



1 **Aurora Records in the Spanish Newspaper “Extremadura” for the**
2 **period 1923 – 2017**

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12 **Abstract:** Aurora records are a valuable proxy for understanding historical solar
13 behavior. This study explores historical records of auroras reported in the Spanish
14 newspaper "Extremadura" from 1923 to 2017. We have found and analyzed 31 news
15 articles, categorizing them into direct observations and general reports. The compiled
16 news includes significant auroral events occurred in 1926, 1938, 1950, 1956, 1957, 1958,
17 and 1991. The news reports aurorae visible not only in Extremadura, but also across Spain
18 and other parts of the world. We have extracted information on the characteristics, places,
19 timing, and societal impacts of auroras, in addition to providing information on these
20 events included in previous scientific literature. This collection of auroral reports
21 highlights historical newspapers as documentary sources for reconstructing solar activity
22 and its effects on Earth.

23 **Keywords:** Aurora; Geomagnetic storm; Solar activity; Space climate; Historical records

24 **1. Introduction**

25 The study of solar activity is of great importance due to its influence on our society
26 (Pulkkinen, 2007). Solar activity can manifest from different phenomena such as, for
27 example, sunspots, coronal mass ejections, and auroras (Usoskin, 2023). Sunspot records
28 represent the longest dataset of direct solar observations and, for that reason, the sunspot
29 number is the most used index to characterize long-term solar activity (Muñoz-Jaramillo
30 and Vaquero, 2019; Arlt and Vaquero, 2020; Clette et al., 2023).



31 Auroras are valuable proxies for studying historical solar behavior as well as offering a
32 complementary perspective to sunspot observations (Eddy, 1976; Siscoe, 1980;
33 Silverman, 1992; Silverman and Hayakawa, 2021). They are more common at high
34 latitudes, but significant geomagnetic storms can produce auroras visible at lower
35 latitudes (Hayakawa et al. 2018, 2020). The frequency and intensity of these events are
36 closely linked to the solar cycle (Vázquez et al., 2016). Therefore, historical records of
37 auroras provide a valuable dataset for reconstructing solar activity over long timescales.
38 Some examples using historical aurora records to reconstruct solar activity can be found
39 in Love (2018), Hapgood (2019), and Hayakawa et al. (2019).

40 Historical aurora observations have also been recorded in the Iberian Peninsula in
41 different documentary sources. For example, auroral displays were observed in Spain
42 during the geomagnetic storms of 1859 and 1870 (Vaquero et al., 2008). Aurora catalogs
43 including Iberian records have been compiled by Rico Sinobas (1855) and Aragonès and
44 Ordaz (2010). Systematic aurora records made in Lisbon and Barcelona in the 18th and
45 19th centuries were presented by Vaquero and Trigo (2005) and Vaquero et al. (2010).
46 An analysis of the great auroral display in 1770 was made by Carrasco et al. (2018) from
47 Spanish records and an analysis of the historical catalogs by Rico Sinobas was made by
48 Vaquero et al. (2003).

49 Valuable information on auroras and their impact on society can be found in news
50 published in journals and newspaper (Odenwald, 2007). In this work, we recover all the
51 information on auroras included in the news published by the Spanish newspaper
52 “Extremadura” from 1923 to 2017. The outline of this work is as follows. We provide
53 information on the documentary source, how we have searched for aurora events in those
54 sources and a description of the data found in Section 2. We analyze and discuss the
55 information on different historical aurorae found in the news in Section 3. Lastly, we
56 present final remarks in Section 4.

57 **2. Data and Methodology**

58 2.1. Documentary source

59 "Extremadura" is a regional Spanish newspaper based on the region of Extremadura.
60 Founded in 1923, it is one of the oldest and most recognized media in the region. It covers
61 local, national, and international news, with a focus on events and topics of interest for
62 Extremadura. Currently, in addition to its print editions, "Extremadura" also publishes



63 digital content. Its publications include reports, opinions, and sections dedicated to
64 culture, sports, economy, and society.

65 2.2. Location of news of interest

66 For this study, we have collected a digital version of all the issues published by
67 “Extremadura” since its beginning in 1923. Issues published since 2014 are available on
68 the website <https://www.elperiodicoextremadura.com/hemeroteca/>, whereas the previous
69 issues were provided by the staff of “Extremadura” upon request. Once the documentary
70 sources were collected in digital format (pdf format), a search using character recognition
71 with the keywords “aurora” was conducted. We found 31 news articles including
72 information on aurorae.

73 2.3. Data description

74 The news articles published by “Extremadura” on aurorae can be divided into two
75 categories: direct observations and general reports and analyses. There are 12 news items
76 including specific descriptions on direct aurora observations and 19 news items with
77 general reports.

78 News about observations includes historical events, such as the auroras seen during
79 geomagnetic storms in 1926, 1938, 1950, 1956, 1957, 1958, and 1991. This news
80 describes auroras observed not only in Extremadura, but also in other cities in Spain and
81 around the world. Some news items provide detailed descriptions of the auroras including
82 information about the duration and impact on society. Furthermore, there is one
83 ambiguous news article in 1952 in which it is not clear if the observed phenomenon was
84 actually an aurora (see Section 3.8 for more details).

85 General reports cover scientific research and explanations on aurorae. They include
86 attempts to create artificial auroras by Soviet and French scientists in 1974, explanations
87 about aurora formation by the meteorologists Mariano Medina (news from 1979) and José
88 María Lorente (news from 1955) and on the relationship between auroras and solar
89 activity by Martin Pomerantz (news from 1972) from the Bartol Research Institute
90 (USA). Moreover, six news items between 2008 and 2009 report scientific publications
91 on aurorae led by Professor José Manuel Vaquero from the University of Extremadura
92 highlighting the historical impact and relevance of aurorae for contemporary scientific
93 research. Some NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) missions are



94 also mentioned, such as the Themis mission and the launch of Delta 2, both in 2007,
95 aimed to study geomagnetic storms and aurorae. Three other news items in the 2010s
96 describe expeditions to Greenland, Iceland, and Norway by aurora hunters to observe and
97 study the phenomenon.

98 3. News on Historical Aurora Observations in “Extremadura”: Analysis and 99 Discussion

100 In this section, we describe and analyze the news articles containing specific information
101 on aurorae published in “Extremadura”. A summary of the descriptions can be found in
102 Table 1. We also provide information from other scientific studies and documentary
103 sources on the geomagnetic storms that caused the auroras reported in “Extremadura” to
104 compare with the information included in our primary source.

105 **Table 1.** Summary of the descriptions on specific aurora observations published in the
106 newspaper “Extremadura” for the period 1923–2017.

DATE	PLACES	DURATION	COLOR	IMPACTS
26–27 January 1926	New York (USA) Sweden Denmark Germany France Northern regions	> 9 hours	Red Green Violet	Telegraph Telephone Transmission cable submarine
25–26 January 1938	San Fernando (Spain) Throughout Europe	5 hours	Red	-
20 February 1950	Barcelona (Spain) Hervás (Spain)	-	Red	-
1956	Monforte de Lemos (Spain)	-	Red	-
22–23 January 1957	Seville (Spain) Huelva (Spain) Ávila (Spain) Lugo (Spain) Monforte de Lemos (Spain) Salamanca (Spain)	20 minutes	Red	-



10 – 11 February 1958	Panama Canal	-	-	-
4 – 5 September 1958	Germany	-	-	-
November 1991	Huesca Pyrenees Lérida Zaragoza	-	Red	-

107

Aurora boreal El calor solar y la agitación de la Tierra

(POR TELEFONO)

Aparece en los Estados Unidos

Dicen de Nueva York que, durante varias horas de la noche del 27, sobre el territorio de los Estados Unidos se distinguió una brillante aurora boreal.

Vivimos en una época de agitación extraordinaria cuyos efectos parecen dejarse sentir no solamente en la vida de los pueblos sino también en nuestro planeta y en el Sol, fuente de energía y al que debe la Tierra todos sus encantos y bellezas.

tancia simétrica con la anterior y al otro lado del ecuador solar hacia los veintion grados de latitud. Es de advertir que para que una mancha solar sea visible a simple vista precisa que su diámetro sea por lo menos tres veces mayor que el de la Tie-

108

109 **Figure 1.** Two news articles published in the newspaper “Extremadura” on the
 110 geomagnetic storm of January 1926. A translation on the text mentioning the aurora and
 111 its description can be seen in Section 3.1 [Source: newspaper “Extremadura”, 1926].

112 3.1. January 1926

113 There are two news articles related to the geomagnetic storm of January 1926 in
 114 “Extremadura” (Figure 1). The first one was a short news item published on 29 January
 115 1926. Its English translation is:

116 “*Aurora borealis. It appears in the United States. Reports from New York indicate that a*
 117 *brilliant aurora borealis was seen for several hours during the night of the 27th over the*
 118 *United States”.*

119 The second one, published on 17 July 1926, contains a more detailed analysis of the event.
 120 The translation regarding the mention of the aurora is:

121 “[...] *An extremely curious phenomenon took place on 26 January [1926]. On that day,*
 122 *our globe was under a dynamic ocean of prodigious power, resulting in the unleashing*
 123 *of a formidable magnetic storm which triggered telluric currents of such violence that*
 124 *telegraphic and telephone communications as well as transmissions by submarine cables*
 125 *were interrupted for several hours [...]. A magnificent polar aurora covered the sky not*
 126 *only in the polar regions, but also in our latitudes. Professor Carl Störmer, who has*
 127 *carried out very interesting studies on northern lights, observed that the point of*



128 *irradiation of the rays reached seventy-two degrees in the Oslo sky and that they had a*
129 *length of approximately 503 kilometers, giving us an idea of the height of our atmosphere.*
130 *The phenomenon began at 18:04 in the form of a yellow-greenish arc from the north and*
131 *a strong red arc from the north-west. An hour later the spectacle was truly marvelous.*
132 *Gradually, the arc was transformed into an immense corona which gave off dazzling rays*
133 *of a very high red coloring. From one o'clock to three o'clock on the morning of the 27th,*
134 *intense green and violet glows were observed, which gradually disappeared until it was*
135 *completely gone. This splendid aurora borealis was seen in Sweden, Denmark, Germany,*
136 *France and other northern regions”.*

137 The first news item reports a bright aurora seen in New York for several hours on the
138 night of 27 January 1926. The second news item describes a geomagnetic storm on 26
139 January in more detail, indicating the start at 18:04 LT with auroras observed in Oslo,
140 Sweden, Denmark, Germany, France, and other northern regions. This storm disrupted
141 telegraph, telephone, and submarine cable transmissions for several hours. The height of
142 the aurora in Oslo was 72°. The news item reports that this geomagnetic storm was
143 recorded in observatories such as Meudon (France) and Ebro (Spain). It is estimated that
144 the diameter of the sunspot group responsible for this storm was around 100000 km. It is
145 also mentioned the relationship between sunspots, faculae, and prominences with solar
146 cycle.

147 This event was also reported by other observatories, such as the Stonyhurst College
148 Observatory, where geomagnetic measurements, without providing any description on
149 the aurora, were carried out (Rowland, 1926). Newspapers from U.S.A., including “The
150 New York Times” and “The Washington Post”, reported similar issues to those published
151 by “Extremadura” such as wire service and telegraph disruptions (Odenwald, 2021).

152 3.2. January 1938

153 There is one news article providing some information on the geomagnetic storm occurred
154 on 25 – 26 January 1938, known as the Fatima Storm (since it was considered one of the
155 Fatima Prophecies by Roman Catholics). The English translation is:

156 *“San Fernando - The Astronomical Observatory reported yesterday that the phenomenon*
157 *observed the night before was an Aurora Borealis of varying intensity. Its presence was*
158 *recorded at 23:00 and lasted until 2:00 a.m. in, with its maximum intensity at 21:00 and*
159 *23:30. Aurora is due to a magnetic phenomenon that can be repeated several times. In*



160 *Andalusia, no other case is remembered and that was witnessed by a crowd of people*
161 *until aurora stop perceiving. In San Fernando, the magnetic instruments had been*
162 *showing alterations for several days before.*

163 *FROM THE SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES TO THE MEDITERRANEAN. Berlin -All*
164 *the press are commenting on the presence of the Aurora Borealis. It has been perceptible*
165 *from the Scandinavian countries to the Mediterranean. Many data have been taken at the*
166 *observatories which will require laborious and fruitful study. There is also a widespread*
167 *opinion that the phenomenon may repeat itself.*

168 *IN SOUTHERN ITALY. Rome - The Aurora Borealis has been perceived all over the*
169 *country, but with the highest intensity in the southern regions.*

170 *IN POLAND. Warsaw - The Aurora Borealis of the day before yesterday was seen here*
171 *in the form of multicolored lines on a dark red background. Later, it splits into two bands*
172 *and in the early morning it was no longer visible.*

173 *The Aurora Borealis was reported to have been perceptible in all European countries”.*

174 According to this news article, the aurora was visible throughout Europe, including the
175 Spanish Navy Observatory in San Fernando. In Andalusia (Spain), the aurora started at 9
176 p.m. and finished at 2 a.m. with peak intensity between 11 p.m. and 11:30 p.m (Local
177 Time). It was perceived with great intensity in the southern regions of Italy and the color
178 of the aurora was red from Poland.

179 Anonymous (1938) noted that the aurora was remarkable for its brilliance and the wide
180 area of visibility, seen across Europe and as far south as Gibraltar and Sicily, on the night
181 of 25–26 January 1938. This source also provides observations made in different places
182 of the British Isles. For example, the Kew Observatory reported that the aurora was red,
183 spreading from north-northeast to west-northwest, reaching elevations of 5° to 10° above
184 Polaris. The aurora started at 6 p.m. according to the information sent by Mr. J.M. Brierley
185 to the British Meteorological Office. Hayakawa et al. (2021) estimated the intensity of
186 this geomagnetic storm in $D_{cx} \approx -336$ nT at 23:00 UT on 25 January. We note that the
187 D_{cx} index is an extended version of the Dst index at the University of Oulu (Mursula et
188 al., 2008).

189 Odenwald (2021) shows that some of the impacts of this storm were disruptions in all
190 transatlantic radio communication and delays in express trains on the Manchester to



191 Sheffield line affecting signaling apparatus. Newspapers around the world, such as “The
192 New York Times” and “London Times”, informed on this geomagnetic storm and its
193 impact on society.

194 3.3. February 1950

195 Two newspaper articles in “Extremadura” reported the aurora of 20 February 1950. The
196 first one was published on 21 February 1950 and the second one on 9 March 1950 (Figure
197 2). Their English translations are:

198 *“BARCELONA - At 10 p.m. last night, the presence of the aurora boreal was observed,*
199 *which aroused the curiosity of the public. It seems that the phenomenon can be explained*
200 *by the existence of spots observed on the Sun during these days”.*

201 *“From Hervás – [...] On the night of the 20th, the sky was tinged with red, which is seen*
202 *at other points, and according to someone, it looked an aurora borealis. Some gullible*
203 *and timorous people considered it, no less, a harbinger of war”.*

204 The first news item describes the aurora that was observed from Barcelona starting at 10
205 p.m (Local Time), attributing it to sunspots. The second news item mentions that the sky
206 turned red over Hervás (Extremadura) at night on 20 February, and also in other
207 unspecified locations.

208 Newton and Finch (1951) identified that the sunspot groups responsible for this storm had
209 a maximum area of 2800 millionths of solar hemisphere. Moreover, they also show
210 geomagnetic records of this storm. Parker (1951) indicated that the largest magnetic storm
211 in 1950 was that on 19–20 February, but it was not a very great storm. We found that
212 “The New York Times” reported worldwide radio communications disruptions due to
213 solar and geomagnetic activity (Odenwald, 2021). No additional observer descriptions of
214 the aurora were found beyond those published by “Extremadura”.



FENOMENO METEOROLOGICO

Febrero: Mes que ha satisfecho los deseos de labradores y ganaderos, dejándonos en diez días de lluvia y cinco de nieve, 93 litros por metro cuadrado, más la reserva por un mes de la nieve que cubre nuestras montañas. Por su parte, las noches frías retraerán la floración, con lo que será más fácil que las frutas sean abundantes.

A mediados de mes, florecen almendros y albaricoques, se ven las primeras cigüeñas y revolettea algún mirlo en las cercanías, que empiezan a preparar sus nidos. En la noche del 20, el cielo se tiñó de rojo, que es visto en otros puntos, y según algunos, parecía una aurora boreal.

Algunos crédulos y timoratos la estimaron, nada menos, presagio de guerra.

215

216 **Figure 2.** A news article published in “Extremadura” on the geomagnetic storm of
217 February 1950 with report and Hervás (Extremadura) [Source: newspaper
218 “Extremadura”, 1950].

219 3.4. January 1957

220 “Extremadura” published three news articles mentioning an aurora in January 1957
221 (Figure 3). One news item published on 24 January 1957 indicated that the aurora borealis
222 seen in different places of the planet (including Spanish cities) was due to an intense solar
223 storm occurred on 20 January. A news article published on 27 January 1982 reported that
224 an aurora borealis had been seen in several Spanish cities 25 years ago. Only a news item
225 published on 23 January 1957 includes specific information on the aurora. Its English
226 translation is:

227 *“Seville: An aurora borealis was seen in this capital, mainly from the northern sector*
228 *between the Macarena and the Madrid Road. The red glow spread slowly. The*
229 *phenomenon lasted about 20 minutes. According to the meteorological service, the*
230 *phenomenon usually occurs every 12 or 14 years.*

231 *Huelva: A very red cloud appeared over the Molina de la Vega district, in the northern*
232 *part of the city, which began to descend gradually until died out.*



233 *Ávila: A strange meteorological phenomenon was observed in the northern part of the*
234 *city at 11:45 p.m. A red spot covered a large part of the sky and slowly faded away. It is*
235 *believed to be an aurora borealis.*

236 *Lugo: The whole capital was impressed by a gigantic glow that covered the sky.*

237 *Monforte de Lemos: A curious phenomenon was observed in this town. The northern*
238 *Octave of the West was covered with a rosy glow which is supposed to be a refraction in*
239 *space of an aurora borealis with the same characteristics to that occurred in 1956.*

240 *Salamanca: In the early hours of yesterday, towards the part of the Pizarrales, a strange*
241 *meteorological phenomenon was observed, consisting of a great reddish mantle*
242 *extending to a great height”.*

243 The aurora was observed from the Spanish cities of Seville, Huelva, Ávila, Lugo,
244 Monforte de Lemos, and Salamanca on 22–23 January 1957. Reports indicated that the
245 aurora was red, visible in the north side of the sky in Seville, Huelva, and Monforte de
246 Lemos. The phenomenon lasted 20 minutes according to the record from Seville, while it
247 is noted that it started at 11:45 p.m. (Local Time) in Ávila. An intense red light was seen
248 in Lugo and Salamanca.

249 Paton (1958) highlighted this aurora as one of the three more significant in that year
250 indicating that it could have been seen as an overhead arc in the south of England. Cragg
251 (1958) published solar activity observations with sunspot number values and geomagnetic
252 measurements made in 1957. He listed the January 1957 storm as one of the most intense
253 for that year starting on 21 January and ending on 24 January. Regarding news published
254 on this storm, “Chicago Daily Tribune” informed that a plane crash occurred in the
255 Pyrenees was blamed on the aurora of 24 January 1957 (Odenwald, 2021).

256 We also highlight that the report made in Monforte de Lemos on this aurora indicates that
257 a similar aurora was seen in 1956.

Raros fenómenos meteorológicos han sido observados en varias capitales españolas

Aurora boreal en Sevilla, nube roja en Huelva y manchas rojizas en Avila y Salamanca

Una erupción solar produjo la aurora boreal del lunes último

EL FENOMENO LLENO DE PAVOR ALGUNAS REGIONES DEL PLANETA

258



259

260 **Figure 3.** News articles published in “Extremadura” on the geomagnetic storm of January
261 1957. News items published on 23 (left) and 24 (right) January 1957 [Source: newspaper
262 “Extremadura”, 1957].

263 3.5. February 1958

264 Information on two geomagnetic storms in 1958 is included in two news articles, one for
265 February and another for September (Figure 4). That occurred in September 1958 is
266 detailed in Section 3.6. The English translation including the relevant information for the
267 aurora in February is:

268 *“On the night of 10–11 February 1958, the crew of the German ship “Beate Bolten” from*
269 *Hamburg, Germany, sighted an aurora borealis near the Panama Canal. It was the*
270 *aurora borealis observed closest to the equator for the International Geophysical Year”.*

271 “Extremadura” reported that the closest aurora to the equator seen in the International
272 “Geophysical Year was observed by the crew of the German ship “Beate Bolten” as far
273 south as Panama Canal on 10–11 February. Furthermore, the article provides information
274 on where auroras can be seen and also on the aurora program developed by Germany,
275 including a summary of the aurora frequency and shapes observed for the period 1957–
276 1959. It is indicated that, in that period, German captains sighted about 12 aurorae around
277 Spain and even one in the coast of North Africa. In addition, details on observations made
278 by the “Explorer VI” mission and the “Argus” experiment in 1958 are included.

279 Akasofu (1962) defined this storm as exceptional, with DST index values below -400 nT
280 and intense red auroras visible at low, middle, and high latitudes. Several newspapers, as
281 “The New York Time” and “Los Angeles Time”, reported radio blackouts, telegraph
282 issues, and auroras as far south as Los Angeles (Odenwald, 2021).



- El origen de las auroras boreales -

En el mar se pueden observar más auroras boreales que en tierra

Un agujero en la «Botella Magnética»

POR WALTER THEIMER

283



284 **Figure 4.** News article published in “Extremadura” on the geomagnetic storm of February
285 1958 [Source: newspaper “Extremadura”, 1961].

286 3.6. September 1958

287 The news item published in “Extremadura” on 23 June 1959 included information on
288 auroras seen in Germany. Its English translation is:

289 *“In the Geophysical year, there were 36 magnificent magnetic-terrestrial disturbances*
290 *with corresponding whirlwind in the ionosphere. Five aurorae were observed in northern*
291 *Germany; aurora borealis is also related to the ionosphere. The most wonderful aurora*
292 *borealis was observed on the night of 4–5 September 1958”.*

293 Unfortunately, the only information available on aurorae in this news article is that five
294 aurorae were seen in the northern region of Germany and the most marvelous occurred
295 on 4–5 September 1958. We note that 21 aurorae were seen in Germany in 1958 according
296 to the article shown in Section 3.5.

297 Paton et al. (1959) indicated that this aurora started at 8 p.m. and was widely observed
298 from northern countries to France. These authors noted that, although this aurora was not
299 as brilliant as those occurred on 11 February and 8–9 July, it was spectacular due to its
300 active rayed bands and red pulsating surfaces. Moreover, the maximum K_p-index value
301 estimated for this storm was 9- (Schröder, 2011). No information on the influence of this
302 geomagnetic storm was found in other newspapers.

303 3.7. November 1991

304 The last significant magnetic storm reported by “Extremadura” occurred in November
305 1991 (Figure 5):

306 *“Over the last few days, a series of luminous phenomena have been detected in some*
307 *areas of the Huesca Pyrenees, as well as in Lérida and Zaragoza, which were reported*
308 *to the fire brigade as fires by some people. Indeed, these mysterious phenomena were*
309 *aurora borealis, a phenomenon that is only visible every 50 years and coincides with a*
310 *period of high solar activity. Ernest Guill, an astronomer at the Agrometereological*
311 *Centre of Alta Segarra, explained that ‘the first felling you get when you see them is that*
312 *it is a fire, even when we observed the phenomenon the other night, we initially made that*
313 *interpretation. But when we looked more closely we began to suspect that it was*
314 *something else’ ”.*



315 The news noted auroras seen in the Pyrenees and in the cities of Lérida and Zaragoza
316 (cities in northern Spain) some nights back. The fire brigade received warnings of
317 possible fires from many people. Thus, we can suppose that the color of the aurora was
318 red. However, no information was provided on the start and duration of the aurora as well
319 as the impact of the geomagnetic storm.

320 Cliver et al. (2009) classified this storm as one of the largest geomagnetic storms based
321 on the DST index, with a minimum peak of -354 nT. McEwen and Huang (1995) also
322 studied this storm showing that the aurora reached a low-latitude limit of 40° (in
323 geomagnetic latitude) on 9 November. Regarding newspapers informing about this event,
324 for example, “Los Angeles Time” reported that the aurora was visible as far south as
325 Texas (Los Angeles Time, 1991).

Aurora boreal

Durante los últimos días, se han detectado en algunas zonas del Pirineo oscense, así como en Lérida y Zaragoza, una serie de fenómenos luminosos que algunas personas denunciaron a los bomberos como incendios.

En realidad, estos misteriosos fenómenos no eran otra cosa que una aurora boreal, un fenómeno que solamente es visible cada 50 años y coincide con un período de gran actividad solar.

Ernest Guill, astrónomo del Centro Agrometeorológico de la Alta Segarra, explicó que «la primera sensación que se tiene al contemplarlas es que se trata de un incendio, incluso cuando nosotros observamos el fenómeno la otra noche hicimos, de entrada, esa interpretación. Pero cuando miramos con mayor detenimiento empezamos a sospechar que se trataba de otra cosa».

326

327 **Figure 5.** News item published in “Extremadura” on the geomagnetic storm of November
328 1991 [Source: newspaper “Extremadura”, 1991].

329 3.8. A suspicious aurora case in 1952



330 A news article published in “Extremadura” on 12 February 1952 mentioned the sighting
331 of an aurora. The text indicates:

332 “A phenomenon of splendor was observed in Hervás [town of Extremadura] on 6 January
333 [1952]: the aurora preceding the Sun was formed by concentric arcs with the colors of
334 the rainbow”.

335 Concentric arcs are not typical of auroras, which usually display dynamic and changing
336 arcs. Moreover, red is the most probable auroral color at latitudes as far south as
337 Extremadura (geographic latitudes between 38° and 40°). The mention of rainbow color
338 is unlikely for an aurora. We have also searched for information on possible geomagnetic
339 storm around that date and no records on auroras were found. Therefore, based on the
340 colors and shapes described and the fact that no more records were found, we think that
341 it is highly improbable that this case was related to an aurora.

342 **4. Conclusions**

343 The study of solar activity is crucial due to its influence on our society. This activity
344 manifests in phenomena such as sunspots, coronal mass ejections, and auroras. Auroras,
345 more common at high latitudes, but visible at lower latitudes during significant
346 geomagnetic storms, are valuable for studying historical solar behavior. Historical records
347 of auroras provide a valuable dataset for reconstructing long-term solar activity. This
348 work recovers all the information on auroras published in the Spanish newspaper
349 “Extremadura” from 1923 to 2017.

350 “Extremadura” is a Spanish regional newspaper established in 1923, covering local to
351 international news with a focus on Extremadura. In addition to print, it publishes digital
352 content across various sections. For this study, all the issues since its inception were
353 collected digitally. A search for news items on auroras yielded 31 results. These articles
354 are categorized into direct observations (12) and general reports (19). The former includes
355 historical aurora events from 1926 to 1991, while the latter covers scientific research,
356 explanations of aurora formation, and reports on aurora-related scientific missions and
357 expeditions.

358 We scrutinize the news articles in “Extremadura” that encompass specific details on
359 auroras. A condensed overview of these descriptions is presented in Table 1.
360 Additionally, we incorporate data from other scholarly researchs and documentary



361 resources on the geomagnetic disturbances that resulted in the auroras documented in
362 "Extremadura", enabling a comparison with the information derived from our principal
363 source.

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372 **Data Availability**

373 The data used in this work are available on reasonable request to the authors.

374 **Author Contribution**

375 JMV organized the work; CSR, LDC and IT extracted the information from the
376 newspaper; all the author analyzed the data; VMSC wrote the manuscript draft; all the
377 authors reviewed and edited the manuscript.

378 **Competing interests**

379 The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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