

Other sources of opacity



He ABSORPTION
METALLIC ABSORPTION
SCATTERING
EFFECT OF NONGREYNESS OF THE
TEMPERATURE STRUCTURE

Many physical processes contribute to opacity

149

- **Bound-Bound Transitions** – absorption or emission of radiation from electrons moving between bound energy levels.
- **Bound-Free Transitions** – the energy of the higher level electron state lies in the continuum or is unbound.
- **Free-Free Transitions** – change the motion of an electron from one free state to another.
- **Electron Scattering** – deflection of a photon from its original path by a particle, without changing its wavelength.
 - **Rayleigh scattering** – photons scatter off **bound** electrons (varies as λ^{-4}).
 - **Thomson scattering** – photons scatter off **free** electrons (independent of wavelength).
- **Photodissociation** may occur for molecules.

What can various particles do?



- Free electrons – Thomson scattering
- Atoms and Ions –
 - Bound-bound transitions
 - Bound-free transitions
 - Free-free transitions
- Molecules –
 - BB, BF, FF transitions
 - Photodissociation
- Most continuous opacity is due to hydrogen in one form or another

He opacity?

151

Helium is the next most abundant element after H, so **is it important** for the continuous absorption in the Sun or other stars?

Ionization of He to He⁺ requires an energy of 24.6eV ($\lambda < 504\text{\AA}$ are needed). Indeed, even the first excited level lies 19.8eV above the ground state, which can contribute only below 600 Å where there is very little radiation coming from the Sun. From the Boltzmann formula ($g_1=1, g_2=3$):

$$\log(N_{\text{He}}(2s^3S) / N_{\text{He}}(1s^1S)) = 0.48 - 19.8 \times (5040/5777) = -16.8$$

So, only 10^{-17} of the He atoms can contribute to the absorption, and since He is 10% as abundant as H, only one in 10^{-18} atoms are He atoms in the 1st excited state.

Consequently, He opacity plays a **negligible** role for the Sun. The bound-free absorption from He⁻ is generally negligible, whilst free-free He⁻ (with a form similar to free-free H⁻) can be significant at long wavelengths in cool stars.

Photoionization (bound-free processes) from He only plays a significant role for the hottest, O-type, stars.

Metal (Iron) opacity

152

- If He only plays a role for very hot stars, do any metals contribute to the continuous opacity in cool stars?
- **Iron** ($\text{Fe}/\text{H}=10^{-4}$) is generally the dominant metal continuous opacity source in stellar atmospheres.
- In the Sun, let's consider absorption by **atomic Fe** in the ultraviolet (2000 Å) for which an excitation energy of ~ 1.7 eV is required. The fraction of excited Fe atoms is 4×10^{-2} relative to the ground-state (from Boltzmann formula), whilst the fraction of ionized to neutral Fe is approximately 6 (from Saha equation).
- Accounting for the abundance of Fe, we obtain the fraction of atomic Fe atoms absorbing at 2000 Å relative to the total number of H atoms to be $4 \times 10^{-2} \times 10^{-4} \times 1/6 = 6 \times 10^{-7}$.
- We previously obtained 2×10^{-8} for H^- , so metallic lines **in the UV** are much more important for the absorption than the H^- ion, or the neutral H atom. Even more important is the absorption by the metal atoms in the ground level, which is < 1570 Å for **Fe**, < 1520 Å for **Si**.

Molecular opacity

153

- CN^- , C_2^- , H_2O^- , CH_3 , TiO are important sources of opacity in **late** (K-type) & **very late** (M-type) stars.
- Molecular Hydrogen (H_2) is more common than atomic H in stars cooler than mid-M (brown dwarfs!)
- H_2 does **not** absorb in the **visible** spectrum, so only plays a role in the IR.
- H_2^+ does absorb in the visual but is less than 10% of H^- .
 H_2^+ is a significant absorber in the UV for such very cool stars.

Scattering

154

In the classical picture of an atom, we can consider the electron as being bound to the atom. Any force trying to remove it will be counteracted by an opposing force. If a force were to pull on the electron and then let go, it would oscillate with eigenfrequencies $\omega = 2\pi\nu$.

The **scattering cross-section** for a *classical oscillator* can be written as

$$\sigma_s = \frac{8\pi}{3} \frac{e^4}{m_e^2 c^4} \left[\frac{\nu^4}{(\nu^2 - \nu_0^2)^2 + \gamma^2 \omega^2} \right] \quad \omega = 2\pi\nu$$

where ν_0 is the eigenfrequency of an atom and γ is the damping constant.

Thomson & Rayleigh Scattering

155

Two cases are of interest:

- 1. Thompson (electron) scattering** ($v_0=0, \gamma=0$)
(photons scatters off a free electron, no change in λ , just direction):

$$\sigma_T = \frac{8\pi}{3} \frac{e^4}{m_e^2 c^4} = \frac{8\pi}{3} r_e^2 = 6.65 \times 10^{-25} \text{ cm}^2/\text{electron}$$

classical electron radius

- 2. Rayleigh scattering** by atoms/molecules ($\nu \ll \nu_0, \gamma \ll \nu_0$)

$$\sigma_R(\nu) \propto \sigma_T \nu^4 = \sigma_T \lambda^{-4}$$

Electron scattering vs. f-f transition

156

- Electron scattering (Thomson scattering) – the path of the photon is altered, but not the energy.
- Free-Free transition – the electron emits or absorbs a photon. A free-free transition **can only occur in the presence of an associated nucleus**.
An electron in free space cannot gain the energy of a photon.

Thompson Scattering

157

Since an electron is tiny it makes a poor target for an incident photon so the cross-section for Thomson scattering is very small ($\sigma_T = 6.65 \times 10^{-25} \text{ cm}^2$) and has the same value for photons of all wavelengths: **As such electron scattering is the only grey opacity source.**

Although e^- are very abundant in the **Solar** photosphere, the small cross-section makes it **unimportant**.

Electron scattering **is** most effective as a source of opacity at high temperatures. In atmospheres of **OB stars** where most of the gas is completely ionized, other sources of opacity involving bound electrons are excluded. In this regime, α_T **dominates the continuum opacity**.

Rayleigh Scattering

158

- Rayleigh scattering by H atoms in **Solar**-type is more relevant than e^- scattering since atoms are much more **common** (recall $N(H) \gg N(H^+)$).
- In **M stars**, H_2 becomes the dominant form for hydrogen, with strong electronic transitions in the UV, so Rayleigh scattering by **molecular** H_2 can be important.
- The cross-section for Rayleigh scattering is much smaller than σ_T and is proportional to λ^{-4} so increases steeply towards the blue. (In the same way the sky appears blue, due to a steep increase in the scattering cross-section of sunlight scattered by molecules in our atmosphere).
- The cross-section is sufficiently small relative to metallic absorption coefficients that Rayleigh scattering only plays a **dominant** role in extended envelopes of **supergiants**.

Total extinction coefficient κ

159

- The total extinction coefficient is given by:

$$\kappa_\nu = (1 - e^{-h\nu/kT}) \sum_j x_j (\kappa_j^{bb} + \kappa_j^{bf} + \kappa_j^{ff}) + \kappa^s$$

where the sum is over all elements j of number fraction x_j .

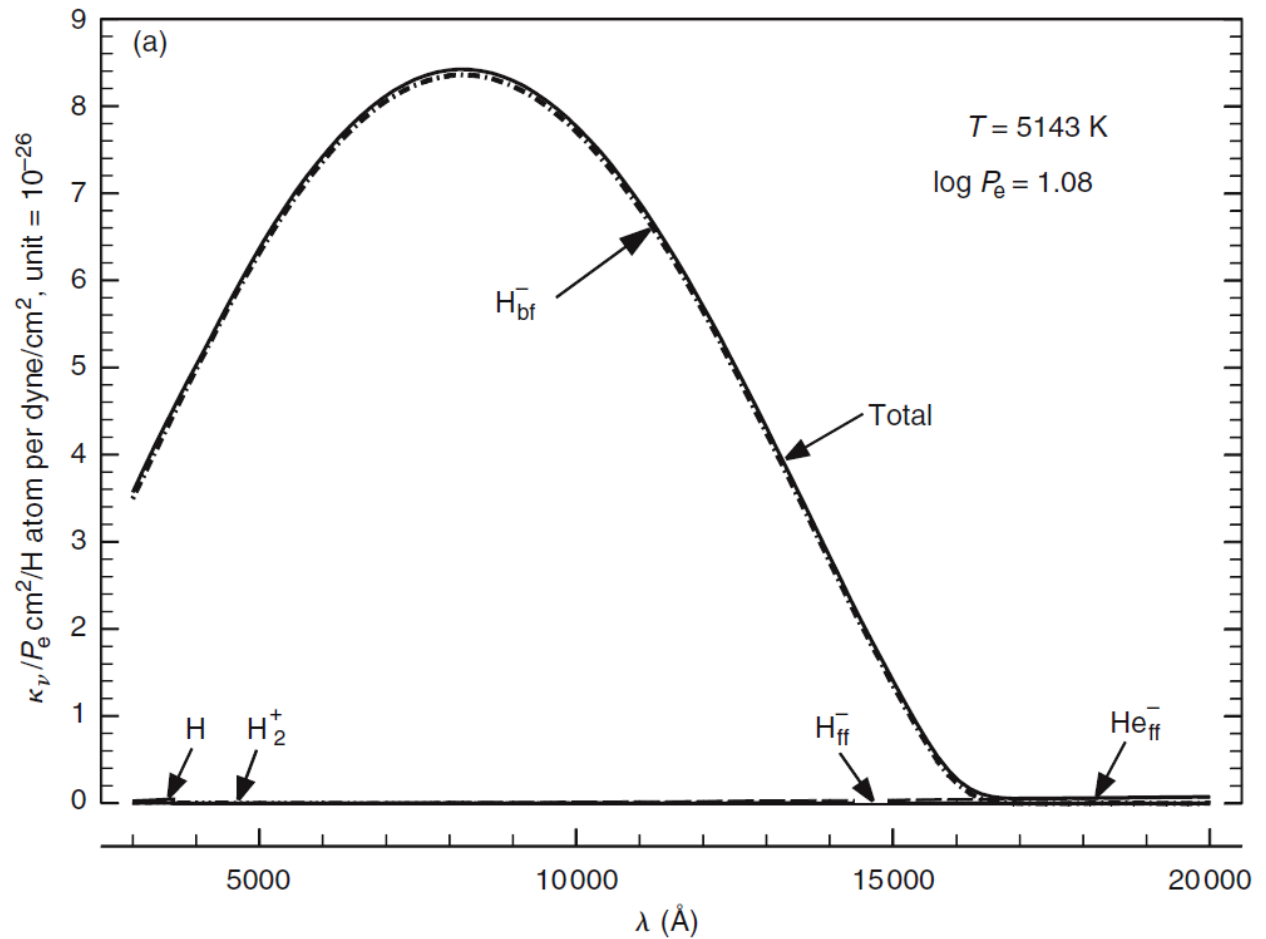
Here the $(e^{-\frac{h\nu}{kT}})$ term accounts for **stimulated emission** (incident photon stimulates electron to de-excite and emit photon with identical energy, as in a laser). We shall discuss it later.

- What is the total extinction coefficient for different types of star?

G-type (optical depth unity)

160

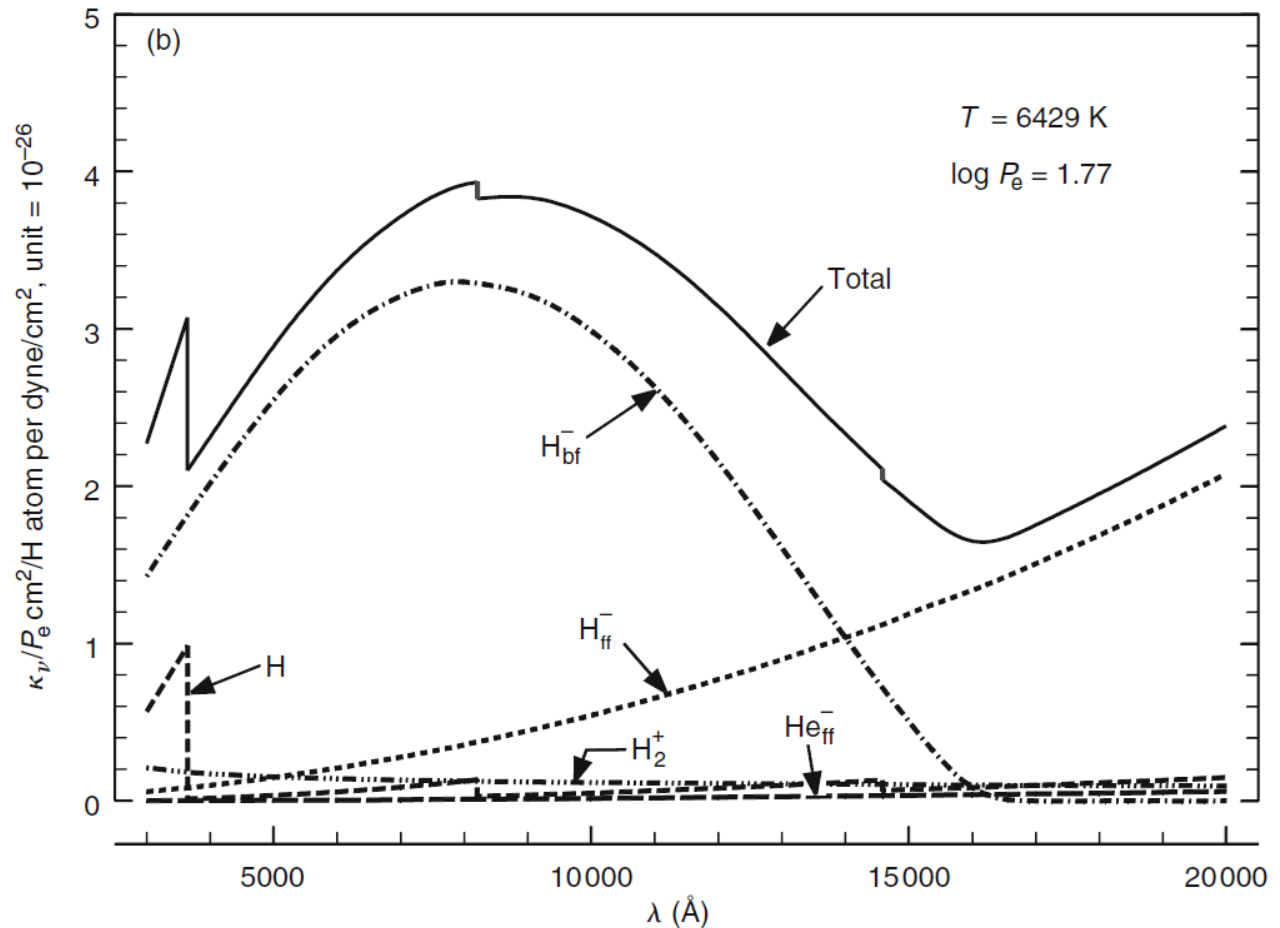
For G stars, the H^- ion (bound-free) dominates for optical.



F-type (optical depth unity)

161

For F stars, the absorption is dominated by the two components of the H^- ion (bound-free) and (free-free), with a contribution from the Balmer continua below 3647\AA .

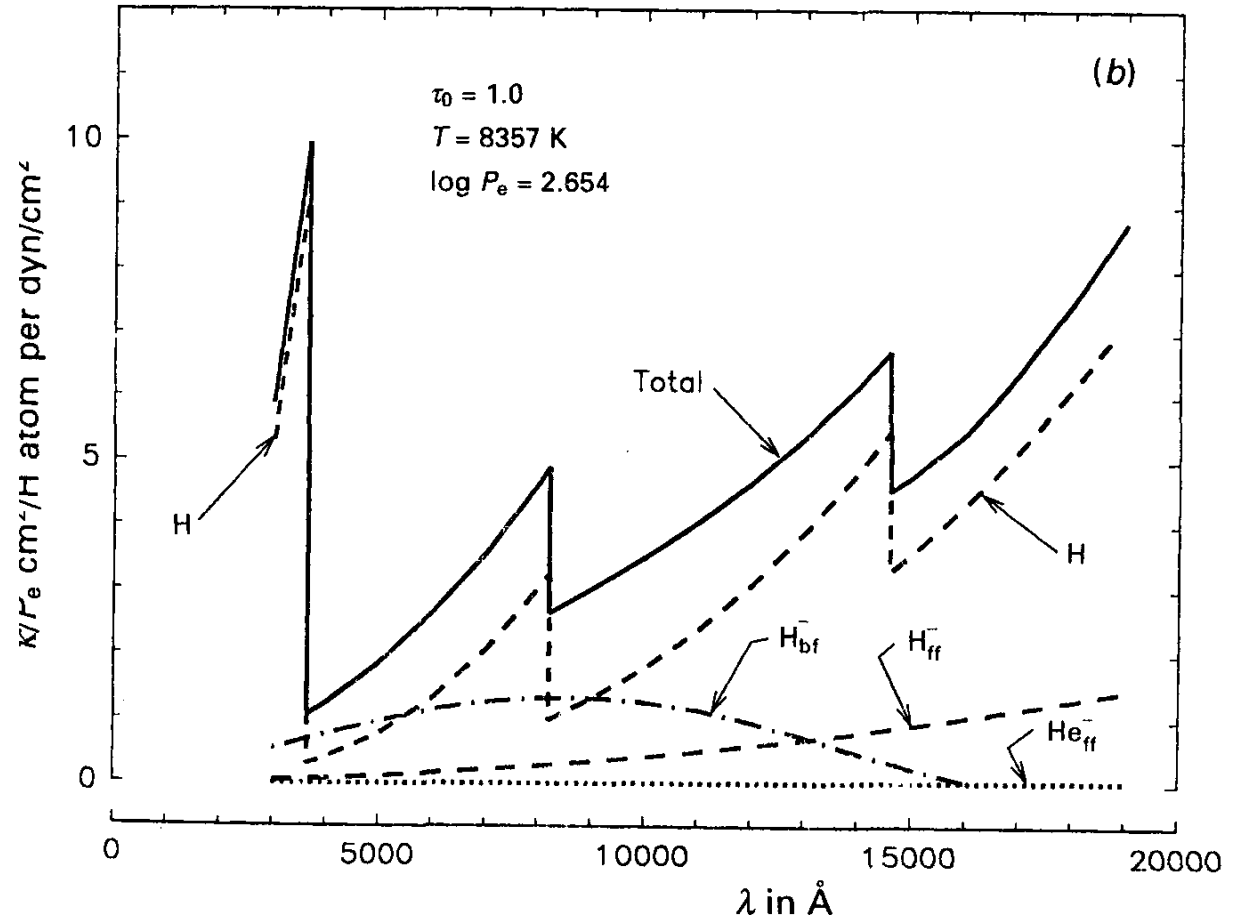


A-type (optical depth unity)

162

For a late A star, absorption from the H^- ion is dropping back compared to the cooler cases, while neutral hydrogen has grown with increasing temperature.

H (bound-free) Balmer, Paschen and Brackett continua start to **dominate**.

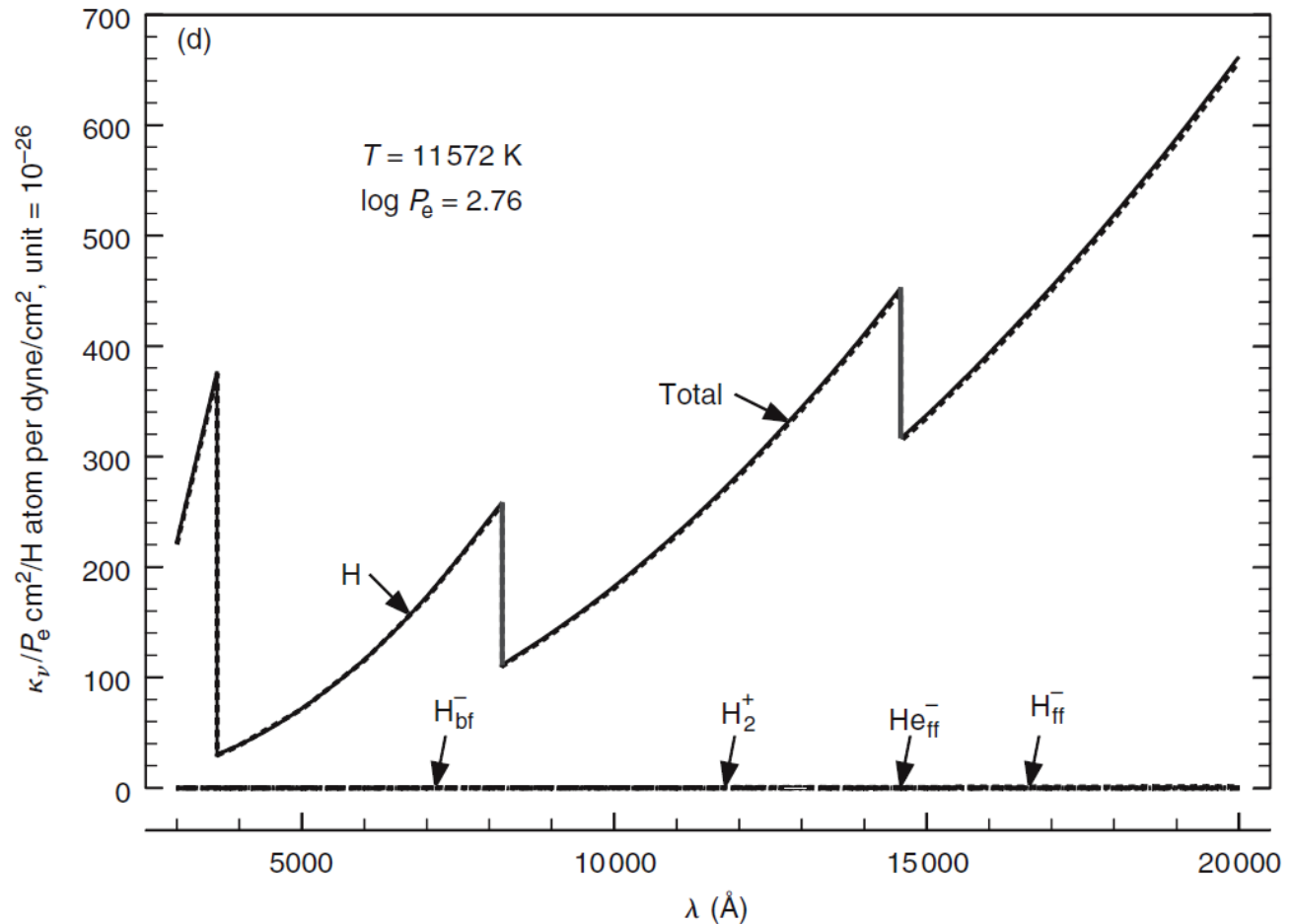


B-type (optical depth unity)

163

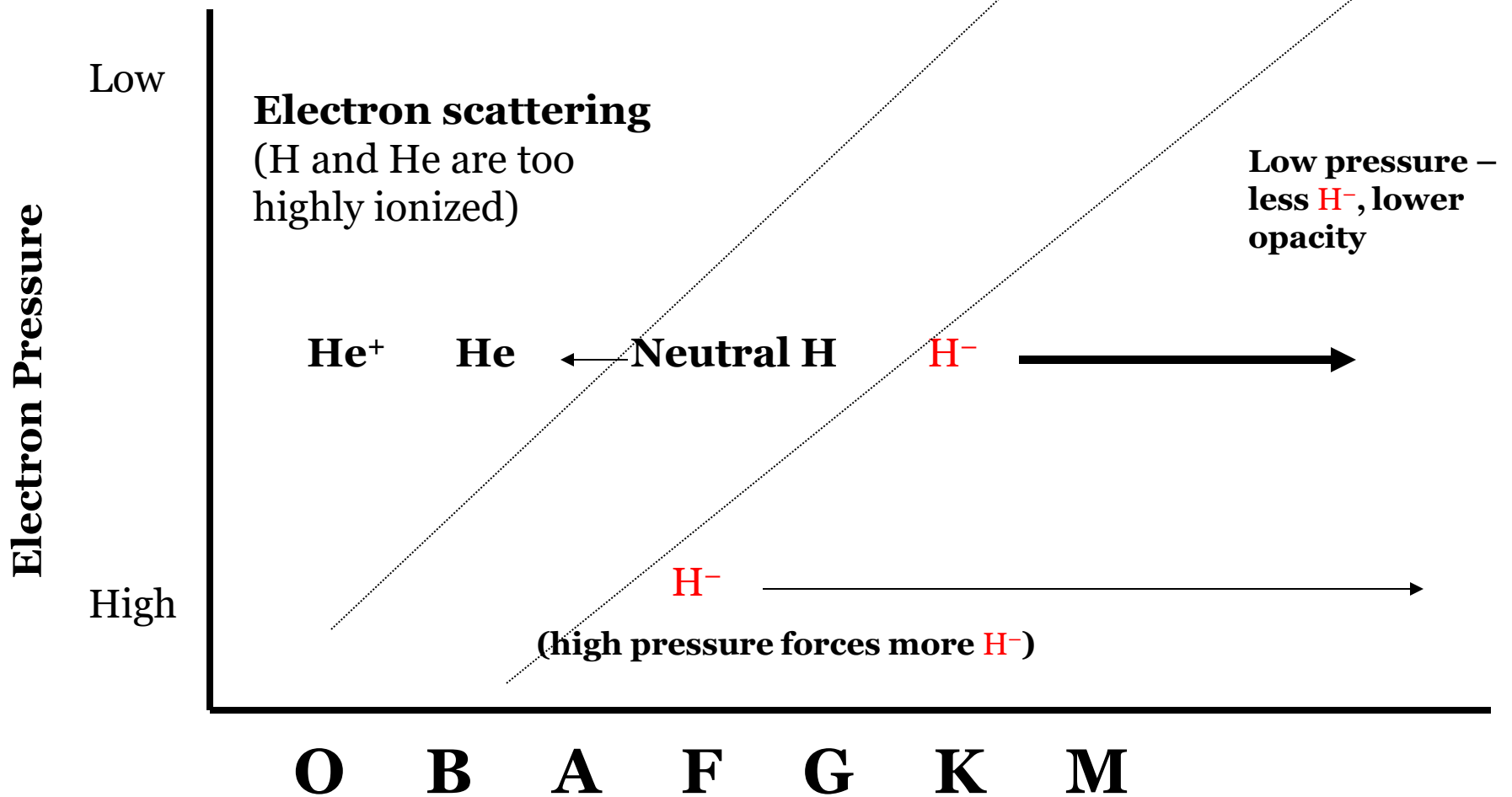
At late B, the **H (bound-free)** Balmer, Paschen & Brackett continua completely **dominate**.

For O stars **electron scattering** is the primary opacity source.



Dominant Opacity vs. Spectra Type

164



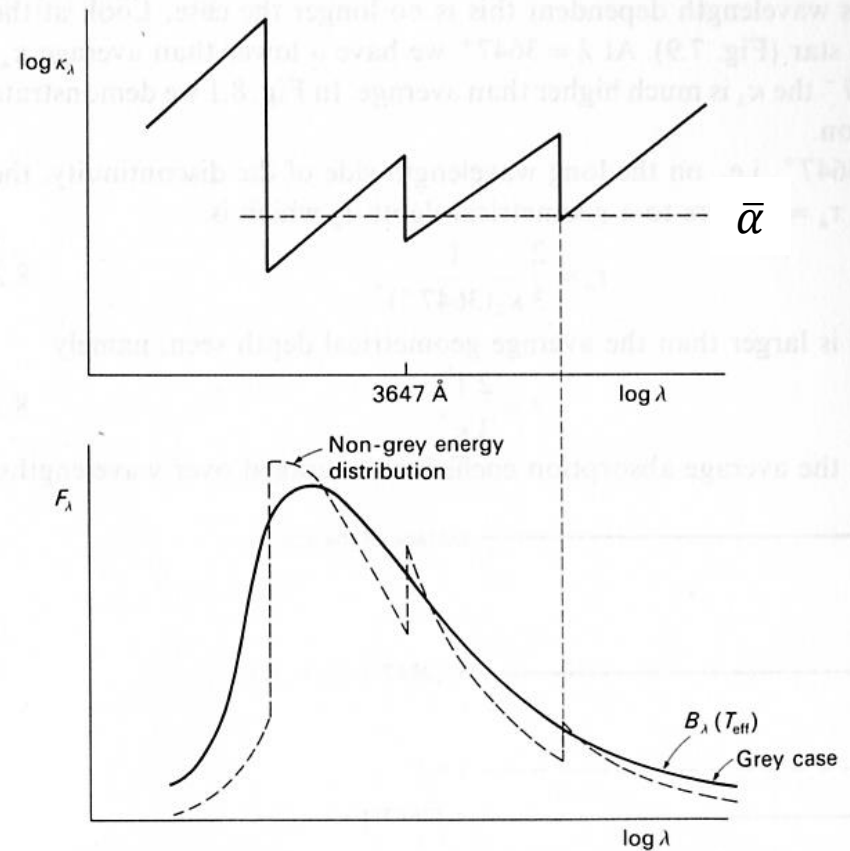
Continuum Energy Distribution

165

What is the effect of the λ dependence of α_λ on the emergent spectrum?

Consider the Balmer discontinuity at 3647\AA . Immediately **above** the discontinuity (3647^+), the opacity α_λ is **lower** than average (shown as $\bar{\alpha}$), so we probe **deeper** than average into the atmosphere, where S_λ (and F_λ) is **higher** than the grey case, so F_λ exceeds the Planck function.

For 3647^- , the opacity is **higher** than average, so we probe **less deep** into the atmosphere (where T is smaller), and so receive a **lower** F_λ .



Balmer jump. Why is important?

166

- In hot stars, $T > 9000\text{K}$, H^- negligible, only H contributes to opacity.

$$\frac{\alpha^+}{\alpha^-} = \frac{\sigma^+(\text{H}) N_H(n=3)}{\sigma^-(\text{H}) N_H(n=2)}$$

Function of T only

“observed” known From Boltzmann law(T)

Thus, we can obtain the temperature.

In cooler stars (Solar-type)

$$\frac{\alpha^+}{\alpha^-} = \frac{\sigma(\text{H}^-)N(\text{H}^-) + \sigma^+(\text{H})N_H(n=3)}{\sigma(\text{H}^-)N(\text{H}^-) + \sigma^-(\text{H})N_H(n=2)}$$

small

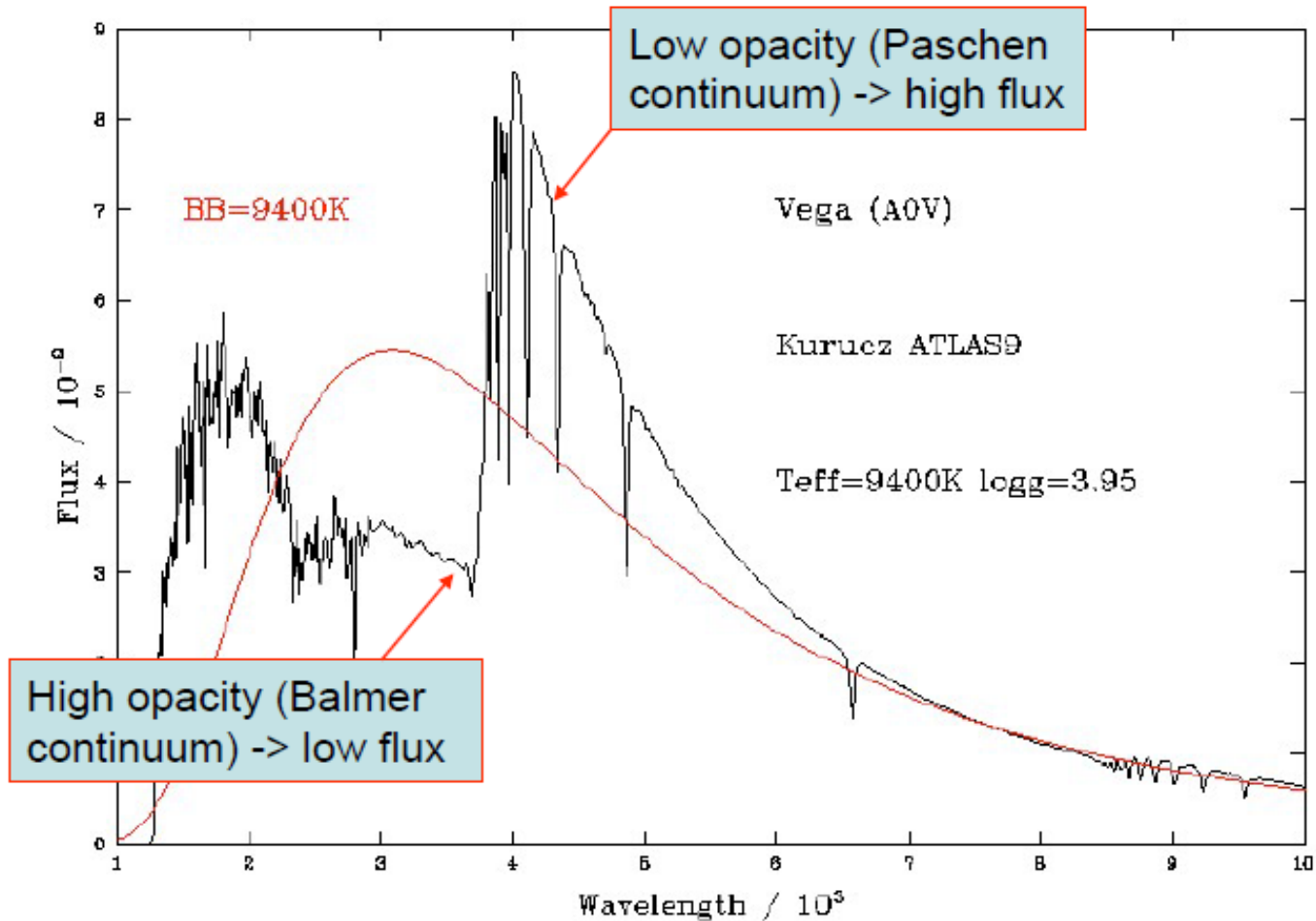
$$N(\text{H}^-) = N_H(n=1)n_e f(T) \quad \text{Saha eq} \Rightarrow \frac{\alpha^+}{\alpha^-}(n_e, T)$$

One of n_e or T
can be
determined

$$\text{if } n_e \uparrow \text{ then } \frac{\alpha^+}{\alpha^-} \rightarrow 1$$

Balmer jump in Vega

167



Summary

168

- **Bound-bound** transitions contribute to the **line absorption**. **Bound-free** and **free-free** transitions (plus scattering) contribute to the **continuous** absorption, mostly by H & He.
- Atomic H absorption coefficient highly T sensitive. For **late-type stars** in the optical and IR, **bound-free** and **free-free** transitions of the **H⁻ ion** dominate the continuous opacity, since the population of atomic H in $n=3$ (Paschen series) is so low.
- For **early-type stars**, **atomic H dominates**, producing strong **jumps** in the opacity at the Lyman, Balmer & Paschen edges.
- **Negative H ion** confirmed as dominant Solar optical & IR opacity source from limb darkening.
- **He b-f** opacity relevant only for very hot stars. **Metal (Fe) opacity** contributes to opacity in Solar-type stars in **ultraviolet**.
- **Thompson** (electron) scattering is grey & dominates continuum opacity in **hot stars**. **Rayleigh** scattering most important for **late-type supergiants** in **UV**
- Observed form of e.g. **Balmer jump** in A stars can be understood from the **discontinuity** in continuous **H b-f opacity**.
- Nongreyness changes the temperature structure.

Spectral lines

169

EQUIVALENT WIDTH

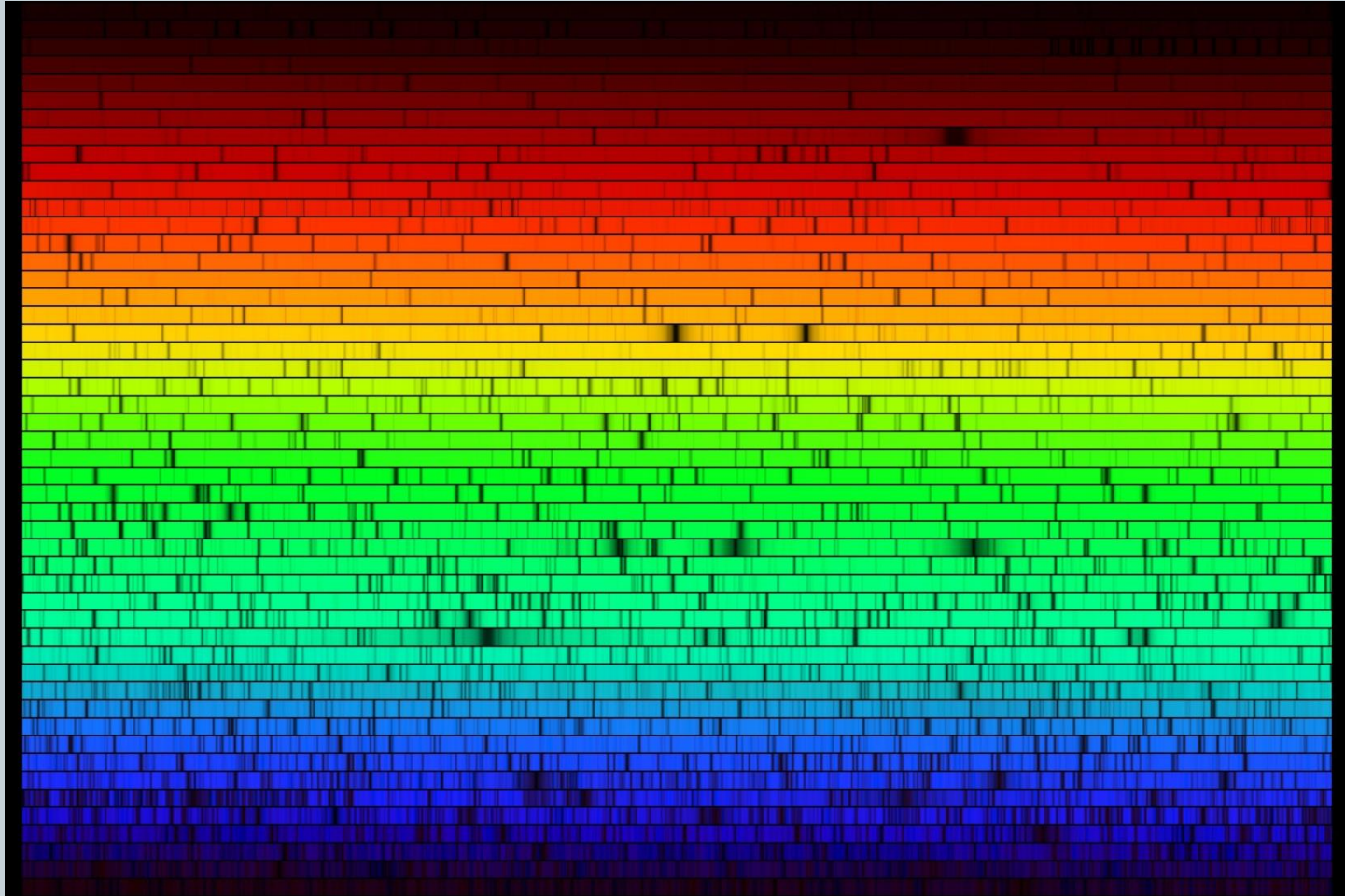
FWHM

FWZI

Spectral Lines

170

(e.g. 2D echelle image of optical Solar spectrum)

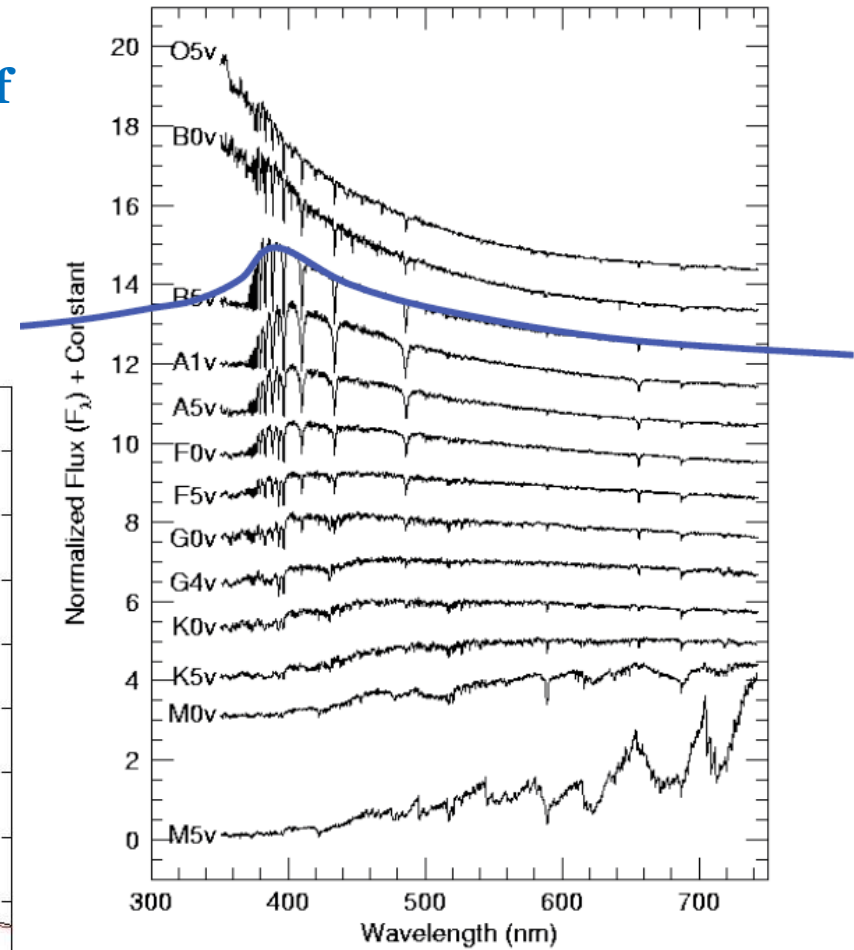
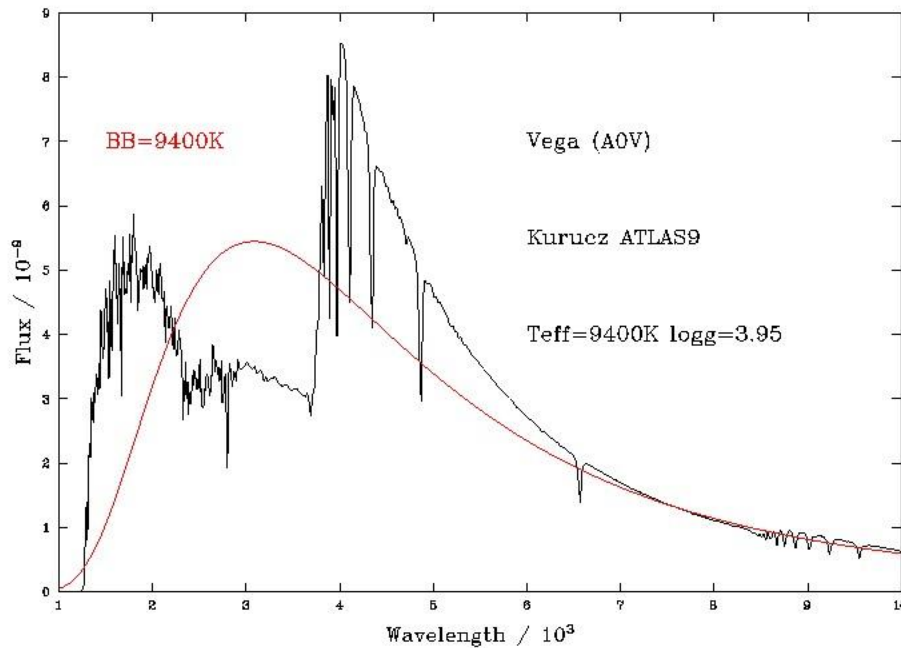


Continuous Energy Distribution

171

Dwarf Stars

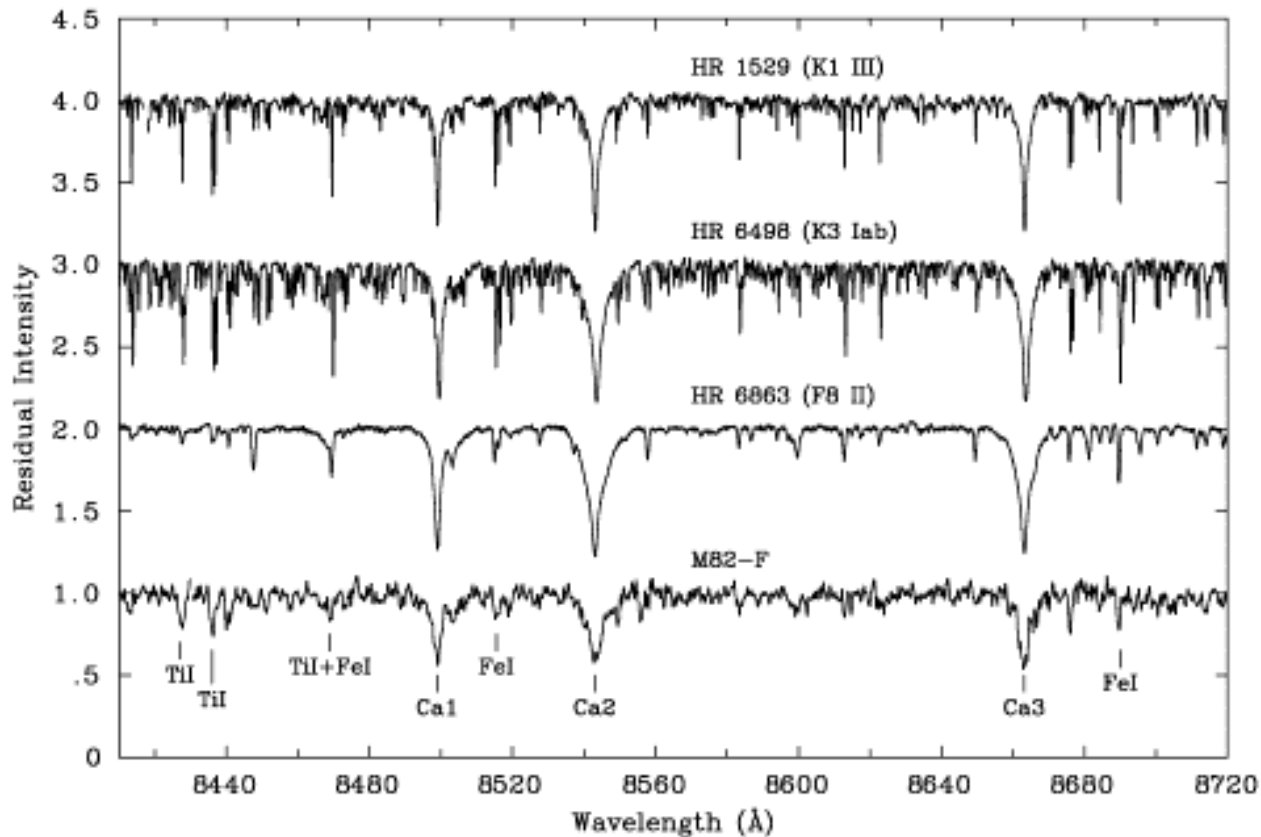
Vega



Spectra of stars, clusters, galaxies...

172

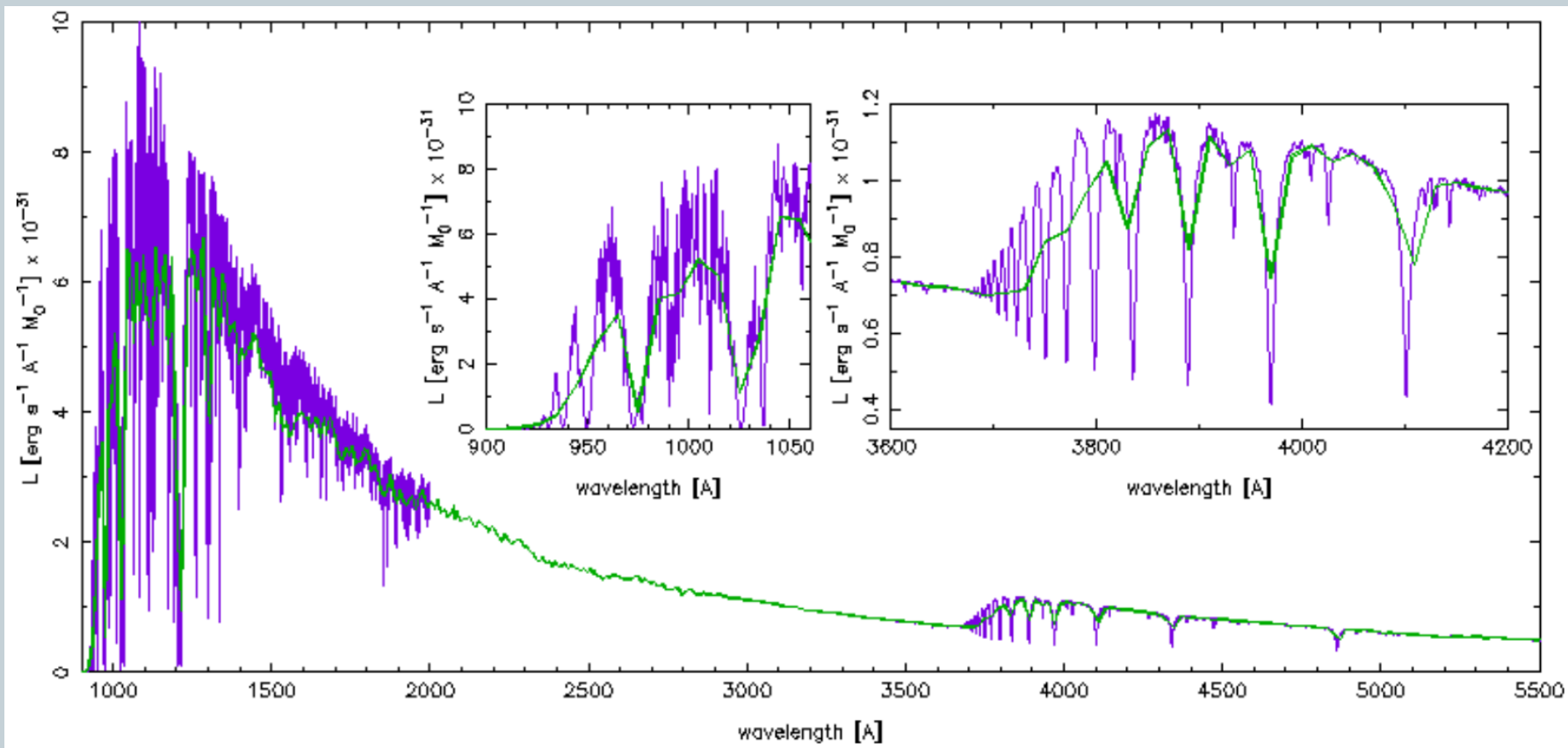
Spectral lines and continuum energy distributions provide temperatures and metallicity of **individual stars**, plus **ages of clusters & galaxies** (since the highest mass stars are visually the brightest).



Spectral Lines

173

Impact of Spectral Resolution



Line depth

174

We now turn from the continuous energy distribution to the **line spectrum**.

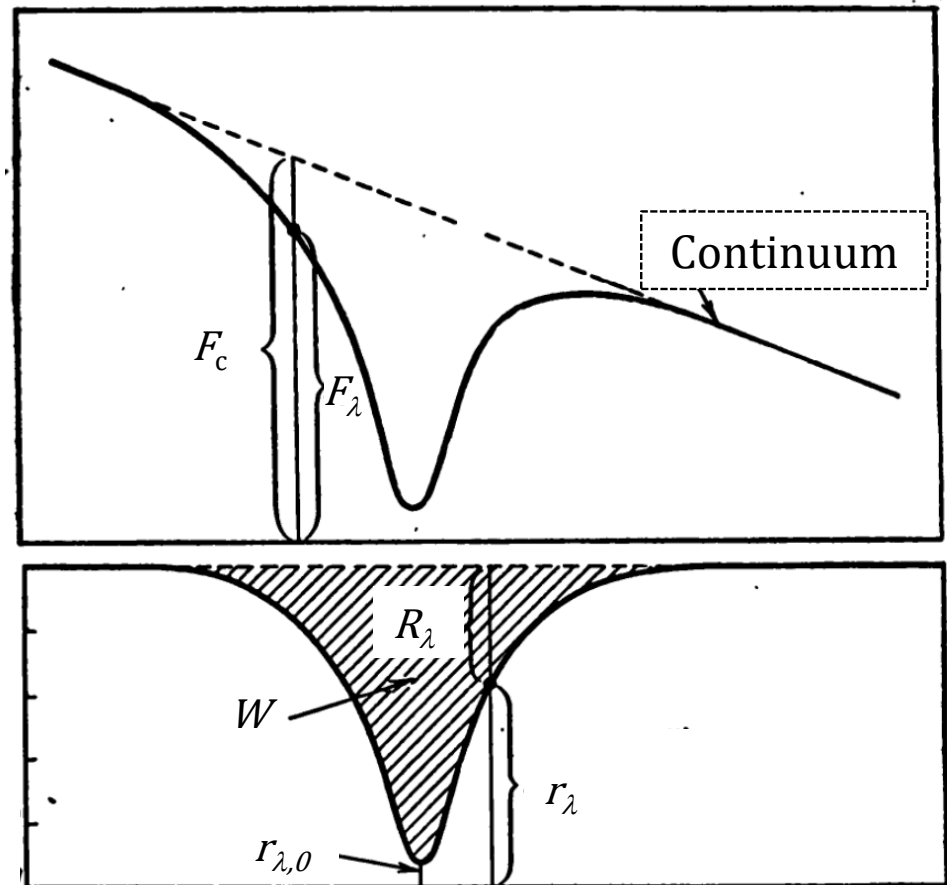
Relative intensity r_λ
(not very common term, usually applied to emission lines):

$$r_\lambda = \frac{F_\lambda}{F_c}$$

The line depth R_λ :

$$R_\lambda = \frac{F_c - F_\lambda}{F_c} = 1 - \frac{F_\lambda}{F_c}$$

The largest $R_{\lambda,0}$ —
the central line depth



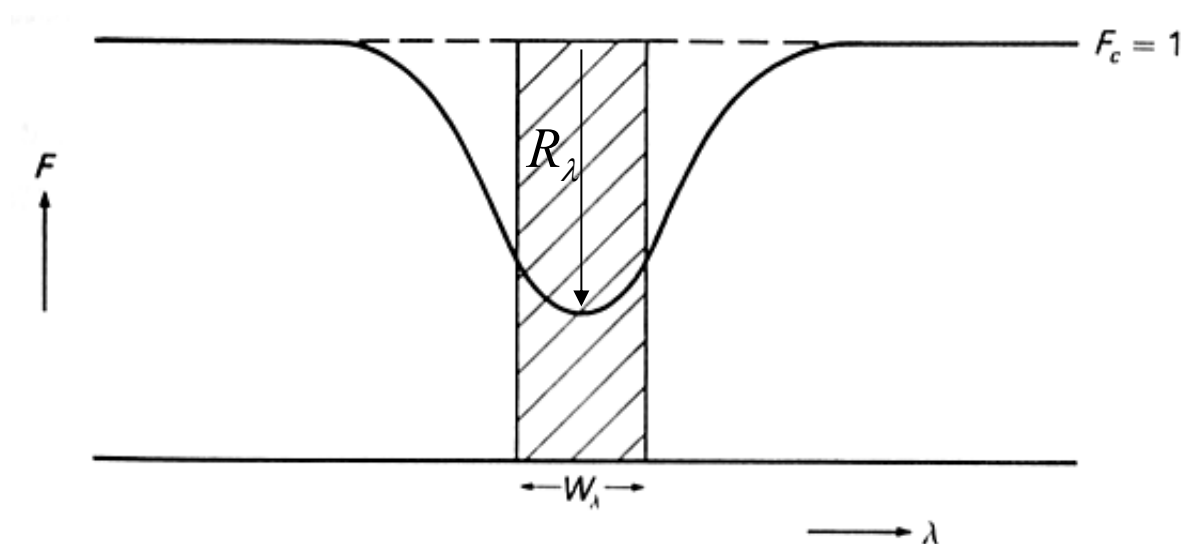
Equivalent Width

175

- The total area in a spectral line divided by the continuum flux F_c is called the line **equivalent width**, i.e. an integral over a line **depth** R_λ

$$W_\lambda = \int \frac{F_c - F_\lambda}{F_c} d\lambda = \int R_\lambda d\lambda$$

- The division by the continuum flux means that this is a measurement of the flux in units of the continuum – the equivalent width is identical to a rectangular line of width W_λ .
- EW of **absorption** lines is **positive**, **emission** lines have **negative** EWs, and are measured in Ångströms (at optical wavelengths).



Energy Flux of (emission) line

176

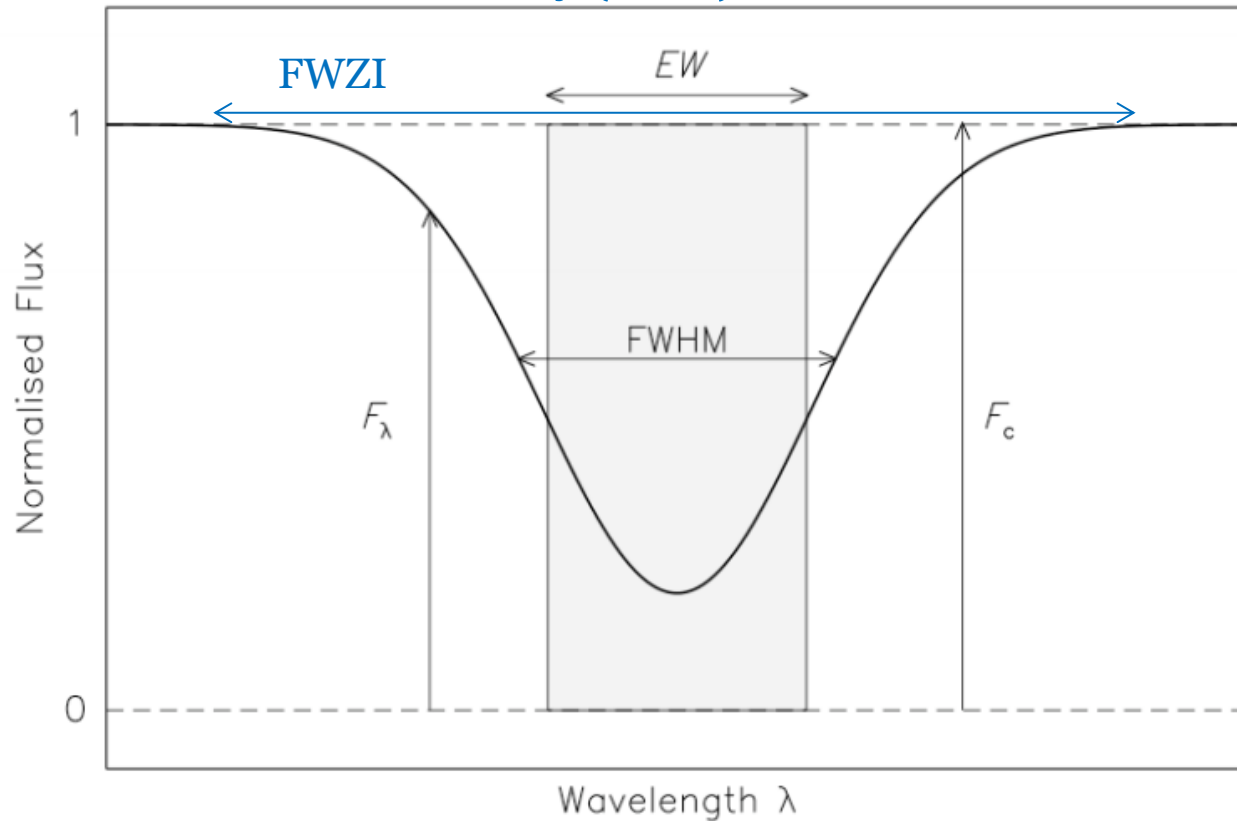
- The total area in a spectral line from which the continuum flux F_c subtracted is called the **energy flux of the line**

$$F = \int (F_\lambda - F_c) d\lambda$$

FWHM and FWZI

177

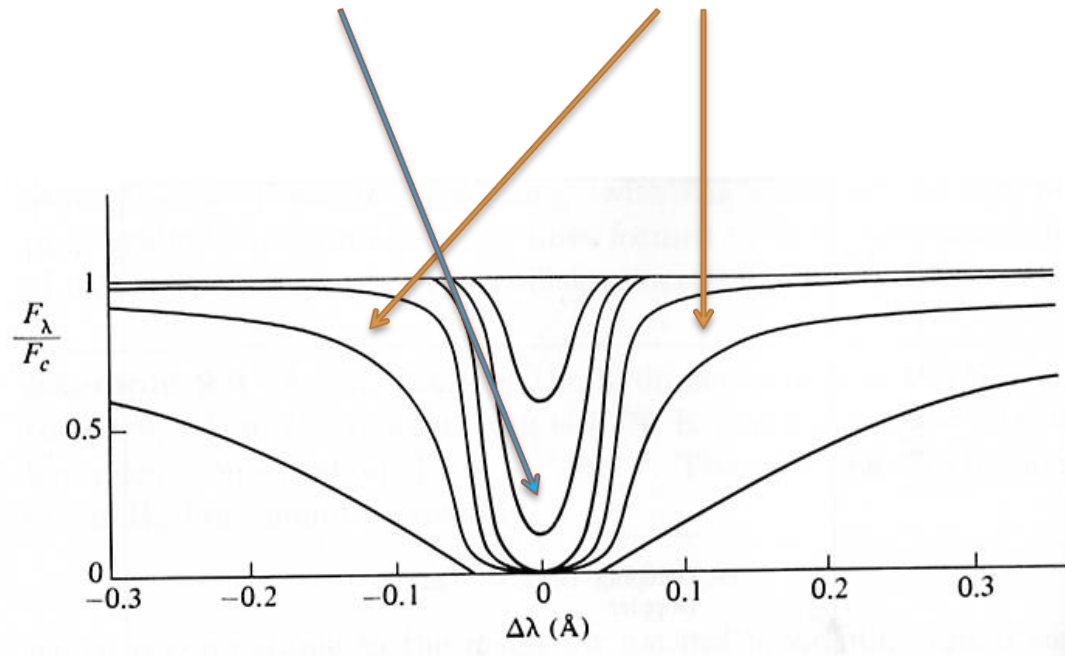
- Other measures of the line width are the **Full Width at Half Maximum (FWHM)**, the distance between the half line depth from blue to red, i.e. $(\Delta\lambda)_{1/2}$, and the **Full Width at Zero Intensity (FWZI)**,



Line core and the wings

178

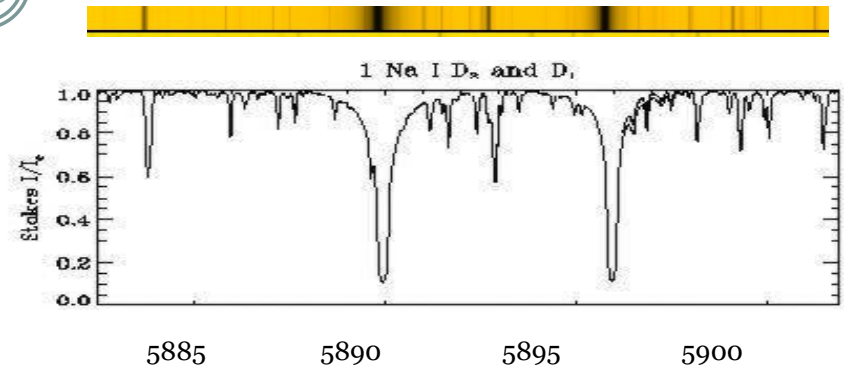
- We denote **optically (thin) thick** lines as those in which the line core is **(not) saturated**, i.e. reaching zero intensity. In reality, zero intensity is only reached for lines in non-LTE.
- The region close to the centre of the spectral line is referred to as the line **core**, whilst the **wings** sweep up the local continuum.



Example: Solar spectrum

179

λ	Element	$W(\text{\AA})$	Name
4920.51	Fe I	0.43	
4957.61	Fe I	0.45	
5167.33	Mg I	0.65	b_4
5172.70	Mg I	1.26	b_2
5183.62	Mg I	1.58	b_1
5232.95	Fe I	0.35	
5269.55	Fe I	0.41	
5324.19	Fe I	0.32	
5238.05	Fe I	0.38	
5528.42	Mg I	0.29	
5889.97	Na I	0.63	D_2
5895.94	Na I	0.56	D_1
6122.23	Ca I	0.22	
6162.18	Ca I	0.22	
6562.81	H_α	4.02	C
6867.19	O_2	tell	B
7593.70	O_2	tell	A
8194.84	Na I	0.30	
8498.06	Ca II	1.46	
8542.14	Ca II	3.67	
8662.17	Ca II	2.60	
8688.64	Fe I	0.27	
8736.04	Mg I	0.29	



Strong spectral lines in the Solar spectrum typically have equivalent widths $W_\lambda \approx 1\text{\AA}$, such as the Na I D lines in the yellow. In other stars, line equivalent widths can reach tens or even hundreds of Angstroms. **EWs** are by definition measured relative to the continuum strength, unlike **line fluxes**.

Formation of absorption lines

180

- We obtained earlier that the emergent flux from the stellar surface is π times the Source function at an optical depth of $2/3$:

$$F_{\lambda}(0) = \pi S_{\lambda}(\tau_{\lambda} = 2/3) = \pi B_{\lambda}(T(\tau_{\lambda} = 2/3))$$

↑
LTE

- In spectral lines, the opacity is much larger, thus we see much higher layers at these wavelengths. These layers have a lower temperature and so B_{λ} is smaller, leading to a smaller F_{λ} in the line than F_c , the continuum flux in the neighbourhood of the line.
- In the following few lectures, we will study theory of line formation.

Spectral line formation

181

EINSTEIN COEFFICIENTS

LINE PROFILES: NATURAL BROADENING

BROADENING OF SPECTRAL LINES

NATURAL LINE BROADENING

THERMAL (DOPPLER) BROADENING

**CONVOLUTION OF DIFFERENT BROADENING
PROCESSES**

PRESSURE BROADENING

LORENTZ-TELLER RELATION

ROTATIONAL AND INSTRUMENTAL BROADENING

Bound-Bound transitions

182

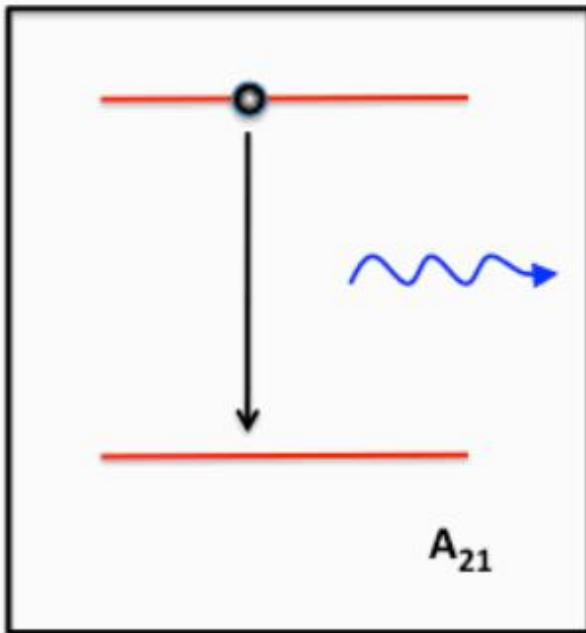
There are 3 basic kinds of line processes associated with bound-bound transitions of atoms or ions:

1. **Direct Absorption**, in which the absorbed photon induces a bound electron to go into a higher energy level.
2. **Spontaneous Emission**, in which an electron in a higher energy level spontaneously decays to lower level, emitting the energy difference as a photon.
3. **Stimulated Emission**, in which an incoming photon induces an electron in a higher energy level to decay to a lower level, emitting in effect a second photon that is nearly identical in energy (and even phase) to the original photon.

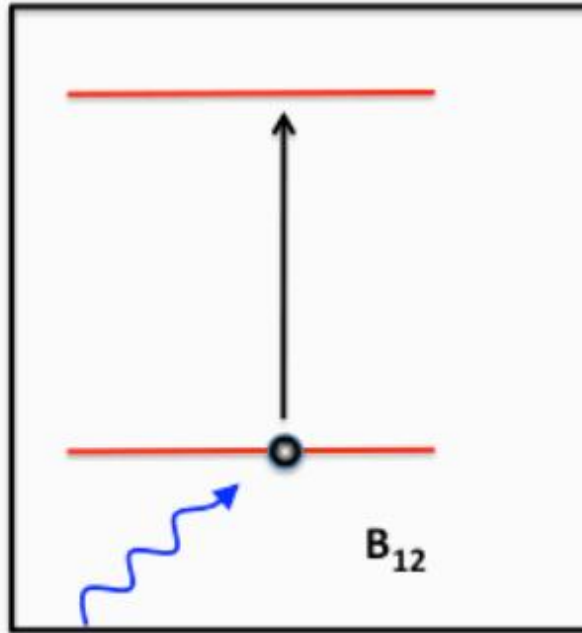
The **probability** that the atom will emit (or absorb) its quantum of energy is described by **Einstein probability coefficients**, written as B_{ij} , A_{ji} , and B_{ji} .

Einstein coefficients

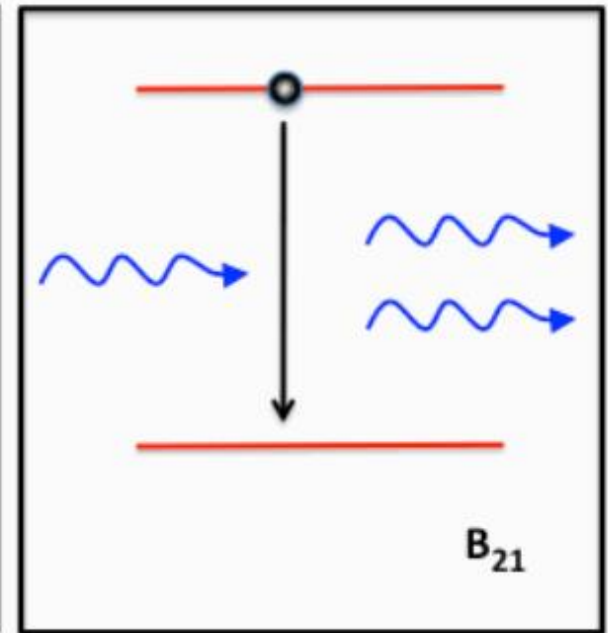
183



Spontaneous emission



Absorption



Stimulated emission

Einstein coefficients concern the probability that a particle spontaneously emits a photon, the probability to absorb a photon, and the probability to emit a photon under the influence of another incoming photon. Einstein's coefficients are valid for all radiation fields.

Spontaneous emission

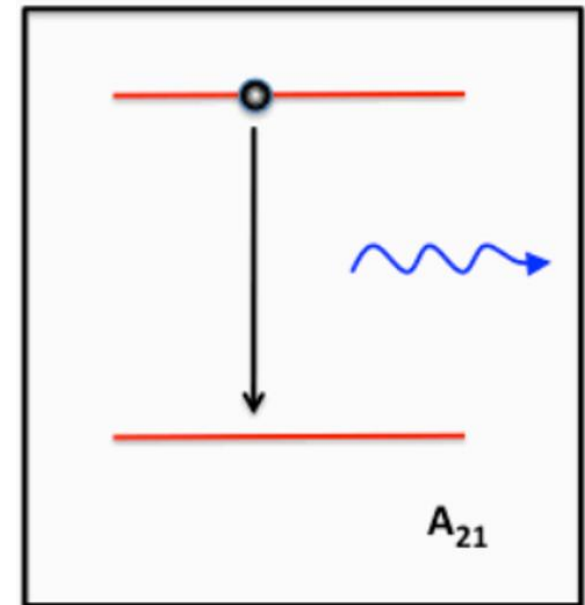
184

Consider an upper level u and a lower level l separated by an energy $h\nu$.

- The probability that the atom will spontaneously emit its quantum of energy within a time dt and in a solid angle $d\omega$ is $A_{ul} dt d\omega$.
- The proportionality constant, A_{ul} , is the Einstein probability coefficient for spontaneous emission [s^{-1}].
- Occurs independently of the radiation field.
- Emits **isotropically**.

For $H\alpha$, $A_{32}=4.4\times 10^7 s^{-1}$. If at time $t_0=0$ there are $N_u(0)$ atoms in level u , then at time t the population is $N_u(t)=N_u(0)\exp(-A_{ul} t)$.

Lifetime = $1/A_{ul}$



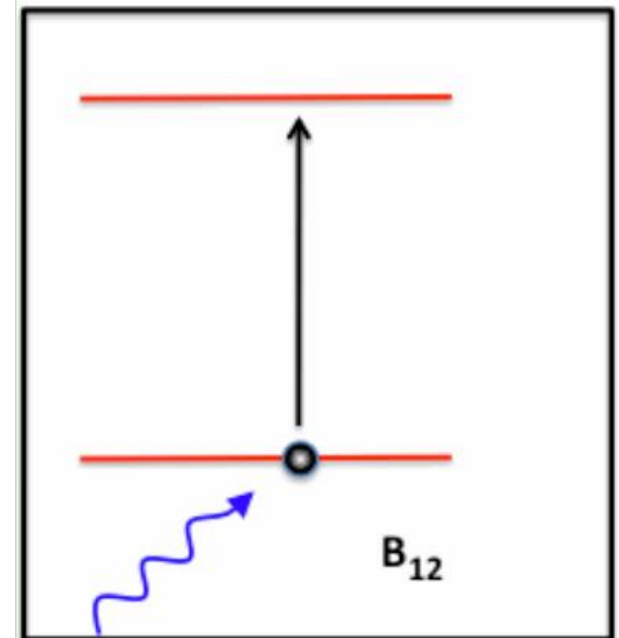
Spontaneous emission

Absorption

185

Consider an upper level u and a lower level l , separated by an energy $h\nu$.

- Photons with energies *close* to $h\nu$ cause transitions from levels l to u .
- The probability per unit time for this process will evidently be proportional to the mean intensity J_ν at the frequency ν .
- $B_{lu}J$: transition probability of absorption per unit time.
- The proportionality constant B_{lu} is one of the Einstein B -coefficients.



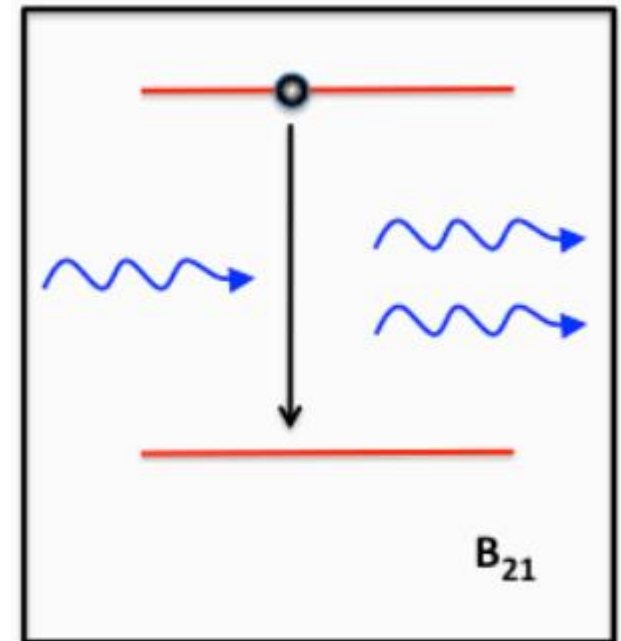
Absorption

Stimulated emission

186

Planck's law does **not** follow from considering only spontaneous emission and absorption. Must also include **stimulated** emission, which like absorption is proportional to the mean intensity J .

- The system goes from an upper level u to a lower level l stimulated by the presence of a radiation field ($h\nu$ corresponding to the energy difference between levels u and l).
- The energy of the emitted photon is the **same** as of the incoming photon (also direction and phase are the same).
- $B_{ul}J$: transition probability of stimulated emission per unit time.
- The proportionality constant B_{ul} is a second Einstein B -coefficient.
- The process of stimulated emission is sometimes referred to as a process of **negative absorption**.
- Stimulated emission occurs into the **same** state (frequency, direction, polarization) as the photon that stimulated the emission.



Stimulated emission

Relation between Einstein coefficients

187

Einstein's Coefficients are not independent. To find a relation between them, let's assume strict **Thermodynamic Equilibrium** (TE), and, for simplicity, adopt a 2-level approximation.

In TE, each process is in equilibrium with its inverse, i.e., within one line there is no **netto** destruction or creation of photons (**detailed balance**)

$$n_1 B_{12} J_\nu = n_2 A_{21} + n_2 B_{21} J_\nu$$

Transitions $1 \rightarrow 2$ **equal** to $2 \rightarrow 1$
 n_1, n_2 : number density of e^- in levels 1,2

$$J_\nu = \frac{A_{21}/B_{21}}{\left(\frac{n_1}{n_2}\right) \left(\frac{B_{12}}{B_{21}}\right) - 1}$$

Thermodynamic equilibrium:
Boltzmann, $J = B_\nu(T)$


$$\frac{n_1}{n_2} = \frac{g_1}{g_2} e^{h\nu_{21}/kT}$$



Relation between Einstein coefficients

188

TE: blackbody, $J=B_\nu(T)$


$$B_\nu(T) = \frac{A_{21}/B_{21}}{\left(\frac{g_1 B_{12}}{g_2 B_{21}}\right) e^{h\nu_{21}/kT} - 1}$$

Comparison with Planck blackbody radiation:

$$B_\nu(T) = \frac{A_{21}}{B_{21}} \left(\frac{g_1 B_{12}}{g_2 B_{21}} e^{\frac{h\nu_{21}}{kT}} - 1 \right)^{-1} = \frac{2h\nu_{21}^3}{c^2} \left(e^{\frac{h\nu_{21}}{kT}} - 1 \right)^{-1}$$

$$\frac{A_{21}}{B_{21}} = \frac{2h\nu_{21}^3}{c^2} \rightarrow A_{21} = B_{21} \frac{2h\nu_{21}^3}{c^2}$$

$$\frac{g_1 B_{12}}{g_2 B_{21}} = 1 \rightarrow g_1 B_{12} = g_2 B_{21}$$

Einstein coefficients

189

Thus, if one of the Einstein Coefficients is known then two other can be calculated.

Important: The Einstein's coefficients are **atomic constants**.

Although the above relations were derived under the conditions of TE, these relations hold in any non-TE state.

Total amount of absorbed photons per unit time at a given frequency is

$$n_1 B_{12} J_\nu - n_2 B_{21} J_\nu = n_1 B_{12} J_\nu \left(1 - \frac{n_2 B_{21}}{n_1 B_{12}} \right) = n_1 B_{12} J_\nu \underbrace{\left(1 - \frac{g_1 n_2}{g_2 n_1} \right)}$$

Thus, to **take into account** negative absorption (stimulated emission), one must multiply the number of absorbed photons by

$$\left(1 - e^{-h\nu_{12}/kT} \right)$$

(we already did it before)

Comparison of induced and spontaneous emission

Home work:

- When (at what temperatures, wavelengths) is spontaneous or induced emission stronger?

Assume LTE (blackbody)

Lifetime of atom in excited state

191

In the absence of collisions and of any other transitions than the ul one, the mean lifetime of particles in state u is **Lifetime = $1/A_{ul}$**

If at time $t_0=0$ there are $N_u(0)$ atoms in level u , then at time t the population is

$$N_u(t) = N_u(0)e^{-A_{ul}t}.$$

Typical value of A_{ij} is 10^7 - 10^8 s $^{-1}$ (for H α , $A_{32}=4.4\times 10^7$ s $^{-1}$), so lifetime is $\sim 10^{-8}$ s.

However, not all transitions are allowed, some are strictly forbidden!

In practice, strictly forbidden means **very low probability of occurrence** \rightarrow **Metastable states** at which a lifetime is much longer than of the ordinary excited states but shorter than of the ground state.

Lifetimes at metastable states can reach several hours and even longer!

Forbidden line transitions are noted by placing square brackets around the atomic species in question, e.g. [O III] or [S II]. A **semi-forbidden** line, designated with a single square bracket, such as C III], occurs where the transition probability is about a thousand times higher than for a forbidden line.

Einstein A-coefficients for Hydrogen

192

$i \backslash k$	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	$4,67 \cdot 10^8$	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	$5,54 \cdot 10^7$	$4,39 \cdot 10^7$	—	—	—	—	—
4	$1,27 \cdot 10^7$	$8,37 \cdot 10^6$	$8,94 \cdot 10^6$	—	—	—	—
5	$4,10 \cdot 10^6$	$2,52 \cdot 10^6$	$2,19 \cdot 10^6$	$2,68 \cdot 10^6$	—	—	—
6	$1,64 \cdot 10^6$	$9,68 \cdot 10^5$	$7,74 \cdot 10^5$	$7,67 \cdot 10^5$	$1,02 \cdot 10^6$	—	—
7	$7,53 \cdot 10^5$	$4,37 \cdot 10^5$	$3,34 \cdot 10^5$	$3,03 \cdot 10^5$	$3,24 \cdot 10^5$	$4,50 \cdot 10^5$	—
8	$3,85 \cdot 10^5$	$2,20 \cdot 10^5$	$1,64 \cdot 10^5$	$1,42 \cdot 10^5$	$1,38 \cdot 10^5$	$1,55 \cdot 10^5$	$2,26 \cdot 10^5$