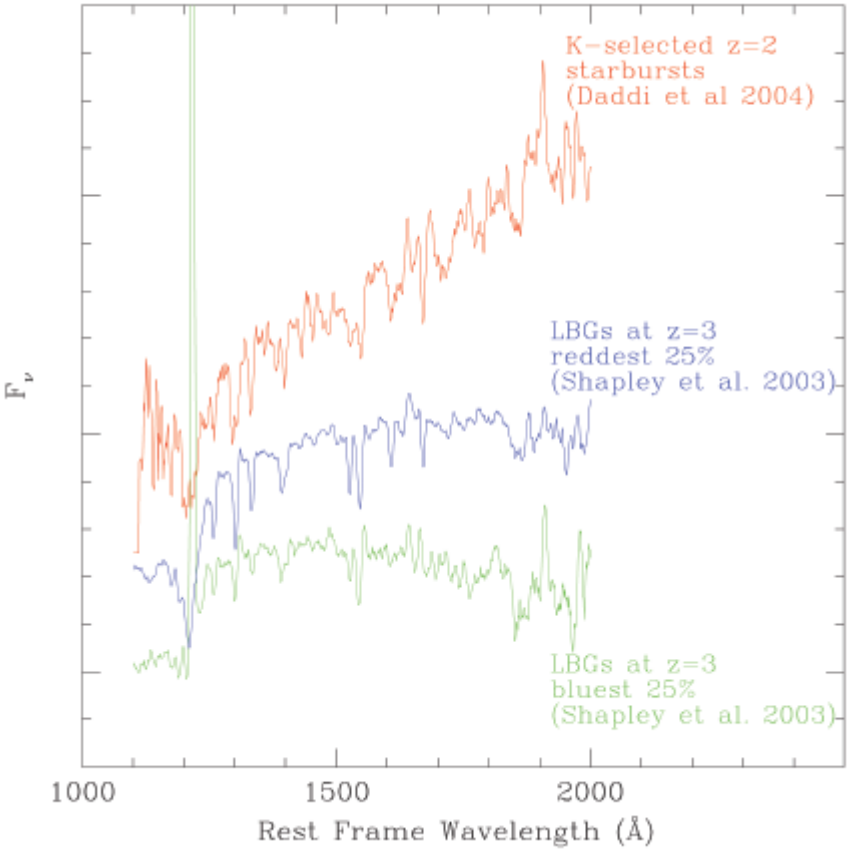


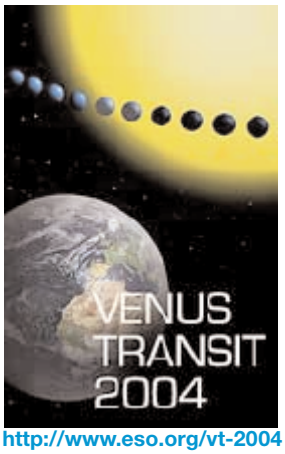
Figure 3: VLT/FORS2 coadded spectra of starburst galaxies with $1.7 \leq z \leq 2.3$ from the K20 sample (courtesy of Emanuele Daddi), are compared to the coadded spectra of the 25 bluest and 25 reddest classical z= 3 Lyman-break galaxies.

While the meeting was mostly dedicated to observations, hence dominated by observers, a few theorists also attended and made lively contributions to it (Avishai Dekel, Cedric Lacey, Rachel Somerville, Simon White). Rachel, in particular, presented efforts in tuning model parameters trying to push the assembly of massive galaxies towards earlier epochs.

Imaging/spectroscopic surveys that have just started were also illustrated, showing early results from the VLT VIMOS Deep Survey (VVDS, Olivier Le Fèvre), the Keck DEEP/DEEP2 survey (David Koo, Jeffrey Newman), and GALEX (Chris Martin, Mike Rich). For other major surveys that are about to start, motivations, plans, and expectations were also illustrated, including SWIRE on SIRTF (Alberto Franceschini, Seb Oliver), the near-IR Ultra Deep Survey which is part of UKIDSS (Omar Almaini) and the COSMOS 2-square degree ACS survey (Nick Scoville). Given its convenient equatorial/10^h location, COSMOS is attracting virtually every major facility on the ground and in space with the goal of providing a full multiwavelength, public dataset, thus promising astronomers the means they need to cope with cosmic variance while mapping galaxy and LSS evolution all the way to at least $z \sim 3$.

All in all, during the four days of the meeting 66 oral and over 100 poster contributions were presented, and I apologize for the many I could not mention in this cursory summary. Much of the success of the meeting was also due to the 30-minute long discussions at the end of each session, and to the colloquial atmosphere favoured by the city and by the daily vaporetto trips to and from the island.

The VT-2004 Educational Programme - A Unique Opportunity



http://www.eso.org/vt-2004

On June 8, 2004, Venus passes in front of the Sun as seen from the Earth. This very rare event (the last one was in 1882 and no living person has ever seen one!) lasts about 6 hours and will be visible from most of Europe, Africa and Asia. It will most certainly generate unprecedented attention from the media and the public, not just in these areas, but all over the world.

The VT-2004 project is launched in this connection and aims at transforming public curiosity into knowledge and interest in science through a broad set of actions. It is managed by the European Southern Observatory (ESO) and the European Association for Astronomy Education (EAAE), together with the Institut de Mécanique Céleste et de Calcul des éphémérides (IMCCE) and the Observatoire de Paris in France, as well as the Astronomical Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. The programme is supported by the European Commission in the frame of the European Science Week 2004. It starts officially on January 1, 2004, but provisional information is already available at the dedicated website (www.eso.org/vt-2004/). When ready, it will provide access to a wealth of related information in many (European) languages about many different aspects (scientific, technical, historical etc.) of this event.

The VT-2004 project invites active participation of all interested individuals (including teachers, students, amateur astronomers, etc.) and educational institutions (planetariums, public observatories, science centres, etc.). It will provide comprehensive information about the related - scientific, technical, social and historical - aspects. It encourages and will coordinate real-time measurements of the transit, thus publically re-enacting the determination of one of the most fundamental astronomical parameters, the distance from the Earth to the Sun. It also explains the relation of this event to the search for extra-solar planets by the transit method, the only one which, in the near future, might be able to discover Earth-size planets.

The VT-2004 project promotes international collaboration throughout a large part of the world, by observing the same rare celestial event, debating it via the web and adding local observational contributions to a large, common database. Real-time feed-back via the web and the media will ensure that this will become a very special public event. A large, international network of educational institutions that will be actively involved in the Venus Transit event is being established (see the website).