

# Interstellar Medium (ISM)

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선광일 (Kwangil Seon)  
KASI / UST

# H II Regions 1

# Atomic Processes

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- **Excitation and de-excitation (Transition)**

- Radiative excitation (photoexcitation; photoabsorption)
- Radiative de-excitation (spontaneous emission and stimulated emission)
- Collisional excitation
- Collisional de-excitation

- **Emission Line**

- Collisionally-excited emission lines
- Recombination lines (recombination following photoionization or collisional ionization)

- **Ionization**

- Photoionization and Auger-ionization
- Collisional Ionization (Direct ionization and Excitation-autoionization)

- **Recombination**

- Radiative recombination  $\Leftrightarrow$  Photoionization
- Dielectronic Recombination (not dielectric!)
- Three-body recombination  $\Leftrightarrow$  Direct collisional ionization

- **Charge exchange**

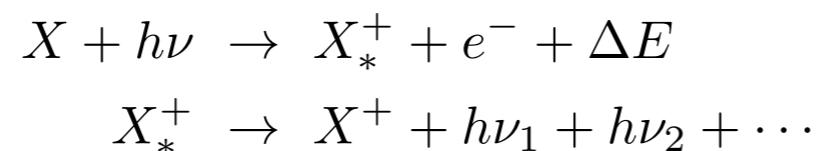
# Ionization - [Photoionization]

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- Interstellar medium (ISM) is transparent to  $h\nu < 13.6 \text{ eV}$  photons, but is very opaque to ionizing photons. In fact, the ISM does not become transparent until  $h\nu \sim 1 \text{ keV}$ .
  - Sources of ionizing photons include massive, hot young stars, hot white dwarfs, and supernova remnant shocks.
- ***From the Outer Shells***
  - ▶ Photoionization is the inverse process to radiative recombination.



- ▶ If the incoming photon has sufficient energy, it may leave the ionized species in an excited state.

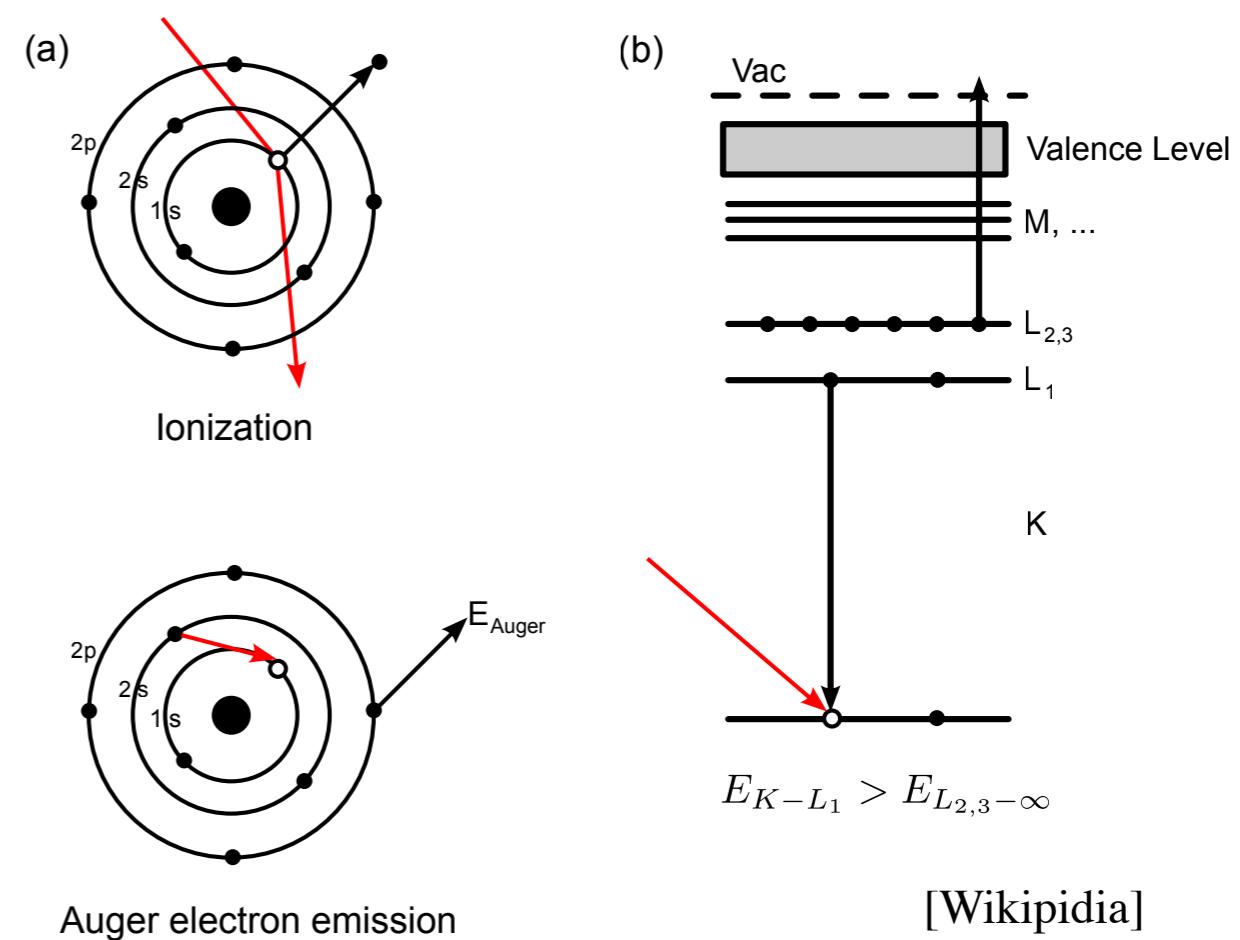
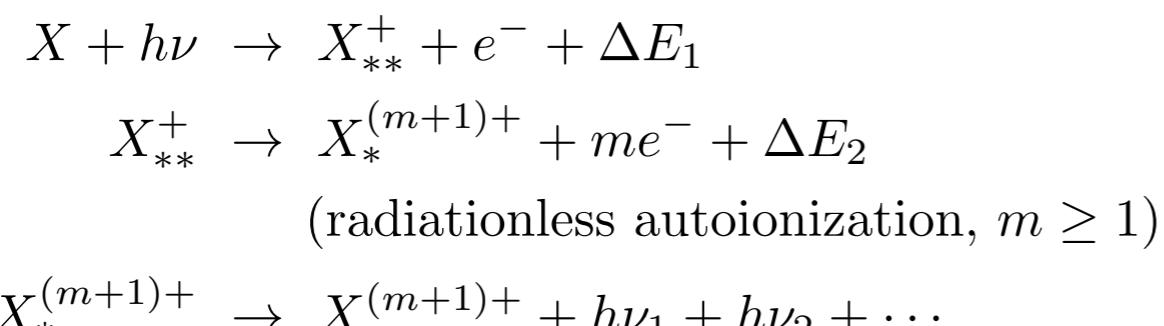


Here, X denotes an atom, molecule, or ion and subscript \* indicates an excited states.

$\Delta E$  denotes energy carried by the electron.

## • Inner Shell Photoionization

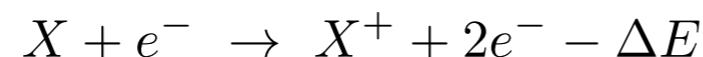
- If the energy of the incoming photon is still higher, it becomes possible to remove one of the inner shell electrons which also results in a change in the electron configuration in the excited species. This may be followed by a radiative readjustment back to the ground state.
- However, in this case, **Auger ionization** becomes more probable. High frequency photons may eject an inner shell electron from an ion or atom, and the resulting ion may then fill the gap in its inner shell with an outer electron, ejecting another outer electron to remove the energy in a radiationless transition called an Auger transition. Such a process will produce very energetic electrons which will lose their energy in heating up the gas.



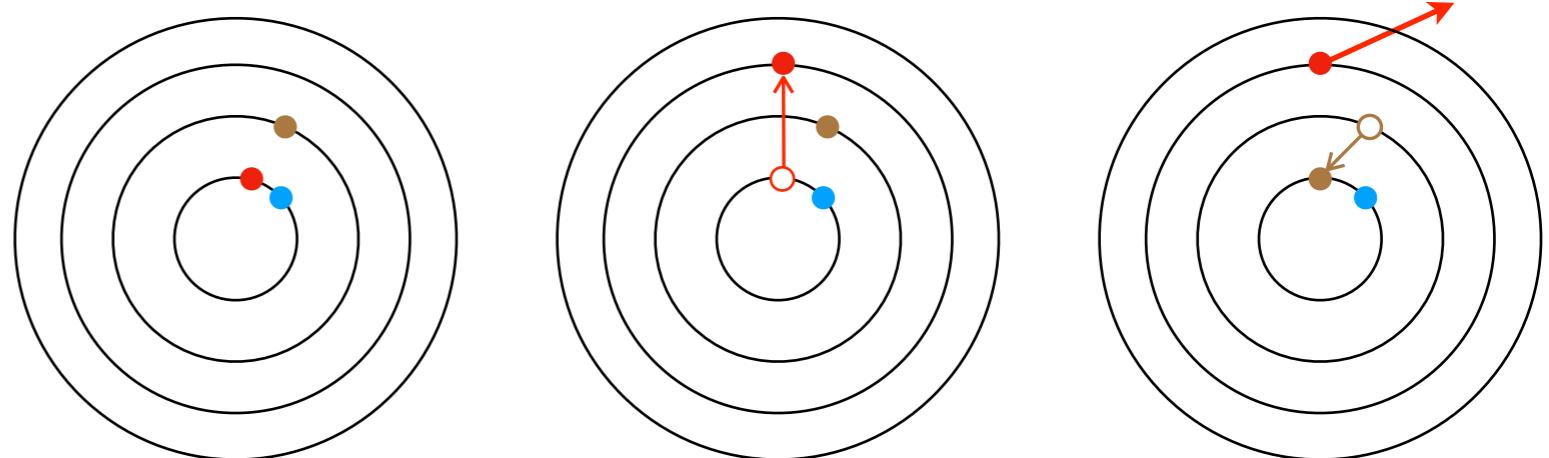
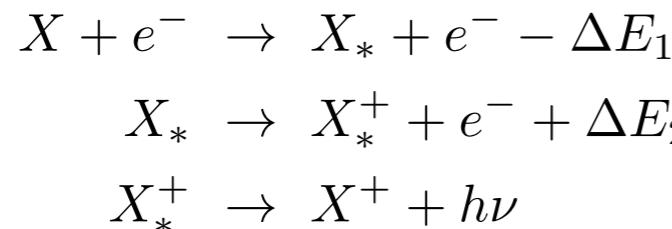
# Ionization - [Collisional ionization]

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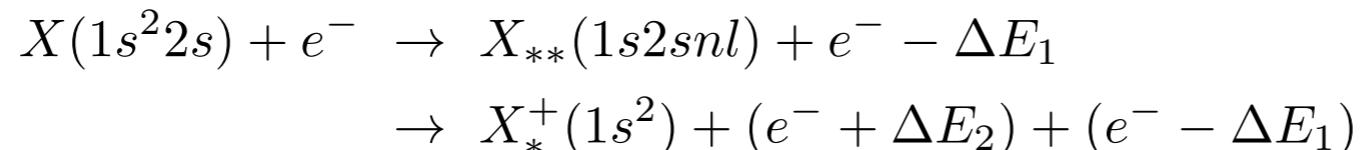
- ***Direct collisional ionization:*** The process whereby an electron strikes an atom or ion X, with sufficient energy to strip out a bound electron:



- ***Excitation-autoionization:*** At sufficiently high electron impact energies, more than one electron of the target may be excited, leaving the atom in an unstable state, which is stabilized by the radiationless ejection of one of outer electrons, possibly followed by a radiative decay of the ionized atom back to its ground state. This process is favored in heavy elements which have a large number of inner shell electrons and only one or two electrons in the outer shell.



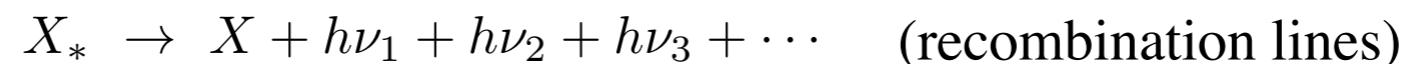
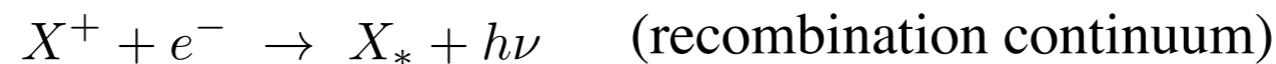
- For example, in collisions of Li-like ions, excitation and autoionization can occur via excitation of the 1s-electron into states with principal quantum numbers  $n \geq 2$ . After the decay of a doubly excited state, one has an additional electron in the final channel.



# Recombination

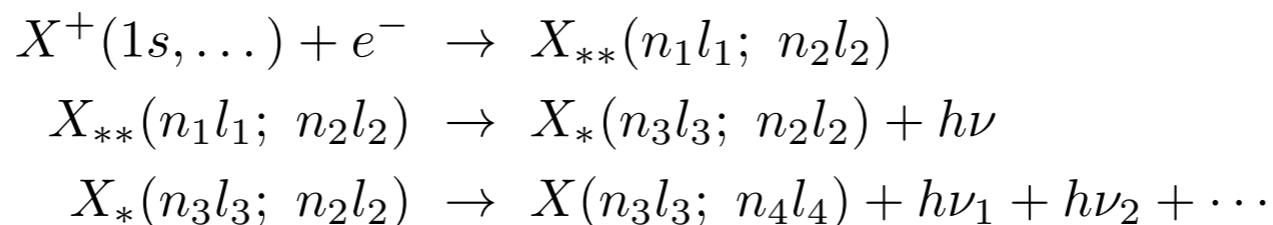
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- Radiative recombination
  - Radiative recombination is the process of capture of an electron by an ion where the excess energy is radiated away in a photon.
  - The electron is captured into an excited state. The recombined but still excited ion radiates several photons in a radiative cascade, as it returns to the ground state:



- The photon in the first line represents a **recombination continuum** ( $h\nu$ ) photon. However, photons ( $h\nu_1$ ,  $h\nu_2$ ,  $h\nu_3$ ) represent quantized transitions and are therefore termed **recombination lines**.
- The total effective recombination rate can be written as the sum of the recombination rate to each state.

- Dielectronic recombination
  - Dielectronic recombination (DR) is a resonant two-step process in which a few electron is captured by the incident ion into an autoionizing state followed by a stabilizing radiation decay of the resulting ion in the second step. The DR is often more important than radiative recombination.

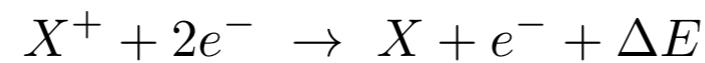


- The first step is a double-electron process, often called dielectronic capture, through which one free electron is captured and another core electron is simultaneously excited forming a doubly excited state. One of the electron is in an autoionizing state,  $n_1 l_1$ , and the other is in an excited state,  $n_2 l_2$ . In the second step, the ion in a doubly excited state emits a photon and decays into a stable state below the ionization limit.
- There is a competitive process for the decay of the doubly excited ion. - the autoionization or Auger decay associated not with the radiative transition but with a change in ion charge.

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- Three-body Recombination

- The combination process of an electron with a positive ion in a gas in such a way that the incoming free electron transfers energy and momentum to another free electron in the neighborhood of the ion.



- In most interstellar medium, three-body recombination is unimportant.
  - In dense regions with electron densities above  $10^4 \text{ cm}^{-3}$ , three-body recombination into high levels of the hydrogen atom with principal quantum numbers ( $n > 100$ ) can be important. (Compare Eq. (3.44) and (14.6) in Draine)

# Charge Exchange

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- During the collision of two ionic species, the charge clouds surrounding each interact, and it is possible that an electron is exchanged between them.



- Since, in virtually all diffuse astrophysical plasmas, hydrogen and helium are overwhelmingly the most abundant species, the charge-exchange reactions which are significant to the ionization balance of the plasma are



# Ionization Equilibrium

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- ***Collisional Ionization Equilibrium (CIE)*** or coronal equilibrium
  - ▶ Balance at a given temperature between collisional ionization from the ground states of the various atoms and ions, and the process of recombination from the higher ionization stages.
  - ▶ In this equilibrium, effectively, all ions are in their ground state.
- ***Photoionization Equilibrium:***
  - ▶ Balance between photo-ionization and the process of recombination.
- Ionization balance under conditions of local thermodynamic equilibrium (LTE)
  - ▶ The ionization equilibrium in LTE is described by the ***Saha equation***.
  - ▶ In LTE, the excited states are all populated according to Boltzmann's law.

# Introduction to Ionized Hydrogen Regions

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- Ionized atomic hydrogen regions, broadly termed “H II regions”, are composed of gas ionized by photons with energies above the hydrogen ionization energy of 13.6 eV.
  - These objects include “classical H II regions” ionized by hot O or B stars (or clusters of such stars) and associated with regions of recent massive-star formation, and “planetary nebulae”, the ejected outer envelopes of AGB stars photoionized by the hot remnant stellar core.
  - Warm Ionized Medium / Diffuse Ionized Gas
  - The UV, visible and IR spectra of H II regions are very rich in emission lines, primarily collisional excited lines of metal ions and recombination lines of hydrogen and helium. H II regions are also observed at radio wavelengths, emitting radio free-free emission from thermalized electrons and radio recombination lines from highly excited states of H, He, and some metals (e.g., H $109\alpha$  and C lines).
- Three processes govern the physics of H II regions:
  - ***Photoionization Equilibrium***: the balance between photoionization and recombination. This determines the spatial distribution of ionic states of the elements in the ionized zone.
  - ***Thermal Balance*** between heating and cooling. Heating is dominated by photoelectrons ejected from hydrogen and helium with thermal energies of a few eV. Cooling is mostly dominated by electron-ion impact excitation of metal ion followed by emission of “forbidden” lines from low-lying fine structure levels. It is these cooling lines that give H II regions their characteristic spectra.
  - ***Hydrodynamics***, including shocks, ionization and photodissociation fronts, and outflows and winds from the embedded stars.

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- Fraction ionization
    - In the CNM, the fractional ionization  $x = n_e/n_{\text{H}} \sim 0.001$ . In the WNM,  $x \sim 0.1$ .
    - Although the number of free electrons are small in the neutral ISM, free electrons play a role in bringing the WNM to kinetic equilibrium. Free electrons photo-ejected from dust grains are the major heat source in the neutral medium.
    - In the WIM,  $x \sim 0.7$ . In the HIM,  $x \sim 1.0$ .
  - H II regions, with  $T \sim 10,000$  K and  $n \sim 0.3 \text{ cm}^{-3}$ , contributes only a few percent of the mass of the ISM, and no more than ten percent of its volume.
    - Classical H II regions and planetary nebulae have a similar temperature, but have a higher density.

# Ionization Energy

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- First ionization energy = energy required to remove the most loosely bound electron in a neutral atom in its ground state.
  - The first ionization energy of hydrogen is  $I_H = 13.59844 \text{ eV}$ .
  - The highest first ionization energy is that of He, with  $I_{He} = 24.6 \text{ eV} = 1.91I_H$ .
  - The second ionization energy of helium is  $I_{HeII} = 54.4 \text{ eV} = 4I_H$ .
  - The lowest first ionization energy of astrophysically interesting elements is that of potassium, with  $I_K = 4.3 \text{ eV}$ . (Rubidium, cesium, and francium have lower first ionization energies, but they are not much seen in the ISM.)
  - Thus, photoionization of neutral atoms will be done by UV photons in the wavelength range  $\lambda = 500 - 3000 \text{\AA}$  (corresponding to  $E = 4.1 - 24.8 \text{ eV}$ ).
- A hydrogen ion with atomic number Z has an ionization energy  $Z^2 I_H$ .
  - 54.4 eV for He II, 122.4 eV for Li III, and so forth.

# Photoionization

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- The (nonrelativistic) quantum mechanics of hydrogen-like ions (with only one electron) give an analytic expression for the ground-state photoionization cross section.

$$\sigma_{\text{pi}}(\nu) = \sigma_0 \left( \frac{Z^2 I_{\text{H}}}{h\nu} \right)^4 \frac{e^{4 - 4 \arctan(x)/x}}{1 - e^{-2\pi/x}}, \quad x \equiv \sqrt{\frac{h\nu}{Z^2 I_{\text{H}}} - 1} \quad \text{for } h\nu > Z^2 I_{\text{H}}$$

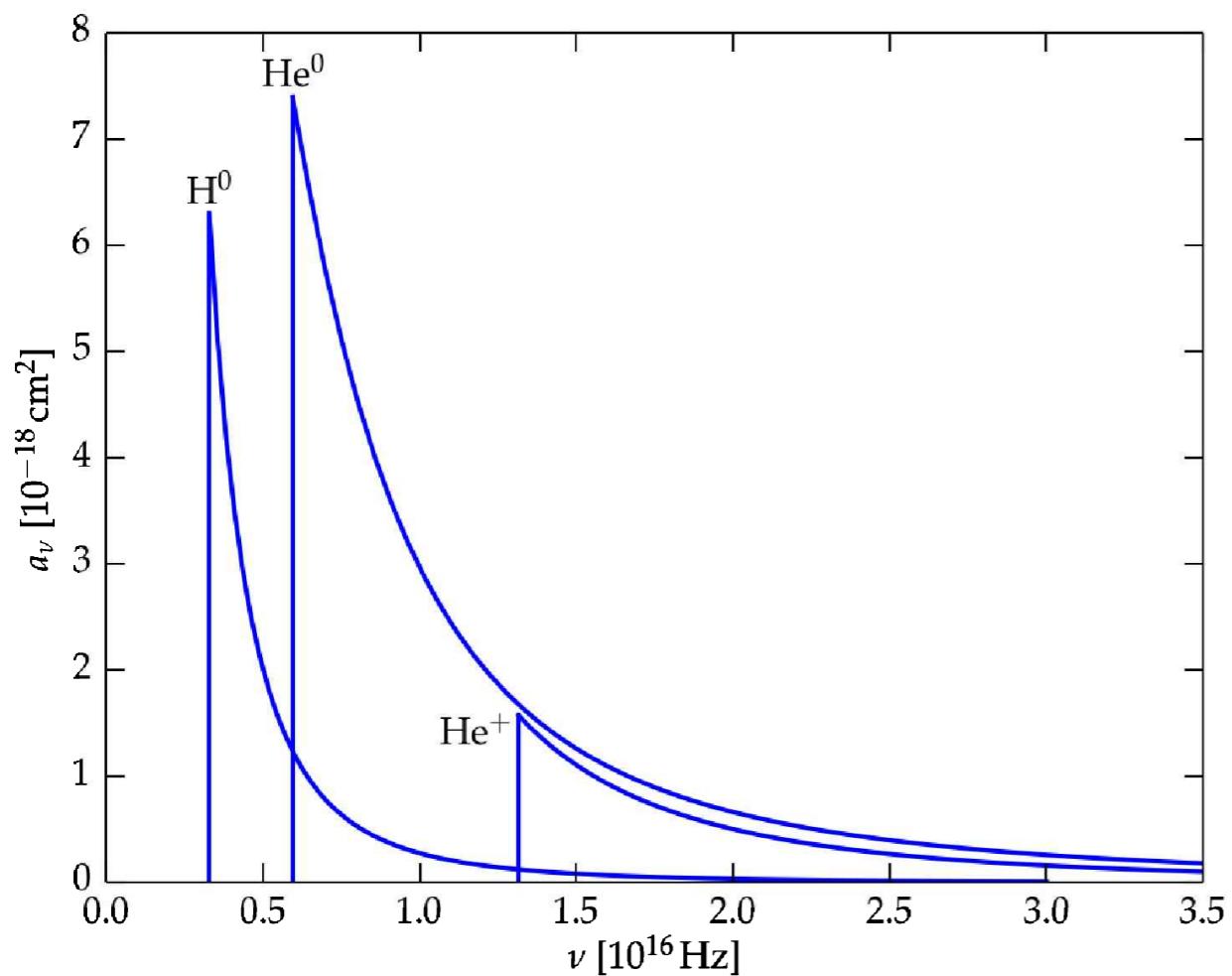
- The cross section at threshold is

$$\sigma_0 \equiv \frac{2^9 \pi}{3e^4} \alpha \pi a_0^2 Z^{-2} = 6.304 \times 10^{-18} Z^{-2} \text{ cm}^{-2} \quad \begin{matrix} \text{fine-structure constant} \\ (\alpha \equiv e^2/hc = 1/137.04, e = 2.71828...) \end{matrix}$$

- The photoionization cross section is reasonably approximated by a power-law:

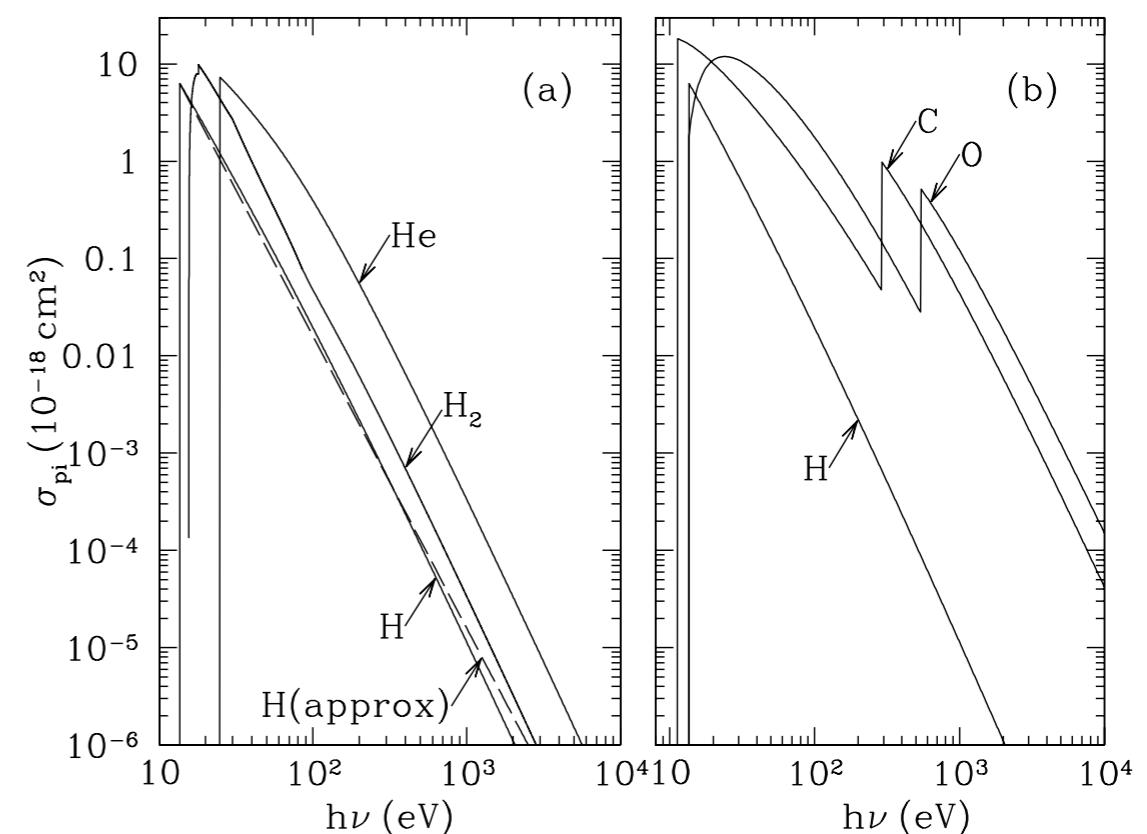
$$\sigma_{\text{pi}}(\nu) \approx \sigma_0 \left( \frac{h\nu}{Z^2 I_{\text{H}}} \right)^{-3} \quad \text{for } Z^2 I_{\text{H}} \lesssim h\nu \lesssim 100 Z^2 I_{\text{H}}$$

- For atoms with three or more electrons, the energy dependence of the photoionization cross section is considerably more complicated because there is more than one available channel.
  - Convenient analytic fits to the contribution of individual shells to photoionization cross section are given by Verner & Yakovlev (1995) and Verner et al. (1996).

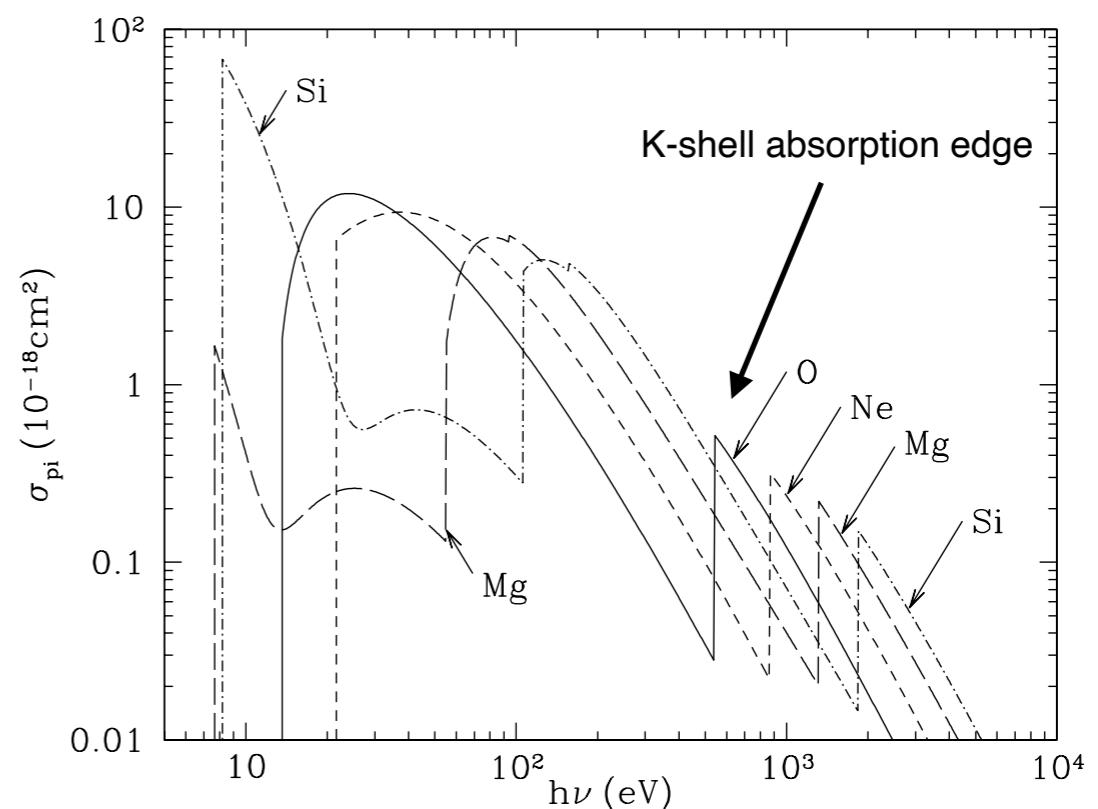


Photoionization cross section for hydrogen( $H^0$ ), hydrogenic helium ( $He^+$ ), and neutral helium ( $He^0$ ).

[Fig. 4.1 in Ryden]



[Fig. 13.1 in Draine]



[Fig. 13.2 in Draine]

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- Photoionization rate (the probability of photoionization per unit time, for a single atom that undergoes photoionization)

$$\zeta_{\text{pi}} = \int_{\nu_1}^{\infty} \sigma_{\text{pi}}(\nu) c \frac{u_{\nu}}{h\nu} d\nu \quad \nu_1 = Z^2 I_{\text{H}}/h = 3.29 \times 10^{15} \text{ Hz} \text{ (for hydrogenic ions)}$$

= (cross section) x (flux of ionizing photons)

$$\text{flux} = 4\pi \frac{J_{\nu}}{h\nu} = c \frac{u_{\nu}}{h\nu}$$

- Since the photoionization cross section decreases fairly steeply with increasing photon energy, most photoionizing photons are just above the ionization energy (13.6 eV for hydrogen), in a range of the spectrum where the background is produced mainly by hot stars.
- The volumetric photoionization rate, for instance, for hydrogen is

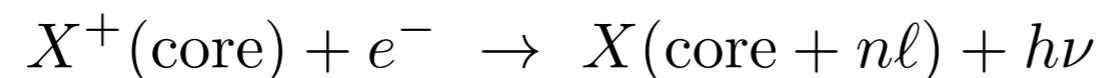
$$\frac{dn_{\text{HII}}}{dt} = n_{\text{HI}} \zeta_{\text{pi}} \quad [\text{cm}^{-3} \text{ s}^{-1}]$$

= (# atoms/volume) x (rate per atom)

# Radiative Recombination (RR)

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- The cross section for the radiative recombination can be obtained using the photoionization cross section and the **Milne relation**, which is derived from the principle of detailed balance.
- Consider an ion with its electron in some configuration that we will refer to as the “core”. In a low-density plasma, free electrons can undergo transitions to bound states by emission of a photon. The electron is captured into some specific state  $n\ell$  that will initially unoccupied.



- The RR rate coefficient for electron capture directly to level  $n\ell$ , with emission of a photon of energy  $h\nu = I_{n\ell} + E$  (where  $I_{n\ell}$  is the bounding energy required for ionization from level  $n\ell$  and  $E$  is the captured electron energy), is

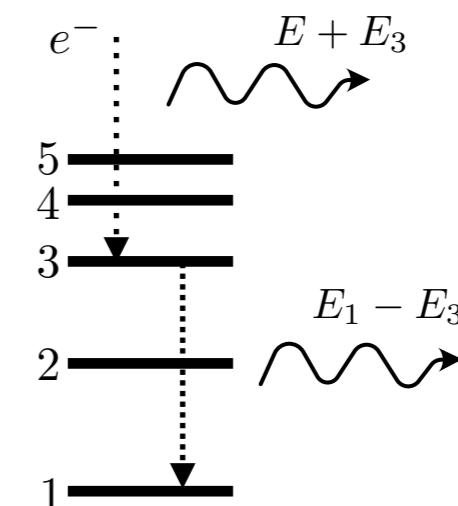
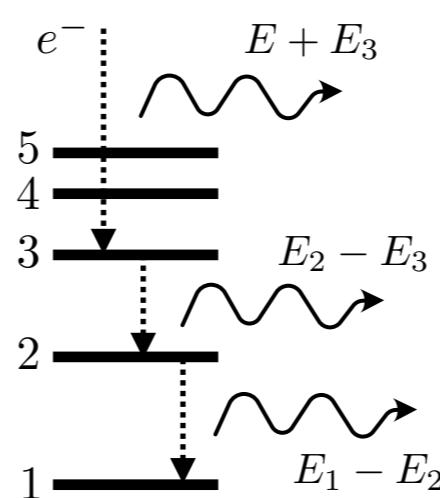
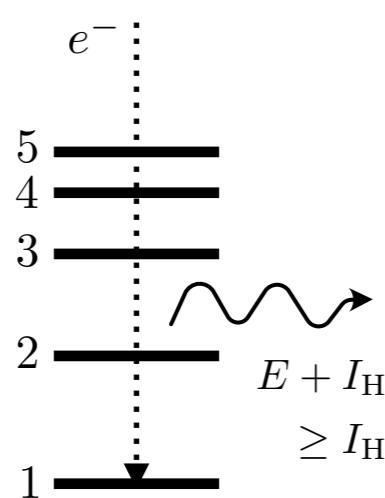
$$\alpha_{n\ell}(T) = \left( \frac{8kT}{\pi m_e} \right)^{1/2} \int_0^\infty \sigma_{\text{rr},n\ell}(E) \frac{E}{kT} e^{-E/kT} \frac{dE}{kT}$$

- The volumetric rate of RR, for instance for hydrogen, can be written as

$$\frac{dn_{\text{HII}}}{dt} = -n_e n_{\text{HII}} \alpha$$

Notice that an electron of any energy can trigger a collisional de-excitation as well as RR.

- General properties of radiative recombination
  - In general,  $\alpha_{nl}$  is a decreasing function of  $T$ , although it depends weakly on temperature. Therefore, it's easier to recombine with a slow electron than with a fast electron.
  - In general,  $\alpha_n = \sum_\ell \alpha_{nl}$  summed over all applicable values of  $\ell$ , is a decreasing function of  $n$ , implying that it's easier to recombine to a low energy level than to a high energy level.
- ***Recombination to the ground state:***
  - If the recombination is to the ground state of hydrogen ( $n = 1$ ), the energy of the emitted photon is  $E + I_H \geq I_H$ . Thus, the emitted photon is guaranteed to have an energy of at least 13.6 eV, and will be capable of photoionizing any neutral hydrogen atom that it encounters. Thus, in regions that are optically thick to UV light at photon energies just above  $I_H$ , the emitted photon will be rapidly destroyed in photoionizing a nearby hydrogen atom.



# Case A and B (Radiative Recombination of Hydrogen)

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- ***On-the-spot approximation:***
  - In optically thick regions, it is assumed that every photon produced by radiative recombination to the ground state of hydrogen is immediately, then and there, destroyed in photoionizing other hydrogen atom.
  - In the on-the-spot approximation, recombination to the ground state has no net effect on the ionization state of the hydrogen gas.
- Baker & Menzel (1938) proposed two limiting cases:
  - **Case A: Optically thin** to ionizing radiation, so that every ionizing photon emitted during the recombination process escapes. For this case, we sum the radiative capture rate coefficient  $\alpha_{nl}$  over all levels  $nl$ .
  - **Case B: Optically thick** to radiation just above  $I_H = 13.60 \text{ eV}$ , so that ionizing photons emitted during recombination are immediately reabsorbed, creating another ion and free electron by photoionization. In this case, the recombinations directly to  $n = 1$  do not reduce the ionization of the gas: only recombinations to  $n \geq 2$  act to reduce the ionization.
- Photoionized nebulae around OB stars (H II regions) usually have large enough densities of neutral H. For this situation, so that case B is an excellent approximation.
- Regions where the hydrogen is collisional ionized are typically very hot ( $T > 10^6 \text{ K}$ ) and contain a very small density of neutral hydrogen. For these shock-heated regions, case A is an excellent approximation.

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- ***Radiative recombination rate coefficients:***

- In Case A, the relevant radiative recombination rate coefficient is found by summing over all energy levels of the hydrogen atom:

$$\alpha_{A,H}(T) \equiv \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \sum_{\ell=0}^{n-1} \alpha_{n\ell}(T)$$

$$\approx 4.18 \times 10^{-13} T_4^{-0.721 - 0.021 \ln T_4} \text{ [cm}^3 \text{s}^{-1}\text{]} \quad \text{for } 0.3 \lesssim T_4 \lesssim 3 \quad (T_4 \equiv T/10^4 \text{ K})$$

- In Case B, the relevant radiative recombination rate coefficient is found by summing over all energy levels other than the ground state:

$$\alpha_{B,H}(T) \equiv \sum_{n=2}^{\infty} \sum_{\ell=0}^{n-1} \alpha_{n\ell}(T) = \alpha_{A,H}(T) - \alpha_{1s}(T)$$

$$\approx 2.59 \times 10^{-13} T_4^{-0.833 - 0.034 \ln T_4} \text{ [cm}^3 \text{s}^{-1}\text{]} \quad \text{for } 0.3 \lesssim T_4 \lesssim 3$$

- The percentage of radiative recombinations that go directly to the ground state is 30% at  $T = 3000 \text{ K}$  but increases to 46% at  $T = 30,000 \text{ K}$ . Thus, the distinction between Case A and Case B becomes increasingly important at higher temperatures.

$$\frac{\alpha_{1s,H}}{\alpha_{A,H}} = 1 - \frac{\alpha_{B,H}}{\alpha_{A,H}} = 1 - 0.0619 T_4^{-0.112 - 0.013 \ln T_4}$$

# H II Regions and Strömgren Spheres

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- ***Strömgren Sphere:***

- Following Strömgren (1939), we consider the simple idealized problem of a fully ionized, spherical region of uniform medium plus a central source of ionizing photons.
- The ionization is assumed to be maintained by absorption of the ionizing photons radiated by a central hot star. The central source produces ionizing photons, with energy  $\nu > \nu_0 = I_{\text{H}}/h$  at a constant rate  $Q_0$  [photons s<sup>-1</sup>].
- At a distance  $r$  from the central star, the balance equation between ionization and recombination balance is

$$n_{\text{H}^0} \int_{\nu_0}^{\infty} \frac{4\pi J_{\nu}}{h\nu} \sigma_{\nu} d\nu = n_{\text{H}^+} n_e \alpha_{\text{B},\text{H}}$$

- From the RT equation,

$$4\pi J_{\nu} = \frac{L_{\nu}}{4\pi r^2} e^{-\tau_{\nu}}, \quad \tau_{\nu} = \int_0^r n_{\text{H}^0} \sigma_{\nu} dr$$

- Integrating the balance equation over the volume:

$$\int_0^{\infty} \int_{\nu_0}^{\infty} \frac{L_{\nu}/h\nu}{4\pi r^2} e^{-\tau_{\nu}} n_{\text{H}^0} \sigma_{\nu} d\nu (4\pi r^2) dr = \int_0^{\infty} n_{\text{H}^+} n_e \alpha_{\text{B},\text{H}} (4\pi r^2) dr$$

$$\int_{\nu_0}^{\infty} L_{\nu}/h\nu \left[ \int_0^{\infty} e^{-\tau_{\nu}} n_{\text{H}^0} \sigma_{\nu} dr \right] d\nu = \int_0^{\infty} n_{\text{H}^+} n_e \alpha_{\text{B},\text{H}} (4\pi r^2) dr$$

- The square bracket term in the left side is

$$\int_0^\infty e^{-\tau_\nu} n_{\text{H}^0} \sigma_\nu dr = \int_0^\infty e^{-\tau_\nu} d\tau_\nu = 1$$

- Then, we obtain

$$Q_0 = \int_0^\infty n_{\text{H}^+} n_e \alpha_{\text{B}, \text{H}} dV, \quad \text{where } Q_0 \equiv \int_{\nu_0}^\infty \frac{L_\nu}{h\nu} d\nu, \quad dV = 4\pi r^2 dr$$

- Assuming that the ionization is nearly complete ( $n_{\text{H}^+} = n_e = n_{\text{H}}$ ) within  $R_s$ , and nearly zero ( $n_{\text{H}^0} = n_{\text{H}}$ ,  $n_e = 0$ ) outside  $R_s$ , we obtain the size of the ionized region.

$$\begin{aligned} R_s &= \left( \frac{3}{4\pi} \frac{Q_0}{\alpha_{\text{B}, \text{H}} n_{\text{H}}^2} \right)^{1/3} \\ &= 3.17 \left( \frac{Q_0}{10^{49} \text{ photons s}^{-1}} \right)^{1/3} \left( \frac{n_{\text{H}}}{10^2 \text{ cm}^{-3}} \right)^{-2/3} \left( \frac{T}{10^4 \text{ K}} \right)^{0.28} \text{ [pc]} \end{aligned}$$

- The physical meaning of this is that ***the total number of ionizing photons emitted by the star balances the total number of recombinations within the ionized volume***  $(4\pi/3)R_s^3$ , often called the Strömgren sphere. Its radius  $R_s$  is called the Strömgren radius.

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- Mean free path
    - The mean free path of an ionizing photon is

$$\lambda_{\text{mfp}} = \frac{1}{n_{\text{H}} \sigma_{\text{pi}}} \sim 5 \times 10^{-4} \text{ pc} \left( \frac{n_{\text{H}}}{10^2 \text{ cm}^{-2}} \right)^{-1} \left( \frac{\sigma_{\text{pi}}}{6.304 \times 10^{-18} \text{ cm}^{-2}} \right)^{-1}$$

- This tells us that the transition from ionized gas to neutral gas at the boundary of the H II region will occur over a distance that is very small compared to the Strömgren radius.
- Time Scales:
  - ***Ionization time scale:*** The Strömgren sphere analysis assumes a steady state solution. What is the time scale for approach to the steady state? Suppose that we start with a neutral region, and the ionizing source is suddenly turned on.

$$\begin{aligned} t_{\text{ioniz.}} &= \frac{\text{total number of ions to be created}}{\text{number of photons supplied}} \\ &= \frac{(4\pi/3)R_s^3 n_{\text{H}}}{Q_0} = \frac{1}{\alpha_{\text{B,H}} n_{\text{H}}} = 1.22 \times 10^3 \left( \frac{10^2 \text{ cm}^{-3}}{n_{\text{H}}} \right) \text{ [yr]} \end{aligned}$$

- 
- **Recombination time scale:** Suppose that the ionizing source suddenly turns off. The ionized region will recombine on the recombination time scale:

$$t_{\text{rec}} = \frac{1}{\alpha_{\text{B,H}} n_{\text{H}}} = 1.22 \times 10^3 \left( \frac{10^2 \text{ cm}^{-3}}{n_{\text{H}}} \right) \text{ [yr]}$$

- Note that the recombination time scale is identical to the ionization time scale!
- The ionization/recombination time scale is shorter than the main-sequence lifetime  $> 5 \text{ My}$  for a massive star.
- Sound crossing time
  - The ionized region will likely be overpressure relative to its surroundings, in which case it will expand on the sound crossing time.
  - The isothermal sound speed in fully ionized hydrogen is

$$c_s = (2kT/m_{\text{H}})^{1/2} = 13 (T/10^4 \text{ K})^{1/2} \text{ km s}^{-1} \quad p = (n_{\text{HI}} + n_e)kT = 2n_{\text{H}}kT$$

- The time for a pressure wave to propagate a distance equal to Strömgren radius is

$$t_{\text{sound}} = \frac{R_s}{c_s} \approx 2.39 \times 10^5 \frac{Q_0/10^{49} \text{ s}^{-1}}{(n/10^2 \text{ cm}^{-3})^{2/3}} \text{ [yr]}$$

something wrong in page 166 [Draine]  
add more from page 86 in [Ryden]

# Ionization of Helium

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- Now, what about helium?
  - Out of every 1000 atoms, there are on average 912 hydrogen atoms, 87 helium atoms and one metal atom.
  - ▶ Looking at the photoionization cross sections for  $H^0$ ,  $He^0$ ,  $He^{+1}$ , we see that above the 24.6 eV threshold for ionizing  $He^0$ , the photoionization cross section for helium is larger than that for hydrogen.

$$\begin{aligned}\sigma_{\text{pi}, He^0} &\approx 6.5 \sigma_{\text{pi}, H^0} \quad \text{at } h\nu \sim 24.6 \text{ eV} \\ &\approx 14 \sigma_{\text{pi}, H^0} \quad \text{at } h\nu \sim 5.45 \text{ eV}\end{aligned}$$

- ▶ Thus, the photoionization cross section for He is  $\sim 10$  times that of H, while the number density of He is  $\sim 0.1$  times that of H.
- ▶ This implies that if we suddenly turn on a hot star, the initial photons in the range  $24.6 \text{ eV} < h\nu < 54.4 \text{ eV}$  will be about as likely to photo ionize a helium atom as a hydrogen atom.
- ▶ In the range of  $13.6 \text{ eV} < h\nu < 24.6 \text{ eV}$ , on the other hand, nearly all the photons go to ionize H; scarcer atoms (metals like O and C) account for only a tiny fraction of the ionizations.

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- ***Radiative Recombination of Helium***



$$\alpha_A(T) \approx 4.13 \times 10^{-13} Z(T_4/Z^2)^{-0.7131 - 0.0115 \ln(T_4/Z^2)} \quad [\text{cm}^3 \text{s}^{-1}] \quad (30 \text{ K} < T/Z^2 < 3 \times 10^4 \text{ K})$$

$$\alpha_B(T) \approx 2.54 \times 10^{-13} Z(T_4/Z^2)^{-0.8163 - 0.0208 \ln(T_4/Z^2)} \quad [\text{cm}^3 \text{s}^{-1}]$$



$$\alpha_{1s^2, \text{He}} = 1.54 \times 10^{-13} T_4^{-0.486} \quad [\text{cm}^3 \text{s}^{-1}] \quad (0.5 < T_4 < 2)$$

$$\alpha_{B, \text{He}} = 2.72 \times 10^{-13} T_4^{-0.789} \quad [\text{cm}^3 \text{s}^{-1}]$$

Here,  $\alpha_{B, \text{He}}$  is the recombination rate coefficient to all states except the ground state, and  $\alpha_{1s^2, \text{He}}$  is the recombination rate to the ground state  $1s^2 1S_0$ .

- **Effective recombination rate coefficient for Helium**
  - The recombinations directly to the **ground state**  $1s^2 1S_0$  of neutral helium produce photons with  $h\nu > 24.6 \text{ eV}$ . **These photons are capable of photoionizing not only neutral helium atoms but also neutral hydrogen atoms; the fraction of these that ionize hydrogen is**

$$\begin{aligned} y &= \frac{n_{\text{H}^0} \sigma_{\text{pi}, \text{H}^0}(E)}{n_{\text{H}^0} \sigma_{\text{pi}, \text{H}^0}(E) + n_{\text{He}^0} \sigma_{\text{pi}, \text{He}^0}(E)} \\ &= \left[ 1 + \frac{n_{\text{He}^0}}{n_{\text{H}^0}} \frac{\sigma_{\text{pi}, \text{He}^0}(E)}{\sigma_{\text{pi}, \text{H}^0}(E)} \right]^{-1}, \quad \text{where } E \approx 24.6 \text{ eV} + kT \end{aligned}$$

$\sigma_{\text{pi}, \text{He}^0}(E)/\sigma_{\text{pi}, \text{H}^0} > 6.0$ , for  $E > 24.6 \text{ eV}$

$y < 0.5$  if  $n_{\text{He}^0}/n_{\text{H}^0} > 0.16$

In an optically thick gas, the effective radiative recombination rate coefficient for  $\text{He}^+ \rightarrow \text{He}^0$  is then

$$\alpha_{\text{eff}, \text{He}} = \alpha_{\text{B}, \text{He}} + y \alpha_{1s^2, \text{He}} = \alpha_{\text{A}, \text{He}} - (1 - y) \alpha_{1s^2, \text{He}}$$

At  $T = 10,000 \text{ K}$ ,

$$\alpha_{\text{B}, \text{He}} = 2.72 \times 10^{-13} \text{ [cm}^3 \text{s}^{-1}\text{]} \rightarrow \alpha_{\text{eff}, \text{He}} \approx 3.0 \times 10^{-13} \text{ [cm}^3 \text{s}^{-1}\text{]}$$

$$\alpha_{1s^2, \text{He}} = 1.54 \times 10^{-13} \text{ [cm}^3 \text{s}^{-1}\text{]} \approx 1.2 \alpha_{\text{B}, \text{H}}$$

$$y \approx 0.2$$

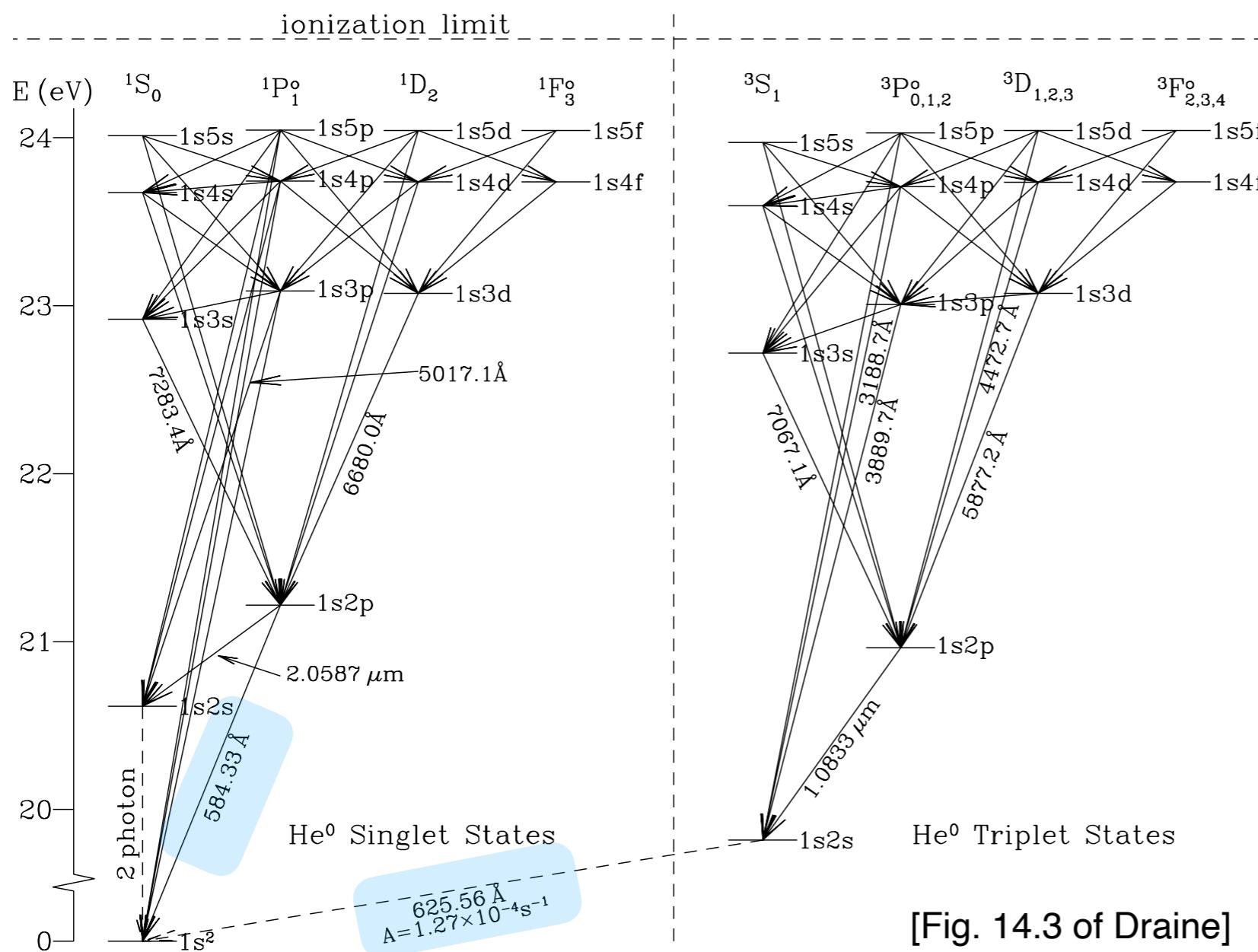
- Consider now the recombination to **excited levels** of  $\text{He}^0$ , which are followed by a radiative cascade down. Most of photons produced by the cascades have  $h\nu > 13.6 \text{ eV}$ . A fraction of these photons are capable of photoionizing hydrogen. Let  $z$  be this fraction.

$z \approx 0.96$  at low densities

$\approx 0.67$  at high densities

We take an intermediate value  $z \approx 0.8$ .

- See Section 14.3.2 and 15.5 of [Draine] for details.
- [Ryden] assumes that  $z = 1$ .



- Recombination: Suppose that we have a Strömgren sphere with the cosmic abundance ratio of helium to hydrogen  $f \equiv n_{\text{He}}/n_{\text{H}} \approx 0.096$ . Now define:

$$Q_0 \equiv \int_{I_{\text{H}}/h}^{\infty} \frac{L_{\nu}}{h\nu} d\nu, \quad Q_1 \equiv \int_{I_{\text{He}}/h}^{\infty} \frac{L_{\nu}}{h\nu} d\nu \quad (Q_1 < Q_0)$$

- In the very central region, the hydrogen would be fully ionized, and the helium would be all singly ionized. Even the hottest O stars don't produce a significant number of photons with  $h\nu > 54.5 \text{ eV}$ ; hence, there will be no significant amount of doubly ionized He III.
- This will result in

$$n_{\text{HI}^0} = n_{\text{H}}$$

$$n_{\text{He}^+} = n_{\text{He}} = f n_{\text{H}}$$

$$n_e = n_{\text{H}^+} + n_{\text{He}^+} = (1 + f) n_{\text{H}}$$

- The volumetric rate of the hydrogen recombination is

$$\frac{dn_{\text{H}^+}}{dt} = -\alpha_{\text{B,H}} n_e n_{\text{H}^+} = -\alpha_{\text{B,H}} (1 + f) n_{\text{H}}^2$$

- The volumetric rate of He recombination is

$$\frac{dn_{\text{He}^+}}{dt} = -\alpha_{\text{eff,He}} n_e n_{\text{He}^+} = -\alpha_{\text{eff,He}} f (1 + f) n_{\text{H}}^2$$

- 
- Comparing the above equations, we see that

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{dn_{\text{He}^+}}{dt} &= \left( \frac{\alpha_{\text{eff,He}}}{\alpha_{\text{B,H}}} \right) f \frac{dn_{\text{H}^+}}{dt} \\ &\approx (1.2)(0.096) \frac{dn_{\text{H}^+}}{dt} \\ &\approx 0.11 \frac{dn_{\text{H}^+}}{dt}\end{aligned}$$

- Thus, for every helium recombination, we expect about 9 hydrogen recombinations.

# Radius of the He<sup>+</sup> zone

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- We summarize the recombination paths, as follows, under the Case B condition:
  - $13.6 \text{ eV} < h\nu < 24.6 \text{ eV}$  : A stellar photon will ionize one H atom.
  - $h\nu > 24.6 \text{ eV}$  : For a fraction of  $y$  of the direct recombinations to the ground state, a stellar photon will ionize one H atom. For the remaining fraction  $(1 - y)$  of these, a stellar photon will ionize one He atom.
  - $h\nu > 24.6 \text{ eV}$  : For the recombinations to excited states, a stellar photon will ionize one He atom, and will additionally ionize one He atom for a fraction of  $z$  of the recombination events.
- **Number of ionized atoms:** The number of ionized helium and hydrogen,  $N(\text{He}^+)$  and  $N(\text{H}^+)$ , within the ionized regions can be estimated by balancing recombinations and photoionizations:

$$N(\text{He}^+)n_e (\alpha_{\text{B},\text{He}} + y\alpha_{1s^2,\text{He}}) = (1 - y)Q_1$$

$$N(\text{H}^+)n_e \alpha_{\text{B},\text{H}} = (Q_0 - Q_1) + yQ_1 + N(\text{He}^+)n_e (z\alpha_{\text{B},\text{He}} + y\alpha_{1s^2,\text{He}})$$

$$\rightarrow \frac{N(\text{He}^+)}{N(\text{H}^+)} = \frac{(1 - y)\alpha_{\text{B},\text{H}}(Q_1/Q_0)}{\alpha_{\text{B},\text{He}} + y\alpha_{1s^2,\text{He}} - (1 - y)(1 - z)(Q_1/Q_0)\alpha_{\text{B},\text{He}}}$$

---


$$\frac{N(\text{He}^+)}{N(\text{H}^+)} \approx \frac{0.68(Q_1/Q_0)}{1 - 0.17(Q_1/Q_0)} \quad \text{for } z \approx 0.8, T = 8000 \text{ K, and } y = 0.2$$

- Condition for full ionization of the He:

$$\frac{N(\text{He}^+)}{N(\text{H}^+)} = \frac{n_{\text{He}}}{n_{\text{H}}} = 0.096 \rightarrow \frac{Q_1}{Q_0} \approx 0.15$$

- ***Radius of the He<sup>+</sup> zone:***

$$N(\text{He}^+) = \frac{4\pi}{3} R_{\text{He}}^3 n_{\text{He}}$$

$$N(\text{H}^+) = \frac{4\pi}{3} R_{\text{H}}^3 n_{\text{H}}$$

$R_{\text{He}} < R_{\text{H}}$  if  $Q_1/Q_0 \lesssim 0.15$

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{R_{\text{He}}}{R_{\text{H}}} &= \left[ \frac{n_{\text{H}}}{n_{\text{He}}} \frac{N(\text{He}^+)}{N(\text{H}^+)} \right]^{1/3} \\ &= \left[ \frac{7.08(Q_1/Q_0)}{1 - 0.17(Q_1/Q_0)} \right]^{1/3} \end{aligned}$$

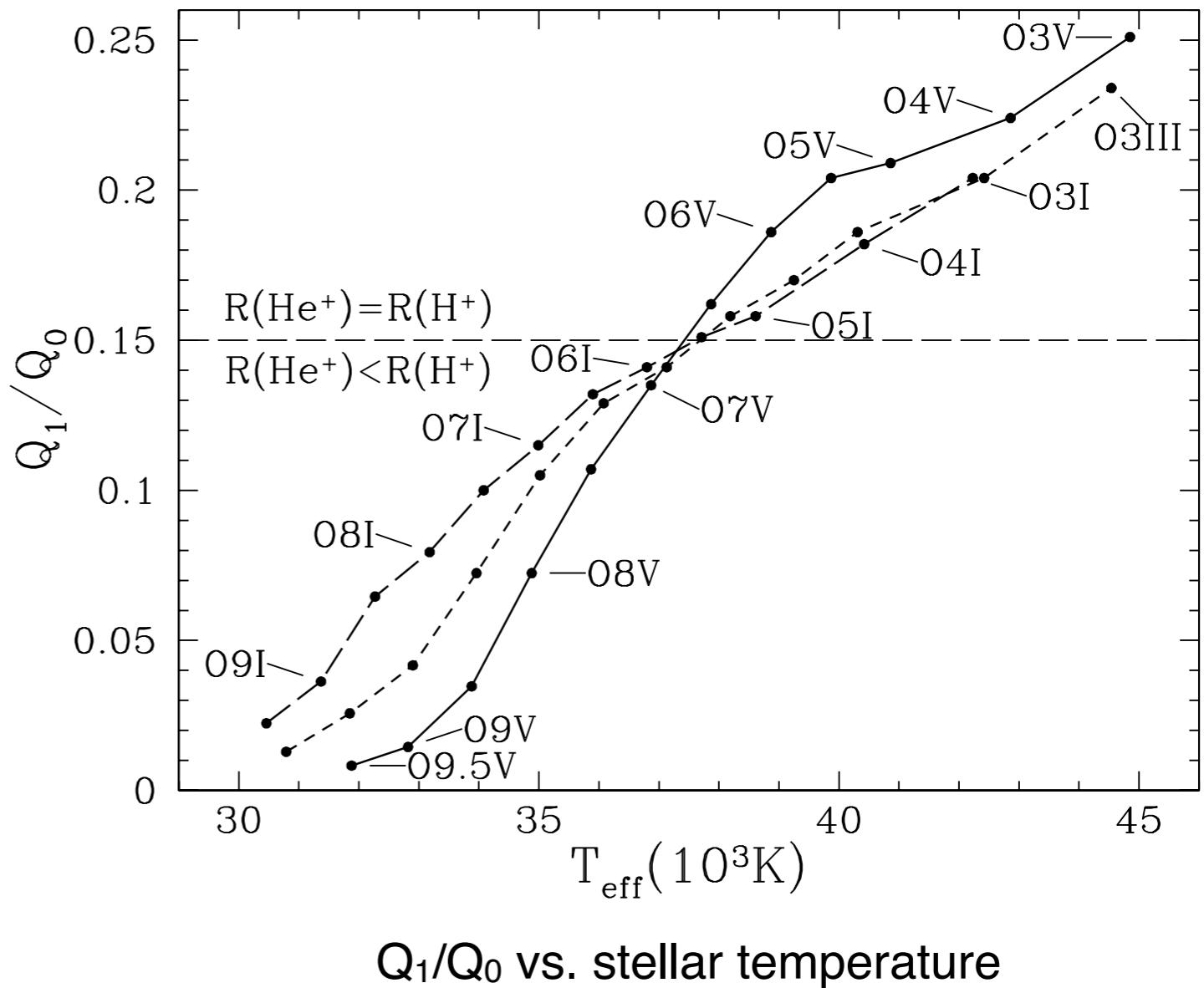
- On the main sequence, a star with spectral class O7, corresponding to effective temperature  $T_{\text{eff}} = 37,000 \text{ K}$ , will have a critical ratio  $Q_1/Q_0 \sim 0.14$ .
  - ▶ For cooler ionizing stars, the ionized helium sphere will have a radius that is smaller than the radius of the ionized hydrogen sphere.
  - ▶ For stellar temperature  $T_{\text{eff}} > 37,000 \text{ K}$ , the ionized helium sphere has the same size as the ionized hydrogen sphere, because of the limit on the abundance. The photons with  $h\nu > 24.6 \text{ eV}$  will be used up to ionize H.

Table 15.1 [Draine]

SpTp	$M/M_{\odot}$	$T_{\text{eff}}$ (K)	$\log_{10}(Q_0/\text{s}^{-1})^b$	$Q_1/Q_0^c$	$\log_{10}(L/L_{\odot})^d$
O3V	58.0	44850	49.64	0.251	5.84
O4V	46.9	42860	49.44	0.224	5.67
O5V	38.1	40860	49.22	0.209	5.49
O5.5V	34.4	39870	49.10	0.204	5.41
O6V	31.0	38870	48.99	0.186	5.32
O6.5V	28.0	37870	48.88	0.162	5.23
O7V	25.3	36870	48.75	0.135	5.14
O7.5V	22.9	35870	48.61	0.107	5.05
O8V	20.8	34880	48.44	0.072	4.96
O8.5V	18.8	33880	48.27	0.0347	4.86
O9V	17.1	32830	48.06	0.0145	4.77
O9.5V	15.6	31880	47.88	0.0083	4.68
O3III	56.0	44540	49.77	0.234	5.96
O4III	47.4	42420	49.64	0.204	5.85
O5III	40.4	40310	49.48	0.186	5.73
O5.5III	37.4	39250	49.40	0.170	5.67
O6III	34.5	38190	49.32	0.158	5.61
O6.5III	32.0	37130	49.23	0.141	5.54
O7III	29.6	36080	49.13	0.129	5.48
O7.5III	27.5	35020	49.01	0.105	5.42
O8III	25.5	33960	48.88	0.072	5.35
O8.5III	23.7	32900	48.75	0.0417	5.28
O9III	22.0	31850	48.65	0.0257	5.21
O9.5III	20.6	30790	48.42	0.0129	5.15
O3I	67.5	42230	49.78	0.204	5.99
O4I	58.5	40420	49.70	0.182	5.93
O5I	50.7	38610	49.62	0.158	5.87
O5.5I	47.3	37710	49.58	0.151	5.84
O6I	44.1	36800	49.52	0.141	5.81
O6.5I	41.2	35900	49.46	0.132	5.78
O7I	38.4	34990	49.41	0.115	5.75
O7.5I	36.0	34080	49.31	0.100	5.72
O8I	33.7	33180	49.25	0.079	5.68
O8.5I	31.5	32270	49.19	0.065	5.65
O9I	29.6	31370	49.11	0.0363	5.61
O9.5I	27.8	30460	49.00	0.0224	5.57

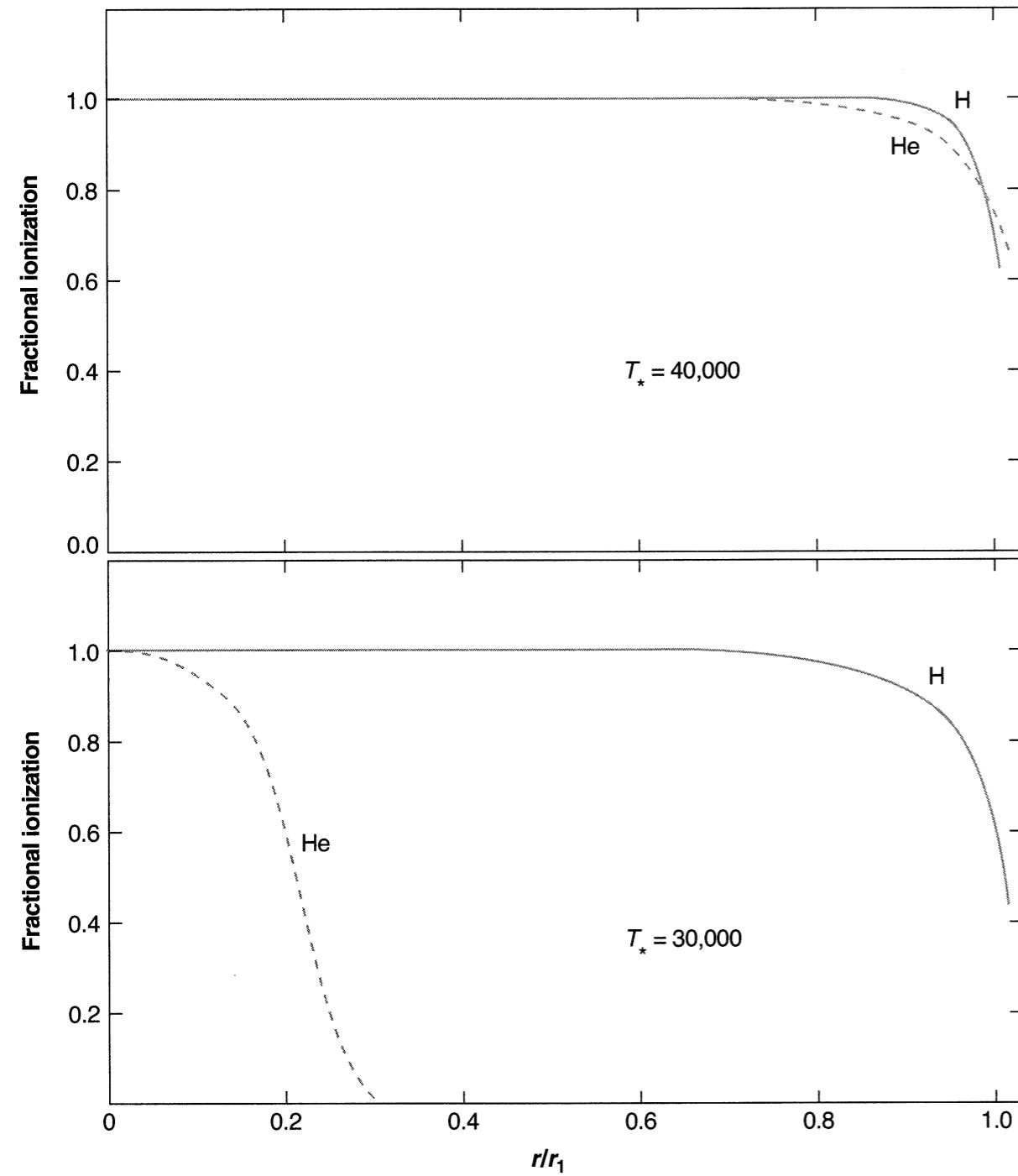
<sup>a</sup> After Martins et al. (2005).<sup>b</sup>  $Q_0$  = rate of emission of  $h\nu > 13.6 \text{ eV}$  photons.<sup>c</sup>  $Q_1$  = rate of emission of  $h\nu > 24.6 \text{ eV}$  photons.<sup>d</sup>  $L$  = total electromagnetic luminosity.

Figure 15.5 [Draine]



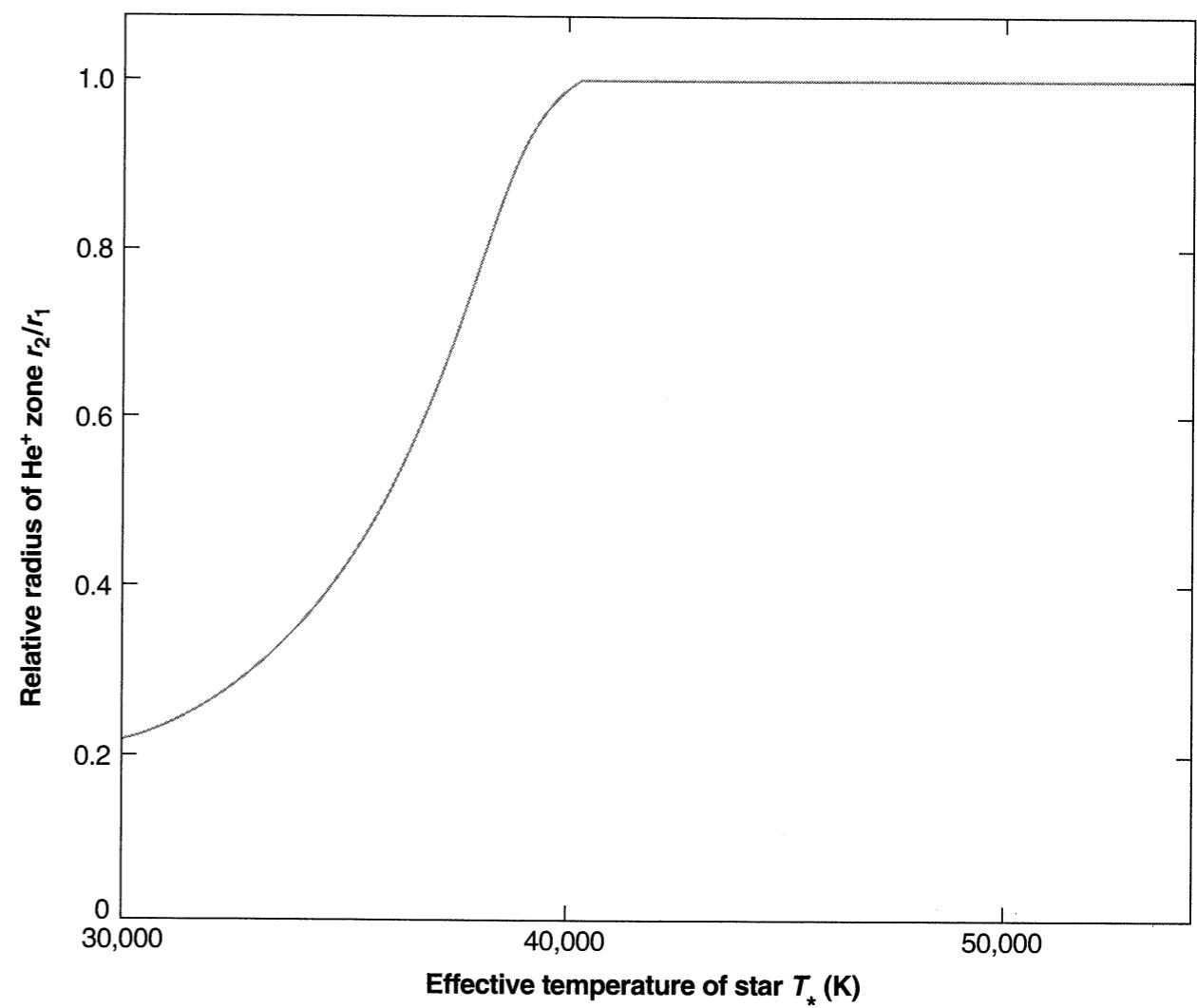
$Q_1/Q_0 > 0.15$  is required for He to be ionized throughout the H II region, corresponding to  $T_{\text{eff}} > 37,000 \text{ K}$ .

Figure 2.4 [Osterbrock]



Ionization structure of two homogeneous  $\text{H}^+$  He model of  $\text{H II}$  regions.

Figure 2.5 [Osterbrock]



Relative radius of  $\text{He}^+$  zone as a function of effective temperature of exciting star.

- **Metals:** Ions that requires  $E > 24.6$  eV for their formation will present only in the  $\text{He}^+$  zone.

[Draine] **Table 15.2** Abundant Ions in H II Regions<sup>a</sup>

Element	H II and He I zone <sup>b</sup>		H II and He II zone <sup>c</sup>	
	Ion	$h\nu$ (eV) <sup>d</sup>	Ion	$h\nu$ (eV) <sup>d</sup>
H	H II	13.60	H II	13.60
He	He I	0	He II	24.59
C	C II	11.26	C III <sup>e</sup>	24.38
			C IV	47.88
N	N II	14.53	N III	29.60
			N IV	47.45
O	O II	13.62	O III	35.12
Ne	Ne II	21.56	Ne III	40.96
Na	(Na II) <sup>f</sup>	5.14	(Na II) <sup>f</sup>	5.14
			Na III	47.29
Mg	Mg II	7.65	(Mg III) <sup>f</sup>	15.04
	(Mg III) <sup>f</sup>	15.04		
Al	Al III	18.83	(Al IV) <sup>f</sup>	28.45
Si	Si III	16.35	Si IV	33.49
			(Si V) <sup>f</sup>	45.14
S	S II	10.36	S III	23.33
	S III	23.33	S IV	34.83
Ar	Ar II	15.76	Ar III	27.63
			Ar IV	40.74
Ca	Ca III	11.87	Ca IV	50.91
Fe	Fe III	16.16	Fe IV	30.65
Ni	Ni III	18.17	Ni IV	35.17

<sup>a</sup> Limited to elements  $X$  with  $N_X/N_{\text{H}} > 10^{-6}$ .

<sup>b</sup> Ions that can be created by radiation with  $13.60 < h\nu < 24.59$  eV.

<sup>c</sup> Ions that can be created by radiation with  $24.59 < h\nu < 54.42$  eV.

<sup>d</sup> Photon energy required to create ion.

<sup>e</sup> Ionization potential is just below 24.59 eV.

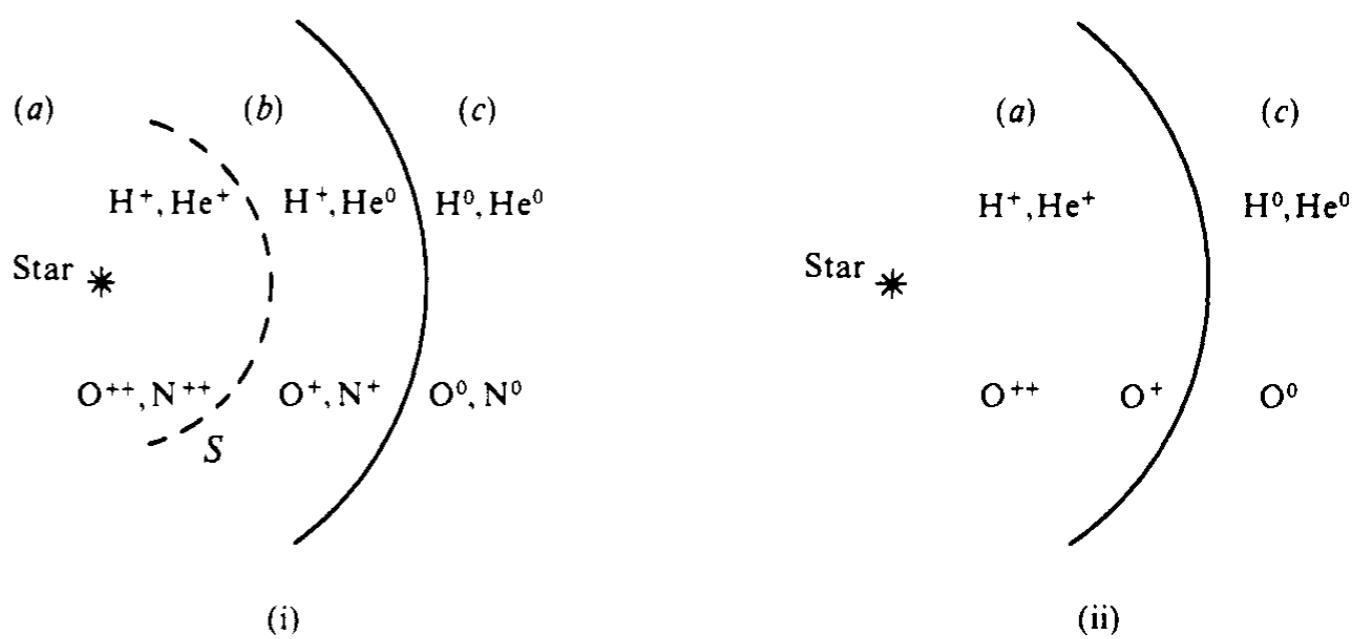
<sup>f</sup> Closed shell, with no excited states below 13.6 eV.

[Page 238, Dopita]

The dominant ionization zones of the nebula for the most abundant elements and important coolants are as follows:

H I, He I : C II, N I, O I, Ne I, S II,  
 H II, He I : C II, (C III), N II, O II, Ne II, S II, (S III),  
 H II, He II : C III, (C IV), N III, O III, Ne III, S III, (S IV, S V),  
 H II, He III : C IV, N IV, O IV, Ne III, S V, and higher,

[Figure 5.3, Dyson]  
 Ionization stratification in a nebula. (i) Low stellar temperature, (ii) High stellar temperature



# Recombination lines

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- Balmer lines
- Metal lines

# Heating and Cooling in H II Regions: Heating

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- Temperature?
  - $T_{\text{HII}} \sim 10,000 \text{ K}$ . Observations indicate that the temperatures of H II regions are remarkably independent of the effective temperature of the central star.
  - The temperature is not determined by the central star. It is the result of a balance between heating and cooling mechanisms in the ionized gas of the H II region.
  - The main source of heating in an ionized nebula is photoionization.
- ***Photoionization Heating***
  - When hydrogen is photoionized from its ground state, the photoelectron that is emitted carries away a kinetic energy:

$$E = h\nu - I_{\text{H}} \quad (h\nu = \text{energy of incident photon})$$

The mean energy of the ejected electrons, averaged over all photoionization, is

$$\langle E \rangle = \langle h\nu \rangle - I_{\text{H}}$$

- The average energy  $\langle h\nu \rangle$  of an ionizing photon must be weighted by the photoionization cross-section.

$$\langle h\nu \rangle = \frac{\int_{\nu_0}^{\infty} (4\pi J_{\nu}/h\nu)(h\nu)\sigma_{\text{pi}} d\nu}{\int_{\nu_0}^{\infty} (4\pi J_{\nu}/h\nu)\sigma_{\text{pi}} d\nu}$$

- Although stars are not blackbodies, we will use the Planck function. Because the energy of ionizing photons is  $h\nu > 1.36 \text{ eV}$ , we use the high-energy Wien tail with an effective temperature  $T_{\text{eff}}$ .

$$J_\nu \propto \nu^3 \exp\left(-\frac{h\nu}{kT_{\text{eff}}}\right) \quad \text{and} \quad \sigma_{\text{pi}} \propto \nu^{-3}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \langle h\nu \rangle &= \frac{h \int_{\nu_0}^{\infty} (\nu^2 e^{-h\nu/kT_{\text{eff}}}) \nu \cdot \nu^{-3} d\nu}{\int_{\nu_0}^{\infty} (\nu^2 e^{-h\nu/kT_{\text{eff}}}) \nu^{-3} d\nu} \\ &= kT_{\text{eff}} \frac{\int_{x_0}^{\infty} e^{-x} dx}{\int_{x_0}^{\infty} e^{-x} x^{-1} dx} \quad \text{Here, } x \equiv h\nu/kT_{\text{eff}} \text{ and } x_0 \equiv h\nu_0/kT_{\text{eff}} \\ &= kT_{\text{eff}} \frac{e^{-x_0}}{\int_{x_0}^{\infty} e^{-x} x^{-1} dx} = kT_{\text{eff}} \frac{e^{-x_0}}{E_1(x_0)} \end{aligned}$$

The integral in the denominator is the first exponential integral  $E_1(x_0)$ . Then, we obtain

$$E_1(x_0) \simeq \frac{e^{-x_0}}{x_0} \left[ 1 - \frac{1}{x_0} + \mathcal{O}(x_0^{-2}) \right] \quad \text{for } x_0 \gg 1$$

$$\langle h\nu \rangle \approx kT_{\text{eff}} x_0 \left( 1 + \frac{1}{x_0} \right) = h\nu_0 + kT_{\text{eff}} \longrightarrow$$

**Mean kinetic energy of the ejected electrons:**

$$\langle E \rangle = \langle h\nu \rangle - I_H \approx kT_{\text{eff}}$$

- 
- **Volumetric heating rate:** In photoionization equilibrium,

$$n_{\text{H}^0} \zeta_{\text{pi}} = n_e n_{\text{H}^+} \alpha_{\text{B},\text{H}}$$

Hence, the volumetric heating rate is

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{G}_{\text{pi}} &= n_{\text{H}^0} \zeta_{\text{pi}} \langle E \rangle = n_e n_{\text{H}^+} \alpha_{\text{B},\text{H}} kT_{\text{eff}} \\ &= n_{\text{H}}^2 \alpha_{\text{B},\text{H}} kT_{\text{eff}} \\ &\propto T_{\text{gas}}^{-0.83} T_{\text{eff}} \end{aligned} \quad \leftarrow \quad \alpha_{\text{B},\text{H}} \approx 2.59 \times 10^{-13} (T_{\text{gas}}/10^4 \text{ K})^{-0.833} [\text{cm}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}]$$

Notice that the volumetric heating rate decreases with increasing gas temperature.

- **Necessity of the cooling mechanisms**

- ▶ An O3 main sequence star has an effective temperature  $T_{\text{eff}} \sim 44850 \text{ K}$  ( $kT_{\text{eff}} \sim 3.9 \text{ eV}$ ), and thus the photoelectrons will have a mean energy of 3.9 eV.
- ▶ However, the free electrons in the 10,000 K nebula have a mean energy  $(3/2) kT_{\text{gas}} \sim 1.3 \text{ eV}$ .
- ▶ Therefore, some cooling mechanism must be reducing the average kinetic energy of the photoelectrons.

# Heating and Cooling in H II Regions: Cooling

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- **Main cooling sources in H II regions:**
  - Recombination Continuum and Line Emission (free-bound)
  - Thermal Bremsstrahlung (free-free)
  - Collisional Excited Line Emission
- **Recombination Cooling:**
  - Recombination cooling occurs when electrons undergo radiative recombination with protons to form neutral hydrogen atoms. The volumetric cooling rate is

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{rr}} = n_e n_{\text{H}^+} \alpha_{\text{B}, \text{H}} \langle E_{\text{rr}} \rangle$$

where  $\langle E_{\text{rr}} \rangle$  is the mean kinetic energy of the recombining electrons. The mean kinetic energy is obtained by weighting by cross section and integrating over the Maxwell distribution

$$\langle E_{\text{rr}} \rangle = \frac{\int v^2 d\nu e^{-E/kT_{\text{gas}}} \sigma_{\text{rr}} v E}{\int v^2 d\nu e^{-E/kT_{\text{gas}}} \sigma_{\text{rr}} v}$$

Note that  $\langle E_{\text{rr}} \rangle \neq (3/2)kT_{\text{gas}}$ . This is because the radiative recombination cross-section is a decreasing function of electron kinetic energy.

---

We will perform the integration by approximating that the radiative recombination cross-section, at about  $T \sim 10^4$  K, by a power-law:

$$\sigma_{\text{rr}}(E) = \sigma_0 (E/E_0)^\gamma \quad \text{where } \gamma \approx -1.316 \text{ for Case B}$$

See Section 27.3.1 of [Draine] for the derivation of the power-law index.

Then, the mean energy per recombining electron (for Case B) is

$$\begin{aligned} \langle E_{\text{rr}} \rangle &= \frac{\Gamma(3 + \gamma)}{\Gamma(2 + \gamma)} kT_{\text{gas}} = (2 + \gamma) kT_{\text{gas}} \\ &= 0.684 kT_{\text{gas}} \end{aligned}$$

The cooling rate from the recombination is

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{rr}} = n_e n_{\text{H}^+} \alpha_{\text{B}, \text{H}} (\gamma + 2) kT_{\text{gas}}$$

- Gas temperature:
  - If radiative recombination were the only cooling mechanism, then the gas temperature would be found by setting the photoionization heating and the recombination cooling.

$$\mathcal{G}_{\text{pi}} = \mathcal{L}_{\text{rr}} \longrightarrow n_e n_{\text{H}^+} \alpha_{\text{B}, \text{H}} kT_{\text{eff}} = n_e n_{\text{H}^+} \alpha_{\text{B}, \text{H}} (\gamma + 2) kT_{\text{gas}}$$

$$T_{\text{gas}} = \frac{T_{\text{eff}}}{2 + \gamma} = \frac{T_{\text{eff}}}{0.684} = 1.462 T_{\text{eff}}$$

*The resulting temperature would be ~46% higher than the effective temperature of the central star. For an O3 main sequence star with  $T_{\text{eff}} = 44,900 \text{ K}$ , the nebula temperature will be  $T_{\text{gas}} = 66,000 \text{ K}$*

This is because radiative recombination selectively removes the lower-energy free electrons (because of the higher cross section at lower energy), and thus increases the mean kinetic energy of electrons that are left without being captured.

- Hence, we need an additional cooling mechanism.
- **Free-free cooling:**
  - Bremsstrahlung cooling occurs when free electrons are accelerated by close encounters with protons or other ions, and thus emit radiation.
  - For a pure hydrogen gas, the volumetric cooling rate is

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{ff}} = \frac{32\pi}{3} \left(\frac{2\pi}{3}\right)^{1/2} \frac{e^6}{m_e^2 h c^3} (m_e k T_{\text{gas}})^{1/2} n_{\text{H}^+} n_e \bar{g}_{\text{ff}}$$

where  $\bar{g}_{\text{ff}}$  is the Gaunt factor.

$$\bar{g}_{\text{ff}} \approx 1.34 (T/10^4 \text{ K})^{0.05}$$

- The ratio between the RR cooling and free-free cooling rates is

$$\frac{\mathcal{L}_{\text{ff}}}{\mathcal{L}_{\text{rr}}} = \frac{32\pi}{3} \left(\frac{2\pi}{3}\right)^{1/2} \frac{e^6}{m_e^2 h c^3} \left(\frac{m_e}{kT_{\text{gas}}}\right)^{1/2} \frac{\bar{g}_{\text{ff}}}{(2+\gamma)\alpha_{\text{B,H}}}$$

Note that both cooling mechanisms are two-body processes and thus the factors  $n_e n_{\text{H}^+}$  cancel.

$$\frac{\mathcal{L}_{\text{ff}}}{\mathcal{L}_{\text{rr}}} \approx 0.79 \left(T_{\text{gas}}/10^4 \text{ K}\right)^{0.37}$$

- Adding the free-free cooling, we can estimate the gas temperature, as follows:

$$\mathcal{G}_{\text{pi}} = \mathcal{L}_{\text{rr}} + \mathcal{L}_{\text{ff}} \longrightarrow T_{\text{eff}} = (\gamma + 2) T_{\text{gas}} \left[1 + 0.79 \left(T_{\text{gas}}/10^4 \text{ K}\right)^{0.37}\right]$$

$$\gamma + 2 = 0.684$$

Example: for an O3 main sequence star with  $T_{\text{eff}} = 44,900 \text{ K}$ , the nebula temperature will be  $T_{\text{gas}} = 30,000 \text{ K}$  if both the radiative recombination and free-free coolings are taken into account. This temperature is still higher than that is actually observed in H II regions.

- ***Collisional excited line cooling***

- If a free electron collisional excites an atom or ion from a lower energy level to an excited level, the energy difference between the levels is taken from the free electron's kinetic energy. If the excited atom or ion then undergoes radiative de-excitation, and if the emitted photon escapes from the nebula, then there is a net cooling of the gas.

- 
- To cool from  $T \sim 30,000$  K to  $\sim 10,000$  K, the energy levels of the excited system must be separated by a difference  $\Delta E \approx 1 - 3$  eV [ $T \approx (1.2 - 3.5) \times 10^4$  K].
    - ▶ If  $\Delta E$  is much lower than this value, then the photons emitted by radiative de-excitation will carry away only a small amount of energy.
    - ▶ If  $\Delta E$  is much higher than this value, then only a small fraction of free electrons will have high enough energies to excite the ions or atoms.
    - ▶ In H II regions, most of the hydrogen will be ionized. Even if some He or  $\text{He}^+$  is present, the energy of the first excited state is so far above the ground state that the rate for collisional excitation is negligible. Ly $\alpha$  ( $\Delta E = 10.2$  eV) emission from neutral hydrogen atoms is not effective at cooling H II regions. Similarly, the first excited state of neutral helium is far too energetic ( $\Delta E = 20.6$  eV) to be collisional excited.
  - This is where the heavy atoms such as oxygen and nitrogen play a key role in cooling H II regions.
    - ▶ In particular, O II, N II, and O III have forbidden transitions in the 1 - 3 eV range.
    - ▶ If the collisional excitation is followed by a collisional de-excitation, the kinetic energy of the gas will be unchanged.
    - ▶ Therefore, if a collisional excitation is to result in cooling, it must be followed by a radiative de-excitation. For radiative de-excitation to dominate over collisional de-excitation, the number density of electrons must be lower than the critical density  $n_{\text{crit}}$ .
    - ▶ The critical density for these forbidden lines are indeed high compared to typical densities in an H II region.

- If the collisional excited levels are radiatively de-excited, the rate of energy loss by the gas is

$$\mathcal{L}_{ce} = \sum_X \sum_i n(X, i) \sum_{j < i} A_{ij} (E_i - E_j)$$

where the sum is over species  $X$  and excited states  $i$ .

Main contributors to line cooling in H II regions  
[Table 4.1 in Ryden]

Name	$\lambda$ [Å]	$A_{ul}$ [ $10^{-3} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ]	$n_{\text{crit}}$ [ $10^4 \text{ cm}^{-3}$ ]
O II ${}^4\text{S} - {}^2\text{D}$	3726	0.16	1.5
	3729	0.036	0.34
N II ${}^3\text{P} - {}^1\text{D}$	6548	0.98	6.6
	6583	3.0	6.6
O III ${}^3\text{P} - {}^1\text{D}$	4959	6.8	68
	5007	20.	68

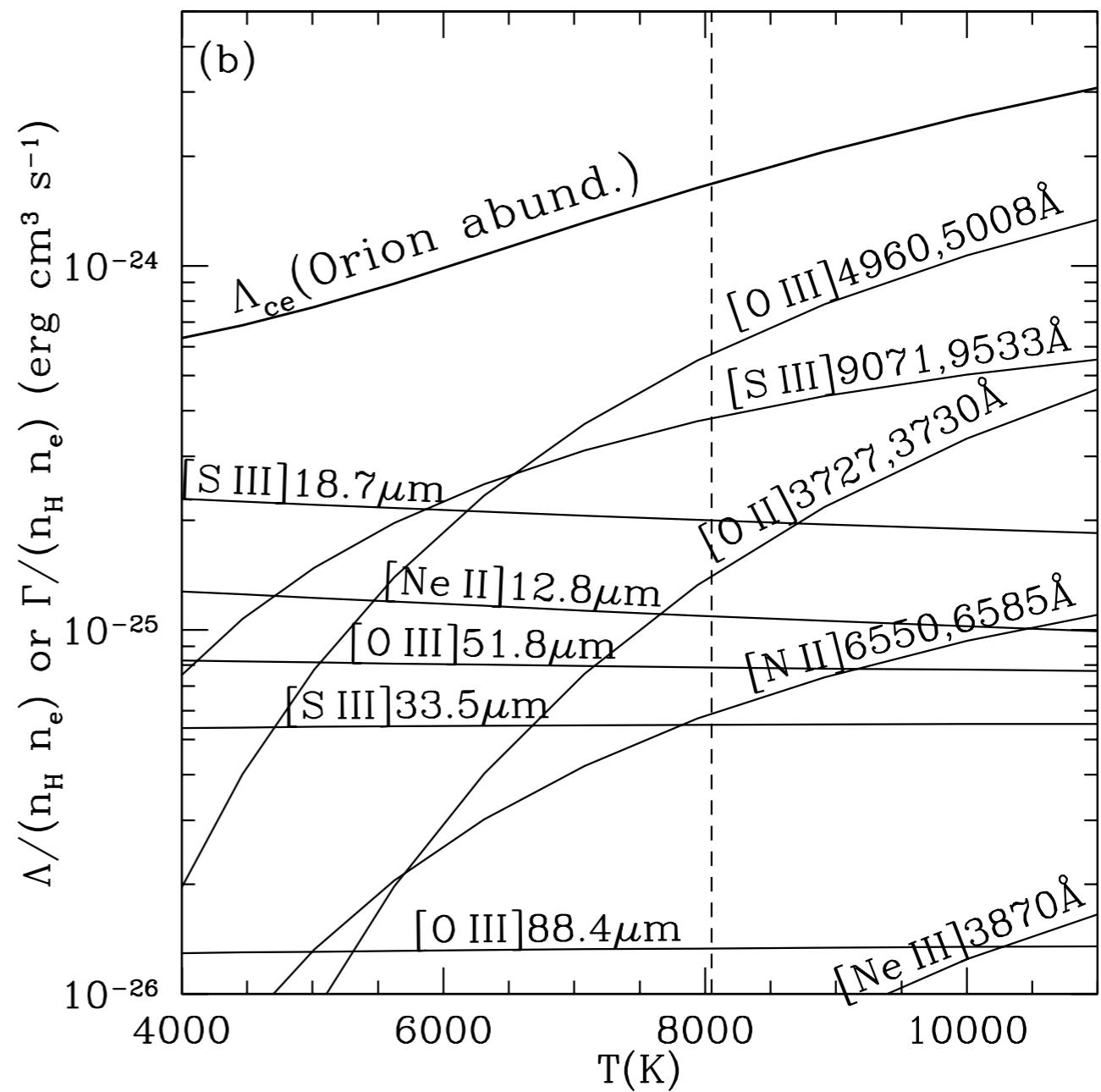
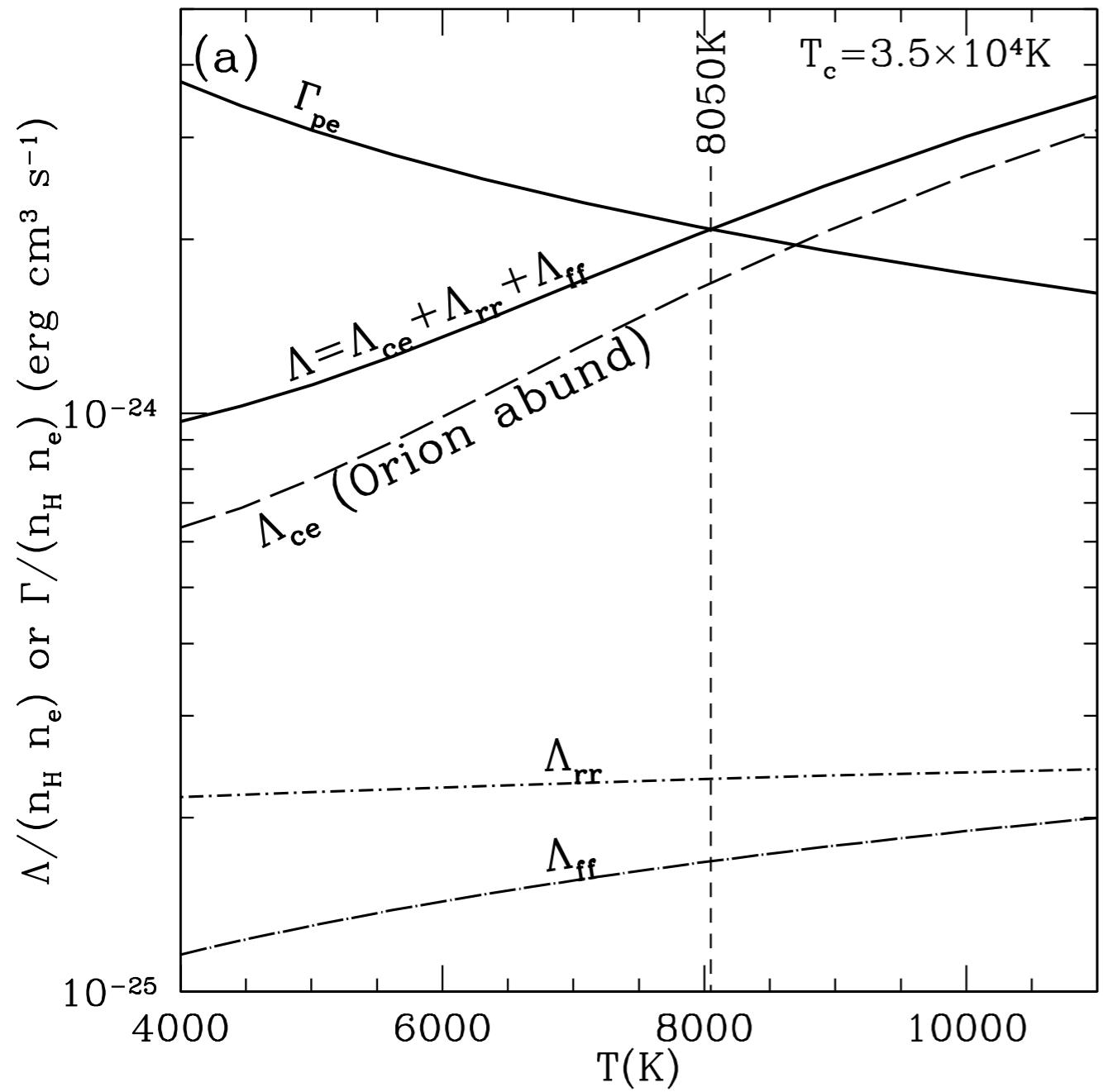
- **Density Effect:** If the density is high, fewer of the possible cooling lines are above the critical density.
  - Thus, cooling becomes less effective at higher densities, and the equilibrium temperature of the nebula goes up.
  - For instance, the temperature of an Orion-like nebula increases from  $T_{\text{gas}} = 6600 \text{ K}$  at  $n_{\text{H}} = 100 \text{ cm}^{-3}$  to  $T = 9050 \text{ K}$  at  $n_{\text{H}} = 10^6 \text{ cm}^{-3}$ .
- **Metallicity Effect:**
  - An Orion-like nebula (around a star with  $T_{\text{eff}} = 35,000 \text{ K}$ ) has a gas temperature of  $T_{\text{gas}} \sim 8050 \text{ K}$ .
  - If the metallicity were zero, the gas temperature would be  $T_{\text{gas}} \sim 250,000 \text{ K}$ .
  - If the metallicity were 3 times that of the Orion Nebula, its temperature would be  $T_{\text{gas}} \sim 5400 \text{ K}$ .

# Heating and Cooling Function (1)

Heating and Cooling function as a function of gas temperature in an H II region with Orion-like abundances and density  $n_H = 4000 \text{ cm}^{-3}$ . Heating and cooling balance at  $T_{\text{gas}} \sim 8050 \text{ K}$ .

Contributions of individual collisionally-excited lines to the cooling function.

[Figure 27.1 in Draine]



# Heating and Cooling function - Dependence on Metallicity

Heating and Cooling function as a function of gas temperature

(a) For an abundance of 10% of that of the Orion Nebula

(b) For 3 times higher abundance

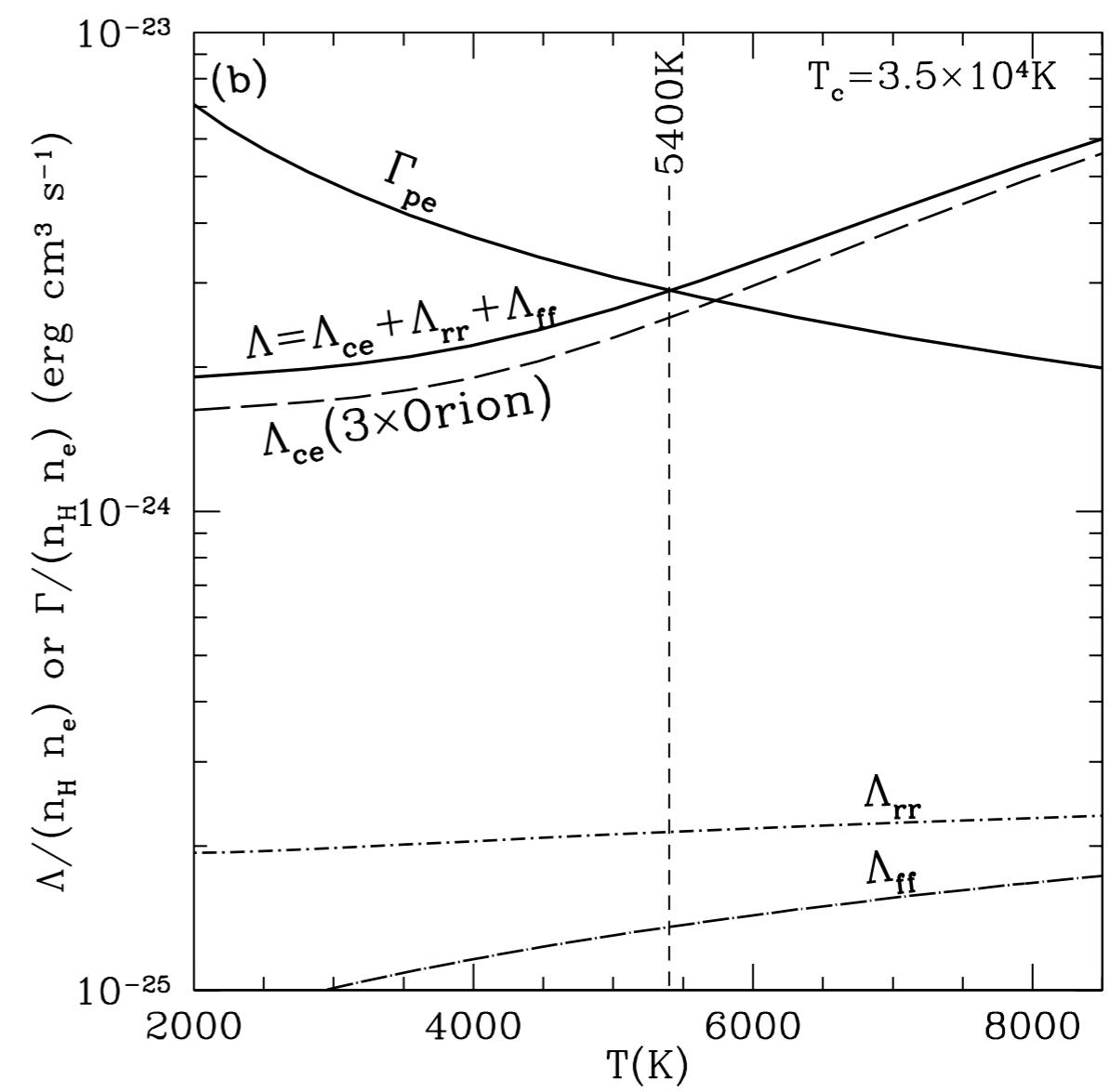
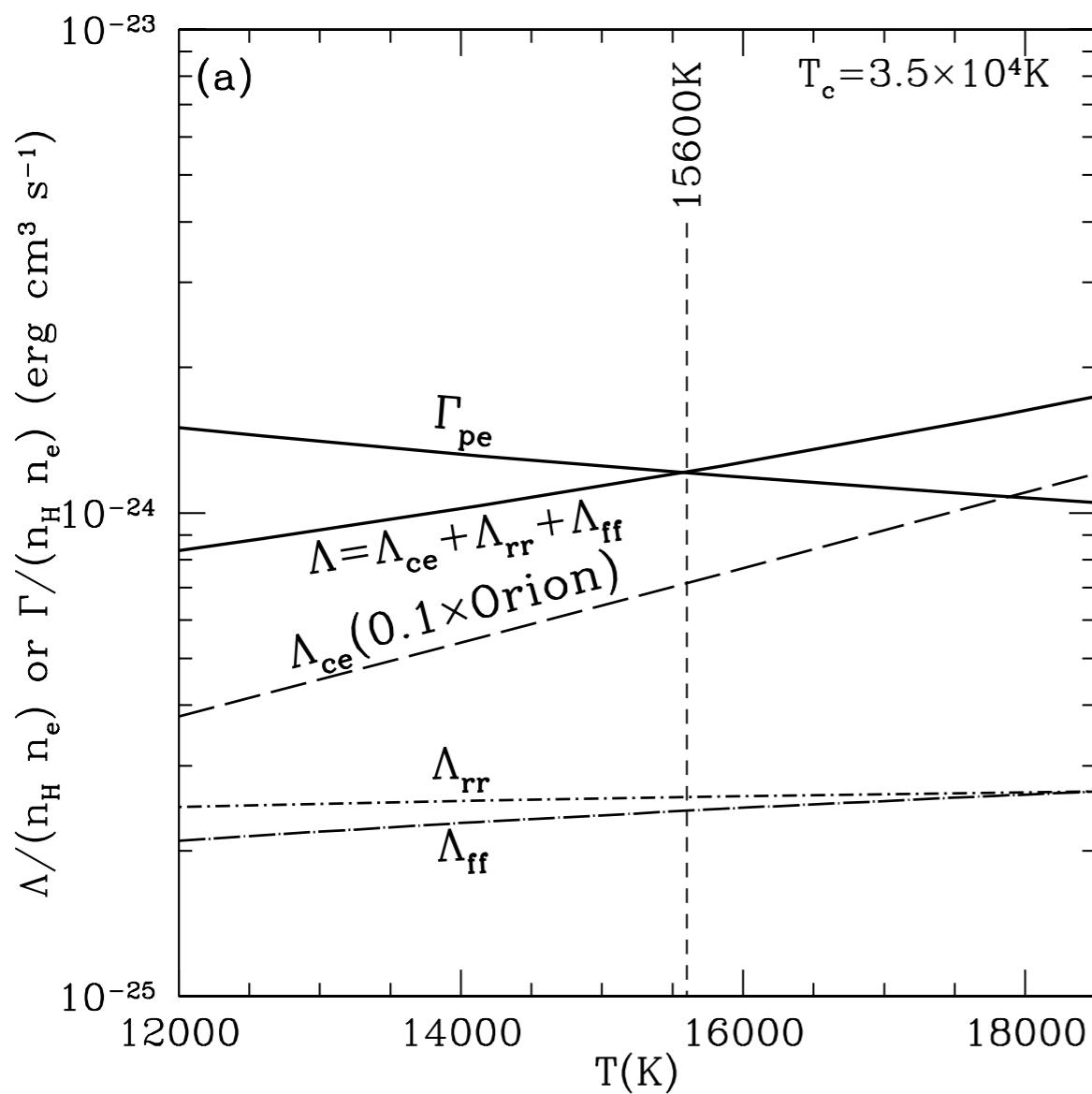


Figure 27.2 in Draine

# Heating and Cooling function - Dependence on Density

Cooling function for different densities.

The gas is assumed to have Orion-like abundances and ionization conditions.

As the gas density is varied from  $10^2$  to  $10^5 \text{ cm}^{-3}$ , the equilibrium temperature varies from 6600 K to 9050 K, because of the contribution of collisional de-excitation.

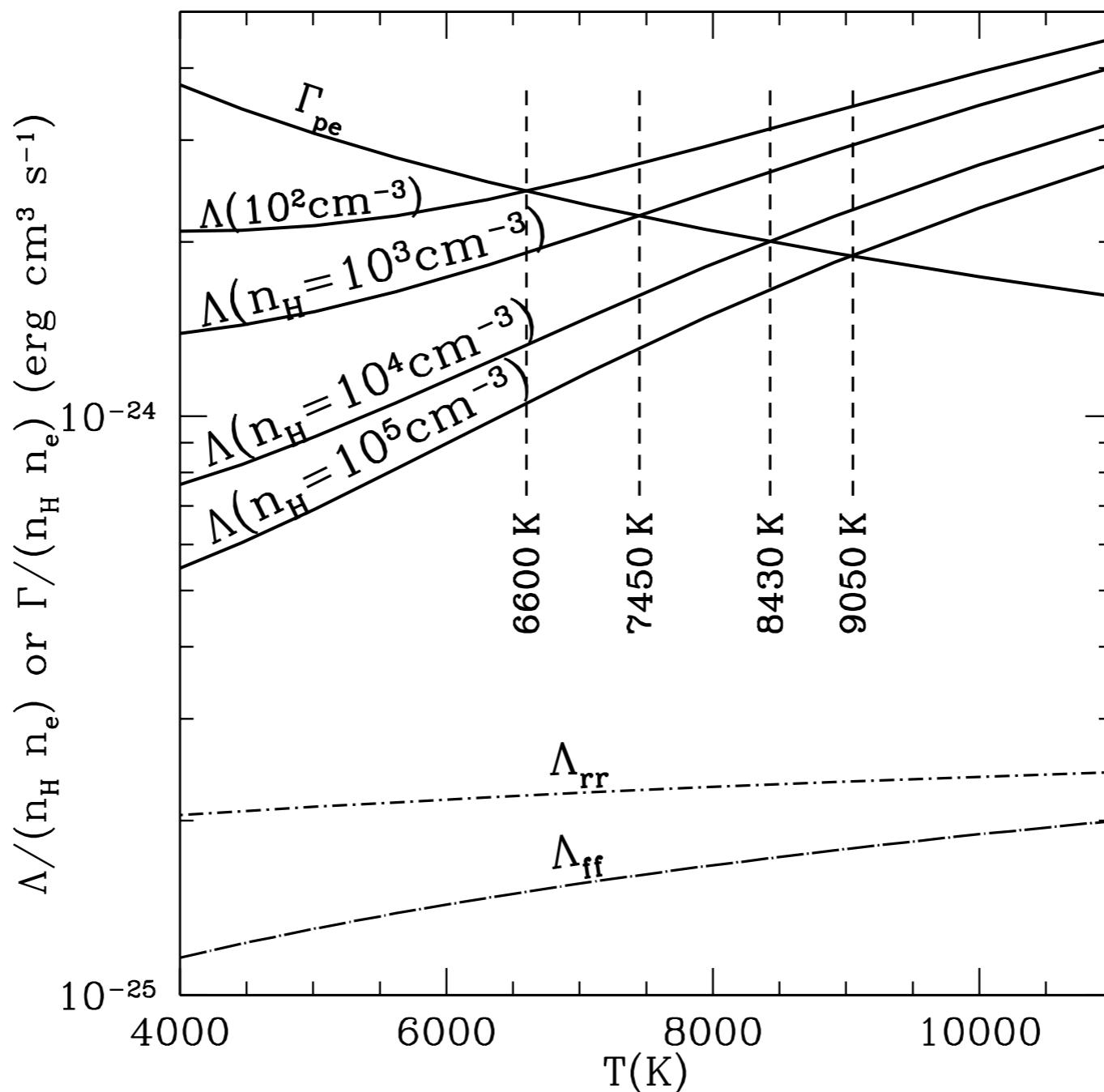


Figure 27.3 in Draine

# Homework

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