The Sun and the Solar Wind An Introduction

Laboratorio di Astrofisica

Summary

- THE SUN
  - Sun’s facts
  - Solar spectrum
  - Solar structure
  - Solar activity
  - Flare
  - CME

- THE SOLAR WIND

SUN: data

G2 V, absolute magnitude = 4.8

$r_{Sun\text{-}Earth} = 1.5\times10^{11}$ m = 1 AU

Age = 4.5×10^{9} yr

$R_{\odot} = 6.96\times10^{8}$ m

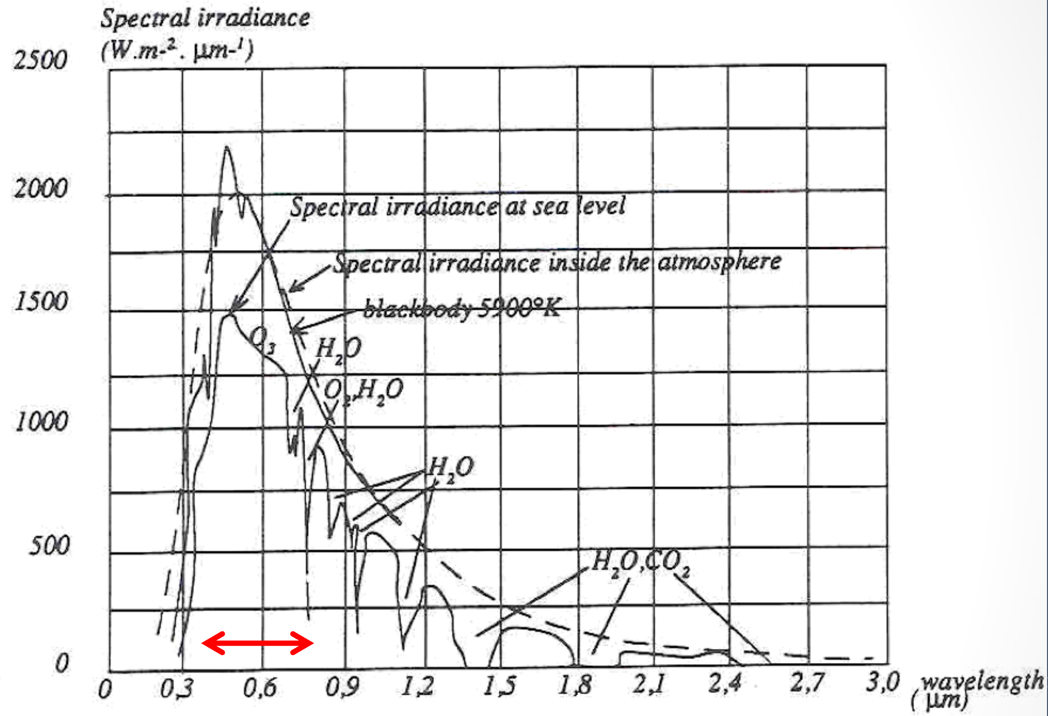
$M_{\odot} = 1.99\times10^{30}$ kg (99.8% SS)

$L_{\odot} = 3.86 \times 10^{26}$ W

	Temperature (K)	Density (kg m^{-3})	Chemical Composition
Core	1.56×10^{7}	1.5×10^{5}	35% H, 63% He, 2% C, N, O,..
Surface	5770	2.07×10^{-4}	70% H, 28% He, 2% C, N, O,..

SUN: spectrum

InfraRed	52 %
Visible	41%
NUV	<7%
EUV	0.1%
Radio	0.1%
X	<0.1%



Energy at Earth = 1380 Wm^{-2}

Variations ± 3% (1326 ÷ 1418 Wm^{-2}) → ΔT ~ 1%

Δ/year ~ 0.018%

SUN: state of the matter

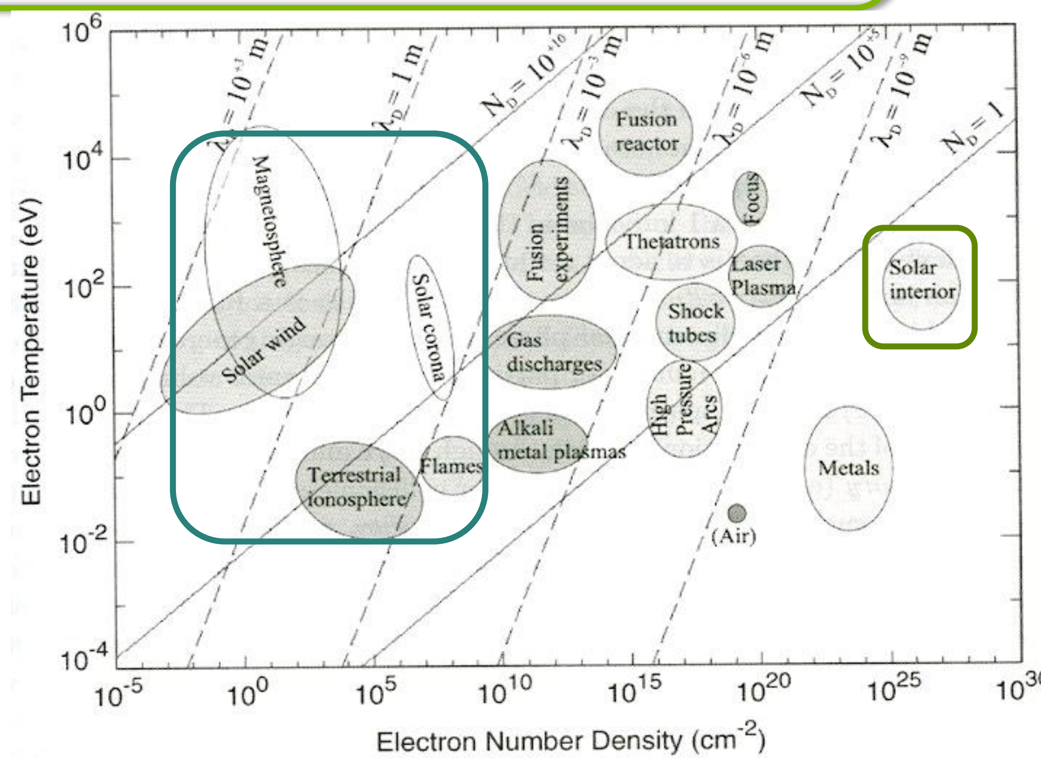
The matter that constitutes the Sun is in the state of PLASMA

PLASMA: quasi-NEUTRAL gas of CHARGED particles that exhibit a COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOUR

Sun-Earth Plasma:

T: 6 orders of magnitude

n: 10 orders of magnitude



1eV = 11,604.5 K

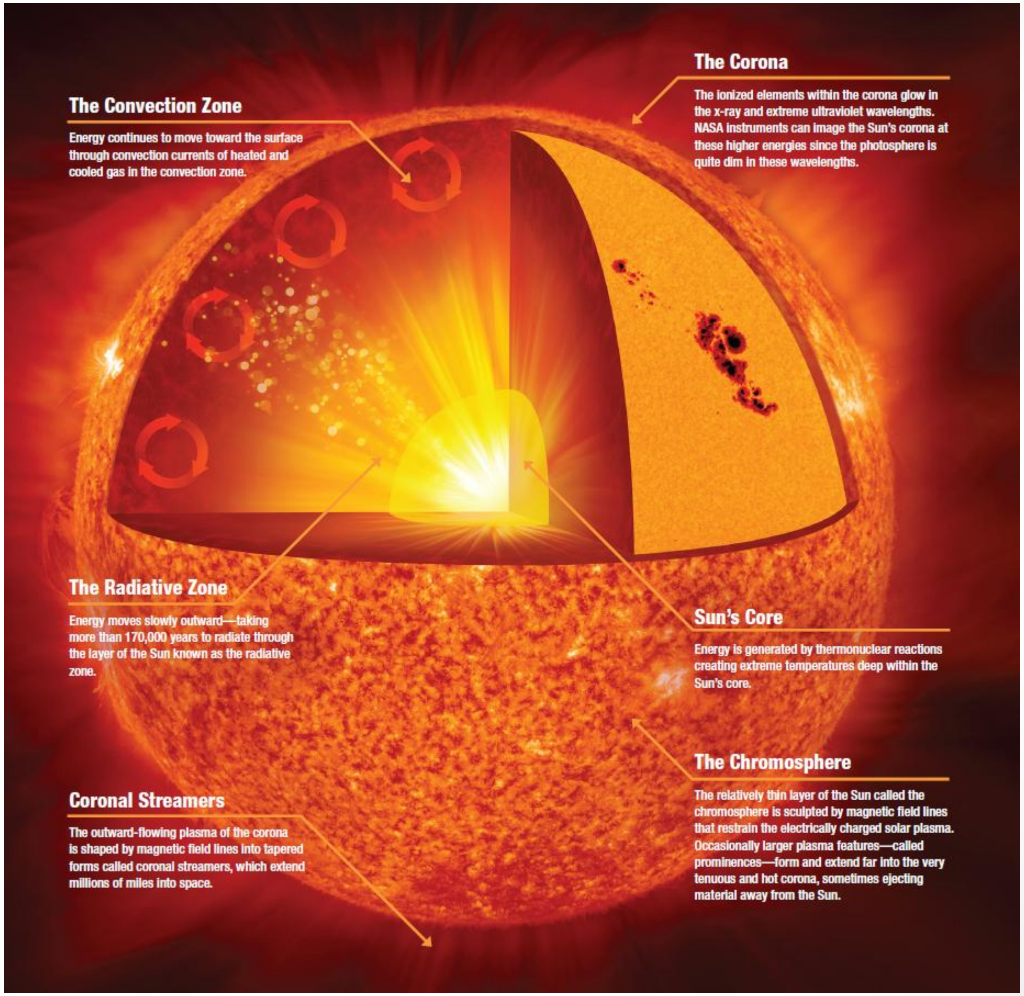
tar

October 9, 2013

SUN: structure

- Core
- Radiative zone
- Tachocline
- Convective zone
- Photosphere

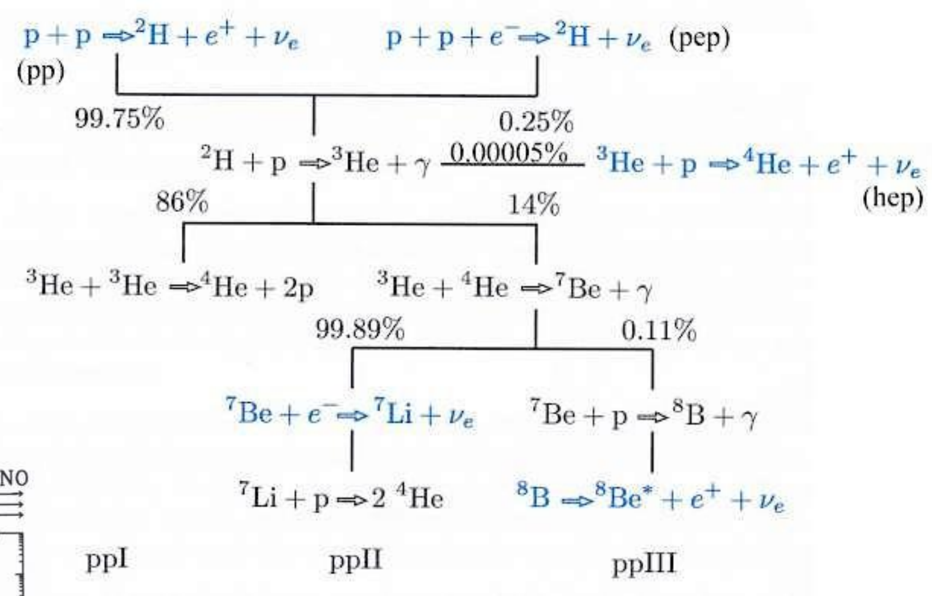
- Cromosphere
- Transition region
- Corona

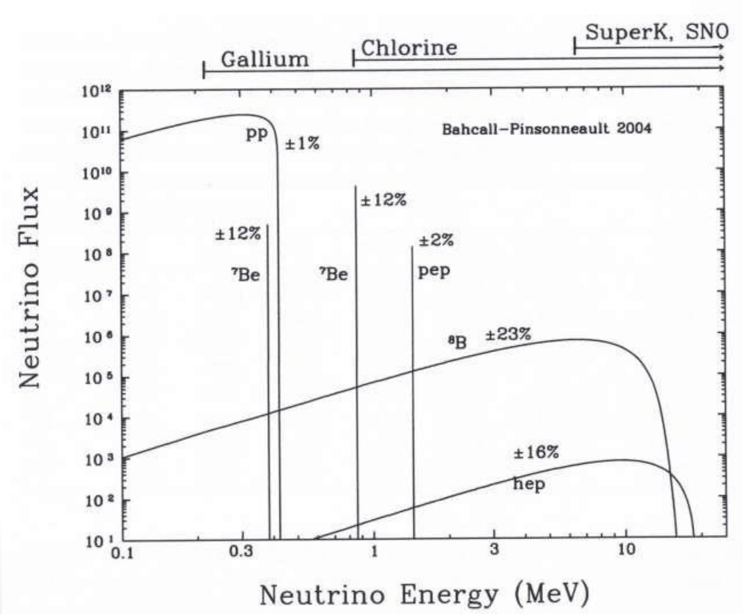


NASA Jenny Mottar

SUN: core

- $T \approx 1 \times 10^7$ K
- $R \approx R_{\odot}/4$
- $M \approx M_{\odot}/2$
- $\rho \approx 1.5 \times 10^5$ kg m^{-3}





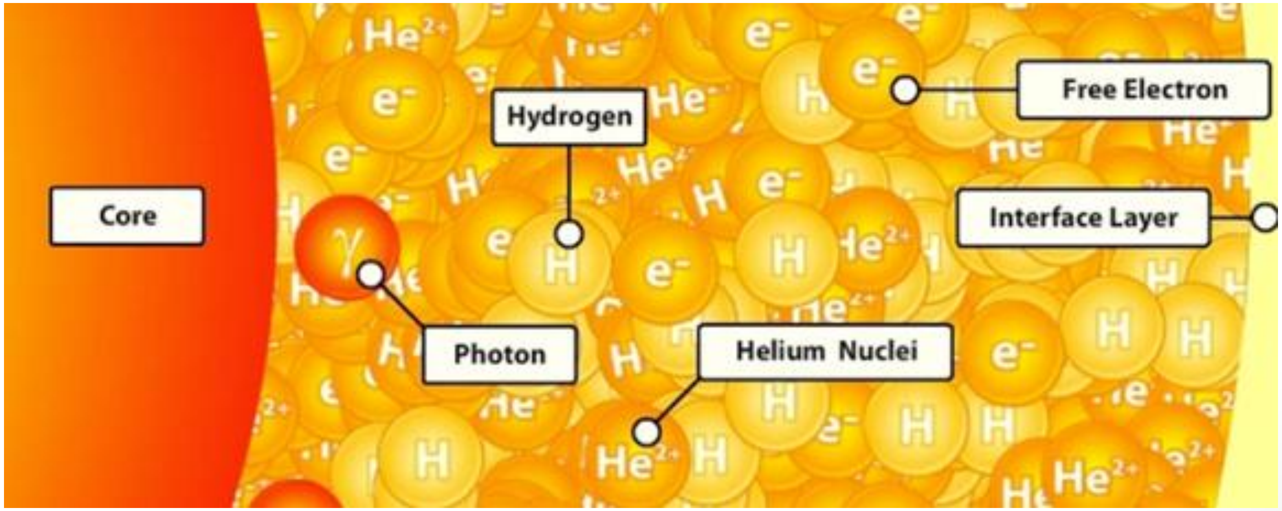
Photons: E of the order of MeV (gamma-rays) transport energy to the outer layers of the star.

SUN: radiative zone

- ΔR: 0.25 $R_{\odot}$ ÷ 0.7 $R_{\odot}$
- ΔT: 1 × 10^7 K ÷ 2 x 10^6 K
- Δρ: 20 x10^3 kg m^{-3} ÷ 2 x 10^2 kg m^{-3}

Mean free path: $\lambda_{ph} \approx 1$ mm

Diffusion timescale (radiative zone): $t_{ph} \approx 10^5$ yr

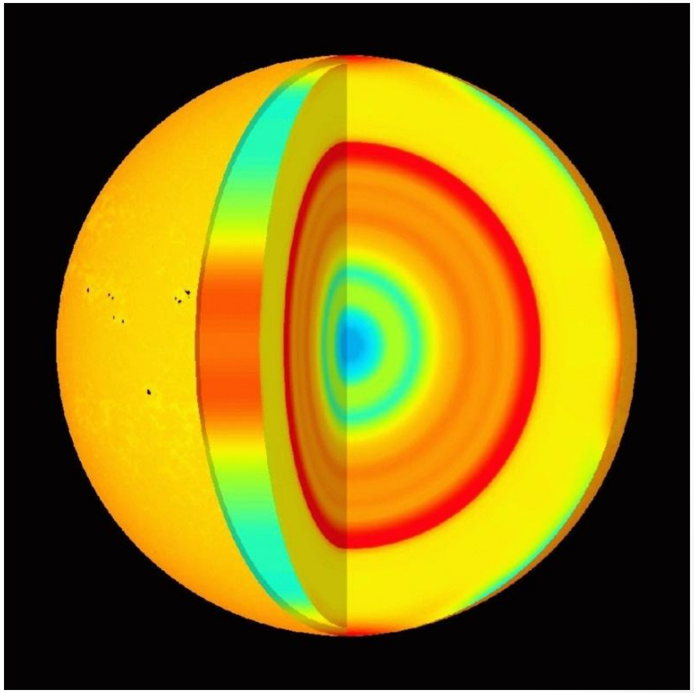


SUN: tachocline

Transition region between the radiative and the convective zone

- $R \approx 0.69 \div 0.71\ R_\odot$
- Thickness $< 0.05\ R_\odot$
- $R/R_\odot$ varies by 0.02 from 0° to 60 ° lat
- $\rho \approx 2 \times 10^2\ \mathrm{kg\ m^{-3}}$
- $T \approx 2 \times 10^6$ K

◆ Location of the SOLAR DYNAMO

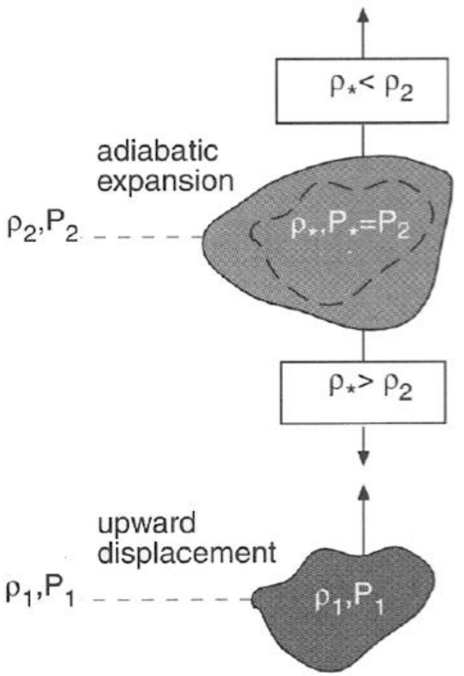


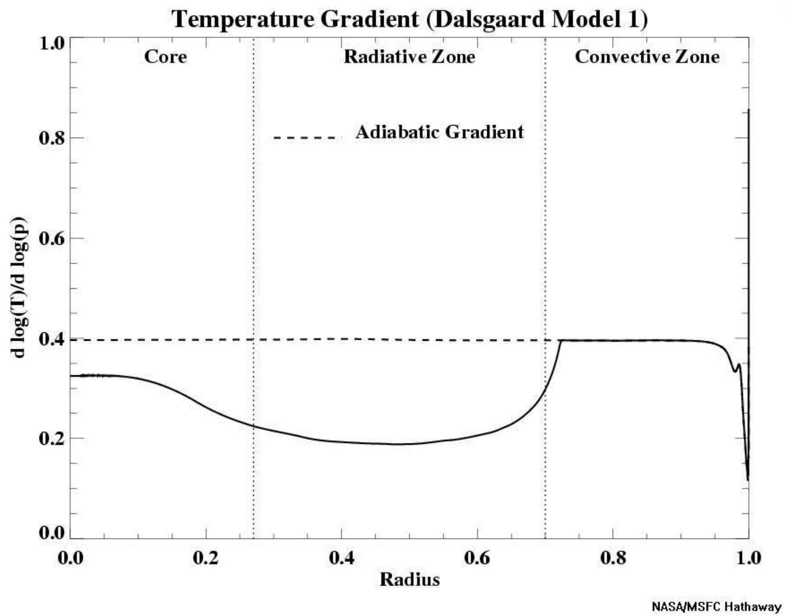
SOHO (ESA/NASA)

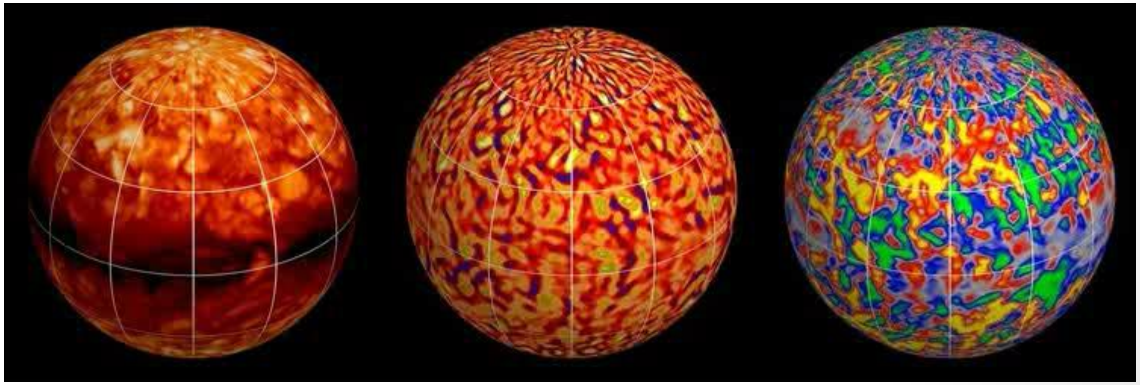
October 9, 2013

SUN: convective zone

- T ≈ 2×10^6 K
- ΔR ≈ 200000 km

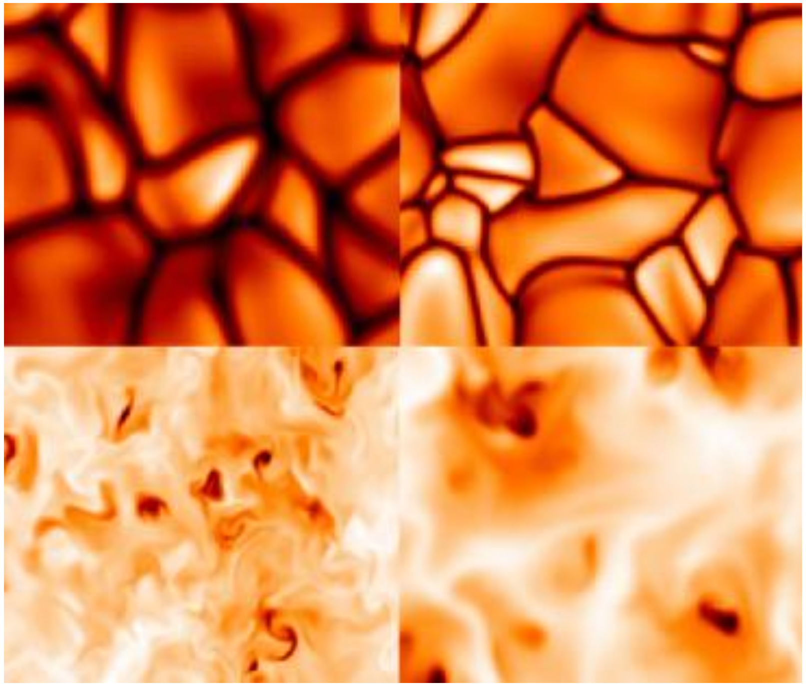




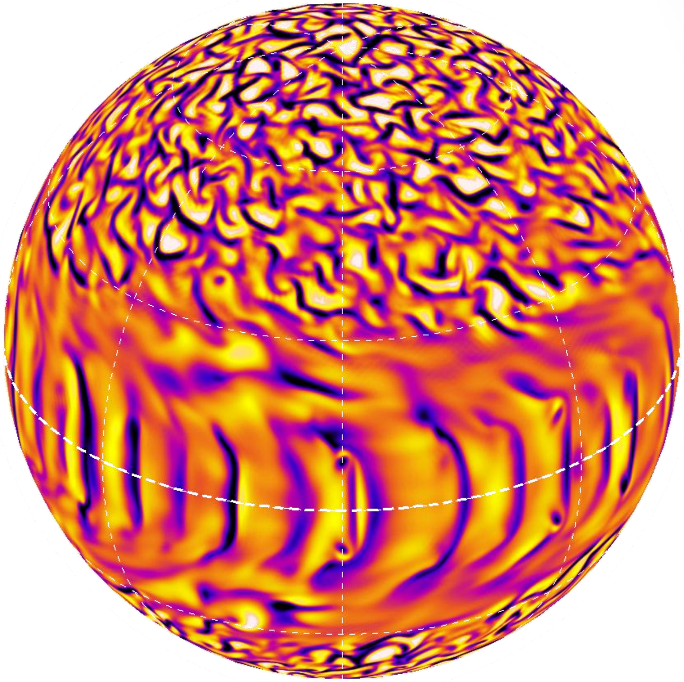


http://www.astro.umontreal.ca/~paulchar/grps/mhd_a.html#sec1

SUN: convective zone



3D MHD simulations of solar convection using two different treatments of viscosity (from Abbett et al. 2004).



Convection in a star rotating five times the current solar rate. Shown here is the radial velocity near the upper boundary of the simulation box, with upflows in bright tones and downflows in dark tones . lcd-www.colorado.edu/bpbrown/Research/index.html

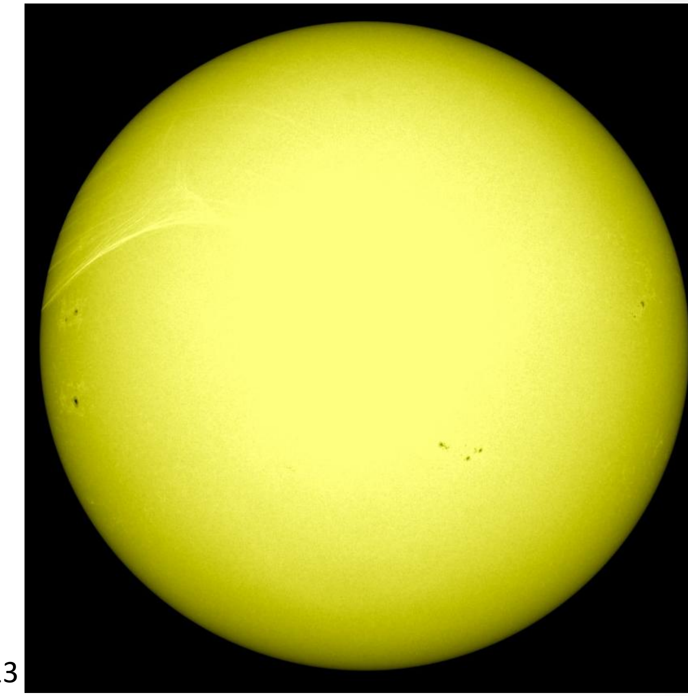
SUN: photosphere

Solar surface visible in the optical band.

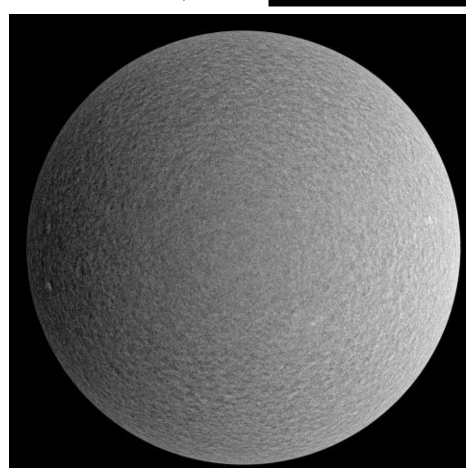
- $\Delta R \sim 600$ km
- $T \sim 7500 \div 4200$ K (r >)
- $\rho \sim 10^{-4}$ kg m^{-3}
- $n \sim 10^{23} \div 10^{21}$ m^{-3} (r >)

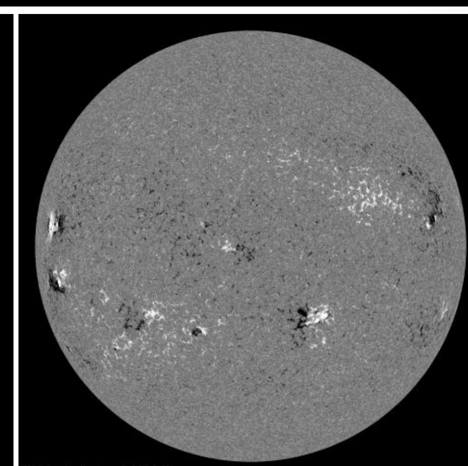
Solar Activity Manifestations

Sunspots
Faculae
Granules
Supergranules



SDO Oct 3, 2013

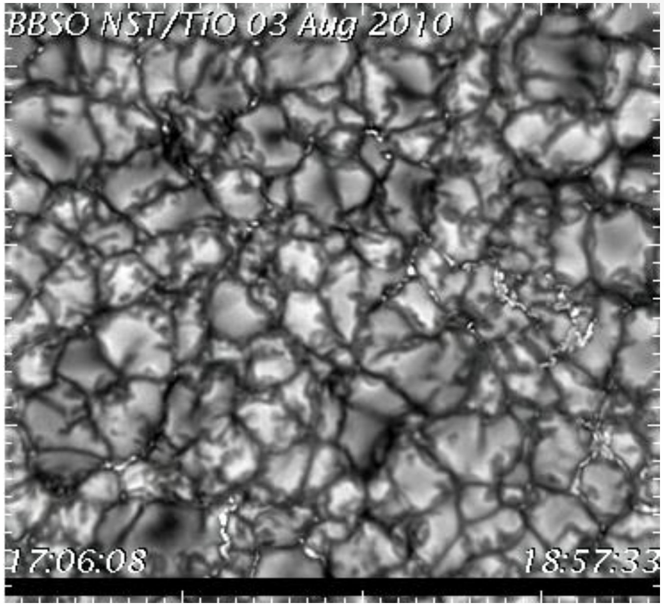




SUN: photosphere

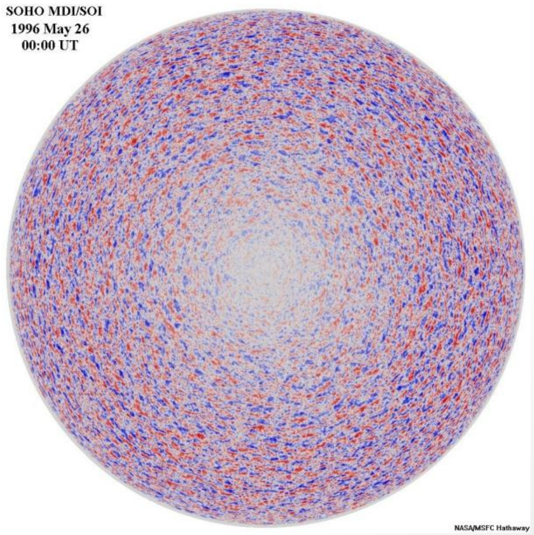
◆ GRANULES

- size: $10^4 \div 10^6$ m
- plasma velocity: 7 km s^{-1}
- mean lifetime: 10 min



◆ SUPERGRANULES

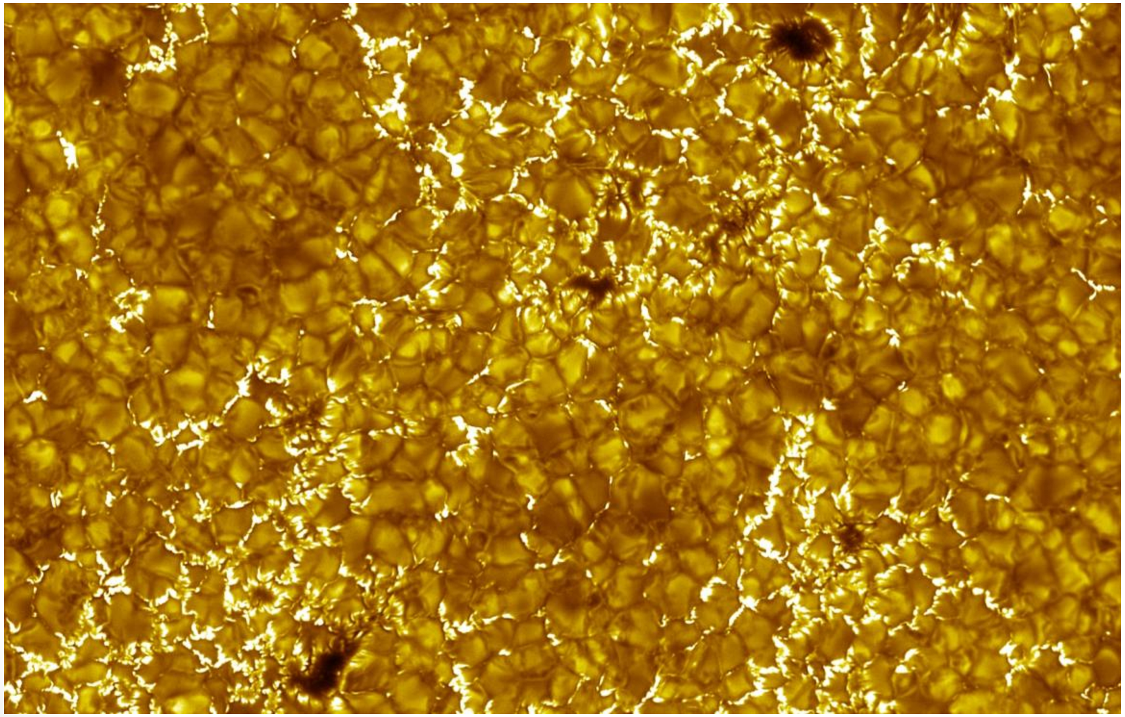
- size: 10^7 m
- plasma velocity: 0.5 km s^{-1}
- mean lifetime: $12 \div 24$ h



SUN: photosphere

◆ FACULAE

- Very intense B concentrated in small regions
- Solar irradiance augmentation ~ 1%



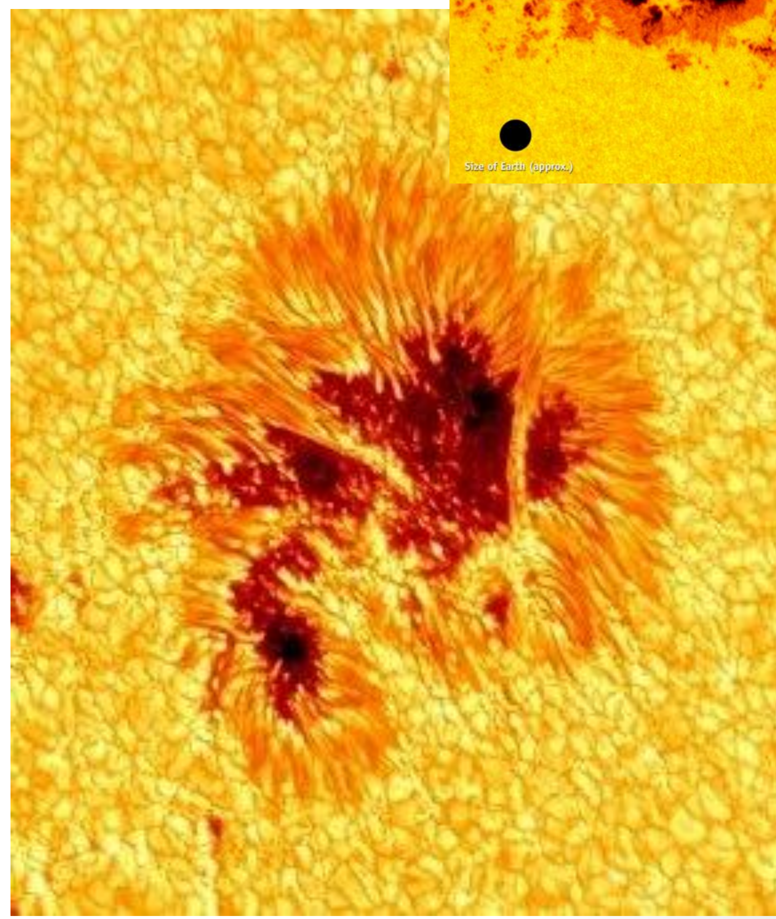
SST La Palma

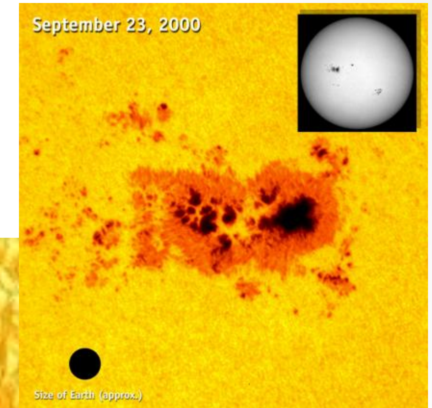
Intense B lowers opacity and makes visible deeper and hotter parts of granules

SUN: photosphere

- Sunspots
  - Umbra:
    - B ~ 0.2 ÷ 0.4 T, vertical
    - T ~ 3700 K
    - L ~ 3-5% $L_\odot$ (@500 nm)
  - Penumbra:
    - B ~ 0.1 ÷ 0.2 T, horizontal
    - L ~ 80% $L_\odot$ (@500 nm)

$$B = B_0 \left(1 + \left(\frac{r}{R_s}\right)^2\right)^{-1}$$

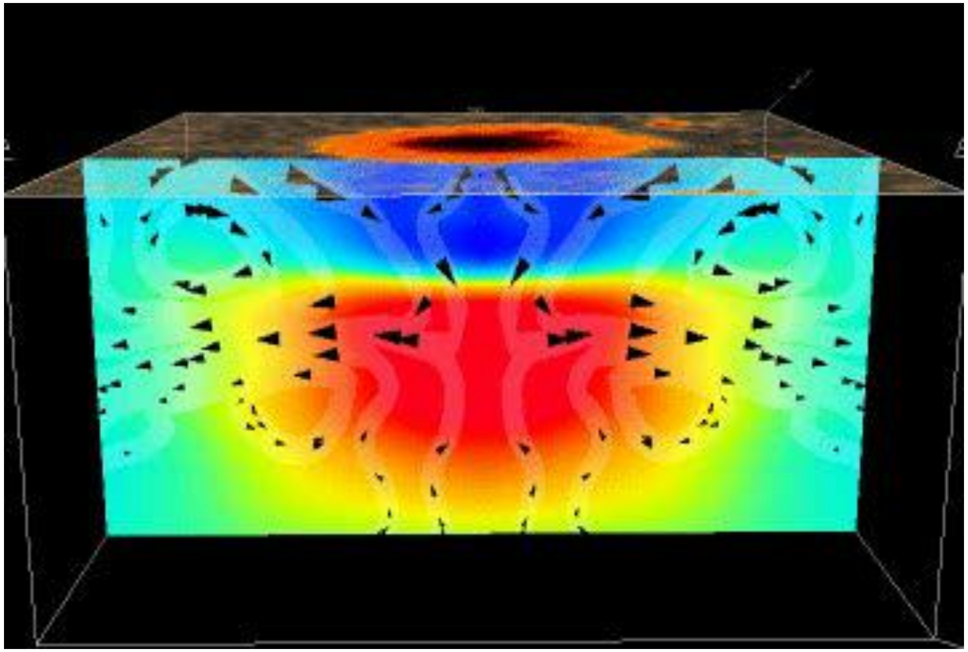




BBSO/NJIT

SUN: photosphere

- Sunspots
  - Are originated by the presence of very intense magnetic fields that inhibit upwards motion of hotter plasma from regions at higher depths



SUN: photosphere

- Sunspots
  - A flux tube is less dense of the surroundings and rises up

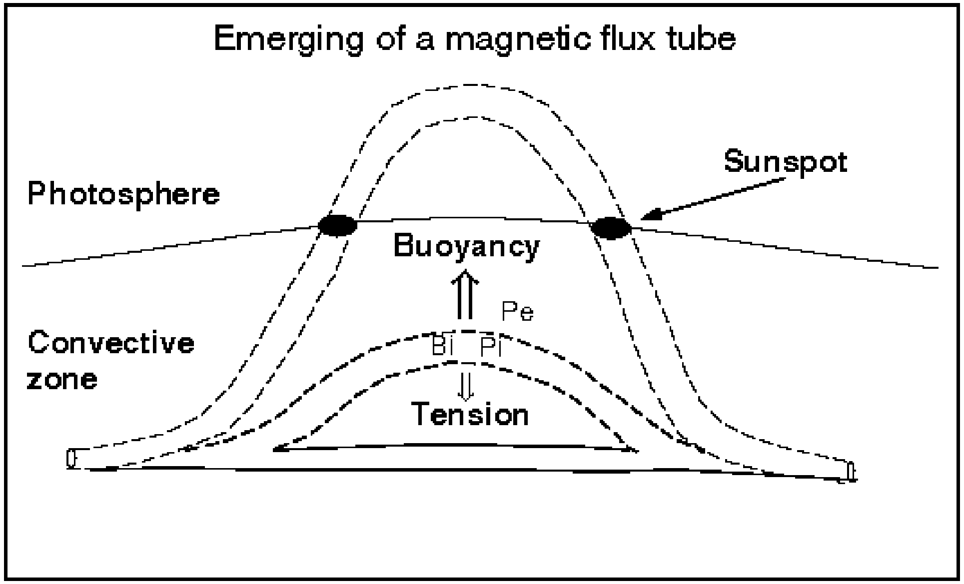
$$P_g^i + P_m^i = P_g^e \rightarrow \frac{k_b}{m}\rho_i T_i + \frac{B^2}{2\mu} = \frac{k_b}{m}\rho_e T_e$$

$$\rho_e = \rho_i + \frac{\frac{B^2}{2m}}{\frac{k_b}{m}T} > \rho_i$$

$$(\rho_e - \rho_i)gV > \frac{B^2 S}{\mu}$$

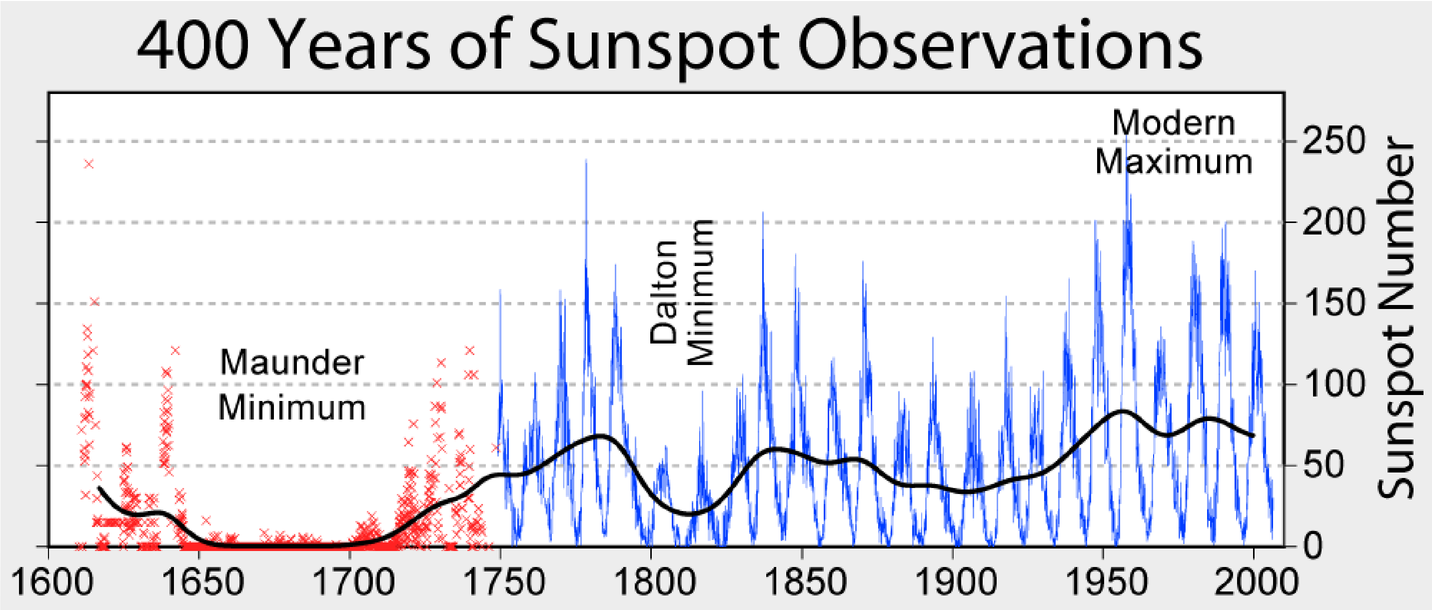
Archimedean Force

Magnetic Tension



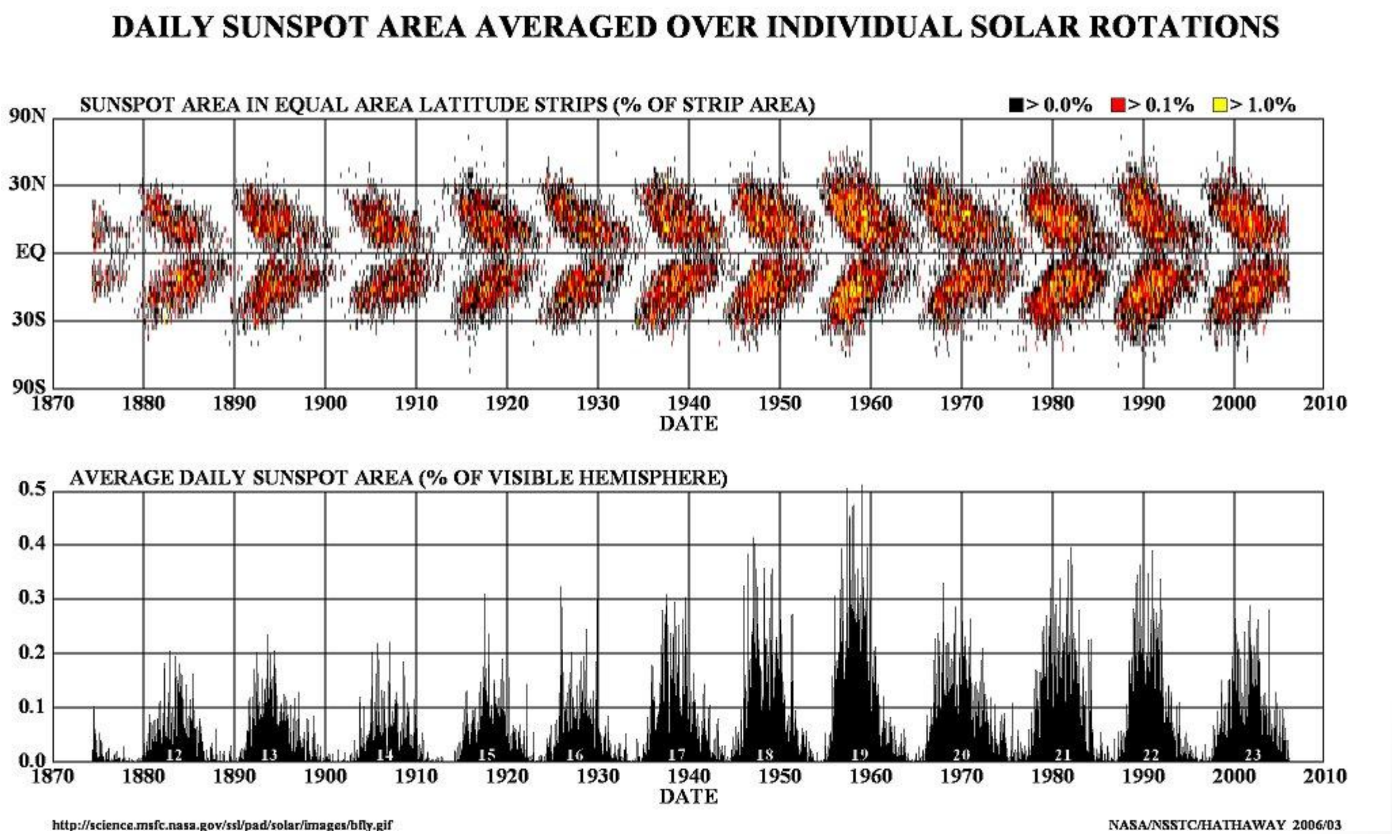
SUN: solar activity

- Periodicity ~ 11 anni
- Equatorial drif of activity longitude (butterfly diagram)
- Hale's law for sunspot polarity, magnetic cycle of 22 anni
- Sunspot groups tilt (Joy's law)
- Polarity inversion at maximum of solar cycle



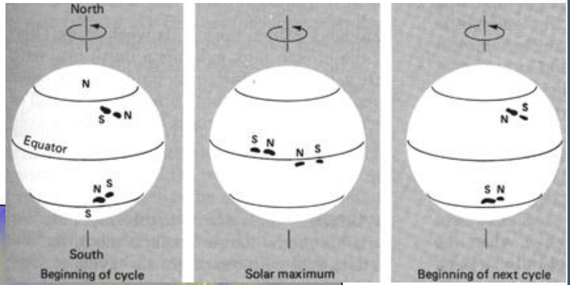
SUN: solar activity

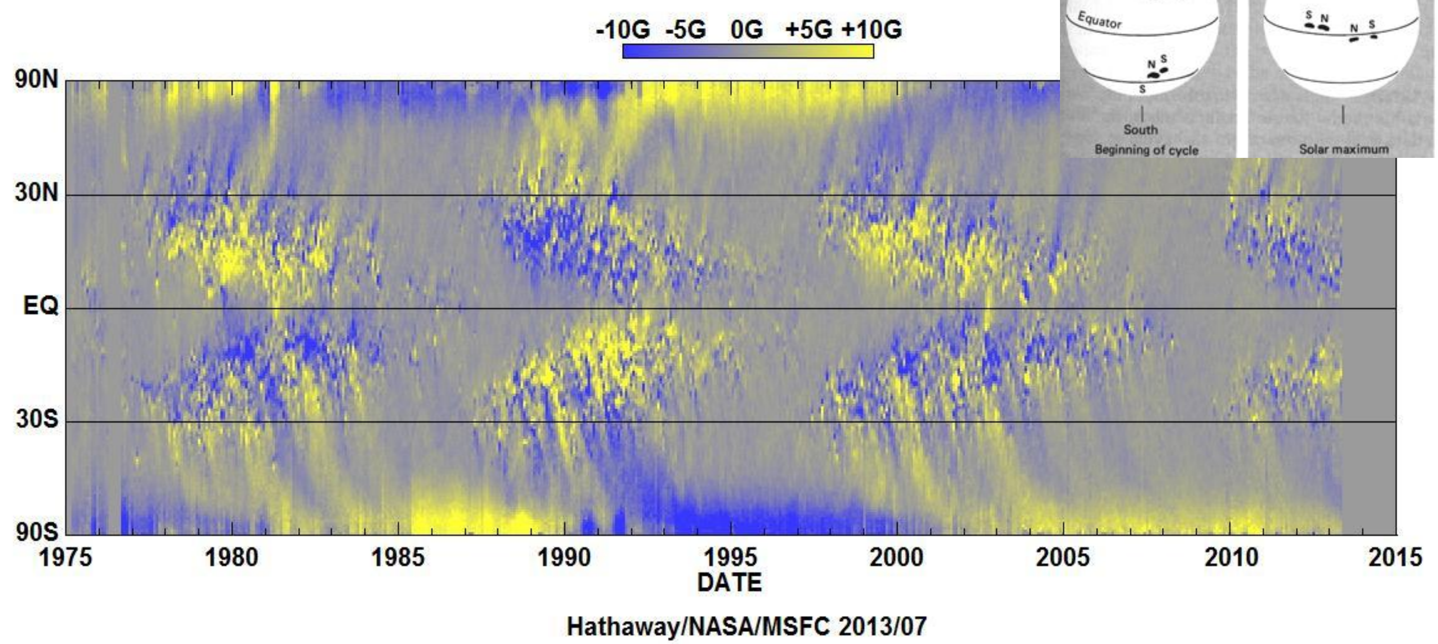
- Equatorial drift of activity longitude



SUN: solar activity

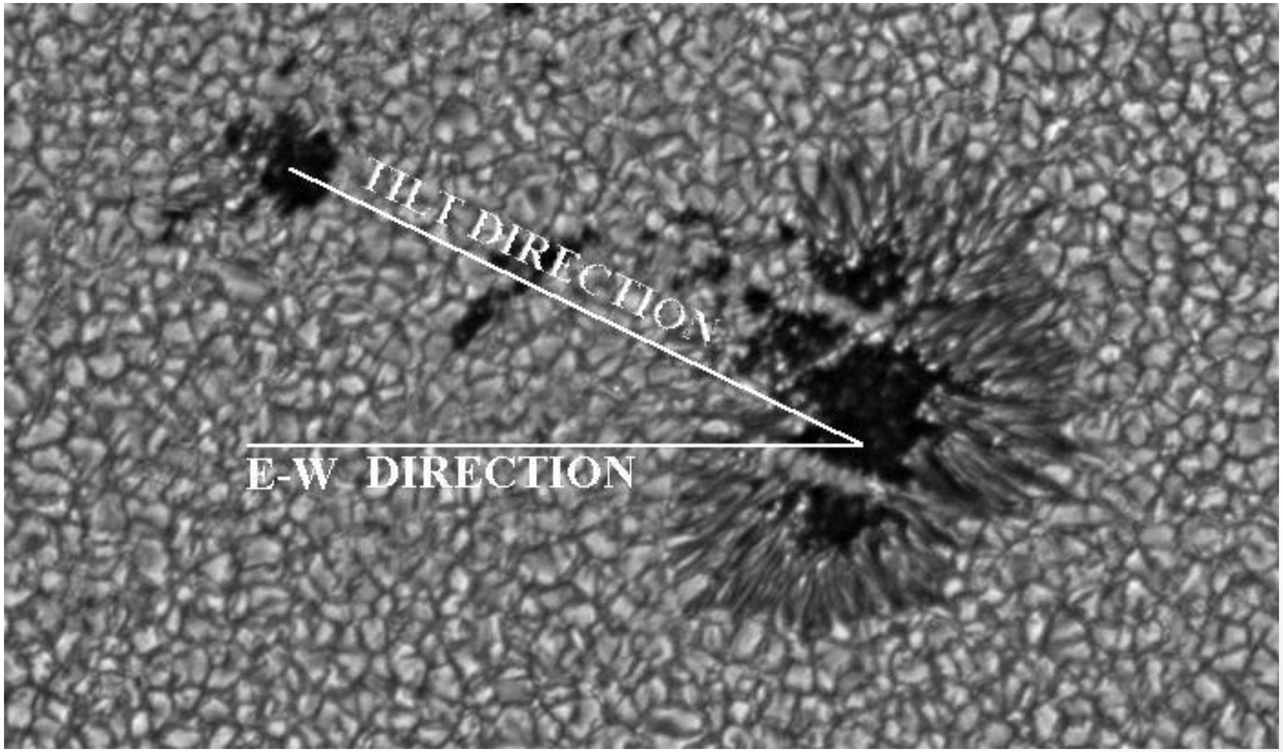
- Hale's law
  - "…the preceding and following spots … are of opposite polarity, and that the corresponding spots of such groups in the Northern and Southern hemispheres are also opposite in sign. Furthermore, the spots of the present cycle are opposite in polarity to those of the last cycle" Hale et al. (1919).
- Polarity inversion in proximity of solar maximum





SUN: solar activity

- Joy's law:
  - Sunspot groups originate with a tilt angle with respect to equator and the leading spot is nearer to it. The tilt angle becomes larger with latitude but is very different for each group



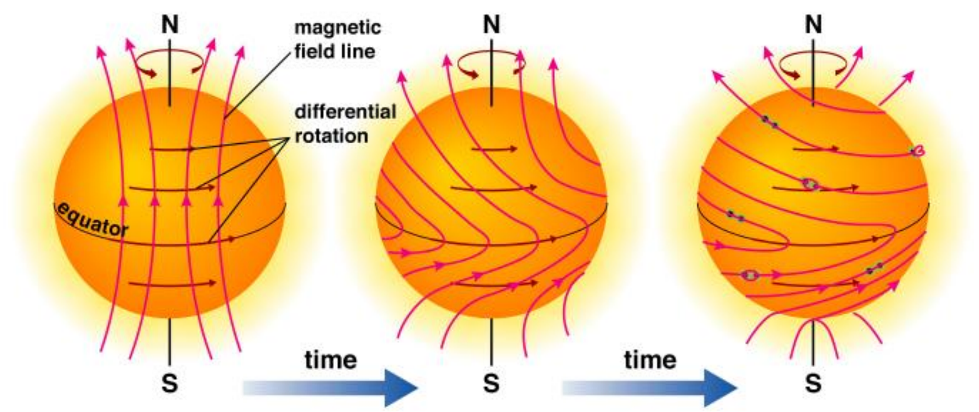
SUN: solar activity

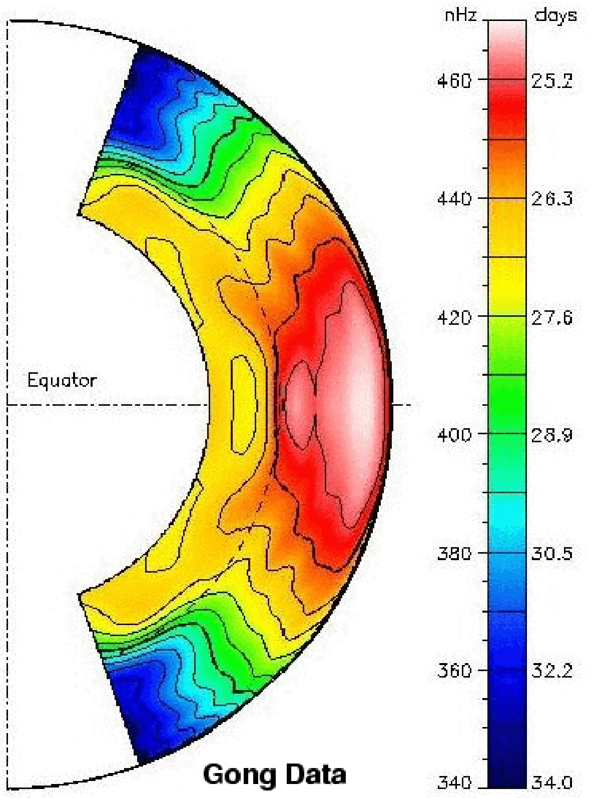
- Kinetic dynamo related to the α-Ω effect

  $\omega_{eq} \sim 2.9 \times 10^{-6}$ rad/s (T ~ 24.9 days)

  $\omega_{poli} \sim 2.0 \times 10^{-6}$ rad/s (T ~ 31.5 days)

Poloidal -> Toroidal -> Poloidal->…

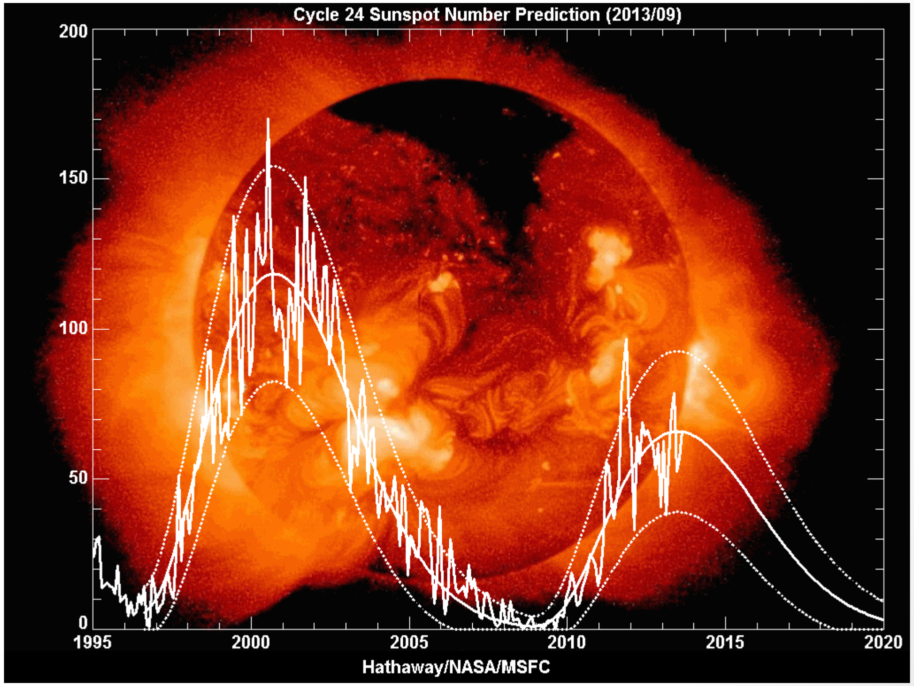




SUN: solar activity

◆ ACTIVITY CYCLE 7÷13 years

- Modifies the coronal structure and the solar wind
- Modulates the occurrence of eruptive phenomena (flares, CMEs, etc.)
- Modulates solar irradiance
- Modulates UV, X radiation
- CME ➔ Space Weather
- Modulates GCR flux



The present solar cycle is the weakest (smoothed sunspot number Cycle 24 = 67) since 1906 (smoothed sunspot number Cycle 14 = 64,2)

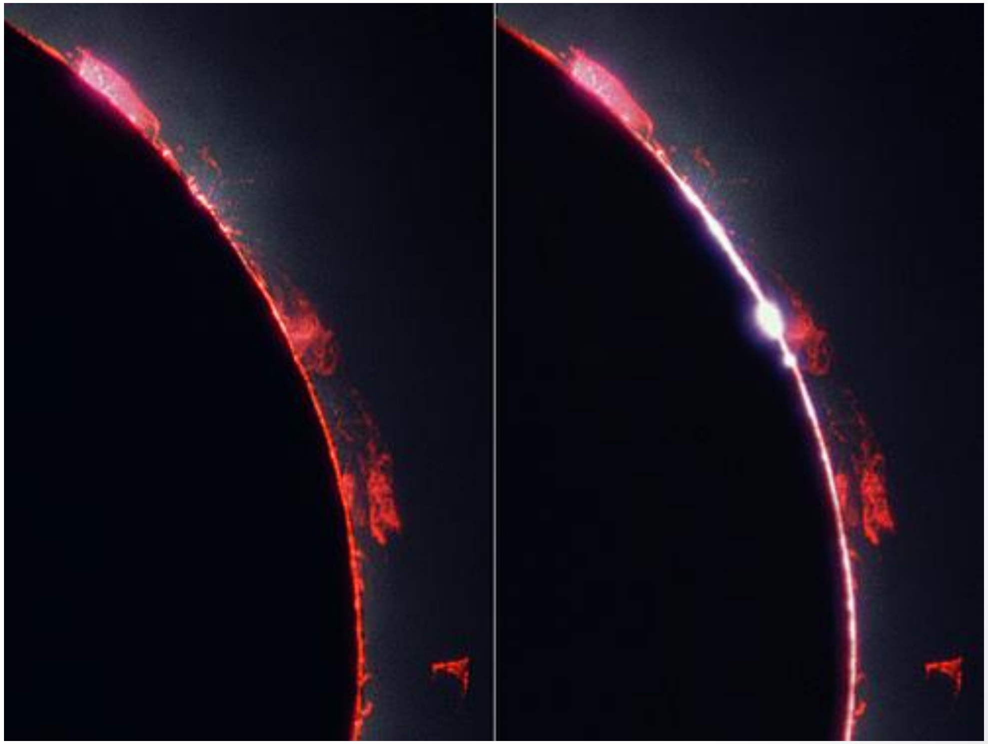
http://solarscience.msfc.nasa.gov/predict.shtml

SUN: chromosphere

Red light emitted by H atoms, visible during solar eclipses

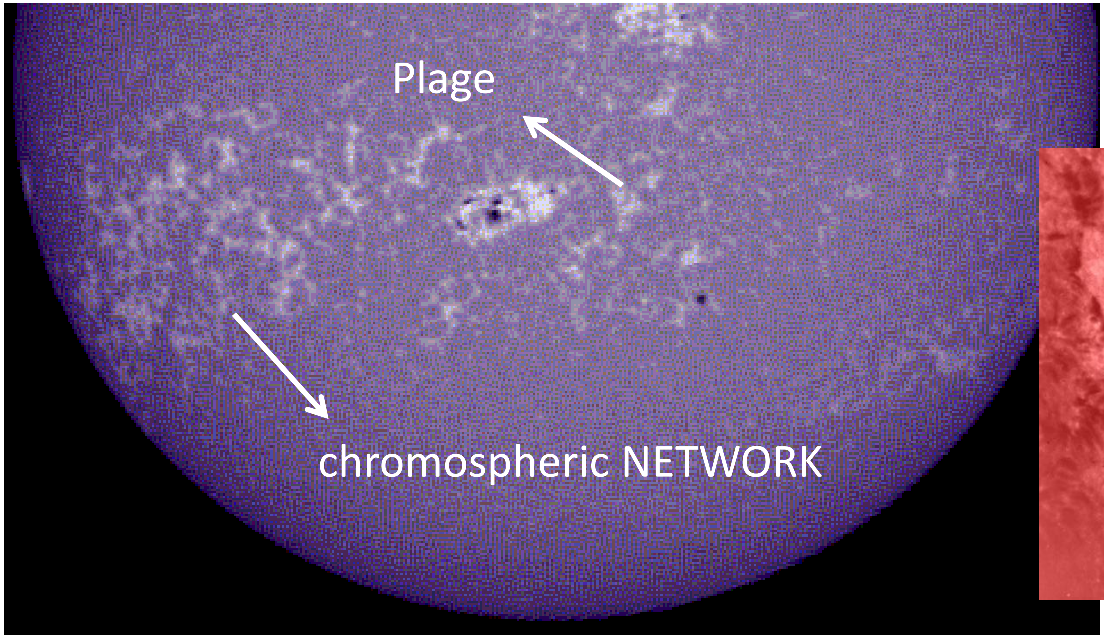
- $\Delta R \sim 10 \div 15 \times 10^3$ km
- $T \sim 10^4 \div 10^5$ K

Chromospheric Network
Filaments
Plages
Prominences
Spicules



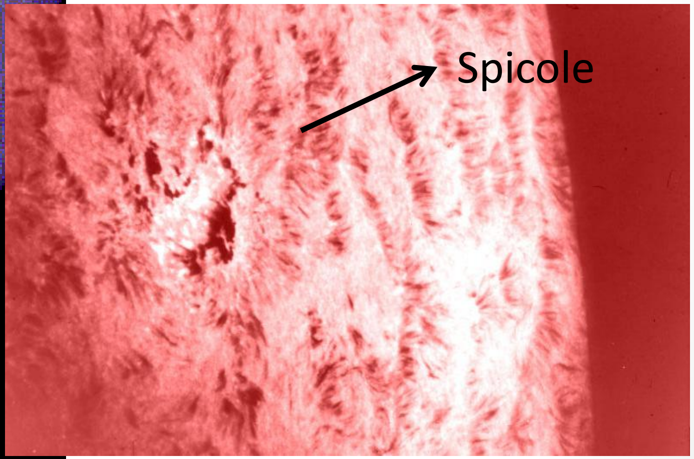
SUN: cromosphere

- Chromospheric Network, plages and spicules



CaII (393.4 nm)

BBSO

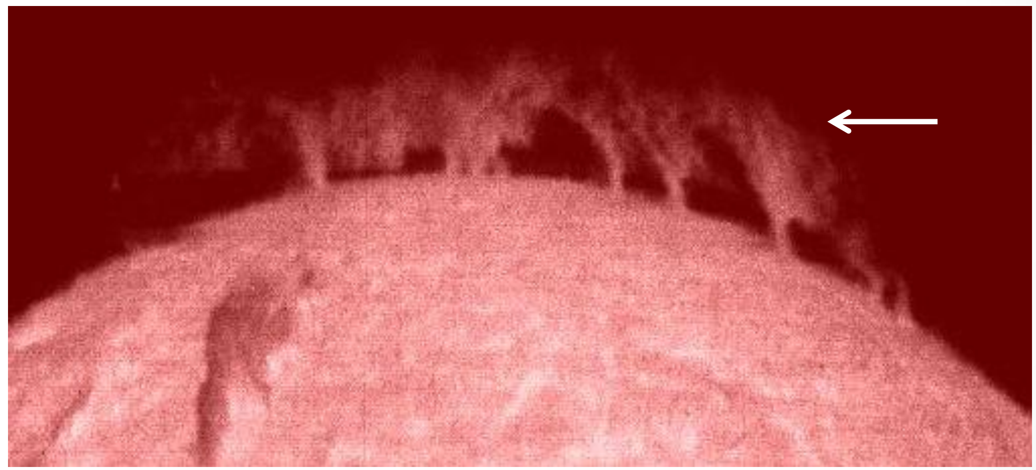


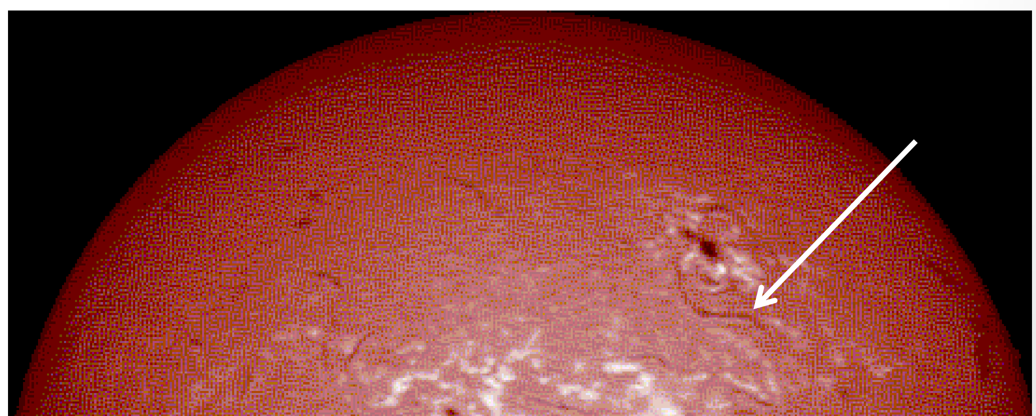
SUN: cromosphere

- Prominences and filaments

Quiescent:
$\tau \sim 200$ days
$T \sim 5 \times 10^3$ K ÷ 10^4 K
$n \sim 10^{16} \div 10^{17}$ m^{-3}
Length = 2×10^8 m
Width = 6×10^6 m
Height = 5×10^7m

Near active regions:
$n > 10^{17}$ m^{-3}
smaller by a factor of 3

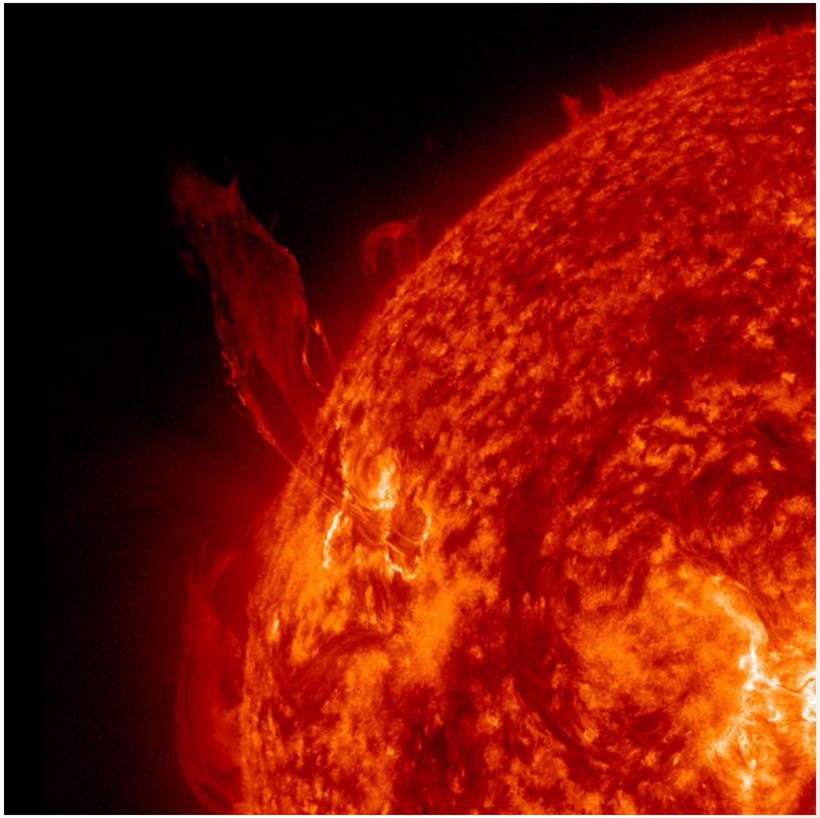




SUN: chromosphere

- Globally filaments and prominences are in equilibrium but they can erupt upon instability set in

The number of prominences varies with the activity level

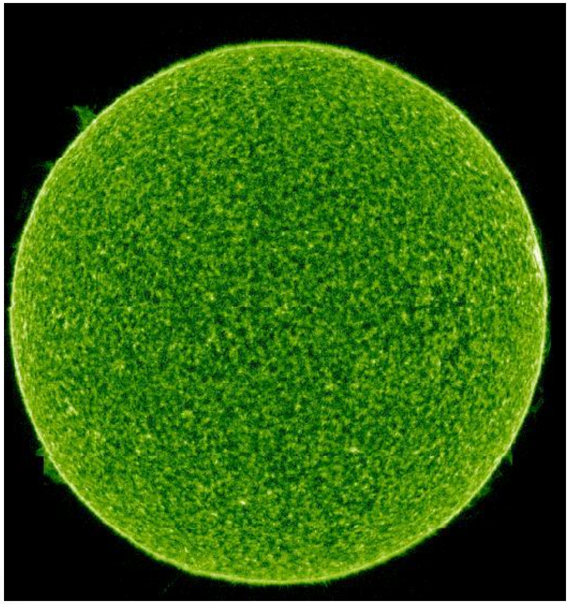


SDO, Sept 24, 2013

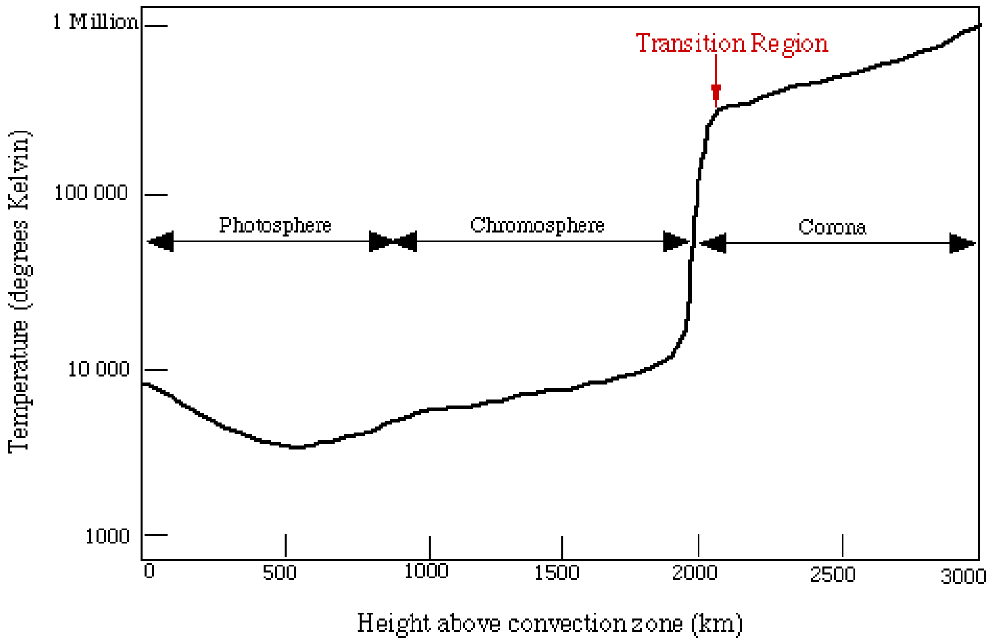
SUN: transition region

- It separates the chromosphere from the corona and it extends by a few tens of km

ΔT: $2 \times 10^4 \longrightarrow 1\text{-}2 \times 10^6$ K ➡ Ionised atmos



SUMER/SOHO
CIV, 10^5 K



October 9, 2013

SUN: corona

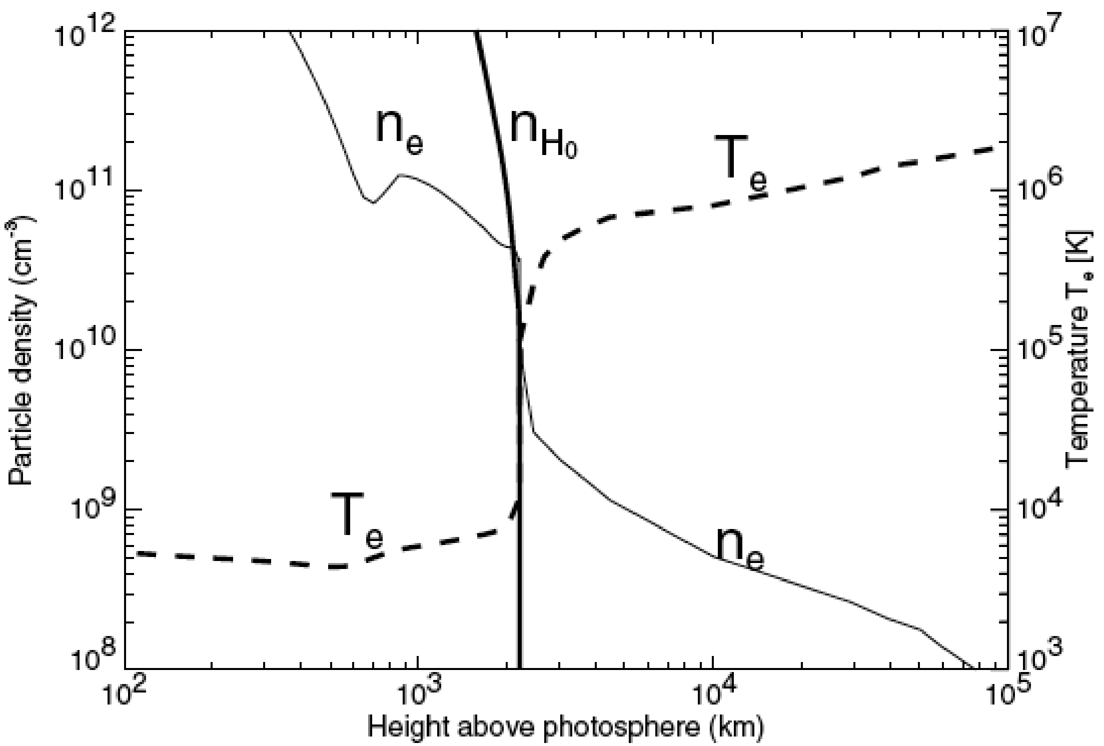
- In white light it can be observed only during total eclipses.
- Its structure varies with solar activity

SUN: corona

$T \sim 2 \times 10^6$ K → UV, EUV, X

$n \sim 10^{15} \div 10^{16}\ m^{-3}$

Helmet Streamers
Polar Plumes
Coronal Loops
Coronal Holes



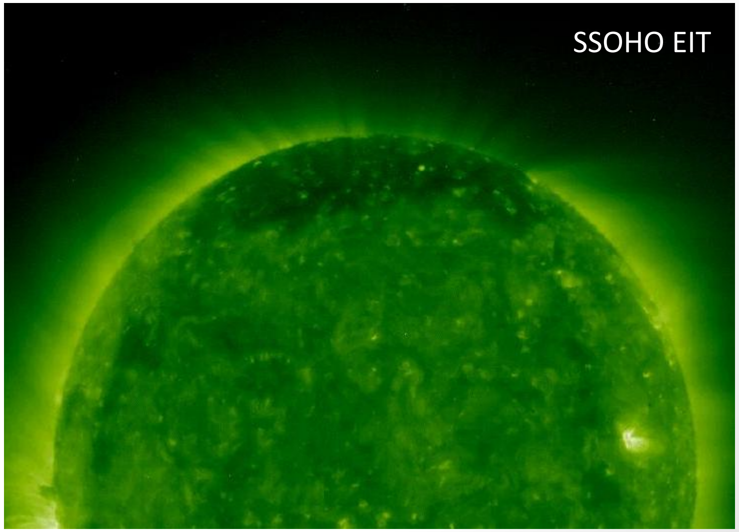
Fontela et al.1990

SUN: corona

- Helmet Streamers
  - Formed by magnetic arches that connect two sunspots
  - The elongated structure is due to the solar wind

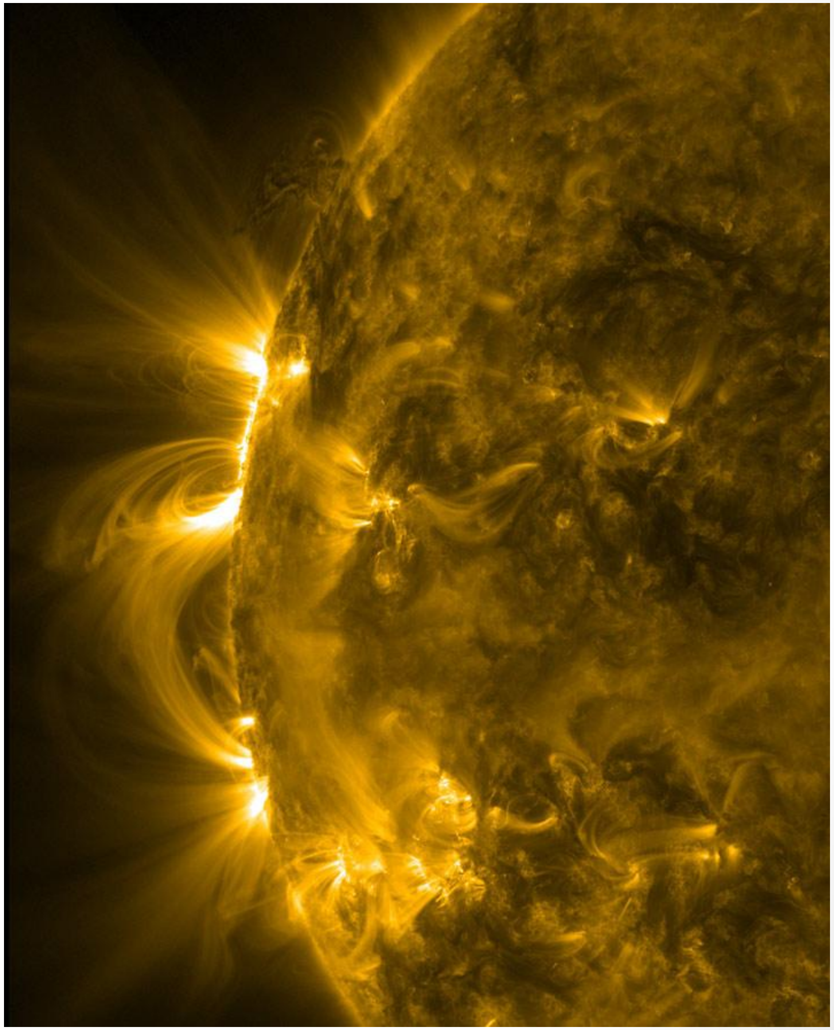
Often prominences are visible at the base of such structures

- Polar Plumes
  - Visible at the poles
  - Associated with open magnetic field lines
  - Their structure is due to the solar wind



SUN: corona

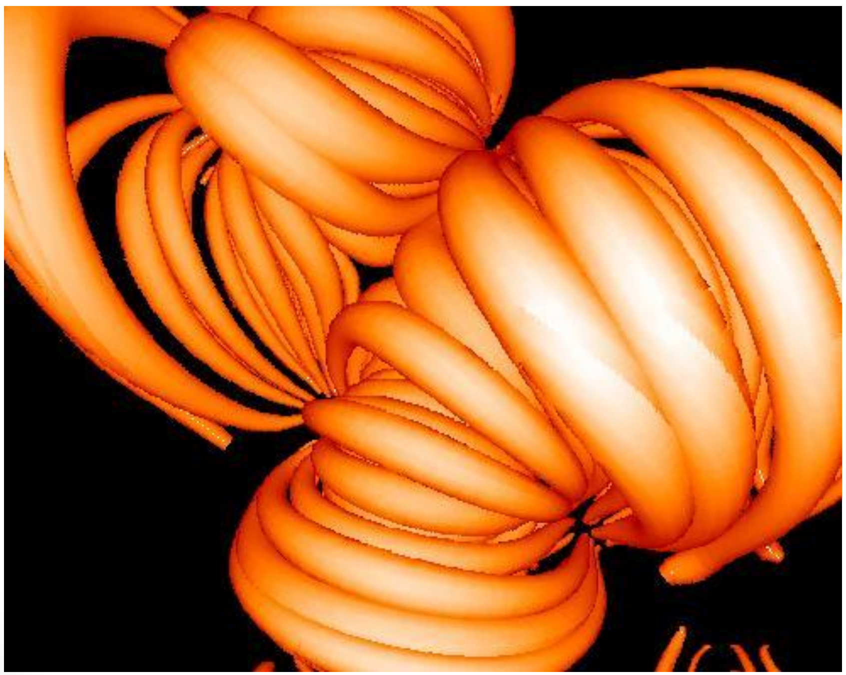
- Coronal Loops
  - Associated with closed magnetic field lines
  - Plasma is injected into the corona from underlying layers
  - Can persist for days even if the structure is changeable
  - Are associated with solar flares
  - Exhibit a 3D structure



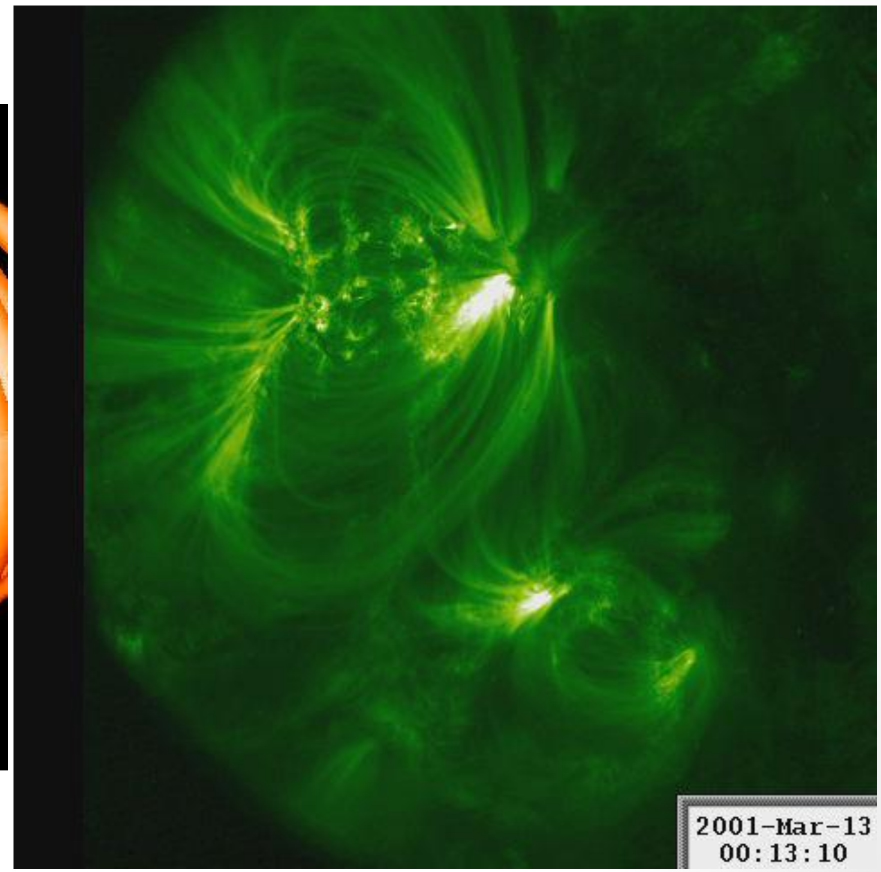
Solar Dynamics Observatory/NASA

SUN: corona

- Coronal Loops



Dr. Allen Gray

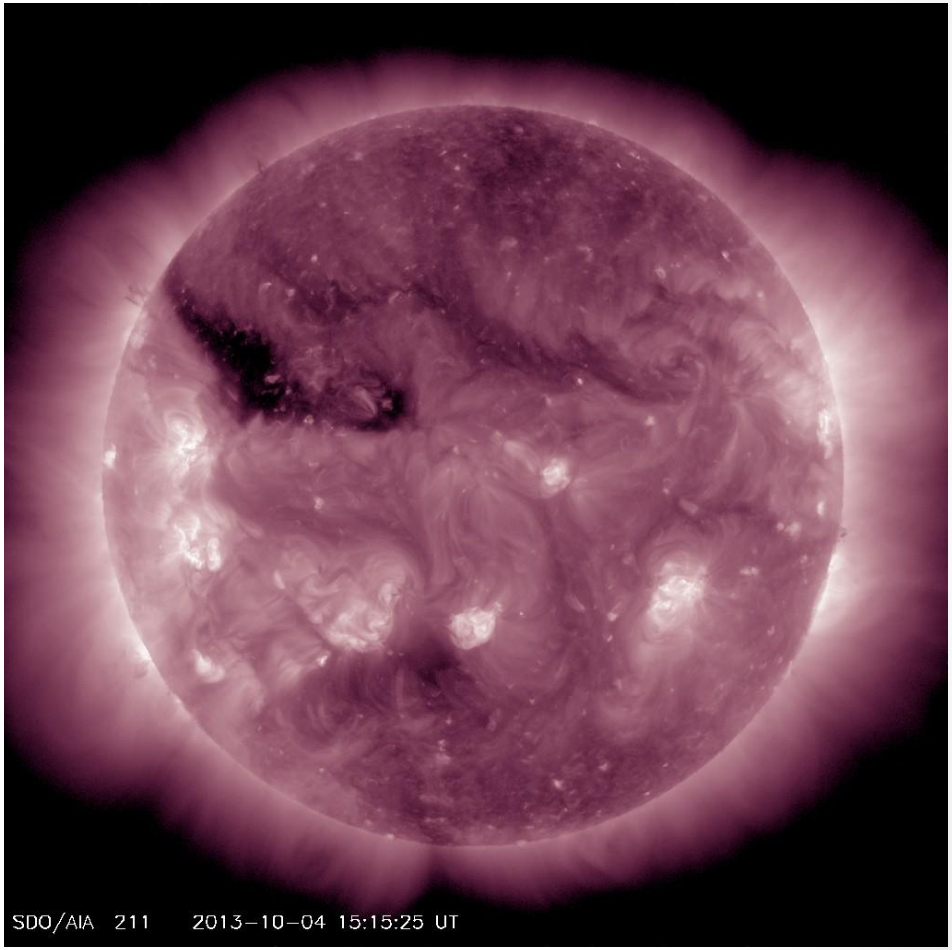


TRACE

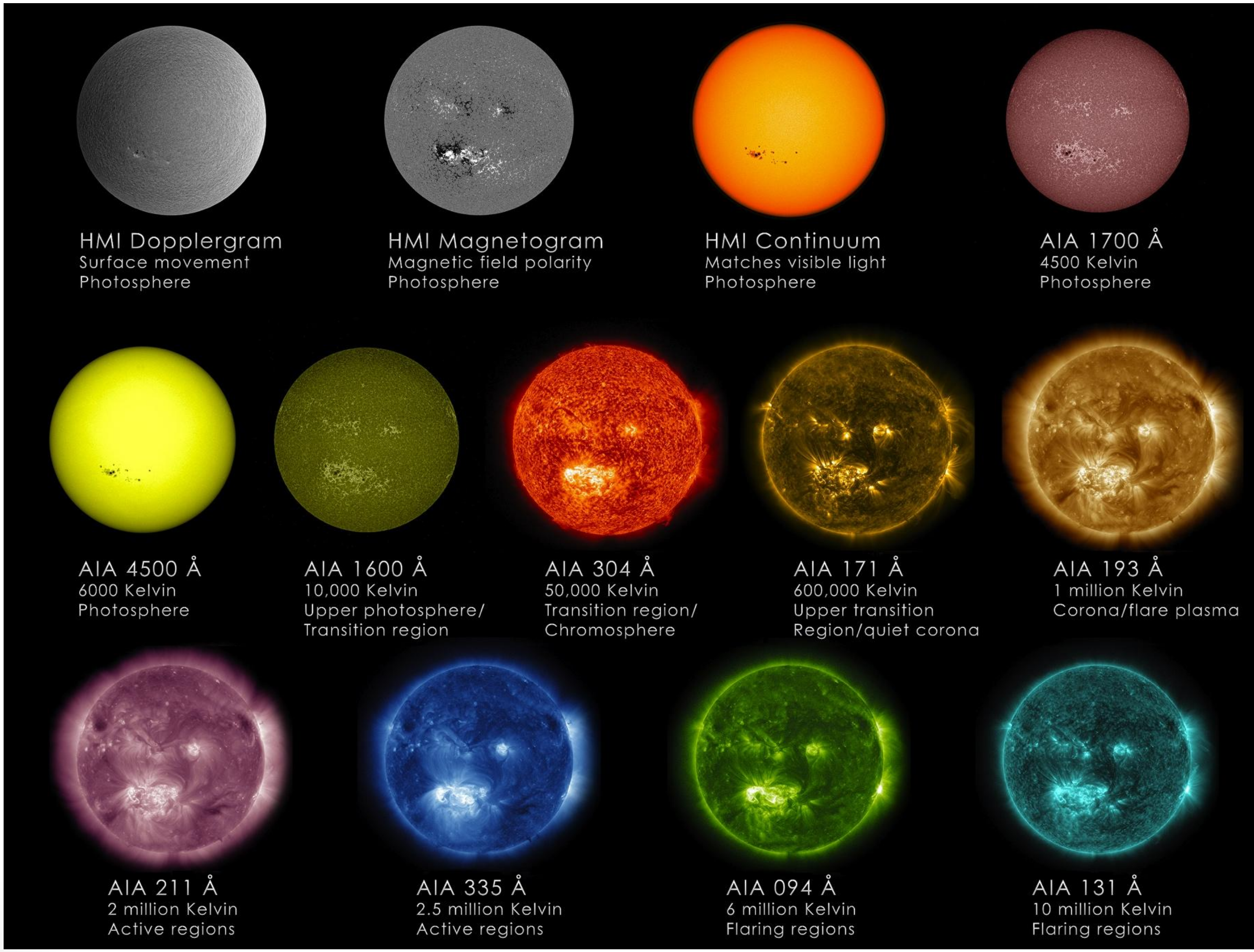
SUN: corona

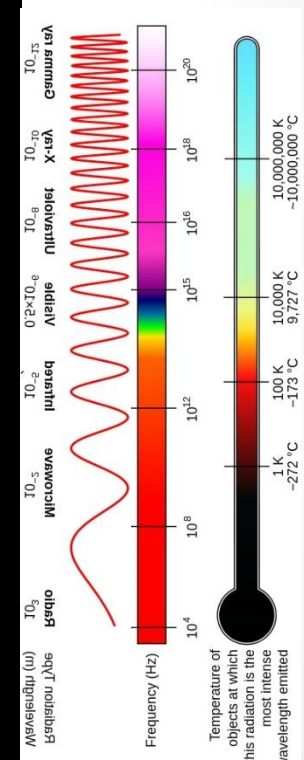
- Coronal Holes
  - Low-emissivity regions in the solar corona
  - Associated with open magnetic field lines

    → high speed solar wind
  - Polar regions



SUN: Sun Wavelength Chart





NASA SDO Goddard Space Flight Center

SUN: flare

- A solar flare is a rapid energy release in solar corona triggered by an instability in the magnetic configuration. (Magnetic reconnection)
- Flares release $10^{16} \div 10^{25}$ J ($10^{27} – 10^{32}$ erg) energy in tens of minutes (Note: one H-bomb: 10 million TNT = 5.0×10^{23} erg)
- Emission almost in all wavelenght + energetic particles

	Peak, 0.1 to 0.8 nm band
Class	(Watts/square metre)
B	$I < 10^{-6}$
C	10^{-6} $I < 10^{-5}$
M	10^{-5} $I < 10^{-4}$
X	I 10^{-4}

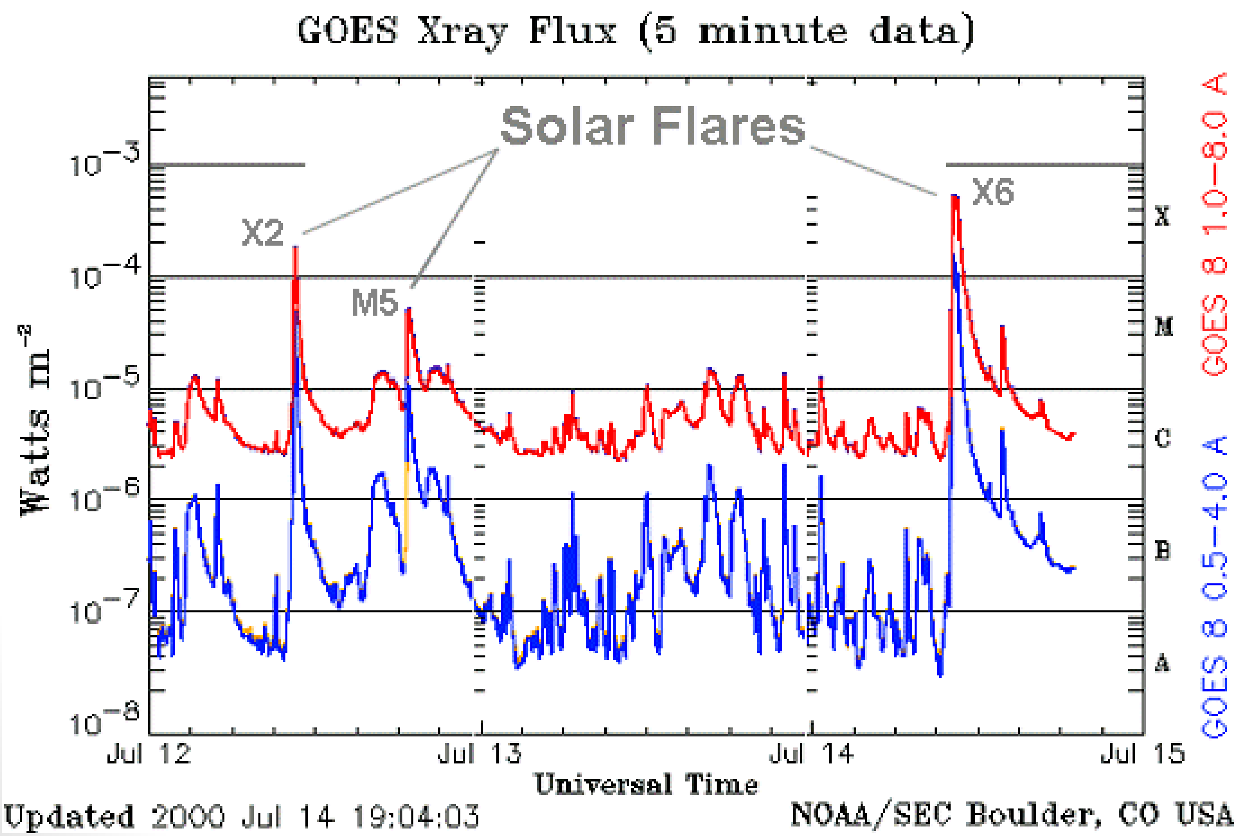
Each category for x-ray flares has nine subdivisions ranging from, *e.g.*, C1 to C9

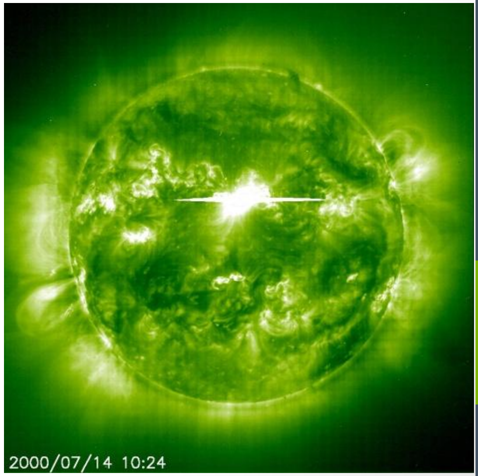
A multiplier is used to indicate the level within each class. For example:
M6 = 6×10^{-5} Watts/m^2

I = peak burst intensity

SUN: flare

- The X6 flare triggered a radiation storm around Earth nicknamed the Bastille Day event.





SUN: flare

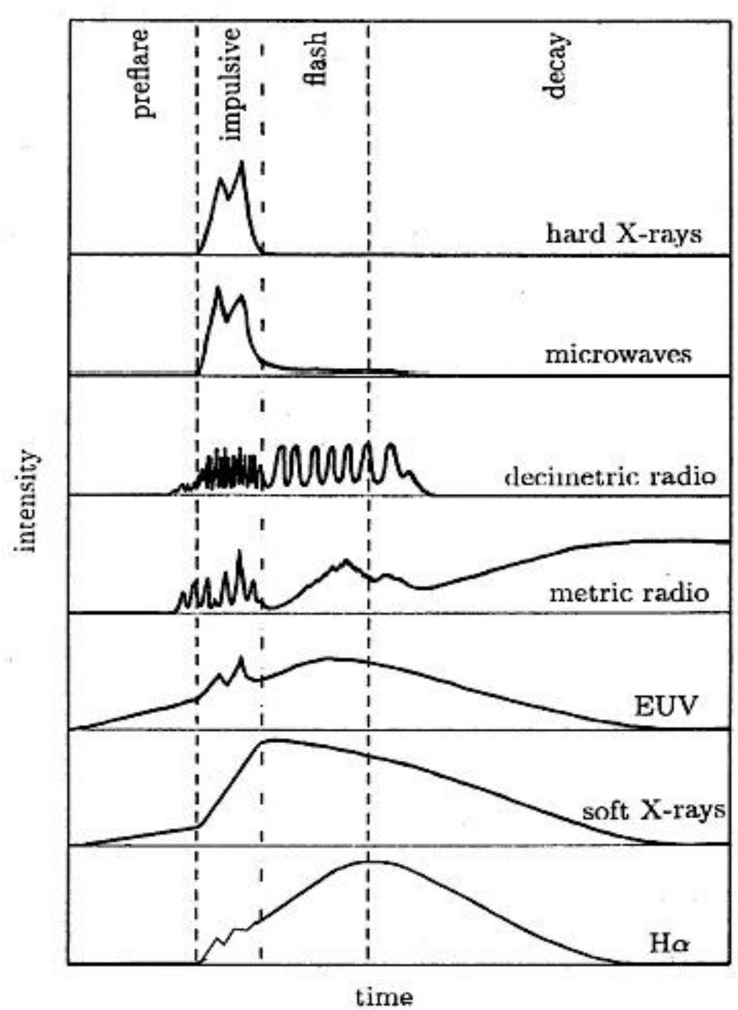
- The temporal evolution of a flare may consist in *three phases*:

Preflare phase: lasts few minutes, coronal plasma heats up, soft x-rays and H_α

Impulsive phase: ~ 3 ÷ 10 min, energetic particles acceleration, hard x-rays

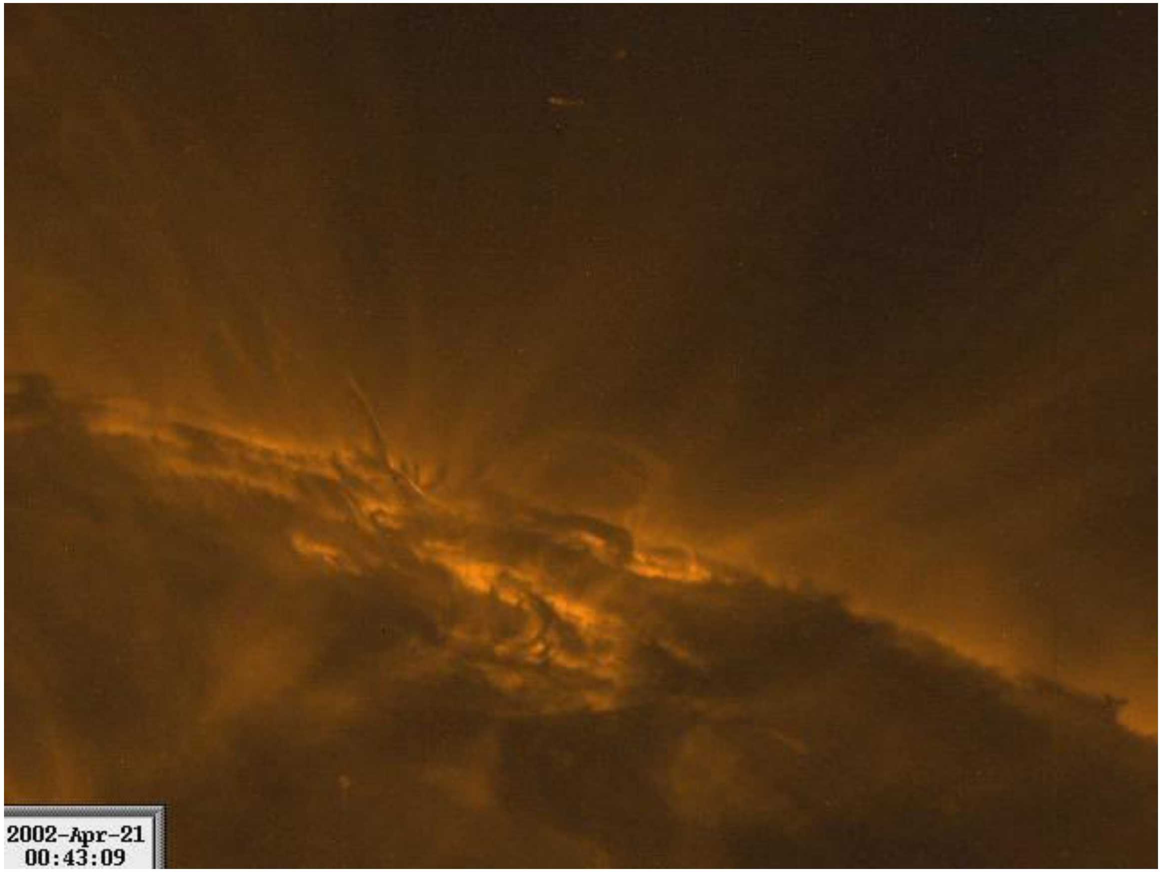
(flash phase: rapid increase in H_α, 5 ÷ 10 min)

Gradual phase: coronal plasma gradually return to its original state



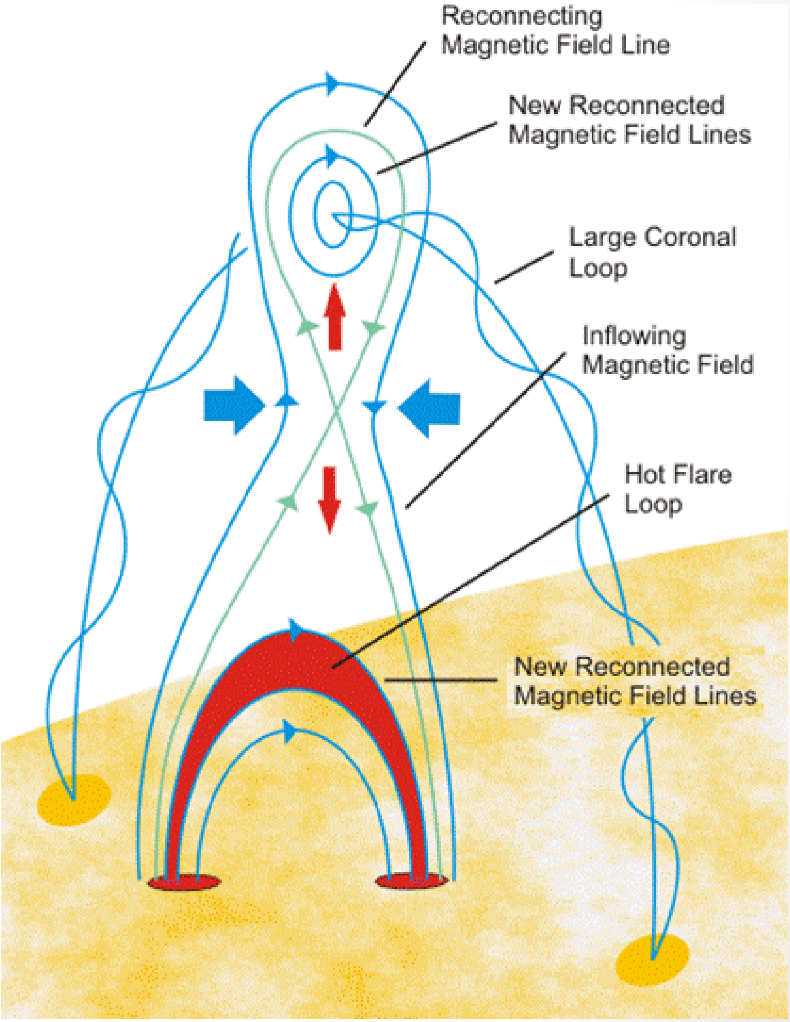
SUN: flare

Flare evolution by TRACE (195 Å)



SUN: flare

- Magnetic reconnection



SUN: coronal mass ejection

- A CME is a huge cloud of magnetized plasma ejected from the Sun's corona into space at high speeds
  - Sometimes, but not always associated with flare and prominence eruption

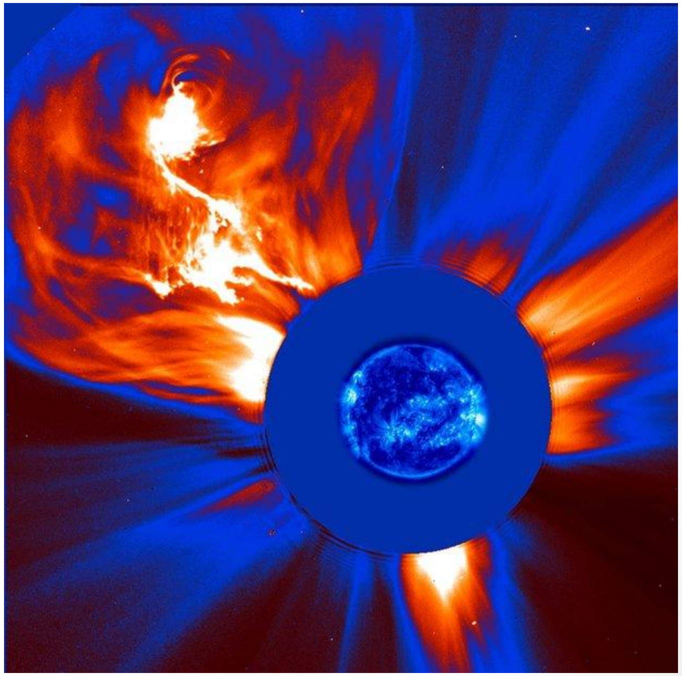
Apparent angular width:

few ÷ 120° (normal CME)

120° ÷ 360° (partial halo CME)

Front (Earth) or back side directed

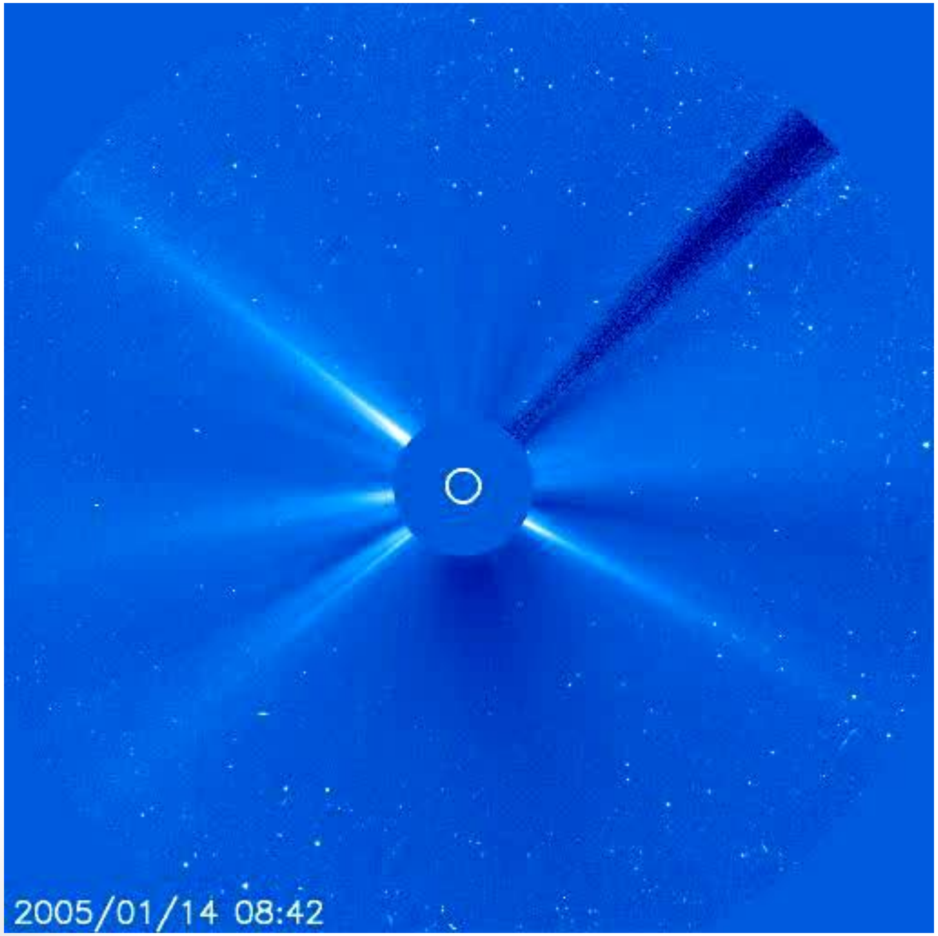
CMEs are referred to halo CMEs

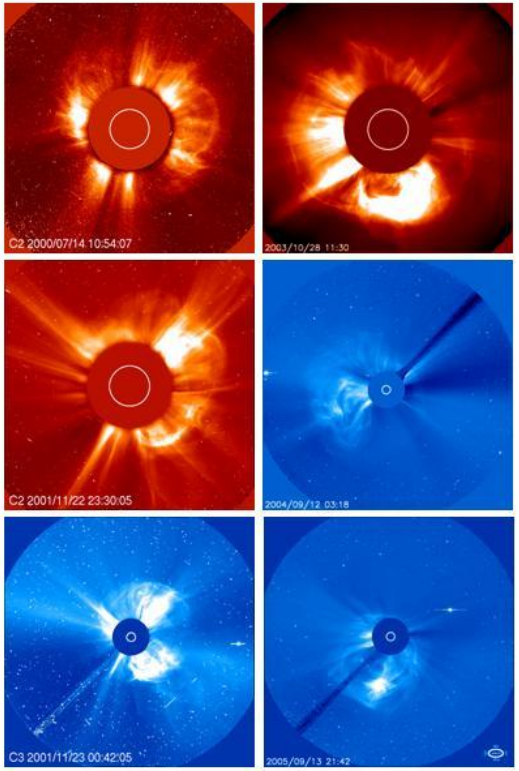


SOHO/LASCO

SUN: coronal mass ejection

- Halo CME = Earth-directed CMEs





SOHO/LASCO

SUN: coronal mass ejection

- Correlation relation between the radial speed and the expansion speed measured across the full CME width in the direction perpendicular to the radial direction:

  $v_{rad} = 0.88\ v_{exp}$

- $M_{ej} = 10^{10} \div 10^{13}$ kg
- $E_{tot} = E_{cin} + E_{potenial} = 10^{20} \div 10^{26}$ J
- $V = 300 \div 2000\ kms^{-1}$

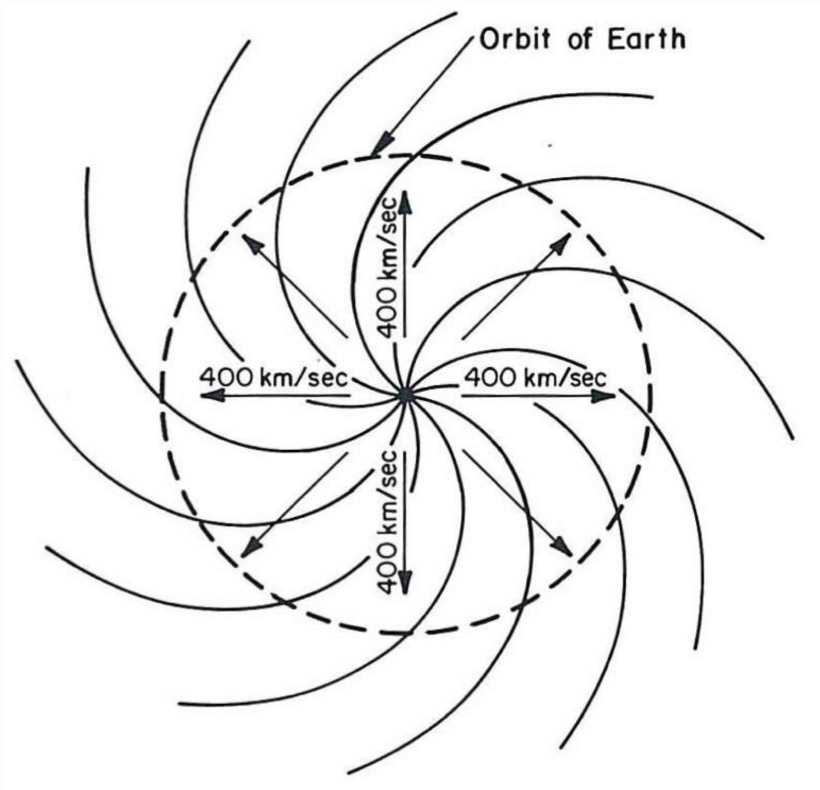
- Interfere with solar wind for example by the creation of shock wave that moves ahead the CME, accelerating solar wind particles to high energies

SOLAR WIND

- It is a stream of charged particles (mostly e^- and p) released from the Sun's corona in radial direction

The solar magnetic field is frozen in to the radial outflowing solar wind. Thus, due to the Suns rotation, the magnetic field lines adopt an Archimedean spiral configuration.

The angle to the radial direction of the magnetic field depends on distance, latitude and the local solar wind velocity.



SOLAR WIND

- Typical values of several solar wind parameters as measured by Helios 2 at 1AU

Wind Parameter	Slow wind	Fast wind
number density	~ 15 cm^{-3}	~ 4 cm^{-3}
bulk velocity	~ 350 km s^{-1}	~ 600 km s^{-1}
proton temperature	~ 5 x 10^4 K	~ 2 x 10^5 K
electron temperature	~ 2 x 10^5 K	~ 1x 10^5 K
α-particles temperature	~ 2 x 10^5 K	~ 8 x 10^5 K
magnetic field	~ 6nT	~ 6nT

http://solarphysics.livingreviews.org/open?pubNo=lrsp-2005-4&page=articlese12.html

SOLAR WIND

- Solar wind velocity and interaction with magnetosphere