GALAXY EVOLUTION AT HIGH REDSHIFT: OBSCURED STAR FORMATION, GRB RATES, COSMIC REIONIZATION, AND MISSING SATELLITES

A. Lapi1,2,3, C. Mancuso1,2,3, A. Celotti1,2,3, and L. Danese1,2,3
1 SISSA, Via Bonomea 267, I-34136 Trieste, Italy
2 INAF-Osservatorio Astronomico di Trieste, via Tiepolo 11, I-34131 Trieste, Italy
3 INFN-Sezione di Trieste, via Valerio 2, I-34127 Trieste, Italy

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ABSTRACT

We provide a holistic view of galaxy evolution at high redshifts \( z \gtrsim 4 \), which incorporates the constraints from various astrophysical/cosmological probes, including the estimate of the cosmic star formation rate (SFR) density from UV/IR surveys and long gamma-ray burst (GRBs) rates, the cosmic reionization history following the latest Planck measurements, and the missing satellites issue. We achieve this goal in a model-independent way by exploiting the SFR functions derived by Mancuso et al. on the basis of an educated extrapolation of the latest UV/IR data from HST/Herschel, and already tested against a number of independent observations. Our SFR functions integrated down to a UV magnitude limit \( M_{\text{UV}} \lesssim -13 \) (or SFR limit around \( 10^{-2} M_\odot \text{yr}^{-1} \)) produce a cosmic SFR density in excellent agreement with recent determinations from IR surveys and, taking into account a metallicity ceiling \( Z \lesssim Z_\odot/2 \), with the estimates from long GRB rates. They also yield a cosmic reionization history consistent with that implied by the recent measurements of the Planck mission of the electron scattering optical depth \( \tau_{\text{esc}} \approx 0.058 \); remarkably, this result is obtained under a conceivable assumption regarding the average value \( f_{\text{esc}} \approx 0.1 \) of the escape fraction for ionizing photons. We demonstrate via the abundance-matching technique that the above constraints concurrently imply galaxy formation becoming inefficient within dark matter halos of mass below a few \( 10^8 M_\odot \); pleasingly, such a limit is also required so as not to run into the missing satellites issue. Finally, we predict a downturn of the Galaxy luminosity function faintward of \( (10^8 M_\odot / \text{pc}^2) \) with the estimates from long GRB rates. This can effectively probe various astrophysical processes that must severely limit or even suppress galaxy formation in halos with masses of a few \( 10^8 M_\odot \), or alternatively by abandoning the paradigm on the “cold” microscopic nature of the dark matter (e.g., Lapi & Danese 2015). Whatever the solution is, such an argument establishes an intriguing connection between high-redshift constraints and local observables.

Key words: dark ages, reionization, first stars – dust, extinction – galaxies: evolution – galaxies: star formation – galaxies: statistics

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent observations of the high-redshift universe have substantially improved our knowledge of the early stages of galaxy formation and evolution. On the astrophysical side, UV observations from HST (e.g., Bouwens et al. 2015, 2016a, 2016b; Finkelstein et al. 2015) and far-IR observations from Herschel surveys (e.g., Lapi et al. 2011; Gruppioni et al. 2013, 2015) have allowed the cosmic star formation rate (SFR) density to be estimated (see Schiminovich et al. 2005; Hopkins & Beacom 2006; Madau & Dickinson 2014; Rowan-Robinson et al. 2016) and even the shape of the Galaxy SFR distributions (see Mancuso et al. 2016a), including the essential contribution from strongly star-forming dust-obscured objects, to be inferred, out to redshift \( z \lesssim 10 \). Independent measurements have also been provided by estimates of the long gamma-ray burst (GRB) rates from Swift observations (see Kistler et al. 2009, 2013, Chary et al. 2016, and references therein), which can effectively probe larger volumes than UV and far-IR surveys unbiasedly with respect to dust extinction, although they are still affected by appreciable uncertainties.

On the cosmological side, the history of cosmic reionization has recently been probed to an unprecedented accuracy by the Planck Collaboration XLVII (2016) in terms of the optical depth for electron scattering \( \tau_{\text{esc}} \approx 0.058 \). Such data, besides assumptions concerning the escape fraction of ionizing photons from the early galaxies, provide independent constraints on the shape of the SFR function at high redshift.

A substantial, if not major, contribution to the cosmic SFR density at high redshifts \( z \gtrsim 6 \) and to the ionizing background responsible for reionization comes from faint galaxies residing in small dark matter halos. Numerical simulations indicate that an appreciable number of such small halos would survive down to the present time as bound satellites of Milky Way-sized galaxies, which are instead not observed in the local universe. This constitutes the missing satellites problem, one of the most serious issues faced by the standard \( \Lambda \)CDM model (see Boylan-Kolchin et al. 2014; Wetzel et al. 2016). It can be solved by invoking astrophysical processes that must severely limit or even suppress galaxy formation in halos with masses of a few \( 10^8 M_\odot \), or alternatively by abandoning the paradigm on the “cold” microscopic nature of the dark matter (e.g., Lapi & Danese 2015). Whatever the solution is, such an argument establishes an intriguing connection between high-redshift constraints and local observables.

Here we aim to provide a holistic view of galaxy evolution at high redshifts \( z \gtrsim 4 \) by jointly exploiting the above astrophysical and cosmological probes; remarkably, we will demonstrate that a coherent picture emerges, and we will provide specific predictions to test it with further observations in the near future. The plan of the paper is as follows: in Section 2 we focus on the cosmic SFR history, as inferred from UV/IR surveys and as estimated from GRB rates; in Section 3 we consider the cosmic reionization history as probed by the recent data from the Planck mission; in Section 4 we establish a connection between the high-redshift observables and the...
missing satellites issue in the local universe; and in Section 5 we summarize and discuss our findings.

Throughout this work we adopt the standard flat concordance cosmology (Planck Collaboration XIII 2016) with round parameter values; matter density $\Omega_M = 0.32$, baryon density $\Omega_b = 0.05$, Hubble constant $H_0 = 100\, h\,\text{km\,s^{-1}\,Mpc^{-1}}$ with $h = 0.67$, and mass variance $\sigma_8 = 0.83$ on a scale of $8\, h^{-1}\,\text{Mpc}$. Stellar masses and luminosities (or SFRs) of galaxies are evaluated assuming Chabrier’s (2003) initial mass function (IMF).

2. COSMIC STAR FORMATION HISTORY

Our starting point is the global SFR function $dN / d\log M_*$, namely, the number density of galaxies per logarithmic bin of SFR [$\log M_*$, $\log M_* + d\log M_*$] at a given redshift $z$. This has been accurately determined by Mancuso et al. (2016a), to which we refer the reader for details, recalling here only some basic aspects.

In a nutshell, the SFR function was built up by exploiting the most recent determinations of the luminosity functions at different redshifts down to $M_{\text{UV}} \approx -17$ from far-IR and UV data (symbols in the top panel of Figure 1). UV data were dust-corrected according to the local empirical relation between the UV slope $\beta_{\text{UV}}$ and the IR-to-UV luminosity ratio IRX (see Meurer et al. 1999), which is also routinely exploited for high-redshift galaxies (see Bouwens et al. 2009, 2015, 2016a, 2016b). For the sake of simplicity, here we adopt a Meurer/Calzetti prescription, but we stress that the determination of the SFR functions is only marginally affected by choosing a different extinction law, like, for example, that for the the Small Magellanic Cloud. Note that for violently star-forming galaxies with intrinsic SFR $M_* \gtrsim 30\,M_\odot\,\text{yr}^{-1}$, the UV data, even when dust-corrected via the UV slope–IRX relationship, strongly underestimate the intrinsic SFR, which is instead well probed by far-IR data. This is because high SFRs occur primarily within heavily dust-enshrouded molecular clouds, while the UV slope mainly reflects the emission from stars obscured by the diffuse cirrus dust component (Silva et al. 1998; Efstathiou et al. 2000; Efstathiou & Rowan-Robinson 2003; Coppin et al. 2015; Reddy et al. 2015; Mancuso et al. 2016a). On the other hand, at low SFR $M_* \lesssim 10\,M_\odot\,\text{yr}^{-1}$, the dust-corrected UV data efficiently probe the intrinsic SFR.

The luminosity $L$ was converted into the SFR $M_*$ using $\log M_/M_* \approx -9.8 + \log L/L_{\odot}$, a good approximation both for far-IR and (intrinsic) UV luminosities, as expected based on energy conservation arguments, with the assumption of Chabrier’s IMF. Note that actually this conversion factor depends on the star formation history, and specifically on the duration and age of the burst (see Efstathiou et al. 2000; Bressan et al. 2002); the standard value adopted here is the average for continuous star formation over 100 Myr, the age at which 90% of emission has been contributed (see Kennicutt & Evans 2012, their Table 1).

A smooth analytic representation of the SFR function was determined in terms of the standard Schechter shape:

$$\frac{dN}{d\log M_*}(M_*, z) = \mathcal{N}(z) \left( \frac{M_*}{M_{*,c}(z)} \right)^{1-\alpha(z)} \exp\left[-\frac{M_*}{M_{*,c}(z)}\right],$$

characterized at any given redshift $z$ by three parameters, namely, the normalization $\mathcal{N}$, the characteristic SFR $M_{*,c}$, and the faint-end slope $\alpha$. We determine the values of the three Schechter parameters over the range $z \sim 0–10$ in unitary redshift bins $\Delta z \approx 1$ by performing an educated fit to the data. Specifically, for redshift $z \lesssim 3$, UV data are fitted for SFRs $M_* \lesssim 30\,M_\odot\,\text{yr}^{-1}$ since in this range dust corrections based on the $\beta_{\text{UV}}$ are reliable, while far-IR data are fitted for SFRs $M_* \gtrsim 10^2\,M_\odot\,\text{yr}^{-1}$ since in this range dust emission is largely dominated by molecular clouds and reflects the ongoing SFR. On the other hand, for $z \gtrsim 10$, the (dust-corrected) UV data are considered by themselves reliable estimators of the global SFR functions, since the amount of dust in a star-forming galaxy is expected to be rather small for an age of the universe younger than $5 \times 10^9\,\text{yr}$. In the bottom panels of Figure 1 we report, using circles with error bars, the values and uncertainties of the Schechter parameters at the specific redshifts where the fit to the data was performed; empty symbols refer to the parameters for the (dust-corrected) UV-inferred SFR functions while filled symbols refer to the parameters for the global (UV+far-IR) SFR functions.

To obtain a smooth yet accurate representation of the SFR functions at any redshift, we find it necessary to (minimally) describe the redshift evolution for each parameter $p(z)$ of the
Table 1
SFR Function Parameters

| Parameter | Global (Far-IR+UV) | UV (Dust-corrected) |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|
| $\log N(z)$ | $p_0 = -2.47 \pm 0.06$ | $p_0 = -1.95 \pm 0.07$ |
| | $p_1 = -6.79 \pm 1.19$ | $p_1 = -1.85 \pm 1.57$ |
| | $p_2 = 14.11 \pm 3.63$ | $p_2 = 4.91 \pm 4.04$ |
| | $p_3 = -9.58 \pm 2.83$ | $p_3 = -5.73 \pm 2.73$ |
| $\log M_{\star}(z)$ | $p_0 = 1.24 \pm 0.05$ | $p_0 = 0.01 \pm 0.05$ |
| | $p_1 = 5.37 \pm 0.63$ | $p_1 = 2.5 \pm 0.97$ |
| | $p_2 = -4.22 \pm 1.87$ | $p_2 = 1.38 \pm 2.51$ |
| | $p_3 = -0.71 \pm 1.53$ | $p_3 = -2.38 \pm 1.69$ |
| $\alpha(z)$ | $p_0 = 1.27 \pm 0.01$ | $p_0 = 1.11 \pm 0.02$ |
| | $p_1 = 2.92 \pm 0.23$ | $p_1 = 2.88 \pm 0.47$ |
| | $p_2 = -6.47 \pm 0.66$ | $p_2 = -6.27 \pm 1.21$ |
| | $p_3 = 4.48 \pm 0.45$ | $p_3 = 4.50 \pm 0.78$ |

Notes. Quoted uncertainties are at 1σ level. Fits hold in the range of SFR $M_\star \sim 10^{-3}$ – $10^4 M_\odot$ yr$^{-1}$ and for redshifts $z \sim 0$–10.

Schechter function as a third-order polynomial in log-redshift $p(z) = p_0 + p_1 \xi + p_2 \xi^2 + p_3 \xi^3$, with $\xi = \log(1 + z)$. The values of the parameters $\{p_i\}$ are reported in Table 1, and the polynomial fits to the redshift evolution of the Schechter parameters are shown as lines in the bottom panels of Figure 1; dashed lines refer to the (dust-corrected) UV-inferred SFR functions while solid lines refer to the global (UV+far-IR) SFR functions. The behavior of the normalization $N$ and of the characteristic SFR $M_\star$, highlights the fact that UV surveys tend to pick up many galaxies with low SFR, while far-IR surveys also select less numerous galaxies with higher SFR; this mirrors the fact that high SFRs are usually associated with a large dust abundance. The evolution with redshift of these parameters shows that most of the SFR occurs in dusty galaxies around redshift $z \approx 2$ (cf. also Figure 2); on the other hand, toward high redshifts $z \gtrsim 6$, the dust content progressively decreases and UV surveys become more effective in selecting the typical population of star-forming galaxies. Note that for the purpose of this paper, the high-redshift evolution is most relevant.

The resulting SFR functions (weighted by one power of the SFR) for representative redshifts $z \approx 1$ (red line), 3 (orange), 6 (cyan), and 8 (blue) are illustrated in Figure 1. The top axis has been labeled using the relation $M_{\text{UV}} \approx 18.5 - 2.5 \log \text{SFR}[M_\odot \text{yr}^{-1}]$ between the intrinsic UV magnitude and the SFR; at the faint end for $M_{\text{UV}} \lesssim -20$ where dust extinction is negligible, this also provides an estimate of the observed UV magnitude. All in all, at $z \gtrsim 4$ our global estimate implies a significant number density of dusty star-forming galaxies with SFR $M_\star \gtrsim 10^2 M_\odot$ yr$^{-1}$, currently missed by UV data, even when corrected via the standard UV slope. To highlight this point more clearly, we also report in Figure 1 the SFR function that would have been inferred basing solely on the (dust-corrected) UV data.

In Mancuso et al. (2016a, 2016b), we validated the global SFR functions against independent data sets, including galaxy number counts at significant submillimeter/far-IR wavelengths, redshift distributions of gravitationally lensed galaxies, cosmic infrared background, galaxy stellar mass function via the continuity equation, main sequence of star-forming galaxies, and even associated AGN statistics. In particular, the analysis of the main sequence for high-redshift galaxies and AGNs presented in Mancuso et al. (2016b) highlights the fact that the current data can be consistently interpreted in terms of an in situ coevolution scenario for star formation and black hole accretion, envisaging these as local, time-coordinated processes.

In the present paper, when dealing with the reionization history of the universe or with the estimates of the cosmic SFR density from GRB rates, the behavior of the SFR function at the very faint end down to $M_{\text{UV}} \approx -12$ (corresponding to SFR $M_\star \approx 10^{-3} M_\odot$ yr$^{-1}$) will become relevant. This actually requires our SFR functions to be extrapolated well beyond the magnitude limit $M_{\text{UV}} \approx -17$ (corresponding to SFR $M_\star \approx 10^{-1} M_\odot$ yr$^{-1}$) currently accessible to blank-field UV surveys, which we have exploited in our fitting procedure (see above).

One may wonder whether these extrapolations of the SFR functions are reasonable, and in particular whether the faint-end slope keeps steep values $\alpha \lesssim 2$ as inferred for $M_{\text{UV}} \gtrsim -17$. Actually, at redshifts $z \lesssim 6$, the faint end of the luminosity/SFR functions was recently explored, although still with large uncertainties, even down to $M_{\text{UV}} \approx -13$ via gravitational lensing by foreground galaxy clusters (see Alavi et al. 2014, 2016; Bouwens et al. 2016b; Livermore et al. 2016). We have reported (but not used in the fit because of the still-large systematic uncertainties) these data in Figure 1 to highlight that they are indeed consistent with the...
extrapolation of our SFR functions; specifically, the faint portion of the SFR function is seen to keep rising steeply with
$\alpha \lesssim 2$ out to $z \lesssim 6$.

In moving toward yet higher redshifts $z \sim 8$, our SFR function determination based on the current UV data down to $M_{UV} \approx -17$ features a faint-end slope steepening to values $\alpha \gtrsim 2$. This is somewhat theoretically expected, since it reflects the steepening in the underlying mass function of dark matter halos, given that the slope of the SFR versus halo mass relationship between $z \approx 3$ and $z \approx 6$–8 is not appreciably different (see Aversa et al. 2015; also see Figure 4).

2.1. Cosmic SFR Density

We now turn to exploit our SFR functions to compute, and to illustrate in Figure 2, the cosmic SFR density:

$$\rho_{\text{SFR}}(z) = \int_{M_{\text{min}}}^{\infty} d \log M_* \frac{dN}{d \log M_*} M_*;$$

(2)

here $M_{\text{min}}$ is a minimum SFR limit, relevant because of the steepness $\alpha > 1$ of the SFR functions at the faint end.

We start by considering the UV-inferred SFR functions (dust corrected via the UV slope) integrated down to a UV magnitude $M_{UV} \approx -17$ (corresponding to a minimum SFR $M_{\text{min}}^{\text{UV}} \approx 10^{-1} M_\odot \text{yr}^{-1}$) that matches the observational limit of current blank-field UV surveys. The outcome (blue dashed line) is in good agreement with the dust-corrected data by Bouwens et al. (2015; cyan squares) at $z \gtrsim 4$ and by Schiminovich et al. (2005; cyan shaded area) at $z \lesssim 4$.

On the other hand, the cosmic SFR density from (dust-corrected) UV data is inconsistent with other data sets both at low and high redshifts. Specifically, at redshifts $z \lesssim 4$ it falls short with respect to the multiwavelength determination by Hopkins & Beacom (2006; orange shaded area) based on UV/optical, radio, $H_\alpha$, and mid-IR $24\mu$m data and to the far-IR measurements from Herschel by Magnelli et al. (2013) and Gruppioni et al. (2013; red shaded area). At redshifts $z \gtrsim 4$, it underestimates the determinations based on stacking of far-IR data from Herschel by Rowan-Robinson et al. (2016; red dots), and the determination based on long GRB rates from Swift by Kistler et al. (2009, 2013). This mostly reflects the fact, already mentioned above, that the UV-inferred SFR functions (even corrected for dust extinction by the UV slope) appreciably underestimate the number density of dusty galaxies with $M_* > 30 M_\odot \text{yr}^{-1}$.

Thus we compute the cosmic SFR density by exploiting our global (far-IR+UV) SFR function down to the same magnitude limit $M_{\text{lim}}^{\text{UV}} \approx -17$. The outcome (red dashed line) is found to be in good agreement both with the Hopkins & Beacom (2006) and Gruppioni et al. (2013) determinations at $z \lesssim 4$ and with the stacked far-IR data by Rowan-Robinson et al. (2016) at $z \gtrsim 4$. However, at $z \gtrsim 6$ the result is only marginally consistent with the estimates from GRB rates; this hints toward a substantial contribution to the cosmic SFR density by faint GRB hosts with $M_{UV} \gtrsim -17$.

In particular, we show the outcome (solid line) when integrating our global SFR functions down to $M_{\text{lim}}^{\text{UV}} \approx -13$ (corresponding to a minimum SFR $M_{\text{min}}^{\text{UV}} \approx 10^{-2} M_\odot \text{yr}^{-1}$); as we shall discuss in the next section, this value is also indicated by the recent data on the reionization history of the universe in terms of electron scattering optical depth $\tau_{\text{esc}} \approx 0.058$ as measured by Planck Collaboration XLVII (2016). Our result compares fairly well with the GRB data at $z \gtrsim 6$ but appears to overestimate those around $z \sim 4$–5. Actually, this is due to the well-established fact that long GRBs tend to occur mostly in low-metallicity environments. Thus we add this further constraint, weighting the integrand in Equation (2) with the time spent by an individual galaxy below a given critical metallicity ceiling $Z_{\text{crit}}$. To compute the latter, we have exploited a standard code of chemical evolution (see Feldmann 2015) that reproduces the locally observed mass–metallicity relation (e.g., Zahid et al. 2014). We find, in pleasing agreement with metallicity estimates at $z \lesssim 6$ from GRB afterglow spectra (e.g., Salvaterra et al. 2013; Perley et al. 2016) and with GRB formation models based on binary evolution (e.g., Fryer & Heger 2005; Mao 2010; Podsiadlowski et al. 2010), that a value $Z_{\text{crit}} \approx Z_\odot/2$ reproduces fairly well the GRB-inferred SFR density (green solid line) over the whole redshift range $z \gtrsim 4$.

We stress that further decreasing the limiting magnitude below $M_{\text{lim}}^{\text{UV}} \approx -13$ does not substantially change the cosmic SFR density for $z \lesssim 8$; e.g., the dotted-dashed red line shows the outcome when adopting $M_{\text{lim}}^{\text{UV}} \approx -12$ (corresponding to a minimum SFR $M_{\text{min}}^{\text{UV}} \approx 10^{-1} M_\odot \text{yr}^{-1}$), which will turn out to be the faintest value allowed by the Planck data on cosmic reionization and by the missing satellites issue (cf. Sections 3 and 4).

3. REIONIZATION HISTORY

Another important observational channel, plainly connected with the cosmic SFR density, is the reionization of the universe as probed by the electron scattering optical depth $\tau_{\text{esc}}$. This is because the cosmic ionization rate $N_{\text{ion}}$ is just proportional to the cosmic SFR density

$$N_{\text{ion}} \sim k_{\text{esc}} k_{\text{ion}} \rho_{\text{SFR}};$$

(3)

here $k_{\text{esc}} \approx 4 \times 10^{53}$ is the number of ionizing photons s$^{-1} (M_\odot \text{yr}^{-1})^{-1}$, with the quoted value appropriate for a Chabrier IMF, and $f_{\text{esc}} \lesssim 0.2$ is the average escape fraction for ionizing photons from the interstellar medium of high-redshift galaxies (see Mao et al. 2007; Dunlop et al. 2013; Robertson et al. 2015). Note that two other parameters implicitly entering in the expression $\rho_{\text{SFR}}$ are the minimum UV limiting magnitude and the faint-end slope of the SFR functions $\alpha$ discussed at the end of Section 2.

The ionization rate rules the standard evolution equation of the H II ionizing fraction

$$\dot{Q}_{\text{HII}} = \frac{N_{\text{ion}}}{\bar{n}_H} - \frac{\dot{Q}_{\text{HII}}}{t_{\text{rec}}},$$

(4)

which takes into account the competition between ionization and recombination processes (see Madau et al. 1999, Ferrara & Pandolfi 2014). In the above equation $\bar{n}_H \approx 2 \times 10^{-7}$ ($\Omega_{b}\rho_c/0.022$) cm$^{-3}$ is the mean comoving hydrogen number density. In addition, the recombination timescale reads $t_{\text{rec}} \approx 3.2 \text{Gyr} [(1+z)/7]^{-3} c^{-1} \bar{n}_H^{-1}$, where the case B coefficient for an IGM temperature of $2 \times 10^4$K has been used; this timescale crucially depends on the clumping factor of the ionized hydrogen, for which a fiducial value $C_{\text{HII}} \approx 3$ is usually adopted (see Pawlik et al. 2013). A first glimpse on the level of the cosmic SFR density required to balance
The evolution of the ionized fraction is shown in the green shaded area, which demonstrates the measurement outcomes from our SFR functions integrated down to UV-magnitude limits. The upper and lower limits from the plethora of independent observations collected by Robertson et al. (2006) are also shown.

The recombination rate per unit SFR $k_{\text{ion}}$ associated mainly with the IMF, the clumping factor $C_{\text{HI}}$, the faint-end slope of the SFR function $\alpha$, and the UV magnitude limit $M_{\text{UV}}^{\text{lim}}$. The strongest dependencies are on $f_{\text{esc}}$ and on the limiting magnitude $M_{\text{UV}}^{\text{lim}}$. For example, to reproduce the Planck best estimate $\tau_{\text{esc}} \approx 0.058$ for $M_{\text{UV}}^{\text{lim}} \approx -17$, it would be necessary to force $f_{\text{esc}}$ to implausible values $\geq 0.2$; at the other end, setting $M_{\text{UV}}^{\text{lim}} \approx -12$ would require $f_{\text{esc}} \lesssim 0.05$, but at the cost of worsening the agreement with the observational constraints on $Q_{\text{HI}}$.

In all, the adoption of $M_{\text{UV}}^{\text{lim}} \approx -13$ with a conceivable escape fraction of $f_{\text{esc}} \approx 0.1$ constitutes the best compromise to reproduce the Planck constraints on the reionization history of the universe, while still retaining consistency with the cosmic SFR density inferred from IR and GRB data at high $z \gtrsim 6$ (see Figure 2).

4. MISSING SATELLITES

We now aim to convert such constraints on the UV-limiting magnitude (or equivalently on the minimum SFR) into bounds on masses of the host dark matter halos. For this purpose, we need an average statistical relationship between the SFR (or the UV magnitude) of a galaxy and its host halo mass; we obtain the latter via the standard abundance-matching technique, i.e., by associating galaxies and halos with the same integrated number density (e.g., Vale & Ostriker 2004; Shankar et al. 2006; Moster et al. 2013; Aversa et al. 2015).

The outcome for our global SFR function at the three redshifts $z \approx 6$ (black dashed line), 8 (solid), and 10 (dotted) relevant for reionization is illustrated in Figure 4. We find a relationship $M_* \propto M_{\text{HI}}^{0.5}$ between the SFR and host halo mass, which is remarkably similar to what has been derived at lower $z \lesssim 6$ (e.g., Aversa et al. 2015); the slope is close to that expected for galaxies where the SFR is regulated by the balance between cooling and energy feedback from supernova explosions or stellar winds (see Shankar et al. 2006; Finlator et al. 2011).

We stress once more that the current UV data from blankfield surveys at $z \gtrsim 6$ probe the SFR functions down to $M_{\text{UV}} \approx -17$, so actually most of these relations are obtained by extrapolation. However, we also report the relation at $z \approx 3$ where the SFR function has been probed down to $M_{\text{UV}} \approx -12$. The relationships at $z \lesssim 3$ and at $z \gtrsim 6$ approximately have the same slope, hinting at a common in situ nature of the star formation process within galaxies (see Mancuso et al. 2016a, 2016b). The offset in normalization is theoretically well understood in terms of an increased efficiency of star formation at high redshift, because of the shorter cooling times induced by the denser cosmic environment (see Lapi et al. 2011, 2014).

![Figure 3. Reionization history of the universe, in terms of the redshift evolution of the optical depth $\tau_{\text{esc}}$ for electron scattering. Black lines illustrate the outcomes from our SFR functions integrated down to UV-magnitude limits $M_{\text{UV}}^{\text{lim}} \approx -13$ (solid), $-17$ (dashed), and $-12$ (dotted-dashed) when adopting an escape fraction of ionizing photons $f_{\text{esc}} \approx 0.1$; see Section 3. For reference, the black dotted line refers to a fully ionized universe up to redshift $z$. The green shaded area shows the measurement (with the 1σ uncertainty region) from the Planck Collaboration XLVII (2016). In the inset, the corresponding evolution of the ionized fraction $Q_{\text{HI}}$ is plotted, together with upper and lower limits from various observations collected by Robertson et al. (2015; empty circles).]
We also report constraints on the limiting $M_{\text{UV}}^{\text{lim}}$ given by the analysis of the cosmic SFR inferred from GRBs \((\text{light blue hatched area})\) and those from Planck data on $\tau_{\text{es}}$ \((\text{green area})\). We stress that, while the GRB constraints are much looser, the constraint on $\tau_{\text{es}}$ depends critically on the assumed value $f_{\text{esc}} \approx 0.1$ for the escape fraction \((\text{see Section 3})\). In the bottom panels, the reader may appreciate how changing $f_{\text{esc}}$ to 0.05 or to 0.2 alters the Planck constraints.

Then we add the independent constraint from the missing satellites issue \((\text{red area})\). As shown by numerical simulations \((\text{Boylan-Kolchin et al. 2014; Wetzel et al. 2016})\), astrophysical processes must intervene to severely limit or even suppress galaxy formation in halos with low masses $M_{\text{H}} \approx \text{few} \times 10^8 M_{\odot}$, because a substantial number of such small halos would otherwise survive down to the present time as bound satellites of Milky Way-sized galaxies, which are not observed. This is reinforced by recent estimates of the halo masses from kinematics of local dwarf spirals: the objects with the smallest stellar masses $M_* \approx 10^7 M_{\odot}$ are found to reside in halos with masses always larger than a few $\times 10^8 M_{\odot}$ \((\text{see Karukes et al. 2017})\).

Physical processes suppressing galaxy formation in such small halos may include an increase of supernova feedback efficiency, or radiative/chemical feedback from the diffuse UV background, or more complex phenomena \((\text{see Efstathiou 1992; Sobacchi & Mesinger et al. 2013; Cai et al. 2014})\). Note that an alternative, although more exotic, possibility is given by warm dark matter with particle masses $\approx 3 \text{ keV}$ \((\text{Viel et al. 2013; Lapi & Danese 2015})\): in such frameworks, halo masses below a few $\times 10^8 M_{\odot}$ may not exist at all due to truncation in the primordial power spectrum, and even cooling/star formation processes may be less efficient due to the lack of substructures \((\text{e.g., Pontzen & Governato 2014})\).

We remark that the combination of the astrophysical/cosmological constraints from the satellites issue, GRB rates, and reionization \((\text{highlighted in Figure 4 by the yellow contour})\) concurrently support a limiting UV magnitude around $M_{\text{UV}}^{\text{lim}} \approx -13$ and a plausible value of the escape fraction around $f_{\text{esc}} \approx 0.1$, producing a reionization redshift $z \approx 8–9$ and agreement with the constraints on the evolution of the HII ionizing fraction $Q_{\text{HII}}$; cf. inset of Figure 3.
functions imply a significant number density of dusty star-forming galaxies with SFR $M_{\star} \gtrsim 10^2 M_\odot$ yr$^{-1}$ at $z \gtrsim 4$, currently missed by UV data even when corrected for dust extinction via the UV slope (see Section 1). We stress that our model-independent SFR functions constitute a crucial test of galaxy formation, especially for redshifts $z \gtrsim 2$ and large SFRs $M_{\star} \gtrsim 100 M_\odot$ yr$^{-1}$, where most of the current numerical and semianalytic models suffer substantial problems (e.g., Gruppioni et al. 2015, their Figure 3).

We have found that the cosmic SFR density inferred from our global SFR functions integrated down to a UV magnitude limit $M_{UV} \lesssim -13$ (corresponding to an SFR limit around $10^{-2} M_\odot$ yr$^{-1}$) is in excellent agreement with recent determinations from stacked IR data at redshift $z \gtrsim 4$. Moreover, when taking into account a critical metallicity ceiling $Z \lesssim Z_{\odot}/2$, it is also in accordance with the estimates from long GRB rates (cf. Section 2.1). Note that such a value of the metallicity ceiling lends support to GRB formation models based on binary stellar evolution. We stress that such findings on the cosmic SFR and metallicity demonstrate the relevance of the issue concerning dust production mechanisms by Type II supernovae and AGB stars in high-$z$ galaxies (e.g., Dwek et al. 2015; Michałowski 2015; Mancuso et al. 2016a; Rowan-Robinson et al. 2016). Large statistical samples of dusty star-forming galaxies at $z \gtrsim 4$ will constitute key data sets for understanding the role of the physical processes involved in dust formation and destruction.

We have been able to reproduce the recent measurements of the Planck mission on the electron scattering optical depth $\tau_{es} \approx 0.058$, and to satisfy the constraints on the redshift evolution of the HII ionizing fraction $Q_{H\alpha}$ by adopting the standard Chabrier IMF and a conceivable value of the average escape fraction for ionizing photons $f_{esc} \approx 0.1$. At the same time, we have shown that to maintain consistency with the Planck data, the SFR functions at $z \gtrsim 6$ cannot extend with steep slopes $\alpha \lesssim 2$ much beyond $M_{UV} \lesssim -12$ (SFRs of a few $10^{-3} M_\odot$ yr$^{-1}$). Coordinated variations of the escape fraction and of the limiting magnitude can work comparably well in reproducing the estimate on $\tau_{es}$ from Planck, but at the cost of worsening the agreement with the observational constraints on $Q_{H\alpha}$.

We have then connected via the abundance-matching technique the constraints on the cosmic SFR density from IR/GRB data and on cosmic reionization to the missing satellites issue. All these independent probes concurrently imply galaxy formation to become inefficient (at least at $z \gtrsim 6$) within dark matter halos of mass below a few $10^7 M_\odot$ or correspondingly within galaxies with $M_{UV} \lesssim -12$ or SFRs of a few $10^{-3} M_\odot$ yr$^{-1}$. This inefficiency may be due to baryonic processes like increased supernova feedback efficiency, radiative/chemical feedback from the diffuse UV background, or more complex phenomena. An alternative, though more exotic, possibility is given by warm dark matter with particle masses $\lesssim 3$ keV, implying that halo masses below a few $10^7 M_\odot$ may be strongly suppressed in number due to truncation in the primordial power spectrum by free streaming, or that cooling/star formation processes may be less efficient in such small halos due to the lack of substructures.

Therefore, we have predicted a downturn of the Galaxy luminosity function faintward of $M_{UV} \lesssim -12$, and stressed that its detailed shape, as plausibly probed in the next future by the Hubble Frontier Fields program or by the JWST, will be

Figure 5. Solid line illustrates our prediction concerning the very faint end of the SFR function at $z \sim 8$, based on the combined constraints from reionization, GRB rates, and missing satellites (gray shaded area). These concurrently indicate that the SFR function turns down at around $M_{UV} \sim -12$, not far from the magnitudes $M_{UV} \sim -15$ that have been already observed by Atek et al. (2015) and Livermore et al. (2016), due to gravitational lensing effects. Remarkably, at $z \approx 3$ and $z \approx 6$, Alavi et al. (2016) and Bouwens et al. (2016b) have pushed our knowledge of the SFR function down to $M_{UV} \sim -13$, with no significant evidence for a downturn.

At $z \sim 8$ the relevant magnitude range is not accessible with current facilities but will be probed in the near future with the advent of the James Webb Space Telescope. The precise location and the detailed shape of the SFR function near the downturn would be extremely informative on the astrophysics of galaxy formation in small halos (e.g., Weisz et al. 2014).
extremely informative on the astrophysics of galaxy formation in small halos, or even pivotal in probing the microscopic nature of dark matter.

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