

# **GALACTIC CHEMICAL EVOLUTION**

- A. Introduction to nucleosynthesis**
- B. GCE: formalism and ingredients**
- C: The solar neighborhood and the evolution of intermediate elements (C-Fe)**
- D: Heavy (>Fe) and light (LiBeB) elements; the Bulge; satellite galaxies and Halo formation**
- E: The Disk and the Extragalactic Universe**

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# **GALACTIC CHEMICAL EVOLUTION**

## **Part I : Introduction to Nucleosynthesis**

# Periodic Table of Elements

1A																	0	
1	2																	
3	4											5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	12	III B	IV B	V B	VI B	VII B	VII B	VII B	VII B	VII B	IB	IB	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	
37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	
55	56	57	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	
87	88	89	104	105	106	107	108	109	110									

\* Lanthanide Series  
 † Actinide Series

58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71
Ce	Pr	Nd	Pm	Sm	Eu	Gd	Tb	Dy	Ho	Er	Tm	Yb	Lu
90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103
Th	Pa	U	Np	Pu	Am	Cm	Bk	Cf	Es	Fm	Md	No	Lr

Helium

Lithium

Oxygen

Carbon

Nitrogen

Neon

Magnesium

Silicon

**Solar  
Photosphere,  
(absorption  
line spectrum)**

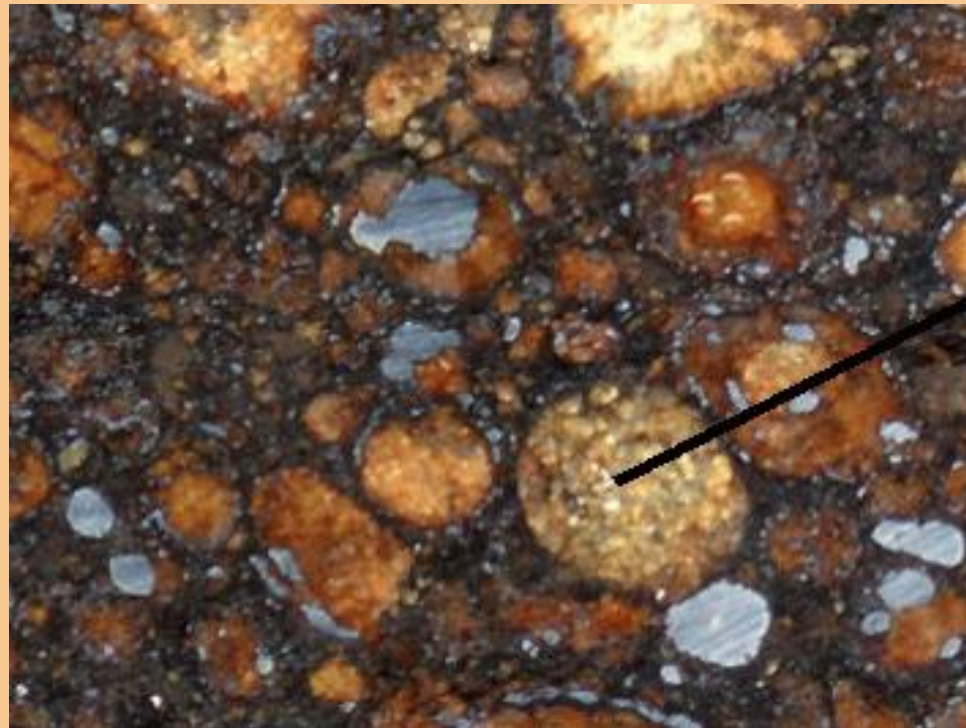
unmodified  
by nucleosynthesis  
in Sun's core,  
it reflects  
the composition  
of the gas  
from which  
the Sun formed  
4.5 Gyr ago

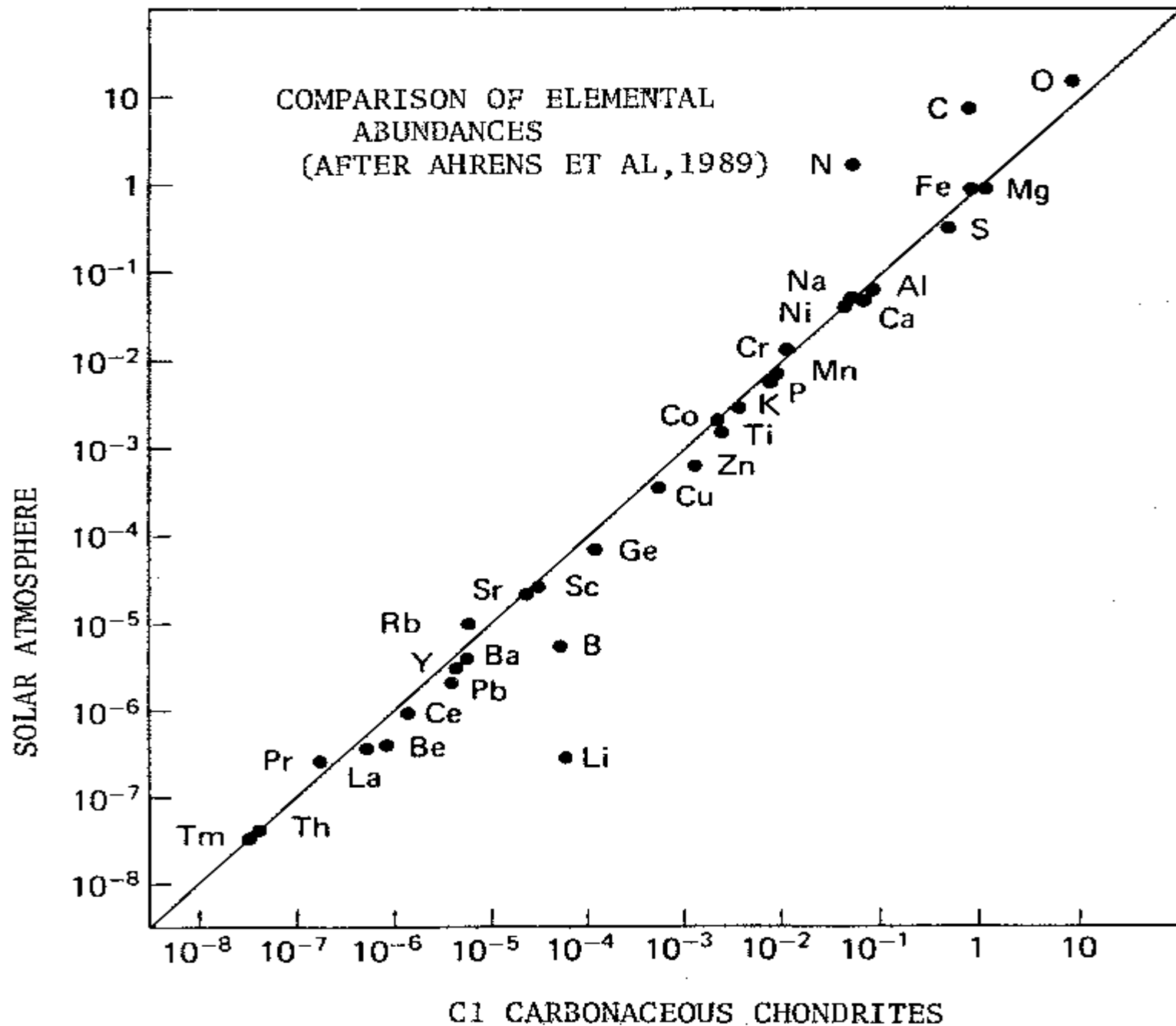
**Elemental  
composition  
determined**

**C1 Carbonaceous chondrites**  
formed in early Solar system  
and unaffected by fractionation



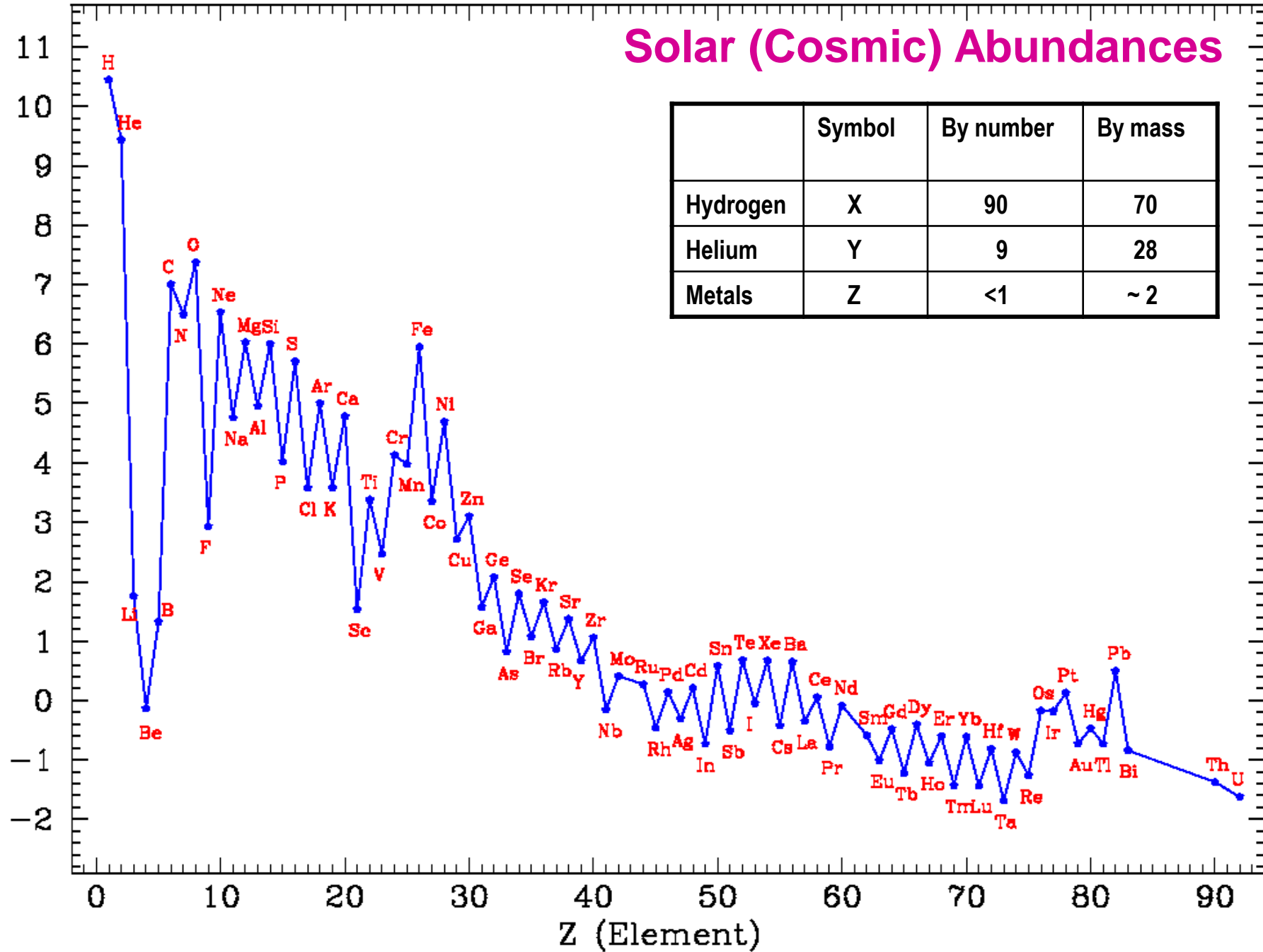
**Isotopic composition  
determined**





# Solar (Cosmic) Abundances

Log(Abundance) [Si=6]



## Abundance scales

1) By mass (Mass fraction):  $X_i$   $\Sigma X_i = 1$

X: H    Y: He    Z: Metals ( $A > 4$ )     $X + Y + Z = 1$

Sun:  $X_{\odot} = 0.71$      $Y_{\odot} = 0.275$      $Z_{\odot} = 0.015$

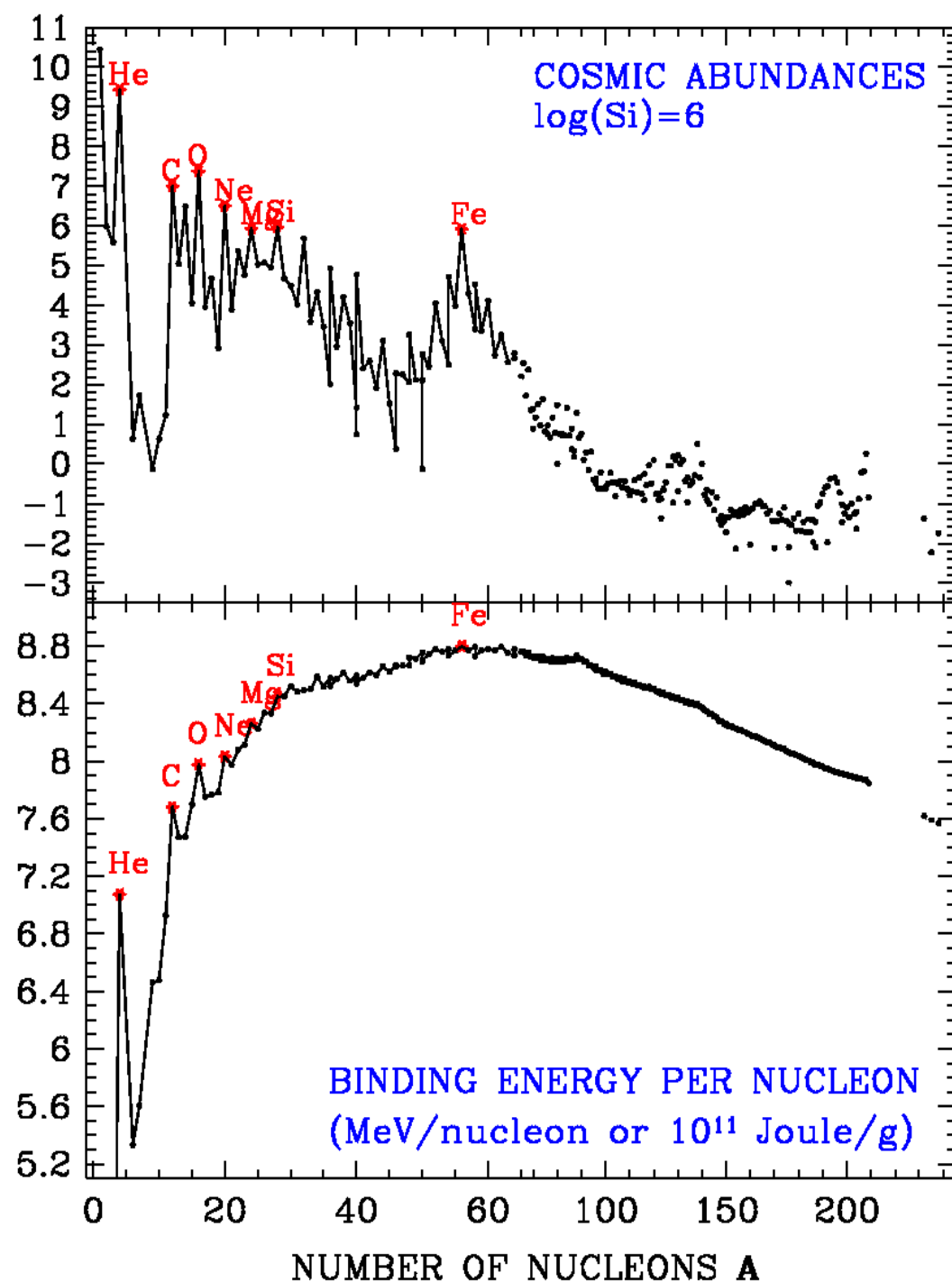
2) By number :  $N_i = X_i / A_i$

Observers :  $N_H = 10^{12}$      $A_H = \log(N_H) = 12$

$$\epsilon_X = A_X - A_H$$

3) Relative to solar ratio  $(X_i / X_j)_{\odot}$

$$[X_i / X_j] = \log(X_i / X_j) - \log(X_i / X_j)_{\odot} \quad [X_i / X_j]_{\odot} = 0$$



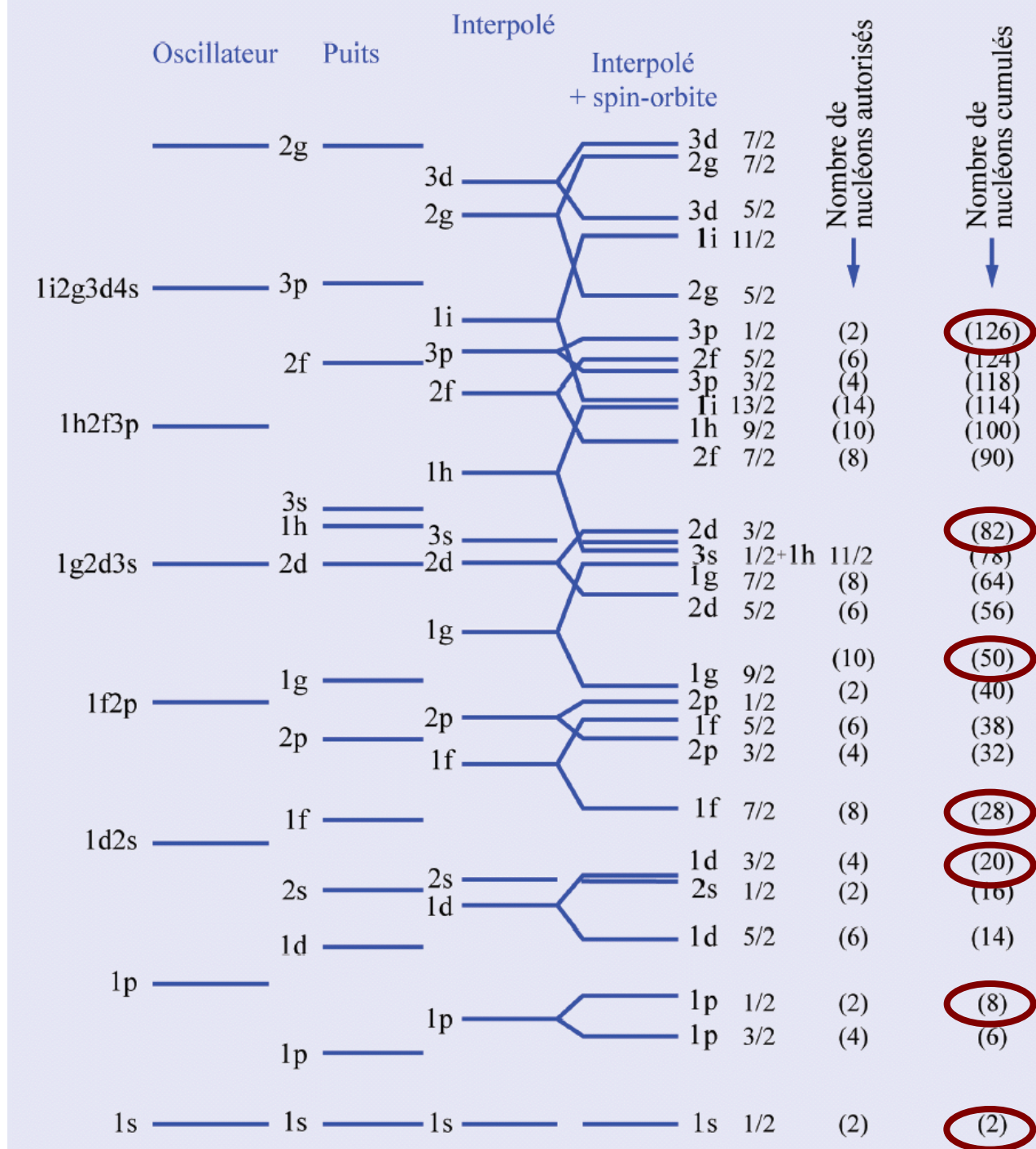
Cosmic abundances of nuclides are roughly correlated with nuclear stability

(alpha-nuclei, Fe peak nuclei or nuclei with even nucleon number are more abundant than their neighbors)

Nuclear processes have shaped the cosmic abundances of the chemical elements

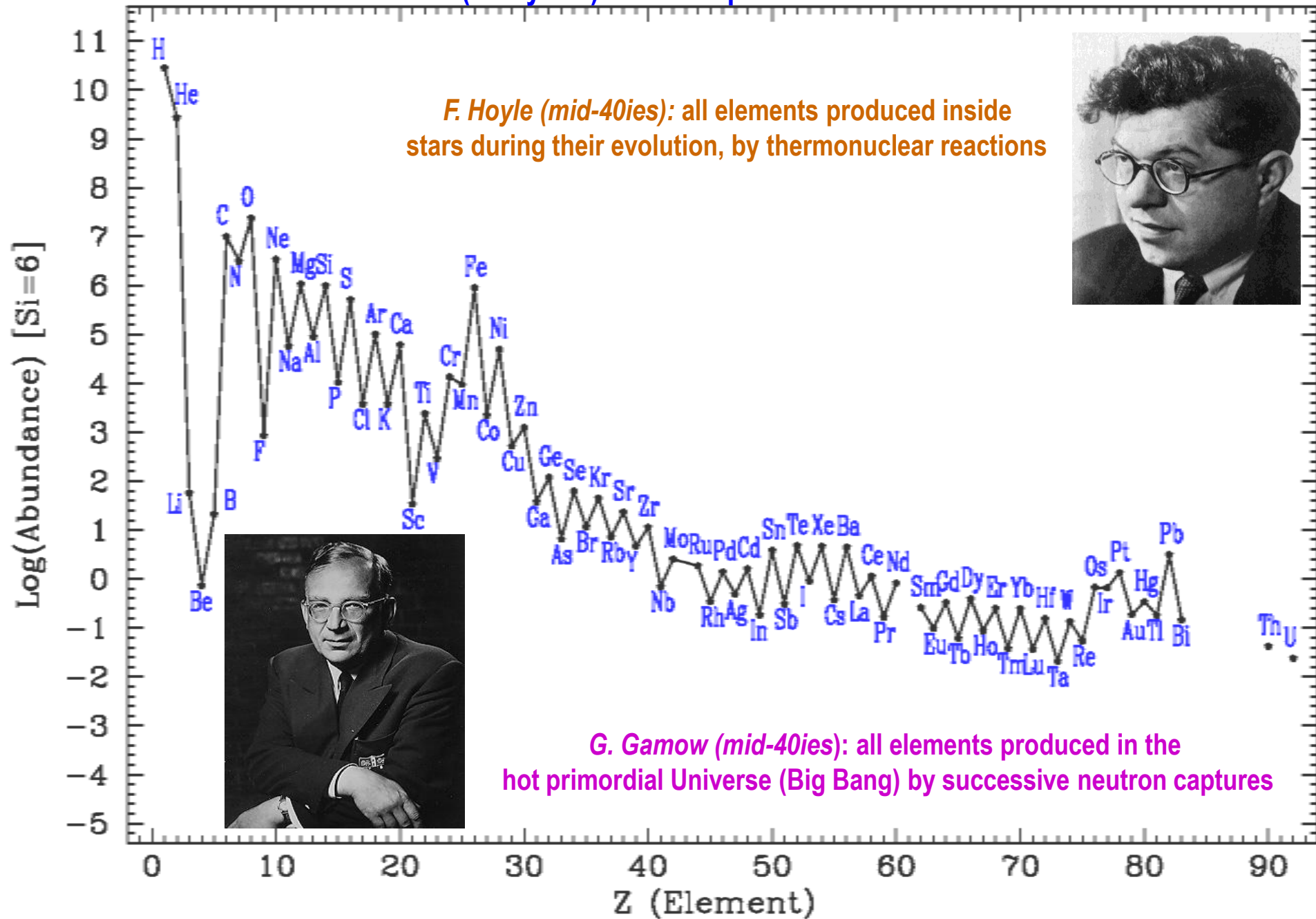
Nuclear shell model suggests that nuclei with “magic” nucleon numbers (2, 8, 20, 28, 50, 82, ...) are more strongly bound than their neighbors

They are also found to be more abundant in the Universe

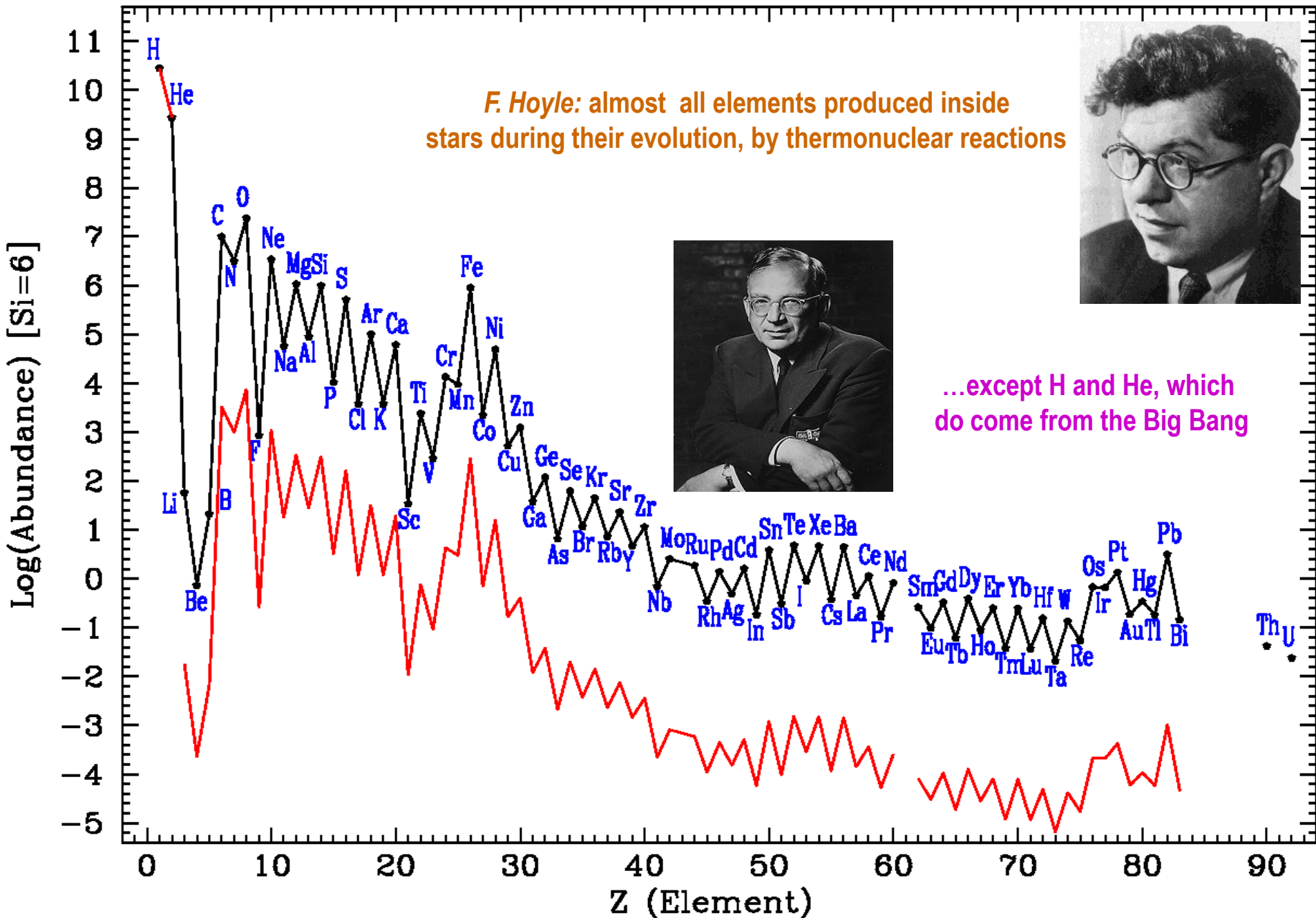


**Solar (= Cosmic) abundances : related to nuclear properties (nuclear binding energies)**

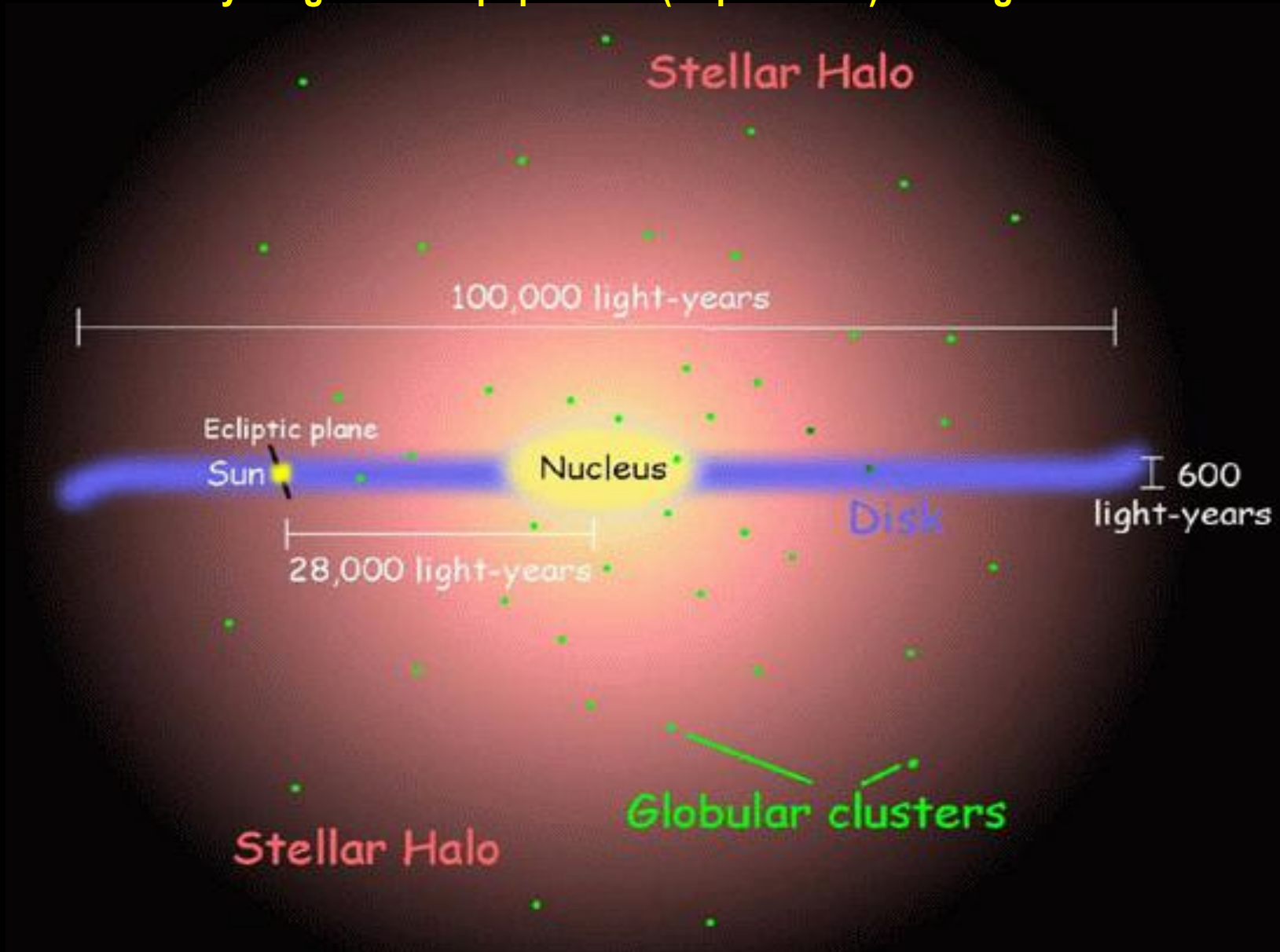
**→ a hot (many MK) site is required : which one ?**



Early 50ies: metal (heavier than He) abundances are not always the same ;  
Galactic halo stars have low metallicities



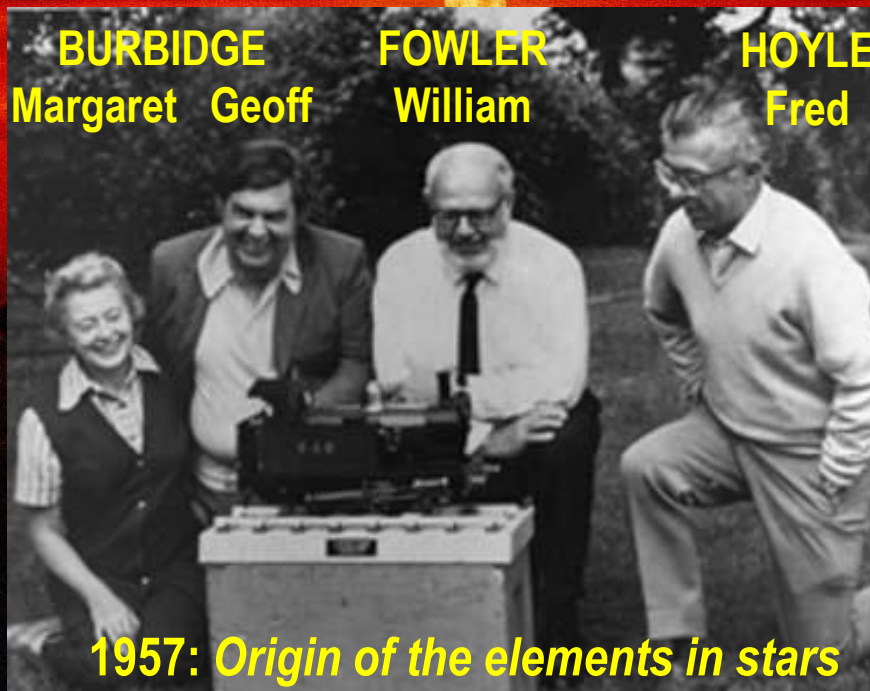
**Old stars of galactic halo (Population II) contain less heavy elements (metals) than the younger stellar population (Population I) of the galactic disk**



**The chemical composition of the Milky Way was substantially different in the past**

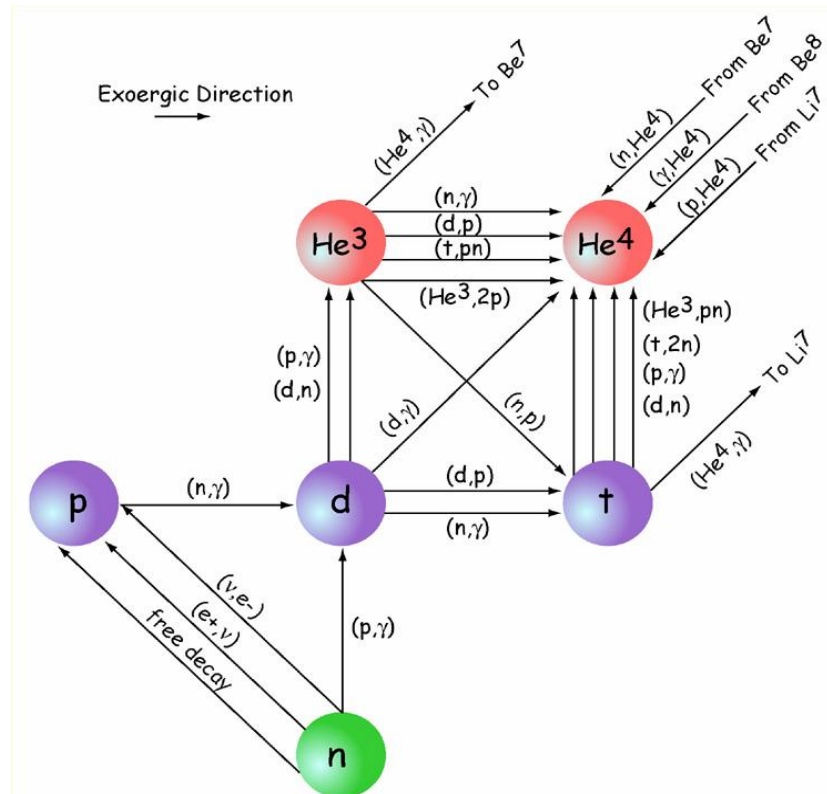
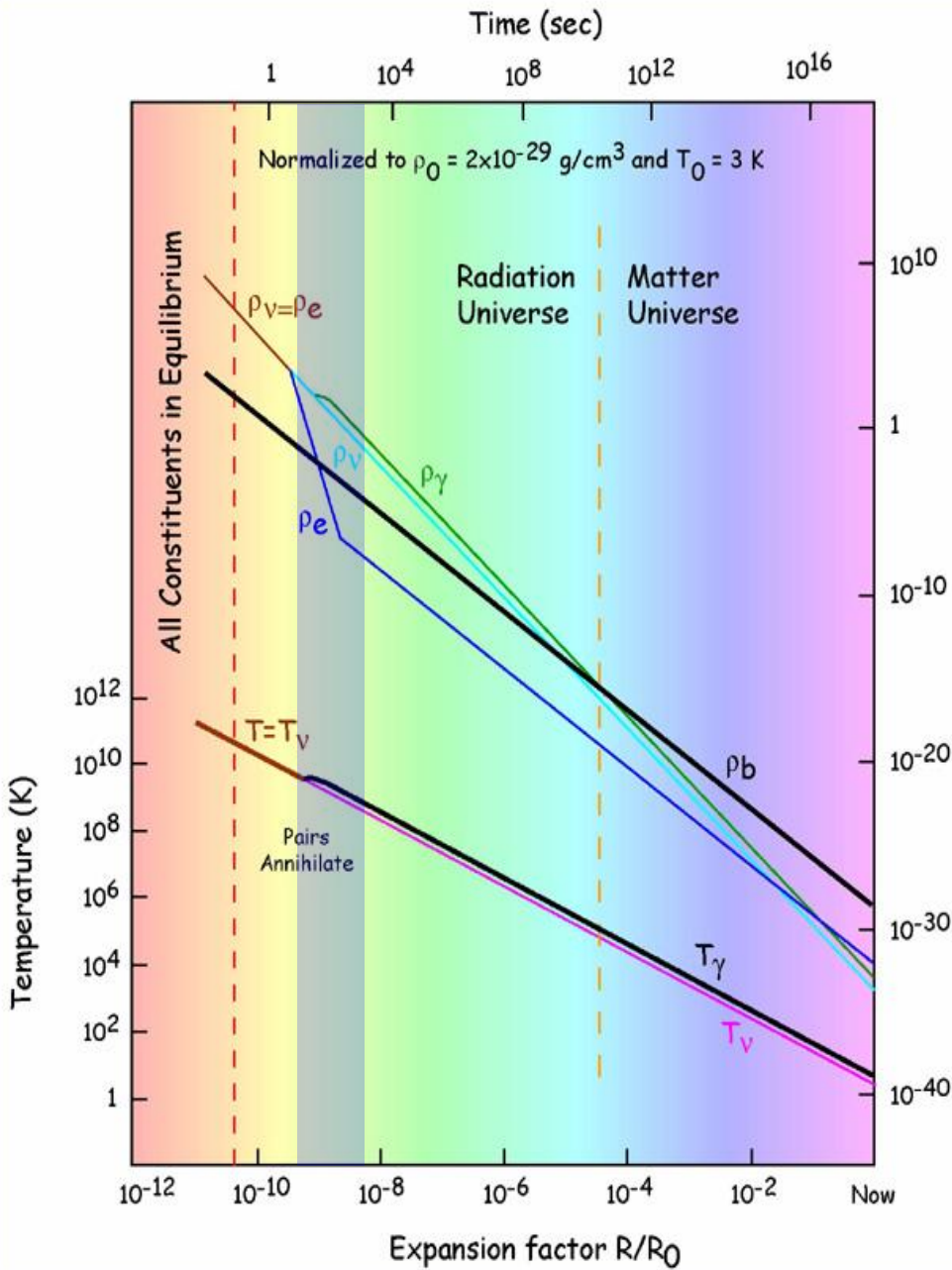


**BURBIDGE**      **FOWLER**      **HOYLE**  
**Margaret**   **Geoff**      **William**      **Fred**



**1957: Origin of the elements in stars**

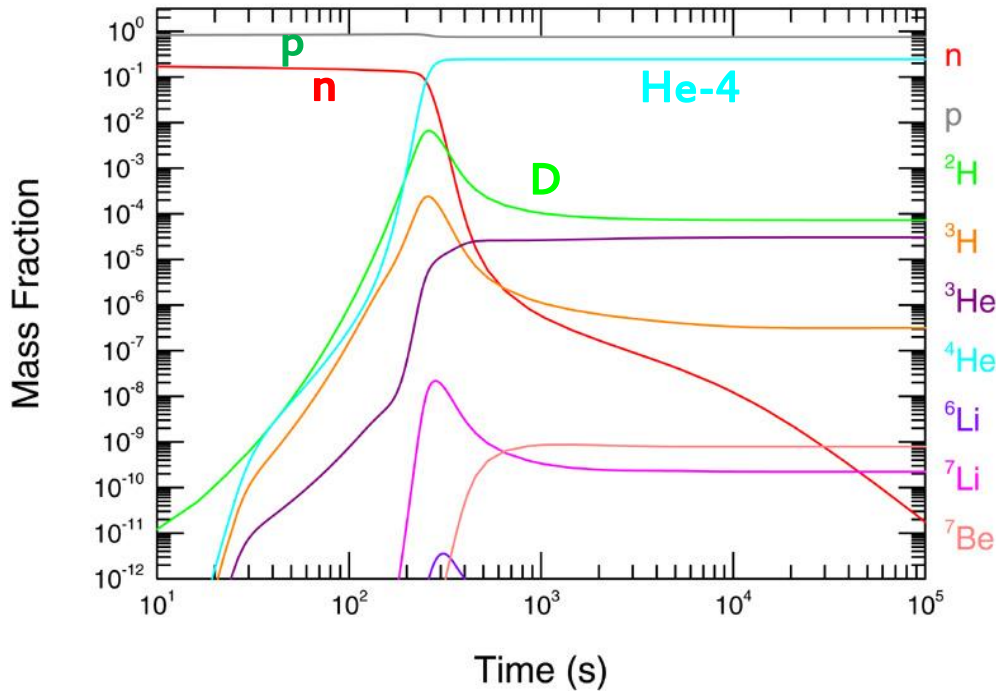
# Primordial Nucleosynthesis



H and He isotopes are produced from **p** and **n** in the early hot Universe at  $1 \text{ GK} \geq T \geq 100 \text{ MK}$  ("first" 3 minutes)

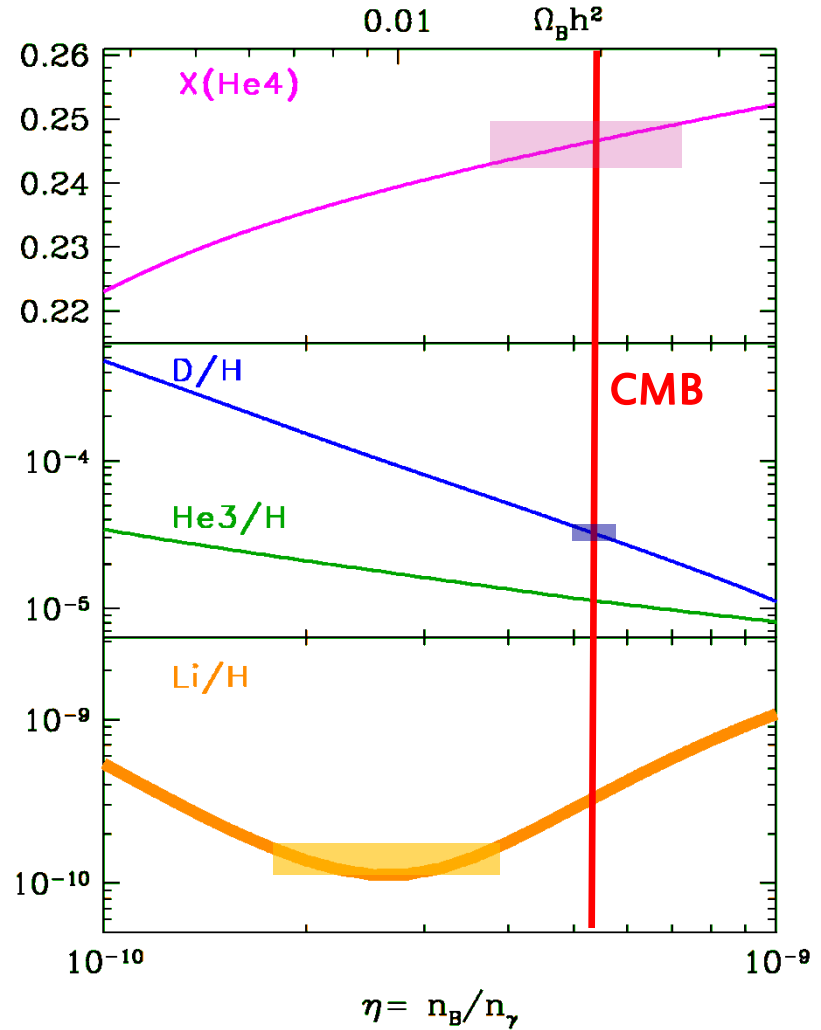
# Primordial Nucleosynthesis

$\eta = 4.0 \times 10^{-10}$   $N_\nu = 3.0$



-Only way to produce so much He4 (~25 % by mass)

-Only way to produce Deuterium (destroyed in stellar interiors)

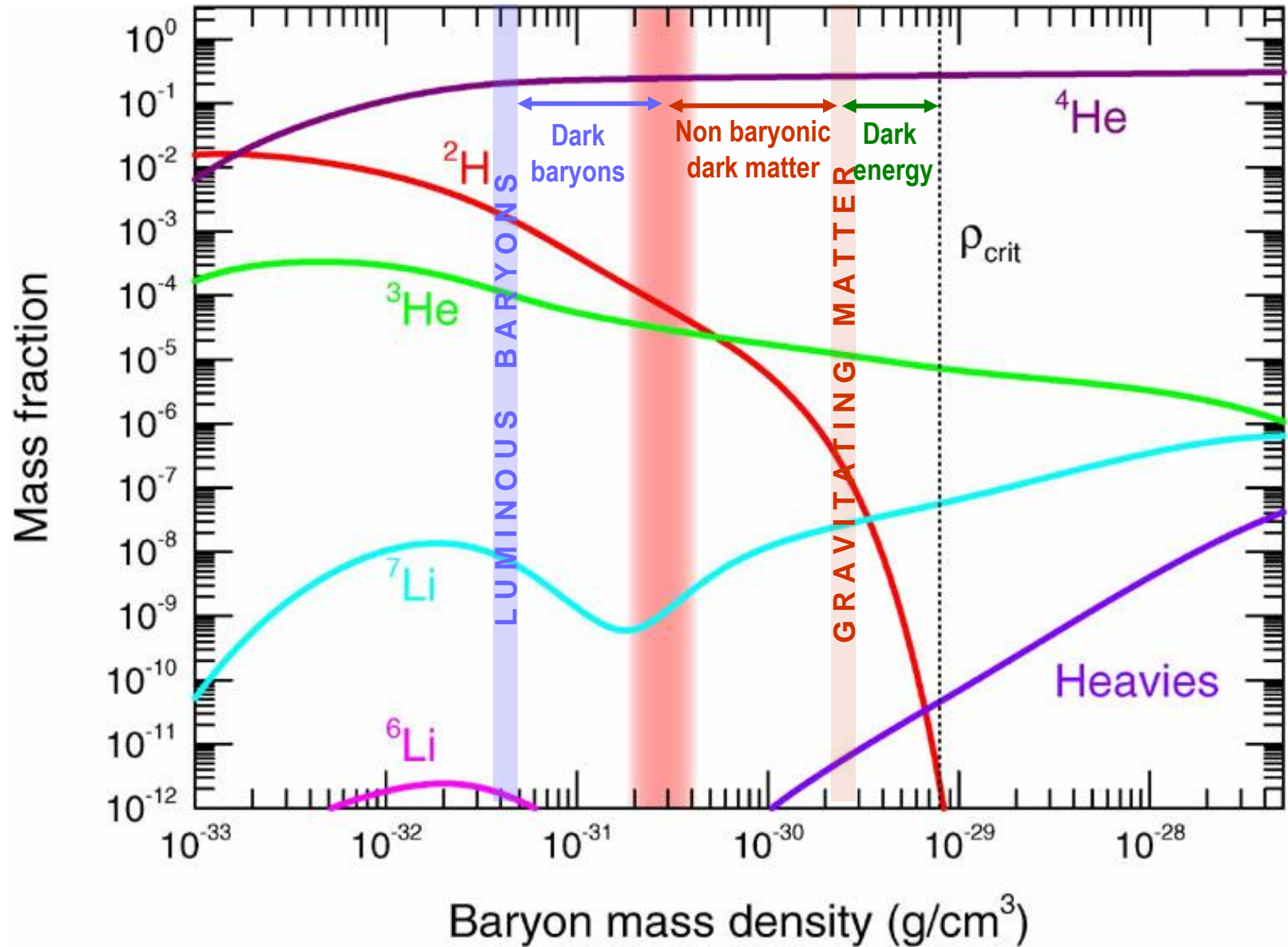


Abundances predicted by theory agree well with those observed in old - or little evolved - objects (old stars, small nearby galaxies, remote gas clouds):

**perfectly for D,** **satisfactorily for He-4,** **poorly for Li-7**

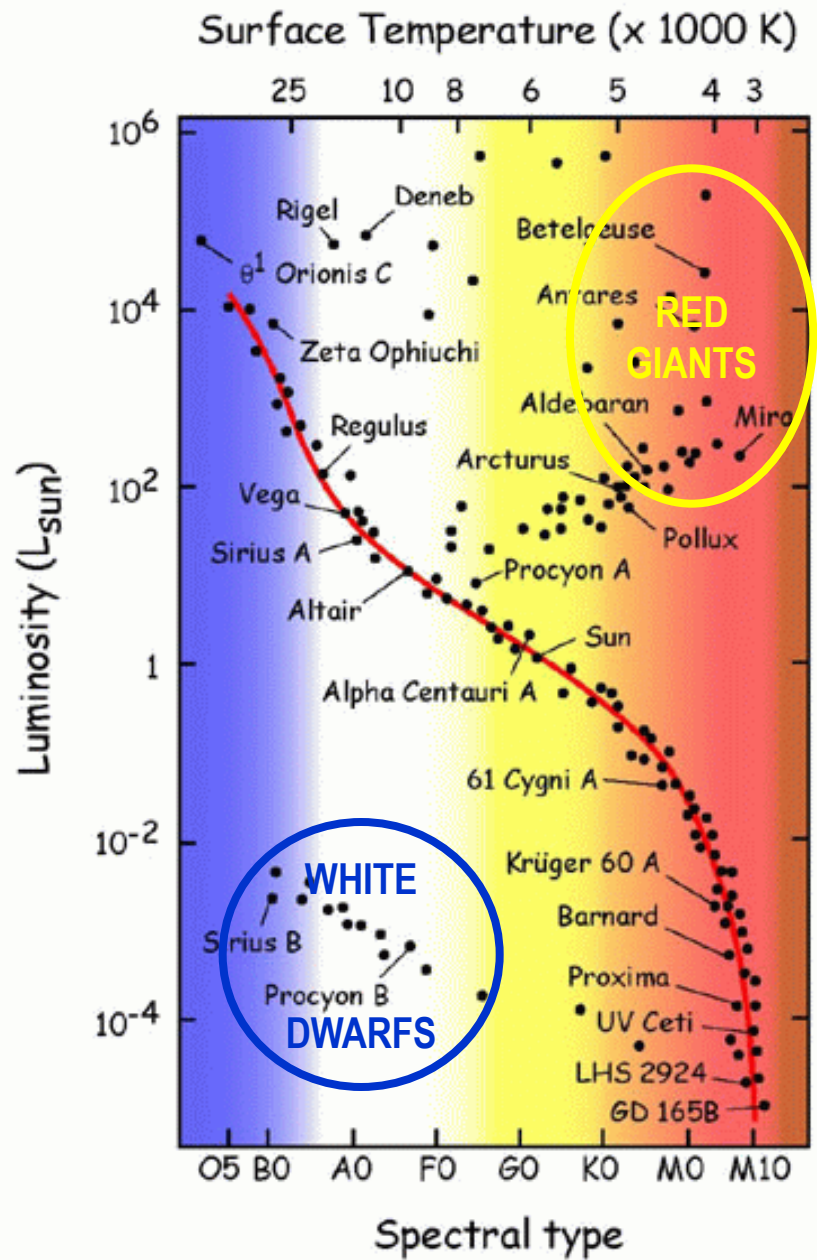
Nuclear reaction rates, and resulting abundances, depend on baryon density

The cosmic baryonic density is much less than critical (~ 4%) BUT

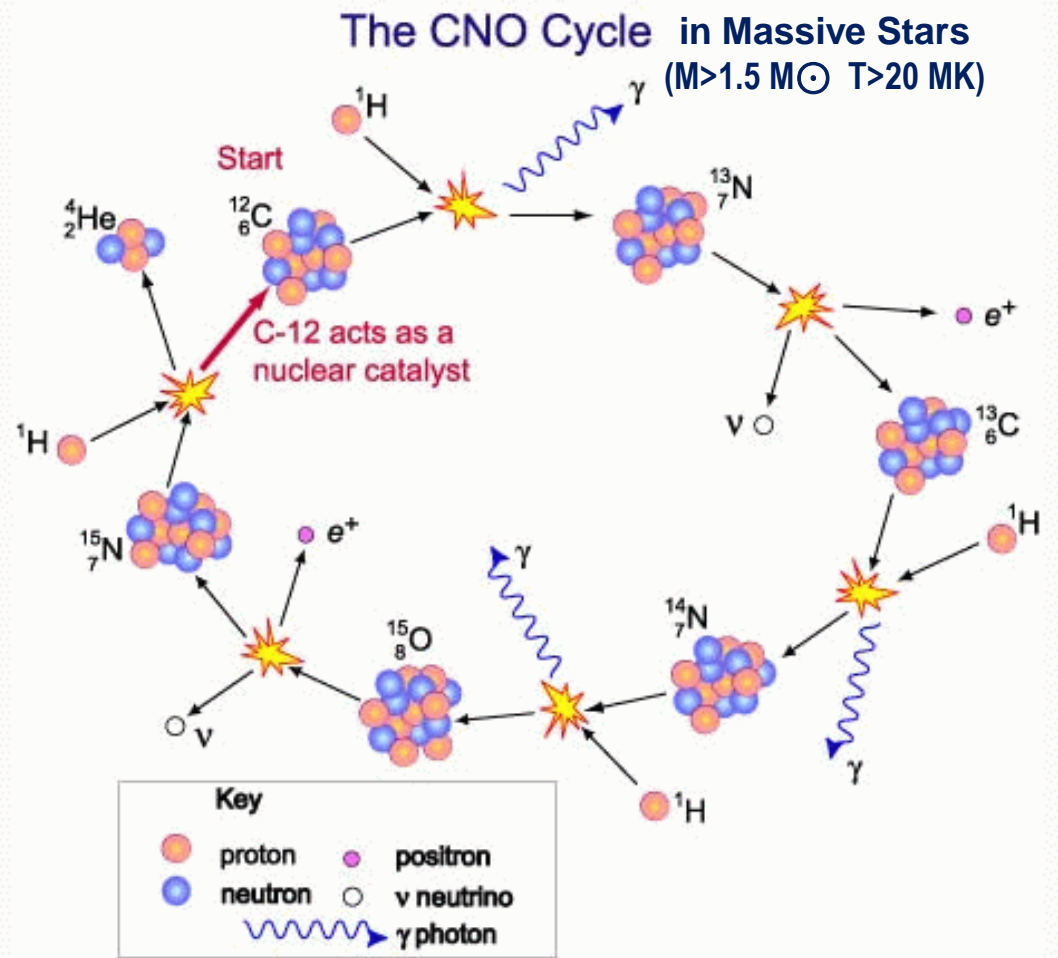
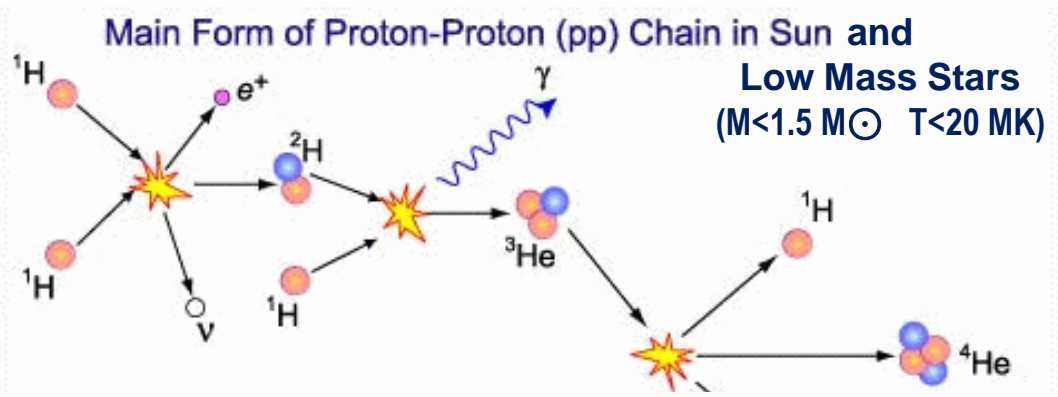


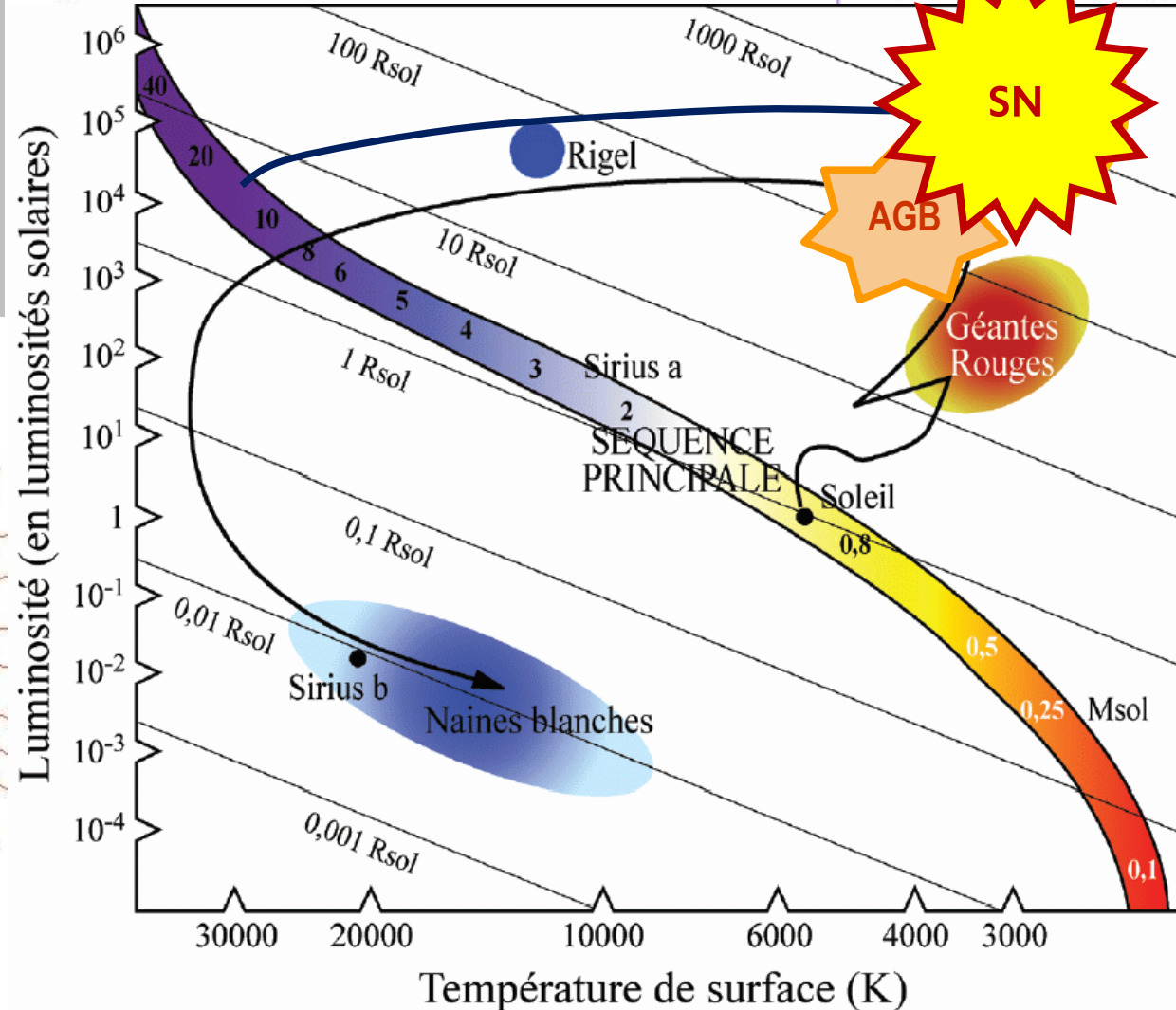
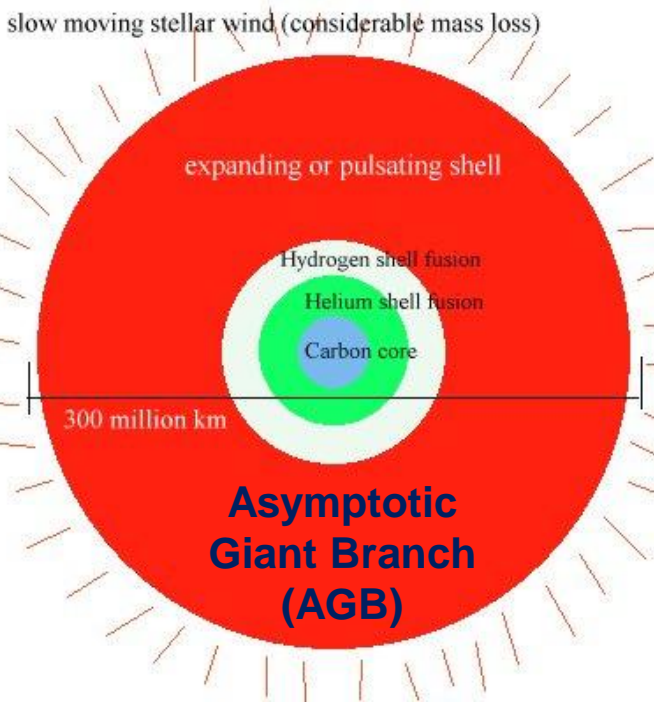
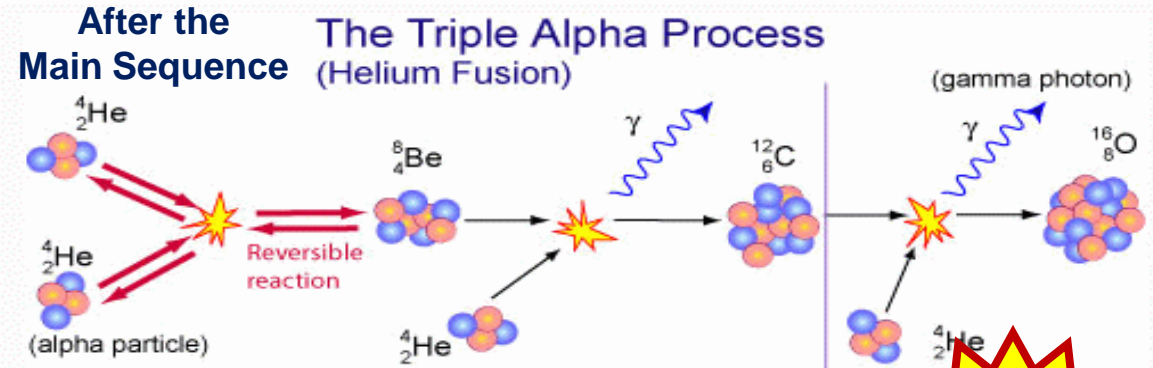
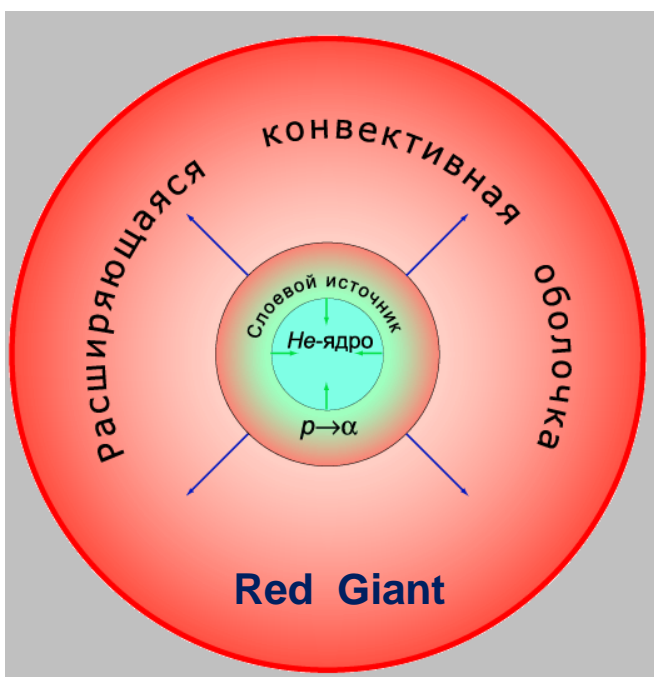
# STARS: Luminosity vs Effective Temperature (Magnitude vs Colour)

## Hertzsprung – Russel Diagram (HRD)



## Main Sequence: Hydrogen burning



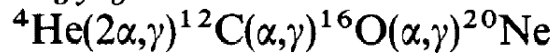


# Advanced burning stages in massive stars

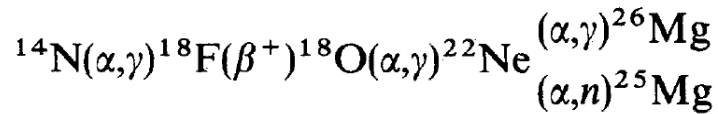
$T \sim 200$  million K

## IMPORTANT REACTIONS IN HELIUM BURNING

*Energy generation:*



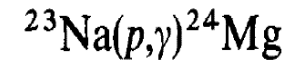
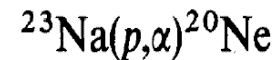
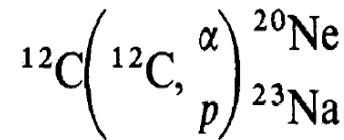
*Neutron source:*



$T \sim 900$  million K

## IMPORTANT REACTIONS IN CARBON BURNING

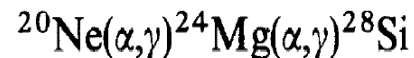
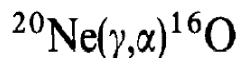
*Basic:*



$T \sim 1500$  million K

## NEON BURNING

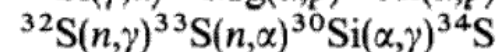
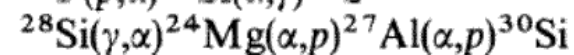
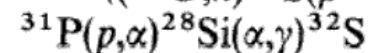
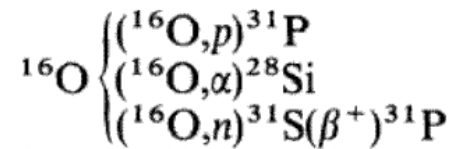
*Basic reactions:*



$T \sim 2000$  million K

## OXYGEN BURNING

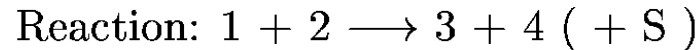
*Basic reactions:*



## Si – “Melting” ( $T \geq 3 \cdot 10^9$ K)

At high temperatures **photodesintegrations**  $[(\gamma, \alpha) (\gamma, p)(\gamma, n)]$  become very rapid

Ejected particles ( $n, p, \alpha$ ) are captured by nuclei to form nuclei with larger binding energies



$$\begin{aligned} \text{Reaction energy: } S &= (m_1 + m_2 - m_3 - m_4) c^2 \\ &= Q_3 + Q_4 - Q_1 - Q_2 \end{aligned}$$

[ Nucleus Binding Energy:

$$Q = (Z m_P - N m_N - m) c^2 ]$$

$$\text{Cross section: } \langle \sigma v \rangle_{34} \propto \langle \sigma v \rangle_{12} e^{-S/kT}$$

High T  $\longrightarrow$  **Equilibrium:** Rate<sub>12</sub> = Rate<sub>34</sub>

$$N_1 N_2 \langle \sigma v \rangle_{12} = N_3 N_4 \langle \sigma v \rangle_{34}$$

$$\frac{N_3 N_4}{N_1 N_2} \propto e^{S/kT}$$

Matter composition shifts to Fe-peak nuclei (largest binding energies)

Energy produced:  $E/m \sim 1.9 \cdot 10^{17}$  erg/gr  $\sim 0.2$  MeV/nucleon

# NUCLEAR STATISTICAL EQUILIBRIUM (NSE)

When all **strong nuclear reactions** are equilibrated, the **abundance** of a nucleus depends on its **binding energy**, the ambient **temperature** and **density** and the **neutron excess**  $\eta=(N-Z)/(N+Z)$

**Weak interactions** (mostly electron captures)  
never reach equilibrium (because neutrinos escape),  
and slowly increase  $\eta$  (**neutronisation**)

$$Y_i(A, Z) = (\rho N_A)^{A_i-1} \frac{\omega(A_i, Z_i)}{2^{A_i}} A_i^{3/2} \times \left( \frac{2\pi\hbar^2}{m_H kT} \right)^{3/2(A_i-1)} e^{-Q(A_i, Z_i)/kT} Y_p^Z Y_n^N, \quad i = 1, N - 2 \quad (8)$$

$$\sum_i \frac{\partial Y_i}{\partial t} = \sum_{j,k} (Z_k - Z_j) \lambda_j Y_j, \quad (9)$$

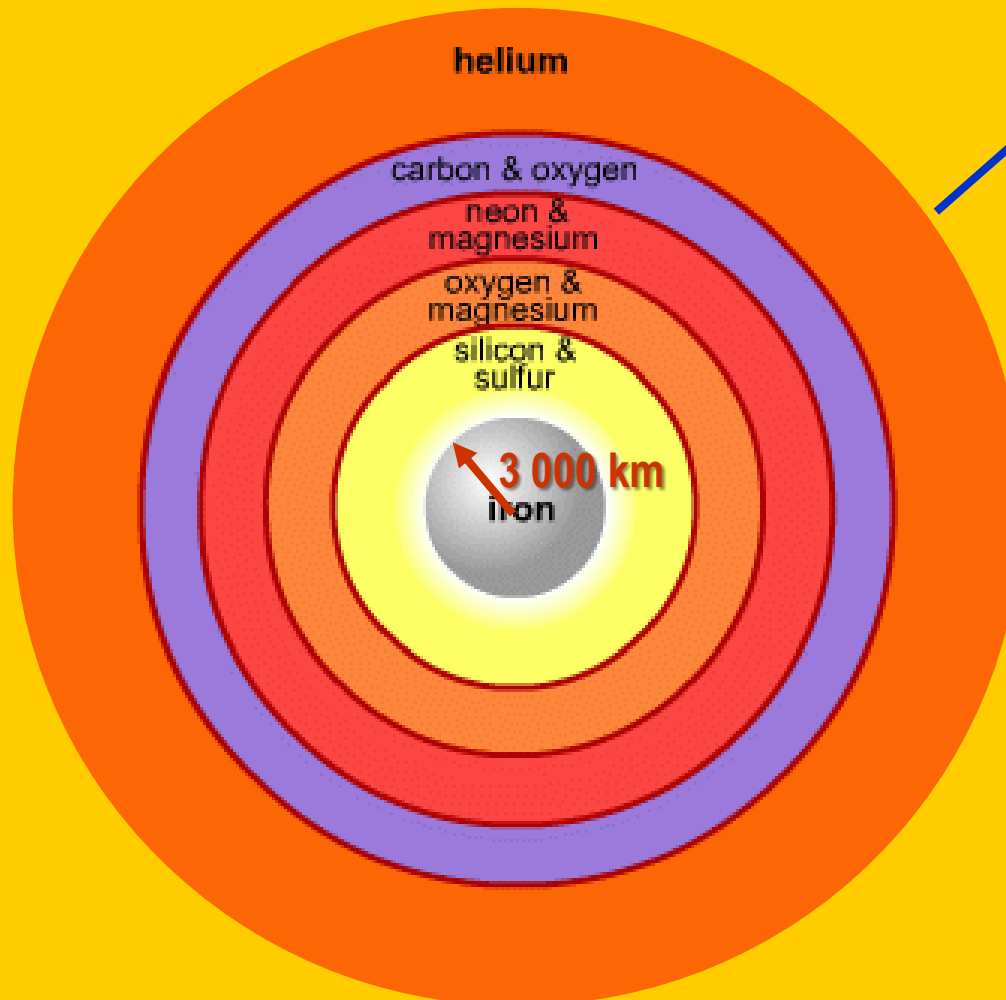
$$\sum_i Y_i A_i = 1, \quad (10)$$

where  $\omega(A_i, Z_i)$  is the partition function and  $Q(A_i, Z_i)$  is the binding energy of the species  $i$ . The first  $N - 2$  equations give the NSE distribution of all of the nuclear species, but for the neutrons and protons, equation (9) describes the neutronization due to the weak interactions and equation (10) represents the conservation of mass.

Hydrogen envelope

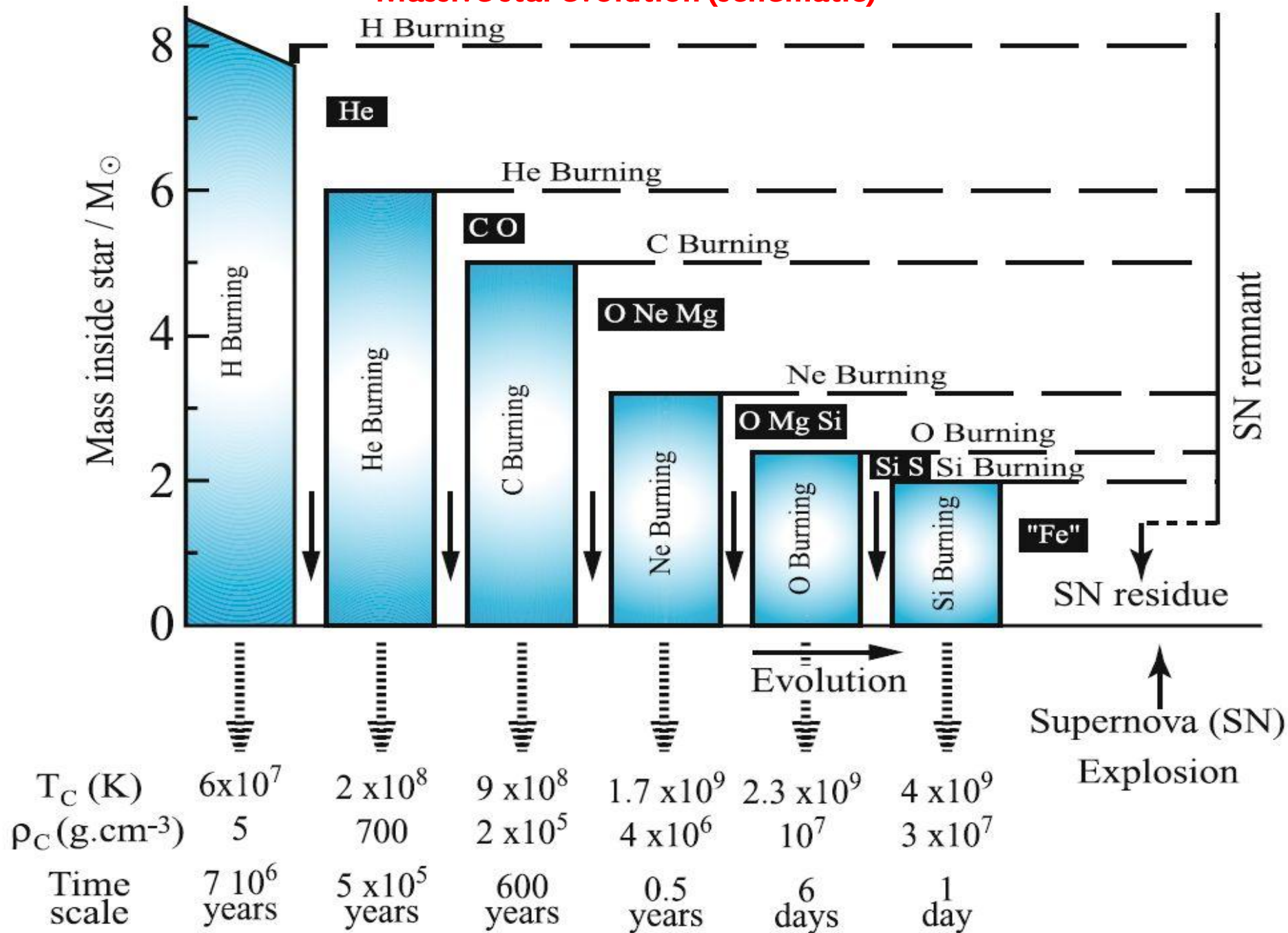
Radius:  
700 000 000 km  
=1000  $R_{\odot}$

Massive stars  
“burn” heavier and  
heavier nuclei,  
until they turn  
their cores  
into iron  
Fe-56

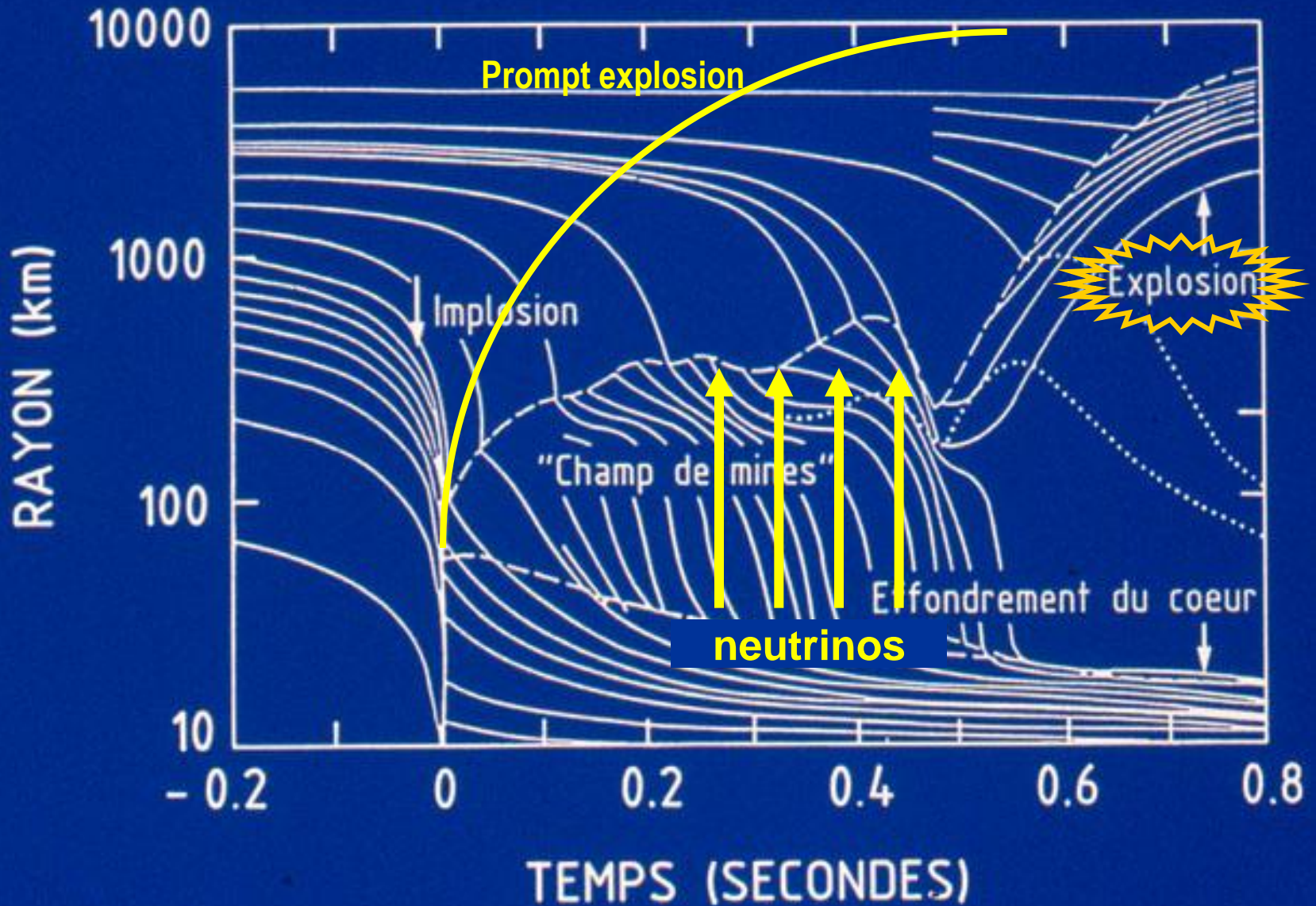


Fe-56 is the most stable nucleus in nature  
(its reactions are endothermic).  
With no nuclear energy source available,  
the stellar core collapses

## Massive star evolution (schematic)



## Delayed explosion of supernovae



*Does not seem to work either, but only for the smallest stars...*

1 sec

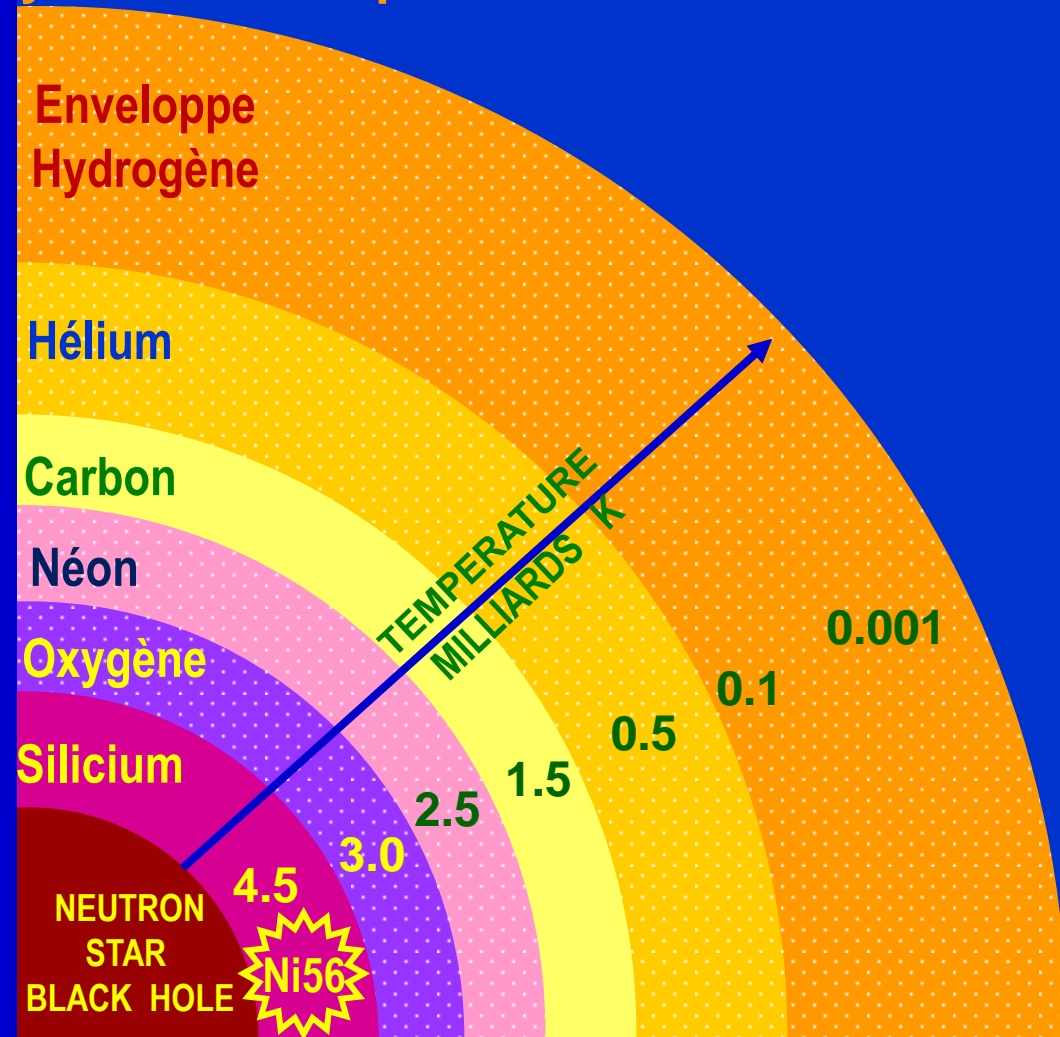


# Explosive nucleosynthesis in supernovae

In case of successful explosion the shock wave propagates in the envelope and heats the stellar layers to high temperatures, inducing *explosive nucleosynthesis*

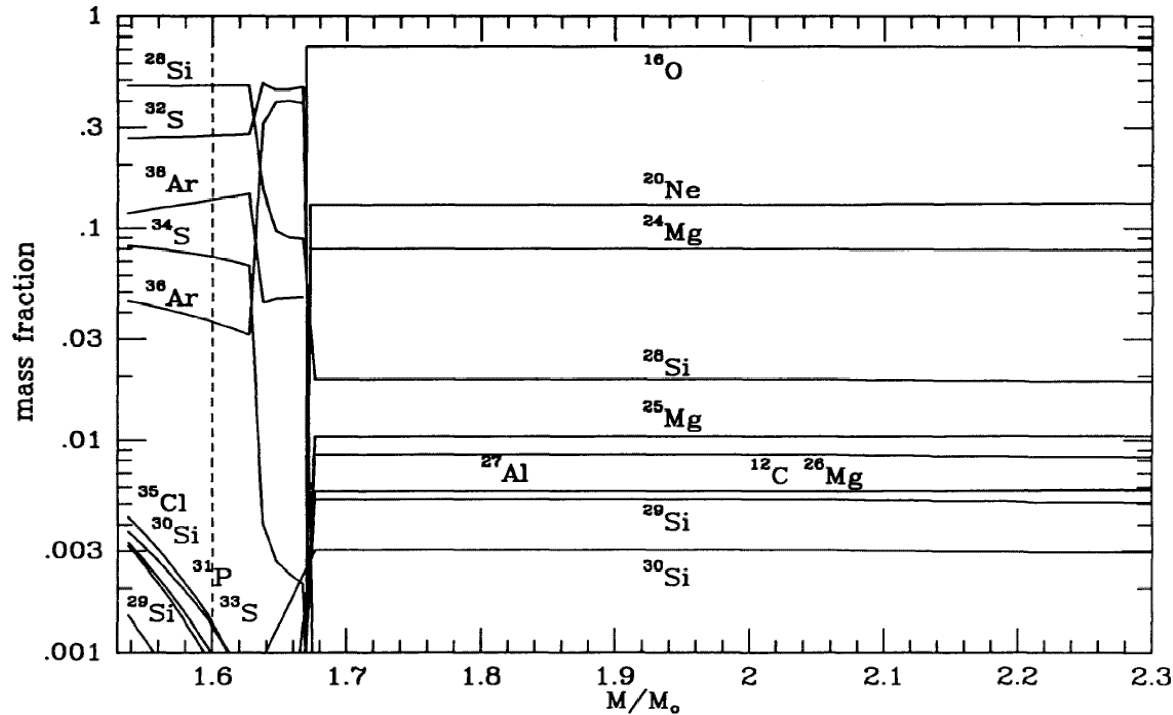
Products of hydrostatic and explosive nucleosynthesis are ejected in the interstellar medium

Supernovae are the chief-chemists of the Universe

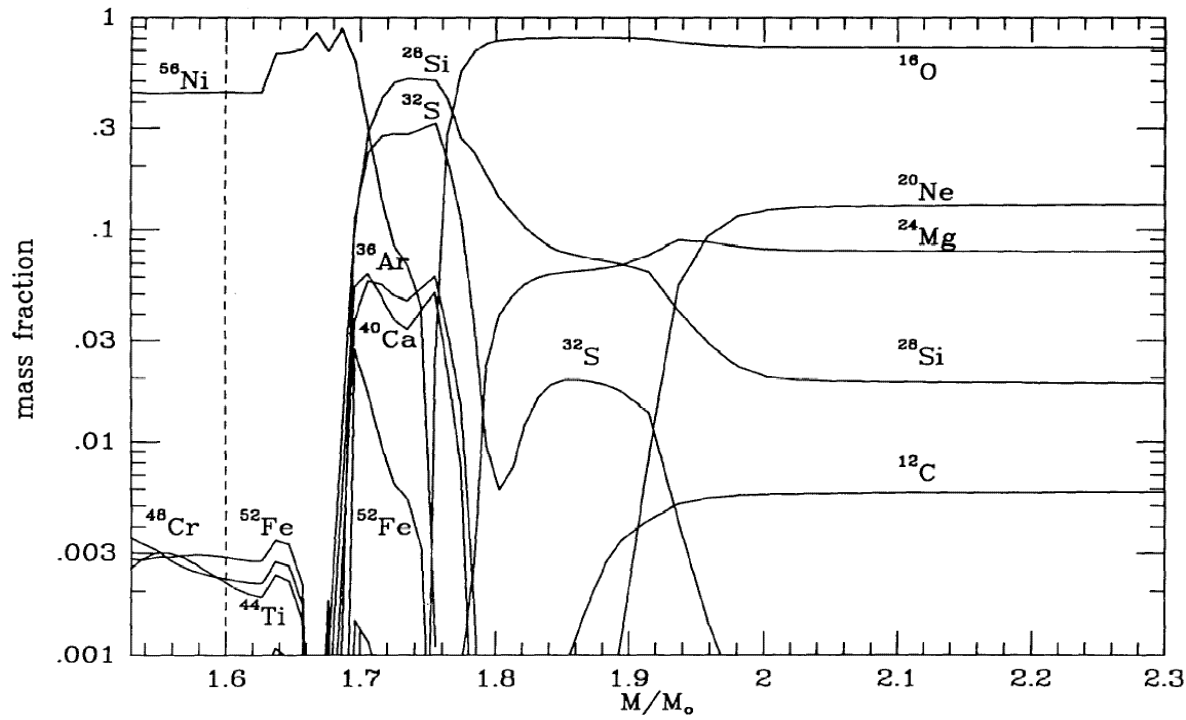


Stable Fe-56 is made in the unstable (radioactive) form of Ni-56 :  
 $\text{Ni-56} \rightarrow \text{Co-56} \rightarrow \text{Fe-56}$

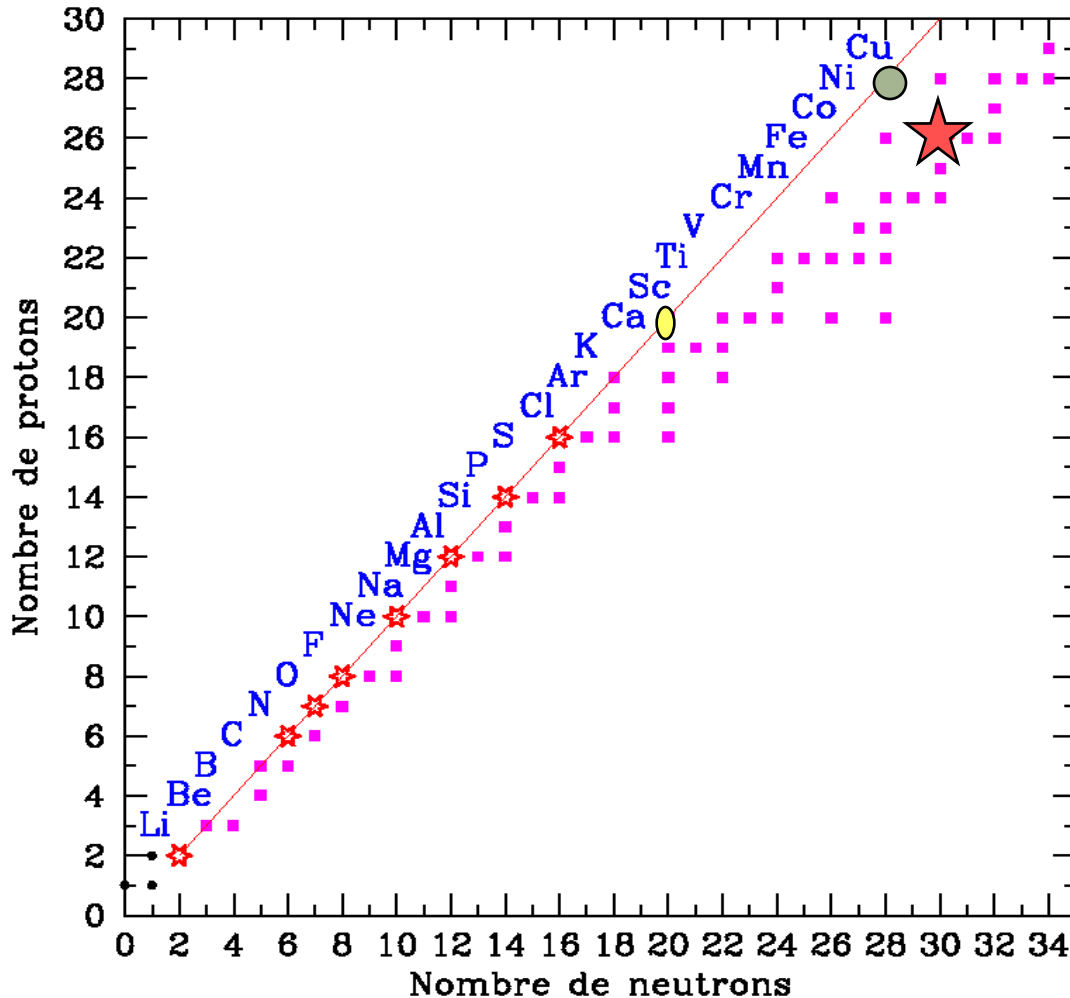
20  $M_{\odot}$  star:  
Pre-explosive composition  
of inner layers



20  $M_{\odot}$  star:  
Post-explosive composition  
of inner layers



# THE WAY TOWARDS NSE (Nuclear Statistical Equilibrium)

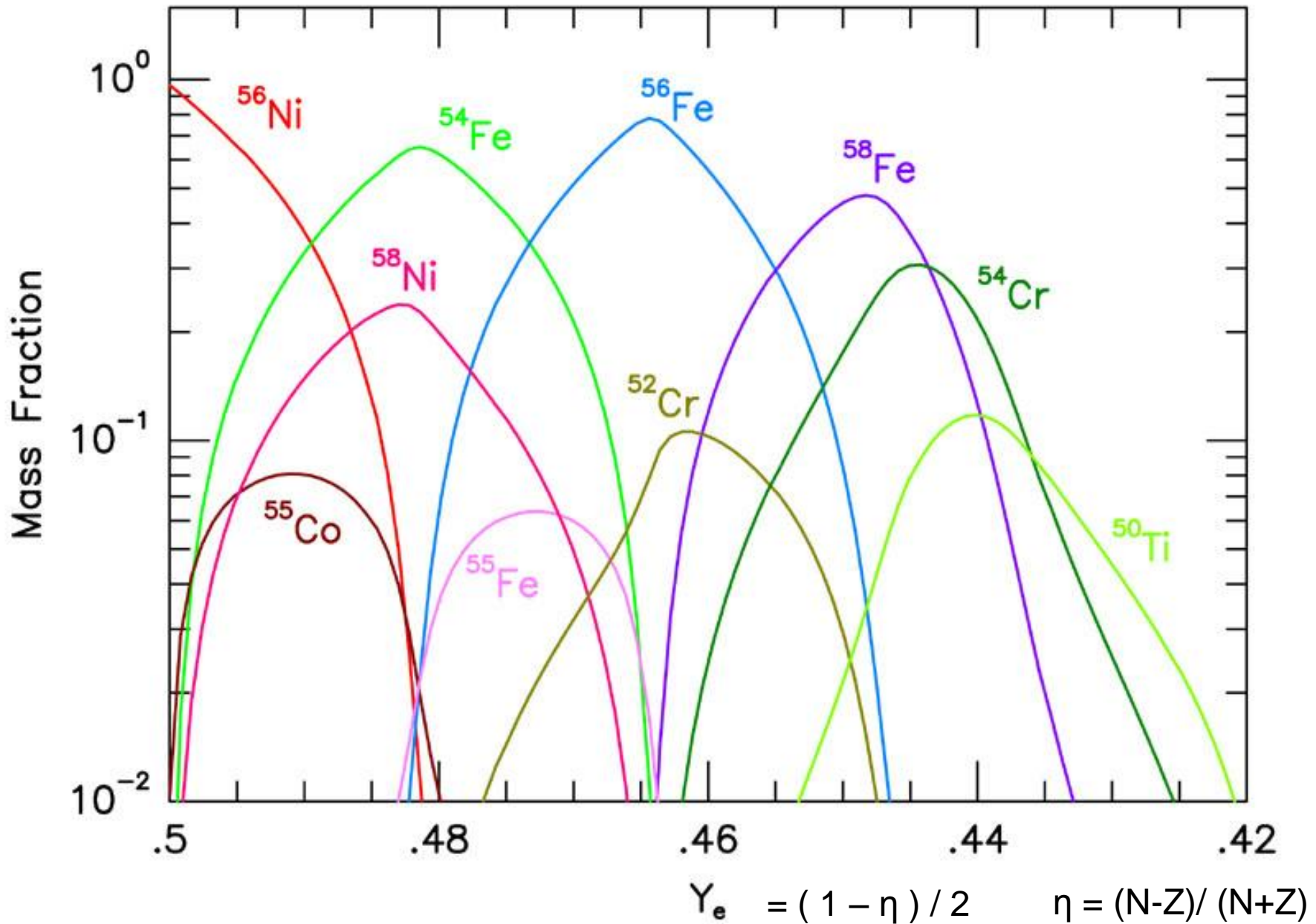


Ca40 is the last stable nucleus with  $N=Z$  on the way of Si-melting towards NSE

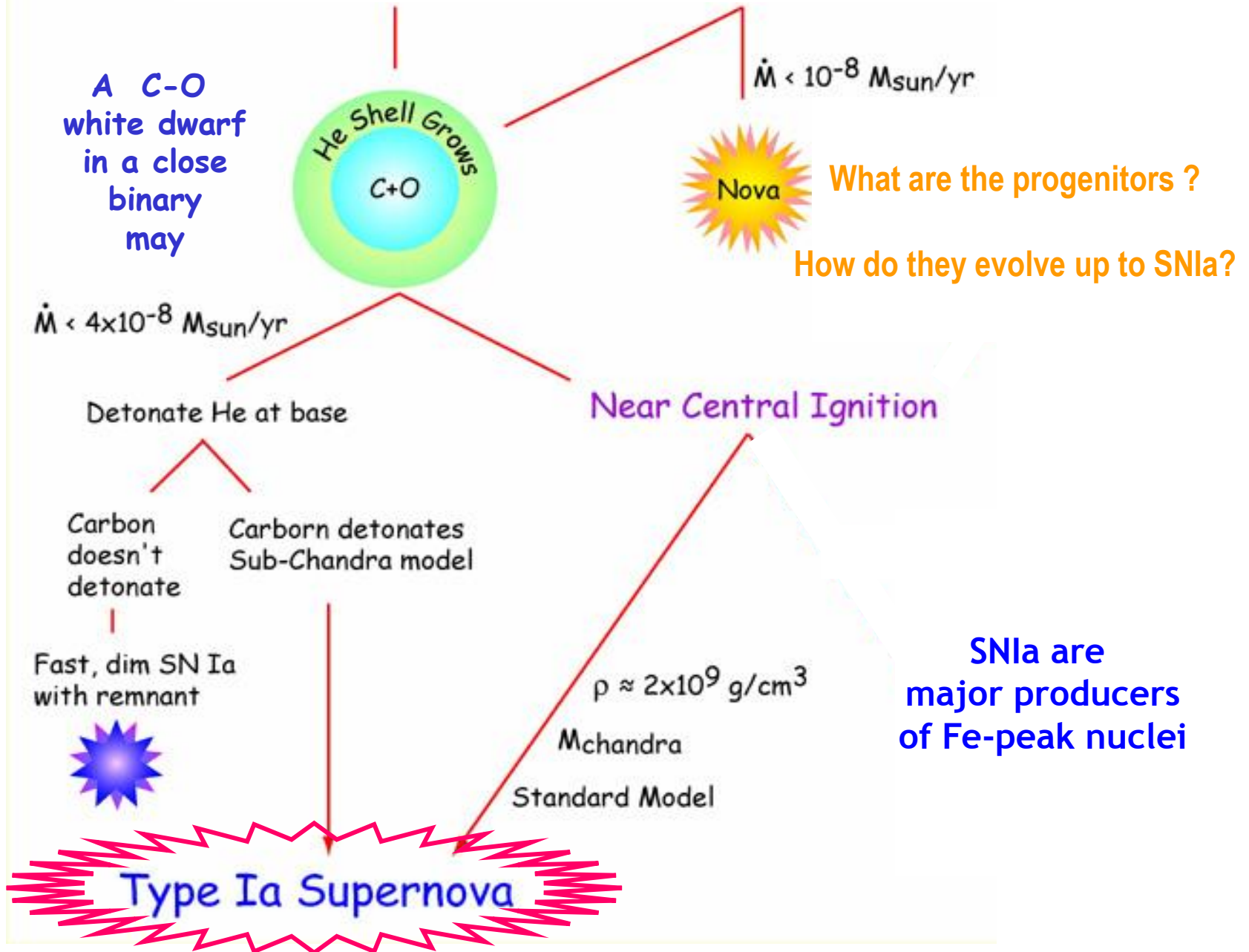
In the stellar core weak interactions shift the neutron excess towards  $\eta \sim 0.05 - 0.10$  and Fe56 dominates the NSE composition


**Note** : in explosive nucleosynthesis, weak interactions have no time to operate and  $\eta$  remains close to 0. Ni56 dominates the NSE composition

NSE Distributions at  $T=3.5e9$  K  $\rho=1e7$  g cm<sup>-3</sup>



# Stellar explosions in binary systems





**Thermonuclear supernovae  
(SNIa)**

*White dwarves exploding  
in binary systems*

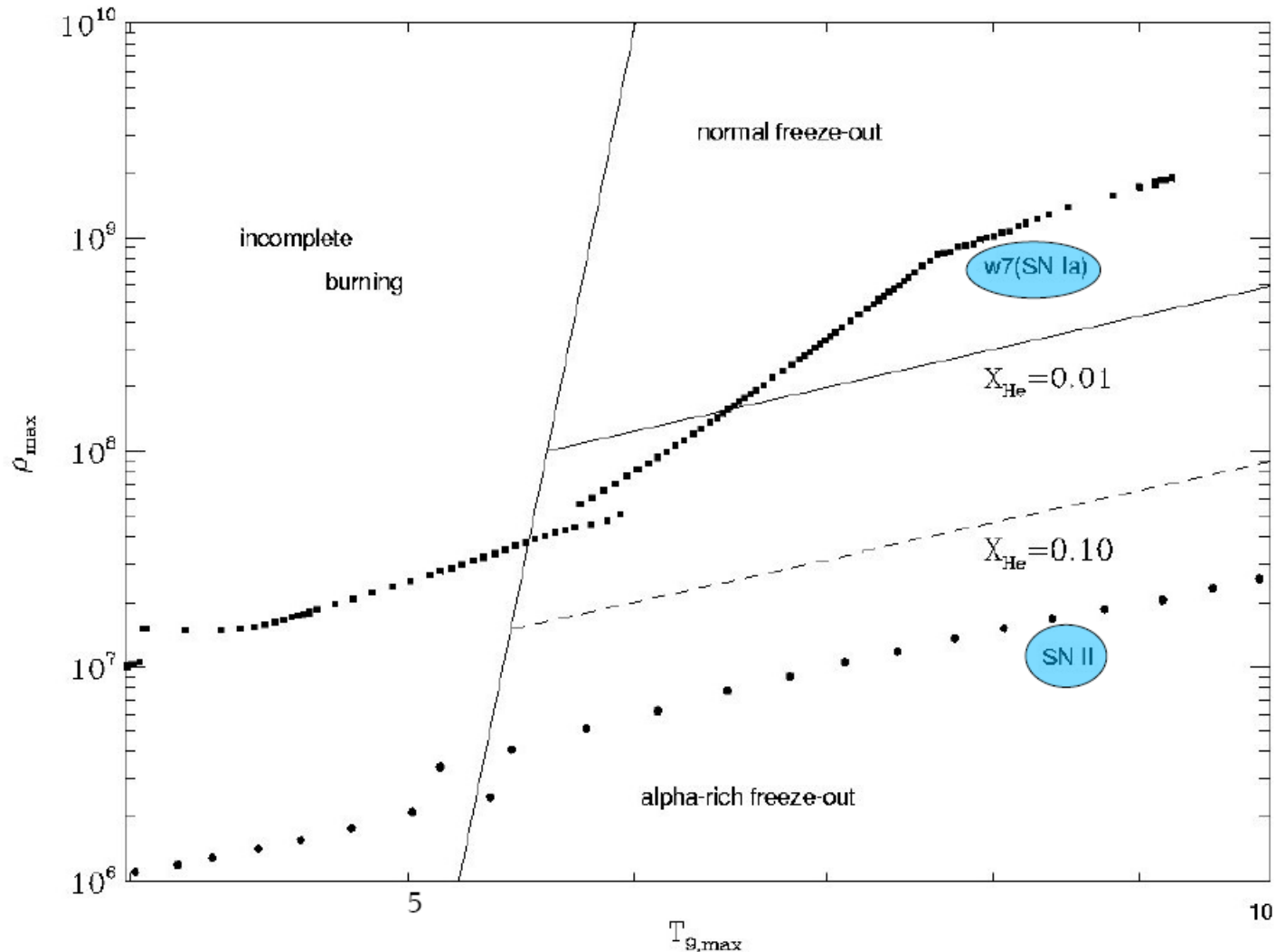
The mass of the white dwarf  
(carbon-oxygen) increases  
by matter accretion  
from the companion

When it becomes greater than the mass-limit  
of Chandrasekhar ( $1.4 M_{\odot}$ )  
the white dwarf collapses,  
its temperature increases and  
*thermonuclear reactions  
ignite explosively in  
a degenerate medium*

The nuclear flame propagates rapidly outwards, burning in a second  
about half of the white dwarf to radioactive Ni-56  
and disrupting the whole star

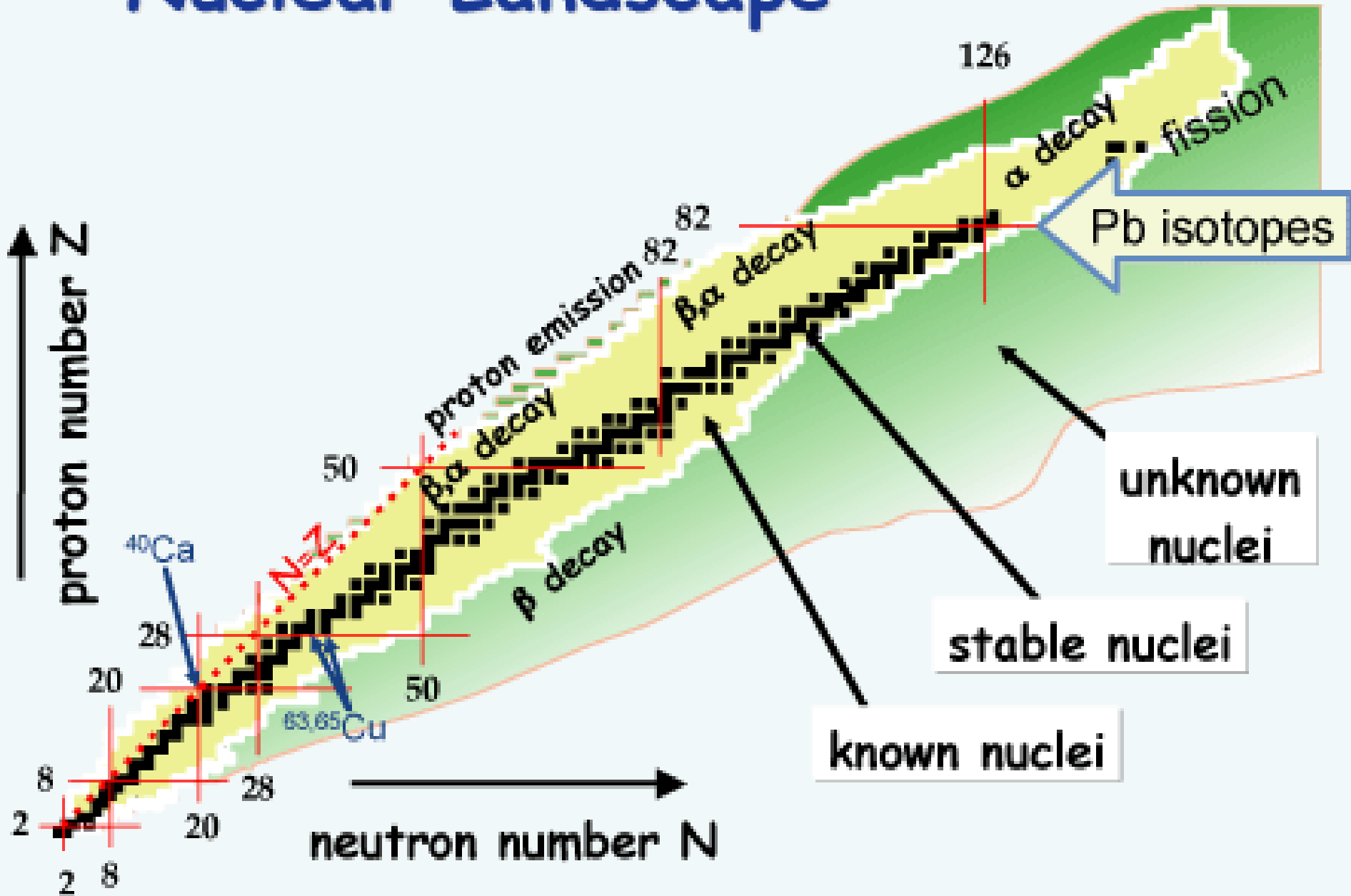
**SNIa produce 2/3 of Fe (stable product of Ni-56) in the Milky Way**

# Explosive Si-Burning



Explosive Burning above a critical temperature destroys (photodisintegrates) all nuclei and (re-)builds them up during the expansion. Dependent on density, the full NSE is maintained and leads to only Fe-group nuclei (normal freeze-out) or the reactions linking  $^4\text{He}$  to C and beyond freeze out earlier (alpha-rich freeze-out).

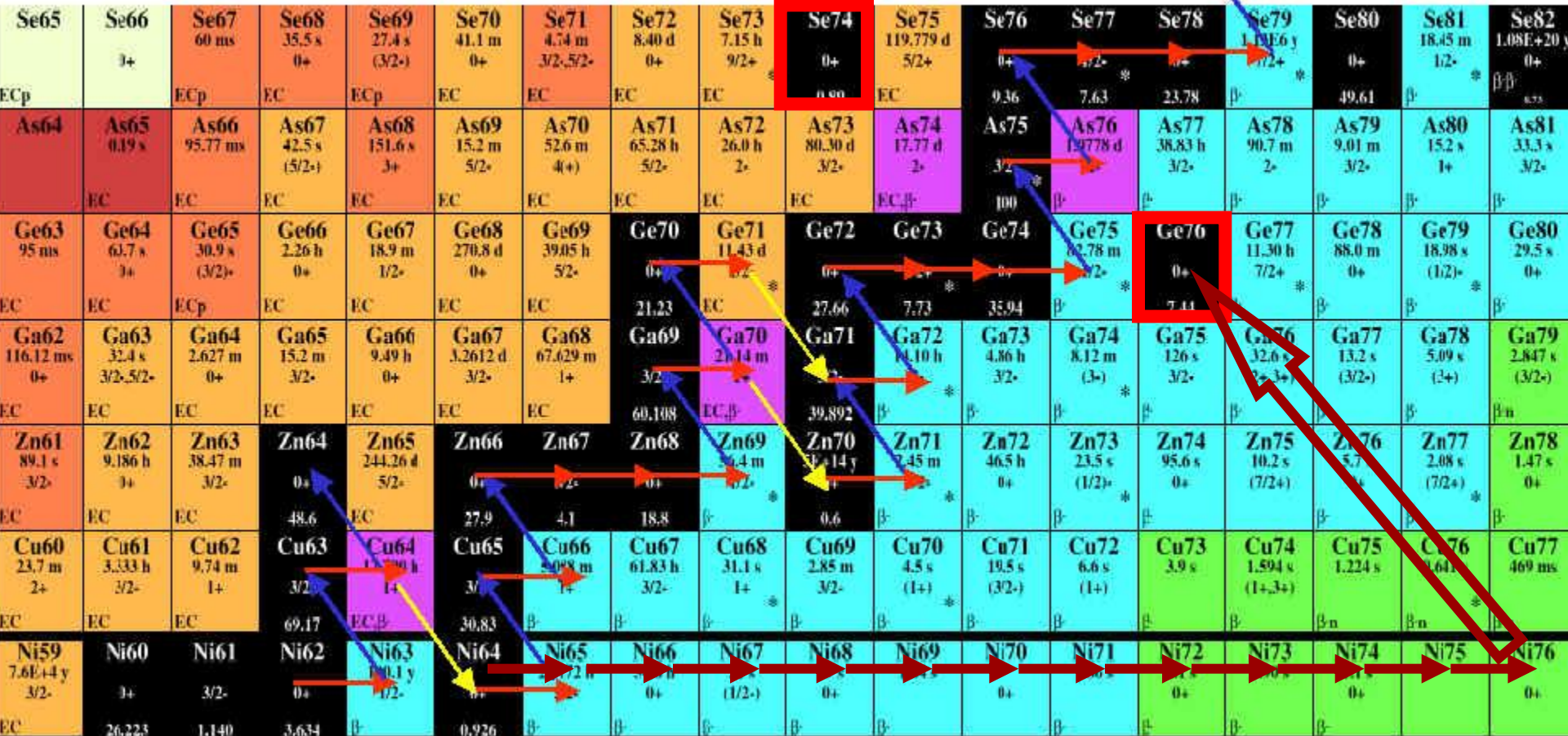
# Nuclear Landscape



# THE PRODUCTION OF HEAVIER THAN Fe NUCLEI

Neutron captures, on timescales:

long w.r.t. the  $\beta$ -decay lifetimes (few neutrons available): **S-process**  
 short w.r.t. the  $\beta$ -decay lifetimes (many neutrons available): **R-process**



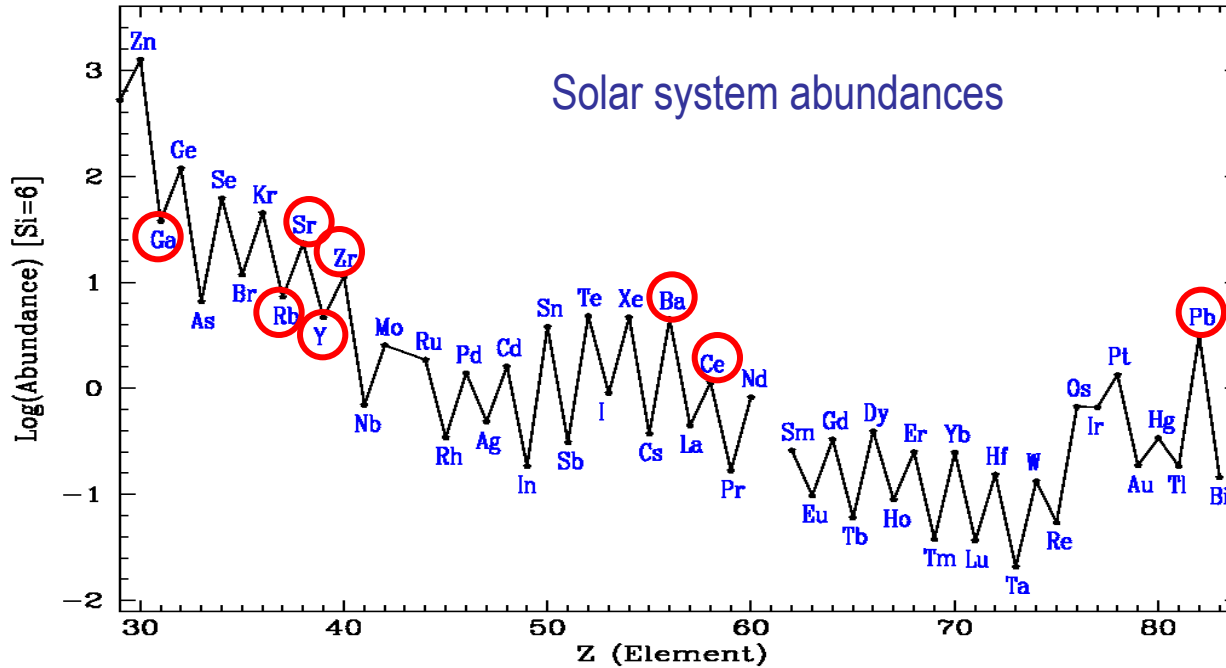
S-nuclei: in the valley of nuclear stability

R-nuclei: neutron rich

Most nuclei have mixed (S- and R-) origin, but there exist pure S- or R- nuclei

Nuclei unreachable by n-captures: P-nuclei

# The heavier than Fe-peak nuclei

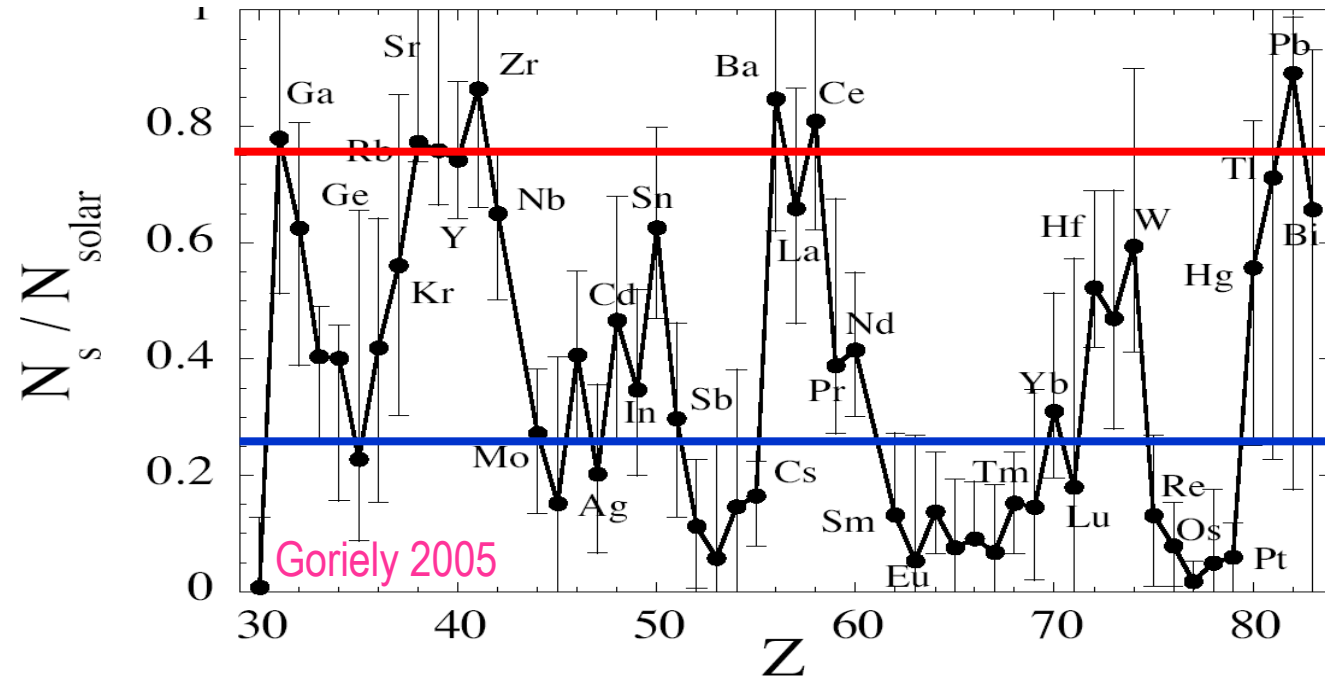


They are produced by neutron captures, on long or short timescales (s- and r- process)

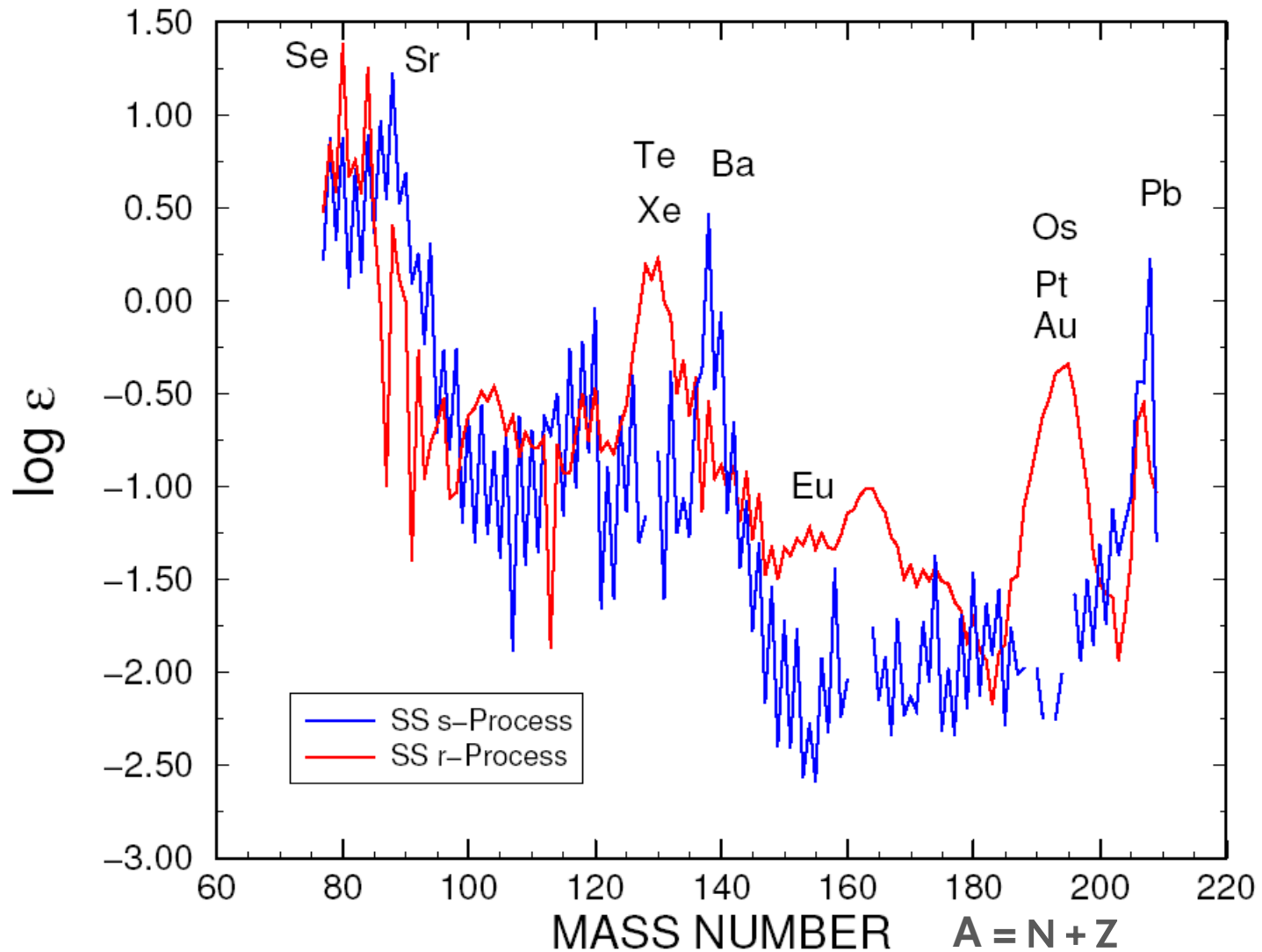
Most heavy elements have a mixed origin (s- and r- process)

The solar abundances of a handful of elements are dominated by the s-process (Sr, Y, Zr, Ba, La, Ce, Pb)

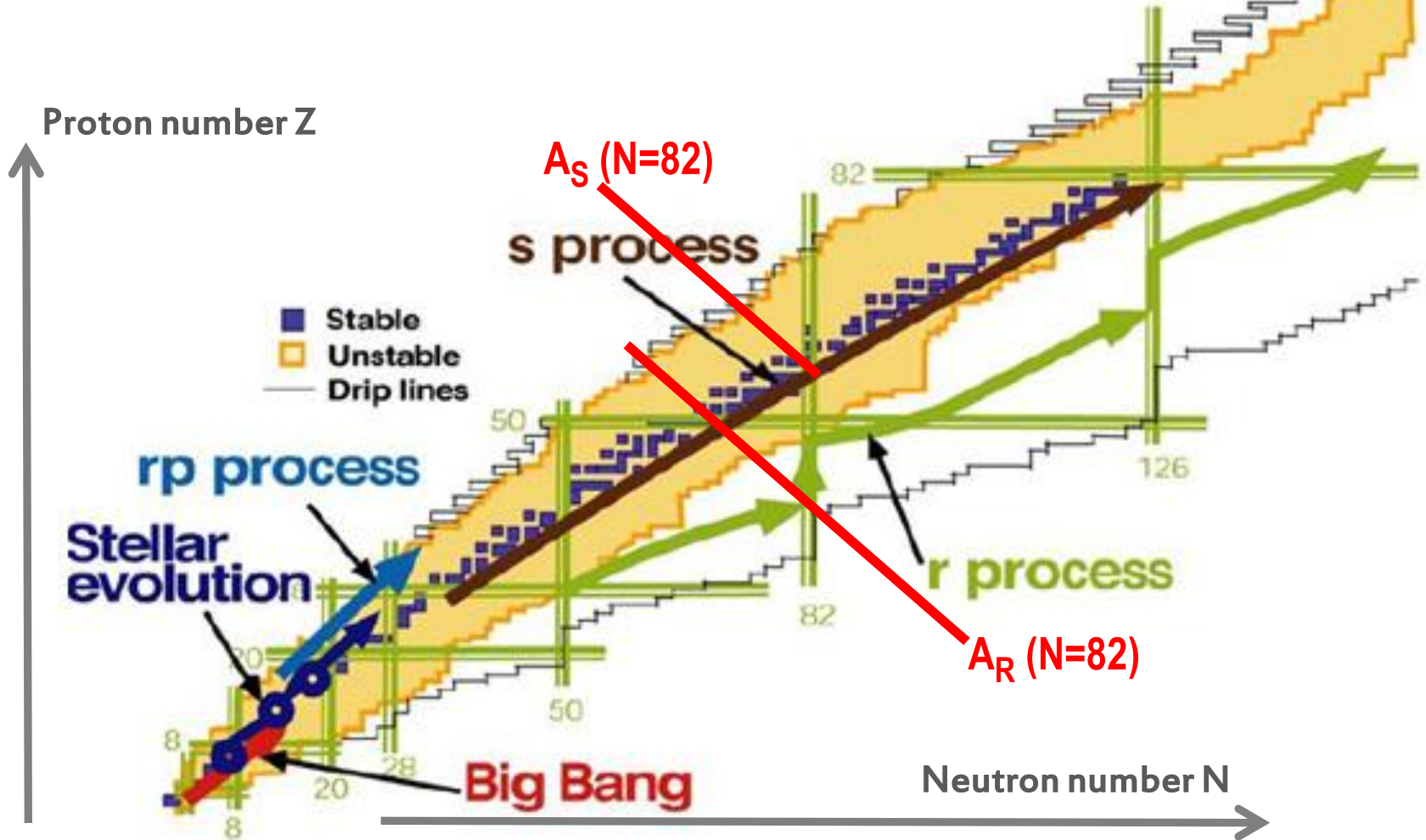
While others are dominated by the r-process (Ag, Te, I, Xe, Cs, S, Eu, Gd, Tb, Dy, Ho, Er, Tm, Lu, Re, Os, Ir, Pt, Au, U, Th)



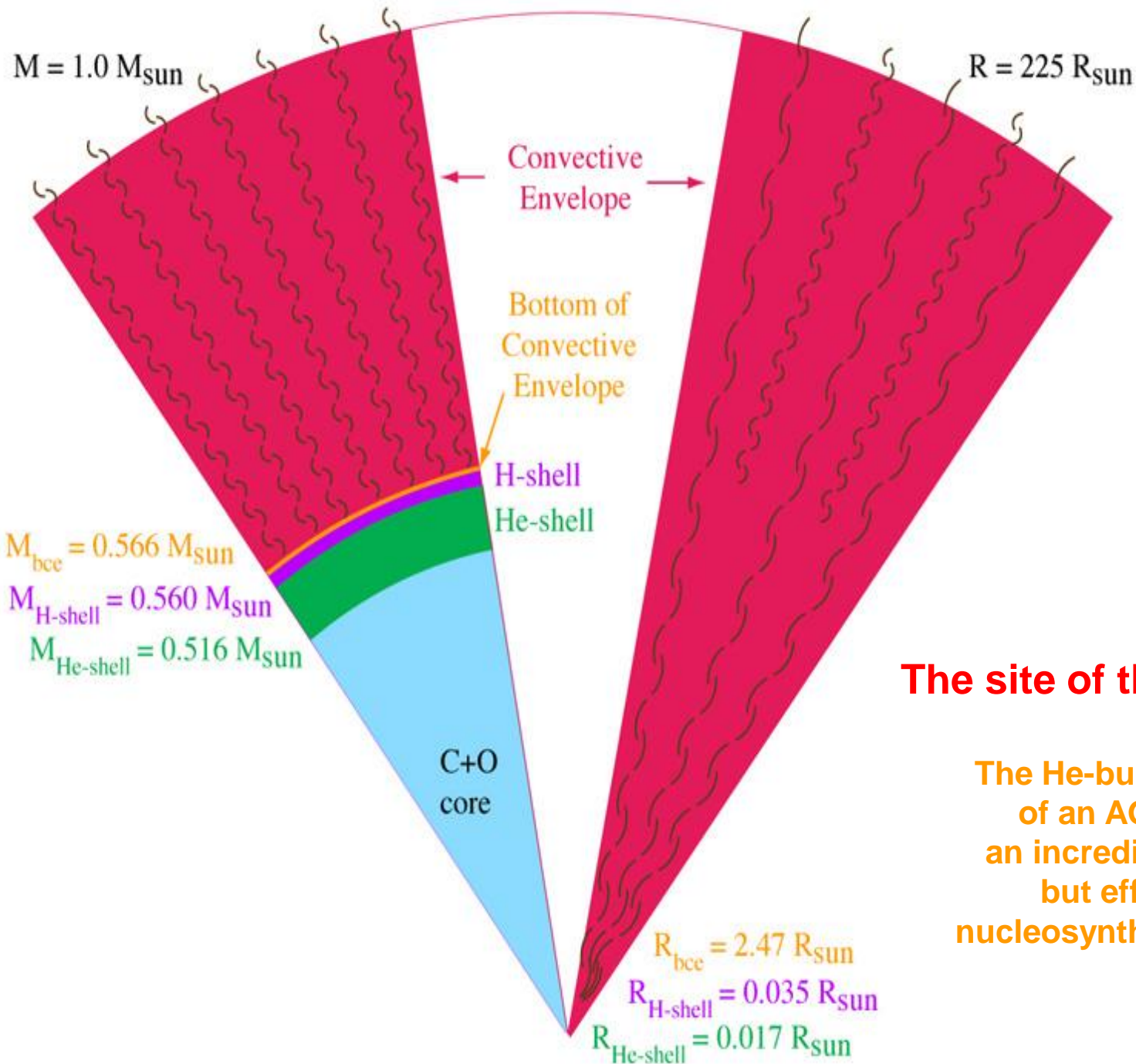
## Abundances of heavier than Fe nuclei



The abundance peaks are associated to nuclei with “magic” nucleon numbers ( $N=50, 82, 126$ ) of enhanced stability



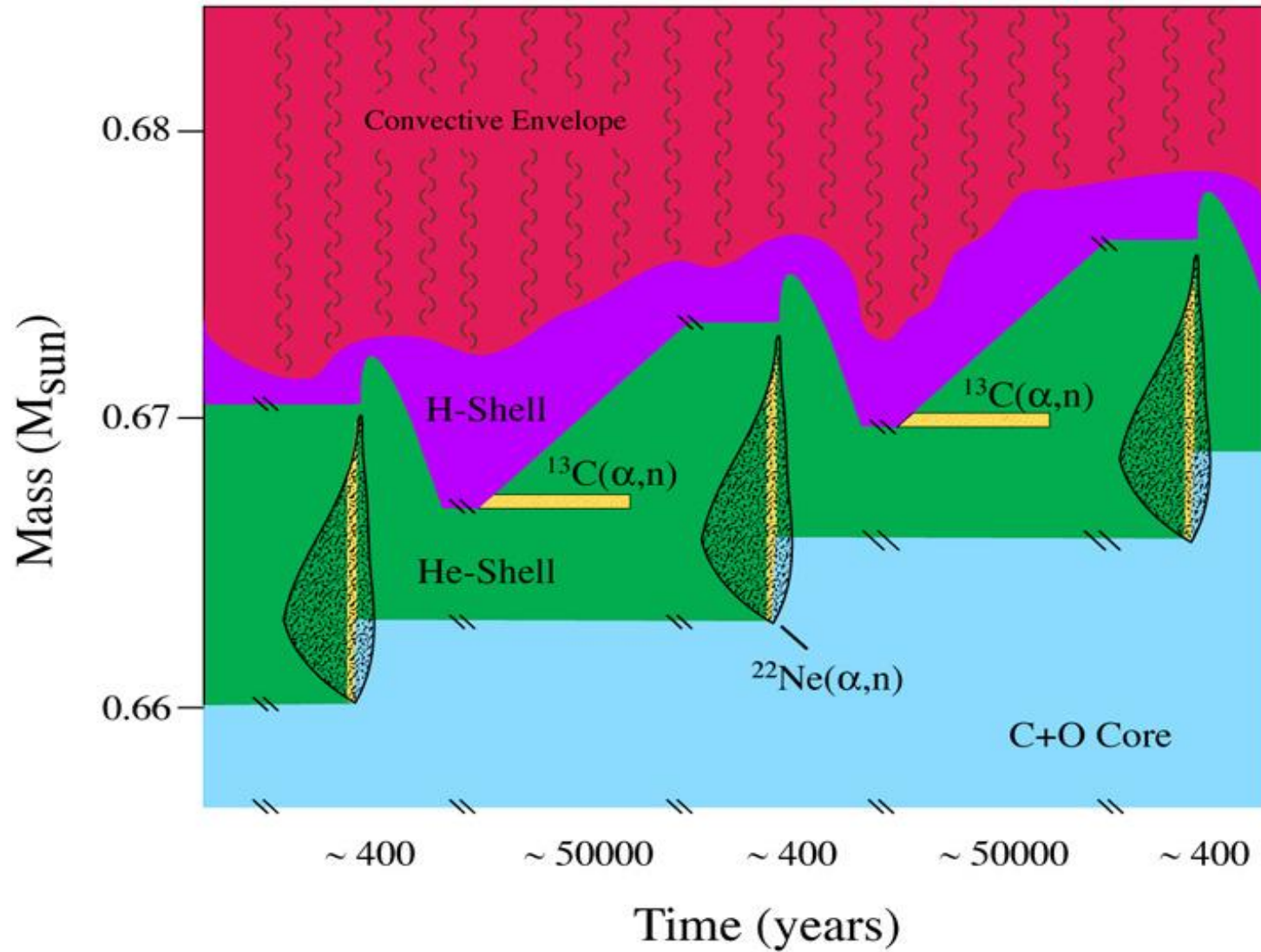
process	conditions	timescale	site
s-process (n-capture, ...)	$T \sim 0.1$ GK $\tau_n \sim 1-1000$ yr, $n_n \sim 10^{7-8}/\text{cm}^3$	$10^2$ yr and $10^{5-6}$ yrs	Massive stars (weak) Low mass AGB stars (main)
r-process (n-capture, ...)	$T \sim 1-2$ GK $\tau_n \sim \mu\text{s}$ , $n_n \sim 10^{24}/\text{cm}^3$	$< 1$ s	Type II Supernovae ? Neutron Star Mergers ?
p-process ( $(\gamma, n)$ , ...)	$T \sim 2-3$ GK	$\sim 1$ s	Type II Supernovae



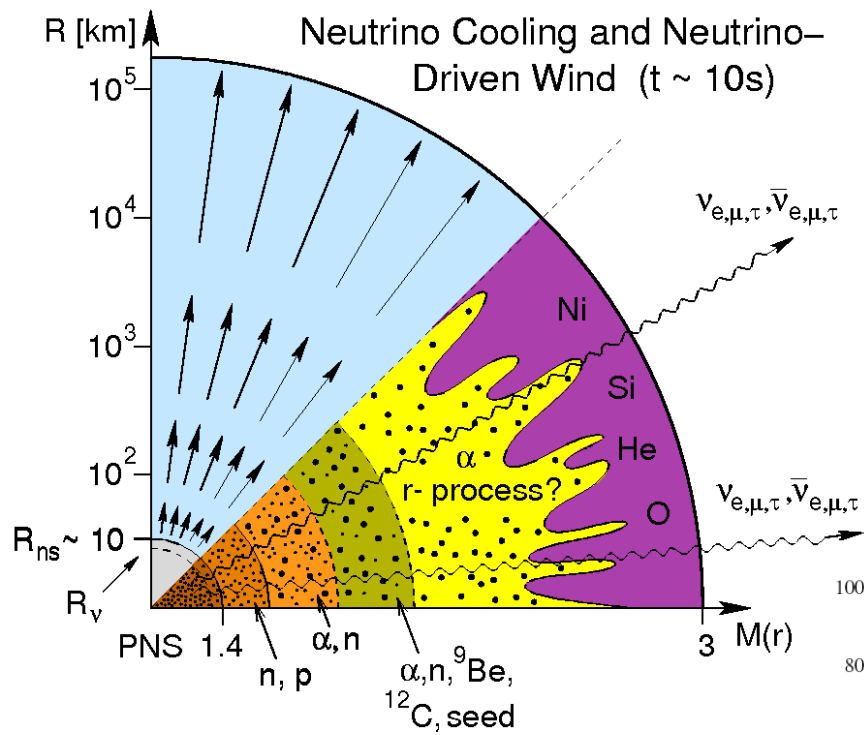
## The site of the s-process

The He-burning shell  
 of an AGB star:  
 an incredibly small,  
 but efficient,  
 nucleosynthesis factory

Neutrons are released through  $C13(\alpha,n)O16$  or  $Ne22(\alpha,n)Mg25$



During **thermal pulses**, S-nuclei are convected to upper regions, then to the stellar envelope and then to the surface, from where **stellar wind** expels them to the **interstellar medium**

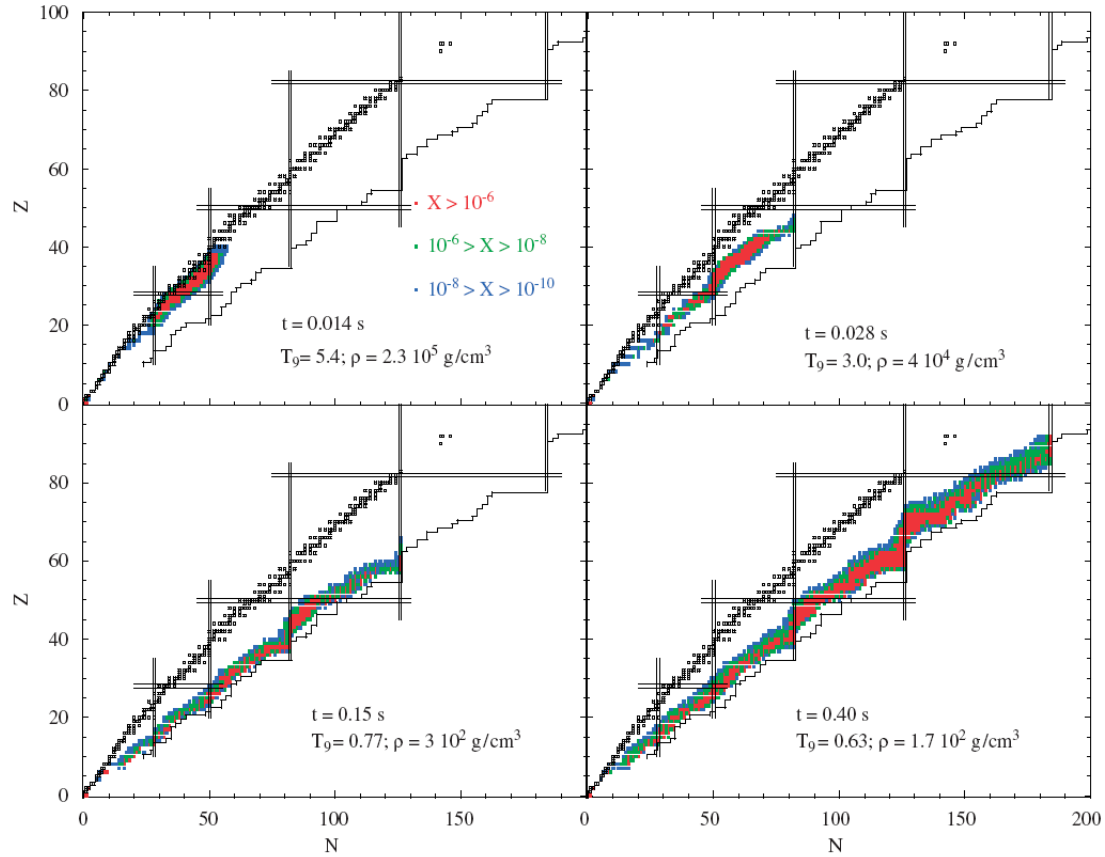


The site of the r-process

The innermost layers of core collapse supernovae (?)

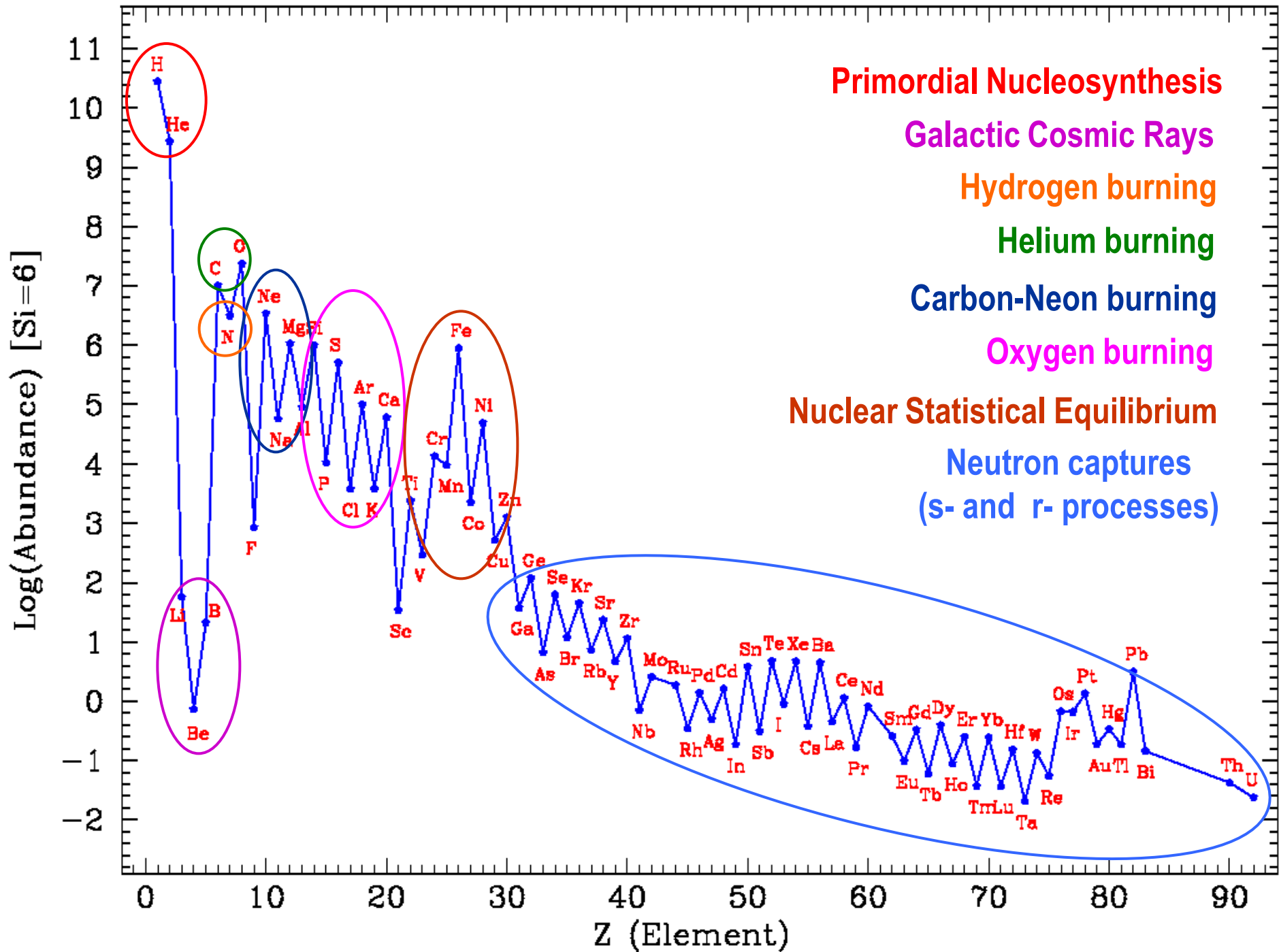
or, neutron star mergers ?

R-process path



R-process studies are much more demanding in nuclear physics than those of any other nucleosynthetic process because they involve *nuclei far from the stability valley*

Quantity		Effect
$S_n$	neutron separation energy	path
$T_{1/2}$	$\beta$ -decay half-lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• abundance pattern</li> <li>• timescale</li> </ul>
$P_n$	$\beta$ -delayed n-emission branchings	final abundance pattern
fission (branchings and products)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• endpoint</li> <li>• abundance pattern?</li> <li>• degree of fission cycling</li> </ul>
G	partition functions	• path (very weakly)
$N_A \langle \sigma v \rangle$	neutron capture rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• final abundance pattern during freezeout ?</li> <li>• conditions for waiting point approximation</li> </ul>



## Summary of Origins

Species	Site	Species	Site
H	Big Bang	Ar	Oxygen burning
He	Big Bang + stars	K	Oxygen burning + s-process
Li	Big Bang, L* + nu process	Ca	Oxygen burning
Be	Cosmic rays	Sc	s-process
B	Nu-process	Ti	Expl Si burning
C	Helium burning, L*+M*	V	Expl Si burning
N	CNO cycle, L*+ VMS	Cr	Expl Si burning
O	Helium burning	Mn	Expl Si burning, Ia
F	Nu-process	Fe	Expl Si burning, Ia
Ne	Carbon burning	Co	alpha-rich freeze out
Na	Carbon burning	Ni	alpha-rich freeze out
Mg	Carbon burning	Cu	alpha-rich freeze out + s-process
Al	Neon burning	Zn	Nu-powered wind
Si	Oxygen burning	p-proc	Explosive neon burning, O-burning
P	Neon Burning	s-proc	Helium burning, L* and M*
S	Oxygen burning	r-proc	Nu wind, jets?
Cl	Oxygen burning + s-proc		

