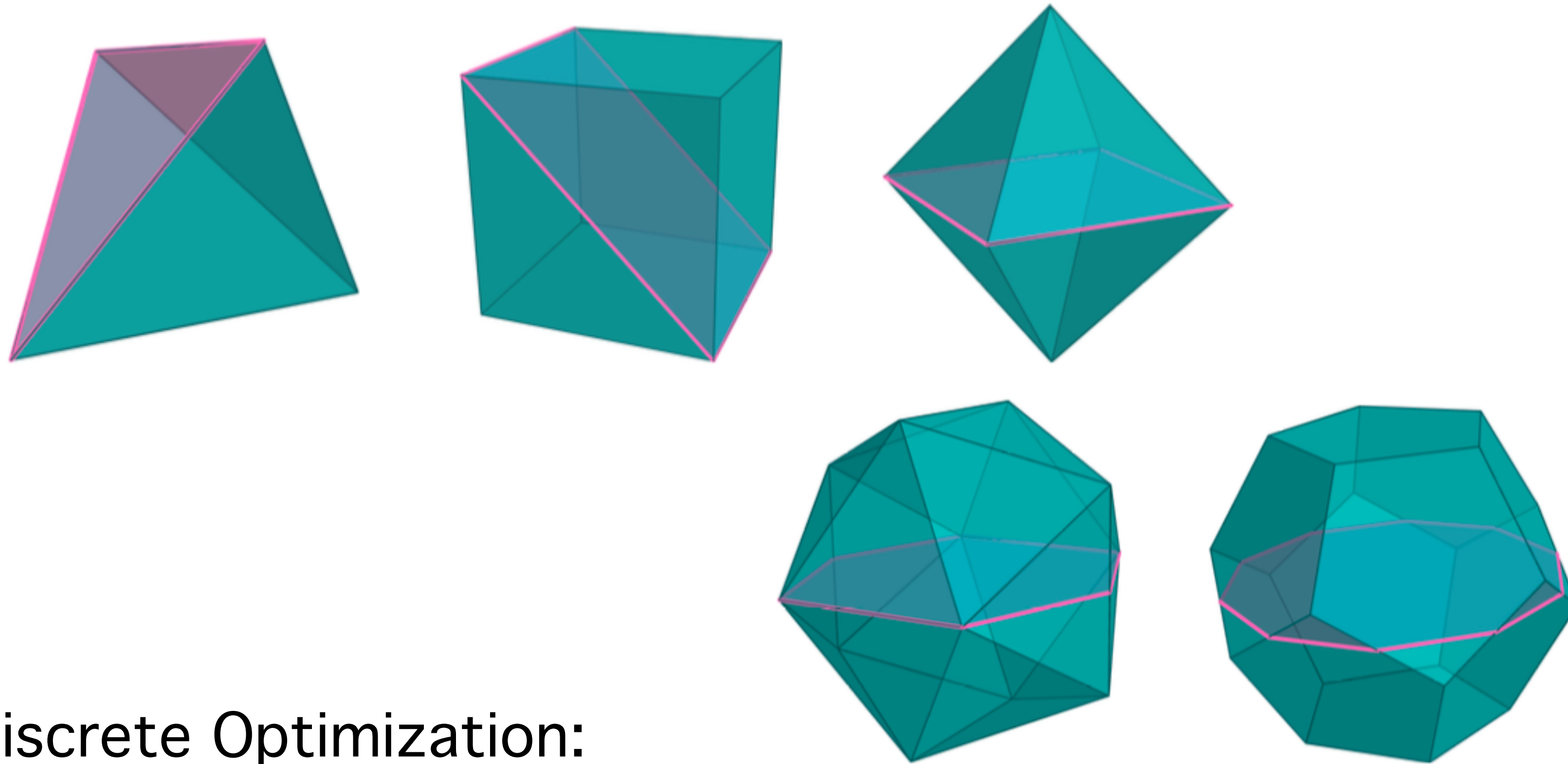


# Slices of convex bodies



Chiara Meroni

**ETH** zürich

Institute for Theoretical Studies

Discrete Optimization:  
Mathematics, Algorithms, and Computation

ICERM, August 2024

# Busemann–Petty problem

1956 → 1999

**ETH** zürich

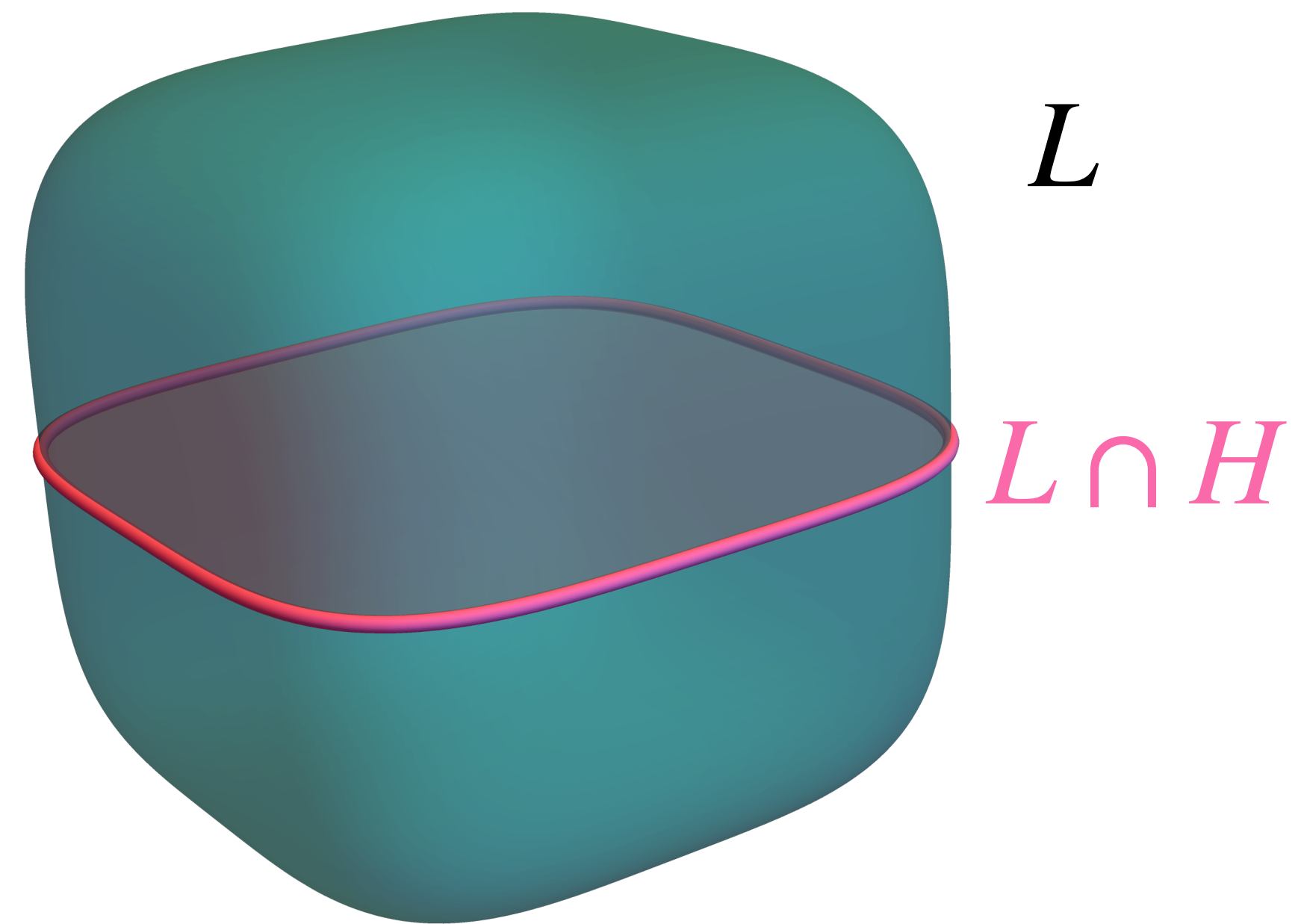
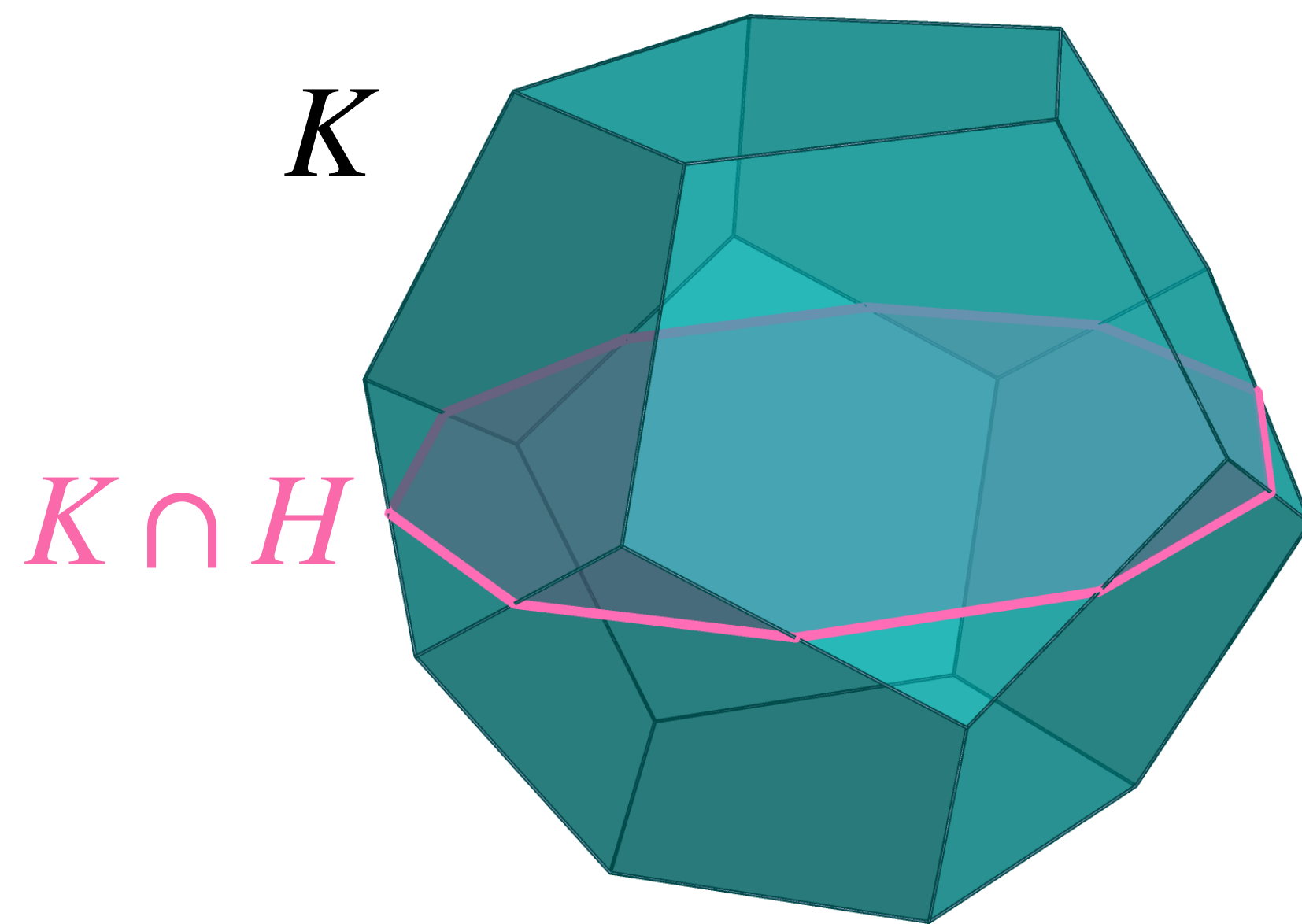
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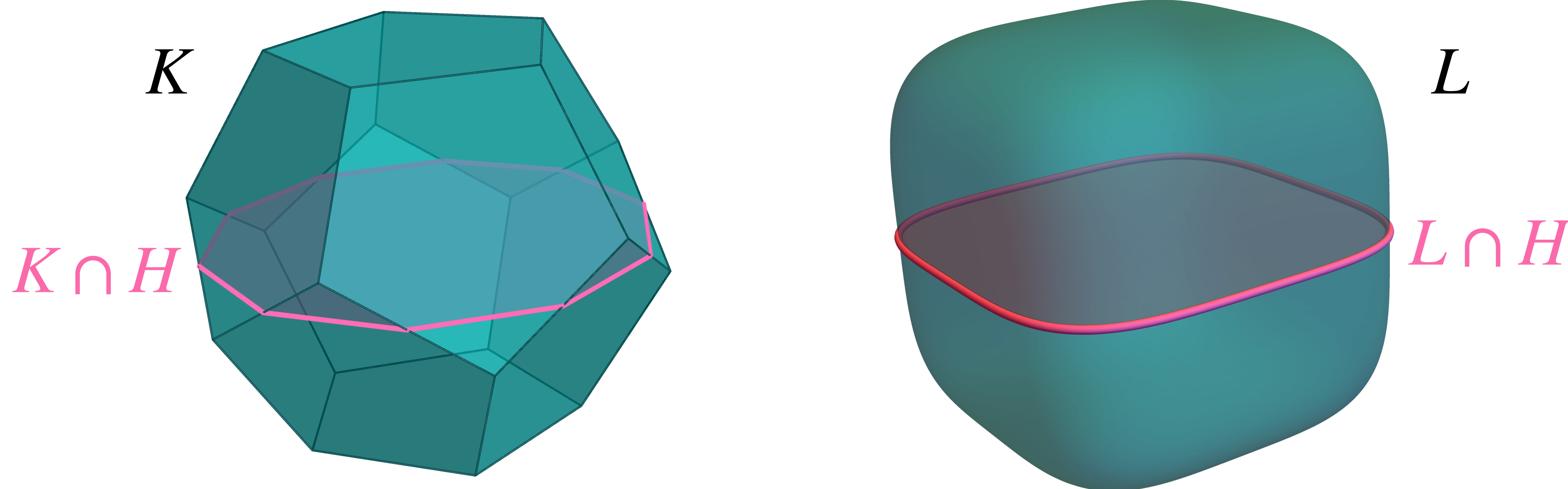


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Does this imply that  $\text{vol}(K) \leq \text{vol}(L)$ ?

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In general NOT true!

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Let's refine it:

**Bourgain's slicing conjecture (1986):**

$$\text{vol}(K) \leq C \text{vol}(L),$$

where  $C$  does **not** depend on  $d$ .

Very active research topic in functional analysis, convex geometry, tomography,...

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Rephrase:

**Bourgain's slicing conjecture (1986):**  
There exists  $C > 0$  such that  
for all  $d$  and all convex bodies  $K \subset \mathbb{R}^d$   
of volume 1 there exists a hyperplane  $H$   
satisfying  $\text{vol}(K \cap H) > \frac{1}{C}$ .



# Best slices

This motivates the study of **extremal** slices of convex bodies

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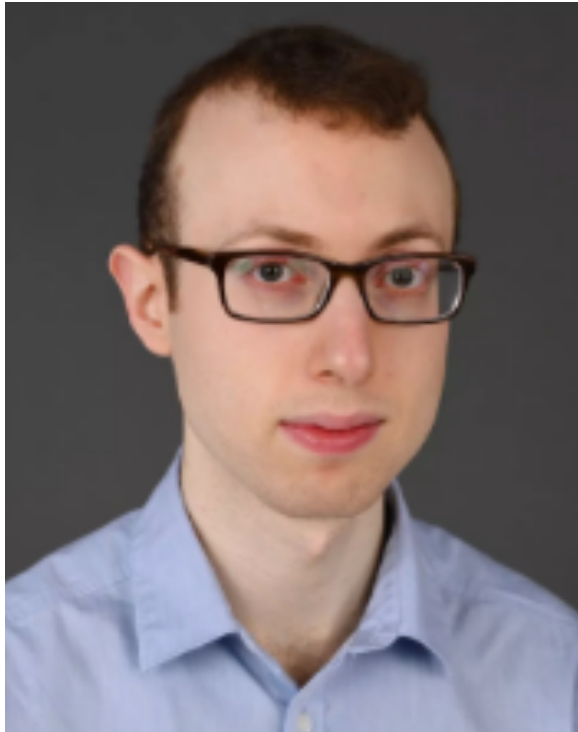
Many collaborators and collaborations that started at



Jesús A. De Loera



Mauricio Velasco



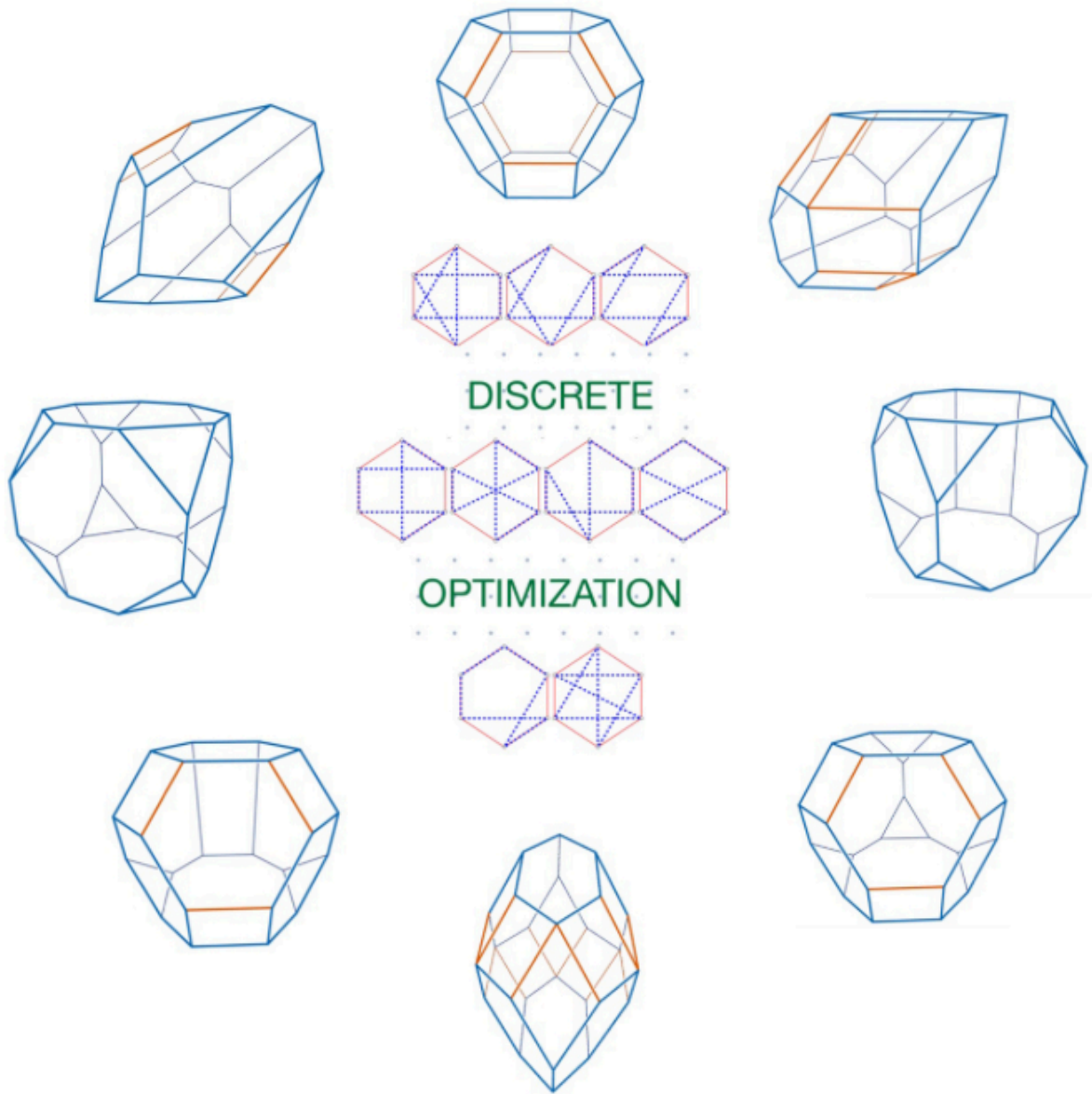
Jared Miller



Matteo Tacchi



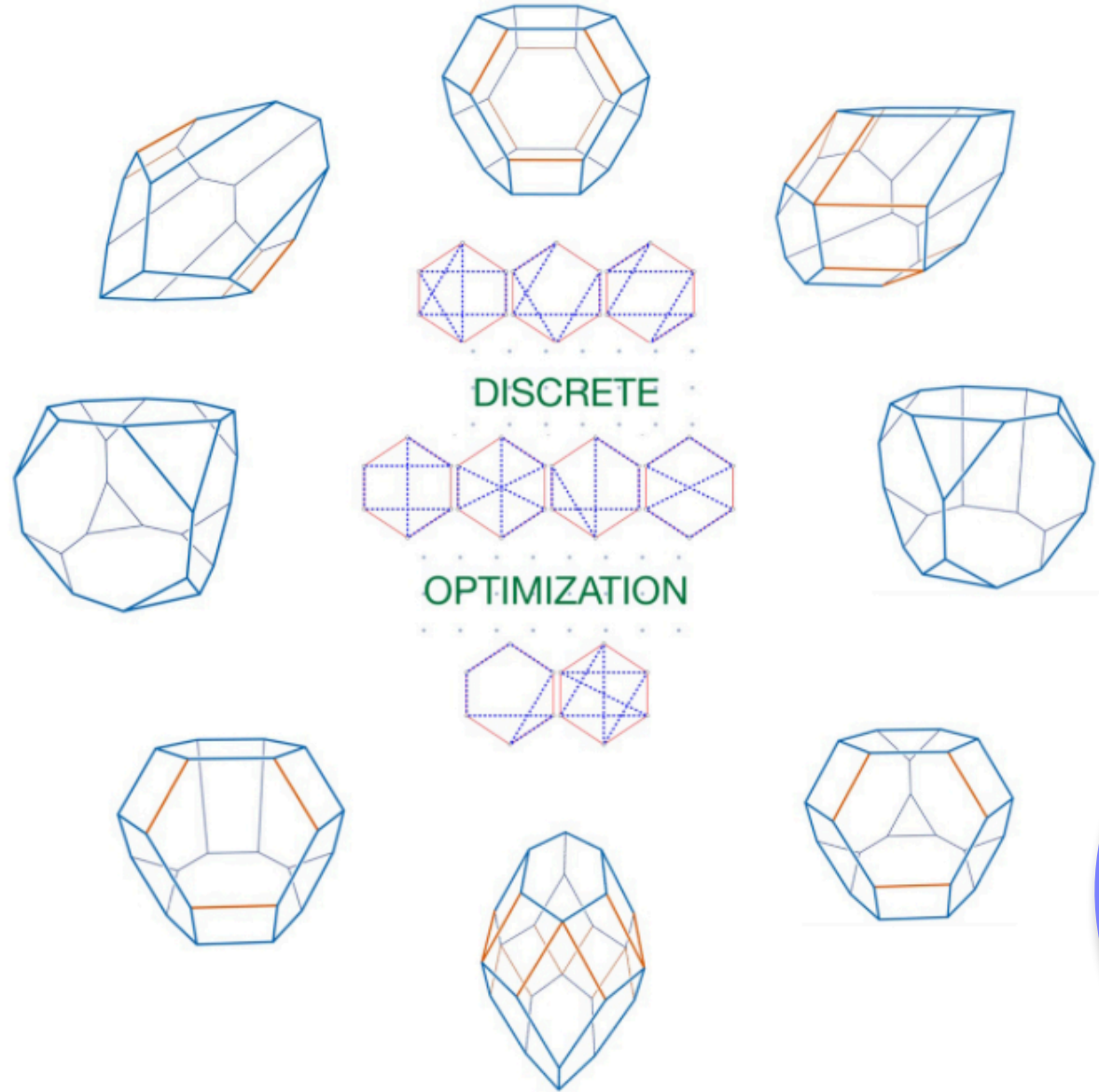
Marie-Charlotte Brandenburg



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Slices of convex bodies



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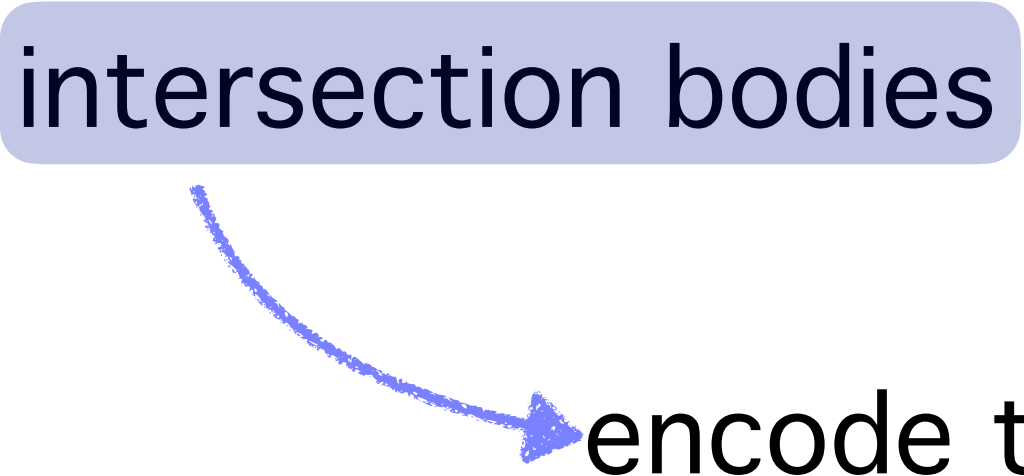
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# B. I. ( = Before ICERM )

Back to Busemann and Petty: problem solved using intersection bodies

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encode the volume of the  
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Home > Beiträge zur Algebra und Geometrie / Contributions to Algebra and Geometry

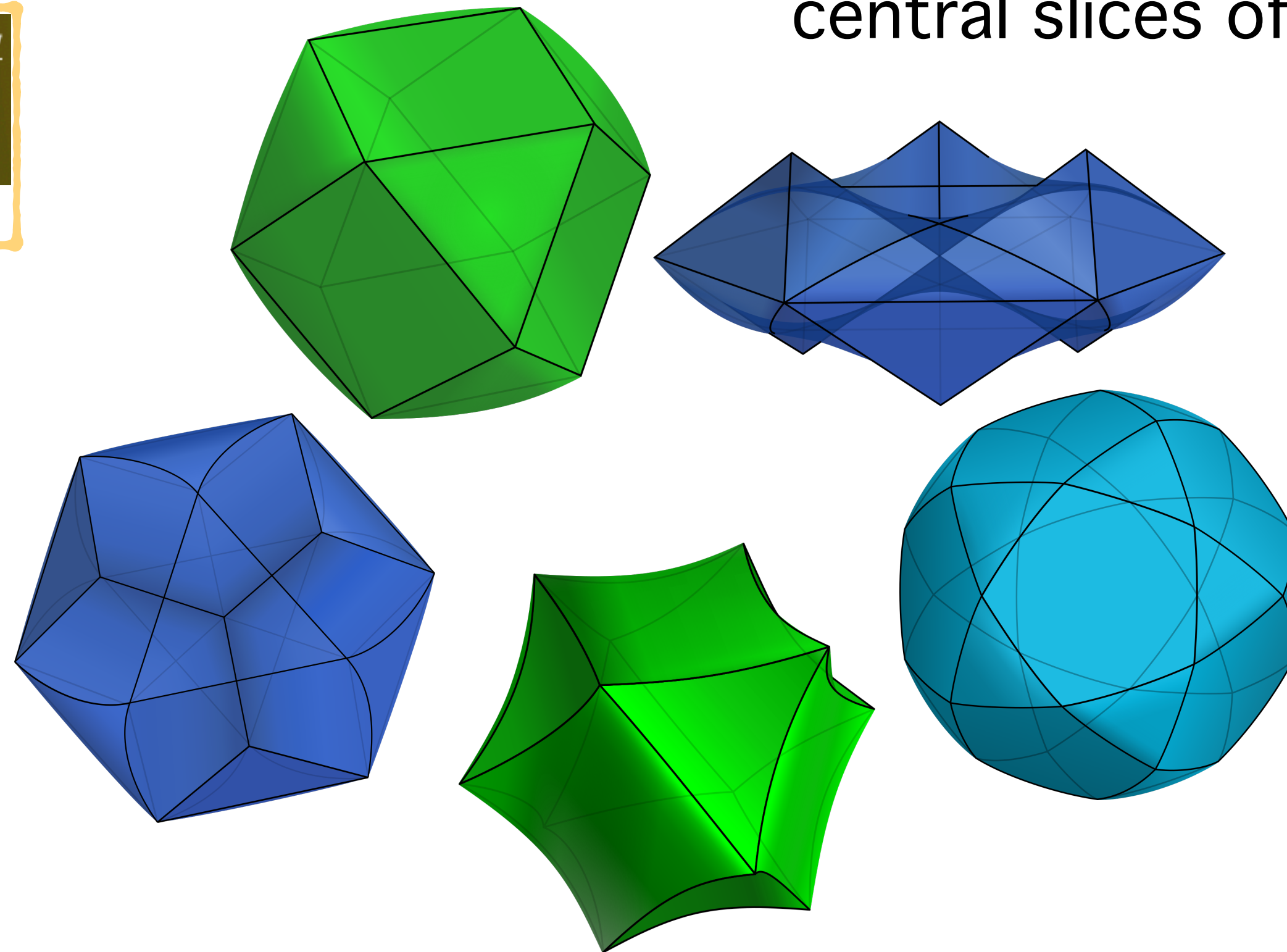
## Intersection bodies of polytopes

Katalin Berlow, Marie-Charlotte Brandenburg, Chiara Meroni & Isabelle Shankar

Home > Journal of Algebraic Combinatorics > Article

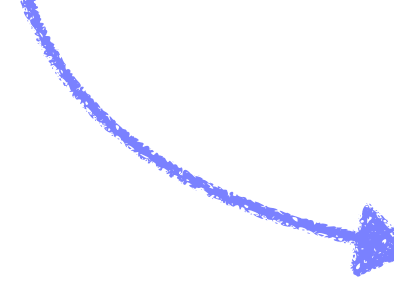
## Intersection bodies of polytopes: translations and convexity

Marie-Charlotte Brandenburg & Chiara Meroni



# D. I. ( = During ICERM )

Back to Busemann and Petty: problem solved using intersection bodies



encode the volume of the  
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I want all of them!!!



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arXiv > math > arXiv:2304.14239

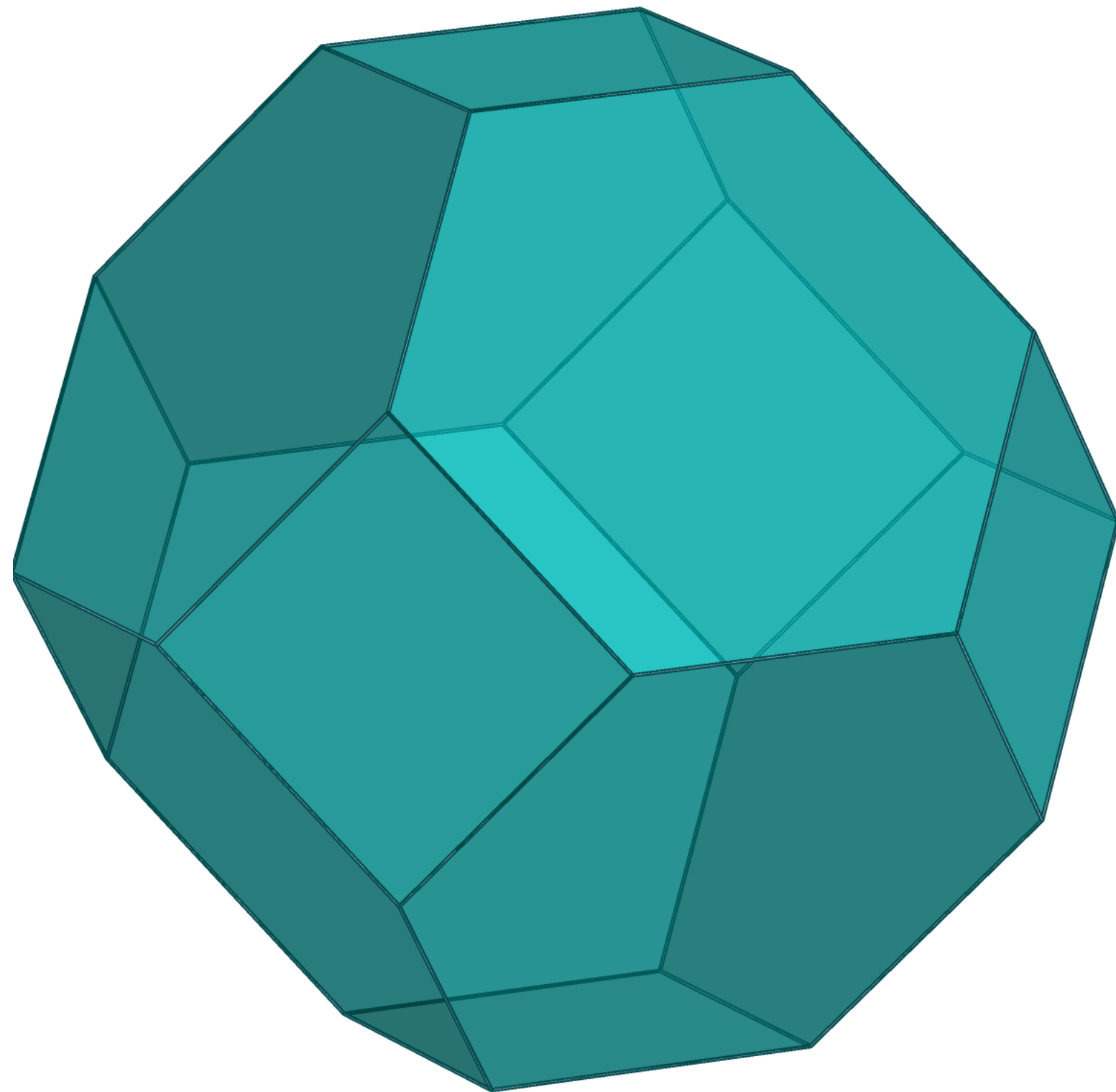
**The Best Ways to Slice a Polytope**

Marie-Charlotte Brandenburg, Jesús A. De Loera, Chiara Meroni

to appear in Mathematics of Computation

# Goal: find the “best” slice of $P$

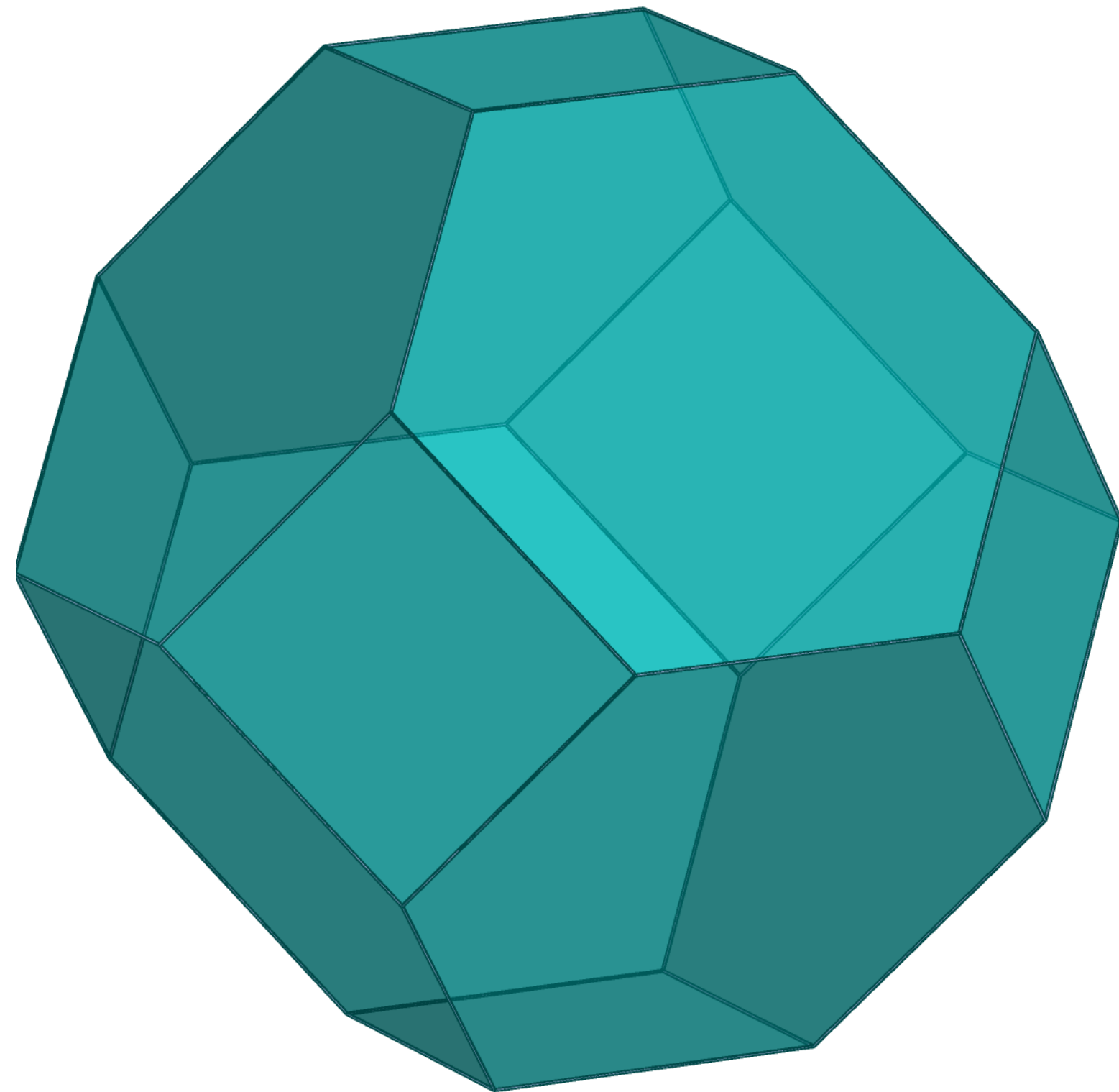
$P$  = permutahedron



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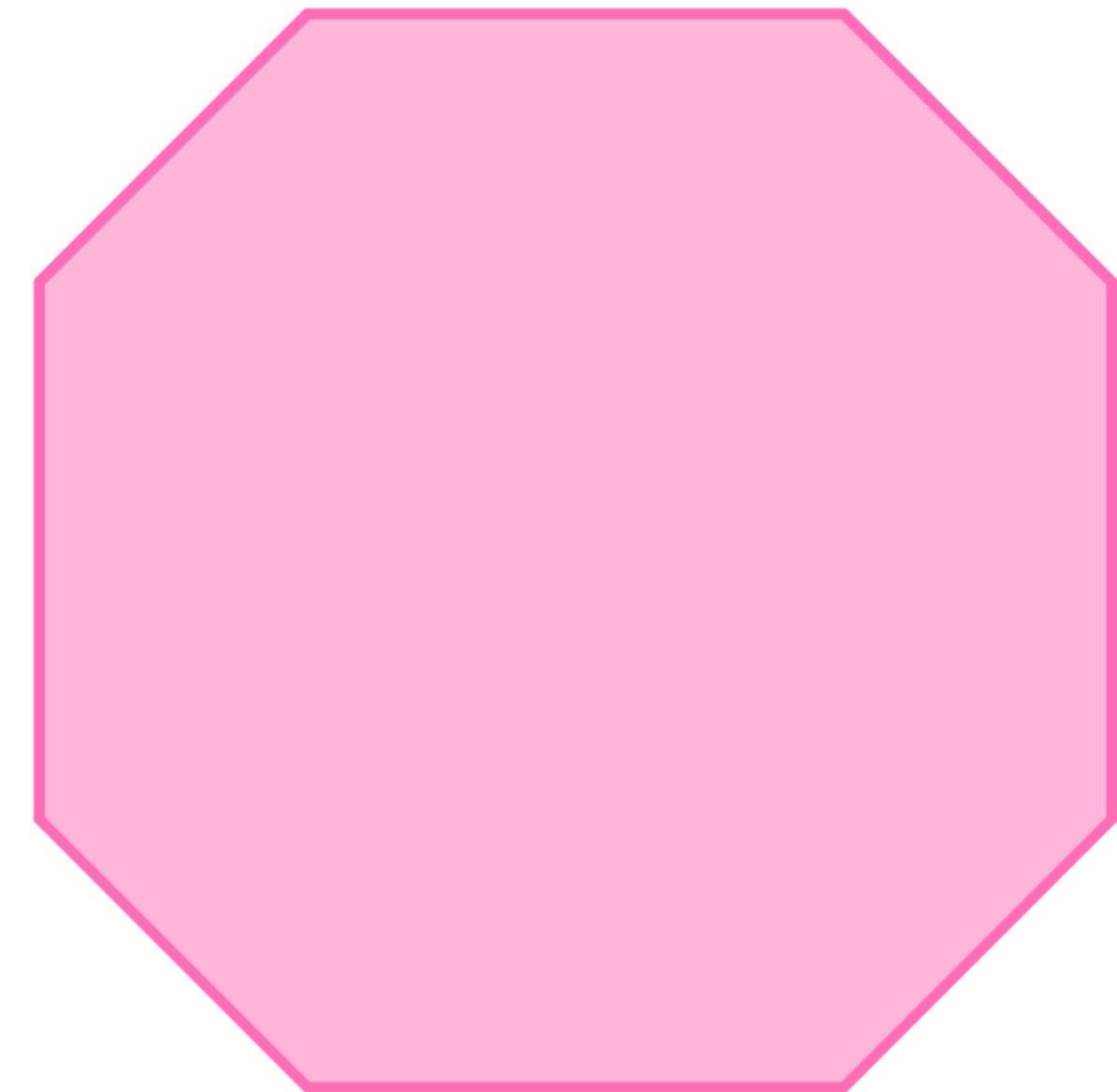
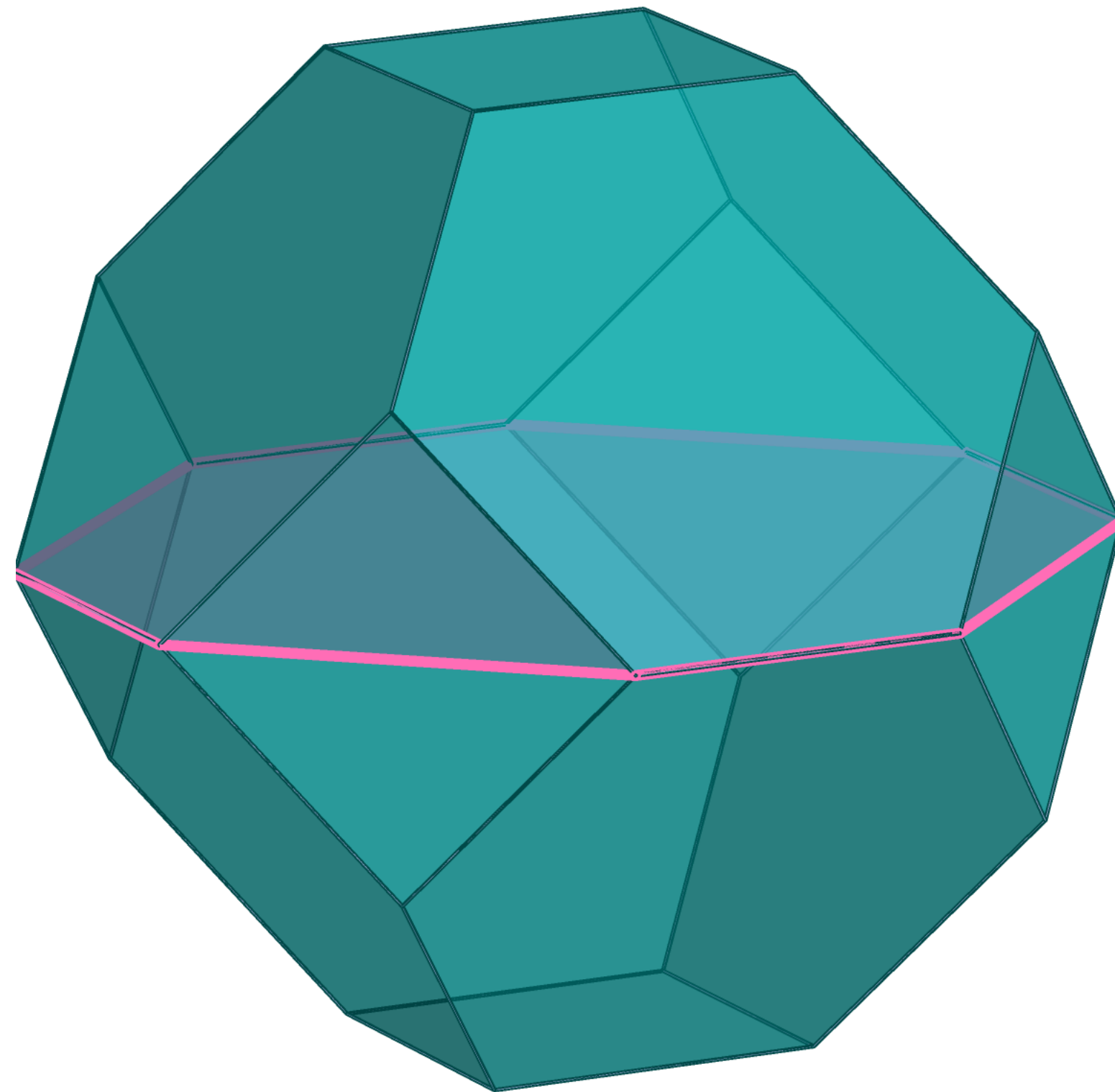
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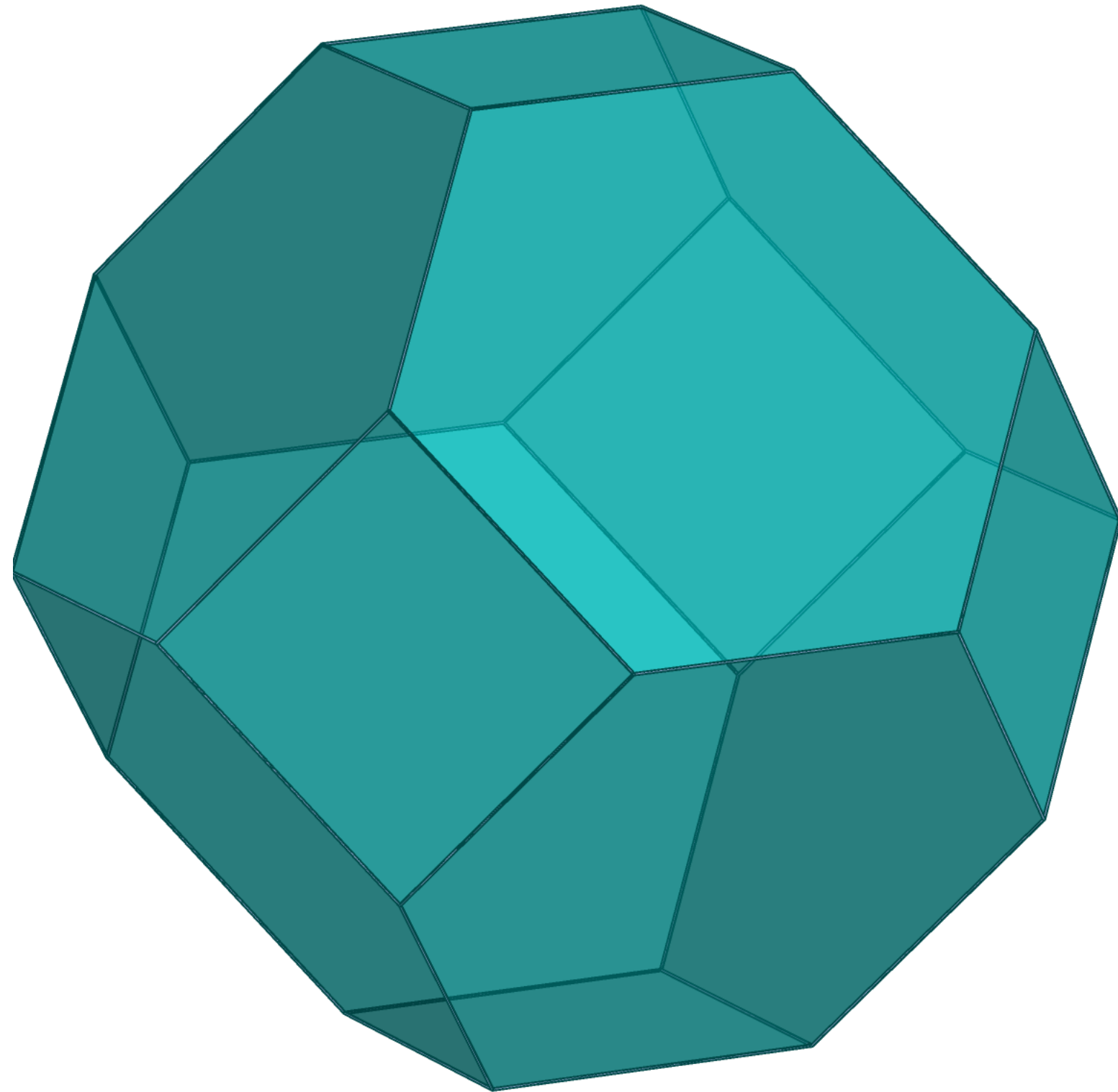
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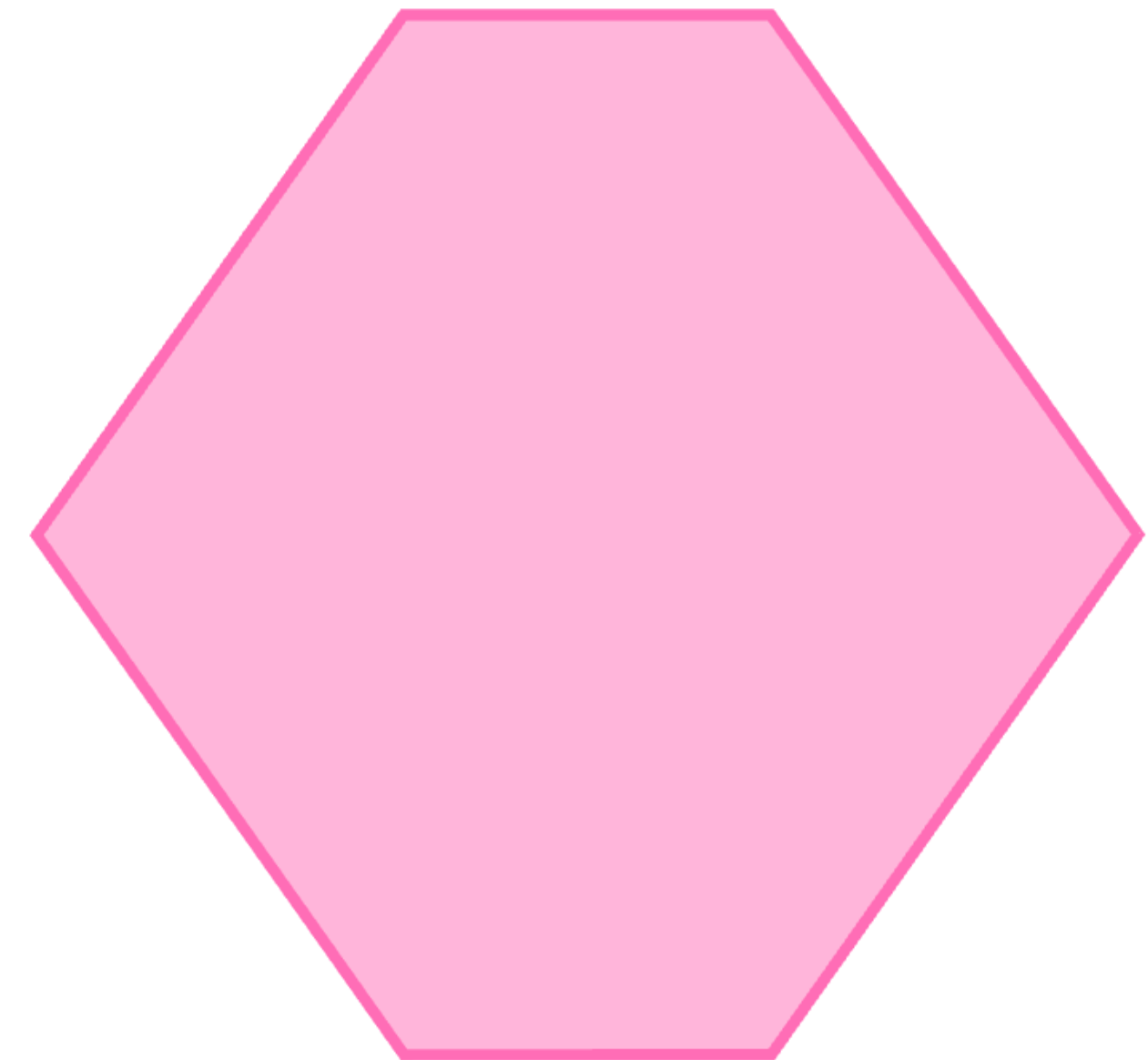
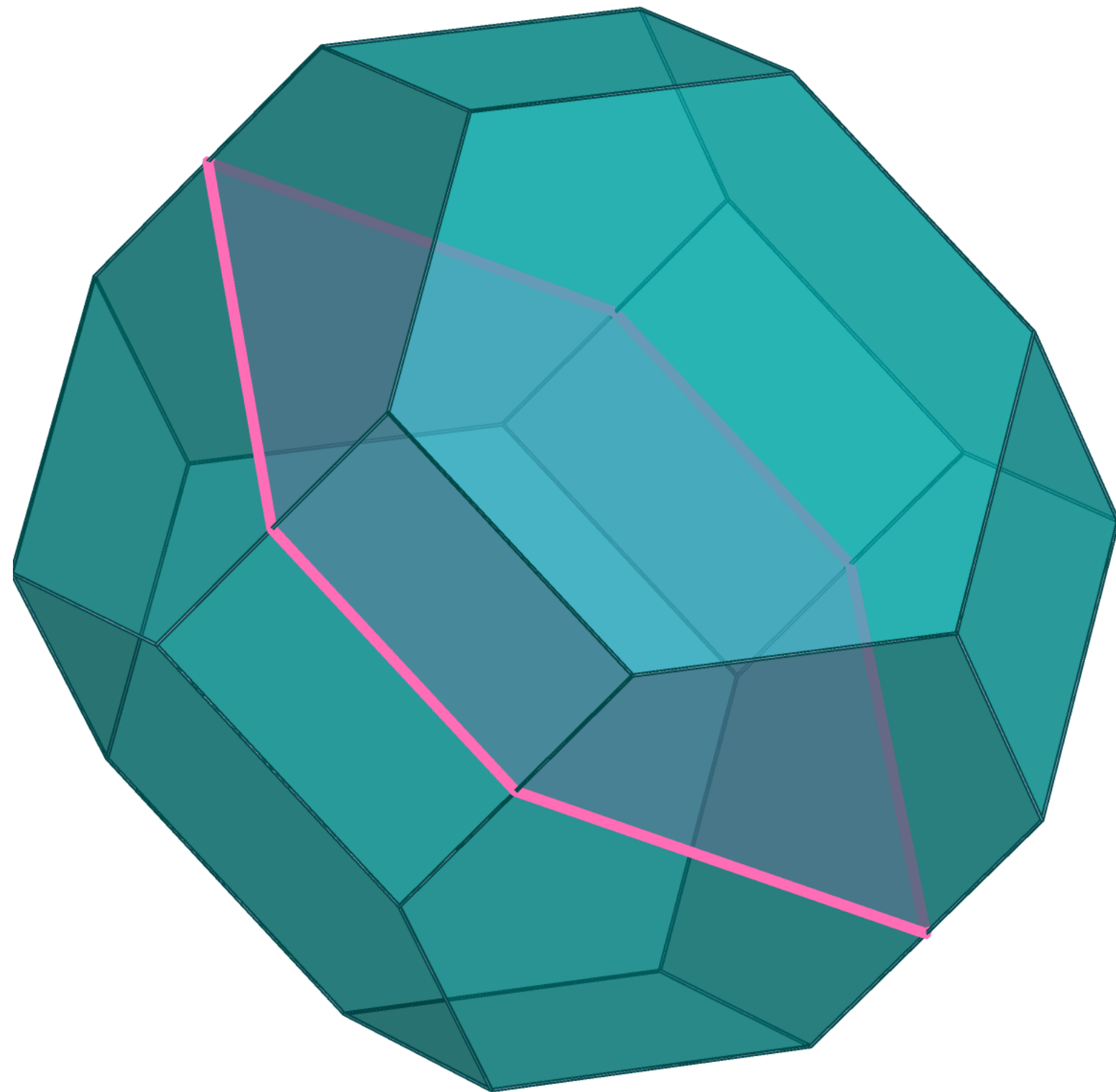
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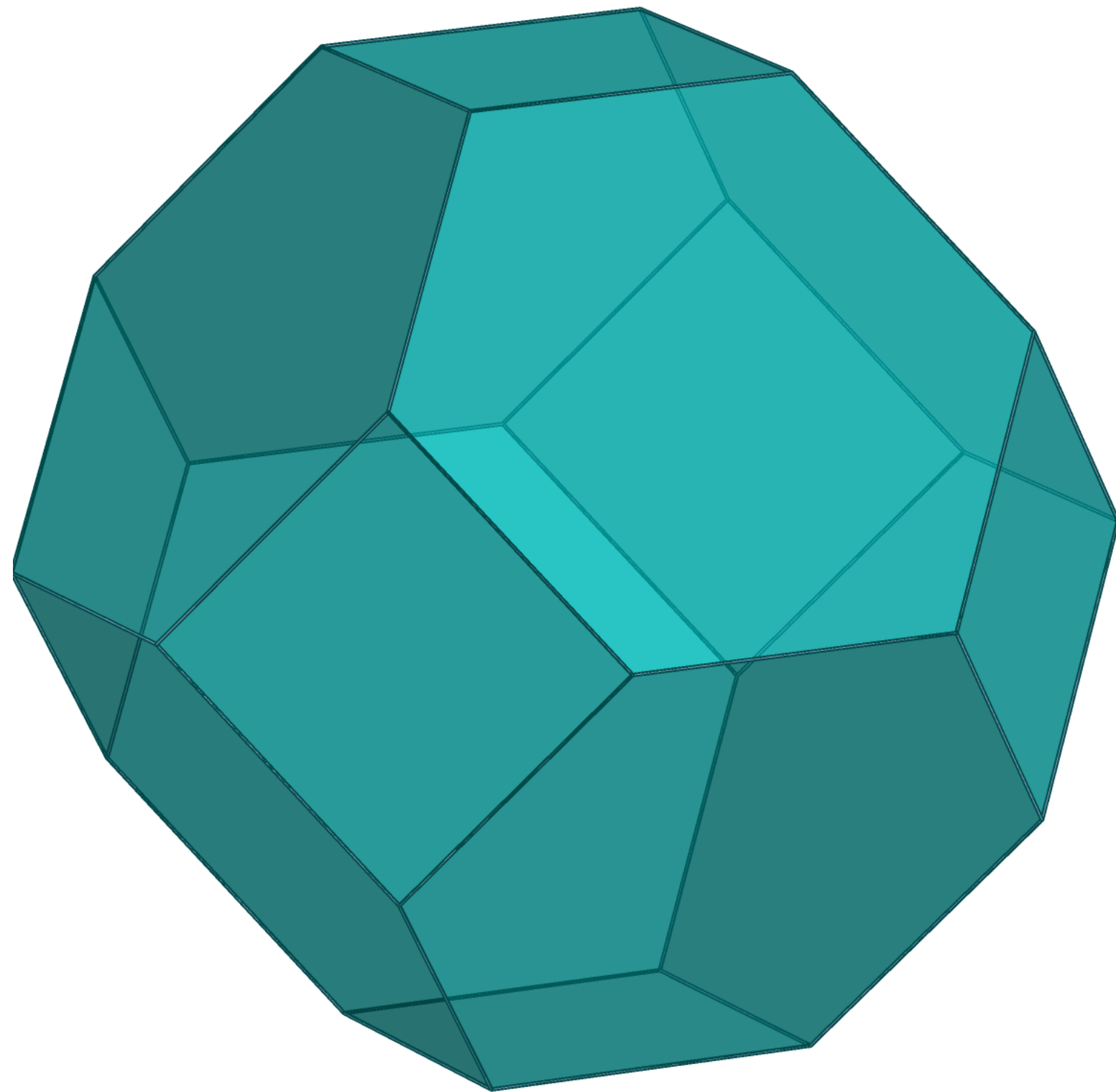
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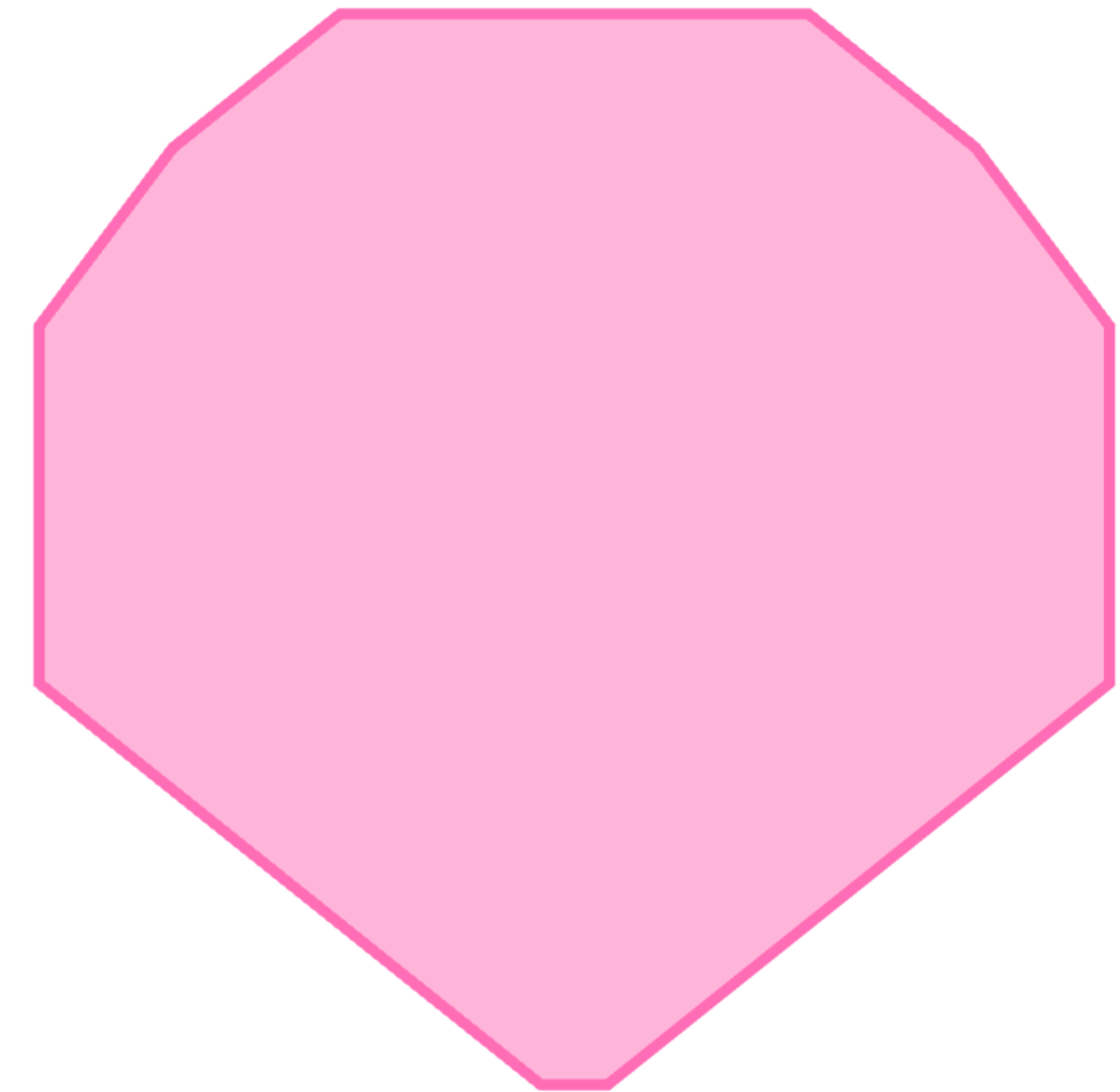
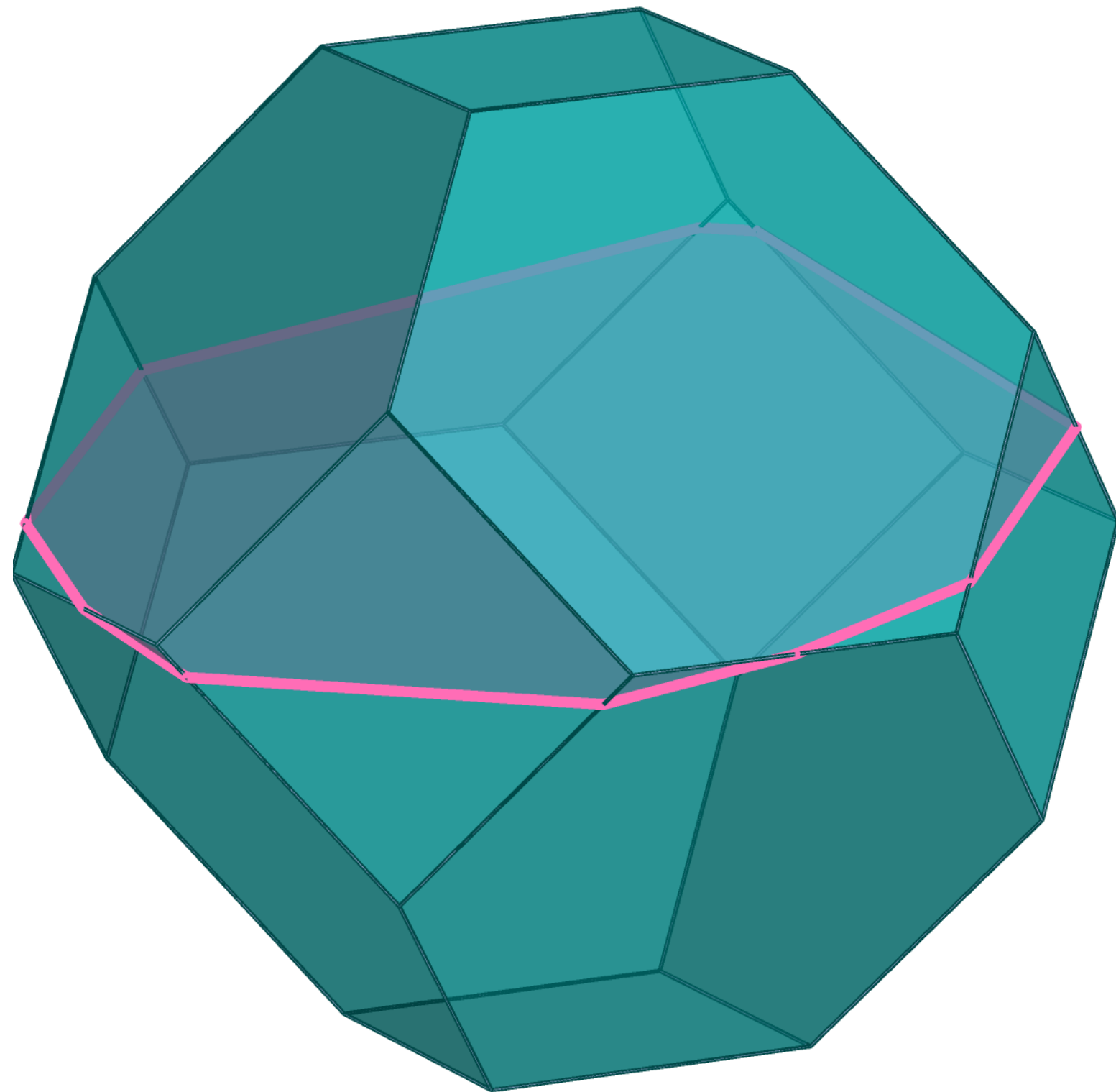
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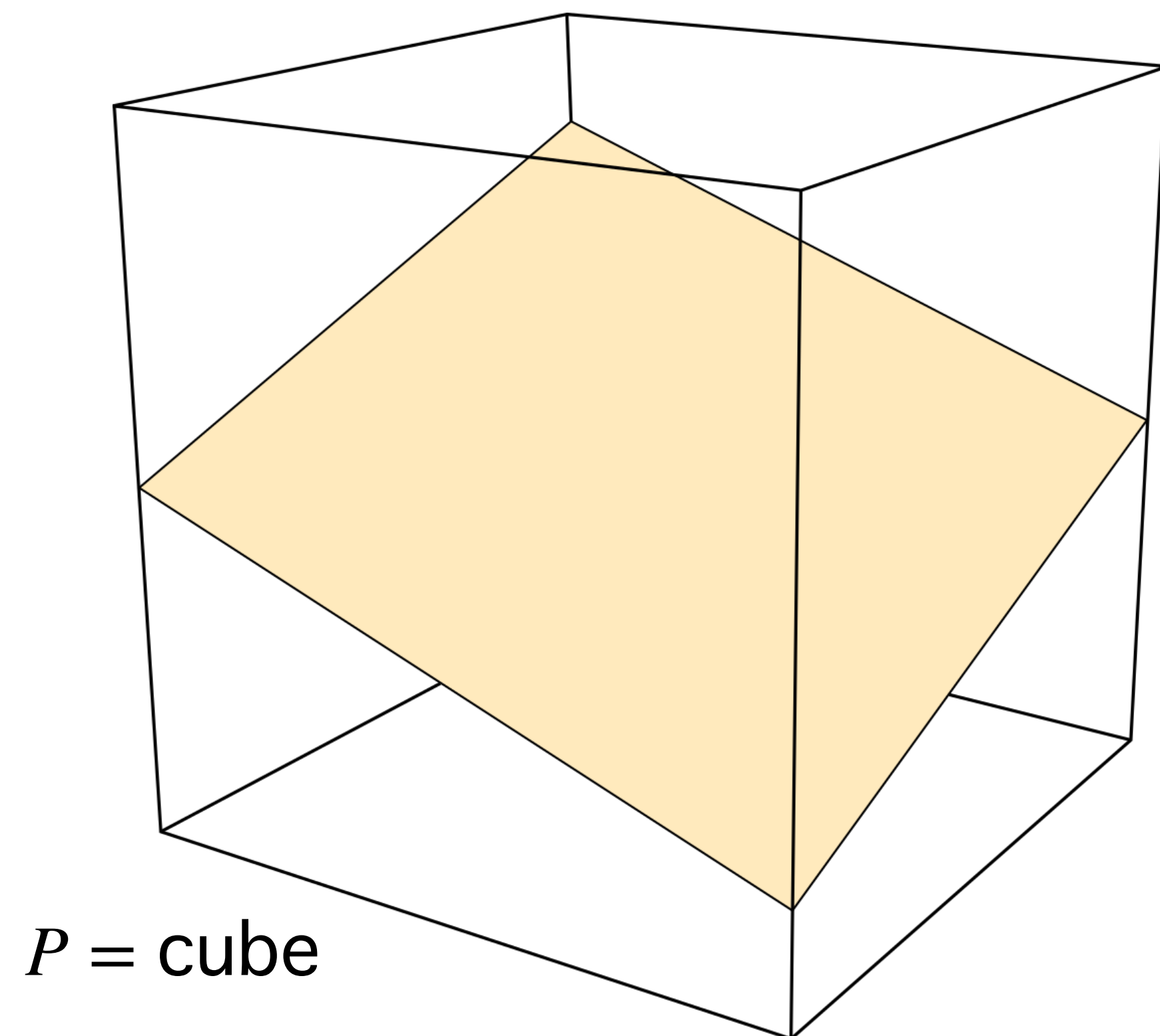
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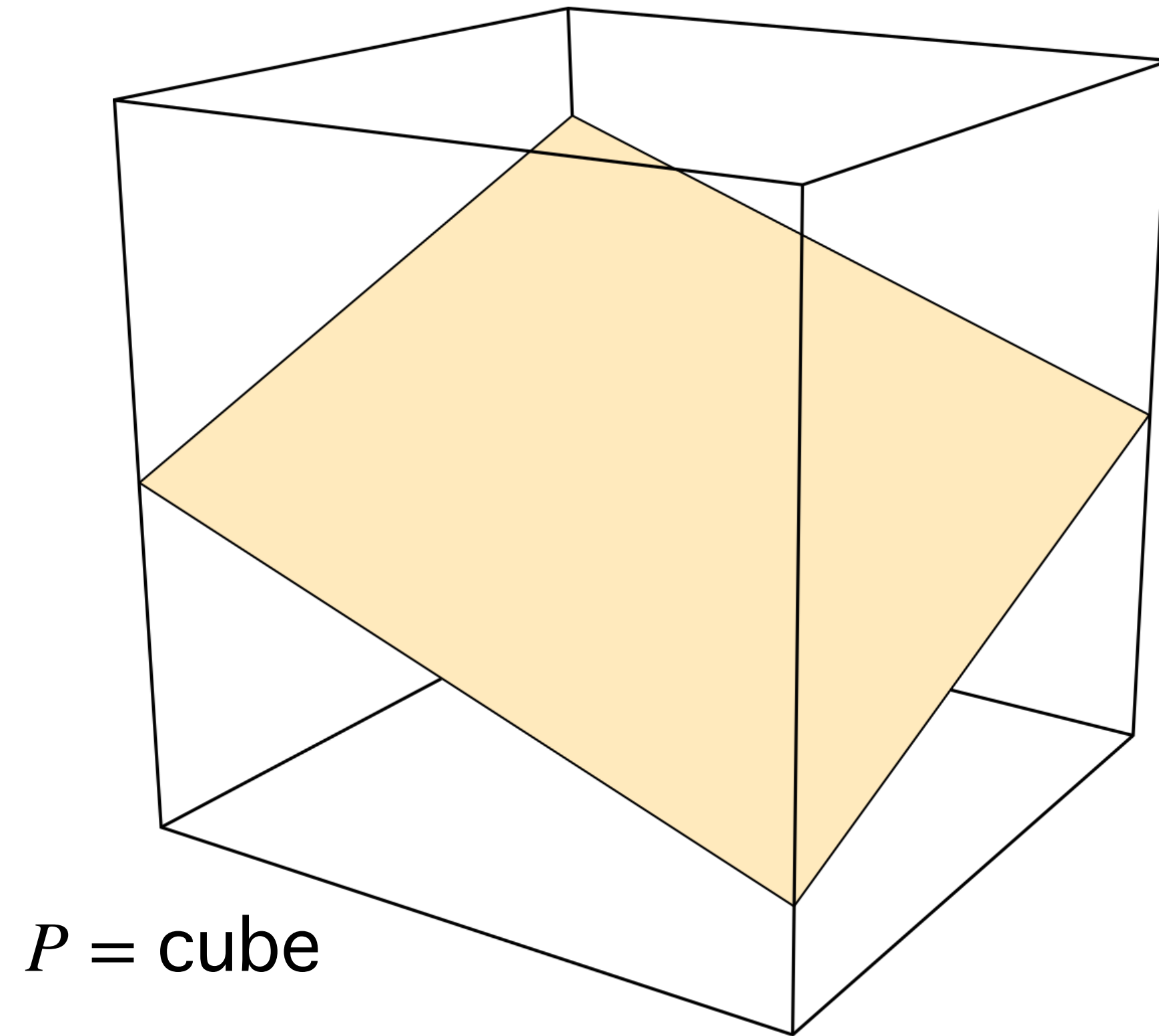


# Main idea



Small perturbations (generically)  
preserve the **combinatorial type**

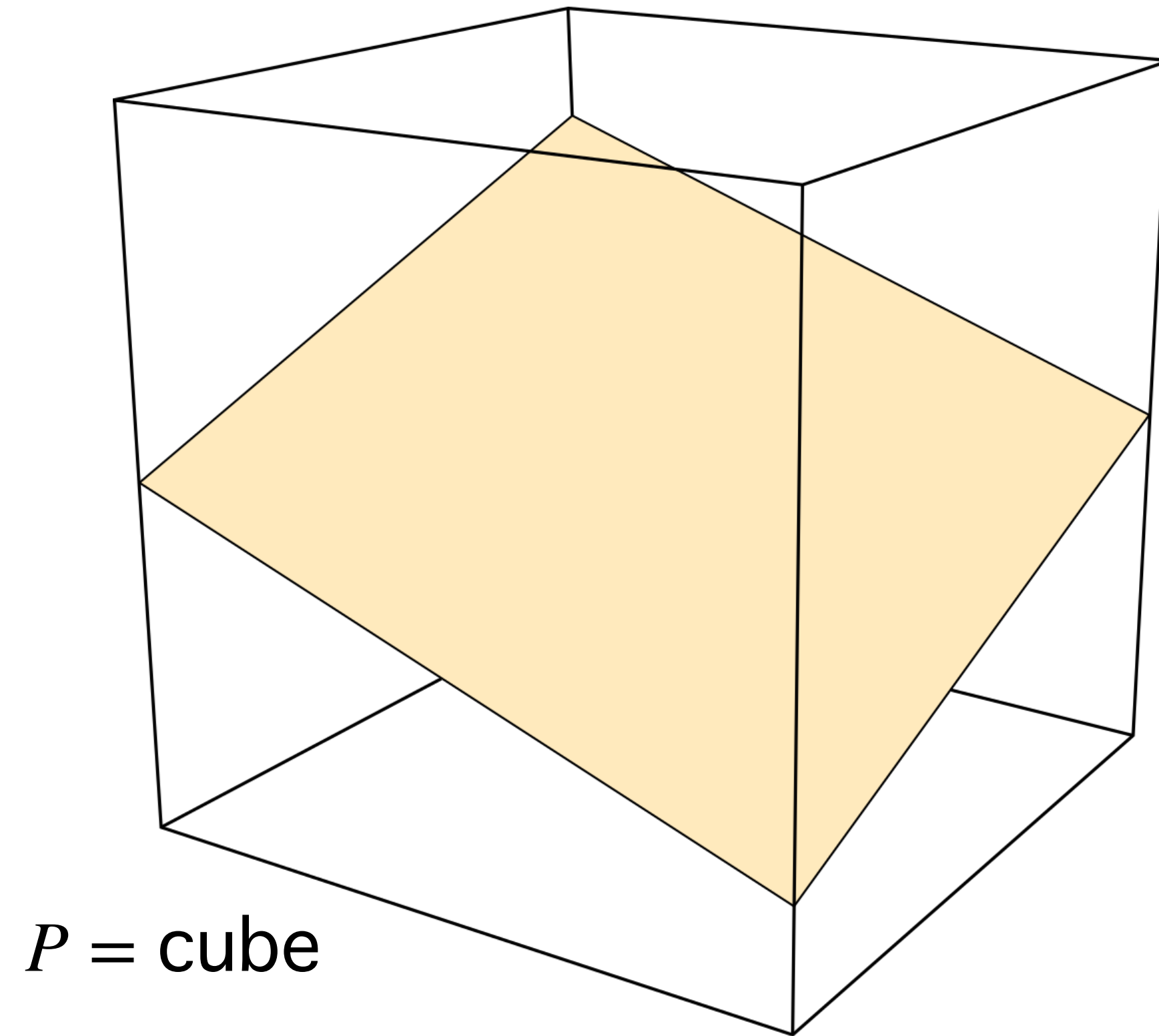
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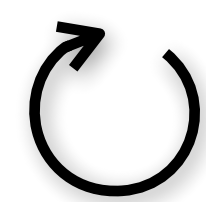

**Strategy:** group the slices with the same combinatorial type

# Hyperplane arrangements

**Construction:** slices with the same combinatorial type belong to the same cell of a certain (combination of) hyperplane arrangement(s)

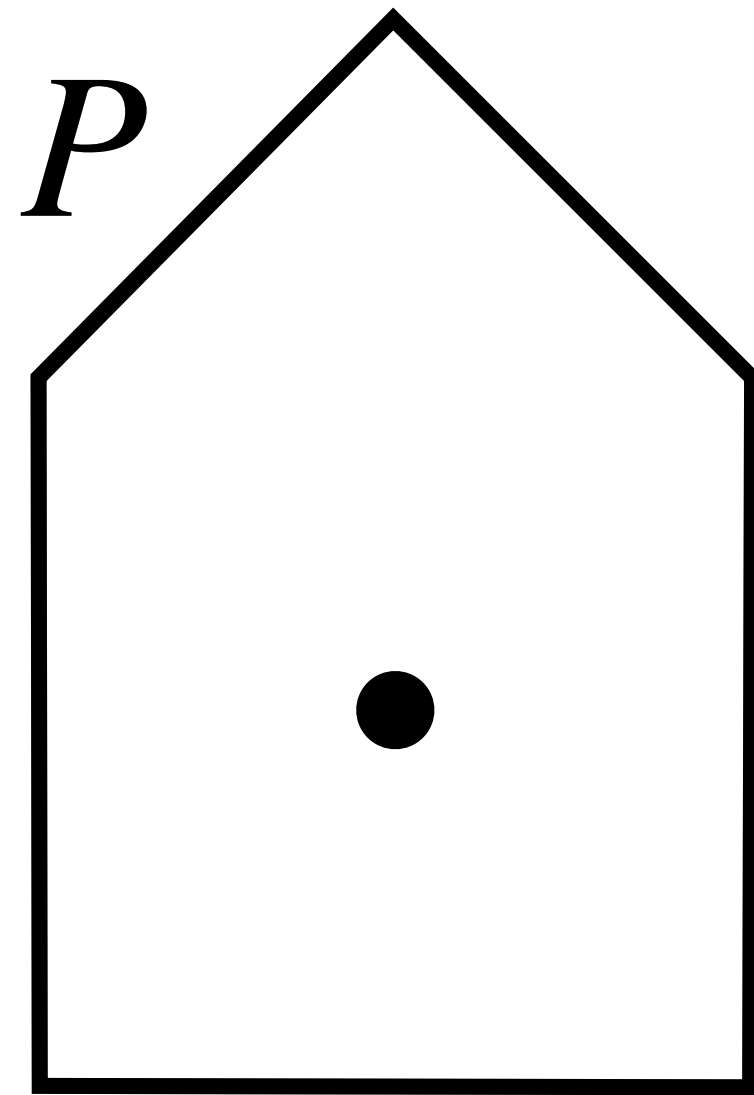
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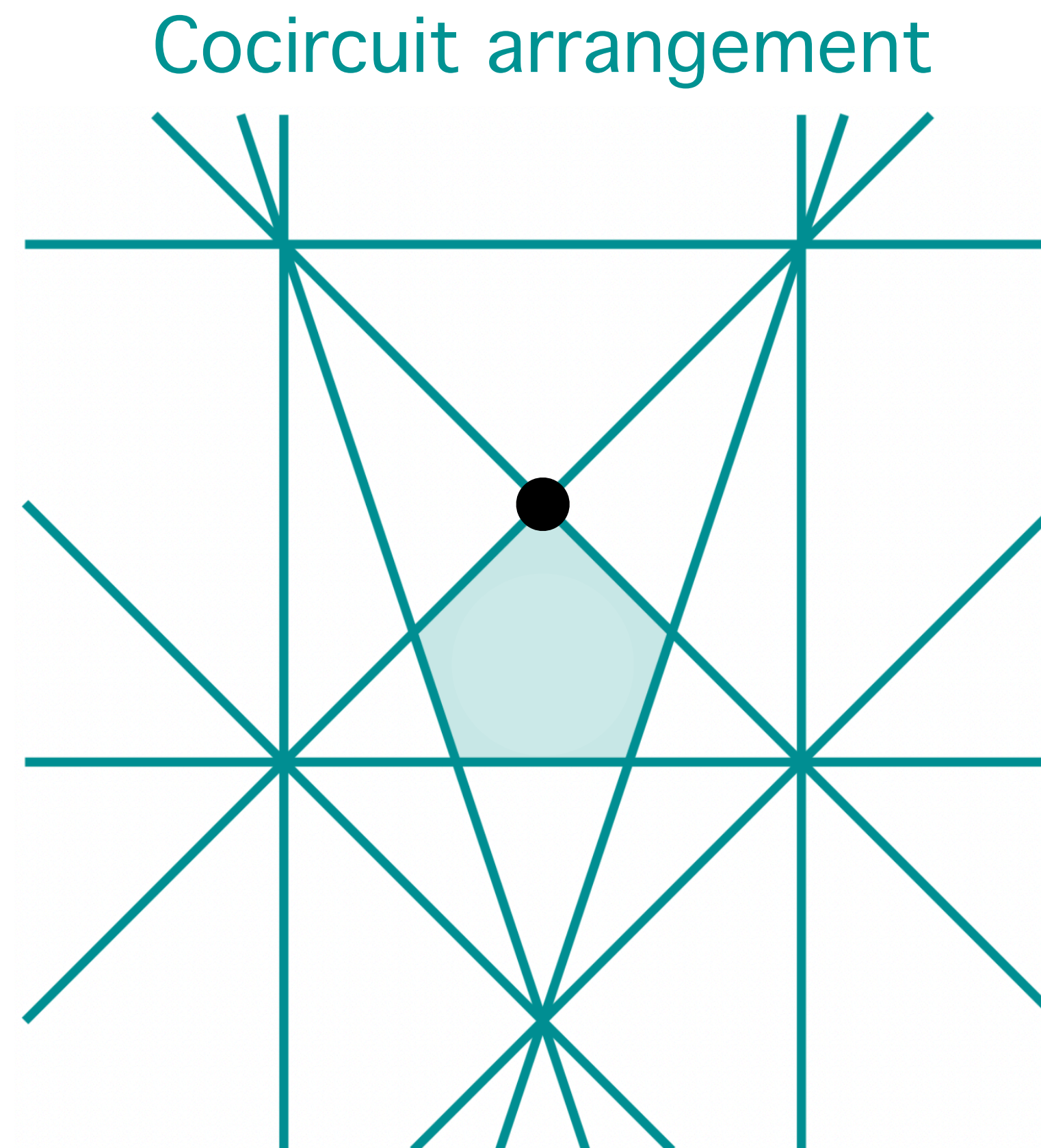
	Hyperplane arrangement	Reference object
	Central arrangement Cocircuit arrangement	Intersection body Oriented matroid
	Parallel arrangement Sweep arrangement	Fiber polytope Sweep polytope

# Hyperplane arrangements

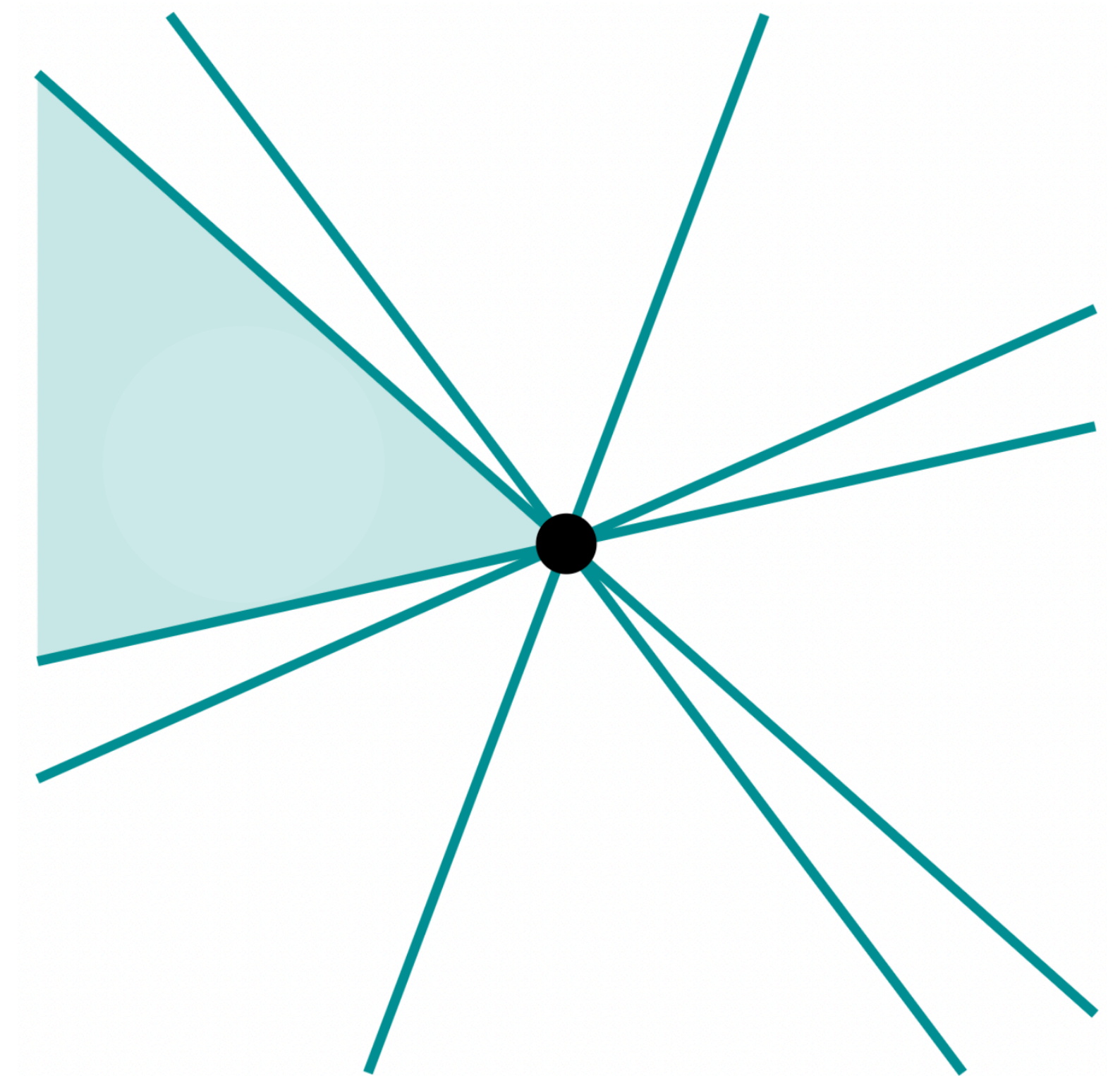
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Slices of convex bodies



10

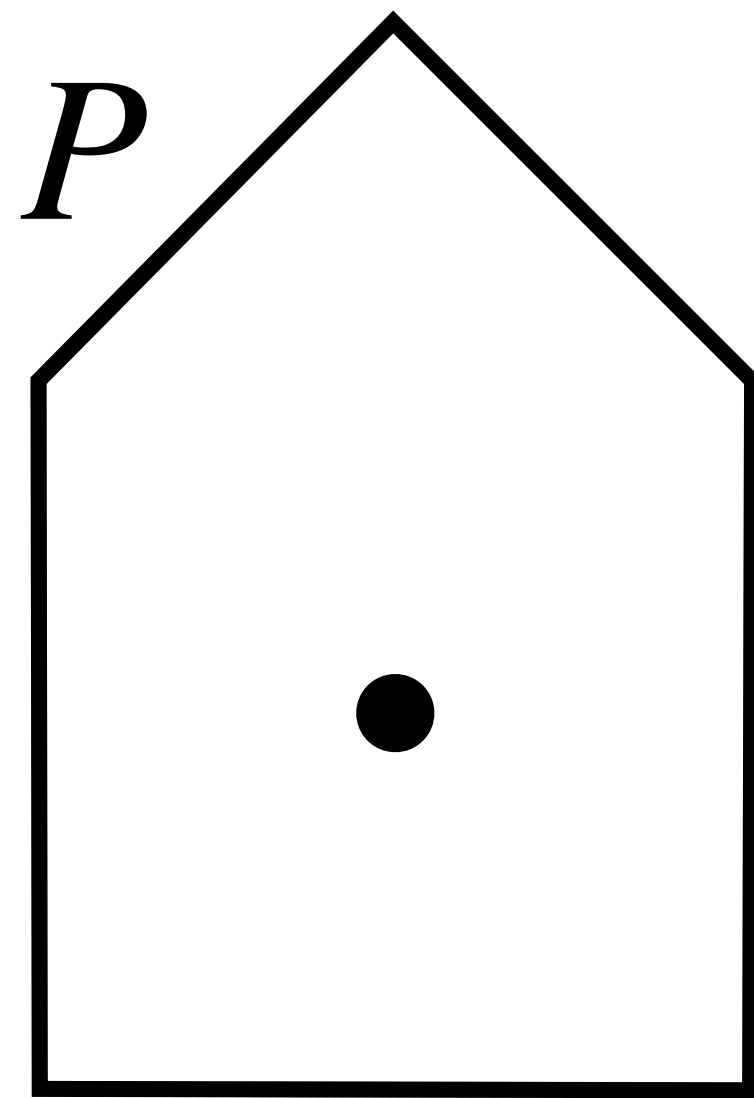


Central arrangement

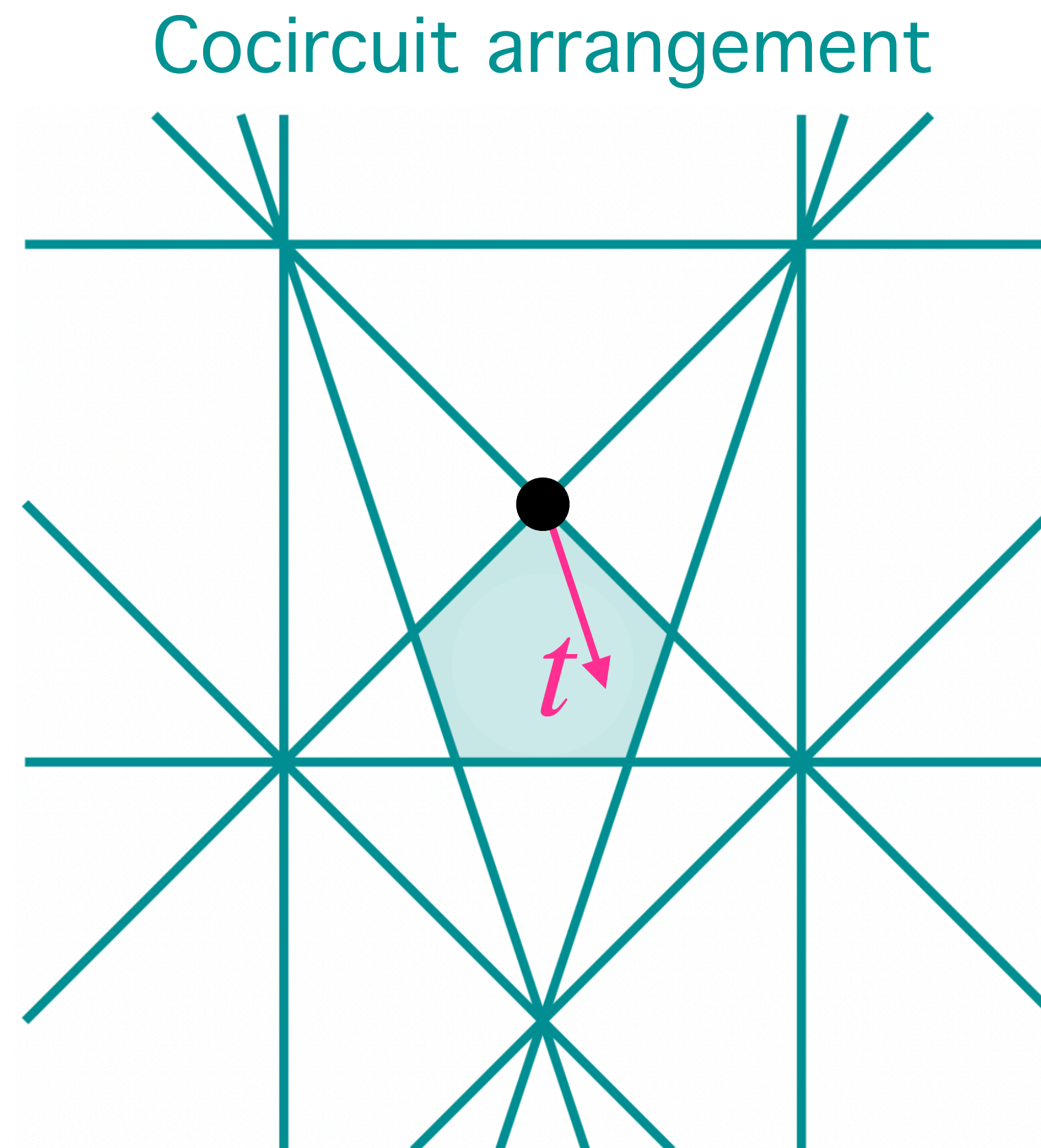
Chiara Meroni

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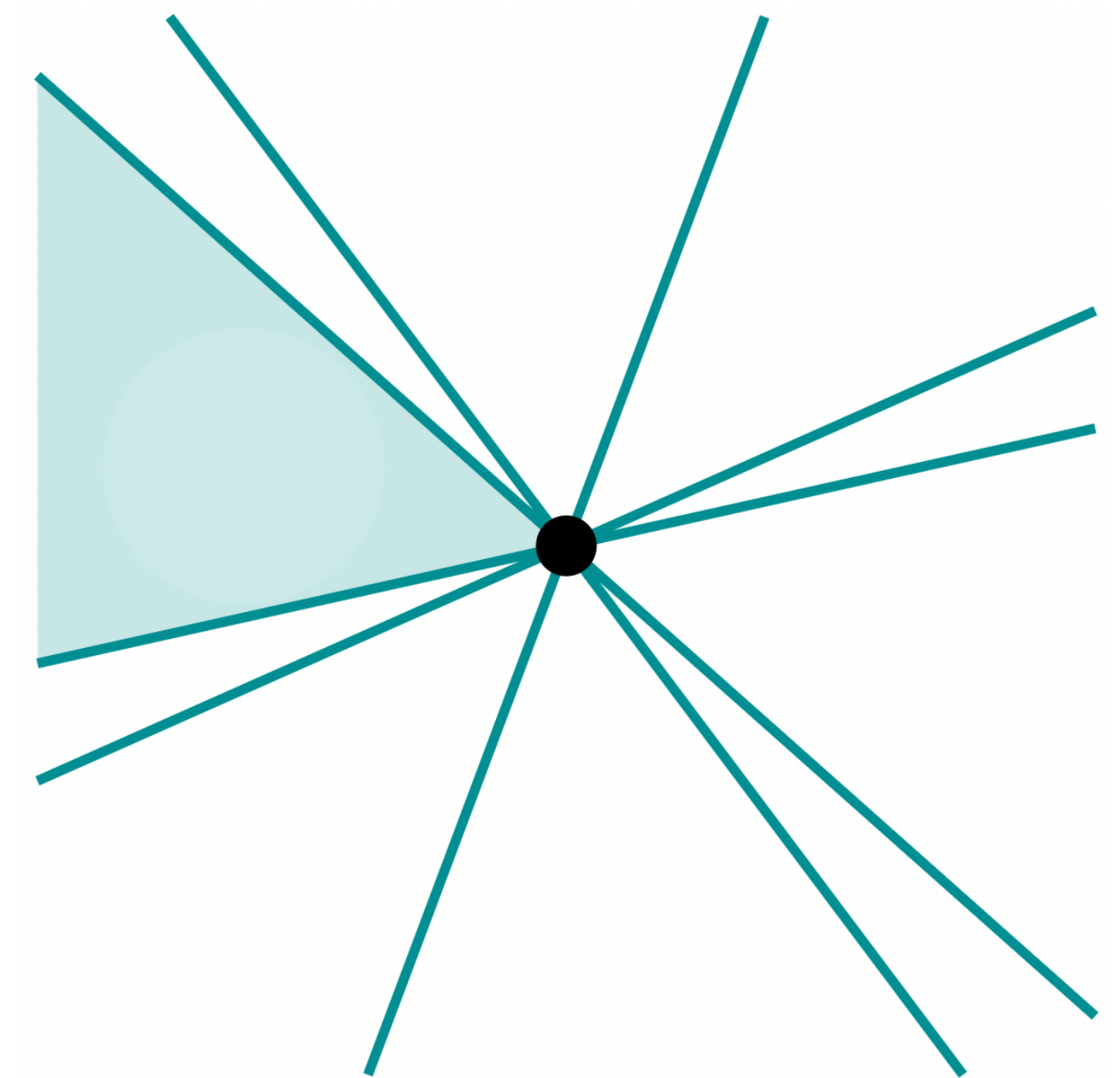
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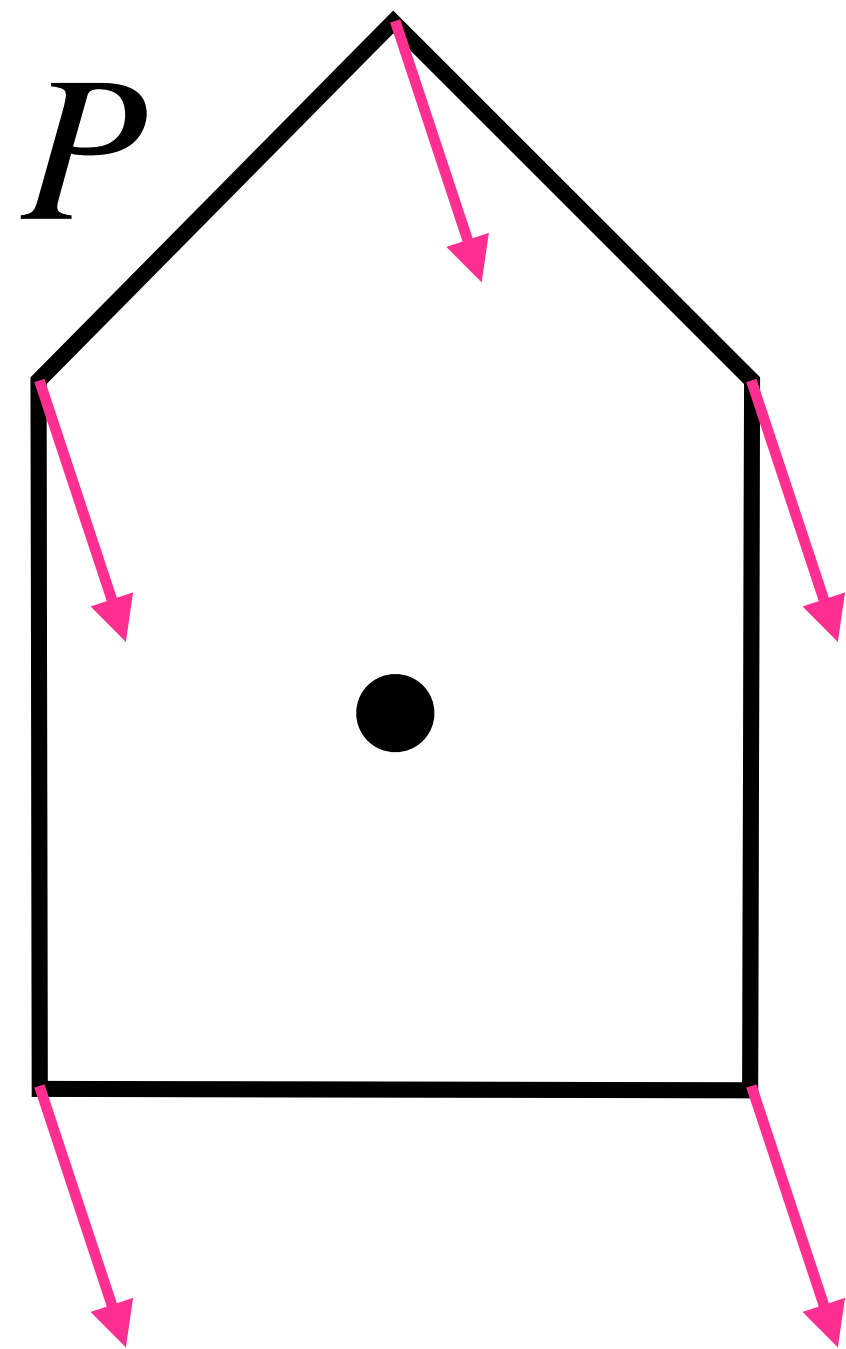
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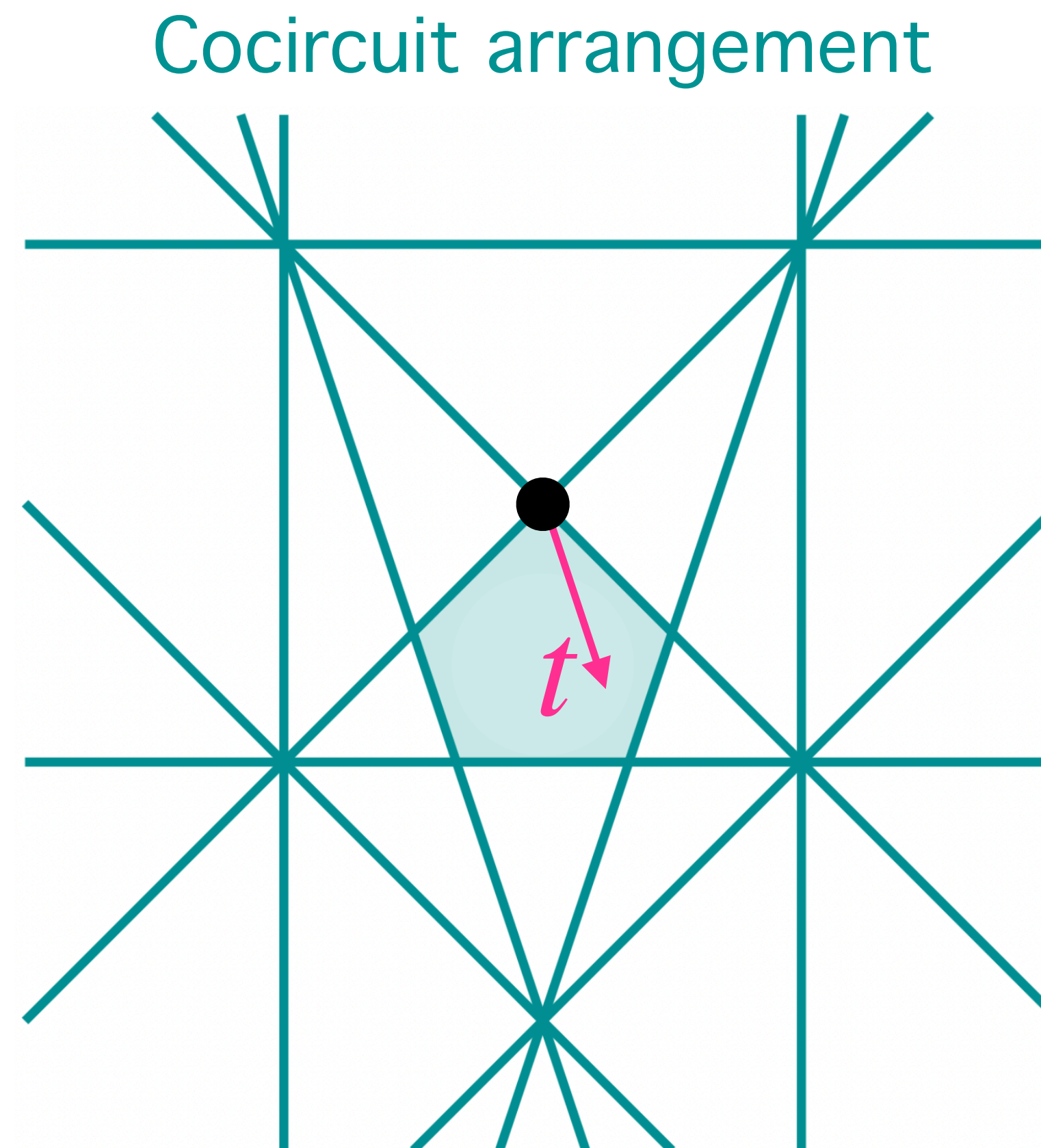
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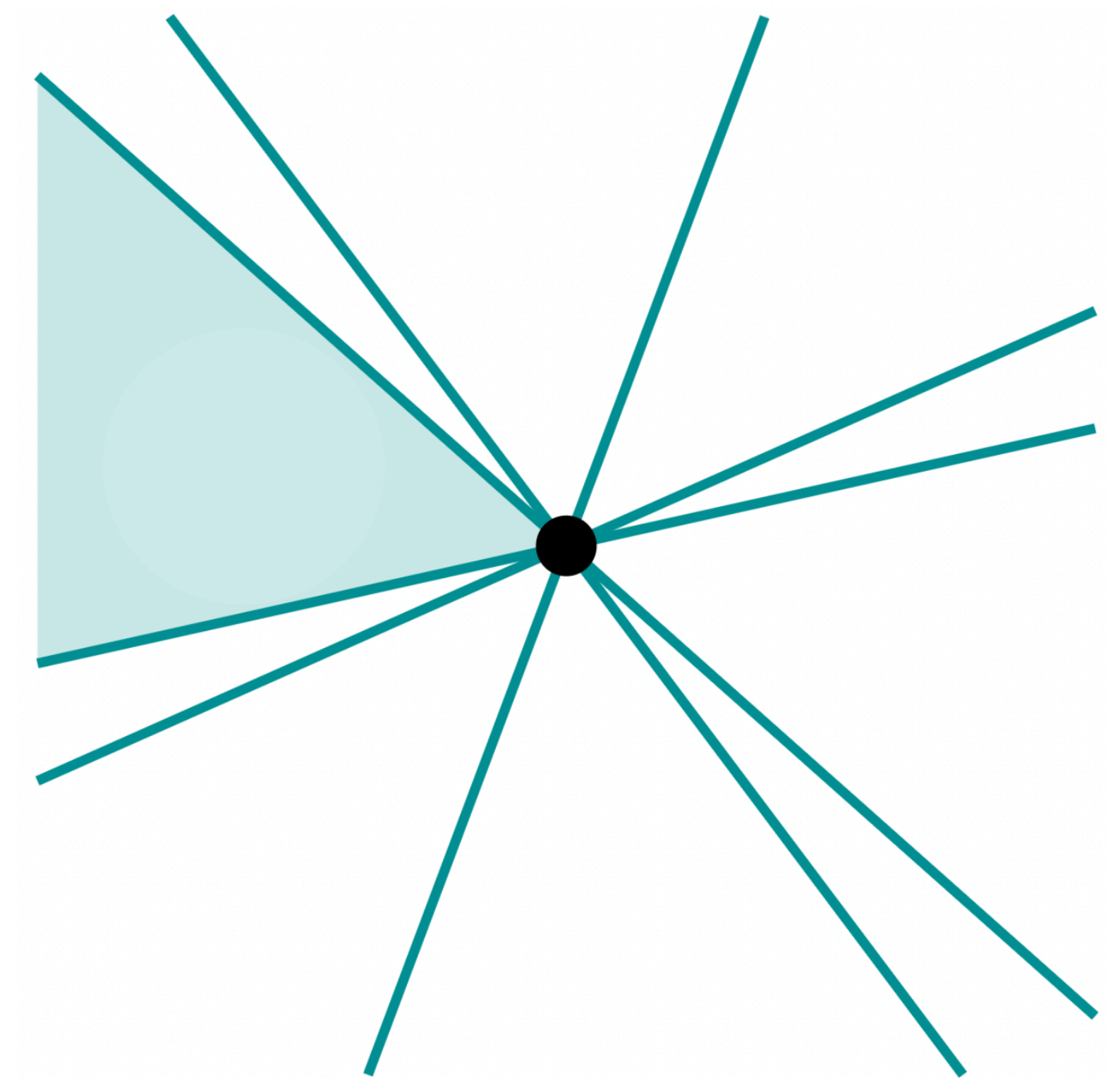
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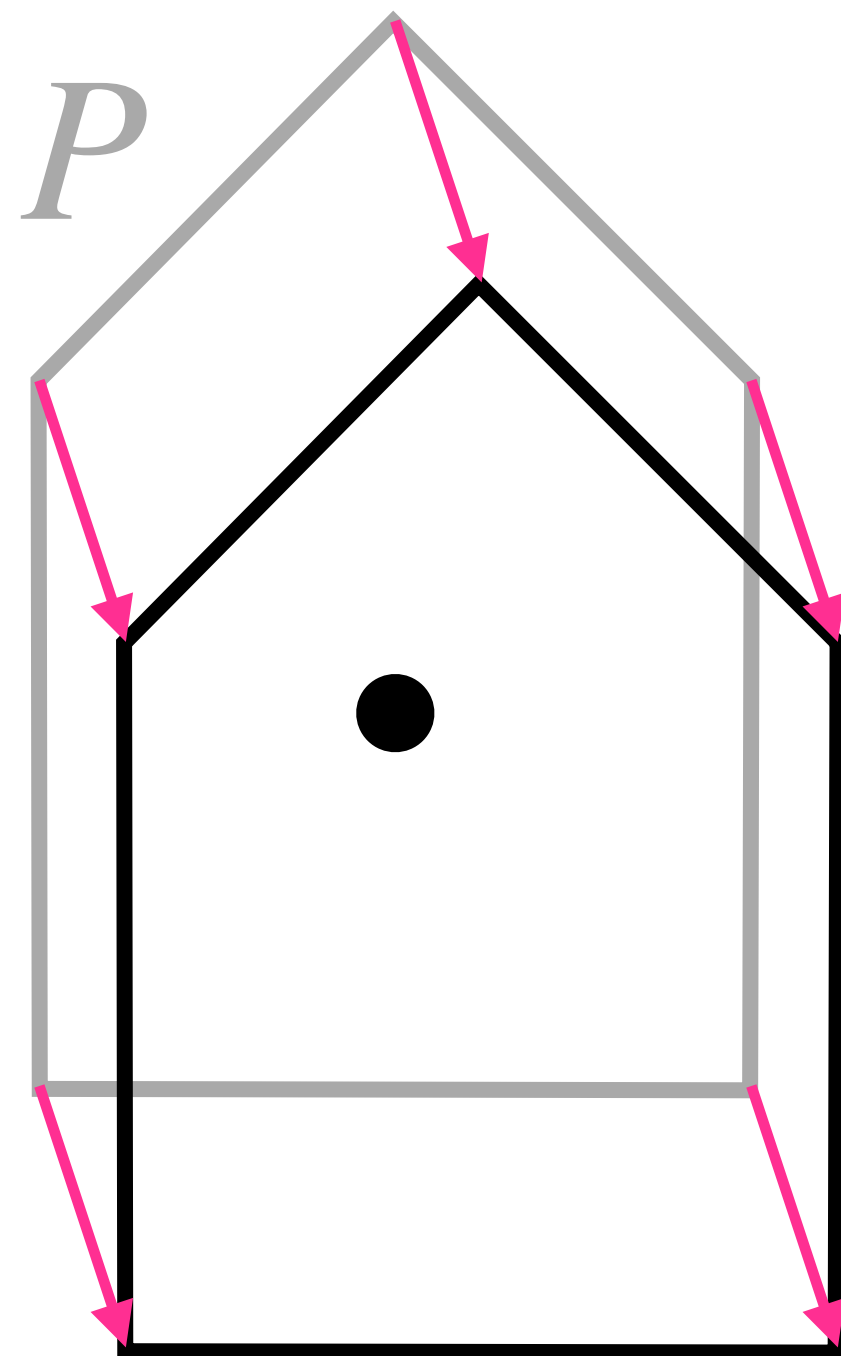
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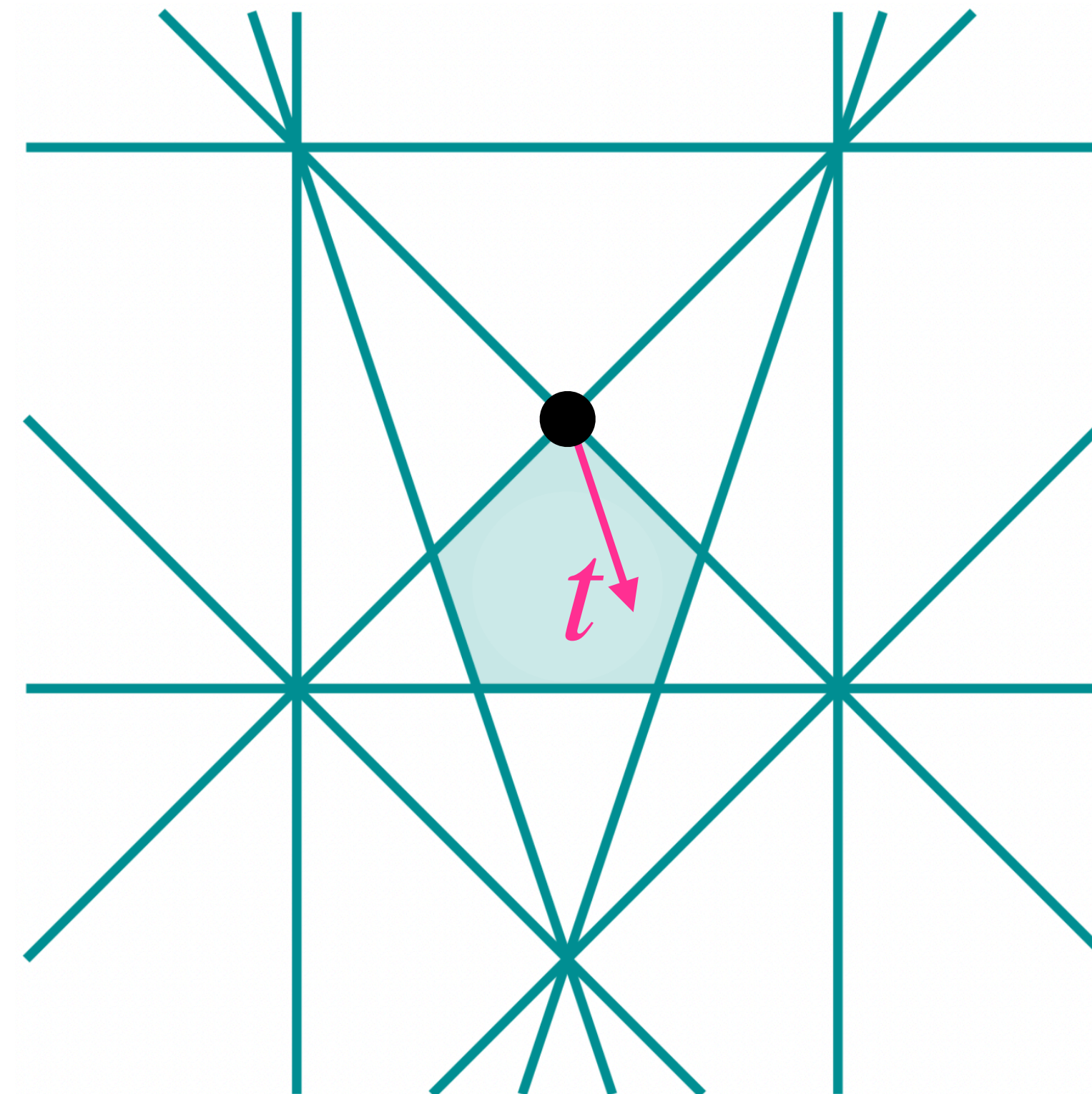
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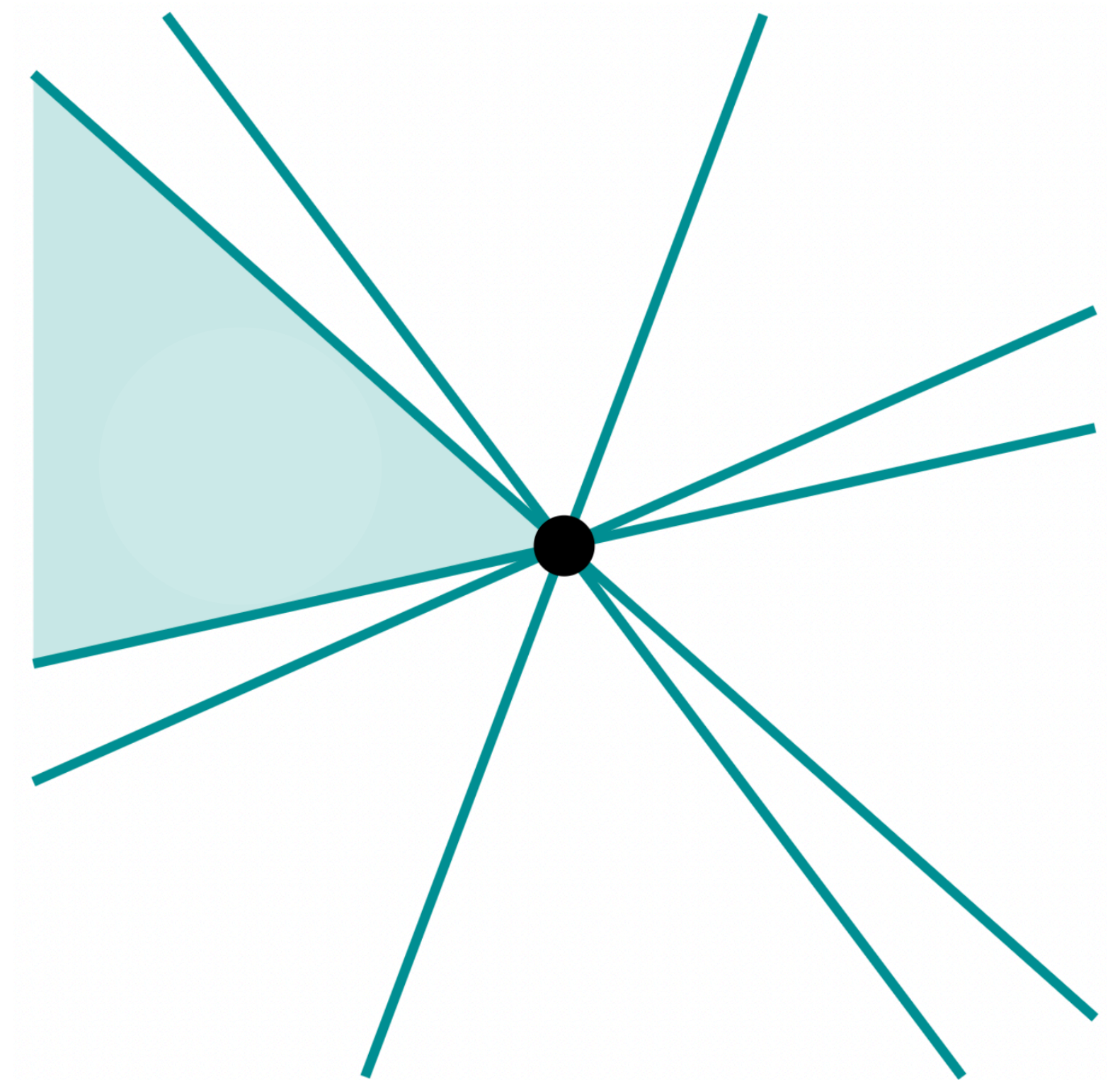


Slices of convex bodies

Cocircuit arrangement



10

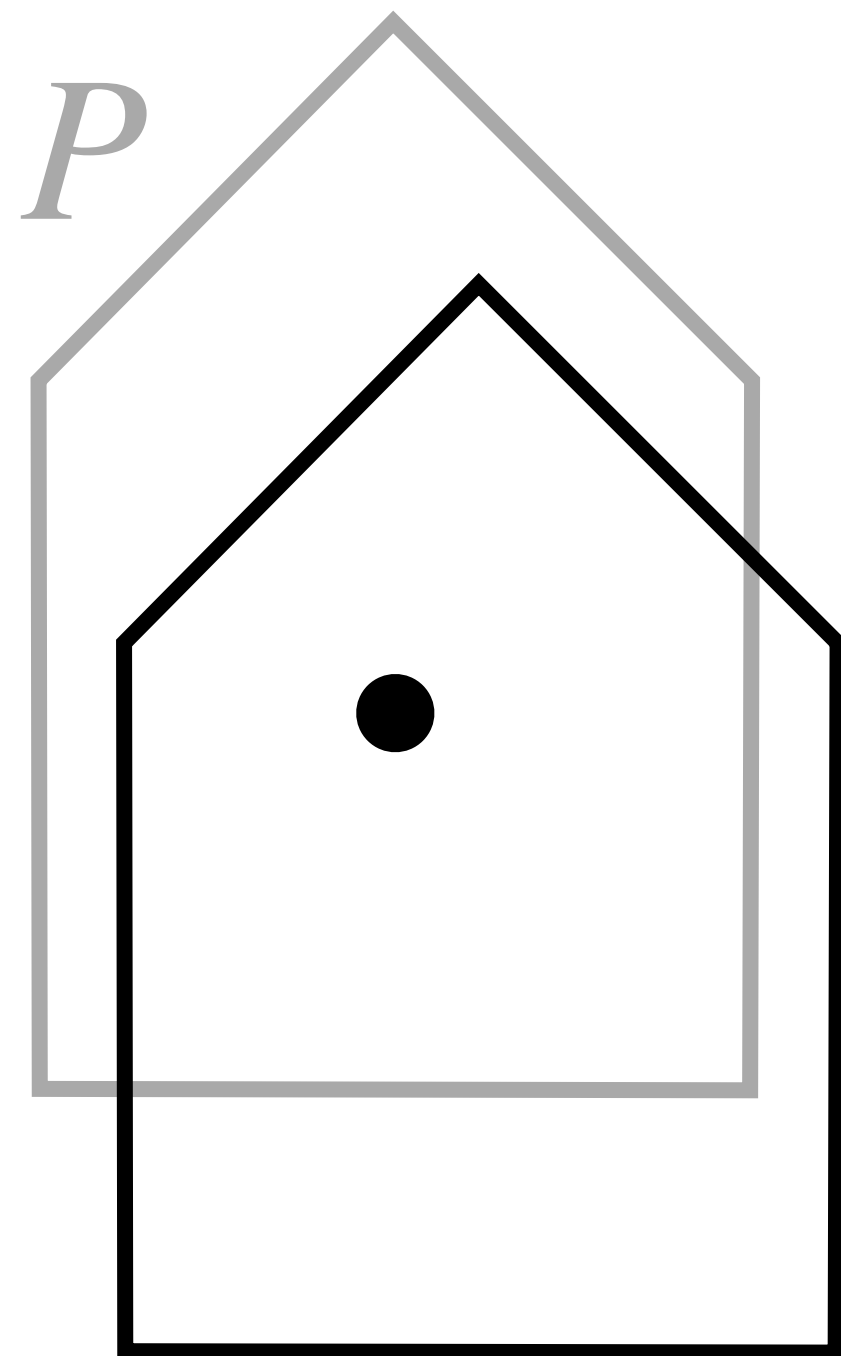


Central arrangement

Chiara Meroni

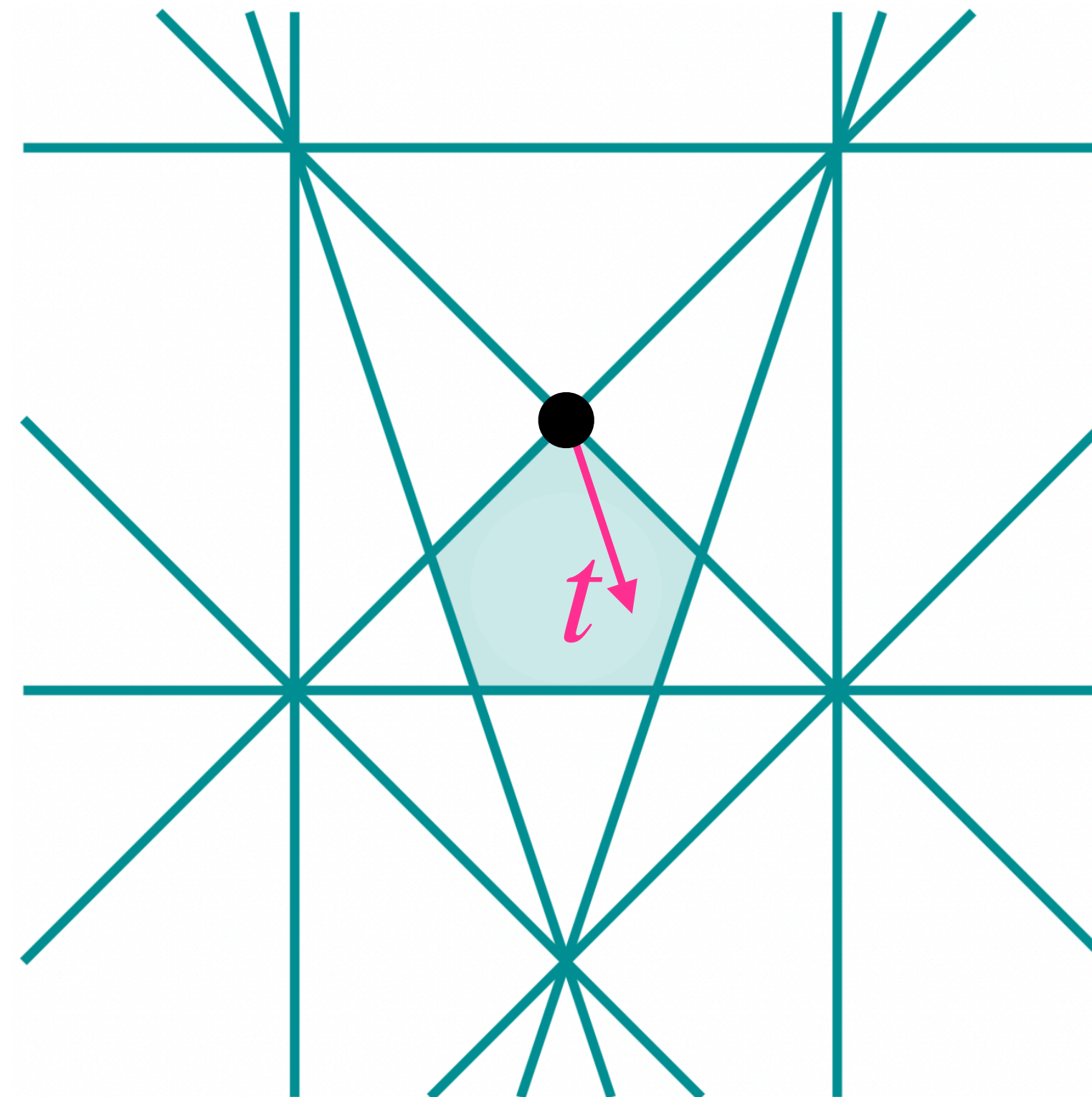
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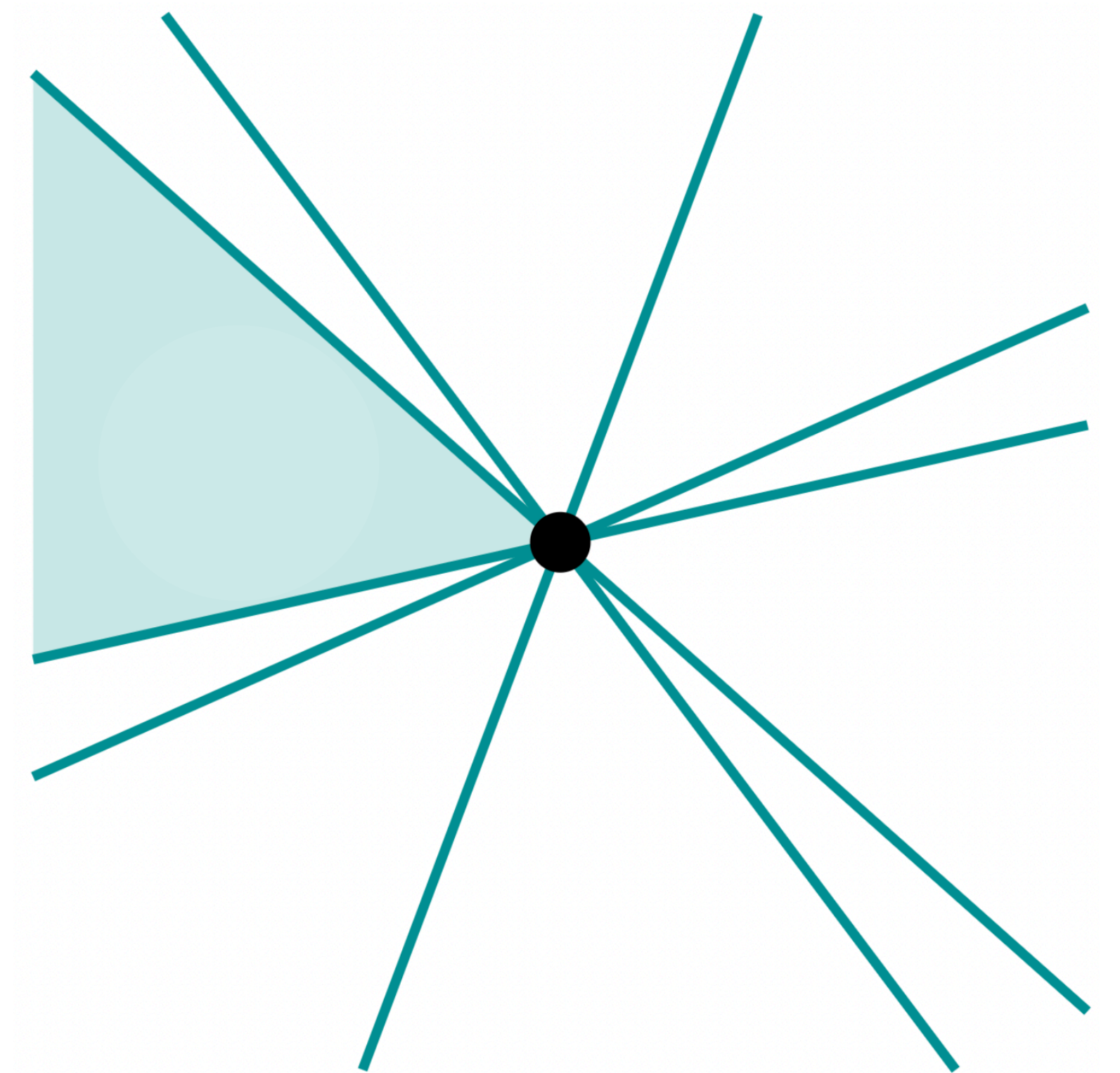


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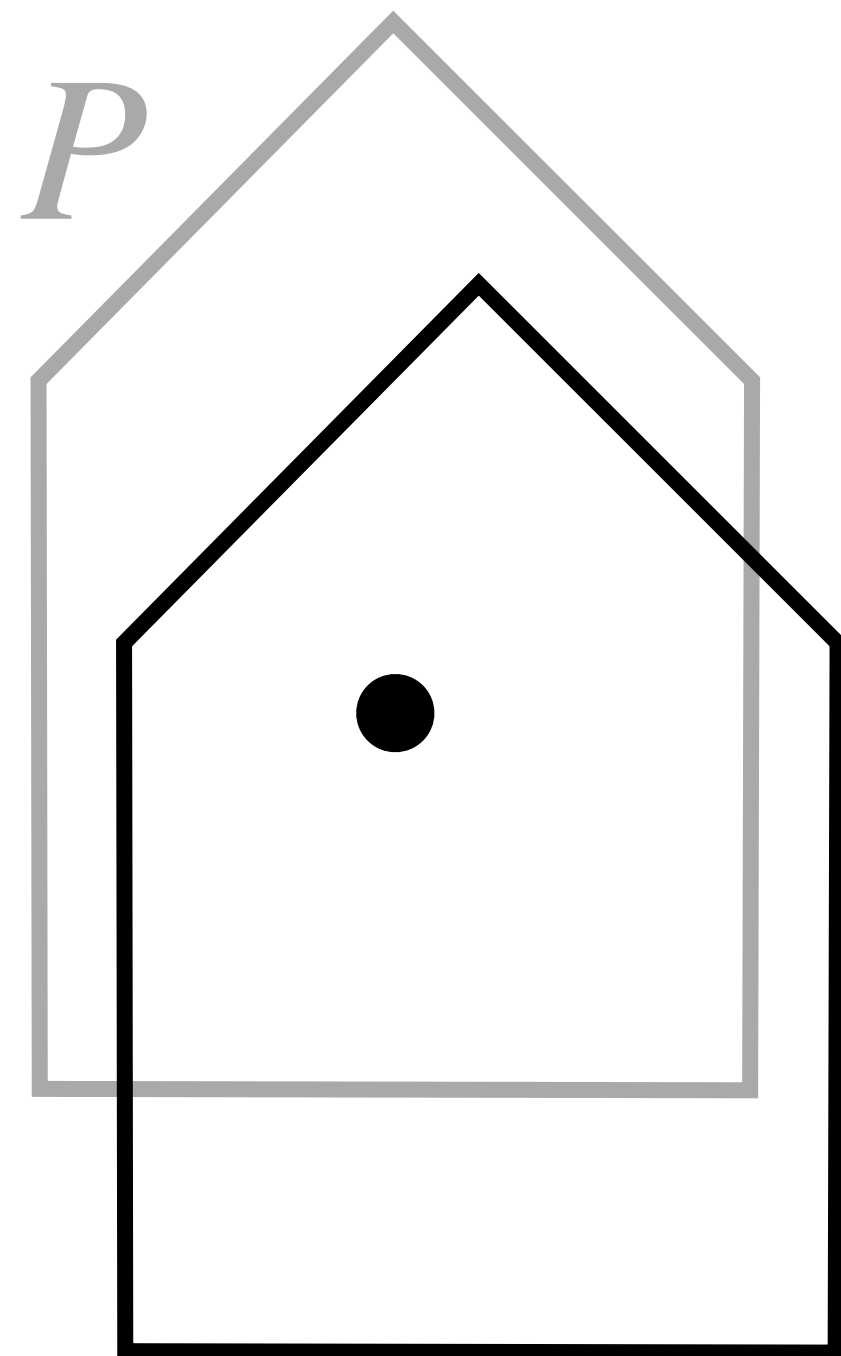


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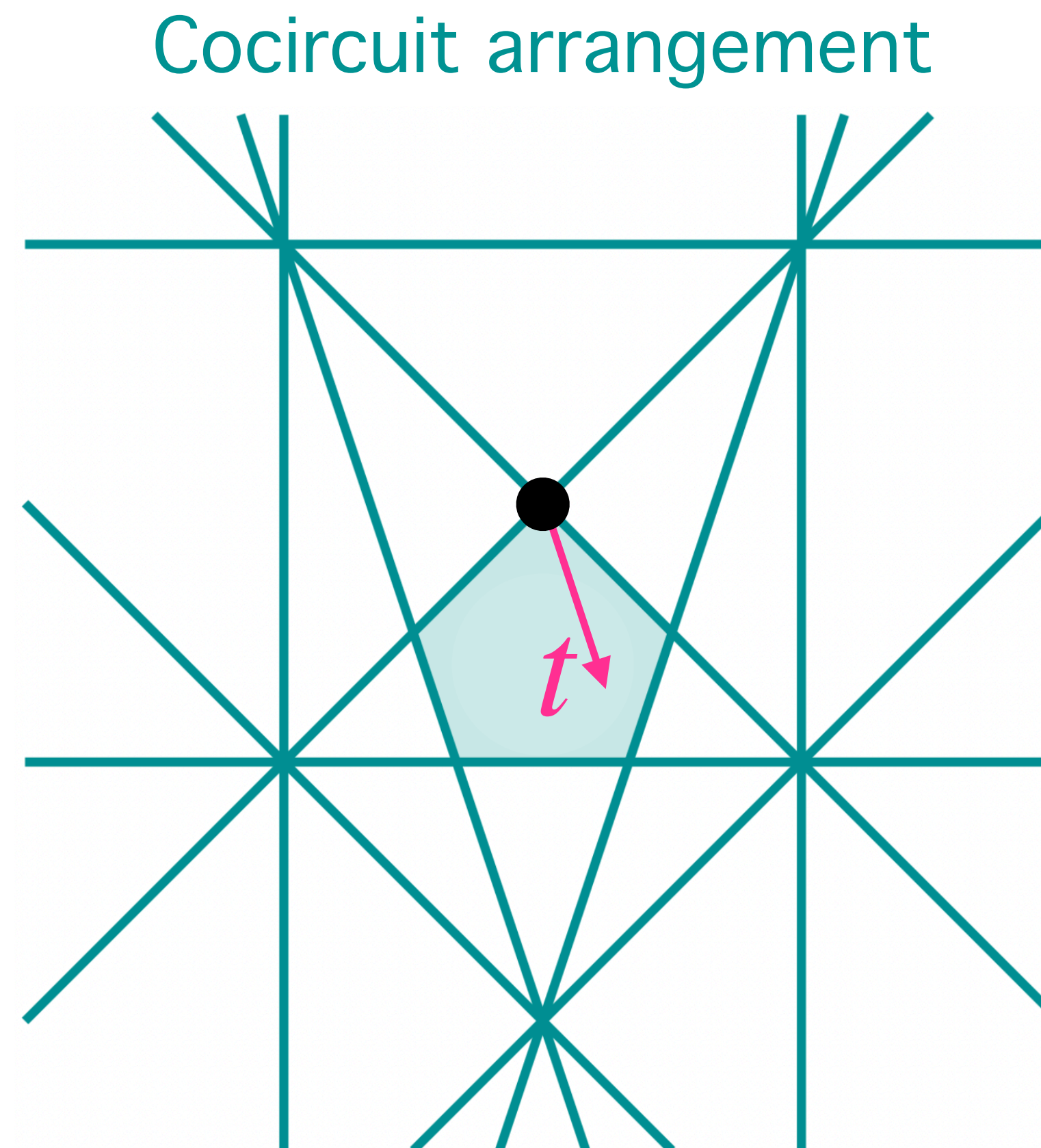
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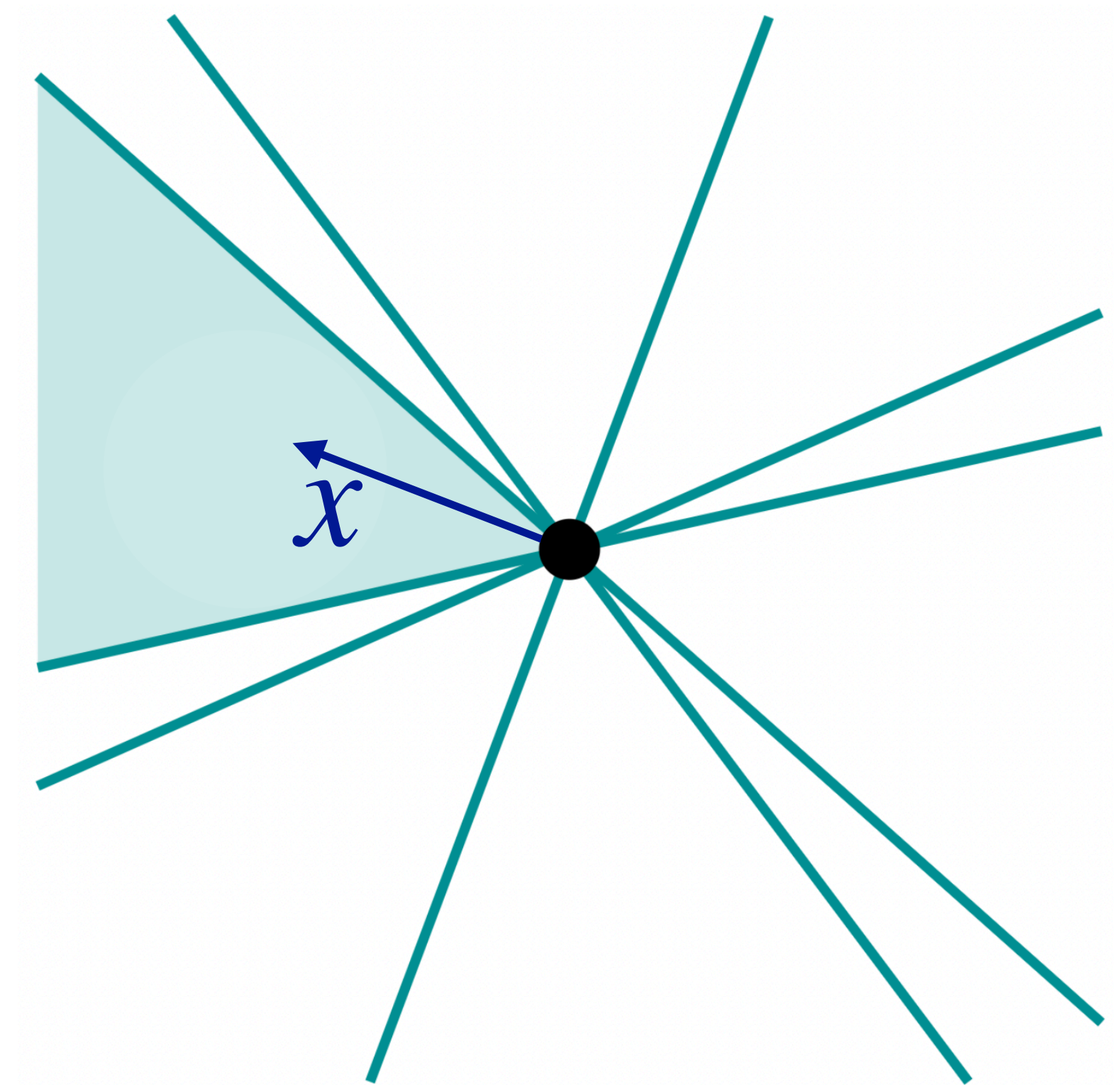
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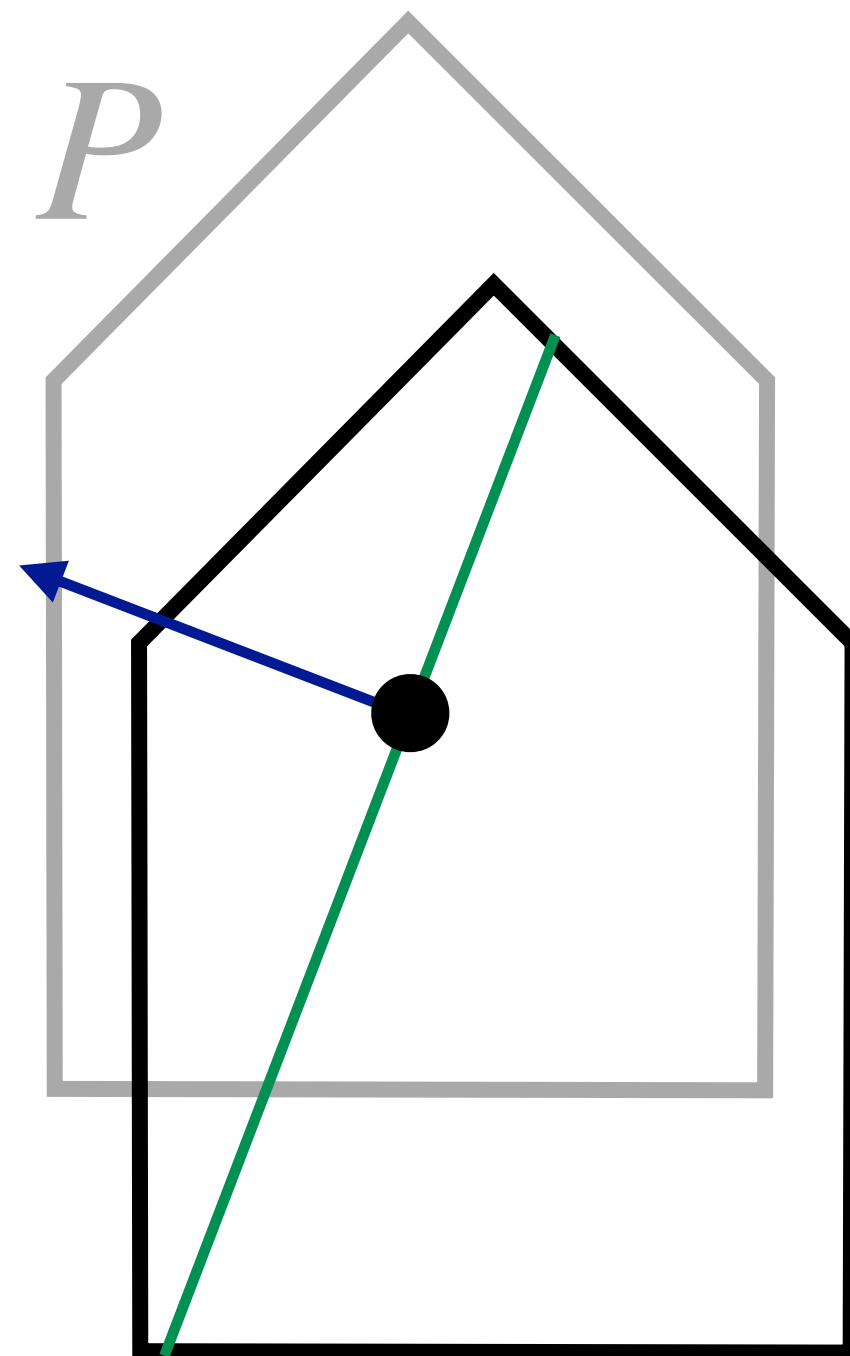


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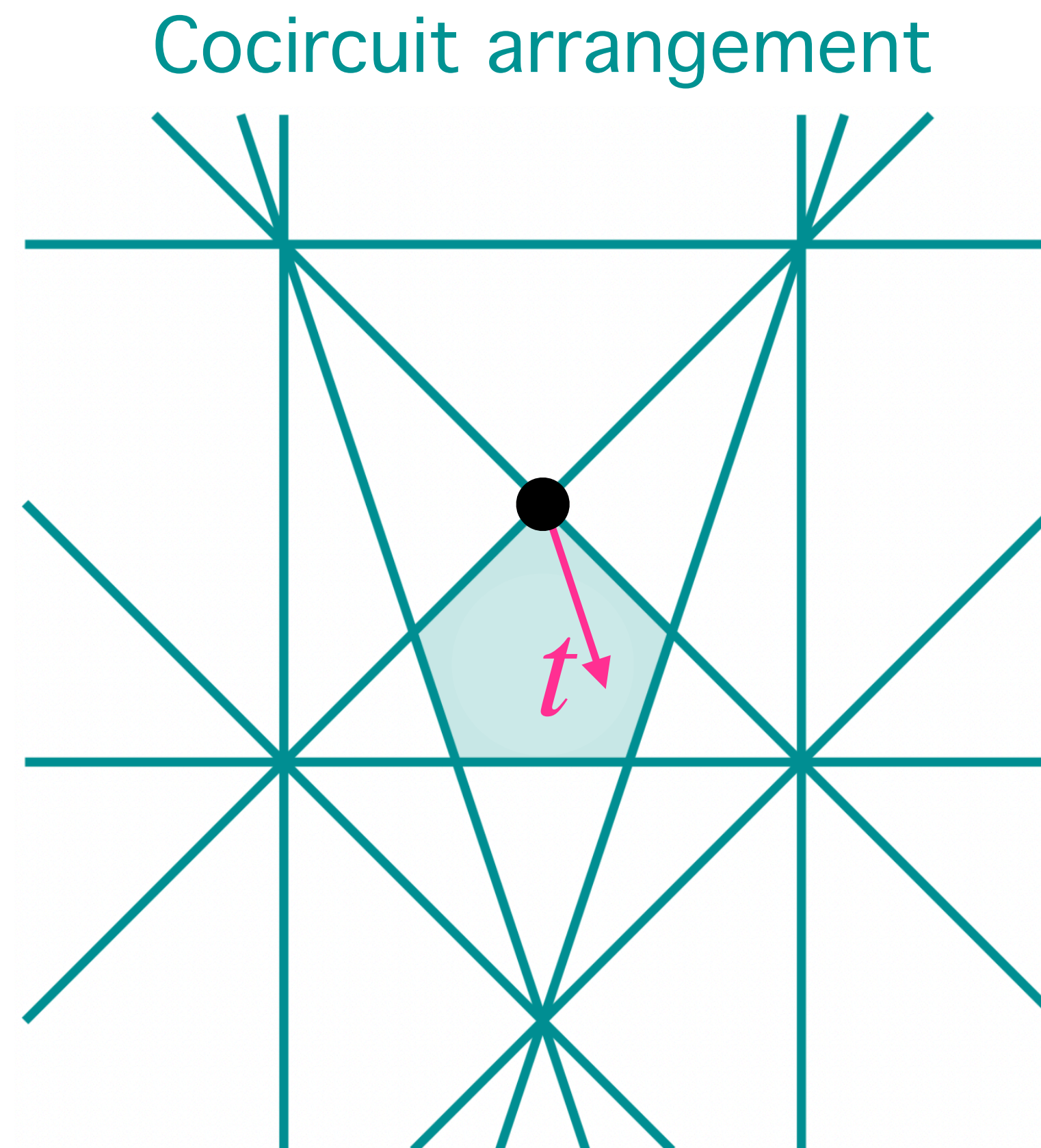
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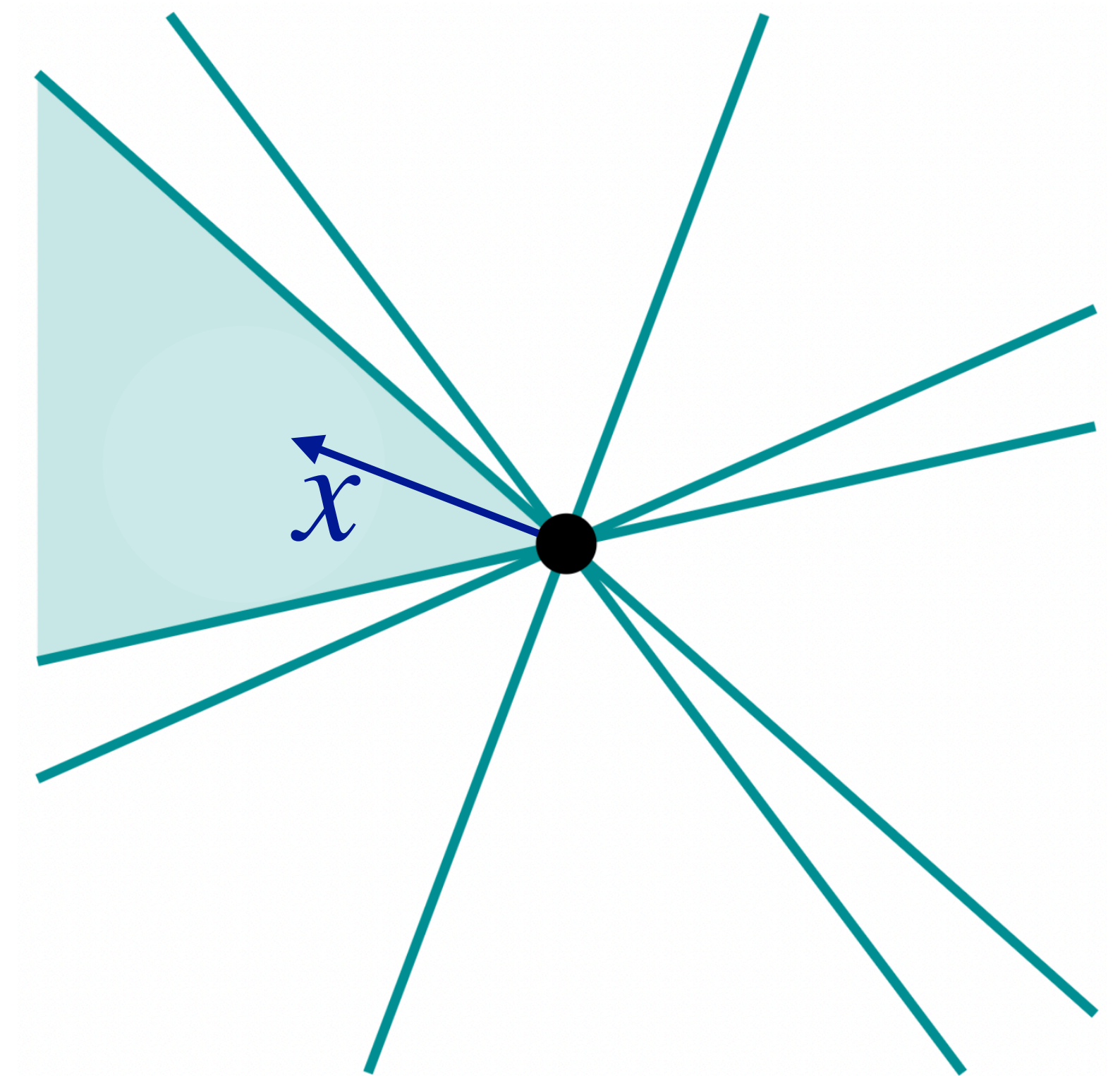
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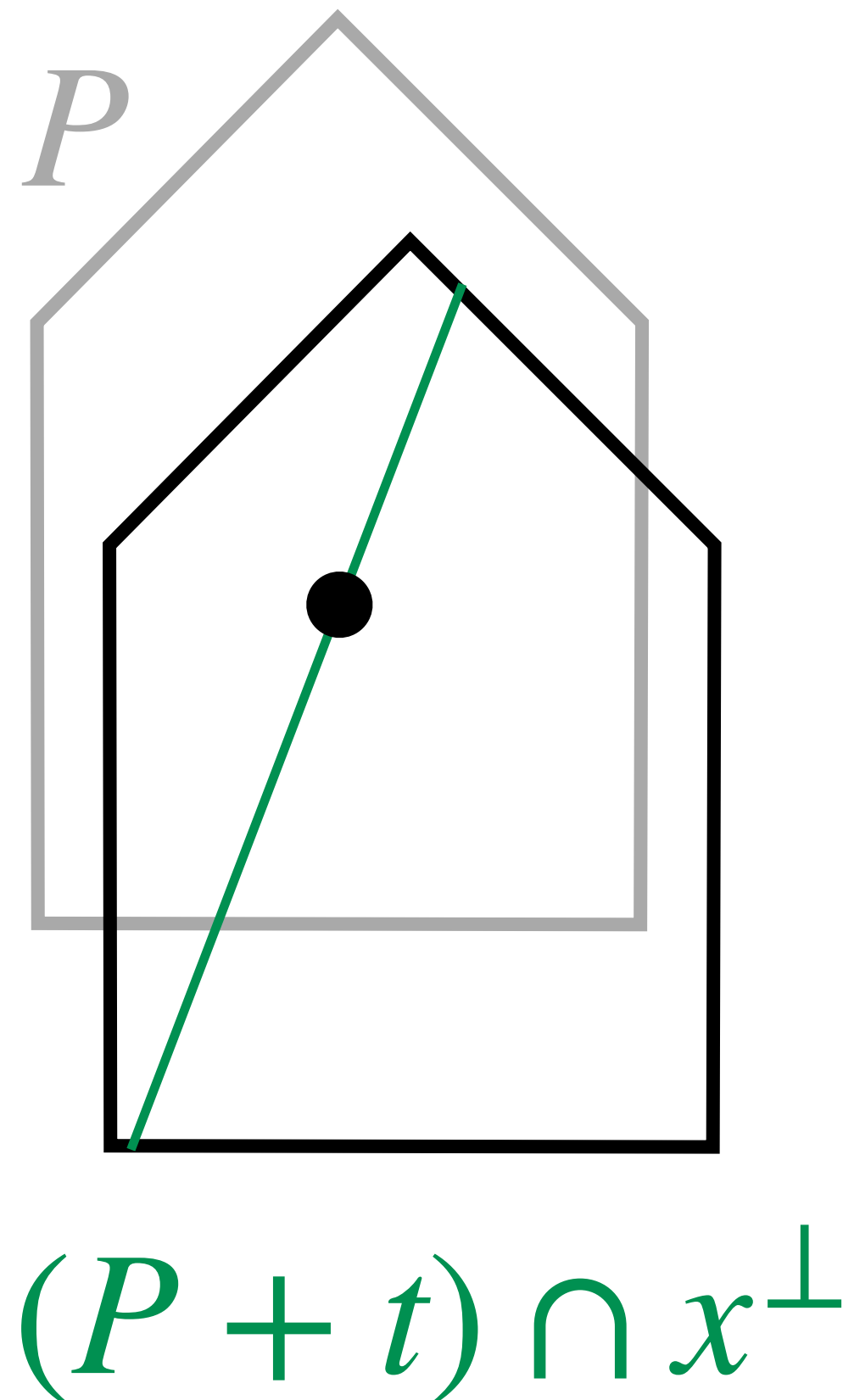
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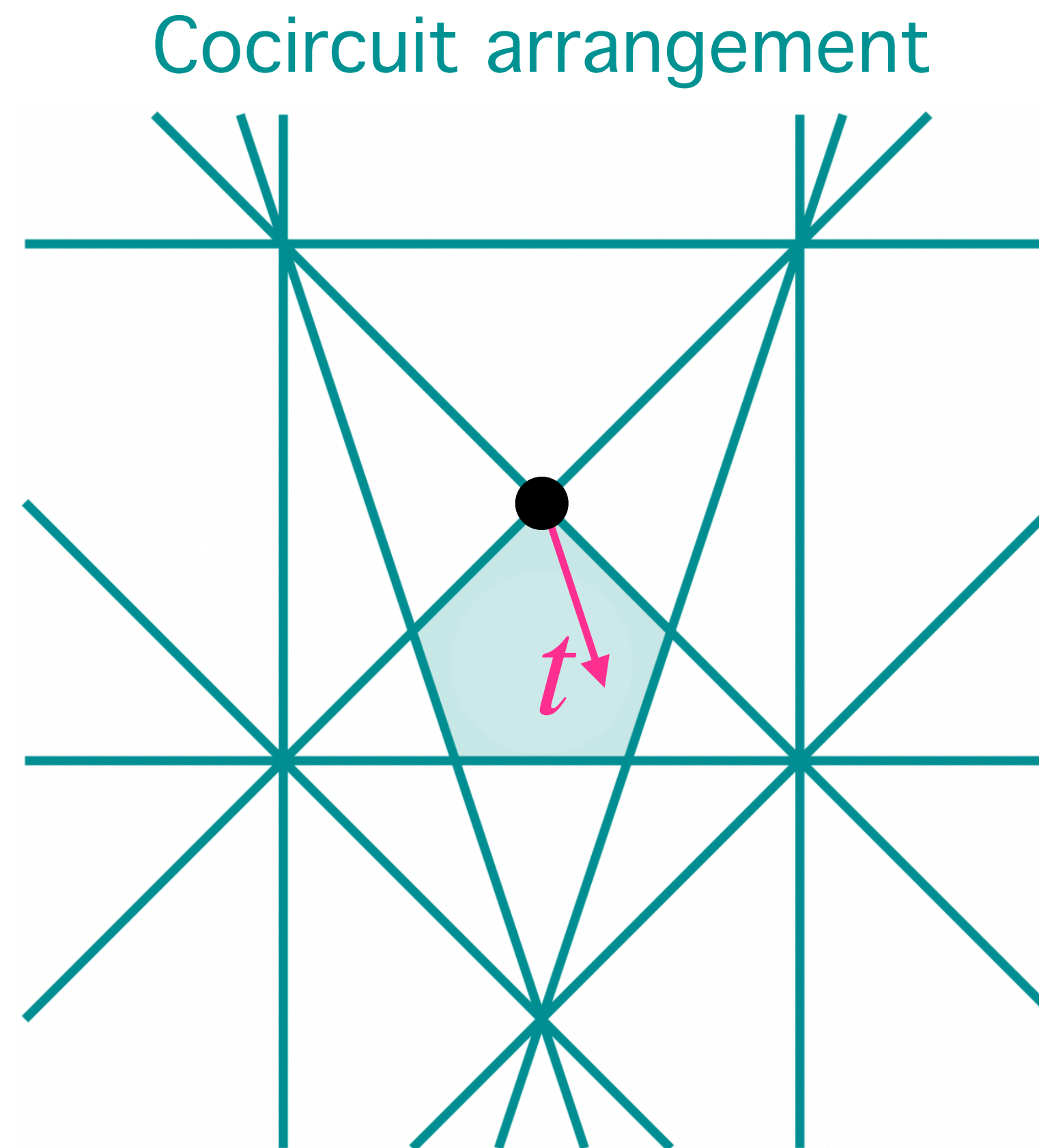
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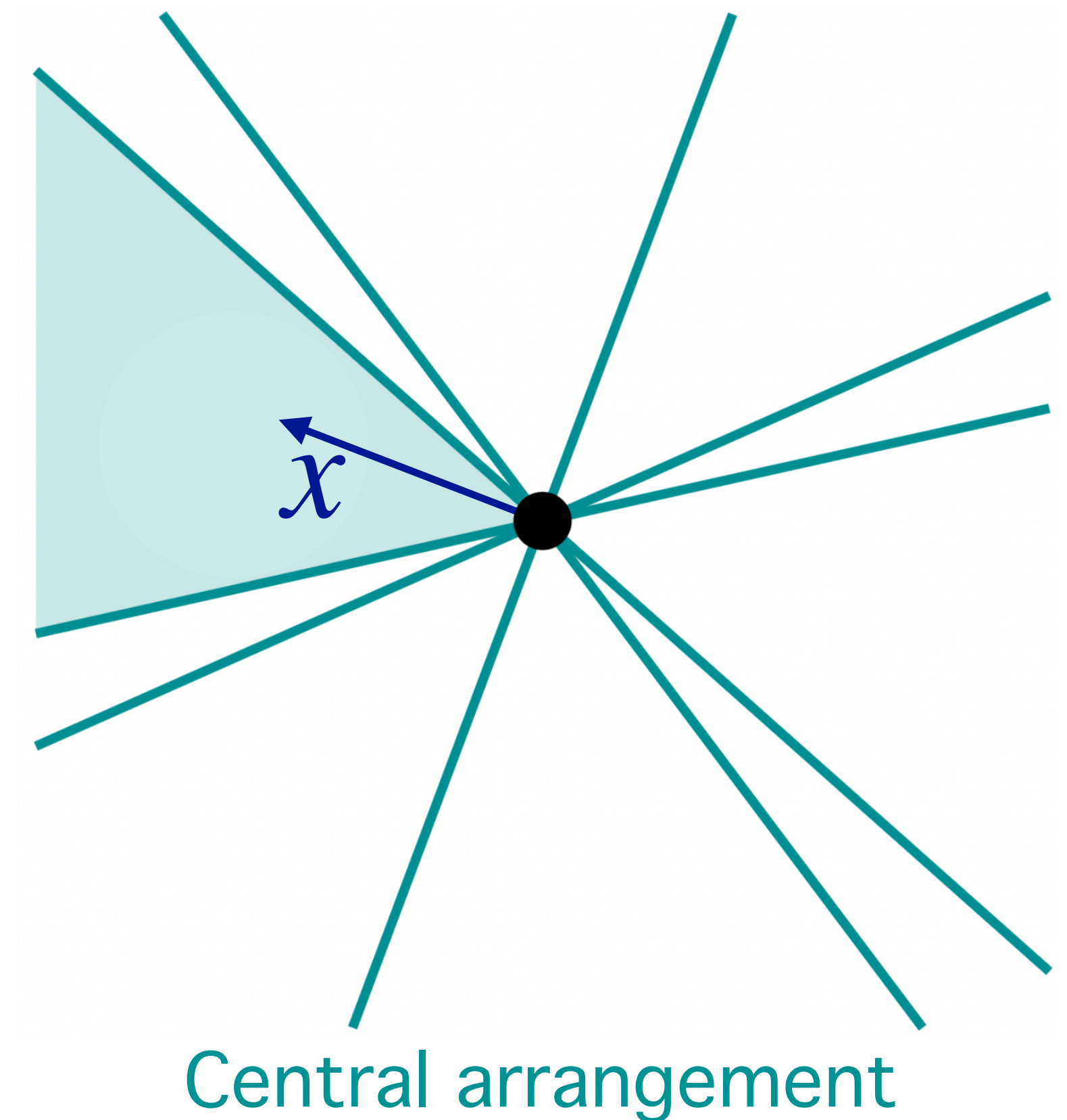
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Slices of convex bodies



10



Chiara Meroni

# Let's optimize!

Theorem [B,DL,M]: Let  $P \subset \mathbb{R}^d$  be a polytope.

For fixed  $d$ , we can find the slice  $P \cap H$  with

- \*  $\max f_k(P \cap H)$

- \*  $\max \sum_{\substack{F \subset P, \\ F \cap H \neq \emptyset}} \omega(F)$

- \*  $\max \text{vol}(P \cap H)$

- \*  $\min \text{vol}(P \cap H)$  (through a fixed point)

- \*  $\max \int_{P \cap H} f(x) dx$

- \* ...

in polynomial time.

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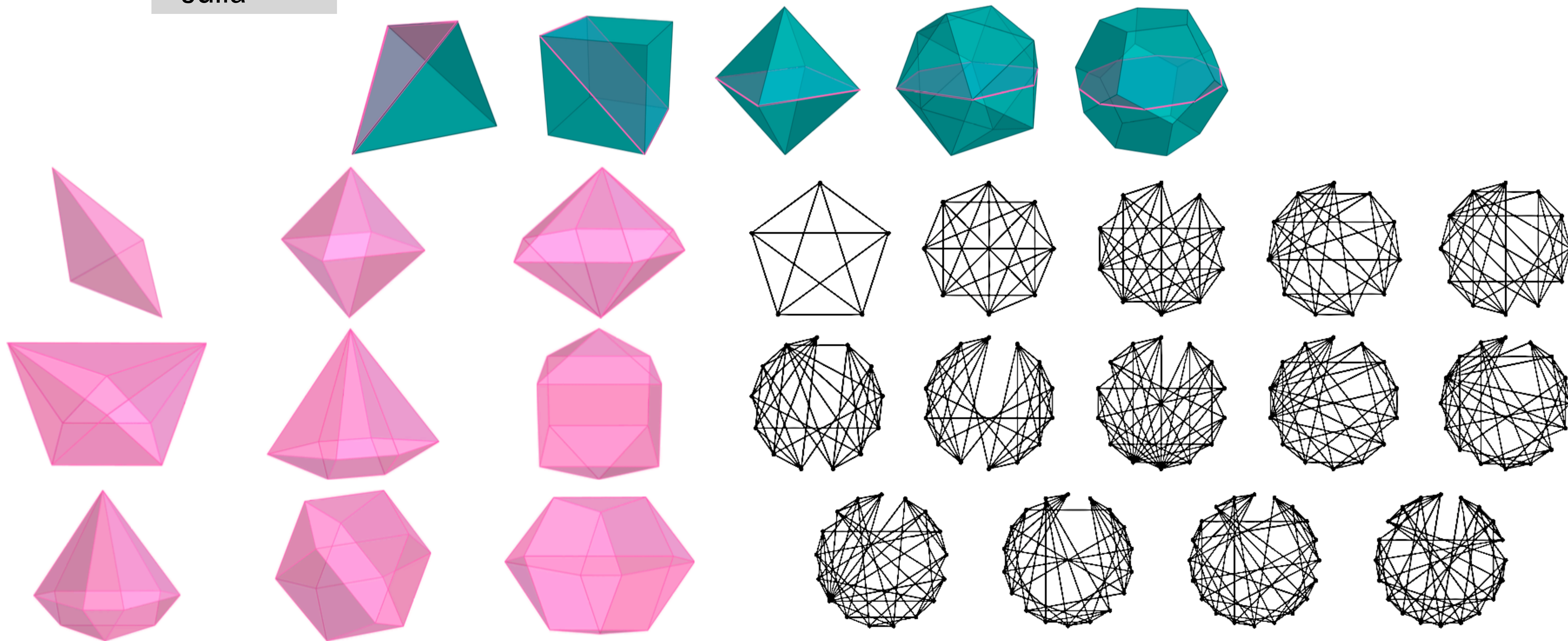
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Theorem [B,DL,M]:  
It is #P-hard to compute  
the volume of the slice  
with largest volume.

# Theory and practice

- SageMath
- Julia

<https://mathrepo.mis.mpg.de/BestSlicePolytopes/>



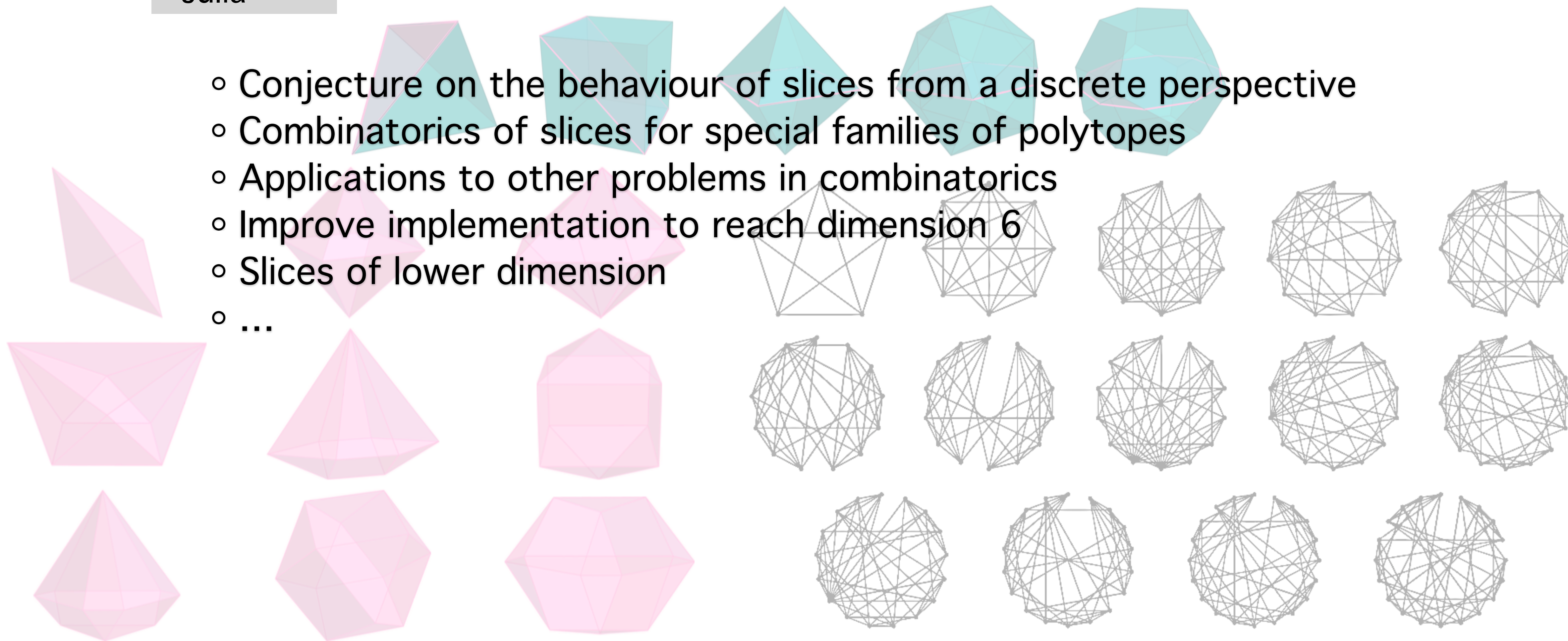
Slices of convex bodies

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- Conjecture on the behaviour of slices from a discrete perspective
- Combinatorics of slices for special families of polytopes
- Applications to other problems in combinatorics
- Improve implementation to reach dimension 6
- Slices of lower dimension
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Slices of convex bodies

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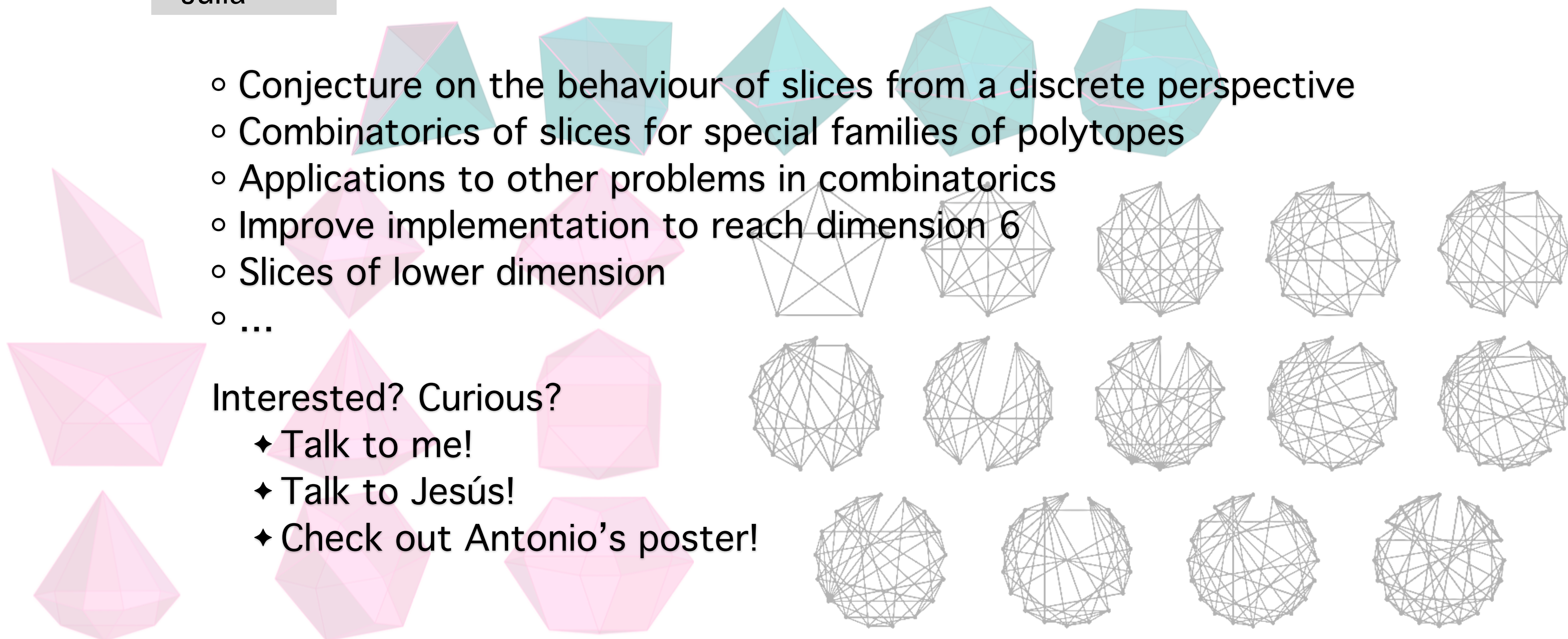
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Interested? Curious?

- ◆ Talk to me!
- ◆ Talk to Jesús!
- ◆ Check out Antonio's poster!



# A. I. ( = After ICERM )

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Hey! There are also NON-discrete objects!

arXiv > math > arXiv:2403.04438

## Maximizing Slice-Volumes of Semialgebraic Sets using Sum-of-Squares Programming

Jared Miller, Chiara Meroni, Matteo Tacchi, Mauricio Velasco

Recompile

12



87%

ON THE USE OF POLYNOMIALS IN THE APPROXIMATION AND OPTIMIZATION OF STAR-BODIES

CHIARA MERONI, JARED MILLER, AND MAURICIO VELASCO

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Jared Miller, Chiara Meroni, Matteo Tacchi, Mauricio Velasco

PROS:  $\{x \in \mathbb{R}^d \mid g_i(x) \geq 0 \text{ for } i = 1, \dots, N\}$

CONS: Only an approximation  
In  $\mathbb{R}^3$  it is already out of reach

KEY: SDP  
Adapted Lasserre hierarchies



Recompile 12 87%

**ON THE USE OF POLYNOMIALS IN THE APPROXIMATION AND OPTIMIZATION OF STAR-BODIES**

CHIARA MERONI, JARED MILLER, AND MAURICIO VELASCO

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Hey! There are also NON-discrete objects!



arXiv > math > arXiv:2403.04438

**Maximizing Slice-Volumes of Semialgebraic Sets using Sum-of-Squares Programming**

Jared Miller, Chiara Meroni, Matteo Tacchi, Mauricio Velasco

PROS:  $\{x \in \mathbb{R}^d \mid g_i(x) \geq 0 \text{ for } i = 1, \dots, N\}$

CONS: Only an approximation  
In  $\mathbb{R}^3$  it is already out of reach

KEY: SDP  
Adapted Lasserre hierarchies



Recompile 12 87%

ON THE USE OF POLYNOMIALS IN THE APPROXIMATION AND OPTIMIZATION OF STAR-BODIES

CHIARA MERONI, JARED MILLER, AND MAURICIO VELASCO

B-P problem and Bourgain's conjecture:  
optimization over all convex bodies



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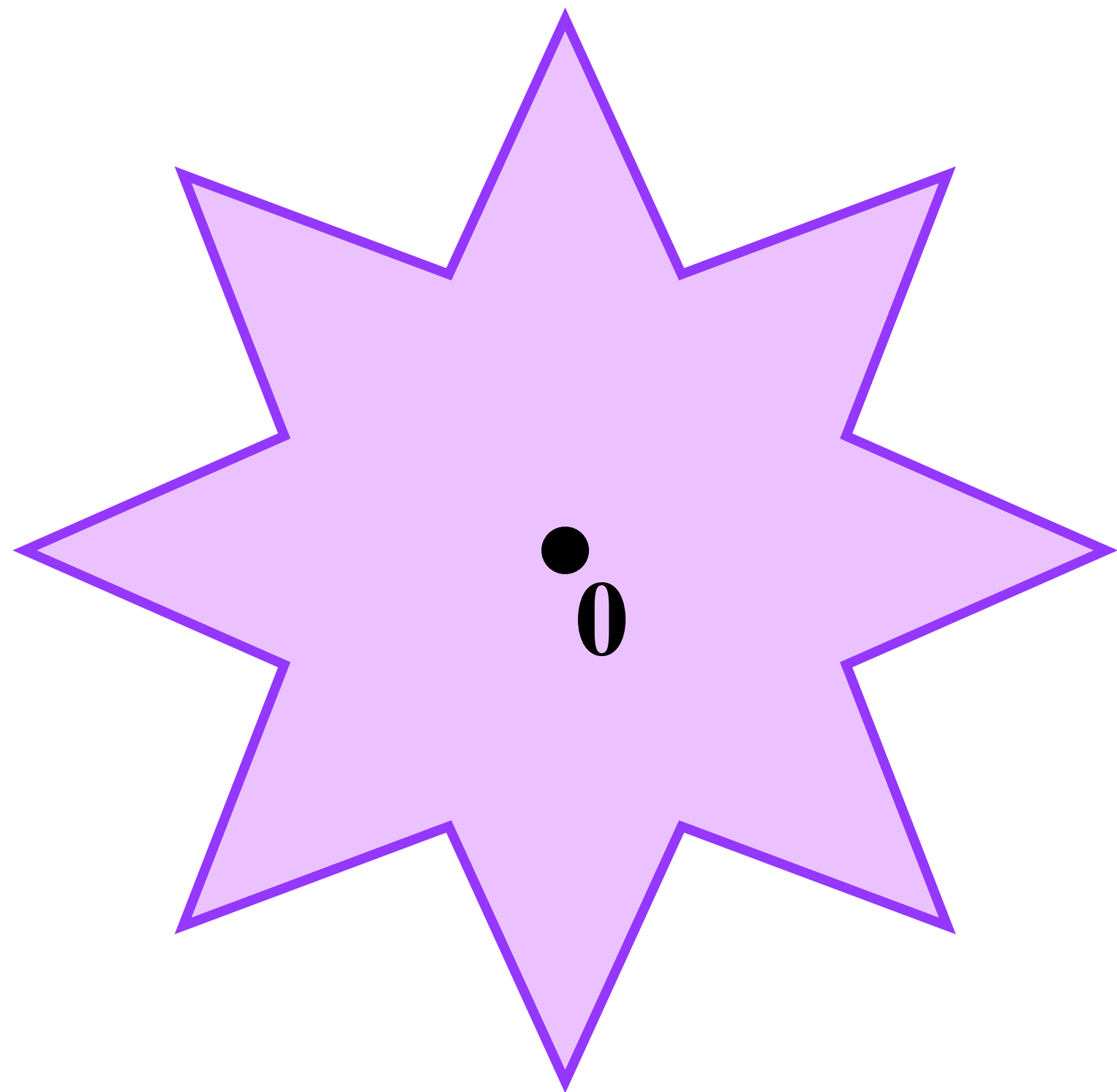
How can we do this?

# Star-bodies

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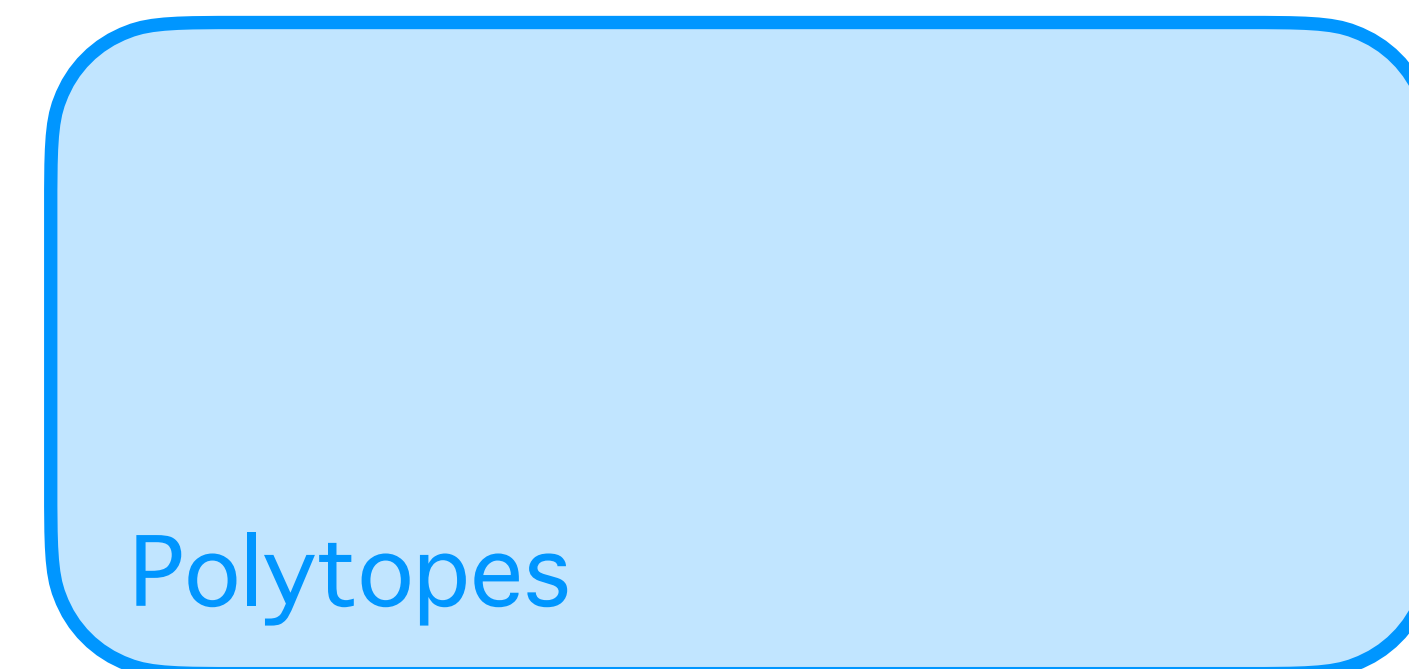
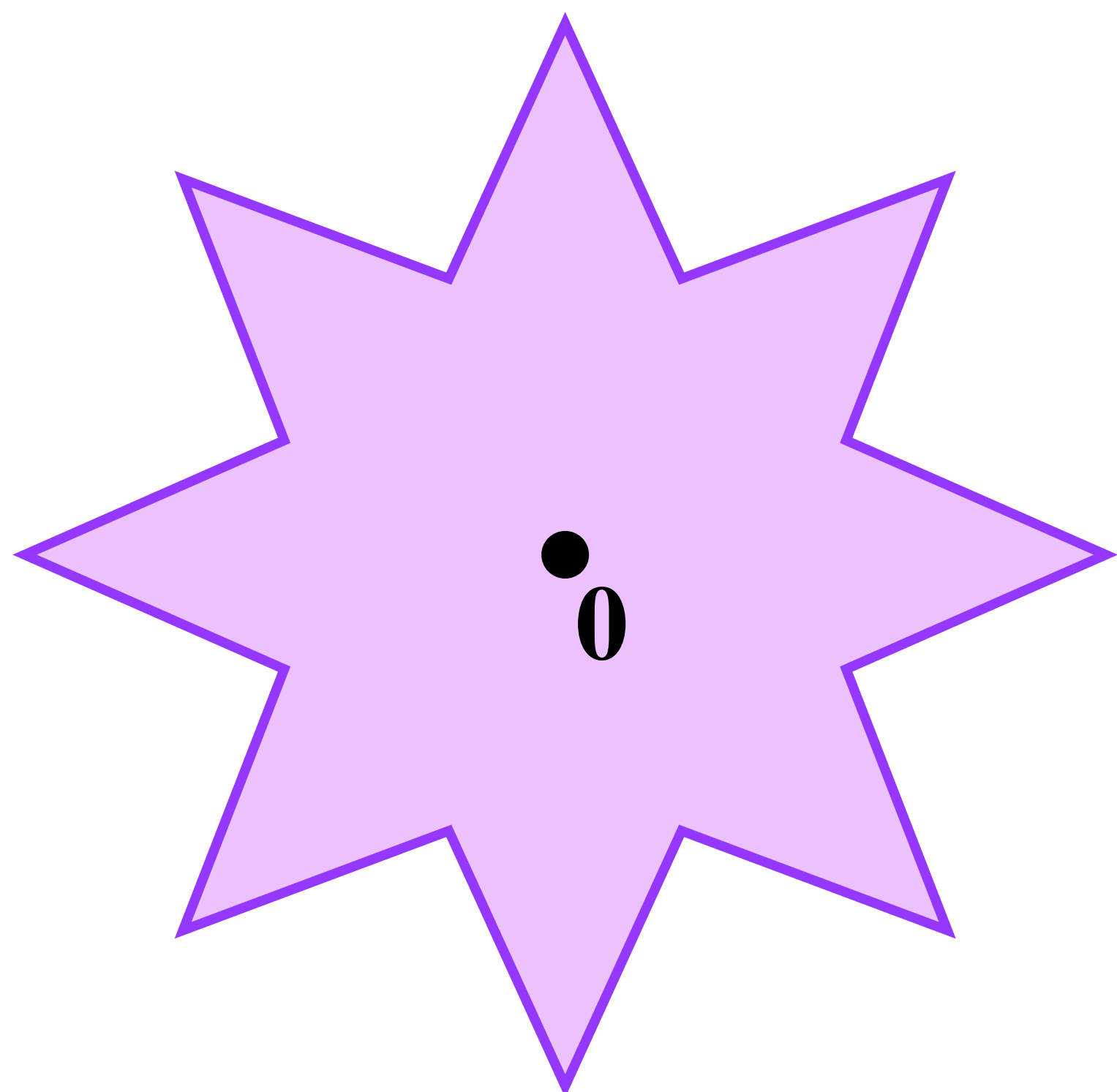
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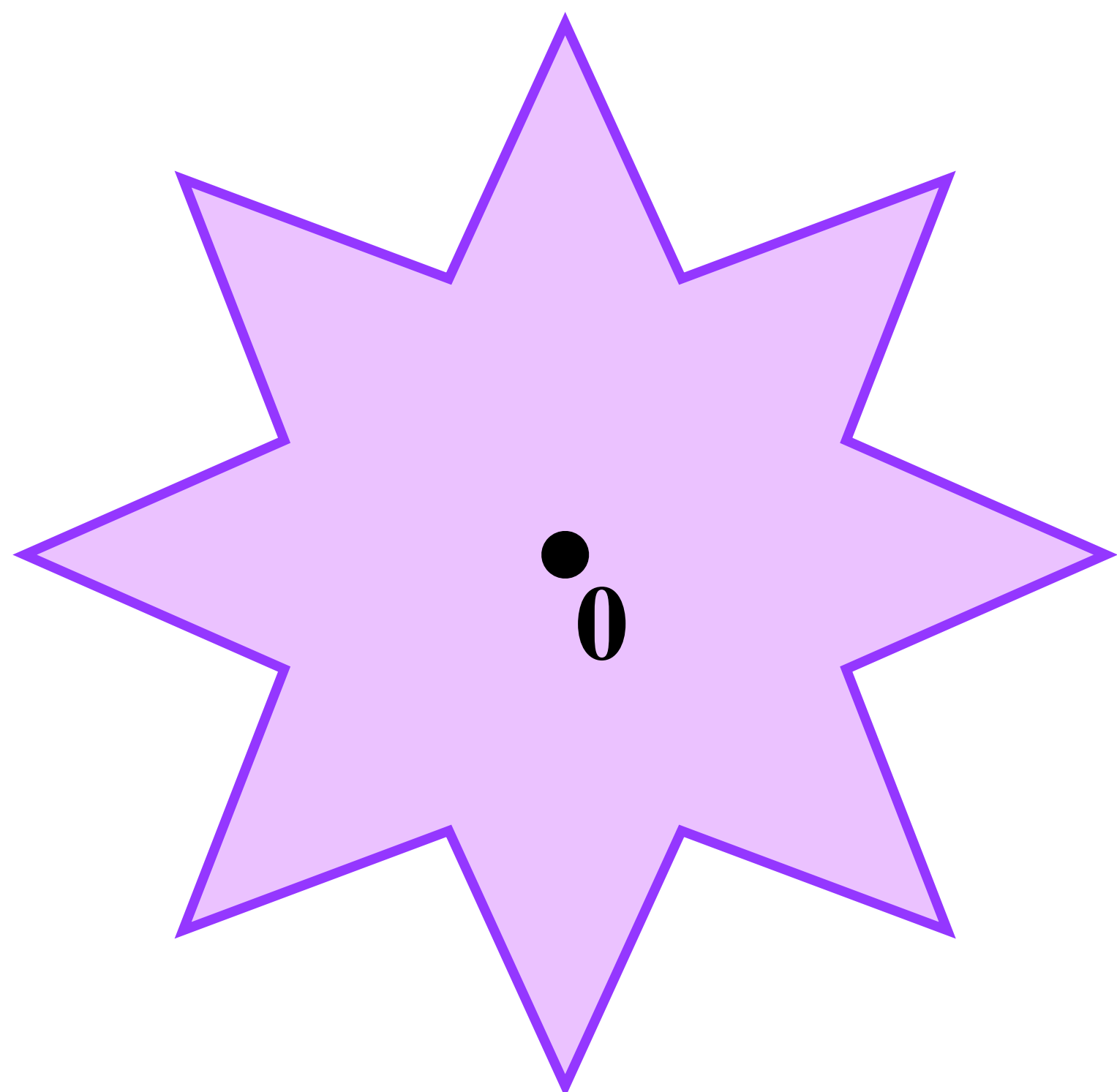
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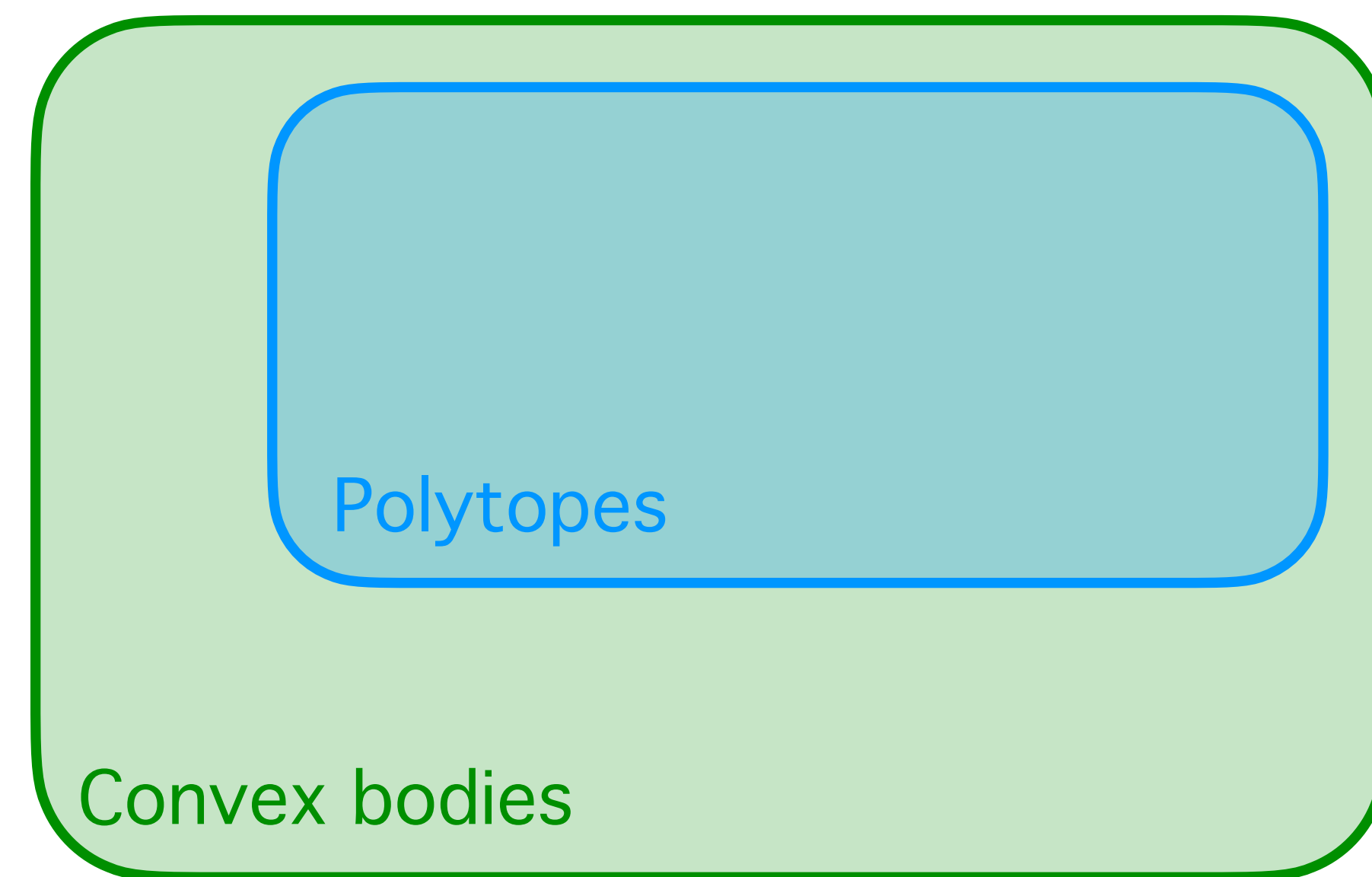
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Slices of convex bodies



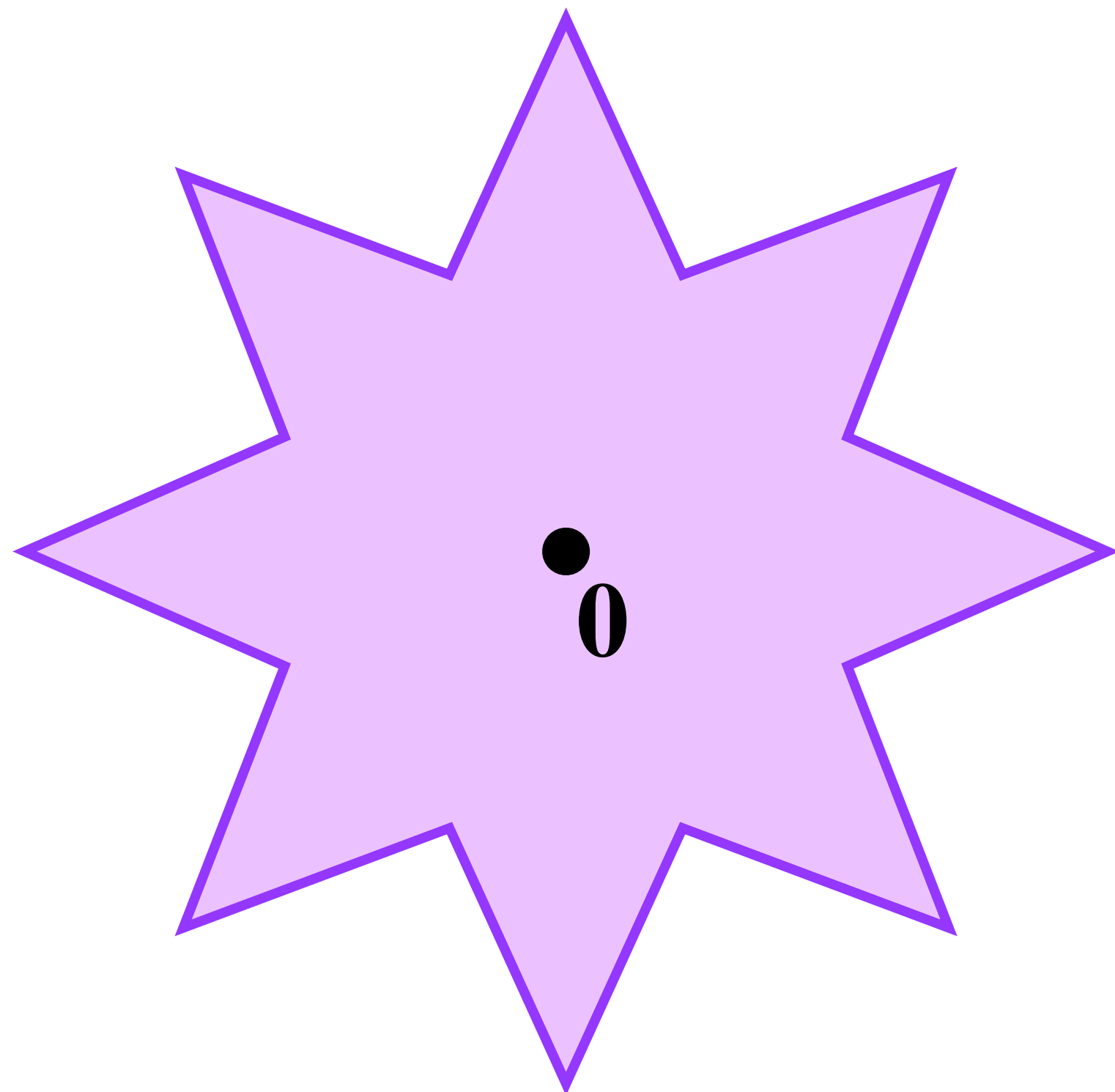
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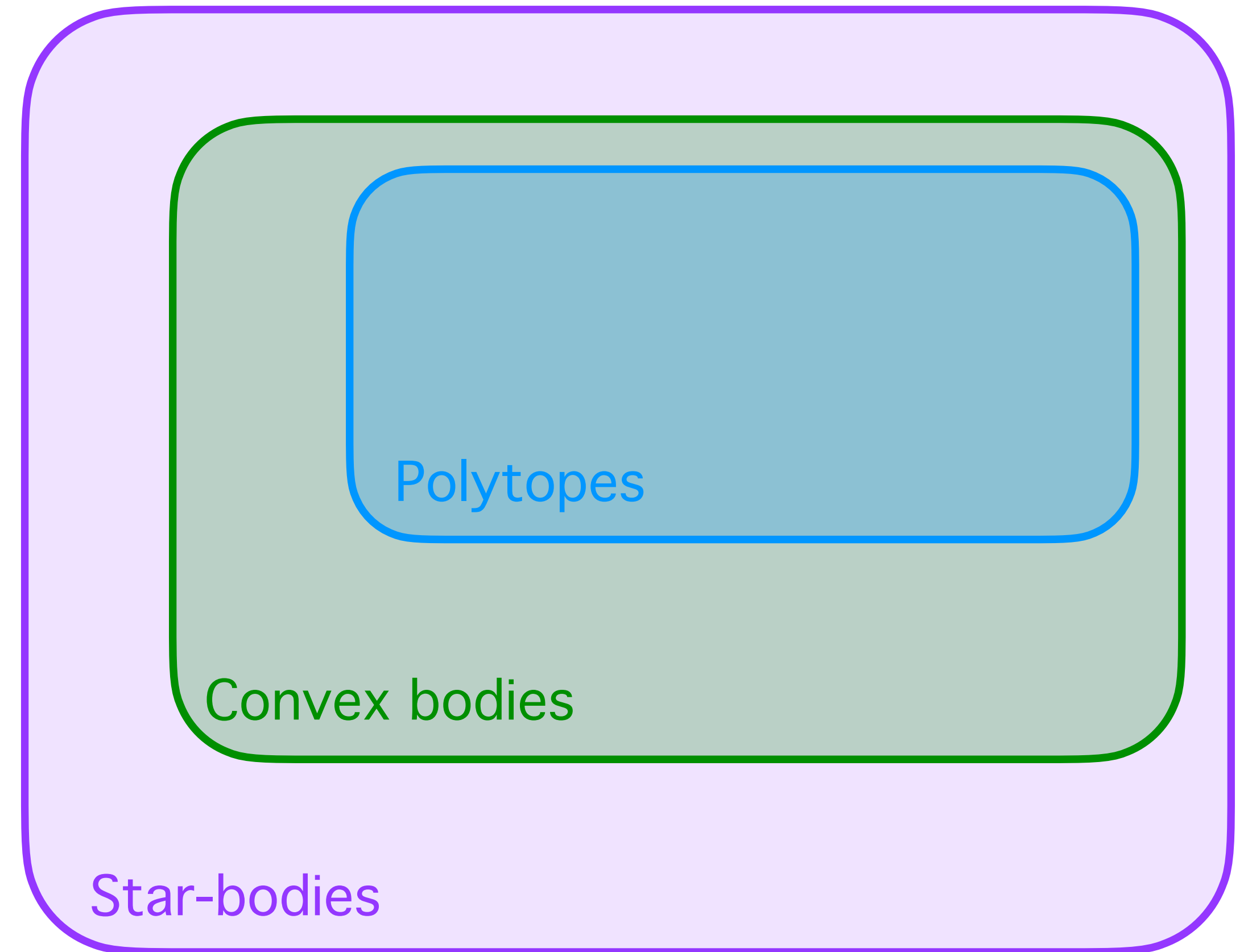
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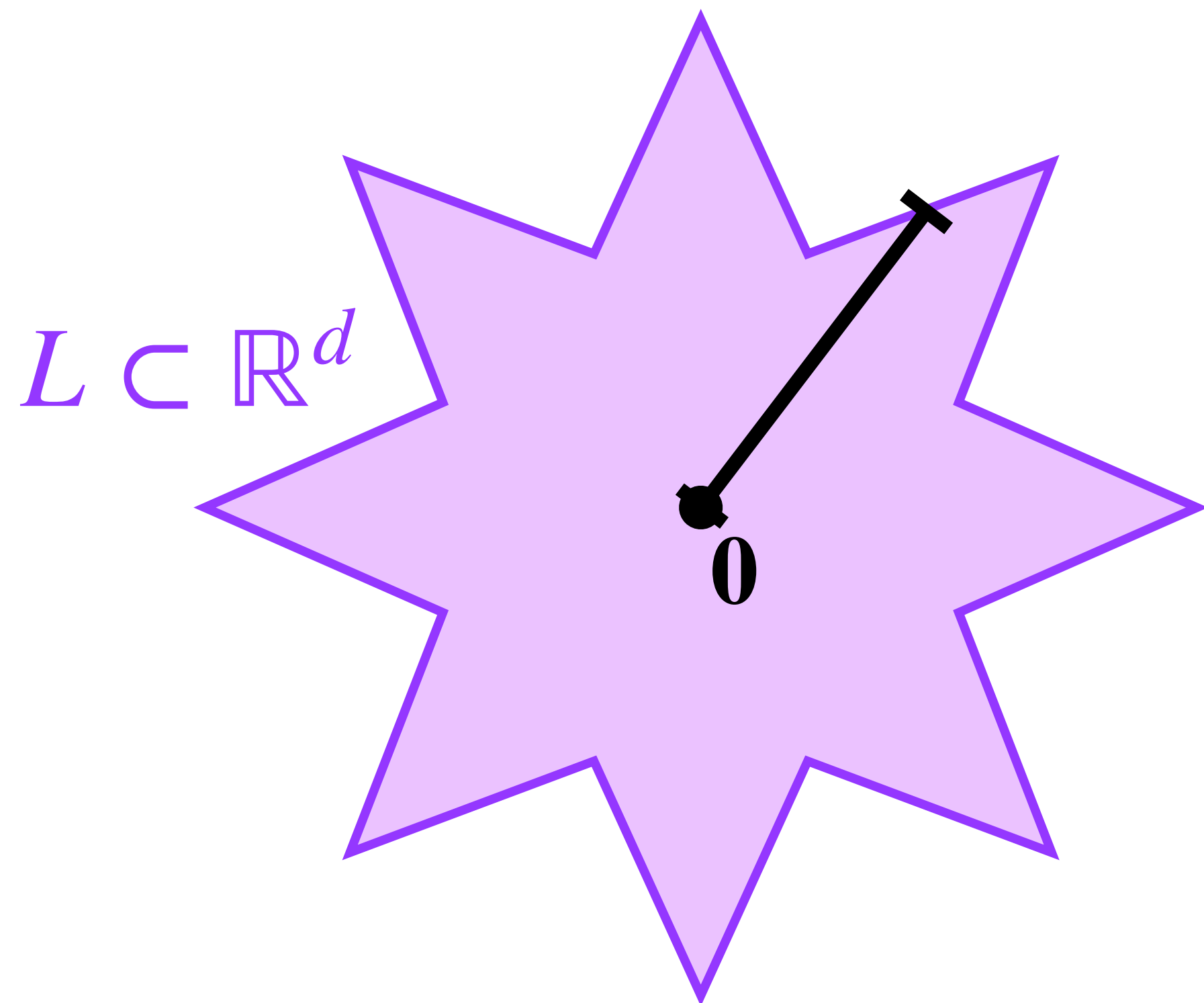
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# Radial & gauge functions

Radial function:  $\rho_L(x) = \max\{\lambda \in \mathbb{R}_{>0} \mid \lambda x \in L\}$ , for all  $x \in S^{d-1}$

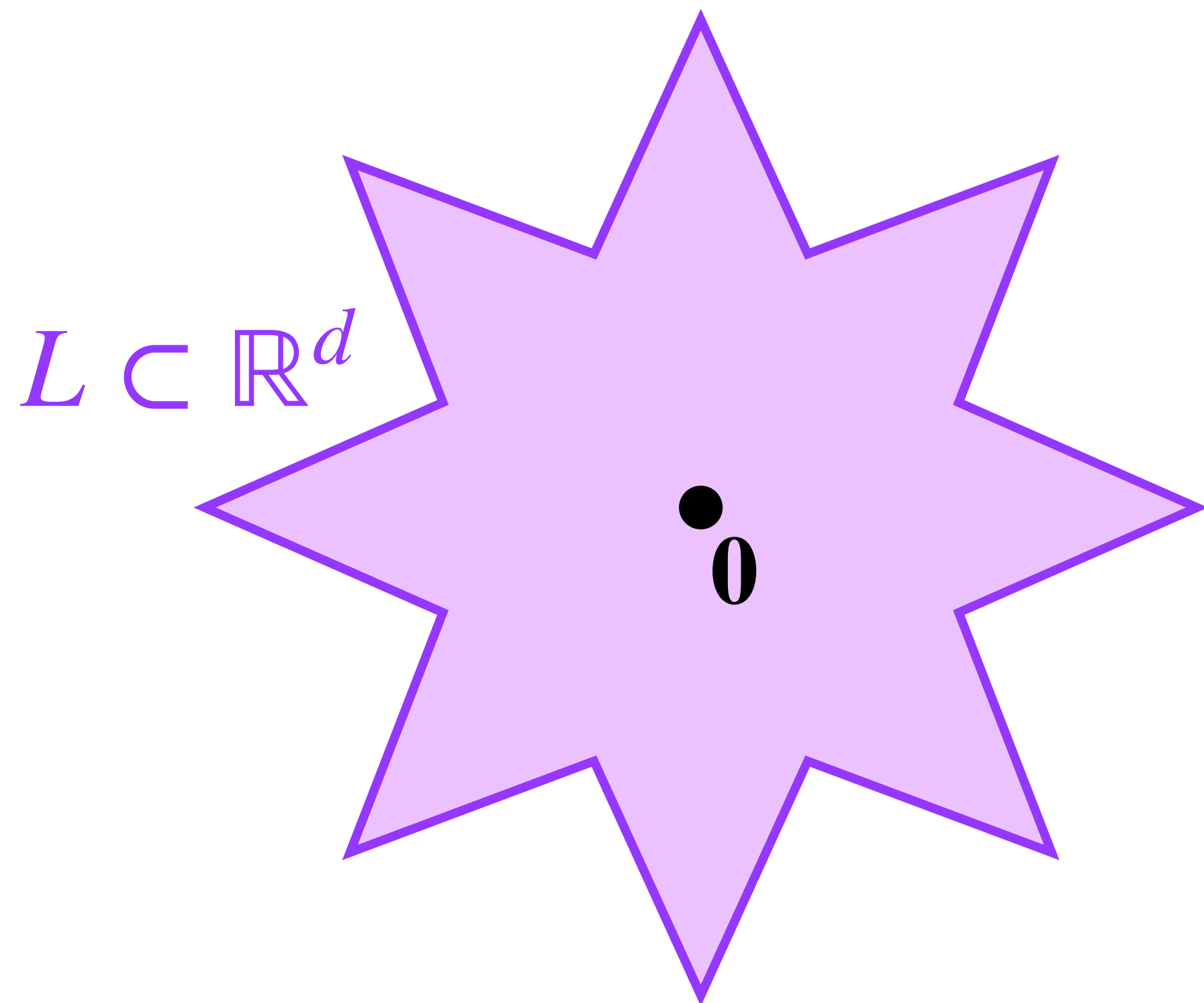


$L \subset \mathbb{R}^d$

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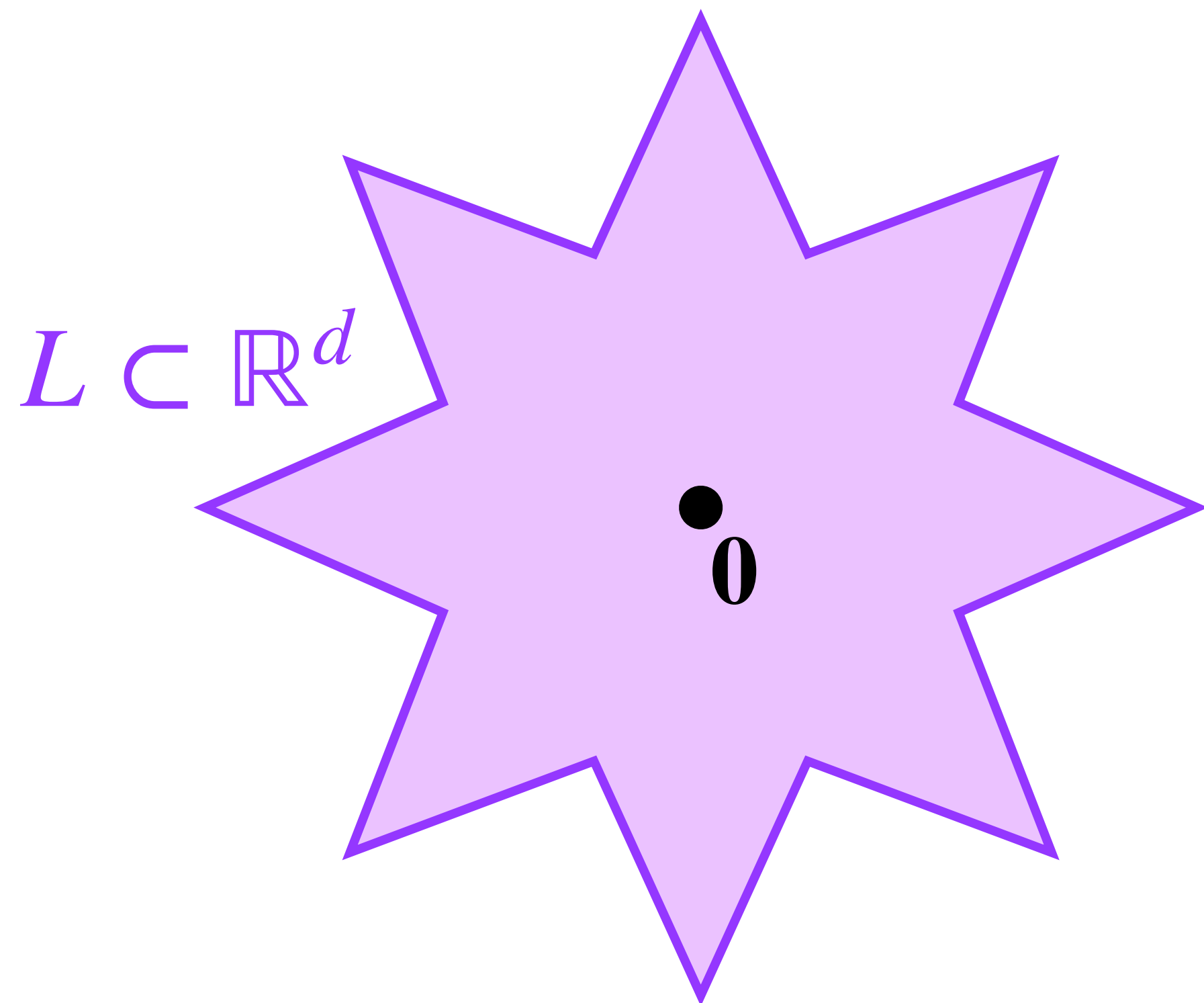


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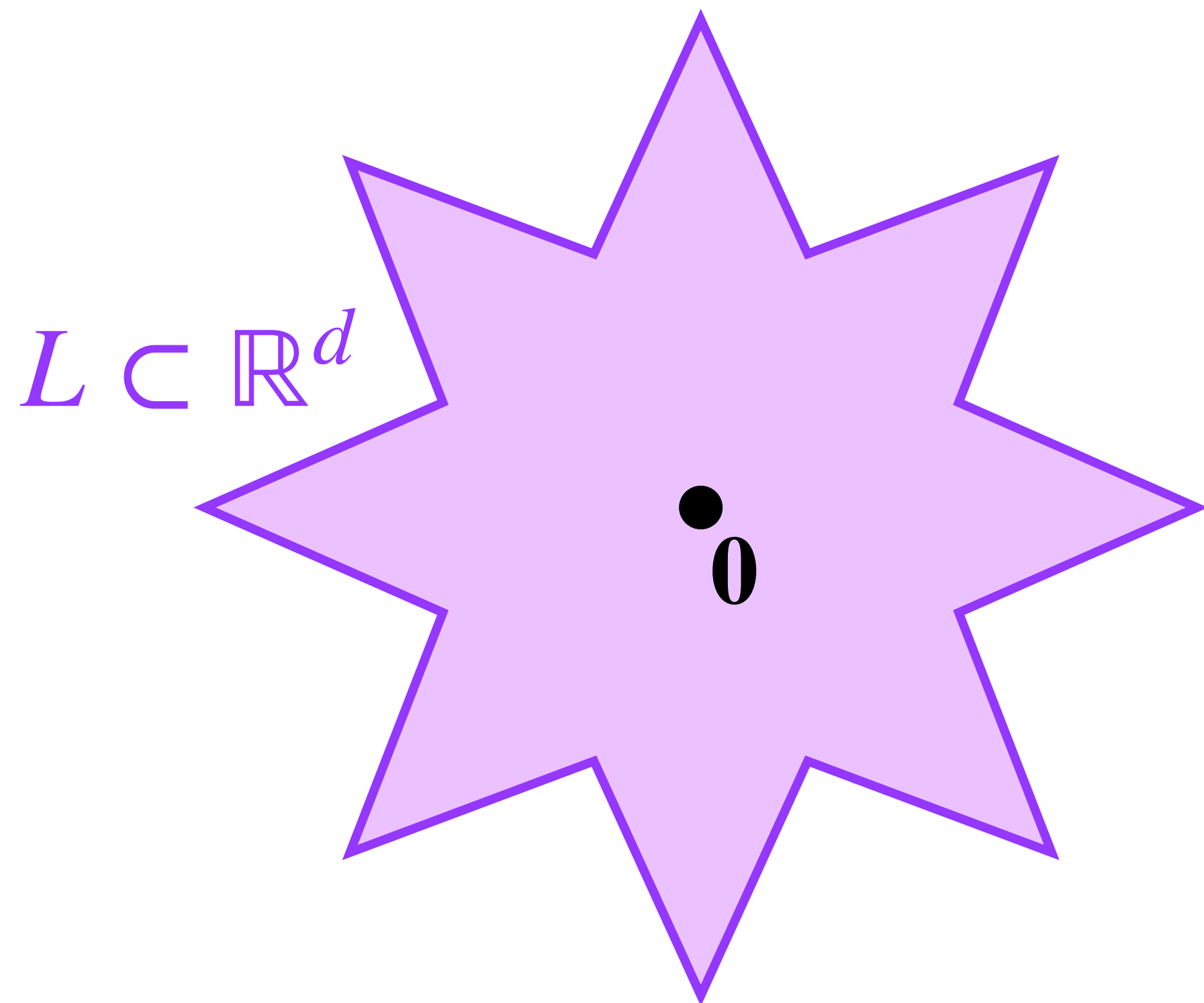


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For  $P = \{x \in \mathbb{R}^d \mid Ax \leq 1\}$  we have

$$\gamma_P(x) = \max_i A_i \cdot x, \quad \rho_P(x) = \min_i \left\{ \frac{1}{A_i \cdot x} \mid A_i \cdot x > 0 \right\}$$

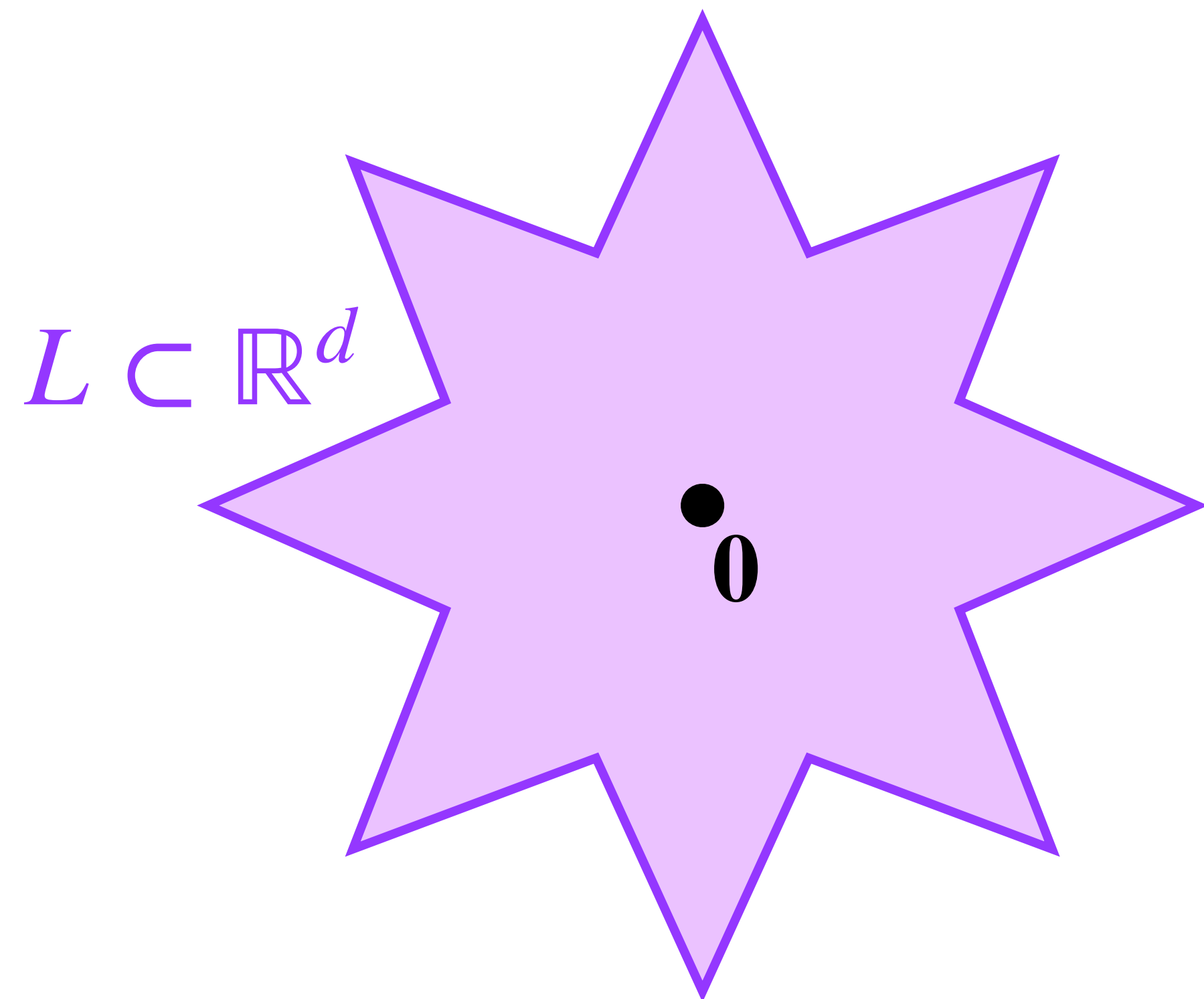
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can be wild!

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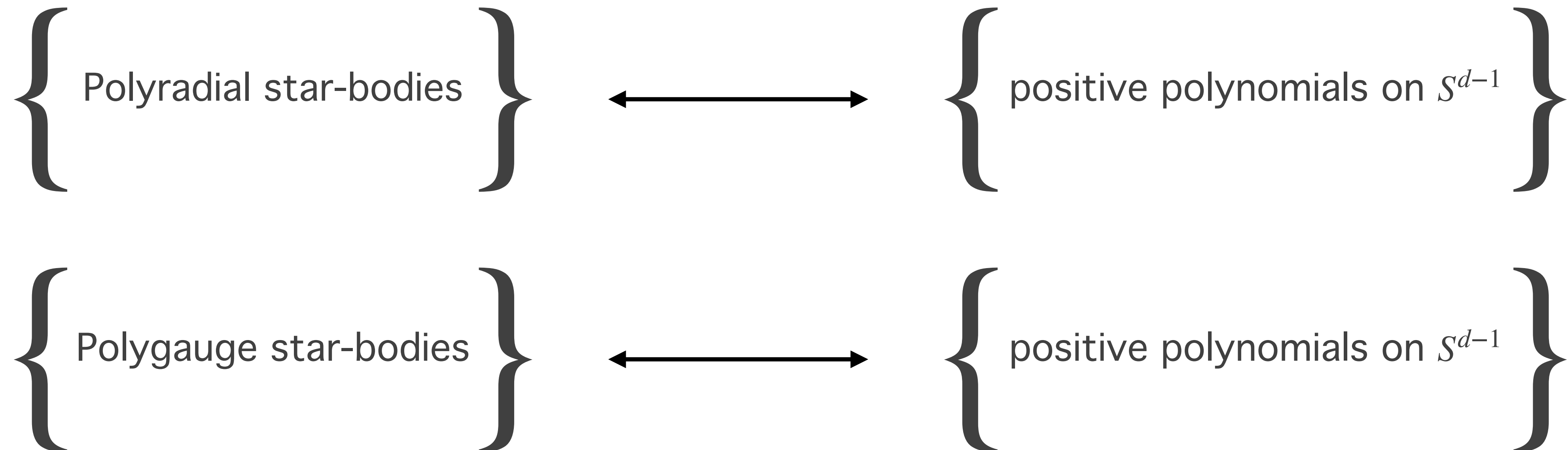


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Polyradial body: a star-body whose radial function is polynomial  
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# Polyradial & polygauge bodies

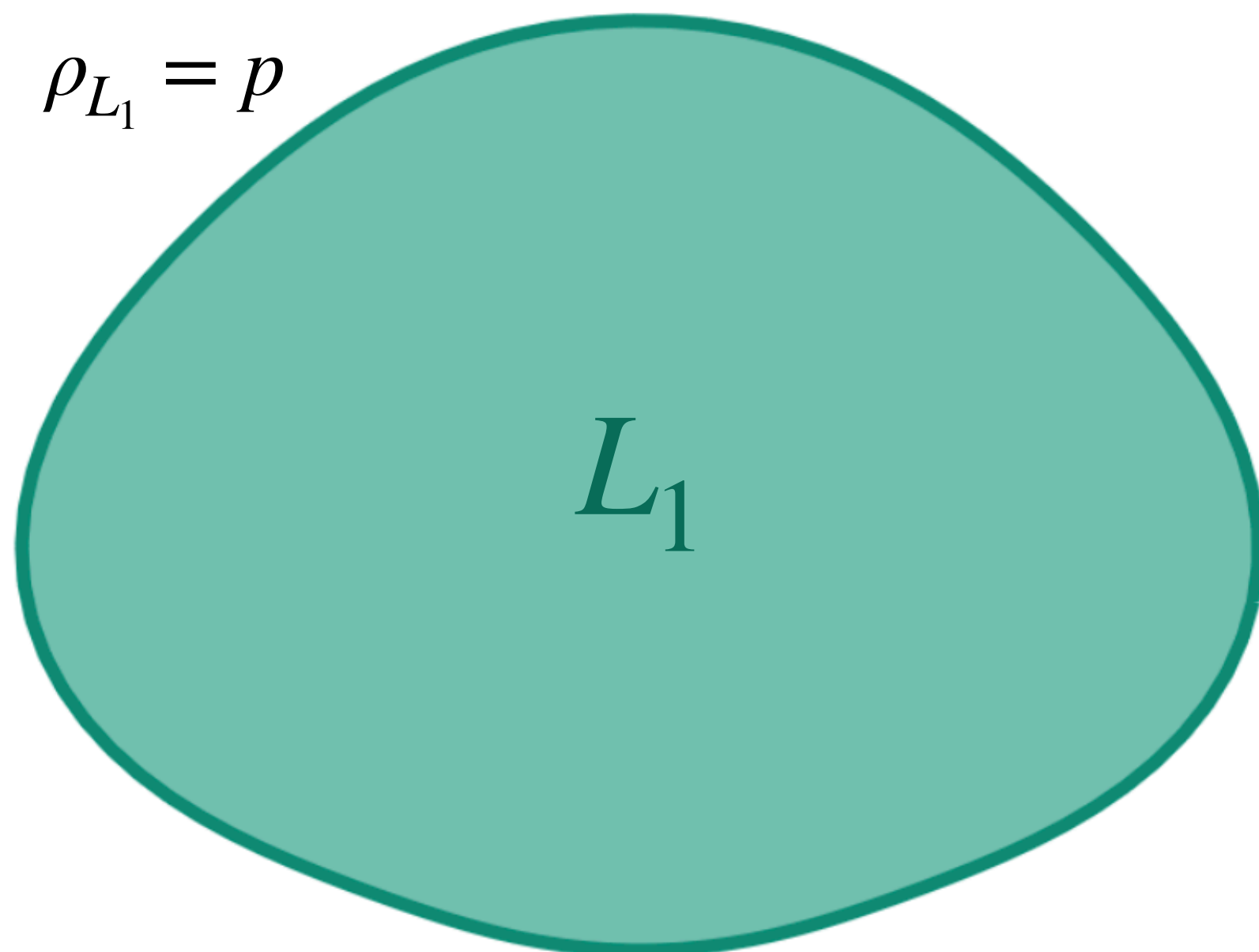
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$$p = 32x^6 + 32y + 128 = 32((\cos \theta)^6 + \sin \theta + 4)$$

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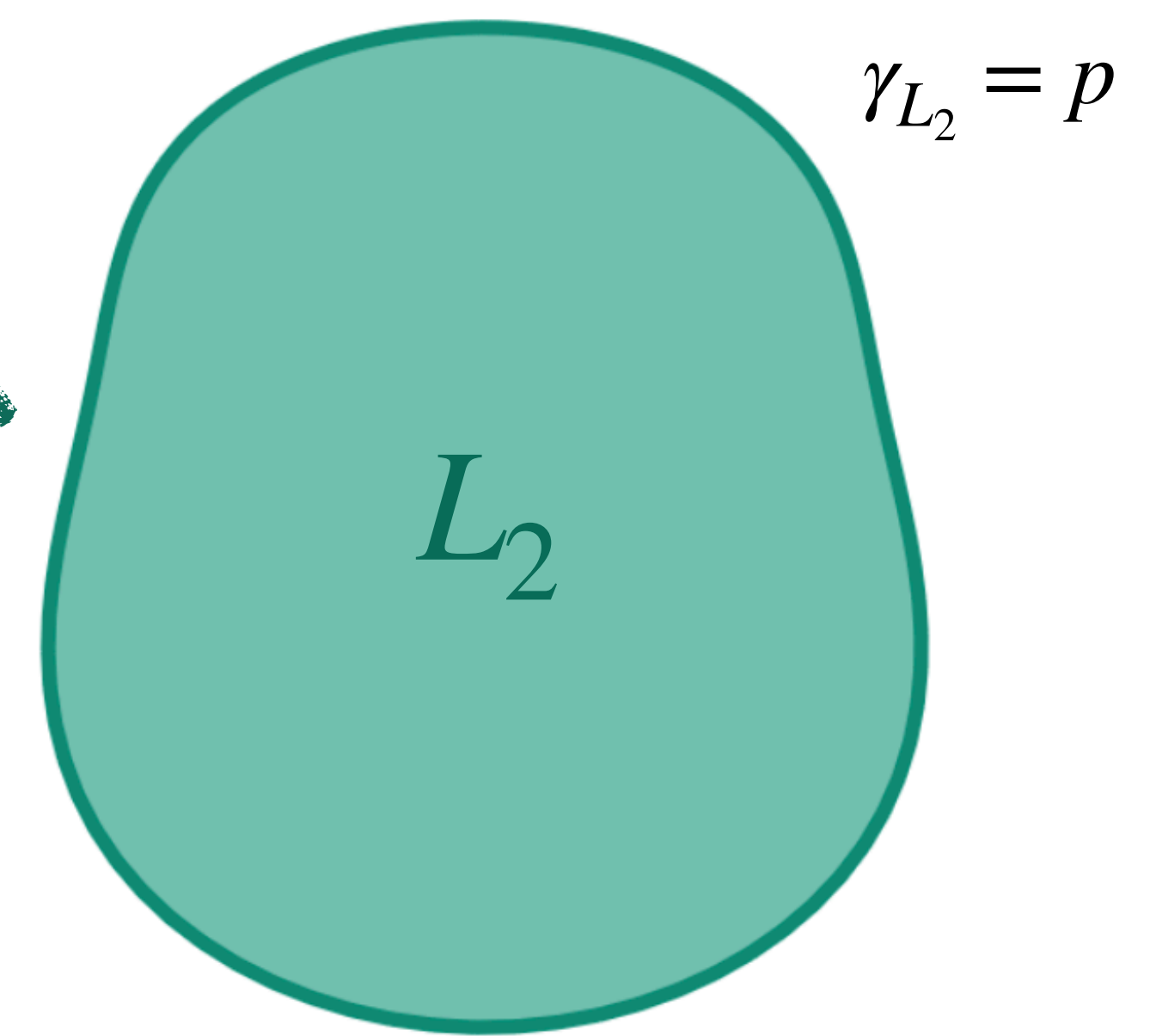
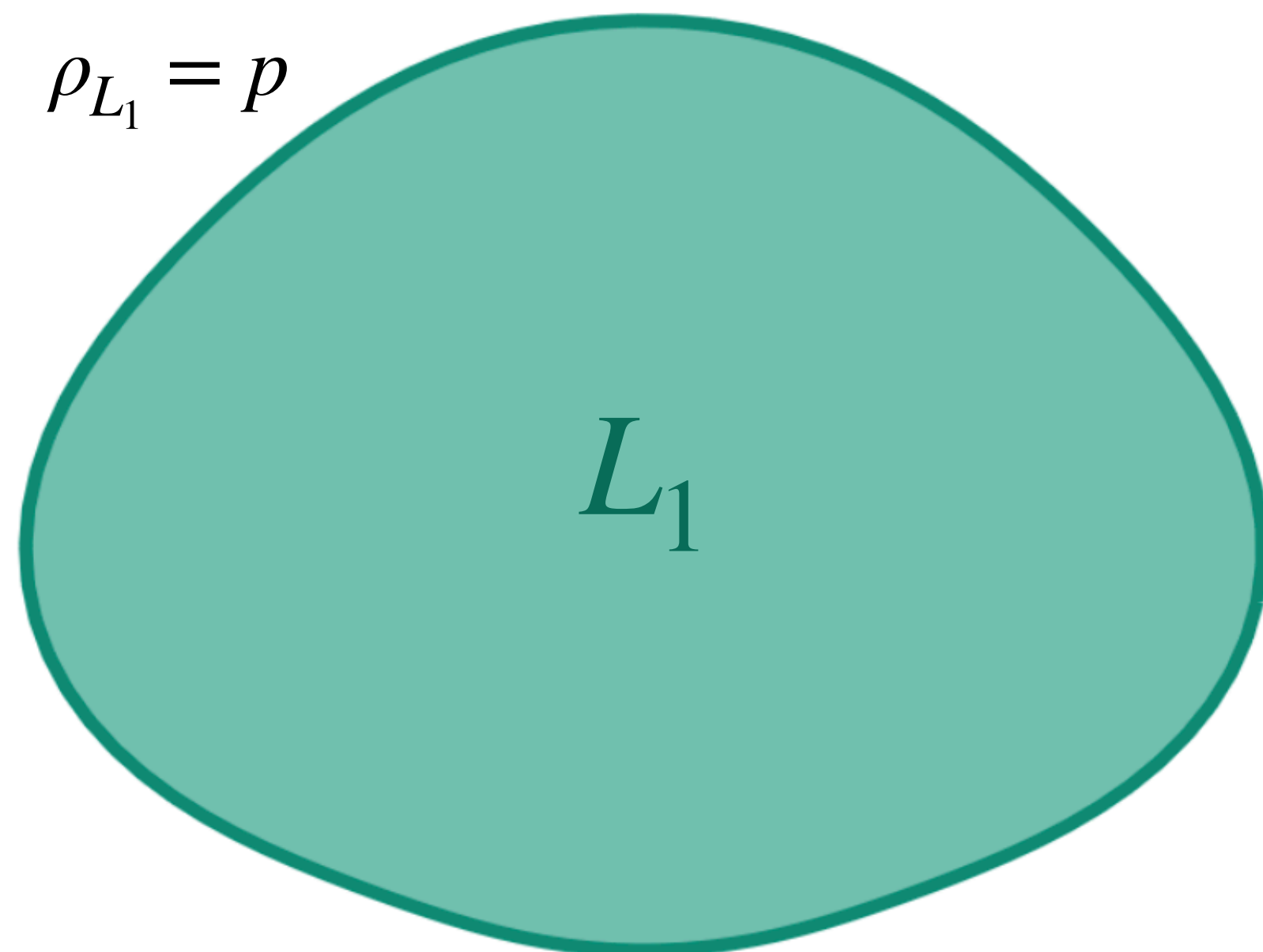
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How strict is this assumption?

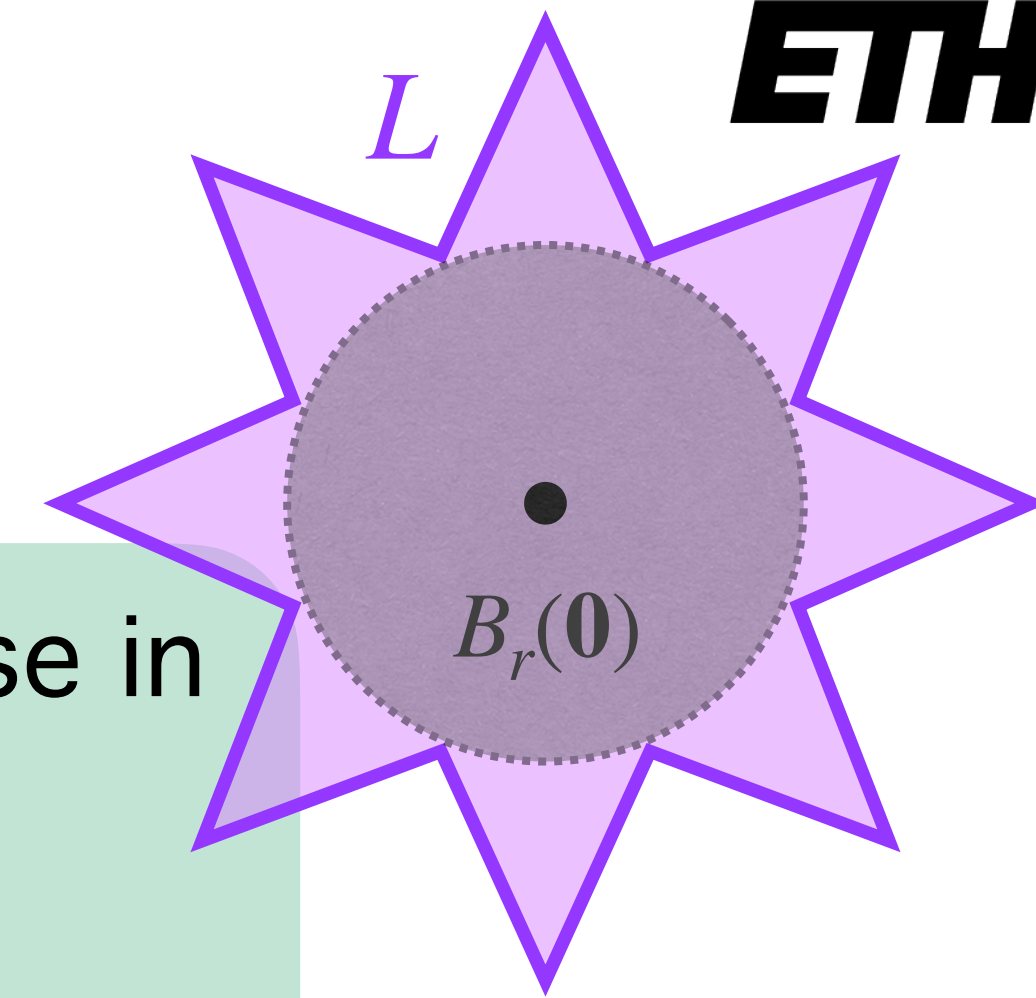
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**Theorem [M,M,V]:** The set of polyradial/polygauge bodies is dense in the set of star-bodies with continuous radial/gauge function.

If  $B_r(\mathbf{0}) \subset L$ , then the smallest distance between  $L$  and

- a polygauge body of degree  $k$  is in  $\mathcal{O}\left(\frac{1}{r\sqrt{k}}\right)$ ,
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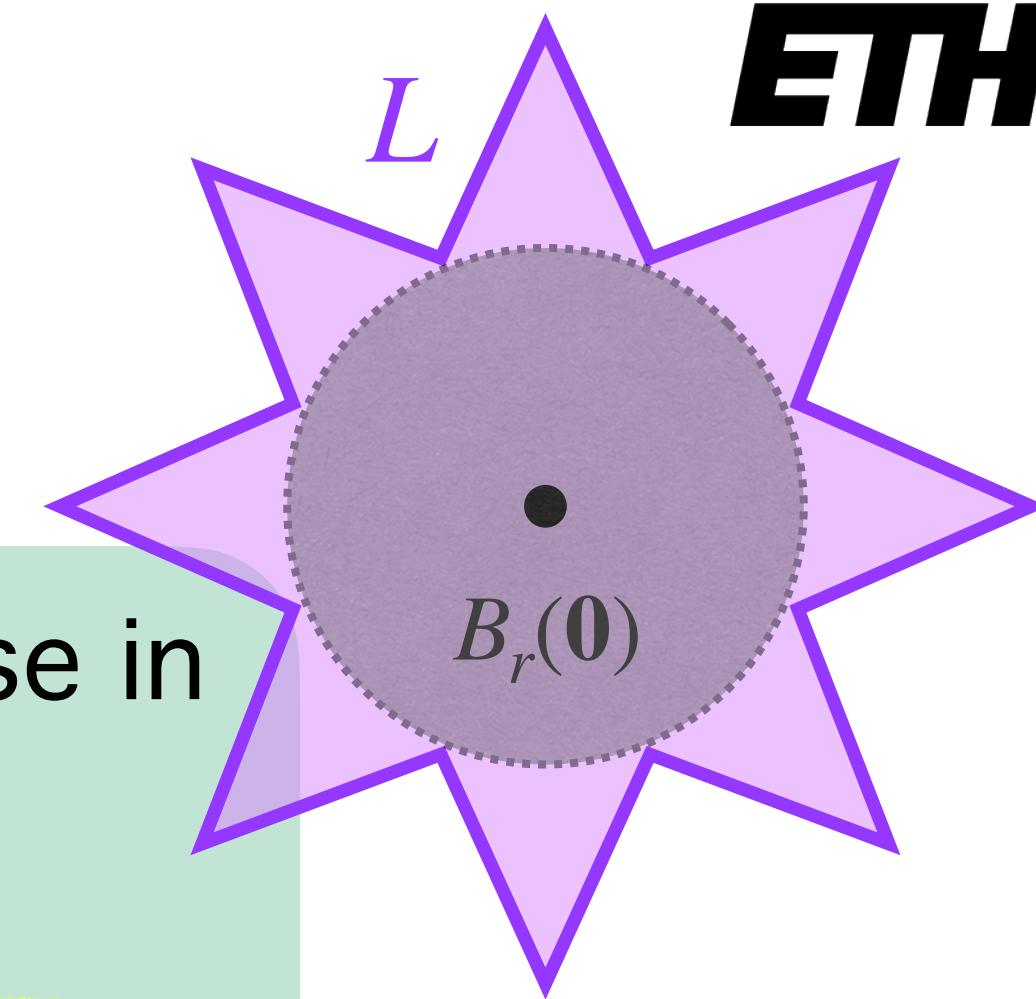
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Spherical harmonics  
Funk-Hecke formula  
Fourier series  
Convolutions

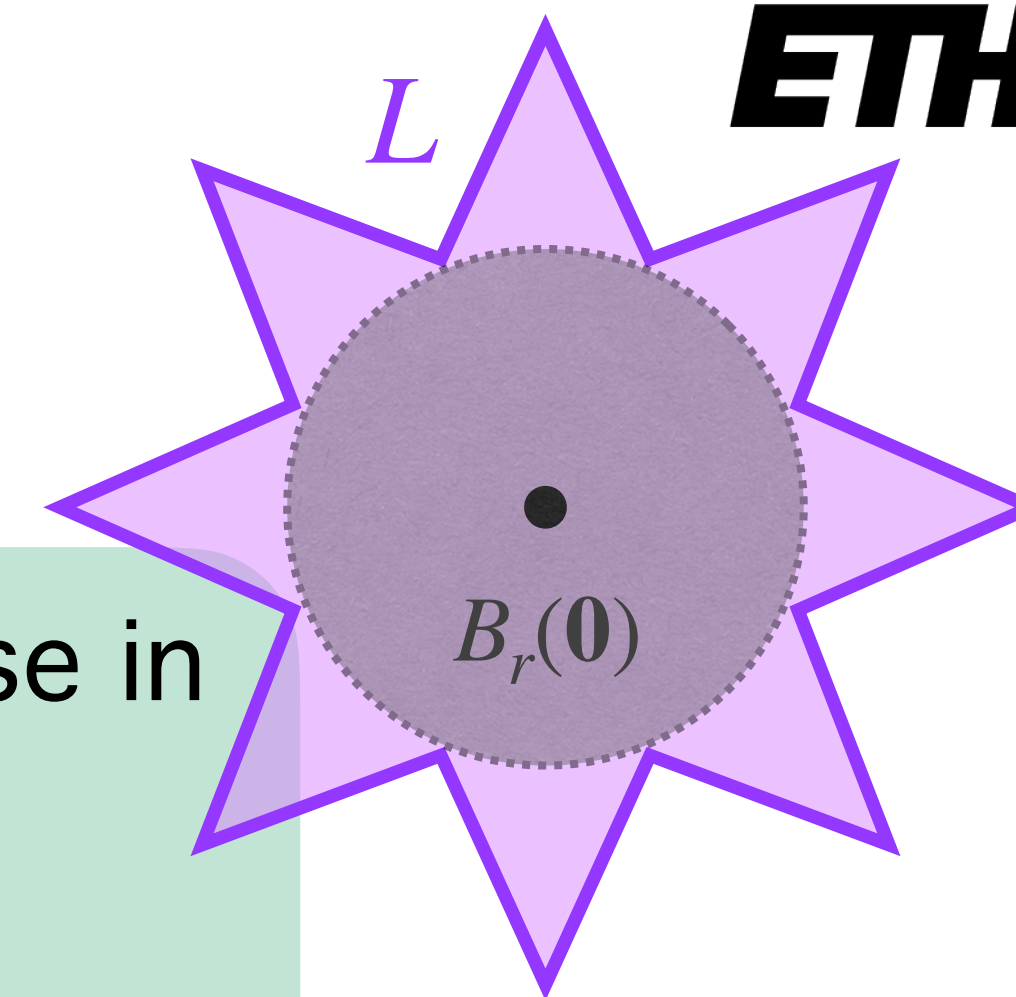
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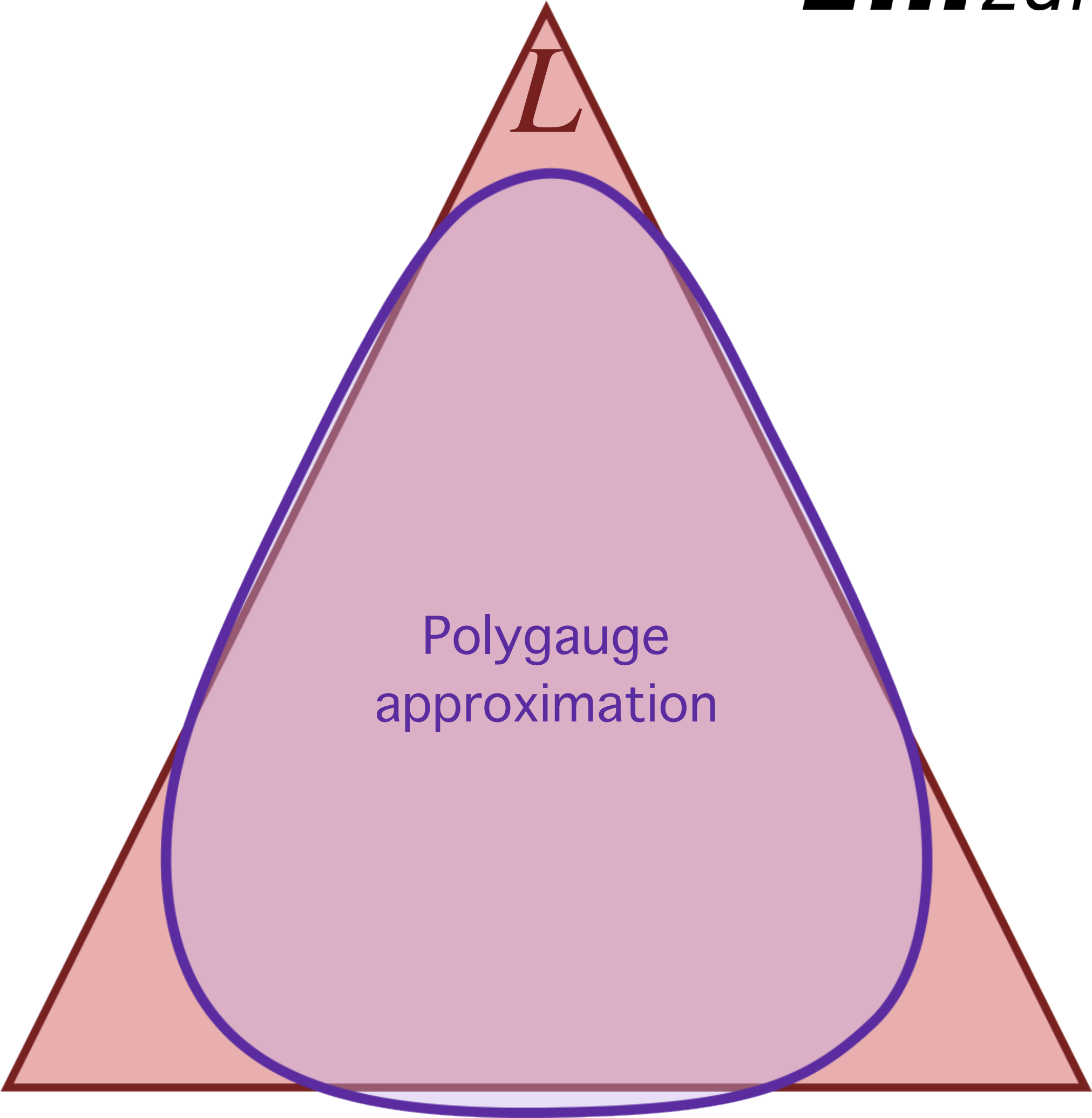
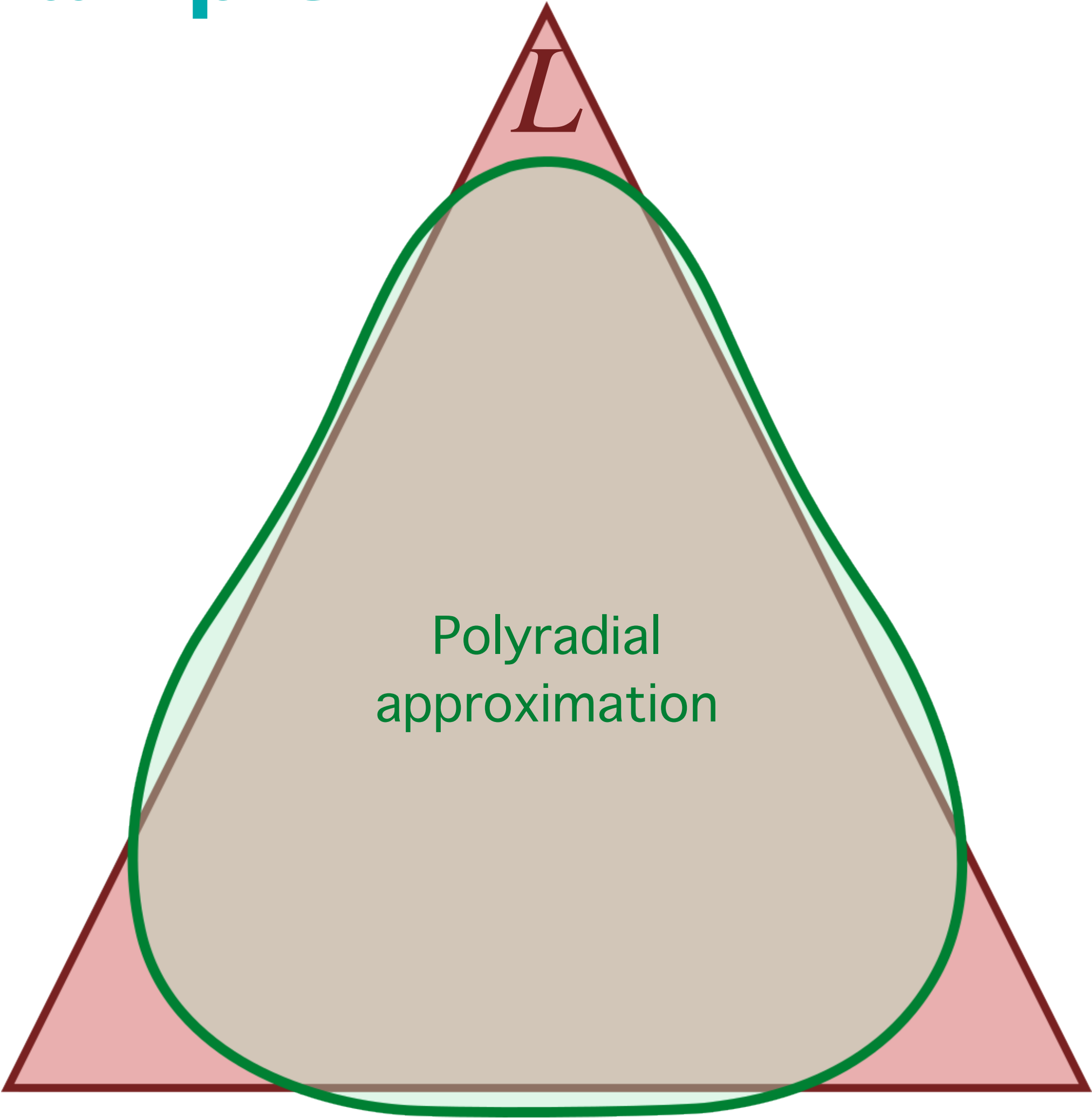
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Moreover: if  $L$  is convex, it's easy to make the approximating polygauge body convex too.

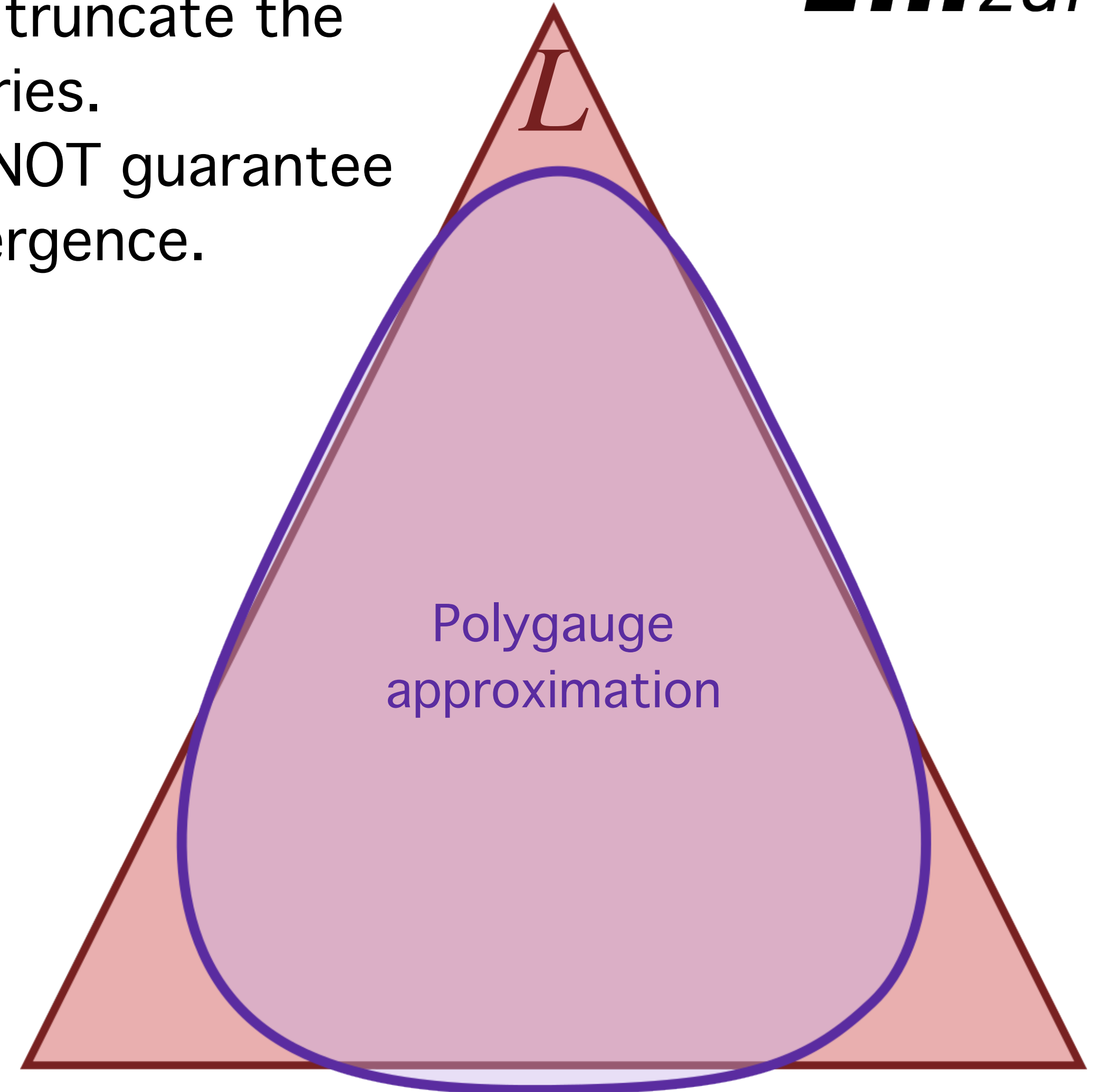
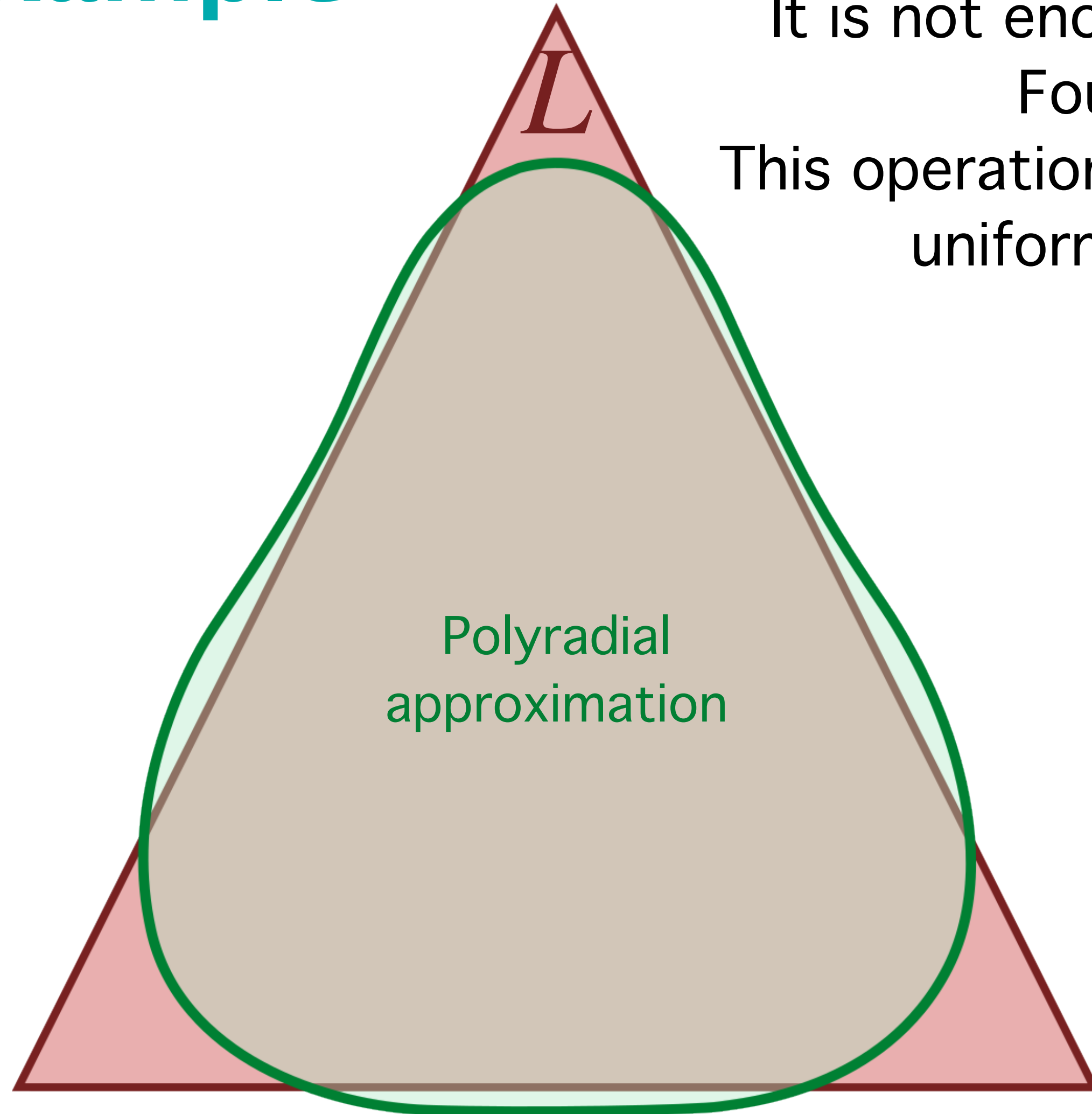
# Example



# Example

## Note:

It is not enough to truncate the Fourier series.  
This operation does NOT guarantee uniform convergence.



# Okay but why?

Back to the slice volume...  
(central)

$$\text{vol}(L \cap x^\perp) = \mathcal{R}(\rho_L(x))$$

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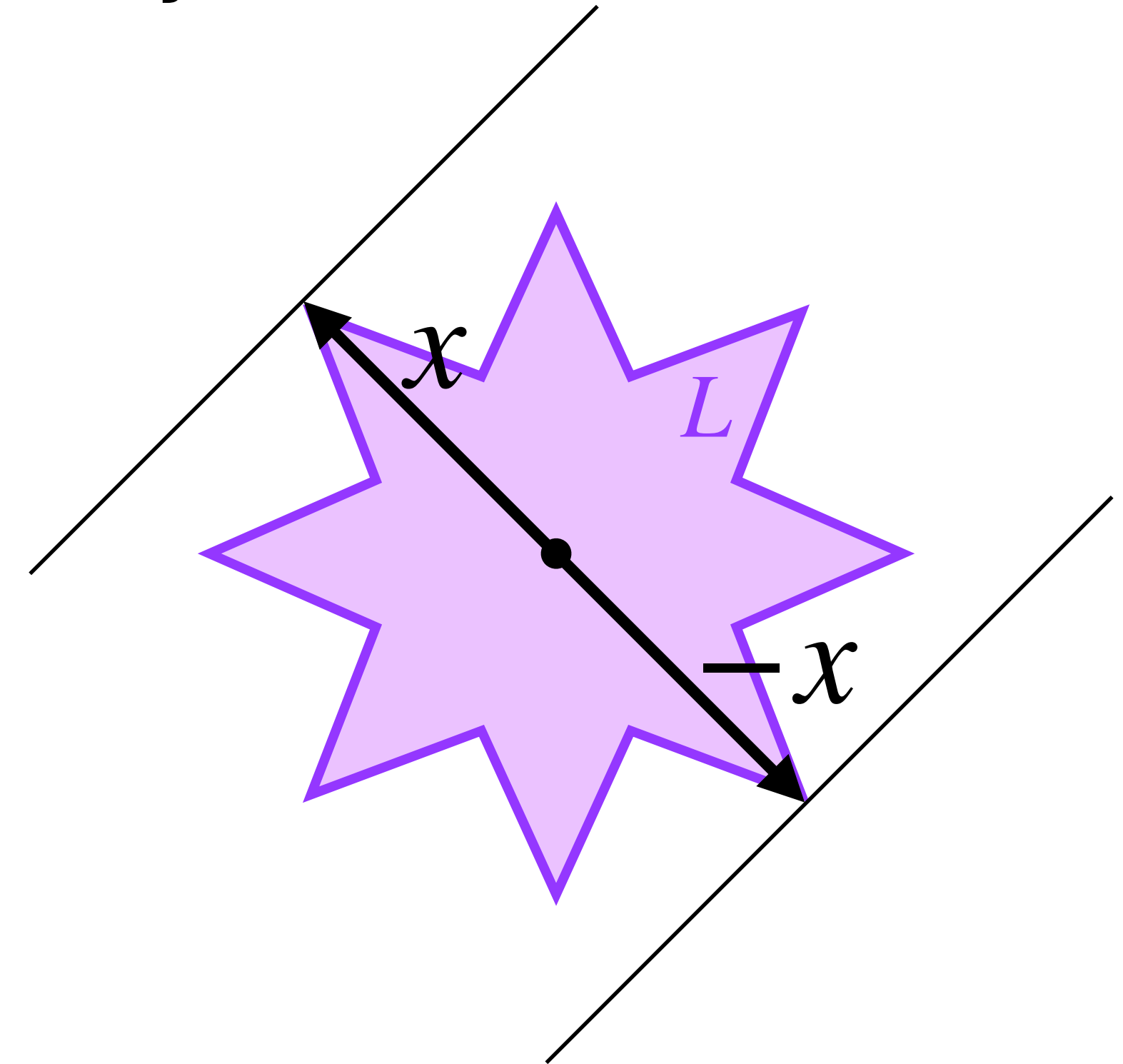
- Finding the slice with maximal (minimal) volume
- is reduced to a sum-of-squares optimization



# More optimization...

With the gauge function we can express the width of a body:

$$w(L) = \max_{x \in S^{d-1}} \gamma_{(\text{conv } L)^\circ}(x) + \gamma_{(\text{conv } L)^\circ}(-x)$$

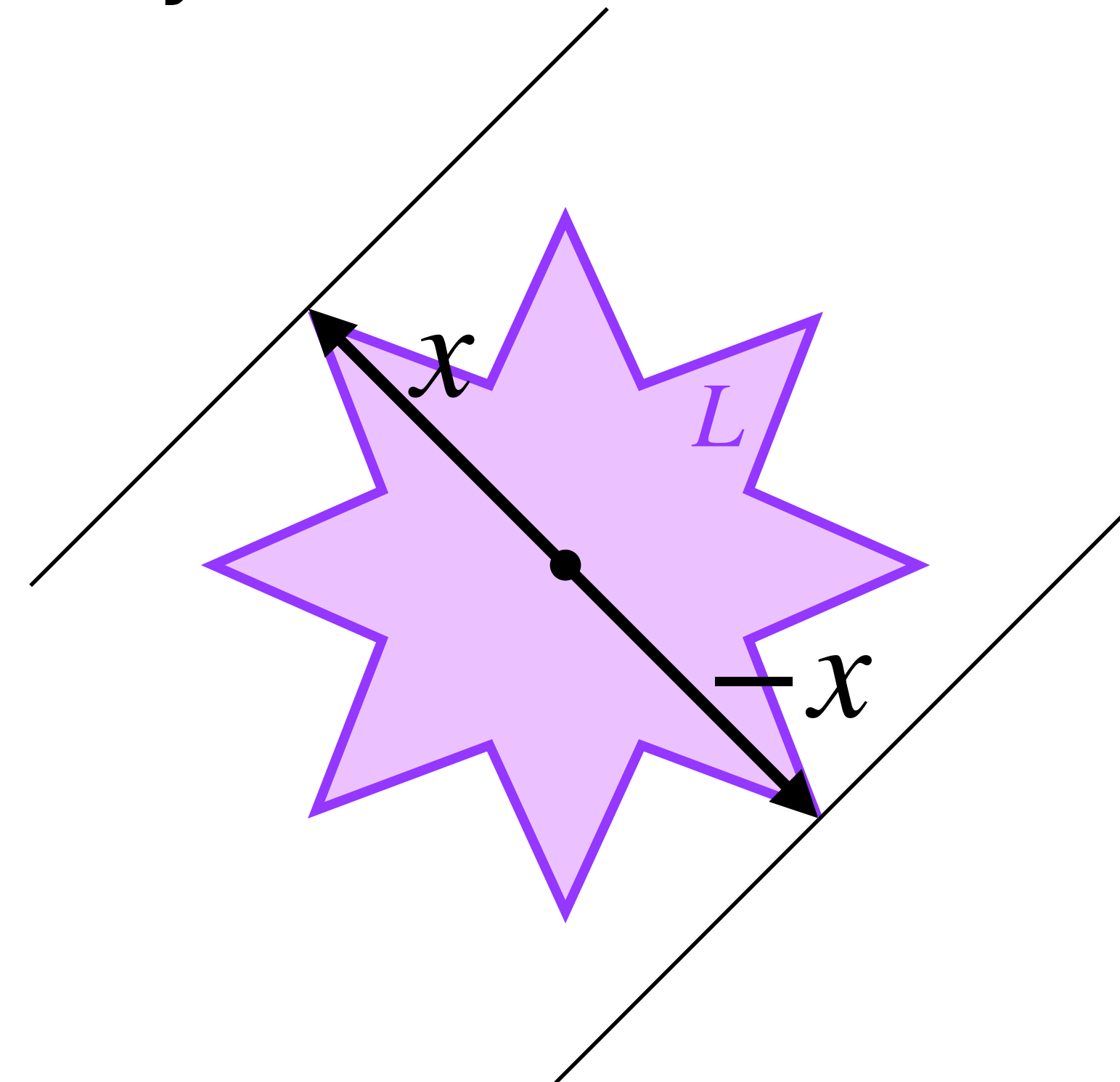


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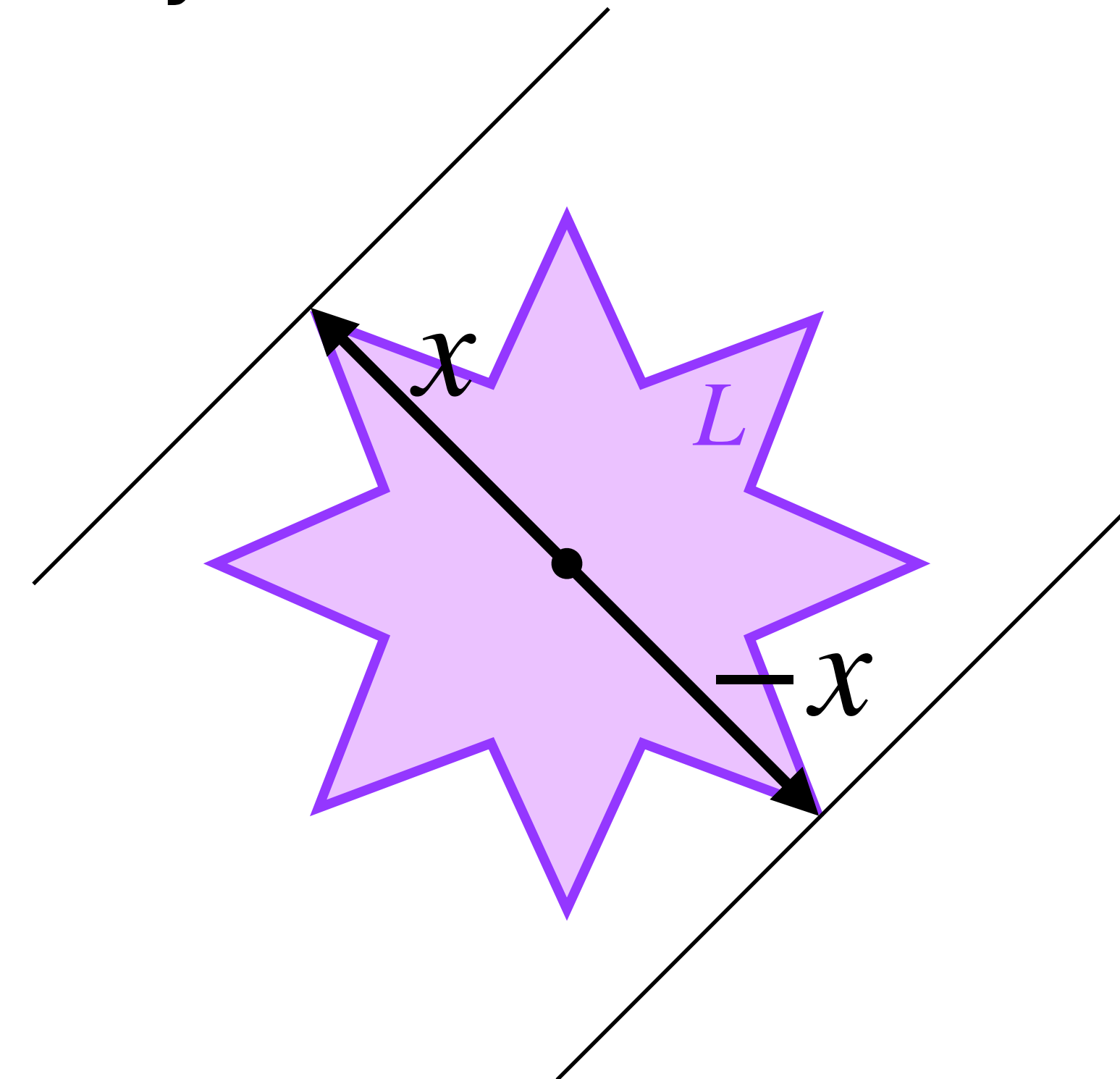


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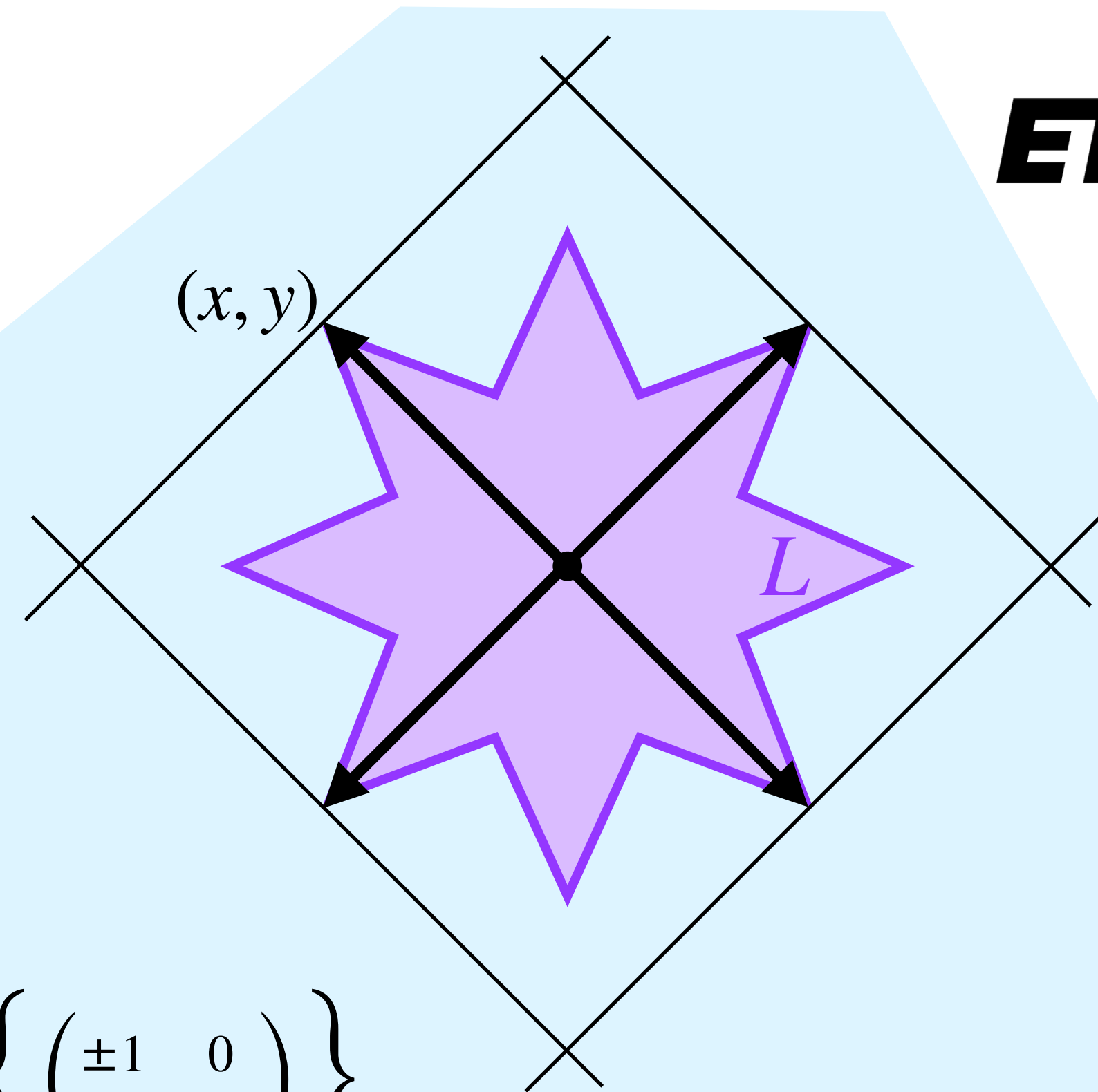
Volume and width constraints can be formulated in terms of the gauge function

# G-width

Define the  $G$ -width now, for a group  $G \leq O(d)$ :

$$w_G(L) = \max_{x \in S^{d-1}} \frac{1}{\text{vol } G} \int_G \gamma_{(\text{conv } L)^\circ}(Gx) \, d\omega_G$$

$$w(L) = w_{\{Id, -Id\}}(L)$$



$$G = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} \pm 1 & 0 \\ 0 & \pm 1 \end{pmatrix} \right\}$$

$$w_G(L) = \max_{(x,y) \in S^1} (\gamma_{(\text{conv } L)^\circ}(x, y) + \gamma_{(\text{conv } L)^\circ}(x, -y) + \gamma_{(\text{conv } L)^\circ}(-x, -y) + \gamma_{(\text{conv } L)^\circ}(-x, y))$$

$G$ -Meissner: among all convex bodies with constant unit  $G$ -width, what is the smallest possible volume?

# Summary

🔄 Recompile

12



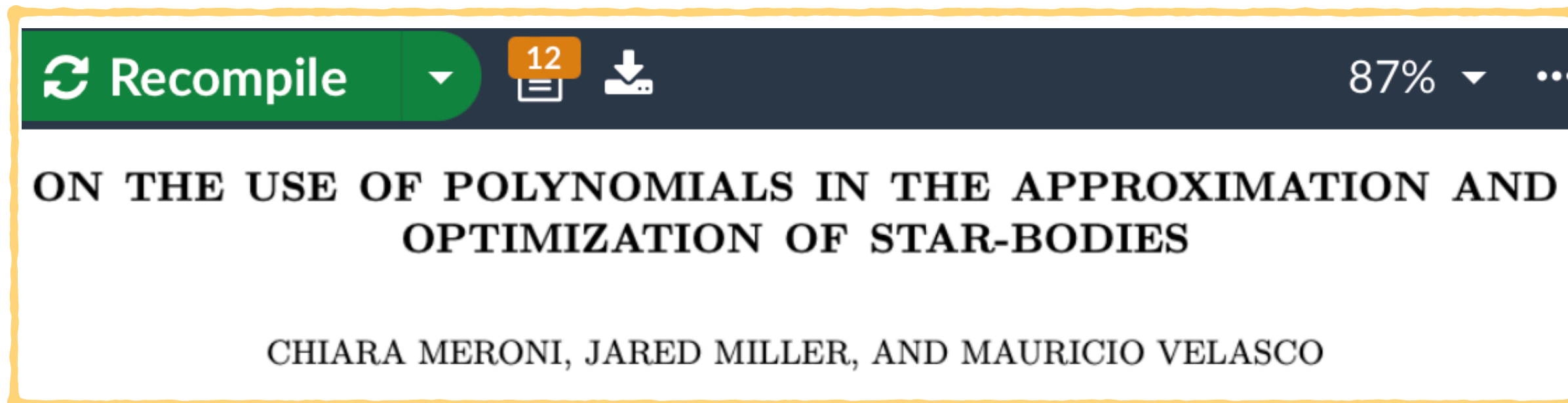
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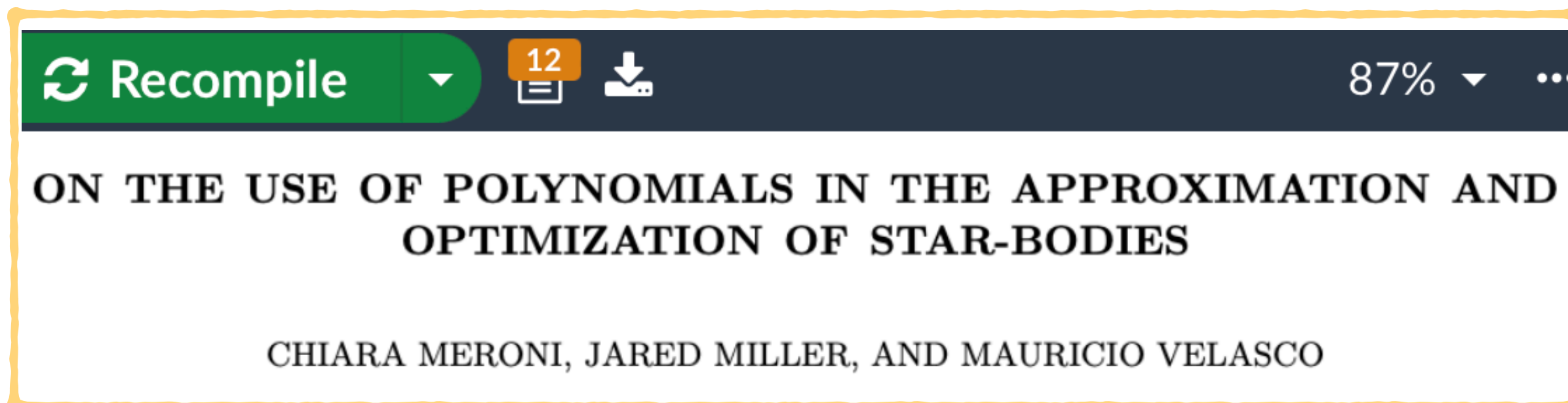


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Optimization over the set of convex/  
star-bodies/polytopes  
Works probably in  $\mathbb{R}^3$

CONS: For polytopes just an approximation  
In  $\mathbb{R}^4$  it is probably out of reach

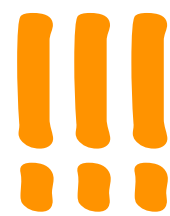
WHY NOT ON ARXIV: Implementation is a work-in-progress!

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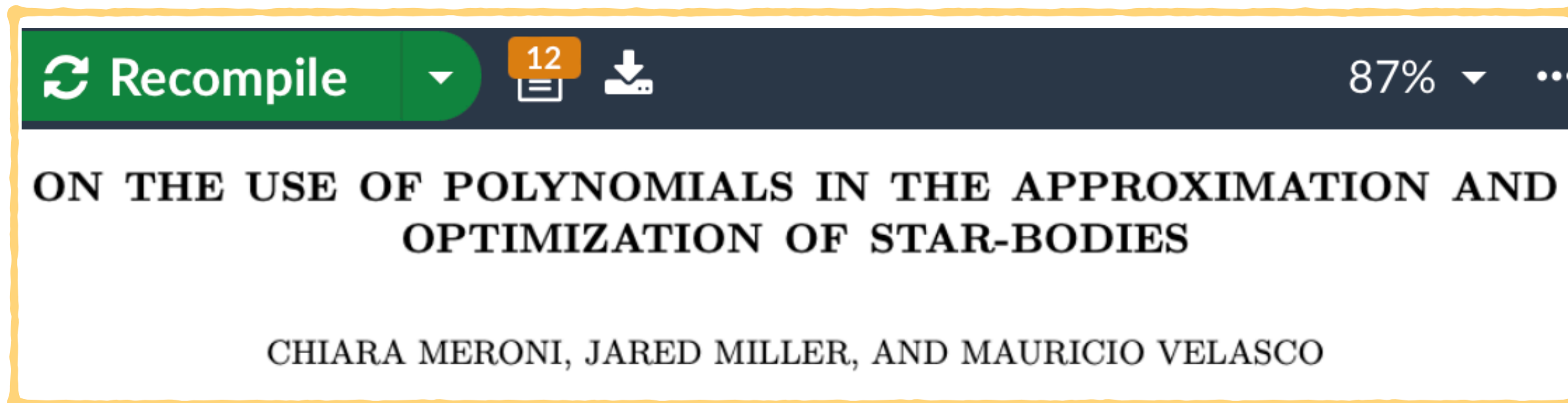
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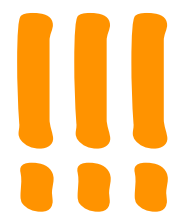
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