

# The Standard Model prediction for $R_{e/\mu}^{(\pi,K)}$

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We study the ratios  $R_{e/\mu}^{(P)} \equiv \Gamma(P \rightarrow e\bar{\nu}_e[\gamma])/\Gamma(P \rightarrow \mu\bar{\nu}_\mu[\gamma])$  ( $P = \pi, K$ ) in Chiral Perturbation Theory to order  $e^2 p^4$ . We complement the two-loop effective theory results with a matching calculation of the counterterm, finding  $R_{e/\mu}^{(\pi)} = (1.2352 \pm 0.0001) \times 10^{-4}$  and  $R_{e/\mu}^{(K)} = (2.477 \pm 0.001) \times 10^{-5}$ .

*Introduction* - The ratio  $R_{e/\mu}^{(P)} \equiv \Gamma(P \rightarrow e\bar{\nu}_e[\gamma])/\Gamma(P \rightarrow \mu\bar{\nu}_\mu[\gamma])$  ( $P = \pi, K$ ) is helicity-suppressed in the Standard Model (SM), due to the  $V - A$  structure of charged current couplings. It is therefore a sensitive probe of all SM extensions that induce pseudoscalar currents and non-universal corrections to the lepton couplings [1], such as the minimal supersymmetric SM [2]. Effects from weak-scale new physics are expected in the range  $(\Delta R_{e/\mu})/R_{e/\mu} \sim 10^{-4} - 10^{-2}$  and there is a realistic chance to detect or constrain them because: (i) ongoing experimental searches plan to reach a fractional uncertainty of  $(\Delta R_{e/\mu}^{(\pi)})/R_{e/\mu}^{(\pi)} \lesssim 5 \times 10^{-4}$  [3] and  $(\Delta R_{e/\mu}^{(K)})/R_{e/\mu}^{(K)} \lesssim 3 \times 10^{-3}$  [4], which represent respectively a factor of 5 and 10 improvement over current errors [5]. (ii) The SM theoretical uncertainty can be pushed below this level, since to a first approximation the strong interaction dynamics cancels out in the ratio  $R_{e/\mu}$  and hadronic structure dependence appears only through electroweak corrections. Indeed, the most recent theoretical predictions read  $R_{e/\mu}^{(\pi)} = (1.2352 \pm 0.0005) \times 10^{-4}$  [6],  $R_{e/\mu}^{(\pi)} = (1.2354 \pm 0.0002) \times 10^{-4}$  [7], and  $R_{e/\mu}^{(K)} = (2.472 \pm 0.001) \times 10^{-5}$  [7]. The authors of Ref. [6] provide a general parameterization of the hadronic effects and estimate the induced uncertainty via dimensional analysis. On the other hand, in Ref. [7] the hadronic component is calculated by modeling the low- and intermediate-momentum region of the loops involving virtual photons.

With the aim to improve the existing theoretical status, we have analyzed  $R_{e/\mu}$  within Chiral Perturbation Theory (ChPT), the low-energy effective field theory

(EFT) of QCD. The key feature of this framework is that it provides a controlled expansion of the amplitudes in terms of the masses of pseudoscalar mesons and charged leptons ( $p \sim m_{\pi,K,\ell}/\Lambda_\chi$ , with  $\Lambda_\chi \sim 4\pi F_\pi \sim 1.2$  GeV), and the electromagnetic coupling ( $e$ ). Electromagnetic corrections to (semi)-leptonic decays of  $K$  and  $\pi$  have been worked out to  $O(e^2 p^2)$  [8, 9], but had never been pushed to  $O(e^2 p^4)$ , as required for  $R_{e/\mu}$ . In this letter we report the results of our analysis of  $R_{e/\mu}$  to  $O(e^2 p^4)$ , deferring the full details to a separate publication [10]. To the order we work,  $R_{e/\mu}$  features both model independent double chiral logarithms (previously neglected) and an a priori unknown low-energy coupling (LEC), which we estimate by means of a matching calculation in large- $N_C$  QCD. The inclusion of both effects allows us to further reduce the theoretical uncertainty and to put its estimate on more solid ground.

Within the chiral power counting,  $R_{e/\mu}$  is written as:

$$R_{e/\mu}^{(P)} = R_{e/\mu}^{(0),(P)} \left[ 1 + \Delta_{e^2 p^2}^{(P)} + \Delta_{e^2 p^4}^{(P)} + \Delta_{e^2 p^6}^{(P)} + \dots \right] \quad (1)$$

$$R_{e/\mu}^{(0),(P)} = \frac{m_e^2}{m_\mu^2} \left( \frac{m_P^2 - m_e^2}{m_P^2 - m_\mu^2} \right)^2. \quad (2)$$

The leading electromagnetic correction  $\Delta_{e^2 p^2}^{(P)}$  corresponds to the point-like approximation for pion and kaon, and its expression is well known [6, 11]. Neglecting terms of order  $(m_e/m_\rho)^2$ , the most general parameterization of the NLO ChPT contribution can be written in the form

$$\Delta_{e^2 p^4}^{(P)} = \frac{\alpha}{\pi} \frac{m_\mu^2}{m_\rho^2} \left( c_2^{(P)} \log \frac{m_\rho^2}{m_\mu^2} + c_3^{(P)} + c_4^{(P)} (m_\mu/m_P) \right) + \frac{\alpha}{\pi} \frac{m_P^2}{m_\rho^2} \tilde{c}_2^{(P)} \log \frac{m_\mu^2}{m_e^2}, \quad (3)$$

which highlights the dependence on lepton masses. The dimensionless constants  $c_{2,3}^{(P)}$  do not depend on the lepton mass but depend logarithmically on hadronic masses, while  $c_4^{(P)}(m_\mu/m_P) \rightarrow 0$  as  $m_\mu \rightarrow 0$ . (Note that our  $c_{2,3}^{(\pi)}$  do not coincide with  $C_{2,3}$  of Ref. [6], because their  $C_3$  is

not constrained to be  $m_\ell$ -independent.) Finally, depending on the treatment of real photon emission, one has to include in  $R_{e/\mu}$  terms arising from the structure dependent contribution to  $P \rightarrow e\bar{\nu}_e\gamma$  [12], that are formally of  $O(e^2 p^6)$ , but are not helicity suppressed and behave as

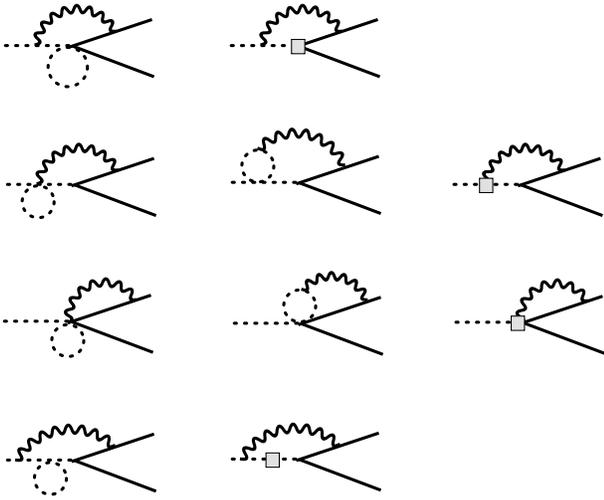


FIG. 1: One- and two-loop 1PI topologies contributing to  $R_{e/\mu}$  to order  $e^2 p^4$ . Dashed lines represent pseudoscalar mesons, solid lines fermions and wavy lines photons. Shaded squares indicate vertices from the  $O(p^4)$  effective lagrangian.

$$\Delta_{e^2 p^6} \sim \alpha/\pi (m_P/m_\rho)^4 (m_P/m_e)^2.$$

*The calculation* - In order to calculate the various coefficients  $c_i^{(P)}$  within ChPT to  $O(e^2 p^4)$ , one has to consider

$$\delta T_\ell^{e^2 p^4} = 2G_F V_{ud}^* e^2 F \int \frac{d^d q}{(2\pi)^d} \frac{\bar{u}_L(p_\nu) \gamma^\nu [-(\not{p}_\ell - \not{q}) + m_\ell] \gamma^\mu v(p_\ell)}{[q^2 - 2q \cdot p_\ell + i\epsilon] [q^2 - m_\gamma^2 + i\epsilon]} \mathcal{T}_{\mu\nu}(p, q) \quad (4)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{T}^{\mu\nu}(p, q) = & iV_1(q^2, W^2) \epsilon^{\mu\nu\alpha\beta} q_\alpha p_\beta - A_1(q^2, W^2) (q \cdot p g^{\mu\nu} - p^\mu q^\nu) - (A_2(q^2, W^2) - A_1(q^2, W^2)) (q^2 g^{\mu\nu} - q^\mu q^\nu) \\ & + \left[ \frac{(2p - q)^\mu (p - q)^\nu}{2p \cdot q - q^2} - \frac{q^\mu (p - q)^\nu}{q^2} \right] (F_V^{\pi\pi}(q^2) - 1). \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

To the order we work, the form factors  $V_1(q^2, W^2)$ ,  $A_i(q^2, W^2)$  and  $F_V^{\pi\pi}(q^2)$  have to be evaluated to  $O(p^4)$  in ChPT in  $d$ -dimensions. Their expressions are well known for  $d = 4$  [12] and have been generalized to any  $d$  [10]. So the relevant  $O(e^2 p^4)$  amplitude is obtained by calculating a set of one-loop diagrams with effective local ( $V_1$  and  $A_1$ ) and non-local ( $A_2$  and  $F_V^{\pi\pi}$ )  $O(p^4)$  vertices. The final result can be expressed in terms of one-dimensional integrals [10].

While  $c_{2,4}^{(P)}$  and  $\tilde{c}_2^{(P)}$  are parameter-free predictions of ChPT (they depend only on  $m_{\pi,K}$ ,  $F_\pi$ , and the LECs  $L_{9,10}$  determined in other processes [13]),  $c_3^{(P)}$  contains an ultraviolet (UV) divergence, indicating the need to introduce in the effective theory a local operator of  $O(e^2 p^4)$ , with an associated LEC. The physical origin of the UV divergence is clear: when calculating  $\delta T_\ell^{e^2 p^4}$  in the EFT approach, we use the  $O(p^4)$  ChPT representation of the form factors appearing in Eq. 5 ( $\mathcal{T}_{\mu\nu} \rightarrow \mathcal{T}_{\mu\nu}^{\text{ChPT}}$ ). While this representation is valid at scales below  $m_\rho$  (and gener-

(i) two-loop graphs with vertices from the lowest order effective lagrangian ( $O(p^2)$ ); (ii) one-loop graphs with one insertion from the NLO lagrangian [13] ( $O(p^4)$ ); (iii) tree-level diagrams with insertion of a local counterterm of  $O(e^2 p^4)$ . In Fig. 1 we show all the relevant one- and two-loop 1PI topologies contributing to  $R_{e/\mu}$ . Note that all diagrams in which the virtual photon does not connect to the charged lepton line have a trivial dependence on the lepton mass and drop when taking the ratio of  $e$  and  $\mu$  rates. We work in Feynman gauge and use dimensional regularization to deal with ultraviolet (UV) divergences.

By suitably grouping the 1PI graphs of Fig. 1 with external leg corrections, it is possible to show [10] that the effect of the  $O(e^2 p^4)$  diagrams amounts to: (i) a renormalization of the meson mass  $m_P$  and decay constant  $F_P$  in the one-loop result  $\Delta_{e^2 p^2}^{(P)}$ ; (ii) a genuine shift to the invariant amplitude  $T_\ell \equiv T(P^+(p) \rightarrow \ell^+(p_\ell) \nu_\ell(p_\nu))$ . This correction can be expressed as the convolution of a known kernel with the vertex function  $\mathcal{T}_{\mu\nu} = 1/(\sqrt{2}F) \int dx e^{iqx+iWy} \langle 0 | T(J_\mu^{EM}(x) (V_\nu - A_\nu)(y) | \pi^+(p) \rangle$  (with  $V_\mu(A_\mu) = \bar{u}\gamma_\mu(\gamma_5)d$ ), once the Born term has been subtracted from the latter. Explicitly, in the case of pion decay one has ( $W = p - q$ ,  $\epsilon_{0123} = +1$ )

ates the correct single- and double-logs upon integration in  $d^d q$ ) it leads to the incorrect UV behavior of the integrand in Eq. 4, which is instead dictated by the Operator Product Expansion (OPE) for the  $\langle VVP \rangle$  and  $\langle VAP \rangle$  correlators. So in order to estimate the finite local contribution (dominated by the UV region) we need a QCD representation of the correlators valid for momenta beyond the chiral regime ( $\mathcal{T}_{\mu\nu} \rightarrow \mathcal{T}_{\mu\nu}^{\text{QCD}}$ ). This program is feasible only within an approximation scheme to QCD. We have used a truncated version of large- $N_C$  QCD, in which the correlators are approximated by meromorphic functions, representing the exchange of a *finite* number of narrow resonances, whose couplings are fixed by requiring that the vertex functions  $\langle \pi | VA | 0 \rangle$  and  $\langle \pi | VV | 0 \rangle$  obey the leading and next-to-leading OPE behavior at large  $q$  [14]. This procedure allows us to obtain a simple analytic form for the local coupling (see Eq. 10).

*Results* - The results for  $c_{2,3,4}^{(P)}$  and  $\tilde{c}_2^{(P)}$  depend on the definition of the inclusive rate  $\Gamma(P \rightarrow \ell \bar{\nu}_\ell[\gamma])$ . The ra-

diative amplitude is the sum of the inner bremsstrahlung component ( $T_{IB}$ ) of  $O(ep)$  and a structure dependent component ( $T_{SD}$ ) of  $O(ep^3)$  [12]. The experimental definition of  $R_{e/\mu}^{(\pi)}$  is fully inclusive on the radiative mode, so that  $\Delta_{e^2p^4}^{(\pi)}$  receives a contribution from the interference of  $T_{IB}$  and  $T_{SD}$ , and one also has to include the effect of  $\Delta_{e^2p^6}^{(\pi)} \propto |T_{SD}|^2$ . The usual experimental definition of

$R_{e/\mu}^{(K)}$  corresponds to including the effect of  $T_{IB}$  in  $\Delta_{e^2p^2}^{(K)}$  (dominated by soft photons) and excluding altogether the effect of  $T_{SD}$ : consequently  $c_n^{(\pi)} \neq c_n^{(K)}$ .

*Results for  $R_{e/\mu}^{(\pi)}$*  - Defining  $\bar{L}_9 \equiv (4\pi)^2 L_9^r(\mu)$ ,  $\ell_P \equiv \log(m_P^2/\mu^2)$  ( $\mu$  is the chiral renormalization scale),  $\gamma \equiv A_1(0,0)/V_1(0,0)$ ,  $z_\ell \equiv (m_\ell/m_\pi)^2$ , we find:

$$c_2^{(\pi)} = \frac{2}{3} m_\rho^2 \langle r^2 \rangle_V^{(\pi)} + 3(1-\gamma) \frac{m_\rho^2}{(4\pi F)^2} \quad \tilde{c}_2^{(\pi)} = 0 \quad (6)$$

$$c_3^{(\pi)} = -\frac{m_\rho^2}{(4\pi F)^2} \left[ \frac{31}{24} - \gamma + 4\bar{L}_9 + \left( \frac{23}{36} - 2\bar{L}_9 + \frac{1}{12}\ell_K \right) \ell_\pi + \frac{5}{12}\ell_\pi^2 + \frac{5}{18}\ell_K + \frac{1}{8}\ell_K^2 \right. \\ \left. + \left( \frac{5}{3} - \frac{2}{3}\gamma \right) \log \frac{m_\rho^2}{m_\pi^2} + \left( 2 + 2\kappa^{(\pi)} - \frac{7}{3}\gamma \right) \log \frac{m_\rho^2}{\mu^2} + K^{(\pi)}(0) \right] + c_3^{CT}(\mu) \quad (7)$$

$$c_4^{(\pi)}(m_\ell) = -\frac{m_\rho^2}{(4\pi F)^2} \left\{ \frac{z_\ell}{3(1-z_\ell)^2} \left[ (4(1-z_\ell) + (9-5z_\ell)\log z_\ell) + 2\gamma(1-z_\ell + z_\ell \log z_\ell) \right] \right. \\ \left. + \left( \kappa^{(\pi)} + \frac{1}{3} \right) \frac{z_\ell}{2(1-z_\ell)} \log z_\ell + K^{(\pi)}(z_\ell) - K^{(\pi)}(0) \right\} \quad (8)$$

where  $\kappa^{(\pi)}$  is related to the  $O(p^4)$  pion charge radius by:

$$\kappa^{(\pi)} \equiv 4\bar{L}_9 - \frac{1}{6}\ell_K - \frac{1}{3}\ell_\pi - \frac{1}{2} = \frac{(4\pi F)^2}{3} \langle r^2 \rangle_V^{(\pi)}. \quad (9)$$

The function  $K^{(\pi)}(z_\ell)$ , whose expression will be given in Ref. [10], does not contain any large logarithms and gives a small fractional contribution to  $c_{3,4}^{(\pi)}$ .

As anticipated,  $c_2^{(\pi)}$  is a parameter-free prediction of ChPT. Moreover, we find  $\tilde{c}_2^{(\pi)} = 0$ , as expected due to a cancellation of real- and virtual-photon effects [15]. Finally,  $c_3^{(\pi)}$  encodes calculable chiral corrections (as does  $c_4(m_\ell)$ ) and a local counterterm  $c_3^{CT}(\mu)$ , for which our matching procedure [10] gives ( $z_A \equiv m_{a_1}/m_\rho$ ):

$$c_3^{CT}(\mu) = -\frac{19m_\rho^2}{9(4\pi F)^2} + \left( \frac{4m_\rho^2}{3(4\pi F)^2} + \frac{7+11z_A^2}{6z_A^2} \right) \log \frac{m_\rho^2}{\mu^2} \\ + \frac{37-31z_A^2+17z_A^4-11z_A^6}{36z_A^2(1-z_A^2)^2} \\ - \frac{7-5z_A^2-z_A^4+z_A^6}{3z_A^2(-1+z_A^2)^3} \log z_A. \quad (10)$$

Numerically, using  $z_A = \sqrt{2}$ , we find  $c_3^{CT}(m_\rho) = -1.61$ , implying that the counterterm induces a sub-leading correction to  $c_3$  (see Table I). The scale dependence of  $c_3^{CT}(\mu)$  partially cancels the scale dependence of the chiral loops (our procedure captures all the "single-log" scale dependence). Taking a very conservative attitude we assign to  $c_3$  an uncertainty equal to 100% of the local contribution ( $|\Delta c_3| \sim 1.6$ ) plus the effect of residual renormal-

ization scale dependence, obtained by varying the scale  $\mu$  in the range  $0.5 \rightarrow 1$  GeV ( $|\Delta c_3| \sim 0.7$ ), leading to  $\Delta c_3^{(\pi,K)} = \pm 2.3$ . Full numerical values of  $c_{2,3,4}^{(\pi)}$  are reported in Table I, with uncertainties due to matching procedure and input parameters ( $L_9$  and  $\gamma$  [16]).

As a check on our calculation, we have verified that if we neglect  $c_3^{CT}$  and pure two-loop effects, and if we use  $L_9 = F^2/(2m_\rho^2)$  (vector meson dominance), our results for  $c_{2,3,4}^{(\pi)}$  are fully consistent with previous analyses of the leading structure dependent corrections based on current algebra [6, 17]. Moreover, our numerical value of  $\Delta_{e^2p^4}^{(\pi)}$  reported in Table II is very close to the corresponding result in Ref. [6],  $\Delta_{e^2p^4}^{(\pi)} = (0.054 \pm 0.044) \times 10^{-2}$ .

For completeness we report here the contribution to  $\Delta_{e^2p^6}^{(\pi)}$  induced by structure dependent radiation:

$$\Delta_{e^2p^6}^{(\pi)} = \frac{\alpha}{2\pi} \frac{m_\pi^4}{(4\pi F)^4} (1+\gamma^2) \left[ \frac{1}{30z_e} - \frac{11}{60} + \frac{z_e}{20(1-z_e)^2} \right. \\ \left. \times (12-3z_e-10z_e^2+z_e^3+20z_e \log z_e) \right]. \quad (11)$$

*Results for  $R_{e/\mu}^{(K)}$*  - In this case we have:

$$c_2^{(K)} = \frac{2}{3} m_\rho^2 \langle r^2 \rangle_V^{(K)} + \frac{4}{3} \left( 1 - \frac{7}{4}\gamma \right) \frac{m_\rho^2}{(4\pi F)^2} \quad (12)$$

$$\tilde{c}_2^{(K)} = \frac{1}{3} (1-\gamma) \frac{m_\rho^2}{(4\pi F)^2} \quad (13)$$

where  $\langle r^2 \rangle_V^{(K)}$  is the  $O(p^4)$  kaon charge radius.  $c_3^{(K)}$  is obtained from  $c_3^{(\pi)}$  by replacing  $31/24 - \gamma \rightarrow -7/72 -$

	( $P = \pi$ )	( $P = K$ )
$\tilde{c}_2^{(P)}$	0	$(7.84 \pm 0.07_\gamma) \times 10^{-2}$
$c_2^{(P)}$	$5.2 \pm 0.4_{L_9} \pm 0.01_\gamma$	$4.3 \pm 0.4_{L_9} \pm 0.01_\gamma$
$c_3^{(P)}$	$-10.5 \pm 2.3_m \pm 0.53_{L_9}$	$-4.73 \pm 2.3_m \pm 0.28_{L_9}$
$c_4^{(P)}(m_\mu)$	$1.69 \pm 0.07_{L_9}$	$0.22 \pm 0.01_{L_9}$

TABLE I: Numerical values of the coefficients  $c_n^{(P)}$  of Eq. 3 ( $P = \pi, K$ ). The uncertainties correspond to the input values  $L_9^r(\mu = m_\rho) = (6.9 \pm 0.7) \times 10^{-3}$ ,  $\gamma = 0.465 \pm 0.005$  [16], and to the matching procedure (m), affecting only  $c_3^{(P)}$ .

	( $P = \pi$ )	( $P = K$ )
$\Delta_{e^2 p^2}^{(P)}$ (%)	-3.929	-3.786
$\Delta_{e^2 p^4}^{(P)}$ (%)	$0.053 \pm 0.011$	$0.135 \pm 0.011$
$\Delta_{e^2 p^6}^{(P)}$ (%)	0.073	
$\Delta_{LL}$ (%)	0.055	0.055

TABLE II: Numerical summary of various electroweak corrections to  $R_{e/\mu}^{(\pi,K)}$ .

$13/9\gamma$ , by dropping the term proportional to  $\log m_\rho^2/m_\pi^2$ , and by inter-changing everywhere else the label  $\pi$  with  $K$  (masses,  $\ell_\pi \rightarrow \ell_K$ , etc.).  $c_4^{(K)}$  is obtained from  $c_4^{(\pi)}$  by keeping only the second line of Eq. 8 and inter-changing the labels  $\pi$  and  $K$ . The numerical values of  $c_{2,3,4}^{(K)}$  and  $\tilde{c}_2^{(K)}$  are reported in Table I.

*Resumming leading logarithms* - At the level of uncertainty considered, one needs to include higher order long distance corrections to the leading contribution  $\Delta_{e^2 p^2} \sim -3\alpha/\pi \log m_\mu/m_e \sim -3.7\%$ . The leading logarithms can be summed via the renormalization group and their effect amounts to multiplying  $R_{e/\mu}^{(P)}$  by [6]

$$1 + \Delta_{LL} = \frac{\left(1 - \frac{2}{3}\alpha \log \frac{m_\mu}{m_e}\right)^{9/2}}{1 - \frac{3\alpha}{\pi} \log \frac{m_\mu}{m_e}} = 1.00055. \quad (14)$$

*Conclusions* - In Table II we summarize the various corrections to  $R_{e/\mu}^{(\pi,K)}$ , which lead to our final results:

$$R_{e/\mu}^{(\pi)} = (1.2352 \pm 0.0001) \times 10^{-4} \quad (15)$$

$$R_{e/\mu}^{(K)} = (2.477 \pm 0.001) \times 10^{-5}. \quad (16)$$

In the case of  $R_{e/\mu}^{(K)}$  we have inflated the nominal uncertainty arising from matching by a factor of four, to account for higher order chiral corrections of expected size  $\Delta_{e^2 p^4} \times m_K^2/(4\pi F)^2$ . Our results have to be compared with the ones of Refs. [6] and [7] reported in the introduction. While  $R_{e/\mu}^{(\pi)}$  is in good agreement with both

previous results, there is a discrepancy in  $R_{e/\mu}^{(K)}$  that goes well outside the estimated theoretical uncertainties. We have traced back this difference to the following problems in Ref. [7]: (i) the leading log correction  $\Delta_{LL}$  is included with the wrong sign (this accounts for half of the discrepancy); (ii) the NLO virtual correction  $\Delta_{e^2 p^4}^{(K)} = 0.058\%$  is not reliable because the hadronic form factors modeled in Ref. [7] do not satisfy the QCD short-distance behavior.

In conclusion, by performing the first ever ChPT calculation to  $O(e^2 p^4)$ , we have improved the reliability of both the central value and the uncertainty of the ratios  $R_{e/\mu}^{(\pi,K)}$ . Our final result for  $R_{e/\mu}^{(\pi)}$  is consistent with the previous literature, while we find a discrepancy in  $R_{e/\mu}^{(K)}$ , which we have traced back to inconsistencies in the analysis of Ref. [7]. Our results provide a clean basis to detect or constrain non-standard physics in these channels by comparison with upcoming measurements.

**Acknowledgments** - We wish to thank M. Ramsey-Musolf for collaboration at an early stage of this work, D. Poganic and M. Bychkov for correspondence on the experimental input on  $\gamma$ , and W. Marciano and A. Sirlin for cross-checks on parts of our calculation. This work has been supported in part by the EU MRTN-CT-2006-035482 (FLAVIANet), by MEC (Spain) under grant FPA2004-00996 and by Generalitat Valenciana under grant GVACOMP2007-156

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