

[7GC-03] The evolution of spheroidal galaxies over the last 8 billion years

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We review our current understanding of the star formation histories of spheroidal galaxies, in the context of recent observational studies of their ultraviolet (UV) properties. Combination of UV and optical spectro-photometric data indicates that the bulk of the stellar mass in this forms at high redshift ($z > 2$), possibly over short timescales (< 1 Gyr). Nevertheless, spheroids of all luminosities form stars over the lifetime of the Universe, with most luminous ($-23 < M(V) < -21$) systems forming 10–15% of their stellar mass after $z = 1$ (with a scatter to higher value), while their less luminous ($M(V) > -21$) counterparts form 30–60% of their mass in the same redshift range. The intensity of recent star formation and the bulk of the UV colour distribution is consistent with what might be expected from minor mergers (mass ratios $< 1:6$) in an LCDM cosmology.

[7GC-04] GOODS and the formation of early-type galaxies

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In this talk I will present a sample of ~ 1000 visually classified early-type galaxies extracted from the Great Observatories Origins Deep Survey (GOODS). The superb depth and resolution of the HST/ACS images enable us to explore the evolution of the intrinsic properties of massive galaxies over a redshift range corresponding to more than half of the present age of the Universe.