Ablation and Heating During Atmospheric Entry and Its Effect on Airburst Risk

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Heating and Ablation in Threat Assessment

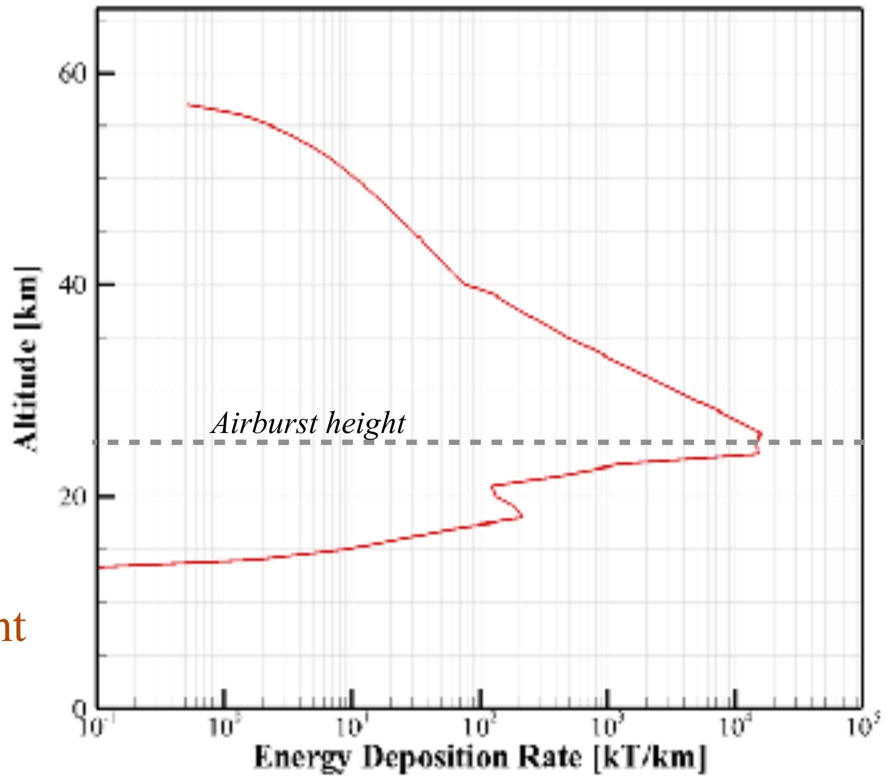
Asteroid Entry Equation of Motion *

$$dv = \left(-\frac{1}{2}C_d\rho_A v^2 A/m + g\sin\theta\right)dt$$

$$d\theta = \left(\frac{v}{R_E + h} + \frac{g}{v}\right)\cos\theta \; dt$$

$$dm = -\frac{1}{2}\rho_A v^3 A \sigma_{ab} dt$$

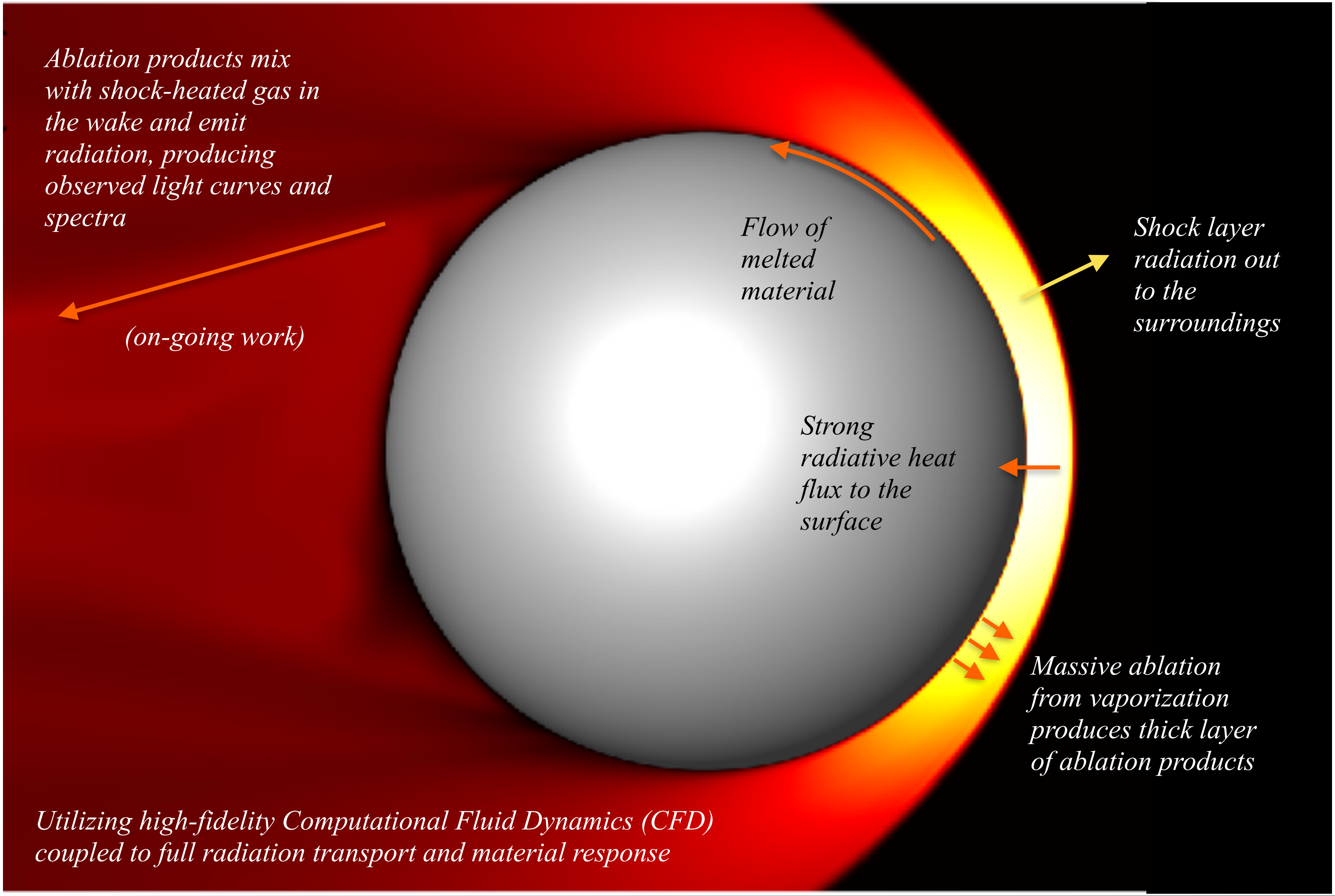
$$\sigma_{ab} = \frac{C_H}{Q^*} \quad \frac{\text{Heat Transfer Coefficient}}{\text{Heat of Ablation}}$$



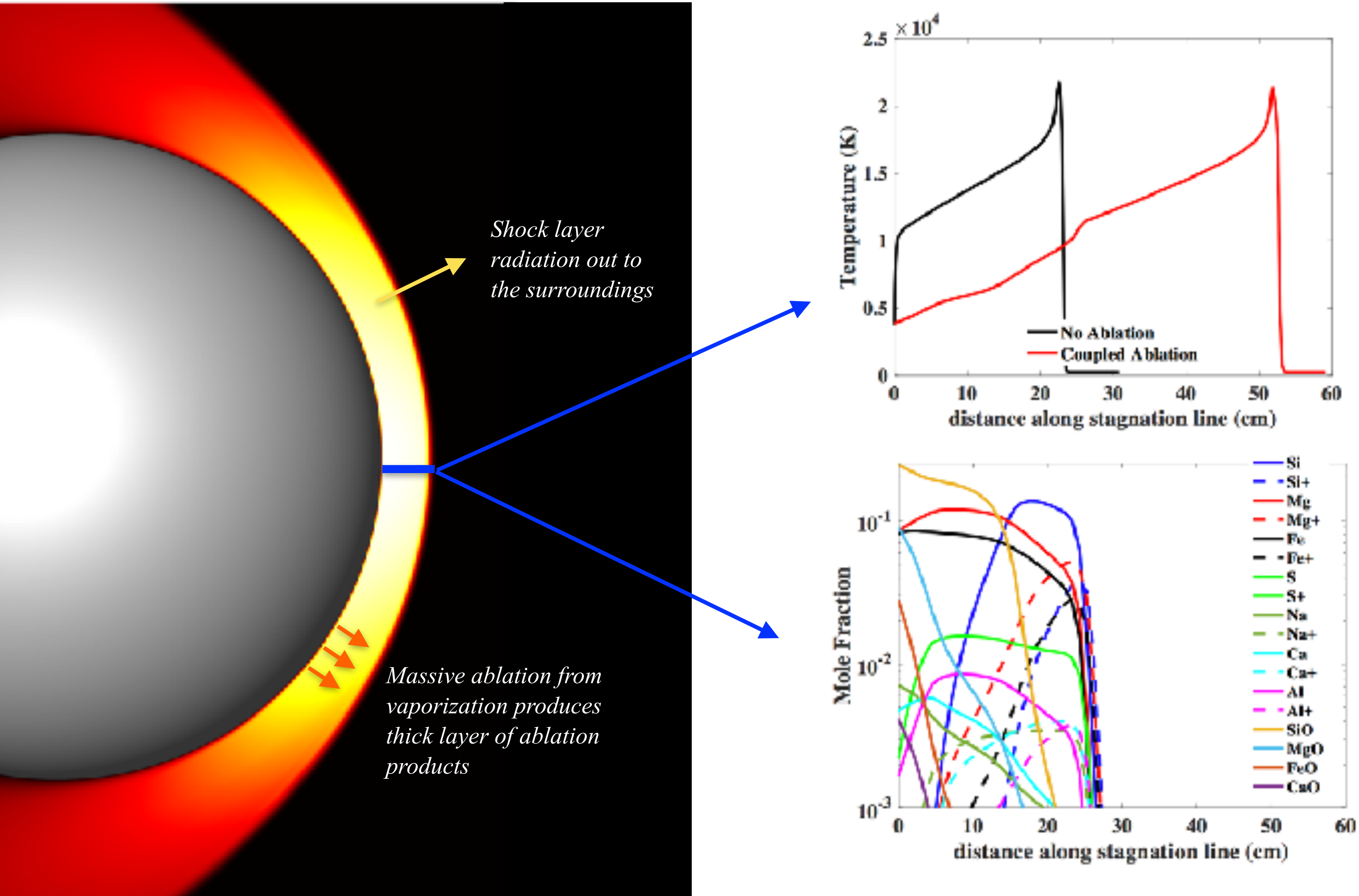
NASA Asteroid Threat Assessment Project working to improve models for these phenomena

* *Wheeler et al., 2017*

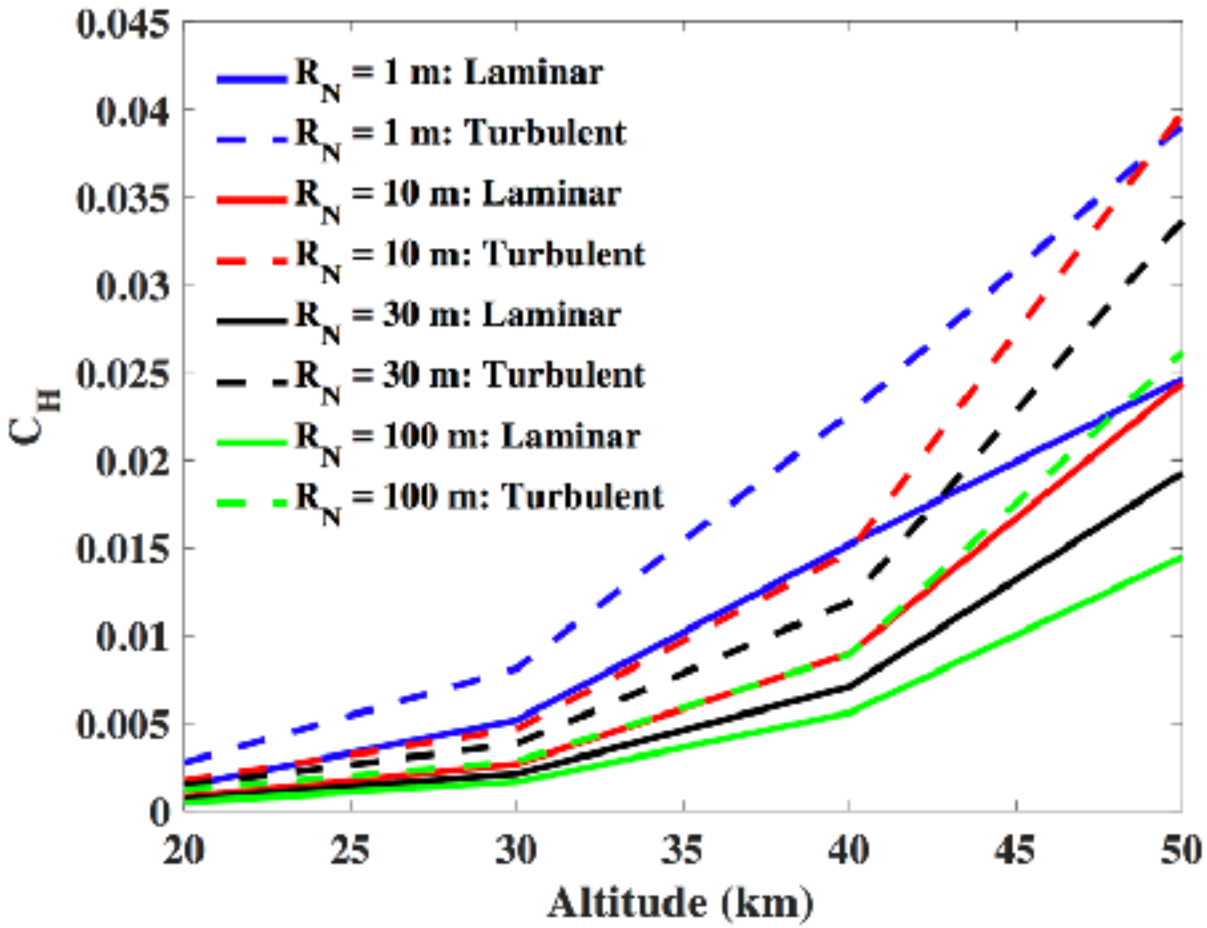
Asteroid Entry Environment



Coupled Ablation and Radiation Modeling



Coupled Ablation and Heat Transfer Modeling

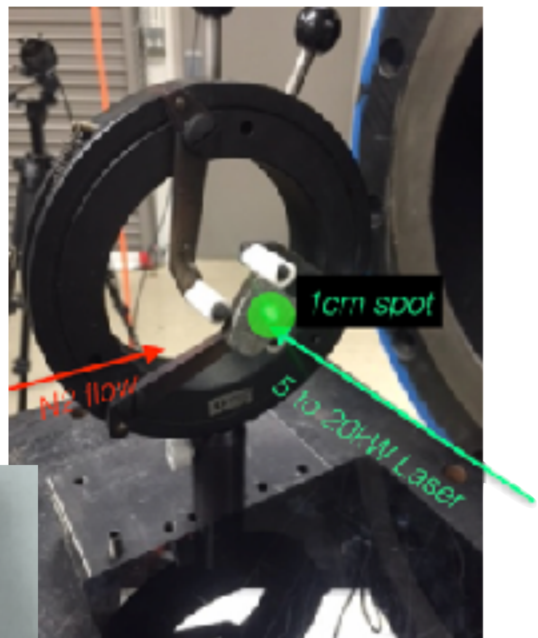


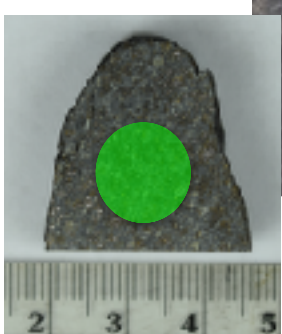
- Fully coupled radiation and ablation results reduces the heat transfer coefficient by nearly two orders of magnitude in some cases

Meteoroid Ablation Experiments

- Continuous Wave Laser Experiment
  - Source of heating is radiation, which is the dominant source of heating for large meteoroids
  - Tamdakht H5 Chondrite samples tested at heating rates from 5 to 16 kW/cm^2

Laser testing apparatus

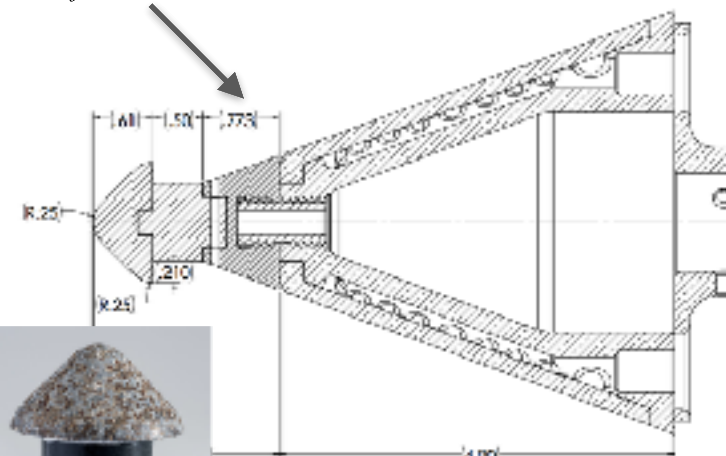




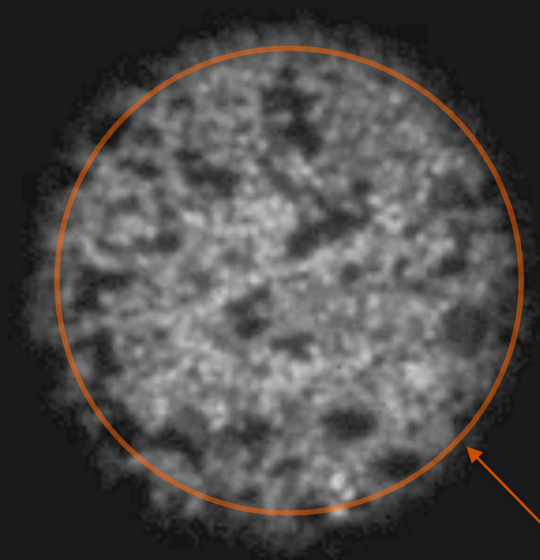
Tamdakht H5 article for laser testing

- Arc Jet Experiment
  - Heating rates (~4 kW/cm^2) produced in the experiment comparable to 30m asteroid at 20 km/s at 65km altitude
  - Machined sphere-cone model allows for high-fidelity simulation of the test environment and material response

Schematic arc jet test article

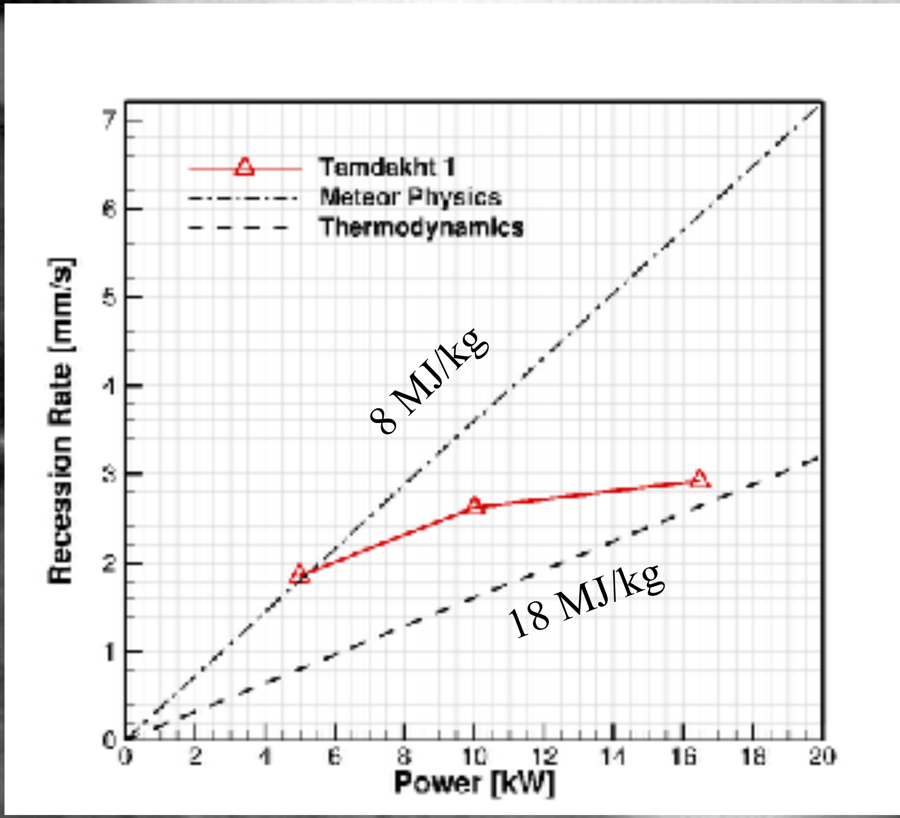


Tamdakht H5 model for arc jet testing



High-speed video showing boiling meteorite surface

Laser Experiment Findings



- At low heat flux, effective heat of ablation value close to canonical value of 8 MJ./kg
- Reduction in ablative efficiency at high heat fluxes attributed to radiation blockage from ablation products

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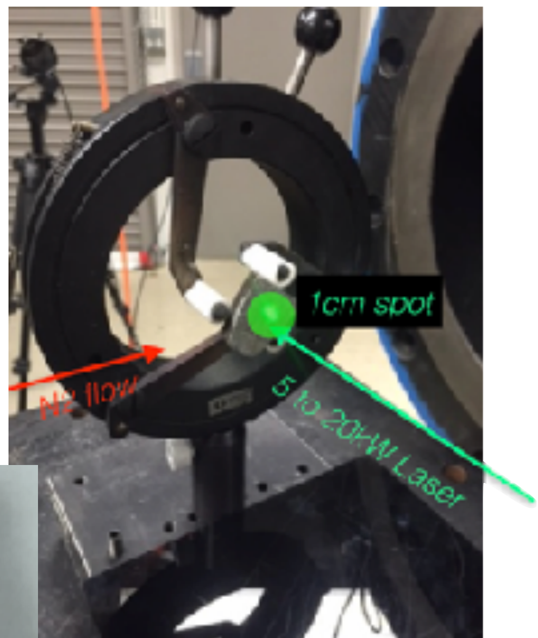

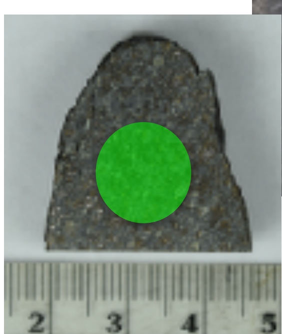

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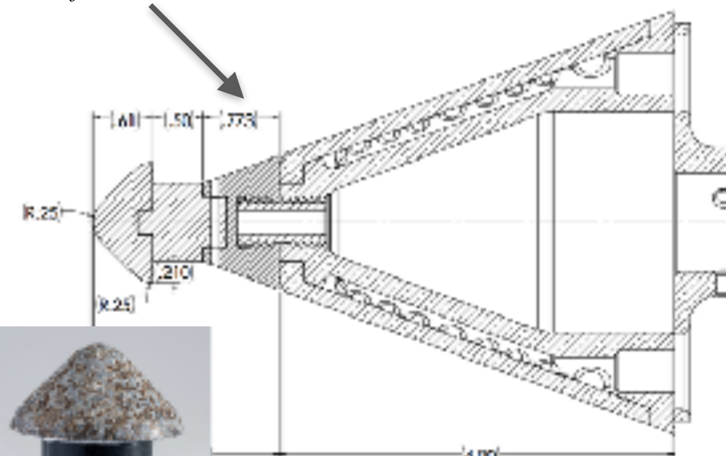
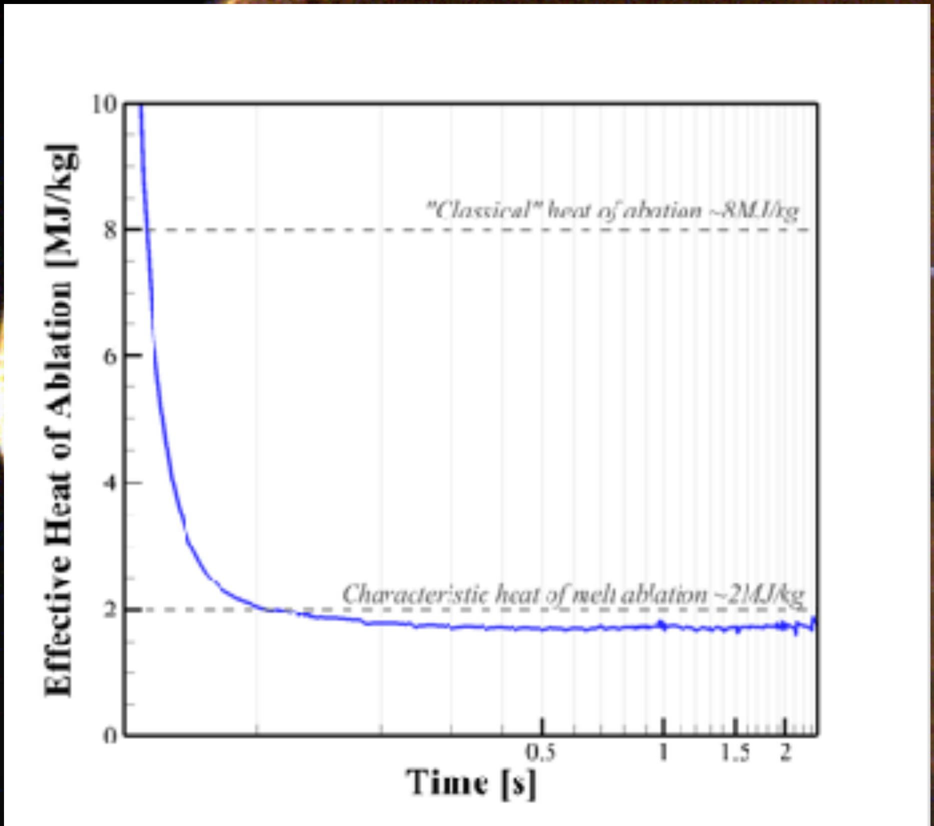


Tamdakht H5 model for arc jet testing

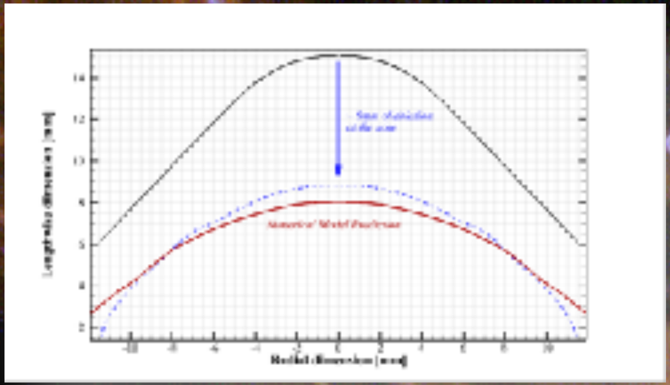
High-speed video from arc jet experiment showing widespread melt flow

Arc Jet Experiment

Findings



- Effective heat of ablation (*Q*) from the experiment ~ 2 MJ/kg
- Heat is well below the canonical value of 8 MJ/kg for chondrite vaporization
  - Indicates we are in a *melt* dominated regime

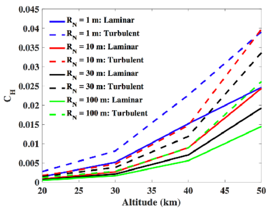


Effect of Ablation Parameter on Energy Deposition

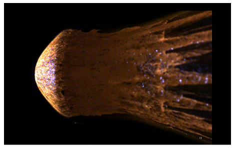
Nominal Value

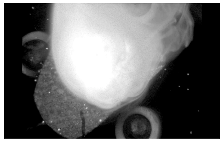
Range based on preceding analysis

C_H — 0.1 → 0.001 – 0.04

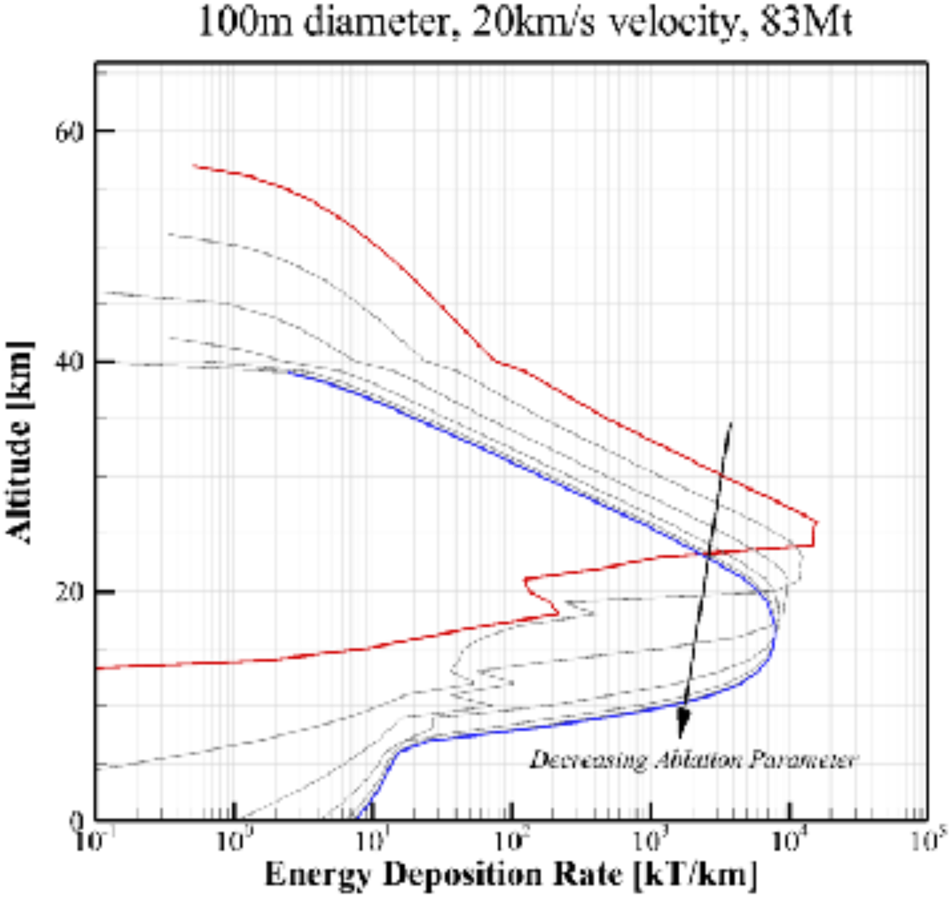


Q^* — 8.0 → 1.8 – 8.0





$$\sigma_{ab} = \frac{C_H}{Q^*}$$ → 1.25×10^{-10} – 2.20×10^{-8}



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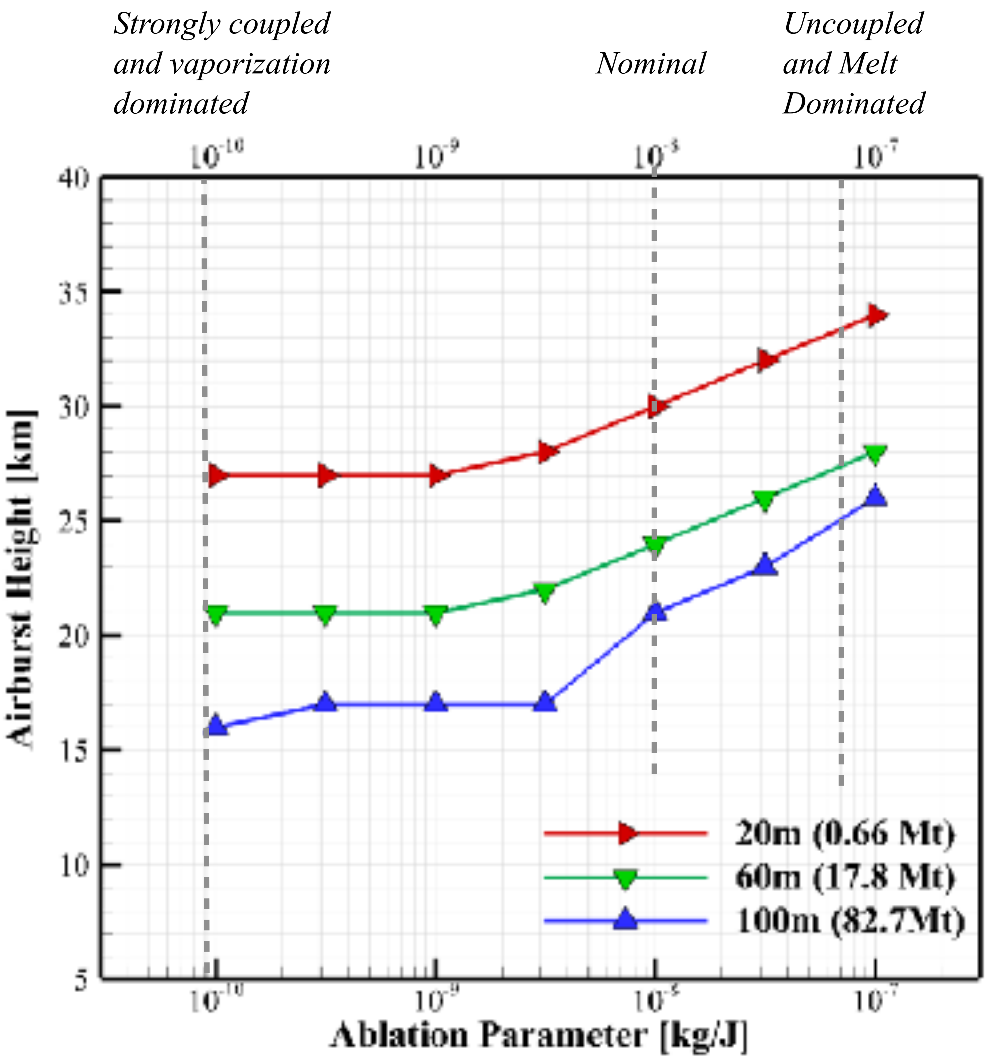

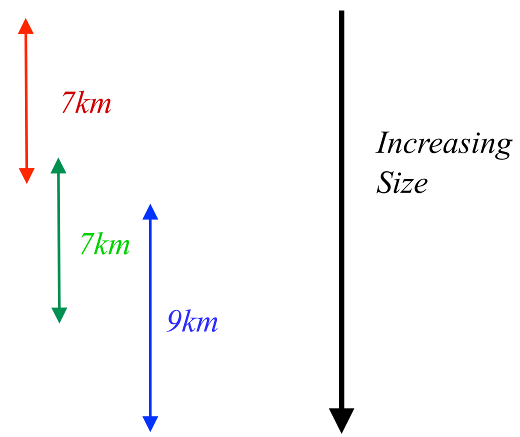

For 100m impactor, 9km burst height difference corresponds to 25km increase in 4psi blast footprint radius (*using Glasstone and Dolan*)

Conclusions

- Coupled Fluid Dynamics-Ablation-Radiation calculations show significant reduction in heating over canonical value, particularly at larger sizes relevant to planetary defense
- Ground test experiments yielding insight into ablation phenomena, and being used to develop and validate numerical models
- Bias in ablation parameter toward the low-end results in lower altitude airburst, and therefore larger ground damage footprints

Acknowledgments

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- Thanks to Greg Gonzalez and Val Kasvin for machining the models for the experiments

Questions…?