

# The Earth's atmosphere



Bibliography: Lena's book (chapter 2) and other sources,  
*for ex., book Meteorology Today (Ahrens)*

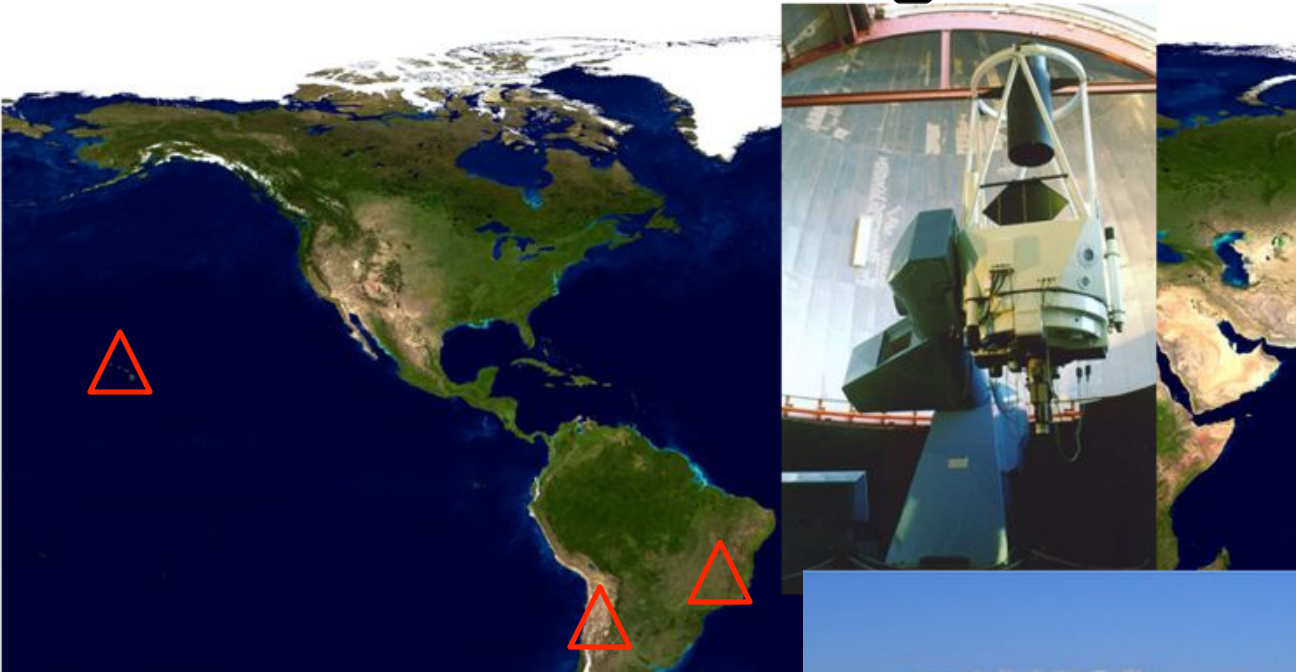
[www.pbase.com/psinclair/la\\_silla](http://www.pbase.com/psinclair/la_silla)

Prof. Jorge Meléndez

# Points to discuss at the beginning of the class

- What is the Earth atmosphere?
- Temperature profile?
- Pressure profile?
- Composition profile?
- What are the main problems for observational astronomy?

# Most observations are performed on the ground



We must know the Earth atmosphere to understand the limitations for ground observations



# O P D - Estação Meteorológica

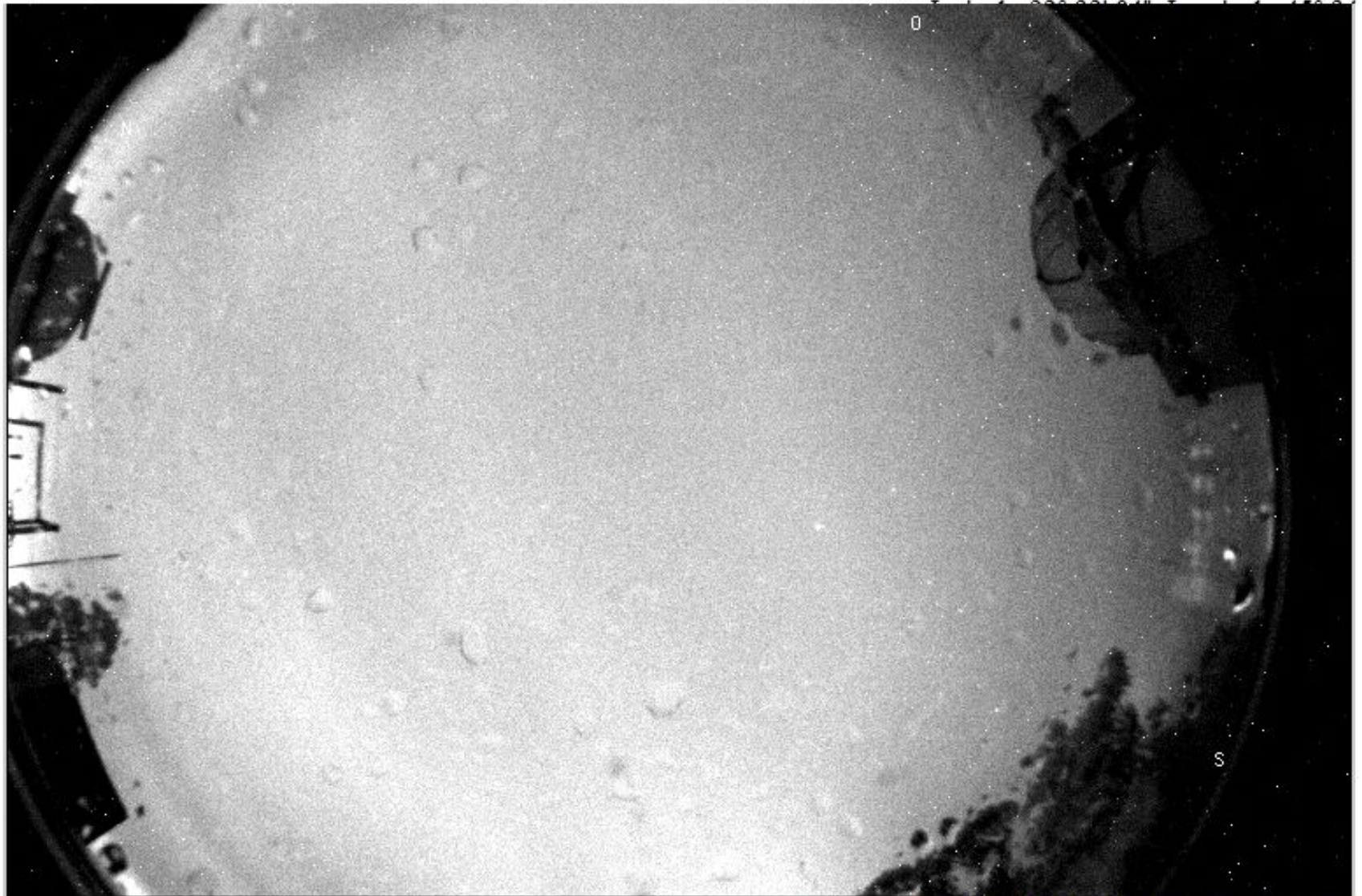
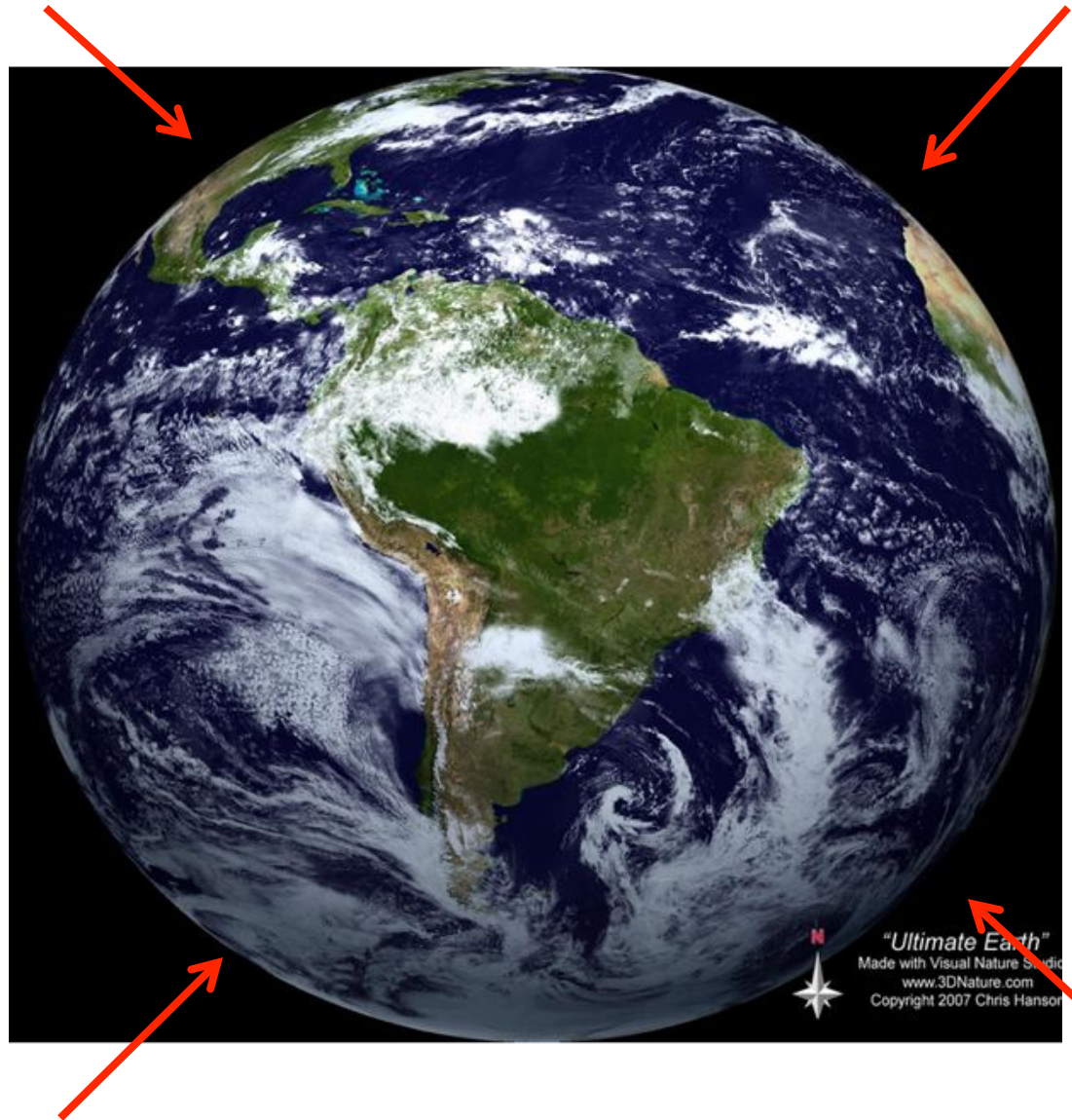


Imagem em 06/March/2014 04:23:18h [765x510] pxs

Earth's atmosphere is a fine layer of gas that surrounds Earth and that is kept by gravity

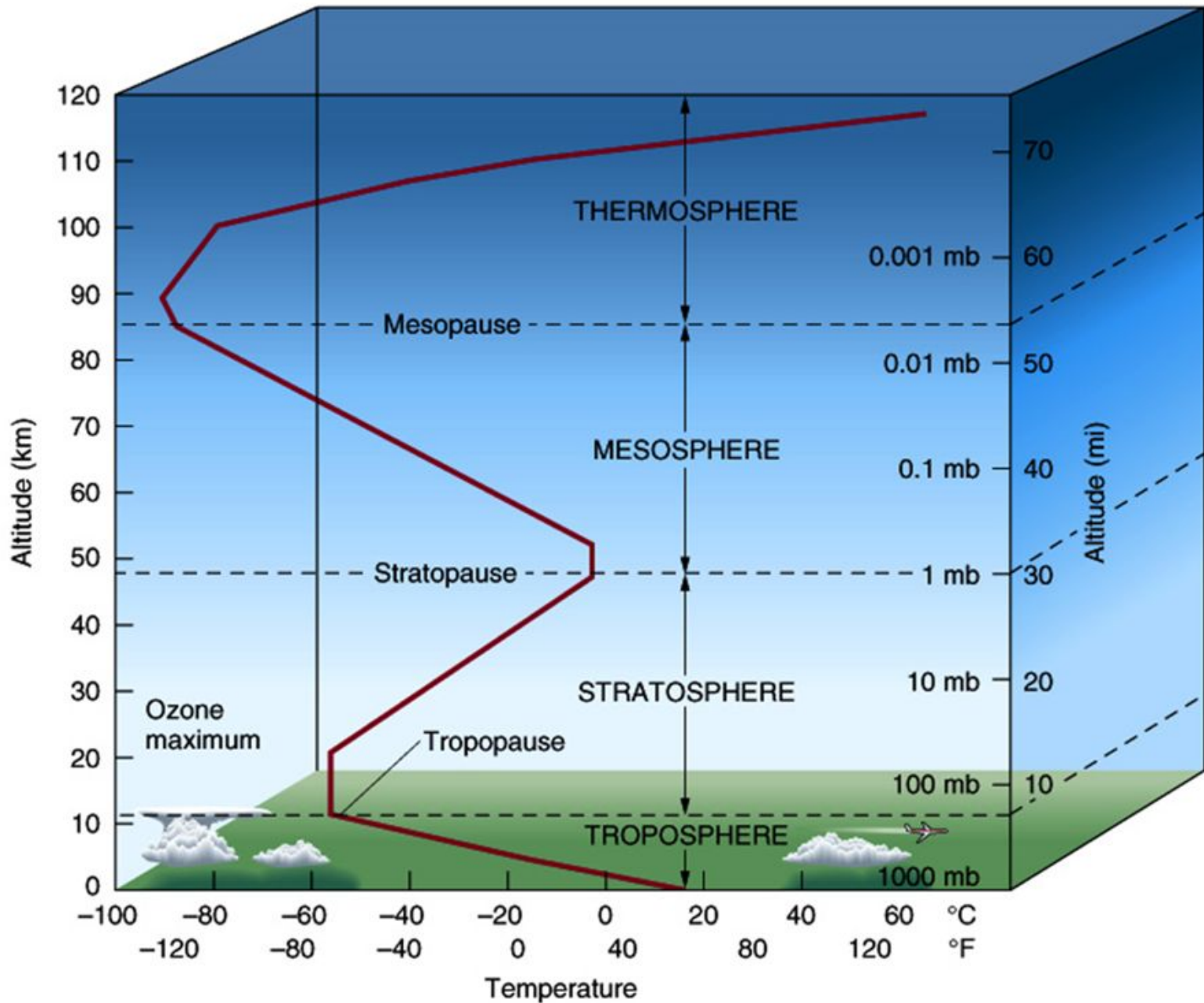


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● **FIGURE 1.2** The earth's atmosphere as viewed from space. The atmosphere is the thin blue region along the edge of the earth.



# Structure of Earth's atmosphere



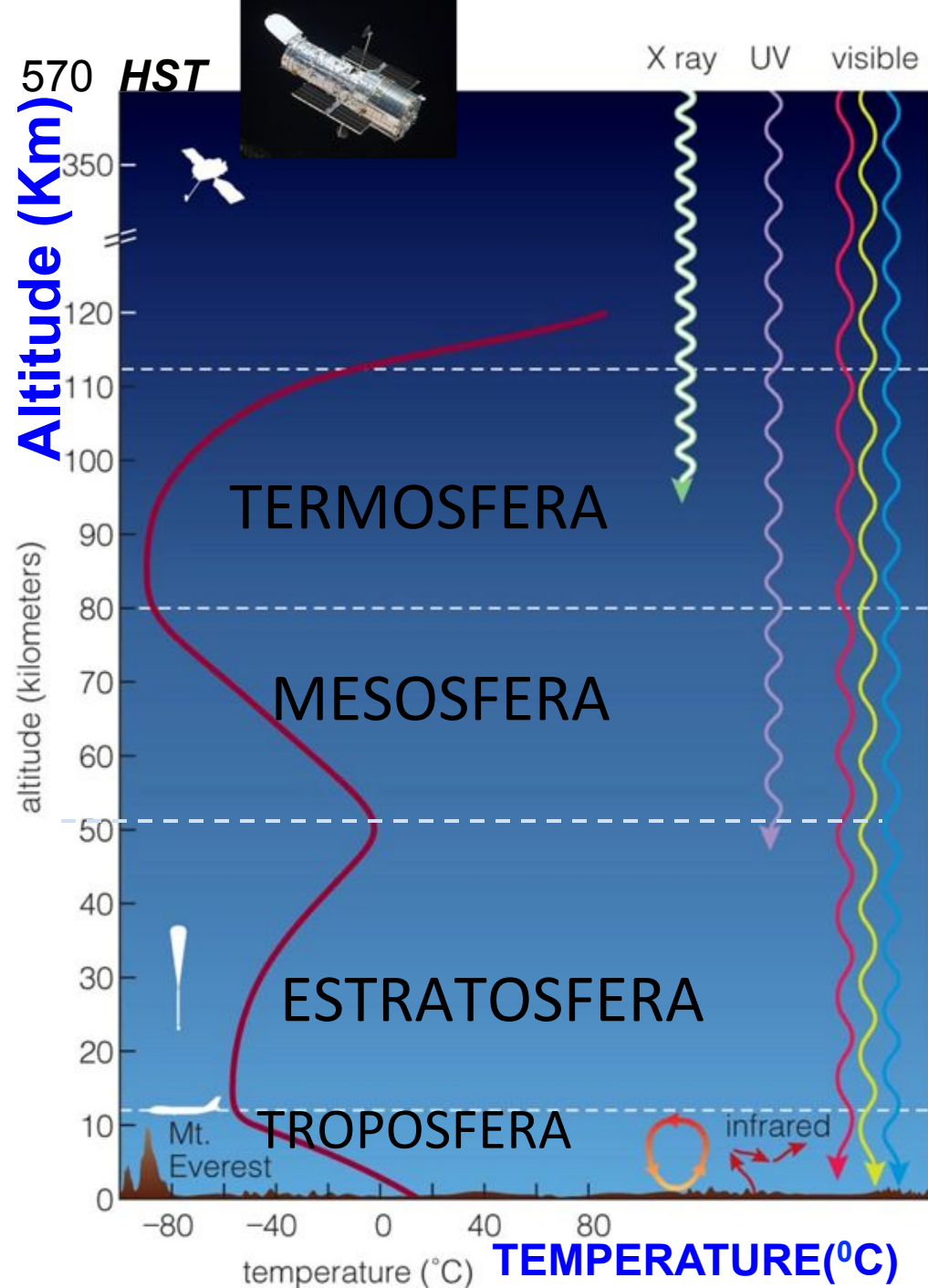
# Temperature profile

Solar UV light and X-rays heat and ionize gas

Ozone decreases

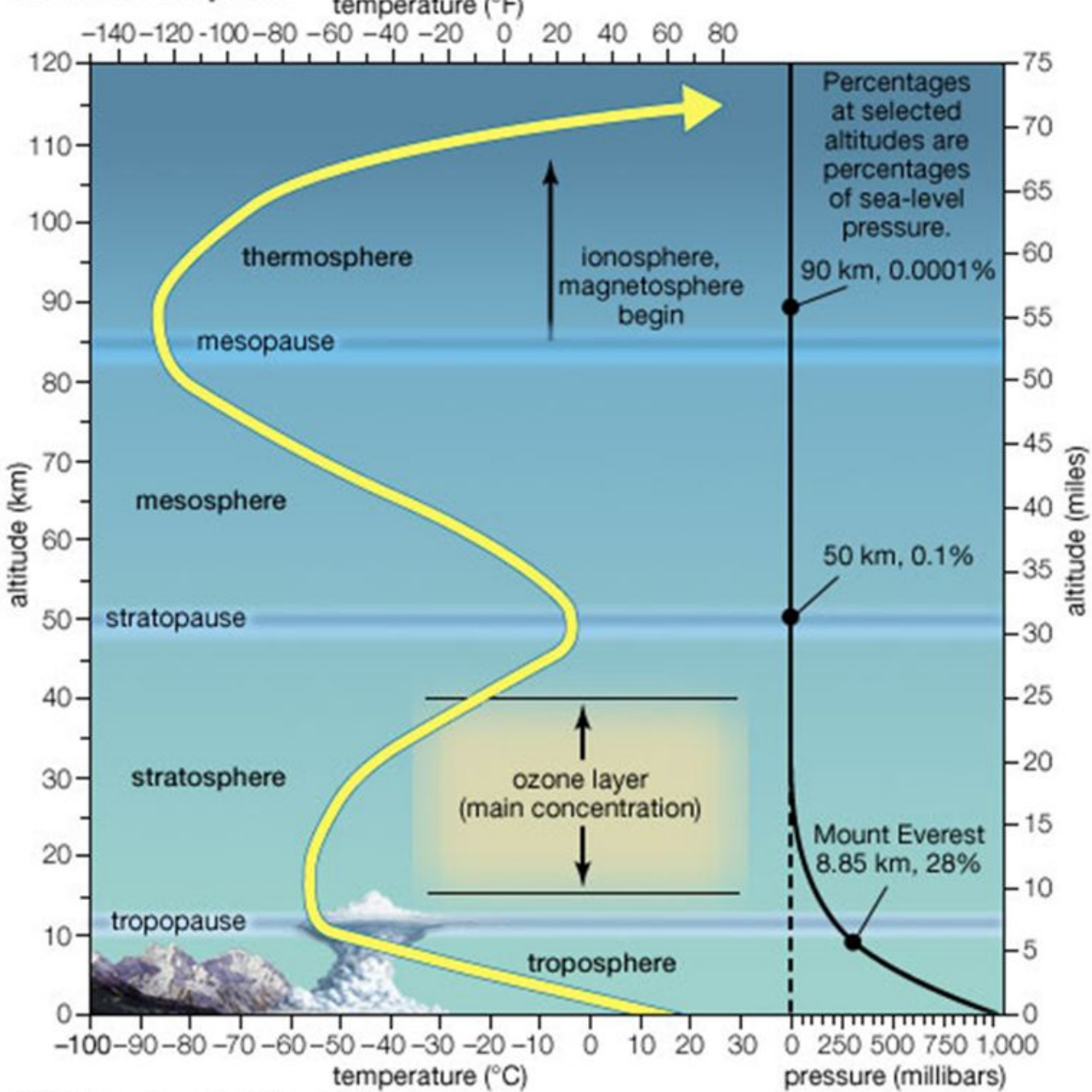
Warm by ozone UV absorption

Warm by the ground and convection





# Earth's atmosphere



Pressure:  
decrease exp.  
with height  $z$

$$P(z) = P_0 \exp(-z/H)$$

$H$ : height scale  
( $=RT_m/M_0g$ )

Chemical  
composition  
aprox. constant  
until 90 km

$$\rho = \frac{MP}{kT}$$

$$H = RT_m / M_0 g$$

(scale height)

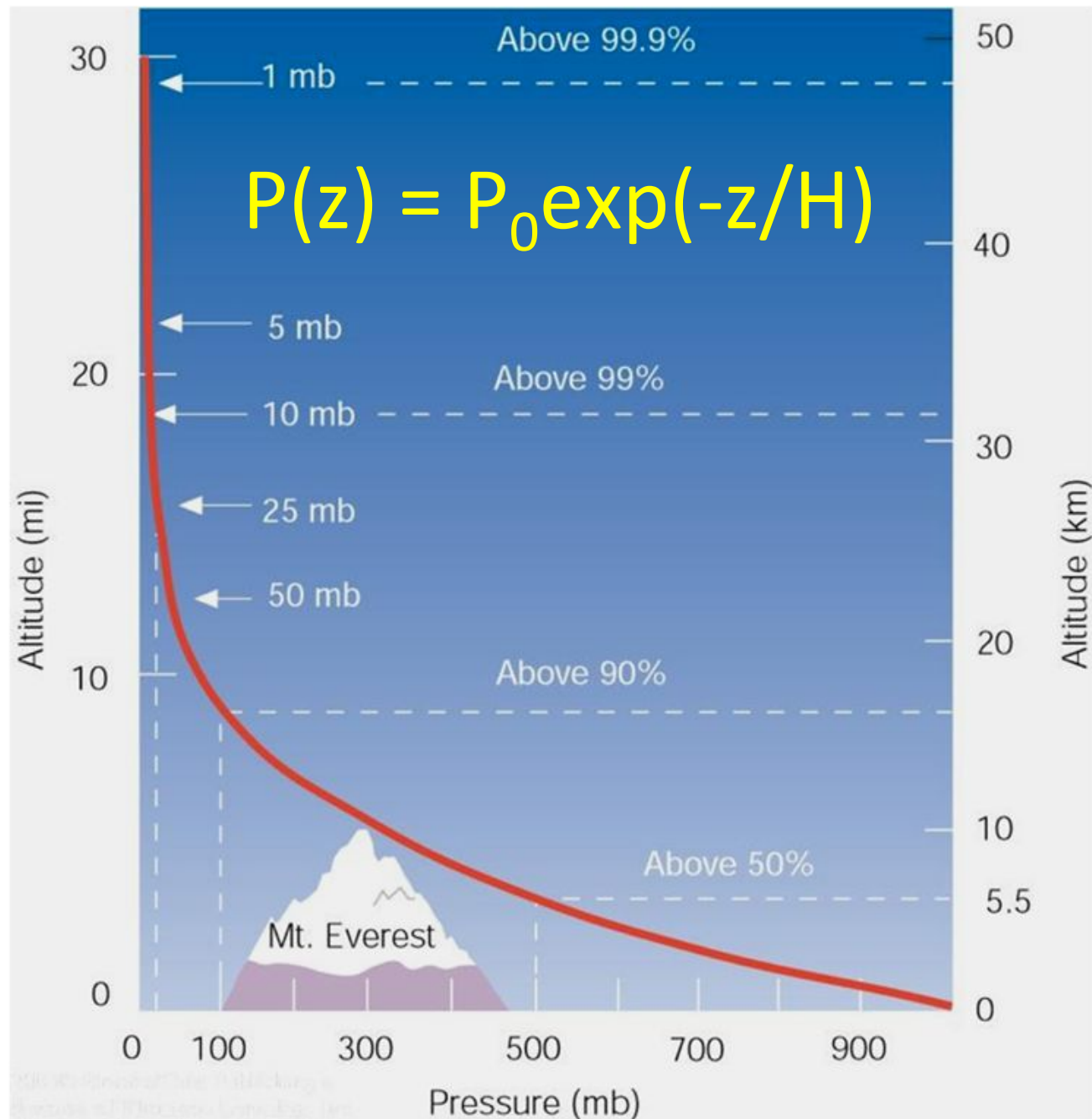
R: gas constant  
( $8.23 \text{ J K}^{-1} \text{ mol}^{-1}$ )

$T_m$ : mean temp.  
( $0^\circ \text{ C}$ )

$M_0$ : mean mol.  
mass ( $0.029 \text{ kg}$ )

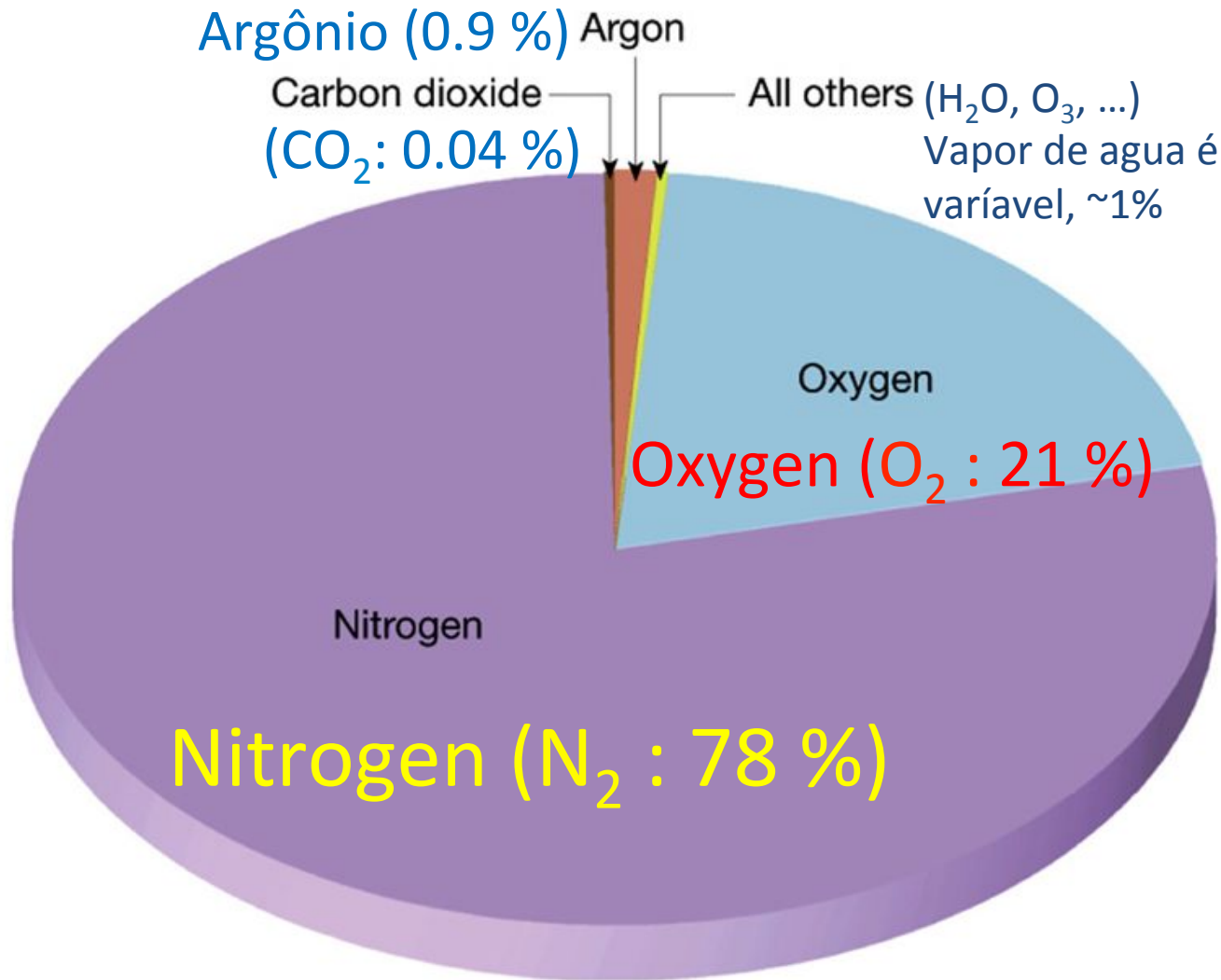
g: gravity

$$H = 8 \text{ km}$$



Which are the main constituents of the atmosphere?

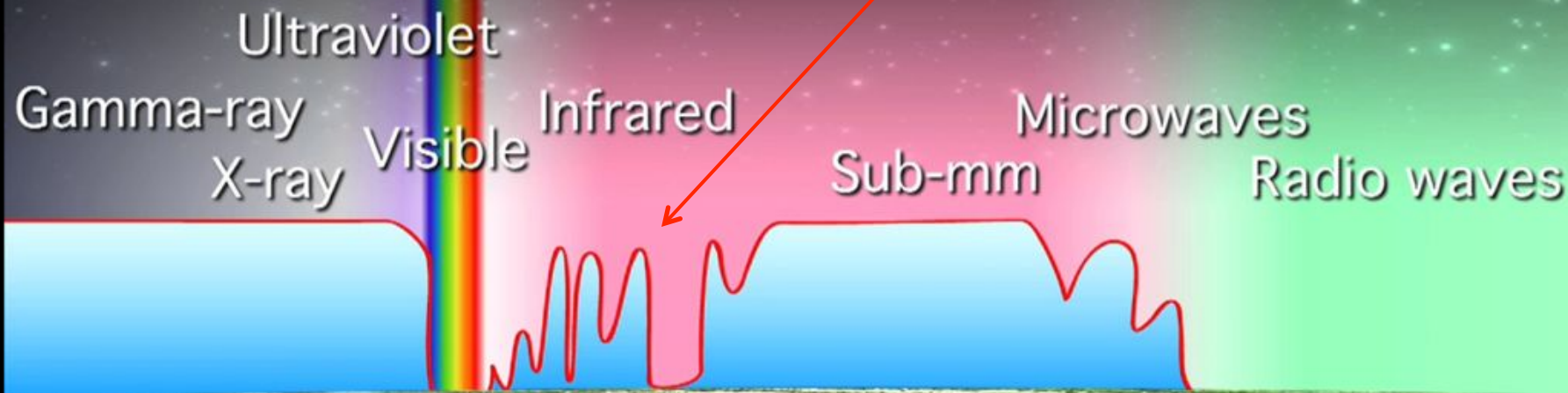
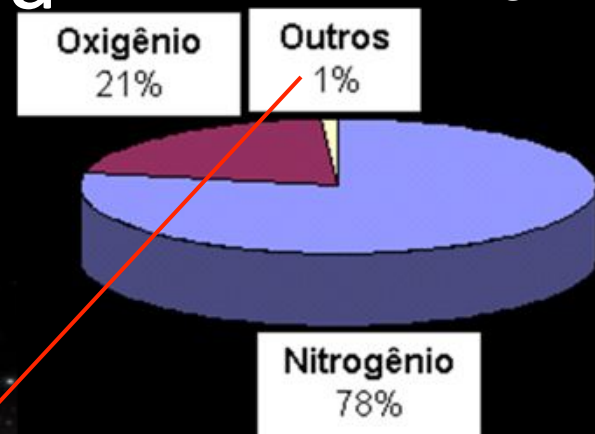
# Constituents of the atmosphere



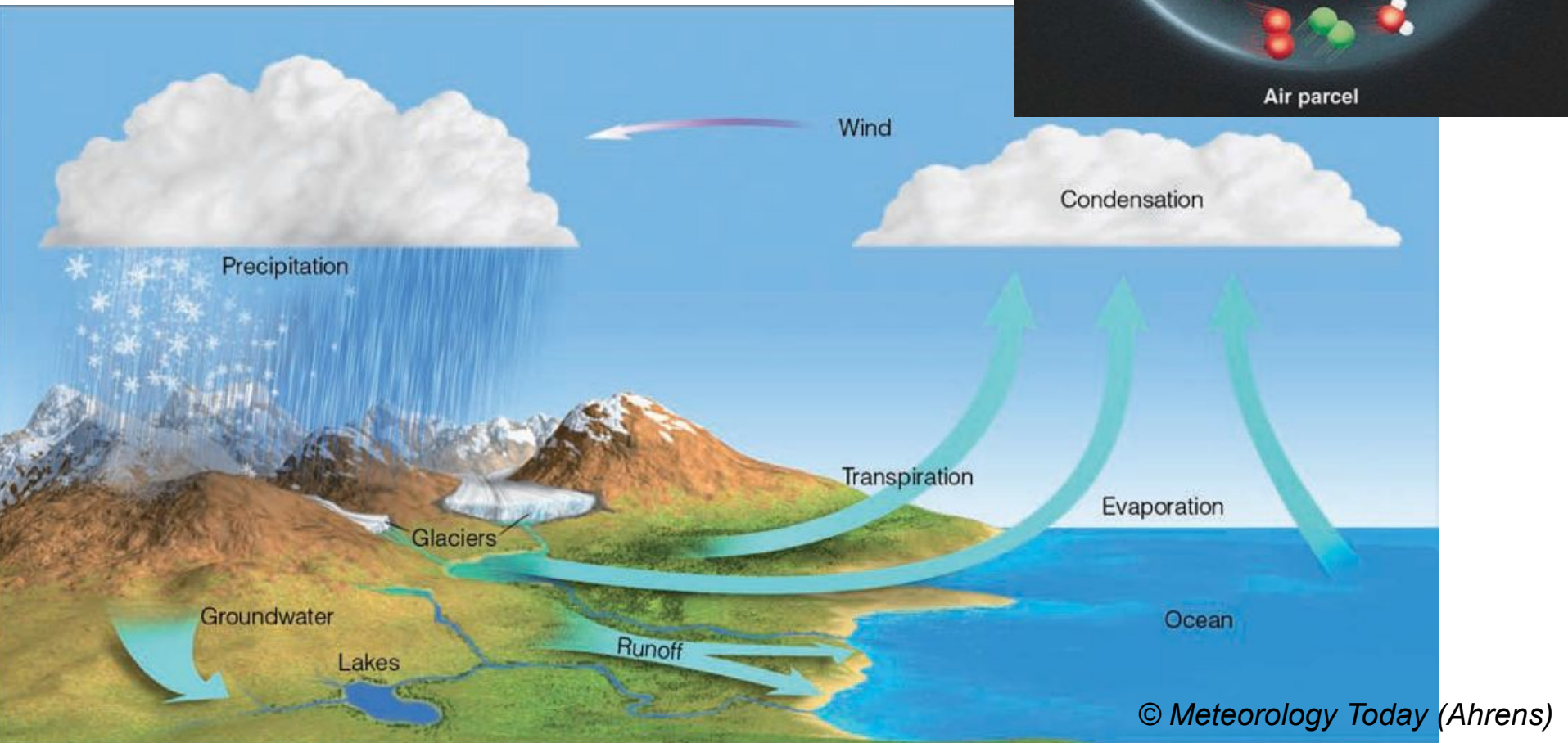
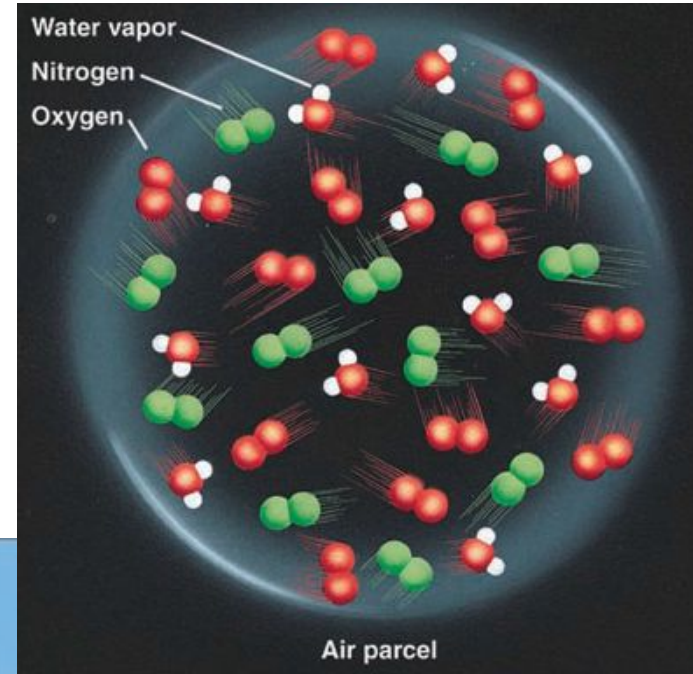
N & O are the main constituents and its proportion is relatively constant between 0-90 km

# Constituents of the atmosphere ( $\text{CO}_2$ , $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ , $\text{O}_3$ , ...)

The minor (and variable) constituents are important sources of opacity in the atmosphere



# Water vapor: one of the most important sources of opacity



# Measurement of the water vapor content

The *fractional content, mixing ratio, or specific humidity* is:

$$r = \frac{\text{mass of H}_2\text{O per m}^3}{\text{mass of air per m}^3}$$

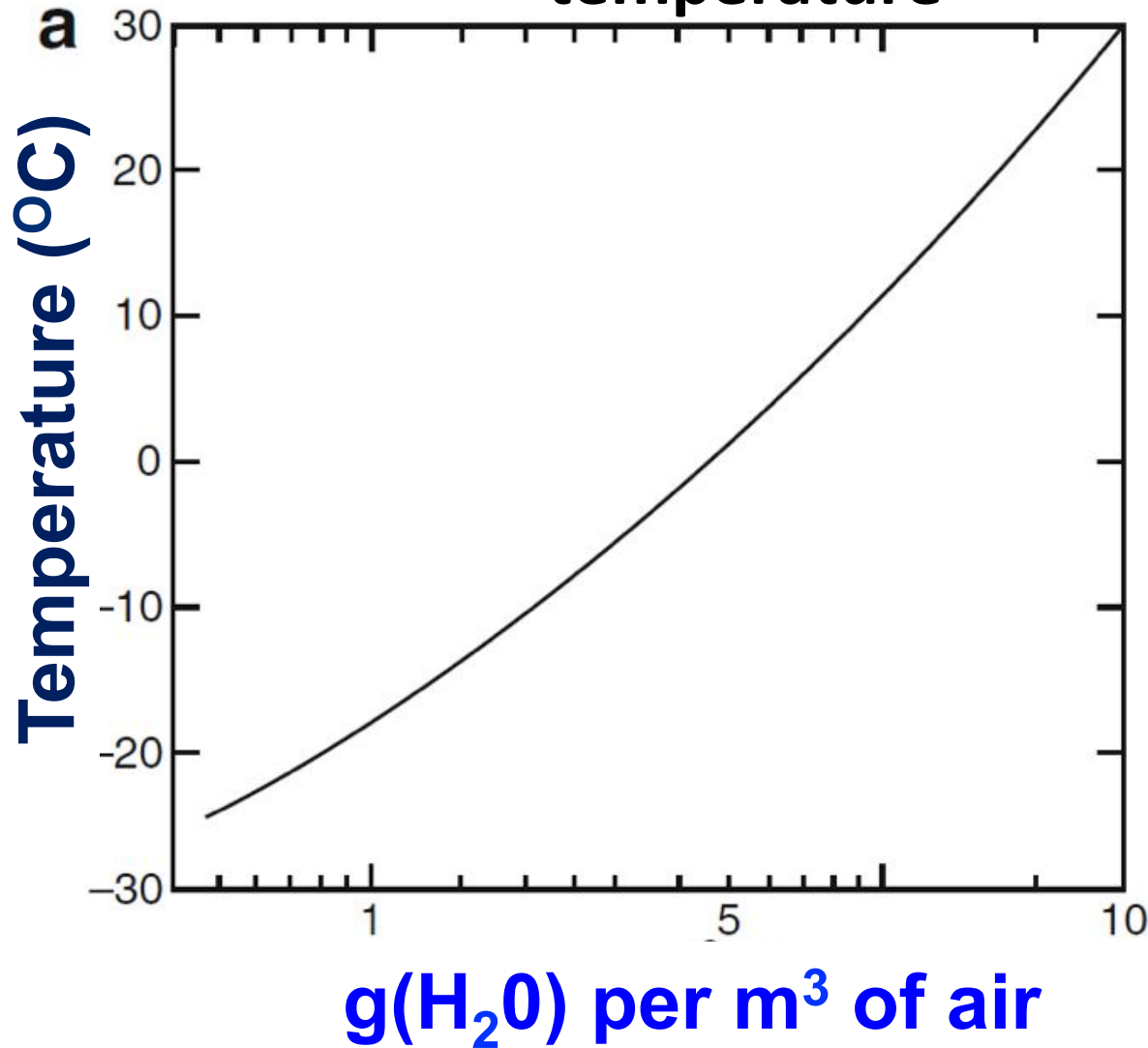
•  $0 < r \leq r_s(T)$  (saturation)

$[r] = \text{g/Kg}$

Very sensitive to:

- Temperature
- $z$  (altitude)
- Latitude
- time

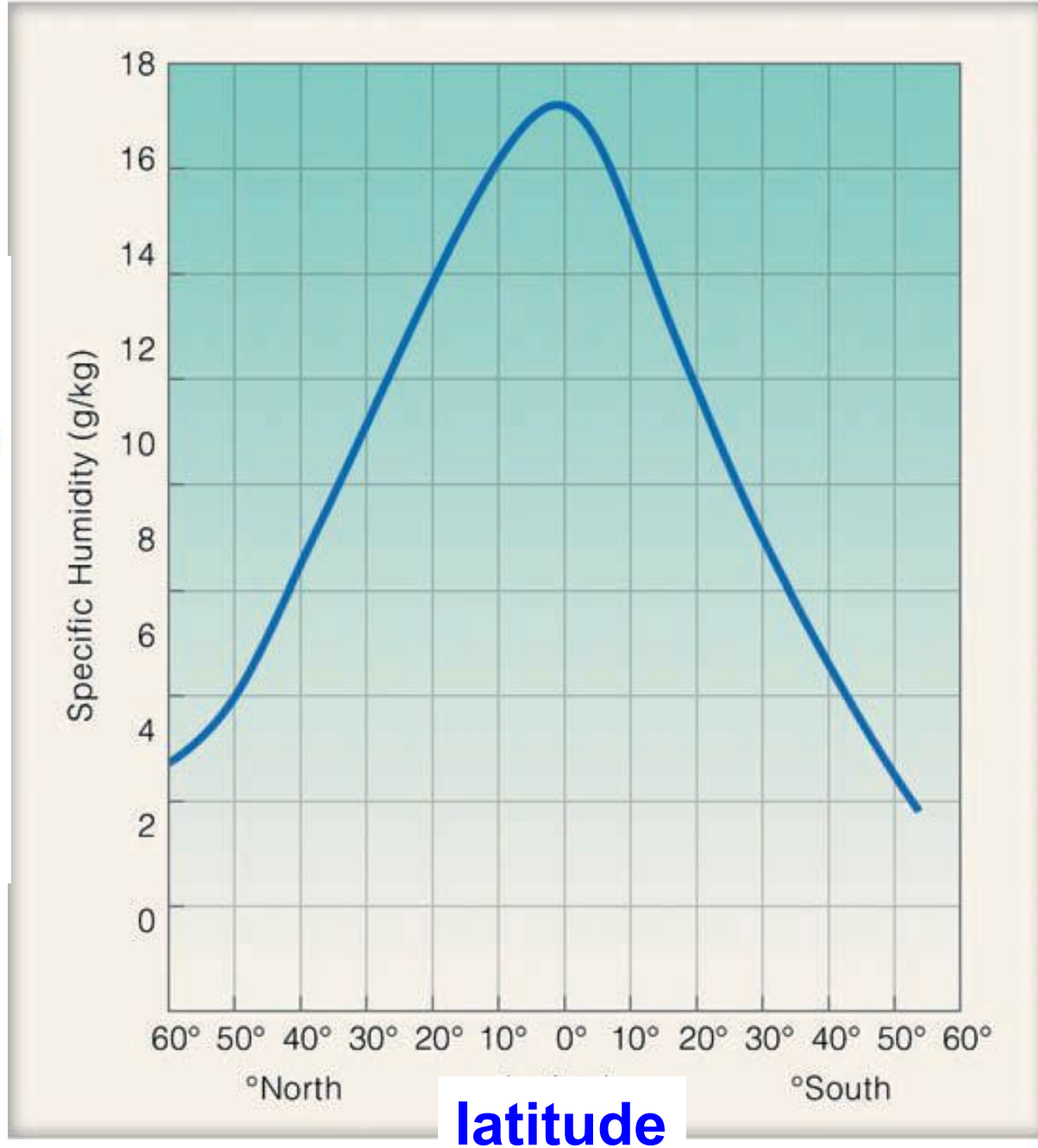
# Mass concentration of water vapor per volume of saturated air at normal pressure as a function of temperature





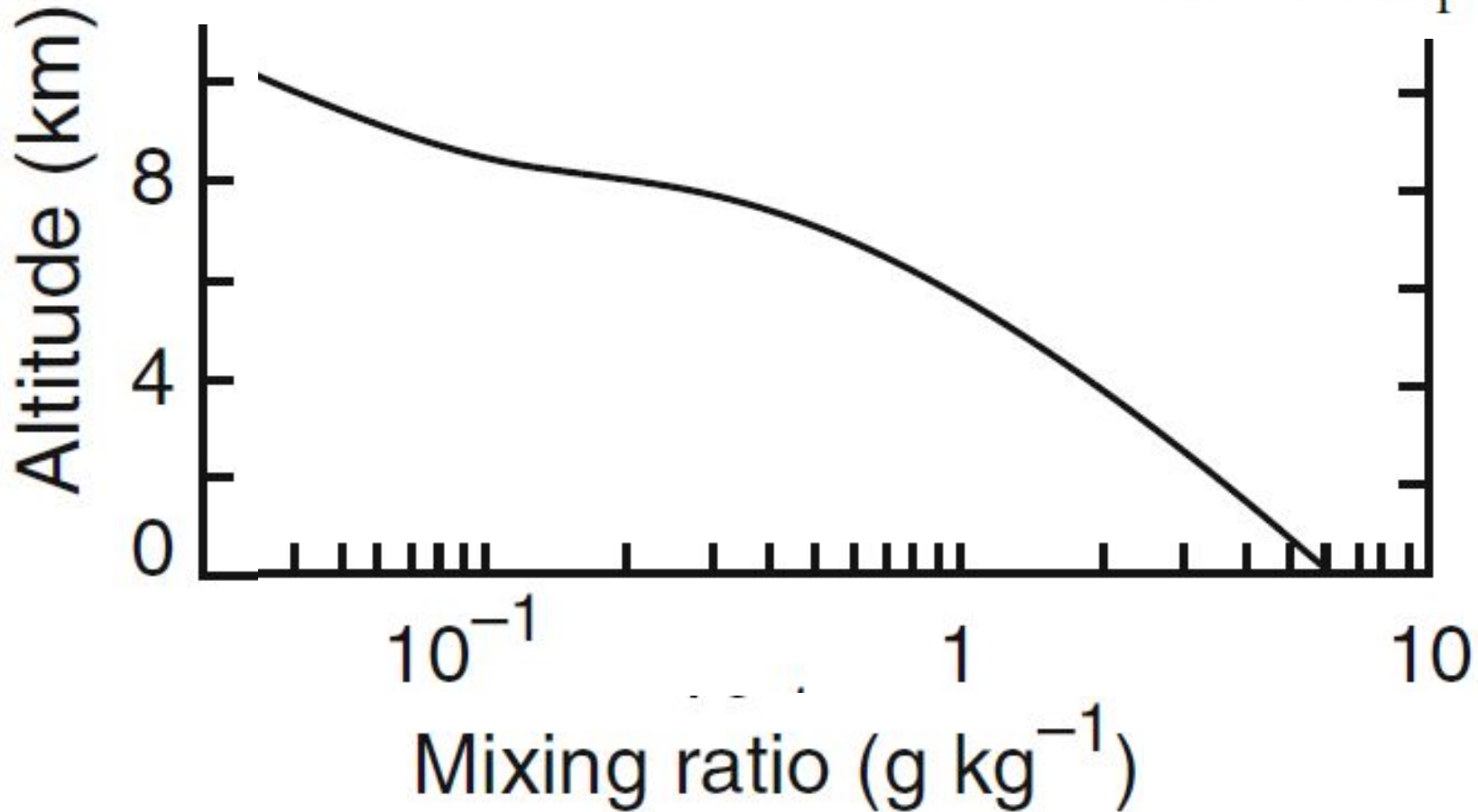
# Mixing ratio as a function of latitude

$$r = \frac{\text{mass of H}_2\text{O per m}^3}{\text{mass of air per m}^3}$$



# Concentration of water vapor as a function of altitude

$$r = \frac{\text{mass of H}_2\text{O per m}^3}{\text{mass of air per m}^3}$$



# Precipitable water

Precipitable water above altitude  $z_0$ :

$$w(z_0) = \int_{z_0}^{\infty} N_{\text{H}_2\text{O}} dz$$

where  $N_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}(z)$  is the number of molecules/volume

For normal pressure and temperature  $P_0$  and  $T_0$ , respectively,

$$N_{\text{H}_2\text{O}} [\text{m}^{-3}] = 4.3 \times 10^{25} \frac{P}{P_0} \frac{T}{T_0} r(z).$$

# Column of precipitable wapor vapor

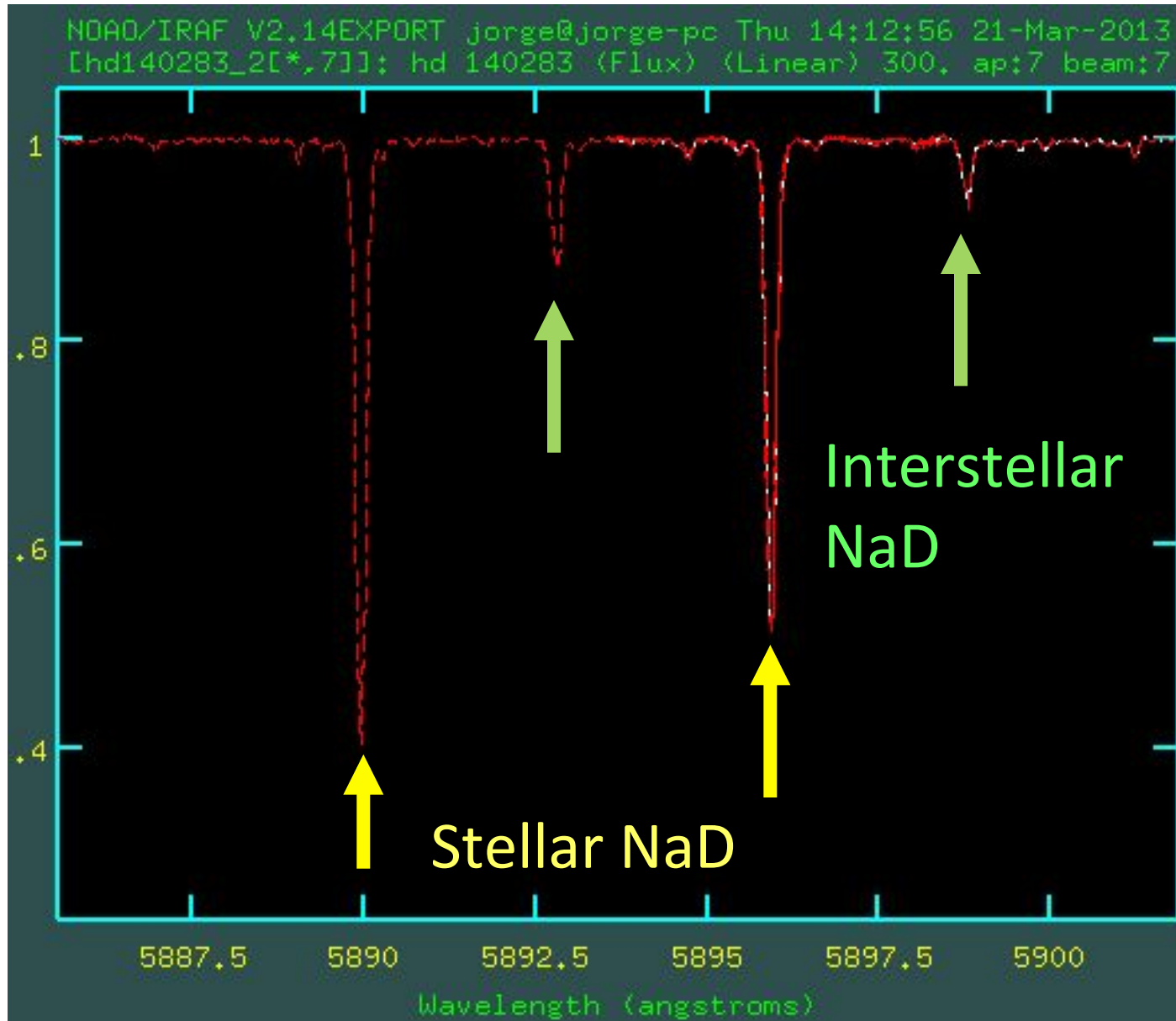
$$h_{\text{H}_2\text{O}} [\text{cm}] = \rho_0 [\text{g cm}^{-3}] \int_{z_0}^{\infty} r(z) e^{-z/H} dz,$$

where  $\rho_0$  is air density at  $z_0$

$r(z)$  changes rapidly: scale height of water vapor is (3km)  $\ll$  dry air (8 km)

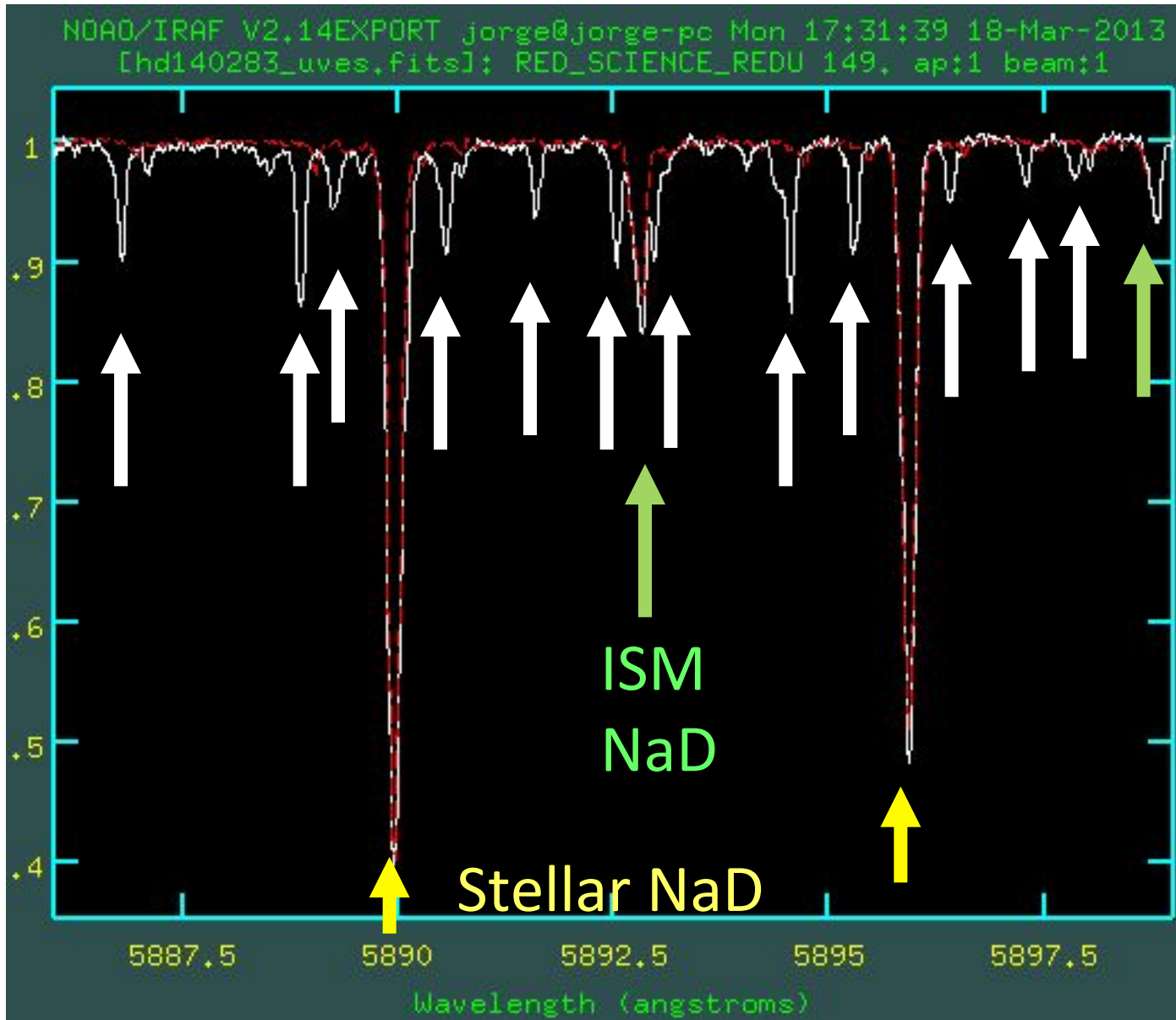
# **Comparison of water vapor at 2 diferent observatories**

# Keck (4.2km) spectrum of HD140283

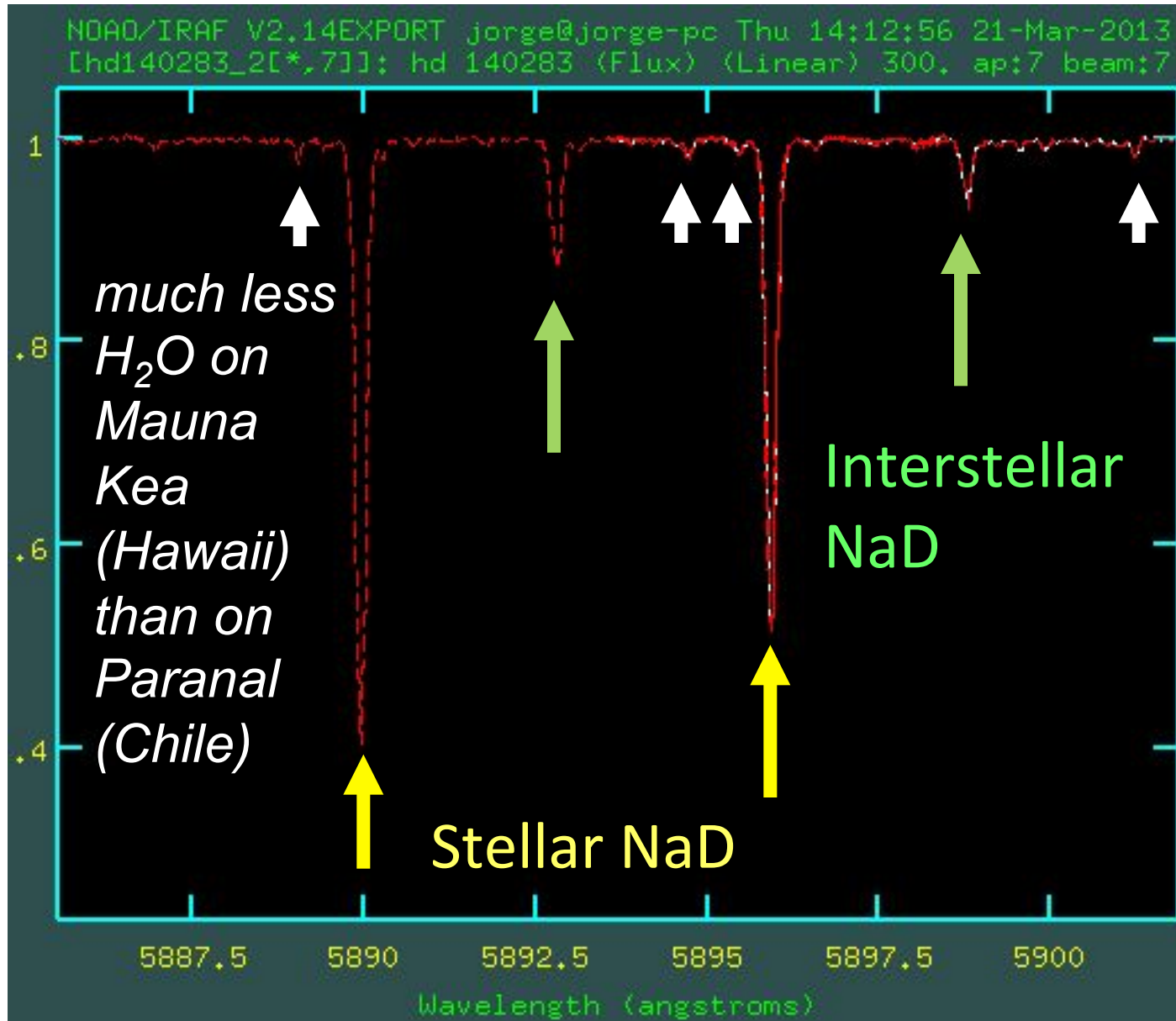


# Keck (4.2km) vs. VLT (2.7km)

Water vapor clearly present on Paranal (VLT)



# Keck (4.2km) spectrum of HD140283





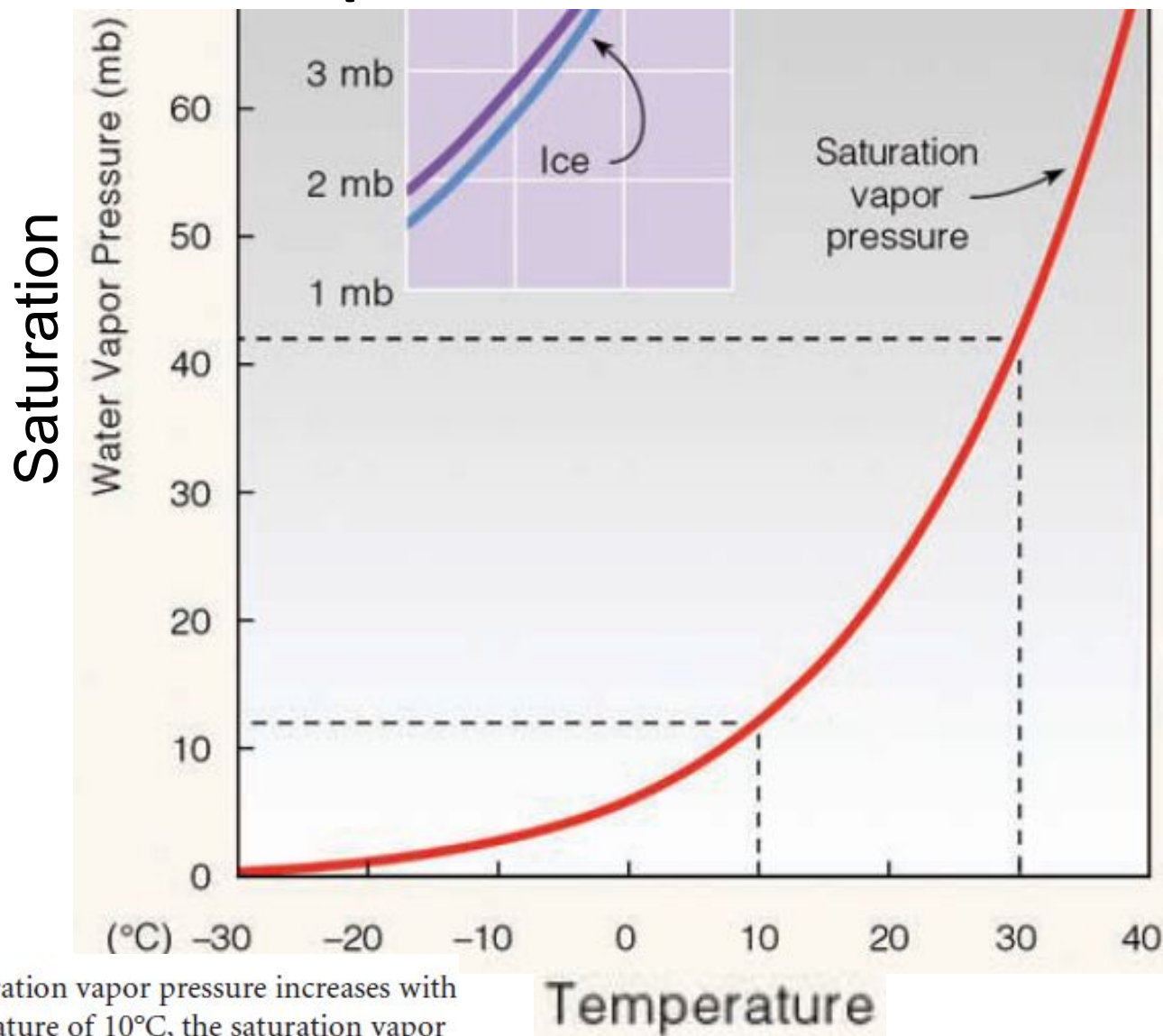
# Umidade relativa (Relative humidity: RH)

$$RH = \frac{\text{water vapor content}}{\text{water vapor capacity}}$$

$$RH = \frac{\text{water vapor content}}{\text{Maximum water vapor content for saturation at a given T}}$$

# Water vapor content

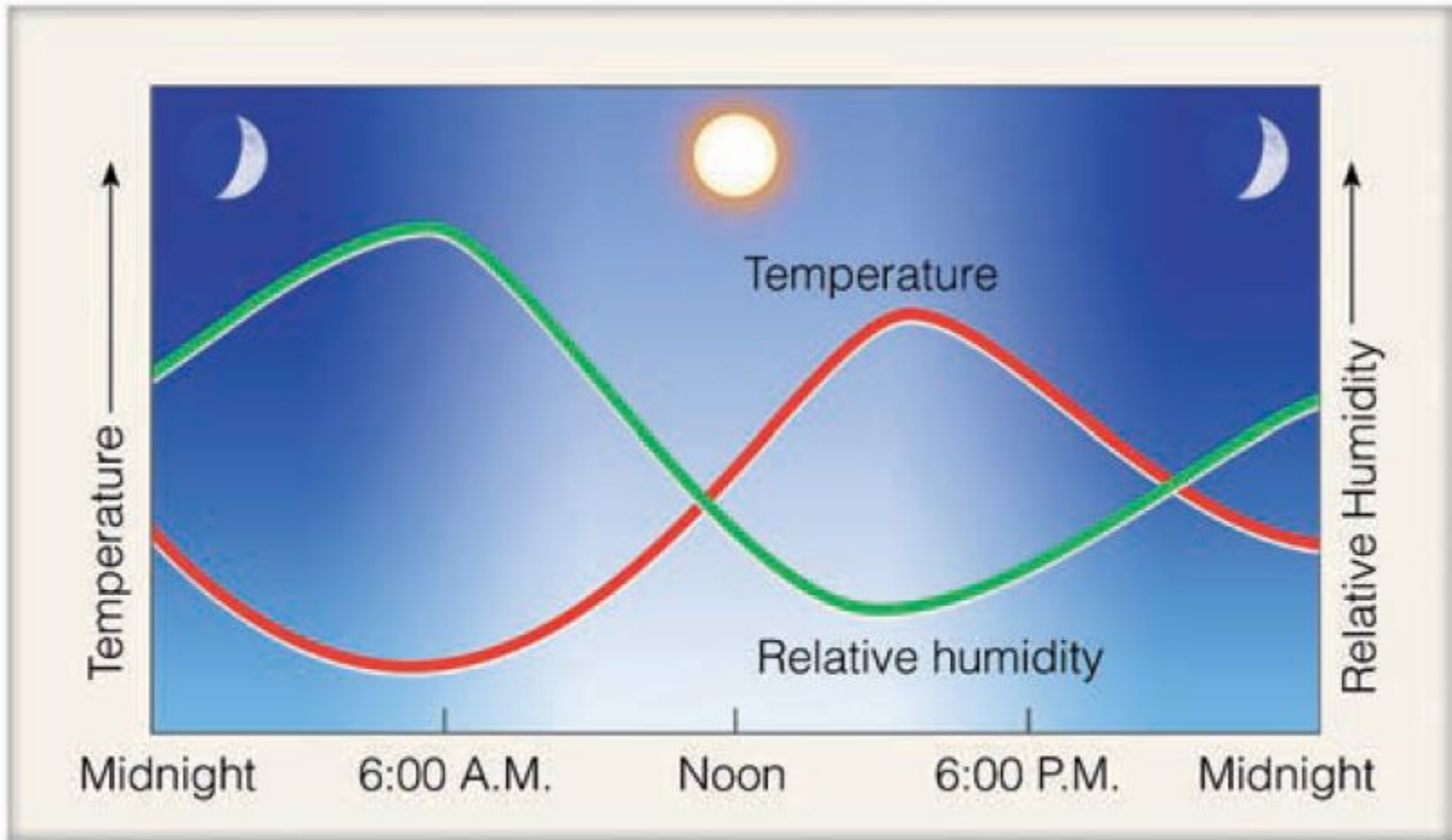
$$RH = \frac{\text{Water vapor content}}{\text{Maximum water vapor content for saturation}}$$



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**ACTIVE FIGURE 4.10** Saturation vapor pressure increases with increasing temperature. At a temperature of 10°C, the saturation vapor pressure is about 12 mb, whereas at 30°C it is about 42 mb. The insert

# Variation of relative humidity during the day



- **FIGURE 4.12** When the air is cool (morning), the relative humidity is high. When the air is warm (afternoon), the relative humidity is low. These conditions exist in clear weather when the air is calm or of constant wind speed.

# **Change in RH on 5/mar/2014**

## **OPD observatory**

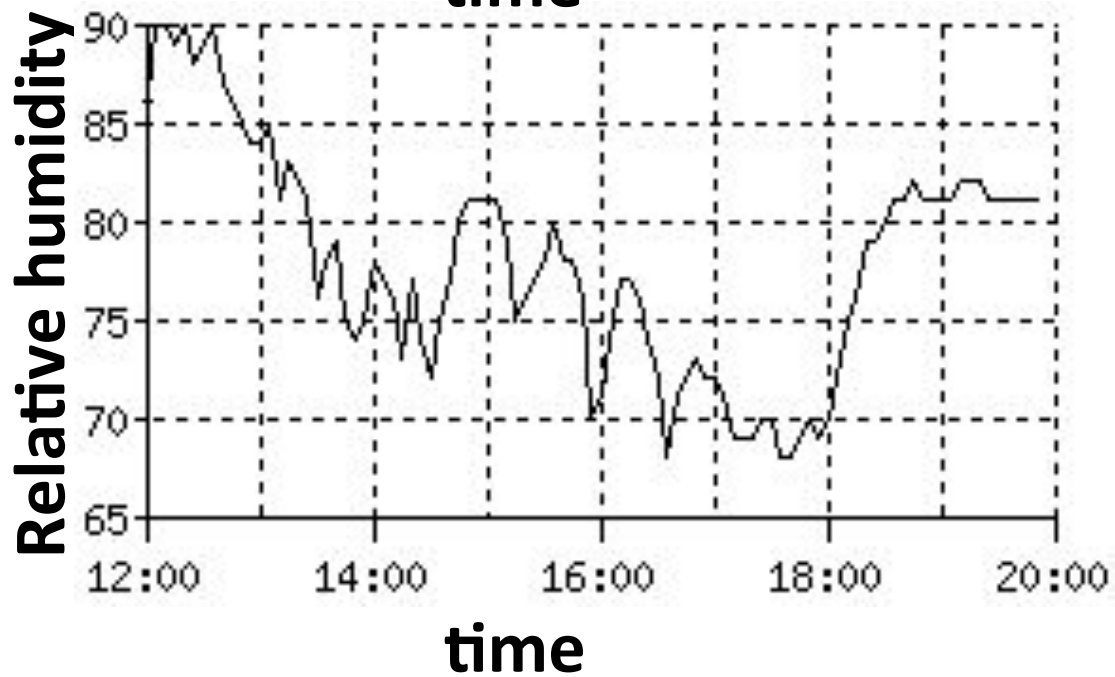
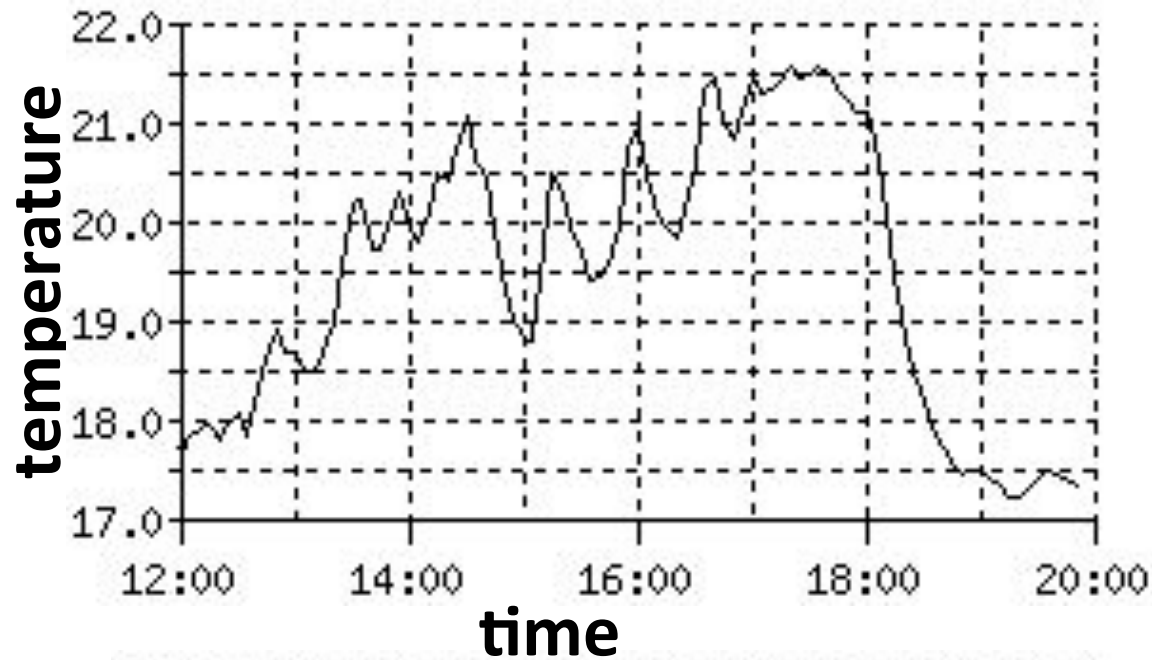
**18h: 70%**

**20h: 80%**

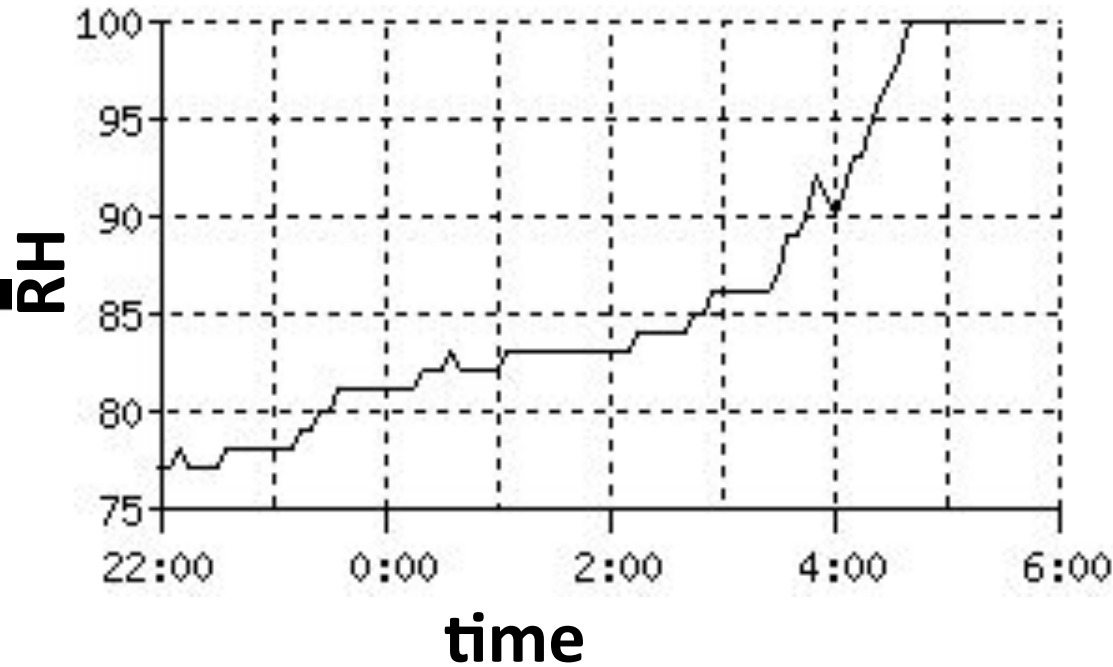
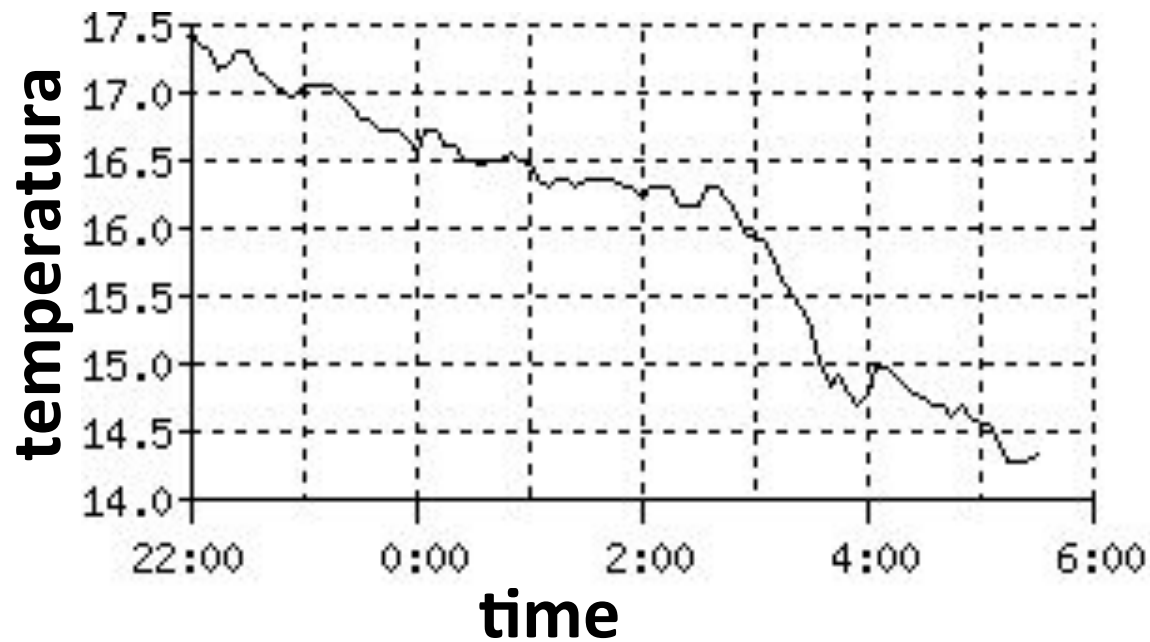
**22h: 90%**

**0h: 100%**

# Change in temperature and RH on 9/3/2014

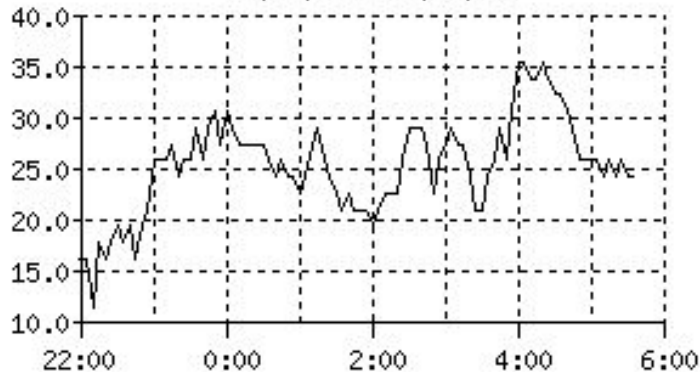


# Change in temperature and RH on 9/3/2014



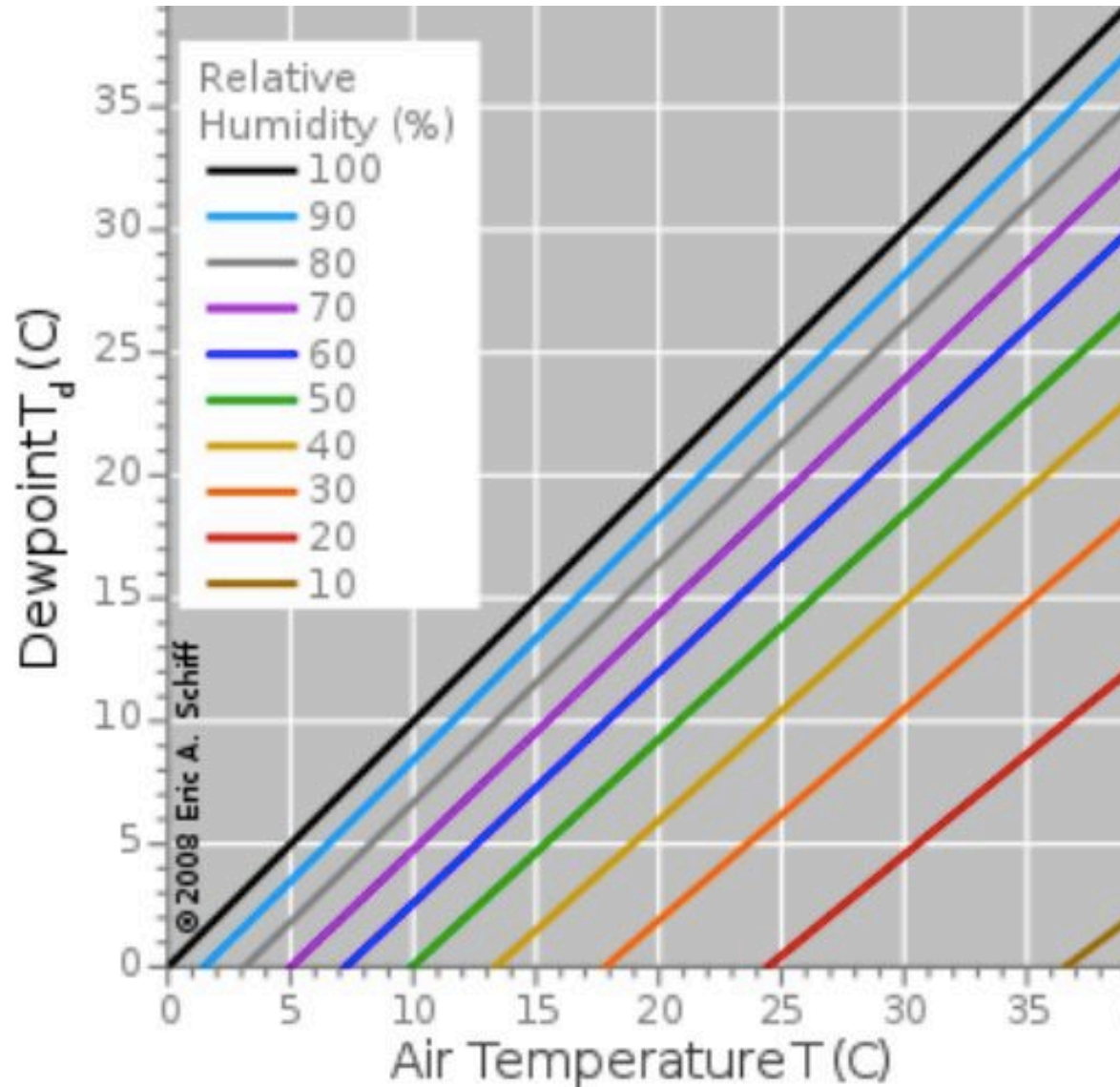
Wind Speed (kn/hr)

09/03/14 - 10/03/14

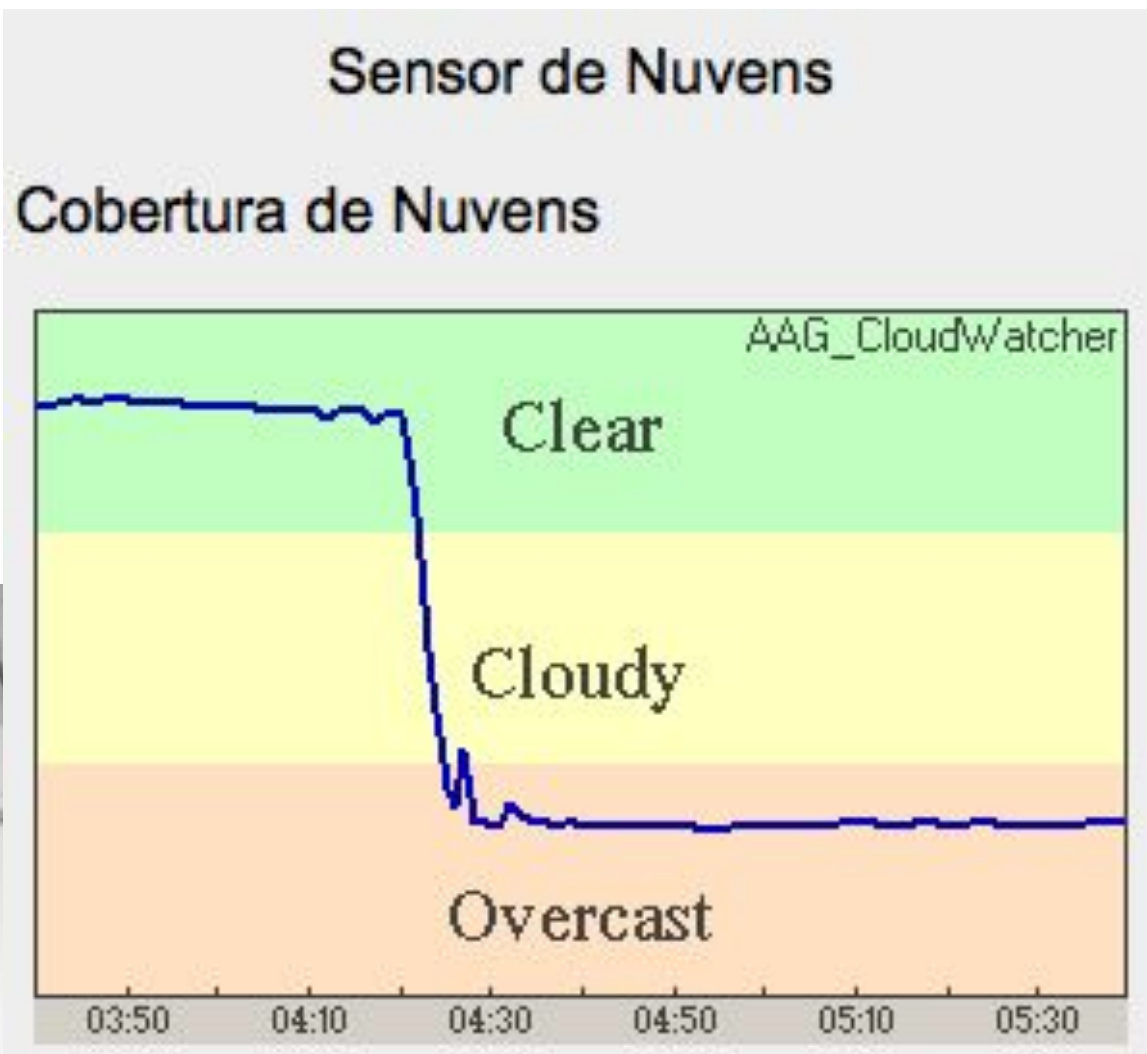


# Dew point

Temperature to which the air must be cooled to become saturated with water vapor



# Cloud coverage 9-10/3/2014

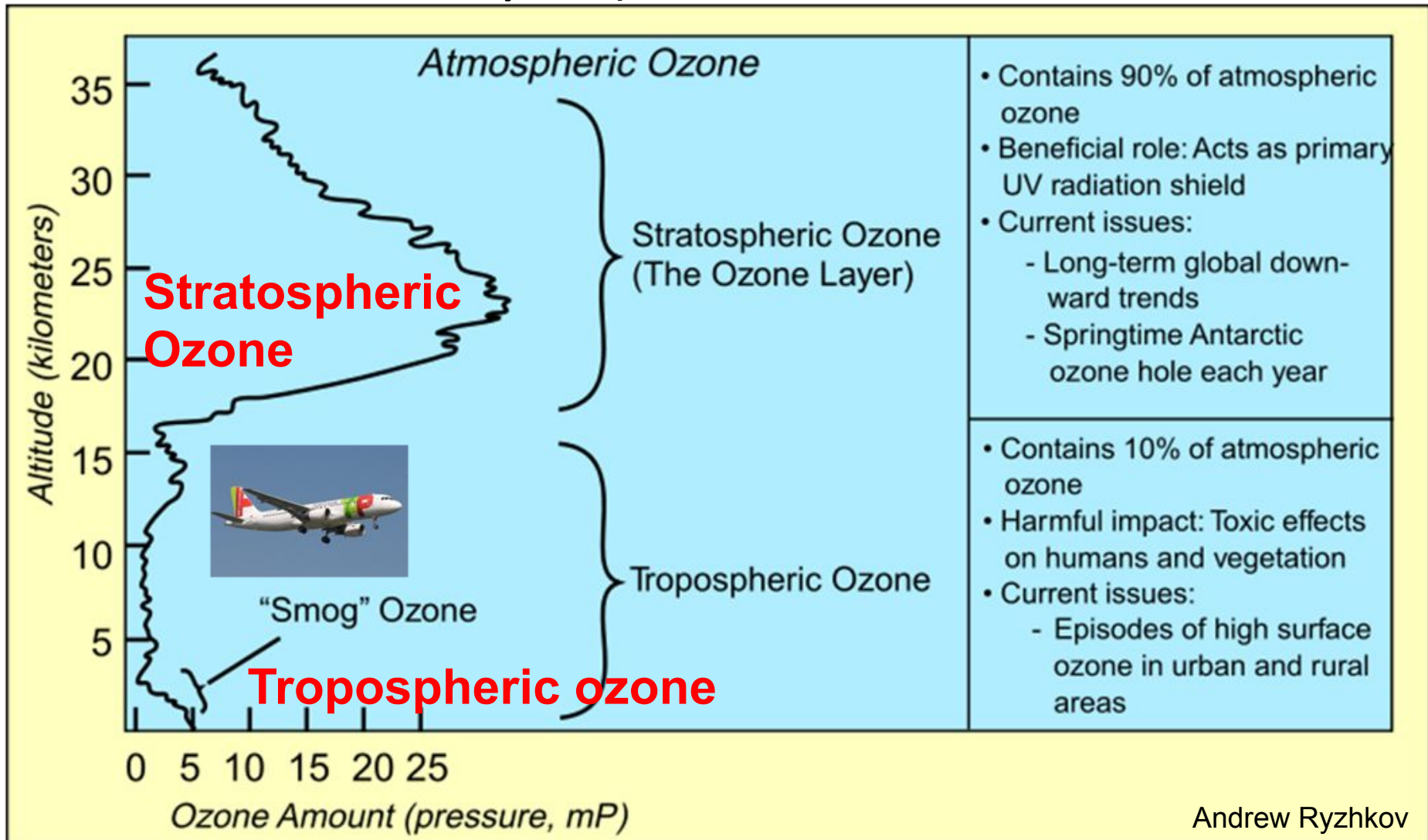


time



# Ozone ( $O_3$ )

Vertical structure of  $O_3$  changes a lot (latitude, season of the year), but maximum  $\sim 20\text{km}$

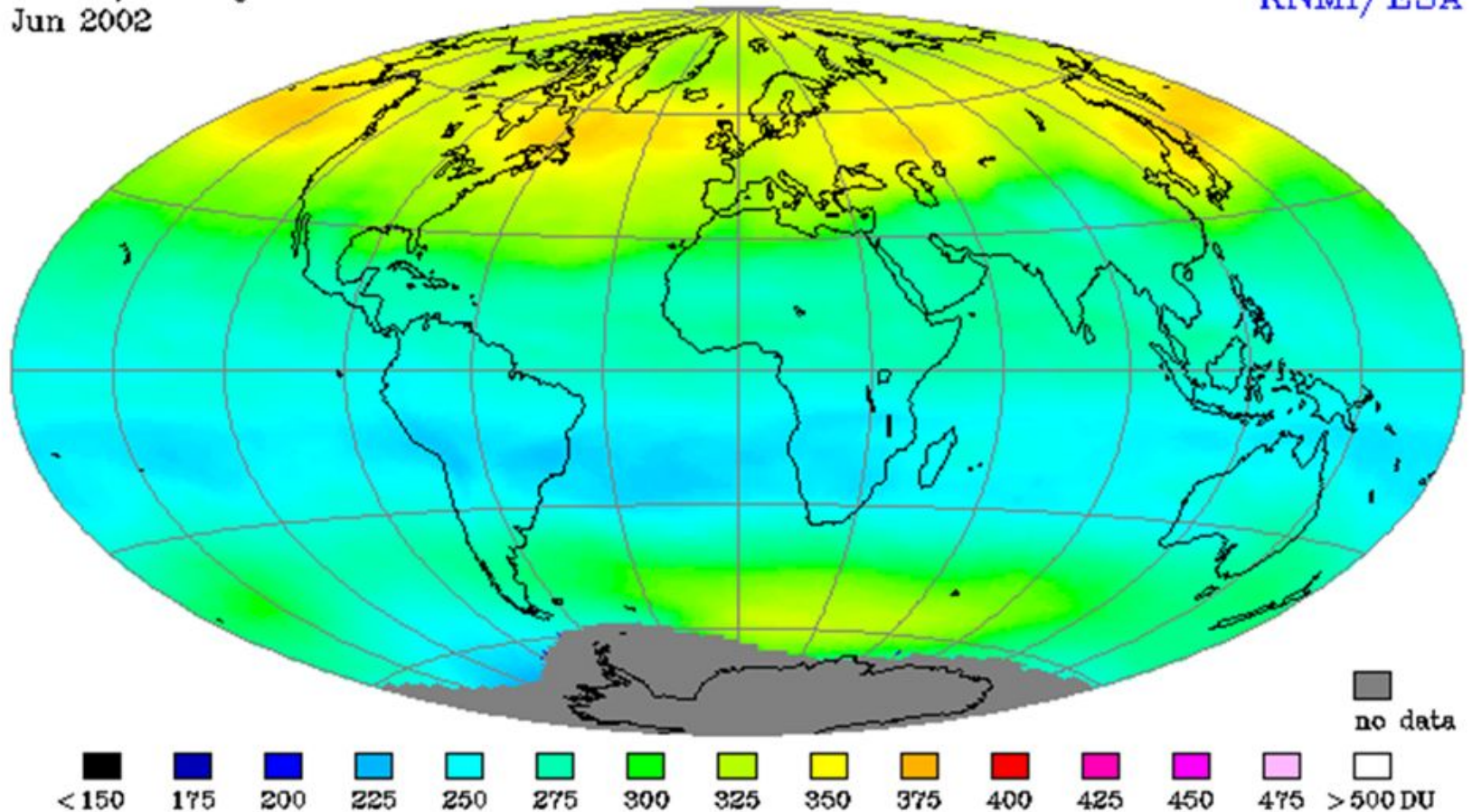


# Ozone ( $O_3$ )

Northern hemisphere has larger concentration of ozone

Monthly average GOME total ozone  
Jun 2002

KNMI/ESA



# Ozone ( $O_3$ )

Zone  $O_3$  has an annual cycle

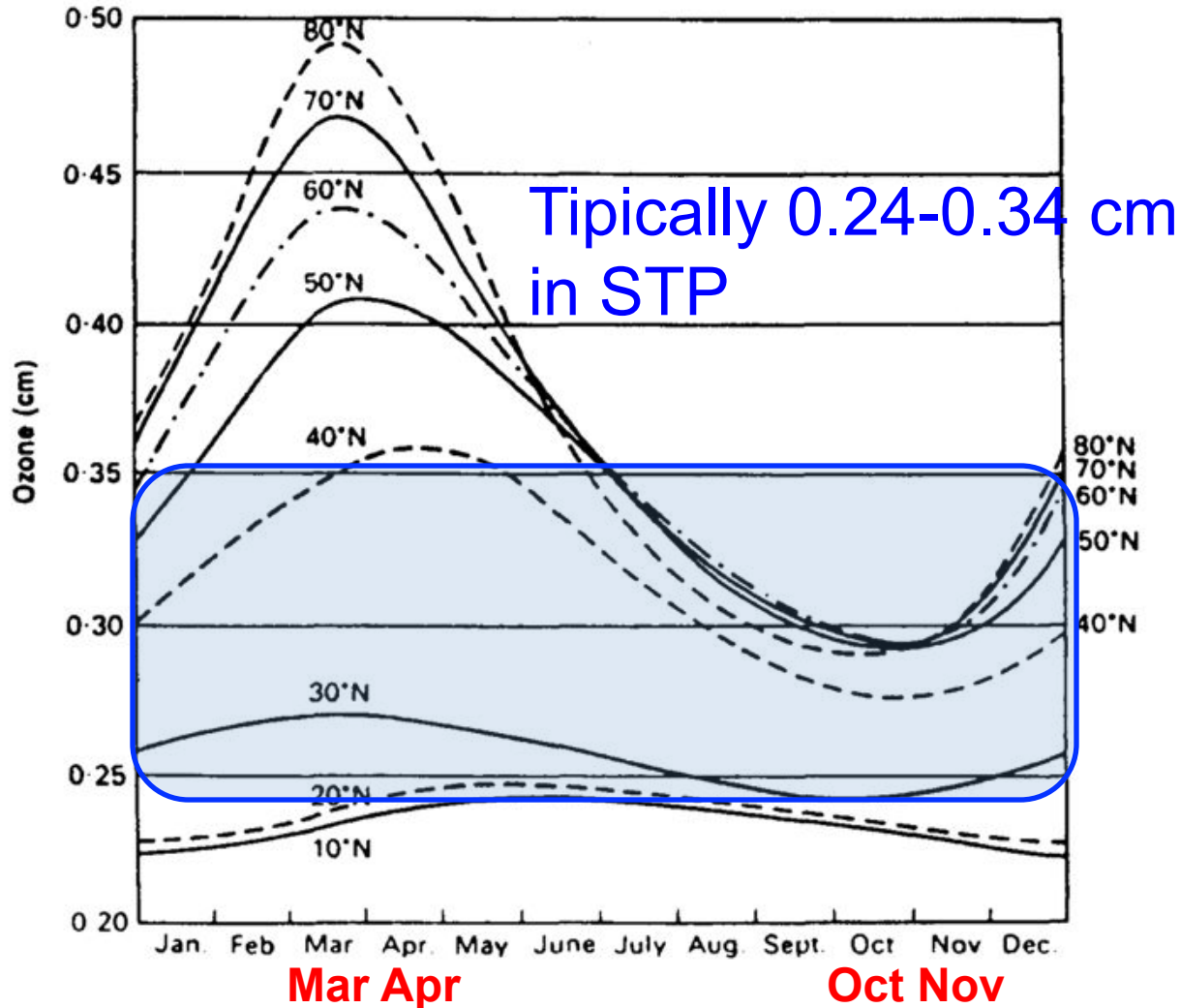
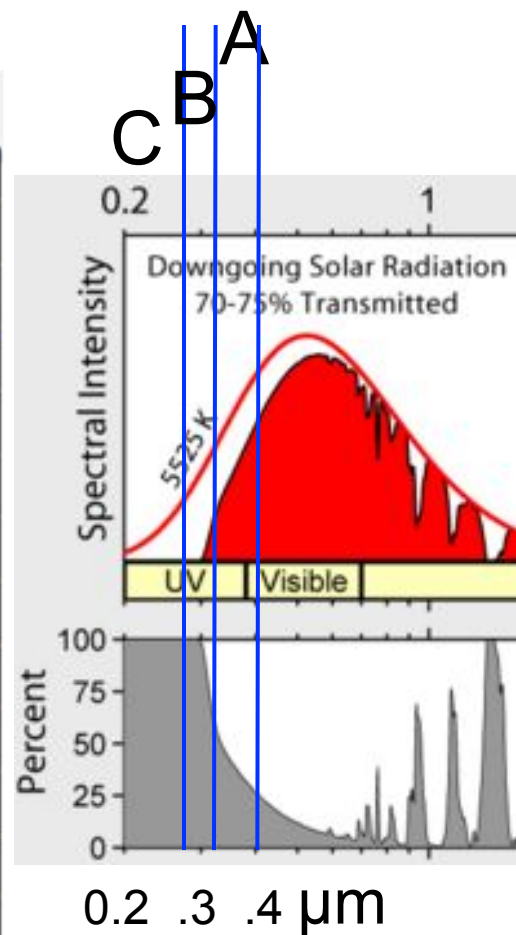
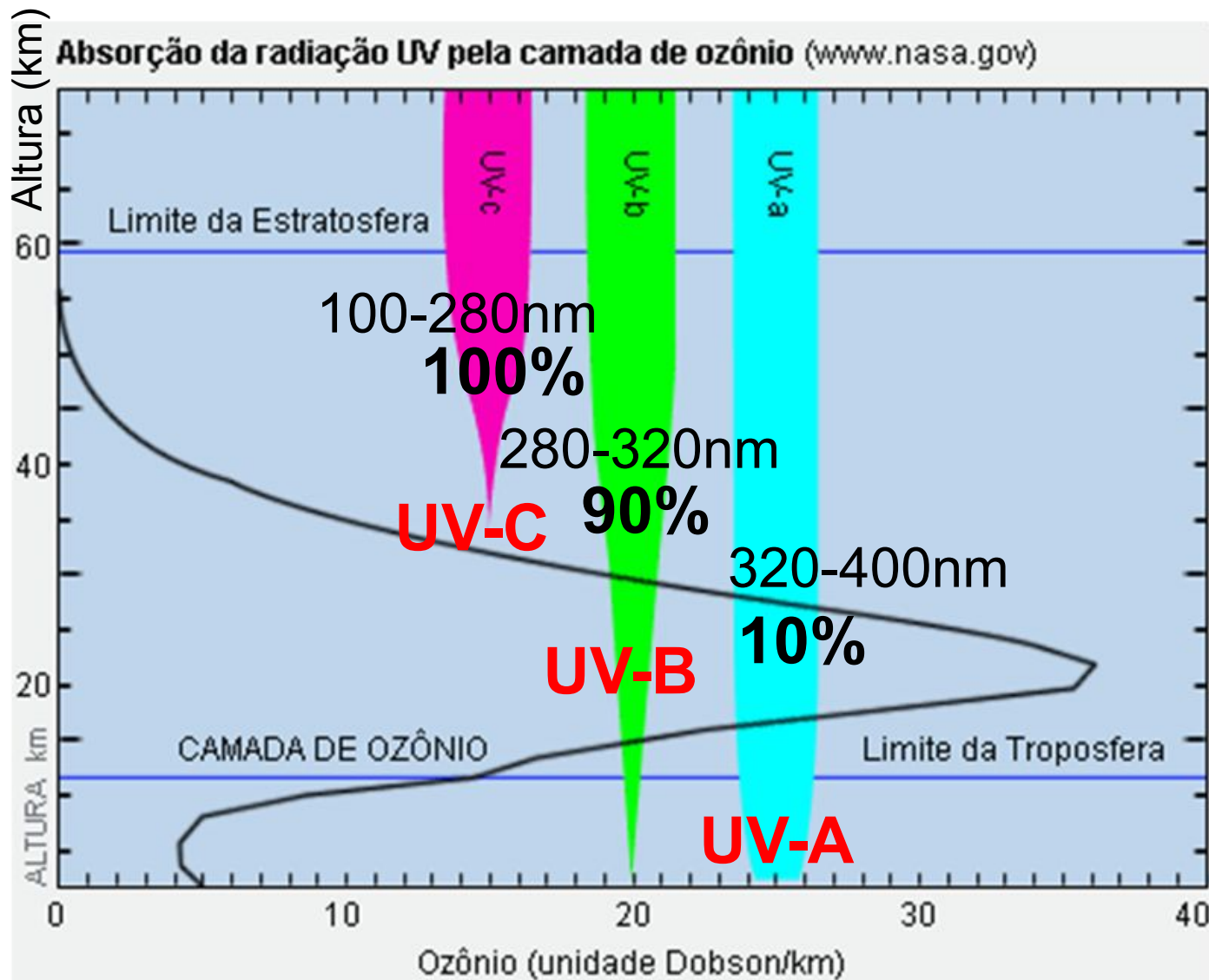


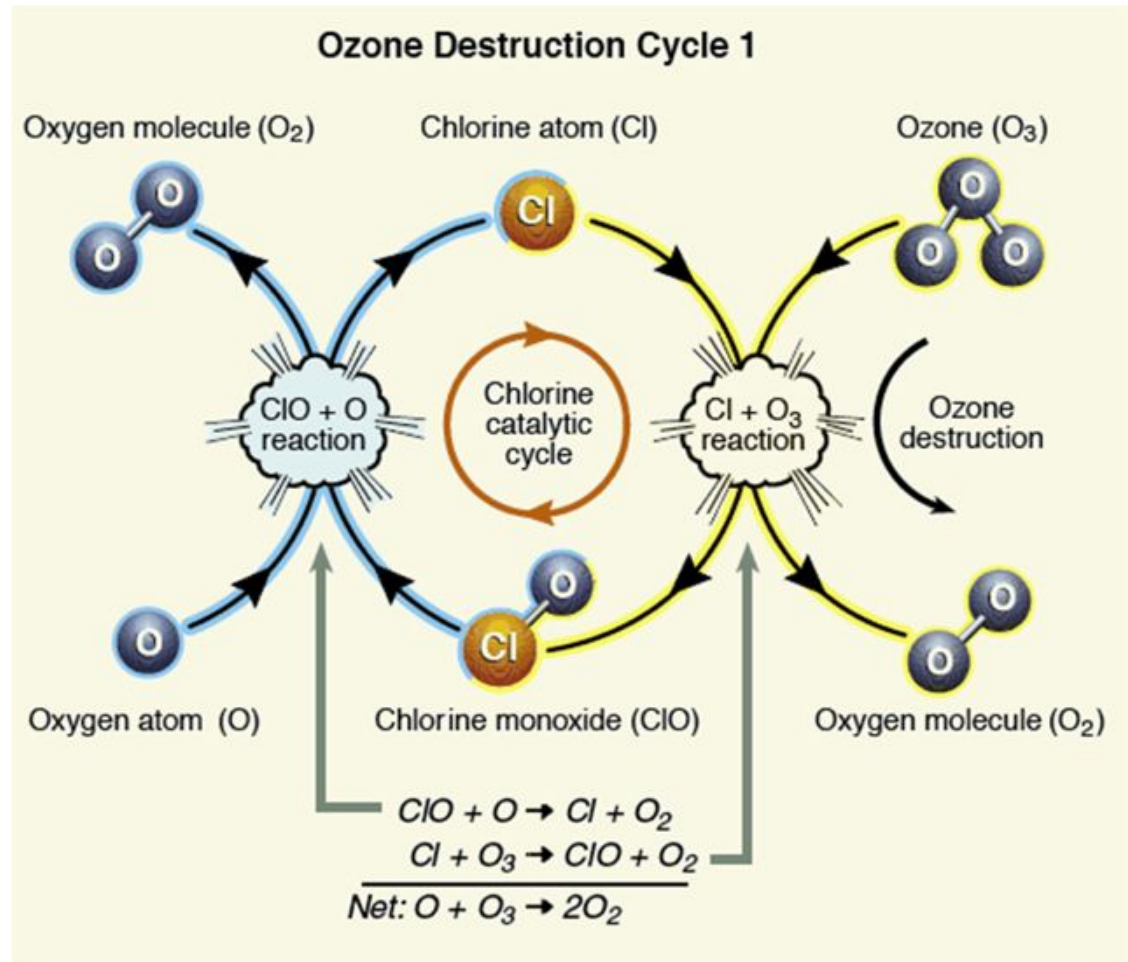
Figure 1. Annual Variation of Total Ozone for Each 10° of N Latitude

# Ozone: principal protection for UV solar radiation



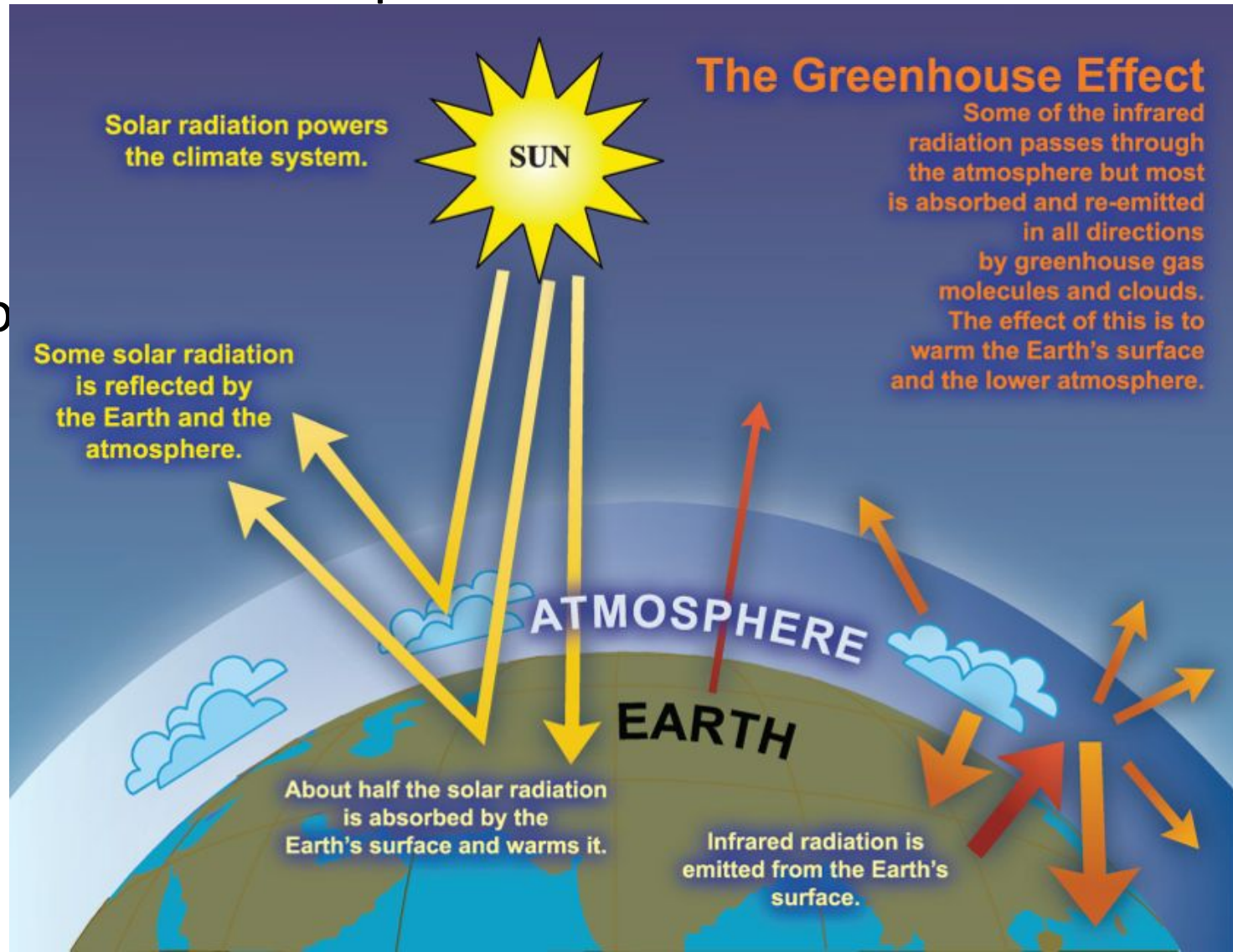
# Ozone destruction

- Minor constituents (Cl, NO) destroy  $O_3$
- Chlorofluorocarbons, CFCs, can reach the stratosphere and destroy ozone



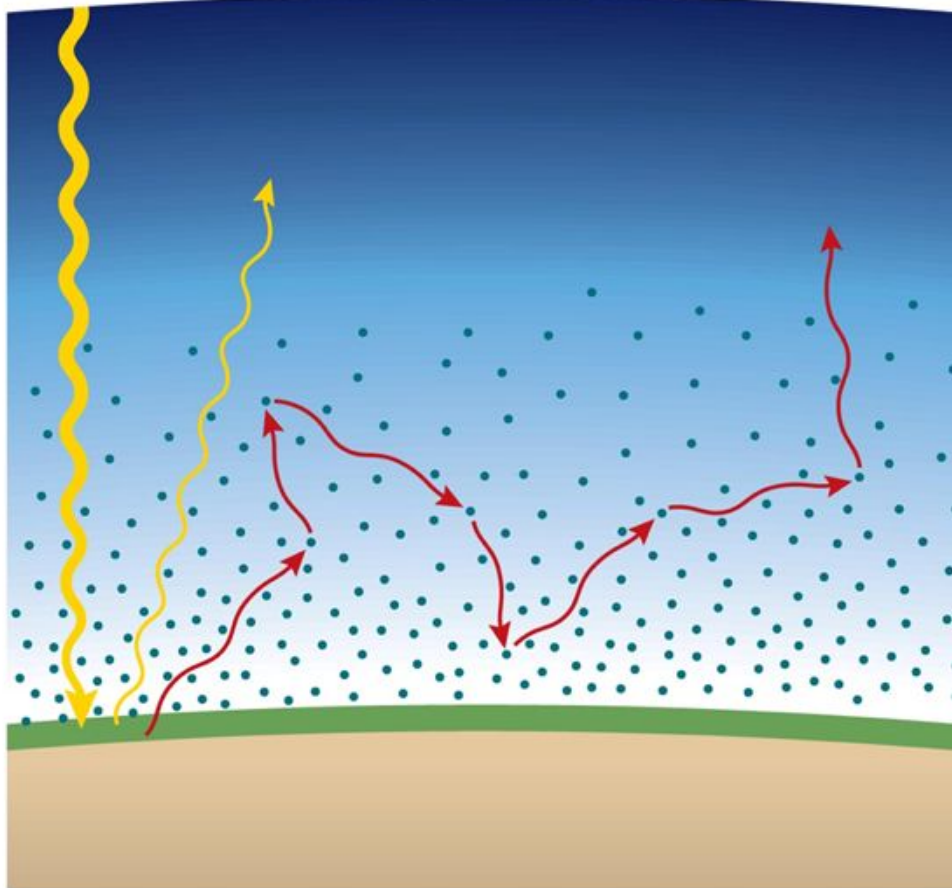
# Carbon dioxide $\text{CO}_2$

- Important source of absorption in the infrared
- Similar distribution to  $\text{O}_2$  e  $\text{N}_2$
- Mixing ratio does not depend on altitude



# CO<sub>2</sub> and global warming

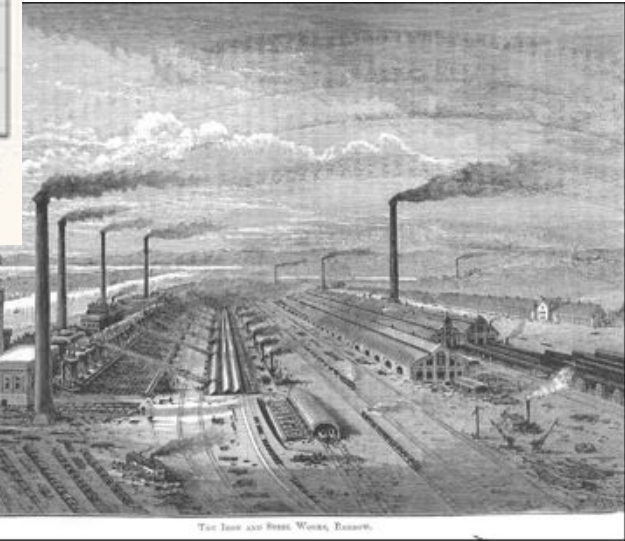
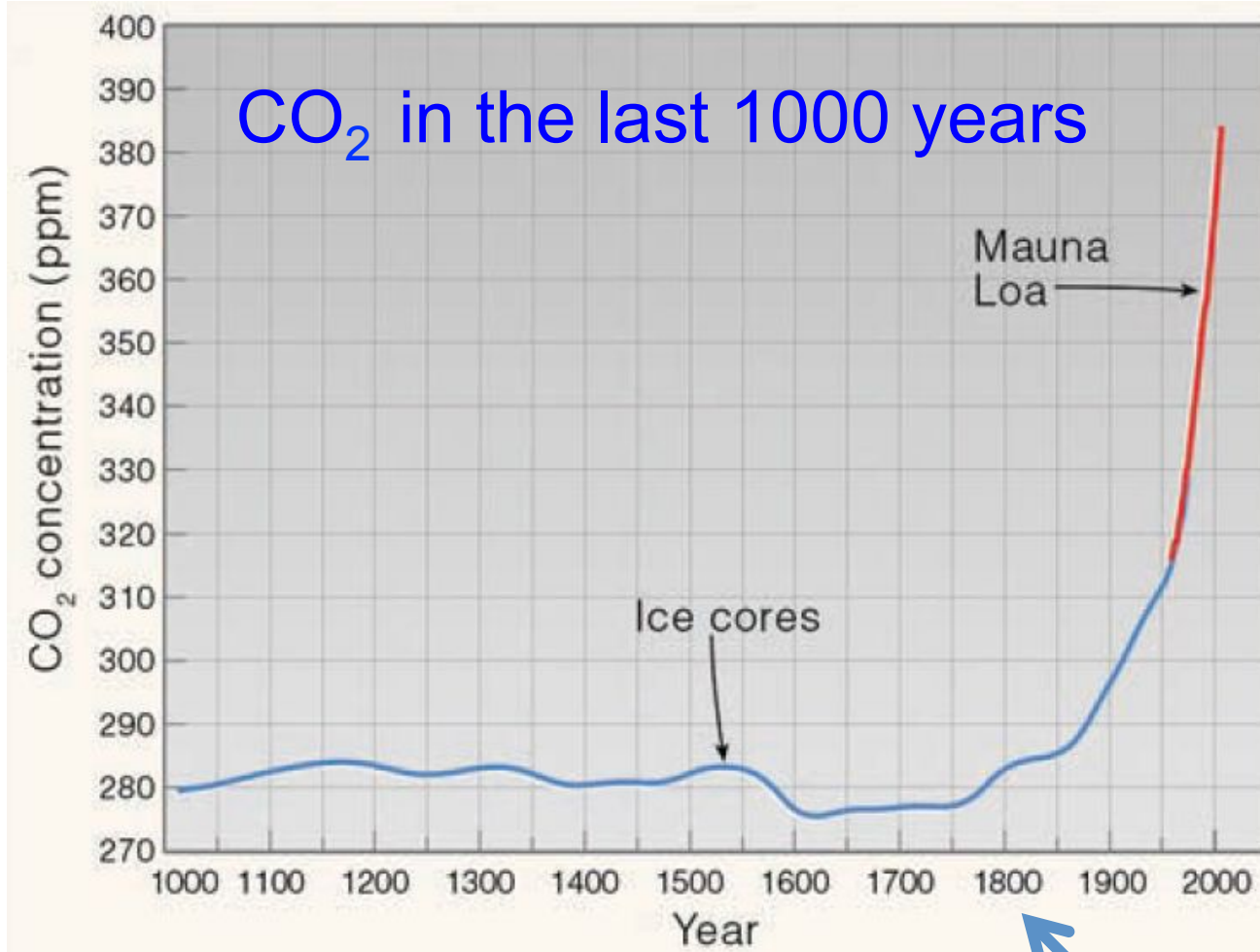
Visible light pass through atmosphere and heats the surface. Gases (CO<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>O & CH<sub>4</sub>) in atmosphere absorb the reflected IR light, re-emitting in random directions



CO<sub>2</sub> is the second source of global warming (after H<sub>2</sub>O)

# CO<sub>2</sub> and global warming

CO<sub>2</sub> in the last 1000 years

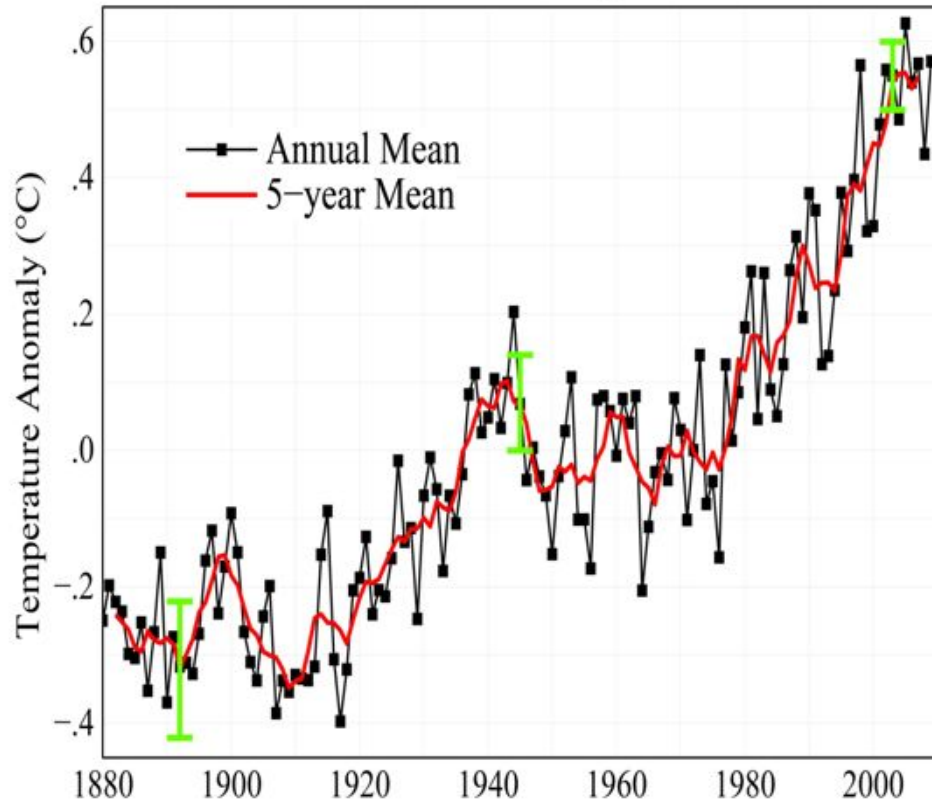


● **FIGURE 1.6** Carbon dioxide values in parts per million during the past 1000 years from ice cores in Antarctica (blue line) and from Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii (red line). (Data courtesy of Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center, Oak Ridge National Laboratory.)

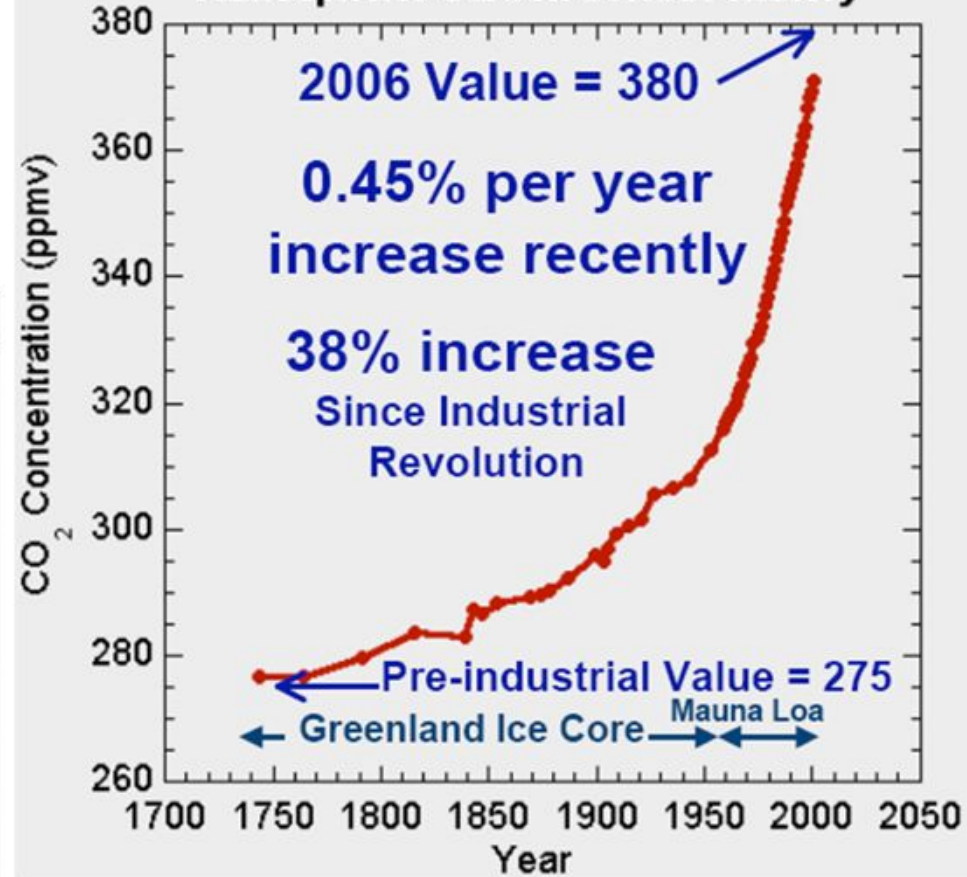


# CO<sub>2</sub> and global warming

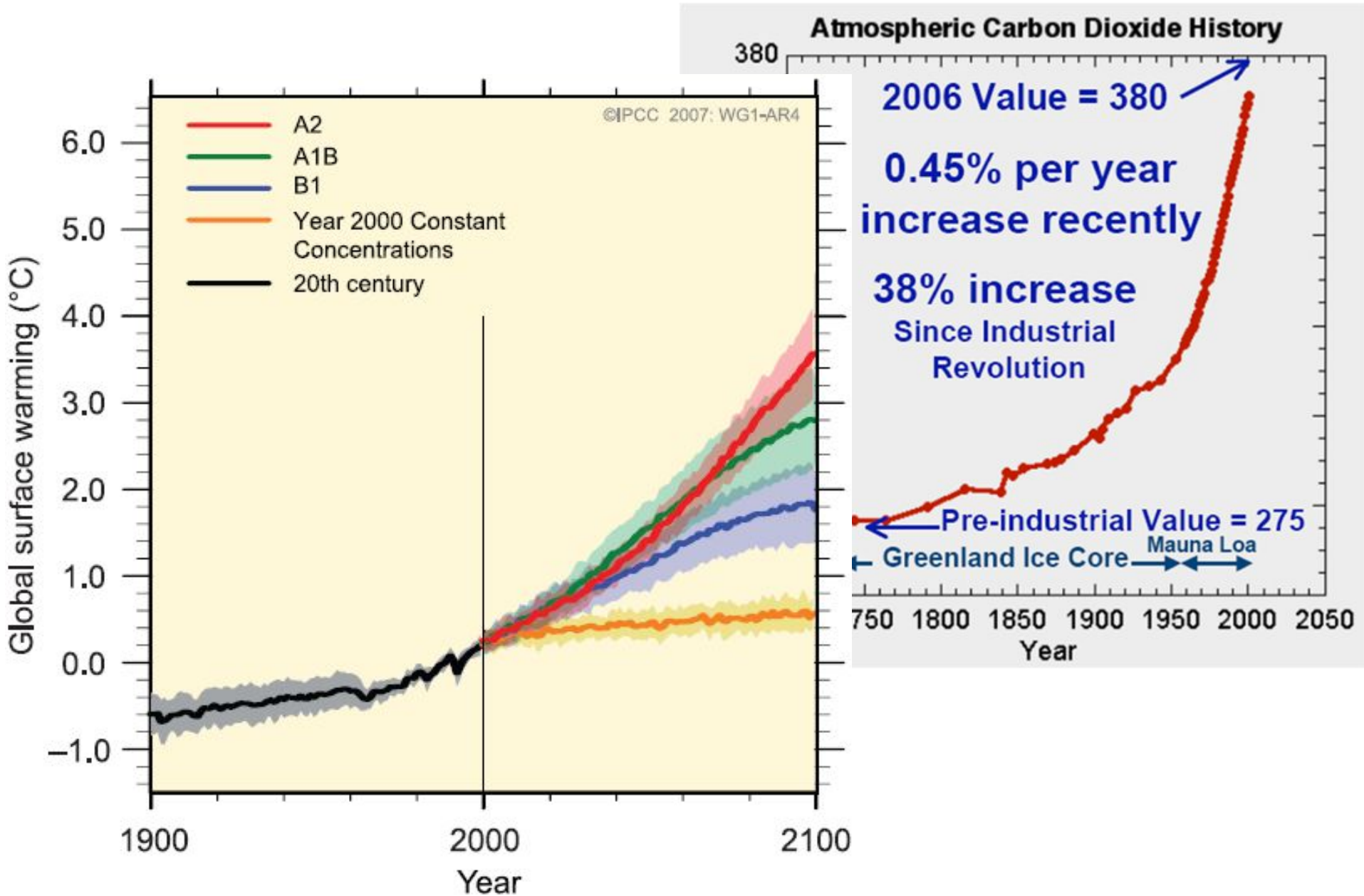
Global Land–Ocean Temperature Index



Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide History

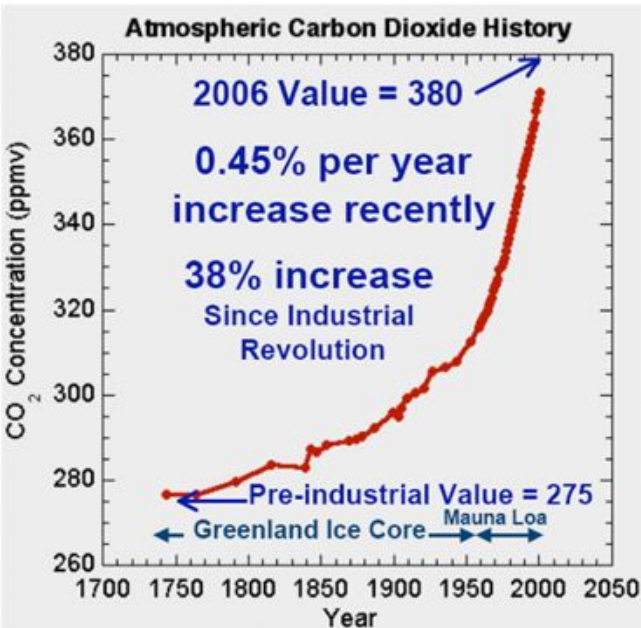
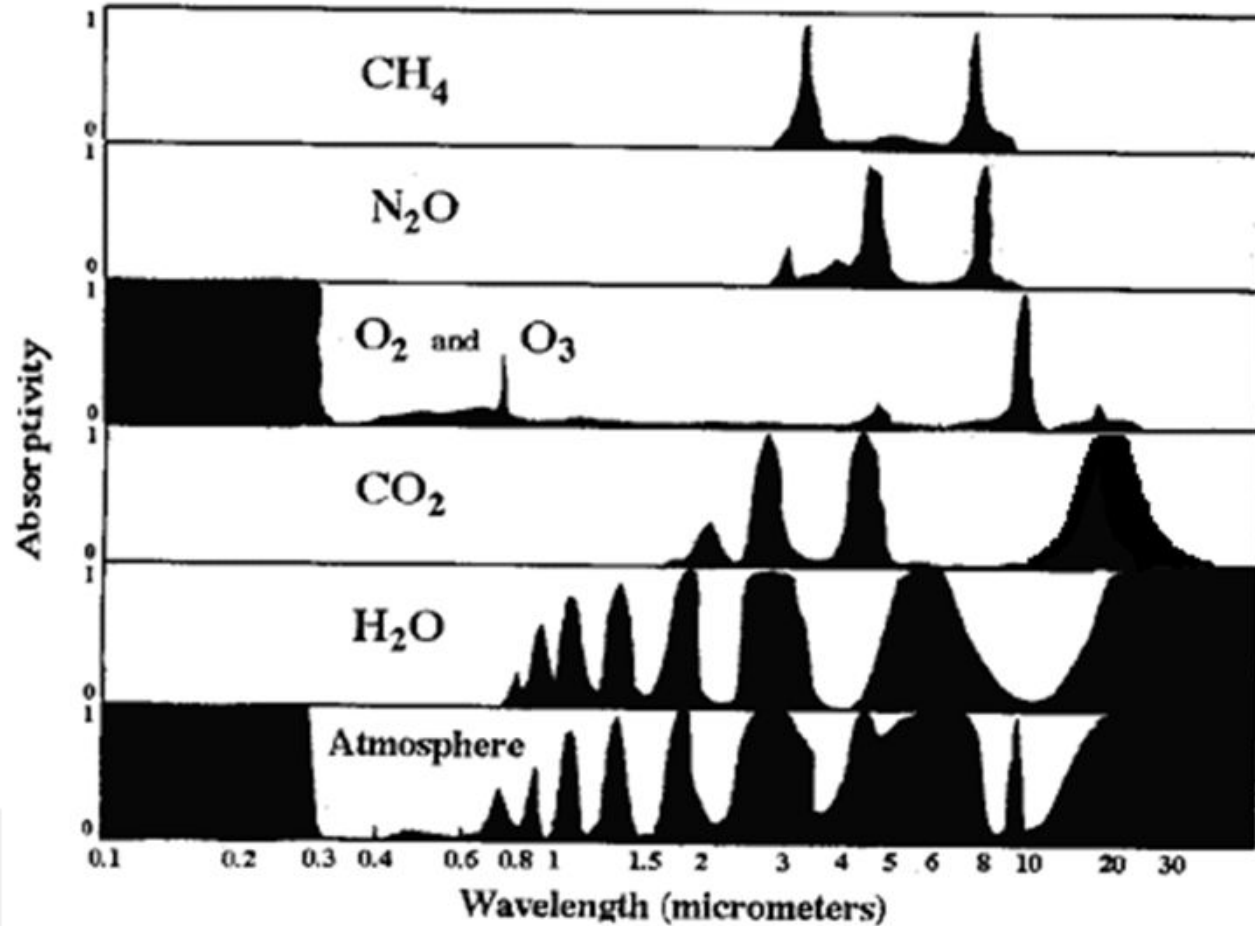


# CO<sub>2</sub> and global warming



# Impact on Astronomy

Rise of CO<sub>2</sub>: deeper absorption bands in the atmosphere



Absorptivity of various gases of the atmosphere and the atmosphere as a whole as a function of the wavelength of radiation. An absorptivity of zero means no absorption while a value of one means complete absorption. The dominant absorbers of infrared radiation are water vapor (H<sub>2</sub>O) and carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). Oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>) and ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) absorb much of the sun's ultraviolet radiation.

Atmospheric absorption bands (telluric bands)

# Impact on Astronomy?

## PROJECTED PATTERNS OF PRECIPITATION CHANGES

Dec-Feb

multi-model

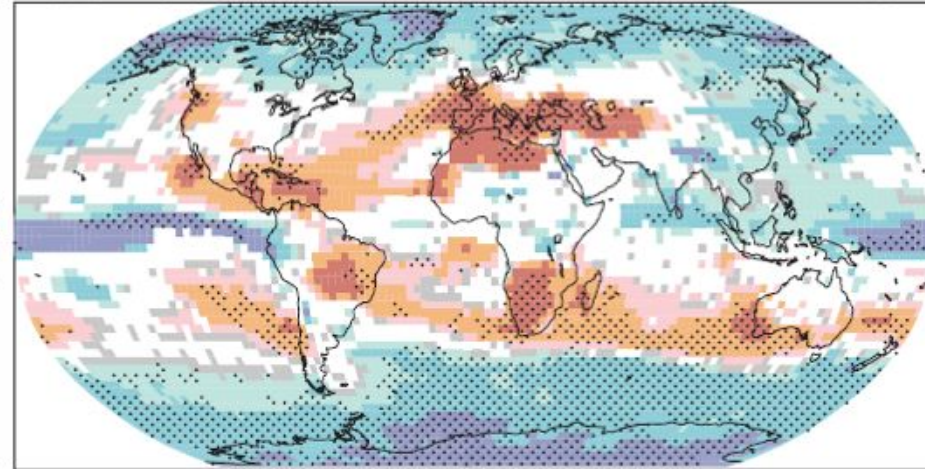
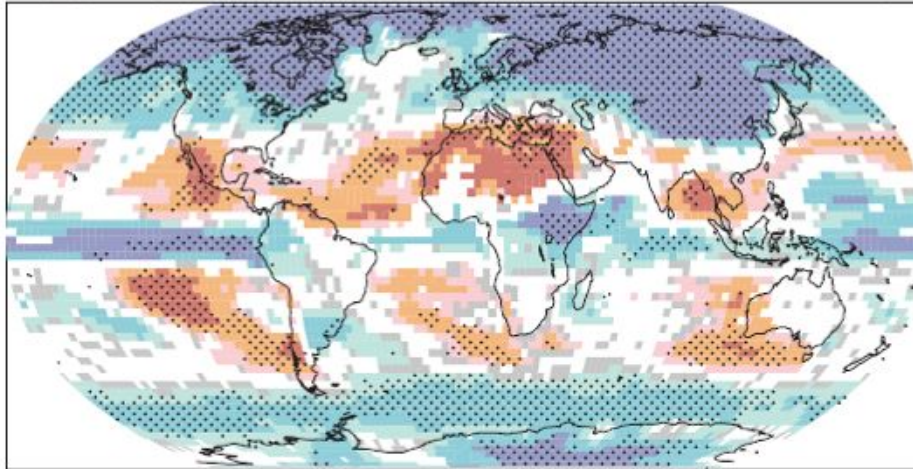
A1B

DJF multi-model

A1B

Jun-Aug

JJA

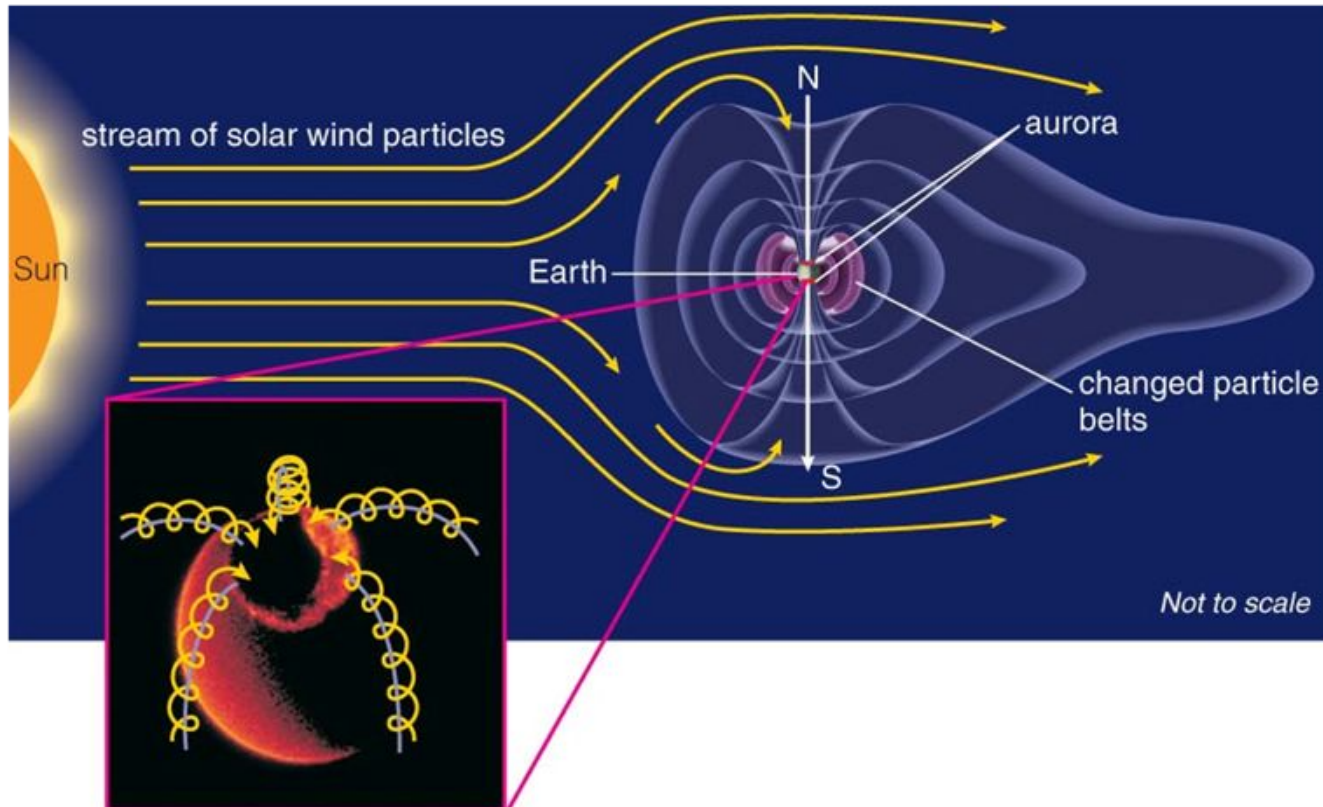


©IPCC 2007: WG1-AR4

**Figure SPM.7.** Relative changes in precipitation (in percent) for the period 2090–2099, relative to 1980–1999. Values are multi-model averages based on the SRES A1B scenario for December to February (left) and June to August (right). White areas are where less than 66% of the models agree in the sign of the change and stippled areas are where more than 90% of the models agree in the sign of the change. {Figure 10.9}

# Ions

- Above 60km, solar UV radiation ionizes the atmosphere
- Ionization changes with altitude, solar illumination, solar activity
- At high latitudes, electron cascades enter magnetic poles, causing auroras

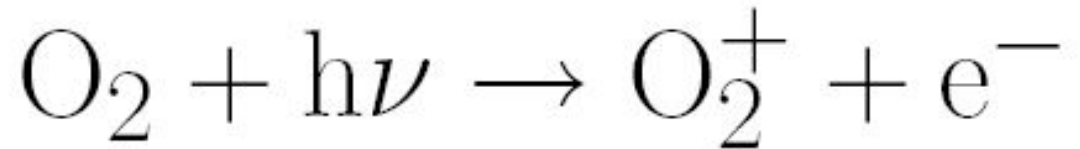


# Ions : Auroras



# Ions

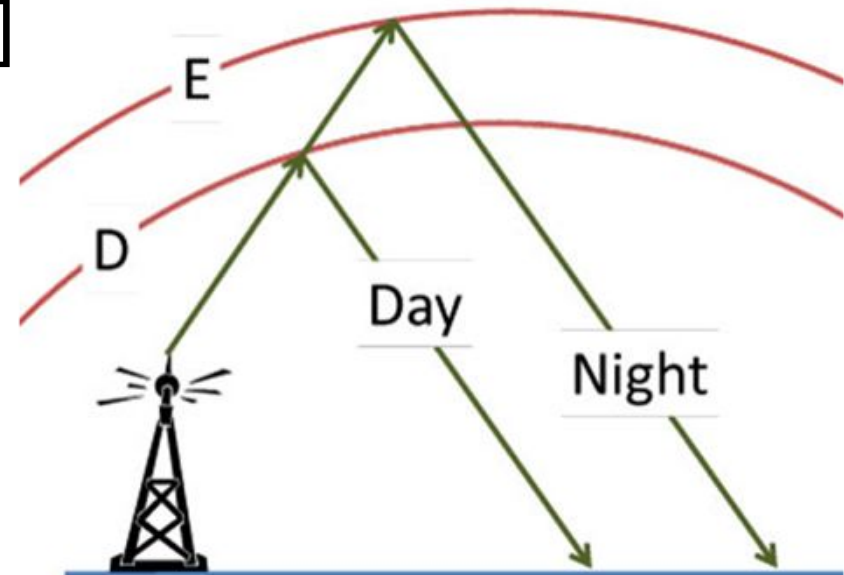
- Typical reactions:



- Variation of electronic densities:

Layer	z(km)	Ne[cm <sup>-3</sup> ]
D	60	10 <sup>3</sup>
E	100	10 <sup>5</sup>
F	150-300	2x10 <sup>6</sup>
	> 2000	10 <sup>4</sup>

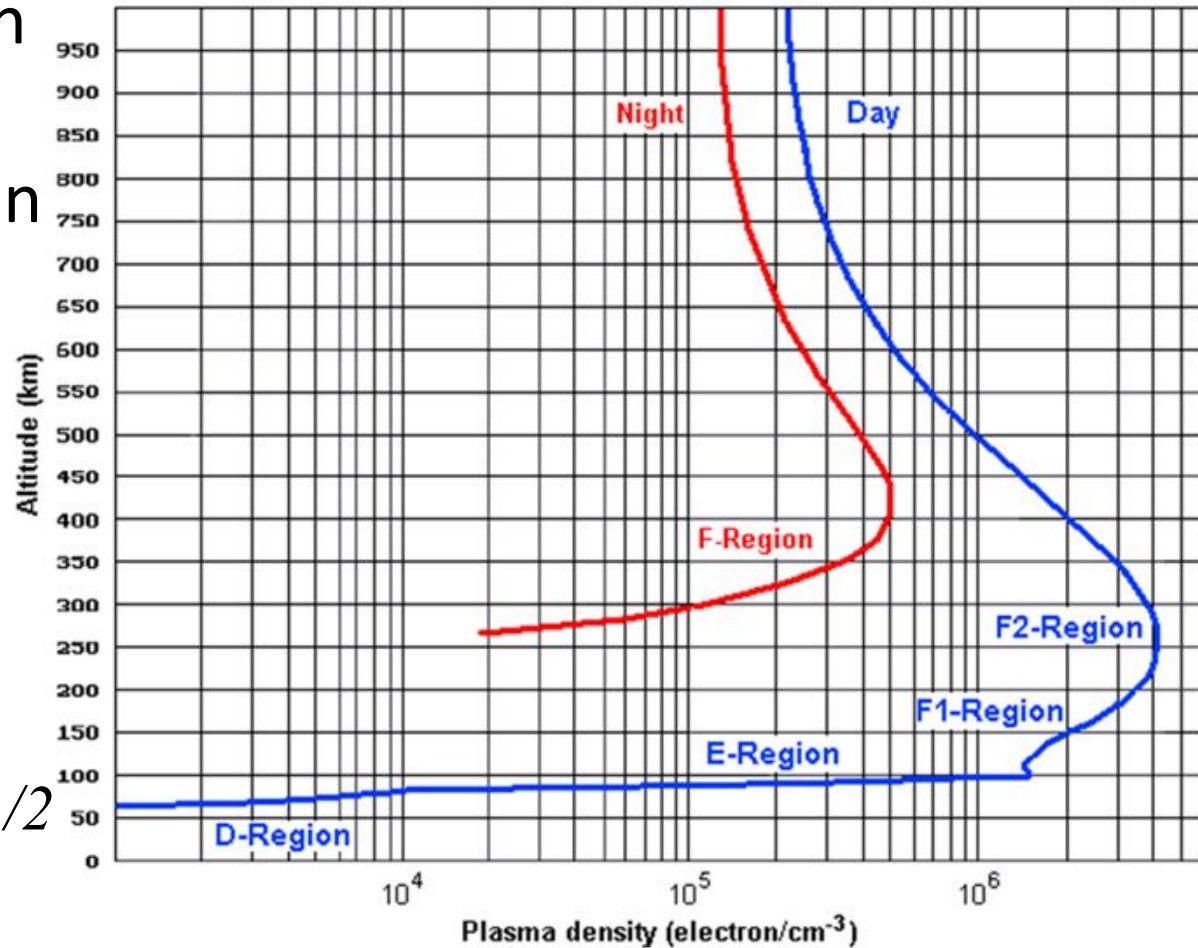
- D almost disappears at night
- Interference in radio waves



# Ionospheric plasma

Ionized layers have an index of refraction  $n$  related to the electron density  $N_e$

- $n^2 = 1 - \omega_p^2 / \omega$   
 $= 1 - (\lambda / \lambda_p)^2$
- $\nu_p [\text{Hz}] = \omega_p / 2\pi$   
 $= 9 \times 10^3 N_e^{1/2}$



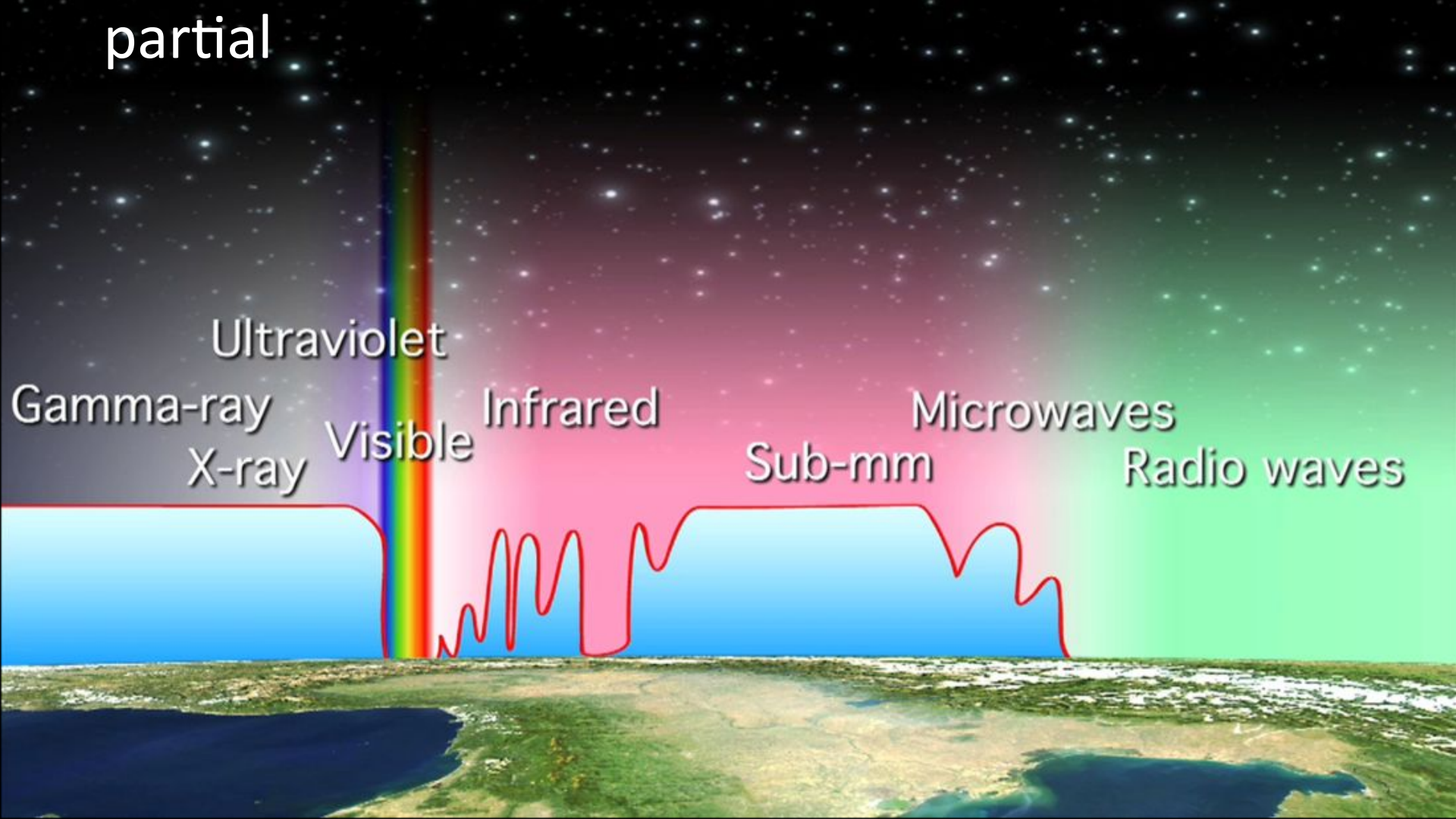
Total internal reflection

For  $F$  layer ( $N_e = 2 \times 10^6 \text{ cm}^{-3}$ ),  $\lambda_p = 23.5 \text{ m}$  ( $\nu_p = 12 \text{ MHz}$ )



# Absorption of Radiation

The absorption by the atmosphere could be total or partial

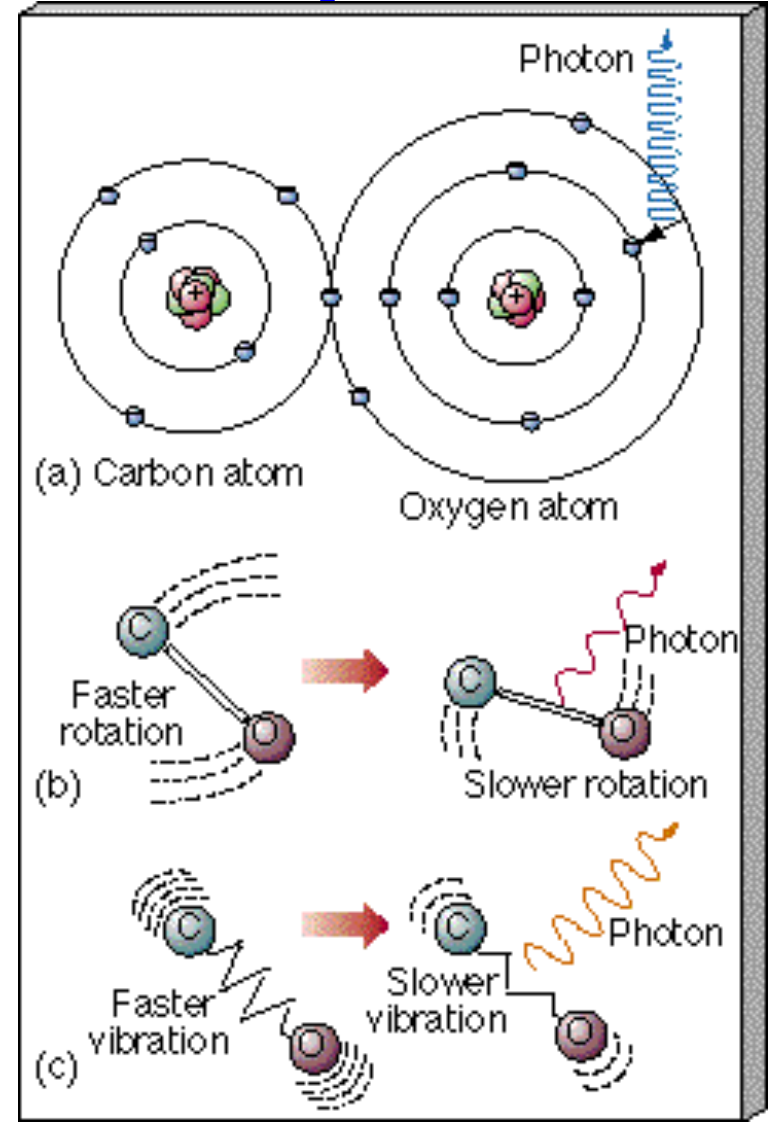


# Atomic and Molecular absorption

Atomic: O, N

Molecular:

- Electronic  
CH<sub>4</sub>, CO, H<sub>2</sub>O, O<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, ...
- Rotational:  
H<sub>2</sub>O, CO<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, ...
- Vibrational-Rotational:  
CO<sub>2</sub>, NO, CO ...

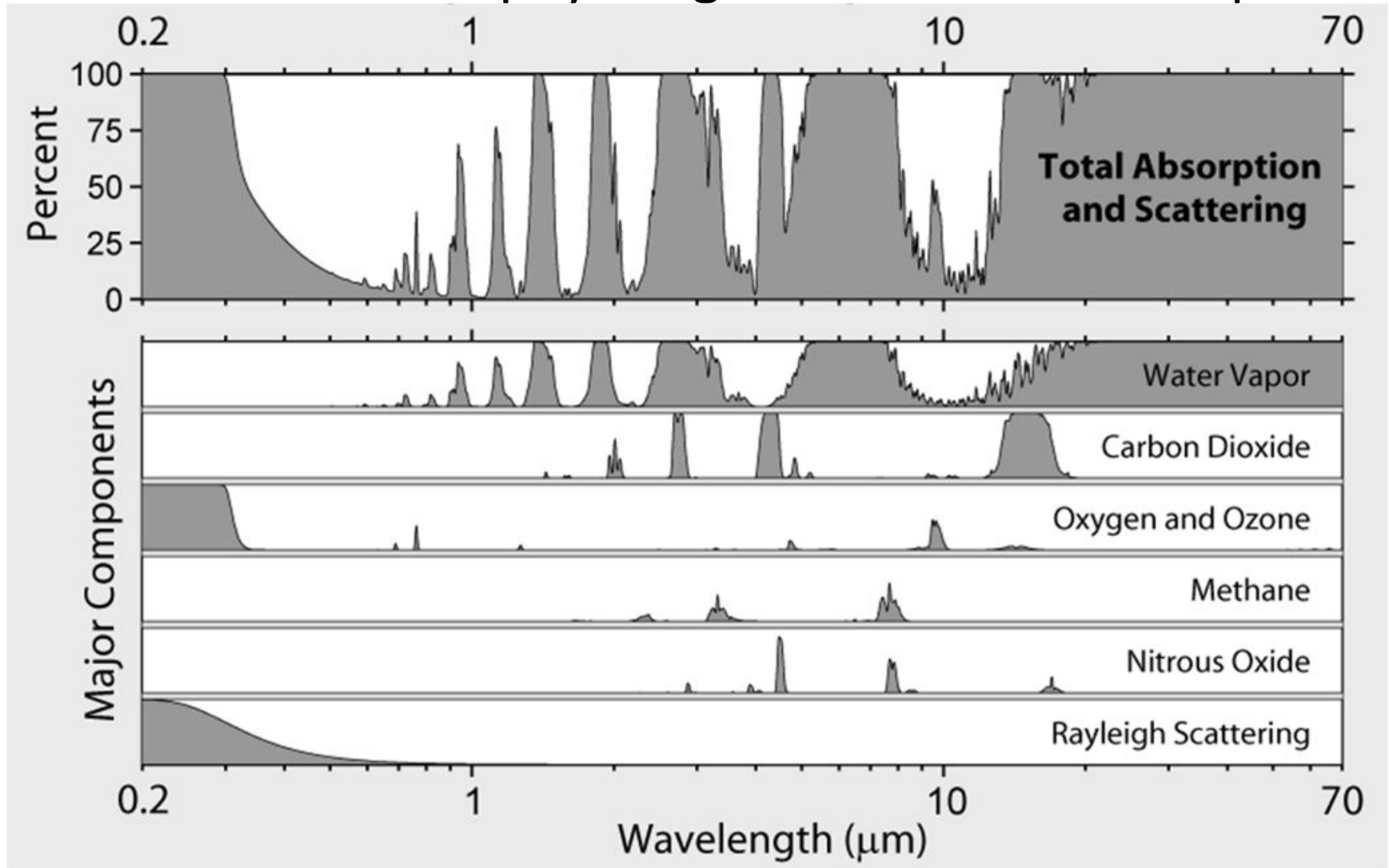


$$E_{el,v'',J''} = [T_e + G_v + F_v(J)] hc$$

# Atmospheric absorption bands

## *Telluric bands*

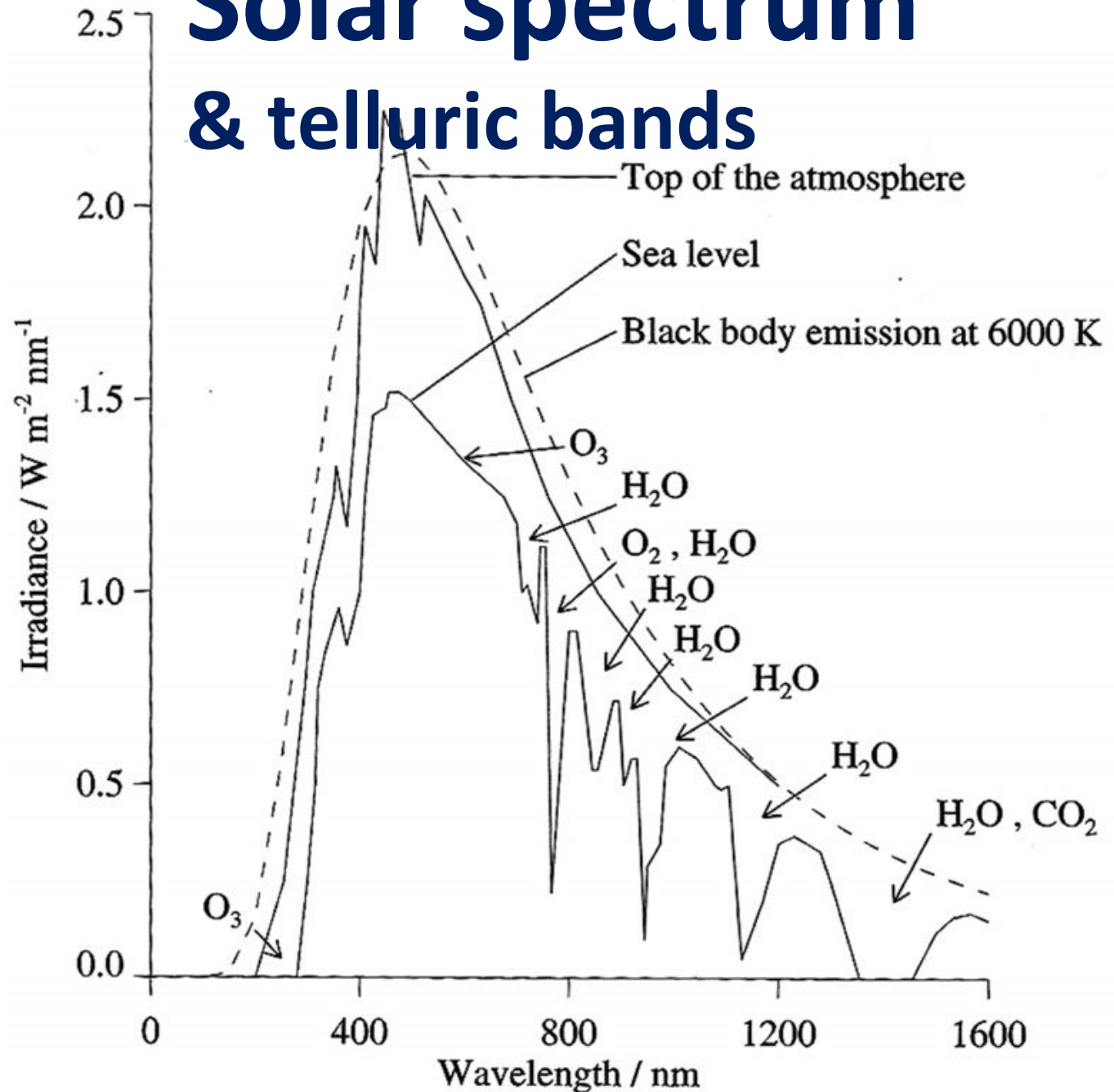
Atomic & molecular physics gives  $\kappa$  or  $\sigma$  for each species





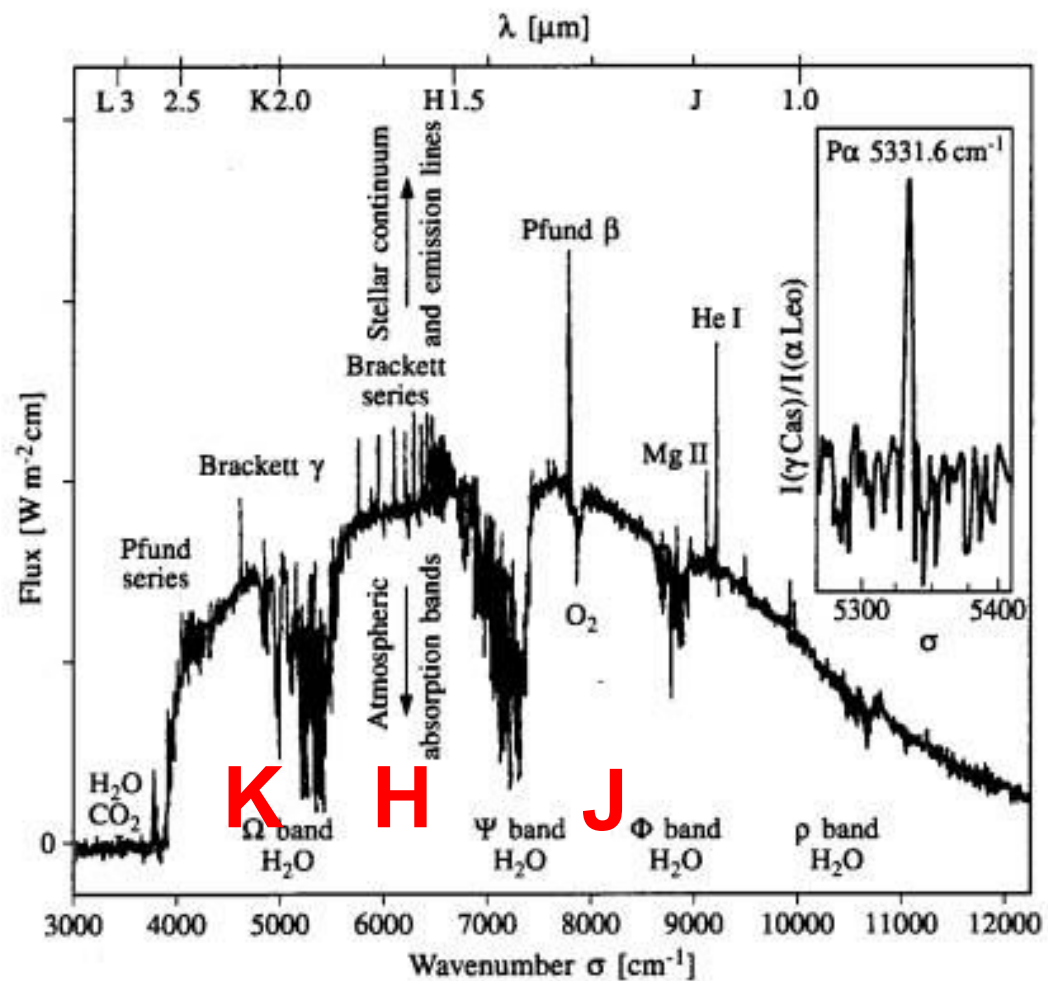
# Solar spectrum & telluric bands

In the optical and near infrared,  $O_3$ ,  $H_2O$  &  $CO_2$  cause strong absorption bands in Earth's atmosphere



# $\gamma$ Cas and telluric bands

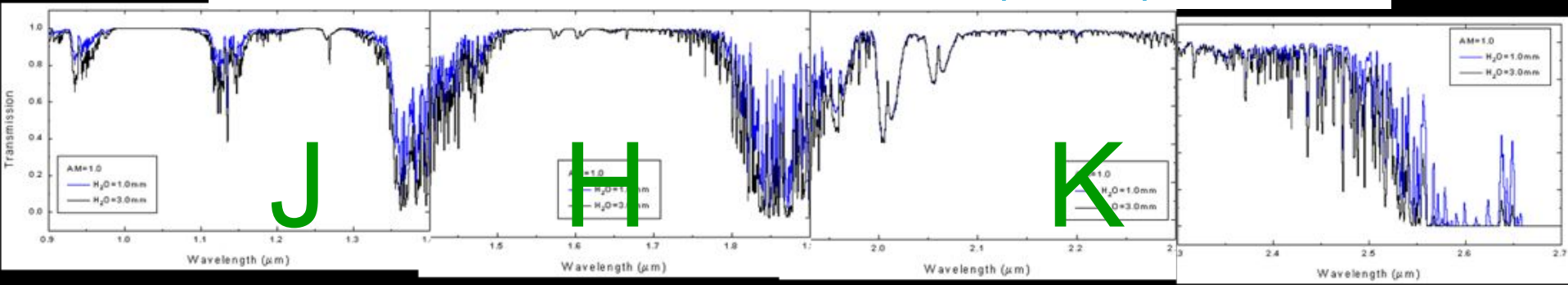
At the near infrared,  $H_2O$  cause strong absorption bands in Earth's atmosphere



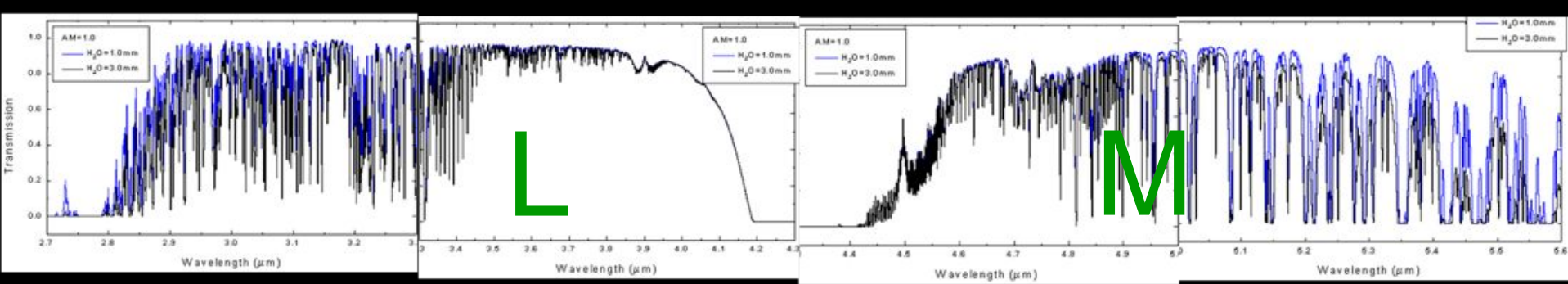
**Fig. 2.5.** Telluric absorption and spectroscopy: the spectrum of the star  $\gamma$  Cas. The spectrum was obtained using the 3.6 m Canada-France-Hawaii telescope at the summit of Mauna Kea, Hawaii, USA. (4 200 m), with a Fourier transform interferometer (cf. Sect. 5.3.4), in the near infrared atmospheric transmission window, with a resolution of  $\Delta\sigma = 0.5 cm^{-1}$ . (Chalabaev A., Maillard J.-P., *Ap. J.* **294**, 640, 1984.) Atmospheric absorption bands are indicated, together with photometric windows I, J and K (cf. Sect. 3.3). The star has both a continuum and emission lines (mainly H recombination lines). The inset shows the 3–4 Paschen  $\alpha$  line ( $5331.6 cm^{-1}$ ) extracted from a heavily absorbed part of the spectrum: the spectrum of  $\gamma$  Cas was divided by that of a reference star ( $\alpha$  Leo) to eliminate atmospheric bands. As  $\alpha$  Leo (spectral type B7) also has hydrogen lines, the absolute value of P  $\alpha$  is not significant. Observation of P  $\alpha$  would be impossible at lower altitude. (With the kind

# Atmospheric transmission

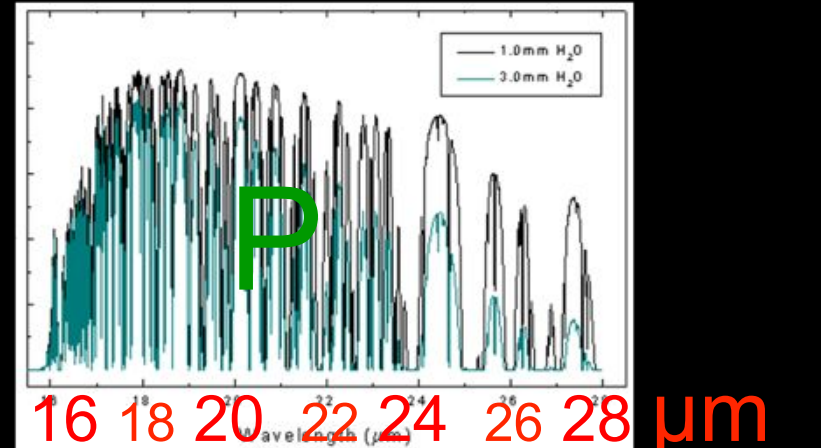
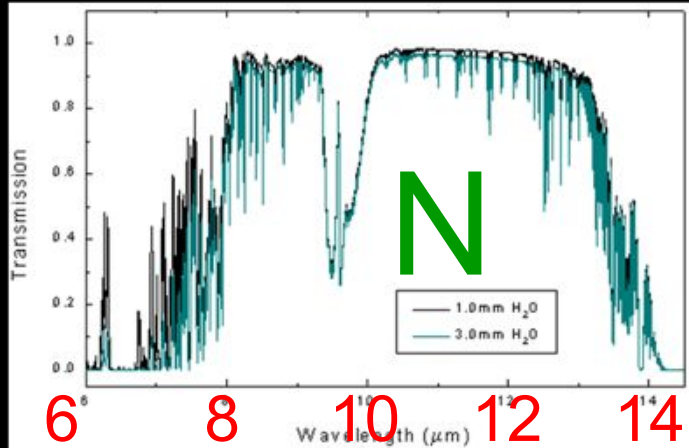
Mauna Kea com H<sub>2</sub>O = 1mm(1mm) & 3mm



0.9 1.0 1.1 1.2 1.3 1.4 1.5 1.6 1.7 1.8 1.9 2.0 2.1 2.2 2.2 2.4 2.5 2.6 2.7

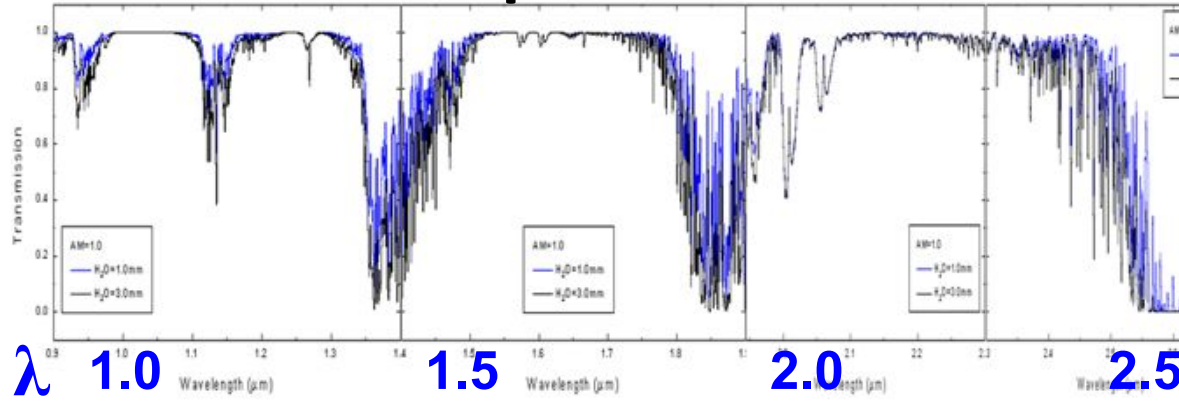


2.8 3.0 3.2 3.4 3.7 4.0 4.2 4.4 4.6 4.8 5.0 5.2 5.4 5.6

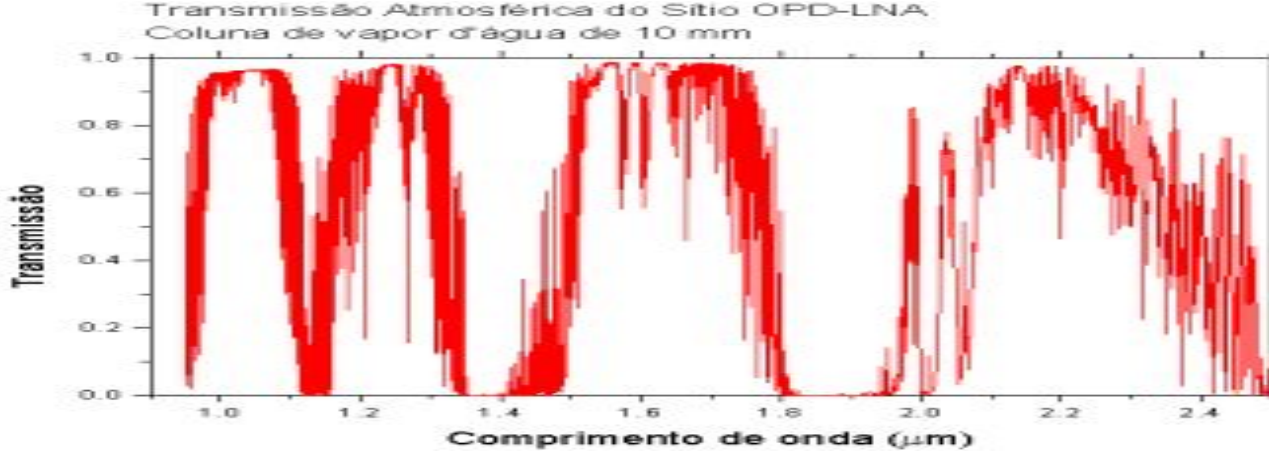


6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24 26 28  $\mu\text{m}$

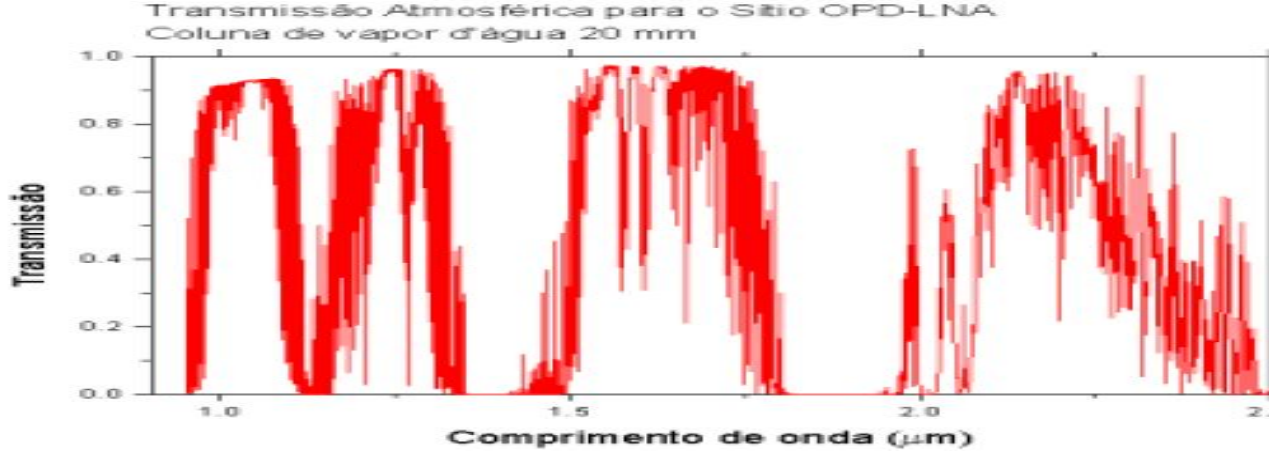
# Water Vapor: Mauna Kea vs OPD



Mauna Kea  
h(1mm ,3mm)



OPD/LNA  
h(10mm)  
*Barbosa(2000)*



OPD/LNA  
h(20mm)  
*Barbosa(2000)*

# Optical depth

The optical depth along a vertical line, of a constituent  $i$  with mixing ratio  $r_i(z)$  is:

$$\tau(\lambda, z_0) = \int_{z_0}^{\infty} r_i(z) \rho_0(z) k_i(\lambda) dz$$

The attenuation of an incident ray of intensity  $I_0$  (top of the atmosphere) received at altitude  $z_0$  and at an angle  $\theta$  from the zenith, is:

$$\frac{I(z_0)}{I_0(\infty)} = \exp \left\{ -\frac{1}{\cos\theta} \sum_i \tau_i(\lambda, z_0) \right\}$$

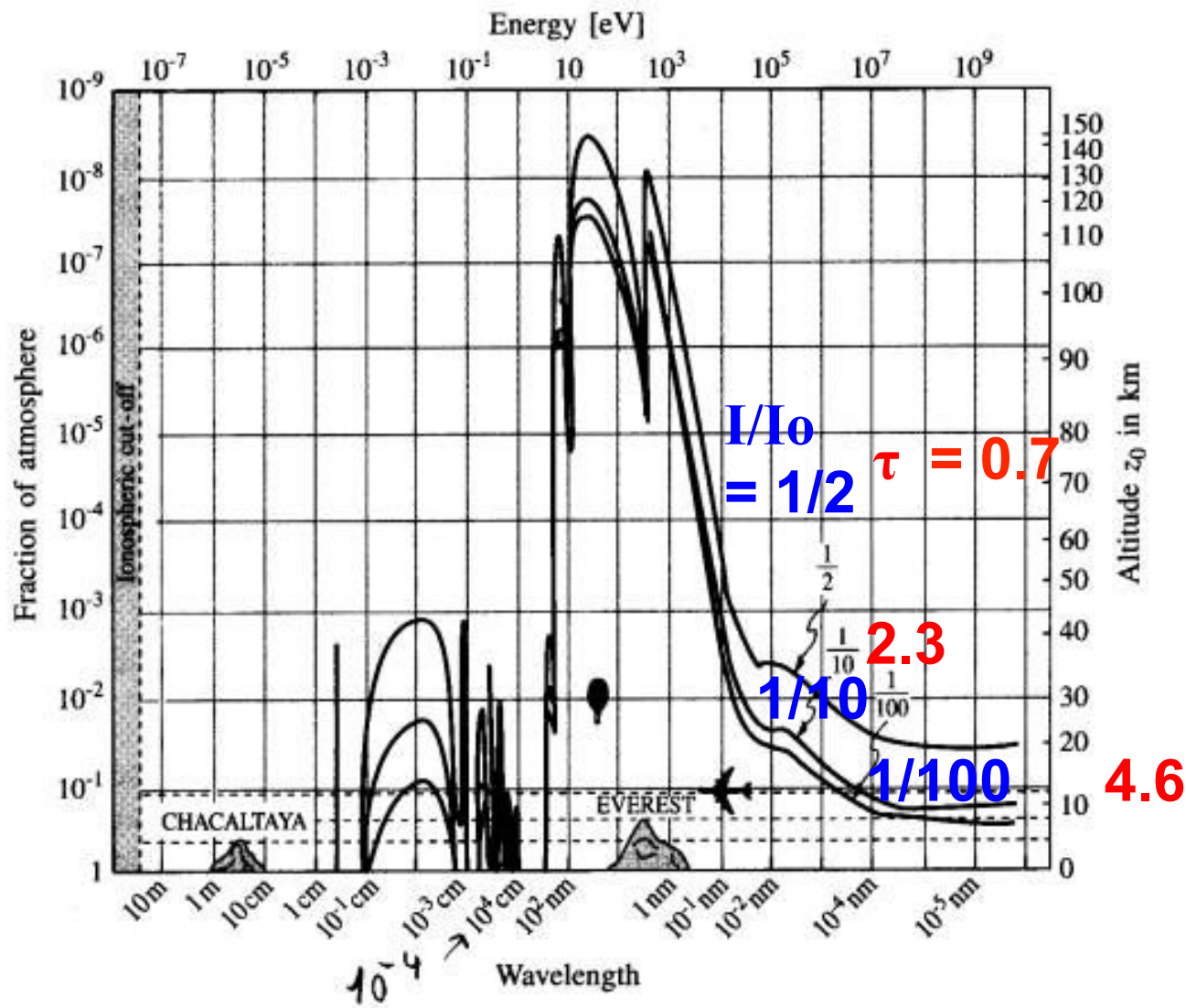
The sum is over all species that absorb



# Attenuation of radiation with altitude

Atmosphere totally opaque for  $\tau = 10$

Ideally observatories are feasible for  $\tau < 0.5$  (transmission  $> 61\%$ )



**Fig. 2.4.** Attenuation of electromagnetic radiation by the atmosphere. Curves give the altitude  $z_0$  (right-hand scale) or the residual fraction of the atmosphere, in mass, above  $z_0$  (left-hand scale), for three values of the ratio  $I(z_0, \lambda, \theta = 0^\circ)/I_0(\infty, \lambda)$ . Chacaltaya is a site in the Andes (altitude  $\sim 6000$  m)

# Ground-based observatories

Continuum N<sub>2</sub>

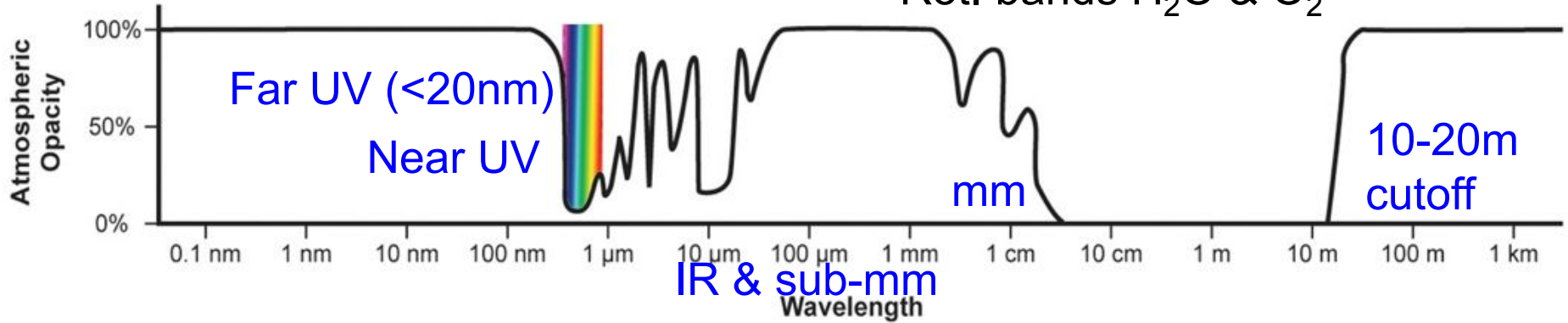
Bands (rot. & v-r)

Ionospheric plasma

Elect bands O<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, cont O<sub>2</sub>

H<sub>2</sub>O e CO<sub>2</sub>

Rot. bands H<sub>2</sub>O & O<sub>2</sub>



Optical –  
IR window

Radio  
window



Gamma Rays, X-Rays and Ultraviolet  
Light blocked by the upper atmosphere  
(best observed from space).

Visible Light  
observable  
from Earth,  
with some  
atmospheric  
distortion.

Most of the  
Infrared spectrum  
absorbed by  
atmospheric  
gasses (best  
observed  
from space).

Radio Waves observable  
from Earth.

Long-wavelength  
Radio Waves  
blocked.

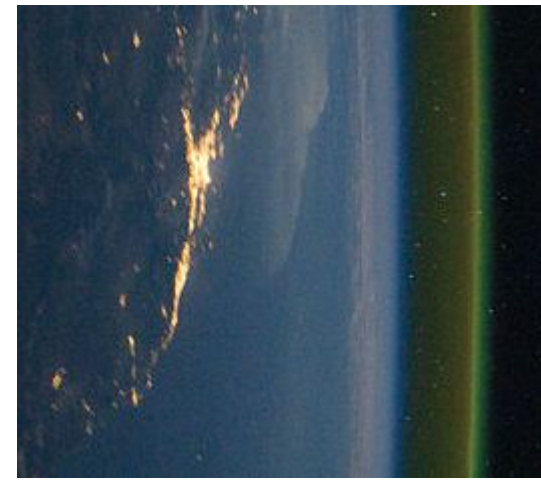


# ALMA:

66 antennas working together at mm and submm

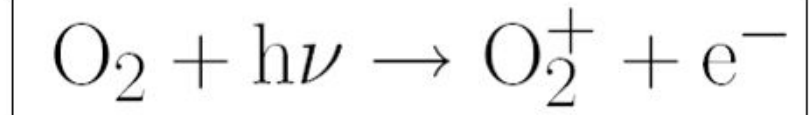


# Atmospheric emission



- The atmosphere emits by fluorescence (*airglow*) & thermally

FLUORESCENCE: recombination of e<sup>-</sup> & ions from diurnal dissociation; ex.:



- Continuum: 1-3 Rayleigh Å<sup>-1</sup>
- Lines: 500 R

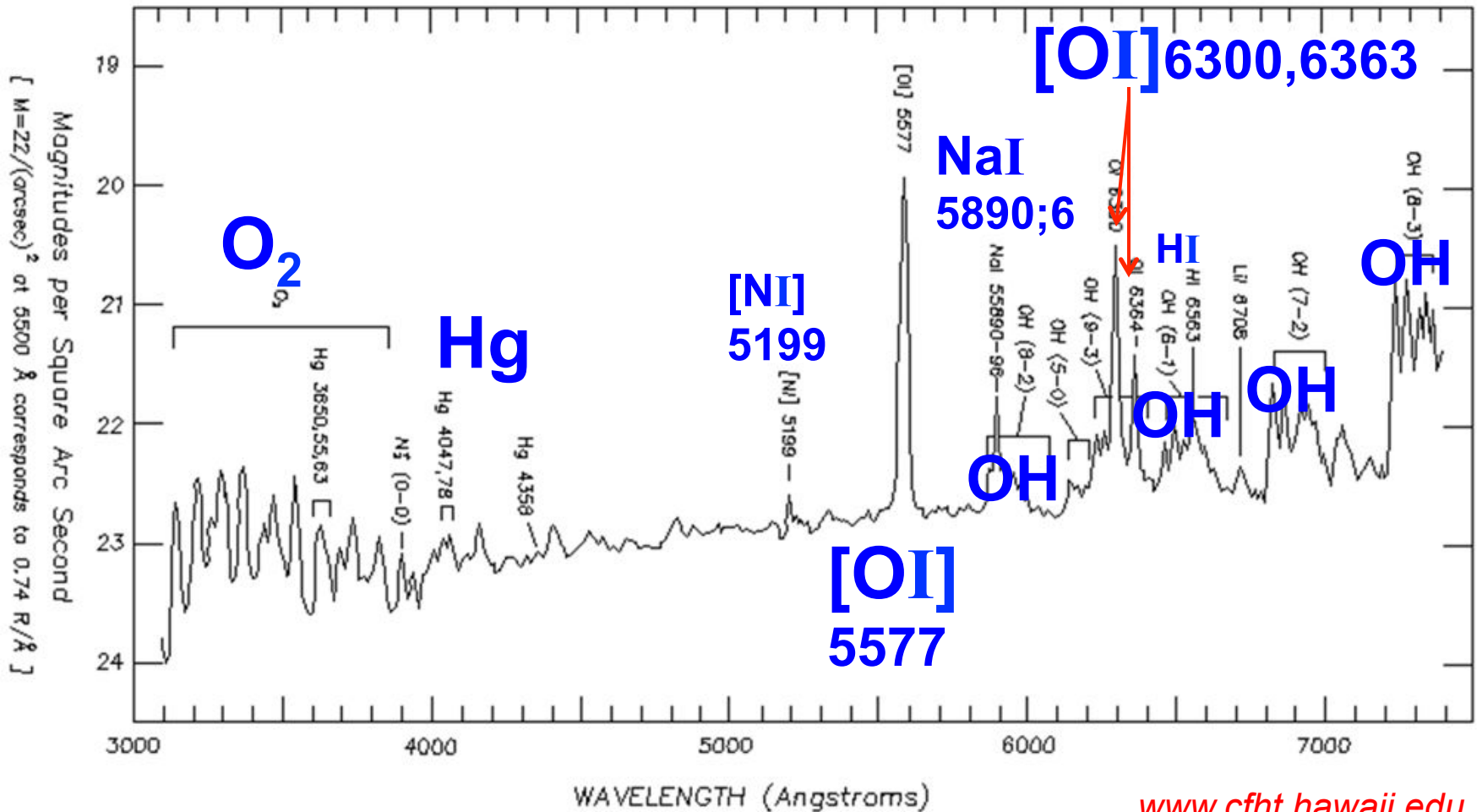
$$1 \text{ Rayleigh (R)} = 10^6 \text{ photons cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1} \text{ str}^{-1}$$

$$= 6.8 \times 10^{-17} \text{ Wm}^{-2} \text{ um}^{-1} \text{ arcsec}^{-2} (\text{em} = 550 \text{ nm}) = 22 \text{ mag arcsec}^{-2}$$

- Main emitters: OI, NaI, O<sub>2</sub>, OH, H

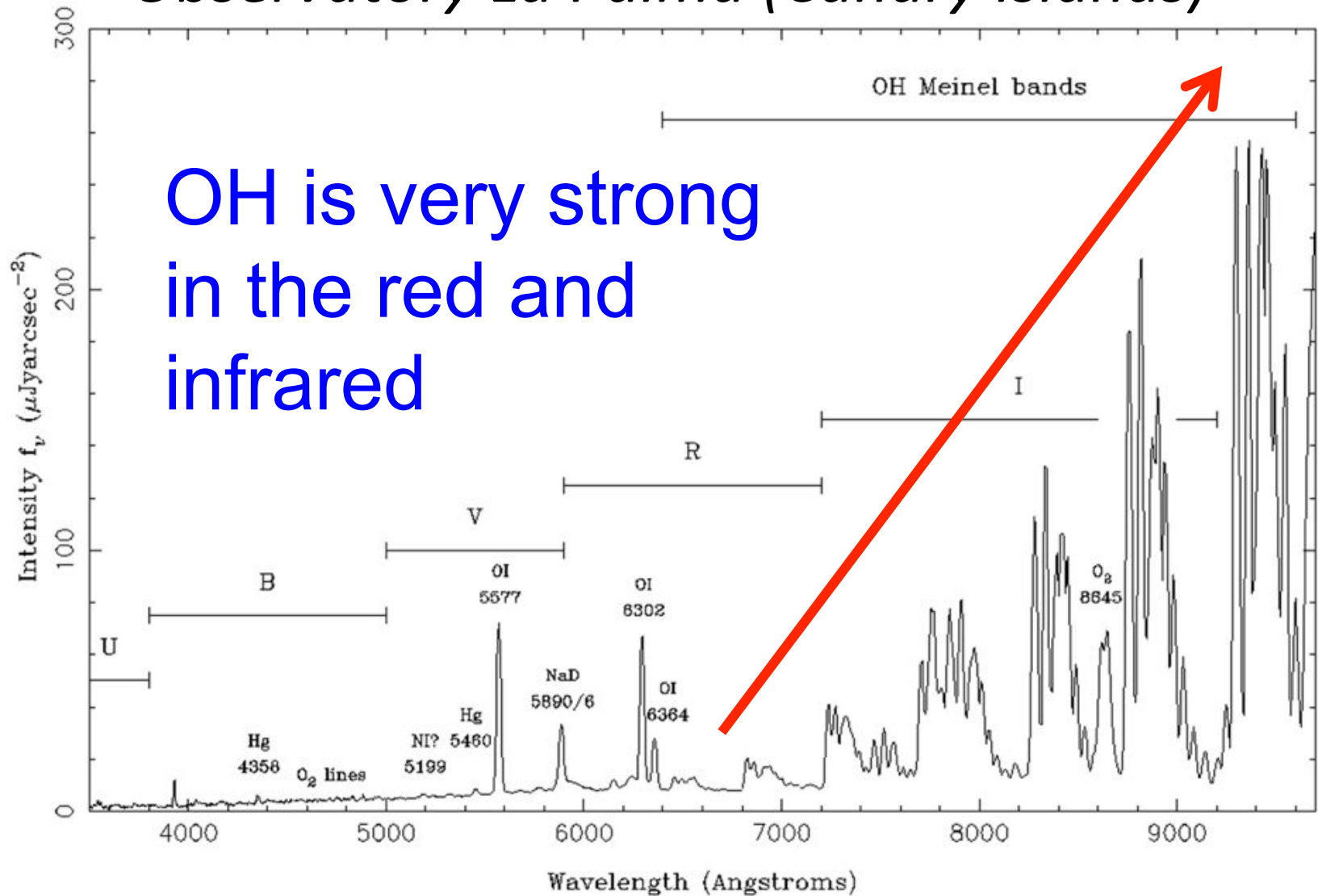
# Spectrum of the night sky (optical)

## Mauna Kea (Hawaii)



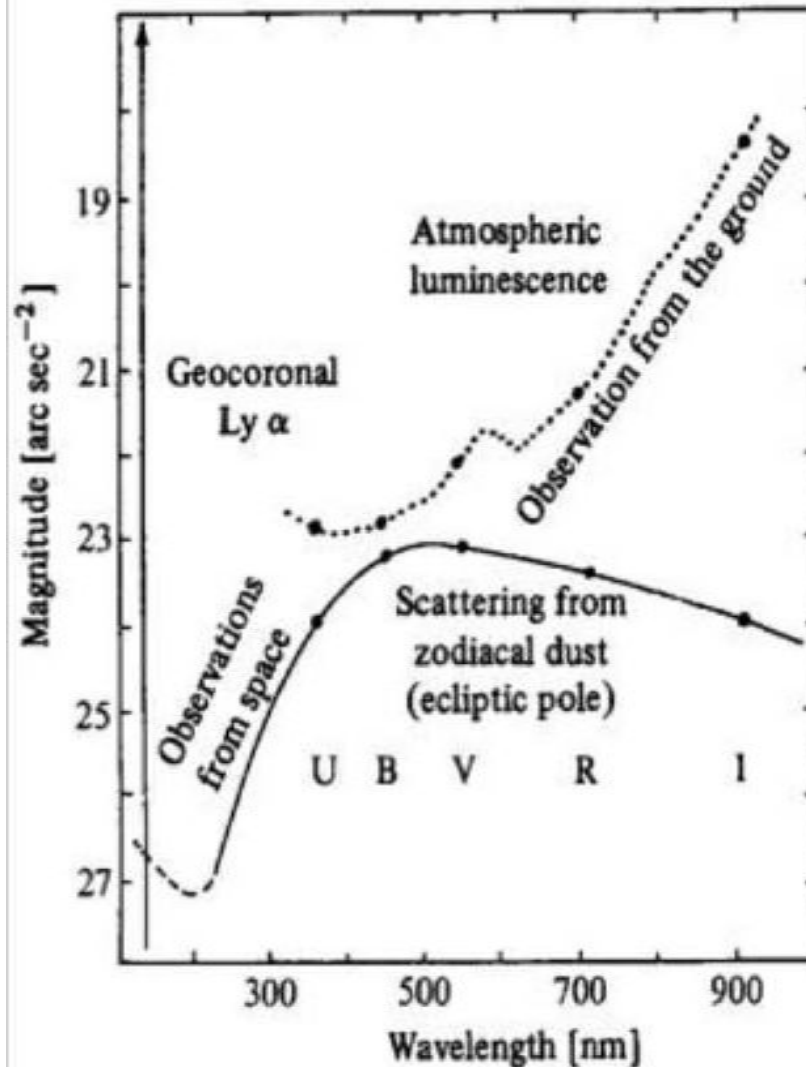
# Spectrum of the sky at night (optical & infrared)

## *Observatory La Palma (Canary Islands)*



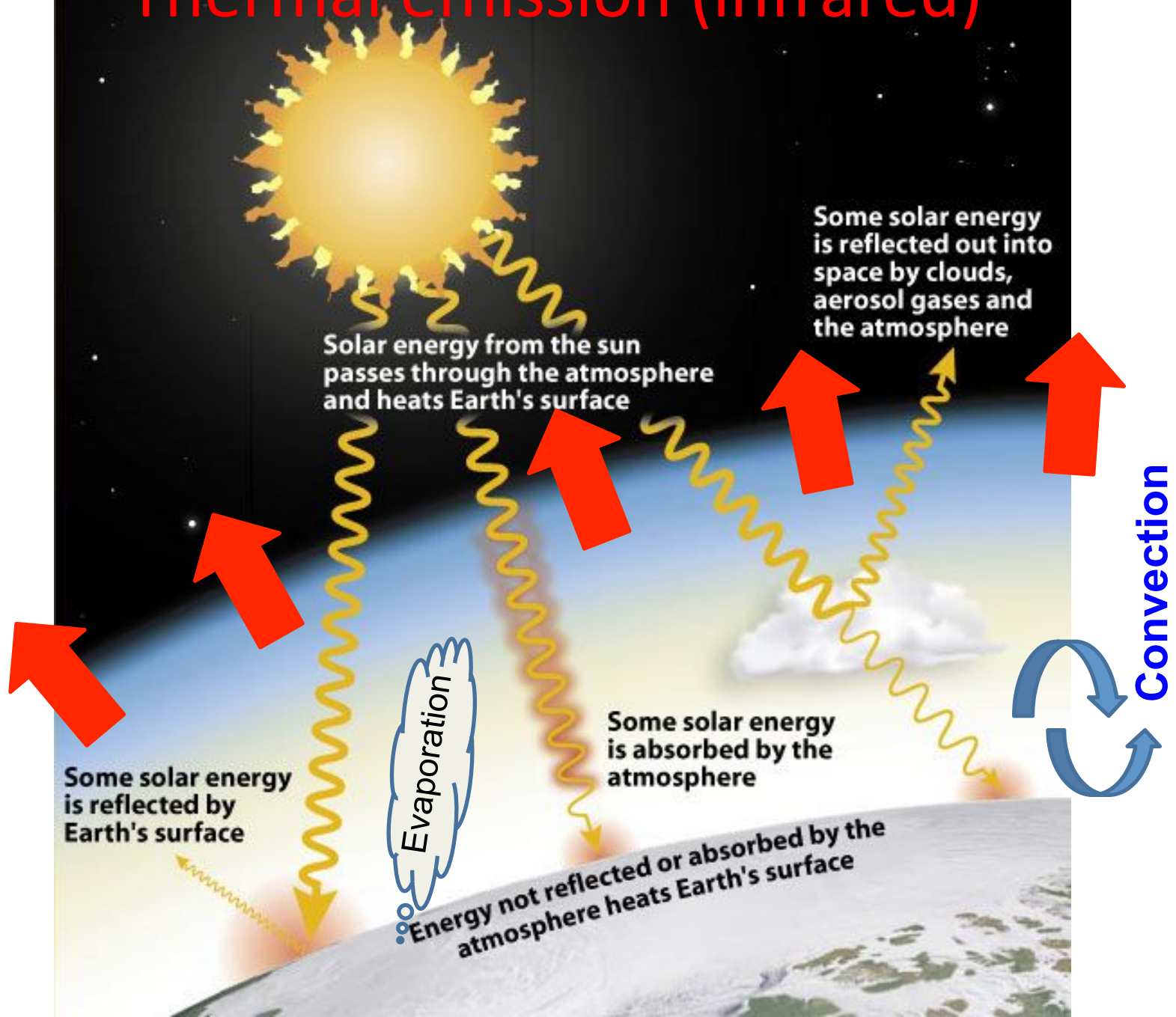
OH is very strong  
in the red and  
infrared

# Sky background for observations on ground and space near Earth



**Fig. 2.8.** Visible and ultraviolet magnitudes of the sky background per square arc second, for observations from the ground and from space near the Earth. Letters denote the spectral bands of the photometric system (cf. 3.3), corresponding to the points (•). [After Courtès G., personal communication; Smith H.E., Burbidge E.M., *Ap. J.* **210**, 629, 1979; Leinert C., *Sp. Sci. Rev.* **18**, 281, 1975; Machetto F. et al, *ESA-SP 1028*, 1980, European Space Agency]

# Thermal emission (infrared)





# Thermal emission

- Atmosphere could be considered a gas in LTE until 40-60km
- For  $\tau \ll 1$  (shallow optical depth), the intensity of radiation at altitude  $z$  and zenithal distance  $\theta$ , is:

$$I_{\lambda}(z) \approx \tau_{\lambda} B_{\lambda}(\bar{T}) \frac{1}{\cos \theta}$$

$B_{\lambda}$  : Planck function at mean temperature  $\bar{T}$  of the atmosphere

$\tau \ll 1$  and  $B_{\lambda}$  non-negligible, satisfied for:

- Infrared window: 1 - 20  $\mu\text{m}$
- Milimeter window: 0.5 – 2 mm

# Thermal emission

$$I_{\lambda}(z) \approx \tau_{\lambda} B_{\lambda}(\bar{T}) \frac{1}{\cos \theta}$$

Using a mean temperature 250K:

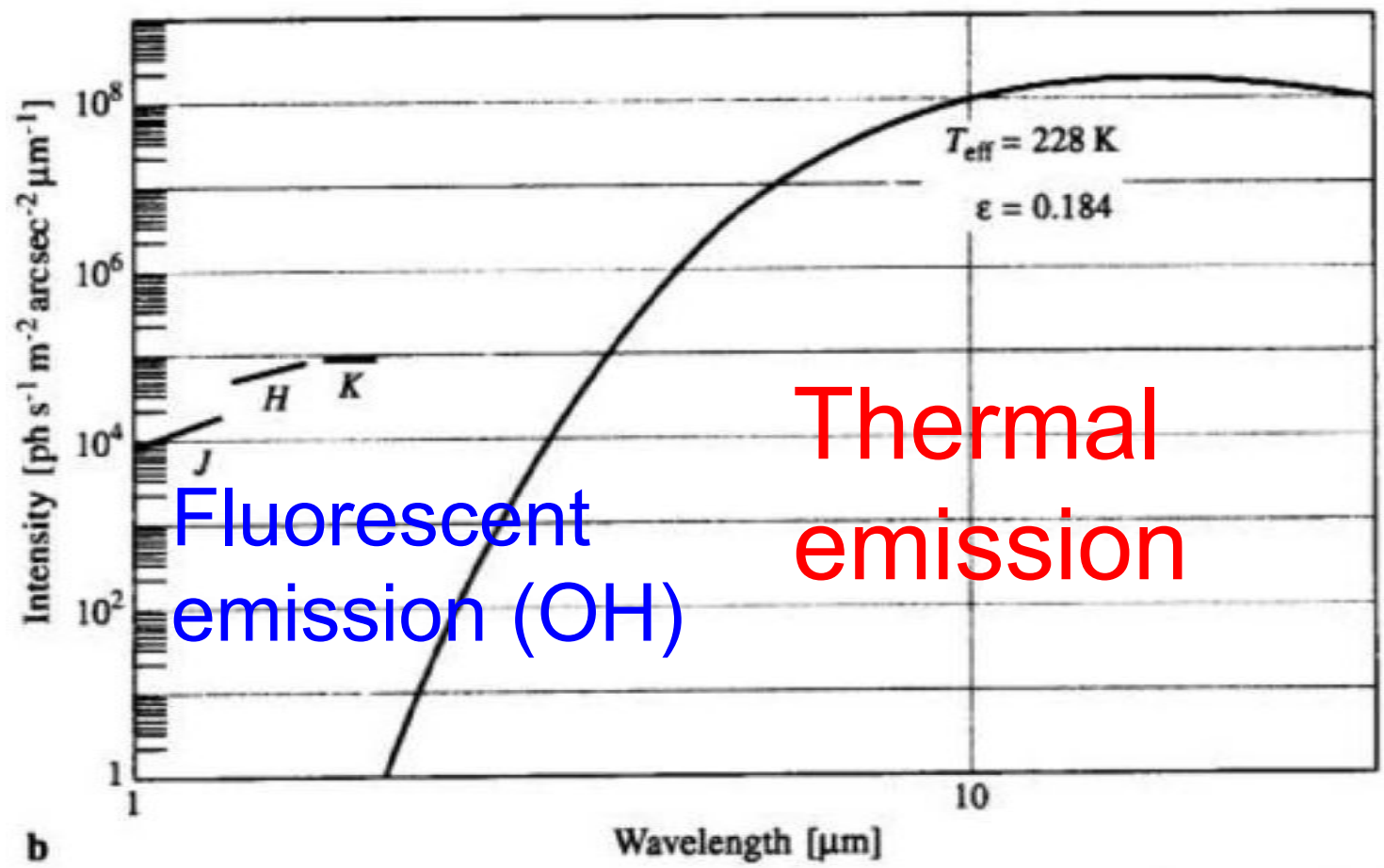
Astronomical sources could be several orders of magnitude weaker than sky thermal emission (also could be problematic for sky fluorescent emission).

**Table 2.3.** Mean thermal emission of the atmosphere

Spectral band (cf. Sect. 3.3)	<i>L</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Q</i>
Mean wavelength [ $\mu\text{m}$ ]	3.4	5.0	10.2	21.0
Mean optical depth $\tau$	0.15	0.3	0.08	0.3
Magnitude [arcsec <sup>-2</sup> ]	8.1	2.0	-2.1	-5.8
Intensity [Jy arcsec <sup>-2</sup> ] <sup>a</sup>	0.16	22.5	250	2 100

<sup>a</sup> 1 Jansky =  $10^{-26}$  W m<sup>-2</sup> Hz<sup>-1</sup>.

# Sky background in the infrared: thermal emission vs. OH



Sky background emission in the infrared, at the altitude of Mauna Kea (4200m).

# Scattering of radiation: Rayleigh & Mie

- Caused by molecules and aerosols in suspension
- Influence of air molecules depends on altitude, *but aerosols depend on winds, weather, season, volcanic activity, industrial pollution*

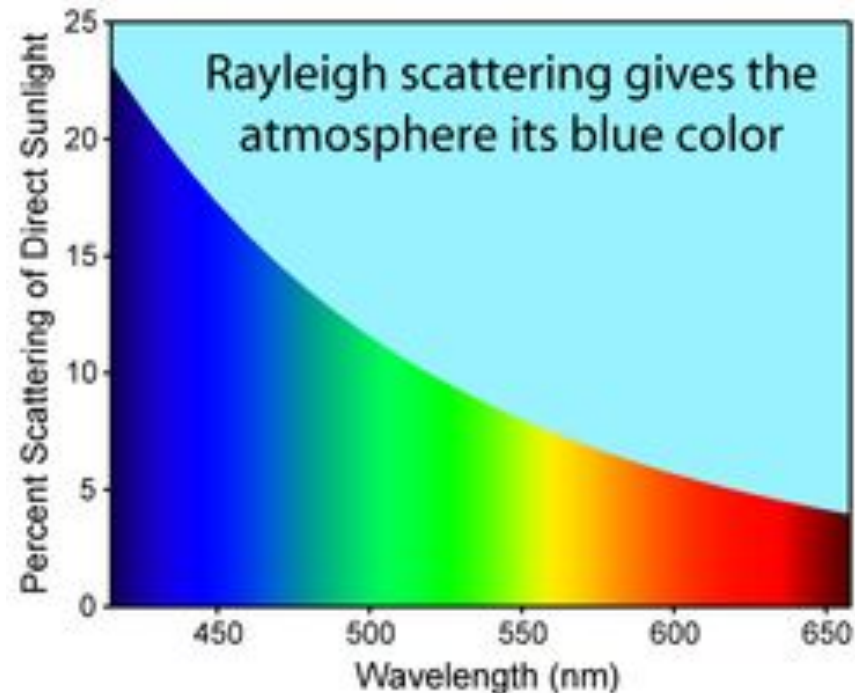


# Rayleigh scattering

- For particles smaller than the light wavelength  $\lambda$ :

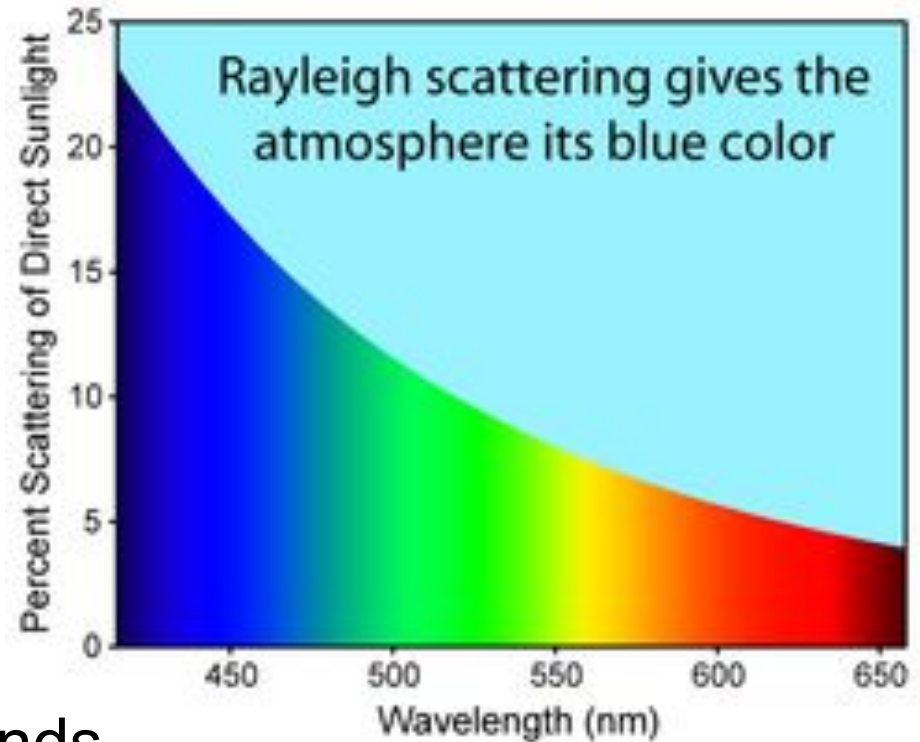
$$\sigma_R(\lambda) = \frac{8\pi^3}{3} \frac{(n^2 - 1)^2}{N^2 \lambda^4}$$

- n: refraction index;
- N: density of molecules



# This is why the sky is blue

$$\sigma_R(\lambda) = \frac{8\pi^3}{3} \frac{(n^2 - 1)^2}{N^2 \lambda^4}$$



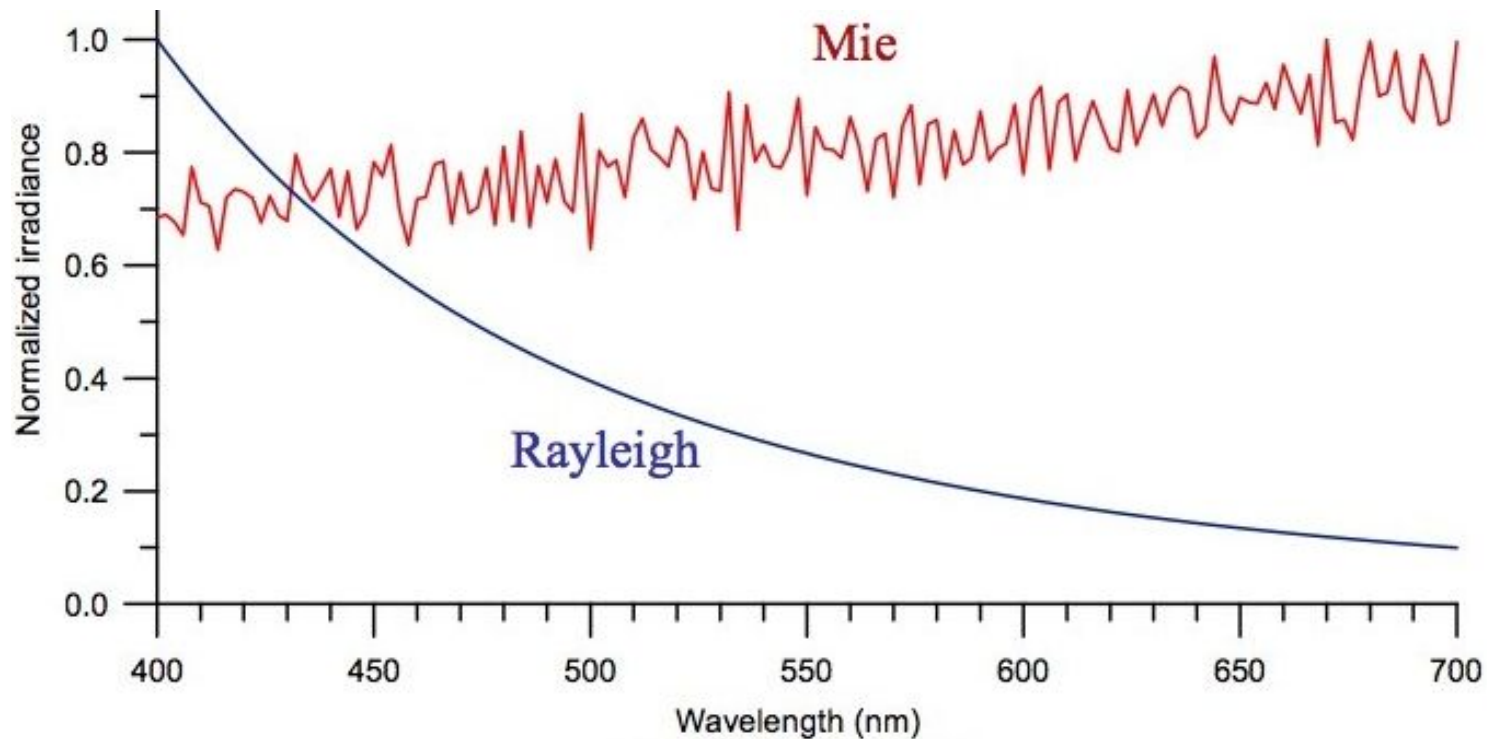
Rayleigh scattering also depends on the incident angle  $\theta$ :

$$j = \sigma_R \frac{3}{4} (1 + \cos^2 \theta) \frac{d\omega}{4\pi} I$$

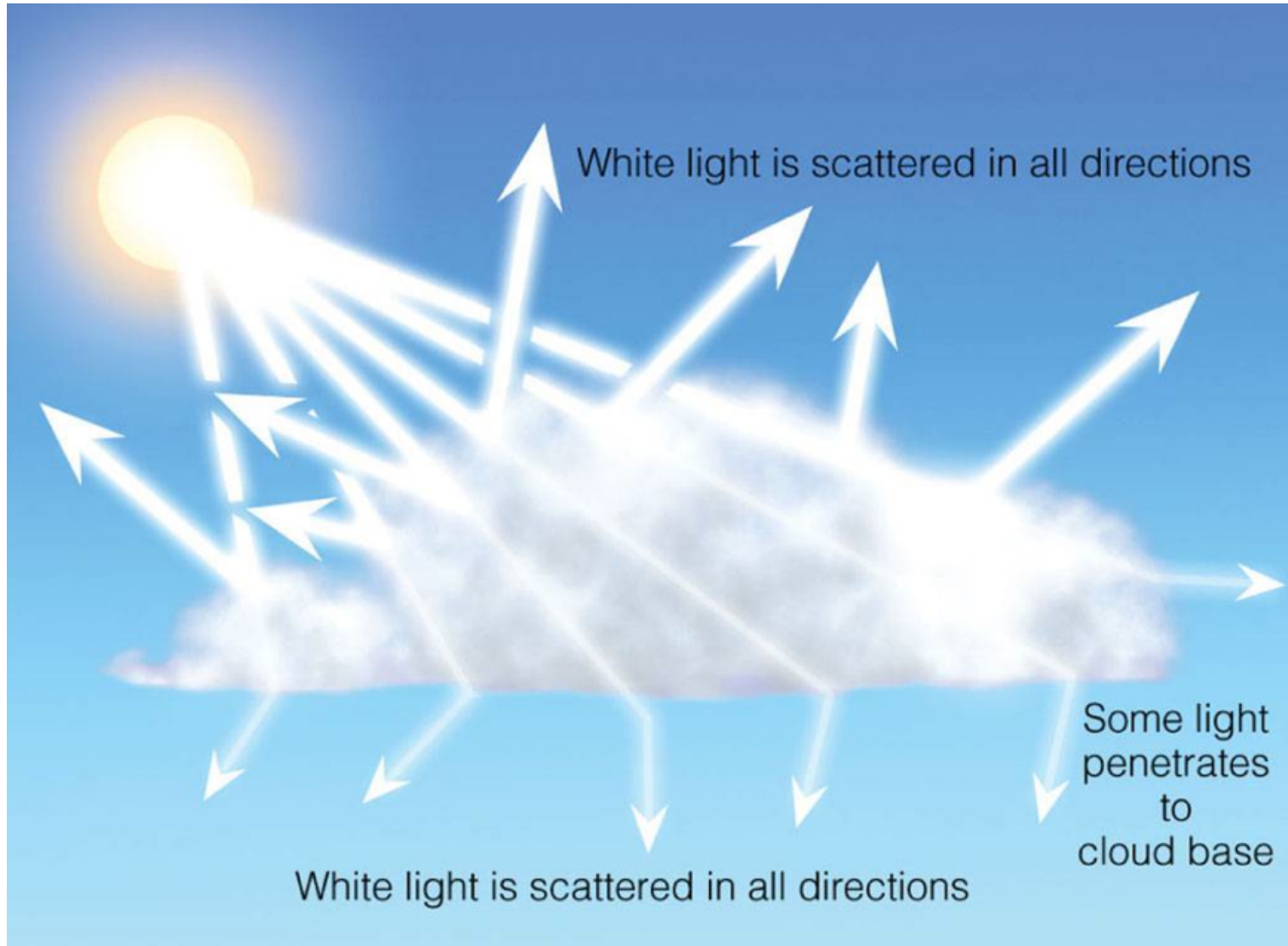
At  $z=2\text{km}$ : at  $90^\circ$  from the Sun,  $\lambda=7000\text{\AA}$ , sky brightness is  $10^{-7}$  of the Sun's disk

# Mie scattering

- Scattering by particles larger than  $\lambda$  of light
- Does not depend much on wavelength



# Mie scattering





# Sky brightness during the day in the optical and infrared

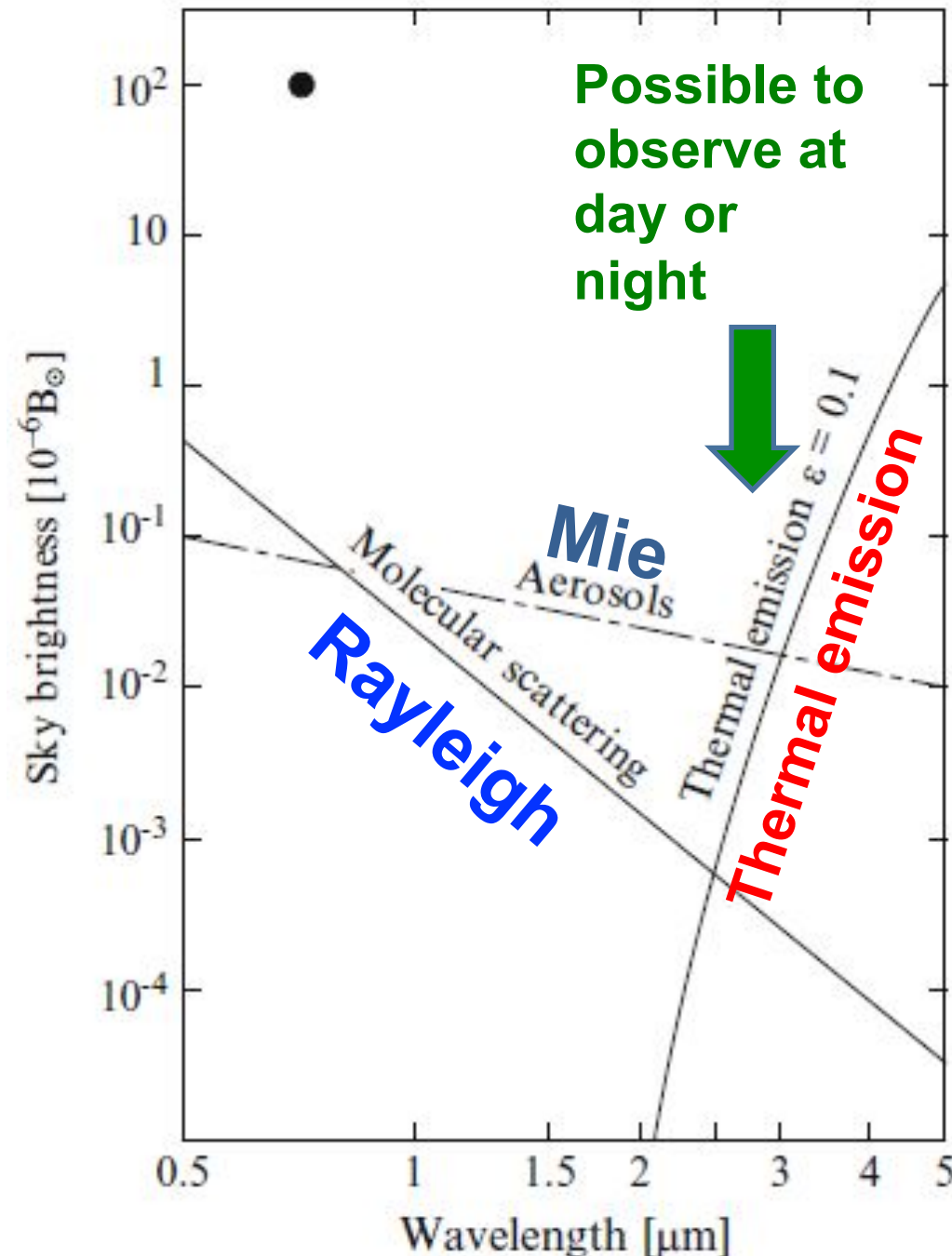


Fig. 2.11 (Lena, *Observational Astrophysics*). Molecular scattering is given for the altitude  $z = 2000\text{m}$ , at  $90^\circ$  from the Sun. The wavelength dependence is  $\lambda^{-4}$ . Thermal emission is also shown, assuming uniform mean emissivity of 0.1.

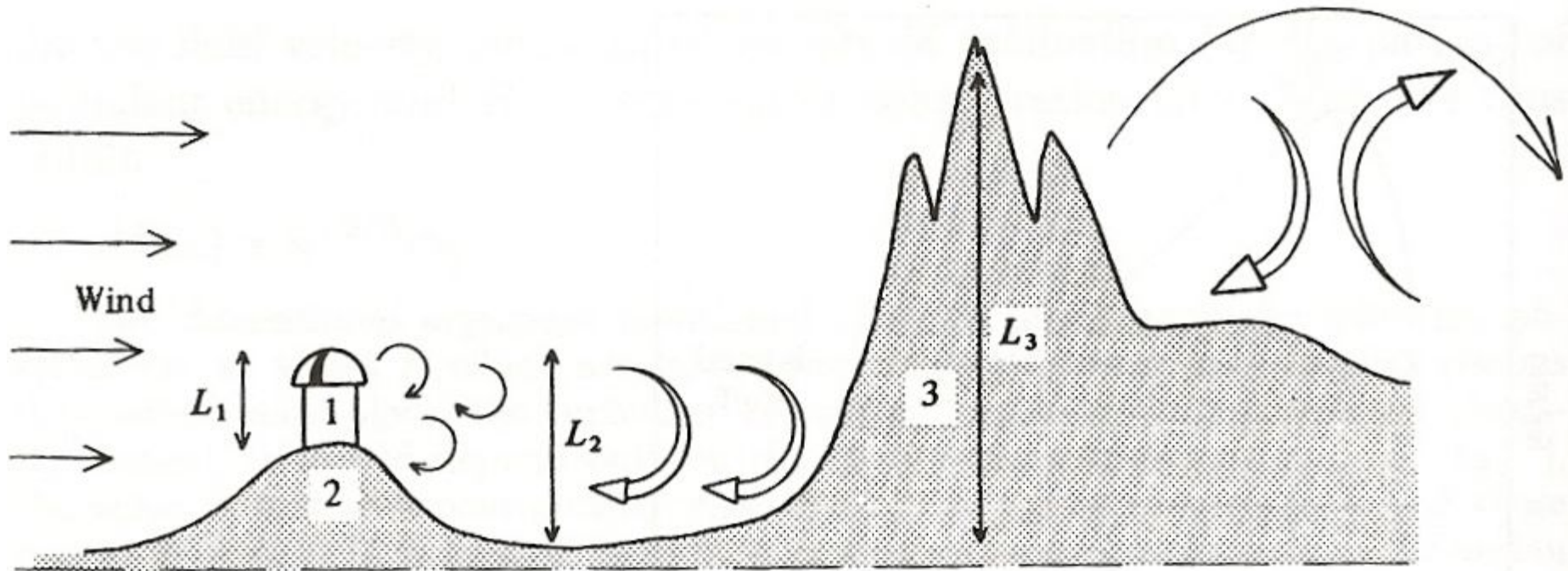
The dashed line shows the possible additional contribution due to aerosols, varying as  $\lambda^{-1}$ . For comparison, (•) marks the sky brightness measured at 0.5 arcmin from the Sun's limb at Kitt Peak (Arizona)

# Other atmospheric factors: Atmospheric turbulence

*Vincent van Gogh*



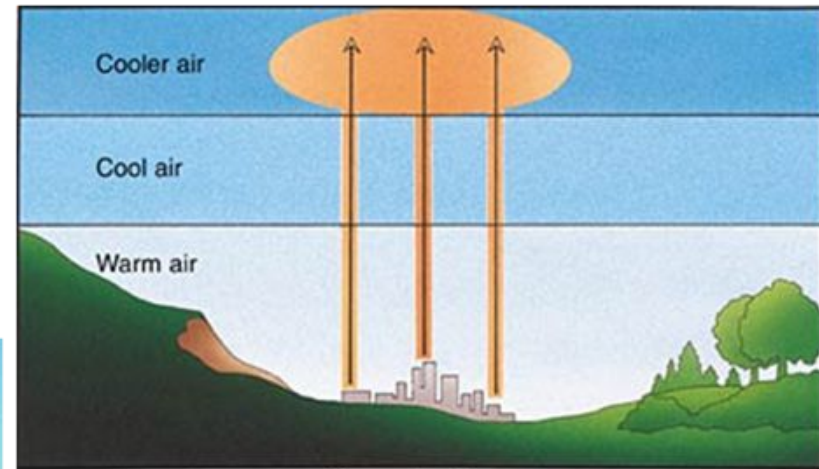
# Sources of turbulence by different obstacles



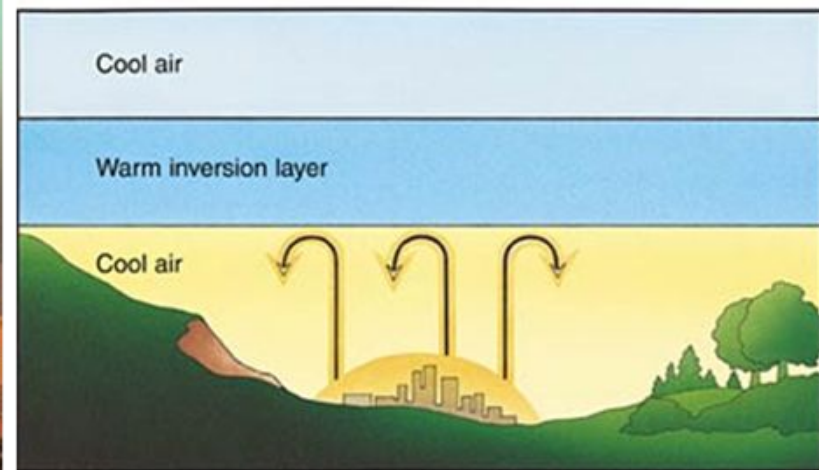
**Fig. 2.13.** Schematic representation of the generation of turbulence in the atmosphere by different obstacles. The amplitude of the temperature fluctuations depends on the amplitude of the turbulence and on the deviation of the actual temperature gradient from the adiabatic gradient. The scales  $L_1$ ,  $L_2$ ,  $L_3$  are characteristic of the external scales of turbulence caused by wind around the obstacles 1, 2 and 3

# Other atmospheric factors: **inversion layer**

- Important factor to choose an astronomical site
- Inversion layer  $\sim 2\text{km}$ , but could occur at lower  $z$



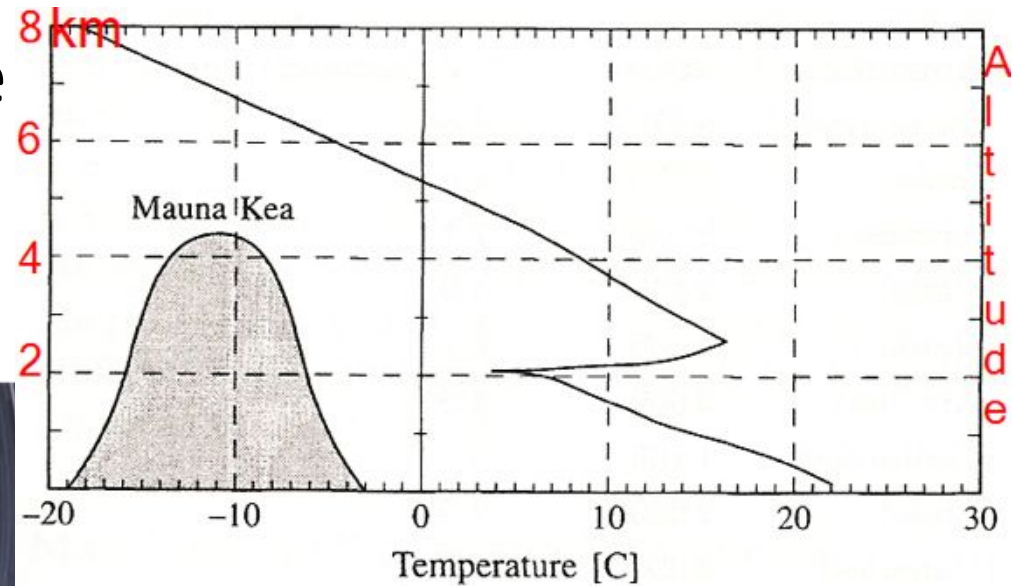
Normal pattern



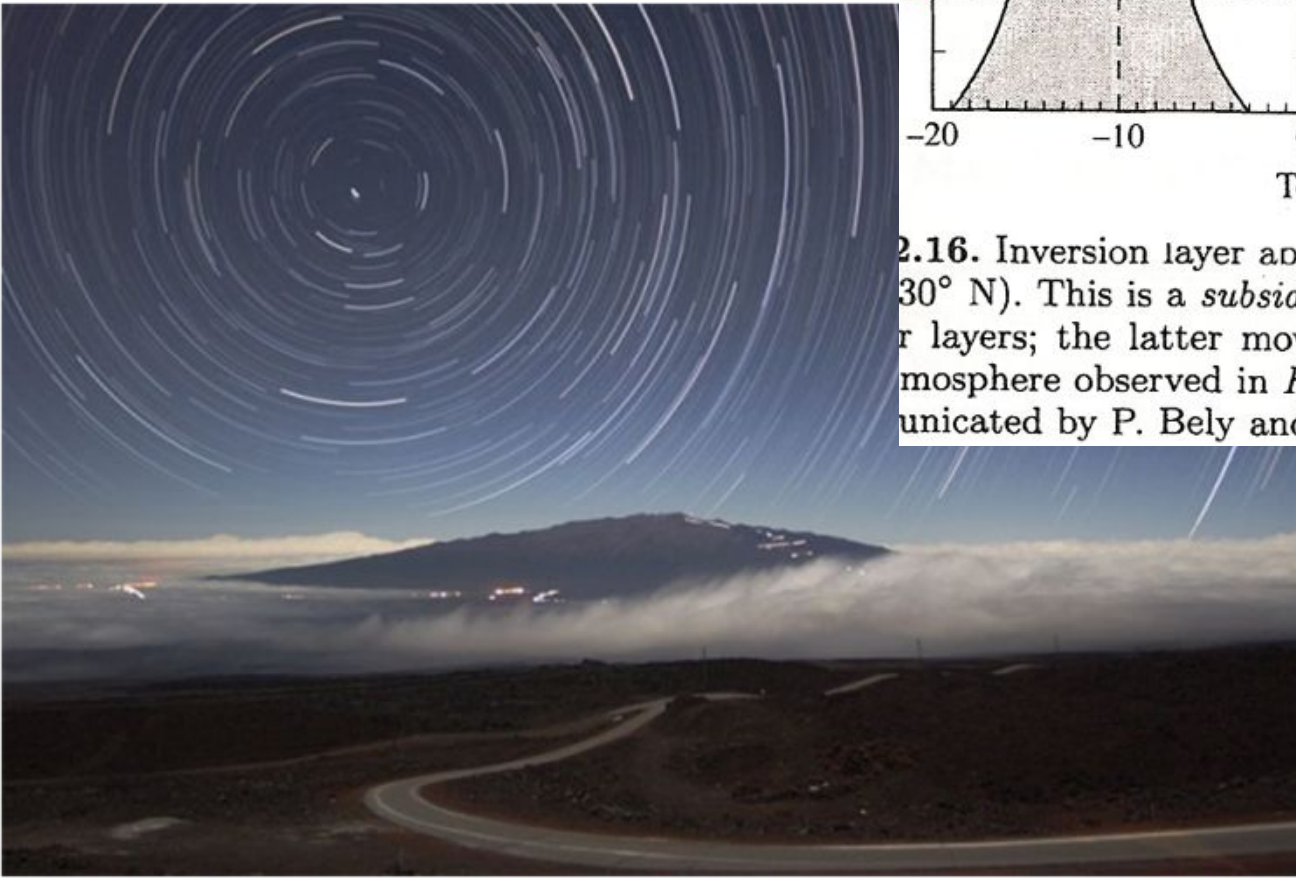
Thermal inversion

# Inversion layer

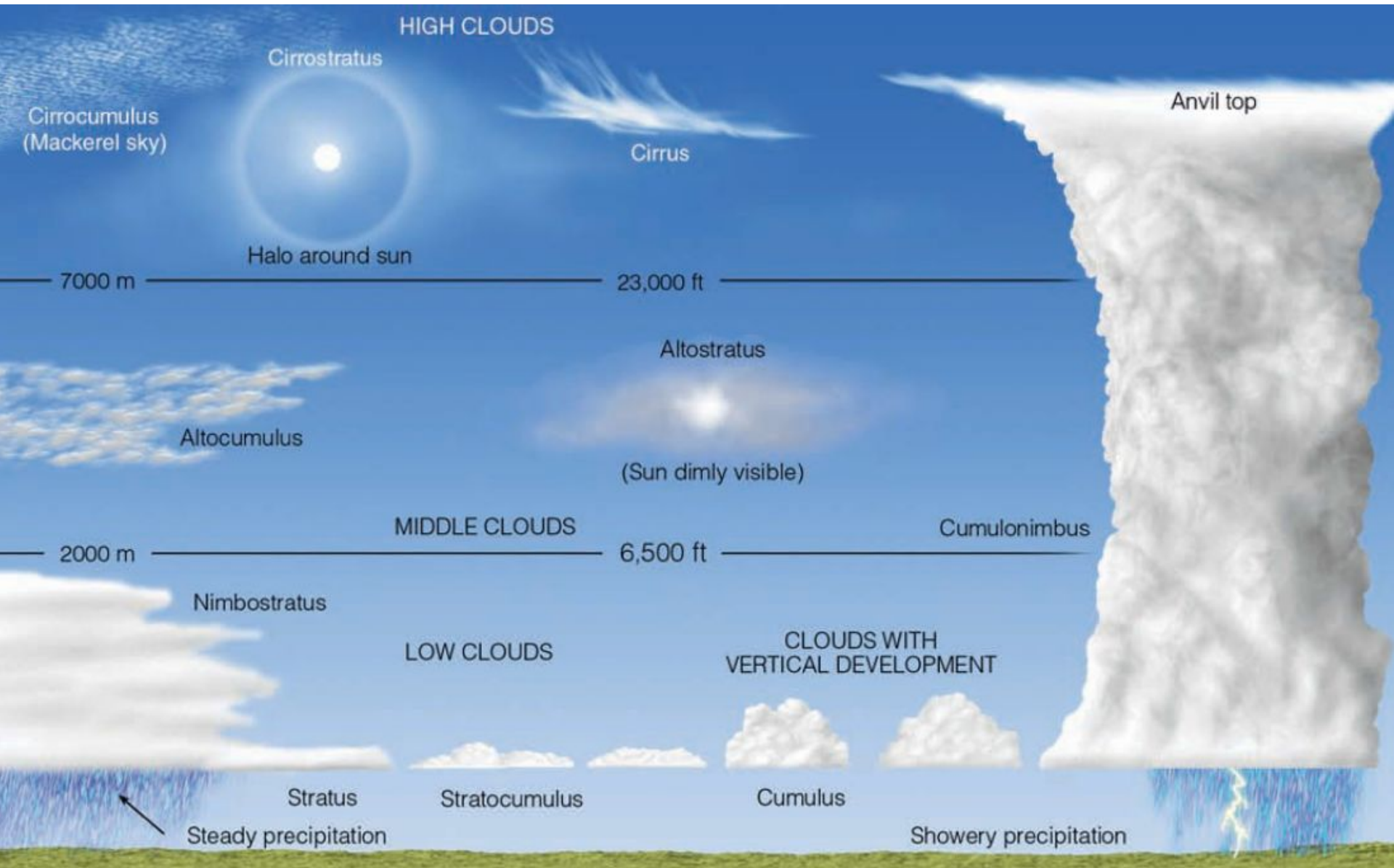
Inversion layer above the Pacific Ocean around the Big Island of Hawaii



2.16. Inversion layer above the Pacific Ocean, near the island (30° N). This is a *subsidence inversion*, caused by reheating of air layers; the latter movement itself is caused by the general circulation of the atmosphere observed in *Hadley cells*. (Sounding balloon measurements communicated by P. Bely and the Hilo Weather Bureau, Hawaii)



# High altitude → less clouds



**FIGURE 5.24** A generalized illustration of basic cloud types based on height above the surface and vertical development

# Meteorological conditions at La Silla (Chile)









Brazilian students @ La Silla, 20/9/2013

1/10/2013

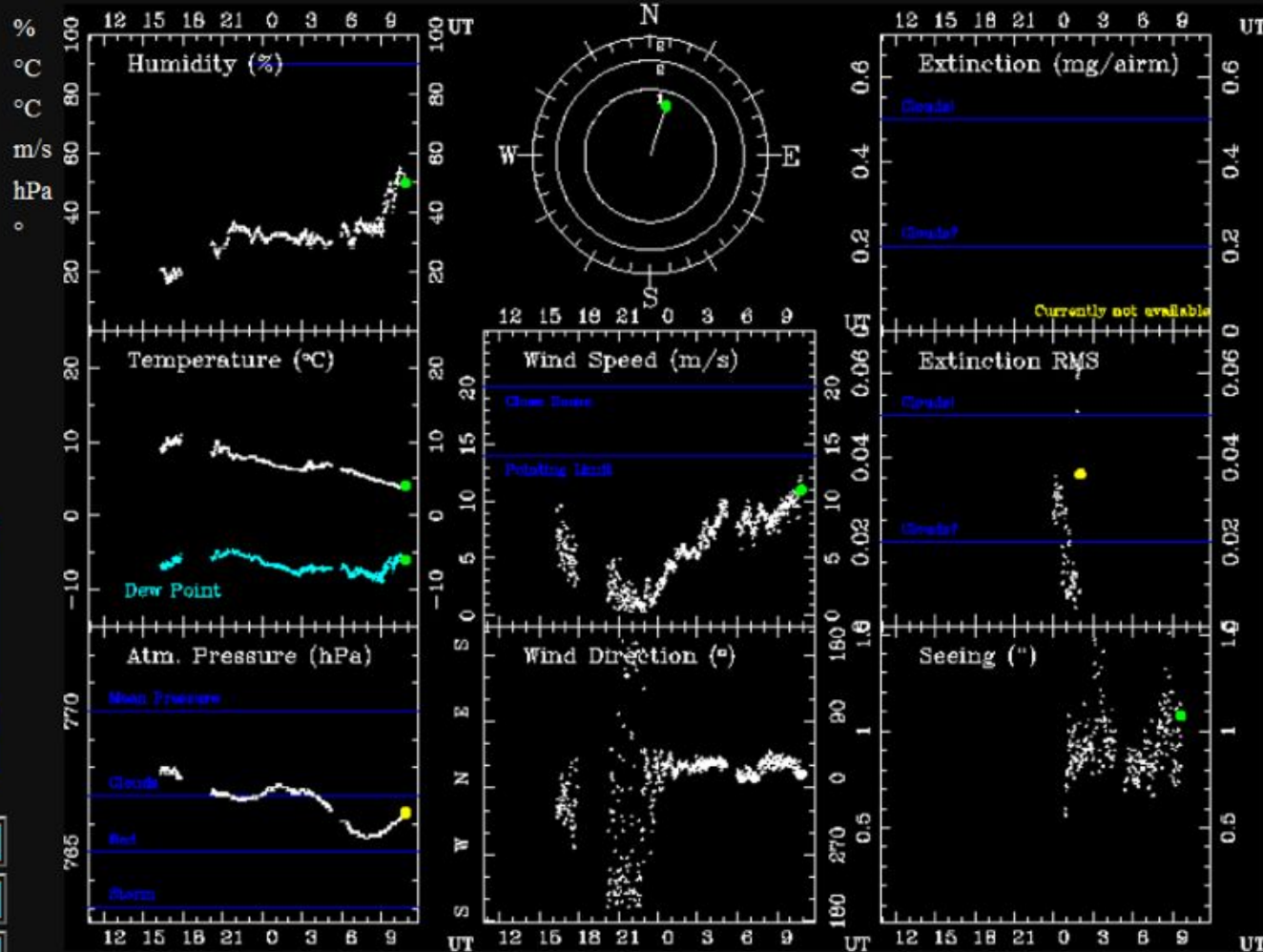
# La Silla - MeteoMonitor

Current Average

Humidity:	50.0		50.0
Temperature:	4.0		4.0
Dew Point:	-6.0		-6.0
Wind Speed:	11.0		11.0
Atm. Pressure:	766.4		766.4
Sun Altitude:	6.		
DIMM Seeing:	1.08		arcsec

Last Update

UT: 2013-10-02 10:50  
JD: 2456567.951  
ST: 06:52



[Update](#)

[PRINT GRAPH](#)

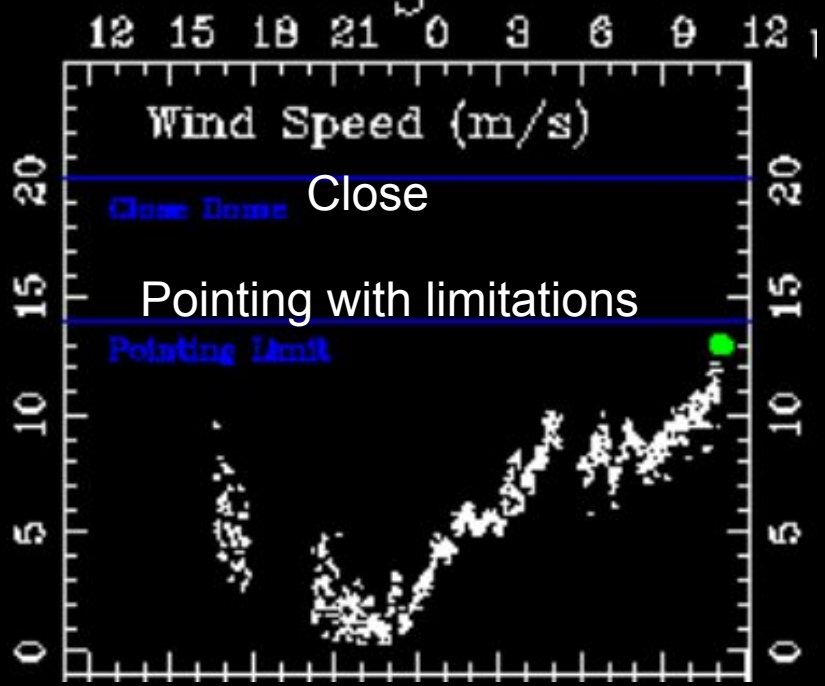
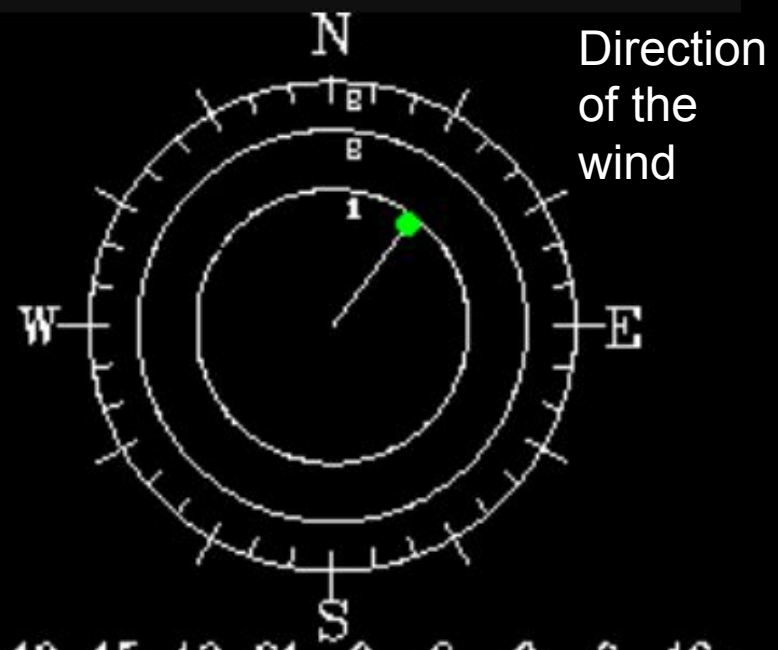
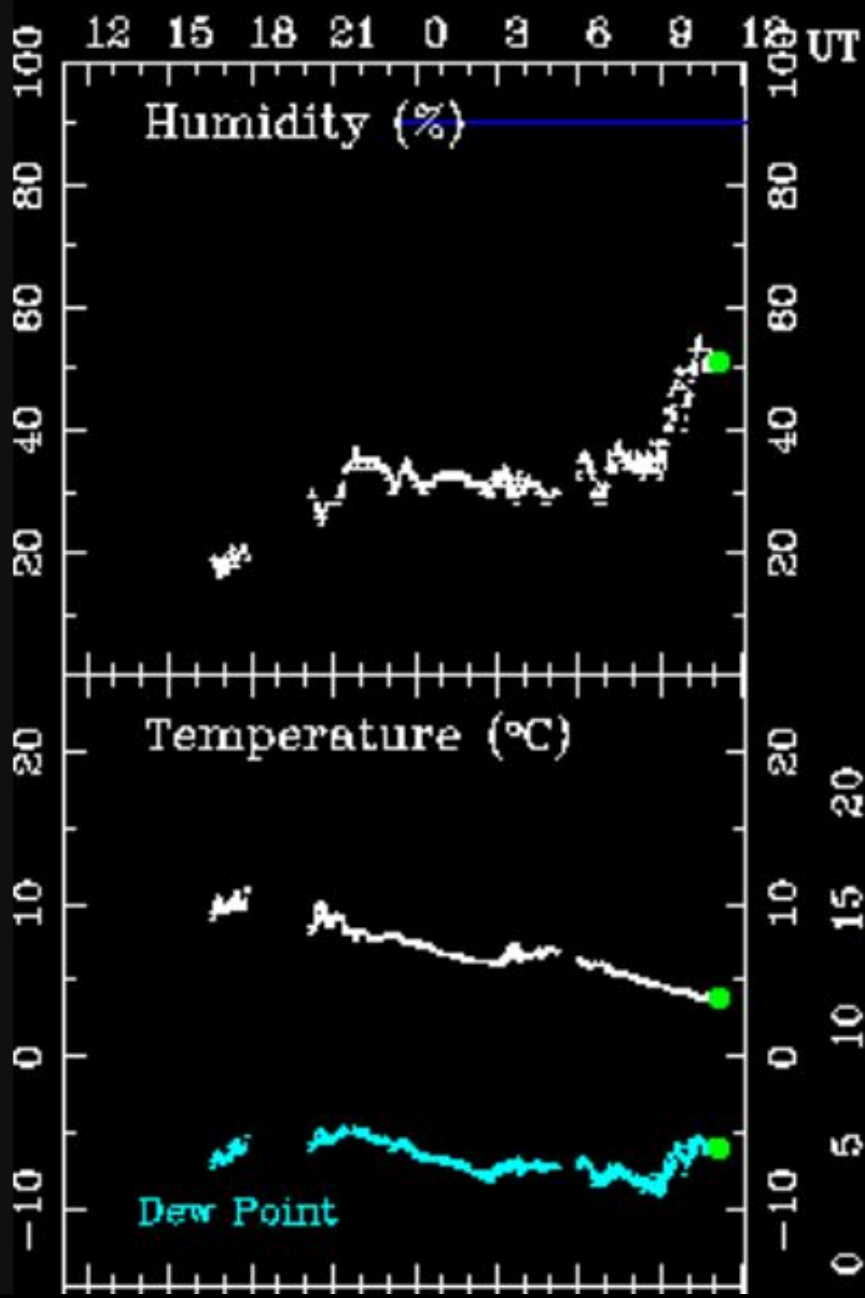
[Help/Info](#)

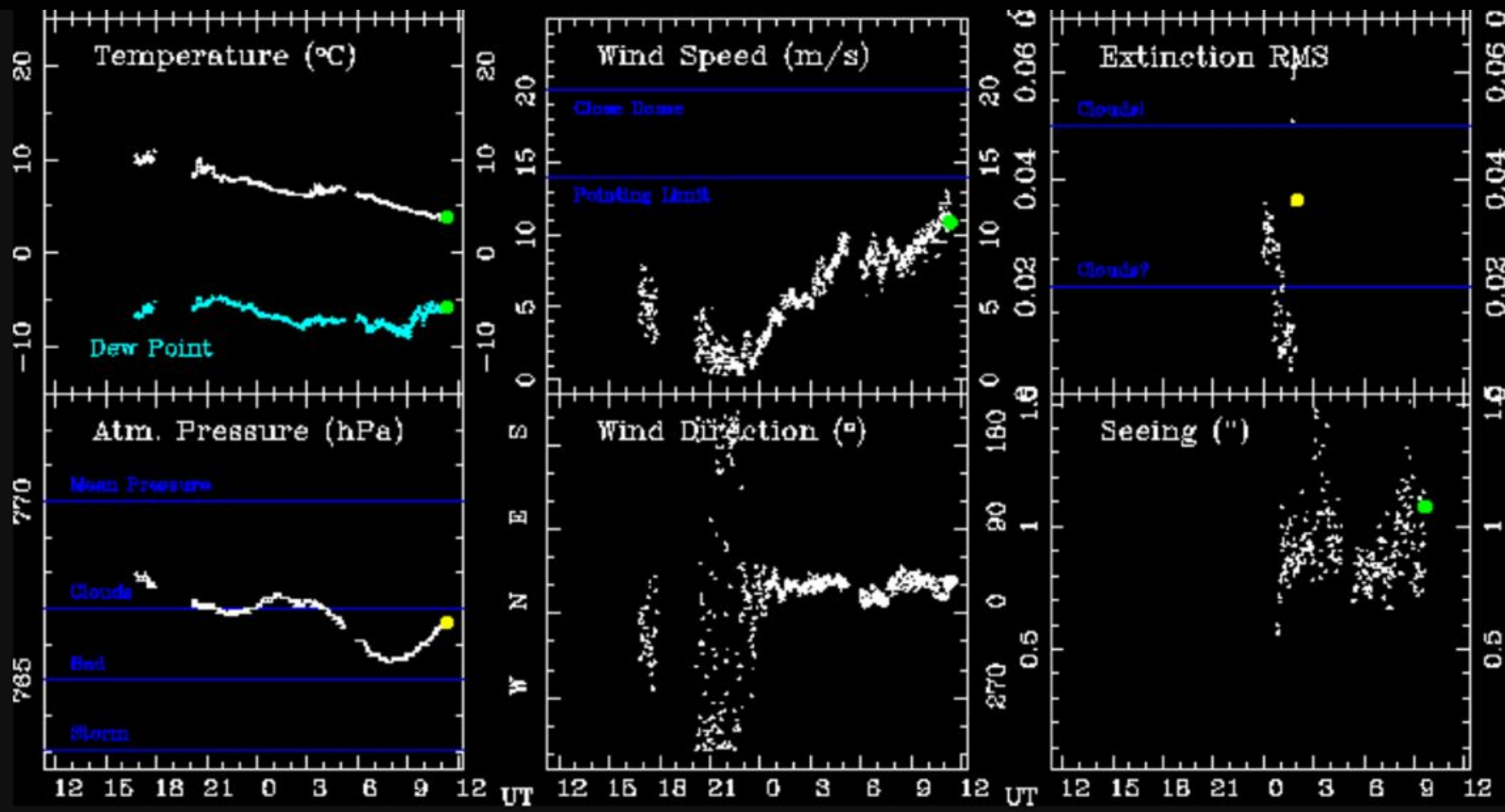
[Zoom graph](#)

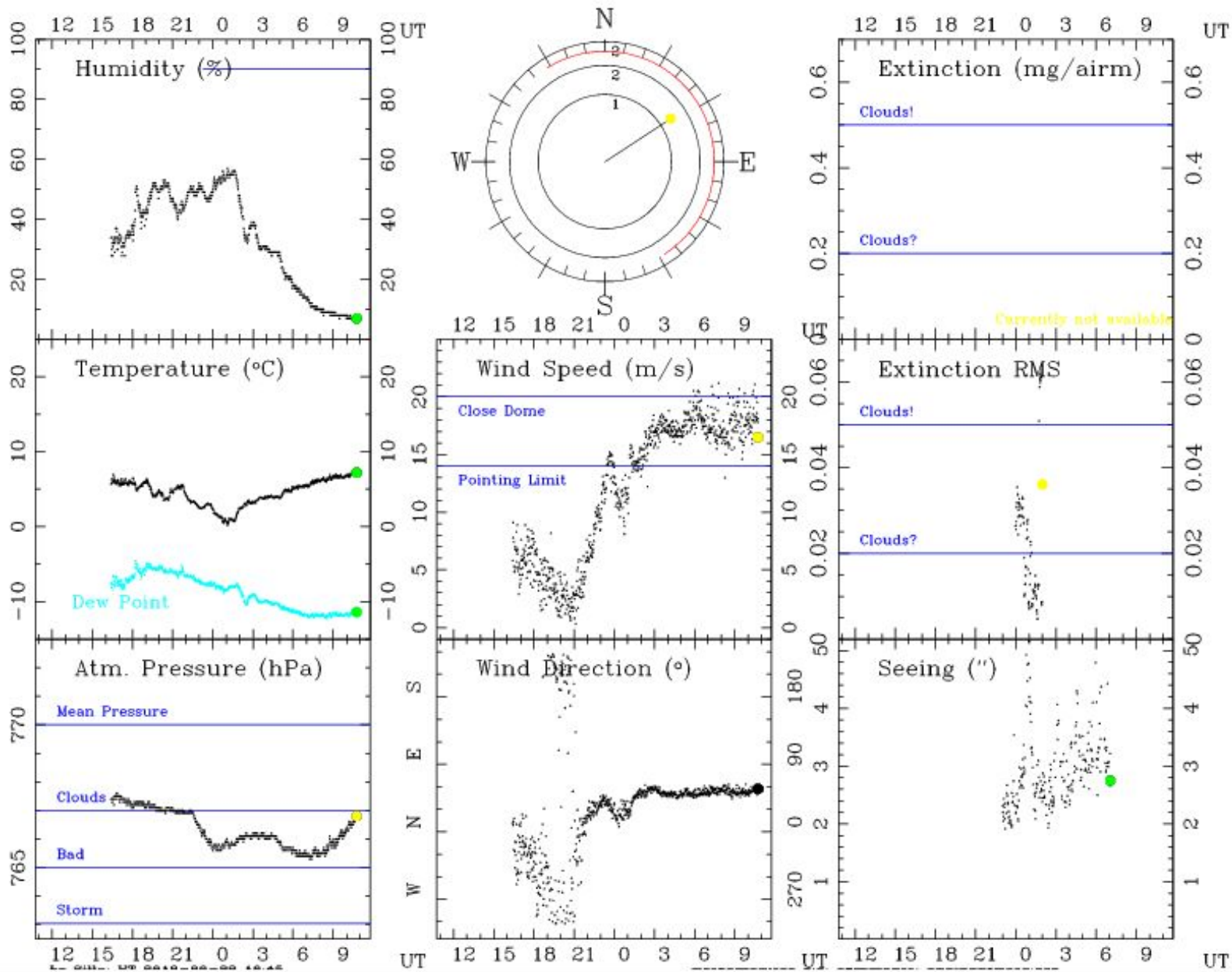
[Satellite Pics](#)

[Plot Archive](#)












# Dome-Closing Conditions at ESO LaSilla

## Wind Speed Monitor Light Codes

Lights	Speed (m/sec)	Action By Observer
	< 14 m/s	
	< 14-20 m/s	Don't observe into the wind
	> 20 m/s (18 m/s for 3,6m)	DOME: Don't wait to be told!

**Humidity**. General humidity sensors are installed on the weather tower; their readings are relayed on the MeteoMonitor . **Domes have to be closed when the relative humidity exceeds 80% (was 90%), and can be re-opened when it remains below 70% for 30min**. Similarly, the domes must be closed when the temperature difference between the coldest part of the telescope and the dew point drops below 2 degrees.

[https://www.eso.org/sci/facilities/lasilla/sciops/At\\_Telescope.html](https://www.eso.org/sci/facilities/lasilla/sciops/At_Telescope.html)

# Hawaii



Hawaii, 18/8/2013

Mauna Kea mountain



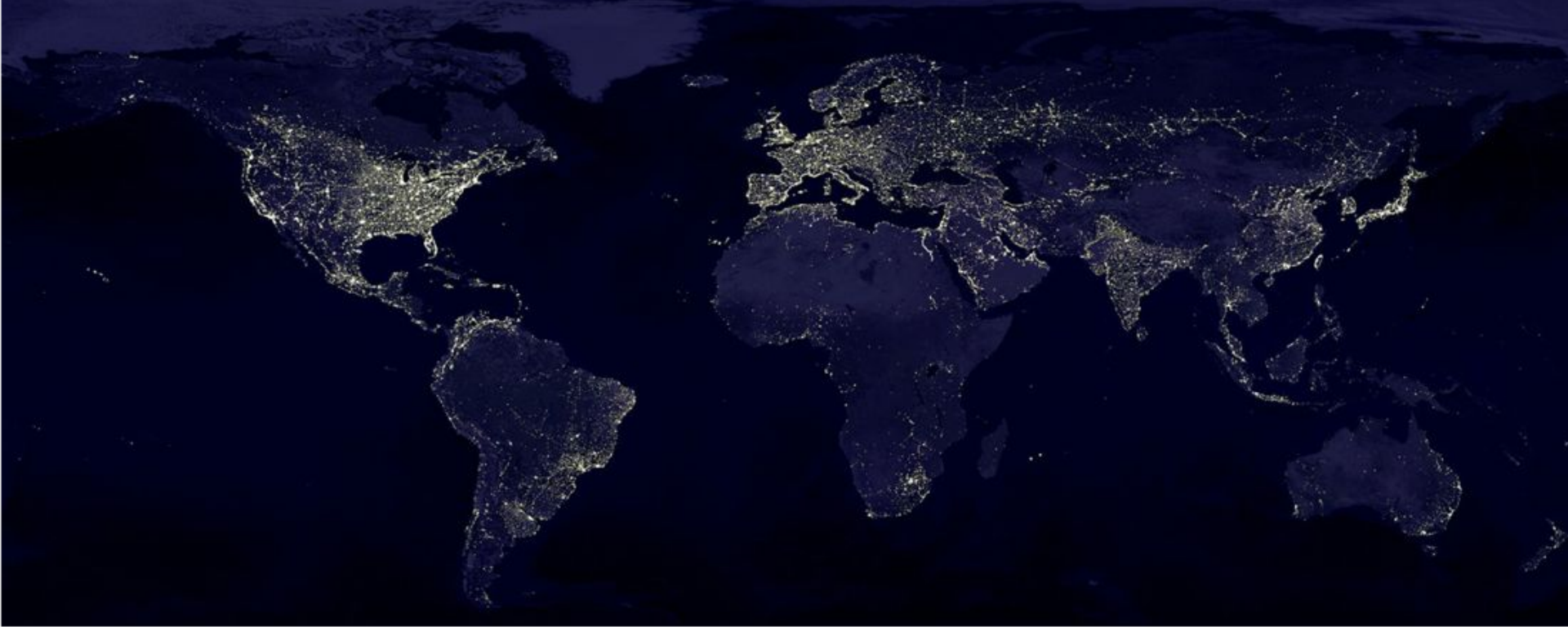
# Mauna Kea Weather conditions



**Current Conditions**  
 Temp 1.9 C  
 RH 60 %  
 Wind W 7 mph  
 Road Open

## Observations

STN	DATE HST	TIME HST	TEMP °C	DPNT °C	RH %	WSPD mph	PK WSPD mph	WDIR dir	PRES mb	RAIN mm	PW mm	Seeing arcsec	Trends
CFHT/GEM	10/02/13	01:31	1.9	-5.1	60	7	11	W	617	0.00		0.50	Meteogram
UKIRT	10/02/13	01:27	1.9	-5.8	57	5		NW	615				Meteogram
IRTF	10/02/13	01:28	0.0	-5.4	57	6	7	NW					Meteogram
SUBARU	10/02/13	01:28	0.8	-4.9	66	2	4	WNW	621	0			Meteogram
KECK	10/02/13	01:30	2.1	-5.9	56				620				
JCMT	10/02/13	01:26	2.5	-5.5	56	4		N	625		3.16		Meteogram
CSO	10/02/13	01:30	9.3	-3.6	40	0	0	N	626		3.45		Tau
SMA	10/02/13	01:17	3.4	-3.6	60	3		ENE	624	0.0			Trend
VLBA	10/02/13	01:26	5.2	-8.9	36	4	7	NNW	654	0			Meteogram
HP	10/02/13	01:30	9.3	1.3	57	7	8	WNW	727	0			Meteogram
<b>UNITS</b>	UTC   HST		°C   K   F		%	mph   Kts   mps		dir	mb	mm	Tau   mm	arcsec	



# Choosing an astronomical site

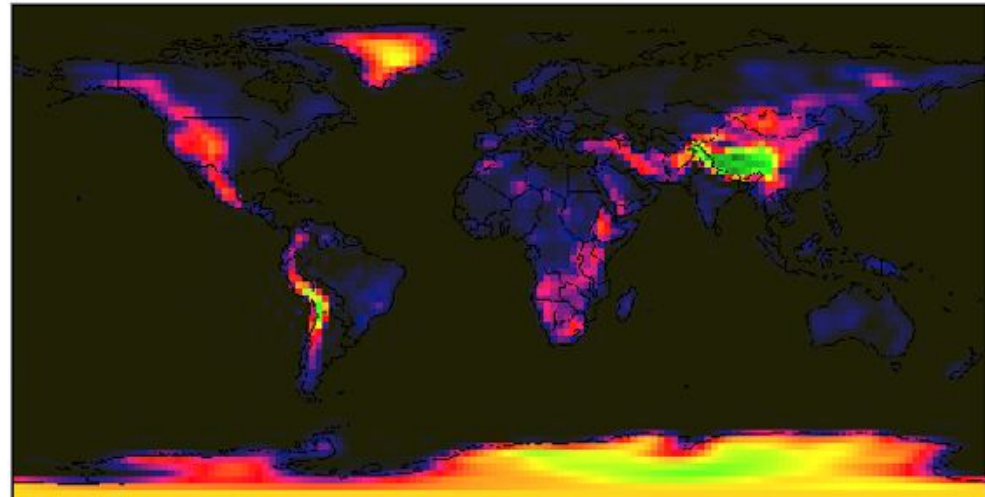
- No clouds (related to inversion layer)
- Photometric quality (atmospheric transparency)
- Transparency in the infrared & mm (atmospheric H<sub>2</sub>O)
- Image quality (related to variations in temperature and the air refraction index)

# Choosing an astronomical site

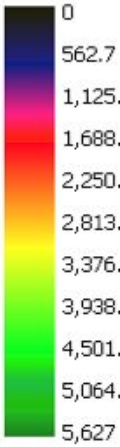
FriOWL Version 2.1 (2006)  
Southern Observatory & University of Fribourg (Switzerland)



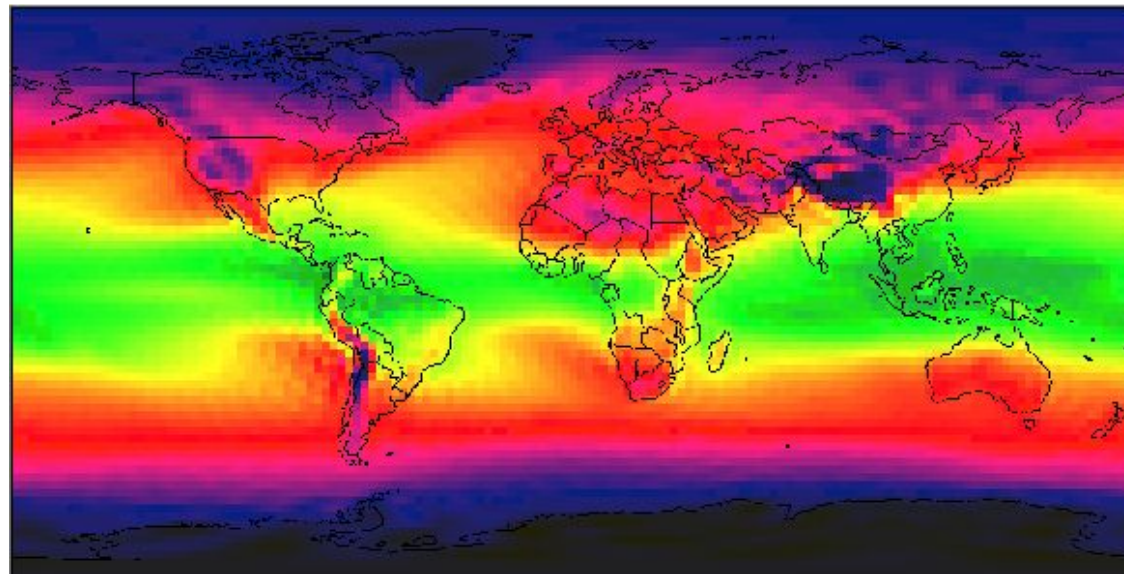
Altitude



Colors



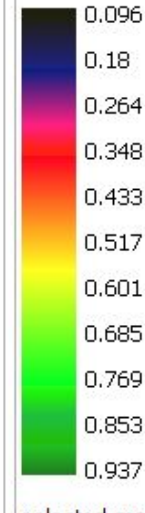
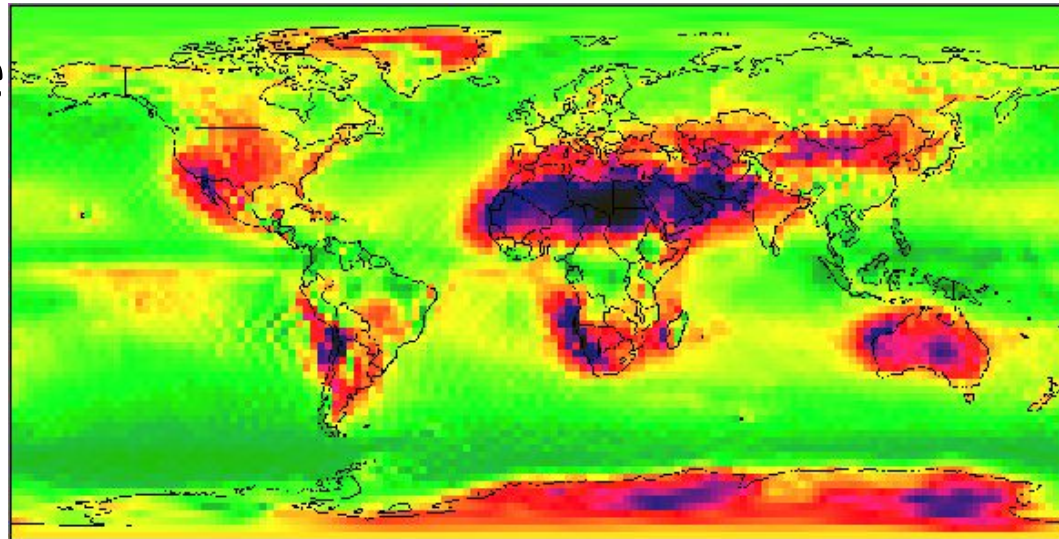
precipitable  
 $H_2O$





# Choosing an astronomical site

Cloud coverage



## BEST SITES

High  
summits  
+ low  
cloudiness +  
low  
precipitable  
water vapor



*Peru, Chile,  
Bolivia,  
Argentina*

