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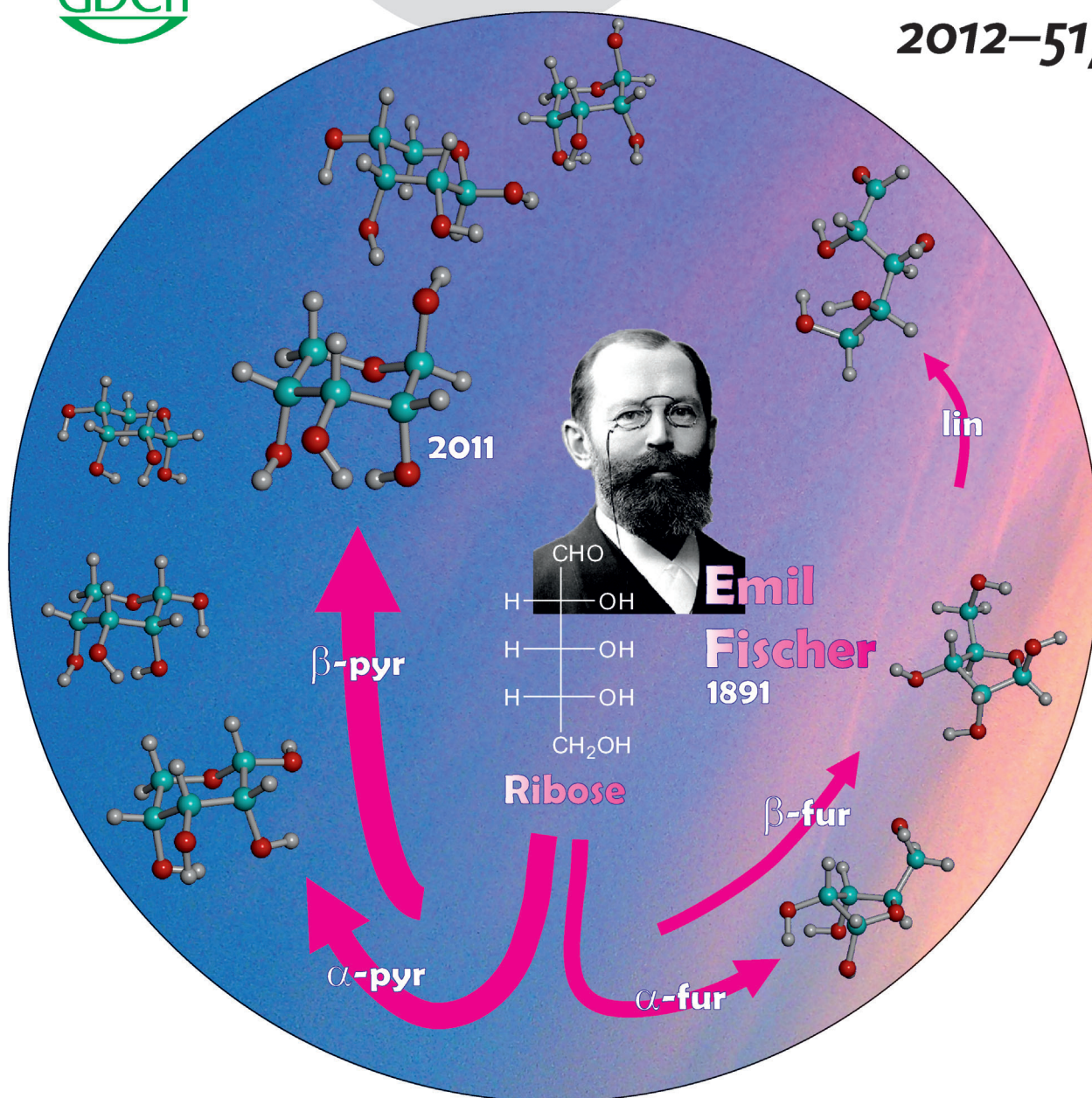
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Sugars in space: ...

... The rotational signature of ribose, the first C₅ sugar to be detected in the gas phase, is reported by E. J. Cocinero, A. Lesarri, and co-workers in their Communication on page 3119 ff. Six conformers were detected by a combination of laser vaporization and microwave spectroscopy. All adopt a pyranoside (pyr) structure, stabilized by cooperative hydrogen-bond networks, rather than the furanose form usually found in biological compounds. This rotational spectrum opens the door to the radio-astronomical detection of the first sugar in space.

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