

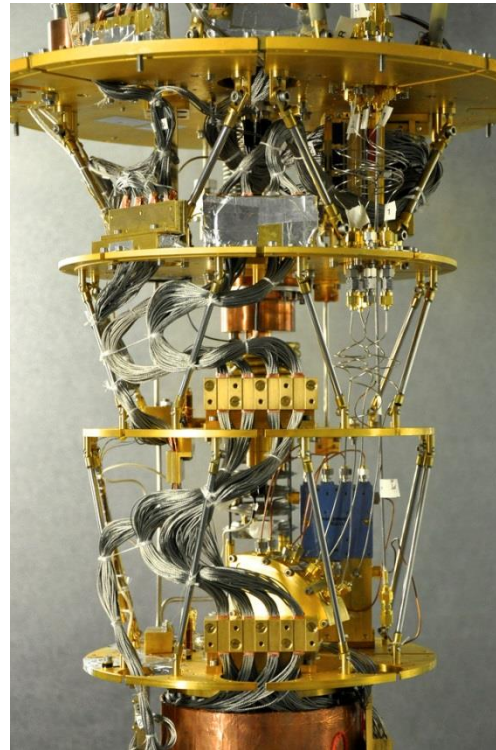
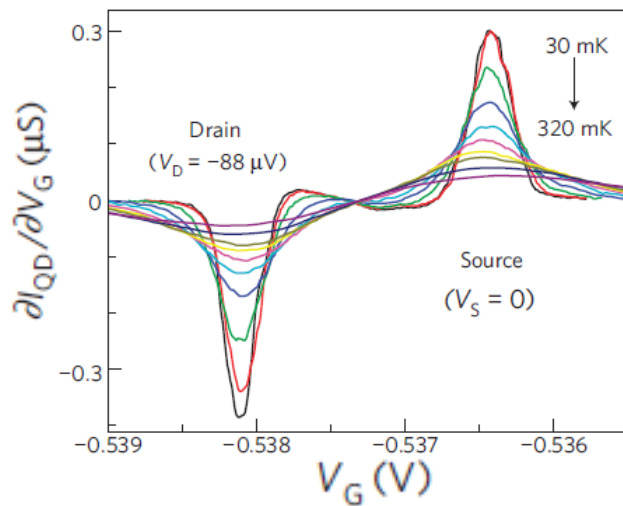
Low Noise Measurements

(for mesoscopic physics, quantum transport & circuits)

François D. Parmentier

Service de Physique de l'État Condensé, CNRS-CEA Saclay

francois.parmentier@cea.fr



'a gentle journey in a world of many body problems & soldering irons'

Low Noise Measurements

Why this course?

1. They asked me...
2. low noise measurements for experimentalists
3. low noise measurements for theorists?

Low Noise Measurements

To observe quantum effects in a macroscopic system with a few degrees of freedom, one battles against the smallness of Planck's constant \hbar .

Martinis, Devoret, Clarke, PRB **35**, 4682 (1987)

(incomplete) Bibliography

- **Books:**

Lounasmaa – *Experimental principles and methods below 1K* (1974)

Pobell – *Matter and Methods at Low Temperatures* (1992)

Horowitz & Hill – *The Art of Electronics* (1989)

White – *Experimental Techniques in Low-Temperature Physics* (1979)

Ventura & Risegari – *The Art of Cryogenics* (2008)

- **PhD theses:**

H. Pothier (1991)

B. Huard (2006)

J. Gabelli (2006)

H. le Sueur (2007)

F. D. Parmentier (2010)

S. Jezouin (2014)

T. Jullien (2014)

- **review papers:**

F. Giazotto *et al.*, Rev. Mod. Phys., **78**, 217 (2006)

D.C. Glattli, Eur. Phys. J. Special Topics **172**, 163–179 (2009)

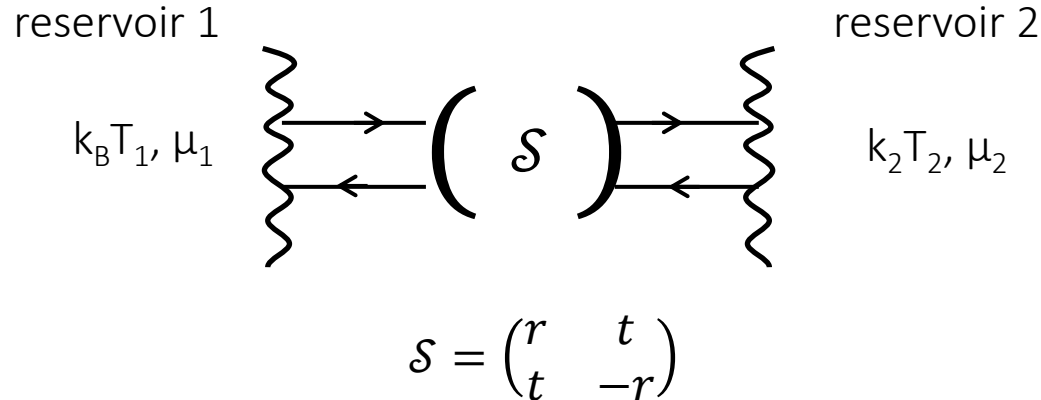
A.A. Clerk *et al.*, Rev. Mod. Phys. **82**, 1155 (2010)

+ references mentioned in the slides (and references therein)

Low Noise Measurements

Landauer Buttiker formalism:

electron quantum transport = coherent conductor (\equiv scattering matrix \mathcal{S}) + ideal reservoirs

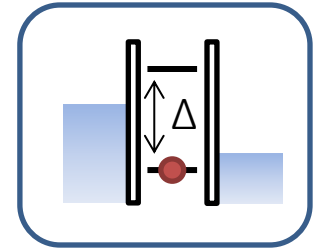


- how does one realize ideal reservoirs, with well controlled $k_B T$ & μ ?
- how does one measure \mathcal{S} precisely in both linear & non-linear regimes?
transmission=conductance $\propto |t|^2$

Energy scales in mesoscopic transport

“intrinsic”:

- quantum dots: charging energy E_c / level spacing Δ
- Kondo temperature $k_B T_K$
- superconducting gap Δ / Andreev bound states energy E_A
- ...

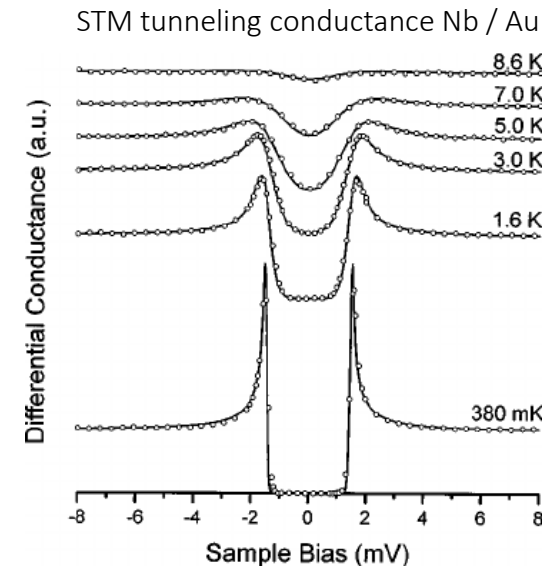


“external probes”:

- dc/ac voltage V_{dc}/V_{ac}
- e-mag field / photons $\hbar\omega$
- temperature $k_B T$
- ...

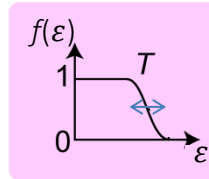
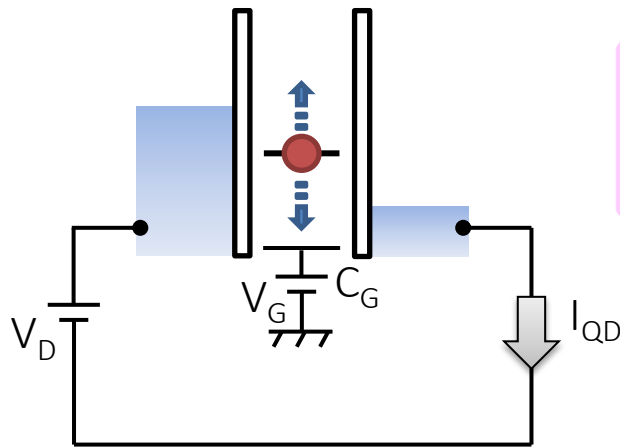
need to be tunable from $\ll \{E_c, \Delta, \dots\}$ to $\geq \{E_c, \Delta, \dots\}$

$$1 \text{ K} \Leftrightarrow 86 \mu\text{V} \Leftrightarrow 20 \text{ GHz}$$

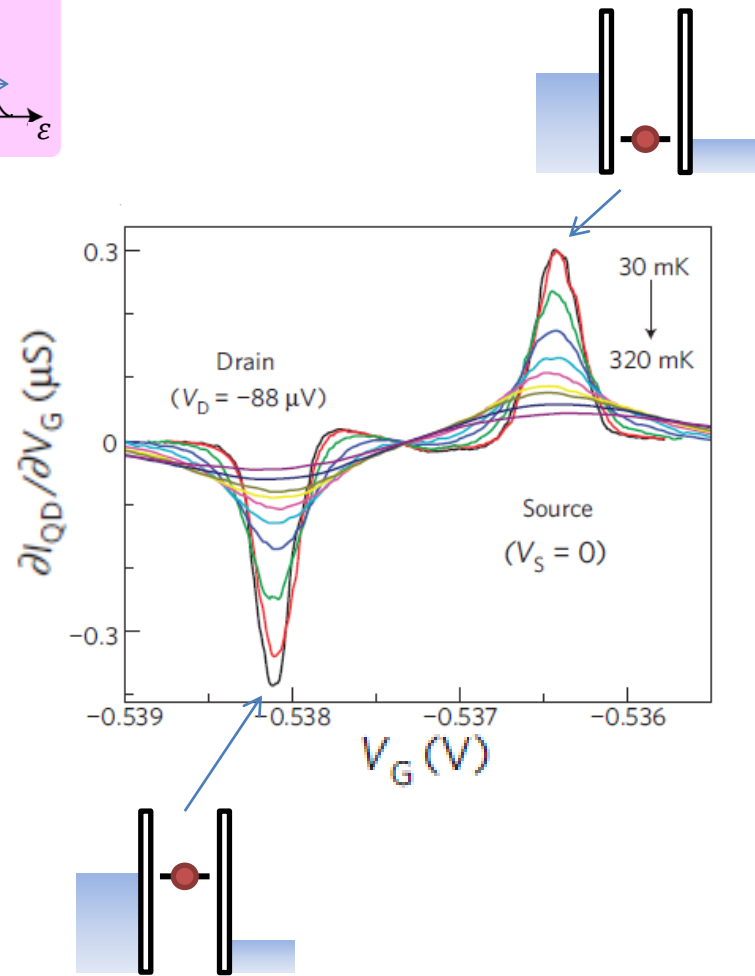
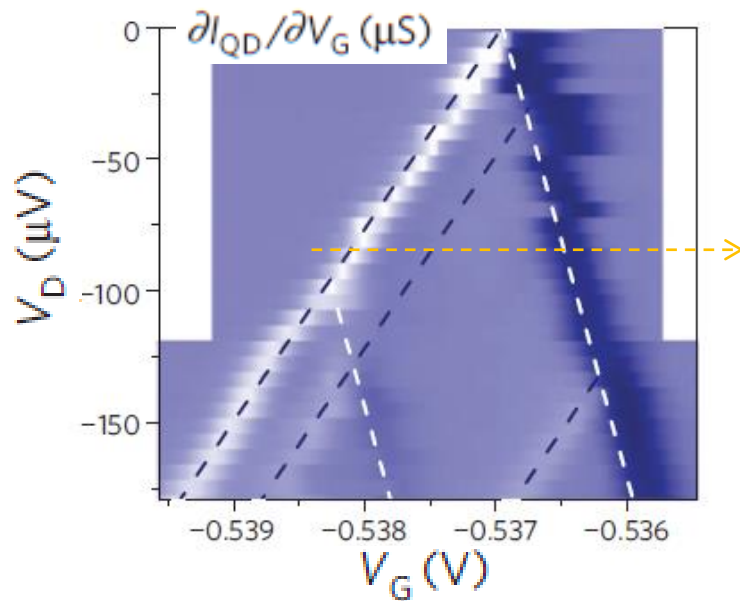


APL 73, 2992 - 2994 (1998)

Example: transport in a quantum dot



Altimiras *et al.*, Nat. Phys. **6**, 34 - 39 (2010)

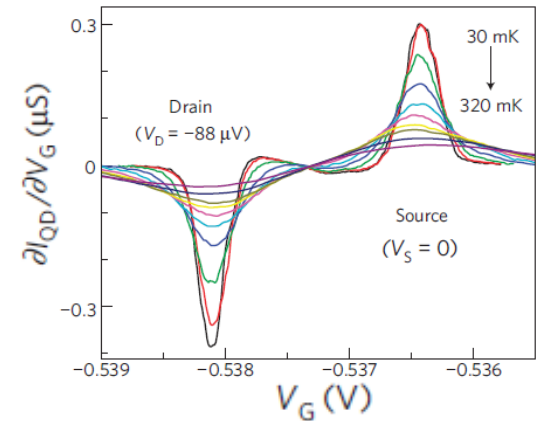


resonance width affected by temperature

Outline

1. low temperature experiments

- cryogenic systems
- lattice vs electron temperature
- filtering & shielding



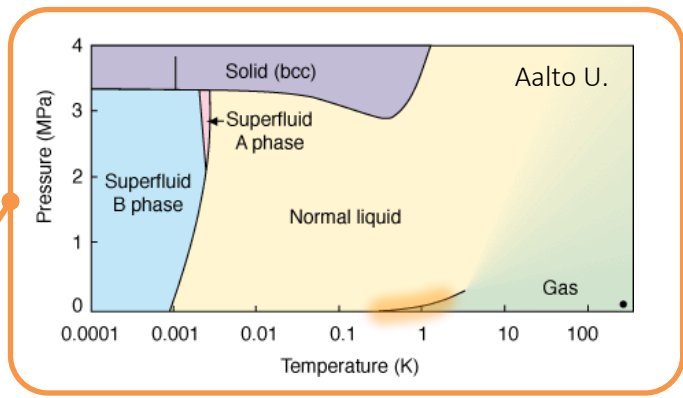
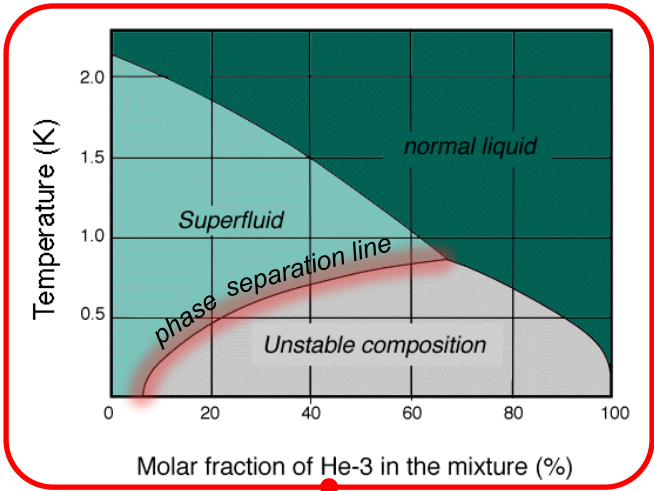
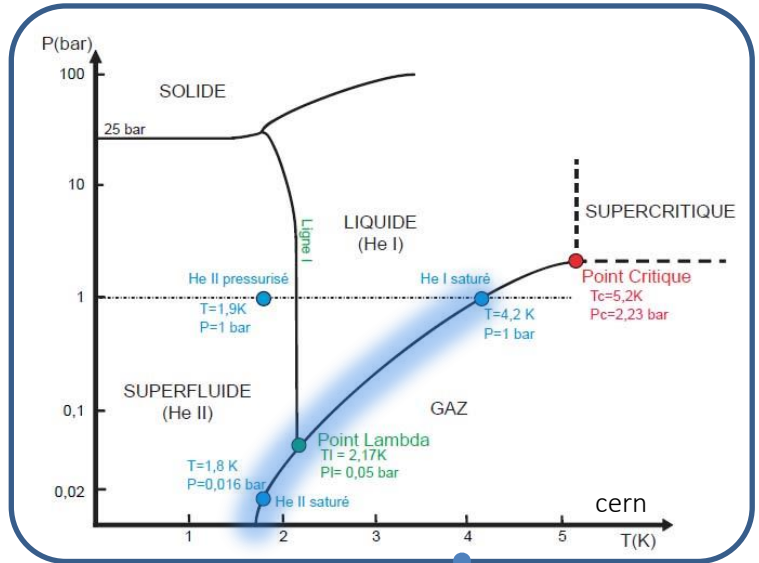
2. low noise cryoelectronics

- signal vs noise
- lock-in measurements
- measurement configurations

3. beyond dc conductance

- microwave measurements
- shot noise

He-based cryogenic systems



pumped liqu. ⁴He

pumped liqu. ³He

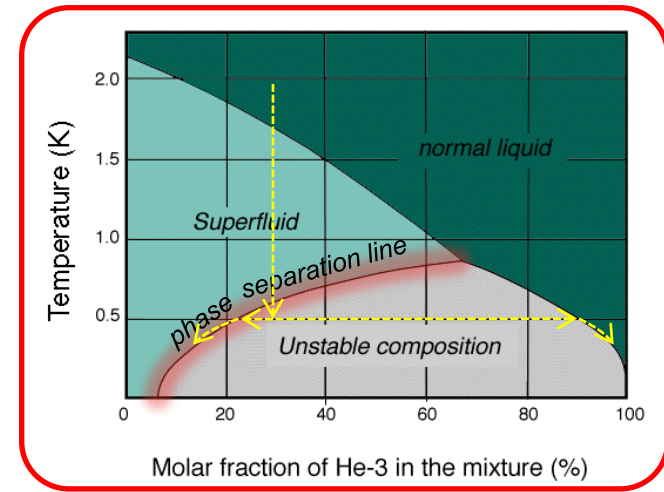
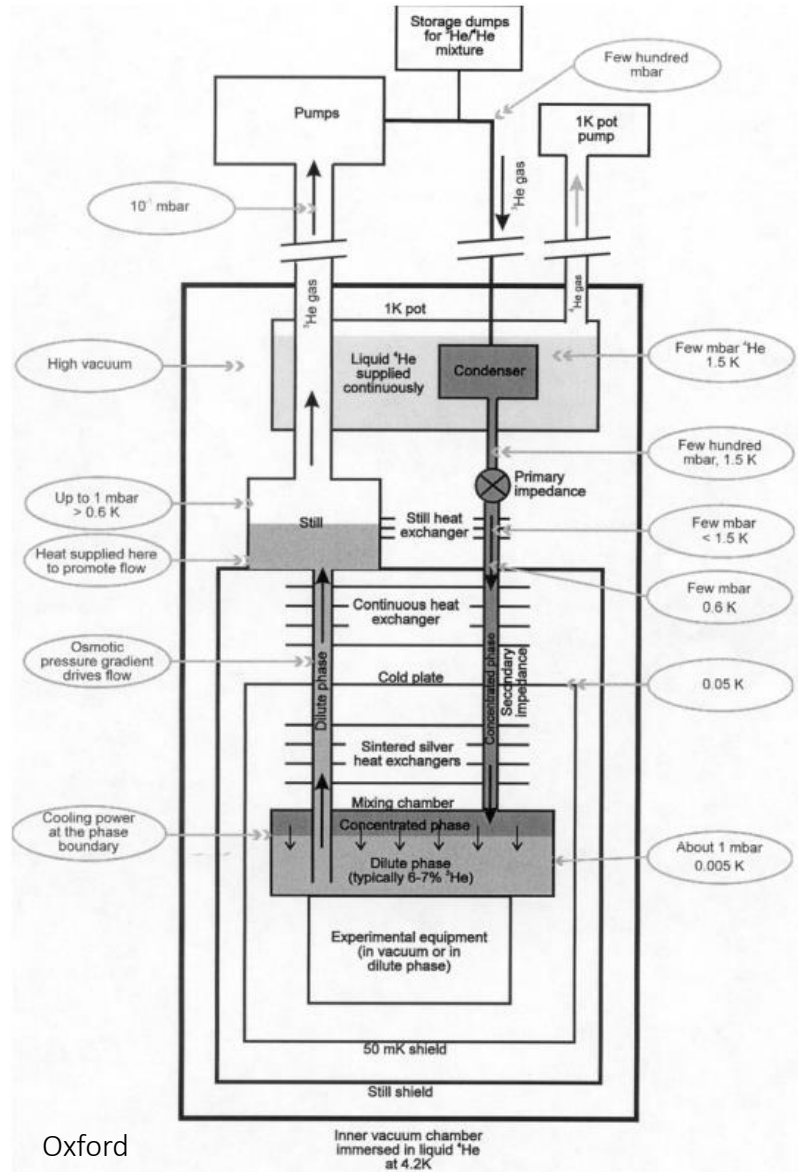
superfl. ⁴He

⁴He / ³He phase separation

⁴He / ³He dilution refrigerators

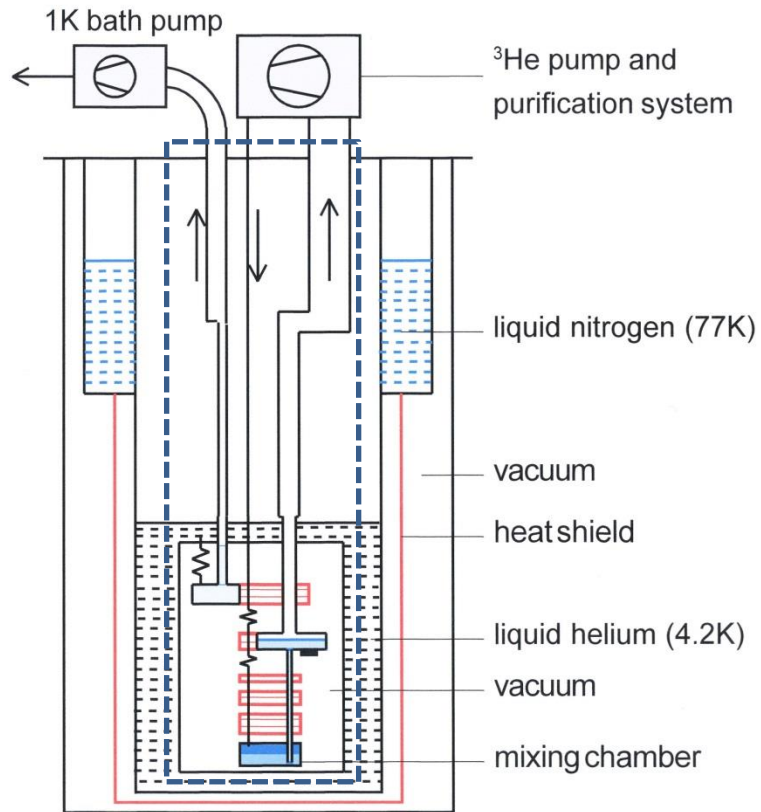


$^4\text{He} / ^3\text{He}$ dilution refrigerators



- circulated $^4\text{He} / ^3\text{He}$ mixture
- continuous operation down to **1 mK**
- needs ^4He bath + cooling power at ~ 1 K
(1 K pot or Joule-Thomson expansion)

Wet vs dry dilution refrigerators



'Wet' fridge:

dilution unit dipped in liquid ^4He bath

+ reliable

+ (relatively) fast cooldowns

- liquid ^4He consumption expensive

- requires regular refills (week-end...)

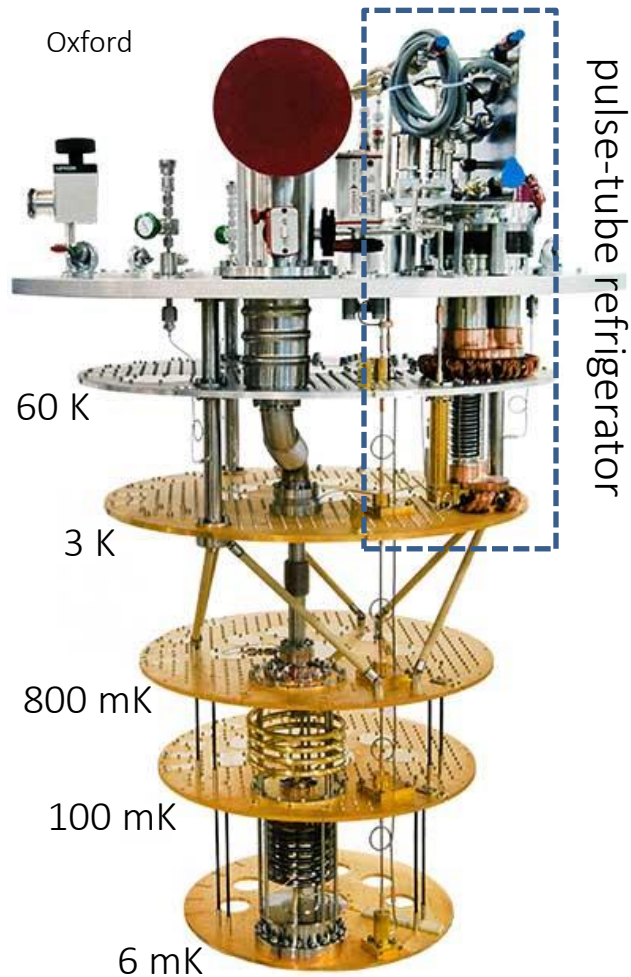
- limited experimental space

- vacuum isolation = low temperature seal

- cryogenic liquids hazards

Das *et al.*, Low Temperature Physics LT9, 1253-1255 (1965)

Wet vs dry dilution refrigerators



'dry' fridge:

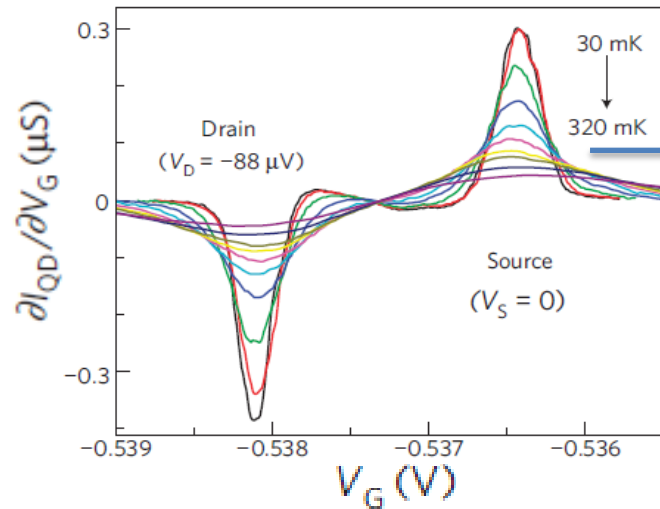
precooling down to 4 K by mechanical refrigerator
(compression-expansion cycles in "pulse-tubes")

- + automatized & autonomous
- + no more liquid ^4He transfers!
- + huge experimental space

- mechanical vibrations
- high electricity & cooling water consumption
- VERY POOR efficiency
(5 kW electrical power \rightarrow <1 W cooling @ 4K)
- sensitive to electrical failure

game-changer for labwork / labs funding / cryogenics industry

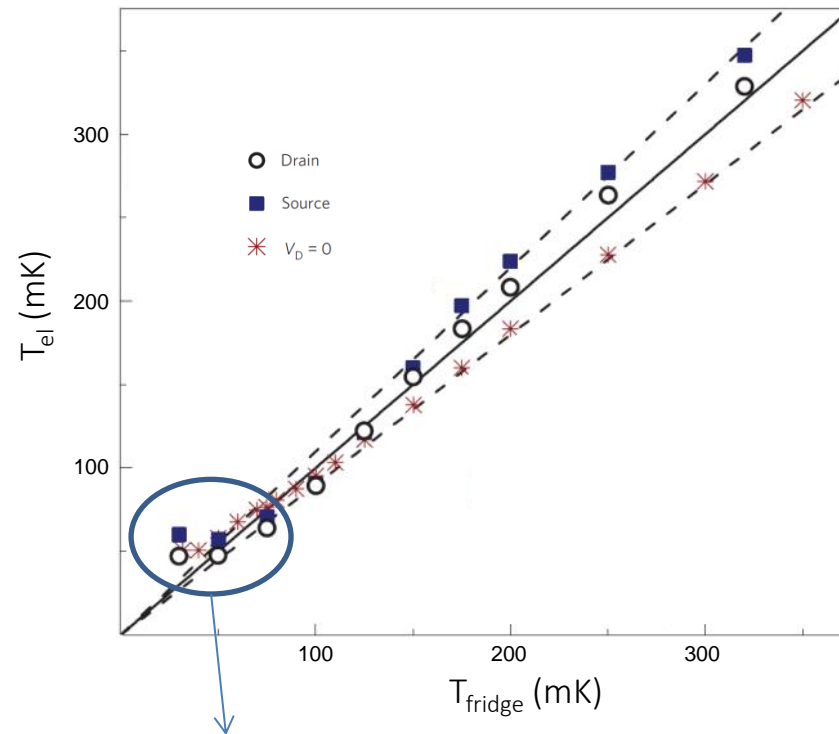
So you got a fridge... then what?



$$\propto \frac{\partial f_{\text{Fermi}}(\varepsilon)}{\partial \varepsilon}$$

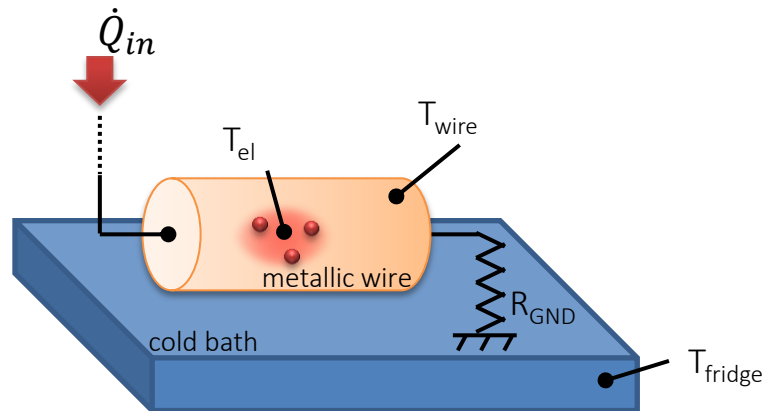


peak width \propto sample temperature T_{el}

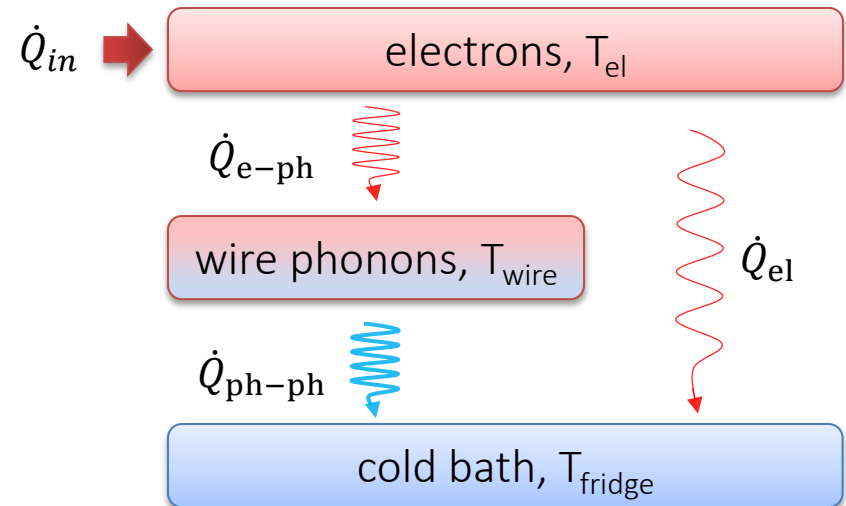


discrepancy T_{el}/T_{fridge} at low temperature?

Electron vs lattice temperature



thermal transport model:



Rev. Mod. Phys., **78**, 217 (2006)

electron-phonon cooling:

$$\dot{Q}_{e-ph} = \Sigma U (T_{el}^5 - T_{wire}^5)$$

Σ : coupling constant (depends on material)

U : wire volume

phonon-phonon cooling (Kapitza resistance):

$$\dot{Q}_{ph-ph} = KA (T_{wire}^4 - T_{fridge}^4)$$

K : coupling constant (depends on materials)

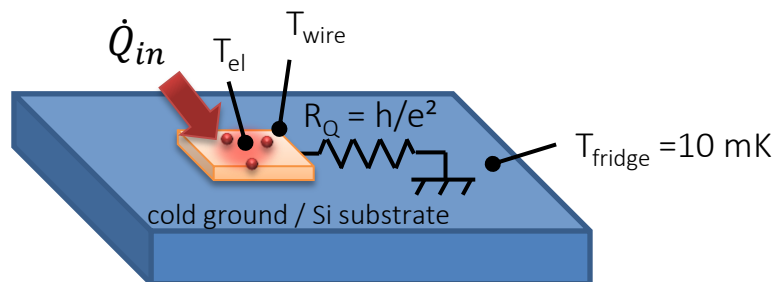
A : contact area

electronic heat transport (Wiedemann-Franz law):

$$\dot{Q}_{el} = L_0 (T_{wire}^2 - T_{fridge}^2) / R_{GND}$$

$L_0 = \pi^2 k_B^2 / 3e^2$: Lorenz number

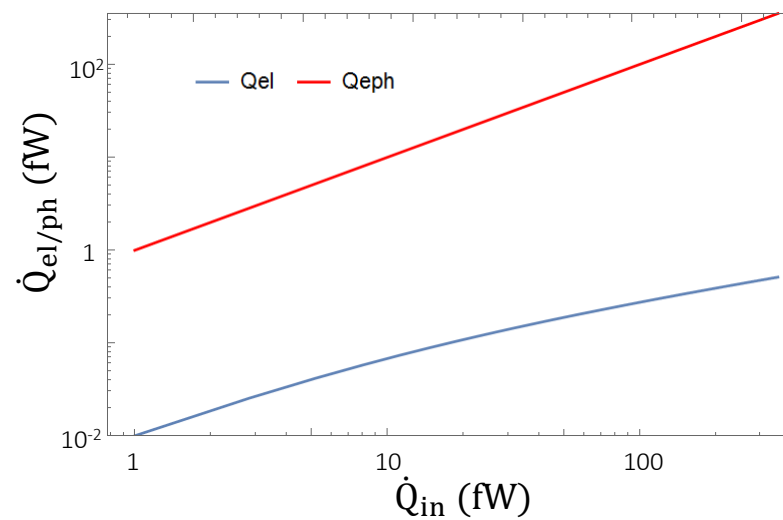
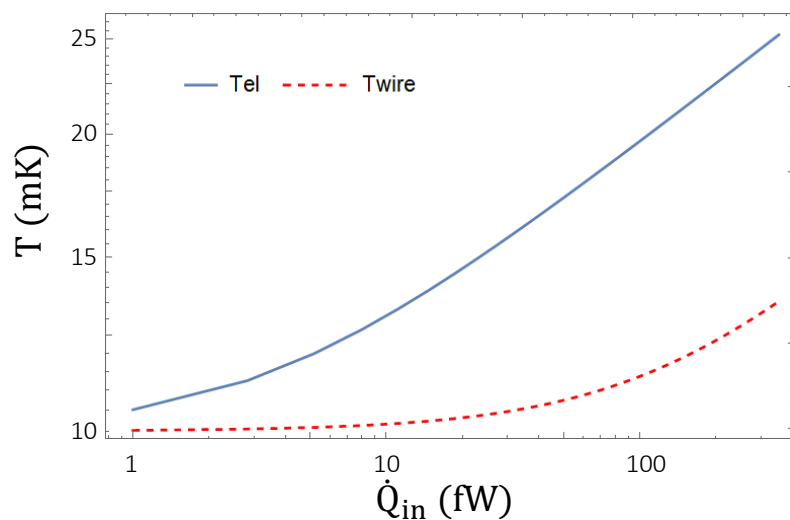
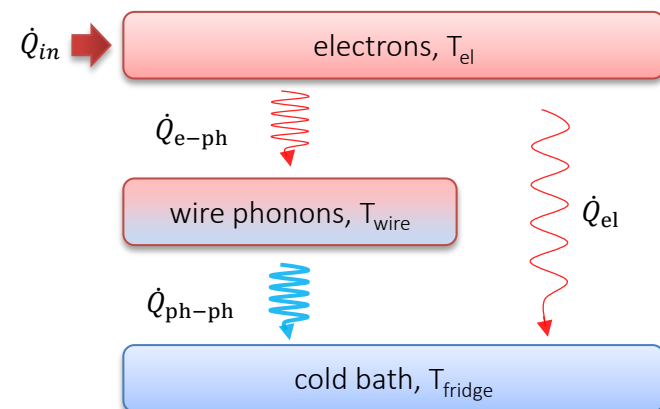
Example: metal contact on meso. conductor



300 μm x 300 μm x 100 nm Cu contact

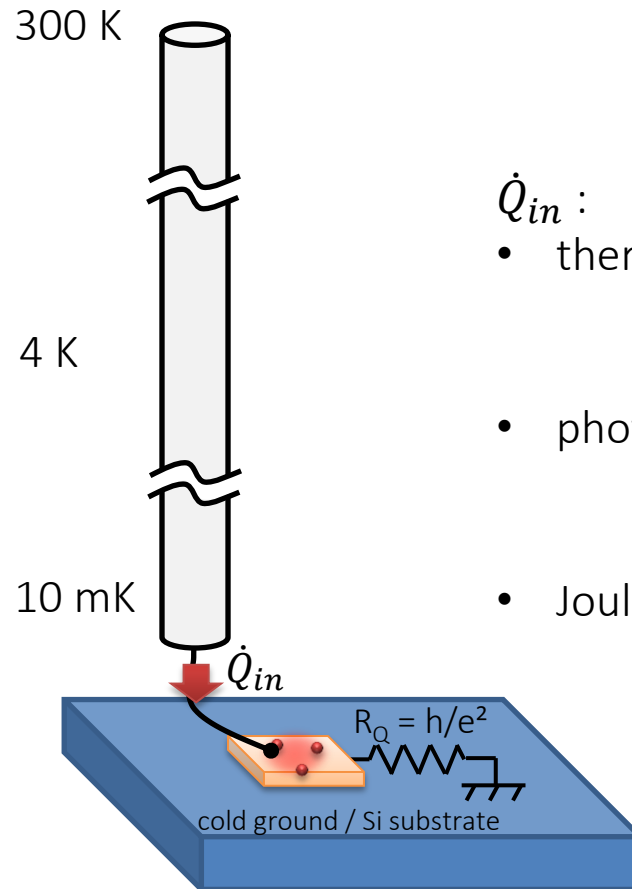
$$\Sigma_{\text{Cu}} = 2 \times 10^9 \text{ W m}^{-3} \text{ K}^{-5}$$

$$K_{\text{Cu/Si}} = 166 \text{ W m}^{-2} \text{ K}^{-4}$$



➔ minimize power \dot{Q}_{in} incoming on sample

Example: metal contact on meso. conductor



\dot{Q}_{in} :

- thermal conduction from warmer parts



wire thermalization

- photons (blackbody radiation)



shielding & filtering

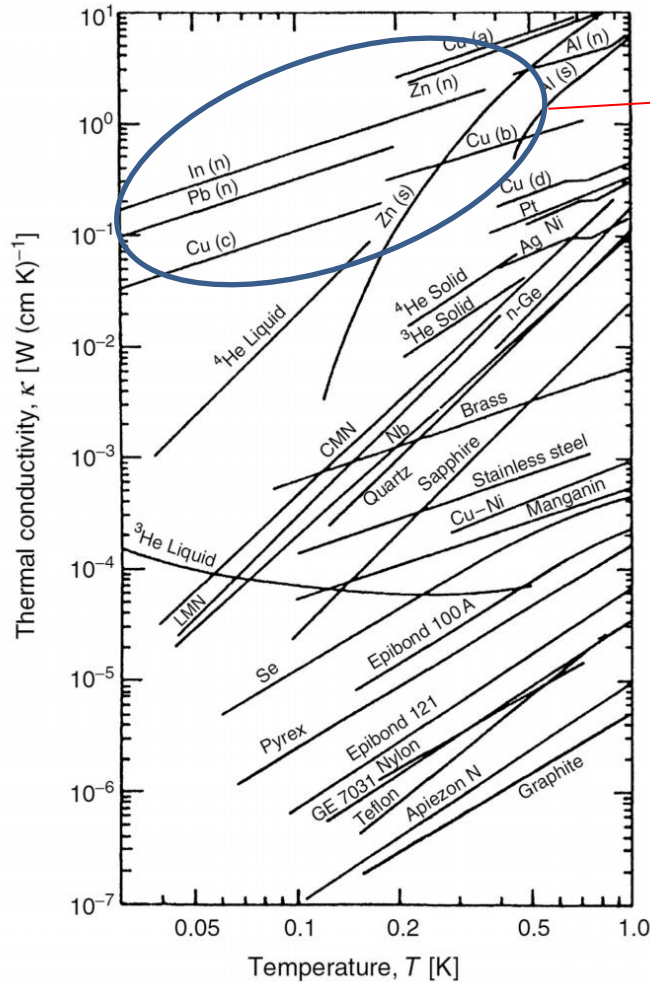
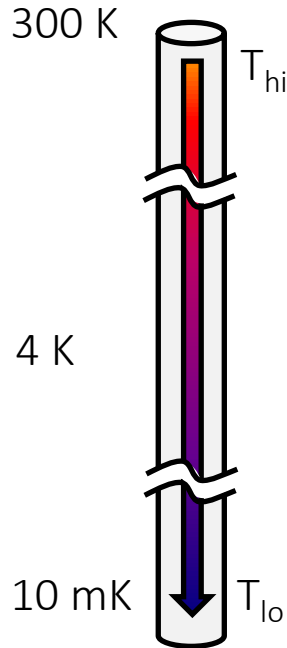
- Joule power dissipated in the contact



small electrical signals

Wire thermalization

thermal conductivity κ @ low temp



metals: $\kappa \propto T$

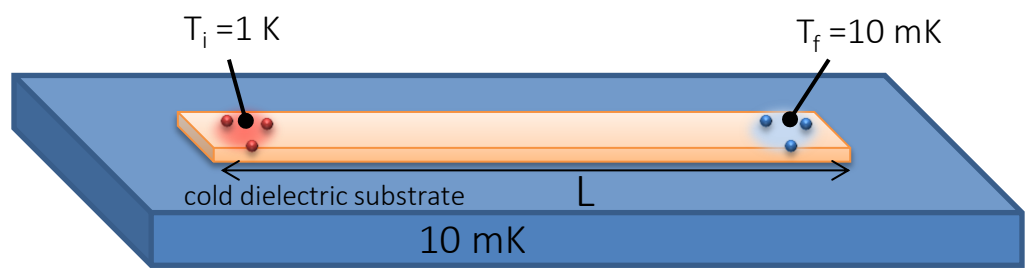
heat mainly carried by electrons
(Wiedemann-Franz law):

$$\dot{Q}_{el} = L_0 (T_{hi}^2 - T_{lo}^2) / R_{wire}$$

use resistive wire

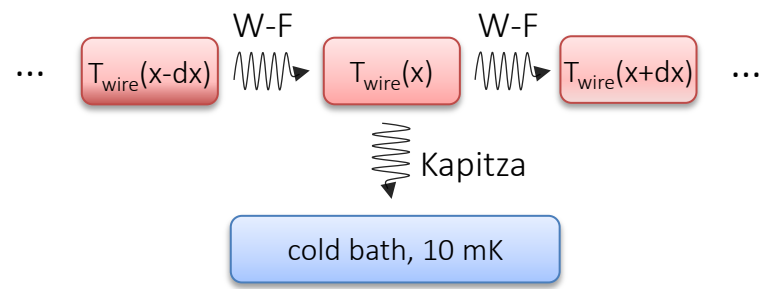
Lounasmaa - Experimental principles and methods below 1K (1974)

Wire thermalization



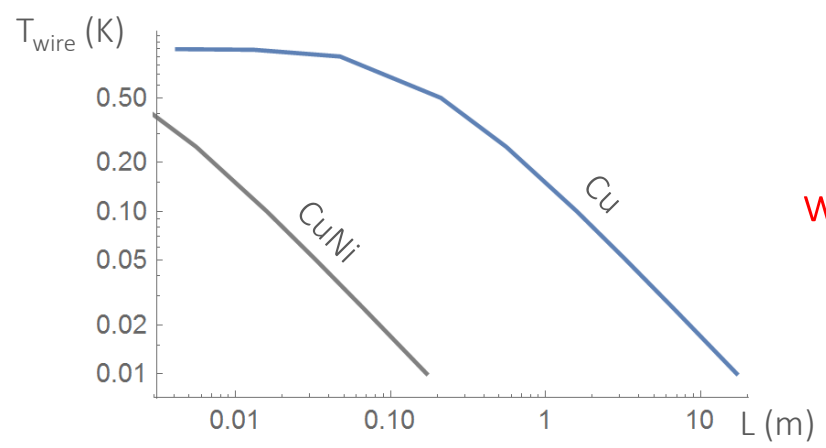
wire length L to thermalize electrons from 1 K to 10 mK ?

hyp.: electrons well thermalized to wire phonons



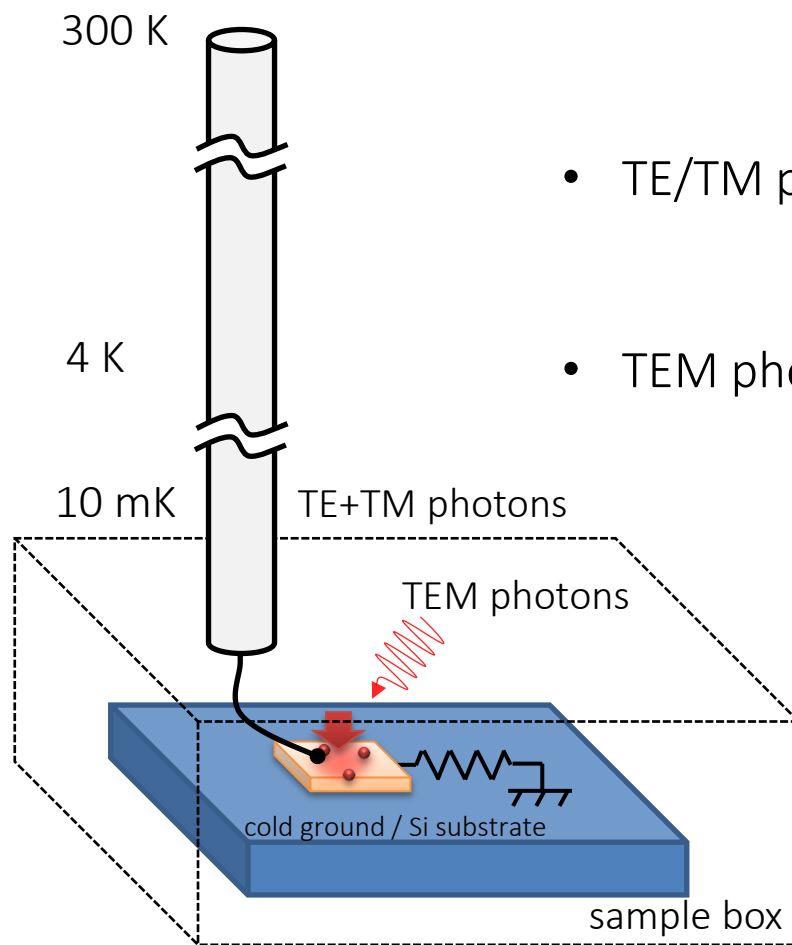
$$L = \sqrt{\frac{2 L_0 \sigma}{K}} \int_{T_f}^{T_i} \frac{dT}{\sqrt{T^4 - T_f^4}}$$

electrical conductivity



wire material is crucial!

Photons impinging on the sample



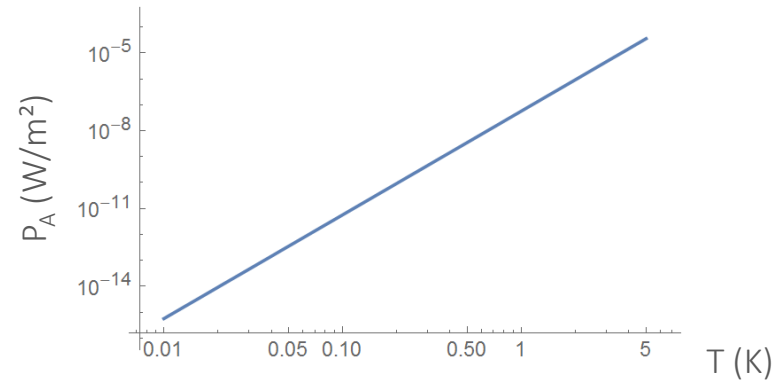
- TE/TM photons propagating in the wires
- TEM photons modes of the sample box

➔ shielding!

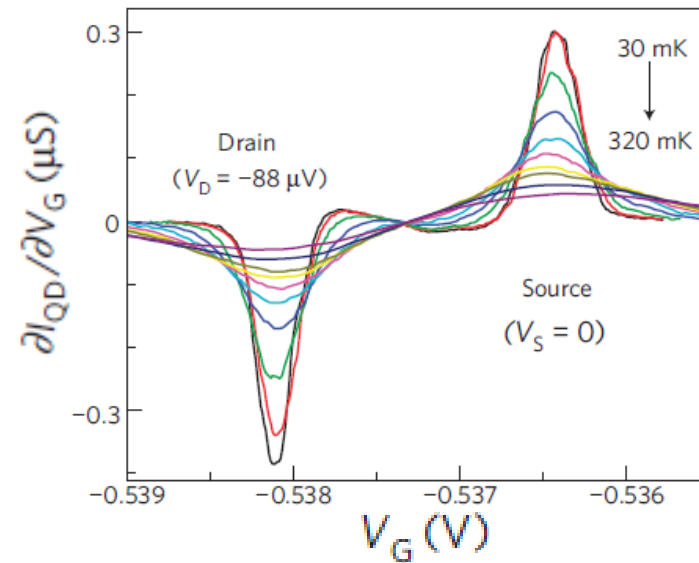
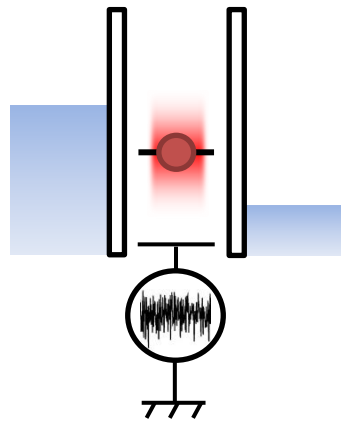
non-thermalized photons

- radiative heat transfer:
Stefan-Boltzmann law

$$P_A [\text{W}/\text{m}^2] = \frac{2\pi^5 k_B^4}{15h^3 c^2} T_{\text{photons}}^4$$



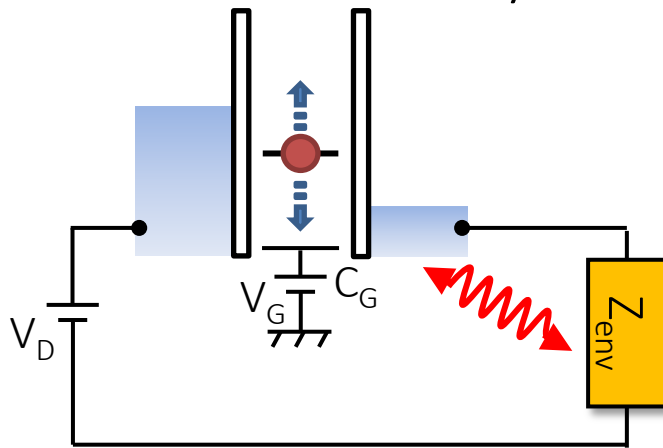
- electromagnetic noise on the gates



non-thermalized photons II

- charge transfer in coherent conductor coupled to electromag. env^t:

Dynamical Coulomb Blockade



tunneling rate Γ affected by prob. $P(E)$

for env^t to absorb photon with energy E :

$$\Gamma(\varepsilon) = \int dE \Gamma_0(\varepsilon - E)P(E)$$

$$Z_{\text{env}} \ll R_K \rightarrow P(E) \approx \frac{1}{2\pi\hbar} \int dt e^{\frac{iEt}{\hbar}} \times \exp \left[\frac{2\pi}{\hbar R_K} \int d\omega \frac{S_V(\omega)}{\omega^2} (\cos \omega t - 1) \right]$$

$$S_V(\omega) \propto \frac{\text{Re}[Z_{\text{env}}] \hbar \omega}{\exp(\hbar \omega / k_B T_{\text{ph}}) - 1} \quad (\text{Planck's law})$$

Devoret *et al.*, Phys. Rev. Lett. **64**, 1824-7 (1990)
 Nazarov & Ingold, *Single Charge Tunneling* (1992)
 Martinis & Nahum, PRB **48**, 18316 (1993)

non-thermalized photons

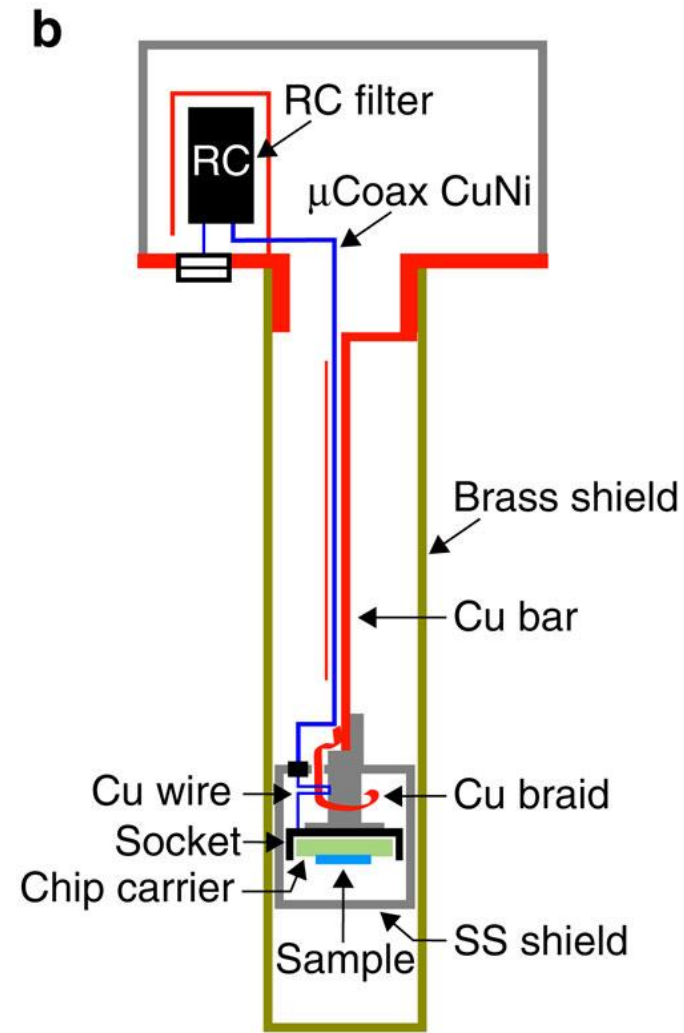
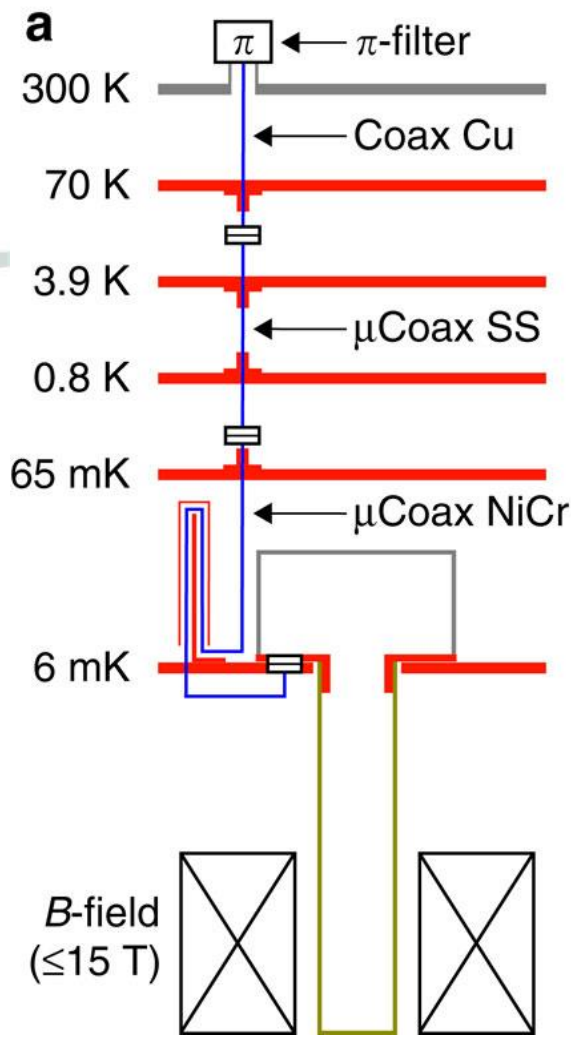
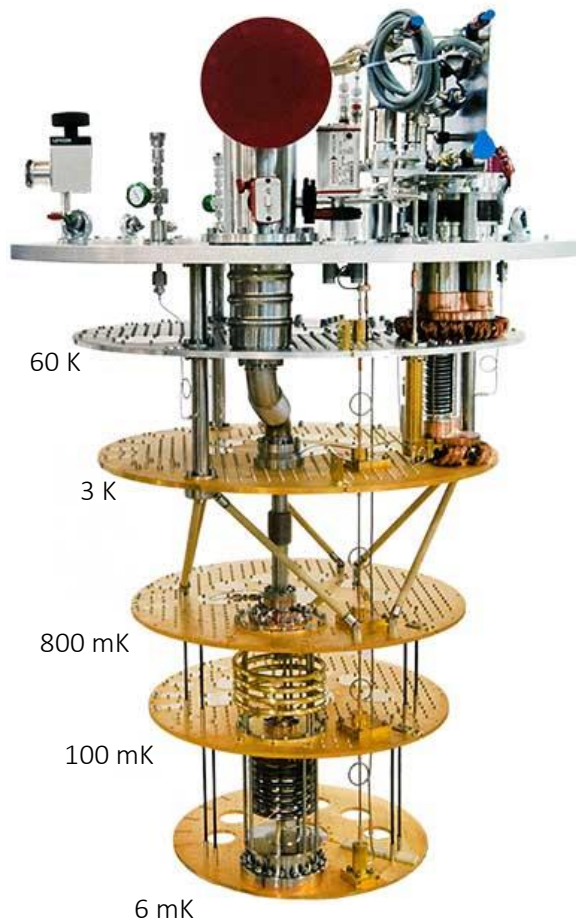
No reliable experimental results [...] are expected if nothing is done to thermalize the photons.

D. C. Glatli, P. Jacques, A. Kumar, P. Pari, & L. Saminadayar, Journal of Applied Physics **81**, 7350 (1997)

... very small amounts of microwave power can cause significant errors, and thus great care must be taken in filtering all leads to the device.

Martinis & Nahum, PRB **48**, 18316 (1993)

Filtering, wiring and shielding



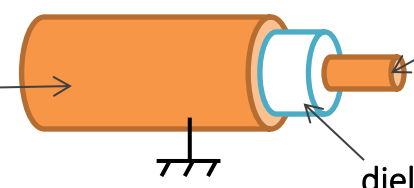
Z. Iftikhar *et al.*, Nature Communications 7, 12908 (2016)

Filtering: coax. wires

resistive wires needed for electron thermalisation → just add capacitance!

→ cryo coaxial wire: lossy transmission line

- outer conductor (ground)**
- minimize heat load on fridge
 - define a good ground
 - thermal anchor to fridge
→ thin and slightly resistive

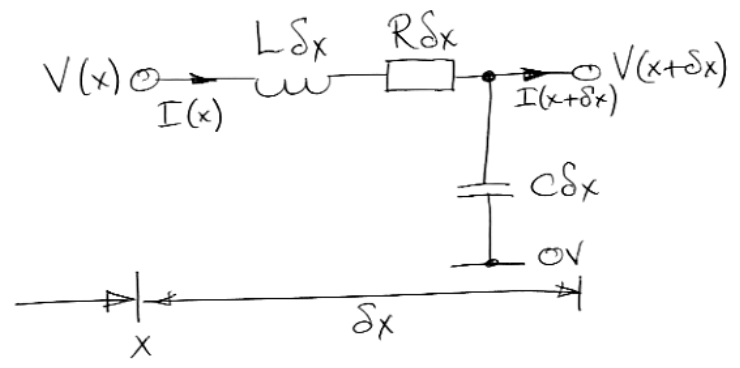


inner conductor (signal)

- electron thermalization
- suppress thermal photons
→ resistive
- minimize heat load
→ thin

dielectric

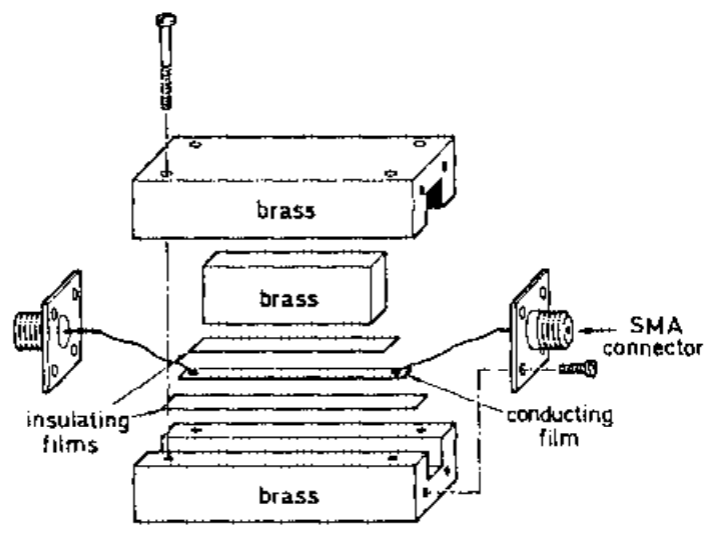
- defines good capacitance
- good thermal transfer between inner & outer conductors
→ thin



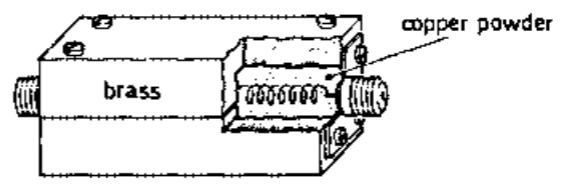
typ. $R=50-100 \Omega/m$
 $C=100 \text{ pF/m}$

- commercial cryo coax
- thin resistive wire threaded in small CuNi tube

Filtering: discrete elements



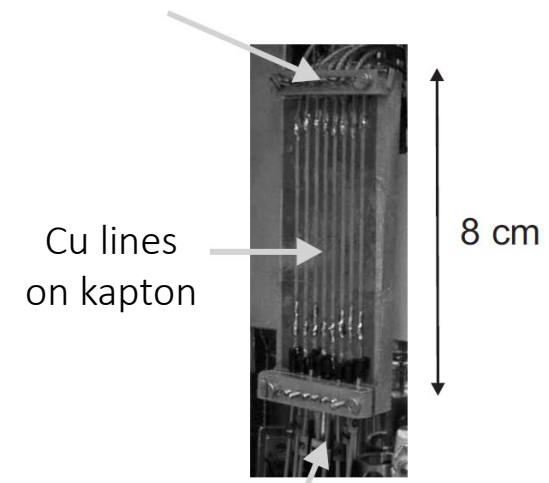
(a)



(b)

Thesis H. Pothier (1991)

- planar copper lines:
not good below 1 K!

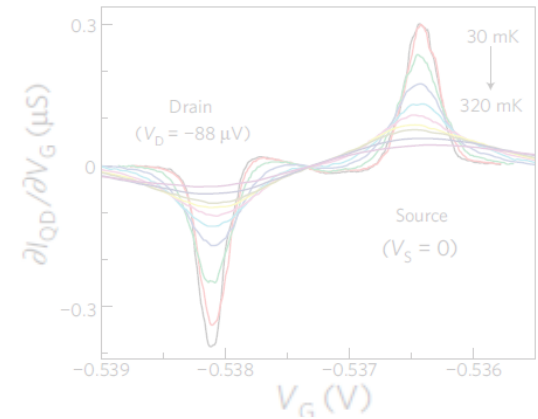


Thesis J. Gabelli (2006)

Outline

1. low temperature experiments

- cryogenic systems
- lattice vs electron temperature
- filtering



2. low noise cryoelectronics

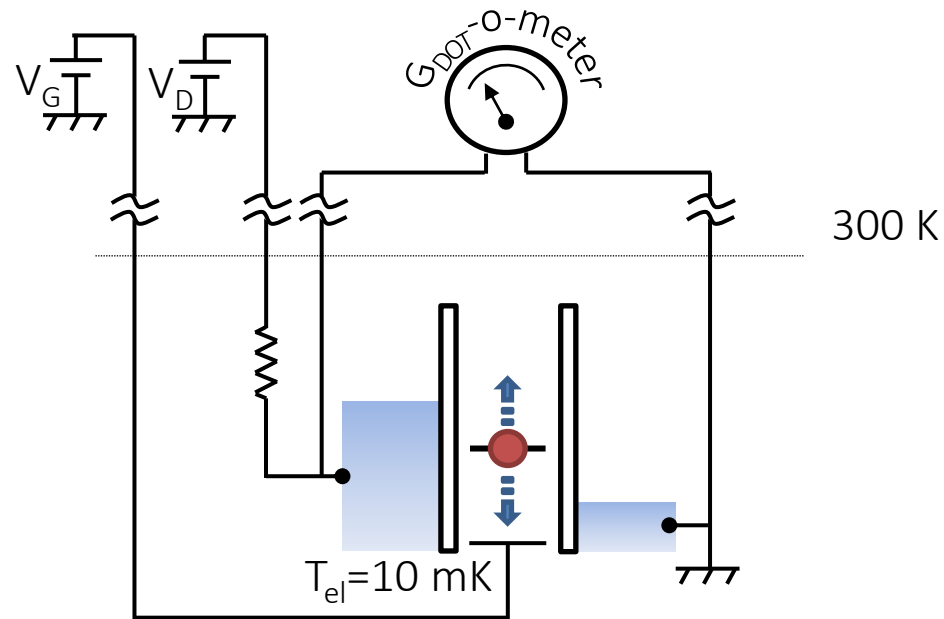
- signal vs noise
- DC & AC meas^t, lock-in
- measurement configurations

3. beyond dc conductance

- microwave measurements
- noise

Low noise cryoelectronics

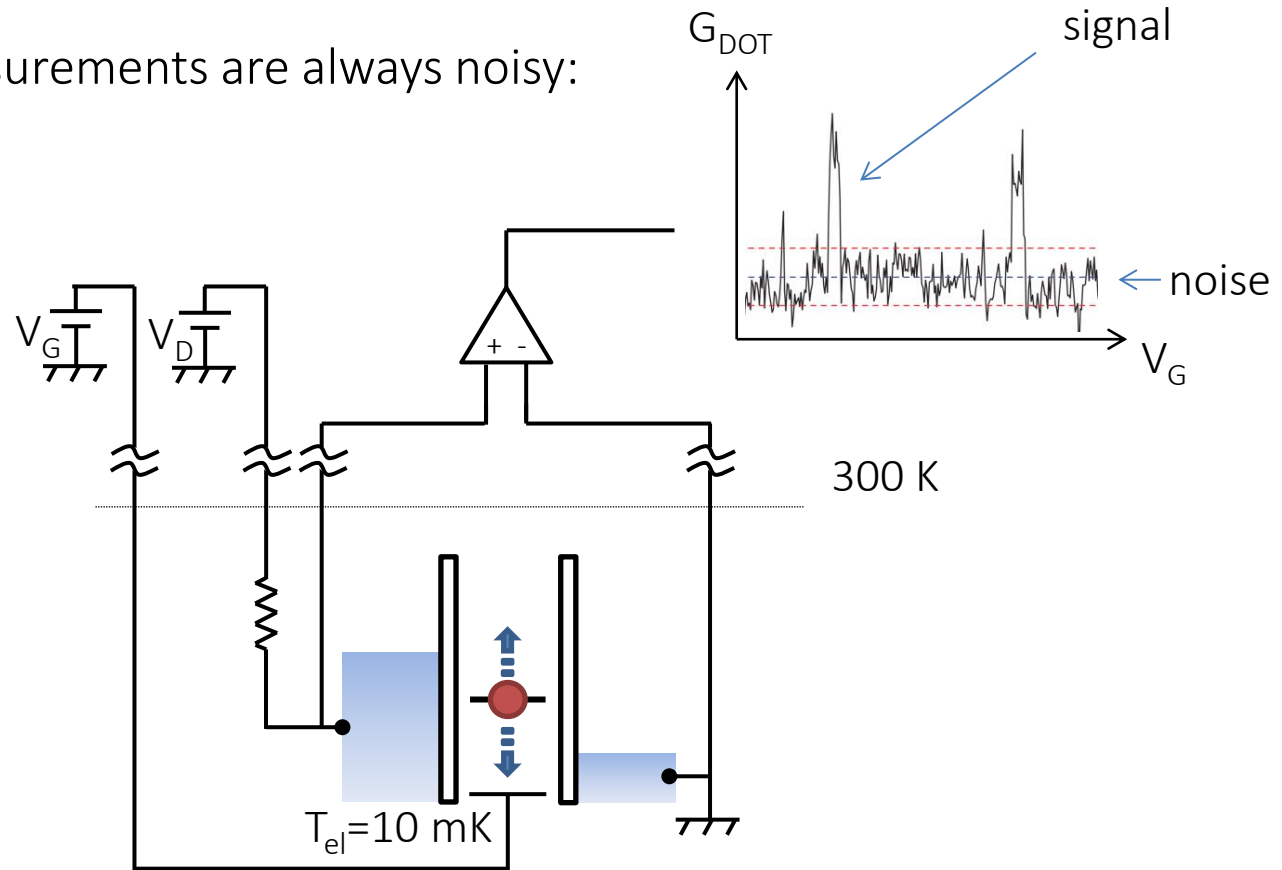
- ✓ electrons are cold
- ✓ photons are filtered out



measurement of $G_{\text{DOT}}(V_D, V_G)$ at low temperature ?

Signal vs noise

real measurements are always noisy:



Maximize signal / noise ratio (SNR):

- A) noise sources
- B) which signals?

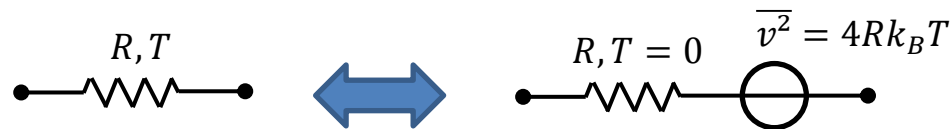
Noise sources

- thermal noise
- 1/f noise
- amplification noise
- parasitics, room T:
 - flux
 - ground loops
- parasitics, cryogenics
 - thermovoltages
 - triboelectrics
 - microphonics

Thermal (Johnson-Nyquist) noise

thermal agitation of charge carriers in a conductor (resistance R , temperature T)

➔ voltage fluctuations $\overline{v^2} = 4Rk_B T$ units: V^2/Hz
(or $V/\sqrt{\text{Hz}}$)



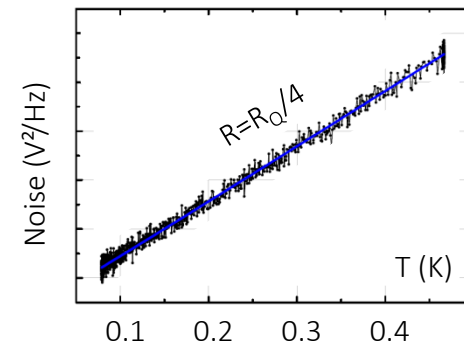
$50 \Omega @ 300 \text{ K} \rightarrow 0.9 \text{ nV}/\sqrt{\text{Hz}}$

Johnson, Phys. Rev. **32**, 97 (1928) (experiment)
Nyquist, Phys. Rev. **32**, 110 (1928) (theory)

Electrical example of fluctuation-dissipation theorem!



good primary thermometer
for low (and high!) temperatures
(also a good way to calibrate amps)

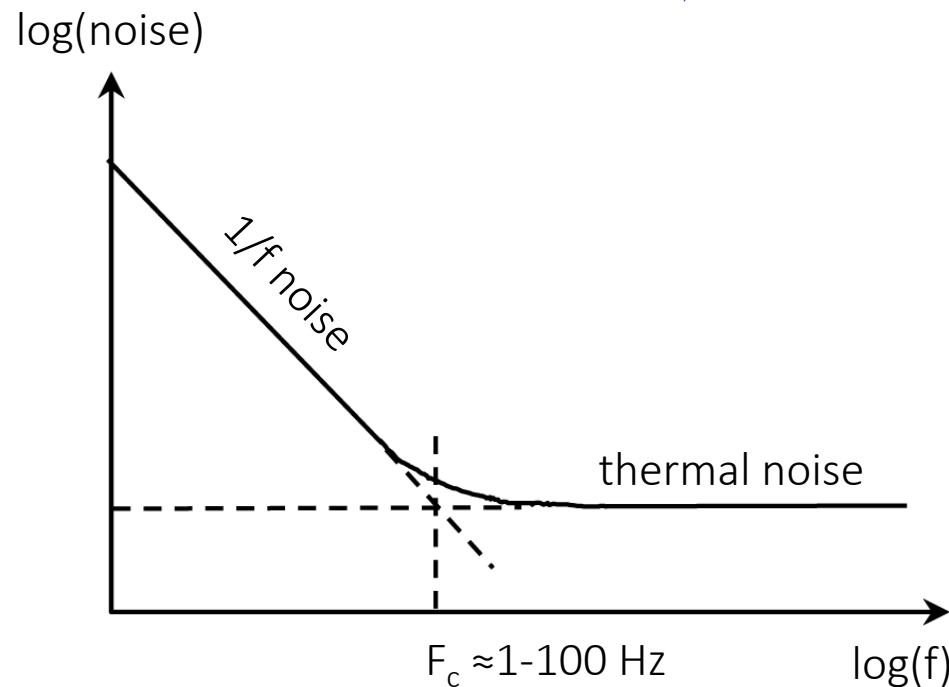


1/f (flicker) noise

sample in electrostatic environment:

surrounding trapped charges = fluctuating two-level systems

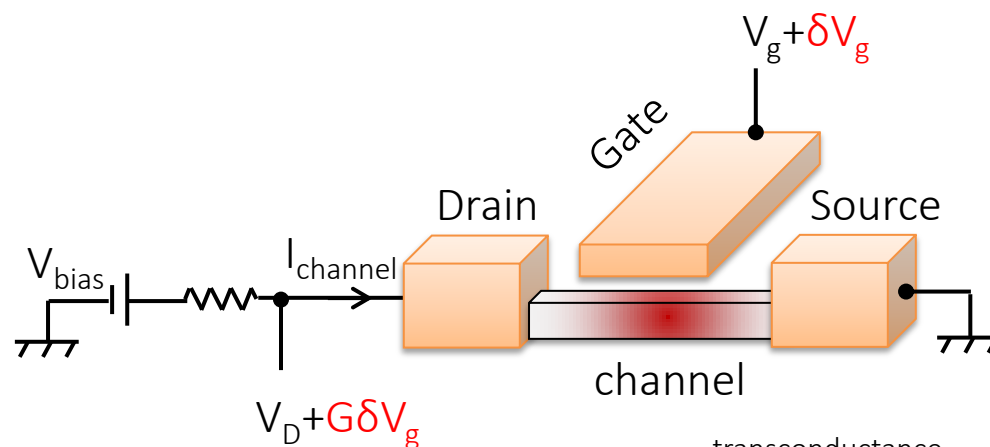
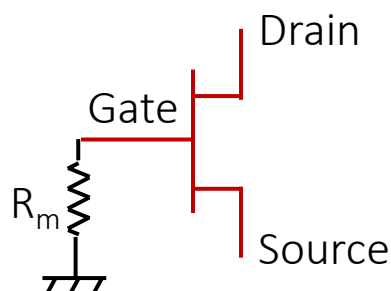
➔ low frequency fluctuations!



very unfavorable for DC measurements, thermally activated

Amplification noise: field-effect transistors

field-effect transistor (FET)



$$G \approx -\frac{g_m}{g_c}$$

transconductance
 $g_m = \partial I_{\text{channel}} / \partial V_g$
 channel conductance
 $g_c = \partial I_{\text{channel}} / \partial V_D$

Main noise sources:

- 1/f noise
- thermal noise of the channel
- shot noise of the gate leakage current

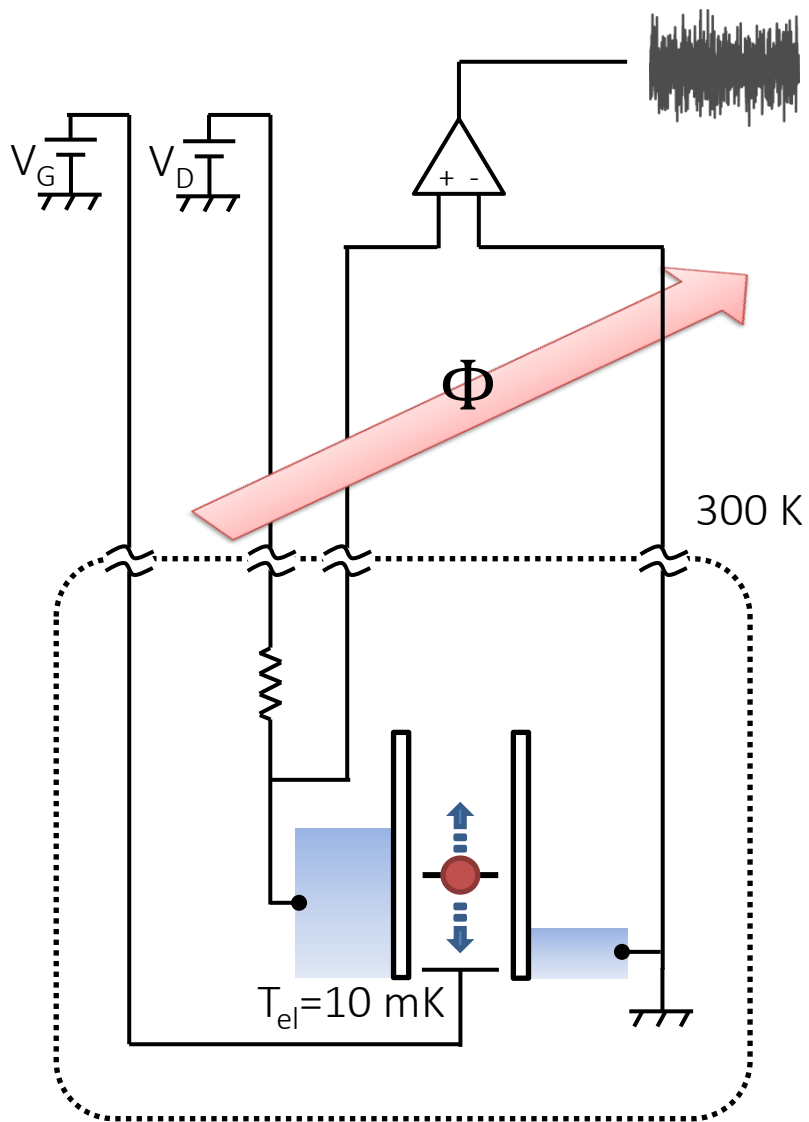
sources independent of measured impedance R_m : *voltage noise*

sources dependent of R_m : *current noise*

typical noise: $\sqrt{\delta v^2} \sim 1 \text{ nV} / \sqrt{\text{Hz}}$

Bordoni *et al.*, Rev. Sci. Instrum. **52**, 1079 (1981)

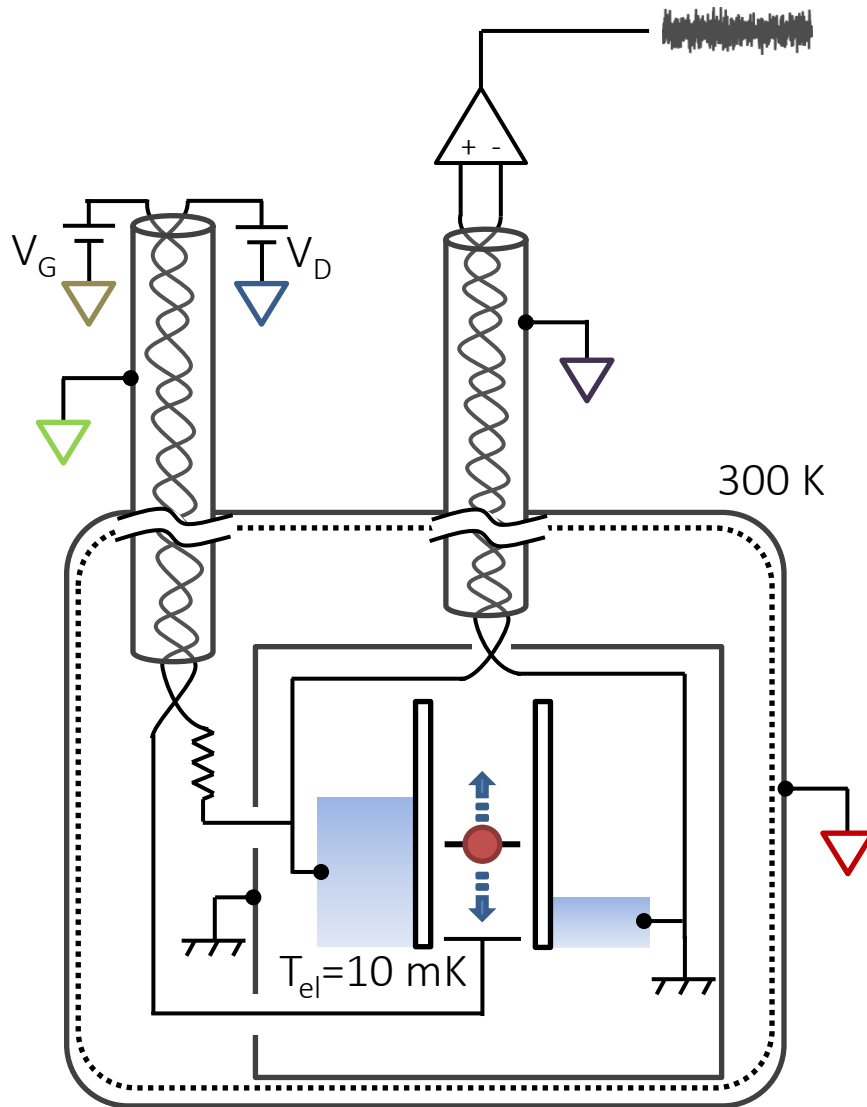
Room T: flux & ground loops



Fluctuating magnetic flux (50 Hz, ...) in the loop induces noise

➔ get rid of loops!

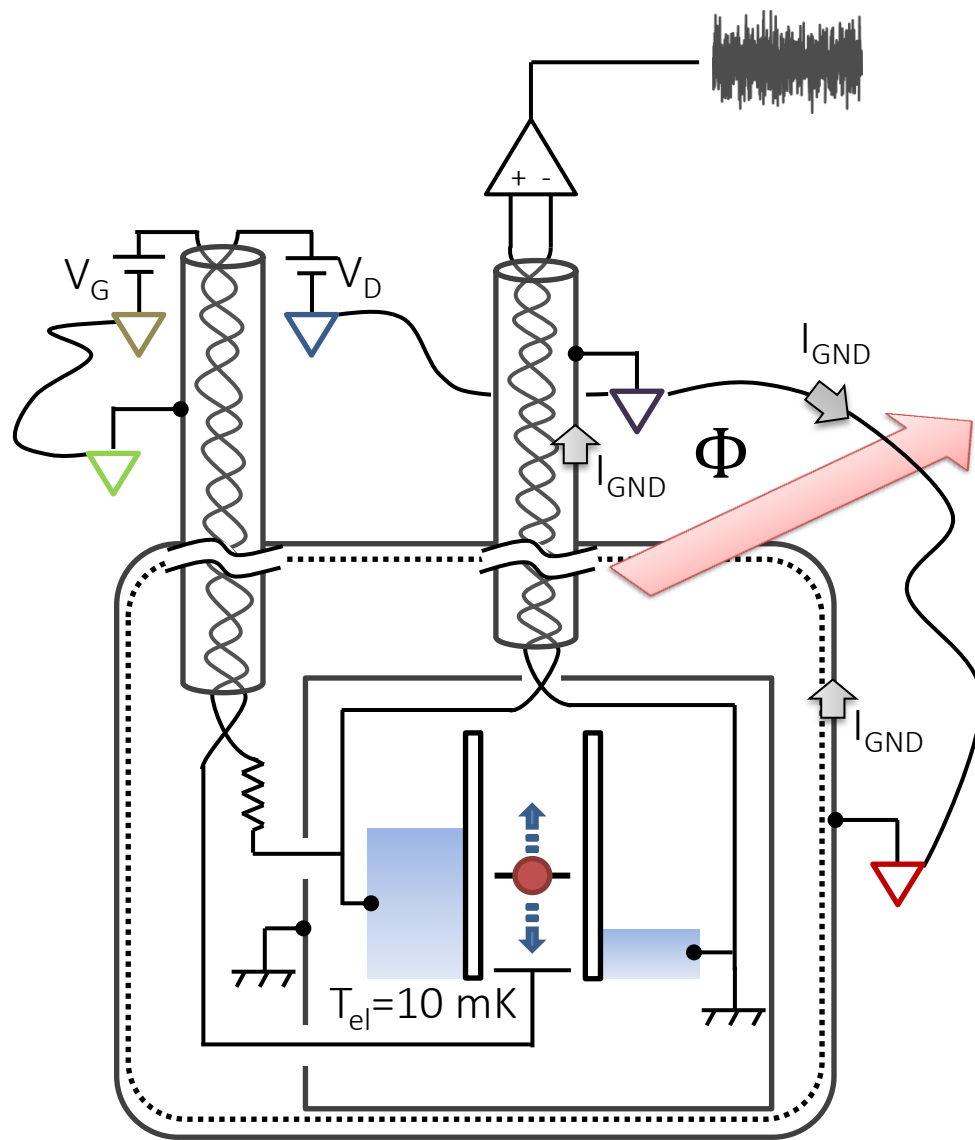
Room T: flux & ground loops



get rid of loops:

- twisted pairs
- shielding

Room T: flux & ground loops



get rid of loops:

- twisted pairs
- shielding

beware of ground loops!

long, poorly conducting GND wires



pick up flux

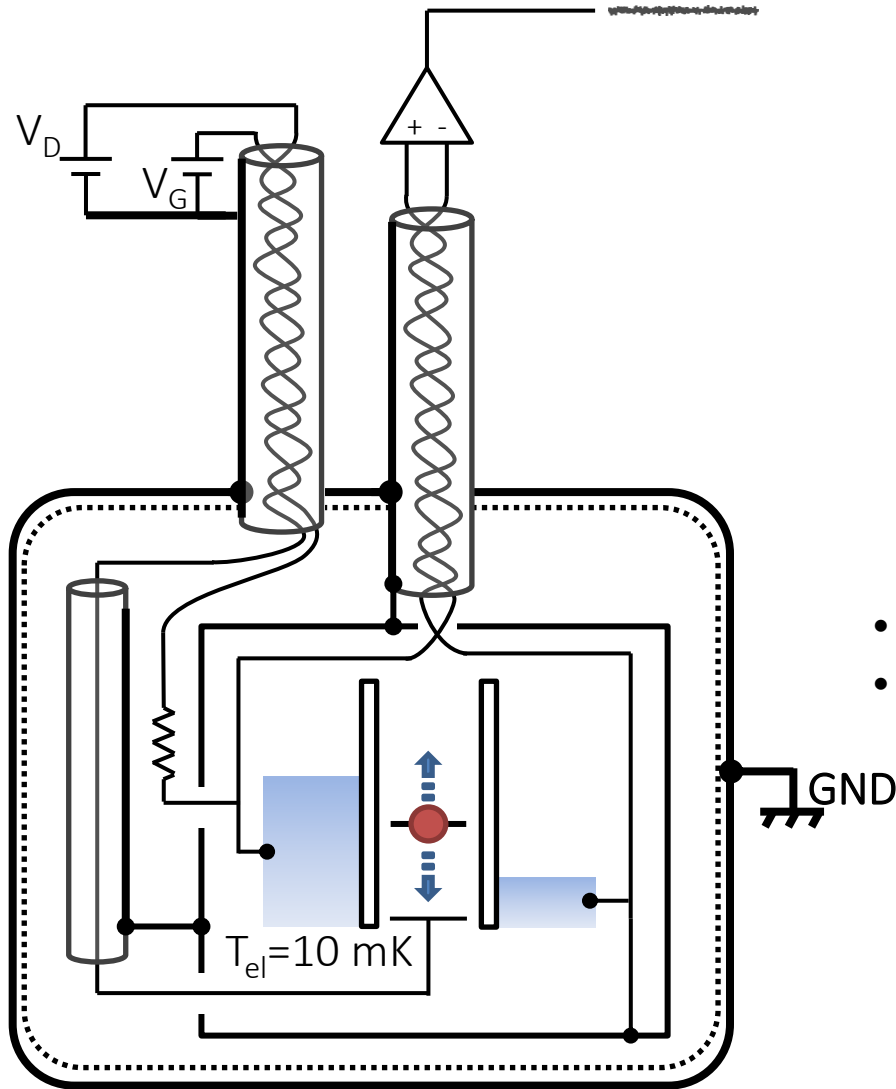


parasitic fluctuating I_{GND}



noise!!

Room T: flux & ground loops



get rid of loops:

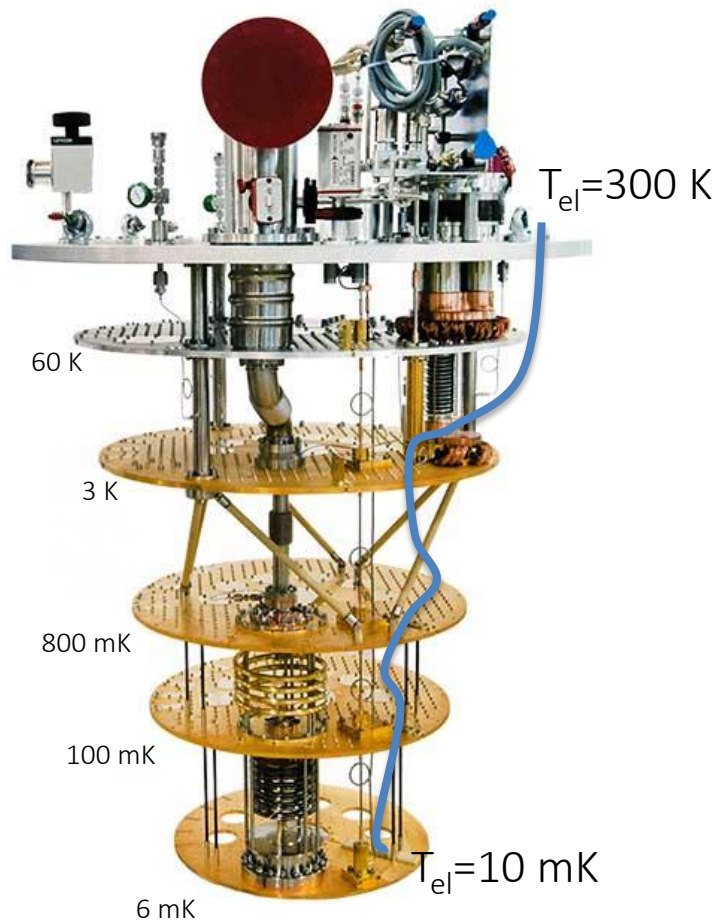
- twisted pairs
- shielding

beware of ground loops!



- single well defined GND (close to fridge)
- short, low resistance wires to the GND

Thermoelectric voltages



Seebeck effect: $V_{\text{therm}} = S\Delta T \quad \left(\frac{\Delta T}{T} \ll 1\right)$

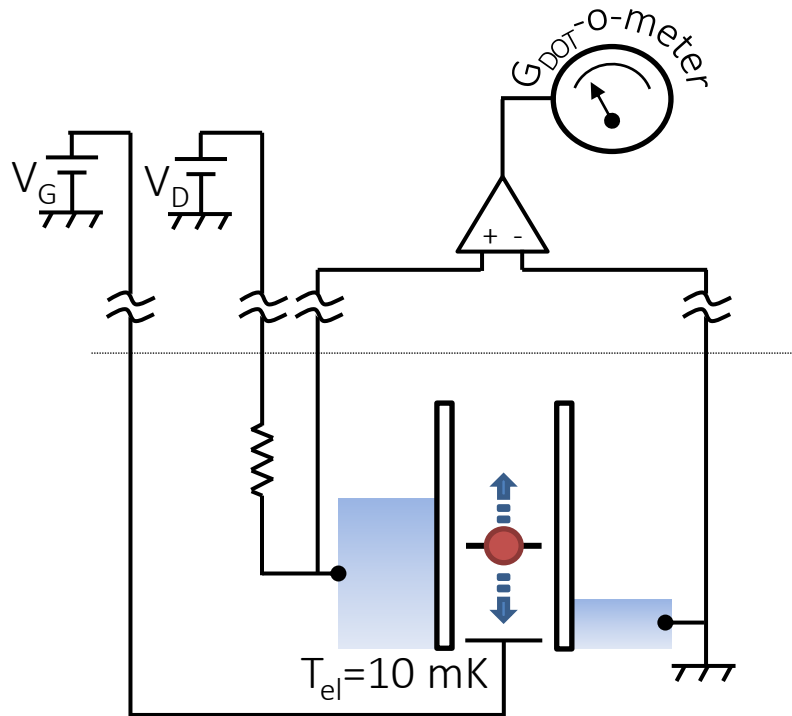
thermoelectric dc voltage between 300 K and 10 mK

$$V_{\text{therm}} \sim 1 - 100 \mu V$$

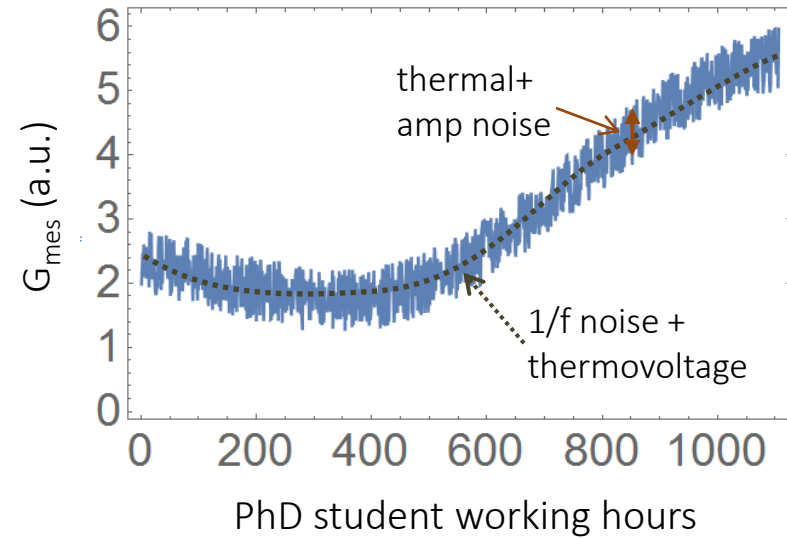
slow fluctuations with temperature!

unfavorable for DC measurements

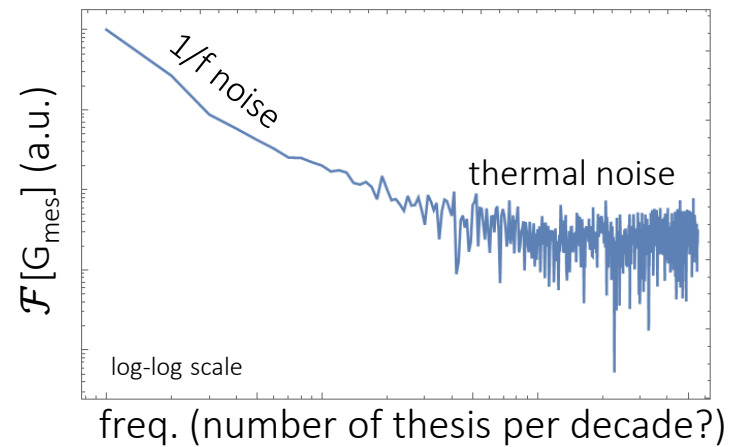
DC vs finite frequency meas^t



$V_D = 0 : G_{\text{DOT}} = 0$ (no signal from sample)

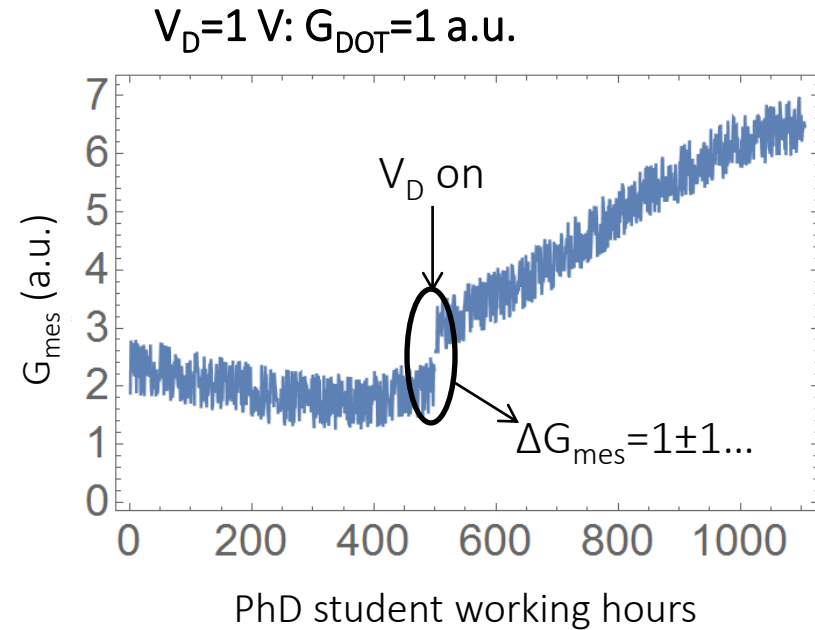
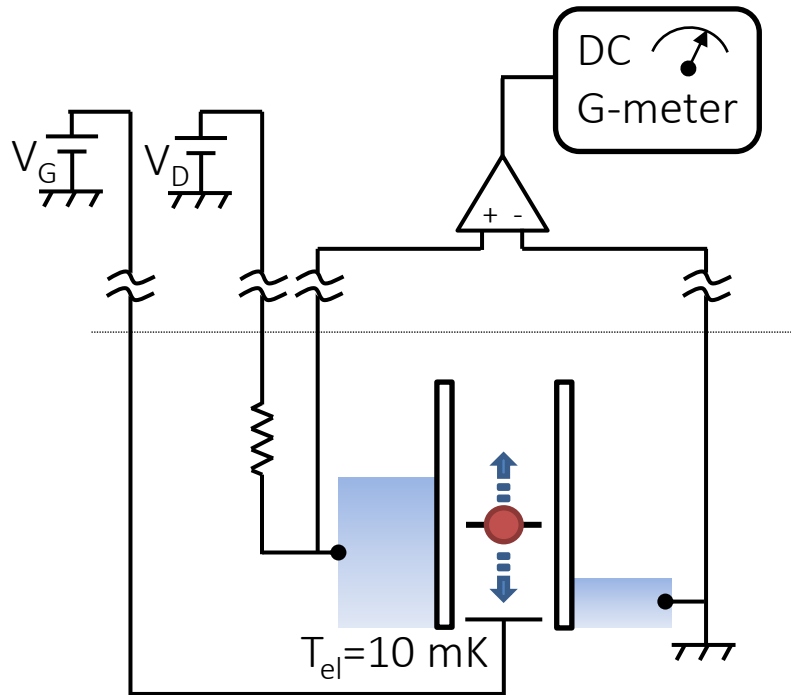


↓ FFT



DC vs finite frequency meas^t

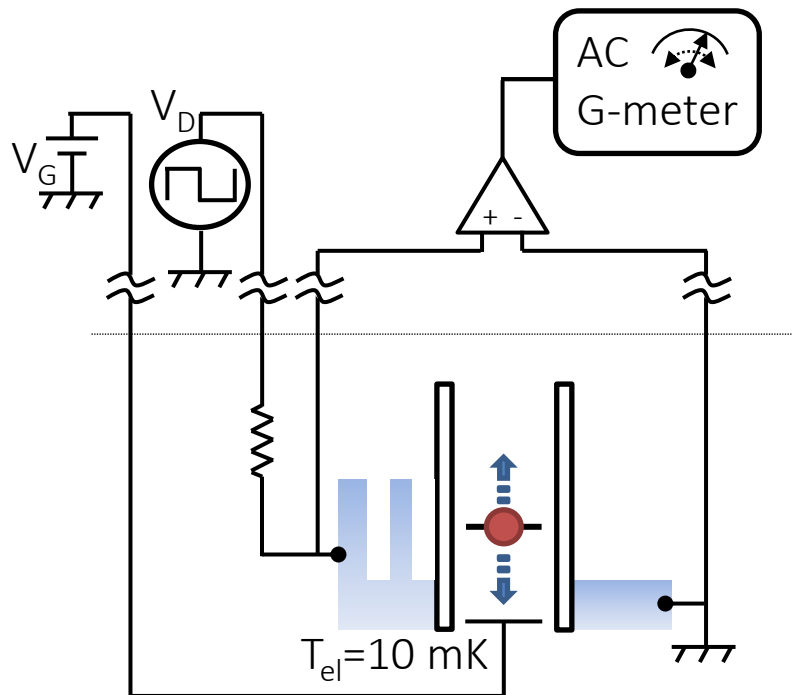
after working ~500 hrs, student A remembers to turn V_D on.



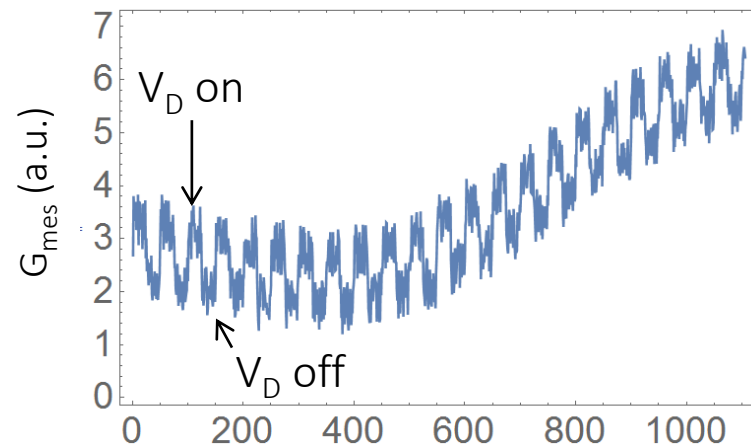
- 'instant' DC meas^t \rightarrow very noisy!
- averaged DC meas^t \rightarrow drift!!

DC vs finite frequency meas^t

Solution: turn V_D on periodically

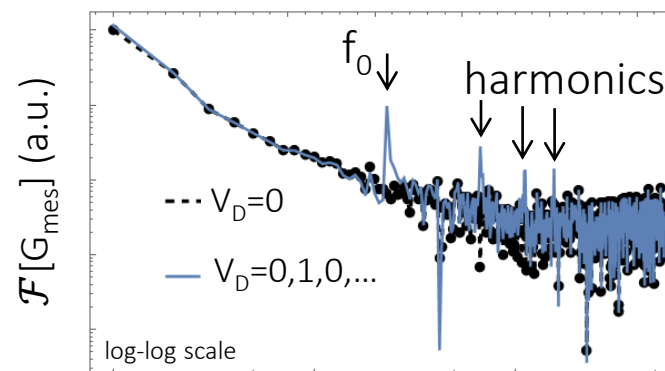


$V_D = 0, 1, 0, \dots V \rightarrow G_{\text{DOT}} = 0, 1, 0, \dots \text{ a.u.}$



PhD student working hours

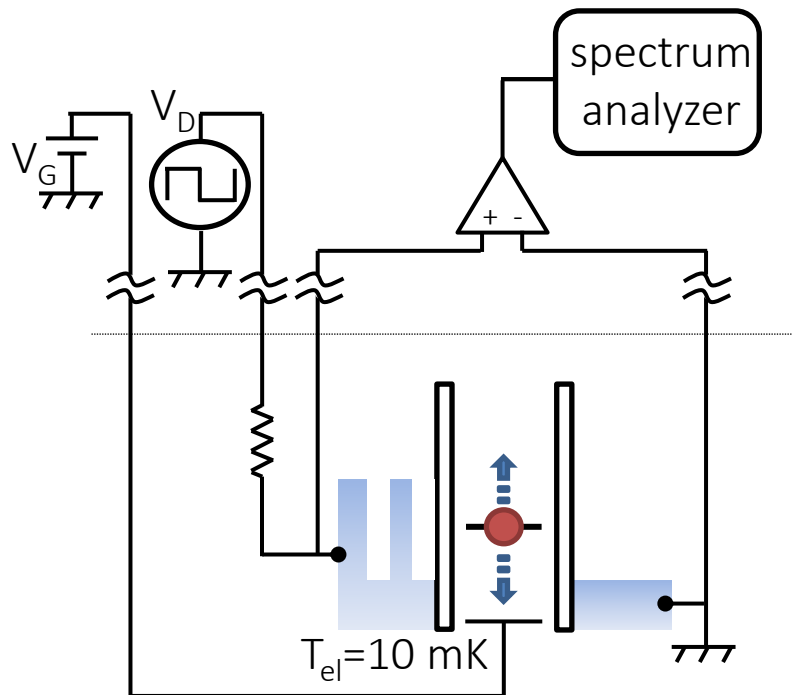
↓ FFT



freq. (number of thesis per decade?)

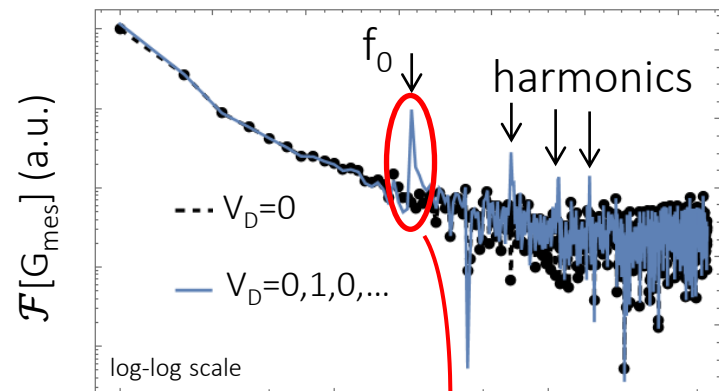
DC vs finite frequency meas^t

Solution: turn V_D on periodically
+ measure power at f_0

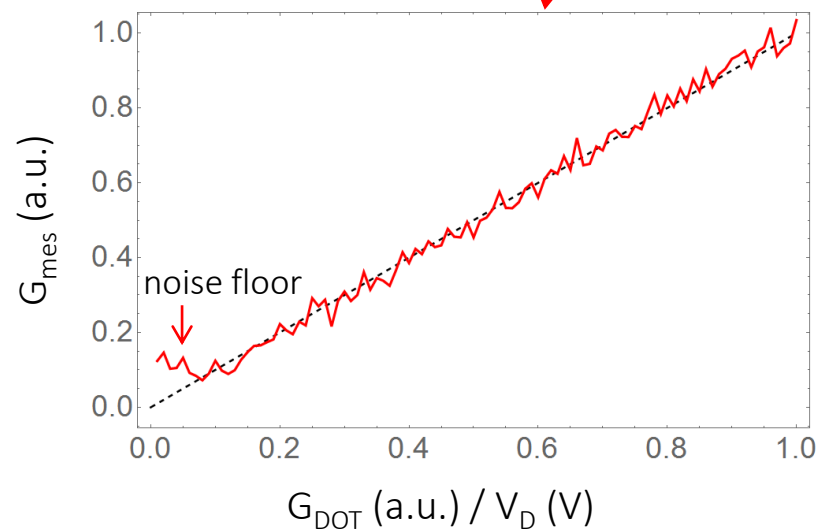


AC meas^t: less noise

$V_D=0,1,0,\dots V \rightarrow G_{DOT}=0,1,0,\dots$ a.u.



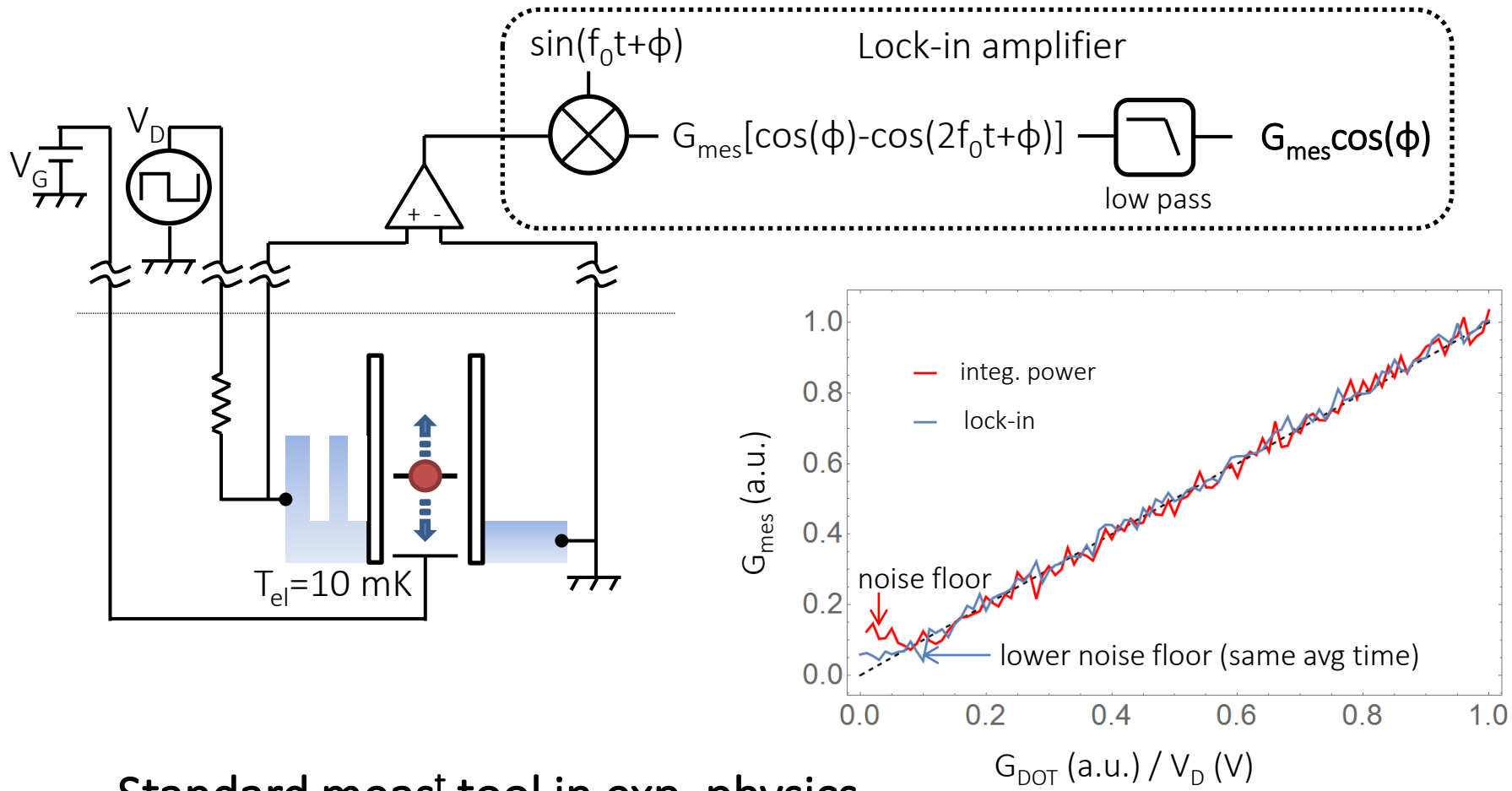
freq. (number of thesis per decade?)



Lock-in measurement

turn V_D on periodically + multiply output signal by sine wave at same period

<http://www.thinksrs.com/>

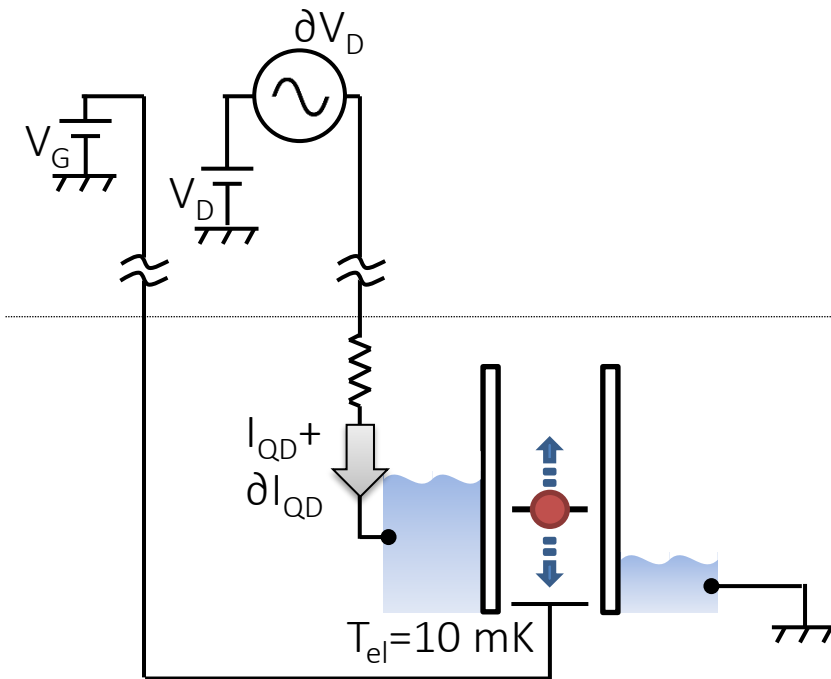


Standard meas^t tool in exp. physics

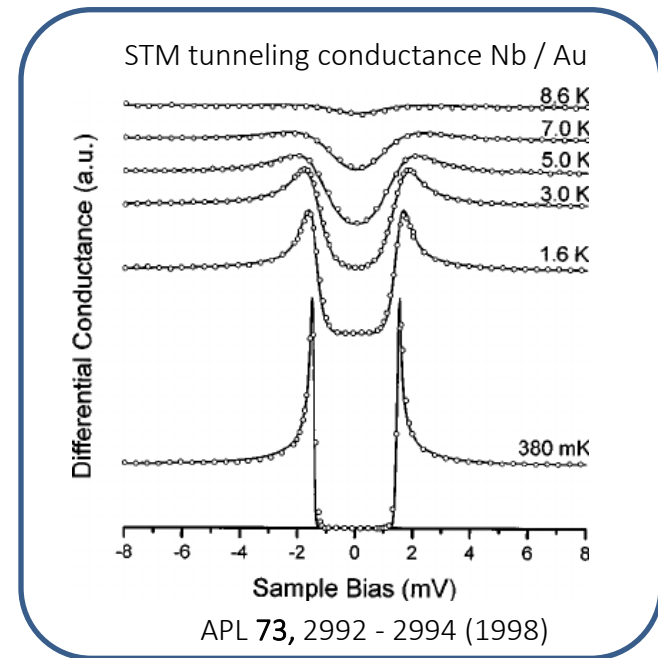
Differential conductance meas^t

lock-in: great for small AC signals detection

- ➔ drive sample with small (linear) AC signal ∂V on top of DC signal
 + lock-in measurement of diff. conductance $g_{\text{DOT}}(V_D) = \partial I_{\text{QD}} / \partial V_D$



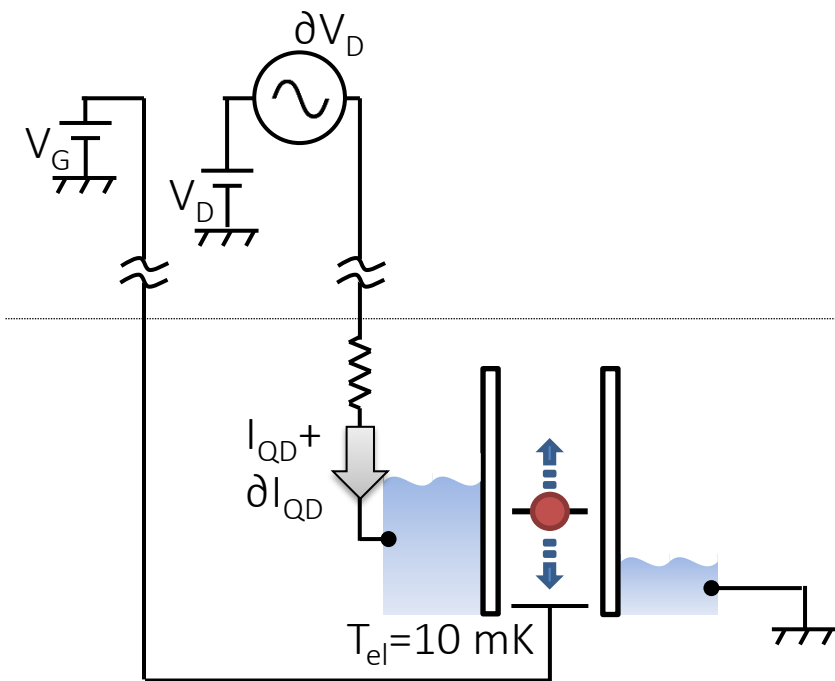
- proportional to D.O.S.!
- access to the linear ($V_D = 0$) regime
- emphasizes non-linear features



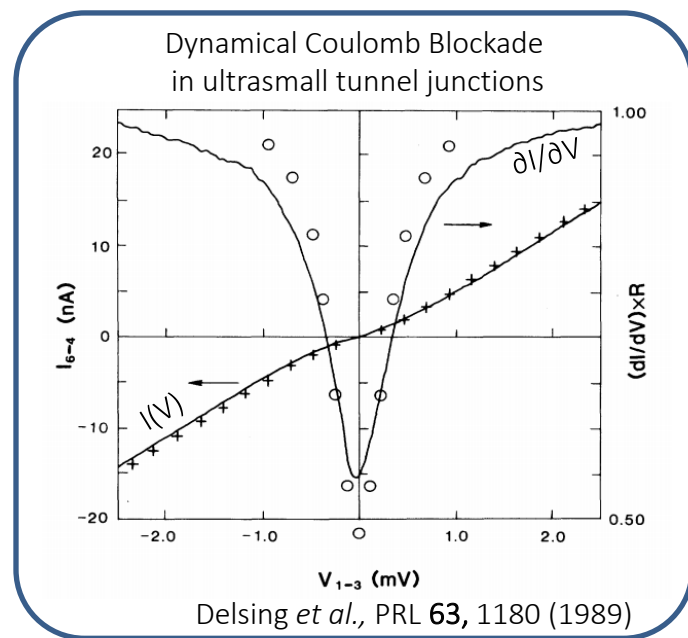
Differential conductance meas^t

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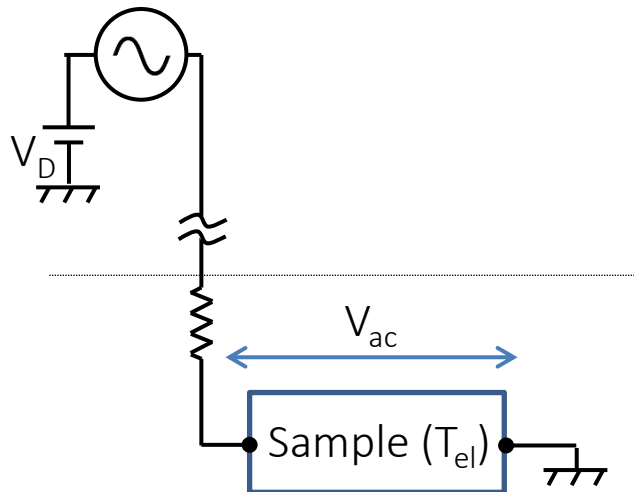
- proportional to D.O.S.!
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- emphasizes non-linear features



Differential conductance meas^t

lock-in: great for small AC signals detection

- ➔ drive sample with small (linear) AC signal ∂V on top of DC signal
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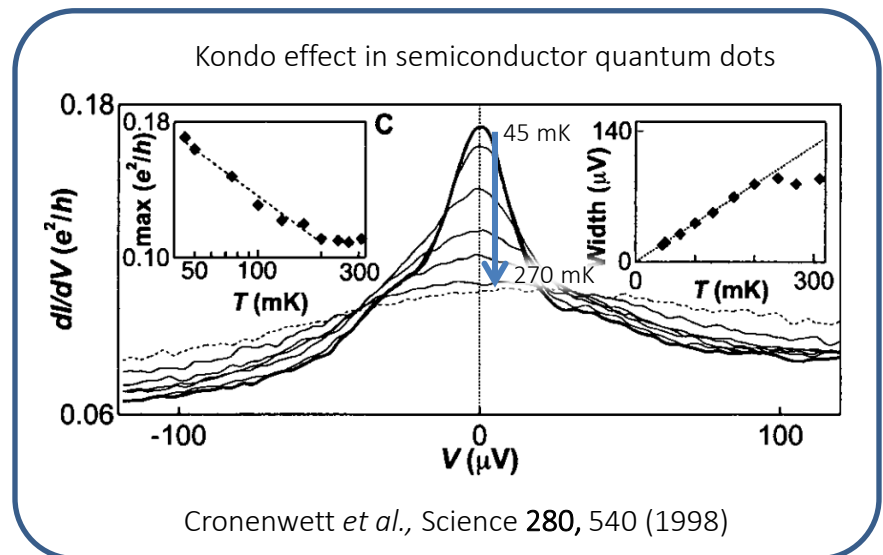


$$eV_{ac} < k_B T_{el}$$

$$1 \mu\text{V} \leftrightarrow 11.5 \text{ mK}$$

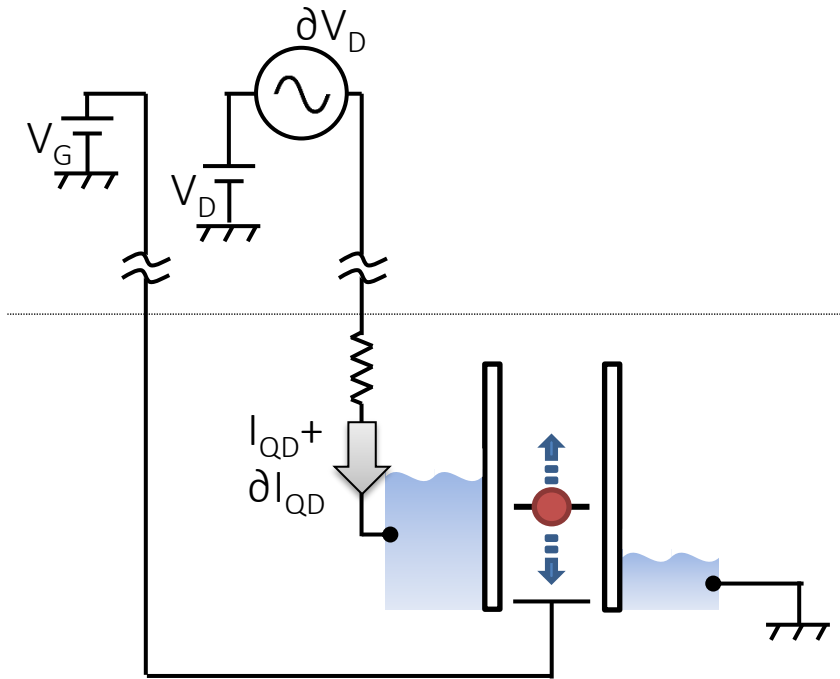
AC voltage scale set by T_{el}

- proportional to D.O.S.!
- access to the linear ($V_D=0$) regime
- emphasizes non-linear features



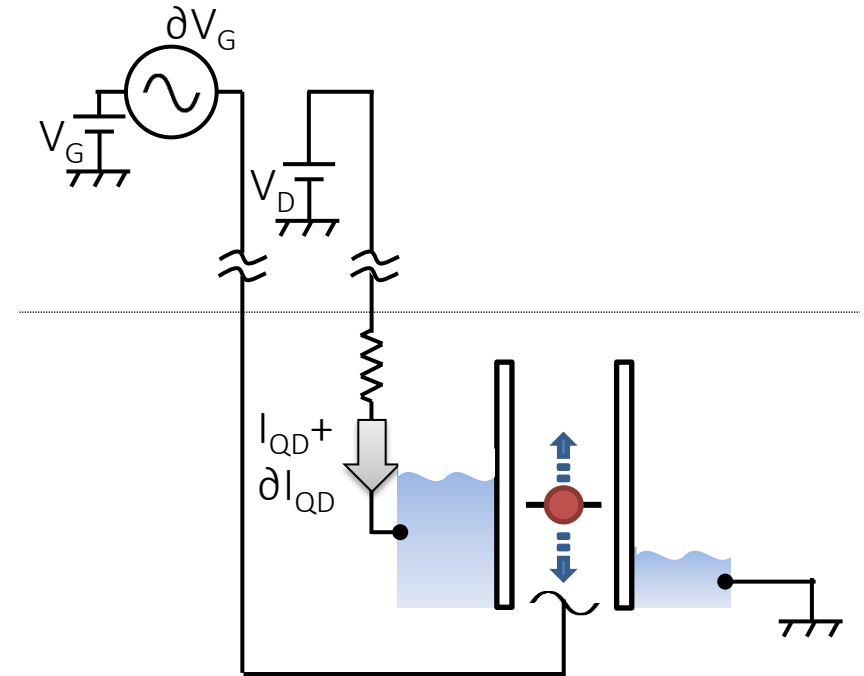
Lock-in meas^t configurations

- differential conductance $\partial I_{\text{QD}}/\partial V_{\text{D}}$



straightforward , quantitative
extraction of $G_{\text{DOT}} / \mathcal{S}$ -matrix

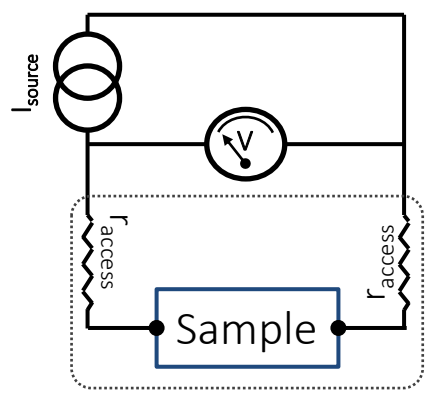
- transconductance $\partial I_{\text{QD}}/\partial V_{\text{G}}$



out-of-equilibrium meas^t:
 $V_{\text{D}1,2,\dots}$ applied to various terminals
(requires calibration of lever arm $V_{\text{G}} \leftrightarrow \epsilon_{\text{DOT}}$)

Meas^t configs.: 2/4 points

2 points resistance/conductance meas^t

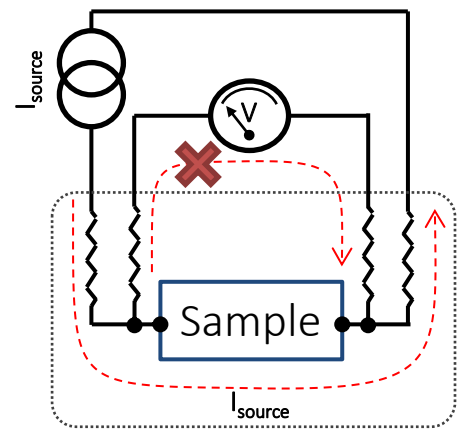


2 points: $V/I = R_{\text{sample}} + 2r_{\text{access}}$

r_{access} = wires, contacts, ...

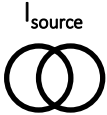
➔ 'false' reading of R_{sample}

4 points resistance/conductance meas^t




4 points: $V/I = R_{\text{sample}}$

➔ no contribution from r_{access}



I_{source}

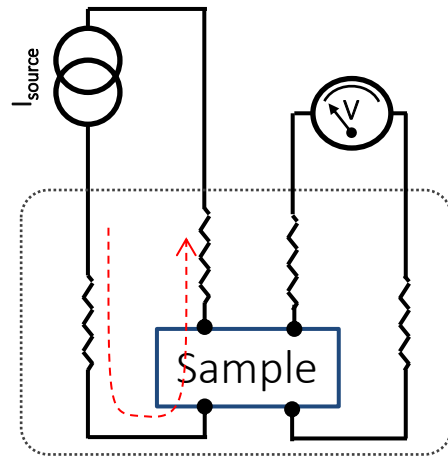
current source: $R_{\text{int}} \ll R_{\text{sample}}$



volt-meter: $R_{\text{int}} \gg R_{\text{sample}}$

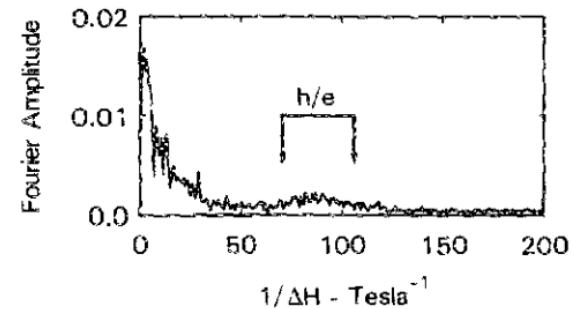
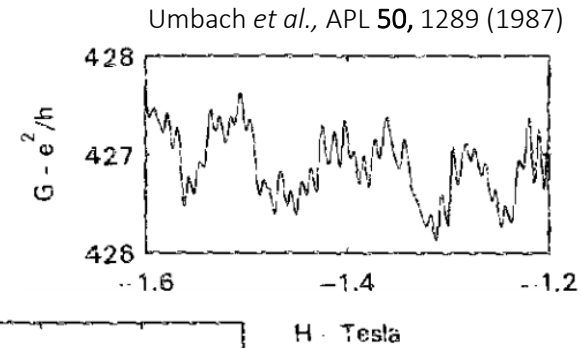
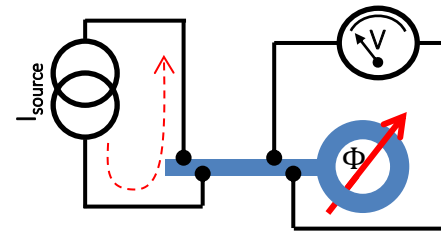
➔ be careful when measuring very high R_{sample} !

4 pts & more: non-local meas^t

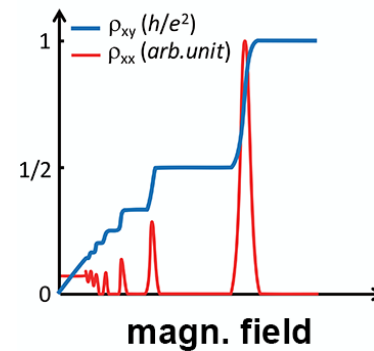
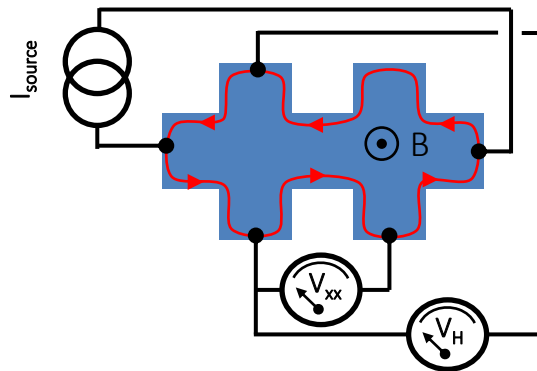


drive current in one side of sample
& measure non-local voltage on other side

A) unveils non-local effects



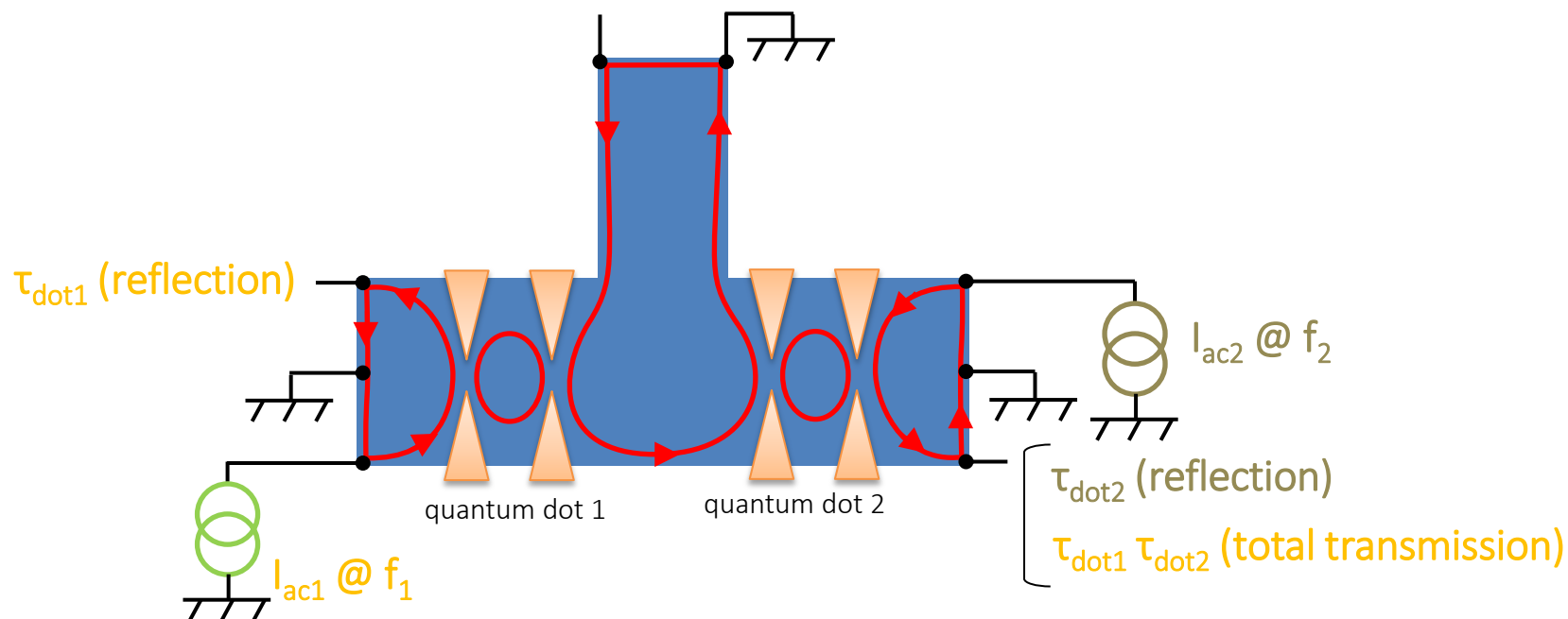
B) probes chirality: quantum Hall effect



Even more complex (chiral) geometries

complex quantum circuits:

→ several simultaneous lock-in measurements at various frequencies!

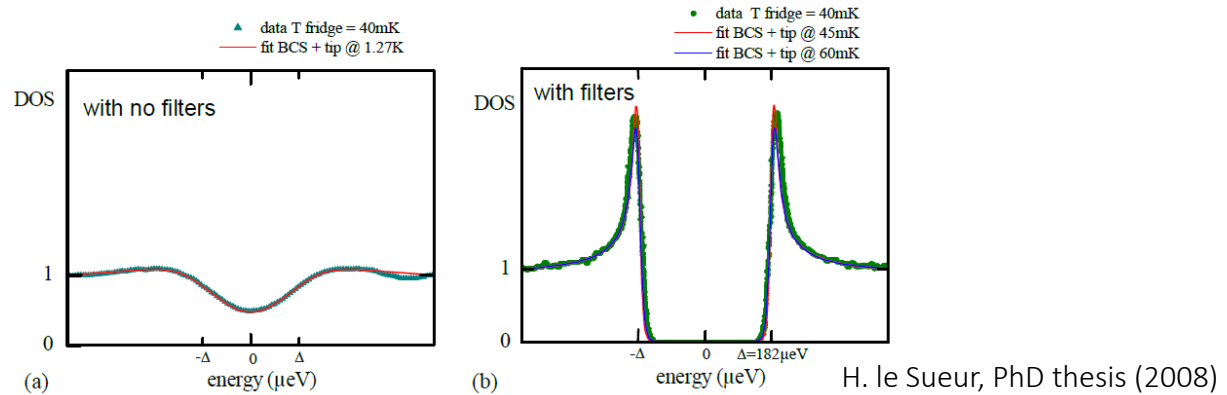


R. Rodriguez' PhD experiment, SPEC

use chirality and lock-in measurement to independently extract all parameters

Conclusions of parts 1 & 2

1) electron thermalization & filtering crucial for low T quantum transport experiments



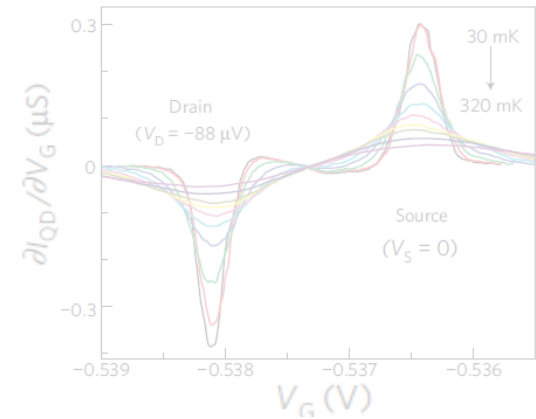
2) small signals in cryo env^t:

- beware of noise sources & signal/GND loops
 - lock-in meas^t: how large is V_{ac} ?

Outline

1. low temperature experiments

- cryogenic systems
- lattice vs electron temperature
- filtering



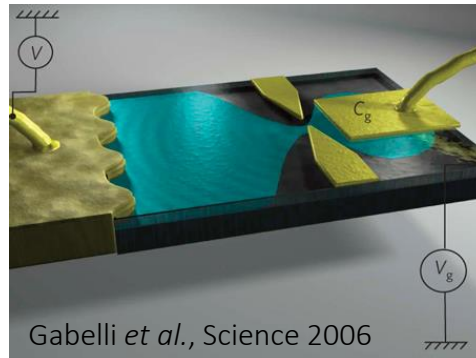
2. low noise cryoelectronics

- signal vs noise
- DC & AC meas^t, lock-in
- measurement configurations

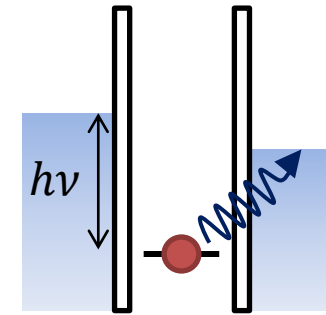
3. beyond dc conductance

- microwave measurements
- noise

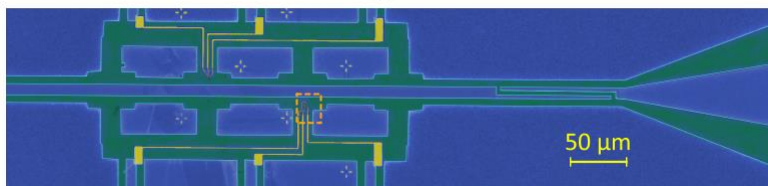
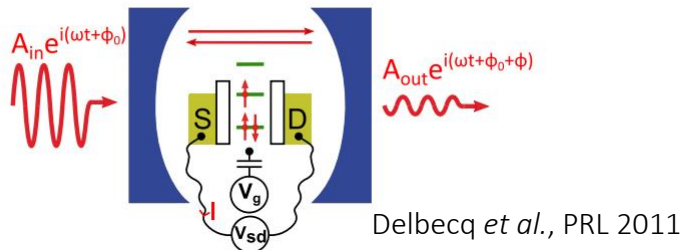
Microvave signals in meso. physics



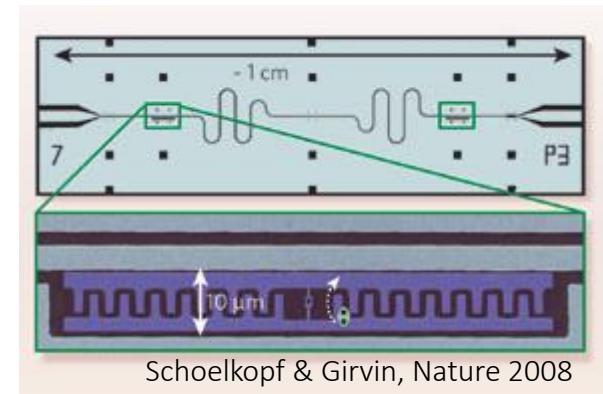
time dependent transport
& quantum capacitances



photon-assisted
tunneling




open quantum system dispersive readout



control & spectroscopy:
circuit quantum electrodynamics

Microvave signals in meso. physics

typical frequencies $hf > k_B T_{el}$  $f > 1$ GHz

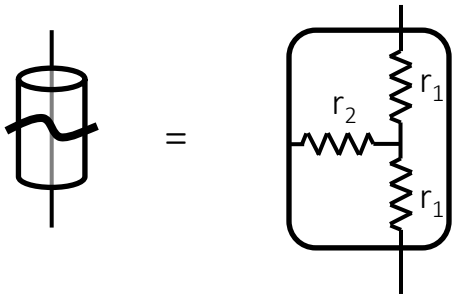
 can't use usual filtered dc lines !

solution: differentiate input and output lines

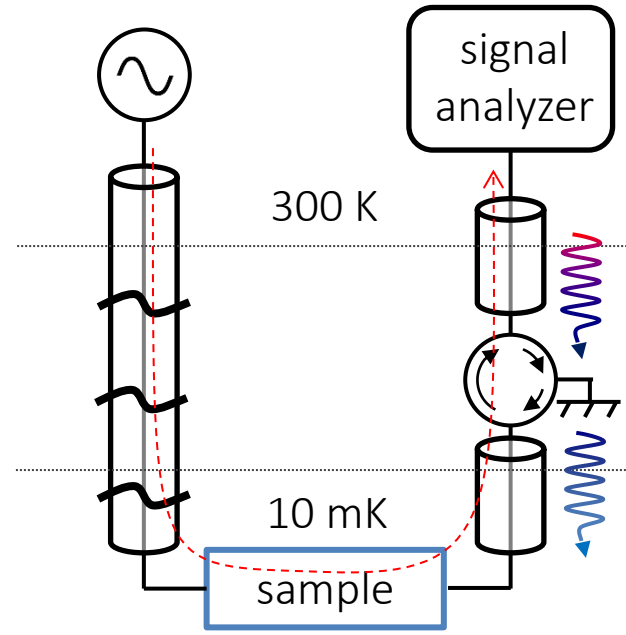
Microvave signals in meso. physics

solution: differentiate input and output lines

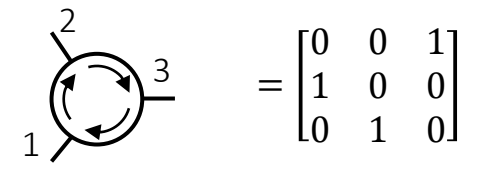
input:
use attenuators



- attenuates (yes!) μ wave power
- res. bridge:
electron thermalization + decoupling
- reduces multiple reflections



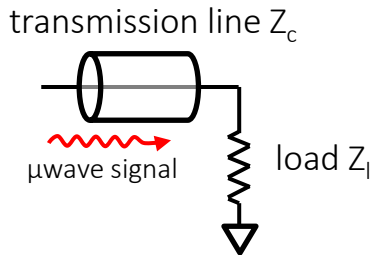
output:
use circulators



induces non-reciprocity
in μ waves propagation
(e.g. using ferrites)

BUT: bulky + limited bandwidth

microwaves: impedance matching



wave propagation:

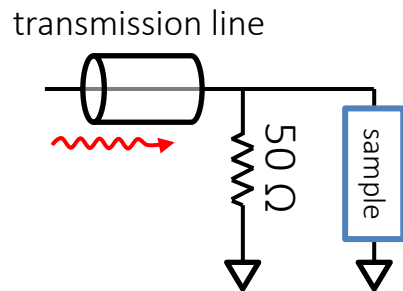
reflection coefficient on the load $r = \frac{Z_l - Z_c}{Z_l + Z_c}$

impedance matching: $r = 0$ for $Z_l = Z_c$

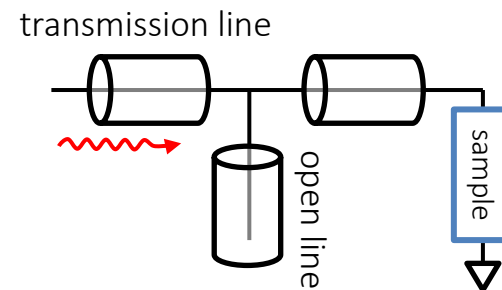
problem:

- $Z=50\ \Omega$ for most commercial μ -wave electronics
- but $Z \approx R_k = 25813\ \Omega$ for typical meso. circuits...

hard to have good coupling & large bandwidth!



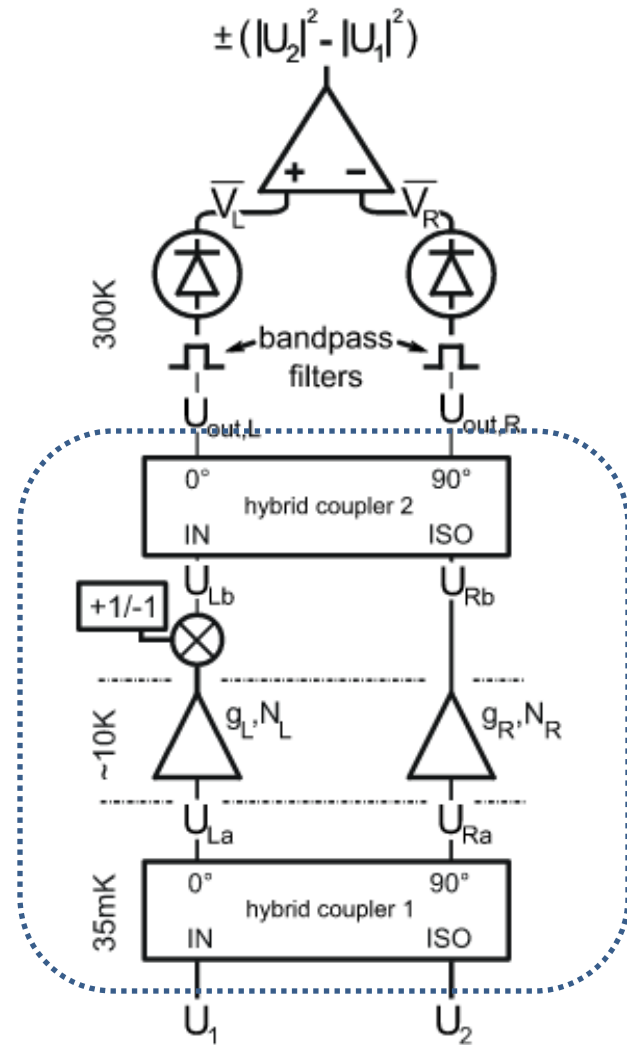
shunt sample with 50 Ω load:
poor coupling, good bandwidth



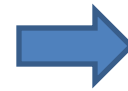
'stub tuner': good coupling, small bandwidth

T. Hasler, et al., Phys. Rev. Applied 4, 054002 (2015)

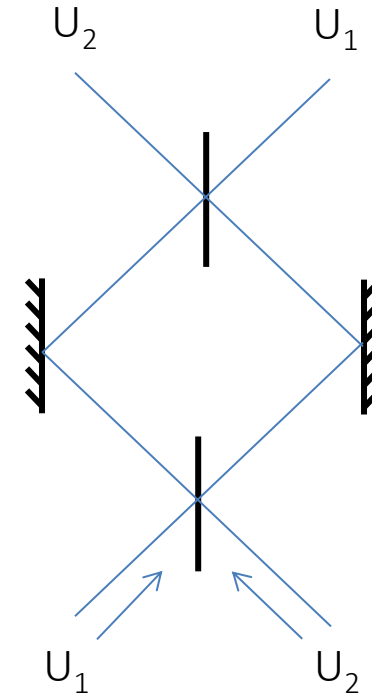
(complicated) example: double balanced amplifier



μ wave Mach Zehnder interferometer



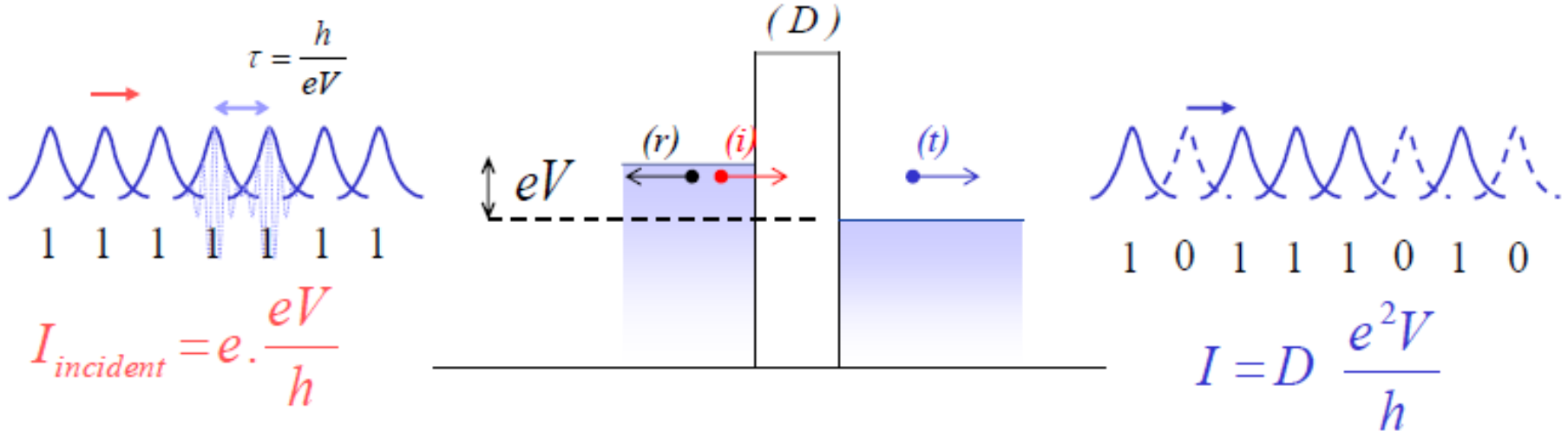
hybrid coupler = beam splitter



F.D. Parmentier et al., Rev. Sci. Inst. **82**, 013904 (2011)

(quantum) noise measurements

shot noise



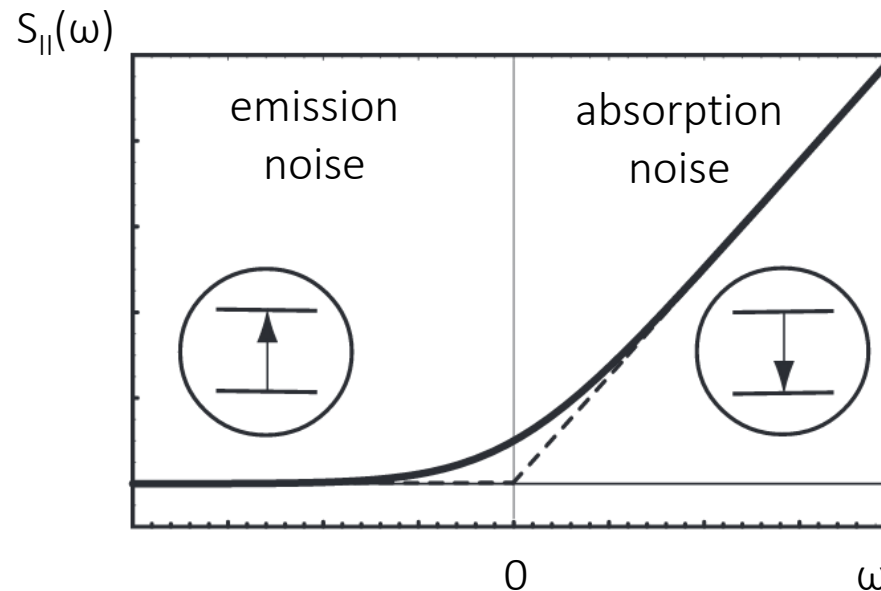
$$S_{II} = 2eI \underbrace{(1 - D)}_{\text{Fano factor}}$$

G. Lesovik 89, M. Büttiker 91
Th. Martin, R. Landauer 92

shot noise: granularity of charge transfers + partitioning

zero & finite frequency quantum noise

current correlator: $S_{II}[\omega] = \int dt \langle \hat{I}(t) \hat{I}(0) \rangle e^{i\omega t}$



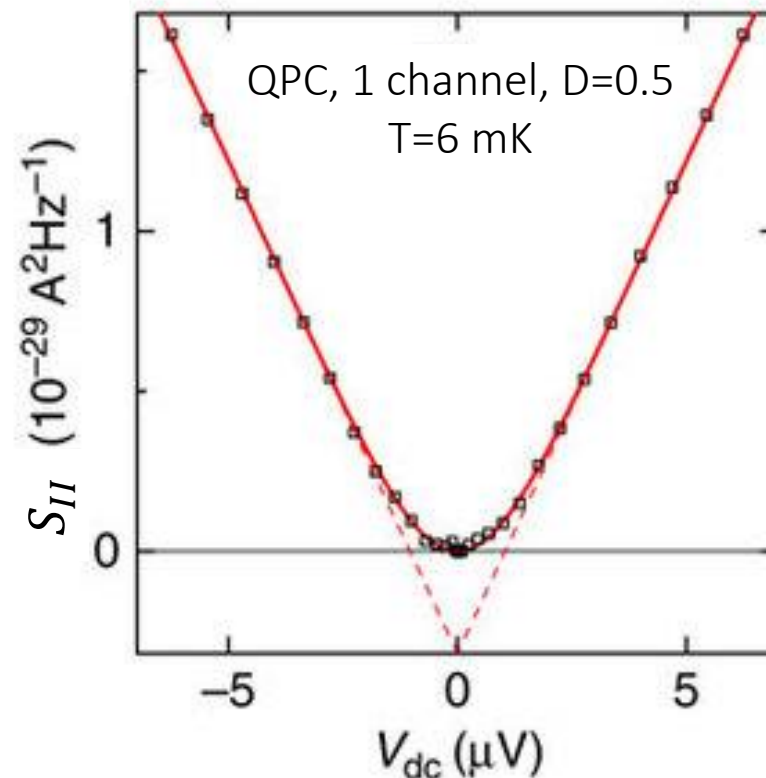
A.A. Clerk et al., Rev. Mod. Phys. **82**, 1155 (2010).

noise meast = measuring a power over some freq. bandwidth

very (very very) small signals

$$S_{II} \approx 2eI(1 - D)$$

➔ $S_{II} \lesssim 2e \times 1 \text{ nA} \sim 10^{-30} - 10^{-28} \text{ A}^2/\text{Hz}$

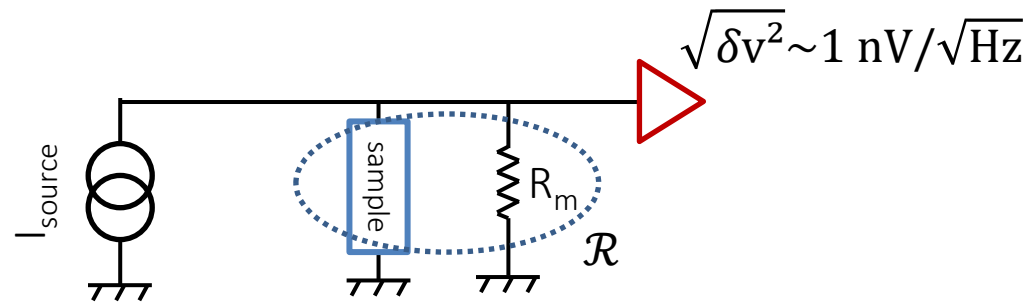


Z. Iftikhar *et al.*, Nature Communications **7**, 12908 (2016)

very (very very) small signals

$$S_{II} \approx 2eI(1 - D)$$

$$\rightarrow S_{II} \lesssim 2e \times 1 \text{ nA} \sim 10^{-30} - 10^{-28} \text{ A}^2/\text{Hz}$$



signal to noise ratio:

$$\text{SNR} = \frac{\mathcal{R}^2 S_{II}}{\delta v^2} \frac{1}{\sqrt{N_{\text{mes}}}} \approx 10^{-10} \frac{\mathcal{R}^2}{\sqrt{N_{\text{mes}}}}$$

$$N_{\text{mes}} = \Delta f \times t_{\text{mes}}$$

needs a long averaging time!

noise meas^t with tank circuits

