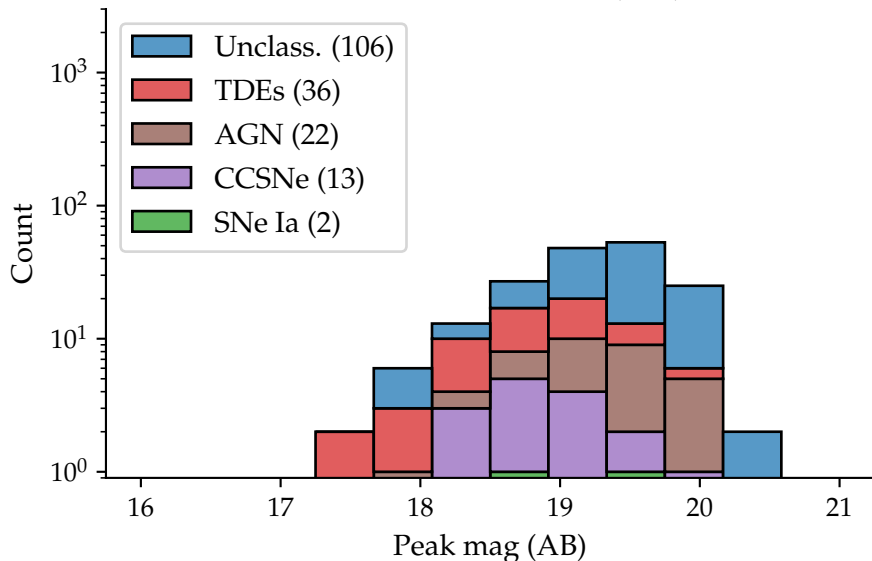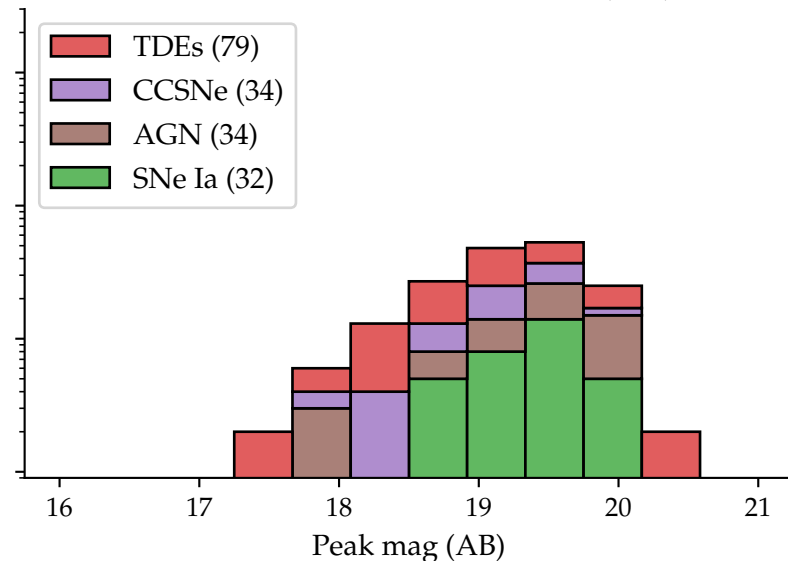cut stage: exactly 1 flar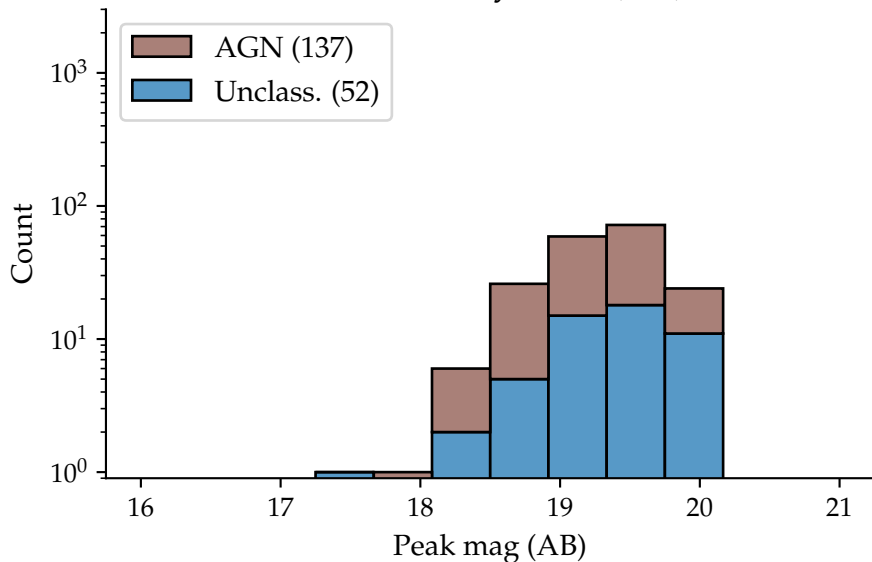e