

Transient Phenomena at Collisionless Shocks and Their Effect on Particle Acceleration

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Acknowledgments:

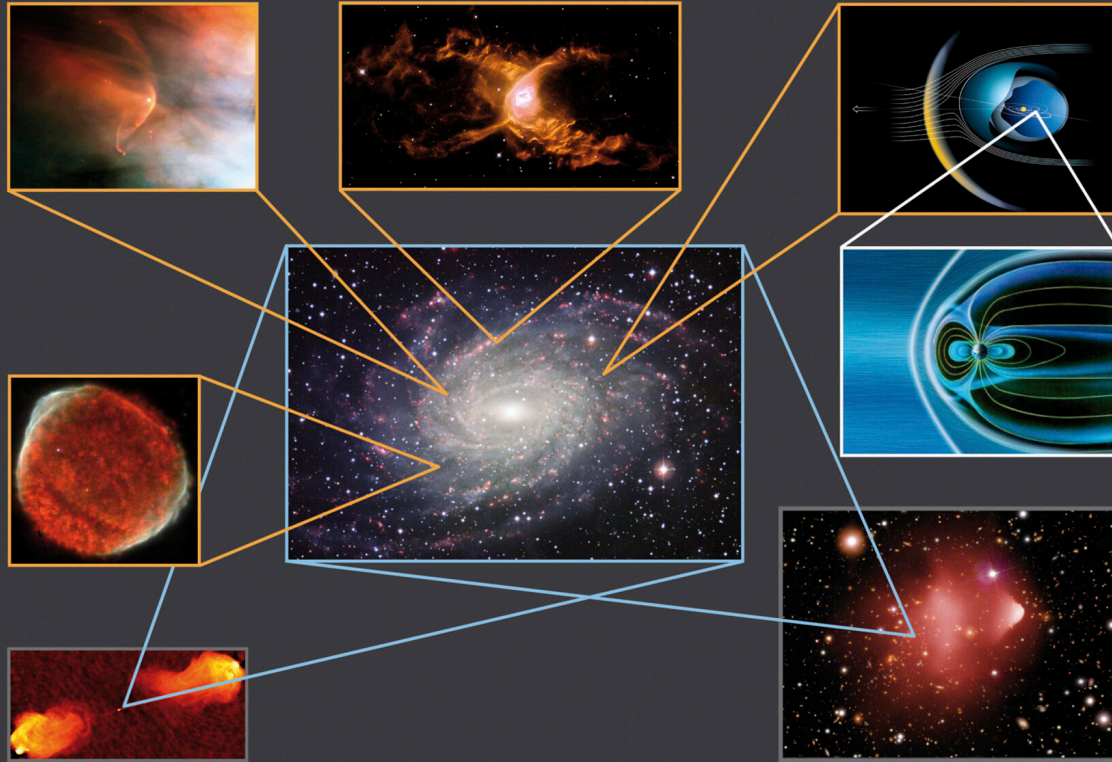
- MMS Mission & Early Career Grant
- JHU/APL R&D fund
- ISSI Team: P. Kajdič - Foreshocks Across The Heliosphere: System Specific Or Universal Physical Processes?

Thanks to friends and collaborators: Ahmad Lalti, Drew Turner, Terry Liu, Martin Lindberg, Damiano Caprioli, Lynn Wilson III, Imogen Gingell, Ying Zou, Ivan Vansko, Yufei Zhou, David Sibeck, Primož Kajdic, Adnane Osmane, Ian Cohen, Philippe Escoubet ++ many more

1. High level intro
2. Shocks (Geometry)
3. Shocks (Acceleration)
4. Transient phenomena
5. New Results on Particle Acceleration

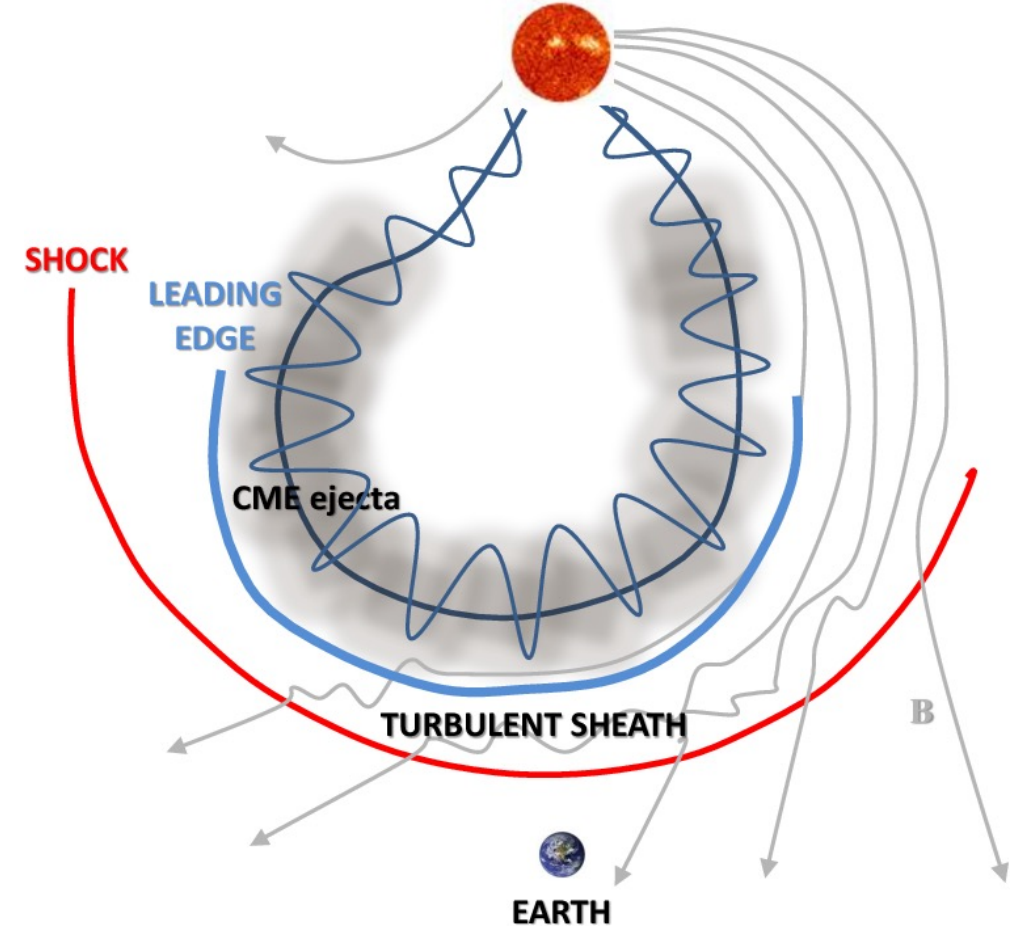
General Intro

Collisionless Shocks in Universe



Shock waves:

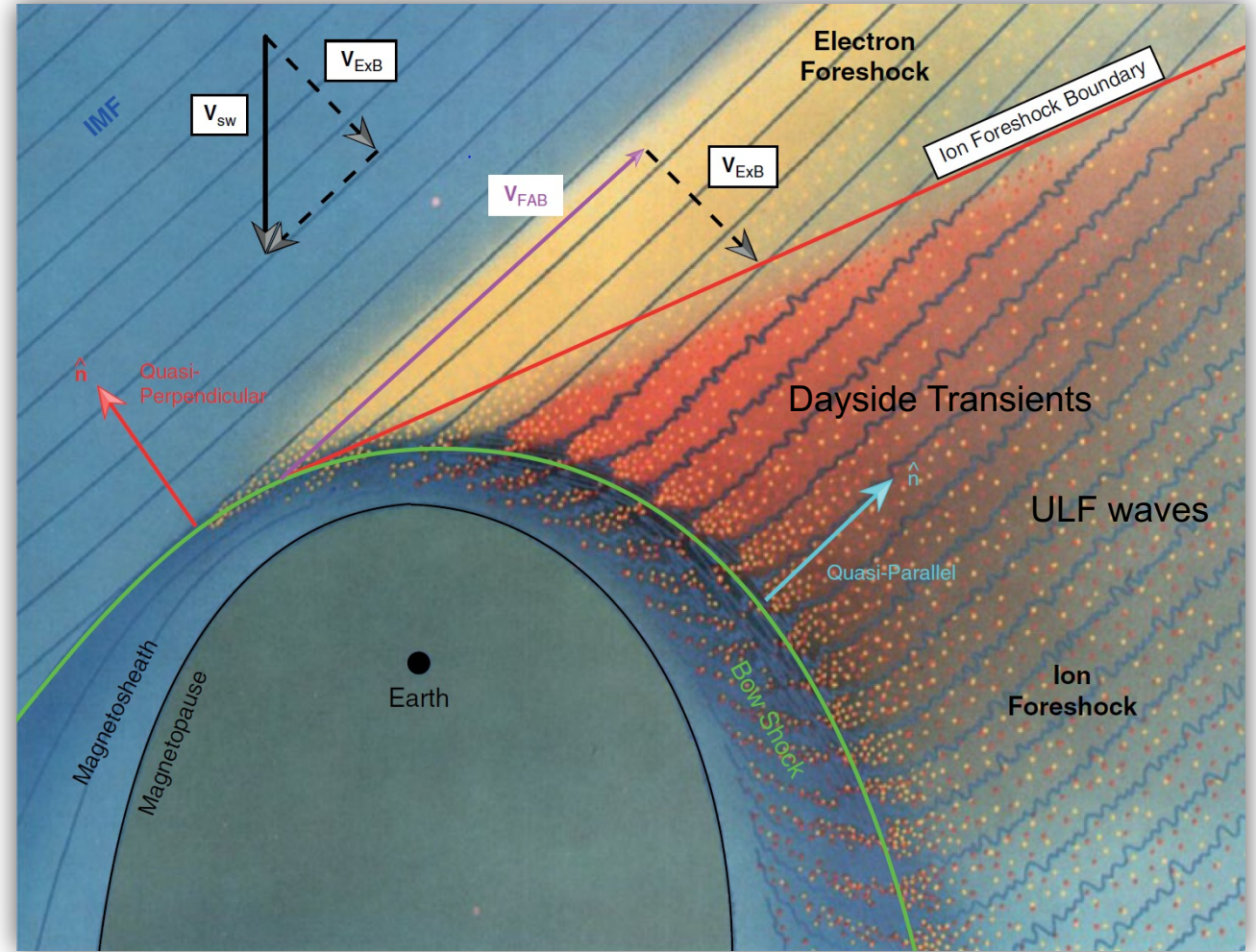
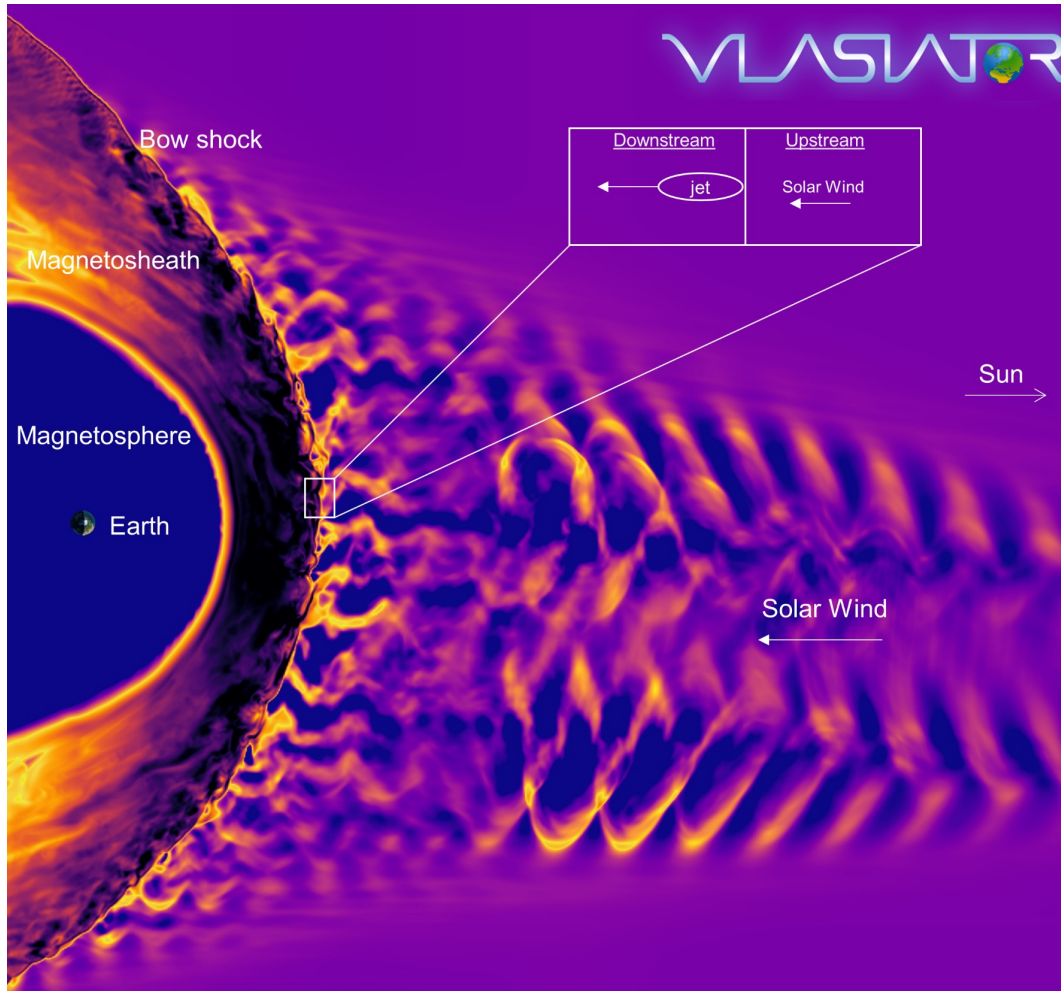
Formed when structure moves with speed above local wave speed (e.g., sound, magnetosonic)



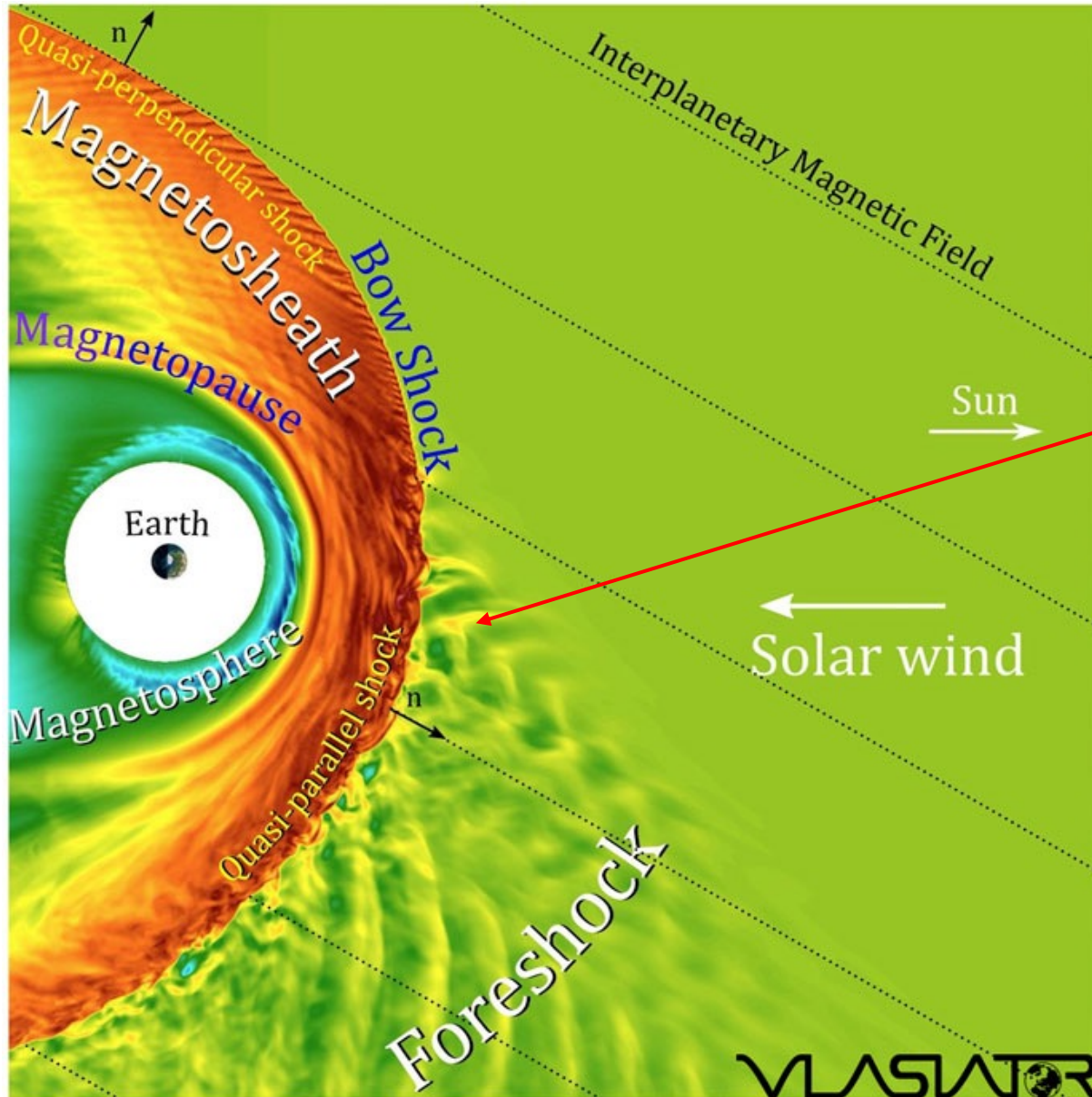
They are everywhere!

Heating, accelerating particles and converting energies

Earth's magnetosphere & shock environment



Earth's Qpar bow shock and foreshock

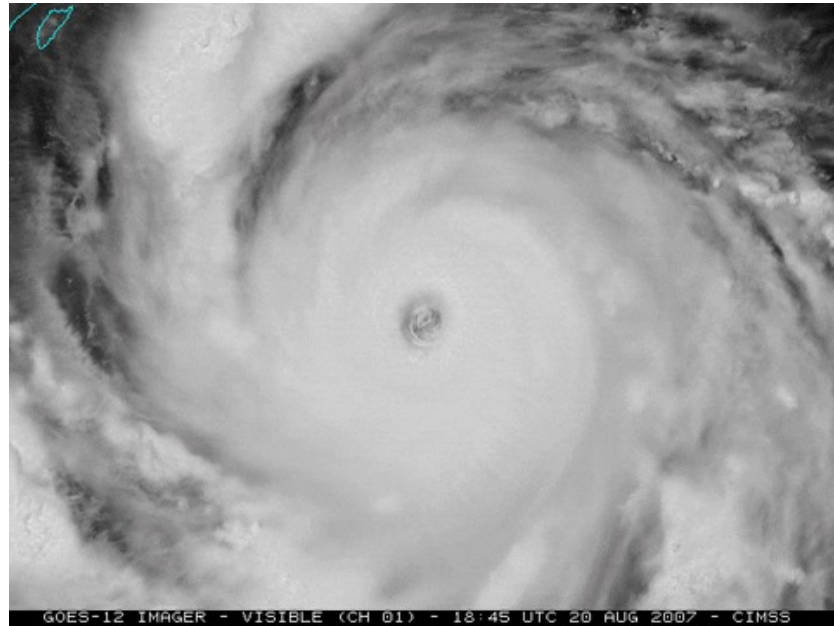


Qpar shocks ($\theta_{Bn} < \sim 45^\circ$)

- Very **efficient particle accelerators**
- **Transient phenomena** upstream and downstream*
- ULF waves upstream and downstream
- Kinetic plasma physics
- Wave particle interaction
- Turbulence
- Current sheets & reconnection

Transient events – weather

Hurricanes



Rain

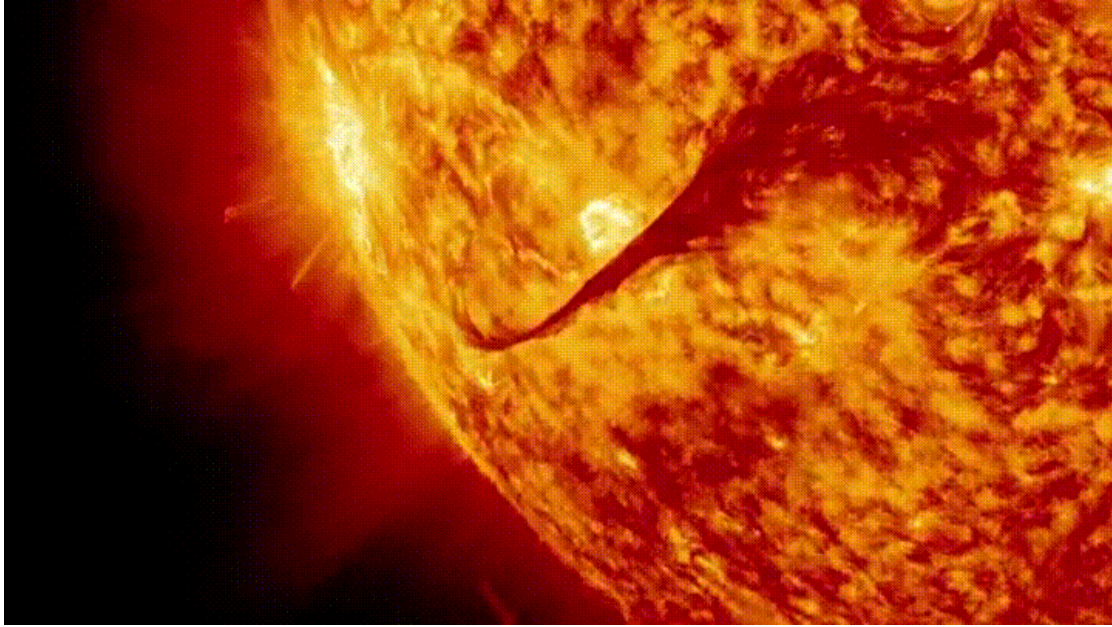


Snowstorms



Transient events – weather

CMEs



Rain

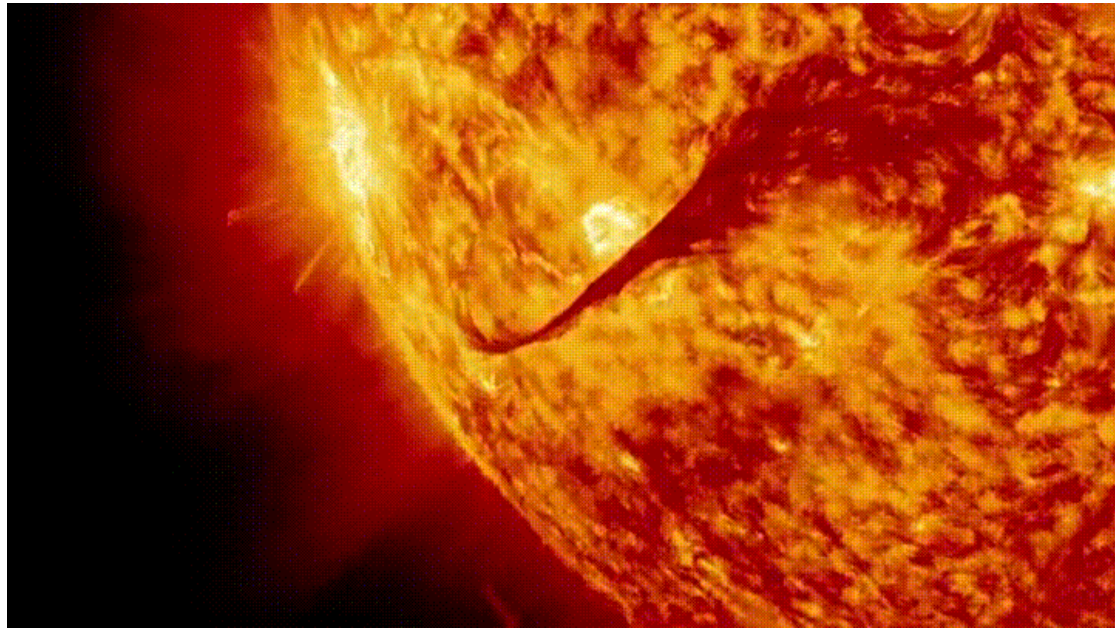


Snowstorms



Transient events – weather

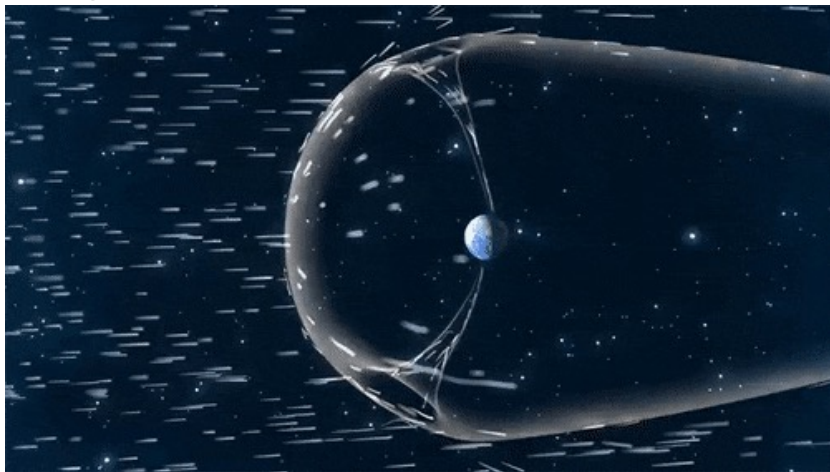
CMEs



Rain

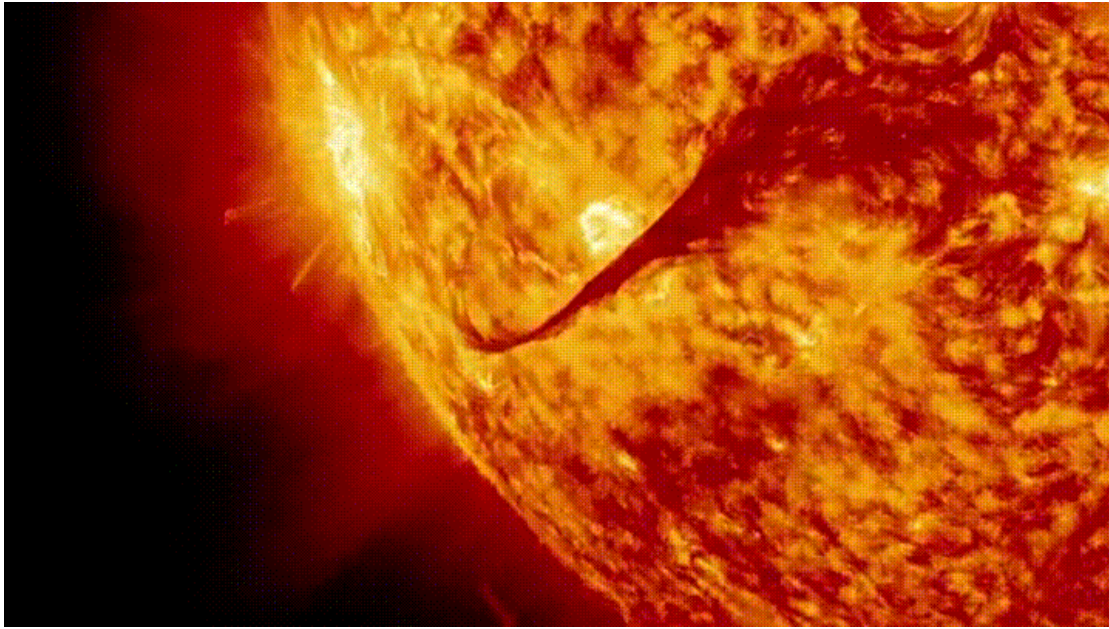


High speed streams, discontinuities

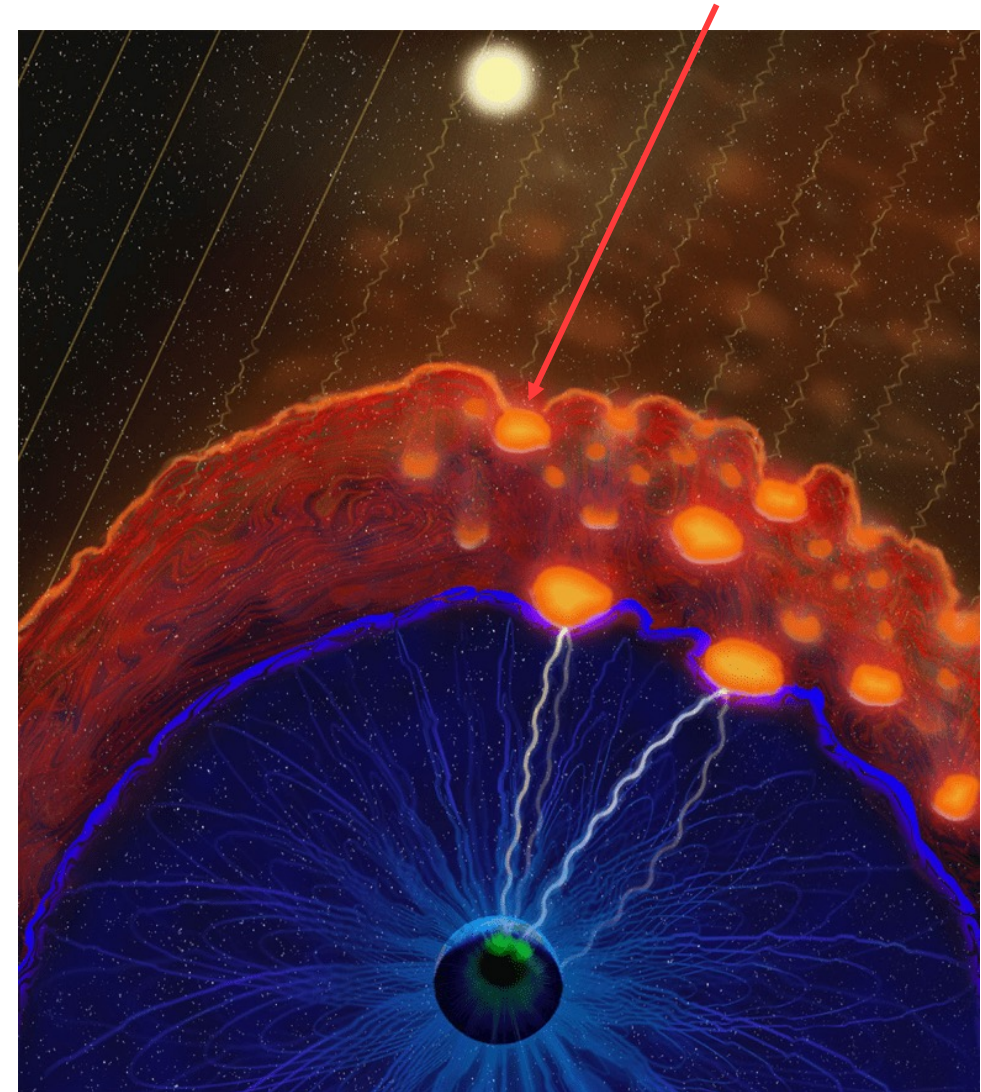


Transient events – *space* weather

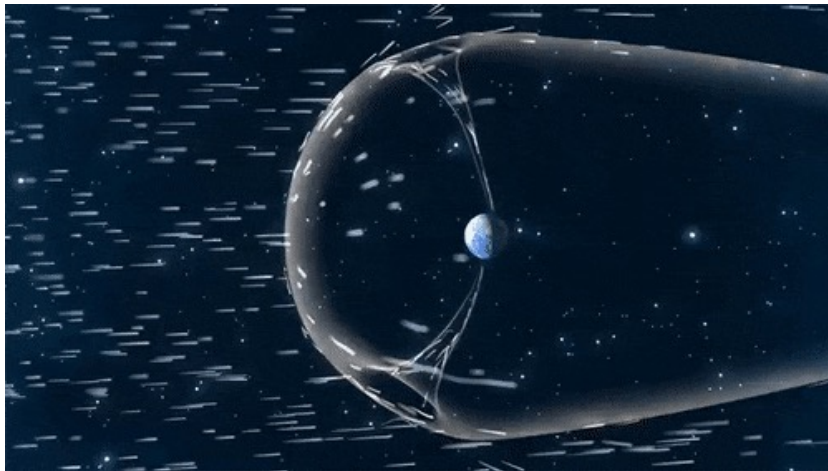
CMEs



Foreshock transients & plasma jets

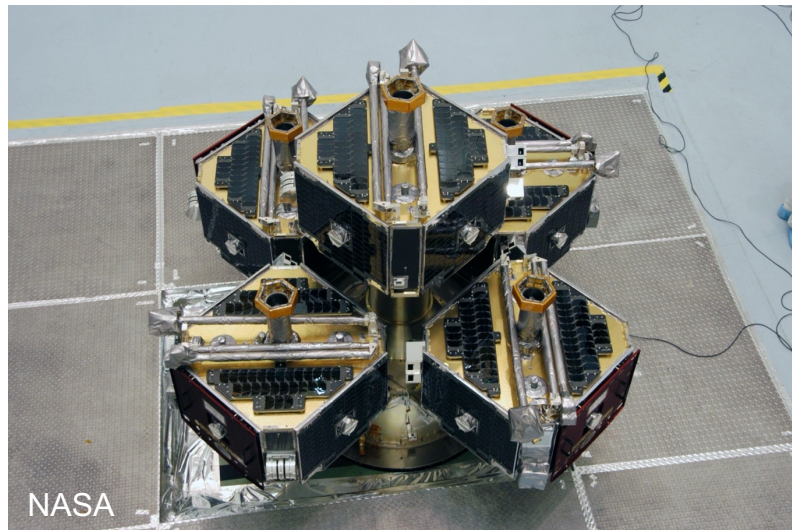
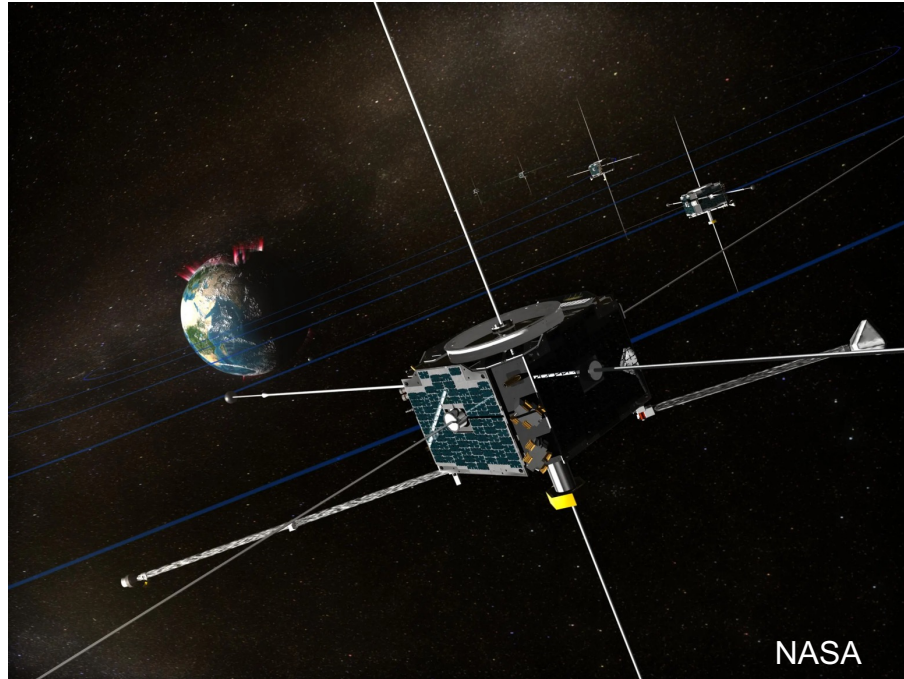


High speed streams, discontinuities



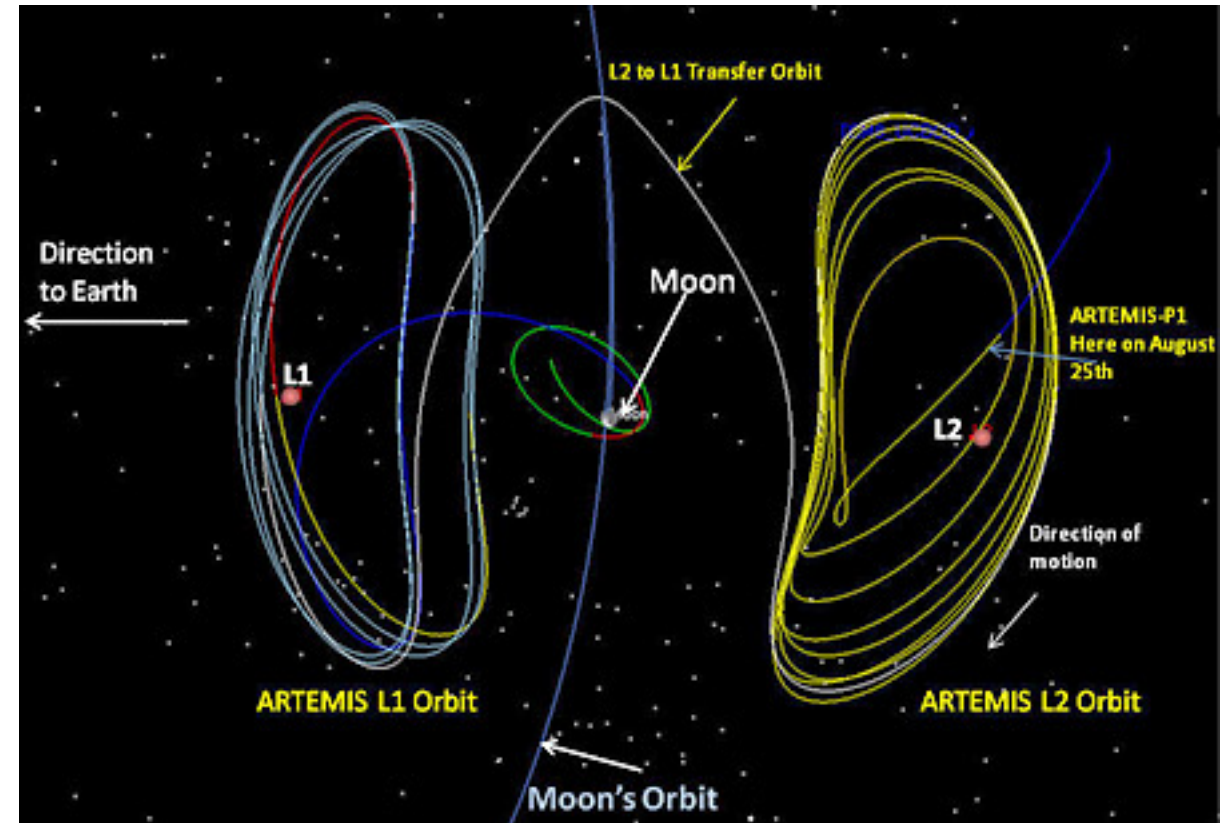
In-situ observations

THEMIS/ARTEMIS mission

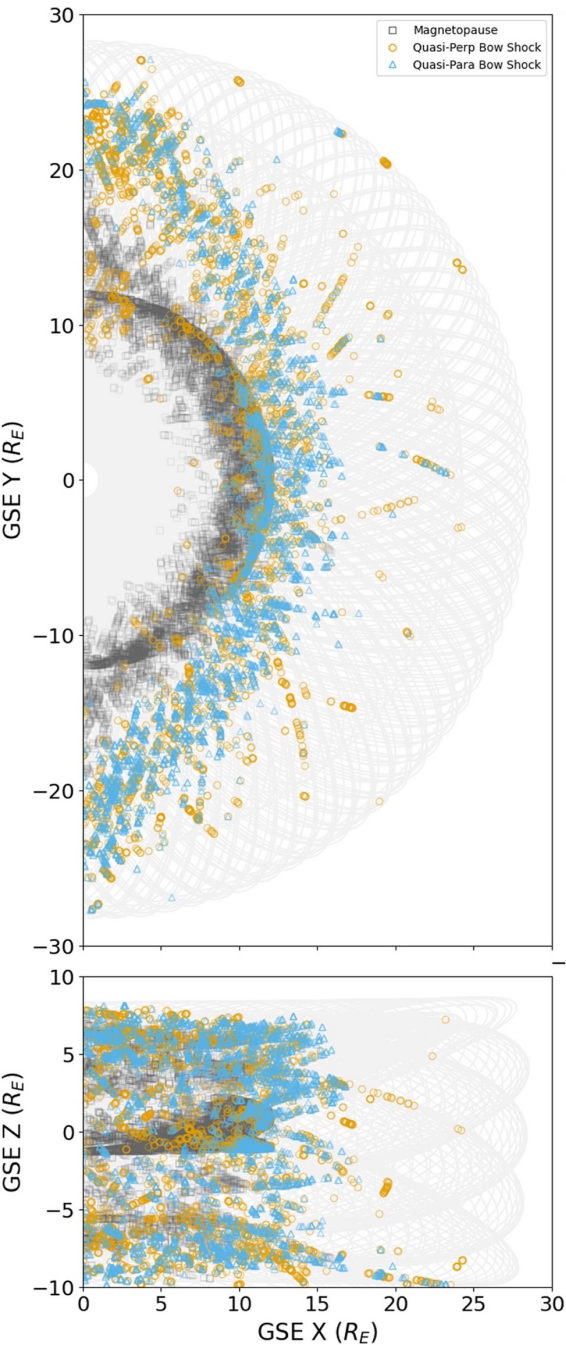


Feb. 17, 2007: Launch → 5 SC, magnetotail reconnection objectives
Jan. 1, 2009: THEMIS-P1 and P2 are Reassigned, Renamed and Redirected to the Moon → ARTEMIS

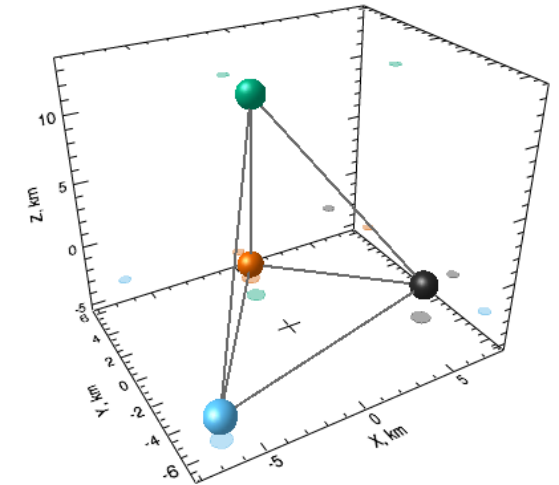
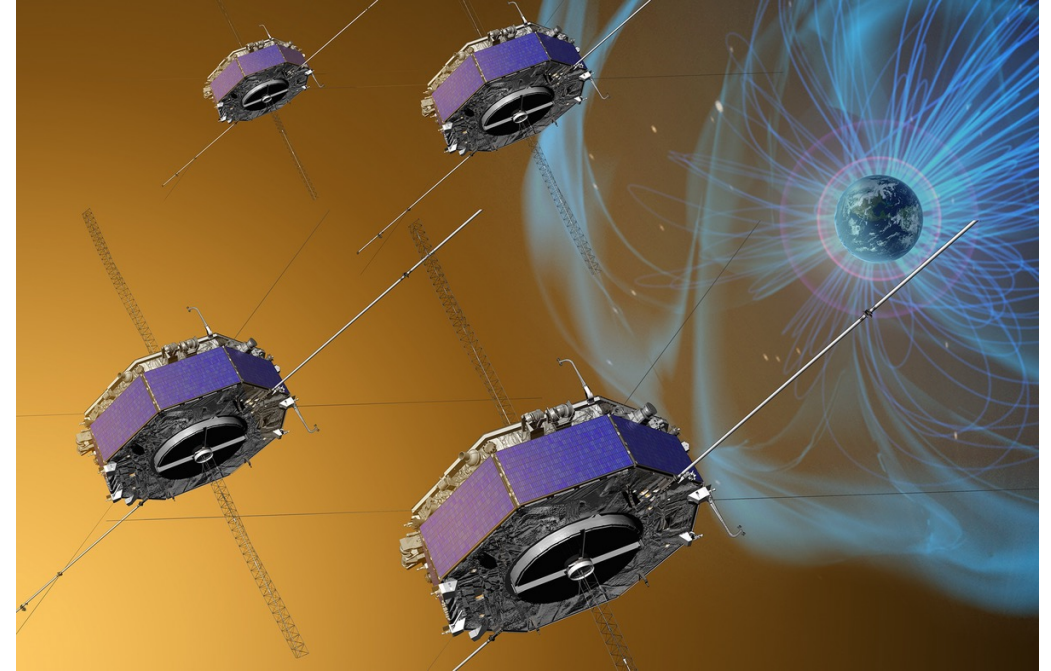
Orbiting the moon it can (sometimes) provide close to Earth in-situ observations of upstream conditions (when moon is on the dayside)

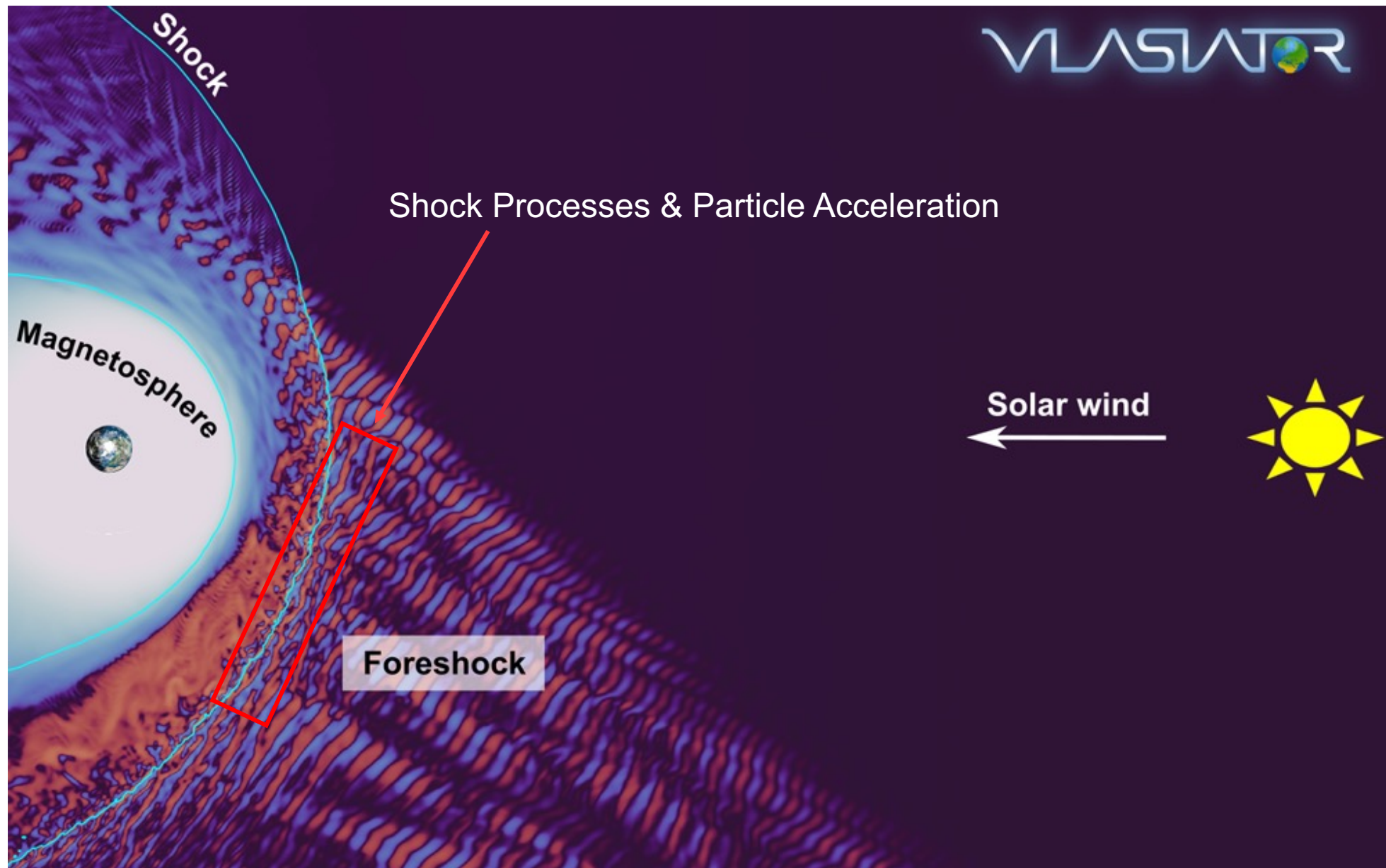


MMS mission



- Launched March 2015
- 4 identical s/c (10s to 100s km separation)
- Equatorial HEO, w/ apogee: $\sim 12 R_E$ (2015-2018); $\sim 28 R_E$ (2018-present)
- Several thousands of shock crossings Lati+ (2023), Toy-Edens+ (2024)
- In-situ observations of plasma moments, fields, and distributions.



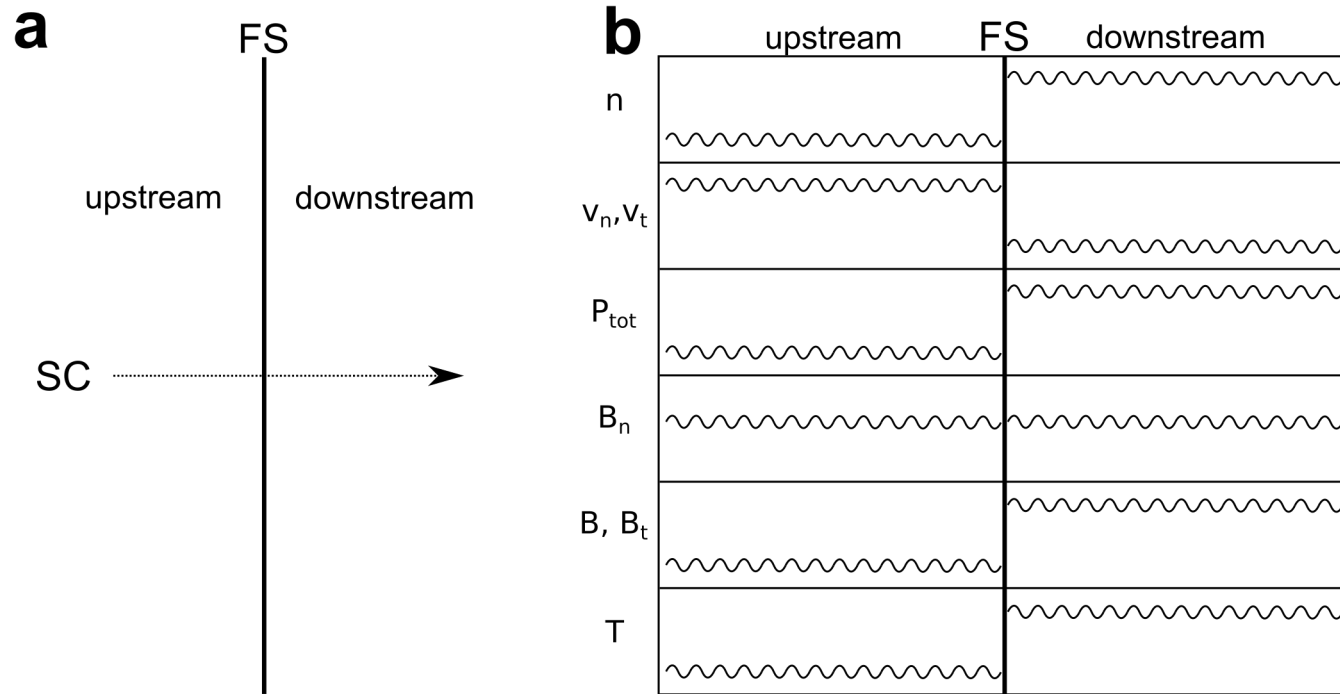


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3. Shocks (Acceleration)
4. Transient phenomena
5. New Results on Particle Acceleration

Shocks

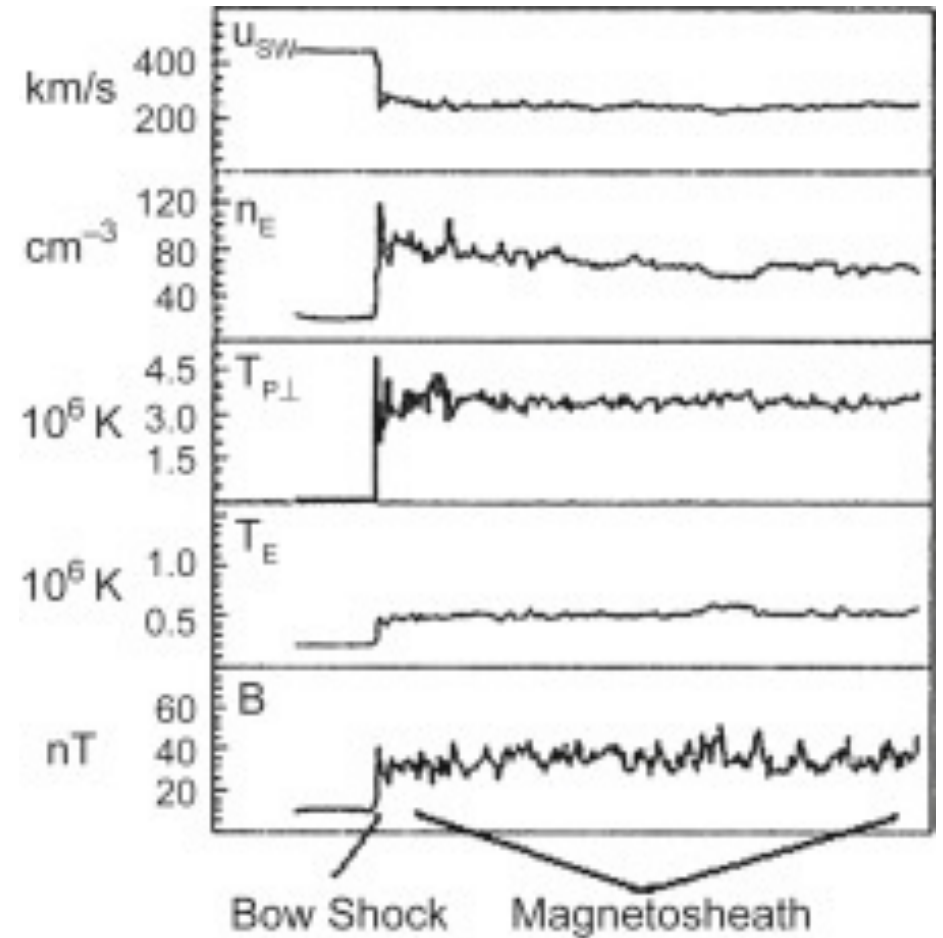
Structure & Geometry

Fast shock transition (Theory & initial data)



Rankine Hugoniot relations / Jump Conditions

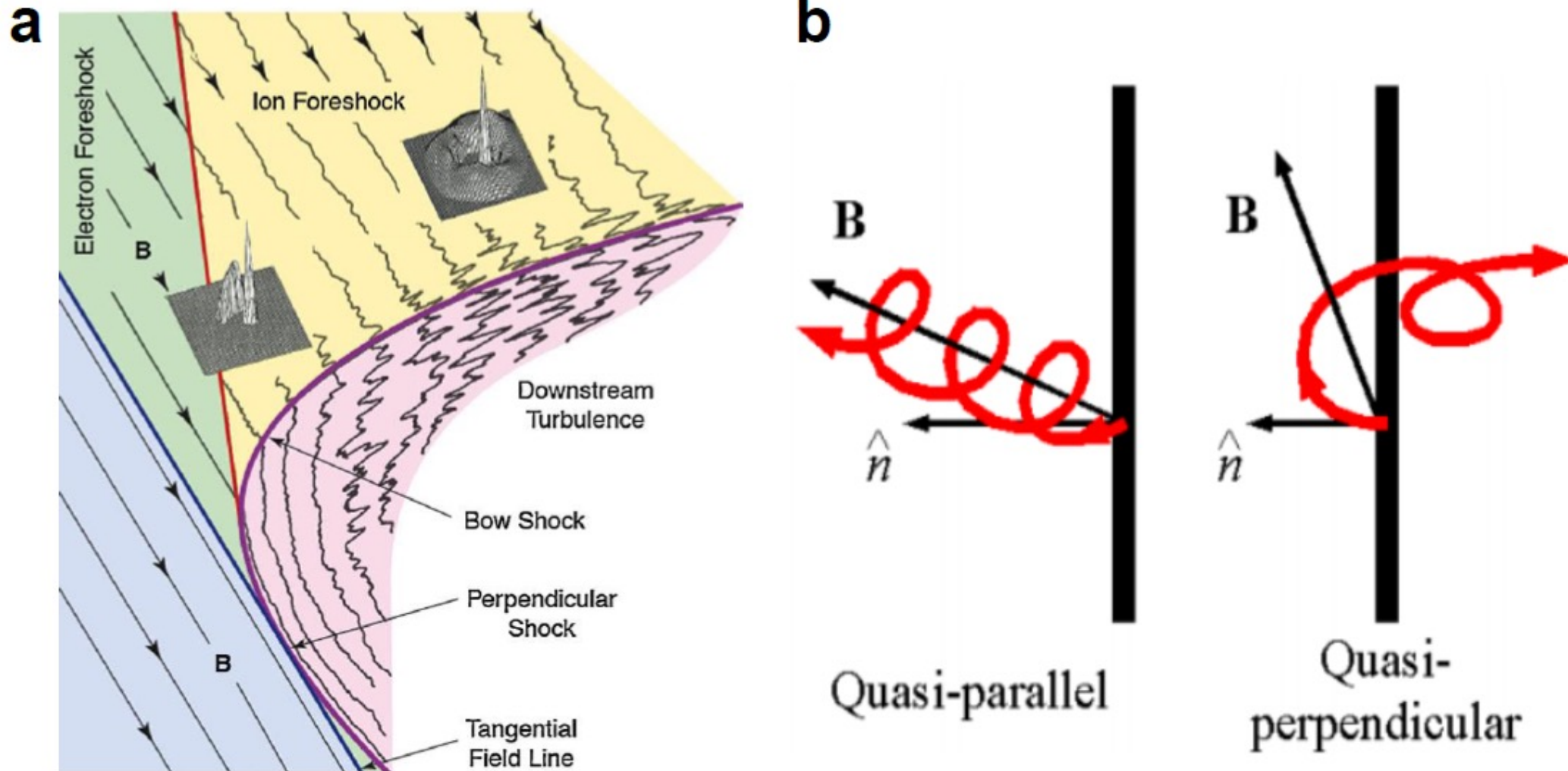
Thermalization, Compression, Breaking



1D Isotropic and adiabatic one fluid plasma shock transitions

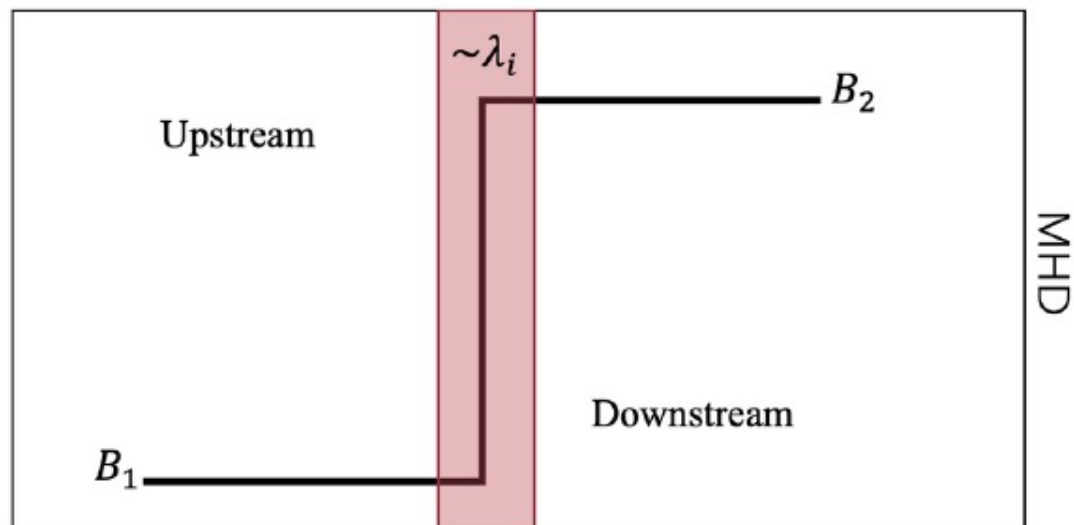
1964. Initial results of IMP-1 magnetic field experiment.

Shock & foreshock

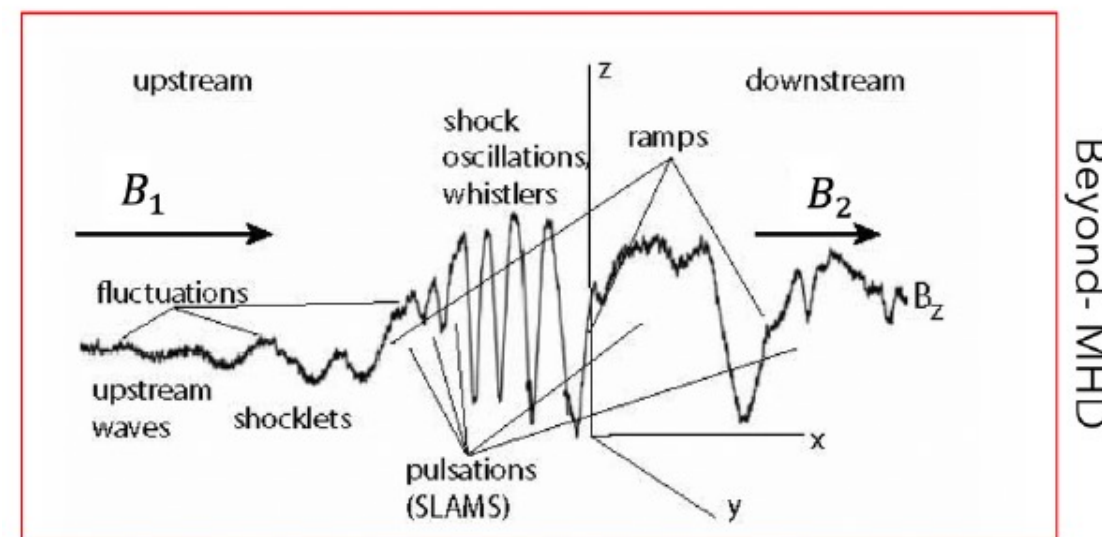
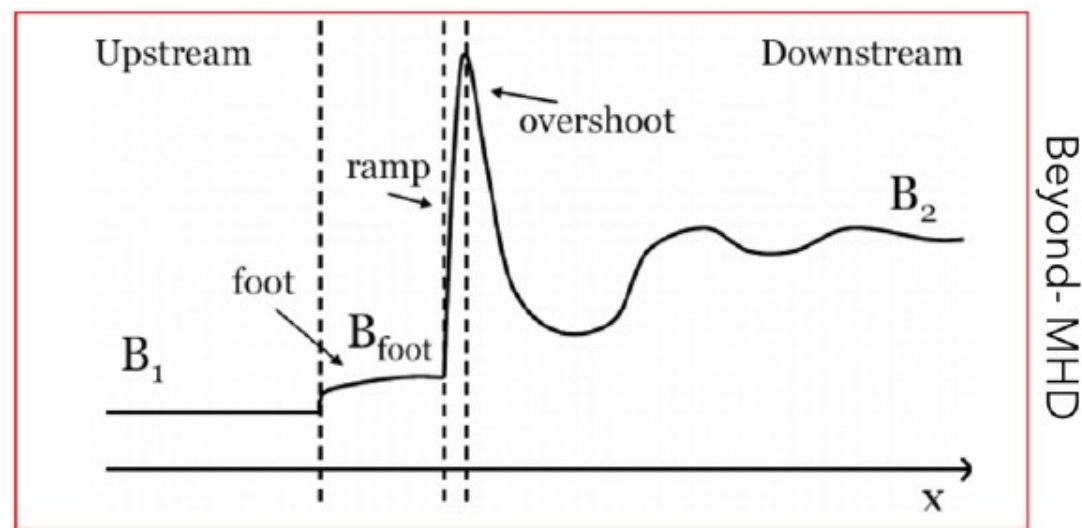
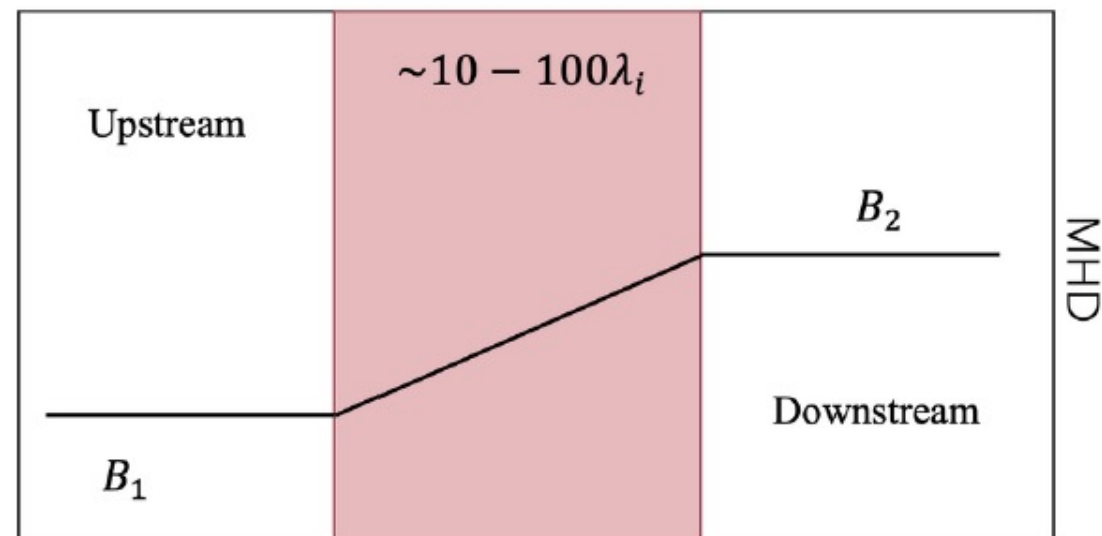


Quasi-parallel and Quasi-perpendicular shocks

Qperp transition



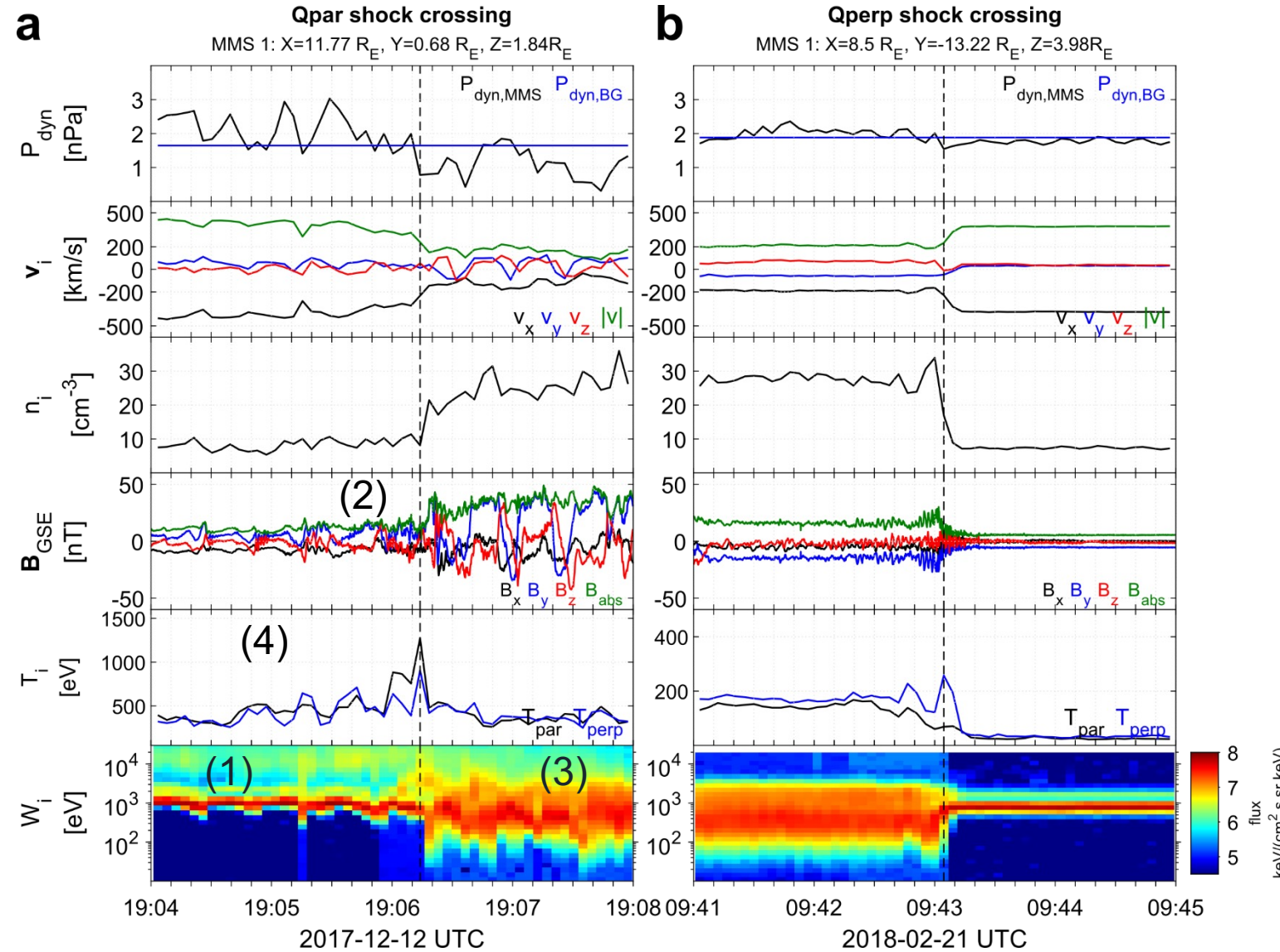
Qpar transition



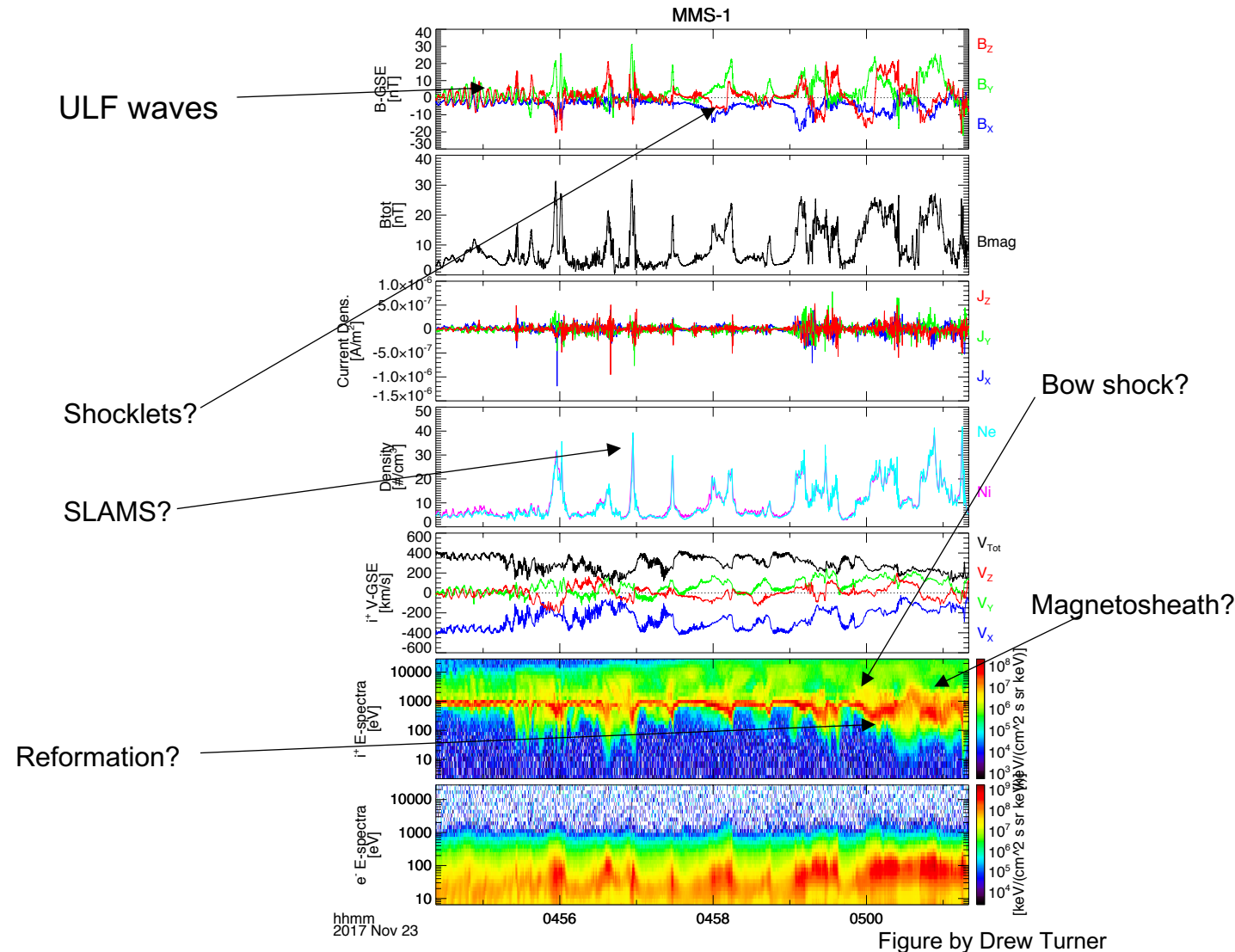
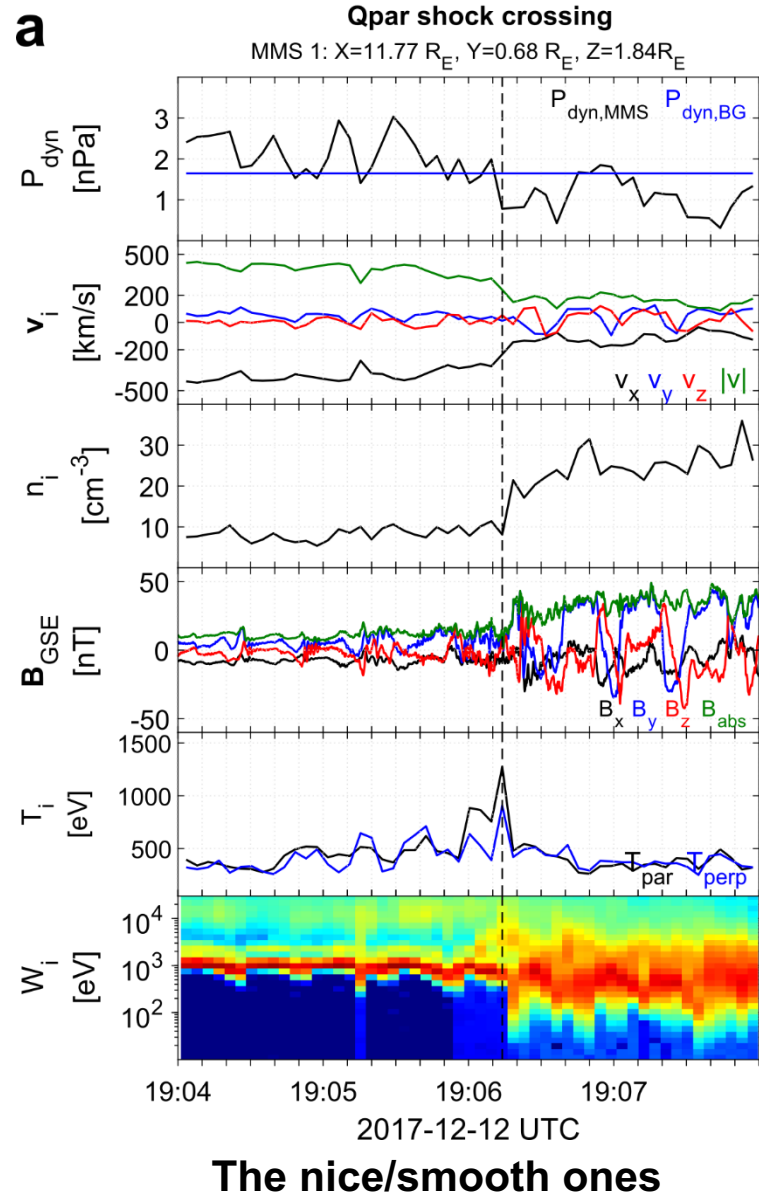
Qpar – Qperp crossings

Qpar shocks and downstream plasma:

- 1) Presence of foreshock ✓
- 2) Magnetic field fluctuations ↑
- 3) High energy ions ↑
- 4) Temperature anisotropy ↓



Qpar shocks have different flavors



Shock Reformation & SLAMS

Shock Reformation

Burgess (1989): “the shock exhibits a cyclic behavior cyclic shock reformation;”

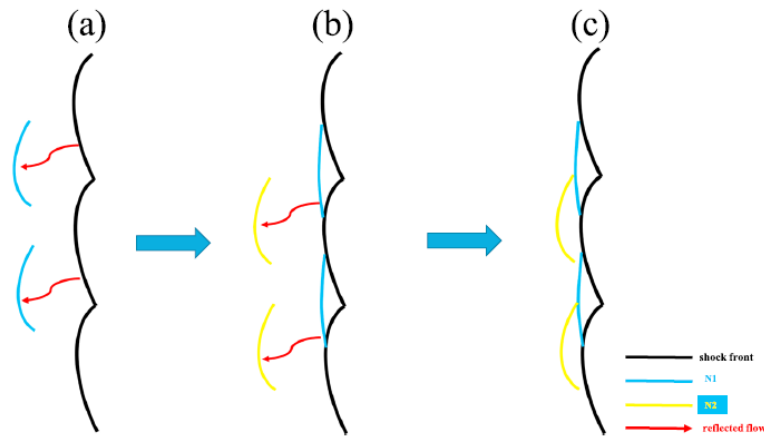


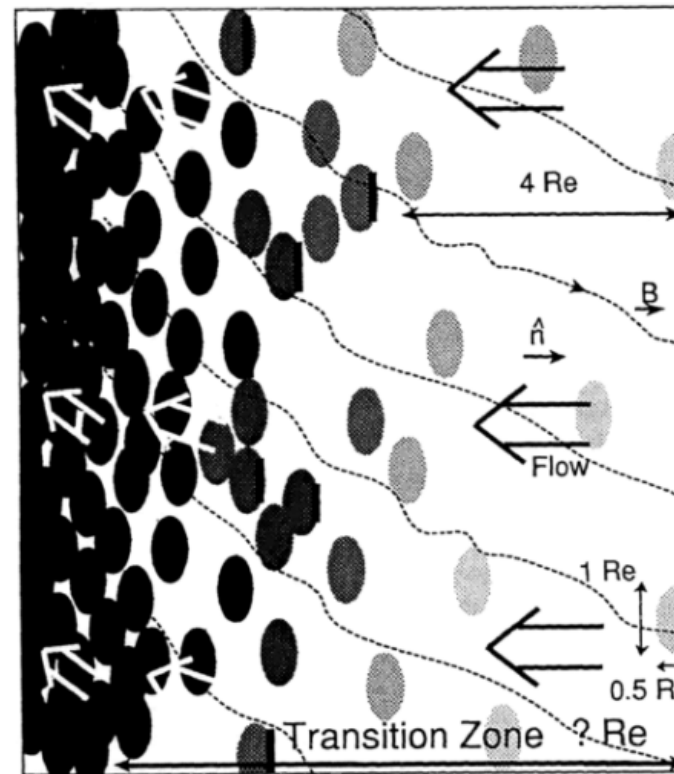
Figure 11. The sketch for evolution of shock front. (a) A rippled shock front, (b) a plane shock front, and (c) a rippled shock front. Solid lines and red arrows denote shock front and reflected beams, and N1 and N2 indicate new shock fronts.

Hao et al. (2017)

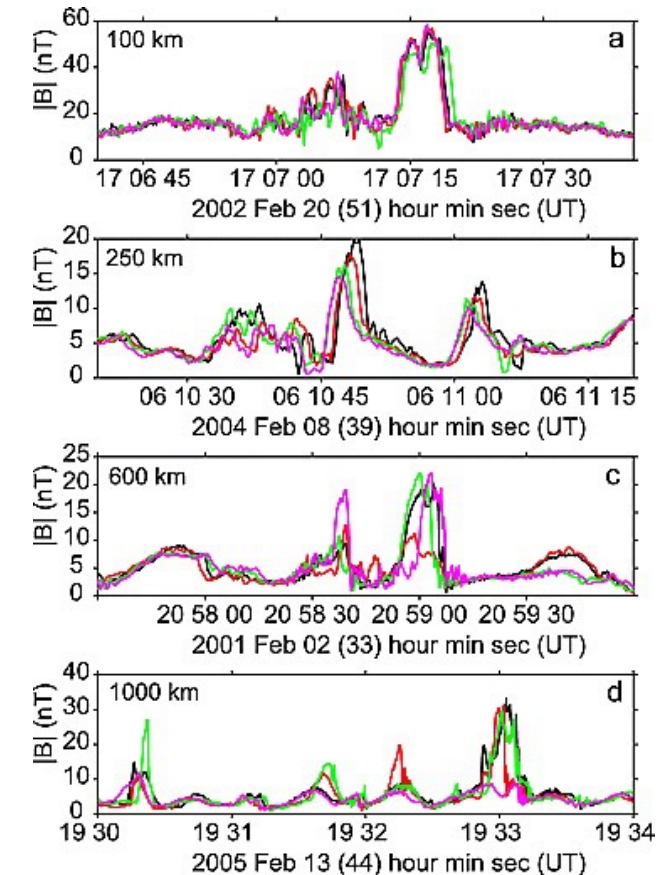
«**The shock is the first and largest amplitude upstream magnetic pulsation**»

ULF non-linear evolution = SLAMS

Chen et al. (2020): “...ULF waves can arise at the foreshock and evolve into SLAMS ...”



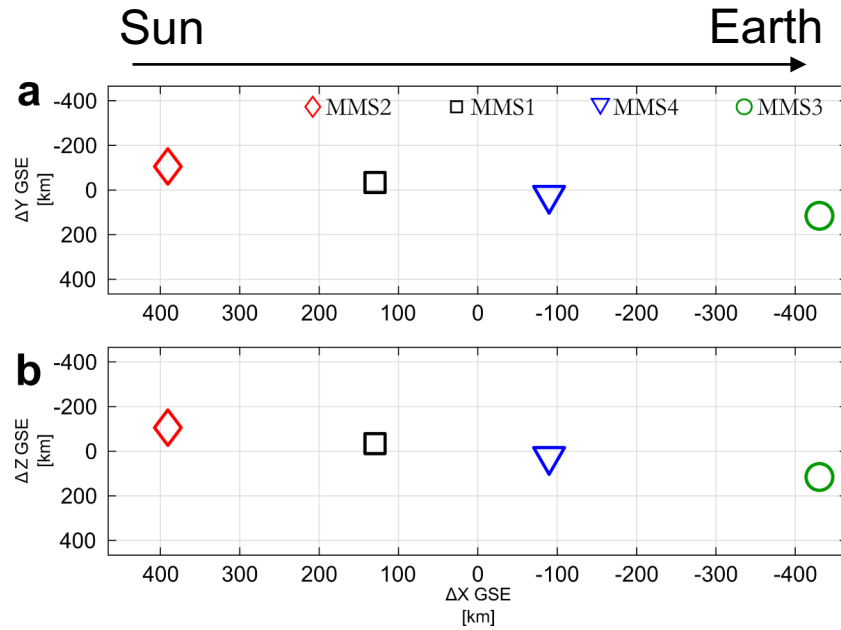
Schwartz, (1991)



Lucek, (2008)

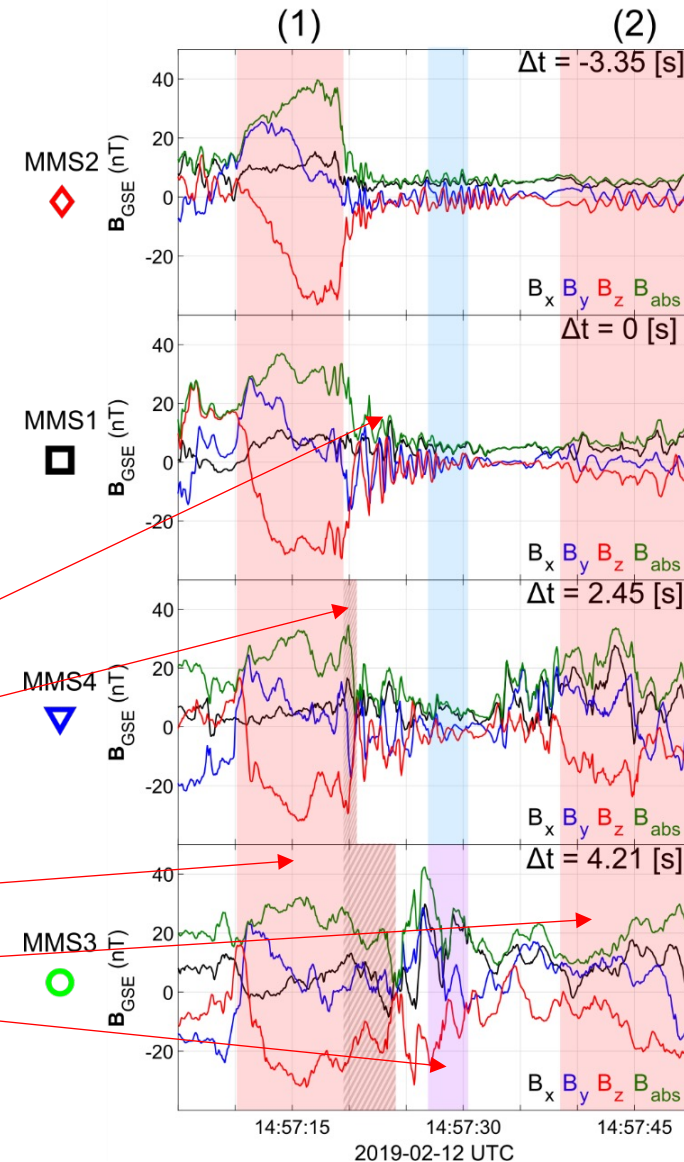
Similar definitions : Hao et al. (2016,2017), Liu et al. (2021), Johlander et al. (2022), Raptis et al. (2022a)

SLAMS – wave activity and reformation



Evolution of SLAMS/Reformation

- Interaction with upstream whistler
- New peak /evolution*
- Formation of *downstream density enhancement***
- Reformation cycle → jet and new front



Sun

~1000 km
~ 10 λ_i

Earth

* See similar examples by Turner et al. (2021), Chen et al. (2021) | “(Self-) reformation/evolution/ripples”

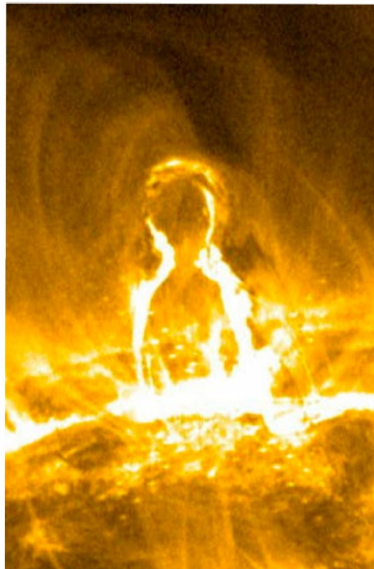
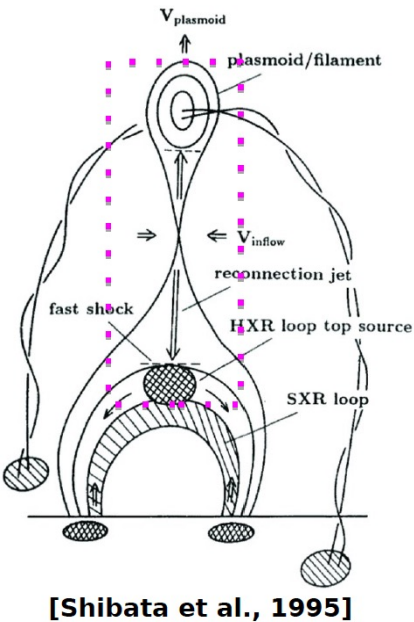
** See similar example by Liu et al. (2021), Johlander et al. (2022) | (Qpar) reformation

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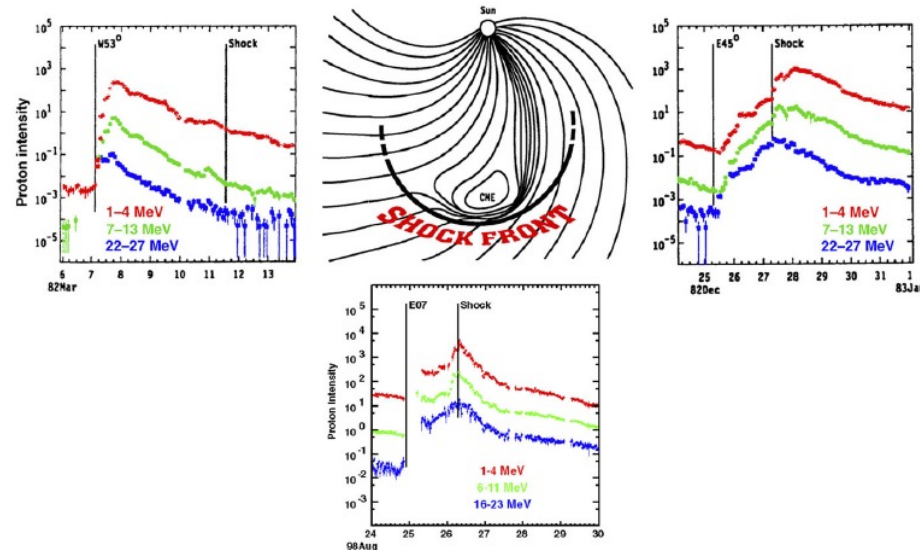
Shocks & Acceleration

Shocks as particle accelerators

- Different shock geometries and particles have different acceleration mechanisms invoked but all can accelerate particles
- **Astrophysics:** Supernova remnants, cosmic rays
- **Solar Physics:** SEP acceleration, fast shock at reconnection

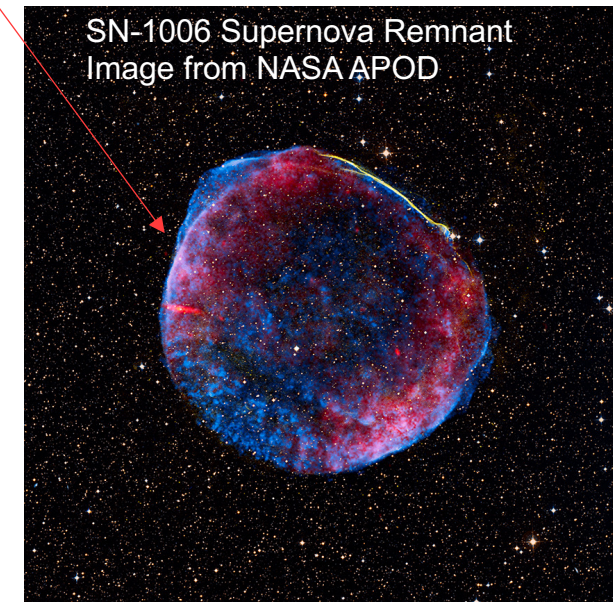


Courtesy of Li-Jen Chen, GSFC

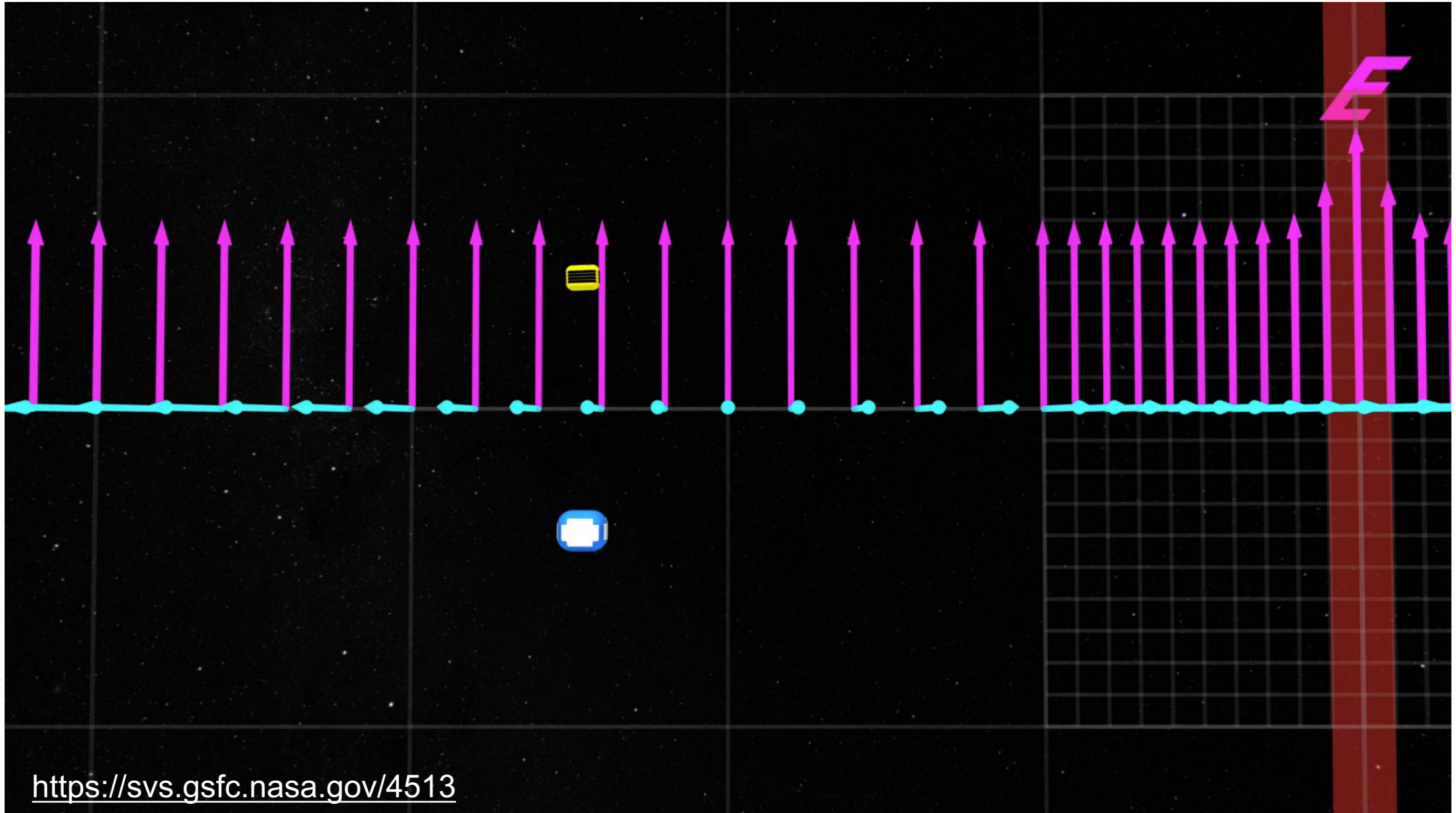


Desai & Giacalone (2016)

Shock wave

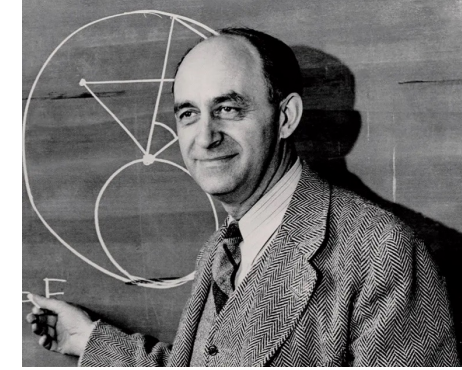


Shock Drift Acceleration (SDA)



<https://svs.gsfc.nasa.gov/4513>

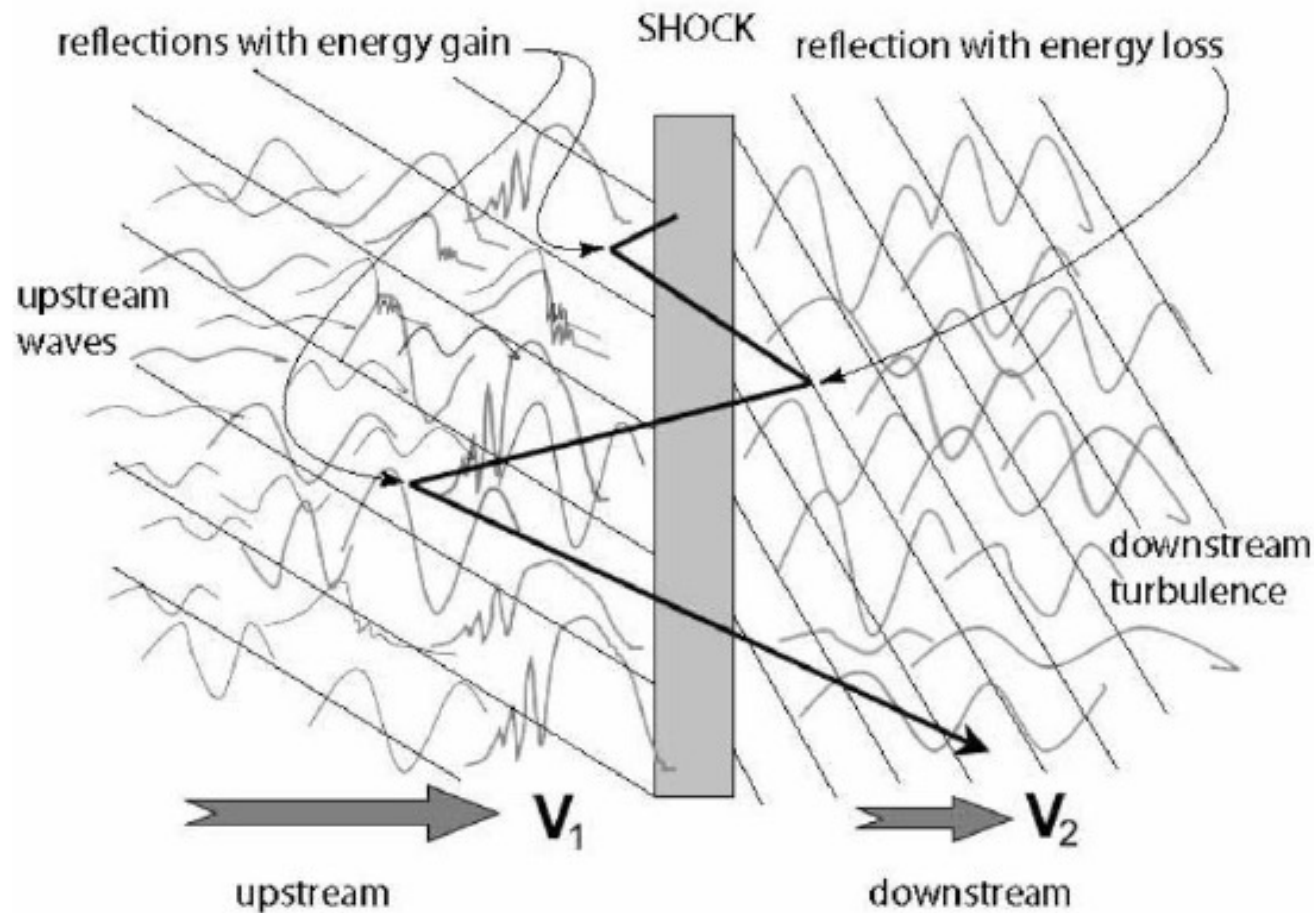
Diffusive Shock Acceleration (DSA)



$$\beta = V_{c-s}/c < 1$$

1st Order Fermi, head-on collisions guaranteed
(quasi-para shocks):

$$\langle \Delta E/E \rangle \sim 4/3 \beta$$



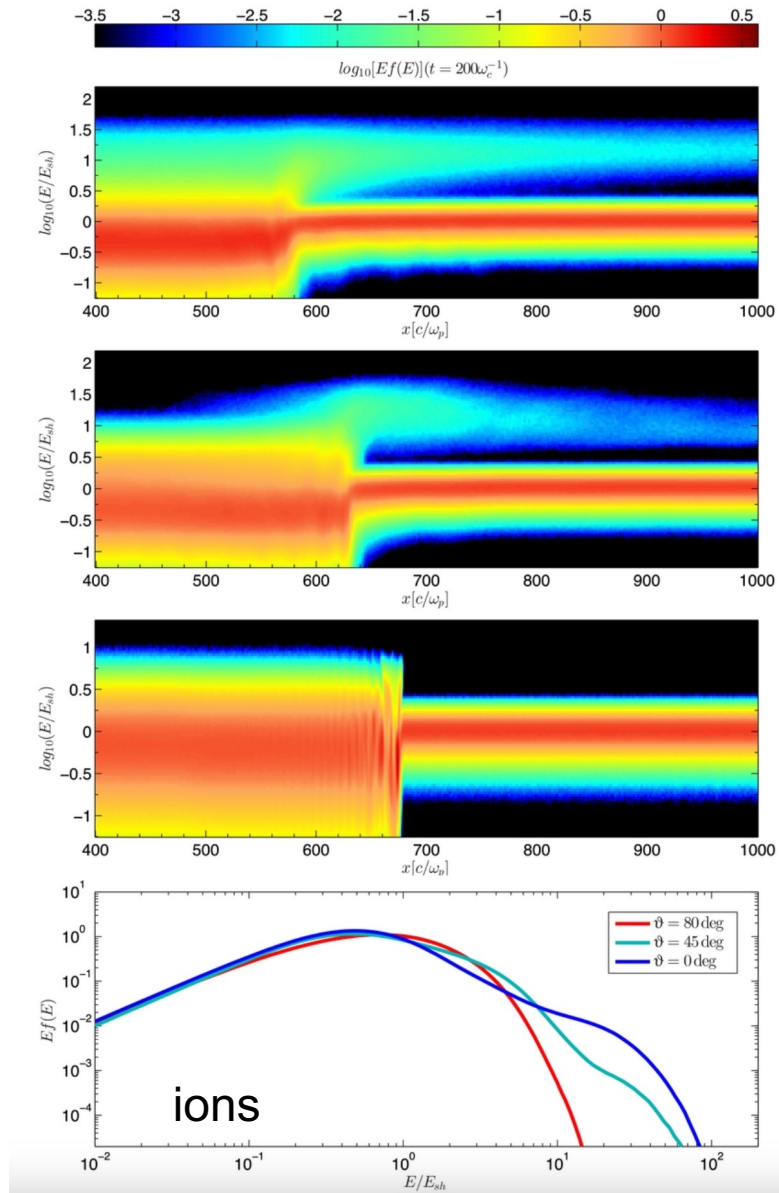
Simplified explanation

- Waves + turbulence downstream = Scatter particles back to the shock
- Some of the particles get to very high energies.

Injection Problem

What is the energy threshold needed to kick start this process and how do we reach that?

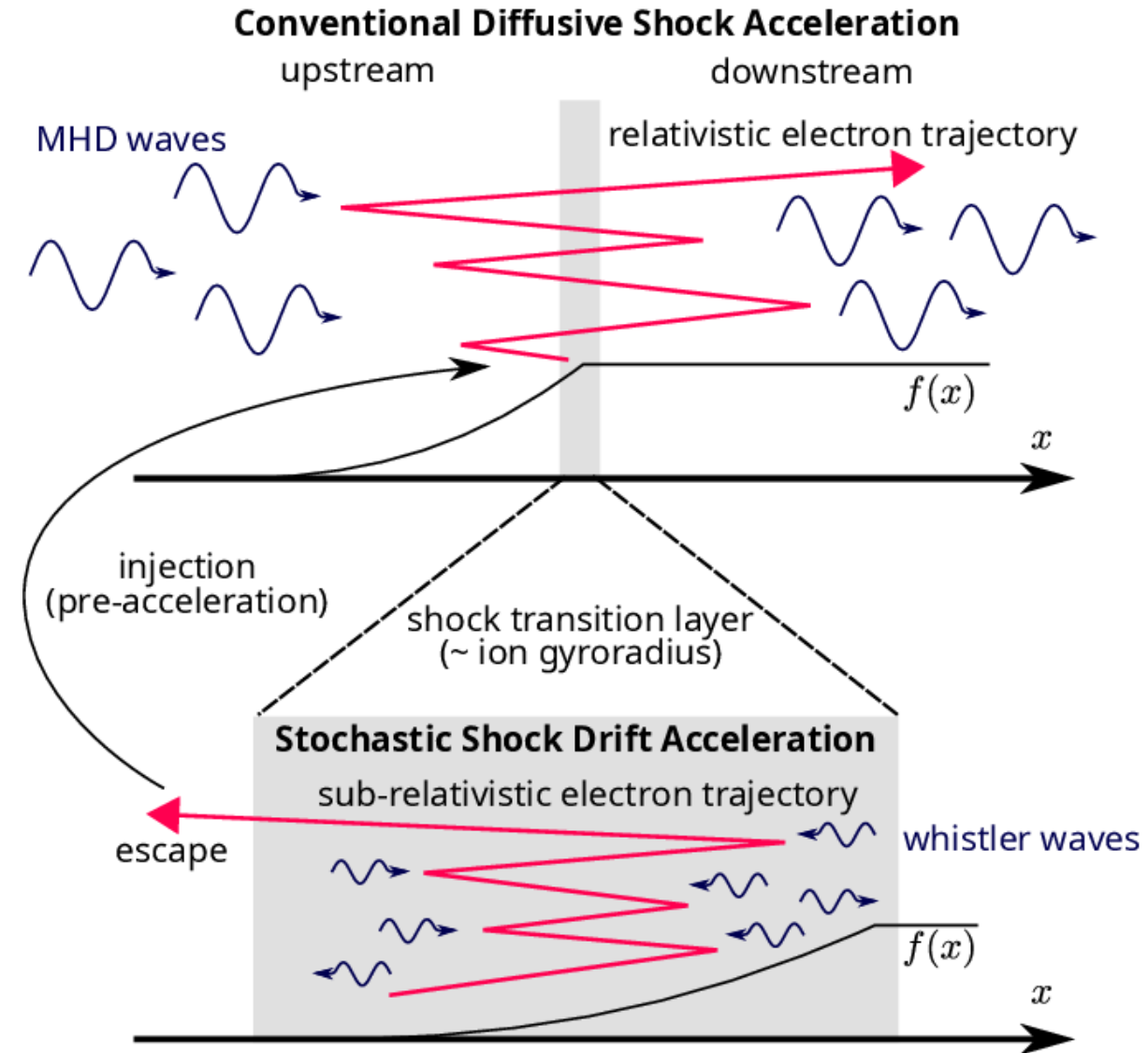
Acceleration at Qpar and Qperp shocks



Qpar shock (DSA)

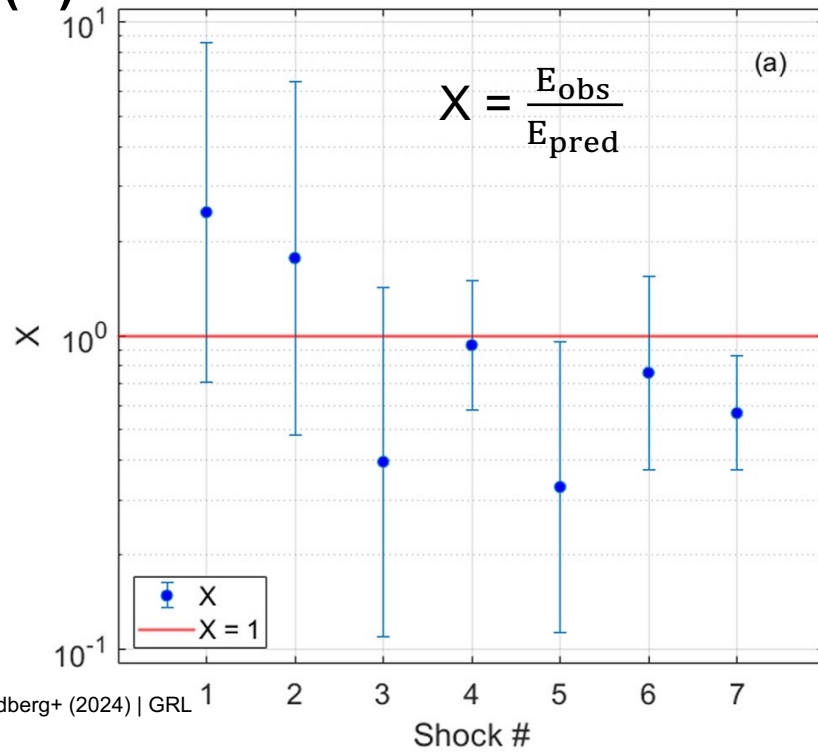
Oblique shock

Qperp shock (SDA/SSDA)

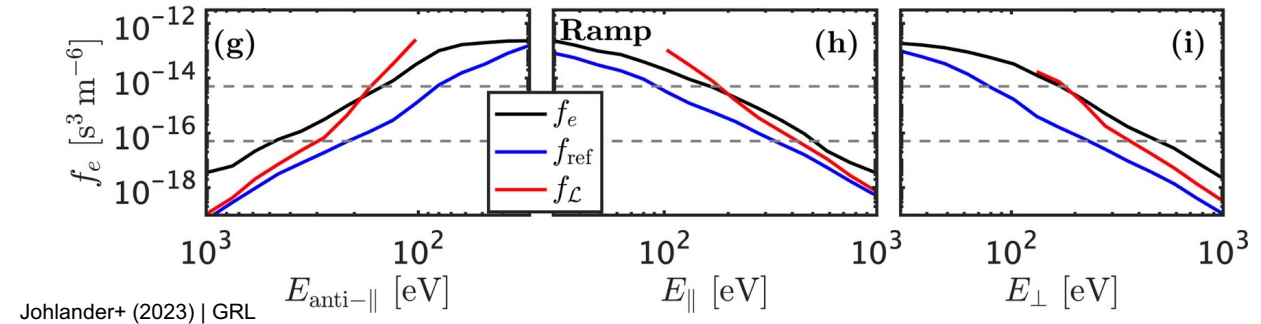


Recent results by MMS on Electron Acceleration

(A)



(B)

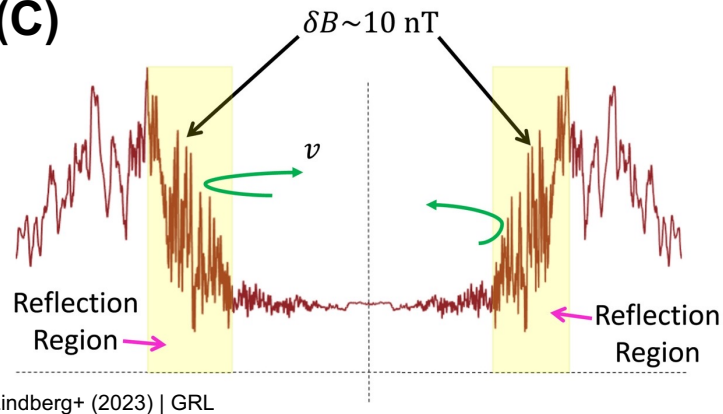


(A) Qperp shocks consistent with SSDA predictions ($X=1$ is theoretical prediction)

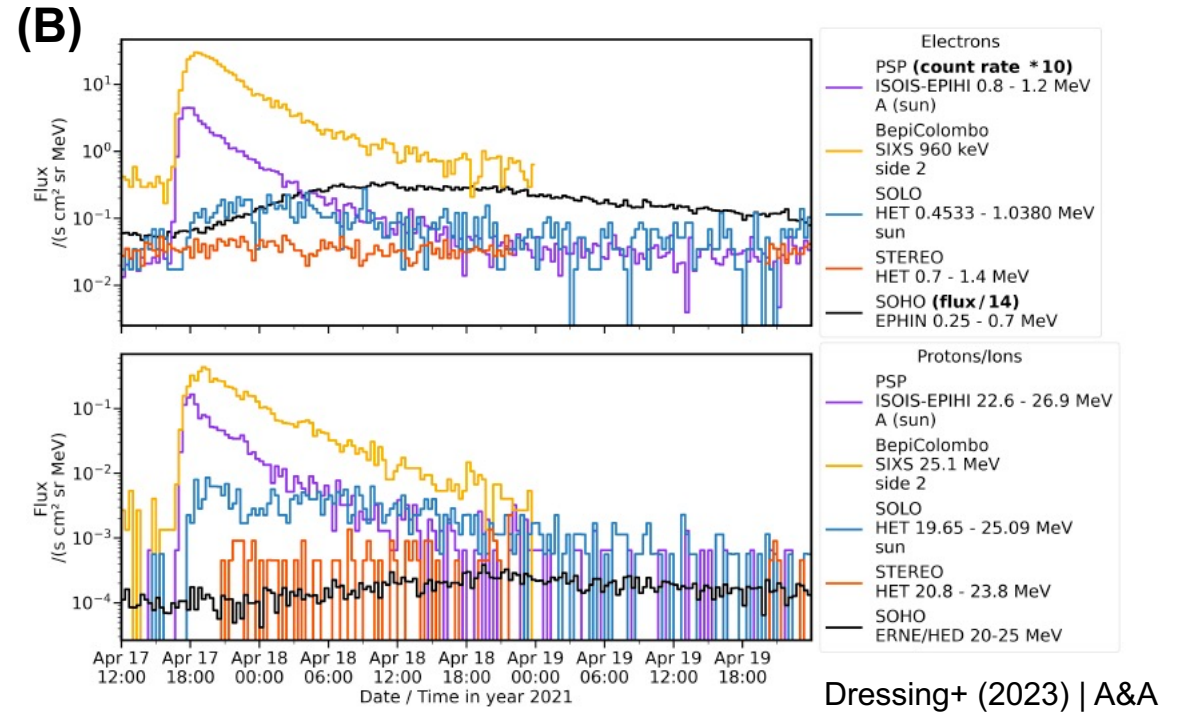
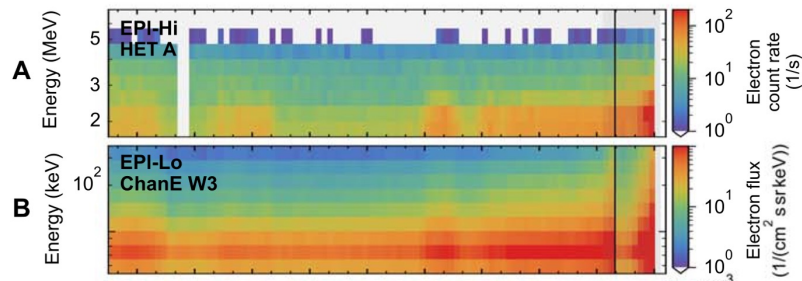
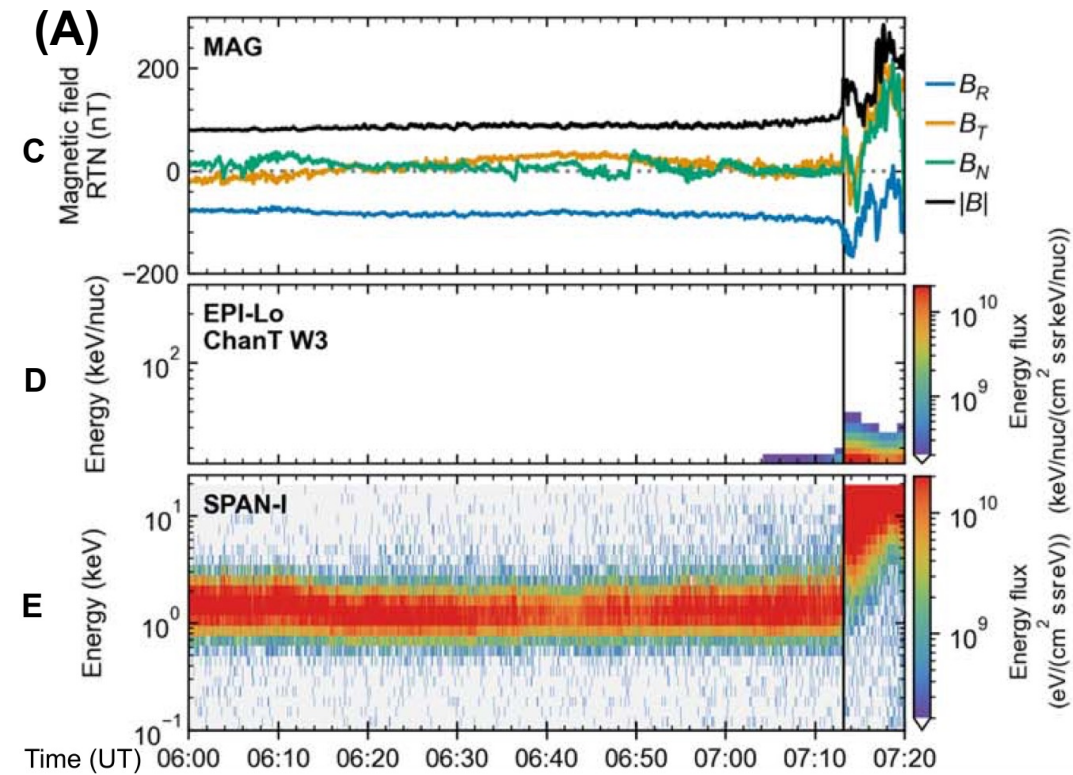
(B) Non-adiabatic heating observed (Red: Model | Black: Observations)

(C) Collapsing bottle + PA scattering + adiabatic reflection

(C)



Recent Results from PSP and SoLo



(A) PSP data showing up to 6 MeV electrons at an IP shock!

(B) Relativistic ~ (MeV) electrons at an SEP associated to a CME shock

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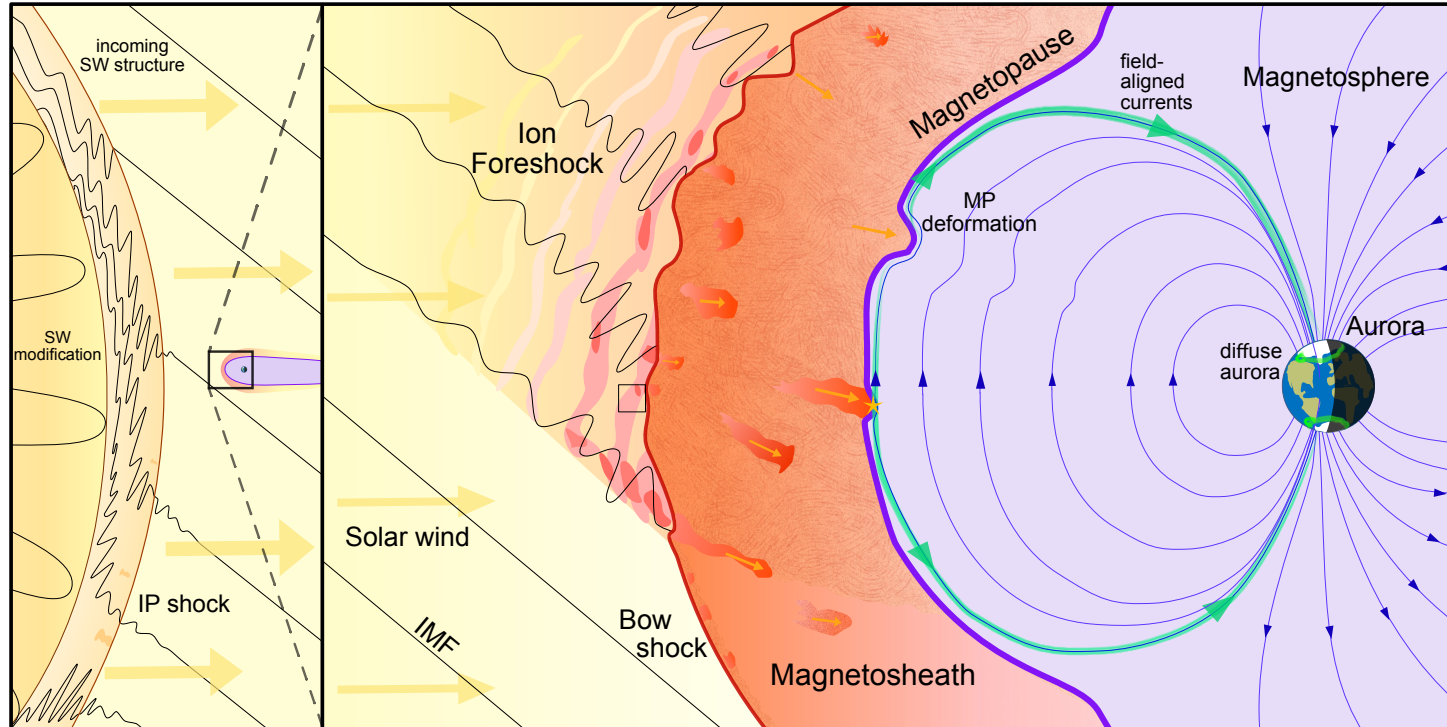
So we know shocks, and we know acceleration!

Let's go back to Transients!

What is a Dayside Transient?

Transient phenomena are events that disrupt the steady-state plasma conditions, occurring temporarily and introducing dynamic changes to the physical system

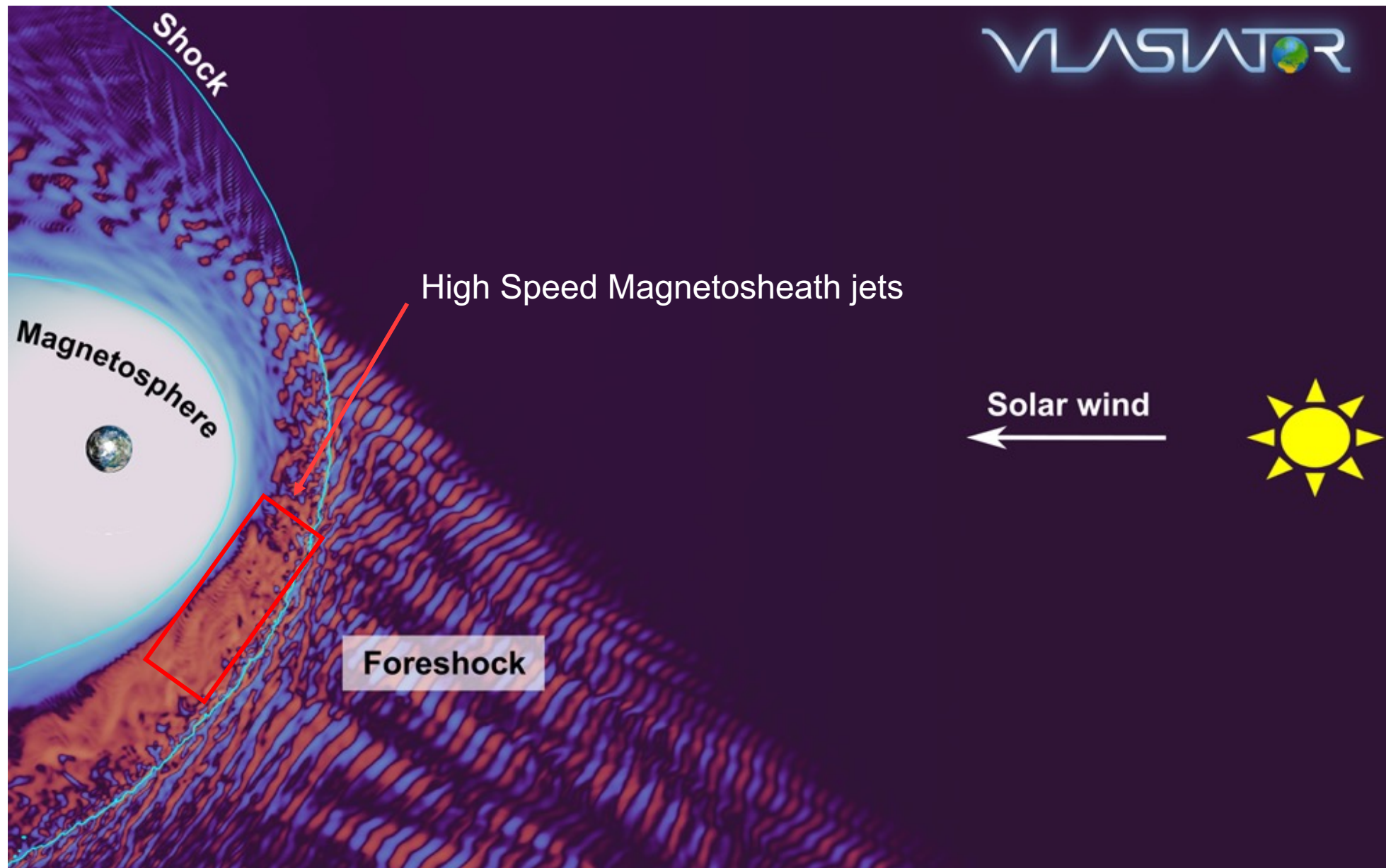
Figure adapted from Krämer et al., 2025, Credits: Florian Koller



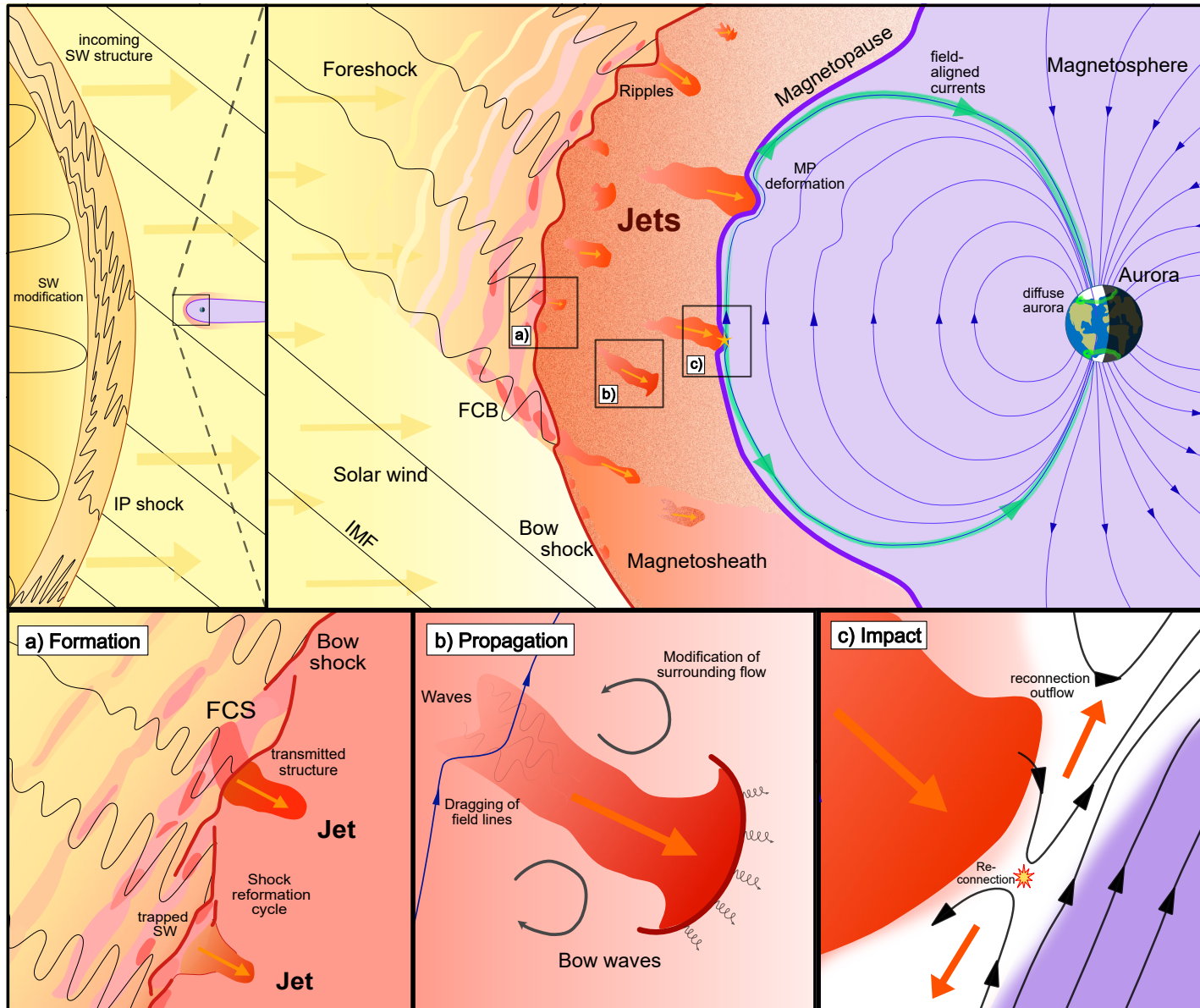
- **Global (Solar):**
 - Coronal Mass Ejection (CME)
 - High-Speed Stream (HSS)
 - Pressure Pulse
- **Fluid scale:**
 - Flux Transfer Event (FTE)
 - Magnetopause (bursty) Reconnection
- **Mesoscale:**
 - Hot Flow Anomalies (HFAs)
 - Foreshock Bubbles (FBs)
 - Magnetosheath High Speed Jets (HSJs)
- **Kinetic:**
 - ULF waves
 - Shocklets
 - SLAMS



← New review paper about high-speed jets!



Magnetosheath jets



Definition

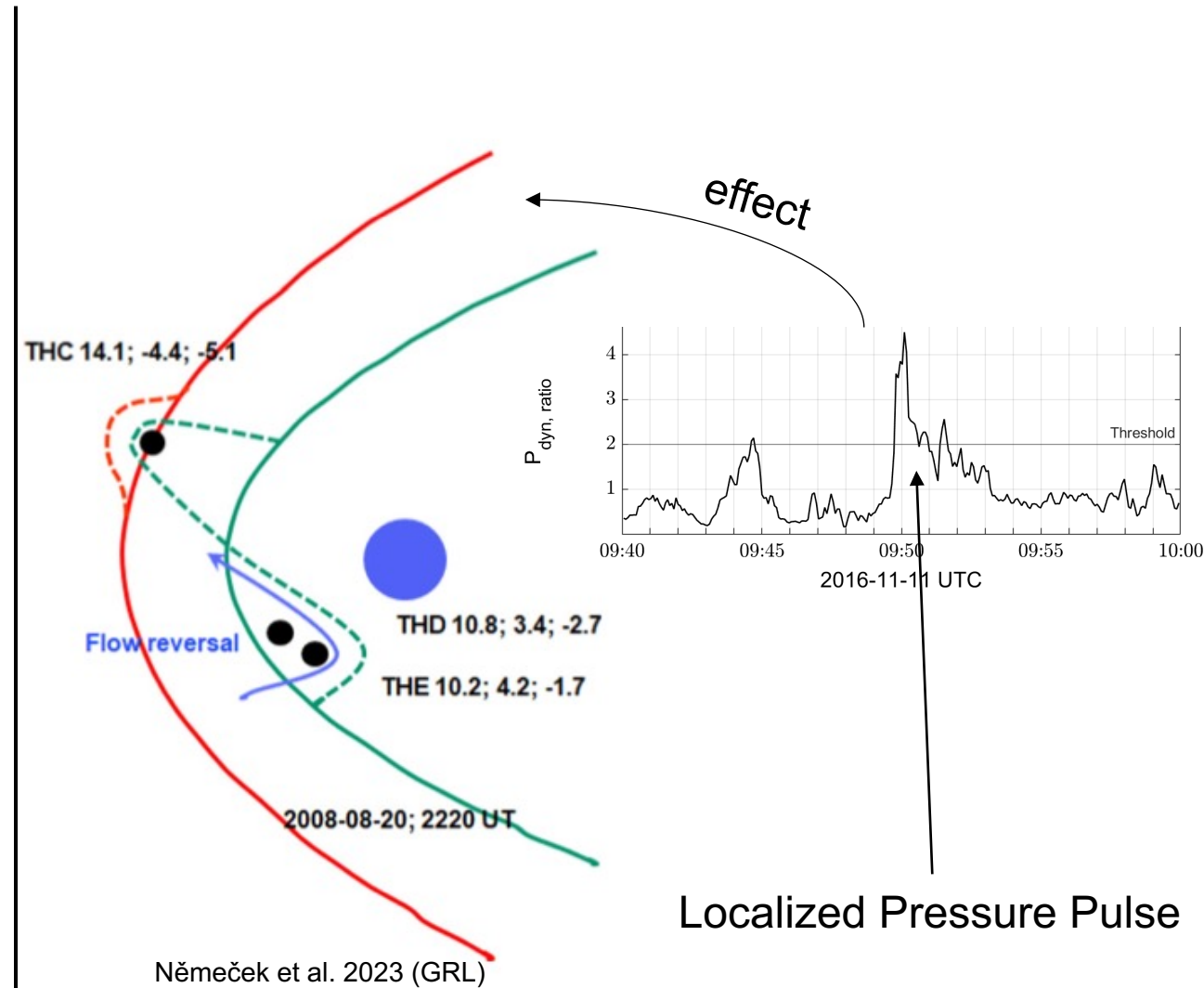
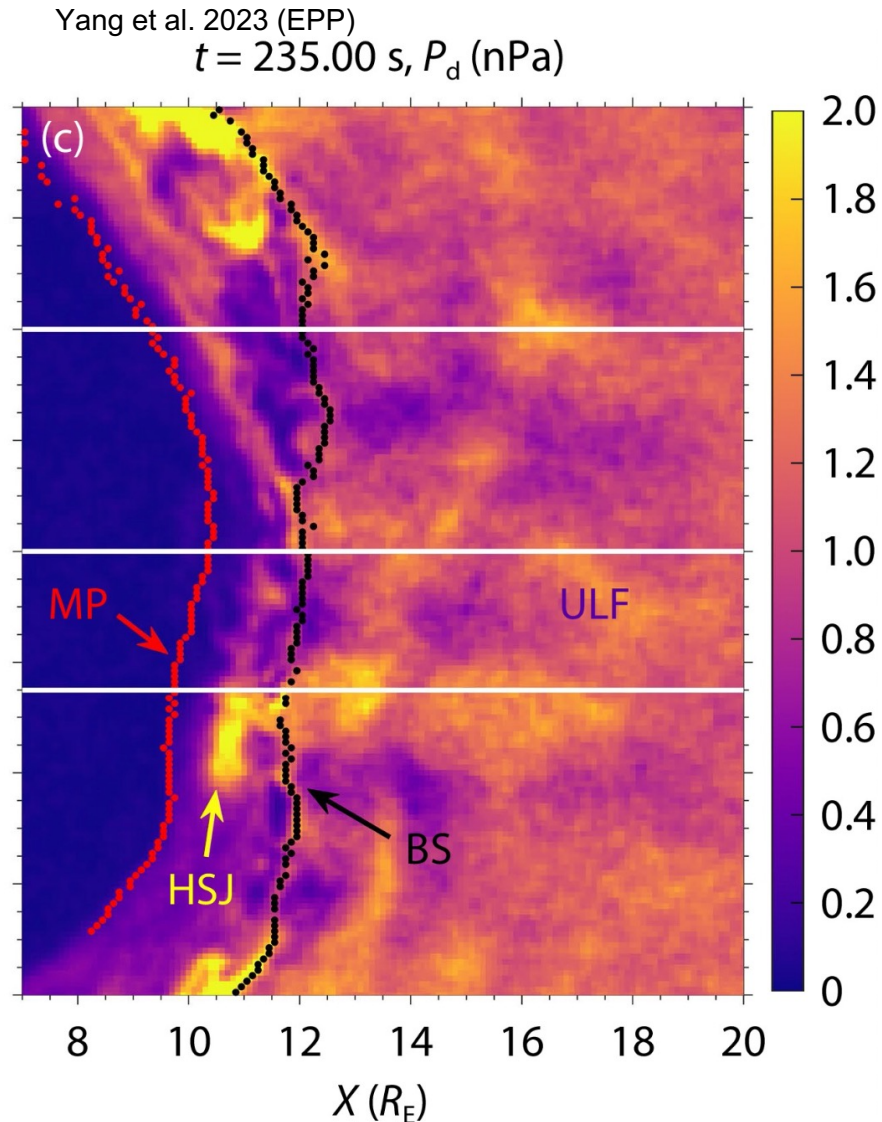
Magnetosheath jets are **transient localized enhancements of dynamic pressure** (density and/or velocity increase)

e.g., 200% dynamic pressure enhancement compared to background magnetosheath

Related phenomena

*Radiation belts
Throat aurora
Magnetopause reconnection
Magnetopause penetration
Shock acceleration
Magnetopause surface eigenmodes
ULF waves
Substorms
Ground magnetometer detection*

Jets & Magnetosphere Effects



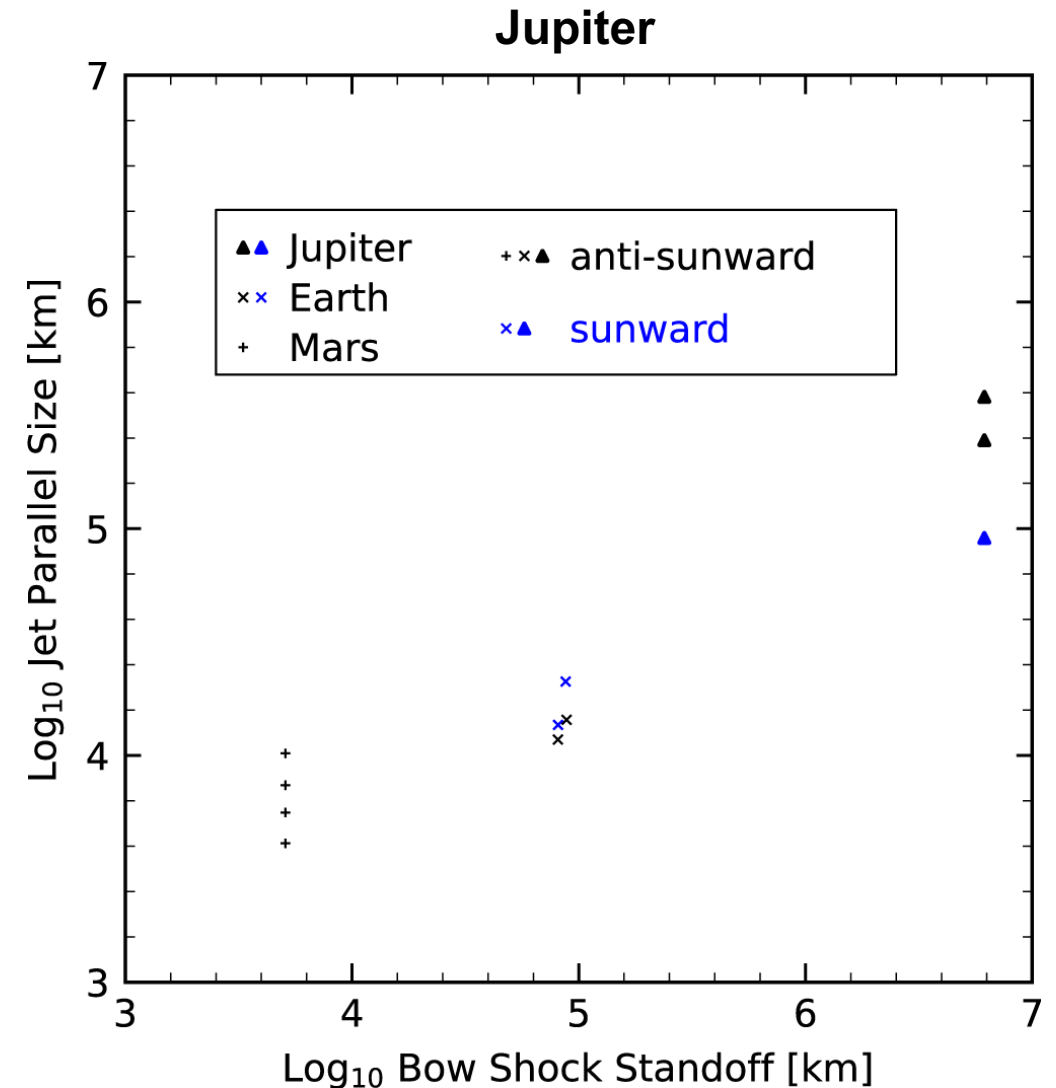
Jets: A universal Phenomenon

- Jets exist in other planets & IP Shocks

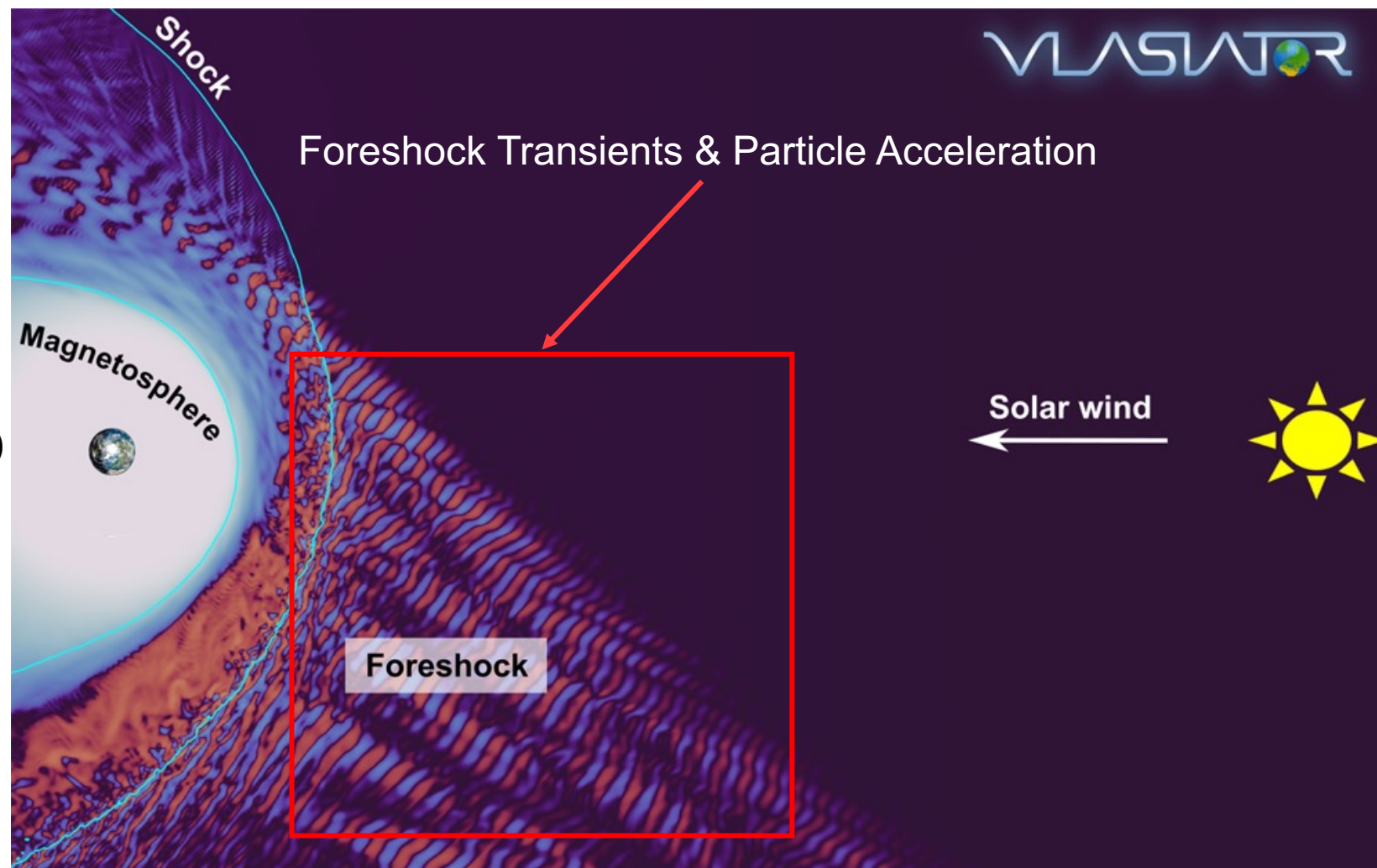
- ❖ Mars : Gunnel et al., 2023
- ❖ Jupiter: Zhou et al., 2024
- ❖ IP shocks: Hietala et al., 2024
- ❖ Mercury (?): Karlsson et al., 2016

Q: Are jets a universal phenomenon across shocks?

A: **Probably!**



Foreshock Transients & Particle Acceleration

Things we know:

- Shocks (Geometry)
- Shock Acceleration (DSA/SDA)
- Downstream transients (Jets)
- Let's go upstream!

Foreshock Transients

Transients with most notable impact

How many: ~several per day!

How big: ~10s of Re

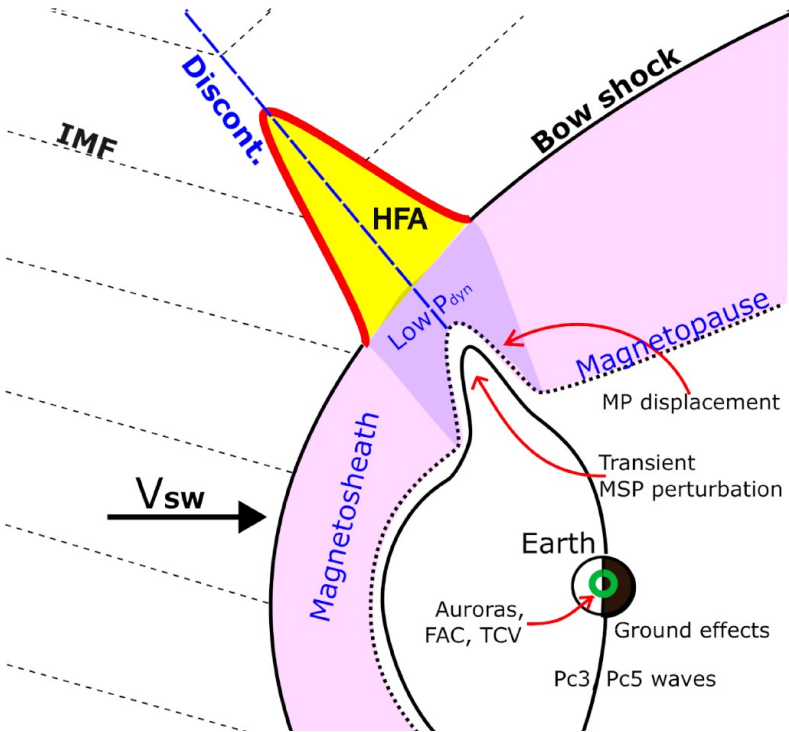
HFAs

Discontinuities intersects BS and E (-
 $V \times B$) points towards the sheet,
ions pile up and thermalized

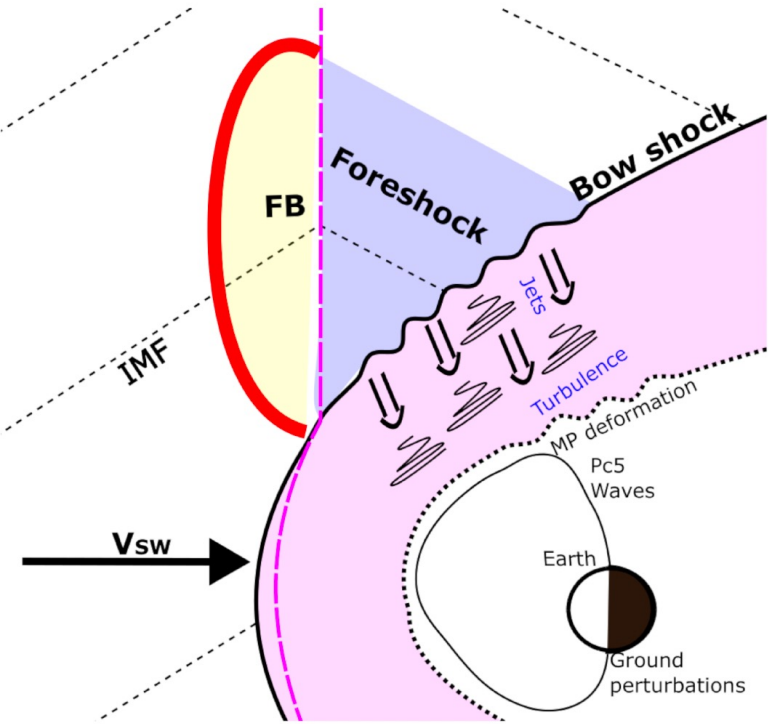
FBs

Discontinuity & foreshock
backstream ions concentrate and
create a bubble that expands into the
SW

Zhang et al., (2022)



Hot Flow Anomalies (HFAs)



Foreshock Bubbles (FBs)

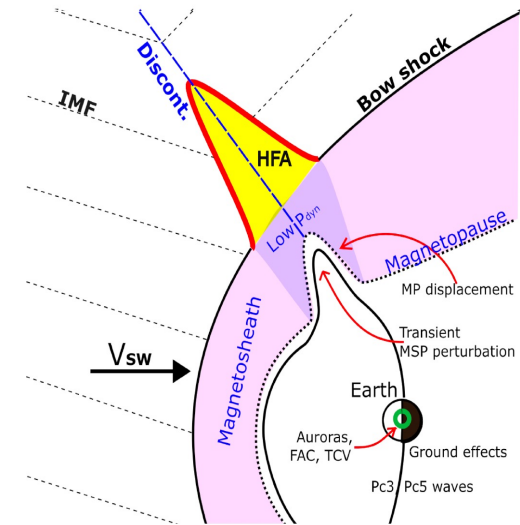
TUMS (Transient Upstream Mesoscale Structures)

Primož K. et al. (2024)

The anatomy of an HFA

How many: ~several per day!

How big: ~10s of Re



Hot Flow Anomalies (HFA)

Kajdič+ (2024)

Discontinuity intersects the bow shock and the convection electric field ($-V \times B$) points towards the sheet on at least one side.

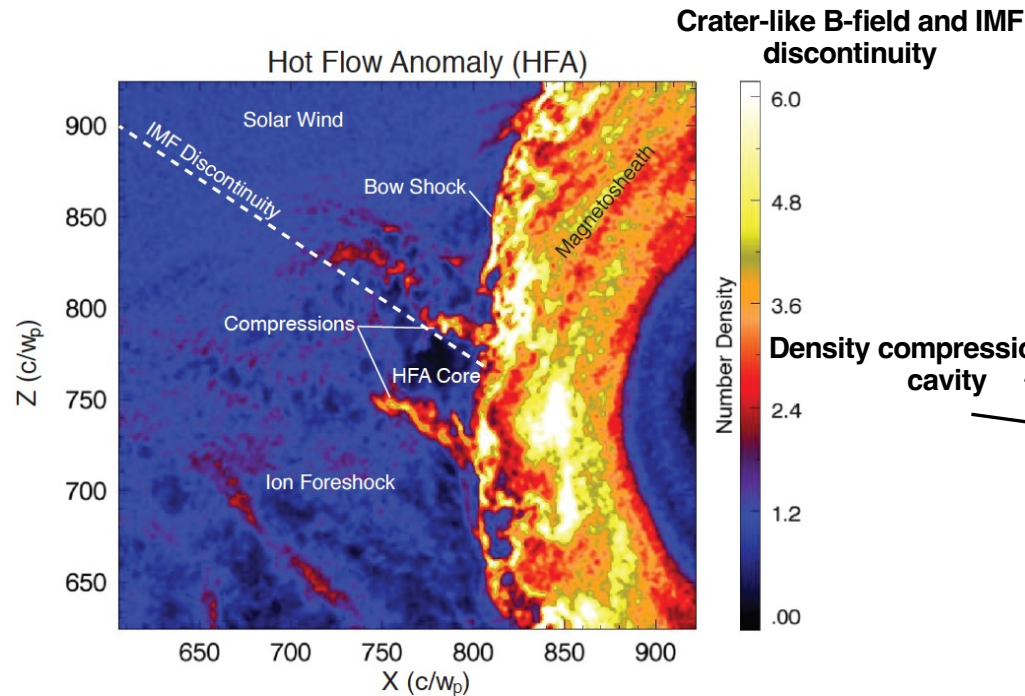


Figure by Nick Omid

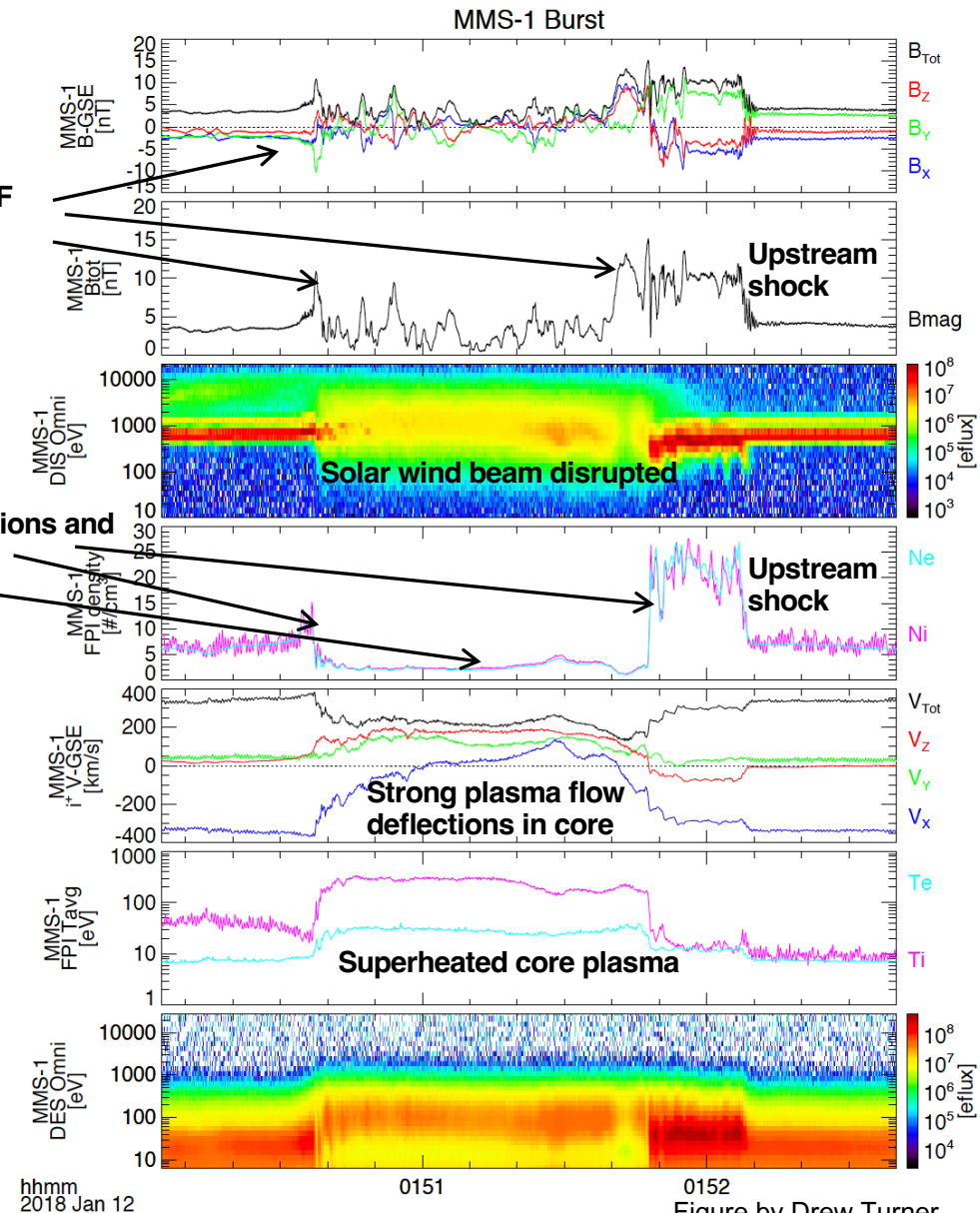


Figure by Drew Turner

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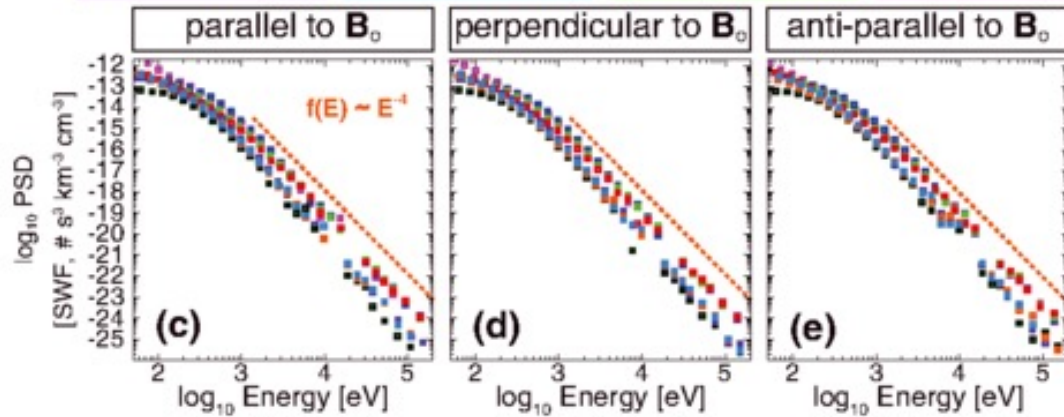
Foreshock/Dayside/Shock-generated Transients...

...and why they make **Qpar shocks super accelerators**

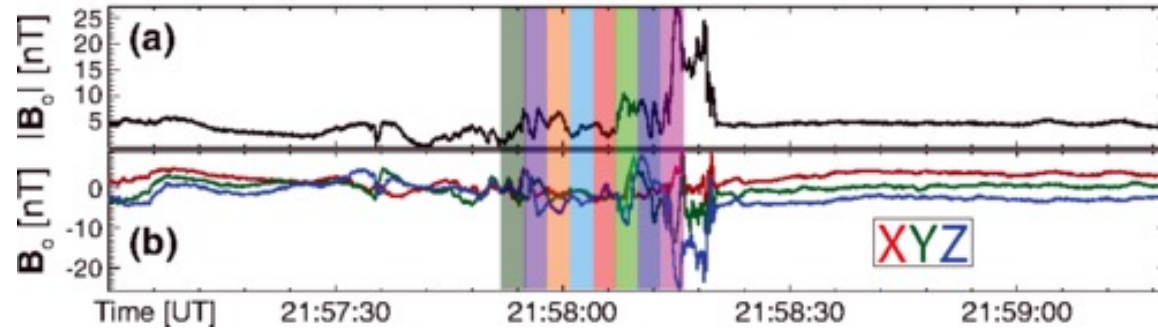
Foreshock Transients & Electron acceleration

Combined low and high energy electron spectra

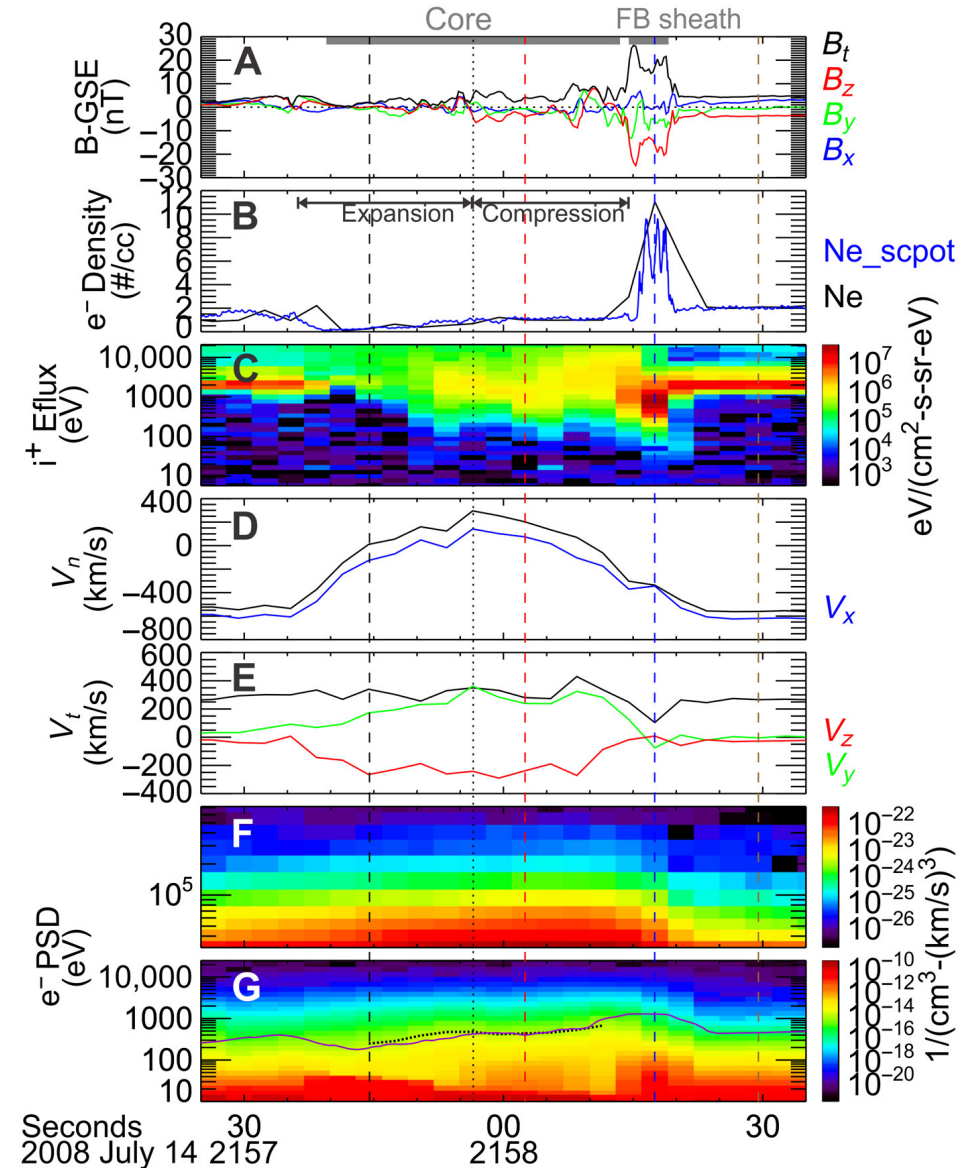
21:57:51 – 21:57:54 UTC 21:57:57 – 21:58:00 UTC 21:58:03 – 21:58:06 UTC 21:58:09 – 21:58:12 UTC
 21:57:54 – 21:57:57 UTC 21:58:00 – 21:58:03 UTC 21:58:06 – 21:58:09 UTC 21:58:12 – 21:58:16 UTC



Foreshock Bubble on 2008-07-14



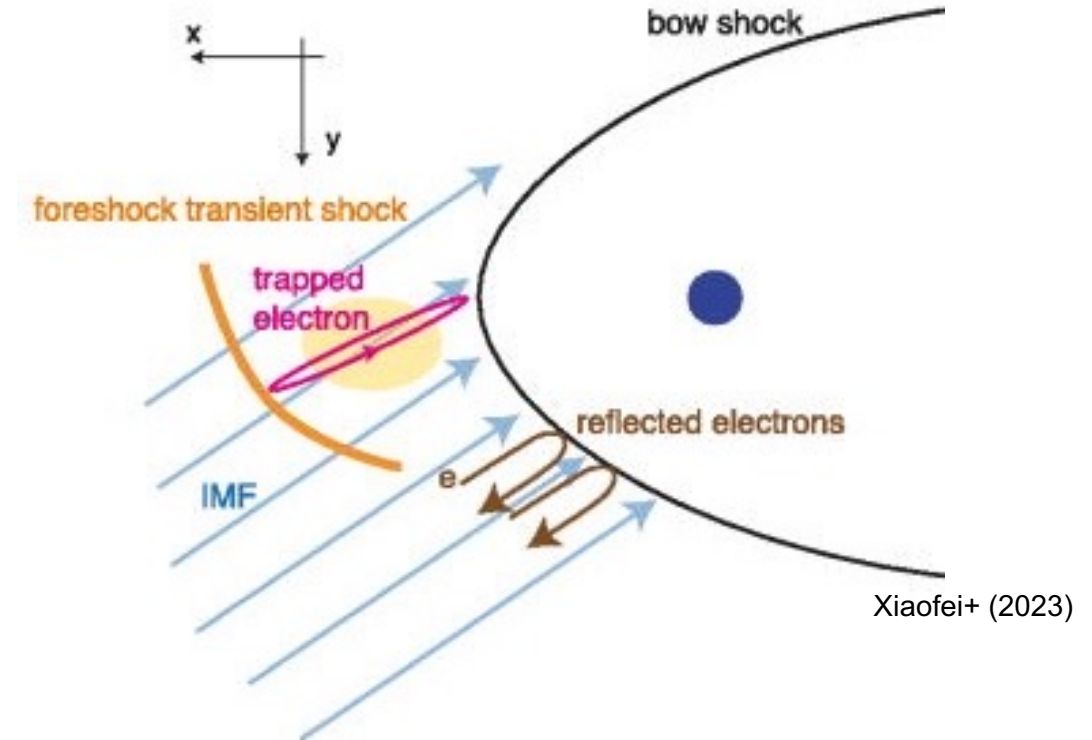
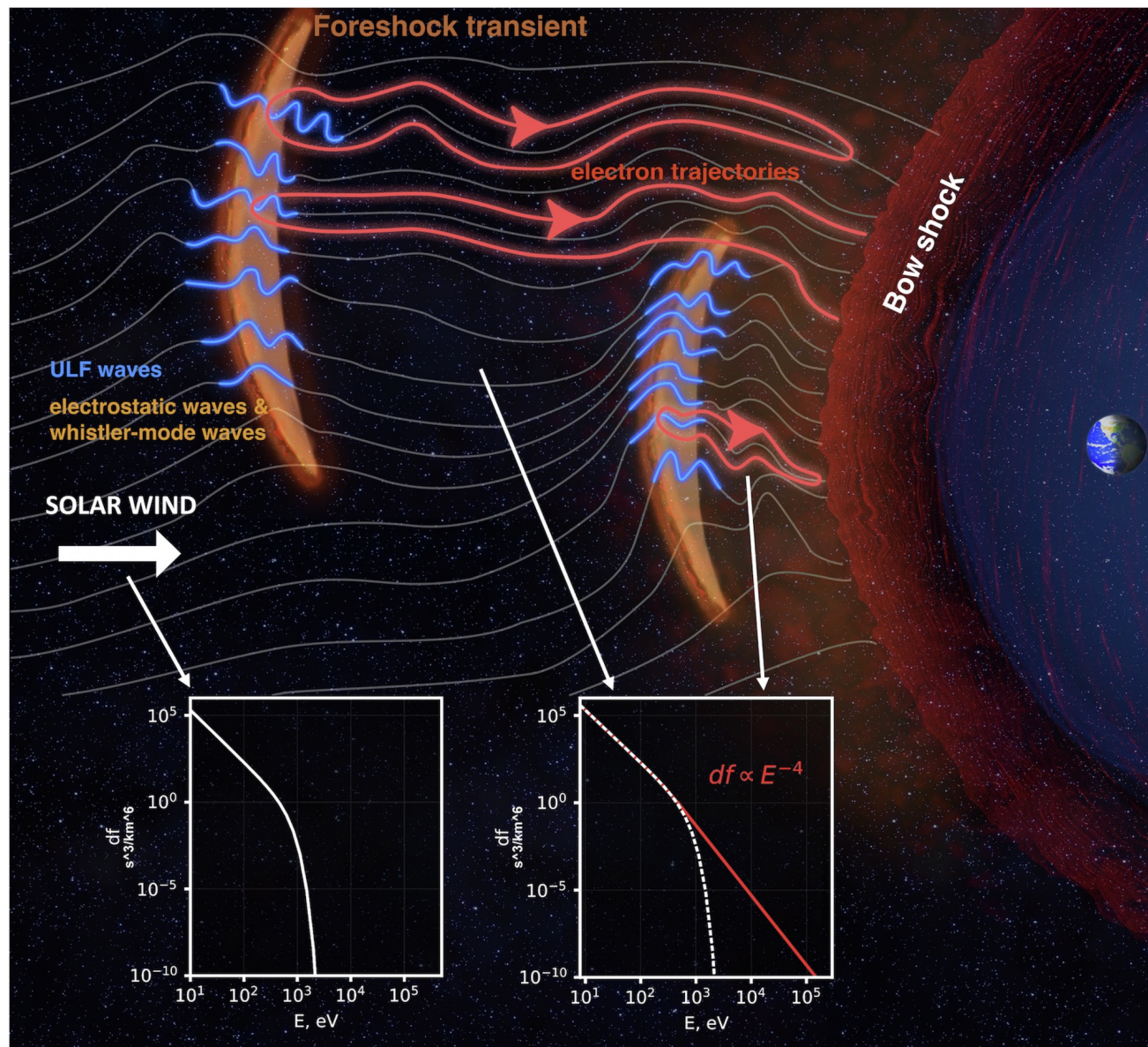
~300 KeV electrons



~200 KeV electrons

Liu T. et al. 2019 | Science Adv.

Recent updates – Wave Particle Interactions



- Adiabatic heating
- Temperature Anisotropy
- High frequency whistlers

Electron acceleration + pitch angle scattering

New Results on Electron Acceleration

Reminder:

Q_{par} shocks → DSA is efficient, but how do we solve the injection problem?

Q_{perp} shocks → (S)SDA is fine, but not sufficient to drive relativistic energies.

Reminder: Q_{par} shocks include the foreshock and its transients



Online Attention



New study unveils breakthrough in understanding cosmic particle accelerators

Science Daily, 13 Jan 2025

Scientists have come a step closer to understanding how collisionless shock waves -- found throughout the universe -- are able...



Cosmic shock waves: Unraveling the mystery of electron acceleration

Phys.org, 13 Jan 2025

Scientists have come a step closer to understanding how collisionless shock waves—found throughout the universe—are able to...

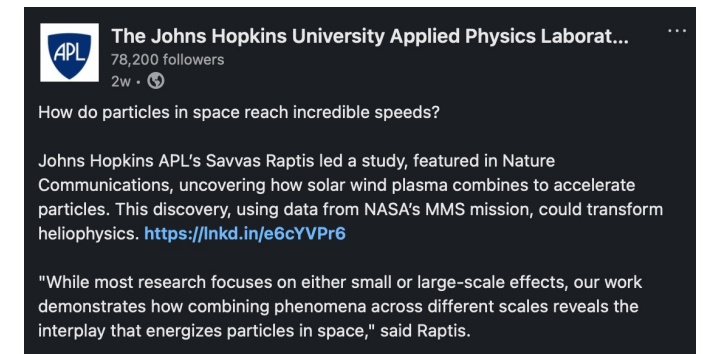
Read the popular science version of the paper:



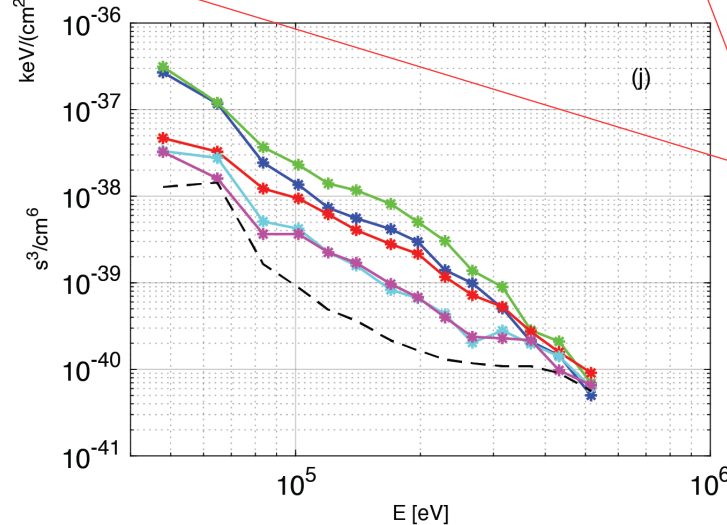
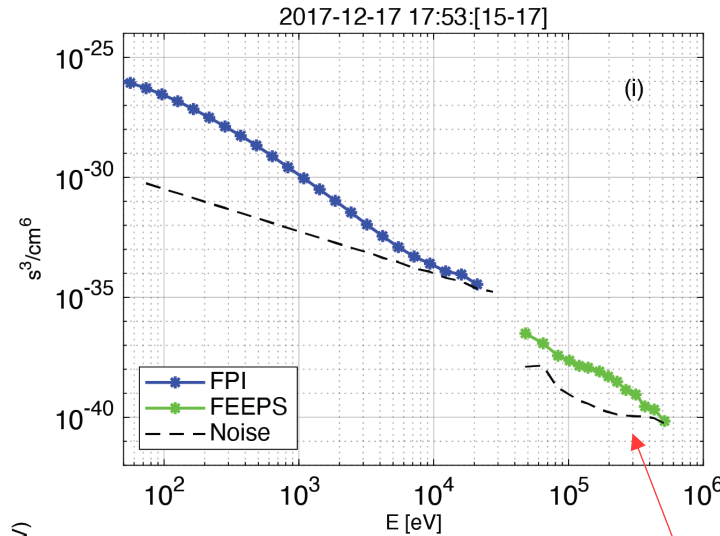
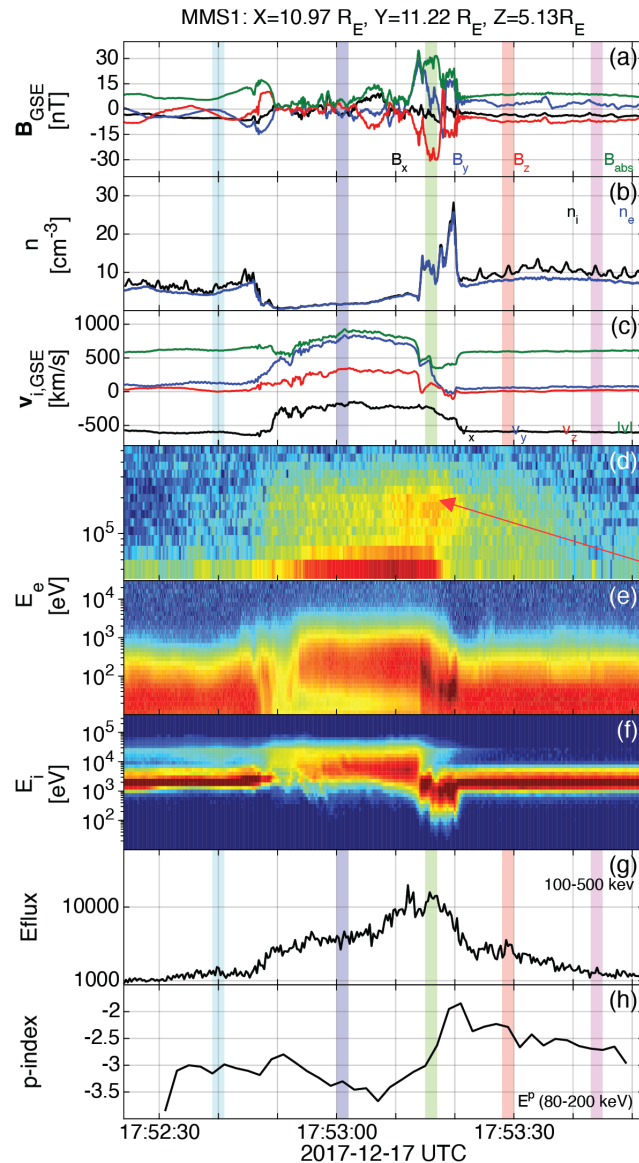
Read the actual paper:



Read the “science nugget” from ARTEMIS mission:



Relativistic Electrons with MMS

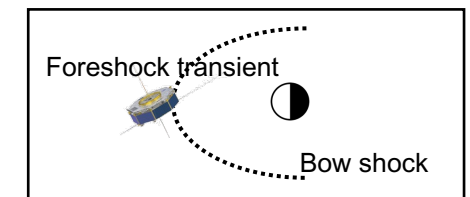


Typical properties of transient:

- Depleted Core (low B, n)
- Mature HFA ($\Delta B/B_0 \sim 1-4$)
- SW beam disrupted
- Strong density and magnetic field compressive boundaries
- Formation of a Qperp “shock”
- Flow anomaly (velocity decreasing)

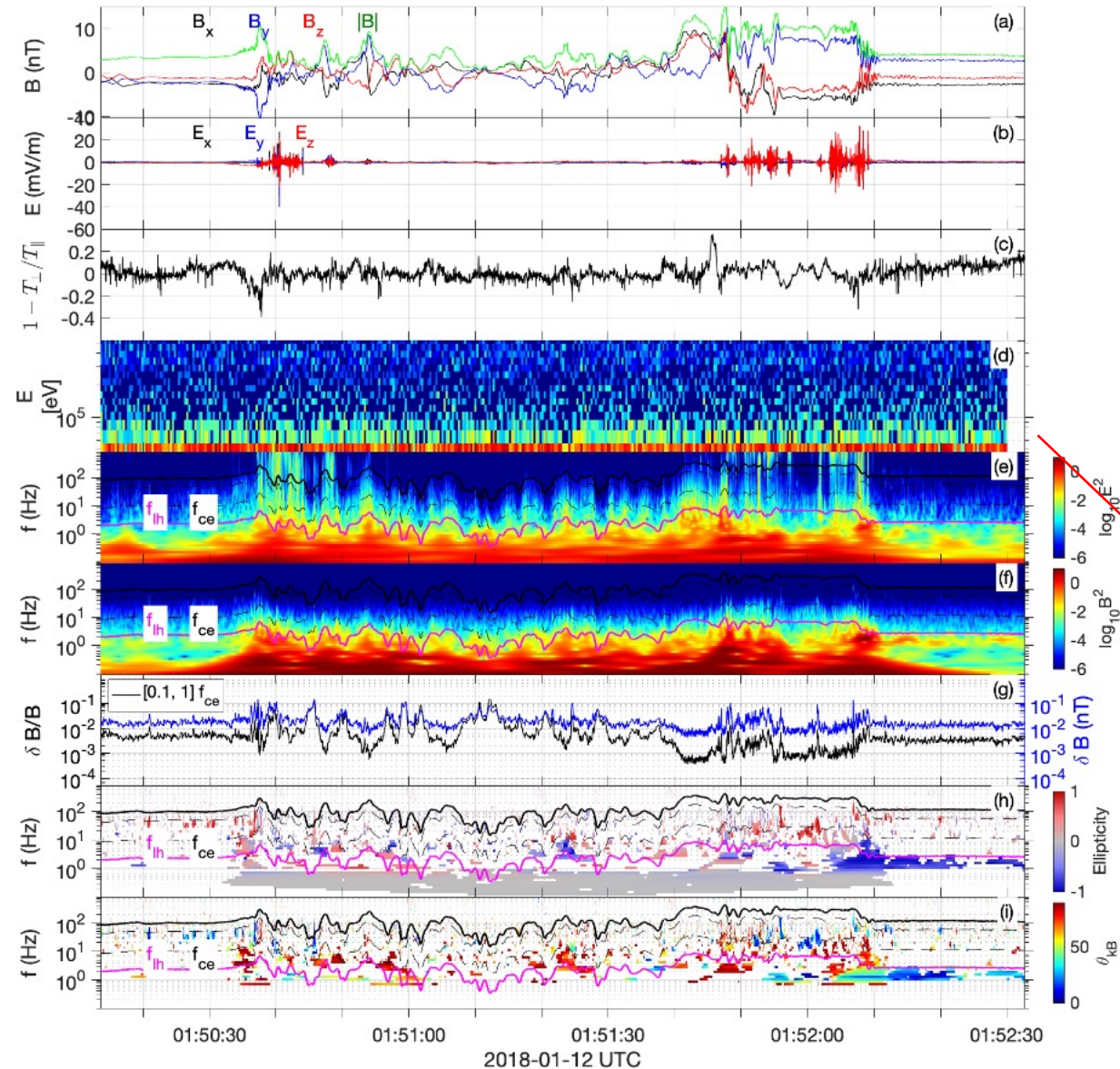
Unique property

>500 keV electrons throughout the core and shock region



Missing piece of the puzzle? – Let's look at another event

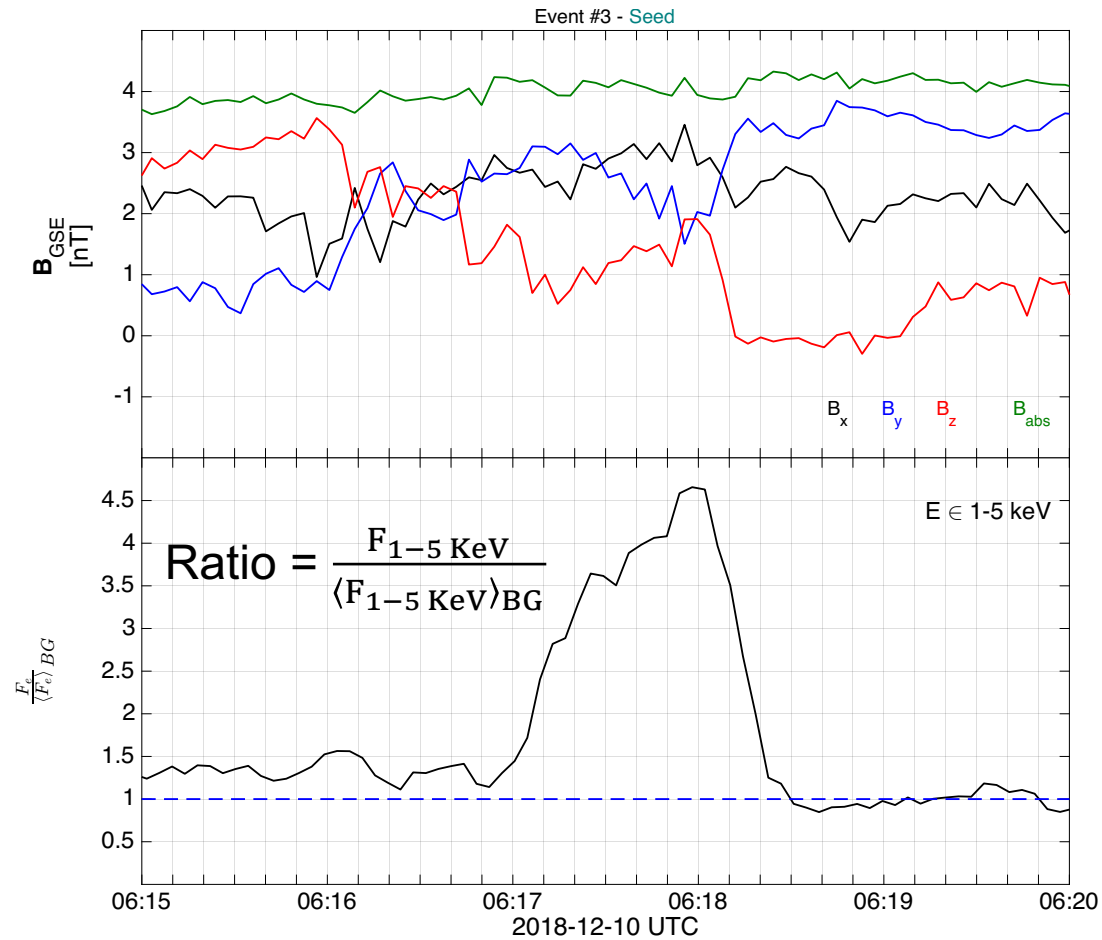
So why there are not always relativistic electrons?



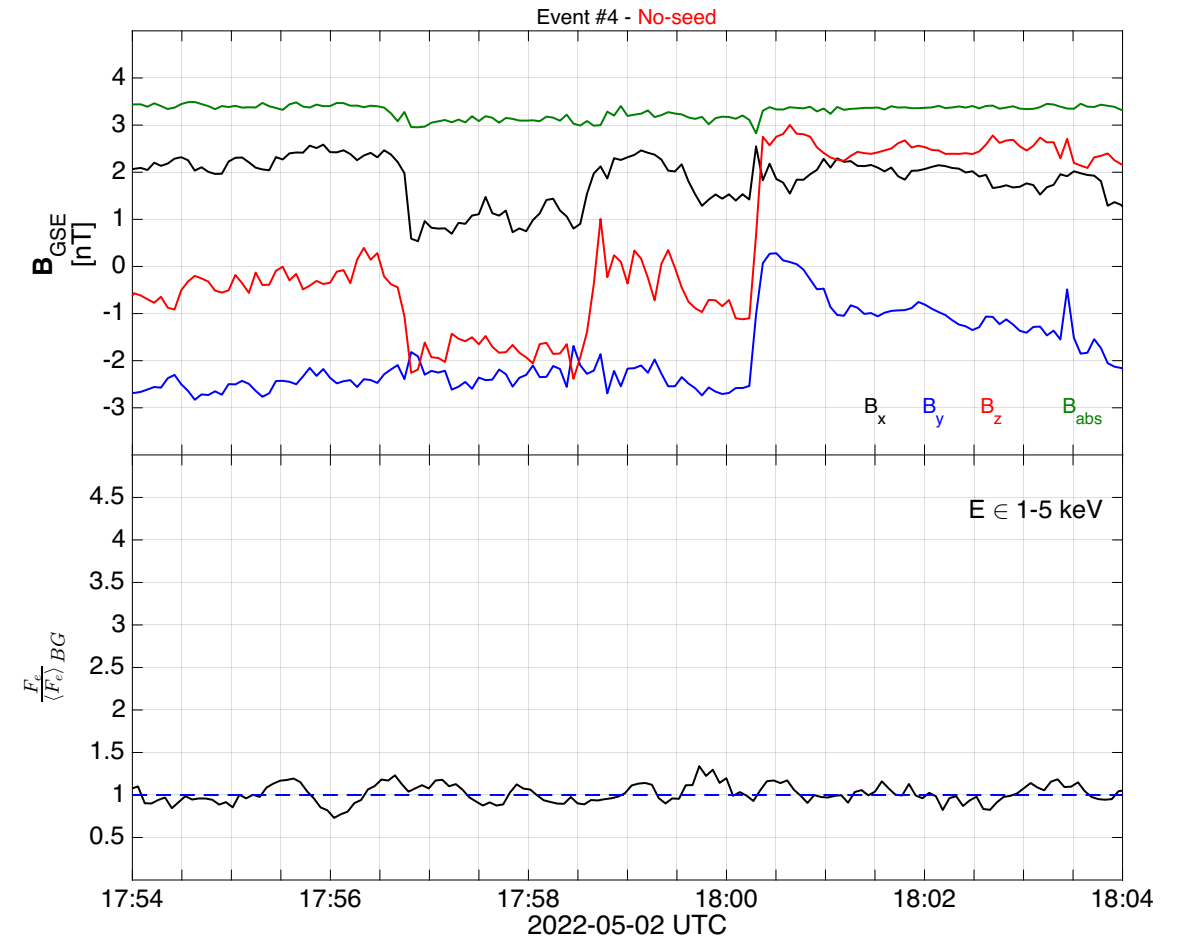
- Waves are there
- Shock is there,
- All the stuff are there.

FEEPS = no signal

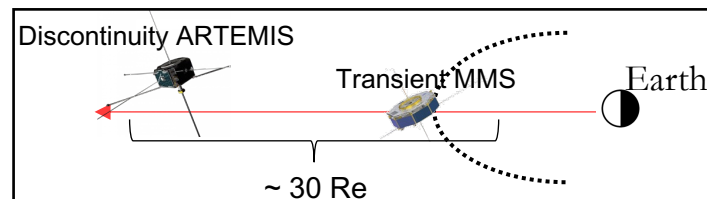
Upstream conditions for two event - ARTEMIS



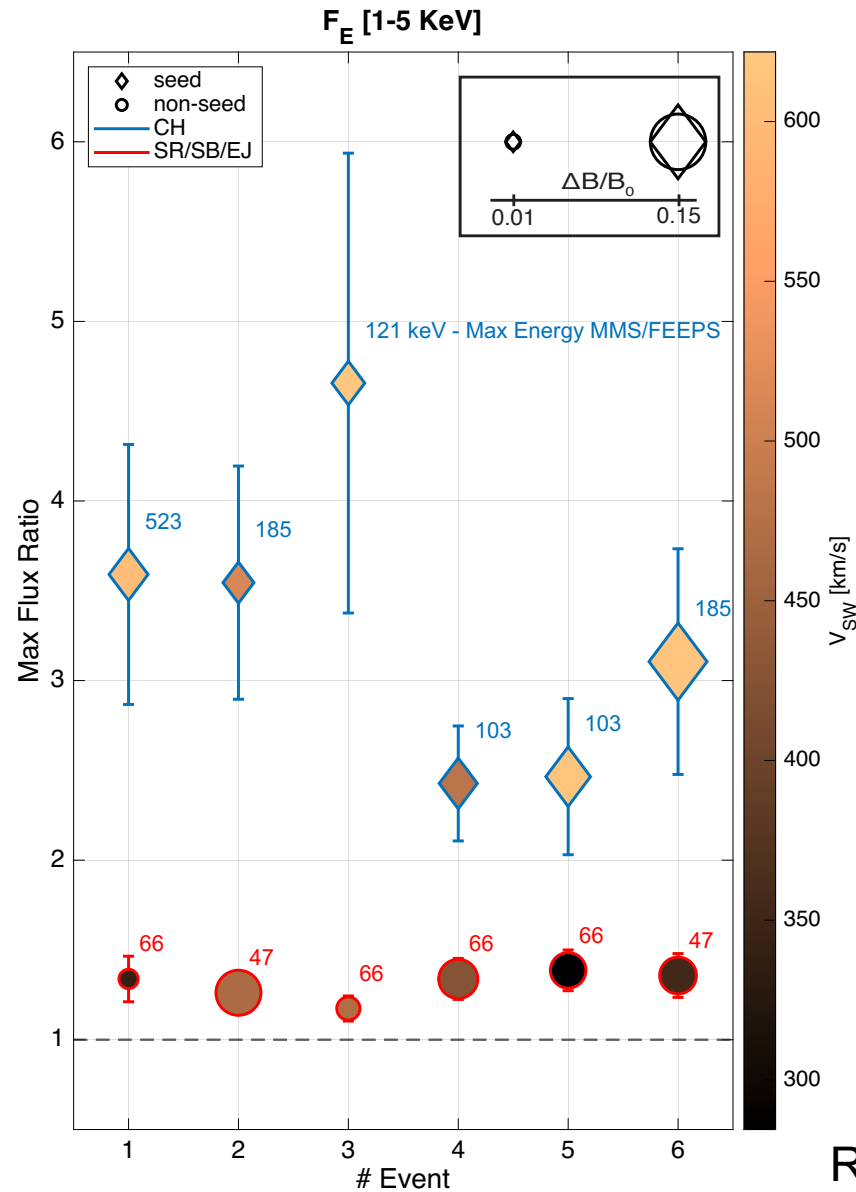
FEEPS: 100+ KeV



No Signal at FEEPS



Statistics for seed and acceleration



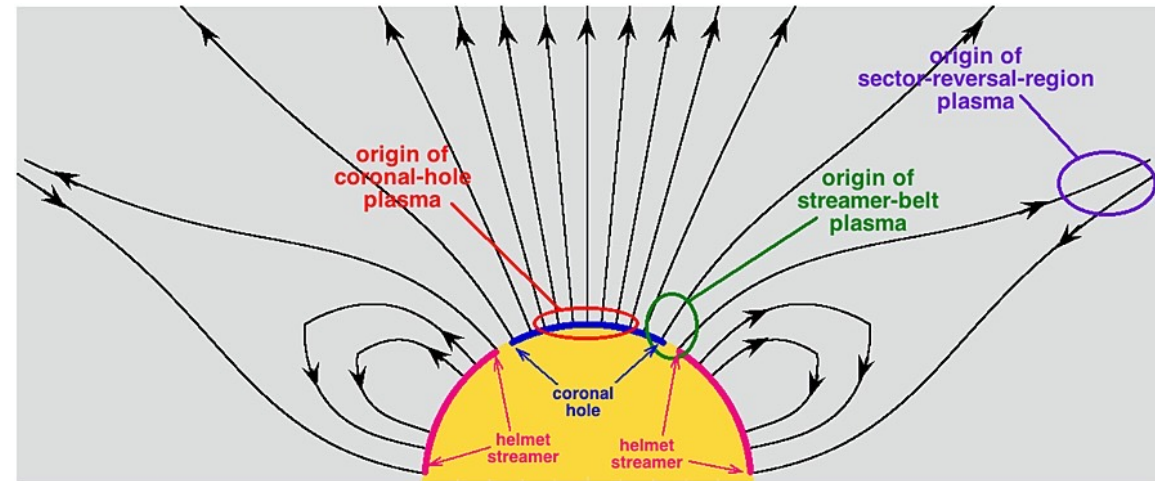
Seed events (FEEPS > 100 KeV)

CH (78%), CH (40%), CH(79%), CH (39%), CH(77%), CH(79%)

No-seed (FEEPS = Noise)

SB (80%), SB(42%), EJ (55%) SB (44%), SR(63%), SB (46%)

Using: [Xu and Borovsky 2014, Camporeale+ 2017] methodology



$$\text{Ratio} = \frac{F_{1-5 \text{ KeV}}}{\langle F_{1-5 \text{ KeV}} \rangle_{\text{BG}}}$$

Reinforced Shock Acceleration of Relativistic Electrons

Electron acceleration at Foreshock Transient

Injection Threshold
“Seeding”

Seed from
CH plasma
(1-5 keV)

Shock
Acceleration
(SDA/DSA)

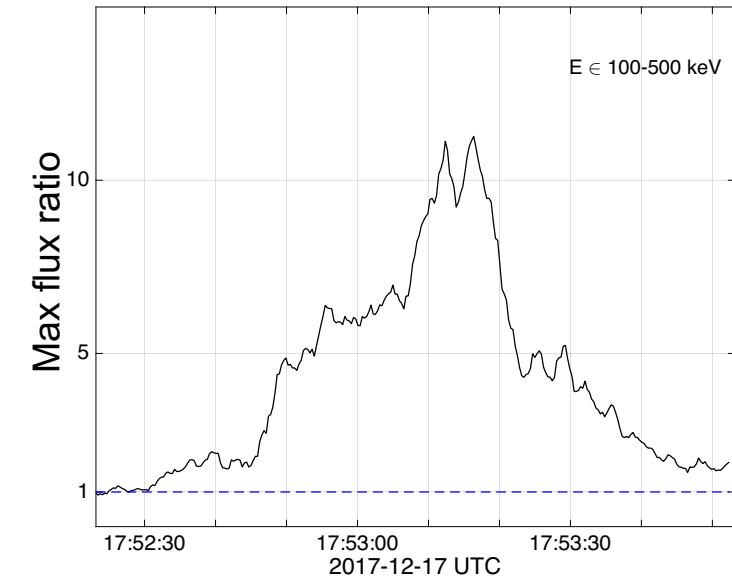
+

Wave particle
interactions

Efficient through PA scattering & confinement:

- LF whistler waves (Shock Transition)
- Wavefield of HFA's core ($\Delta B \gg B$)
- "Magnetic bottle" between edges of HFA and Earth's bow shock (geometry)
- Betatron (electron acceleration temperature anisotropy)

$$\text{Ratio} = \frac{F_{100-500 \text{ KeV}}}{\langle F_{100-500 \text{ KeV}} \rangle_{\text{BG}}}$$

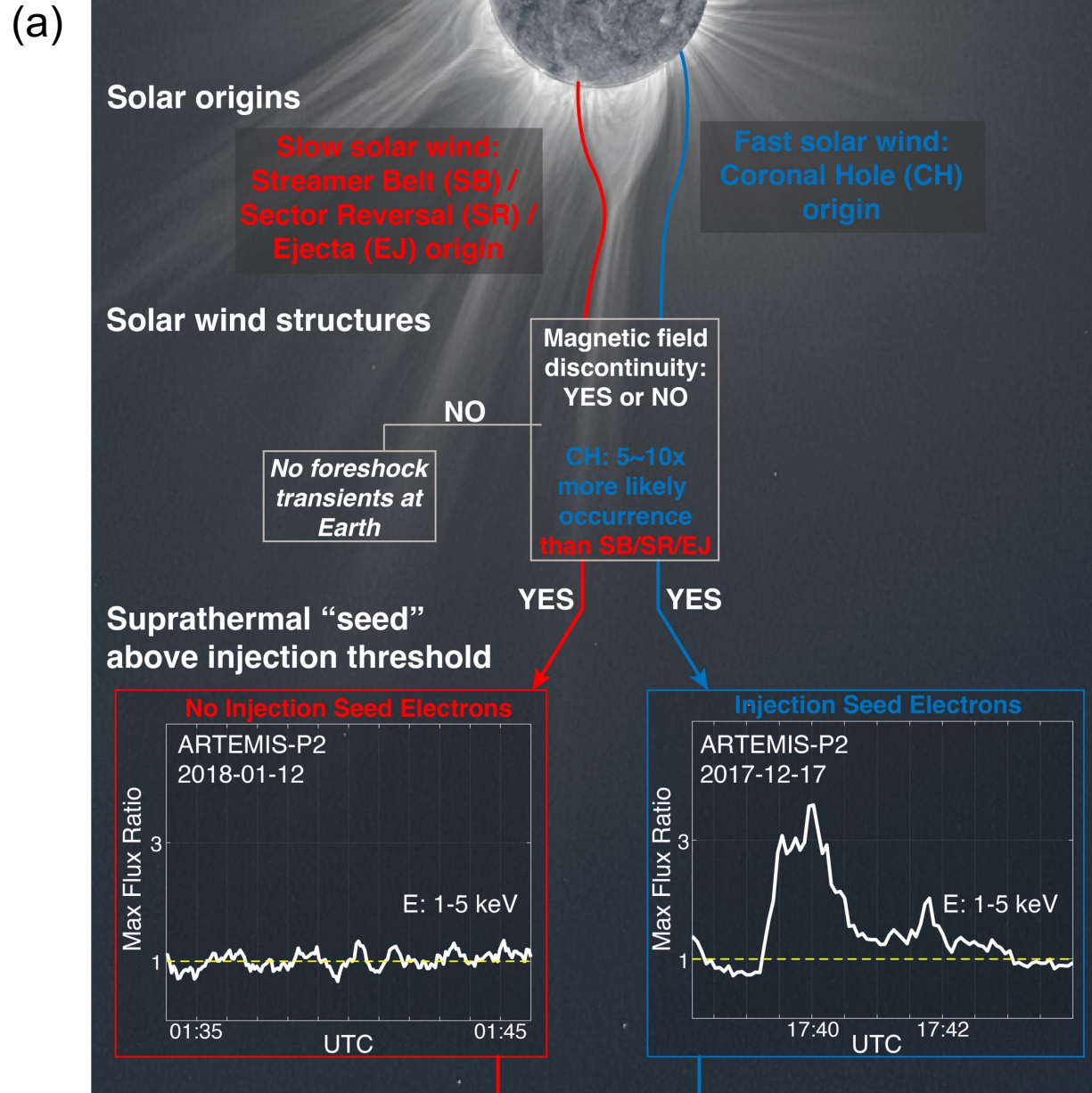


Key-point:

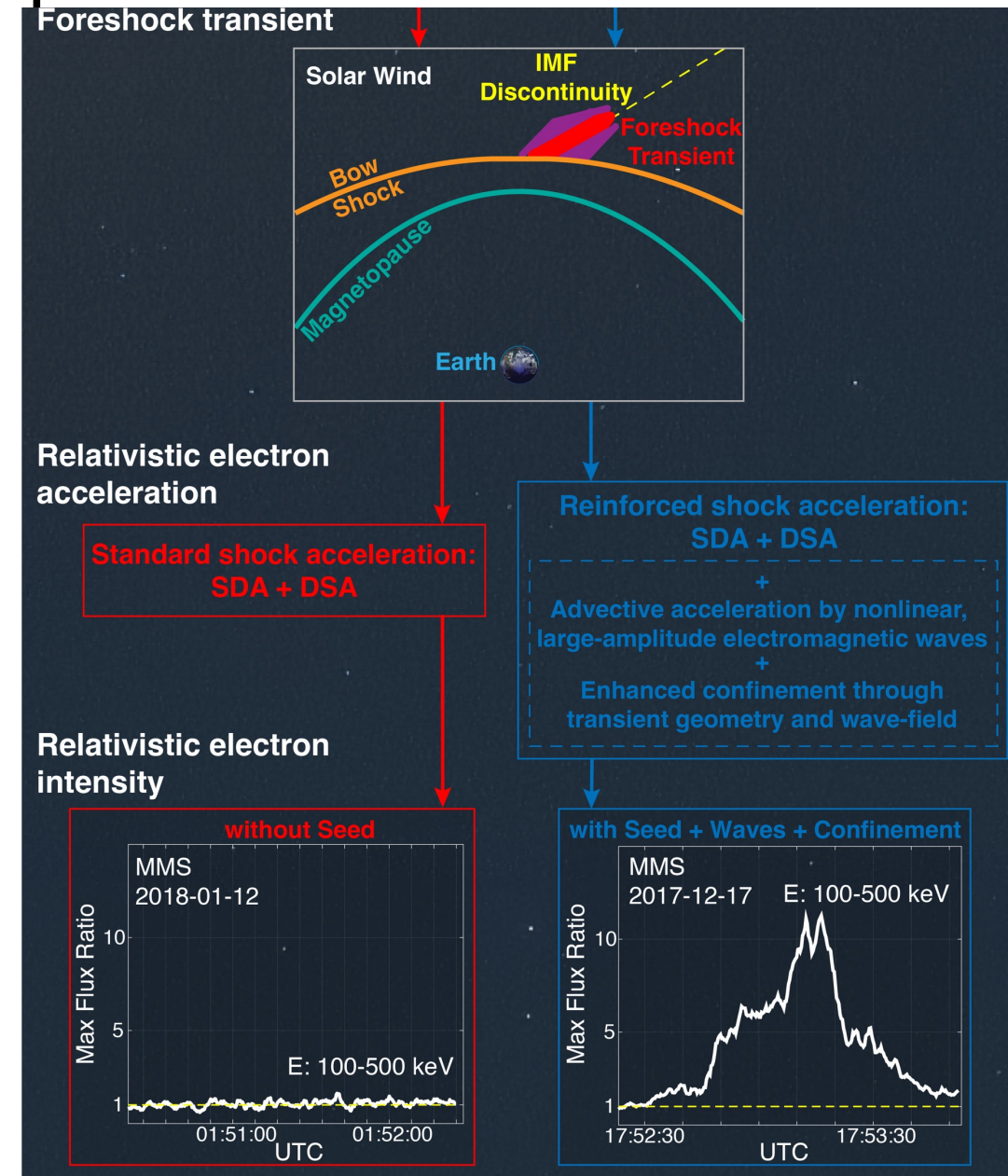
Seed + Foreshock's Shock + Waves +
Efficiency factors = ~MeV electrons
before reaching the bow shock.

Note: Other works results are fully consistent with our description: Wilson+2016, Liu+2019, Xiaofei+2025

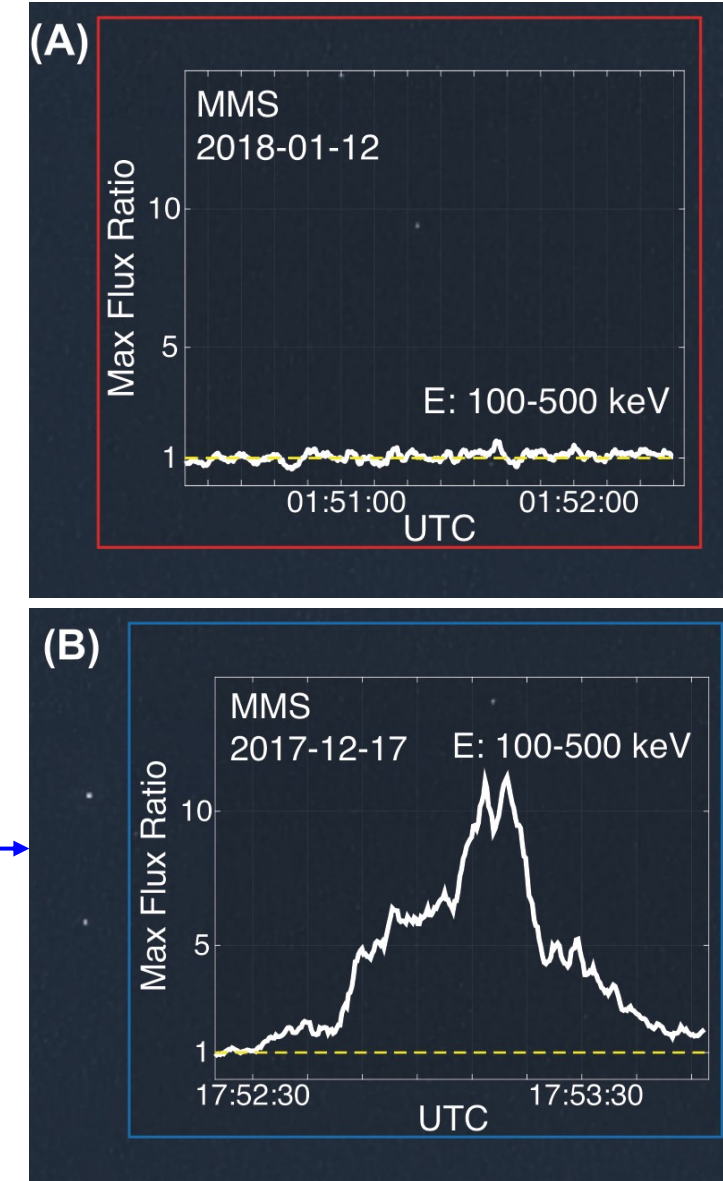
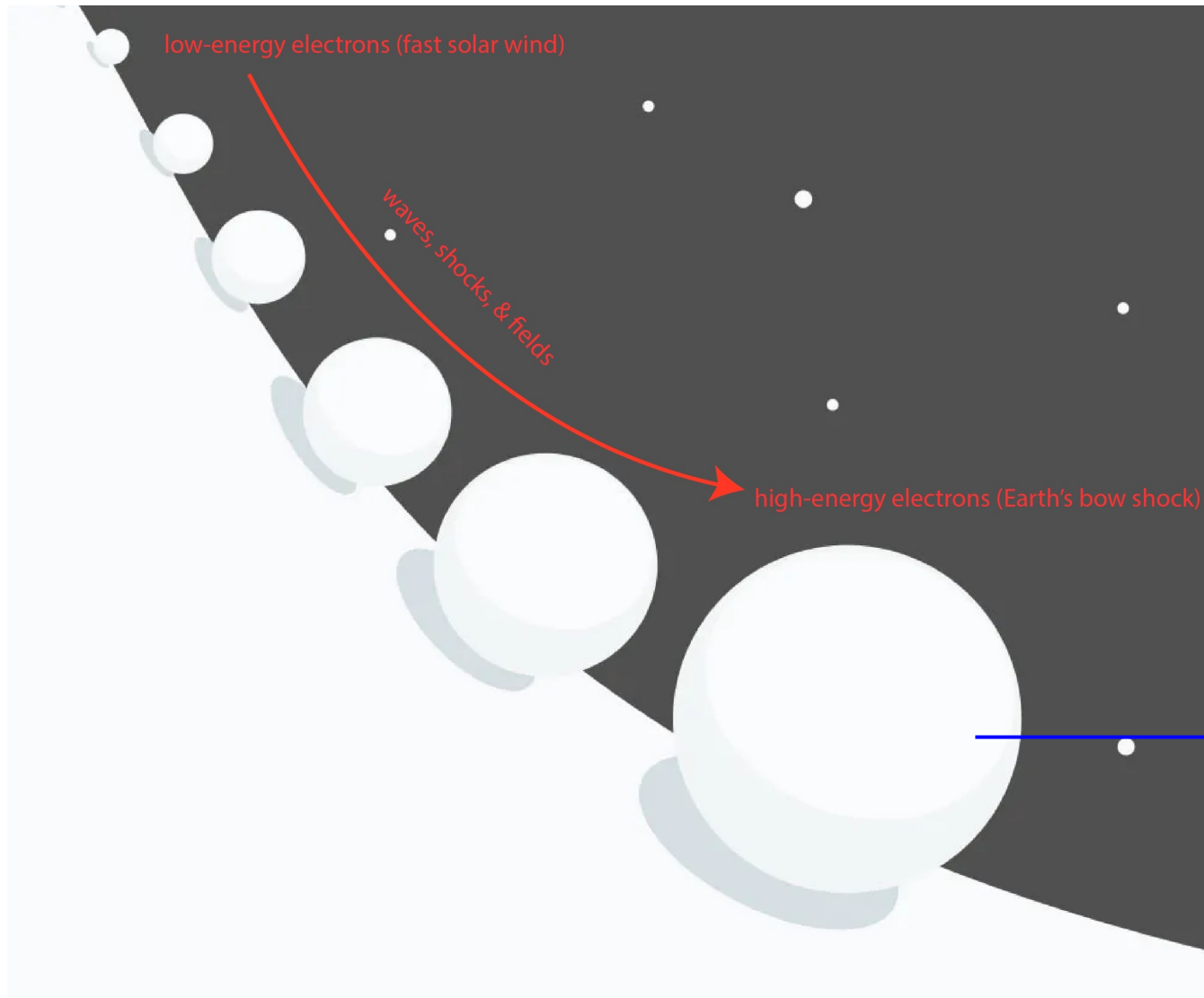
Schematic of the process



(b)

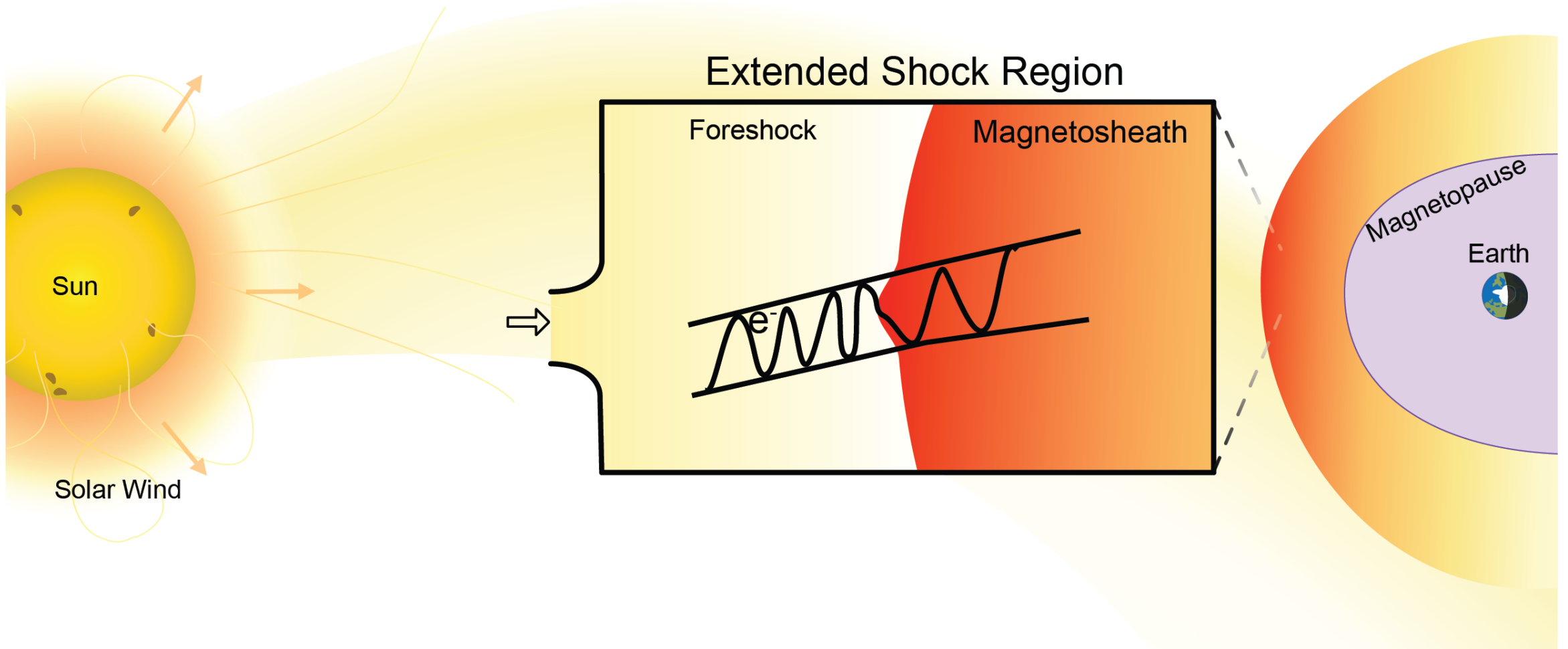


Simplistic Picture to remember



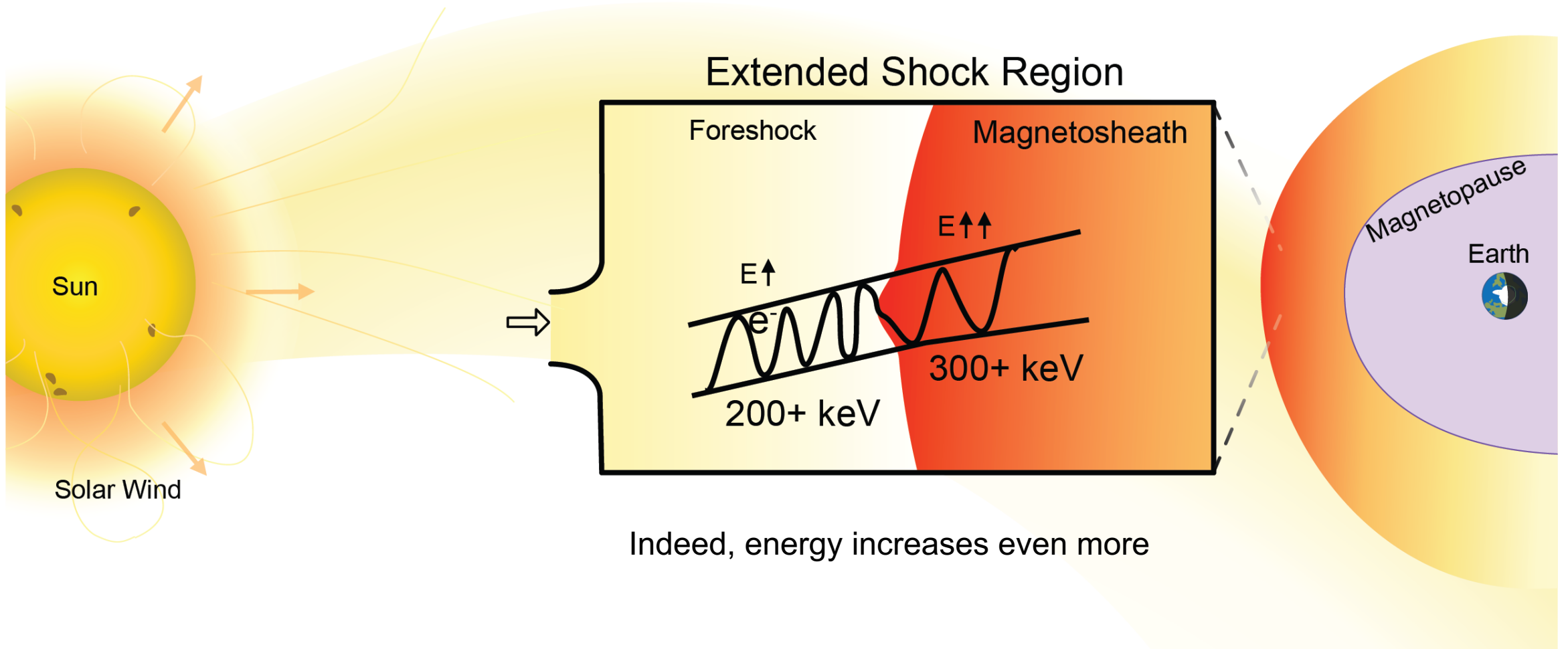
But let's ask one more question

What do we expect to see when these transient appear downstream?

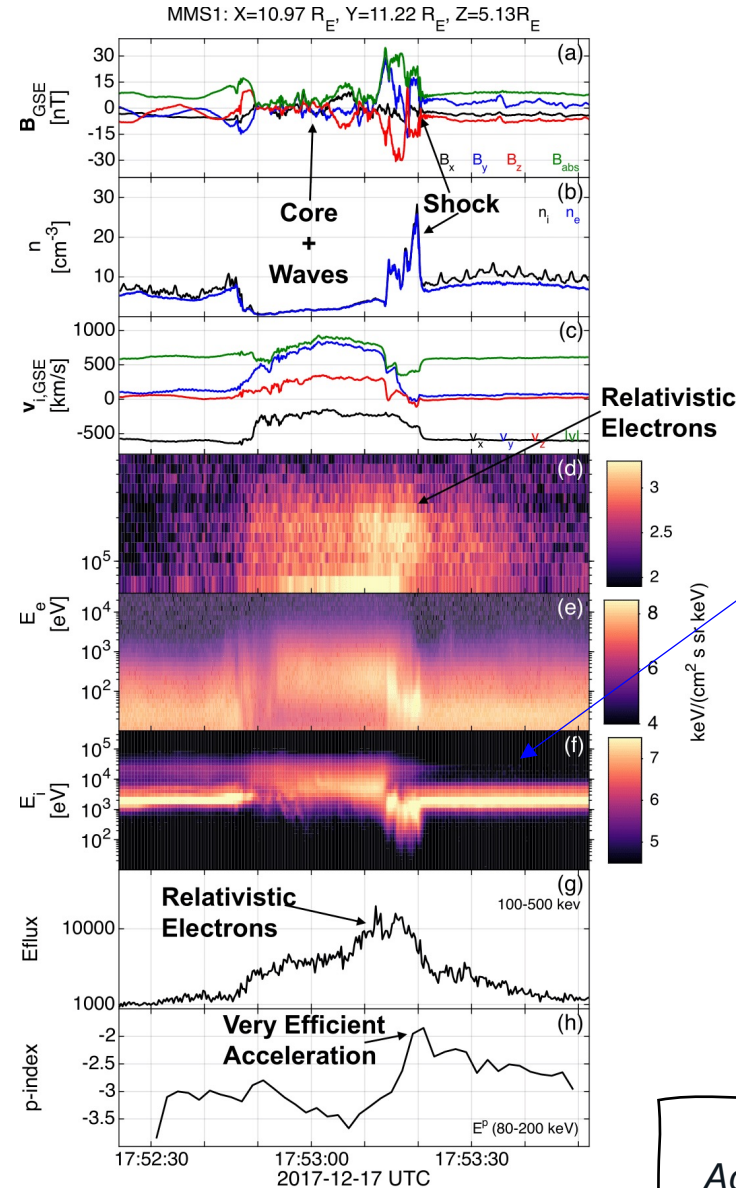


But let's ask one more question

What do we expect to see when these transient appear downstream?

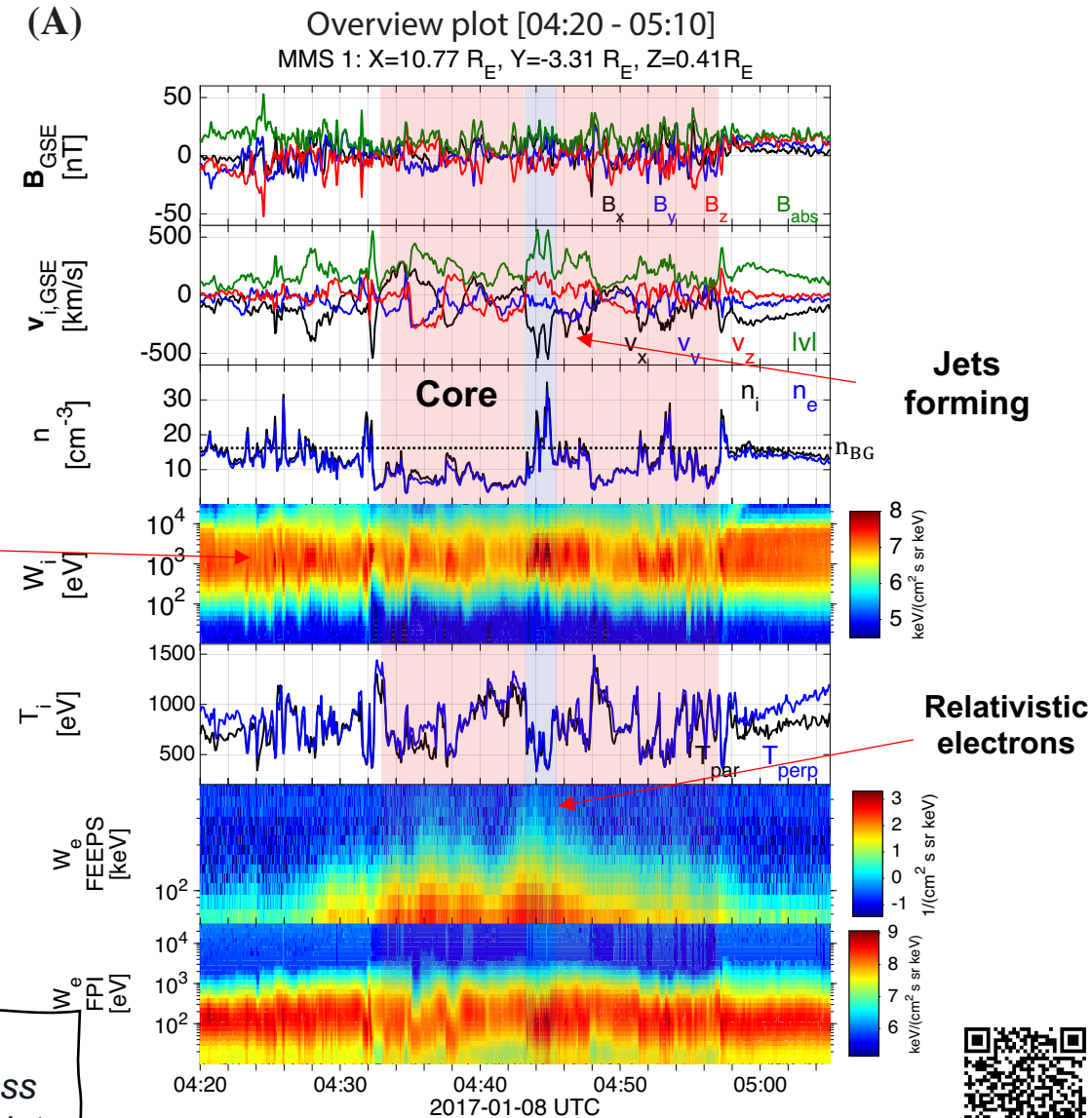


HFAs and FBs are amazing particle accelerators



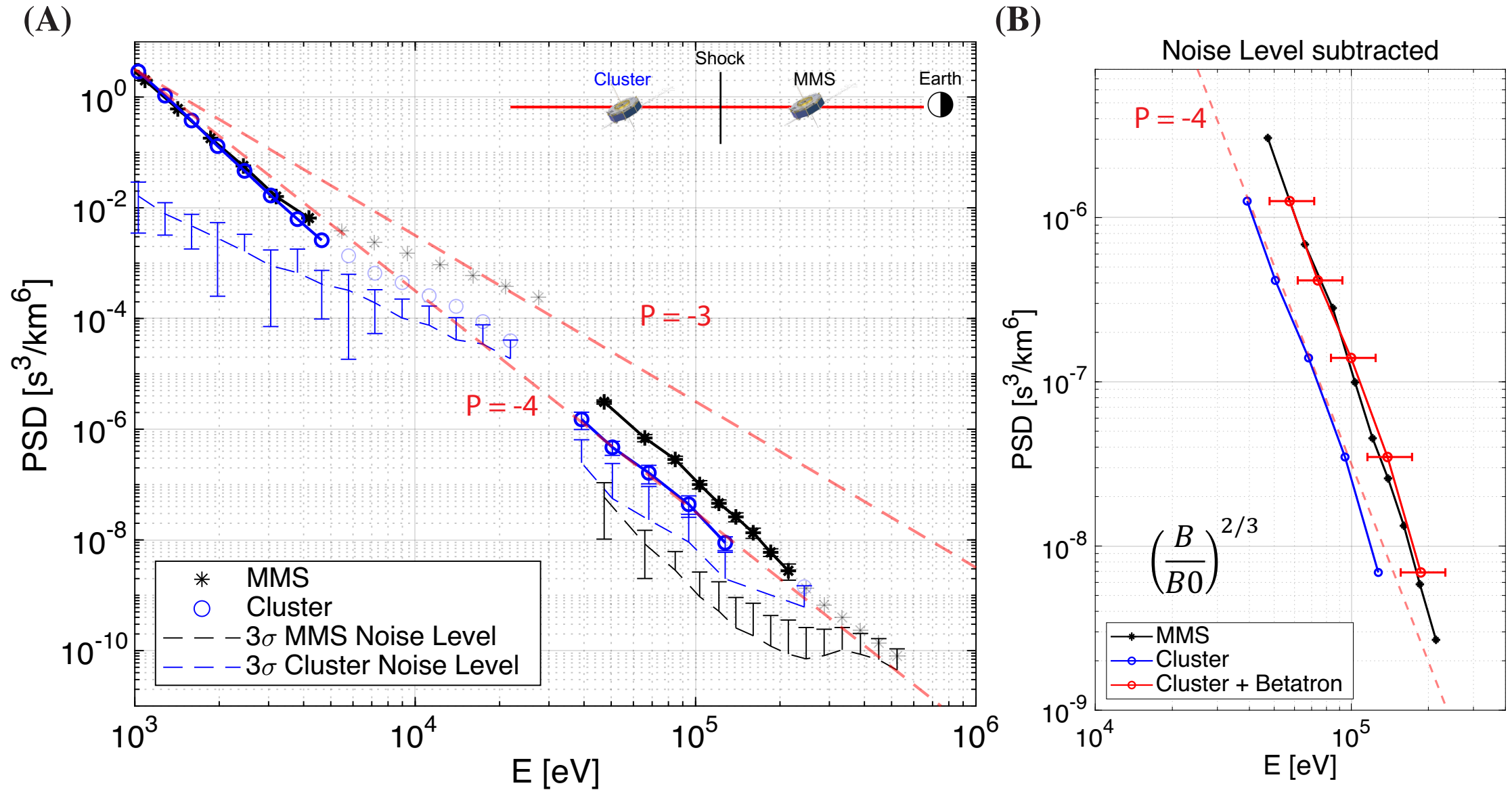
Raptis et al.2025 NatComm

Transients get transmitted
Accelerating particles in the process
Restructuring the sheath & forming jets



Raptis et al.2025 ApJL

Betatron Across Shock Cluster and MMS

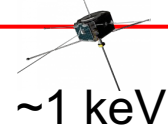


Transients & Reinforced Shock Acceleration

(A)

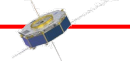
Coronal Hole SW
V > 500 km/s

Discontinuity (SW) ARTEMIS

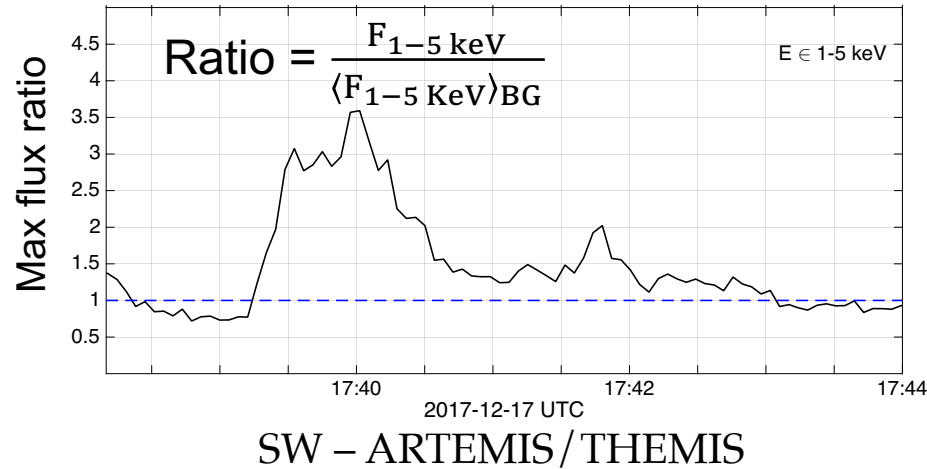


~1 keV

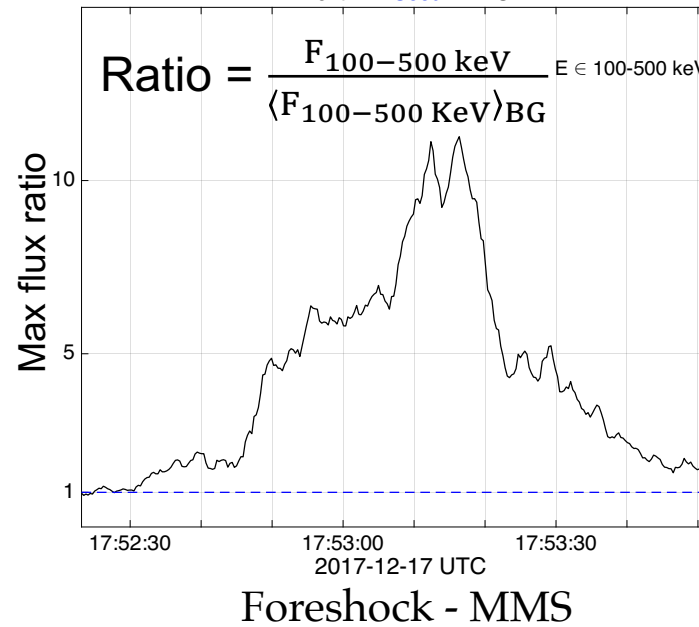
Transient (FS) MMS



>500 keV



Fast SW seeding ~keV particles



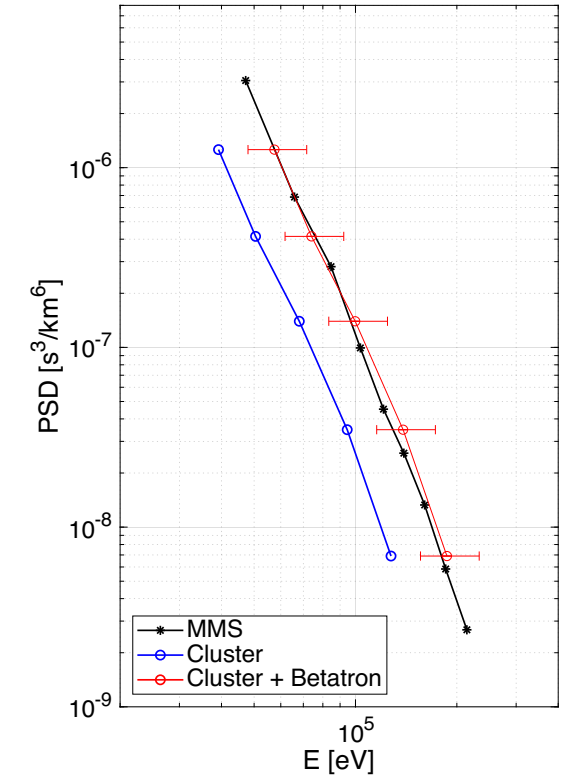
(B)

Transient (FS) Cluster

Transient (MSH) MMS

200 → 300 keV

Noise Level subtracted



Magnetosheath – CL/MMS

(A) : Raptis+ 2025 (NatComm) - *Revealing an Unexpectedly Low Electron Injection Threshold via Reinforced Shock Acceleration*

(B) : Raptis+ 2025 (ApJL) - *Multi-Mission Observations of Relativistic Electrons and High-Speed Jets Linked to Shock Generated Transients*

Concluding Words

Quasi-Parallel shocks are amazing! Relativistic particles, non-stationary shocks on multiple temporal and spatial scales, high-speed jets, foreshock transients all interacting with each other.

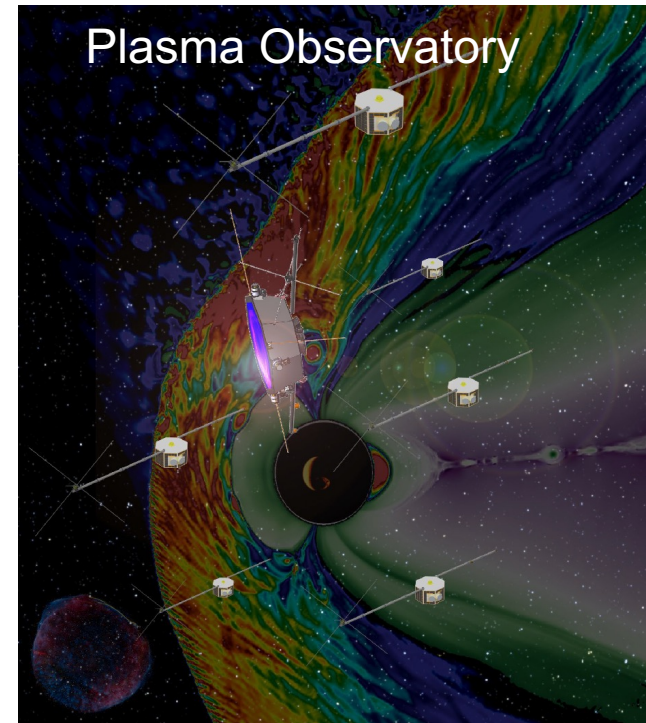
Recent results:

❖ **Revealed** that the **electron injection threshold at Earth** to be at the **suprathermal range of $\sim 1\text{-}5$ KeV** as a systematic **feature of the fast solar wind/coronal hole plasma**.

Discussion: *What happens in other planets and systems? What processes cause seeding? Which is the dominant mechanism?*

EGU/AGU session: *Collisionless Shocks in Heliospheric and Astrophysical Plasmas and their Effects on Planetary Magnetospheres.*

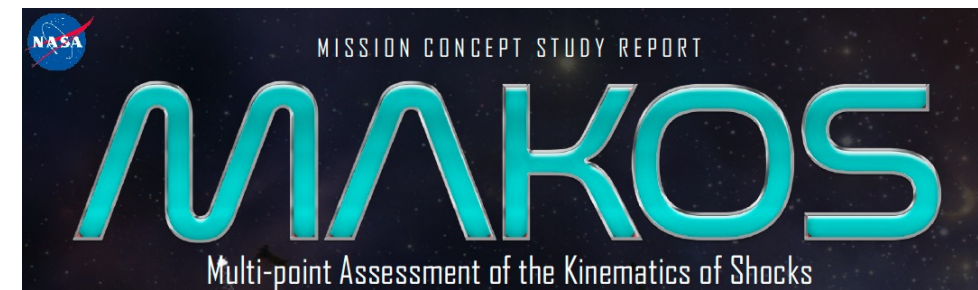
GEM FG: **(MDT) Multiscale Dayside Transients and their Effect on Earth's Magnetosphere (2025 – 2029)**
Savvas Raptis, Ivan Vansko, Imogen Gingell, Terry Z. Liu, Ying Zou, Runyi Liu, David Tonoian



Retino+ 2021 | Ex. Astro.

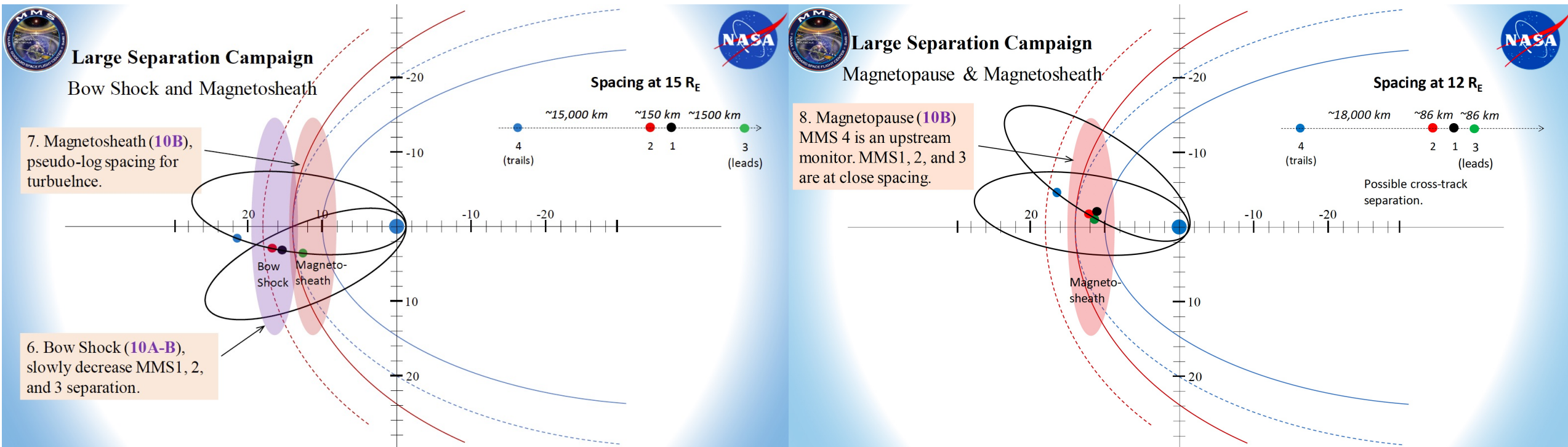


Goodrich+ 2023



Extras

Timeliness (Ongoing MMS Campaigns)

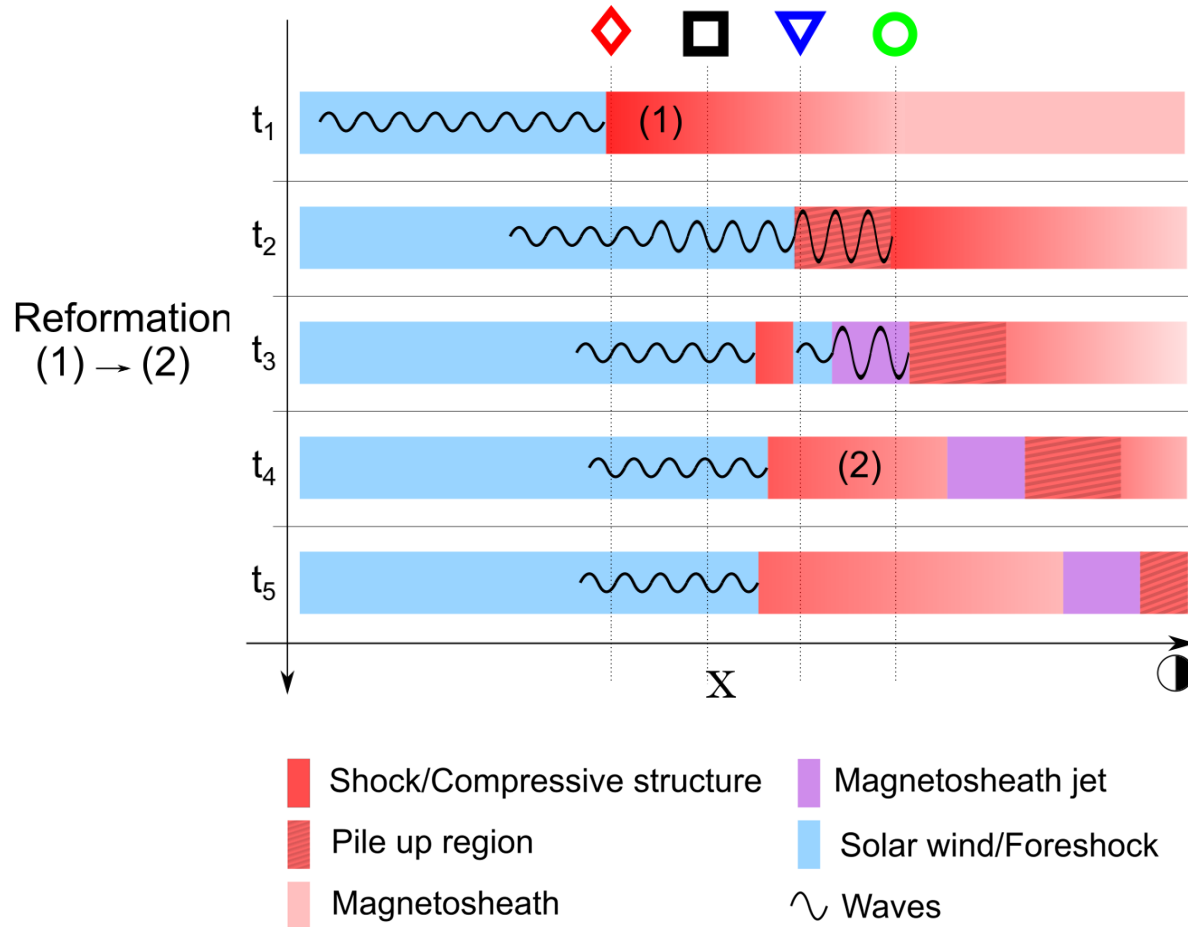


String-of-pearls campaigns with variable separation (cross-scale):

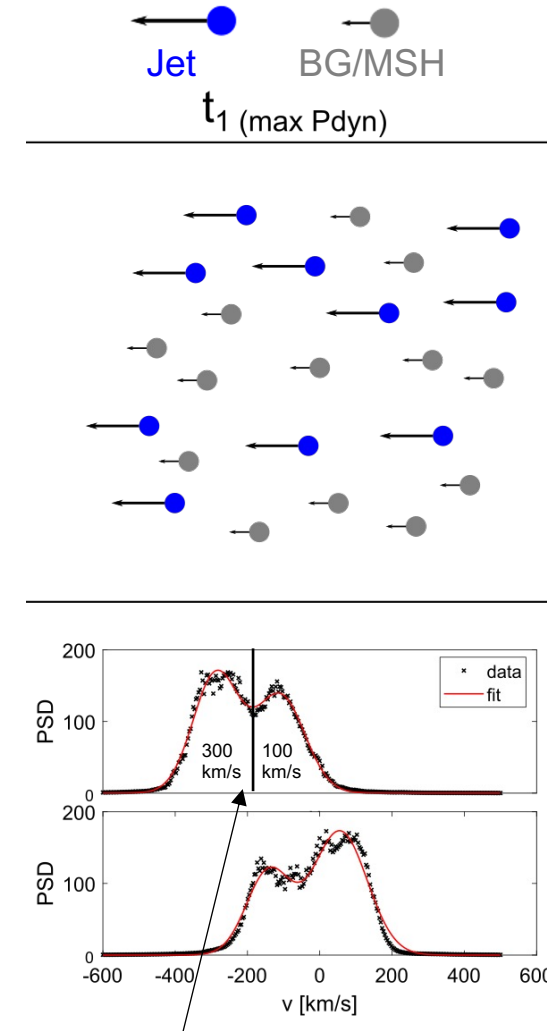
- (a) 1000s kms showing effects of dayside transients on the magnetosphere
- (b) ~1-2 satellites upstream and ~1-2 downstream to evaluate the transmission
- (c) Magnetopause response (1000s km separation) to upstream SW/foreshock data (several Re)

Jets & Kinetic Plasma Processes

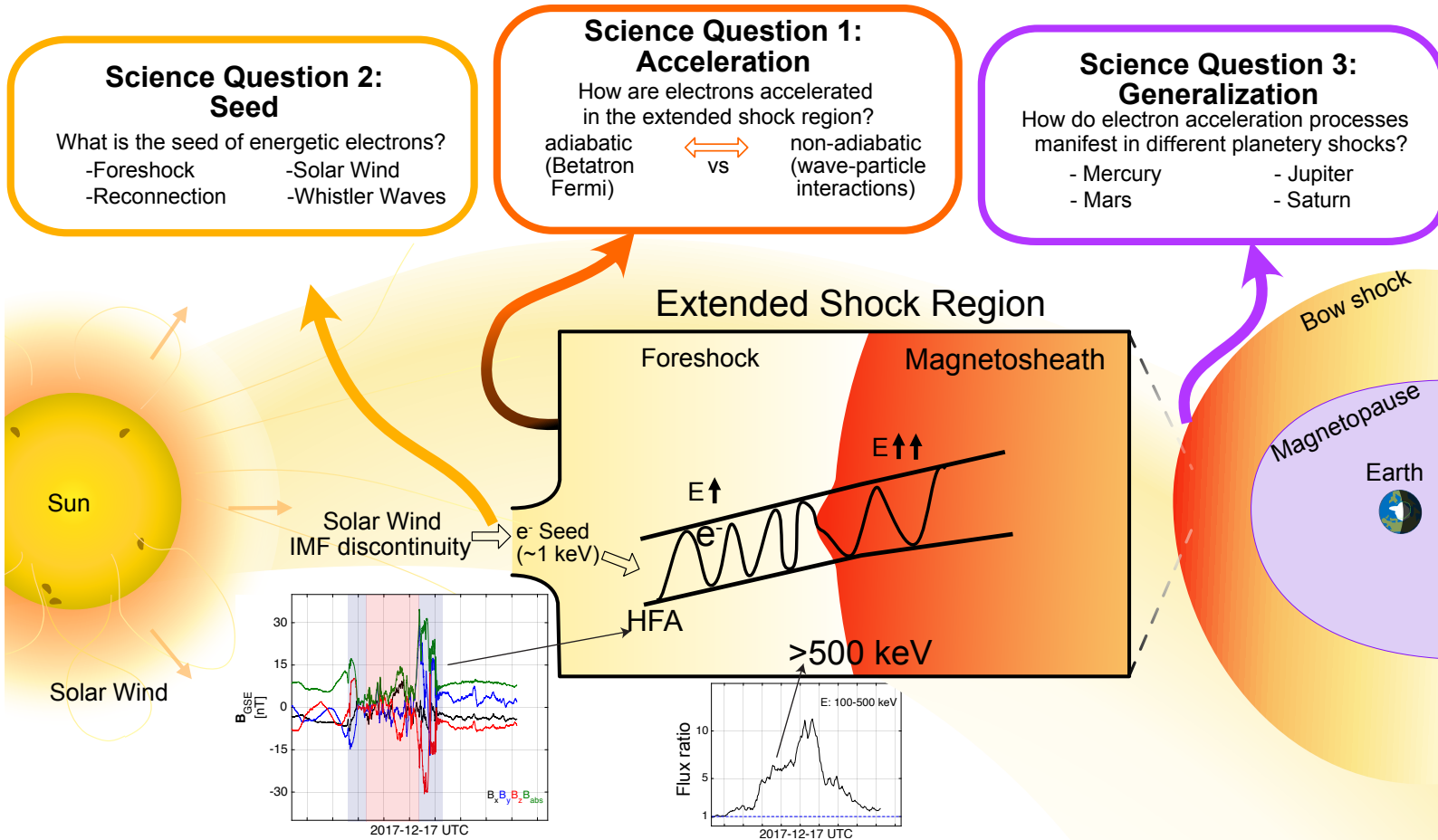
Jets forming from shock's fundamental non-stationarity process



Jets exhibiting 2+ populations = partial moments needed



Some potential future work



Solar people: What is causing the seed?

- Solar Wind reconnection ?
- Wave-particle interactions?
- Strahl population?

Planetary and astro people: Can we generalize ?

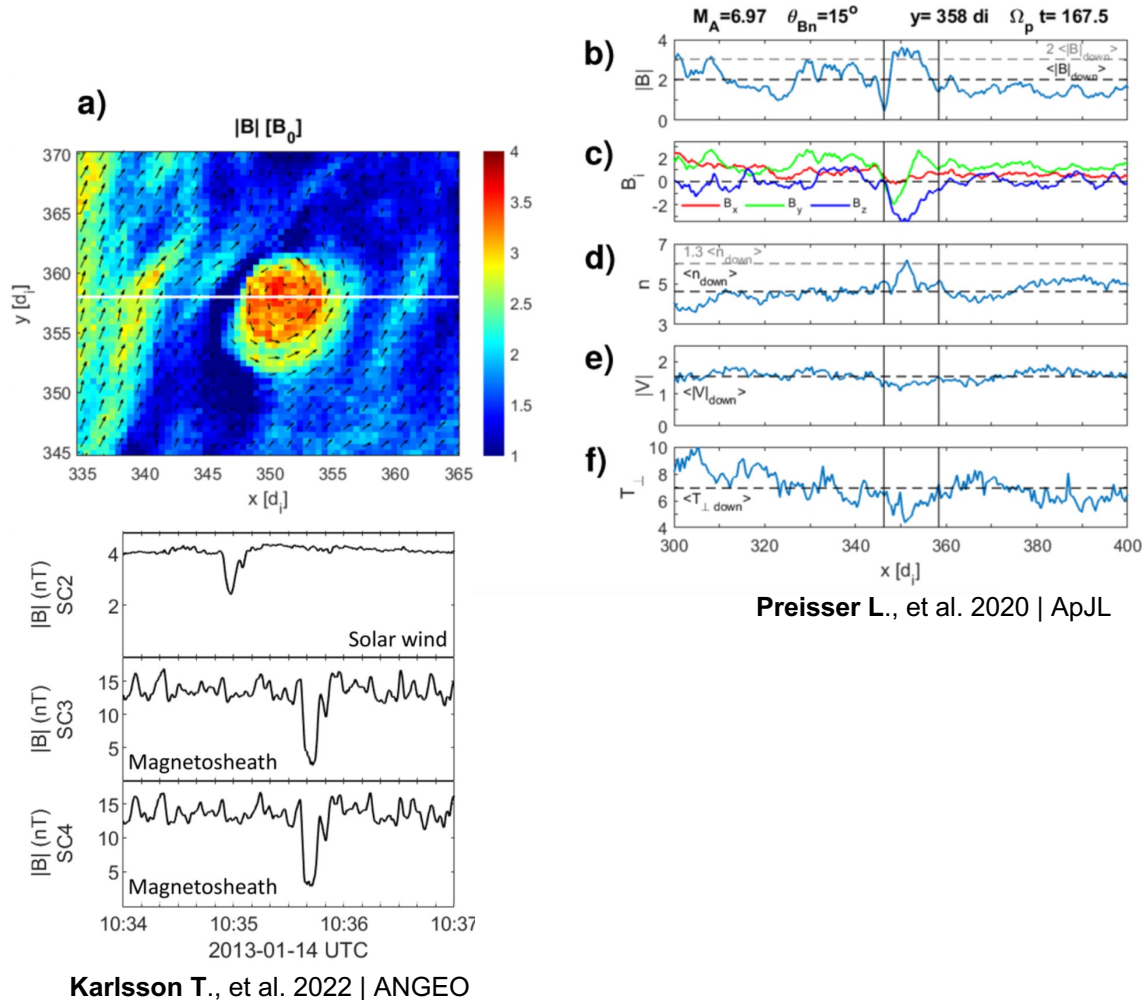
- What is the system size and local conditions?
- Do we observe energetic electrons upstream?
- Do we have datasets/examples available?

Method and data people:

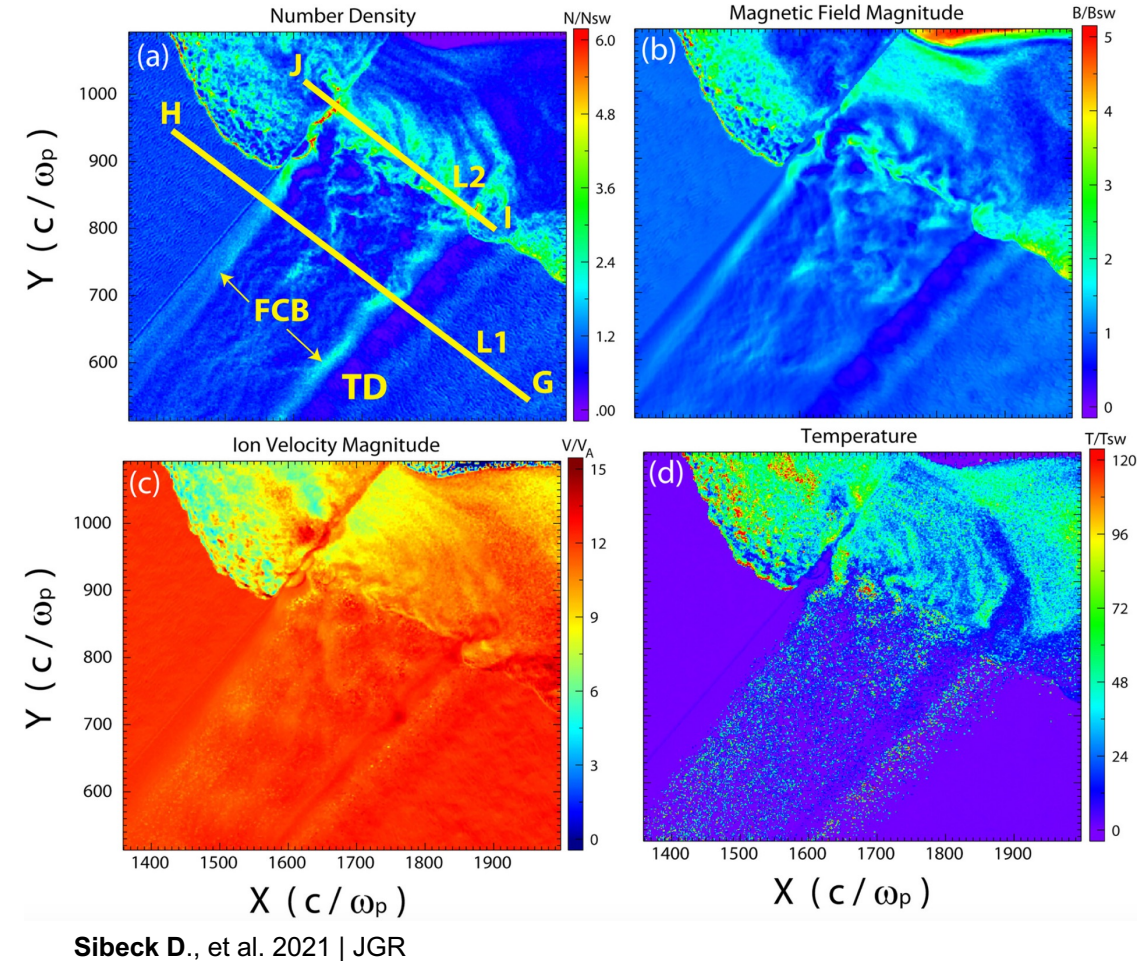
- How can we establish an automatic finder?
- How to associate DCs with transients?
- How to quantify each acceleration process

Transmission of Foreshock Transients

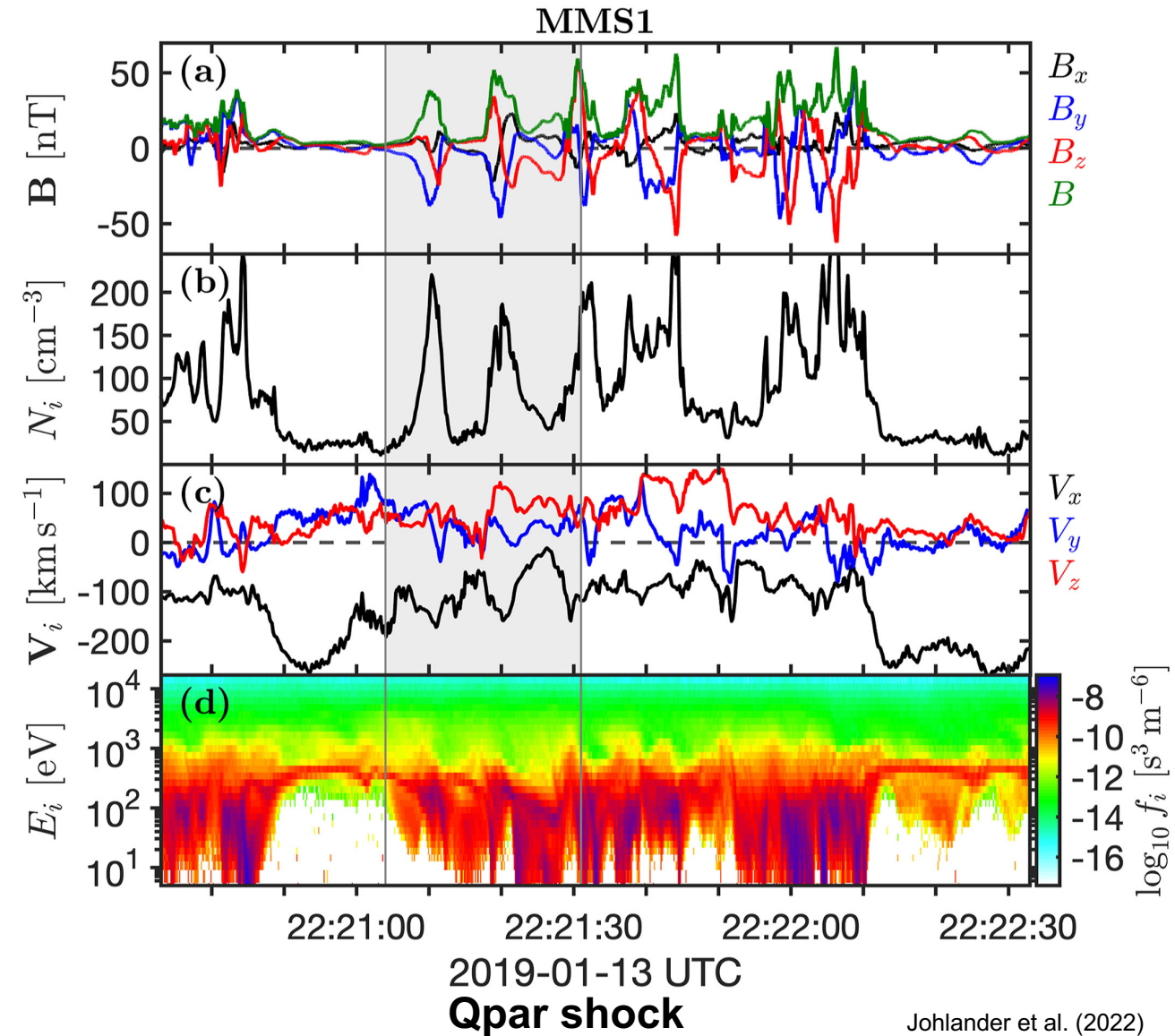
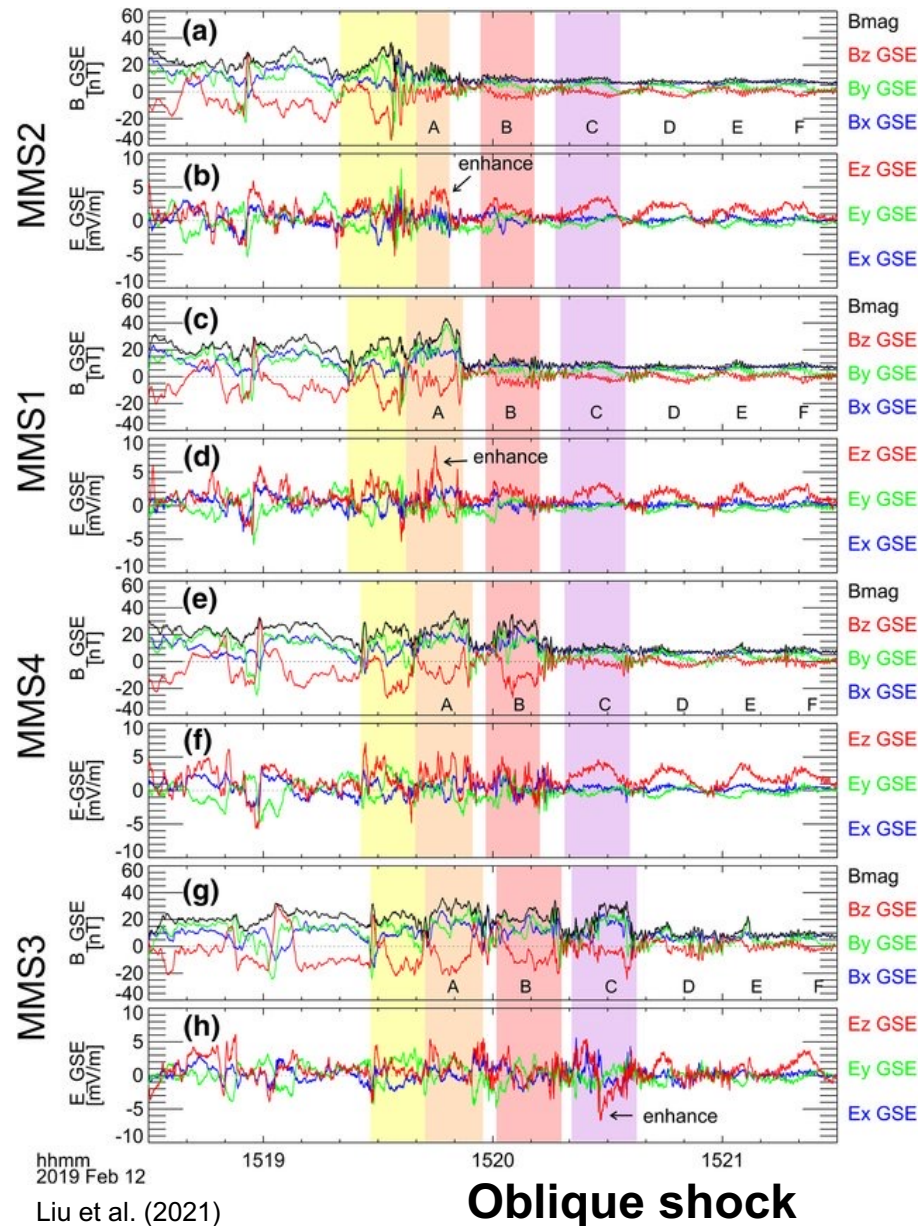
ULF waves are transmitted and so are the non-linear associated phenomena (Shocklets, SLAMS, etc.)



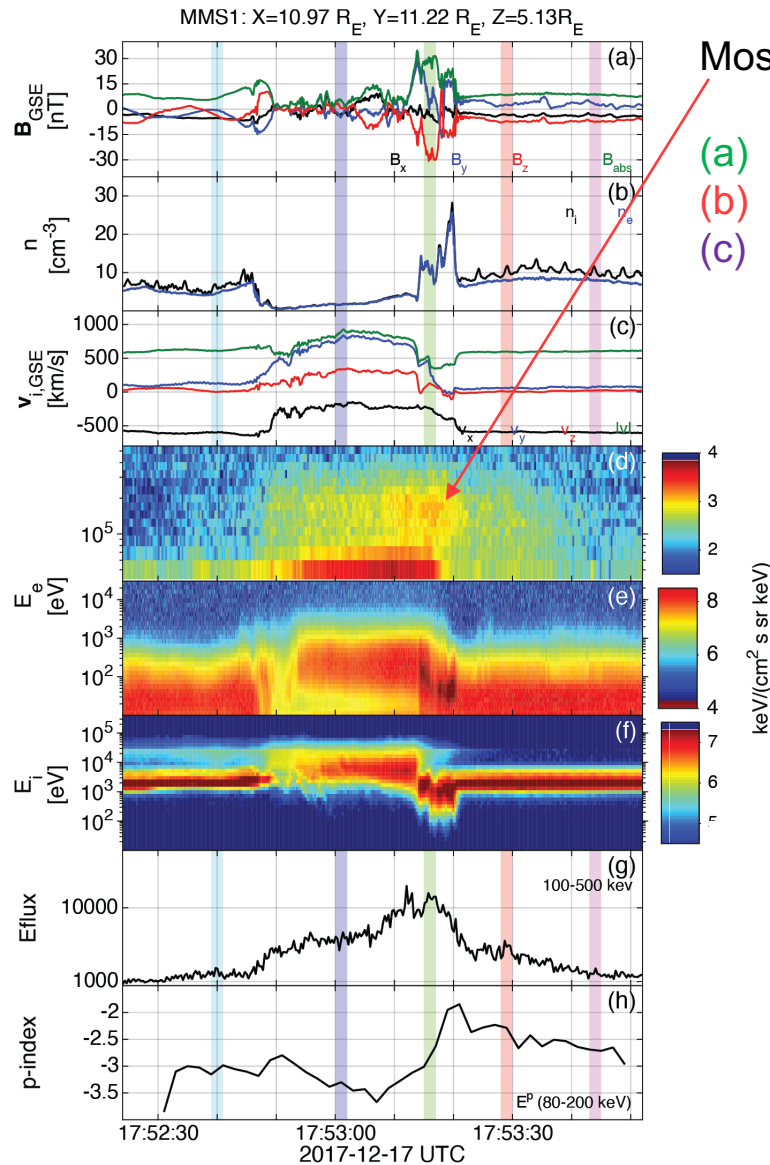
Transmission of FCB, FBs, HFAs, etc. has been shown in simulation and observations.



Shock Reformation – MMS Results

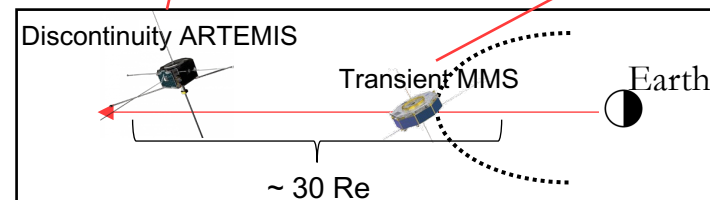
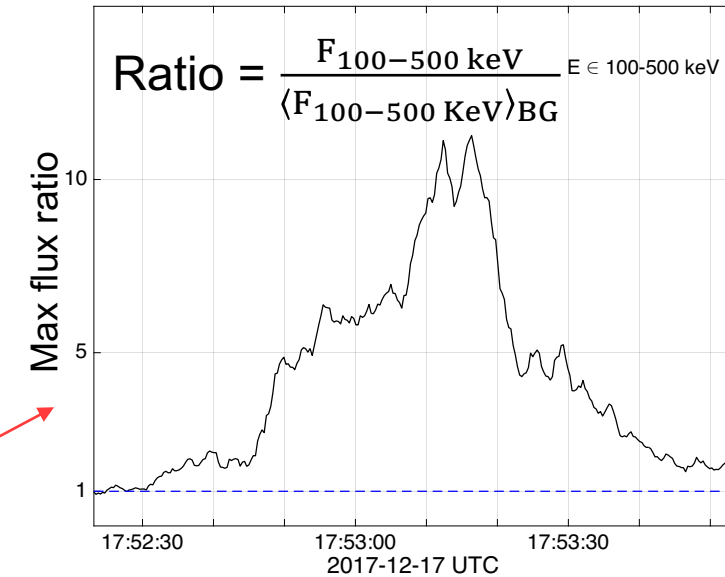
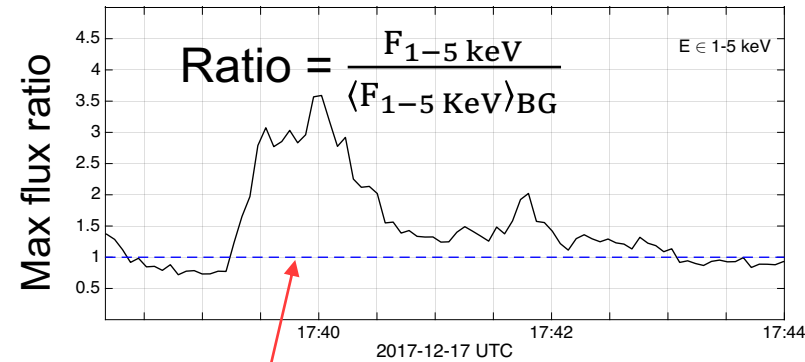


Reinforced Shock Acceleration of Relativistic Electrons



Most energetic electrons observed (**500+keV**) at foreshock observed by MMS obtained by:

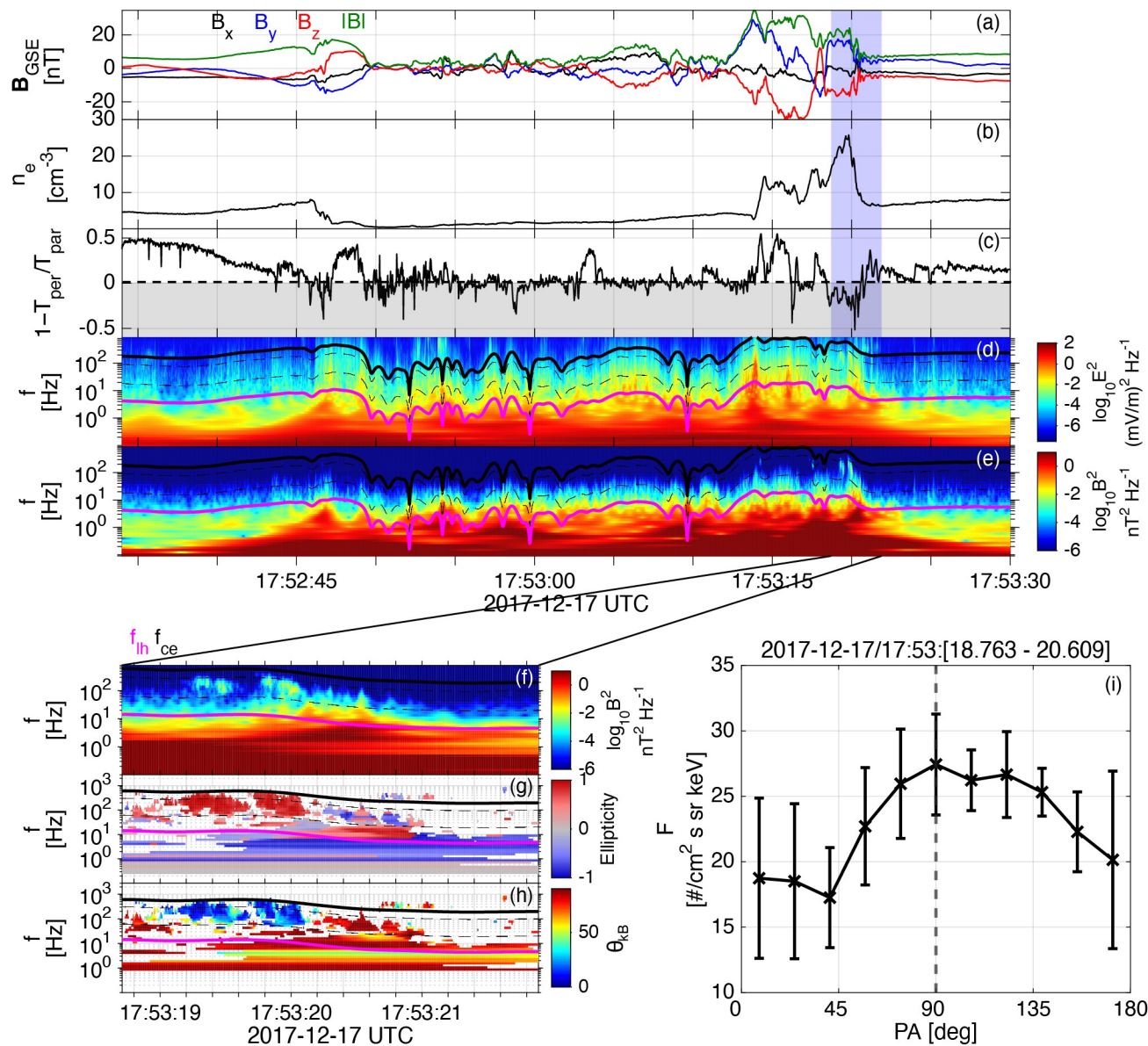
- (a) Seed population from fast coronal hole solar wind at suprathermal energy range (~1-5 KeV)
- (b) Shock acceleration (SDA/Betatron/Fermi) + Wave particle interaction
- (c) Efficiency factors (Trapping and scattering – geometry with bow shock)



Key-point:

Seed + Foreshock's Shock + Waves + Efficiency factors = ~MeV electrons before reaching the bow shock.

Wave analysis of event



Acceleration:

- Shock Acceleration
- Betatron $\rightarrow$ Temperature anisotropy
- High amplitude electron whistler waves (Chorus) resonance

Scattering & Trapping:

- LF whistler waves (Shock)
- Wavefield of HFA's core
- Geometry of HFA. i.e., "Magnetic bottle" between edges of HFA and the Earth's bow shock

Particularly efficient acceleration:

$$\frac{U_E}{U_I} = \frac{\text{Energy density suprathermal electrons}}{\text{Energy density Solar Wind}} \sim 5 \%$$

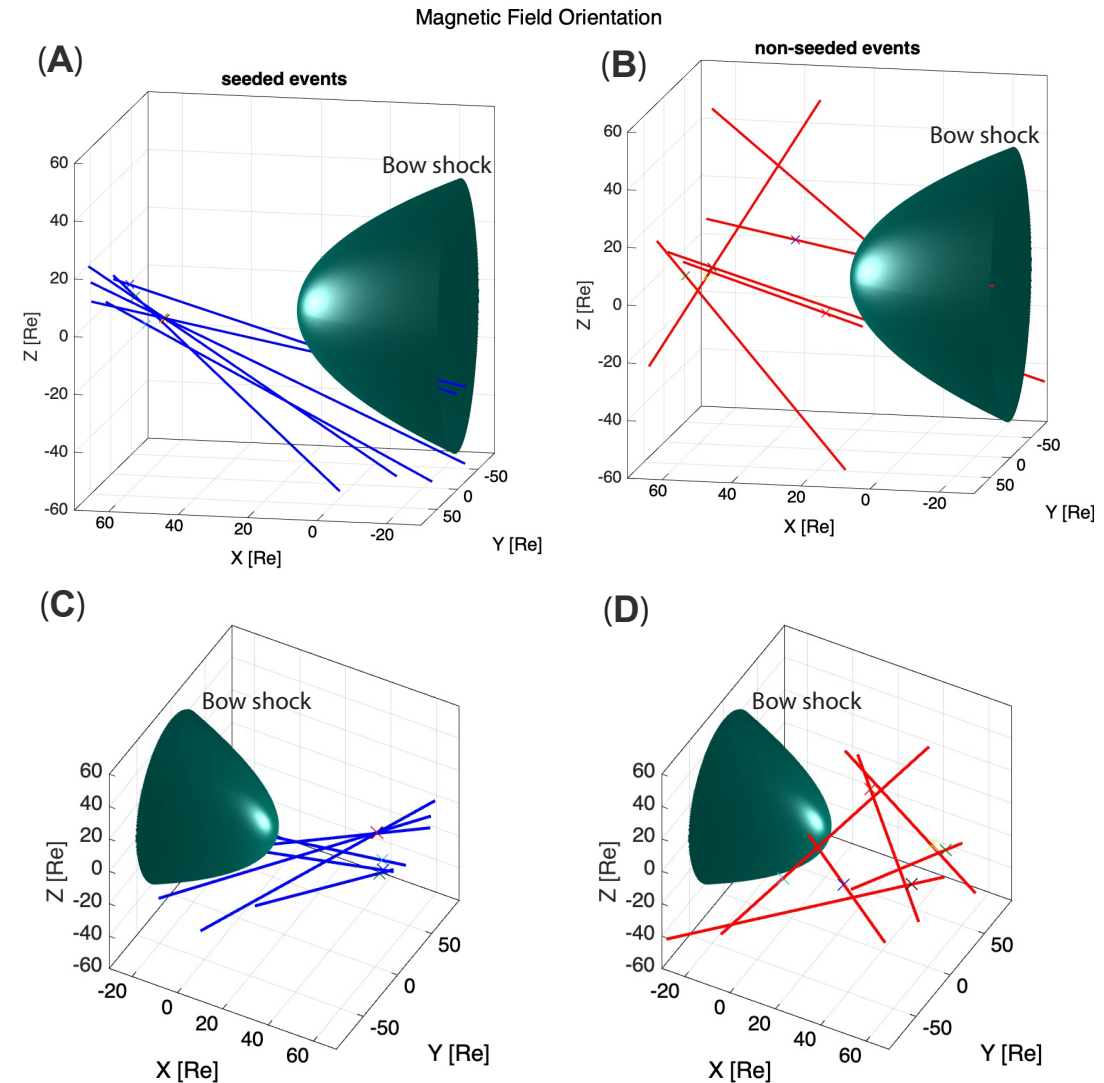
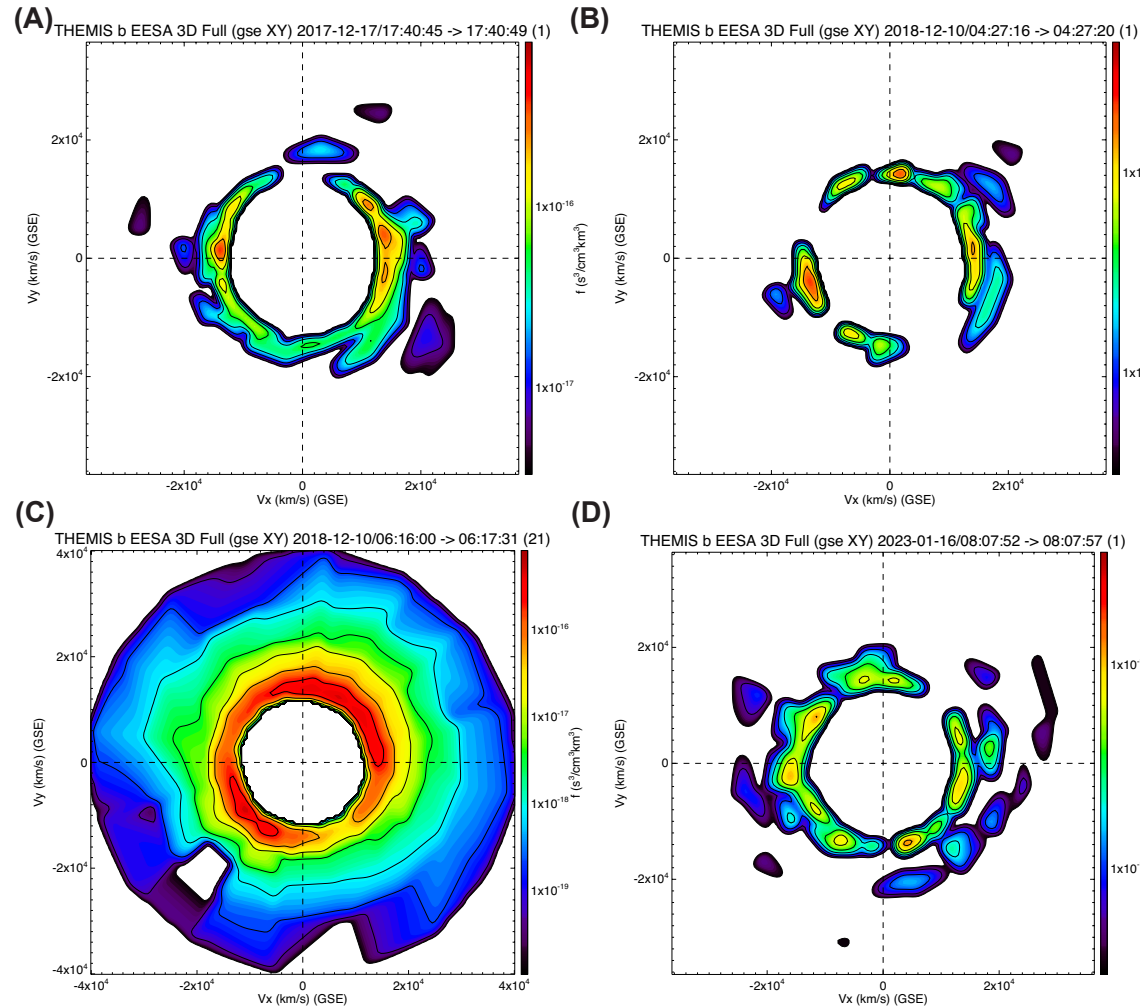
Is seed from the foreshock? – Maybe partially

(A), (B) → Seeded events – partial mode

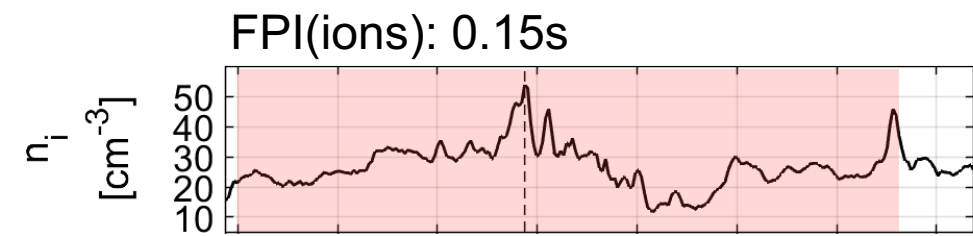
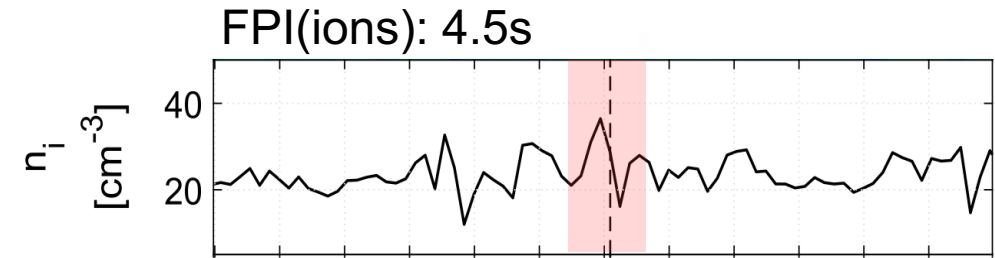
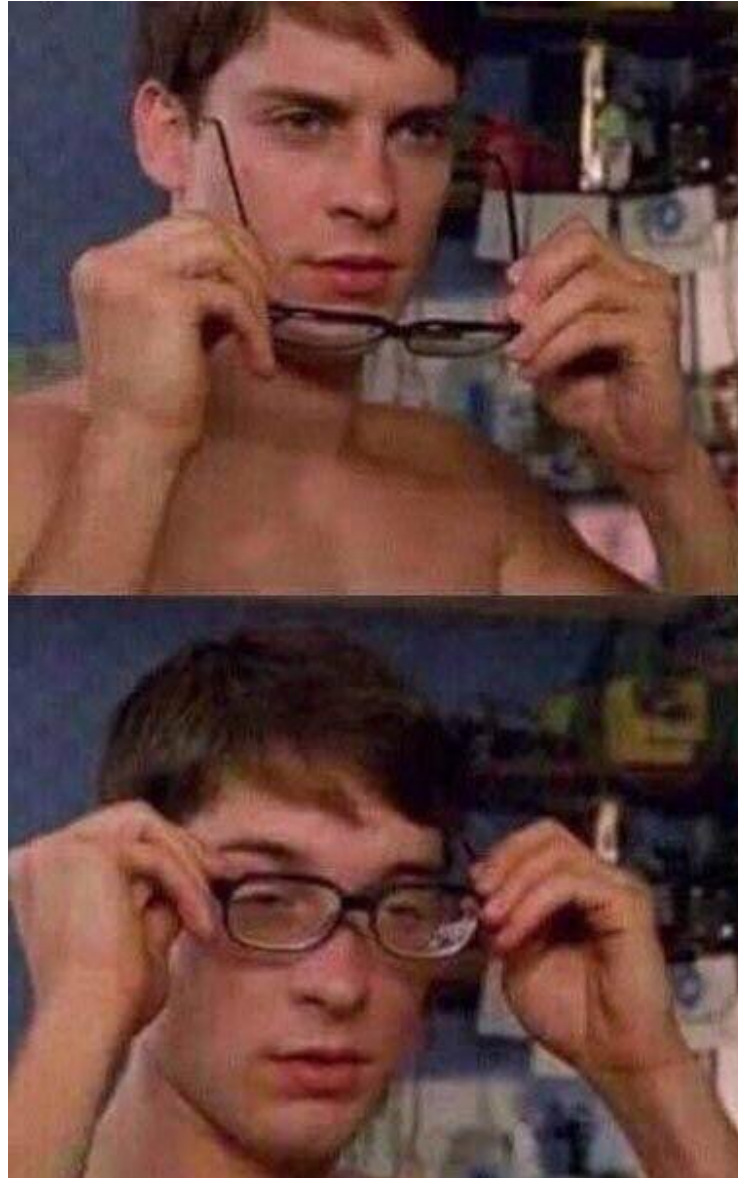
(C) → Seeded event full mode

(D) → Non-seeded event – partial mode

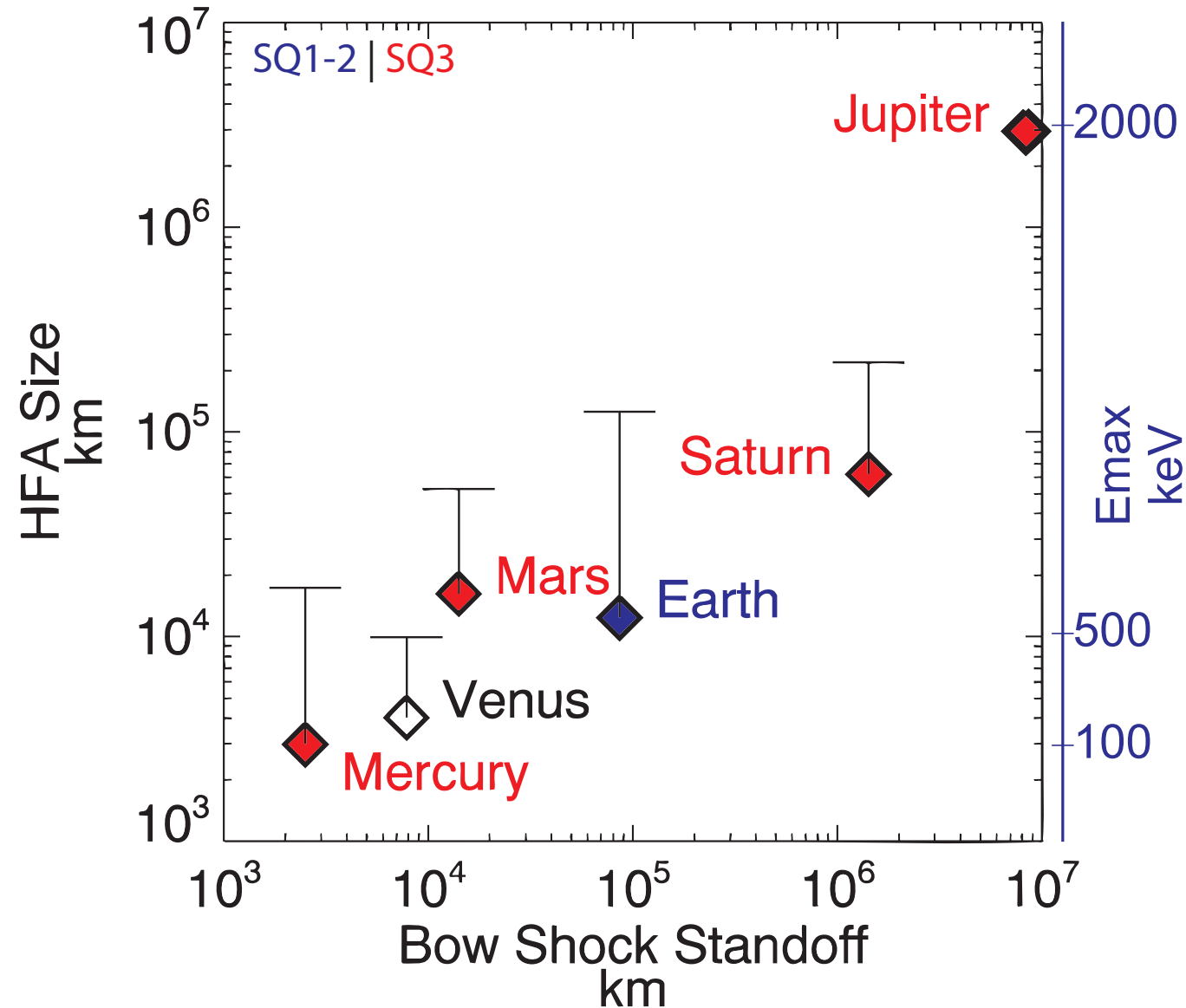
3/6 seeded and 2/6 non seeded connected to foreshock



Why MMS burst data?

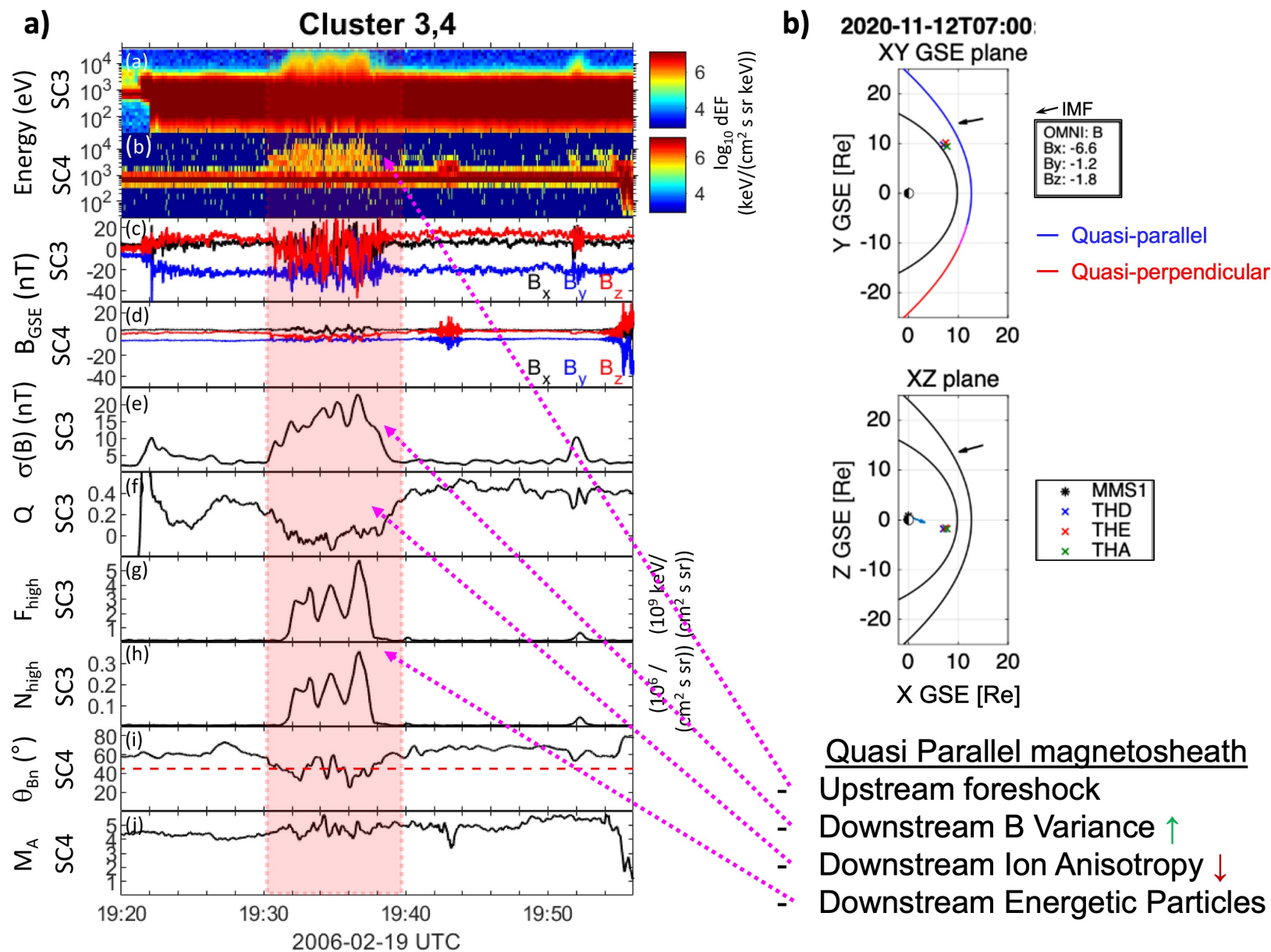


Foreshock transients at other planets & Electrons

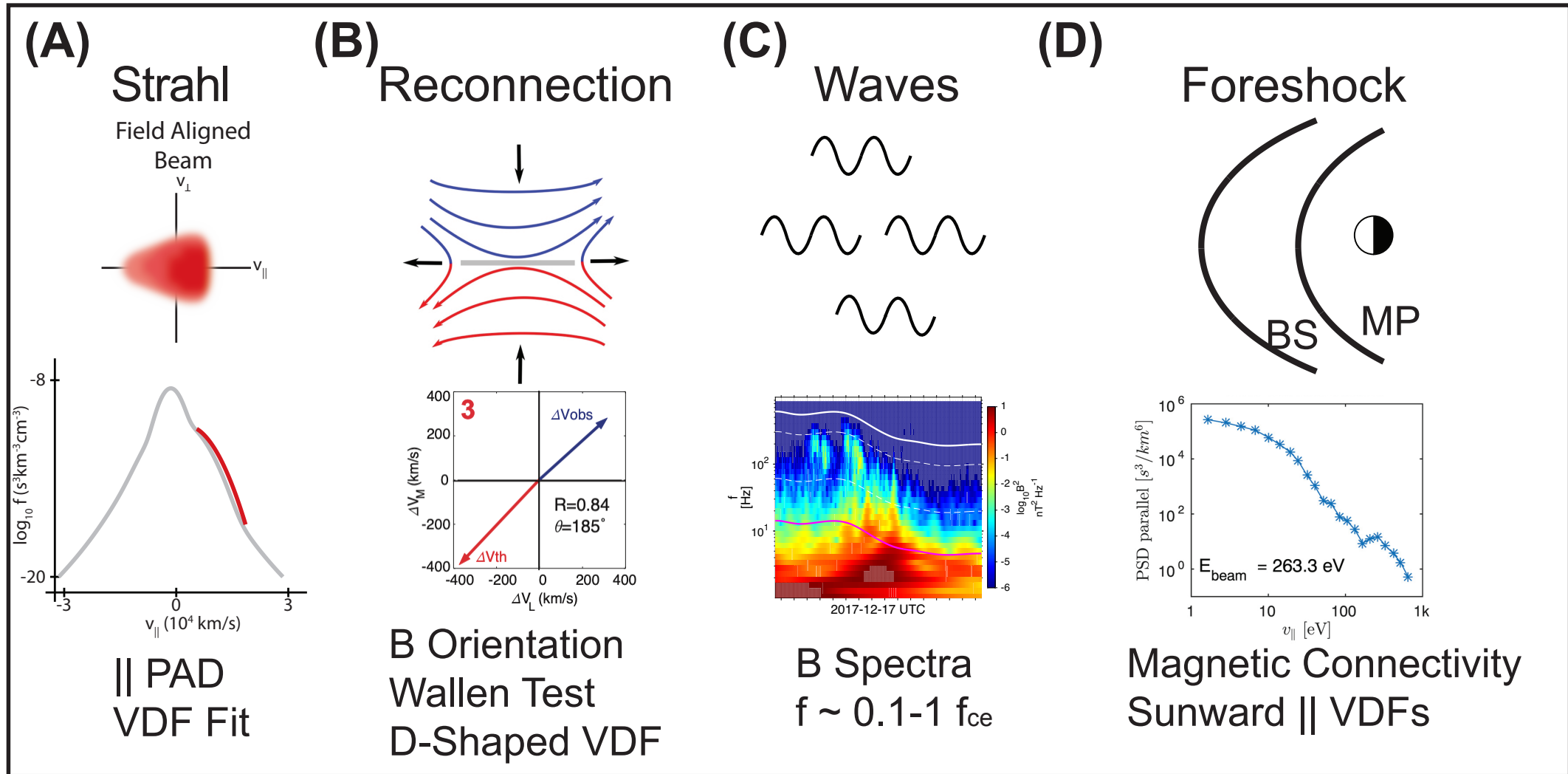


Adapted from Valek et al. (2017) | JGR

In-situ classification of the Quasi-parallel magnetosheath



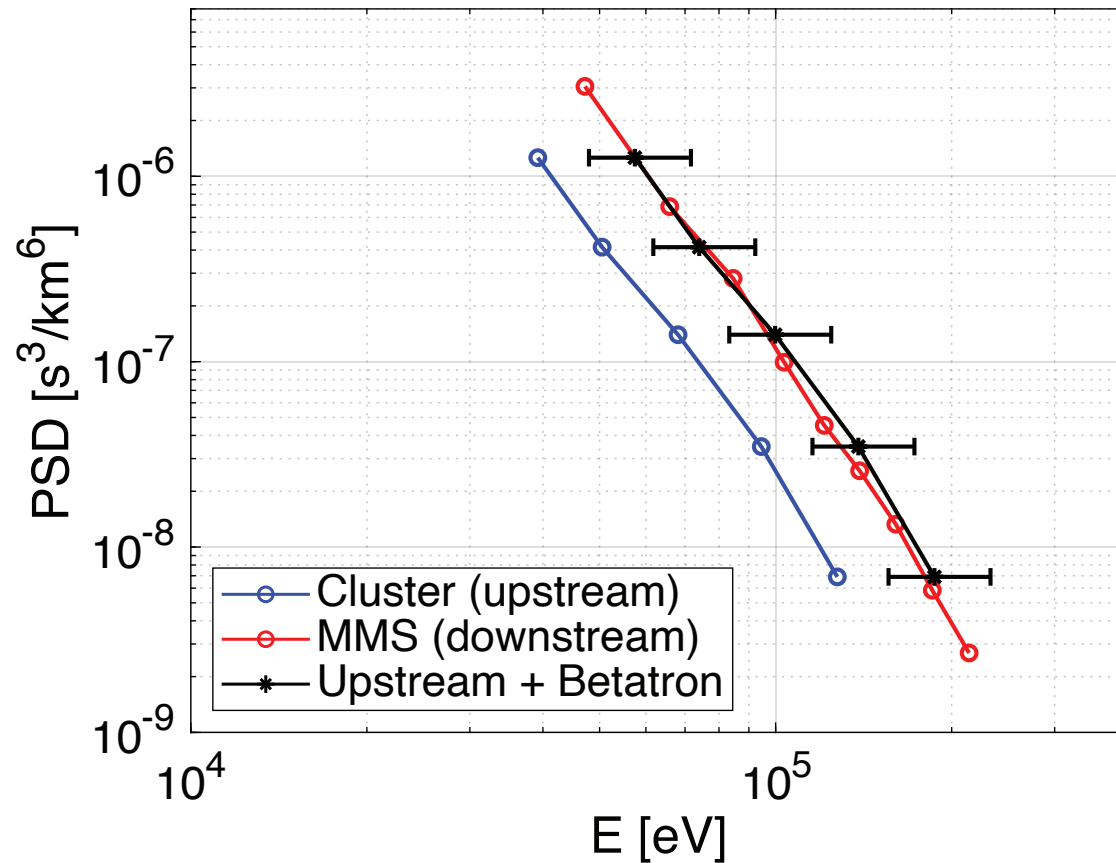
Some Ideas about the Seed Population



Preliminary Comparison (Data vs Simulations)

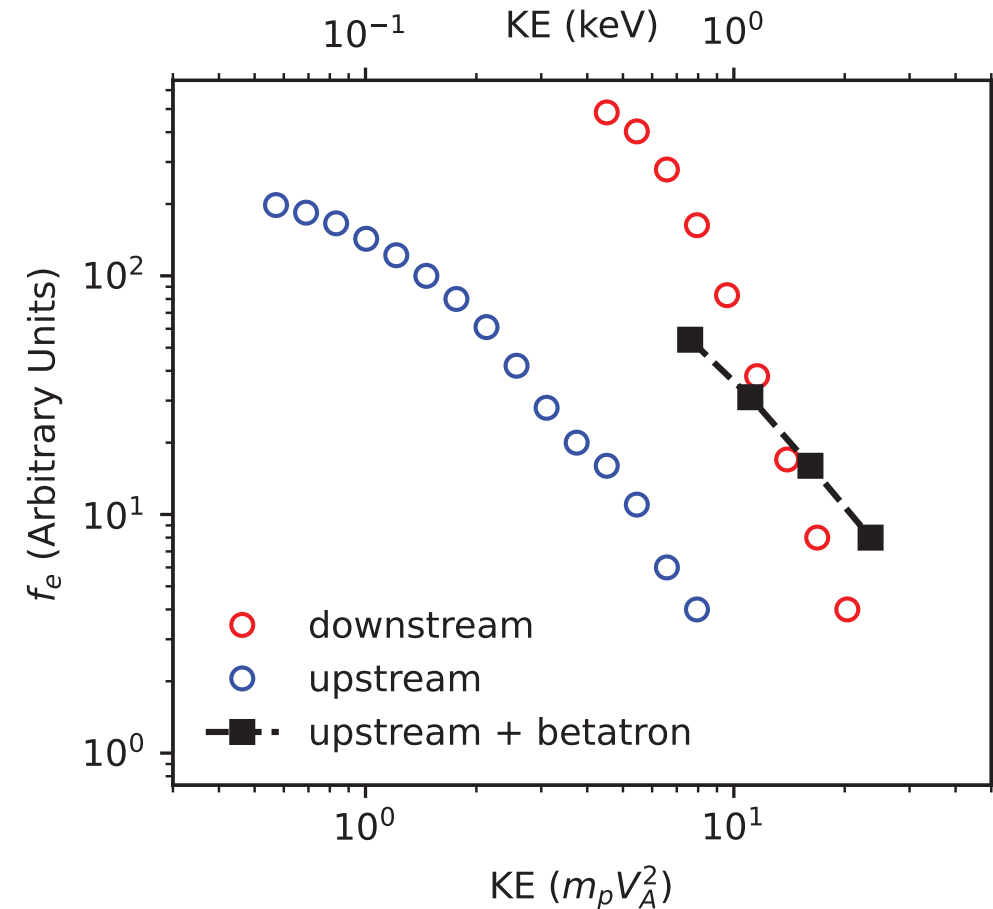
(A)

In-situ Observations



(B)

Hybrid Simulations



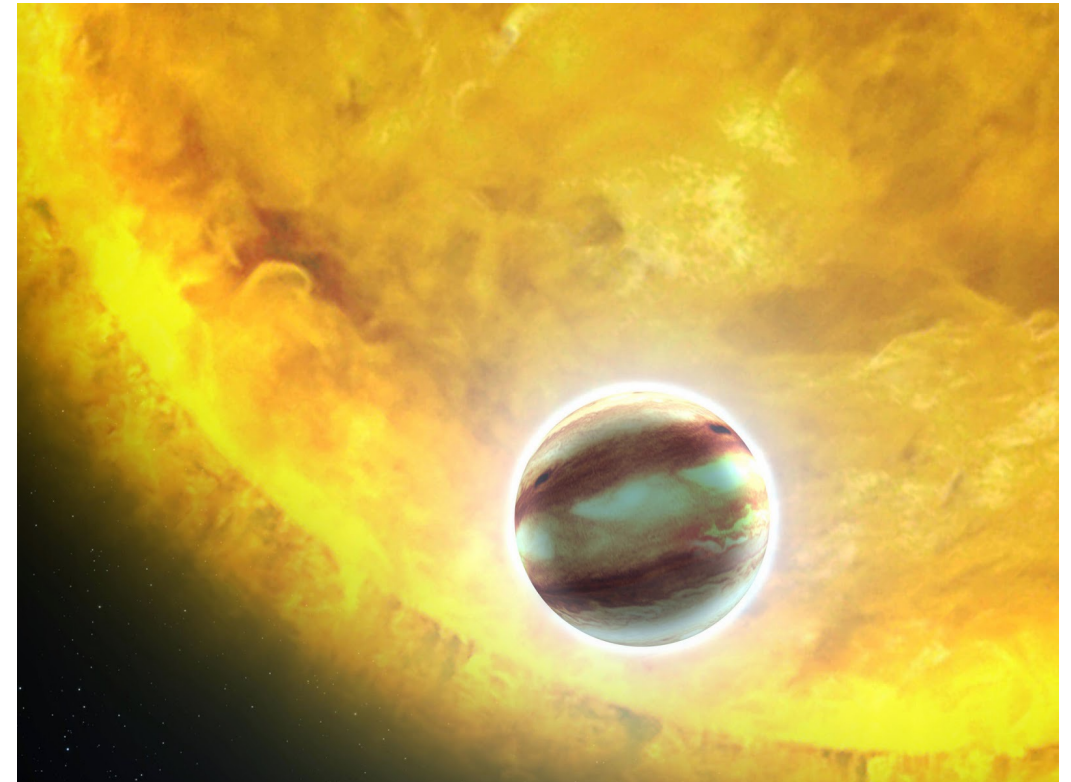
Electron Acceleration in astrophysics

Taking an **exoplanet, ultra-hot Jupiter**, assuming shock and foreshock transient exist (big assumption):

One can estimate the magnetic field of the stellar wind near their orbit to be $B \sim 0.01 - 1\text{G} \sim 10^3 - 5 \text{ nT}$

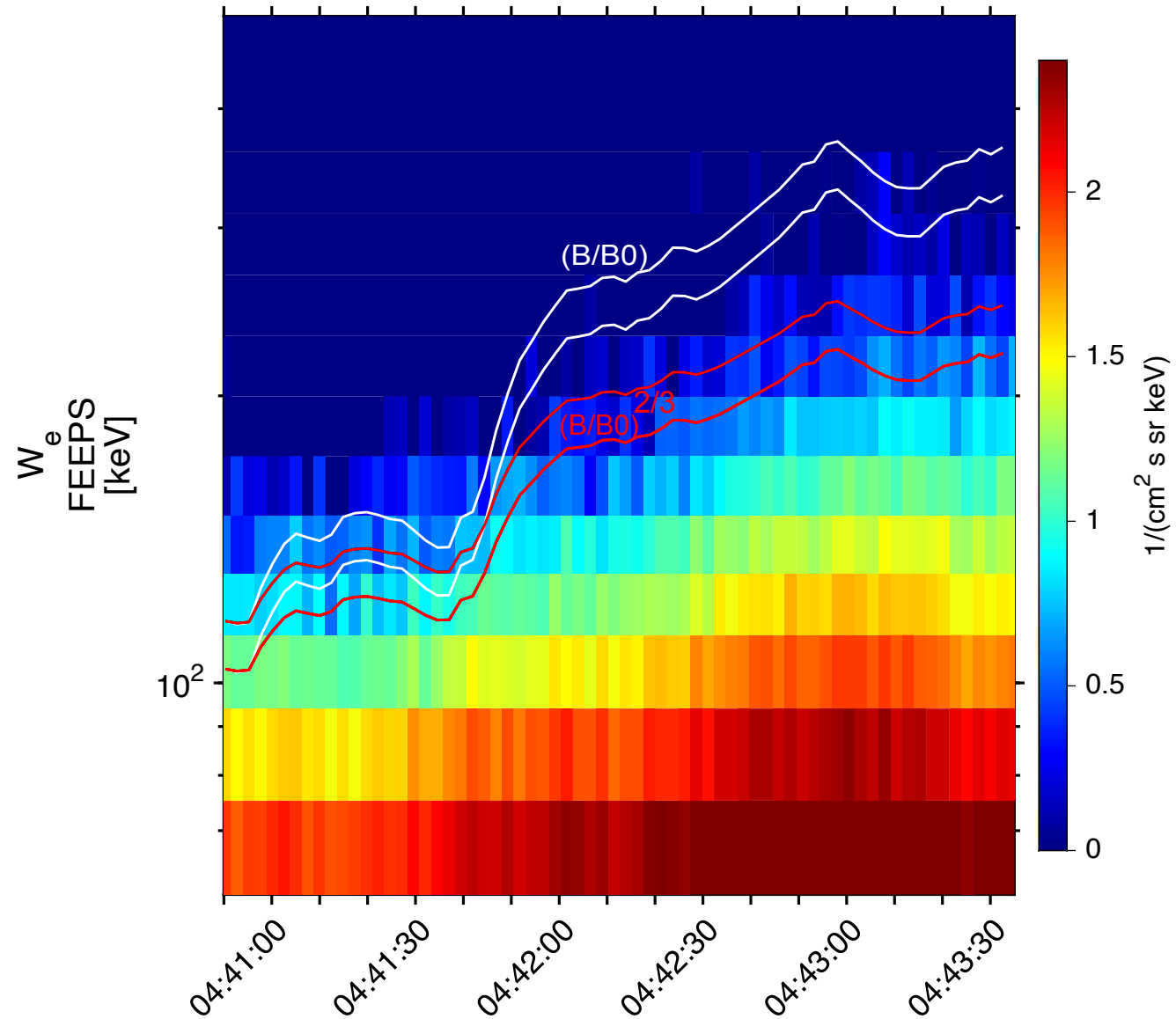


James webb showing bow shock waves from newborn stars moving with $\sim 100 \text{ km/s}$ in the interstellar medium

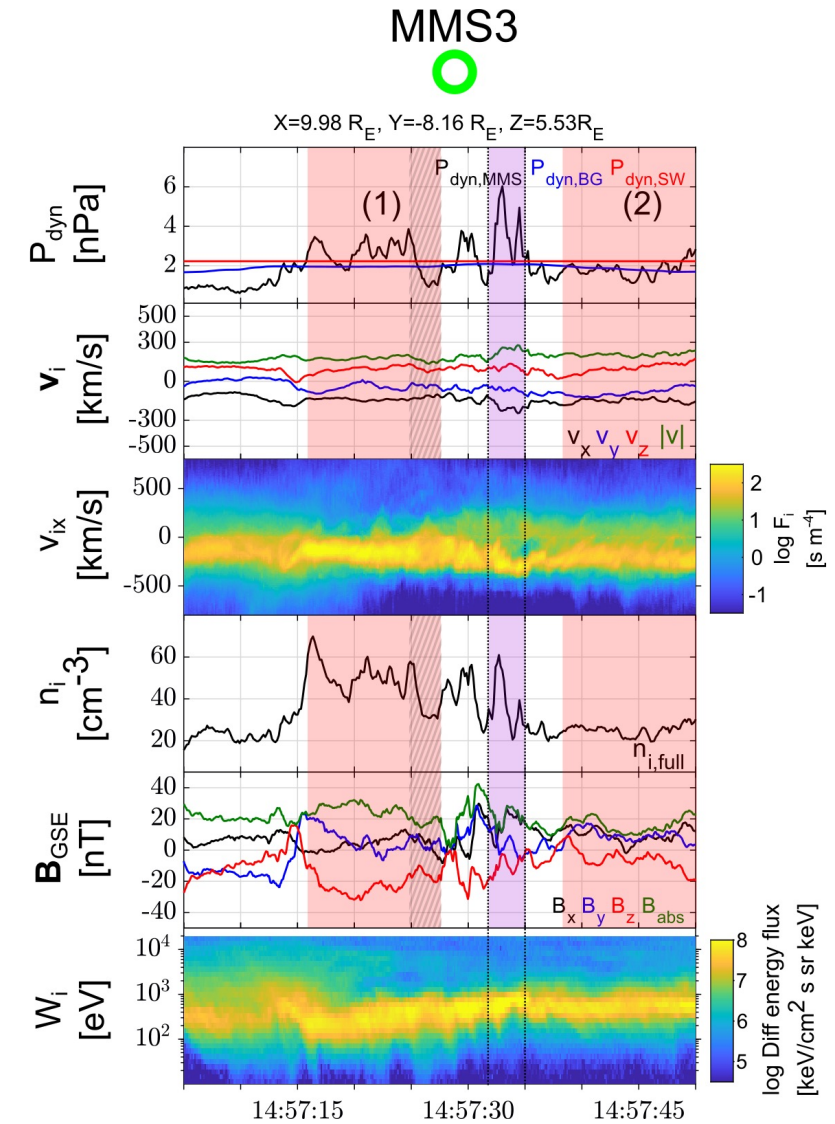
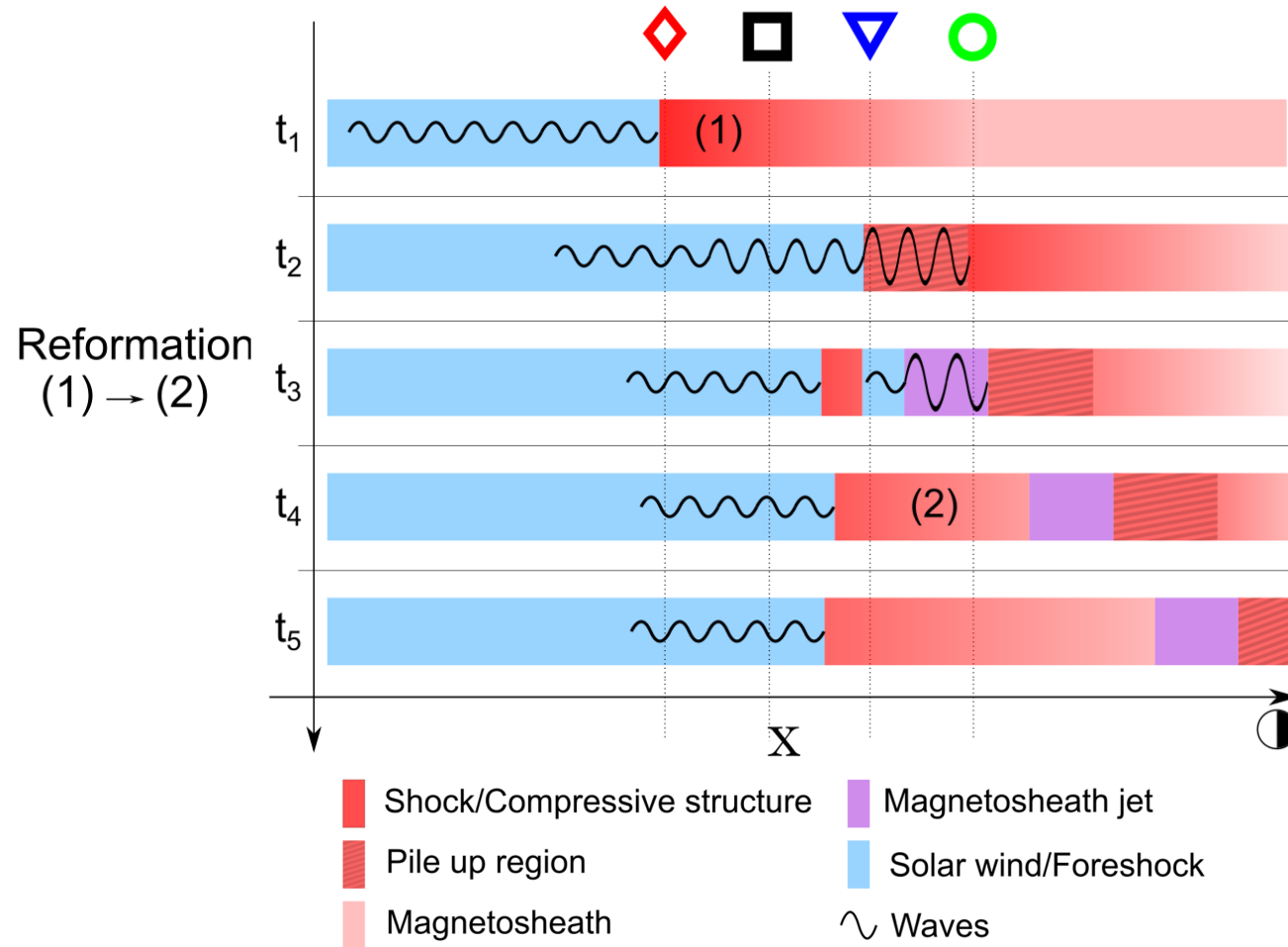


ASP 18 b, a hot Super-Jupiter that orbits its star in less than one day. Image Credit: NASA, ESA, and G. Bacon

Why Stochastic Betatron Acceleration?



Shock reformation & magnetosheath jets



Jet evolution in Qpar magnetosheath

