

PHY517 / AST443: Observational Techniques

Tutorial 4: Astronomy Software

Astrometry.net and Source Extractor

Wiki pages: *Computing Resources*, *bash*, *Astrometry.net*, *SExtractor*, *ds9*, *topcat*

1. Ssh into uhura or vulcan, with window forwarding.
2. View the contents of the directory
`/astrolab/anja/PHY517_AST443_archive/TRANSITS/HD189733_2016-10-10`
 - this is an archival dataset of a transit of the exoplanet HD189733b. Copy one of the files beginning with `hd189733` to your data directory (`/astrolab/Fall_19/username`)
 - this is one of the science exposures. Also copy all of the files beginning with `darks` to your working directory - these are dark frames. Also copy all files beginning with `flats`, but which do not have NOAUTODARK in the filename - these are all the flat-frames that have been auto-dark-corrected.
3. View the header of your science image. What is the exposure time? What is the gain? Use `dfits` and `fitsort` (see wiki page) to output the exposure times of all of the dark frames. Which dark frames would need to be used for the calibration of the science data? **Homework:** Submit the answers to these questions.
4. Open your science image in `ds9`. Adjust the scale so that you can see the content of the image (check the `ds9` wiki page for help on this). Note that the image does not contain World Coordinate System (WCS) information, i.e. we do not know the right ascension and declination of the objects in the image.
5. Determine the astrometric solution of your science image, i.e. its position on the sky, using `astrometry.net` - see the wiki page for instructions. To significantly speed up this process, look up the coordinates of HD189733 and pass them as a starting guess. Check the output of the program - which file will you want to use in the subsequent analysis? Open it in `ds9` to see that for every pixel, the position in right ascension (α) and declination (δ) is also reported.¹
6. Open the Source Extractor configuration file (see its wiki page). Adjust the `GAIN` keyword, if necessary. Run Source Extractor on your science image to detect objects.
7. Overlay your object catalog on the image in `ds9`. You can do this either within `ds9` directly (see the `ds9` wiki page), or from `topcat` (see the `topcat` wiki page).

¹`astrometry.net` seems to have a bug that causes a bit shift in the count values of the output image. To fix this, add 32768 to the output image, e.g. by using `pyraf` or `ftools`.

8. Do you detect all stars that you identify by eye? Is your catalog free of “spurious” detections? If the answer to either of these is “no”, change some of the Source Extractor parameters, in particular the analysis threshold (`ANALYSIS_THRESH`), and repeat this step.
9. **Homework:** Submit your Source Extractor configuration file, and a screenshot of your final object catalog overlaid on your image.

pyraf

Wiki page: *pyraf*

1. Follow the pyraf wiki page to set up your pyraf/iraf environment.
2. Use the `imcombine` command to make a median image of the dark frames (i.e. the masterdark) you would use to calibrate the science image (see above).
3. Subtract the masterdark from the science image.
4. **Homework:** Submit the pyraf (and bash) commands that you used to combine the images, and to subtract the masterdark. Submit a screenshot of your dark-corrected science image.

Bonus: ftools

Wiki page: *Image arithmetic*

1. For each of the flat-fields, determine the mean. Hint: the quickest way to do so is to run a bash loop over all files, run `ftstat` on each file, and search for lines containing “mean”:
`for file in $(ls flats.??????.FIT); do ftstat $file | grep mean ; done`
2. Identify a set of flat fields with similar count-levels, ideally at $\sim 30\%$ of the saturation threshold. Use `ftpixcalc` (see the ftools wiki page) to take the average of these frames - this is your masterflat.
3. Submit a screenshot of your masterflat (make sure the ds9 colorbar is visible, and is set to zscale), along with the commands that you used to make it.
4. Use `ftstat` to print out the image statistics for the masterdark (not -flat). Do so with, and without, 5-sigma clipping. Submit the outputs from the two ftstat runs.