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Music of the Spheres: the gravitational wave signal from exoplanets

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Abstract

We focus on a class of sources that has been largely ignored in the science case for the Laser Interferometer Space Antenna (LISA), a joint ESA/NASA space-based gravitational wave mission set to launch in 2034: stellar-exoplanet systems. These systems are a billion times closer, if much less massive, than say supermassive black holes, making exoplanets a potentially observable source class. With typical orbital periods of decades, most exoplanets would emit gravitational radiation at much lower frequencies than the current design of LISA. However, exoplanet surveys have unveiled a surprisingly rich variety of systems, from highly eccentric orbits to hot Jupiters to pulsar planets. Here, we investigate the gravitational wave signal from known exoplanets and predict the total signature of exoplanetary systems in the Milky Way.

Motivating Question

How weak are exoplanets in gravitational waves? If very weak individually, there are so many, and so close to us, will LISA see this as background?

Theory - GWs from Binaries

Masses in orbit exhibit a time-changing mass quadrupole moment and therefore emit GWs (Peters and Mathews, Maggiore). The total power radiated depends on the eccentricity

References

P. C. Peters and J. Mathews, “Gravitational Radiation from Point Masses in Keplerian Orbit,” Phys. Rev. **131** (1963) 435;
M. Maggiore, “Gravitational Waves: Volume 1: Theory and Experiment,” Oxford Univ. Press, 2008;
Amaro-Seoane et al., “Triplets of supermassive black holes: astrophysics, gravitational waves and detection,” Mon. Not. Royal Astro. Soc. **402** (2010) 2308;

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Abstract

