

Numerical tools for strong lensing

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GDR CoPhys Tools, 3-4 nov 2025



Introduction

- Light deflection
- Wide varie

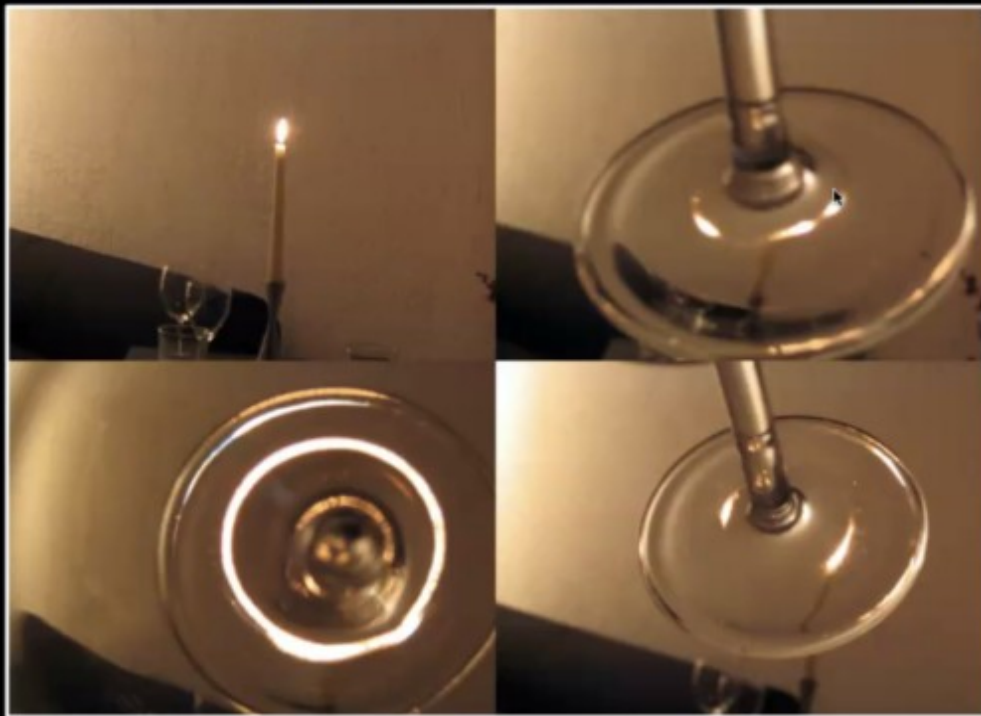
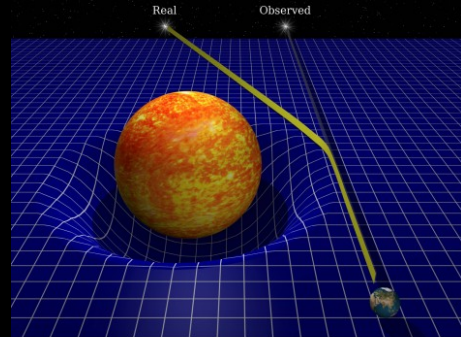
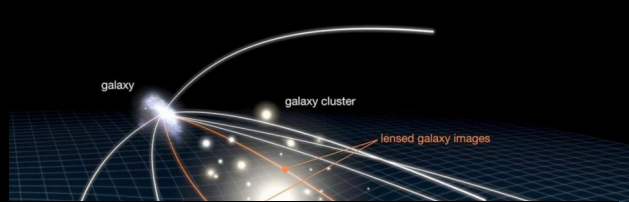
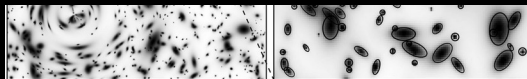
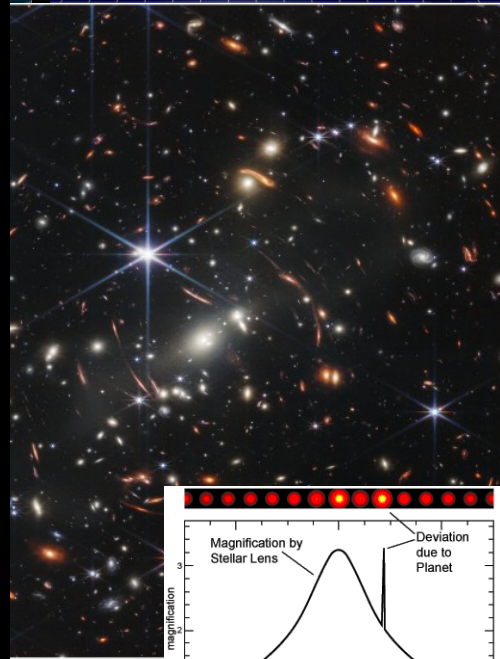


Image Credit: P. J. Marshall

- When impa
distorsions
Invoke St



The lens equation for a thin lens

- Main hypotheses: thin, $\Psi \ll c^2$,
stationary $d\Psi/dt \sim 0$, FLRW
elsewhere, transparent otherwise

$$\hat{\alpha} = \frac{2}{c^2} \int \nabla_{\perp} \Phi \, dl$$

- Previous results if
- Geometry yields

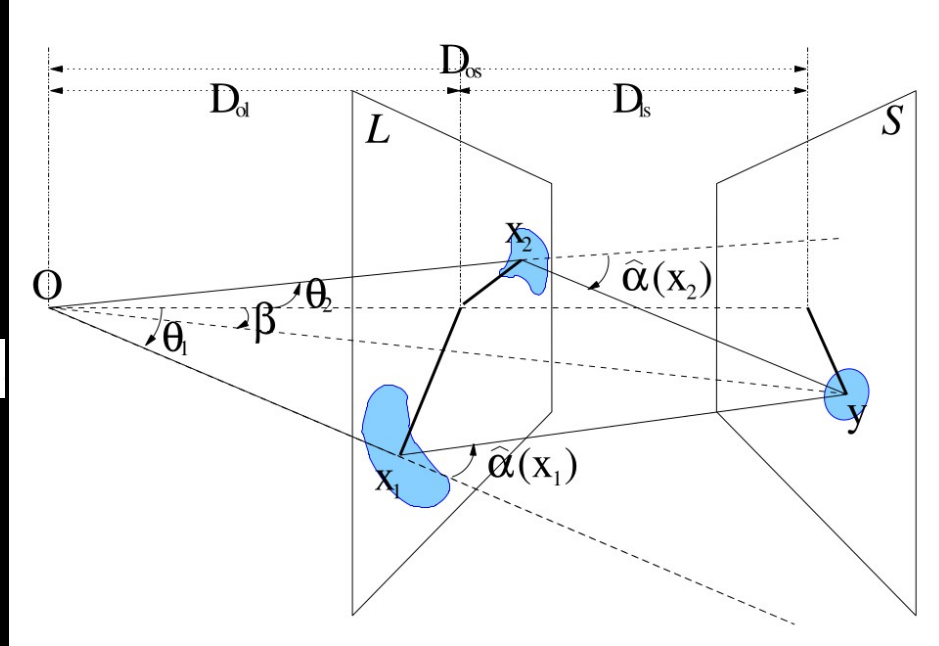
$$\Phi(\vec{r}) = -GM/|\vec{r}|$$

$$\hat{\alpha} = \frac{4GM}{c^2} \frac{\vec{x}}{|\vec{x}|^2},$$

$$D_{os}\beta + D_{ls}\hat{\alpha} = D_{os}\theta.$$

- Introduction reduced deflection angle

$$\alpha = \frac{D_{ls}}{D_{os}} \hat{\alpha}$$



The main lens equation

$$\vec{\beta} = \vec{\theta} - \vec{\alpha} \equiv \vec{\theta} - \vec{\nabla} \psi(\vec{\theta})$$

Potential, convergence, arrival time

- where

$$\psi(\vec{\theta}) = \frac{2}{c^2} \frac{D_{ls} D_{ol}}{D_{os}} \phi(\vec{\theta})$$

and

$$\phi = \int \Phi dz$$

The lens potential

$$\Delta\psi = 2\kappa = \vec{\nabla} \cdot \vec{\alpha}$$

- Equivalent of

$$\Delta\phi(\vec{\theta}) = 4\pi G \Sigma(\vec{\theta})$$

With convergence $\kappa \equiv \Sigma / \Sigma_{\text{crit}}$ is surface density normalised by critical density

$$\Sigma_{\text{crit}} = \frac{c^2}{4\pi G} \frac{D_{os}}{D_{ol} D_{ls}}$$

- Relations

$$\vec{\alpha}(\vec{\theta}) = \frac{1}{\pi} \int_{\mathbb{R}^2} d^2\vartheta \kappa(\vec{\vartheta}) \frac{\vec{\theta} - \vec{\vartheta}}{|\vec{\theta} - \vec{\vartheta}|^2},$$

$$\psi(\vec{\theta}) = \frac{1}{\pi} \int_{\mathbb{R}^2} d^2\vartheta \kappa(\vec{\vartheta}) \ln|\vec{\theta} - \vec{\vartheta}|.$$

Arrival time

$$ct = \frac{D_{ol} D_{ls}}{D_{os}} \left((\vec{\theta} - \vec{\beta})^2 - \psi(\vec{\theta}) \right)$$

Fermat principle $\nabla_{\vec{\theta}} t = 0 \rightarrow$ lens eq.

Local distortions: magnification, shear...

- The lens equation... “inverse” mapping

$$\vec{\beta} = \vec{\theta} - \vec{\alpha} \equiv \vec{\theta} - \vec{\nabla}\psi(\vec{\theta})$$

- Locally:

$$\mathcal{A}_{ij}(\vec{\theta}) = \frac{\partial \vec{\beta}}{\partial \vec{\theta}} = (\delta_{ij} - \psi_{,ij}) \equiv \begin{pmatrix} 1 - \kappa - \gamma_1 & -\gamma_2 \\ -\gamma_2 & 1 - \kappa + \gamma_1 \end{pmatrix}$$

	< 0	> 0
κ		
$\text{Re}[\gamma]$		
$\text{Im}[\gamma]$		

- Convergence κ (isotropic distortions) shear γ (anisotropic distortions)

$$\begin{aligned} \kappa &= \frac{1}{2}(\psi_{,11} + \psi_{,22}) \\ \gamma_1 &= \frac{1}{2}(\psi_{,11} - \psi_{,22}) \\ \gamma_2 &= \psi_{,12} \end{aligned}$$

Jacobian (magnification):

$$\mu^{-1} = \det \mathcal{A} = (1 - \kappa)^2 - |\gamma|^2$$

Local distortions: magnification, shear...

- Shape of images : surface brightness conservation

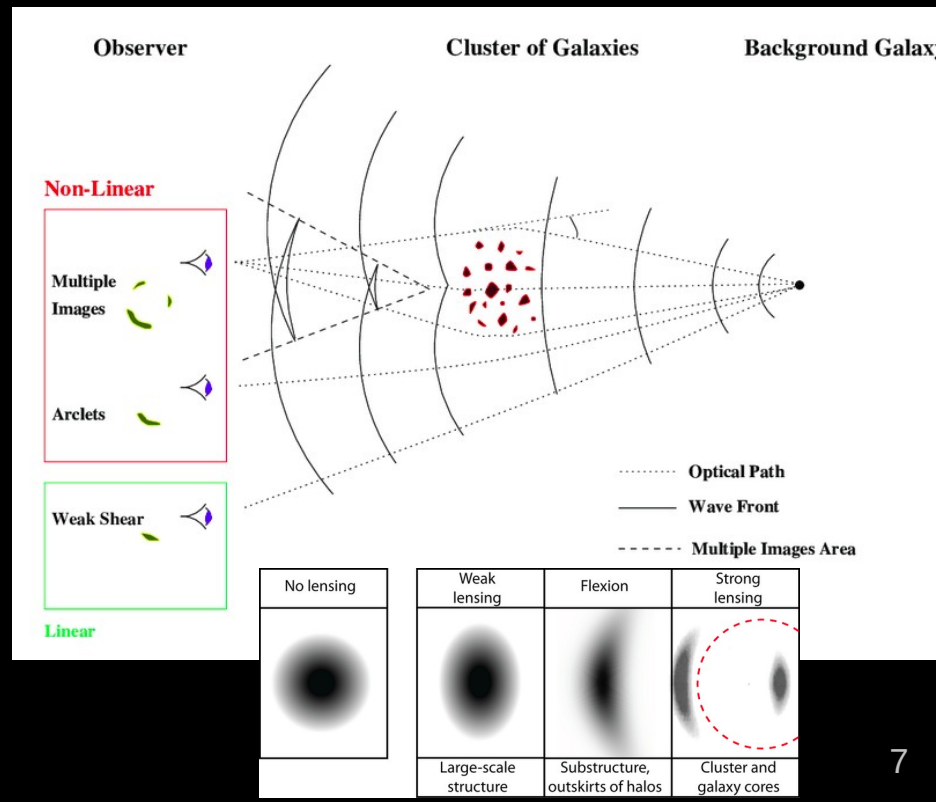
$$I(\vec{\theta}) = I_s(\vec{\theta} - \vec{\nabla}(\vec{\theta}))$$

- Locally:

$$I(\vec{\theta}) = I_s \left[\vec{\beta}_0 - \mathcal{A}(\vec{\theta}_0)(\vec{\theta} - \vec{\theta}_0) \right]$$

- Convergence κ (isotropic distortions)
- shear γ (anisotropic distortions)

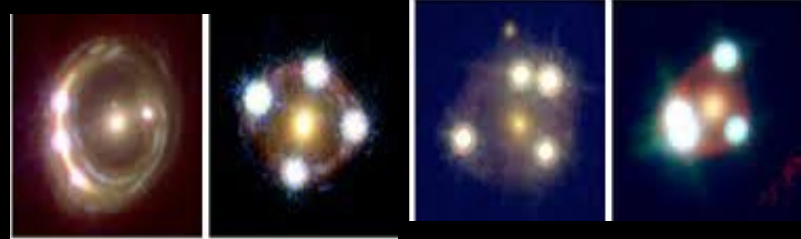
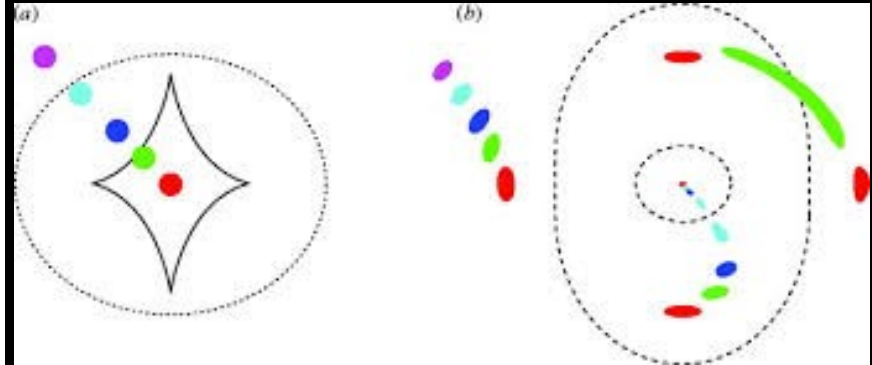
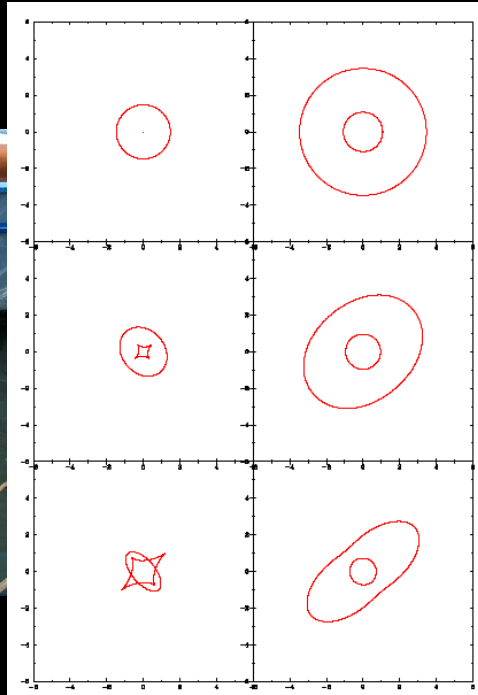
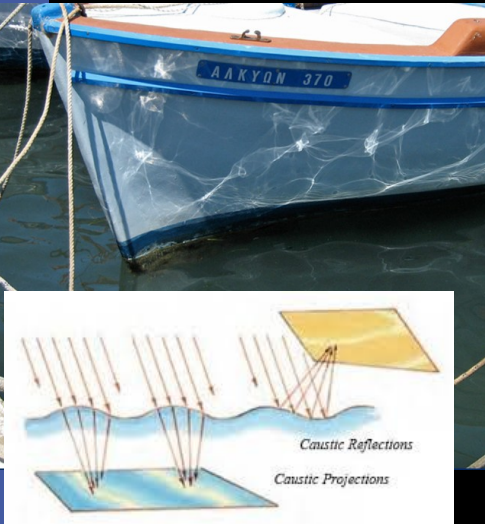
→ WEAK LENSING regime



Critical/Caustic lines, image multiplicity

Critical lines : where magnification is infinite in image plane
Einstein radius R_{Ein} : Radius of the main (tangential critical line)

Caustic lines: image of critical lines through lens equation in the source plane



Inverting the lens equation

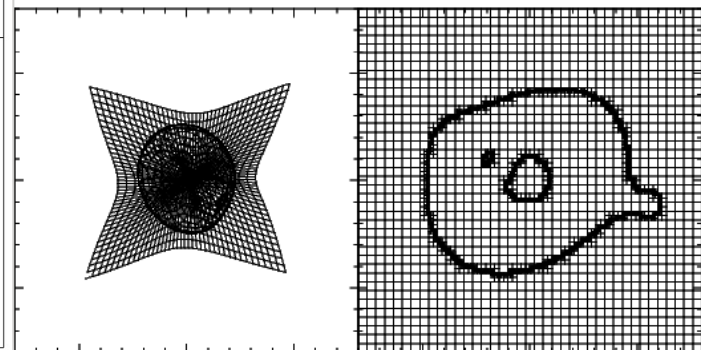
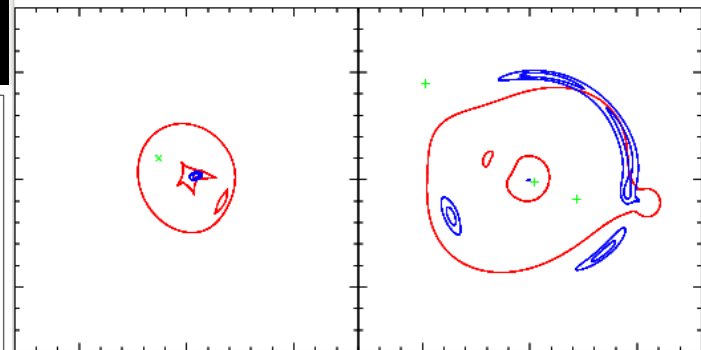
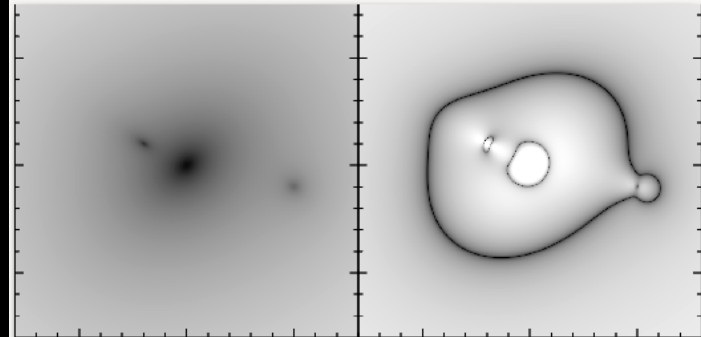
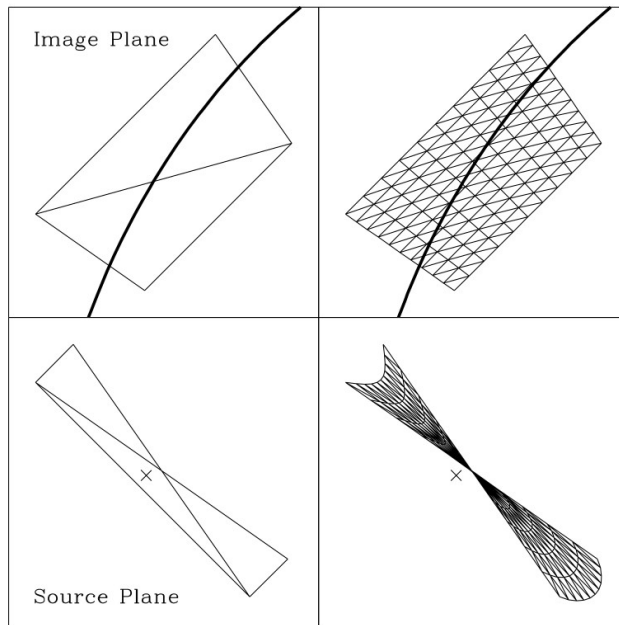
- Lens equation explicitly yields β knowing θ .

$$\vec{\beta} = \vec{\theta} - \vec{\alpha} \equiv \vec{\theta} - \vec{\nabla} \psi(\vec{\theta})$$

- How to go the other way: get **all** the θ s, knowing β (important for modeling)

Numerical adaptive

Same technique for
lines and isophotes of



Degeneracies : MST

- Any transformation like this leaves lensing **observables** unchanged if unknown source plane is rescaled like
(Same critical lines,... same mass in Rein!)
- Total magnification scales like
- Arrival times scale like
- Unless intrinsic source size/flux is known, mass sheet transformation (and more complex analogous) prevents robust density profile estimates
- Additional non-lensing data is needed to lift degeneracies (especially H_0 estimates)

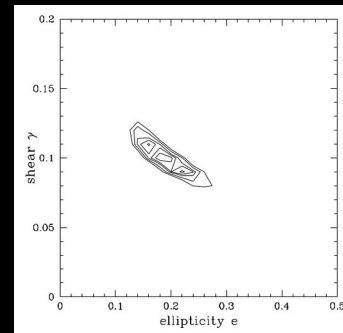
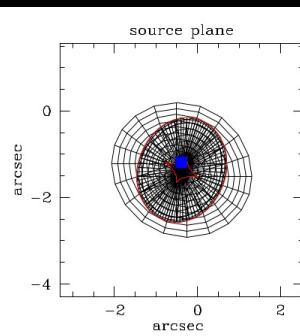
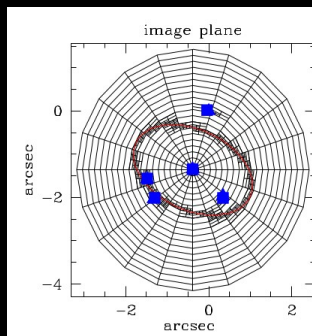
Degeneracies : non-axisymmetry

- Apart from monopole (isotropic matter distrib.), multipole expansion shows that $m=2$ and beyond terms at radius r come from both mass interior (eg internal ellipticity) and exterior (eg external shear) matter.
- Some degeneracy is expected since $R \sim R_{\text{ein}} \pm \delta$

$$\phi(x, y) = \phi_0(r) + \sum_{m=1}^{\infty} [\phi_{cm}(r) \cos m\theta + \phi_{sm}(r) \sin m\theta]$$

$$\psi_m(r) = -\frac{2\pi G}{m} \left[r^{-m} \int_0^r dx \Sigma_m(x) x^{m+1} + r^m \int_r^{\infty} dx \Sigma_m(x) x^{1-m} \right]$$

$$\psi_0(r) = 4\pi G \left[\log r \int_0^r dx \Sigma_m(x) x + \int_r^{\infty} dx \Sigma_m(x) x \log x \right]$$

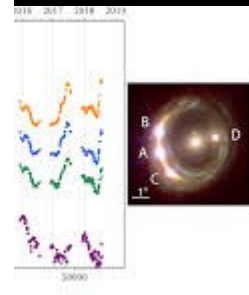
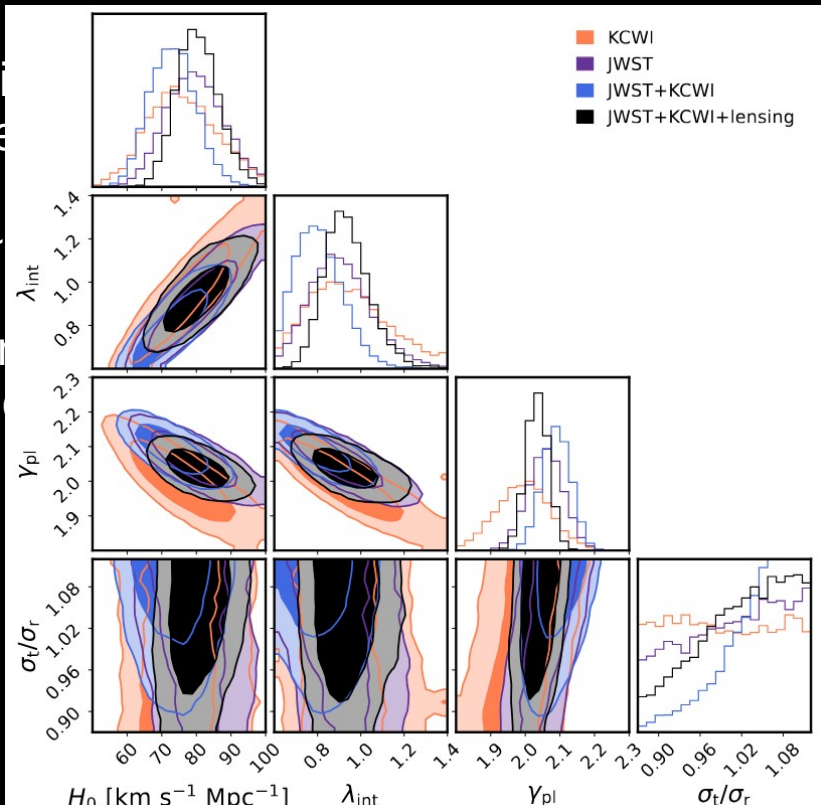
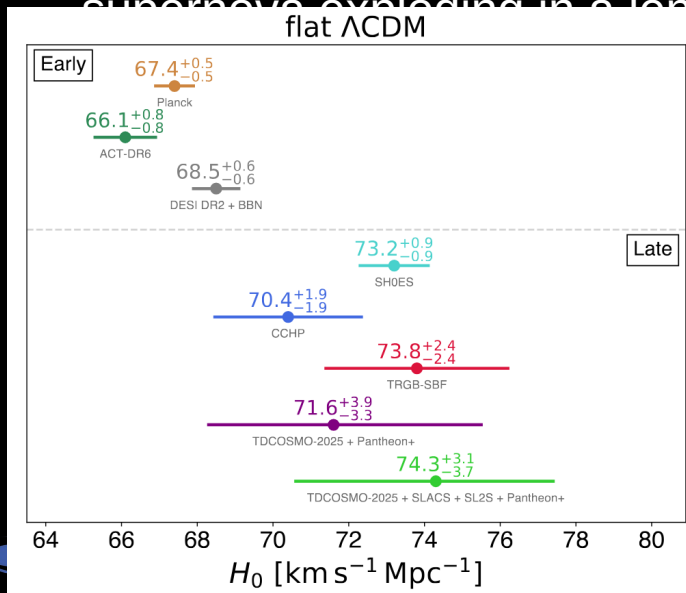


Time delays

$$ct = \frac{D_{\text{ol}} D_{\text{ls}}}{D_{\text{os}}} \left((\vec{\theta} - \vec{\beta})^2 - \psi(\vec{\theta}) \right)$$

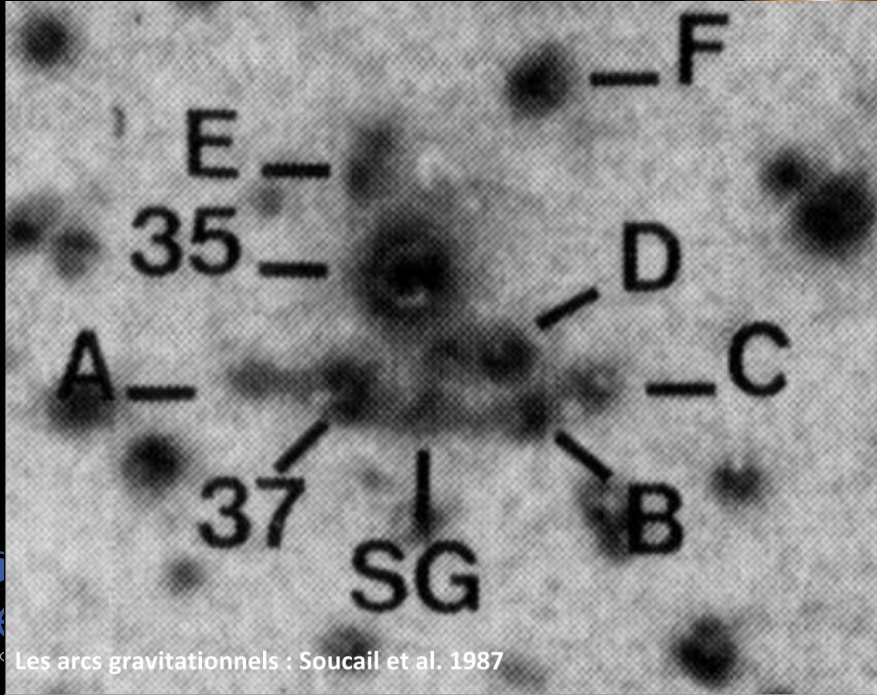
- Time delay between two paths $t_A - t_B \sim H_0^{-1}$ (Refsdal 64)

- Requires the monitoring of variable supernovae exploding in a lensed

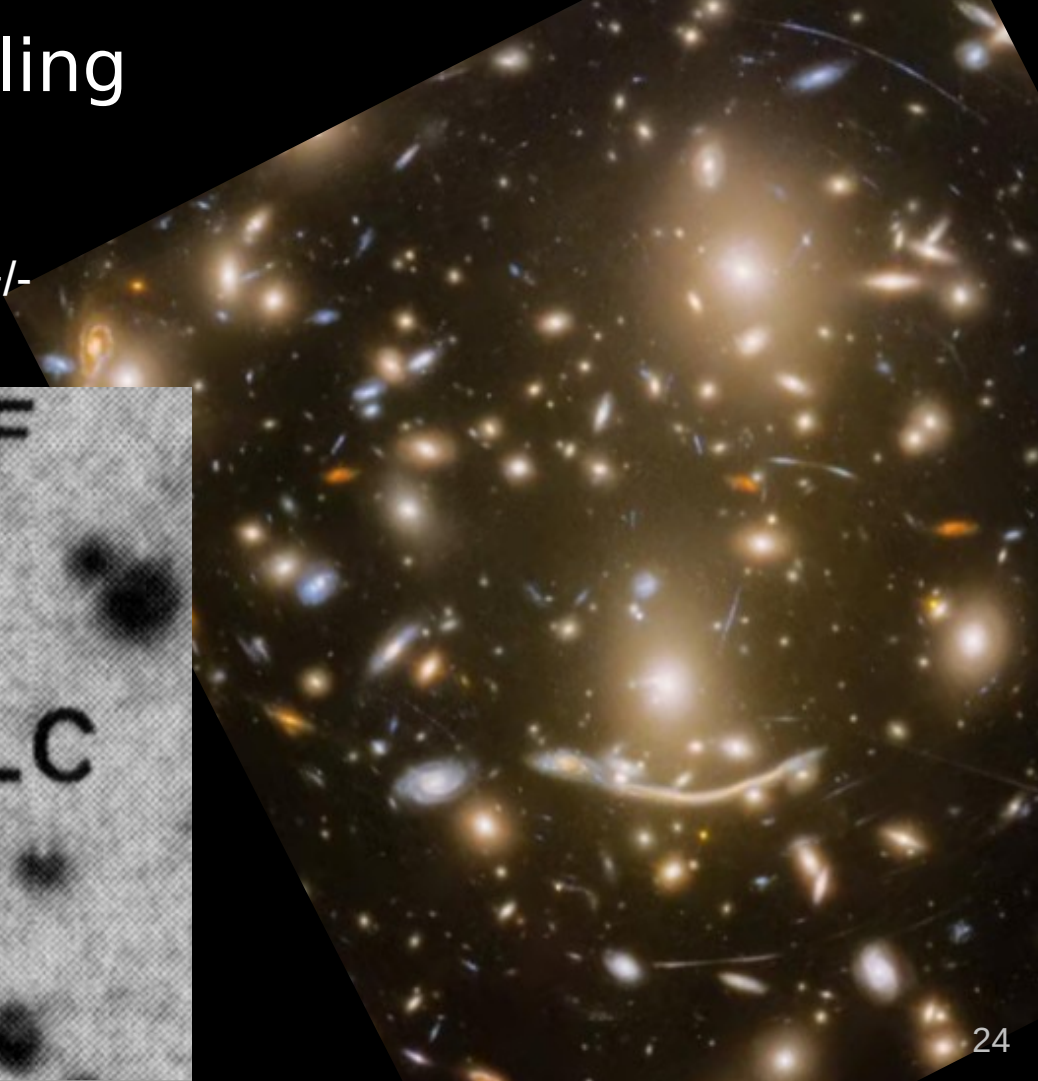


Cluster-scale SL modeling

- Space vs ground A370
- Sources petites --> fit positions +/-
- Source plane vs image plane
-



Les arcs gravitationnels : Soucaill et al. 1987



Cluster-scale SL modeling

- Several sources at different redshift mixed with several fg galaxies : colour+resolution (morphology) crucial!
- Sources are relatively small compared to typical scale of potential variations. Point-source minimisation is ok!

$$\chi_{\text{src},0}^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{N-1} \frac{\left(\vec{\theta}_i - \vec{\nabla} \psi(\vec{\theta}_i) - \vec{\theta}_{i+1} + \vec{\nabla} \psi(\vec{\theta}_{i+1}) \right)^2}{\sigma_{x,i}^2}$$

Fast but inaccurate

$$\begin{aligned} \vec{\beta} &= \vec{\theta}_1 - \vec{\nabla} \psi(\vec{\theta}_1) \\ &\vdots \\ &= \vec{\theta}_N - \vec{\nabla} \psi(\vec{\theta}_N) \end{aligned}$$

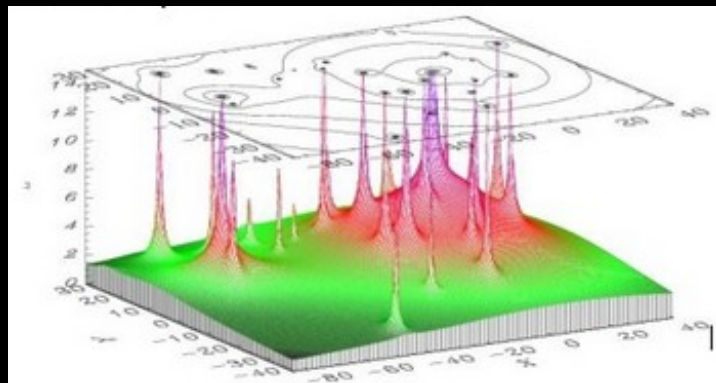
$$\chi_{\text{img}}^2 = \sum_{i=1}^N \delta \vec{\theta}_i^T \mathcal{C}_i^{-1} \delta \vec{\theta}_i$$

$$\delta \vec{\theta} = \vec{\theta}_{\text{obs},i} - \vec{\theta}_{\text{mod},i}$$

Requires inverting lens equation. Tedious !
Image plane rms often > image resolution !

Cluster-scale SL modeling

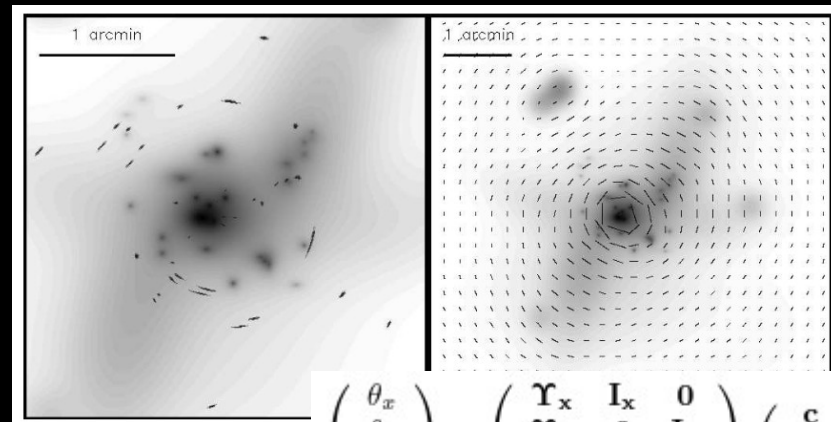
- Parametric vs grid-based (free form) models (and hybrid)



MCMC sampling of high-dim non-linear parameter space.

Slow but robust !

lenstool, glafics, glee, sl_fit, gravity.jl



$$\begin{pmatrix} \theta_x \\ \theta_y \\ \gamma_1 \\ \gamma_2 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \Upsilon_x & \mathbf{I}_x & 0 \\ \Upsilon_y & 0 & \mathbf{I}_y \\ \Delta_1 & 0 & 0 \\ \Delta_2 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{c} \\ \beta_x \\ \beta_y \end{pmatrix}$$

“Linear” inversion, fast but unstable
Requires regularisation...
WSLAP, pixelens, SWUnited...

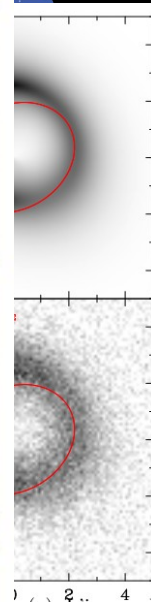
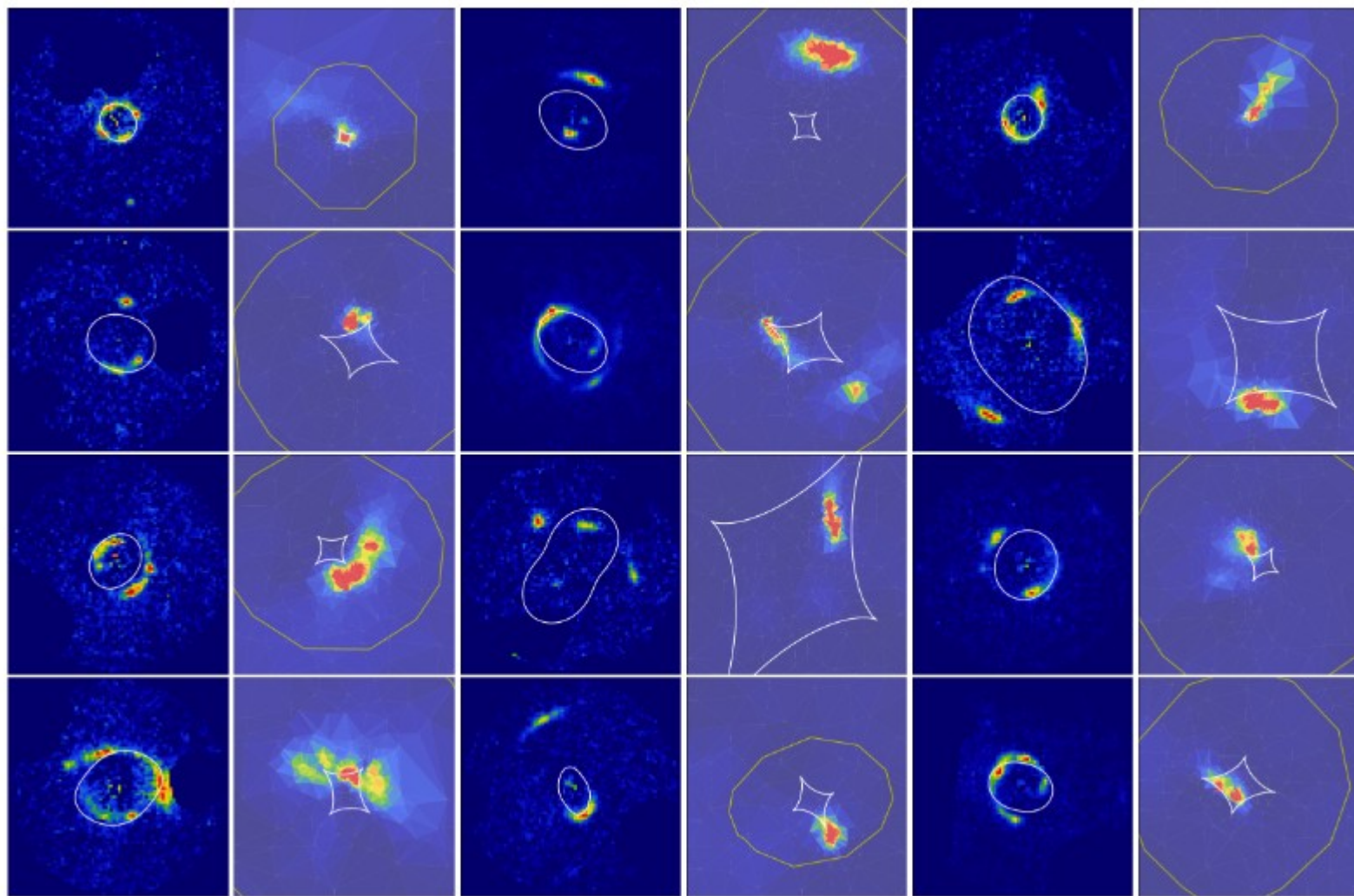
Cluster-scale SL modeling

- Results:
 - HFF sims and challenge...
 - SN Refsdal, time delays on first lensed SN in MACSJ1149
 - Recent JWST models
 - Addition of kinematics, WL

See Marceau's presentation

Model

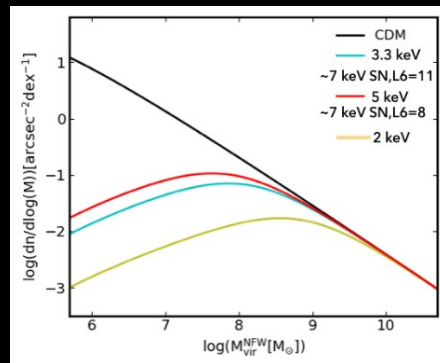
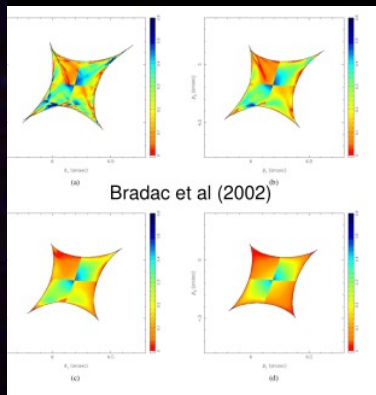
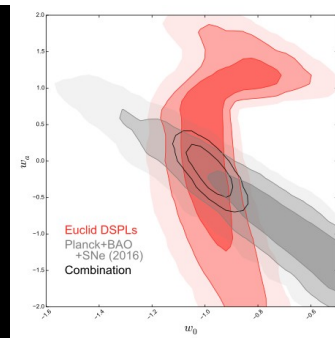
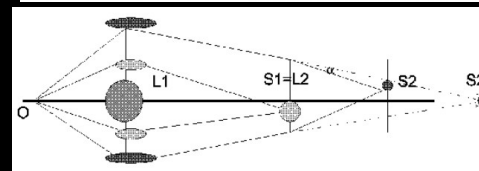
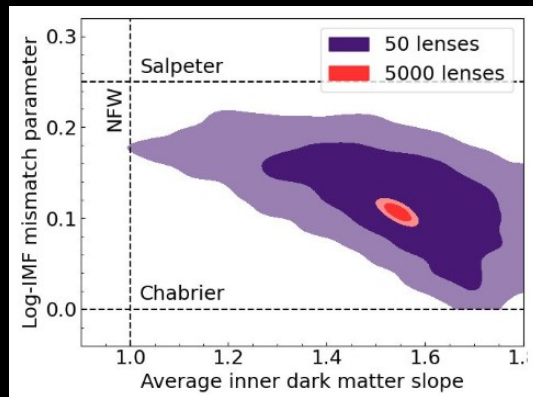
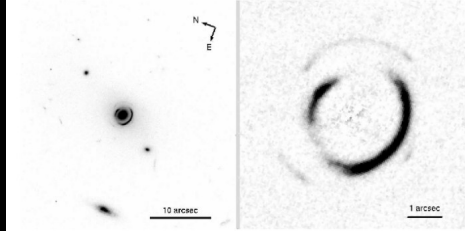
- Euclidean
- Cosmological
- Linear



$$HS||^2$$

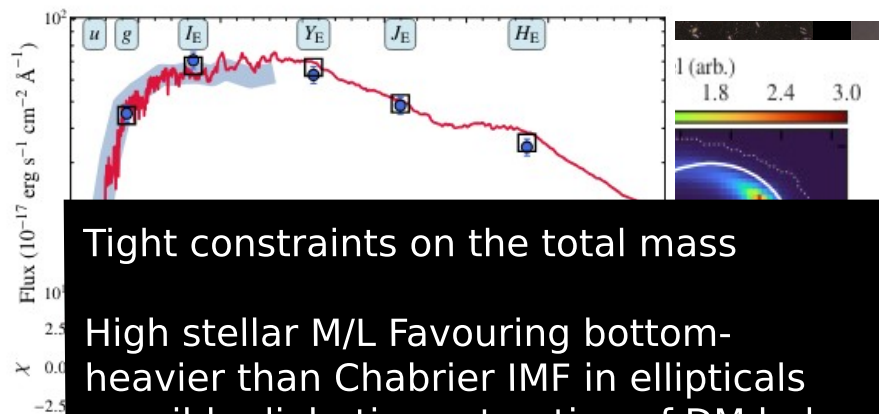
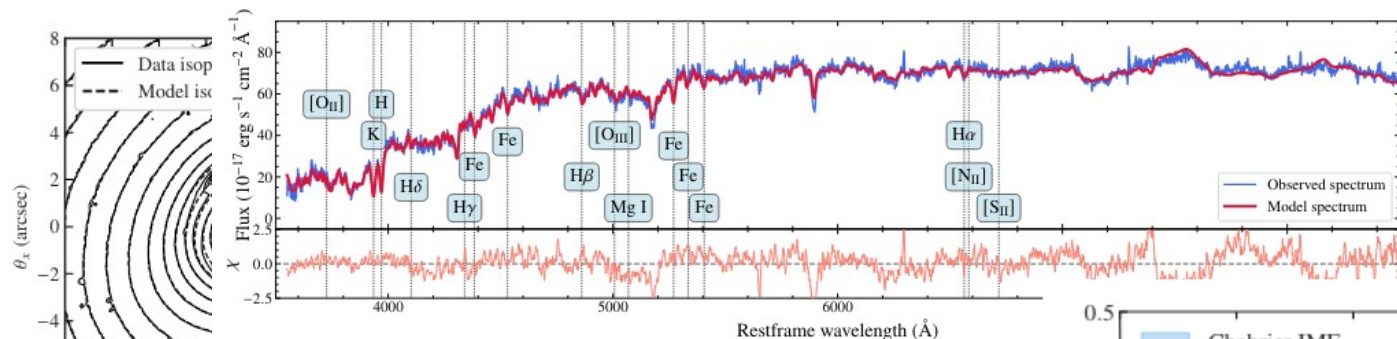
Modeling galaxy-scale lenses

- Sous-structures ... multipoles
- Results
- DSPLs
- L+D modeling
- S+W in galaxies

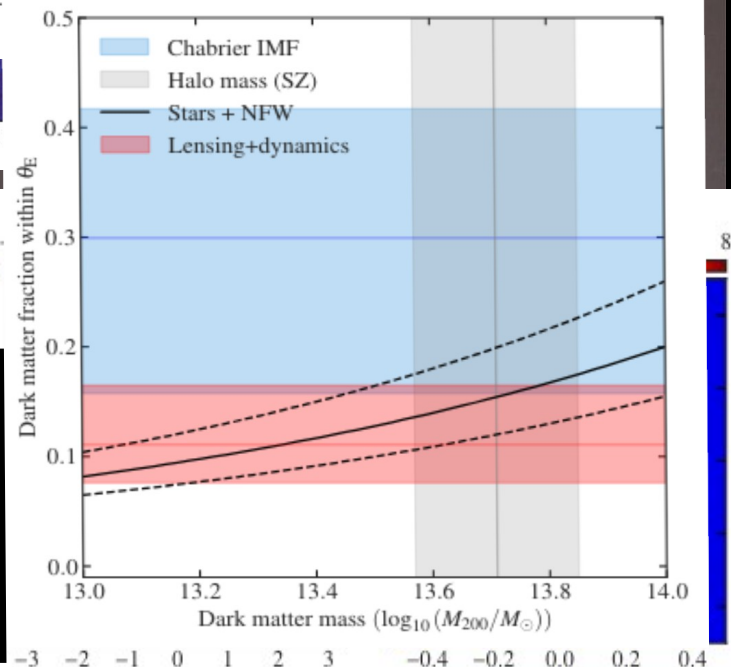


Normalised residuals

Relative brightness



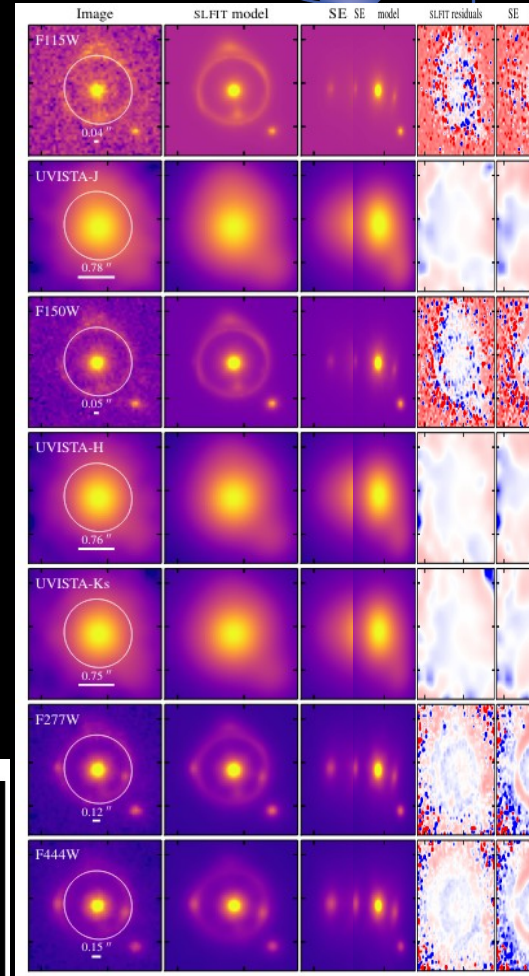
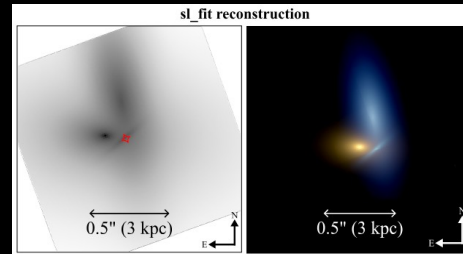
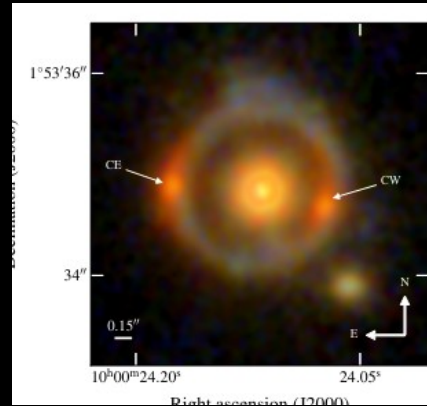
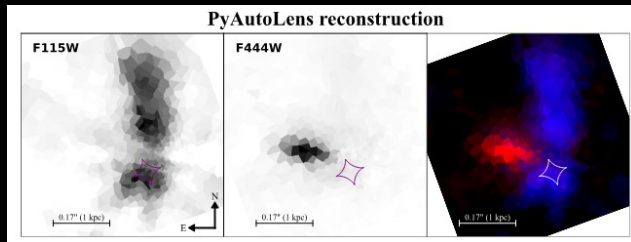
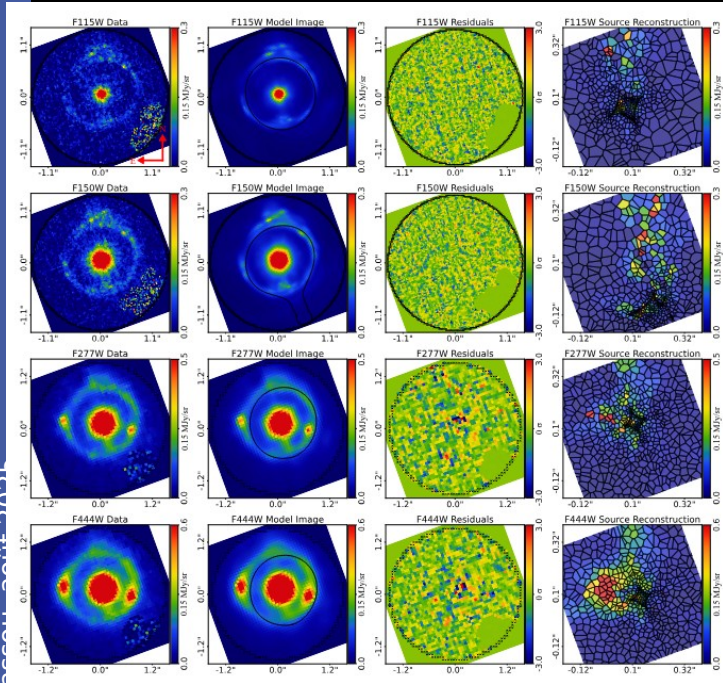
Tight constraints on the total mass
High stellar M/L Favouring bottom-
heavier than Chabrier IMF in ellipticals
or mild adiabatic contraction of DM halos.



a_stunning_Einstein_ring

Cosmos-Web ring

Mercier+24





Ongoing revamping of `sl_fit` into julia



- 100% Parametric fit
 - Simple mass model, one Sersic, one band
 - Optim.jl w/ and w/o AD
 - GPU offloading: quite easy with CUDA.jl and Flux.jl
 - Posterior sampling with Turing.jl
- Regularized source
 - Hyperparameters, source resolution
 - Basis functions: pixels, Shapelets, Sersiclets (Gram-Schmidt orthon.), wavelets...
 - Gaussian processes
 - Hybrid Sersic + flexible
 - Sparse matrices and/or massive gradients with AD?!?



Ongoing revamping of sl_fit into julia



- Hands-on!?!
 - Download tarball and go to dir
 - Julia --project="."
 -] instantiate
 - slow... but
 -

```
[deps]
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CUDA = "052768ef-5323-5732-b1bb-66c8b64840ba"
ColorSchemes = "35d6a980-a343-548e-a6ea-1d62b119f2f4"
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FFTW = "7a1cc6ca-52ef-59f5-83cd-3a7055c09341"
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Flux = "587475ba-b771-5e3f-ad9e-33799f191a9c"
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ReverseDiff = "37e2e3b7-166d-5795-8a7a-e32c996b4267"
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