The dynamically hot stellar halo around NGC 3311: a small cluster-dominated central galaxy*,**

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ABSTRACT

Context. An important open question is the relation between intracluster light and the halos of central galaxies in galaxy clusters.

Aims. Here we report results from an on going project with the aim to characterize the dynamical state in the core of the Hydra I (Abell 1060) cluster around NGC 3311.

Methods. We analyze deep long-slit absorption line spectra reaching out to ~25 kpc in the halo of NGC 3311.

Results. We find a very steep increase in the velocity dispersion profile from a central $\sigma_0 = 150$ km s$^{-1}$ to $\sigma_{\text{halo}} \approx 450$ km s$^{-1}$ at $R \approx 12$ kpc. Further out, to ~25 kpc, $\sigma$ appears to be constant at this value, which is ~60% of the velocity dispersion of the Hydra I galaxies. With its dynamically hot halo kinematics, NGC 3311 is unlike other normal early-type galaxies.

Conclusions. These results and the large amount of dark matter inferred from X-rays around NGC 3311 suggest that the stellar halo of this galaxy is dominated by the central intracluster stars of the cluster, and that the transition from predominantly galaxy-bound stars to cluster stars occurs in the radial range 4 to 12 kpc from the center of NGC 3311. We comment on the wide range of halo kinematics observed in cluster central galaxies, depending on the evolutionary state of their host clusters.

Key words. galaxies: clusters: general – galaxies: clusters: individual: Hydra I – galaxies: kinematics and dynamics – galaxies: individual: NGC 3311

1. Introduction

An important open question is the physical and evolutionary relation between the intracluster light (ICL) and the extended halo of the brightest cluster galaxies (BCGs), whether they are truly independent components or whether the former is a radial extension of the latter. Using a sample of 683 SDSS clusters Zibetti et al. (2005) found a surface brightness excess with respect to the central part of the cluster’s distribution of temperature and metal abundance from a few kpc in the Hydra I cluster, an X-ray bright, non-cooling flow, medium of 0.64 Å pixel$^{-1}$ and spatial resolution $\sigma = 90$ km s$^{-1}$, and a spatial resolution along the slit of 0.252 pixel$^{-1}$. The seeing during observations ranged from 0.7 to 1.2. The wave-length coverage of the spectra is from 4655 Å to 5965 Å, including absorption lines from H$_\alpha$, MgI ($\lambda=5167, 5173, 5184$ Å) and Fe I ($\lambda = 5270, 5328$ Å). We obtained eight spectra of 1800 s each, for a total exposure time of 4 h. In the FORS2 observations, the long slit is centered on the dwarf galaxy HCC 26 at $a = 10^\circ 35' 45.85''$ and $b = -27^\circ 31' 24.2'' (J2000)$, with a

* Based on observations collected at the European Organisation for Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere, Chile, during the observing program 082.A-0255(A) on 2009 March 25.
** Table 1 is only available in electronic form at http://www.aanda.org

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Gemini GMOS-South long slit spectra – We use Gemini archive long-slit spectra in the wavelength range from 3675 Å to 6266 Å observed with the B600 grating, a dispersion of 0.914 Å pixel$^{-1}$, a spectral resolution of $\sigma = 135$ km s$^{-1}$, and a spatial scale of 0.146 pixel$^{-1}$; a detailed description of the instrumental setup is presented in Loubser et al. (2008). The seeing was typically in the range from 0.6 to 1.2. We target the same absorption lines as for the FORS2 spectra, i.e. H$\alpha$, Mgi ($\lambda\lambda 5167, 5173, 5184$ Å) and Fe I ($\lambda\lambda 5270, 5328$ Å). The 0.5' wide and 5.5' long Gemini slit is centered on NGC 3311, at $\alpha = 10^h36^m42.74^s$ and $\delta = -27^d31^m41.3^s$ (J2000), along PA = 63°, the direction of the galaxy major axis. Its position is shown in Fig. 1.

3. Data reductions

The data reduction of the FORS2 long slit spectra is carried out in IRAF. After the standard operations of bias subtraction and flat-fielding, the spectra are registered, co-added and wavelength calibrated. The edges of the FORS2 slit reach well into sky regions, which are then used to interpolate the sky emission in the regions covered by the stellar spectra.

In the low surface brightness regions, spectra are summed along the spatial direction in order to produce one-dimensional spectra with an adequate S/N ratio ($\geq 20$ per Å). Four independent one-dimensional spectra are extracted along the slit where the light is dominated by the halo of NGC 3311; of these, two are from regions north and two from regions south of HCC 26, respectively. We extract spectra from slit regions of $\sim 31'' \times 1'6$ and $\sim 25'' \times 1'6$ at distances of about 54'' and 47'' from the center of NGC 3311, and of $\sim 58'' \times 1'6$ and $\sim 36'' \times 1'6$ at central distances of about 100'' and 67''. We properly mask the spectra of foreground stars in those areas.

The data reduction for the GMOS long slit spectra is carried out independently here; also in IRAF and with the standard tasks in the Gemini package. The procedure is described in Loubser et al. (2008) for the wavelength calibration and background subtraction; also in this case the edges of the slit are used to interpolate the sky emission in the regions covered by the stellar continuum. Because our goal is to sample the kinematics well into the halo, the one-dimensional spectra for the absorption line measurements are summed along the slit direction so that a minimum S/N $\sim 20$ per Å is obtained in each radial bin, out to a radial distance of about 40'' from the center of NGC 3311.

Stellar kinematics – The stellar kinematics is measured from the extracted 1D spectra in the wavelength range 4800 Å $< \lambda < 5800$ Å, using both the “penalized pixel-fitting” method (PPXF, Cappellari & Emsellem 2004) and the Fourier correlation quotient (FCQ) method (Bender 1990), in order to account for possible systematic errors and template mismatch.

In the PPXF method, stellar template stars from the MILES library (Sanchez-Blazquez et al. 2007) are combined to fit the one-dimensional extracted spectra; the rotational velocity, the velocity dispersion and Gauss-Hermite moments (e.g. Gerhard 1993) are measured simultaneously. Figure 2 shows two of the extracted spectra and the broadened templates fit by PPXF. In the FCQ method, the rotational velocity and velocity dispersion are derived for each extracted one-dimensional spectrum by assuming that the LOSVD is described by a Gaussian plus third- and fourth- order Gauss-Hermite functions. Before to the fitting procedure the MILES template spectra are smoothed to the GMOS and FORS2 spectral resolution with the measured broadening offsets. While FCQ provides error estimates along with the measured kinematics, errors for the PPXF kinematic parameters are calculated with a series of Monte Carlo simulations adopting the appropriate S/N for each bin.

Because the stellar populations in cD halos may have different metal abundances and ages from those of the inner regions
Fig. 3. Major axis line-of-sight velocity and velocity dispersion profiles for NGC 3311 (PA = 63°). The open light blue triangles are the values published by Loubser et al. (2008), based on Gemini-South GMOS data. The black asterisks are our independent measurements from these GMOS (archival) spectra, and the red asterisks show measurements from the new VLT-FORS2 spectra. These are weighted averages of GMOS (archival) spectra, and the red asterisks are our independent measurements from these data. The black asterisks are our independent measurements from these values published by Loubser et al. (2008), based on Gemini-South GMOS (Coccato et al. 2010a, b), systematic effects caused by template mismatch must be evaluated and accounted for. We therefore extract kinematic measurements with PPFX and FCQ as follows:

1. fit with PPFX the best stellar template from the MILES library in the central regions with the highest S/N, and extract $v$ and $\sigma$ at all radii, using the same stellar template;
2. simultaneously fit the best stellar template, $v$ and $\sigma$ in each radial bin with PPDFX;
3. adopt the respective best-fit PPXF stellar template to derive the LOSVD with FCQ for all radial bins;
4. finally, average rotational velocities $v$ and velocity dispersions $\sigma$ are computed as weighted means of the three values extracted in each radial bin as detailed above. Errors for these weighted average values are computed from those of the three measurements, but if the reduced $\chi^2 = \frac{1}{(n-1)} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \frac{(x_i - \bar{x})^2}{\epsilon_i^2}$ is greater than one, they are increased by $\sqrt{\chi^2}$ in order to take into account systematic differences. I.e., $\epsilon_i^2 = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} \epsilon_i^2} \times \chi^2$ where $\epsilon_i$, $\epsilon_j$ are the errors on the individual measurements $x_i$ and the weighted mean $\bar{x}$, respectively.

Mean velocities and velocity dispersions in all radial bins are listed in Table 1, and the profiles are shown in Fig. 3 together with the previous measurements from Loubser et al. (2008). Table 1, which is available in electronic form, contains the following information: source of data (Col. 1), distance from galaxy center (Col. 2), PA (Col. 3), $v$, $\sigma$ with errors for each of the procedures 1.-4. described in the text, in Col. (4–5), (6–7), (8–9), and (10–11), respectively. Heliocentric and relativistic corrections have been applied to the mean velocities. The systemic velocity is 3800 km s$^{-1}$ and has been subtracted.

In the central region of NGC 3311, our new velocity dispersion profile marginally agrees with that of Loubser et al. (2008). The new mean line-of-sight velocity measurements agree with the systemic velocity of NGC 3311 obtained by Misgeld et al. (2008), but have a systematic offset from the $v$ data of Loubser et al. (2008), by about 91 km s$^{-1}$. The agreement between the new FORS2 measurements at $-47''$ and the revised value at $-34''$ from archive GMOS data gives us confidence that the systematic effects from wavelength calibration offsets, template mismatch, etc., are sufficiently small in the new, independent data reductions. However, several tests have convinced us that the data do not allow us to reliably determine full line-of-sight distributions (e.g., $h_3$, $h_4$), which could be used to test for subcomponents, which one would expect in particular at radii $30''-40''$. 

4. The kinematics of the NGC 3311 stellar halo

The combined new velocity dispersion profile for NGC 3311 reaches to $R_{maj} = 390 \equiv 10$ kpc from the center of NGC 3311 along the galaxy’s major axis (PA = 63°), and to an off-axis distance of $R = 100'' \equiv 25$ kpc along the FORS2 slit. It shows a very unusual steep rise with increasing radial distance from the galaxy center: from a central value $\sigma_0 = 150$ km s$^{-1}$, to $\sigma = 231$ km s$^{-1}$ at $R = 15'' \equiv 3.7$ kpc, and then on to a flat $\sigma_{2400} \approx 450$ km s$^{-1}$ outside $R = 47'' \equiv 12$ kpc. The steep outward gradient is supported by two independent data sets and data reductions. The measurements of Loubser et al. (2008) near the galaxy center had already hinted at a positive gradient from 190 km s$^{-1}$ at $R = 5'' \equiv 240$ km s$^{-1}$ at a radius of $R = 10''$, and data shown in Fig. 1 of Hau et al. (2004) reach $\approx 300$ km s$^{-1}$ at $-25''$. With the new data we now have very clear evidence of a dynamically hot stellar halo in NGC 3311.

To put the extremely rapid rise of the velocity dispersion profile of NGC 3311 in context, we compare its kinematic properties with those of early-type galaxy (ETG) halos mapped using planetary nebula data (Coccato et al. 2009) and with the halos of the Coma BCG galaxies (NGC 4874, NGC 1852) from deep absorption line spectroscopy (Coccato et al. 2010a). Figure 4 shows the mean $(V/\sigma)$, X-ray luminosity, and total absolute B-band magnitude for these galaxies versus their outermost halo velocity dispersion. For NGC 3311, we use a bolometric X-ray luminosity within 500 $\equiv 12$ kpc, $L_X = 2.75 \times 10^{40}$ erg s$^{-1}$ (based on the flux in the 0.5–4.5 keV energy range from Yamasaki et al. (2002) and corrected to bolometric $L_X$ according to Table 1 of O’Sullivan et al. 2001), and the total extinction corrected B-band magnitude (12.22) from de Vaucouleurs et al. (1991). For the velocity dispersion of NGC 3311, we use the values at the center, at 15'' ($\equiv 3.7$ kpc) and at 47'' ($\equiv 12$ kpc). Only the central $\sigma_0$ puts NGC 3311 in the middle of the ETG distribution; $\sigma''$ deviates strongly, with a much larger $\sigma''$ than expected for the given $L_X$, $B_T$.

The natural interpretation for these results is that the outer stellar halo of NGC 3311 is dominated by the central intracluster star component of the Hydra cluster. This is supported by several pieces of evidence: (i) The steep rise of the $\sigma$-profile; more isolated ETGs all have slightly or even steep falling $\sigma$-profiles (Coccato et al. 2009); (ii) The saturation of $\sigma$ at $\approx 12$ kpc, outside of which the dynamically hot component dominates
Fig. 4. Properties of the stellar halo of NGC 3311 compared with other early-type galaxy halos: mean \((V/\sigma)\) (upper panel), total X-ray luminosity (central panel), and B-band total magnitude (lower panel) against stellar velocity dispersion \(\sigma\). Solid diamond, circle, and square show the measured \(\sigma\) of NGC 3311 at the center, \(15''\) (\(\approx 3.7\) kpc), and \(47''\) (\(\approx 12\) kpc). Crosses show outermost velocity dispersions from Coccato et al. (2009), and open diamonds for NGC 4889/4874 from Coccato et al. (2010a).

\(\sigma\)-profile rises to cluster values at \(R \sim 60\) kpc. But NGC 3311 is even more extreme; it is a fairly small galaxy, based on its central \(\sigma_0 = 150\) km s\(^{-1}\), and it is already dominated by the surrounding cluster component at \(R \sim 12\) kpc. Presumably, this is because the core of the “relaxed” Hydra cluster has had time to collapse onto the galaxy. For comparison, the two BCG galaxies in the Coma cluster core, which have a nearly constant \(\sigma\)-profile (Coccato et al. 2010a), may be in the middle of an ongoing merger (Gerhard et al. 2007), so that their previous subcluster halos would have been stripped and a new cluster halo could have been built only after the merger was completed; and in the outer halo of the more isolated M 87, the velocity dispersion appears to drop (Doherty et al. 2009) towards the edge.

\section*{5. Conclusions}

Based on two independent long-slit data sets and reductions, we find a steep gradient in the velocity dispersion profile of the central galaxy NGC 3311 in the Hydra I cluster, from \(\sigma_0 \approx 150\) km s\(^{-1}\) to \(\sigma_{\text{cut}} \approx 450\) km s\(^{-1}\) outside 12 kpc (60\% of the velocity dispersion of the galaxies in the surrounding cluster). The new data provide evidence that NGC 3311 is a fairly small galaxy dominated by a large envelope of intracluster stars already beyond \(R \sim 12\) kpc, whose orbits are dominated by the cluster dark matter potential. Comparison with other BCG galaxies shows a wide range of dynamical behavior in their halos.

\section*{Acknowledgements}

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\section*{References}

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### Table 1. Measured mean velocities and velocity dispersions for NGC 3311.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instr.</th>
<th>$R$ (arcsec)</th>
<th>PA (°)</th>
<th>$V_{\text{ppxf1}}$ (km s$^{-1}$)</th>
<th>$\sigma_{\text{ppxf1}}$ (km s$^{-1}$)</th>
<th>$V_{\text{ppxf2}}$ (km s$^{-1}$)</th>
<th>$\sigma_{\text{ppxf2}}$ (km s$^{-1}$)</th>
<th>$V_{\text{FCQ}}$ (km s$^{-1}$)</th>
<th>$\sigma_{\text{FCQ}}$ (km s$^{-1}$)</th>
<th>$\langle V \rangle$ (km s$^{-1}$)</th>
<th>$\langle \sigma \rangle$ (km s$^{-1}$)</th>
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<td>GMOS-S 38</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>63°</td>
<td>38 ± 33</td>
<td>399 ± 38</td>
<td>−47 ± 33</td>
<td>381 ± 38</td>
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<td>435 ± 48</td>
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<td>−50 ± 8</td>
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<td>−49 ± 8</td>
<td>241 ± 14</td>
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<td>−22 ± 6</td>
<td>201 ± 10</td>
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Notes. For details see text. The galaxy’s systemic velocity $V_{\text{sys}} = 3800$ km s$^{-1}$ has been obtained by a linear fit to the velocities in the central 20′′ and has then been subtracted from the measurements. This value includes heliocentric and relativistic corrections.

Column 1: instrument; Col. 2: radial distance from center of NGC 3311; Col. 3: position angle of data with respect to NGC 3311’s center; Col. 4: velocity measured with PPXF (using template determined at $R = 0''$), relative to the galaxy systemic velocity; Col. 5: velocity dispersion measured with PPXF (using template determined at $R = 0''$); Col. 6: velocity measured with PPXF (free template), relative to the galaxy systemic velocity; Col. 7: velocity dispersion measured with PPXF (free template); Col. 8: velocity measured with FCQ, relative to the galaxy systemic velocity; Col. 9: velocity dispersion measured with FCQ; Col. 10: weighted average velocity; Col. 11: weighted average velocity dispersion.