



NGC 404 – Ghost of Mirach



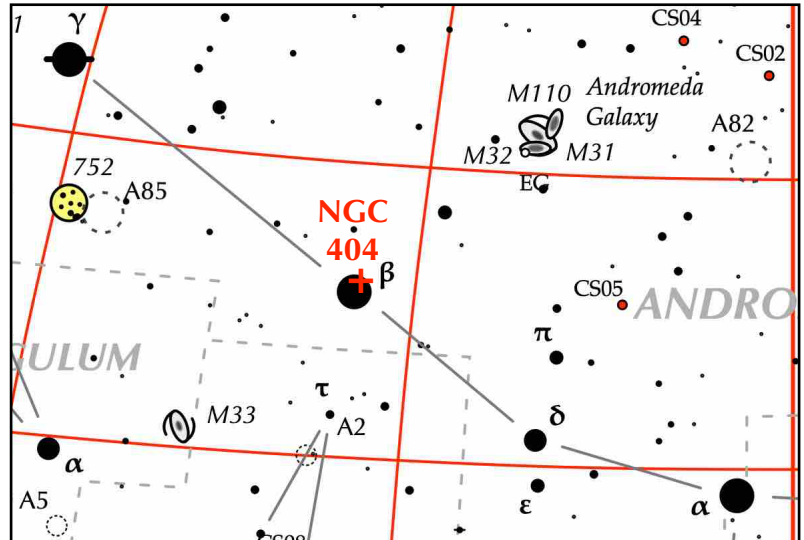
Can you see it? You know it's there.

Its published brightness and size values indicate that it should be readily visible in an 8-inch telescope on a clear, dark night.

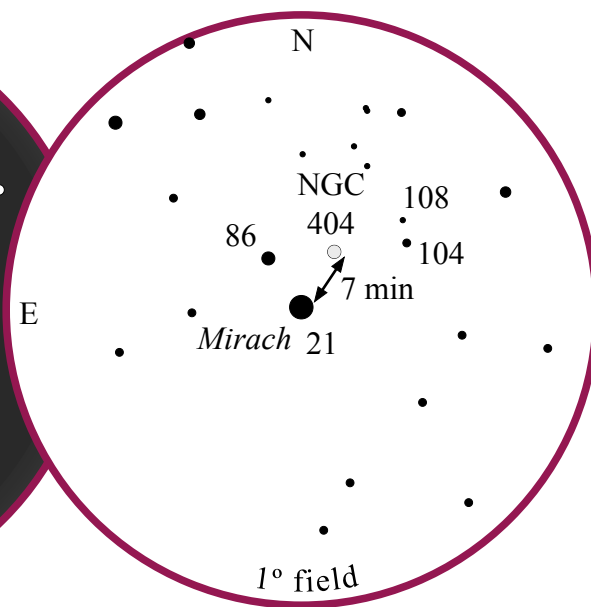
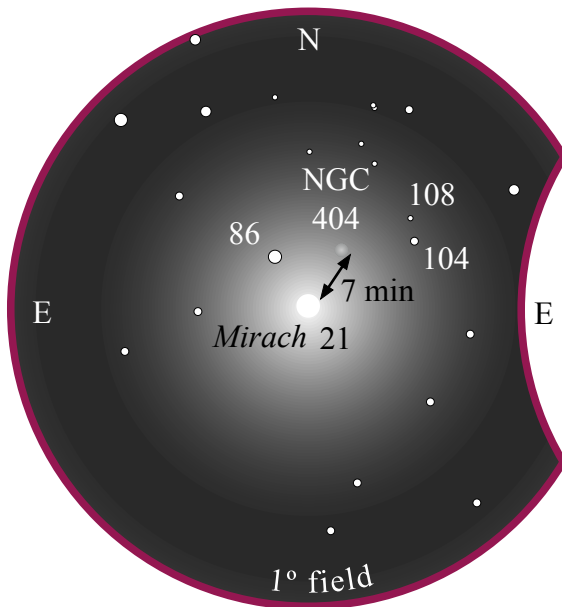
It is not.

Beta Andromeda, commonly known as Mirach, is easy to spot shining at magnitude 2.1.

Seven arc minutes to its northwest "hides" the 10th magnitude galaxy NGC 404. The term "hides" is used because bright Mirach prevents easy observation of this galaxy. Hence, NGC 404 has been called the "Ghost of Mirach." But not so much because of the star's glare obscuring the galaxy (which it does), but more so because of the annoying lens flares produced by this bright star. Do you see the galaxy, or just another lens flare?



Mirach's glare interferes more in large aperture scopes than small. But the galaxy appears dimmer in small scopes than large.



NGC 404, the Ghost of Mirach
Integrated magnitude: 10.3; Size: 3.5' x 3.5'
dwarf lenticular, 10 million ly
Seen as round with brighter center