Les Houches:

The history of

Black-hole accretion in Alps

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Some historical remarks

John Michell (1784): *Phil. Trans. Roy. Soc. Lond.*, LXXIV, 35

If there should really exist in nature any bodies whose density is not less than that of the sun, and whose diameters are more than 500 times the diameter of the sun, since their light could not arrive at us . . . we could have no information from sight; yet if any other luminous bodies should happen to revolve about them we might still perhaps from the motions of these revolving bodies infer the existence of the central ones. . .

Pierre S. Laplace (1796): *“Exposition du Système du Monde”*

. . . the attractive force of a heavenly body could be so large that light could not flow out of it.

Some historical remarks

SCIENCE NEWS LETTER *for January 18, 1964*

ASTRONOMY

"Black Holes" in Space

The heavy densely packed dying stars that speckle space may help determine how matter behaves when enclosed in its own gravitational field—By Ann Ewing

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But . . .

. . . It is virtually impossible to prove unambiguously the presence of black-hole horizon by observing the electromagnetic signal from its presumed vicinity in a cosmic system – absence of radiation signal does not necessarily prove the absence of the surface of the body and the existence of the horizon.

(See Abramowicz et al. 2002, A&A, 396, L31)

BHs in Les Houches 1972

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Coordinates: 45.8989°N 6.7701°E

Les Houches School of Physics (French: *École de physique des Houches*) is an international physics center dedicated to seasonal schools and workshops. It is located in Les Houches, France. The school was founded in 1951 by French scientist Cécile DeWitt-Morette.[1]

Summer, 1972, discussion in main lecture hall. From left, Yuval Ne'eman, Bryce DeWitt, Kip Thorne, Demetrios Christodoulou.

Between its participants there have been famous Nobel laureates in Physics like Enrico Fermi, Wolfgang Pauli, Murray Gell-Mann and John Bardeen amongst others.[1] According to former director of the school, Jean Zinn-Justin, the school is the "mother of all modern schools of physics".[1]

Since 2017, it is a Joint Research Service (French: *Unité mixte de service*, UMS) of the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and the Grenoble Alpes University.[2] In 2020, it was recognized as a EPS Historic Site by the European Physical Society (EPS).[1]

History [edit]

The school was founded by Cécile DeWitt-Morette in 1951. She was 29 years old at the time, had married physicist Bryce DeWitt a week before, and was still a postdoctoral researcher in the United States.[3] The school was created as a post-World War II effort to improve the standard of modern physics in Europe, which was lagging behind the United States.[1] She was inspired by her experience in the Girl Scouts and 1949 Richard Feynman's Ann Arbor annual Summer Symposium, at the University of Michigan, which DeWitt-Morette attended.[3]

BHs in Les Houches 1972

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Les Houches, Août 1972
Cours de l'Ecole d'été de Physique théorique
Organe d'intérêt commun de l'U.S.M.G.
et I.N.P.G. subventionné par l'OTAN et
le Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique

BLACK HOLES

LES ASTRES OCCLUS

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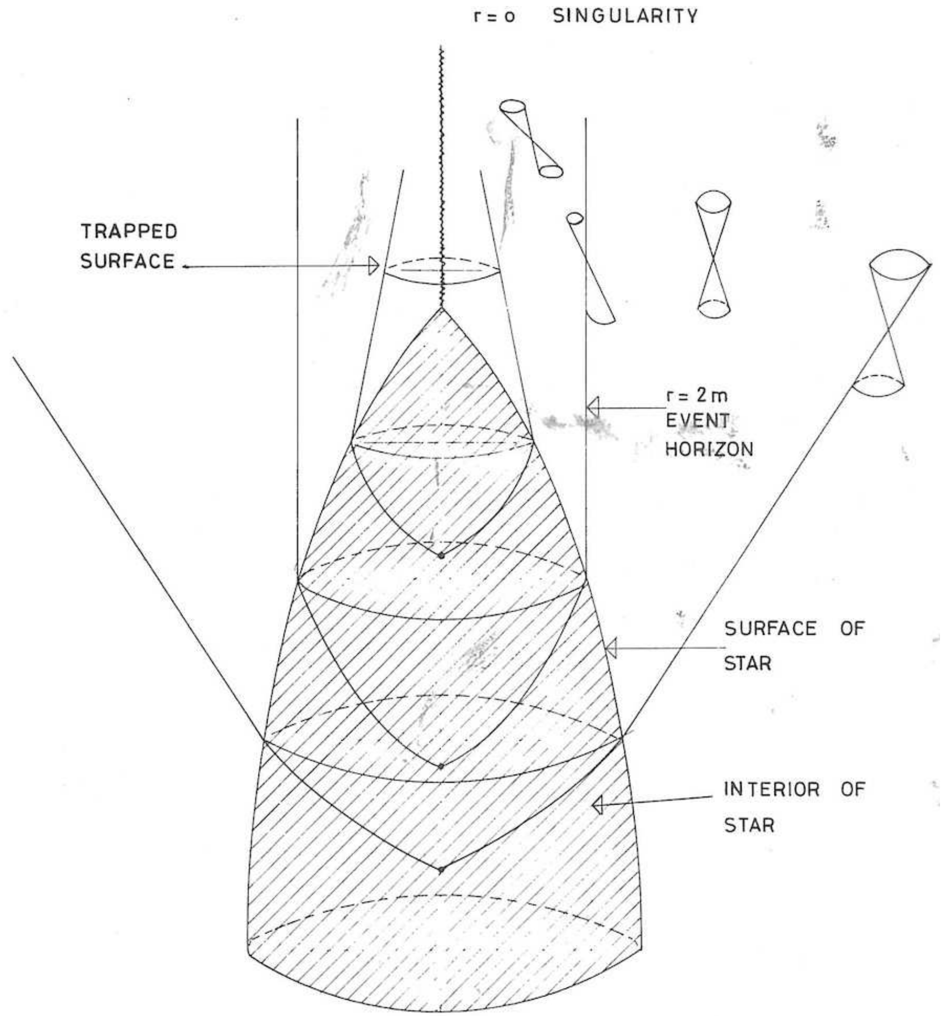
BHs in Prague 2025

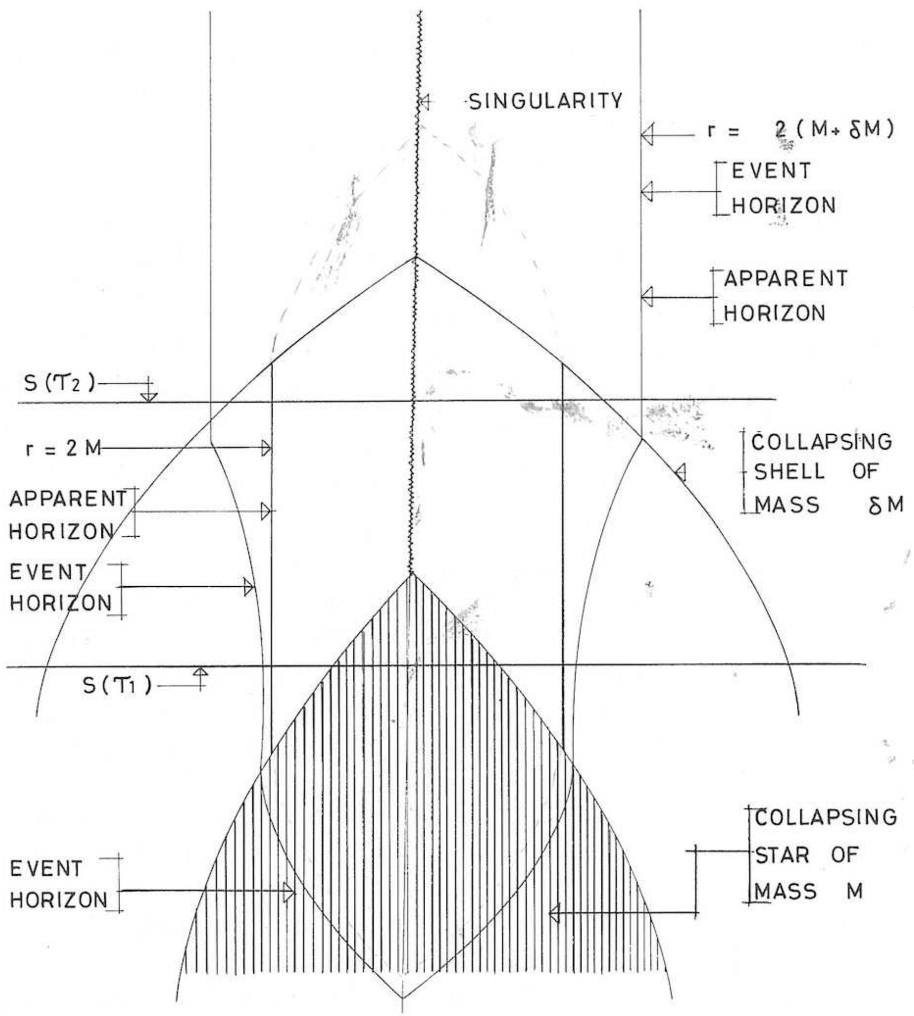
Astrophysical BHs in GR



Emergence of Event Horizon and Trapped Surfaces.

(Hawking, 1972)

Astrophysical BHs in GR



Growth of Event Horizon by a collapsing shell.

(Hawking, 1972)

Objects and ideas

- Nuclei of galaxies: in AGN (quasars, Seyfert galaxies, ...)
- Stellar remnants: accreting BH and NS (microquasars, ...)

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- model predictions vs. observations: elmg. lightcurves & spectra (power-spectra, SSC continua, broad lines), high-energy particles (TeV)
- GR effects taken into account: acceleration to relativistic speed • strong gravity lensing, energy shifts • variability time-scales → orbiting near ISCO • gw–elmg. synergy (TDEs)...

GR relevant for BH accretion

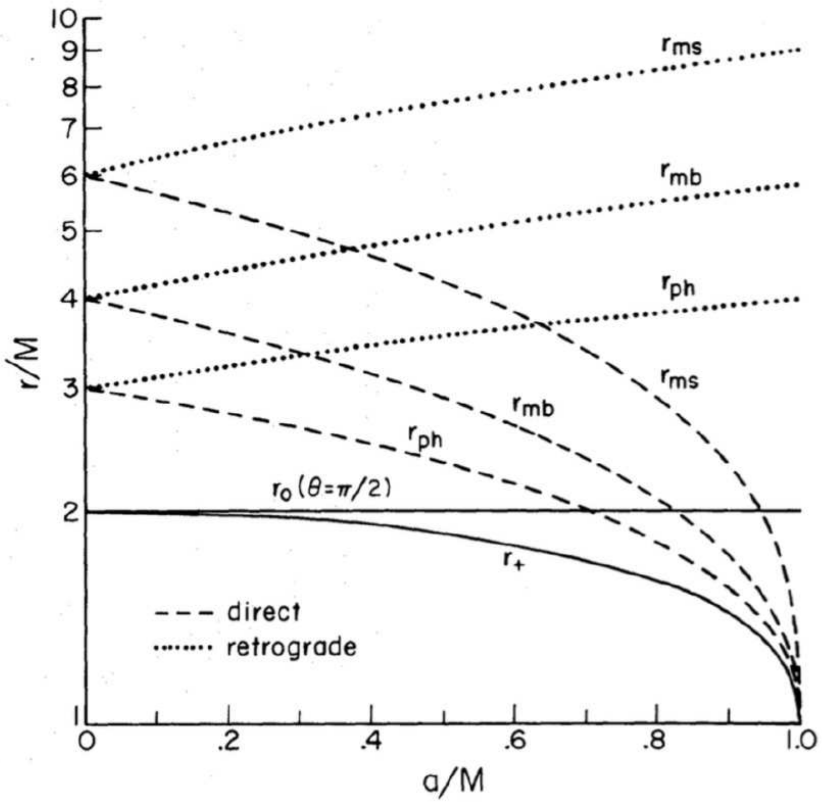


FIG. 1.—Radii of circular, equatorial orbits around a rotating black hole of mass M, as functions of the hole's specific angular momentum a. Dashed and dotted curves (for direct and retrograde orbits) plot the Boyer-Lindquist coordinate radius of the innermost stable (ms), innermost bound (mb), and photon (ph) orbits. Solid curves indicate the event horizon (r_+) and the equatorial boundary of the ergosphere (r_0).

Equatorial orbits of particles near a rotating BH ($|a/M| \leq 1$).

(Bardeen et al, ApJ, 1972)

GR relevant for BH accretion

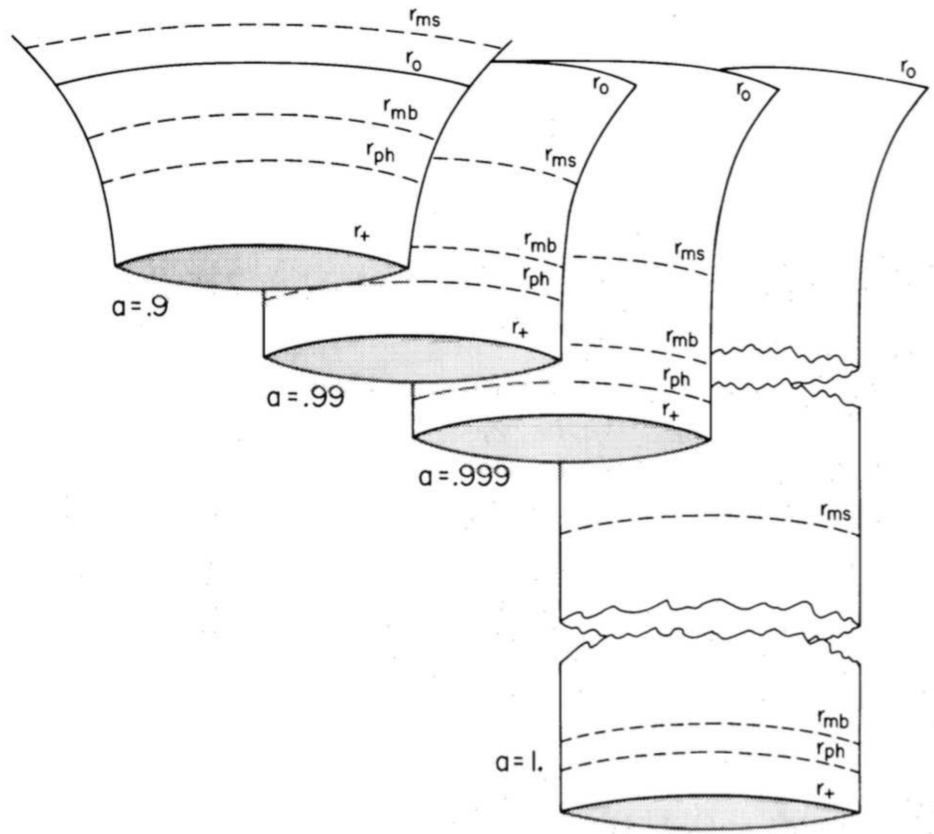
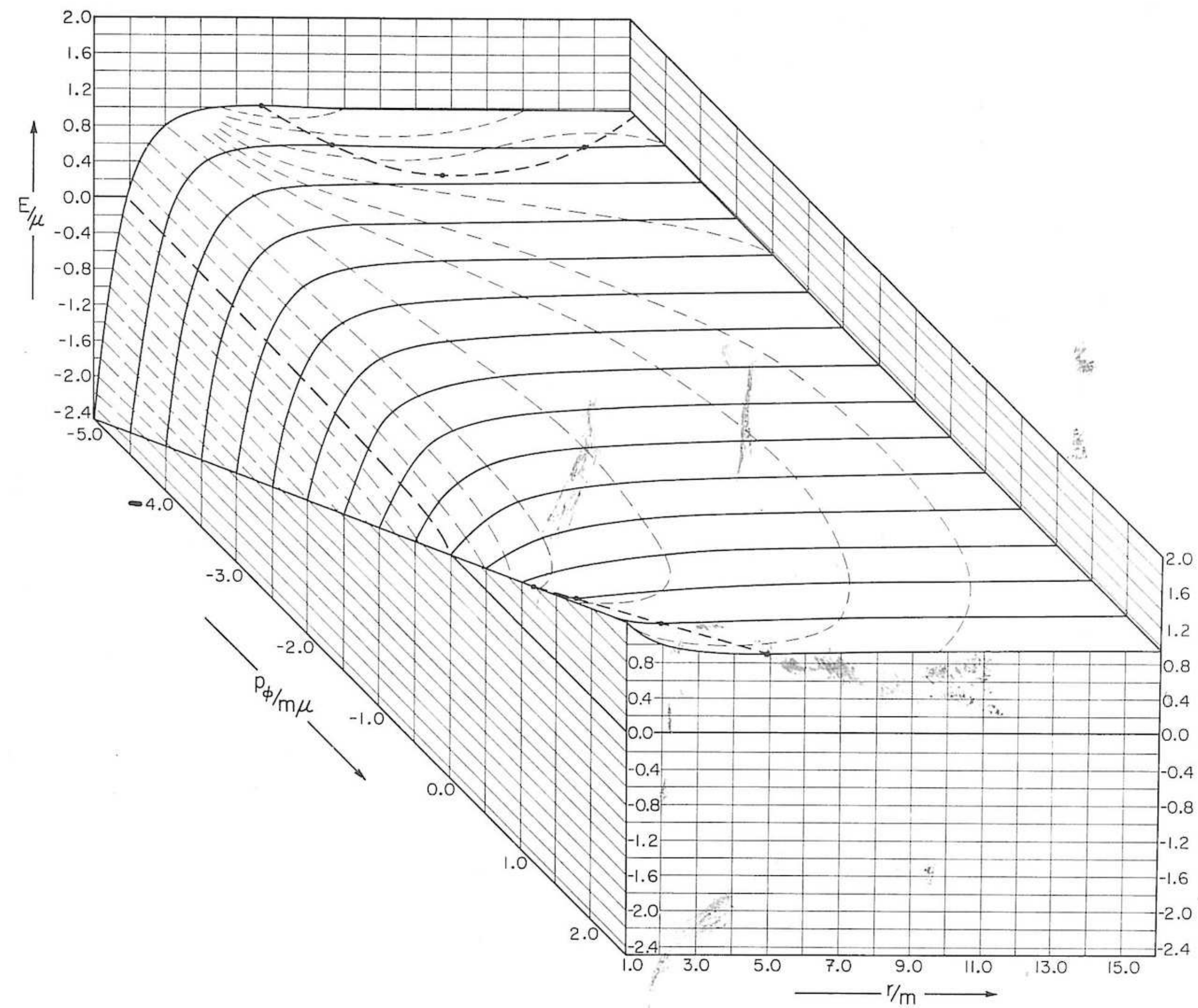


FIG. 2.—Embedding diagrams of the "plane" $\theta = \pi/2$, t = constant, for rotating black holes with near-maximum angular momentum. Here a denotes the hole's angular momentum in units of M. The Boyer-Lindquist radial coordinate r determines only the circumference of the "tube." When $a \to M$, the orbits at $r_{\rm ms}$, $r_{\rm mb}$, and $r_{\rm ph}$ all have the same circumference and coordinate radius, although—as the embedding diagram shows clearly—they are in fact distinct.

Embeddings of equatorial plane near a rotating BH ($|a/M| \leq 1$).

(Bardeen et al, ApJ, 1972)

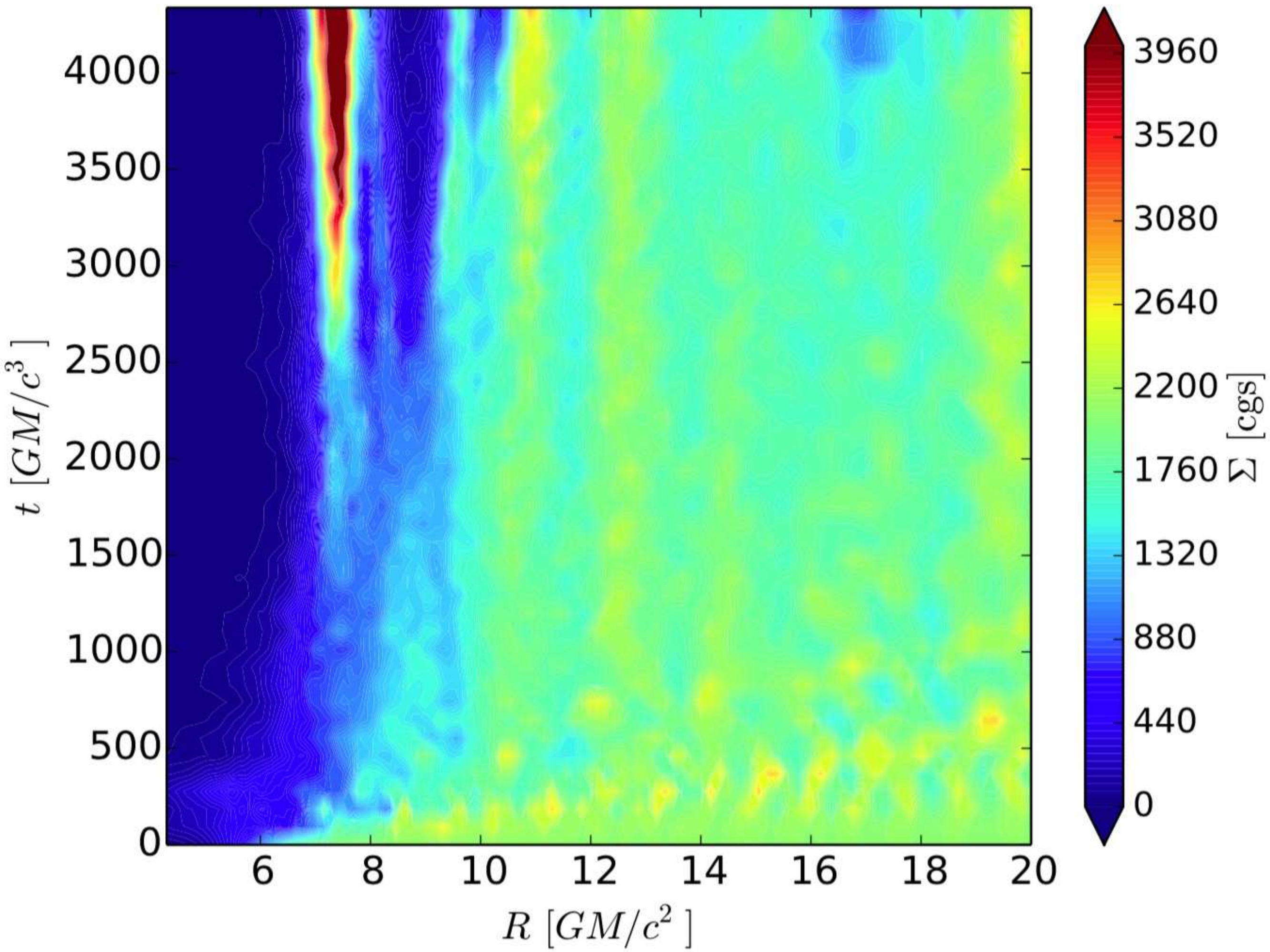
Eff. potential for test motion



Effective potential for test motion near an extreme BH ($a/M = 1$): co-rotating vs. counter-rotating orbits.

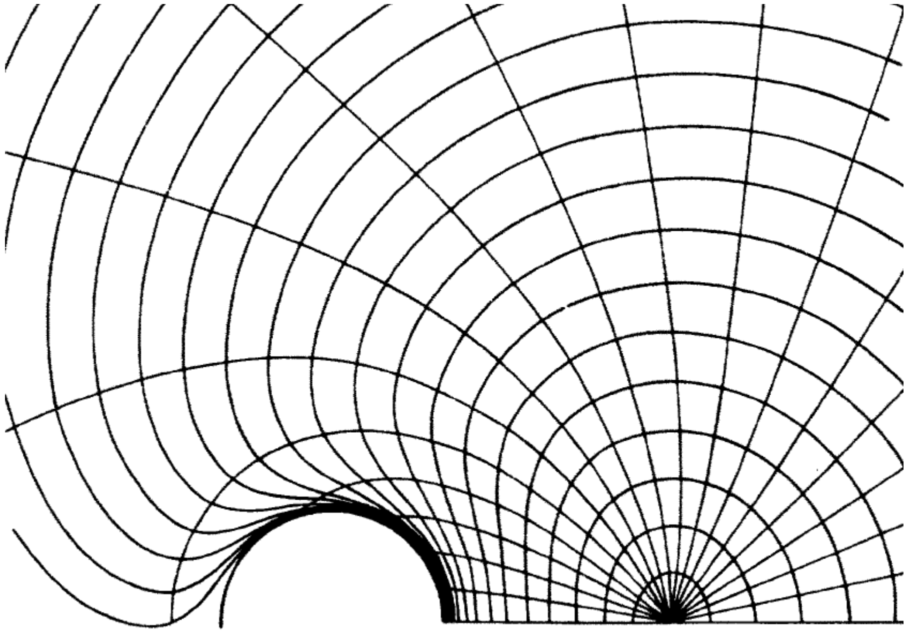
(Ruffini & Wheeler, 1970)

GR relevant for BH accretion



Three-dimensional, global, radiative GRMHD simulations of a thermally unstable disc. (B. Mishra et al, MNRAS, 2016)

Wave fronts in a BH spacetime



Assumptions and facts: elmg. radiation does not influence geometry of the BH spacetime (to first order).

Wave fronts do not depend on polarization (in geometrical optics approximation).

The analogy:
light propagation in a vacuum curved spacetime versus material media in a flat spacetime.

The effective permeability: $\mu = \sqrt{1 - 2M/r}$.

Mashoon (1973); Hanni (1977); . . .

Wave fronts in a BH spacetime

Schwarzschild metric,

$$ds^2 = -\left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right) dt^2 + \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{-1} dr^2 + r^2 d\Omega^2.$$

Eikonal equation,

$$-\left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right) (\psi_{,r})^2 + \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{-1} (\psi_{,t})^2 - r^{-2}(\psi_{,\phi})^2 = 0.$$

Solved by separation of variables, $\psi(t, r, \phi) \equiv R(r) + \alpha\phi - \omega t$,

$$\left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right) (R')^2 = \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{-1} \omega^2 - r^{-2}\alpha^2.$$

Wave front: $\boxed{\psi(t_0 + n\,\delta t, r, \phi) = \psi(t_0, r_0, 0).}$

Wave fronts in a BH spacetime

Kerr metric,

$$ds^2 = -\frac{\Delta}{\Sigma}\Big(dt - a\sin^2\theta\, d\phi\Big)^2 + \frac{\Sigma}{\Delta}\, dr^2 + \Sigma\, d\theta^2$$

$$+\frac{\sin^2\theta}{\Sigma}\Big[a\, dt - (r^2 + a^2)\, d\phi\Big]^2.$$

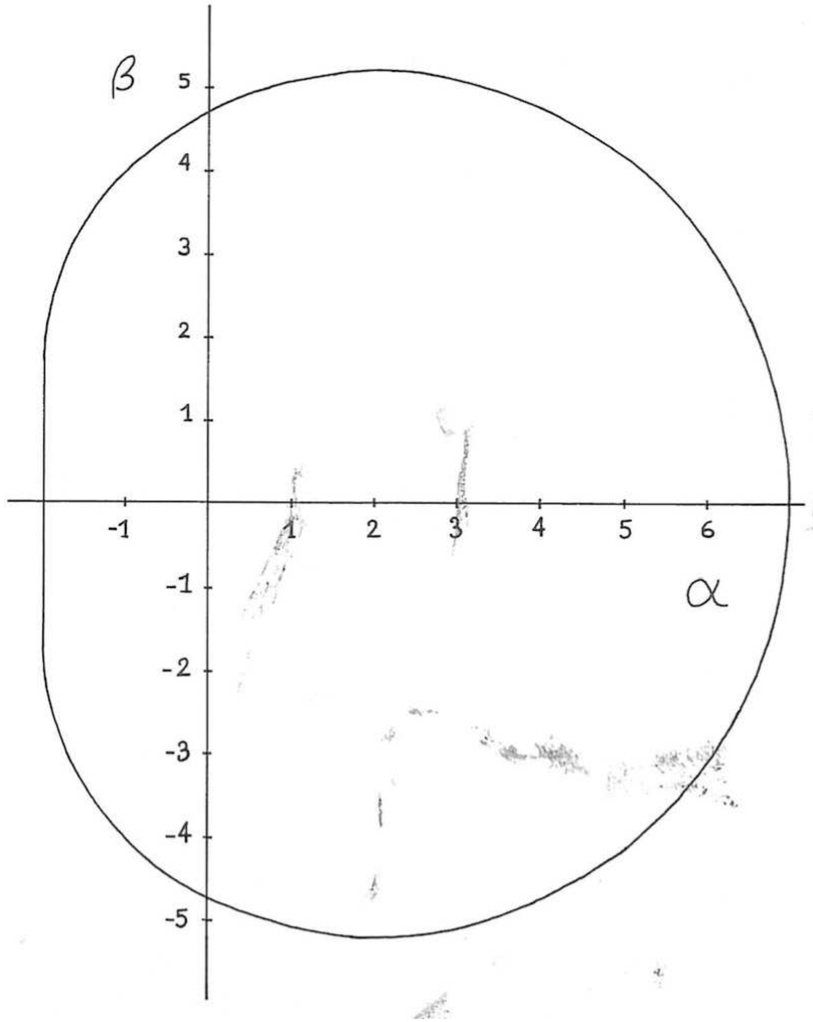
The separation of variables and solution for the eikonal equation follow from Carter's solution of the scalar wave equation,

$$\psi = R(r) + T(\theta) + \alpha\phi - \omega t.$$

Notice: direct vs. retrograde spin.

Wave fronts exhibit the **frame dragging effect.**

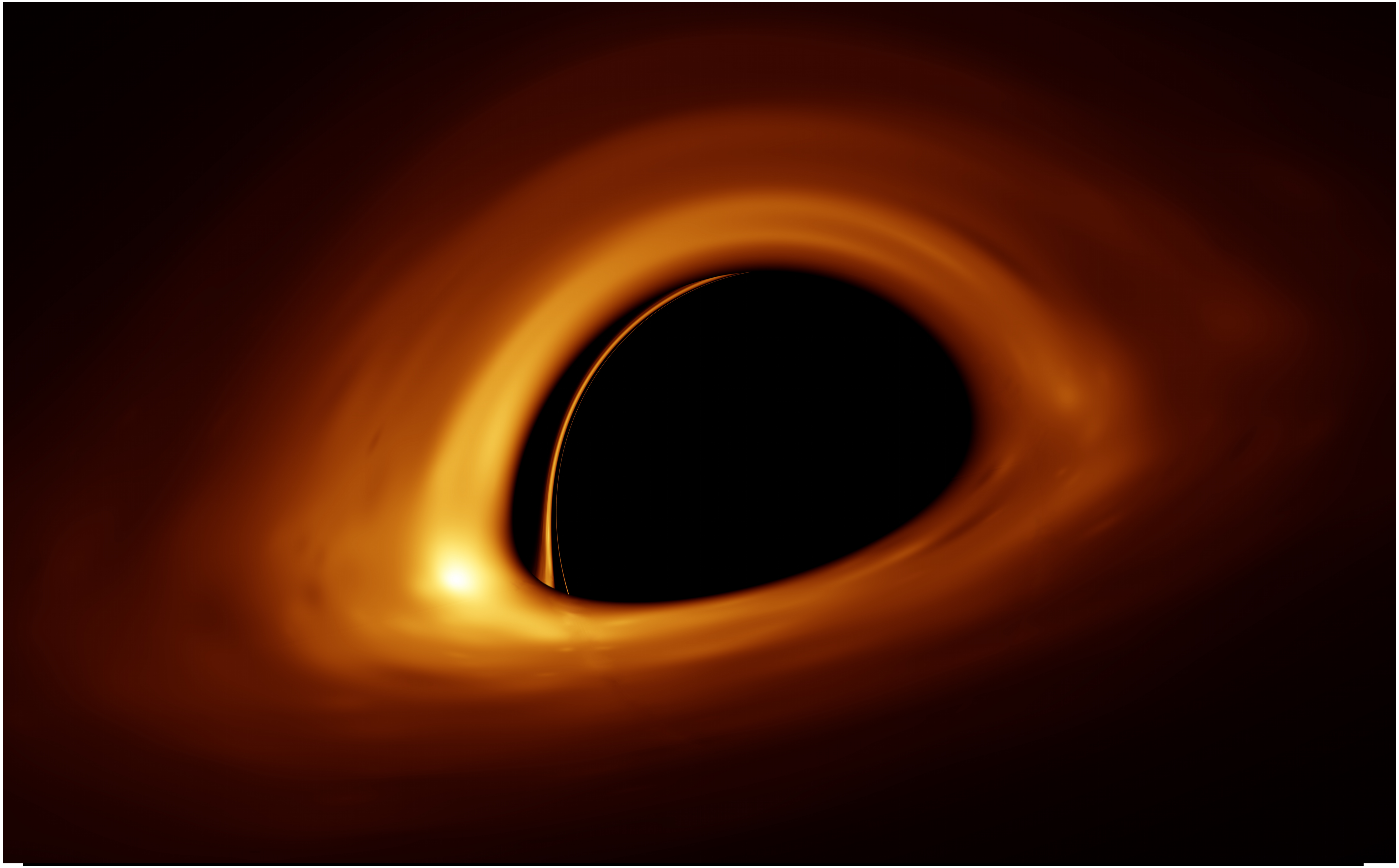
BH shadow and light circle



Apparent shape of an illuminated extreme Kerr BH.

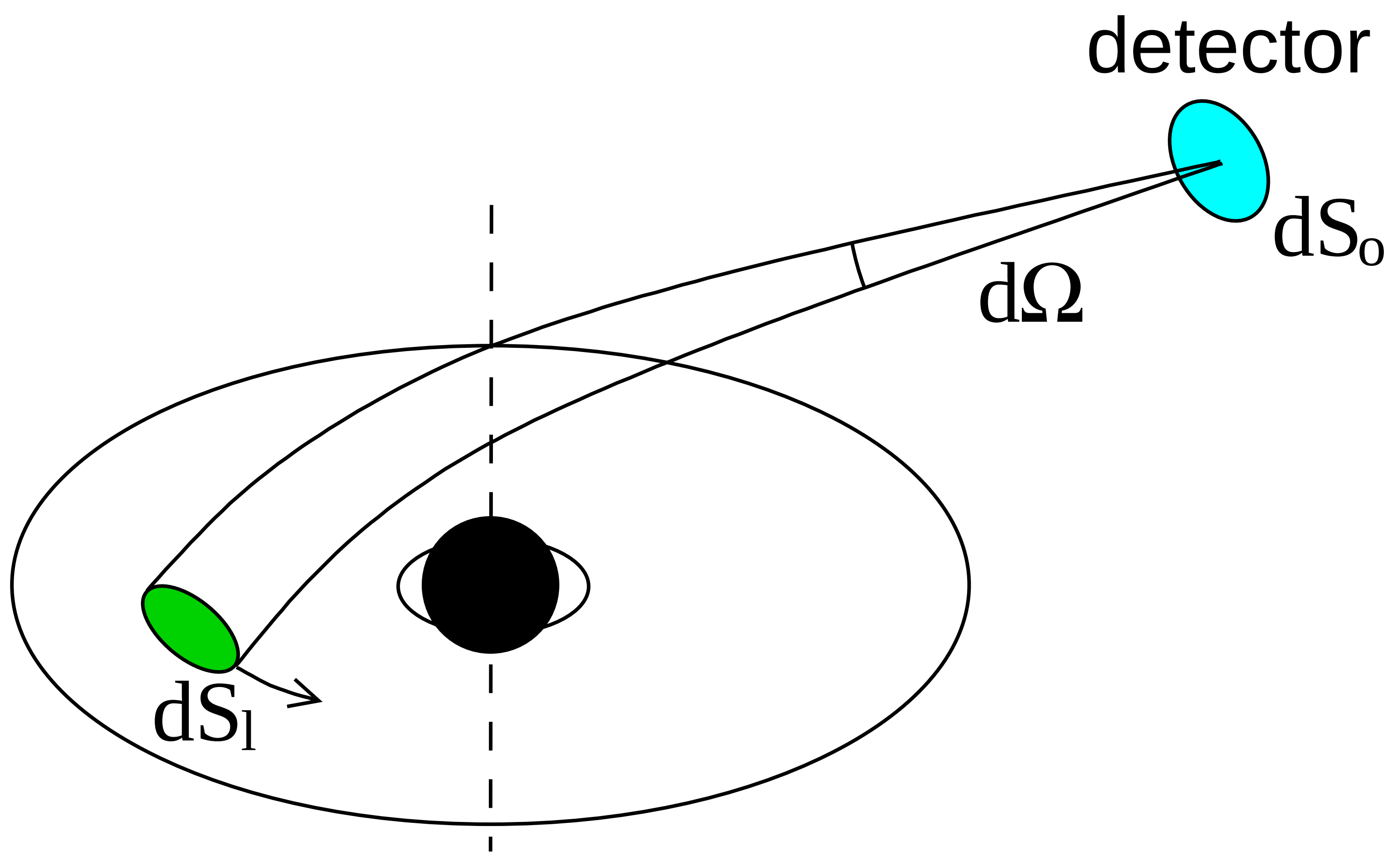
(Bardeen, 1972)

BH shadow and light circle

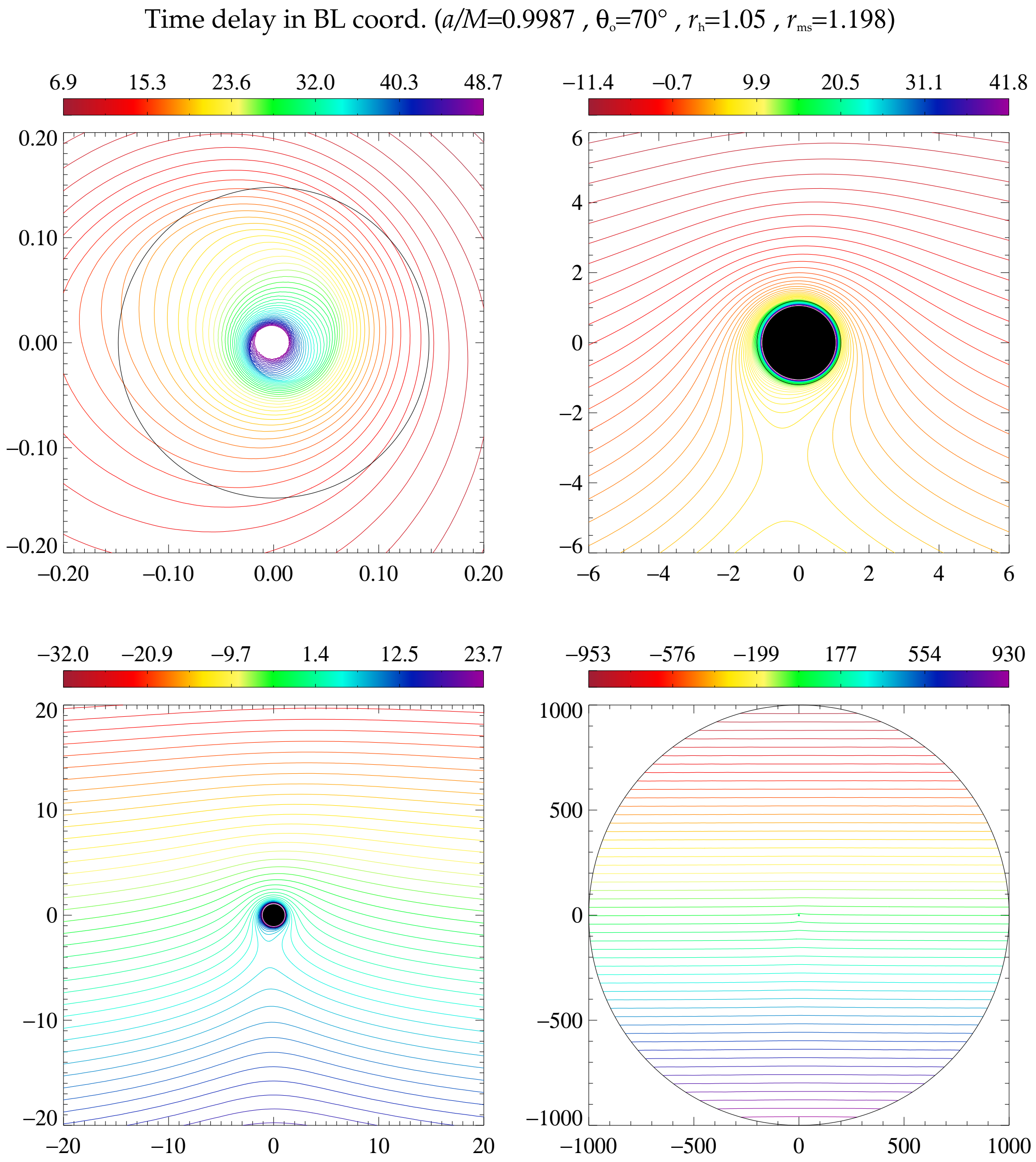


(Bursa et al. 2007)

Light-travel time effect

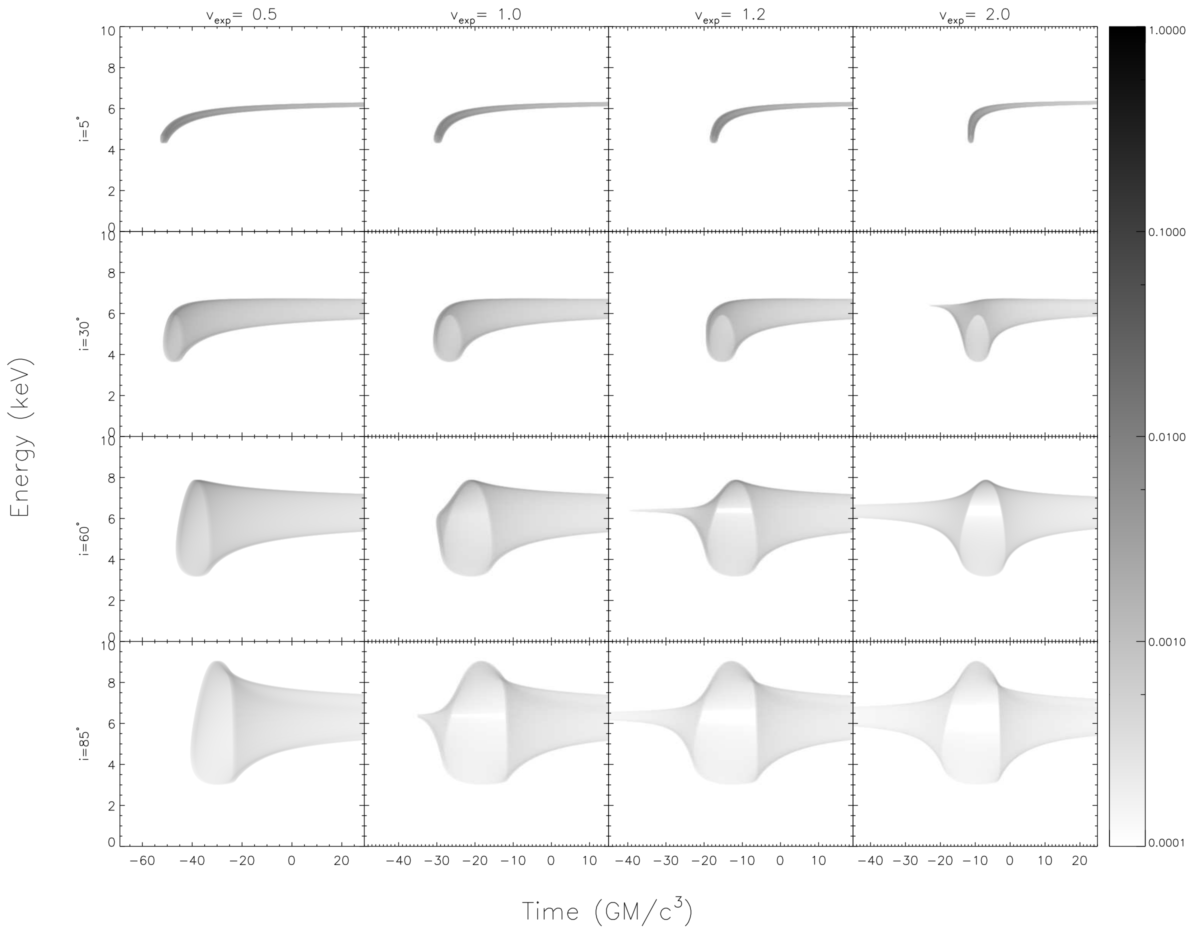


Light-travel time effect



Dovčiak et al, 2014

Reverberation from TDEs

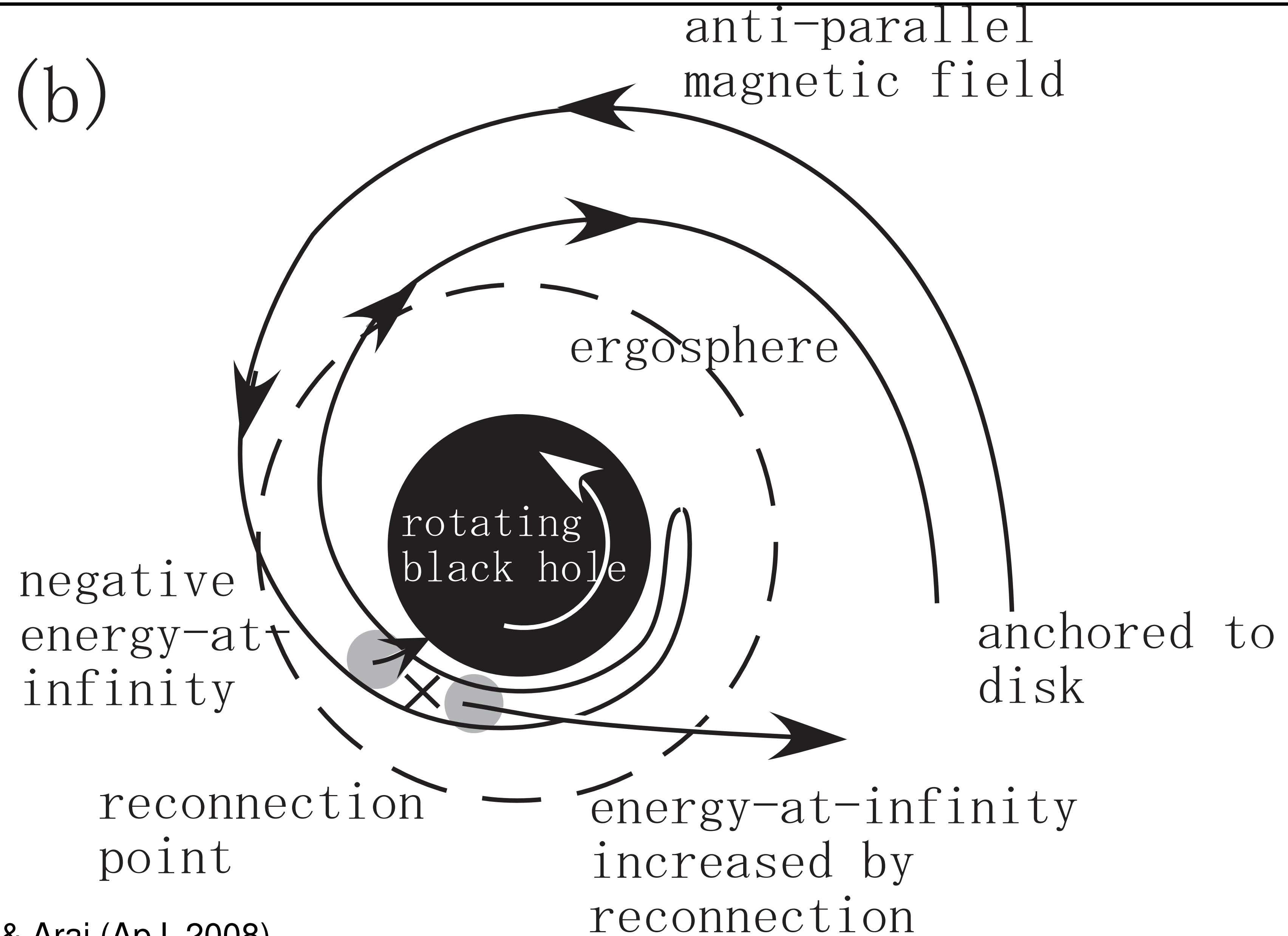


Zhang et al (2015), ApJ

Prospects for future: reverberation signatures on remnants from tidal disruptions.

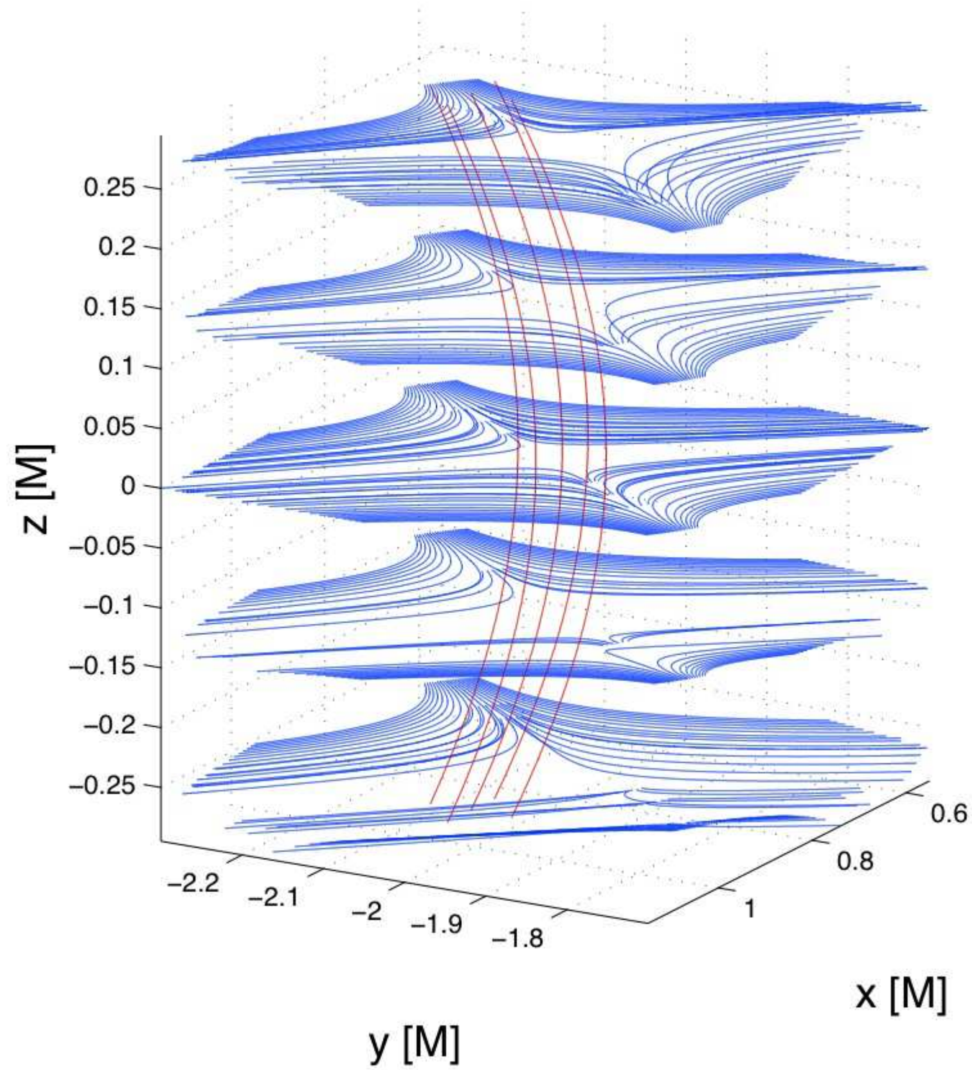
(Karas et al, Proc. RAGtime 2014; Kara et al, Nature 2016)

Reconnection in ergosphere?



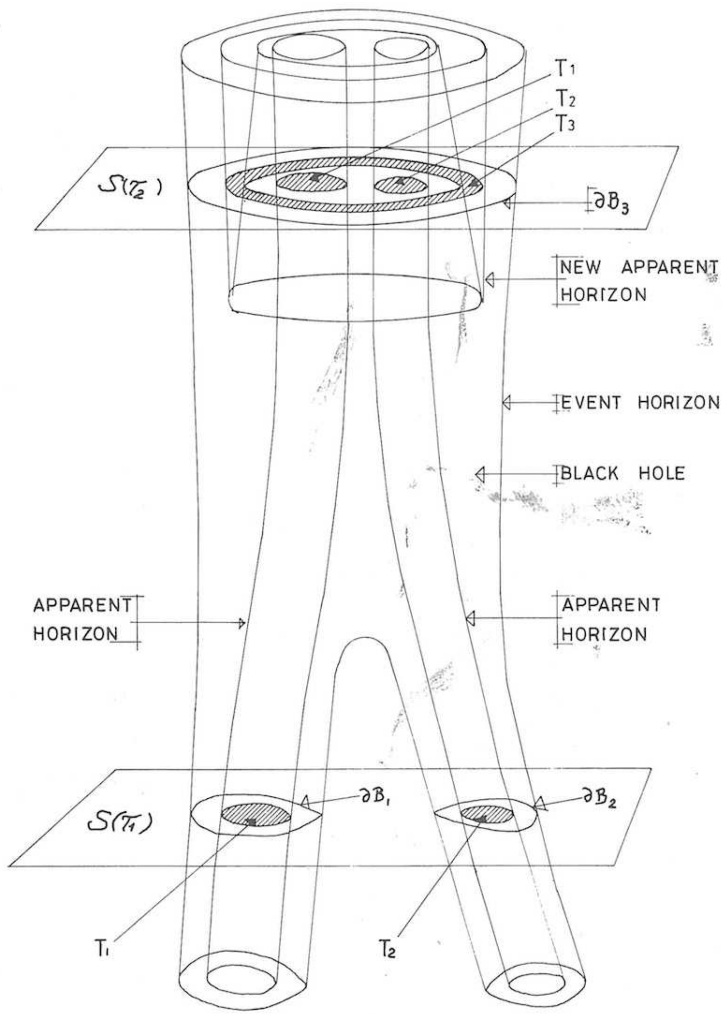
Koide & Arai (ApJ, 2008)

Reconnection in ergosphere?



Karas, Kopáček & Kunneriath (CQG, 2012)

Binary BHs



(Hawking, 1972)

Growth of horizon by BH mergers. Ratio of TDEs/gas accretion.
See further lectures at this meeting!

Thank you!

Discussion slides

Prague Relativistic Astrophysics

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Annual meetings of Prague Relativistic Astrophysics Group

2023 (Hüben, Ötztal, Austria, 22–29 July 2023)
2021 (Taxenbach, Austria, 14–21 July 2021)
2020 (Höf, St. Michael/Lungau, Austria, 25 July–01 August 2020)
2018 (Mittersill, Austria, 23–30 June 2018)
2016 (Bramberg am Wildkogel, Austria, 11–18 June 2016)
2014 (Mandling, Austria, 19–26 July 2014)
2012 (Heiligenblut, Austria, 11–18 August 2012)
2011 (Ginzling, Austria, 6–13 August 2011)
2010 (Gargellen, Austria, 14–21 August 2010)
2009 (Leogang, Austria, 14–21 June 2009)
2008 (Fügen, Austria, 23–30 August 2008)

Texas Symposium on Relativistic Astrophysics

Since 1978, the Texas Symposium has the tradition of moving around the globe and taking place at various cities. In December 2021,