

The formation of the Milky Way

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Studies of the Milky Way allow us to probe the formation of a disk galaxy in a detail that is completely inaccessible in more distant systems. New photometric large-area surveys are giving us a revolutionary view of the fine substructures in the distant regions of our Galaxy. Coupled with high-resolution spectroscopic surveys, these are unveiling a rich fossil record of the formation of a spiral galaxy. I will review this recent progress, and discuss the striking differences between the Milky and other nearby galaxies.

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