

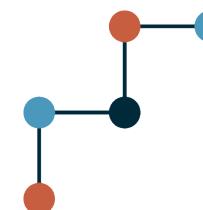
Testing the laws of gravity and dark matter properties with cosmological observations

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University of Geneva, Switzerland



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Science Foundation

Queen Mary University
January 2026

Our Universe: two mysteries

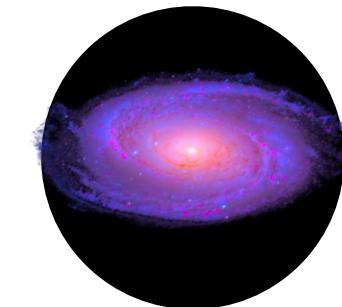
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- ◆ **Evidence** at all scales and with different observations
 - **Rotation** of stars around galactic center
 - Motion of galaxies inside **clusters**
 - Deviation of light by matter: **gravitational lensing**
 - Temperature fluctuations in **Cosmic Microwave Background**



80% of dark matter versus 20% of normal matter

Our Universe: two mysteries

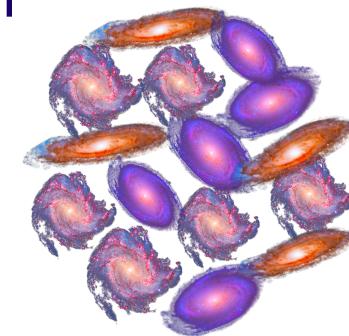
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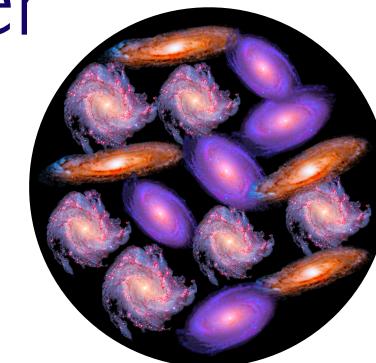
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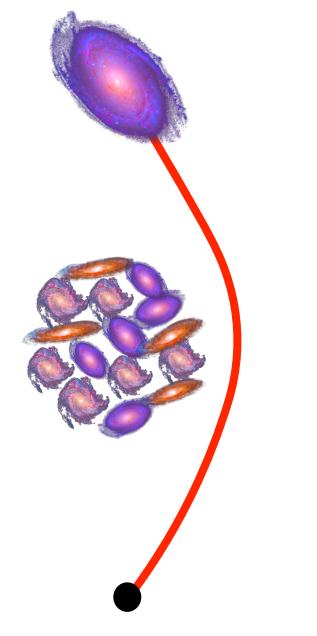
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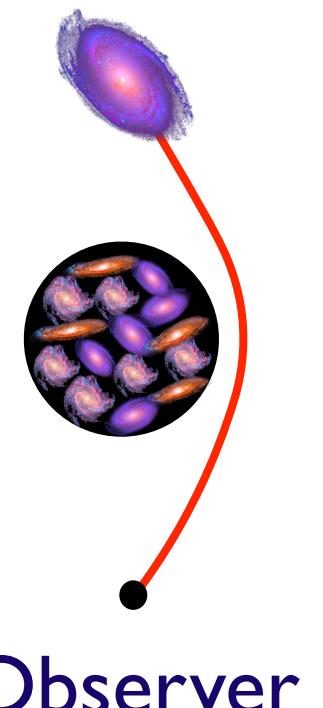
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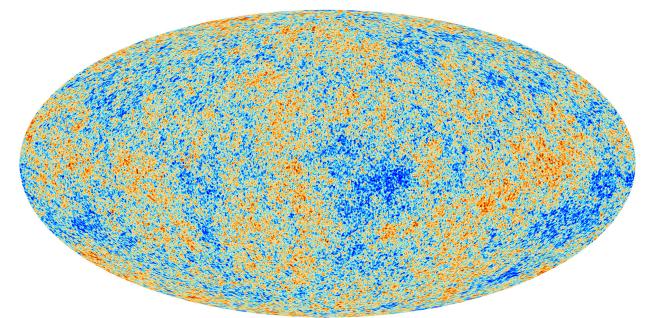
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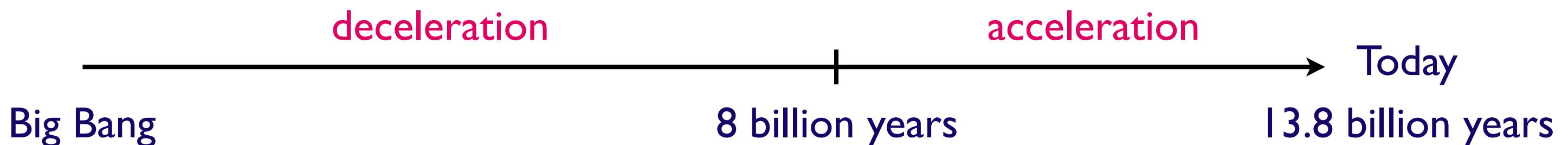
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Our Universe: two mysteries

- ◆ The expansion of the Universe **accelerates**
- ◆ We known since 1930 that the Universe is **expanding**
- ◆ **Prediction** from General Relativity: the expansion should **decelerate**



- Cosmological constant
- ◆ **Solutions** • Dark energy
- Modification of gravity at large scale

Standard LCDM model

- ◆ Dark matter is a **cold non-interacting** particle
- ◆ The acceleration is due to a **cosmological constant** Λ
- ◆ **Our goal:** use cosmological data to test this model and search for deviations
- ◆ **Current status:** compatible with most observations, but some tensions have appeared in the past years

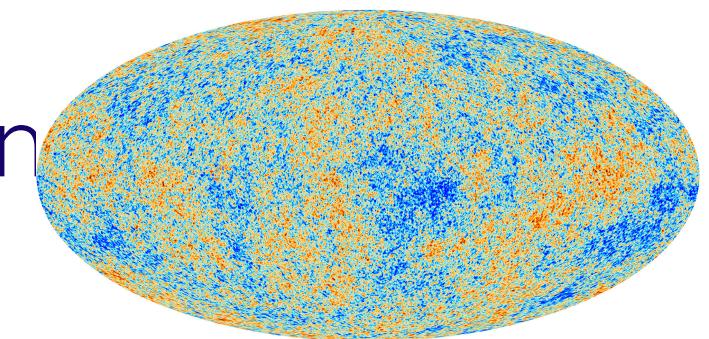
How can we test the LCDM model?

- ♦ It is not sufficient to measure the expansion rate
- We need to look at **structures** in our Universe
- ♦ **CMB**: fluctuations of the order of 10^{-5} around 2.73 K
- ♦ **Galaxies**: patterns in the distribution up to very large scales

These inhomogeneities are sensitive to the **dark matter properties** and to the theory of **gravity**

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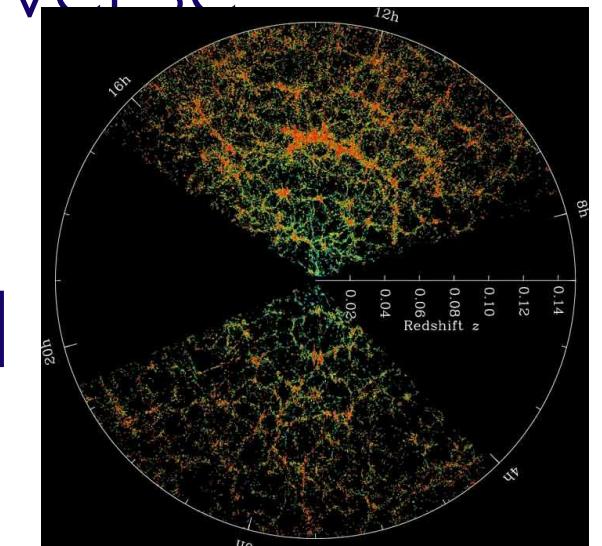
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Accounting for inhomogeneities

- ◆ Our Universe is split into:

Homogeneous and **isotropic** background + **fluctuations**

Fluctuations encoded into four fields

- ◆ Perturbations in the **geometry**

$$ds^2 = -a^2 \left[(1 + 2\Psi) d\eta^2 + (1 - 2\Phi) \delta_{ij} dx^i dx^j \right]$$

scale factor gravitational potentials



- ◆ Perturbations in the universe's **content**:


$$\delta = \frac{\delta\rho}{\rho}$$
$$V$$

Relations

- ◆ General Relativity and conservation equations provide **relations** between the **fields**

Λ CDM model

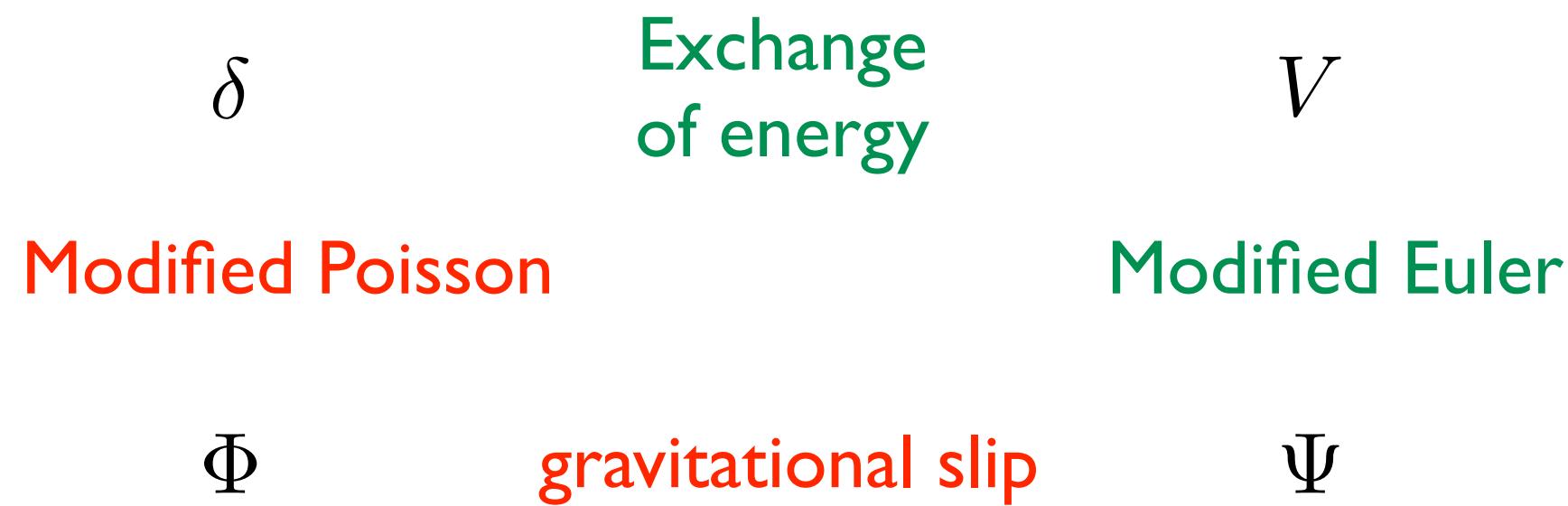
$$\begin{array}{ccc} \delta & \text{Continuity} & V \\ \text{Poisson} & & \text{Euler} \\ \Phi & = & \Psi \end{array}$$

- ◆ By **measuring** the 4 fields and **comparing** them we can test the validity of the Λ CDM model

Relations

- ◆ General Relativity and conservation equations provide **relations** between the **fields**

Beyond Λ CDM

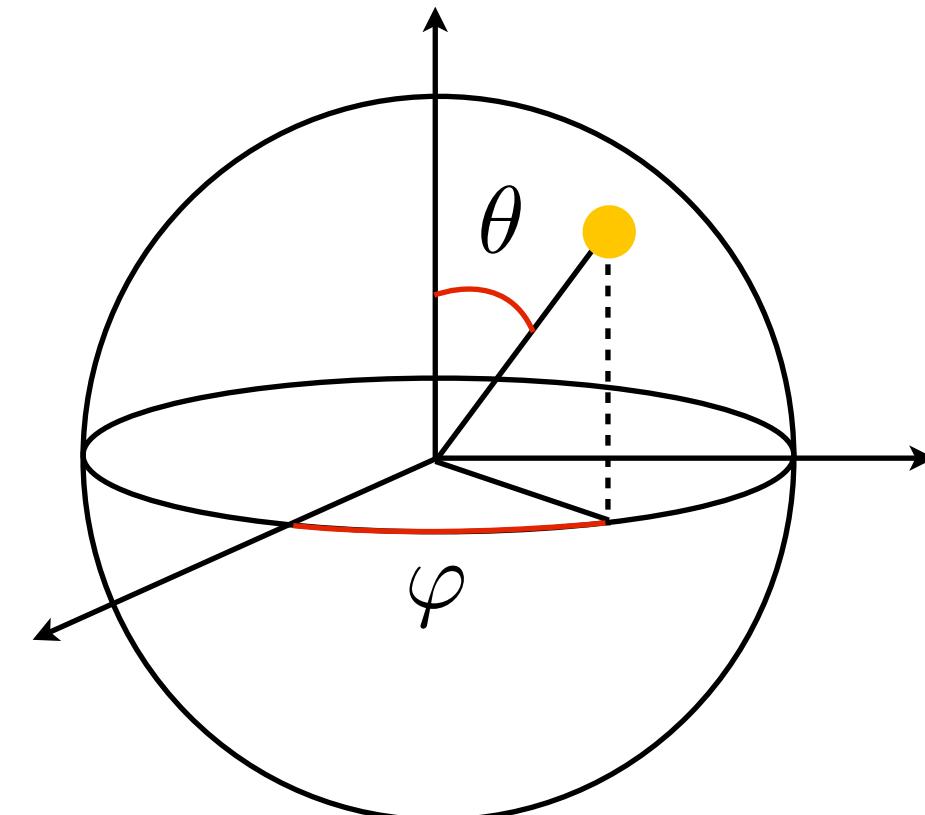


- ◆ By **measuring** the 4 fields and **comparing** them we can test the validity of the Λ CDM model

Cosmological observations

Surveys detect galaxies and measure

- ♦ the **angular position**



Some surveys are dedicated to redshift measurements, whereas other are specialised in imaging.

Cosmological observations

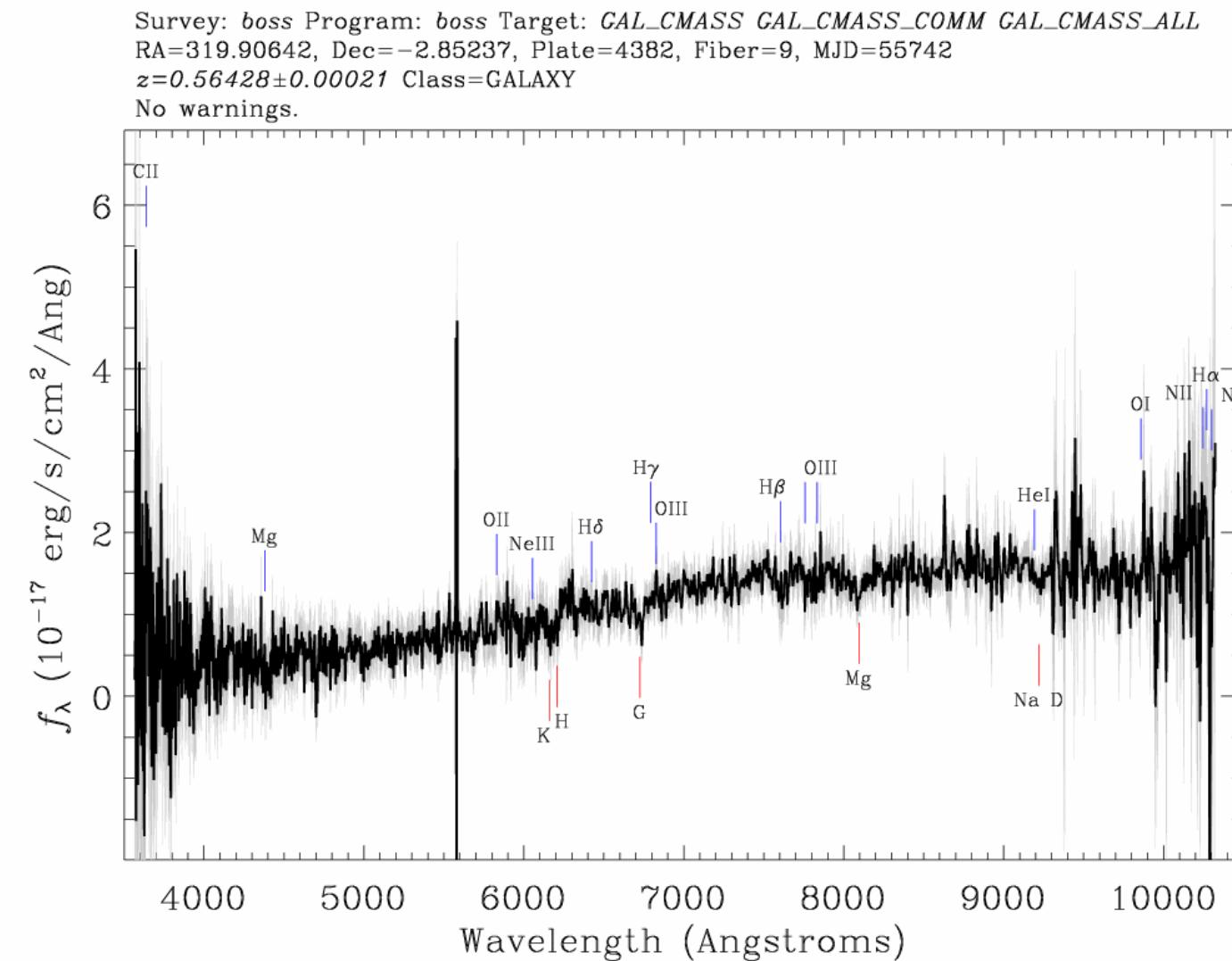
Surveys detect galaxies and measure
galaxy spectrum



♦ the **redshift**



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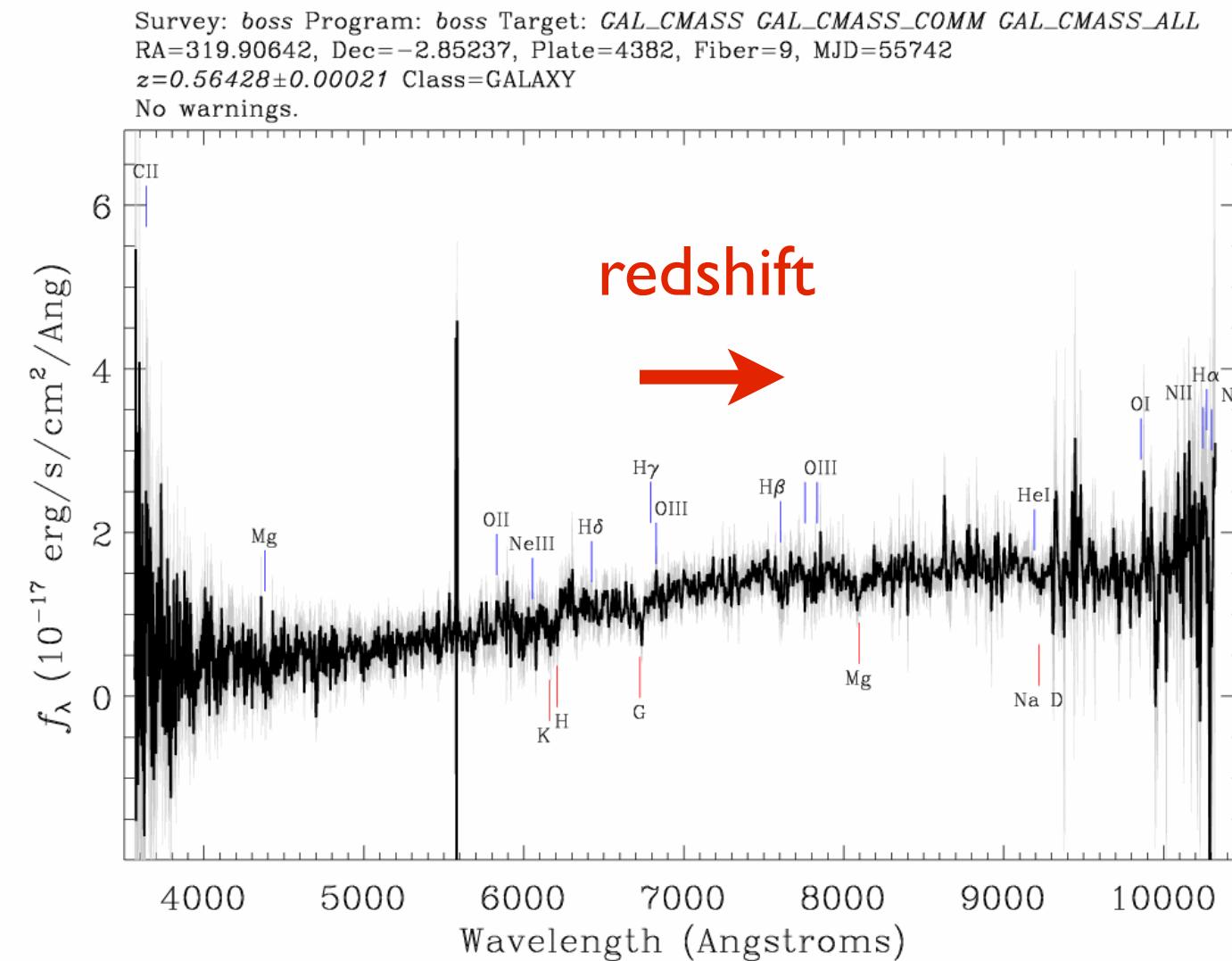


Cosmological observations

Surveys detect galaxies and measure galaxy spectrum



♦ the **redshift** → distance

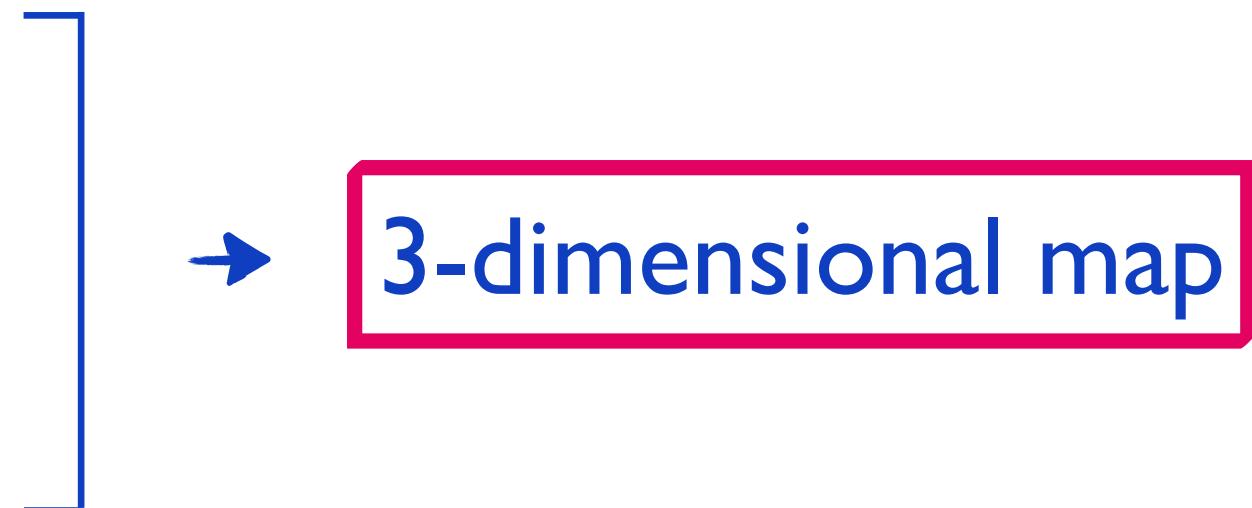


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Surveys detect galaxies and measure

- ◆ the **angular position**
- ◆ the **redshift** → distance



- ◆

Some surveys are dedicated to redshift measurements, whereas others are specialised in imaging.

Cosmological observations

Surveys detect galaxies and measure



- ◆ the **shape** and **luminosity**



Credit: ESO/INAF-VST

Some surveys are dedicated to redshift measurements, whereas other are specialised in imaging.

Cosmological observations

Surveys detect galaxies and measure



size

→
ellipticity

- ◆ the **shape** and **luminosity**

Credit: ESO/INAF-VST

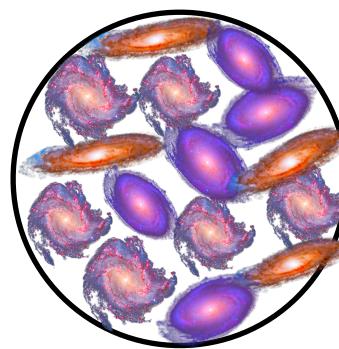
Some surveys are dedicated to redshift measurements, whereas other are specialised in imaging.

Which field can we measure?

Kaiser (1987)
Hamilton (1992)

- ◆ 3D **maps**: distance measured through the redshift
 - expansion
 - Doppler
- ◆ The Doppler effect **distorts** the structures in the maps

Without Doppler effect
isotropic structures



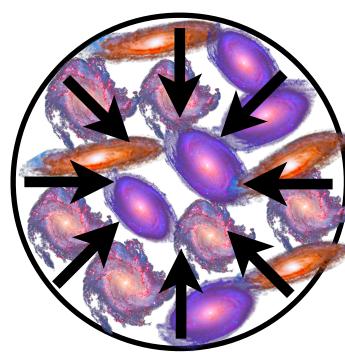
● Observer

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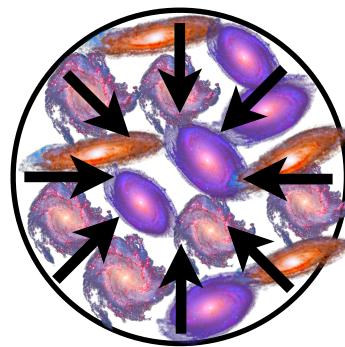
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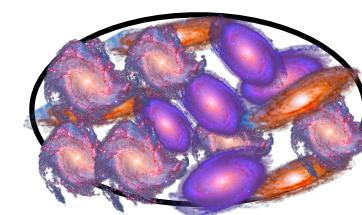
- ◆ 3D **maps**: distance measured through the redshift
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Without Doppler effect
isotropic structures



● Observer

With Doppler effect
squashed structures



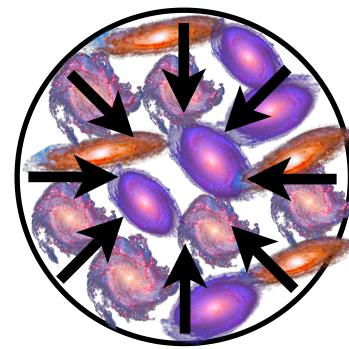
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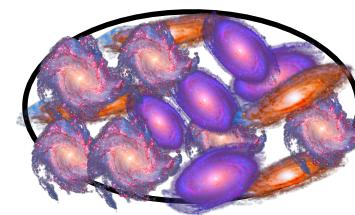
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Measurable by looking at **probability** of finding a **pair** of galaxies at a given separation

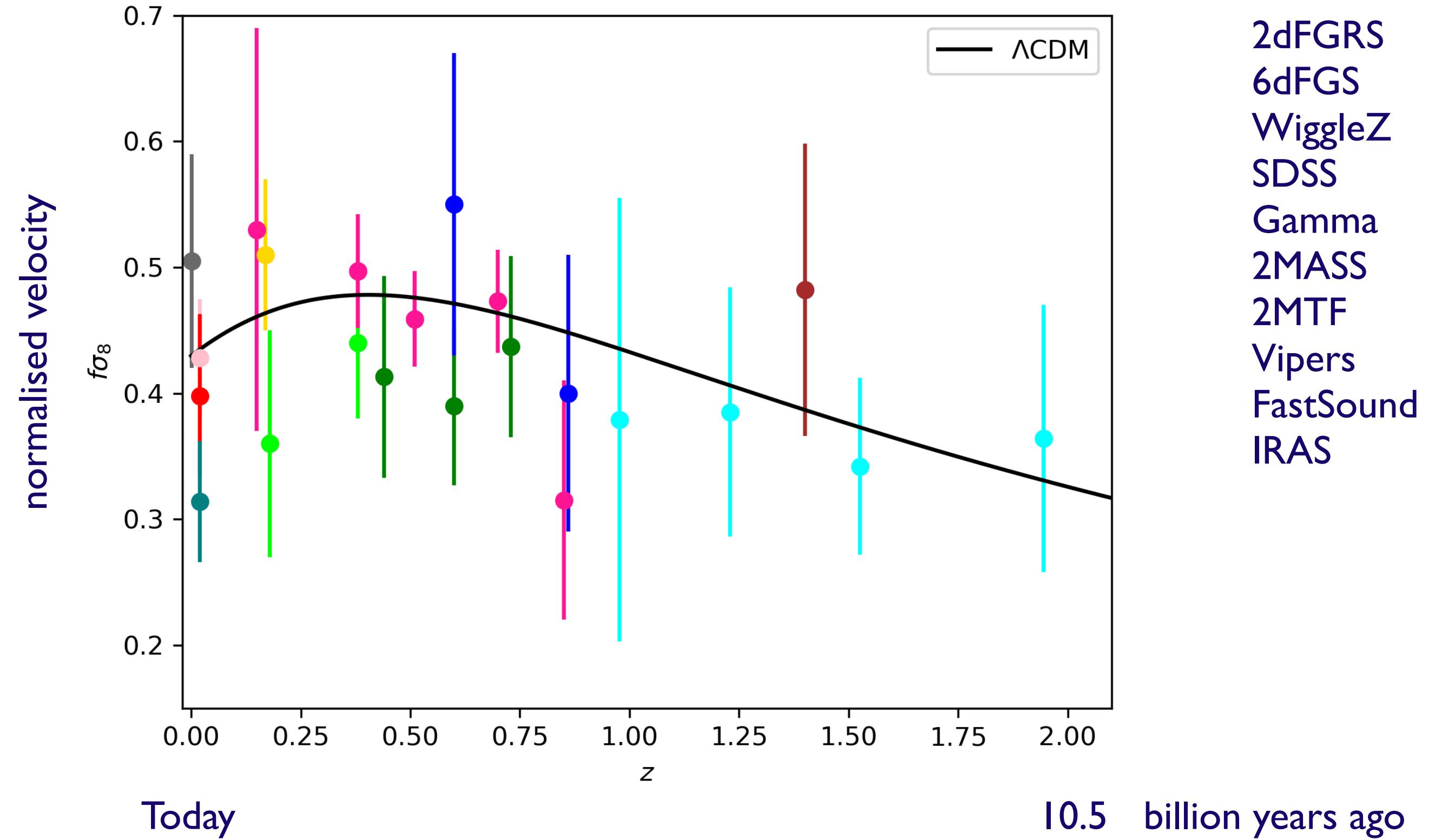


Observer



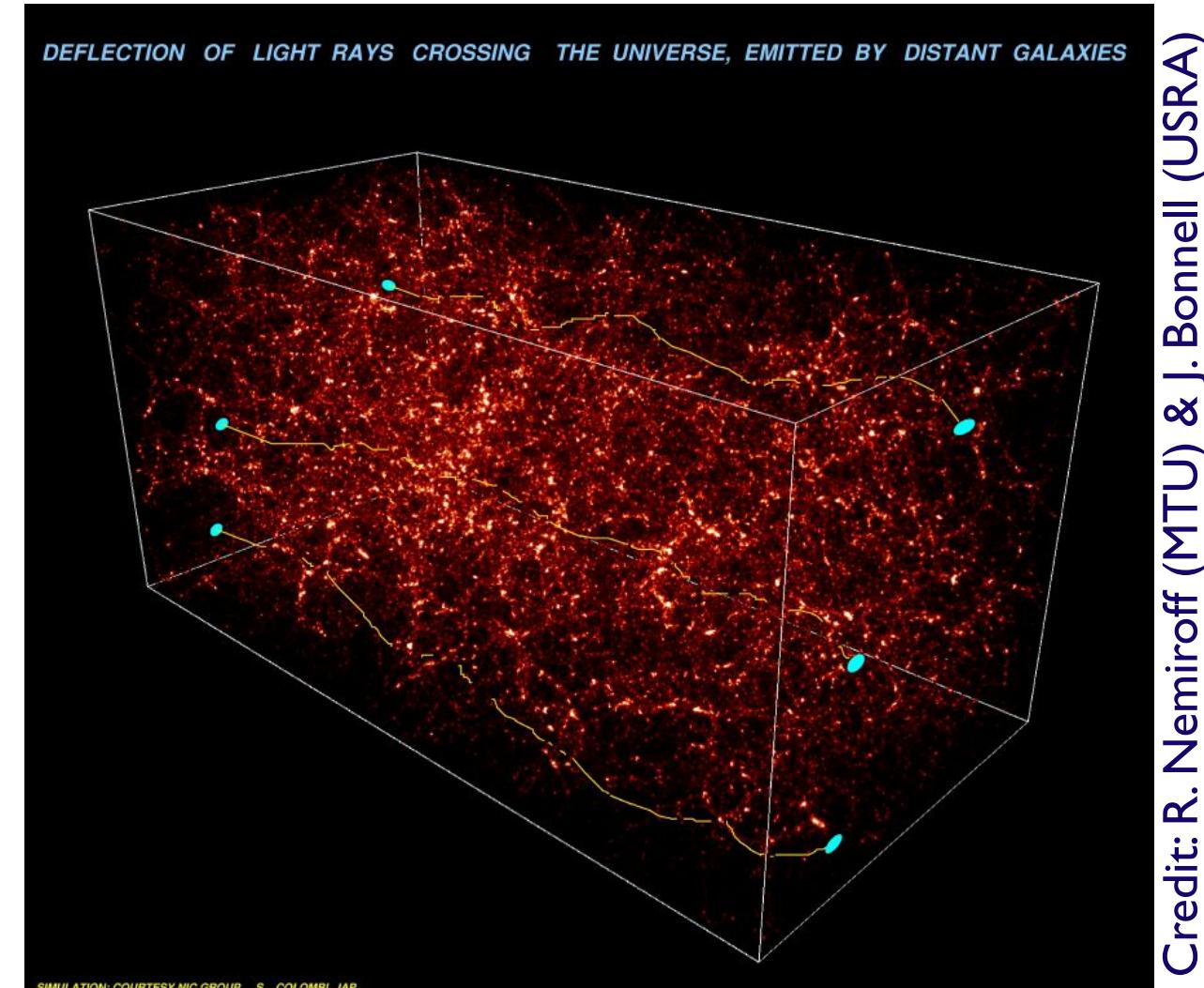
Observer

Measuring the evolution of velocities



Which field can we measure?

- ◆ The **shape** of galaxies is **distorted** by gravitational lensing
- ◆ It generates **correlations** between shapes affected by the same structures
- ◆ **Detected** by various surveys:
CFHT, KiDS, DES



$$\int_{\text{obs}}^{\text{source}} dr \frac{r_s - r}{2rr_s} \Delta_{\Omega}(\Phi + \Psi) \quad \rightarrow \quad \Phi = \Psi + \text{Poisson equation}$$

δ **total matter**

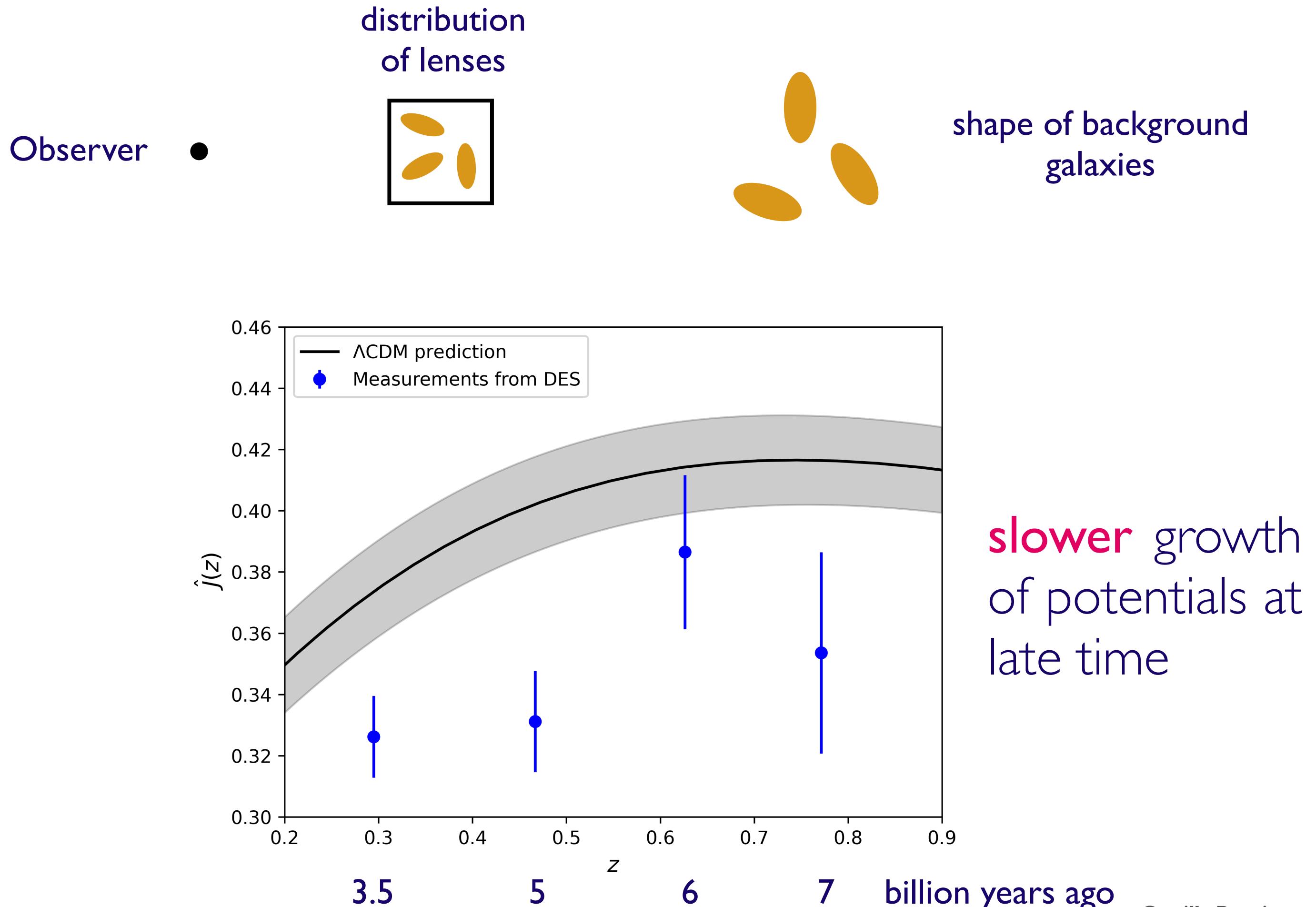
Heymans et al. (2020)
Abbott et al. (2022)&(2023)

less clustered than predicted in Λ CDM (2-3 sigma tension)

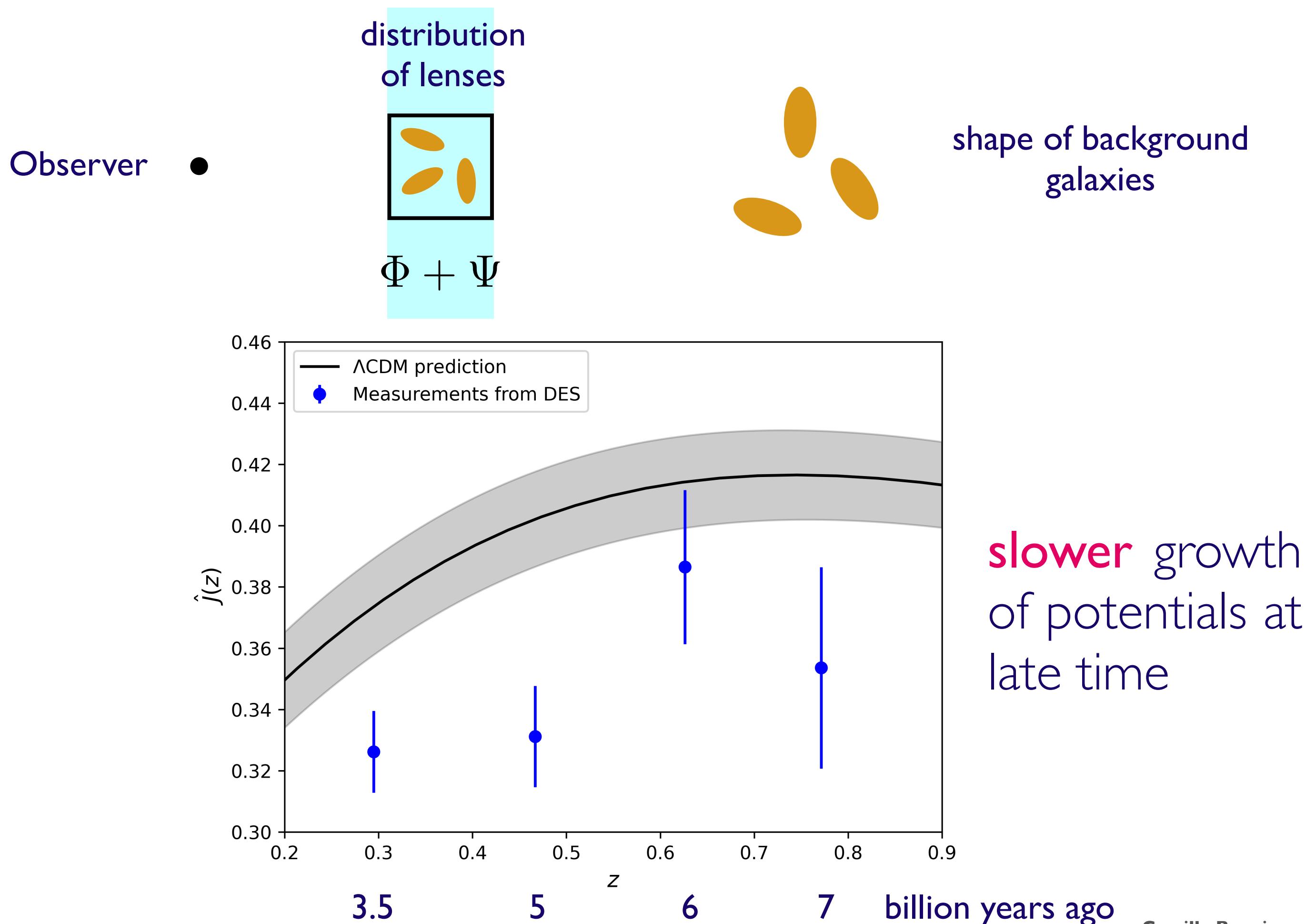
Can we improve on current techniques?

- ◆ Use gravitational lensing to measure the **evolution** of $\Phi + \Psi$
- ◆ Use 3D maps of galaxies to measure the **evolution** of Ψ
- ◆ Test the relation between Φ and Ψ : test of **General Relativity**
- ◆ Test the relation between V and Ψ : test of **Euler equation** for dark matter

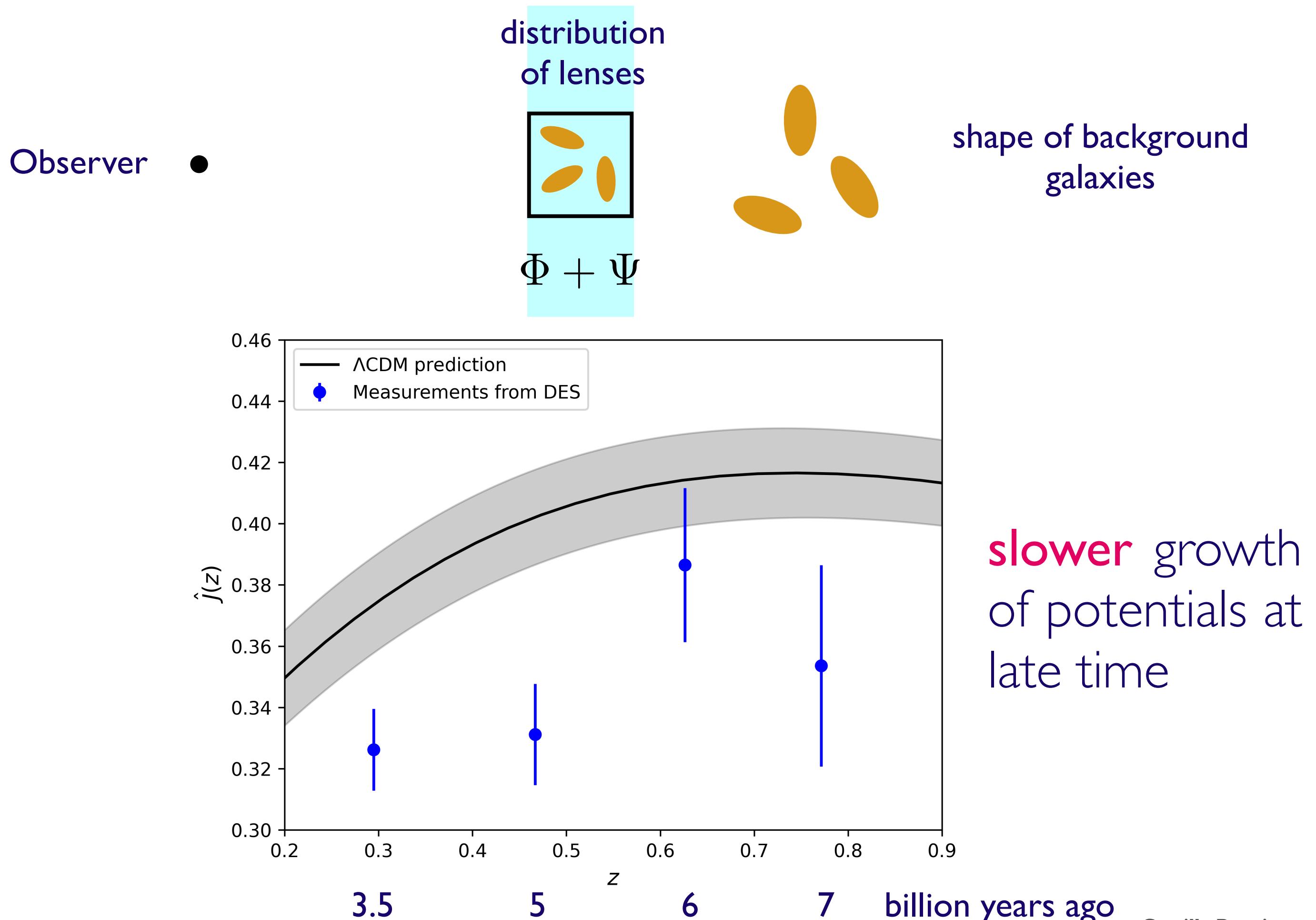
Measuring the sum of potentials



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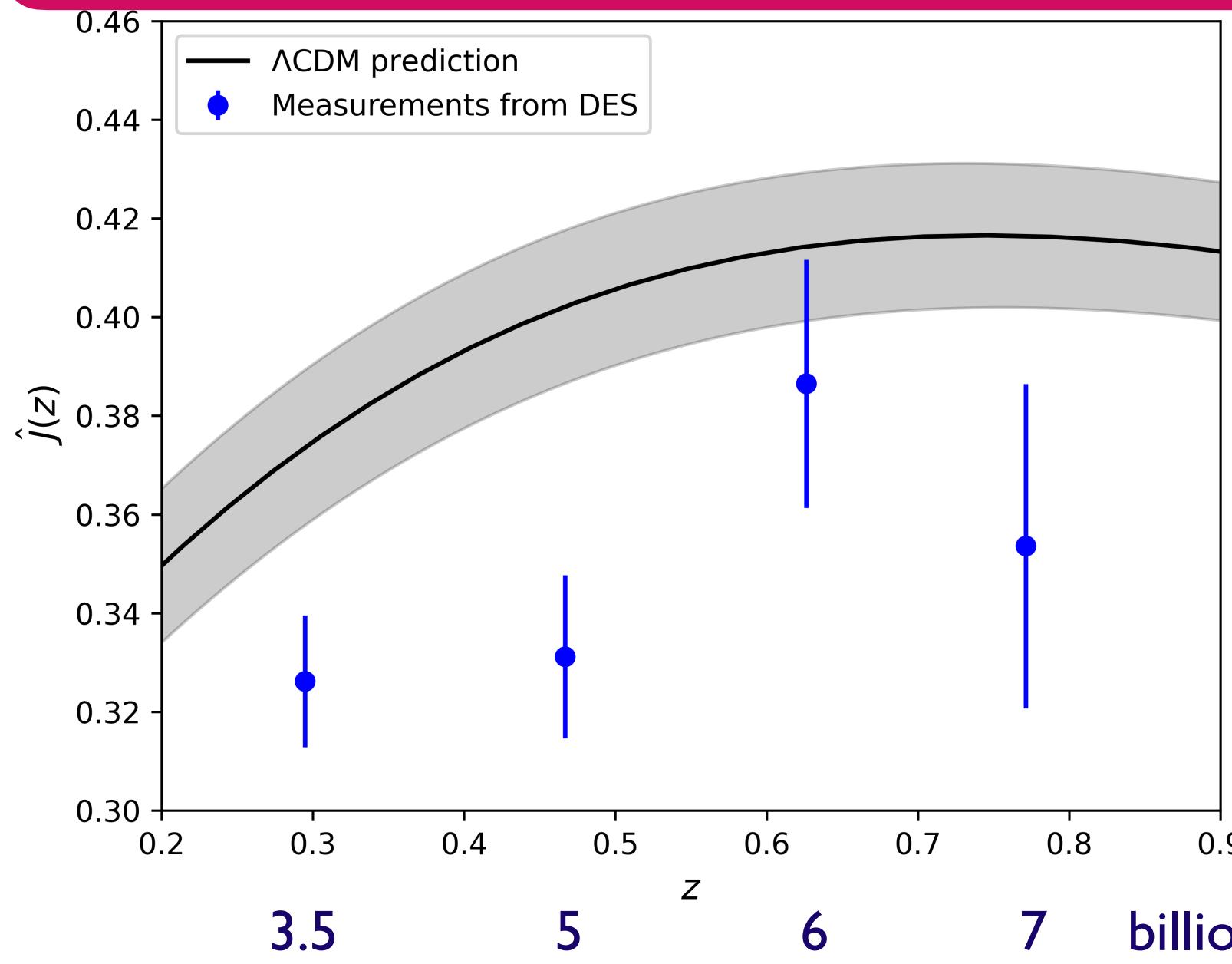
Measuring the sum of potentials

Observer

distribution
of lenses

of background
galaxies

If the deviations persist: are they due to modified gravity, dark matter interactions or evolving dark energy?

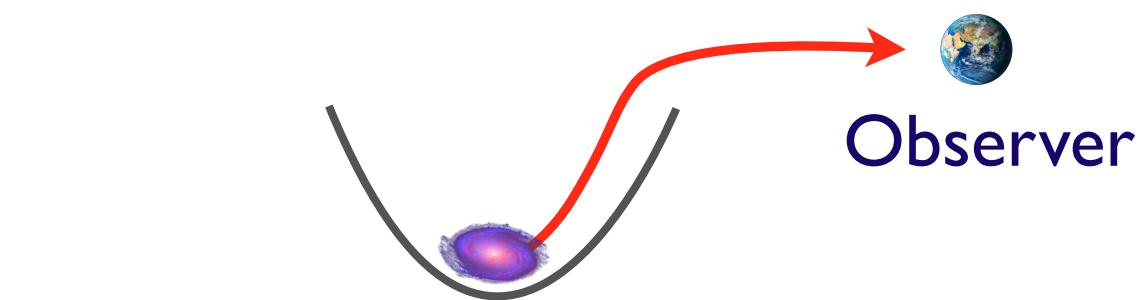


slower growth
of potentials at
late time

Measuring the distortion of time

- ◆ 3D **maps**: distance measured through the redshift
 - expansion
 - Doppler

Another effect: **gravitational redshift**



Change in photon frequency

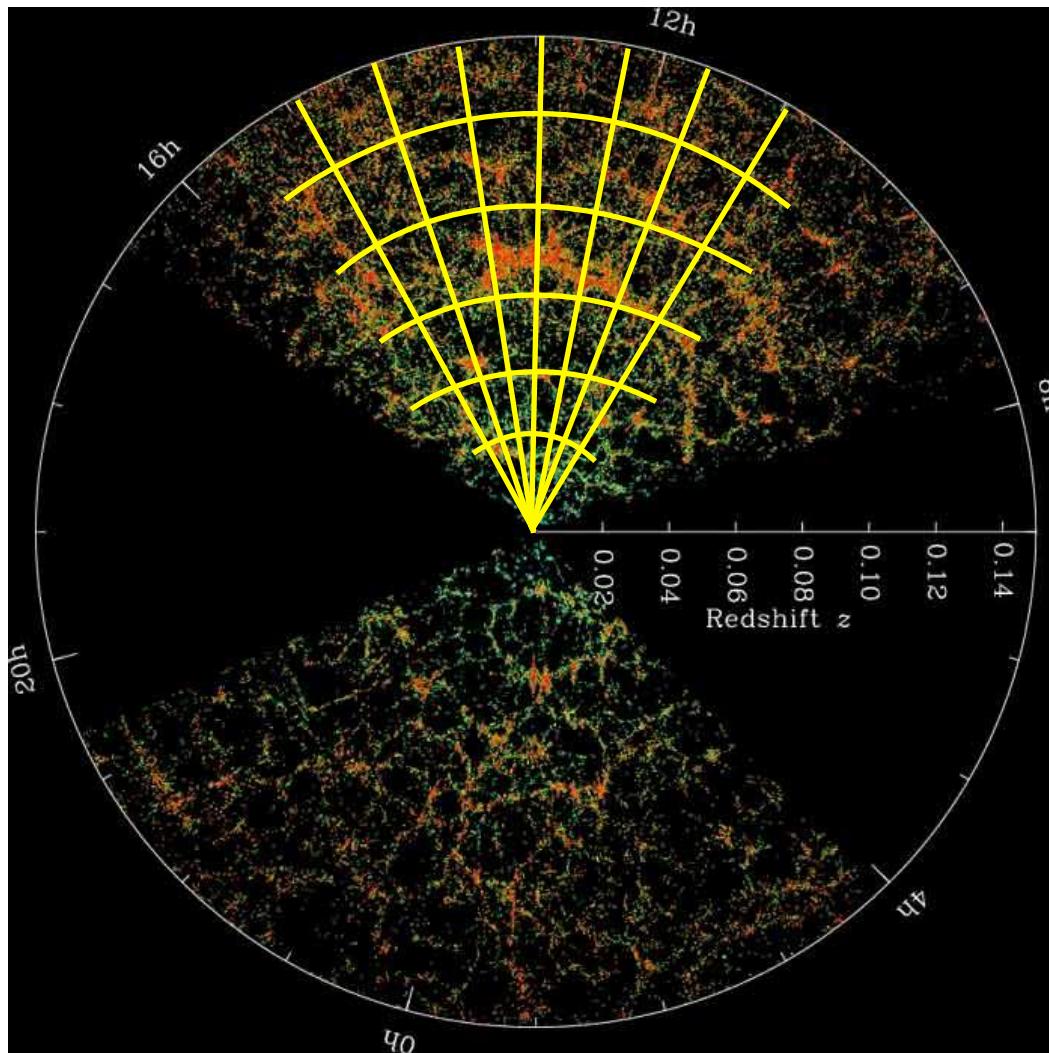
- ◆ The effect is typically **100 times smaller** than Doppler effect
- ◆ Can we use 3D maps to **isolate** it?

What do we measure?

CB and Durrer (2011)

We count the number of **galaxies** per **pixel**: $\Delta = \frac{N - \bar{N}}{\bar{N}}$

Credit: M. Blanton, SDSS

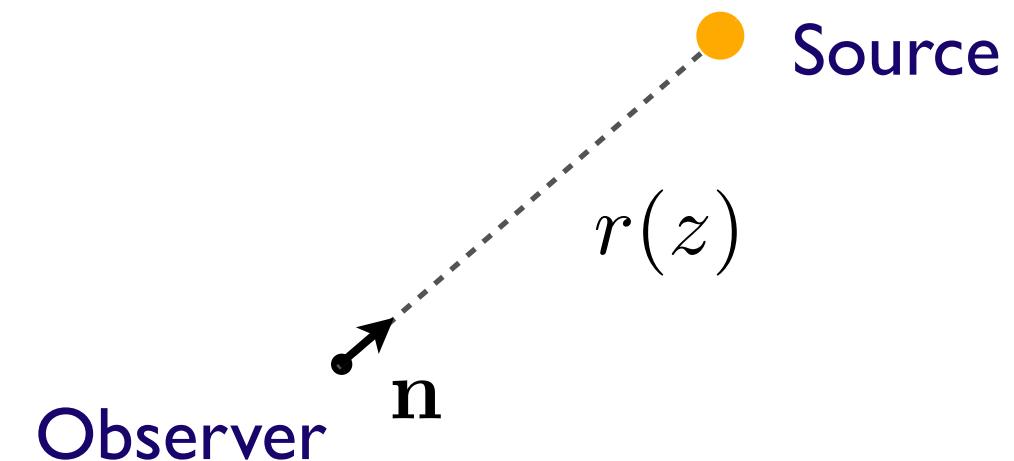


- ◆ Galaxies follow the distribution of matter $\Delta = b \cdot \delta$
- ◆ We never observe directly the position of galaxies, we observe the **redshift** z and the **direction** of incoming photons \mathbf{n}

$$(x_1, x_2, x_3)$$

In a **homogeneous** universe:

- we calculate the distance $r(z)$
- light propagates on straight lines

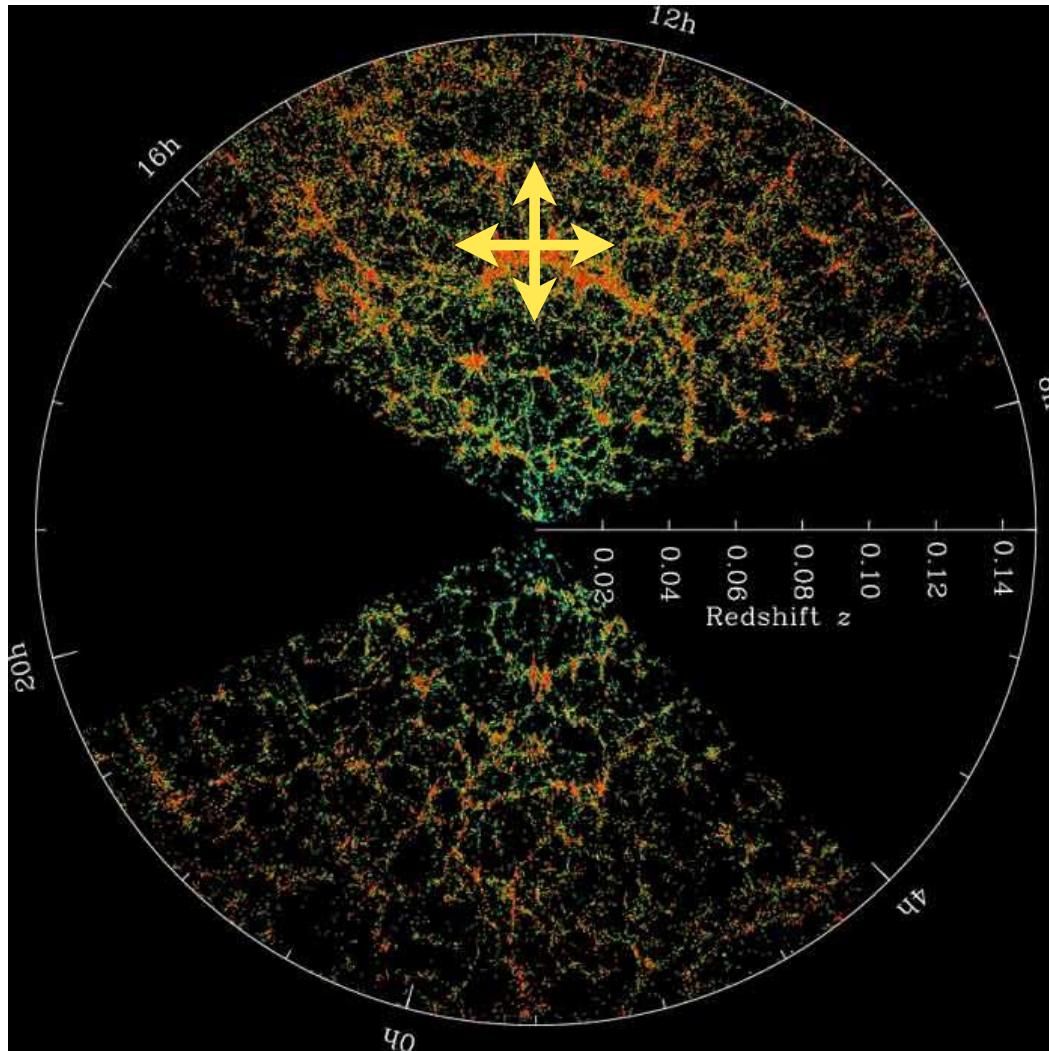


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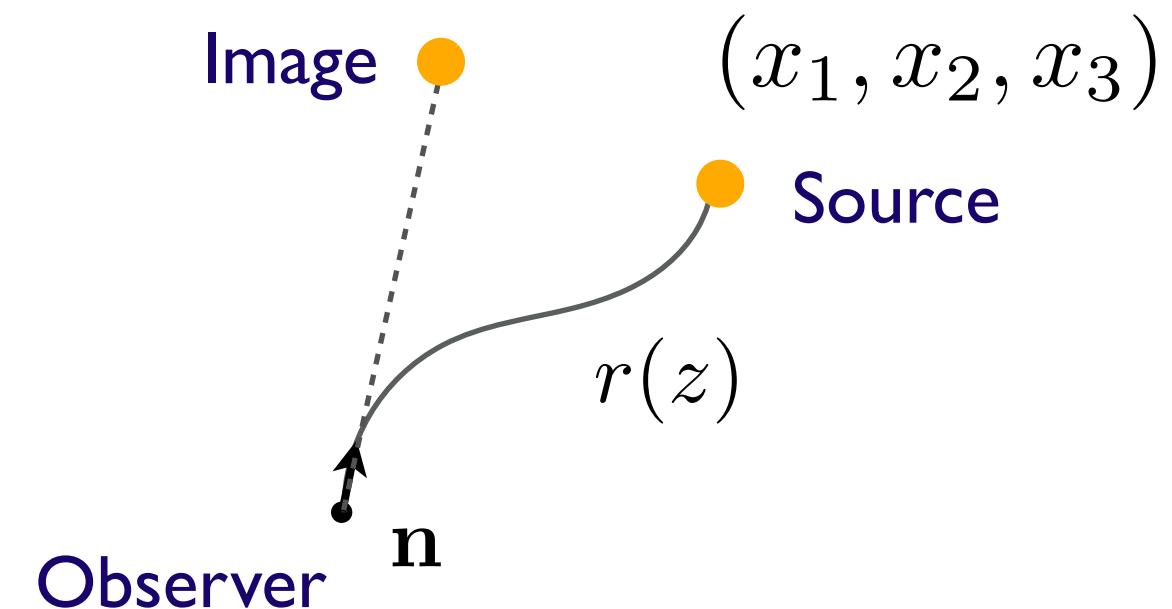
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Inhomogeneities modify:

- distance-redshift relation
- angular position of the image

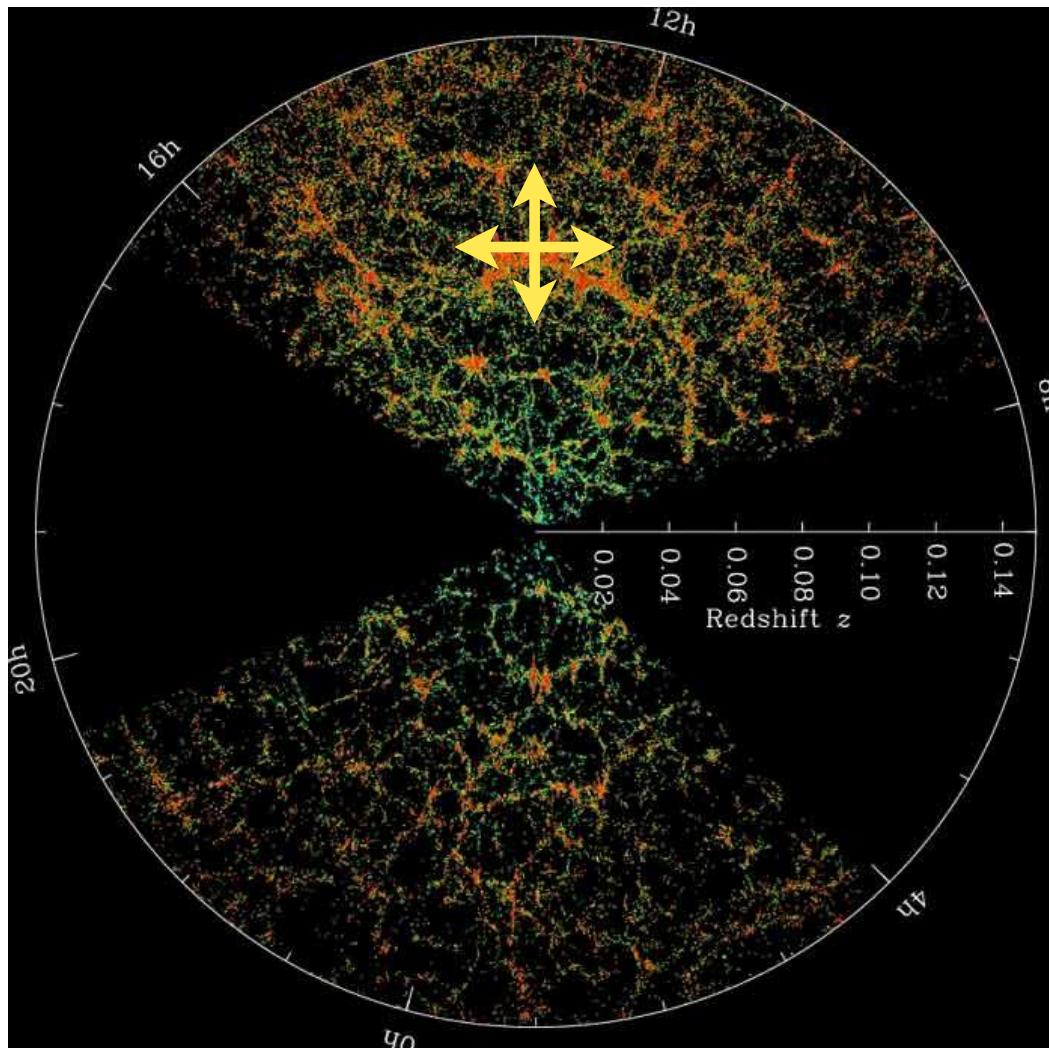


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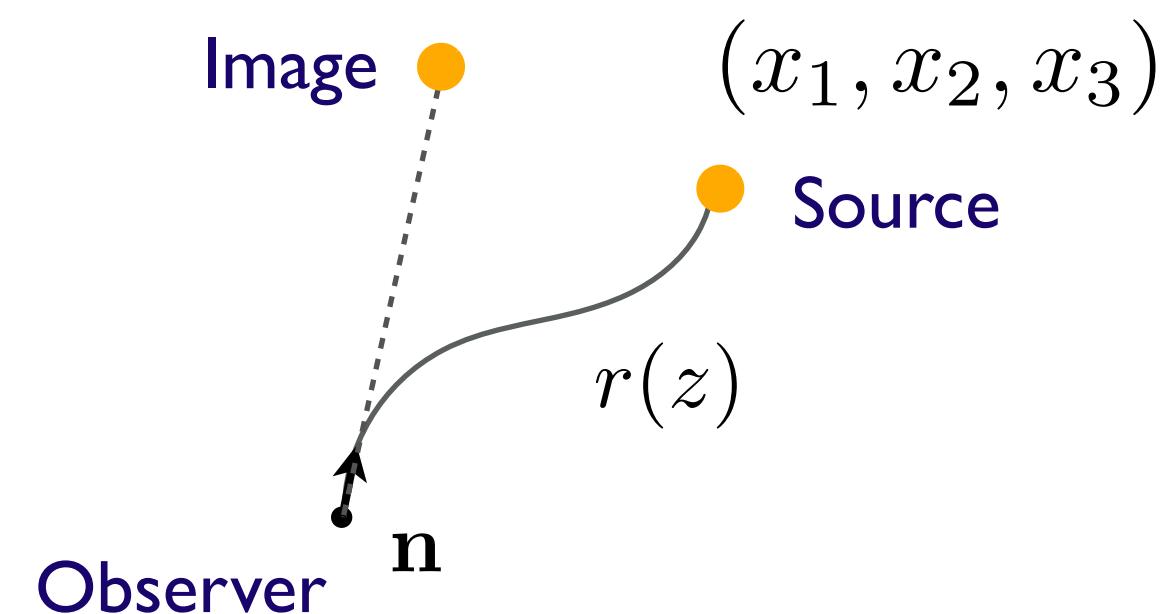
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Light propagation

$$ds^2 = -a^2(1+2\Psi)d\eta^2 + a^2(1-2\Phi)d\mathbf{x}^2$$



What do we measure?

$$\begin{aligned}
 \Delta(z, \mathbf{n}) = & b \cdot \delta - \frac{1}{\mathcal{H}} \partial_r (\mathbf{V} \cdot \mathbf{n}) \\
 & + (5s - 2) \int_0^r dr' \frac{r - r'}{2rr'} \Delta_\Omega(\Phi + \Psi) \\
 & + \left(1 - \frac{\dot{\mathcal{H}}}{\mathcal{H}^2} + \frac{5s - 2}{r\mathcal{H}} - 5s + f^{\text{evol}} \right) \mathbf{V} \cdot \mathbf{n} + \frac{1}{\mathcal{H}} \dot{\mathbf{V}} \cdot \mathbf{n} + \frac{1}{\mathcal{H}} \partial_r \Psi \\
 & + \frac{2 - 5s}{r} \int_0^r dr' (\Phi + \Psi) + 3\mathcal{H} \nabla^{-2} (\nabla \mathbf{V}) + \Psi + (5s - 2)\Phi \\
 & + \frac{1}{\mathcal{H}} \dot{\Phi} + \left(\frac{\dot{\mathcal{H}}}{\mathcal{H}^2} + \frac{2 - 5s}{r\mathcal{H}} + 5s - f^{\text{evol}} \right) \left[\Psi + \int_0^r dr' (\dot{\Phi} + \dot{\Psi}) \right]
 \end{aligned}$$

What do we measure?

Matter fluctuations

$$\begin{aligned}
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What do we measure?

$$\begin{aligned}
 \Delta(z, \mathbf{n}) = & b \cdot \delta - \boxed{\frac{1}{\mathcal{H}} \partial_r (\mathbf{V} \cdot \mathbf{n})} \text{ Doppler} \\
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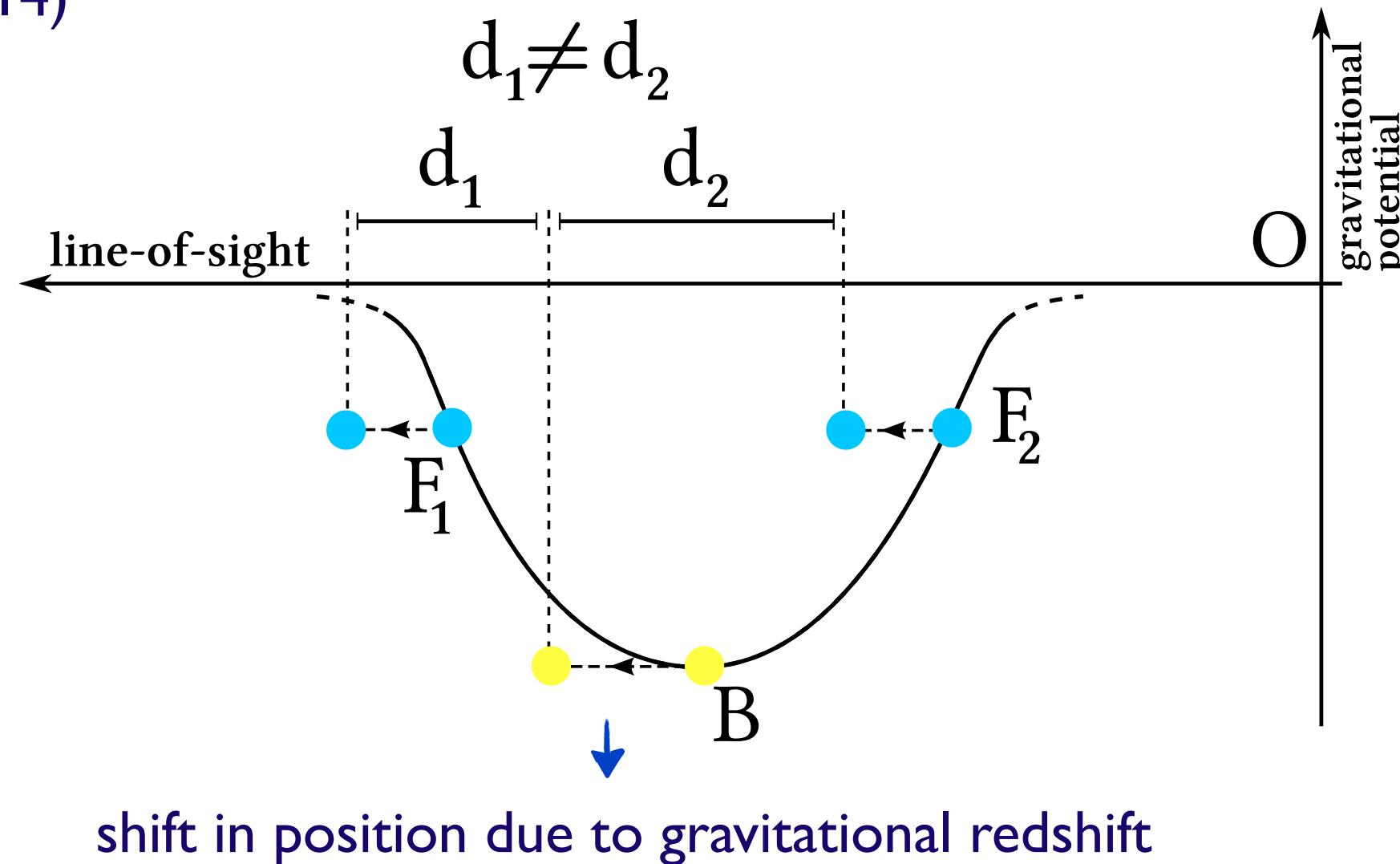
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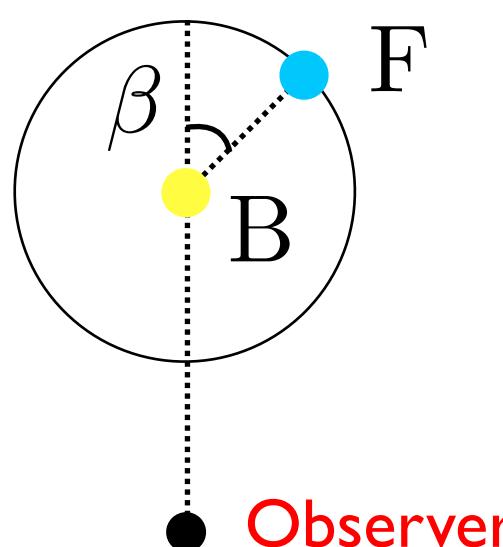
Gravitational redshift

Breaking of symmetry from gravitational redshift

CB, Hui & Gaztanaga (2014)

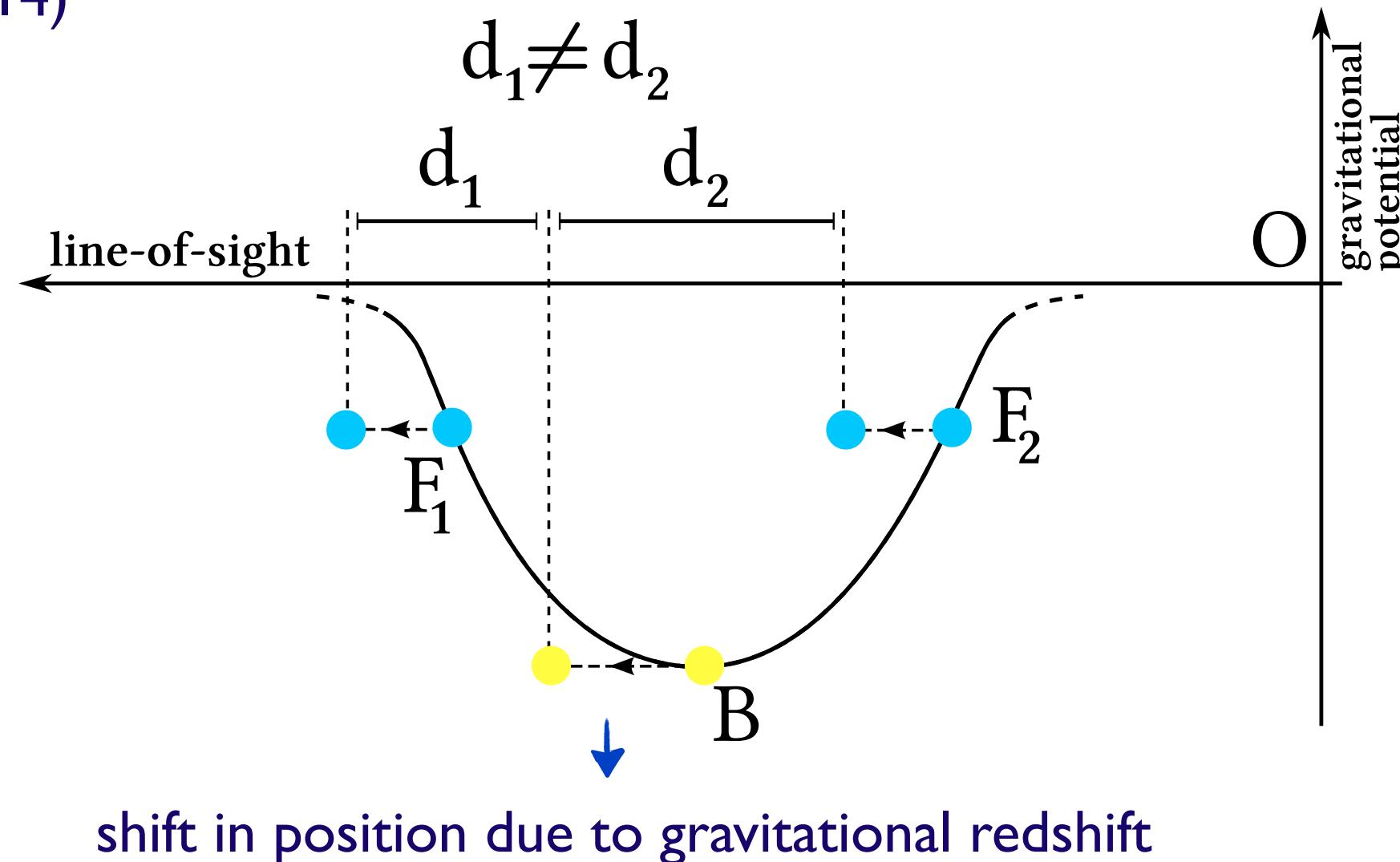


Taking all pairs of galaxies into account: **dipolar** modulation

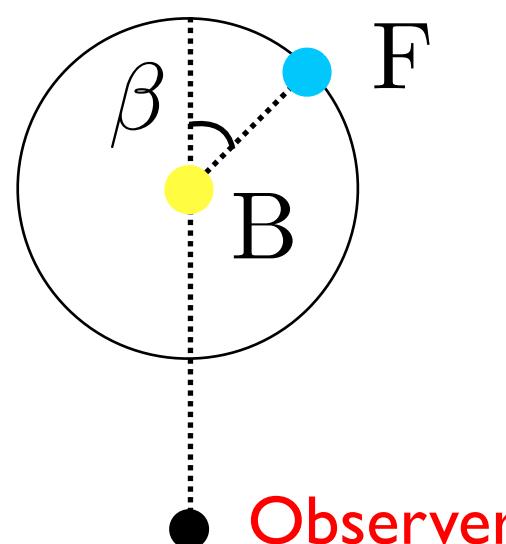


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Taking all pairs of galaxies into account: **dipolar** modulation



We can **isolate** the effect
by fitting for a dipole

Extracting a dipole

$$\Delta(z, \mathbf{n}) = b \cdot \delta - \frac{1}{\mathcal{H}} \partial_r (\mathbf{V} \cdot \mathbf{n})$$

$$+ (5s - 2) \int_0^r dr' \frac{r - r'}{2rr'} \Delta_\Omega(\Phi + \Psi)$$

Dipolar modulation

$$+ \left(1 - \frac{\dot{\mathcal{H}}}{\mathcal{H}^2} + \frac{5s - 2}{r\mathcal{H}} - 5s + f^{\text{evol}} \right) \mathbf{V} \cdot \mathbf{n} + \frac{1}{\mathcal{H}} \dot{\mathbf{V}} \cdot \mathbf{n} + \frac{1}{\mathcal{H}} \partial_r \Psi$$

$$+ \frac{2 - 5s}{r} \int_0^r dr' (\Phi + \Psi) + 3\mathcal{H} \nabla^{-2} (\nabla \mathbf{V}) + \Psi + (5s - 2)\Phi$$

$$+ \frac{1}{\mathcal{H}} \dot{\Phi} + \left(\frac{\dot{\mathcal{H}}}{\mathcal{H}^2} + \frac{2 - 5s}{r\mathcal{H}} + 5s - f^{\text{evol}} \right) \left[\Psi + \int_0^r dr' (\dot{\Phi} + \dot{\Psi}) \right]$$

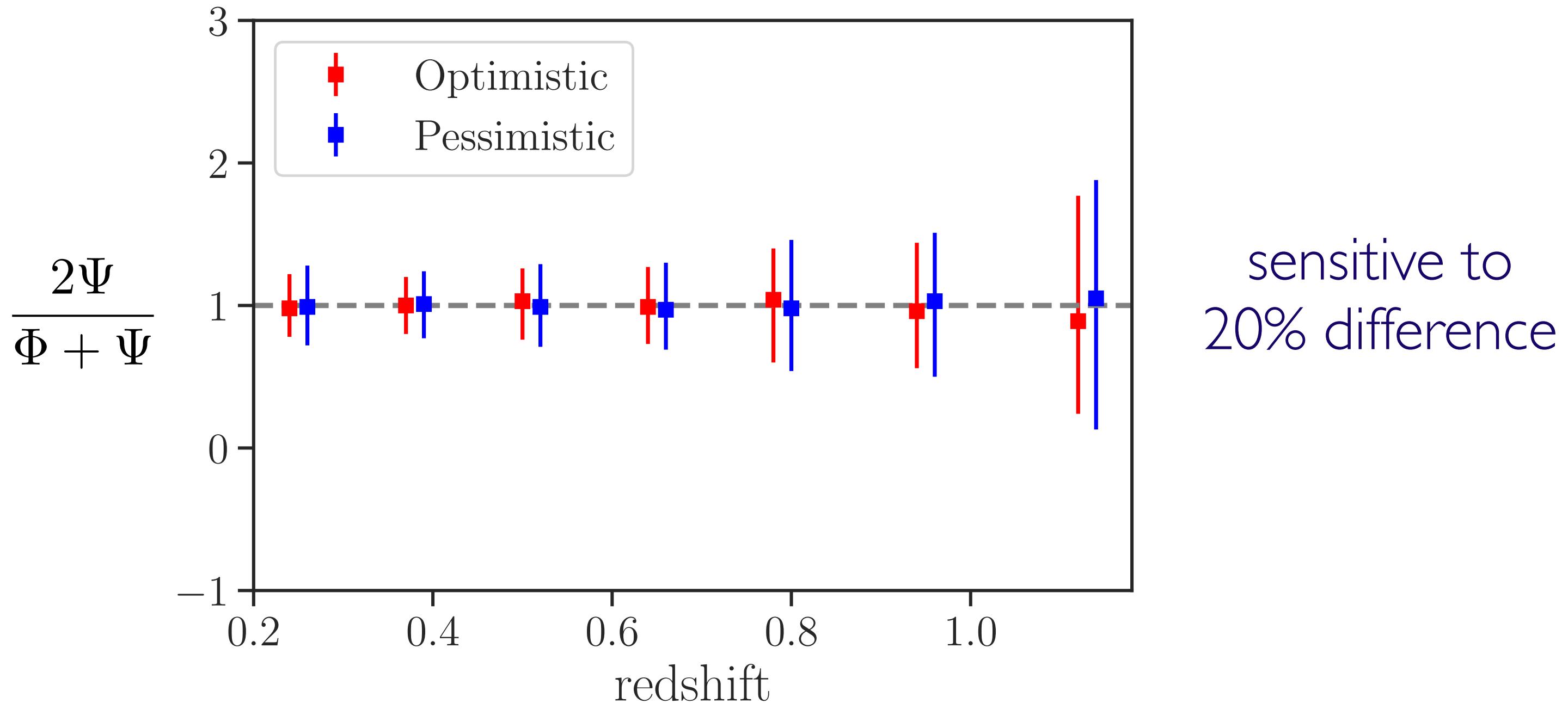
Isolating gravitational redshift

- ◆ **First detection** expected with **DESI** (this year?), but low SNR
10 millions galaxies, 14'000 square degrees
- ◆ **Square Kilometer Array (2030)**
one billion galaxies, 30'000 square degrees

Forecasts for SKA2

Redshift	0.35	0.45	0.55	0.65	0.75	0.85	0.95
Constraints	23%	24%	28%	33%	40%	48%	60%

Testing for a gravitational slip



Detecting a gravitational slip would be
a **smoking gun** for modified gravity

Testing Euler equation

- ◆ Euler equation projected in the direction \mathbf{n}

$$\dot{\mathbf{V}} \cdot \mathbf{n} + \mathcal{H} \mathbf{V} \cdot \mathbf{n} + \partial_r \Psi = 0$$

- ◆ We modify it with two scale-independent parameters

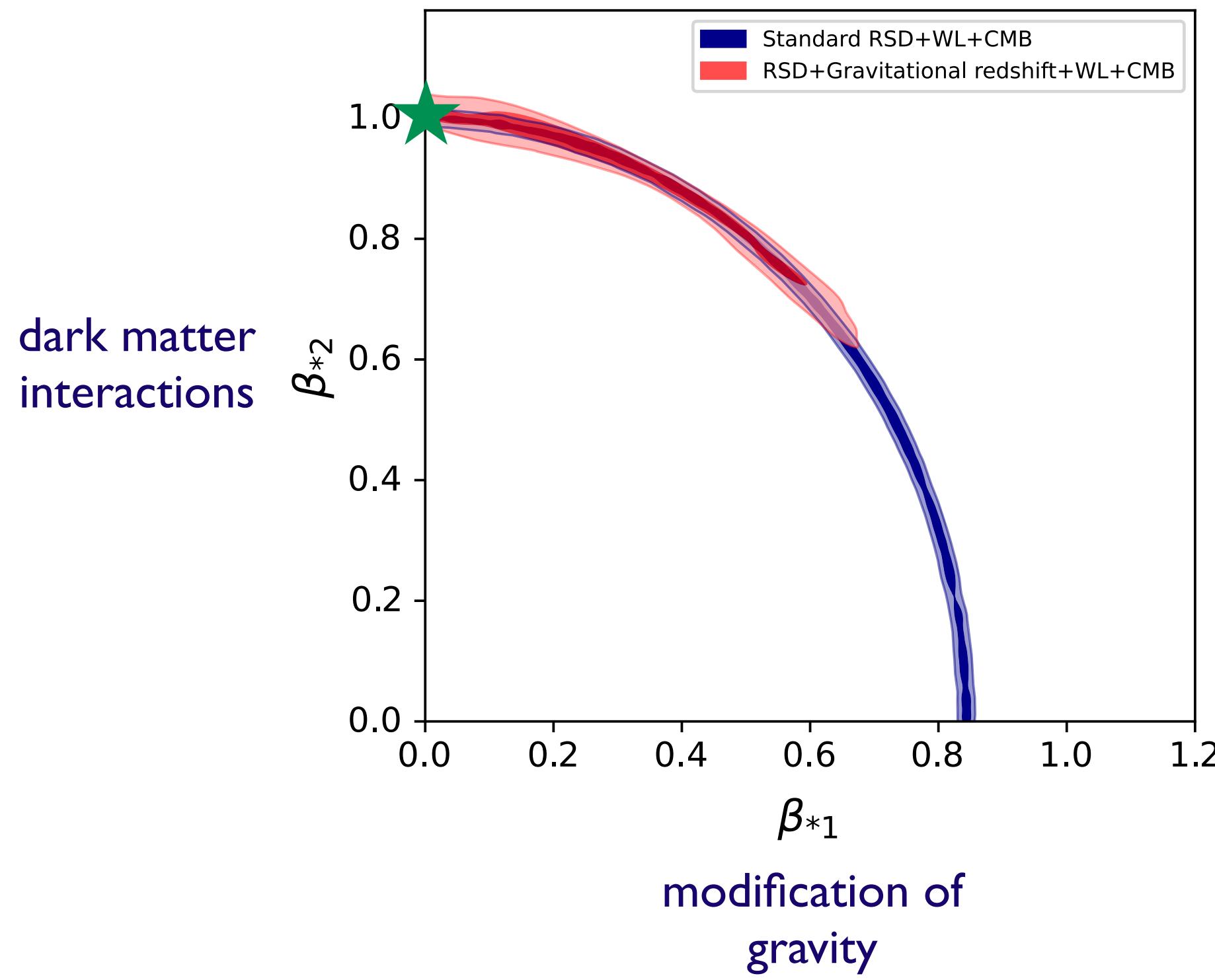
$$\dot{\mathbf{V}} \cdot \mathbf{n} + \mathcal{H}[1 + \Theta(z)] \mathbf{V} \cdot \mathbf{n} + [1 + \Gamma(z)] \partial_r \Psi = 0$$

 friction
  additional force

- ◆ With the SKA we can detect: change of 8% in friction and 16% in additional force

Distinguish between Euler and modified gravity

We **simulate** data in a model where **dark matter interacts** with dark energy and gravity is given by General Relativity



Conclusion

- ◆ **Current data** are mostly in agreement with Λ CDM
- ◆ **Future survey** will allow us to measure
 - Evolution of $\Phi + \Psi$
 - Evolution of Ψ
- ◆ We can test for
 - **gravitational slip** (modified gravity)
 - dark matter **interactions**
- ◆ We can **distinguish** the two scenarios