

## AN ORPHAN IN THE “FIELD OF STREAMS”

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### ABSTRACT

We use Sloan Digital Sky Survey Data Release 5 photometry and spectroscopy to study a tidal stream that extends over  $\sim 50^\circ$  in the north Galactic cap. From the analysis of the path of the stream and the colors and magnitudes of its stars, the stream is  $\sim 20_{-5}^{+7}$  kpc away at its nearest detection (the celestial equator). We detect a distance gradient: the stream is farther away from us at higher declination. The contents of the stream are made up from a predominantly old and metal-poor population that is similar to the globular clusters M13 and M92. The integrated absolute magnitude of the stream stars is estimated to be  $M_r \sim -7.5$ . There is tentative evidence for a velocity signature, with the stream moving at  $\sim -40$  km s<sup>-1</sup> at low declinations and  $\sim +100$  km s<sup>-1</sup> at high declinations. The stream lies on the same great circle as Complex A, a roughly linear association of H I high-velocity clouds stretching over  $\sim 30^\circ$  on the sky, and as Ursa Major II, a recently discovered dwarf spheroidal galaxy. Lying close to the same great circle are a number of anomalous, young, and metal-poor globular clusters, including Palomar 1 and Ruprecht 106.

*Subject headings:* galaxies: kinematics and dynamics — galaxies: structure — Local Group

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Sloan Digital Sky Survey (SDSS; York et al. 2000) is an imaging and spectroscopic survey that has now mapped over one-fourth of the sky. It has already proven to be a powerful tool for the identification of Galactic substructure. For example, Newberg et al. (2002) and Yanny et al. (2003) identified a ring at low Galactic latitude, often called “the Monoceros Ring.” It spans over  $100^\circ$  in the sky (see also Ibata et al. 2003; Rocha-Pinto et al. 2003), but its progenitor remains unclear (Peñarrubia et al. 2005). Odenkirchen et al. (2001) used SDSS data to find the spectacular  $10^\circ$  tidal tails around the sparse and disrupting Galactic globular cluster Pal 5. More recently still, Belokurov et al. (2006a) found  $4.5^\circ$  tails around the high-latitude globular cluster NGC 5466, while Grillmair & Dionatos (2006) discovered a  $63^\circ$  tail that presumably arises from a so far unidentified globular cluster.

The best-known example of a stream is the tidally stripped stars and globular clusters associated with the Sagittarius dwarf spheroidal. A panorama of the Sagittarius stream in the northern hemisphere was recently obtained by Belokurov et al. (2006b), who mapped out the stars satisfying  $g - r < 0.4$  in almost all of SDSS Data Release 5 (DR5). This color plot of the high-latitude Galactic northern hemisphere has been dubbed the “Field of Streams.” In addition to the features associated with the Sagittarius dSph, the plot exhibits extensive substructure. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the “Orphan Stream,” so named for its lack of obvious progenitor. This is a striking feature dis-

covered by Belokurov et al. (2006b) in the Field of Streams and independently detected in public SDSS data by Grillmair (2006).

### 2. MORPHOLOGY OF THE ORPHAN STREAM

SDSS imaging data are produced in five photometric bands, namely  $u$ ,  $g$ ,  $r$ ,  $i$ , and  $z$  (see, e.g., Fukugita et al. 1996; Hogg et al. 2001; Smith et al. 2002; Gunn et al. 2006). The data are automatically processed through pipelines to measure photometric and astrometric properties and to select targets for spectroscopic follow-up (Lupton et al. 1999; Stoughton et al. 2002; Pier et al. 2003; Ivezić et al. 2004; Adelman-McCarthy et al. 2006). To correct for Galactic reddening, we use the maps of Schlegel et al. (1998). All the magnitudes in the paper are reddening corrected. DR5 covers  $\sim 8000$  deg<sup>2</sup> around the Galactic north pole and three strips in the Galactic southern hemisphere.

The left panel of Figure 1 shows the Orphan Stream in an RGB composite image. It has been constructed using all SDSS DR5 stars<sup>9</sup> with  $20.0 < r < 22.0$ , with blue for stars with  $0.0 < g - r \leq 0.2$ , green for stars with  $0.2 < g - r \leq 0.4$ , and red for stars with  $0.4 < g - r \leq 0.6$ . The Orphan Stream is clearly visible running roughly from top to bottom at right ascensions  $\alpha \approx 150^\circ - 165^\circ$ . It can be traced over nearly  $50^\circ$  of arc in DR5. Some familiar objects are marked in the right panel of Figure 1, including the bifurcated Sagittarius stream, the Monoceros Ring, the newly discovered globular cluster Segue 1 (Belokurov et al. 2007), and the two distant dwarf spheroidal galaxies, Leo I and Leo II. On moving from lower to higher declinations, the stream becomes less detectable.

### 3. DISTANCES AND STELLAR POPULATIONS OF THE ORPHAN STREAM

Our aim is to constrain the distance and the stellar content of the Orphan Stream by comparison with CMDs of populations

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<sup>9</sup> A small number of Data Release 6 stars are used to ensure continuous photometric coverage of the Orphan Stream (cf. Grillmair [2006], who used Data Release 4 only).

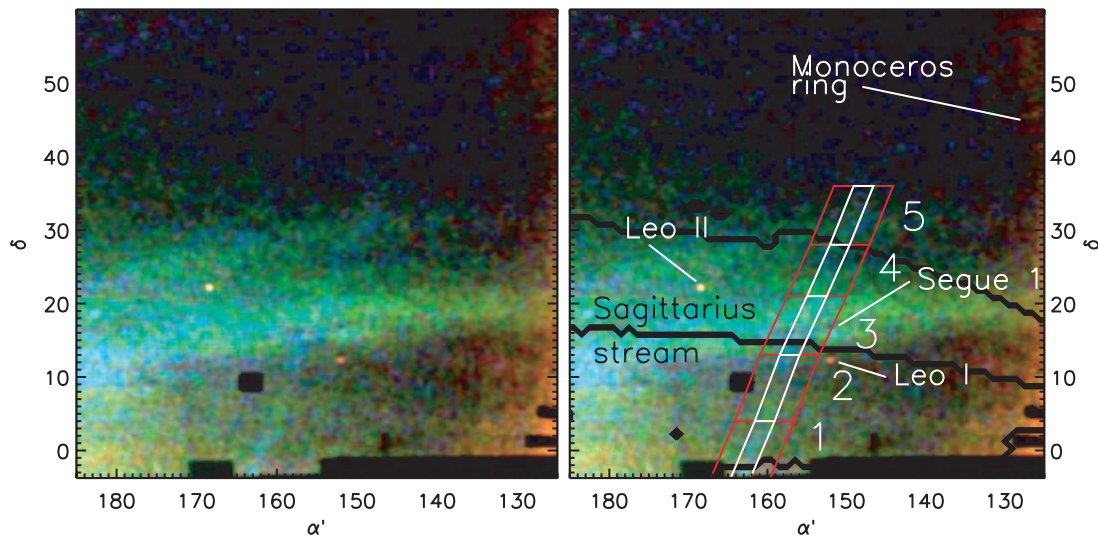


FIG. 1.—*Left*: False color RGB composite of density of stars with  $20.0 < r < 22.0$ . Blue corresponds to  $0.0 < g - r \leq 0.2$ , green to  $0.2 < g - r \leq 0.4$ , and red to  $0.4 < g - r \leq 0.6$ . *Right*: Sagittarius and Monoceros structures are marked, together with the on-stream and off-stream fields along the Orphan Stream. Also shown is the location of the recently discovered probable globular cluster Segue 1 (Belokurov et al. 2007). The black curves mark the limits of the DR5 spectroscopic footprint.

of known age and metallicity. For this purpose, we create masks (or color-magnitude boxes) based on the  $r$  versus  $g - r$  ridgeline of globular clusters and theoretical isochrones by shifting them both horizontally and vertically. The mask is applied to select stars from the fields on and off the stream shown in the right panel of Figure 1. The signal is assessed by measuring the difference in the number of stars between the on and off streams as a function of distance modulus.

The left panel of Figure 2 shows a Hess diagram using all the stars in DR5. From blue to red, the main components of this CMD are the halo and the thick and thin disks of the Milky Way. The vertical line shows a color cut at  $g - r = 0.75$  used to minimize contamination from the disk stars. The right panel shows a sequence of theoretical isochrones computed by Girardi et al. (2004) for the SDSS photometric system. Different metallicities are distinguished by different colors, as shown in the key to the

panel. Although we investigate a range of ages, only the isochrones corresponding to 1, 5, 10, and 14 Gyr are displayed. To compare the model predictions with observations, we also use the illustrated masks based on the ridgelines of the old (14 Gyr) clusters M92 ( $[Fe/H] = -2.2$ ), M13 ( $[Fe/H] = -1.6$ ), and M71 ( $[Fe/H] = -0.7$ ). These are produced from the data of Clem (2005) and chosen to span a representative range of metallicities.

The Orphan Stream (and parts of the Sagittarius stream) shown in Figure 1 are blue-green in our RGB scheme. This corresponds to  $g - r \sim 0.3$ , which is typical for the old, metal-poor halo. Most of the stars are redward of  $g - r \sim 0.2$ . The stars that are blueward could be either blue stragglers/blue horizontal-branch stars, or main-sequence turnoff stars scattered by large photometric errors.

It is well known that given a color-magnitude diagram, simultaneously fitting for age, metallicity, and distance modulus is degenerate. However, we have some clues as to the likely nature

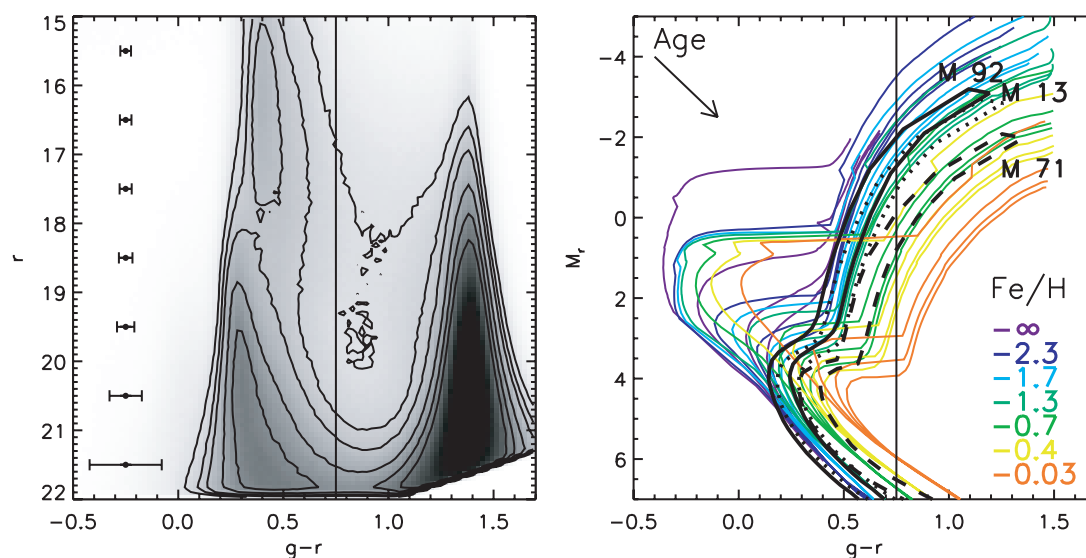


FIG. 2.—*Left*: Hess diagram for all stars in DR5. The typical errors in color are shown as a column of error bars on the left of the plot. The vertical line shows the color cut to constrain the population to blue stars. *Right*: Isochrones from Girardi et al. (2004) with different colors corresponding to different metallicities. Four representative ages are shown for each metallicity (1, 5, 10, and 14 Gyr; left to right). Masks based on the ridgelines of M92 (solid curves), M13 (dotted curves), and M71 (dashed curves) from Clem (2005) are also shown.

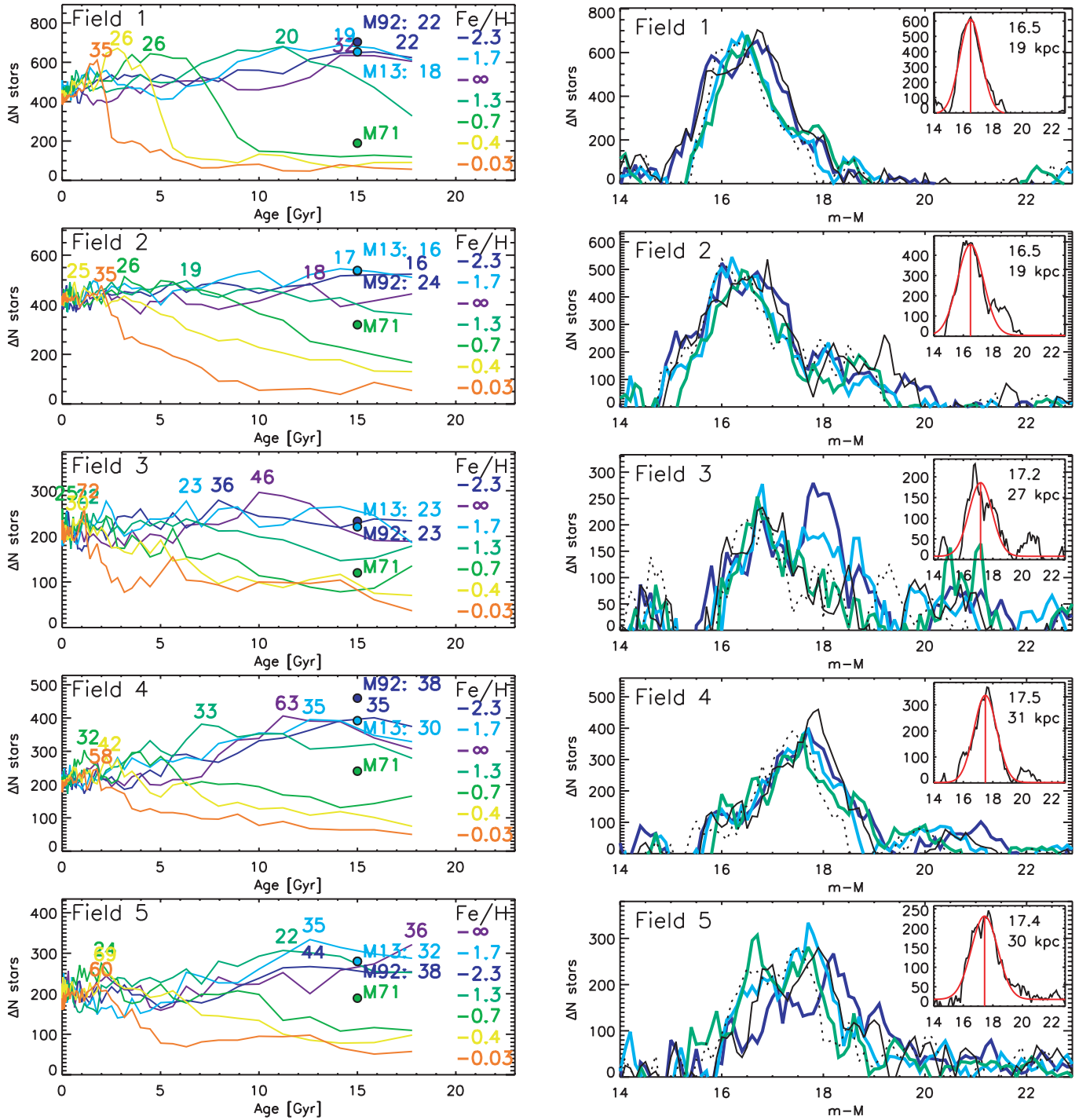


FIG. 3.—*Left*: For each field, the excess of stars in the Orphan Stream is shown as a function of age for different metallicities. Each point on the curve gives the maximum number of excess stars over all distance moduli. The peak of each curve gives the maximal signal for a given metallicity and is marked with its corresponding distance. It is apparent that there is a trade-off between age, metallicity, and distance. Although there is a degeneracy, old metal-poor populations perform slightly better than young metal-rich ones. The filled circles show the signal picked up by the ridgeline masks for the three clusters M92, M13, and M71. *Right*: For three metal-poor populations ( $[Fe/H] = -2.3, -1.7,$  and  $-1.3$ ), we show the excess stars as a function of distance modulus for the age at the peak of the curve in the left panel. Also shown as solid and dotted lines are the curves using the ridgelines for M92 and M13. The inset shows the average of the five curves, together with a Gaussian fit in red. The number gives the central value of the Gaussian, which is our best estimate for the distance modulus, and hence the distance in kiloparsecs.

of the solution. The length and the width of the Orphan Stream suggest that it is dynamically old. If star formation ceased after the interaction that produced the tails, then the stars in the stream are expected to be old. Also, when viewed from the Sun, tidal streams deviate from a great circle. The deviation is controlled by  $\langle D \rangle / R_{GC}$ , where  $\langle D \rangle$  is the stream's average heliocentric distance and  $R_{GC}$  is the offset of the Sun from the Galactic center (here

taken as 8 kpc). This parallax effect gives an average heliocentric distance to the stream of  $\sim 15 \pm 5$  kpc.

The results of applying the masks to the photometric data are shown in Figure 3. In the left column, each panel corresponds to a different field. For a given metallicity and age, the masks are applied at a different distance modulus and the number of excess stars in the on-stream field is calculated. The maximum value fixes

TABLE 1  
POSITIONS, DISTANCE MODULI, AND DISTANCES OF THE ORPHAN STREAM

| Field  | $\alpha$<br>(deg) | $\delta$<br>(deg) | $m - M$                  | $D$<br>(kpc)             |
|--------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1..... | 162.1             | -0.5              | $(16.5 \pm 0.1) \pm 0.7$ | $(20 \pm 1)_{-5}^{+7}$   |
| 2..... | 158.9             | 8.5               | $(16.5 \pm 0.1) \pm 0.9$ | $(20 \pm 1)_{-7}^{+10}$  |
| 3..... | 155.4             | 17.0              | $(17.1 \pm 0.1) \pm 0.7$ | $(26 \pm 1)_{-7}^{+10}$  |
| 4..... | 152.3             | 25.0              | $(17.5 \pm 0.1) \pm 0.8$ | $(32 \pm 1)_{-10}^{+13}$ |
| 5..... | 149.4             | 32.0              | $(17.5 \pm 0.1) \pm 0.9$ | $(32 \pm 1)_{-12}^{+15}$ |

a distance modulus. The number of excess stars at this distance modulus is used to build up the curve. The different colored lines correspond to different metallicities. Even though there is a degeneracy, the distances to which models of different metallicities converge are broadly consistent. For example, in field 1, most of the distances are between 20 and 30 kpc, whereas in field 5 they are mostly above 30 kpc. These values are somewhat higher than the  $15 \pm 5$  kpc obtained from the parallactic effect, but are consistent given the uncertainties and the strong assumptions in the latter calculation. The M92 and M13 masks perform similarly to the corresponding isochrones, although there are some small discrepancies. It is reassuring that the results based on theoretical models are supported by those based on data.

Even though young stellar population seemingly performs quite well in Figure 3, this is not really the case. From the turnoff color of the Orphan Stream (see, e.g., Fig. 1), we can exclude young populations with a turnoff bluer than  $g - r \sim 0.2$ . Young isochrones are so blue that even the metal-rich ones extend blue enough to overlap with the Orphan Stream CMD, and hence give a signal in Figure 3.

The general conclusion is that the old, metal-poor masks perform better, and in some instances significantly better, than the metal-rich masks. Given this, we take the three metal-poor models, namely  $[\text{Fe}/\text{H}] = -2.2$ ,  $-1.7$ , and  $-1.3$ , and identify the age at which the signal is maximized. These masks are now used to investigate the behavior of the signal as a function of distance modulus, shown in the panels in the right column. Also shown are the curves based on the ridgelines of M92 (*solid curve*) and M13 (*dotted curve*). They all show a similar performance, so we average them as displayed in the inset (*solid black curve*). A Gaussian model is then fit to this curve to give a central value, its uncertainty, and a dispersion. These numbers are recorded in Table 1. The uncertainty in the mean gives a lower bound to the true distance error, while the dispersion overestimates the error, as the curves in the insets are a convolution of the true error distribution with the mask.

Grillmair (2006) has also recently analyzed the stars of the Orphan Stream. Grillmair's detection method uses M13 as a template for the stellar population of the stream. His Figure 3 shows a clear upper main sequence and subgiant branch, which appear to be located somewhat blueward of the M13 ridgeline. This is consistent with a stream composed of a somewhat younger and/or more metal-poor stellar population than M13. In turn, this is in agreement with the blue color of the Orphan Stream in our Figure 1, suggesting that our detection method is picking up primarily turnoff and upper main-sequence stars.

Figure 4 shows the results of a search for blue horizontal-branch (BHB) stars in the Orphan Stream. These are identified with the cut  $g - r < 0.1$ , and as usual the difference between on-stream and off-stream fields is computed. BHB stars have an absolute magnitude of  $M_r = 0.75$  (see the right panel of Fig. 2). Such a BHB population would be detected by peaks in the

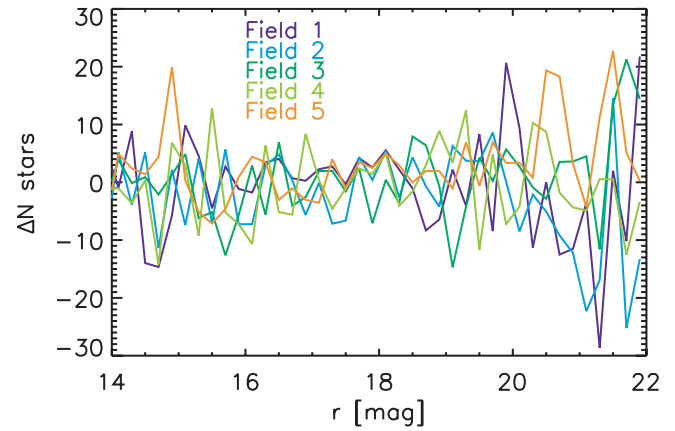


FIG. 4.—Differential histograms of number of stars with  $g - r < 0.1$  as a function of apparent magnitude in different fields.

differential number distribution in the apparent magnitude range  $16 < r < 18$  for the five fields inspected. There is no evidence for such a signal. However, blue stragglers have an absolute magnitude  $M_r$  of between 2 and 4, and there are hints of peaks in fields 1 and 5 for  $r \approx 20$ . This seems consistent, given the distance moduli in Table 1.

#### 4. ABSOLUTE MAGNITUDE AND WIDTH OF THE ORPHAN STREAM

Figure 5 shows cross sections across the stream in a coordinate system that has been rotated so that the stream lies along the  $y$ -axis. The cross section contains only those stars with  $g - r < 0.4$  and  $21.0 < r < 22.0$ . We estimate that the thickness (FWHM) of the Orphan Stream is  $\sim 2^\circ$  in projection (or  $\geq 650$  pc, assuming a conservative distance of  $\sim 20$  kpc), which would make it broader than all known globular cluster streams, but smaller than

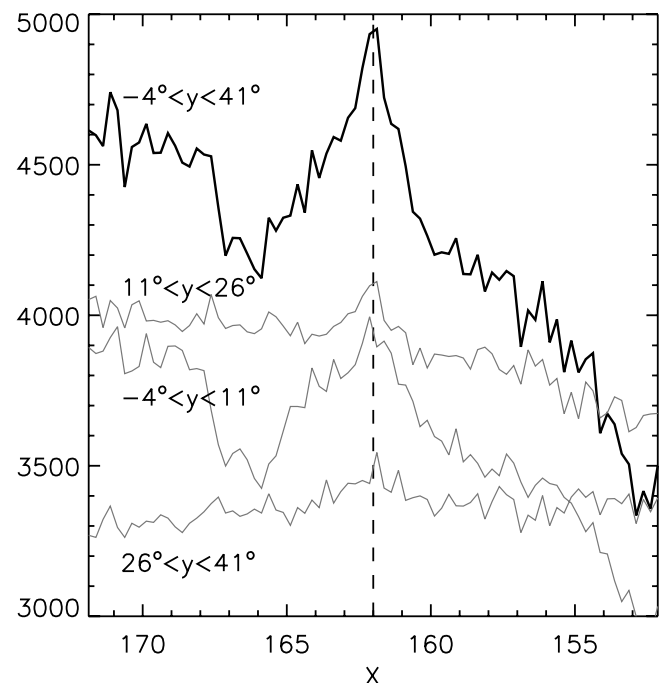


FIG. 5.—Profiles in stars with  $g - r < 0.4$  and  $21.0 < r < 22.0$  across the stream in a rotated coordinate system in which the stream lies along the  $y$ -axis. Note that the peak of the profile barely shifts as we move along the stream.

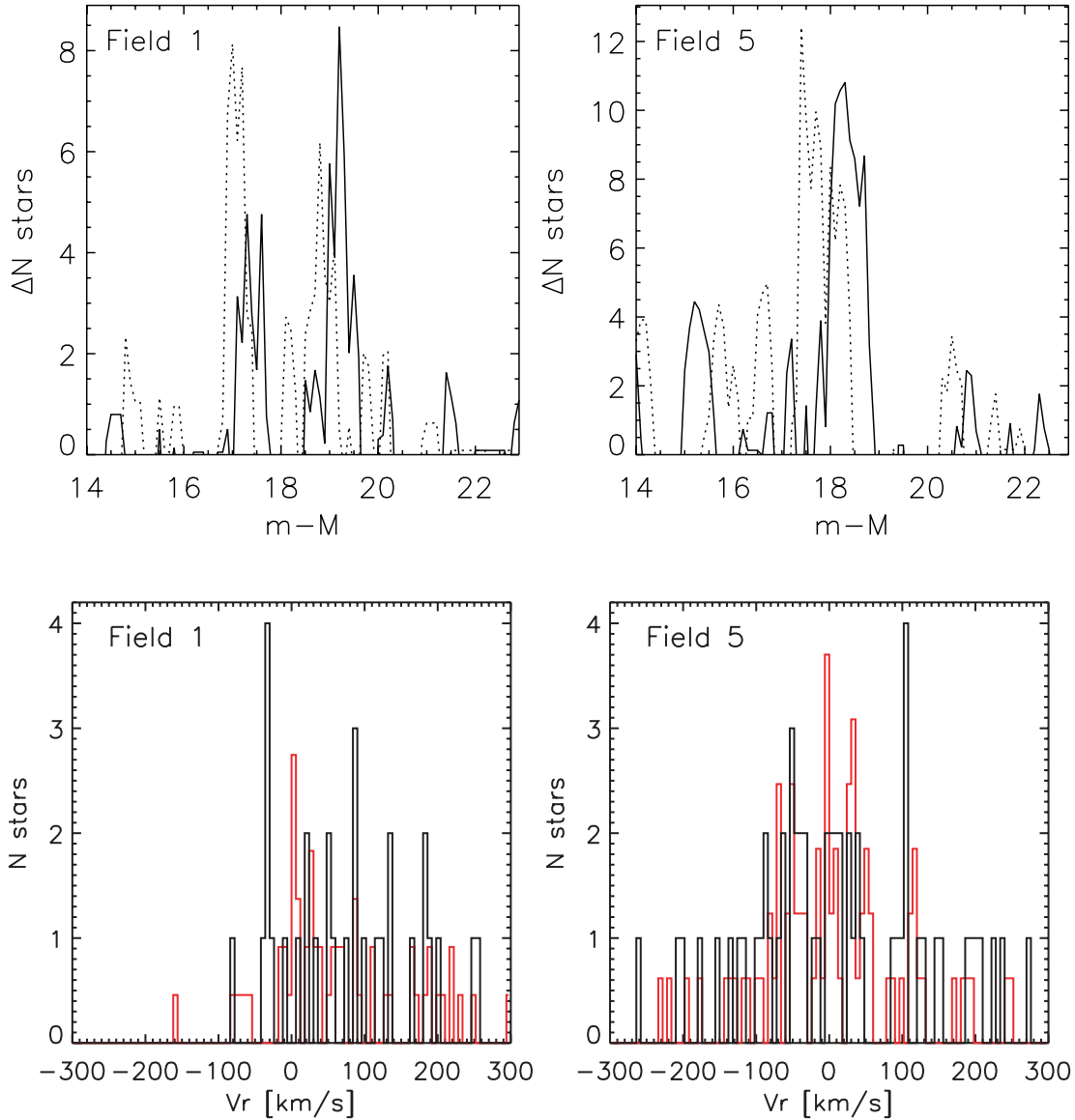


FIG. 6.—*Top*: Excess number of stars in the on- and off-stream fields in the DR5 spectroscopic catalog using the M92 (solid curves) and M13 (dotted curves) ridgeline masks. Even though the catalog is much smaller, there is a reasonably clear detection of the Orphan Stream at a distance modulus of  $\sim 17$ . *Bottom*: Velocity histograms of stars selected with the M92 and M13 ridgeline masks at the distance moduli satisfying  $16.5 \leq m - M \leq 17.5$  in field 1 and  $17.5 \leq m - M \leq 18.5$  in field 5. Black represents on-stream and red off-stream field stars.

the branches of the Sagittarius stream and the Monoceros Ring. This suggests that the progenitor was a low-luminosity dwarf satellite galaxy, rather than a globular cluster.

Taking the total profile (Fig. 5, *top curve*), we fit a polynomial to estimate the background and then compute the luminosity of the stream. The number of excess stars in the  $45^\circ$  arc of the stream is  $\sim 4110$ , within  $160^\circ < x < 164^\circ$ . Hence, the total apparent magnitude of the stream in these stars is around  $r \sim 12$  (assuming an average  $r$  magnitude of 21.0). Given the stream FWHM of  $\sim 2^\circ$ , the average density of these stars is  $\sim 45.6$  per  $\text{deg}^2$ , which translates to an average surface brightness of the stream of  $\sim 34.6$  mag arcsec $^{-2}$ . To correct for other stars, we use the data on the luminosity function of M92 derived from Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope observations (J. L. Clem 2006, private communication). This gives an average surface brightness of the stream of  $\sim 32.4$  mag arcsec $^{-2}$  and a total  $r$  magnitude of  $\sim 9.8$ . Assuming the distance really is  $\sim 20$  kpc gives an absolute magnitude of the  $45^\circ$  arc as  $M_r \sim -6.7$ . Assuming plausibly that there ought to be at least the same again on

the other side of the progenitor, then we can boost the total to at least  $M_r \sim -7.5$  for the stream stars alone. This number must be augmented by the (unknown) contribution from the progenitor nucleus, if it is still intact.

## 5. VELOCITIES OF THE ORPHAN STREAM

The spectroscopic portion of SDSS DR5 covers  $5713 \text{ deg}^2$  (Adelman-McCarthy et al. 2007). The outline of the spectroscopic footprint is shown as a black curve in Figure 1. It does not cover fields 3 and 4 of the Orphan Stream. The number of stars in the spectroscopic database is  $\sim 215,000$ . Only stars brighter than  $g \sim 20$  were targeted, and the selection algorithm is strongly nonuniform. A large number of spectra of standard stars were taken for calibration purposes. Other targets include K giants and dwarfs, F turnoff and subdwarf stars, and BHB stars.

The accuracy of the radial velocities measured from the  $R = 2000$  spectra obtained by the SDSS spectrographs varies from  $7 \text{ km s}^{-1}$  for the brighter stars ( $r \sim 14$ ) to on the order of  $20 \text{ km s}^{-1}$





