

What does the Milky Way look like?

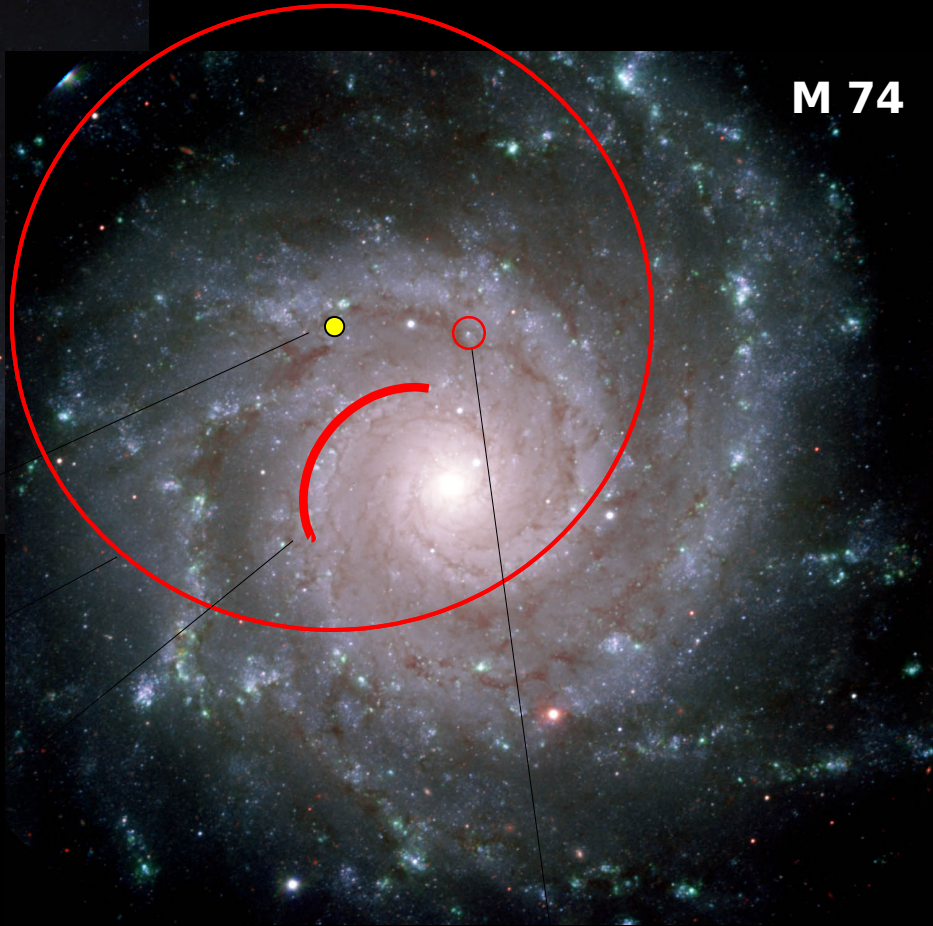
NGC 1300



Hipparcos Satellite
range of distances
(early '90s)

“Gold standard” distances
are

Trigonometric parallax measurements



M 74

The BeSSeL Survey range of distances:
improve by a factor more than 100!
(late 2010 on)

we can trace spiral structure by observing regions where “big” stars form