

Conformal geodesics and timelike infinity

Revisiting the semiglobal stability of the Minkowski spacetime

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Summary

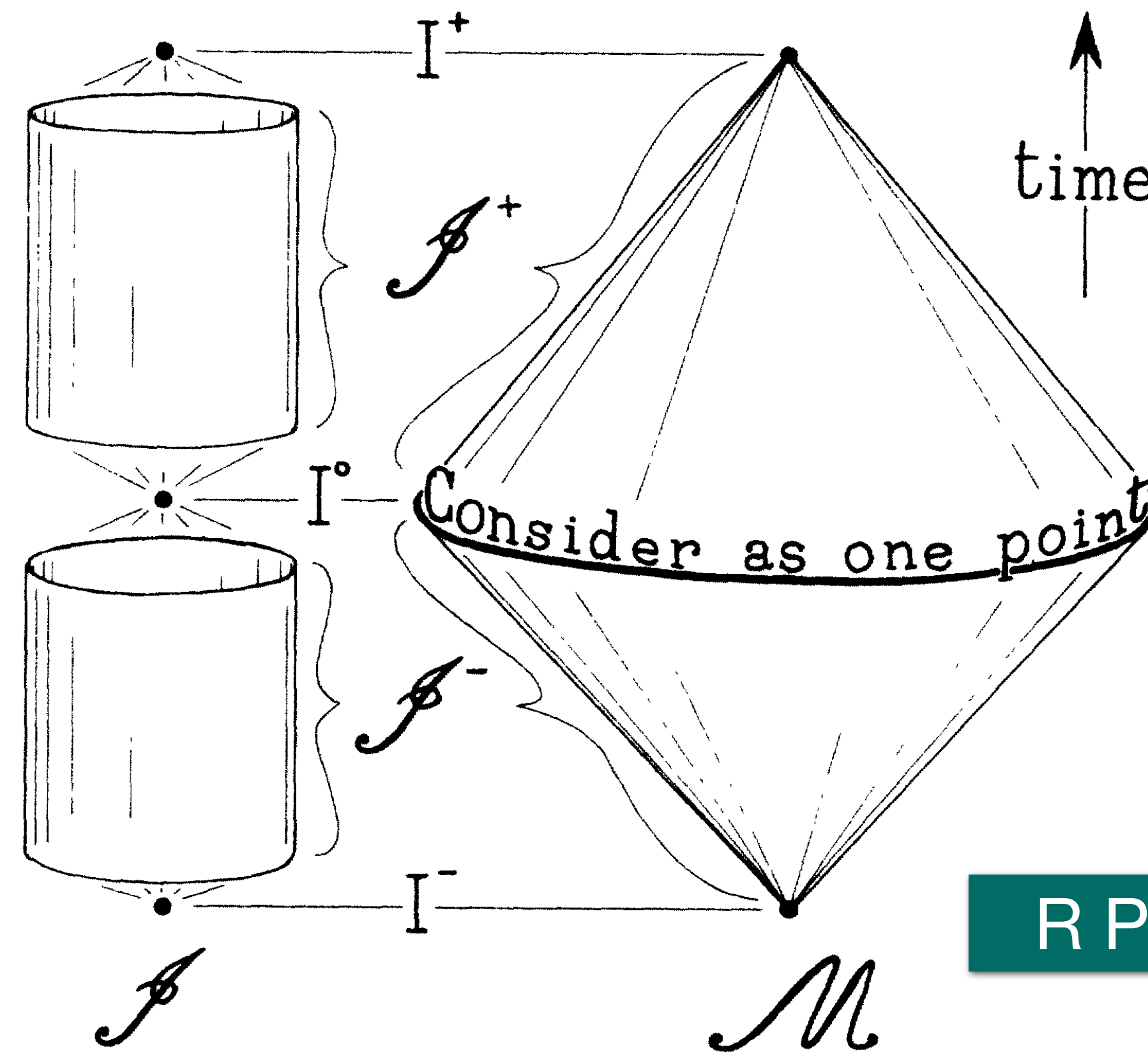
Key messages...

- **Conformal geodesics (CGs)** are a powerful tool to study the conformal structure of spacetimes
- CGs provide a **natural link** between various approaches to i^+
- In particular, CGs allow to **blow-up** i^+ in Friedrich's **semiglobal perturbations of Minkowski** spacetime to a hyperboloid \mathcal{H}^+
- The strategy can be generalised to more complicated (blackhole) spacetimes
- The geometric set-up is the starting point for the use of tools of **microlocal analysis (b-geometry/analysis)**

Motivation

How do the various representations of timelike infinity arise/relate?

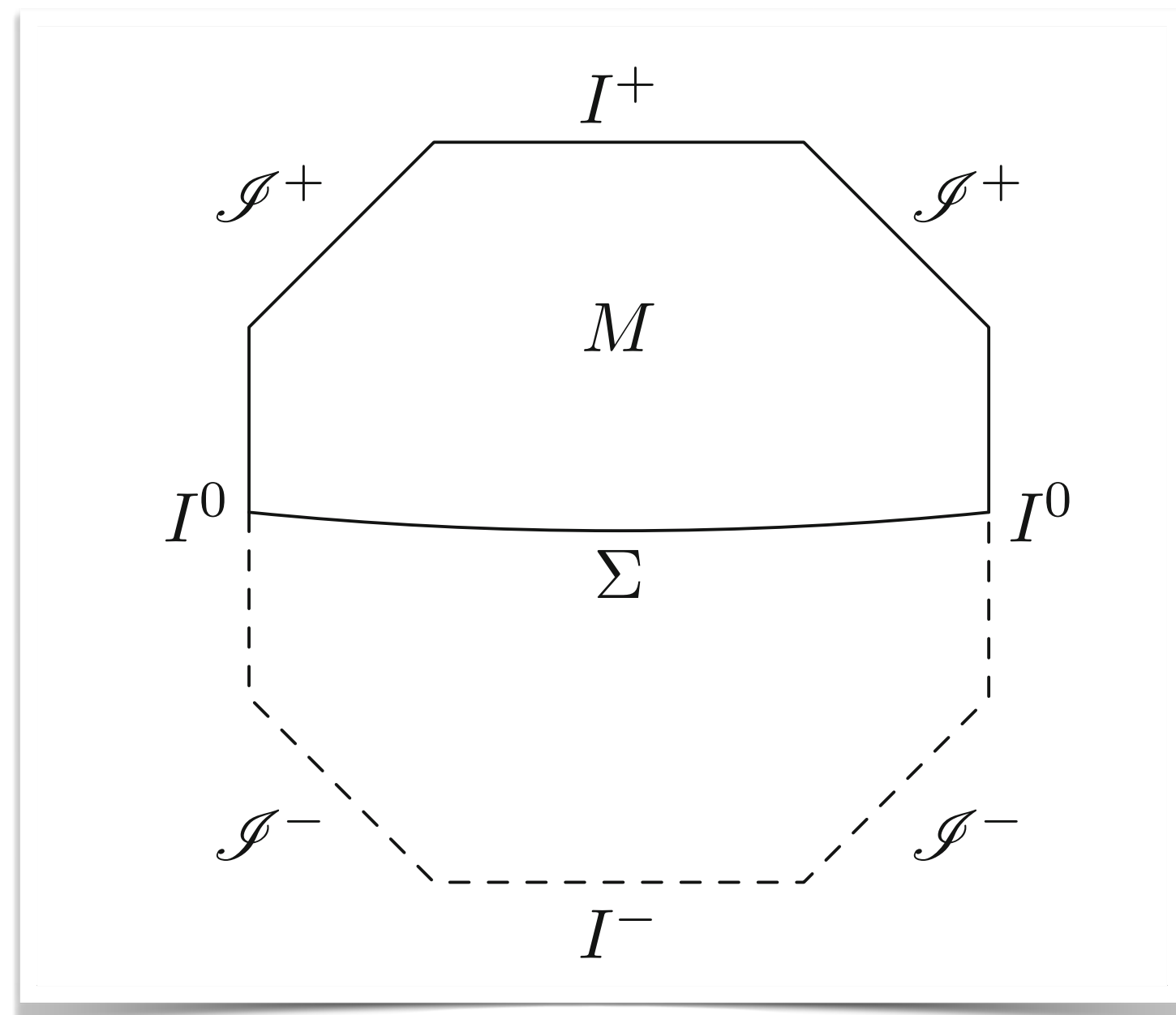
Penrose's original idea:
treat i^0 , i^- and i^+ as
points



R Penrose, PRL (1963)

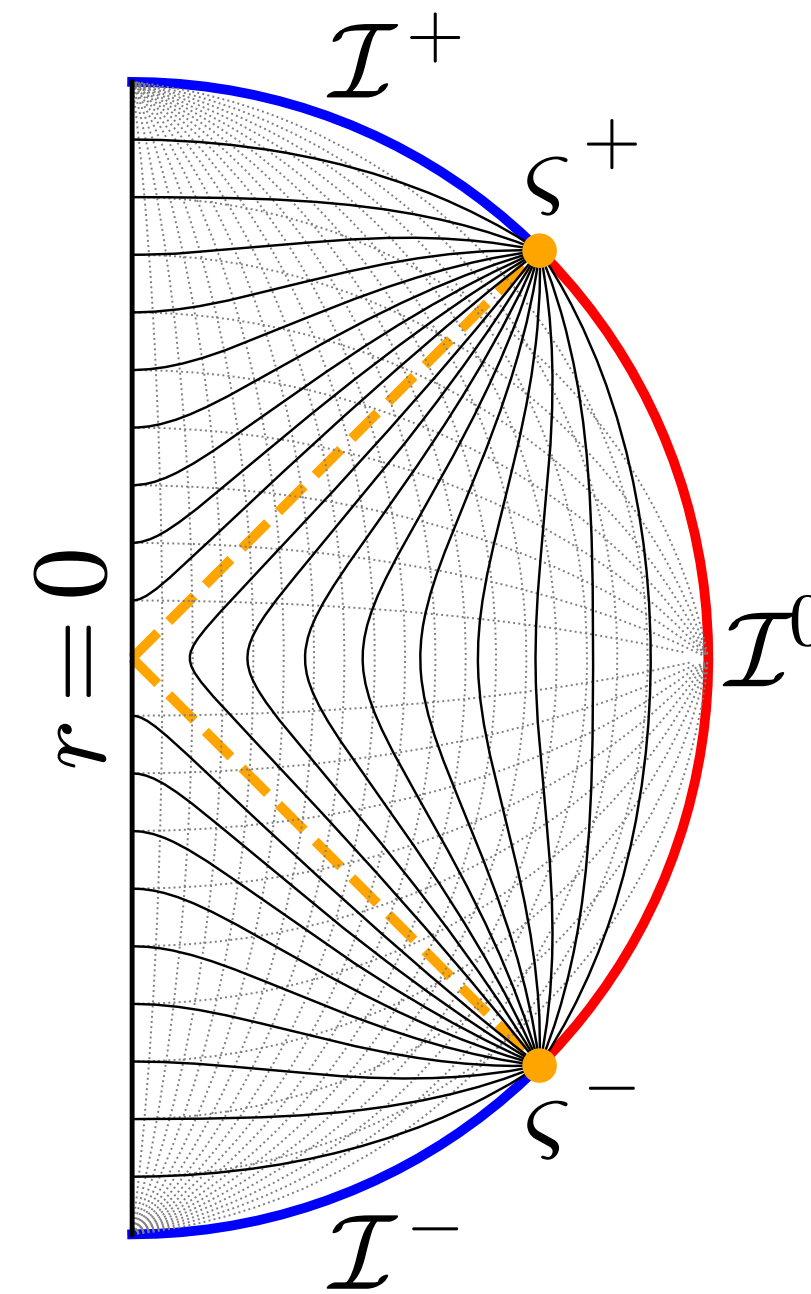
Motivation

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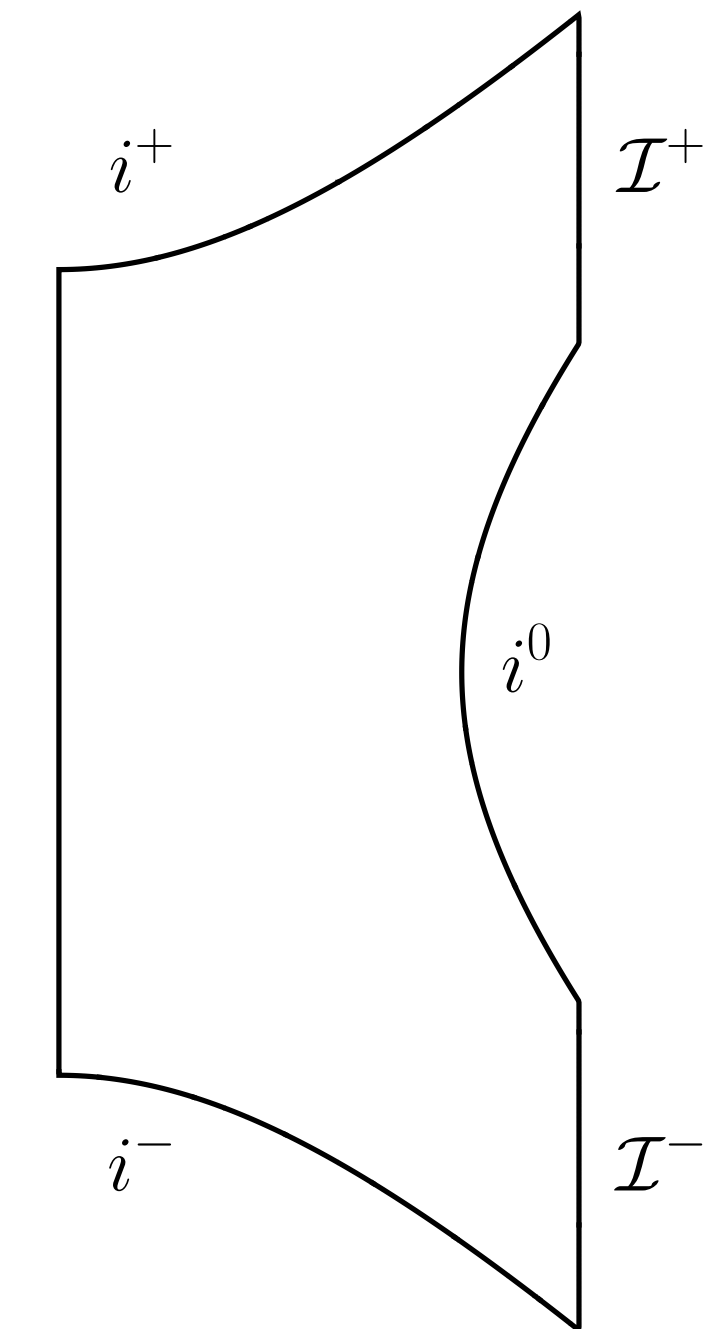
P Hintz & A Vasy (2020)

Microlocal analysis



Bortwick & Herfray (2024)

Affine geometry



Compère, Gralla & Wei (2024)

Scattering

The big question:

Can one show that these structures arise naturally as a consequence of the evolution dictated by the Einstein equations?

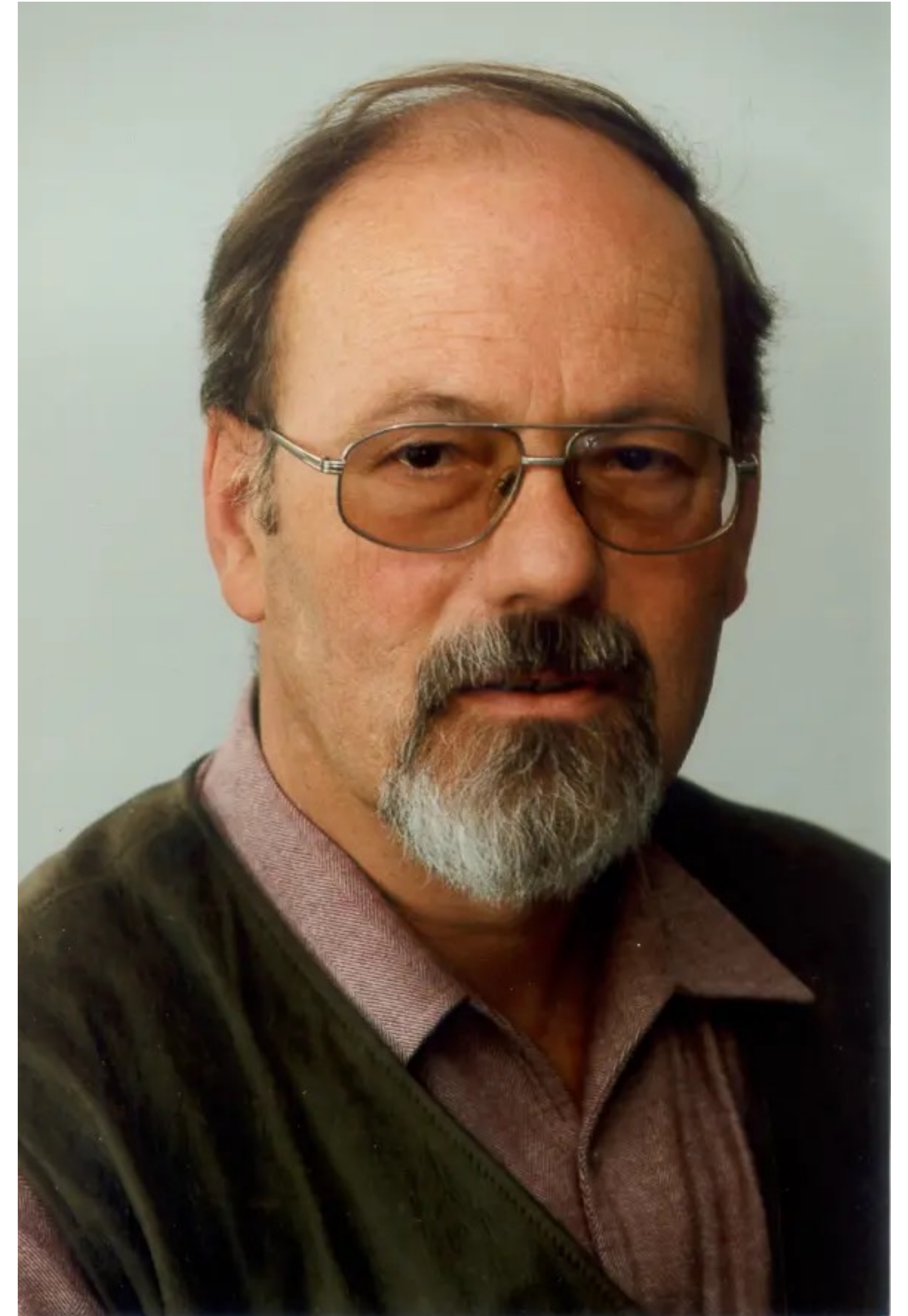
Prologue

Compactifying spacetimes

What is the best way to conformally compactly a spacetime?

“Ask Bernd Schmidt!”

(heard from Alan Rendall)

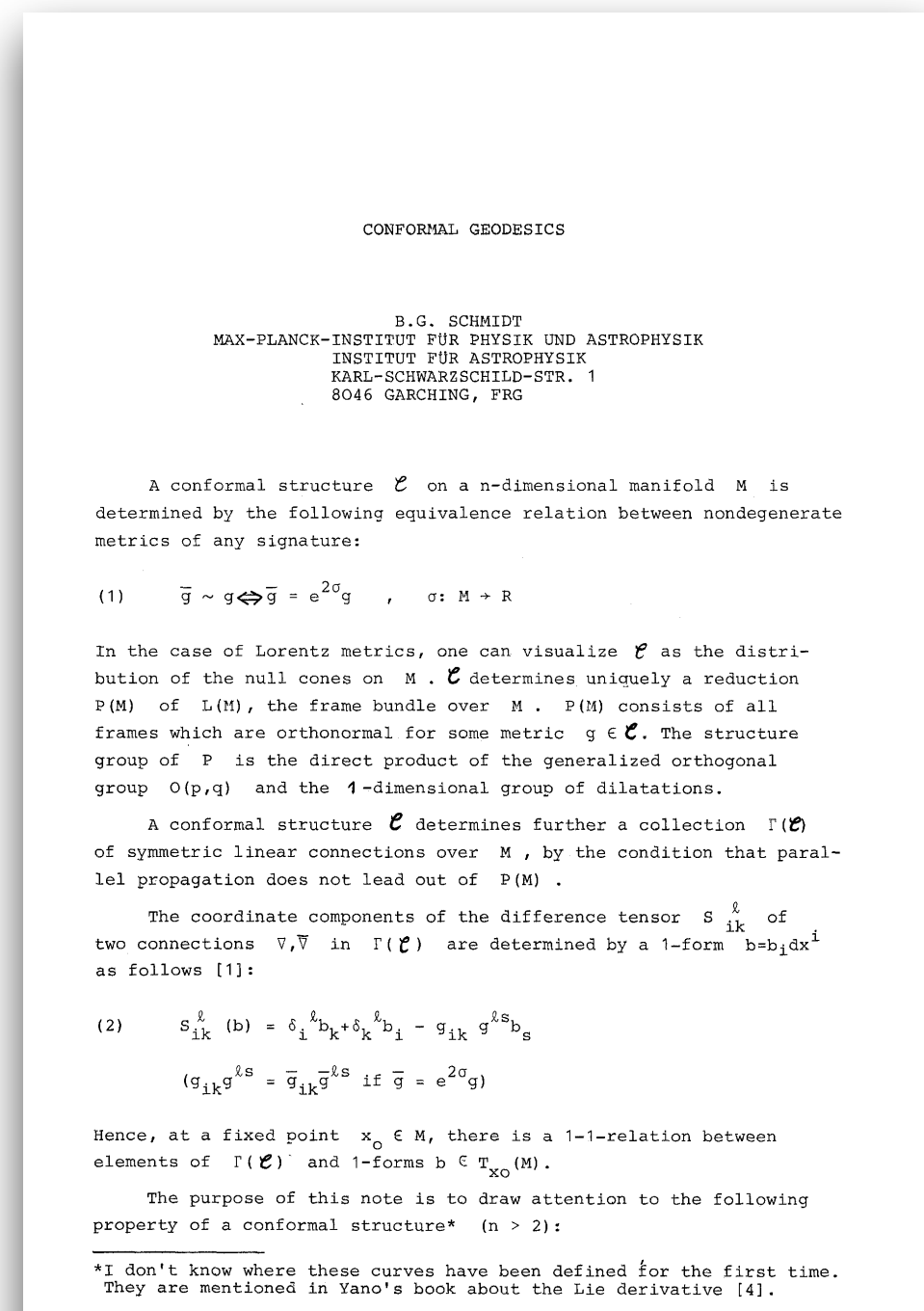


(1921-2023)

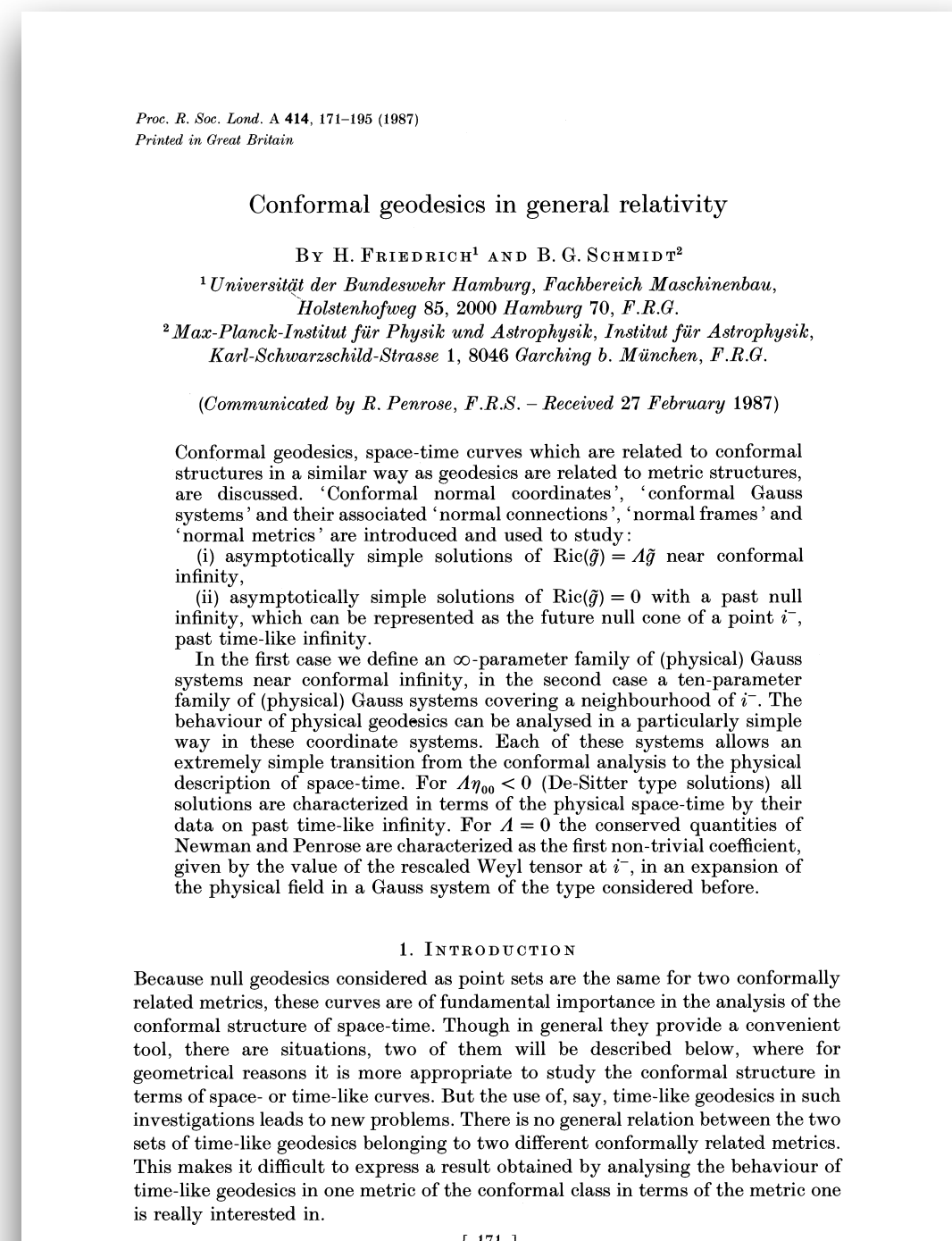
What would Bernd Schmidt suggest?

Use conformal geodesics!

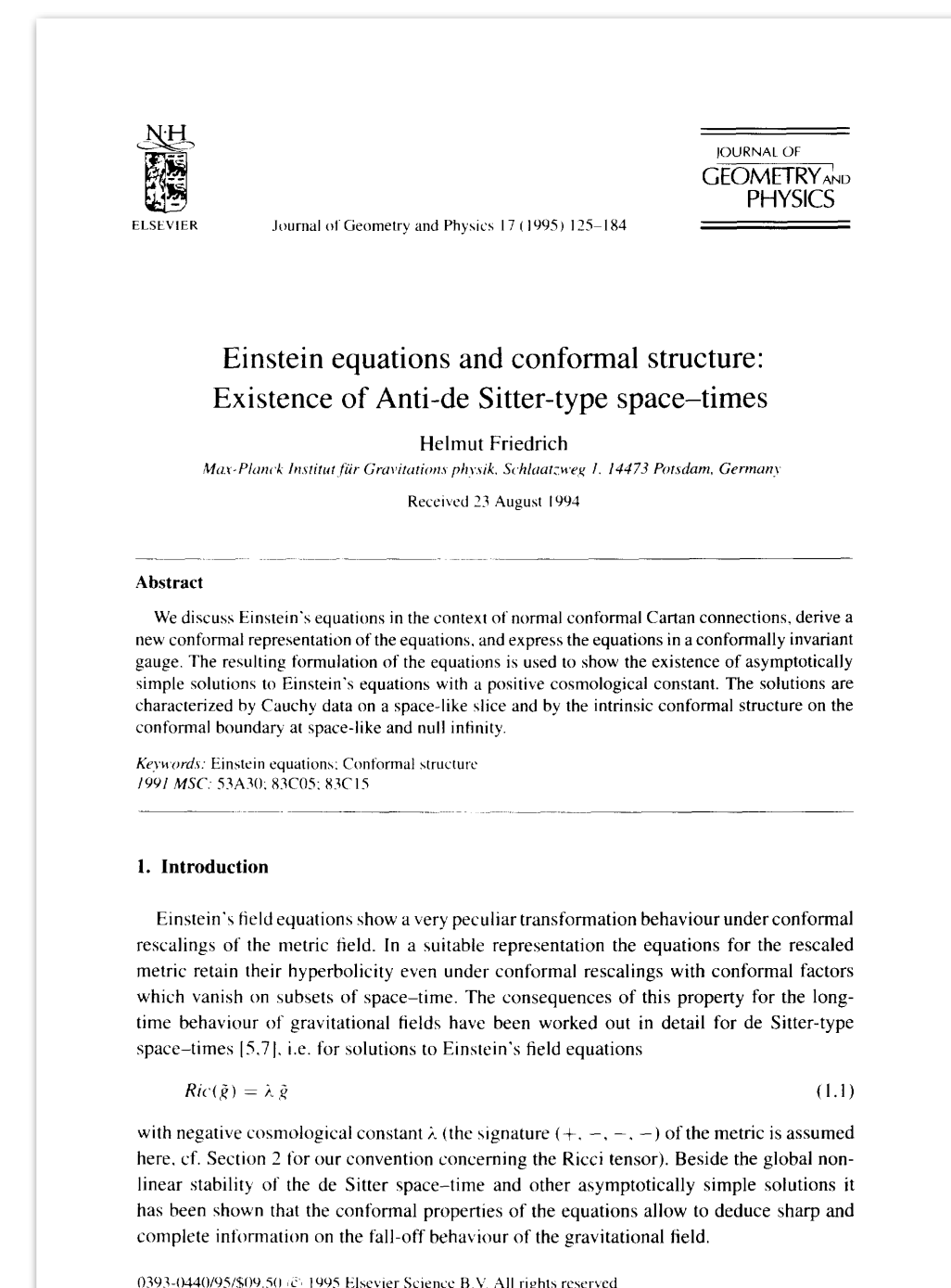
Conformal geodesics provide a canonical way to obtain conformal completions of spacetime.



BG Schmidt (1986)



BG Schmidt & H Friedrich (1987)

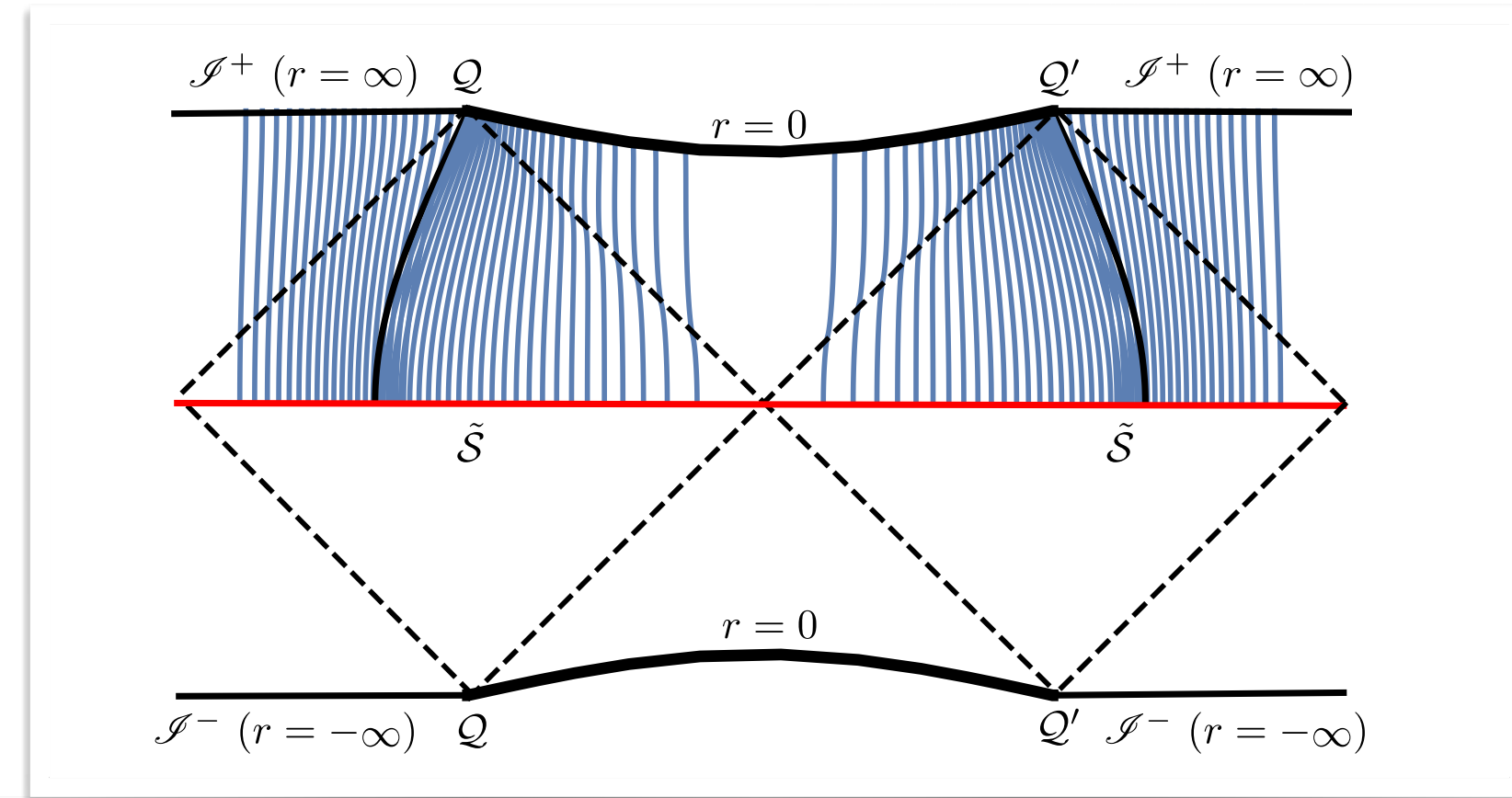


H Friedrich (1995)

Conformal geodesics

Using conformal structures to fix the gauge

$$\begin{aligned}\tilde{\nabla}_{\dot{x}}\dot{x} &= -2\langle\beta, \dot{x}\rangle\dot{x} + \tilde{g}(\dot{x}, \dot{x})\beta^\sharp, \\ \tilde{\nabla}_{\dot{x}}\beta &= \langle\beta, \dot{x}\rangle\beta - \frac{1}{2}\tilde{g}^\sharp(\beta, \beta)\dot{x}^b + \tilde{L}(\dot{x}, \cdot),\end{aligned}$$



- General properties: Friedrich & Schmidt (1987). Connection to the value NP constants at i^+ .
- **Construction of adS-like spacetimes:** (HF, 1995)
- Conformal Gaussian systems in Schwarzschild (2003)
- Schwarzschild-(a)dS: García-Parrado, Gasperín, JAVK (2018)

Proposition 5.1 (*the canonical conformal factor associated to a conformal geodesic*) Let $(\tilde{\mathcal{M}}, \tilde{g})$ denote an Einstein spacetime. Suppose that $(x(\tau), \beta(\tau))$ is a solution to the conformal geodesic equations (5.35a) and (5.35b) and that $\{e_a\}$ is a g -orthonormal frame propagated along the curve according to Equation (5.36). If $\alpha = \Theta^2 \tilde{\alpha}$ is such that $\alpha(\dot{x}, \dot{x}) = 1$, then the conformal factor Θ satisfies

where the coefficient
along the conformal

$\dot{\Theta}_*$

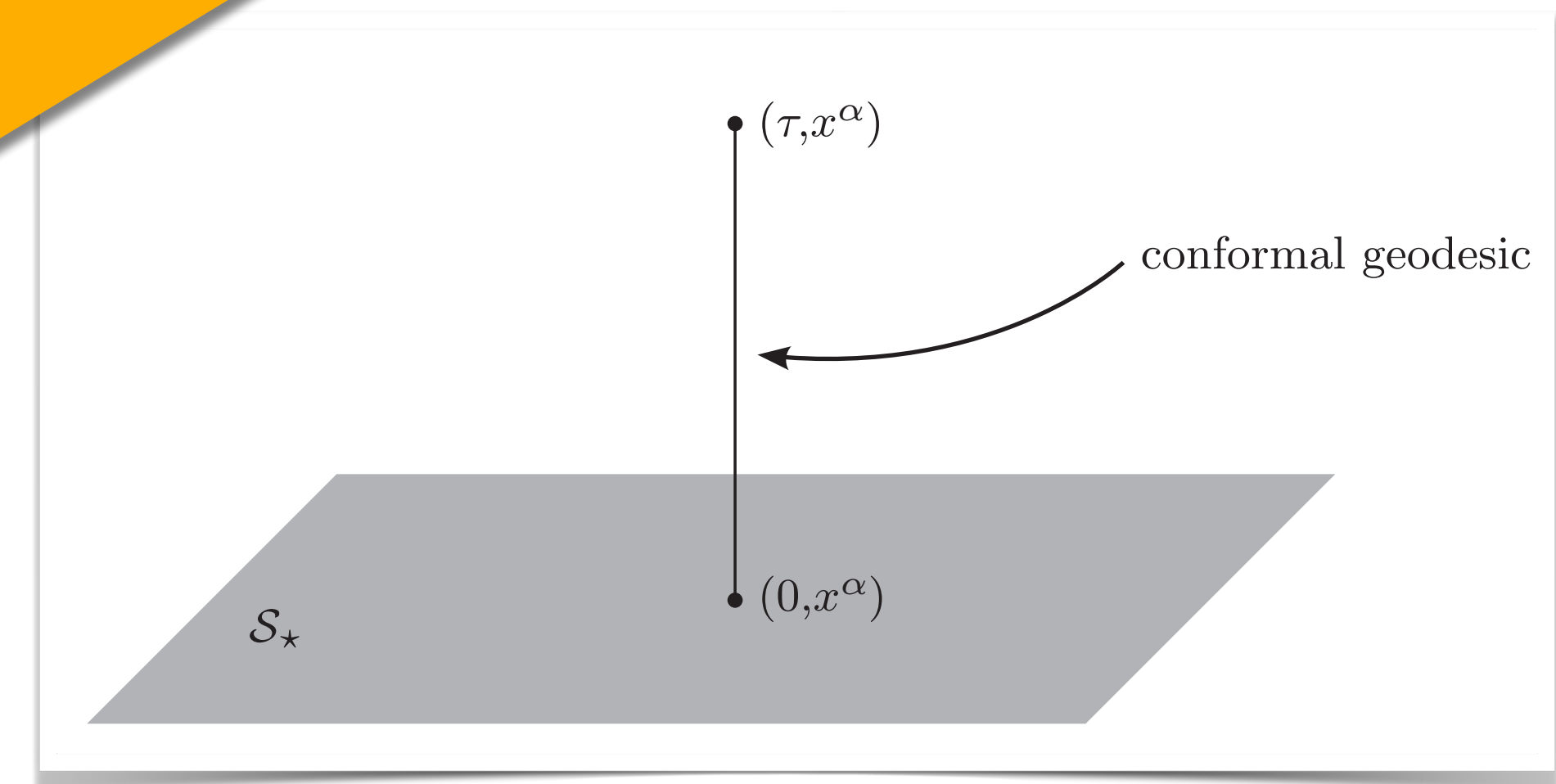
An explicitly known canonical conformal factor associated to the conformal structure!

Conformal Gaussian gauges

A canonical way of describing the spacetime

Connection to affine geometry!

- The one form β defines a Weyl connection (torsion free, nonmetric) $\hat{\nabla}$ along the congruence
- Make use of the canonical conformal factor selected by the congruence of GCs
- Propagate the coordinates along the curves (Gaussian) from some fiduciary hypersurface
- Use Weyl propagation to evolve the frame



$$e_0 = \partial_\tau, \quad \text{so that} \quad e_0^\mu = \delta_0^\mu.$$

$$\hat{\Gamma}_0^a{}_b = 0, \quad \hat{L}_{0a} = 0.$$

$$f_0 = 0.$$

The extended conformal Einstein field equations

A conformal representation of the vacuum Einstein equations

- Expressed in terms of geometric fields in the conformally rescaled spacetime:
 - Frame, connection, Schouten tensor, **Weyl tensor**.
- The equations are **formally regular** at the conformal boundary.

• A hyperbolic reduction implies a **conformal evolution**

$$\partial_\tau \hat{\nu} = \mathbf{K} \hat{\nu} + \mathbf{Q}(\hat{\Gamma}) \hat{\nu} + \mathbf{L}(x) \phi,$$

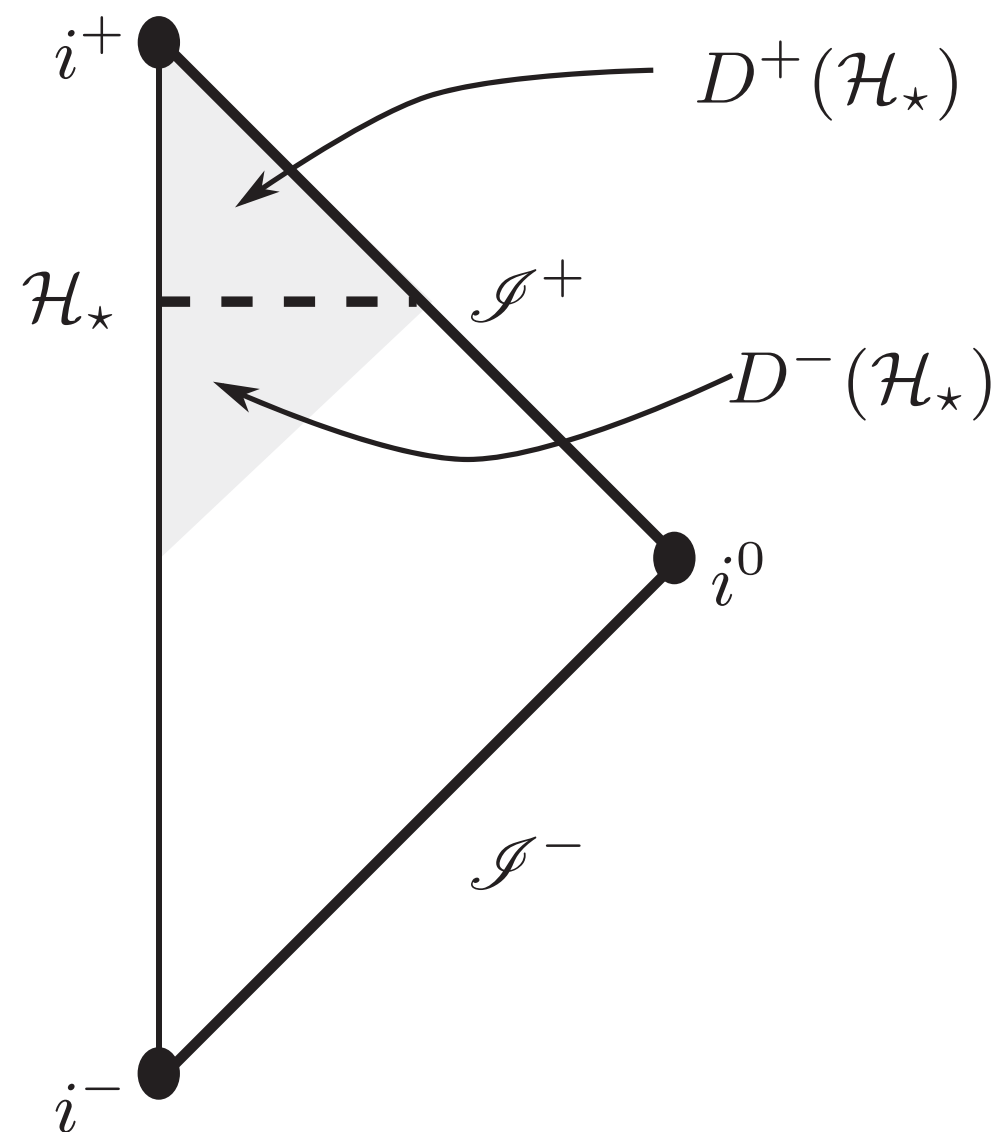
$$(\mathbf{I} + \mathbf{A}^0(e)) \partial_\tau \phi + \mathbf{A}^\alpha(e) \partial_\alpha \phi = \mathbf{B}(\hat{\Gamma}) \phi$$

Key idea: the conformal factor is known *a priori*

Friedrich's semiglobal stability theorem of the Minkowski spacetime

Semiglobal stability of the Minkowski spacetime (and global stability of de Sitter)

Theorem (Friedrich, 1986). *Perturbations of hyperboloidal data for the Minkowski spacetime which are regular at \mathcal{I}^+ give rise to a development with the same global properties of the Minkowski spacetime. In particular, the solutions admit a smooth conformal extension.*



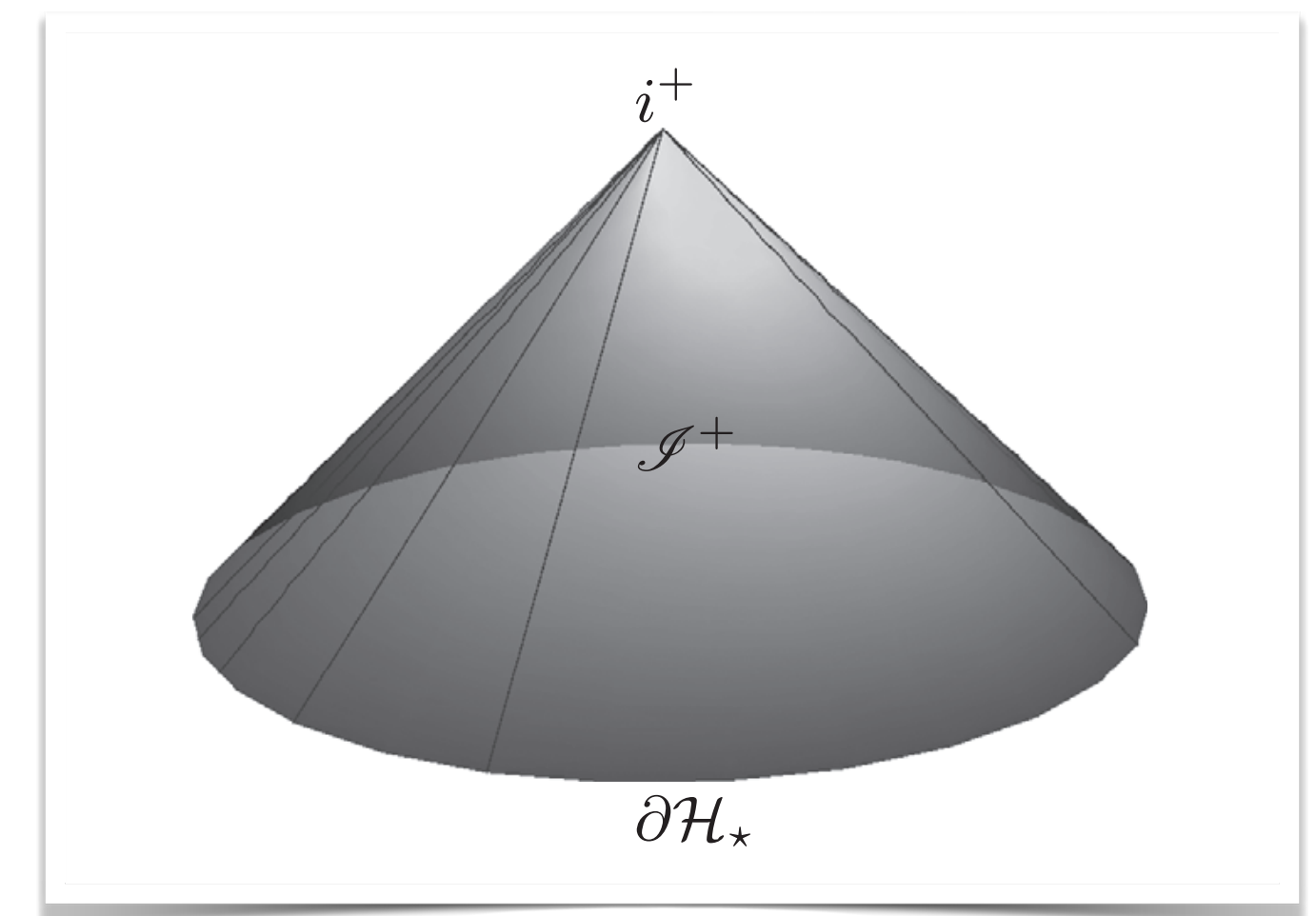
- Existence of solutions to the constraint equations with the required properties has been analyzed by Anderson, Chrusciel & Friedrich (1990) and Anderson & Chrusciel (1991)

The structure of timelike infinity

A couple of corollaries

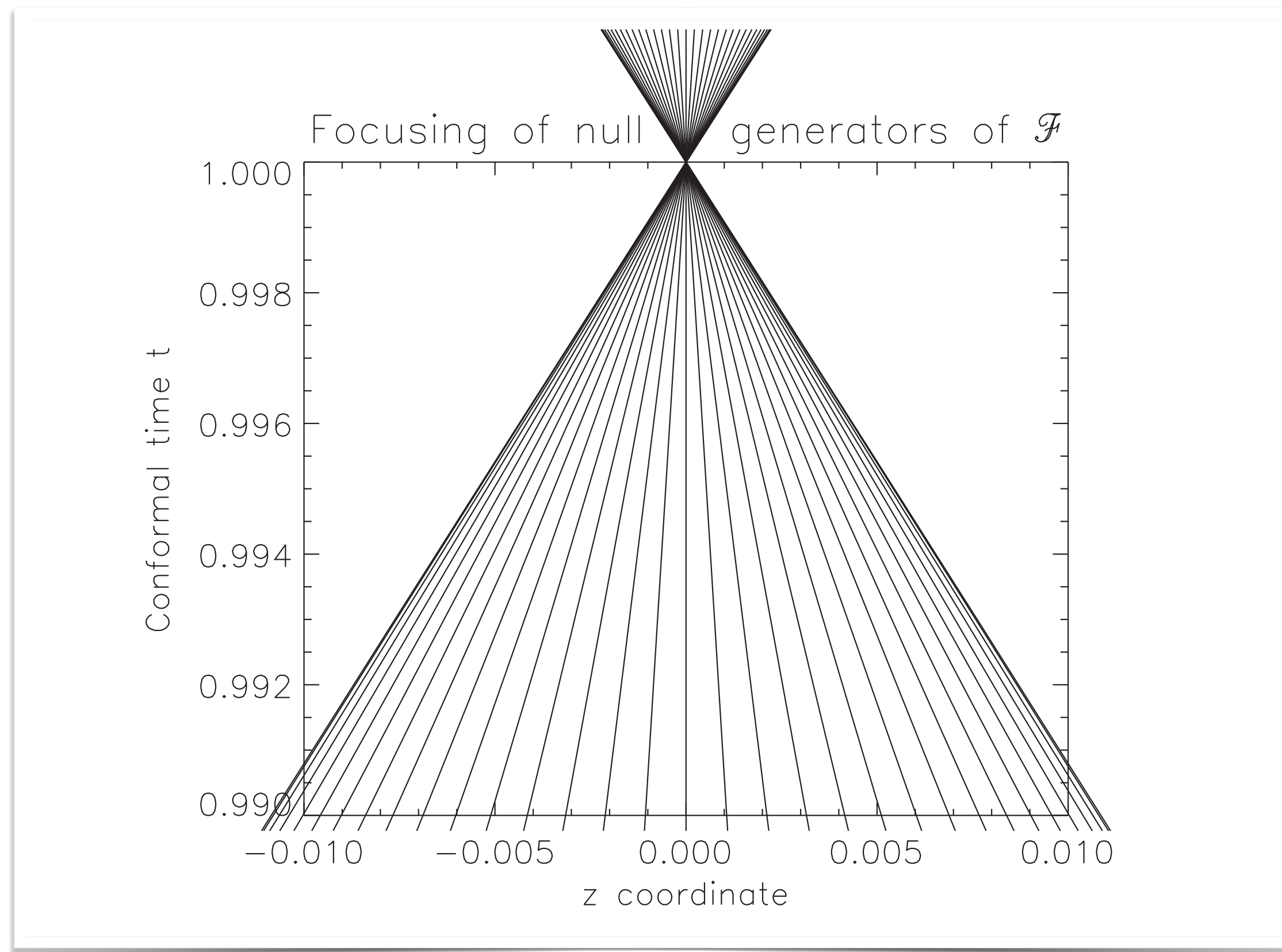
Corollary 1. *The spacetimes obtained in the previous theorem are future timelike geodesically complete.*

Corollary 2. *The null generators of \mathcal{I}^+ intersect at single point i^+ corresponding to the endpoints of (physical) timelike geodesics.*



Numerics

Using the conformal field equations for numerical simulations

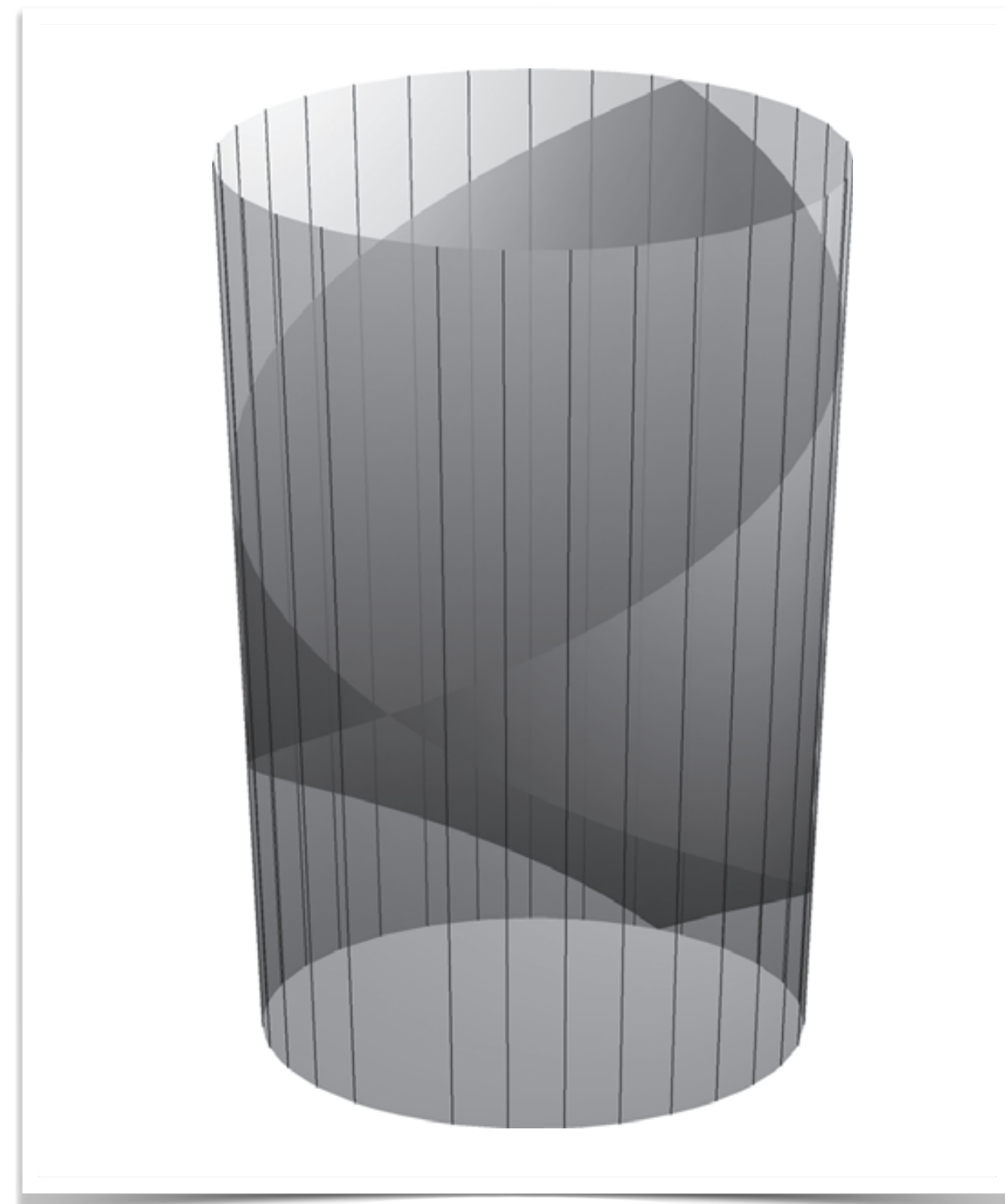


Credit: P Hübner (2001)

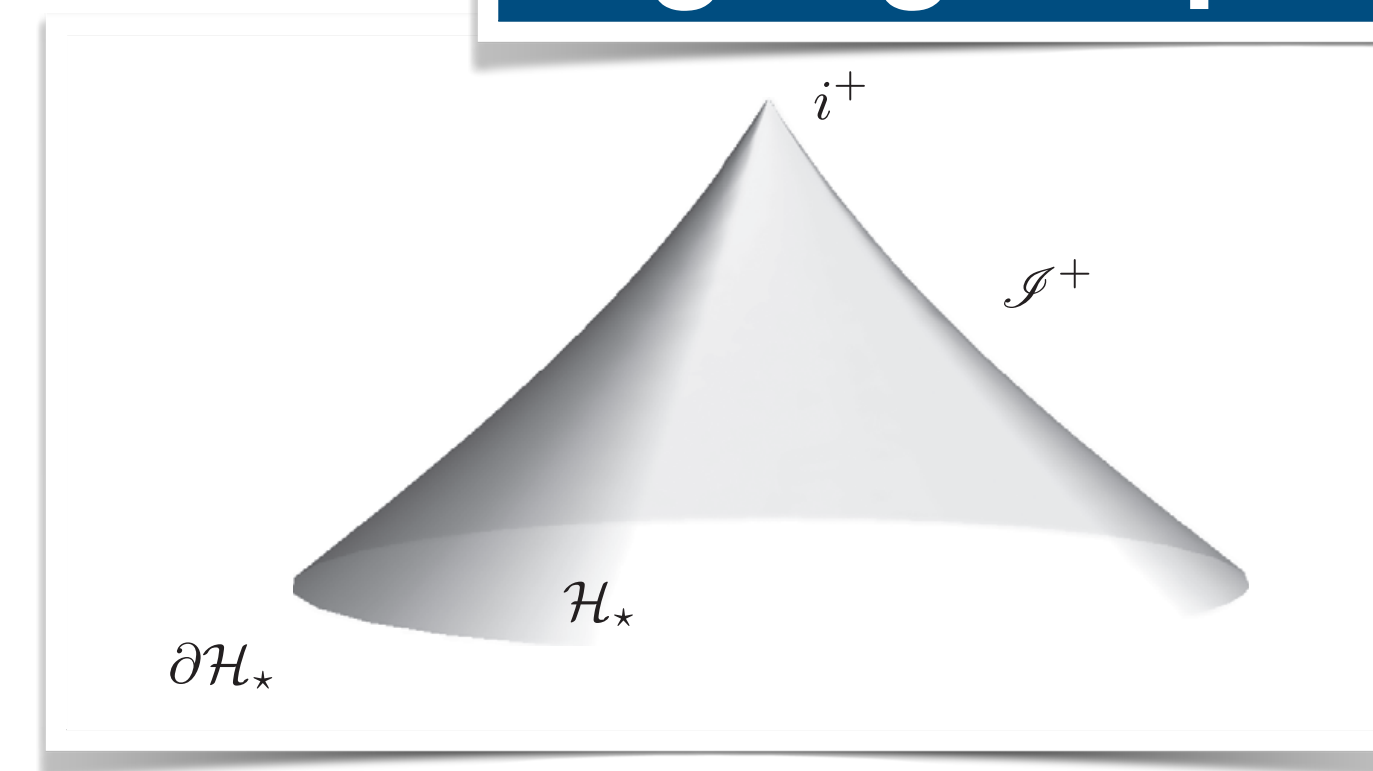
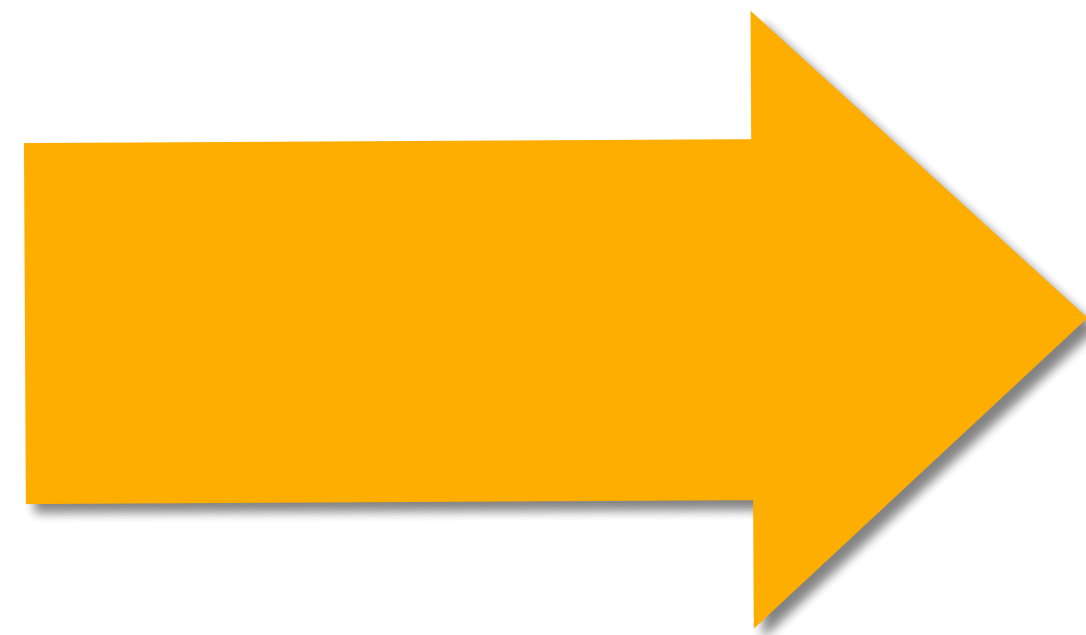
- The semiglobal stability of Minkowski spacetime has been *numerically illustrated* by P. Hübner (2001)
- New developments regarding scattering problems by Frauendiener, Stevens et al.
- Renewed interest by the community working on self-force problems —eg Zenginoglu,...

A proof using conformal geodesics

Revisiting Friedrich's original proof...



Conformal Gaussian
gauge representation



Key idea 1: use the CGs ruling the Einstein cylinder

Key idea 2: apply Cauchy stability to the conformal evolution equations

$$\partial_\tau \hat{v} = \mathbf{K} \hat{v} + \mathbf{Q}(\hat{\Gamma}) \hat{v} + \mathbf{L}(x) \phi,$$

$$(\mathbf{I} + \mathbf{A}^0(e)) \partial_\tau \phi + \mathbf{A}^\alpha(e) \partial_\alpha \phi = \mathbf{B}(\hat{\Gamma}) \phi$$

A conformal Gaussian system for
timelike infinity

A key observation

Timelike geodesics as conformal geodesics

Proposition. Any non-null metric geodesic in an Einstein spacetime is, up to a reparametrisation, a non-null conformal geodesic.

CG equations

$$\tilde{\nabla}_{\mathbf{x}'} \mathbf{x}' = 0$$

$$s = s(\tau)$$

$$\beta = \alpha(\tau) \mathbf{x}'^b$$

$$\ddot{s} + \alpha \dot{s}^2 \tilde{g}(\mathbf{x}', \mathbf{x}') = 0$$

$$\dot{\alpha} = \frac{1}{2} \alpha^2 \dot{s} \tilde{g}(\mathbf{x}', \mathbf{x}')$$

Solving...

$$s - s_{\star} = \frac{2(\tau - \tau_{\star})}{2\tau'_{\star} + \alpha_{\star}(\tau - \tau_{\star})}$$

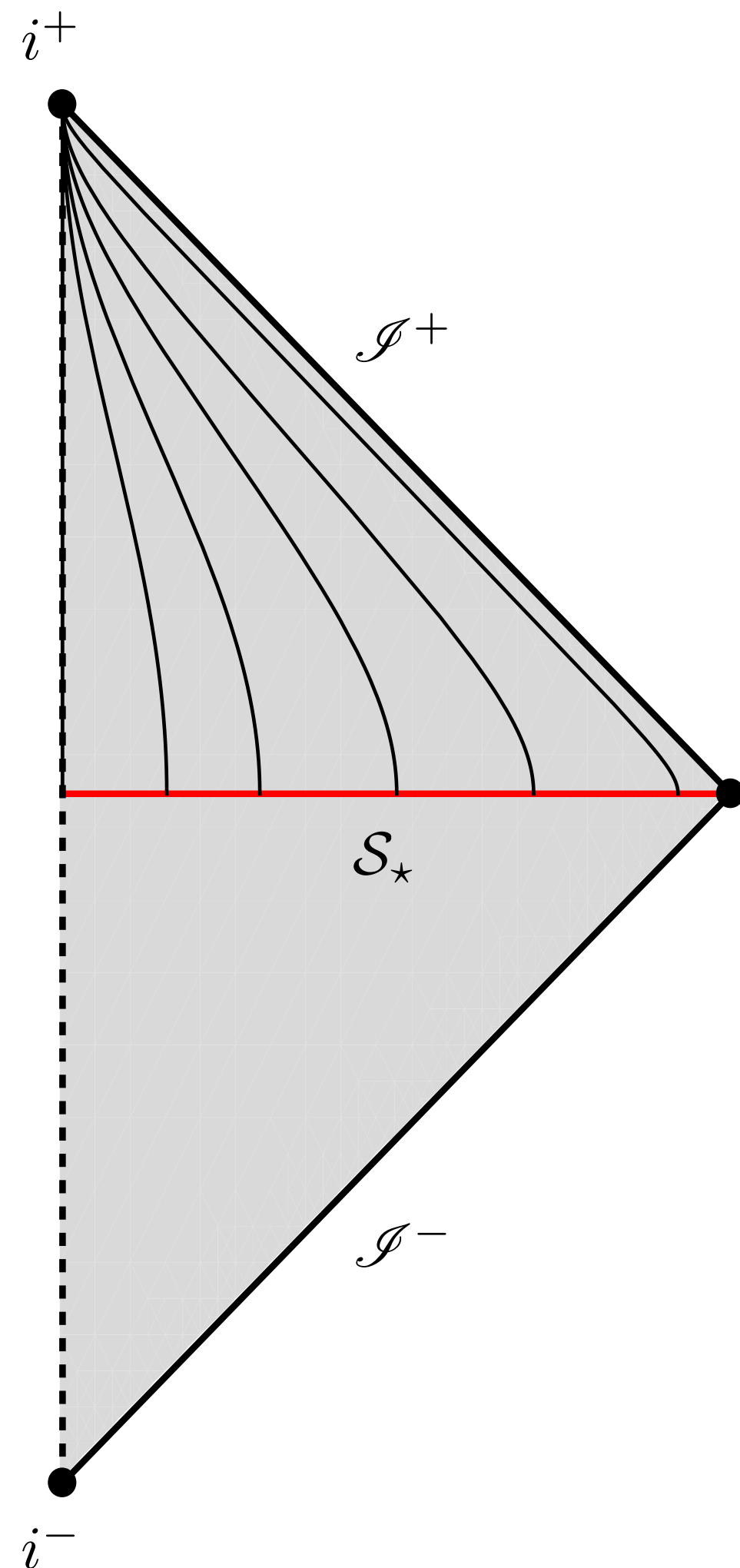
$$\alpha - \alpha_{\star} = \frac{\alpha_{\star}^2}{2\tau'_{\star}} (\tau - \tau_{\star})$$

Hypothesis and Ansatz

Universal solution if proper time is used!

Which timelike geodesics?

Blow-up i^+ by looking at the integral curves of ∂_t



- A natural congruence to blow-up timelike infinity is given by the integral curves of ∂_t (time translation Killing vector)
- In the Minkowski spacetime these curves are geodesics and, thus, can be reparametrised as conformal geodesics
- The reparametrised curves reach i^+ for a finite value of the new parameter τ
- The curves can be parametrised by their location at the fiducial hyper surface

A first example

Reaching i^+ from a Minkowski Cauchy hypersurface

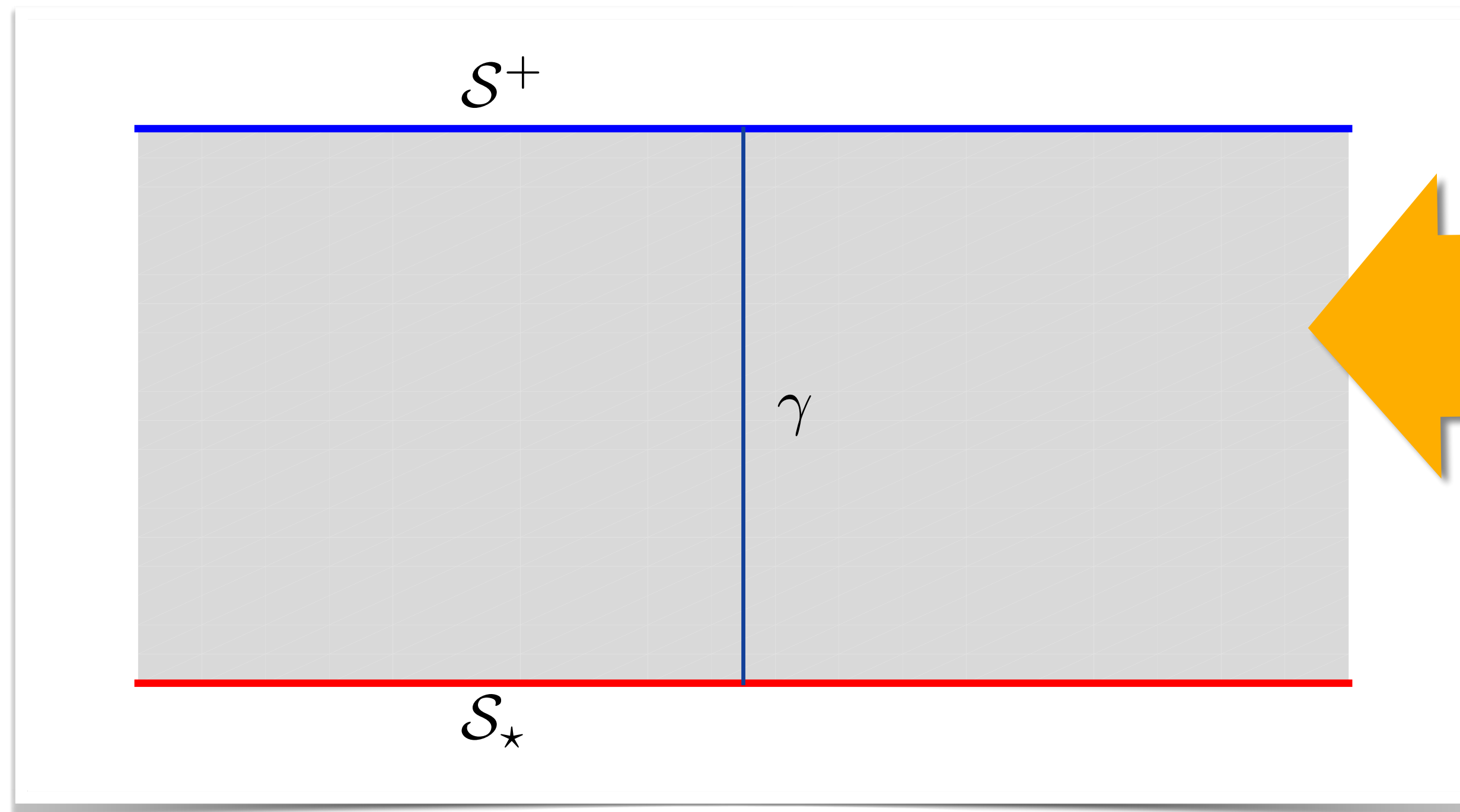
$$\tilde{\eta} = dt \otimes dt - dr \otimes dr - r^2 \sigma$$

$$\gamma(r_*, \theta_*, \varphi_*) \equiv (s, r_*, \theta_*, \varphi_*), \quad s \in \mathbb{R}$$

$$x'(s) = \partial_t$$

$$s(\tau) = \frac{\tau}{1 - \tau} \quad \tau \in [0, 1]$$

$$\Theta = (1 - \tau)^2$$



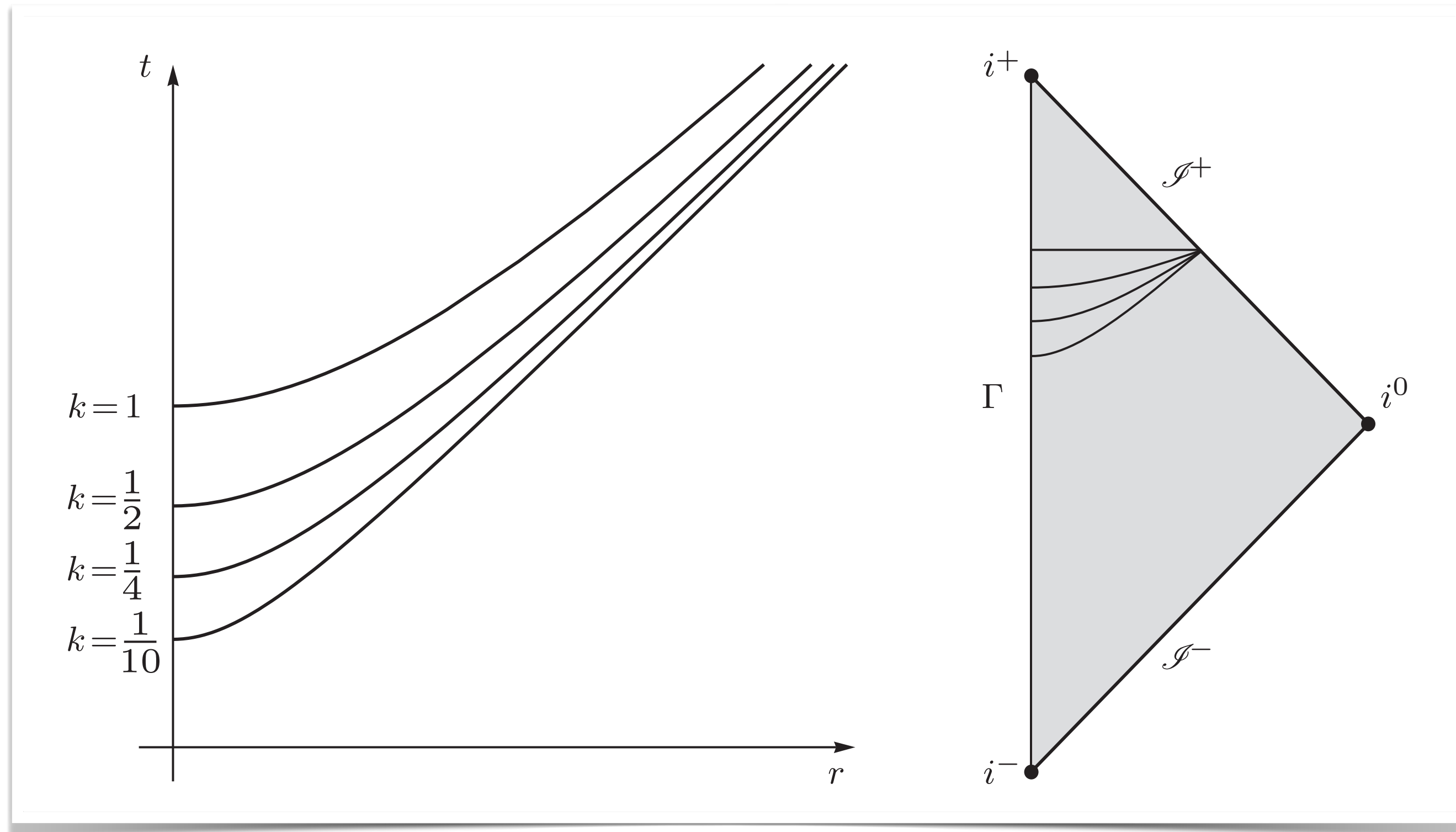
Key observations:

$$\eta = d\tau \otimes d\tau - (1 - \tau)^2 \delta.$$

$$\Theta|_{\tau=1} = 0, \quad d\Theta|_{\tau=1} = 0.$$

CMC hyperboloids in Minkowski spacetime

A more convenient starting point for an investigation of i^+



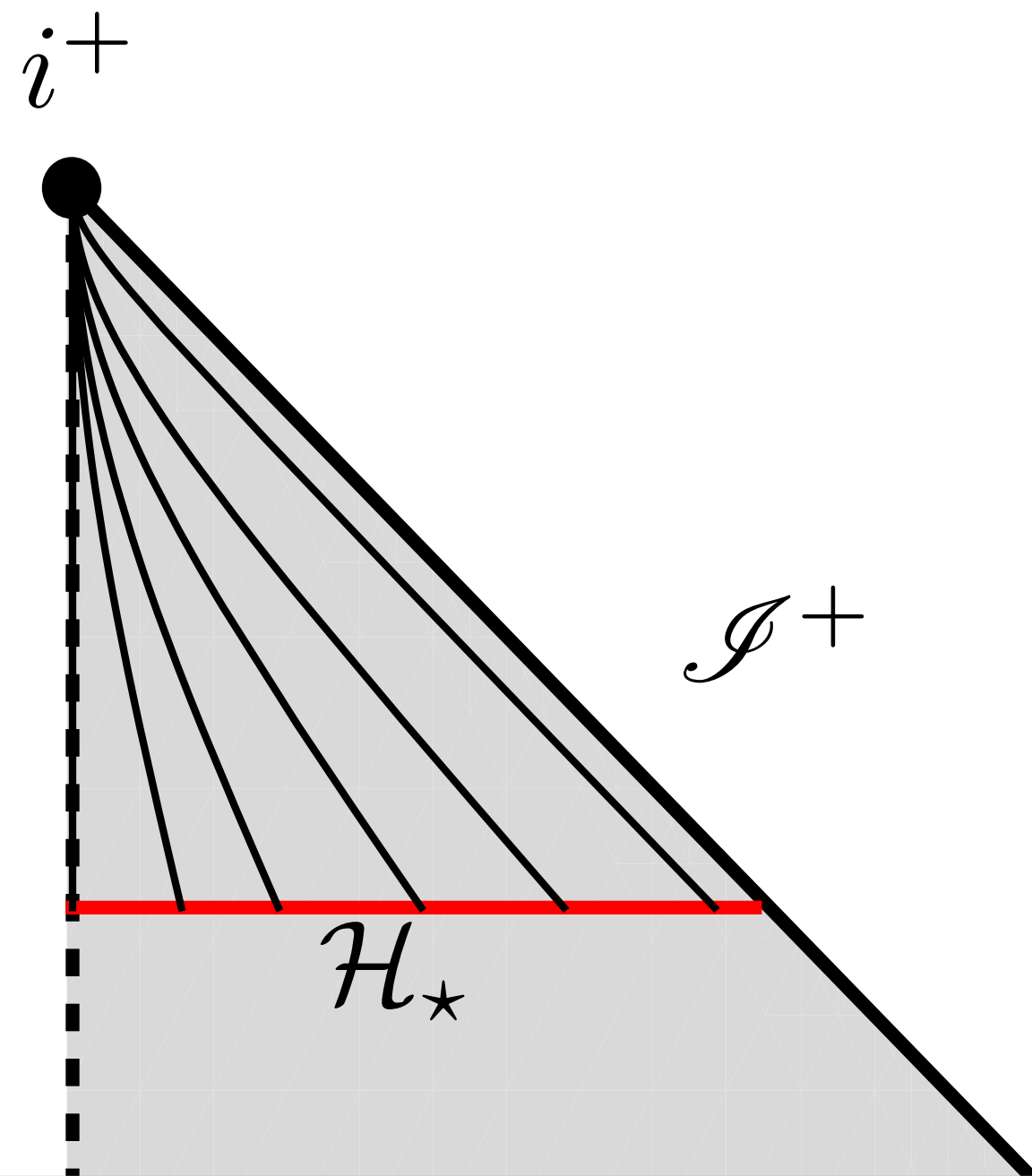
$$\mathcal{H}_k = \{p \in \mathbb{R}^4 \mid t^2(p) - r^2(p) = k\},$$

$$k > 0$$

$$\tilde{K} = \frac{3}{\sqrt{k}}$$

Using the standard hyperboloid

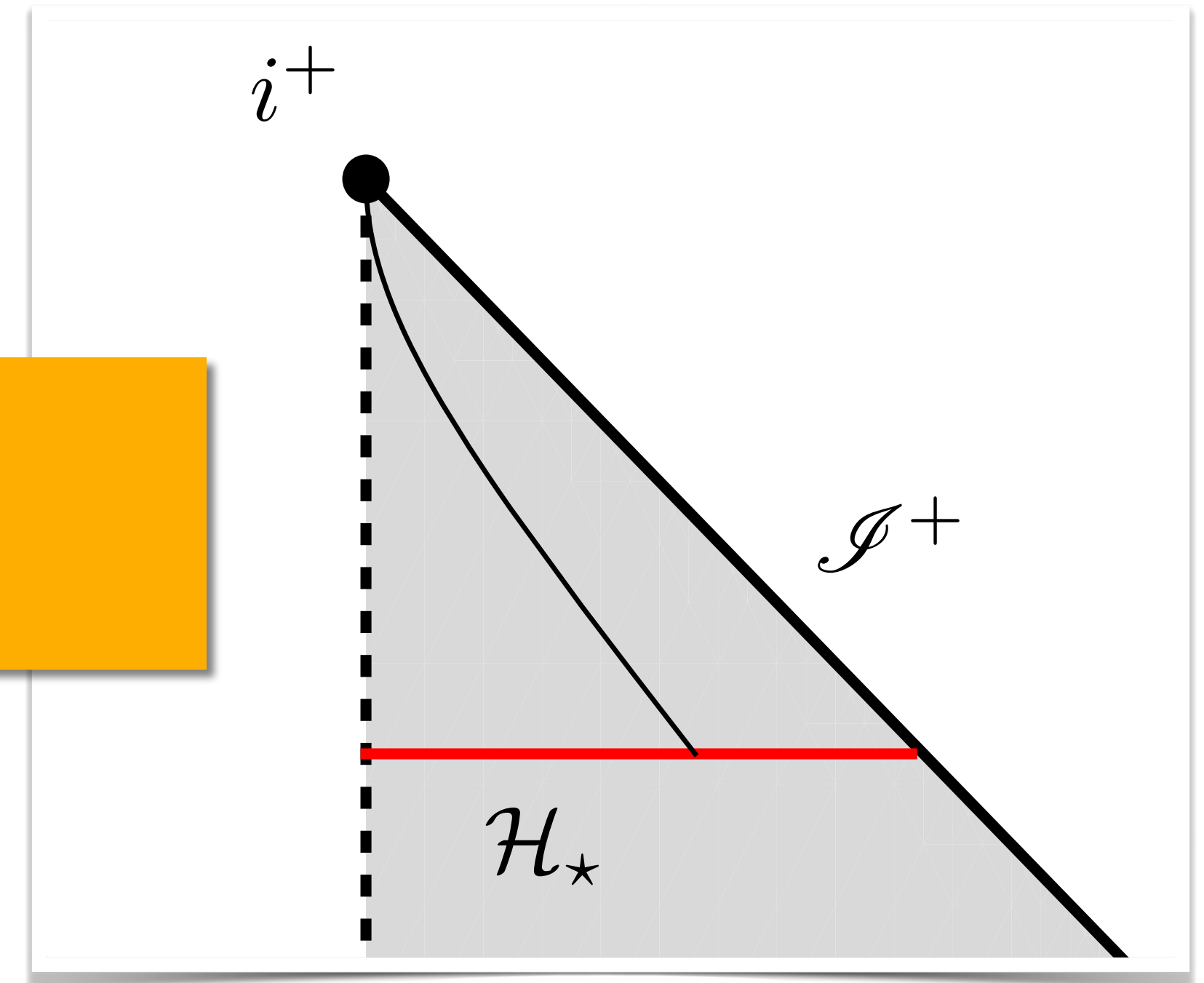
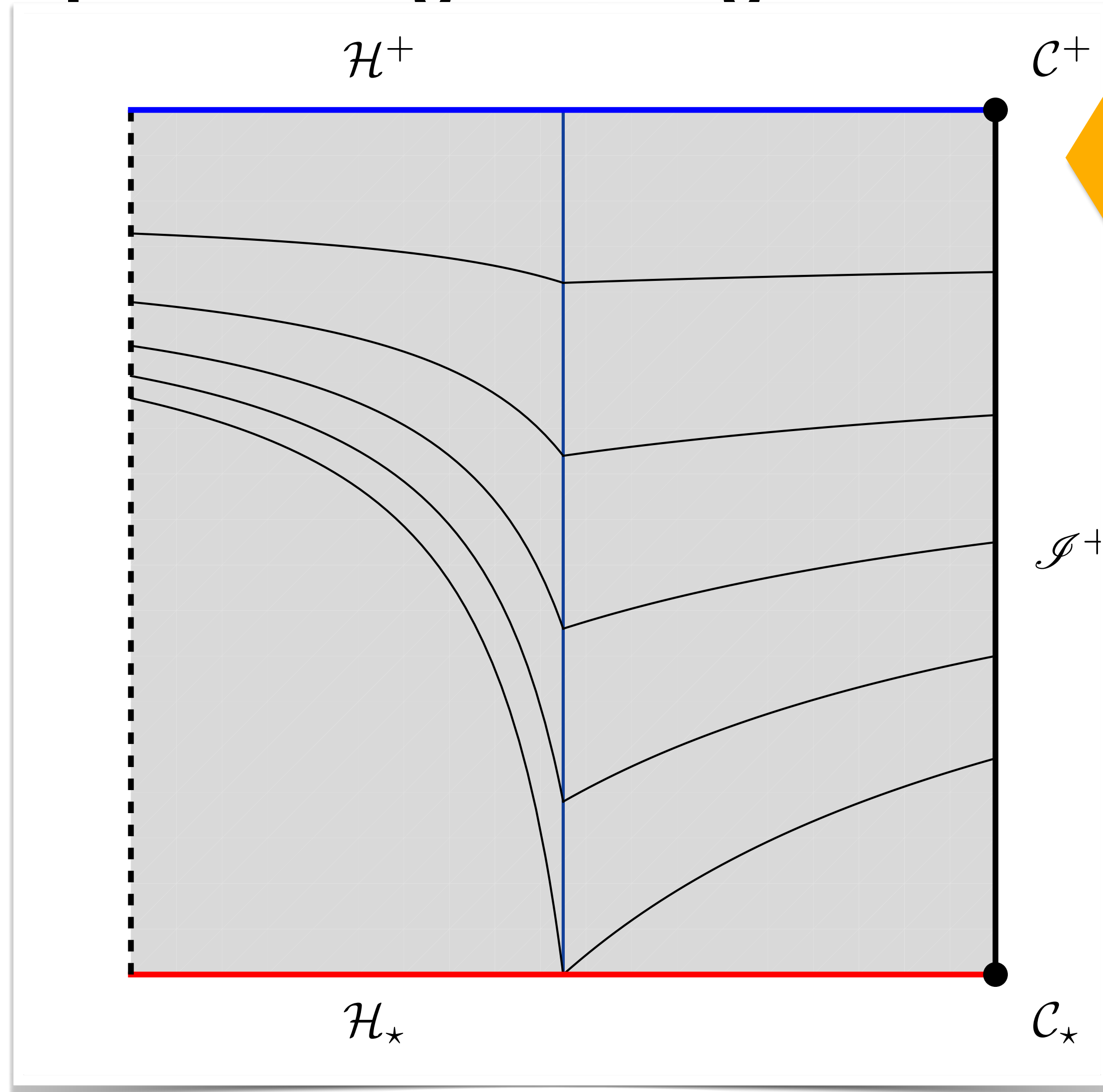
Encoding the information on \mathcal{H}_\star



- Starting from \mathcal{H}_\star allows to naturally include \mathcal{I}^+ in the discussion
- \mathcal{I}^+ is generated by limiting CGs
- Conformally compactify \mathcal{H}_\star to the interior of S^2 (Beltrami-Klein model of hyperbolic space)
- The CGs are not orthonormal to \mathcal{H}_\star

The null cones near \mathcal{H}^+

Implementing \mathcal{I} -fixing



- \mathcal{I}^+ is described by a fixed coordinate location ($\chi = 1$)
- \mathcal{H}^+ is given by the condition $\tau = 1$
- Lightcones open as \mathcal{H}^+ is approached along a conformal geodesic

Side remark: i^0 vs i^+

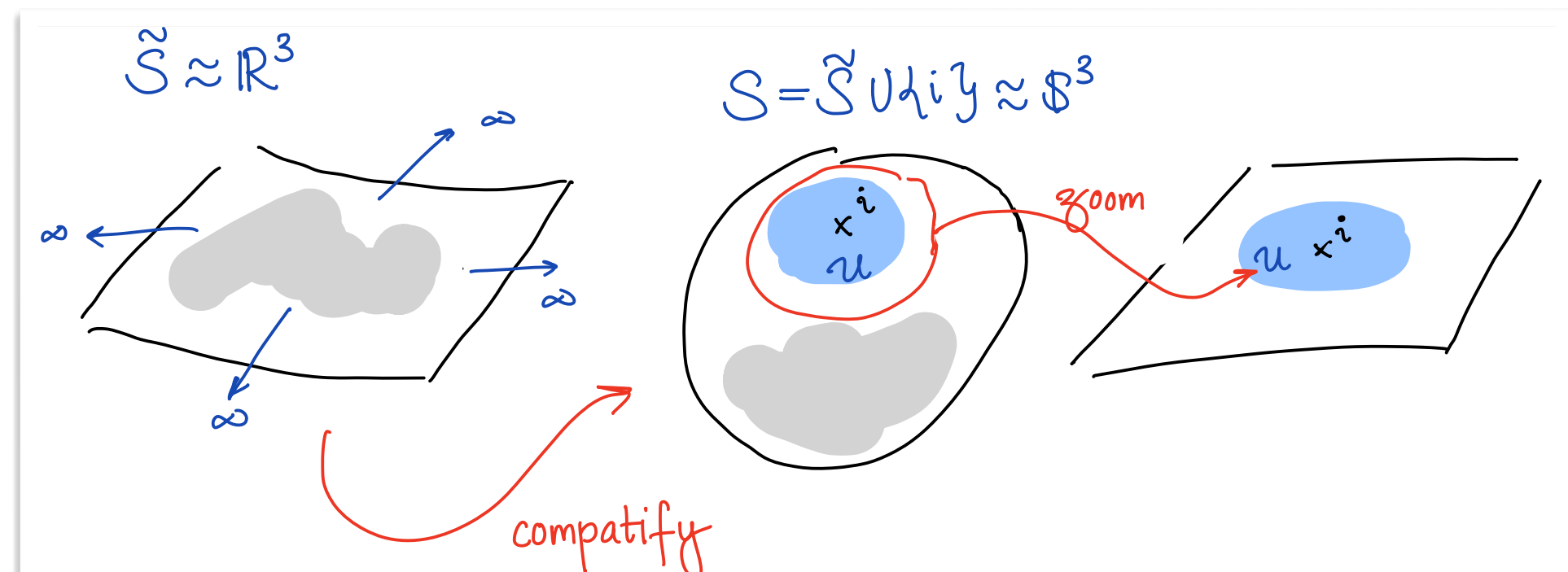
First attempts at formalising spatial infinity

Geroch (1972), Ashtekar & Hansen (1978) —see also Wald (1984)

Definition 11.2 (*asymptotically Euclidean and regular manifolds*) A three-dimensional Riemannian manifold $(\tilde{\mathcal{S}}, \tilde{\mathbf{h}})$ will be said to be **asymptotically Euclidean and regular** if there exists a three-dimensional, orientable, compact manifold $(\mathcal{S}, \mathbf{h})$ with points $i_k \in \mathcal{S}$, $k = 1, \dots, N$ with N some integer, a diffeomorphism $\varphi : \mathcal{S} \setminus \{i_1, \dots, i_N\} \rightarrow \tilde{\mathcal{S}}$ and a function $\Omega \in C^2$ such that:

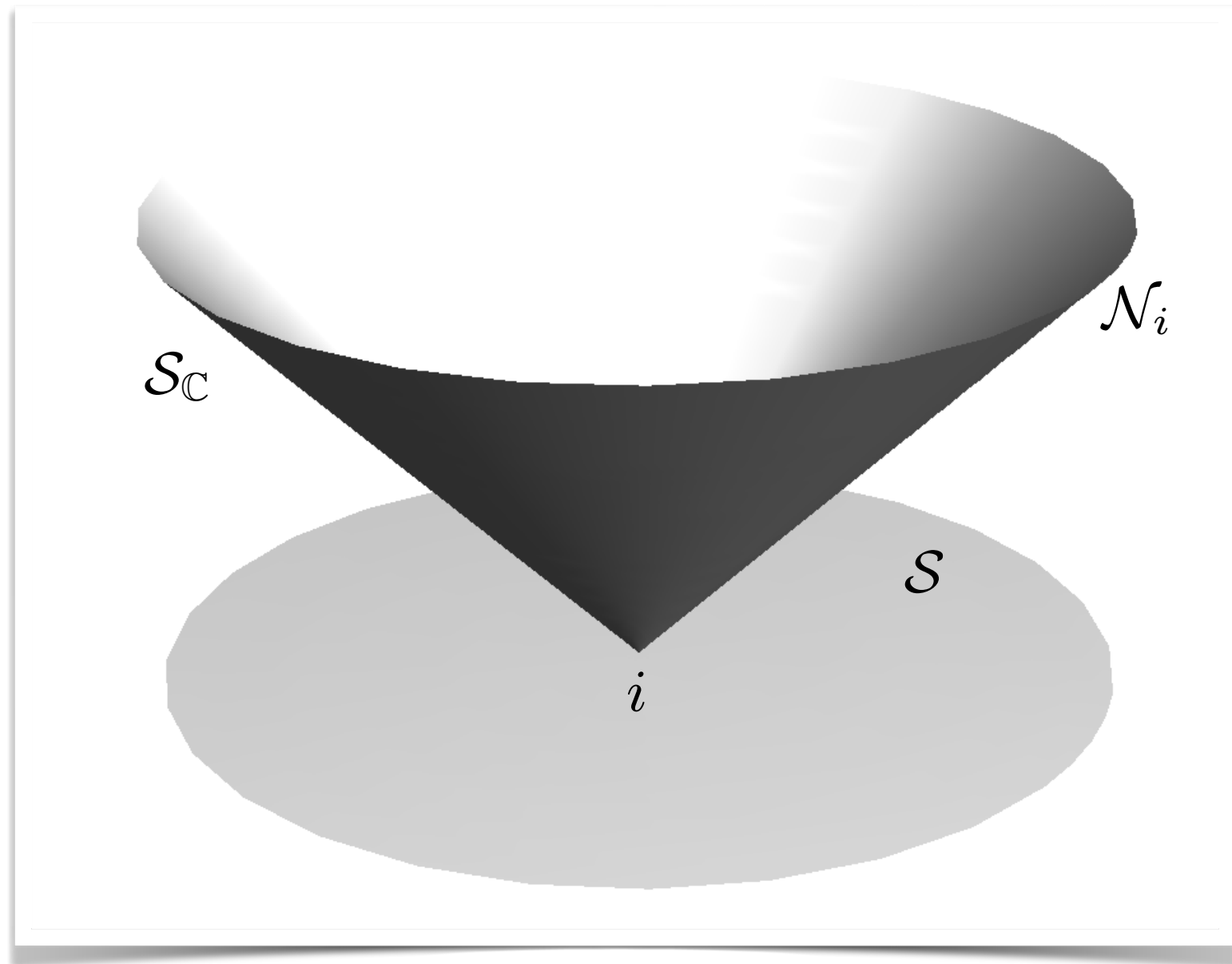
- (i) $\Omega(i_k) = 0$, $d\Omega(i_k) = 0$, $\mathbf{Hess} \Omega(i_k) = -2\mathbf{h}(i_k)$.
- (ii) $\Omega > 0$ on $\mathcal{S} \setminus \{i_1, \dots, i_N\}$.
- (iii) $\mathbf{h} = \Omega^2 \varphi^* \tilde{\mathbf{h}}$ on $\mathcal{S} \setminus \{i_1, \dots, i_N\}$ with $\mathbf{h} \in C^2(\mathcal{S}) \cap C^\infty(\mathcal{S} \setminus \{i_1, \dots, i_N\})$.

- Point compactification of spatial infinity using **stereographic projection**.
- Later used to construct solutions to the constraints by the **puncture method** —Beig & O'Murchadha (1990), Friedrich (1998).



Duality between i^0 and i^+

On static and radiative spacetimes (HF, CMP 1986)



Constructing *radiative spacetimes near i^+* from *static solutions near i^0*

Identifies the *radiativity condition* for the Cotton tensor

$$D_{\{i_p \cdots D_{i_1} b_{jk}\}}(i) = 0, \quad p = 0, 1, 2, \dots$$

ensuring that

$$d_{ij} = \frac{1}{\Omega^2} \left(D_{\{i} D_{j\}} \Omega + \Omega s_{ij} \right)$$

is *analytic at i* .

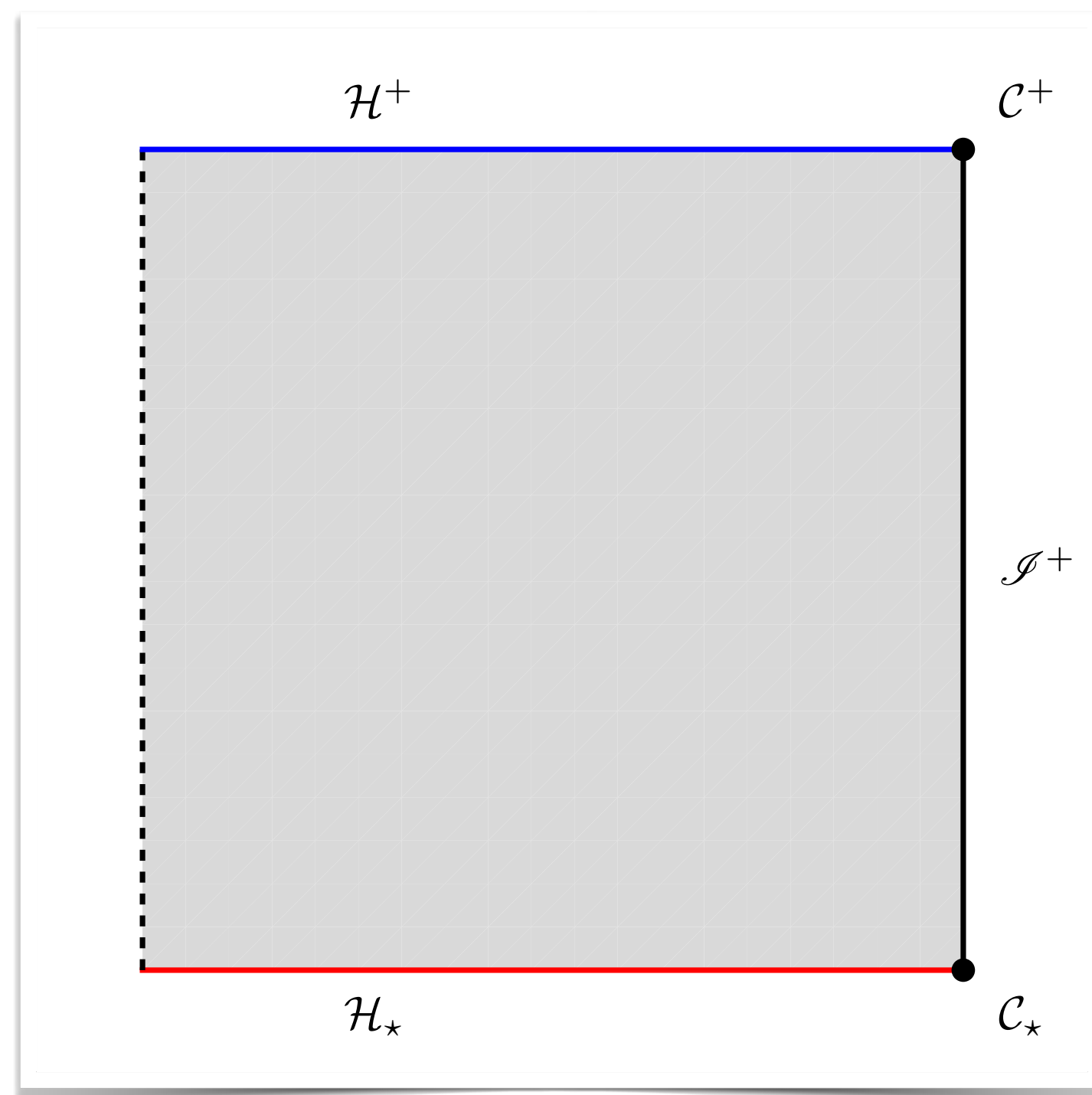
Proposition (Beig 1990). *Static solutions satisfy the radiativity condition.*

Stability of the gauge

Stability of the gauge

The structures are preserved for a larger class of spacetimes

Theorem (M Magdy & JA Valiente Kroon, 2026). *The semiglobal perturbations of Minkowski of Friedrich's theorem admit a hyperboloidal representation of i^+ similar to that of the Minkowski spacetime.*



- This follows from the timelike geodesic completeness of the spacetimes and the fact that the reparametrisation formulae are universal!

Evolution equations near \mathcal{H}^+

A toy model: the wave equation

Degeneracy of the principal part near \mathcal{H}^+

$$\square\phi = 0$$

A useful toy model!

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{4\mathbf{a}^2(1-\tau)^4}{(1+\chi^2)^2} \partial_\tau^2 \phi + \frac{8\mathbf{a}(1-\tau)^2\chi}{(1+\chi^2)^2} \partial_\tau \partial_\chi \phi - \frac{(1-\chi^2)^2}{(1+\chi^2)^2} \partial_\chi^2 \phi \\ & + \frac{4\mathbf{a}}{(1+\chi^2)^2} (1-\tau)^2 (3+\chi^2 + 6\mathbf{a}(\tau-1)(1+\chi^2)) \partial_\tau \\ & - \frac{1}{\chi(1+\chi^2)^3} \left(2(1-(4+8\mathbf{a}(\tau-1)))\chi^2 + (1+8\mathbf{a}(1-\tau))\chi^4 + 2\chi^6 \right) \partial_\chi \phi \\ & - \frac{1}{\chi^2} \Delta \phi = 0. \end{aligned}$$

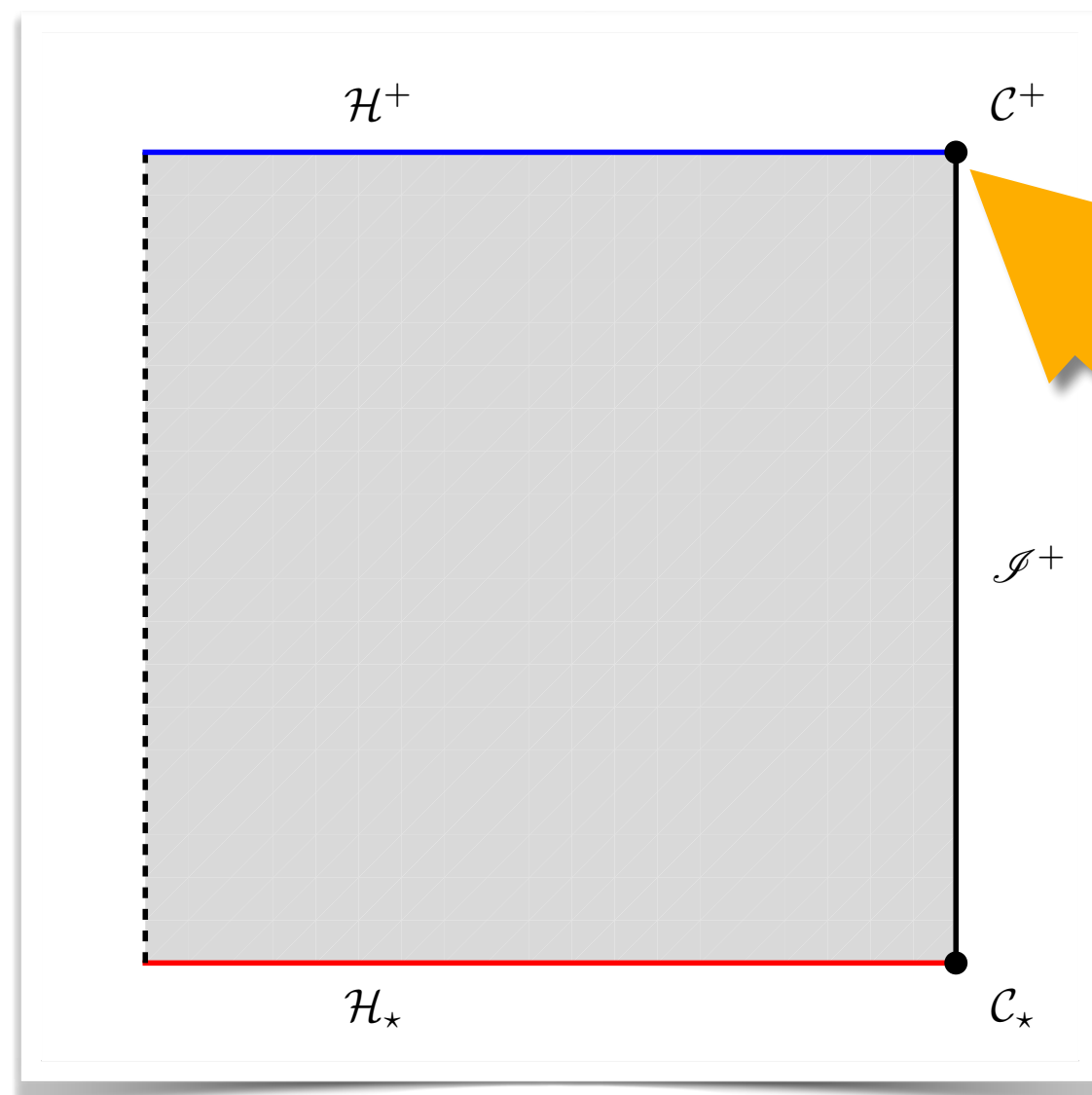
Key observations:

- The principal part degenerates at \mathcal{H}^+
- However, it is regular from the point of view of **b-geometry**

The constraint at \mathcal{H}^+

The values of ϕ are not independent from each other

$$\frac{(1 - \chi^2)^2}{(1 + \chi^2)^2} \partial_\chi^2 \phi + \frac{2(1 - \chi^2)}{\chi(1 + \chi^2)^3} (2\chi^4 + 3\chi^2 - 1) \partial_\chi \phi + \frac{1}{\chi^2} \Delta \phi = 0$$



- This is a degenerate elliptic equation
- Regular from the point of view of ***b-geometry***
- Solutions, in principle, determined by the value of ϕ at the corner \mathcal{C}^+
- Analogous behaviour to that of the cylinder at spatial infinity

The transport equations at \mathcal{I}^+

A first investigation of the degeneracy at \mathcal{C}^+

The restriction of the wave equation at \mathcal{I}^+ :

$$\mathfrak{a}^2(1-\tau)^4\partial_\tau^2\phi + \frac{\mathfrak{a}}{2}(1-\tau)^2(4-12\mathfrak{a}(1-\tau))\partial_\tau\phi - \Delta\phi = 4\mathfrak{a}(1-\tau)\partial_\chi\phi - 2\mathfrak{a}(1-\tau)^2\partial_\tau\partial_\chi\phi.$$

Transverse derivatives: regard as sources

$$\Delta Y_{\ell m} = -\ell(\ell+1)Y_{\ell m}$$

Decompose in harmonics

$$(1-\tau)^4\ddot{\varphi} + \frac{1}{2\mathfrak{a}}(1-\tau)^2(4-12\mathfrak{a}(1-\tau))\dot{\varphi} + \frac{1}{\mathfrak{a}^2}\ell(\ell+1)\varphi = 0$$

Solutions in terms of Whittaker functions. Can be used to ***study the behaviour towards $\tau \rightarrow 1^-$***

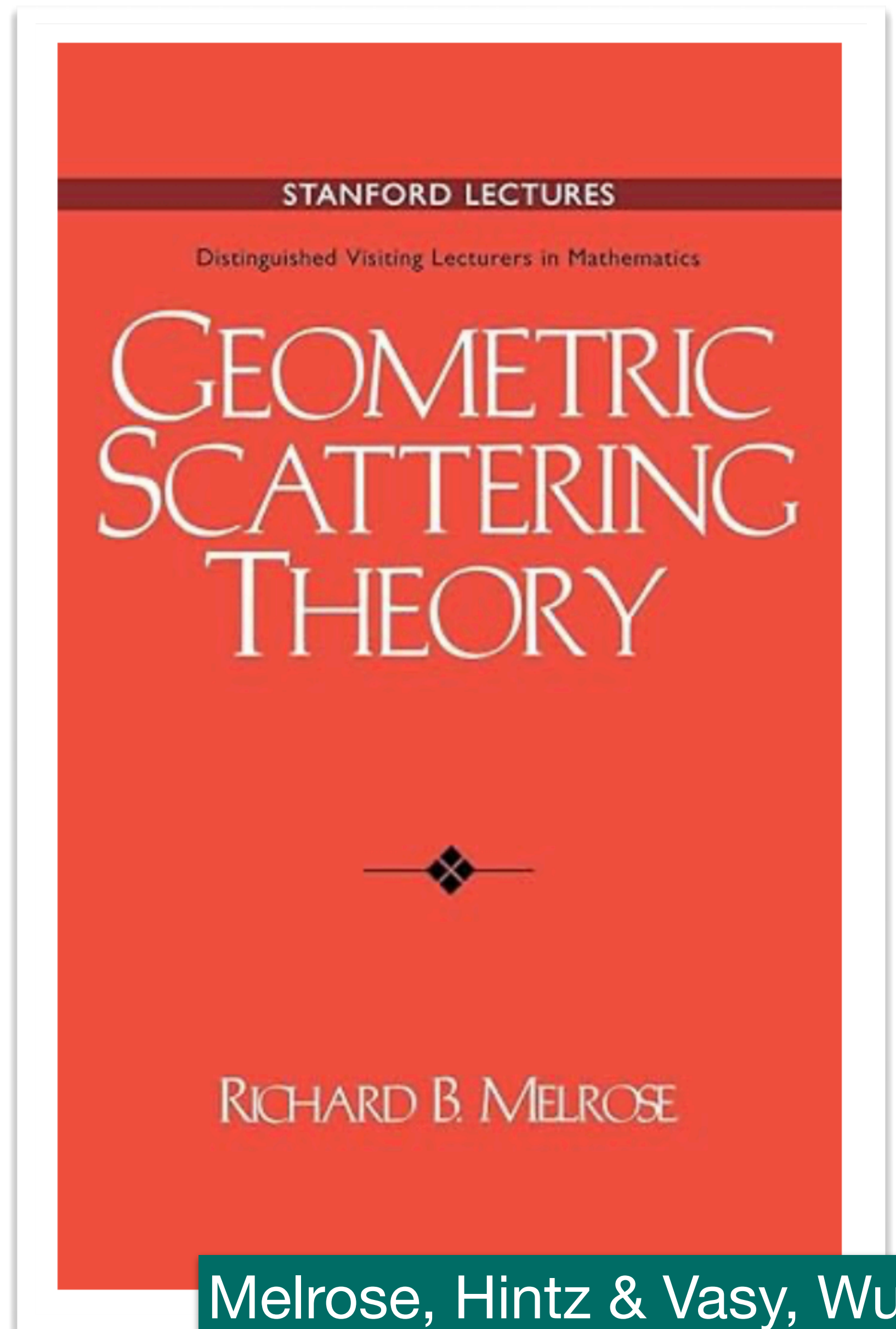
Conclusions

Geometric scattering theory

A fresh perspective

- Melrose's framework of geometric scattering theory provides a modular framework to study PDEs on ***compact manifolds***.
- Building on ***microlocal analysis***, allows to understand the ***singularities*** of solutions to PDEs.

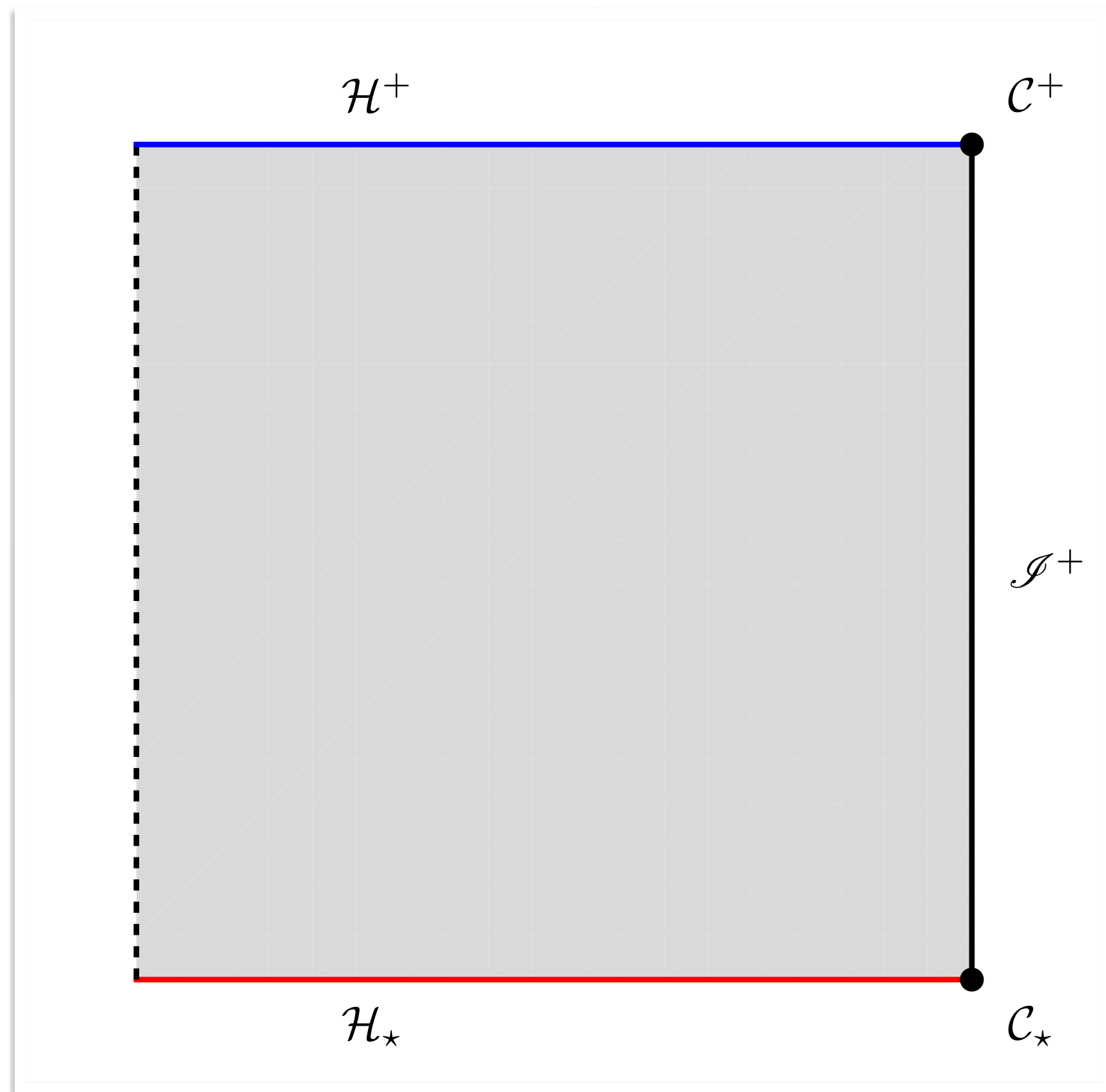
First applied to study stability of the Minkowski spacetime by Hintz & Vasy (2020).



Melrose, Hintz & Vasy, Wunsch, Kadar & Kehrberger

Back to the semi global stability of Minkowski

A fresh perspective



Beheshti, Koutras & JAVK
(in preparation)

$$\partial_\tau \hat{v} = \mathbf{K} \hat{v} + \mathbf{Q}(\hat{\Gamma}) \hat{v} + \mathbf{L}(x) \phi,$$

$$(\mathbf{I} + \mathbf{A}^0(e)) \partial_\tau \phi + \mathbf{A}^\alpha(e) \partial_\alpha \phi = \mathbf{B}(\hat{\Gamma}) \phi$$

Obtain a **polyhomogeneous** version of the semiglobal stability of Minkowski:

- Exploit the conformal Gaussian gauge and the structure equations
- Construct weighted estimates *à la* Hintz & Vasy

Thank you for your attention!