Towards foundation model for astrophysical source detection: An End-to-End Gamma-Ray Data Analysis Pipeline Using Deep Learning





Judit Pérez Romero judit.perez@ung.si S. Bhattacharyya, S. Caron, D. Malyshev, R. Nicolas, G. Principe, Z. Rokavec, R. Ruiz de Austri, D. Skočaj, F. Stoppa, D. Tabernik, G. Zaharijas



EUROPEAN AI FOR FUNDAMENTAL PHYSICS CONFERENCE EuCAIFCon 2025

Cagliari, Italy 17/06/2025



Total brightness and colour of stars seen by Gaia between July 2014 and May 2016





Gamma-ray emission > 1 GeV from 12 years of *Fermi*-LAT data

DETECTION OF ASTROPHYSICAL SOURCES ACCROSS WAVELENGTHS



Final goal

- Given a sky-map, can a DNN-based pipeline detect localized sources with catalogue properties?
 - locations [longitude, latitude deg]
 - extension [deg]
 - flux [above certain energy/wavelength]

Can these methodologies be applicable across different wavelengths?

OUTLINE

1. Gamma-ray analysis pipeline:

- 1. Current data: *Fermi*-LAT all-sky images
- 2. Future data: CTAO simulations of the galactic plane survey (GPs)

2. Optical analysis pipeline



3. Towards foundation model for astrophysical source detection





• Different techniques for gamma-ray detection:

THE GAMMA-RAY SKY

• Different techniques for gamma-ray detection:



Fermi Large Area Telescope (LAT)



- Best sensitivity at ~200 GeV
- Angular resolution up to 0.1 deg
- 17 years of all-sky data





THE GAMMA-RAY SKY

• Different techniques for gamma-ray detection:



Fermi Large Area Telescope (LAT)



- Best sensitivity at ~200 GeV
- Angular resolution up to 0.1 deg
- 17 years of all-sky data



CTAO

Cherenkov Telescope Array Observatory (CTAO)

- Ground-based telescope array
- Best sensitivity at ~1 TeV
- Angular resolution ~0.05 deg
- Deep dedicated surveys
- *O*(10) better sensitivity w.r.t. current telescopes





O(10) better sensitivity w.r.t. • current telescopes



ullet

.

۲

•

•

•

 $Flux > 1 \text{ TeV} (cm^{-2} s^{-1})$



b [deg]

٠







EuCAIFCon 2025

 Simulation of 10 years of data with collaboration software [fermitools] and population models from previous catalogs [4FGL-DR2] for training Analyzing gamma-rays of the Galactic Center with deep learning

S. Caron, G. A. Gómez-Vargas, L. Hendriks & R. Austri, JCAP05(2018)058, [arXiv: 1708.06706] *Identification of point sources in gamma rays using U-shaped convolutional neural networks and a data challenge* B. Panes, S. Caron, R. Austri, G. Zaharijas *et.al*, A&A (A62, 2021), [arXiv: 2103.11068]

- 300 MeV < *E* < 1 TeV, 6 energy bins
- Spatial resolution increases with energy: from 0.8 deg at 0.3 GeV, to 0.1 deg above 7 GeV
- Test robustness against different IE models

IE small scale structures



Complete Workflow of Source Location, Flux Estimation (+Uncertainty), Classification Localization 10×10 Pixels Resolution: $\sim 0.1^{\circ}$ $\sim 10^{\circ} \times 10^{\circ}$ Patches ASID-LON ASID-LAT 1. Multi-Input U-Net 2. Laplacian of Gaussian •• (Lat, Lon), Pixel Probability CNN for Source/FAKE classification ASID-SProba Deep Ensemble Deep Ensemble **ASID-Flux** for for Flux Uncertainty Location Uncertainty Sigmoid Probabilities Location Uncertainty TRUE: 0.06 Flux Estimation in degree FAKE: 0.94

 $l', b', \delta l', \delta b'$

Uncertainty

- Flux sensitivity of ASID is comparable to the 4FGL-DR2 detection threshold and to our previous work
- To test the robustness against different IEM models, use the pipeline trained with B1 IEM and test it with catalogs prepared using B1 and B2 IEMs separately



- Comparison with 4FGL-DR2 catalog:
 - For sources with *σ* > 20, more than 90% association independent on latitude
 - For sources with 20 < σ < 10 and |b| > 20 deg, 90% association
 - For sources with 20 < σ < 10 and |b| < 20 deg, 77% association

Final catalog-like product



ASID-LON	ASID-LAT	ASID-SC	ASID-SProba	ASID-Flux	DR2-Name
$^{\circ}$ (deg.)	$^{\circ}$ (deg.)	Binary Class $(0/1)$	Sigmoid Probability	ph. $cm^{-2}s^{-1}$	
287.603	-0.627	0	3.18e - 12	6.037e - 8	4FGL J1045.1-5940
304.097	-45.137	0	2.69e-4	2.827e - 10	4FGL J0040.7-7157
349.823	9.238	0	3.94e-4	2.627e - 10	4FGL J1643.3-3148
•	•	•	•	•	•
:	:	:	:	:	:

• Improvement of CTAO sensitivity will imply detection of:

Fainter sources

• Crowded regions will be extremely complex to analyze



• Improvement of CTAO sensitivity will imply detection of:

Fainter sources

• Crowded regions will be extremely complex to analyze

Simplify the problem

- Simulate a toy gamma-ray sky with only point-like sources
- Keep the original spatial and spectral distribution of sources
- One patch: 10 x 10 deg (512 x 512 pix), 3 energy bins

Proof of concept: Learn how to improve detection and localization of sources in CTAO toy-simulation



- 1. Image scaling using ASID
- Naturally enhances contrast between sources and background



2. Dense center-direction regression approach

Dense Center-Direction Regression for Object Counting and Localization with Point Supervision,

D. Tabernik, J. Muhovič, D. Skočaj, J. Pat. Cog. 2024, 110540, [arXiv:2408.14457]

Dense center-direction regression Sine Cosine https://github.com/vicoslab/CeDiRNet Localization <--- I Visualized Locations directions

Densely regresses directions pointing to the nearest object center

2. Dense center-direction regression approach

Dense Center-Direction Regression for Object Counting and Localization with Point Supervision,

D. Tabernik, J. Muhovič, D. Skočaj, J. Pat. Cog. 2024, 110540, [arXiv:2408.14457]

Dense center-direction regression Sine Cosine https://github.com/vicoslab/CeDiRNet The localization network Localization learns fully <--- I domain-agnostic Visualized Locations directions

Densely regresses directions pointing to the nearest object center







- Trained and tested with MeerLICHT data
 - 65 cm optical telescope with FoV = 2.7 deg²
 - Images of fields with different source densities:
 - 1. Omega Cen. globular cluster,
 - 2. Fornax galaxy cluster
 - 3. "Empty" field
 - Each field is divided into 1681 patches of 256 × 256 pixels (total of 5043 patches)
- Automatic rejection of CR contaminants, satellite trails...

Can we extend the pipeline to other wavelengths?

- Trained and tested with MeerLICHT data
 - 65 cm optical telescope with FoV = 2.7 deg²
 - Images of fields with different source densities:
 - 1. Omega Cen. globular cluster,
 - 2. Fornax galaxy cluster
 - 3. "Empty" field
 - Each field is divided into 1681 patches of 256 × 256 pixels (total of 5043 patches)
- Automatic rejection of CR contaminants, satellite trails...

Can we extend the pipeline to other wavelengths?

ASID-Light: Fast Optical Source Localization via U-Net and Laplacian of Gaussian F. Stoppa et. al., A&A (A109, 2022), [arXiv: 2202.00489]



- Once localized, estimate flux with uncertainties (single band image cutout)
- Performs better in crowded field compared to source extractor; well-calibrated uncertainty *ASID-FE: Flux Estimation & Uncertainty Characterization*
 E Standard M & M (M100, 2022) [arXi: 2205.44405]

F. Stoppa et.al., A&A (A108, 2023), [arXiv: 2305.14495]



Predicted flux percentage error

- Trained and tested with MeerLICHT data
- Try transfer learning with Hubble data
 - Hubble PSF: 0.11 arcsec
 - MeerLICHT telescope PSF: 2-3 arcssec
- Try transfer learning with WISE infrared data

First hints: is it possible to build a foundational model for source detection across wavelengths?



ASID-Light [arXiv: 2202.00489] ASID-FE [arXiv: 2305.14495]



- Clear distinction between:
 - Gamma-ray sources
 - Gamma-ray backgrounds











International Conference Al for SCIENCE 2025 joined by SMASHing Conference

https://ai4science.si/

22-26 September 2025 Ljubljana, Slovenia

Important dates for thematic tracks (excluding Discovery Science conference):



Paper/abstract submission deadline

1 July, 2025 Notification of acceptance

28th Discovery Science Conference

AI & Digital Humanities

Al & Environmental Science

AI & Physics



Thanks for your attention!





Back up slides



THE GAMMA-RAY SKY



Gamma-rays are electromagnetic radiation > 100 keV

- Gamma-rays travel in straight lines, allowing to determine their origin
- Originated from non-thermal processes

GAMMA-RAY STANDARD ANALYSIS

 Includes all expected gamma-ray sources: Target + Astrophysical Backgrounds (BKG) + BKG from Instrument Response Function (IRFs)



• Use likelihood ratio test to fit the models to the simulated data:

$$\ln \mathcal{L}(\vec{\theta}|D) = \sum_{i} \tilde{M}_{i}(\vec{\theta}) - d_{i} \ln(\tilde{M}_{i}(\vec{\theta}))$$
Poissonian likelihood for each parameter
$$TS = 2 \log \left[\frac{\mathcal{L}\left(A_{\chi}, \hat{\hat{\nu}}\right)}{\mathcal{L}_{null}\left(A_{\chi} = 0, \hat{\nu}\right)} \right]$$
• $TS < 25$
• No signal





- U-Net produces segmented regions around point sources
- For each input patch there is per-pixel classification (background vs. foreground)
- Label scores: ~1 (for pixels in the region around a point source) and ~0 (otherwise)
- To translate this to positions, apply a clustering algorithm

ML TO DETECT FAINT GAMMA-RAY SOURCES

Localization

Laplacian of Gaussian filter

LoG(x, y;
$$\sigma^2$$
) = $-\frac{1}{\pi\sigma^4} \left[1 - \frac{x^2 + y^2}{2\sigma^2} \right] e^{-\frac{x^2 + y^2}{2\sigma^2}}$



AutoSourceID-Light (ASID-L) [Stoppa+22]

https://github.com/FiorenSt/AutoSourceID-Light

44

CTAO

ML TO DETECT FAINT GAMMA-RAY SOURCES: CTAO

- Future of Imaging Atmospheric Cherenkov Telescopes for VHE gamma-ray astronomy
- 2 arrays: Northern Array (La Palma, Spain) and Southern Array (Paranal, Chile)
- First LST already in operations!

LST1

Oct 2018

LST4

Mar 2025

LST3

Aug 2025

LST2

Nov 2025

Courtesy of M. Teshima



ML TO DETECT FAINT GAMMA-RAY SOURCES: CTAO We need to prepare for the data & analysis: we will for sure detect fainter sources, ML (U-Net) can help CTAO Preliminary Performance Capabilities of the Alpha Configuration https://www.ctao.org/for-scientists/performance/ 0.25 V0.1) CTAO Northern Array Ś 10^{-10} CTAO Northern Array **CTAO Southern Array** E^2 x Flux Sensitivity (erg cm⁻² s⁻¹) 0.2 Angular Resolution ($^{\circ}$) 10 0.15 0.1 10^{-12} Fermi-LAT Sensitivity Angular resolution 0.05 13 10^{-} Differential flux sensitivity (50 h) 10-2 10^{-1} 10^{2} 10 10^{-2} 10^{-1} 10^{2} 10 Reconstructed Gamma-ray Energy $E_{_{R}}$ (TeV) Reconstructed Gamma-ray Energy $E_{_{R}}$ (TeV)

45

ABOUT THE CTAO DATA

- We generate the data (telescope is under construction phase)
- We only have one sky
- Data is generated according to state-of-the-art physical models on the population of the different kind of sources that we know
- We only have simulated data (we use most updated characterization of the detector to make it as realistic as possible)
- To increase number of data, we take advantage of the uncertainty in populations, making realizations of the sky given the models
- This means we have as training data as many as we need (reasonable in space and time)

ABOUT THE DATA: PRELIMINARY TOY SIMULATIONS



• Observation plan in [2310.02828] and the corresponding GPS pointings list from the GPS repository (non-equilateral double-row pattern and duration 30 min per pointing)

- IRFs prod5-v0.1 (South_z20_50h)
- The Rol centered on (15.12 deg, 0 deg) in gal. coords. and 10.24 x 10.24 deg^2
- The spatial binning 0.02deg
- Energy bins range from 0.07 TeV to 100 TeV logarithmically binned in 3 (70 GeV 0.788 TeV, 0.788 TeV 8.88 TeV, 8.88 TeV 100 TeV)
- Always same patch



- number of sources randomly between [20, 40]
- 10 < / < 20.24 deg
- -5.12 < b < 5.12 deg, with a variance of 1.4 so most of sources in |b| < 1 deg
- Each source follows power-law spectral distribution $dN/dE = KO(E/EO) \gamma$
- To obtain the distributions of the parameters used GammaCat
- E0 fixed at 1 TeV, and γ has a normal distribution with a mean of 2.2 and variance of 0.05
- K0 was modeled as 10^x TeV-1 cm-2 s-1, where x was adjusted so that the resulting cumulative distribution of integrated source flux above 1 TeV aligned with the same distribution of all model sources from the GPS paper

ABOUT THE DATA: PRELIMINARY TOY SIMULATIONS



CTAO EXTRA-RESULTS: PRELIMINARY TOY SIMULATIONS

$$Precision = \frac{TP}{TP + FP} \qquad Recall = \frac{TP}{TP + FN}$$



CTAO EXTRA-RESULTS: PRELIMINARY TOY SIMULATIONS



Distribution of separations of predicted sources from true sources below a separation threshold of 0.05°. Only original counts and log-transformed counts are included and for each we plot for separations of sources with flux below and above the GPS sensitivity Integrated flux (> 1TeV) distribution of true recovered sources by the algorithm.

CEDIRNET METHODOLY

Algorithm CeDirNet: https://github.com/vicoslab/CeDiRNet

[Tabernik, Muhovič & Skočaj 24]



Center-direction regression network

Localization network

• Original simulated population on the galactic plane



- We need several realizations (simulations) of the GP
- Extract the physical distributions of the sample



• The difference between types is not on the image but on the spectrum (flux vs. energy)

• Original simulated population on the galactic plane



- Original simulated population on the galactic plane
 - We need several realizations (simulations) of the GP



Sources fainter than 1/3 of target sensitivity are removed

• Comparison of original sample vs. one drawn realization from the physical distributions



- Focus on the most crowded region
- Cover through patches: -30 < l < 30 deg -2.5 < b < 2.5 deg



A Python package for gamma-ray astronomy [Donath et al. 2023]

- Cover the galactic plane through patches
 - $-30 < l < 30 \deg$
 - $-2.5 < b < 2.5 \deg$
- 12 patches per each complete simulation of the galactic plane

512 pix × 512 pix 5.12 deg × 5.12 deg

 3 energy bins (following the instrument's sensitivity)



CTAO EXTRA-RESULTS: FIRST TRIALS USING ASID

• Running U-Net + LoG is problematic, since the mask we use for training, have an extension the original sigma used for generating the simulation, and some sources lay behind the larger ones, confusing the segmentation part



CTAO EXTRA-RESULTS: FIRST TRIALS USING ASID Approach 1: Remove from the training the fainter sources, with a different flux threshold depending on each size,

• Approach 1: Remove from the training the fainter sources, with a different flux threshold depending on each size, original size then should more or less correspond to size in last energy bin, for point-like source we use value of CTAO PSF at those energies (0.05 deg)



• Example for patches_v1 patch_0, bin 1



• Example for patches_v1 patch_0, bin 1



0.7

Example for patches_v1 patch_1, bin 1 ٠



Normalized to max



Signal to noise

• Example for patches_v1 patch_1, bin 1



Normalized to max image



Signal to noise



Example for patches_v1 patch_1, bin 1 ۲



Log10 signal to noise to noise

Background removal: Optical Data Model: Denoising Diffusion (Attention U-net as backbone)





Through the embedding matrix we try to find most important words \implies Find most important features in latent space



• Main objective:

