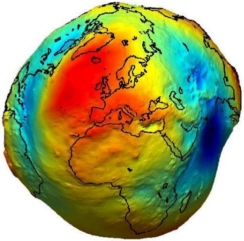
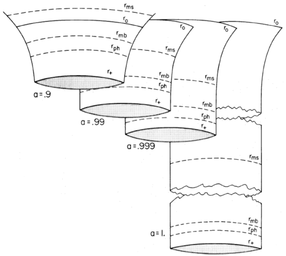
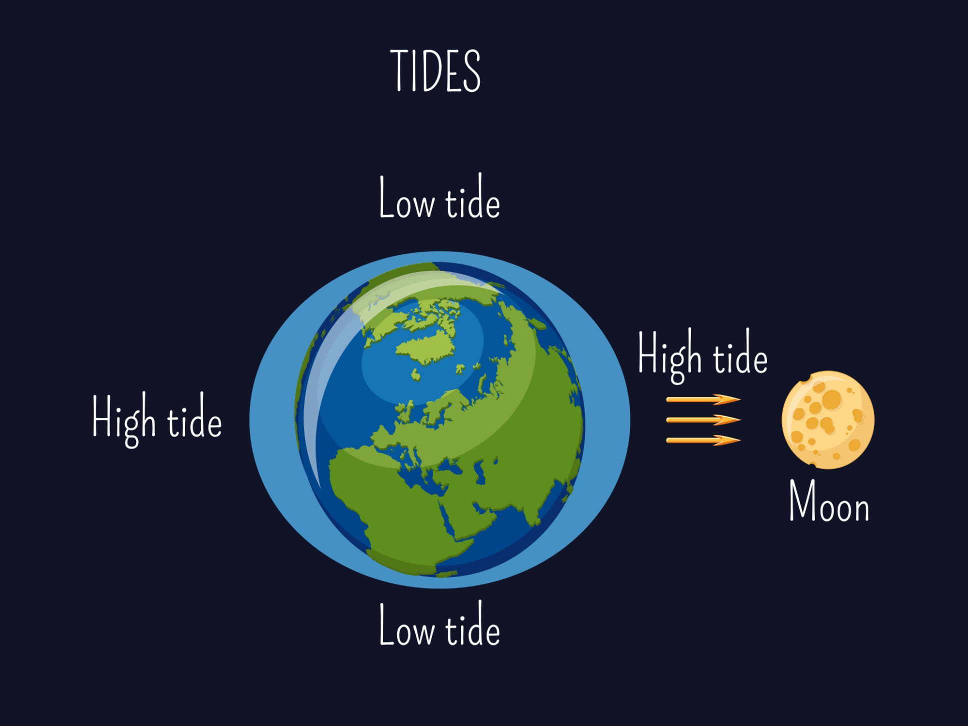
Tidal deformations of black holes

Alexandre Le Tiec

LUX, Observatoire de Paris | CNRS
Instituto de Física Teórica | UNESP

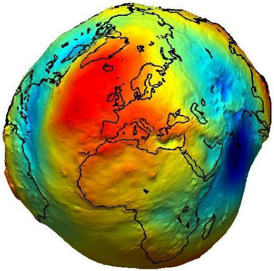





TIDES
Low tide
High tide
High tide
Moon
Low tide

Do isolated black holes have hair?

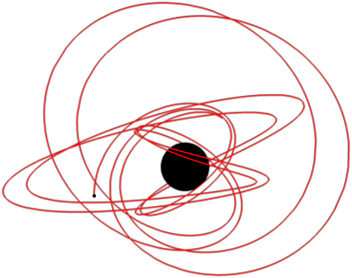
Geodesy



M_{lm} arbitrary

rich internal structure

Black holes



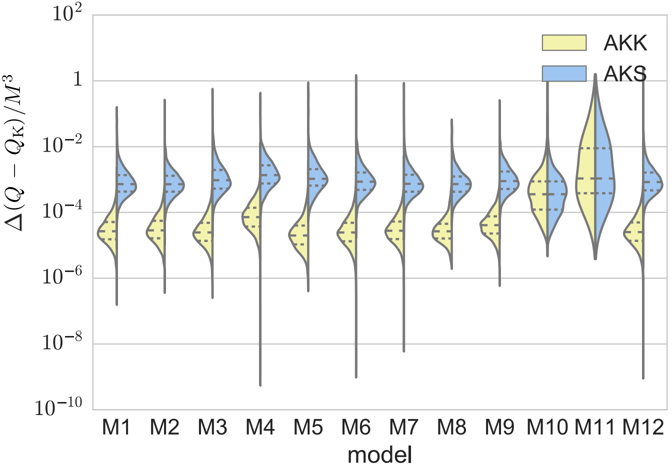
$$M_{l0} + \mathrm{i}S_{l0} = M(\mathrm{i}a)^l$$

completely fixed by (M, a)

Objective: measure the *multipolar structure* of astrophysical BHs

LISA constraints from EMRIs

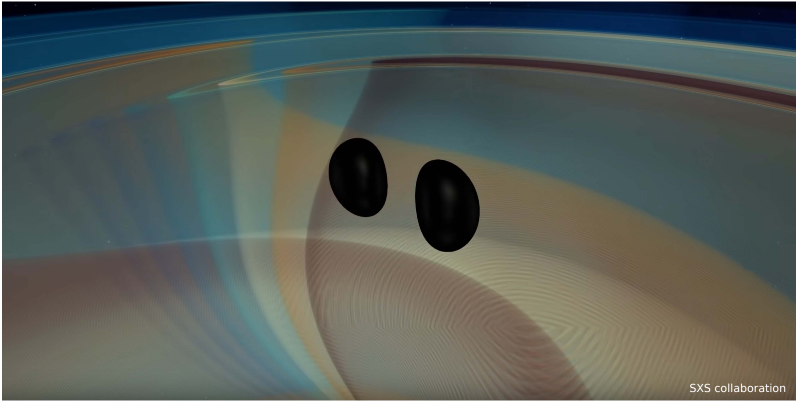
Waveform $\rightarrow$ measure (M_{lm}, S_{lm}) $\rightarrow$ test $Z_l = (i\chi)^l$



[Babak, Gair, Sesana *et al.*, PRD **95** (2017) 103012]

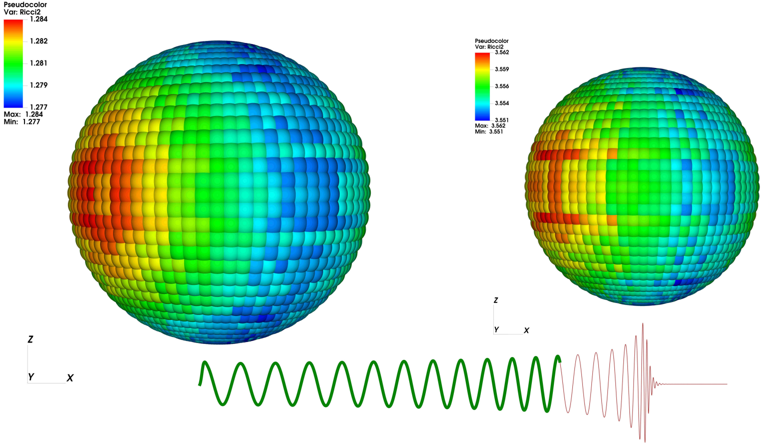
Do tidally-interacting black holes deform?

Isolated BH: **no hair** $\longrightarrow$ Binary BH: **do they respond?**



Objective: measure the *dynamical response* of astrophysical BHs

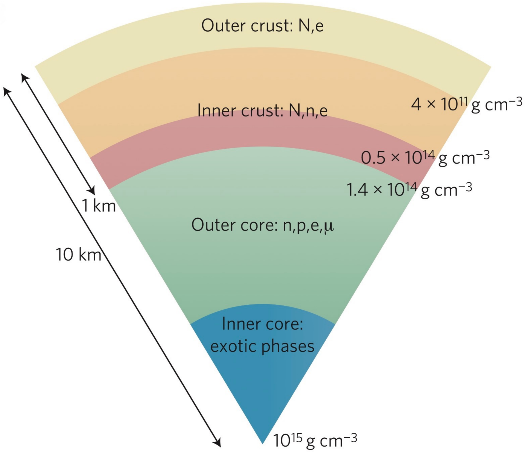
Black hole tomography by GW observations



Waveform $\rightarrow$ measure (I_{lm}, L_{lm}) $\rightarrow$ shape Love numbers

[Prasad, PRD **109** (2024) 044033 | Ribes Metidieri *et al.*, PRD **111** (2025) 104075]

What is the internal structure of a NS?

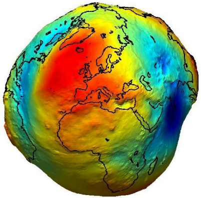


GW observations as probes of **neutron star equation of state**

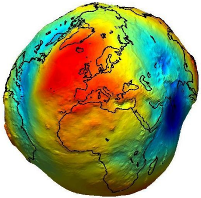
Field multipoles in Newtonian gravity

- Gravitational field:

$$U(\boldsymbol{x}) = \int_{\mathbb{R}^3} \frac{\rho(\boldsymbol{x}')}{|\boldsymbol{x} - \boldsymbol{x}'|} \, \mathrm{d}^3\boldsymbol{x}'$$



Field multipoles in Newtonian gravity



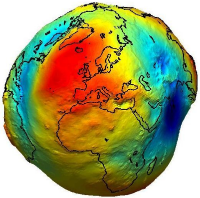
- Gravitational field:

$$U(\boldsymbol{x}) = \int_{\mathbb{R}^3} \frac{\rho(\boldsymbol{x}')}{|\boldsymbol{x} - \boldsymbol{x}'|} \, \mathrm{d}^3\boldsymbol{x}'$$

- Multipole expansion:

$$U(r, \theta, \phi) = \sum_{l \geqslant 0} \sum_{|m| \leqslant l} \frac{4\pi}{2l+1} \frac{M_{lm}}{r^{l+1}} Y_{lm}(\theta, \phi)$$

Field multipoles in Newtonian gravity



- Gravitational field:

$$U(\boldsymbol{x}) = \int_{\mathbb{R}^3} \frac{\rho(\boldsymbol{x}')}{|\boldsymbol{x} - \boldsymbol{x}'|} \, \mathrm{d}^3\boldsymbol{x}'$$

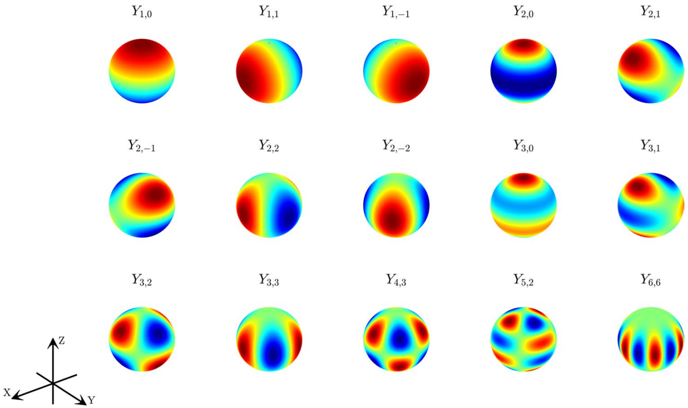
- Multipole expansion:

$$U(r,\theta,\phi) = \sum_{l\geqslant 0} \sum_{|m|\leqslant l} \frac{4\pi}{2l+1} \frac{M_{lm}}{r^{l+1}} Y_{lm}(\theta,\phi)$$

- Multipole moments:

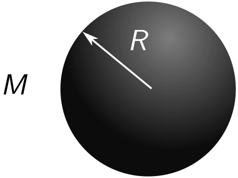
$$M_{lm} = \int_{\mathbb{R}^3} \rho(\boldsymbol{x}) \, r^l \, Y^*_{lm} \, \mathrm{d}^3\boldsymbol{x}$$

Field multipoles in Newtonian gravity



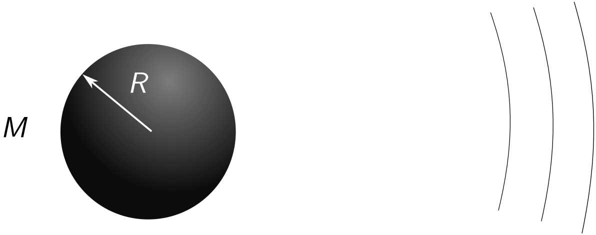
Angular structure encoded into spherical harmonics $Y_{lm}(\theta, \phi)$

Newtonian theory of *field* Love numbers



$$U = \frac{M}{r}$$

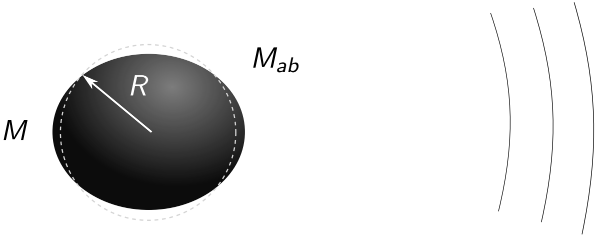
Newtonian theory of *field* Love numbers



$$\mathcal{E}_{ab} = -\partial_{\langle a}\partial_{b\rangle} U_{\text{ext}}(\mathbf{0})$$

$$U = \frac{M}{r} - \frac{1}{2} x^a x^b \mathcal{E}_{ab}$$

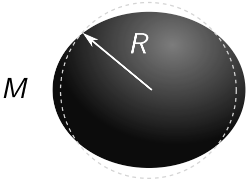
Newtonian theory of *field* Love numbers



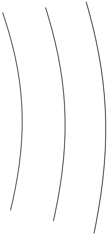
$$\mathcal{E}_{ab} = -\partial_{\langle a}\partial_{b\rangle} U_{\rm ext}(\mathbf{0})$$

$$U = \frac{M}{r} - \frac{1}{2}x^a x^b \mathcal{E}_{ab} + \frac{3}{2}\frac{x^a x^b}{r^5} M_{ab}$$

Newtonian theory of *field* Love numbers



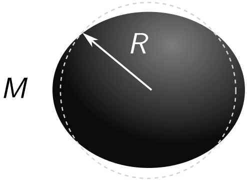
$$M_{ab} = \lambda_2 \mathcal{E}_{ab}$$



$$\mathcal{E}_{ab} = -\partial_{\langle a}\partial_{b\rangle} U_{\text{ext}}(\mathbf{0})$$

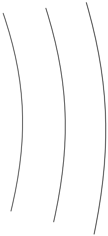
$$U = \frac{M}{r} - \frac{1}{2} x^a x^b \mathcal{E}_{ab} + \frac{3}{2} \frac{x^a x^b}{r^5} M_{ab}$$

Newtonian theory of *field* Love numbers



$$\mathcal{E}_{ab} = -\partial_{\langle a}\partial_{b\rangle} U_{\rm ext}(\mathbf{0})$$

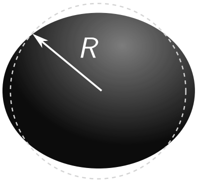
$$\begin{aligned} M_{ab} &= \lambda_2 \mathcal{E}_{ab} \\ &= -\tfrac{2}{3} {\color{red}k_2} R^5 \mathcal{E}_{ab} \end{aligned}$$



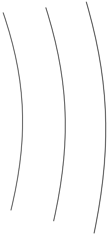
$$U = \frac{M}{r} - \frac{1}{2} x^a x^b \mathcal{E}_{ab} + \frac{3}{2} \frac{x^a x^b}{r^5} M_{ab}$$

Newtonian theory of *field* Love numbers

M



$$M_{ab} = \lambda_2 \mathcal{E}_{ab} = -\frac{2}{3} k_2 R^5 \mathcal{E}_{ab}$$

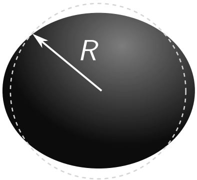


$$\mathcal{E}_{ab} = -\partial_{\langle a}\partial_{b\rangle} U_{\rm ext}(\mathbf{0})$$

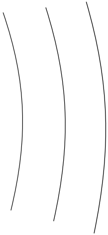
$$U = \frac{M}{r} - \frac{1}{2} x^a x^b \mathcal{E}_{ab} \left[1 + 2 k_2 \left(\frac{R}{r} \right)^5 \right]$$

Newtonian theory of *field* Love numbers

M



$$M_{ab} = \lambda_2 \mathcal{E}_{ab} = -\frac{2}{3} k_2 R^5 \mathcal{E}_{ab}$$

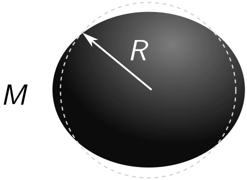


$$\mathcal{E}_{ab} = -\partial_{\langle a}\partial_{b\rangle} U_{\text{ext}}(\mathbf{0})$$

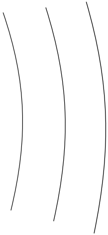
$$U = \frac{M}{r} - \sum_{l \geqslant 2} \frac{(l-2)!}{l!} x^L \mathcal{E}_L \left[1 + 2k_l \left(\frac{R}{r}\right)^{2l+1}\right]$$

Tidal Love numbers k_l encode the body's **internal structure**

Newtonian theory of *field* Love numbers



$$M_{ab} = \lambda_2 \mathcal{E}_{ab}$$
$$= -\frac{2}{3} k_2 R^5 \mathcal{E}_{ab}$$

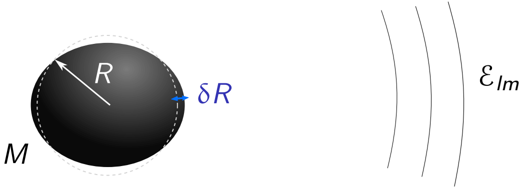


$$\mathcal{E}_{ab} = -\partial_{\langle a} \partial_{b\rangle} U_{\text{ext}}(\mathbf{0})$$

$$U = \frac{M}{r} - \sum_{l \geqslant 2} \sum_{|m| \leqslant l} \frac{(l-2)!}{l!} r^l \mathcal{E}_{lm} \left[1 + 2 k_l \left(\frac{R}{r} \right)^{2l+1} \right] Y_{lm}$$

Tidal Love numbers k_l encode the body's **internal structure**

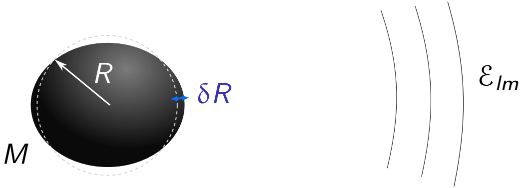
Newtonian theory of *shape* Love numbers



- The perturbation δR of the body's equilibrium **surface radius** $r = R$ is used to define the shape Love numbers h_l as:

$$\delta R(t, \theta, \phi) = -\sum_{lm} \frac{h_l}{l(l-1)} \frac{R^{l+2}}{M} \mathcal{E}_{lm}(t)\, Y_{lm}(\theta, \phi)$$

Newtonian theory of *shape* Love numbers



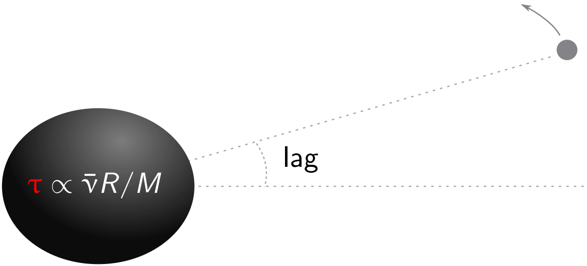
- The perturbation δR of the body's equilibrium **surface radius** $r = R$ is used to define the shape Love numbers h_l as:

$$\delta R(t, \theta, \phi) = -\sum_{lm} \frac{h_l}{l(l-1)} \frac{R^{l+2}}{M} \mathcal{E}_{lm}(t)\, Y_{lm}(\theta, \phi)$$

- The equilibrium surface radius is an **equipotential** for a fluid body, implying

$$h_l = 1 + 2k_l$$

Tidal dissipation: lag, heating and torquing



$$M_{ab}(t) = -\frac{2}{3} k_2 R^5 \left[\mathcal{E}_{ab}(t) - \tau \dot{\mathcal{E}}_{ab}(t) + \cdots \right]$$
$$= -\frac{2}{3} k_2 R^5 \left[\mathcal{E}_{ab}(t - \tau) + \cdots \right]$$

Relativistic theory of field Love numbers

- **Tidal** vs **response** decomposition:

$$g_{\alpha\beta} = \bar{g}_{\alpha\beta} + \underbrace{h^{\text{tidal}}_{\alpha\beta}}_{\sim r^{l}} + \underbrace{h^{\text{resp}}_{\alpha\beta}}_{\sim r^{-(l+1)}}$$

[Binnington & Poisson, PRD **80** (2009) 084018 | Damour & Nagar, PRD **80** (2009) 084035]

Relativistic theory of field Love numbers

- **Tidal** vs **response** decomposition:

$$g_{\alpha\beta} = \bar{g}_{\alpha\beta} + \underbrace{h^{\text{tidal}}_{\alpha\beta}}_{\sim r^l} + \underbrace{h^{\text{resp}}_{\alpha\beta}}_{\sim r^{-(l+1)}}$$

- Response induces shift in **field multipoles**:

$$\delta M_{lm} = \lambda_l^{\text{elec}}\, \mathcal{E}_{lm} \qquad \text{and} \qquad \delta S_{lm} = \lambda_l^{\text{mag}}\, \mathcal{B}_{lm}$$

[Binnington & Poisson, PRD **80** (2009) 084018 | Damour & Nagar, PRD **80** (2009) 084035]

Relativistic theory of field Love numbers

- **Tidal** vs **response** decomposition:

$$g_{\alpha\beta} = \bar{g}_{\alpha\beta} + \underbrace{h^{\text{tidal}}_{\alpha\beta}}_{\sim r^l} + \underbrace{h^{\text{resp}}_{\alpha\beta}}_{\sim r^{-(l+1)}}$$

- Response induces shift in **field multipoles**:

$$\delta M_{lm} = \lambda_l^{\text{elec}}\, \mathcal{E}_{lm} \qquad \text{and} \qquad \delta S_{lm} = \lambda_l^{\text{mag}}\, \mathcal{B}_{lm}$$

- *Nonspinning* BHs have **vanishing** static Love numbers

[Binnington & Poisson, PRD **80** (2009) 084018 | Damour & Nagar, PRD **80** (2009) 084035]

Relativistic theory of field Love numbers

- **Tidal** vs **response** decomposition:

$$g_{\alpha\beta} = \bar{g}_{\alpha\beta} + \underbrace{h^{\text{tidal}}_{\alpha\beta}}_{\sim r^l} + \underbrace{h^{\text{resp}}_{\alpha\beta}}_{\sim r^{-(l+1)}}$$

- Response induces shift in **field multipoles**:

$$\delta M_{lm} = \lambda_l^{\text{elec}}\, \mathcal{E}_{lm} \qquad \text{and} \qquad \delta S_{lm} = \lambda_l^{\text{mag}}\, \mathcal{B}_{lm}$$

- *Nonspinning* BHs have **vanishing** static Love numbers
- Effects of **spin**:
  - coupling between multipoles & m-dependence
  - mixing between electric and magnetic sectors

$\hookrightarrow$ **anisotropic** and **mode-coupled** response

[Binnington & Poisson, PRD **80** (2009) 084018 | Damour & Nagar, PRD **80** (2009) 084035]

Field Love numbers of a Kerr black hole

- Love numbers computed to **linear order** in spin $\chi \equiv S/M^2$

[Le Tiec & Casals, PRL **126** (2021) 131102 | Le Tiec, Casals & Franzin, PRD **103** (2021) 084021]

Field Love numbers of a Kerr black hole

- Love numbers computed to **linear order** in spin $\chi \equiv S/M^2$
- The modes of the mass/current **quadrupole moments** are

$$\delta M_{2m} \doteq \frac{im\chi}{180}\,(2M)^5\,\mathcal{E}_{2m} \quad \text{and} \quad \delta S_{2m} \doteq \frac{im\chi}{180}\,(2M)^5\,\mathcal{B}_{2m}$$

[Le Tiec & Casals, PRL **126** (2021) 131102 | Le Tiec, Casals & Franzin, PRD **103** (2021) 084021]

Field Love numbers of a Kerr black hole

- Love numbers computed to **linear order** in spin $\chi \equiv S/M^2$
- The modes of the mass/current **quadrupole moments** are

$$\delta M_{2m} \doteq \frac{im\chi}{180}\,(2M)^5\,\mathcal{E}_{2m} \quad \text{and} \quad \delta S_{2m} \doteq \frac{im\chi}{180}\,(2M)^5\,\mathcal{B}_{2m}$$

- The associated **tidal Love numbers** are

$$\boxed{k_{2m}^{M\mathcal{E}} = k_{2m}^{S\mathcal{B}} \doteq -\frac{im\chi}{120}} \quad \text{and} \quad \boxed{k_{2m}^{M\mathcal{B}} = k_{2m}^{S\mathcal{E}} \doteq 0}$$

[Le Tiec & Casals, PRL **126** (2021) 131102 | Le Tiec, Casals & Franzin, PRD **103** (2021) 084021]

Field Love numbers of a Kerr black hole

- Love numbers computed to **linear order** in spin $\chi \equiv S/M^2$
- The modes of the mass/current **quadrupole moments** are

$$\delta M_{2m} \doteq \frac{im\chi}{180} (2M)^5 \, \mathcal{E}_{2m} \quad \text{and} \quad \delta S_{2m} \doteq \frac{im\chi}{180} (2M)^5 \, \mathcal{B}_{2m}$$

- The associated **tidal Love numbers** are

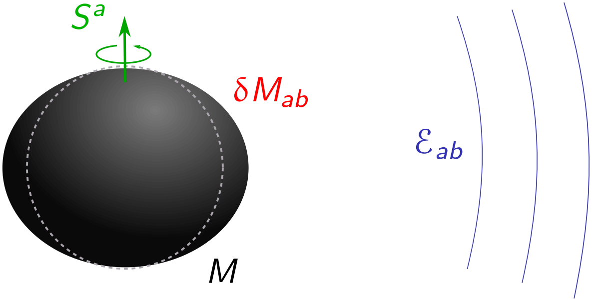
$$\boxed{k_{2m}^{M\mathcal{E}} = k_{2m}^{S\mathcal{B}} \doteq -\frac{im\chi}{120}} \quad \text{and} \quad \boxed{k_{2m}^{M\mathcal{B}} = k_{2m}^{S\mathcal{E}} \doteq 0}$$

- For a black hole spin $\chi = 0.1$ this gives

$$|k_{2,\pm 2}| \sim 10^{-3} \quad \longrightarrow \quad \textbf{extremely small response}$$

[Le Tiec & Casals, PRL **126** (2021) 131102 | Le Tiec, Casals & Franzin, PRD **103** (2021) 084021]

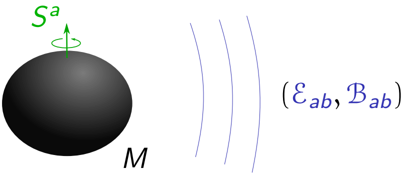
Geometric interpretation



$$\delta M_{ab} \propto M^3 \, S^c \, \mathcal{E}^d{}_{\langle a} \, \varepsilon_{b\rangle cd} \quad \longrightarrow \quad \text{tidal bulge } \textbf{rotated by } 45^\circ$$

[Le Tiec & Casals, PRL **126** (2021) 131102 | Le Tiec, Casals & Franzin, PRD **103** (2021) 084021]

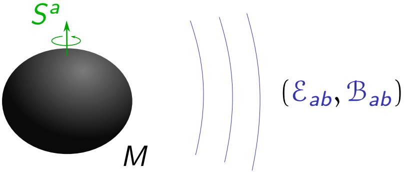
Tidal torquing



- Any spinning body interacting with a tidal environment suffers a **tidal torquing** [Thorne & Hartle, PRD 1985]

$$\langle \dot{S}^a \rangle = -\varepsilon^{abc} \langle M_{bd} \mathcal{E}^d{}_c + S_{bd} \mathcal{B}^d{}_c \rangle$$

Tidal torquing



- Any spinning body interacting with a tidal environment suffers a **tidal torquing** [Thorne & Hartle, PRD 1985]

$$\langle \dot{S}^a \rangle = -\varepsilon^{abc} \langle M_{bd} \mathcal{E}^d{}_c + S_{bd} \mathcal{B}^d{}_c \rangle$$

- Applied to a Kerr black hole this yields

$$\langle \dot{S} \rangle \propto M^3 S \left[\langle \mathcal{E}^2 \rangle + \langle \mathcal{B}^2 \rangle \right]$$

$\hookrightarrow$ **full agreement** with analysis of [Poisson, PRD 2004]

A burst of activity on BH tidal deformability

- Other **backgrounds**, generic **spin-*s*** fields and higher **dimensions**
  [Hui *et al.*, JCAP 2021; Pereñiguez & Cardoso, PRD 2022; Rodriguez *et al.*, PRD 2023; Charalambous & Ivanov, JHEP 2023; Charalambous, JHEP 2024]
- **Dissipative nature** of Kerr BH tidal deformability
  [Chia, PRD 2021; Goldberger *et al.*, JHEP 2021; Charalambous, JHEP 2021; Prasad Bhatt *et al.*, PRD 2023]
- **Hidden symmetry** and vanishing BH field Love numbers
  [Charalambous *et al.*, PRL 2021; Hui *et al.*, JCAP 2022; Charalambous *et al.*, JHEP 2022; Achour *et al.*, JHEP 2022; Hui *et al.*, JHEP 2022; Berens *et al.*, JCAP 2023; Katagiri *et al.*, PRD 2023; Rai & Santoni 2024]
- **Scattering amplitudes** and vanishing BH field Love numbers
  [Creci *et al.*, PRD 2021; Ivanov & Zhou, PRL 2023; Saketh *et al.*, PRD 2024]
- Effective Field Theory, matching and **logarithmic corrections**
  [Ivanov & Zhou, PRD 2023]
- **Nonlinearities** in the BH field Love numbers
  [De Luca *et al.*, PRD 2023; Maria Riva *et al.* 2023; Hadad *et al.* 2024; Combaluzier-Szteinsznaider *et al.* 2024; Kehagias & Riotto 2024]

A burst of activity on BH tidal deformability

Two recent **review articles**:

- *Love numbers of black holes and compact objects*
  Rodríguez, Santoni & Solomon
  arXiv:gr-qc/2604.08653

- *Tidal response of compact objects*
  Chakraborty & Pani
  arXiv:gr-qc/2604.08679

For a nonspinning compact body

- Define the shape Love numbers h_l from the perturbation $\delta\mathcal{R}$ of the **curvature radius** $\mathcal{R}$ at the body's surface as:

$$\delta\mathcal{R}(t,\theta,\phi) = -2\sum_{lm}\frac{l+2}{l}\,h_l\,\frac{R^{l-1}}{M}\,\mathcal{E}_{lm}(t)\,Y_{lm}(\theta,\phi)$$

[Damour & Lecian, PRD **80** (2009) 044017 | Landry & Poisson, PRD **89** (2014) 124011]

For a nonspinning compact body

- Define the shape Love numbers h_l from the perturbation $\delta\mathcal{R}$ of the **curvature radius** $\mathcal{R}$ at the body's surface as:

$$\delta\mathcal{R}(t,\theta,\phi) = -2\sum_{lm} \frac{l+2}{l}\, h_l\, \frac{R^{l-1}}{M}\, \mathcal{E}_{lm}(t)\, Y_{lm}(\theta,\phi)$$

- The Newtonian formula $h_l = 1 + 2k_l$ generalizes into

$$h_l = F_l(M/R) + 2G_l(M/R)\, k_l^{\rm elec}$$

[Damour & Lecian, PRD **80** (2009) 044017 | Landry & Poisson, PRD **89** (2014) 124011]

For a nonspinning compact body

- Define the shape Love numbers h_l from the perturbation $\delta\mathcal{R}$ of the **curvature radius** $\mathcal{R}$ at the body's surface as:

$$\delta\mathcal{R}(t,\theta,\phi) = -2\sum_{lm} \frac{l+2}{l}\, h_l\, \frac{R^{l-1}}{M}\, \mathcal{E}_{lm}(t)\, Y_{lm}(\theta,\phi)$$

- The Newtonian formula $h_l = 1 + 2k_l$ generalizes into

$$h_l = F_l(M/R) + 2G_l(M/R)\, k_l^{\text{elec}}$$

- In the **black hole limit** where $R \to 2M$, $k_l^{\text{elec}} = 0$ and

$$h_l = \frac{l+1}{2(l-1)} \frac{(l!)^2}{(2l)!}$$

[Damour & Lecian, PRD **80** (2009) 044017 | Landry & Poisson, PRD **89** (2014) 124011]

For a spinning black hole

Problem
The previous definition relies on the **spherical symmetry** of the background spacetime, and thus cannot be applied to Kerr BHs

[Ribes Metidieri *et al.*, PRD **110** (2024) 024069 | Le Tiec *et al.*, in preparation (2026)]

For a spinning black hole

Problem

The previous definition relies on the **spherical symmetry** of the background spacetime, and thus cannot be applied to Kerr BHs

Proposal

Define shape Love numbers from a geometric, quasi-local notion of **horizon multipole moments** I_{lm} and L_{lm}, according to

$$\delta I_{lm} = \sum_{l'm'} \left(\lambda^{I\mathcal{E}}_{lm,l'm'} \, \mathcal{E}_{l'm'} + \lambda^{I\mathcal{B}}_{lm,l'm'} \, \mathcal{B}_{l'm'} \right)$$

$$\delta L_{lm} = \sum_{l'm'} \left(\lambda^{L\mathcal{E}}_{lm,l'm'} \, \mathcal{E}_{l'm'} + \lambda^{L\mathcal{B}}_{lm,l'm'} \, \mathcal{B}_{l'm'} \right)$$

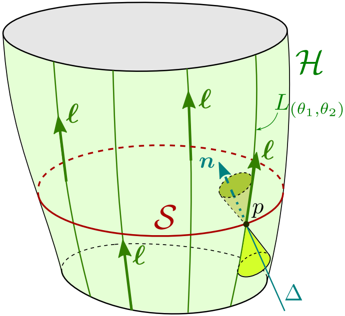
[Ribes Metidieri *et al.*, PRD **110** (2024) 024069 | Le Tiec *et al.*, in preparation (2026)]

Non-expanding horizons (NEHs)

Definition

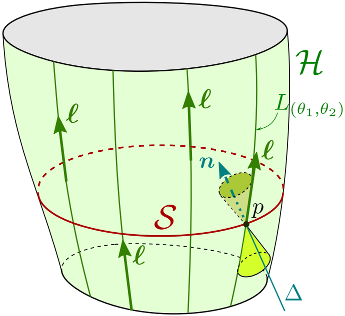
A **null hypersurface** $\mathcal{H}$ is a non-expanding horizon iif:

- $\mathcal{H} \sim \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{S}^2$
- $\forall \boldsymbol{\ell} : \theta_{(\boldsymbol{\ell})} = 0$



[Ashtekar, Fairhurst & Krishnan, PRD **62** (2000) 104025]

Non-expanding horizons (NEHs)



Definition

A **null hypersurface** $\mathcal{H}$ is a non-expanding horizon iif:

- $\mathcal{H} \sim \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{S}^2$
- $\forall \boldsymbol{\ell} : \theta_{(\boldsymbol{\ell})} = 0$

Consequences

- Raychaudhuri equation implies **vanishing shear** σ_{ab} of $\boldsymbol{\ell}$
- Induced geometry on $\mathcal{H}$ is **invariant** along $\boldsymbol{\ell}$

[Ashtekar, Fairhurst & Krishnan, PRD **62** (2000) 104025]

Multipole moments of a NEH

Definition

The **shape** and **current** multipole moments I_{lm} and L_{lm} are defined by

$$I_{lm} + \mathrm{i} L_{lm} \equiv - \oint_{\mathcal{S}} \Psi_2 \, \mathring{Y}_{lm} \, \mathrm{d}S$$

[Ashtekar *et al.*, CQG **21** (2004) 2549 | Ashtekar *et al.*, JHEP **2022** (2022) 28]

Multipole moments of a NEH

Definition

The **shape** and **current** multipole moments I_{lm} and L_{lm} are defined by

$$I_{lm} + \mathrm{i} L_{lm} \equiv -\oint_{\mathcal{S}} \Psi_2 \, \mathring{Y}_{lm} \, \mathrm{d}S$$

Properties

- The Coulomb-type curvature information is encoded into the **Weyl scalar** Ψ_2

[Ashtekar *et al.*, CQG **21** (2004) 2549 | Ashtekar *et al.*, JHEP **2022** (2022) 28]

Multipole moments of a NEH

Definition

The **shape** and **current** multipole moments I_{lm} and L_{lm} are defined by

$$I_{lm} + \mathrm{i}L_{lm} \equiv -\oint_{\mathcal{S}} \Psi_2 \, \mathring{Y}_{lm} \, \mathrm{d}S$$

Properties

- The Coulomb-type curvature information is encoded into the **Weyl scalar** Ψ_2
- The spherical harmonics $\mathring{Y}_{lm}$ are defined **geometrically** from canonical polar coordinates (ϑ, φ)

[Ashtekar *et al.*, CQG **21** (2004) 2549 | Ashtekar *et al.*, JHEP **2022** (2022) 28]

Multipole moments of a NEH

Definition

The **shape** and **current** multipole moments I_{lm} and L_{lm} are defined by

$$I_{lm} + \mathrm{i}L_{lm} \equiv -\oint_{\mathcal{S}} \Psi_2 \, \mathring{Y}_{lm} \, \mathrm{d}S$$

Properties

- The Coulomb-type curvature information is encoded into the **Weyl scalar** Ψ_2
- The spherical harmonics $\mathring{Y}_{lm}$ are defined **geometrically** from canonical polar coordinates (ϑ, φ)
- This definition is **independent** of the choice of $\mathcal{S}$

[Ashtekar *et al.*, CQG **21** (2004) 2549 | Ashtekar *et al.*, JHEP **2022** (2022) 28]

Horizon multipoles of a Kerr black hole

- Due to the **axisymmetry** of the Kerr metric, all non-zero multipoles have $m = 0$. The **reflection symmetry** accross the equatorial plane further implies

$$\forall n \in \mathbb{N}, \quad I_{2n+1,0} = 0 \quad \text{and} \quad L_{2n,0} = 0$$

[Gourgoulhon, Le Tiec & Casals, to appear in PRD (2026), gr-qc/2602.05823]

Horizon multipoles of a Kerr black hole

- Due to the **axisymmetry** of the Kerr metric, all non-zero multipoles have $m = 0$. The **reflection symmetry** accross the equatorial plane further implies

$$\forall n \in \mathbb{N}, \quad I_{2n+1,0} = 0 \quad \text{and} \quad L_{2n,0} = 0$$

- Moreover, in the regime of **small-spin** values $0 < \chi \ll 1$, the non-zero horizon multipoles behave as

$$\boxed{I_{l0} + \mathrm{i} L_{l0} \sim \alpha_l \, (\mathrm{i}\chi)^l}$$

$\hookrightarrow$ **same scaling** as normalized field multipoles $Z_l = (\mathrm{i}\chi)^l$

[Gourgoulhon, Le Tiec & Casals, to appear in PRD (2026), gr-qc/2602.05823]

Multipole moments of a *perturbed* NEH

- For a closed surface $\mathcal{S}$ embedded in spacetime, the invariant information is encoded into the **complex curvature**

$$\mathcal{K} \equiv \underset{\substack{\uparrow \\ \text{intrinsic}}}{-\tfrac{1}{4}\mathcal{R}} + \underset{\substack{\uparrow \\ \text{extrinsic}}}{\mathrm{i}\mathcal{X}} \overset{\mathcal{S}}{=} \Psi_2 + \rho\rho' - \sigma\sigma'$$

[Le Tiec, Gourgoulhon & Casals, in preparation (2026)]

Multipole moments of a *perturbed* NEH

- For a closed surface $\mathcal{S}$ embedded in spacetime, the invariant information is encoded into the **complex curvature**

$$\mathcal{K} \equiv -\underset{\substack{\uparrow \\ \text{intrinsic}}}{\tfrac{1}{4}\mathcal{R}} + \underset{\substack{\uparrow \\ \text{extrinsic}}}{\mathrm{i}\mathcal{X}} \overset{\mathcal{S}}{=} \Psi_2 + \rho\rho' - \sigma\sigma'$$

- Accordingly, the **shape** and **current** multipole moments I_{lm} and L_{lm} of $\mathcal{S}$ are defined by

$$I_{lm} + \mathrm{i}L_{lm} \equiv -\oint_{\mathcal{S}} \mathcal{K}\, \mathring{Y}_{lm}\, \mathrm{d}S$$

[Le Tiec, Gourgoulhon & Casals, in preparation (2026)]

Multipole moments of a *perturbed* NEH

- For a closed surface $\mathcal{S}$ embedded in spacetime, the invariant information is encoded into the **complex curvature**

$$\mathcal{K} \equiv -\underset{\substack{\uparrow \\ \text{intrinsic}}}{\tfrac{1}{4}\mathcal{R}} + \mathrm{i}\underset{\substack{\uparrow \\ \text{extrinsic}}}{\mathcal{X}} \overset{\mathcal{S}}{=} \Psi_2 + \rho\rho' - \sigma\sigma'$$

- Accordingly, the **shape** and **current** multipole moments I_{lm} and L_{lm} of $\mathcal{S}$ are defined by

$$I_{lm} + \mathrm{i}L_{lm} \equiv -\oint_{\mathcal{S}} \mathcal{K}\, \mathring{Y}_{lm}\, \mathrm{d}S$$

- The linear perturbations δI_{lm} and δL_{lm} are **gauge invariant** $\hookrightarrow$ geometrical definition of black hole shape Love numbers

[Le Tiec, Gourgoulhon & Casals, in preparation (2026)]

Take-home messages

1. Black hole *field* Love numbers **do not vanish** in general
2. Kerr black holes have a **purely dissipative** (no conservative) tidal response
3. Horizon multipoles provide a **geometric characterization** of black hole *shape* Love numbers
4. Gravitational-wave observations enable **precision tests** of:
   - the no-hair theorem (stationary geometry)
   - tidal deformability (dynamical response)

From geometry to observable signatures