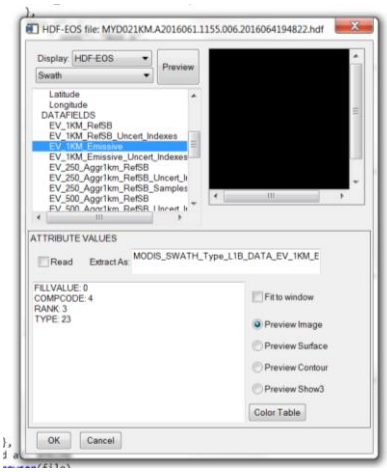
Quick tips to handling HDF files.

STEP1) Look inside! The first step is to check out what is in your .hdf file. Here are 3 options:

1) **With IDL, using hdf_browser.**

```
file='MYD021KM.A2016061.1155.006.2016064194822.hdf'
IDL> a=hdf_browser(file)
```



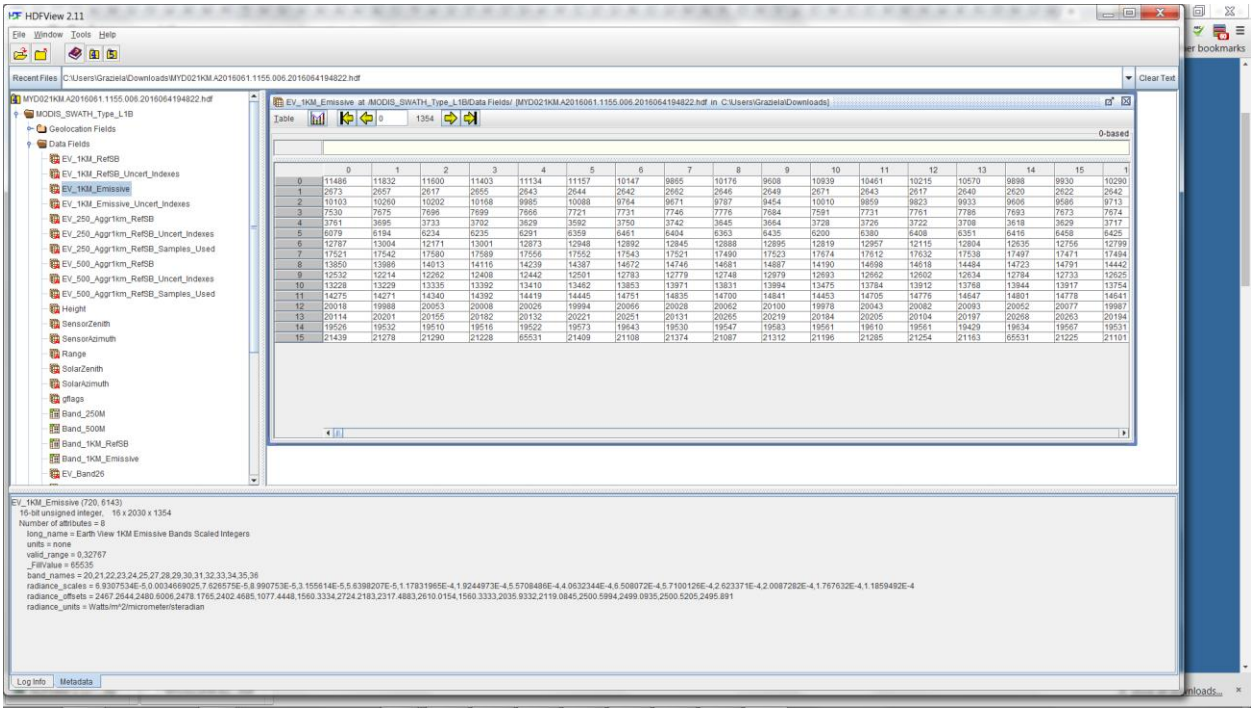
2) **With IDL, using hdf_parse.**

```
IDL> h=hdf_parse(file)

IDL> print,h,/implied

Will print on the screen a summary of the hdf content. May print too much stuff to be
practical.
```

3) **With HDFView – *Easiest way I know how*. ☺**

HDFView is a free software. You can use it on either Linux, Windows or Mac and it is very useful to take a look inside your HDF file. You can also have it export your variables in text format, making it good for beginners that may know how to read in text files with IDL but not .hdf files. I downloaded it to my Windows laptop from https://www.hdfgroup.org/products/java/release/download.html

It looks like this:



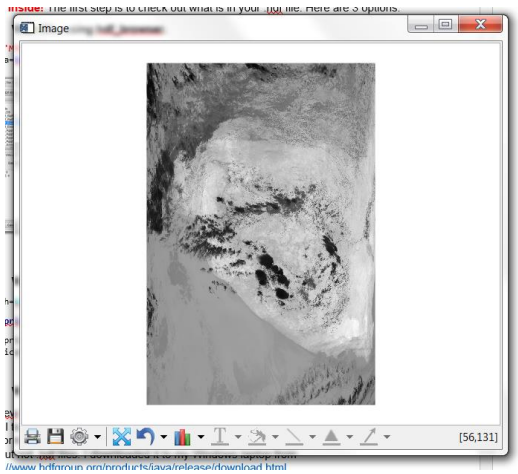
STEP2) Read it in! To read the data in your .hdf file using idl, you can do:

```
IDL> h=hdf_parse(file,/read_data)

IDL> myvariable=h['MODIS_SWATH_Type_L1B','Data Fields','EV_1KM_Emissive','_DATA']

IDL> help,myvariable
MYVARIABLE      UINT      = Array[1354, 2030, 16]
```

Notice that the strings I use in the command are exactly identical to the variable names you see when you look inside the .hdf file.

STEP3) Plotting it!

```
IDL> m=image(myvariable[*,*,10])
```



Graziela R. Keller