

The QCD static potential at NLO

M.E. Carrington

Brandon University, Manitoba, Canada

Collaborators: Cristina Manuel and Joan Soto

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Introduction

static potential

→ dominant interaction between heavy $q\bar{q}$ at low energy

$$T = 0$$

- attractive
- coulomb-like at small r (linearly rising at large r)

$$T \neq 0$$

- the short-distance potential screened
- yukawa-like with screening mass $\propto T$

proposed signal for QGP formation:

suppression of heavy $q\bar{q}$ bound state production at high T

T. Matsui and H. Satz, Phys. Lett. B **178**, 416-422 (1986).

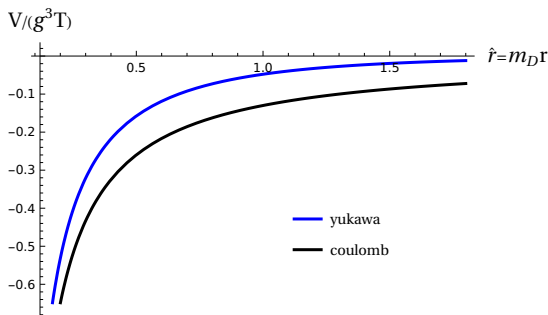
$$C_F = (N_c^2 - 1)/(2N_c)$$

$$\text{debye mass} = m_D = gT \hat{m}_D \text{ with } \hat{m}_D^2 = (N_c + N_f/2)/3$$

$$\text{Re}[V_{\text{coulomb}}] = -\frac{g^2 C_F}{4\pi} \frac{1}{r}$$

$$\text{Re}[V_{\text{yukawa}}] = -\frac{g^2 C_F}{4\pi} \frac{e^{-m_D r}}{r}$$

$$\text{Re}[V_{\text{nlo}}] = ?$$



dissociation

idea: if $\text{Im}[V] \sim \text{Re}[V]$ where screening becomes important

→ bound states disappear because decay (*become wide resonances*)

- not because V is screened (*too shallow to support them*)

M. Laine, O. Philipsen, P. Romatschke and M. Tassler, JHEP 03, 054 (2007).

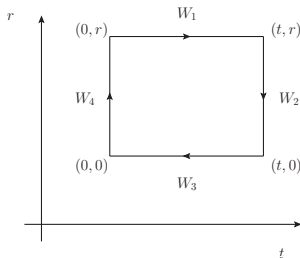
to study this we need to calculate the imaginary potential at nlo

calculational method

MEC, C. Manuel and J. Soto, *Phys. Rev. Lett.* 134, 011905 (2025)

- thermalized plasma
- $M_q \gg$ all other physical scales
→ static $q\bar{q}$ are (unthermalised) probe particles
- we considered bottomonium $M = 4676 \text{ MeV}$
- coulomb gauge
- dimensional regularization

potential obtained from real time QCD (rectangular) wilson loop



$$W(t, r) = \frac{1}{N_c} \langle \mathcal{P} \exp (ig \int A_\mu(z) dz^\mu) \rangle$$

$$V(r) = \lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} \frac{i}{t} \ln[W(t, r)]$$

in coulomb gauge $G_{0i} = 0 \rightarrow$ in limit $t \rightarrow \infty$ lines on sides set to 1
 $q\bar{q}$ couple to A_0 on 11 branch of CTP contour

lo real potential

contract A_0 on W_1 and W_3

$$W_{1a}(t, r) = \frac{(ig)^2}{N_c} \left\langle \int_0^t dx_0 A_0(x_0, \vec{r}) \int_t^0 dy_0 A_0(y_0, \vec{0}) \right\rangle$$

use $\langle A_0(x_0, \vec{r}) A_0(y_0, \vec{0}) \rangle = -iG_{00}(x_0 - y_0, \vec{r}) \equiv -iG(x_0 - y_0, \vec{r})$

$$W_{1a}(t, r) = -ig^2 C_F \int_0^t dx_0 \int_0^t dy_0 \int \frac{d^4 p}{(2\pi)^4} e^{-i(p_0(x_0 - y_0) - \vec{p} \cdot \vec{r})} G(p_0, \vec{p})$$

identity: $\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} \int_0^t dx_0 \int_0^t dy_0 e^{ip_0(x_0 - y_0)} = t 2\pi \delta(p_0) + \mathcal{O}(t^0)$

$$\begin{aligned} V(r) &= g^2 C_F \int \frac{d^3 p}{(2\pi)^3} e^{i\vec{p} \cdot \vec{r}} G_{\text{htl}}(0, p) \\ &= -g^2 C_F \int \frac{d^3 p}{(2\pi)^3} \frac{e^{i\vec{p} \cdot \vec{r}}}{p^2 + m_D^2} = -\frac{\alpha C_F}{r} e^{-m_D r} \end{aligned}$$

constant contribution

contract two A_0 's on W_1 (or W_3)

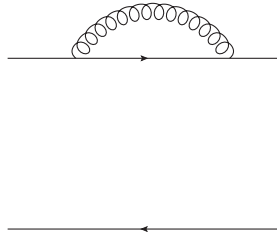
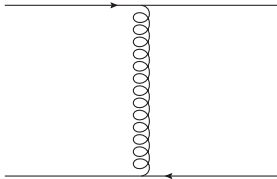
$$W_{1b}(t) = 2ig^2 C_F \int_0^t dx_0 \int_0^{x_0} dy_0 \int \frac{d^4 p}{(2\pi)^4} e^{-ip_0(x_0-y_0)} G(p_0, \vec{p})$$

$$\rightarrow V = -\alpha C_F m_D$$

combining we have

$$\text{Re}[V_{\text{lo}}(r)] = -\alpha C_F \left(\frac{e^{-m_D r}}{r} + m_D \right)$$

corresponding figures:



LO complex potential

time ordered propagator (using: $n(p_0) = 1/(e^{p_0/T} - 1) \rightarrow \frac{T}{p_0} + \dots$)

$$G(p_0, \vec{p}) = \frac{1}{2} \left(G^{\text{ret}}(p_0, \vec{p}) + G^{\text{adv}}(p_0, \vec{p}) + (1 + 2n(p_0)) \left[G^{\text{ret}}(p_0, \vec{p}) - G^{\text{adv}}(p_0, \vec{p}) \right] \right)$$

htl propagator: $G_{\text{lo}}(0, p) = -\frac{1}{m_D^2 + p^2} + \frac{i\pi T m_D^2}{p(p^2 + m_D^2)^2}$

$$V_{\text{lo}}(\vec{r}) = -g^2 C_F \int \frac{d^3 p}{(2\pi)^3} e^{i\vec{p} \cdot \vec{r}} G_{\text{lo}}(0, p) + \text{const}$$

coordinate space potential is ($\hat{r} = rm_D$)

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Re}[V_{\text{lo}}] &= -\frac{g^2 C_F}{4\pi} m_D \left(1 + \frac{e^{-\hat{r}}}{\hat{r}} \right) \\ i\text{Im}[V_{\text{lo}}] &= i \frac{g^2 C_F T}{4\pi} \left(\frac{2I_2(\hat{r})}{\hat{r}} - 1 \right) \end{aligned}$$

defined dimensionless integrals $I_j(\hat{r}) = \int_0^\infty d\hat{p} \sin(\hat{p}\hat{r}) (\hat{p}^2 + 1)^{-j}$

dissociation

recall:

bound states disappear because decay (*become wide resonances*)

- not because V is screened (*too shallow to support them*)

Q: what is the scale where we expect this to happen?

propagator: $G_{10}(0, p) = -\frac{1}{m_D^2 + p^2} + \frac{i\pi T m_D^2}{p(p^2 + m_D^2)^2}$

if $p \sim g^a T$ then $\text{Re}[\tilde{V}_{1LO}(p)] \sim \frac{g^{2-2a}}{T^2}$ and $\text{Im}[\tilde{V}_{1LO}(p)] \sim \frac{g^{4-5a}}{T^2}$

for a resonance to exist need $\text{Im}[\tilde{V}] < \text{Re}[\tilde{V}] \Rightarrow 0 < a < 2/3$

$a = 2/3$ parametrically scale we expect quarkonium to dissociate

real time static potential beyond LO in equilibrium

we consider $p \sim g^a T$ with $1/2 < a < 2/3 \Rightarrow m_D \ll p \ll T$

- upper bound on p : from condition $\text{Re} \tilde{V}_{\text{lo}}(p) \sim \text{Im} \tilde{V}_{\text{lo}}(p)$

→ bound state decays

- lower bound on p : require p “semi-hard”

- calculation of next-to-leading order potential is simplified

consequences: $V(r)$ valid for $r m_D \ll 1 \ll r T$

1st part: large $r \rightarrow$ momenta smaller than the semi-hard scale

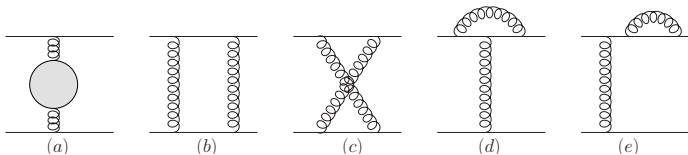
2nd part: small $r \rightarrow$ momenta larger than the temperature

motivation

- a check of the idea of quarkonium dissociation
- provides wider set of physically motivated forms of the potential
 - *to use as input for methods to extract V from lattice correlators*

how to calculate static potential beyond leading order

- expand W to higher order in g
- dress the propagator in the LO contribution



- iterate the LO potential (not shown)

determine how to dress lines/vertices for $p \sim g^a T$ with $\frac{1}{2} < a < \frac{2}{3}$

comment about power counting

calculation of NLO HTL n -point functions

→ follow prescription ...

for the static potential there are two important differences

1. fermion lines have the form $\frac{1}{p_0 \pm i\eta}$ ($M_q \gg$ all other scales)
2. external frequencies are taken to zero

⇒ external momenta don't flow through the diagram

** power counting is different from standard thermal field theory

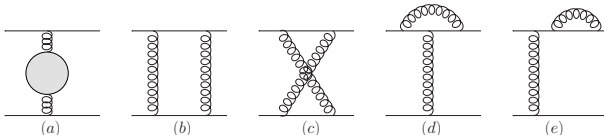


diagram (a) - include corrections to HTL self-energy

- power correction to HTL gluon bubble
- one loop gluon bubble with loop momenta semi-hard
- *can be done with bare lines and vertices*
- *bose-einstein distributions $\sim T/p_0$ since $p \ll T$*
- *no quark loop (pauli blocking)*

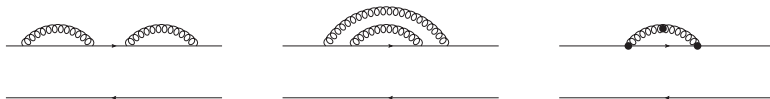
diagrams (bcde) = ladder diagrams

- HTL propagators and bare vertices

also: additional contributions from static quark self-energies

→ constant contributions that we have not calculated

- method to include these contributions explained in a minute



- we take into account corrections to LO

real part: larger than g^2 & imag part: larger than g^{2-a}

- denominators $\sim p^2 + m_D^2$ kept unexpanded (*damped approximation*)

→ extends region that coordinate space potential is valid

NLO momentum space potential

$$\text{Re}[\tilde{V}_2^{(0)}(p)] = -\frac{g^4 N_c C_F}{16\pi} \frac{1}{p^2 + m_D^2} \left(1 - \frac{3\pi^2}{16}\right) \frac{T}{m_D}$$

$$\text{Re}[\tilde{V}_{\text{1HTL}}(p)] = \frac{g^4 p T N_c C_F}{4(m_D^2 + p^2)^2}$$

$$\text{Re}[\tilde{V}_2^{(1)}(p)] = \frac{g^4 T N_c C_F}{16} \frac{m_D}{3\pi(m_D^2 + p^2)^2} \left(1 - \frac{\pi^2}{16}\right)$$

$$i\text{Im}[\tilde{V}_{\text{1HTL}}(p)] = -\frac{7ig^4 T^2 N_c C_F}{6\pi(m_D^2 + p^2)^2}$$

$$i\text{Im}[\tilde{V}_{\text{1POW}}(p)] = \frac{ig^4 p T C_F (2N_c - N_f)}{8\pi(m_D^2 + p^2)^2}$$

$$i\text{Im}[\tilde{V}_2^{(1)}(p)] = \frac{g^4 T N_c C_F}{16} \frac{i T m_D}{p(m_D^2 + p^2)^2} \left(1 - \frac{3\pi^2}{16}\right).$$

verify consistency of the calculation ($p \sim g^a T$ and $1/2 < a < 2/3$)
 the biggest contributions that we did not calculate



HTL corrections: $\text{Re}[V] \sim g^{6-5a}$ and $\text{Im}[V] \sim g^{6-6a}$

2 loop contributions: $\text{Re}[V] \sim g^{4-2a}$ and $\text{Im}[V] \sim g^{4-2a}$

real part: for $0 < a < 2/3$ the biggest neglected contro is $\sim g^{4-2a}$

from previous slide: smallest calculated (kept) is $\text{Re}[V_2^{(1)}] \sim g^{5-4a}$

must require $4 - 2a > 5 - 4a \rightarrow a > 1/2$

imaginary part gives $a > 1/3 \Rightarrow$ combining $1/2 < a < 2/3$

coordinate space potential beyond leading order

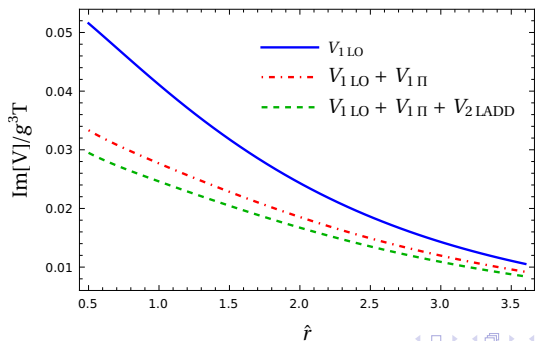
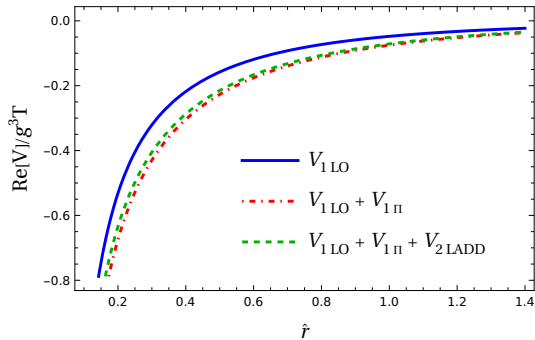
$$\hat{r} = r m_D \text{ and } m_D = g T \hat{m}_D$$

$$I_j(\hat{r}) = \int_0^\infty d\hat{p} \sin(\hat{p}\hat{r}) (\hat{p}^2 + 1)^{-j}$$

$$V_{1lo} = -\frac{g^2 C_F}{4\pi \hat{r}} \left(m_D e^{-\hat{r}} - 2iT I_2(\hat{r}) \right)$$

$$\text{Re}[V_{nlo}] = \frac{g^4 N_c C_F T}{64\pi^2 \hat{r}} \left\{ 8(I_2(\hat{r}) - I_1(\hat{r})) + \frac{e^{-\hat{r}}}{16} \left(3\pi^2 - 16 + \frac{\hat{r}}{6} (16 - \pi^2) \right) \right\}$$

$$i\text{Im}[V_{nlo}] = -i \frac{g^3 C_F T}{16\pi^2 \hat{m}_D} \left\{ \frac{3\pi^2 - 16}{32 \hat{r}} I_2(\hat{r}) + \frac{7}{3} N_c e^{-\hat{r}} - \frac{2g \hat{m}_D}{\pi \hat{r}} \left(N_c - \frac{N_f}{2} \right) (I_1(\hat{r}) - I_2(\hat{r})) \right\}$$



soft contributions

want to include contributions from $p \sim m_D$ *that we haven't calculated*

- since $pr \sim m_D r \sim g^{1-a} < 1 \rightarrow$ can expand the exponential

$$V_{\text{soft}}(r) = \int \frac{d^3 p}{(2\pi)^3} \left(1 + i\vec{p} \cdot \vec{r} - \frac{1}{2}(\vec{p} \cdot \vec{r})^2 + \dots \right) \tilde{V}(p)$$

keep terms that are \geq smallest contributions in analytic result

odd powers zero by symmetry in an isotropic system

- add contributions:

$$\text{Re}[V] = C + g^3 q_0 T$$

$$\text{Im}[V] = g^3 i_0 T + g^5 i_2 r^2 T^3$$

coefficients obtained by fitting to lattice results

C is a global constant that adjusts the origins of the energies

a check: expanded momentum space potential

$$V_{2\text{exp}}(p) = - \frac{g^4 C_F N_c T}{16\pi m_D p^2} \left\{ \left[1 - \frac{3\pi^2}{16} + \frac{4\pi m_D}{p} + \frac{m_D^2}{p^2} \left(\frac{5\pi^2}{24} - \frac{4}{3} \right) \right] \right. \\ \left. + i \frac{\pi T m_D}{p^2} \left[\frac{56}{3\pi} - \left(1 - \frac{3\pi^2}{16} \right) \frac{m_D}{p} - \left(1 - \frac{N_f}{2N_c} \right) \frac{4p}{\pi T} \right] \right\}$$

fourier transform

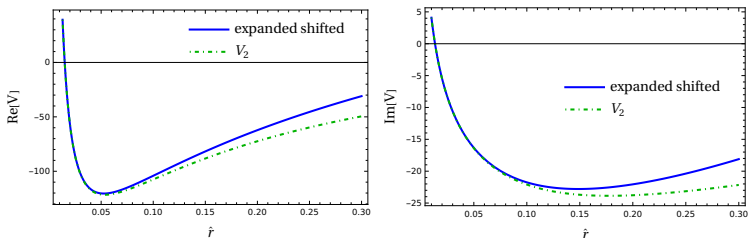
$$V_{2\text{exp}}(r) = - \frac{g^4 C_F N_c T}{16\pi m_D} \left\{ \left[\left(1 - \frac{3\pi^2}{16} \right) \frac{1}{4\pi r} - \frac{m_D}{\pi} L(r) - \left(\frac{5\pi^2}{24} - \frac{4}{3} \right) \frac{r m_D^2}{8\pi} \right] \right. \\ \left. - i \pi T m_D \left[\frac{7r}{3\pi^2} - \left(1 - \frac{3\pi^2}{16} \right) \frac{m_D r^2}{24\pi^2} (1 - L(r)) - \frac{1}{\pi^3 T} \left(1 - \frac{N_f}{2N_c} \right) L(r) \right] \right\}$$

$$L(r) = -1/\epsilon + \gamma + \log [\pi (r\mu)^2]$$

→ $1/\epsilon$ poles could be absorbed into the parameters of $V_{2\text{soft}}$

- damped approximation regulates these poles
- reshuffles part of the soft contribution into the semi-hard one

figure shows NLO potential and expanded approximation to it
- shifted so it matches the NLO potential at $r = 0.01$ fm

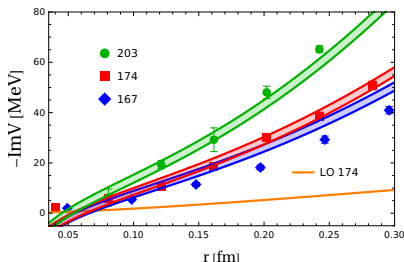
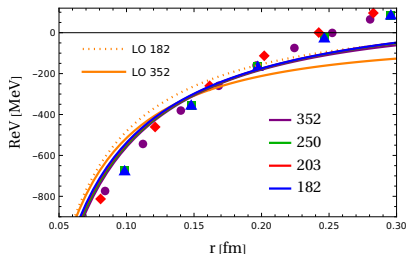


also note: constant terms that correspond to contributions from the quark self-energies do not need to be calculated because they are absorbed into the constants (q_0, i_0)

use $g = 1.8$ from fit to $T = 0$ lattice data

find (C, q_0, i_0, i_2) with fit to all available T and $r \in (0.02, 0.3)$ fm

- real part of potential varies little with T (like data)
- imaginary part gets big contro from soft region
- solid bands are uncertainties in fitted coefficients inherited from lattice data



physical effects of NLO corrections to the potential

correct method to include dissipation

- couple system to a bath and do a partial trace over bath dof

simpler ad-hoc way to include dissipation in SE (*Landau&Lifschitz QM vol 3*)

- phenomenological method to describe unstable, decaying states
 - imaginary part of V related to the average lifetime of the state
- schrödinger equation is

$$i\hbar \frac{\partial \Psi(t, \vec{r})}{\partial t} = -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \nabla^2 \Psi(t, \vec{r}) + V(\vec{r}) \Psi(t, \vec{r})$$

separate: $\Psi(t, \vec{r}) = \varphi(t) \psi(\vec{r}) = e^{-i\theta t} \psi(\vec{r}) = e^{-i(E - i\Gamma/2)t} \psi(\vec{r})$

note: $\Psi^\dagger(t, \vec{r}) \Psi(t, \vec{r}) = e^{-\Gamma t} \psi^\dagger(\vec{r}) \psi(\vec{r})$

$\Rightarrow \Gamma$ has interpretation of a damping rate

- write the laplacian in spherical coordinates
- assume spherically symmetric potential $\rightarrow \psi(\vec{r}) = Y_{l0}(\theta, 0)R_{nl}(r)$
- define $u_{nl}(r) = r R_{nl}(r)$
- separate real/imag $V(r) = V_R(r) + iV_I(r)$ and $u(r) = u_R(r) + iu_I(r)$

$$-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \left(\frac{d^2 u_R(r)}{dr^2} - \frac{l(l+1)}{r^2} u_R(r) \right) + [V_R(r)u_R(r) - V_I(r)u_I(r)] = Eu_R(r) + \frac{\Gamma}{2} u_I(r)$$

$$-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \left(\frac{d^2 u_I(r)}{dr^2} - \frac{l(l+1)}{r^2} u_I(r) \right) + [V_R(r)u_I(r) + V_I(r)u_R(r)] = -\frac{\Gamma}{2} u_R(r) + Eu_I(r)$$

$$-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \left(\frac{d^2 u_R(r)}{dr^2} - \frac{l(l+1)}{r^2} u_R(r) \right) + [V_R(r)u_R(r) - V_I(r)u_I(r)] = Eu_R(r) + \frac{\Gamma}{2} u_I(r)$$

- should solve two coupled equations
- will make the approximation that we can separate re/im parts
- use $\text{Re}[V]$ to find binding energy and wavefunction

$$-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \left(\frac{d^2 u_R(r)}{dr^2} - \frac{l(l+1)}{r^2} u_R(r) \right) + V_R(r)u_R(r) = Eu_R(r)$$

- calculate the decay width as expectation value $\Gamma = -2\langle \text{Im}[V] \rangle$

use $M_Q = 2m$ and define the scaled variables

$$\bar{r} = r/a \text{ with } a = 4\pi/(g^2 C_F M_Q)$$

$$\hat{V} = M_Q a^2 V \text{ and } \hat{E} = M_Q a^2 E$$

schrödinger equation takes the form

$$-\frac{d^2 u(\bar{r})}{d\bar{r}^2} + \frac{l(l+1)}{\bar{r}^2} u(\bar{r}) + \hat{V}(\bar{r}) u(\bar{r}) = \hat{E} u(\bar{r})$$

centrifugal term dominates when $r \rightarrow 0$

boundary conditions $u(\bar{r}_0) = \bar{r}_0^{l+1}$ and $u'(\bar{r}_0) = (l+1)\bar{r}_0^l$

method:

maximum of the potential is its value as $\bar{r} \rightarrow \infty$

minimum is found numerically

→ solve using trial eigenvalue $E_{\text{try}} = (E_{\text{min}} + E_{\text{max}})/2$

- search for a normalizable solution with the right # nodes

adjust the trial energy either up or down based on

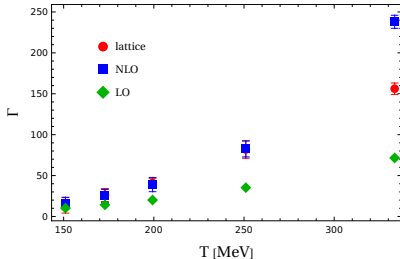
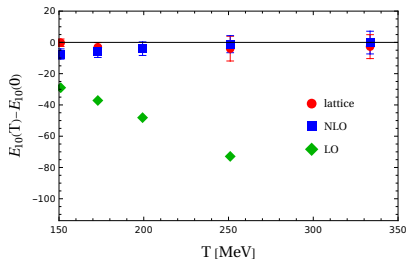
- solution diverges to positive or negative infinity

- # number of nodes is even or odd

lattice calculation : *R. Larsen, S. Meinel, S. Mukherjee and P. Petreczky, Phys. Lett. B* **800**, 135119 (2020).

find soft coefficients by fitting to all available temperatures

- error bars from fitting to upper/lower values



\Rightarrow reasonable description of data for both E_{bind} and Γ

fitted soft contribution

recall: contribution to $V(r)$ from $p \sim m_D$

$$\text{Re}[V] = C + g^3 q_0 T$$

$$\text{Im}[V] = g^3 i_0 T + g^5 i_2 r^2 T^3$$

find values of coefficients by fitting to 2 sets of lattice data

in our calculation all scales are explicit

→ expect same size for all numerical coefficients

$$(q_0, i_0, i_2) = (0.027, \quad -0.019 \pm 0.001, 0.194 \pm 0.002)$$

$$(q_0, i_0, i_2) = (0.044 \pm -0.002, -0.026 \pm 0.009, 0.052 \pm 0.002)$$

i_2 from the first fit is significantly larger

$C=219$ MeV from first calculation

in second the coulomb binding energy is subtracted (C plays no role)

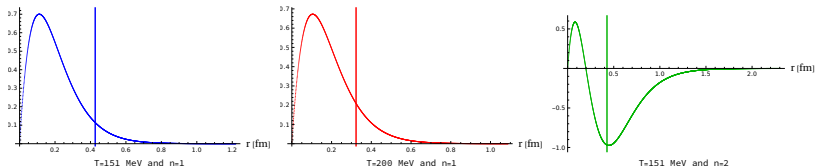
dissociation:

- bound states disappear because decay (become wide resonances)
- not because V is screened *too shallow to support them*

Q: how to define dissociation temperature in our calculation?

\sim *temperature where adjacent peaks merge ...*

but: problem with excited states



vertical line is value of r for which $rm_D = 1$

alternate definition:

$T_{\text{diss}} \approx$ temperature where ground state $E_{\text{bind}} = \Gamma = -2\langle \text{Im} V \rangle$

- *define E_{bind} as eigenvalue of V with threshold set to 0*

lo result: $T_{\text{diss}} = 193.2 \text{ MeV}$

nlo result: $T_{\text{diss}} = 151.8 \pm 1.2 \text{ MeV} \leftarrow$ using first fit

*** unphysical result from outlying value for i_2*

nlo result: $T_{\text{diss}} = 225 \pm 10 \text{ MeV} \leftarrow$ using second fit

improvement 1

'self-energy' part of the potential from $G = -\frac{1}{p^2 + \Pi_{00}}$

real part of self-energy is $\lim_{p_0 \rightarrow 0} \Pi_{00} = m_D^2 - \frac{1}{4}g^2 p T N_c$

expansion:
$$G = -\frac{1}{p^2 + m_D^2} - \frac{1}{p^2 + m_D^2} \left[\frac{1}{4}g^2 p T N_c \right] \frac{1}{p^2 + m_D^2}$$

→ fourier transform can easily be done analytically

alternative: do fourier transform on the unexpanded potential

$$V(r) = -g^2 C_F \int \frac{d^3 p}{(2\pi)^3} \frac{e^{i\vec{p} \cdot \vec{r}}}{p^2 + m_D^2 - \frac{1}{4}g^2 p T N_c}$$

→ extend the region of validity of the potential

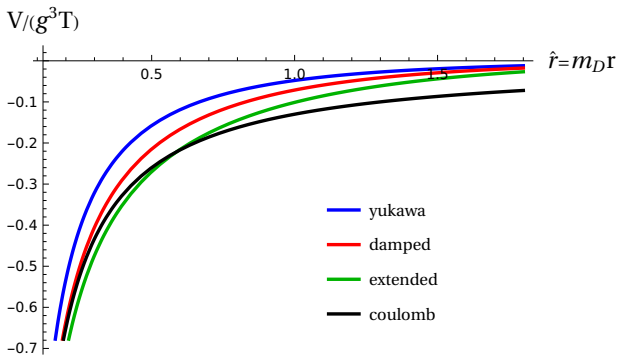
- *same idea as the yukawa potential*

effect:

yukawa potential is screened (shallower) than coulomb

nlo damped potential is deeper (promotes binding)

'extended' potential is even deeper



improvement 2

our method to solve SE:

solve real part of equation for E and $\psi_R(r)$

→ find width $\Gamma = -2\langle \text{Im} V \rangle$

more accurately: solve real/imag parts of SE self-consistently

$$\begin{aligned} -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \left(\frac{d^2 u_R(r)}{dr^2} - \frac{l(l+1)}{r^2} u_R(r) \right) + [V_R(r)u_R(r) - V_I(r)u_I(r)] &= E u_R(r) + \frac{\Gamma}{2} u_I(r) \\ -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \left(\frac{d^2 u_I(r)}{dr^2} - \frac{l(l+1)}{r^2} u_I(r) \right) + [V_R(r)u_I(r) + V_I(r)u_R(r)] &= -\frac{\Gamma}{2} u_R(r) + E u_I(r) \end{aligned}$$

→ search 2d space for (E, Γ) so $(u_R(r), u_I(r))$ are normalizable

preliminary results:

*both changes slightly increase the dissociation temperature
most of the effect is from improvement 1*

$$T_{\text{diss}} = 171 \pm 2 \text{ MeV} \leftarrow \text{from first fit}$$

$$T_{\text{diss}} = 231 \pm 8 \text{ MeV} \leftarrow \text{from second fit}$$

conclusions

- calculated beyond-lo corrections to momentum space potential
 - when the typical momentum transfer p satisfies $m_D \ll p \ll T$
 - relevant region to obtain dissociation T for heavy quarkonium
- we include soft contributions $p \lesssim m_D$
 - have universal form because we can expand exponential in f-transform
 - coefficients from fitting to lattice data
- reasonable description of lattice data (LO fails)
 - *identify an inconsistency between 2 different sets of lattice data*
- results provide useful inputs for the Bayesian methods required in the effort to determine the potential from euclidean lattice data