

European Symposium on Algorithms (ESA) 2026, L'Aquila, Italy

Hierarchical Spanners

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⁽²⁾ *Tor Vergata* University of Rome, Italy

Graph Spanner

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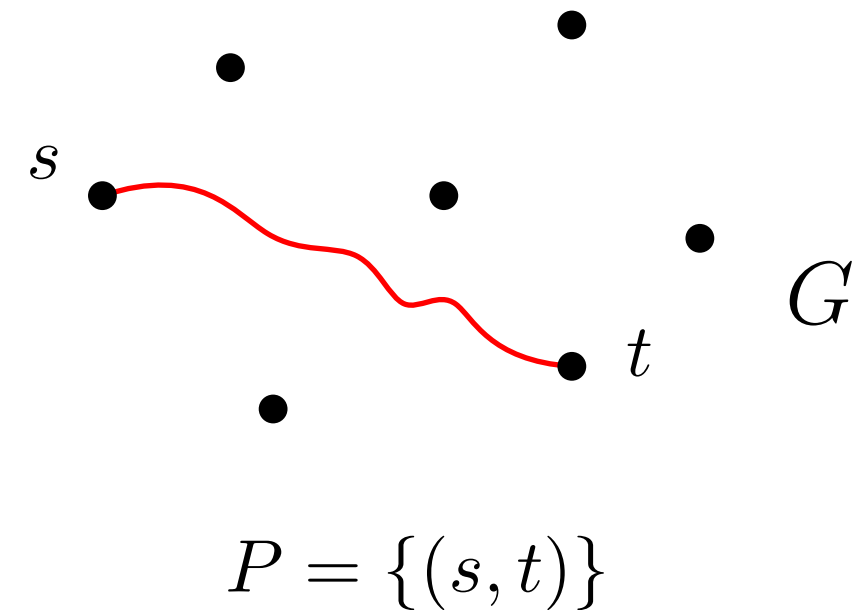
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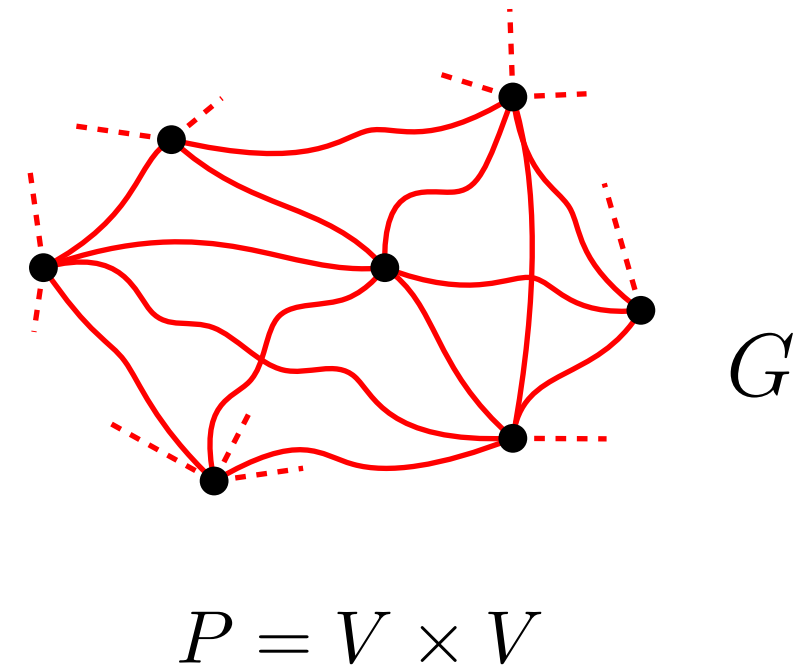
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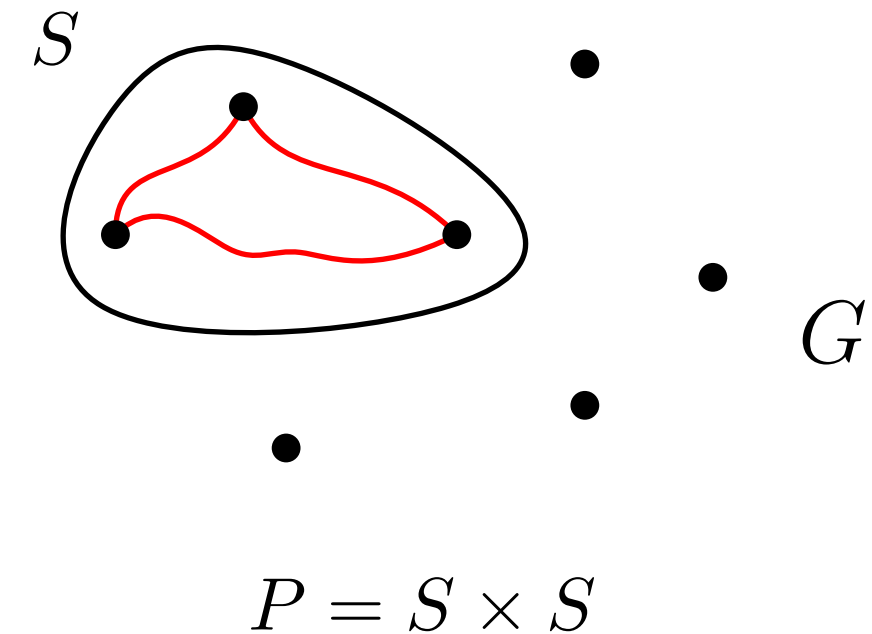
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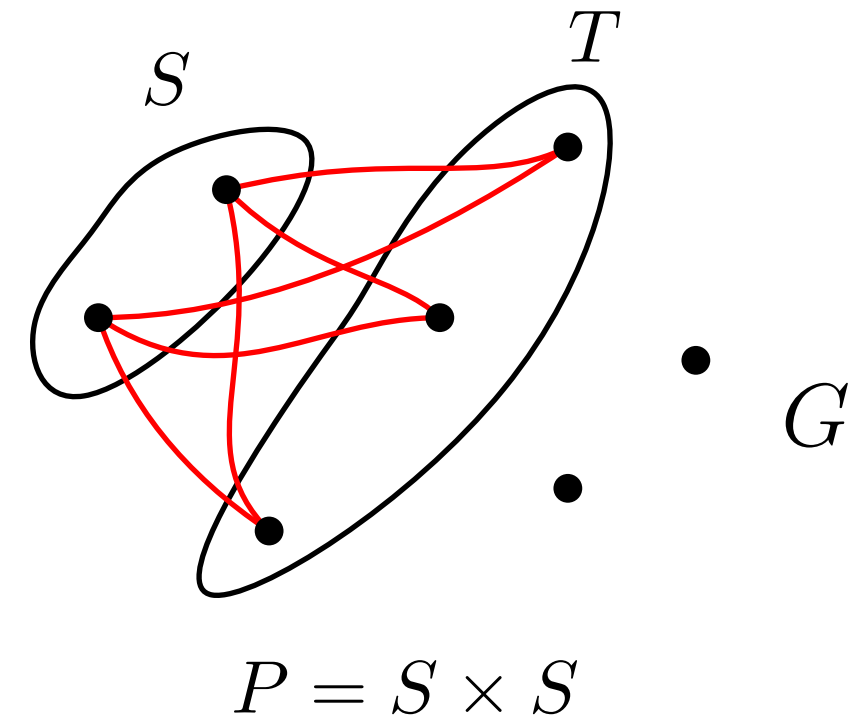
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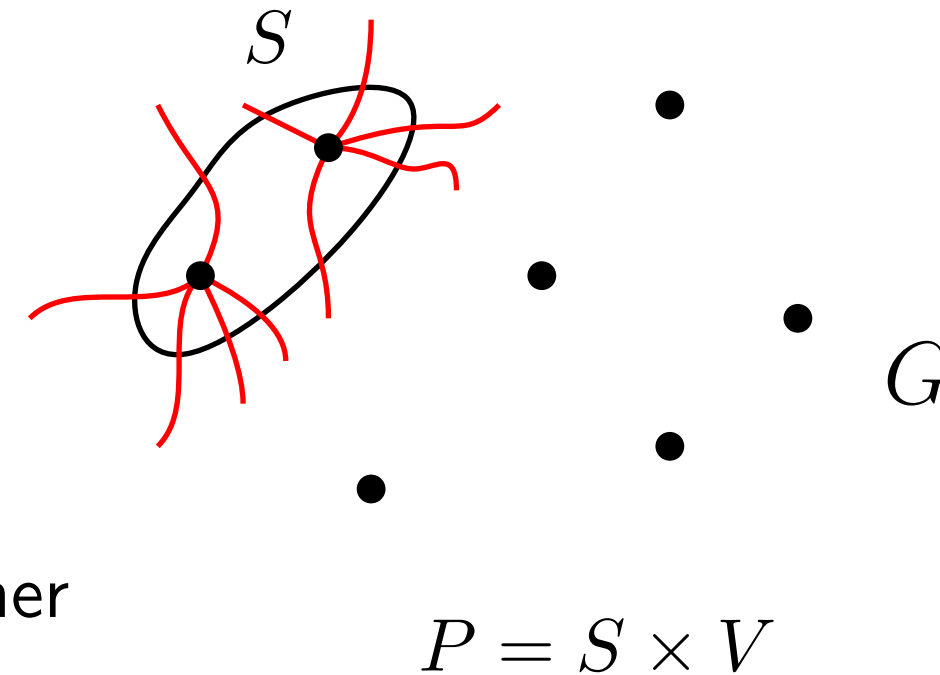
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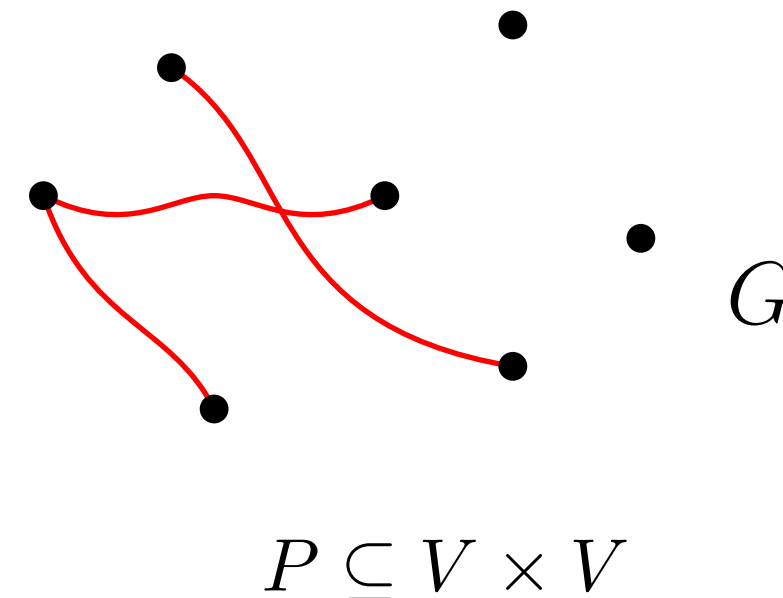
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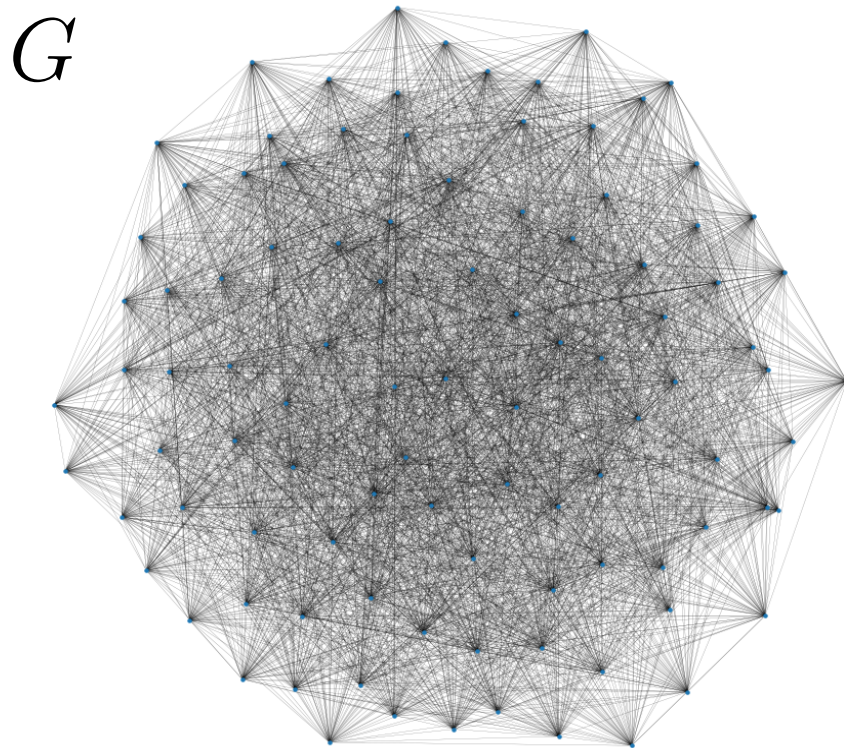
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$n = 100$ vertices and $m = 3300$ edges

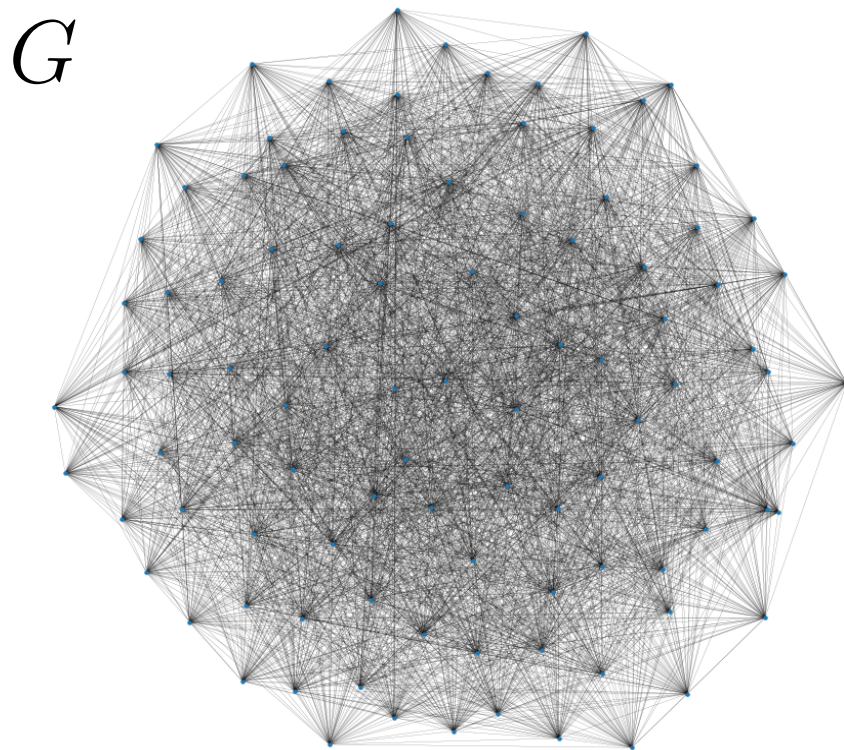
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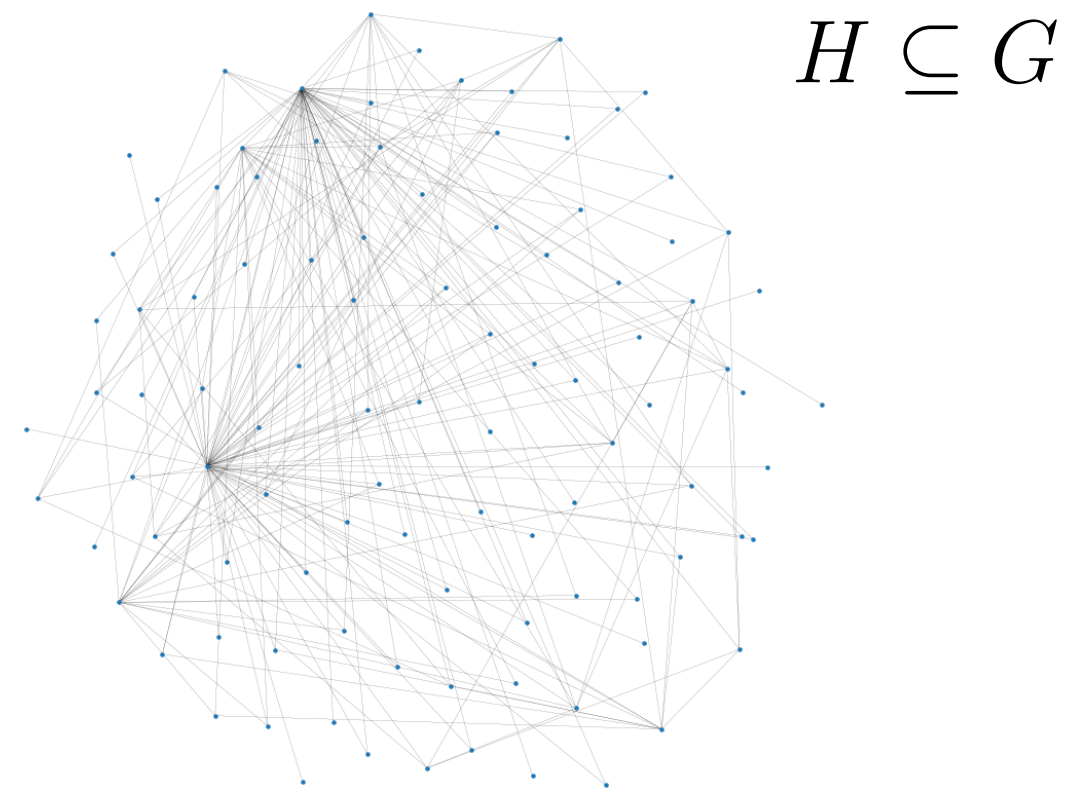
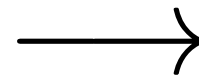
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all-pairs 7-spanner with $m = 214$ edges

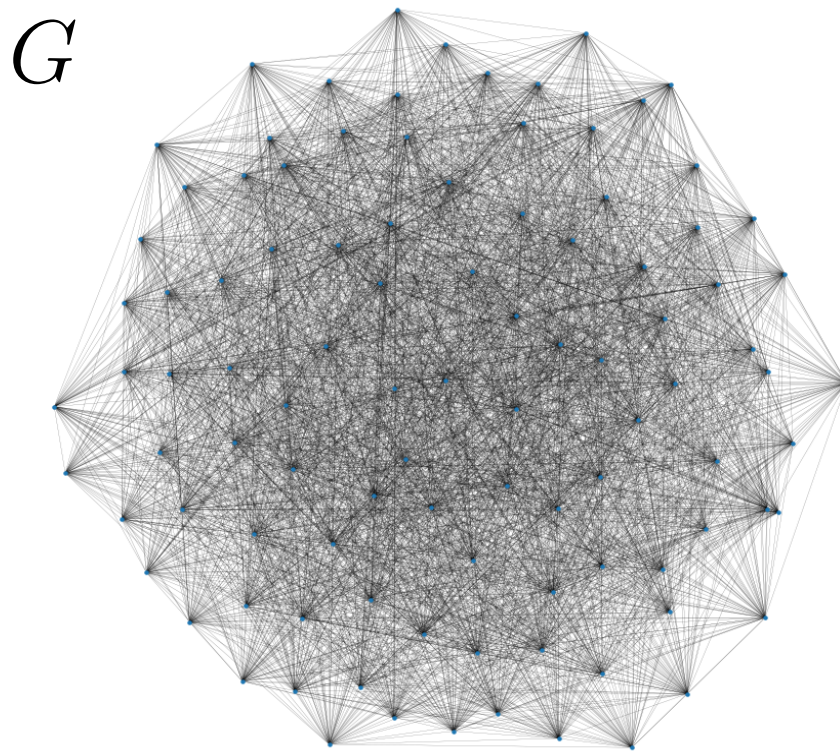
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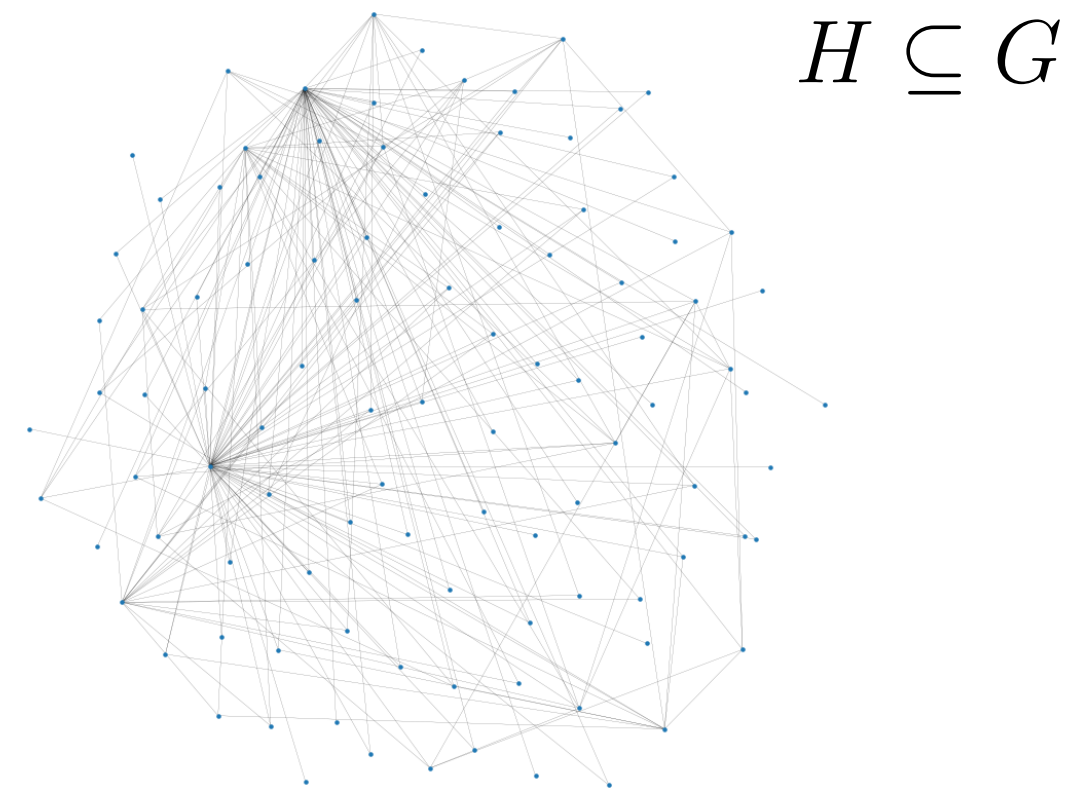
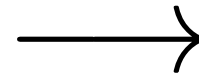
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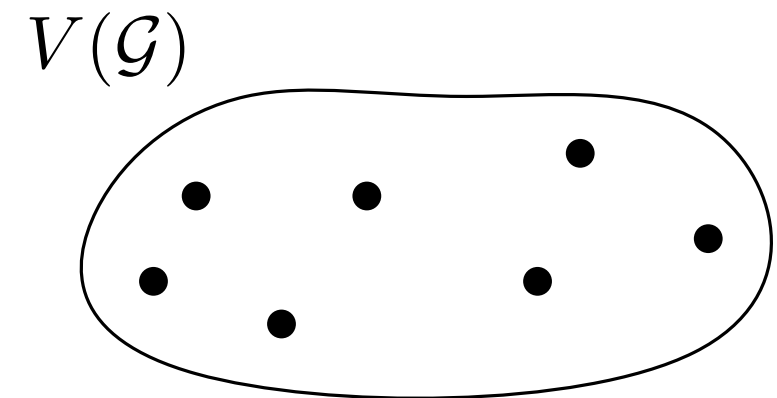
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only 6.5% of edges of G !

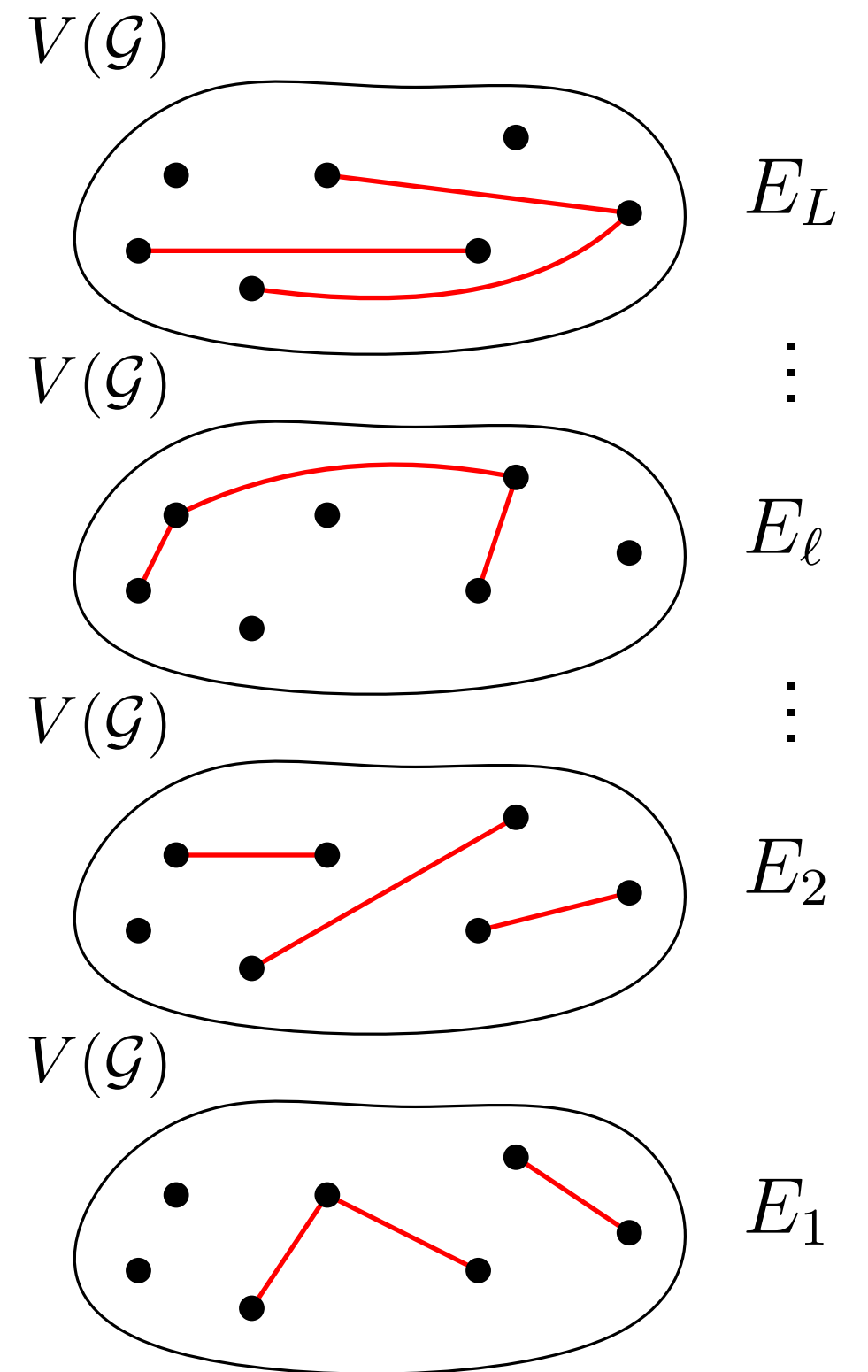
Hierarchical Graphs and Spanners

- a set $V(\mathcal{G})$ of n vertices



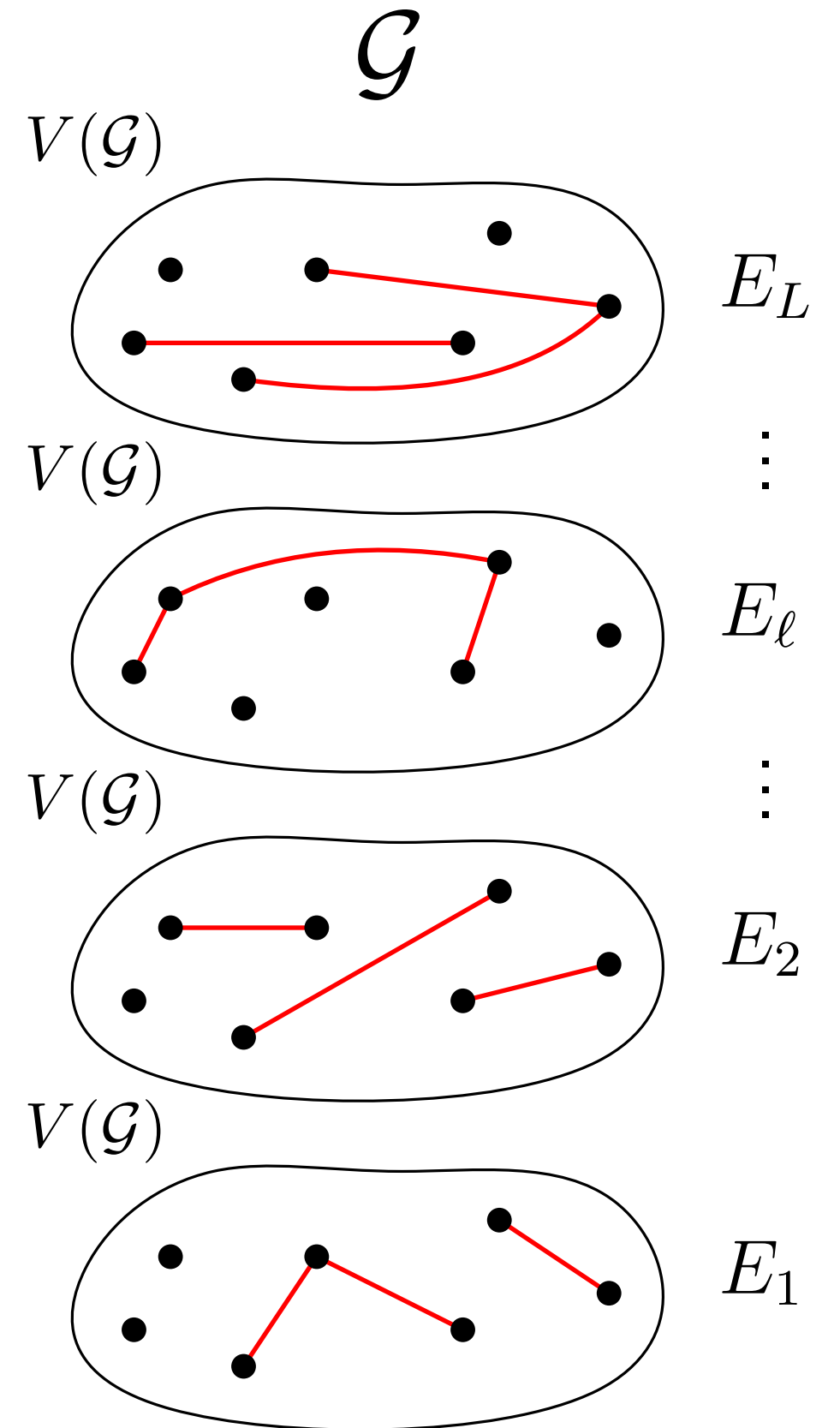
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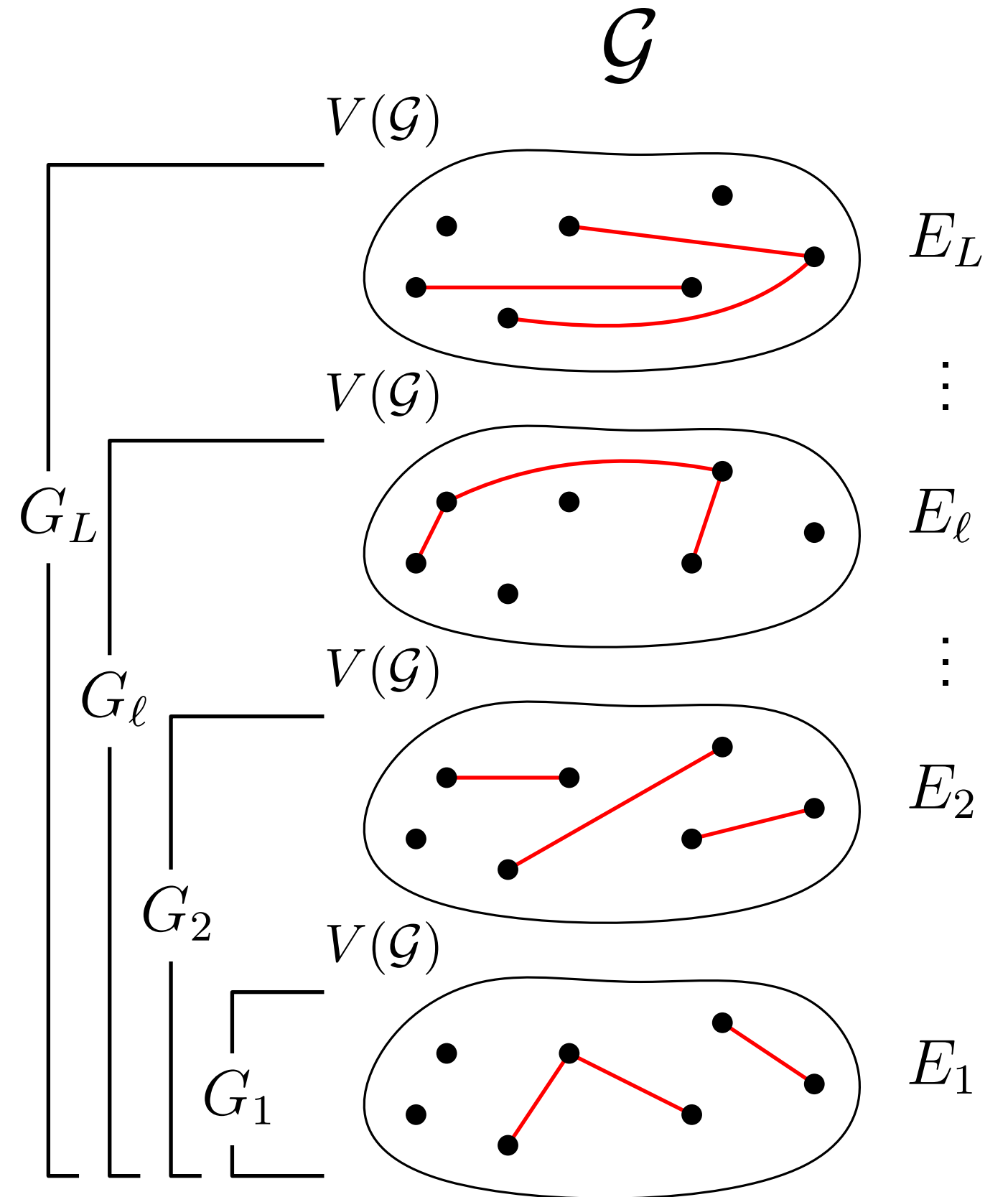
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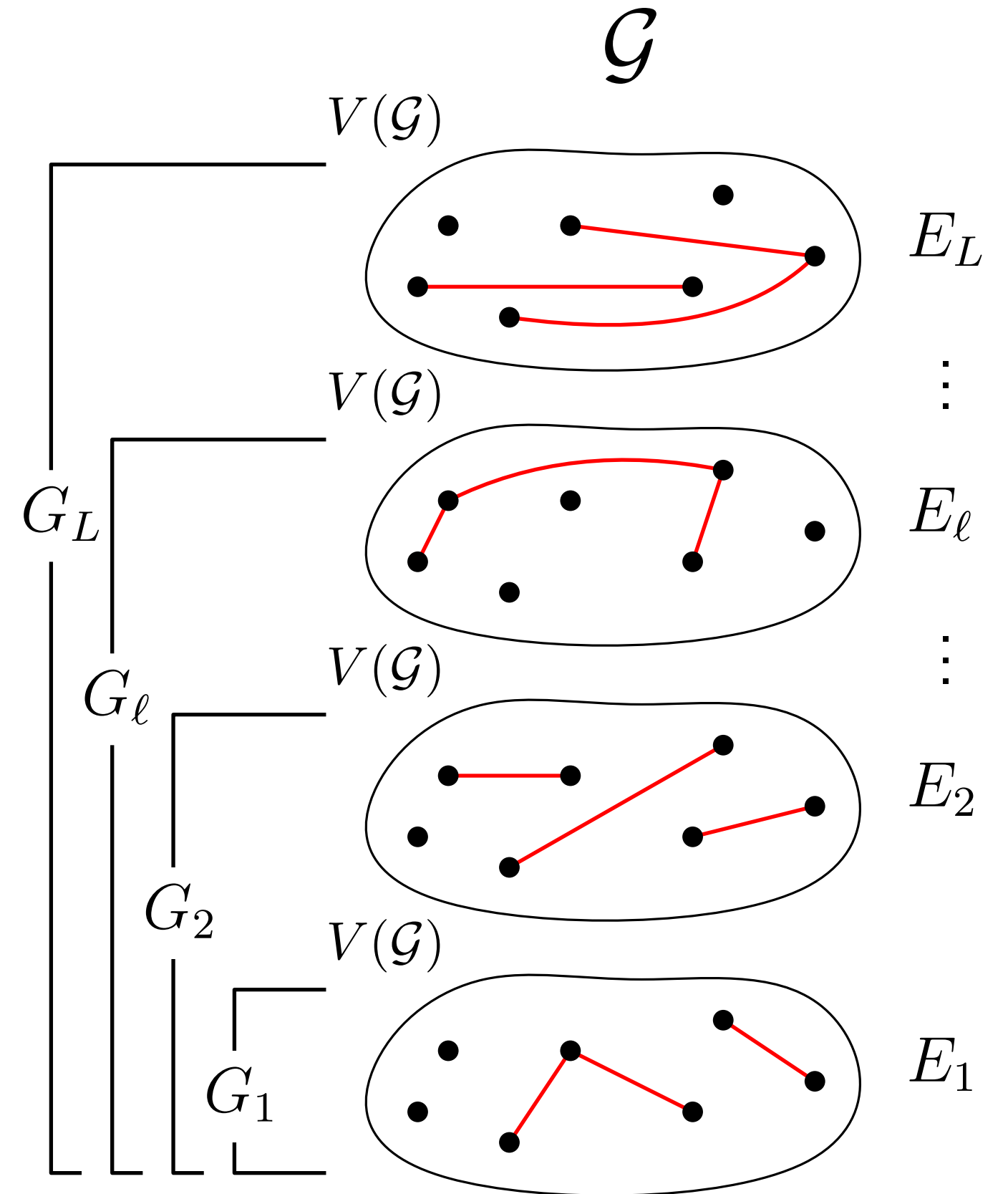
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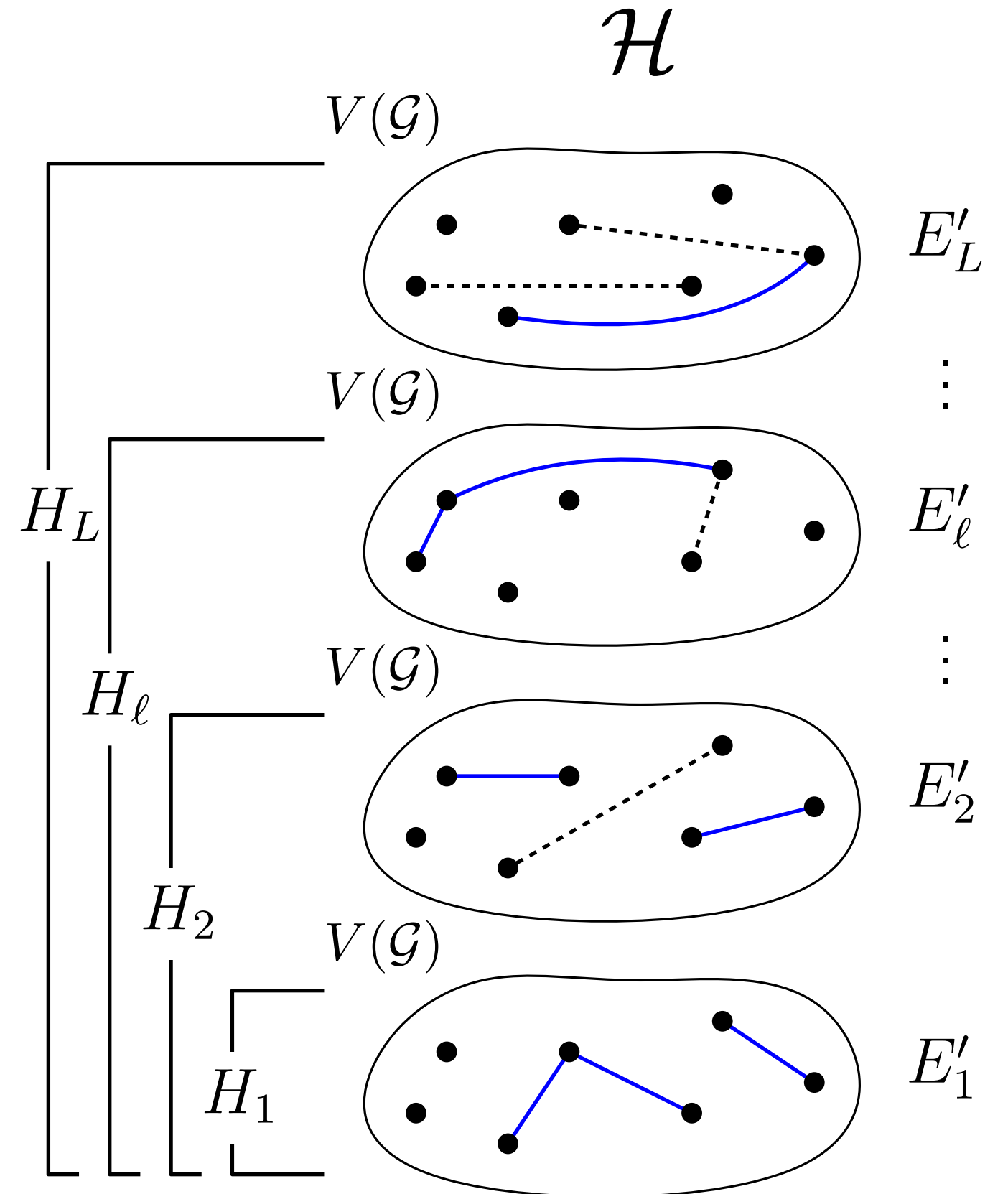
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Classical Graphs

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Do classical size-stretch tradeoffs survive the hierarchy?
--

Results roadmap

2019-2020

2020-2021

2021-2022

2022-2023

2023-2024

2024-2025

2025-2026

2026-2027

2027-2028

2028-2029

2029-2030

2030-2031

2031-2032

2032-2033

2033-2034

2034-2035

2035-2036

Results roadmap

Single-pair

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$$\beta\text{-additive} \longrightarrow \Theta \left(n \sqrt{\frac{n}{\beta+1}} \right)$$

Results roadmap

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$$\begin{aligned} \beta\text{-additive} &\longrightarrow \Theta\left(n\sqrt{\frac{n}{\beta+1}}\right) \\ O(1)\text{-additive} / \text{preserver} &\longrightarrow \Theta(n\sqrt{n}) \end{aligned}$$

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All-pairs

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$(2k - 1)$ -stretch, $O(n^{1+1/k})$

Hierarchical

$(2k - 1)$ -stretch, $O(n^{1+1/k})$ (no asymptotic loss)

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2-additive, $O(n\sqrt{n})$

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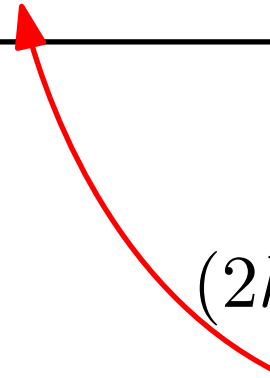
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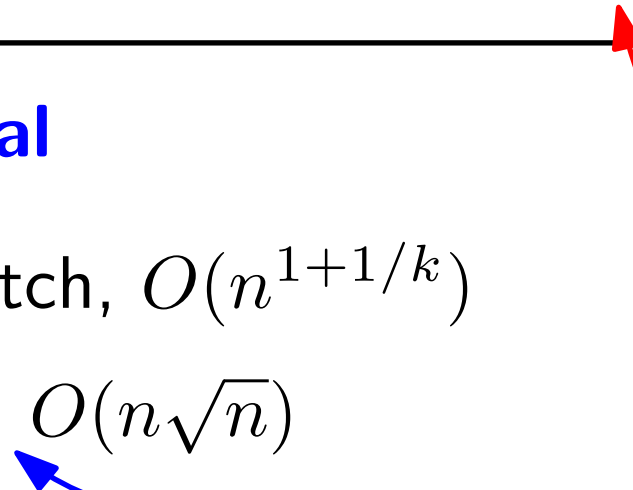
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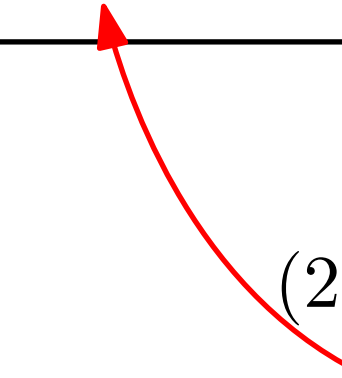
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$$4\text{-additive, } \tilde{O}(n^{5/3})$$

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asymptotically similar for small constant ε (nearly additive) $(1+\varepsilon, 2), \tilde{O}(n\sqrt{\frac{n}{\varepsilon}})$

$$4\text{-additive}, \tilde{O}(n^{5/3})$$

$s \times T$

$$\text{preserver} \longrightarrow O(n\sqrt{n|T|}), \Omega(n|T|)$$

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$$(2k-1)\text{-stretch}, O(n^{1+1/k})$$

$$2\text{-additive}, O(n\sqrt{n})$$

Hierarchical

$$(2k-1)\text{-stretch}, O(n^{1+1/k}) \quad (\text{no asymptotic loss})$$

$$2\text{-additive}, ? \quad (\text{unlikely } O(n\sqrt{n}) \text{ size})$$

asymptotically similar for small constant ε (nearly additive) $(1+\varepsilon, 2), \tilde{O}(n\sqrt{\frac{n}{\varepsilon}})$

$$4\text{-additive}, \tilde{O}(n^{5/3})$$

$$s \times T$$

$$\text{preserver} \longrightarrow O(n\sqrt{n|T|}), \Omega(n|T|) \implies \Theta(n^2) \text{ for single-source } s \times V$$

Results roadmap

Single-pair

$$\beta\text{-additive} \longrightarrow \Theta\left(n\sqrt{\frac{n}{\beta+1}}\right)$$

$$O(1)\text{-additive} / \text{preserver} \longrightarrow \Theta(n\sqrt{n})$$

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other upperbounds for subsetwise $(S \times S)$ and pairwise

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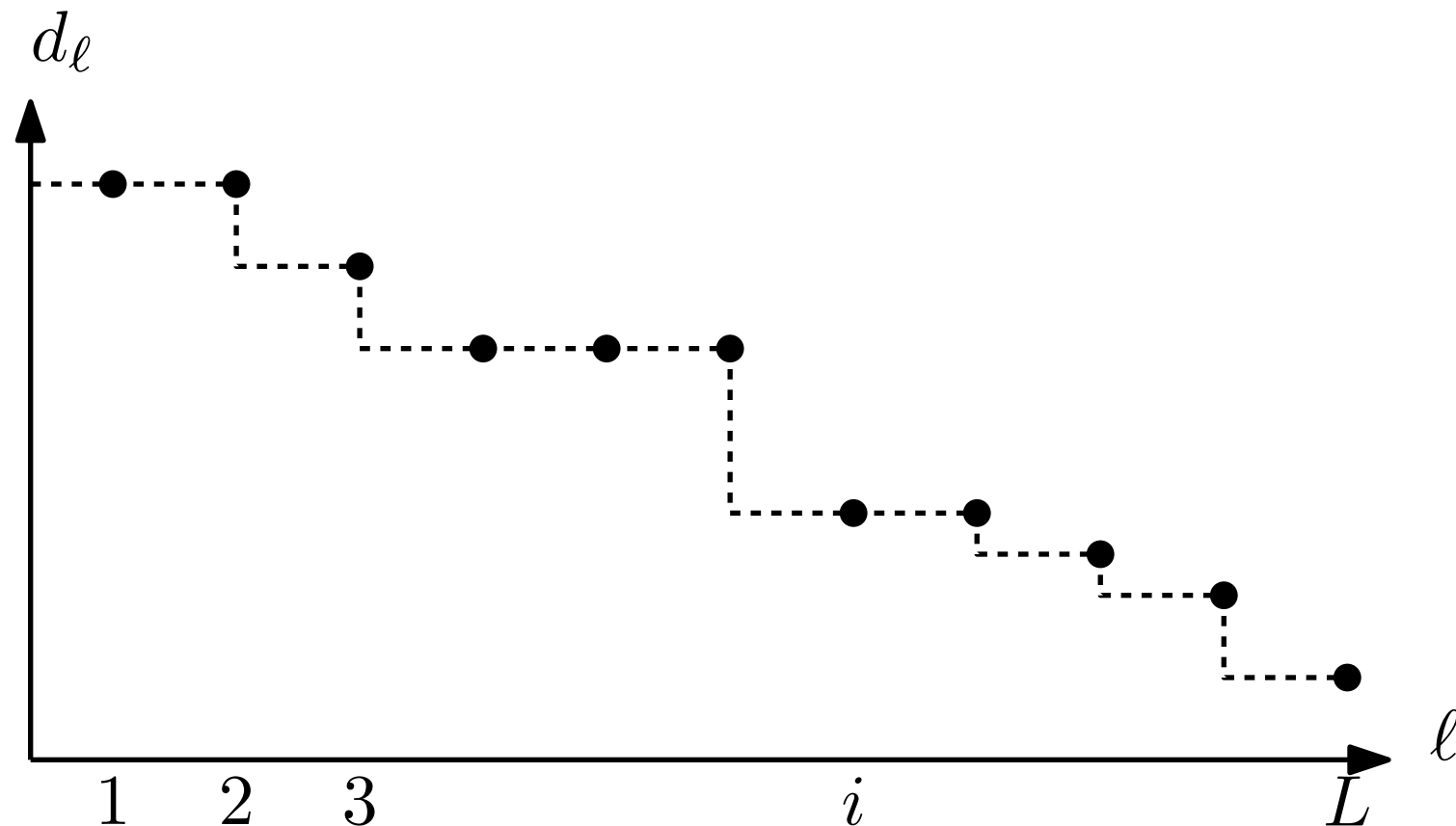
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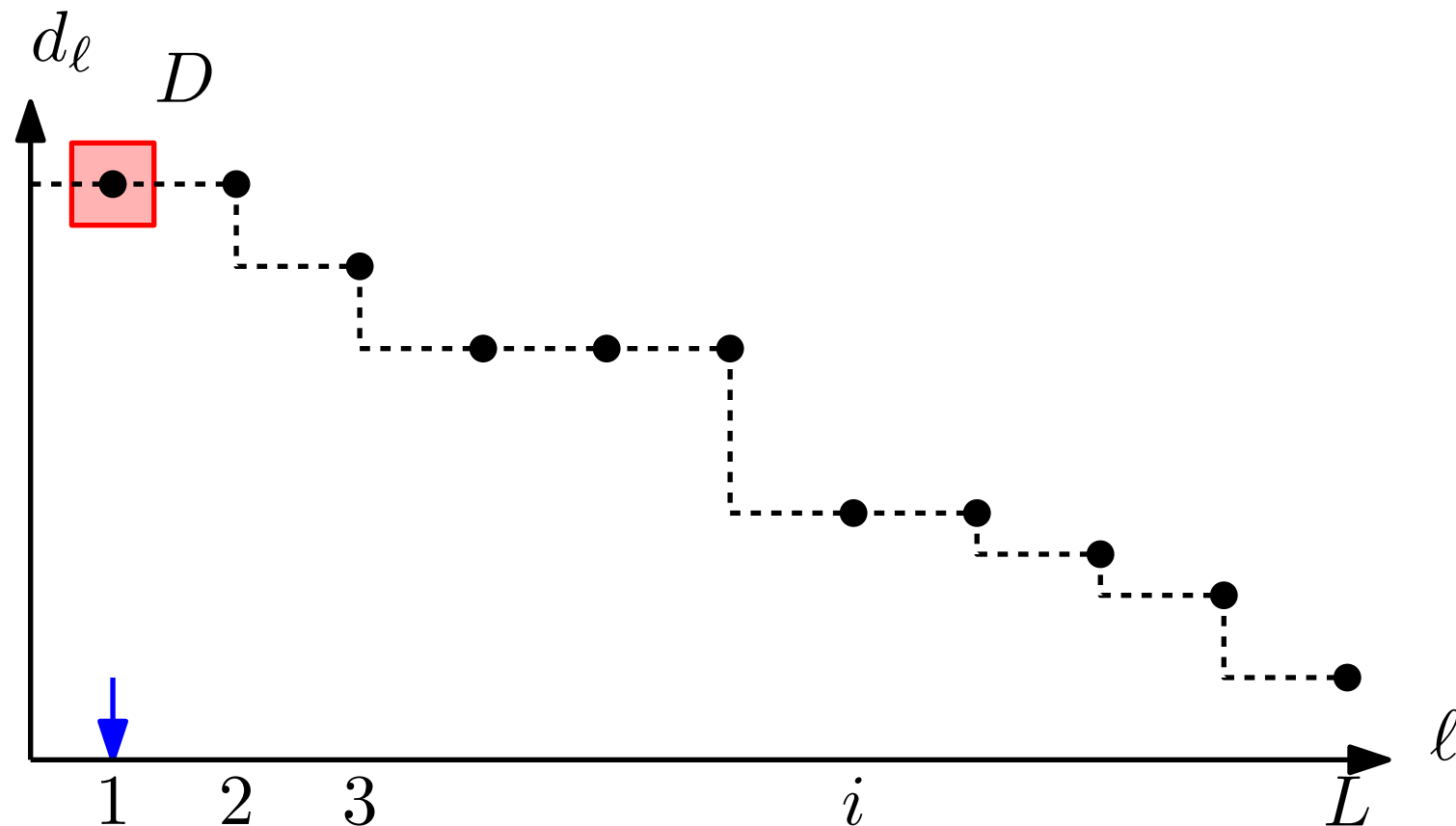
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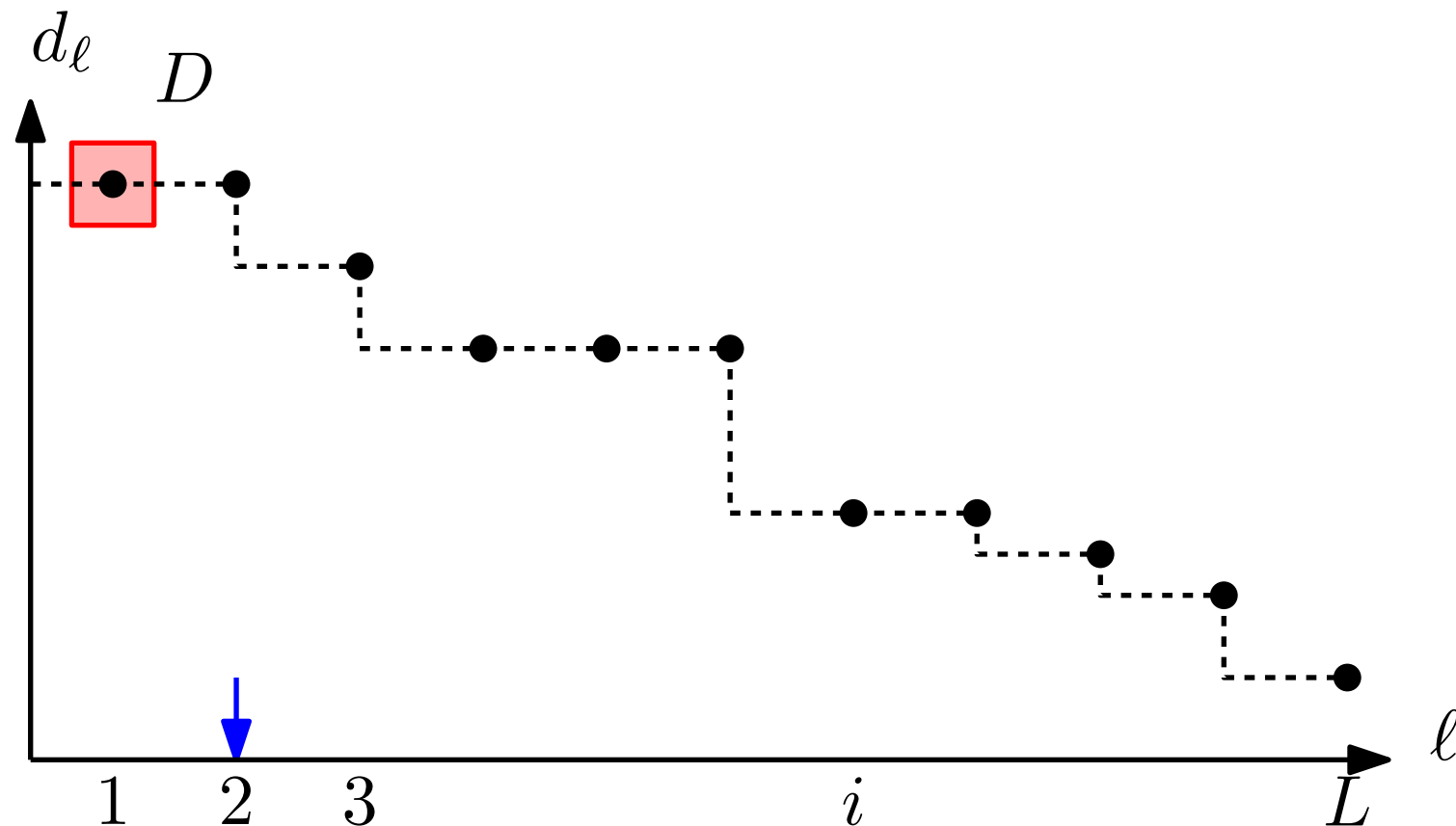
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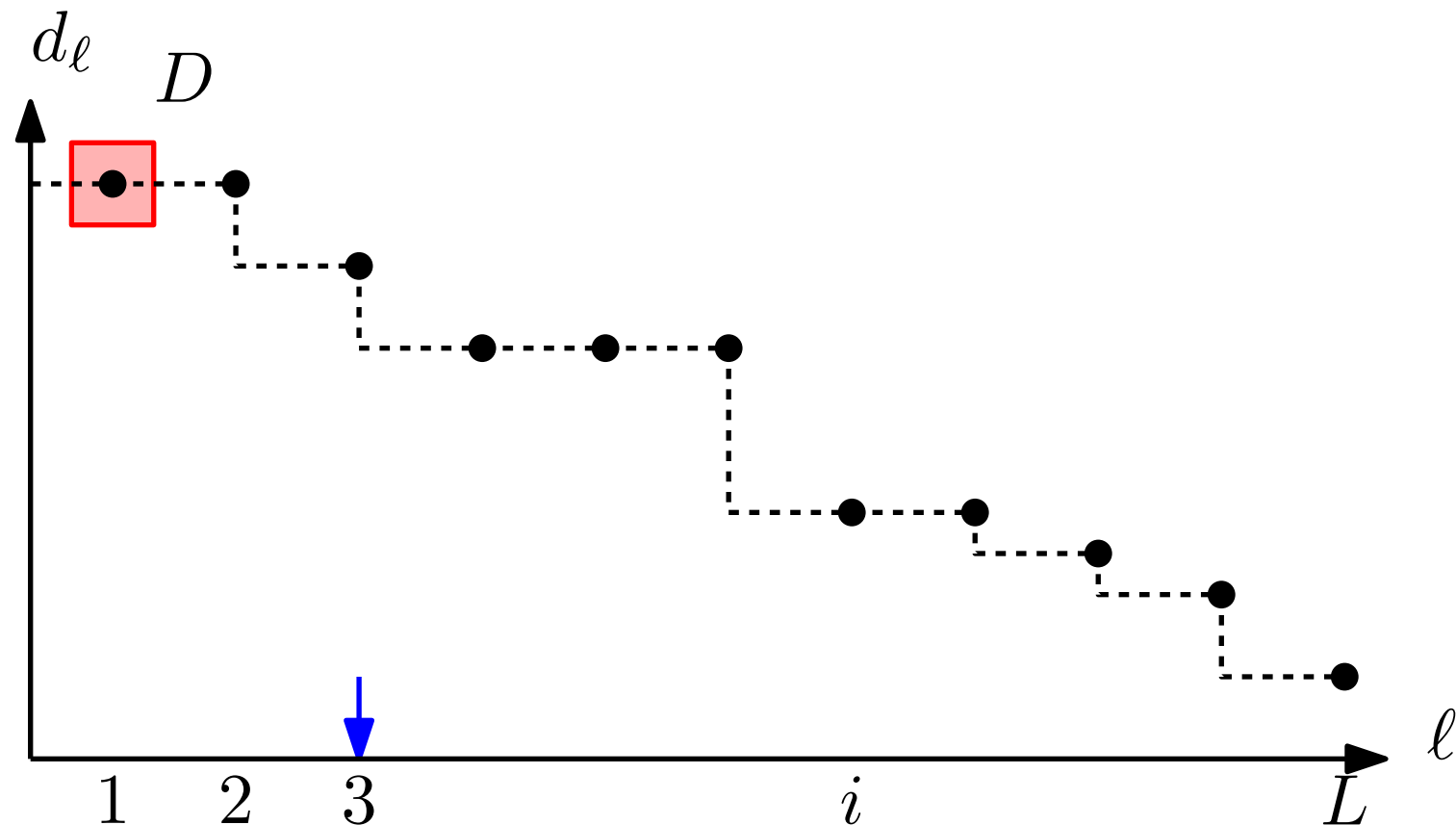
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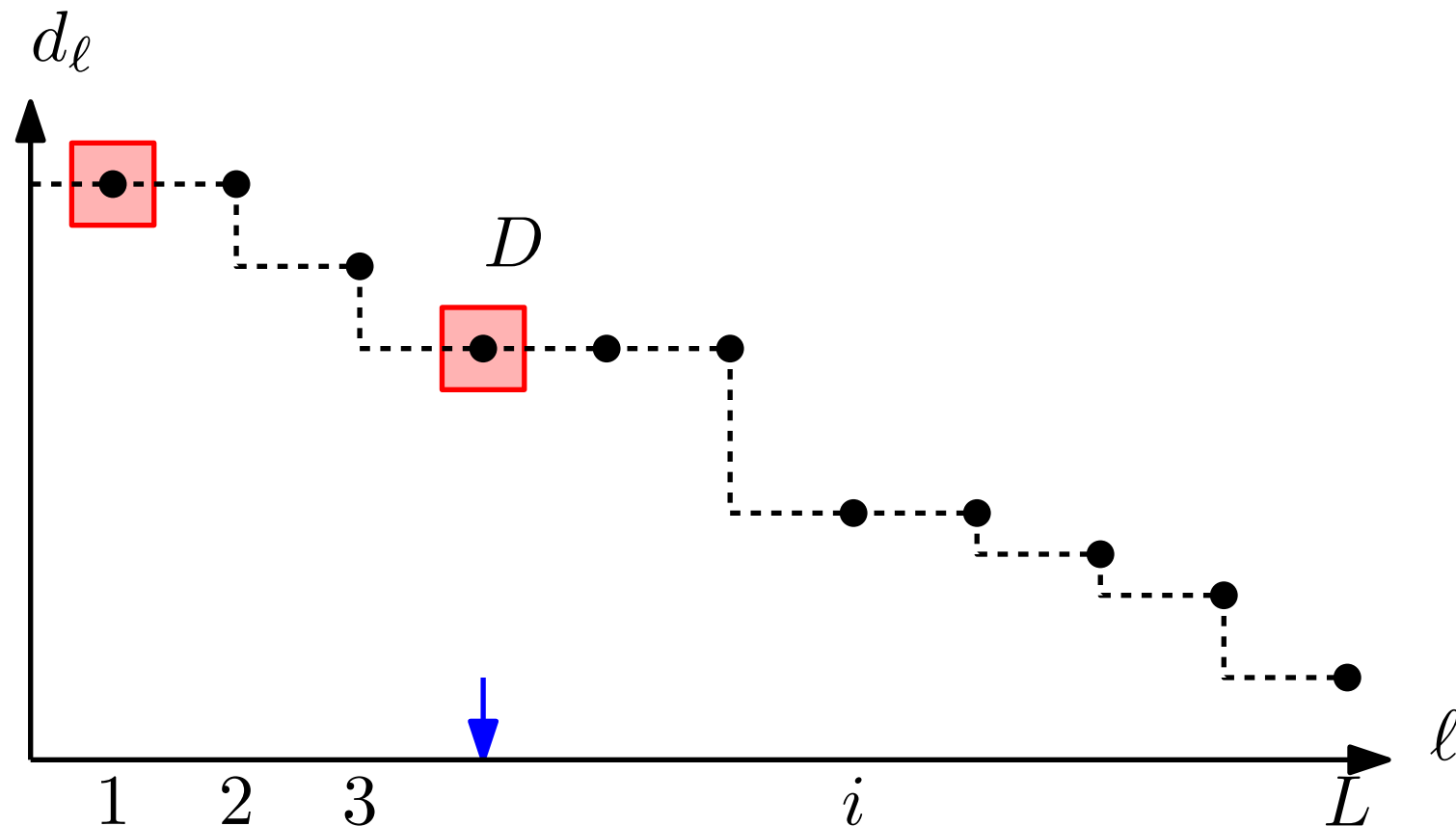
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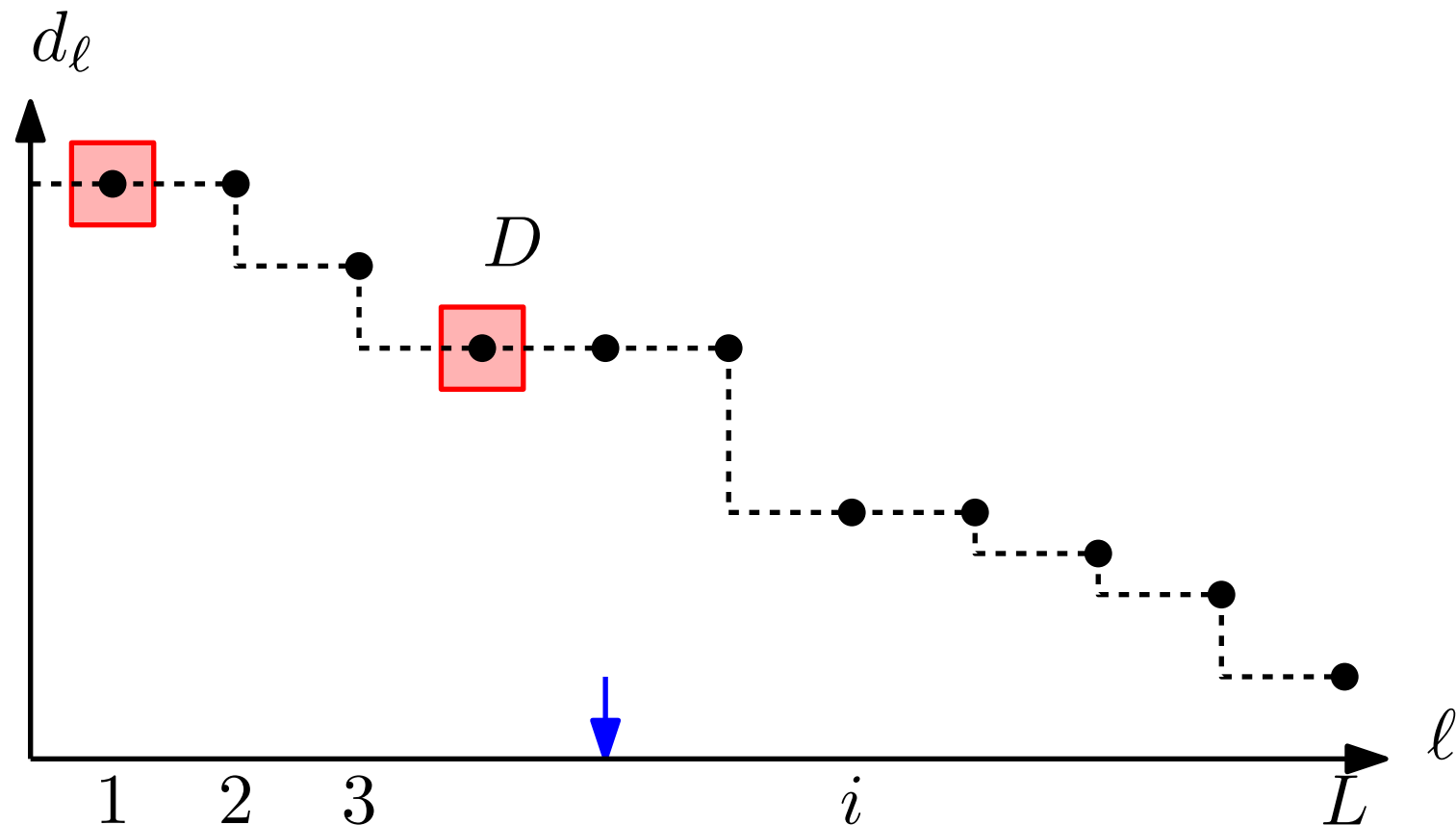
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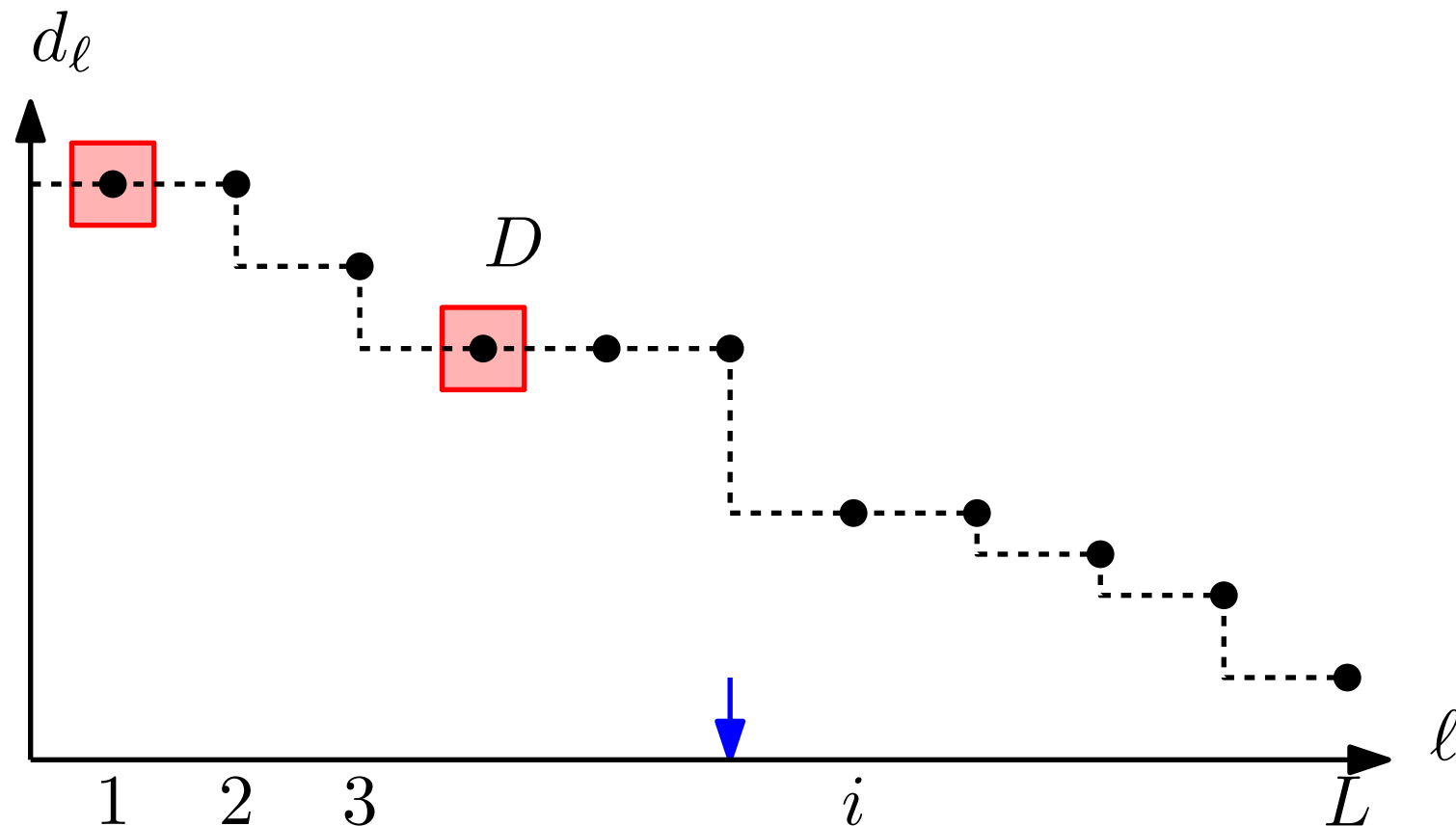
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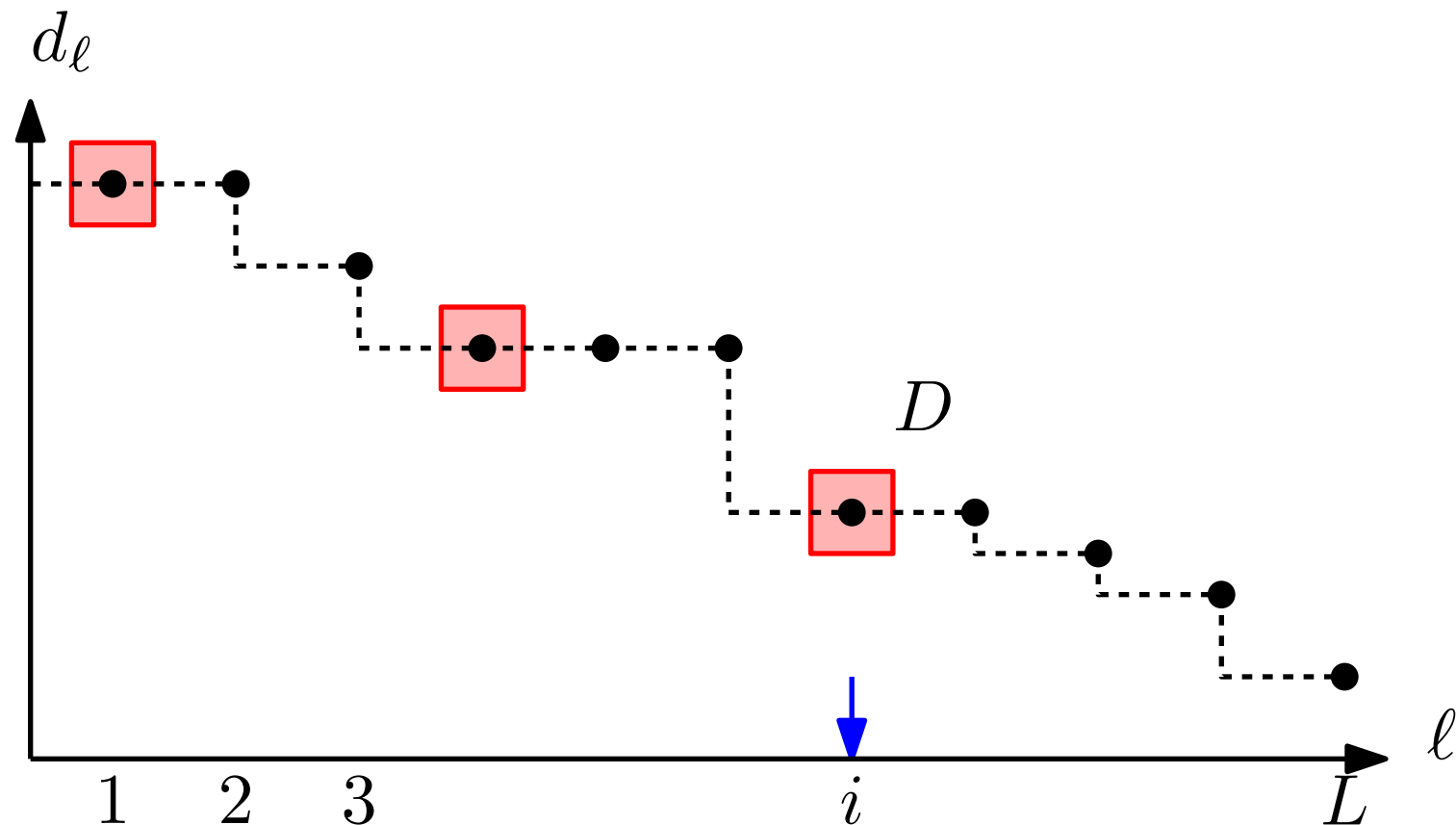
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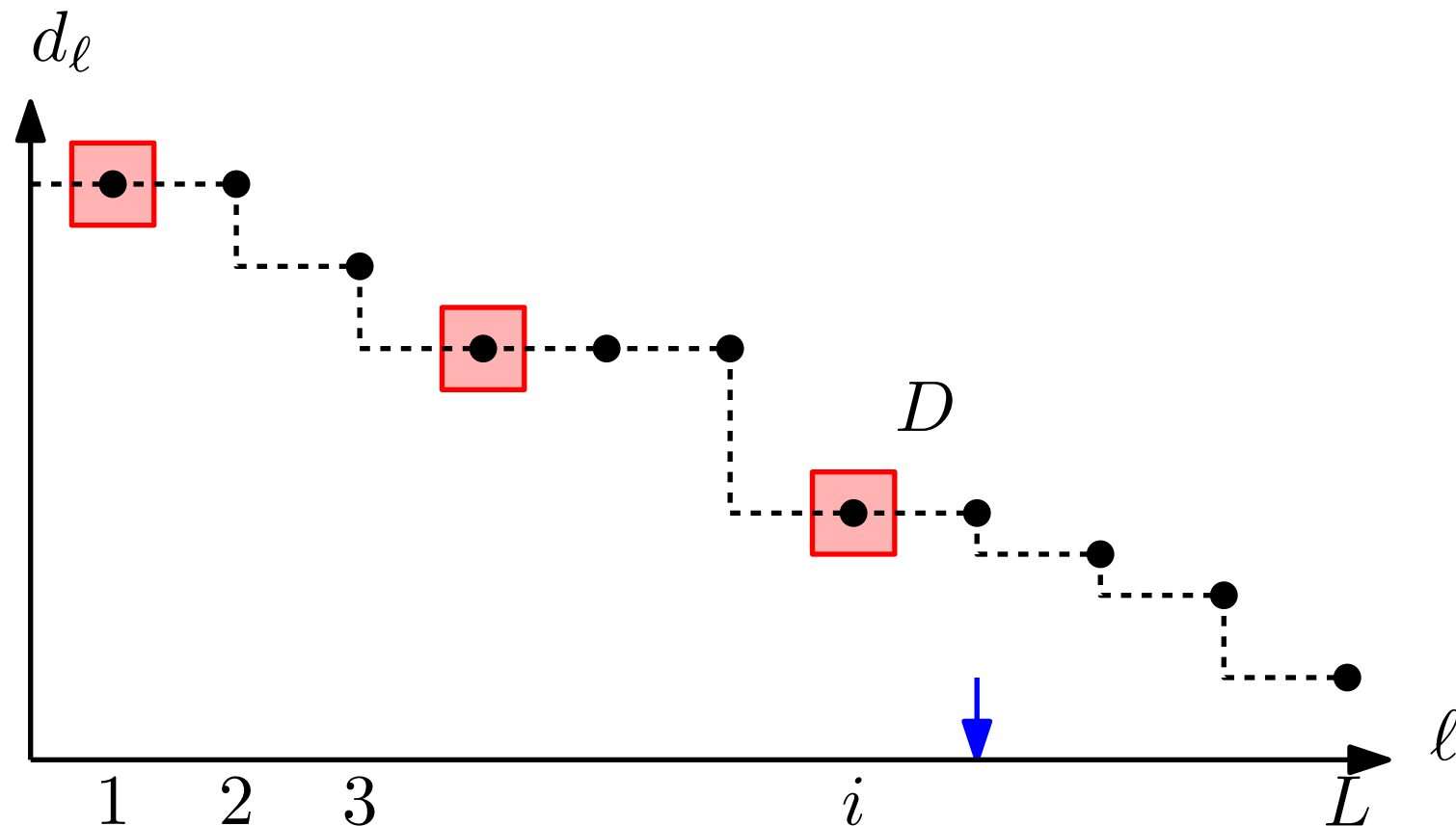
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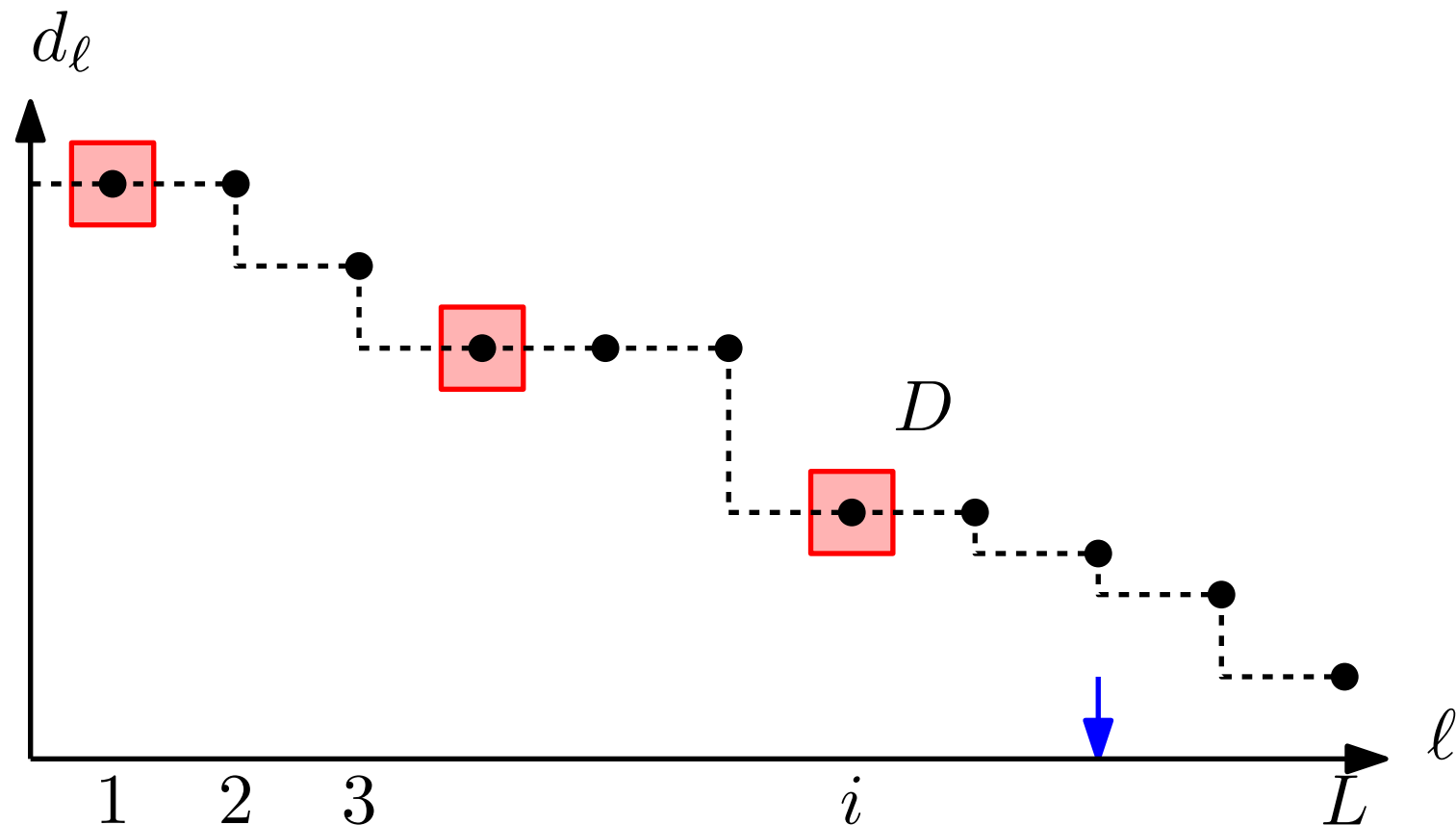
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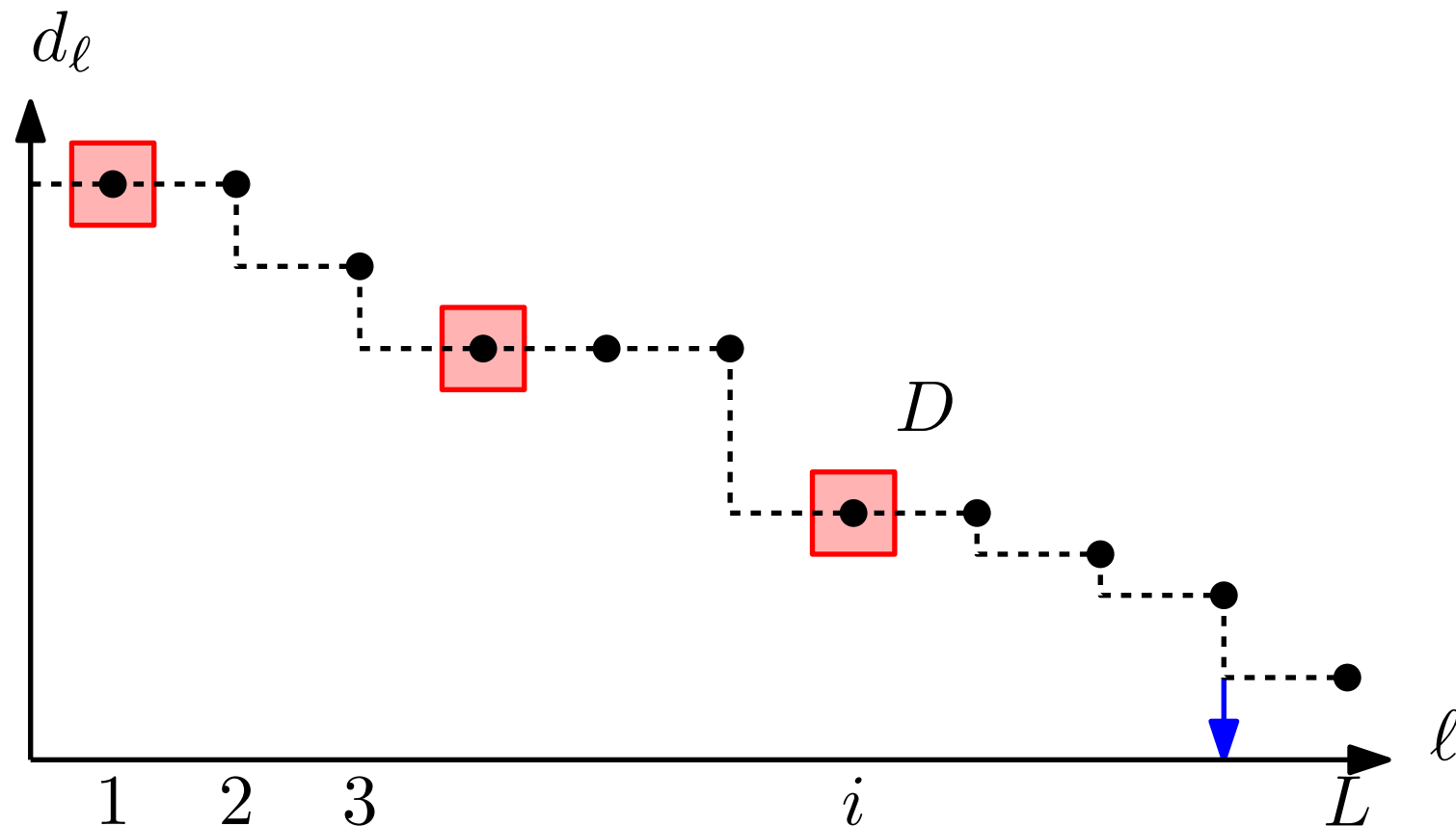
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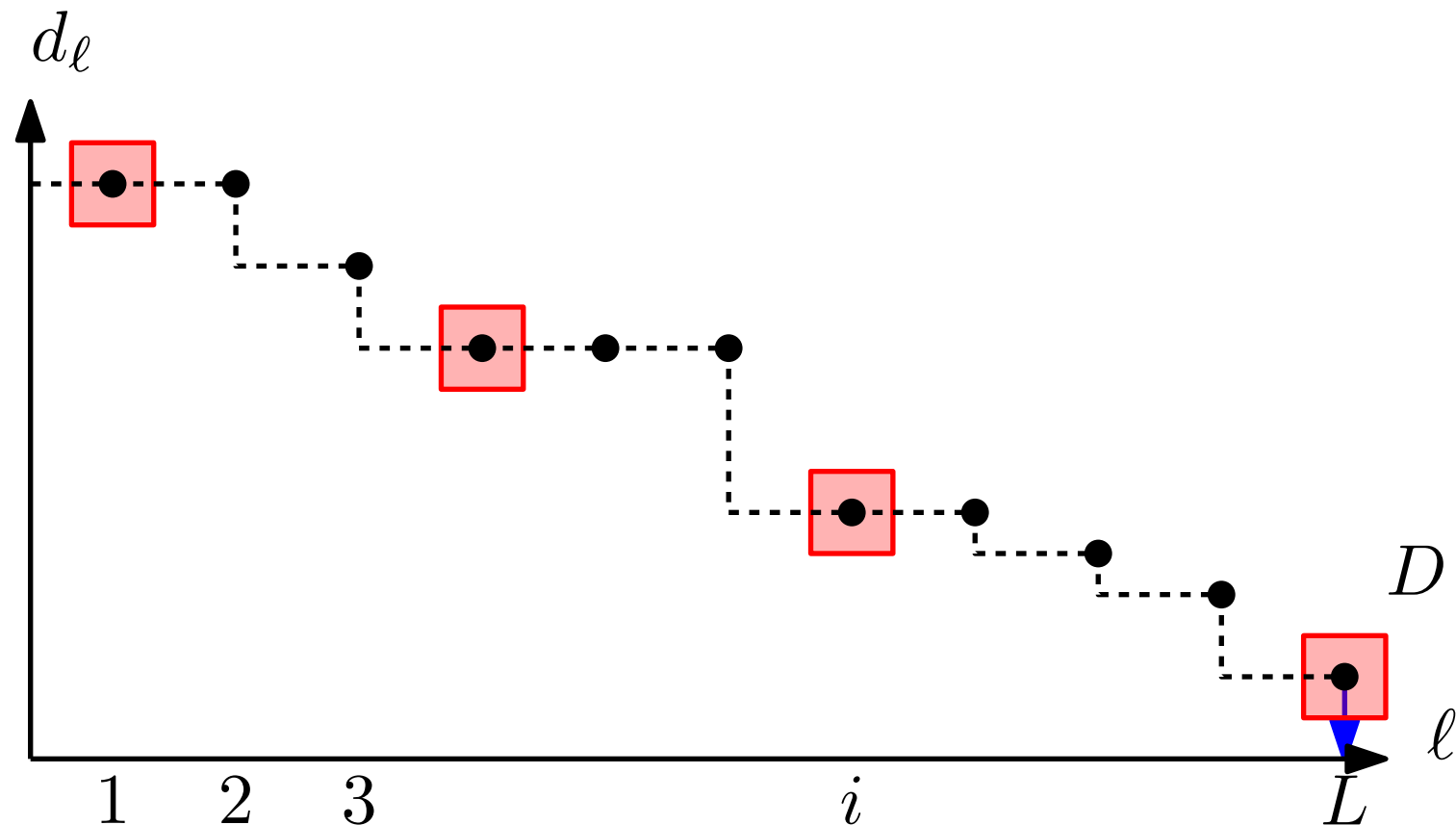
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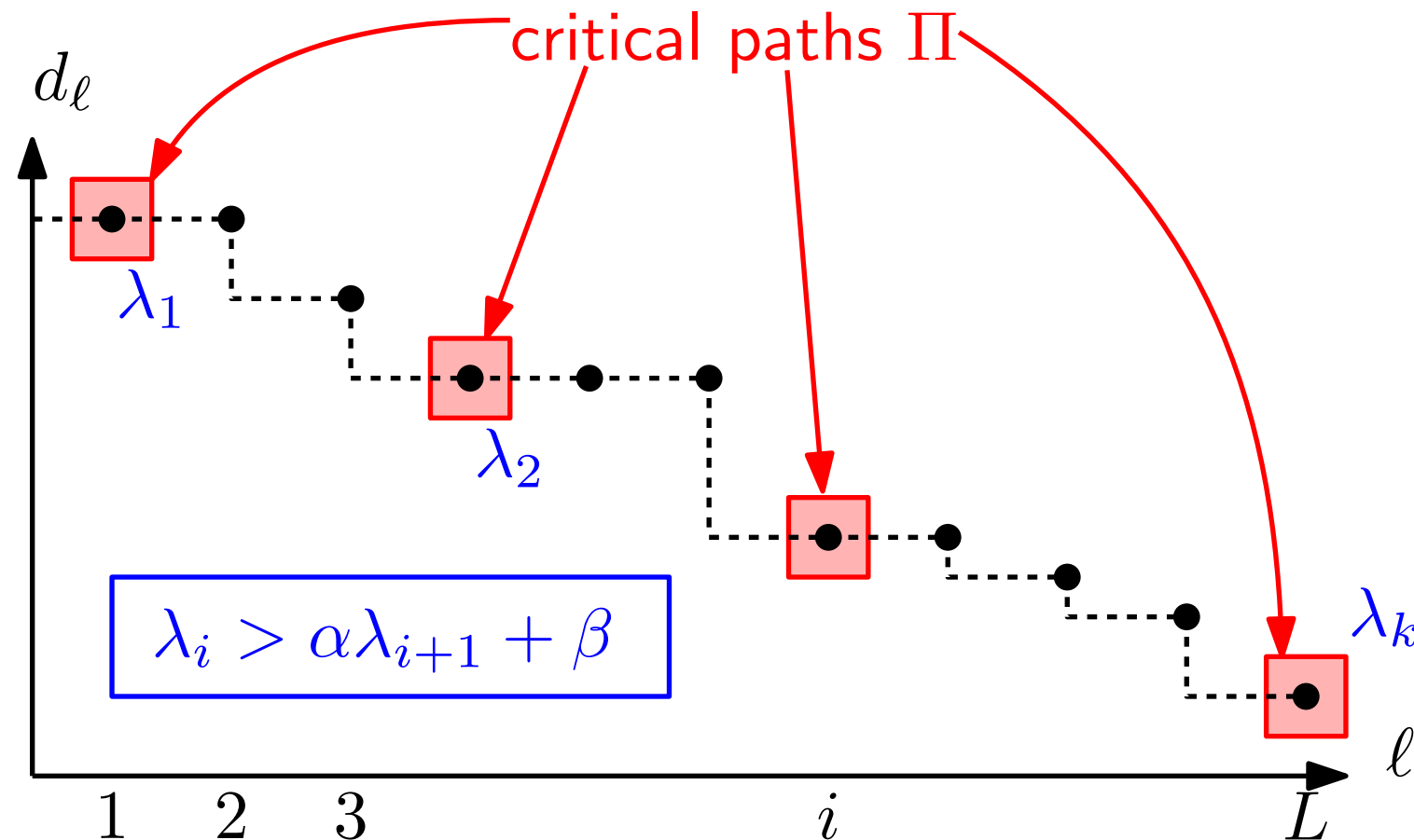
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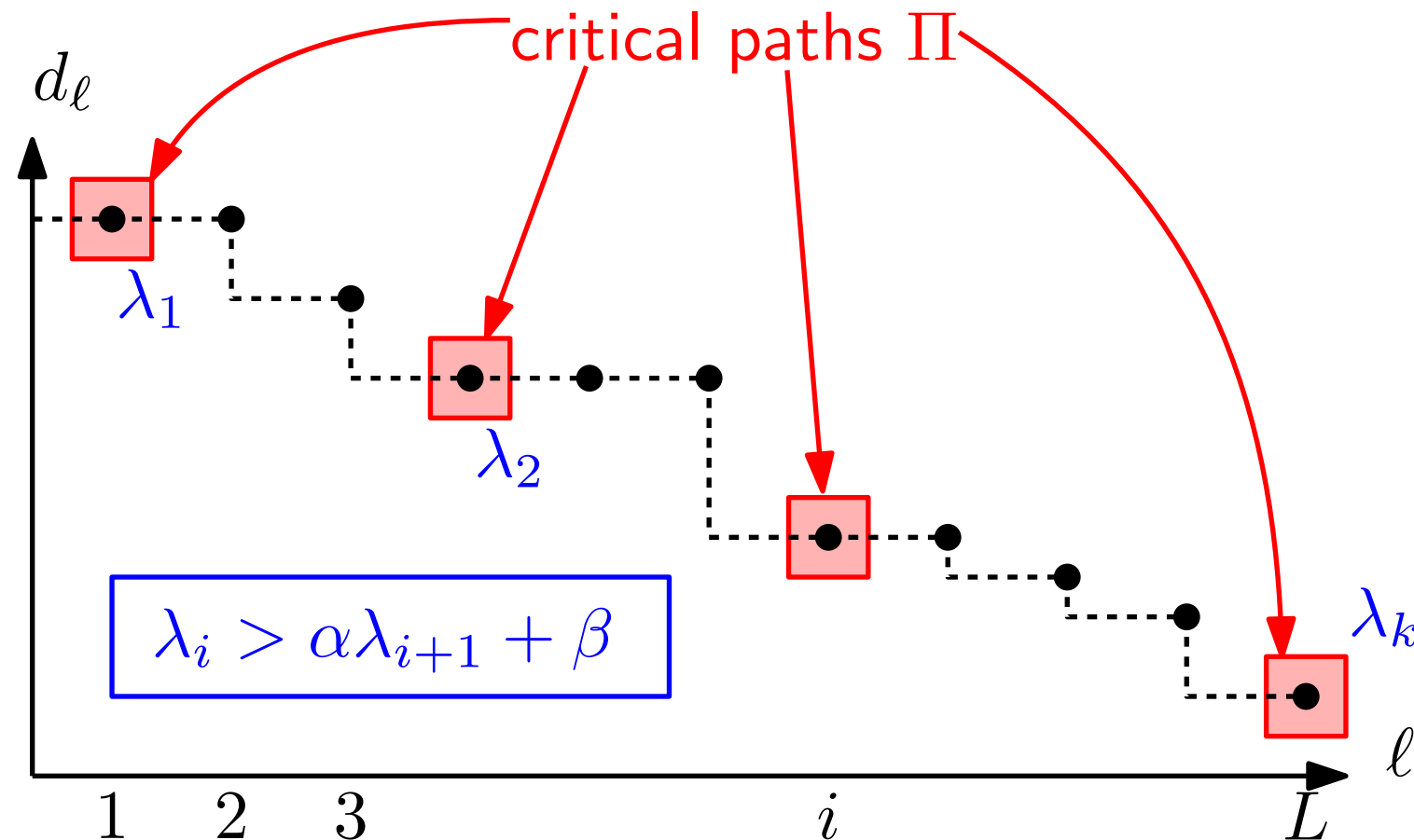
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Pure additive case ($\alpha = 1, \beta > 0$):

A possible sequence of $\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_k$ could be

$$\begin{matrix} \lambda_1 & \lambda_2 & \dots & \lambda_{k-1} & \lambda_k \\ n & n - \beta & \dots & \beta + 1 & 1 \end{matrix} \implies |\Pi| = O\left(\frac{n}{\beta+1}\right)$$



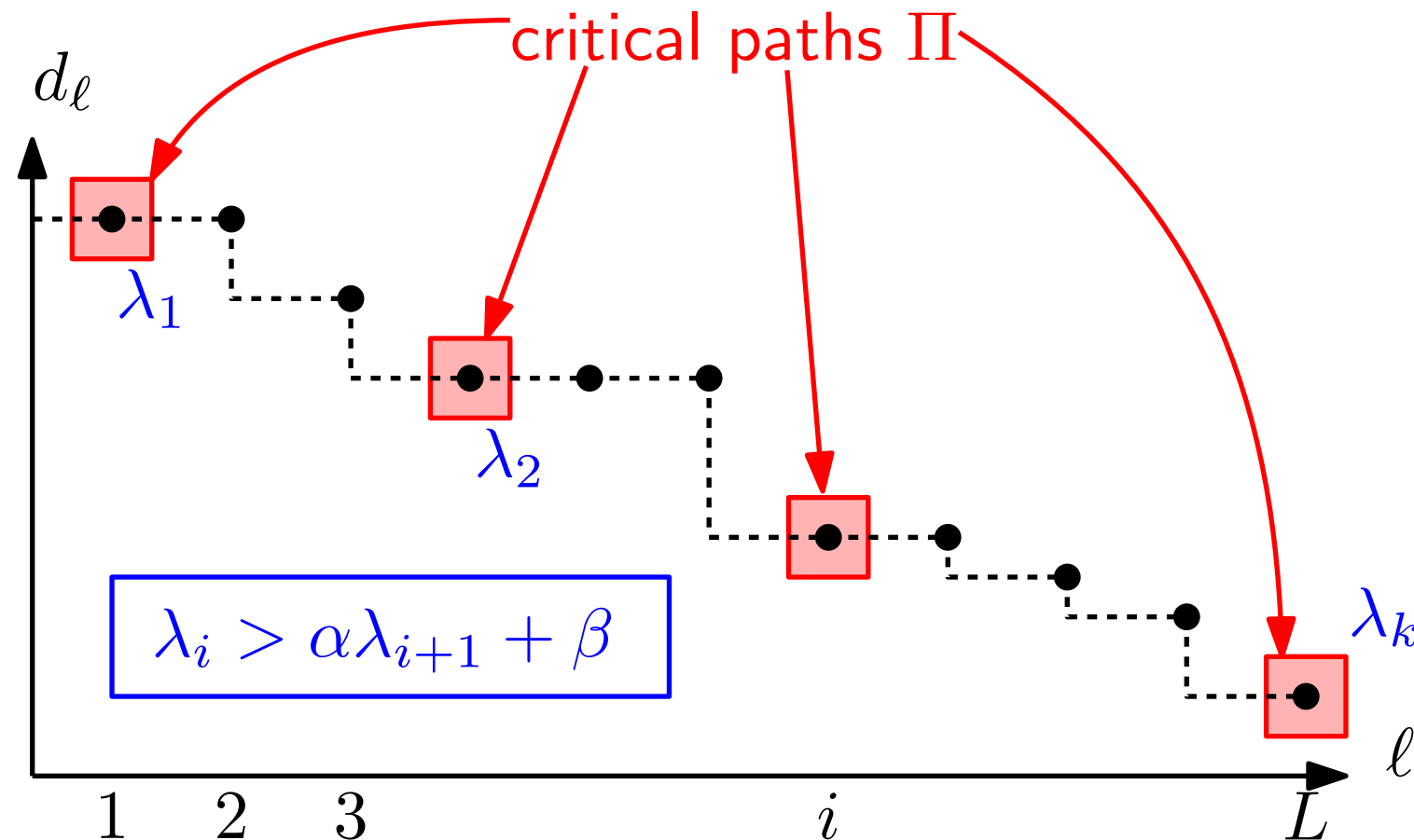
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The union of critical shortest paths is sparse

Greedy alg.: for every hierarchy ℓ store all **critical pats** π_ℓ to Π

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ii) can be generalized to **pairwise**, with size $O(n\sqrt{|P||\Pi|})$

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Can we do better?

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Can we do better?

No, $\Omega(n\sqrt{n})$ edges can be necessary.

At many different levels, a different long path becomes unavoidable.

Lower bound

Single-pair preserver $O(n\sqrt{n})$ edges

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$\mathcal{X}$

$\ell = 1$

s

t



$O(n)$

$O(n)$

$O(n)$

Lower bound

Single-pair preserver $O(n\sqrt{n})$ edges

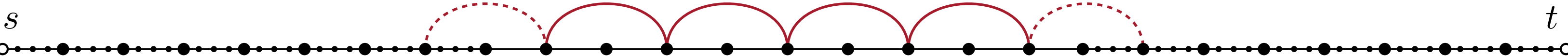
$\mathcal{X}$

$\ell = 2$

s

t

two-hop jumps



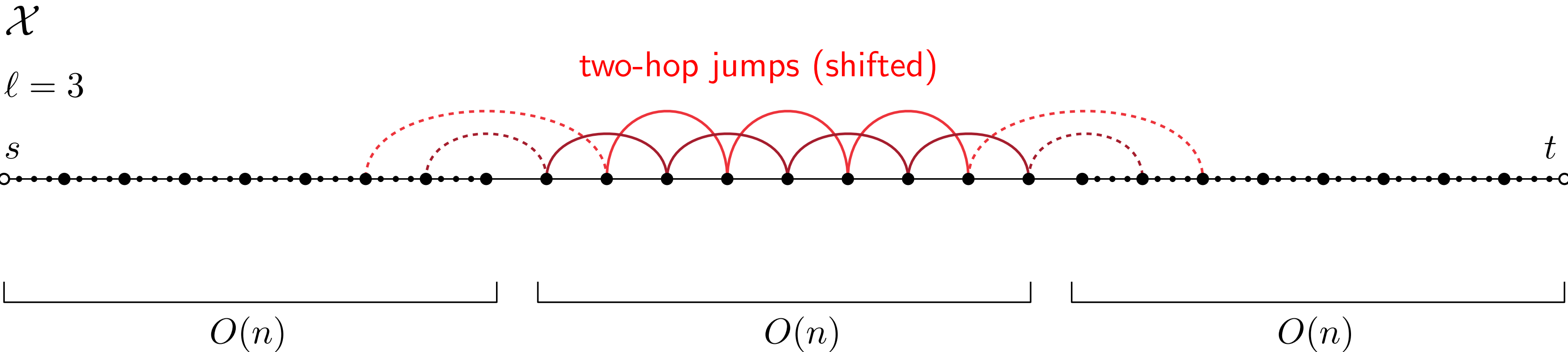
$O(n)$

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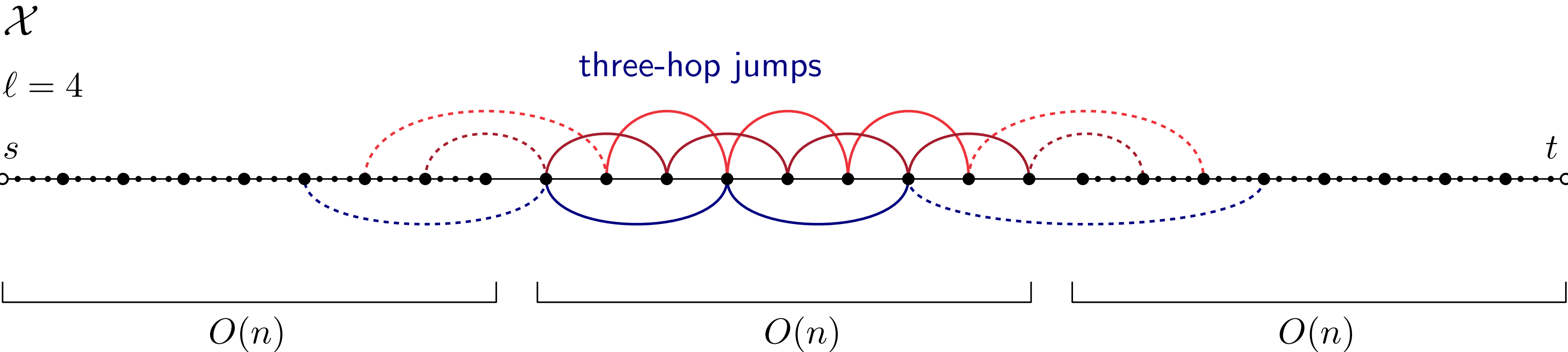
Lower bound

Single-pair preserver $O(n\sqrt{n})$ edges



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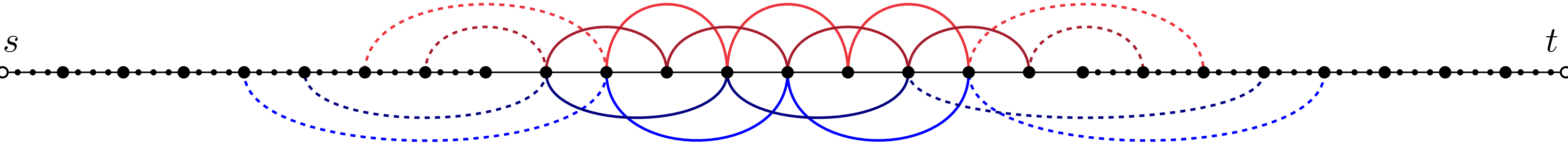
$\mathcal{X}$

$\ell = 5$

s

t

three-hop jumps (shifted)



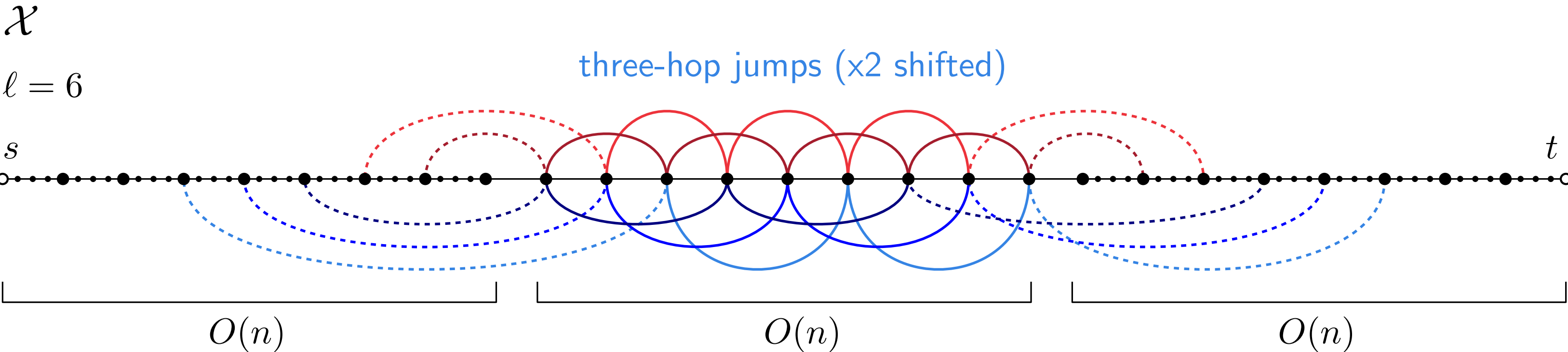
$O(n)$

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$O(n)$

Lower bound

Single-pair preserver $O(n\sqrt{n})$ edges

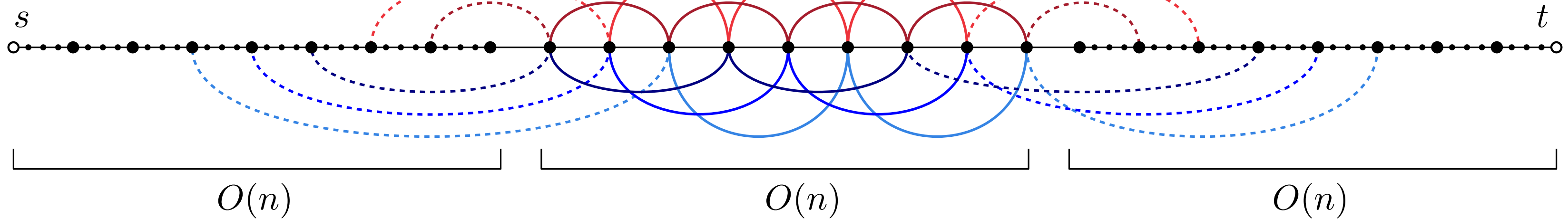


Lower bound

Single-pair preserver $O(n\sqrt{n})$ edges

at most $\sqrt{n}$ -hop jumps, $\sqrt{n}$ shift

$\mathcal{X}$

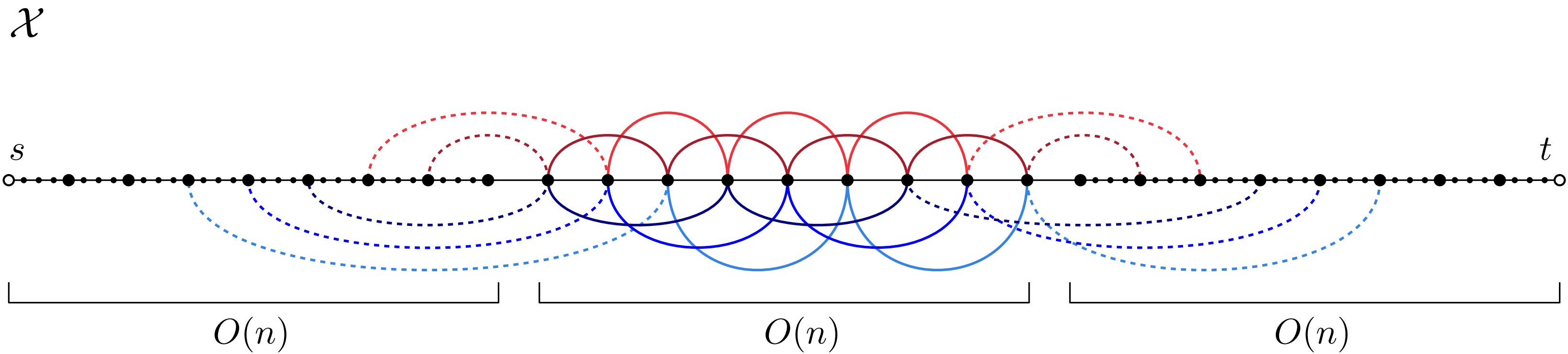


Lower bound

Single-pair preserver $O(n\sqrt{n})$ edges

$L = \Theta(n)$ layers

at most $\sqrt{n}$ -hop jumps, $\sqrt{n}$ shift $\implies$



Lower bound

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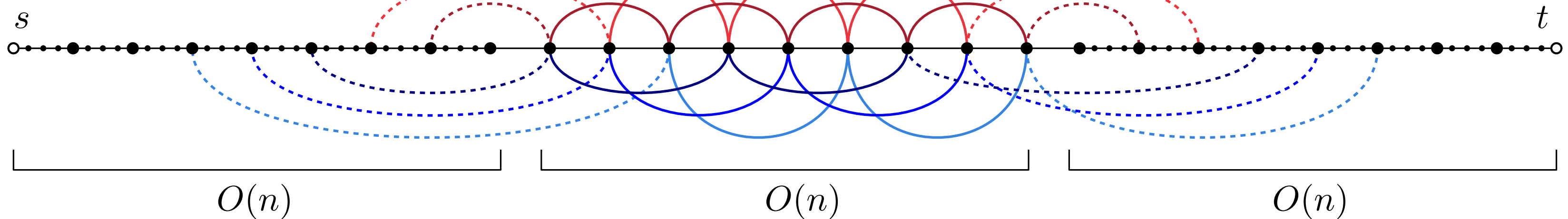
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$\Rightarrow$

$L = \Theta(n)$ layers

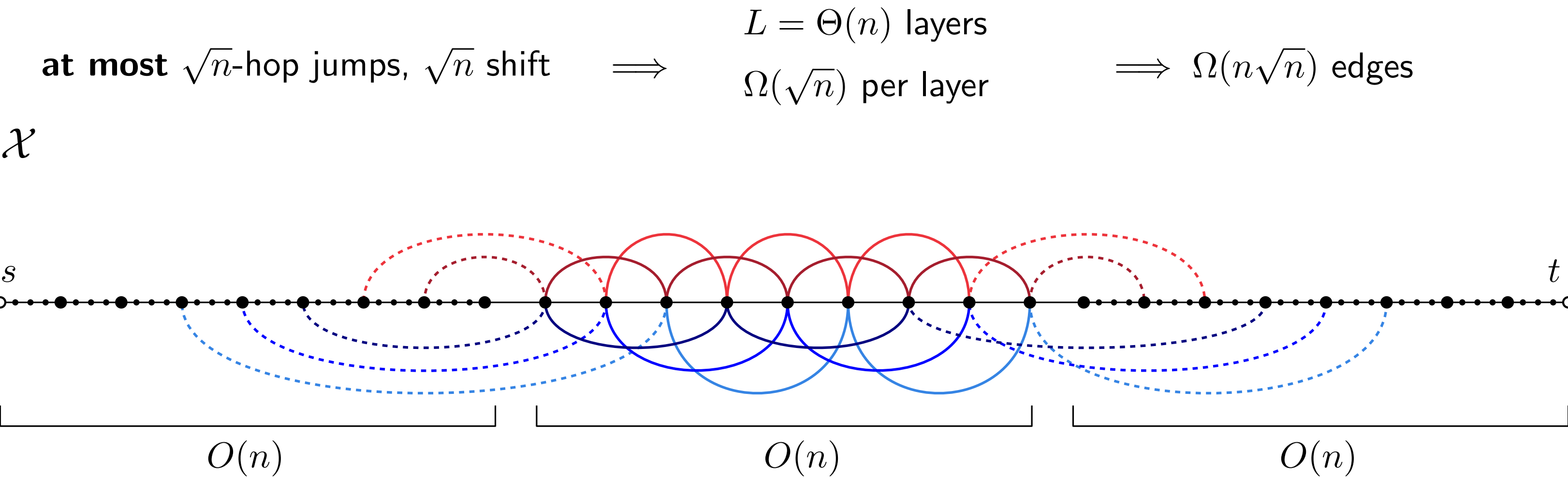
$\Omega(\sqrt{n})$ per layer

$\mathcal{X}$



Lower bound

Single-pair preserver $O(n\sqrt{n})$ edges



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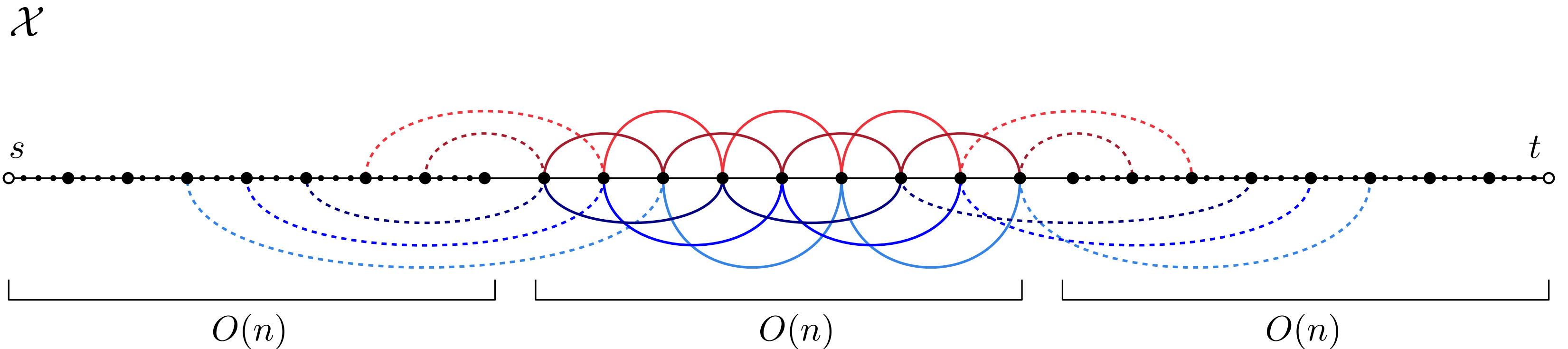
at most $\sqrt{n}$ -hop jumps, $\sqrt{n}$ shift

$\implies$

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$\Omega(\sqrt{n})$ per layer

$\implies \Omega(n\sqrt{n})$ edges



$\Theta(n)$ long, edge-disjoint, unavoidable paths $\implies \Omega(n\sqrt{n})$ edges for st -preserver

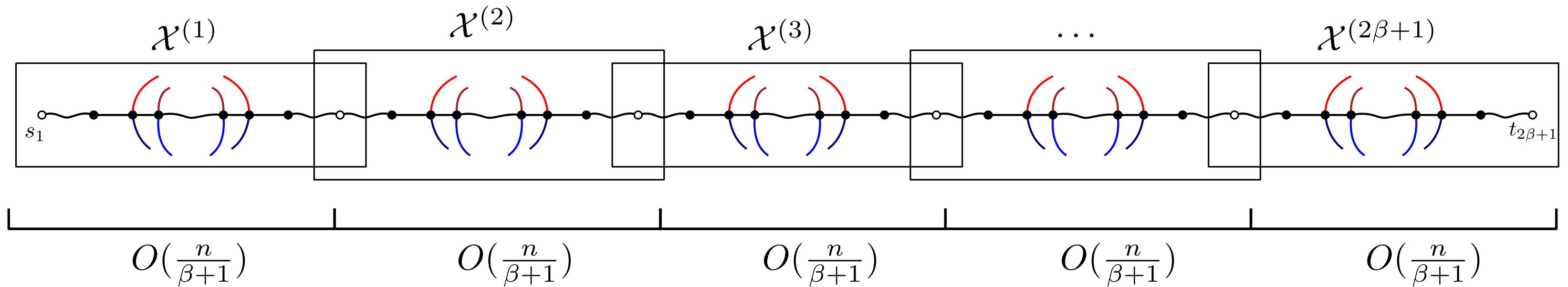
Lower bound with additive stretch

Single-pair β -additive $O(n\sqrt{\frac{n}{\beta+1}})$ edges

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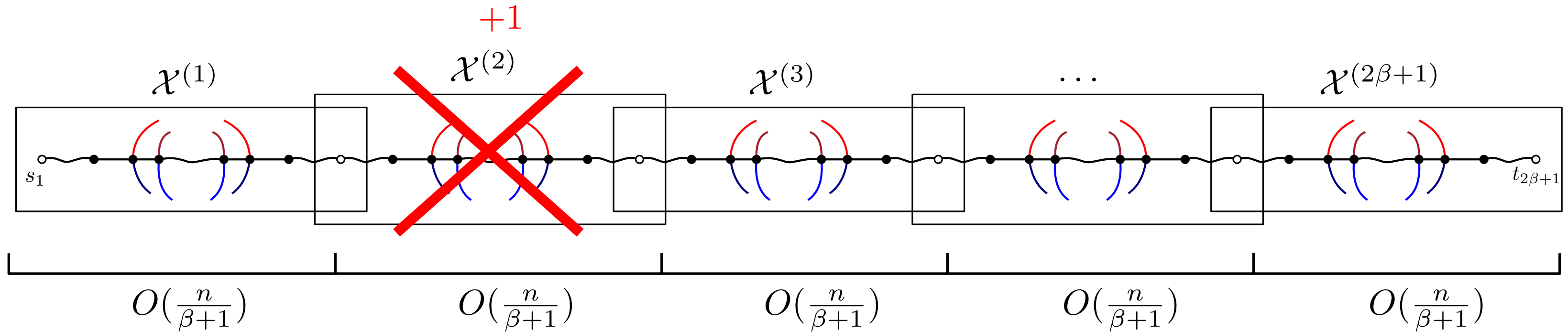


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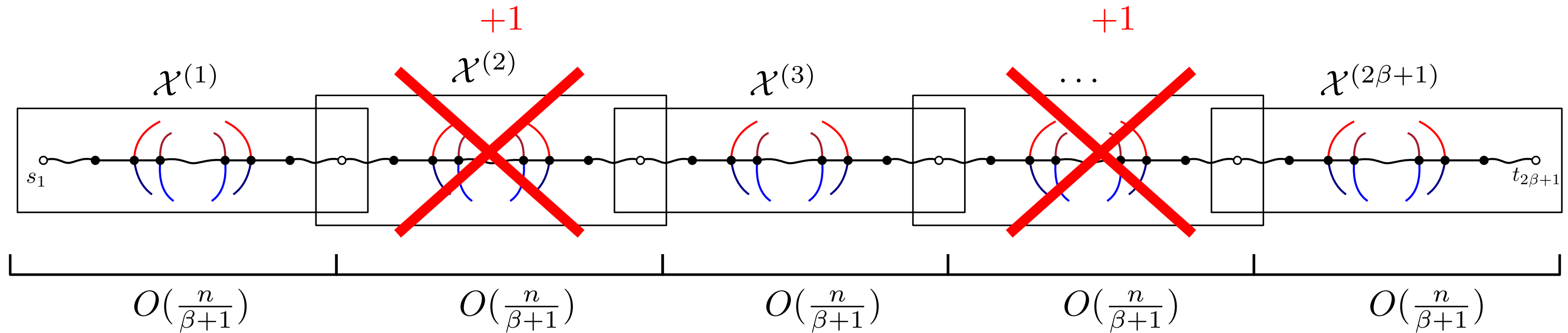
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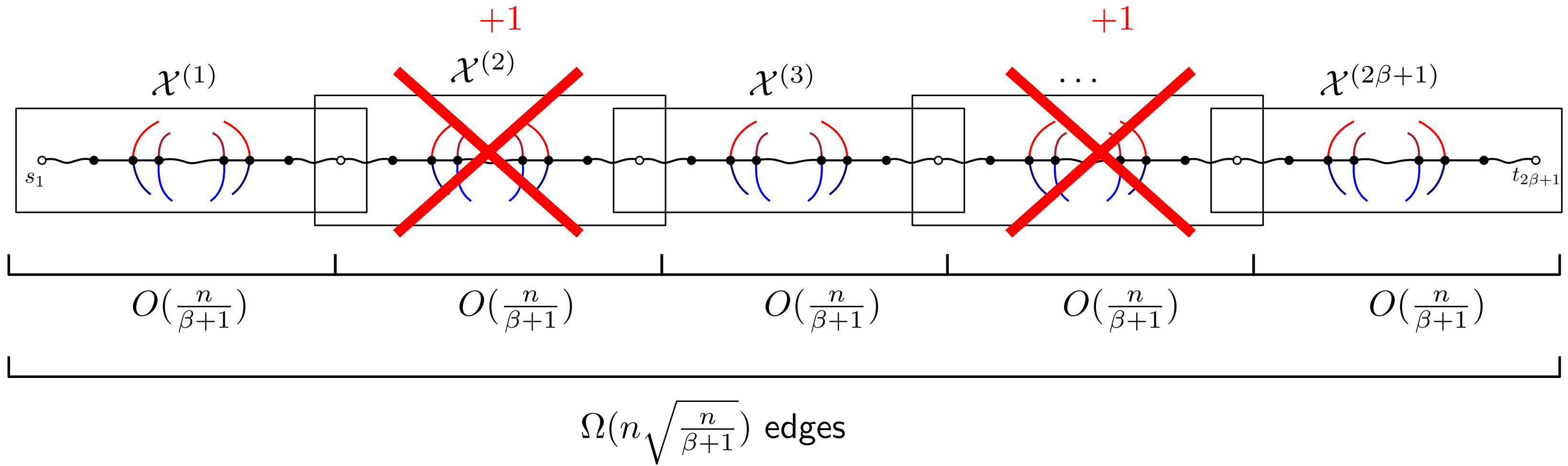
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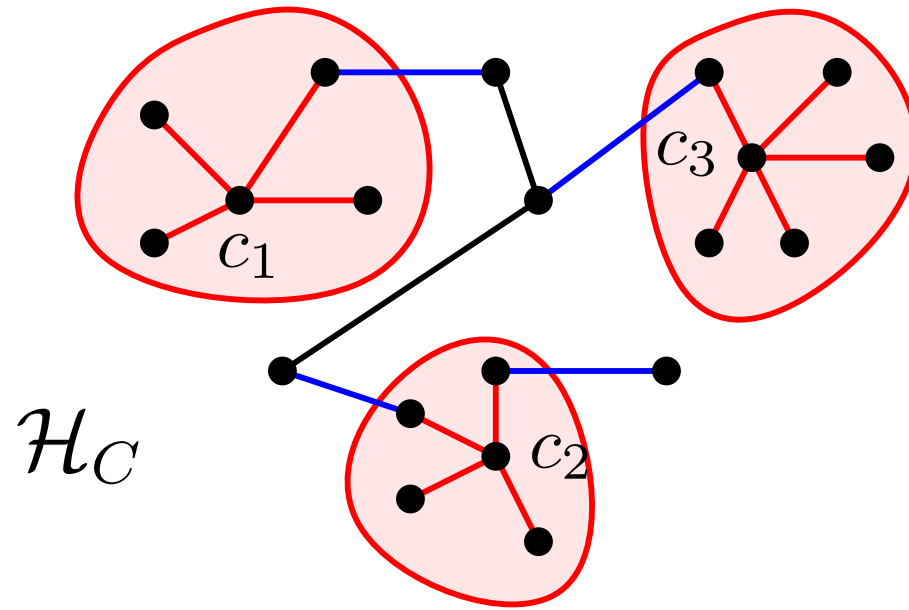


From one-pair to all-pairs

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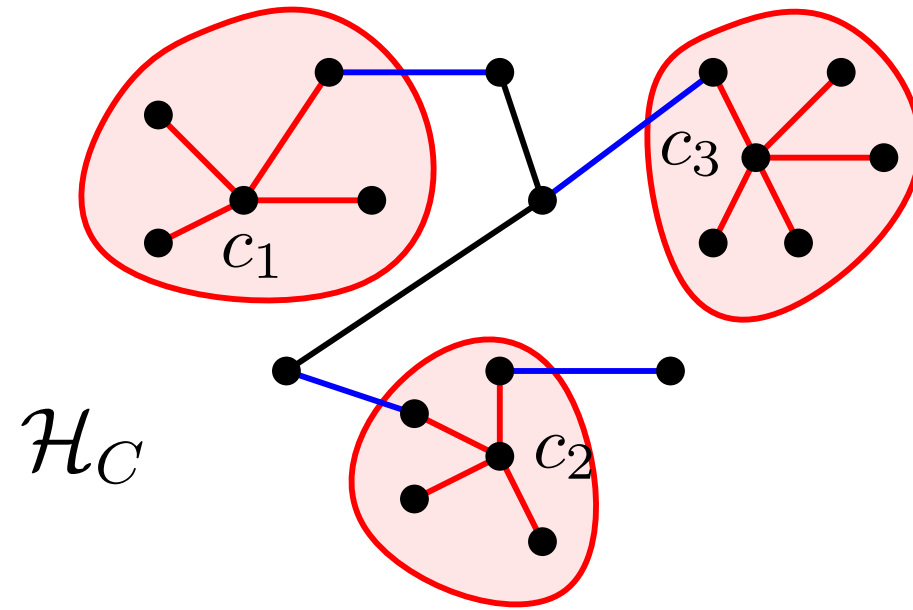


Hierarchical clustering:

- $C = \{c_1, c_2, \dots\}$, cluster centers
- $|C_i| = \Delta$
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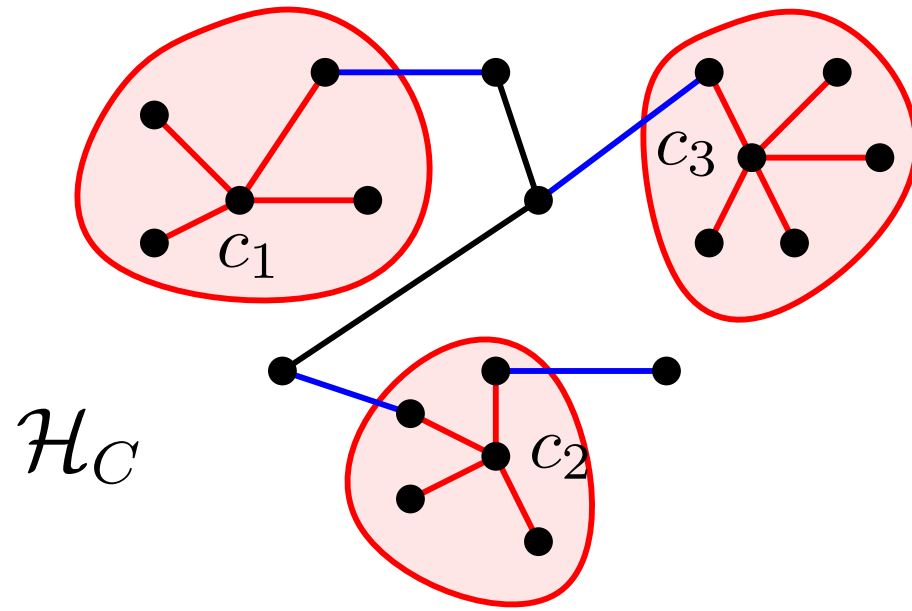
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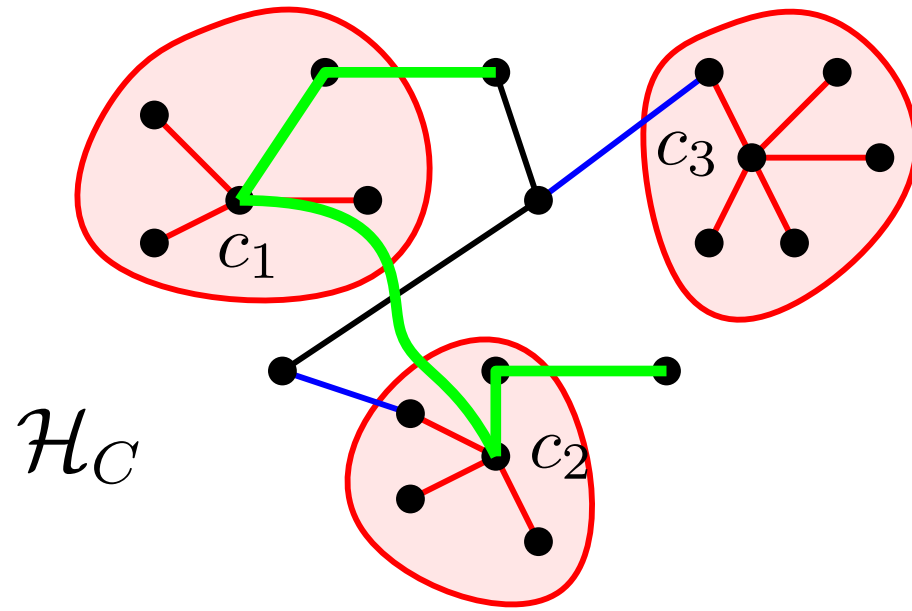
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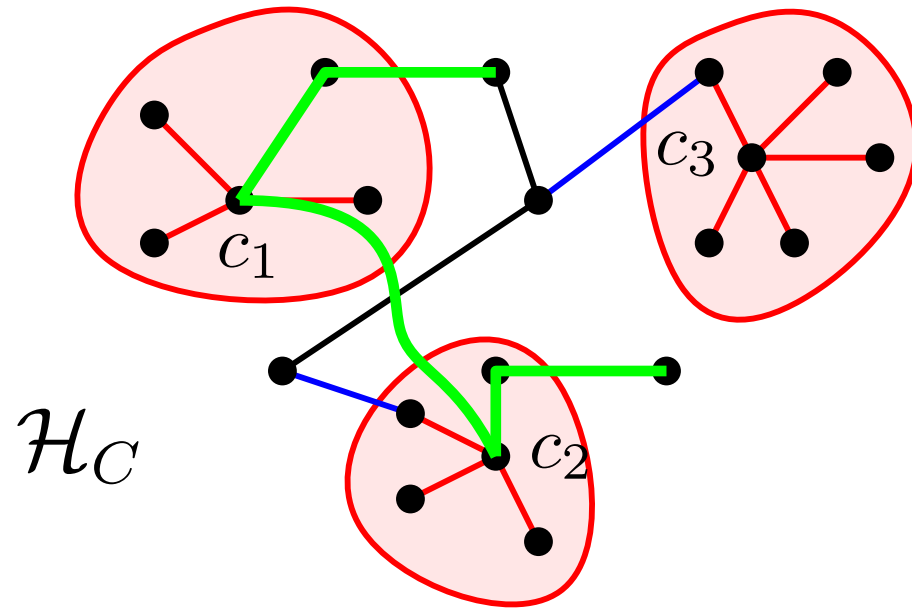
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Hierarchy hurts exacts / additive preservation more than multiplicative approximation

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↑
What's here?

Thank you for your attention!