

PREFACE

Since its inception in 1995, the Cracow Epiphany Conference has been dedicated to a distinct scientific theme each year. By addressing emerging topics and bringing together a continually evolving community of participants, the conference provides a broad platform for the exchange of ideas and the discussion of current developments at the frontiers of physics. The 32nd Cracow Epiphany Conference was devoted to the review and discussion of recent results in heavy-ion collision physics, covering a wide range of collision energies and spanning both theoretical and experimental research. The conference was held at the Henryk Niewodniczański Institute of Nuclear Physics of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków on 12–16 January 2026. It was organized in collaboration with the Henryk Niewodniczański Institute of Nuclear Physics of the Polish Academy of Sciences and AGH University of Krakow, with the support of the Polish Academy of Sciences. These proceedings present a collection of contributions covering the main topics discussed during the conference, including:

- Nuclear parton distribution functions (nPDFs);
- Ultraperipheral collisions;
- Small collision systems;
- Jets in heavy-ion collisions;
- Collective phenomena and dynamics;
- Low-energy heavy-ion experiments;
- Future experimental projects and perspectives in heavy-ion physics.

The conference programme also included an open lecture by Professor Andrzej Białas, presenting a personal perspective on the wounded nucleon model, introduced 50 years ago by him and his collaborators. The lecture offered a retrospective view of the origins, evolution, and lasting significance of this seminal model in the field of high-energy nuclear physics.

A very important objective of the Epiphany Conference is to support the professional growth of Ph.D. students and young researchers by providing them with an opportunity to present their research results during dedicated Young Scientists Sessions.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the members of the Local Organising Committee for their invaluable support in preparing the conference programme. We also wish to thank the Directorate and Administration of the Henryk Niewodniczański Institute of Nuclear Physics of the Polish Academy of Sciences and AGH University of Krakow for their assistance and contribution to the organisation of the event. We are grateful to the Polish Academy of Sciences for its co-organisation and financial support. We also acknowledge *Acta Physica Polonica B* for their contribution to the preparation and publication of this proceedings volume. Finally, we would like to thank all speakers and participants for their contributions, which made the conference a successful and stimulating scientific event.

The electronic materials from the conference are available at:

<https://epiphany.ifj.edu.pl/epiphany2026/>

Dominik Derendarz
Mateusz Dyndał
Aleksander Kusina
Adam Matyja
The Editors