

Ongoing work in RSN4 on Gravitational Wave sources

Giulia Stratta (INAF-OAS)

Giornate RSN4 Napoli 28-30 gennaio 2026

RSN4 activity on gravitational wave sources

This talk is heavily based on the information gained in the shared doc where members of RSN4 were free to add their activity in the GW astronomy field:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wfbcnv6uKBEQlrAtcTpbatuFn-9frcOuGIXAnju9RjA/edit?tab=t.0>

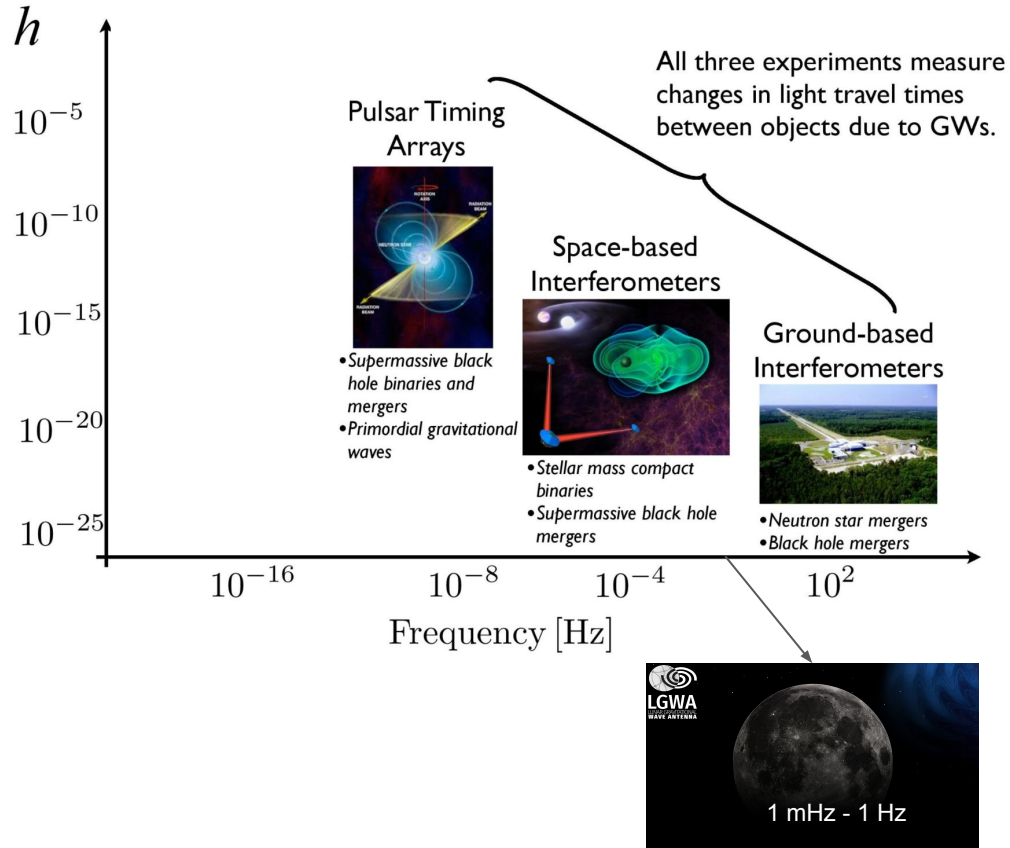
(thank you!)

>50 people in RSN4 is working on GW -> >30% of RSN4

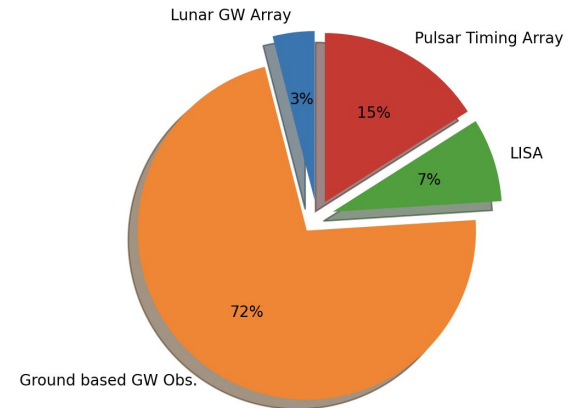
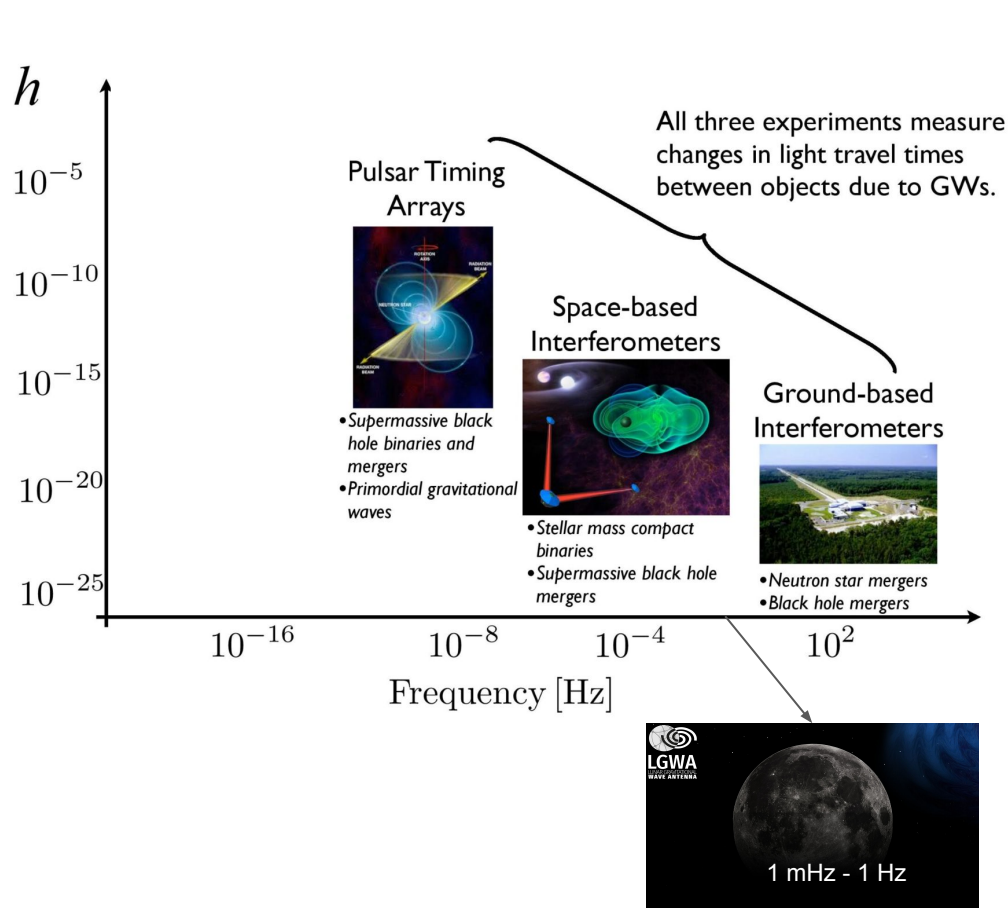
Nome e cognome	email	Istituto	Breve descrizione dell'attività di ricerca in corso	link utili	Altro
Andrea Pizzetti	andrea.pizzetti@unifi.it	OA Cagliari	PFA science at 360°, including multi-messenger for SBBH binaries		n-EPTA and IPTA context
Caterina Tiberti	caterina.tiberti@unifi.it	OA Brescia	PFA science at 360°, including multi-messenger for SBBH binaries. Modeling of noise caused by the ionized interstellar medium and Solar wind. Studies of plasma effects using pulsar data taken at low radio frequencies with the European radio-telescope LOFAR and HFRFAR. 2 PhD students on PTAs: Francesco Inaci (University of Cagliari) and Danilo Zecca (University of Salerno) 1 postdoc on low-frequency pulsar data: Mark Brame		n-EPTA and IPTA context
Dolores Perotti	dolores.perotti@unifi.it	OA Cagliari	PFA science at 360°, including multi-messenger for SBBH binaries. Cosmological backgrounds of GW. Contributions to ET Blue Book CDD Ch 5 (synergies between GW detectors): cosmological backgrounds from PTAs to ground-based detectors. GW searches with PTAs in alternative theories of gravity. 2 postdocs (Large Grant INFN 2023 "Gravitational wave detection using Pulsar Timing Arrays"): Paolo Soudier & Jyoti Desai 1 postdoc (AstroCatal) funded by PRIN MLUR 2022 "Gravity tests in the Ultraviolet and the Infrared with Pulsar Timing"		n-EPTA and IPTA context, ET collaboration
Maria Burgey	maria.burgey@unifi.it	OA Cagliari	PFA science at 360°, including multi-messenger for SBBH binaries		n-EPTA and IPTA context
On Sharan Satala	on.satala@unifi.it	OA Brescia	Modeling and interpretation of the multi-messenger emission of binary neutron star and black hole - neutron star mergers, at both the single event and the population level, for the realistic purpose of enabling the extraction of information from the available data (in short light or in wide range of open windows in frequency, including the equality of state of matter beyond the nuclear saturation density, the origin of heavy elements, the central engine of relativistic jets, the separation history of the Universe, the mass of the graviton, ...) and to guide the development of observing strategies and of new instruments		
Alessandro De Rosa	alessandro.derosa@unifi.it	INFN	Joint AGN and binary SBBH in MW and MM with LISA		n-LISA context (there will be a WG)
Cristiana Spingola	cristiana.spingola@unifi.it	IFA Bologna	Search and characterization of strongly lensed binary SBBHs at high-z as precursors of LISA sources		n-LISA context
Matteo Bachetti	Matteo.Bachetti@unifi.it	OA Cagliari	Population studies for super-Eddington sources as GW progenitors, contribution to ET Blue Book		ET
Antonio Stamerra (with other INFN members)	antonio.stamerra@unifi.it	OA Roma	Perspectives for joint detection of gamma-ray counterparts, specifically from Cherenkov telescopes (MAGIC, ASPIRE, LST, CTAO). Computation of joint probabilities and constraints on physical parameters during the dispersive emission. Optimization of observing strategies.		ET
GRANATA		ONAF, OAS, IFA, OAT, OAT, OAT	Follow-up of GW triggers with the main INFN facilities: VLT Survey Telescope, Large Binocular Telescope, Telescopio Nazionale Galileo, Rapid	https://grawita.onaf.it/grawita/	LVK

shared document with RSN4 activity on GW

The spectrum of gravitational wave astronomy

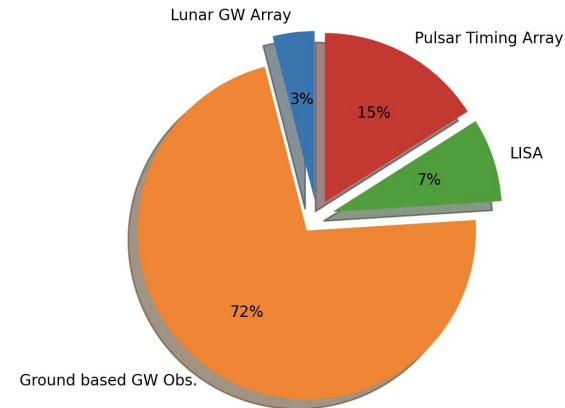
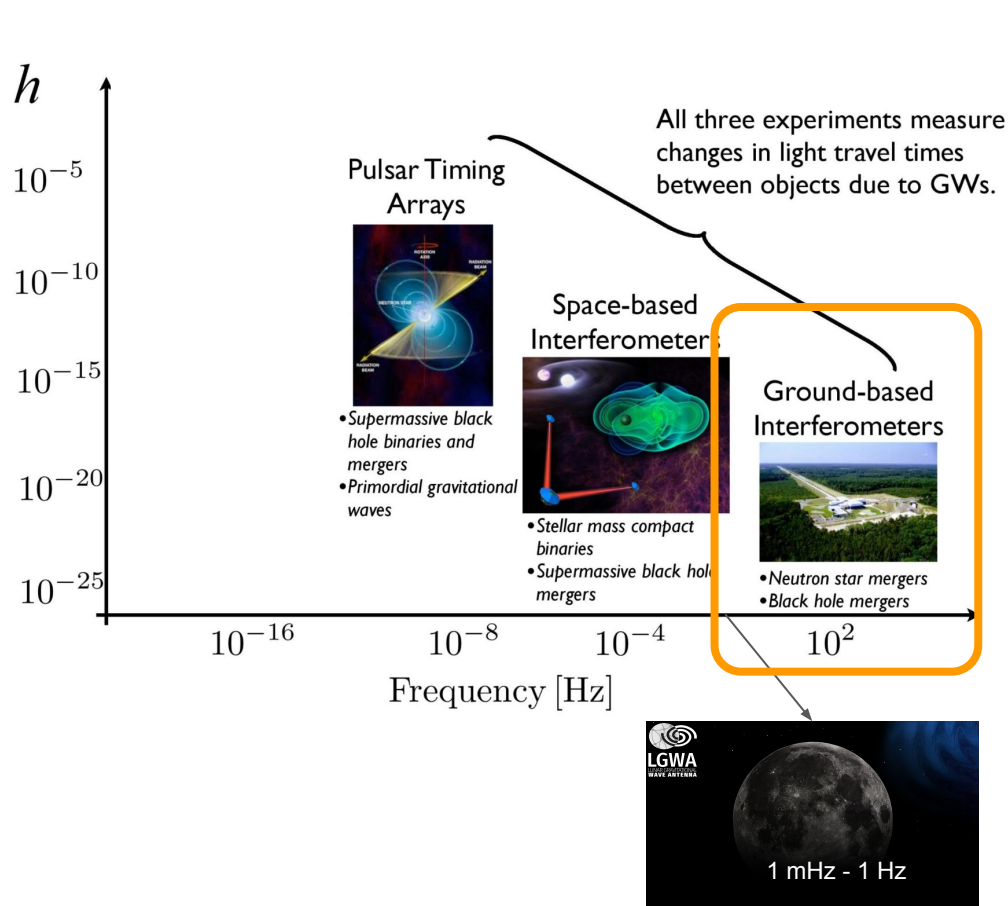


The spectrum of gravitational wave astronomy



RSN4 activities with different types of GW sources

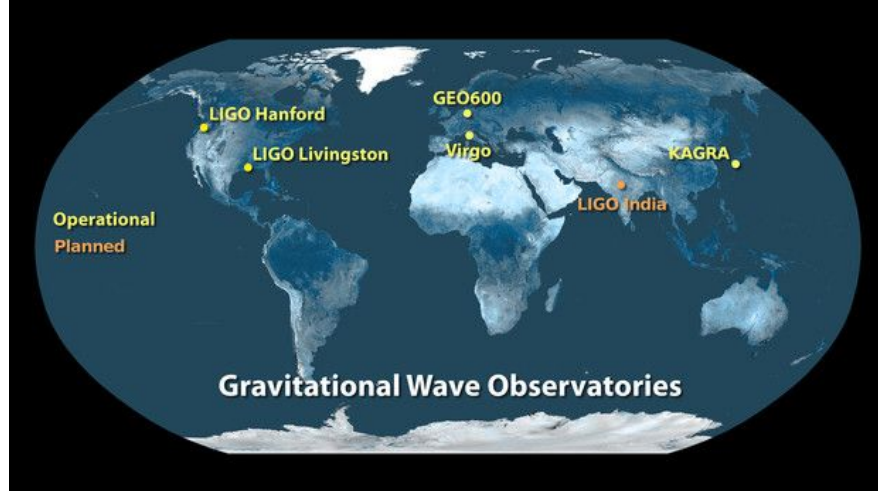
The spectrum of gravitational wave astronomy



RSN4 activities with different types of GW sources

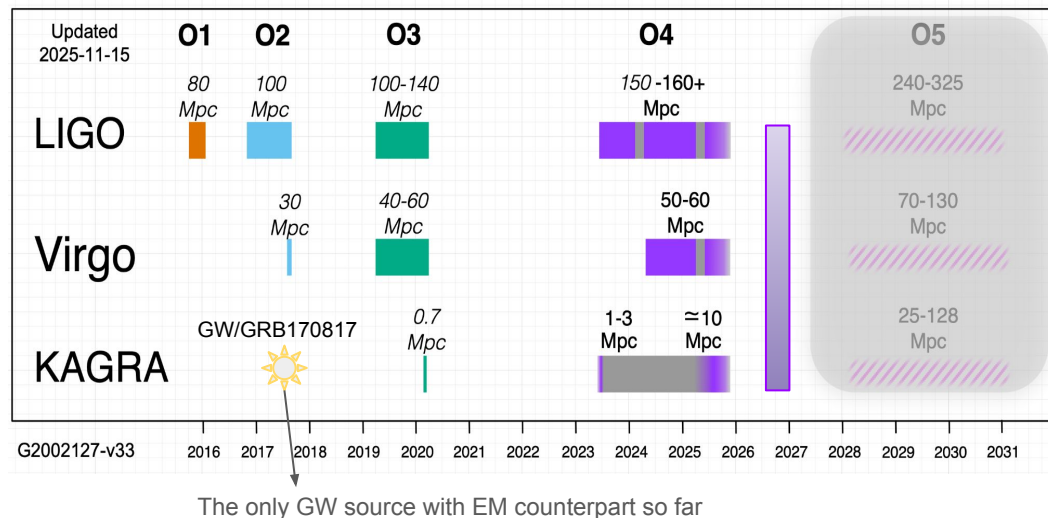
LIGO-Virgo-Kagra

- “Second generation” Interferometer network for high-frequency GW (~ 10 -1000 Hz) detections
 - Expected sources are: BH-BH, NS-NS, NS-BH, ccSN, magnetars



- 4 Observing runs
 - Hundreds of BBH, 2 NSBH, 2 BNS

- Future:
 - **O4c: 6 months from fall 2026**
 - Planned upgrades for 2030s: Virgo_nEXT, A#, Voyager, ET



LIGO-Virgo-Kagra -> **RSN 4 activities**

- **Observations: LVK GW
source follow-up campaigns**
- **Theory: EM counterpart
modelling**
- **Future perspectives**

LIGO-Virgo-Kagra -> RSN 4 activities

- **Observations: LVK GW source follow-up campaigns**

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- **Future perspectives**

- **MW** (L. Piro, G. Gianfagna, A. Thakur, **IAPS**; S. Piranomonte, A. Melandri, **OA Roma**; E. Maiorano, E. Pian, A. Rossi, G. Stratta **OAS**, M.G. Bernardini, P. D'Avanzo, S. Covino, **OA Brera**)
- **radio** (G. Bruni, **IAPS**, M. Giroletti, **IRA**)
- **High-energy** (e.g. AGILE, Swift, etc., Campana, Bernardini, D'Avanzo, Sbarrato, Sbarufatti, Covino, Tagliaferri, **OA Brera**, F. Verrecchia, **OA Roma**; C. Casentini, **IAPS**)
- **VHE with Cherenkov telescopes** (MAGIC, ASTRI, LST, CTAO, A. Stamerra, **OA Roma**)
- **GRB (jet), kilonova radiation, mechanisms and source population studies** (O. Salafia, G. Ghirlanda, **OA Brera**, R. Salvaterra **IASF Milano**)
- **GW+afterglow modelling** (G. Gianfagna, L. Piro, **IAPS**)
- **GRB afterglow+kilonova modelling** (G. Stratta, A. Rossi, R. Farinelli, E. Maiorano **OAS**)
- **NS-NS GW+jet+kilonova formation and emission** (R. Ciolfi, **OA Padova**)
- **Future GRB missions as THESEUS, eXTP, newAthena** (L. Amati, G. Stratta, **OAS**, G. Ghirlanda, **OA Brera**, R. Salvaterra, S. Mereghetti **IASF Milano**; R. Ciolfi, **OA Padova**; L. Piro, **IAPS**)
- **Future GW observatories - Einstein Telescope** (M. Bachetti, D. Perrodin, **OA Cagliari**; S. Piranomonte, F. Verrecchia, A. Stamerra, **OA Roma**; C. Casentini, **IAPS**; R. Ciolfi, **OA Padova**, G. Ghirlanda, **OA Brera**)

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- **GRB** (O. S. **Brera**)
- **GW+GRB** (M. **Brera**)
- **GRB** and **NS-NS** (E. **Brera**)
- **NS-NS** (G. **Brera**)
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LIGO-Virgo-Kagra -> RSN 4 activities

RSN4 people in the
GRAWITA collaboration ~40

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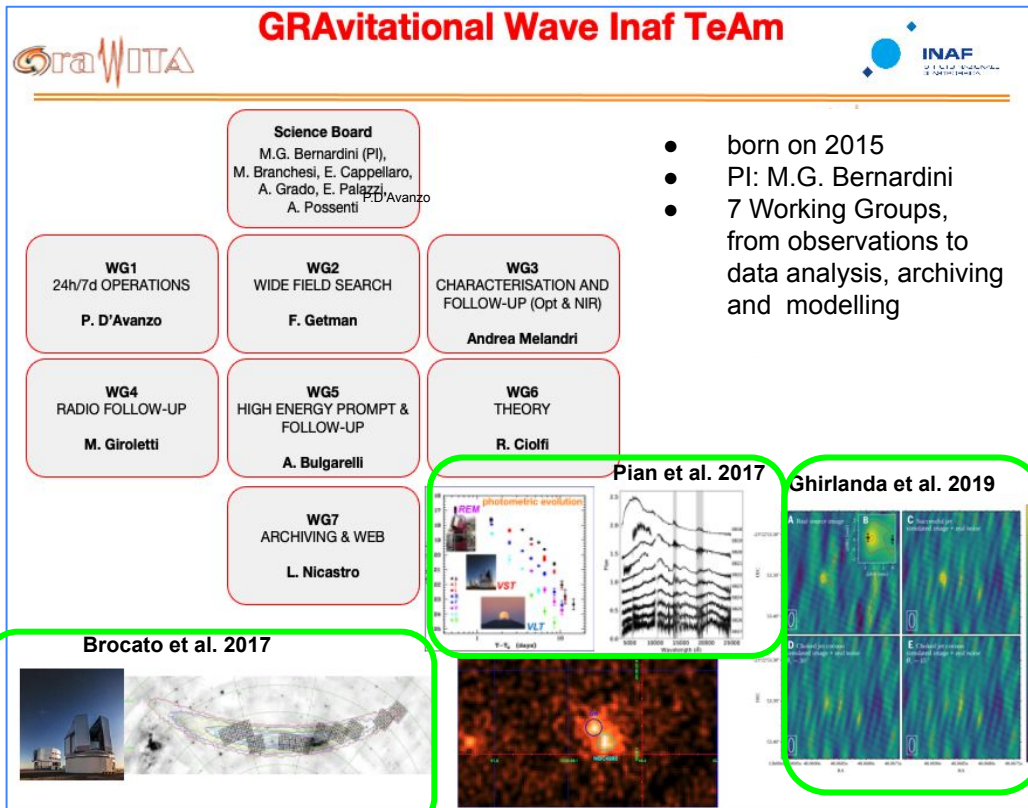
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credit: P D'Avanzo



Follow-up of GW triggers with main INAF facilities:

Wide field:

- **VLT Survey Telescope,**
- **Asiago Observatory,**
- **Campo Imperatore Observatory,**

Narrow Field:

- **Large Binocular Telescope,**
- **Telescopio Nazionale Galileo,**
- **Rapid Eye Mount Telescope,**
- **Loiano Observatory,**
- **SRT**

+ other facilities (e.g. Swift, SVOM, VLBI, etc.)

Contribution to ENGRAVE EU collaboration

RSN4 in GRAWITA ~40 INAF researches:

- OA Brera
- OAS Bologna
- IRA Bologna
- OA Padova,
- OAR Roma
- OA Capodimonte,
- OA Cagliari
- OA Teramo (+GSSI)



ACME

Astrophysics Centre for
Multimessenger studies in Europe

The Astrophysics Centre for Multi-messenger studies in Europe (ACME) consortium gathers 40 institutes, 15 countries, over 30 research infrastructures from Astronomy and Astroparticle domains, covering GW, Gamma & X-rays, neutrinos, CR, radio, optical.

One common objective: to provide enhanced access to infrastructure and services for the European multi-messenger and time-domain research communities.

The project has been funded by the European Union (call: HORIZON-INFRA-2023-SERV-01, grant no. 101131928) for 4 years (Sept 24, Aug 28), for a total cost of 14.5 MEuro.

<https://www.acme-astro.eu>



INAF@ACME

Project co-Coordinator: Paolo D'Avanzo

INAF reference person: Silvia Piranomonte

21 INAF researchers (> 60% from RSN4) from 8 structures

Contribution to:

WP1: Coordination and Management

WP3: TA3/VA3 Provision of scientific expertise for multi-messenger observations

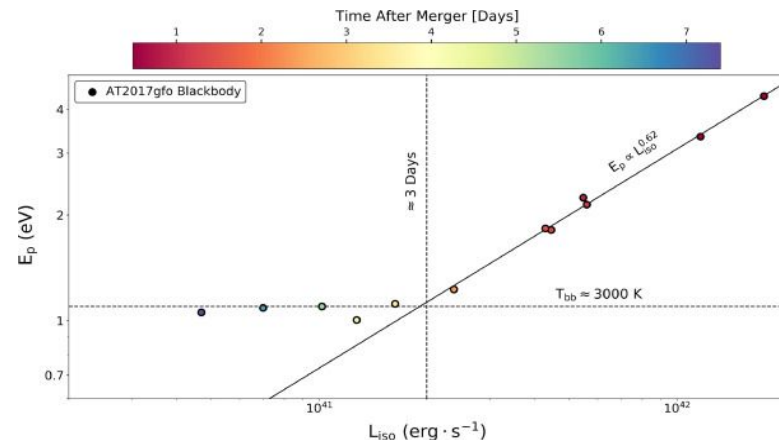
WP4: Provision of improved access to near-real time and archival multi-messenger data.

WP6: Training for scientists and engineers.

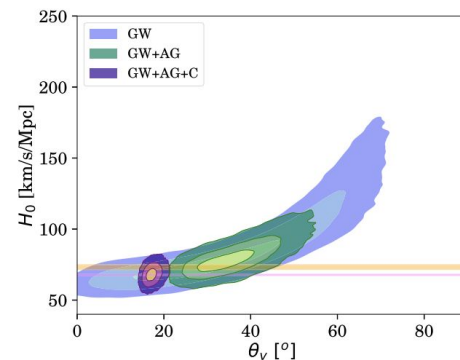
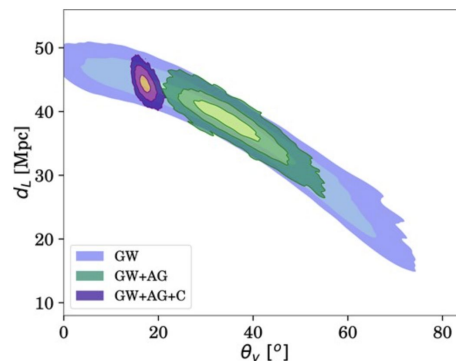
LIGO-Virgo-Kagra -> RSN 4 activities

Examples of studies on the famous GW170817/GRB170817/AT2017gfo

Using AT2017gfo X-Shooter spectra -> spectral evolution with time show a characteristic path in the E_p - L_{iso} reminiscent of GRB prompt emission, that can be used to test kilonova models (Farinelli et al. 2026)



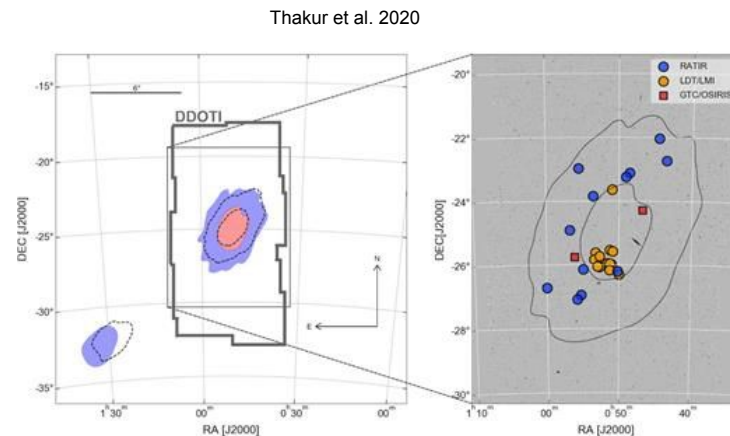
Accurate GW170817 + GRB170817afterglow modelling to disentangle DL vs inclination degeneracy from GW-only analysis, allowing for more precise H_0 measures (Gianfagna et al. 2024)



LIGO-Virgo-Kagra -> RSN 4 activities

Examples of GW sources follow-up

Opt/NIR: GW190814, a potential NS-BH with 18.5 deg^2 sky localization (90%) at 240 Mpc -> deep searches and model comparison (Thakur et al. 2020)

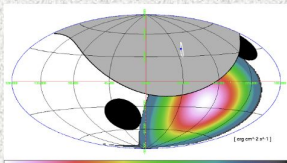


AGILE contribution to GW counterpart search

F. Verrecchia, C. Casentini on behalf of the AGILE Team

From O2/O3/O4a real time analysis:

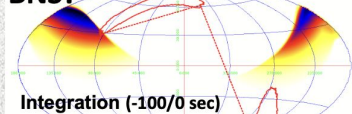
GW170817- GRB170817A



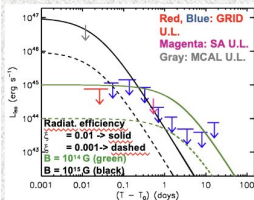
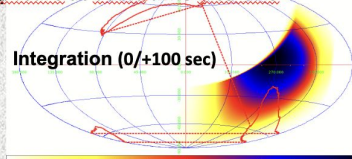
Sep. 2025 announce: VERY HOT EVENT under consideration

GW191219 $T_0 = 16:31:20.00 \text{ UT, 19 Dec., 2019}$, from GWTC-3, a possible BNS event

BNS?



Very low exposure by GRID only, possible exposure at other time intervals



(Verrecchia et al. 2017b)

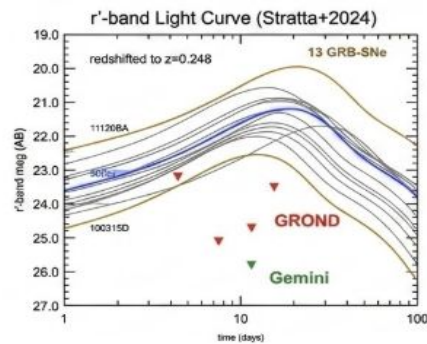
AGILE ULs, important constraints in the early phases, to exclude a highly magnetized magnetar

High-energies: AGILE / GRID follow-up of the NS-NS merger GW170817 -> upper limits vs expected magnetar emission (Verrecchia et al. 2017)

AGILE archival data covering the sky at the time of GW191219, a NS-NS or NS-BH candidate -> data still under investigation

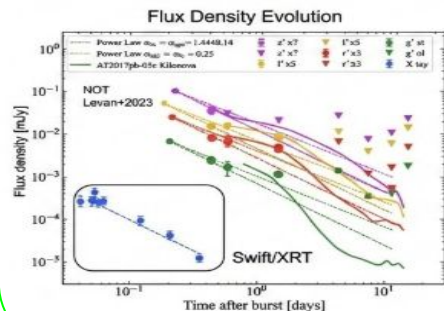
LIGO-Virgo-Kagra -> RSN 4 activities

Examples of KN studies from merger-driven GRBs

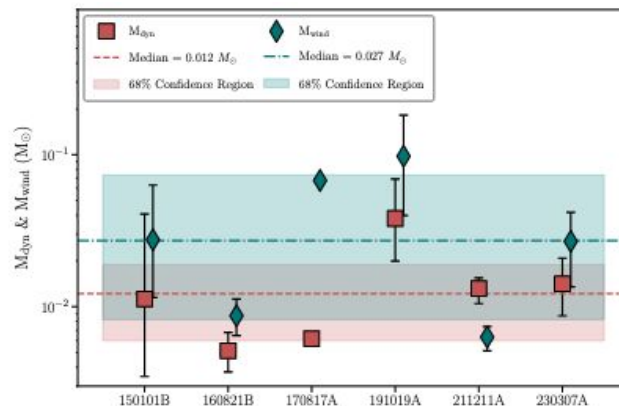


long GRB 191019A
- no SN
- old host
- Evidence of kilonova signature

(Stratta et al. 2025)



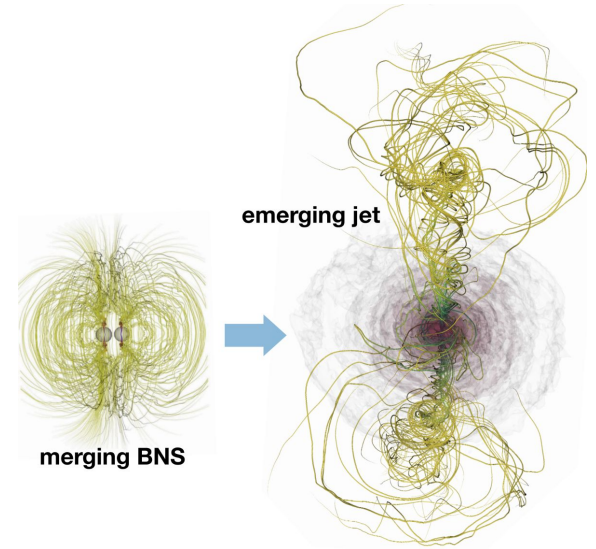
INAF Mini Grants RSN4 (ID: 1.05.24.07.04) PI: Andrea Rossi
Titolo: The GRB-KN connection



Joint afterglow+kilonova fit for a sample of GRBs with evidence of KN (Singh et al. 2025)

LIGO-Virgo-Kagra -> RSN 4 activities -> *THEORY*

- **Modelling and interpretation of MM emission of NS-NS and NS-BH, at both single-event and population level** (O. Salafia, G. Ghirlanda, **OA Brera**, R. Salvaterra **IASF Milano**)
 - equation of state of NS
 - origin of heavy elements
 - central engine of relativistic jets
 - expansion history of the Universe
 - observing strategies and of new instruments
- **BNS merger simulations** (R. Ciolfi, **OA Padova**)
 - GRMHD simulations to study how kilonovae and GRB jets form, along with the GW emission before and after merger
 - Relativistic MHD simulations of jets from BNS mergers, covering up to the much larger scales relevant for shaping the GRB prompt and afterglow emission

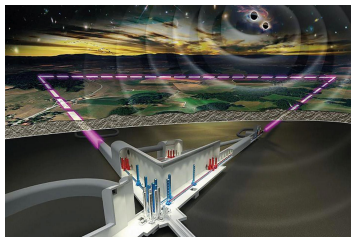
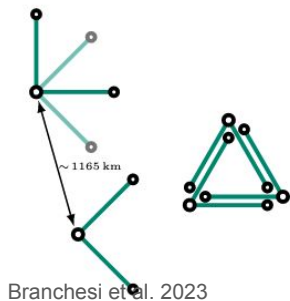


LIGO-Virgo-Kagra -> RSN 4 activities -> *near future*

- **Vera Rubin Observatory** -> Kilonovae observational campaigns (S. Piranomonte, A. Melandri, E. Loffredo, F. Onori, OA Roma,...)
 - contribution to Vera Rubin Target Of Opportunity program (Andreoni et al. 2024, arxiv: 2411.04793)
- **Square Kilometer Array Observatory (SKAO)** -> prospects of EM counterpart identification and characterization
 - contribution to SKAO Science Book (M. Giroletti, IRA et al.)
- **CTAO** -> follow-up campaigns at very high energies with (A. Stamerra, OA Roma et al.)
- **ELT** -> Kilonovae characterisation with (MORFEO-ELT, GW Science Case: E. Maiorano, A. Rossi, G. Stratta, E. Palazzi, OAS, et al.)



LIGO-Virgo-Kagra -> RSN 4 activities -> *Far future*



- **Einstein Telescope** is the next generation EU GW ground-based observatory (>2035)
- **Large RSN4 participation to the Einstein Telescope “blue book”** (e.g. D. Perrodin, M. Bachetti, OA Cagliari; G. Ghirlanda, O. Salafia, OA Brera; A. Stamerra, S. Piranomonte, F. Verrecchia, OA Roma; C. Casentini, IAPS, and many others....)

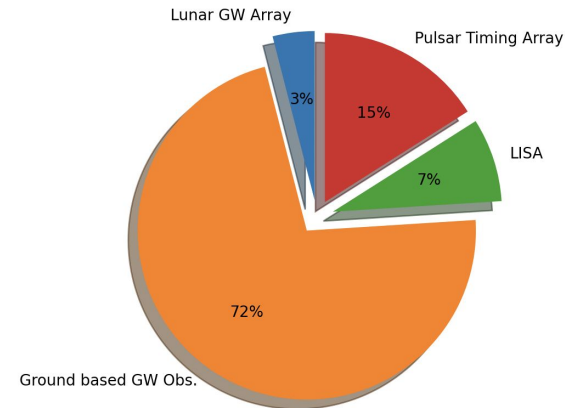
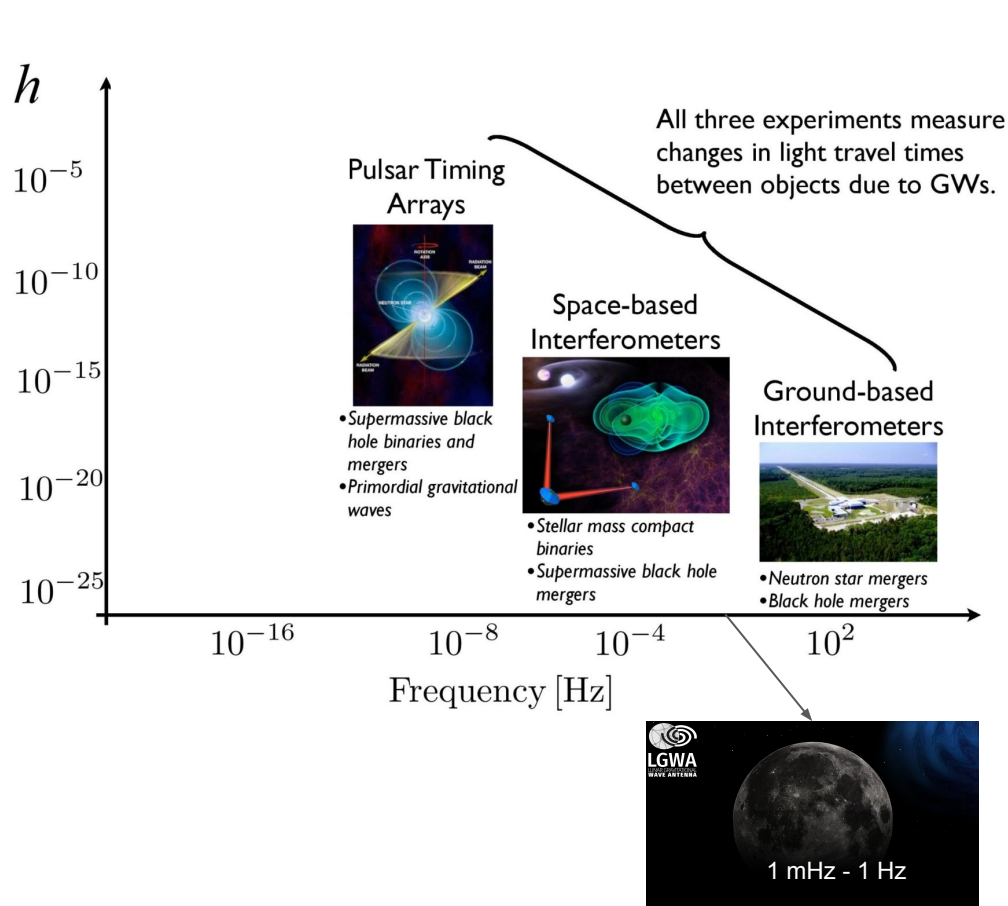
The Science of the Einstein Telescope

Einstein Telescope collaboration

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arXiv:2503.12263v2 [gr-qc] 29 Aug 2025

The spectrum of gravitational wave astronomy

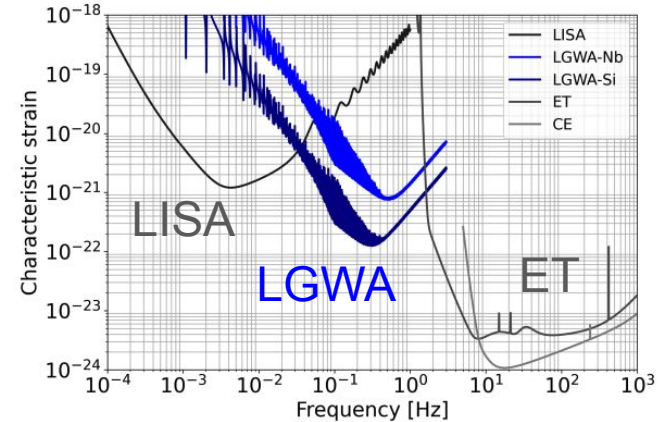


RSN4 activities with different types of GW sources

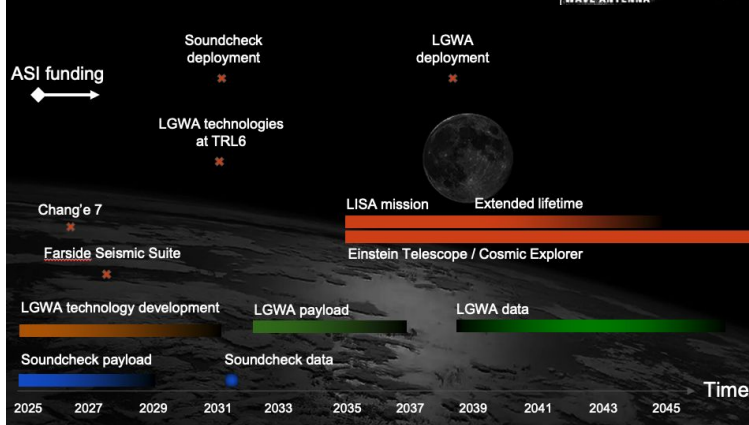
Lunar GW Antenna (LGWA) -> RSN 4 activities

Mission concept:

Sensor array inside a **permanently shadowed lunar region** (low T and stable) to measure Moon oscillations due to **dHz GWs**



Conceivable Timeline



Scientific cases (some examples): Early warnings (week/month) and localization of NS-NS, AGN, TDE, SNIa progenitors (e.g. WD+WD)

RSN4 activities: study of scientific cases, contribution to "LGWA mission studies and scientific cases" -> **JCAP01, 2025, 108** (P. Severgnini, OA Brera, S. Piranomonte, OA Roma, and many others....)

Laser Interferometer Space Antenna

LISA - LASER INTERFEROMETER SPACE ANTENNA

Gravitational waves are ripples in spacetime that alter the distances between objects. LISA will detect them by measuring subtle changes in the distances between **free-floating cubes** nestled within its three spacecraft.

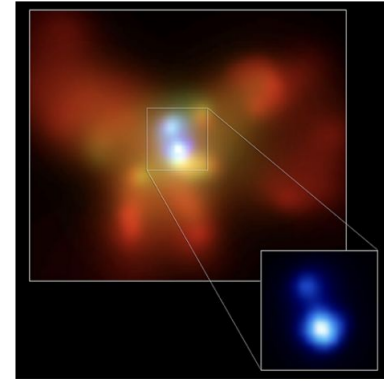
③ **identical spacecraft** exchange **laser beams**. Gravitational waves change the distance between the **free-floating cubes** in the different spacecraft. This tiny change will be measured by the laser beams.

** Changes in distances travelled by the laser beams are not to scale and extremely exaggerated*

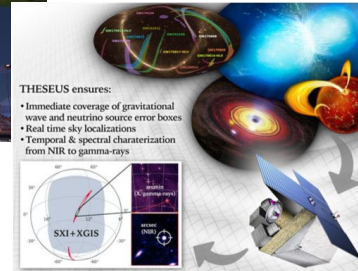
- LISA: international collaboration between ESA and NASA for the detection of GW from space at $\sim$ mHz
- Sources:
 - Super Massive BH binaries
 - Extreme Mass Ratio Inspirals
 - Galactic compact object binaries (e.g. WD+WD)
 - Compact object binaries before merger
- Adopted on Jan 2024 and scheduled for launch mid 2030s

Laser Interferometer Space Antenna -> RSN 4 activities

- MW and MM study of dual AGN and SMBH and their identification methods (A. De Rosa, **IAPS**)
- Search and characterization of strongly **lensed binary SMBHs** at high- z as precursors of LISA sources (C. Spingola, **IRA**)
- Study of the synergies between newAthena, THESEUS, and other future facilities with LISA (w.g. Piro, **IAPS**, Amati **OAS**, etc.)



Chandra image of NGC 6240 and its pair of accreting SMBHs (De Rosa et al. 2017)

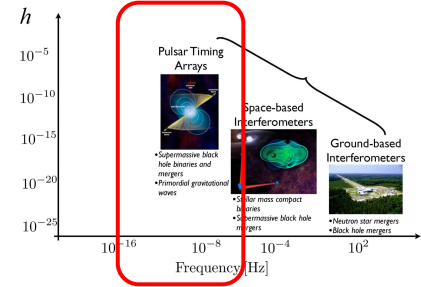


THESEUS ensures:

- Immediate coverage of gravitational wave and neutrino source error boxes
- Real time sky localizations
- Temporal & spectral characterization from NIR to gamma-rays

Pulsar Timing Array -> RSN 4 activities

- PTA allows for detection of **GWs at nHz frequencies** with variations in the pulsar signal arrival time due to GW crossing
- GW sources:
 - SMBH binaries
 - stochastic gravitational wave background (SGWB) sources in early Universe



- RSN4 activity:
 - **multi-messenger emission from SMBH binaries** (A. Possenti, OA Cagliari; C. Tiburzi OA Brera + 1 postdoc M. Brionne + 1 PhD F. Iraci, Univ. of Cagliari + PhD D. Zecca, Univ. of Salento)
 - **Cosmological backgrounds of GWs** (C. Tiburzi, M. Brionne, OA Brera)
 - **Modeling of noise by the ionised ISM and Solar wind** on PSR timing (C. Tiburzi, M. Brionne, OA Brera)
 - **Studies of plasma effects using pulsar data taken at low radio-frequencies with the European interferometers LOFAR and NenuFAR** (C. Tiburzi, M. Brionne, OA Brera)

Some of the key open questions we will address in the coming years

- EM emission from NS-BH?
- central engine of GRB jets (NS vs BH)
- Are kilonovae the dominant cosmic sites for r-process nucleosynthesis?
- EoS of NS?
- EM emission from SMBH mergers?
- GWs from Early Universe?
- SNIa progenitors?
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To answer many of these questions:

- large samples of GW sources -> ET (Meanwhile, study of EM sources that are connected to GW emitters, such as GRBs, KNe, SNe,)
- go down in GW frequencies -> LGWA/LISA/PTA

Summary and Conclusions

- GW source studies represent roughly ~30% of the whole RSN4 network activities
- ~ 70% of the RSN4-GW activities are focussed on high frequency GW sources as NS-NS and NS-BH detected with ground based GW observatories, and their EM counterparts, ~30% on PTA, LISA and LGWA projects
- Good fraction of RSN4-GW activities devoted to GW source science with future missions like newAthena, THESEUS, and telescopes as CTA, ELT, etc. -> mandatory to answer many open questions in synergies with next ground-based GW detectors and low GW frequency detections