

N-BODY DYNAMICS LEADING TO GW SOURCES

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with

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Georgios Loukes-Gerakopoulos, Vladimír Karas and others. . .

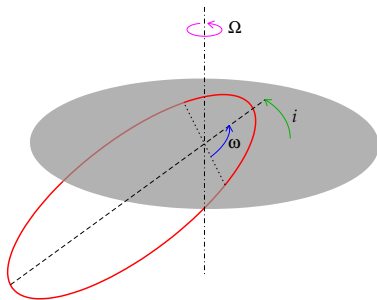
AI&GW@CZ, November 28, 2025

N -body dynamics and gravitational waves

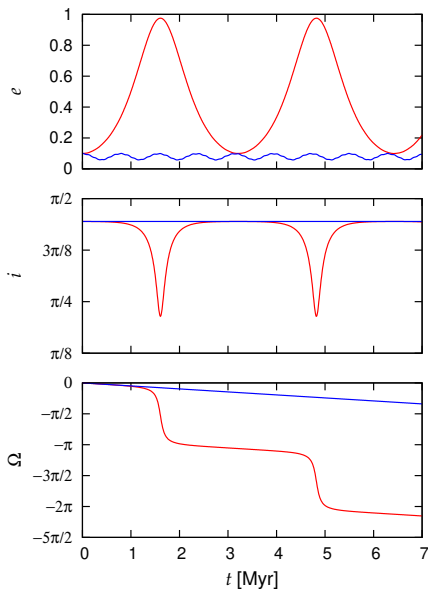
Various points of view:

- physics - GR vs. Newtonian dynamics
- GW signal - information about processes in N -body environments
- influence of N -body system on individual inspirals (signal)
- influence of GR/GW on evolution of N -body systems
- tools

Kozai-Lidov oscillations



- shape of the orbit: a, e
- orientation of its plane: i, Ω
- orientation within the plane: ω
- position on the orbit: ν

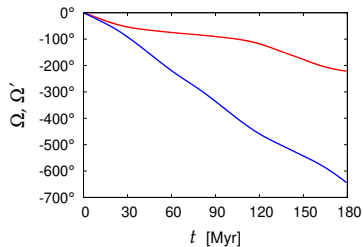
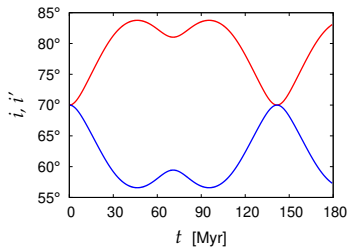
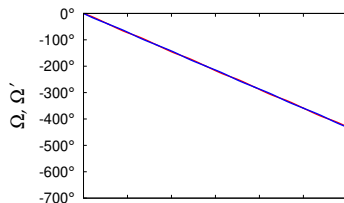
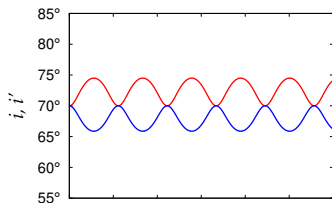


Kozai-Lidov oscillations

- already the PN1 correction leads to damping of K-L oscillations
- extreme eccentricities / extremely small pericentre passages still possible, yet with smaller rates in comparison to pure Newtonian dynamics (e.g., Karas & Šubr 2007)
- pattern of K-L cycles not likely to be detectable in the final inspiral / GW signal
- at some moment, K-L cycles may accelerate shrinkage of compact body orbits, i.e., effectively increase rates of inspirals
- K-L oscillations also suggested as solution to the 'final parsec' problem, i.e., being a driver towards SMBH-SMBH coalescence

VHS – specific setup of 4-body dynamics

(Haas, Šubr & Vokrouhlický, 2011)



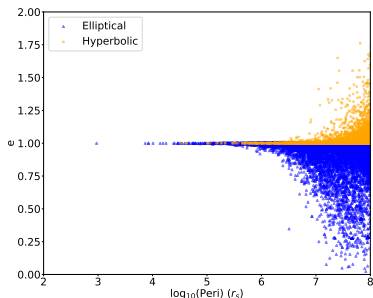
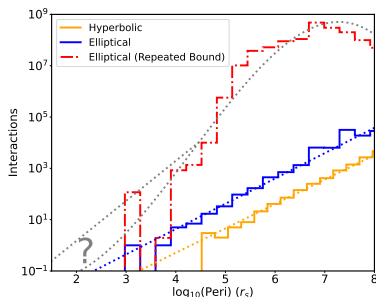
Close encounters of compact stellar remnants

Mukherjee, Mitra, Chatterjee, 2021, MNRAS, 508: “Gravitational wave observatories may be able to detect hyperbolic encounters of black holes”

Singhal & Šubr: N -body modeling seem to be necessary to get realistic estimates of rates and properties of close encounters

Close encounters of compact stellar remnants

- 600 integrations of self-gravitating star cluster
- 20 000 stars, including 37 black holes and 219 neutron stars
- $\approx 10^{-14}$ of hyperbolic and $\approx 10^{-11}$ of elliptic encounters with pericentre within $3\text{--}10 R_{\text{Schw}}$ per cluster per year



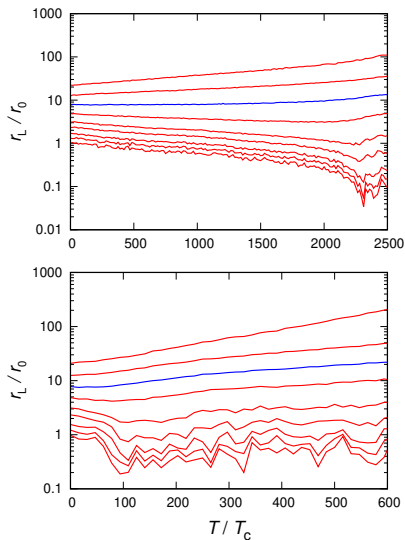
Collapse of relativistic clusters

Kroupa, Šubr, Jeřábková & Wang, 2020, MNRAS, 498:
“Very high redshift quasars and the rapid emergence of
supermassive black holes”

- assume a hyper-massive ($M_c \sim 10^8 M_\odot$) star cluster
- zero metallicity + high density \rightarrow top-heavy mass function
- rapid stellar evolution \rightarrow cluster of stellar mass black holes
- if gravitational radiation surpasses binary heating \rightarrow cluster collapses, forming a SMBH seed

Collapse of relativistic clusters

- self-gravitating systems tend to core collapse
- binary heating prevents the “gravothermal catastrophe”
- gravothermal oscillations and slow decay through three-body interactions



Collapse of relativistic clusters

a bit of formulae:

$$\text{hard/soft binary boundary: } a_{h/s} \approx \frac{GM_{\text{BH}}}{\sigma^2}$$

$$\text{binary-single collision rate: } t_{\text{coll}} \approx \frac{\sigma}{8\pi G \rho_{\text{BH}} a}$$

$$\text{GW decay time-scale: } t_{\text{GW}} \approx \frac{a^4 c^5}{128 G^3 M_{\text{BH}}^3}$$

$$t_{\text{coll}} > t_{\text{GW}} \Rightarrow \sigma^{11} > \sigma_{\text{crit}}^{11} \approx \frac{1}{4} \rho_{\text{BH}} G^3 M_{\text{BH}}^2 c^5$$

$$\begin{aligned} t_{\text{relax}} &\approx 0.01 \frac{\sigma^3}{G^2 M_{\text{BH}} \rho_{\text{BH}}} \\ &\approx 100 \left(\frac{M_{\text{BH}}}{10 M_{\odot}} \right)^{-5/11} \left(\frac{\rho_{\text{BH}}}{10^8 M_{\odot} / \text{pc}^{-3}} \right)^{-8/11} \text{ Myr} \end{aligned}$$

Summary

- K-L oscillations not so effective in strong gravity, but still may contribute to inspiral rates and perhaps influence their initial properties
- ‘VHS’ - 4-body dynamics may lead to ‘coherent’ or ‘assisted’ inspirals
- rates of close encounters of compact stellar remnants in star clusters are maybe much smaller than expected by Mukherjee et al., but more effort from N -body modellers is needed to make robust conclusions; motivation from the GW community will be welcome
- formation of SMBHs through collapse of relativistic BH clusters – a lot of work may be done on our side, but insight from GW community would be beneficial at the current stage of the model already