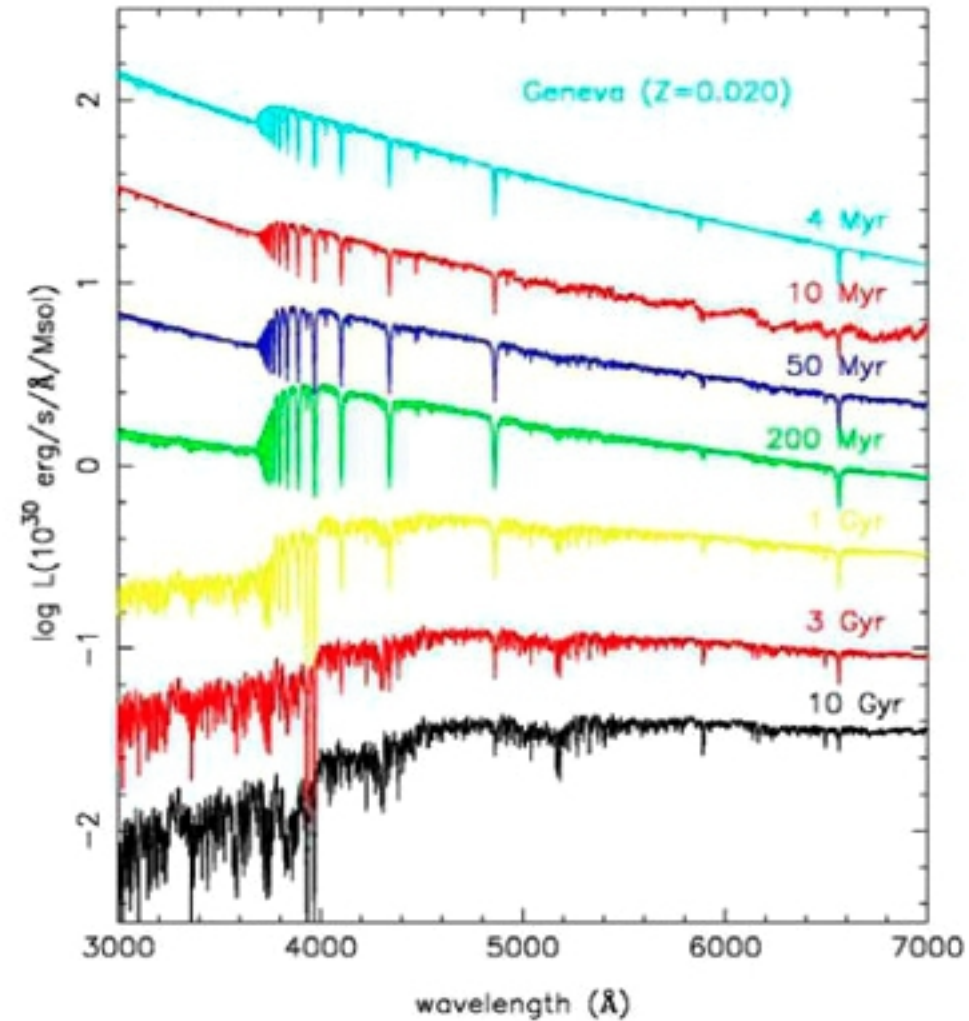
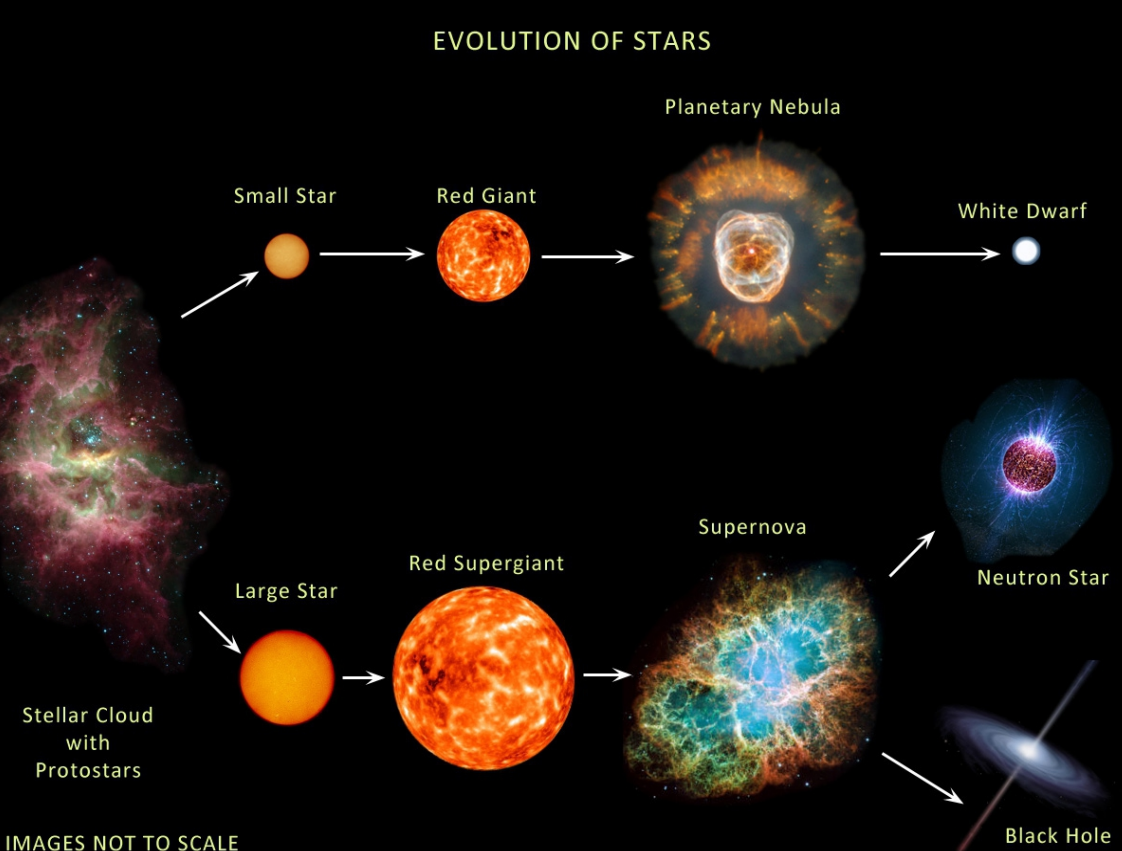


STAR FORMATION AND EVOLUTIONARY STELLAR POPULATION SYNTHESIS



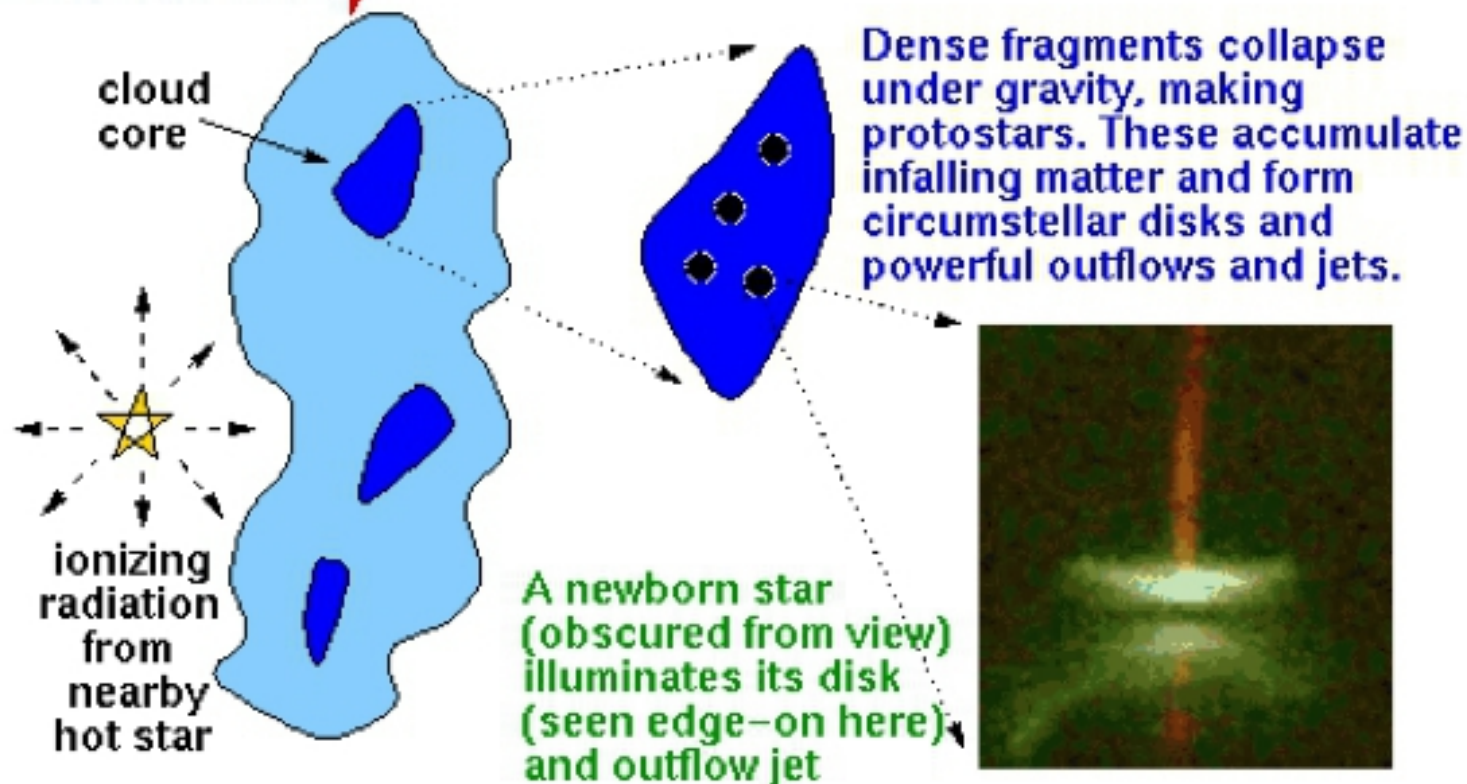


Molecular clouds are cold, dark, giant condensations of dust and molecular gas which serve as "stellar nurseries".

All stars are born in molecular clouds, including our Sun. Molecular clouds are the "stuff" we're made of!

Because of their dusty content, visible light cannot penetrate into a molecular cloud. Thus, infrared and submillimeter observations are needed to "see" the star-forming process.

molecular cloud



Molecular Cloud Properties

Composition: H_2 , He, dust (1% mass), CO (10^{-4} by number),
and many other molecules with low abundances.

Sizes: 10-100 pc

Masses: 10 to $10^6 M_{\text{sun}}$. Most of the molecular gas mass in
galaxies is found in the more massive clouds.

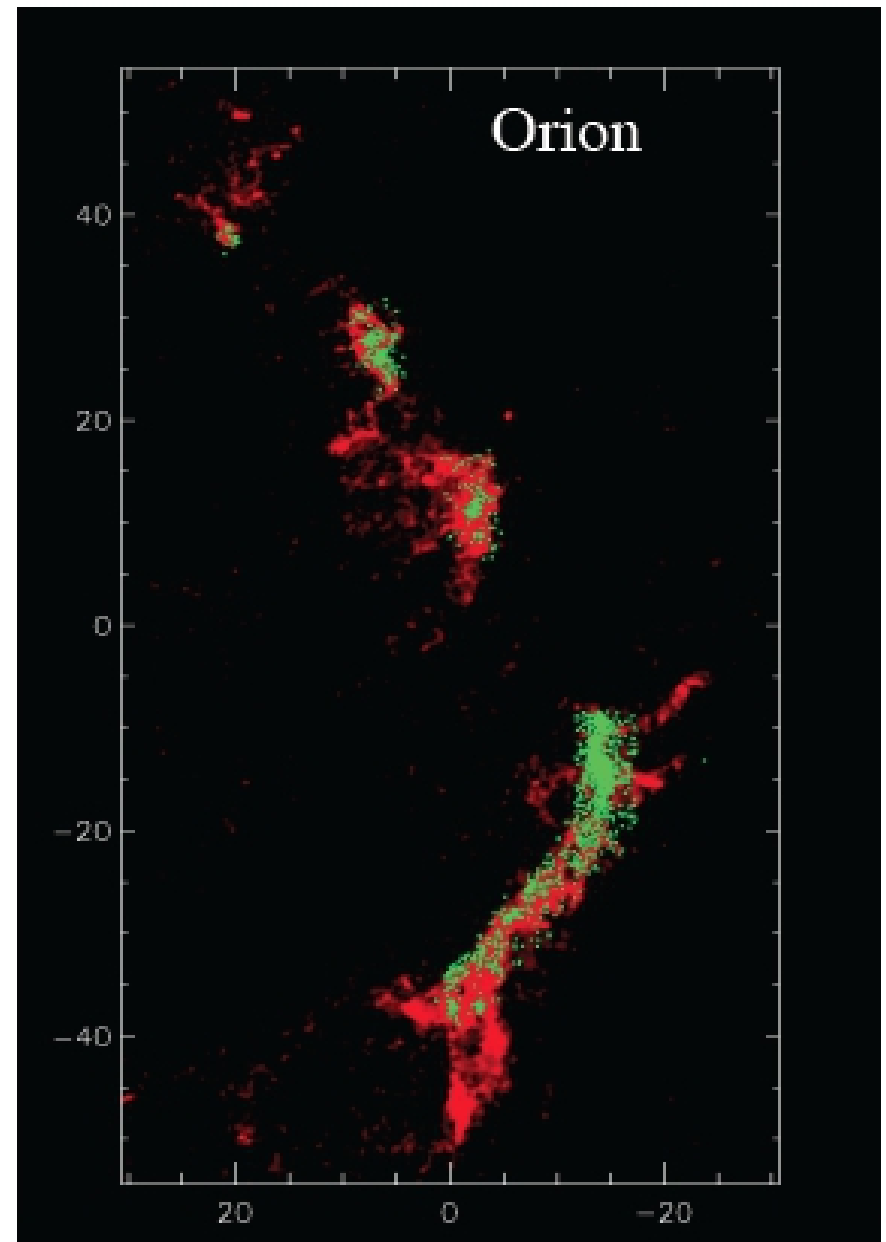
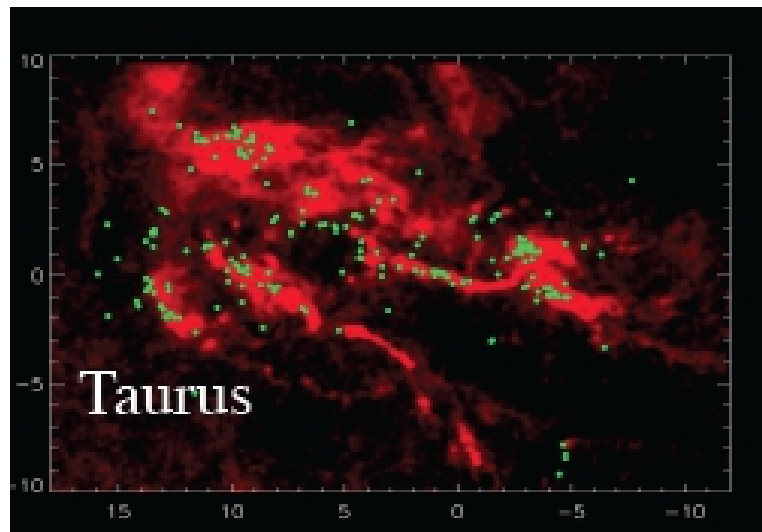
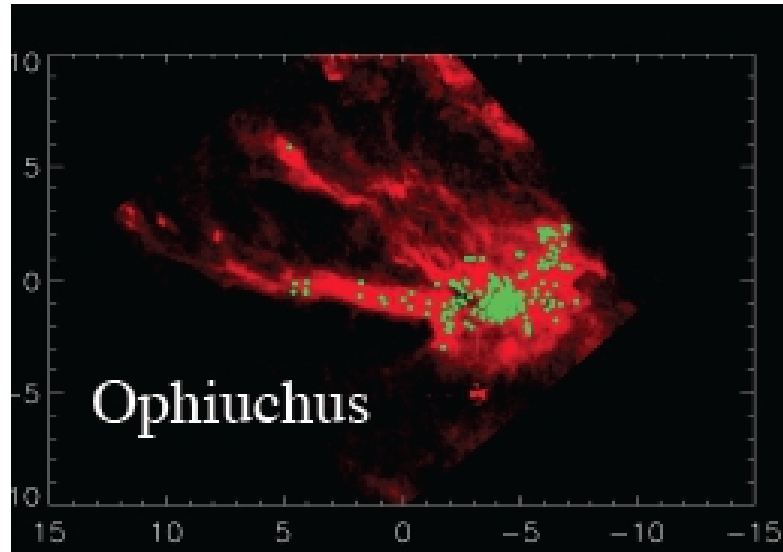
Average Density: 100 cm^{-3}

Lifetimes: $< 10 \text{ Myr}$

Issue: it is hard to separate individual clouds - not well defined.

Molecular Clouds are Filamentary and Clumpy

Units in Parsecs



H₂ makes up the bulk of the mass of the molecular cloud, but cannot be directly detected (only quadrupole transitions). Existing data is for trace molecules, CO being the most common.

Determining Cloud Mass With the X-Factor

Measure for each pixel of cloud the quantity W_{CO} :

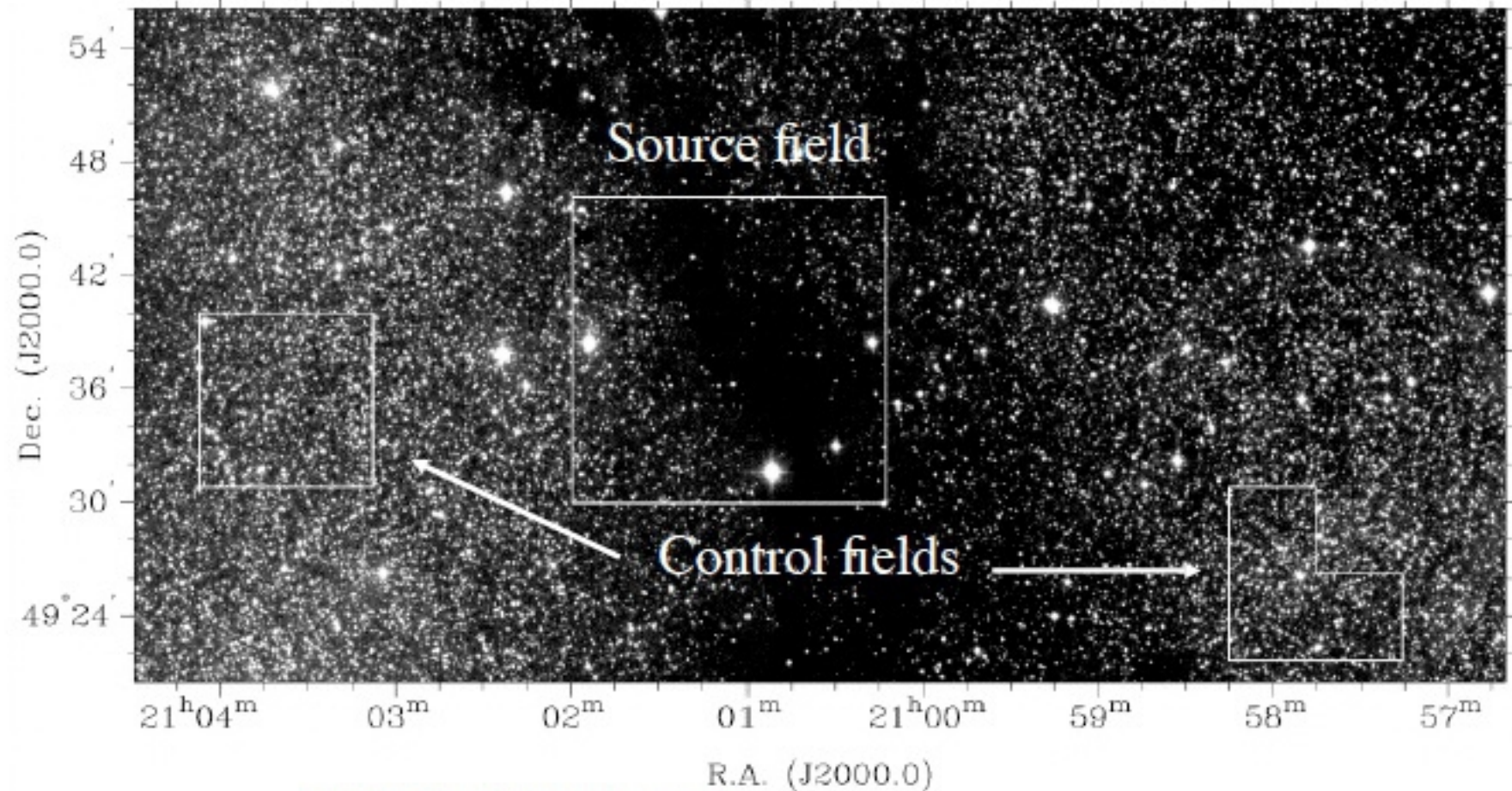
$$W_{CO} = \int T_{CO} dv \text{ [K km s}^{-1}\text{]}$$

Then convert to column density:

$$N(H_2) = X W_{CO} \text{ where } X = 1.7 \times 10^{20} \text{ cm}^{-2}/\text{K km s}^{-1}$$

The Dark Cloud L977

Alves et al. 1998 ApJ 506, 292

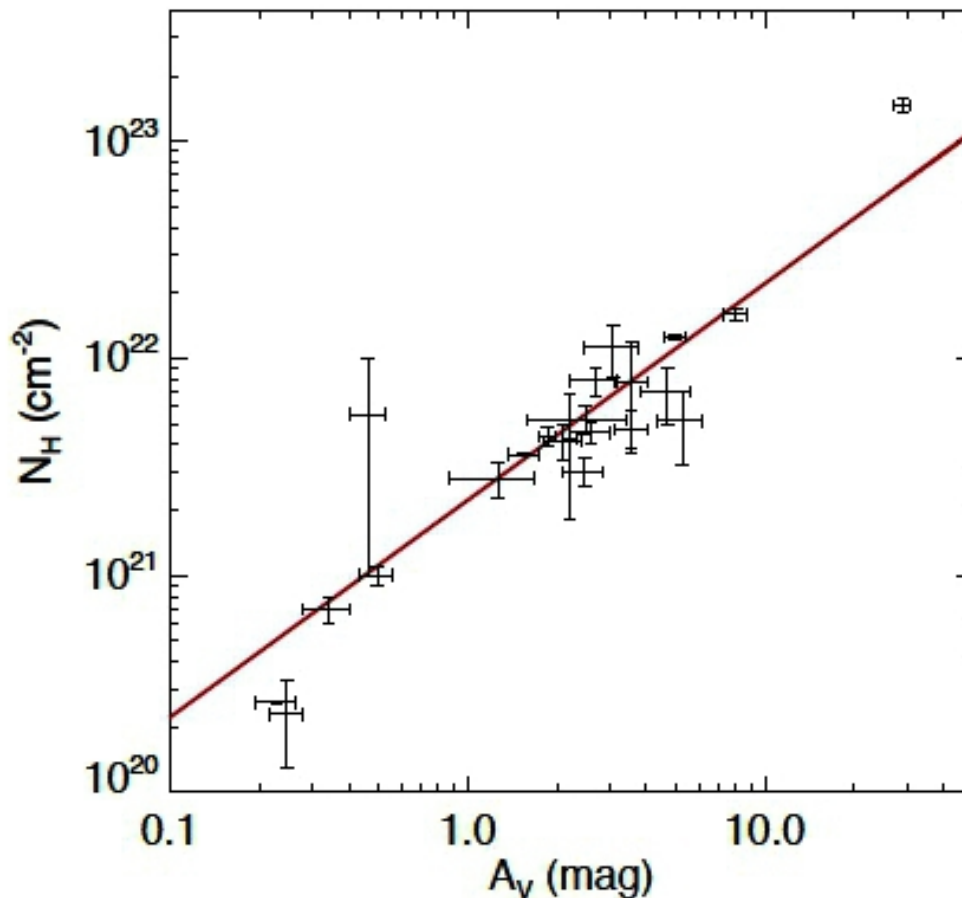


Visible light image

Color Excess

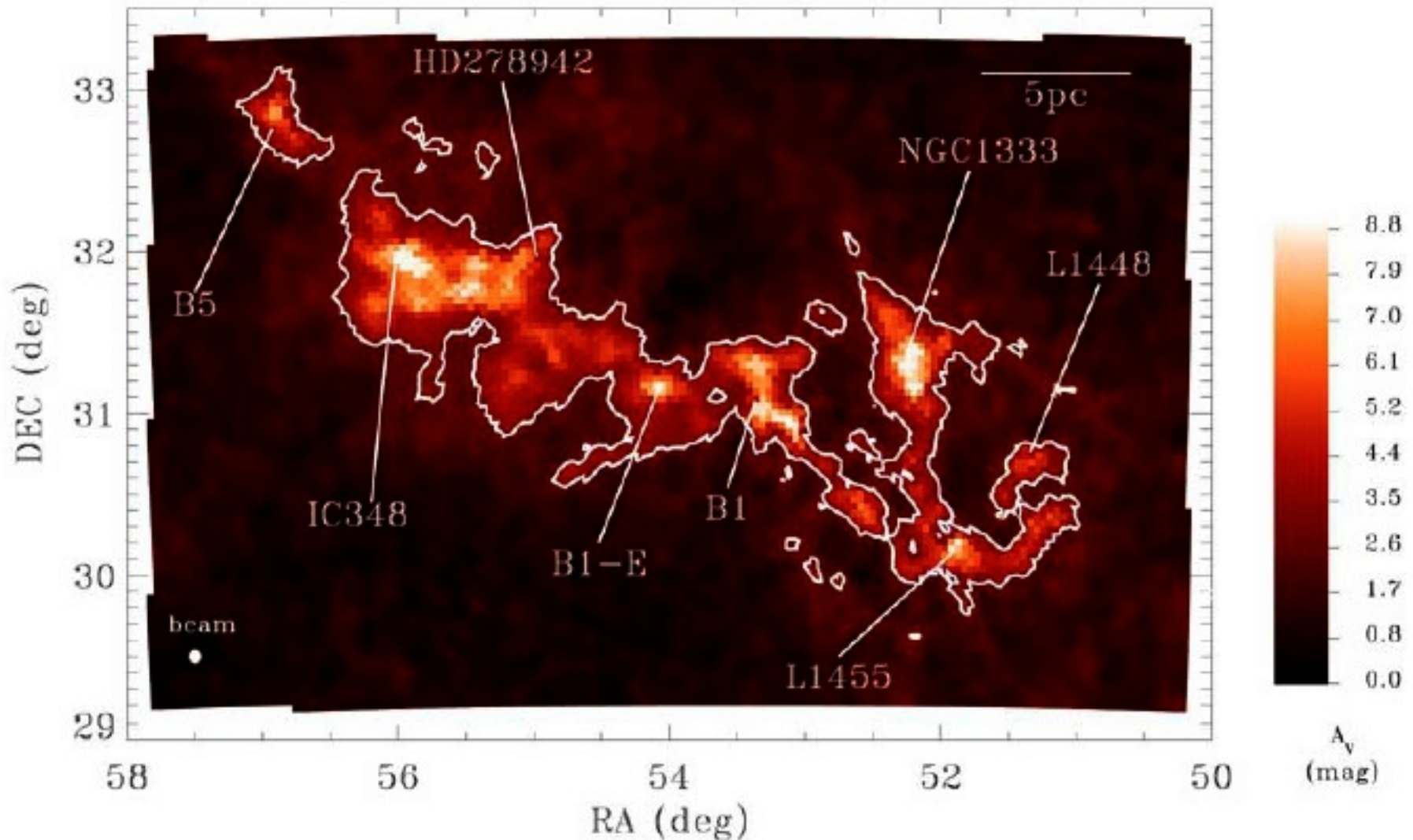
$$m_{\lambda_1} - m_{\lambda_2} = M_{\lambda_1} - M_{\lambda_2} + A_{\lambda_1} - A_{\lambda_2}$$

Observed color Intrinsic color Color Excess due to interstellar dust



Relation between measured extinction due to dust and total hydrogen column density from x-ray spectroscopy of SN remnants

Extinction Map



Correlation of extinction map with CO map allows determination of "X factor"

The Formation of Molecular Hydrogen

The rate of H₂ formation in the gas phase is very low.

H₂ can form on the surfaces of dust grains (from Stahler & Palla):

Collision rate with grains: $1/t_{coll} = n_{HI} \sigma_d V_{th}$

H moves around grains through quantum tunneling, may find defect in lattice and stick. When another H comes along, the two atoms bind. Some of that energy kicks the H₂ off the grain.

Formation rate: $R_{H_2} = 1/2 \gamma_H n_d / t_{coll}$
 $= 1/2 \gamma_H n_d n_{HI} \sigma_d V_{th}$

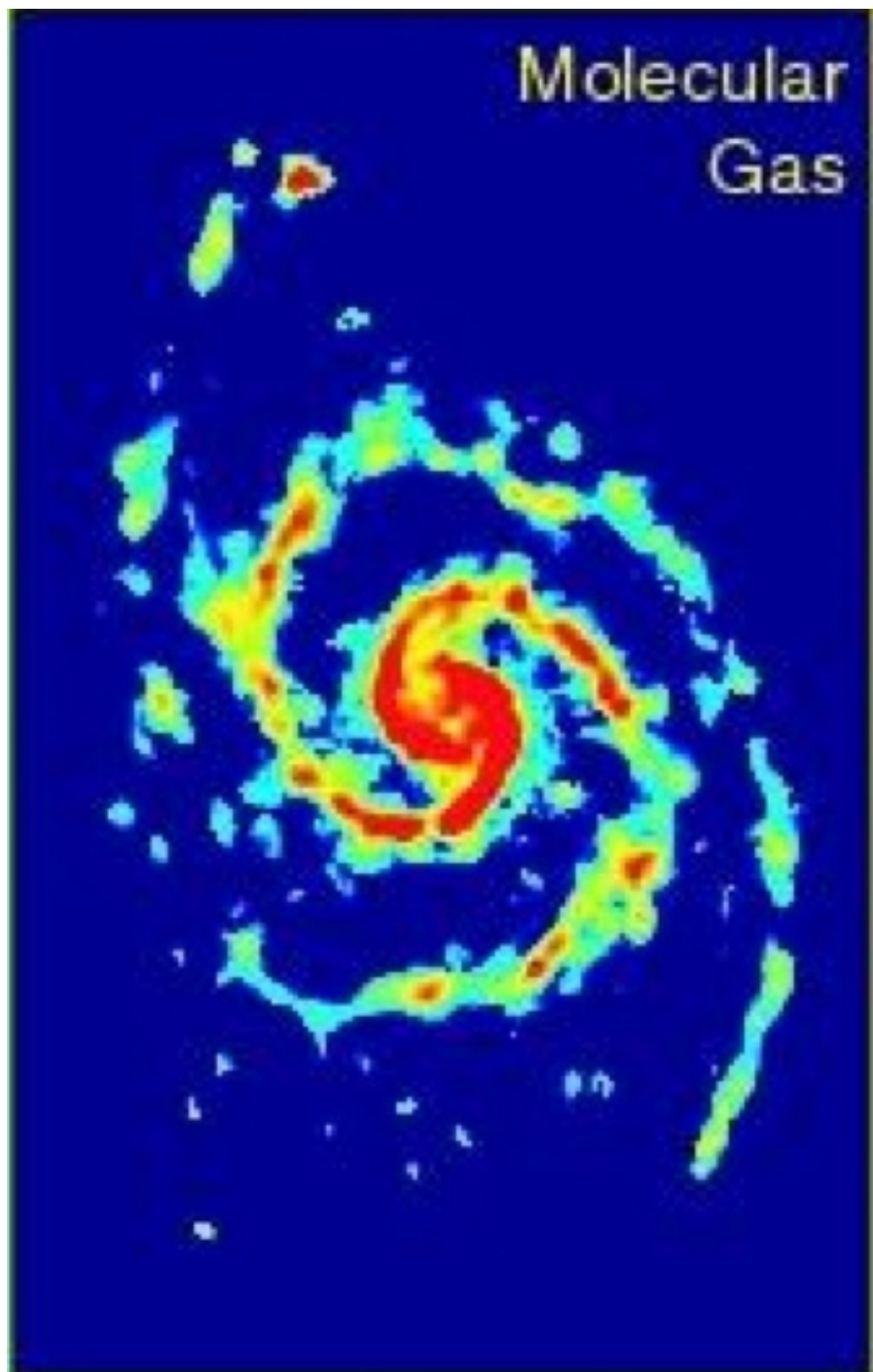
γ_H is the sticking probability, n_d is density of grains, n_{HI} is density of hydrogen, σ_d is cross section of grains, V_{th} = thermal velocity of gas

Dissociation of Molecular Hydrogen

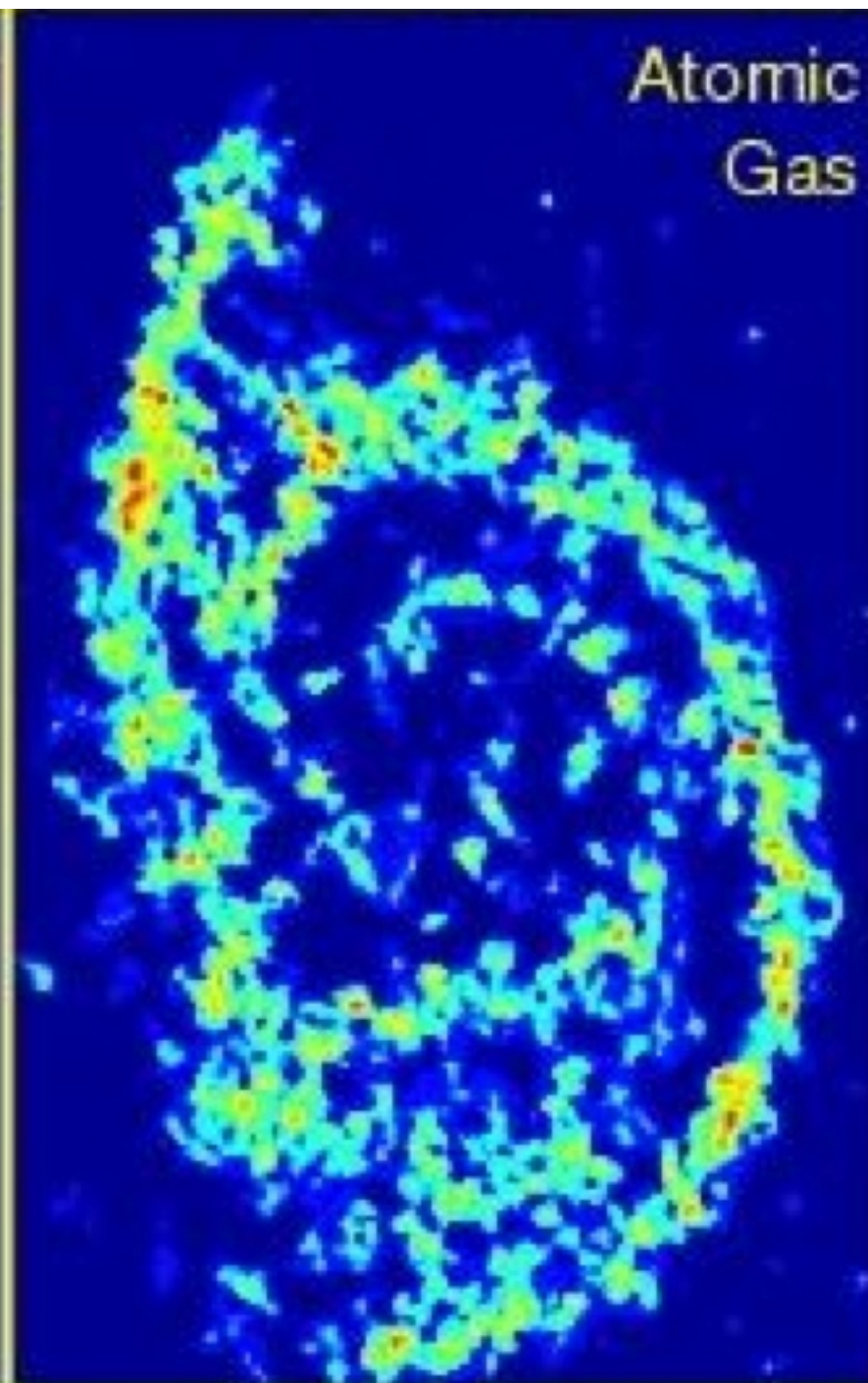
1. Absorption of UV photons with energies of 4.48-13.6 eV
2. The photons raise molecule to excited electronic state.
3. This energy can be exchanged to vibrational and rotational modes.
4. A fraction of these excited molecules will dissociate into two H.

To prevent dissociation, molecules must be shielded from UV radiation from external starlight. This is done by dust and self-shielding of the molecule.

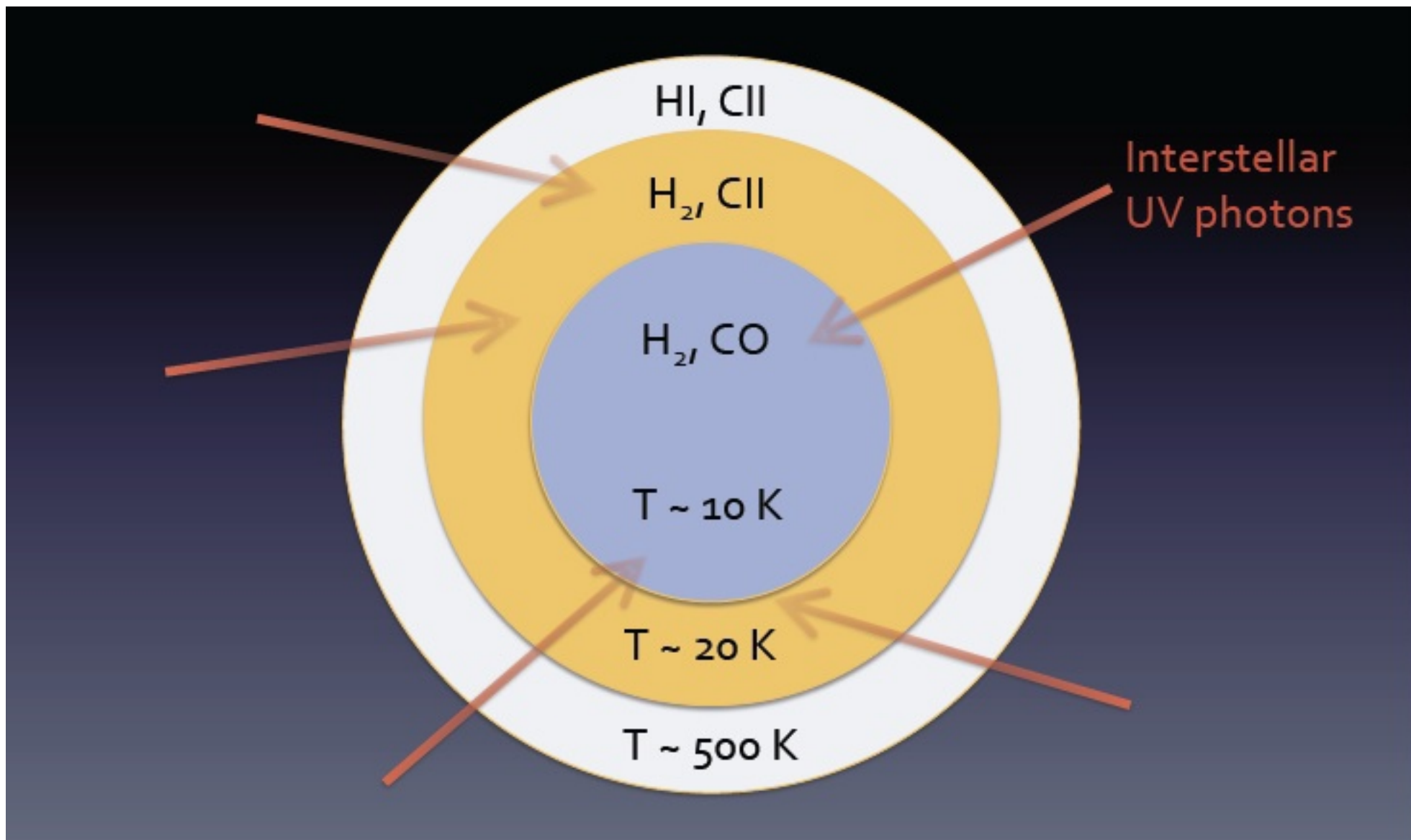
Molecular
Gas



Atomic
Gas



Models of uniform, spherical clouds of given composition, bathed in a uniform field of UV photons



Chemical and Thermal Balance

H₂ formation

$n_{\text{HI}}n_{\text{R}}$

=

$$n_{\text{H}_2} \int d\Omega \int d\nu \overset{\text{H}_2 \text{ photodissociation}}{\sigma_{\text{H}_2} f_{\text{diss}} I_\nu / (h\nu)}$$

$\hat{e} \cdot \nabla I_\nu$

=

$$-(n_{\text{H}_2} \sigma_{\text{H}_2} + n \sigma_{\text{d}}) I_\nu$$

Decrease in
rad. intensity

Absorption
by dust, H₂

Line cooling

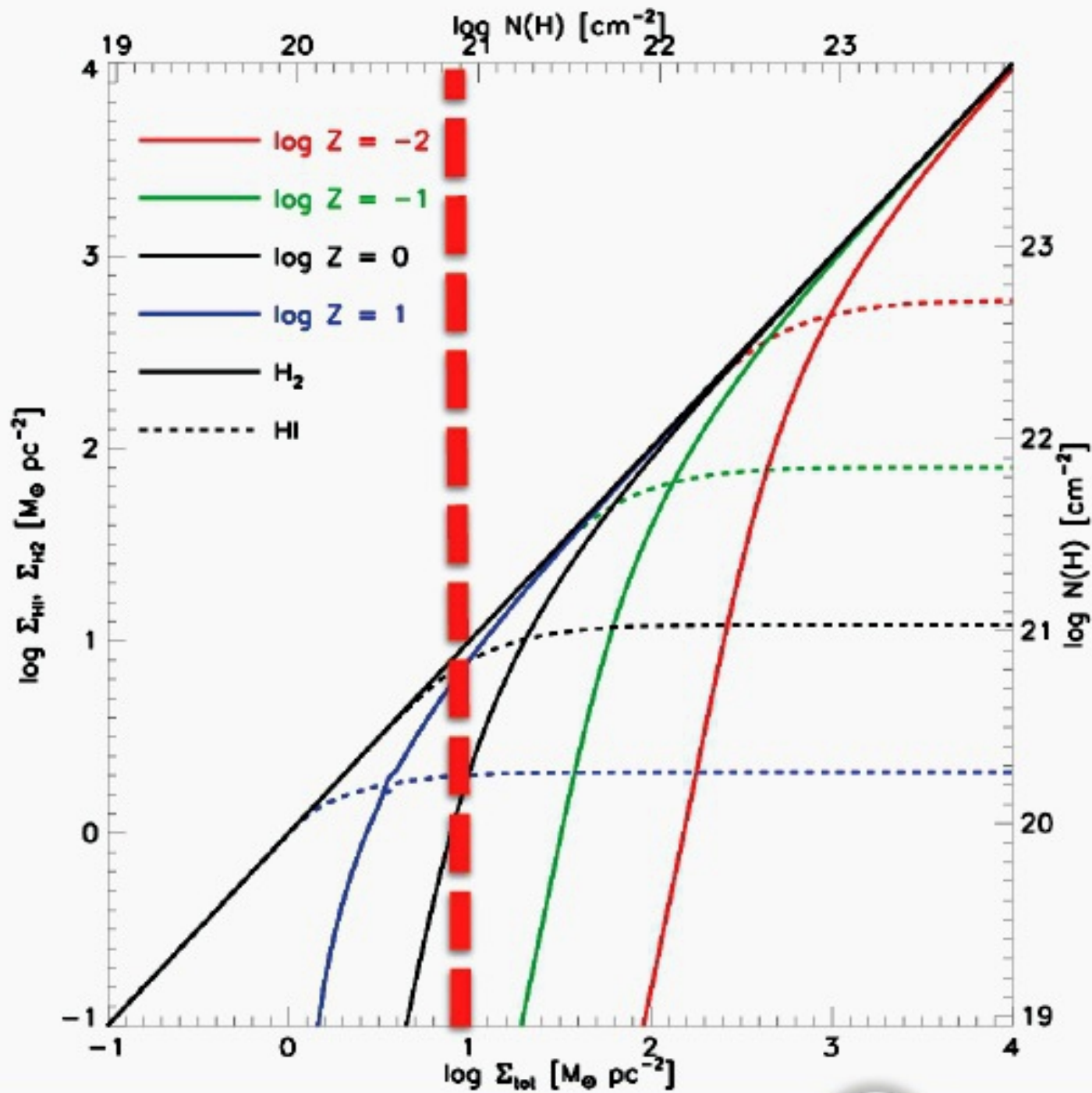
$n^2 \Lambda$

$$= n \int d\Omega \int d\nu \overset{\text{Photoelectric heating}}{\sigma_{\text{d}} E_{\text{PE}} I_\nu / (h\nu)}$$

$$\hat{e} \cdot \nabla I_\nu = -n \sigma_{\text{d}} I_\nu$$

Decrease in
rad. intensity

Absorption by
dust



The balance between atomic and molecular hydrogen in the cloud can be expressed in terms of its column density and its metallicity (dust content and metallicity are assumed to scale linearly)

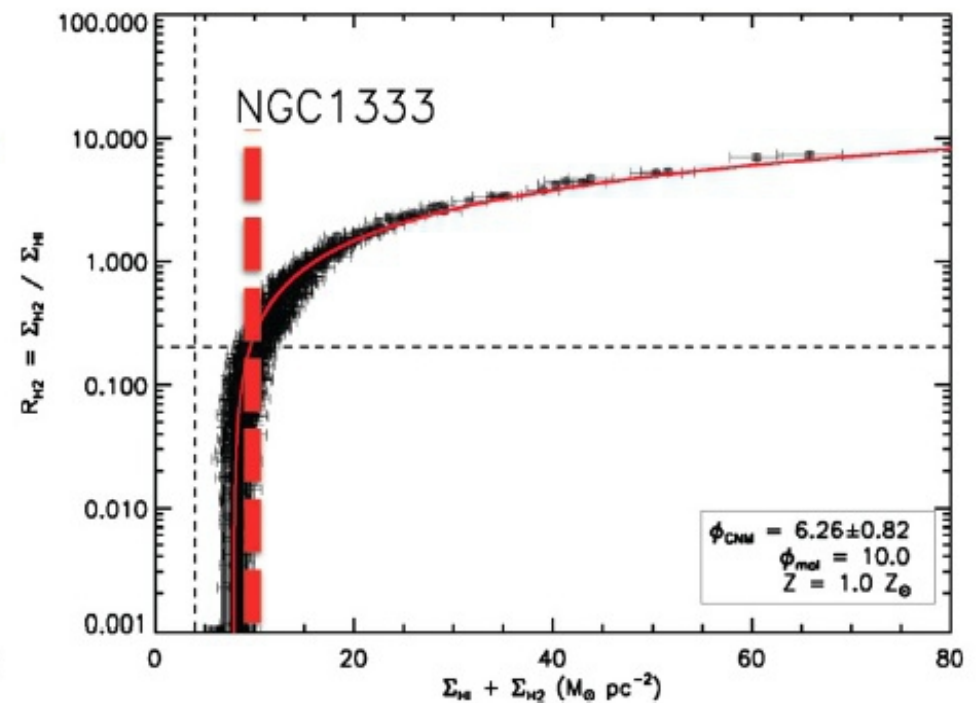
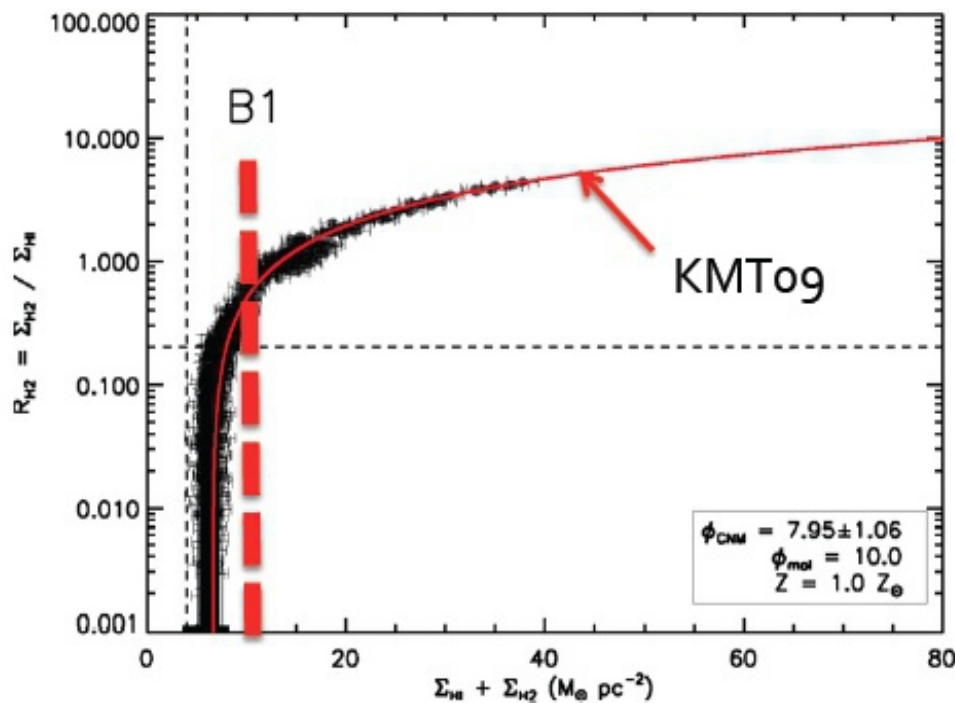
- Approximate solution:

$$f_{\text{H}_2} \approx 1 - \frac{3}{4} \left(\frac{s}{1 + 0.25s} \right)$$

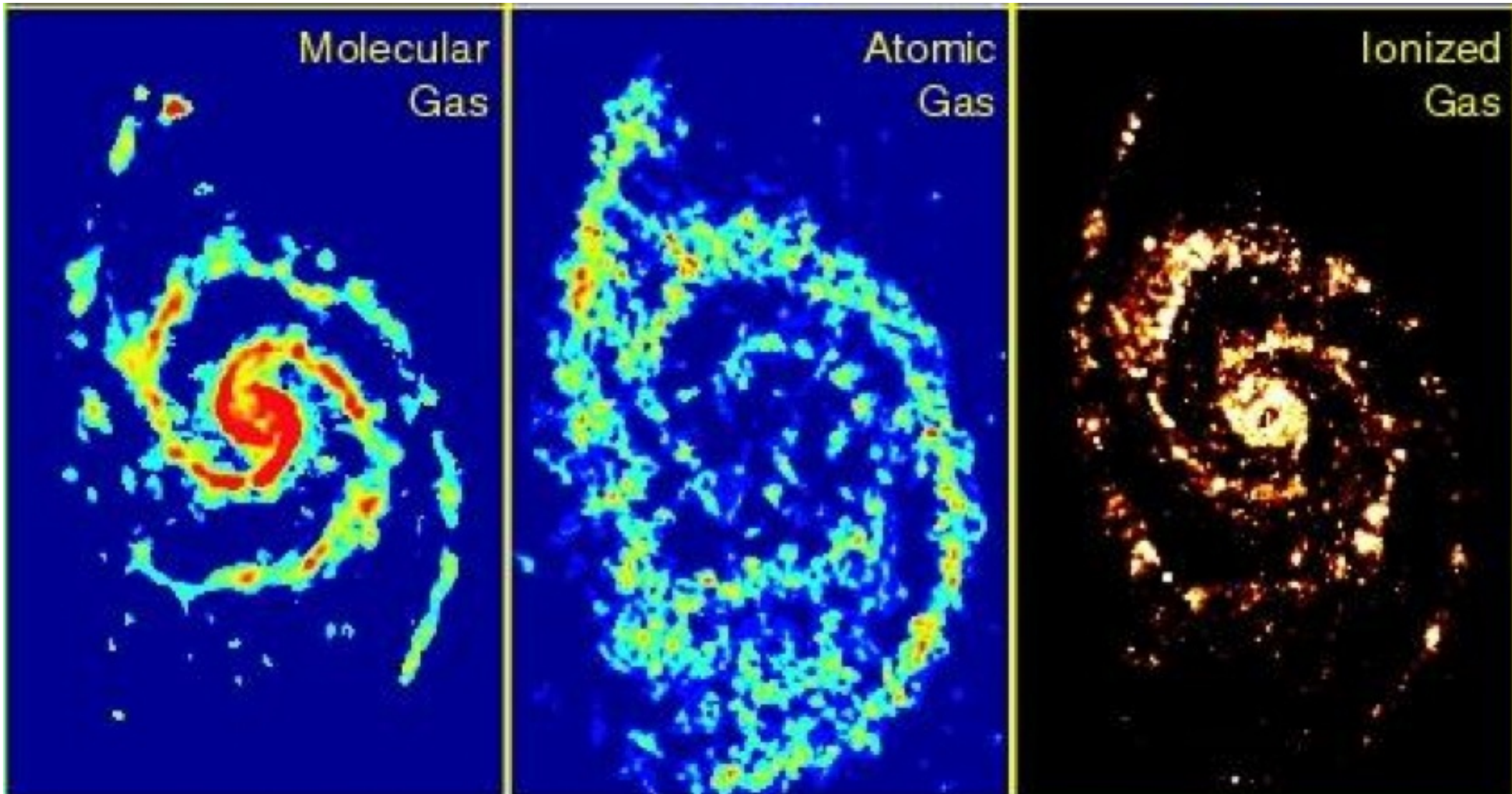
$$s \approx \frac{\ln(1 + 0.6\chi + 0.01\chi^2)}{0.04 \left(\frac{Z}{Z_\odot} \right) \left(\frac{\Sigma}{M_\odot \text{ pc}^{-2}} \right)}$$

$$\chi \approx 3.1 \frac{1 + 3.1 \left(\frac{Z}{Z_\odot} \right)^{0.365}}{4.1}$$

Main result: f_{H_2} is predicted to transition suddenly from ~ 0 to ~ 1 when $\Sigma_{\text{gas}} \sim 10 M_{\text{sun}} \text{ pc}^{-2}$



How rapidly is gas converted into stars in galaxies?



Empirical Star Formation “Laws”

$$\dot{\Sigma}_{\star} = \dot{M}_{\star} / \text{area}$$

SFR, Σ , in terms of mass in stars formed per unit area per unit time

$$\tau_{\text{SF}} = \Sigma_{\text{gas}} / \dot{\Sigma}_{\star}$$

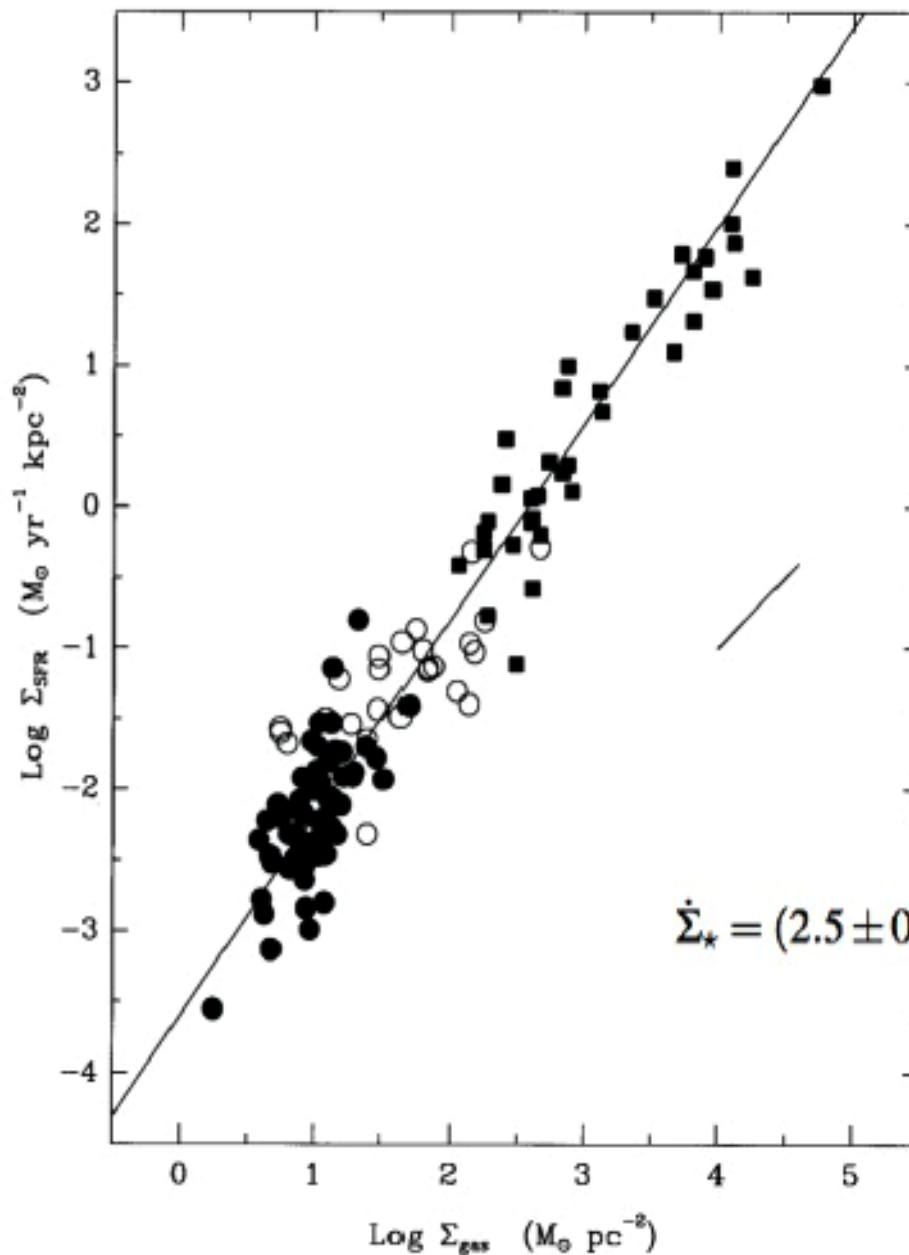
Gas consumption time, τ

Since the most obvious requirement for star formation is the presence of gas, it is only logical to look at the relation between SFR and surface density of gas:

$$\dot{\Sigma}_{\star} \propto \Sigma_{\text{gas}}^{\text{N}}$$

Schmidt (1959)

Kennicutt-Schmidt law



The study of star formation in normal spiral galaxies and also starbursts have shown Schmidt is a surprisingly good description of global SFRs (averaged over entire SF disc) –

$$\dot{\Sigma}_* = (2.5 \pm 0.7) \times 10^{-4} \left(\frac{\Sigma_{\text{gas}}}{M_{\odot} \text{pc}^{-2}} \right)^{1.4 \pm 0.15} M_{\odot} \text{yr}^{-1} \text{kpc}^{-2}$$

$$\Sigma_{\text{gas}} = \Sigma_{\text{HI}} + \Sigma_{\text{H}_2}$$

Dynamical time scale

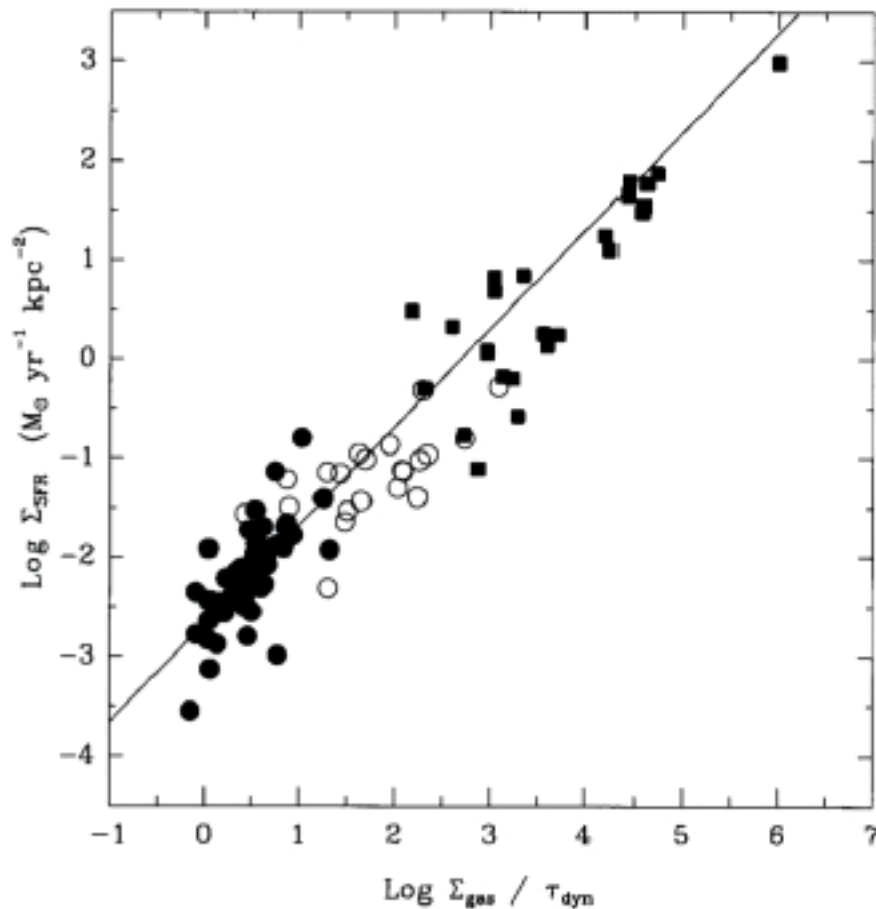
In addition to the Schmidt law – there is an equally strong correlation between star formation rate and the gas surface density divided by the dynamical time

$$\tau_{\text{dyn}} = 2\pi R / V_{\text{rot}}(R)$$

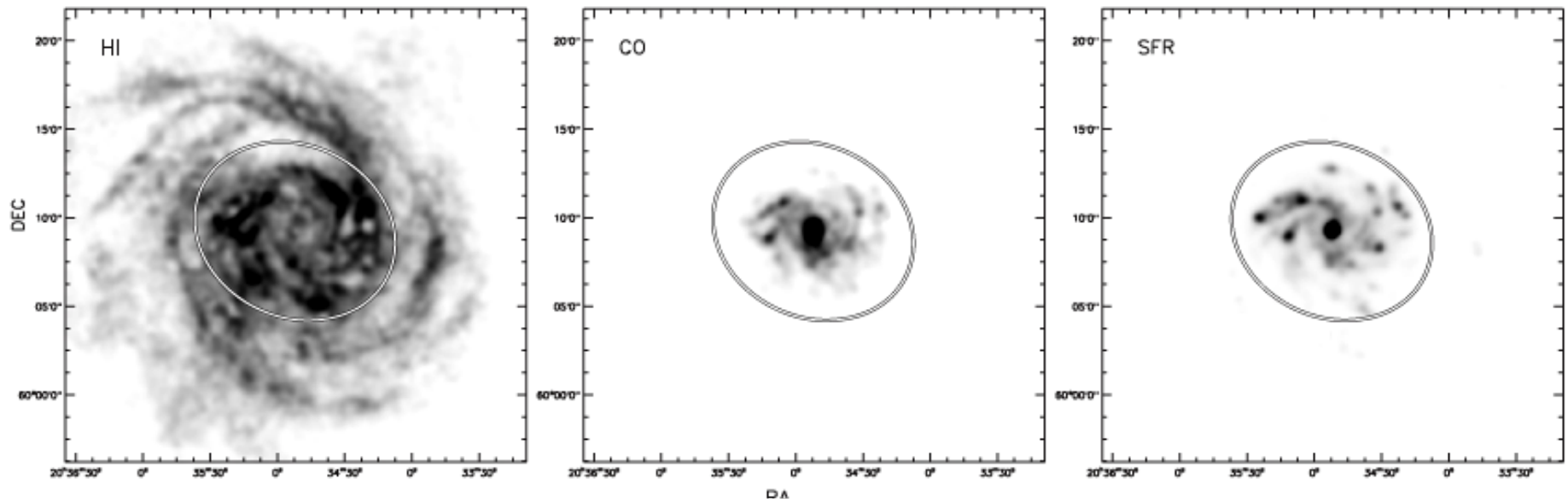
defined as the orbital time at the outer radius R of the relevant star forming region.

$$\dot{\Sigma}_{\star} \approx 0.017 \Sigma_{\text{gas}} \Omega$$

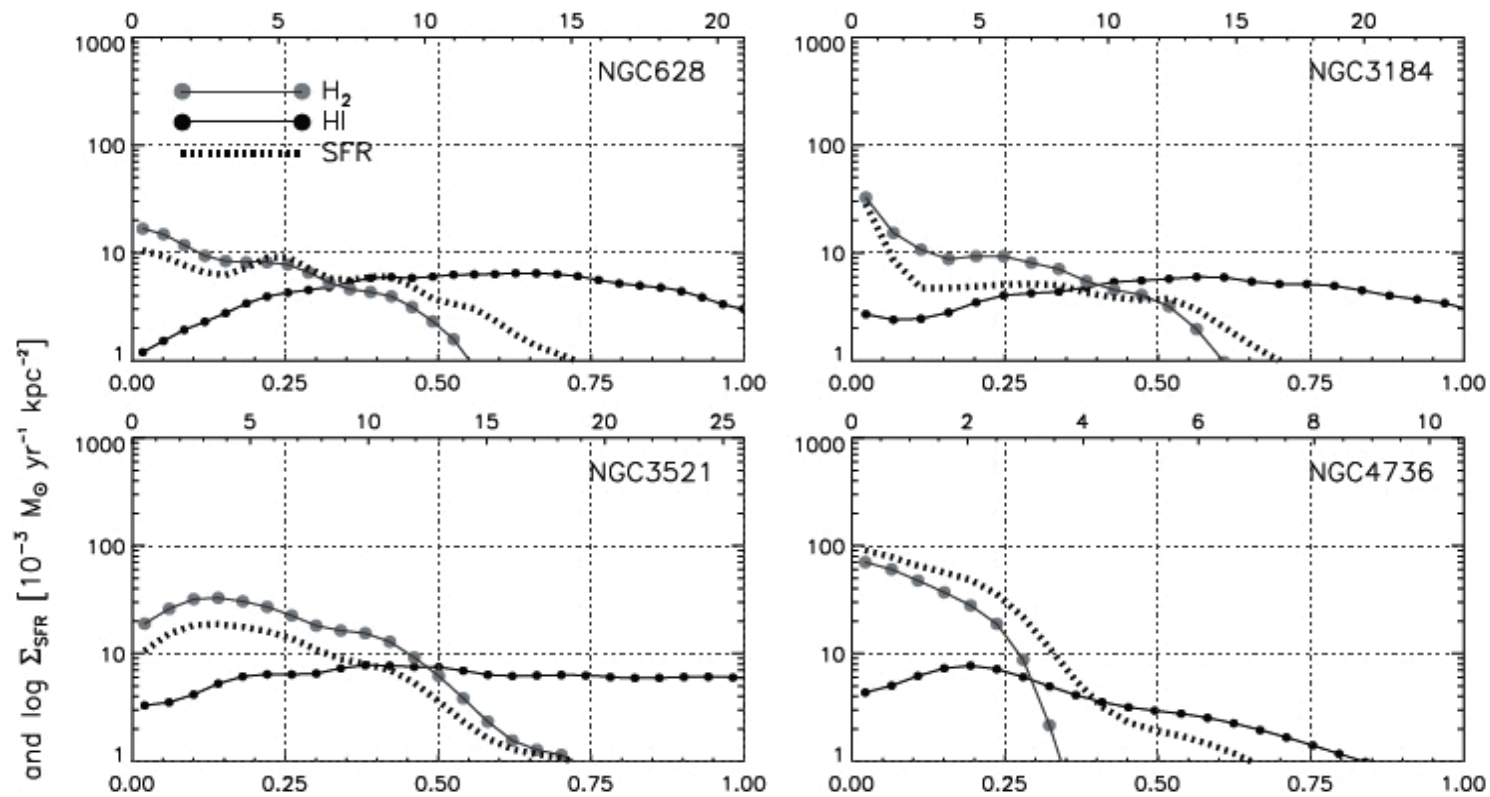
Ω is the circular frequency

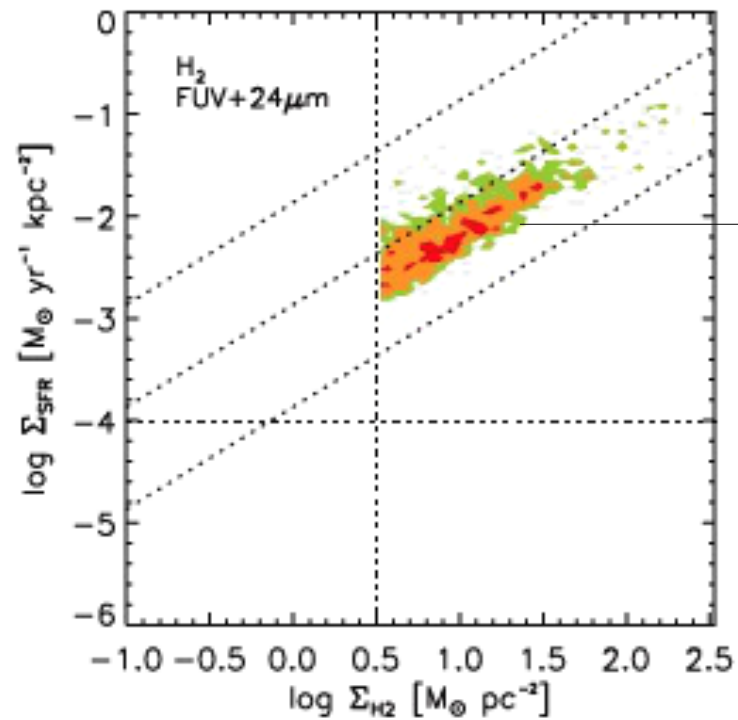
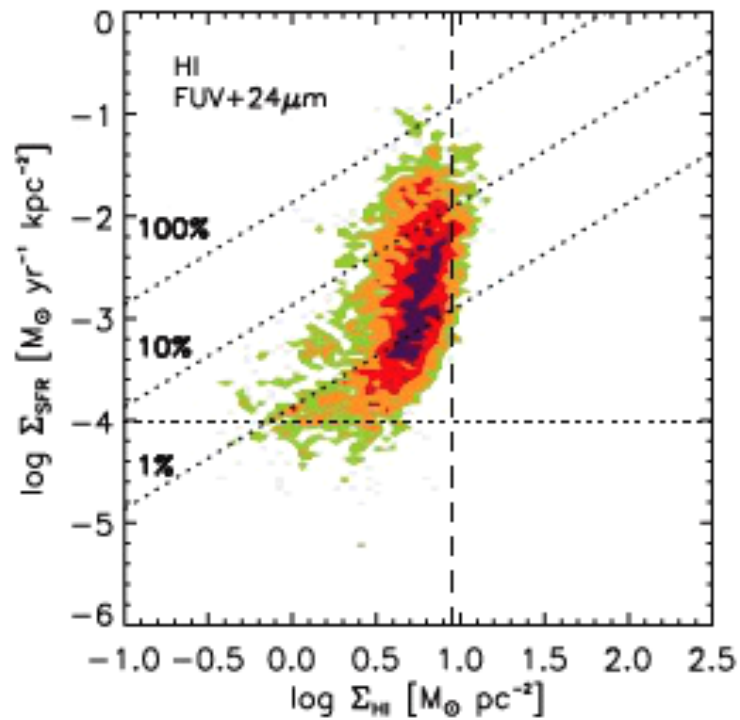


This implies 10% of available gas forms stars per orbital time

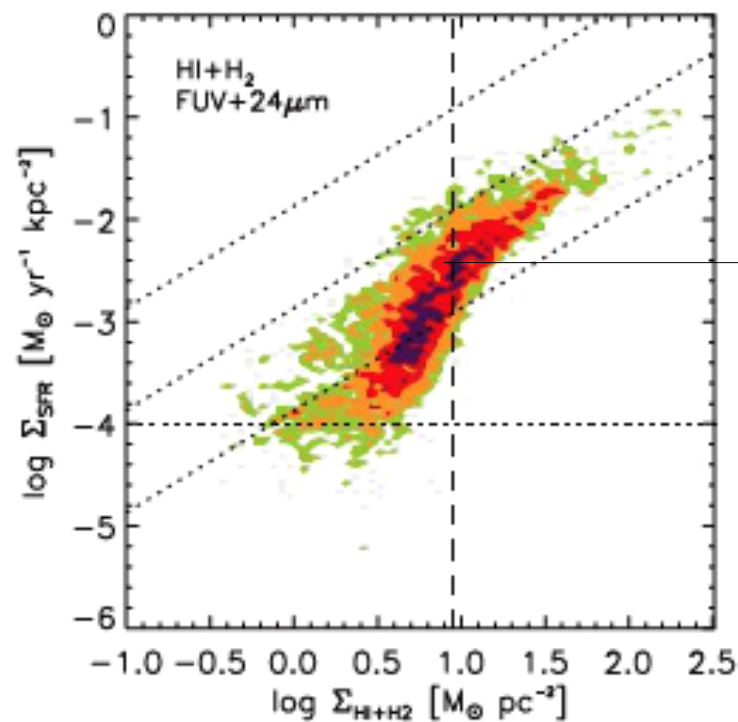
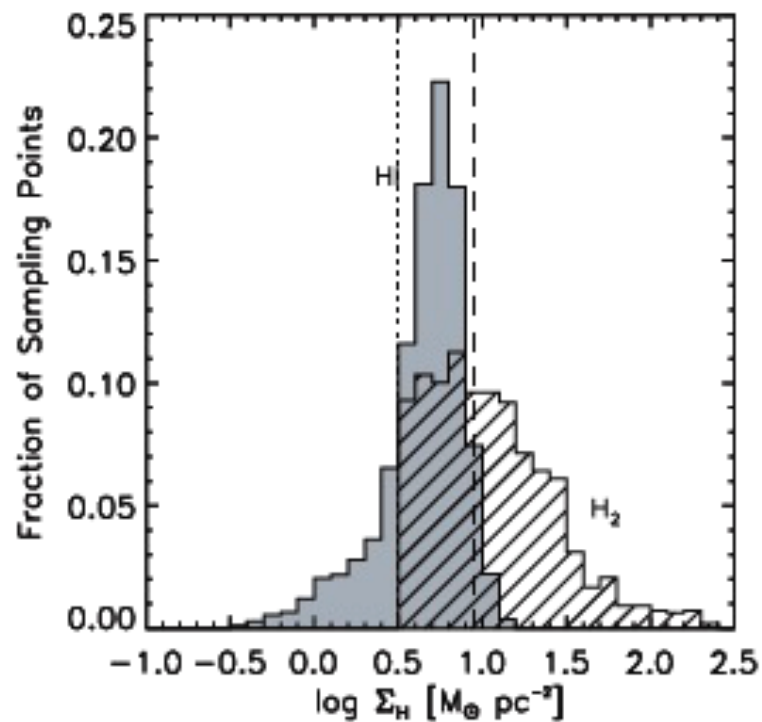


Galactocentric Radius [kpc]





Depletion time
of around 1 Gyr



Roughly the
location of the
atomic-to-
molecular
transition.

No clear second parameter in the relation between SFR and molecular gas

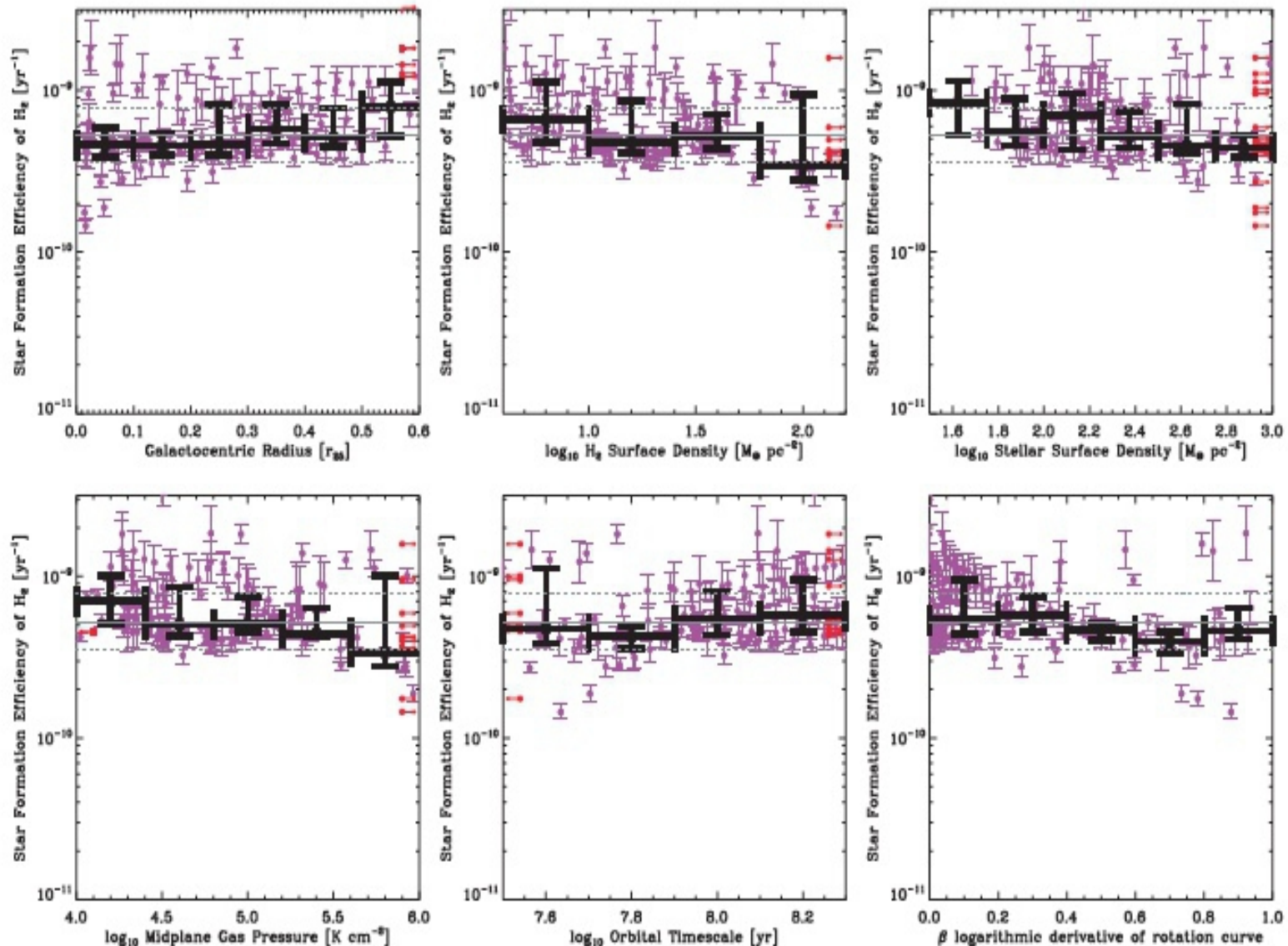
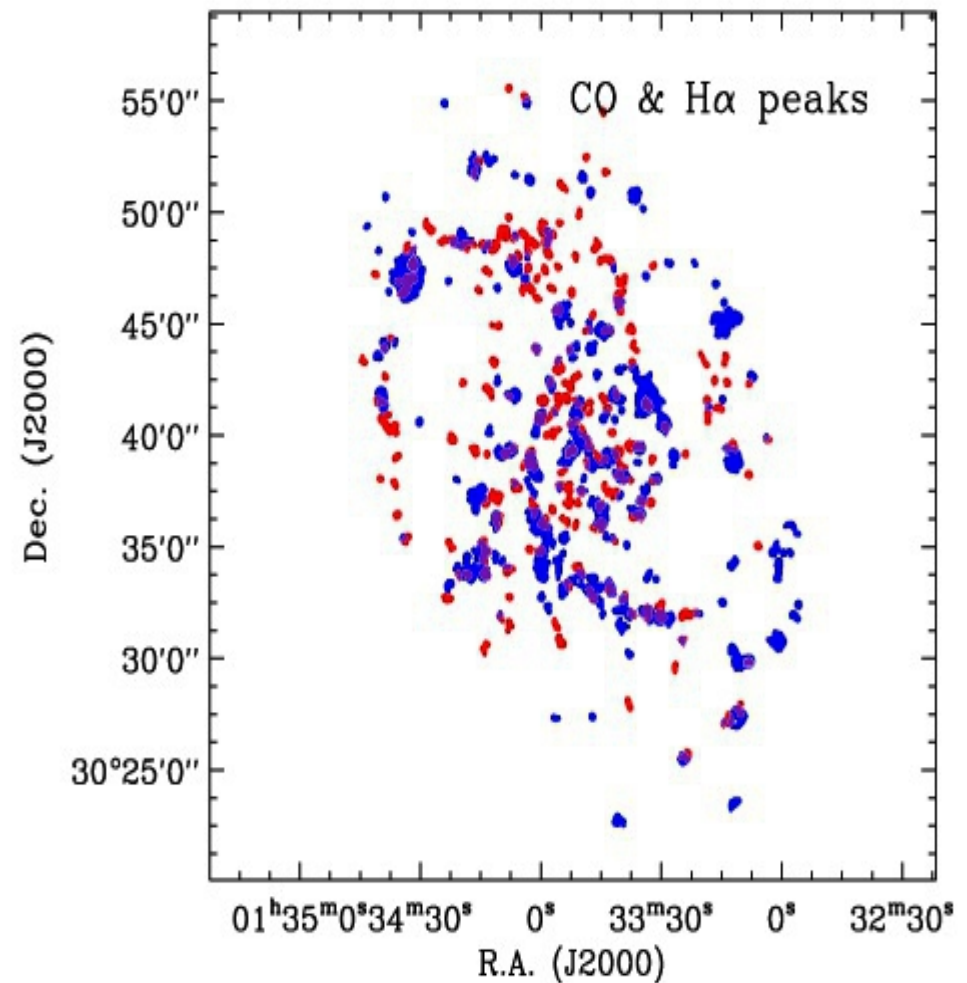
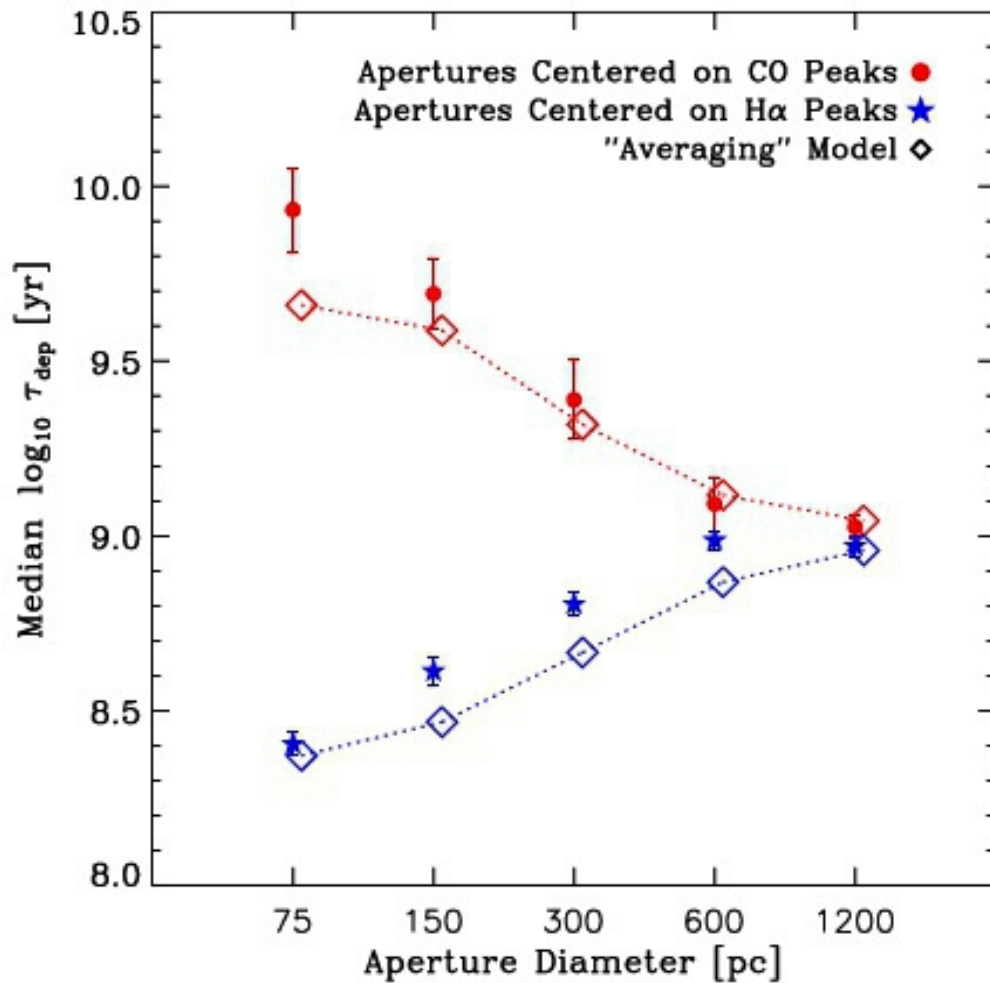


Figure 15. SFE (H₂) in individual tilted rings from spiral galaxies as a function of (top left) galactocentric radius, (top middle) H₂ surface density, (top right) stellar surface density, (bottom left) midplane pressure, (bottom middle) orbital timescale, and (bottom right) logarithmic derivative of the rotation curve. Gray lines show the median $\log_{10} \text{SFE}(\text{H}_2) = -9.28 \pm 0.17$ for our data.

On what scales does the apparently “Universal” molecular gas depletion timescale hold?



The Stellar Initial Mass Function (IMF)

The initial mass function is a function describing the distribution of stellar masses in a newly formed population (i.e. none of the stars have had a chance to lose mass or undergo supernova). The initial mass function, IMF, was first derived by Ed Salpeter in 1955, who found that:

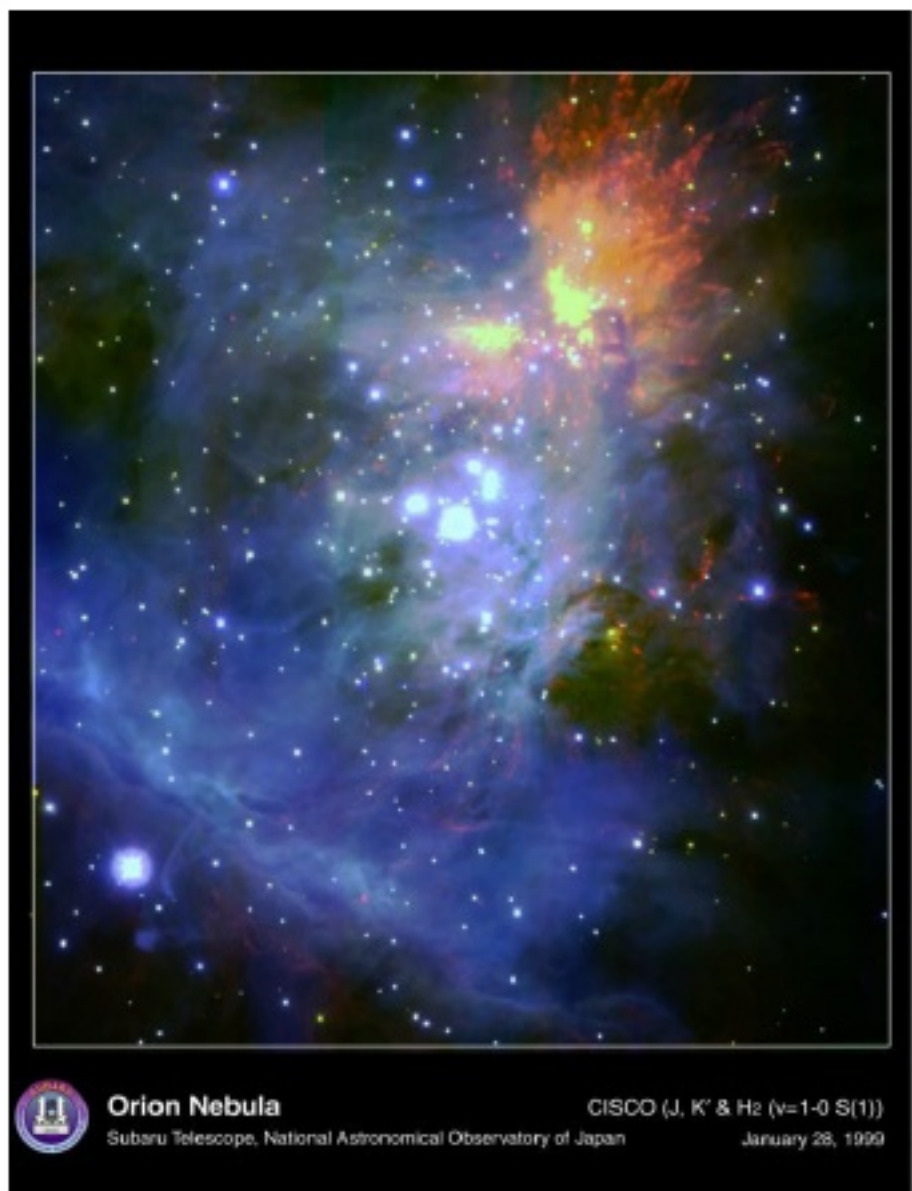
$$\xi(\log M) = \frac{dN}{d\log(M)} = k_1 M^{-\Gamma} = k_1 M^{-1.35} \quad (1)$$

A similar function is the mass spectrum

$$\frac{dN}{dM} = k_2 M^{-\alpha} = k_2 M^{-2.35} \quad (2)$$

where $\alpha = \Gamma + 1$.

The initial stellar mass distribution in young star clusters



Construction of the IMF

Photometry → Brightness of each star

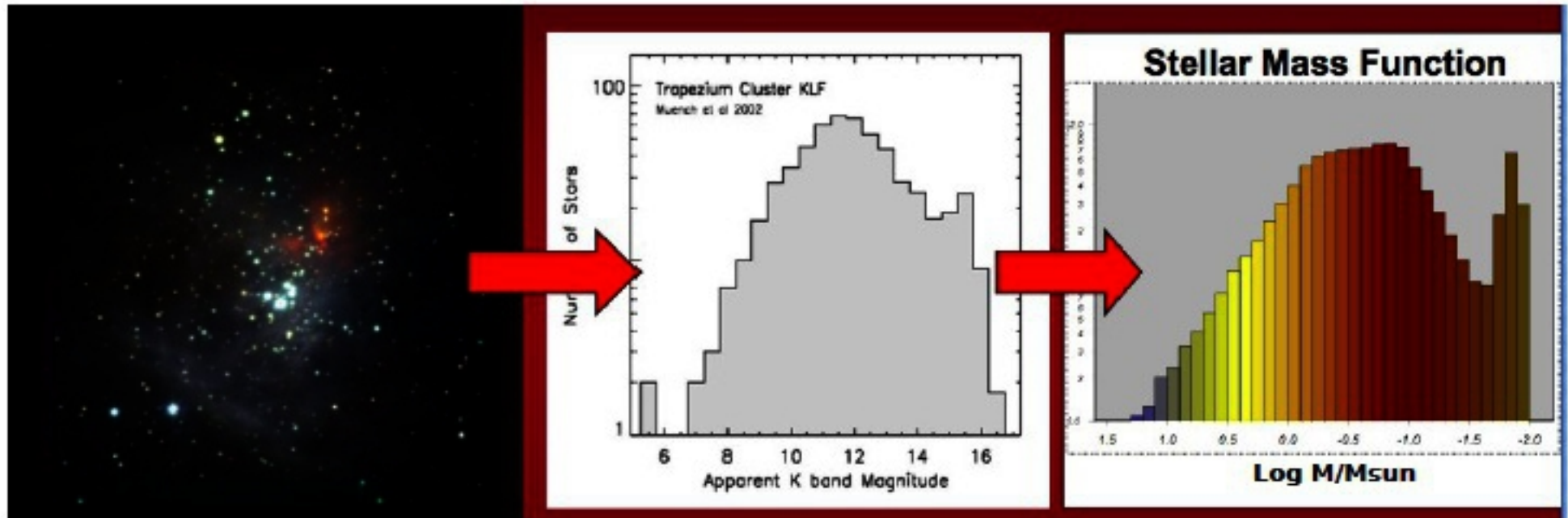
Brightness + stellar model → stellar mass + age

Counting stars into mass intervalls →

Stellar mass distribution = Initial Mass Function

Initial =
"at birth"

Outcome of the
Star formation
Process.



Evidence for a universal IMF in young star clusters

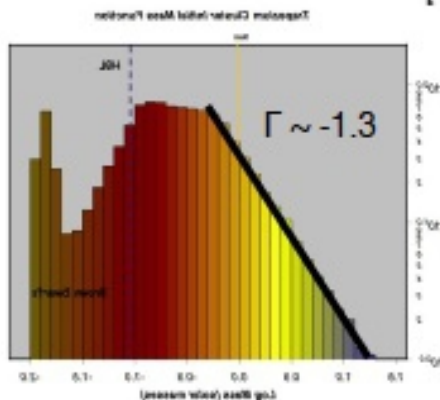
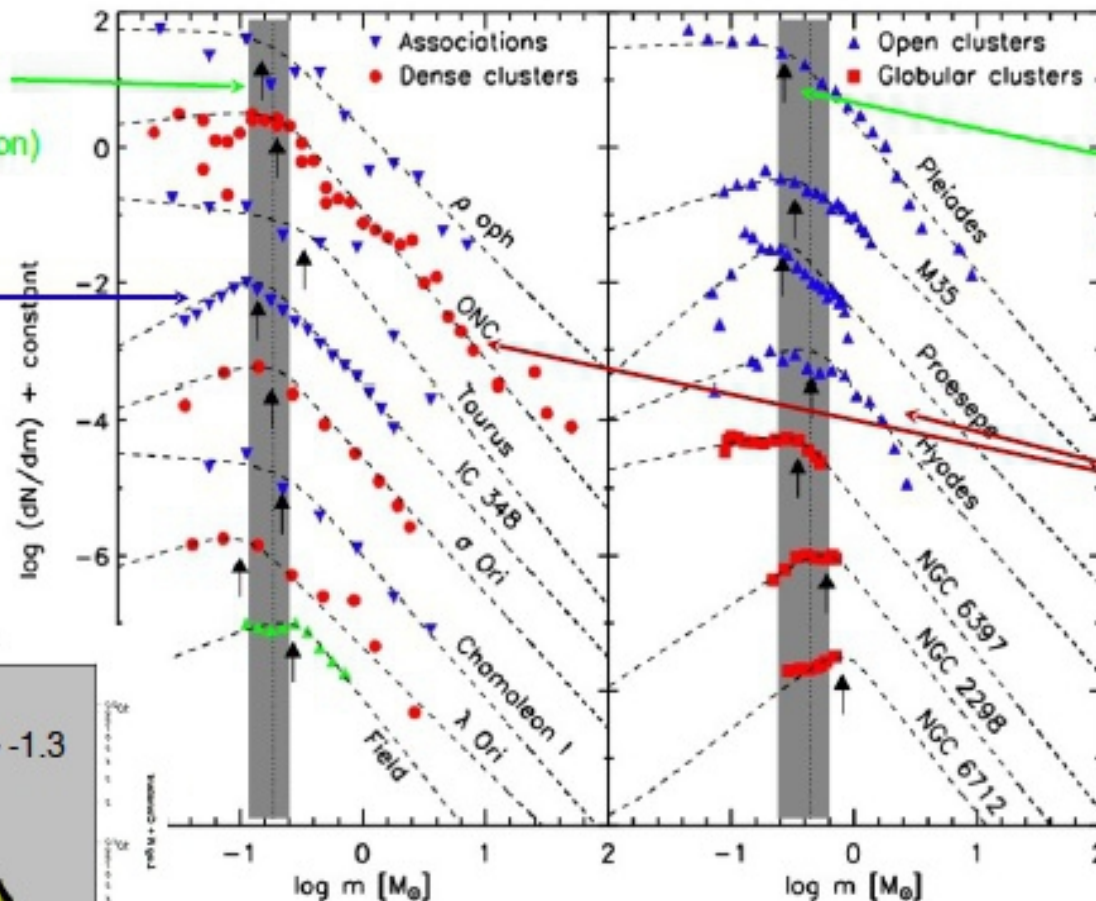
Mass functions from young star clusters & OB associations, as well as open, intermediate-age and old star clusters (globulars).

characteristic mass
(the most frequent
stellar mass
present in the population)

low-mass slope
of the IMF
decreasing into the
brown dwarf regime

characteristic mass
(the most frequent
stellar mass
present in the population)

high-mass slope
of the IMF
"Salpeter" = -1.3
in most clusters



Bastian et al. 2010, IMF review

adapted from: de Marchi, Paresce & Portegies Zwart (2010)

A theoretical construction of the “average” IMF

From a sample of young star cluster observations, Pavel Kroupa constructed a “universal IMF”

Kroupa IMF

$\Gamma = -0.7$ $0.01 < M < 0.08 M_{\text{sun}}$

$\Gamma = 0.3$ $0.08 < M < 0.5 M_{\text{sun}}$

$\Gamma = 1.3 \pm 0.3$ $M > 0.5 M_{\text{sun}}$

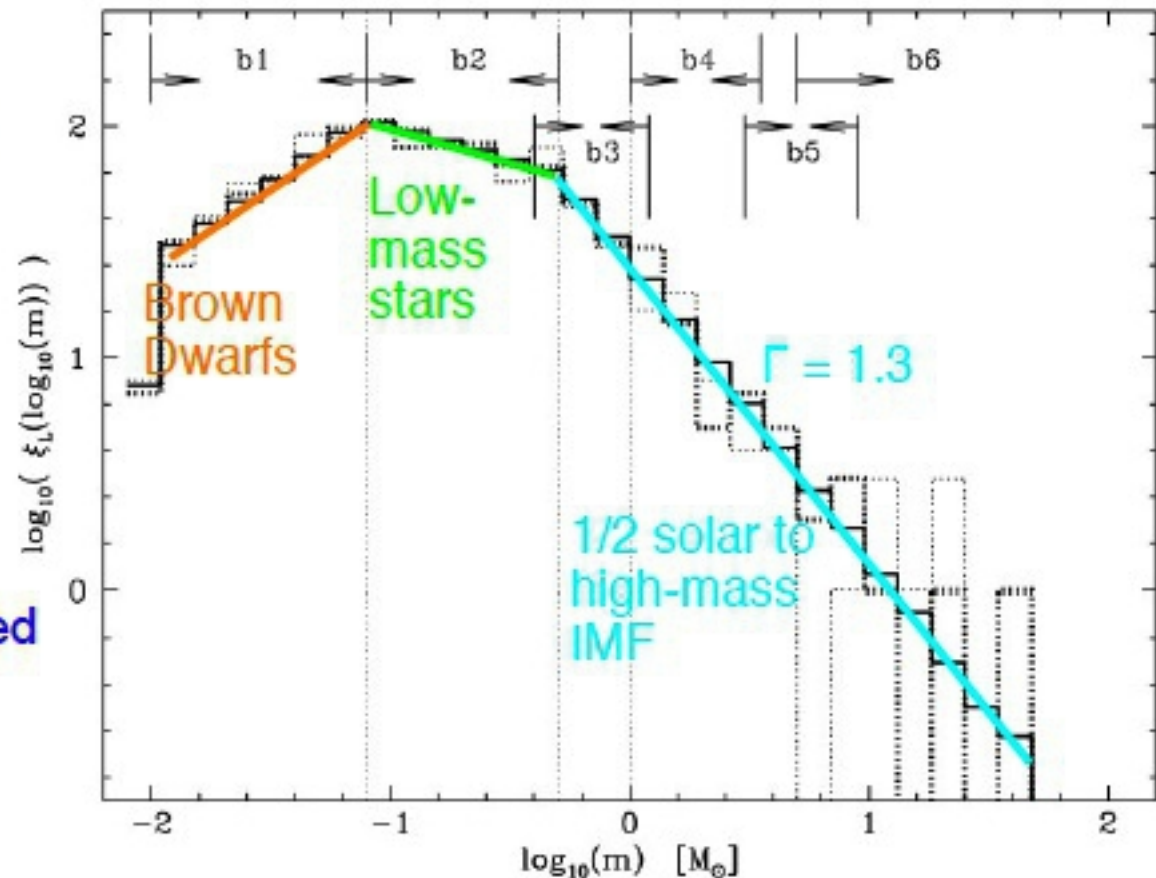
(Salpeter regime)

Note: the IMF slope is defined as $-\Gamma$, so positiv = falling, negativ = rising!!!

$\alpha_0 = +0.3 \pm 0.7$, $0.01 \leq m/M_{\odot} < 0.08$,

$\alpha_1 = +1.3 \pm 0.5$, $0.08 \leq m/M_{\odot} < 0.50$,

$\alpha = +2.3 \pm 0.3$, $0.50 \leq m/M < 1.00$,



Kroupa 2001

Stellar evolution reminder

HERTZSPRUNG-RUSSELL DIAGRAM

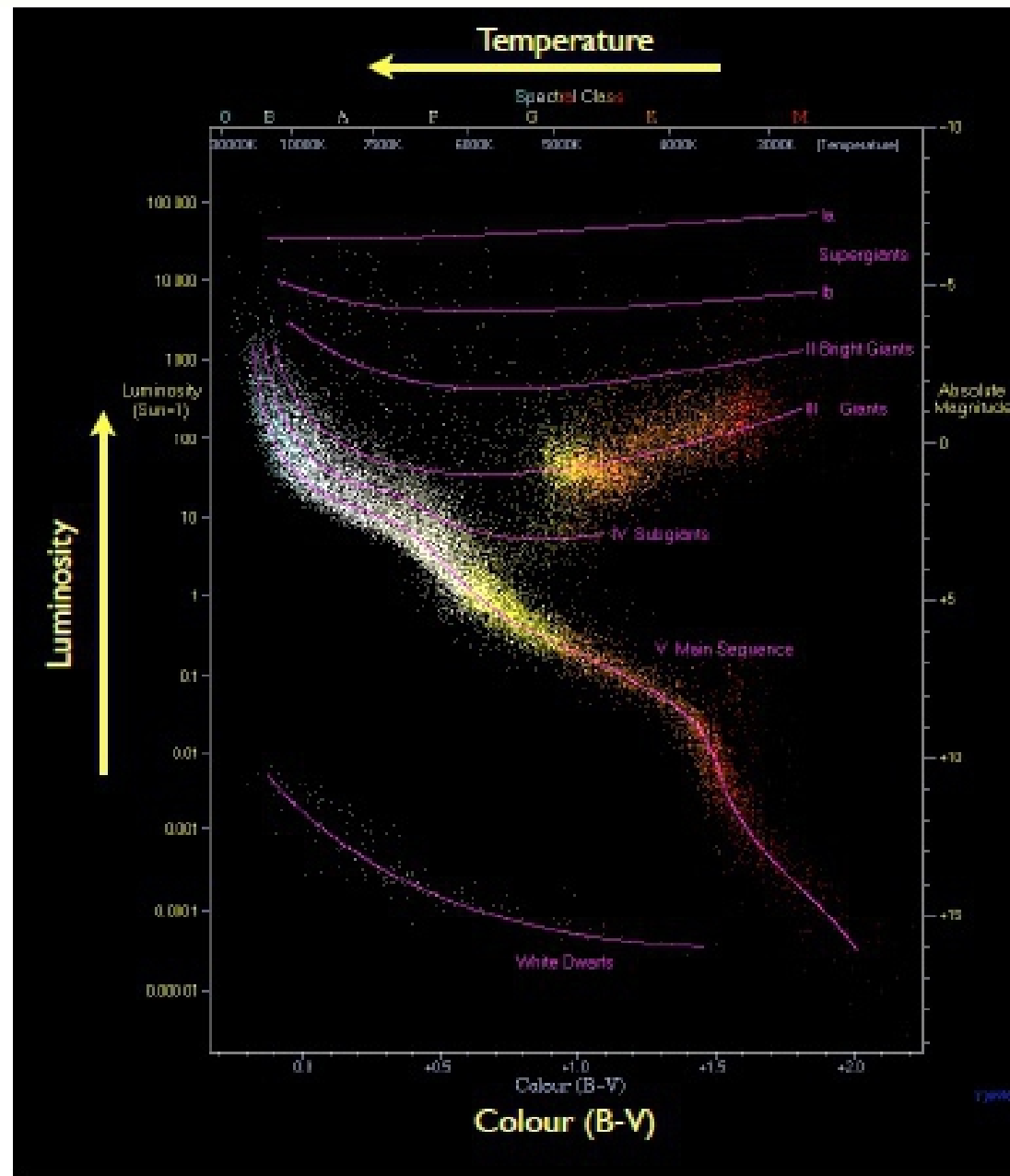
Plots luminosity of stars, versus their temperature.

Stars populate distinct regions of this plane, corresponding to particular evolutionary phases.

Terminology:

HRD is “theory” plane: temperature vs bolometric luminosity.

CMD (colour-magnitude diagram) is its empirical analogue.



Stellar evolution reminder

MAIN SEQUENCE (MS)

Core hydrogen burning phase. Longest phase of evolution.

TURN-OFF

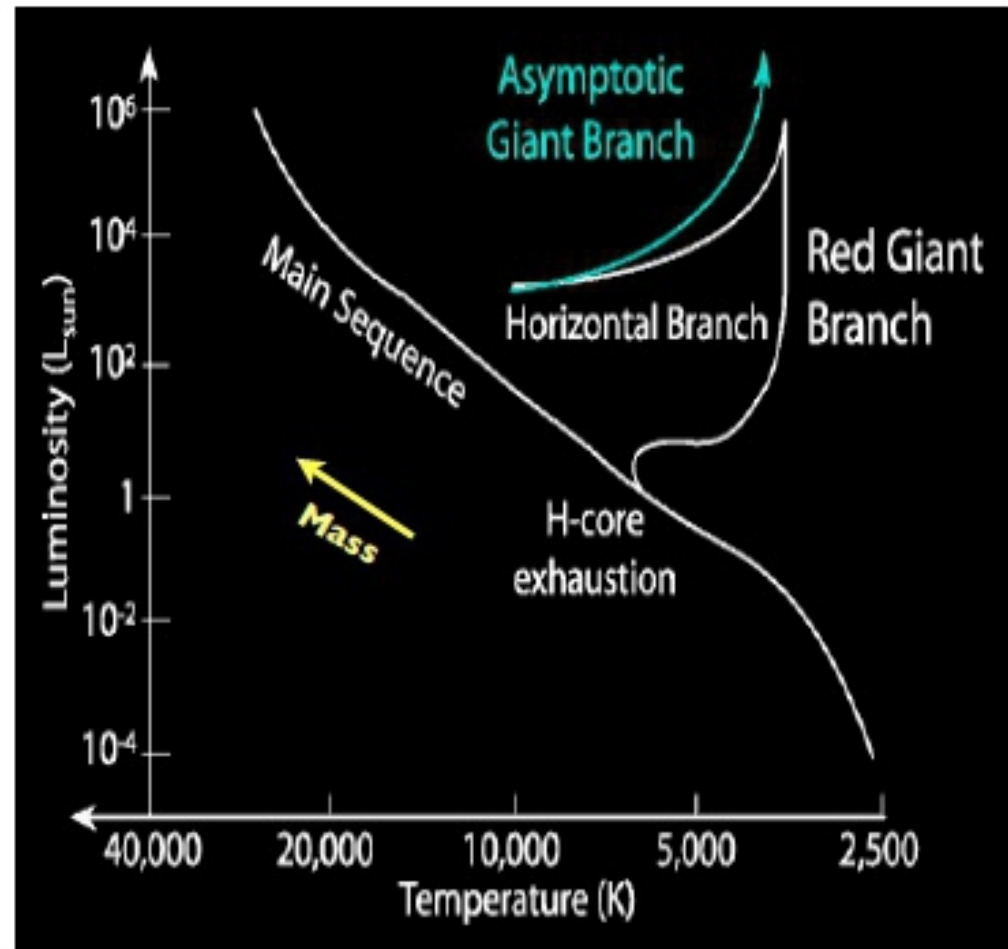
Hydrogen exhausted in core, start of “interesting” evolution.

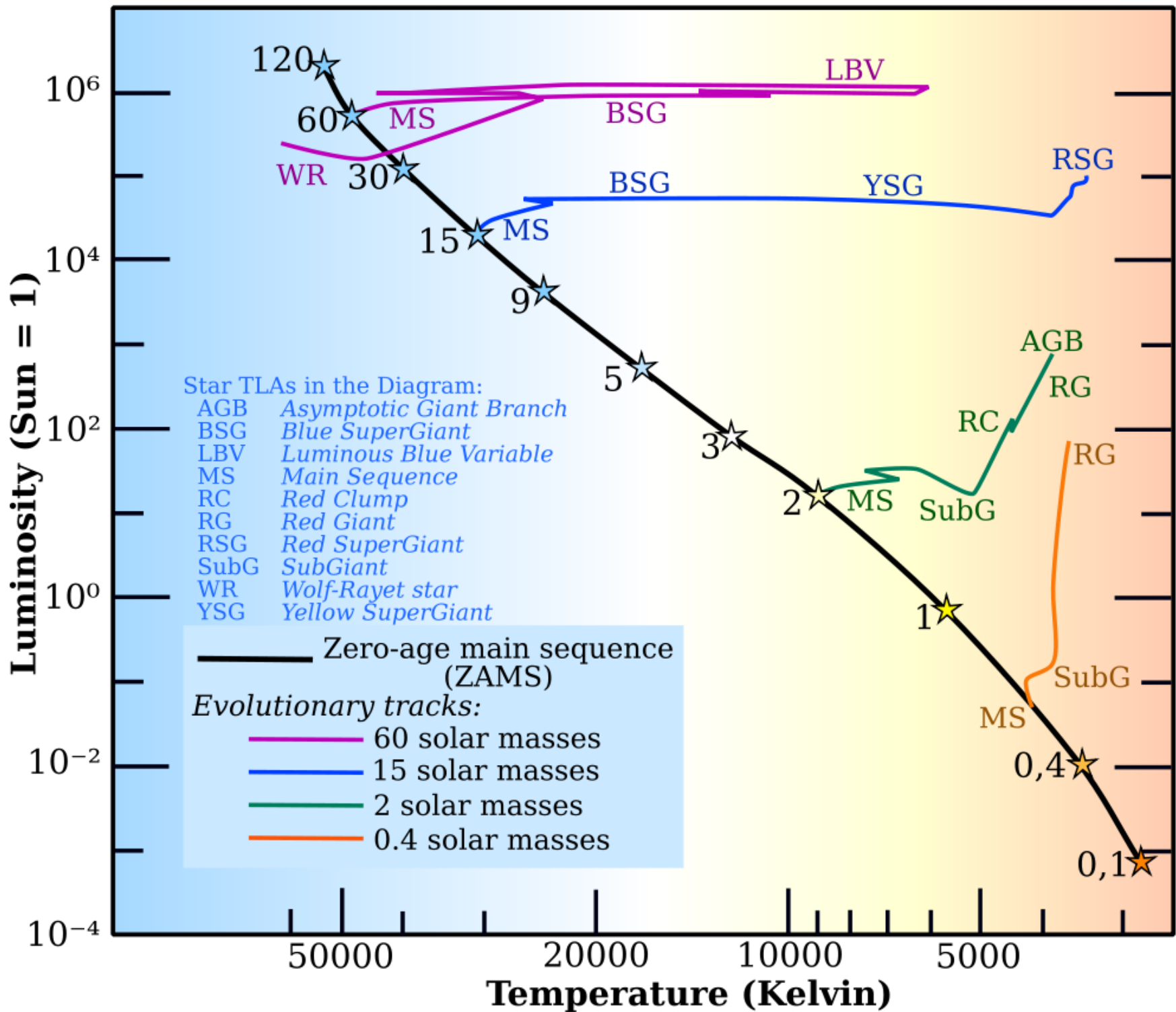
RED-GIANT BRANCH (RGB)

Hydrogen burning in shell around inert helium core. Growth of He core.

RGB TIP

End of RGB phase: core massive and hot enough to ignite He-burning (the “helium flash”)





Stellar Evolution Reminder

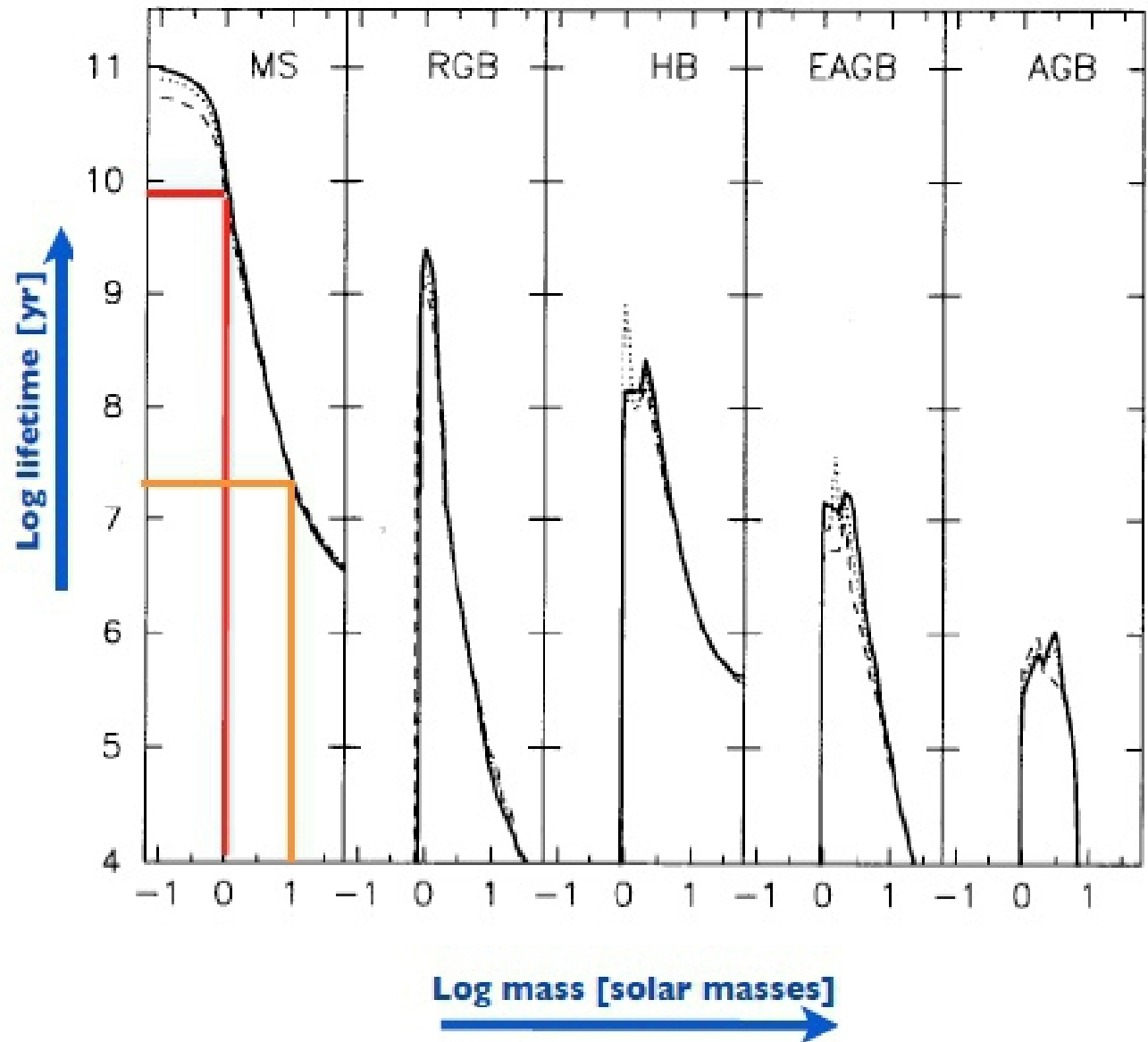
MASS-DEPENDENT LIFETIMES

Lifetime in each evolutionary phase depends sensitively on initial mass.

MS lifetime is $\sim 10^{10}$ years at 1 solar mass, but only $\sim 10^7$ years for 10 Msun.

Below ~ 0.9 Msun, the MS lifetime is longer than age of Universe!

Mass-vs-lifetime relation is one of the crucial tools for age-dating populations.



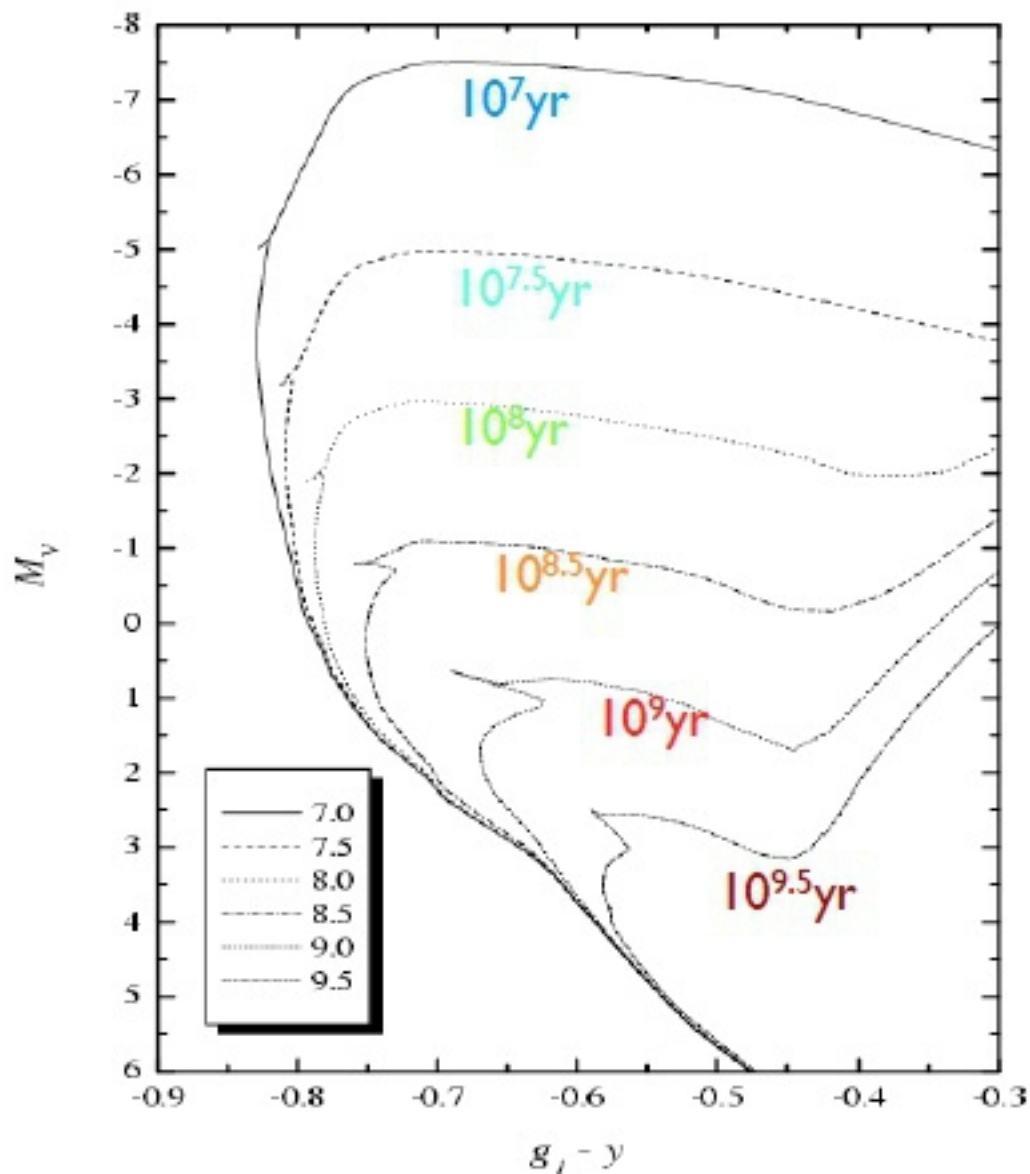
Tracks & Isochrones

ISOCHRONES

“Isochrones” are loci on the HRD populated by stars of a given time since formation, for a range of different masses.

Formed by picking a common “time” point from the track for each stellar mass.

Snapshot of a “simple” stellar population.



Tracks & Isochrones

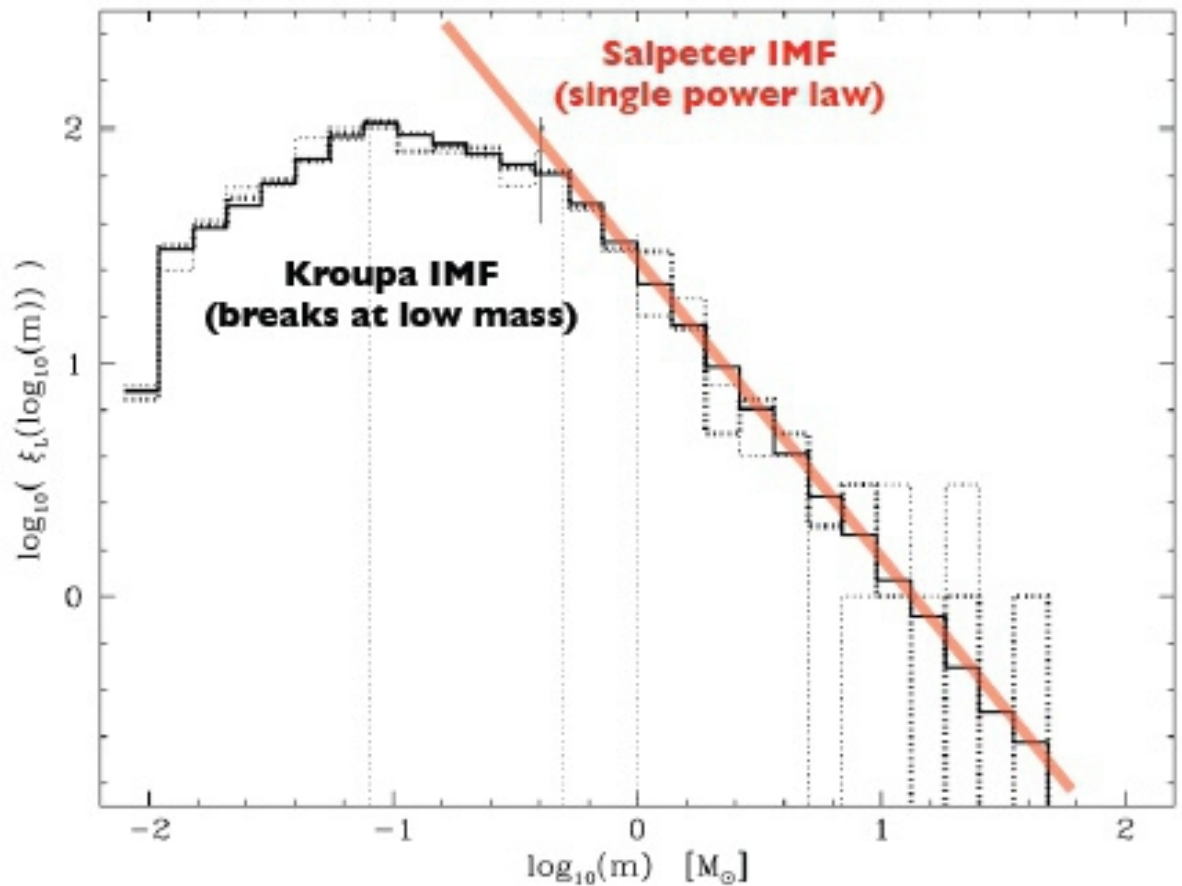
INITIAL MASS FUNCTION

How many stars formed per unit mass?

Determines number of stars expected at each point along isochrone.

Constrained from detailed observations of star-forming regions in the MW.

Applied to wide range of environments beyond MW!



Kroupa (2002)

Simple Stellar Population (SSP)

THE SIMPLEST STELLAR POPULATION MODEL

A burst of star-formation at a given time: all stars have the same age.

All stars form with the same initial chemical composition: a single “metallicity”.

The distribution of initial masses is given by some functional form, e.g. power law $N(M) dM \propto M^{-x} dM$. Commonly assume $x=2.35$, the “Salpeter IMF”, over $M=0.1-100 M_{\text{sun}}$.

Modern studies show fewer low mass stars than in Salpeter, e.g. Kroupa IMF (but these make little contribution to the total light).

USEFUL BECAUSE...

For stellar systems without much recent SF (GCs, elliptical galaxies) the SSP is probably a good approximation.

More complex systems can be modelled using combinations of SSPs.

Observed star cluster CMDs

OPEN CLUSTERS

MS dominant, few RGB or other evolved stars. Only few 100s or 1000s of stars.



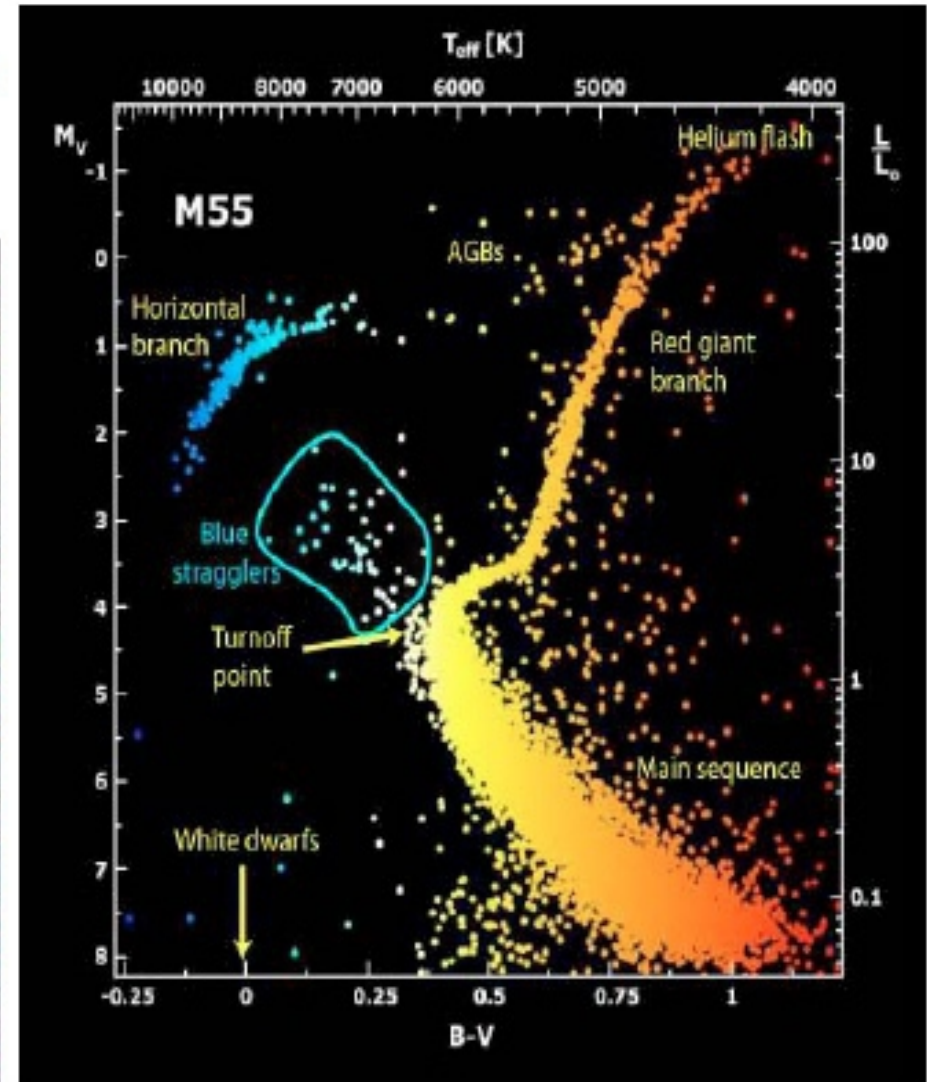
NGC 290 in the Small Magellanic Cloud (Chiosi & Vallenari 2007)

Observed star cluster CMDs

LOBULAR CLUSTERS

De-populated upper MS. Strong RGB and HB.

1,000s to 100,000s of stars.



Population Synthesis Models

TO COMPUTE FLUX FROM AN SSP IN A GIVEN BANDPASS:

1. Choose isochrone according to desired age and metallicity (Padova, BaSTI, etc)
2. Populate isochrone with stars drawn from an assumed IMF (e.g. Kroupa, etc)
3. Map atmospheric parameters (metallicity, temperature, gravity) to flux in a given bandpass (bolometric corrections) using model or empirical spectral energy distributions.
4. Integrate along isochrone, summing contribution from stars of each initial mass:

$$F_{\text{tot}} = \int L(M) \cdot B(T_{\text{eff}}(M), g(M), Z) \cdot N(M) dM$$

First factor is the total (“bolometric” luminosity)

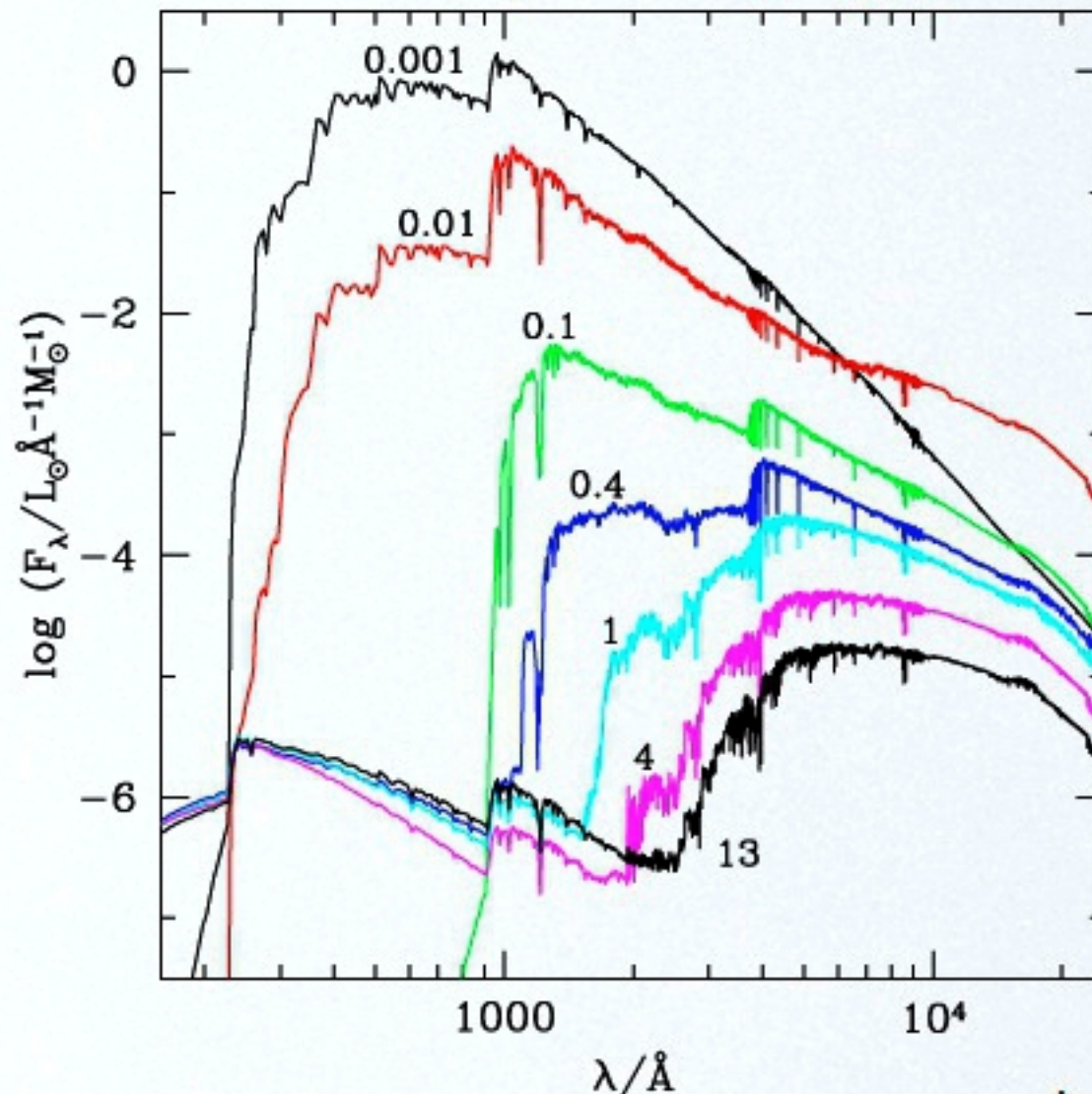
Second factor is the bolometric correction for this bandpass;

Third factor is number of stars contributing for this mass.

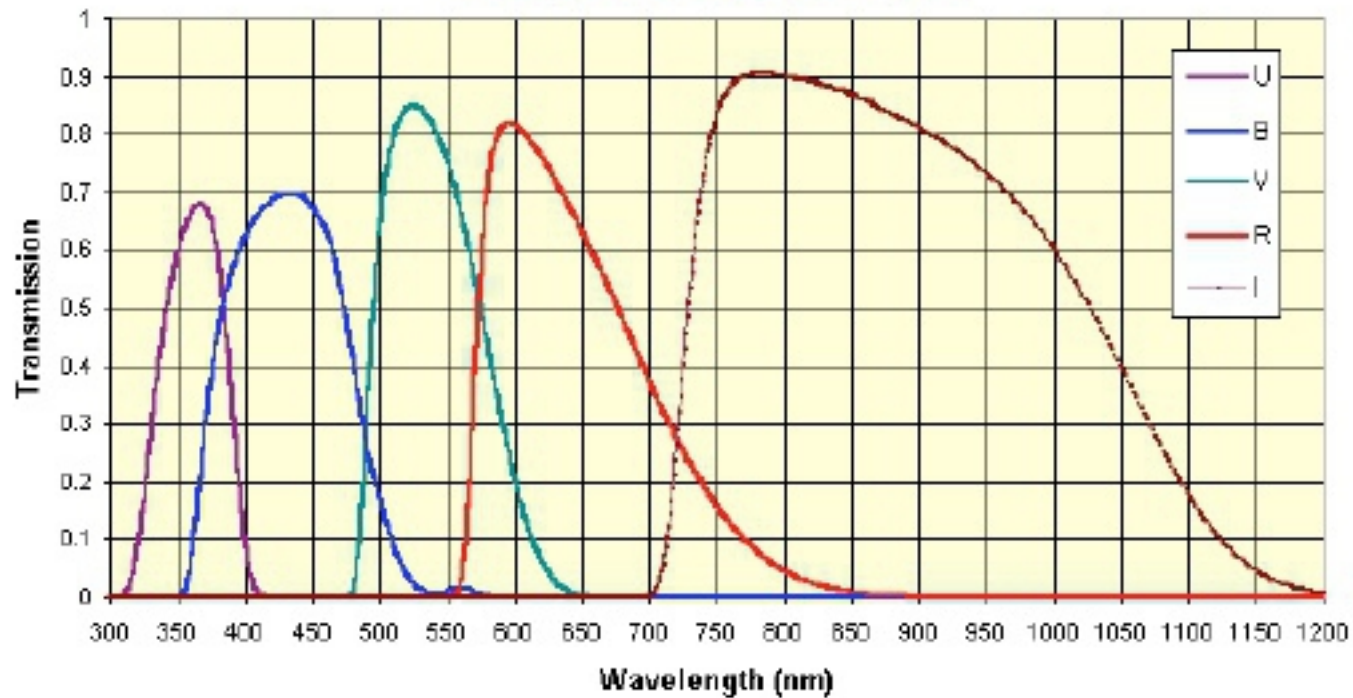
Post RGB phases often added “by hand”.

Spectral evolution of a Simple Stellar Population

Resulting **SSP** evolution (f_{SSP})



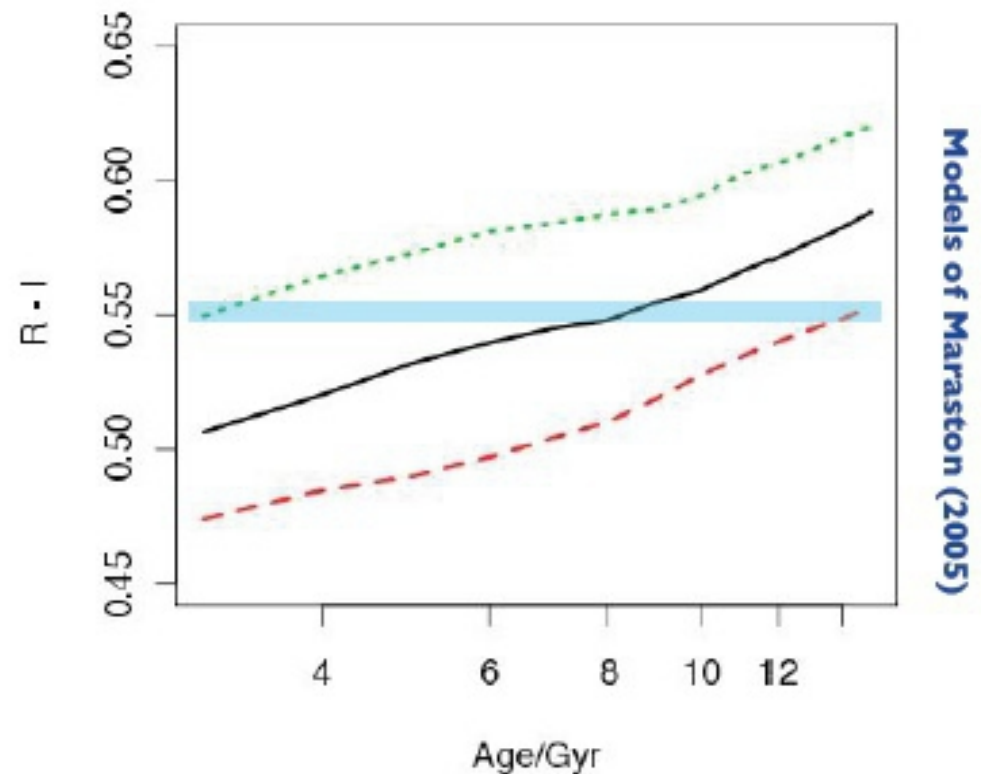
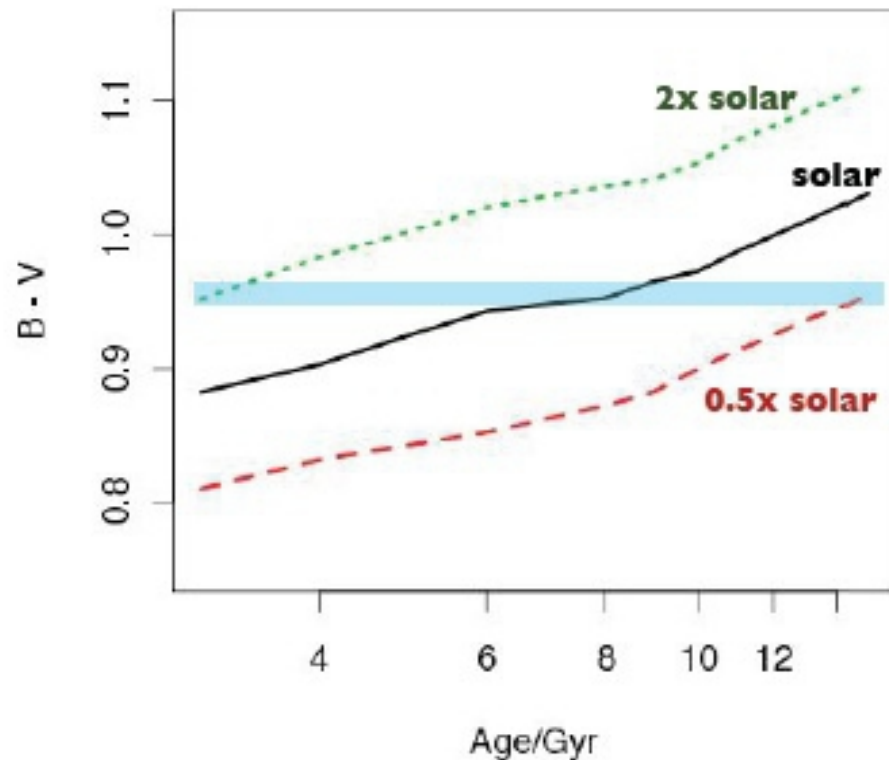
Standard UBVRI filters



BOLOMETRIC CORRECTION

Describes how total luminosity translates to flux measured through a particular filter.

Age-Metallicity Degeneracy



Because both age and metallicity cause the population to redden, a single colour is not enough to disentangle the parameters.