
Damped absorbers and their galactic environments

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Abstract

Strong absorption-lines in the spectra of background quasars tell of intervening absorbers that probe outskirts of gaseous galaxies. Being insensitive to the luminosity of its host, such absorption can be used as an alternative selection of galaxies, complementing traditional luminosity selections. But identifying these galaxies in emission is challenging due to the proximity of the bright background quasar. The detection-rate can, however, be optimised by targeting the host-galaxies of the most metal-rich absorbers because these systems are more massive and brighter. In this talk, I will present the latest results from a FORS2 spectroscopic- and an HST photometric followup aimed at confirming and characterising the galaxies harbouring such absorbers. In particular, I will address what stellar mass range such an absorption-selection probes; where in the galaxies damped absorbers are located; and on metallicity gradients extending out into the galaxy halos.

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