

GaiaNIR: a pathway to the dark side of the Milky Way

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We review the current status of young (Classical Cepheids), intermediate-age (Anomalous Cepheids) and old (RR Lyrae, Type II Cepheids) stellar tracers across the Galactic bulge and the thin disk. In particular, we focus our attention on the role that primary distance indicators can play to trace the early formation and evolution of the Galactic bulge. Moreover, we outline the impact that GaiaNIR will have in lifting the veil on the stellar content of the bulge/disk regions located beyond the Galactic center.

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