

# Imminent test of quantum gravity with gravitational waves

arXiv:2206.06384, 2206.07066 (JHEP 2024a,b)  
with L. Modesto

Gianluca Calcagni

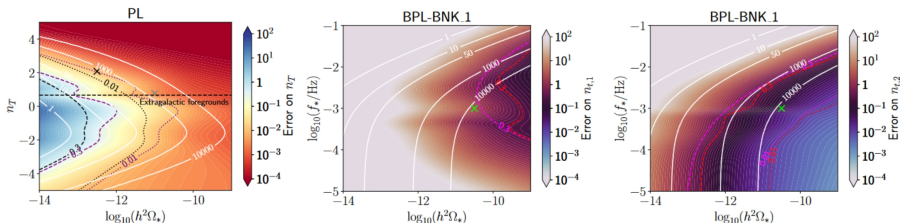
Institute of Matter Structure – CSIC



December 5, 2024

## 01/31— Single- and double-power-law GWB

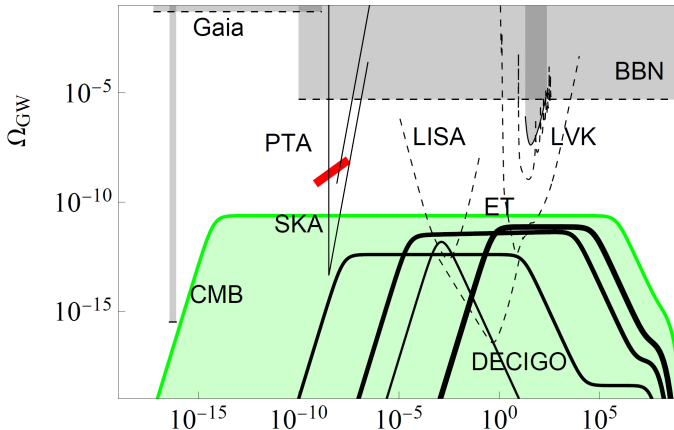
Braglia, GC et al. [LISA Cosmology Working Group] JCAP 2024



# 02/31– Quantum gravity and GWs I

Ben-Dayan, GC et al. JCAP 2024

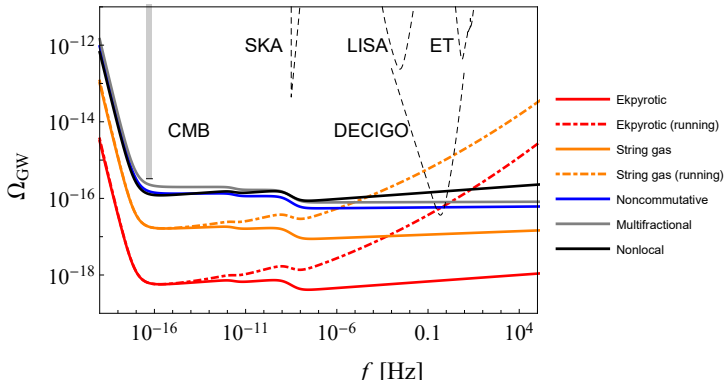
Pre-big-bang cosmology can reach LISA and ET windows.



## 03/31– Quantum gravity and GWs II

GC & Kuroyanagi JCAP 2021; in progress (2024)

DECIGO will be able to see a stochastic background from blue-tilted quantum-gravity-motivated primordial spectra.



## 04/31— Quantum gravity

- Many proposals: string theory, loop quantum gravity, asymptotic safety, **nonlocal quantum gravity (v1.0-1.3)**, fractional gravity, . . .
- Some of them make contact with observations.
- Very few of them make falsifiable predictions.

## 04/31— Quantum gravity

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- Some of them make contact with observations.
- Very few of them make falsifiable predictions.

**Nonlocal quantum gravity** generates **falsifiable predictions (v2.0)**.

## 05/31– Stelle gravity

Stelle 1977, 1978:

$$\mathcal{L} = R + \gamma_0 R^2 + \gamma_2 R_{\mu\nu} R^{\mu\nu}, \quad \gamma_{0,2} = \text{const}$$

**Renormalizable** but **non-unitary** (spin-2 ghost). (Can be made unitary introducing fakeons [[Anselmi & Piva 2017ab,2018](#)])

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**Ostrogradski instability** (ghost) from higher-order derivatives.

Example:

$$(\square + \alpha \square^2)\phi = 0 \quad \Rightarrow \quad \tilde{G}(k) = \frac{1}{k^2 - \alpha k^4} = -\frac{1}{k^2} + \frac{1}{k^2 - \alpha^{-1}}$$



## 06/31– Nonlocal quantum gravity v1.0-1.3

Krasnikov 1987; Kuz'min 1989; Tomboulis 1997; Modesto 2011; Gerwick et al. 2011

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathcal{L} &= R + R\gamma_0(\Box)R + R_{\mu\nu}\gamma_2(\Box)R^{\mu\nu} + R_{\mu\nu\sigma\tau}\gamma_4(\Box)R^{\mu\nu\sigma\tau} + \mathcal{V}(\mathcal{R}) + \mathcal{L}_m \\
&= R + G_{\mu\nu}\gamma(\Box)R^{\mu\nu} + R_{\mu\nu\sigma\tau}\gamma_4(\Box)R^{\mu\nu\sigma\tau} + \mathcal{V}(\mathcal{R}) + \mathcal{L}_m
\end{aligned}$$

**Minimal coupling to matter.** Asymp. polynomial form factor:

$$\gamma(\Box) = \frac{e^{H(\Box)} - 1}{\Box}, \quad e^{H(\Box)} = e^{\gamma_E + \Gamma[0,p(\Box)]} p(\Box) \stackrel{\text{UV}}{\sim} e^{\gamma_E} p(\Box)$$

- **v1.0:**  $\gamma_4 \neq 0$ ,  $\mathcal{V}(\mathcal{R}) = 0$
- **v1.1:**  $\gamma_4 = 0$
- **v1.2:**  $\gamma_4 = 0$ ,  $\mathcal{V}(\mathcal{R}) \neq 0$ , Weyl symmetry
- **v1.3:** add a mass scale in  $\gamma_{0,2}(\Box)$  to get Starobinsky

## 07/31— Properties of nonlocal quantum gravity v1.0-1.3

- Lorentzian and Euclidean path integrals [GC & Modesto 2024]
- Well-defined Cauchy problem [GC, Modesto & Nardelli 2019]
- Finite number of physical degrees of freedom [GC et al. 2019]
- Super-renormalizable or finite [Modesto & Rachwał 2014,2015]
- Perturbatively unitary [Briscece & Modesto 2019]
- Big-bang singularity resolved classically [Biswas et al. 2005; GC, Modesto & Nicolini 2014]
- Black-hole singularities resolved classically by nonlocality (**v1.0**,  $\gamma_4 \neq 0$ ) [Modesto et al. 2015; Frolov & Zelnikov 2016; Edholm et al. 2016; Buoninfante et al. 2018; Giacchini & de Paula Netto 2019; Boos 2020] or by conformal symmetry (**v1.2**,  $\gamma_4 = 0$ , finite) [Modesto & Rachwał 2016; Bambi et al. 2017ab; Zhou et al. 2019]
- Starobinsky inflation naturally embedded (**v1.3**) [Koshelev et al. 2016,2018,2020; Kumar & Modesto 2018; GC & Kuroyanagi 2021]
- **Forces not unified and no soon-falsifiable prediction**

## 08/31— A nonlocal theory of all fields

$$S[\Phi_i] = \int d^D x \sqrt{|g|} [\mathcal{L}_{\text{loc}} + E_i F^{ij}(\Delta) E_j + \mathcal{V}(E_i)]$$

$$S_{\text{loc}} = \int d^D x \sqrt{|g|} \mathcal{L}_{\text{loc}}, \quad \mathcal{L}_{\text{loc}} = \frac{M_{\text{Pl}}^2}{2} R + \mathcal{L}_{\text{m}}(\Phi_i)$$

$$E_i := \frac{\delta S_{\text{loc}}}{\delta \Phi_i(x)}, \quad \Delta_{ki} := \frac{\delta E_i}{\delta \Phi_k} = \frac{\delta^2 S_{\text{loc}}}{\delta \Phi_k \delta \Phi_i}$$

$$\Phi_i \in \{g_{\mu\nu}, \Phi, \psi, A_\mu, \dots\}$$

$$F(\Delta) := \frac{e^{H(\Delta)-H(0)} - 1}{2\Delta}, \quad H(z) = \int_0^{p(z)} dw \frac{1 - e^{-w}}{w}$$

$$p(z) = b_0 - bz + z^4$$

# 09/31– Nonlocal quantum gravity v2.0: equations of motion

Extremals:

$$E_{\mu\nu} = \frac{1}{2} (M_{\text{Pl}}^2 G_{\mu\nu} - T_{\mu\nu})$$

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Nonlocal gravitational EOMs:

$$[e^{\bar{H}(\Delta)}]_{\mu\nu}^{\sigma\tau} E_{\sigma\tau} + O(E_{\mu\nu}^2) = 0$$

## 10/31– Conformal invariance


Field redefinitions:

$$g_{\mu\nu} =: \phi^2 \hat{g}_{\mu\nu}, \quad \Phi = \frac{\hat{\Phi}}{\phi}, \quad \psi = \frac{\hat{\psi}}{\phi^{\frac{3}{2}}}, \quad A_\mu = \hat{A}_\mu$$

Action invariant under Weyl transformations

$$\hat{g}'_{\mu\nu} = \Omega^2(x) \hat{g}_{\mu\nu}, \quad \phi' = \Omega^{-1}(x) \phi, \quad \dots$$

## 11/31– Properties of nonlocal quantum gravity v2.0

- Same basic characteristics as v1.0-1.2 [Modesto 2021].
- Super-renormalizable or finite [GC, Giacchini, Modesto, de Paula Netto & Rachwał 2023].
- Tree-level scattering amplitudes are the same as those of the underlying local theory [Modesto & GC 2021].
- Testable top-down cosmology [Modesto & GC 2022; GC & Modesto 2022] 

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- Testable top-down cosmology [Modesto & GC 2022; GC & Modesto 2022]  $\Leftarrow$

**Finiteness** implies **Weyl invariance** at the quantum level.



## 12/31– Two phases

$$F(\Delta) := \frac{e^{H(\Delta)-H(0)} - 1}{2\Delta}, \quad H(z) = \text{Ein}(z) = \int_0^{p(z)} dw \frac{1 - e^{-w}}{w}$$

$$p(z) = b_0 - bz + z^4$$

- ① **Trans-Planckian Weyl phase**  $\Lambda_* \lesssim E \lesssim M_{\text{Pl}}$ . Manifest Weyl invariance.
- ② **Post-Planckian Higgs phase**  $\Lambda_*/\sqrt{b} =: \Lambda_{\text{hd}} \lesssim E \lesssim \Lambda_*$ . Intermediate UV regime  $p(z) \simeq -bz$ , broken Weyl symmetry.

13/31– Trans-Planckian Weyl phase  $\Lambda_* \lesssim E \lesssim M_{\text{Pl}}$ 

Manifest Weyl invariance, correlation functions of nonconformal fields ( $\Delta_i \neq 0$ ) identically zero [Di Francesco 1997]:

$$\begin{aligned}\langle O_1(x_1) \dots O_n(x_n) \rangle &:= \frac{1}{Z_0} \int [\mathcal{D}O] O_1(x_1) \dots O_n(x_n) e^{iS[O]} \\ &= \Omega^{\Delta_1}(x_1) \dots \Omega^{\Delta_n}(x_n) \langle O_1(x_1) \dots O_n(x_n) \rangle = 0\end{aligned}$$

Gravity disappears!

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Gravity disappears!

Quantum corrections are  $O(h^3)$ ,  $O(h^2\phi)$  and do not affect propagators in this phase.

14/31– Post-Planckian Higgs phase  $\Lambda_{\text{hd}} \lesssim E \lesssim \Lambda_*$ 

**Intermediate UV regime**  $p(z) \simeq -bz$ :

$$\sqrt{\frac{\max(1, b_0)}{b}} \Lambda_* =: \Lambda_{\text{hd}} \lesssim E \lesssim \Lambda_*$$

Choice of vacuum:  $\phi \rightarrow \langle \phi \rangle = \frac{M_{\text{Pl}}}{\sqrt{2}} + \langle \varphi \rangle \simeq \frac{M_{\text{Pl}}}{\sqrt{2}}$ .

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- Adding  $\Lambda_{\text{cc}}$  in  $\mathcal{L}_{\text{loc}} = \mathcal{L}_{\text{loc}}[\phi^2 \hat{g}_{\mu\nu}, \phi^{-\Delta_i} \hat{\Phi}_i^{\text{SM}}]$  generates a  $\sqrt{|g|} \Lambda_{\text{cc}} = \sqrt{|\hat{g}|} \Lambda_{\text{cc}} \phi^4$  term.

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- Modify  $\mathcal{L}_{\text{loc}} = \mathcal{L}_1^{\text{loc}}[\phi^2 \hat{g}_{\mu\nu}, \phi^{-\Delta_i} \hat{\Phi}_i^{\text{SM}}] + \mathcal{L}_2^{\text{loc}}[\phi, \hat{g}_{\mu\nu}, \hat{\Phi}_i^{\text{SM}}]$  and add Weyl-invariant dilaton-Higgs potential [Bars et al. 2006, 2014]:

$$\mathcal{L}_2^{\text{loc}}[\phi, \mathfrak{h}] = \lambda(\mathfrak{h}^\dagger \mathfrak{h} - \alpha \phi^2)^2 + \lambda' \phi^4$$

15/31— Post-Planckian Higgs phase  $\Lambda_{\text{hd}} \lesssim E \lesssim \Lambda_*$ 

Local quadratic action + one-loop log quantum corrections:

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{L}_{\Lambda_{\text{hd}}} &= \frac{M_{\text{Pl}}^2}{2} R + \mathcal{L}_{\text{m}} + F(0) E_{\mu\nu} E^{\mu\nu} + \mathcal{V}(E_{\mu\nu}) + \mathcal{L}_Q \\ \mathcal{L}_Q &= \beta_R R \ln \left( -\frac{\square}{\Lambda_*^2 \delta_0^2} \right) R + \beta_{\text{Ric}} R_{\mu\nu} \ln \left( -\frac{\square}{\Lambda_*^2} \right) R^{\mu\nu}\end{aligned}$$

$\delta_0, \beta_R, \beta_{\text{Ric}}$  numerical constants (not beta functions!).

Overconstrained **Stelle limit**:

$$\begin{aligned}E_{\mu\nu} E^{\mu\nu} &= -\frac{M_{\text{Pl}}^4}{4} \left( R_{\mu\nu} R^{\mu\nu} + \frac{D-4}{4} R^2 \right) \\ \mathcal{L}_{\Lambda_{\text{hd}}}^{D=4} &= -\frac{e^{\tilde{\gamma}_{\text{E}}} M_{\text{Pl}}^2}{2\Lambda_*^2} \textcolor{blue}{b} \textcolor{red}{R}_{\mu\nu} \textcolor{red}{R}^{\mu\nu} + \mathcal{L}_{\text{m}} + \mathcal{L}_Q\end{aligned}$$

## 16/31– Early universe

## I. Solutions of hot-big-bang problems

All problems of the hot big-bang model are solved **without inflation** in the **Weyl phase**

## II. Primordial perturbations

Quasi-scale-invariant primordial spectra generated by **quantum and thermal fluctuations** in the **Higgs phase**

## III. Testable prediction

Large tensor-to-scalar ratio, **observable by BICEP Array and LiteBIRD**

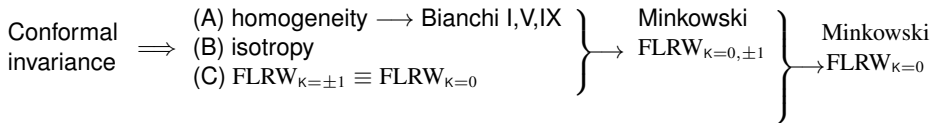


## 17/31– Conformal invariance

- Conformal invariance as an alternative to inflation is not new [Antoniadis et al. 1997,2012; Amelino-Camelia et al. 2013,2015; Agrawal et al. 2020] . . .
- . . . but until now it was not known how to make it work in a fundamental theory.
- We provide a concrete setting thanks to UV finiteness. . .
- . . . and extract rigid, falsifiable predictions on the tensor sector.
- Such rigidity comes from the fact that our cosmological model is derived *directly* from the full theory.

## 18/31– Initial conditions in the Higgs phase

The metric at the onset of the Higgs phase is either Minkowski or flat FLRW:



## 19/31– Big-bang problem

Singularity issue not solved: it simply becomes meaningless.

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Singularity issue not solved: it simply becomes meaningless.

- Conformal gravity evades **BGV theorem** because it is impossible to talk about expanding backgrounds. Average expansion condition not a conformally invariant statement.
- Independent of the underlying theory but requires finiteness.
- Example:

- 1 Solutions of the EOMs grouped into equivalence classes:

$$\hat{g}_{\mu\nu}^* := S(x) \hat{g}_{\mu\nu}, \quad \phi^* := S^{-\frac{1}{2}}(x) \phi$$

- 2 Flat FLRW is a solution, conformally equivalent to Minkowski (plus dilaton).
- 3 Dilaton decouples from the geodesic equation of massless particles. Minkowski spacetime is geodesically complete.

## 20/31– Horizon problem

- 1 In the Weyl phase, spacetime distances do not have any physical meaning: large and small distances are actually the same.
- 2 After breaking Weyl symmetry, distance between particles always smaller than Hubble radius.
- 3 Independent of the underlying theory but requires finiteness.

## 21/31– Flatness problem

- In **any** theory, any FLRW line element is conformally ( $\neq$  physically) equivalent to Minkowski (inhomogeneous if  $\kappa = \pm 1$ ).

$$d\hat{s}_{\text{FLRW}}^2 = \omega^2(T, \rho) [-dT^2 + d\rho^2 + \rho^2 (d\theta^2 + \sin^2 \theta d\varphi^2)]$$

- In any **Weyl  $\times$  Diff invariant** theory, any FLRW solution with  $\kappa = 0, \pm 1$  is physically equivalent to FLRW with  $\kappa = 0$ .

$$\hat{g}'_{\mu\nu} = \Omega^2 \hat{g}_{\mu\nu}, \quad \Omega^2 = a^2(T)/\omega^2(T, \rho)$$

- A Diff  $\times$  Weyl transformation changes  $\kappa = 0, \pm 1$ , so during the Weyl phase  $\kappa = 0$  FLRW is selected by symmetry (analogy with longitudinal polarization of photon) and holds through symmetry breaking by analytic continuation of  $g_{\mu\nu}$ .
- Independent of the underlying theory but requires finiteness.

## 22/31– Flat spacetime approximation

### Two assumptions

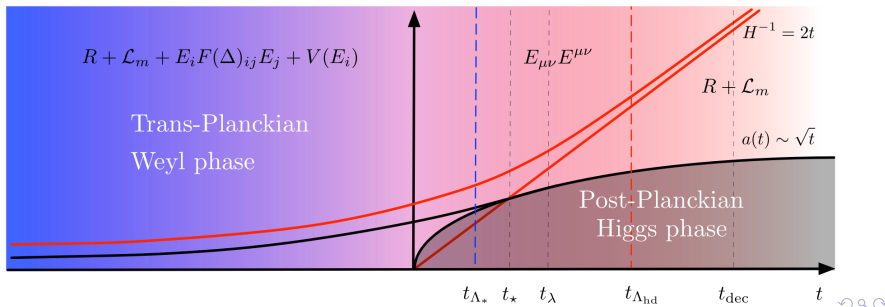
- 1 Quadratic-gravity limit,  $\Lambda_{\text{hd}} \lesssim E \lesssim \Lambda_*$ .
- 2 One-loop quantum corrections in the propagator subdominant with respect to classical part,  $E \gtrsim \Lambda_*/10$ .

$$\Rightarrow E \simeq \frac{\Lambda_*}{10}$$

## 23/31– Evolution of perturbations

$$t_{\Lambda_*} : \quad \lambda = \frac{1}{\Lambda_*} \quad (\text{end of Weyl phase})$$

$$t_{\star} : \quad \lambda = aH \quad (\text{recovery of standard cosmology})$$





## 24/31– Tensor spectrum

**From sub-horizon quantum fluctuations.** Graviton two-point correlation function:

$$\langle h_{ij}(x) h_{kl}(x') \rangle = -\mathbf{C} \Lambda_*^{2\epsilon_2} P_{ijkl}^{(2)}(\partial_x) \int \frac{d^4 k}{(2\pi)^4} \frac{e^{ik \cdot (x-x')}}{k^{4+2\epsilon_2}} = -P_{ijkl}^{(2)}(\partial_x) \int_0^{+\infty} \frac{dk}{k} \Delta_h^2(k) \frac{\sin(kr)}{kr}$$

$$\mathbf{C} := \frac{4\Lambda_*^2}{b e^{\tilde{\gamma}_E} M_{\text{Pl}}^2}, \quad \epsilon_2 = -\frac{2\beta_{\text{Ric}} \Lambda_*^2}{b e^{\tilde{\gamma}_E} M_{\text{Pl}}^2}$$

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Tensor spectrum:

$$\mathcal{P}_t(k) := 2\Delta_h^2(k) = \frac{n_t}{(2\pi)^2 \beta_{\text{Ric}}} \left( \frac{k}{\Lambda_*} \right)^{n_t}$$

Tensor spectral index:

$$n_t := \frac{d \ln \mathcal{P}_t}{d \ln k} = -2\epsilon_2 = \frac{4\beta_{\text{Ric}}}{b e^{\tilde{\gamma}_E}} \frac{\Lambda_*^2}{M_{\text{Pl}}^2} > 0$$

## 25/31– Scalar spectrum

**From thermal fluctuations.** Radiation-dominated universe.

$$\delta h \xrightarrow{\delta \text{EOM}} \delta T_{00} = \delta \rho \Big|_{E \simeq \frac{\Lambda_*}{10}} \xrightarrow{\text{Poisson eq.}} \delta \Phi \Big|_{\text{ss}} \longrightarrow \frac{\delta T_{\text{CMB}}}{T_{\text{CMB}}} \Big|_{\text{ss}}$$

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Scalar spectrum:

$$\mathcal{P}_s(k) = \frac{9}{4} \Delta_\Phi^2(k) = \frac{15}{64} \frac{(n_s - 1)^2}{(2\pi)^2 \beta_{\text{Ric}}} \left( \frac{k}{\Lambda_*} \right)^{n_s - 1}$$

Scalar spectral index:

$$n_s - 1 := \frac{d \ln \mathcal{P}_s}{d \ln k} = 2\epsilon_2 = -\frac{4\beta_{\text{Ric}}\Lambda_*^2}{b e^{\tilde{\gamma}_E} M_{\text{Pl}}^2} < 0$$

## 26/31– Tensor-to-scalar ratio and consistency relation

Tensor-to-scalar ratio:

$$r := \frac{\mathcal{P}_t(k_0)}{\mathcal{P}_s(k_0)} = \frac{64}{15(1 - n_s)} \left( \frac{k_0}{\Lambda_*} \right)^{2(1 - n_s)}$$

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Consistency relation:

$$n_t = 1 - n_s > 0$$

Typical of non-inflationary scenarios such as string-gas cosmology [Brandenberger 2015; Bernardo et al. 2020] and new ekpyrotic model [Brandenberger & Wang 2020ab].

## 27/31– Parameter space

$$\mathcal{P}_s(k_0) \simeq \frac{7.9 \times 10^{-4}}{\beta_{\text{Ric}}} \approx 2.2 \times 10^{-9}$$

How to explain the observed small value of  $\mathcal{P}_s$ ?

- I. Large  $\beta_{\text{Ric}} \propto N_{\text{fields}} \approx 3.6 \times 10^5$  [Buchbinder et al. 1992; Avramidi 2000]. Assumption compatible with a many-particle GUT scenario:  $\Lambda_{\text{hd}} = M_{\text{Pl}}/\sqrt{b} = 5 \times 10^{14} \text{ GeV}$ .
- II. Conformal rescaling of the metric from Minkowski to

$$ds^{*2} = - \left( A + B \tanh \frac{\tau}{\tau_{\text{Pl}}} \right) (-d\tau^2 + d\mathbf{x}^2), \quad \lim_{\tau \rightarrow \pm\infty} a^2 = A \pm B > 0$$

$$\mathcal{P}'_{s,t} = \Omega^4 \mathcal{P}_{s,t}, \quad r' = r.$$

$\mathcal{P}'_s$  consistent with observations if, e.g.,  $\beta_{\text{Ric}} = 1$  and  $A + B = 1.7 \times 10^{-3}$  or  $\beta_{\text{Ric}} = 40$  and  $A + B = 10^{-2}$

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 $H \sim \Lambda_* > 8.5 \times 10^{10} \text{ GeV}$  instead of upper bound  
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 $H \sim \Lambda_* > 8.5 \times 10^{10} \text{ GeV}$  instead of upper bound  
 $H_{\text{infl}} < 10^{-5} M_{\text{Pl}}$
- No mismatch between quantum scale  $M_{\text{Pl}}$  (symmetry breaking) and initial scale  $H \sim \Lambda_* = M_{\text{Pl}}$

## 29/31– Primordial GWs

GC & Modesto JHEP 2024b [arXiv:2206.07066]

PLANCK Legacy with  $dn_s/d \ln k = 0$  [Aghanim et al. 2020],  
 $k_0 = 0.05 \text{ Mpc}^{-1}$ ,  $n_t$  and  $r$  uniquely specified:

$$n_t \approx 0.0351, \quad r_{0.05} = 0.009 - 0.011$$

For  $\Lambda_* = M_{\text{Pl}}$ :

$$r_{0.05} = 0.011$$

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- Three times larger than  $r_{\text{Starobinsky}} = 0.0037$ .

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For  $\Lambda_* = M_{\text{Pl}}$ :

$$r_{0.05} = 0.011$$

- Three times larger than  $r_{\text{Starobinsky}} = 0.0037$ .
- Within reach of **BICEP Array** (uncertainty  $\sigma(r) \lesssim 0.003$ ) **by 2027** [Ade et al. 2021]. Detection if  $r > 0.009$ , implication if  $r \sim 0.006 - 0.009$ , exclusion if  $r < 0.006$ .

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GC & Modesto JHEP 2024b [arXiv:2206.07066]

PLANCK Legacy with  $dn_s/d \ln k = 0$  [Aghanim et al. 2020],  
 $k_0 = 0.05 \text{ Mpc}^{-1}$ ,  $n_t$  and  $r$  uniquely specified:

$$n_t \approx 0.0351, \quad r_{0.05} = 0.009 - 0.011$$

For  $\Lambda_* = M_{\text{Pl}}$ :

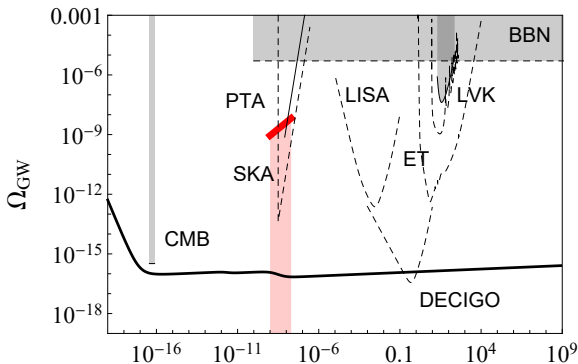
$$r_{0.05} = 0.011$$

- Three times larger than  $r_{\text{Starobinsky}} = 0.0037$ .
- Within reach of **BICEP Array** (uncertainty  $\sigma(r) \lesssim 0.003$ ) **by 2027** [Ade et al. 2021]. Detection if  $r > 0.009$ , implication if  $r \sim 0.006 - 0.009$ , exclusion if  $r < 0.006$ .
- **LiteBIRD**:  $\sigma(r) \sim 0.001$  (exclusion if  $r < 0.002$ ) [Allys et al. 2022].

## 30/31– GW background

GC & Modesto JHEP 2024b [arXiv:2206.07066]

Blue-tilted tensor spectrum at CMB scales, GWB observable by DECIGO. Discriminator against other high- $r$  models.



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**TO BE CONTINUED . . .**

