

# A Cosmic ALP Background and Soft X-ray Excesses from Galaxy Clusters

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Patras Axions Meeting 2014, CERN, 1st July 2014



1. The Cosmological Moduli Problem
2. A 0.1 - 1 keV Cosmic ALP Background
3. Observing a Cosmic ALP Background and the Cluster Soft Excess

# Thanks to my collaborators

1208.3562 Michele Cicoli, JC, Fernando Quevedo

*'Dark Radiation in LARGE Volume Models'*

1304.1804 JC, David Marsh

*'The Cosmophenomenology of Axionic Dark Radiation'*

1305.3603 JC, David Marsh

*'Searching for a 0.1-1 keV Cosmic Axion Background'*

1312.3947 Stephen Angus, JC, David Marsh, Andrew Powell, Lukas Witkowski

*'Soft X-Ray Excess in the Coma Cluster from a Cosmic Axion Background'*

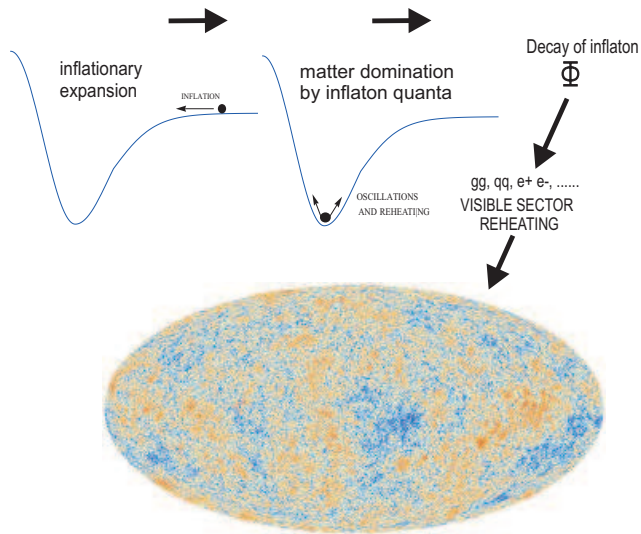
1406.5188 David Kraljic, Markus Rummel, JC

*'ALP Conversion and the Soft X-Ray Excess in the Outskirts of the Coma Cluster'*

# I THE COSMOLOGICAL MODULI PROBLEM

# The Standard Cosmology

The Standard Cosmology:



# The Cosmological Moduli Problem

Polonyi 81, Coughlan Ross 83, Banks Kaplan Nelson 93, de Carlos Casas Quevedo  
Roulet 93

Hot Big Bang starts when universe becomes radiation dominated.

This occurs 'when inflaton decays'. However:

- ▶ Non-relativistic matter redshifts as  $\rho_\Phi \sim a(t)^{-3}$
- ▶ Radiation energy density redshifts as  $\rho_\gamma \sim a(t)^{-4}$
- ▶ Therefore as  $a(t) \rightarrow \infty$ ,  $\frac{\rho_\gamma}{\rho_\Phi} \rightarrow 0$

Long-lived matter comes to dominate almost independent of the initial conditions.

Reheating is dominated by the **LAST** scalar to decay **NOT** the first.

# The Cosmological Moduli Problem

Moduli are generically misaligned from their final minimum during inflation, and after inflation oscillate as non-relativistic matter ( $\rho \sim a^{-3}$ ) before decaying.

Misalignment occurs as inflationary potential contributes to the moduli potential:

$$V_{inf} = V_{inf}(S, T, \dots)$$

The closed string origin of moduli imply their interactions are 'gravitational' and suppressed by powers of  $M_P$ .

Moduli live a long time and come to dominate the energy density of the universe

# The Cosmological Moduli Problem

Lifetime of moduli is determined by  $M_P$ -suppressed decay rate:

$$\begin{aligned}\Gamma &\sim \frac{1}{8\pi} \frac{m_\phi^3}{M_P^2} \\ \tau &= \Gamma^{-1} \sim 8\pi \frac{M_P^2}{m_\phi^3} = \left(\frac{100\text{TeV}}{m_\phi}\right)^3 0.1\text{s} \\ T_{\text{decay}} &\sim \left(\frac{m_\phi}{100\text{TeV}}\right)^{3/2} 3 \text{ MeV}\end{aligned}$$

Hot Big Bang does not start until moduli decay.

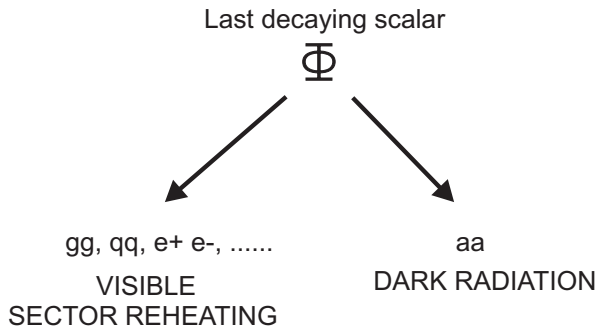
The cosmological moduli problem is the statement that for  $m_\phi \lesssim 100\text{TeV}$  moduli decays spoil predictions of big bang nucleosynthesis.

Side consequence: generic expectation of string compactifications is that the universe passes through a modulus-dominated epoch, and reheating comes from the decays of these moduli.



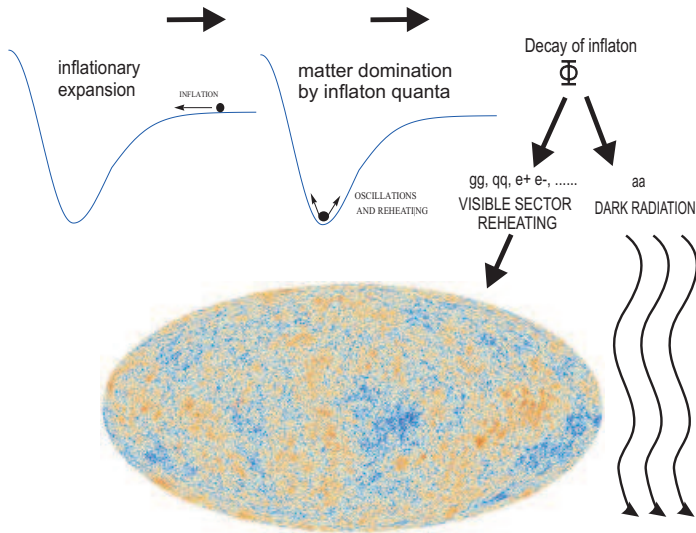
# The Cosmological Moduli Opportunity

We expect reheating to be driven by the **late-time decays** of **massive Planck-coupled particles**.



Hidden sector decays of moduli give rise to **dark radiation**.  
Ideal subject for string phenomenology!

# The Cosmological Moduli Opportunity



# The Cosmological Moduli Opportunity

As gravitationally coupled particles, moduli generally couple to **everything** with  $M_P^{-1}$  couplings and there is no reason to expect vanishing couplings to hidden sectors.

$$\text{Visible sector} : \frac{\Phi}{4M_P} F_{\mu\nu}^{color} F^{color,\mu\nu}, \frac{\partial_\mu \partial^\mu \Phi}{M_P} H_u H_d, \dots$$

$$\text{Hidden sector} : \frac{\Phi}{2M_P} \partial_\mu a \partial^\mu a, \frac{\Phi}{4M_P} F_{\mu\nu}^{hidden} F^{hidden,\mu\nu} \dots$$

This is supported by explicit studies of string effective field theories

In particular, axionic decay modes naturally arise with

$$\text{BR}(\Phi \rightarrow aa) \sim 0.01 \rightarrow 1.$$

1208.3562 Cicoli JC Quevedo, 1208.3563 Higaki Takahashi, 1304.7987 Higaki  
Nakayama Takahashi

# The Cosmological Moduli Opportunity

**Independent of susy breaking scale** in string models reheating is driven by decays of the lightest moduli, and dark radiation arises from hidden sector decays of these moduli.

Example: volume modulus in LVS,  $\tau_b$  is lightest moduli and has a massless volume ALP partner  $a_b$

$$K = -3 \ln (\tau_b + \bar{\tau}_b)$$
$$\mathcal{L} = \frac{3\partial_\mu \tau_b \partial^\mu \tau_b}{4\tau_b^2} + \frac{3\partial_\mu a_b \partial^\mu a_b}{4\tau_b^2}$$

Volume modulus  $\tau_b$  has hidden sector decay  $\tau_b \rightarrow a_b a_b$  to volume ALP. 1208.3562 Cicoli JC Quevedo 1208.3563 Higaki Takahashi

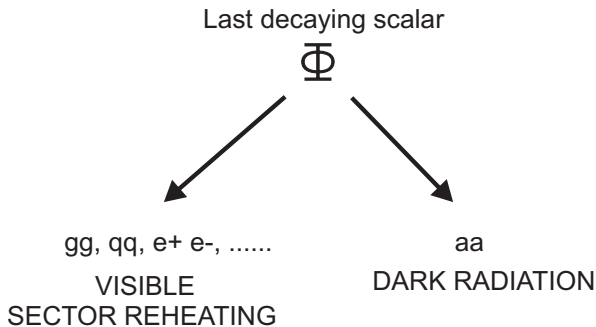
What happens to  $a_b$ ? It becomes **Dark Radiation**

# II

## A COSMIC AXION BACKGROUND

# A Cosmic ALP Background

String theory says we expect reheating to be driven by the late-time decays of massive Planck-coupled particles.



Dark radiation arises from hidden sector decays of moduli

Ideal subject for string phenomenology!

# A Cosmic ALP Background

Typical moduli couplings  $\frac{\Phi}{4M_P} F_{\mu\nu} F^{\mu\nu}$  or  $\frac{\Phi}{M_P} \partial_\mu a \partial^\mu a$  give

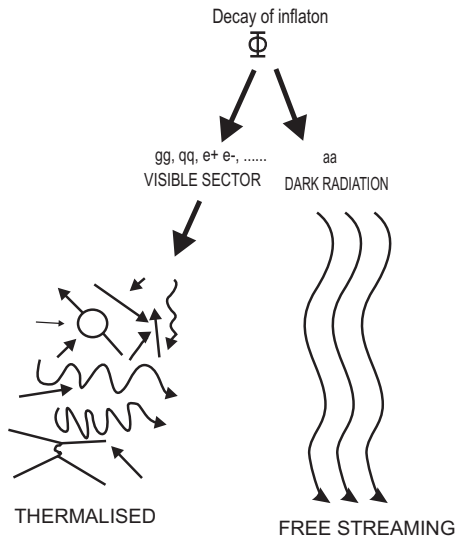
$$H_{decay} \sim \Gamma \sim \frac{1}{8\pi} \frac{m_\phi^3}{M_P^2}$$

$$T_{reheat} \sim \left(3H_{decay}^2 M_P^2\right)^{1/4} \sim \frac{m_\phi^{3/2}}{M_P^{1/2}} \sim 0.6\text{GeV} \left(\frac{m_\phi}{10^6\text{GeV}}\right)^{3/2}$$

$$E_{axion} = \left(\frac{m_\phi}{2}\right) = 5 \times 10^5\text{GeV} \left(\frac{m_\phi}{10^6\text{GeV}}\right)$$

Visible sector thermalises: however ALPs propagate freely as  
universe is transparent to them.

# A Cosmic ALP Background





# A Cosmic ALP Background

$$\begin{aligned}\Phi \rightarrow gg, \dots : \quad & \text{Decays thermalise} & T_\gamma \sim T_{\text{reheat}} \sim \frac{m_\Phi^{3/2}}{M_P^{1/2}} \\ \Phi \rightarrow aa : \quad & \text{ALPs never thermalise} & E_a = \frac{m_\Phi}{2}\end{aligned}$$

Thermal bath cools into the CMB while ALPs never thermalise and freestream to the present day:

Ratio of ALP energy to photon temperature is

$$\frac{E_a}{T_\gamma} \sim \left(\frac{M_P}{m_\Phi}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \sim 10^6 \left(\frac{10^6 \text{ GeV}}{m_\Phi}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}$$

Retained through cosmic history!

# A Cosmic ALP Background

Ratio of ALP energy to photon temperature is

$$\frac{E_a}{T_\gamma} \sim \left( \frac{M_P}{m_\Phi} \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \sim 10^6 \left( \frac{10^6 \text{GeV}}{m_\Phi} \right)^{\frac{1}{2}}$$

No absolute prediction, but a lightest modulus mass  $m \sim 10^6 \text{GeV}$  arises in many string models - often correlated with SUSY approaches to the weak hierarchy problem.

- ▶ KKLT [hep-th/0503216](#) Choi et al
- ▶ Sequestered LVS [0906.3297](#) Blumenhagen et al
- ▶ 'G2 MSSM' [0804.0863](#) Acharya et al

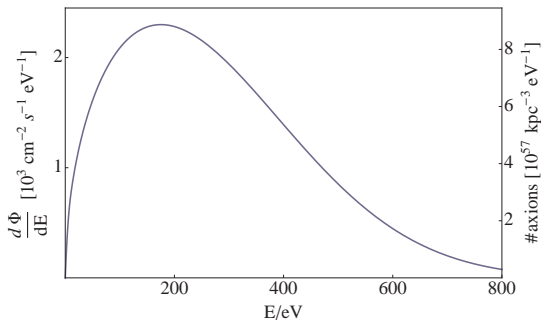
NB Moduli problem requires  $m_\Phi \gtrsim 10^5 \text{TeV}$ .

# A Cosmic ALP Background

ALPs originate at  $z \sim 10^{12}$  ( $t \sim 10^{-6}$  s) and freestream to today.

## PREDICTION: Cosmic ALP Background

Energy:  $E \sim 0.1 \div 1\text{keV}$       Flux:  $\sim \left(\frac{\Delta N_{\text{eff}}}{0.57}\right) 10^6 \text{cm}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1}$ .



# A Cosmic ALP Background

The current energy of such axionic dark radiation is

$$E_a \sim 200\text{eV} \left( \frac{10^6 \text{ GeV}}{m_\phi} \right)^{\frac{1}{2}}$$

The expectation that there is a dark analogue of the CMB at  $E \gg T_{CMB}$  comes from very simple and general properties of moduli.

It is not tied to any precise model for moduli stabilisation, or approach to realising the Standard Model.

It just requires the existence of massive particles only interacting gravitationally.

For  $10^5 \text{ GeV} \lesssim m_\phi \lesssim 10^8 \text{ GeV}$  CAB lies today in extreme ultraviolet /soft X-ray wavebands.

# III

## OBSERVING A COSMIC ALP BACKGROUND

How to see a CAB with  $E_a \sim 0.1 - 1\text{keV}$ ?

ALP-photon conversions come from axion coupling to electromagnetism:

$$\mathcal{L}_{a-\gamma} = -\frac{1}{4}F_{\mu\nu}F^{\mu\nu} - \frac{1}{4M}aF_{\mu\nu}\tilde{F}^{\mu\nu} + \frac{1}{2}\partial_\mu a\partial^\mu a - \frac{1}{2}m_a^2a^2.$$

For general axion-like particles  $M \equiv g_{a\gamma\gamma}^{-1}$  and  $m_a$  are unspecified.

We take  $m_a = 0$  (in practice  $\lesssim 10^{-12}\text{eV}$ ) and keep  $M$  free.

Direct bounds (ALP production in supernovae) are  $M \gtrsim 10^{11}\text{GeV}$ .

ALP-to-photon conversion probability for ALP energy  $E_a$  in transverse magnetic field  $B_{\perp}$  of domain size  $L$  is:

$$P(a \rightarrow \gamma) = \sin^2(2\theta) \sin^2\left(\frac{\Delta}{\cos 2\theta}\right)$$

where

$$\theta \approx 2.8 \cdot 10^{-5} \times \left(\frac{10^{-3} \text{cm}^{-3}}{n_e}\right) \left(\frac{B_{\perp}}{1 \mu\text{G}}\right) \left(\frac{E_a}{200 \text{ eV}}\right) \left(\frac{10^{14} \text{ GeV}}{M}\right),$$

$$\Delta = 0.27 \times \left(\frac{n_e}{10^{-3} \text{cm}^{-3}}\right) \left(\frac{200 \text{ eV}}{E_a}\right) \left(\frac{L}{1 \text{ kpc}}\right).$$

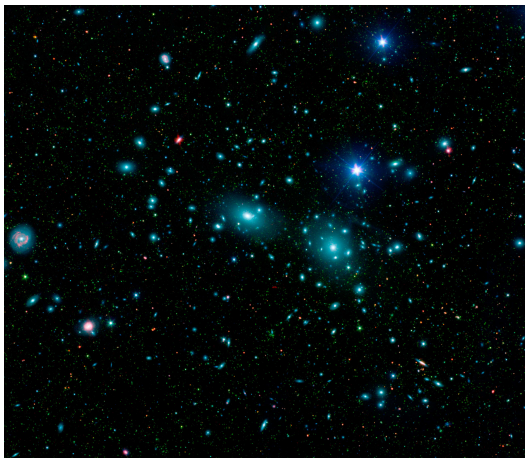
ALPs convert to photons in coherent magnetic field domain: want large magnetic fields supported over large volumes.

Best locations are galaxy clusters:

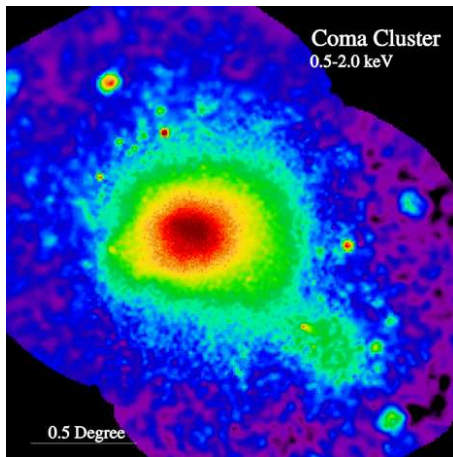
- ▶ The largest virialised structures in the universe
- ▶ Typical size 1 Mpc, typical mass  $10^{14} \div 10^{15} M_{sun}$ .
- ▶ Large magnetic fields  $B \sim 1 \div 10 \mu\text{G}$  coherent over  $L \sim 1 \div 10$  kpc.
- ▶ Hot intracluster gas,  $T_{gas} \sim 2 \div 10 \text{keV}$ .
- ▶ By mass 1 per cent galaxies, 10 per cent gas, 90 per cent dark matter.
- ▶ Sit at the 'large magnetic fields over large volumes' frontier of particle physics.



# The Coma Cluster in IR/Visible



# The Coma Cluster in X-rays



# The Cluster Soft Excess

In fact there exists a long-standing (since 1996) EUV/soft x-ray excess from galaxy clusters (Lieu 1996, review Durret 2008). E.g Coma has

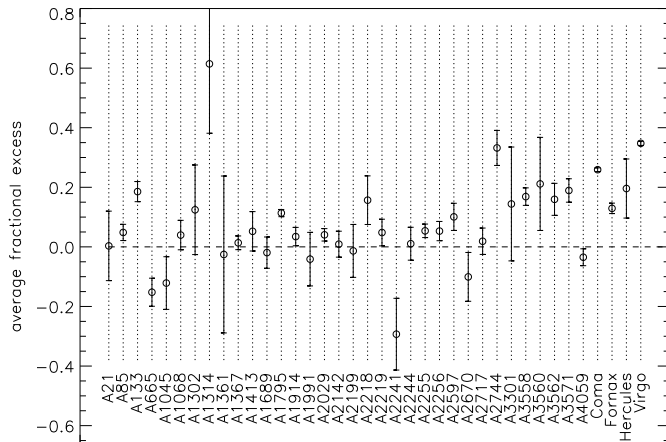
$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{excess}} \sim 10^{43} \text{erg s}^{-1}$$

Observed by different satellites - principally EUVE and soft bands of ROSAT.

Has been studied for a large number ( $\sim 40$ ) of clusters, present in  $\sim 15$ .

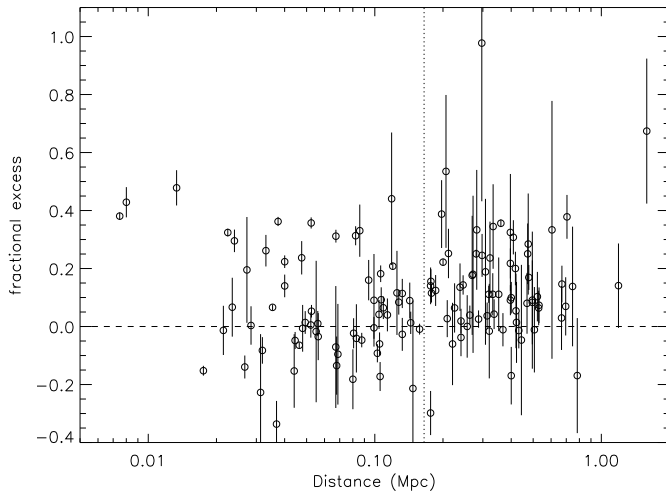
Difficulties with astrophysical explanations - see backup slides.

# The Cluster Soft Excess



from Bonamente et al 2002, fractional soft excess in ROSAT 0.14 - 0.28 keV R2 band

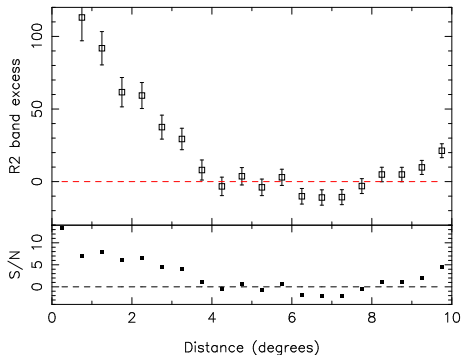
# The Cluster Soft Excess



from Bonamente et al 2002, fractional soft excess with radius

# The Cluster Soft Excess: Coma

Soft excess extends well beyond hot gas and cluster virial radius:



from 0903.3067 Bonamente et al, ROSAT R2 band (0.14-0.28keV) observations of Coma

# The Cluster Soft Excess and a CAB

Proposal: cluster soft excess generated by  $a \rightarrow \gamma$  conversion in cluster magnetic field.

Basic predictions:

- ▶ Magnitude and morphology of soft excess fully determined by cluster magnetic field and electron density
- ▶ Spatial extent of excess conterminous with magnetic field
- ▶ No thermal emission lines (e.g.  $O_{VII}$ ) associated to excess
- ▶ Energy of excess is constant across clusters, varying with redshift as  $E_a \sim (1 + z)$ .

Test by propagating ALPs through simulated cluster magnetic fields

# ALP Propagation through Center of Coma Cluster

Magnetic field model is best fit to Faraday rotation (Bonafede et al 1002.0594):

- ▶ Magnetic field has Kolmogorov spectrum,  $|B(k)| \sim k^{-11/3}$ , generated between  $k_{max} = \frac{2\pi}{2\text{kpc}}$  and  $k_{min} = \frac{2\pi}{34\text{kpc}}$ .
- ▶ Spatial magnetic field has Gaussian statistics.
- ▶ Central magnetic field  $\langle B \rangle_{r < 291\text{kpc}} = 4.7\mu\text{G}$
- ▶ Equipartition radial scaling of  $B$ ,  $B(r) \sim n_e(r)^{1/2}$
- ▶ Electron density taken from  $\beta$ -model with  $\beta = 0.75$ ,

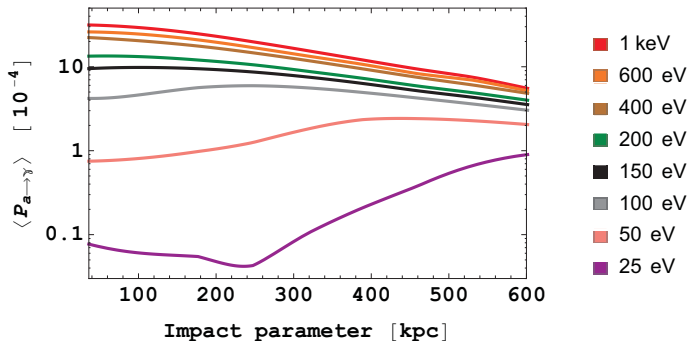
$$n_e(r) = 3.44 \times 10^{-3} \left( 1 + \left( \frac{r}{291\text{kpc}} \right)^2 \right)^{-\frac{3\beta}{2}} \text{cm}^{-3}$$

- ▶ Numerical  $2000^3$  magnetic field with 0.5kpc resolution.

Numerical propagation of ALPs with  $E = 25\text{eV} \div 25000\text{eV}$  and determination of  $P(a \rightarrow \gamma)$ .



# ALP Propagation through Centre of Coma

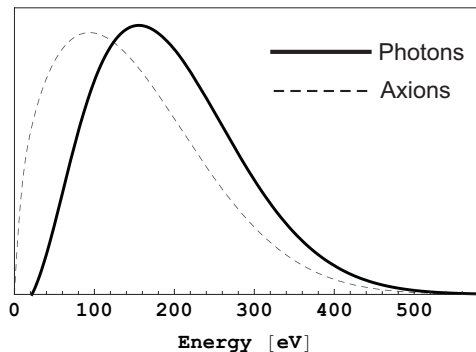


$a \rightarrow \gamma$  conversion probabilities for different ALP energies as a function of radius from the centre of Coma

Note the high suppression for  $E_a < 100\text{eV}$

Angus JC Marsh Powell Witkowski 1312.3947

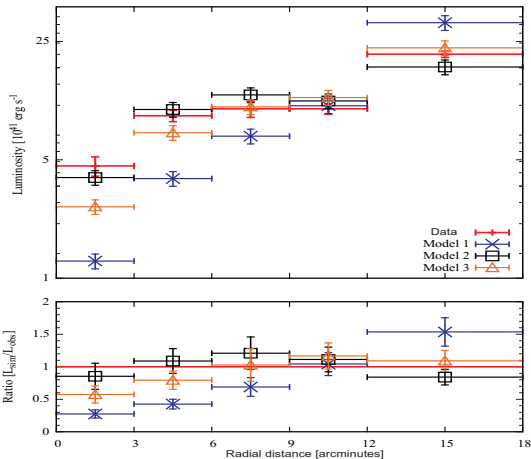
# ALP Propagation through Centre of Coma



Comparison of original ALP spectrum and spectrum of converted photons

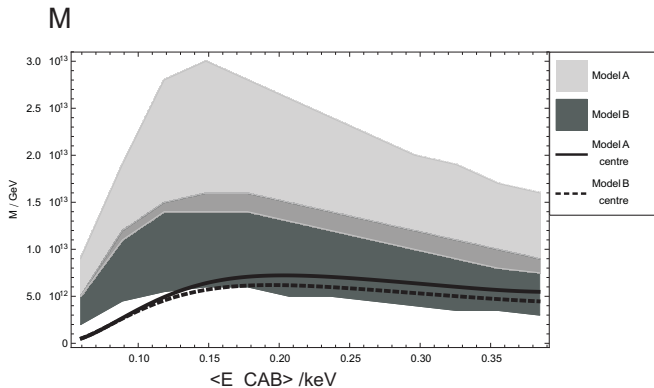
Photon spectrum falls off rapidly at both low and high energies

# ALP Propagation through Centre of Coma



Morphology fits reasonably well for  $M \sim 7 \times 10^{12} \text{ GeV}$

# ALP Propagation through Outskirts of Coma



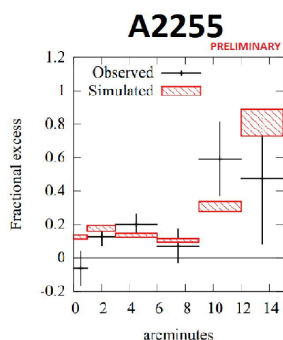
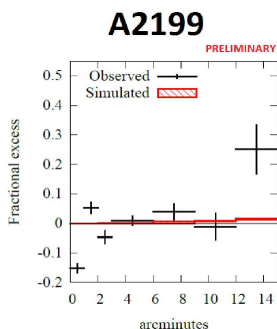
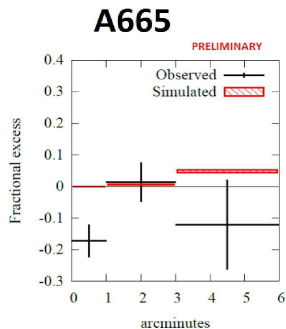
Fit to the outskirts gives a compatible value of  $M \sim 10^{13} \text{GeV}$ .

Kraljic, Rummel, JC 1406.5188

# ALP Propagation through Other Clusters

(Plots assume the Coma best fit value of  $M \sim 7 \times 10^{12} \text{ GeV}$ )

Powell, to appear



- ▶ Physics of moduli suggests the existence of a Cosmic ALP Background with energies  $E_a \gg T_{CMB}$
- ▶ CAB arises from hidden sectors decays of moduli to ALPs at the time of reheating
- ▶ CAB contributes to dark radiation and  $\Delta N_{eff}$
- ▶ CAB energy today is naturally in 0.1 – 1 keV range
- ▶ ALPs can convert into photons in astrophysical magnetic fields, and CAB may be responsible for long-standing soft X-ray excess from galaxy clusters

# BACKUP SLIDES

# Cluster Soft Excess: Astrophysical Explanations

Two main proposals for astrophysical explanations:

1. A warm thermal gas with  $T \sim 0.2\text{keV}$ .

Interpret soft excess as thermal bremsstrahlung emission from this warm gas.

2. A large non-thermal relativistic electron population with  $E \sim 200 - 300 \text{ MeV}$ .

Interpret soft excess as inverse Compton scattering of electrons on CMB.

Both have problems (in back-up slides).



The original proposal. However:

1. Such a gas is pressure unstable against the hot ICM gas.  
It rapidly cools away on a timescale much shorter than cluster timescales.
2. A thermal  $T \sim 0.2\text{keV}$  gas would also have thermal emission lines - particularly  $\text{O}_{\text{VII}}$  at 560 eV.

No such lines have been observed - some early claimed detections have gone away.

# Astrophysics: non-thermal $E \sim 150$ MeV electrons

A more promising proposal: a large population of non-thermal electrons scattering off the CMB. However:

1. If this population continues to  $E \sim 2$  GeV, its synchrotron radio emission is above level of Coma radio halo.

This necessitates a sharp spectral cutoff between  $\sim 200$  MeV and  $\sim 2$  GeV.

2. This population necessarily produces gamma rays through non-thermal bremsstrahlung.

It was predicted that these gamma rays would be easily observable by Fermi (Atoyan + Volk 2000)

But - Fermi does not see any clusters:

$$\mathcal{F}_{>100 \text{ MeV}}^{\text{Coma}} < 1.1 \times 10^{-9} \text{ ph cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$$

# Astrophysics: non-thermal $E \sim 150$ MeV electrons

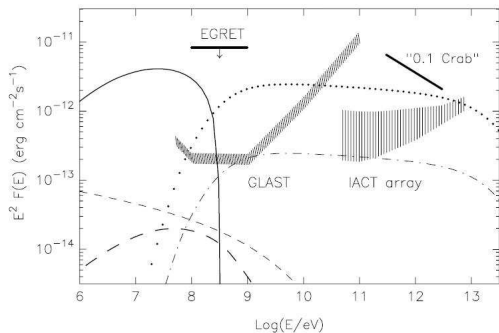
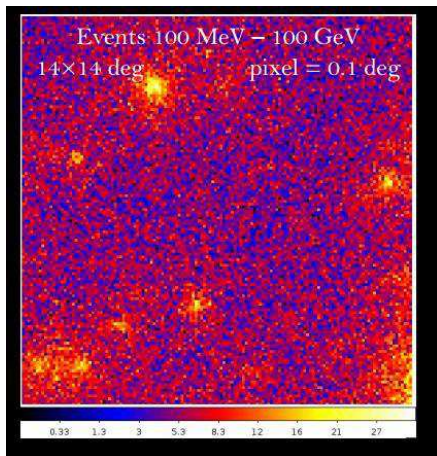


FIG. 6.—Expected  $\gamma$ -ray fluxes expected from the Coma Cluster. The

from Atoyan + Volk, 2000

# Coma in Gamma Rays



(Ando + Zandanel, 1312.1493)