

# Turning Gravitationally Lensed Supernovae into Cosmological Probes

Scientific Category: Cosmology

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Budget Size: Regular

## Abstract

Recent HST observations have been critically important for two landmark discoveries of gravitationally lensed supernovae: the first multiply-imaged SN, "Refsdal", and the first Type Ia SN resolved into multiple images, SN iPTF16geu. Fitting the multiple light curves of such objects can deliver measurements of the lensing time delays, which in turn provide precise tests of lens models or unique constraints on the Hubble constant and other cosmological parameters. For both of these SNe, initial constraints on the time delays have been limited by the need to account for subtle microlensing effects. We will perform a complete reanalysis of both SN Refsdal and SN iPTF16geu, in order to refine estimates of their lensing magnifications and time delays. Our work will improve upon previous efforts by revising the data processing and photometry, and including the significant yet previously ignored effects of microlensing. Additionally, we will develop a publicly available software package in the course of this work, optimized specifically for multiply-imaged SNe. This software will be an important tool in the next decade, supporting precise time delay measurements of tens to hundreds of lensed SNe to be found with LSST and WFIRST.

**Investigators:**

Investigator	Institution	Country
P Kelly	University of California - Berkeley	USA/CA
J Roberts-Pierel	University of South Carolina Research Foundation	USA/SC
S Rodney	University of South Carolina Research Foundation	USA/SC

Number of investigators: 3

**Dataset Summary:**

Instrument	No. of Datasets	Retrieval Method	Retrieval Plan
WFC3	51	FTP	Download all at once
ACS	14	FTP	Download all at once

## Scientific Justification

The seminal work of Refsdal (1964) first showed how a gravitationally lensed supernova (SN) resolved into multiple images could be used as a cosmological tool. Now, some 50 years later, HST is playing an integral role in the long-awaited first observations of such events (Figure 1). HST observations caught the first multiply-imaged SN, called “SN Refsdal”—a core-collapse SN lensed by both a galaxy cluster and a single galaxy (Kelly et al. 2015). This was followed by the first multiply-imaged Type Ia SN (iPTF16geu), resolved with HST imaging (Goobar et al., 2016). As the light for each of the multiple images follows a different path through the expanding universe and through the lensing potential, the SN images appear delayed by hours (for galaxy-scale lenses) or years (for cluster-scale lenses). For objects like SN Refsdal, measurement of this time delay can be used as a precise test of cluster lens models (Treu et al., 2015). For a SN like iPTF16geu, the time delay can lead to a direct constraint on the Hubble constant that is completely independent of the local distance ladder.

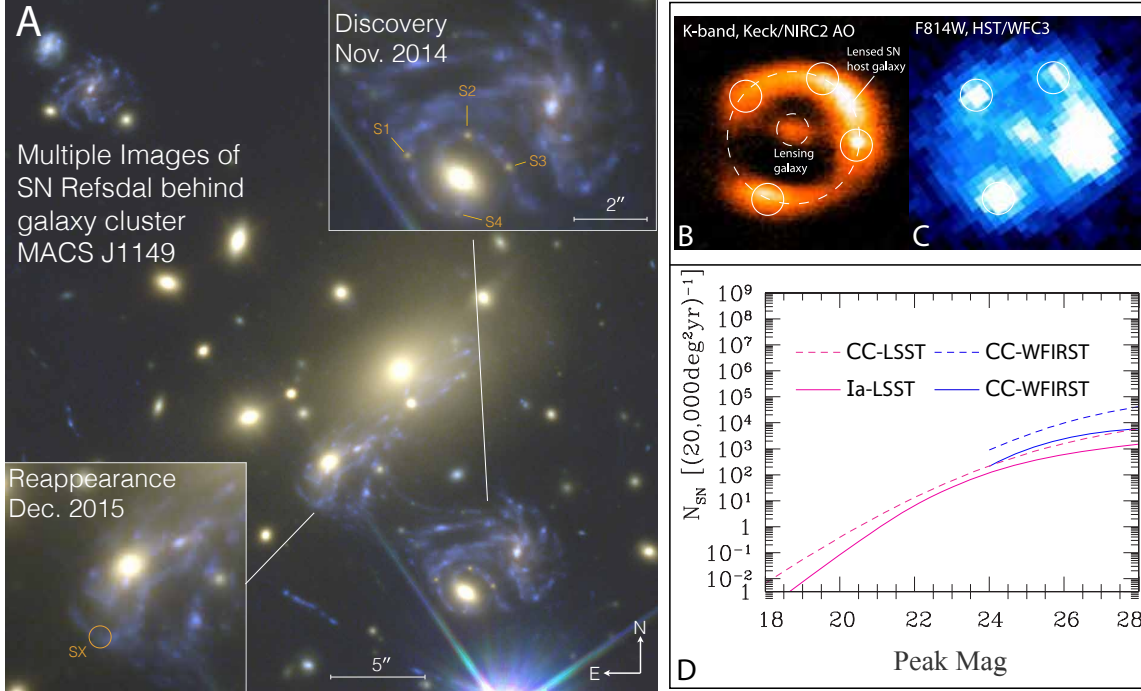


Figure 1: (A) MACS J1149.6+2223 field, showing the positions of the three primary images of the SN Refsdal host galaxy. SN Refsdal appears as four point sources in an Einstein Cross configuration in the southeast spiral arm of image 1.1. (B) HST/WFC3 observation of iPTF16geu, revealing four point sources and (C) NIR Keck observation, with the Einstein ring of the host galaxy clearly visible, adapted from Goobar et al. (2016). (D) Expected numbers of Type Ia and Core Collapse SNe for LSST ( $i_{\text{peak},\text{lim}}$ ) and WFIRST ( $H_{\text{peak},\text{lim}}$ ), adapted from Oguri & Marshall (2010).

Preliminary time delay measurements have been made, but for both SNe these are limited by the need to include complex microlensing effects (Rodney et al., 2016; More et al., 2016). **We propose to re-analyze the HST observations for these two lensed SNe, improving the photometry and including the significant yet previously ignored effects of microlensing. We will develop an open-source software package in the course of this work, optimized for multiply-imaged SNe, that will enable precise time delay measurements to be made for hundreds of lensed SNe expected in the LSST/WFIRST era.**

To improve the control of systematic biases in the SN photometry, our reanalysis will use both the *PythonPhot* and the *DOLPHOT* packages. We will also measure the photometry in single-exposure images to identify any deviations at very short timescales, indicative of very rapid microlensing events. Rodney et al. (2016) measured the SN Refsdal photometry using a static point-spread function (PSF) derived from standard stars. However, as we know that the HST PSF does undergo subtle variations due to telescope “breathing,” our re-analysis will use foreground stars within the MACS1149 imaging datasets to define a variable PSF model **The improved photometric accuracy and precision will be critical for identifying and correcting subtle microlensing effects.**

Microlensing refers to small-scale gravitational lensing perturbations due to massive objects along the light path of any one image of a multiply-imaged SN. This causes distortions in the SN light curves that limit the precision that can be achieved in their time delay measurements (Dobler & Keeton, 2006). Despite noting this significant source of uncertainty, early analyses of SN Refsdal and iPTF16geu have ignored microlensing due to its complexity (More et al., 2016; Rodney et al., 2016). In preparing this proposal, we have already used flexible functions to get a preliminary measurement of microlensing for SN Refsdal (Figure 2), and it is **clear that microlensing must be taken into account.** Therefore, we will analyze the effects of microlensing on a multiply-imaged SN for the and ensure they can be accurately accounted for in future SN analysis.

**The next decade is expected to yield observations of tens to hundreds of multiply-imaged SNe** (Oguri & Marshall, 2010), yet **there is no public software package for analyzing multiply-imaged SNe.** A core product of this work will be an open-source Python package for use in this and future SN analyses. This new will be used to deliver new time delay measurements for SN Refsdal make , providing an important independent check of such a measurement for the first time.

The discovery of SN iPTF16geu suggests that the **rate of strongly lensed Type Ia SNe is likely much higher than previously thought**, with implications for our constraints on  $H_0$ , the study of galaxy sub-structures, and tests of theories of modified gravity (Goobar et al., 2016; More et al., 2016). If the number of lensed Type Ia SNe observed in the LSST/WFIRST era follows these predictions, then it will be essential to have a publicly available, standardized tool in place for accurate time delay and magnification measurements. Reanalysis of these two lensed SNe offers a unique chance to develop the tools necessary for analyzing many new lensed SNe in the coming years, finally realizing the 50-year promise of using lensed SNe as a new cosmological probe.

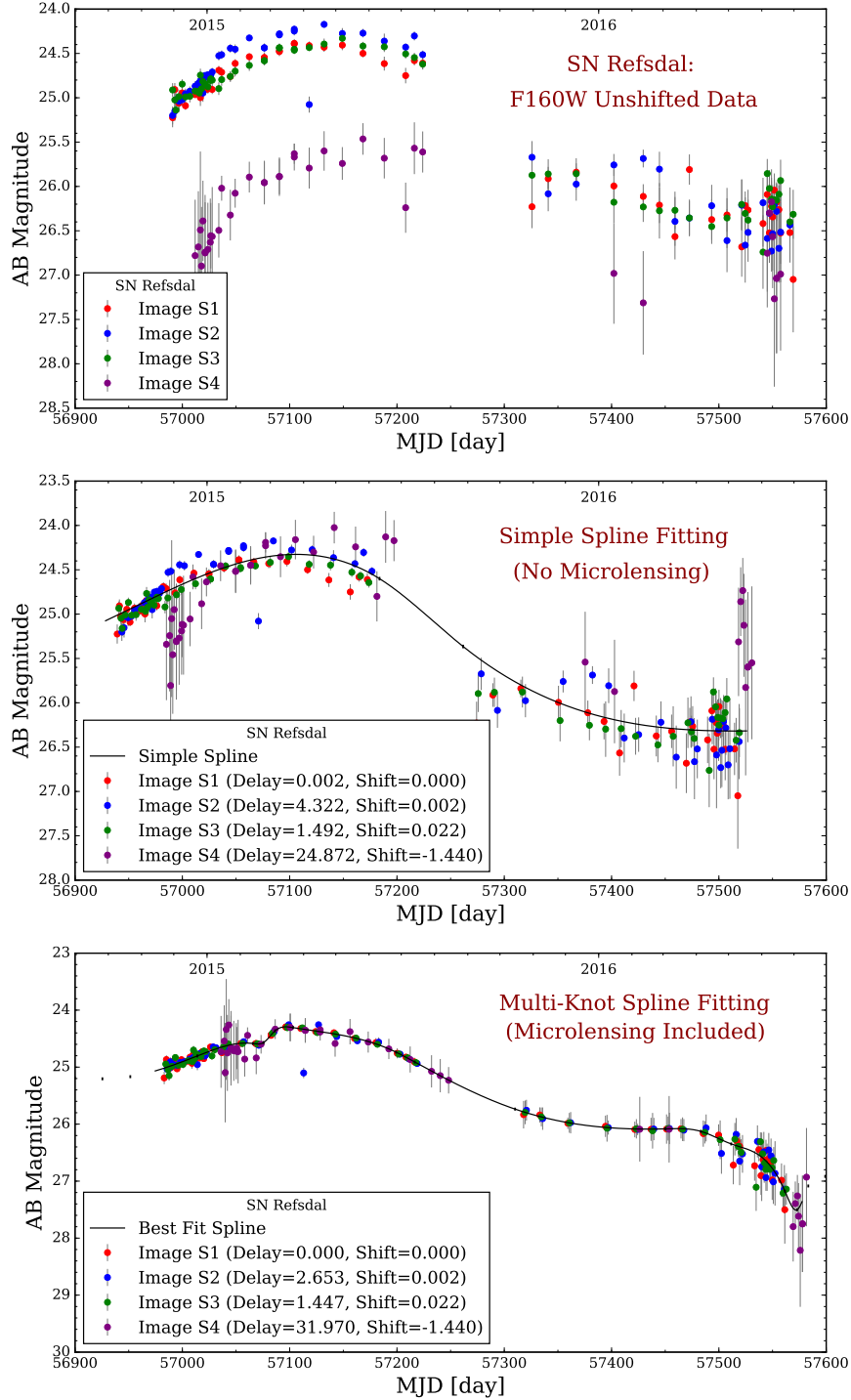


Figure 2: (Top) HST F160W data representing the four images of SN Refsdal (Figure 1A), with no lensing or time shifts. (Middle) Method of fitting the SN Refsdal light curves from Rodney et al. 2016, which did not consider microlensing effects. (Bottom) Preliminary results from this work using a multi-knot spline to fit the data. This method includes microlensing effects, which leads to a slight adjustment in time delay measurements.

## ■ Analysis Plan

There are 64 relevant datasets in the HST archive that will be used in this work: 58 intersecting the coordinates of MACSJ1149, and 8 intersecting the coordinates of SN iPTF16geu. The data intersecting MACSJ1149 are from the WFC3-IR and ACS-WFC instruments, and span April 22, 2004-October 30, 2016 with HST Project IDs: 9722, 10493, 12068, 12197, 13504, 13459, 14041, 13790, 14199, and 14208. The data intersecting SN iPTF16geu are from the WFC3-IR instrument, and span October 20-November 17, 2016 with HST Project ID 14862.

The required HST datasets amount to a relatively small volume of data. All datasets will be requested from the archive at once, at the start of the project. We will start with the FLT files, and will process them through a modified version of the HST data processing pipeline that was originally developed for the CANDELS and CLASH SN surveys (Rodney et al., 2014). This pipeline uses a custom processing sequence with AstroDrizzle and TweakReg to segregate the data into epochs, combine each epoch of HST imaging exposures, register them to a common coordinate system, and generate difference images suitable for SN detection and photometric measurements. This pipeline was updated for use in SN searches related to the Frontier Fields, and is now publicly available (<https://github.com/srodney/sndrizpipe>).

This pipeline will be revised and improved again for this work, adding additional steps to remove persistence artifacts that might impact the photometry of the SN targets and/or the foreground stars that will be used to define a time-varying PSF model. For the initial measurement of the time delays of SN Refsdal, special data processing steps were required to address contamination of the SN by diffraction spikes from a 15th-magnitude star in the foreground (Rodney et al., 2016). Revision and improvement of this contamination removal will be a critical step for increasing the precision of the photometry for SN Refsdal.

## ■ Management Plan

The first stage of this project is to produce an open-source software package called Supernova Time Delays (SNTD). The software is being developed as an open-source project, and is already publicly accessible on github (<https://github.com/jpierre114/sntd>). SNTD relies on two other public software packages: Python Curve Shifting (PyCS; Tewes et al. 2013) a tool developed for measurement of quasar time delays, and the SN light curve analysis package `sncosmo` (Barbary, 2014). Our further development of SNTD will proceed in three steps: 1) Integrate SNCosmo and PyCS, producing a tool that can model SN light curve data with the abilities present in either software package; 2) Extend and optimize the lensing and microlensing algorithm present in PyCS for SNe; 3) Simulate a large number of multiply-imaged SN light curves using SNCosmo and test the ability of SNTD to simultaneously determine SN and lensing parameters. This work will be done primarily by graduate student PI Roberts-Pierel, under the guidance of Co-I Rodney at USC. We anticipate this will require 4-6 months of full time effort from the PI.

In parallel with the software development, we will improve the photometry of the two multiply-imaged SNe (Refsdal and iPTF16geu) by 1) reprocessing the HST images using the most up-to-date AstroDrizzle software; 2) developing new time-variable PSF models, based on stellar sources within each image; and 3) deriving new photometric time series, using multiple photometry packages to extract photometry from both the template-subtracted difference images and directly from the FLT files. Although SN Refsdal appeared in the Hubble Frontier Fields, for this work it is necessary to reprocess the data separately from the official HFF products, because we need to break it up into separate epochs. This component will require 4-6 months of part-time work from the two Co-I's, supplemented by additional effort from the grad student PI.

For the conclusion of this project, we will use the new SNTD package to measure improved gravitational lensing parameters for SN Refsdal and iPTF16geu. We anticipate that the SNTD package and the results of the new lensing analyses will be separately published within 12 months of the start of this project.

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