How typical is the Coma cluster?

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Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the Royal Astronomical Society

ABSTRACT

Coma is frequently used as the archetype $z \sim 0$ galaxy cluster to compare higher redshift work against. It is not clear, however, how representative the Coma cluster is for galaxy clusters of its mass or X-ray luminosity, and significantly, recent works have suggested that the galaxy population of Coma may be in some ways anomalous. In this work, we present a comparison of Coma to an X-ray-selected control sample of clusters. We show that although Coma is typical against the control sample in terms of its internal kinematics (sub-structure and velocity dispersion profile), it has a significantly high ($\sim 3\sigma$) X-ray temperature set against clusters of comparable mass. By de-redshifting our control sample cluster galaxies star formation rates using a fit to the galaxy main-sequence evolution at $z < 0.1$, we determine that the typical star formation rate of Coma galaxies as a function of mass is higher than for galaxies in our control sample at a confidence level of $\sim 99$ per cent. One way to alleviate this discrepancy and bring Coma in line with the control sample would be to have the distance to Coma to be slightly lower, perhaps through a non-negligible peculiar velocity with respect to the Hubble expansion, but we do not regard this as likely given precision measurements using a variety of approaches. Therefore, in summary, we urge caution in using Coma as a $z \sim 0$ baseline cluster in galaxy evolution studies.

Key words: galaxies: clusters: general – galaxies: clusters: individual: Coma cluster – galaxies: evolution – X-rays: galaxies: clusters.

1 INTRODUCTION

Clusters of galaxies span a wide range of physical conditions and internal configurations. At the high-mass end of their mass distribution ($\sim 10^{15}$ solar masses), clusters may contain several thousand member galaxies that are orbiting with velocity dispersions over 1000 km s$^{-1}$ (cf. Pimbblet et al. 2006; Ebeling et al. 2010). They are also rare celestial objects: they form from the gravitational collapse of extremely large perturbations within the primordial density field (e.g. Zel’Dovich 1970; Doroshkevich & Shandarin 1978) and continue to grow at all epochs through the accretion of fresh material; a large fraction of galaxies being funnelled directly to them through the filaments of the cosmic web (Pimbblet, Drinkwater & Hawkrigg 2004). From the point of view of studying galaxy evolution, clusters of galaxies offer excellent test beds as they contain a range of conditions from their outskirts (which may contain filaments and underdense ‘void’ regions that galaxies are being accreted through) to high-density cores that contain a dense, hot ($10^7$–$10^8$ K) X-ray-emitting gas that is capable of stripping an infalling galaxy of its own star-forming gas (Gunn & Gott 1972; Cayatte et al. 1990; Quilis, Moore & Bower 2000; Boselli & Gavazzi 2006). Indeed, galaxies that are located at the centre of clusters (or high-density regions of the Universe) have long been noted to possess systematically different properties (star formation rates, colours, morphologies, masses) to those in low-density regions (e.g. Dressler 1980; Lewis et al. 2002; Gómez et al. 2003; Baldry et al. 2006; Bamford et al. 2009; Wilman & Erwin 2012, amongst many others). To address questions concerning the evolution of galaxies within these structures, samples of self-similar structures (and/or their likely progenitors) need to be assembled across cosmic time.

The Coma cluster (also known as Abell 1656 in the catalogue of Abell 1958) is the closest galaxy cluster of its mass (recently derived to be $1.8 \times 10^{15}$ solar masses through a weak lensing analysis by Kubo et al. 2007) to us. This has led to Coma being extensively used as a redshift $z \approx 0$ baseline to compare higher redshift galaxy clusters to (e.g. Bahcall 1972; Mellier et al. 1988; Stanford, Eisenhardt & Dickinson 1995; Smith, Driver & Phillips 1997; Kodama et al. 1998; Jørgensen et al. 1999; Jones, Smail & Couch 2000; Kodama & Bower 2001; van Dokkum et al. 2001; La Barbera et al. 2002; Rusin et al. 2003; De Lucia et al. 2004, 2007; Ellis & Jones 2004; Poggianti et al. 2004; Fritz et al. 2005; Holden et al. 2005;...
Our results are summarized in Section 6. Throughout this work, we have used the Spergel et al. (2007) standard, flat cosmology in which \( \Omega_M = 0.238, \Omega_\Lambda = 0.762 \) and \( H_0 = 73 \text{ km s}^{-1} \text{ Mpc}^{-1} \).

2 DATA

We use two sets of data in this work, both taken from SDSS Data Release 7 (Abazajian et al. 2009). The first set of data is for the Coma cluster itself, whilst the second set (the control sample) consists of SDSS clusters that possess comparable X-ray luminosity (an observational proxy for mass since it originates from thermal Bremsstrahlung of the hot intra-cluster gas) to Coma. We make use of the SDSS value-added catalogues throughout this work, which includes star formation rates (Brinchmann et al. 2004) and masses (see www.mpa-garching.mpg.de/SDSS/DR7/Data/stellar.html).

To create the control sample, we note that Coma has an X-ray luminosity of \( L_X = 7.77 \times 10^{44} \text{ erg s}^{-1} \) measured in the 0.1–2.4 keV band (Reiprich & Böhringer 2002). This level of emission is comparable with some of the most massive clusters in the Universe (cf. Ebeling, Edge & Henry 2001; Pimbblet et al. 2001). We therefore would like to select clusters with comparable \( L_X \) in the 0.1–2.4 keV band, but balance this with a need to have a sufficiently large control sample to contrast Coma against. We therefore select clusters within \( 5 \times 10^{44} \text{ erg s}^{-1} \) of Coma’s X-ray luminosity. Since X-ray luminosity can predict cluster mass with an accuracy of >50 per cent, such a range is likely to correspond to no more than a factor of 2 in range of mass from this \( L_X \) selection (Popesso et al. 2005). Secondly, we would like to select galaxy clusters to be at a comparable stage in their evolution as Coma. We first note that Kodama & Smail (2001) suggest the time-scale for galaxy morphological transformation within clusters may be as short as 1 Gyr if gas starvation effects are strong (see also Bekki, Couch & Shiroya 2002; Moran et al. 2006; Tonnesen, Bryan & van Gorkom 2007; Boselli et al. 2008). Therefore, we wish to select clusters within \( <1 \) Gyr look-back of Coma. This corresponds to a maximum redshift of \( z \sim 0.08 \) to select our clusters from.

We use the Base de Donnees Amas de Galaxies X (BAX) X-Ray Clusters Database (Sadat et al. 2004) to select clusters by using the above criteria. This yields a total of 47 clusters. Of these, one is Coma and a further 13 (30 per cent) are within the spatial limits of SDSS – this criterion of being within the observational bounds of SDSS is only applied after the X-ray selection within BAX. We detail the global properties of these clusters in Table 1, alongside Coma. We note that the clusters in the control sample have a mean \( L_X = 5.1 \pm 2.4 \times 10^{44} \text{ erg s}^{-1} \) – only \( \sim 1 \sigma \) less than Coma’s.

From this sample, we exclude NRGB045 on the grounds that it has an anomalously low-\( T_X \) value (0.83 keV). This is due to NRGB045 being more akin to a group than a cluster. Indeed, recent work by Stott et al. (2012) suggests that any galaxy grouping with \( T_X < 2 \) keV would physically be considered a group rather than a bona fide cluster. The exclusion of NRGB045 from our subsequent analysis leaves us with 12 clusters in the control sample.

For each of the clusters in our control sample, we download all galaxies within 1 deg of the BAX-specified cluster centres from SDSS. For each cluster, we derive new estimates of their mean recession velocity (\( \sigma_r \)) and velocity dispersion (\( \sigma_{v_z} \)) from the ‘gapping’ technique of Zabludoff, Huchra & Geller (1990) and Zabludoff et al. (1993), which iteratively eliminates any galaxy from the computation of \( \sigma_r \) that is deviant by more than 3\( \sigma_r \) from \( \sigma_{v_z} \). Errors on \( \sigma_{v_z} \) are generated following Danese, de Zotti & di Tullio (1980).

Although this method samples a factor of \( \sim 2 \) different physical radii across our clusters (ranging from 2.2 Mpc for our lowest redshift
cluster, Abell 2199, to 5.2 Mpc for ZwCl 1215.1+0400), the goal here is simply to provide an estimate of the redshift range to define a simple cluster membership criterion from within 3 $\sigma_{\text{c}}$, of the mean interior density. An analogous approach is taken for Coma, but using a 2 deg radius (a 3.4 Mpc radius). To place the clusters on to a common, physically meaningful scale, we limit our subsequent analysis to those galaxies within a virial radius ($R_{\text{vir}}$) at which the mean interior density is 200 times the critical density; this value is well approximated by $R_{\text{200}}$. Although we could compute this radii in other ways (e.g. Carlberg et al. 1997), we emphasize that this approximation is sufficient to serve to place our clusters on to a common scale. These values are tabulated in Table 1. Although it is known that there is considerable scatter in the $L_X$–$\sigma_{\text{c}}$ relationship (Popesso et al. 2005), the first conclusion to be drawn here is that Coma’s velocity dispersion is not atypical compared to the control sample (which has a mean of 1043 ± 372 km s$^{-1}$), but is one of the largest given how we have selected the galaxy members. We point out that the control sample has a full range of Bautz & Morgan (1970) classifications (Table 1) – meaning that we cover a full range of galaxy cluster configurations and morphologies, ranging from those with obvious cD galaxies centrally located in the clusters to those lacking such a galaxy in entirety. Coma as a type II cluster that has two obvious, brightest cluster galaxies is not atypical against this control sample: we do not regard it as more dynamically evolved than the control sample.

### 3 X-RAY TEMPERATURE

From Table 1, it is already clear that Coma has the largest X-ray temperature (8.25 keV) out of all the comparable clusters selected within SDSS. The mean temperature of our control sample is $T_X = 5.1 \pm 1.1$ keV – some 2.9σ lower than the temperature of Coma. Such a large temperature means that the physical conditions inside Coma may actively regulate the star formation of galaxies contained therein. For example, Urquhart et al. (2010) note that high $T_X$ clusters have a much lower fraction of photometrically blue galaxies (i.e. Butler–Oemler fraction; Butler & Oemler 1984) than low-$T_X$ clusters and are highly unlikely to contain any extremely blue galaxies. Further, Popesso et al. (2007b) and Aguerri, Sánchez-Janssen & Muñoz-Tuñón (2007) find an anticorrelation between $L_X$ and cluster blue fraction which supports this finding, given the scaling between $L_X$ and $T_X$. This is reflected in the work of Poggianti et al. (2006) who demonstrate a broad anticorrelation between cluster velocity dispersion (a parameter that also scales with $L_X$; Davé, Katz & Weinberg 2002) and the fraction of star-forming cluster galaxies.

Popesso et al. (2005) report the scaling relationship between $L_X$ and $T_X$ in detail and show that there is both a trend and an appreciable scatter between the two variables (see also Davé et al. 2002). Although Coma’s $T_X$ value may be significantly larger than our control sample, we have used a factor of 2 range in $L_X$ to draw this conclusion from. To determine if its $T_X$ is truly anomalously
Figure 1. X-ray temperatures for clusters extracted from BAX within $1 \times 10^{44}$ erg s$^{-1}$ of Coma’s X-ray luminosity that have $T_X$ values available. Clusters below $z = 0.0814$ are marked with blue pluses, those above with red filled circles. Coma is marked by a triangle near the centre of the plot. The mean $T_X$ of our control sample (i.e. those clusters inside the SDSS boundary that are within $5 \times 10^{44}$ erg s$^{-1}$ of Coma’s X-ray luminosity) is denoted by the solid horizontal line and a few standard deviations either side of this are represented by the dotted lines, as labelled. Coma has one of the largest $T_X$ values for this narrow $L_X$ range and is $\sim 2.9 \sigma$ above the control sample’s mean $T_X$ value.

We therefore conclude that Coma’s X-ray temperature is comparatively high: both against our control sample and against all available clusters in a much narrower $L_X$ range.

4 CLUSTER SUB-STRUCTURE

In this section, we address the second of our comparisons of Coma to the control sample using global cluster kinematical approaches. Depending on cosmological parameters, such as the matter density of the Universe, it might be expected that a rich cluster of galaxies (i.e. such as the ones that are in our sample) have perhaps as much as half of their mass accreted within the past $\sim$few Gyr (e.g. Lacey & Cole 1993). Under such circumstance, it can be expected that a large fraction of rich clusters exhibit measurable sub-clustering. Coma is already well known to possess sub-clustering (see above). But, what fraction of our control sample also exhibits sub-clustering? To determine this fraction, we use the approach of Dressler & Shectman (1988, DS) to evaluate if the clusters possess significant sub-clustering. The test is powerful. Pinkney et al.
(1996) report that the DS approach is the most sensitive test for sub-clustering from a swathe of tests that they evaluated. The method works by computing a local mean local velocity (\(\bar{v}_{\text{local}}\)) and local velocity standard deviation (\(\sigma_{\text{local}}\)) of a galaxy and its 10 nearest neighbours. These values are subsequently compared to the parent cluster’s mean velocity and \(\sigma\), such that

\[
\delta^2 = \frac{N_{\text{local}} + 1}{\sigma^2} \left[ (\bar{v}_{\text{local}} - \bar{v})^2 + (\sigma_{\text{local}} - \sigma)^2 \right],
\]

where \(\delta\) is a measure of the deviation of the individual galaxy. The parameter of merit, \(\Delta\), is computed as the summation of all \(\delta\) terms. This is contrasted with a Monte Carlo re-simulation of the cluster where the galaxy velocities have been randomly shuffled to each galaxy to generate \(P(\Delta)\) and thereby estimate the confidence level that the cluster contains sub-structure.

Before we apply the DS test to our control sample, we need to not only use the cluster membership criterion derived above and limit the members to within \(R_{\text{Virial}}\) but also limit the cluster members to a similar absolute luminosity range and mass range. This is necessary since the sub-structure is strongly dependent on the galaxy luminosity range considered (Aguerri & Sánchez-Janssen 2010). This is achieved by considering the highest redshift in the control group: Abell 2255. For this cluster, the SDSS limiting apparent magnitude of \(r = 17.77\) corresponds to an absolute value \(< c z\). Terms.

\[
P(r) = \frac{1}{\sigma_r} \exp \left( -\frac{(R-R_0)^2}{2\sigma_r^2} \right),
\]

where \(\sigma_r\), the kernel width, is a free parameter that we arbitrarily set to 0.2\(R_{\text{Virial}}\). The velocity dispersion profiles computed in this manner are displayed in Fig. 3. Interestingly, the clusters with produce a \(P(\Delta)\) statistic that is <0.1 per cent (indicating certain sub-structure within \(R_{\text{Virial}}\)). We note that this remains constant even if we ignore the absolute magnitude limit imposed above. Given the comparatively large velocity dispersion of these clusters, this is perhaps expected (Hou et al. 2012). Moreover, from \(\Lambda\)CDM simulations of clusters, Knebe & Müller (2000) demonstrate that some 30 per cent of all clusters should exhibit sub-clustering due to intercluster merger and infall activity (modulo slightly different selection criteria). We therefore regard Coma (and, indeed, our control group) as being ‘typical’ for clusters in a \(\Lambda\)CDM Universe for the level of sub-structure observed at our limits.

### 4.1 Velocity dispersion profiles

In recent years, a number of authors have probed how the velocity dispersion profile of clusters is affected by various cluster-intrinsic factors such as sub-structure (Hou et al. 2012) as well as potentially the dwarf-to-giant ratio (Pimbblet & Jensen 2012) and the occupancy of the cluster by different spectral classes of galaxy (Rood et al. 1972). To complement the above analysis, we now compute the velocity dispersion profile [\(\sigma_r(R)\)] of each of our clusters following the prescription of Bergond et al. (2006, see also Hou et al. 2012). Formally,

\[
\sigma_r(R) = \frac{1}{\sum_i w_i(R)} \sqrt{\sum_i w_i(R)(x_i - \bar{R})^2},
\]

where \(x_i\) are the measured radial velocities of each galaxy and \(\bar{R}\) is the mean recession velocity of the cluster taken from Table 1. The weighting factors, \(w_i\), are applied such that

\[
w_i(R) = \frac{1}{\sigma_r} \exp \left( -\frac{(R - R_i)^2}{2\sigma_r^2} \right),
\]

where \(\sigma_r\) is the central velocity of the cluster in the control group: Abell 2255.

Due to a paucity of data (less than 30 galaxy members per cluster) after applying these cuts, we are forced to eliminate Abell 85, 660, 2199 and Zwicky 1518.8+0747 from our control sample at this stage. Of our sample, Abell 1775 and Abell 2065 (2 out of 8)
significant sub-structure are not seen to have a rising velocity dispersion profile. This argues that any local kinematic group of galaxies may be at a late stage of homogenization with the wider cluster. This is in contrast to ZwCl 1215+0400 which does have a markedly rising profile and lack obvious sub-structure. This may be caused by multiple sub-clumps at large radii infalling for the first time. In comparison, Coma is quite unremarkably set against these profiles.

5 STAR FORMATION

In this section, we determine the star formation activity levels for cluster members in Coma and the control sample.

One way in which to do this is to use the galaxy main sequence (Noeske et al. 2007, and references therein): a plot of star formation rate against galaxy mass. This sequence is known to evolve with redshift – at high-z, the average star formation rate of galaxies is higher per galaxy mass than at lower z – the evolution in the trend being largely attributed to gas exhaustion. Therefore, if we are to use the galaxy main sequence to probe the activity levels in Coma and the control sample, we must first correct for this redshift evolution. We accomplish this by accessing all SDSS galaxies in 0.005 redshift bins up to z = 0.1, thereby encompassing all of our sample. For each bin, we compute the median and interquartile range of star formation rates\(^2\) of log(stellar mass) = 10.4–10.6 galaxies (the choice of this mass range is arbitrary, but is sufficiently representative of our own sample and balances the need to have good statistics to compute the redshift evolution of the main sequence from). The results of this are displayed in Fig. 4. We fit the data with a linear relationship which has a gradient of 7.22 ± 0.21 in this range. Although the actual evolutionary relation will likely be of a higher order of \((1 + z)\), this linear relation is sufficient to describe these data at \(z < 0.1\).

We use the gradient determined in Fig. 4 to de-redshift the star formation rates of galaxies in our control sample to that of Coma. In Fig. 5, we plot the galaxies from Coma and our de-redshifted control sample in the galaxy main-sequence phase space (again, using data from the value-added SDSS catalogue; Brinchmann et al. 2004). From this figure, we see that the galaxies in Coma appear to have a systematically higher star formation rate at a given stellar mass than the control sample.

But is this apparent observation real? A two-dimensional Kolmogorov–Smirnov (KS) test (Peacock 1983; Fasano & Franceschini 1987) returns a very low chance (<0.001 per cent; coupled with a high-\(\Delta\) statistic) that the two distributions are drawn from the same sample. We therefore consider Coma to have a population whose galaxies possess significantly higher star formation rates on average than comparable clusters at similar evolutionary stages. We visually inspect those galaxies with very high star formation and specific star formation rates and confirm that they appear to be late-type (spiral and irregular) galaxies that we assume are undergoing a starburst phase.

A second way in which we may consider the active fraction is to use the divisor of McGee et al. (2011) who use log(specific star formation rate) = −11 to differentiate between active and passive galaxies. In Fig. 6, we plot the specific star formation rate of Coma galaxies and the de-redshifted control sample as a function of galaxy mass. The fraction of galaxies that are active by this definition are 0.09 ± 0.02 in Coma versus 0.14 ± 0.02 for the control sample. This is ∼2\(\sigma\) (depending on rounding) difference between the two samples. This appears to support (albeit at a weaker level) the inference of the two-dimensional KS test: the galaxies in Coma are systematically different to the control sample.

\(^2\) Star formation rates for the galaxies are sourced from the SDSS value-added catalogue which are computed as per Brinchmann et al. (2004) using model fitting.
Specific star formation rates as a function of galaxy mass. Symbols are the same as per Fig. 5. The horizontal line denotes the McGee et al. (2011) delimiter between active (above the line) and passive (below the line) galaxies. The fraction of active galaxies differ between the two samples at a ∼2σ level.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

At the outset, we aimed to investigate three facets of Coma’s galaxies in comparison to a control sample: an X-ray temperature and luminosity comparison, a kinematic comparison and a star formation activity comparison. One area that we have deliberately avoided is an examination of the luminosity function of Coma. This is on the grounds that it has already been well studied in comparison to other clusters at multiple wavelengths (recent examples include but are not limited to Adami et al. 2007; Cortese, Gavazzi & Boselli 2008; Bai et al. 2009; Yamanou et al. 2012) and will likely follow the kinematic results for the control sample (in the sense that multiple components may be reflected in a superposition of functions; see also Tempel et al. 2009).

One way in which the situation of higher $T_X$ coupled with higher star formation rate per galaxy mass bin being larger in Coma compared to the control sample might be arranged is if the bluer galaxies in Coma are just arriving into the cluster environment (given that a hotter intra-cluster medium should inhibit galaxy star formation subsequently). This ties with the Mahajan, Raychadhury & Pimbblet (2012) finding: a high galaxy density in the infalling and filamentary regions of clusters such as Coma inevitably leads to a greater rate of galaxy–galaxy interaction and consequently an increased starburst rate. But the problem with this interpretation is that there are ≈equally massive clusters in the control sample by design (i.e. the X-ray selection used here).

There have been hints in the literature that some of the special features of Coma might be alleviated if the distance to Coma was slightly lower. Consider, for example, fig. 6 of van Dokkum & van der Marel (2007) which shows that the mass-to-light ratio of Coma is similar to that of $z \sim 0.2$ clusters. If the distance to Coma were lower, then this ratio would increase, bringing Coma’s mass-to-light ratio more in line with the trend observed with redshift by the same authors. This could be achieved if Coma had a non-negligible peculiar velocity with respect to the Hubble flow (e.g. towards the Shapley concentration). An interesting facet of this hypothetical change would be the driving of the star formation rates of Coma galaxies lower – bringing them more in line with the deredshifted control sample points. Given results that suggest Coma has been reported to have negligible peculiar velocity (e.g. Bernardi et al. 2002) and a variety of measurements agreeing within uncertainty on its distance (e.g. Capaccioli et al. 1990; D’Onofrio et al. 1997; Jensen, Tonry & Luppino 1999; Kavelaars et al. 2000; Liu & Graham 2001), we do not view this as a likely scenario; we supply it simply as an illustration.

In summary, in this work we have shown the following.

(i) Although Coma has a large velocity dispersion, it is not atypical for a cluster of its $L_X$. However, the X-ray temperature of Coma is rather high: some 2.9σ hotter than our control sample. Even considering all clusters available with published $T_X$ within $1 \times 10^{44} \text{erg s}^{-1}$ of Coma reveals that it has one of the highest temperatures for all clusters in the range. Given the relationship between $T_X$ and cluster galaxy properties, we urge strong caution in using Coma as a $z \sim 0$ baseline for studying cluster galaxy evolution.

(ii) Coma is well known to contain sub-structure. In comparison, we show that 2 out of 8 clusters in the control sample also contain significant sub-structure within $R_{\text{final}}$. Coma is therefore unremarkable in this regard.

(iii) The velocity dispersion profiles of the control sample contain a mixture of rising, falling, flat and combination profiles. Coma is unremarkably set against this background and reinforces the above conclusion that Coma is kinematically normative for clusters of its ilk.

(iv) The general star formation rate of Coma cluster galaxies inferred from the galaxy main sequence is systematically higher than that for the control sample. A two-dimensional KS test rejects the hypothesis that the two samples are drawn from the same parent population with over 99 per cent confidence. Further, the fraction of actively star-forming galaxies by the definition of McGee et al. (2011) is 0.09 ± 0.02 for Coma versus 0.14 ± 0.02 for the control sample. We note in speculation that this discrepancy could be alleviated if the distance to Coma were smaller.

Thus, whilst Coma might be kinematically ‘typical’, the galaxies contained within are less suppressed in star formation rate than the comparison clusters. We consequentially urge caution in using Coma as a $z \sim 0$ cluster in galaxy evolution works: its galaxy population to the limits probed by this sample are not typical of clusters for its mass (as approximated by its X-ray luminosity).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

KAP thanks Christ Church College, Oxford, for their hospitality whilst the bulk of this work was being undertaken. SJP is a Super Science Fellow at Monash University. KAP and SJP thank the Australian Research Council for their support through grant number FS110200047. We thank Ryan Houghton and Martin Bureau for valuable discussion during the preparation of this work.

We would like to express our gratitude to the anonymous referee for her/his robust feedback on the earlier versions of this manuscript.

This research has made use of the X-Ray Clusters Database (BAX) which is operated by the Laboratoire d’Astrophysique de Tarbes-Toulouse (LATT), under contract with the Centre National d’Etudes Spatiales (CNES). Funding for the SDSS and SDSS-II has been provided by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the Participating Institutions, the National...
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