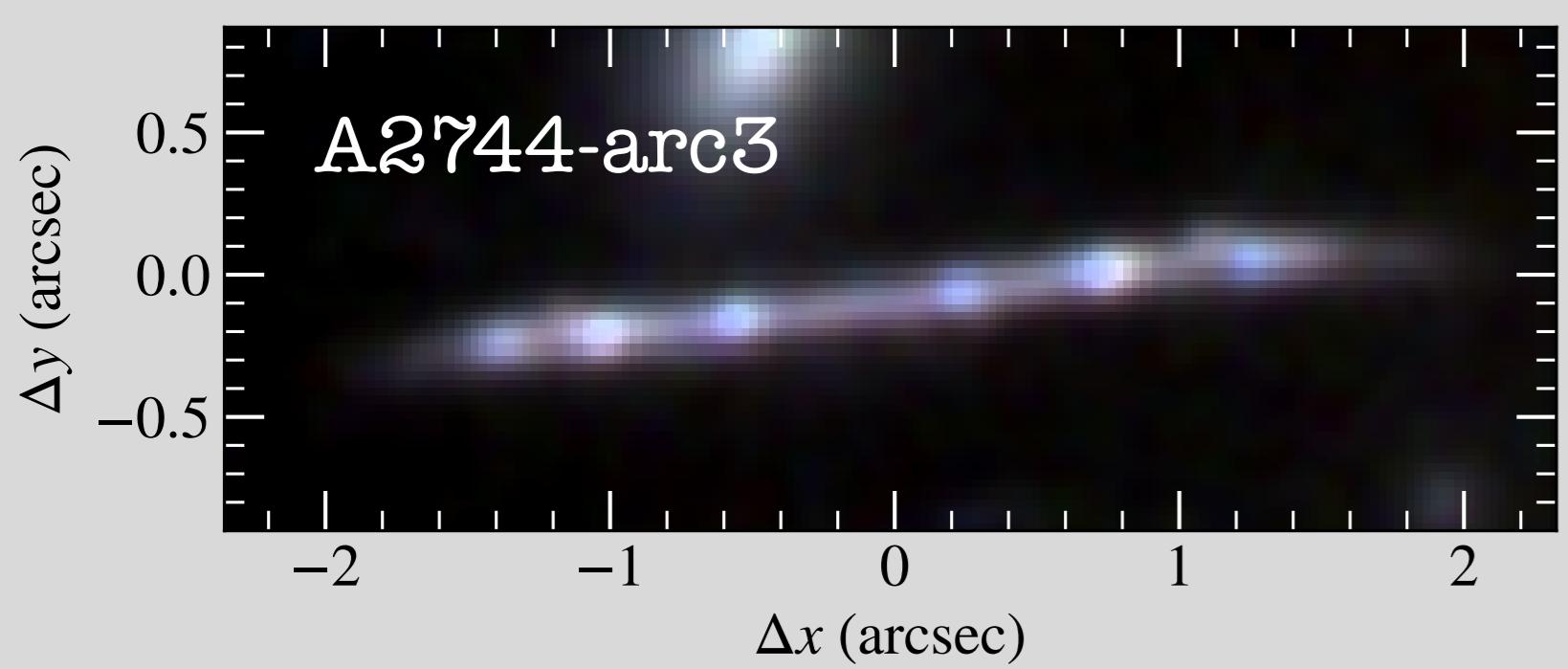


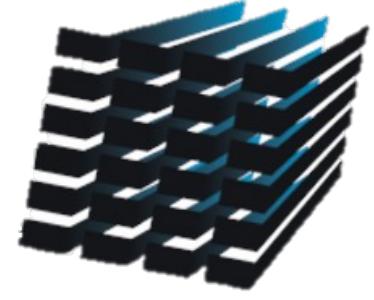
Metal-enriched Neutral Gas Reservoir around a Strongly Lensed Low-mass Galaxy



Xiaojing Lin¹, Zheng Cai¹, Siwei Zou¹, Zihao Li¹, Zuyi Chen², Fuyan Bian³, Fengwu Sun², Yiping Shu⁴, Yunjing Wu^{1,2}, Mingyu Li¹, Jianan Li¹, Xiaohui Fan³, J. Xavier Prochaska^{5,6}, Daniel Schaefer⁷, Stephane Charlot⁸, Daniel Espada^{9,10}, Miroslava Dessauges-Zavadsky¹¹, Eiichi Egami², Daniel Stark², Kirsten K. Knudsen¹², Gustavo Bruzual¹³, and Jacopo Chevallard¹⁴
¹Tsinghua University ²Steward Observatory ³European Southern Observatory ⁴Purple Mountain Observatory ⁵UCSC ⁶Kavli IPMU ⁷Observatoire de Genève ⁸Sorbonne Université ⁹Departamento de Física Teórica y del Cosmos
¹⁰Instituto Carlos I de Física Teórica y Computacional ¹¹University of Geneva ¹²Chalmers University of Technology, ¹³National Autonomous University of Mexico

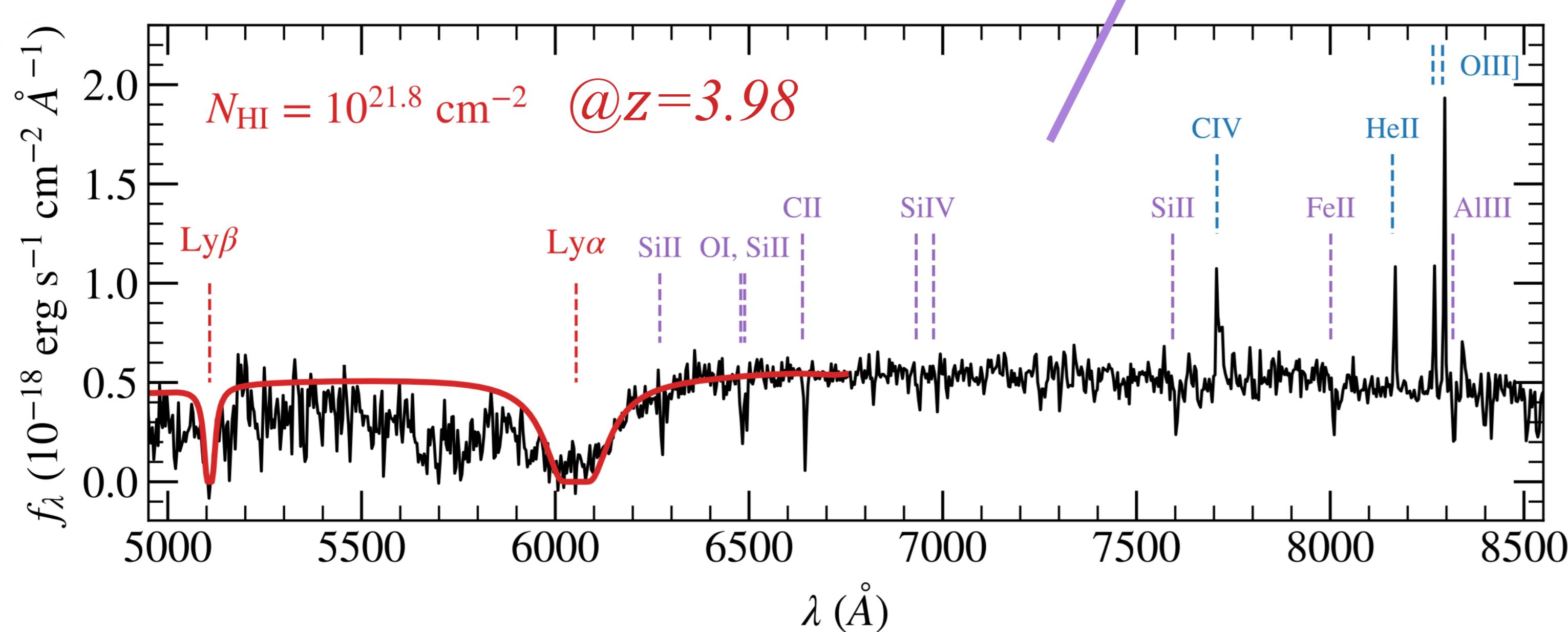
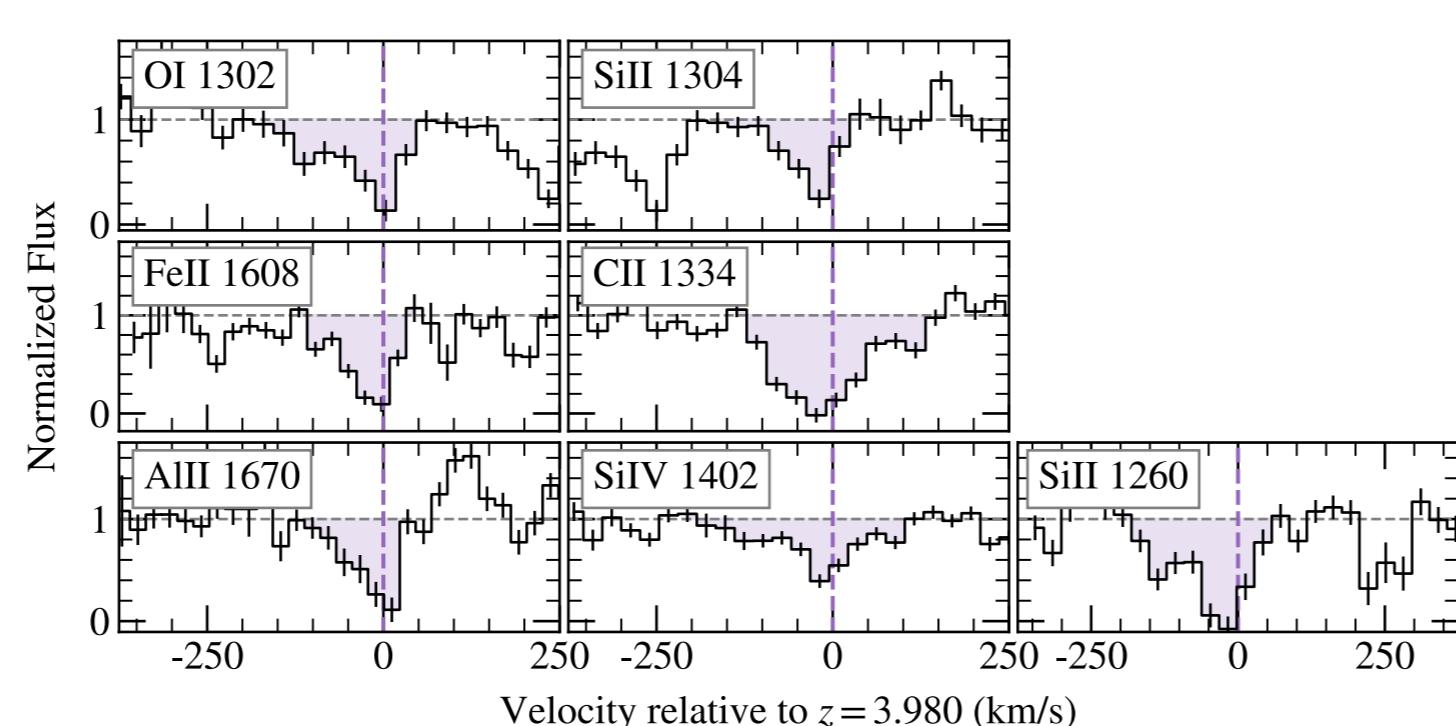


Direct observations of low-mass, low-metallicity galaxies at $z \geq 4$ provide an indispensable opportunity for detailed inspection of the ionization radiation, gas flow, and metal enrichment in sources similar to those that reionized the universe. Combining the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) and Very Large Telescope/MUSE we present detailed observations of a **strongly lensed, low-mass ($\sim 10^{7.6} M_{\odot}$) galaxy at $z = 3.98$** . Our observations suggest that low-mass, low-metallicity galaxies, which dominate reionization, could be surrounded by a high covering fraction of the metal-enriched, neutral-gaseous clouds.



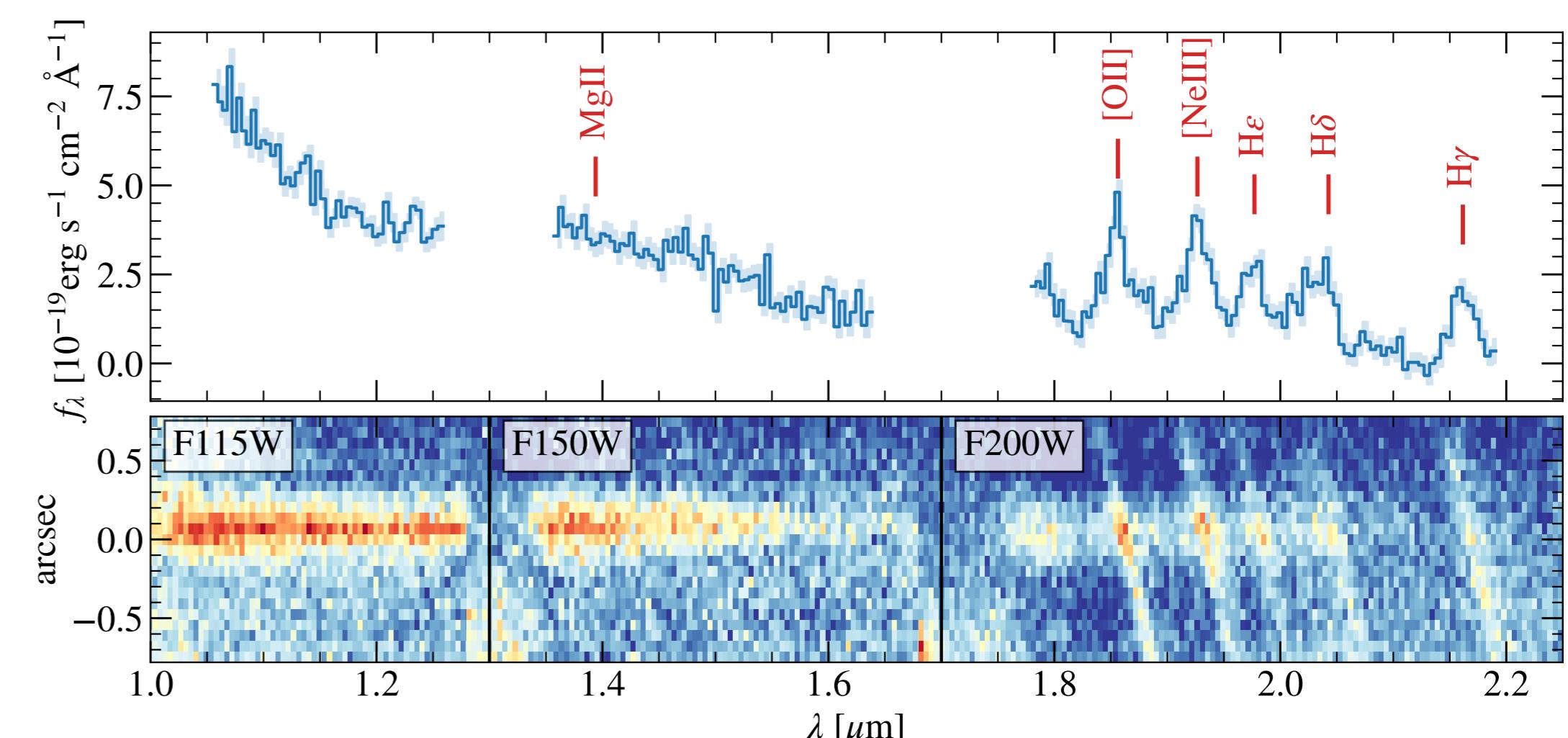
VLT/MUSE reveals an associated extremely strong DLA (ESDLA) with abundant metal absorbers

- Abundant metal absorbers in the ESDLA with tentative P-Cygni profiles imply **ongoing metal enrichment process** by the young stellar feedback.
- Significant high-ionization nebular emission lines, C IV $\lambda 1548, 1550$, He II $\lambda 1640$, O III $\lambda 1661, 1666$ indicate **hard ionizing radiation fields and the low-metallicity nature**. Their line ratios favor the explanation of photoionization due to massive stars rather than AGNs (Gutkin et al. 2016).

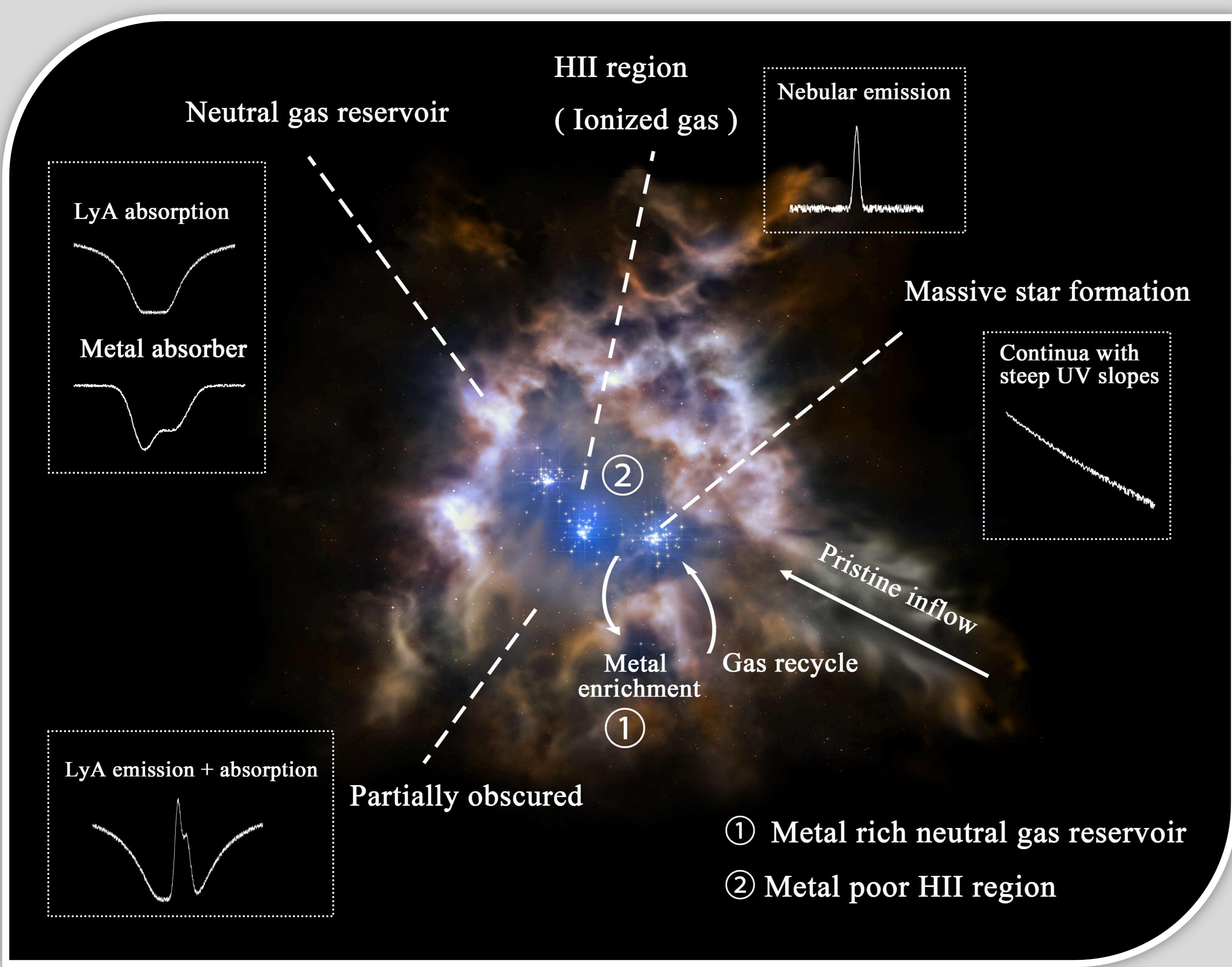
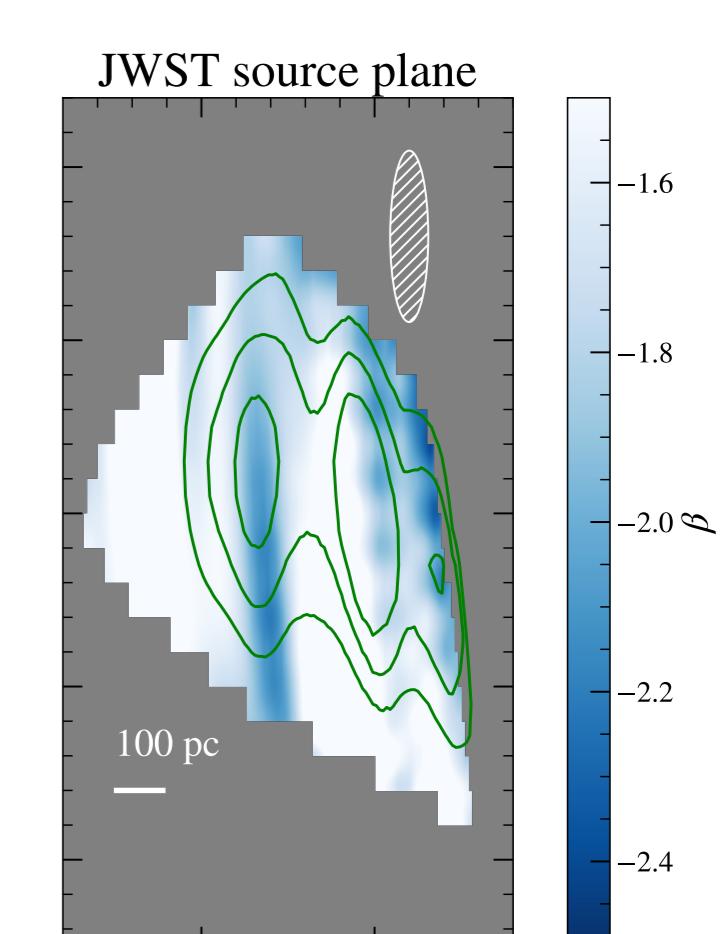
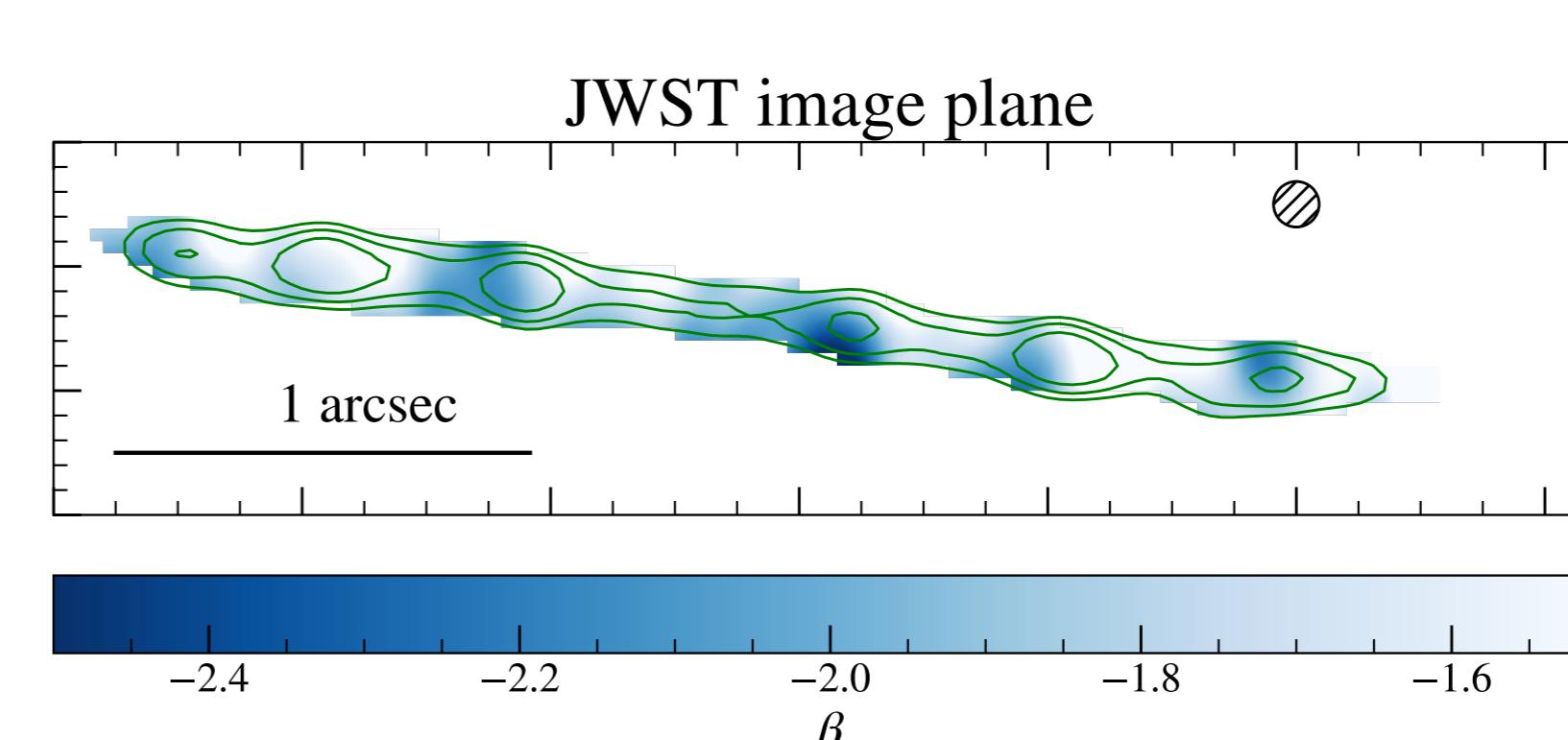


JWST/NIRISS slitless extremes grism indicates a metal-poor HII region with ionization states

- Strong Balmer and [OII], [NeIII] emission lines serve as an indicator of the **metal-poor HII region**: $12 + \log(\text{O/H}) \approx 7.75 \pm 0.05$, i.e. $Z \approx 0.12Z_{\odot}$ based on the empirical metallicity calibrations (Bian et al. 2018).

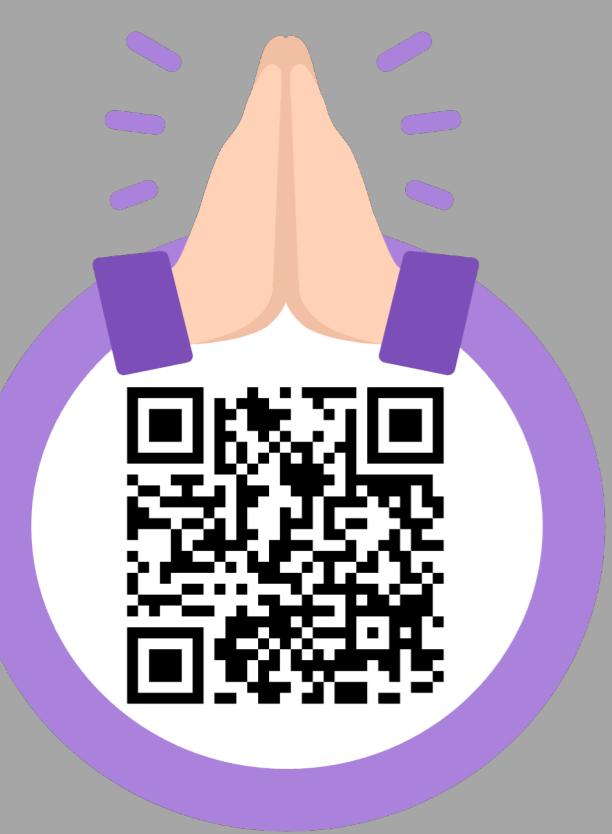


- The UV slope β ($f_{\lambda} \propto \lambda^{\beta}$) reaches -2.5 around those small stellar clumps on the physical scale down to <100pc in the source-plane. This further confirms the extreme ionizing conditions, making A2744-arc3 a **textbook example to get an unparalleled view of low-mass galaxies at the epoch of reionization**.



The schematic toy model of A2744-arc3 as a low-mass, low-metallicity galaxy with high-metallicity neutral gas reservoir.

- The hard ionization field from compact and bursty star-forming regions forms hot, thin, and highly ionized HII regions around them, where strong narrow nebular emission lines are produced.
- The CGM geometry determines the shape of Ly α emission/absorption we observed: damped Ly α / partially obscured / Ly α emission with underlying absorption.
- Feedback from central star formation, such as stellar winds, could metal enrich the neutral gas, leading to strong metal absorbers with P-Cygni profiles. The recycled neutral gas can further efficiently fuel the next-generation star formation.



Our Paper

Lin et al. 2023, The ApJL, 944, 2.
 10.3847/2041-8213/acalc4
 10.48550/arXiv.2209.03376



Contact Me

linxj21@mails.tsinghua.edu.cn

Learn more about Xiaojing (林小婧)

