

# Towards Quantum Sources of Gravity: *superposition of massive systems in experiments*

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# All experiments to date can be explained by assuming the joint validity of quantum theory and general relativity

see also Overstreet, Asenbaum et al.,  
Science 375, 6577 (2022)

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9 JUNE 1975

## Observation of Gravitationally Induced Quantum Interference\*

R. Colella and A. W. Overhauser

Department of Physics, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana 47907

and

S. A. Werner

Scientific Research Staff, Ford Motor Company, Dearborn, Michigan 48121

(Received 14 April 1975)

We have used a neutron interferometer to observe the quantum-mechanical phase shift of neutrons caused by their interaction with Earth's gravitational field.

$$\Delta\psi = \frac{1}{\hbar} \int m \Delta\phi \, dt$$

gravitational potential  
(on Earth:  $\phi = g \cdot h$ )

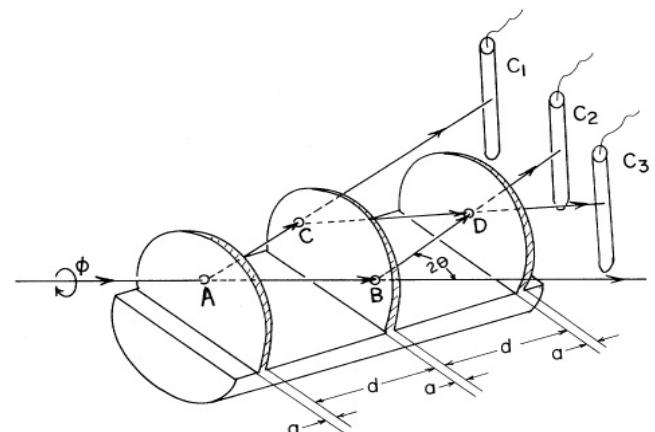
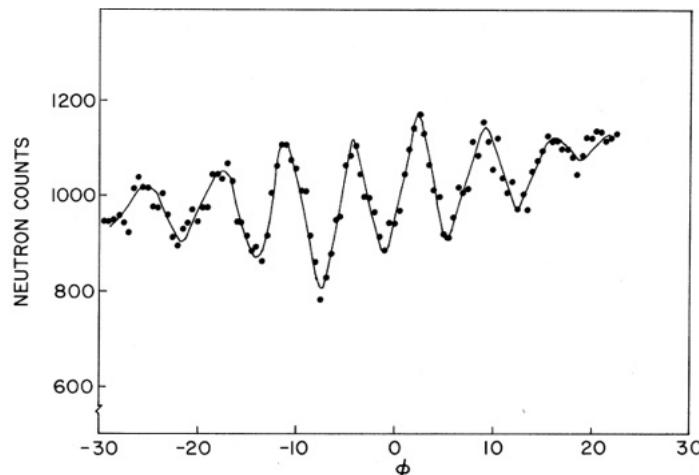
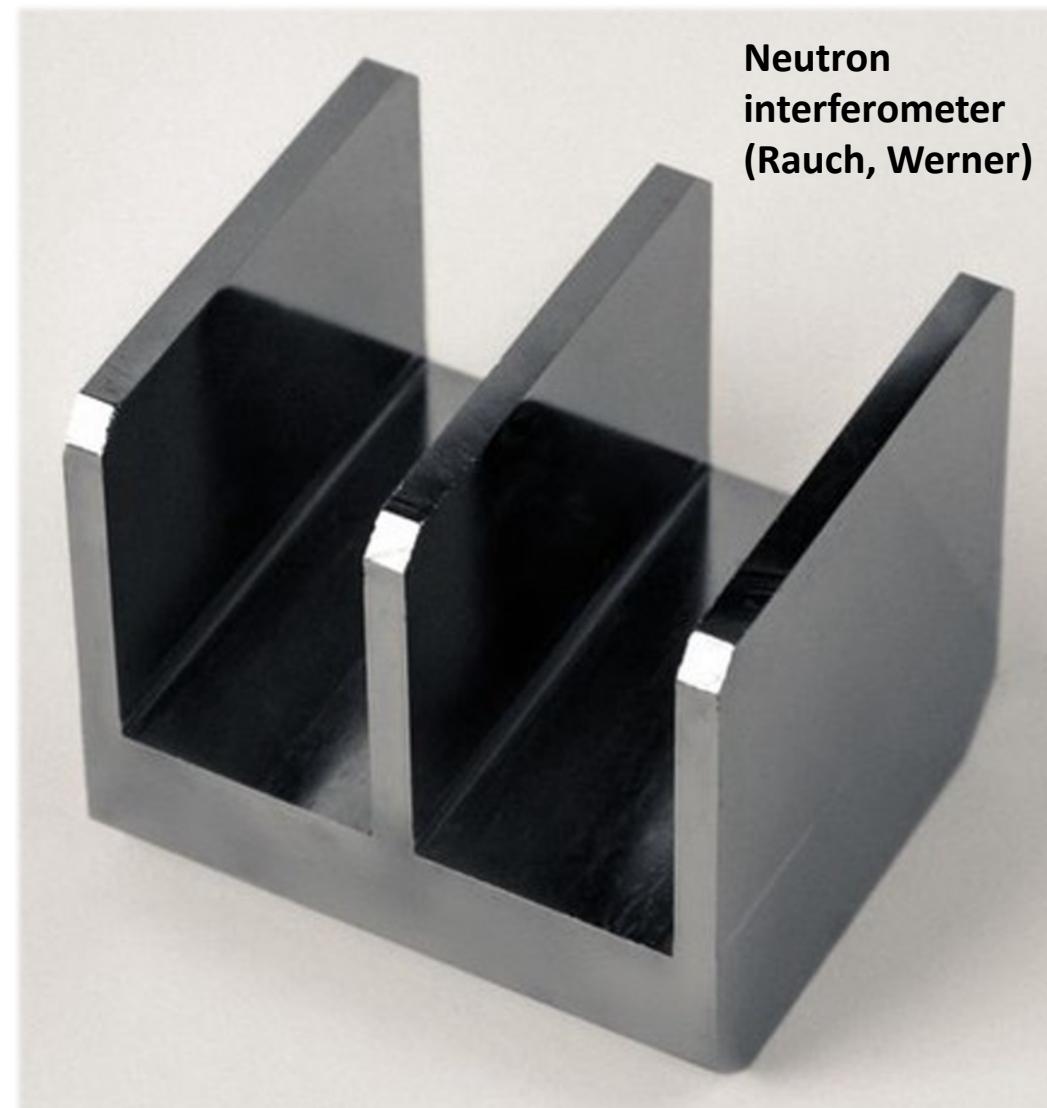


FIG. 1. Schematic diagram of the neutron interferometer and  $^3\text{He}$  detectors used in this experiment.

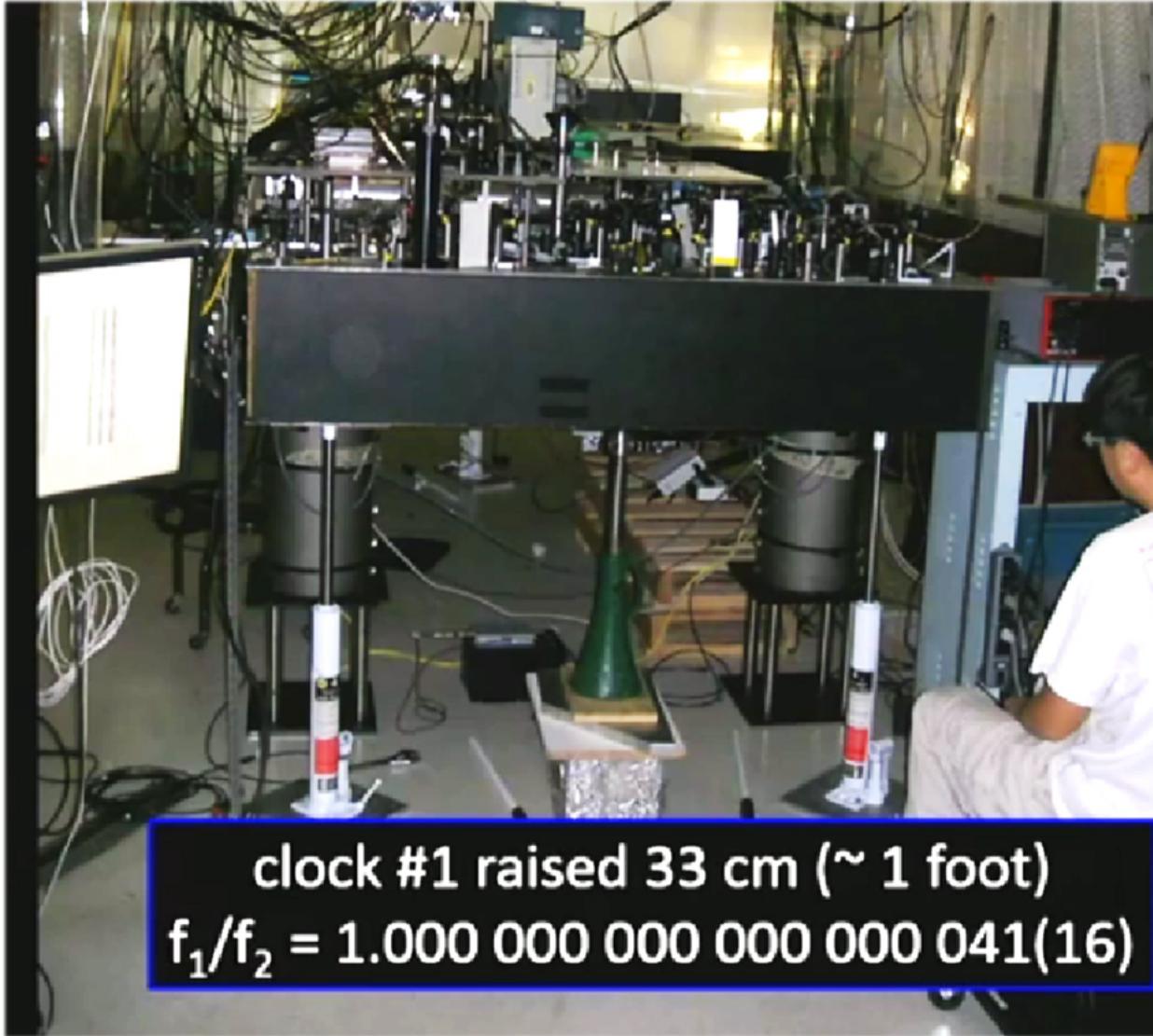


Neutrons: Earth's gravity impacts the wavefunction of a quantum particle



Neutron interferometer (Rauch, Werner)

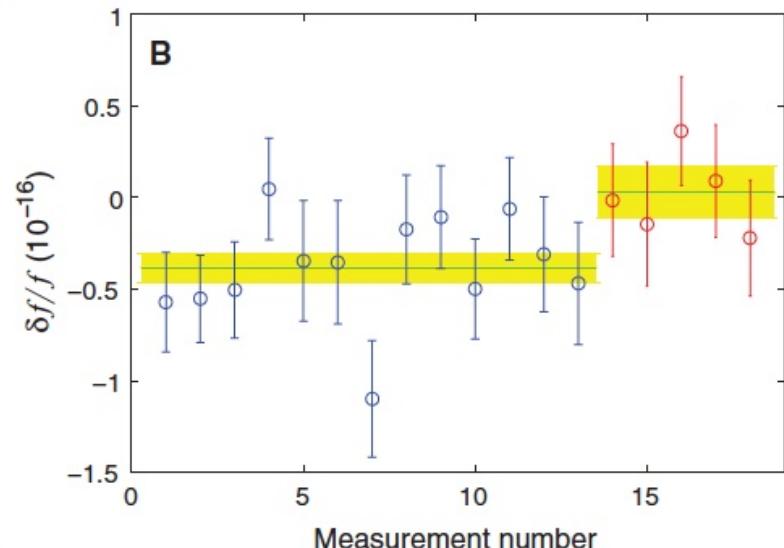
# All experiments to date can be explained by assuming the joint validity of quantum theory and general relativity



## Optical Clocks and Relativity

C. W. Chou,\* D. B. Hume, T. Rosenband, D. J. Wineland

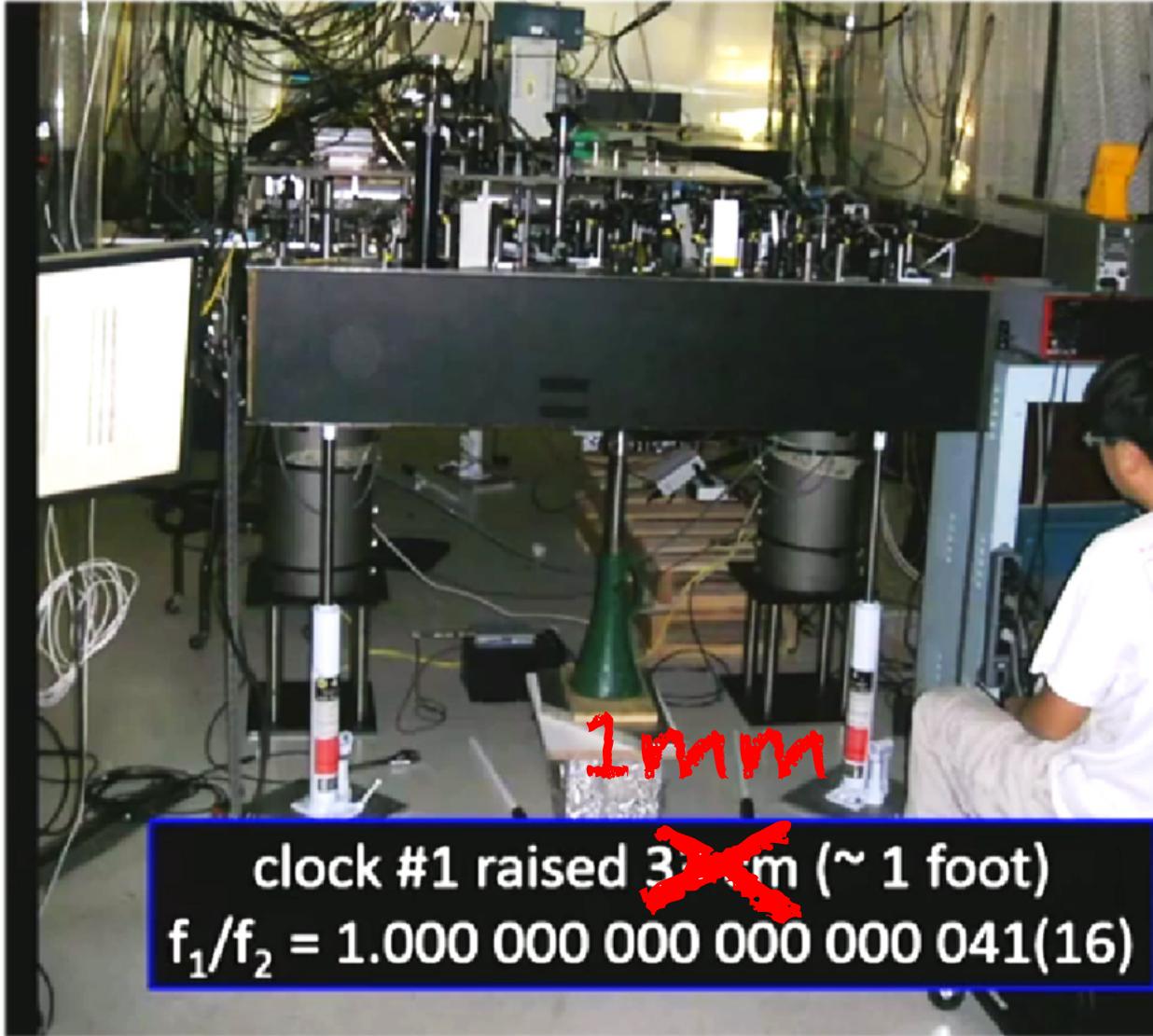
Observers in relative motion or at different gravitational potentials measure disparate clock rates. These predictions of relativity have previously been observed with atomic clocks at high velocities and with large changes in elevation. We observed time dilation from relative speeds of less than 10 meters per second by comparing two optical atomic clocks connected by a 75-meter length of optical fiber. We can now also detect time dilation due to a change in height near Earth's surface of less than 1 meter. This technique may be extended to the field of geodesy, with applications in geophysics and hydrology as well as in space-based tests of fundamental physics.



*Atomic clocks: Frequency shift due to 33 cm lift in Earth's gravitational field*

see also  
Bothwell et al., Nature 602, 420 (2022)  
Zheng et al., Nature 602, 425 (2022)

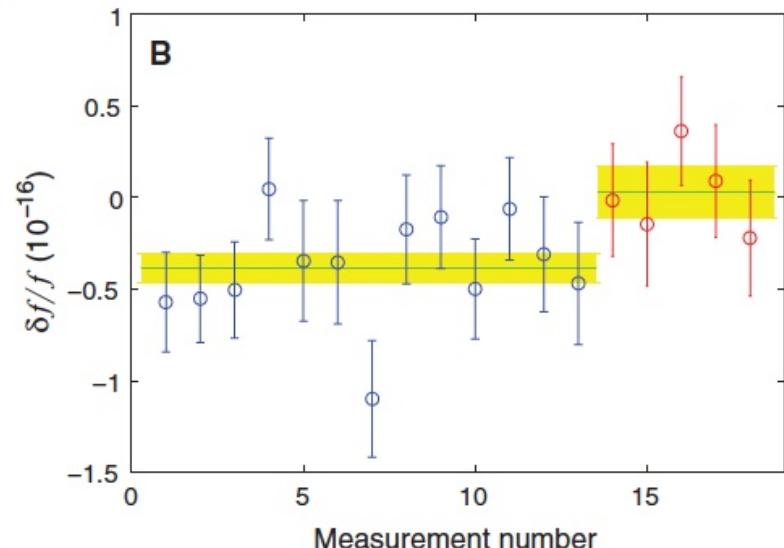
# All experiments to date can be explained by assuming the joint validity of quantum theory and general relativity



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# All experiments to date can be explained by assuming the joint validity of quantum theory and general relativity

Nature 2002

## Quantum states of neutrons in the Earth's gravitational field

Valery V. Nesvizhevsky\*, Hans G. Börner\*, Alexander K. Petukhov\*,  
Hartmut Abele†, Stefan Baebler†, Frank J. Rueß†, Thilo Stöferle†,  
Alexander Westphal†, Alexei M. Gagarski‡, Guennady A. Petrov‡  
& Alexander V. Strelkov§

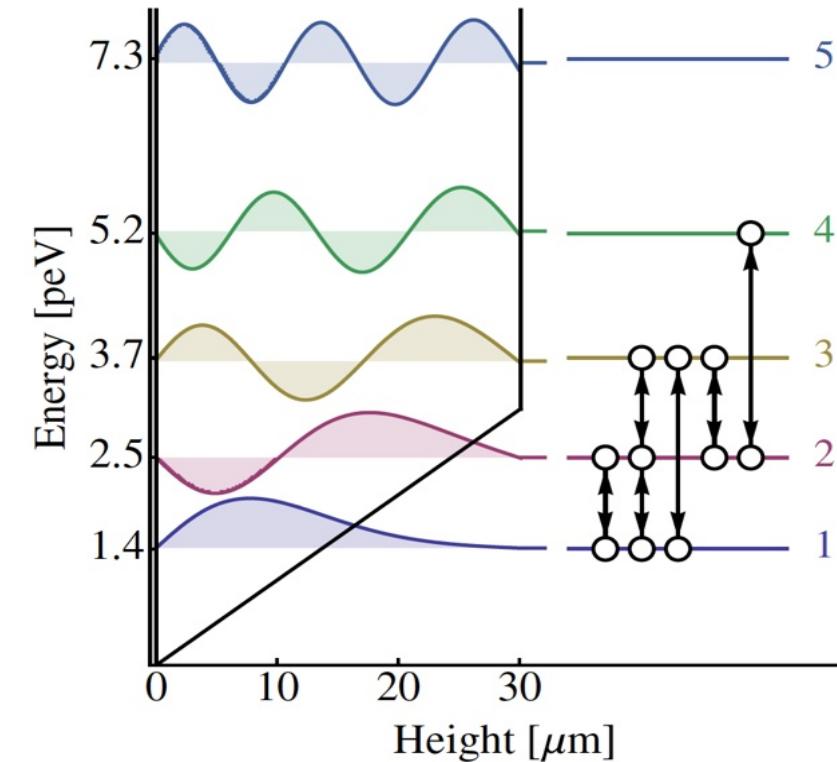
\* Institute Laue-Langevin, 6 rue Jules Horowitz, Grenoble F-38042, France

† University of Heidelberg, 12 Philosophenweg, Heidelberg D-69120, Germany

‡ Petersburg Nuclear Physics Institute, Orlova Roscha, Gatchina, Leningrad reg.  
R-188350, Russia

§ Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, Dubna, Moscow reg. R-141980, Russia

The discrete quantum properties of matter are manifest in a variety of phenomena. Any particle that is trapped in a sufficiently deep and wide potential well is settled in quantum bound states. For example, the existence of quantum states of electrons in an



$$E_0 = \left( \frac{\hbar^2 m_n g^2}{2} \right)^{1/3}$$

LETTERS

PUBLISHED ONLINE: 17 APRIL 2011 | DOI: 10.1038/NPHYS1970

nature  
physics

## Realization of a gravity-resonance-spectroscopy technique

Tobias Jenke<sup>1</sup>, Peter Geltenbort<sup>2</sup>, Hartmut Lemmel<sup>1,2</sup> and Hartmut Abele<sup>1,3,4\*</sup>

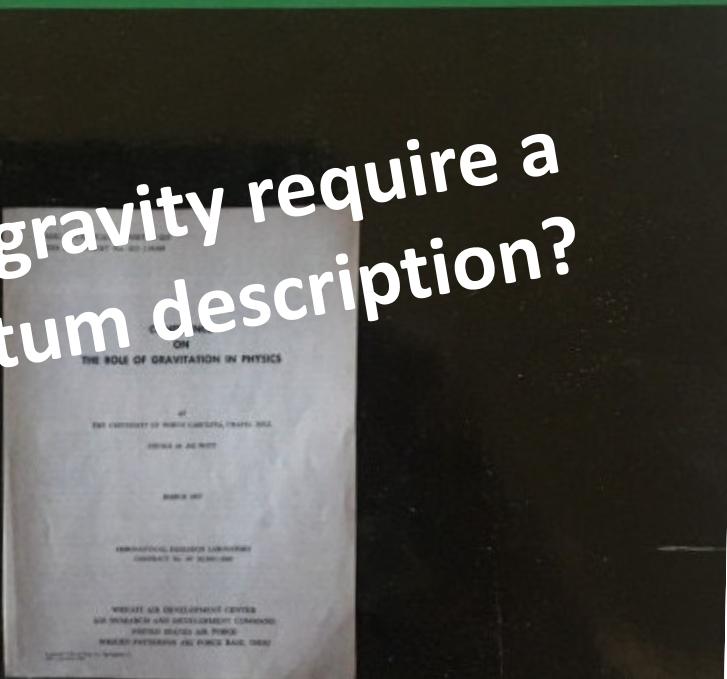
Dropping Neutrons: quantum „particle in a box“ with Earth's gravity as „box“

# The Role of Gravitation in Physics

Report from the 1957 Chapel Hill Conference

Cécile M. DeWitt and Dean Rickles (eds.)

Does gravity require a  
quantum description?



Max Planck Research Library  
for the History and Development of Knowledge  
Sources 5

GOLD: „Can we have phenomena which the classical theory of gravity (without quantization) is unable to explain?“



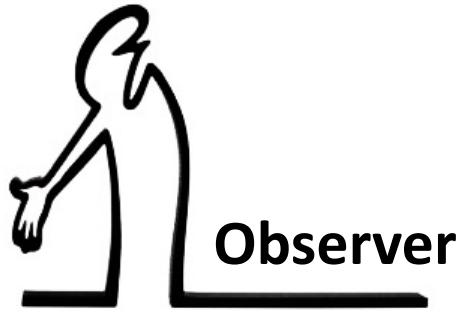
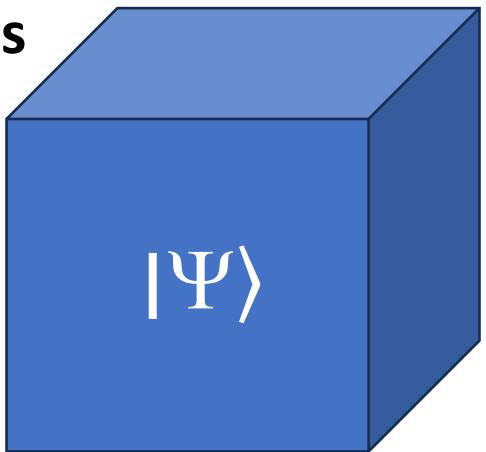
FEYNMAN: „YES!“



1957 Chapel Hill Conference

# What if... we could have quantum sources of gravity in the laboratory

Mass



superposition of states that  
are **gravitationally distinct**,  
i.e. can be distinguished in  
gravity experiments

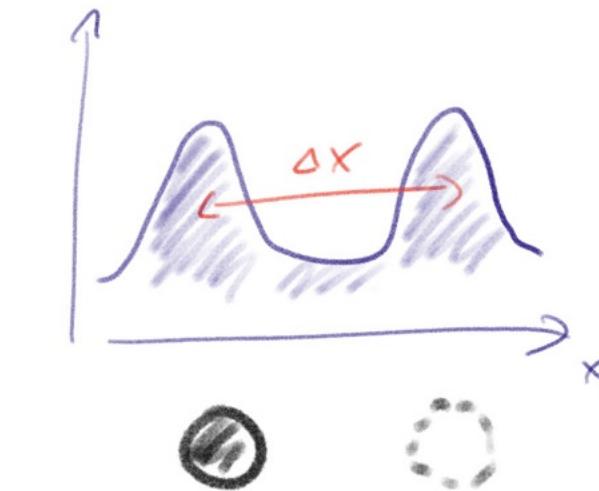
$$(|L\rangle_m + |R\rangle_m) \otimes |\tau\rangle_c$$



Gravity

$$(|L\rangle_m |\tau_L\rangle_c + |R\rangle_m |\tau_R\rangle_c) \quad \text{ENTANGLED IF } \langle \tau_L | \tau_R \rangle \ll 1$$

# What if... we could have quantum sources of gravity in the laboratory



$$(|L\rangle_h + |R\rangle_h) \otimes$$

$$\begin{array}{c} |e\rangle \\ \downarrow S_c \\ |g\rangle \end{array}$$



$$|\tau\rangle_c$$

$$\phi_{Lc} = G \frac{m}{|x_{Lc} - x_0|}$$

$$\Delta\phi = \frac{Gm\Delta x}{d^2}$$

$$(L\rangle_h |\tau_L\rangle_c + |R\rangle_h |\tau_R\rangle_c$$

ENTANGLED IF  $\langle \tau_L | \tau_R \rangle \ll 1$

Bothwell et al., Nature 602, 420 (2022)  
Zheng et al., Nature 602, 425 (2022)

current experiments

$$\Delta v/v = 7 \times 10^{-21}$$

$$\frac{\Delta\phi}{c^2} = \frac{\Delta\omega}{V} \sim 10^{-32}$$

# Can GR describe ALL gravitational phenomena? A YES/NO Experiment

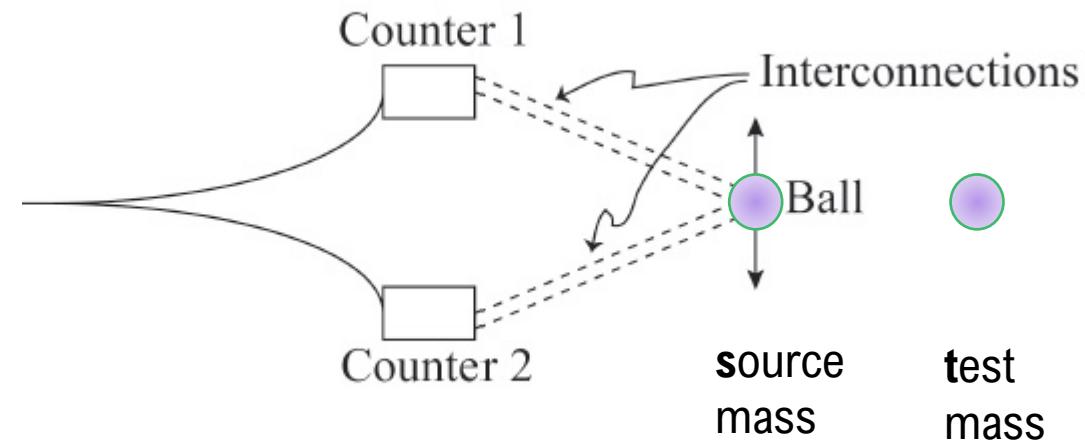
e.g. Belenchia, Wald, et al., *Phys. Rev. D* **98**, 126009 (2018)



R P Feynman

## Quantum entanglement via gravity

" Since the ball is big enough to produce a real gravitational field we could **use that gravitational field to move another ball** (...) We would then have to analyze [this experiment] through the channel provided by the gravitational field itself via the quantum mechanical amplitudes."



$$(|x_d\rangle_s + |x_{\bar{d}}\rangle_s) \otimes |x_0\rangle_t$$
$$\downarrow a_G^{\bar{x}, d} = G \cdot \frac{m_s}{|x_{\bar{x}, d} - x_0|^2}$$

$$(|x_d G_{\mu\nu}|^2 = 8\pi \langle T_{\mu\nu} \rangle_s |\tilde{x}_d\rangle_t)$$

ENTANGLED  $\leftrightarrow \langle \tilde{x}_d | \tilde{x}_d \rangle \ll 1$

# Can GR describe ALL gravitational phenomena? A YES/NO Experiment

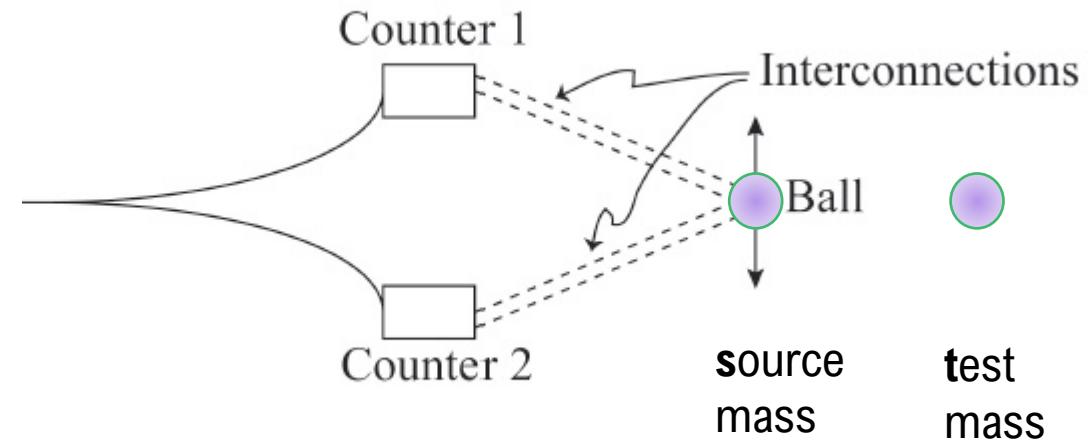
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$$(|x_d\rangle_s + |x_e\rangle) \otimes |x\rangle$$

NOTE! Generation of **entanglement via gravity**

from a **quantum perspective**: obvious

from a **GR perspective**: inconsistent with a fixed space-time geometry,

e.g. Christodoulou and Rovelli, arxiv 1808.05842

$$(|x\rangle, G_{\mu\nu} \stackrel{?}{=} 8\pi \langle T_{\mu\nu} \rangle)$$

$$\langle \tilde{x}_e | \tilde{x}_d \rangle \ll 1$$

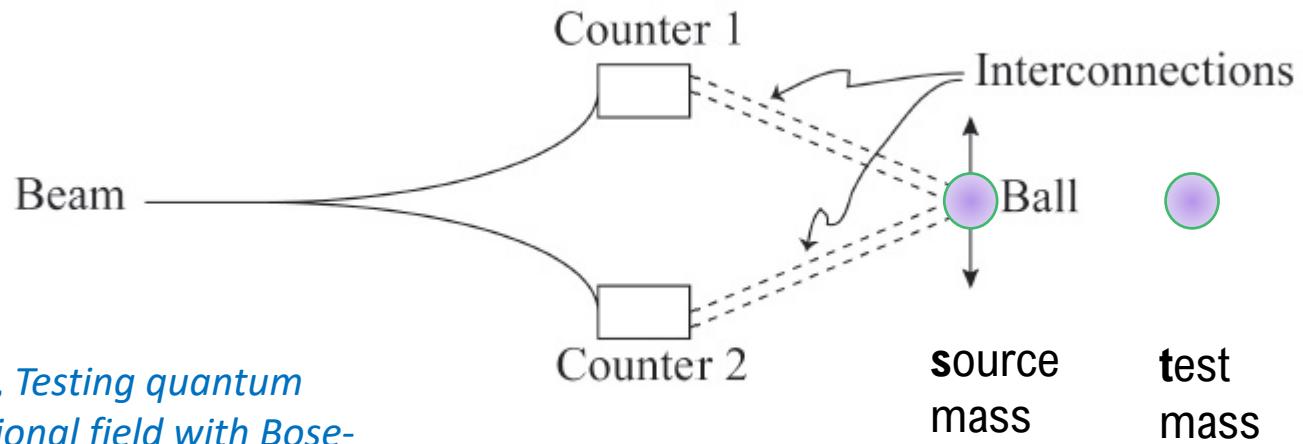
# Can GR describe ALL gravitational phenomena? A YES/NO Experiment



"What prevents this from becoming a practical experiment?"

*Chapel Hill Conference 1957*

Louis Witten



**Early works:** Lindner & Peres, *Testing quantum superpositions of the gravitational field with Bose-Einstein condensates*, PRA 71, 024101 (2005)

$$|\psi_0\rangle = |0\rangle_1 \otimes |0\rangle_2$$

$$\int \hat{H}_{\text{int}} = -G \frac{m^2}{|r|} \rightarrow -t_0 g \hat{x}_1 \hat{x}_2$$

$$|\psi_{\text{ent.}}\rangle$$

$$|\psi_0\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} (|L\rangle_1 + |R\rangle_1) \otimes \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} (|L\rangle_2 + |R\rangle_2)$$

$$\int q(t) = \frac{1}{t} \int G \frac{m^2}{|r|} dt$$

$$|\psi_{\text{ent.}}\rangle$$

Al Balushi et al., PRA 98, 043811(2018),  
 Krisnanda et al., npj Quantum Information 6, 12 (2020),  
 Cosco et al., PRA 103, L061501 (2021)  
 Weiss et al., PRL 127, 023601 (2021)

ENTANGLEMENT RATE

$$g = \frac{G}{t_0} \frac{m^2}{d} \left(\frac{\Delta x}{d}\right)^2$$

$\geq \sqrt{\text{decoherence}}$

Bose et al., PRL 119, 240401 (2017),  
 Marletto et al., PRL 119, 240402 (2017)

# Can GR describe ALL gravitational phenomena? A YES/NO Experiment



Louis Witten

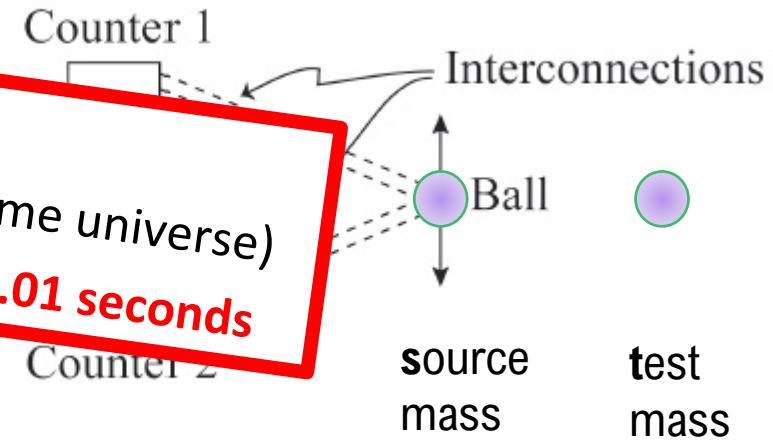
"What pre-  
dicts the  
time scale  
from beca-  
use of the  
practical ex-  
periment?"

*How long to generate entanglement?*

2 atoms separated by  $1\mu\text{m}$ :  **$10^{24}$  seconds** ( $>$  lifetime universe)

2 Pb-spheres (50 $\mu\text{m}$  size) separated by  $100\mu\text{m}$ : **0.01 seconds**

Chapel Hill Conference 1957



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$$|\psi_0\rangle = |0\rangle_1 \otimes |0\rangle_2$$

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Al Balushi et al., PRA 98, 043811(2018),  
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$\geq \Gamma_{\text{decoherence}}$

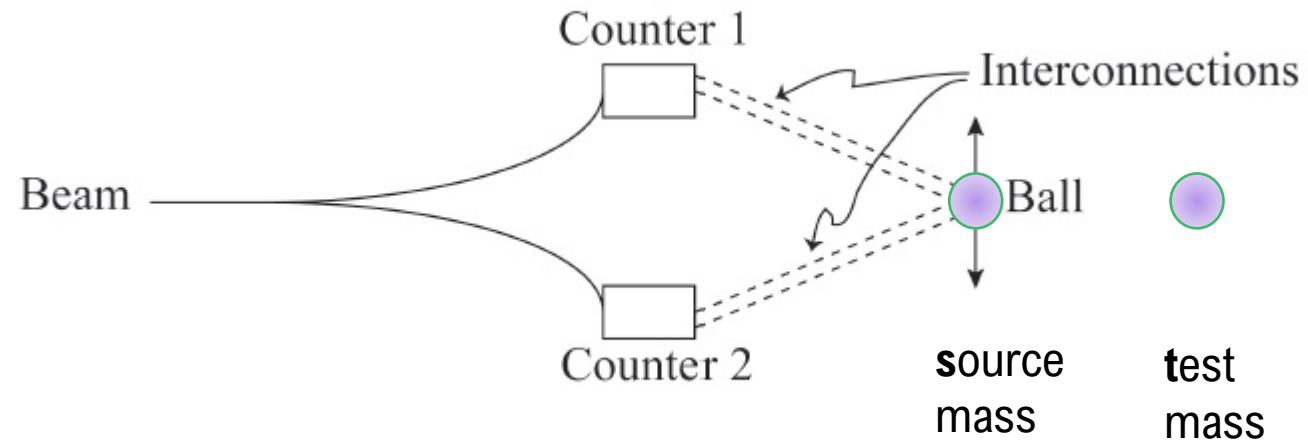
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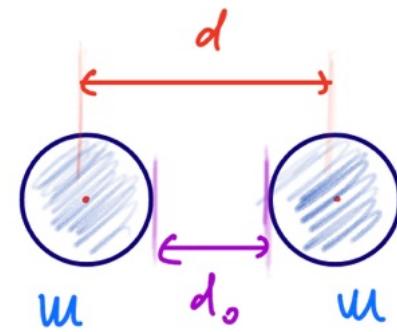
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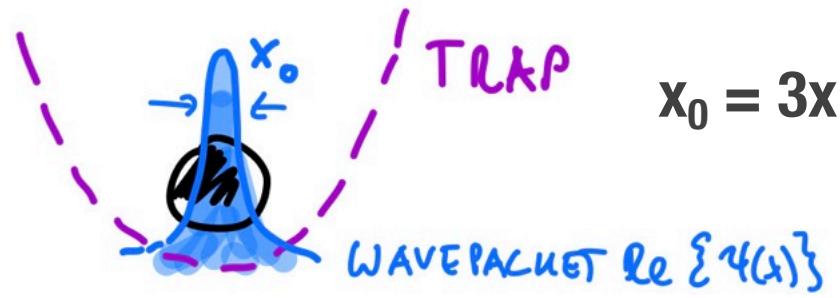


$$\frac{m^2 \Delta x^2 \tau_{\text{coherence}}}{d^{-3}} \stackrel{!}{>} \frac{\tau}{G}$$

Quantum Experiments      Gravity Experiments



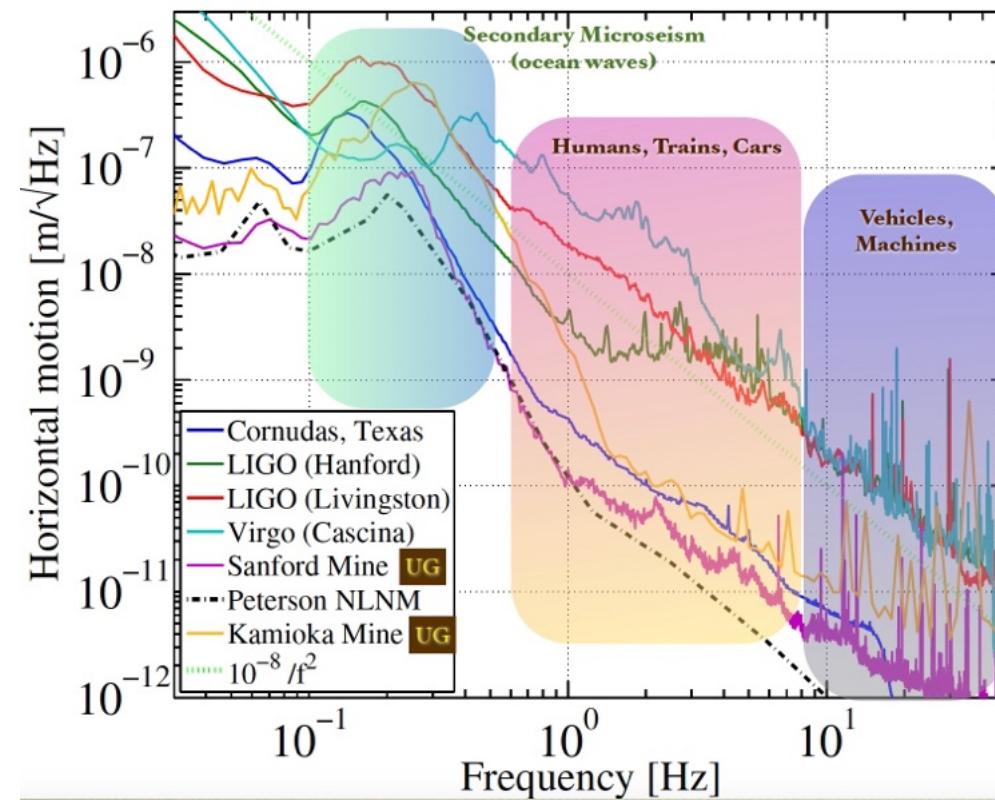
# The decoherence challenge: *displacement noise*



$$x_0 = 3 \times 10^{-12} \text{ m (for } 10^9 \text{ atoms)}$$

**Working Assumption 1: avoid displacement noise!**

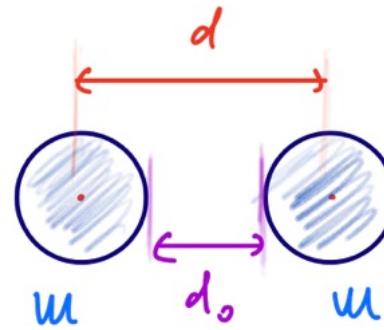
→ Duration of experiment < 0.01 sec (<  $\tau_{\text{coherence}}$ )



$$\mu^2 \Delta x^2 \tau_{\text{coherence}} d^{-3} \gg \frac{\tau}{G}$$

Quantum Experiments

Gravity Experiments



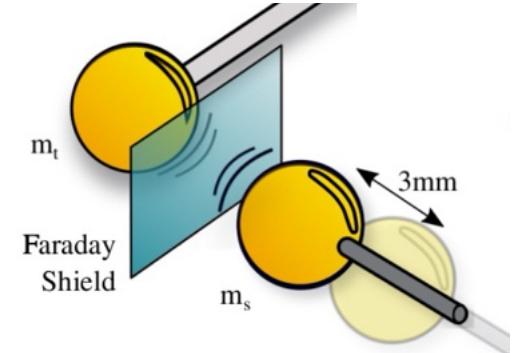
# The decoherence challenge: *electromagnetic shielding*

Gravity experiments require electromagnetic shielding between masses:

today:  $d_0 > 50 \mu\text{m}$  [Eöt-Wash group, Lee et al., PRL 124, 101101 (2020)]

planned:  $d_0 > 10 \mu\text{m}$  [Vienna; in collaboration with Eric Adelberger]

10um thick Au-coated BeCu membrane



Westphal et al., Nature 591, 225 (2021)

Working Assumption 2: need a Faraday shield!

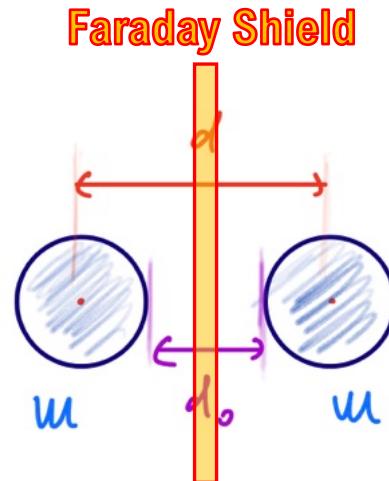
→ Surface distance  $d_0 > 10 \mu\text{m} (> d)$

Related to **tests of large extra dimensions**, e.g.  
ADD: Arkani-Hamed, Dimopolous, Dvali, PLB 429, 263 (1998)  
Swampland: Montero, Vafa, Valenzuela, arxiv 2205.12293 (2022)

$$\mu^2 \Delta x^2 \tau_{\text{coherence}} \underset{!}{\circlearrowleft} d^{-3} \gg \frac{\tau}{G}$$

Quantum Experiments

Gravity Experiments



# The decoherence challenge: *mirror charges*

Decoherence by Coulomb interaction with Faraday shield

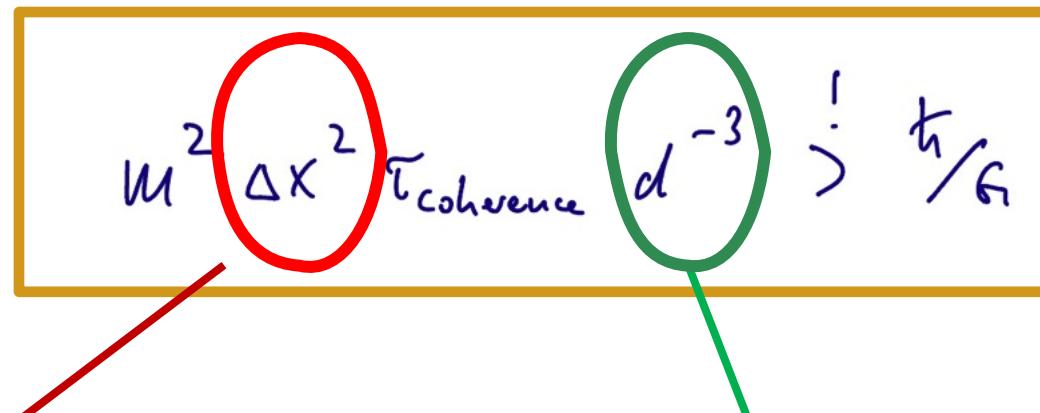
[Kerker et al., NJP 22, 063039 (2020)]

[Martinetz et al., PRX Quantum 3, 030327 (2022)]

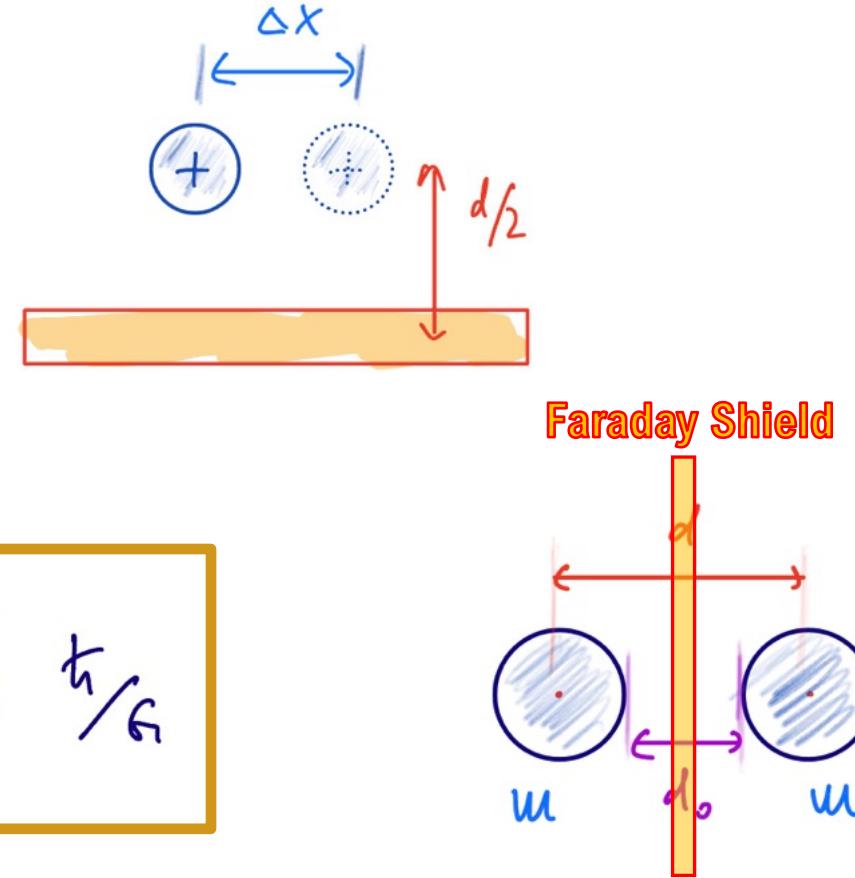
**Working Assumption 3: decoherence scales with some order of  $\Delta x/d$ !**

$$\rightarrow \Delta x/d \ll 1$$

Quantum Experiments



Gravity Experiments



# The decoherence challenge: *mirror charges*

## Decoherence by Coulomb interaction with Faraday shield

[Kerker et al., NJP 22, 063039 (2020)]

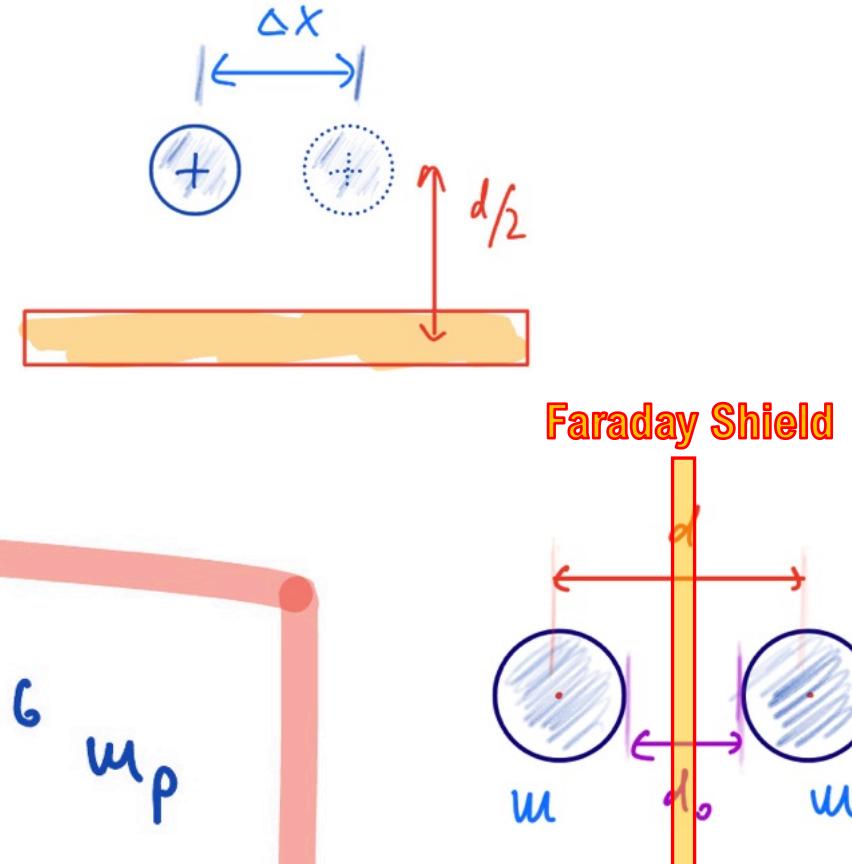
[Martinetz et al., PRX Quantum 3, 030327 (2022)]

**Working Assumption 3: decoherence scales with some order of  $\Delta x/d$ !**

$$\rightarrow \Delta x/d \ll 1$$

$$m \gg m_p \sqrt{\frac{d}{c \tau_{coh}}} \approx 10^{-6} m_p$$

$m_p$ : Planck Mass ( $10^{18}$  atoms,  $2 \times 10^{-8}$  kg)

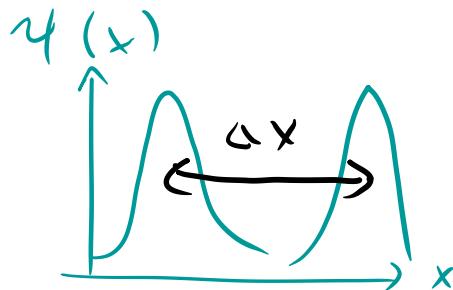


# The decoherence challenge: gas, blackbody, etc...

Joos & Zeh, Caldeira & Leggett, Unruh & Zurek  
Paz & Zurek, Hu & Paz & Zhang, Milburn, ...

$$\dot{\rho} = -\frac{i}{\hbar}[H, \rho] + \mathcal{L}[\rho]$$

Master equation approach



see also

- O. Romero-Isart et al., PRL 107, 020405 (2011)
- O. Romero-Isart, PRA 84, 052121 (2011)
- T. Weiss et al., arxiv: 2012.12260 (2021)

## Decoherence from gas collisions

$$\lambda_{de} = 2\pi\hbar \left( \sqrt{2\pi m_j k_B T_c} \right)^{-1} \sim 1\text{nm} @ 1\text{K} \ll \Delta x \text{ (short wavelength regime)}$$

$$\Gamma_{gas} = \frac{\lambda_{de}}{t_c} \frac{16\pi}{3} \rho R^2$$

## Decoherence from blackbody radiation

$$\lambda_{de} = \frac{\pi^{2/3} t_c}{k_B T_c} \sim \delta(\text{nm}) @ 1\text{K} \gg \Delta x \text{ (long-wavelength regime)}$$

...

$$\Gamma = \lambda \Delta x^2$$

BB scattering  $\lambda_{sc} = \frac{8! 8 \zeta(9) c R^6}{9\pi} \left( \frac{k_B T_c}{t_c} \right)^7 \text{Re} \left\{ \frac{\varepsilon - 1}{\varepsilon + 2} \right\}^2$

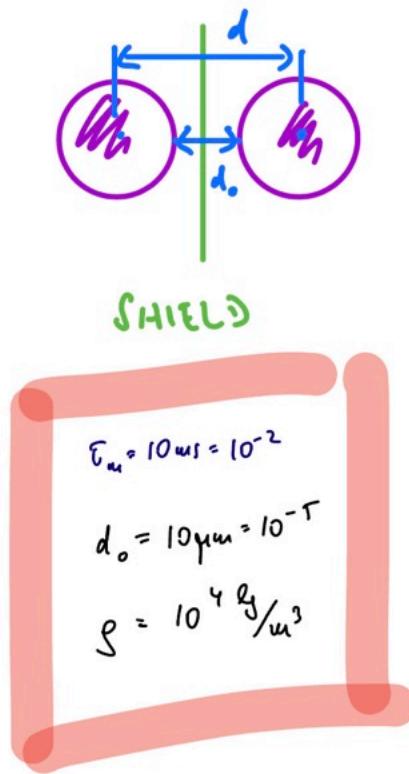
BB emission absorption  $\lambda_{e(a)} = \frac{16\pi^5 c R^3}{189} \left( \frac{k_B T_{e(a)}}{t_c} \right)^6 \text{Im} \left\{ \frac{\varepsilon - 1}{\varepsilon + 2} \right\}^2$

# The decoherence challenge: *background gas, blackbody, etc.* ...

arxiv:2203.05587

## see also

- O. Romero-Isart et al., PRL 107, 020405 (2011)  
 O. Romero-Isart, PRA 84, 052121 (2011)  
 S. Rijavec et al., New J. Phys. 23, 043040 (2021)  
 T. Weiss et al., PRL 127, 023601 (2021)

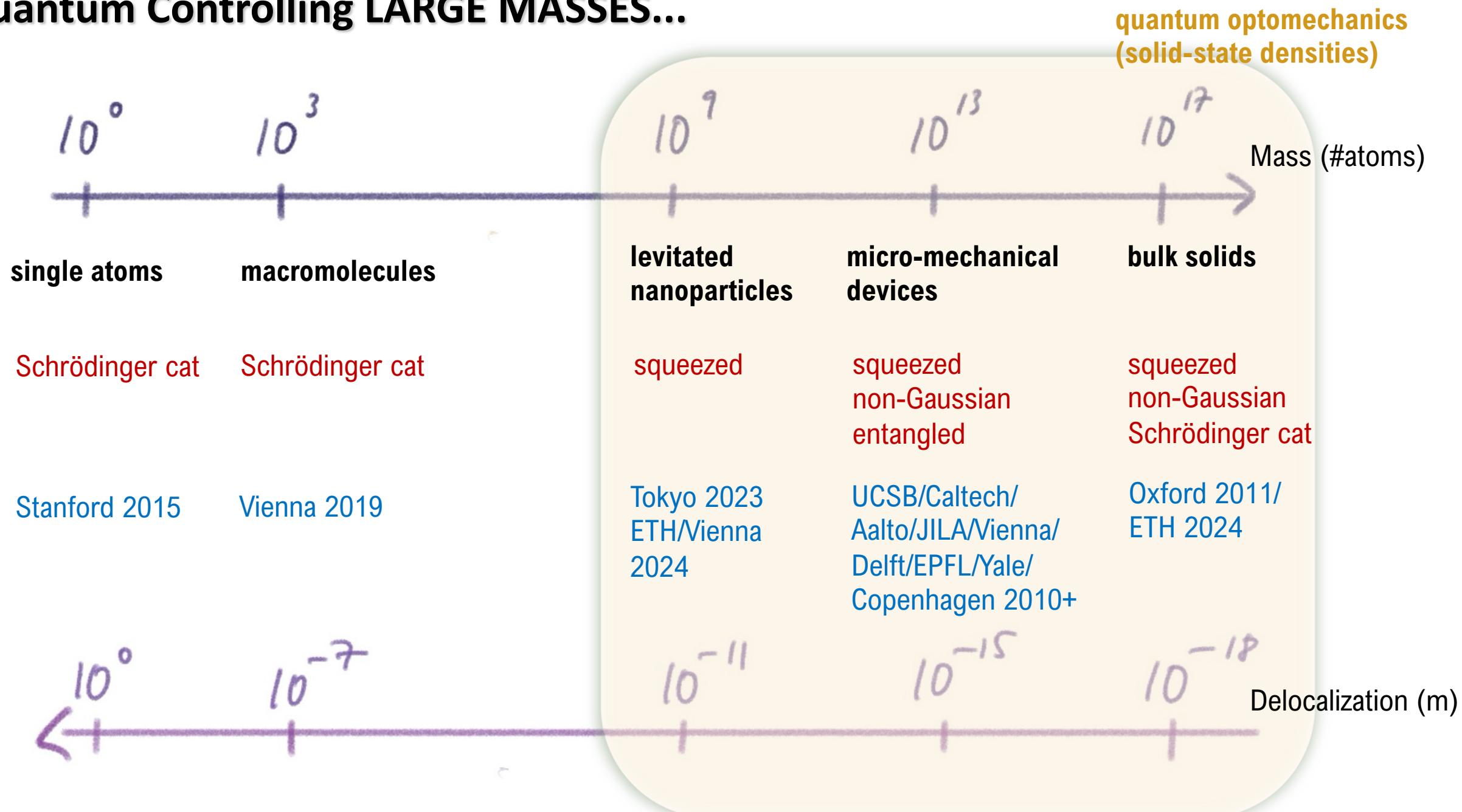


(2021)	MASS	GEOMETRY	DELOCALIZATION	SIZE	TEMPERATURE		
	$\beta [\text{K}_\rho]$	$\rho = (1 + 16 \beta^{1/3})$	$\rho^{3/2}$	$\Delta x$	$r$	$T_a$	$T_{e,i} [\text{K}]$
1	17	70		$1.4 \cdot 10^{-9}$	80 nm	7	11
$10^{-1}$	8.43	25		$4.9 \cdot 10^{-9}$	40 nm	9	11
$10^{-2}$	4.45	9.4		$17 \cdot 10^{-9}$	17 nm	11	10
$10^{-3}$	2.6	4.2		$84 \cdot 10^{-9}$	8 nm	13	9
$10^{-4}$	1.74	2.3		$460 \cdot 10^{-9}$	4 nm	15	8
$10^{-5}$	1.3	1.6		$3.1 \cdot 10^{-6}$	2 nm	16	6
	:	:		:	:	:	
$10^{-9}$	1.02	1.02		$2 \cdot 10^{-2}$	80 nm	18	1.5

for  $\bar{n} \approx 0.1$ ,  $p < 10^{-17}$  under

assuming GAS SCATTERING & BLACK BODY radiation

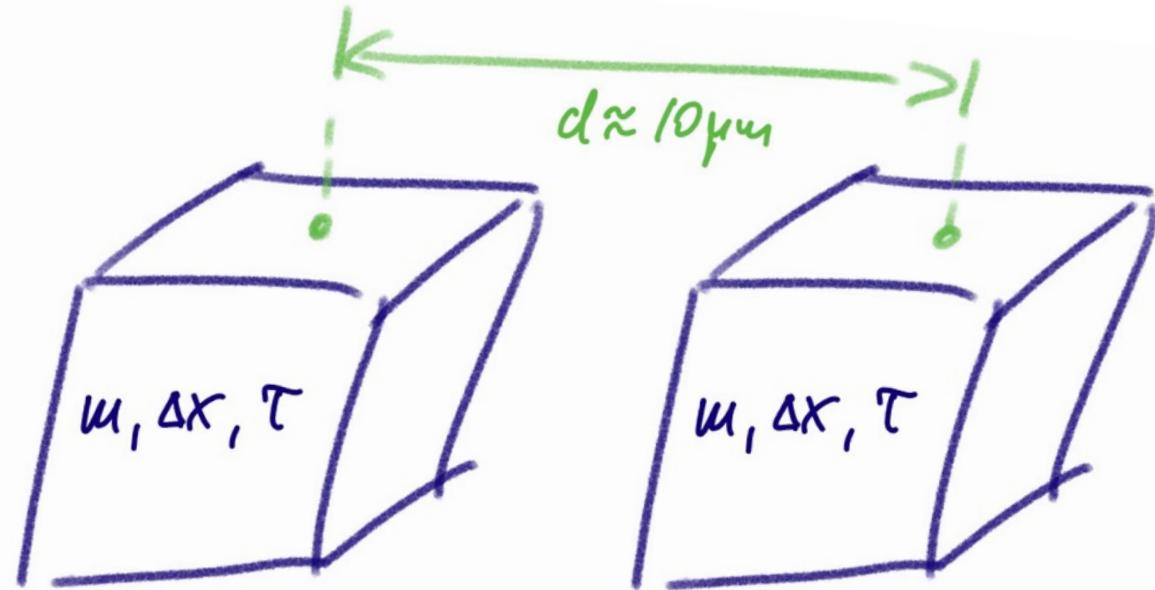
# Quantum Controlling LARGE MASSES...



## Current experiments involving delocalization of massive objects

We quantify the degree of “usability” as quantum source masses by assuming that we can prepare two systems in the same way and place them at a center of mass distance  $d = 10\mu\text{m}$ . Note that this is merely a hypothetical construct...

We express  $(m \Delta x)^2 \tau$  in units of  $(\hbar/G d^3)$ , which means we require  $(m \Delta x)^2 \tau > 1$  for the system to be a useful quantum source mass



? is ENTANGLEMENT possible ?

$$(m \Delta x)^2 \tau \geq \hbar/G \cdot d^3$$

# Current experiments involving delocalization of massive objects

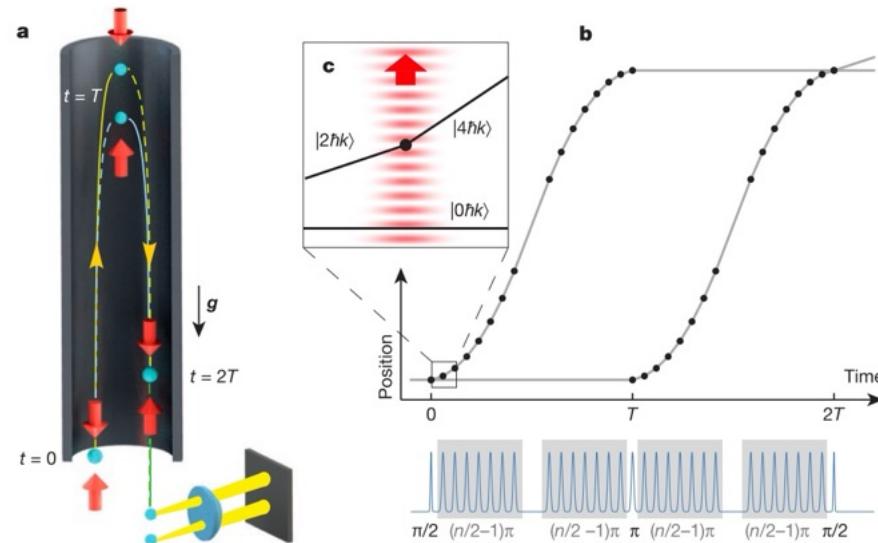
10m fountain  
Kasevich Lab  
Stanford

## Atoms

Atom interferometer; 1 atom;  $M = 87 \text{ a.m.u.} = 8.7 \times 10^{-26} \text{ kg}$ ; superposition size  $\Delta x > 0.5 \text{ m}$

T. Kovachy, P. Asenbaum et al., *Nature* **528**, 530–533 (2015)

$$(\mu \Delta x)^2 \tau \approx 10^{-12} \left[ \frac{\text{kg}}{\text{m}} @ d = 10 \mu\text{m} \right]$$

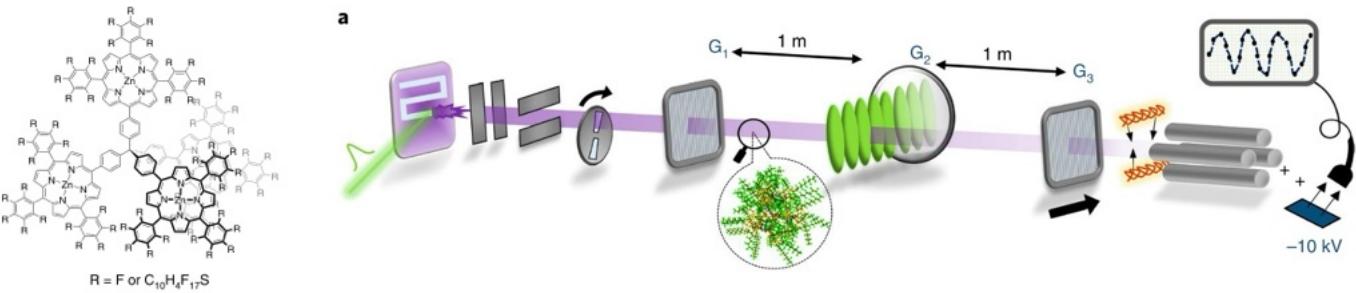


## Macro-molecules

matter-wave interference; 2,000 atoms;  $M = 25,000 \text{ a.m.u.} = 4 \times 10^{-23} \text{ kg}$ ; particle size  $D=5 \text{ nm}$ ; superposition size  $\Delta x > 500 \text{ nm}$

Y. Y. Fein et al., *Nat. Phys.* **15**, 1242–1245 (2019)

$$(\mu \Delta x)^2 \tau \approx 10^{-19} \left[ \frac{\text{kg}}{\text{m}} @ d = 10 \mu\text{m} \right]$$



# Current experiments involving delocalization of massive objects

## Solid-state mechanical oscillators I

Ramsey interference 0+1 between ground state (0) and single-phonon (1) Fock state (6 GHz acoustic mode); 1e13 atoms, M = 8e-13 kg, SiO<sub>2</sub>/AlN slab (60umx10umx700nm); superposition size  $\Delta x = 2e-16$  m (thickness oscillation); coherence time 40ns

A. D. O'Connell et al., *Nature* **464**, 697–703 (2010)

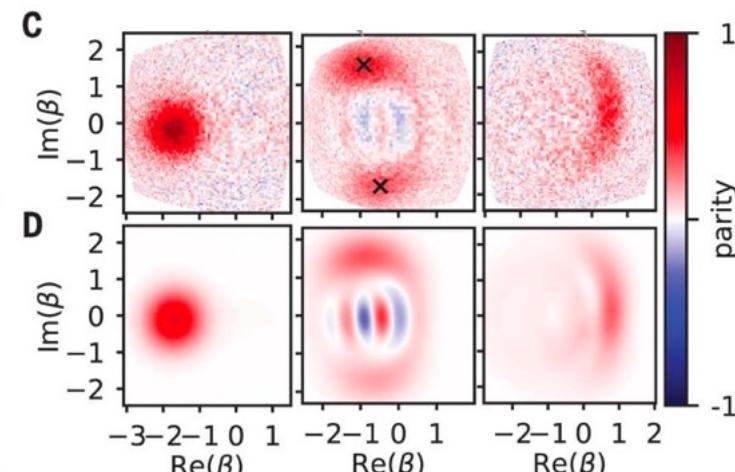
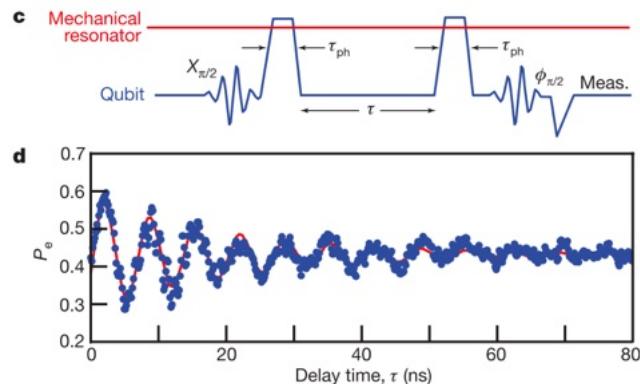
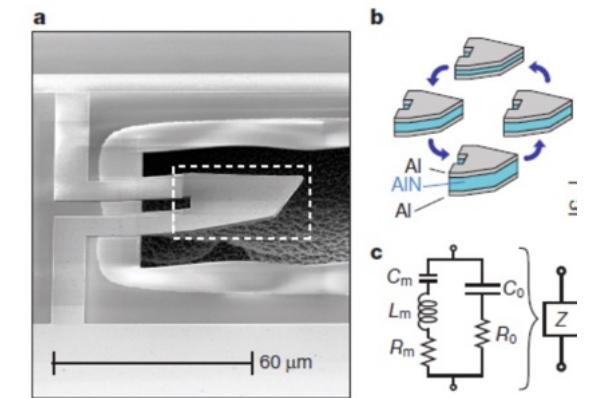
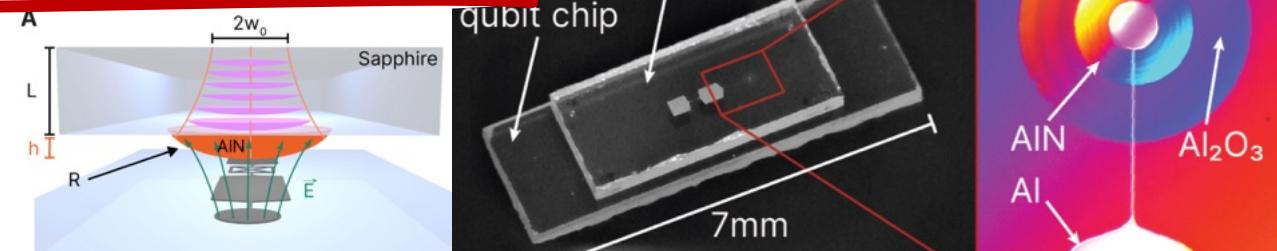
$$(\mu \Delta x)^2 \tau \approx 10^{-24} \left[ \text{kg} @ d = 10 \mu\text{m} \right]$$

## Solid-state mechanical oscillators II

Schrödinger cat state  $|\alpha\rangle + |\bar{\alpha}\rangle$  between coherent phonon states  $|+\alpha\rangle$  and  $|-\alpha\rangle$  with  $|\alpha|=1.6$  of a 6 GHz acoustic mode; 5e17 atoms, M = 2e-8 kg, saphire bulk acoustic resonator ((30um)<sup>2</sup>x400um), superposition size  $\Delta x = 1e-18$  m; coherence time 10μs

M. Bild, M. Fadel, Y. Yang et al., *Science* **380**, 274-278 (2023)

$$(\mu \Delta x)^2 \tau \approx 10^{-18} \left[ \text{kg} @ d = 10 \mu\text{m} \right]$$



# Current experiments involving delocalization of massive objects

## Motional entanglement of solids I

Optomechanical crystals; distributed single-phonon (5GHz acoustic phonon) entanglement 01+10 between 2 optomechanical crystals (DLCZ scheme); 1e11 atoms; M = 4e-15 kg; superposition size  $\Delta x = 1e-15m$ ; coherence time 4  $\mu s$

R. Riedinger, A. Wallucks, I. Marinkovic et al., *Nature* 556, 473-477 (2018)

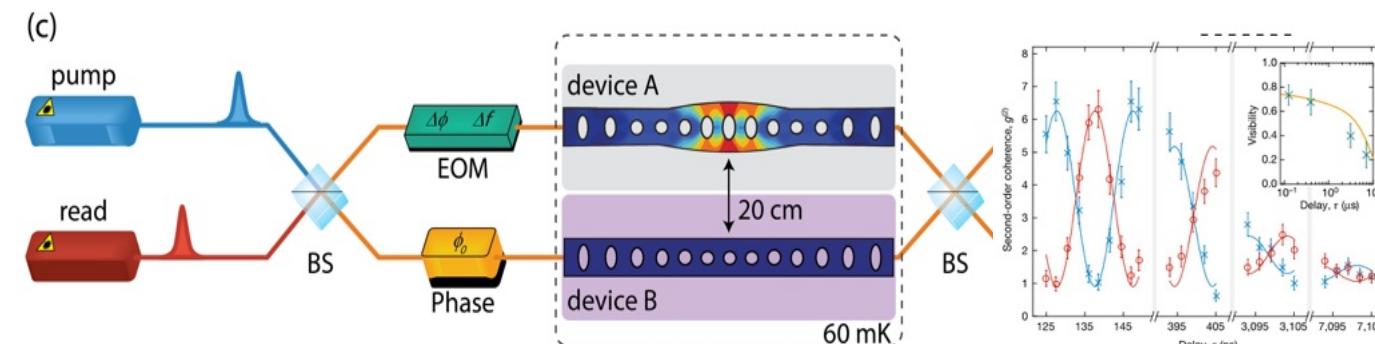
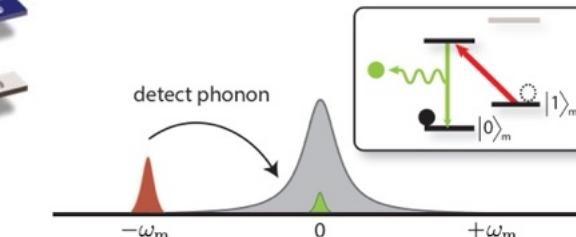
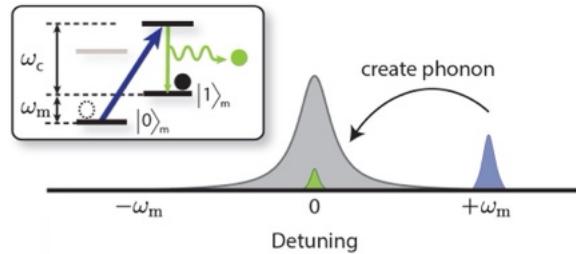
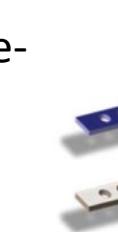
$$(\omega_{\Delta x})^2 \tau \approx 10^{-26} \left[ \text{kg} @ d = 10 \mu\text{m} \right]$$

## Motional entanglement of solids II

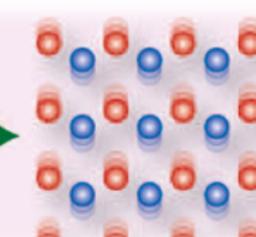
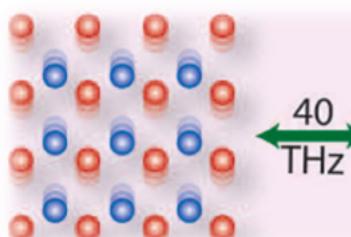
Bulk diamond; distributed single-phonon (40THz optical phonon) entanglement 01+10 between 2 bulk diamonds (DLCZ scheme); 1e16 atoms; M = 2e-9 kg; superposition size  $\Delta x = 1e-18m$ ; coherence time order picoseconds

K. C. Lee et al., *Science* 334, 1253-1256 (2011)

$$(\omega_{\Delta x})^2 \tau \approx 10^{-29} \left[ \text{kg} @ d = 10 \mu\text{m} \right]$$



$$|0_A 1_B\rangle + |1_A 0_B\rangle$$



3mm

# Current experiments involving delocalization of massive objects

## Motional quantum ground state I

LIGO mirrors; differential motion of differential motion of cavity arms form effective mechanical oscillator with  $M = 10\text{kg}$ ;  $3e26$  atoms; mirror size  $(35\text{cm})^2 \times 5\text{cm}$ ; ground state size  $\Delta x = 1e-19\text{m}$  (not yet fully achieved); coherence time ms (without blackbody radiation localization; requires  $T < 0.3\text{K}$ )

C. Whittle *et al.*, *Science* **372**, 1333–1336 (2021)

$$(\mu \Delta x)^2 \tau \approx 10^{-1} \left[ \frac{\hbar}{G} @ d = 10\mu\text{m} \right]$$

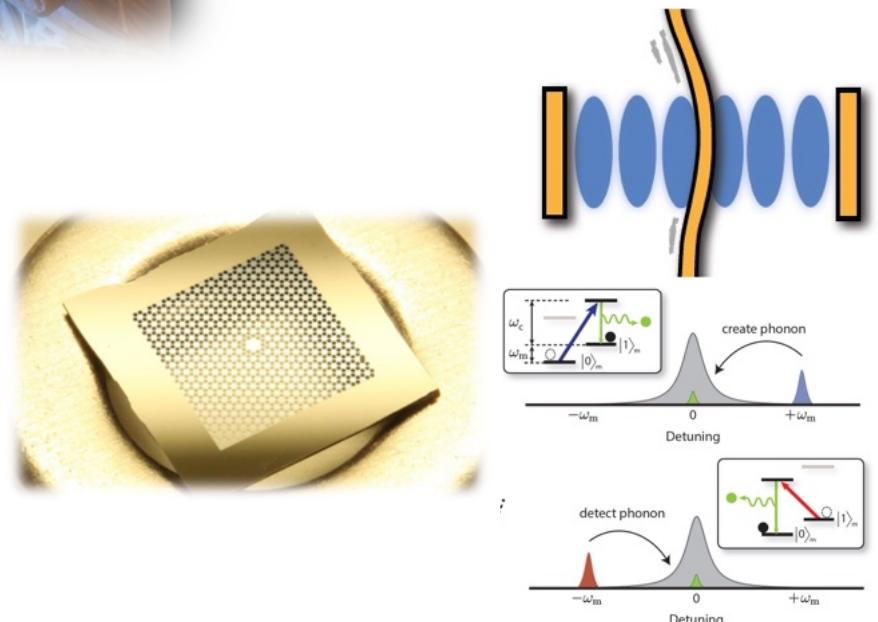
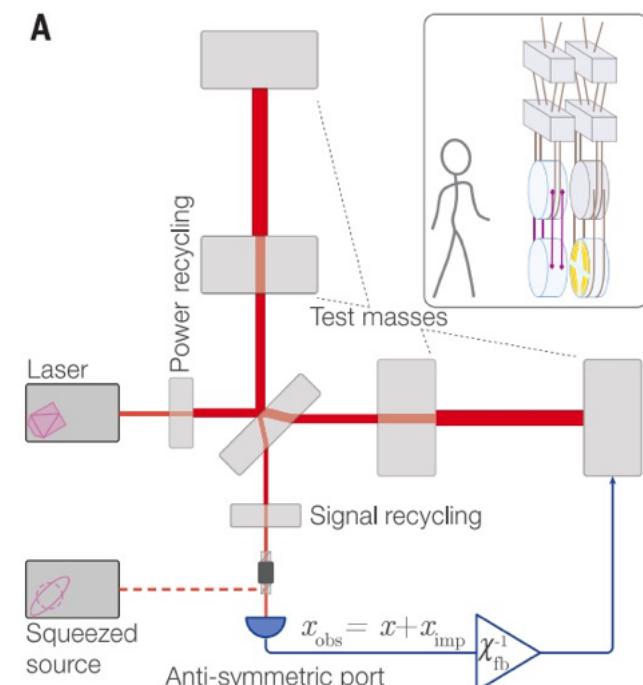
$$\rightarrow 10^{-''} @ d = 10\text{cm}$$

## Motional quantum ground state II

Micromechanical membranes; cavity cooling of fundamental COM mode of a membrane  $((200\mu\text{m})^2 \times 100\text{nm})$ ;  $1e14$  atoms;  $M = 6e15 \text{ a.m.u.} = 1e-11 \text{ kg}$ ; ground state size  $\Delta x = 1e-15\text{m}$ ; coherence time ms

I. Galinskyi *et al.*, arXiv:2312.05641 [quant.ph] (2023)

$$(\mu \Delta x)^2 \tau \approx 10^{-16} \left[ \frac{\hbar}{G} @ d = 10\mu\text{m} \right]$$



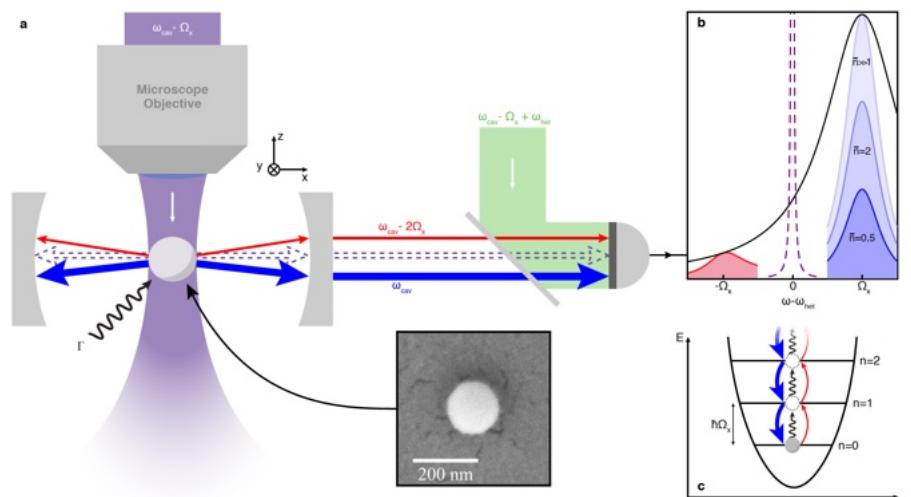
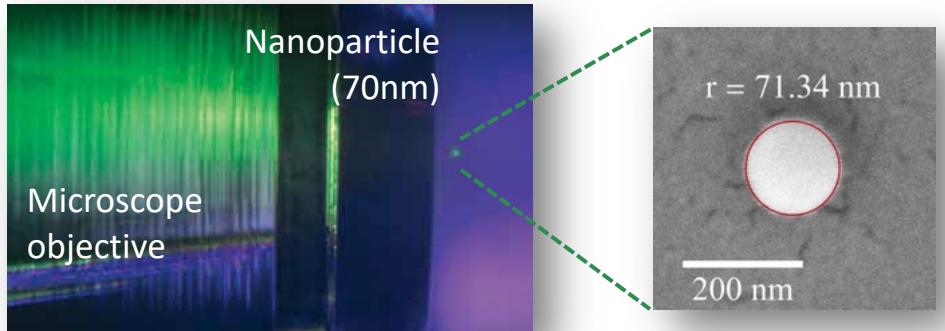
# Current experiments involving delocalization of massive objects

## Motional quantum ground state III

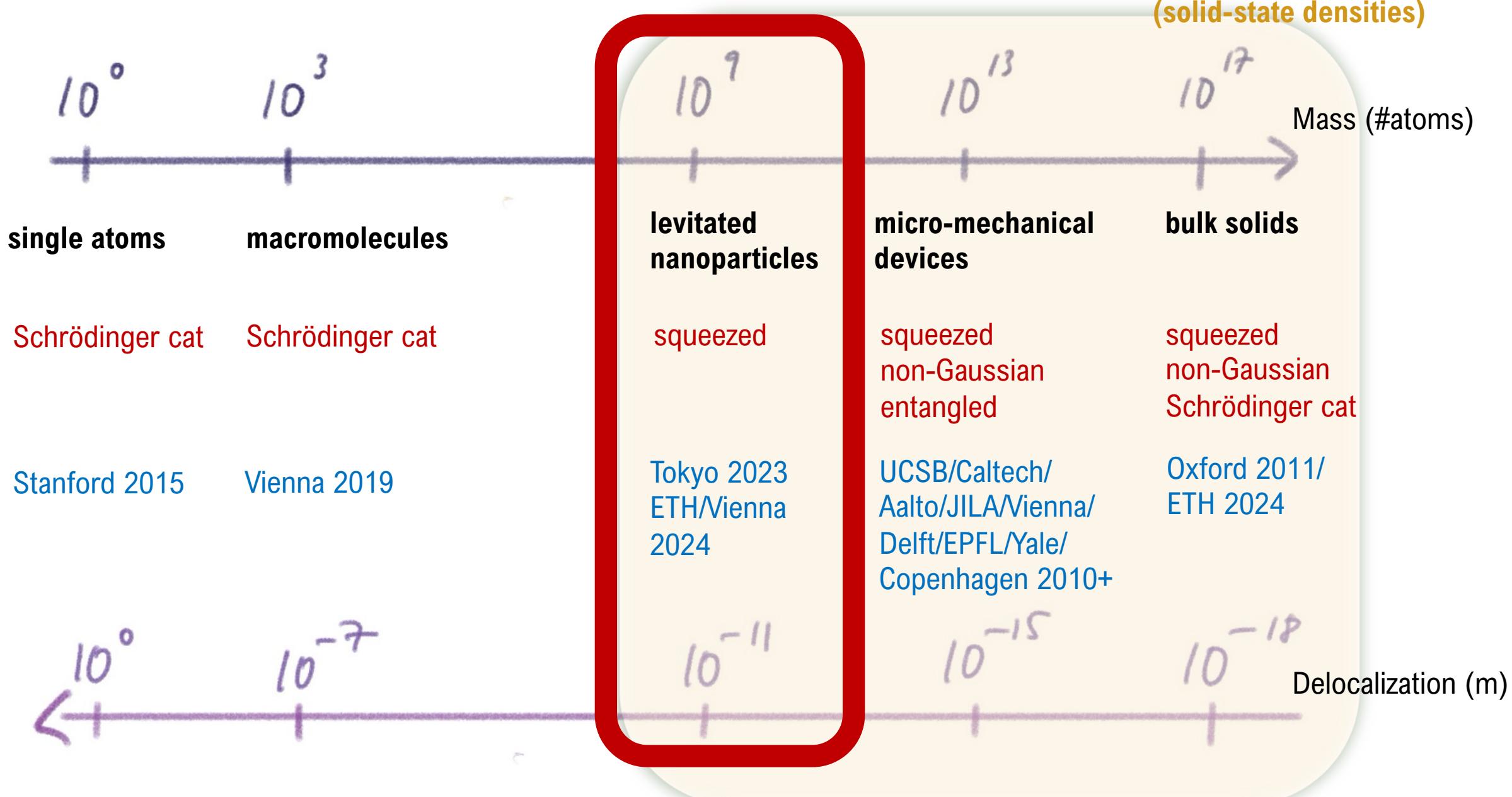
Levitated nanoparticles; 1e9 particles;  $M = 2e10$  a.m.u. =  $3e-17$  kg;  
ground state size  $\Delta x = 2e-12$ m; coherence time ms (in the trap; limited  
by photon recoil)

U. Delic et al., Science 367, 892–895 (2020)

$$(\mu \Delta x)^2 \tau \approx 10^{-20} \left[ \frac{\hbar}{G} @ d = 10 \mu\text{m} \right]$$

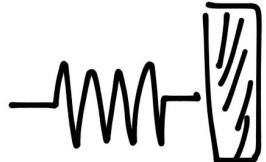


# Quantum Controlling LARGE MASSES...



# Quantum controlling levitated solid-state objects

Combining **LARGE MASSES** with **LONG COHERENCE TIMES** and **FULL MANIPULATION**



+



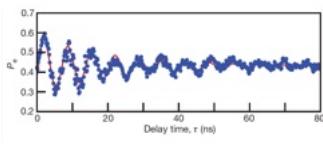
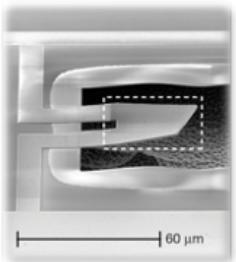
=



Solid-state mechanical quantum devices (clamped):

**$10^{10} - 10^{16}$  atoms**

Coherence time  
 $10^{-12} - 10^{-8}$  sec

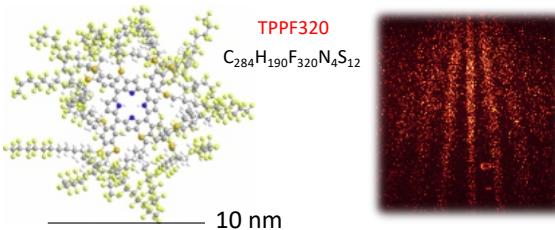


Nature 464, 697 (2010)

Matter-wave interferometry (free-fall):

**$10^0 - 10^4$  atoms**

Coherence time  
 **$10^{-3} - 10^0$  sec**



Nature Nanotech. 7, 297 (2012)

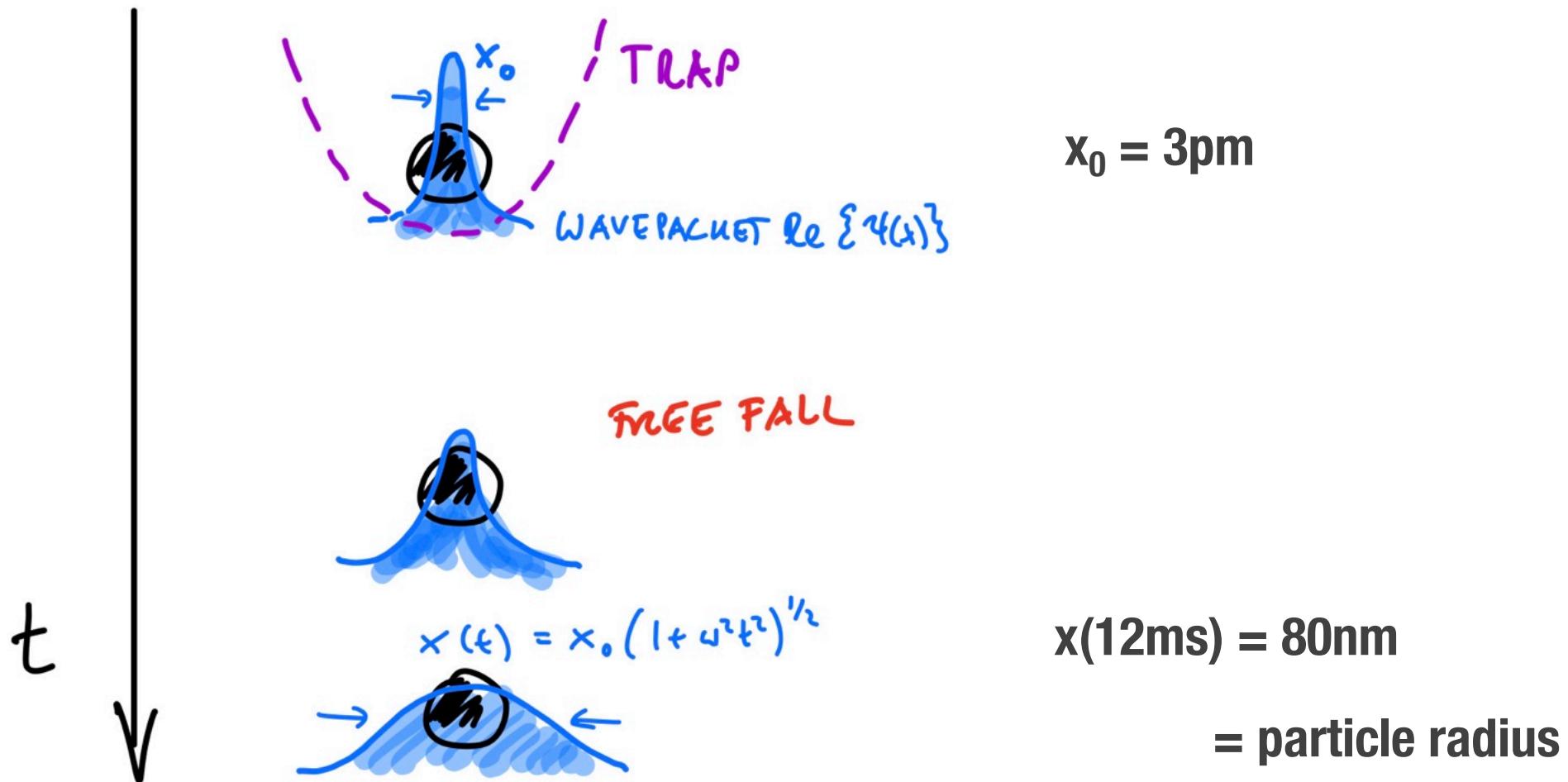
## Levitated (opto-)mechanics

- Quantum control of a trapped solid state object  $>> 10^{10}$  atoms
- Long coherence times (up to seconds)
- Exceptional force sensitivity
- Externally engineerable (and controllable) arbitrary potential landscape

recent review:

Gonzalez-Ballester et al.,  
Science 374, 168 (2021)

# Towards „large“ quantum states?



Additional speedup by coherent inflation (inverted potential):

Romero-Isart, NJP 19, 123029 (2017)  
Weiss et al., PRL 127, 023601 (2021)

# Optically levitating nanoparticles

OPTICAL LEVITATION:

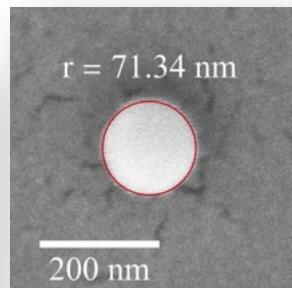
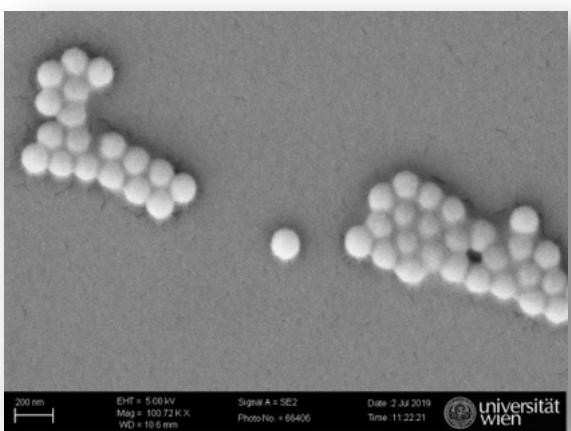
$$\hat{H} \propto d \cdot \underline{E} = \lambda \cdot E^2$$

$\lambda$ : Re{Polarizability}

$E$ : optical trapping field

↳ beam intensity

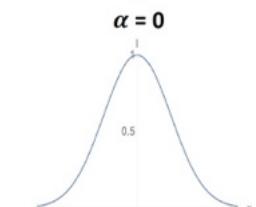
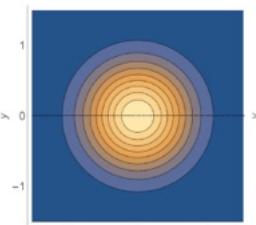
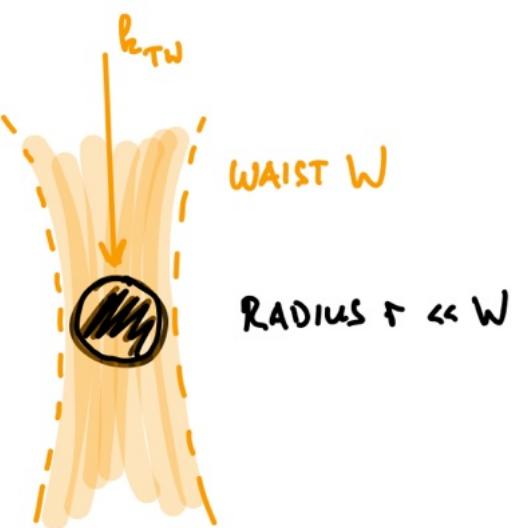
$$\rightarrow \text{GRADIENT FORCE } F \propto (\nabla E^2) \cdot \lambda$$



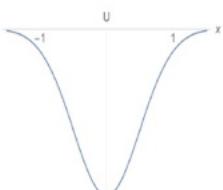
Pioneering work by Ashkin:

A. Ashkin, PRL 24, 156 (1970).

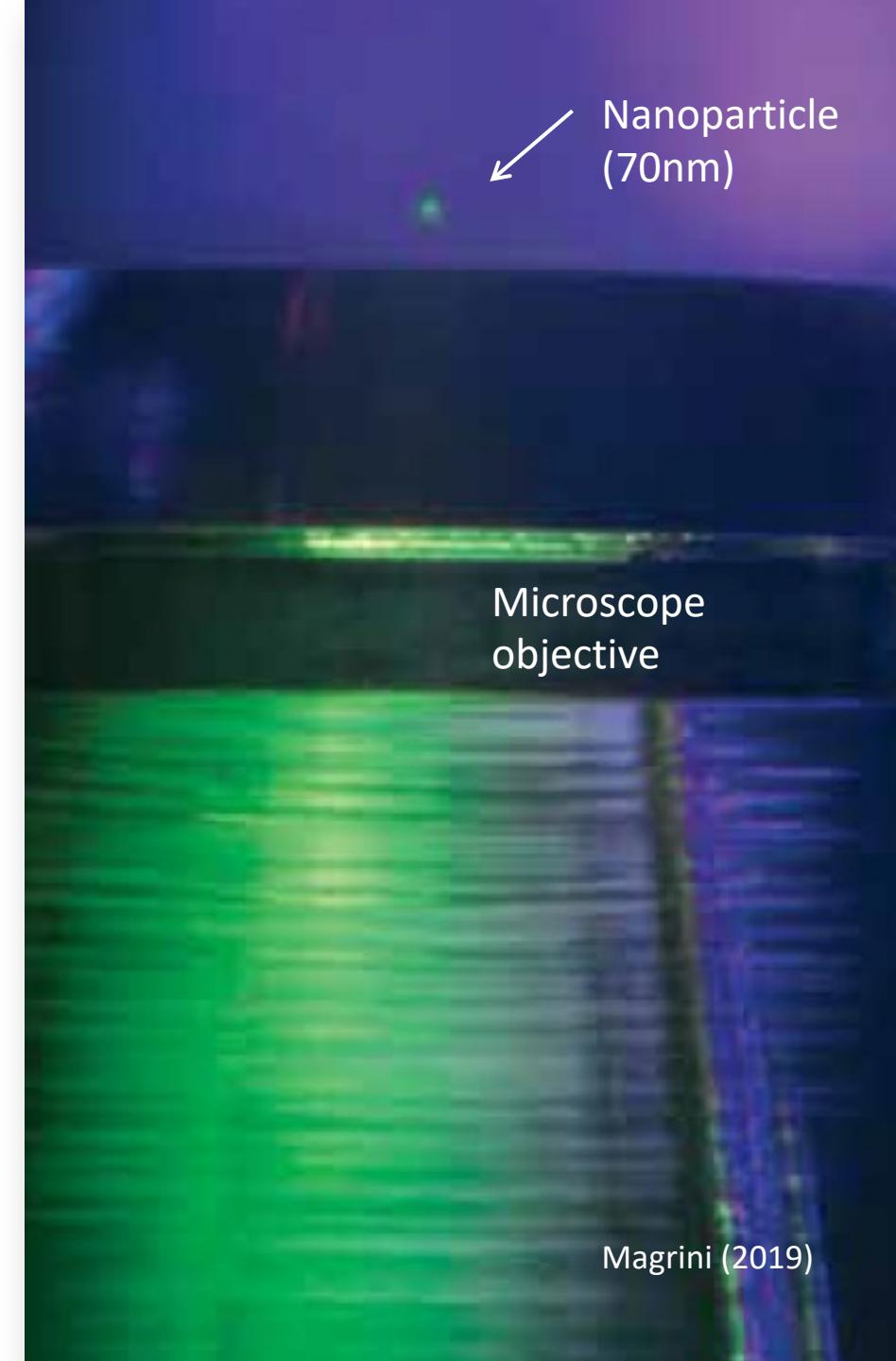
A. Ashkin, J. M. Dziedzic, APL 28, 333 (1976).



intensity



potential



Nanoparticle  
(70nm)

Magrini (2019)

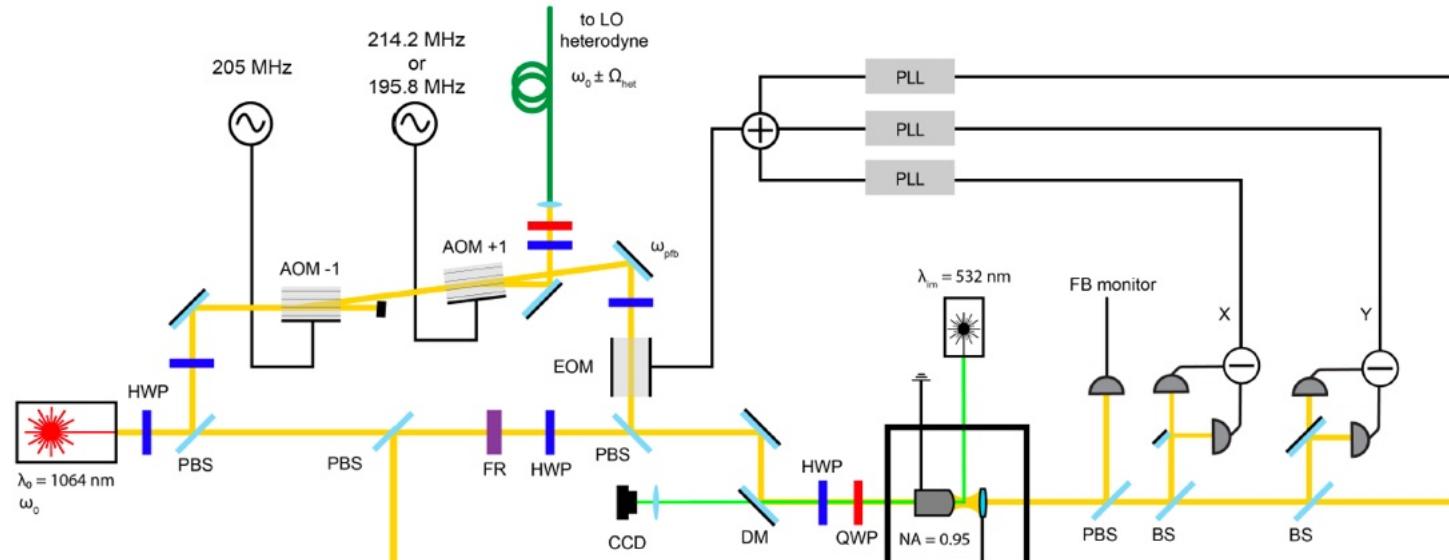
# Keeping a particle in high vacuum: feedback control

Magrini et al., Nature 595, 373 (2021)

see also

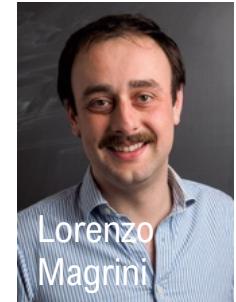
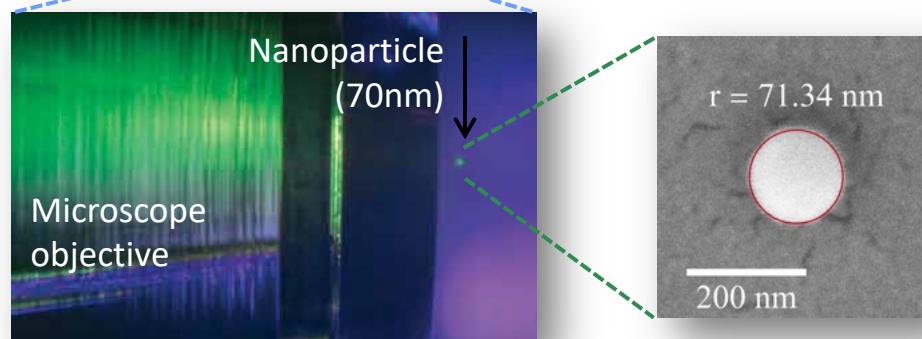
F. Tebbenjohanns et al., PRL 124, 013603 (2020)

F. Teffenjohanns et al., Nature 595, 378 (2021)

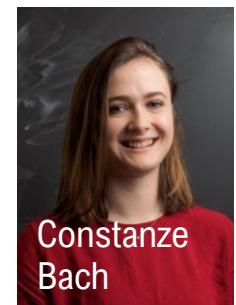


3d parametric feedback  
stabilizes the particle  
@ 9e-9 mbar

see also Gieseler et al., Phys.  
Rev. Lett. 109, 103603 (2012)



Lorenzo  
Magrini



Constanze  
Bach

Lorenzo Magrini, Constanze Bach  
P. Rosenzweig, A. Deutschmann, A. Kugi (TU Wien)

# Trapping, transport and handover with a photonic crystal hollow core fiber

- **particle trapping and transport through a 1064nm optical conveyor belt inside a photonic crystal hollow core fiber**
- **handover to a 1550nm standing wave trap @ < 1e-10 mbar**



Stefan Lindner



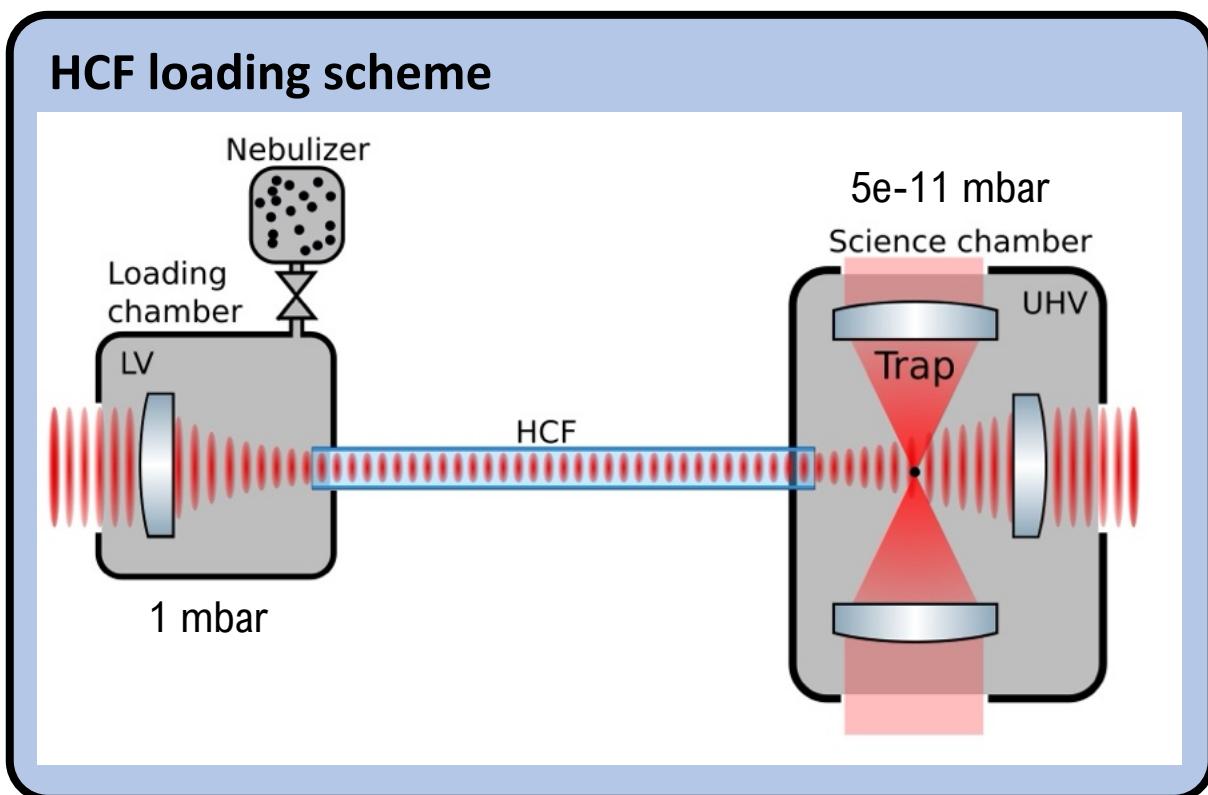
Yaakov Fein



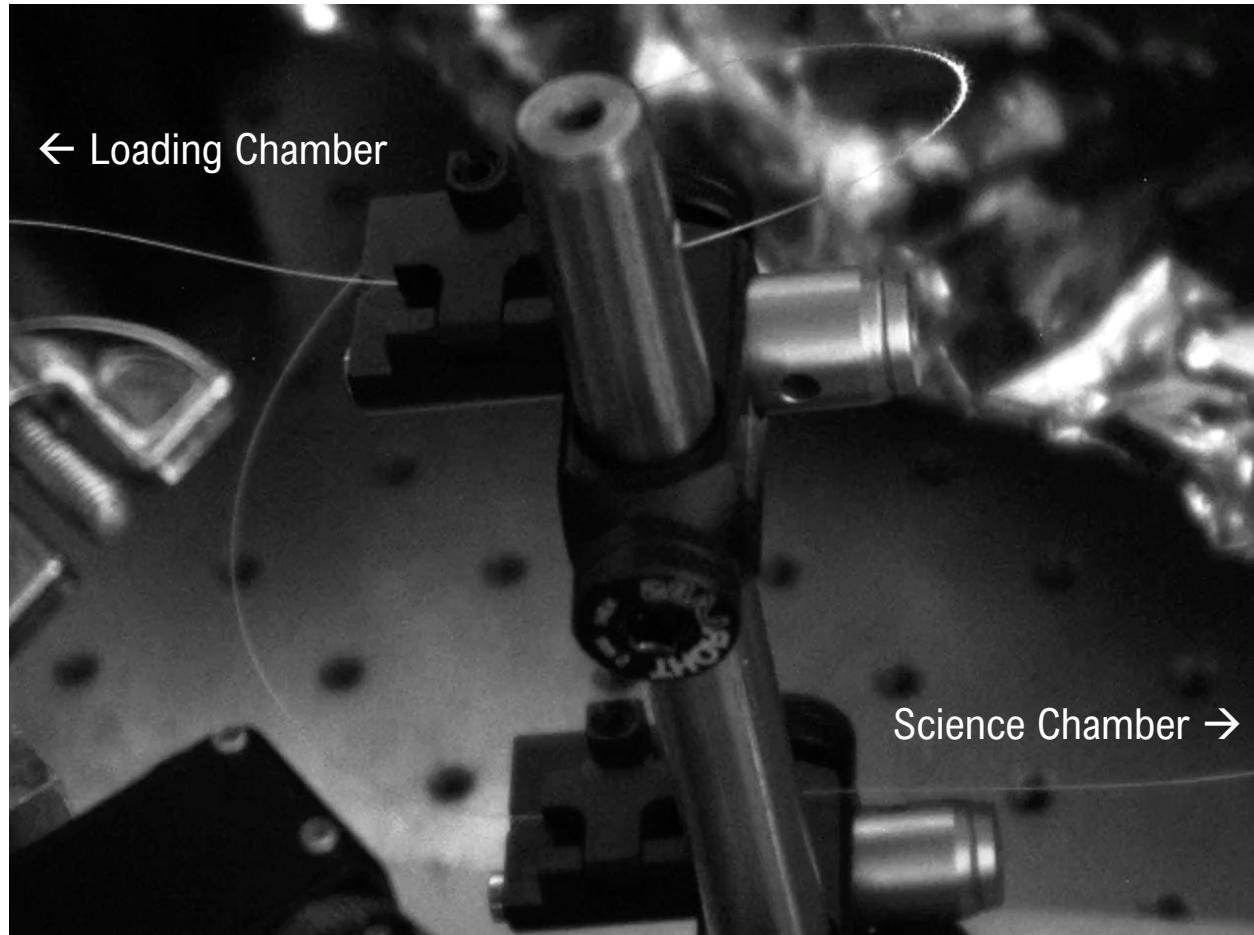
Jakob Rieser



Nikolai Kiesel



in preparation; see also Grass et al., APL 108, 221103 (2016)



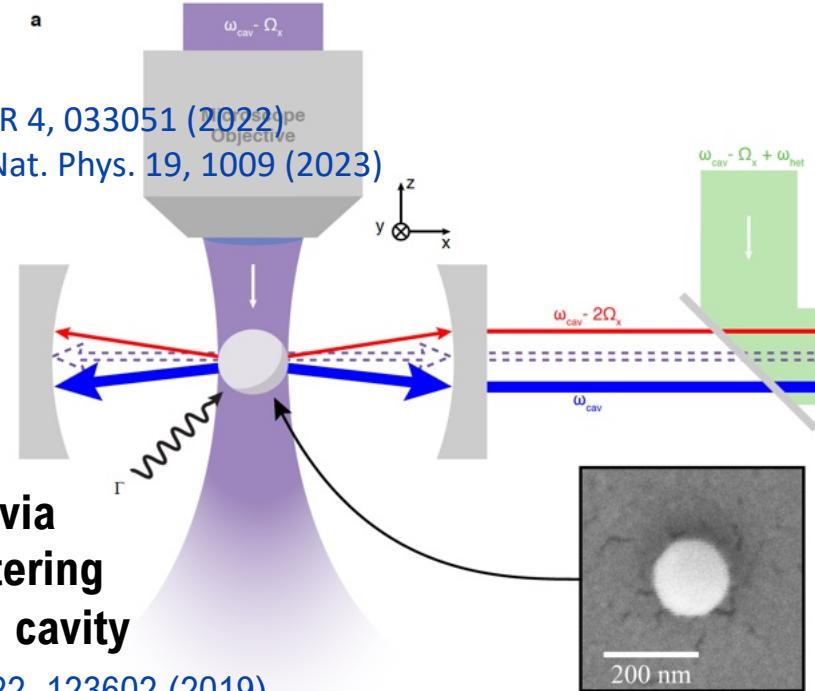
# Motional Quantum Ground State of a Levitated Nanoparticle

Delić et al., Science 367, 892 (2020)

Uros Delic

2d:

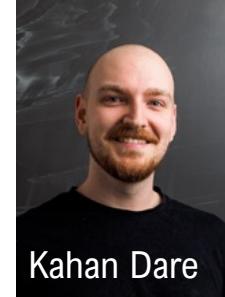
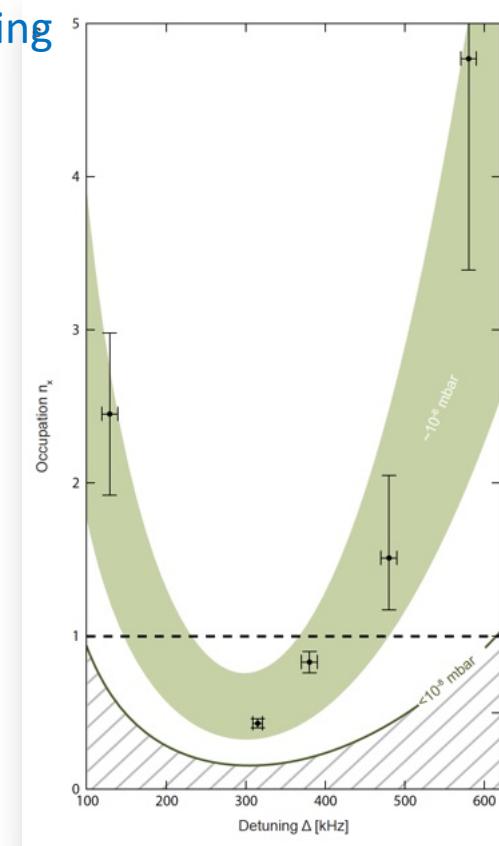
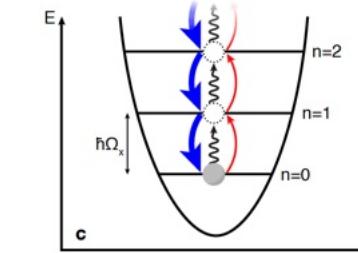
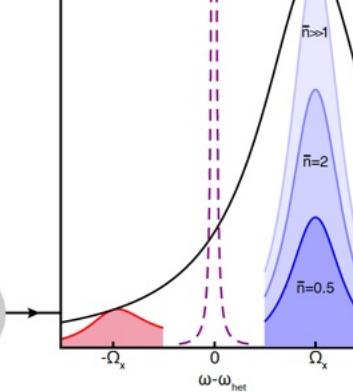
Ranfagni et al., PRR 4, 033051 (2022)  
Piotrowski et al., Nat. Phys. 19, 1009 (2023)



Laser cooling via  
coherent scattering  
into an optical cavity

Delic et al., PRL 122, 123602 (2019)  
Windey et al., PRL 122, 123601 (2019)

Stokes scattering      anti-Stokes scattering



Kahan Dare



Manuel Reisenbauer



Vladan Vuletic  
@ MIT

$$\begin{aligned}\omega_x &\approx 2\pi \times 305 \text{ kHz} \\ \omega_z &\approx 2\pi \times 80 \text{ kHz} \\ \omega_y &\approx 2\pi \times 275 \text{ kHz} \\ \kappa &= 2\pi \times 193 \text{ kHz} \\ p &= 1 \text{e-6 mbar}, T = 300 \text{ K}\end{aligned}$$

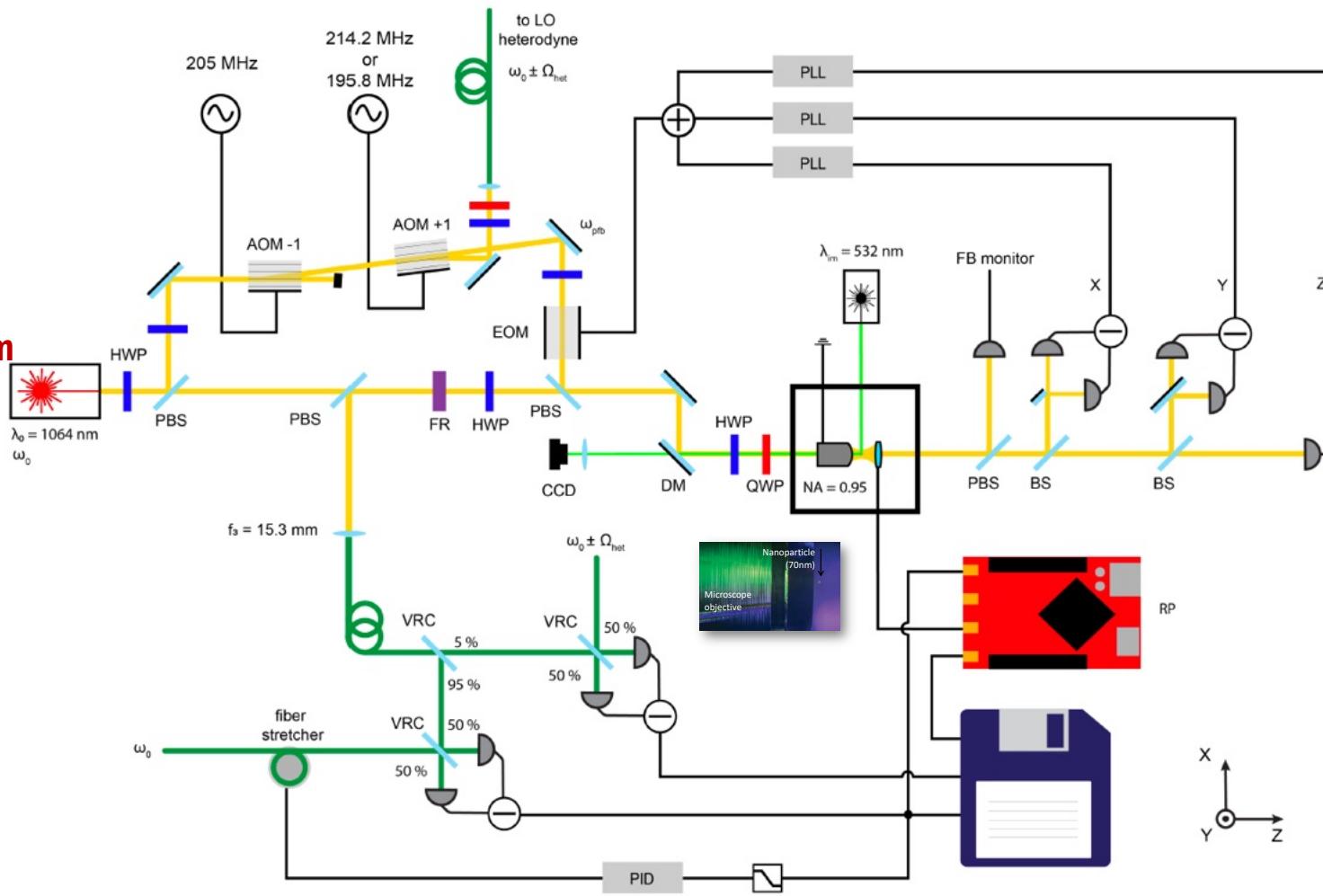
$n_x < 0.5$  (ground state probability  $> 2/3$ )  
Center-of-mass  $T_c = 12 \mu\text{K}$ ; environment  $T_e > 300 \text{ K}$   
 $g_x = 2\pi \times 71 \text{ kHz}$ , Cooperativity  $C = 5$

based on:

Hechenblaikner et al., PRA 58, 3030 (1998)  
Vuletic & Chu, PRL 84, 3787 (2000)  
Leibrandt et al., PRL 103, 103001 (2009)  
Hosseini et al., PRL 118, 183601 (2017)

# Quantum Kalman Control: ground-state cooling

- **Confocal backplane imaging** allows quantum limited position measurement @  $1.7 \times$  Heisenberg limit ( $1e-14$  m/sqrt{Hz})
  - **Kalman filtering** allows real-time tracking of the quantum trajectory @  $1.3 \times$  zero-point motion
  - **Optimal feedback (LQR)** allows to stabilize particle motion in its **quantum ground state ( $\langle n \rangle = 0.5$ )** in a room temperature environment

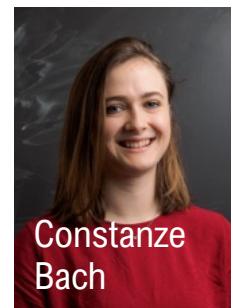


*Magrini et al., Nature 595, 373 (2021)*  
see also

F. Tebbenjohanns et al., PRL 124, 013603 (2020)  
F. Teffenjohanns et al., Nature 595, 378 (2021)



Lorenzo  
Magrini



# Constanze Bach



Andreas Kugi  
@ TU Wien

related:

Wieczorek et al., PRL 114, 223601 (2015)  
 Rossi et al., PRL 123, 163601 (2019)

Lorenzo Magrini, Constanze Bach, Nikolai Kiesel  
P. Rosenzweig, A. Deutschmann, A. Kugi (TU Wien)

*Image of a 150nm glass sphere in its quantum ground state of motion at a room temperature environment*

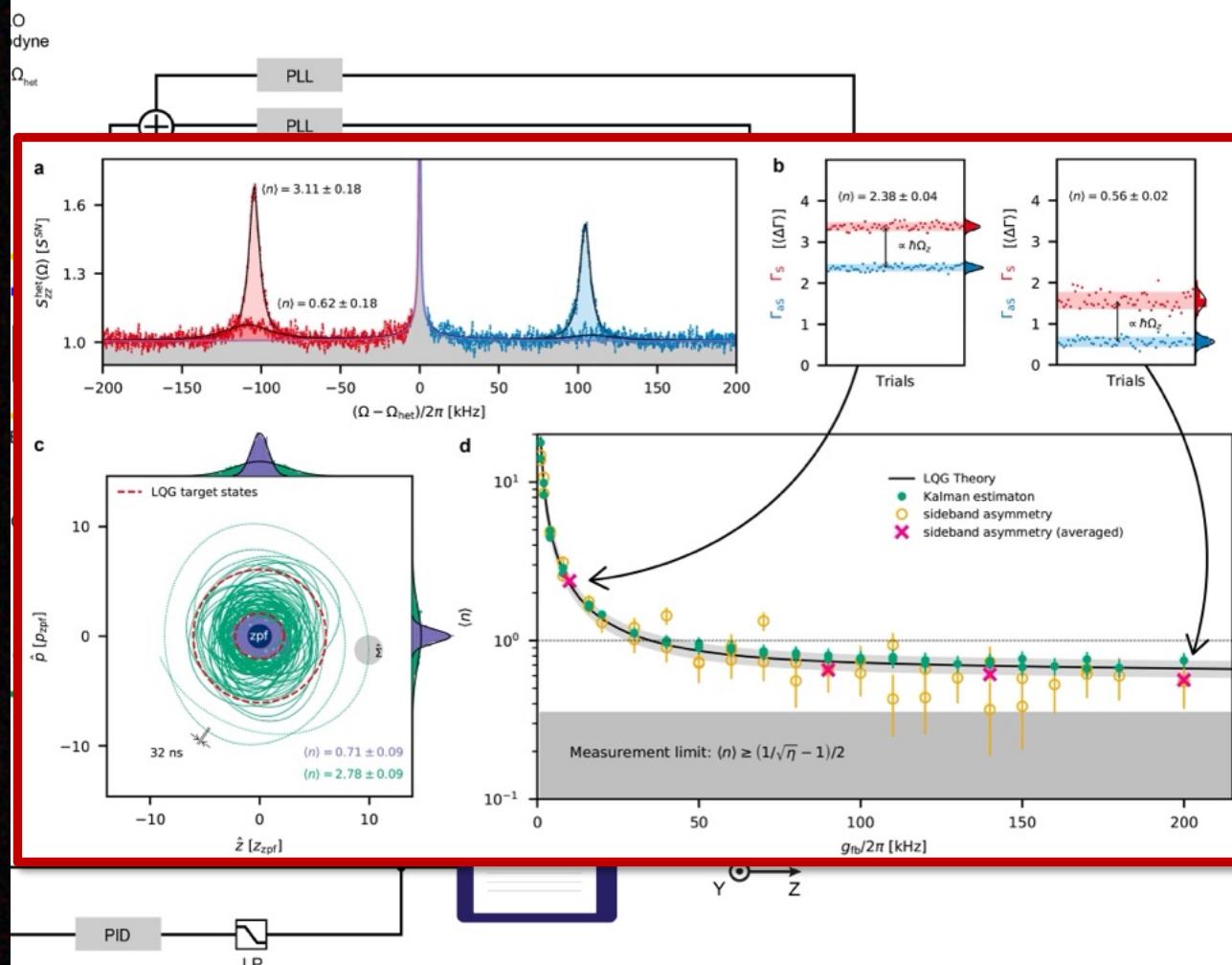
# ground-state cooling

Magrini et al., Nature 595, 373 (2021)

see also

F. Tebbenjohanns et al., PRL 124, 013603 (2020)

F. Tebbenjohanns et al., Nature 595, 378 (2021)



Lorenzo  
Magrini



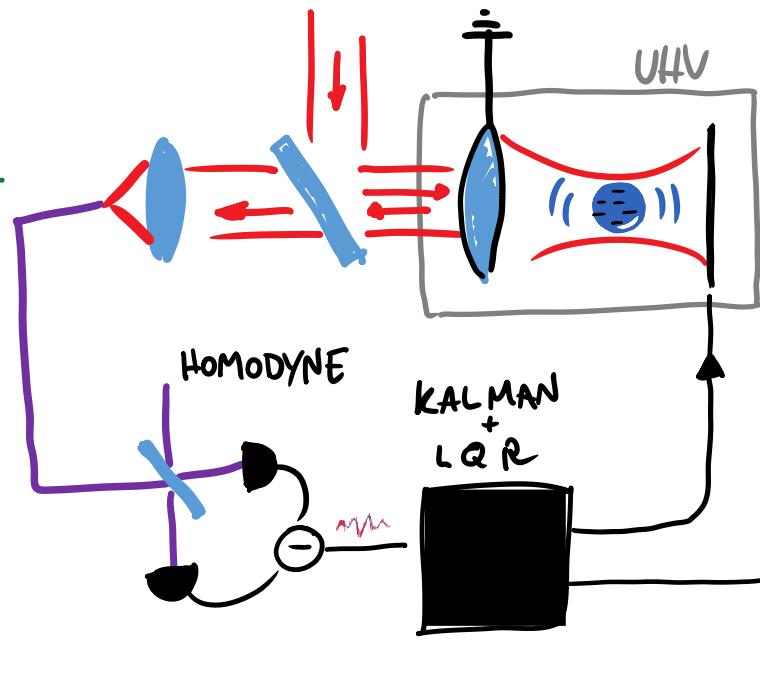
Constanze  
Bach



Andreas Kugi  
@ TU Wien

Lorenzo Magrini, Constanze Bach, Nikolai Kiesel  
P. Rosenzweig, A. Deutschmann, A. Kugi (TU Wien)

# Real-time state estimation: mechanical sensing of weak transient forces

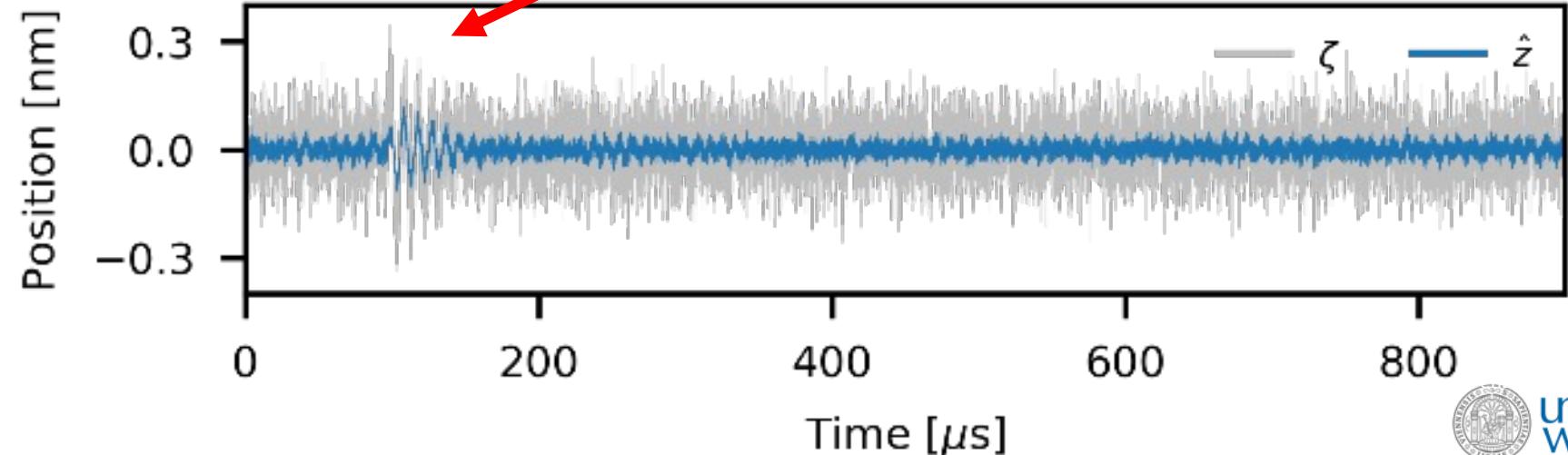


see e.g. David Moore group (Yale):  
*Mechanical detection of nuclear decays*, arXiv:2402.13257  
*Searching for new physics using optically levitated sensors*, QST 6, 014008 (2021)

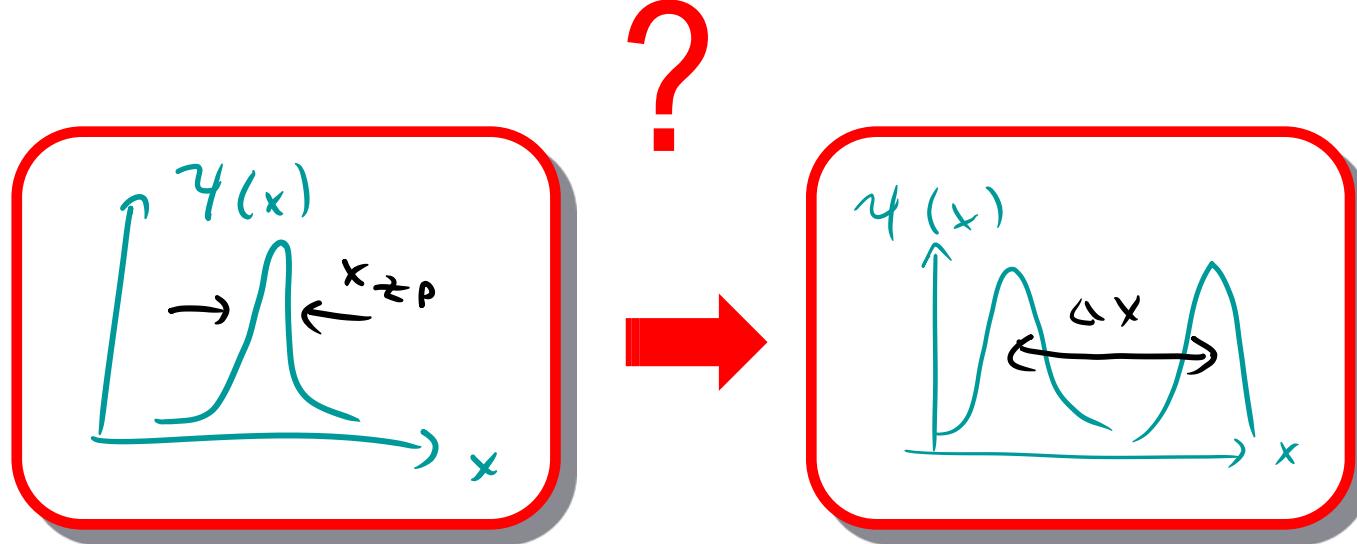
Measuring the kick of a single gas molecule?

$$\Delta p \sim 7p_{\text{zpf}} \sim 7 \times 10^{-23} \text{ kg m s}^{-1}$$

(ca. 100 keV/c)



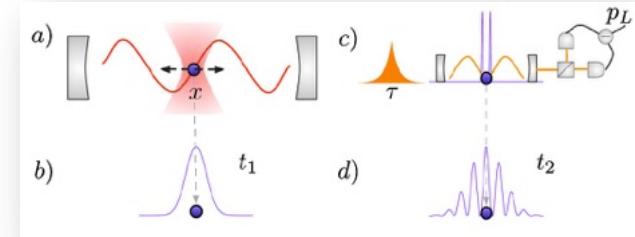
# Towards „large“ quantum superposition states?



**How to prepare “macroscopic superpositions”?**

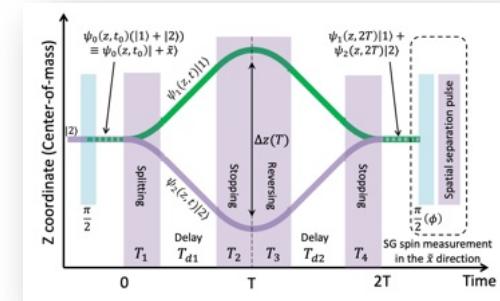
funded by ERC Synergy Grant, with  
Oriol Romero-Isart (Innsbruck)  
Lukas Novotny (ETH)  
Romain Quidant (ETH)

free-fall + quantum measurement



Romero-Isart et al., PRL 107, 020405 (2011)  
Pinot et al., arxiv 1603.01553 (2016)

OR  
internal degrees of freedom

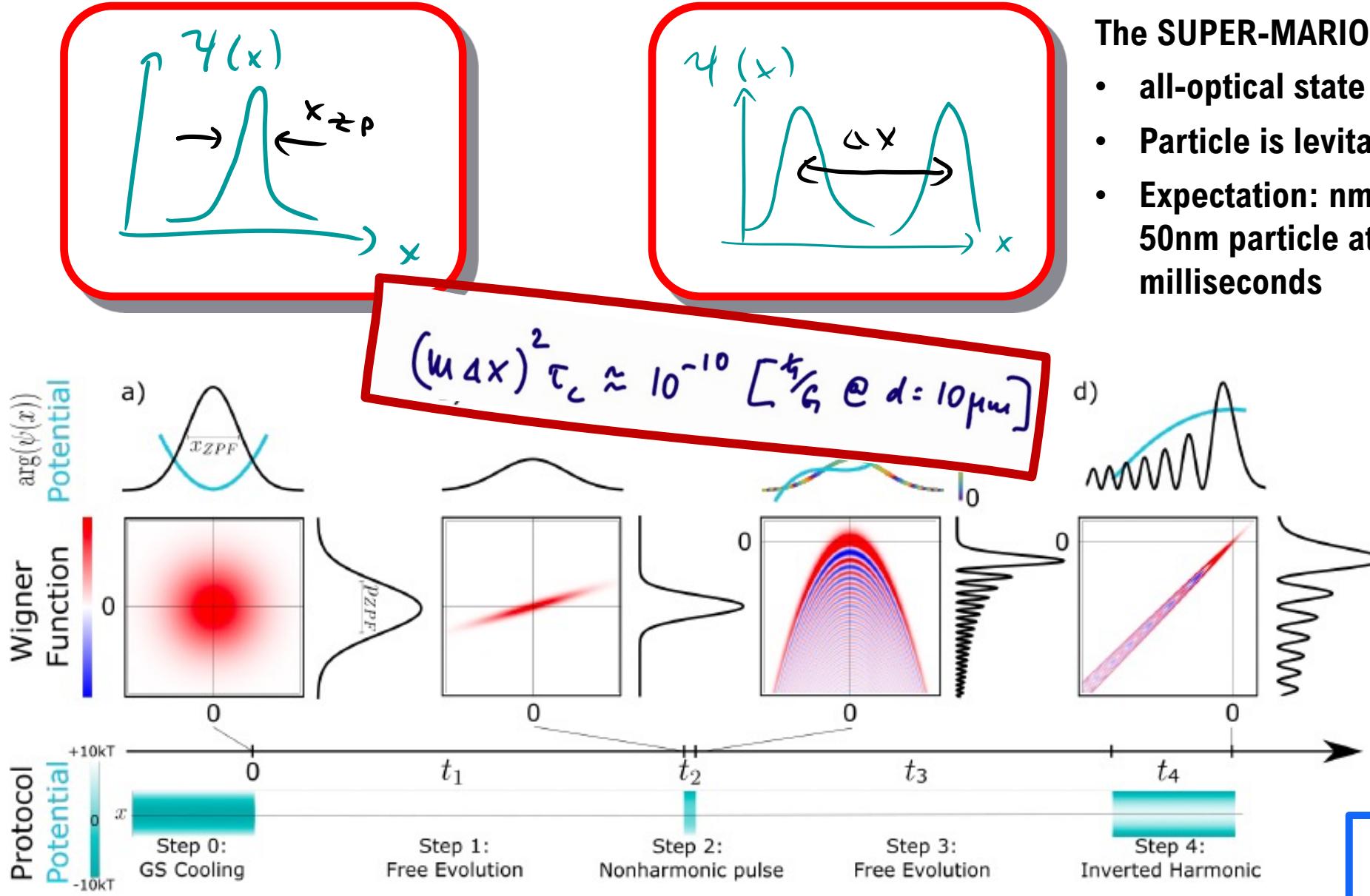


Folman et al., arxiv 2011.10928, 2105.01094

OR  
in-trap coherent dynamics

# Towards „large“ quantum superposition states?

Neumeier et al., arXiv:2207.12539 (PNAS 2024)  
related: Roda-Llordes et al., PRL 132, 023601 (2024)



## The SUPER-MARIO protocol:

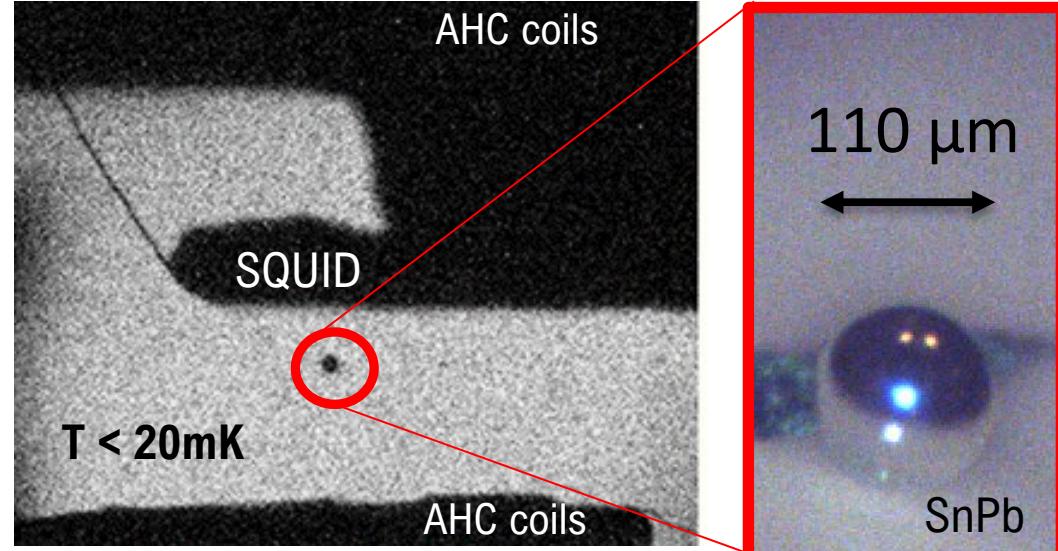
- all-optical state control via potential modulation
- Particle is levitated all the time (no free-fall)
- Expectation: nm-sized quantum interference of a 50nm particle at 300K and UHV within milliseconds



$$V(x) \propto I(x)$$

SHORT PULSE  $I(x)$ :  $\psi(x) \rightarrow \psi(x) \exp\left\{-\frac{i}{\hbar} V(x) t\right\}$

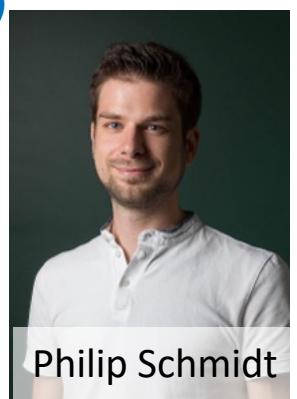
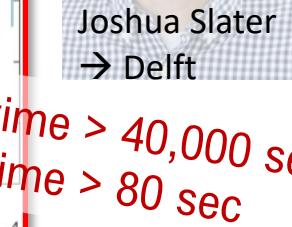
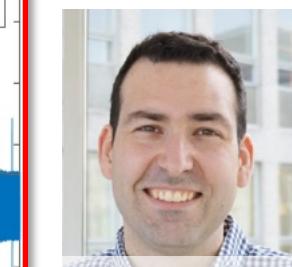
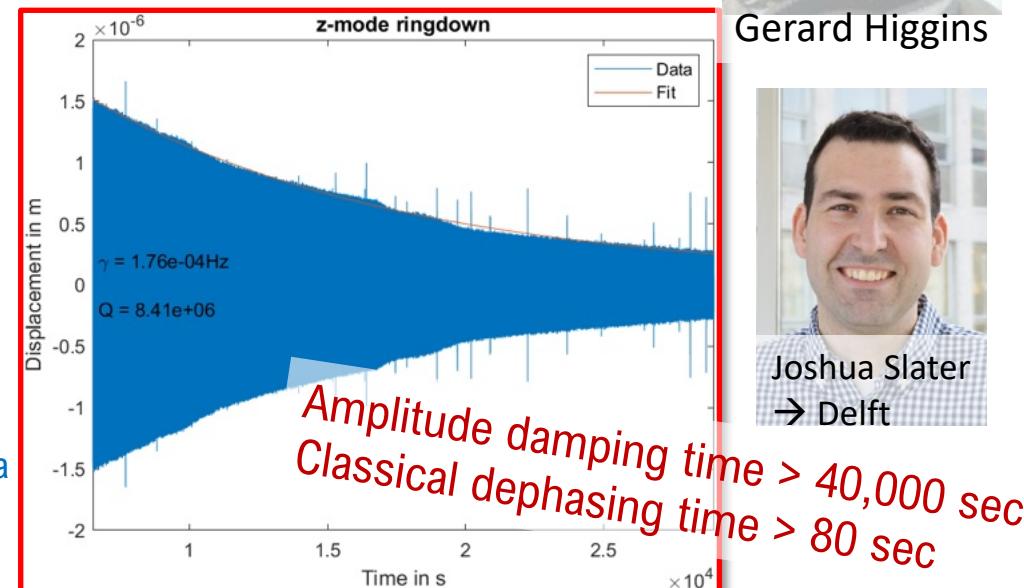
# Towards larger masses: superconducting levitation



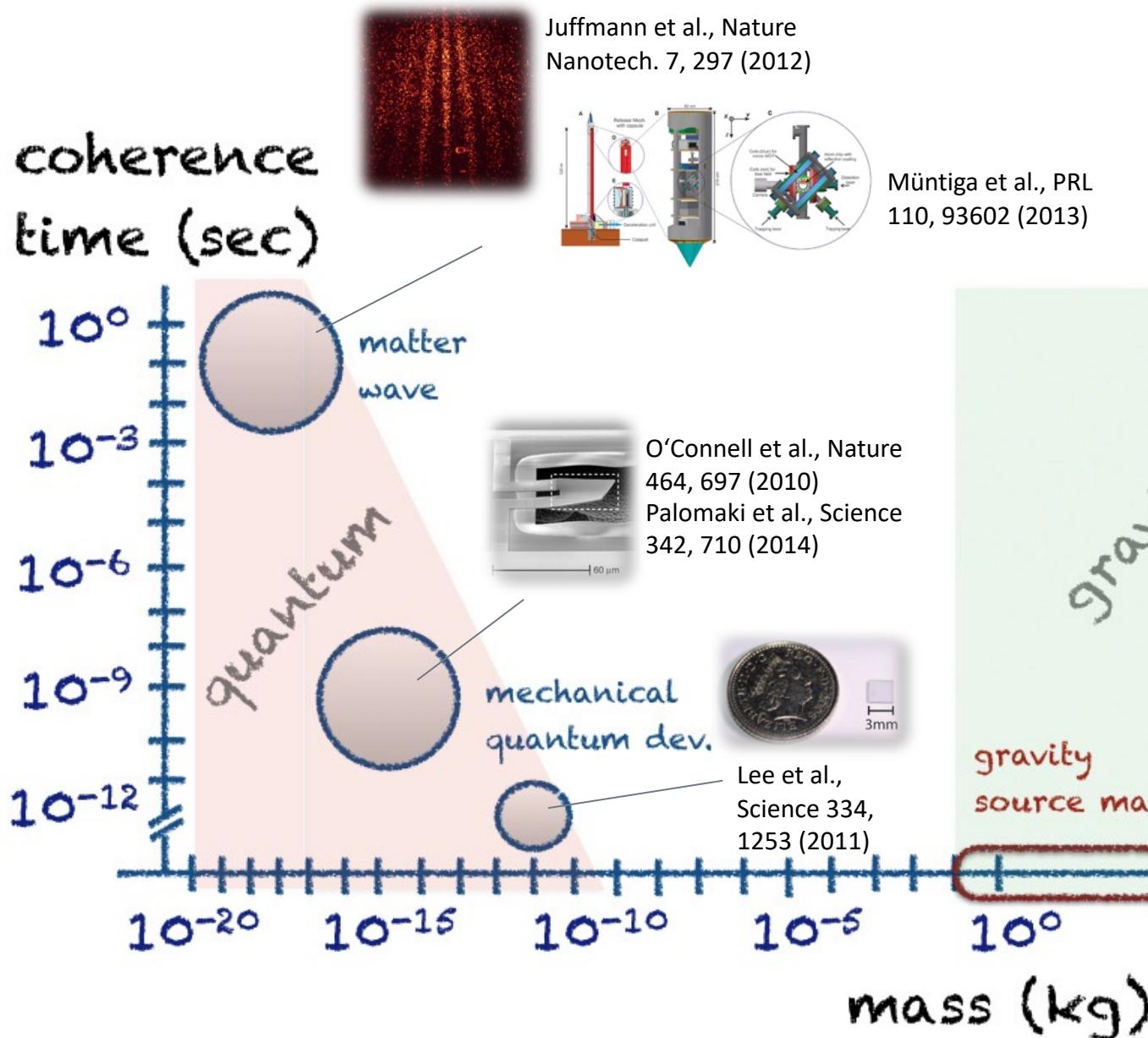
- stable levitation of a  $5.6\mu\text{g}$  superconducting SnPb sphere at  $15\text{mK}$  ( $Q > 1\text{e}7$  at  $200\text{Hz}$  )
- DC-SQUID readout of particle motion allows for 3D magnetic feedback
- cryogenic vibration isolation attenuates seismic noise by seven orders of magnitude

Oosterkamp & Hensen group (Leiden) / Wieczorek group (Chalmers)

- B. van Waarde, The lead zeppelin : a force sensor without a handle, Ph.D. thesis, Leiden University (2016)
- Gutierrez Latorre et al., PR Applied 19, 054047 (2024)



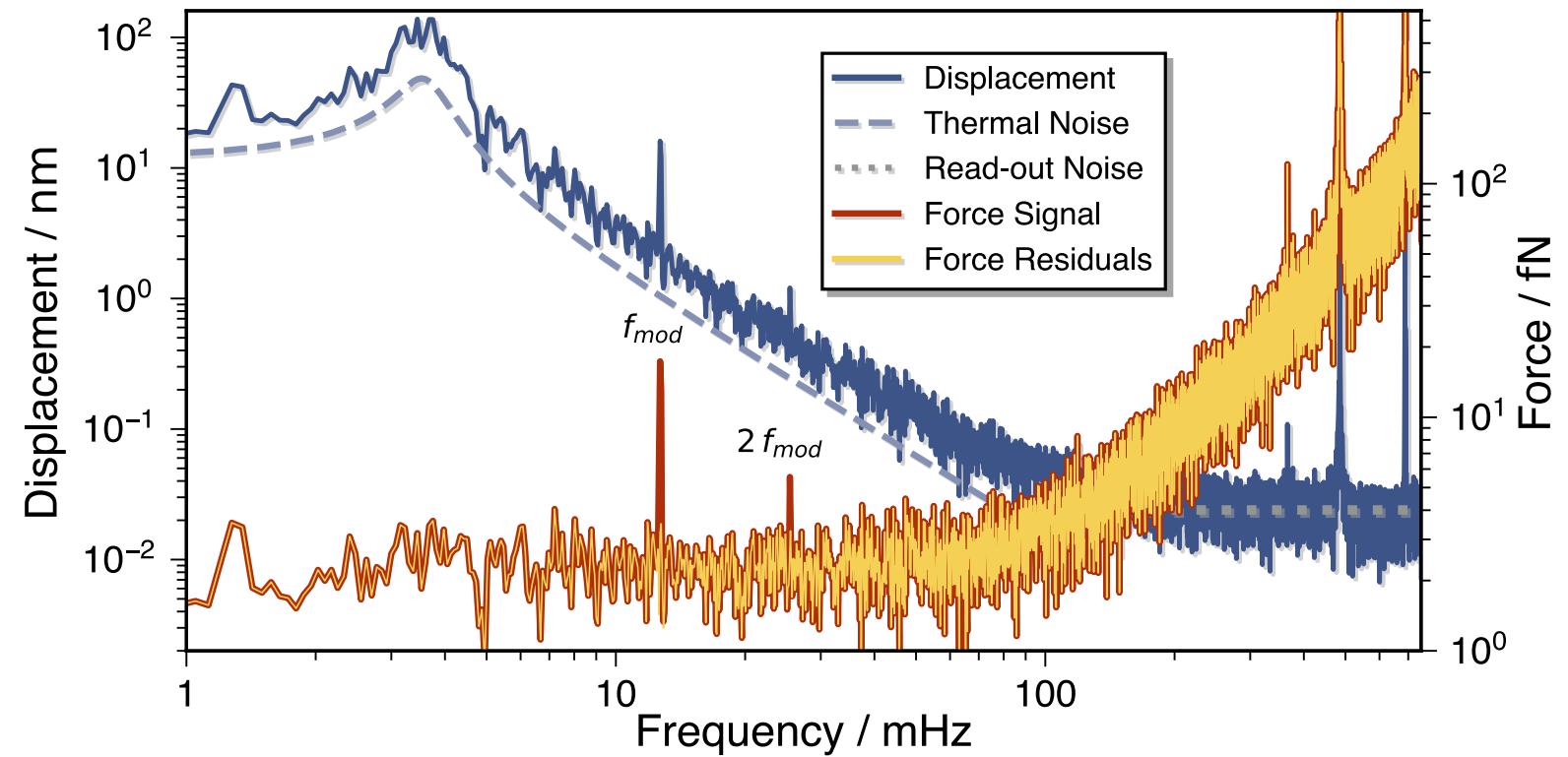
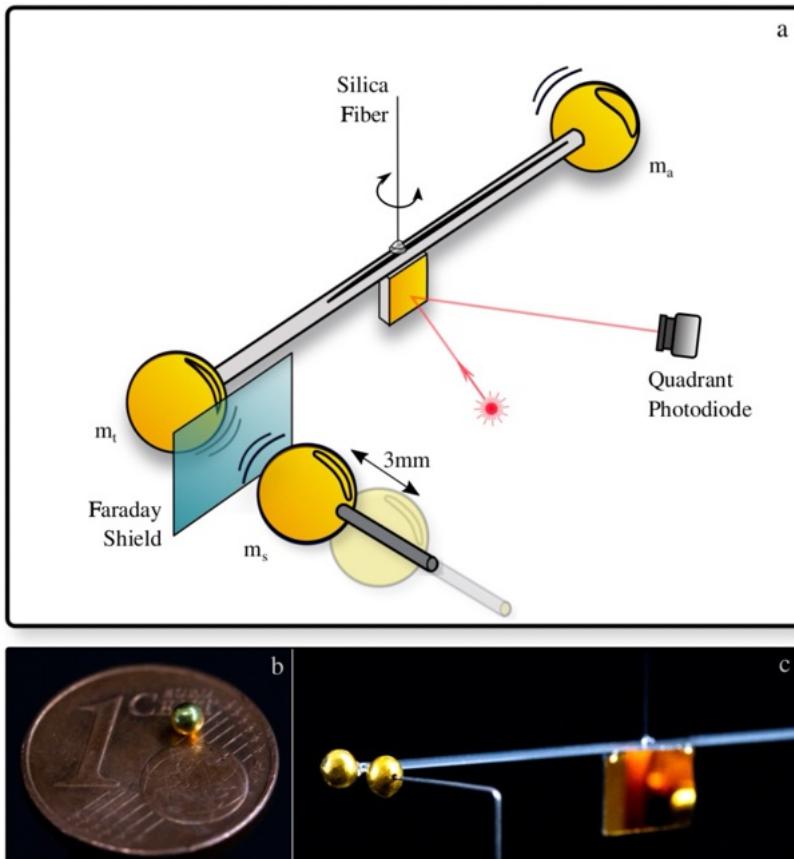
# Reality check: quantum systems as gravitational source masses?



- How small can we make a source mass?
- How massive can we make a quantum system?

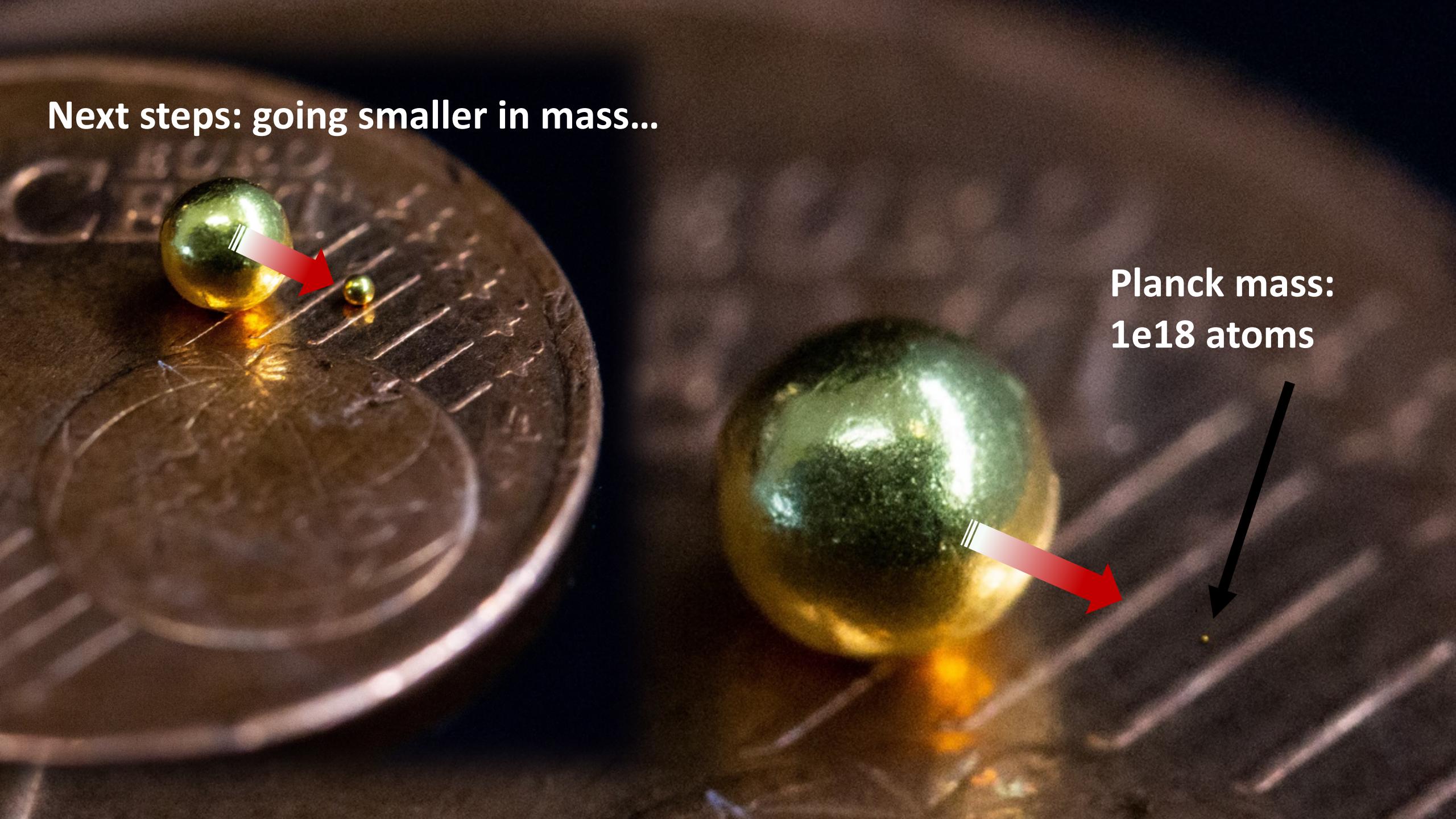


# Silent Christmas Nights...



- We observe a linear and quadratic acceleration modulation (at  $f_{mod}$  and  $2f_{mod}$ ) produced from a **90mg source mass**
- We resolve an **acceleration modulation of  $3e-10 \text{ m/s}^2$**  with an accuracy of 10% and a **precision of  $1\% (3e-12 \text{ m/s}^2)$**
- The observed coupling deviates from the CODATA value for Newton's constant by 9%, which is covered in the known systematic uncertainties of our experiment (i.e. interaction is >90% gravitational)

Next steps: going smaller in mass...



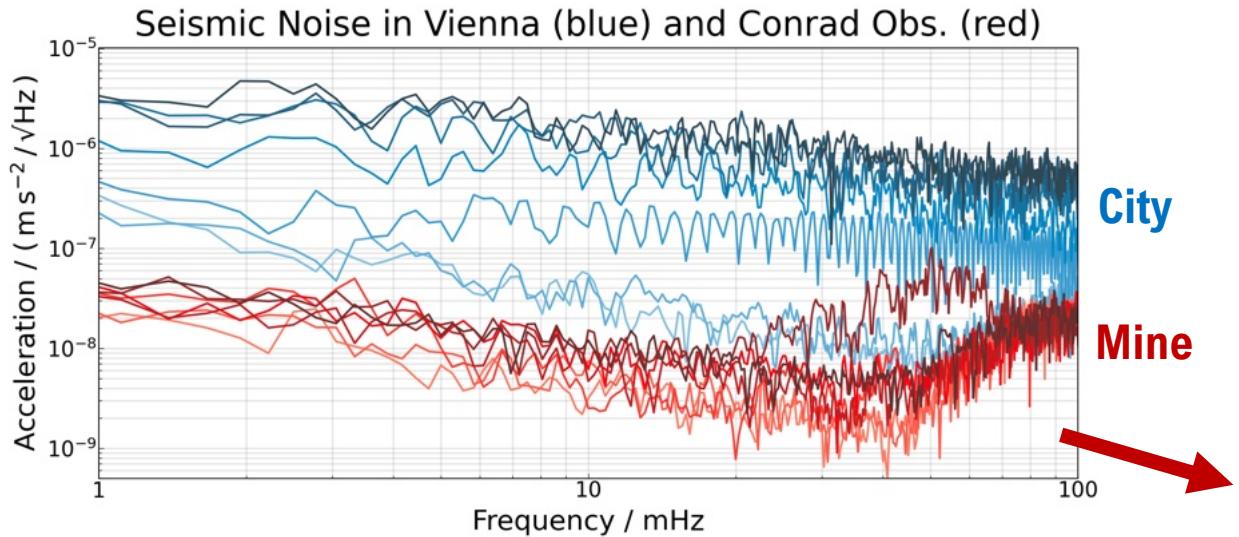
Planck mass:  
1e18 atoms

... by going underground



# Improved noise performance...

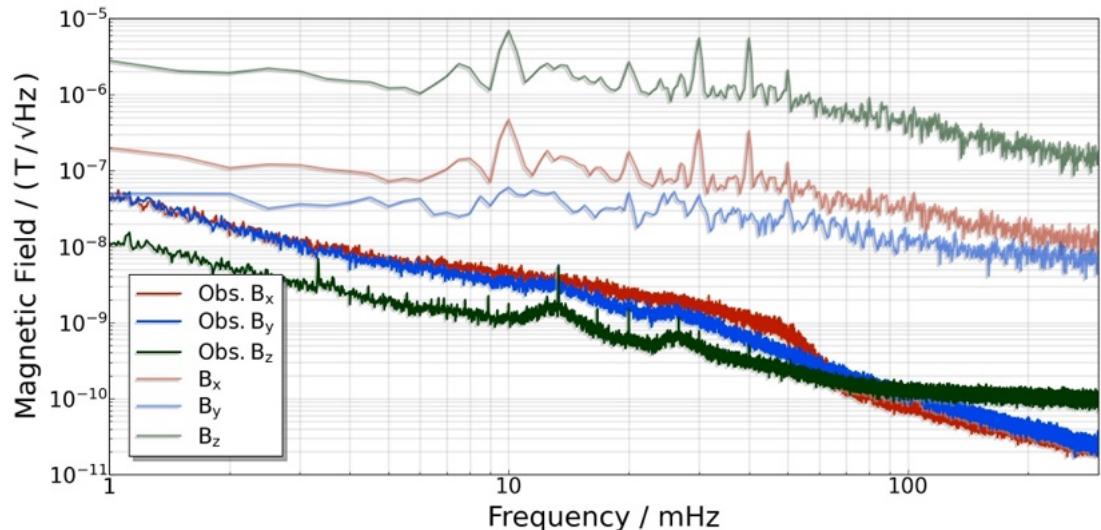
## Seismic



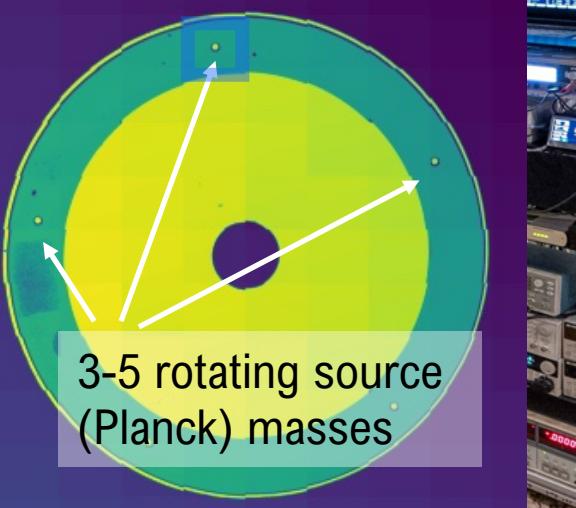
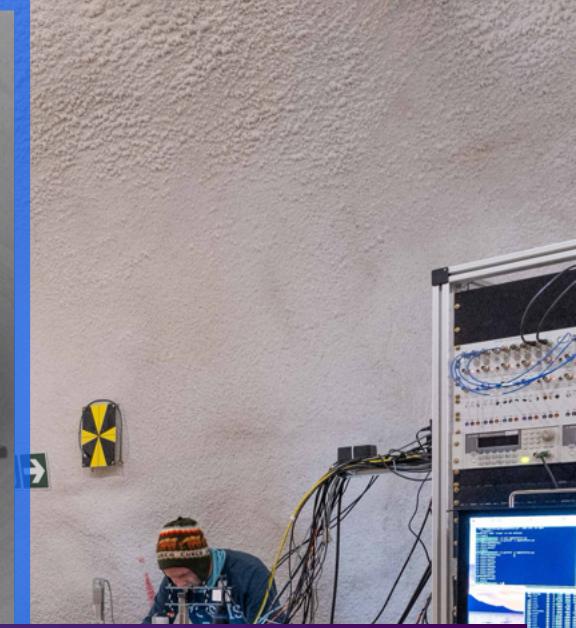
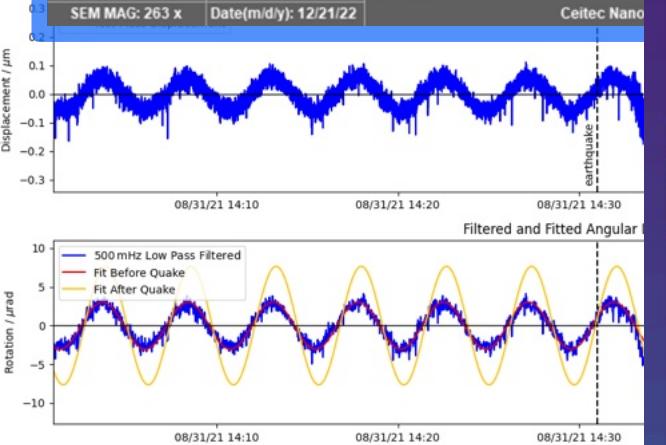
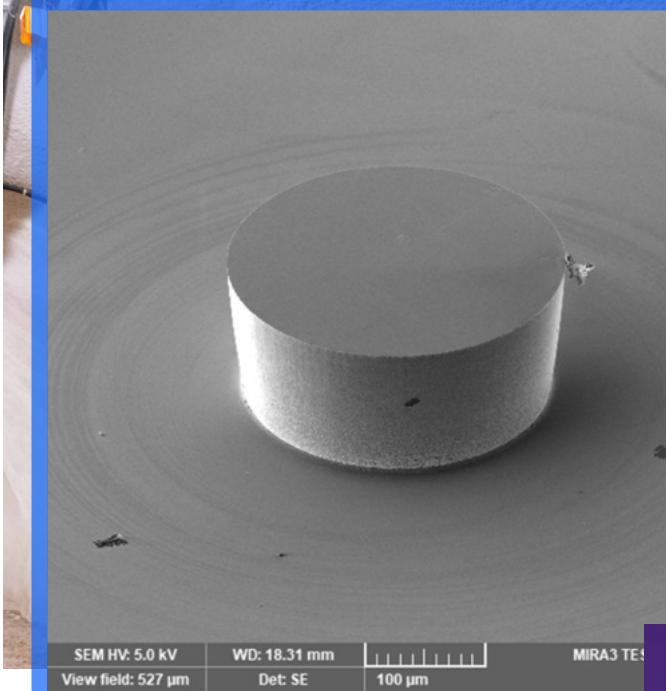
City  
Mine



## Magnetic

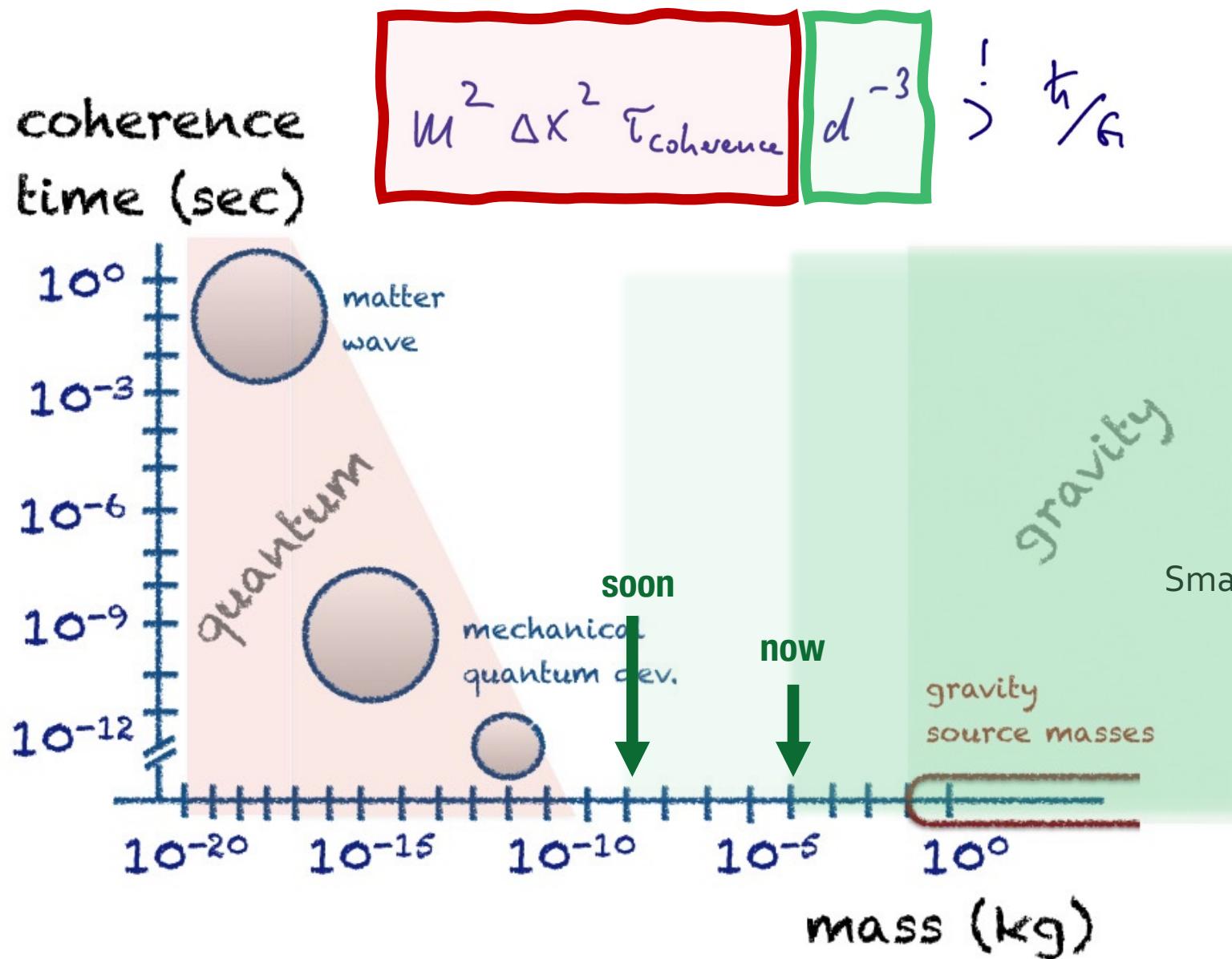


City  
Mine



3-5 rotating source  
(Planck) masses

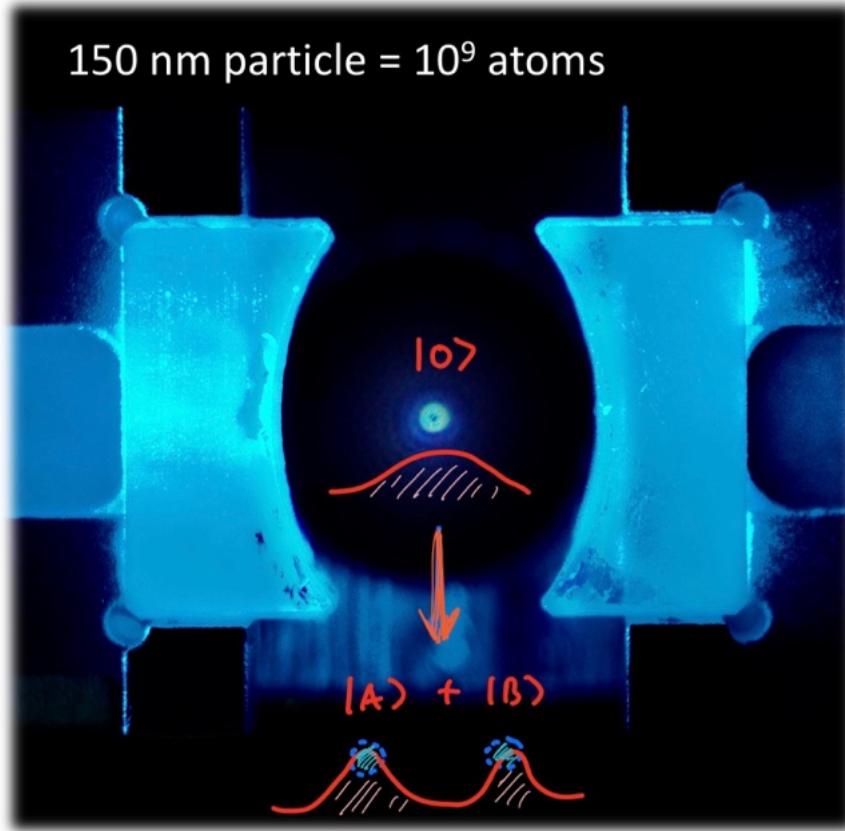
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- How massive can we make a quantum system?

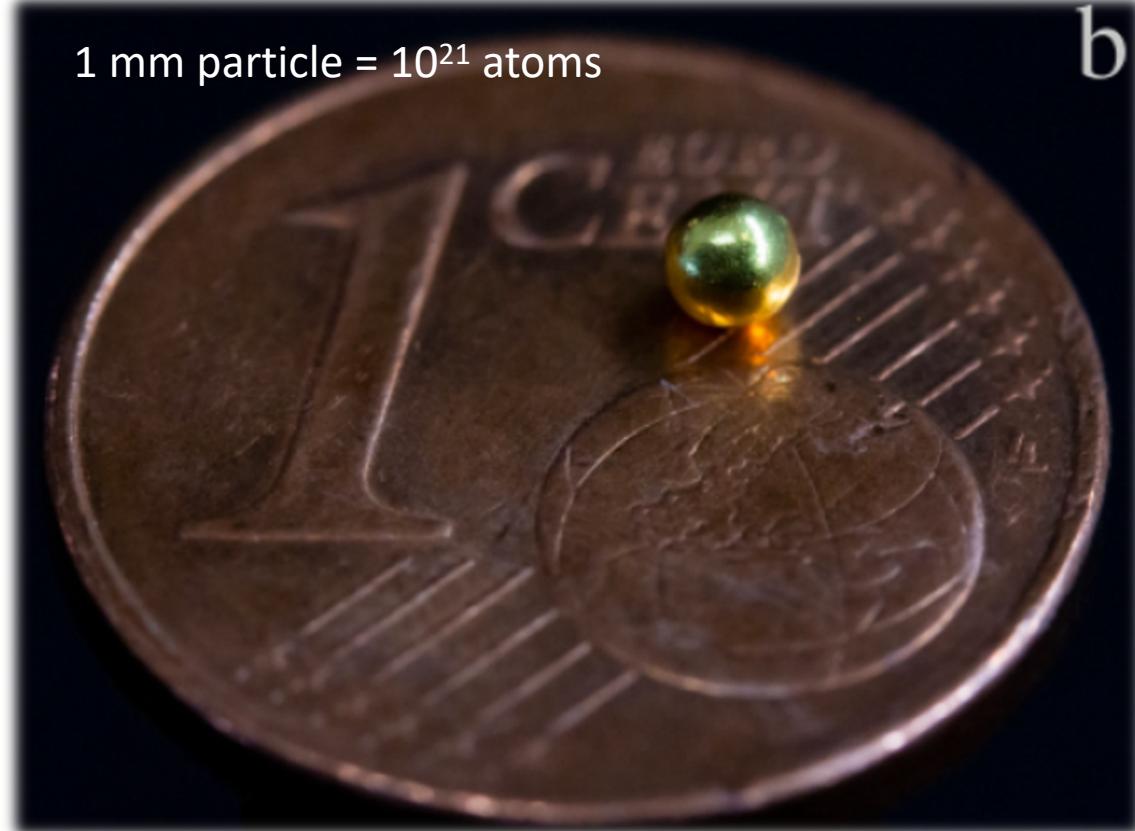
# Summary

- Levitated quantum control in the regime of large mass and long coherence times
  - Bottom-Up: Quantum regime of nanoparticles
  - Top-Down: Gravitational coupling of mm-sized particles
- How small can we make a source mass?
  - How massive can we make a quantum system?



Largest quantum mass in our lab:  
Quantum motion of a silica nanosphere  
at room temperature

Delic et al., Science 367, 892 (2020)  
Magrini et al., Nature 595, 373 (2021)



Smallest gravitational source mass to date (1mm gold sphere = 4,000 times the Planck mass)

Westphal et al., Nature 591, 225 (2021)

# What do we (not) learn from observing entanglement generated by gravity

The generation of gravitationally induced entanglement...

- ... is inconsistent with assuming gravity is described by a classical field theory
- ... does not tell us anything about the quantization of gravity
- ... is consistent with a low-energy linearized quantum field theory of gravity
- ... excludes by principle all gravitational “collapse” models
- ... requires quantization of gravity to avoid conflict with causality and complementarity

IF observed together with retardation

e.g. Belenchia, Wald, et al., *Phys. Rev. D* **98**, 126009 (2018)

Danielson et al., *Phys. Rev. D* **105**, 086001 (2022)

Martín-Martínez, Perche, arXiv:2208.09489 (2022)

2004

2006

2008

2010

2012

2014

# Ars longa, vita brevis

**2004-2014  
Quantum  
optomechanics**

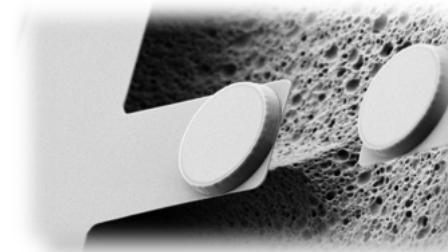
(2004) motivation:  
Paolo Tombesi,  
Anton Zeilinger

laser cooling of  
micromechanics (2006)

strong optomechanical  
coupling (2009)

quantum ground state  
micromechanics (2011)

Cavity cooling of  
levitated solid (2013)



2014

2016

2018

2020

2022

2024

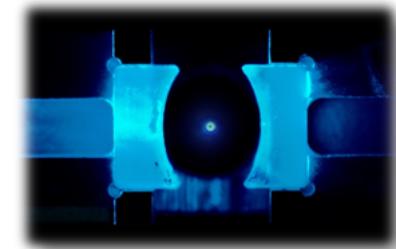
**2014-2024  
Combining  
quantum and  
gravity**

(2014) ERC grant:  
towards entangle-  
ment by gravity

non-Gaussian quantum  
states of nanomechanics  
(2016-2018)

quantum ground state  
levitated solid (2020)  
  
1mm gravitational  
source mass (2021)

quantum control of  
levitated solid (2021)



2024

2026

2028

2030

2032

2034

delocalization of small masses ( $1e-9 M_P$ )

delocalization of cold, small masses ( $1e-9 M_P$ )

delocalization of cold, large masses ( $1e-3 M_P$ )

**2024- ?  
Quantum  
sources of  
gravity**

$1M_P$  gravitational source mass

gravity at 10um scale

$1e-3 M_P$  source mass at 10um scale



@ Einsteinhaus Caputh

## Quantum-“Mechanics” in Vienna: The Levitation Team 2024

+ our collaboration partners:

The ERC Synergy team: Lukas Novotny, Romain Quidant (ETH) / Oriol Romero-Isart (Innsbruck)  
Eric Adelberger (UWash) / Caslav Brukner (Vienna) / Rudolf Gross, Hans Hübl (WMI) / Andreas Kugi (TU Wien) /  
Nikolai Kiesel (Vienna) / Monika Ritsch-Marte (Innsbruck) / Vladan Vuletic (MIT) / Robert Wald (UChicago) / Witold Wieczorek (Chalmers)



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**OPTOMECHANICAL  
TECHNOLOGIES**



**universität  
wien**