

# Presolar Grains from Supernovae

Nan Liu, Boston University

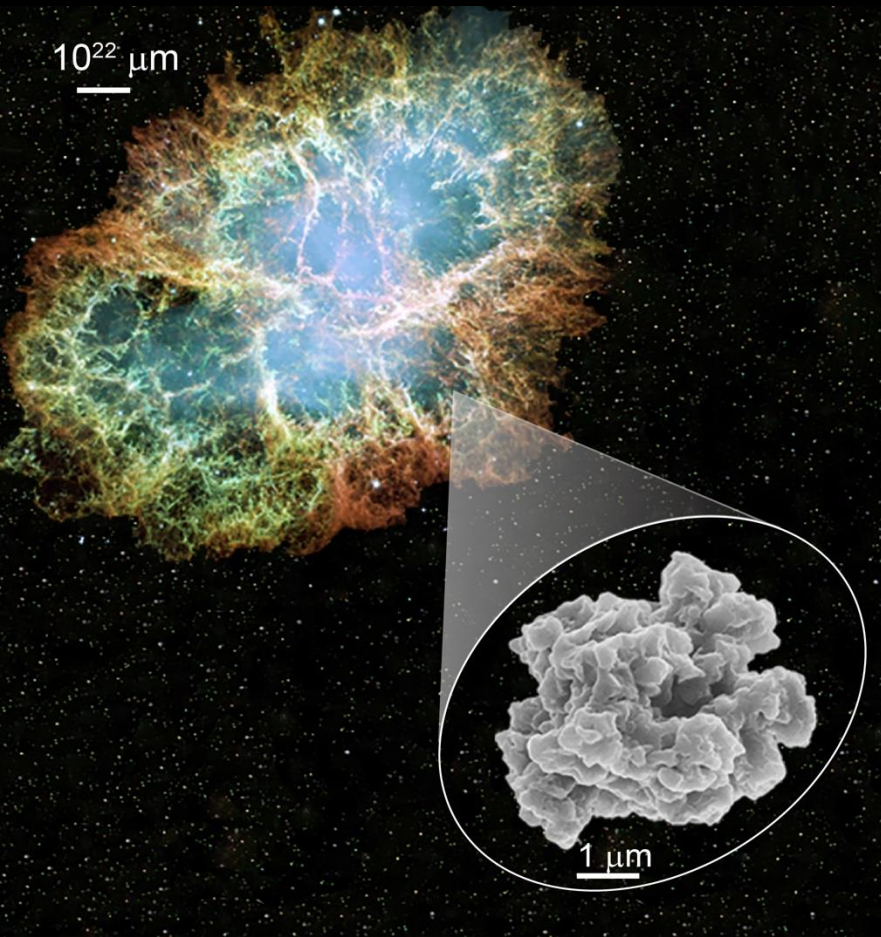
Space Science Reviews (2024) 220:88  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11214-024-01122-w>



## Presolar Grains as Probes of Supernova Nucleosynthesis

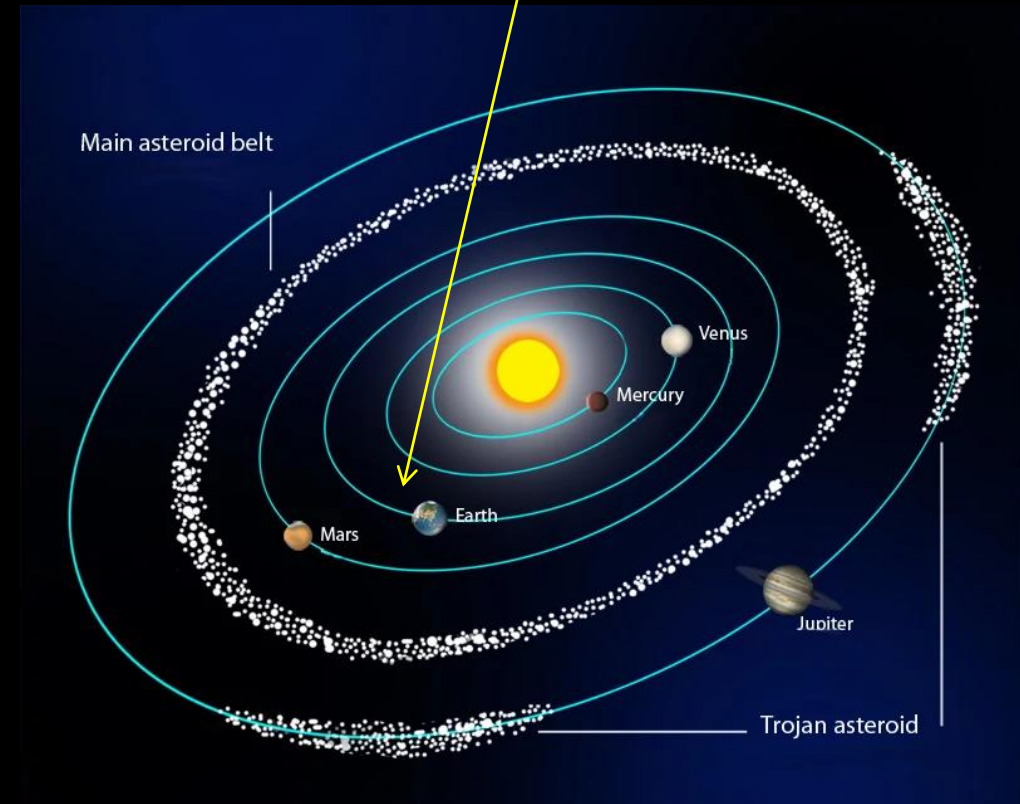
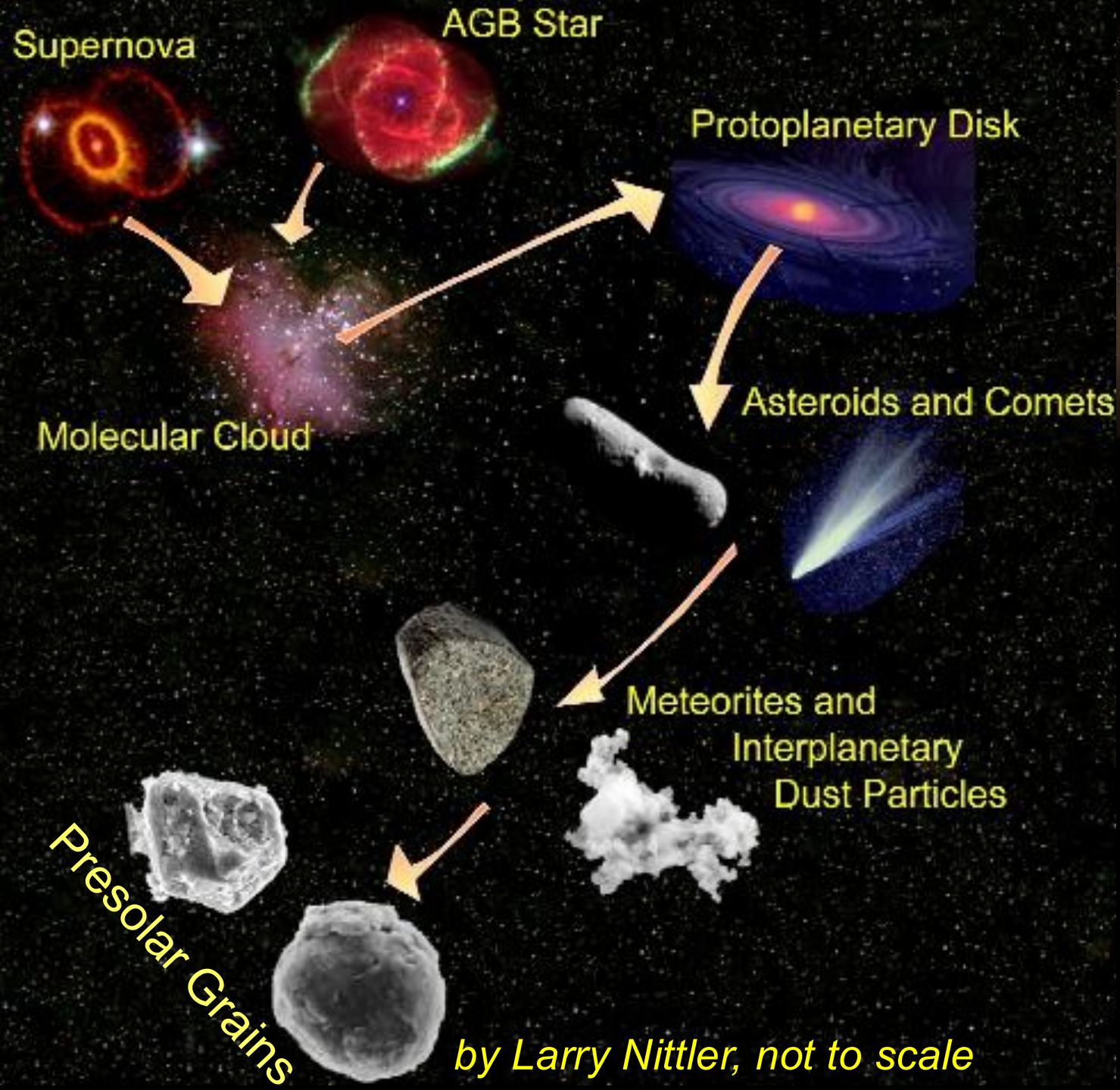
Nan Liu<sup>1</sup>  · Maria Lugaro<sup>2,3,4,5</sup>  · Jan Leitner<sup>6,7</sup>  · Bradley S. Meyer<sup>8</sup>  ·  
Maria Schönbächler<sup>9</sup> 

# Overview



- **Basics of Presolar Stardust Grains**
- **Supernovae and Their Stardust**
  - Titanium-44 in SNe II
  - Explosive nucleosynthesis in SNe II
  - Stardust from other supernovae?

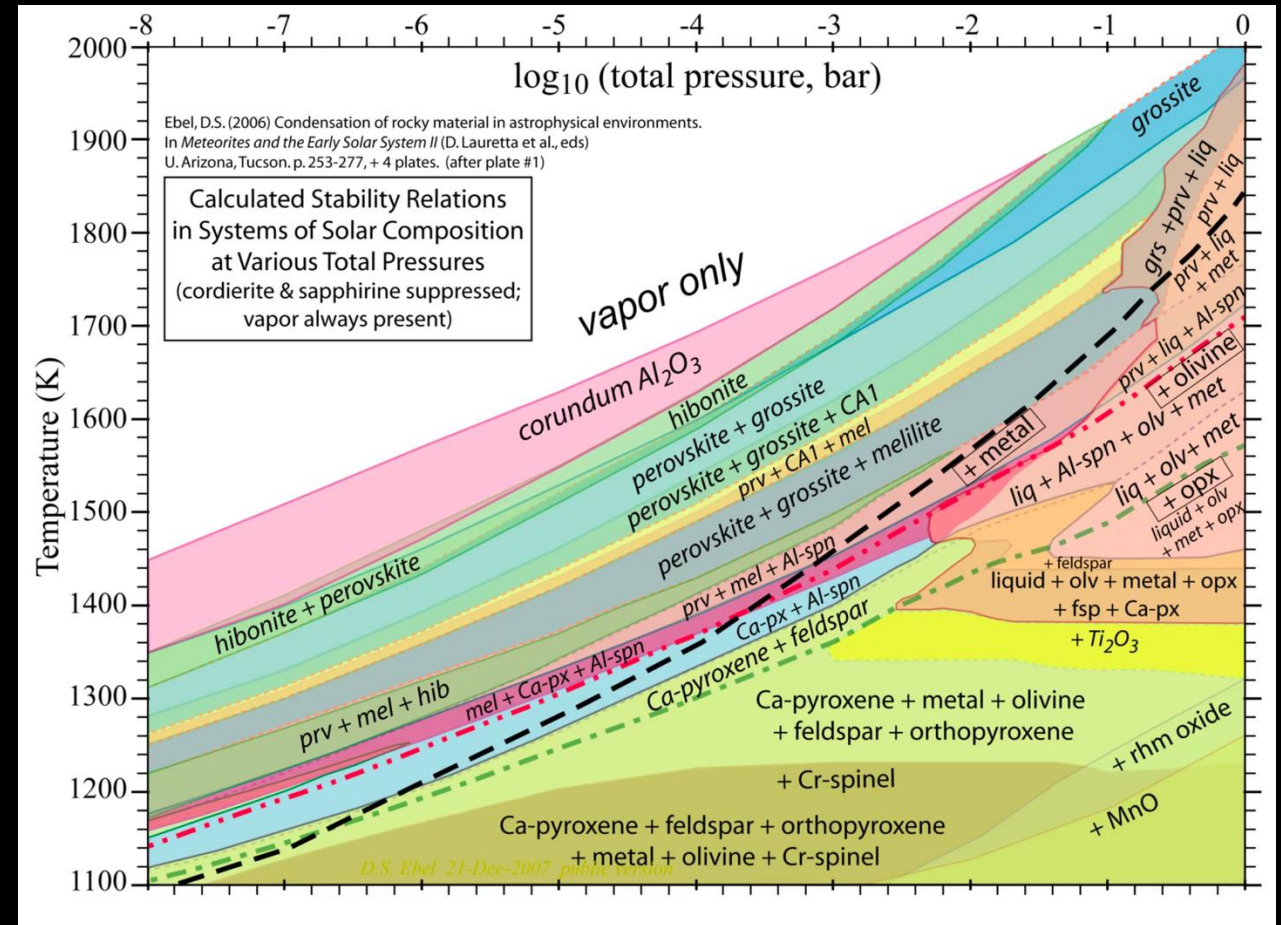
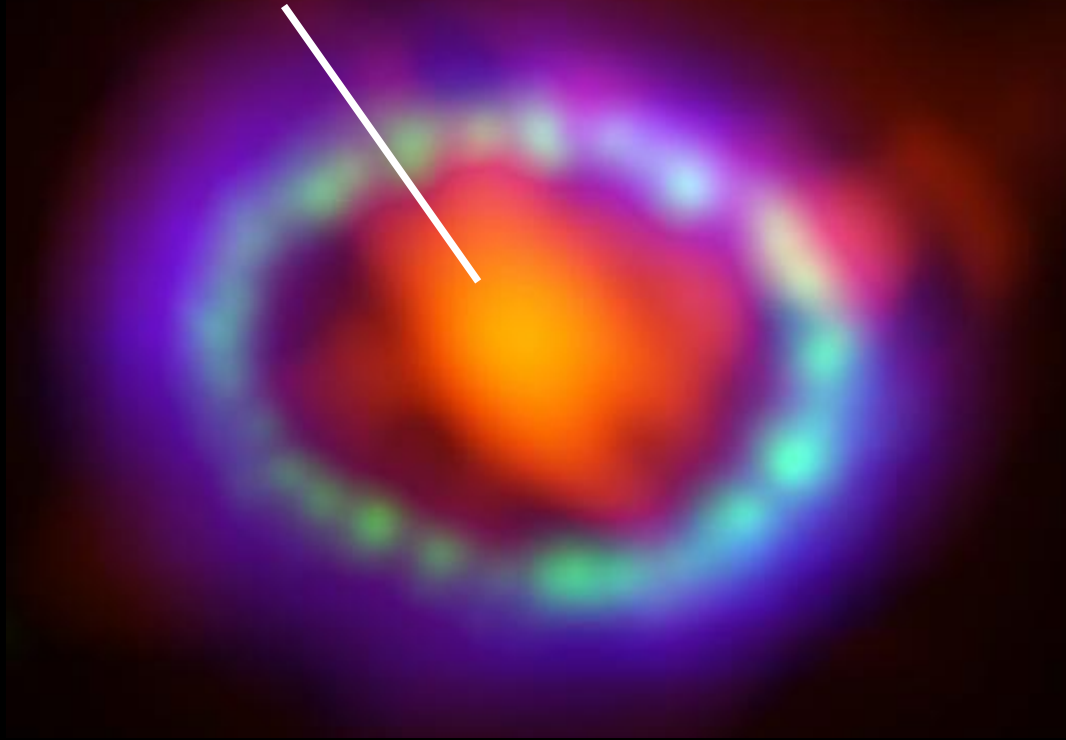






# Dust Formation After Supernova Explosion

Massive amount of dust formed in SN 1987a



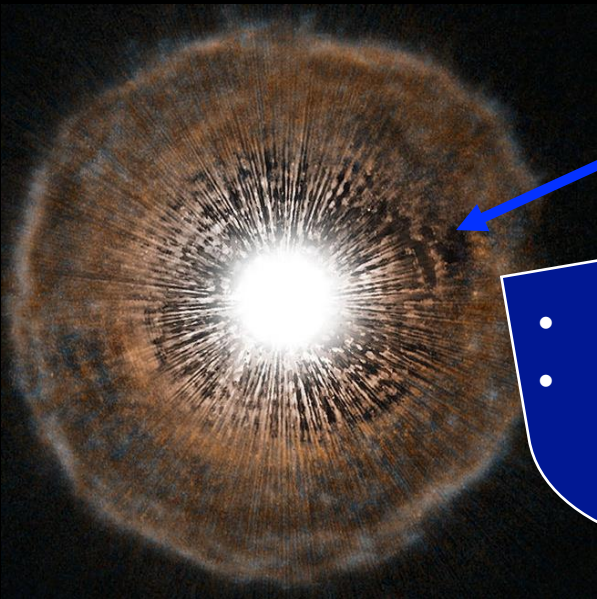
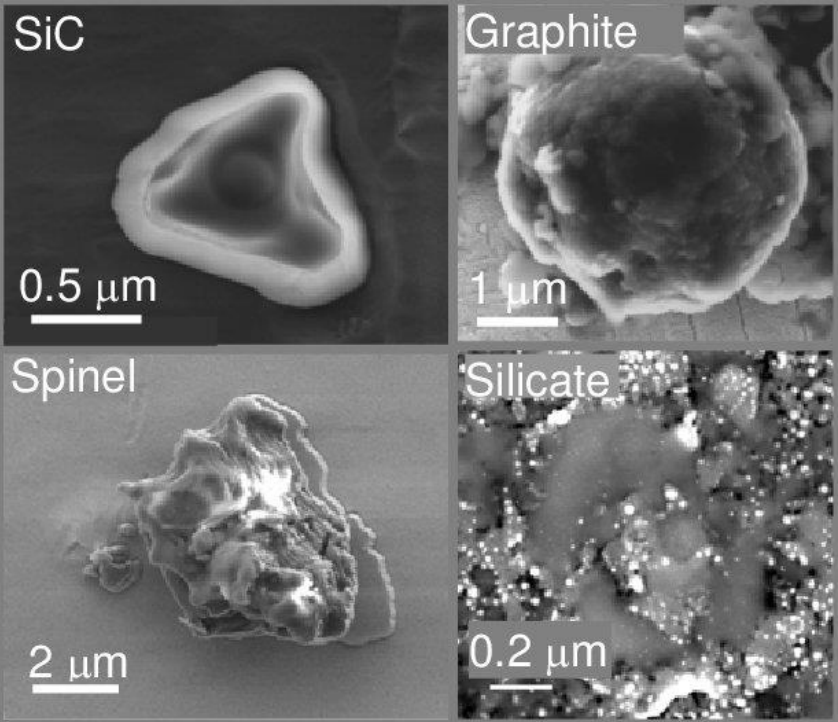
- The **elemental composition** of a grain is determined by both the **gas composition** and **condensation condition (P/T)**
- The **isotopic composition** of a grain is determined by **that of the ejecta** from which the grain condensed

# Stellar Origins of Presolar Grains

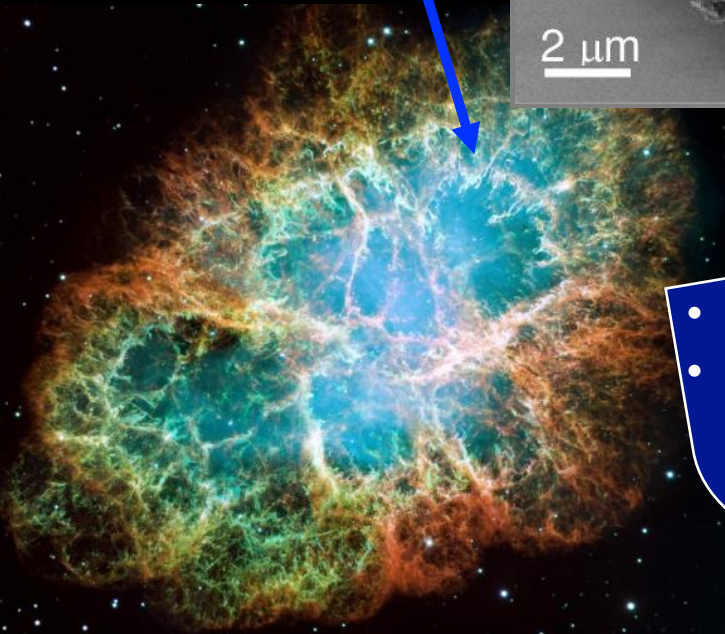
from Liu (2025) *Presolar Grains*

**Table 1** Presolar phases from primitive meteorites.

Presolar phase	Maximum abundance	Main stellar source
SiC	~30 ppm	AGB stars (>90%)
Graphite	up to 10 ppm	AGB stars and CCSNe
Si <sub>3</sub> N <sub>4</sub>	≪1 ppm	CCSNe (100%)
Silicates	~200 ppm	AGB stars and CCSNe
Oxides	~10 ppm	AGB stars and CCSNe
Nanodiamond	~1400 ppm	Ambiguous



- Prolific dust producers
- Low-mass stars, i.e., high in abundance



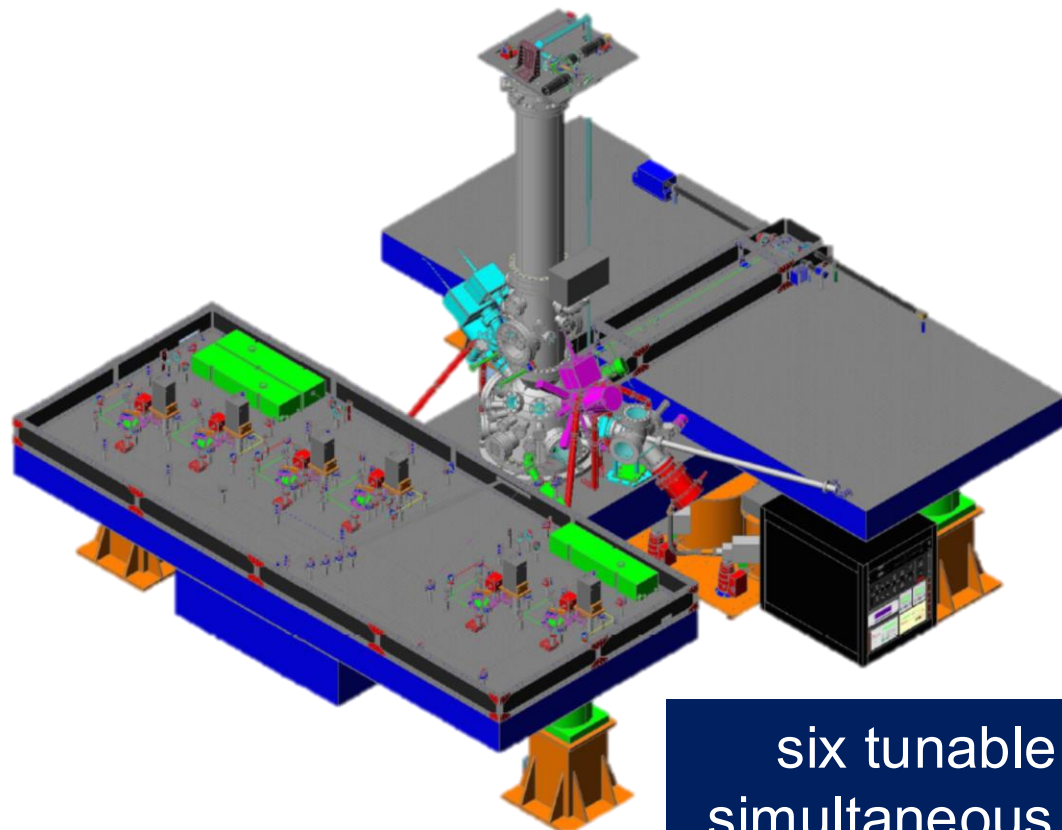
- Prolific dust producers
- Massive stars, i.e., large amounts of ejected mass



# Presolar Grain Analysis in Laboratory

CHILI

(Chicago Instrument for Laser Ionization)



six tunable lasers allow  
simultaneous detection of **all**  
**isotopes of three elements**

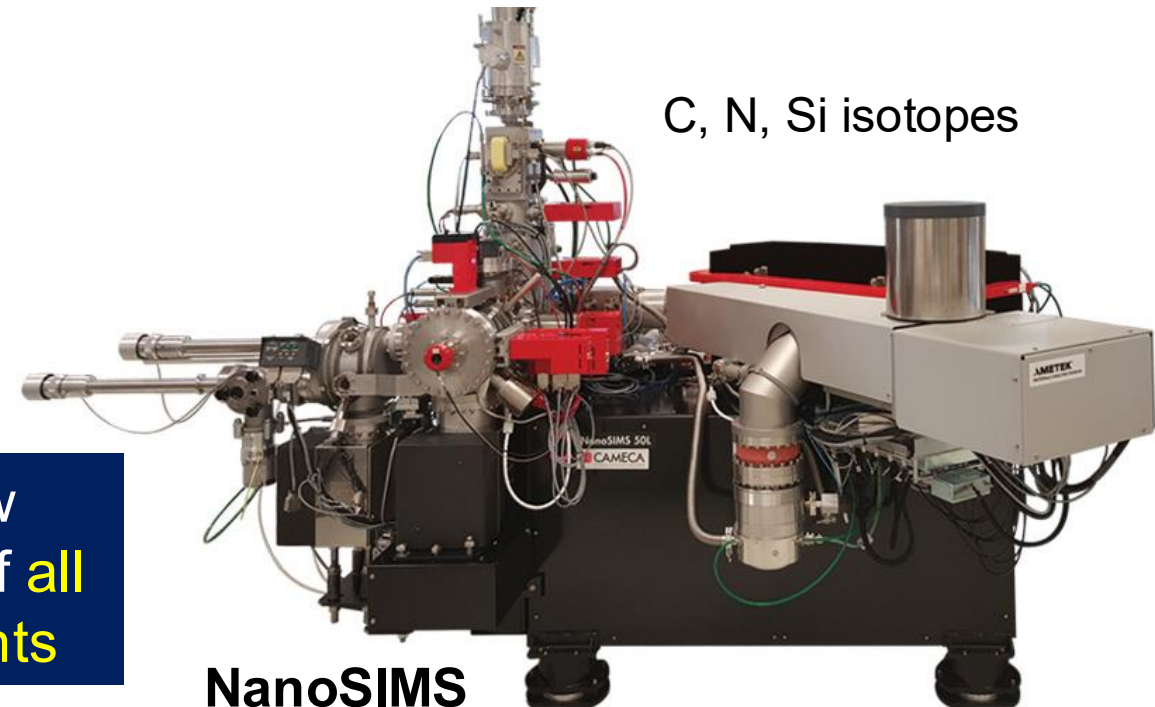
Stephan et al. (2016) *IJMS*

Secondary Ion Mass Spectrometry  
(without significant isobaric interferences)

H																	He
Li	Be																
Na	Mg																
K	Ca	Sc	Ti	V	Cr	Mn	Fe	Co	Ni	Cu	Zn	Ga	Ge	As	Se	Br	Kr
Rb	Sr	Y	Zr	Nb	Mo	Tc	Ru	Rh	Pd	Ag	Cd	In	Sn	Sb	Te	I	Xe
Cs	Ba	La	Hf	Ta	W	Re	Os	Ir	Pt	Au	Hg	Tl	Pb	Bi	Po	At	Rn
Fr	Ra	Ac															

Ce	Pr	Nd	Pm	Sm	Eu	Gd	Tb	Dy	Ho	Er	Tm	Yb	Lu
Th	Pa	U	Np	Pu	Am								

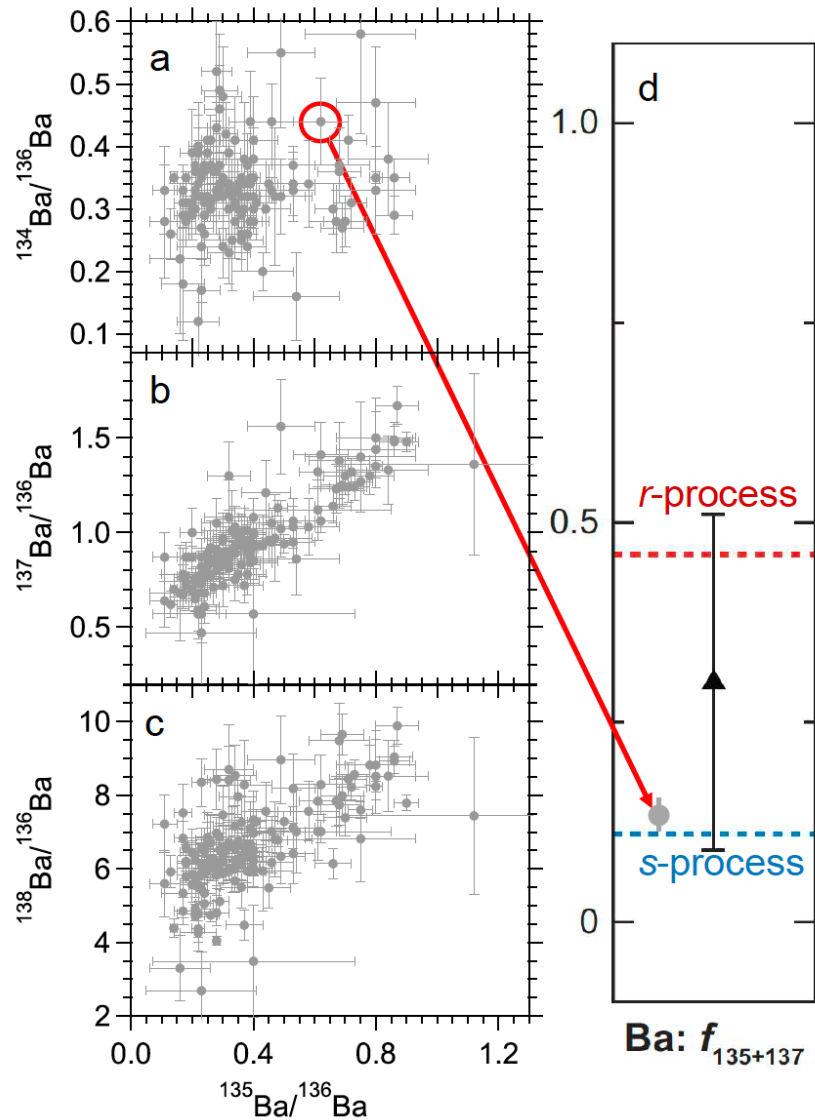
Resonance Ionization Mass Spectrometry  
(concentration down to ppm-ppb level)



C, N, Si isotopes

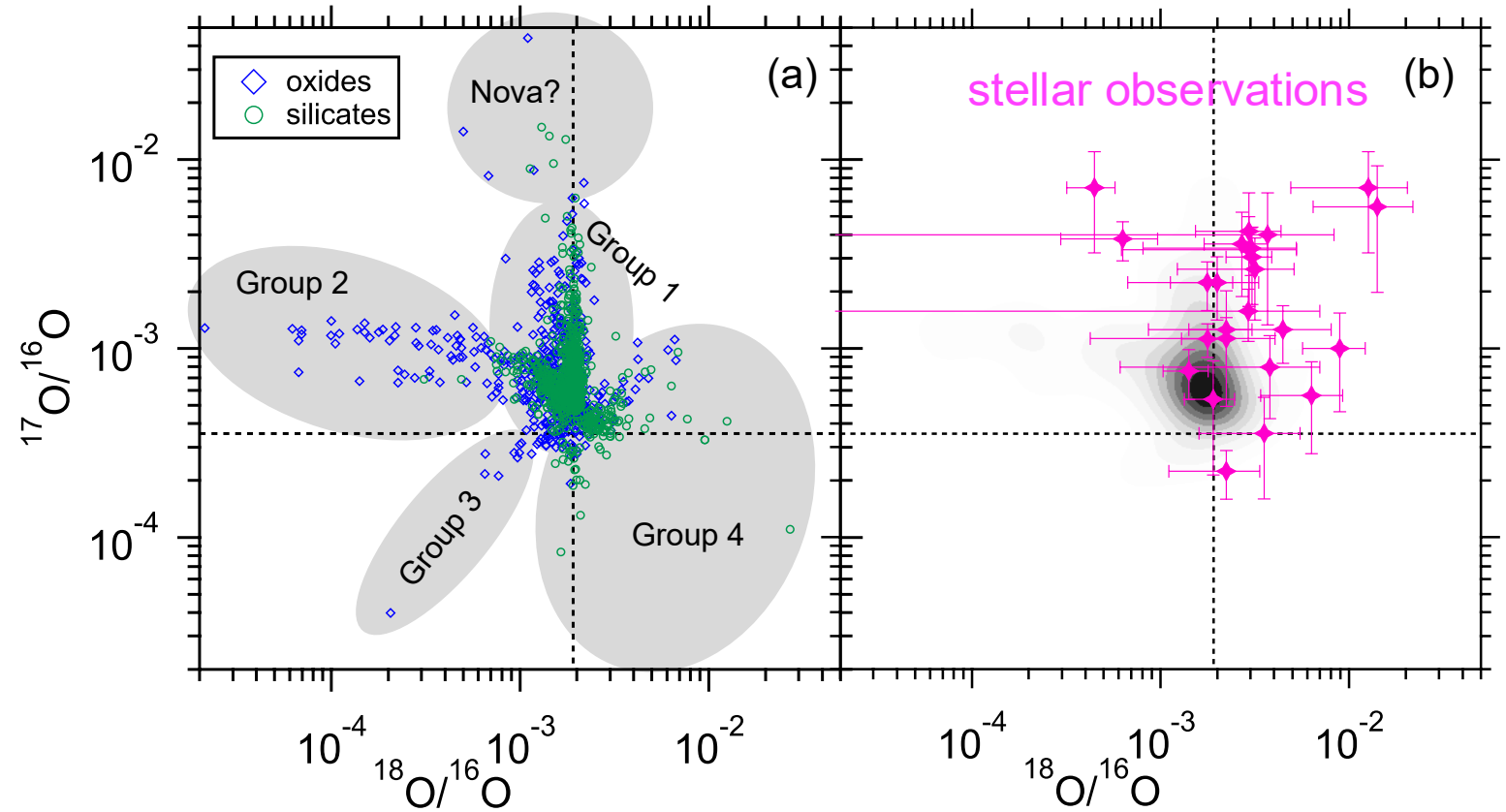
NanoSIMS

# Microscope vs Telescope Isotope Analysis

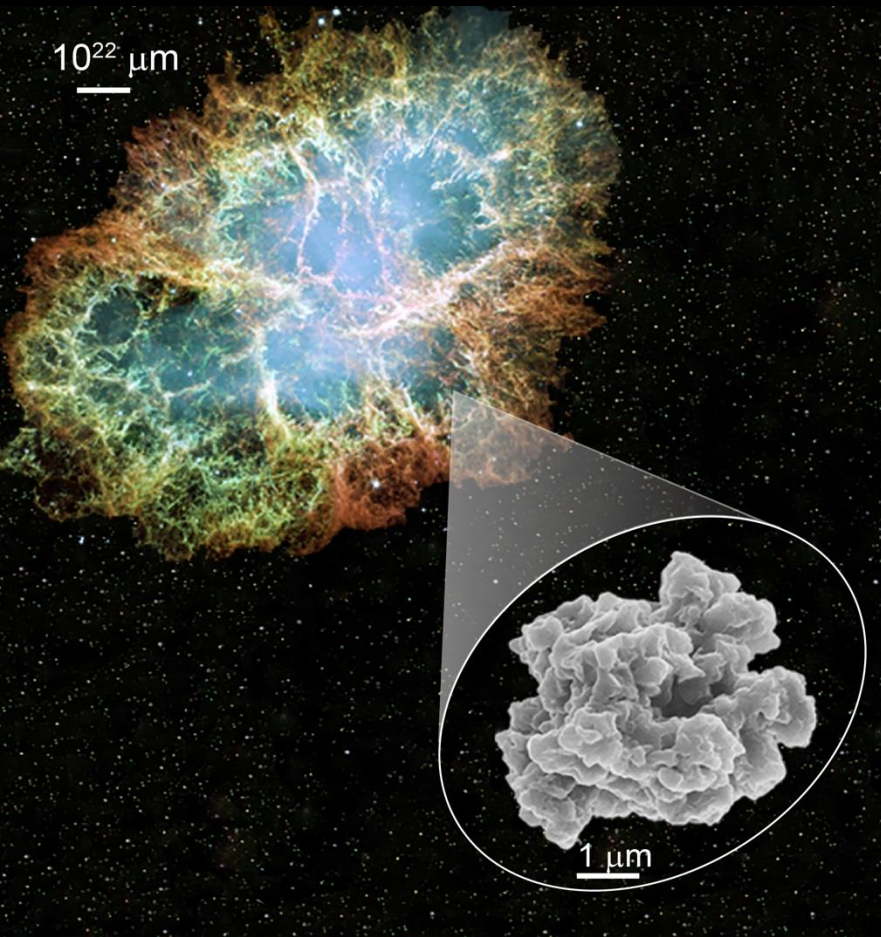


from Liu et al. (2022) Universe

Plots above based on data from presolar grain database (Hynes and Gyngard 2009) and stellar observations from Lebzelter et al. (2015) and Hinkle et al. (2016)



# Overview

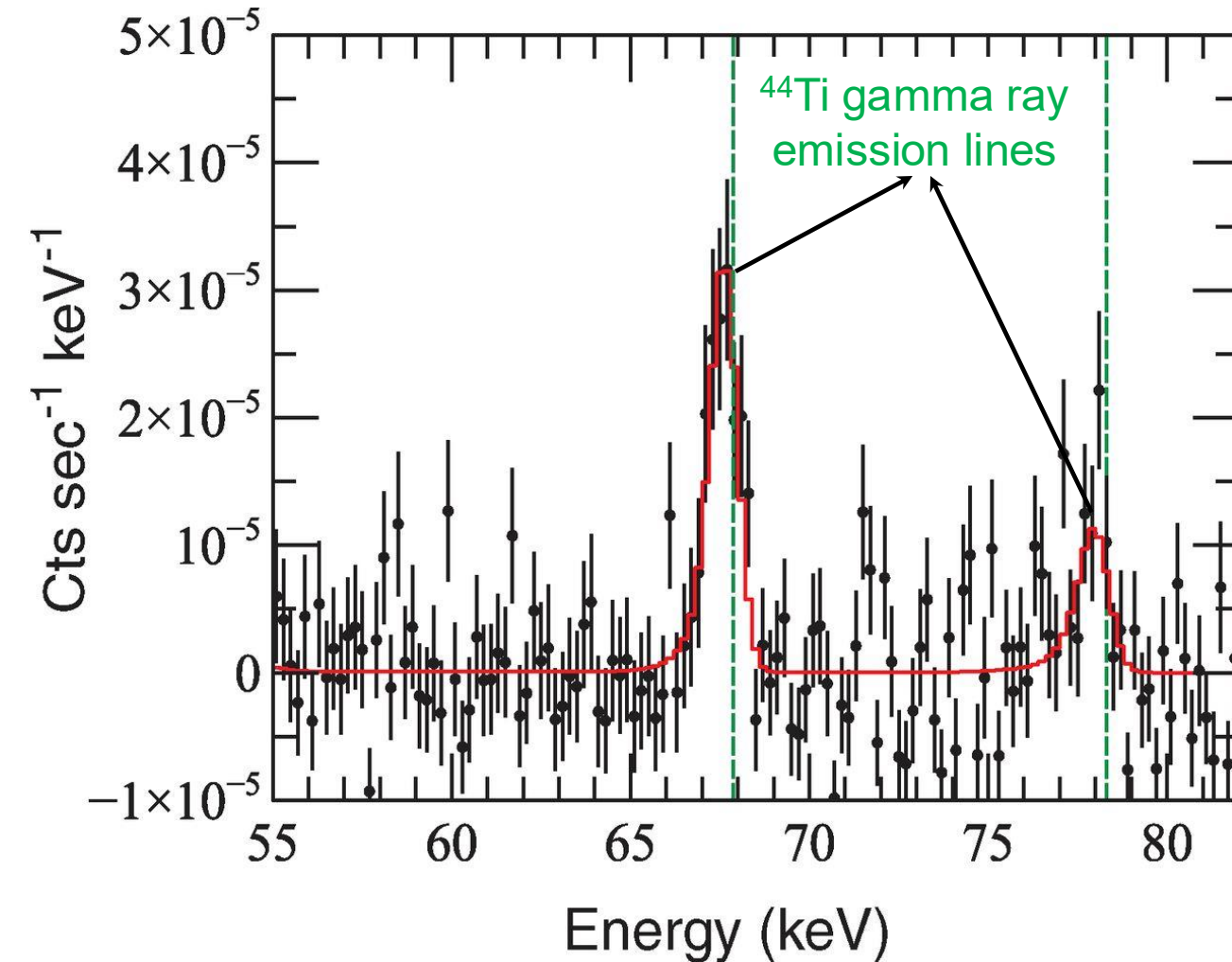


- Basics of Presolar Stardust Grains
- Supernovae and Their Stardust
  - Titanium-44 in SNe II
  - Explosive nucleosynthesis in SNe II
  - Stardust from other supernovae?

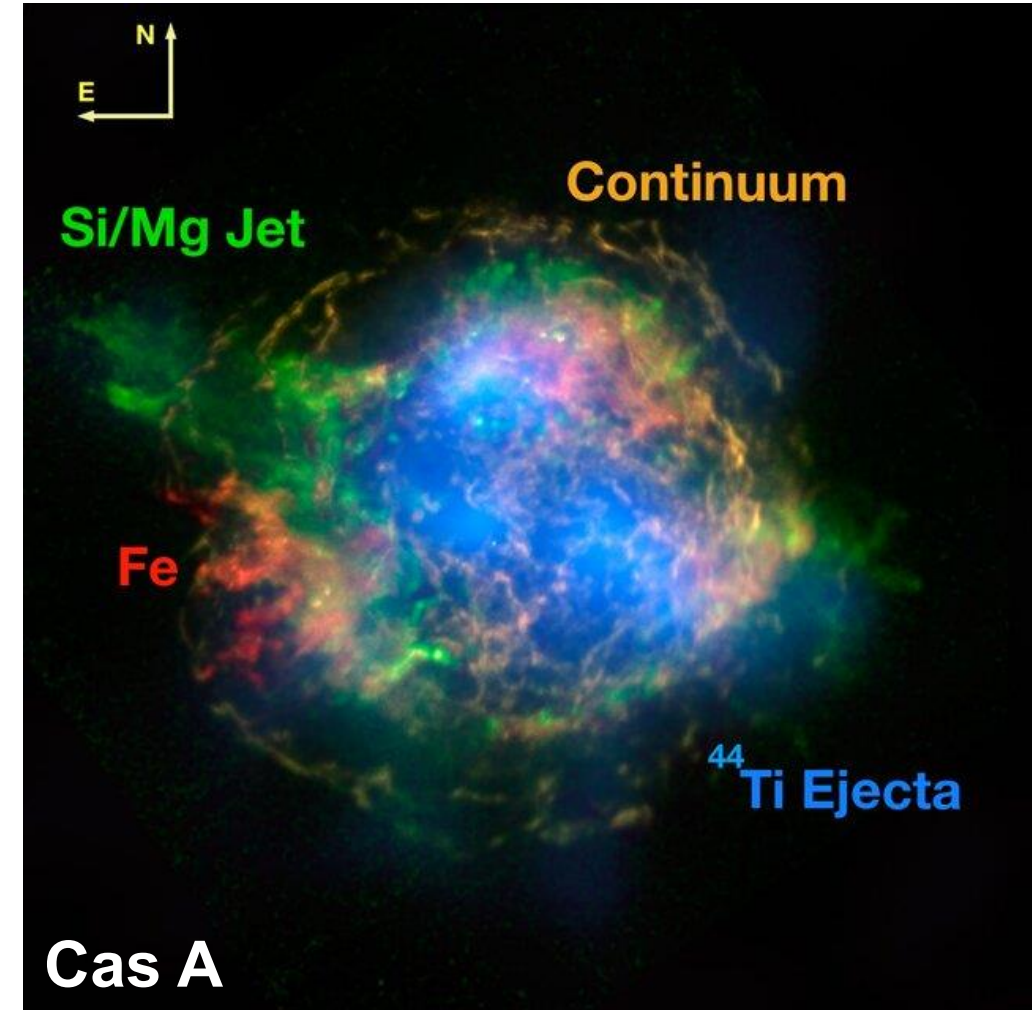


# Titanium-44: Smoking Gun of Supernova Nucleosynthesis

## SN 1987A



from Boggs et al. (2015) Science



from Grefenstette et al. (2016) ApJ

# Inferred Initial Presence of $^{44}\text{Ti}$ in Type-X SiC Grains

$$\delta^{44}\text{Ca} = \{[(^{44}\text{Ca}/^{40}\text{Ca})_{\text{grain}}/(^{44}\text{Ca}/^{40}\text{Ca})_{\text{solar}}] - 1\} \times 1000$$

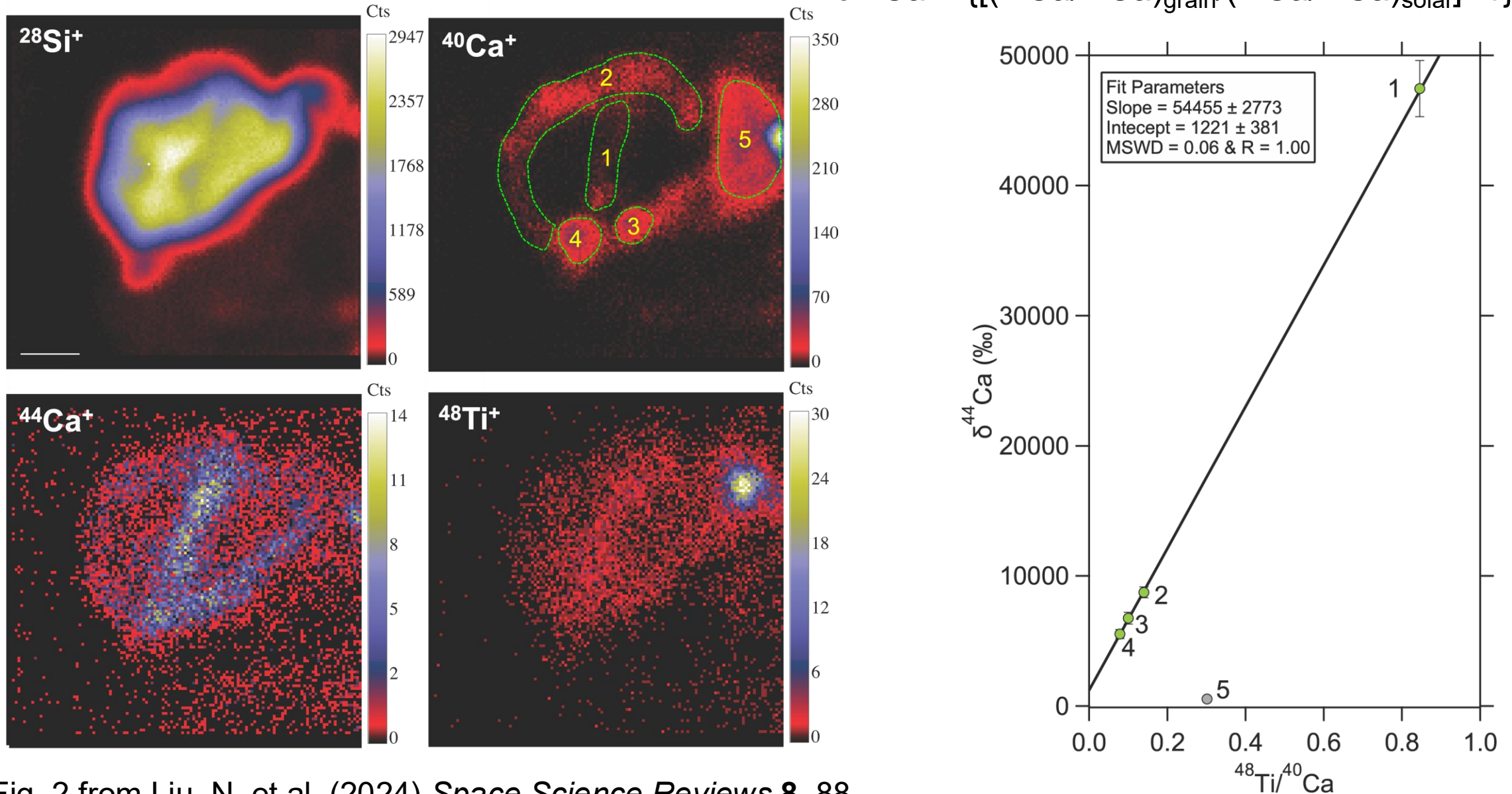
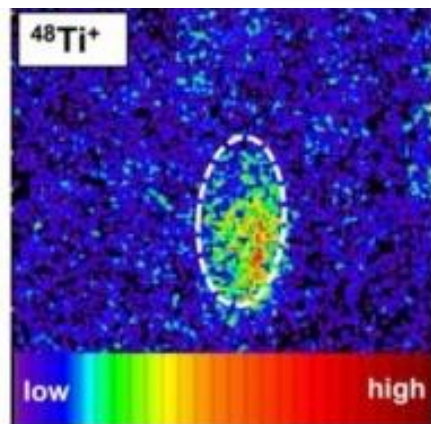
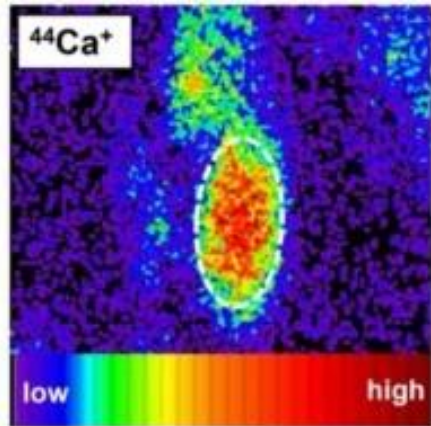
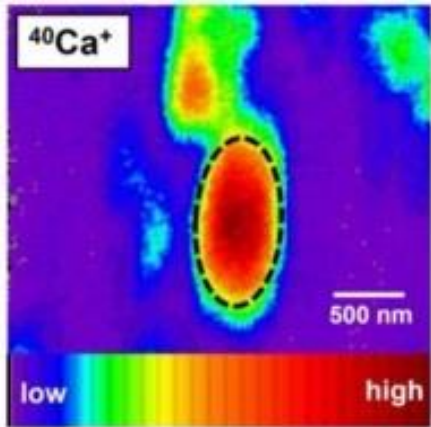


Fig. 2 from Liu, N. et al. (2024) *Space Science Reviews* **8**, 88



# No Initial Presence of $^{44}\text{Ti}$ in Presolar Silicate Grains



No spatial correlation  
between  $^{44}\text{Ca}^+$  and  $^{48}\text{Ti}^+$

Heterogenous GCE?

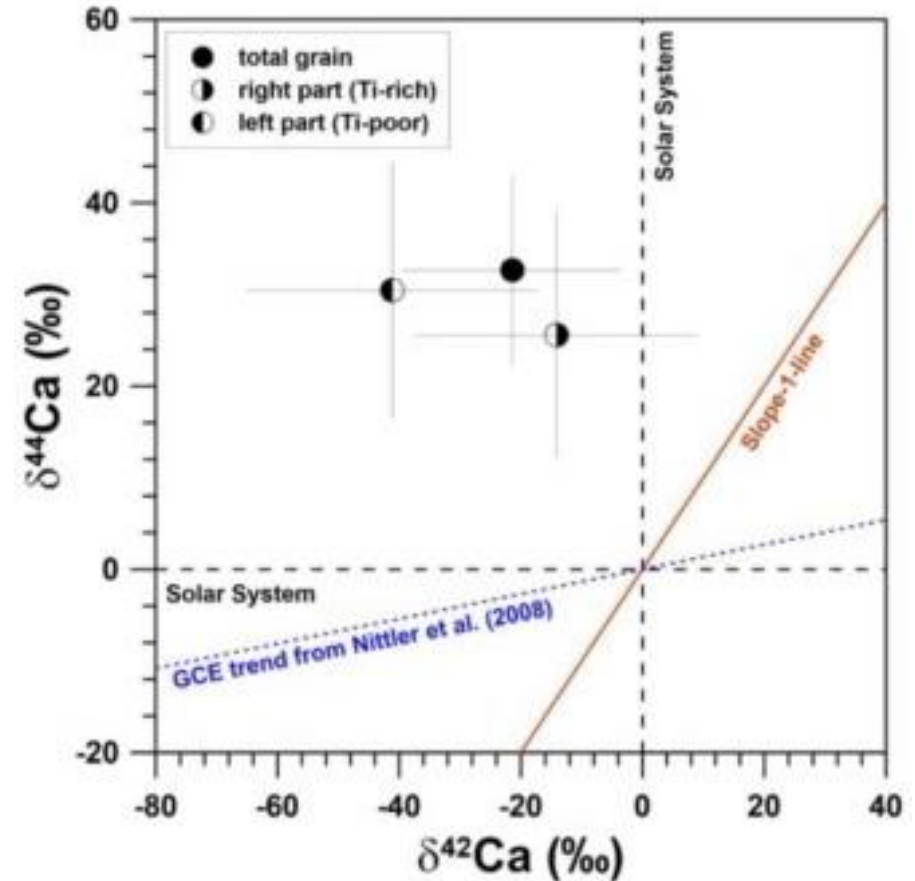
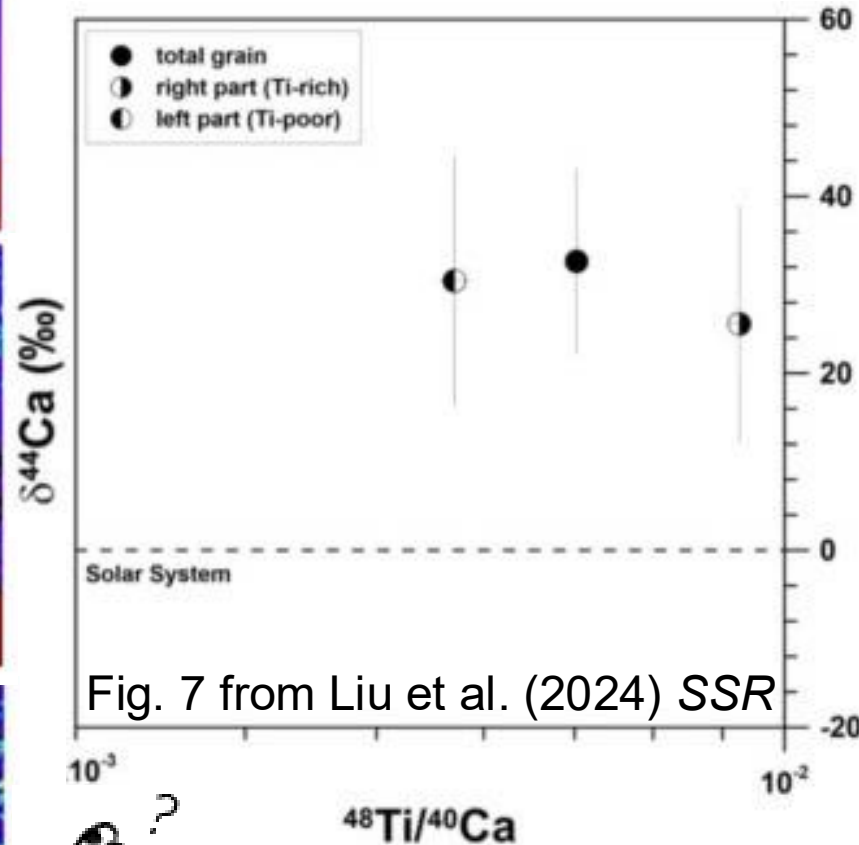
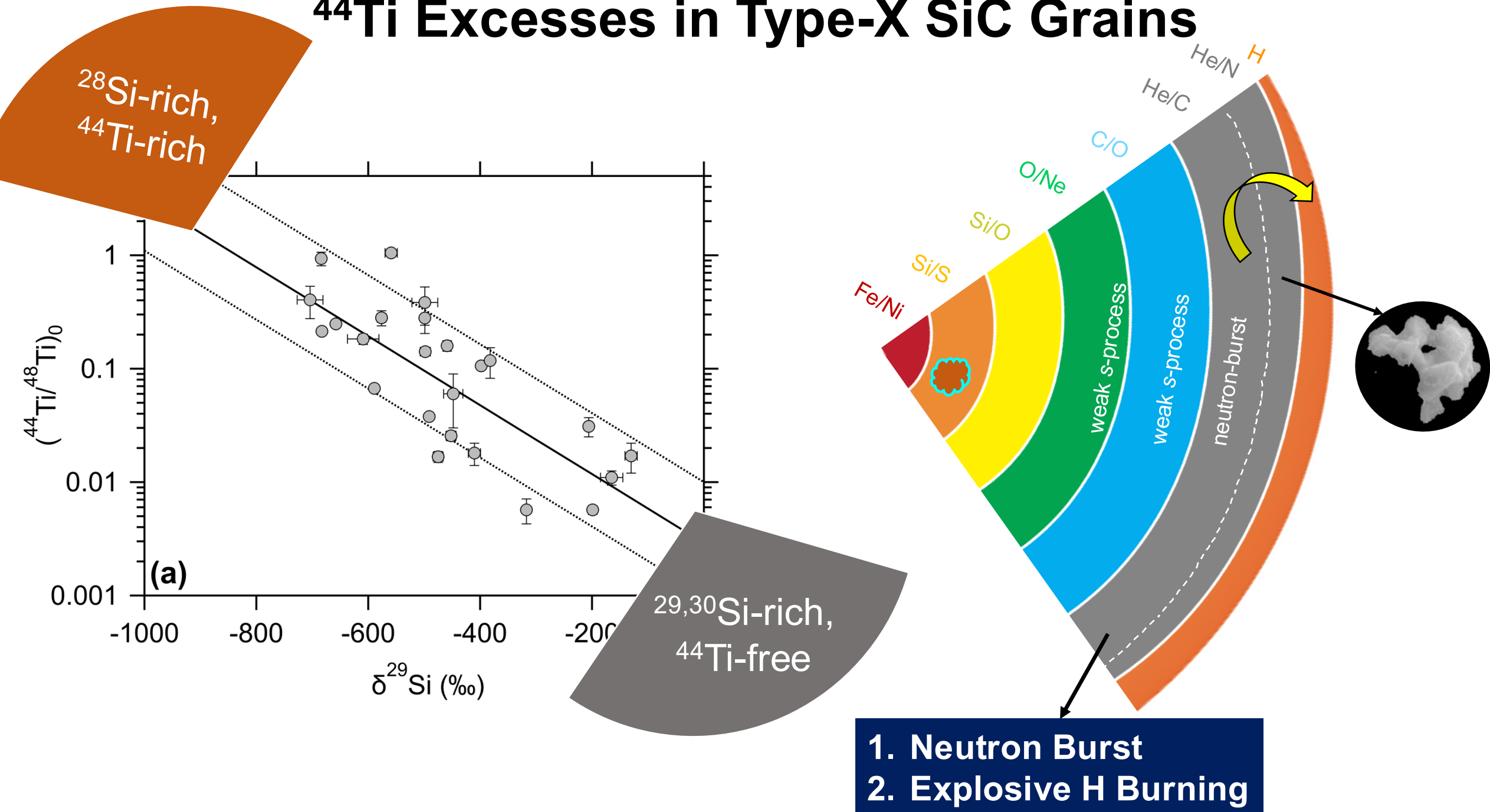


Fig. 7 from Liu et al. (2024) SSR



What is the stellar contributor for the heterogenous GCE  
effect on  $^{44}\text{Ca}$ ? (not typical Type II SNe)

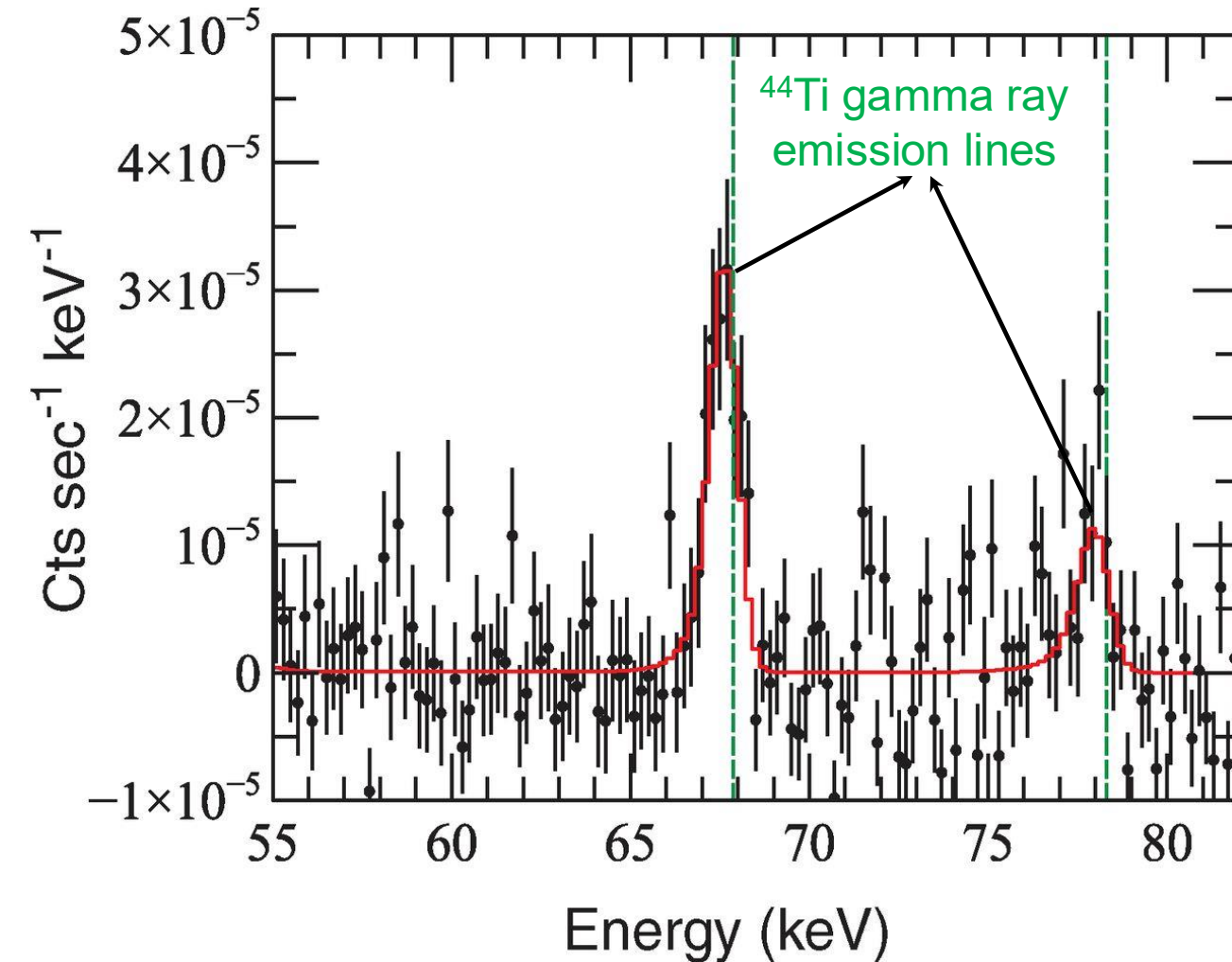
# $^{44}\text{Ti}$ Excesses in Type-X SiC Grains



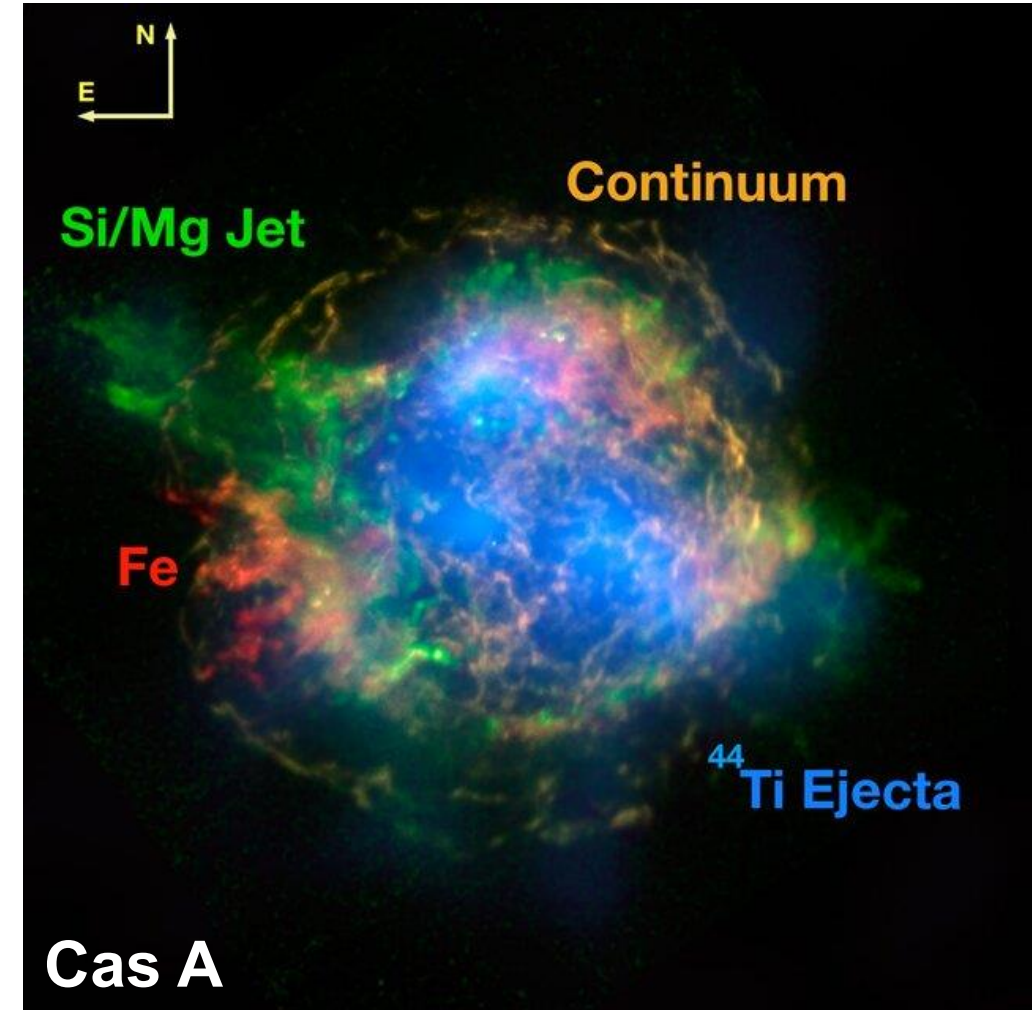


# Titanium-44: Smoking Gun of Supernova Nucleosynthesis

## SN 1987A

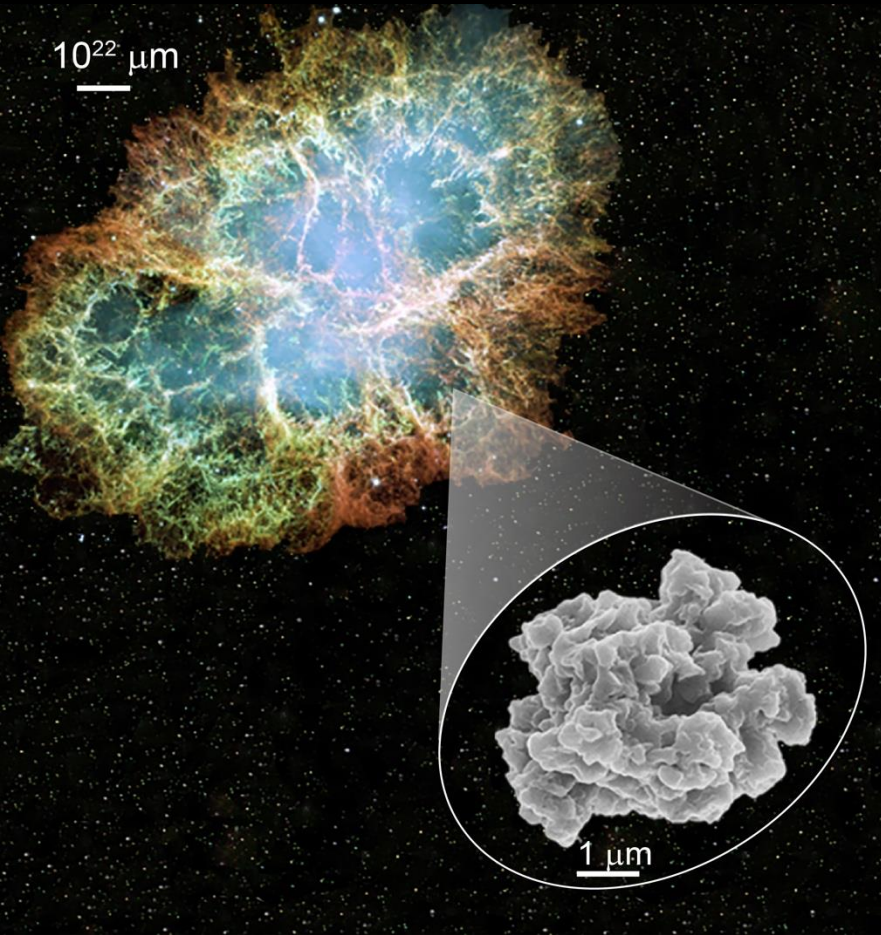


from Boggs et al. (2015) Science



from Grefenstette et al. (2016) ApJ

# Overview



- Basics of Presolar Stardust Grains
- **Supernovae and Their Stardust**
  - Titanium-44 in SNe II
  - **Explosive nucleosynthesis in SNe II**
  - Stardust from other supernovae?

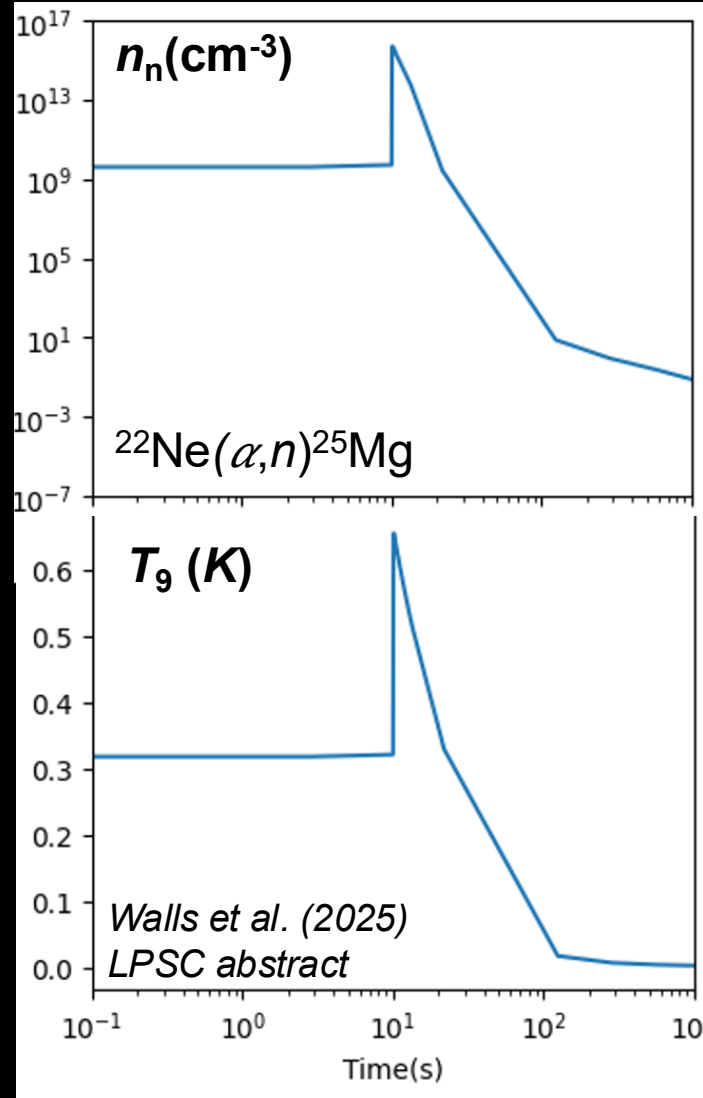


# Neutron Burst in He/C Zone

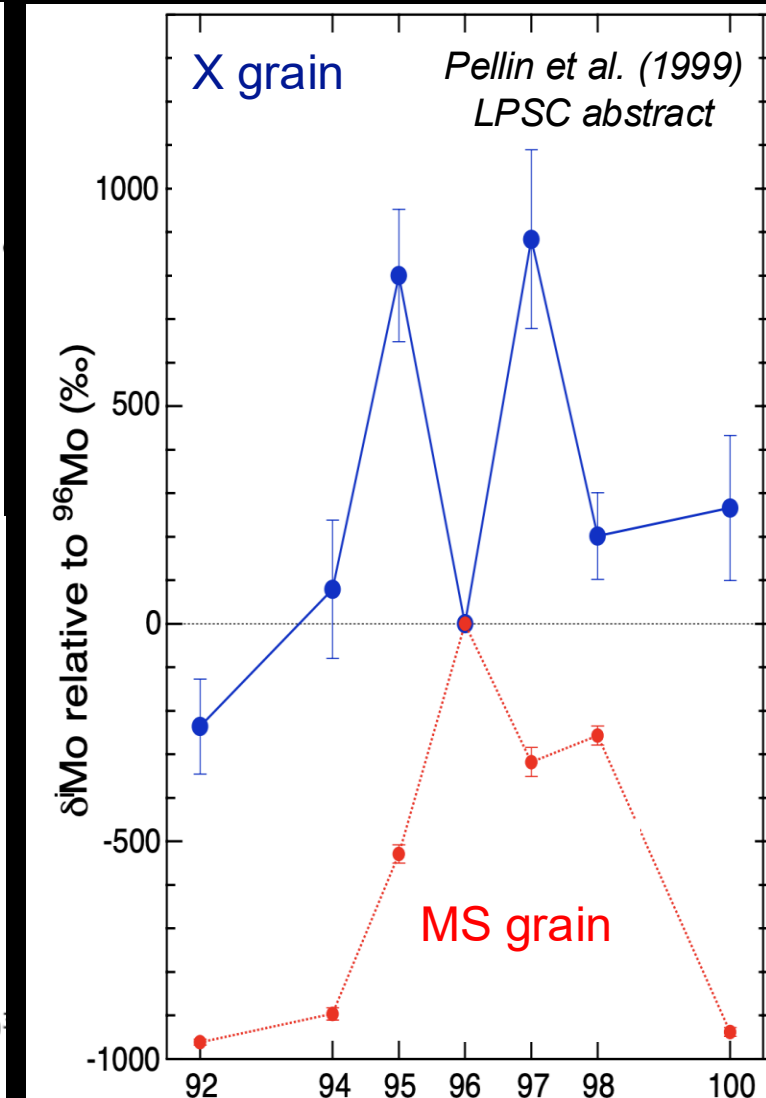
He/C zone: C-rich,  
neutron burst

Fe/Ni & Si/S: rich in  $\alpha$ -  
isotopes (e.g.,  $^{28}\text{Si}$ )

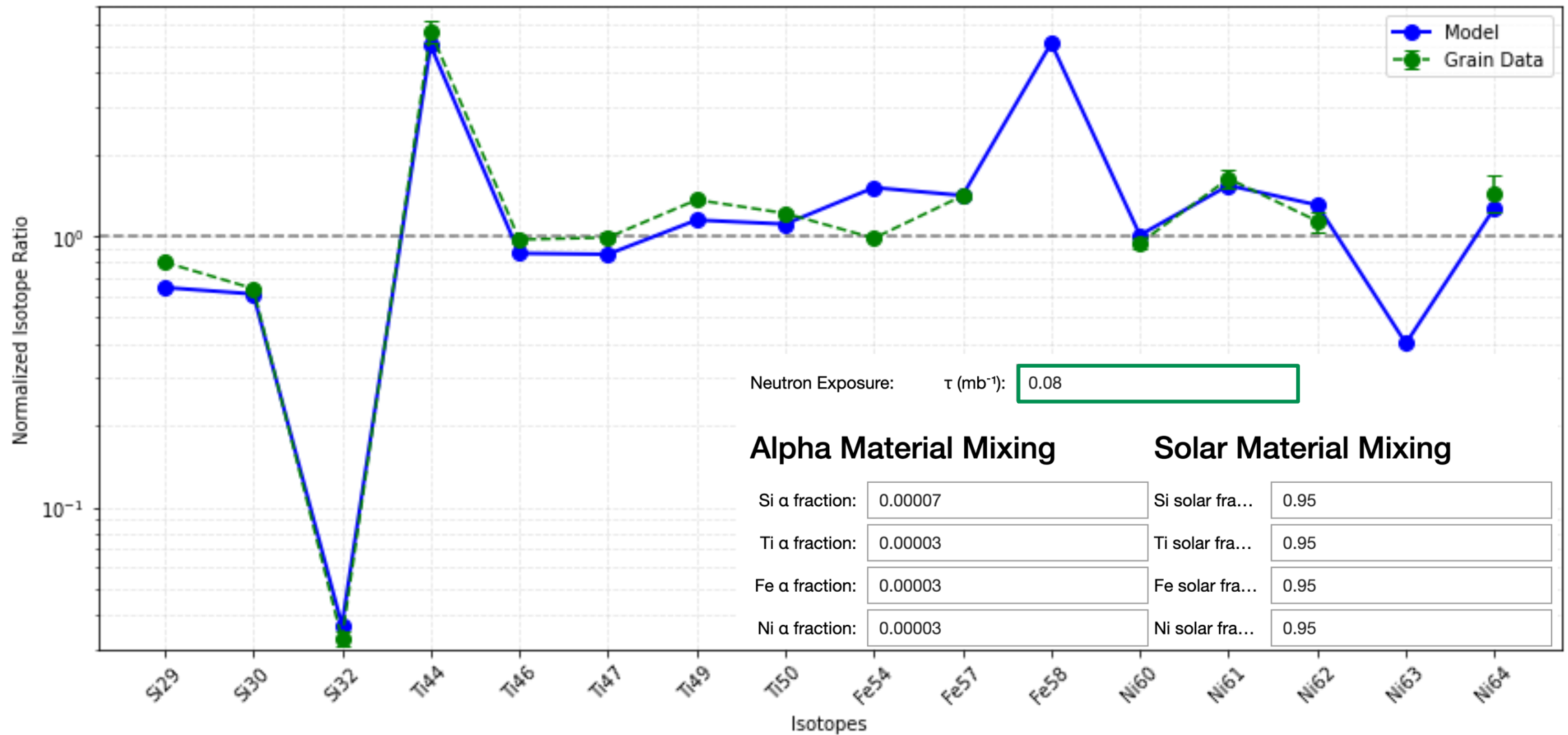
Neutron Burst



Mo Isotope Data



# X Grains Incorporated He/C, Si/S, and Solar Material



See poster “Presolar Grains as Probes of Supernova Nucleosynthesis” by Liu et al. for details



# Explosive H Burning Occurs He/C or He/N zone?

$^{28}\text{Si}$ -rich,  
 $^{12}\text{C}$ -rich

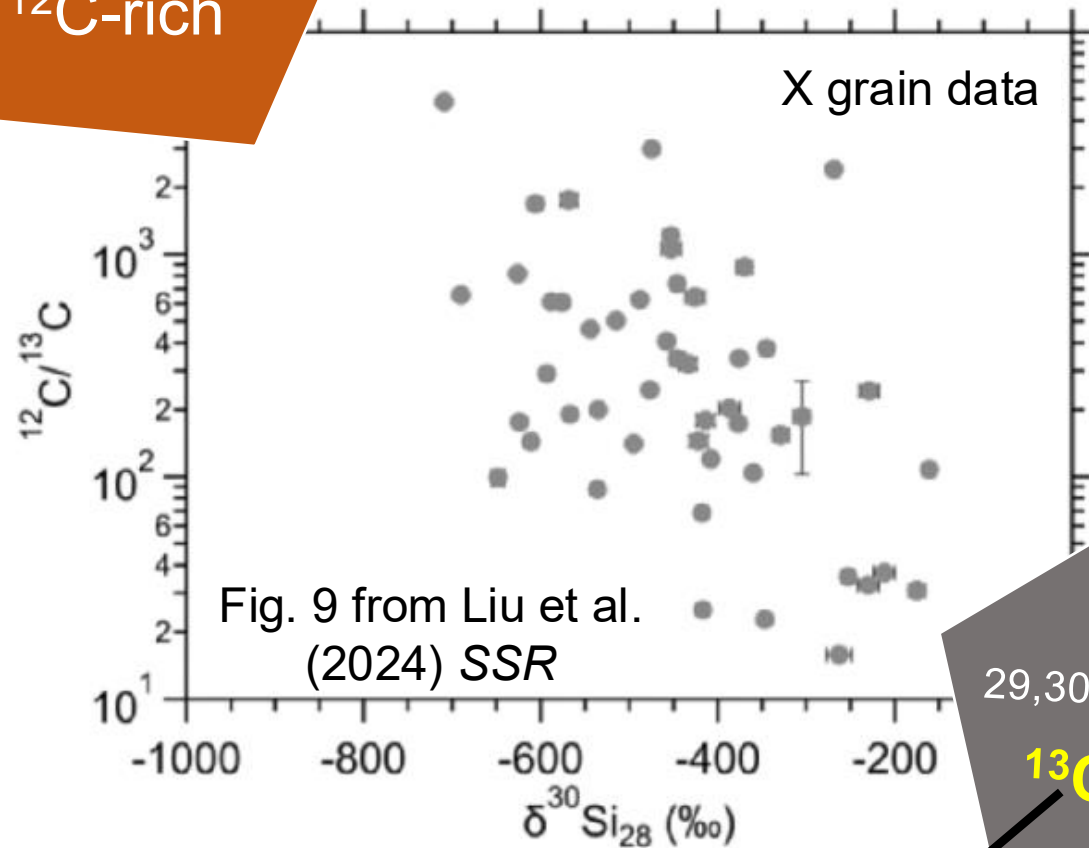
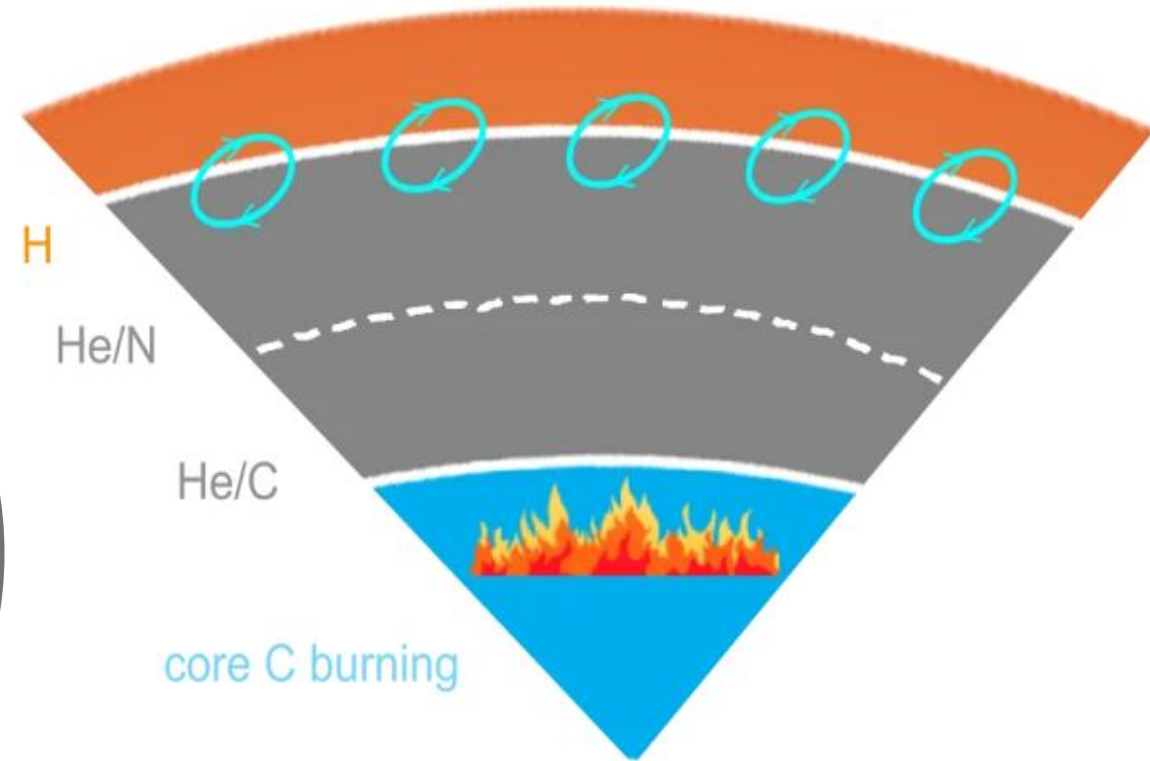


Fig. 9 from Liu et al.  
(2024) SSR

$$^{22}\text{Ne}(p,\gamma)^{23}\text{Na} > ^{22}\text{Ne}(\alpha,n)^{25}\text{Mg} \text{ at } T_9 \text{ K}$$



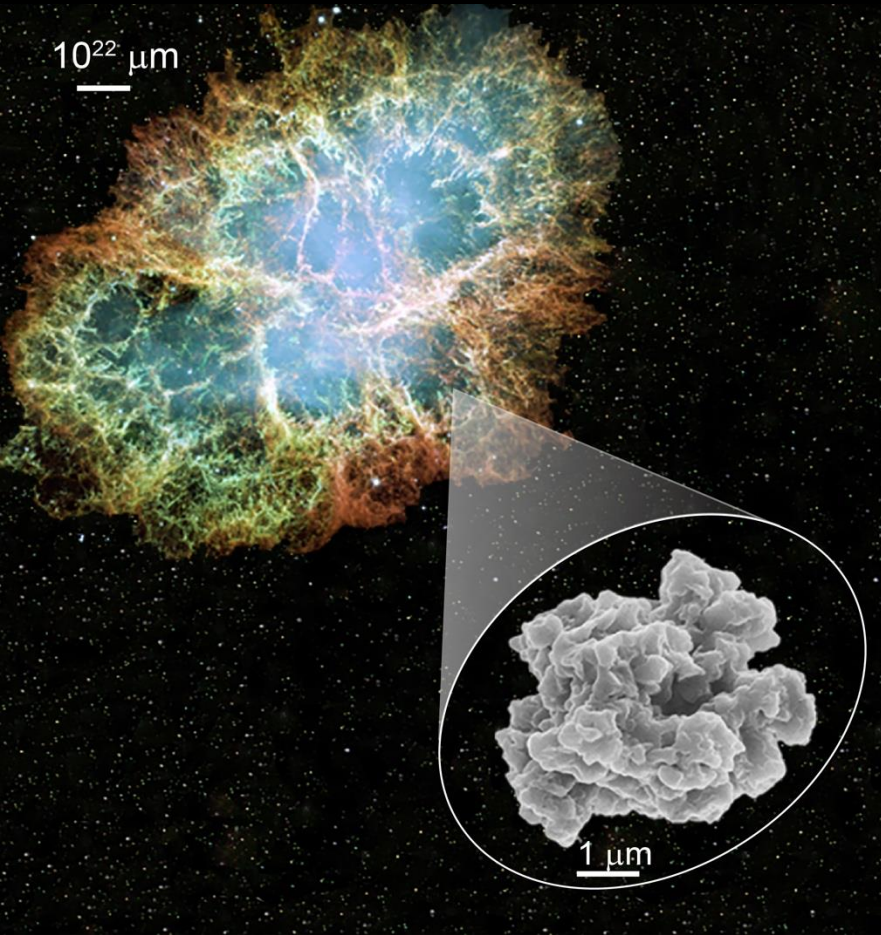
$^{29,30}\text{Si}$ -rich,  
 $^{13}\text{C}$ -rich

- Triple alpha reaction leads to pure  $^{12}\text{C}$  in He-rich shells
- $^{12}\text{C}(p,\gamma)^{13}\text{N}(\beta^-)^{13}\text{C}$



The preservation of **neutron-burst** signatures in **X grains** favor **explosive H burning** in **He/N** zone

# Overview

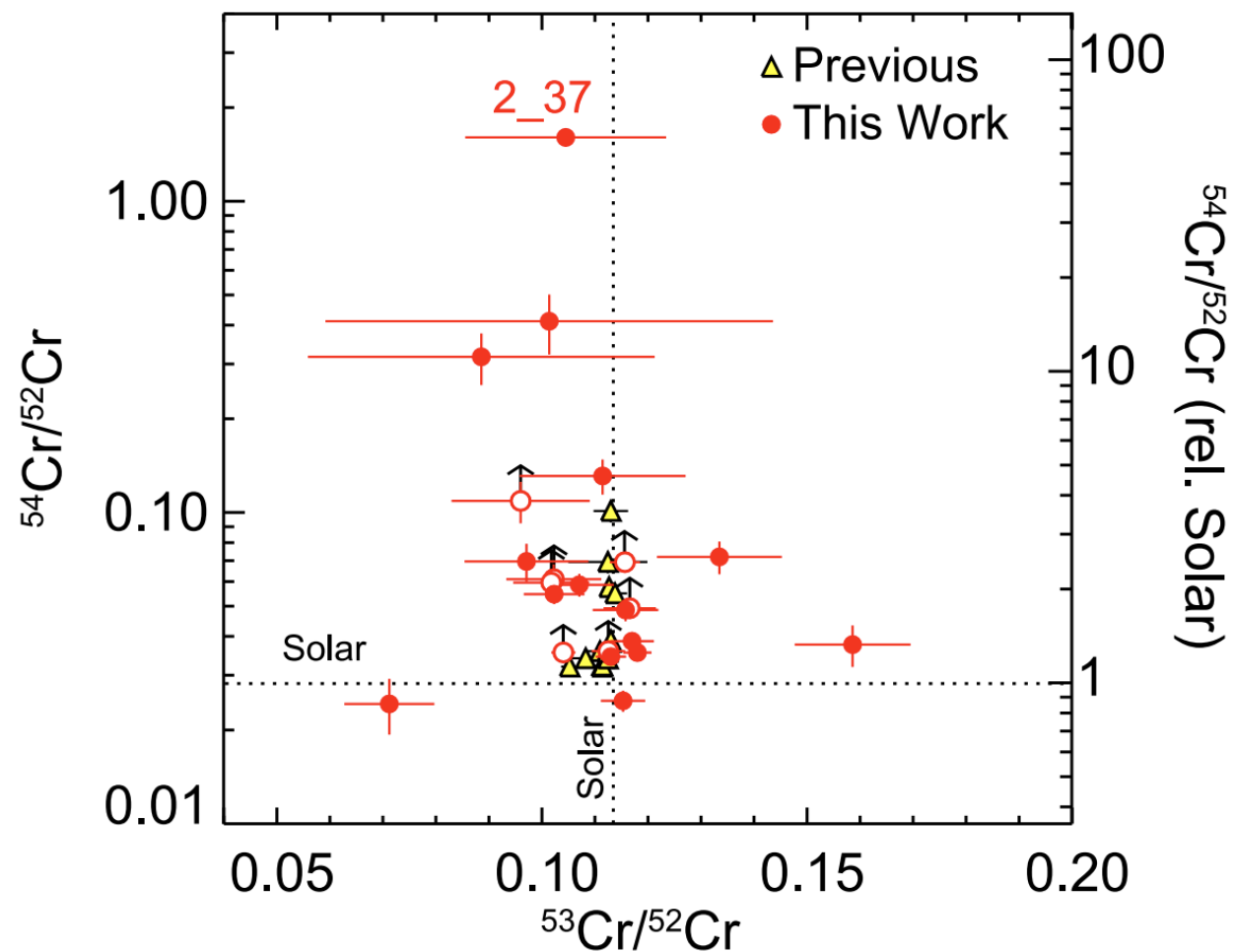
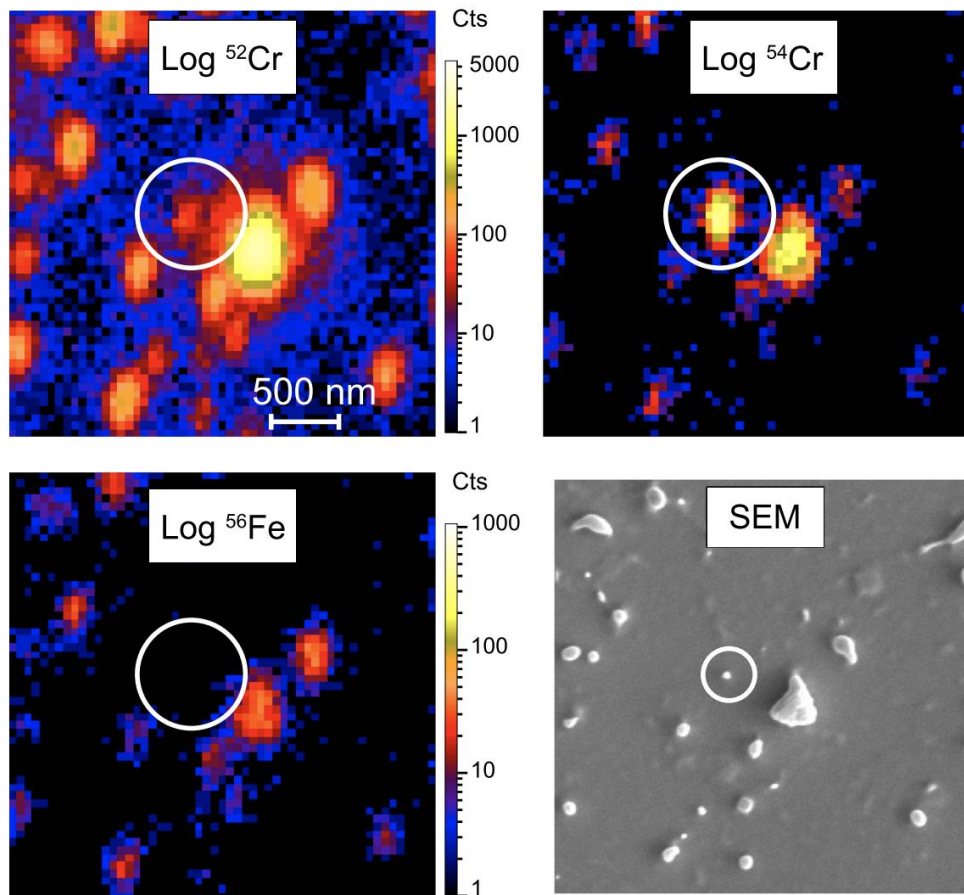


- Basics of Presolar Stardust Grains
- Supernovae and Their Stardust
  - Titanium-44 in SNe II
  - Explosive nucleosynthesis in SNe II
  - Stardust from other supernovae?



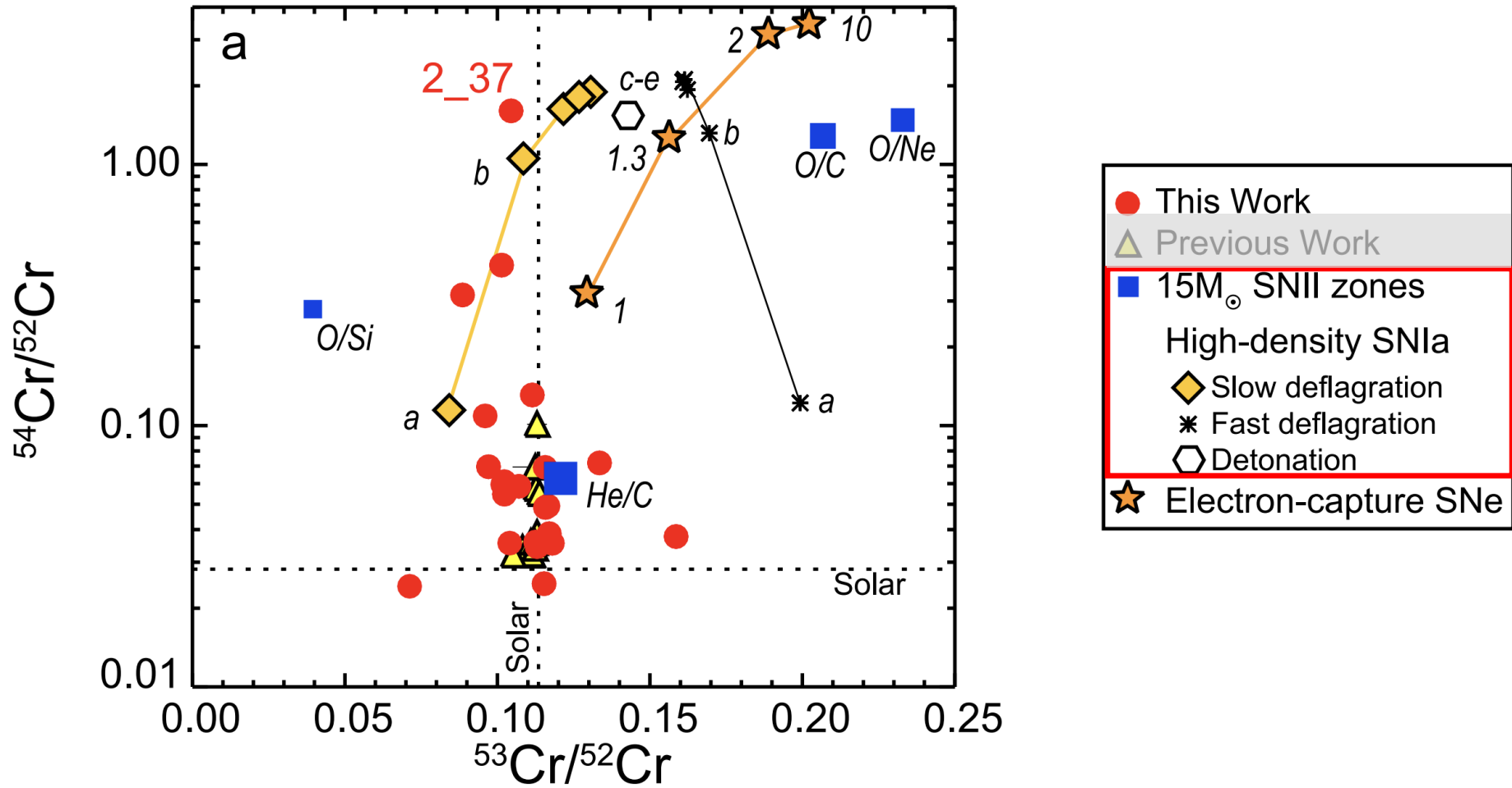
# Presolar Nanospinel Grains

from Nittler et al. (2018) *ApJL*



Potential origins include Chandra SNIa, electron-capture SNe, and Type II SNe

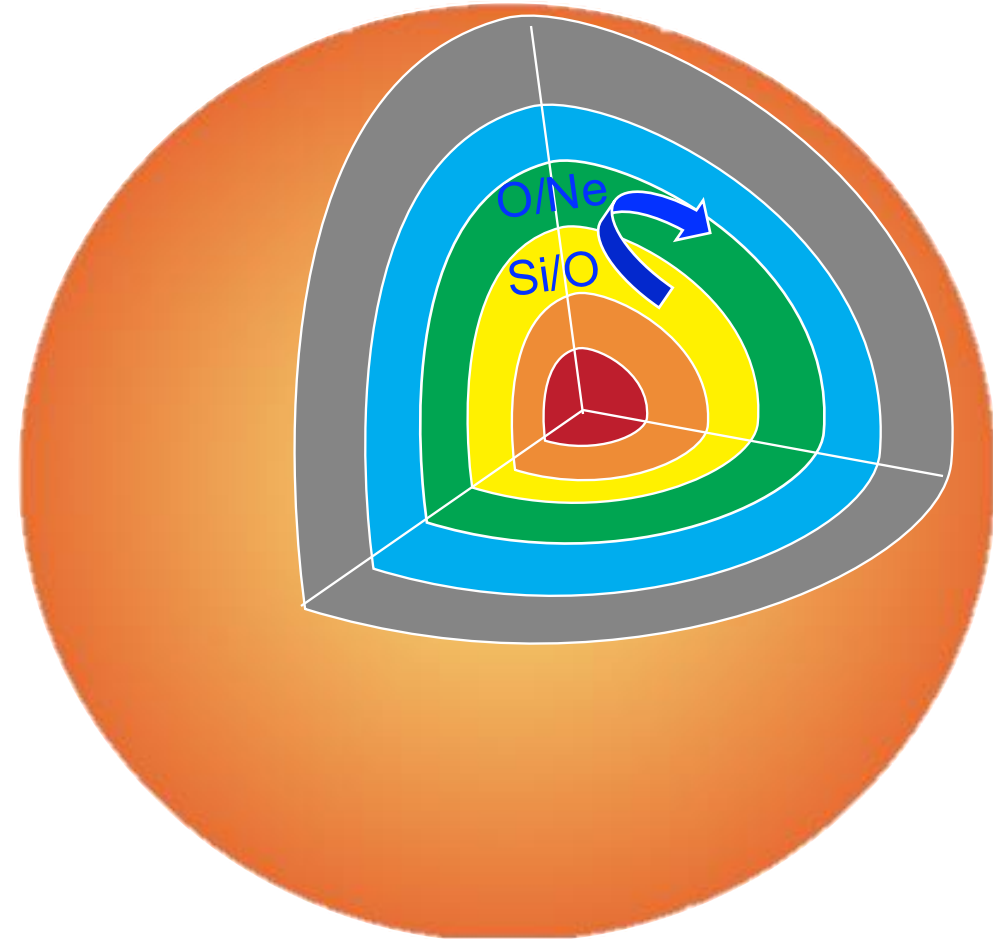
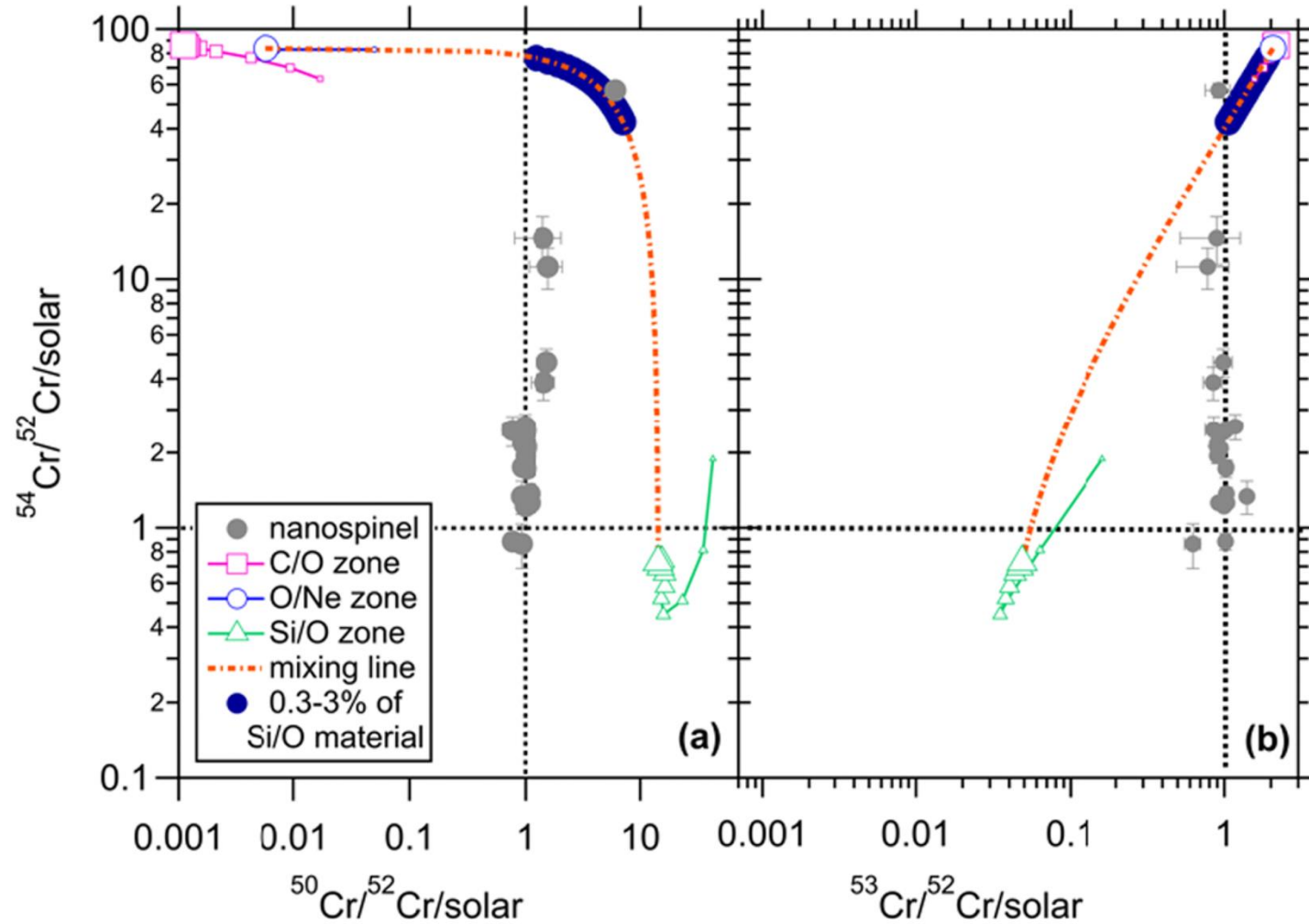
# Type Ia and Electron-capture Supernovae



from Nittler et al. (2018) *ApJL*



# Type II Supernovae are Also Possible!



from Liu et al. (2024) SSR

# Conclusions

- $^{44}\text{Ti}$  is the **smoking gun** of supernova nucleosynthesis and confirms the **Type II supernova** origins for presolar **X SiC** grains
- X grains' **isotopic signatures** constrains the **neutron exposure** ( $\leq 0.8 \text{ mb}^{-1}$ ) for neutron-burst and the **location** of **explosive H-burning** (He/N zone) in He-rich zones of Type II supernovae
- X grains' **multi-element isotope data** allow us to **disentangle** mixing between **different supernova zones** and place **constraints** on **key nuclear reaction rates**
- While **nanospinel grains** may suggest origins in **Type Ia** or **electron-capture supernovae**, a **Type II** origin remains plausible with zone-specific mixing, underscoring the importance of **3D hydrodynamic simulations**



# Backup Slides

