

Exploring the cosmos: Spectroscopy of Ionic Iron Compounds with Astrochemical Relevance

Basic Principles and Recent Results

GRUND ¹⁵₃₅

Shan Jin
Jan. 30th, 2025

1. Background

The CCD image of the interstellar medium (ISM), taken by Adam Block at the Caelum Observation.

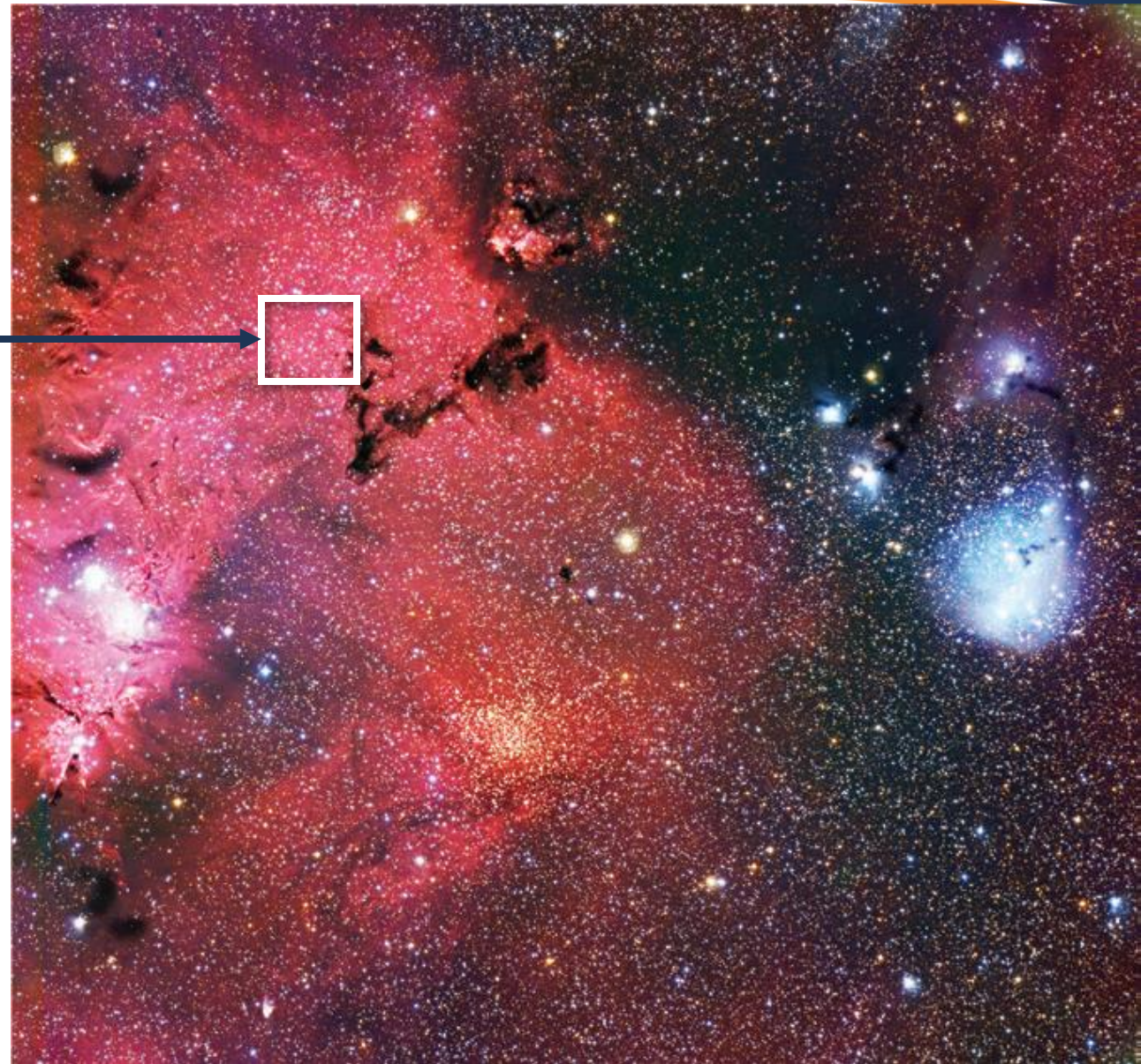
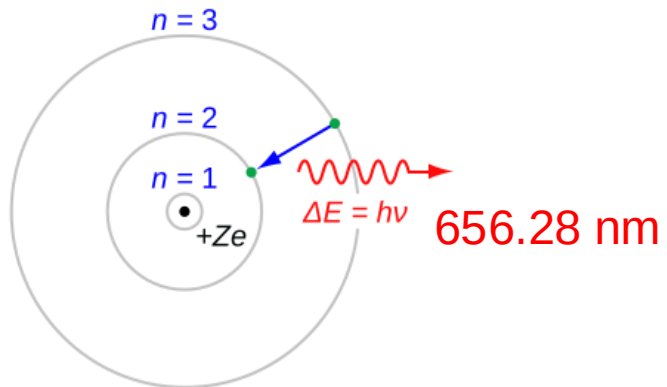
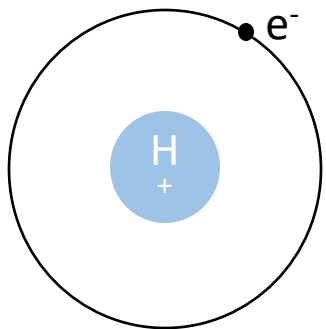


1. Background

Ionized hydrogen
H II regions because of H- α emission

a wavelength of 656.28 nm (red light)

H atom:

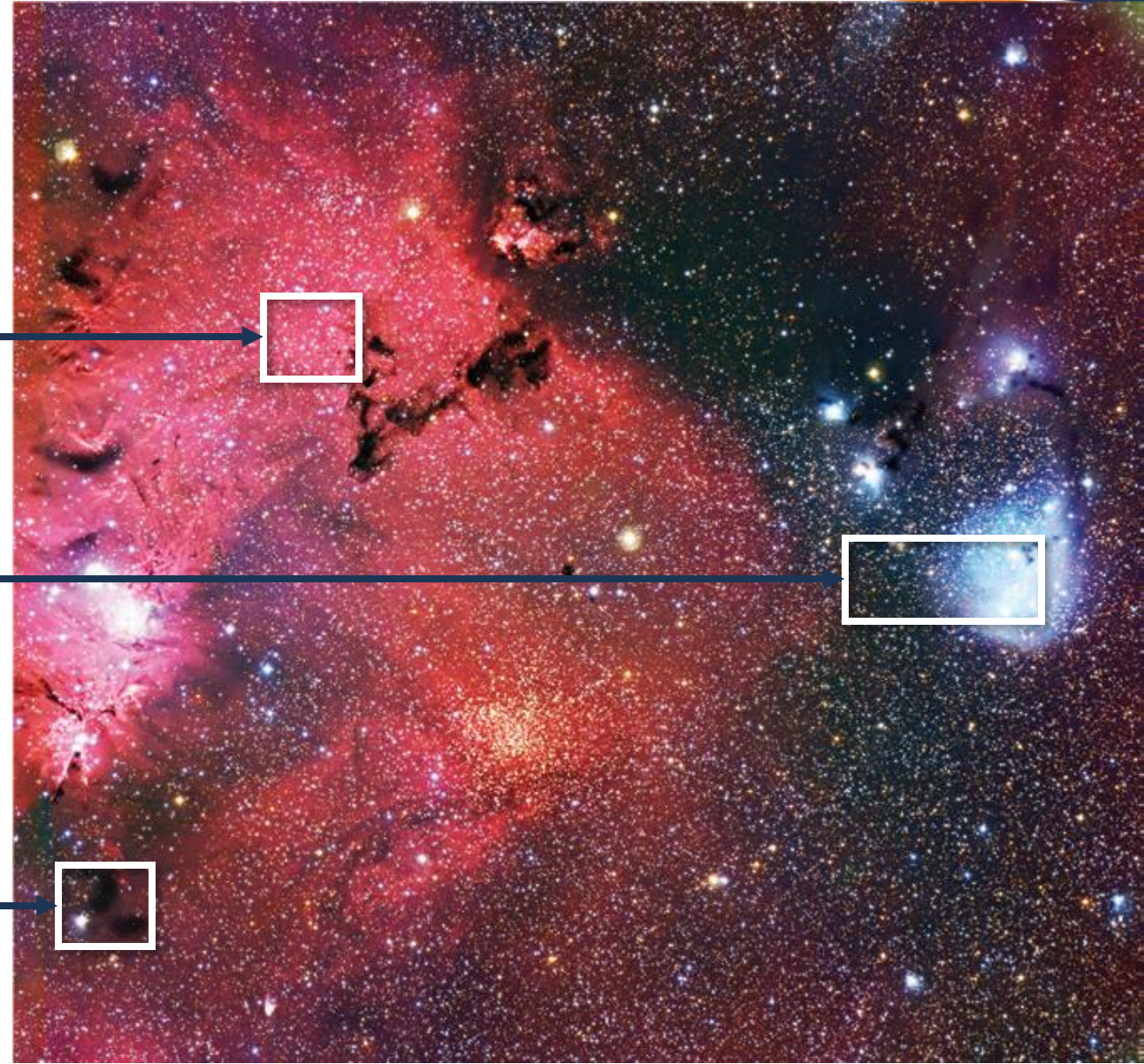


1. Background

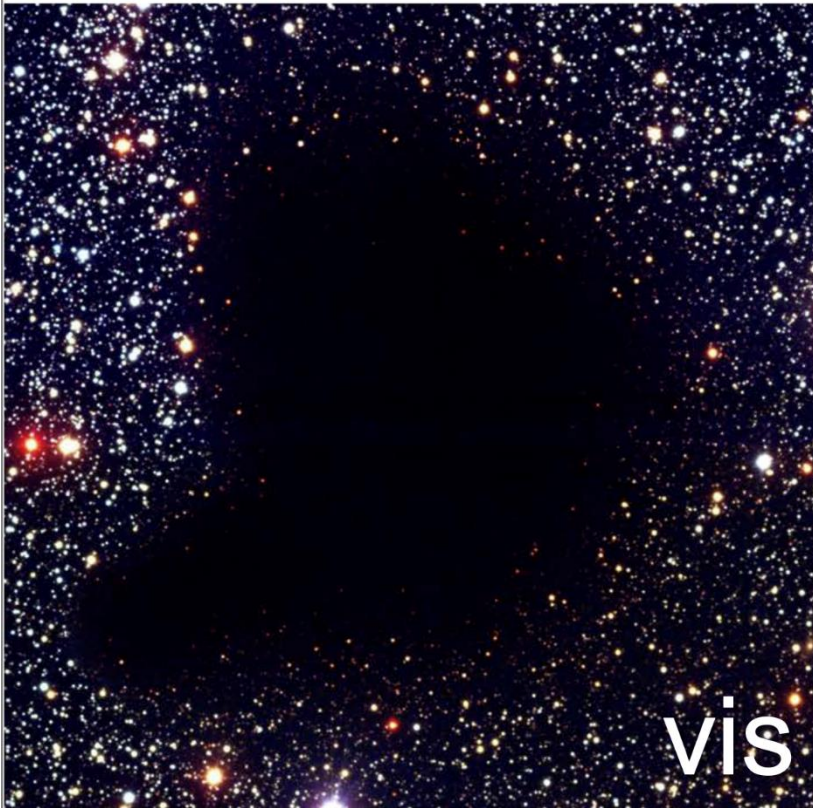
Ionized hydrogen
H II regions because of H- α emission

reflection nebulae

???

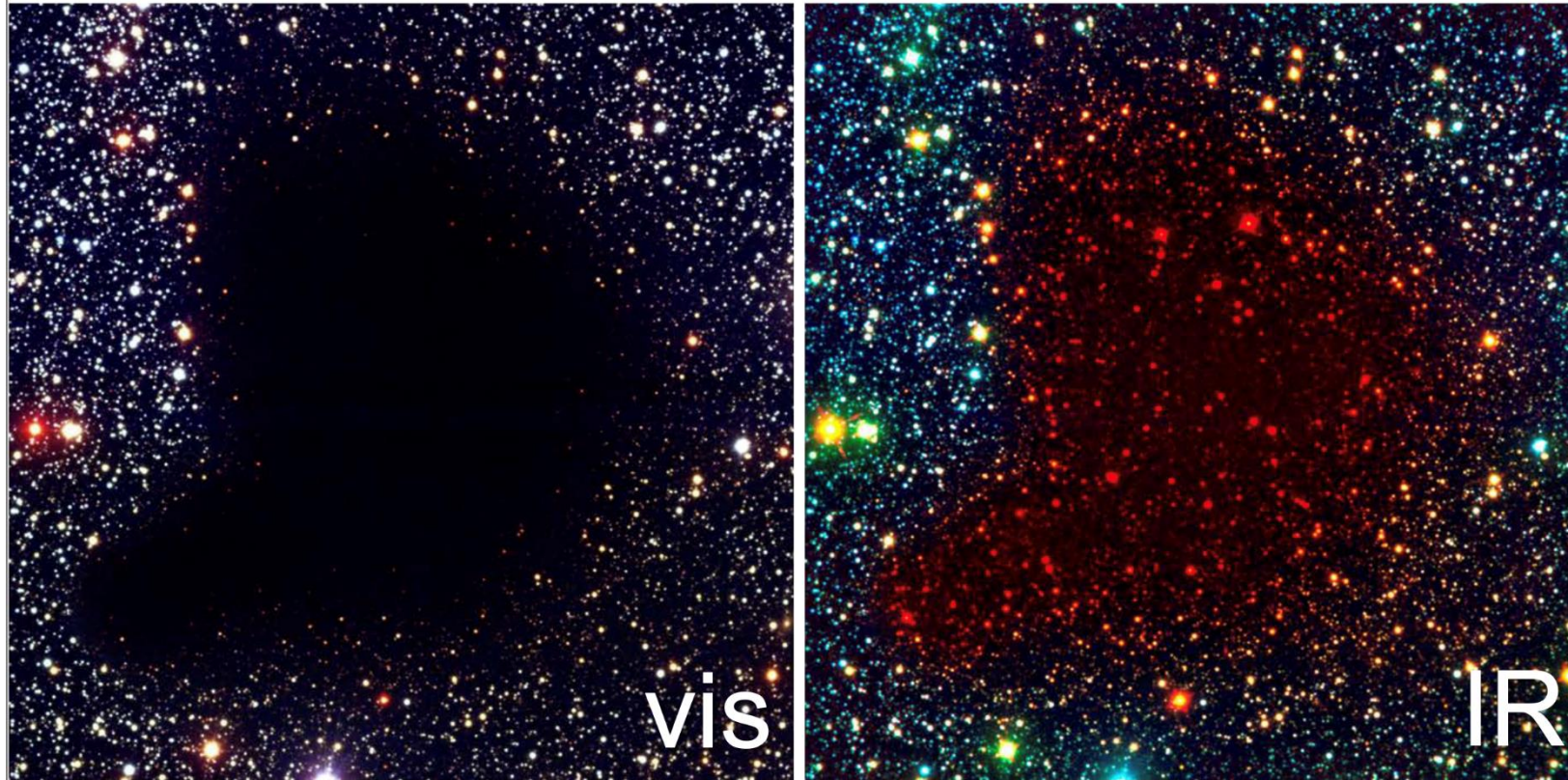


1. Background

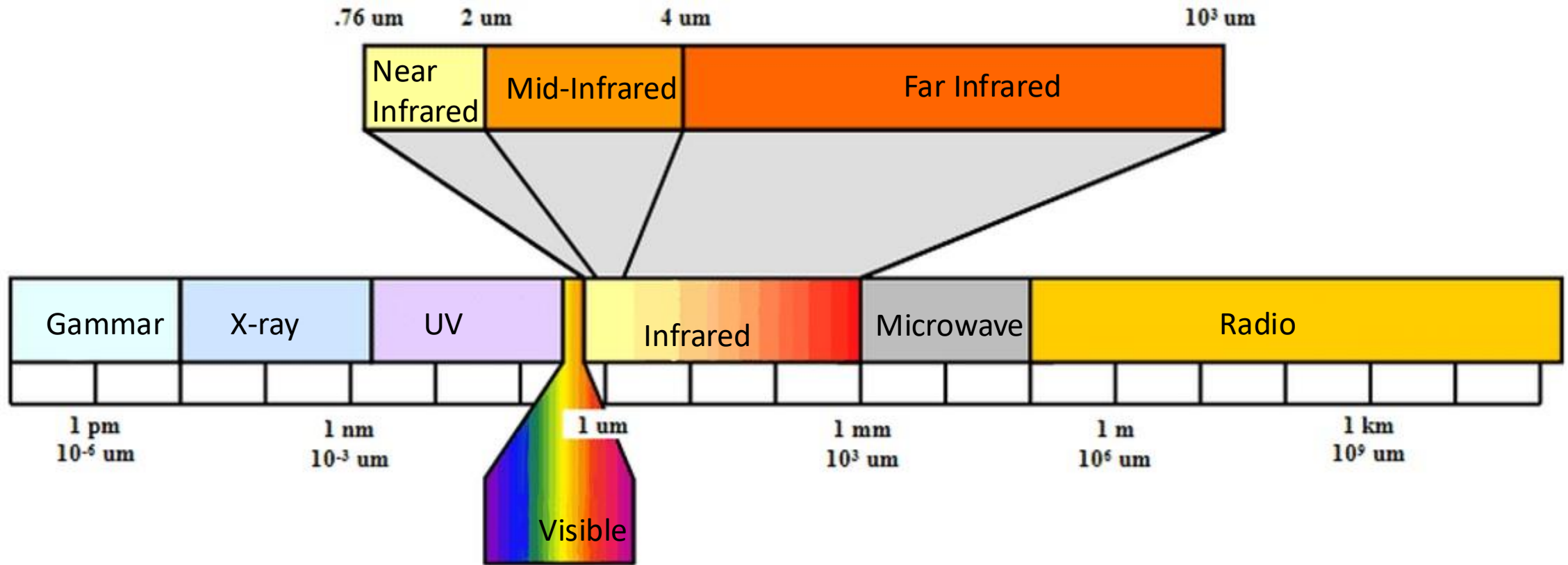


cool dense molecular clouds

1. Background



1. Background



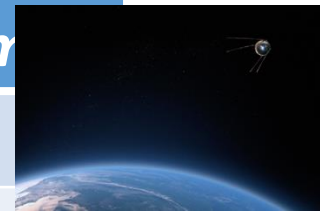
With different telescope covering different region, astrophysicists are able to obtain more information from outerspace.

1. Background

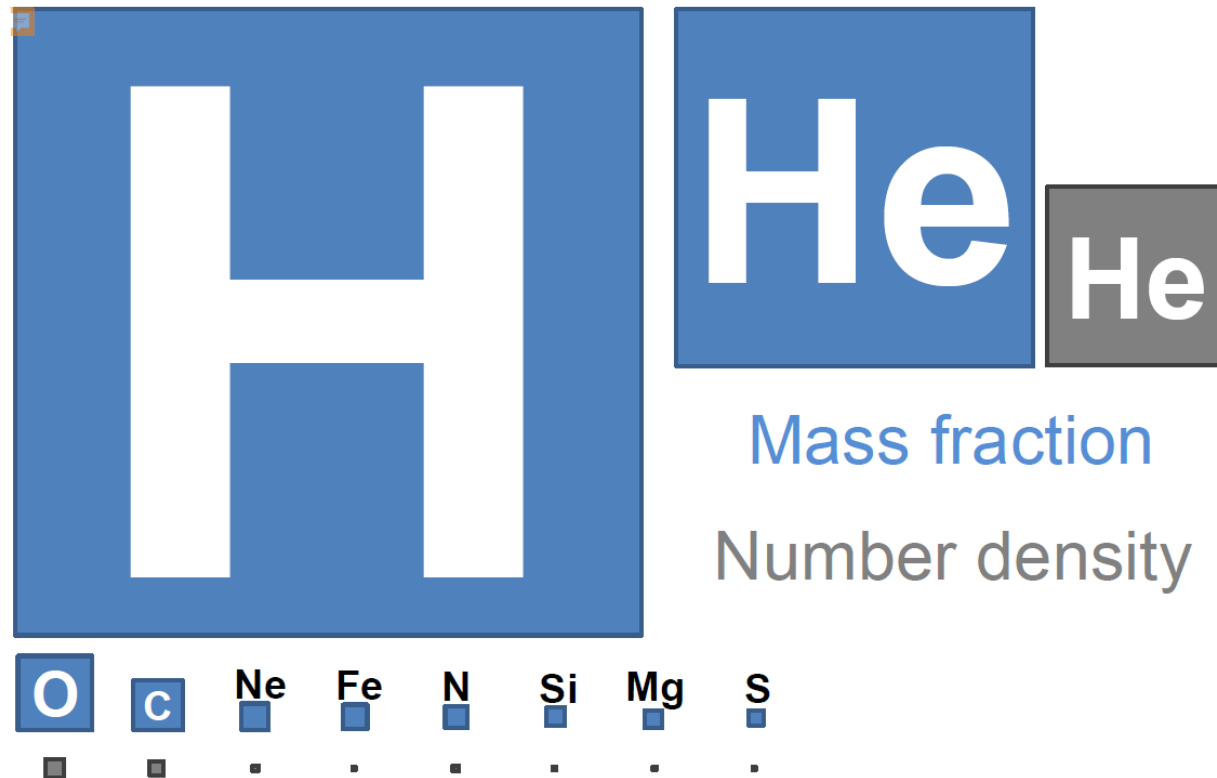
	Temperature / K	Number density / cm^{-3}
Diffuse clouds	~ 100	100
Dense clouds	10-100	$10^4 - 10^8$
Accretion disk	10-1000	$10^8 - 10^{13}$



Material	Number density, n / cm^{-3}
Ideal gas	$2.504 * 10^{19}$
Low Earth orbit (300km)	$\sim 10^8$
Surface of moon	$\sim 10^2$

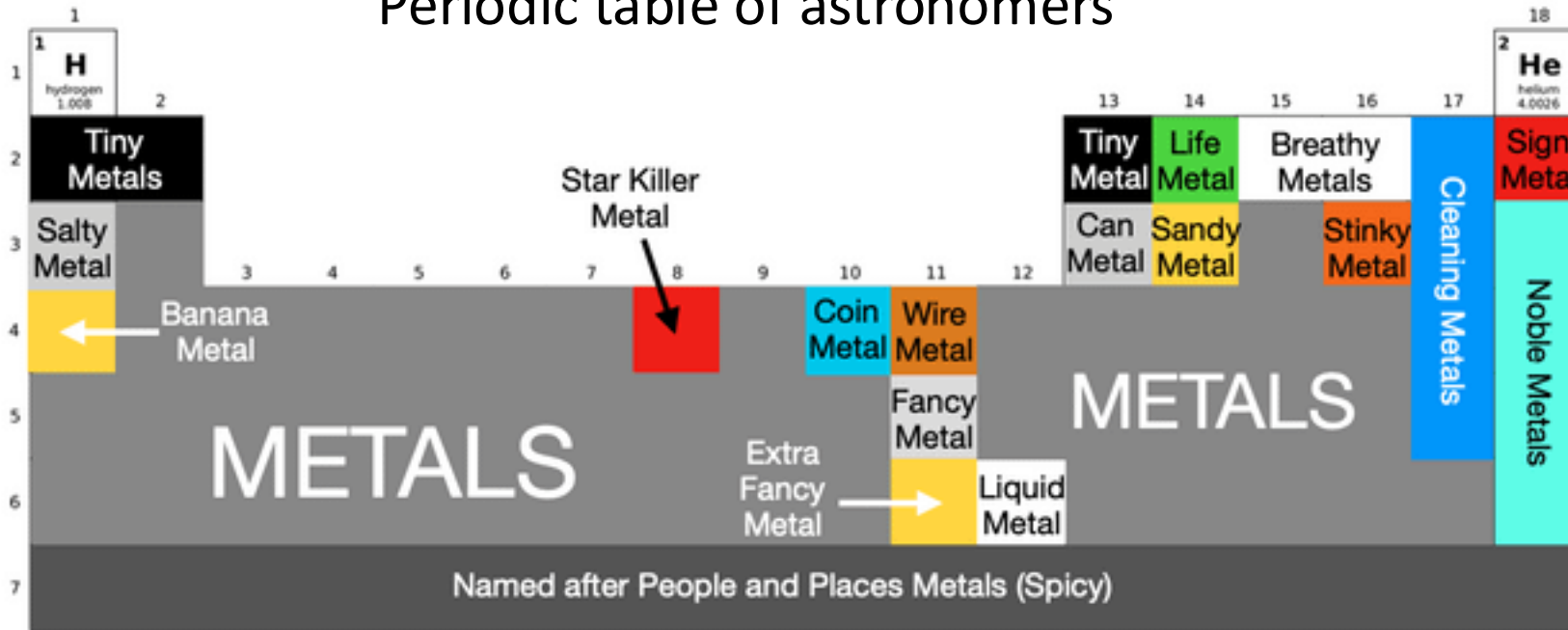


1. Background



1. Background

Periodic table of astronomers



Quiz:

What is the life metal?

What is the star killer metal?

H

He

He

Mass fraction

Number density

O

C

Ne

Fe

N

Si

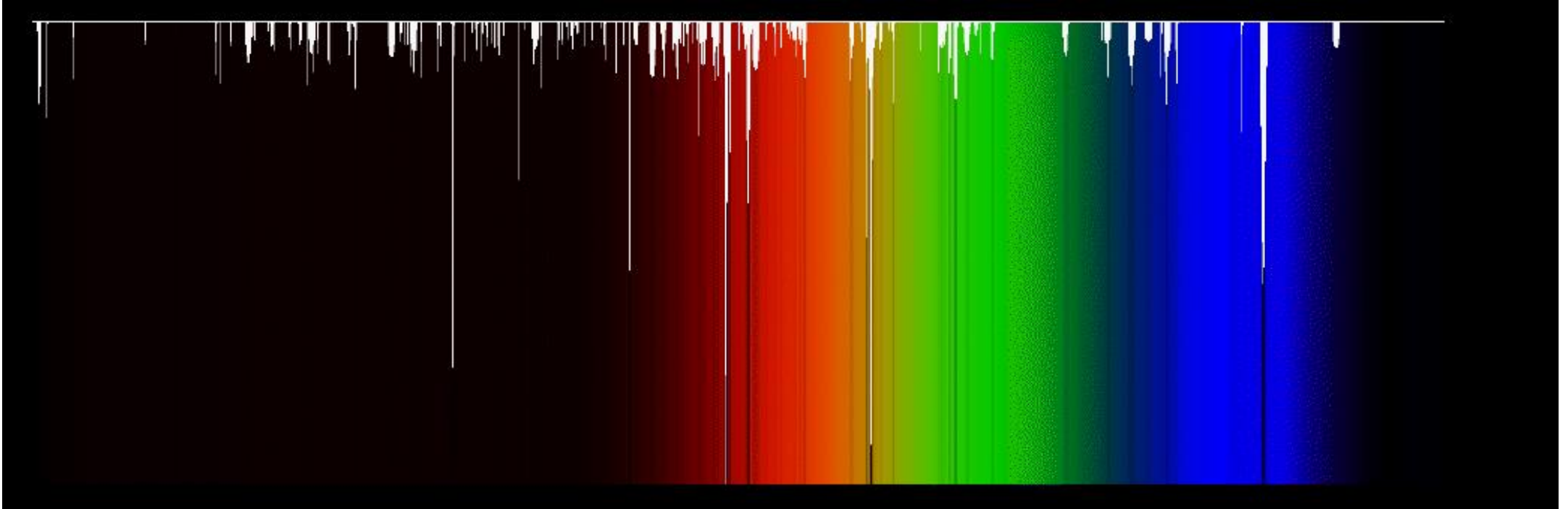
Mg

S

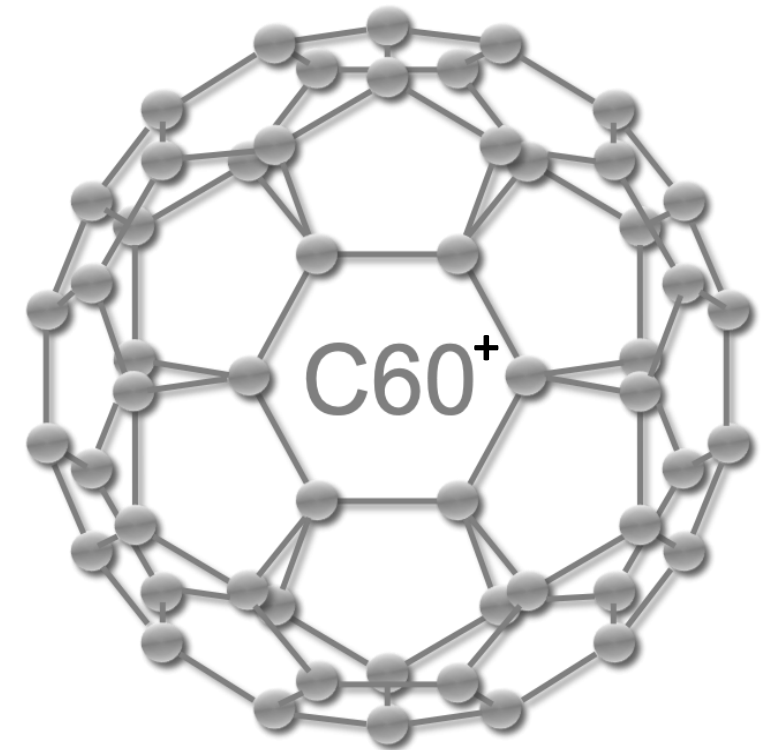
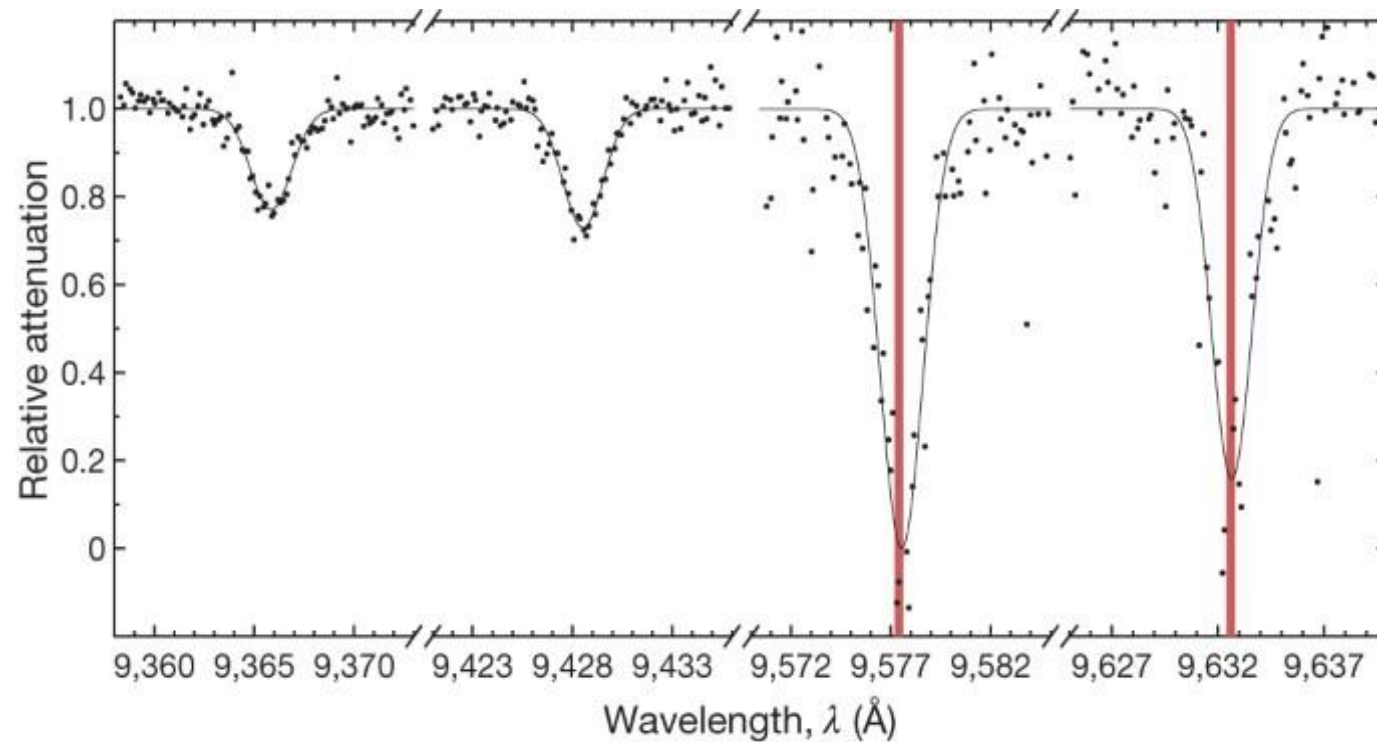


1. Background

Diffuse interstellar medium



1. Background



Fe⁺ in the Interstellar Medium

- **Fe** is by far one of the most abundant metals in the universe
- Little atomic iron is seen
- Detection of **FeO**^[1] and **FeCN**^[2] in the interstellar clouds
- Ion **spectroscopy** + mass **spectrometry** as a high-resolution tool

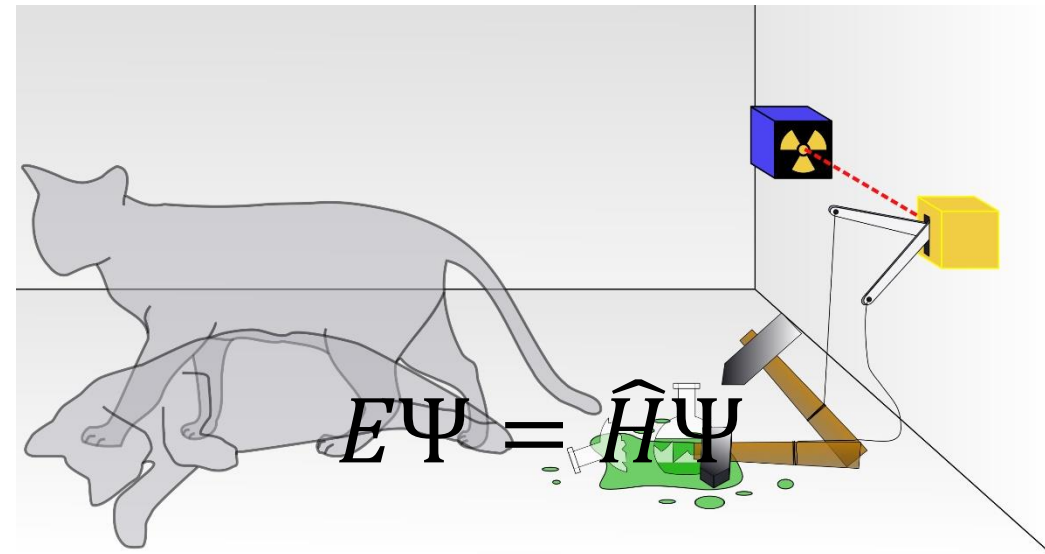


The **FeH⁺** molecule is predicted to be quite abundant based on calculated molecular dissociative equilibria in **cool stellar atmospheres**, such as those occurring in red giant stars (Johnson & Sauval 1982). It is, therefore, important to under-

[3] S.R. Langhoff, C.W. Bauschlicher Jr., *Astrophysics Journal*, **1991**, 375: 843-845.

Theoretical Methods

Molecules are
observed
spectroscopically.



$$\hat{H} = \hat{T}_N + \hat{T}_e + \hat{V}_{eN} + \hat{V}_{ee} + \hat{V}_{NN} \quad \text{----- (1)}$$

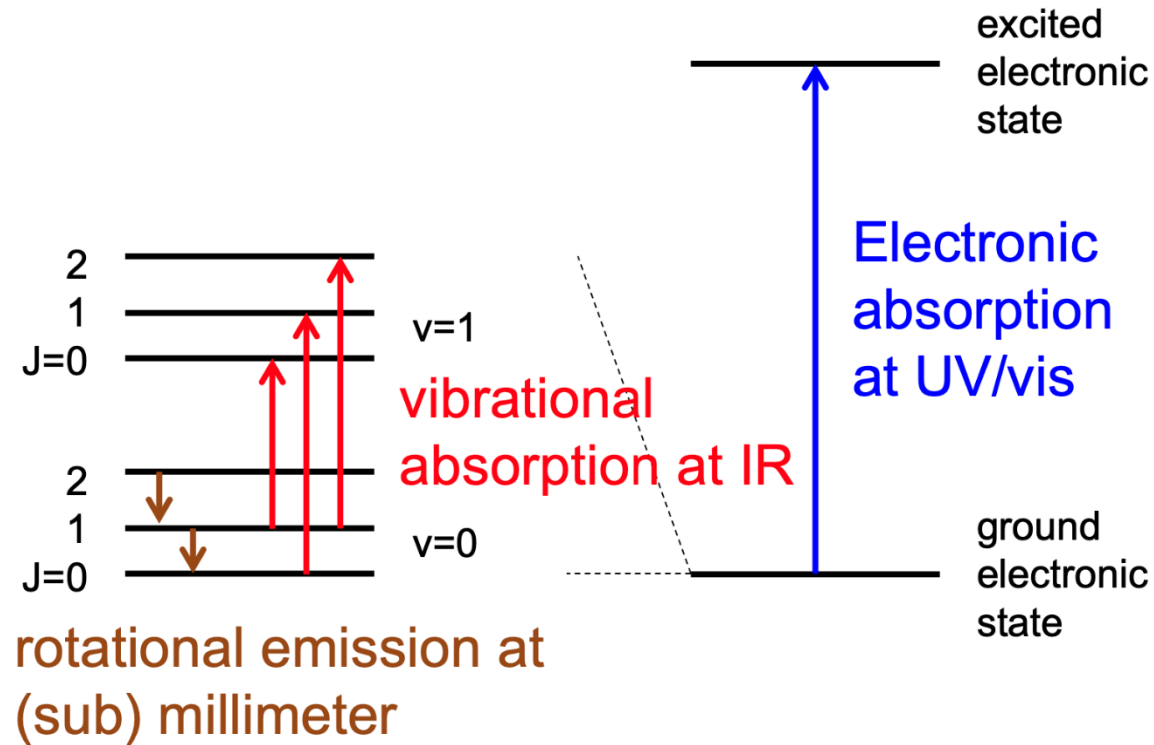
$$\hat{H}_e = \hat{T}_e + \hat{V}_{eN} + \hat{V}_{NN} \quad \text{----- (2)}$$

$\hat{T}_e + \hat{V}_{eN} + \hat{V}_{NN}$ = Hamiltonian for electron motion

$\hat{V}_{NN}$ = Hamiltonian for nu-nu repulsion

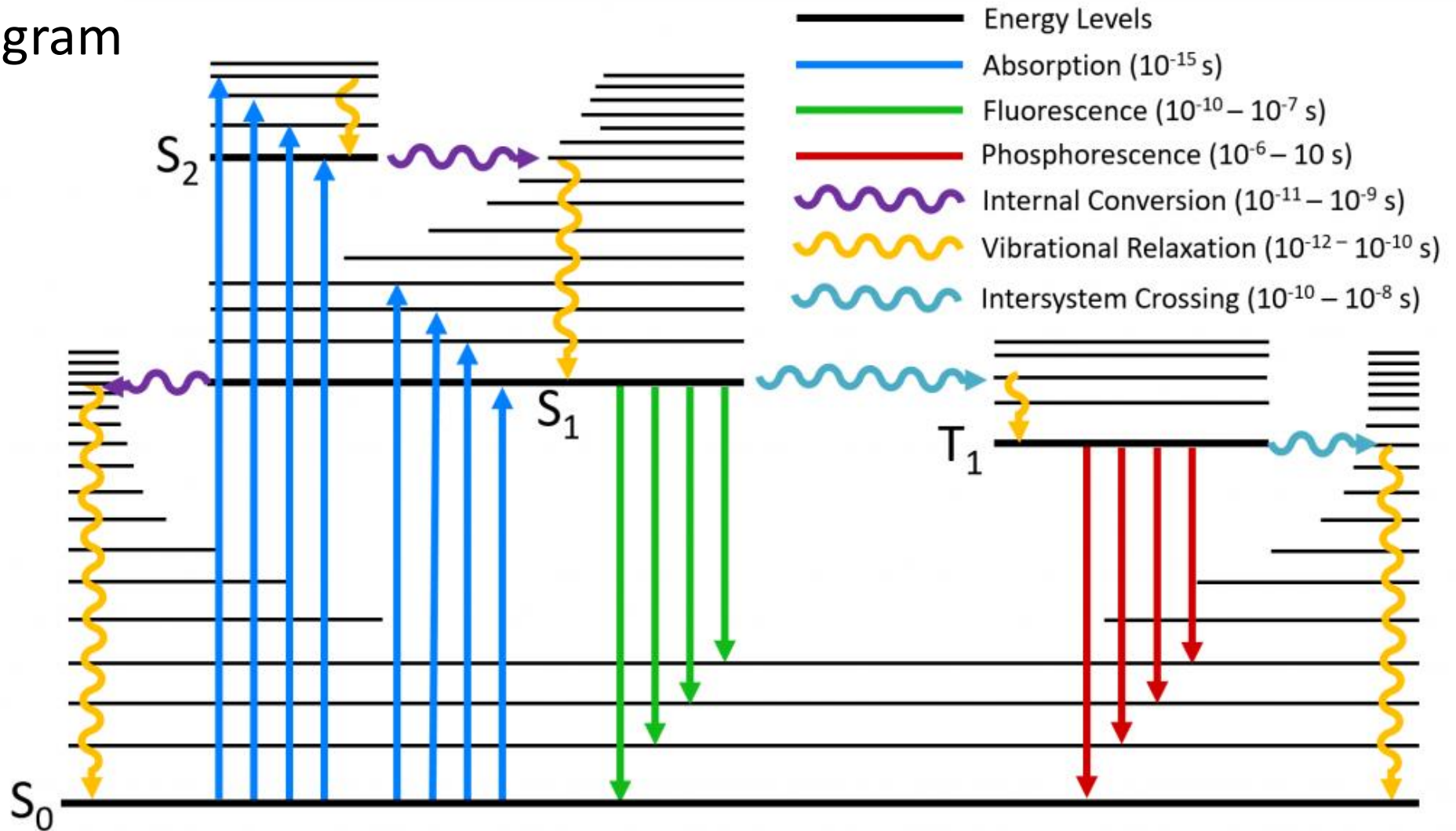
Molecules are observed spectroscopically

$$E = E_{el} + E_{vib} + E_{rot}$$



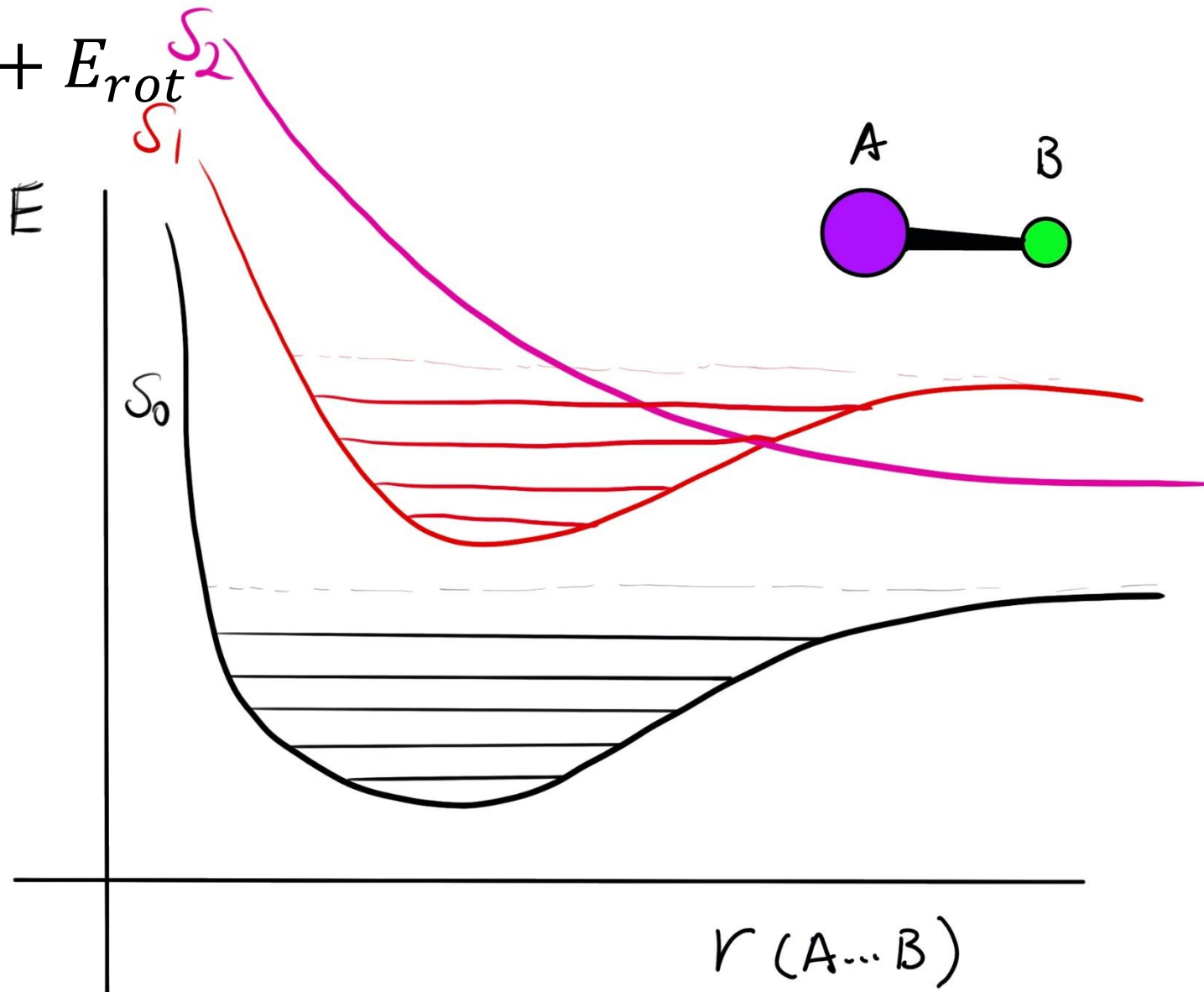
Molecules are observed spectroscopically

Jablonski Diagram



Molecules are observed spectroscopically

$$E = E_{el} + E_{vib} + E_{rot}$$



Infrared Multiphoton Dissociation Spectroscopy

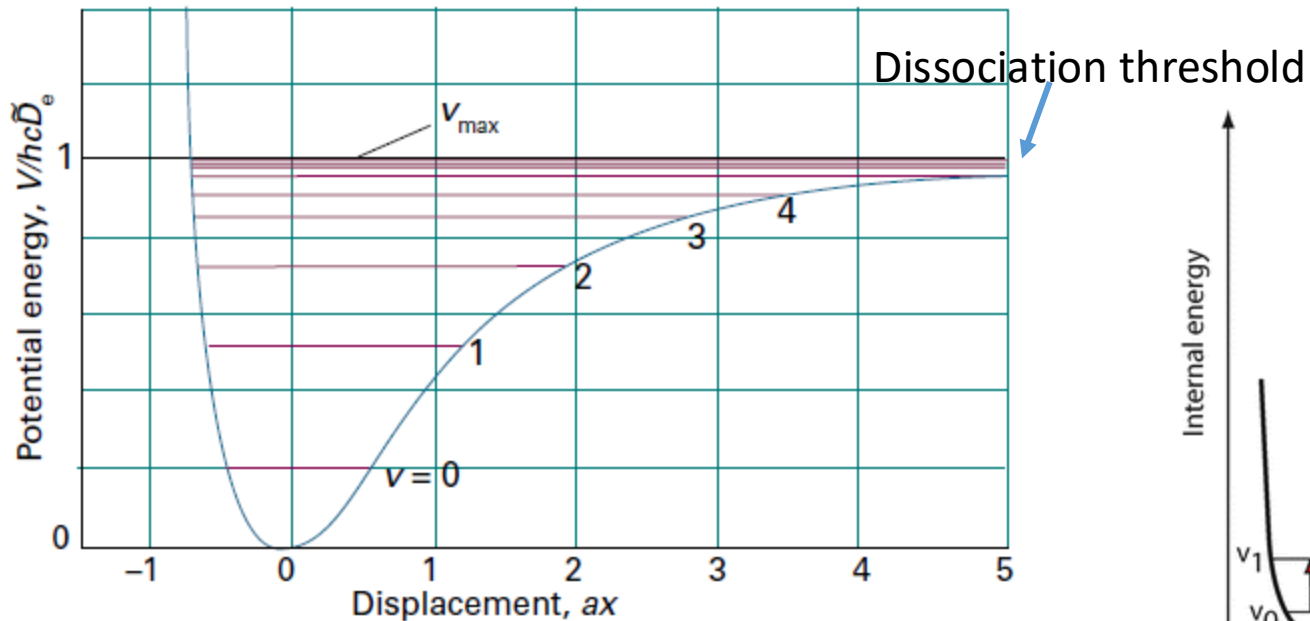
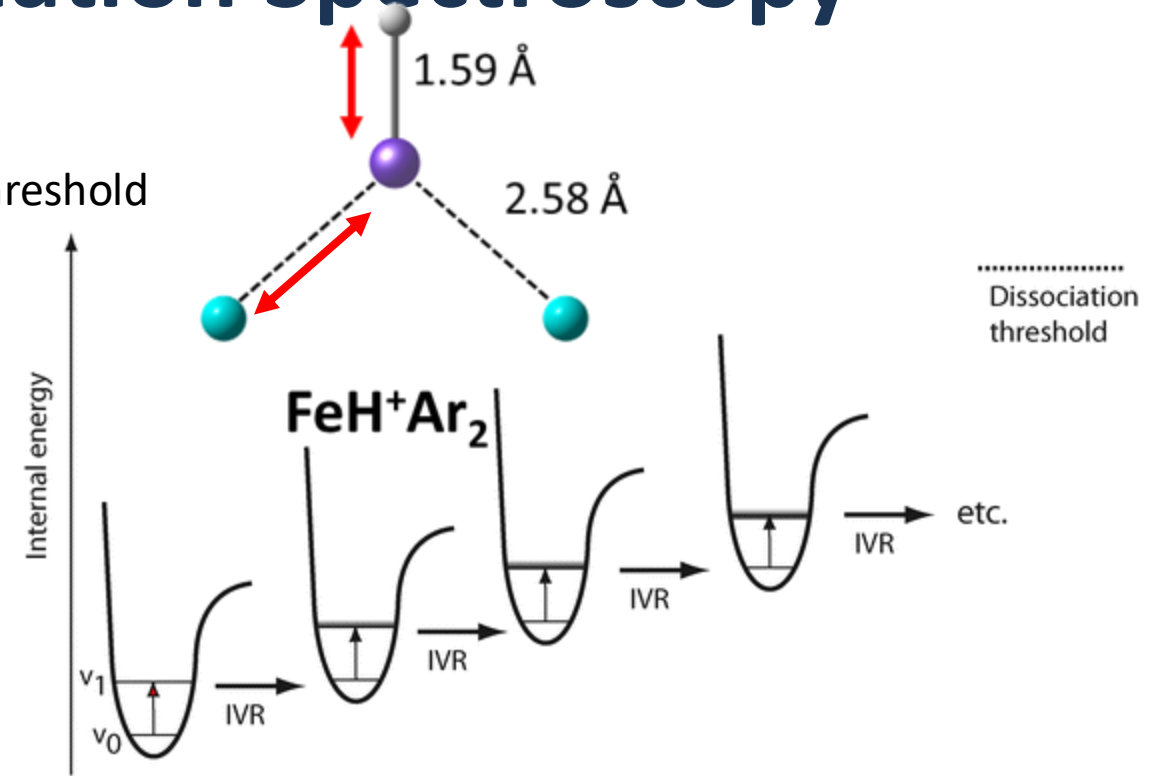
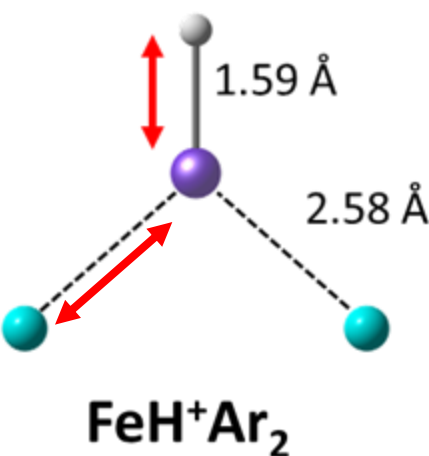
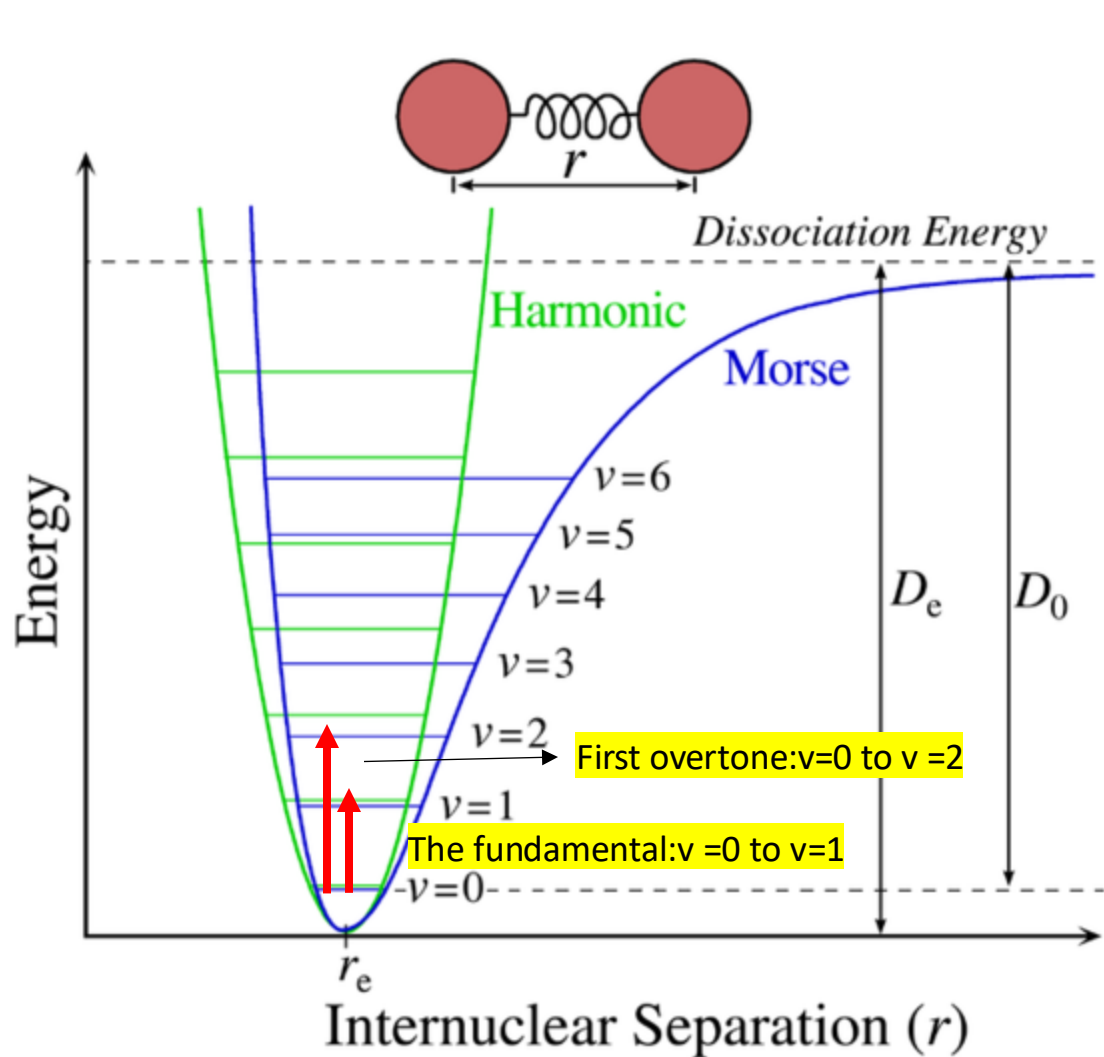


Figure 11C.4 The Morse potential energy curve reproduces the general shape of a molecular potential energy curve. The corresponding Schrödinger equation can be solved, and the values of the energies obtained. The number of bound levels is finite.



IVR: intramolecular vibrational redistribution

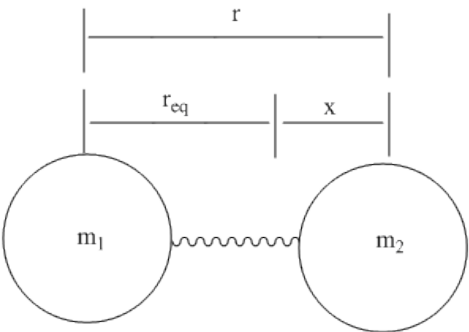
Fundamental, Overtone, Combination band, Hot band, and Isotope effect



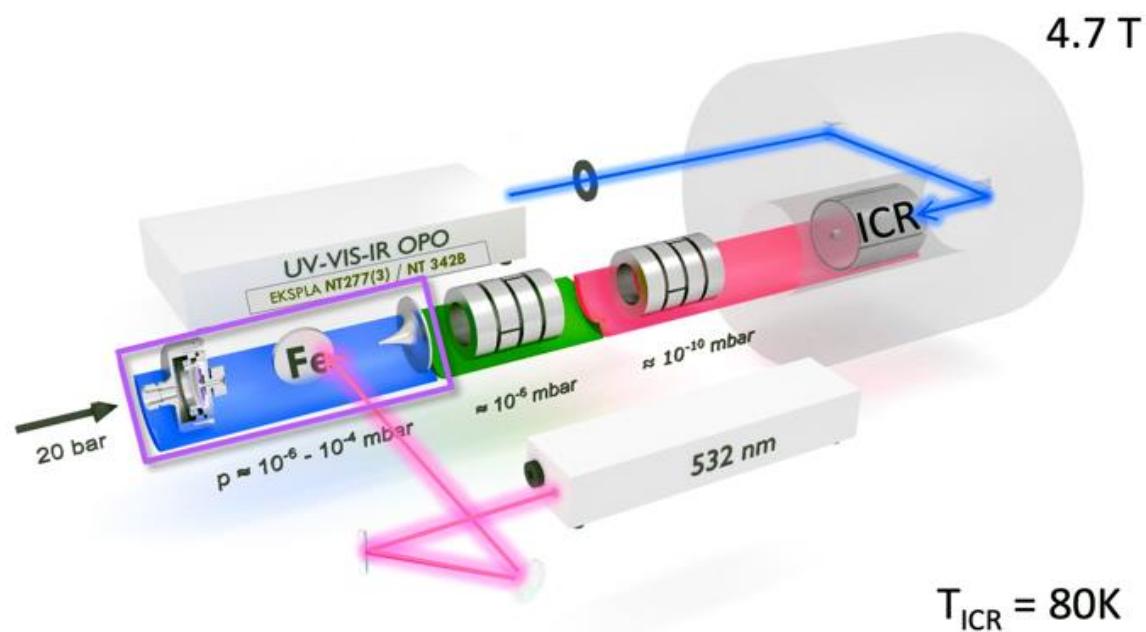
Vibrational energy levels

$$\nu_e = \frac{1}{2\pi} \sqrt{\frac{k}{\mu}}$$

K is the force constant
 μ is a reduced mass $\longrightarrow \mu = \frac{m_1 m_2}{m_1 + m_2}$



EXPERIMENTAL SETUP



Fourier-Transform Ion Cyclotron Resonance Mass Spectrometry

4.7T FT-ICR @ University of Innsbruck

EXPERIMENTAL SETUP - Vacuum

Vacuum classification

Low vacuum	Atmospheric pressure to 1 mbar
Medium vacuum	1 to 10^{-3} mbar
High vacuum (HV)	10^{-3} to 10^{-8} mbar
Ultrahigh vacuum (UHV)	10^{-8} to 10^{-12} mbar
Extreme high vacuum (XHV)	Less than 10^{-12} mbar

Particle density:

$$10^{-12} \text{ mbar} \sim 2.5 \cdot 10^4$$

1 bar = 100000 Pa

1 standard atmosphere

= 101325 Pa = 760Torr

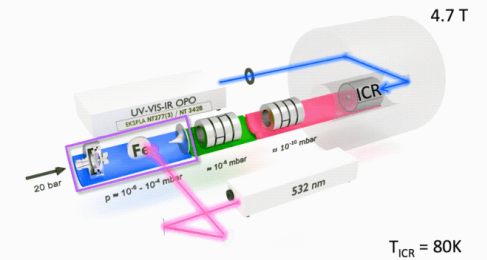
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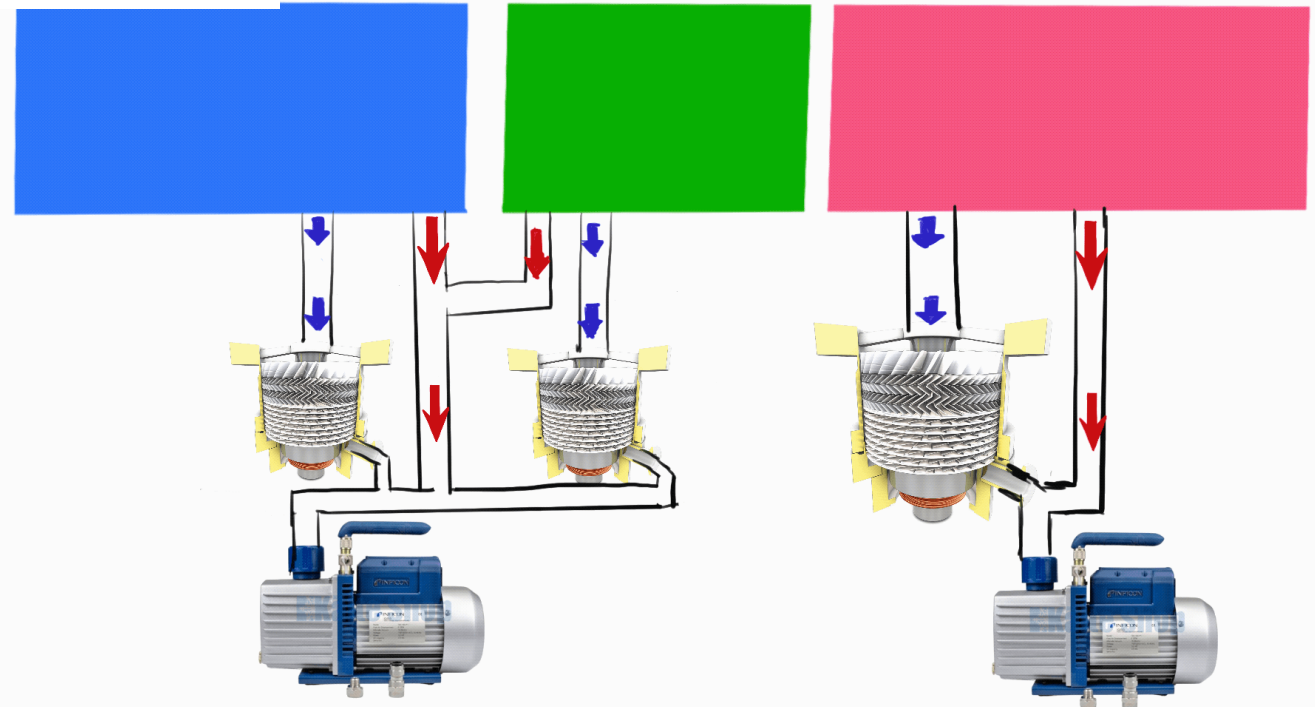
Particle density:

$$10^{-12} \text{ mbar} \sim 2.5 \cdot 10^4$$

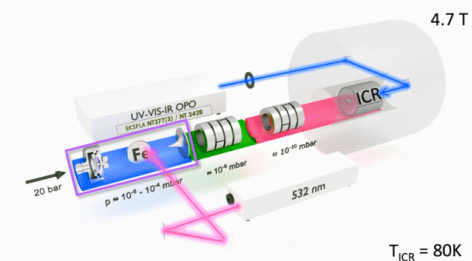


Fourier-Transform Ion Cyclotron Resonance Mass Spectrometry

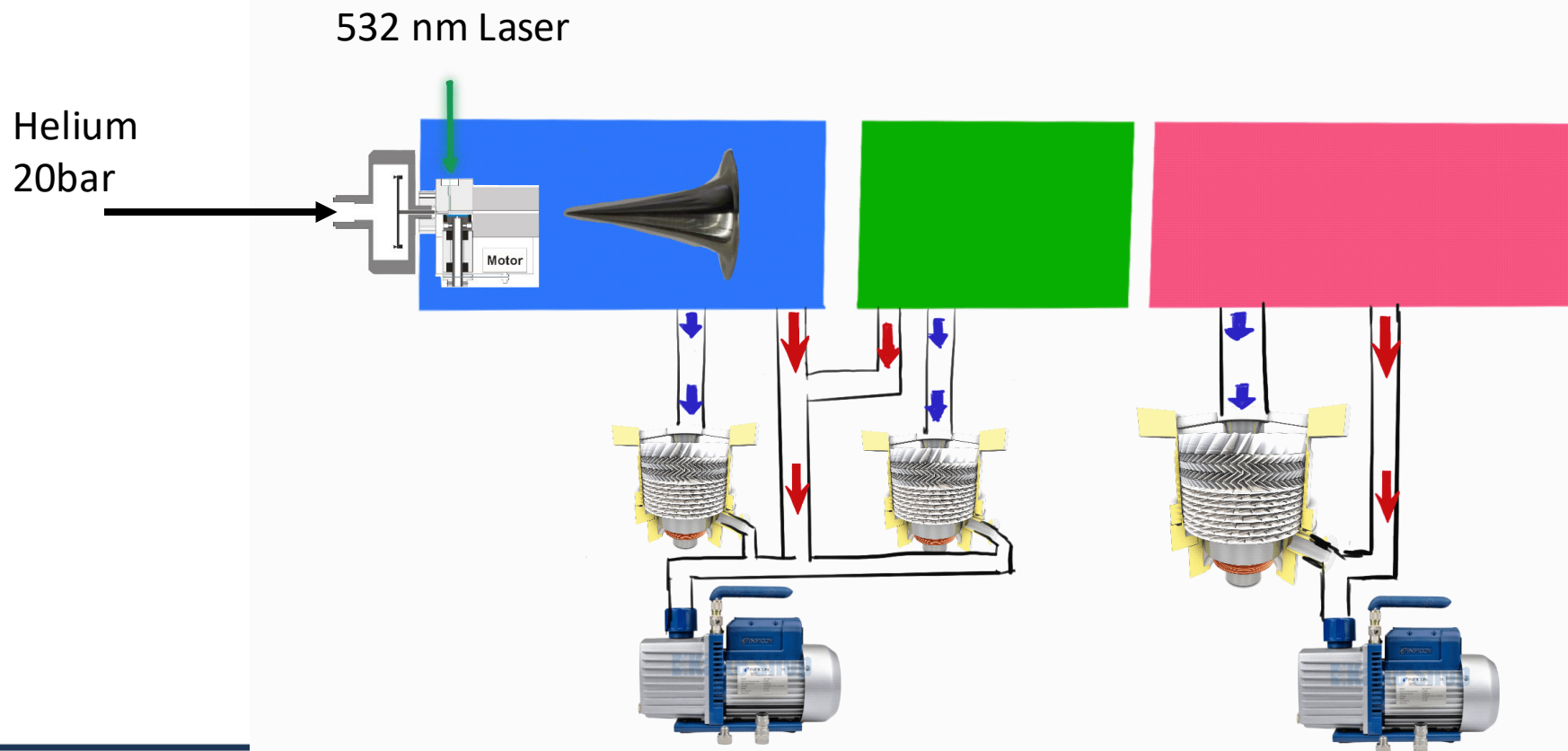
1 bar = 100000 Pa
1 standard atmosphere
= 101325 Pa = 760Torr



EXPERIMENTAL SETUP – Laser Vaporization

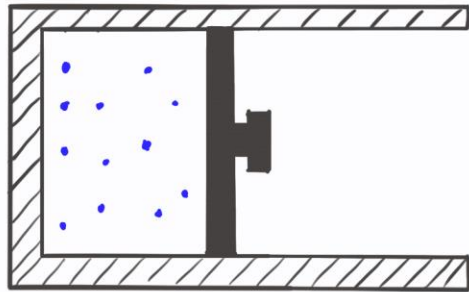
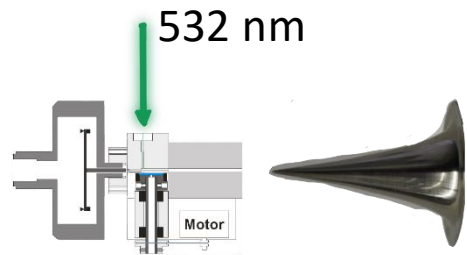


Fourier-Transform Ion Cyclotron Resonance Mass Spectrometry

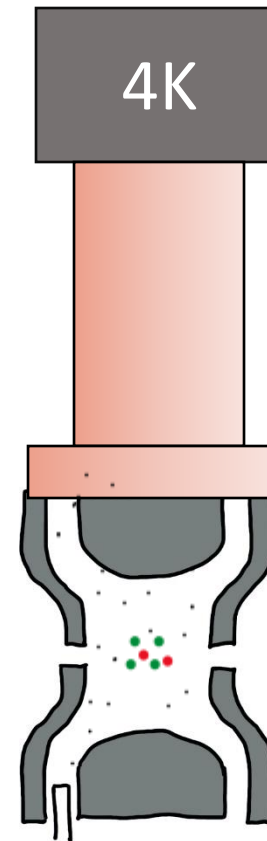


EXPERIMENTAL SETUP - Cooling

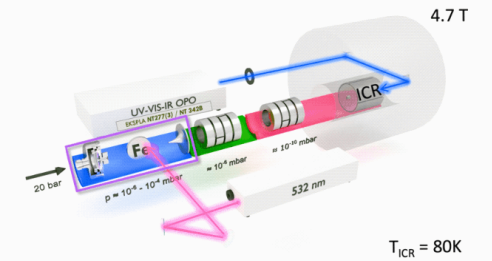
Supersonic expansion



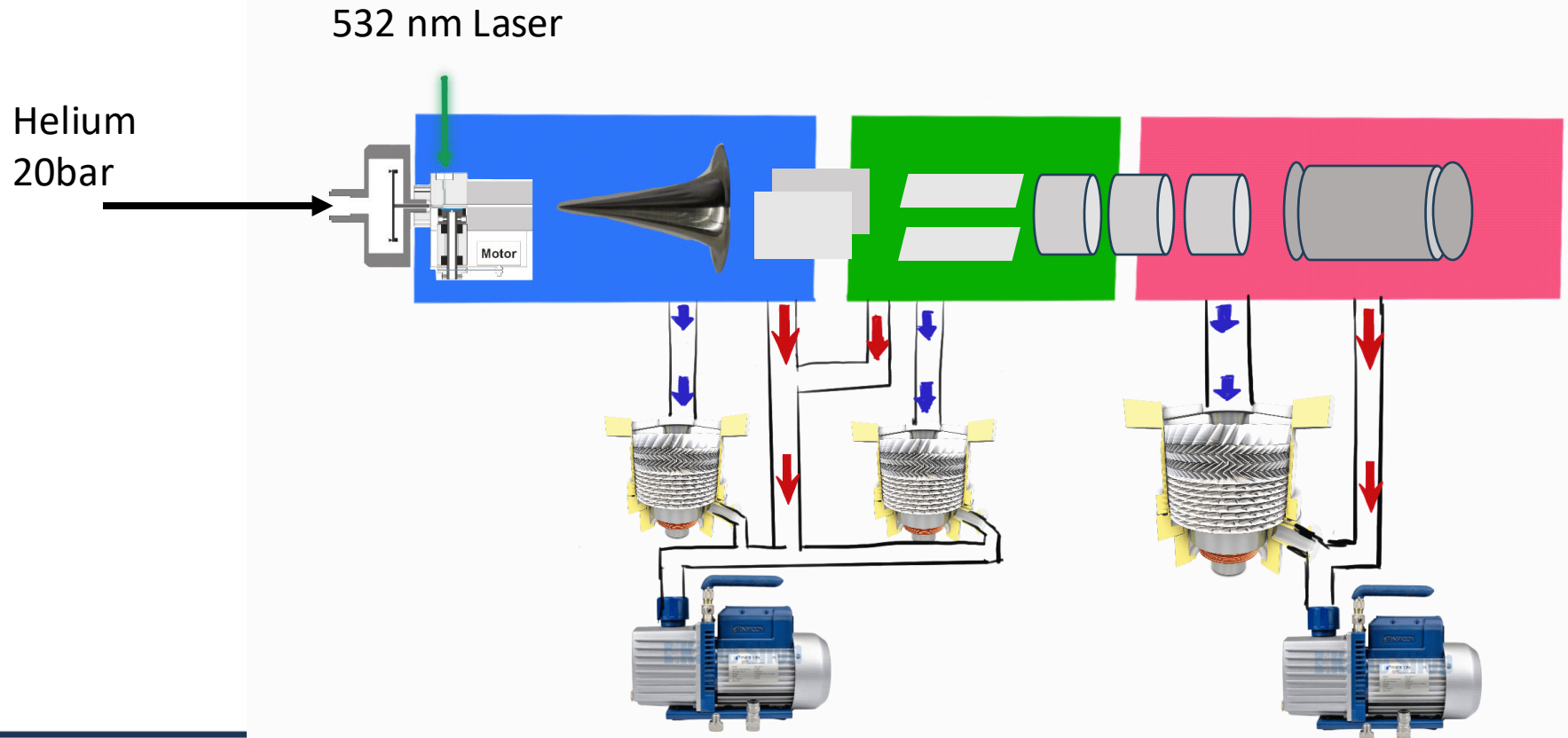
Cryogenic cooling



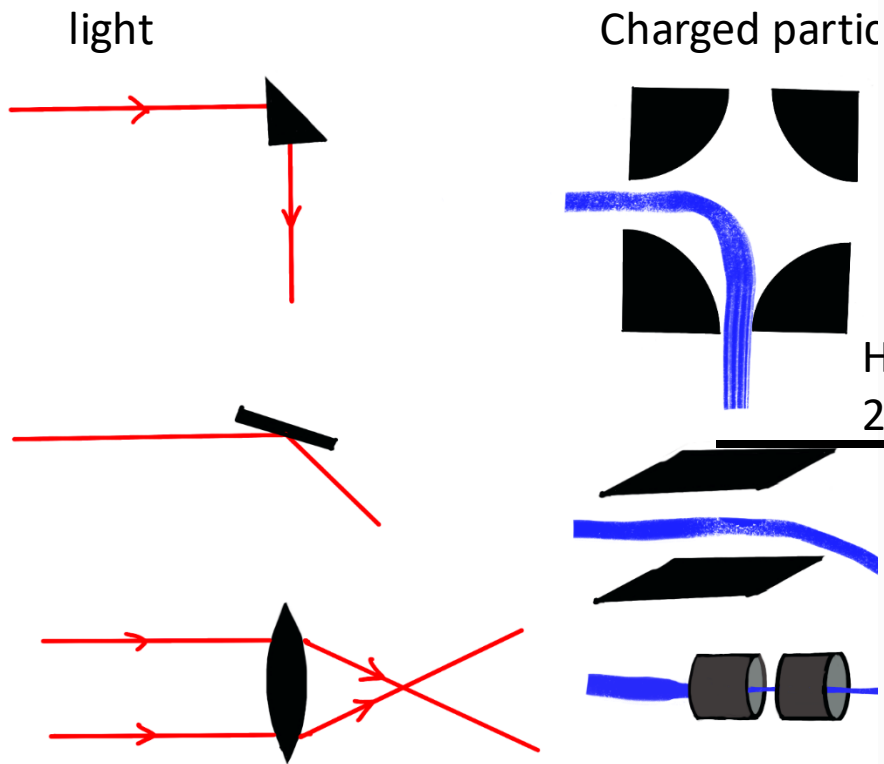
EXPERIMENTAL SETUP– Ion optics



Fourier-Transform Ion Cyclotron Resonance Mass Spectrometry

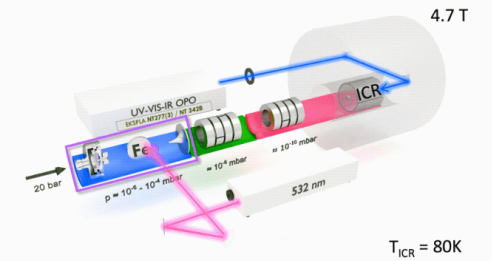
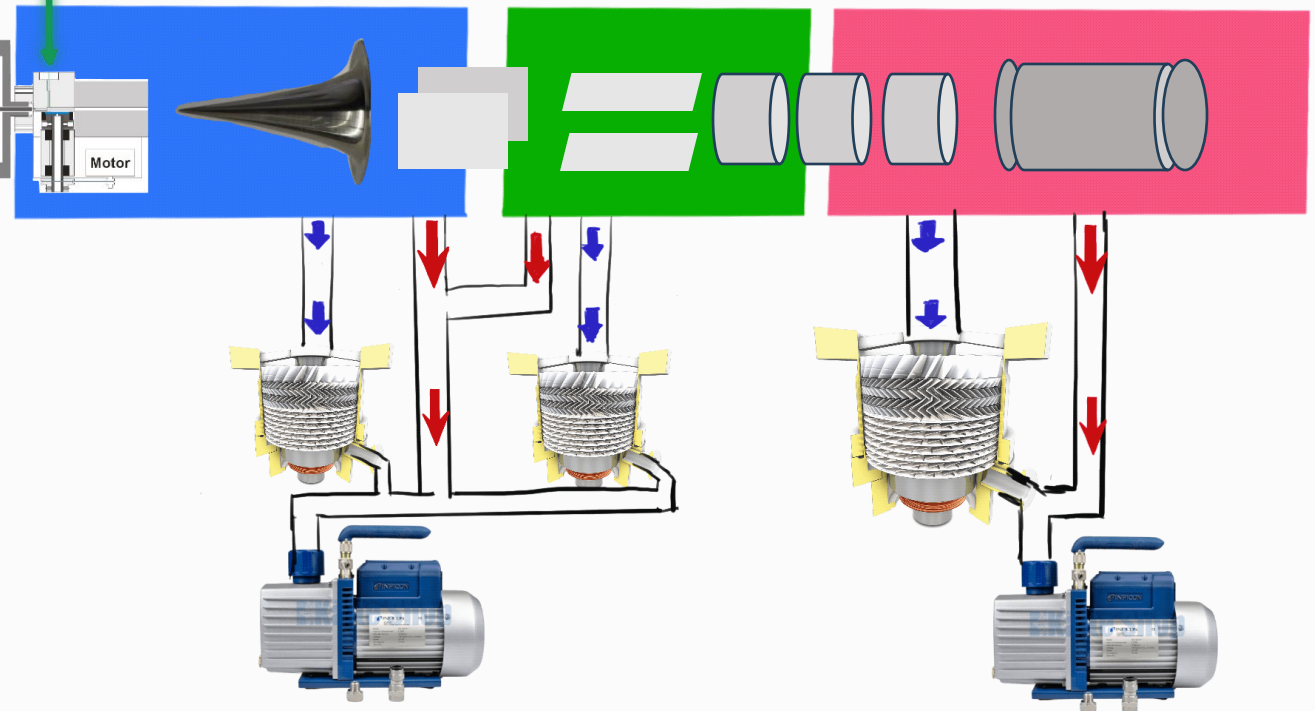


EXPERIMENTAL



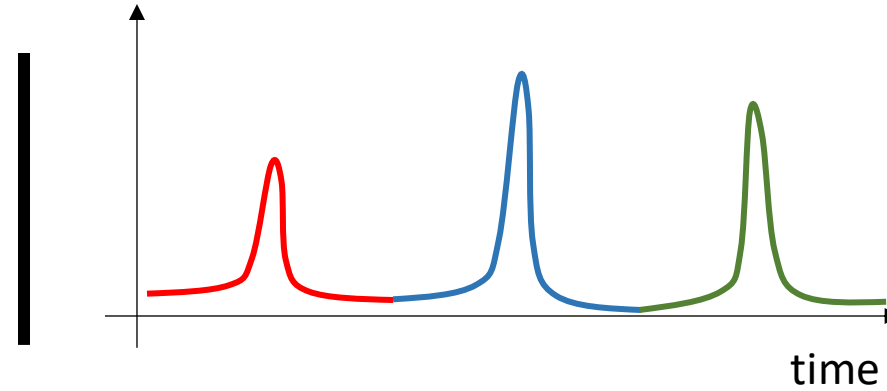
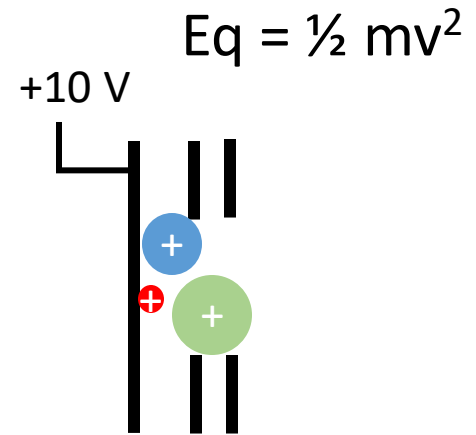
532 nm Laser

Helium
20bar



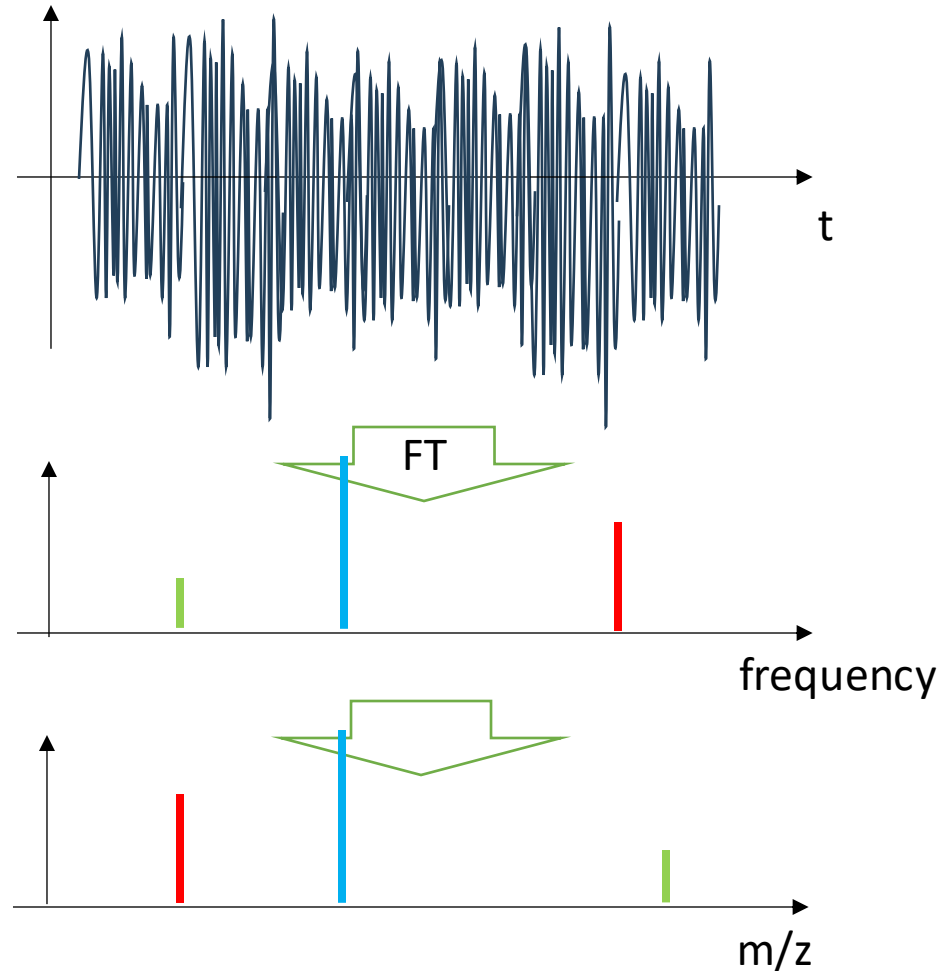
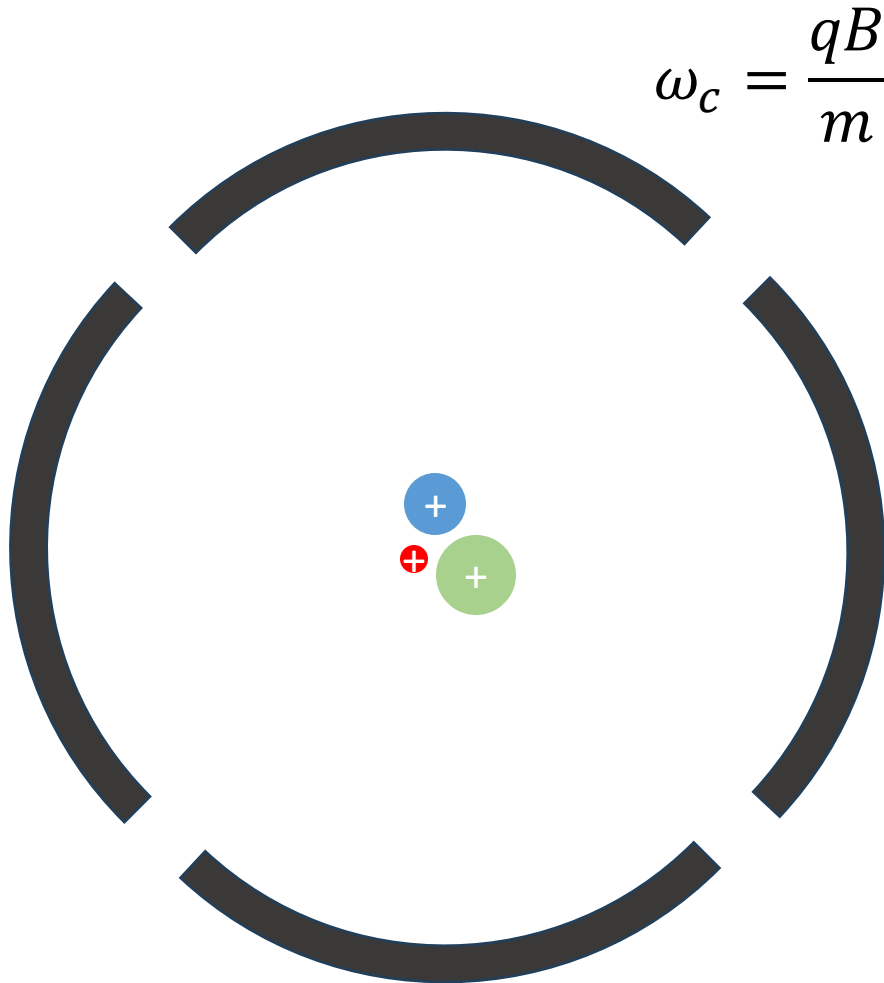
Fourier-Transform Ion Cyclotron Resonance Mass Spectrometry

EXPERIMENTAL SETUP - Detection

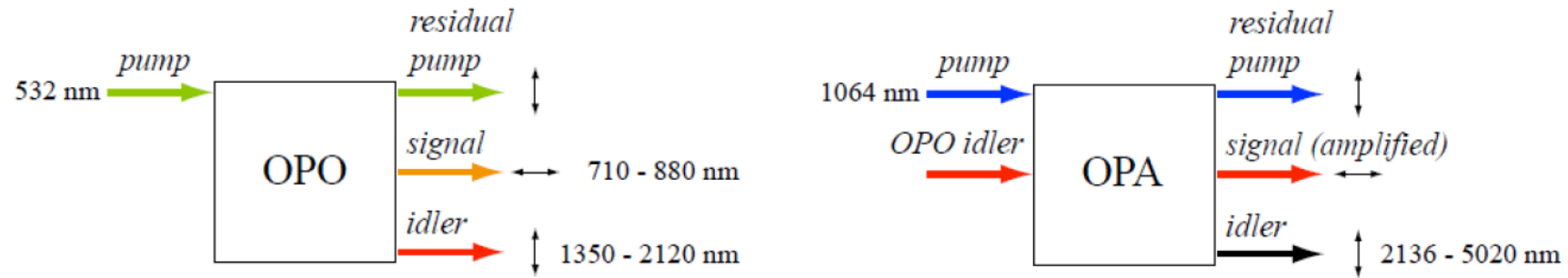


Wiley McLaren Time of Flight

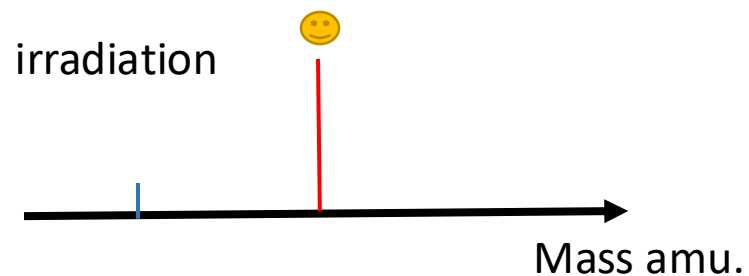
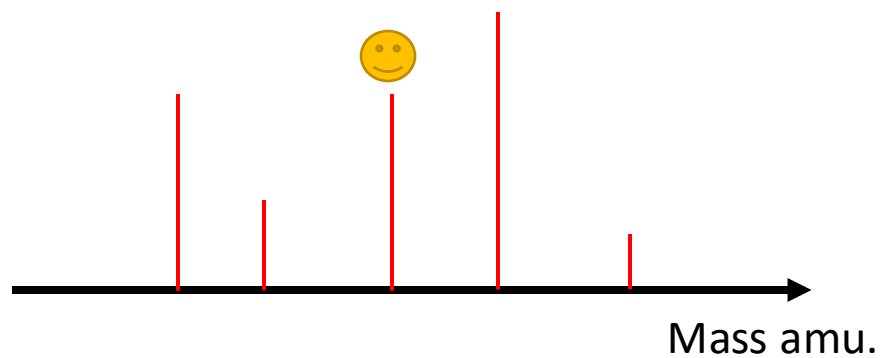
EXPERIMENTAL SETUP - Detection



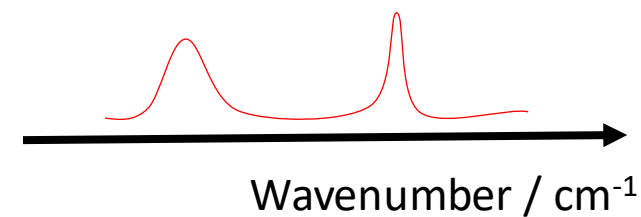
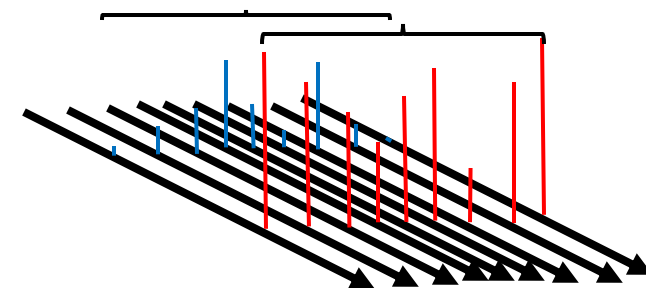
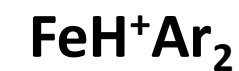
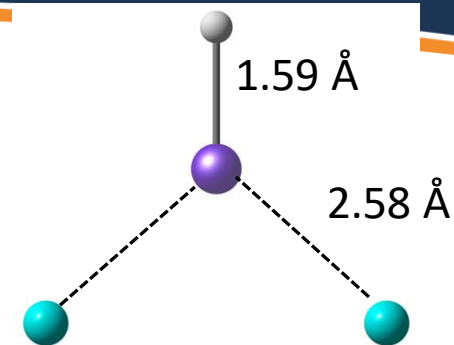
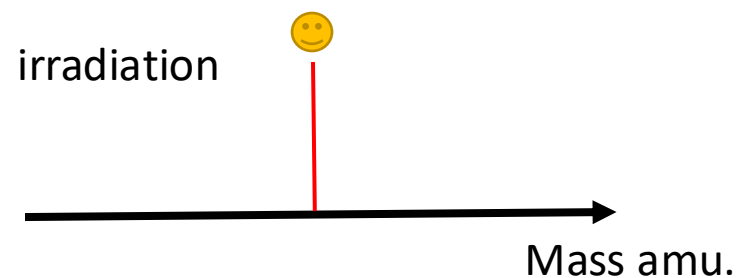
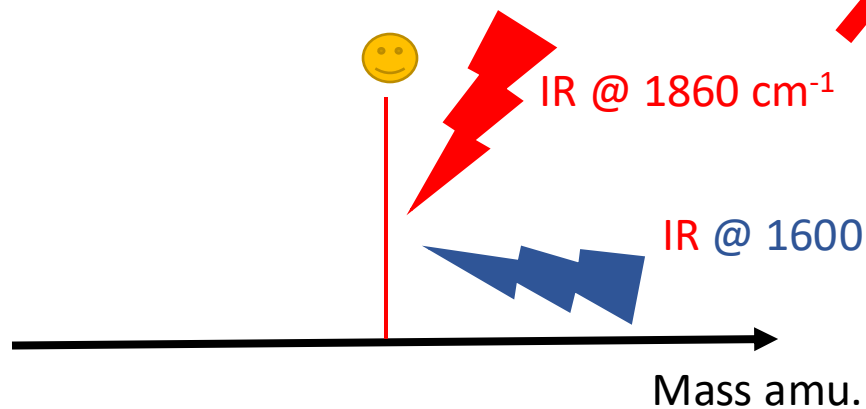
EXPERIMENTAL SETUP – OPO



EXPERIMENTAL SETUP

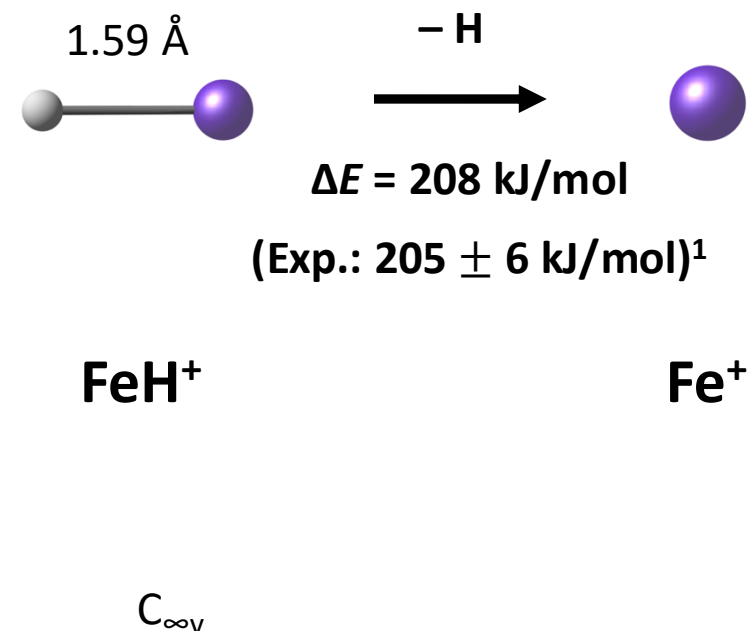


isolation



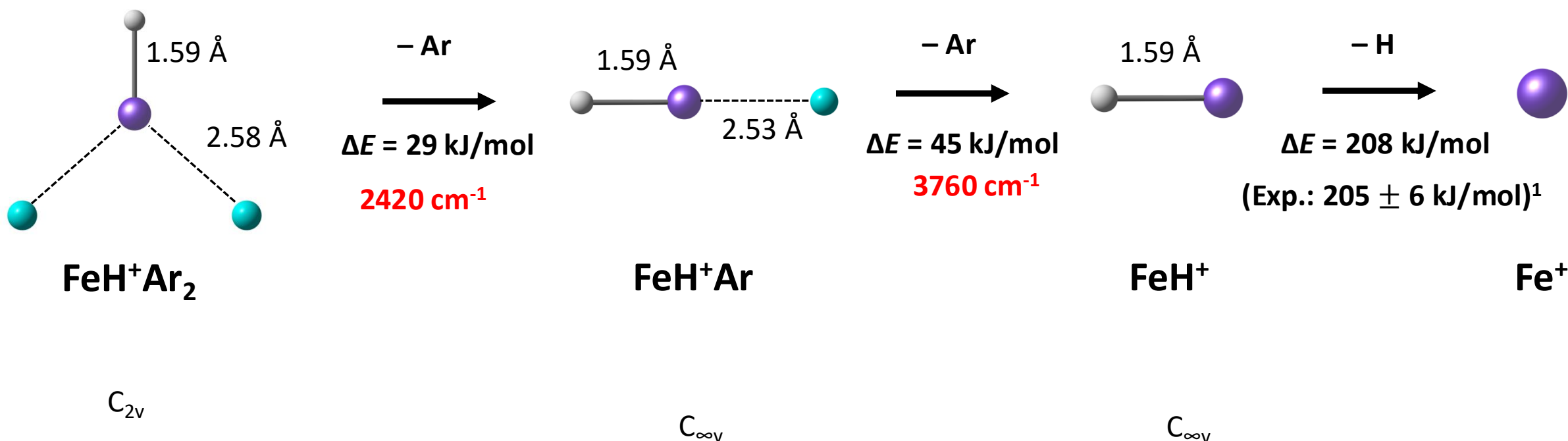
RESULTS

FeH⁺: Structure and Tagging



CCSD/aug-cc-pVTZ

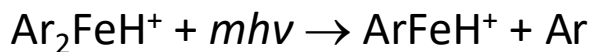
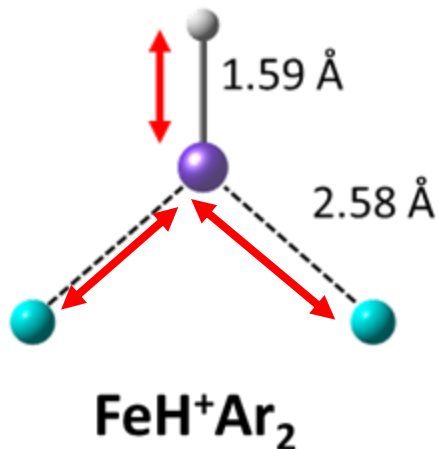
FeH⁺: Structure and Tagging



CCSD/aug-cc-pVTZ

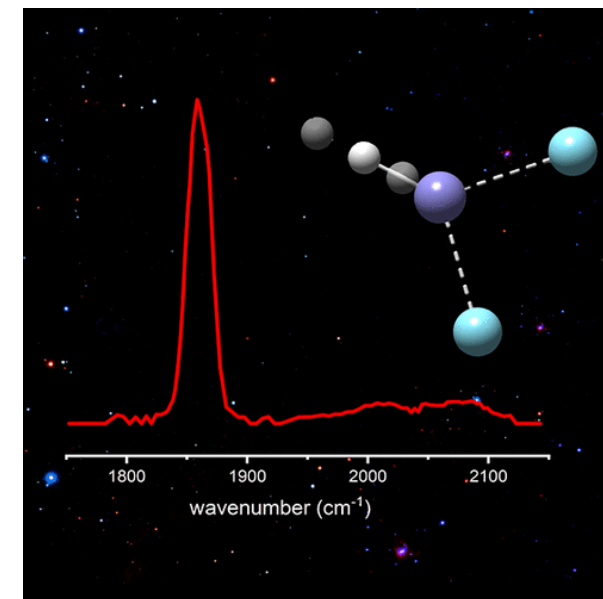
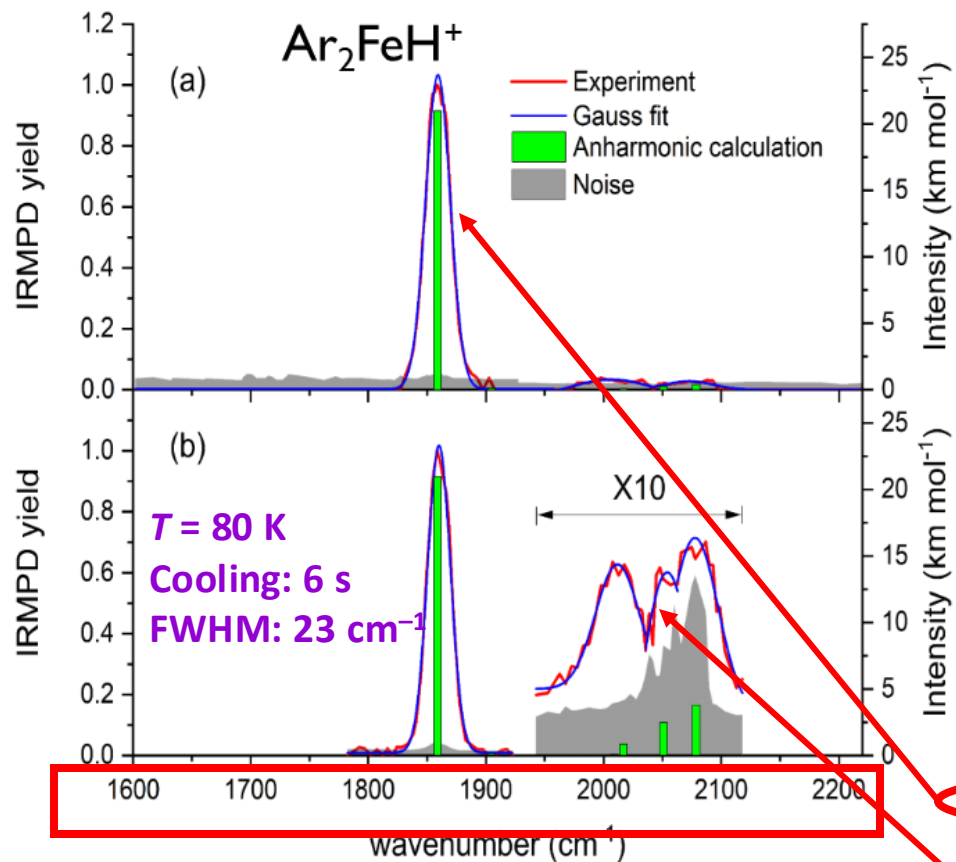
Ar₂FeH⁺

Symmetry Breaking through Tagging



$$\Delta E = 29 \text{ kJ/mol}$$

$$\sim 2420 \text{ cm}^{-1}$$

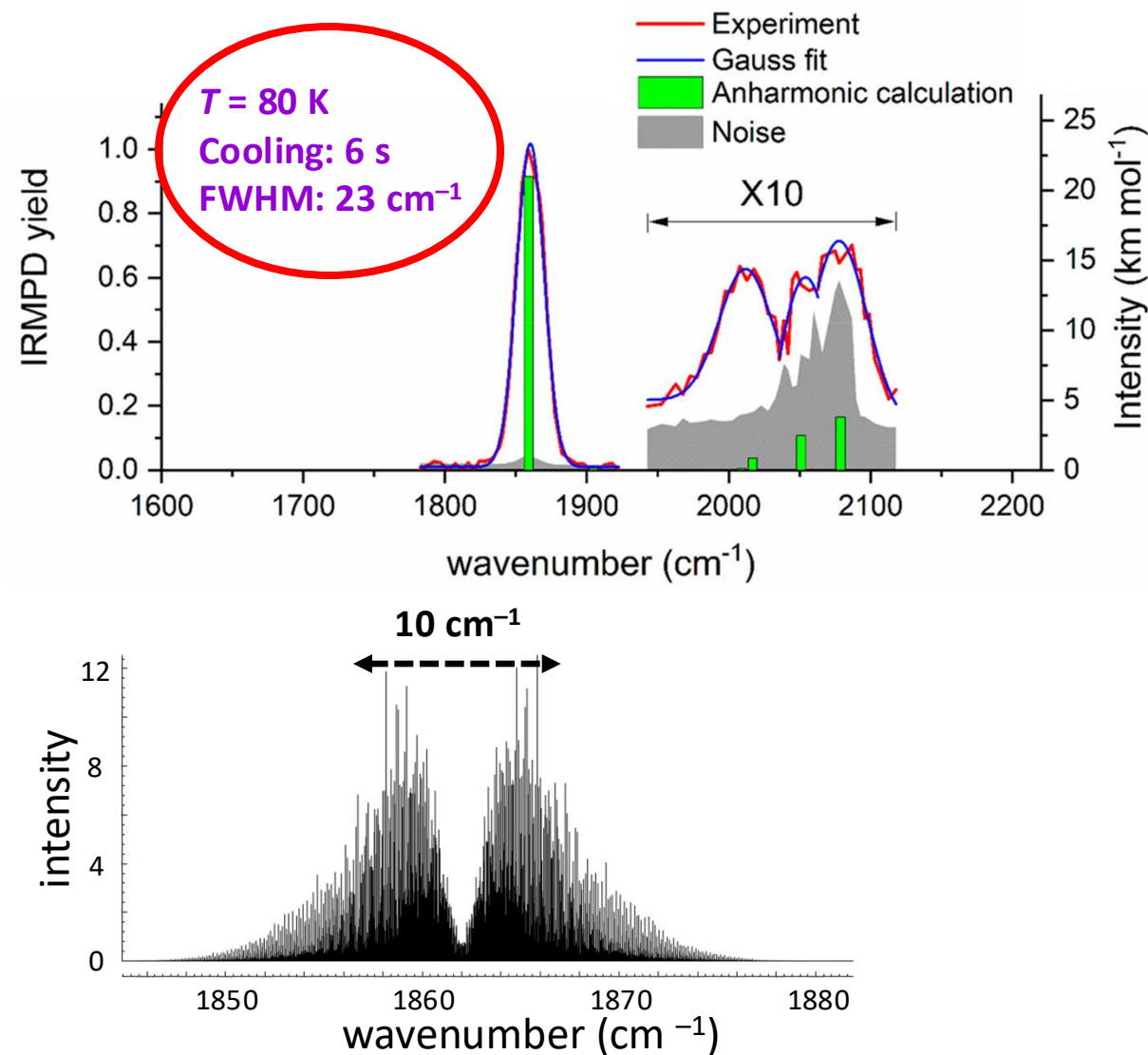
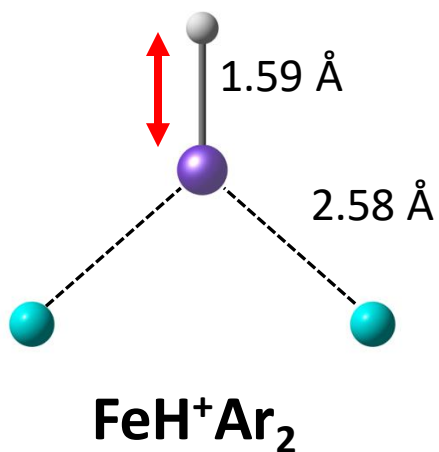


J. Phys. Chem. Lett. **2022**, 13, 25, 5867–5872

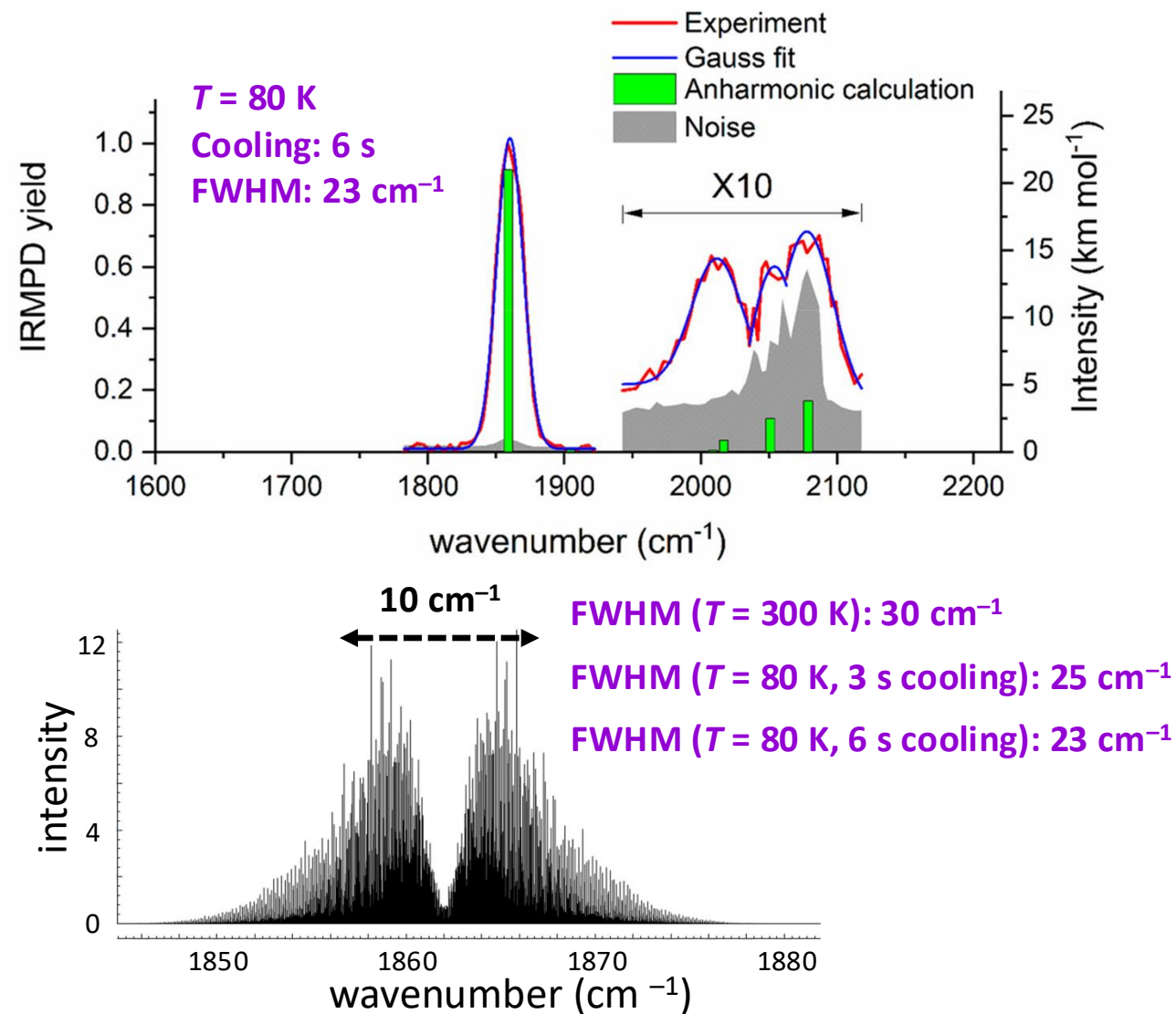
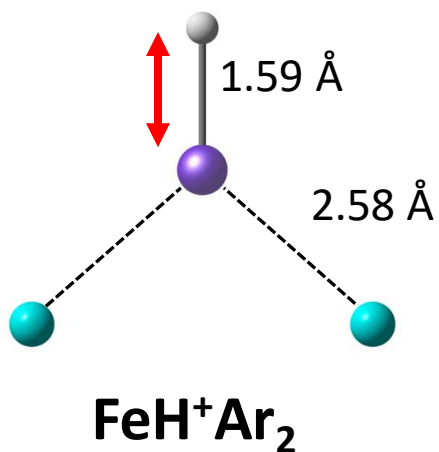
Expt.	mode	theory	Ar ₂ FeH ⁺	ArFeH ⁺	FeH ⁺
1860	$\tilde{\nu}_1$	1862 (21.07)	1878 (9.94)	1793 (1.89)	
2078	$\tilde{\nu}_1 + \tilde{\nu}_2$	2090 (0.38)			
2054	$\tilde{\nu}_1 + \tilde{\nu}_3$	2061 (0.25)			
2012	$\tilde{\nu}_1 + \tilde{\nu}_4$	2014 (0.09)			

Anharmonic frequency analysis B3LYP-D3/aug-cc-pVTZ

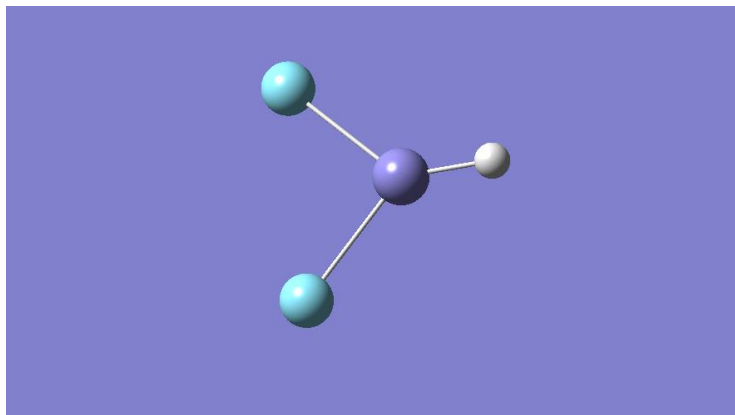
FeH⁺Ar₂: IR Spectrum



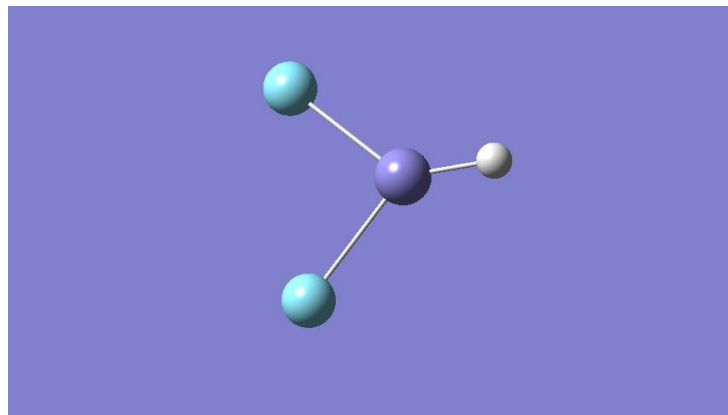
FeH⁺Ar₂: IR Spectrum



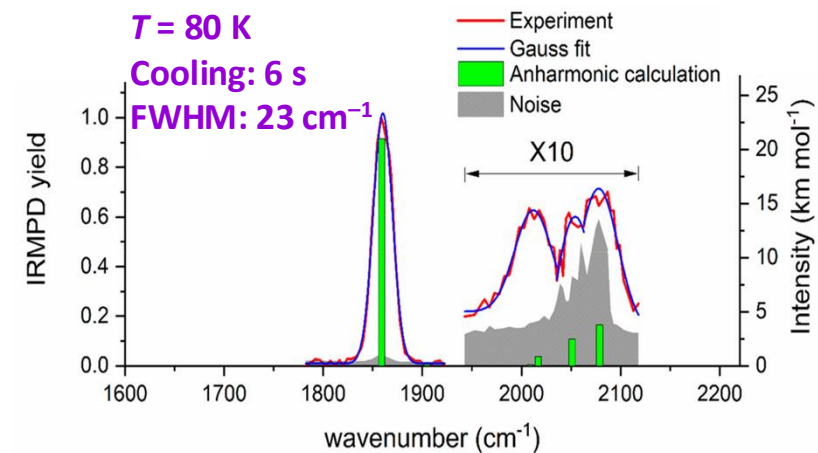
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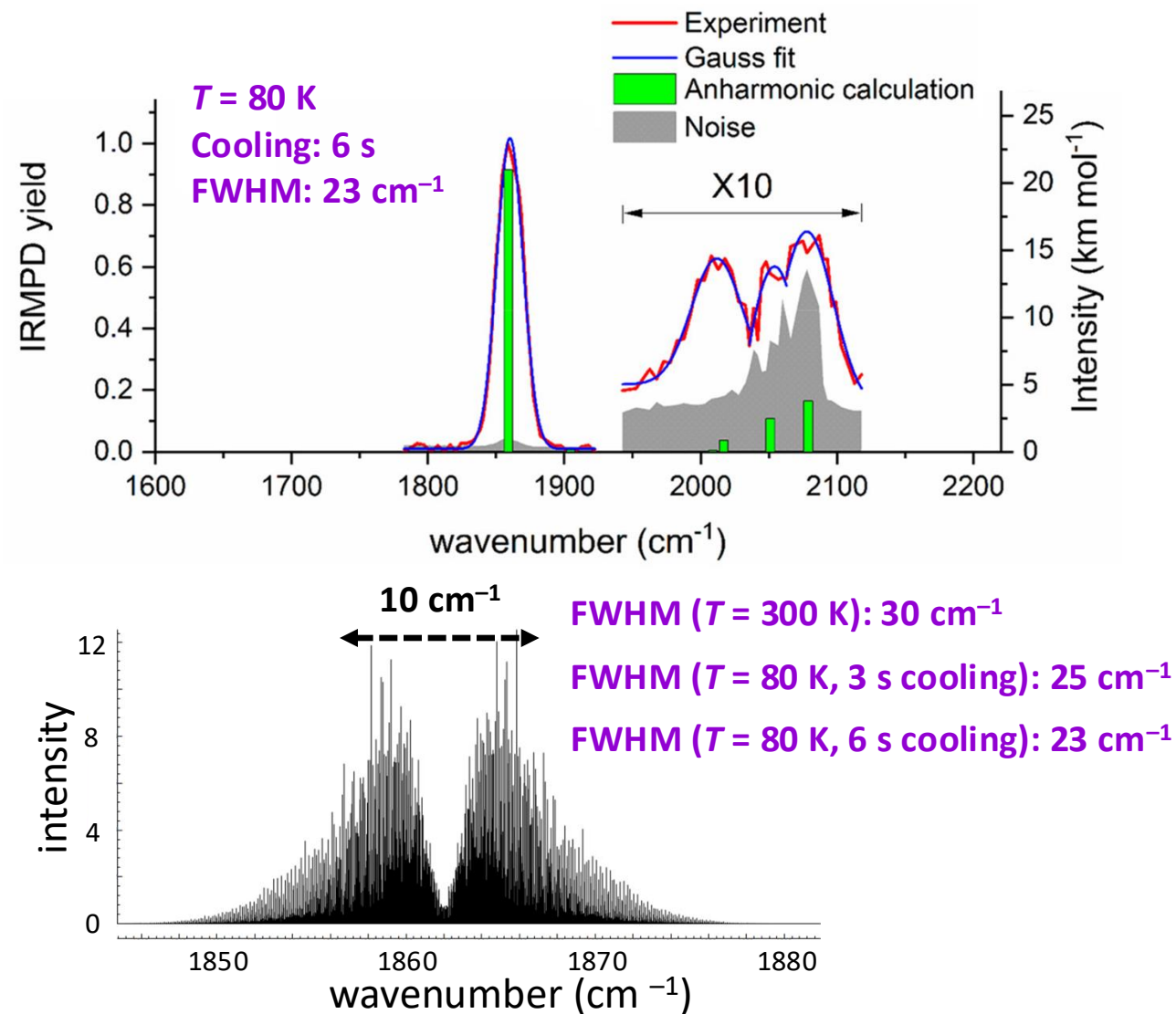
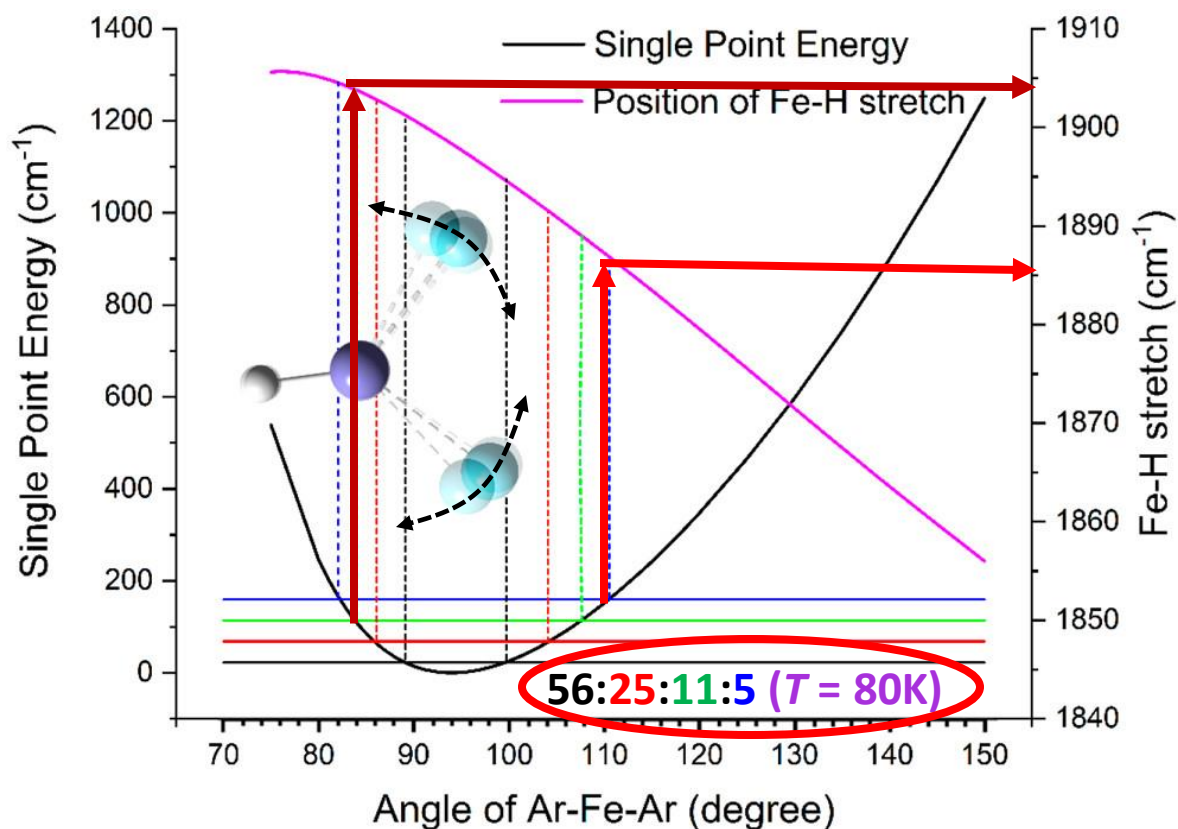
$$\nu_{\text{Ar-Fe-Ar}} = 46 \text{ cm}^{-1}$$



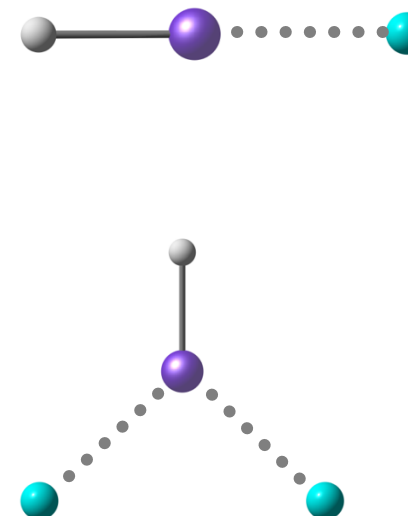
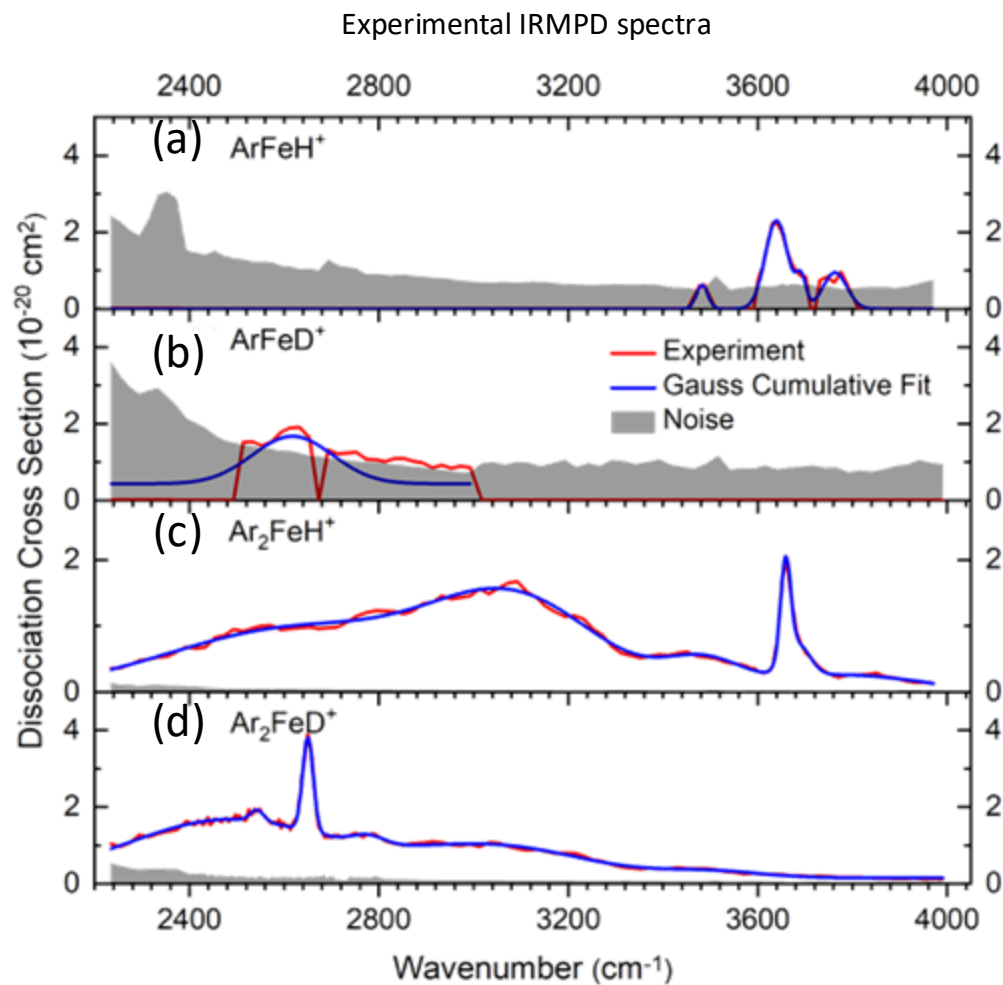
$$\nu_{\text{Fe-H}} = 1906 \text{ cm}^{-1}$$



FeH⁺Ar₂: IR Spectrum



$\text{Ar}_{1,2}\text{FeH(D)}^+$ and overtone study



Besides deuteration, argon tagging also leads to a shift of the spectral band positions!

$\text{Ar}_{1,2}\text{FeH(D)}^+$ and overtone study



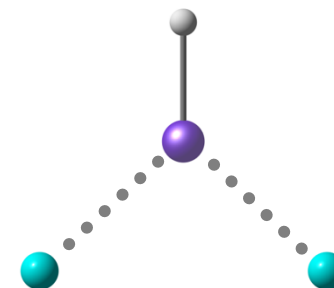
$\text{Fe} (K_h)$



$\text{FeH}^+ (C_{\infty v})$

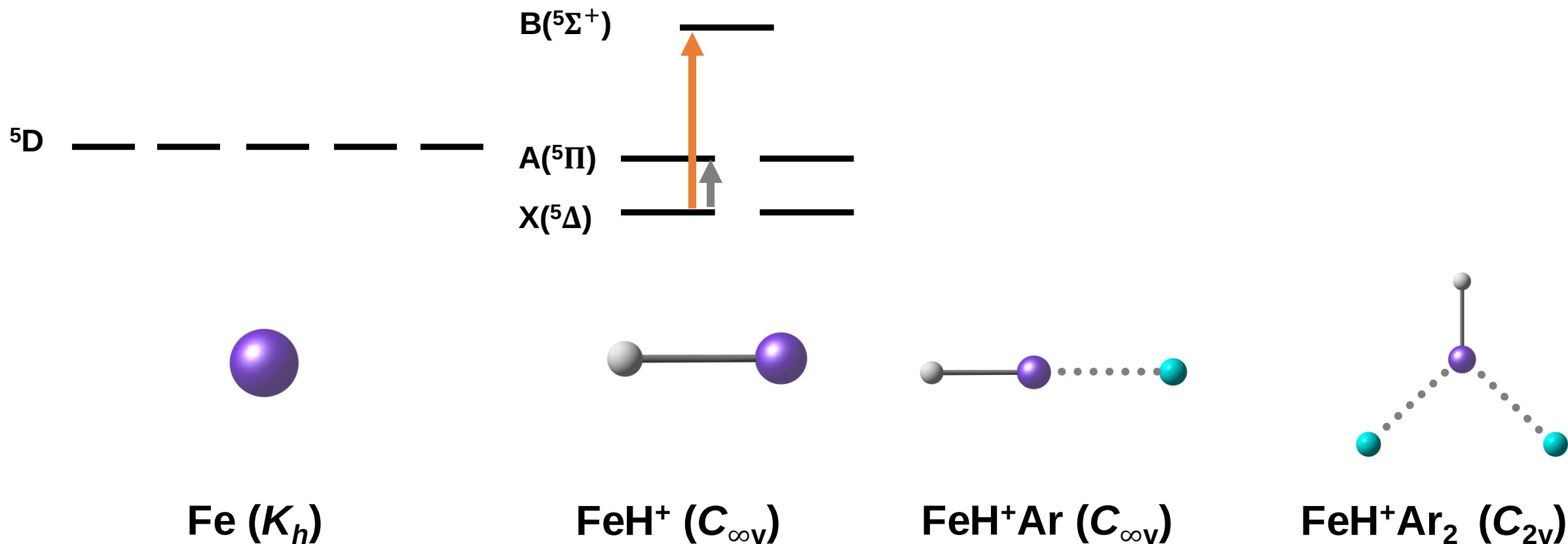


$\text{FeH}^+\text{Ar} (C_{\infty v})$

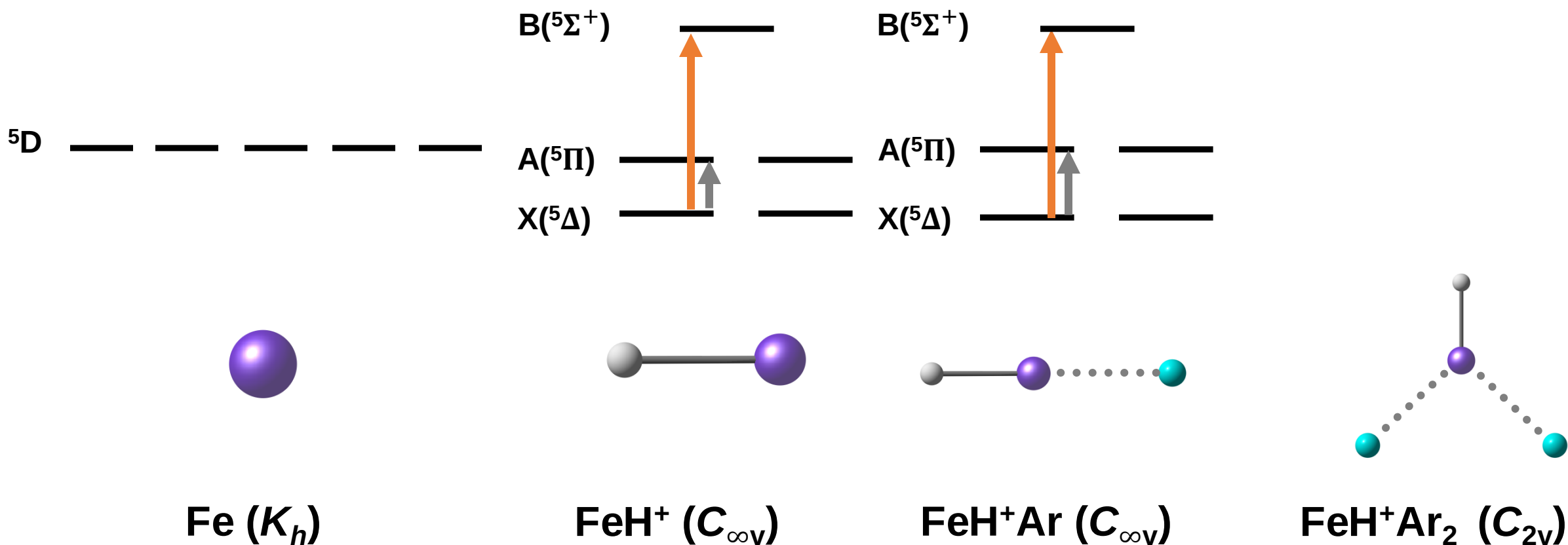


$\text{FeH}^+\text{Ar}_2 (C_{2v})$

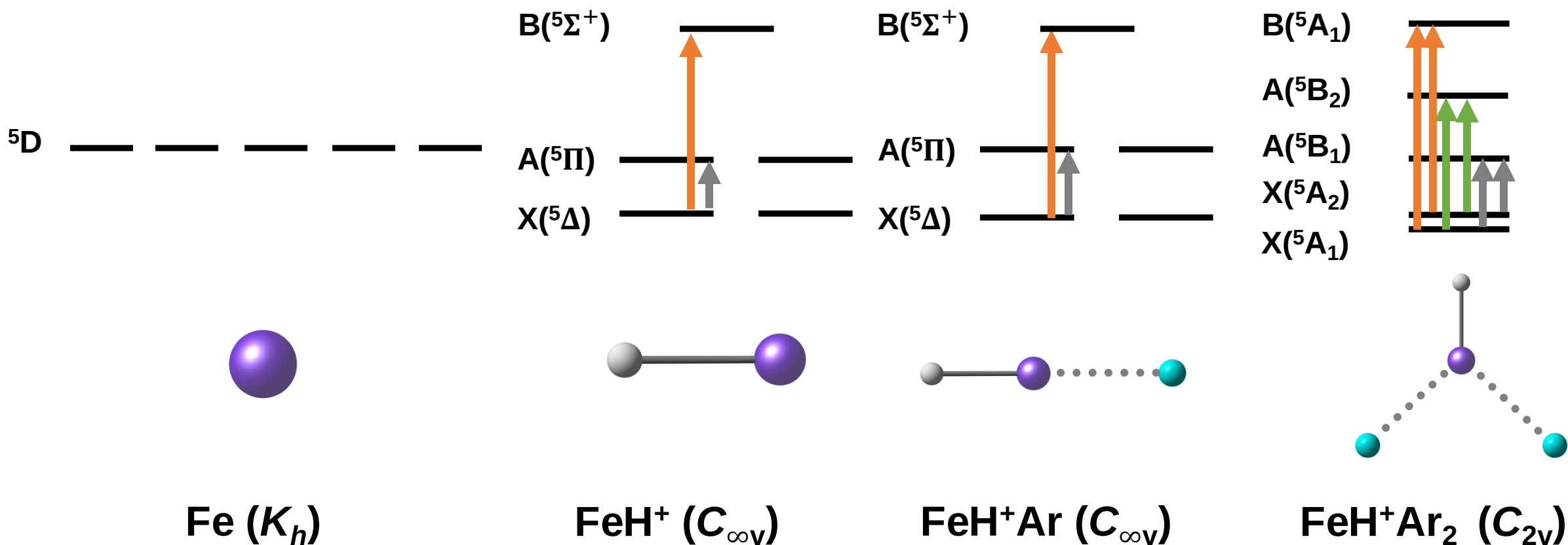
Ar_{1,2}FeH(D)⁺ and overtone study



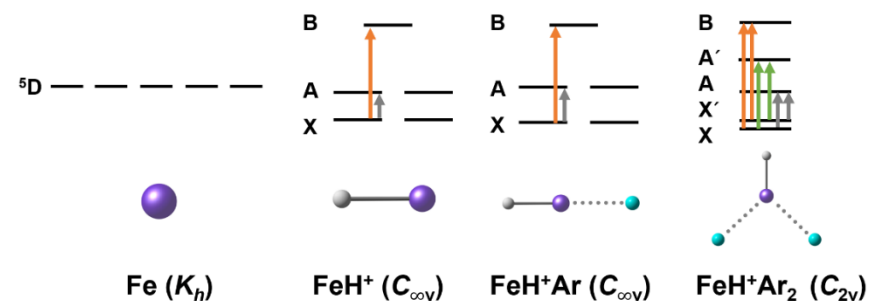
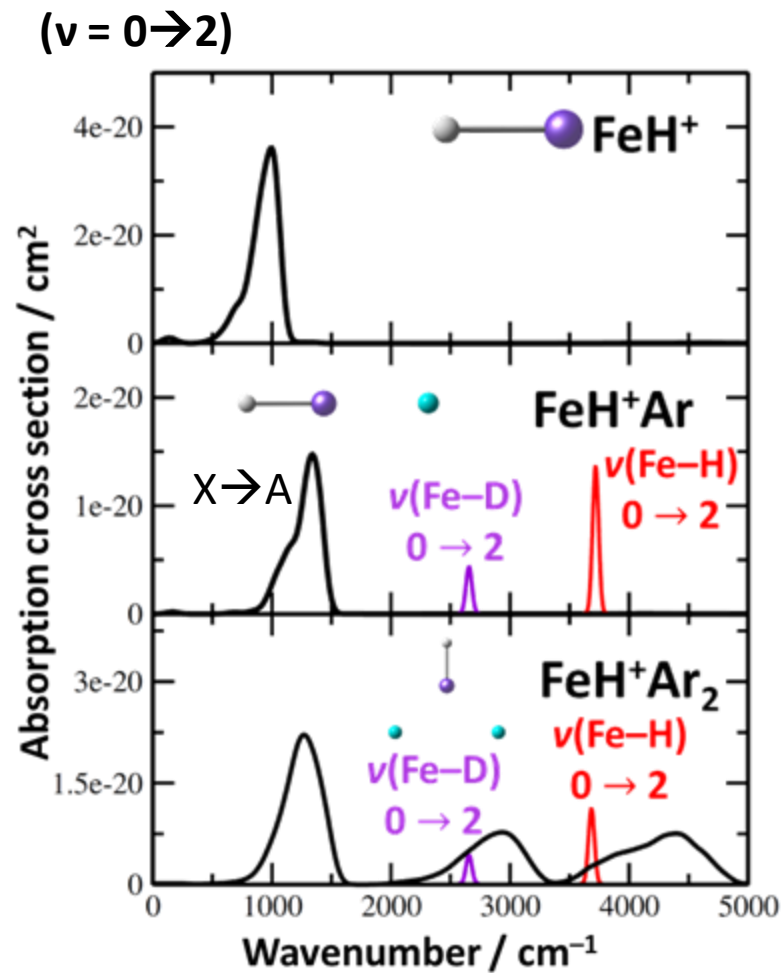
Ar_{1,2}FeH(D)⁺ and overtone study



Ar_{1,2}FeH(D)⁺ and overtone study

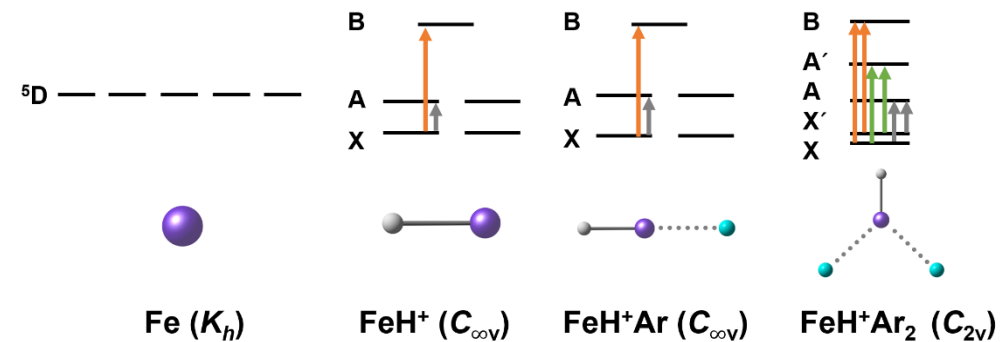
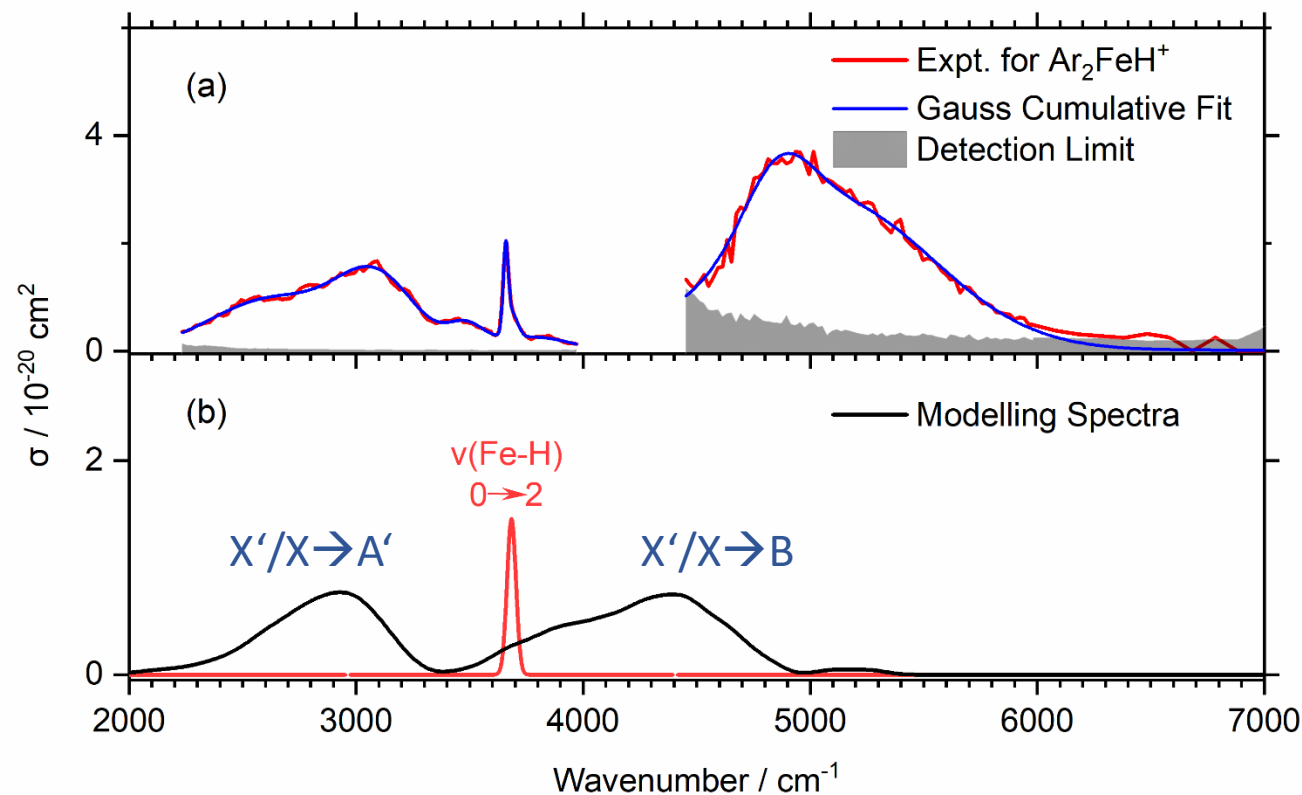


Ar_{1,2}FeH(D)⁺ and overtone study



Splitting of the ⁵D term in iron upon addition of H⁺ and complexation with Ar Symmetrically allowed

$\text{Ar}_{1,2}\text{FeH}(\text{D})^+$ and overtone study



FeH⁺: X-ray Spectrum

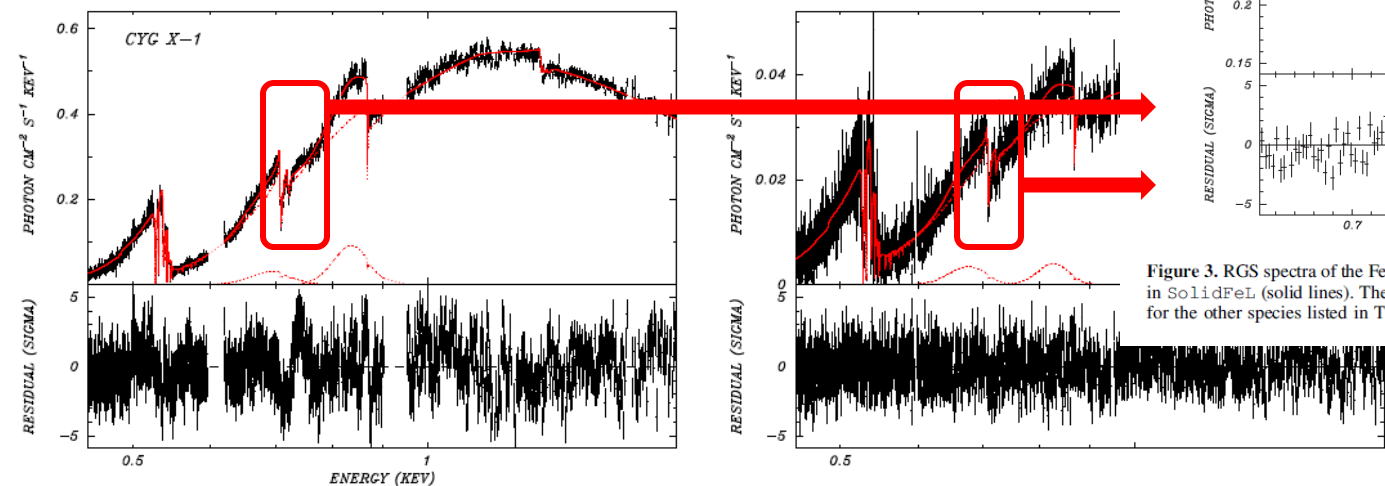


Figure 2. The RGS spectra (crosses) for Cygnus X-1 (left) and GX 339-4 (right) using the paramete uncertainty, and the horizontal the energy bin widths. In each upper panel, the best-fit continuum mo model components. The lower panels show the residuals from the fitted model in units of σ . The ga RGS CCD detectors covering those dispersed wavelengths.

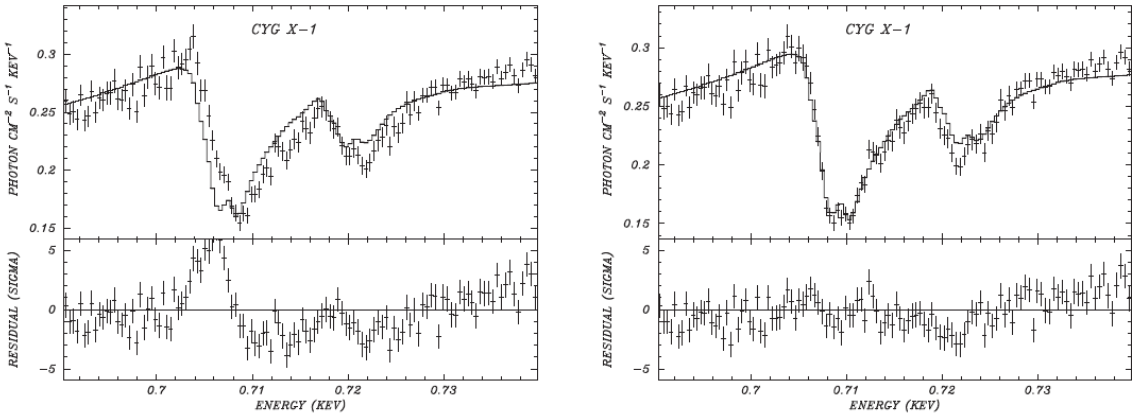


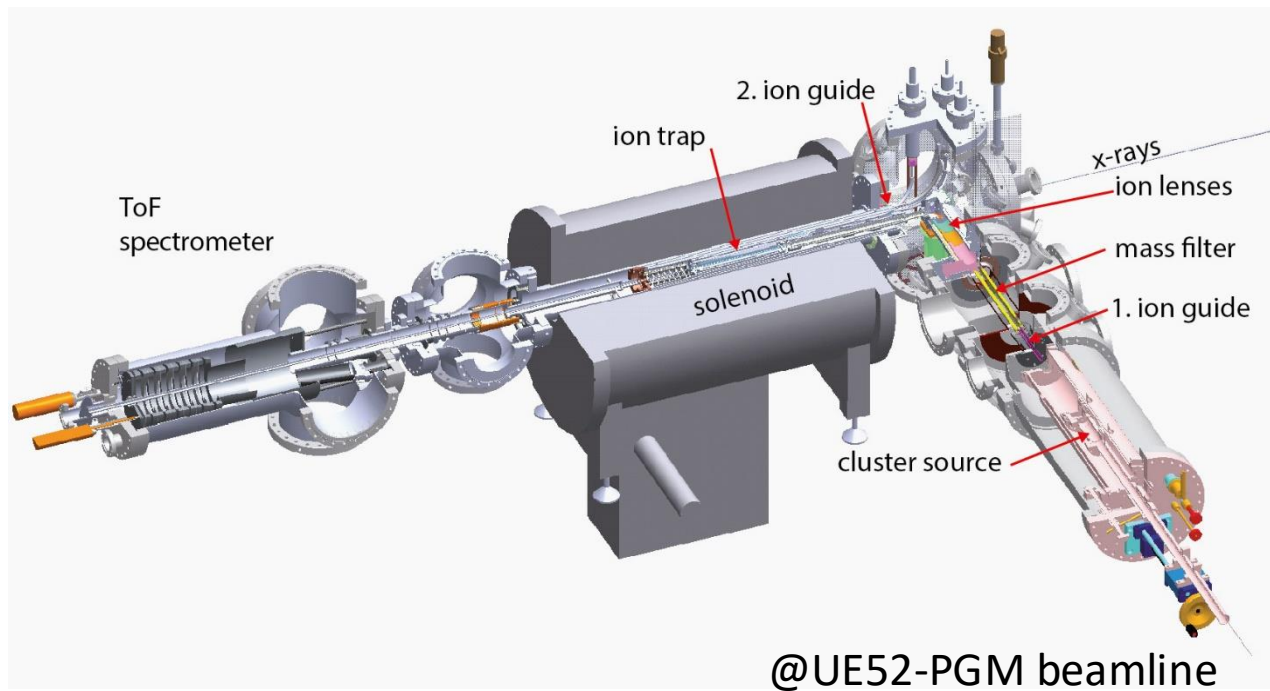
Figure 3. RGS spectra of the Fe feature in Cygnus X-1 fitted in the 0.69–0.74 keV energy range with the (left) unshifted and (right) shifted (+1.88 eV) fayalite model in SolidFeL (solid lines). These panels highlight the evidence for an energy offset error in the published experimental cross section data. Similar results are found for the other species listed in Table 1.

Table 6
Narrowband Spectral Fits to the Fe *L*-shell Features in the Two ISM Sight Lines Probed

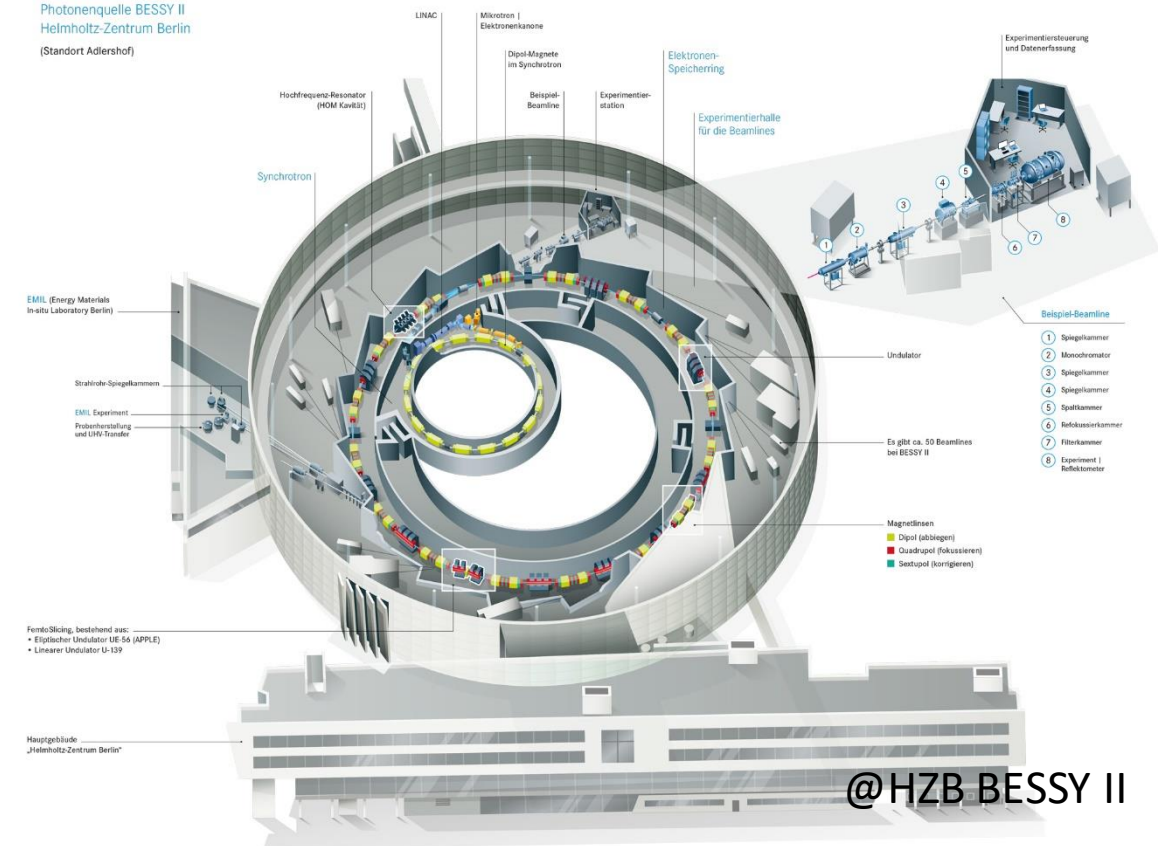
SolidFeL Compound <i>i</i>	Formula	Cygnus X-1			GX 339-4		
		ΔE_{shift} (eV)	$M_{\text{d},i}$ ($10^{-4} \text{ g cm}^{-2}$)	C_{stat} (dof = 119)	ΔE_{shift} (eV)	$M_{\text{d},i}$ ($10^{-4} \text{ g cm}^{-2}$)	C_{stat} (dof = 119)
Lepidocrocite	$\gamma\text{-FeOOH}$	1.14 ± 0.26	0.301 ± 0.022	201.1	1.04 ± 0.61	0.349 ± 0.047	145.1
Hematite	$\alpha\text{-Fe}_2\text{O}_3$	1.21 ± 0.26	0.320 ± 0.022	211.0	1.10 ± 0.61	0.376 ± 0.050	145.2
Fayalite	Fe_2SiO_4	1.88 ± 0.27	0.277 ± 0.019	216.3	1.80 ± 0.63	0.318 ± 0.043	143.9
Ferrous Sulfate	FeSO_4	2.32 ± 0.26	0.394 ± 0.032	467.7	2.18 ± 0.59	0.533 ± 0.082	173.4
Metallic Iron	Fe	2.51 ± 0.31	0.252 ± 0.009	357.6	2.66 ± 0.71	0.290 ± 0.026	155.1

Note. The calibrated energy shift ΔE_{shift} is applied in the laboratory frame of the cross sections for each compound (see text). The mass column is from the fits to the Fe features in the 0.69–0.74 keV range using the SolidFeL model with the fitted 0.45–1.8 keV continuum model held fixed. Uncertainties are quoted at a 90% confidence level for one interesting parameter. Degrees of freedom (dof).

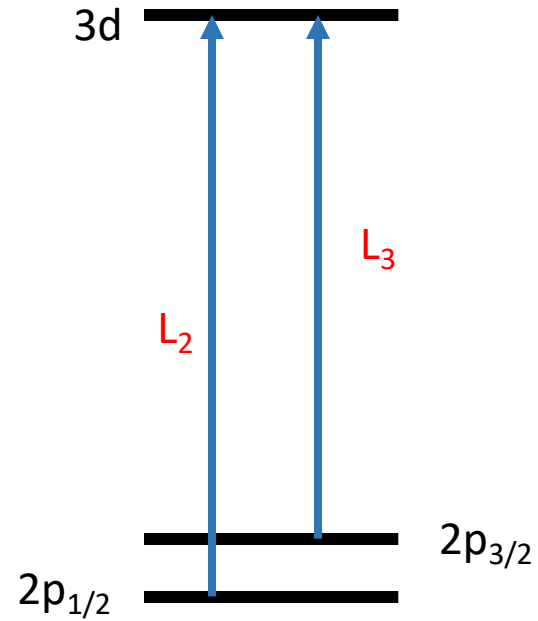
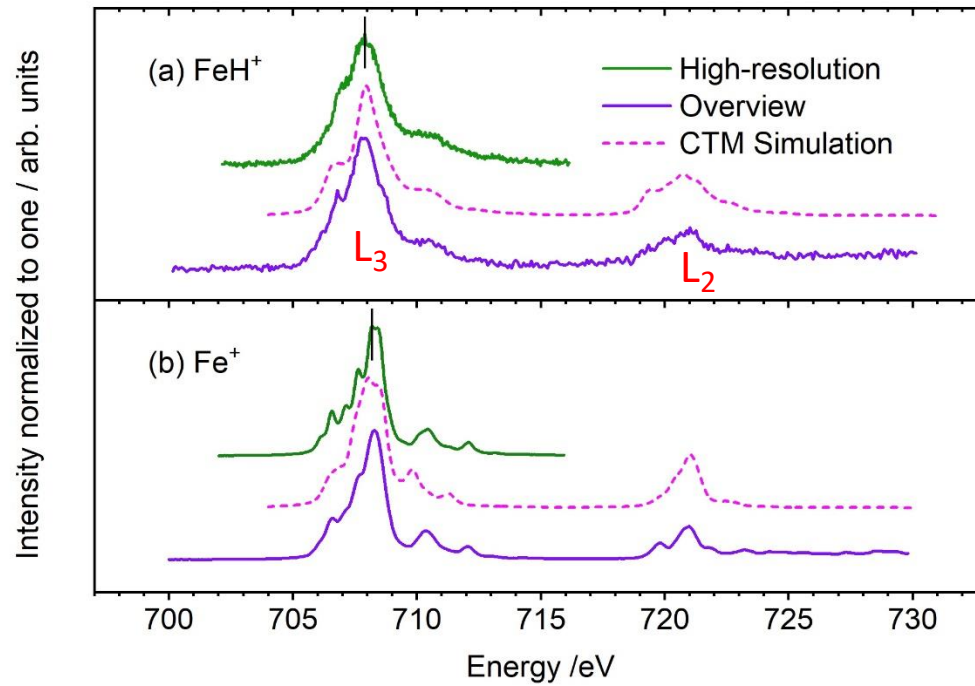
FeH⁺: X-ray Spectrum



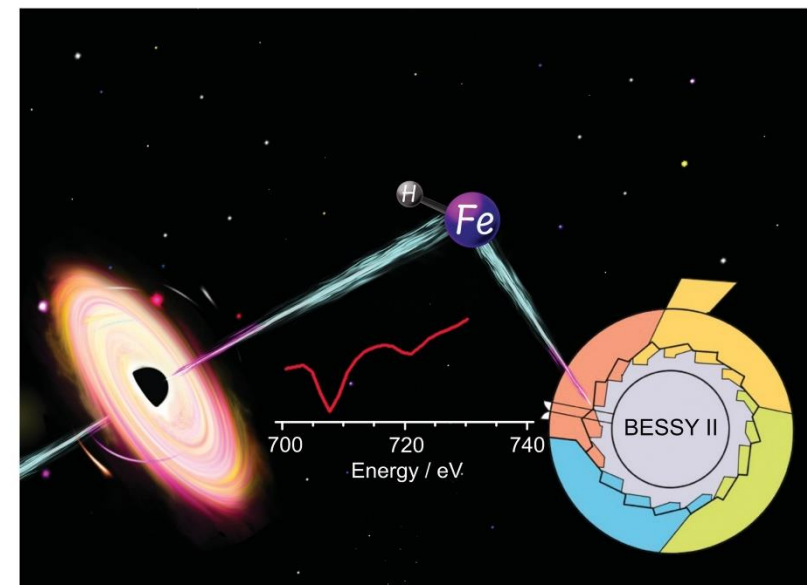
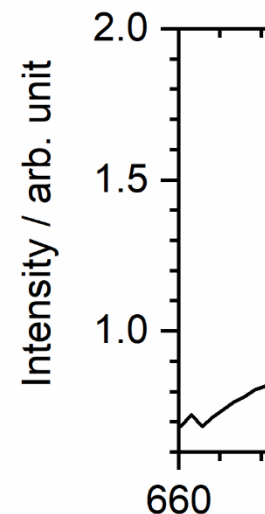
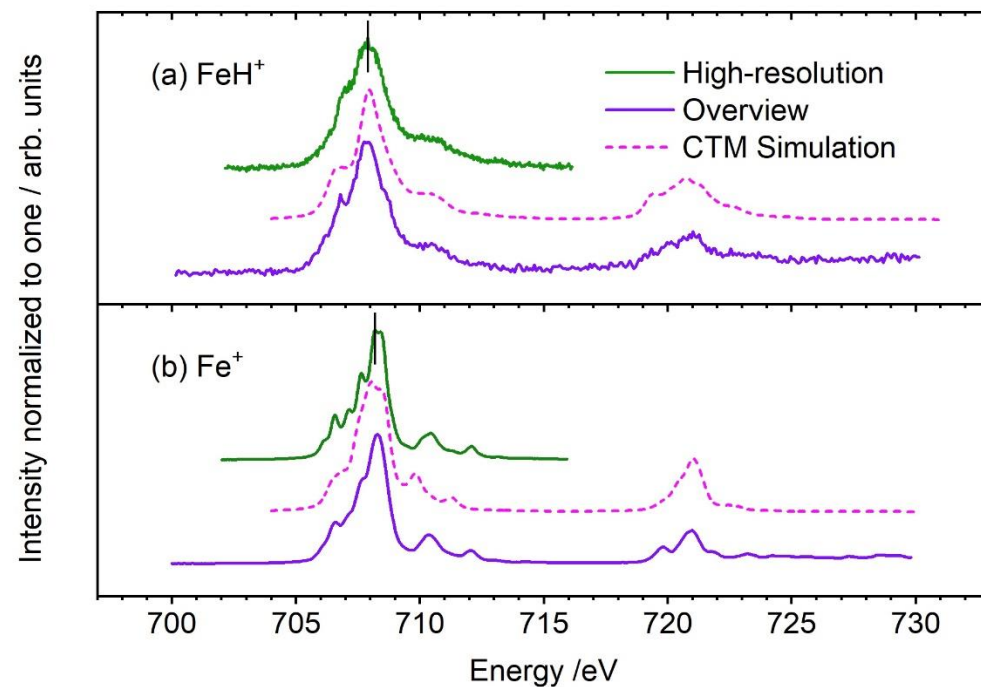
Photonenquelle BESSY II
Helmholtz-Zentrum Berlin
(Standort Adlershof)



FeH⁺: X-ray Spectrum



FeH⁺: X-ray Spectrum



Showcasing research from Professor Martin Beyer's laboratory, Institut für Ionenphysik und Angewandte Physik, Universität Innsbruck, Austria.

X-ray absorption spectroscopy of FeH⁺ to aid its identification in astrochemical environments

The iron hydride diatomic molecular ion FeH⁺ is expected to be present in the interstellar medium. Its X-ray absorption spectrum measured at the BESSY II synchrotron facility is the first laboratory spectrum that can be compared to astronomical observations.

As featured in:



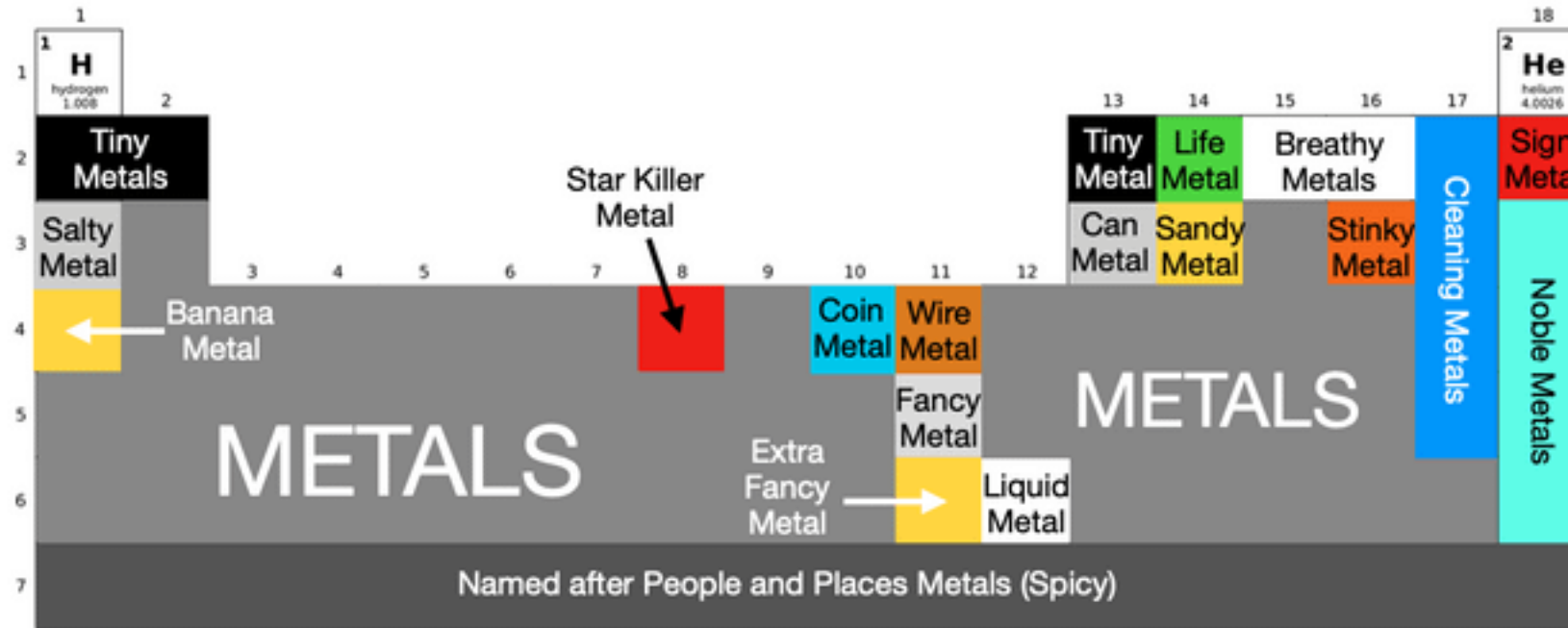
See Norbert Przybilla,
Martin K. Beyer et al.,
Chem. Commun., 2025, 61, 2048.

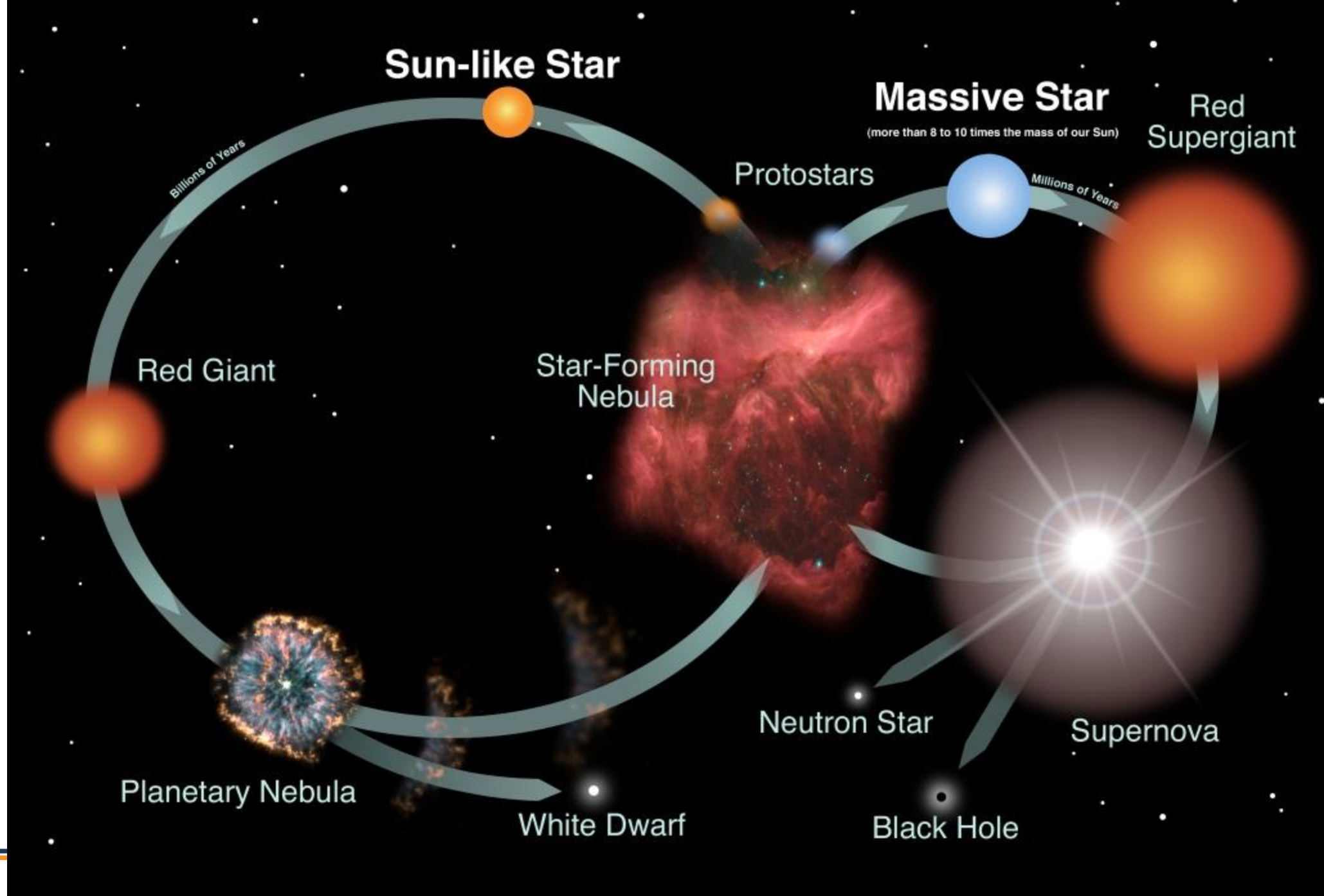
Take Home Messages

- Astrochemistry needs the **collaboration** of astrophysicists, modeling theoretical chemists, and chemical physicists (physical chemists).
- Insight into **basic principles** and **instruments** of chemical physics and physical chemistry
- Understand the spectroscopical characteristics of **Argon-tagged FeH^+** , and provides spectroscopic data first.
- First **X-ray spectroscopy of FeH^+** aids its identification in the ISM environment.

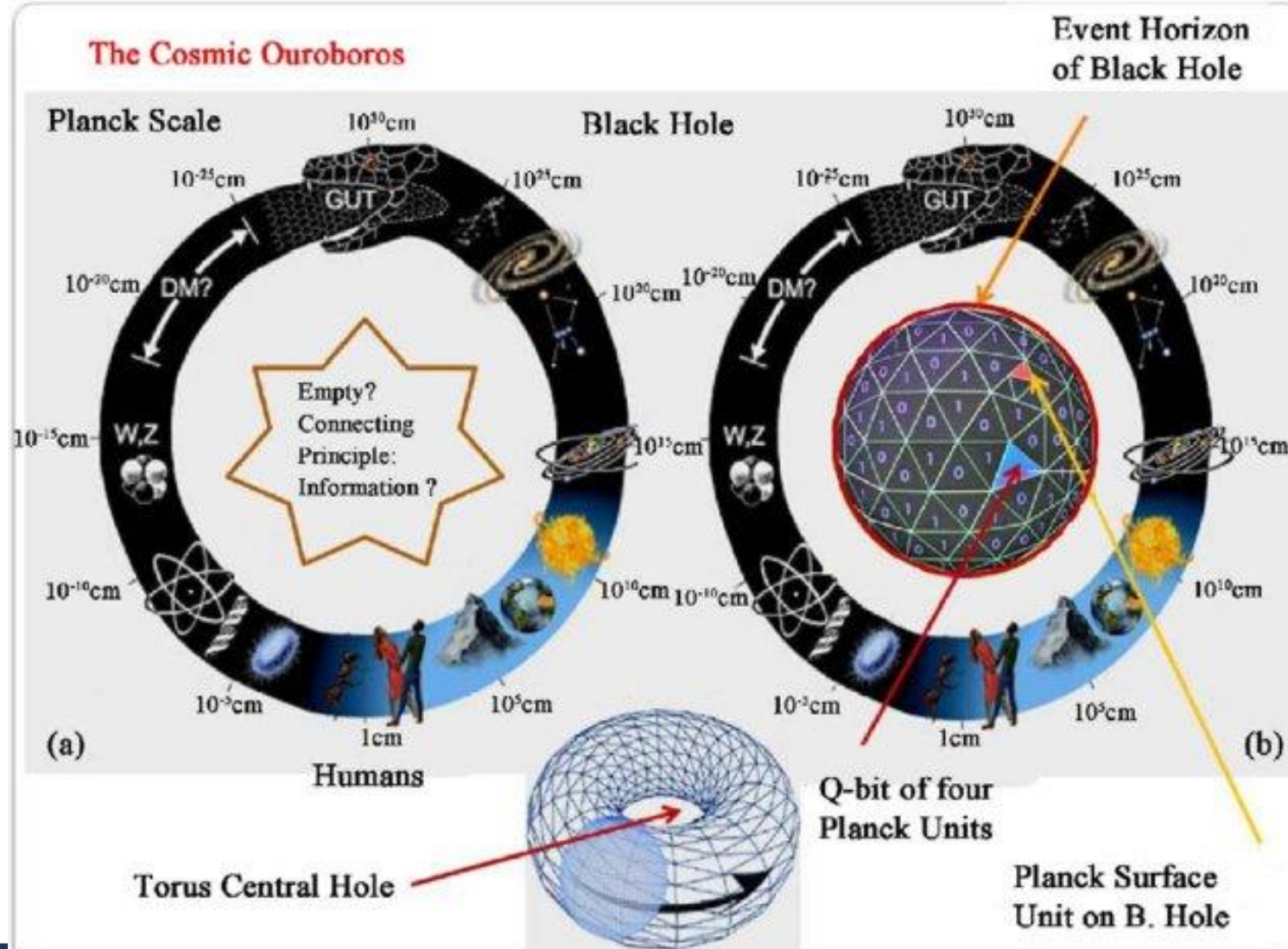
Thank Prof. Dr. Martin Beyer, Assoz. Prof. Dr. Milan Ončák, and groups' help







The Cosmic Ouroboros



Constituent of interstellar space	Where found	Temperature (K) Density (atoms/cm³)	How best observed
Atomic Hydrogen (HI)	Everywhere (~50% of mass, ~50% of volume)	100 - 10⁴ K 1 - 100 cm⁻³	21-cm radio line Ultraviolet absorption lines
Molecular Hydrogen (H₂)	Dark clouds (~50% of mass, ~1% of volume)	5 - 100 K 10⁴ - 100 cm⁻³	Ultraviolet absorption lines Infrared emission lines
Other Molecules (e.g., CO, HCN, H₂O, etc.)	Dark Clouds	5 - 100 K 10⁶ - 100 cm⁻³	Radio and infrared emission lines
Ionized Hydrogen (HII)	Near hot stars (Emission nebulae)	5000 K 10² - 10⁴ cm⁻³	Optical and infrared emission lines; radio continuum
Coronal Gas	Everywhere (~50% of volume)	10⁶ - 10⁷ K 10⁻² cm⁻³	X-ray emission
Dust grains	Everywhere	20 - 100 K	Reddening and absorption of starlight; Infrared emission
Magnetic Fields	Everywhere		Polarization of starlight; Zeeman effect
Cosmic Rays	Everywhere		Radio emission, gamma ray emission

TABLE 1.1: Size-sorted molecules detected in the interstellar medium and in circumstellar shells, up to the year 2019. [8]

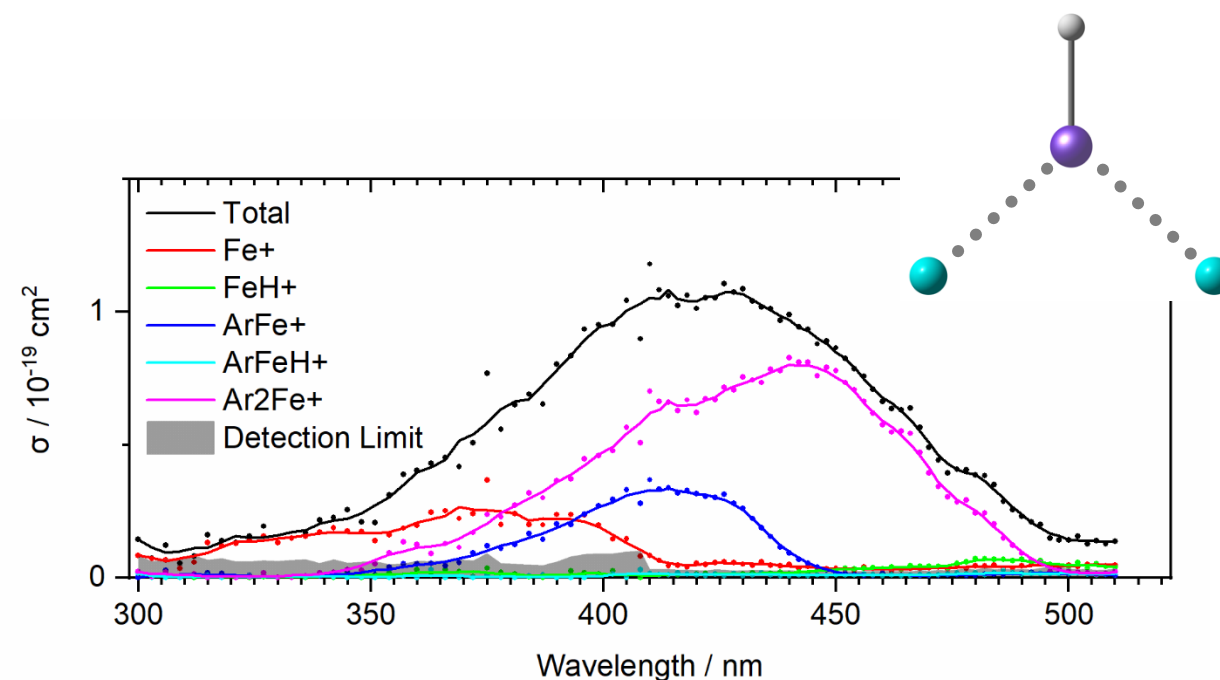
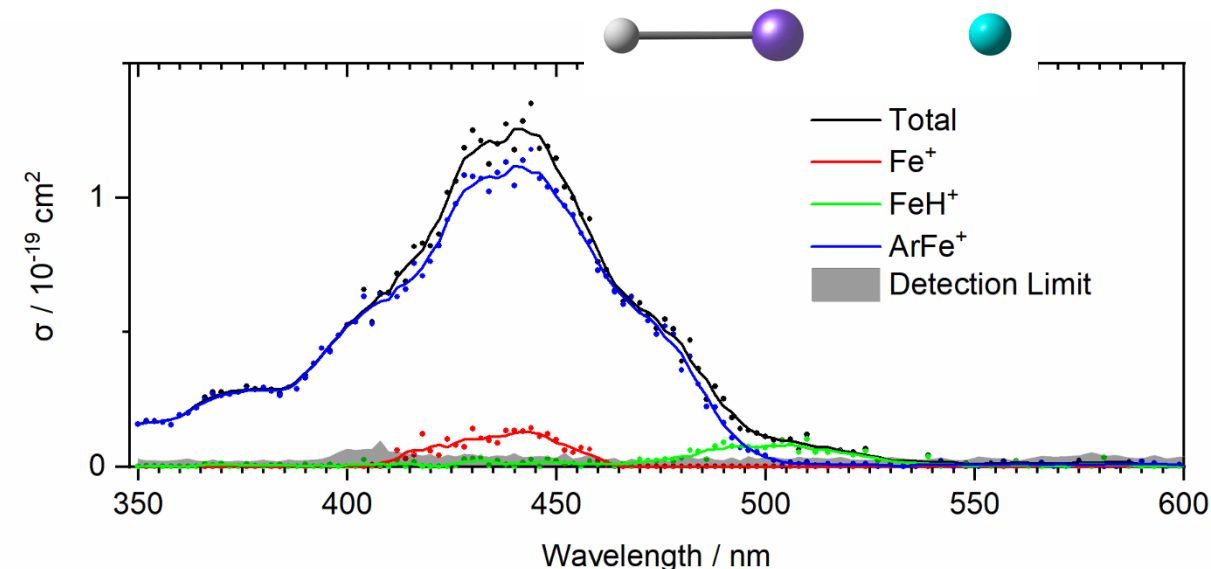
2 atoms	3 atoms	4 atoms	5 atoms	6 atoms	7 atoms	8 atoms
H ₂	C ₃	c-C ₃ H	C ₅	C ₅ H	C ₆ H	CH ₃ C ₃ N
AlF	C ₂ H	l-C ₃ H	C ₄ H	l-H ₂ C ₄	CH ₂ CHCN	HC(O)OCH ₃
AlCl	C ₂ O	C ₃ N	C ₄ Si	C ₂ H ₄	CH ₃ C ₂ H	CH ₃ COOH
C ₂	C ₂ S	C ₃ O	l-C ₃ H ₂	CH ₃ CN	HC ₅ N	C ₇ H
CH	CH ₂	C ₃ S	c-C ₃ H ₂	CH ₃ NC	CH ₃ CHO	C ₆ H ₂
CH ⁺	HCN	C ₂ H ₂	H ₂ CCN	CH ₃ OH	CH ₃ NH ₂	CH ₂ OHCHO
CN	HCO	NH ₃	CH ₄	CH ₃ SH	c-C ₂ H ₄ O	l-HC ₆ H
CO	HCO ⁺	HCCN	HC ₃ N	HC ₃ NH ⁺	H ₂ CCHOH	CH ₂ CHCHO
CO ⁺	HCS ⁺	HCNH ⁺	HC ₂ NC	HC ₂ CHO	C ₆ H ⁻	CH ₂ CCHCN
CP	HOC ⁺	HNCO	HCOOH	NH ₂ CHO	CH ₃ NCO	H ₂ NCH ₂ CN
SiC	H ₂ O	HNCS	H ₂ CNH	C ₅ N	HC ₅ O	CH ₃ CHNH
HCl	H ₂ S	HOCO ⁺	H ₂ C ₂ O	l-HC ₄ H	HOCH ₂ CN	CH ₃ SiH ₃
KCl	HNC	H ₂ CO	H ₂ NCN	l-HC ₄ N		H ₂ NC(O)NH ₂
NH	HNO	H ₂ CN	HNC ₃	c-H ₂ C ₃ O		
NO	MgCN	H ₂ CS	SiH	H ₂ CCNH		
NS	MgNC	H ₃ O ⁺	H ₂ COH ⁺	C ₅ N ⁻		
NaCl	N ₂ H ⁺	c-SiC ₃	C ₄ H ⁻	HNCHCN		
OH	N ₂ O	CH ₃	HC(O)CN	SiH ₃ CN		
PN	NaCN	C ₃ N ⁻	HNCNH	C ₅ S		
SO	OCS	PH ₃	CH ₃ O	MgC ₄ H		
SO ⁺	SO ₂	HCNO	NH ₄ ⁺			
SiN	c-SiC ₂	HOCN	H ₂ NCO ⁺			
SiO	CO ₂	HSCN	NCCNH ⁺			
SiS	NH ₂	H ₂ O ₂	CH ₃ Cl			
CS	H ₃ ⁺	C ₃ H ⁺	MgC ₃ N			
HF	SiCN	HMgNC				
HD	AlNC	HCCO				
FeO	SiNC	CNCN				
O ₂	HCP	HONO				
CF ⁺	CCP	MgC ₂ H				
SiH	AlOH					
9 atoms	10 atoms	11 atoms	12 atoms	>13 atoms		
PO	H ₂ O ⁺	CH ₃ C ₅ N	c-C ₆ H ₆	C ₆₀		
AlO	H ₂ Cl ⁺	(CH ₃) ₂ CO	n-C ₃ H ₇ CN	C ₇₀		
OH ⁺	KCN	(CH ₂ OH) ₂	i-C ₃ H ₇ CN	C ₆₀ ⁺		
CN ⁻	FeCN	CH ₃ CH ₂ CHO	C ₂ H ₅ OCH ₃	c-C ₆ H ₅ CN		
SH ⁺	HO ₂	CH ₃ CH ₂ OH	CH ₃ OC(O)CH ₃			
SH	TiO ₂	HC ₇ N	CH ₃ CHCH ₂ O			
HCl ⁺	C ₂ N	C ₈ H	CH ₃ OCH ₂ OH			
TiO	Si ₂ C	CH ₃ C(O)NH ₂				
ArH ⁺	HS ₂	C ₈ H ⁻				
N ₂	HCS	C ₃ H ₆				
NO ⁺	HSC	CH ₃ CH ₂ SH				
NS ⁺	NCO	CH ₃ NHCHO				
HeH ⁺	CaNC	HC ₇ O				

TABLE 2
CHEMICAL COMPOSITION OF DIFFERENT OBJECT CLASSES IN THE SOLAR NEIGHBORHOOD AND OF THE SUN

Elem.	Cosmic Standard B Stars–This Work ^a		Orion Gas+Dust ^b	B Stars ^c	Young F&G Stars ^c	ISM		Sun	
						Gas	Dust ^d	GS98 ^e	AGS05 ^e
He	10.98 ± 0.02	...	10.988 ± 0.003	...	...	...	...	10.99 ± 0.02	
C	8.32 ± 0.03	209 ± 15	8.52 ± 0.02	8.28 ± 0.17	8.55 ± 0.10	8.15 ± 0.06 ^f	68 ± 26	8.52 ± 0.06	8.39 ± 0.05
N	7.76 ± 0.05	58 ± 7	7.73 ± 0.09	7.81 ± 0.21	...	7.79 ± 0.03 ^g	...	7.92 ± 0.06	7.78 ± 0.06
O	8.76 ± 0.03	575 ± 41	8.73 ± 0.03	8.54 ± 0.16	8.65 ± 0.15	8.59 ± 0.01 ^h	186 ± 42	8.83 ± 0.06	8.66 ± 0.05
Ne	8.08 ± 0.03	120 ± 9	8.05 ± 0.07	...	...	...	...	8.08 ± 0.06	7.84 ± 0.06
Mg	7.56 ± 0.05	36 ± 4	...	7.36 ± 0.13	7.63 ± 0.17	6.17 ± 0.02 ⁱ	34.8 ± 4.4	7.58 ± 0.05	7.53 ± 0.09
Si	7.50 ± 0.02	32 ± 1	...	7.27 ± 0.20	7.60 ± 0.14	6.35 ± 0.05 ⁱ	29.6 ± 2.2	7.55 ± 0.05	7.51 ± 0.04
Fe	7.44 ± 0.04	28 ± 3	...	7.45 ± 0.26	7.45 ± 0.12	5.41 ± 0.04 ⁱ	27.3 ± 2.7	7.50 ± 0.05	7.45 ± 0.05

NOTES.—(a) In units of $\log(\text{El}/\text{H}) + 12$ / atoms per 10^6 nuclei, computed from average star abundances (mean values over all individual lines *per element*, equal weights per line); (b) [Esteban et al. \(2004\)](#); (c) [Sofia & Meyer \(2001\)](#); (d) difference between the cosmic standard and ISM gas-phase abundances, in units of atoms per 10^6 H nuclei; (e) photospheric values; (f) [Sofia \(2004\)](#); (g) [Meyer et al. \(1997\)](#), corrected accordingly to [Jensen et al. \(2007\)](#); (h) [Cartledge et al. \(2004\)](#); (i) Cartledge et al. (2006).

FeH⁺Ar_{1,2}: UV-Vis Spectrum



reactants	products	Dissociation energy ^a /eV	Dissociation energy ^b /eV
ArFeH ⁺ + hν	ArFe ⁺ + H·	2.45	2.76
	FeH ⁺ + Ar	0.46	0.5
	Fe ⁺ + Ar + H·	2.61	3.03
Ar ₂ FeH ⁺ + hν	Ar ₂ Fe ⁺ + H·	2.62	2.9
	ArFe ⁺ + Ar + H·	2.75	3.11
	ArFeH ⁺ + Ar	0.3	0.35
	FeH ⁺ + 2Ar	0.76	0.85
	Fe ⁺ + 2Ar + H·	2.91	3.38