Landau phonon-roton theory revisited for superfluid helium 4 and Fermi gases

Yvan Castin, Alice Sinatra, Hadrien Kurkjian

To cite this version:
Yvan Castin, Alice Sinatra, Hadrien Kurkjian. Landau phonon-roton theory revisited for superfluid helium 4 and Fermi gases. Physical Review Letters, American Physical Society, 2017, 119, pp.260402. <10.1103/PhysRevLett.119.260402>. <hal-01570314v2>

HAL Id: hal-01570314
https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01570314v2
Submitted on 9 Jan 2018

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L’archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire HAL, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d’enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.
Landau phonon-roton theory revisited for superfluid helium 4 and Fermi gases

Yvan Castin and Alice Sinatra
Laboratoire Kastler Brossel, ENS-PSL, CNRS, Sorbonne Universités, Collège de France, 75005 Paris, France

Hadrien Kurkjian
TQC, Universiteit Antwerpen, Universiteitsplein 1, B-2610 Antwerp, Belgium

Liquid helium and spin-1/2 cold-atom Fermi gases both exhibit in their superfluid phase two distinct types of excitations, gapless phonons and gapped rotons or fermionic pair-breaking excitations. In the long wavelength limit, revising and extending Landau and Khalatnikov’s theory initially developed for helium [ZhETF 19, 637 (1949)], we obtain universal expressions for three- and four-body couplings among these two types of excitations. We calculate the corresponding phonon damping rates at low temperature and compare them to those of a pure phononic origin in high-pressure liquid helium and in strongly interacting Fermi gases, paving the way to experimental observations.

PACS numbers: 03.75.Kk, 67.85.Lm, 47.37.+q

Introduction – Homogeneous superfluids with short-range interactions exhibit, at sufficiently low temperature, phononic excitations \( \phi \) as the only microscopic degrees of freedom. In this universal limit, all superfluids of this type reduce to a weakly interacting phonon gas with a quasilinear dispersion relation, irrespective of the statistics of the underlying particles and of their interaction strength. Phonon damping then only depends on the dispersion relation close to zero wavenumber (namely, its slope and third derivative) and on the phonon nonlinear coupling, deduced solely from the system equation of state through Landau-Khalatnikov quantum hydrodynamics [1].

In experiments, however, temperatures are not always low enough to make the dynamics purely phononic. Other elementary excitations can enrich the problem, such as spinless bosonic rotons in liquid helium 4 and spinful fermionic BCS-type pair-breaking excitations in spin-1/2 cold-atom Fermi gases. These excitations, denoted here as \( \gamma \)-quasiparticles, exhibit in both cases an energy gap \( \Delta > 0 \). Remarkably, as shown by Landau and Khalatnikov [1], the phonon-roton coupling, and more generally phonon coupling to all gapped excitations as we shall see, depend to leading order in temperature only on a few parameters of the dispersion relation of the \( \gamma \)-quasiparticles, namely the value of the minimum \( \Delta \) and its location \( k_0 \) in wavenumber space, their derivatives with respect to density, and the effective mass \( m_* \), close to \( k = k_0 \). We have discovered however that the \( \phi \)-\( \gamma \) coupling of Ref.[1] is not exact, a fact apparently unnoticed in the literature. Our goal here is to complete the result of Ref.[1], and to quantitatively obtain phonon damping rates due to the \( \phi \)-\( \gamma \) coupling as functions of temperature, a nontrivial task in the considered strongly interacting systems. We restrict to the collisionless regime \( \omega_q \tau_\gamma \gg 1 \) and \( \omega_q \tau_\phi \gg 1 \), where \( \omega_q \) is the angular eigenfrequency of the considered phonon mode of wavevector \( q \), and \( \tau_\gamma \) (\( \tau_\phi \)) is a typical collision time of thermal \( \gamma \)-quasiparticles (thermal phonons). An extension to the hydrodynamic regime \( \omega_q \tau_\gamma \lesssim 1 \) or \( \omega_q \tau_\phi \lesssim 1 \) may be obtained from kinetic equations [2]. An experimental test of our results seems nowadays at hand, either in liquid helium 4, extending the recent work of Ref.[3], or in homogeneous cold Fermi gases, which the breakthrough of flat-bottom traps [4] allows one to prepare [5] and to acoustically excite by spatio-temporally modulated laser-induced optical potentials [6, 7].

Landau-Khalatnikov revisited – We recall the reasoning of Ref.[1] to get the phonon-roton coupling in liquid helium 4, extending it to the phonon-fermionic quasiparticle coupling in unpolarised spin-1/2 Fermi gases. We first treat in first quantisation the case of a single roton or fermionic excitation, considered as a \( \gamma \)-quasiparticle of position \( r \), momentum \( p \) and spin \( s = 0 \) or \( s = 1/2 \). In a homogeneous superfluid of density \( \rho \), its Hamiltonian is given by \( \epsilon(p, \rho) \), an isotropic function of \( p \) such that \( p \mapsto \epsilon(p, \rho) \) is the \( \gamma \)-quasiparticle dispersion relation. In presence of acoustic waves (phonons), the superfluid acquires position-dependent density \( \rho(r) \) and velocity \( v(r) \). For a phonon wavelength large compared to the \( \gamma \)-quasiparticle coherence length \( \xi \) [8], here its thermal wavelength \( (2\pi \hbar^2/m_\phi k_B T)^{1/2} \) [42], and for a phonon angular frequency small compared to the \( \gamma \)-quasiparticle “internal” energy \( \Delta \), we can write the \( \gamma \)-quasiparticle Hamiltonian in the local density approximation [9, 10]:

\[
\mathcal{H} = \epsilon(p, \rho(r)) + p \cdot v(r)
\] (1)

The last term is a Doppler effect reflecting the energy difference in the lab frame and in the frame moving with the superfluid. For a weak phononic perturbation of the superfluid, we expand the Hamiltonian to second order in density fluctuations \( \delta \rho(r) = \rho(r) - \rho \):

\[
\mathcal{H} \simeq \epsilon(p, \rho) + \partial_r \epsilon(p, \rho) \delta \rho(r) + p \cdot v(r) + \frac{1}{2} \partial_r^2 \epsilon(p, \rho) \delta \rho^2(r)
\] (2)

not paying attention yet to the noncommutation of \( r \) and \( p \). Phonons are bosonic quasiparticles connected to...
the expansion of $\delta \rho (r)$ and $v(r)$ on eigenmodes of the quantum-hydrodynamic equations linearised around the homogeneous solution at rest in the quantisation volume $V$: 

$$
\left( \frac{\delta \rho (r)}{v(r)} \right) = \frac{1}{V^{1/2}} \sum_{q \neq 0} \left[ \left( \frac{\rho_{q}}{v_{q}} \right) \hat{b}_{q} + \left( \frac{\rho_{q}}{-v_{q}} \right) \hat{b}_{q}^{+} \right] e^{i q \cdot r} \tag{3}
$$

with modal amplitudes $\rho_{q} = [\hbar p q / (2 m c)]^{1/2}$ and $v_{q} = [\hbar c / (2 m p q)]^{1/2}$, $m$ being the mass of a superfluid particle and $c$ the sound velocity. The annihilation and creation operators $b_{q}$ and $b_{q}^{+}$ of a phonon of wavevector $q$ and energy $\hbar \omega_{q} = \hbar c q$ obey usual commutation relations $[b_{q}, b_{q}^{+}] = \delta_{q, q'}$.

For an arbitrary number of $\gamma$-quasiparticles, we switch to second quantisation and rewrite Eq.(2) as

$$
\hat{H} = \sum_{k, \sigma} \epsilon_{k} \hat{c}_{k, \sigma}^{+} \hat{c}_{k, \sigma} + \sum_{q, k, k', \sigma} \frac{A_{1}(k, q; k')}{\sqrt{V}} \left( \hat{c}_{k, \sigma}^{+} \hat{b}_{q} + \frac{1}{2} \left( b_{q}^{+} - b_{q} \right) \hat{c}_{k, \sigma} \right) + \text{h.c.} \tag{4}
$$

where $\hat{c}_{k, \sigma}$ and $\hat{b}_{q}^{+}$ are bosonic (rotons, $s = 0, \sigma = 0$) or fermionic ($s = 1/2, \sigma = \uparrow, \downarrow$) annihilation and creation operators of a $\gamma$-quasiparticle of wavevector $k = p / h$ in spin component $\sigma$, obeying usual commutation or anti-commutation relations. The first sum in the right-hand side of Eq.(4) gives the $\gamma$-quasiparticle energy in the unperturbed superfluid, with $\epsilon_{k} \equiv \epsilon(k \hbar, \rho)$. The second sum, originating from the Doppler term and the term linear in $\delta \rho$ in Eq.(2), describes absorption or emission of a phonon by a $\gamma$-quasiparticle, characterised by the amplitude

$$
A_{1}(k, q; k') = \rho_{q} \frac{\partial_{\rho} \epsilon_{k} + \partial_{\rho} \epsilon_{k'}}{2} + v_{q} \cdot \frac{\hbar k + \hbar k'}{2} \tag{5}
$$

where $q$, $k$ and $k'$ are the wavevectors of the incoming phonon and the incoming and outgoing $\gamma$-quasiparticles. Eq.(5) is invariant under exchange of $k$ and $k'$. This results from symmetrisation of the various terms in the form $\langle f(p) \rangle^{\alpha q r} e^{i q \cdot r} f(p) \rangle / 2$ with $r$ and $p$ canonically conjugated operators, ensuring that the correct form of Eq.(2) is hermitian. The third sum in Eq.(4), originating from the terms quadratic in $\delta \rho$ in Eq.(2), describes direct scattering of a phonon on a $\gamma$-quasiparticle, with the symmetrised amplitude

$$
A_{2}(k, q; k', q') = \rho_{q} \rho_{q'} \frac{\partial_{\rho} \epsilon_{k} + \partial_{\rho} \epsilon_{k'}}{2} \tag{6}
$$

where the primed wavevectors are the ones of emerging quasiparticles. It also describes negligible two-phonon absorption and emission. The effective amplitude for $\phi -$ $\gamma$ scattering is obtained by adding the contributions of the direct process (terms of $\hbar$ quadratic in $b$), and of the absorption-emission or emission-absorption process (terms linear in $b$) treated to second order in perturbation theory [1]:

$$
\frac{\text{A}_2^\text{eff}(k, q, k', q')}{\epsilon_k - \epsilon_{k+q} + \epsilon_{k+q'} - \epsilon_{k'+q}} = \frac{\text{A}_2(k, q, k', q')}{\epsilon_k - \epsilon_{k+q} + \epsilon_{k+q'} - \epsilon_{k'+q}} + \frac{\text{A}_1(k - q', q'; k) A_1(k - q', q; k')}{\epsilon_k - \epsilon_{k+q' - \epsilon_{k'-q'}}} \tag{7}
$$

where in the second (third) term the $\gamma$-quasiparticle first absorbs phonon $q$ (emits phonon $q'$) then emits phonon $q'$ (absorbs phonon $q$). Up to this point this agrees with Ref.[1], except that the first derivative $\partial \Delta \Delta$ in Eq.(5), thought to be anomalously small in low-pressure helium, was neglected in Ref.[1]. Eq. (7), issued from a local density approximation, holds to leading order in a low-energy limit. We then take the $T \to 0$ limit with scaling laws

$$
q \approx T, \quad k - k_0 \approx T^{1/2} \tag{8}
$$

reflecting the fact that the thermal energy of a phonon is $\hbar c q \approx k_B T$ and the effective kinetic energy of a $\gamma$-quasiparticle, that admits the expansion

$$
\epsilon_k - \Delta \approx \frac{\hbar^2 (k - k_0)^2}{2 m} + O(k - k_0)^3 \tag{9}
$$

is also $\approx k_B T$. The coupling amplitudes $\text{A}_1$ and energy denominators in Eq.(7) must be expanded up to relative corrections of order $T$ [43]. On the contrary, it suffices to expand $\text{A}_2$ to leading order $T$ in temperature. We hence get our main result, the effective coupling amplitude of the $\phi - \gamma$ scattering to leading order in temperature:

$$
\frac{\text{A}_2^\text{eff}(k, q, k', q')}{\epsilon_k' - \epsilon_{k+q'} + \epsilon_{k+q} - \epsilon_{k'-q}} \sim \frac{\hbar q}{\tau \cdot \hbar k_0} \left( \frac{1}{2} \right)^2 \Delta'' + \frac{\hbar \rho k_{0}^{2}}{2 m'_{*}} + \frac{\hbar^2 k_0^2}{2 m_{*}} \times \left\{ \left( \frac{\rho \Delta'}{\hbar k_0} \right)^2 u^2 + \frac{\rho \Delta'}{\hbar k_0} \left( u + u' \right) \left( u u' - \frac{p_{k}^2}{k_{0}} \right) + \frac{2 m'_{*} c_{w}}{\hbar k_0} \right\} \right. \tag{10}
$$

Here $\Delta'$, $k_0$, $\Delta''$ are first and second derivatives of $\Delta$ and $k_0$ with respect to $\rho$; $u = k' / k$, $u' = k / k'$, $w = q' / q$. $\Delta$ is the energy denominator of the $\text{A}_1$ and $\text{A}_2$, $u$ and $u'$ are cosines of the angles between $k$, $q'$ and $q'$, $\rho k_{0} / k_0$ provided the limit $k_0 \to 0$ is taken in Eq.(10). In Eq.(3.17) of Ref.[1], the $\Delta'$ terms were neglected as said, but the last term in Eq.(10), with the factor $\rho k_{0} / k_0$, was simply forgotten.
Damping rates - A straightforward application of Eq.(10) is a Fermi-golden-rule calculation of the damping rate $\Gamma_{\text{scat}}^a$ of phonons $q$ due to scattering on $\gamma$-quasiparticles. The $\gamma$-quasiparticles are in thermal equilibrium with Bose or Fermi mean occupation numbers $\bar{n}_\gamma k = |\exp(\epsilon_k/k_BT) - (1/2)|^{-1}$. So are phonons in modes $q \neq q'$, with Bose occupation numbers $\bar{n}_b q' = |\exp(h\omega q'/k_BT) - 1|^{-1}$; mode $q$ is initially excited (e.g. by a sound wave) among an arbitrary number $\bar{n}_b q$ of phonons. By including both loss $q + k \to q' + k'$ and gain $q' + k' \to q + k$ processes [44] and summing over $\sigma$, one finds that $\frac{d}{dt} \bar{n}_b q = -\Gamma_{\text{scat}}^a(n_b q - \bar{n}_b q)$ with

$$
\Gamma_{\text{scat}}^a q = \frac{2\pi}{\hbar} (2s + 1) \int \frac{d^3k d^3k'}{(2\pi)^6} |A^a_{\text{eff}}(k, q; k', q')|^2 
\times \delta(h\omega_q + \epsilon_k - \epsilon_{k'}) (n_{\gamma k} - \bar{n}_{\gamma k}) \left[ 1 + (-1)^{2s} \bar{n}_{\gamma k} \right] \frac{\bar{n}_{\gamma k}}{\bar{n}_b q}
$$

(11)

and $k' = k + q - q'$. As our low-energy theory only holds for $k_BT \ll \Delta$, the gas of $\gamma$-quasiparticles is non-degenerate, and $\bar{n}_{\gamma k} \approx \exp(-\epsilon_k/k_BT) \ll 1$ in Eq.(11). By taking the $T \to 0$ limit at fixed $h\omega/k_BT$ and setting $A^a_{\text{eff}} = \frac{h\omega}{\rho} f$, where the dimensionless quantity $f$ only depends on angle cosines, we obtain the equation

$$
h \Gamma_{\text{scat}}^a q \sim (2s + 1) e^{-\Delta/k_BT} \frac{k_B^3 q}{\rho} \left( m_s k_BT \right)^{1/2} I
$$

(12)

with $I = \int d^2\Omega_k \int d^2\Omega_q f^2(u, u', w)$ an integral over solid angles of direction $k$ and $q'$. 

One proceeds similarly for the calculation of the damping rate $\Gamma_{\text{scat}}^e$ of phonons $q$ due to absorption $q \to k$ or emission $k \to q + k$ processes by thermal equilibrium $\gamma$-quasiparticles. We obtain

$$
\Gamma_{\text{scat}}^e q = \frac{2\pi}{\hbar} (2s + 1) \int \frac{d^3k d^3k'}{(2\pi)^6} |A^e_{\text{eff}}(k, q; k', q')|^2 
\times \delta(h\omega_q + \epsilon_k - \epsilon_{k'}) (n_{\gamma k} - \bar{n}_{\gamma k}) \left[ 1 + (-1)^{2s} \bar{n}_{\gamma k} \right] \frac{\bar{n}_{\gamma k}}{\bar{n}_b q}
$$

(13)

with $k' = k + q$. Low degeneracy of the $\gamma$-quasiparticles and energy conservation allow us to write $\bar{n}_{\gamma k} - \bar{n}_{\gamma k} \approx \exp(-\epsilon_k/k_BT)/(1 + \bar{n}_q)$. Energy conservation leads here to a scaling on $k$ different from Eq.(8) as it forces $k$ to be at a nonzero distance from $k_0$, even in the low-phonon-energy limit: When $q \to 0$ at fixed $k$, the Dirac delta in Eq.(13) becomes

$$
\delta(h\omega_q + \epsilon_k - \epsilon_{k'}) \sim (h\omega_q)^{-1} \delta \left( 1 - u \frac{d\epsilon_k}{hc} \right)
$$

(14)

and imposes that the group velocity $\frac{d\epsilon_k}{hc}$ of the incoming $\gamma$-quasiparticle is larger in absolute value than that, $c$, of the phonons. This condition, reminiscent of Landau’s criterion, restricts wavenumber $k$ to a domain $D$ not containing $k_0$. In the low-$q$ limit, that is for $q$ much smaller than the $k$ significantly contributing to Eq.(13), but with no constraint on the ratio $h\omega/k_BT$, we write $A_1$ in Eq.(5) to leading order $q^{1/2}$ in $q$, and integrate over the direction of $k$, to obtain

$$
\Gamma_{\text{scat}}^a q \sim \frac{(2s + 1) \rho k_B^3}{4\pi m c^2} \int \frac{dk}{\frac{d\epsilon_k}{hc} + 1 + \bar{n}_{b q}} \left( \frac{\partial_{\epsilon} e_{\epsilon_k}}{\frac{d\epsilon_k}{hc}} \right)^2 \left( 2 k_B T \epsilon_{\epsilon_k} - \epsilon_{\epsilon_k} \right)^{2} \frac{1}{1 + \bar{n}_{b q}}
$$

(15)

$$
\sim \frac{(2s + 1) \rho k_B^3}{4\pi h c^2 m c^2} \left( \frac{\partial_{\epsilon} e_{\epsilon_k}}{\frac{d\epsilon_k}{hc}} \right)^2 \left( 2 k_B T e_{\epsilon_k} - \epsilon_{\epsilon_k} \right)^{2} \frac{1}{1 + \bar{n}_{b q}}
$$

(16)

Eq.(16) is an equivalent when $T \to 0$ at fixed $h\omega/k_BT$; $k_s$ is the element of the border of $D$ ($\frac{d\epsilon_k}{hc} = k_s \approx \eta_h c$). Energy $\epsilon_k$ is dominant. Our high yet experimental $\omega_{\gamma q} \sim 1/\Gamma_{\text{scat}}^a$. Using $\tau_{\gamma q} \sim 1/\Gamma_{\text{scat}}^a$, we checked that the figures 1 and 2 below are in the collisionless regime $\omega_{\gamma q} \tau_{\gamma q} \gg 0$. Similarly, we checked that $\omega_{\gamma q} \tau_{\gamma q} \gg 0$ on the figures.

Application to helium - Precise measurements of the equation of state (relating $\rho$ to pressure) and of the roton dispersion relation for various pressures were performed in liquid $^4$He at low temperature ($k_BT \ll m c^2, \Delta$). They give access to the parameters $k_0$, $\Delta$, their derivatives and $m_s$. The measured sound velocities agree with the thermodynamic relation $m c^2 = \rho \frac{d\epsilon_k}{hc}$, where $\mu$ is the zero-temperature chemical potential of the liquid. We plot in Fig. 1 the phonon damping rates as functions of temperature, for a fixed angular frequency $\omega_q$. At the chosen high pressure, the phonon dispersion relation is concave at low $q$, therefore the Beliaev-Landau [11–16] three-phonon process $\phi \phi \phi \to \phi \phi \phi$ is energetically forbidden at low temperature and the Landau-Khalatnikov [1, 6, 16] process $\phi \phi \phi \to \phi \phi \phi$ is dominant. Our high yet experimentally accessible [17, 18] value of $\omega_q$ leads to attenuation lengths $2c/\Gamma_{\gamma q}$ short enough to be measured in centimetric cells. As visible on Fig. 1, the damping of sound is in fact dominated by four-phonon Landau-Khalatnikov processes up to a temperature $T \approx 0.6 K$. In this regime one would directly observe this phonon-phonon damping mechanism, which would be a premiere. The sound attenuation measurements of Ref.[19] in helium at 23 bars and $\omega_q = 2 \pi \times 1.1$ GHz are indeed limited to $T > 0.8 K$ where damping is still dominated by the rotons.

Application to fermions - In cold-atom Fermi gases, interactions occur in $s$-wave between opposite-spin atoms.
FIG. 1: Phonon damping rates at angular frequency $\omega_q = 2\pi \times 155$ GHz ($q = 0.3$ Å$^{-1}$) in liquid $^3$He at pressure $P = 20$ bar as functions of temperature. Solid line: purely phononic damping $\Gamma_{\phi,0}$ due to Landau-Khalatnikov four-phonon processes [1, 6, 16]; it depends on the curvature parameter $\gamma$ defined as $\omega_q = c_q[1 + \frac{\Delta}{(k^2\rho^2)^{1/3}} + O(q^4)]$. Interpolating measurements of $P \to \gamma(\dot{P})$ in Refs.[20, 21] gives $\gamma = -6.9$. Dashed black line/dash-dotted black line: damping due to scattering/absorption-emission by rotons, see Eq.(12)/(15). Red dashed line: original formula of Ref.[1] for the damping rate due to phonon-roton scattering. The roton parameters entering in $\Gamma_{\phi,0}$, are extracted from their dispersion relation due to phonon-roton scattering. The roton parameters $D$, $\Delta$, $\rho$ are plotted in Fig. 2a. The contribution of the three-phonon processes $\propto k^2\rho^2 \Delta^2$ is negligible.

![Graph showing phonon damping rates](image)

At various pressures [22]: $\Delta = 346 c_q[1 + \frac{\Delta}{(k^2\rho^2)^{1/3}} + O(q^4)]$. Of negligible range, they are characterized by the scattering length a tunable by Feshbach resonance [24-29].

Precise measurements of the fermionic excitation parameters $k_0$ and $\Delta$ were performed at unitarity $a^{-1} = 0$ [30]. Due to the unitary-gas scale invariance [31-33], $k_0$ is proportional to the Fermi wavenumber $k_F = (3\pi^2\rho)^{1/3}$, $k_0 \simeq 0.92\epsilon_F$ [30], and $\Delta$ is proportional to the Fermi energy $\epsilon_F = \frac{h^2 k_F^2}{2m_\rho} \simeq 0.44\epsilon_F$ [30]. This also determines their derivatives with respect to $\rho$. Similarly, the equation of state measured at $T = 0$ is simply $\mu = \xi \epsilon_F$, where $\xi \simeq 0.376$ [29], and the critical temperature is $T_c \simeq 0.167\epsilon_F/k_B$ [29]. For the effective mass of the fermionic excitations and their dispersion relation at non vanishing $k - k_0$, we must rely on results of a dimensional $\epsilon = 4 - d$ expansion, $m_{\rho}/m \simeq 0.56$ and $\epsilon_k \simeq \Delta + \frac{h^2 (k^2 - k_0^2)^{1/3}}{m_{\rho} k_B}$ [34]. We also trust Anderson's RPA prediction [35, 36] that the $q = 0$ third derivative of the phononic dispersion relation is positive [37]. The damping rates of phonons with wavenumber $q = mc/2\hbar$ are plotted in Fig. 2a. The contribution of the three-phonon Landau-Belaev processes $\phi \leftrightarrow \phi \phi$, here energetically allowed, is dominant; it is computed in the quantum-

![Graph showing phonon damping rates as functions of temperature](image)

hydrodynamic approximation where it is independent of the aforementioned third derivative.

The phononic excitation branch becomes concave in the BCS limit $k_B a \to 0^-$ [38]. As visible on Fig. 2b, the phonon-phonon damping (now governed by the Landau-Khalatnikov processes mentioned earlier) is much weaker, and dominates the $\phi - \gamma$ damping only at very low temperatures. At commonly reached temperatures $T > 0.05\epsilon_F/k_B$ [39], the damping is in fact dominated by absorption-emission $\phi - \gamma$ processes which, unlike in liquid helium, prevail over scattering ones because of the smaller value of $\epsilon_k \Delta$. Although the associated quality
factors $\omega_q / \Gamma_q$ may seem impressive, the lifetimes $\Gamma_q^{-1}$ of the modes do not exceed one second in a gas of $^6$Li with a typical Fermi temperature $T_F = 1\mu K$, which is shorter than what was observed in a Bose-Einstein condensate [40]. Our predictions, less quantitative than on Fig. 2a, are based on the BCS approximation for the equation of state and the fermionic excitation dispersion relation

$$\epsilon_k \simeq \epsilon_k^{\text{BCS}} = \left(\frac{\Delta_{\text{BCS}}^2}{\mu^2} - \mu^2 + \Delta_{\text{BCS}} \right)^{1/2}$$

and on the RPA for the $q = 0$ third derivative of $\omega_q$ (whose precise value matters here). A cutting remark on Ref.[41]: even in the BCS approximation to which it is restricted, we disagree with its expression of $\Gamma_q^{-1}$.

Conclusion – By complementing the local density approximation in Ref.[1] with a systematic low-temperature expansion, we derived the definitive leading order expression of the phonon-roton coupling in liquid helium and we generalized it to the phonon-pair-breaking excitation coupling in Fermi gases. The ever-improving experimental technics in these systems give access to the microscopic parameters determining the coupling and allow for a verification in the near future. Our result also clarifies the regime of temperature and interaction strength in which the purely phononic $\phi \leftrightarrow \phi \phi$ Landau-Khalatnikov sound damping in a superfluid, unobserved to this day, is dominant.

This project received funding from the FWO and the EU H2020 program under the MSC Grant Agreement No. 665501.

[1] L. Landau, I. Khalatnikov, “Teoriya vyazkosti Geliya-II”, Zh. Eksp. Teor. Fiz. 19, 637 (1949) [English translation in Collected papers of L.D. Landau, chapter 69, pp.494-510, edited by D. ter Haar (Pergamon, New York, 1966)].

[2] I. M. Khalatnikov, D.M. Chernikova, “Relaxation phenomena in superfluid Helium”, Zh. Eksp. Teor. Fiz. 49, 1957 (1965) [JETP 22, 1336 (1966)].

[3] B. Fäk, T. Keller, M. E. Zhitomirsky, A. L. Chernyshev, “Roton-phonon interaction in superfluid $^4$He”, Phys. Rev. Lett. 109, 155305 (2012).

[4] A. L. Gaunt, T. F. Schmidutz, I. Gotlibovych, R. P. Smith, Z. Hadzibabic, “Bose-Einstein condensation of atoms in a uniform potential”, Phys. Rev. Lett. 110, 200406 (2013).

[5] B. Mukherjee, Zhenjie Yan, P. B. Patel, Z. Hadzibabic, T. Yefsah, J. Struck, M. W. Zwierlein, “Homogeneous Atomic Fermi Gases”, Phys. Rev. Lett. 118, 123401 (2017).

[6] H. Kurkjian, Y. Castin, A. Sinatra, “Landau-Khalatnikov phonon damping in strongly interacting Fermi gases”, EPL 116, 40002 (2016).

[7] Martin Zwierlein, private communication (September 2017).

[8] C. Cohen-Tannoudji, “Atomic motion in laser light”, §23, in Proceedings of the Les Houches Summer School, session LIII, edited by J. Dalibard, J.-M. Raimond, J. Zinn-Justin (North-Holland, Amsterdam, 1992).

[9] L. H. Thomas, “The calculation of atomic fields”, Proc. Cambridge Phil. Soc. 23, 542 (1927).

[10] E. Fermi, “Un metodo statistico per la determinazione di alcune propriet`a dell’atomo”, Rend. Accad. Naz. Lincei 6, 602 (1927) ["A statistical method to evaluate some properties of the atom"] and in Collected papers, Note e memorie di Enrico Fermi, volume I, edited by E. Amaldi et al. (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1962).

[11] S. T. Beliaev, “Energy-Spectrum of a Non-ideal Bose Gas”, Zh. Eksp. Teor. Fiz. 34, 433 (1958) [JETP 7, 299 (1958)].

[12] L. P. Pitaevskii, S. Stringari, “Landau damping in dilute Bose gases”, Phys. Lett. A 235, 398 (1997).

[13] S. Giorgini, “Damping in dilute Bose gases: A mean-field approach”, Phys. Rev. A 57, 2949 (1998).

[14] B. M. Abraham, Y. Eckstein, J. B. Ketterson, M. Kuchin, J. Vignos, “Sound Propagation in Liquid $^4$He”, Phys. Rev. 181, 347 (1969).

[15] N. Katz, J. Steinhauer, R. Ozeri, N. Davidson, “Beliaev Damping of Quasiparticles in a Bose-Einstein Condensate”, Phys. Rev. Lett. 89, 220401 (2002).

[16] H. Kurkjian, Y. Castin, A. Sinatra, “Three-phonon and four phonon interaction processes in a pair-condensed Fermi gas”, Ann. Phys. (Berlin) 529, 1600352 (2017).

[17] N. A. Lockerbie, A. F. G. Wyatt, R. A. Sherlock, “Measurement of the group velocity of 93 GHz phonons in liquid $^4$He”, Solid State Communications 15, 567 (1974).

[18] W. Dietsche, “Superconducting Al-PbBi tunnel junction as a phonon spectrometer”, Phys. Rev. Lett. 40, 786 (1978).

[19] P. Berberich, P. Leiderer, S. Hunklinger, “Investigation of the lifetime of longitudinal phonons at GHz frequencies in liquid and solid $^4$He”, Journal of Low Temperature Physics 22, 61 (1976).

[20] D. Rugar, J. S. Foster, “Accurate measurement of low-energy phonon dispersion in liquid $^4$He”, Phys. Rev. B 30, 2595 (1984).

[21] E. C. Swenson, A. D. B. Woods, P. Martel, “Phonon dispersion in liquid Helium under pressure”, Phys. Rev. Lett. 29, 1148 (1972).

[22] M. R. Gibbs, K. H. Andersen, W. G. Stirling, H. Schober, “The collective excitations of normal and superfluid $^4$He: the dependence on pressure and temperature”, J. Phys. Condens. Matter 11, 603 (1999).

[23] H. J. Maris, D. O. Edwards, “Thermodynamic properties of superfluid $^4$He at negative pressure”, Journal of Low Temperature Physics 129, 1 (2002).

[24] K. M. O’Hara, S. L. Hemmer, M. E. Gehm, S. R. Granade, J. E. Thomas, “Observation of a strongly interacting degenerate Fermi gas of atoms”, Science 298, 2179 (2002).

[25] T. Bourdel, J. Cubizolles, L. Khaykovich, K. M. Magalhães, S. J. M. F. Kokkelmans, G. V. Shlyapnikov, C. Salomon, “Measurement of the interaction energy near a Feshbach resonance in a $^6$Li Fermi gas”, Phys. Rev. Lett. 91, 020402 (2003).

[26] M. Bartenstein, A. Altmeyer, S. Riedl, S. Jochim, C. Chin, J. H. Denschlag, R. Grimm, “Collective excitations of a degenerate gas at the BEC-BCS crossover”, Phys. Rev. Lett. 92, 203201 (2004).

[27] M. W. Zwierlein, C. A. Stan, C. H. Schunck, S. M. F. Raupach, A. J. Kerman, W. Ketterle, “Condensation of pairs of fermionic atoms near a Feshbach resonance”, Phys. Rev. Lett. 92, 120403 (2004).
[28] S. Nascimbène, N. Navon, K. J. Jiang, F. Chevy, C. Salomon, “Exploring the thermodynamics of a universal Fermi gas”, Nature 463, 1057 (2010).

[29] J. H. Ku, A. T. Sommer, L. W. Cheuk, M. W. Zwierlein, “Revealing the superfluid lambda transition in the universal thermodynamics of a unitary Fermi gas”, Science 335, 563 (2012).

[30] A. Schiroztek, Y. Shin, C. H. Schunck, W. Ketterle, “Determination of the superfluid gap in atomic Fermi gases by quasiparticle spectroscopy”, Phys. Rev. Lett. 101, 140403 (2008).

[31] Tin-Lun Ho, “Universal thermodynamics of degenerate quantum gases in the unitarity limit”, Phys. Rev. Lett. 92, 090402 (2004).

[32] T. Enss, R. Haussmann, W. Zwerger, “Viscosity and scale invariance in the unitary Fermi gas”, Annals of Physics 326, 770 (2011).

[33] Y. Castin, F. Werner, “The Unitary Gas and its Symmetry Properties”, in BCS-BEC Crossover and the Unitary Fermi gas, Springer Lecture Notes in Physics, W. Zwerger ed. (Springer, Berlin, 2011).

[34] Y. Nishida, D. T. Son, “e Expansion for a Fermi gas at infinite scattering length”, Phys. Rev. Lett. 97, 050403 (2006).

[35] P.W. Anderson, “Random-phase approximation in the theory of superconductivity”, Phys. Rev. 112, 1900 (1958).

[36] R. Combescot, M. Y. Kagan, S. Stringari, “Collective mode of homogeneous superfluid Fermi gases in the BEC-BCS crossover”, Phys. Rev. A 74, 042717 (2006).

[37] H. Kurkjian, Y. Castin, A. Sinatra, “Concavity of the collective excitation branch of a Fermi gas in the BEC-BCS crossover”, Phys. Rev. A 93, 013623 (2016).

[38] M. Marini, F. Pistolesi, G. C. Strinati, “Evolution from BCS superconductivity to Bose condensation: analytic results for the crossover in three dimensions”, European Physical Journal B 1, 151 (1998).

[39] Z. Hadzibabic, S. Gupta, C. A. Stan, C. H. Schunck, M. W. Zwierlein, K. Dieckmann, W. Ketterle, “Fifty-fold Improvement in the Number of Quantum Degenerate Fermionic Atoms”, Phys. Rev. Lett. 91, 160401 (2003).

[40] F. Chevy, V. Bretin, P. Rosenbusch, K. W. Madison, J. Dalibard, “Transverse Breathing Mode of an Elongated Bose-Einstein Condensate”, Phys. Rev. Lett. 88, 250402 (2002).

[41] Z. Zhang, W. Vincent Liu, “Finite-temperature damping of collective modes of a BCS-BEC crossover superfluid”, Phys. Rev. A 83, 023617 (2011).

[42] For a thermal phonon wavenumber, this requires \( k_B T \ll \hbar c^2 \), a meaningful condition even in the BEC limit of Fermi gases where \( k_0 = 0 \).

[43] One expands to order \( T^{1/2} \) for \( A_1 \) and \( T^2 \) for energy denominators, \( q' \) being deduced from \( q, k \) and \( q'/q \) by energy conservation, \( q - q' = \frac{\hbar k_0}{m c} \left( \sqrt{\frac{u-\bar{u}}{\bar{u}}} - 1 \right) + \frac{\hbar^2 k_0^2}{2 m c^2} + O(T^{5/2}) \) with \( u \) and \( \bar{u} \) defined below Eq.(10).

[44] We also use energy conservation and the relations \( 1 + (-1)^{2\eta_n} = e^{i k_0 \eta_n T} \) to transform the difference of the gain and loss quantum statistical factors.

[45] \[ I/(4\pi) = \left( \frac{\hbar k_0}{2 m c^2} \right)^2 \left( \frac{1}{2 \pi} \right) + \frac{4 \alpha^2}{9} + \frac{2 \alpha^2}{9} + A \left( \frac{\alpha}{\alpha} - 4 \right) + \begin{align*} A^2 + 4 B C & \left( \frac{\alpha}{9} \right) + B^2 \left( \frac{2}{15} - \frac{2}{9} \right) + C^2 \left( \frac{4}{9} - \frac{8}{3} \right) + D^2 \left( \frac{4}{9} - \frac{8}{3} \right), \end{align*} \]

with \( \alpha = \frac{n_{\text{ph}}}{k_0}, \ \beta = \frac{m c}{\hbar k_0}, \ A = \frac{m c^2}{\hbar^2 k_0^2}, \ \alpha^2, \ B = \frac{2 \alpha}{3 \alpha} + \alpha^2, \ B' = \frac{2 \alpha'}{3 \alpha}, \)

[46] At low \( T \), \( k \) is close to \( k_0 \), emission \( k \leftrightarrow q + k' \) is forbidden by energy conservation, and absorption \( k + q \leftrightarrow k' \), conserving energy only for \( q \geq q_{\text{c}} \simeq 2 m c^2/\hbar \), is \( O(e^{-\hbar c_{\text{ph}} / k_0 T}) \).