Flame Instabilities in Type Ia Supernovae

Michael Zingale
UCSC

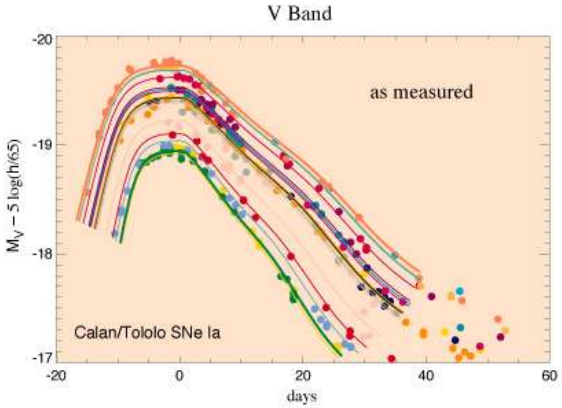
in collaboration with

Stan Woosley (UCSC), John Bell,
Marc Day, Charles Rendleman (LBL)

Type Ia Supernovae Observations

- As Bright as host galaxy
- Large amounts of ^{56}Ni produced
- No compact remnant
- Variation in lightcurves can be corrected for
  - “normalizable” standard candle
  - Broader = Brighter
  - Single parameter function
- What makes them such robust explosions?

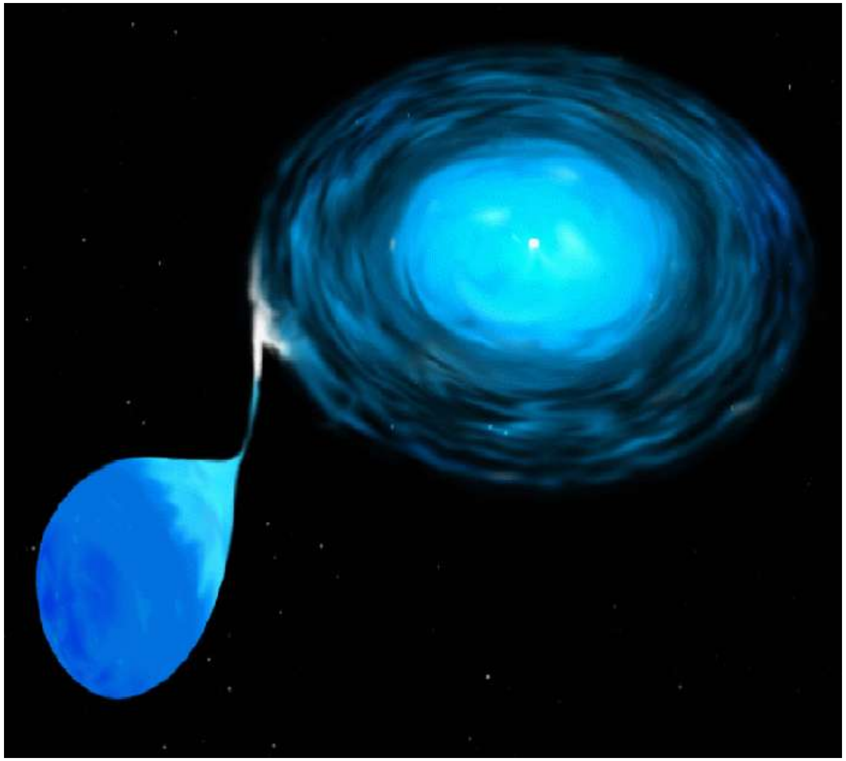
SN 1994D (High-Z SN Search team)



Phillips (1993), Perlmutter et al. (1997)

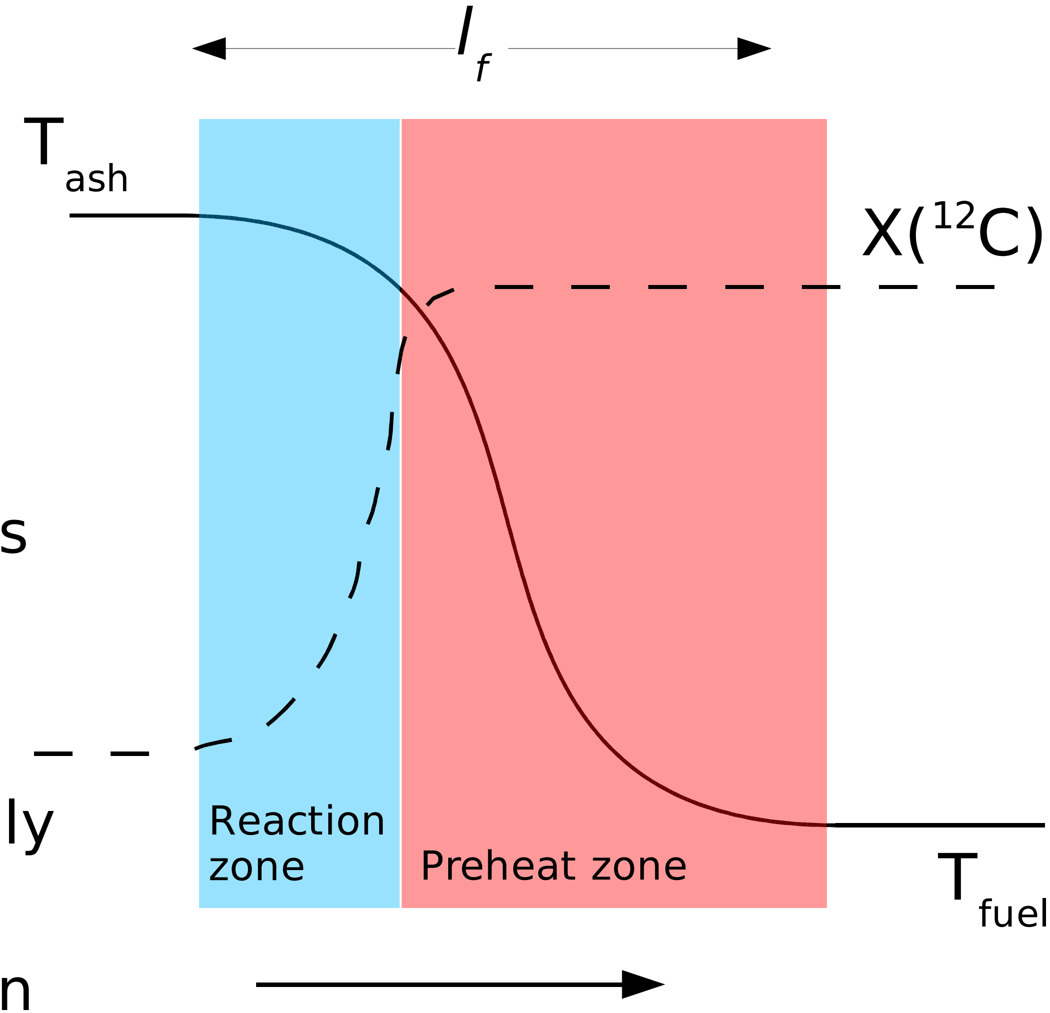
Type Ia Supernovae Theory

- Thermonuclear explosion of M_{Ch} white dwarf
  - Accretes from companion at high rate
  - As M_{wd} nears M_{Ch}, convection occurs throughout interior
- Ignition near center
  - Degeneracy decouples *P* from *T*, allowing for explosive runaway
  - C+C reaction rate is very temperature sensitive.
- Burning can proceed as deflagration or detonation.



Flames

- Begins as a deflagration
  - Subsonic burning front
    - Pressure is continuous across the front
    - Density drops in the ash region.
  - Thermal diffusion transports the heat
- Laminar speed too slow
  - Must accelerate considerably at low densities.
  - May transition to detonation



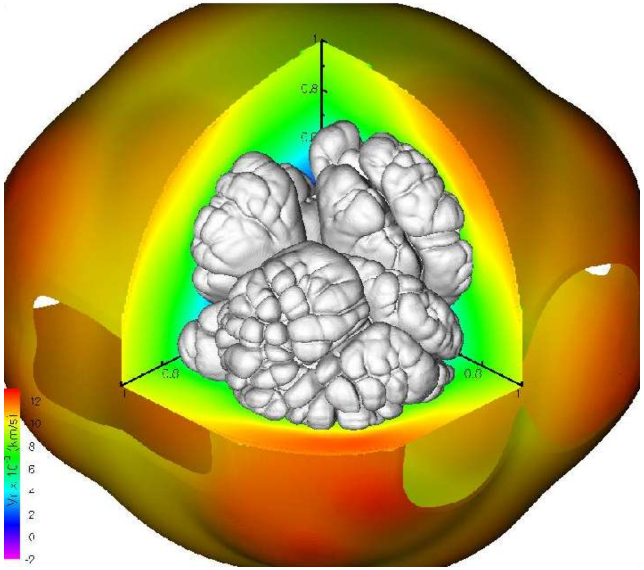
Explosion Requirements

- Flame must accelerate to ~ 1/3 c_s.
- Must produce intermediate mass elements (Si, S, Ar, Ca).
- Produces ~ 0.6 $M_\odot$ ^{56}Ni.
- How does the flame accelerate?
  - Flame instabilities (Landau-Darrieus, Rayleigh-Taylor)
  - Interaction with turbulence.

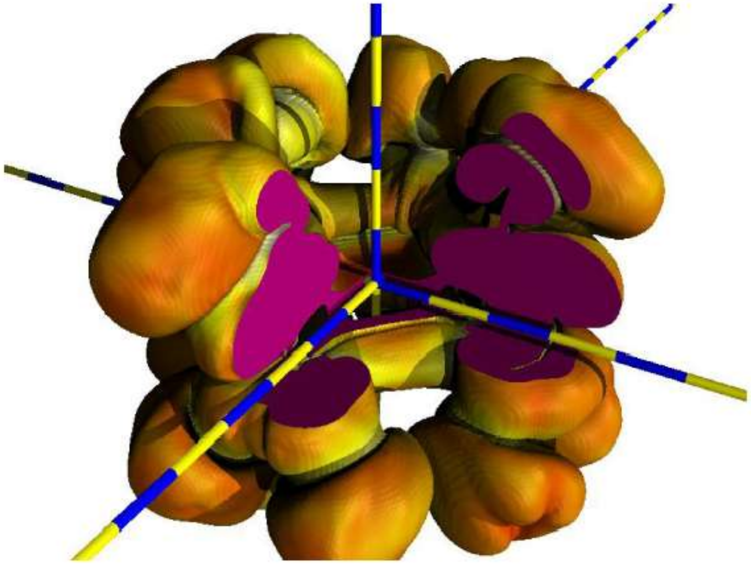
Increase surface area ⇒ increase flame speed.

Large Scale Simulations

- Instabilities are the dominant acceleration mechanism.
- Pure deflagrations can unbind the star.



Gamezo et al. (2003)

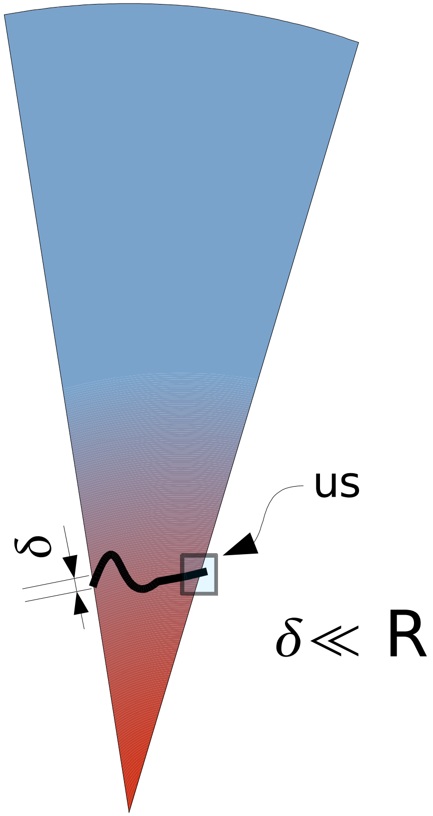


Reinecke et al. (2003)

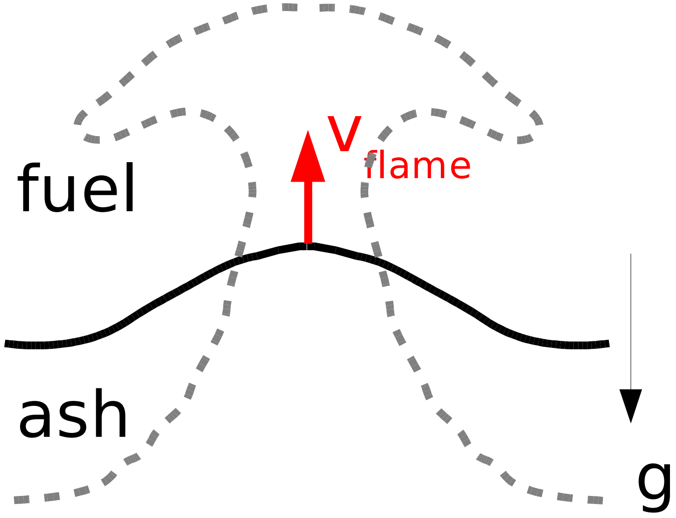
- Some flame model is required.
  - Stellar scale ~ 10^8 cm
  - Flame width ~ 10^{-5} – 10 cm

Bottom-Up Approach

- Simulations cannot resolve the star and the flame.
- We resolve the thermal structure of the flame and work up to large scales
  - Parameter free.
  - Resolved calculations can be used to validate flame models.
- Look for scaling relations that will act as subgrid models.



Rayleigh-Taylor Instability



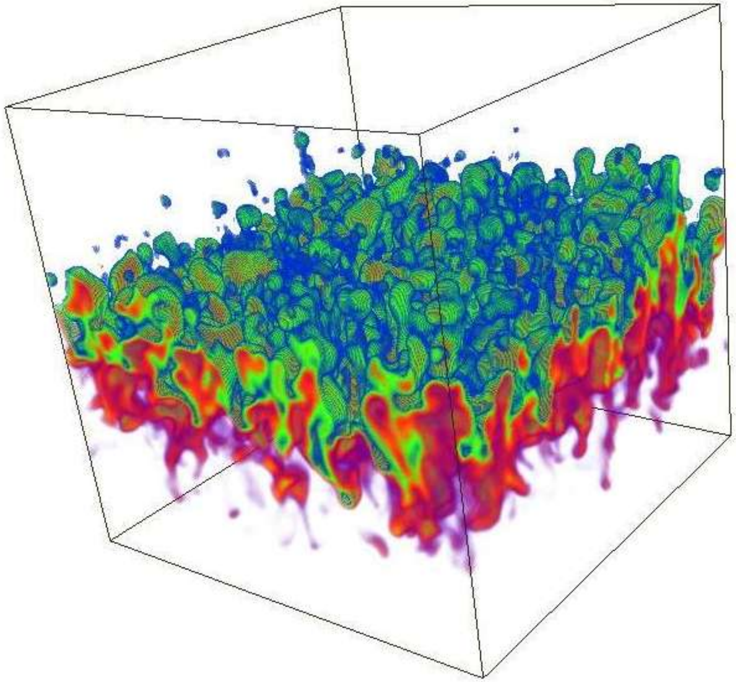
$$\rho_{ash} < \rho_{fuel}$$

- Rayleigh-Taylor
  - Buoyancy driven instability in presence of gravitation field.
  - Large amounts of surface area are generated.

- Well studied experimentally and numerically
  - Bubble merger model (Sharp-Wheeler) predicts growth of mixed region:

$$h = \alpha A g t^2$$

  - Measured α values range from 0.03 – 0.08



Calder et al. (2002)

Rayleigh-Taylor Instability

- Reactions set a small scale cutoff to the growth of the instability
  - Equate the growth rate of the RT instability to the timescale for a laminar flame to burn across that region

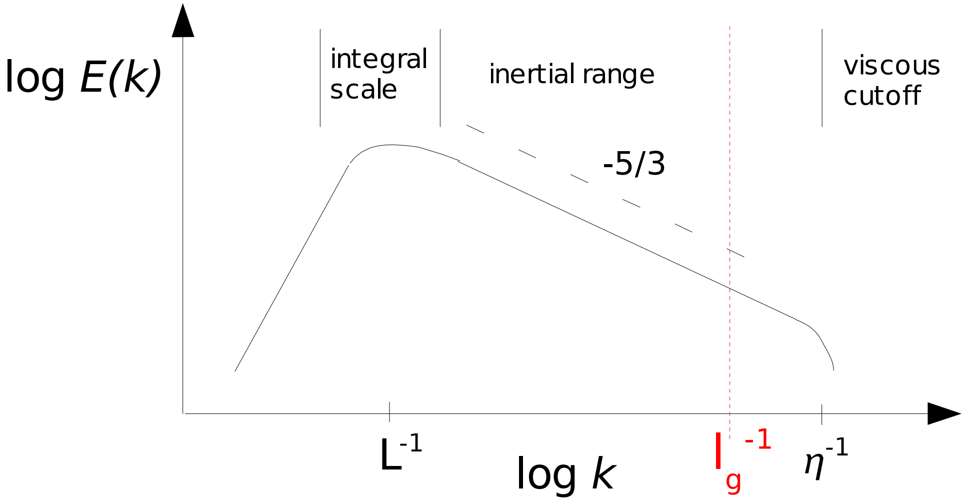
$$\omega^2 = gkA$$

$$\lambda_{\mathrm{fp}} = 4\pi \frac{v_{\mathrm{laminar}}^2}{g_{\mathrm{eff}}}$$

  - Wavelengths smaller than this will burn away.
  - At low densities, RT will dominate

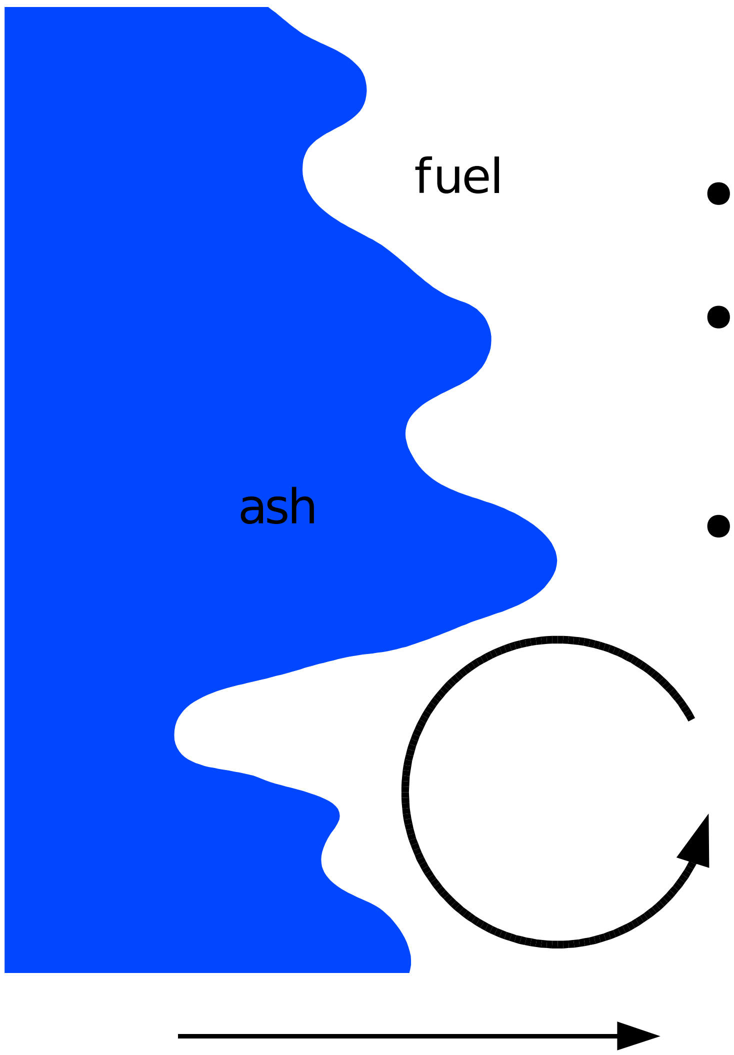
Turbulence

- Cascade of kinetic energy over a range of length scales
  - Integral scale, L, where the bulk of the kinetic energy exists
  - Kolmogorov scale, η, where inertial and viscous effects balance
  - Gibson scale, l_g, where eddy can turn over before burning away.
- Size of l_g in comparison to flame width will determine the flame regime.



adapted from Peters (2000)

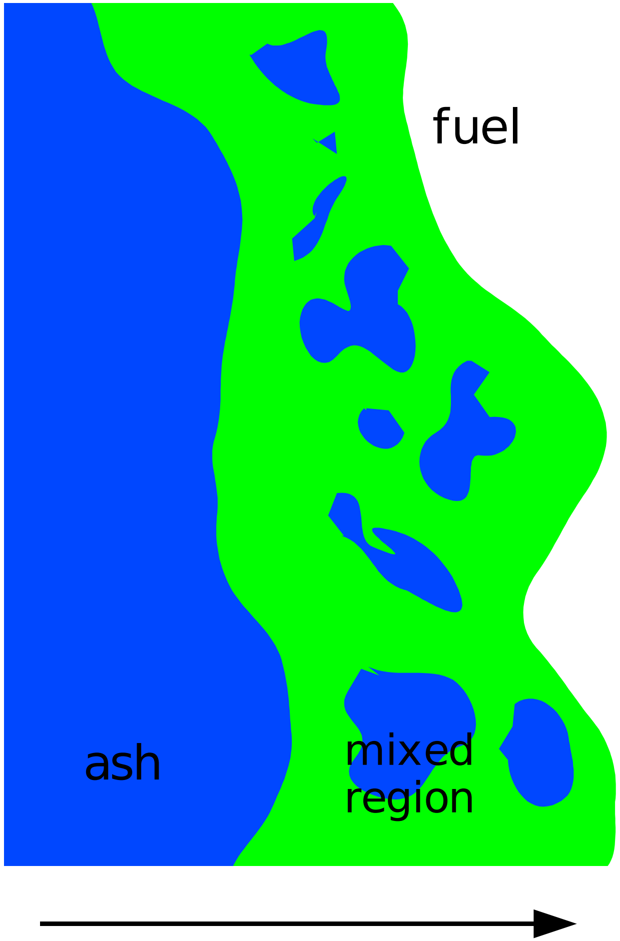
Flamelet Regime



- Flame is thinner than all turbulent scales
- Flame is a continuous surface
- Laminar propagation normal to the surface
- Turbulence serves solely to wrinkle the flame, increasing the area

Only fuel and ash exist, with a sharp interface between.

Distributed Burning Regime



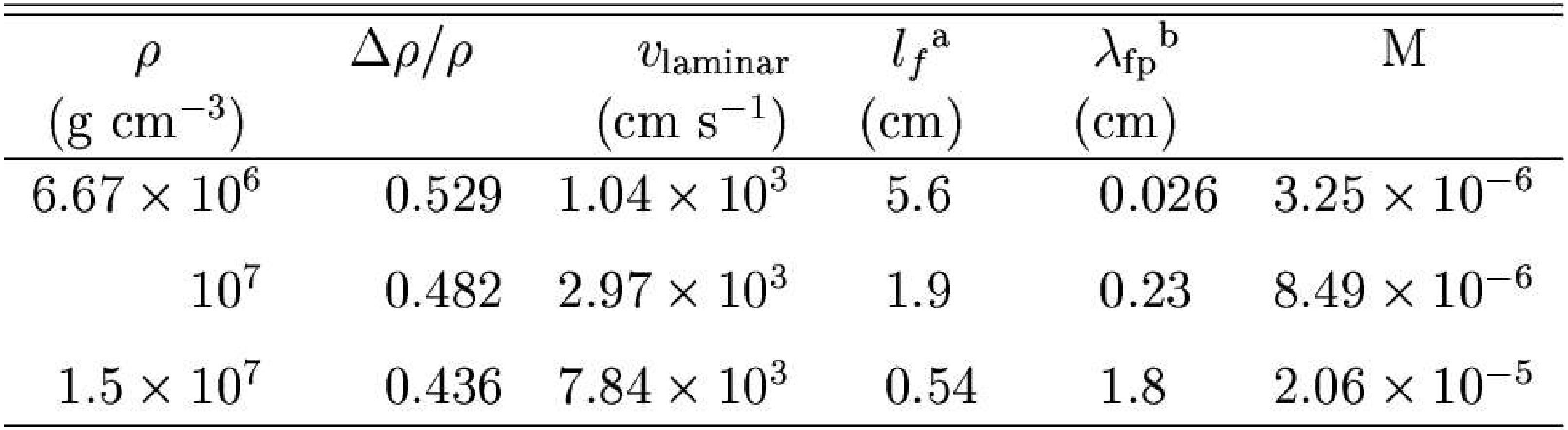
- Turbulence disrupts the flame
  - Gibson scale is thinner than the flame
- Mixed region of fuel + ash develops
- May be possible to quench the flame

Laminar flame properties suggest transition to the distributed regime at 10^7 g cm^{-3}

Niemeyer & Woosley (1997)
Niemeyer & Kerstein (1997)

This is something we can confirm

Low Density Flame Properties



ρ $(\mathrm{g\ cm^{-3}})$	$\Delta\rho/\rho$	v_{laminar} $(\mathrm{cm\ s^{-1}})$	l_f[a] (cm)	λ_{fp}[b] (cm)	M
6.67×10^6	0.529	1.04×10^3	5.6	0.026	3.25×10^{-6}
10^7	0.482	2.97×10^3	1.9	0.23	8.49×10^{-6}
1.5×10^7	0.436	7.84×10^3	0.54	1.8	2.06×10^{-5}

- Laminar flame speeds are very slow, M $\ll$ 1
- Expansion ~ 2x behind the flame.
- Densities around 10^7 g cm^{-3} pass through the region where

$$\lambda_{\mathrm{fp}} = l_f$$

Low Mach Number Hydrodynamics

- Laminar flames are very subsonic (M ~ 10^{-5}–10^{-6}).
- Compressible hydro is too expensive.
  - Timestep is limited by sound crossing across zone.
  - Many timesteps ⇒ large accumulation of error.
- Fuel and ash states are nearly incompressible.
  - Expansion across the flame links the two states.
  - Hydrodynamic method can exploit this to more efficiently evolve the flow.

Low Mach Number Hydrodynamics

- Low Mach number formulation projects out the compressible components.
  - Pressure decomposed into thermodynamic and dynamic components.

$$p(x,t) = p_0(t) + Mp_1(t) + M^2\pi(x,t)$$

  - Elliptic constraint provided by thermodynamics.

$$0 \equiv \frac{Dp}{Dt} = \frac{\partial p}{\partial \rho}\frac{D\rho}{Dt} + \frac{\partial p}{\partial T}\frac{DT}{Dt} + \sum_k \frac{\partial p}{\partial X_k}\frac{DX_k}{Dt}$$

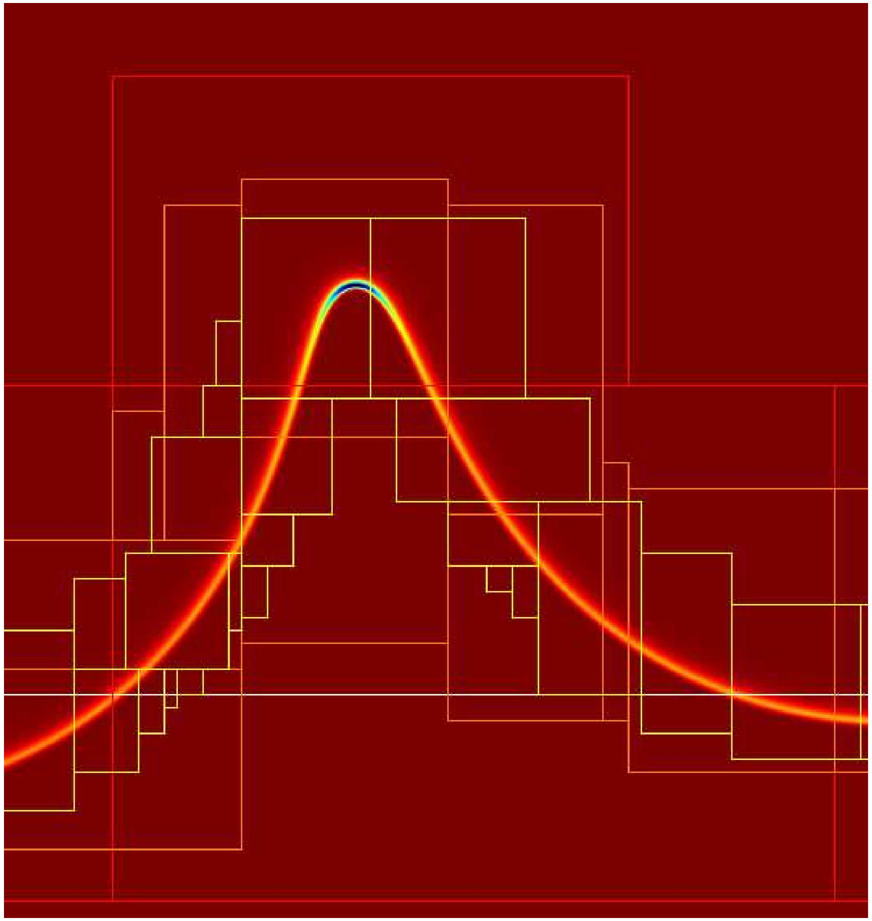
$$\nabla \cdot U = \frac{1}{\rho \frac{\partial p}{\partial \rho}}\left(\frac{\partial p}{\partial T}\frac{DT}{Dt} + \sum_k \frac{\partial p}{\partial X_k}\frac{DX_k}{Dt}\right)$$

  - Advection/Projection/Reaction formulation solves system.
  - Timestep limited by |v| and not |v| + c.

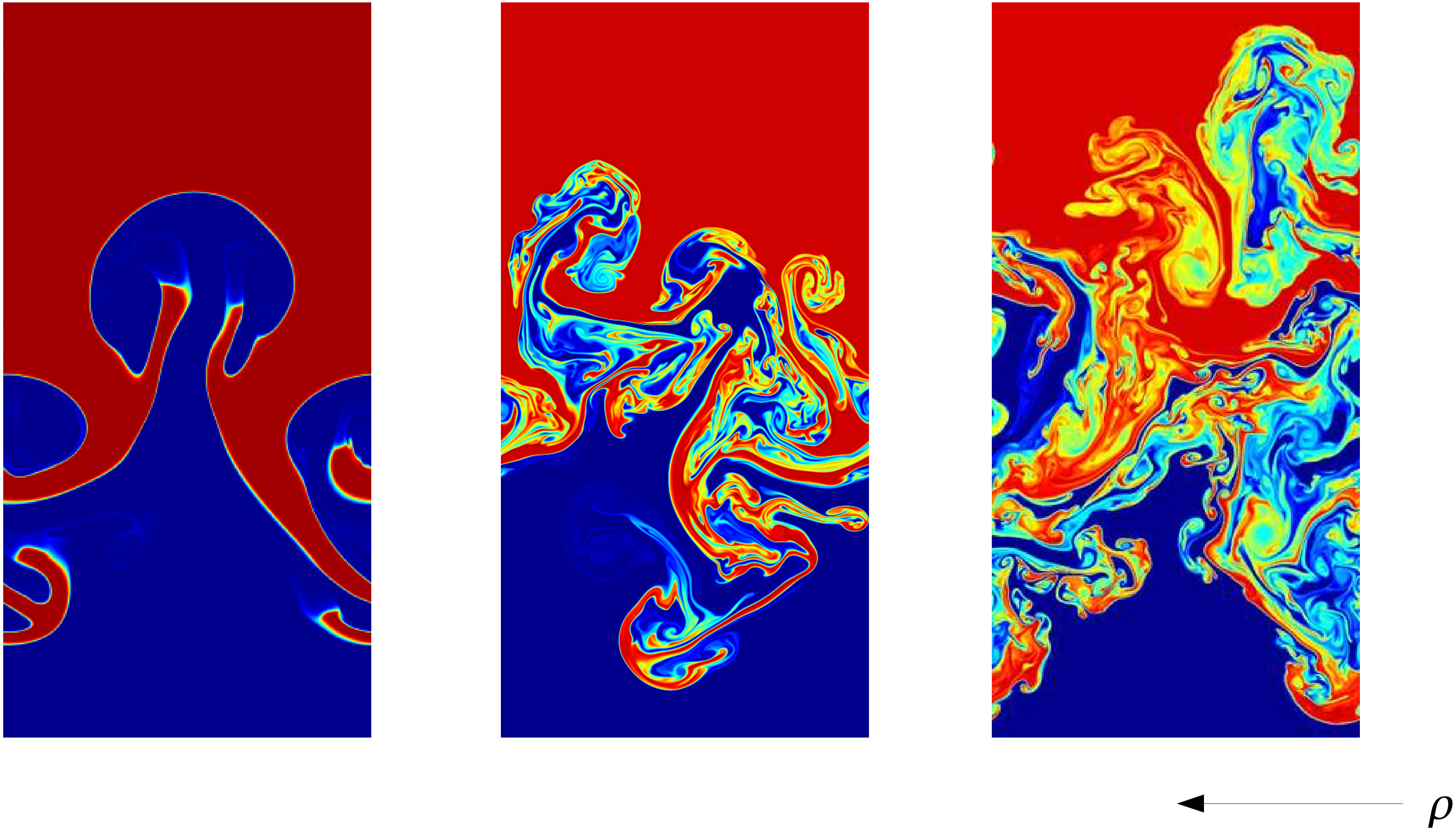
Bell et al. (2003)

Simulation Method

- Degenerate/Relativistic EOS used.
- Single step $^{12}C+^{12}C$ rate
- Initialized by mapping 1-d steady-state laminar flame onto grid.
  - Comoving frame
- Resolution chosen to put 5-10 zones inside thermal width.
- Block-structured adaptive mesh refinement is used.

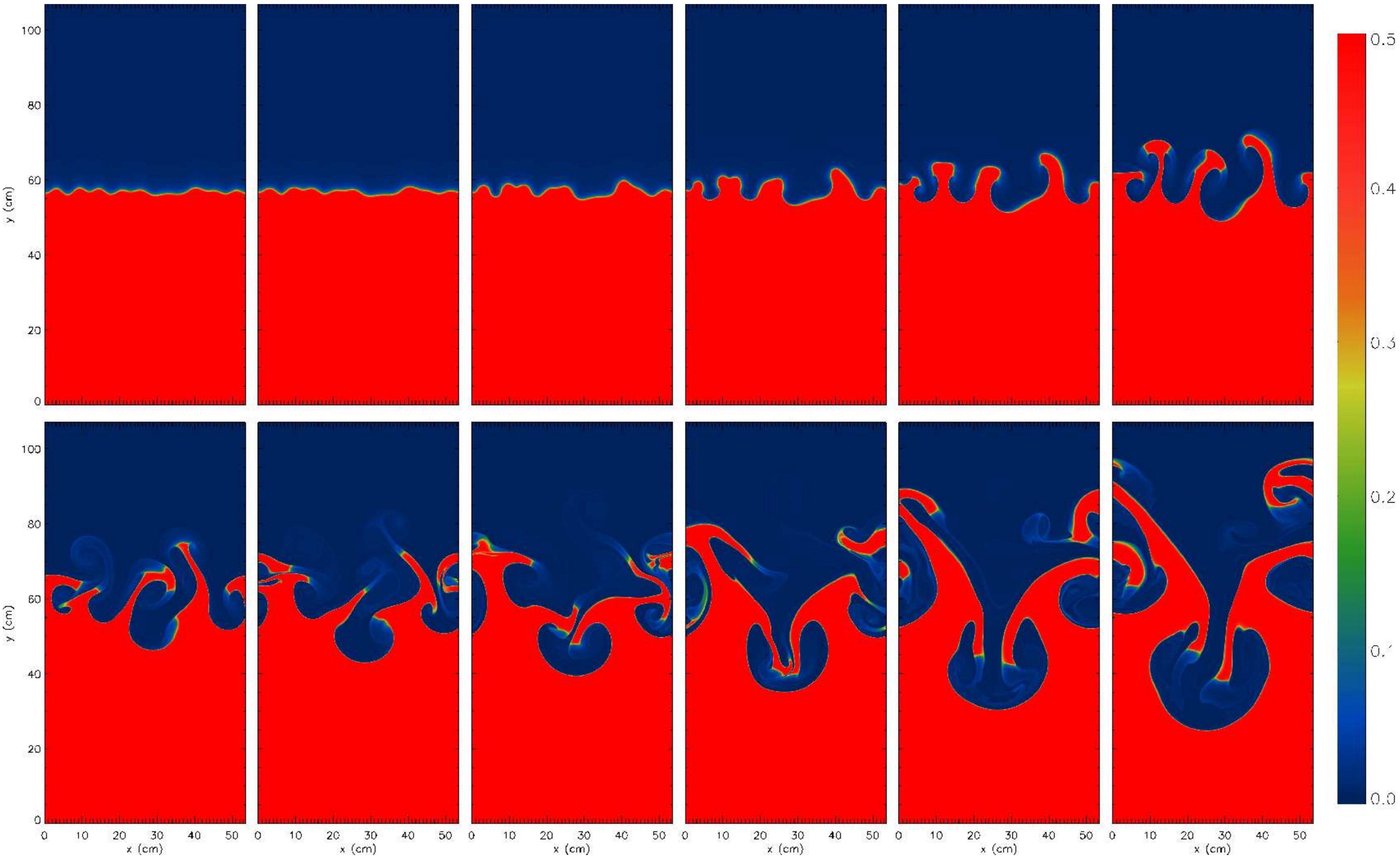


Transition to Distributed Burning

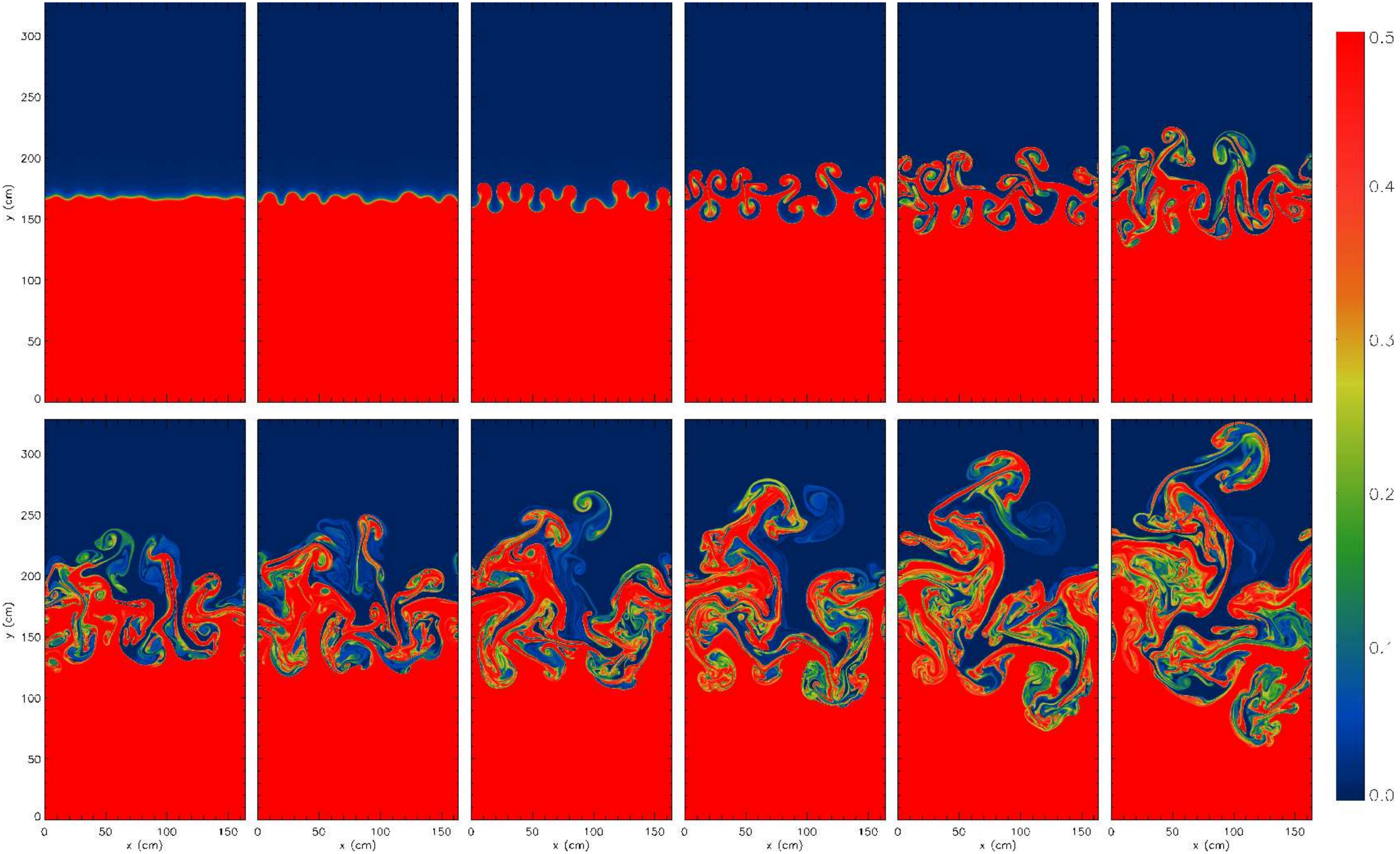


- As ρ decreases, RT dominates over burning.
- At low ρ, flame width is set by mixing scale.

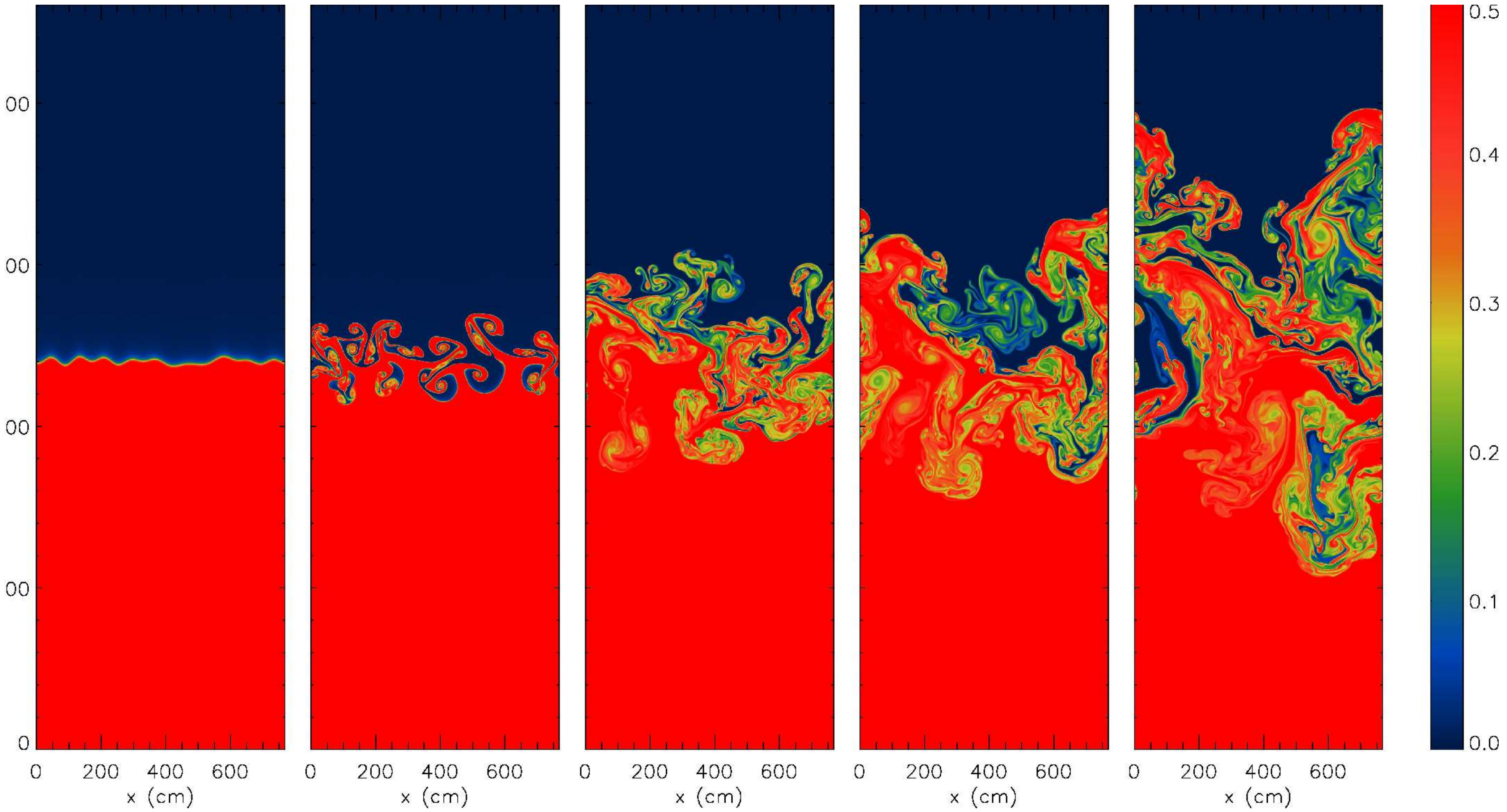
1.5×10^7 g cm^{-3}



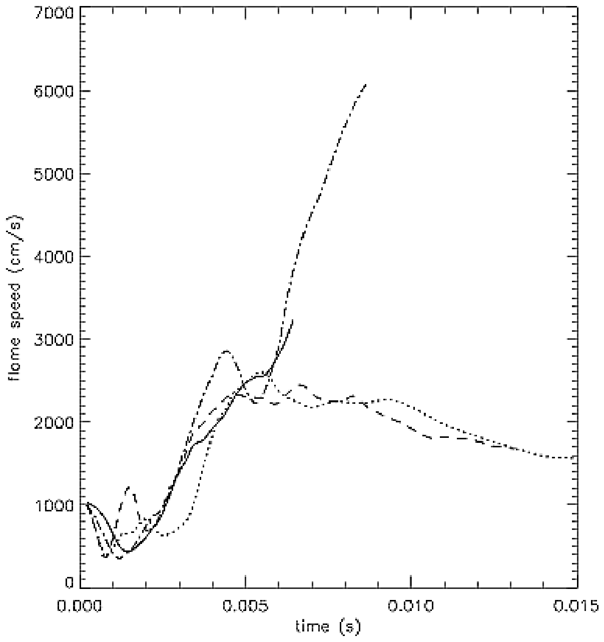
10^7 g cm^{-3}

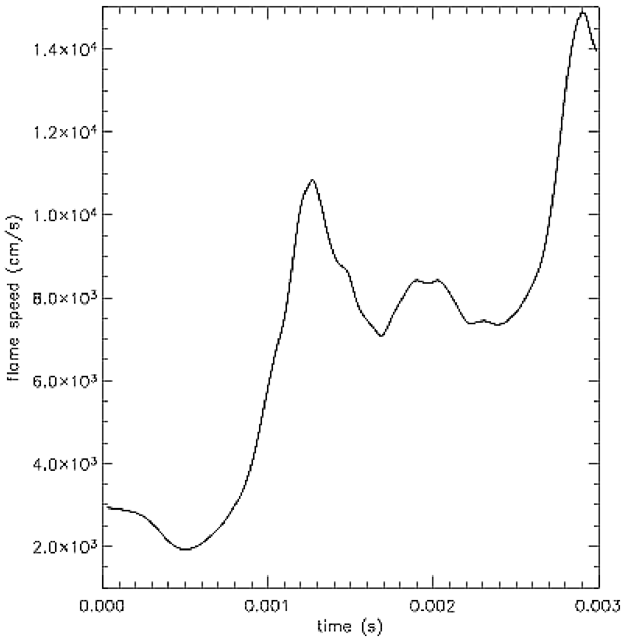


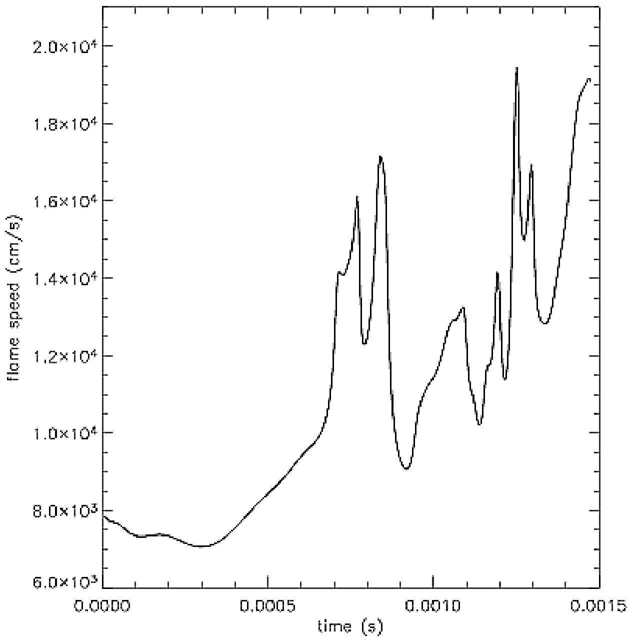
6.67×10^6 g cm^{-3}



Flame Acceleration





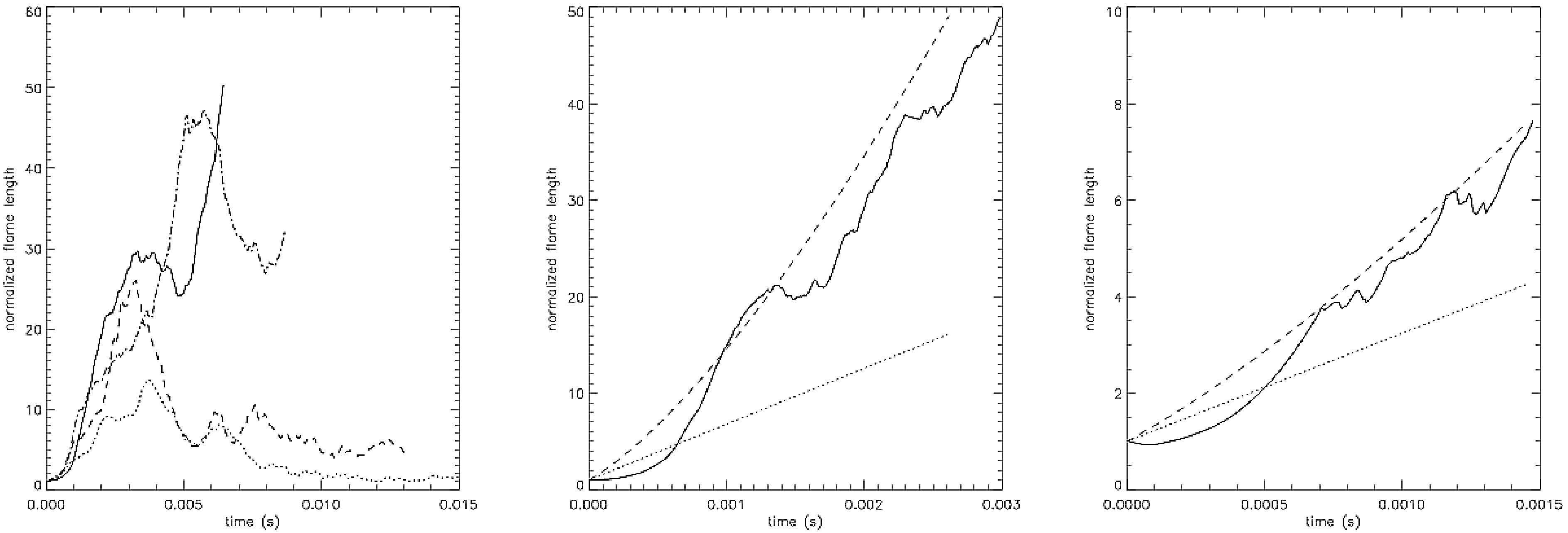


- Flame speed can be computed by looking a carbon consumption rate
- Accelerations up to 6x are obtained
  - Limited only by size of domain

Growth of Flame Surface

- Wrinking greatly increases flame length.
  - Increase in flame length > increase in speed ➞ curvature effects are important.
  - Flame length can be fit to a fractal model

$$L = L_0 \left(\frac{\lambda_{\mathrm{max}}}{\lambda_{\mathrm{min}}} \right)^{D-1} = L_0 \left(\frac{\alpha g_{\mathrm{eff}}^2 (t - t_0)^2}{4\pi v_{\mathrm{laminar}}^2} \right)^{D-1}$$

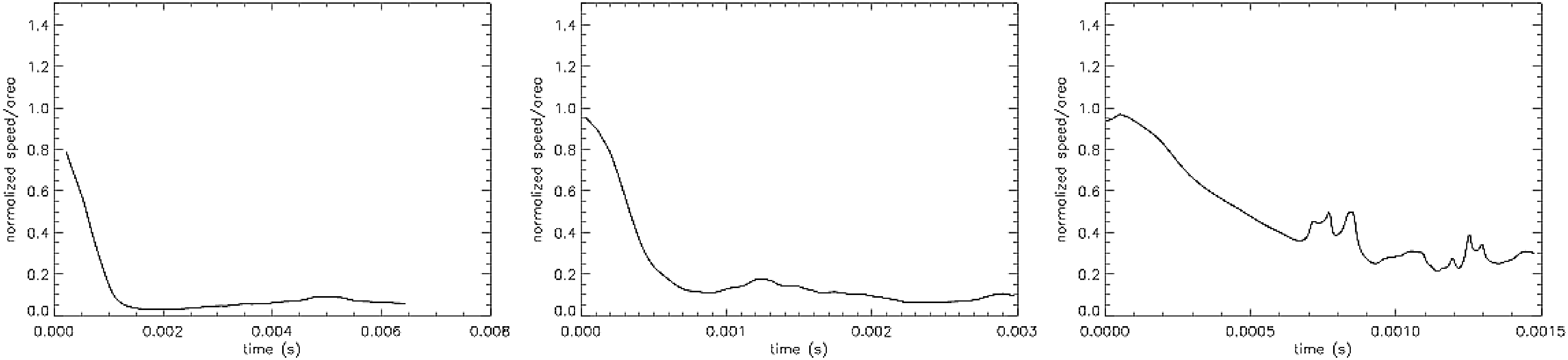


Scaling of Speed with Area

- A simple estimate for the flame speed is that it grows with the surface area

$$v(t) = \frac{A(t)}{A_0} v_0$$

  - This neglects the effects of curvature and strain.



We find a significant departure from v ~ A

Growth of the RT Instability

- RT generated turbulence reaches speeds of > 10^5 cm s^{-1} on scales of 10^3 cm.
  - Peak turbulent kinetic energy grows as t^2.
  - Quickly will dominate over pre-existing turbulence.
  - Non-reactive RT generated turbulent kinetic energy grows faster.
- Mixed region grows slower than Sharp-Wheeler model.
- Extent of reactive region scales with mixed region.
  - There may not be enough time for a DDT.

Implications for Subgrid Models

- Two different mode descriptions are needed:
    - Scaling in the flamelet regime
    - Volume burning in the distributed burning regime
- In the flamelet regime, we can quantify the curvature effects
- Further scaling studies (underway) will assess the validity of the fractal model.
- It seems that as density increases, $v \propto A$ becomes more valid.
- Need to understand the effects of pre-existing turbulence.

Where Do We Go From Here?

- Understanding the behavior of the turbulence requires 3-d simulations (underway)
  - Is the cascade Kolmogorov (usually assumed) or Bulgiano-Obukhov (buoyancy driven)? Niemeyer & Kerstein (1997)
- Formulation of a subgrid model and level set to advect the flame on large scales
  - We can do validation against the DNS flame just presented
- Full star model, including the effects of stratification and expansion.