

SCALARS 2025

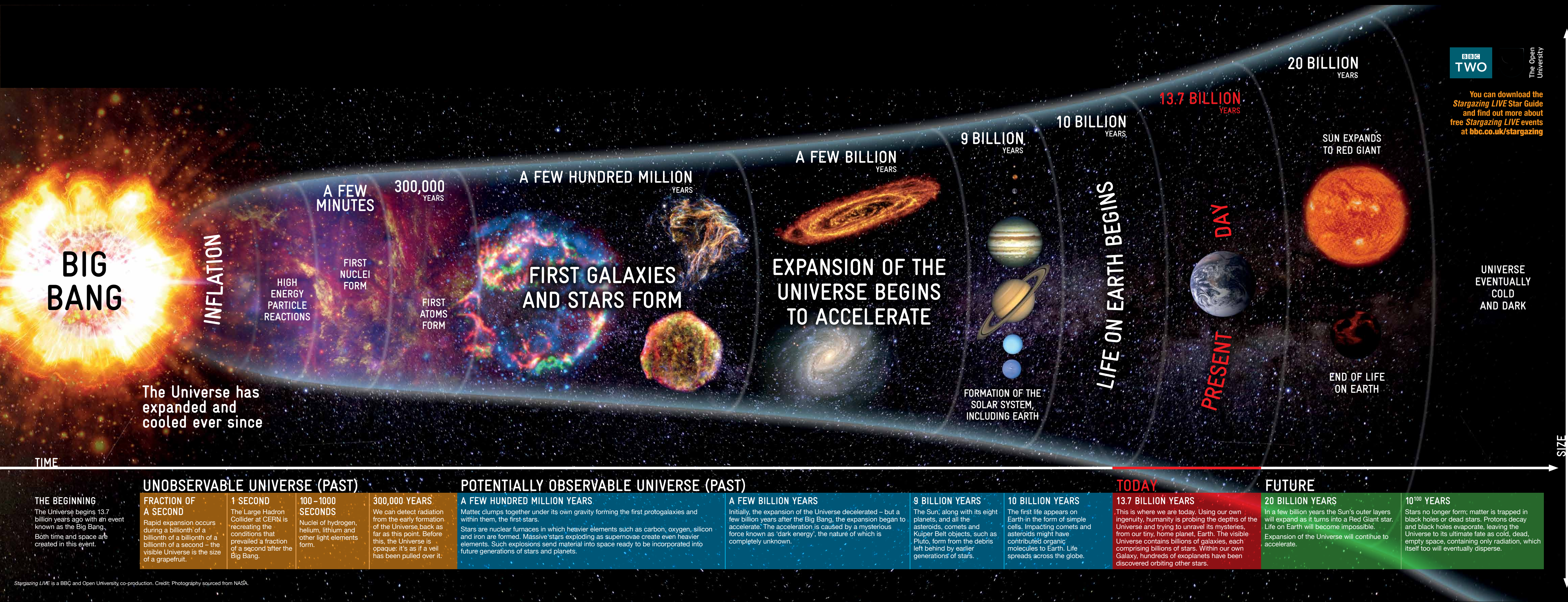
# SUPERCOOLED PHASE TRANSITIONS FROM RADIATIVE SYMMETRY BREAKING

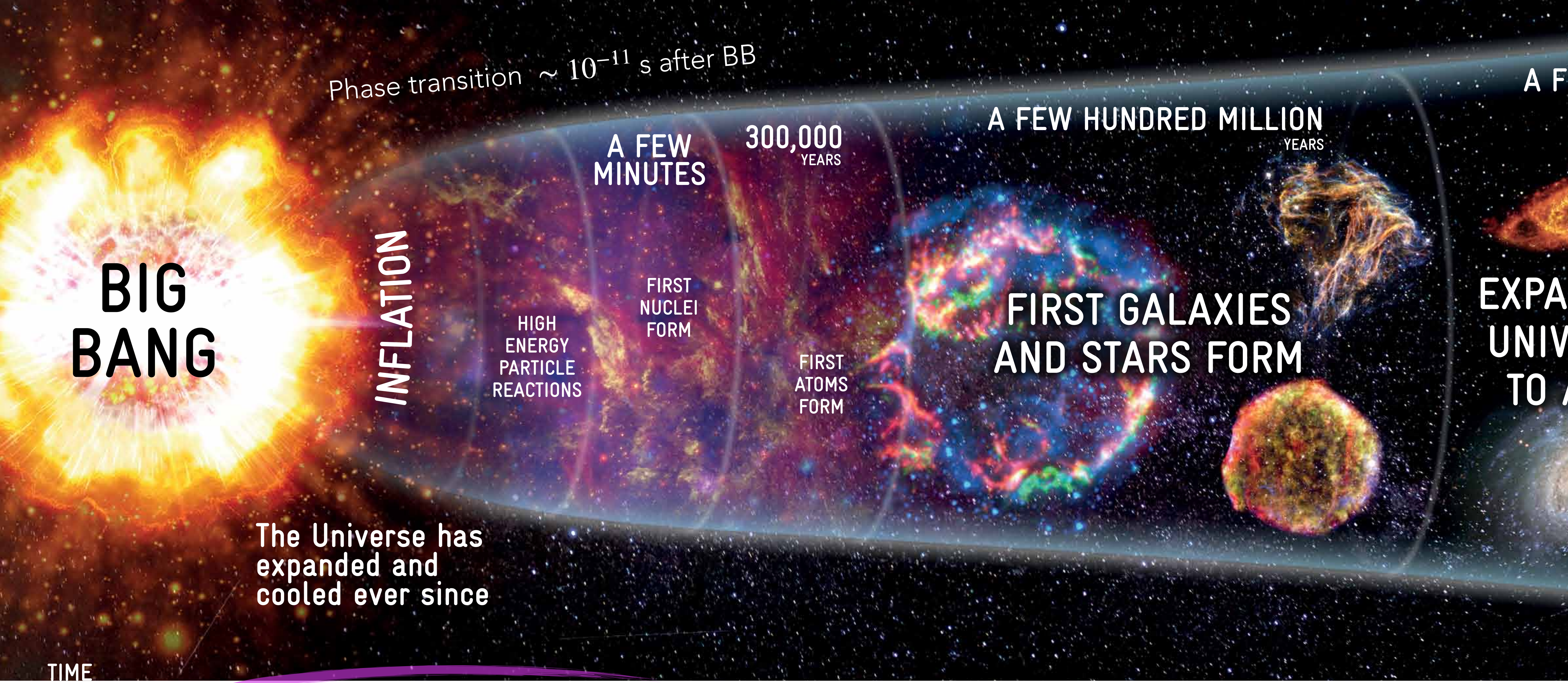
BOGUMIŁA ŚWIEŻEWSKA  
UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW

Based on work in collaboration with:

A. Karam, M. Kierkla, T.V.I. Tenkanen, J. van de Vis, P. Schicho, A. Gonstal, M. Lewicki, B. Sójka,  
JHEP 03 (2023) 007, JHEP 02 (2024) 234, PLB 860 (2025) 139155, *JHEP* 07 (2025) 153, *JHEP* 08 (2025) 039

# LOOKING BACK IN TIME





Phase transition  $\sim 10^{-11}$  s after BB

# BIG BANG

INFLATION

A FEW MINUTES

300,000 YEARS

A FEW HUNDRED MILLION YEARS

FIRST GALAXIES AND STARS FORM

EXPANDED TO /

The Universe has expanded and cooled ever since

TIME

## UNOBSERVABLE UNIVERSE (PAST)

## POTENTIALLY OBSERVABLE UNIVERSE (PAST)

### THE BEGINNING

The Universe begins 13.7 billion years ago with an event known as the Big Bang. Both time and space are created in this event.

### FRACTION OF A SECOND

Rapid expansion occurs during a billionth of a billionth of a billionth of a second – the visible Universe is the size of a grapefruit.

### 1 SECOND

The Large Hadron Collider at CERN is recreating the conditions that prevailed a fraction of a second after the Big Bang.

### 100 – 1000 SECONDS

Nuclei of hydrogen, helium, lithium and other light elements form.

### 300,000 YEARS

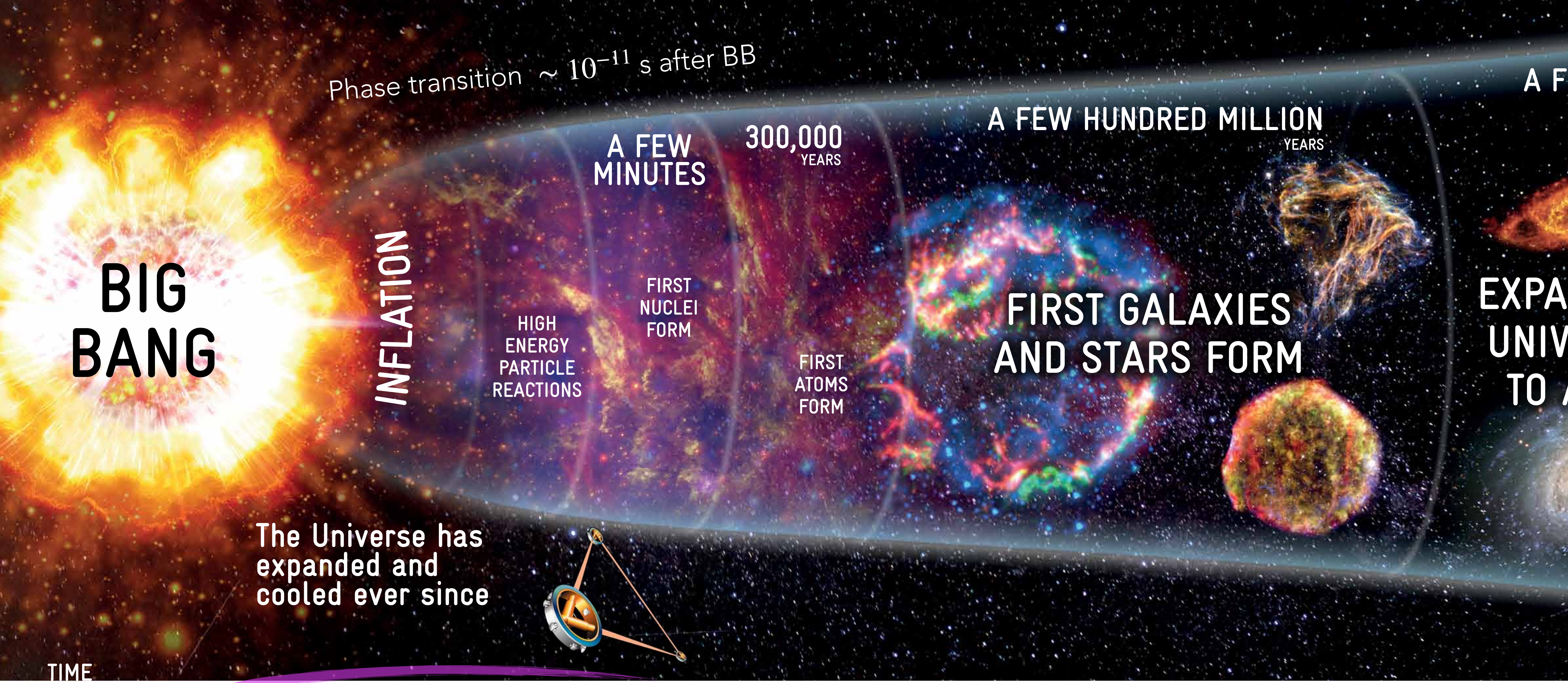
We can detect radiation from the early formation of the Universe back as far as this point. Before this, the Universe is opaque: it's as if a veil has been pulled over it.

### A FEW HUNDRED MILLION YEARS

Matter clumps together under its own gravity forming the first protogalaxies and within them, the first stars. Stars are nuclear furnaces in which heavier elements such as carbon, oxygen, silicon and iron are formed. Massive stars exploding as supernovae create even heavier elements. Such explosions send material into space ready to be incorporated into future generations of stars and planets.

### A FEW BILLION YEARS

Initially, the expansion of the Universe accelerates. The acceleration is a force known as 'dark energy', which is completely unknown.



TIME

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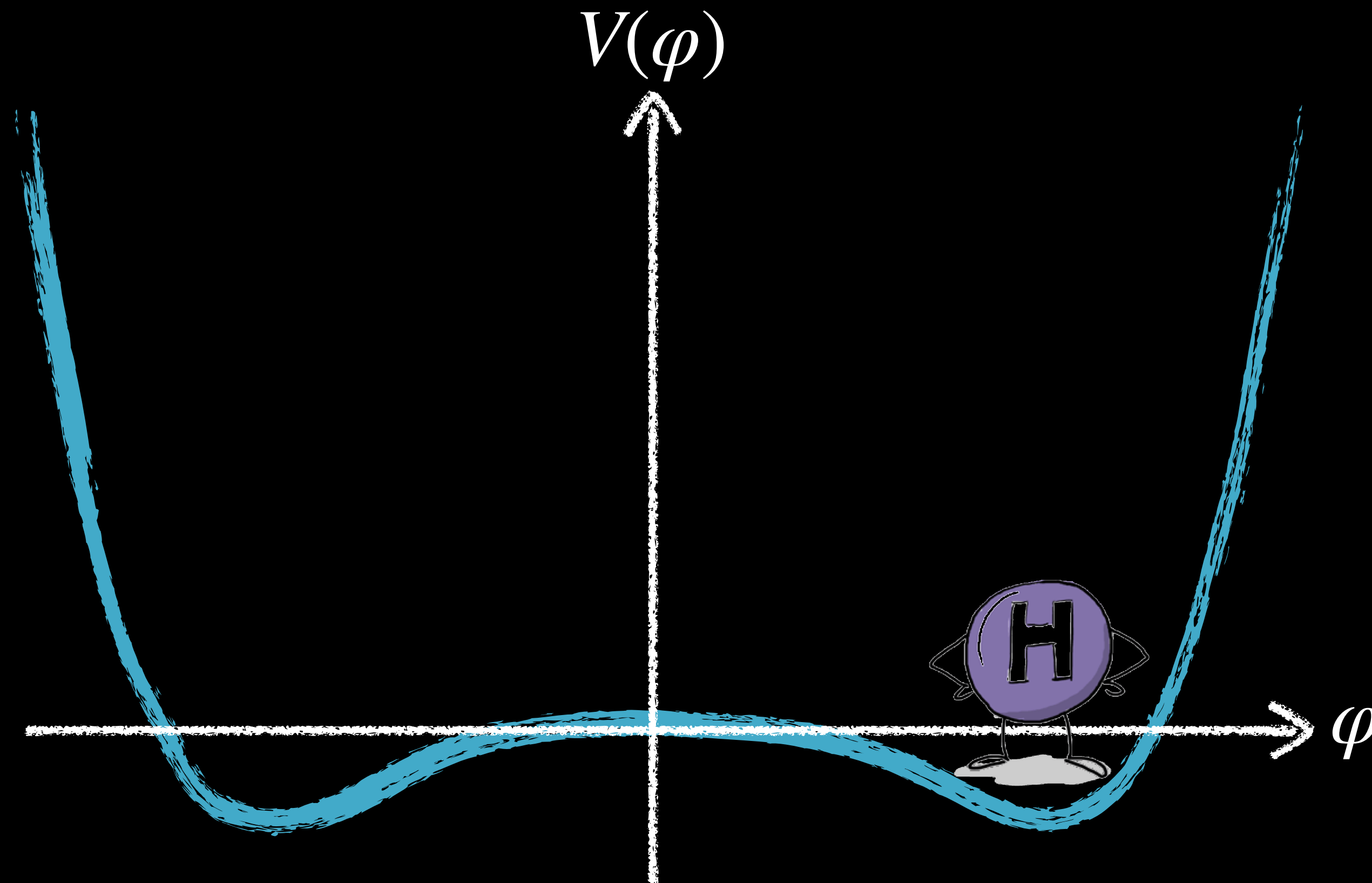
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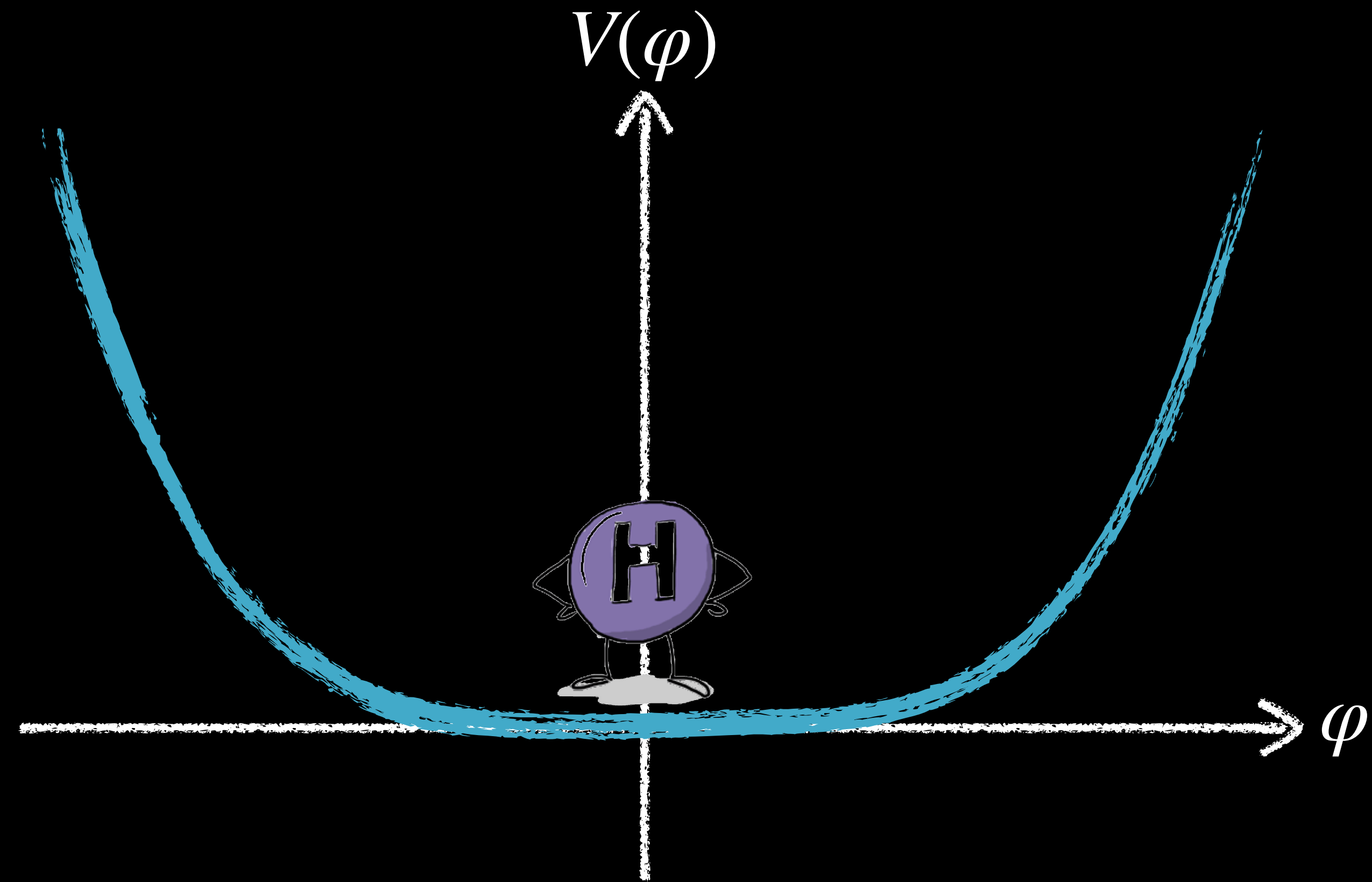
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Initially, the expansion of the Universe accelerates. The acceleration is a force known as 'dark energy', which is completely unknown.

# EXPERIMENT: HIGGS EXISTS

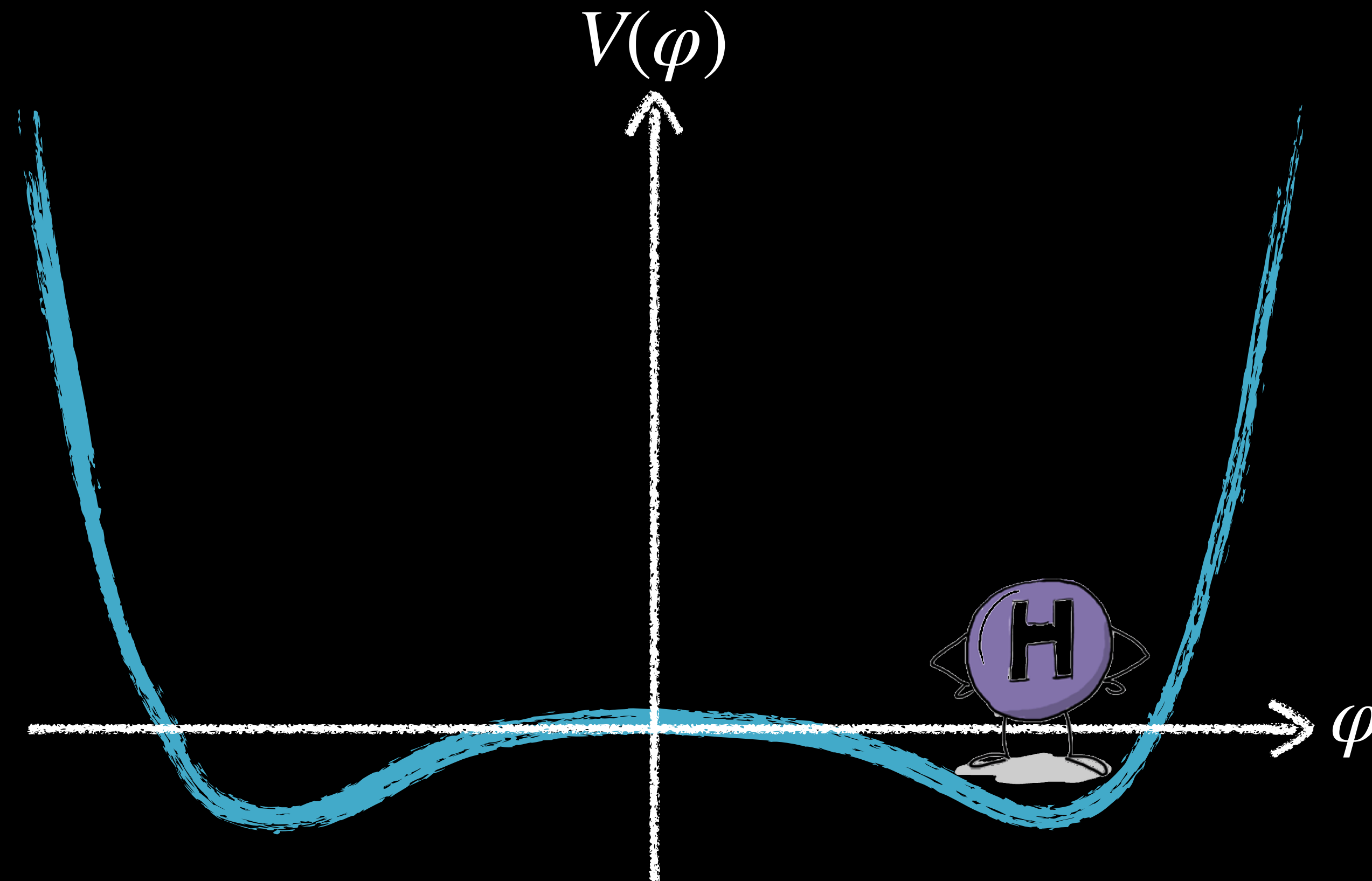


[Image from PhD Comics]

THEORY: SYMMETRY RESTORED AT HIGH T



# PHASE TRANSITION HAPPENED!



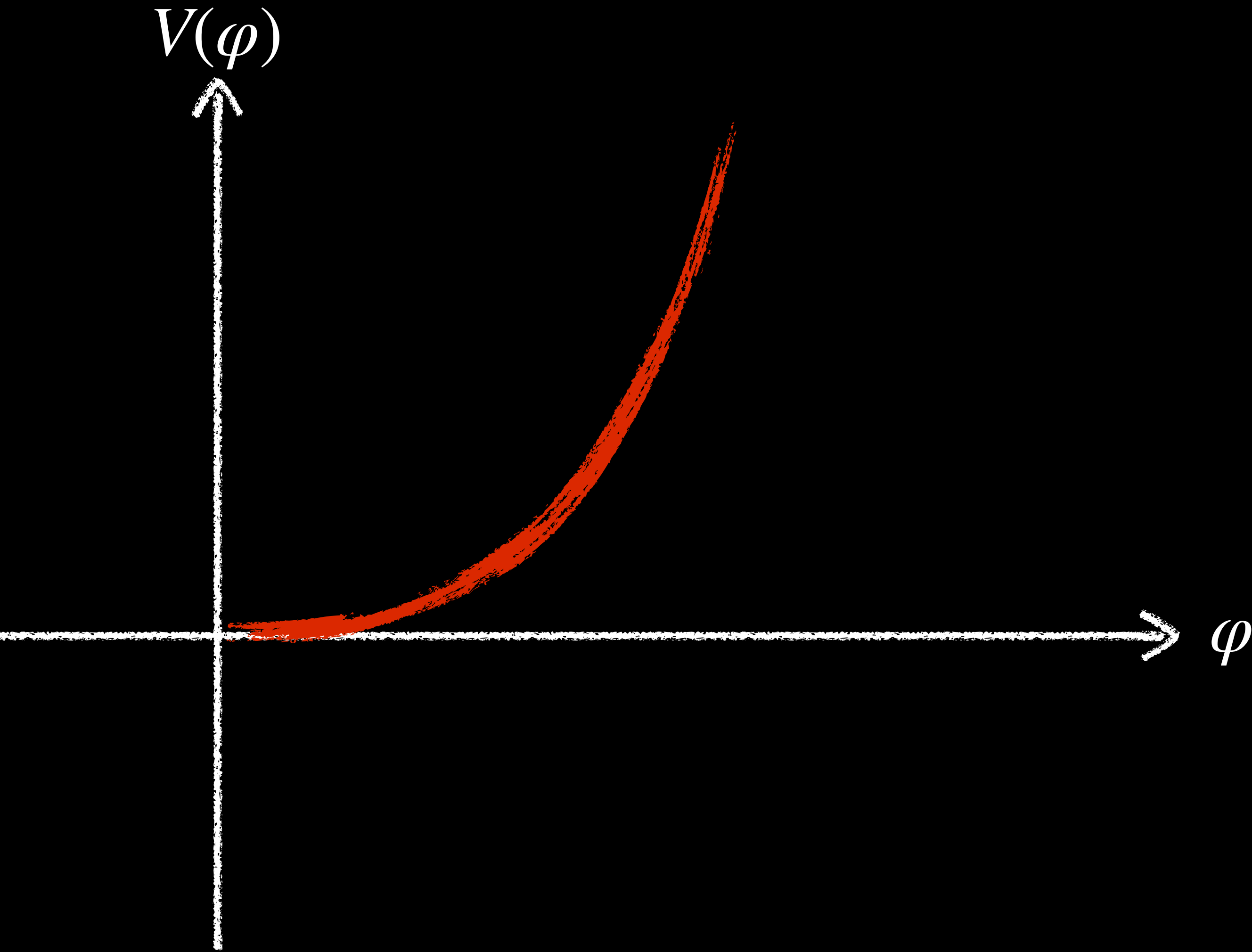
In the SM the PT is a crossover.

The search for a first-order PT is  
a search for New Physics!  
scalar

PHASE TRANSITION  
IN THE EARLY  
UNIVERSE

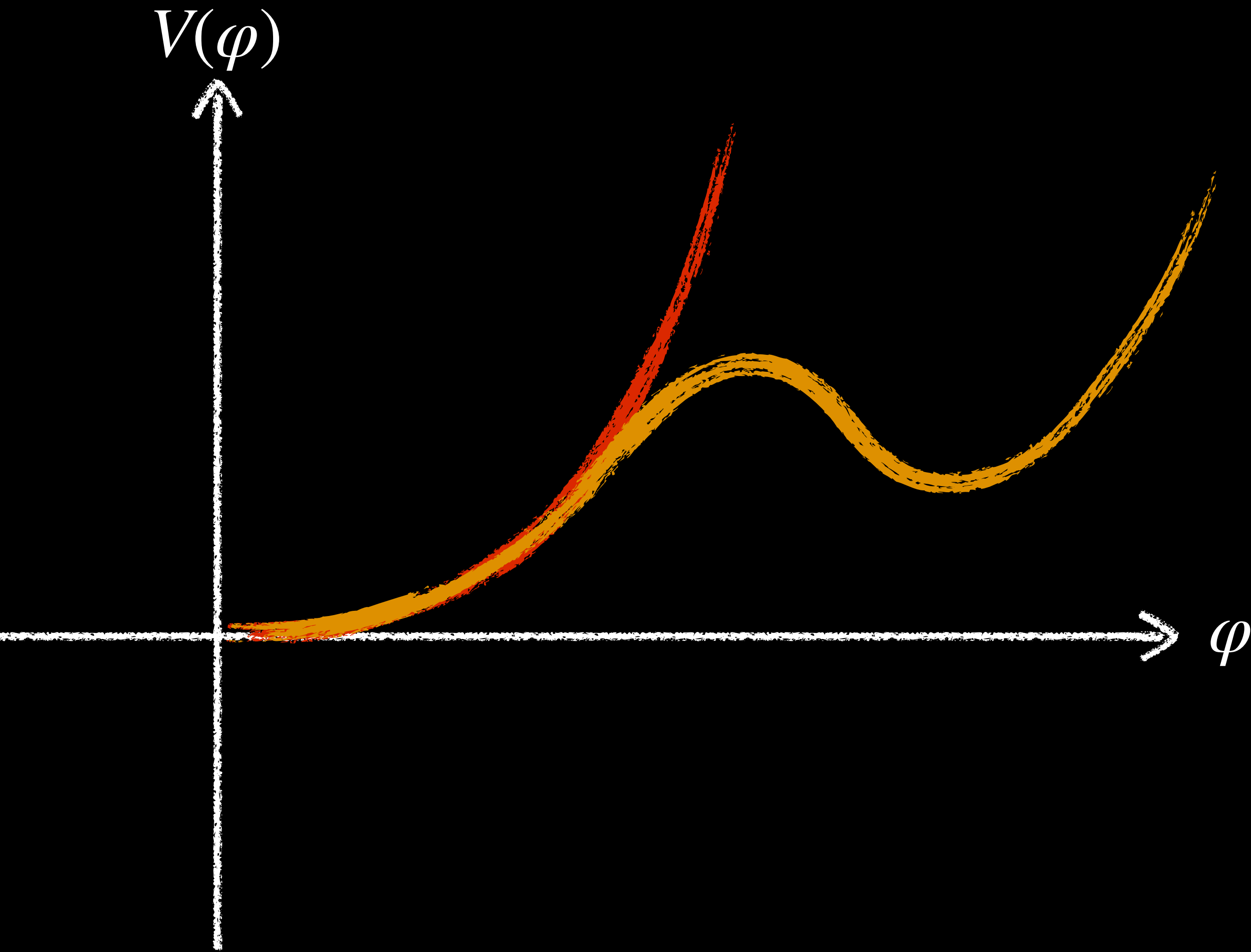


# FIRST-ORDER PHASE TRANSITION



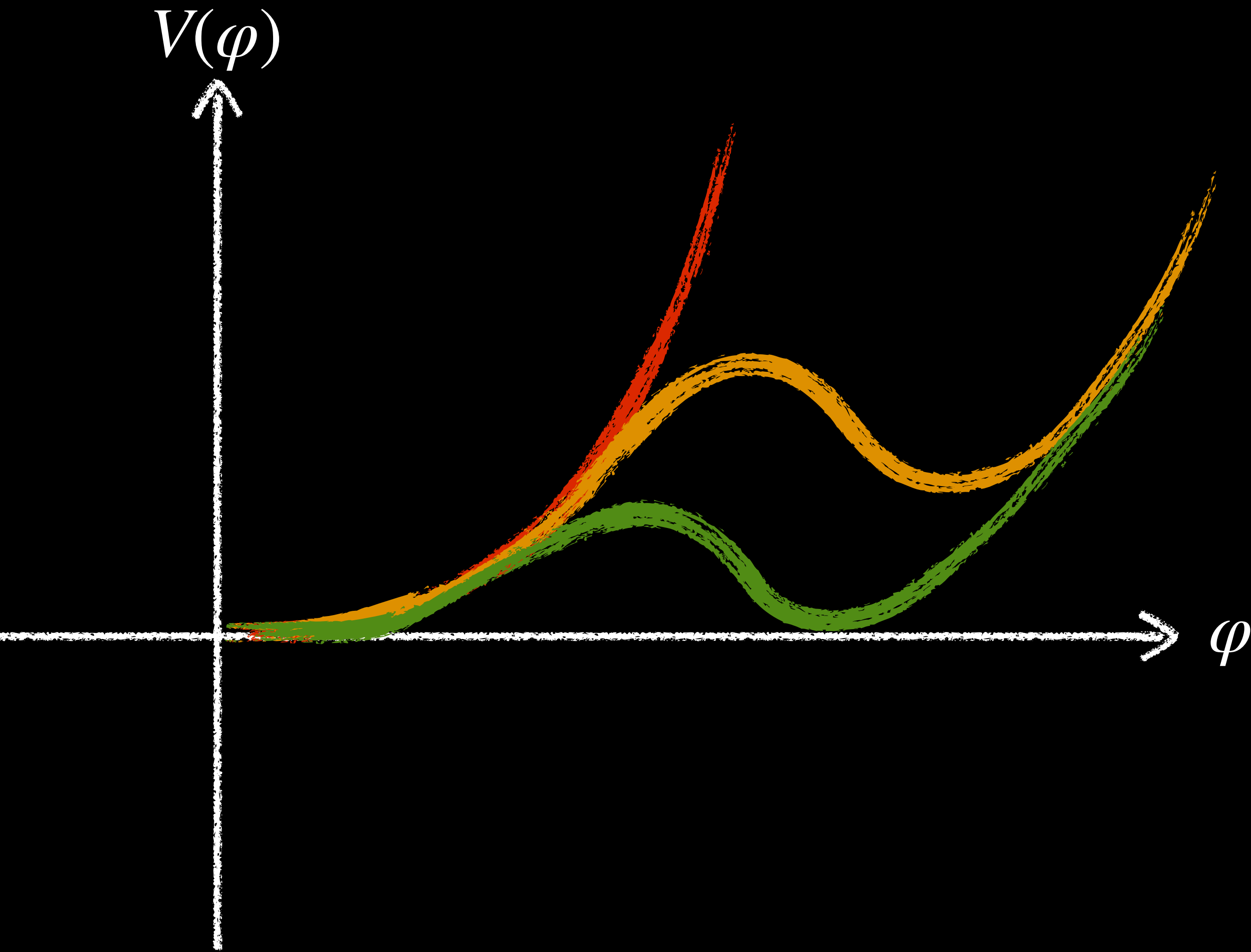
high temperature:  
EW and conformal  
symmetry restored

# FIRST-ORDER PHASE TRANSITION



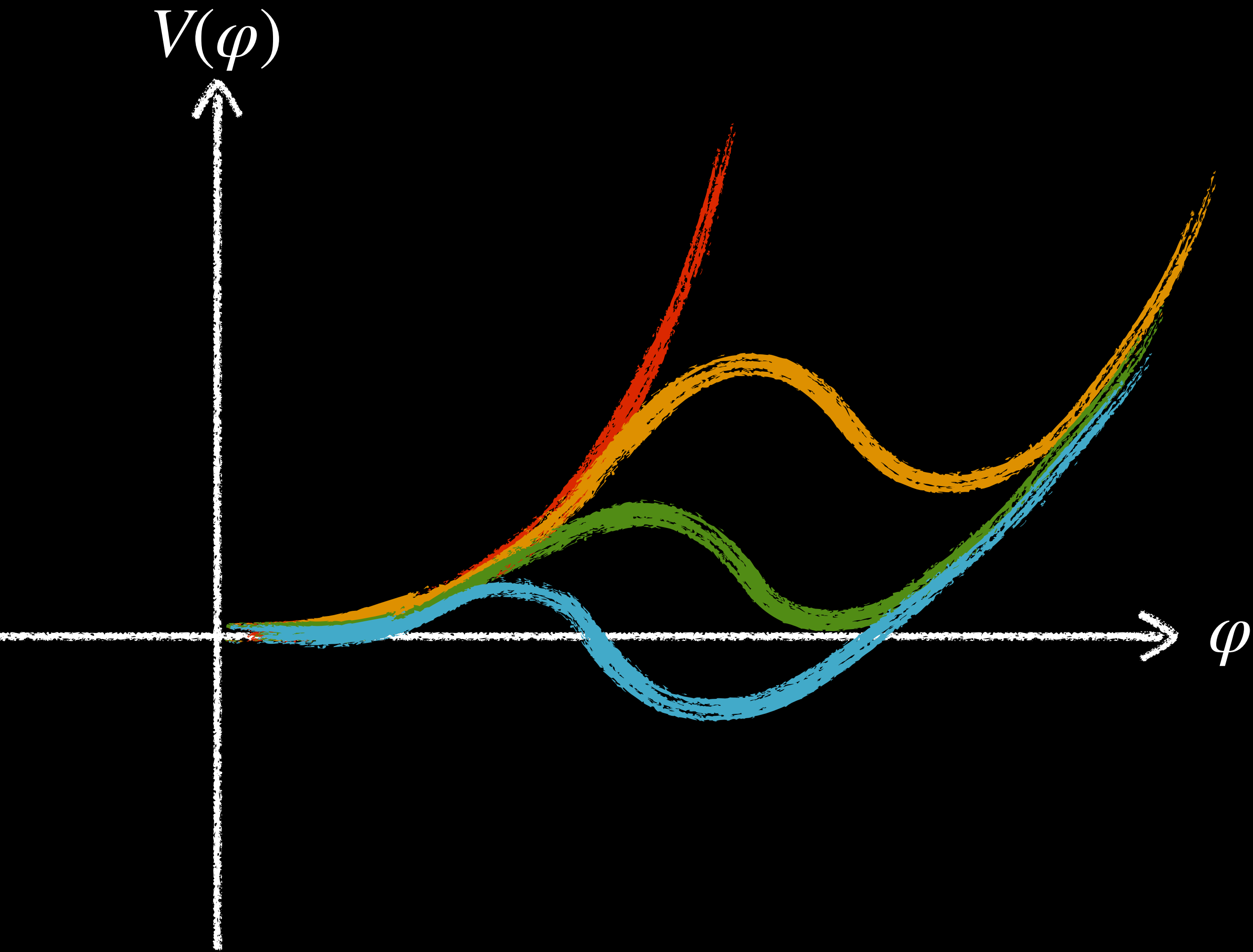
Secondary minimum  
forms

# FIRST-ORDER PHASE TRANSITION

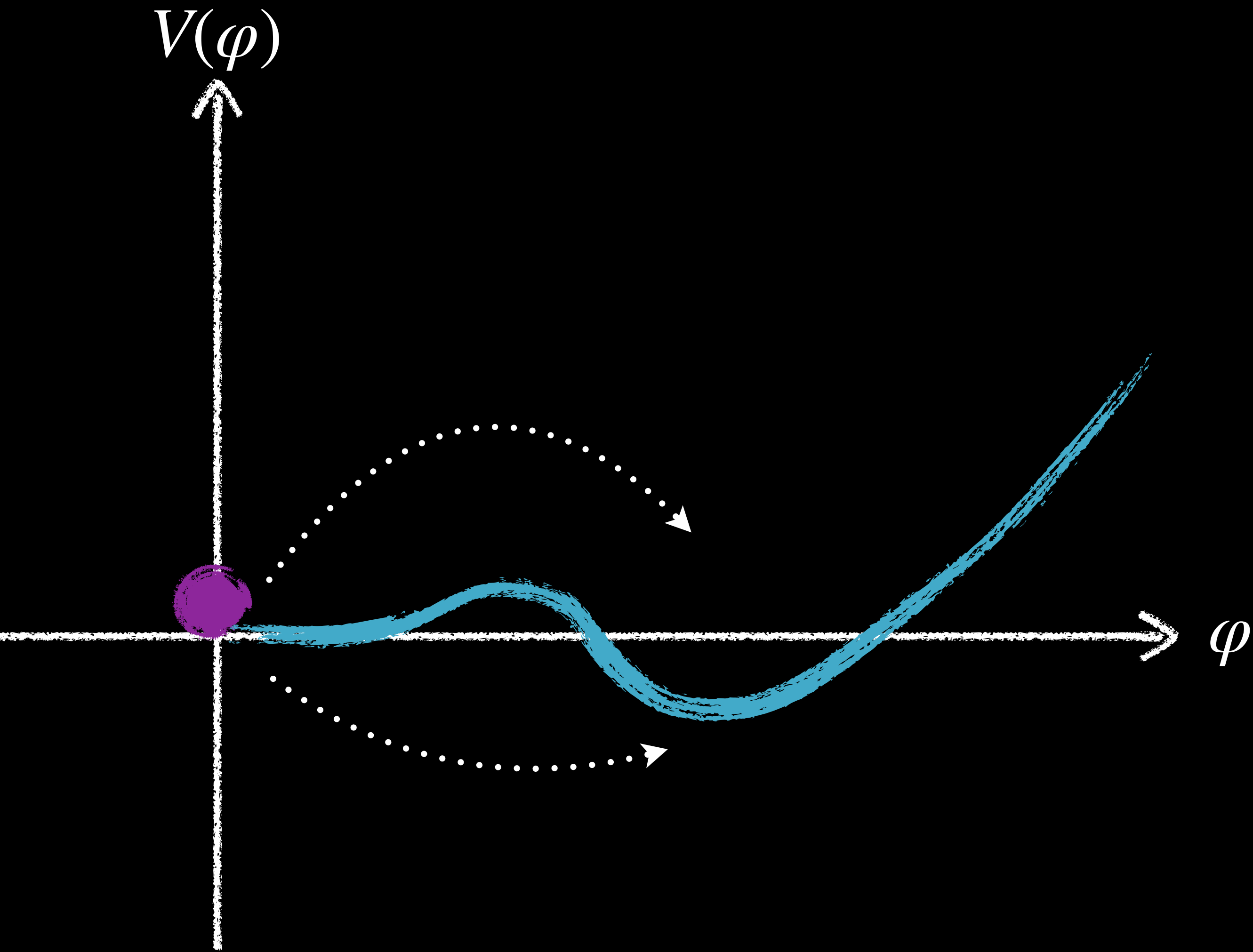


critical temperature:  
two degenerate  
minima

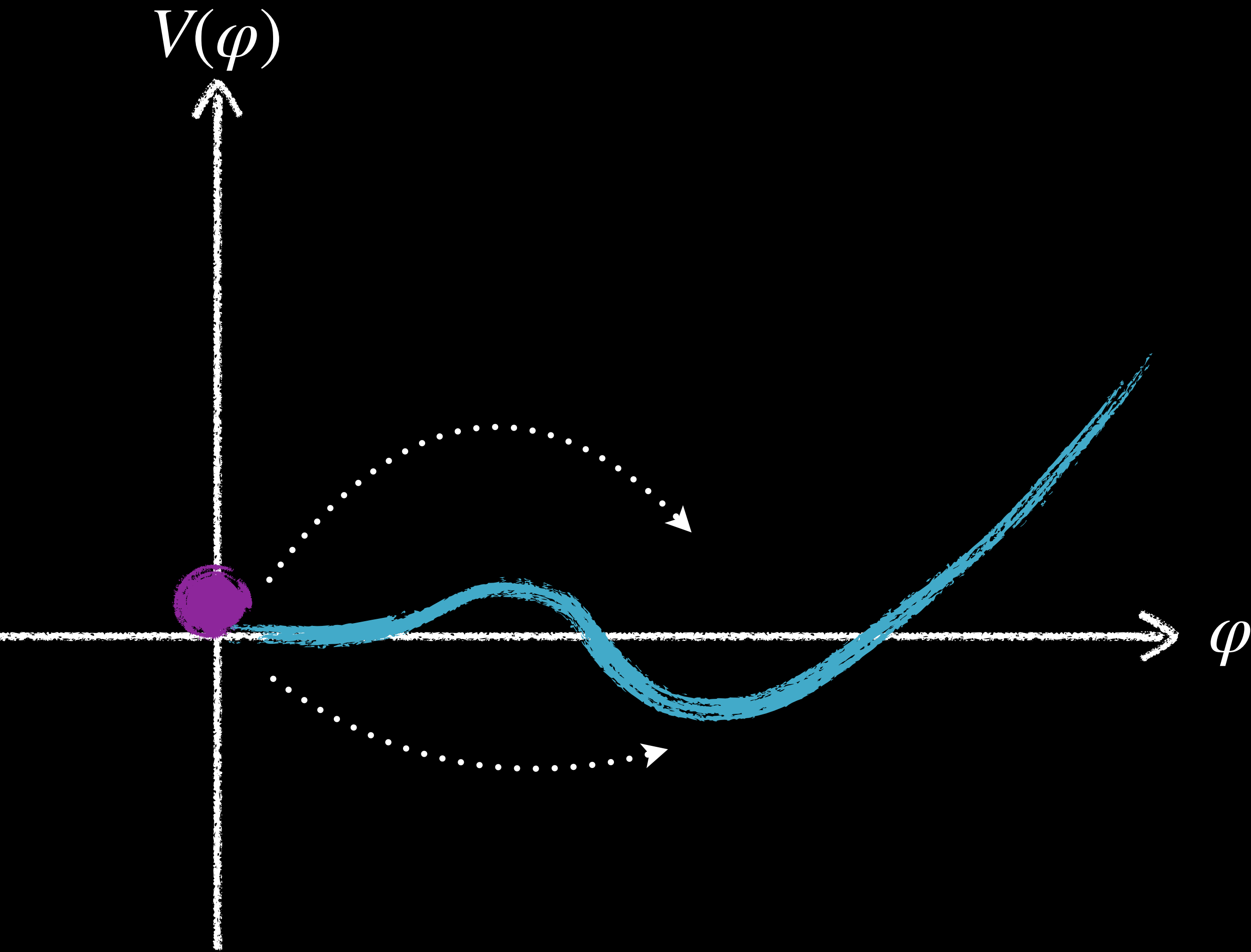
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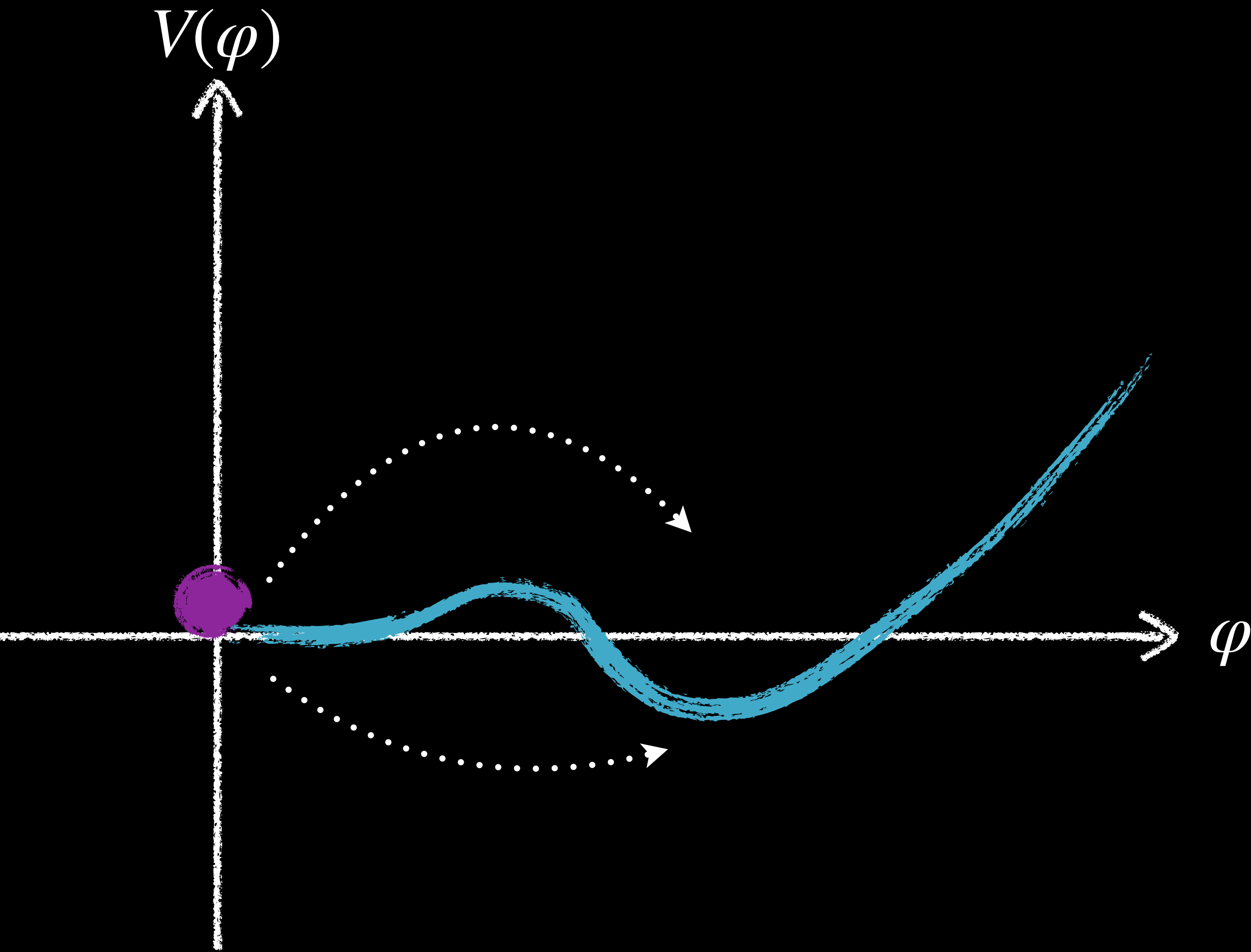
nucleation:  
one bubble nucleates  
per Hubble volume

$$\langle \varphi \rangle \neq 0$$

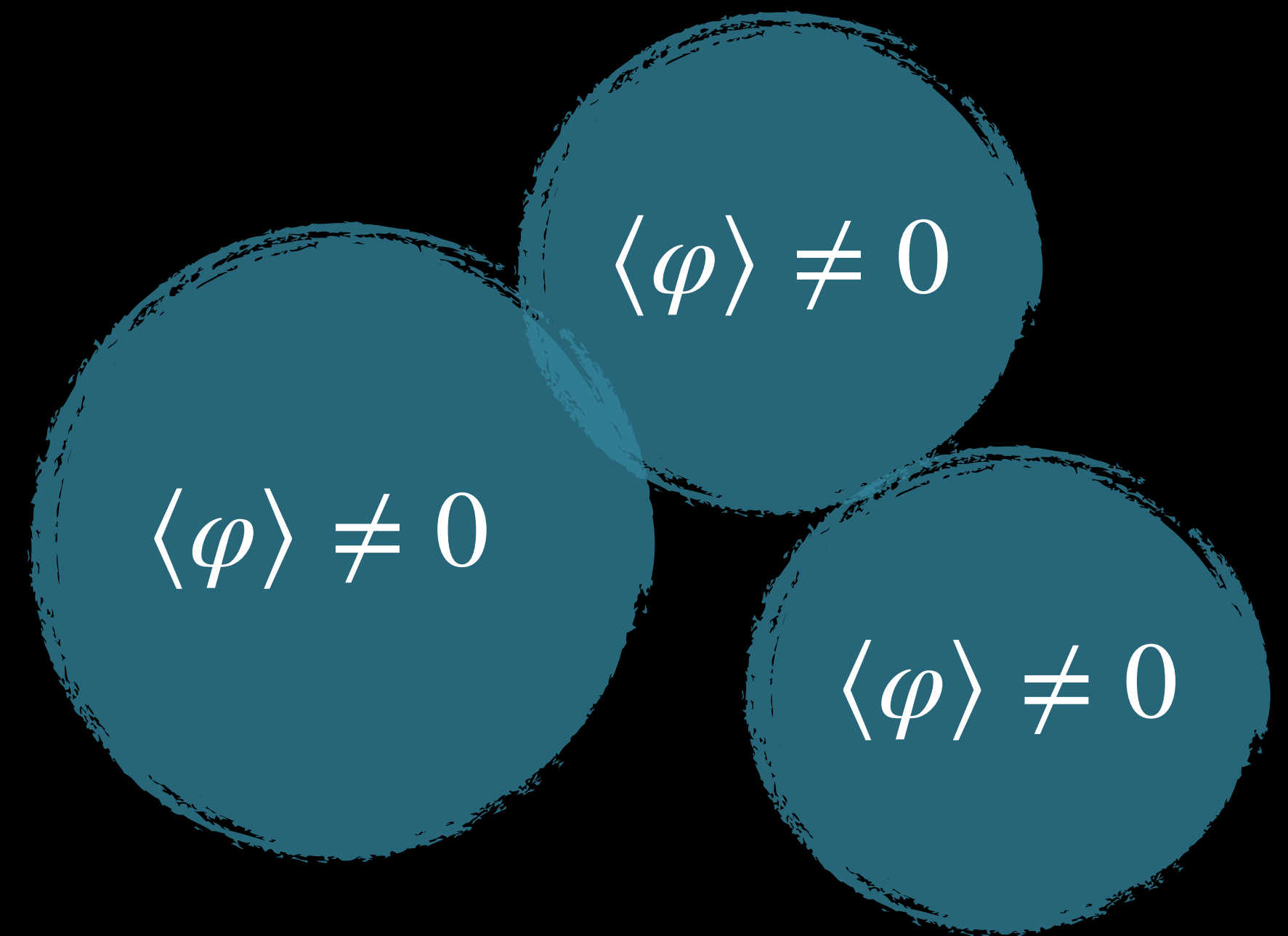
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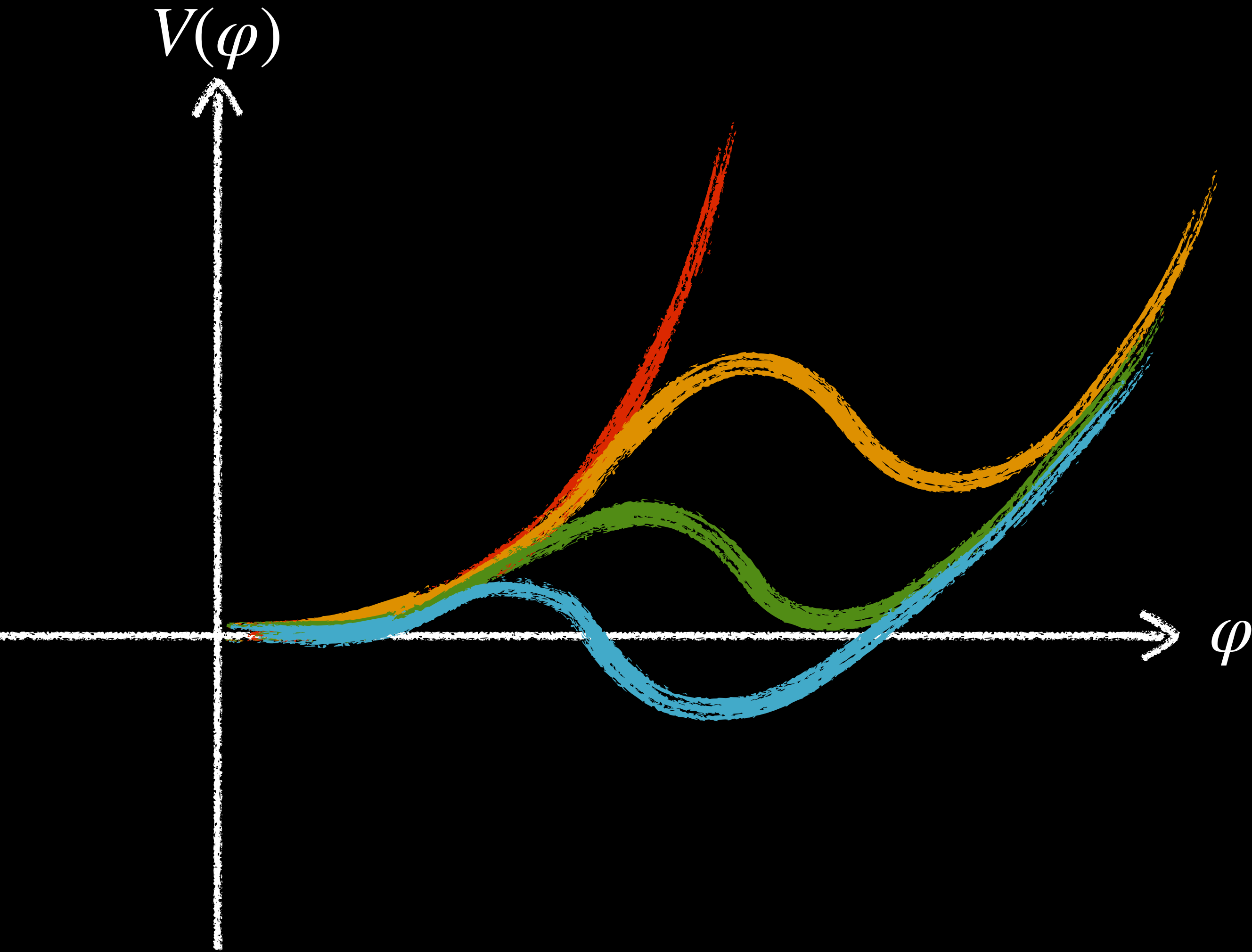
# FIRST-ORDER PHASE TRANSITION



percolation: phase  
transition completes



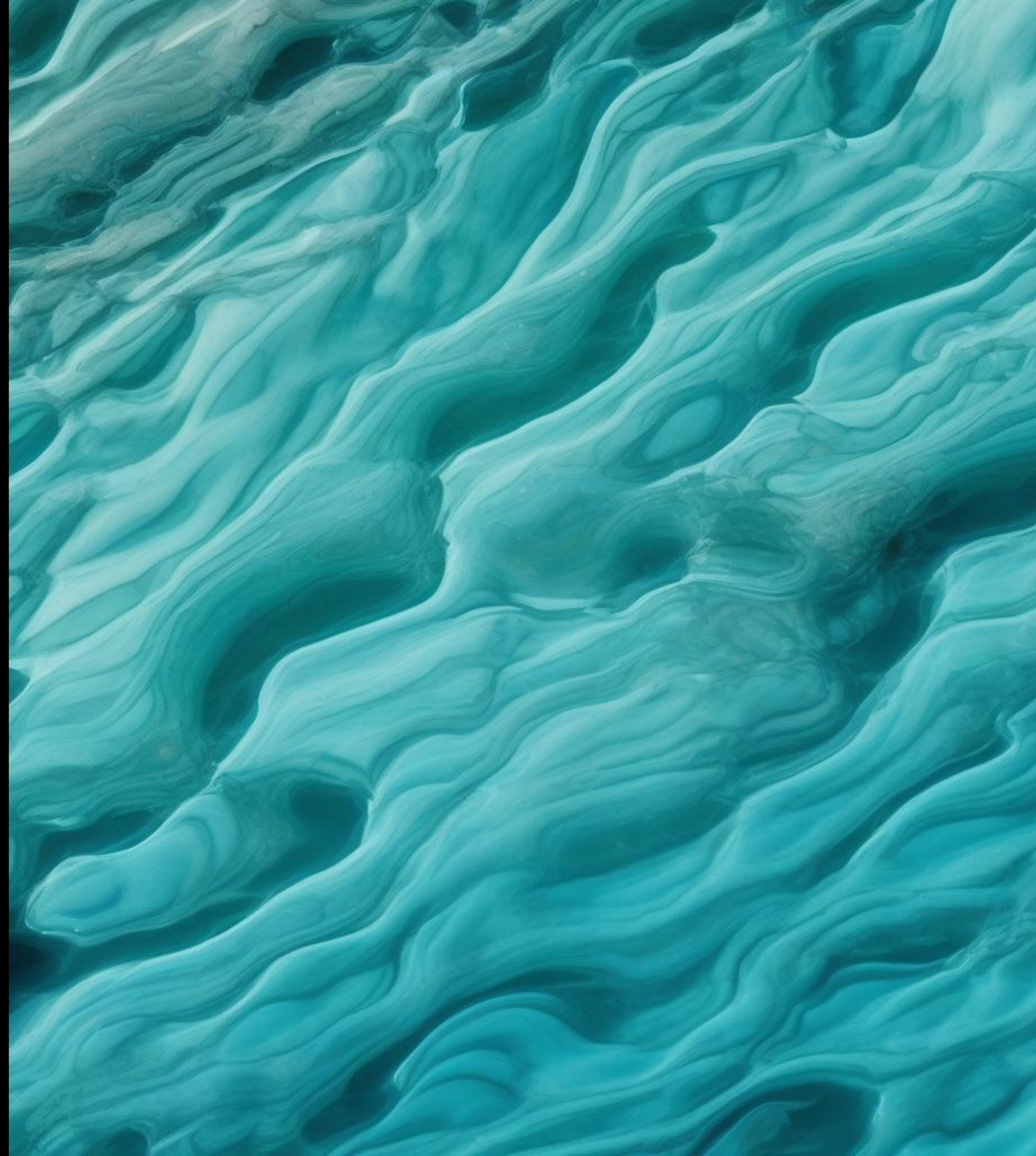
# SUPERCOOLED PHASE TRANSITION



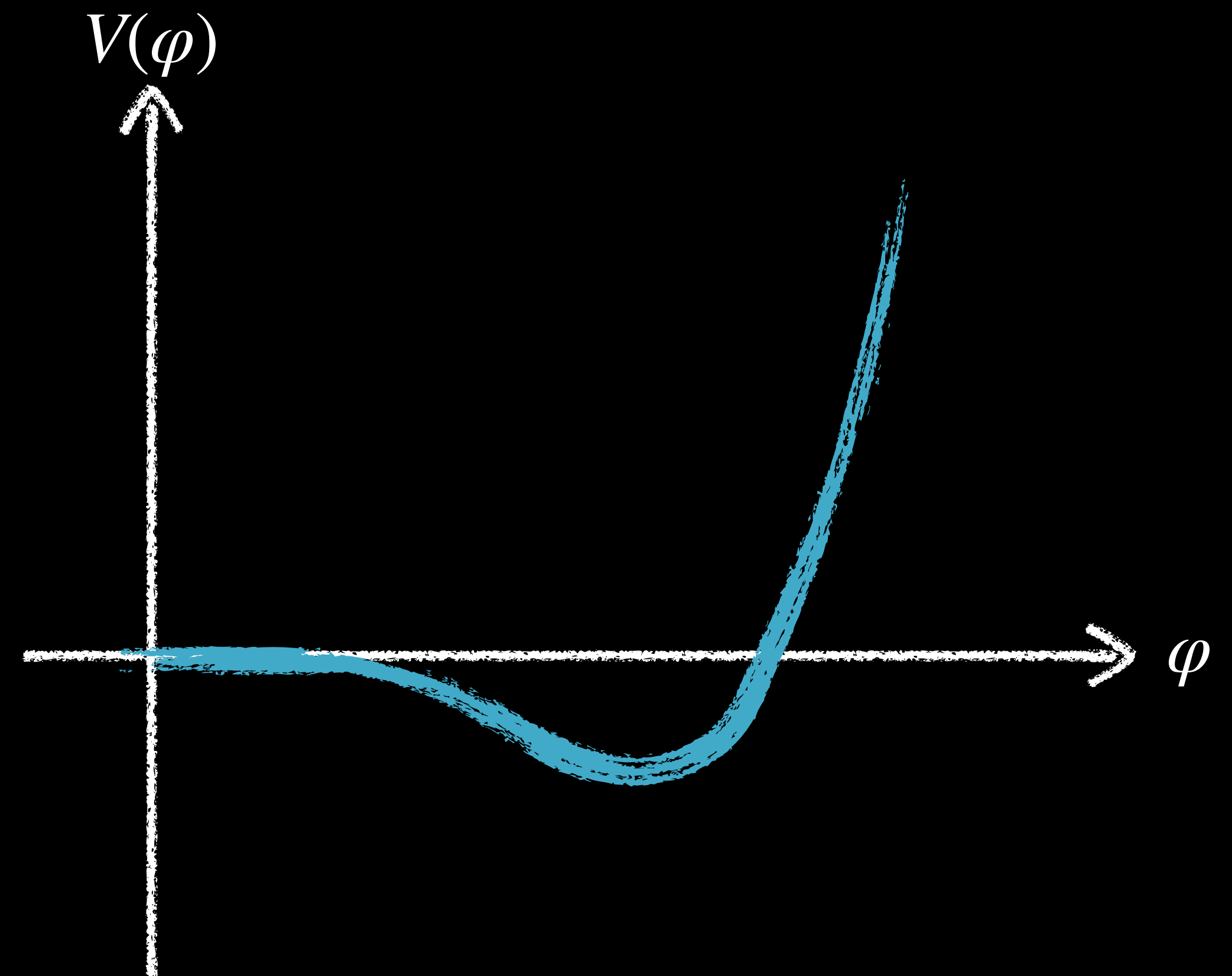
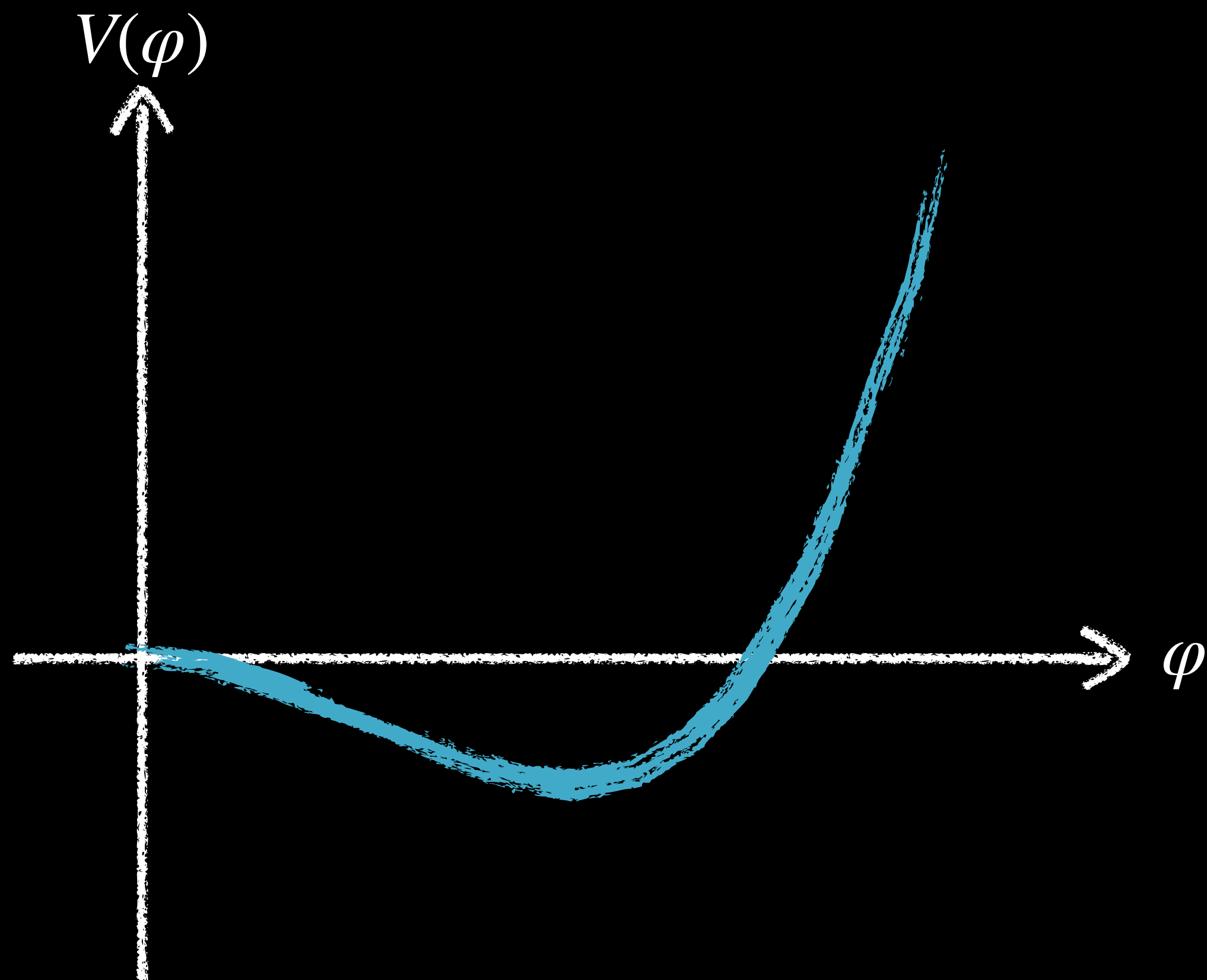
- Before nucleation: period of thermal inflation,
- Percolation temperature  $\ll$  critical temperature,
- Huge energy release (compared to radiation energy),  $\alpha \approx \frac{\Delta V}{\rho_{\text{rad}}} \gg 1$ ,
- Percolation during inflation: make sure that bubbles percolate!
- Significant reheating after the PT

[L. Randall, G. Servant, JHEP 05 (2007) 054, T. Konstandin, G. Nardini, M. Quiros, PRD82 (2010) 083513, T. Konstandin, G. Servant, JCAP 1112 (2011) 009, J. Kubo, M. Yamada, JCAP 1612 (2016), T. Hambye, A. Strumia 88 (2013) 055022 and many more recent papers]

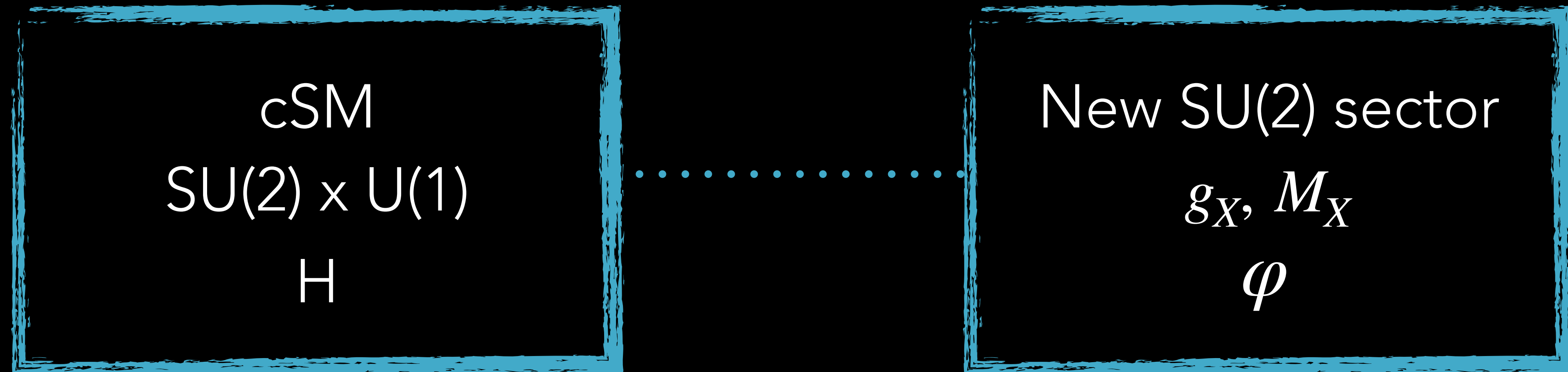
# MODEL FOR SUPERCOOLING



# ARCHETYPE: CLASSICAL SCALE INVARIANCE

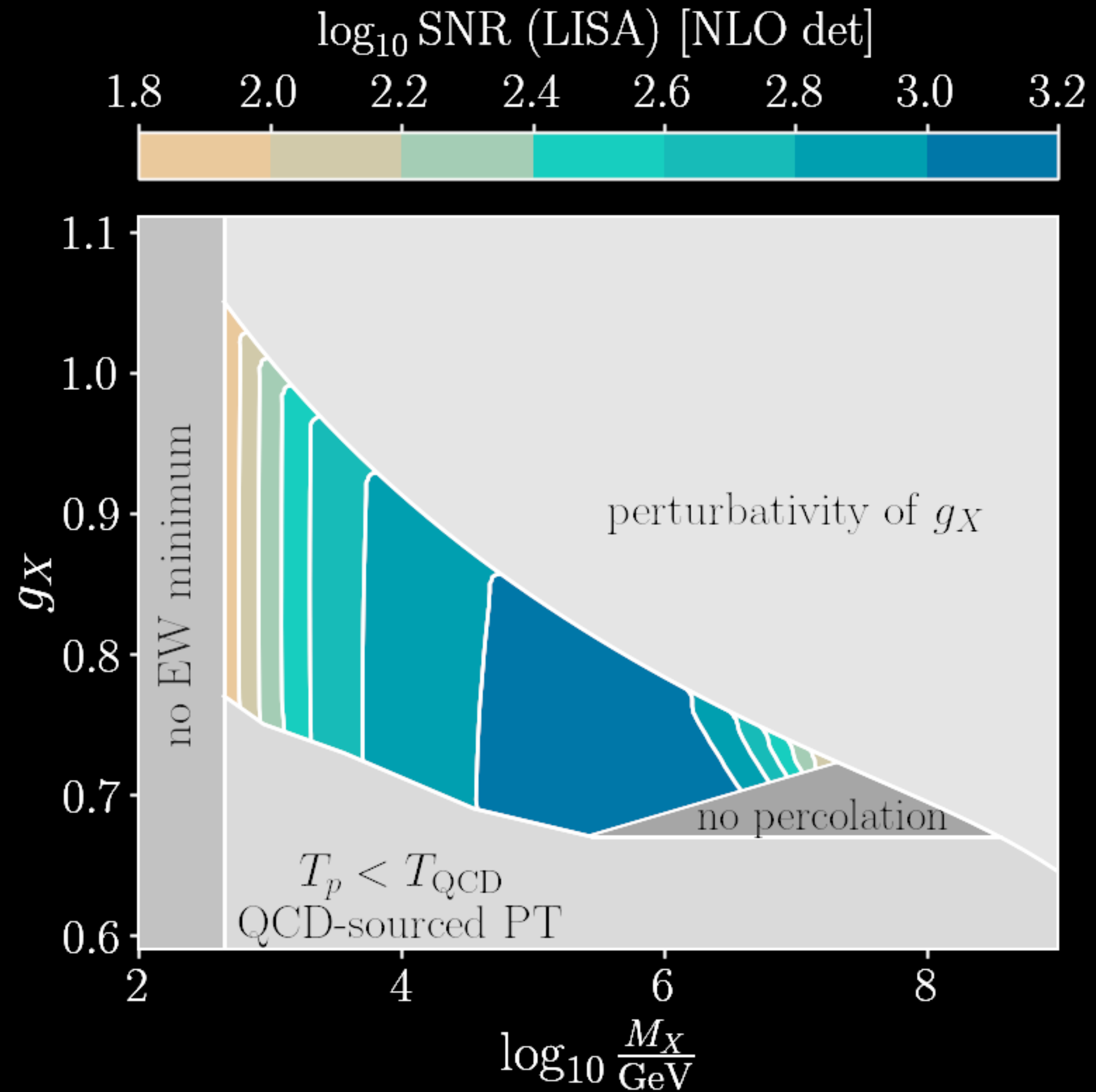


# THE MODEL



[See also: T.Hambye, A.Strumia, PRD88 (2013) 055022, C.Carone, R.Ramos, PRD88 (2013) 055020, V.V.Khoze, C.McCabe, G.Ro, JHEP 08 (2014) 026, T. Hambye, A.Strumia, D.Teresi, JHEP 1808 (2018) 188, I.Baldes, C. Garcia-Cely, JHEP 05 (2019) 190, T.Prokopec, J.Rezacek, BS, JCAP 02(2019)009, D. Marfaria, P. Tseng, JHEP 02 (2021) 022]

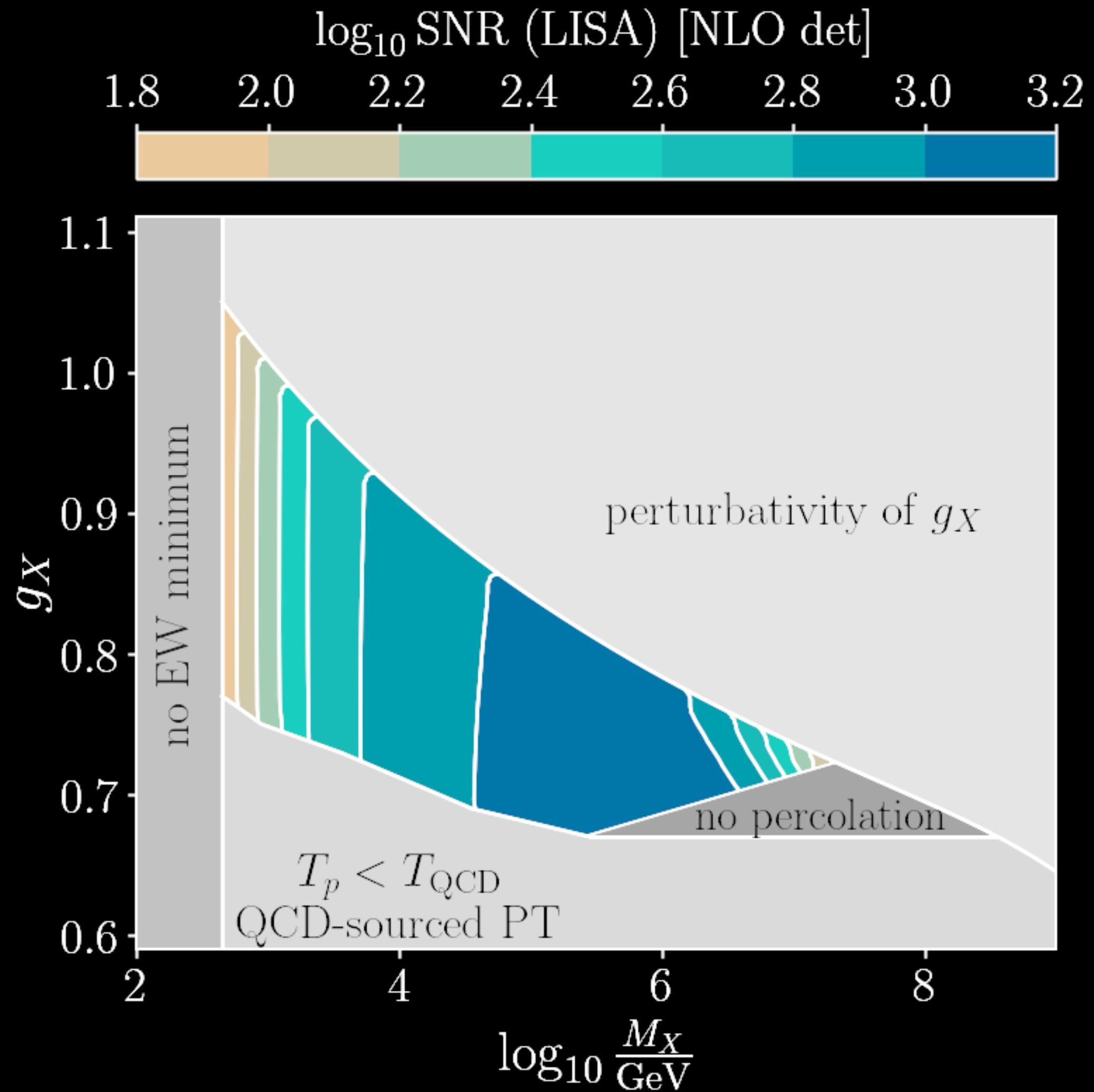
# PROBING SU(2)<sub>c</sub>SM THROUGH GW



SU(2)<sub>c</sub>SM is  
falsifiable  
through GW

[Image adapted from: M. Kierkla, PhD thesis, University of Warsaw, 2025]

# PROBING SU(2)<sub>c</sub>SM THROUGH GW

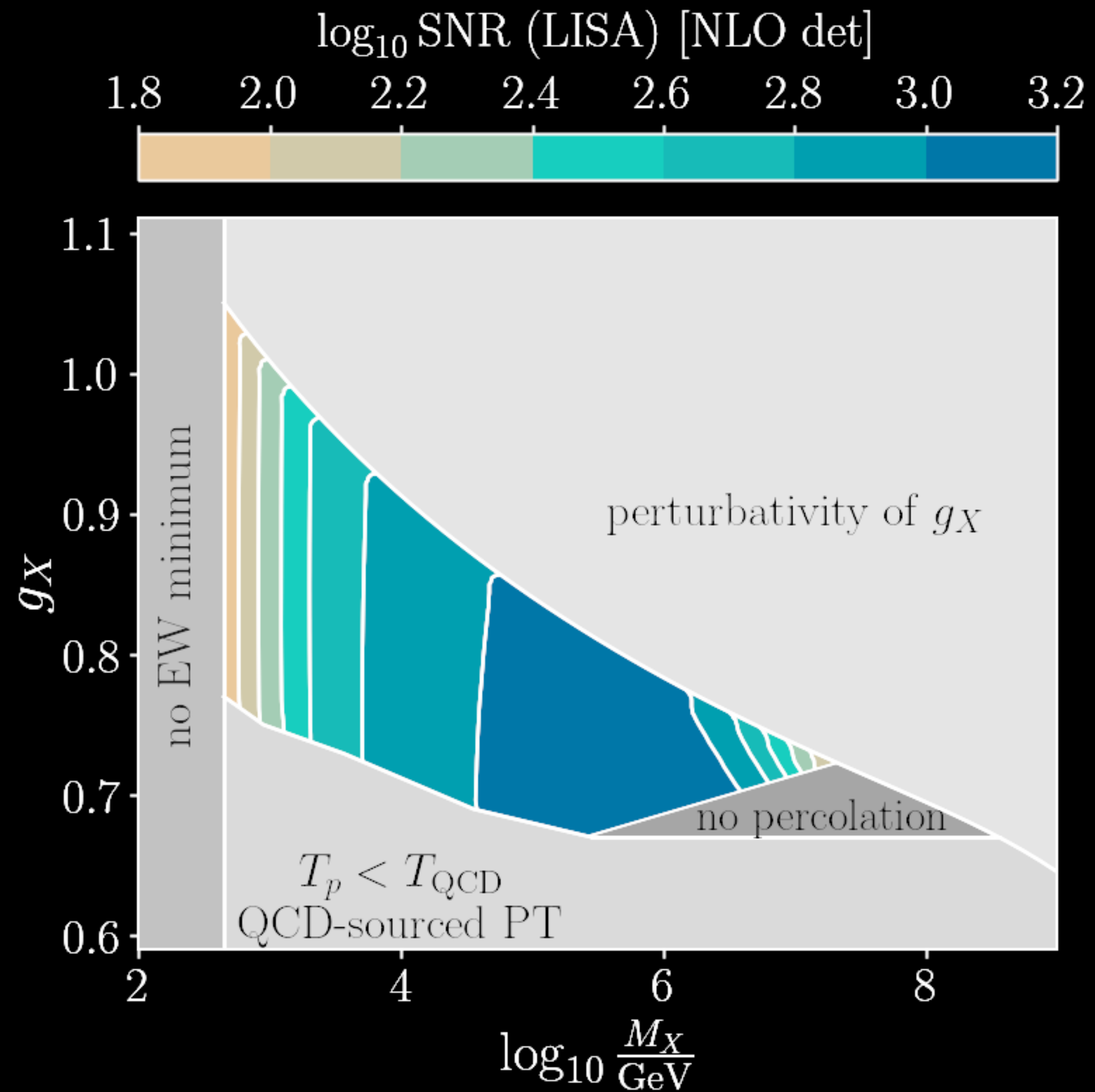


[Image adapted from: M. Kierkla, PhD thesis, University of Warsaw, 2025]

SU(2)<sub>c</sub>SM is  
falsifiable  
through GW

+ PBH  
+ PTA signal

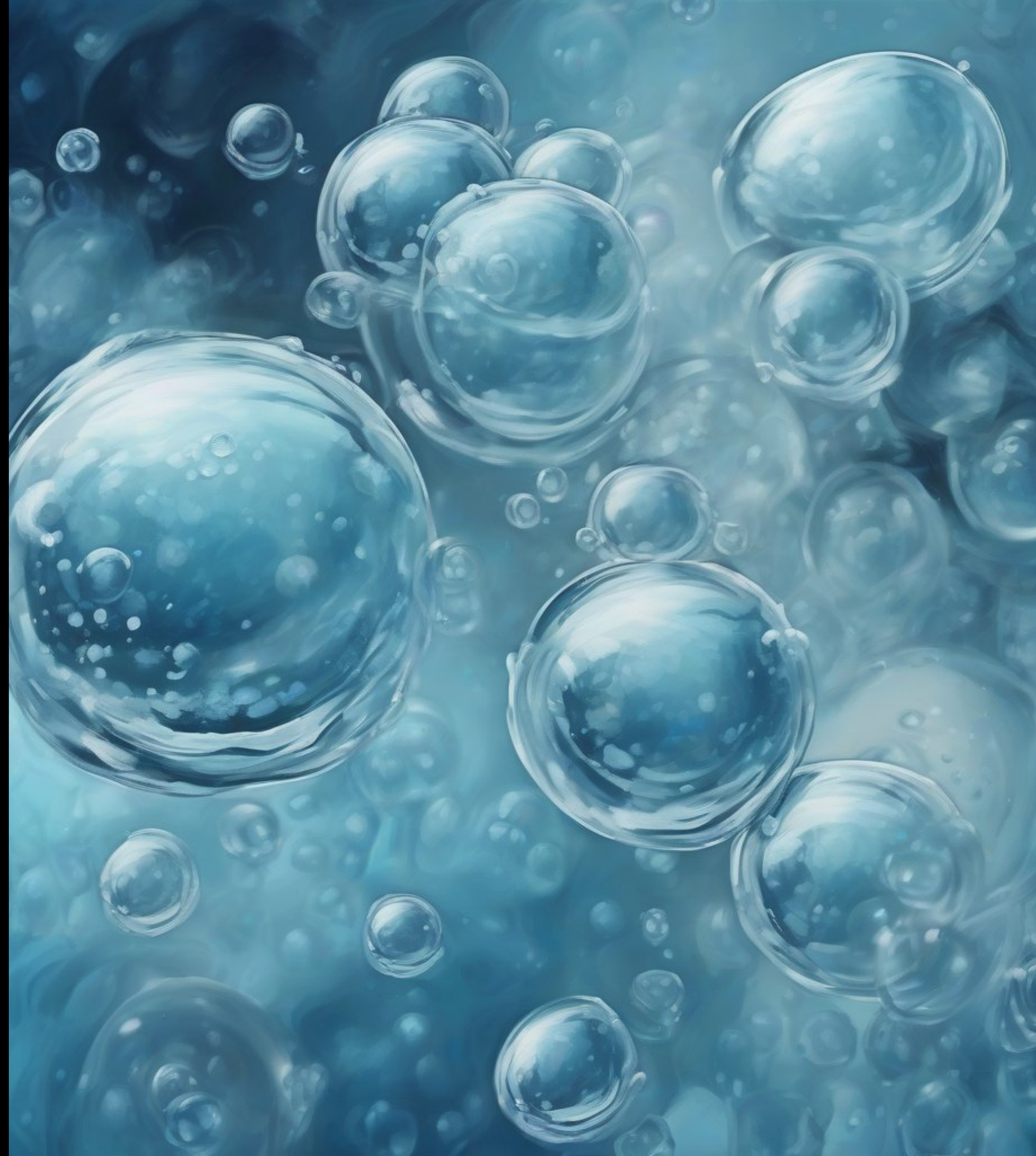
# SUPERCOOLED PHASE TRANSITION



Large SNR  $\rightarrow$   
good precision of  
reconstruction.

[Image adapted from: M. Kierkla, PhD thesis, University of Warsaw, 2025]

ADVANCING  
BUBBLE  
NUCLEATION RATE



# BUBBLE NUCLEATION RATE

$$\Gamma = A_{\text{dyn}} \cdot A_{\text{stat}} = A_{\text{dyn}} \cdot A_{\text{det}} \cdot \exp(-S_{\text{eff}}[\varphi_b])$$

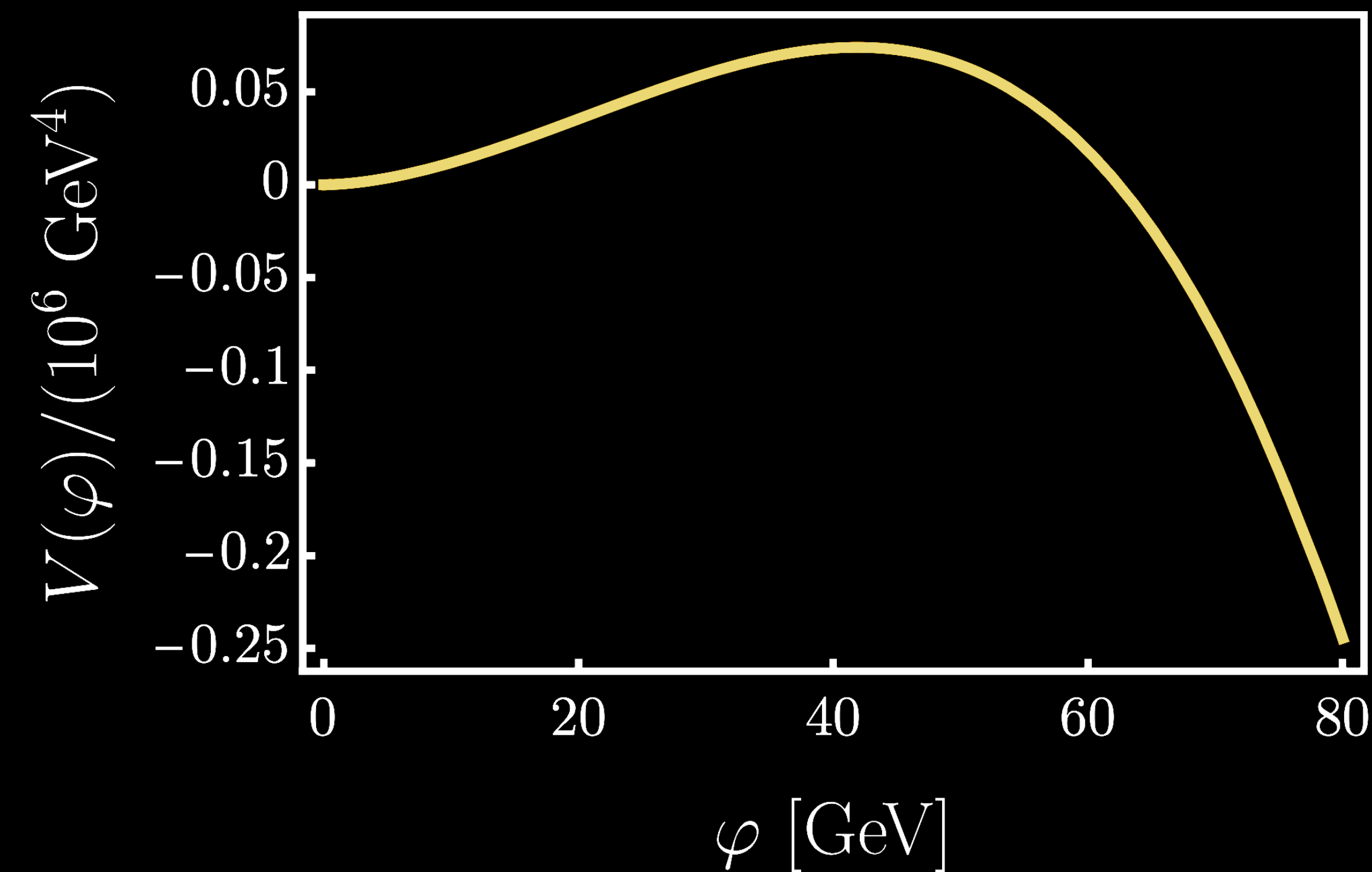
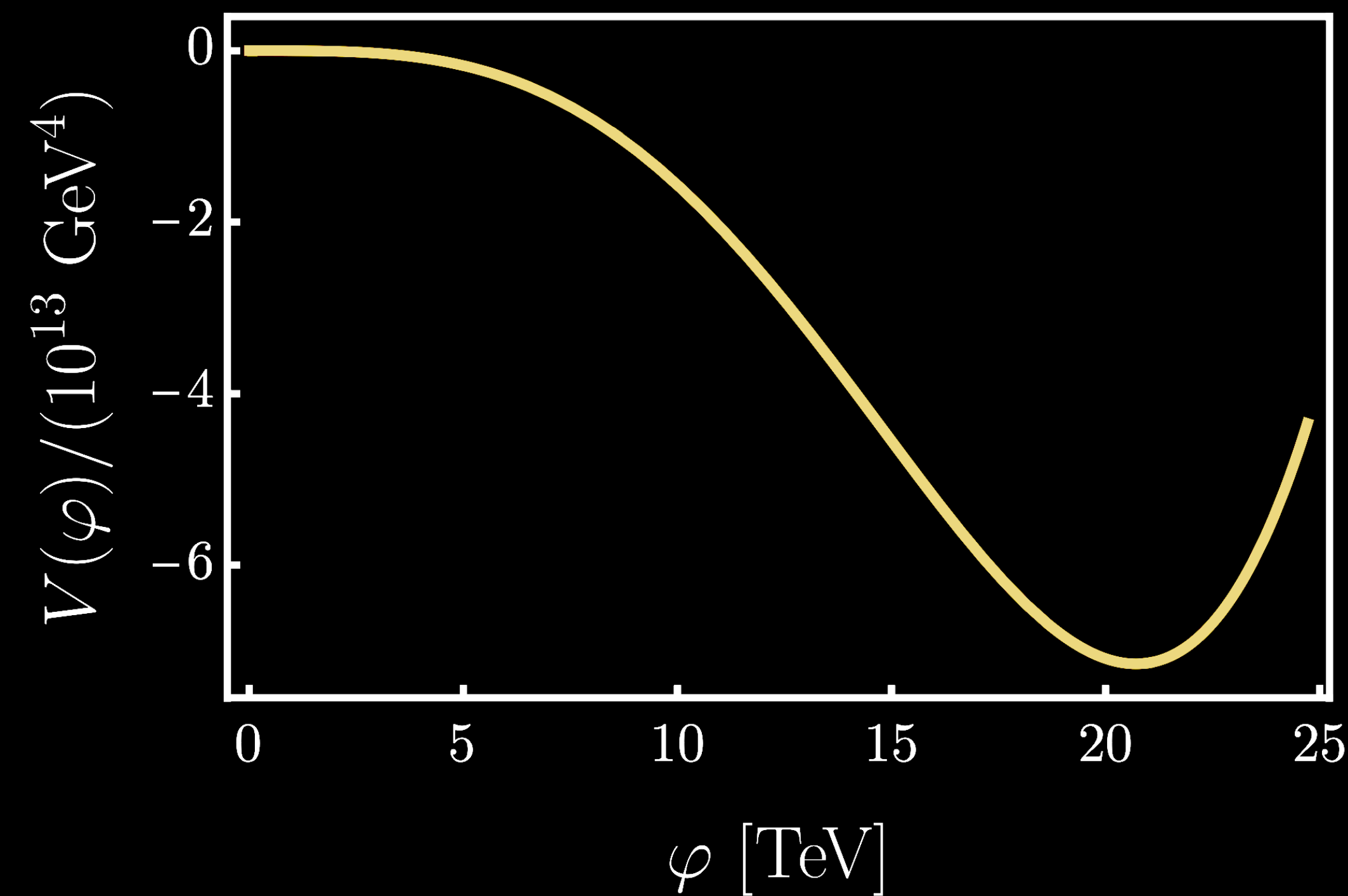
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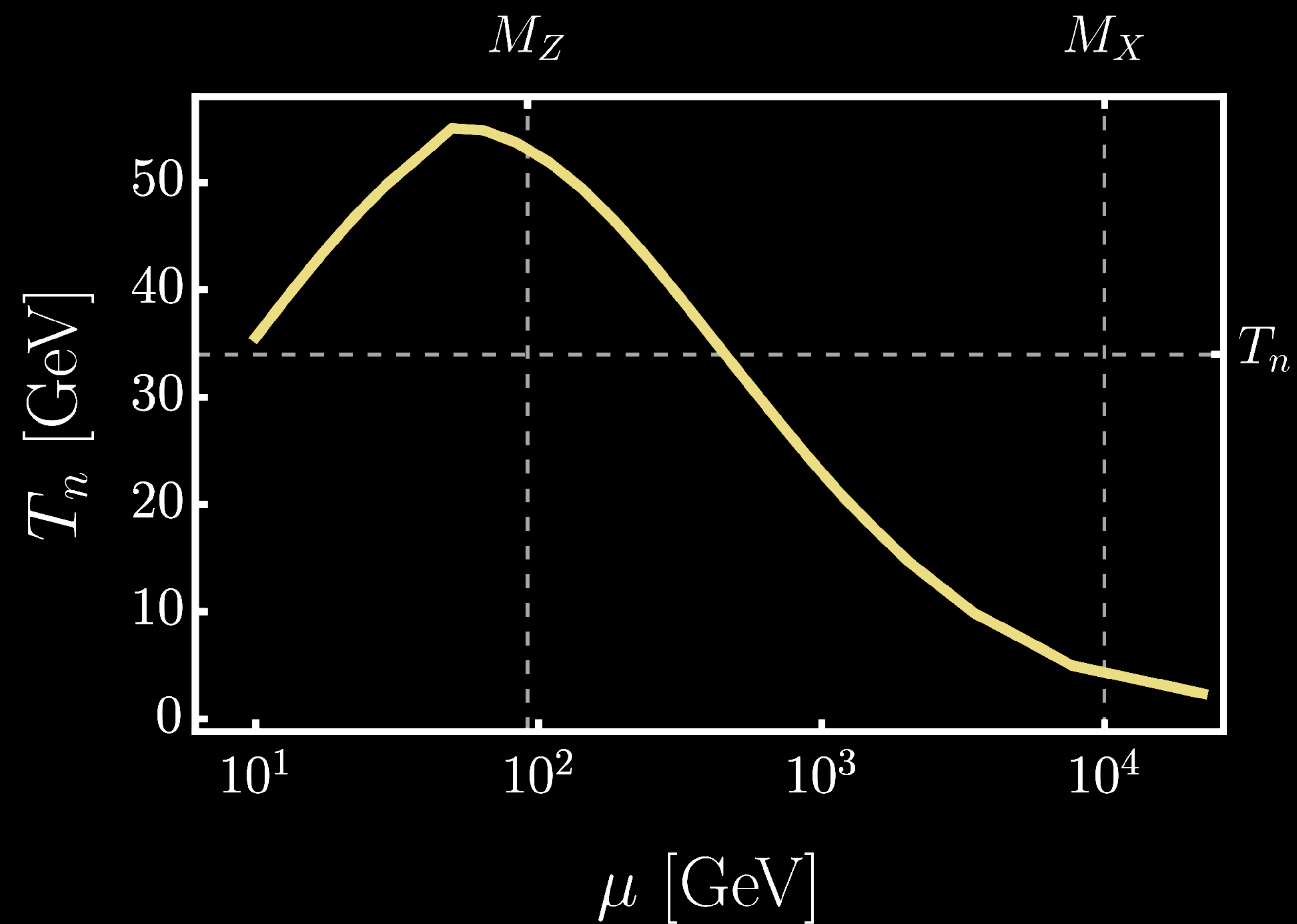
Proper treatment of:

1. renormalisation-scale dependence
2. thermal resummations
3. exponential prefactors

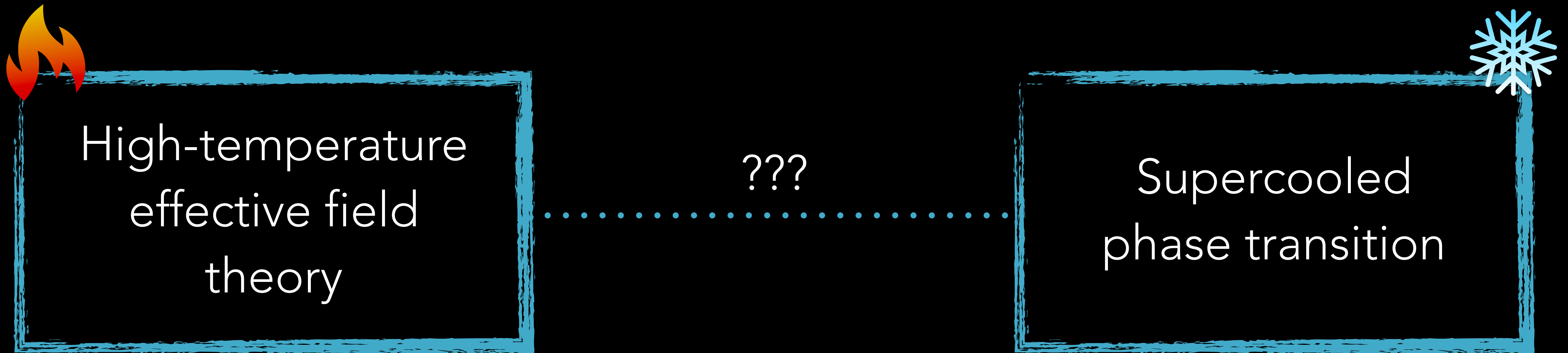
# HIGH-T VS LOW-T



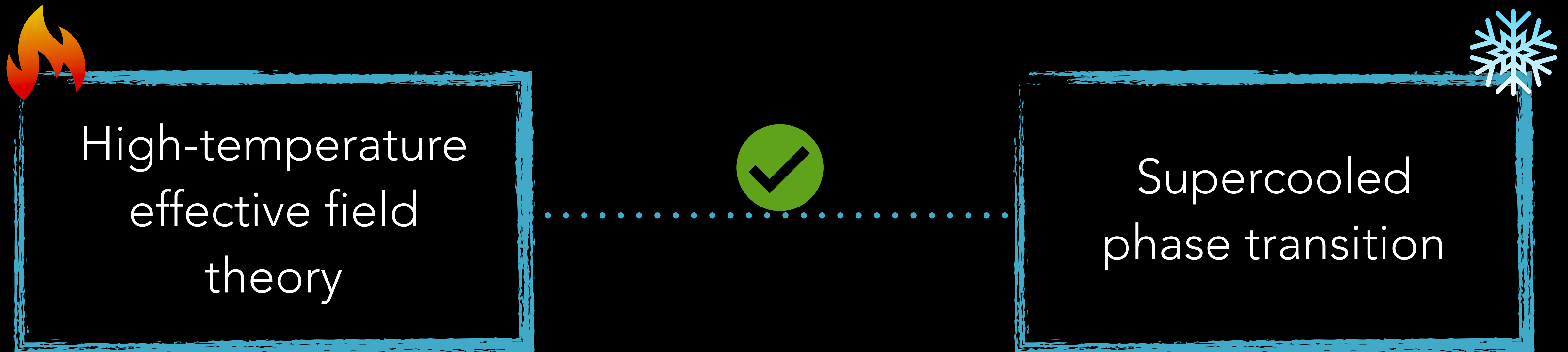
# SCALE DEPENDENCE - SOURCE OF UNCERTAINTY



# SUPERCOOLING AT HIGH TEMPERATURE??



# HIGH-TEMPERATURE EFT FOR NUCLEATION



# HIGH-TEMPERATURE EFT FOR NUCLEATION



High-temperature  
effective field  
theory

See the talk by  
Maciej Kierkla on  
Wednesday!



Supercooled  
phase transition

# NUCLEATION RATE WITHOUT DERIVATIVE EXP.

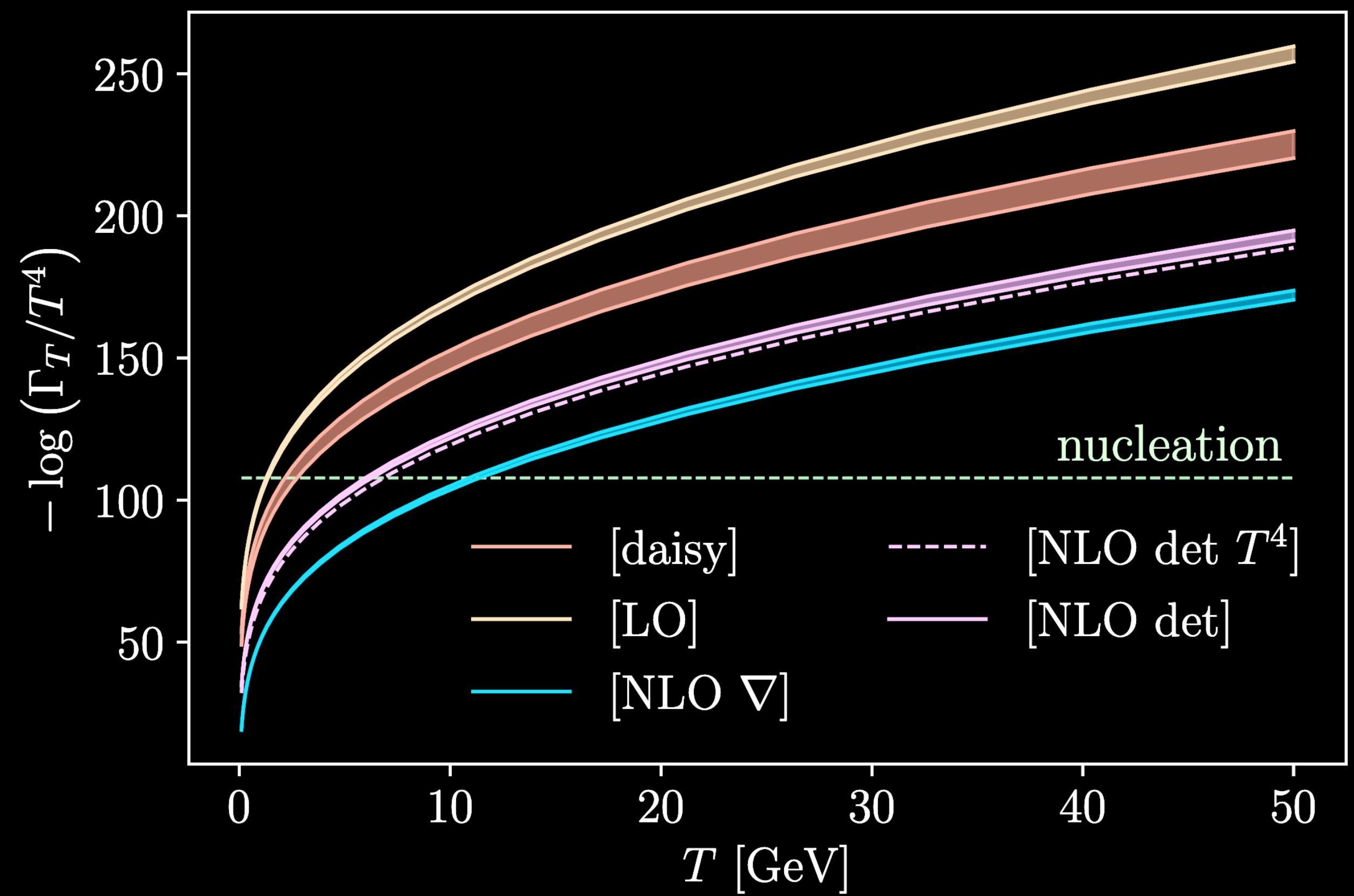
$$\Gamma = A_{\text{dyn}} \cdot A_{\text{stat}}$$

$$A_{\text{stat}} = \prod_a \mathcal{J}_a \mathcal{V}_a \sqrt{\frac{\det \mathcal{O}_a(\varphi_F)}{\det' \mathcal{O}_a(\varphi_b)}} \mathcal{J}_\phi \sqrt{\left| \frac{\det \mathcal{O}_\phi(\varphi_F)}{\det' \mathcal{O}_\phi(\varphi_b)} \right|} e^{-(S[\varphi_b] - S[\varphi_F])}$$

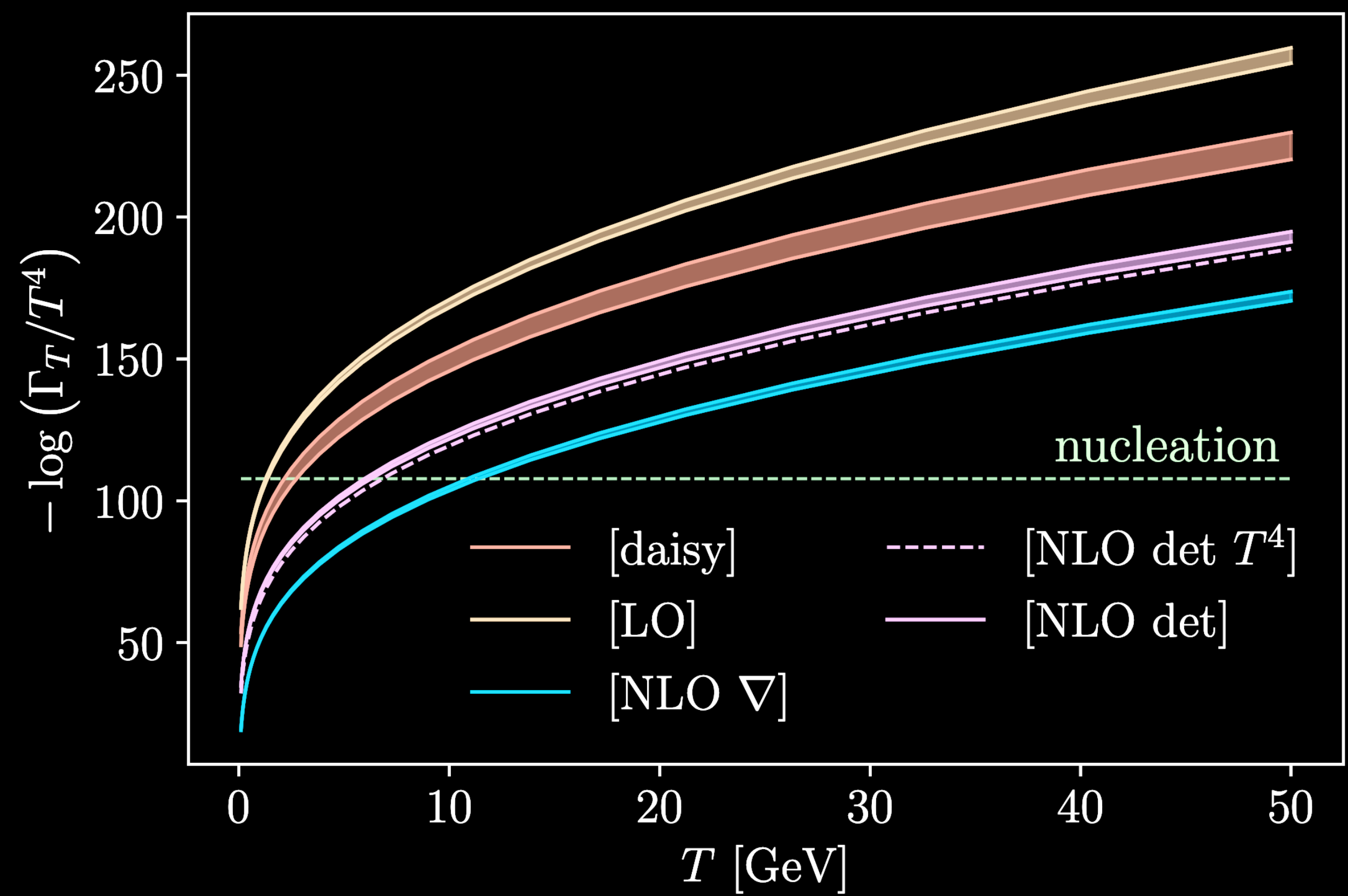
$$\mathcal{O}_a(\varphi) = -\partial^2 + m_a^2(\varphi)$$

$$\mathcal{O}_\phi(\varphi) = -\partial^2 + (V^{\text{LO}})''(\varphi)$$

# COMPARISON OF DIFFERENT APPROXIMATIONS

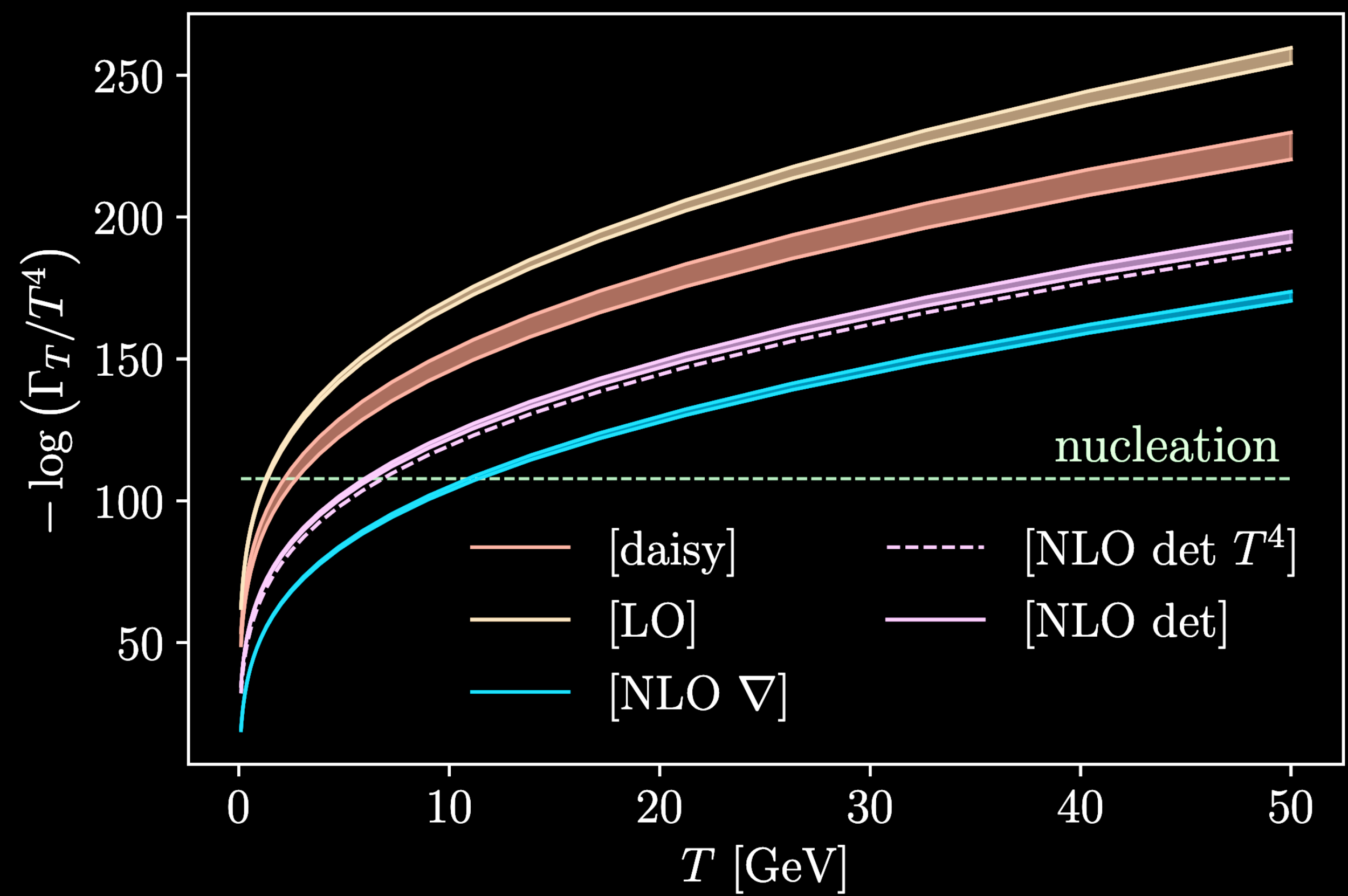


# COMPARISON OF DIFFERENT APPROXIMATIONS



Relative changes:  
} Percolation temp.: up to 300%  
Bubble radius: up to 25%

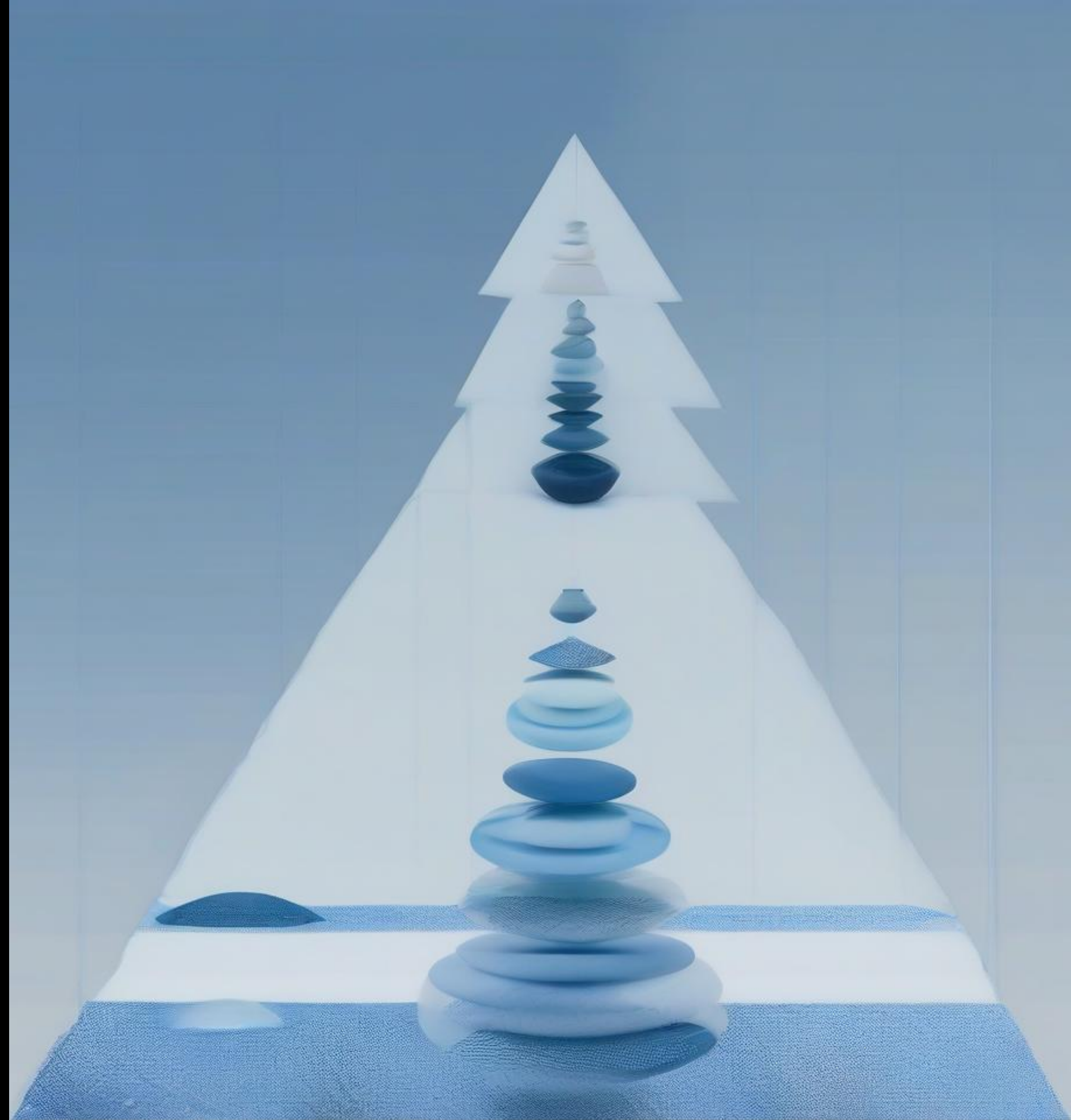
# COMPARISON OF DIFFERENT APPROXIMATIONS



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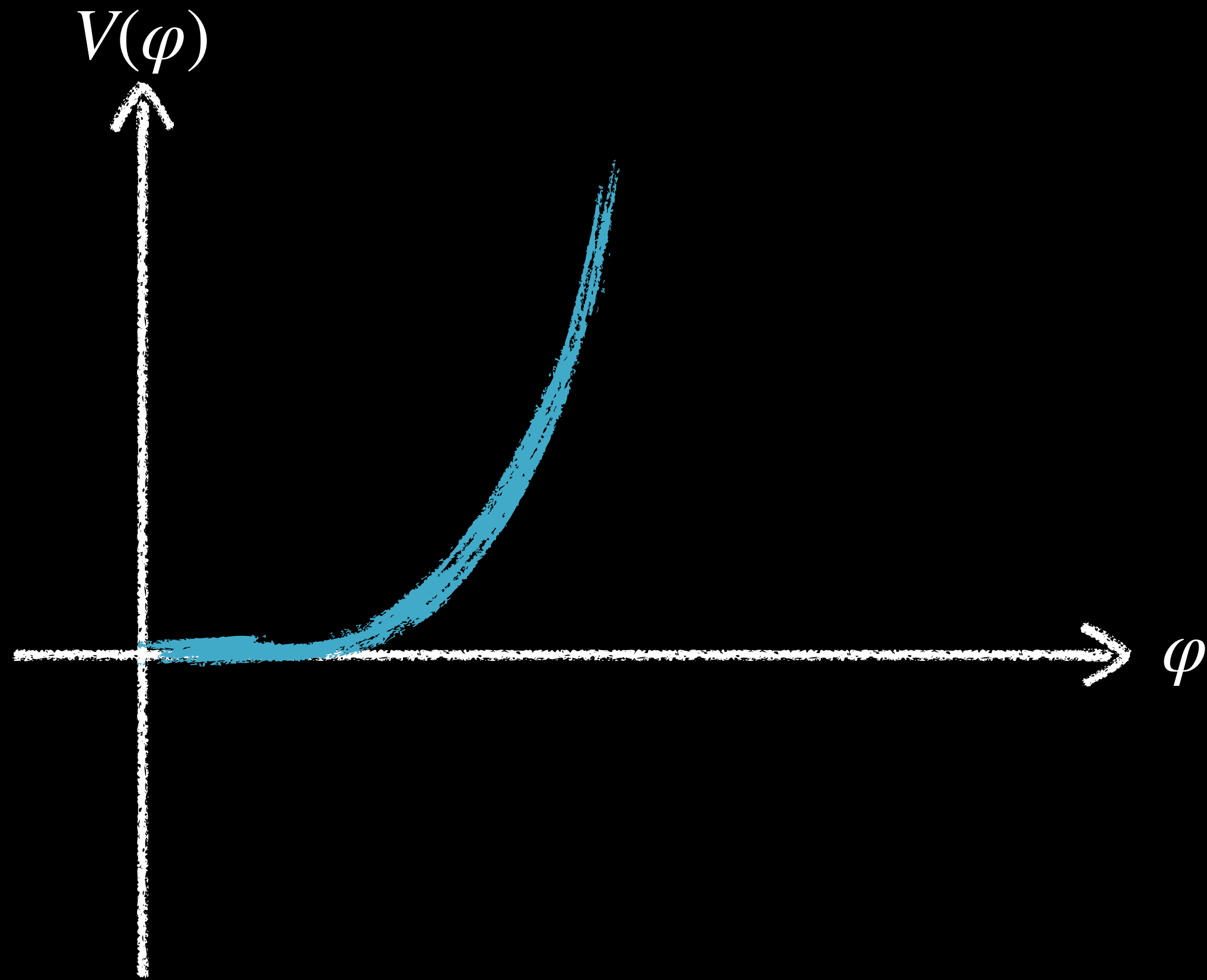
Theoretical  
diligence is crucial!

# RENORMALISATION



# RADIATIVE SYMMETRY BREAKING

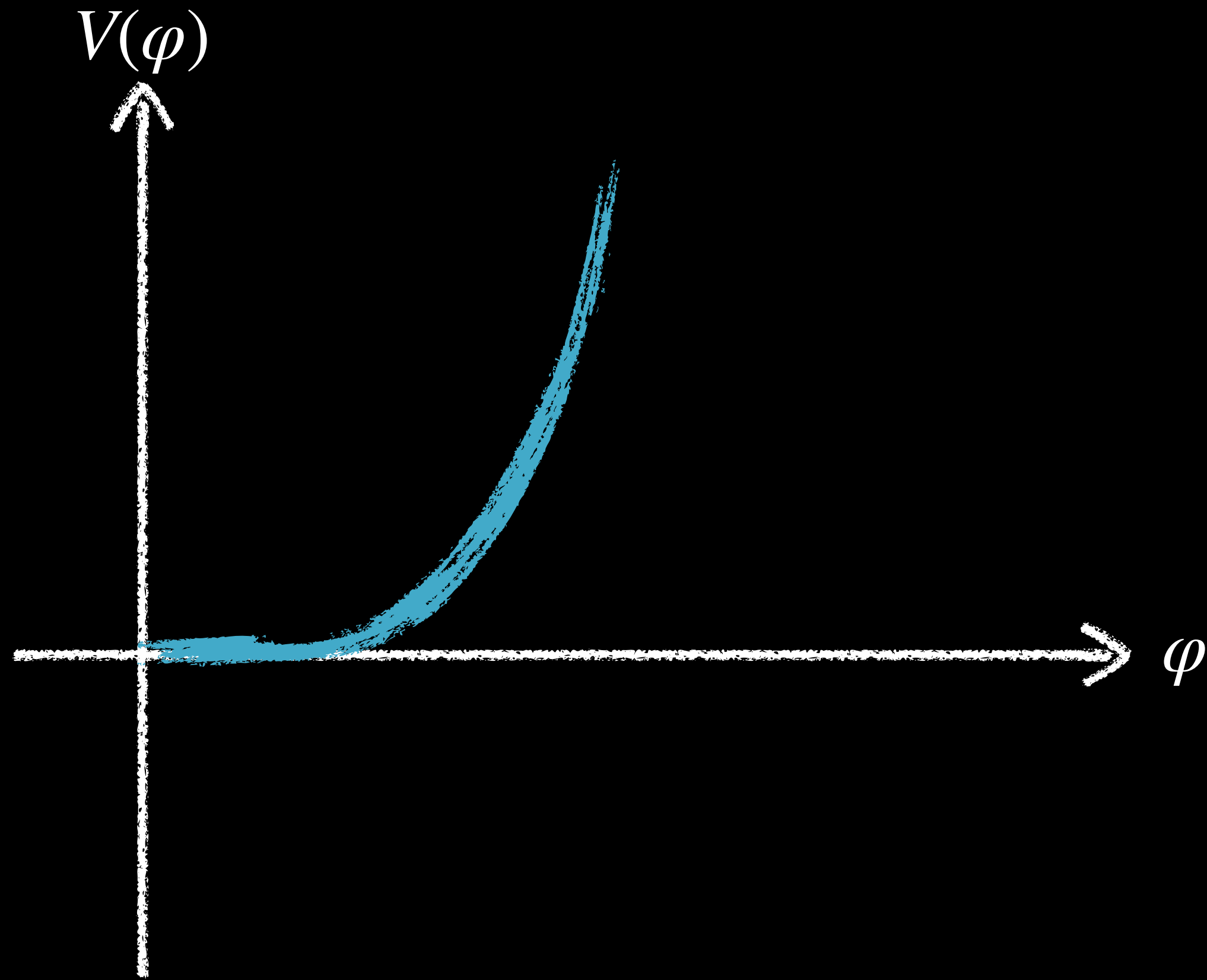
## ABELIAN HIGGS MODEL



$$V^{(0)}(\varphi) = \frac{1}{4}\lambda\varphi^4$$

# RADIATIVE SYMMETRY BREAKING

## ABELIAN HIGGS MODEL

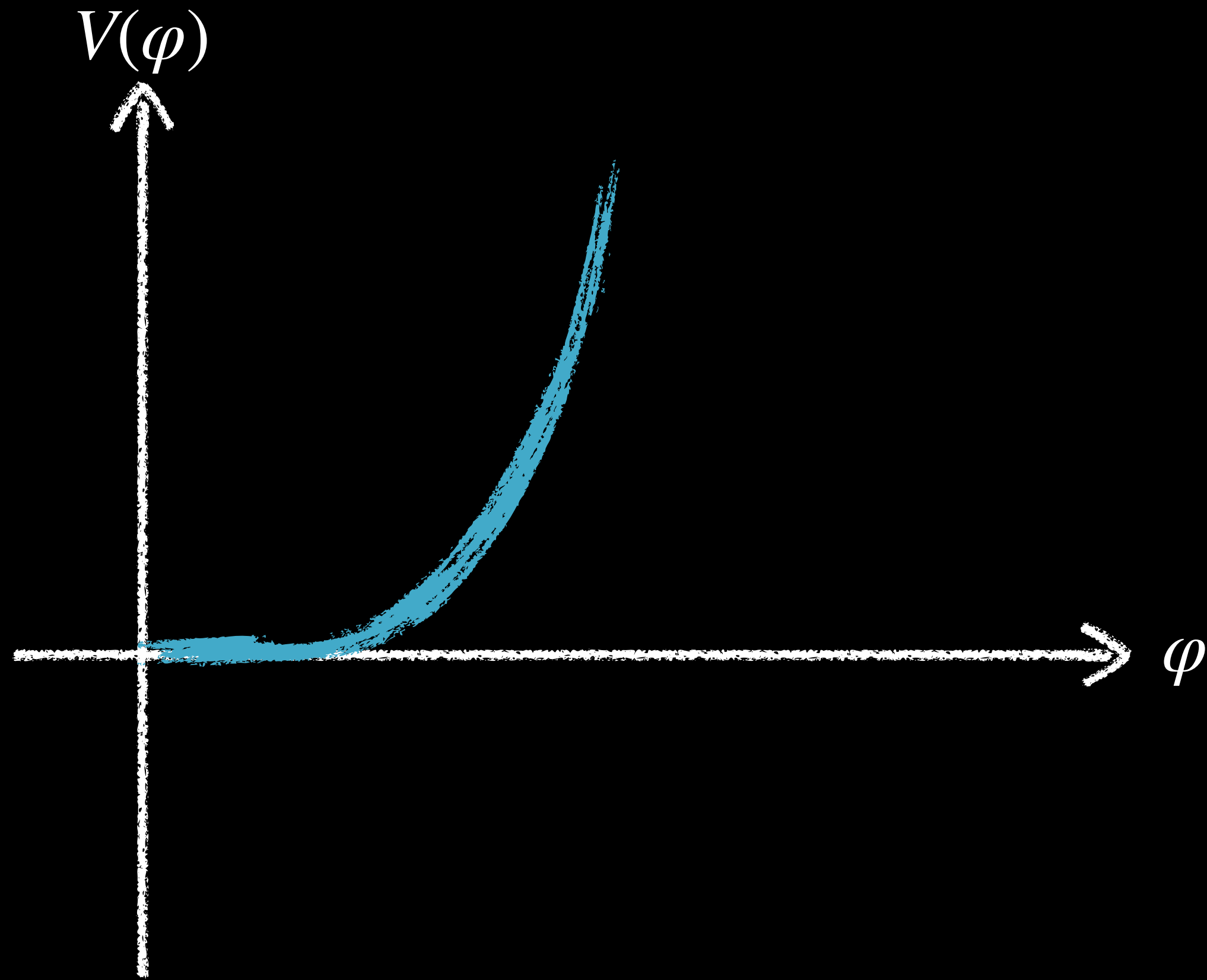


$$V^{(0)}(\varphi) = \frac{1}{4}\lambda\varphi^4$$

$$V^{(1)}(\varphi) = \frac{9\lambda^2\varphi^4}{64\pi^2} \left( \log \frac{3\lambda\varphi^2}{\mu^2} - \frac{3}{2} \right)$$

# RADIATIVE SYMMETRY BREAKING

## ABELIAN HIGGS MODEL

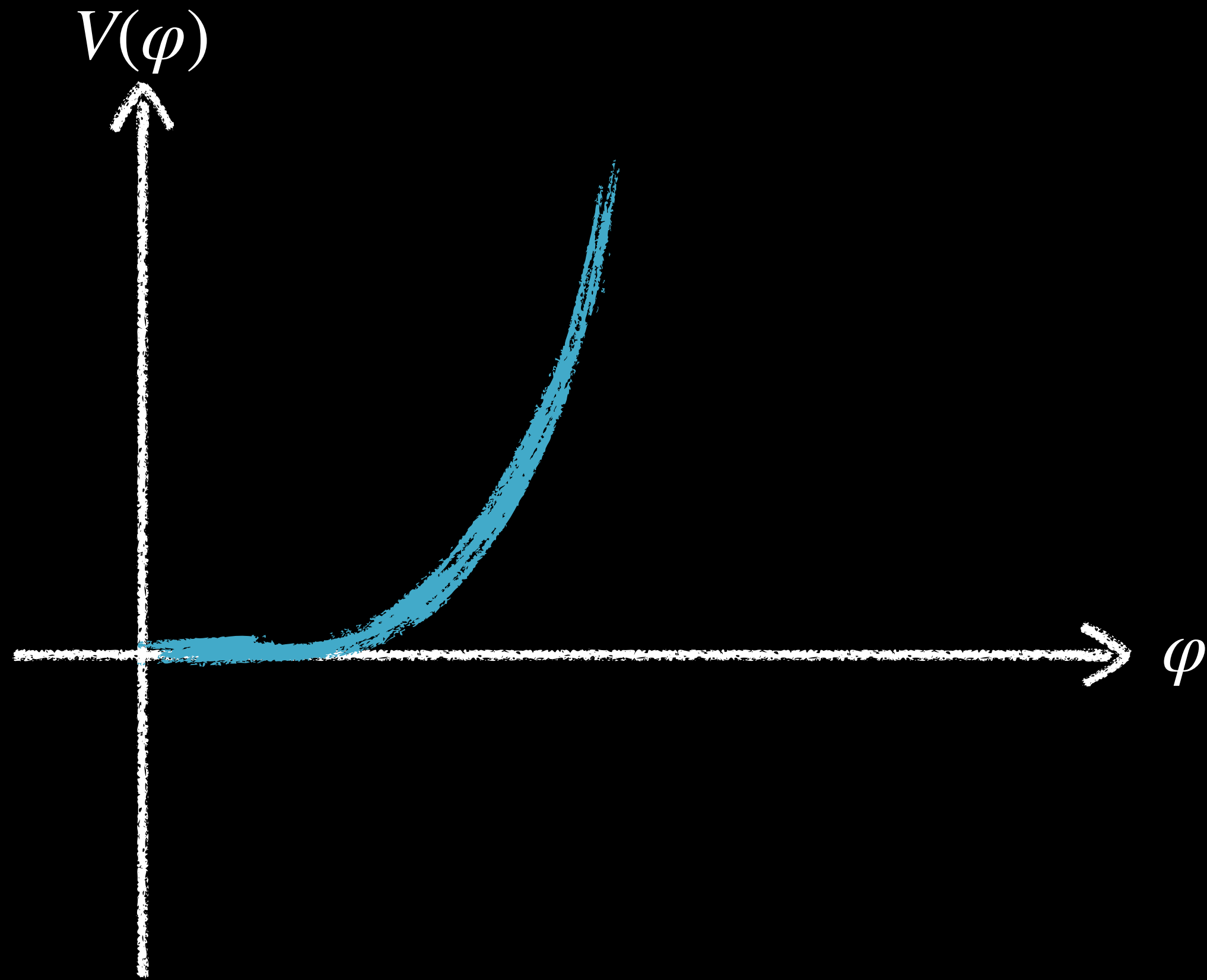


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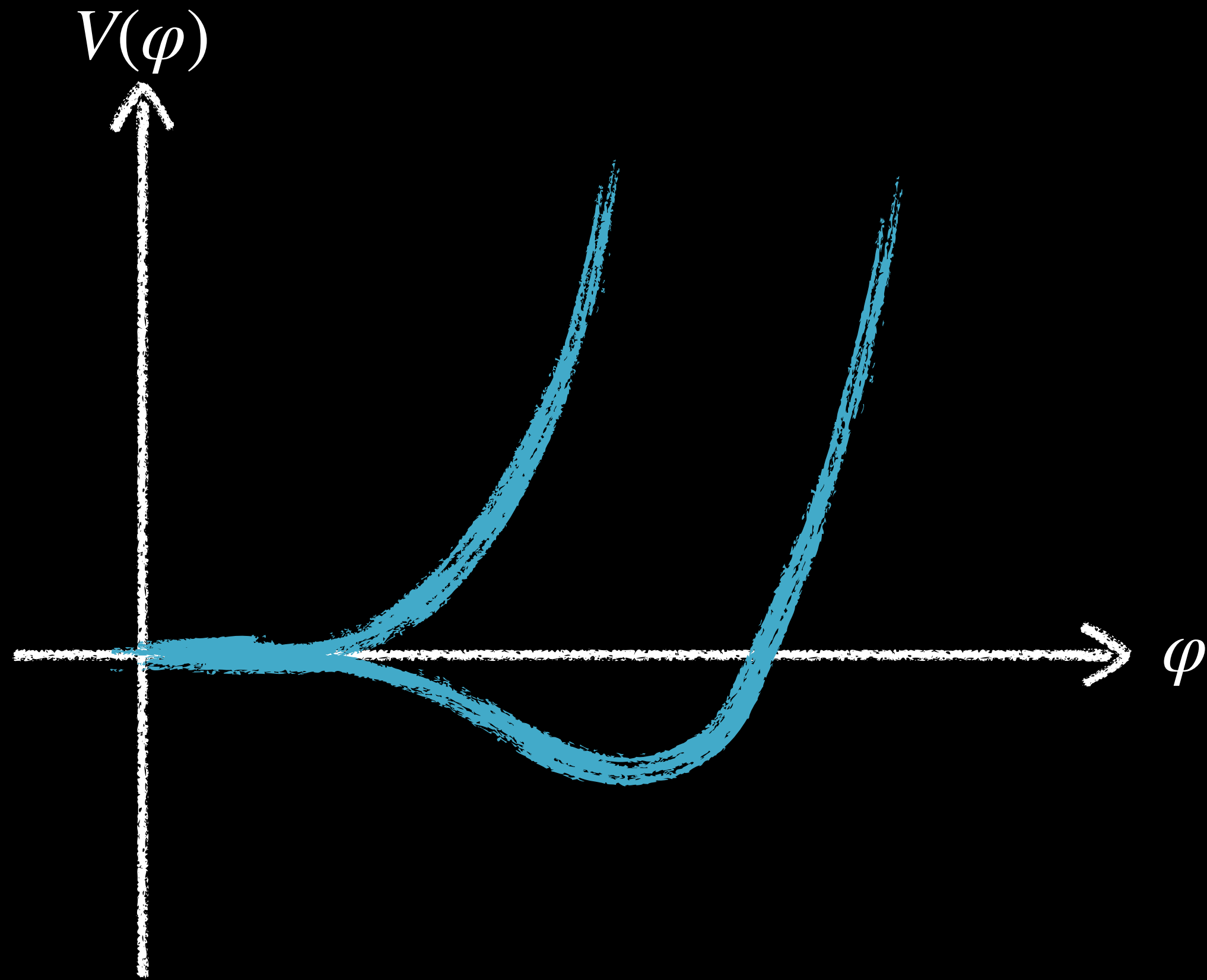


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# RADIATIVE SYMMETRY BREAKING

## ABELIAN HIGGS MODEL

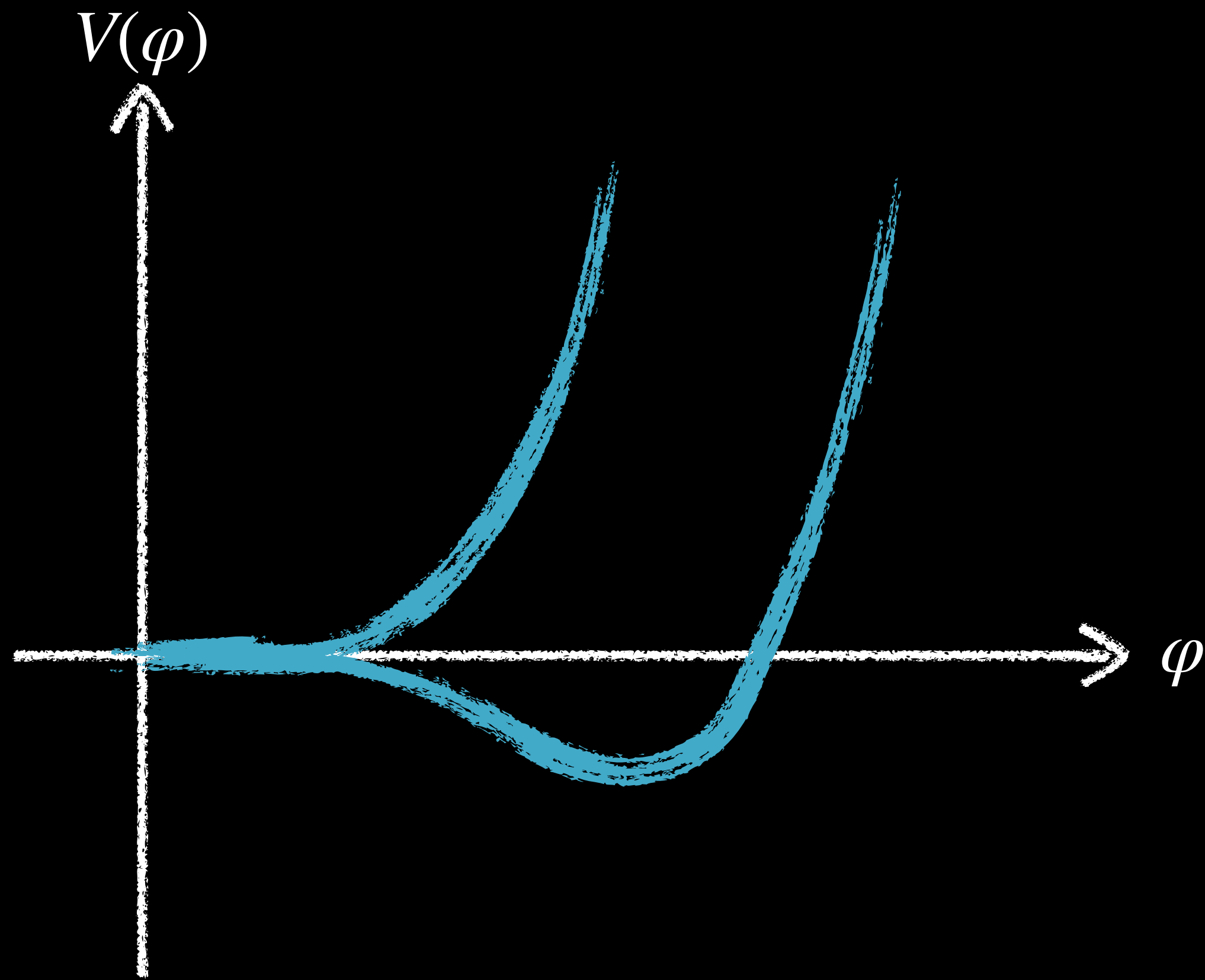


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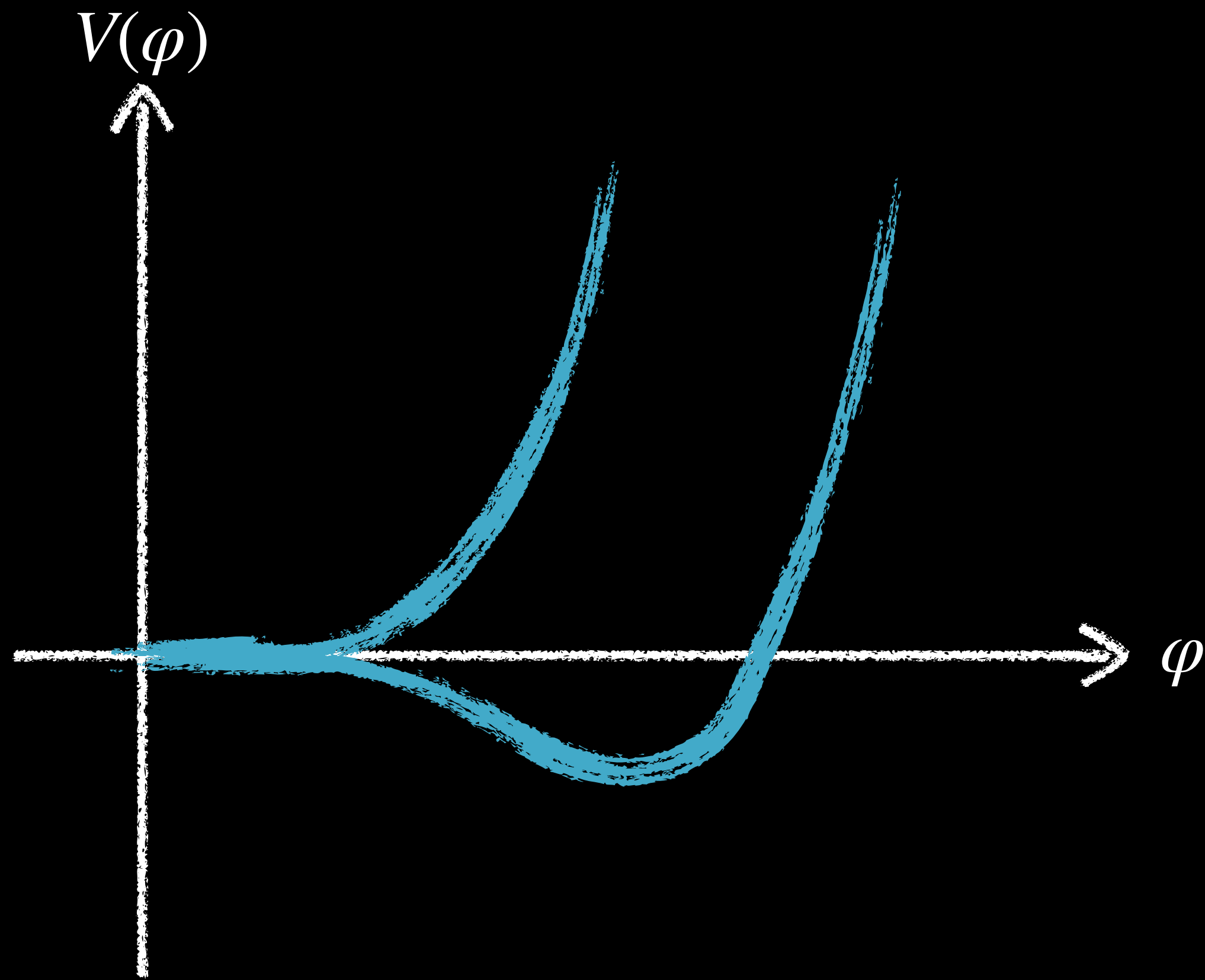
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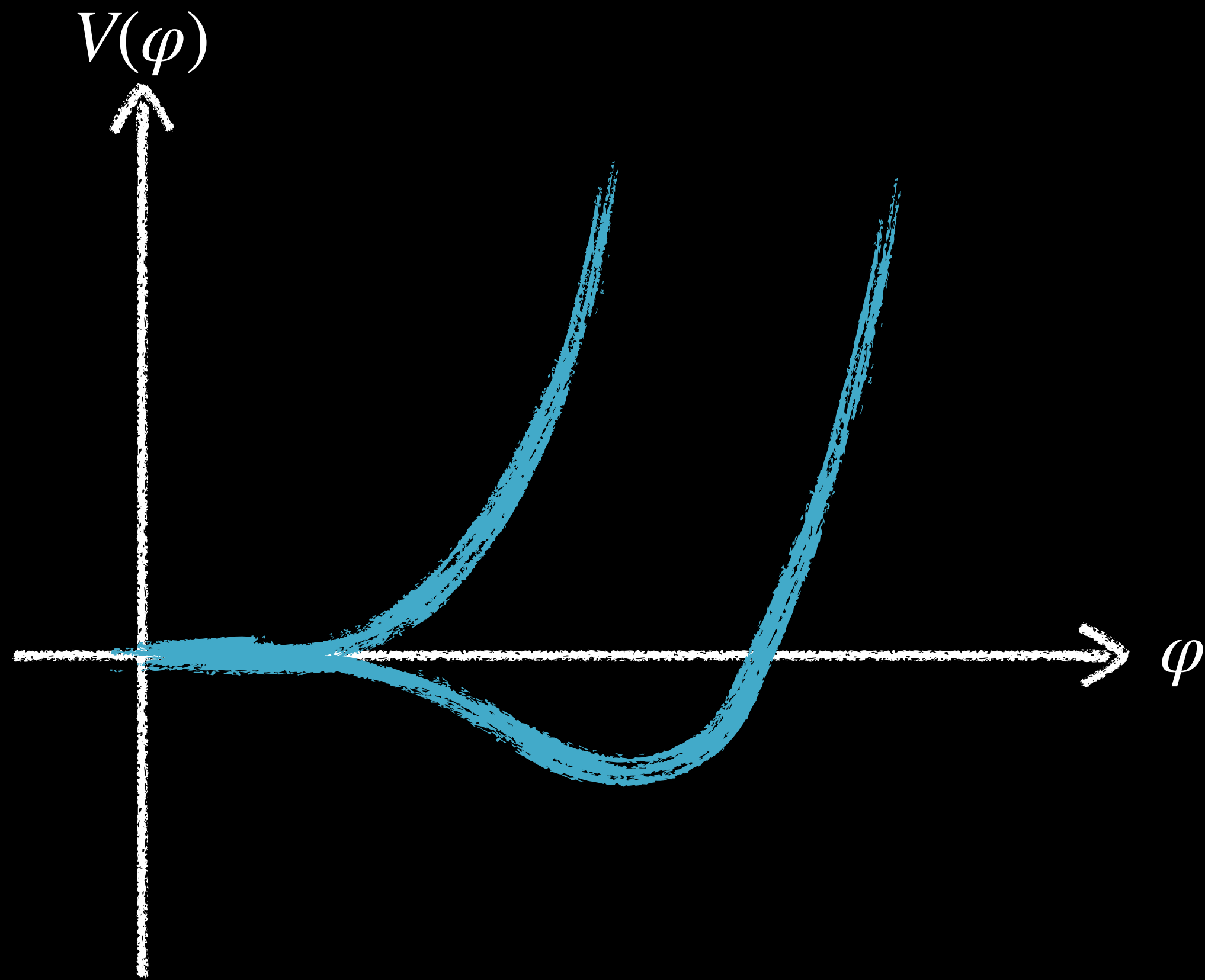
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From minimisation

$$\lambda_{\overline{\text{MS}}} = \frac{4}{3}\kappa e^4 = \frac{e^4}{16\pi^2}$$

# RADIATIVE SYMMETRY BREAKING

## ABELIAN HIGGS MODEL



$$V^{(0)}(\varphi) = \frac{1}{4}\lambda\varphi^4 + \frac{3e^4\varphi^4}{64\pi^2} \left( \log \frac{e^2\varphi^2}{\mu^2} - \frac{5}{6} \right)$$

From minimisation

$$\lambda_{\overline{\text{MS}}} = \frac{4}{3}\kappa e^4 = \frac{e^4}{16\pi^2}$$

Predicted ratio of masses

$$\frac{\overline{M}_S^2}{\overline{M}_V^2} = 8\kappa e^2 = \frac{3e^2}{8\pi^2}$$

$$V(\varphi) = \frac{1}{4}\lambda\varphi^4 + \frac{\kappa}{64\pi^2}e^4\varphi^4\left(\log\frac{e^2\varphi^2}{\mu^2} - \frac{5}{6} + \eta\right) + \frac{1}{2}\delta m^2\varphi^2 + \frac{1}{4}\delta\lambda\varphi^4$$

MS

OS

Counterterms

$$\begin{cases} \delta m_{\text{MS}}^2 = 0 \\ \delta\lambda_{\text{MS}} = -4\kappa e^4\eta, \end{cases}$$

Mass ratio

$$\frac{\overline{M}_S^2}{\overline{M}_V^2} = 8\kappa e^2 \equiv r_{\text{CW}}$$

$$V(\varphi) = \frac{1}{4}\lambda\varphi^4 + \frac{\kappa}{64\pi^2}e^4\varphi^4\left(\log\frac{e^2\varphi^2}{\mu^2} - \frac{5}{6} + \eta\right) + \frac{1}{2}\delta m^2\varphi^2 + \frac{1}{4}\delta\lambda\varphi^4$$

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OS

Renormalisation conditions:

$$\left.\frac{dV}{d\varphi}\right|_{\varphi=M_V/e} = 0$$

$$\left.\frac{d^2V}{d\varphi^2}\right|_{\varphi=M_V/e} = M_S^2$$

$$V(\varphi) = \frac{1}{4}\lambda\varphi^4 + \frac{\kappa}{64\pi^2}e^4\varphi^4\left(\log\frac{e^2\varphi^2}{\mu^2} - \frac{5}{6} + \eta\right) + \frac{1}{2}\delta m^2\varphi^2 + \frac{1}{4}\delta\lambda\varphi^4$$

MS

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OS

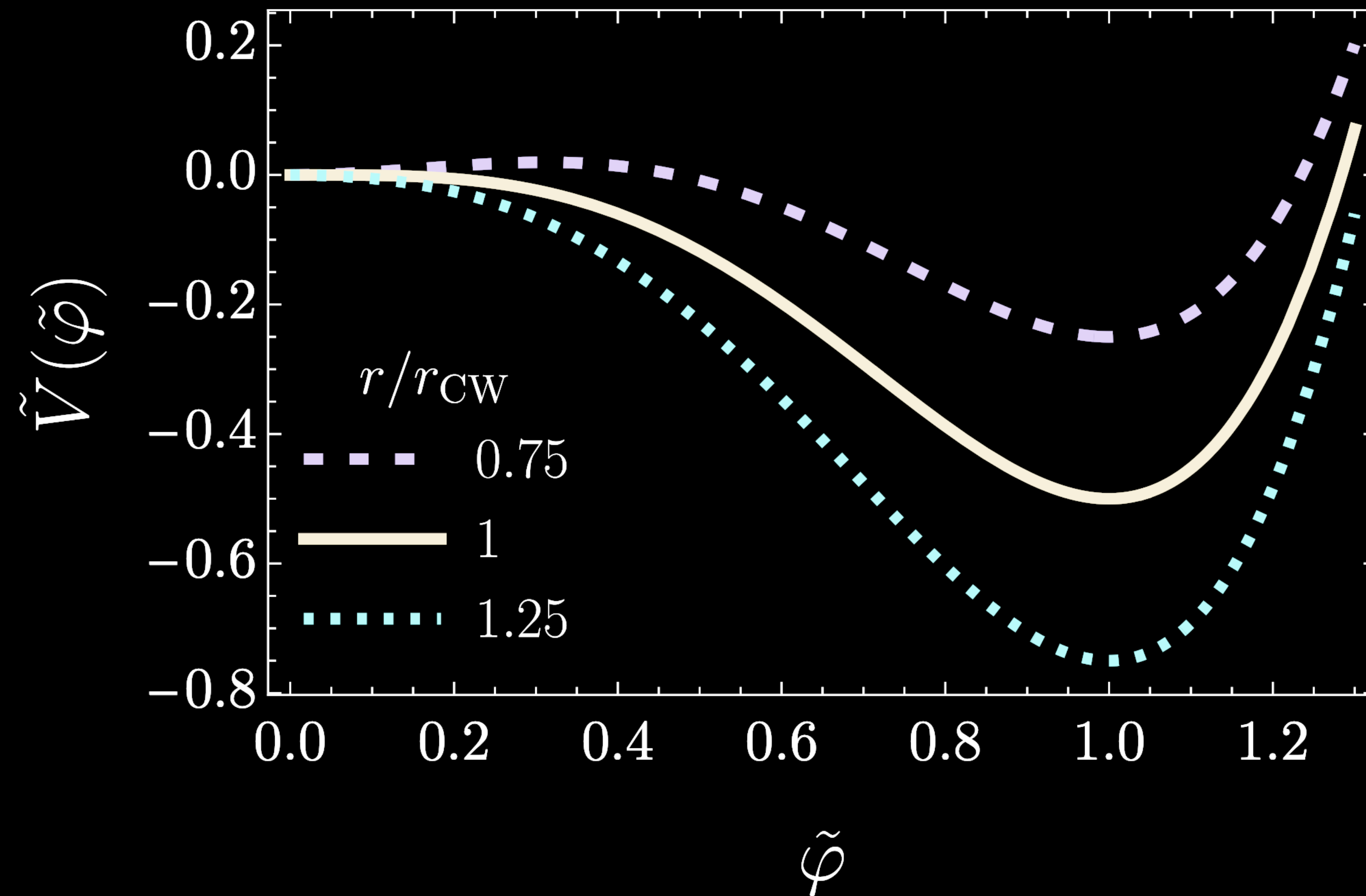
Counterterms

$$\begin{cases} \lambda_{\text{OS}} + \delta\lambda_{\text{OS}} = \frac{e^2}{2} \frac{M_S^2}{M_V^2} \\ \quad -4\kappa e^4 \left( \log \frac{M_V^2}{\mu^2} + \frac{2}{3} + \eta \right) \\ \delta m_{\text{OS}}^2 = -\frac{1}{2}M_S^2 + 4\kappa e^2 M_V^2 \end{cases}$$

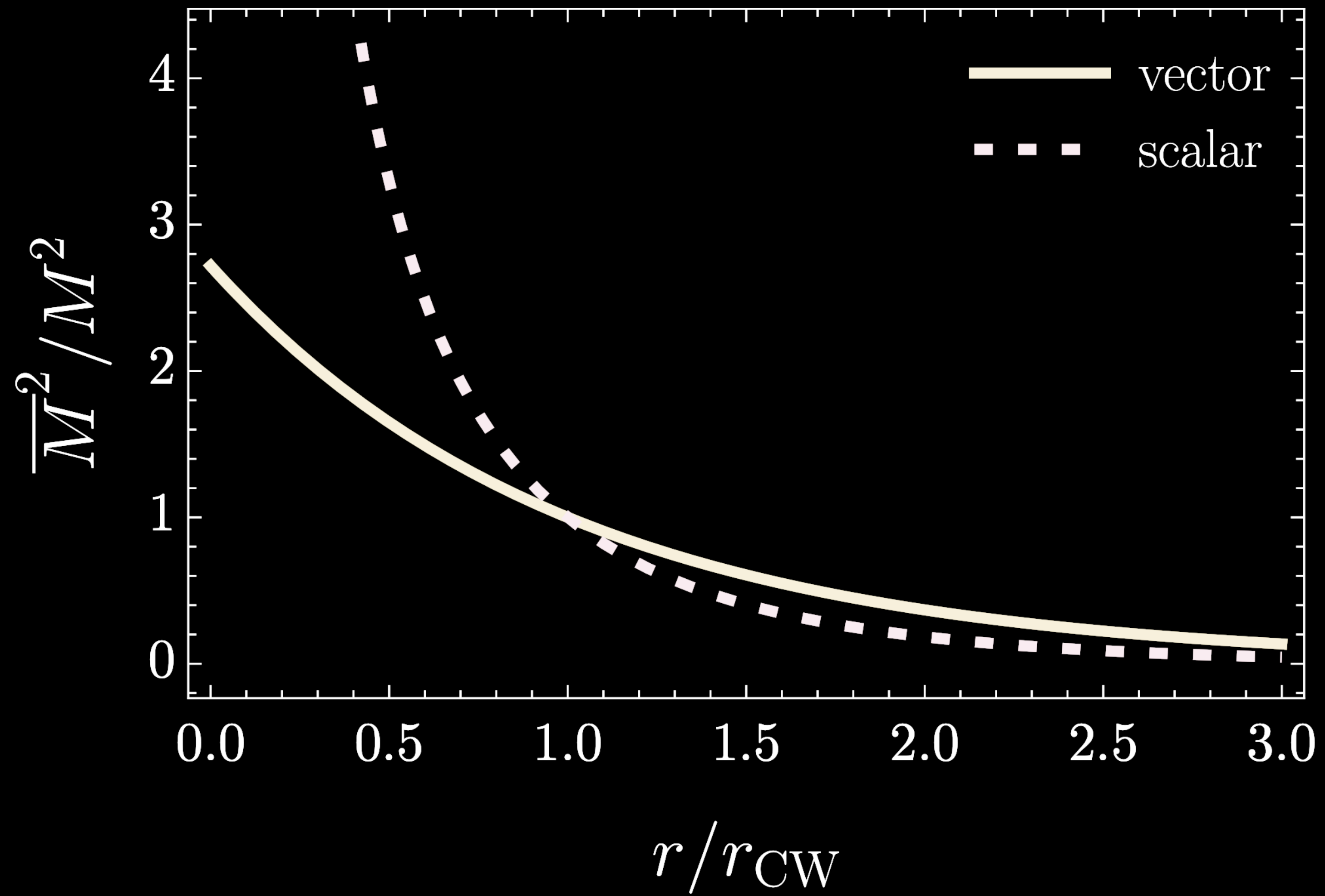
Mass ratio

$$r = \frac{M_S^2}{M_V^2}$$

# THE ON-SHELL POTENTIAL



# OS VS MS



$$V(\varphi) = \frac{1}{4}\lambda\varphi^4 + \frac{\kappa}{64\pi^2}e^4\varphi^4\left(\log\frac{e^2\varphi^2}{\mu^2} - \frac{5}{6} + \eta\right) + \frac{1}{2}\delta m^2\varphi^2 + \frac{1}{4}\delta\lambda\varphi^4$$

## MASSIVE CASE

Minimisation

$$\begin{cases} \lambda = \frac{e^2}{2} \frac{M_S^2}{M_V^2} \\ m^2 = -\frac{1}{2}M_S^2 \end{cases}$$

Counterterms

$$\begin{cases} \delta\lambda = -4\kappa e^4 \left( \log \frac{M_V^2}{\mu^2} + \eta + \frac{2}{3} \right) \\ \delta m^2 = 4\kappa e^2 M_V^2 \end{cases}$$

## OS

Counterterms

$$\begin{cases} \lambda_{\text{OS}} + \delta\lambda_{\text{OS}} = \frac{e^2}{2} \frac{M_S^2}{M_V^2} \\ \quad - 4\kappa e^4 \left( \log \frac{M_V^2}{\mu^2} + \frac{2}{3} + \eta \right) \\ \delta m_{\text{OS}}^2 = -\frac{1}{2}M_S^2 + 4\kappa e^2 M_V^2 \end{cases}$$

# CONSEQUENCES

GW predictions are safe. If  $r = r_{\text{CW}}$ , OS and MS are equivalent and no mass terms are generated.

With RSB a hierarchy of masses is introduced. Is it a good solution of the hierarchy problem?

# SUMMARY



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Supercooled PTs are  
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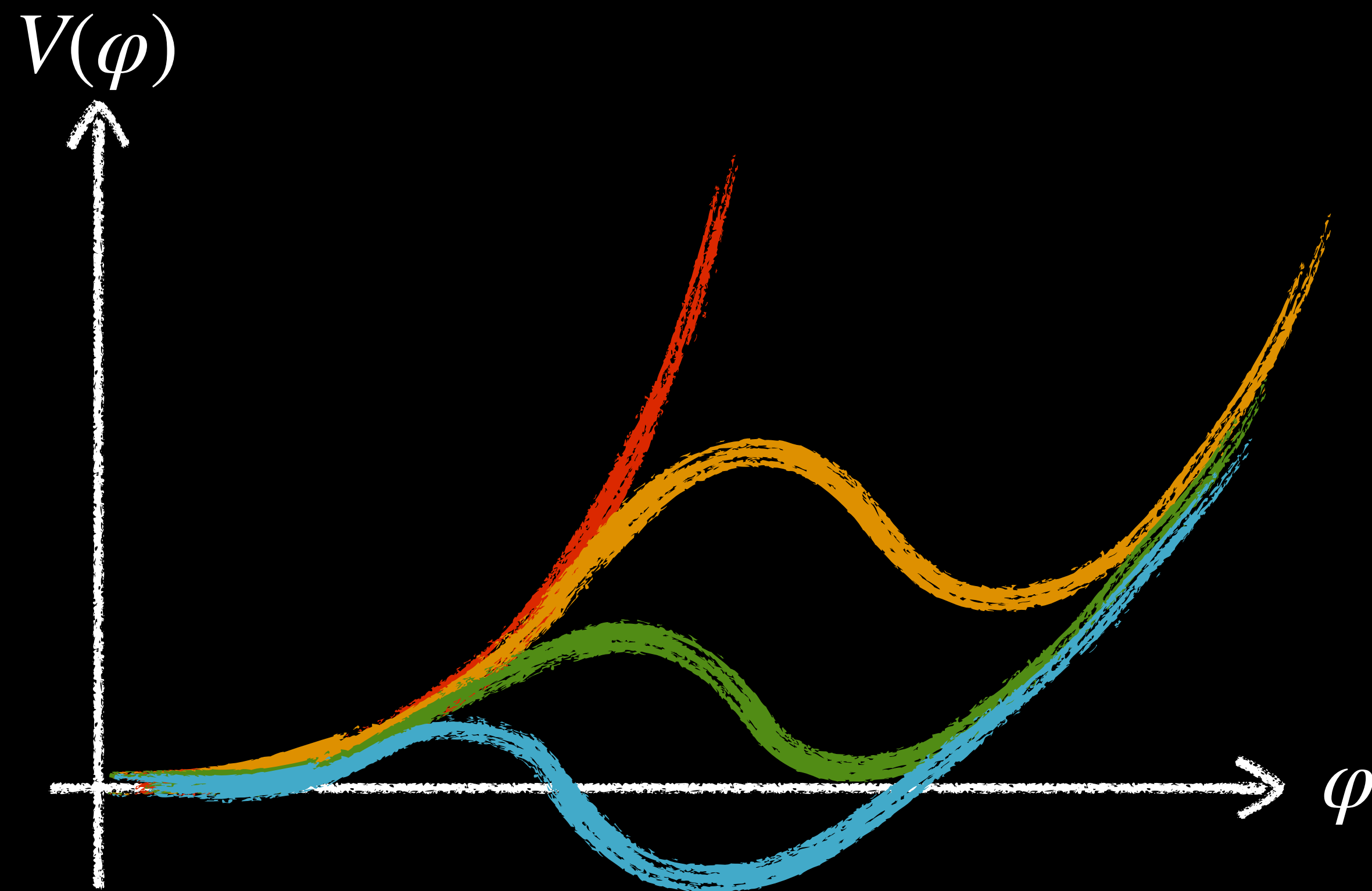
Theoretical  
diligence is crucial!

Radiative symmetry  
breaking  
 $\longleftrightarrow$   
Hierarchical mass  
ordering

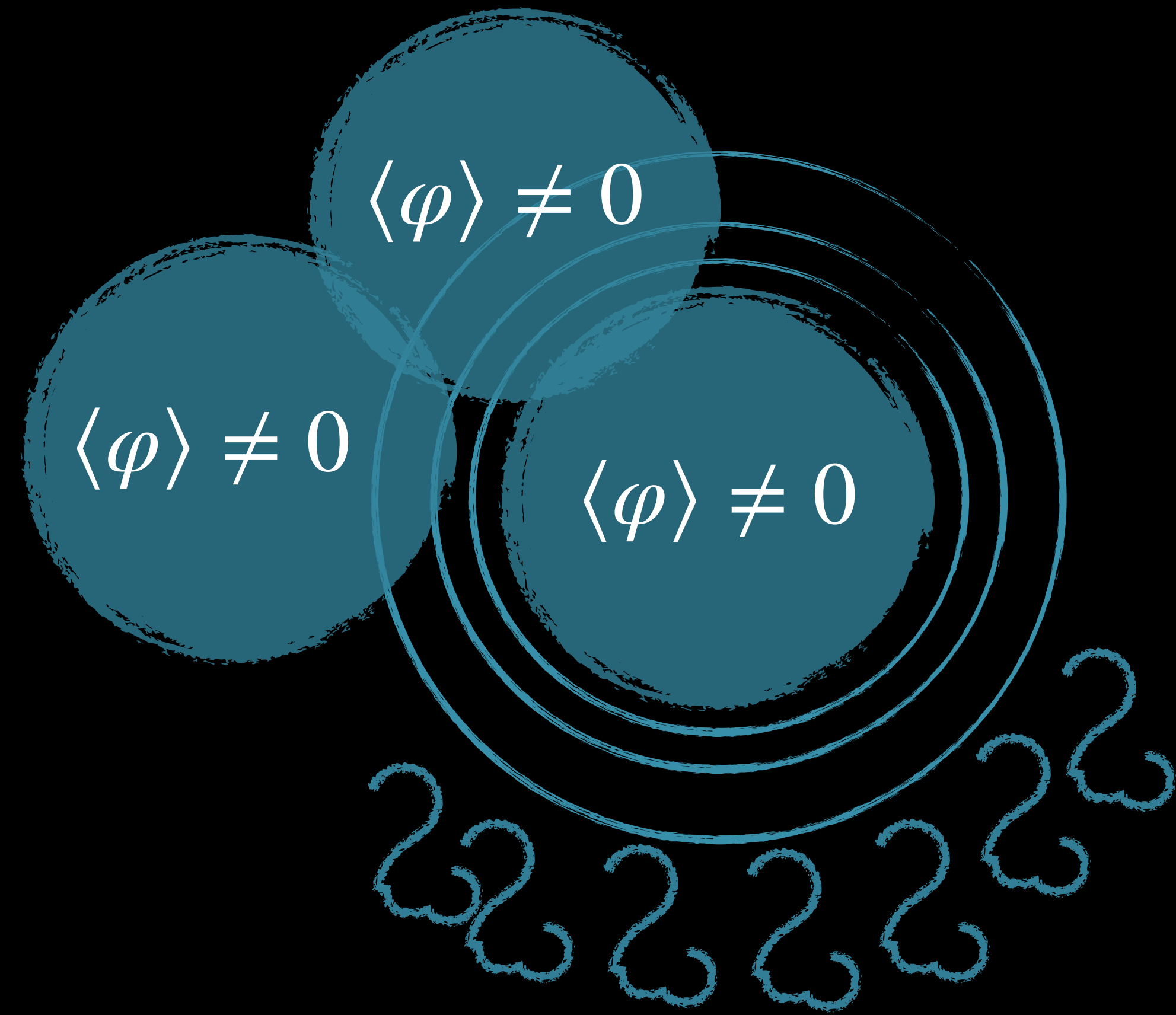
THANK YOU!



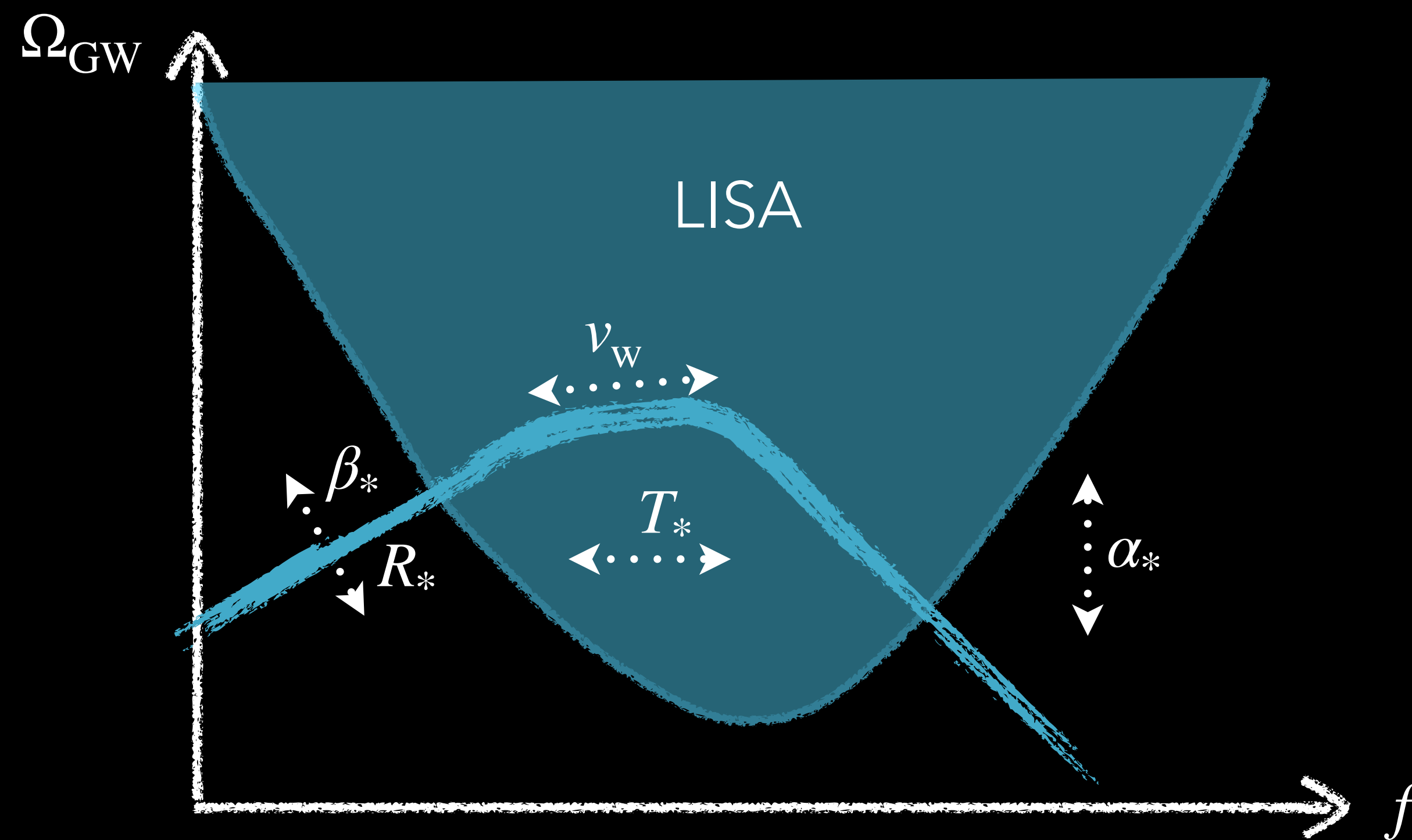
# PHASE TRANSITION — MICROSCOPIC SCALES



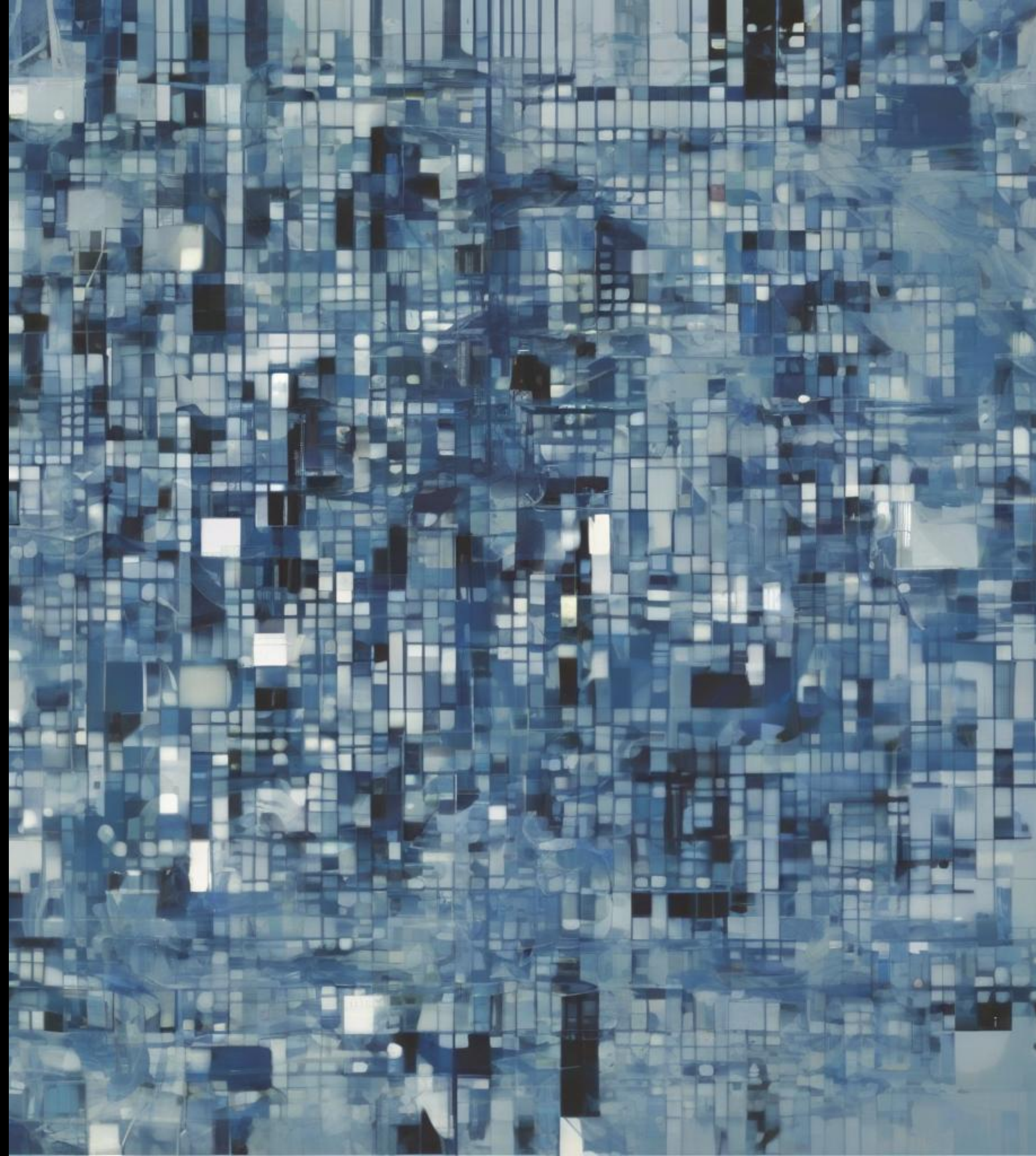
# PHASE TRANSITION — INTERMEDIATE SCALES



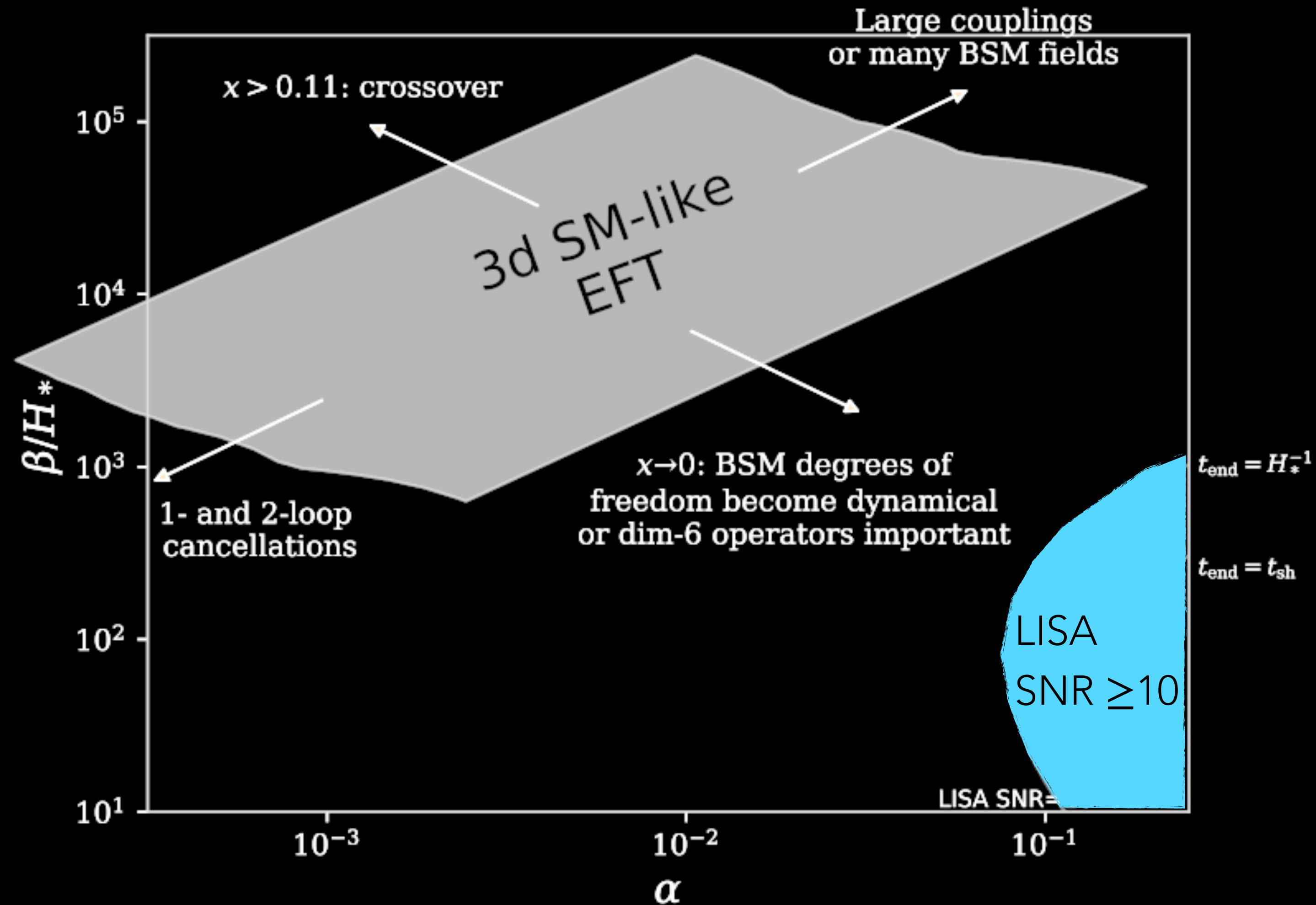
# PHASE TRANSITION — MACROSCOPIC SCALES



WHY DO WE NEED TO  
ADVANCE THE  
MICROPHYSICAL  
DESCRIPTION?

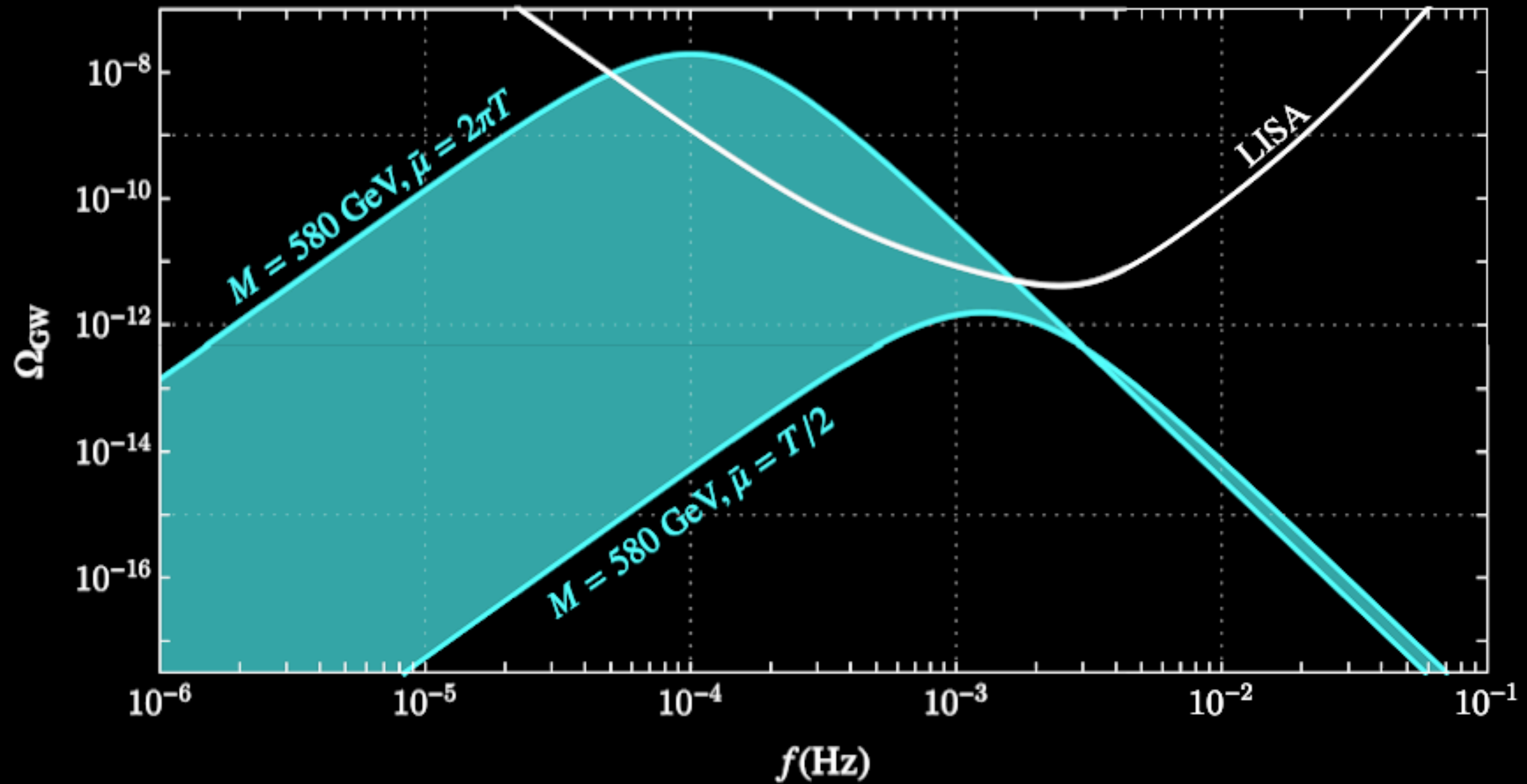


# WHAT KIND OF PT CAN BE OBSERVABLE?



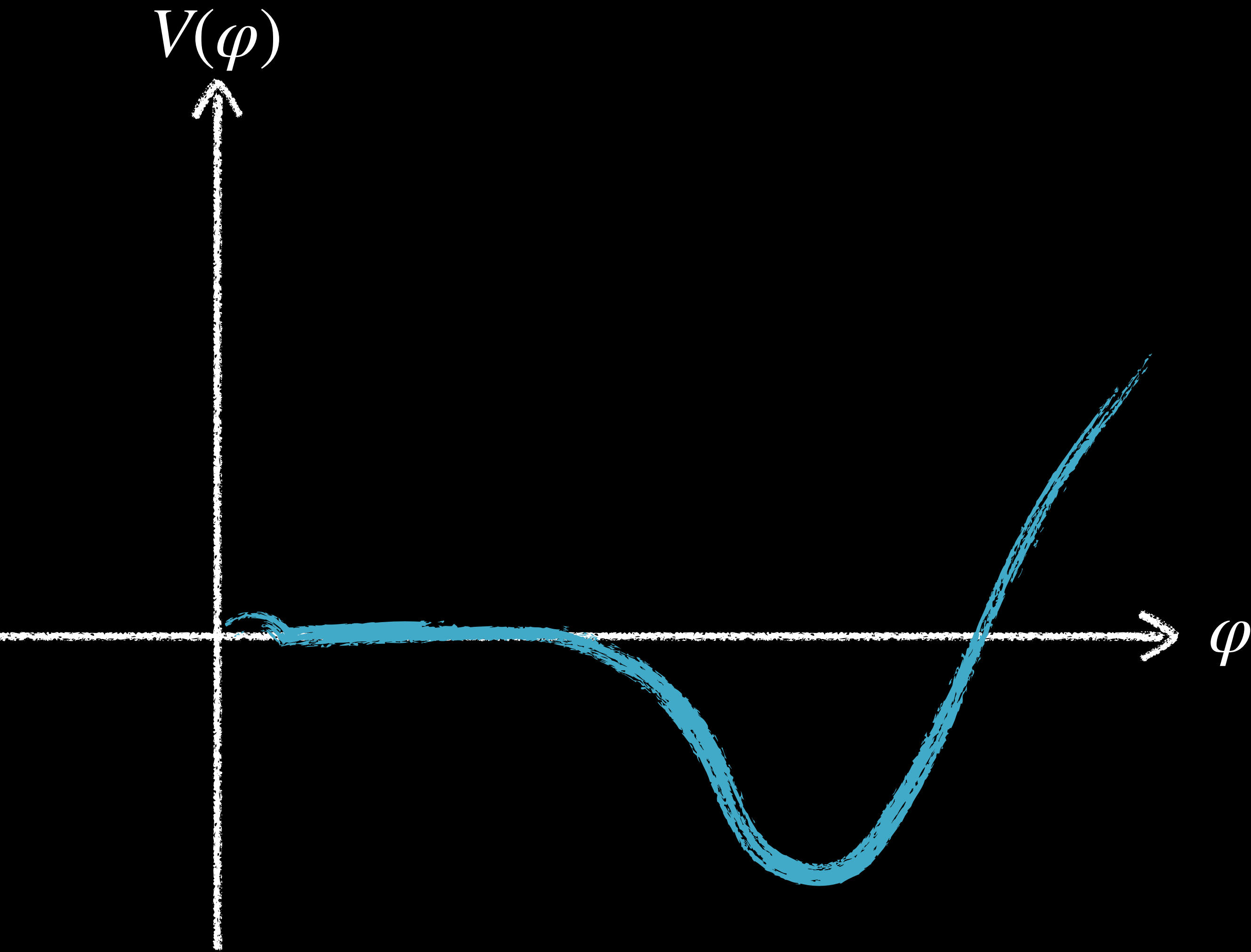
[Figure adapted from: Phys.Rev.D 100 (2019) 11, 115024, O. Gould, J. Kozaczuk, L. Niemi, M. J. Ramsey-Musolf, T. V.I. Tenkanen, D. J. Weir]

# RG SCALE DEPENDENCE



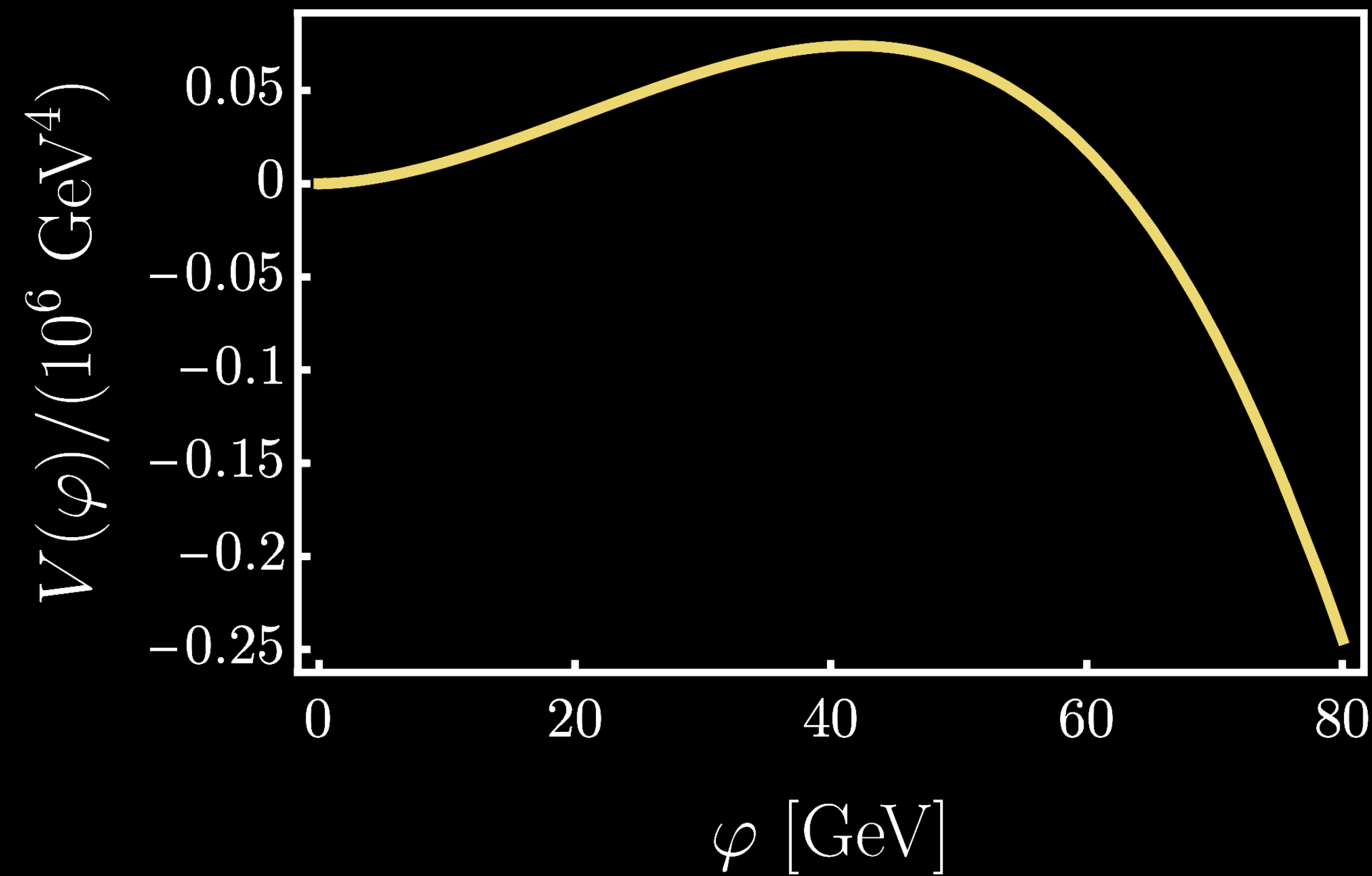
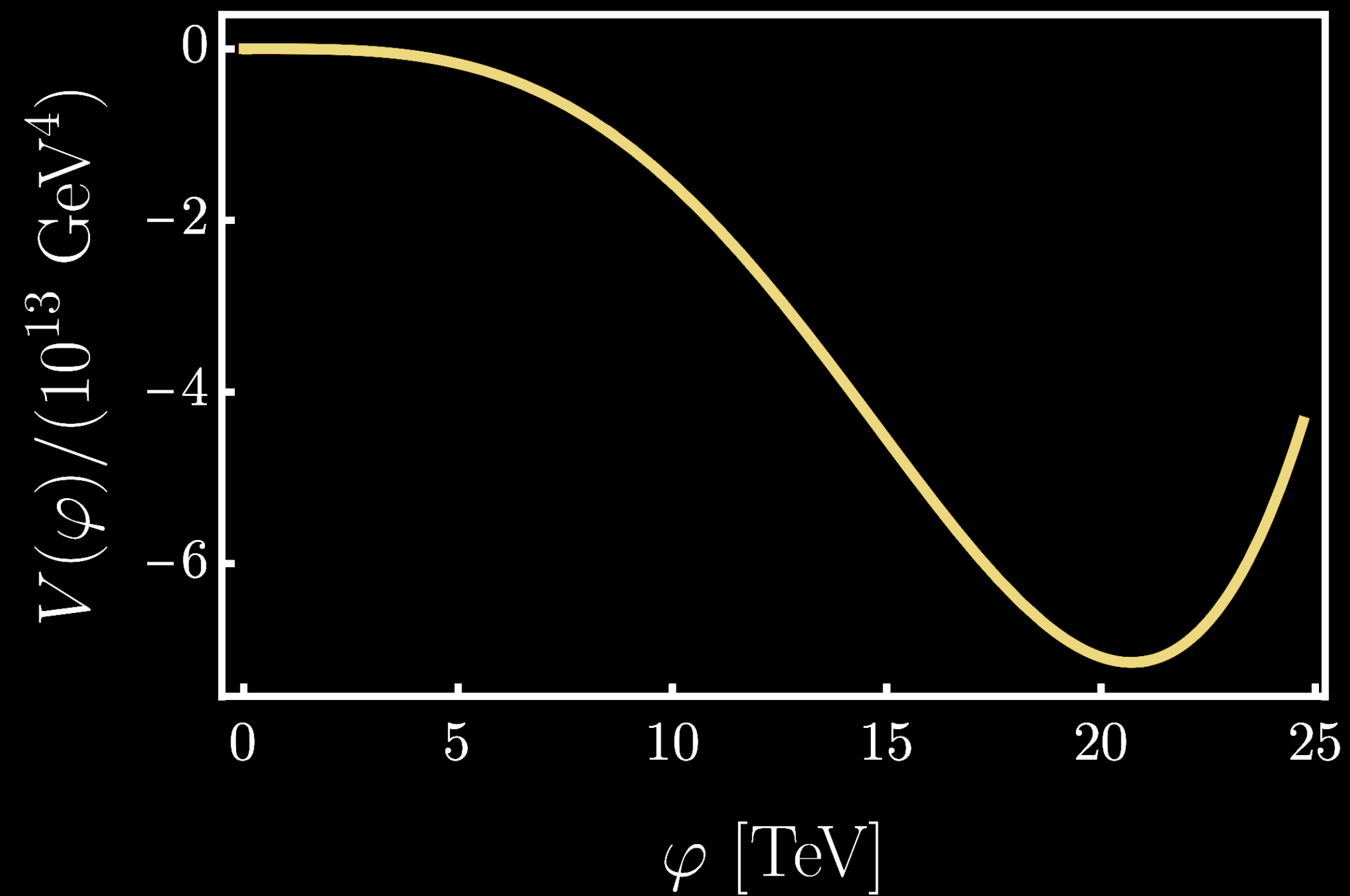
[plot adapted from: D. Croon, O. Gould, P. Schicho, T. Tenkanen, G. White, JHEP 04 (2021) 055]

# SUPERCOOLED PHASE TRANSITIONS

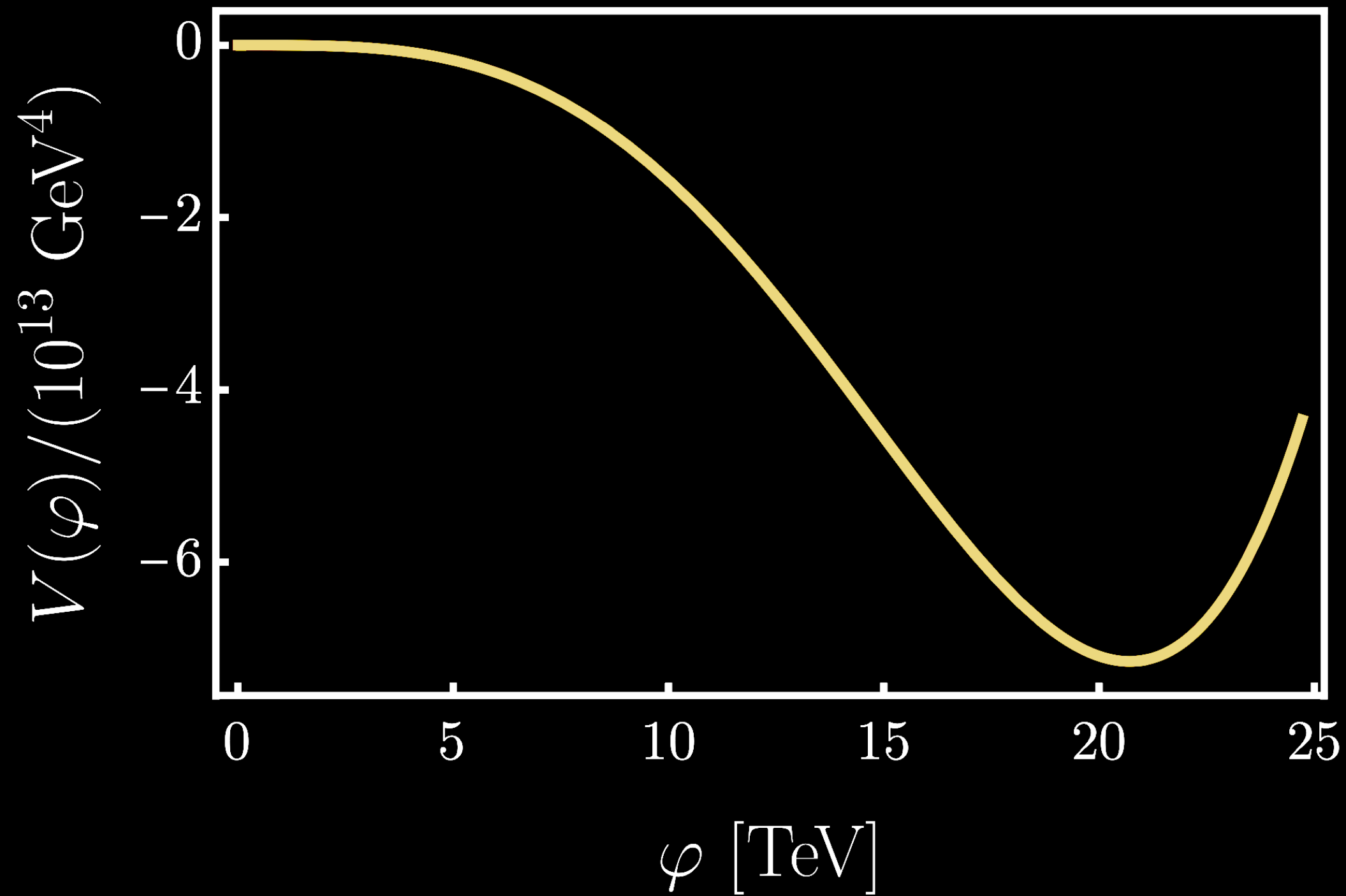


- Percolation temperature  $\ll$  critical temperature,
- Before nucleation: period of thermal inflation,
- Huge energy release (compared to radiation energy),  $\alpha \approx \frac{\Delta V}{\rho_{\text{rad}}} \gg 1$ ,
- Significant reheating after the PT
- Typically realised in models with classical scale invariance

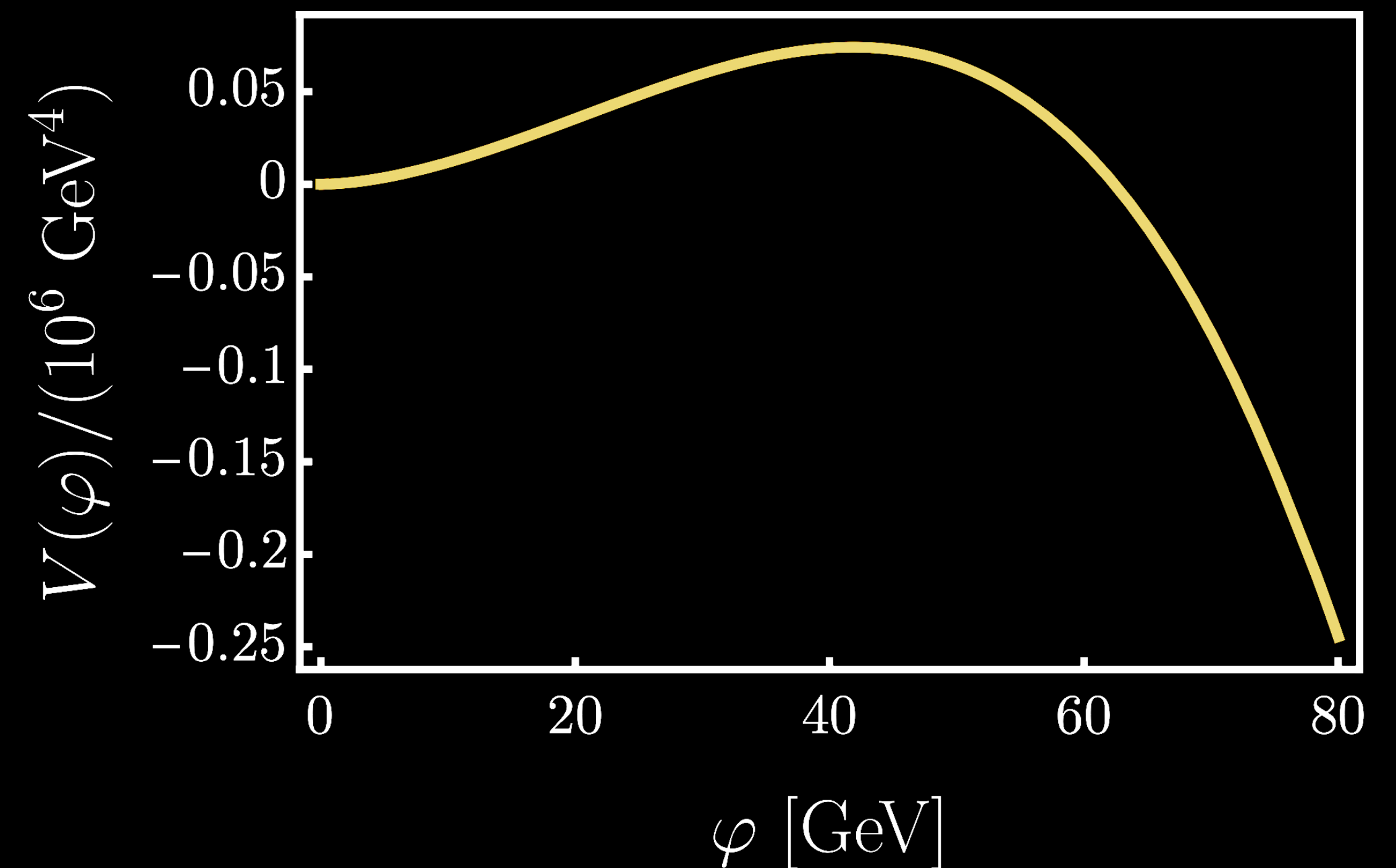
# HIGH-T VS LOW-T



# HIGH-T VS LOW-T




At large fields  $M_X(\varphi)/T \gg 1$ ,  
use LT approximation to compute  $T_{\text{reh}}$ ,  $\Delta V$

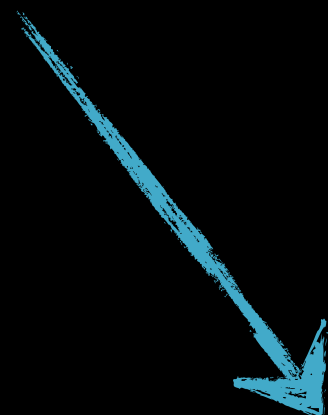


At small fields  $M_X(\varphi)/T \ll 1$ ,  
use HT approximation to compute  $T_p$ ,  $R_* H_*$

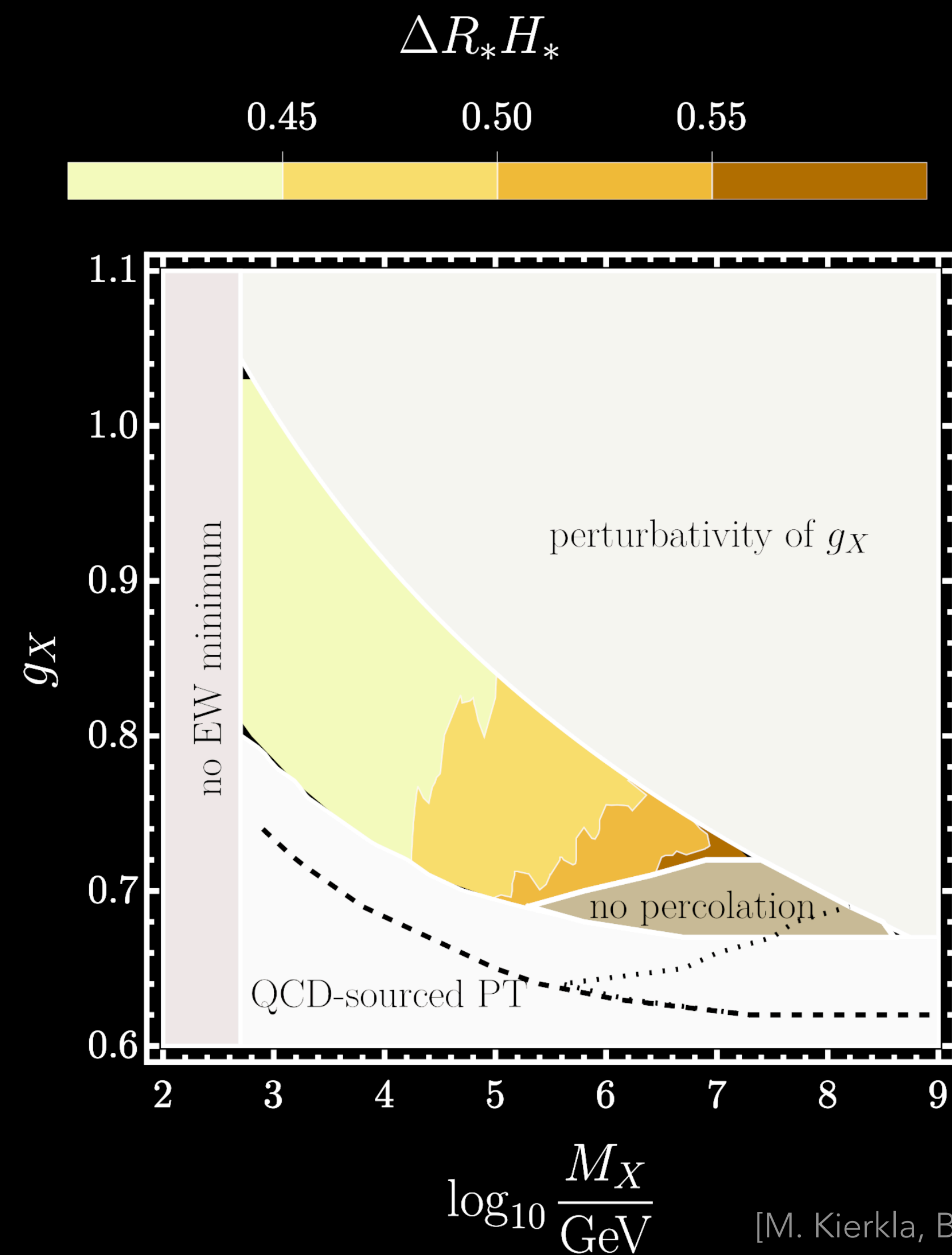
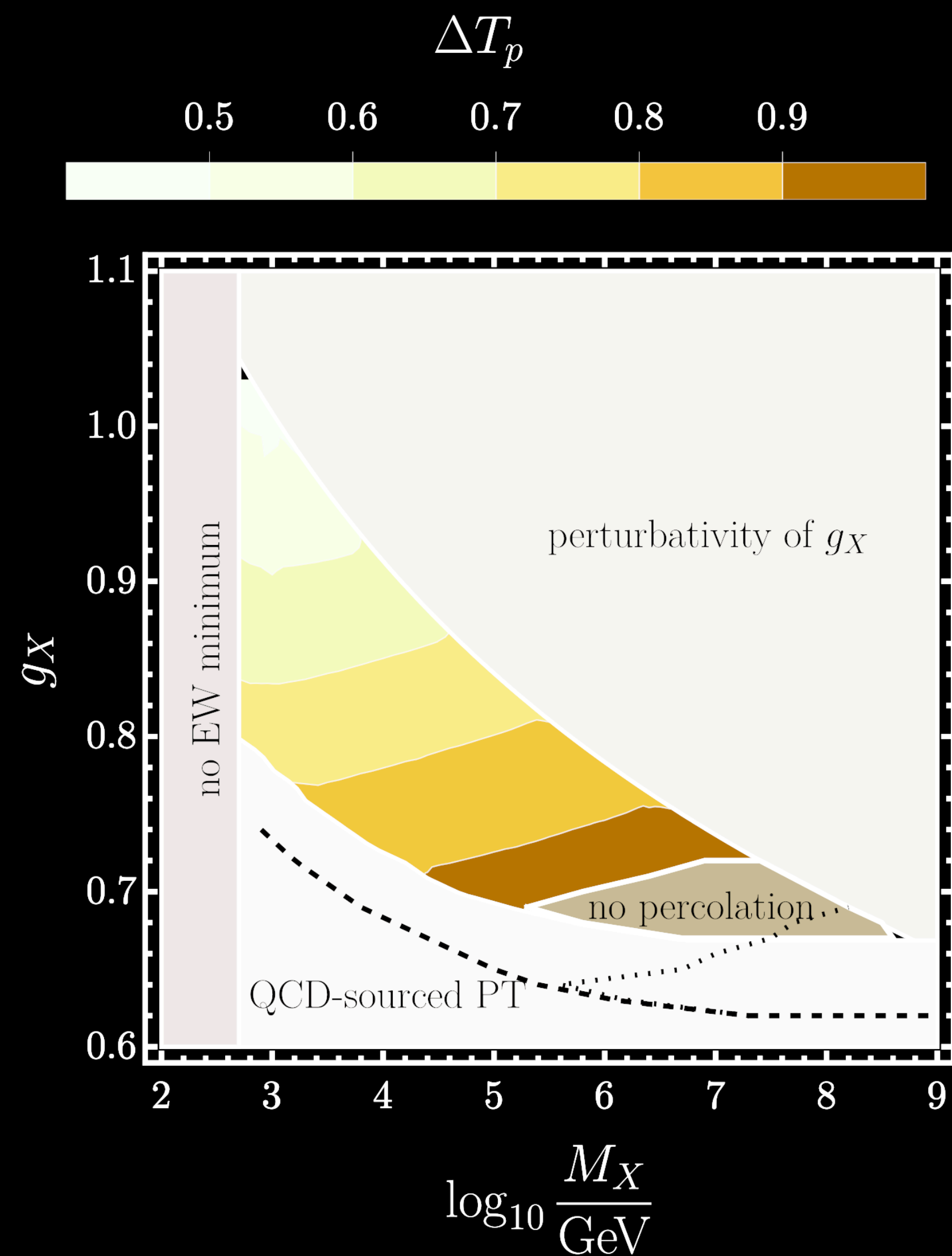
# WHAT'S NEW AT NLO?

$$S_3^{\text{EFT, NLO}} = 4\pi \int dr \, r^2 \left( \frac{1}{2} Z_3^{\text{NLO}}(v_3) (\partial_i v_3)^2 + V_3^{\text{EFT, NLO}}(v_3) \right)$$

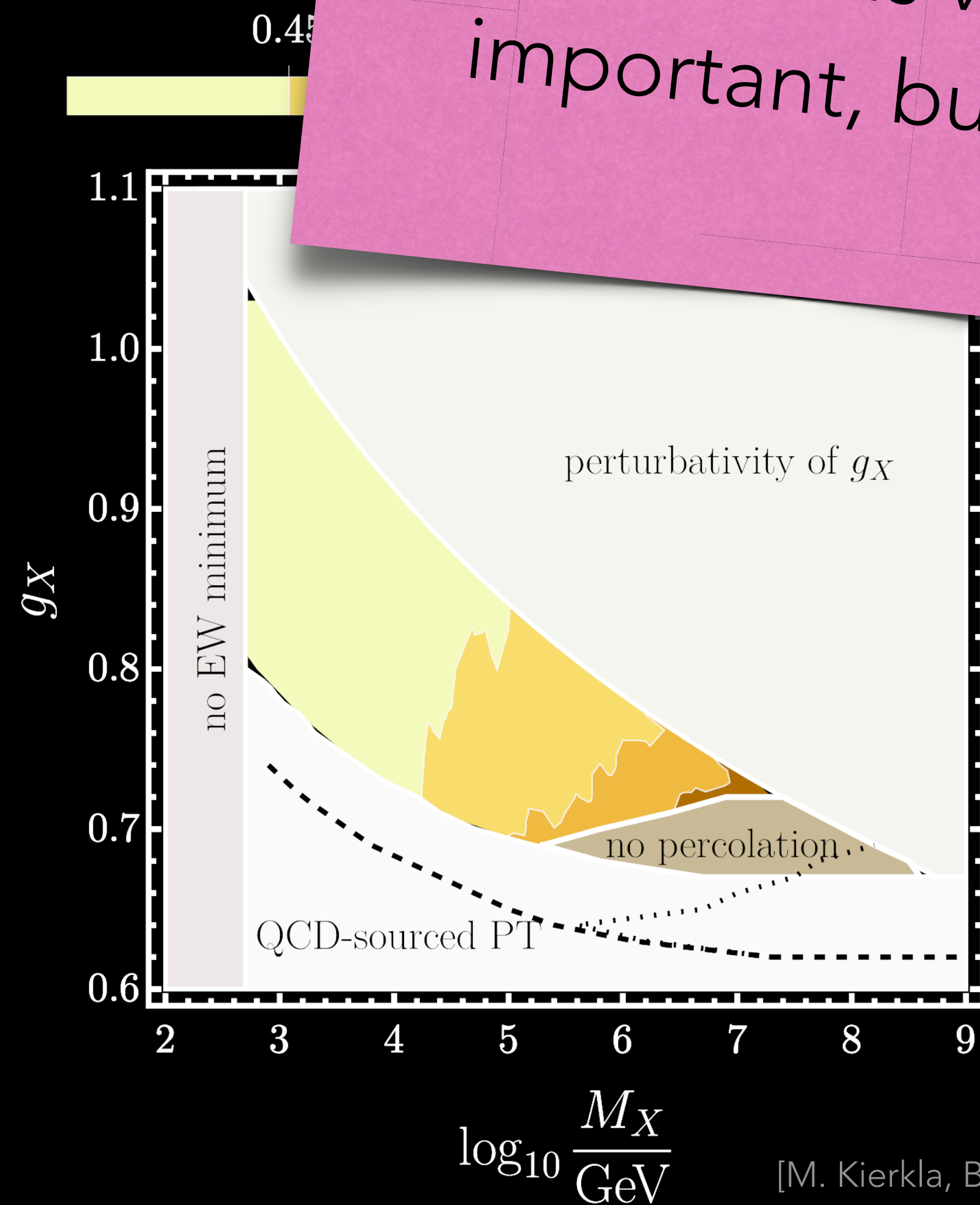
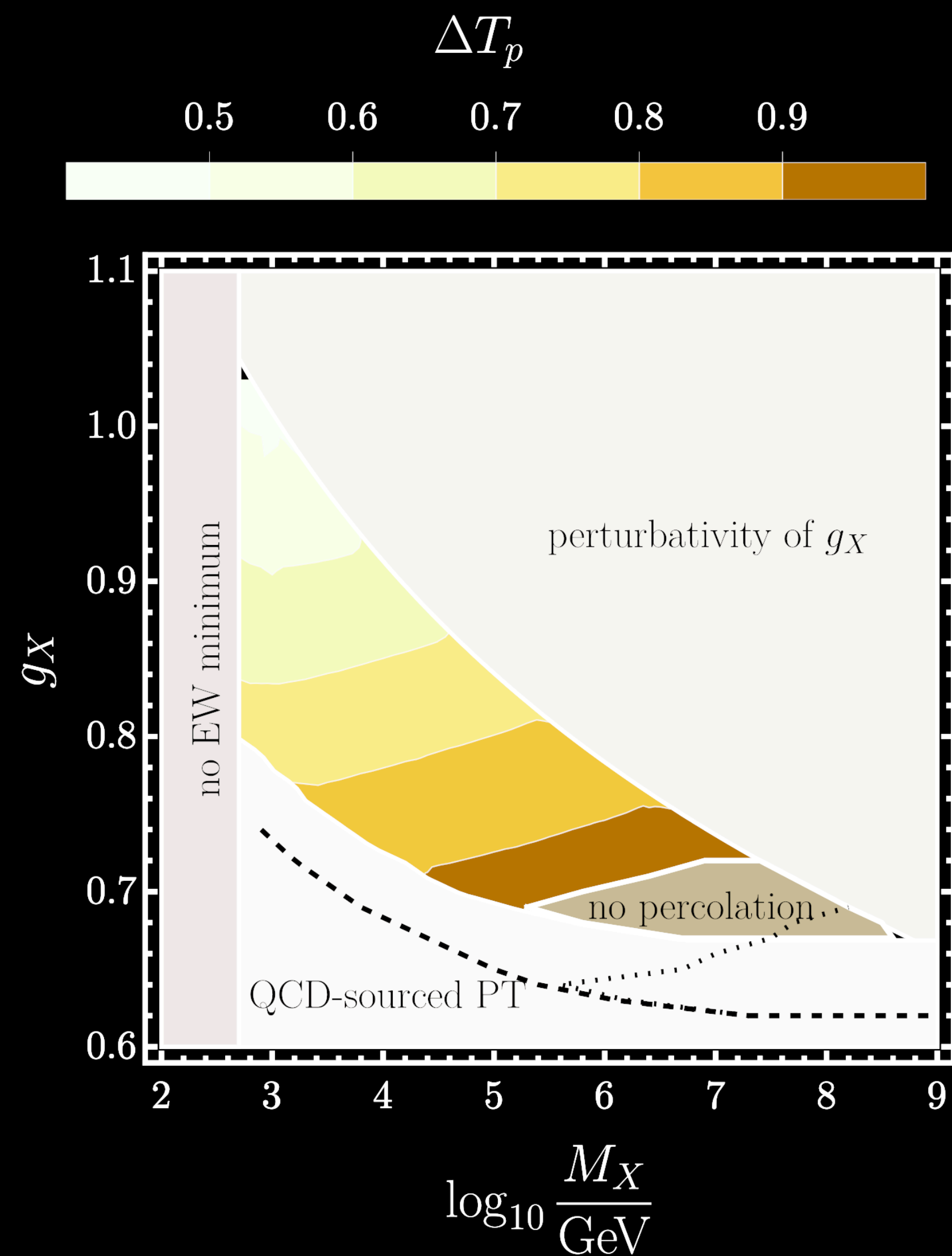
- 
- New effective operator in the kinetic term
  - Behaves badly for  $\varphi_3 \rightarrow 0$

- 
- two-loop matching
  - NLO potential
  - Includes missing (4d) RG scale dependence
  - 3d scale invariant

# IMPROVED PRECISION CHANGES PREDICTIONS

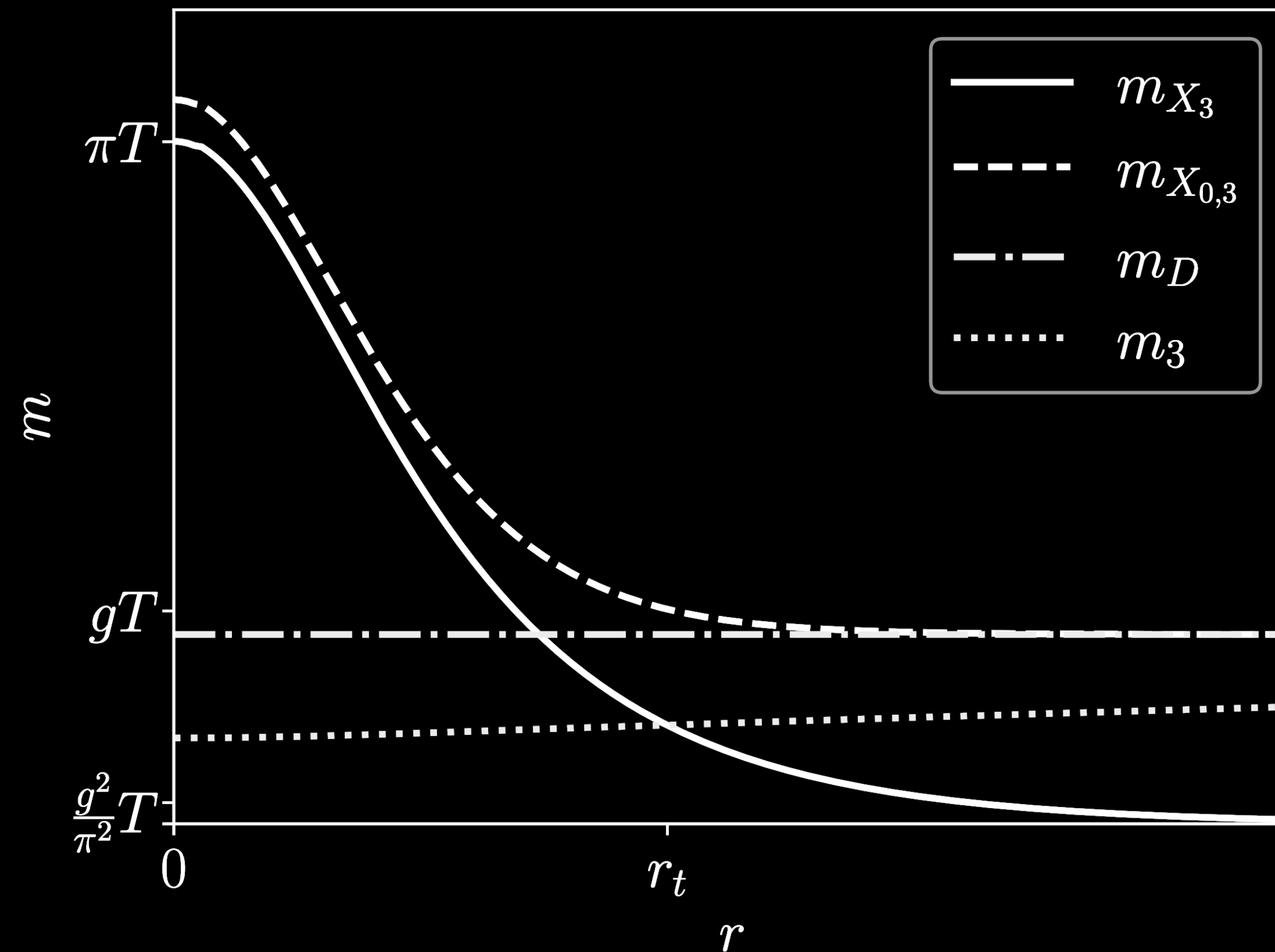


# IMPROVED PRECISION CHANGES

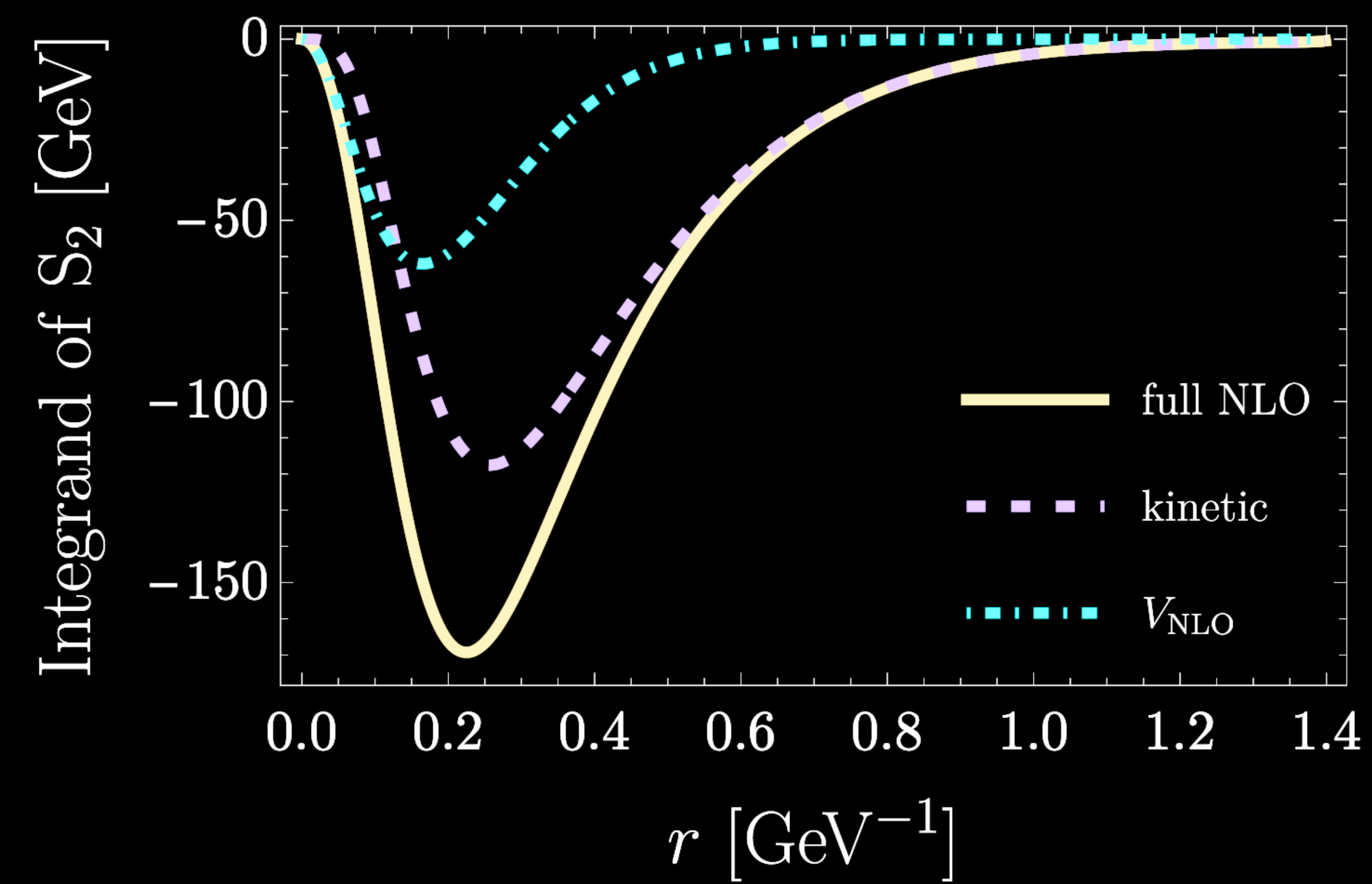


Higher-order  
corrections very  
important, but...

# VALIDITY OF EFT — SCALE-SHIFTERS



# DERIVATIVE EXPANSION



# NUCLEATION RATE BEYOND LEADING ORDER

$$A_{\text{stat}} = \prod_a \mathcal{J}_a \mathcal{V}_a \sqrt{\frac{\det \mathcal{O}_a(\varphi_F)}{\det' \mathcal{O}_a(\varphi_b)}} \mathcal{J}_\phi \sqrt{\left| \frac{\det \mathcal{O}_\phi(\varphi_F)}{\det' \mathcal{O}_\phi(\varphi_b)} \right|} e^{-(S[\varphi_b] - S[\varphi_F])}$$

1. Construct the soft EFT (resum the gauge contributions)
2. Compute the LO bounce solution
3. Remove the gauge contributions from the action
4. Compute the one-loop effective action without the derivative expansion
5. Add the two-loop contribution (at NLO is the soft expansion) to the effective potential

# NUCLEATION RATE BEYOND LEADING ORDER

$$A_{\text{stat}} = \prod_a \mathcal{J}_a \mathcal{V}_a \sqrt{\frac{\det \mathcal{O}_a(\varphi_F)}{\det' \mathcal{O}_a(\varphi_b)}} \mathcal{J}_\phi \sqrt{\left| \frac{\det \mathcal{O}_\phi(\varphi_F)}{\det' \mathcal{O}_\phi(\varphi_b)} \right|} e^{-(S[\varphi_b] - S[\varphi_F])}$$

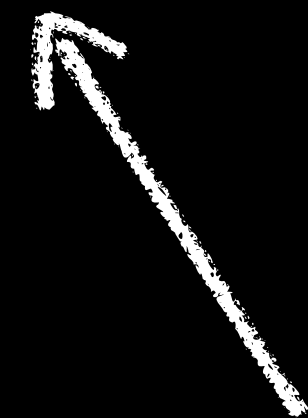
Inclusion of fluctuations  
from the scale-shifting fields



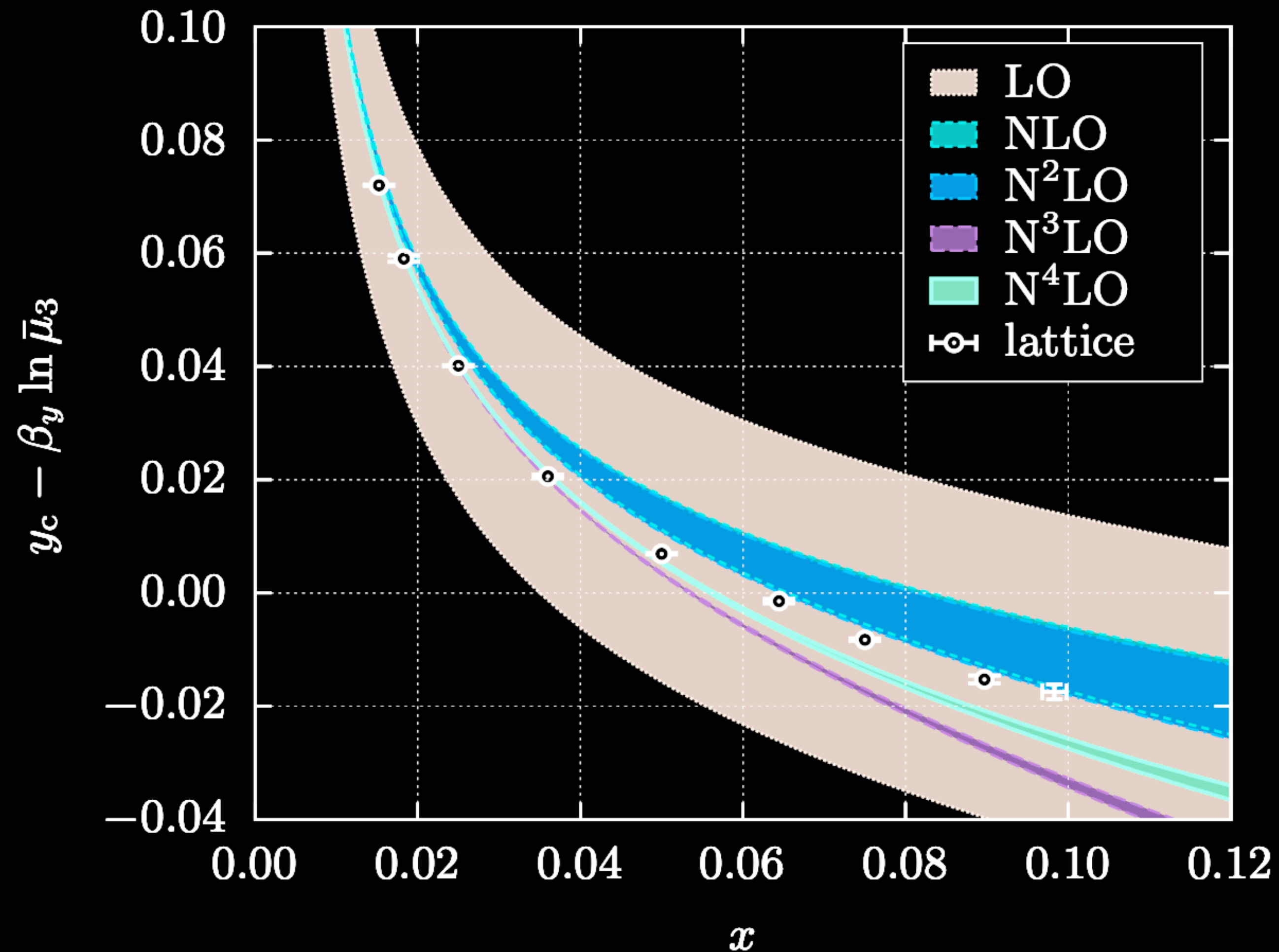
Test of validity of the  
momentum expansion



Test of the  
approximations for  
scalar prefactor



# IS THE PERTURBATIVE APPROACH RELIABLE?

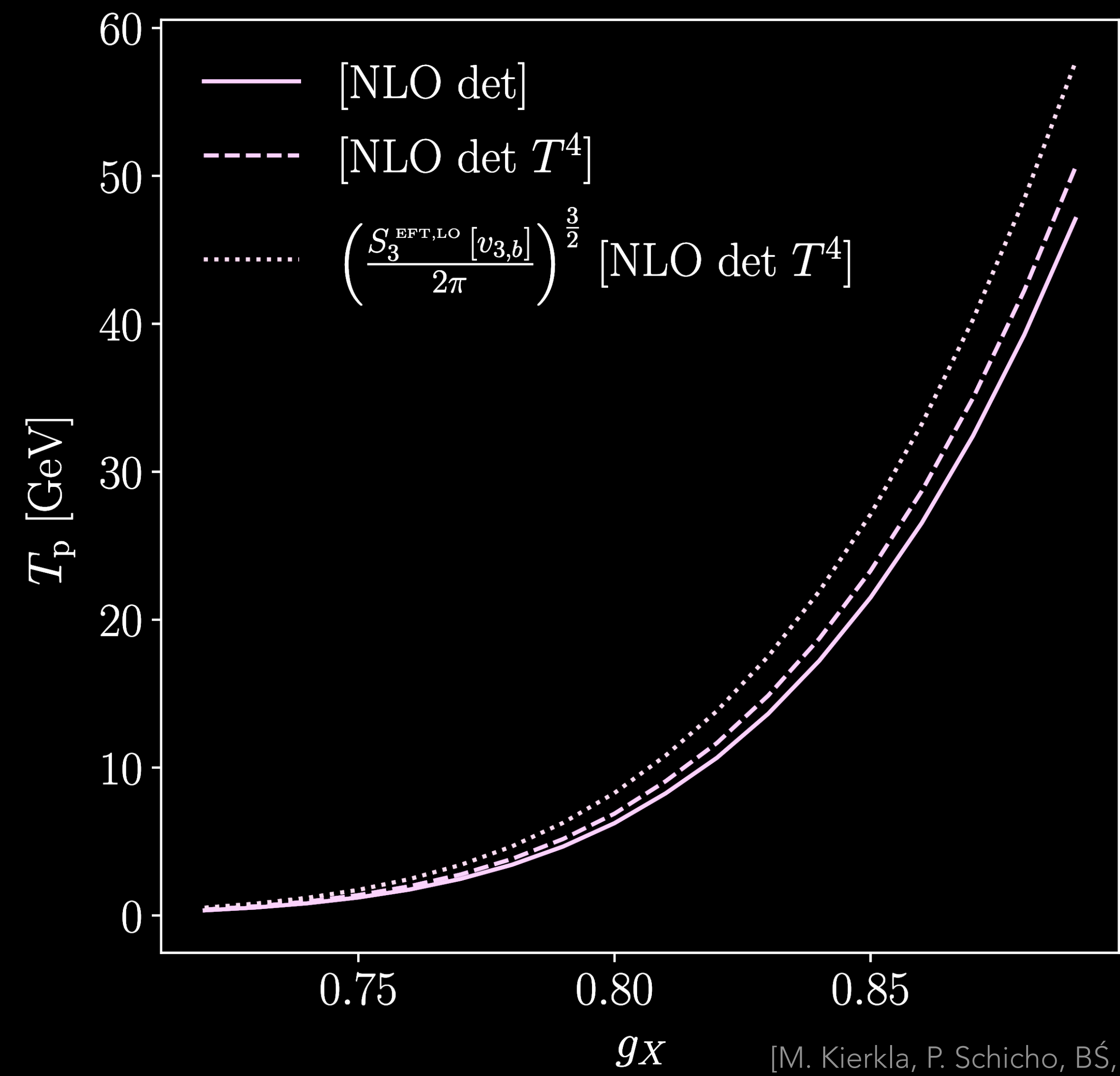


- Convergence in thermodynamical studies
- No lattice computation with  $\lambda < 0$ !

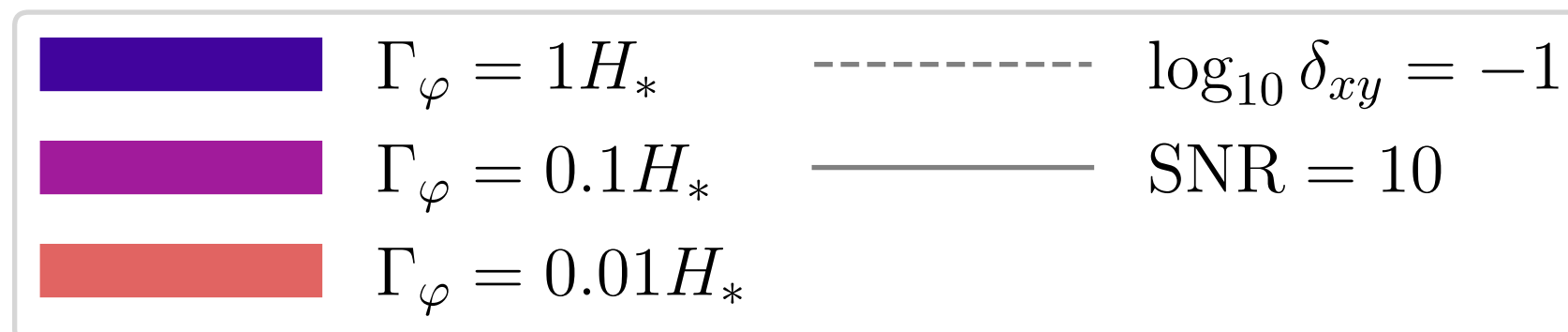
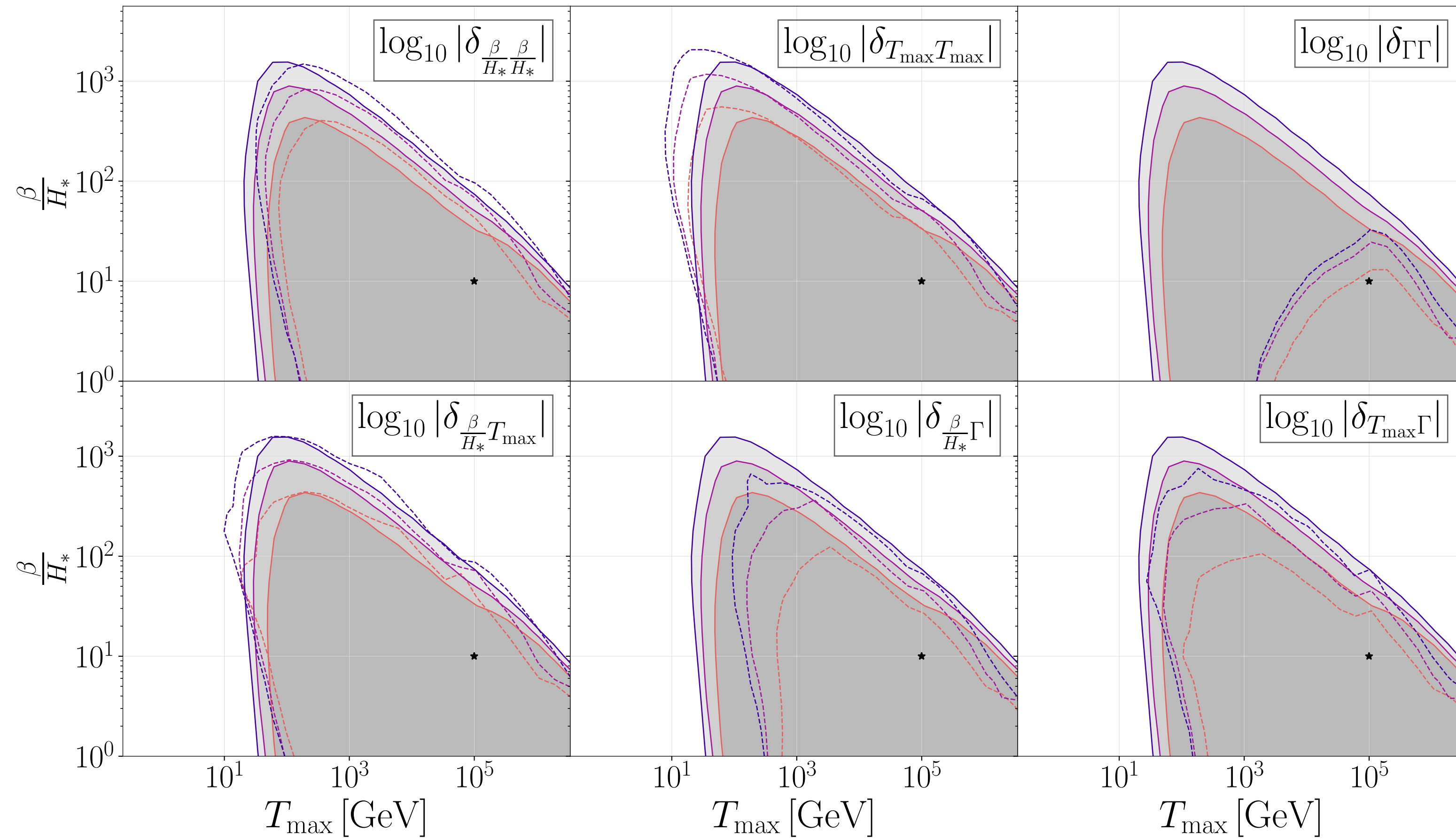
[figure adapted from: A. Ekstedt, P. Schicho, T. V. I. Tenkanen, Phys.Rev.D 110 (2024) 9, 096006]

[See also: O. Gould and T. V. I. Tenkanen, JHEP 01 (2024) 048, L. Niemi et al. PRL 126 (2021) 171802, PRD 110 (2024) 115016]

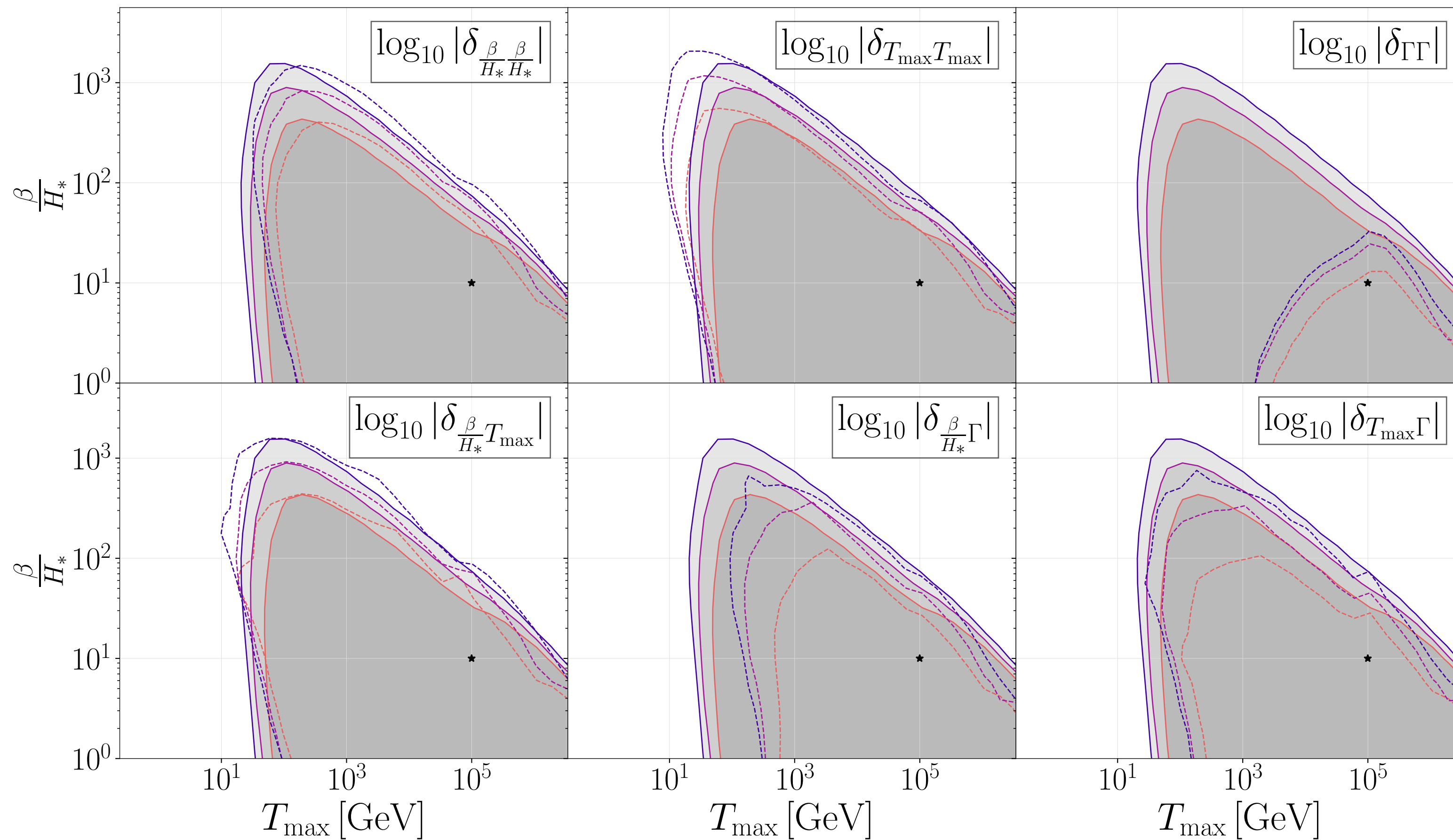
# SCALAR DETERMINANT



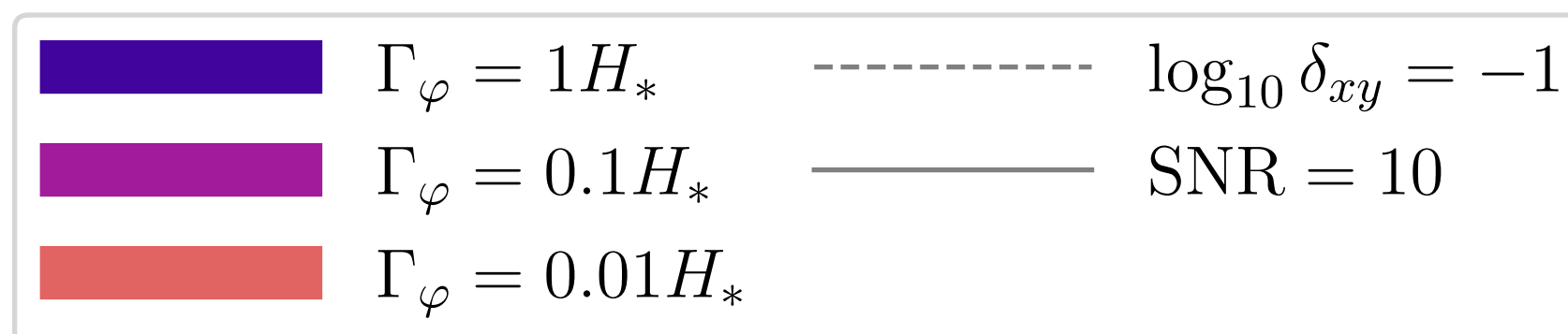
# WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE SIGNAL?



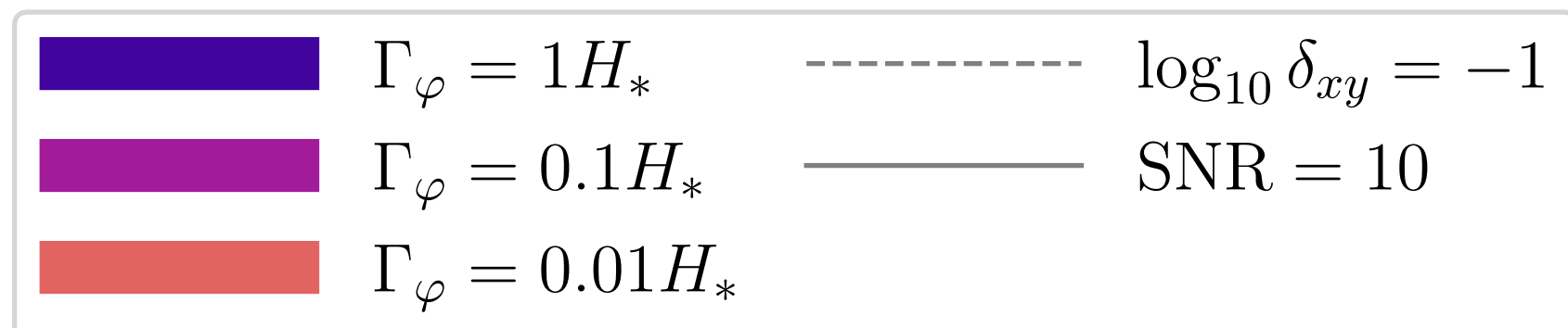
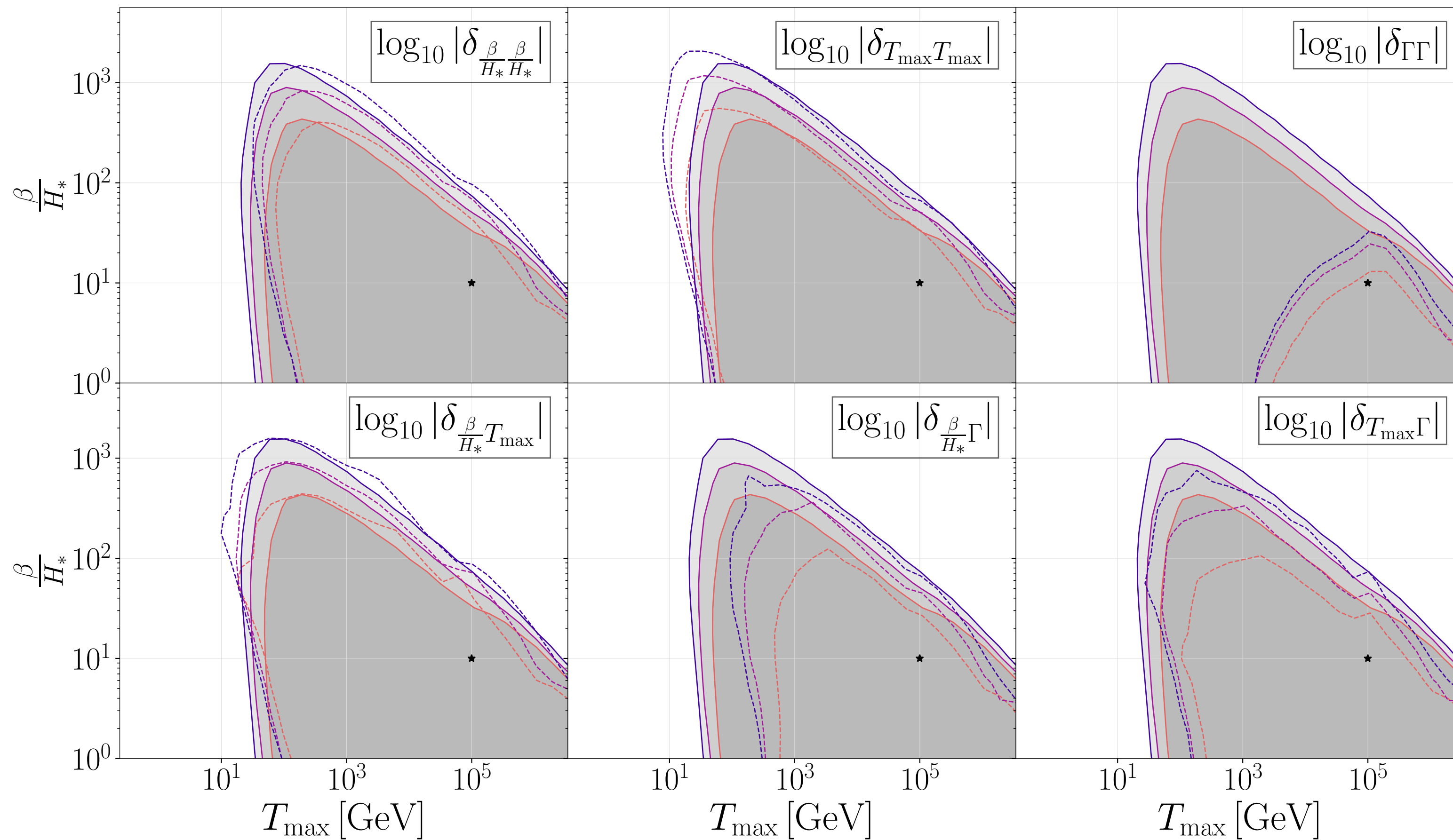
# WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE SIGNAL?



- Decay rate of the scalar (inaccessible at colliders?) can be determined from the spectrum

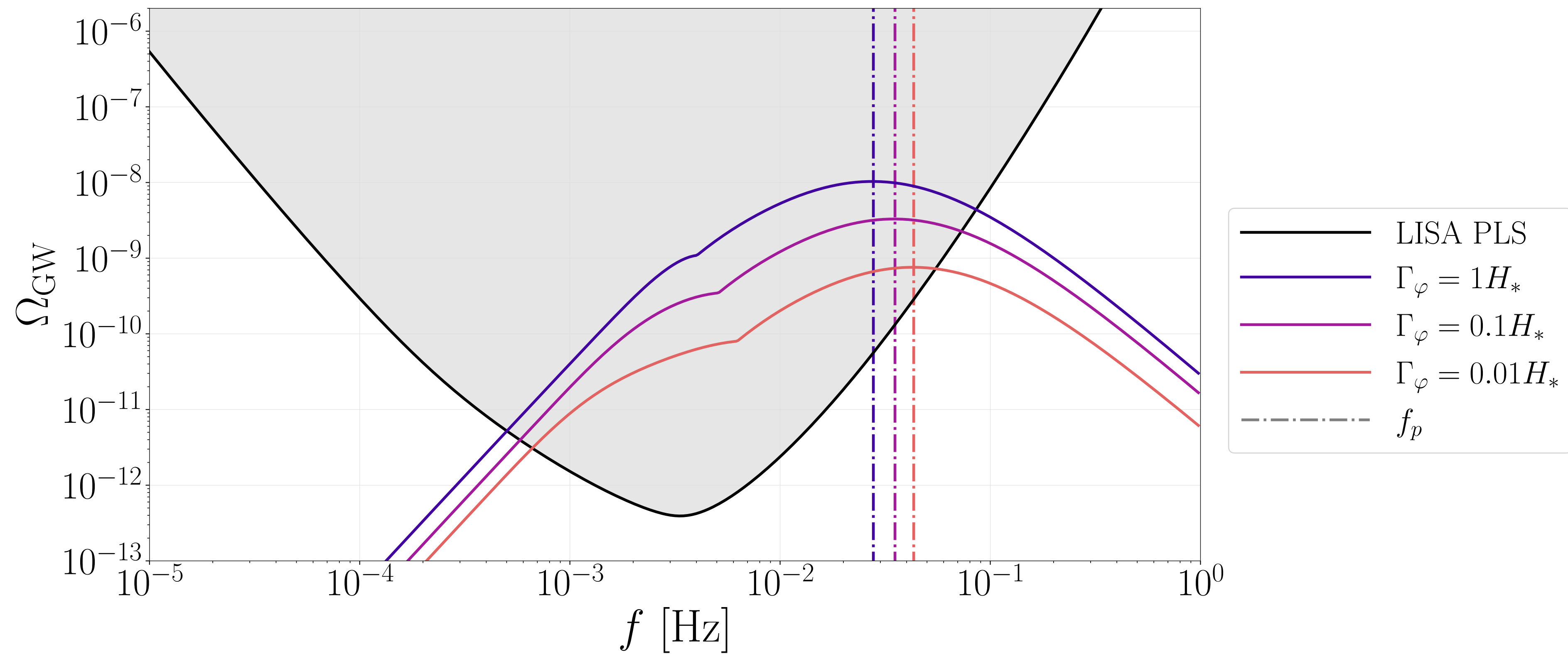


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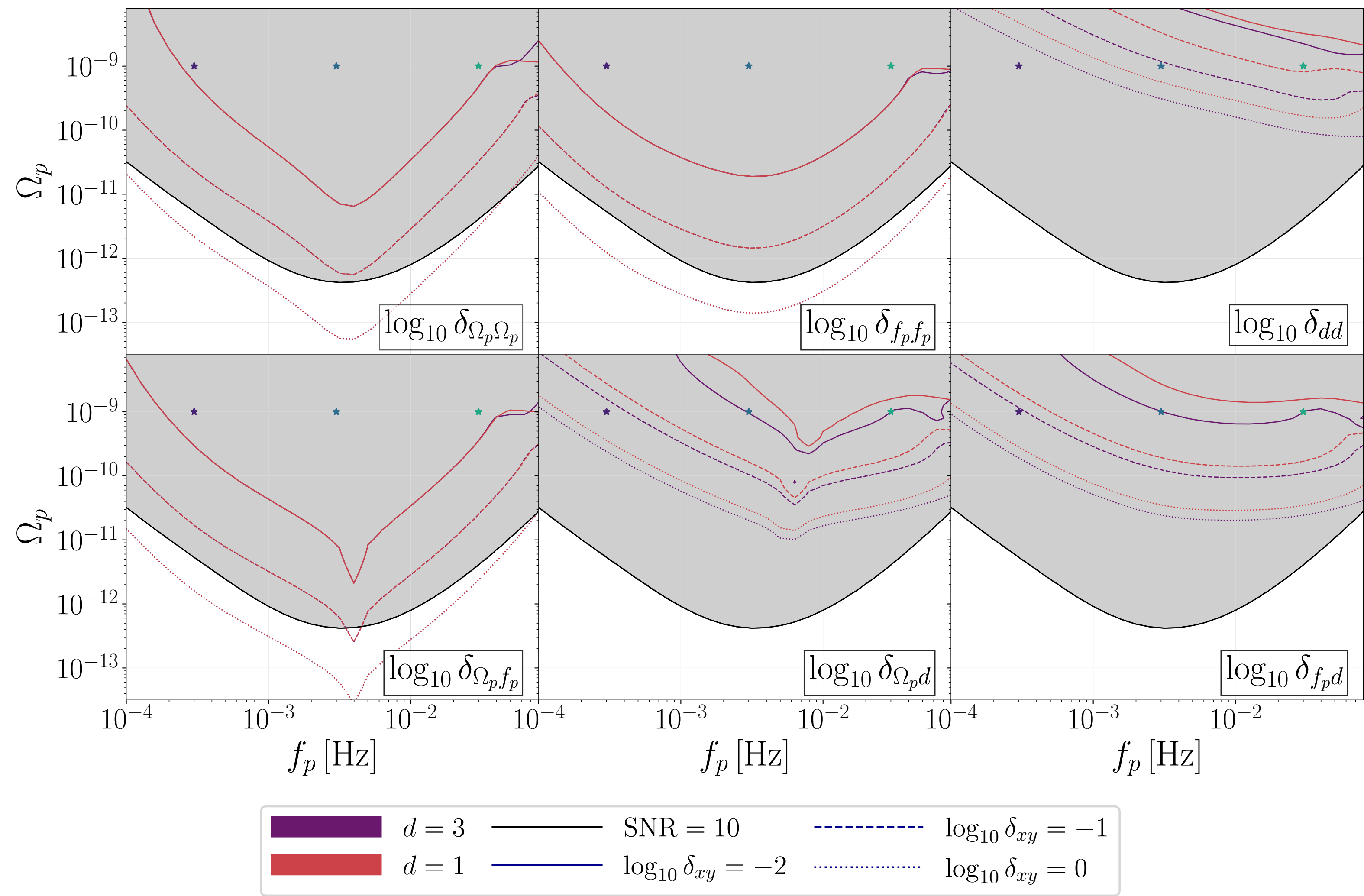


- Decay rate of the scalar (inaccessible at colliders?) can be determined from the spectrum
- Individual parameters can be determined with an accuracy better than 10%

# MODIFIED EXPANSION AFFECTS THE SIGNAL



# RECONSTRUCTION OF GEOMETRIC PARAMETERS



# DETERMINANTS FROM THE EFFECTIVE ACTION

$$e^{-S_{\text{eff}}[\varphi]} = \int \mathcal{D}\chi \mathcal{D}\tilde{\varphi} e^{-S[\chi, \varphi + \tilde{\varphi}]}$$

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For a scalar  
contribution  
and a constant  
background

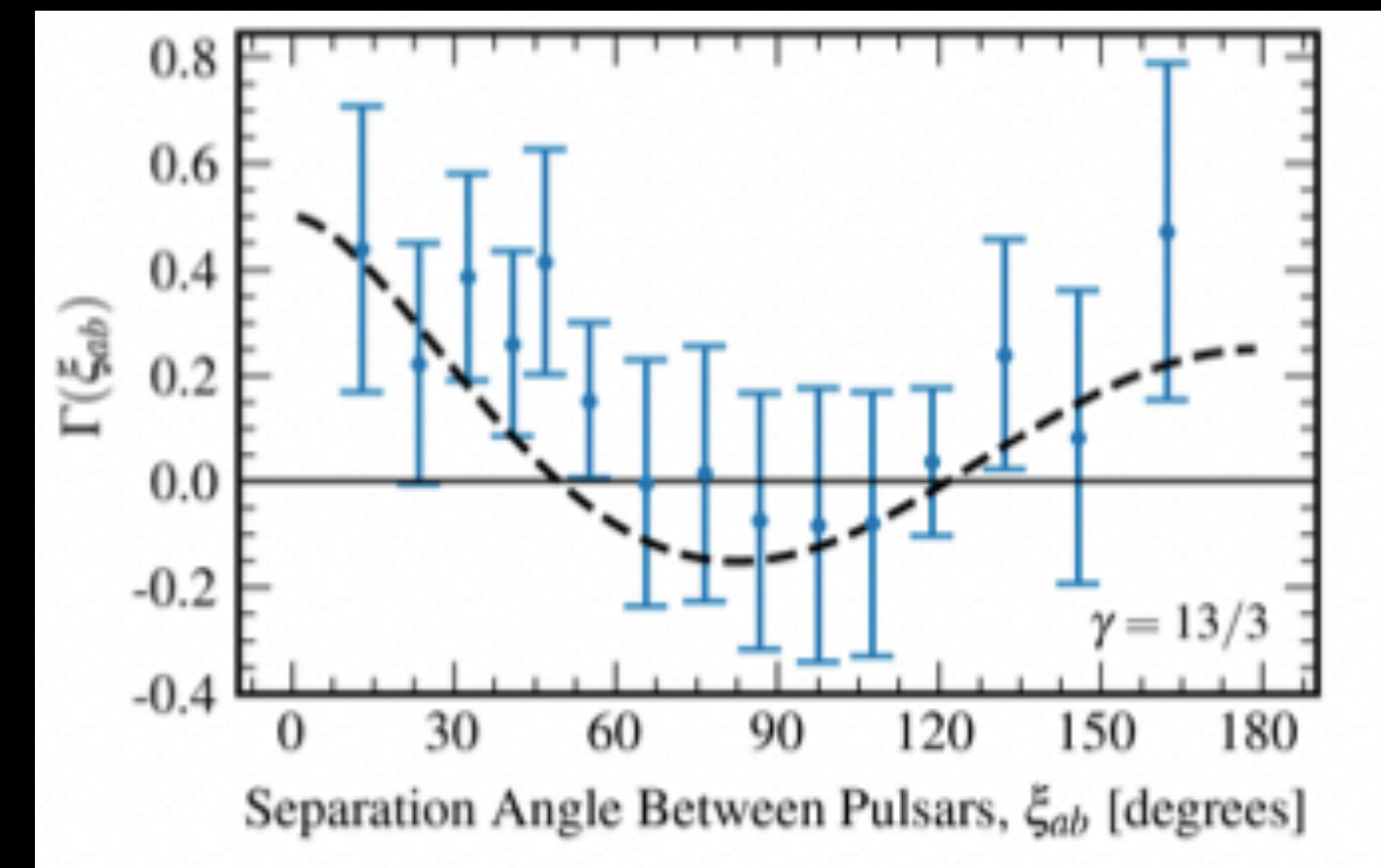
$$S_{\text{eff}}^{(1)}[\varphi_0] = \frac{1}{2} \text{tr} \log (-\partial^2 + V''(\varphi_0)) = V_{\text{eff}}^{(1)}(\varphi_0)$$

# DETERMINANTS FROM THE EFFECTIVE ACTION

$$e^{-S_{\text{eff}}[\varphi]} = \prod_a \frac{1}{\sqrt{\det \mathcal{O}_a(\varphi)}} e^{-S[0, \varphi]}$$

$$A_{\text{stat}} = \prod_a \mathcal{J}_a \mathcal{V}_a \sqrt{\frac{\det \mathcal{O}_a(\varphi_F)}{\det' \mathcal{O}_a(\varphi_b)}} \mathcal{J}_\phi \sqrt{\left| \frac{\det \mathcal{O}_\phi(\varphi_F)}{\det' \mathcal{O}_\phi(\varphi_b)} \right|} e^{-(S[\varphi_b] - S[\varphi_F])}$$

# STOCHASTIC GW BACKGROUND

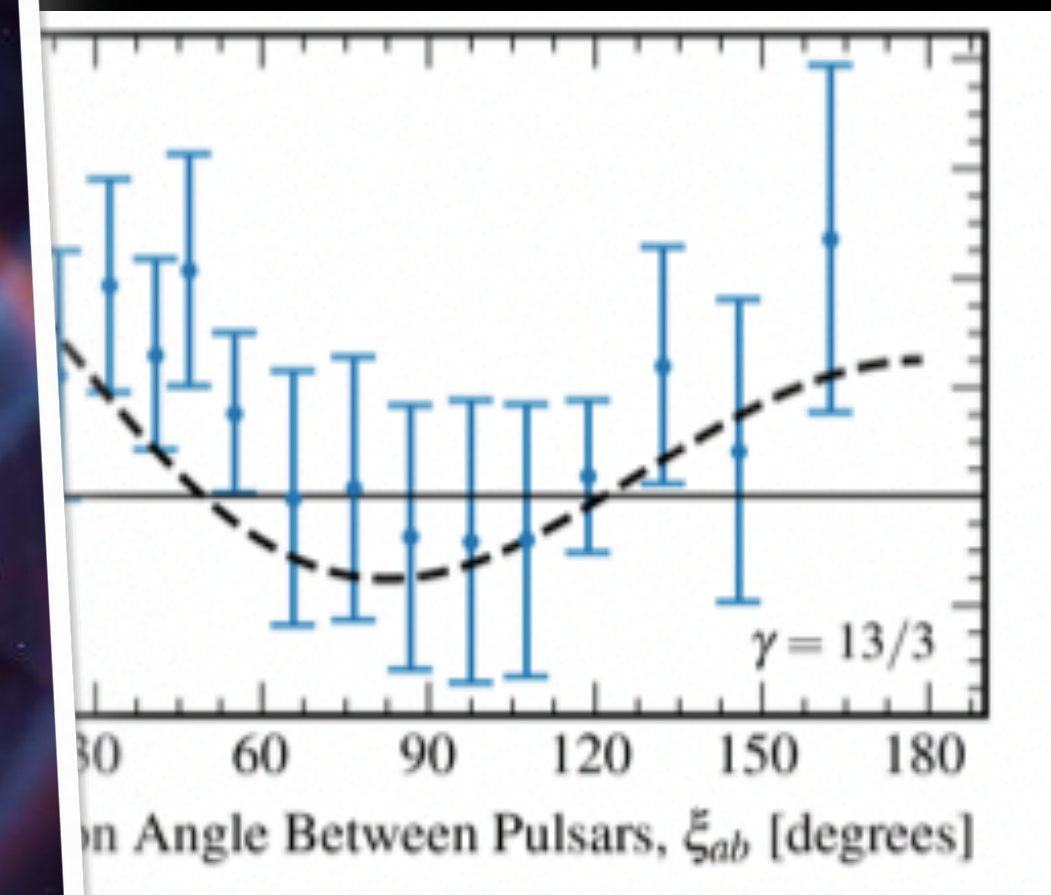


[G. Agazie et al. (NANOGrav Collaboration),  
Astrophys. J. Lett. 951, L8 (2023), arXiv:2306.16213]

# STOCHASTIC GW BACKGROUND

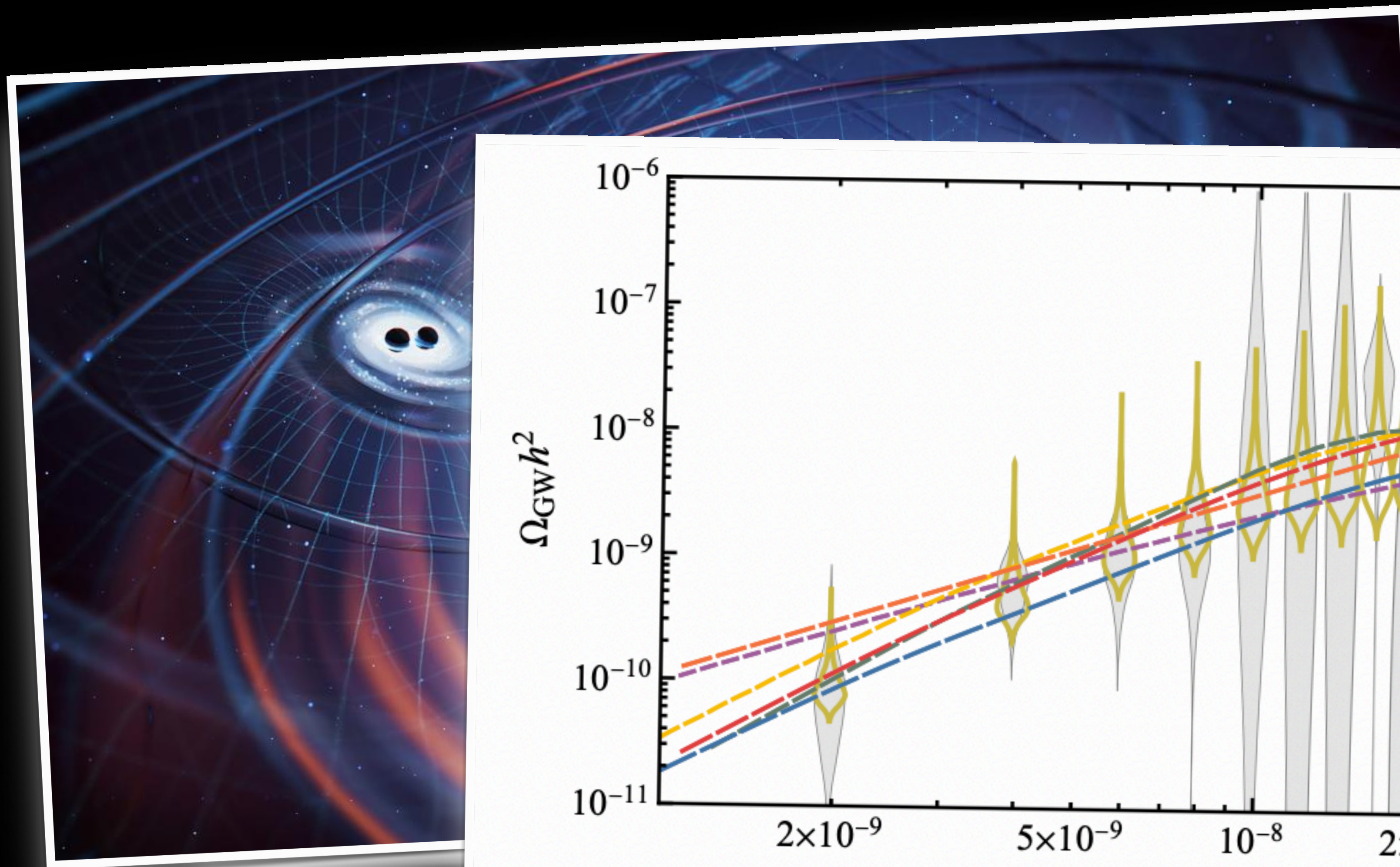


[źródło: nanograv.org, Olena Shmahalo]



et al. (NANOGrav Collaboration),  
lett. 951, L8 (2023), arXiv:2306.16213]

# STOCHASTIC GW BACKGROUND



[źródło]

[J. Ellis et al., Phys.Rev.D 109 (2024) 2, 023522]