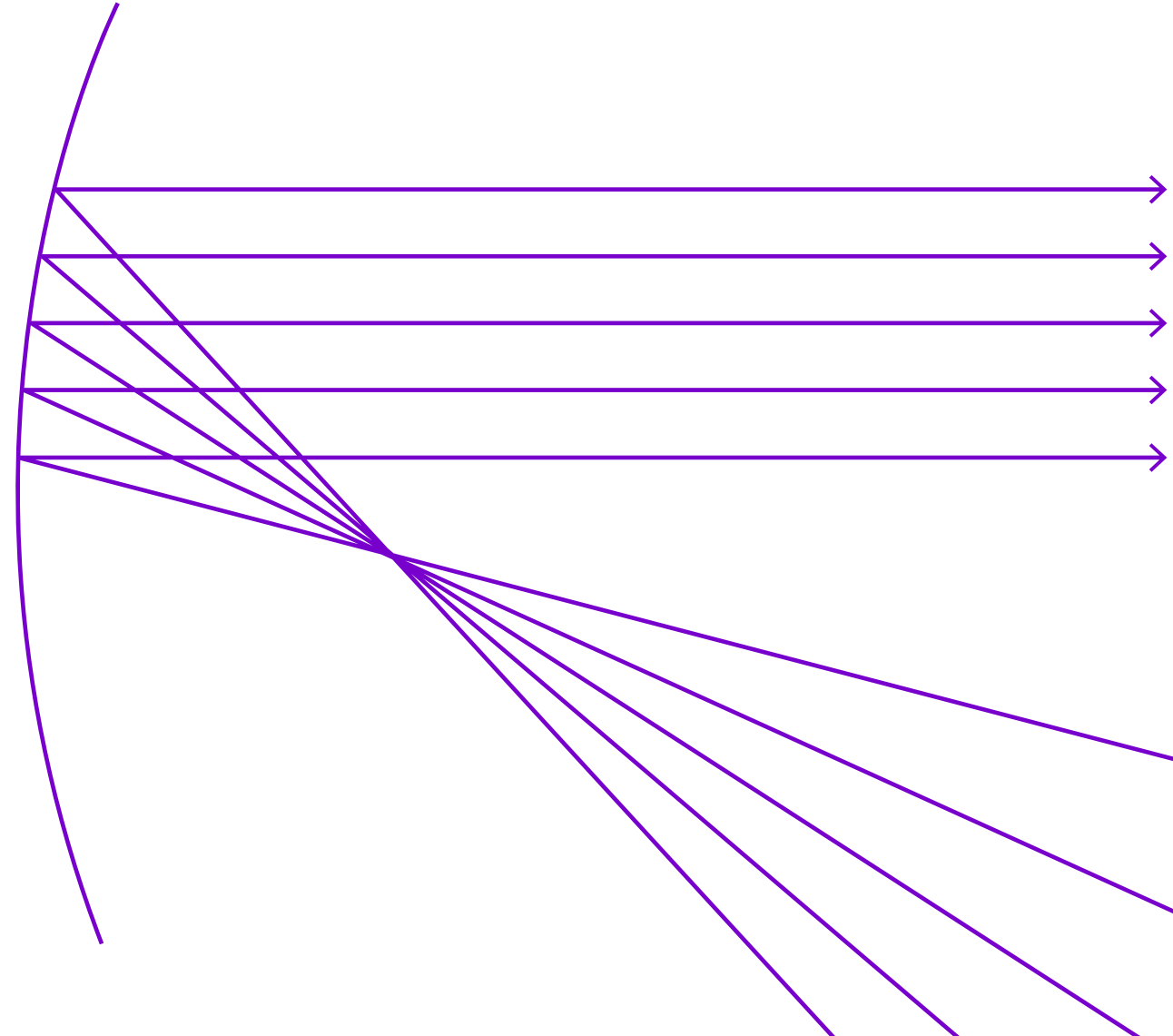


Ultrafast Dynamics of Molecules in Strong Laser Fields

Featuring Jian Wu, East China Normal University
10 February 2022



Technical Group Executive Committee



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of Szeged



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Laboratory



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About Our Technical Group

Our technical group provides a focus for activities related to the development and application of high-intensity lasers as well as novel XUV and x-ray sources

Our mission is to connect the 780+ members of our community through technical events, webinars, networking events, and social media.

Our past activities have included:

- [High-Harmonic Sources for Material Development and Metrology in the Semiconductor Industry](#)
- [Frontiers of Ultrafast X-Ray Spectroscopy and Imaging Virtual Seminar](#)
- [Seeing Electrons In Action Webinar](#)
- Panel discussions at CLEO: 2019 and CLEO: 2016

Connect with our Technical Group

Join our online community to stay up to date on our group's activities. You also can share your ideas for technical group events or let us know if you're interested in presenting your research.

Ways to connect with us:

- Our website at www.optica.org/OH
- On LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/groups/8356401/
- On Facebook at www.facebook.com/OpticaShortWavelengthTG/
- On Twitter at [#OSA0H](https://twitter.com/OSA0H)
- Email us at TGactivities@optica.org

Today's Speaker



Jian Wu

East China Normal University

Jian Wu is the Director and Professor of the State Key Laboratory of Precision Spectroscopy, East China Normal University. His research focuses on the measurement and control of the ultrafast dynamics of molecules in strong laser fields, including the correlated electron-nuclear dynamics in molecular multiphoton energy absorption, the attosecond intramolecular dynamics of electrons such as the electron localization and tunneling, rescattering and recapture, and the molecular vibrational and rotational wave packets such as the molecular echo, all-optical three-dimensional molecular orientation, and molecular ultrafast buffering.

Ultrafast Dynamics of Molecules in Strong Laser Fields

Jian Wu (吴健)

**State Key Laboratory of Precision Spectroscopy
East China Normal University, China**



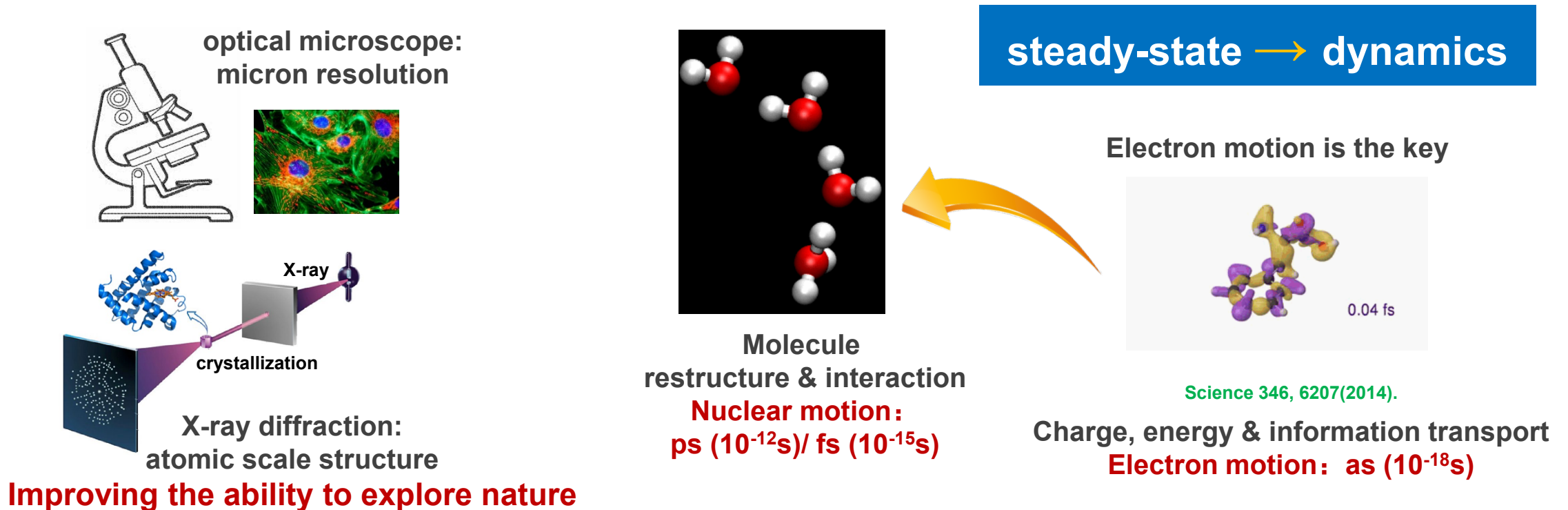
精密光谱科学与技术国家重点实验室
State Key Laboratory of Precision Spectroscopy

Outline

- **Background Introduction**
- **Multiphoton energy absorption: electron-nuclear correlation**
 - ATI & ATD in dissociative ionization of molecules
 - Strong-field Rydberg excitation of molecules
 - An ultrafast stopwatch to clock molecular bond stretching
- **Ro-vibrational dynamics of the nuclear wave-packet**
 - Visualizing unidirectional molecular rotation
 - Echoes of molecules
 - All-optical 3D orientation of molecules
- **Attosecond dynamics of electrons: visualization and control**

Microstructure determines the macroscopic properties of matter

Ultrafast dynamics of the microcosm: attosecond and sub-nanometer spatiotemporal resolution



- Reveal novel physical phenomena and mechanisms
- Provide new ideas for novel material and structural design

Ultrafast dynamics of molecules in ultrashort laser pulses

Ultrashort laser pulses:
measurement → physical mechanism → control

① Photon energy absorption

primary stage of light-molecule interaction:
electron-nuclear correlation

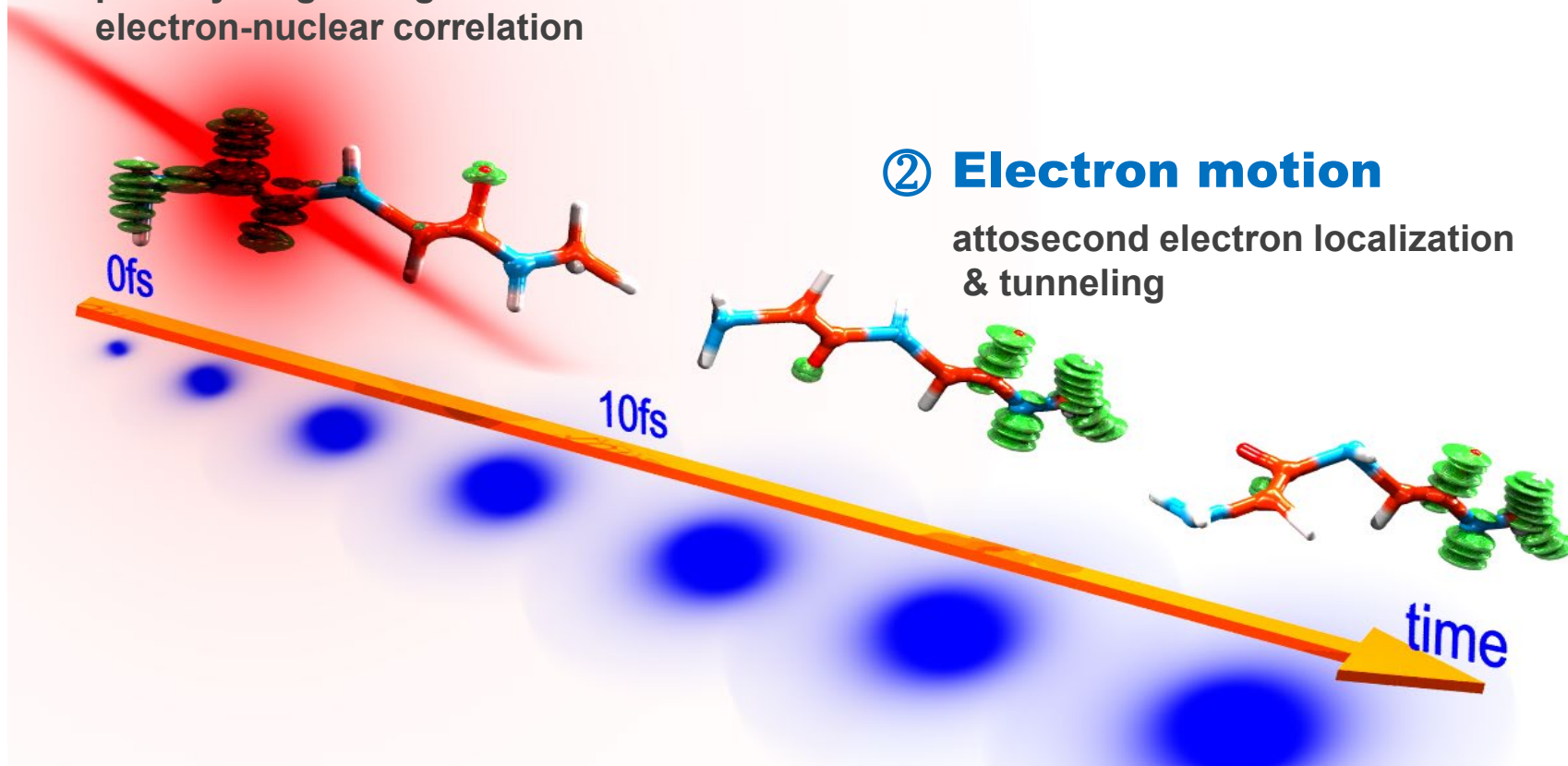
Light-molecule interaction

② Electron motion

attosecond electron localization
& tunneling

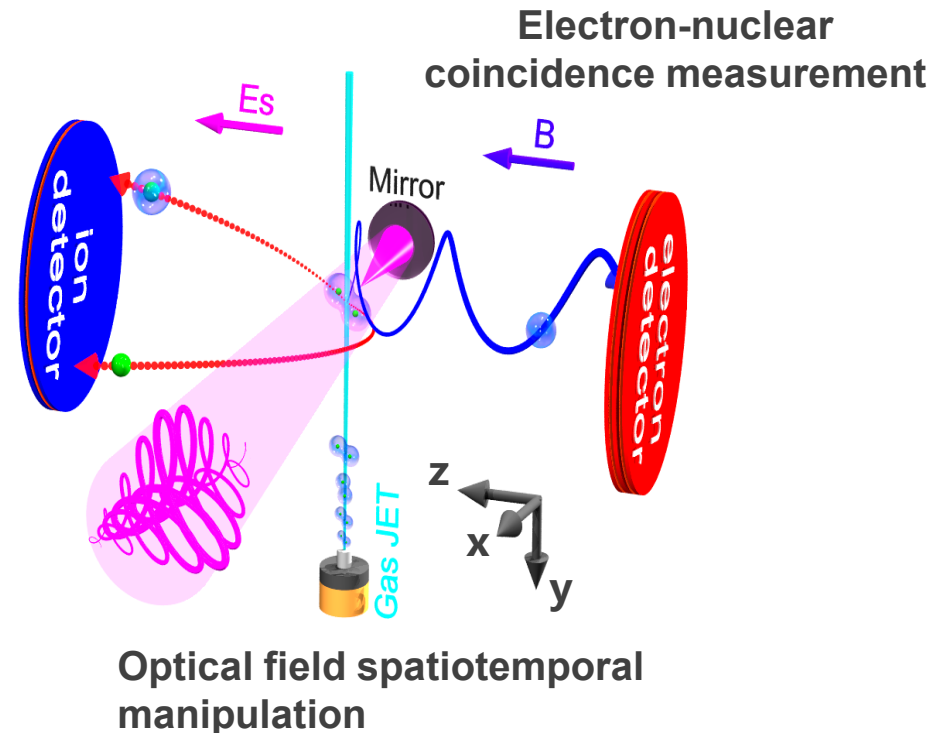
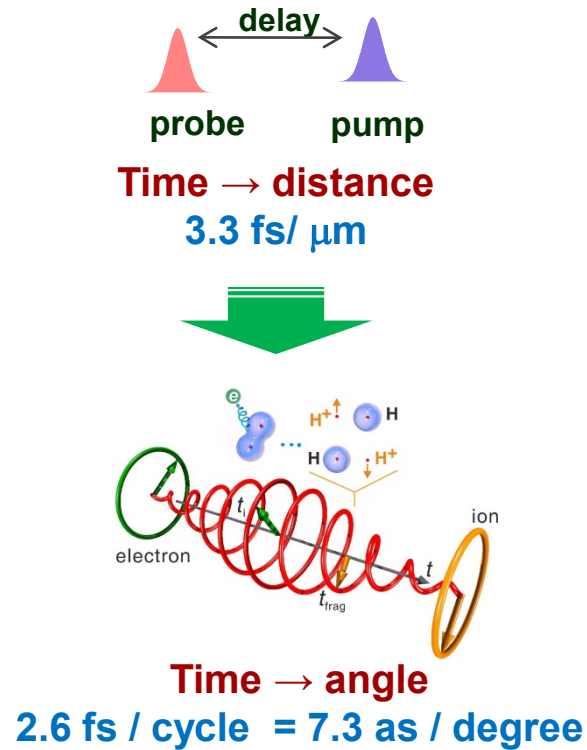
③ Nuclear motion

rotational alignment
vibrational echoes
clocking bond stretching



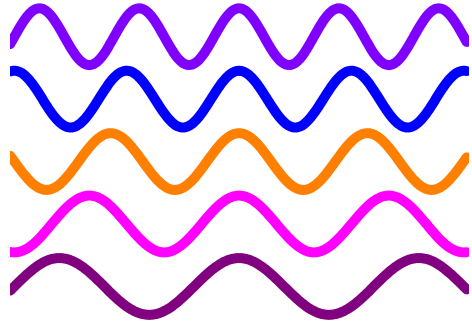
Experimental techniques

- **Spatial resolution:** momentum space \rightarrow sub-nanometer (10^{-10} m)
- **Time resolution:** optical field manipulation \rightarrow attosecond (10^{-18} s)
- **Electron-nuclear correlation:** coincidence measurement \rightarrow visualization

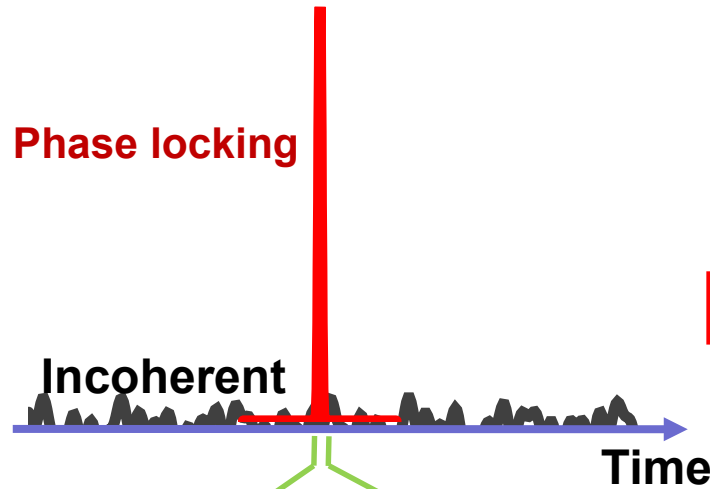


J. Wu et al., Nature Comm. 4, 2177 (2013).

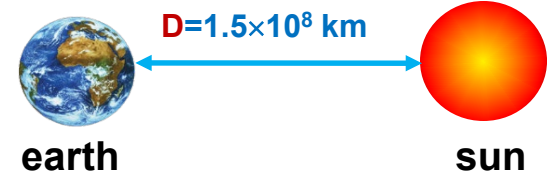
Femtosecond laser pulse



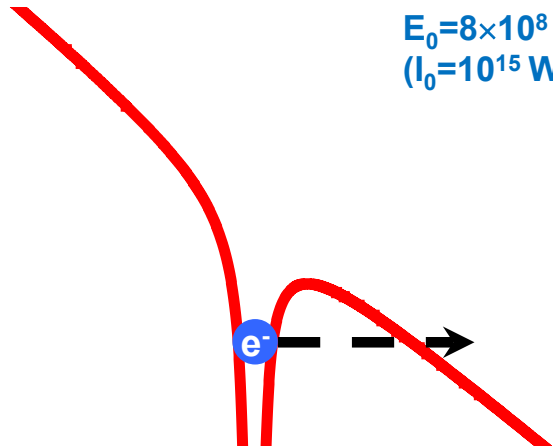
Different frequency modes



$$1 \text{ fs} = 10^{-15} \text{ s}$$

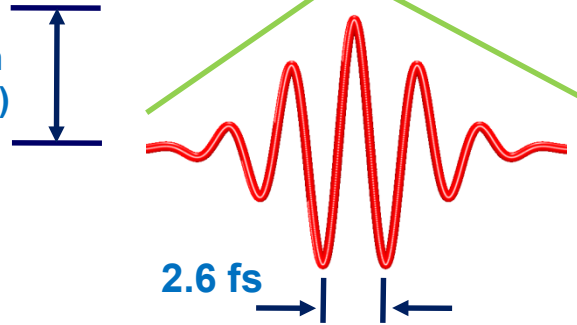


$$1 \text{ fs} : 1 \text{ s} = 0.15 \mu\text{m} : D$$



$$E_0 = 8 \times 10^8 \text{ V/cm}$$
$$(I_0 = 10^{15} \text{ W/cm}^2)$$

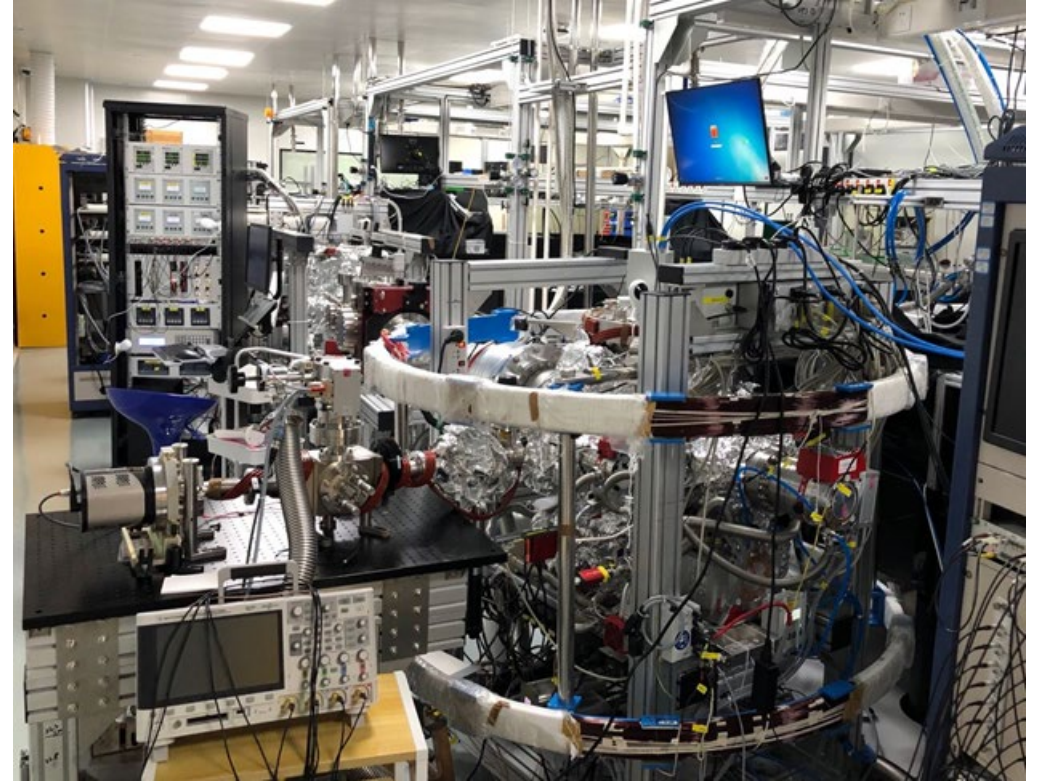
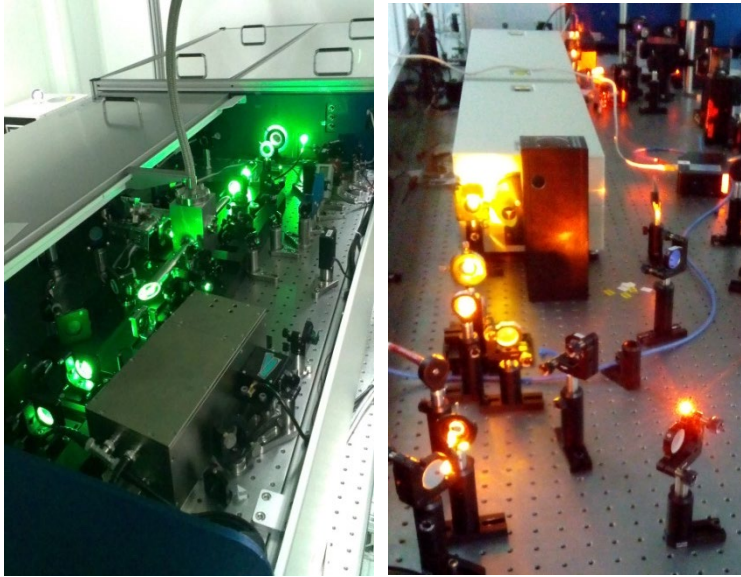
Suppress the potential barrier
Free bound electron



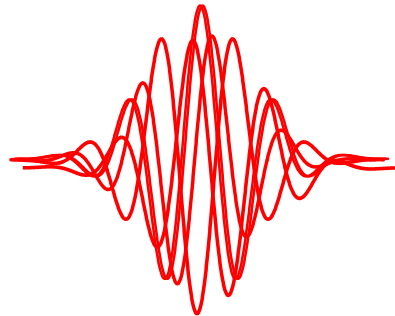
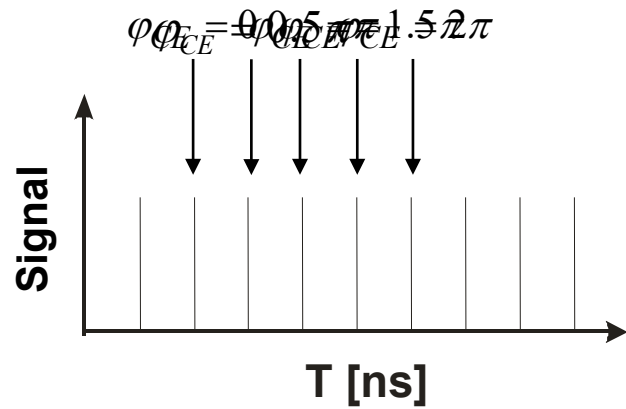
Characters of fs pulse:

1. **Ultrashort** time duration
2. **Ultrahigh** field strength
3. **Ultrabroad** spectral width

Laser systems and COLTRIMS



COLTRIMS: COld Target Recoil Ion Momentum Spectroscopy



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 - Visualizing unidirectional molecular rotation and echoes
 - Echoes of molecules
 - All-optical 3D orientation of molecules
- **Attosecond dynamics of electrons: visualization and control**

ATI & ATD (Above-Threshold Ionization & Dissociation) of molecules

Above-threshold ionization (ATI) of atoms

VOLUME 42, NUMBER 17

PHYSICAL REVIEW LETTERS

23 APRIL 1979

Free-Free Transitions Following Six-Photon Ionization of Xenon Atoms

P. Agostini, F. Fabre, G. Mainfray, and G. Petite

Centre d'Etudes Nucléaires de Saclay, Service de Physique Atomique, 91190 Gif-sur-Yvette, France

and

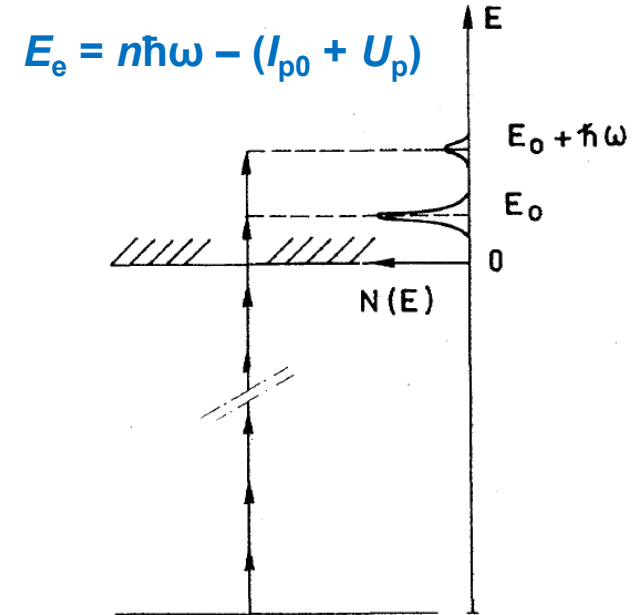
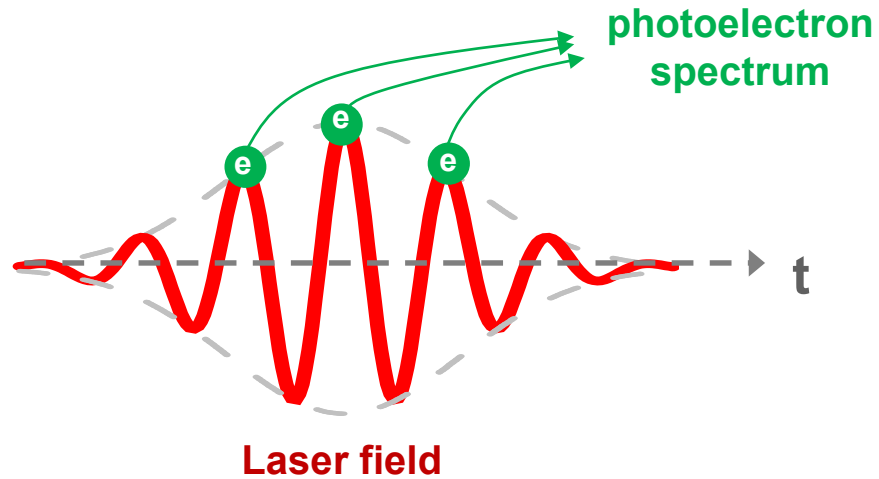
N. K. Rahman

Laboratorio di Chimica Quantistica ed Energetica Molecolare del

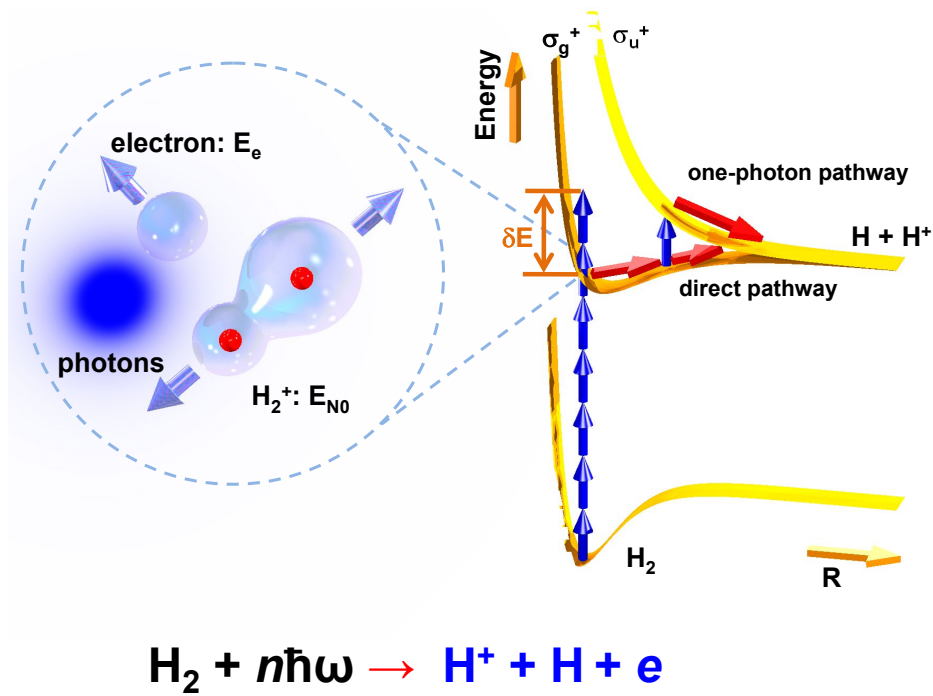
Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 56100 Pisa 35, Italy

(Received 29 January 1979)

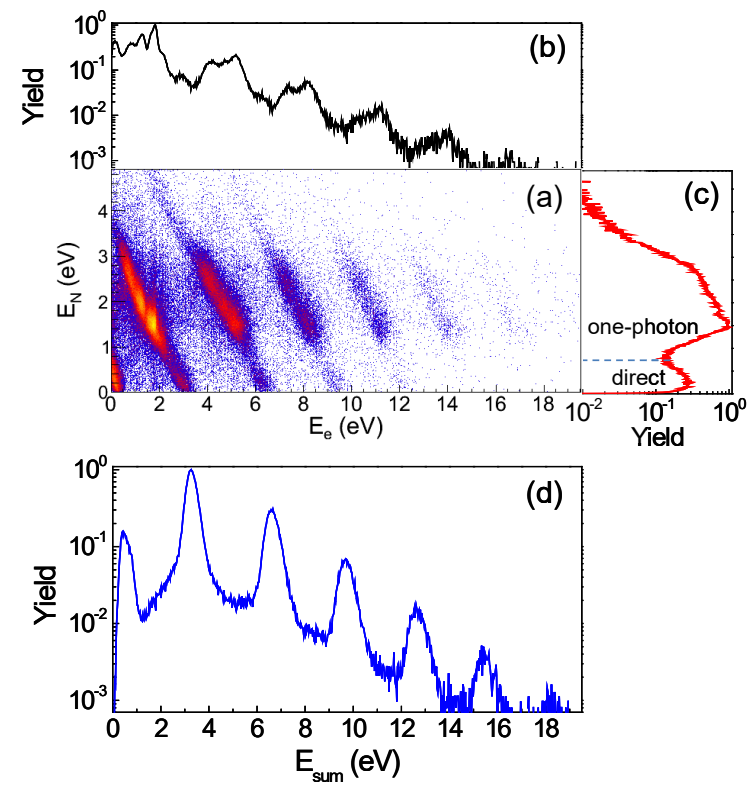
Quantized nature of light energy:
inter-cycle interference of emitted electron wave packet



Electron-nuclear sharing of photon energy in a molecule



$$E_e + E_N = n\hbar\omega - (I_{p0} + U_p)$$



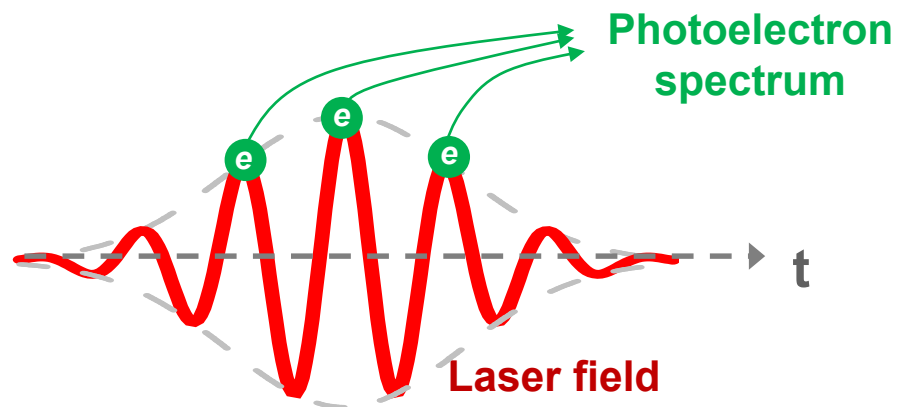
How does a molecule absorb photon energy?
 Experimental demonstration: electron-nuclear sharing of photon energy



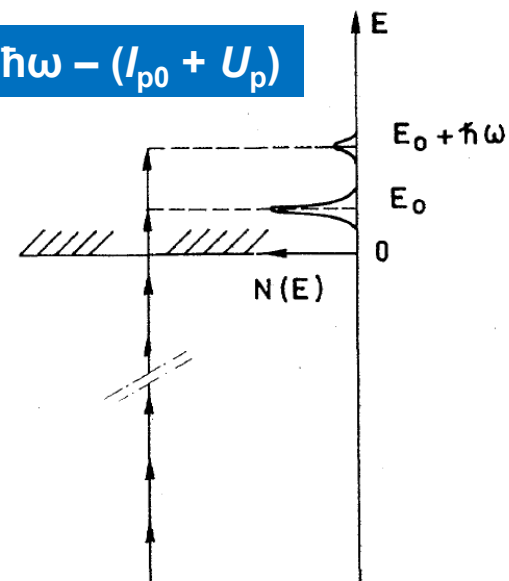
Above threshold ionization (ATI)

→ Above threshold dissociation (ATD) of a molecule

Multiphoton absorption by the electron:
Interference of periodically tunneled electron



$$E_e = n\hbar\omega - (I_{p0} + U_p)$$



Deposition of multiphoton energy into the electron: ATI

Interference of periodically tunneled nuclear wave-packets:
deposition of multiphoton energy into the nuclei



Photon-energy spaced nuclear spectrum : ATD



Electron-nuclear correlation via electron re-scattering



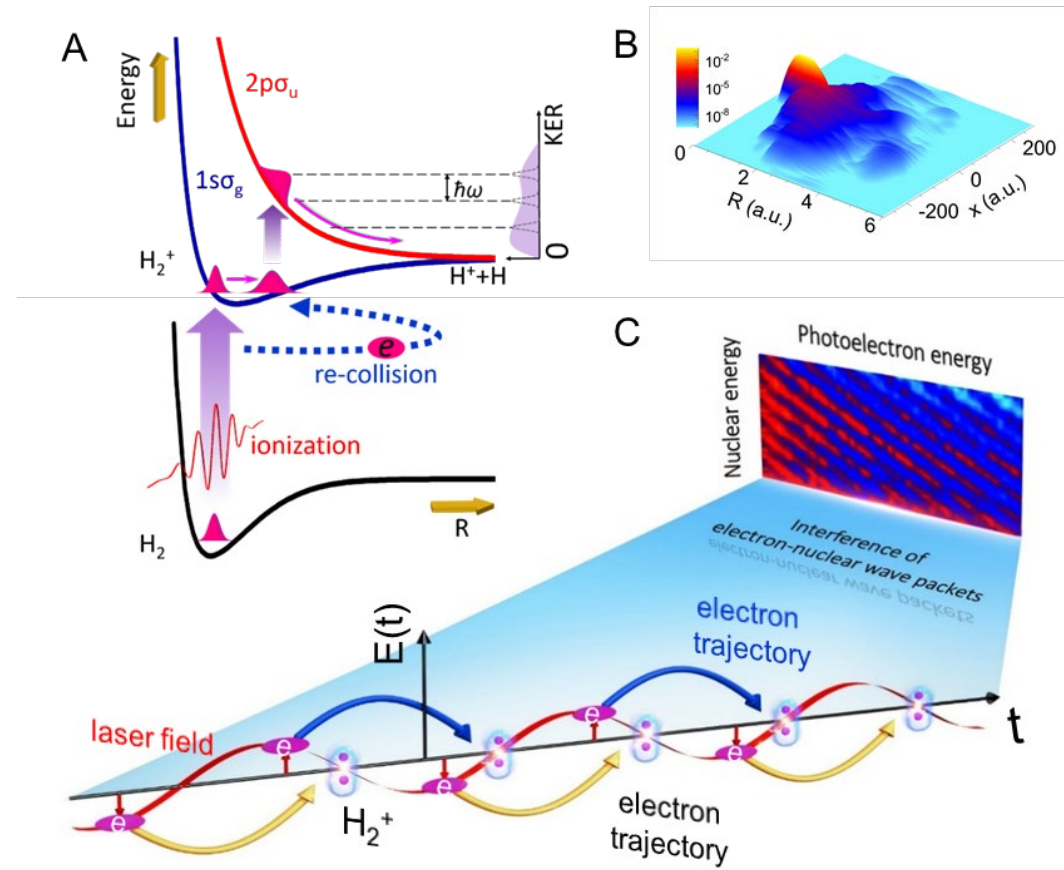
- ① Electron tunnels & gains energy from the oscillating laser field



- ② Returning electron transfers the energy to nuclei via the rescattering

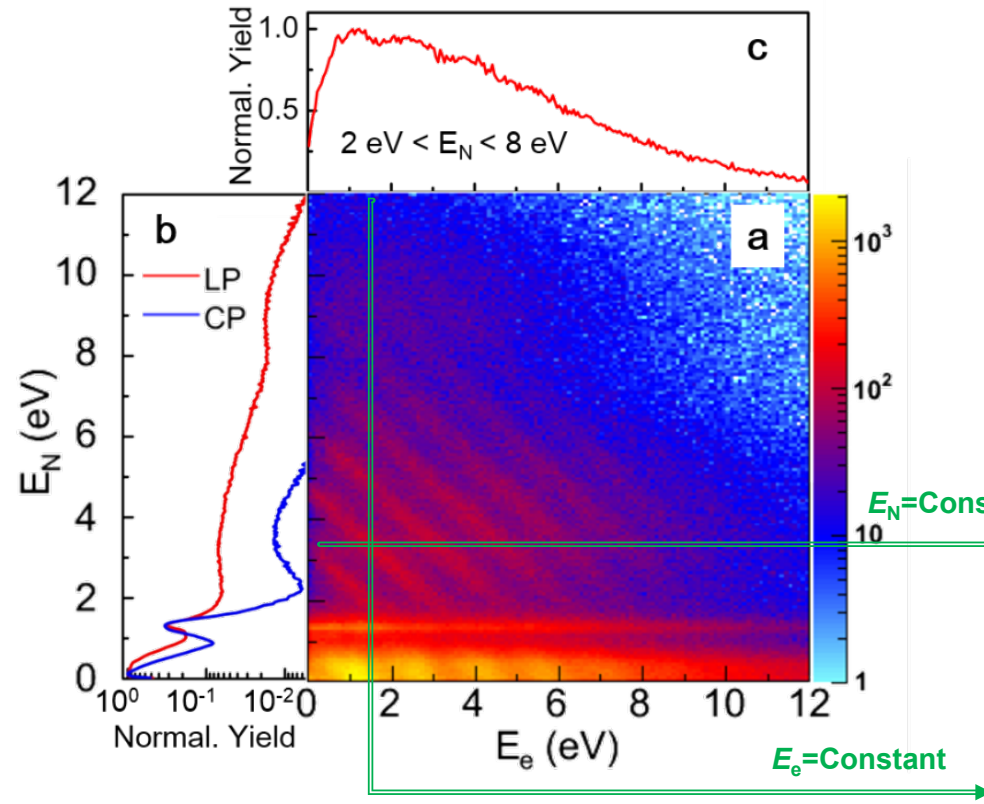
Electron-nuclei energy sharing:

$$E_e + E_N = n\hbar\omega - (I_{p0} + U_p)$$

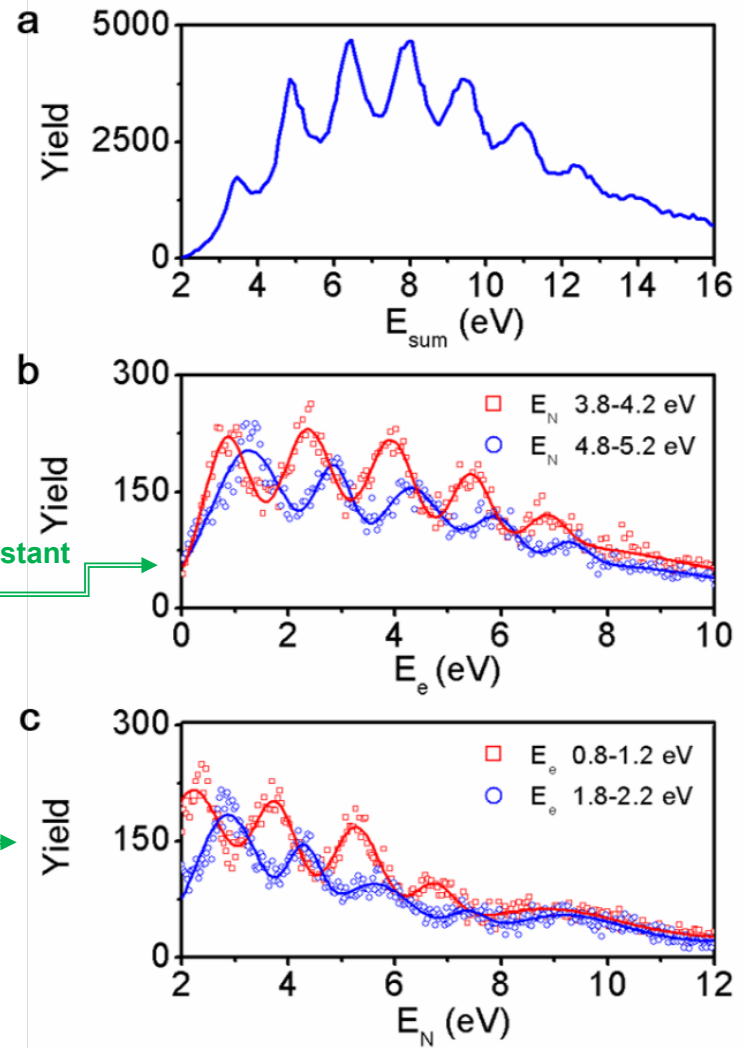


Interference of periodically emitted electron-nuclear wave packets:
 molecule as a whole absorbs multiple photon energy \rightarrow ATI & ATD

Experimental observation of high-order ATD

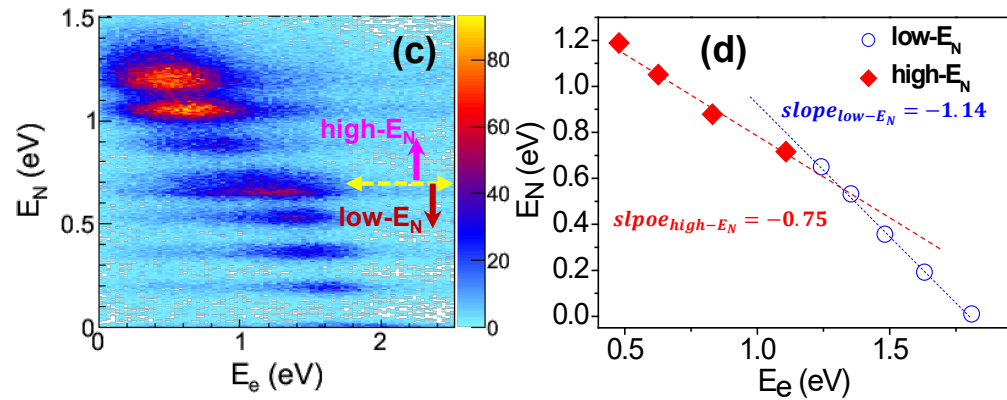
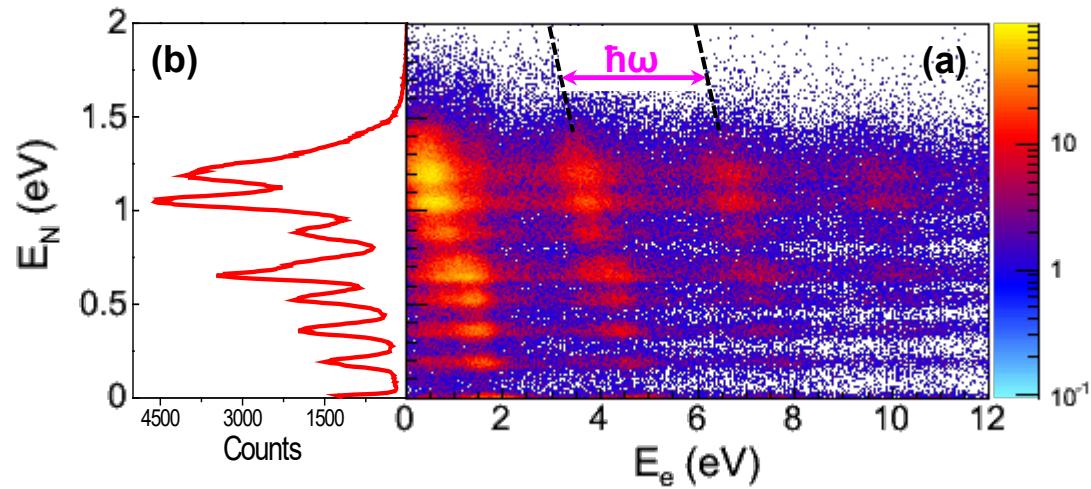


$$E_e + E_N = n\hbar\omega - (I_{p0} + U_p)$$



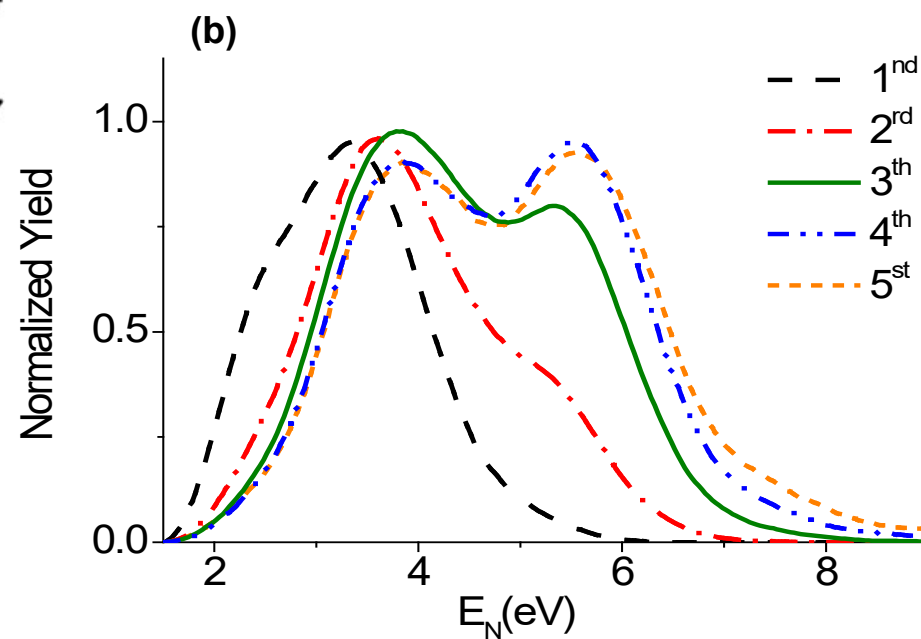
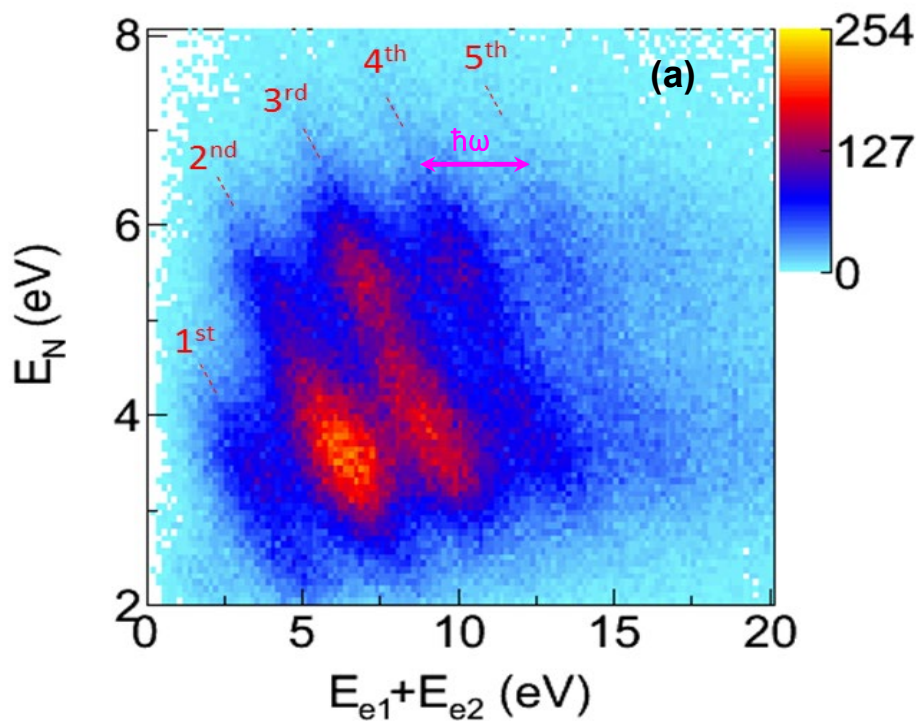


Electron-nuclear sharing of photon energy: multielectron system (orbital & vibrational)

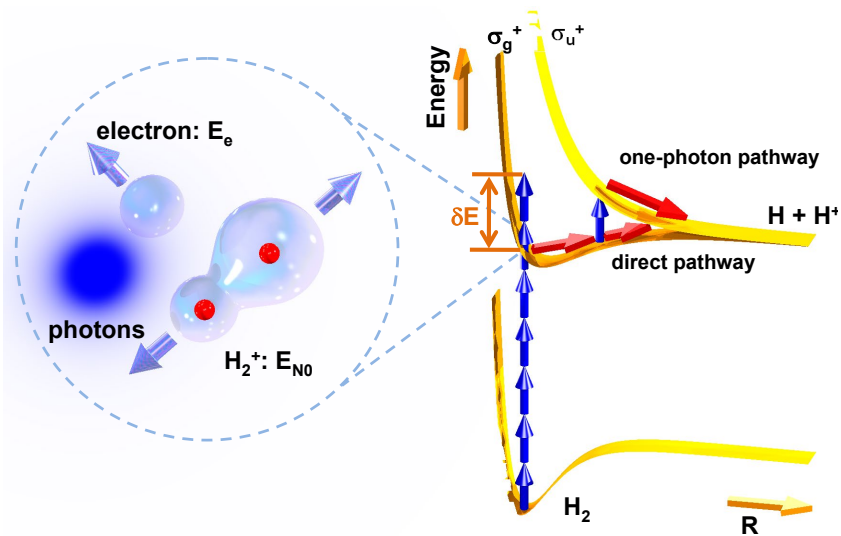




Electron-nuclear correlated above-threshold double ionization (ATDI)



Multiphoton energy absorption by a molecule



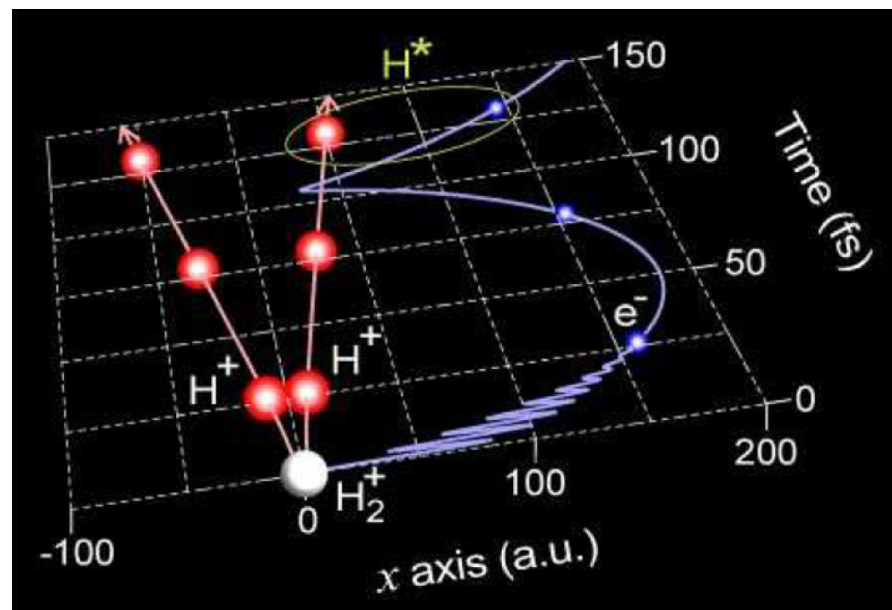
- First ATI photoelectron spectrum in strong-field ionization of atoms ([PRL 1979](#)).
- In 2013, observation of electron-nuclear sharing of multiphoton photon energy in a molecule: [Phys. Rev. Lett. 111, 023002 \(2013\)](#).
- In 2016, important role of the vibrational motion: [Phys. Rev. Lett. 117, 103002 \(2016\)](#).
- In 2018, direct observation of high-order ATD: [PNAS 115, 2049 \(2018\)](#).

Mechanism: electron absorbs photon energy, transfers the energy to nuclei via their correlated interaction.

Strong-field Rydberg excitation of molecules

Frustrated ionization: Rydberg excitation

Dissociative Frustrated Double Ionization (FDI): **tunneled electron is recaptured by the ionic fragments during the breaking of molecules.**



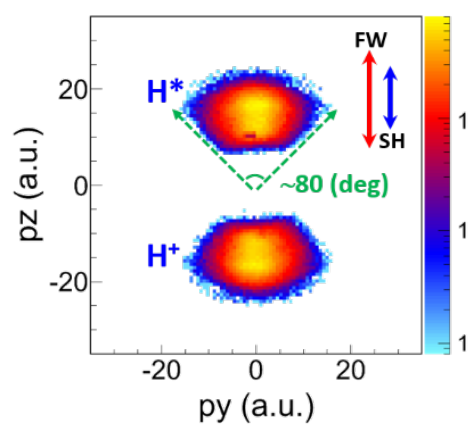
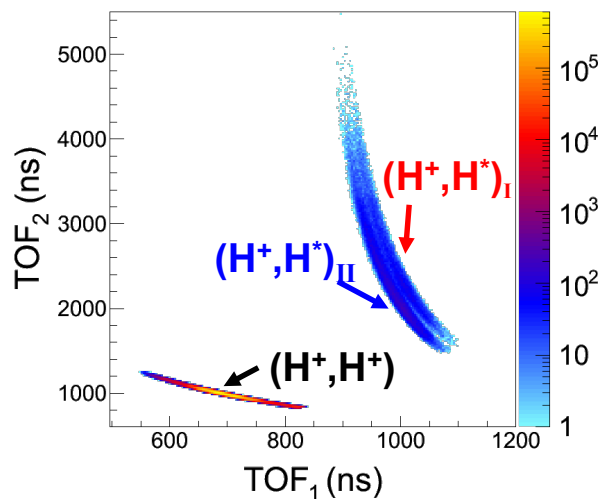
B. Manschwetus *et al.*, Phys. Rev. Lett. 102, 113002 (2009).

Dynamics of FDI of molecules:

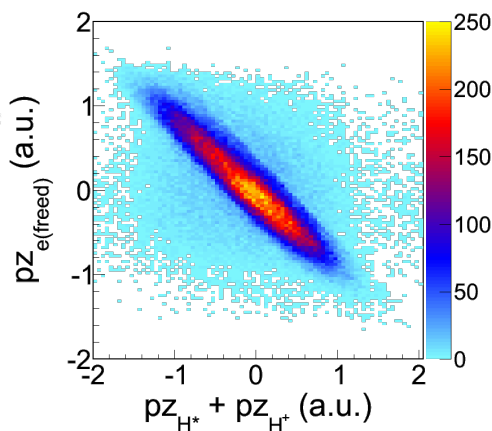
- When and where the dissociative FDI occurs?
- Steering the electron recapture to a desired ionic core?
- **Electron-nuclear correlation?**

Dissociative FDI of H₂: full coincidence measurements

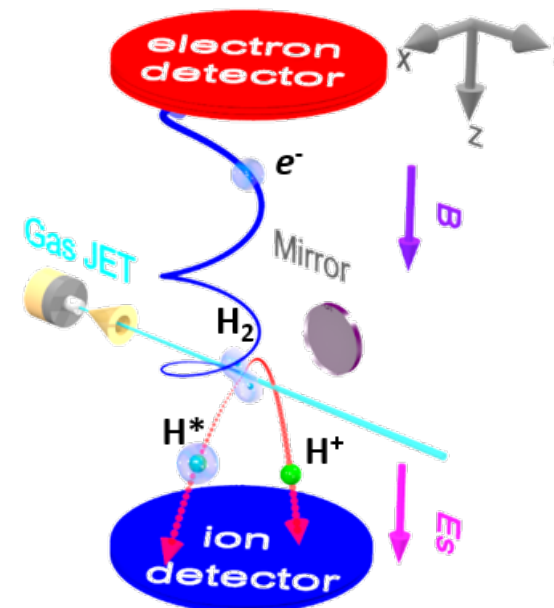
Photoion-photoion coincidence (PIPICO)



Momentum distribution



Coincidence spectrum

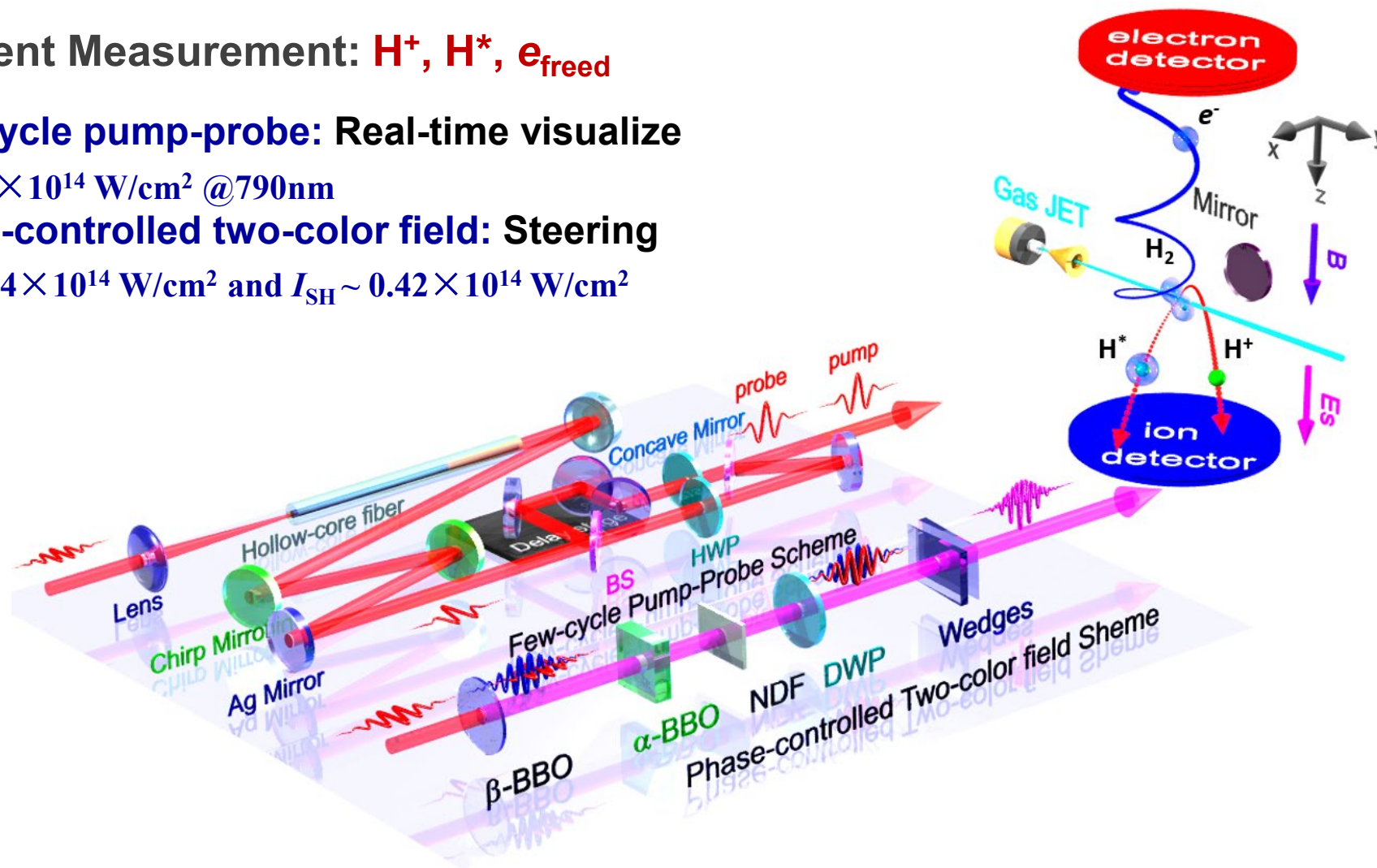


W. Zhang *et al.*, Phys. Rev. Lett. 119, 253202 (2017).

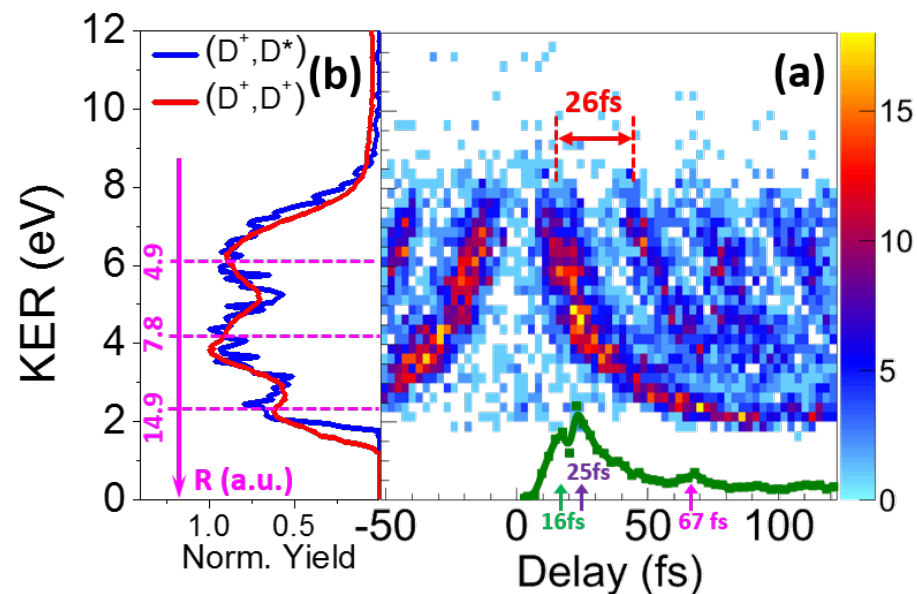
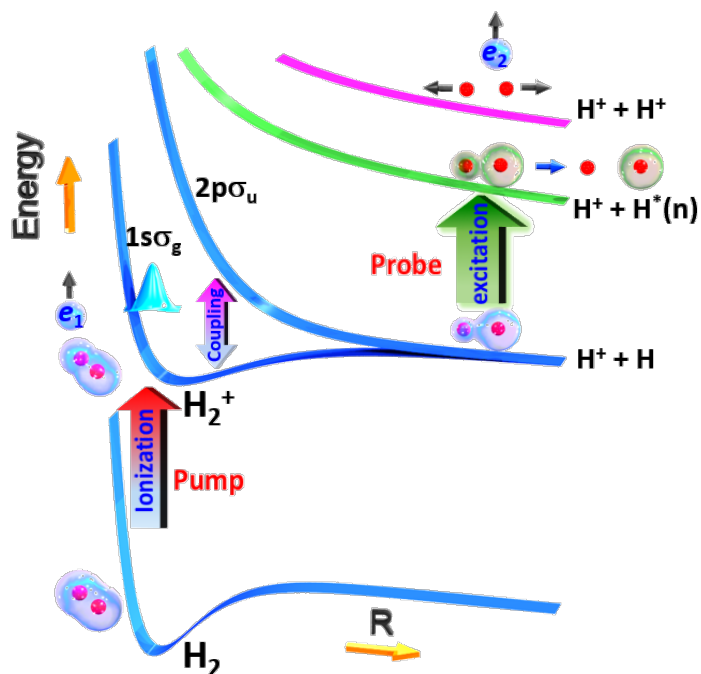


Dissociative FDI of H₂: full coincidence measurements

- Coincident Measurement: H⁺, H^{*}, e_{freed}
- Few-cycle pump-probe: Real-time visualize
7fs, 6.4×10^{14} W/cm² @790nm
- Phase-controlled two-color field: Steering
 $I_{FW} \sim 2.4 \times 10^{14}$ W/cm² and $I_{SH} \sim 0.42 \times 10^{14}$ W/cm²



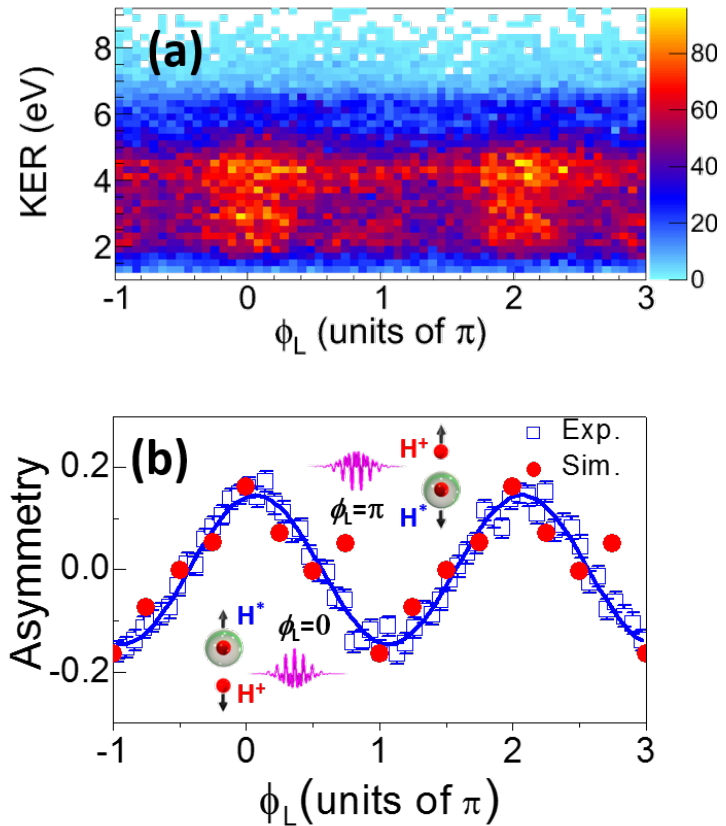
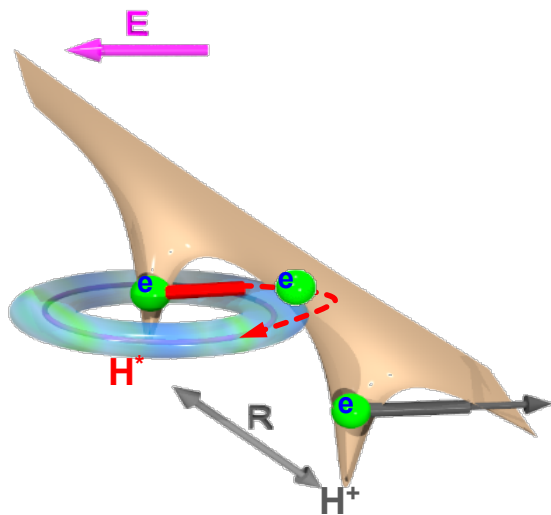
Visualizing dissociative FDI of H₂



Three internuclear distances (R) of the stretching molecular ion are observed to enhance the dissociative FDI at different instants (τ)

$$(\tau, R) \sim (16 \text{ fs}, 4.9 \text{ a.u.}), (25 \text{ fs}, 7.8 \text{ a.u.}), (67 \text{ fs}, 14.9 \text{ a.u.})$$

Steering electron recapture



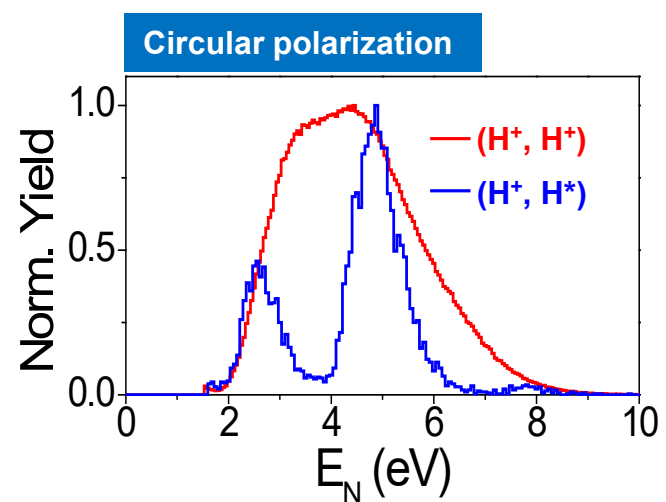
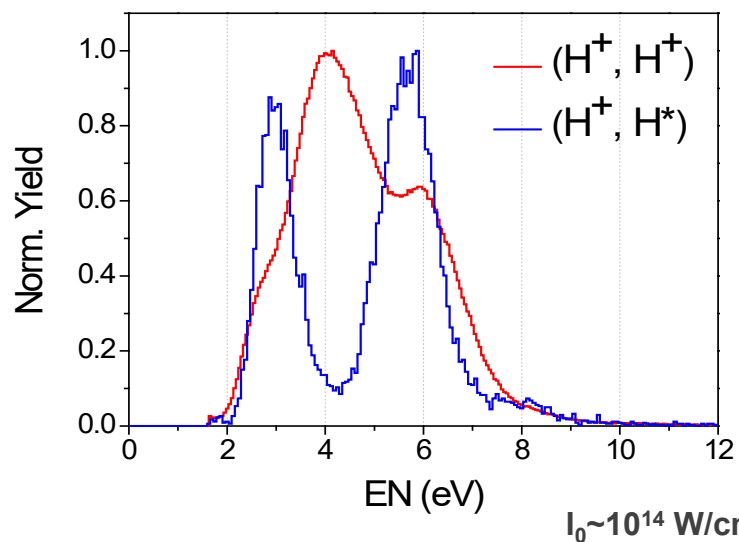
The Rydberg atom is favored to emit to the direction of the maximum of the asymmetric optical field.



Dissociative FDI of molecules in strong laser fields

Electron recapture

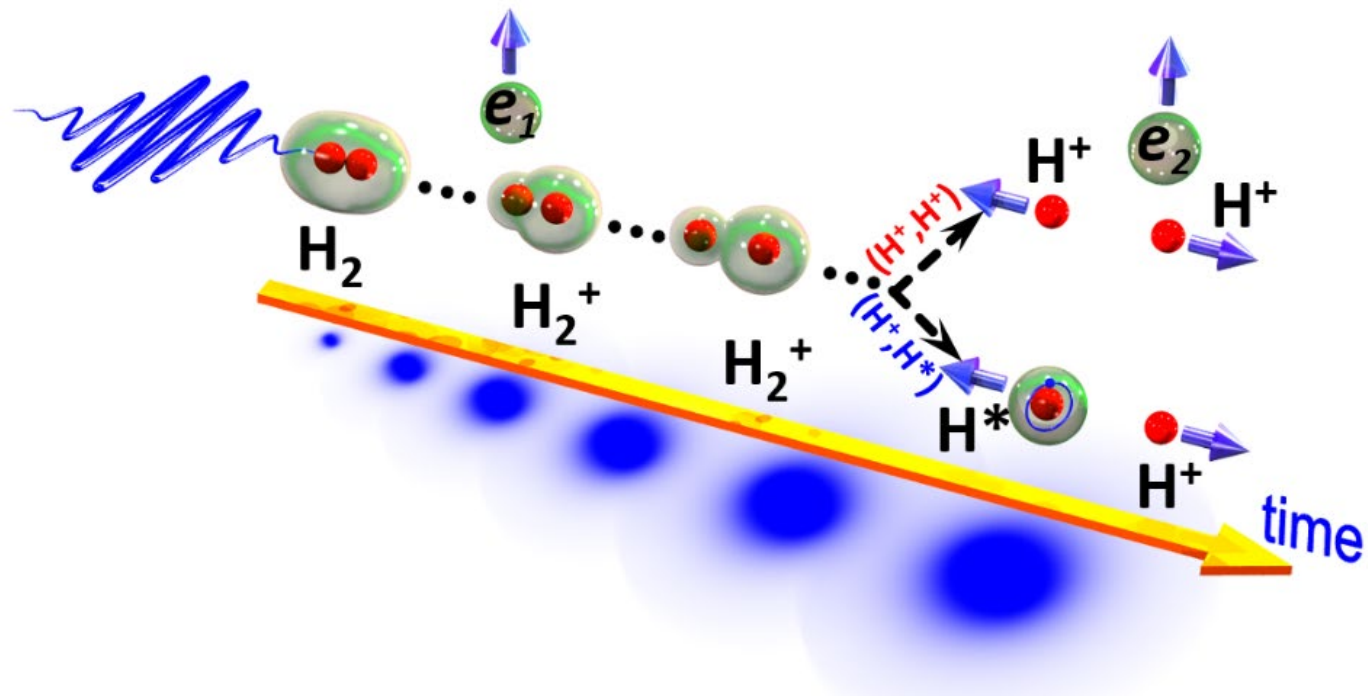
- Similar KER spectrum as double ionization
- Suppression in circular polarization



Observation of different KER spectra: (H⁺,H^{*}) vs. (H⁺,H⁺)

Alternative routes for FDI?

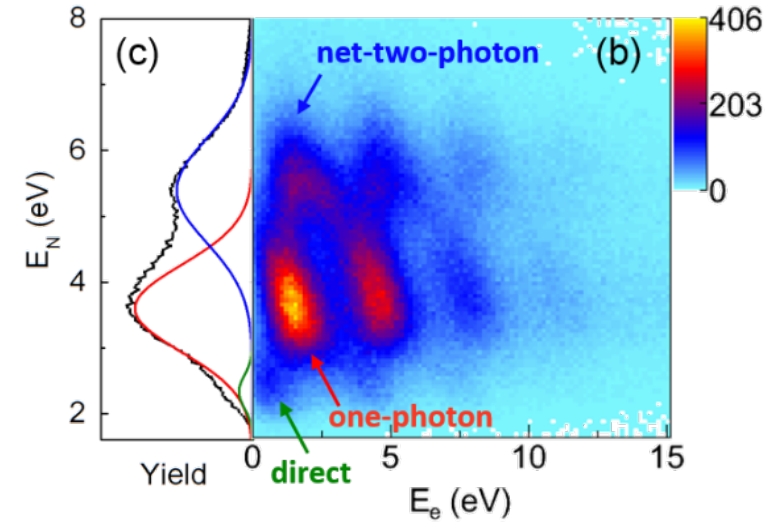
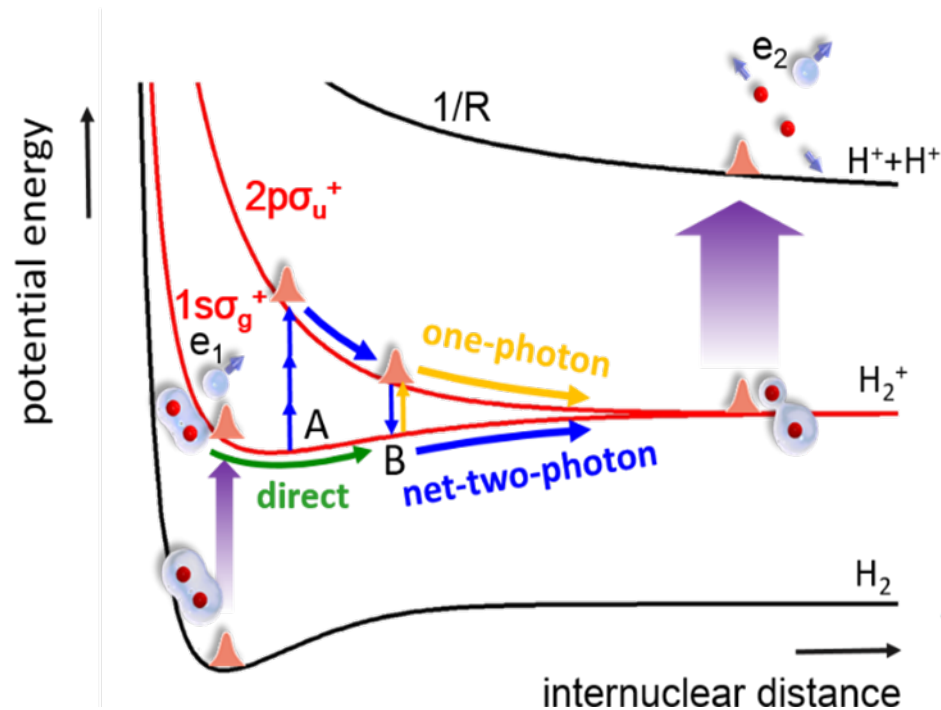
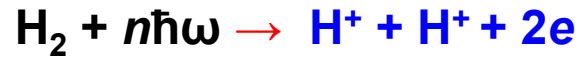
Multiphoton routes: dissociative DI vs. FDI of molecules



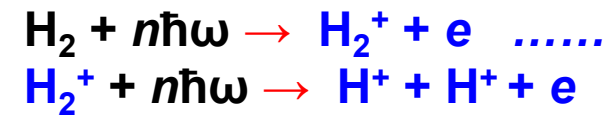
Dissociative double ionization : $H_2 + m\hbar\omega \rightarrow H^+ + H^+ + 2e$

Dissociative frustrated double ionization: $H_2 + m\hbar\omega \rightarrow H^+ + H^* + e$

Multiphoton routes for dissociative DI of molecules: above-threshold double ionization (ATDI)

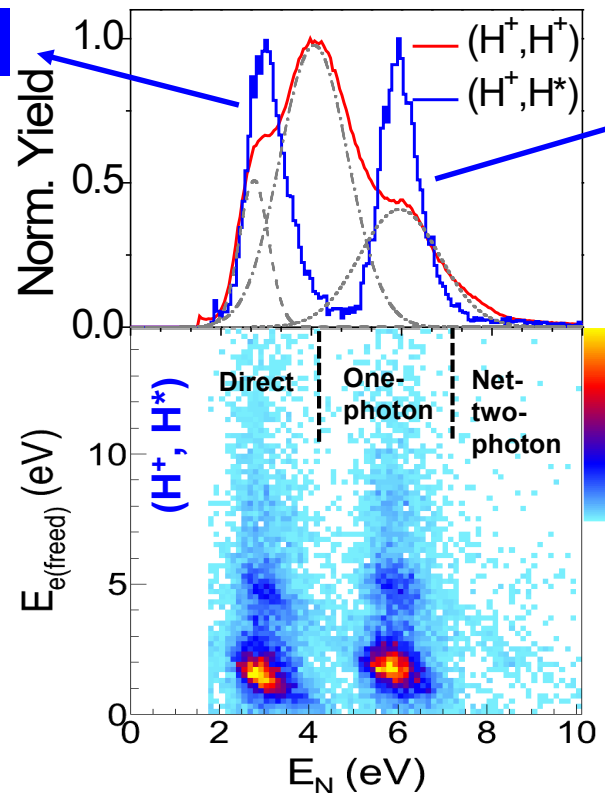


Photon number resolving, enhancing, and suppressing pathways towards CREI.

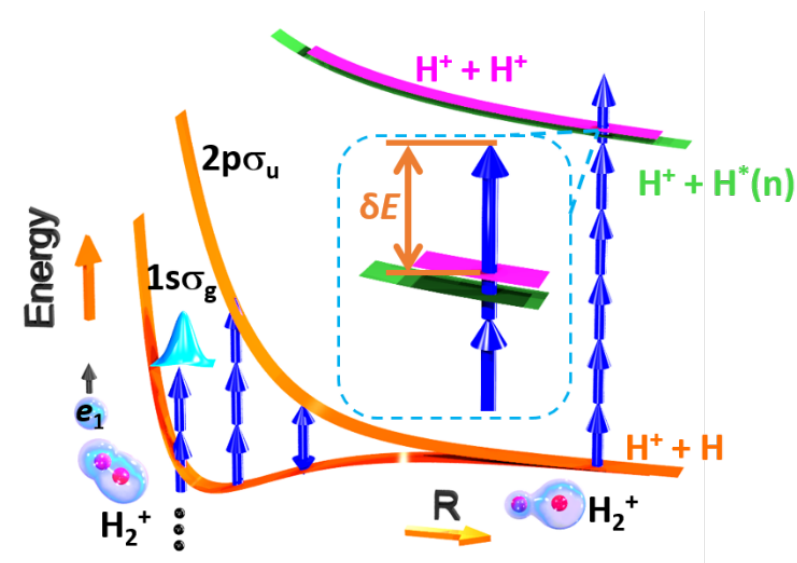


Multiphoton routes: dissociative FDI of molecules

FDI via direct pathway



FDI via one-photon pathway



Dissociative DI: $\text{H}_2 + m\hbar\omega \rightarrow \text{H}^+ + \text{H}^+ + 2e$

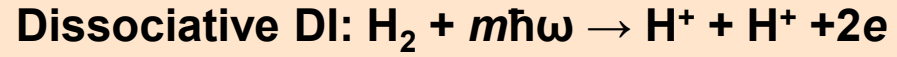
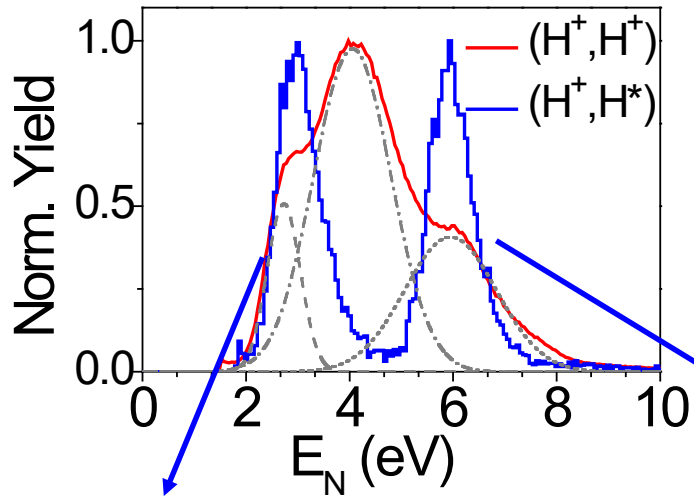
$m\hbar\omega = E_{\text{sum}} = E_{\text{H}^+} + E_{\text{H}^+} + E_{e1} + E_{e2}$, where $\delta E \sim E_{e2}$

Dissociative FDI: $\text{H}_2 + m\hbar\omega \rightarrow \text{H}^+ + \text{H}^* + e$

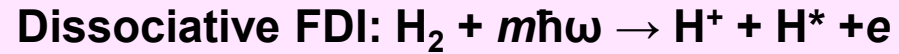
$m\hbar\omega = E_{\text{sum}} = E_{\text{H}^+} + E_{\text{H}^*} + E_e$, where $\delta E \sim E_{\text{H}^+} + E_{\text{H}^*}$



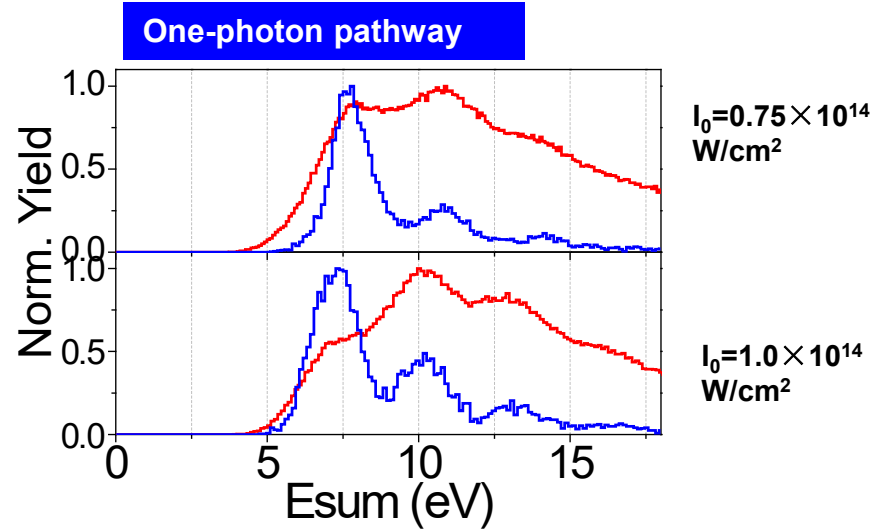
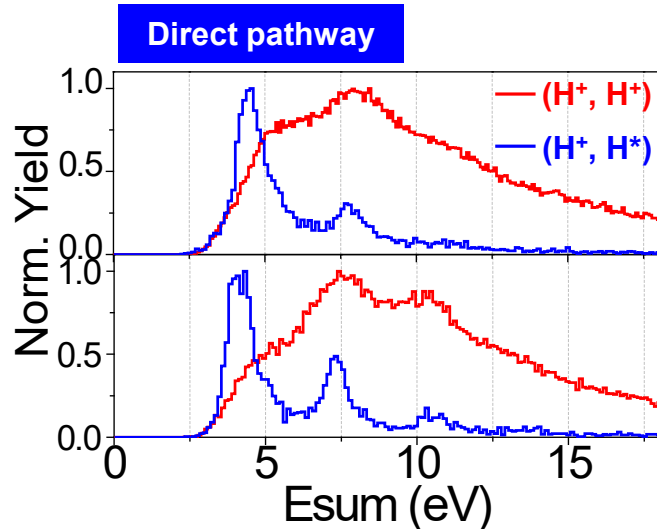
E_{sum} spectra of DI vs. FDI



$$m\hbar\omega = E_{\text{sum}} = E_{\text{H}^+} + E_{\text{H}^+} + E_{\text{e1}} + E_{\text{e2}}$$

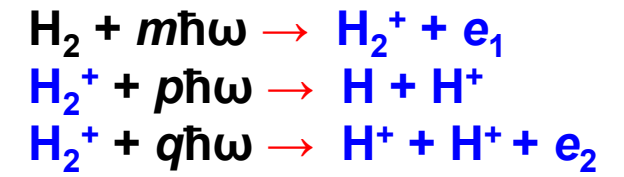
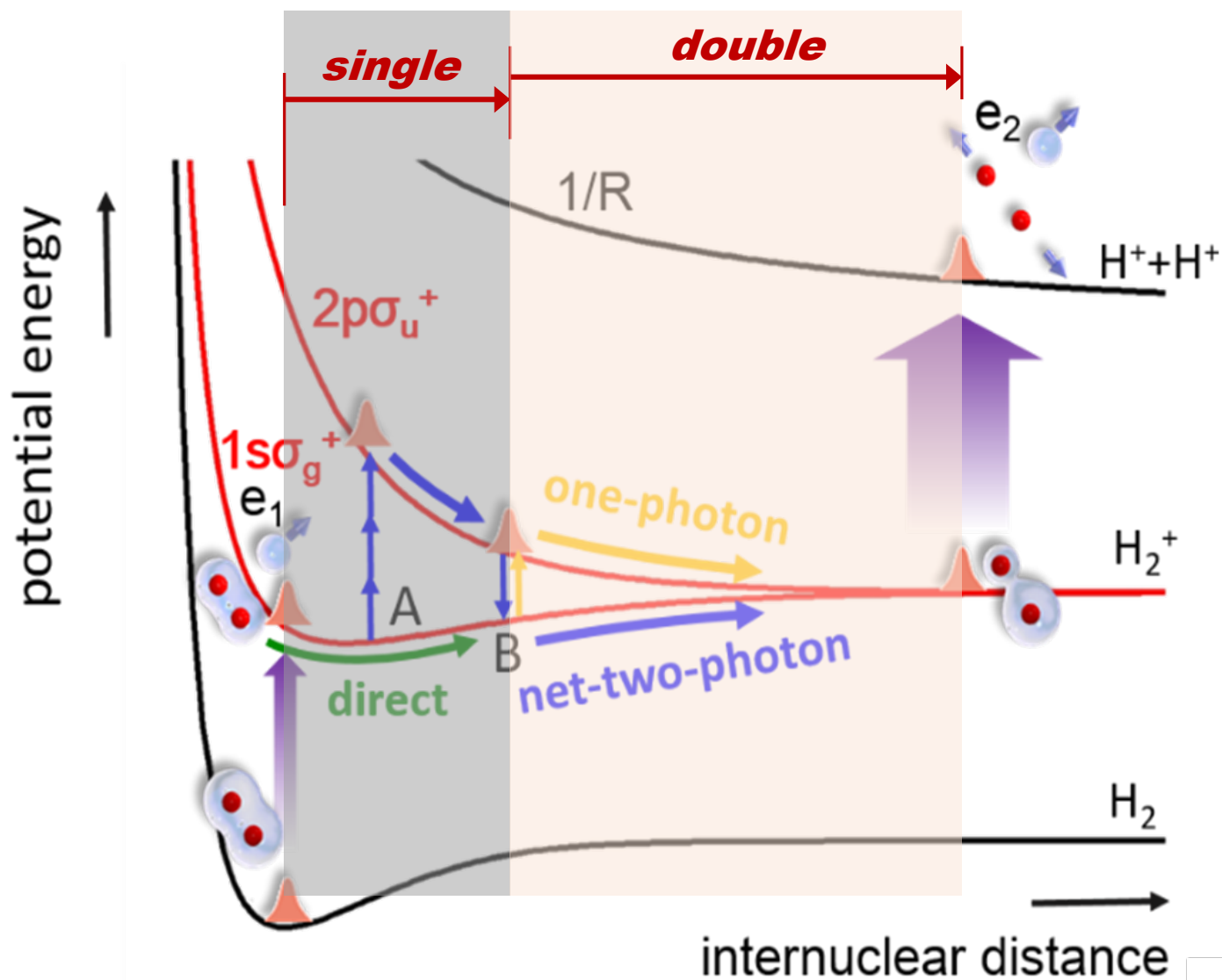


$$m\hbar\omega = E_{\text{sum}} = E_{\text{H}^+} + E_{\text{H}^*} + E_{\text{e}}$$

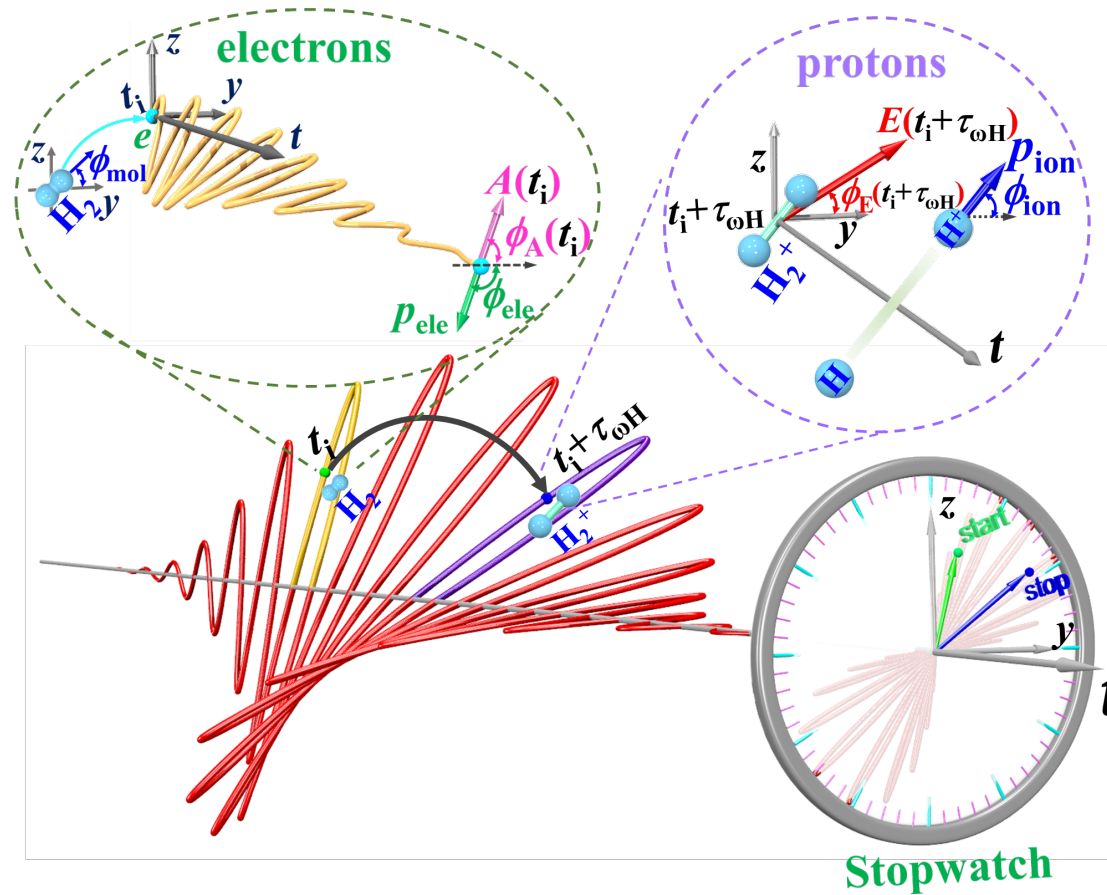


An ultrafast stopwatch to clock molecular bond stretching

Dissociative *single* & *double* ionization of H₂



Ultrafast stopwatch by polarization-skewed laser pulse



Q. Ji *et al*, Phys. Rev. A 96, 053423 (2017).

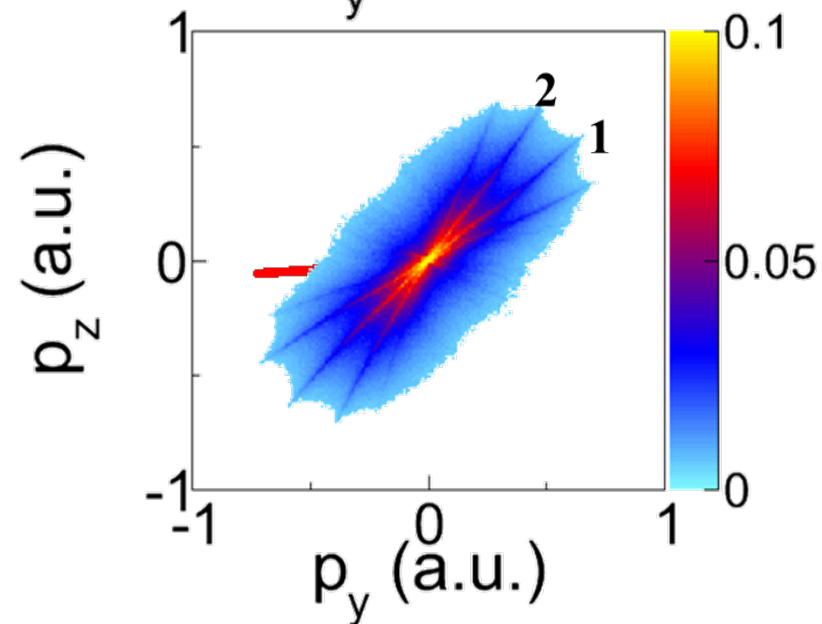
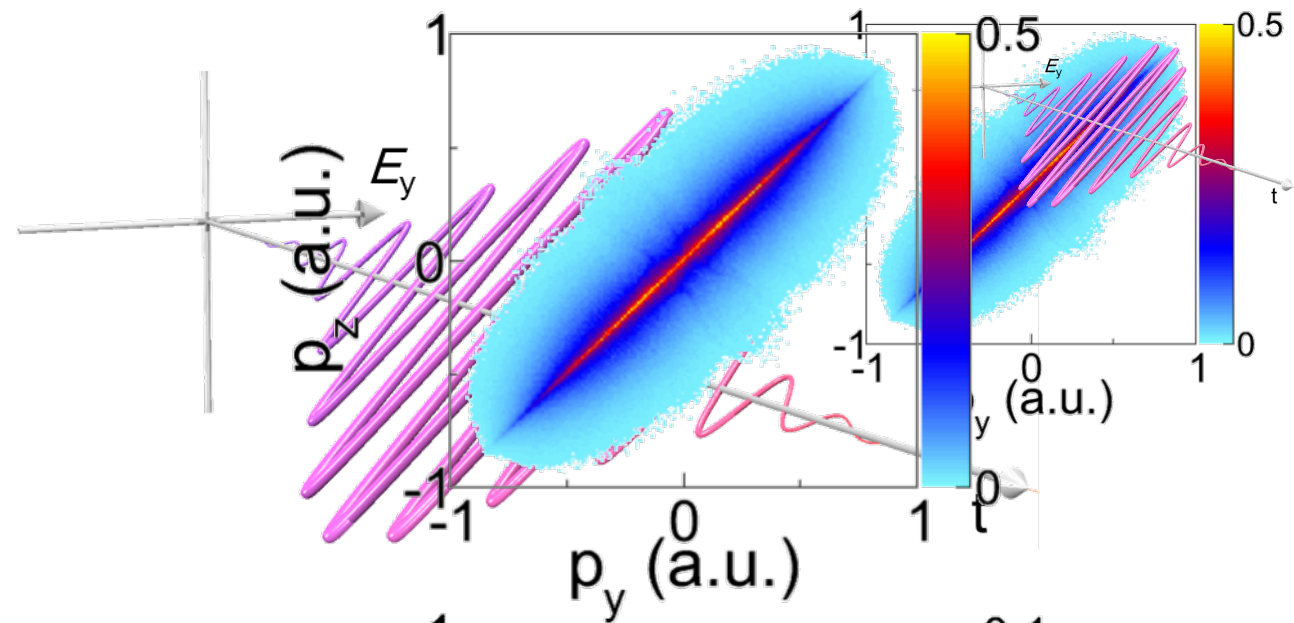
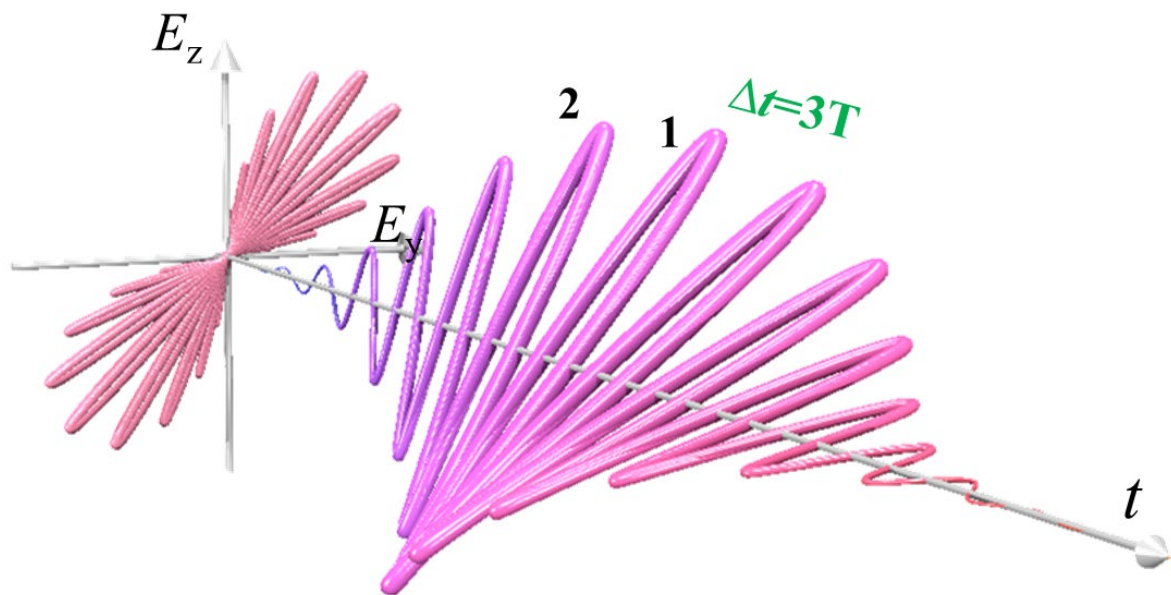
Q. Ji *et al*, Phys. Rev. Lett. 123, 233202 (2019).

S. Pan *et al*, Phys. Rev. Lett. 126, 063201 (2021).

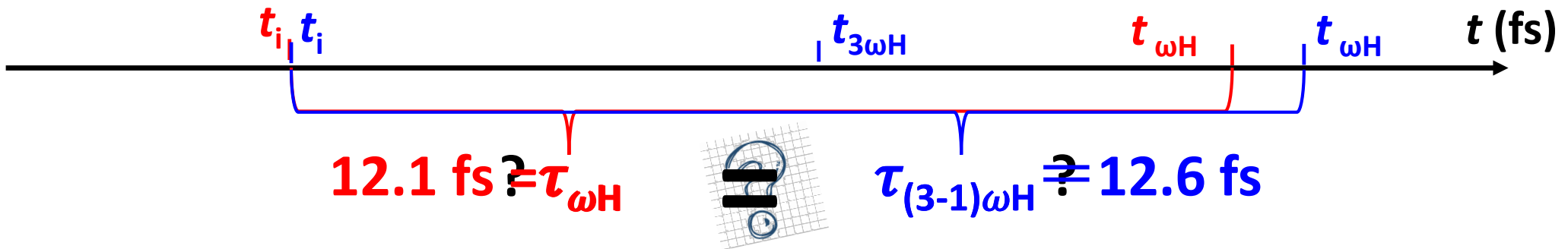
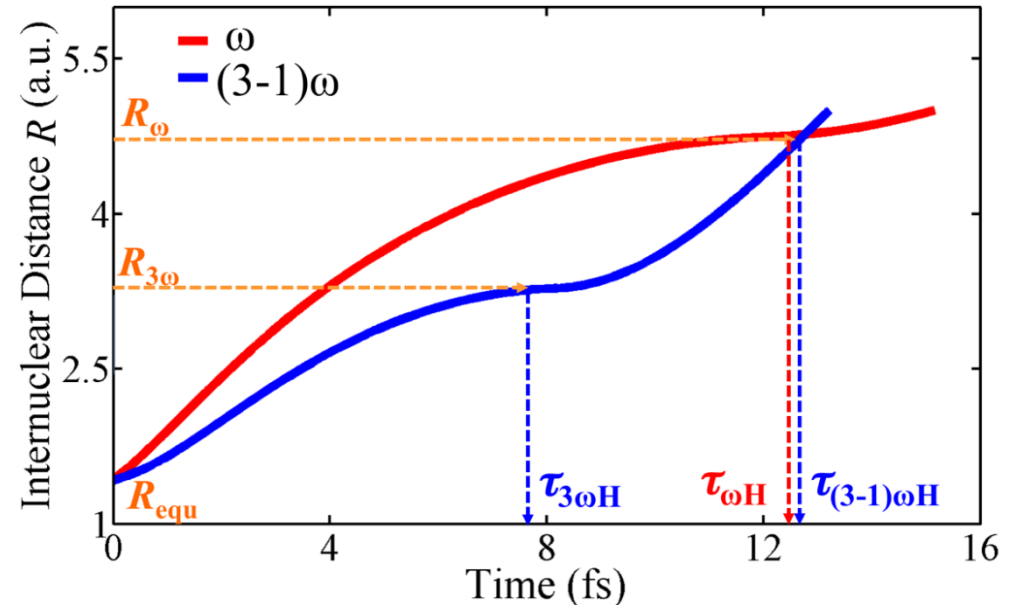
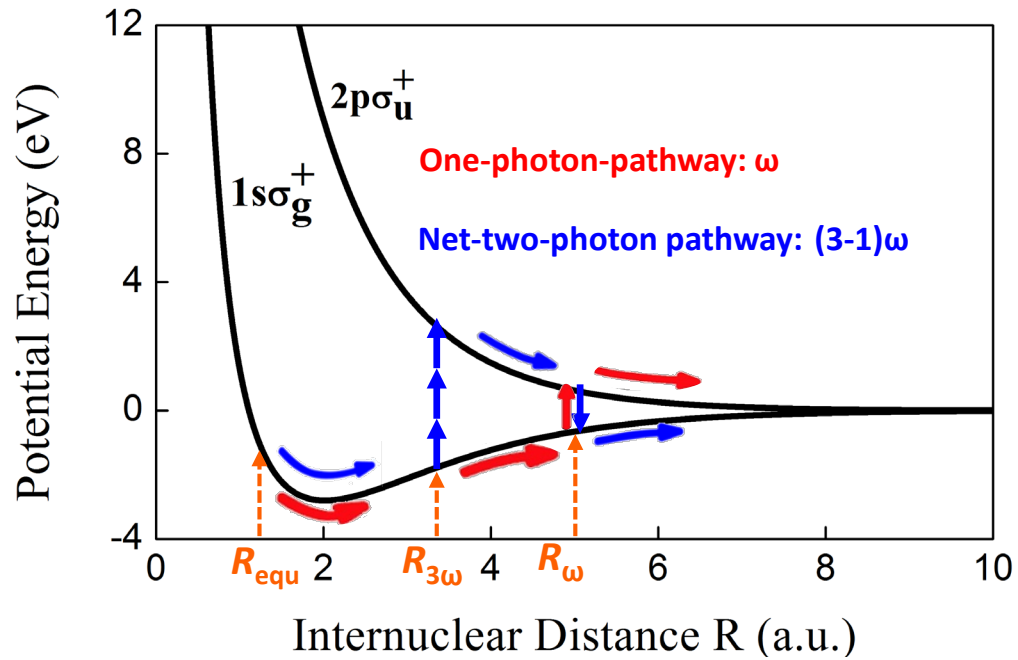
The polarization-skewed laser pulse

multicycle laser pulse

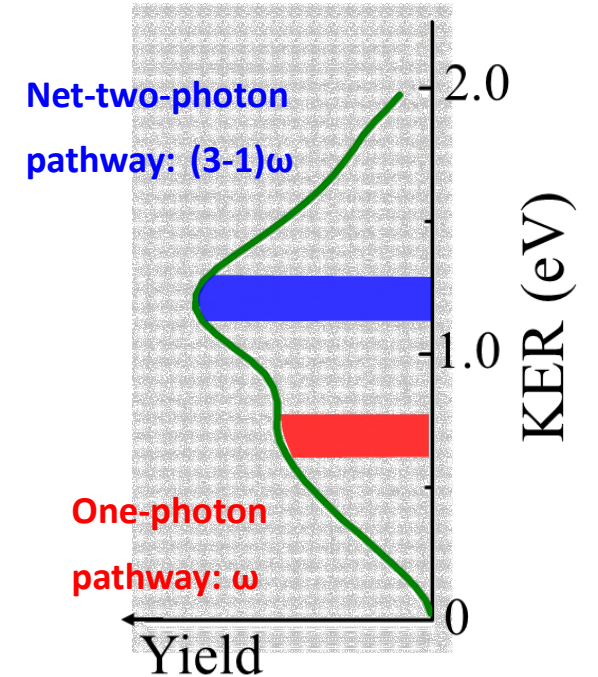
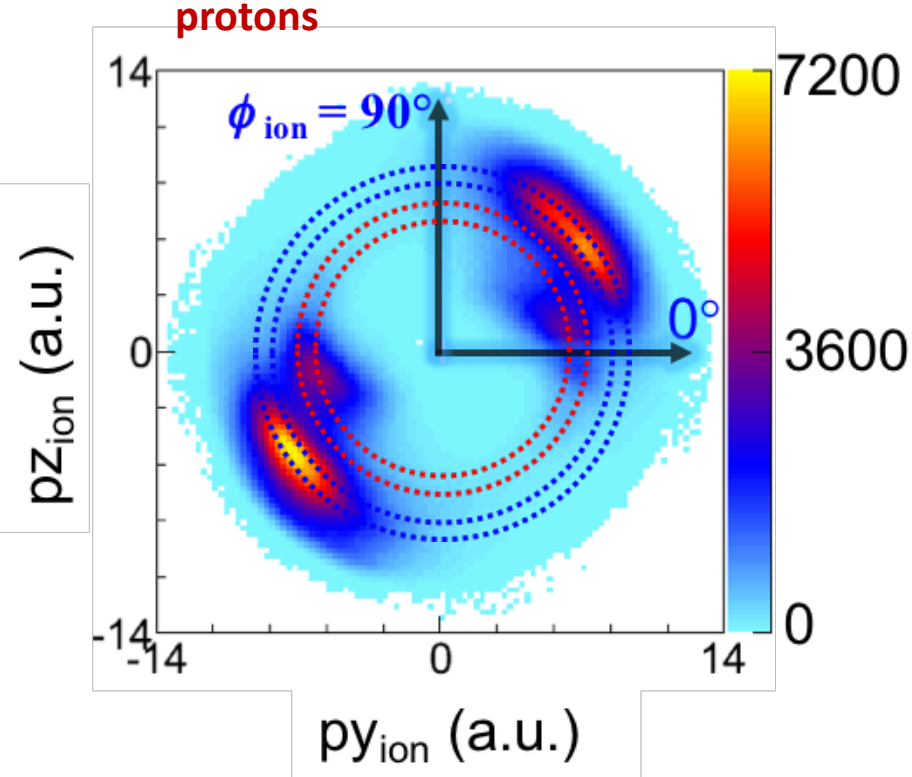
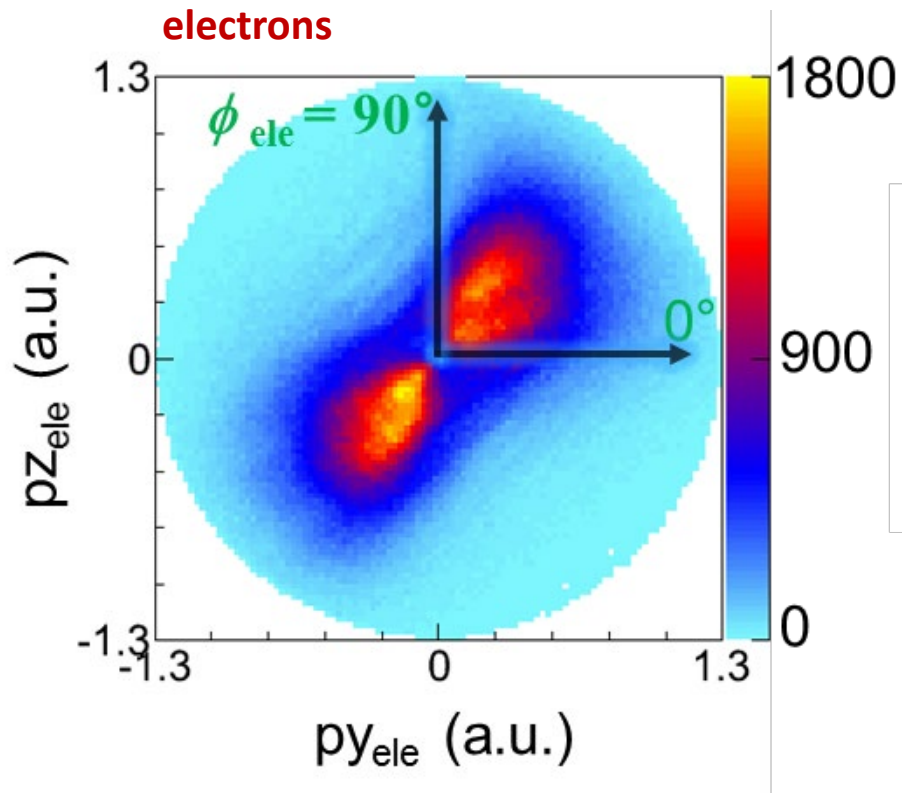
polarization-skewed laser pulse



Clocking dissociative single ionization of H₂

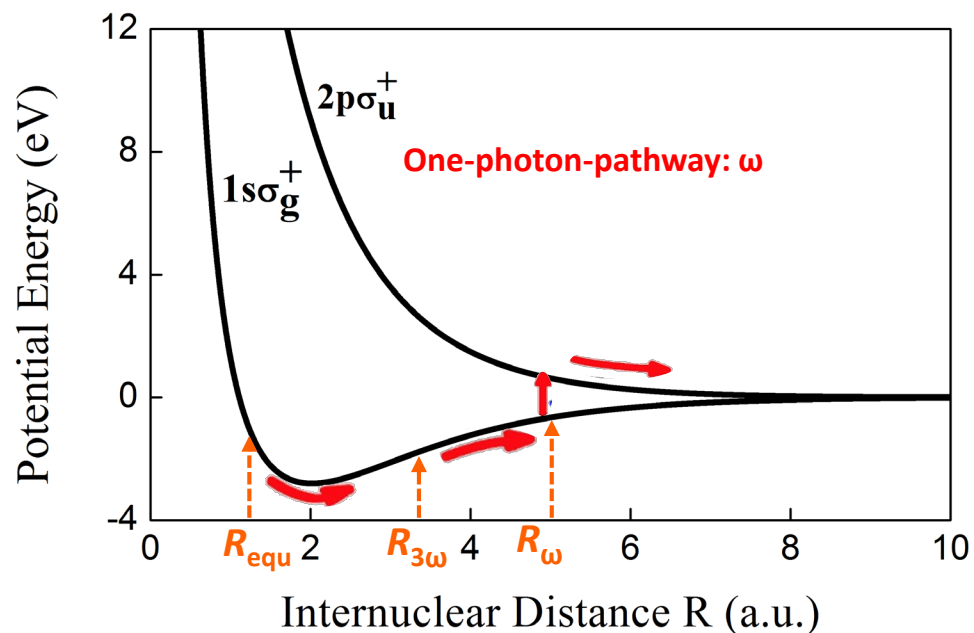


Extraction bond-stretching time: experiments



- KER of proton: distinguish various pathways
- Electron & proton angular distributions: timing using the stopwatch of a PS pulse

Extraction $\tau_{\omega H}$ of the one-photon pathway

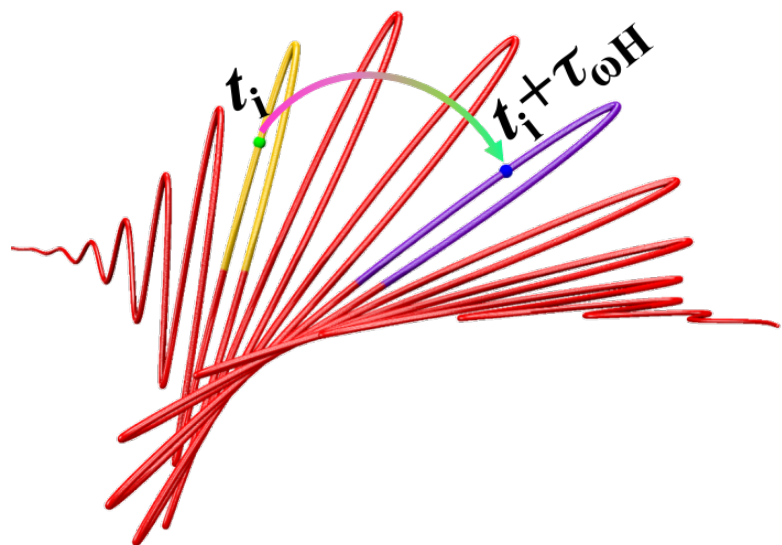


$$P_{id}(t_i, \phi_{mol}) \propto P_i(t_i, \phi_{mol}) P_{\omega d}(t_i + \tau_{\omega H}, \phi_{mol})$$

$$\phi_{mol}: \quad P_i(t) \sim \exp\left(-\frac{(t-t_{si})^2}{\sigma_{si}^2}\right).$$

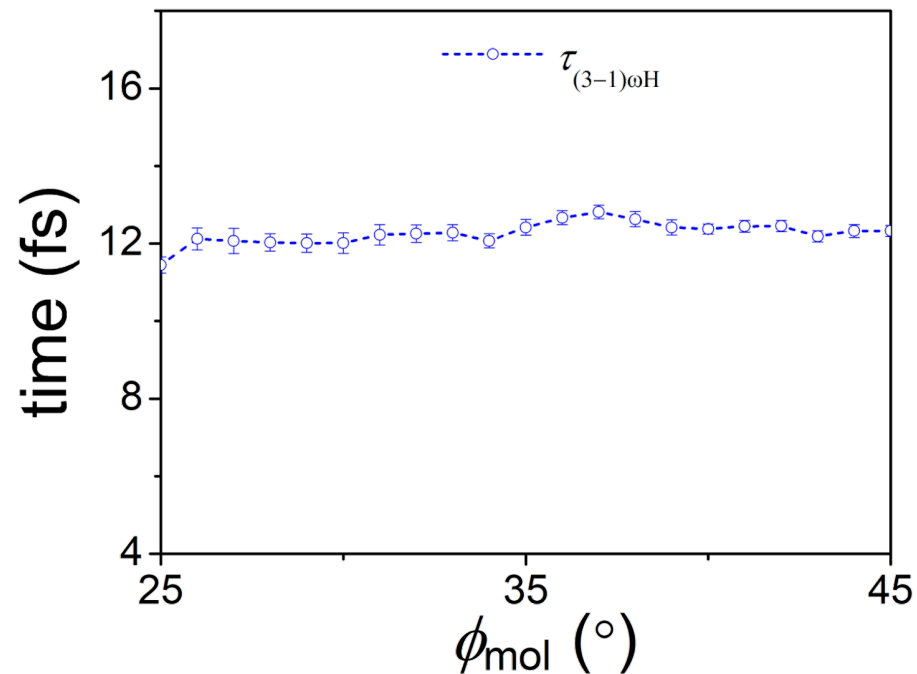
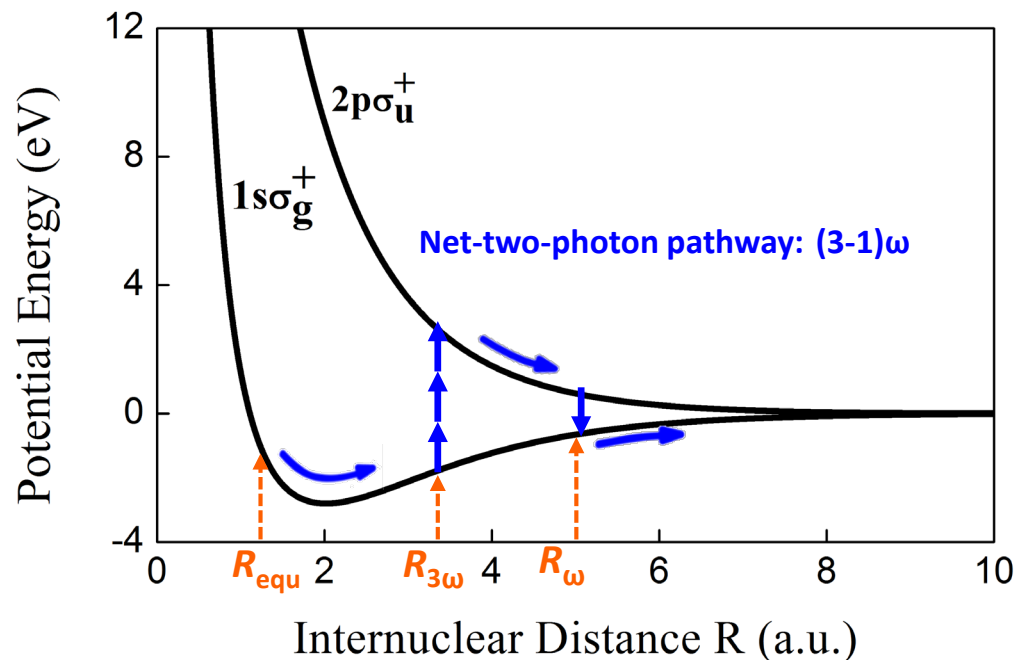
$$P_{\omega d}(t) \sim \exp\left(-\frac{(t-t_{s\omega d})^2}{\sigma_{s\omega d}^2}\right).$$

$$P_{id}(t) \sim \exp\left(-\frac{(t-t_{sid})^2}{\sigma_{sid}^2}\right).$$



$$\tau_{\omega H} = (t_{s\omega d} - t_{sid}) + (t_{si} - t_{sid}) \frac{\sigma_{s\omega d}^2}{\sigma_{si}^2}$$

Extraction $\tau_{(3-1)\omega\text{H}}$ of the net-two-photon pathway

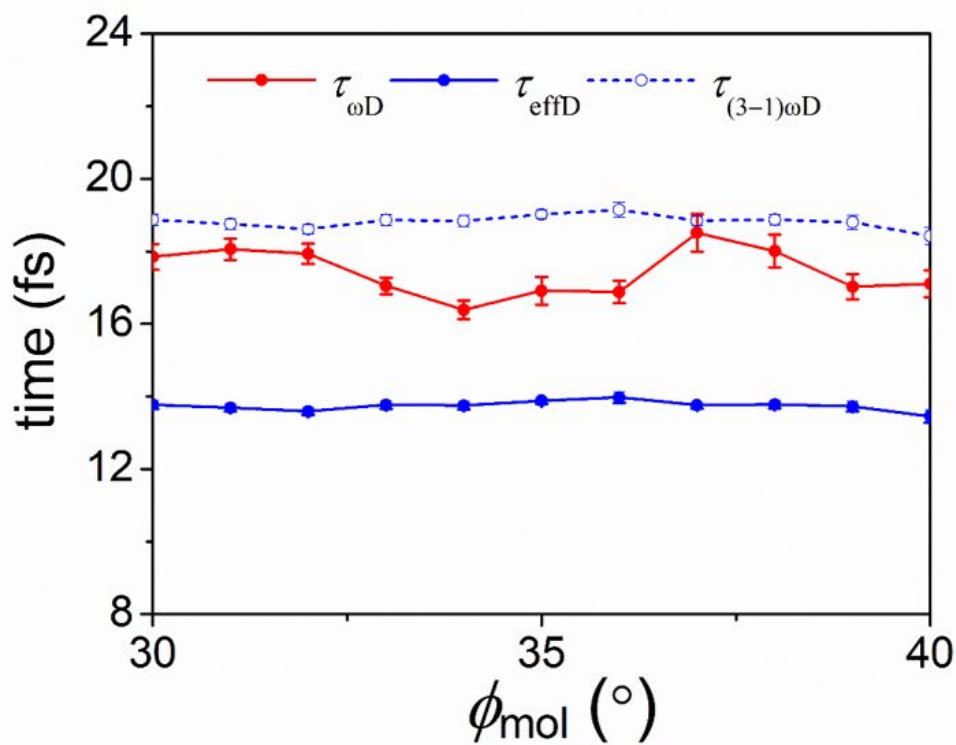
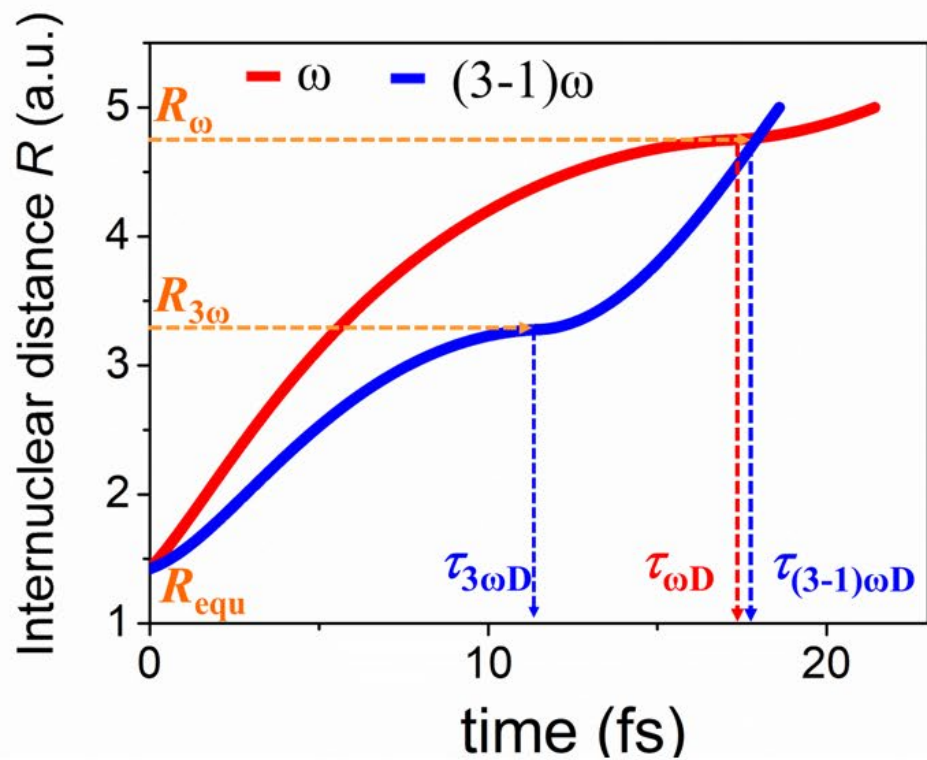


$$\tau_{(3-1)\omega\text{H}} = 12.3 \pm 0.3\text{fs} = \tau_{\omega\text{H}} = 12.8 \pm 0.6\text{fs}$$

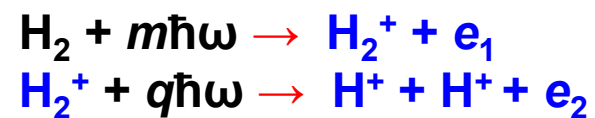
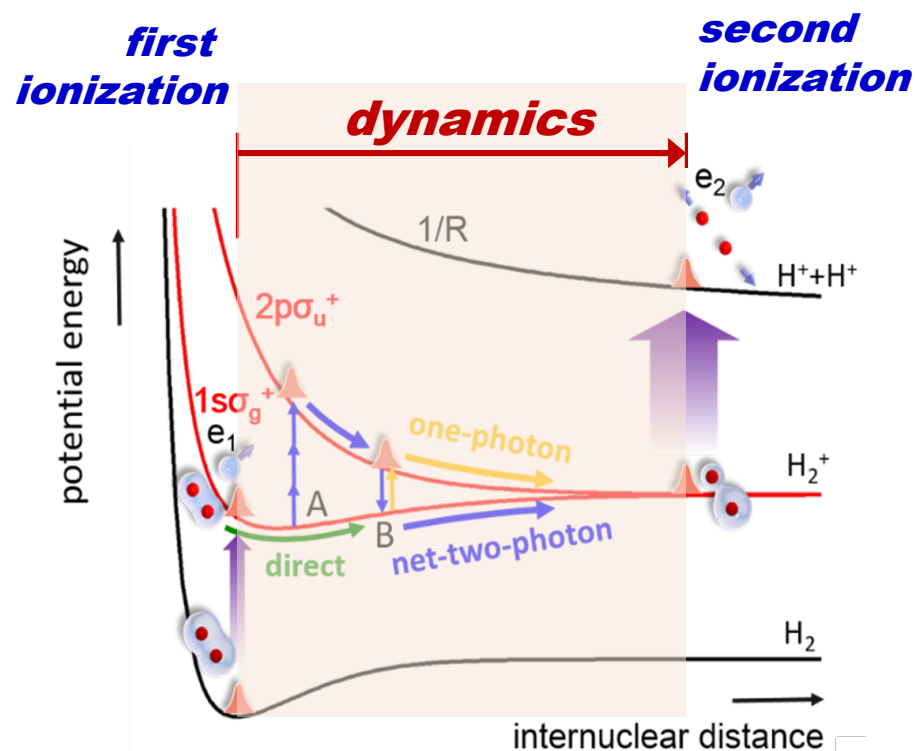


The bond-stretching time of D_2^+

$$\tau_{\omega D} = \sqrt{2} \tau_{\omega H} \quad \tau_{(3-1)\omega D} = \sqrt{2} \tau_{(3-1)\omega H}$$



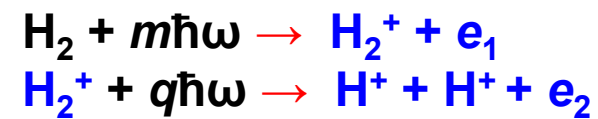
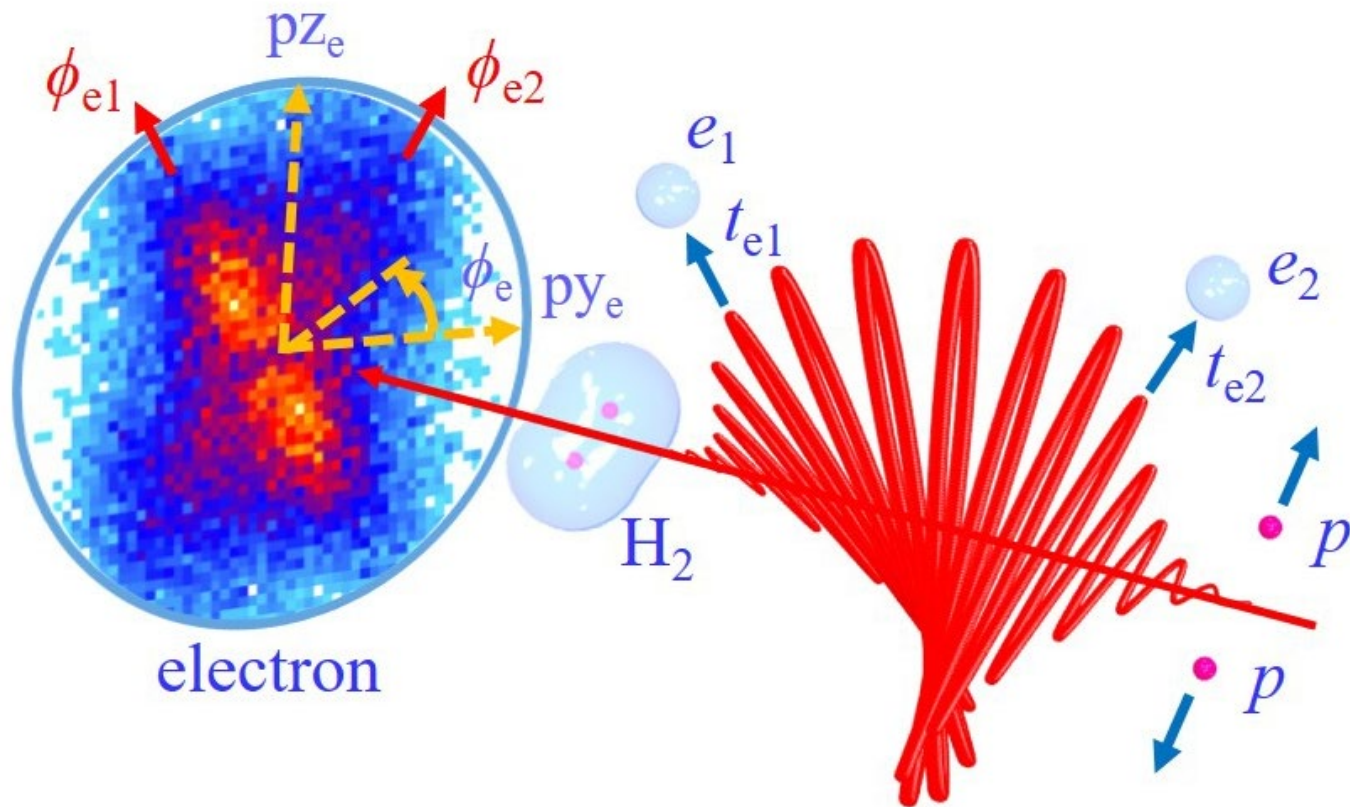
Clocking dissociative double ionization of H₂



Dynamics of ATDI of molecules:

- Only analyzed by the KER spectra
- Real-time observation?
- Time interval between two ionization steps?

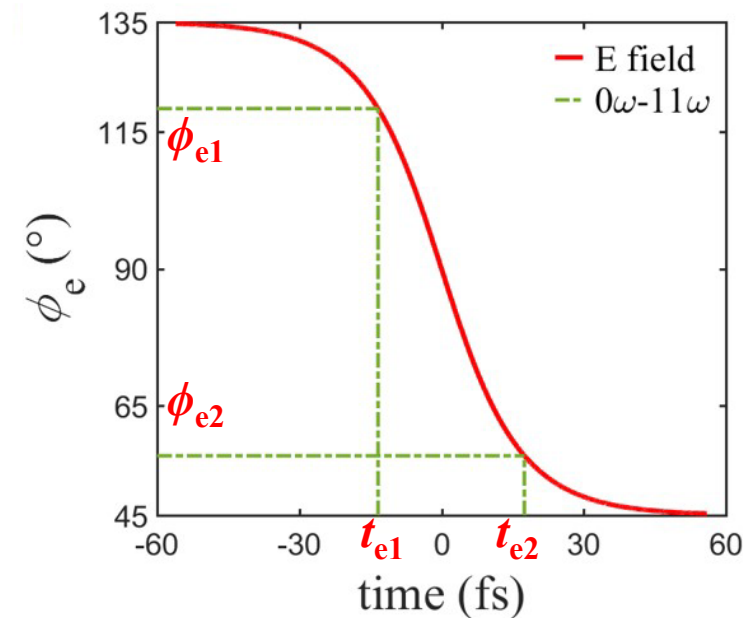
Ultrafast stopwatch: clocking ADTI of H₂



$$\phi_{e1} \rightarrow t_{e1}$$

$$\phi_{e2} \rightarrow t_{e2}$$

$$\Delta t = t_{e2} - t_{e1}$$



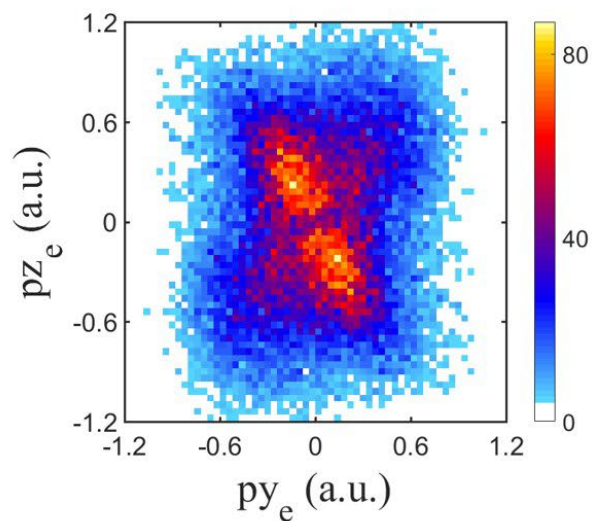
Pathway-resolved momentum distribution of e_1 & e_2

Direct pathway

$0\omega-11\omega$

30.9 fs (exp.)

29.1 fs (sim.)

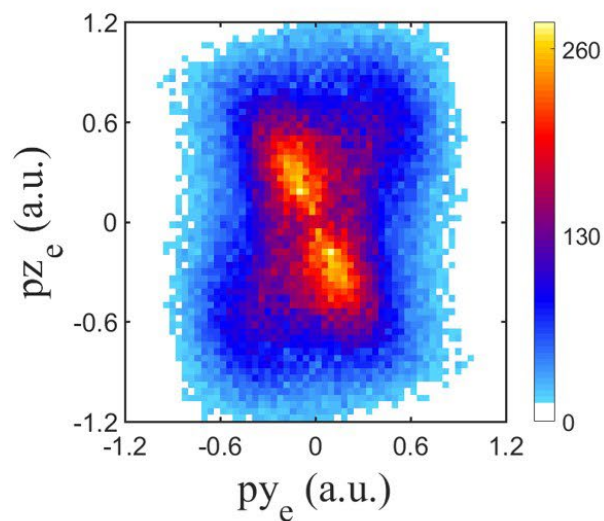


One-photon pathway

$1\omega-11\omega$

25.6 fs (exp.)

25.6 fs (sim.)

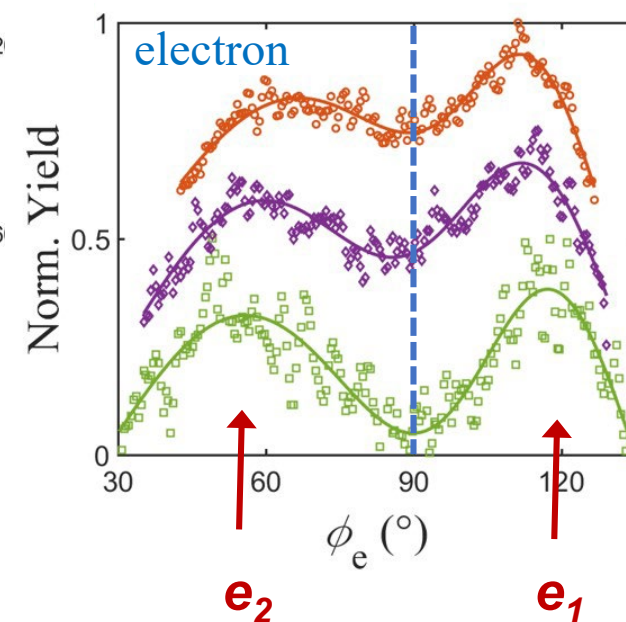
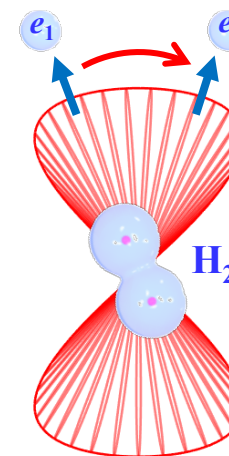
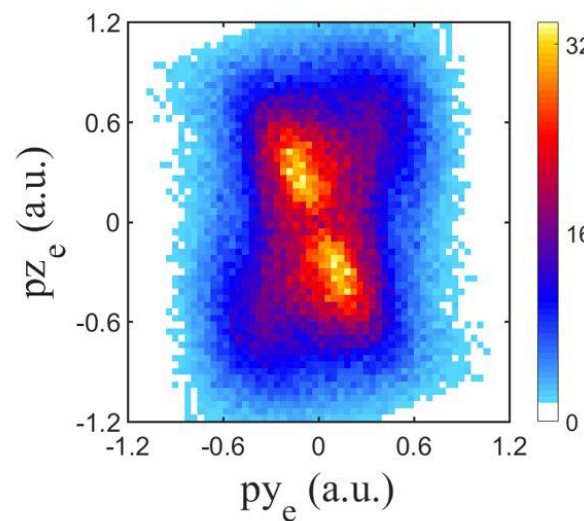


Net-two-photon pathway

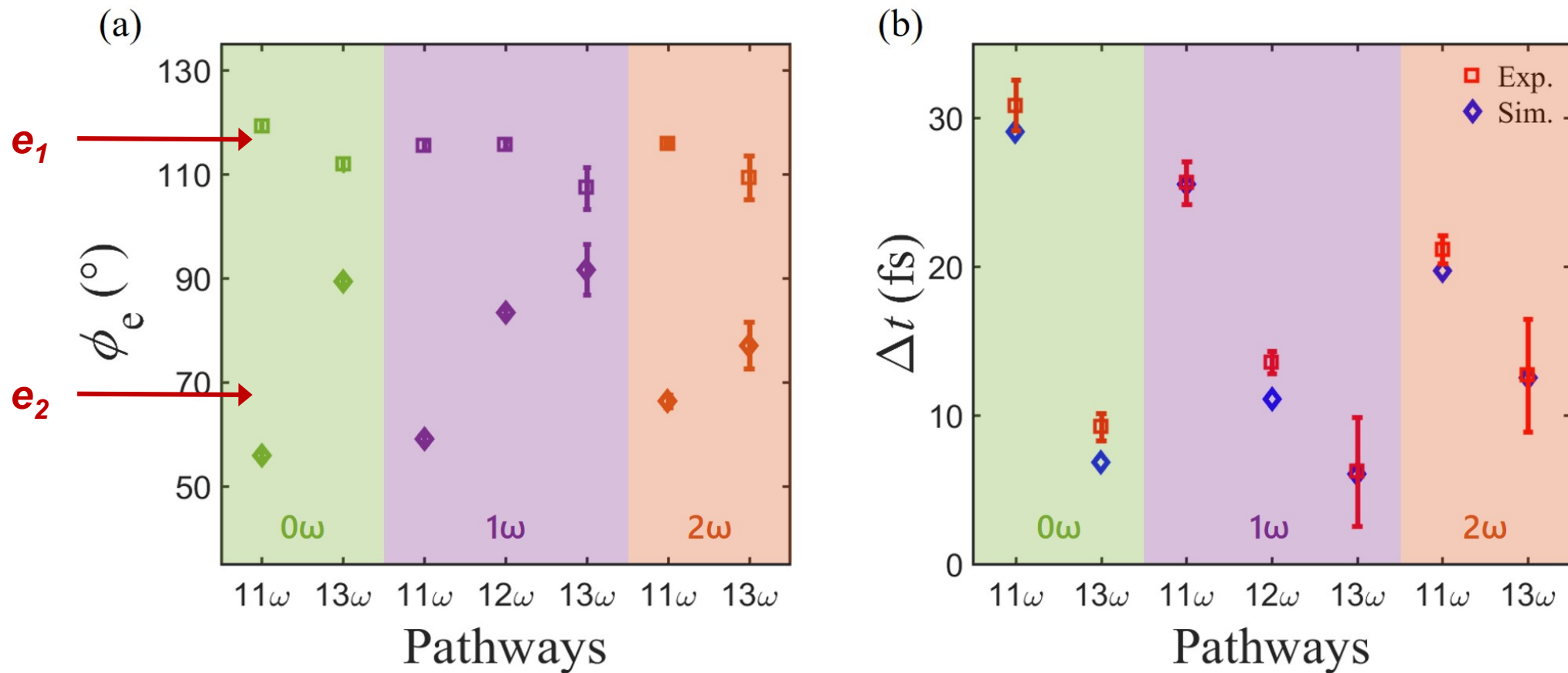
$2\omega-11\omega$

21.1 fs (exp.)

19.8 fs (sim.)

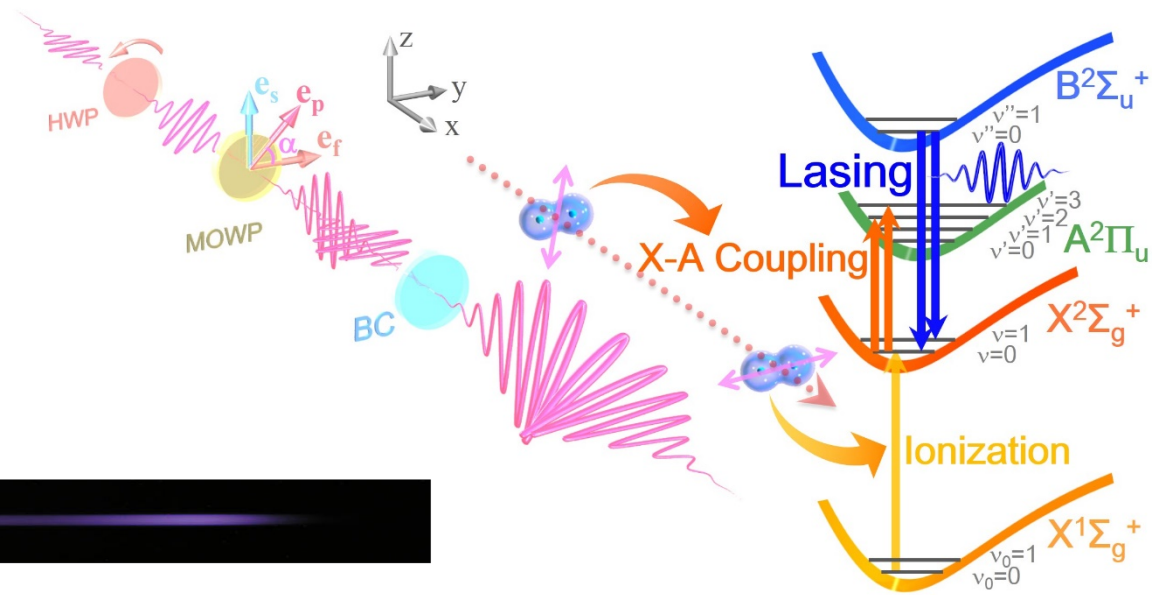


Measured vs. simulated timings of ATDI



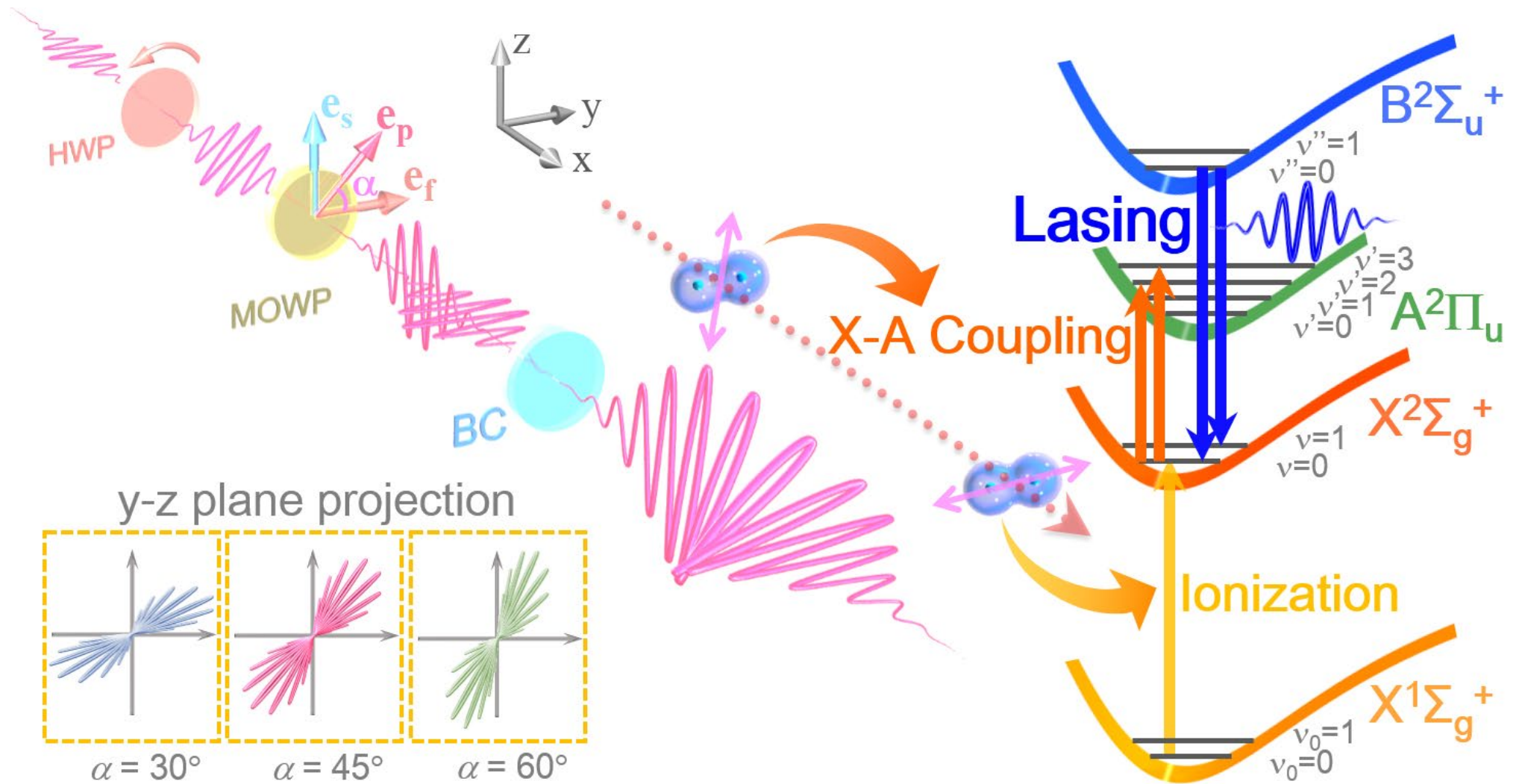
Experimentally resolved time intervals agree well with classically simulated results.

Optimization of N_2^+ lasing by waveform-controlled polarization-skewed pulses



femtosecond filamentation in air

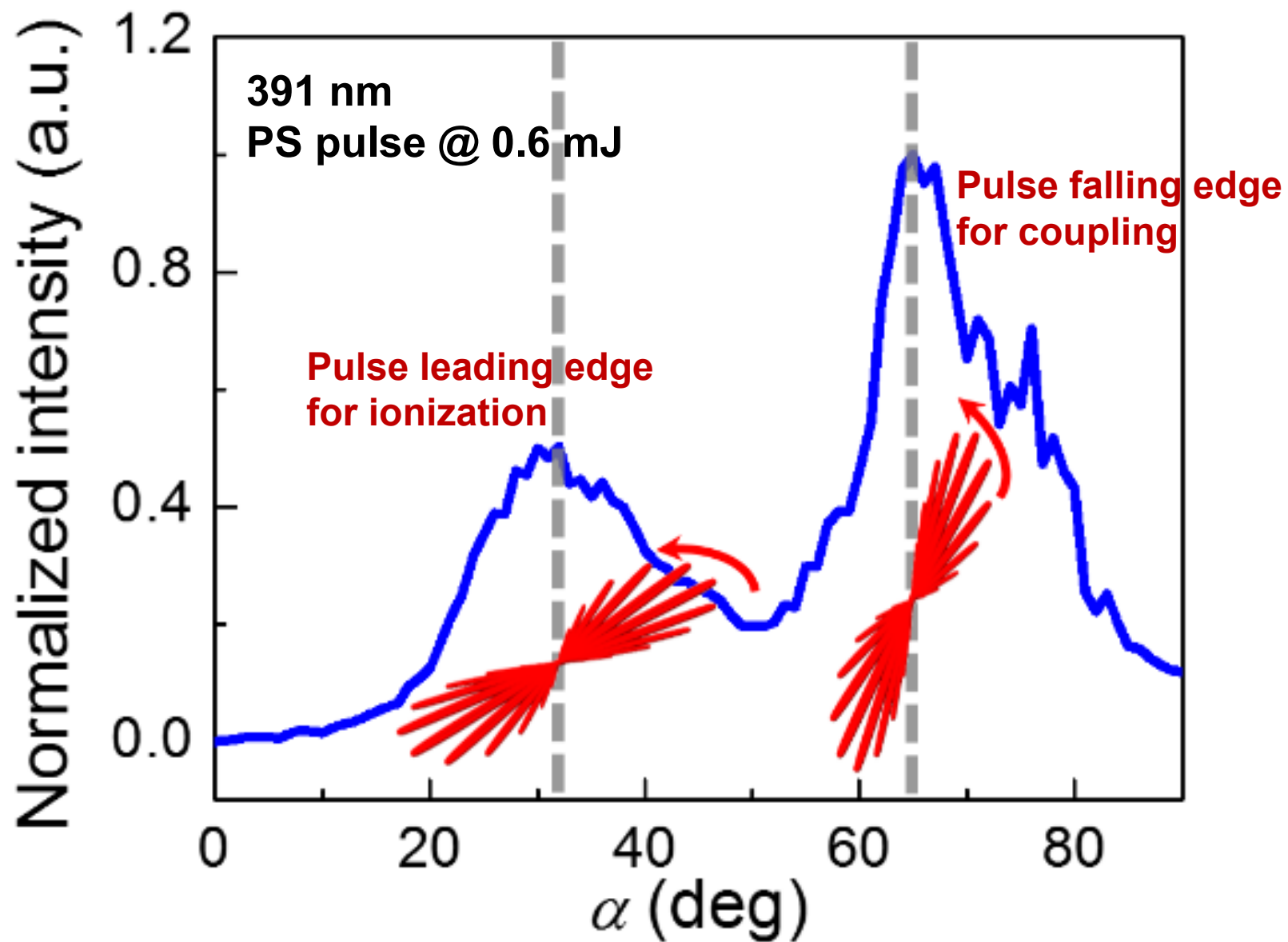
Spatiotemporal waveform shaped PS pulse for N_2^+ lasing



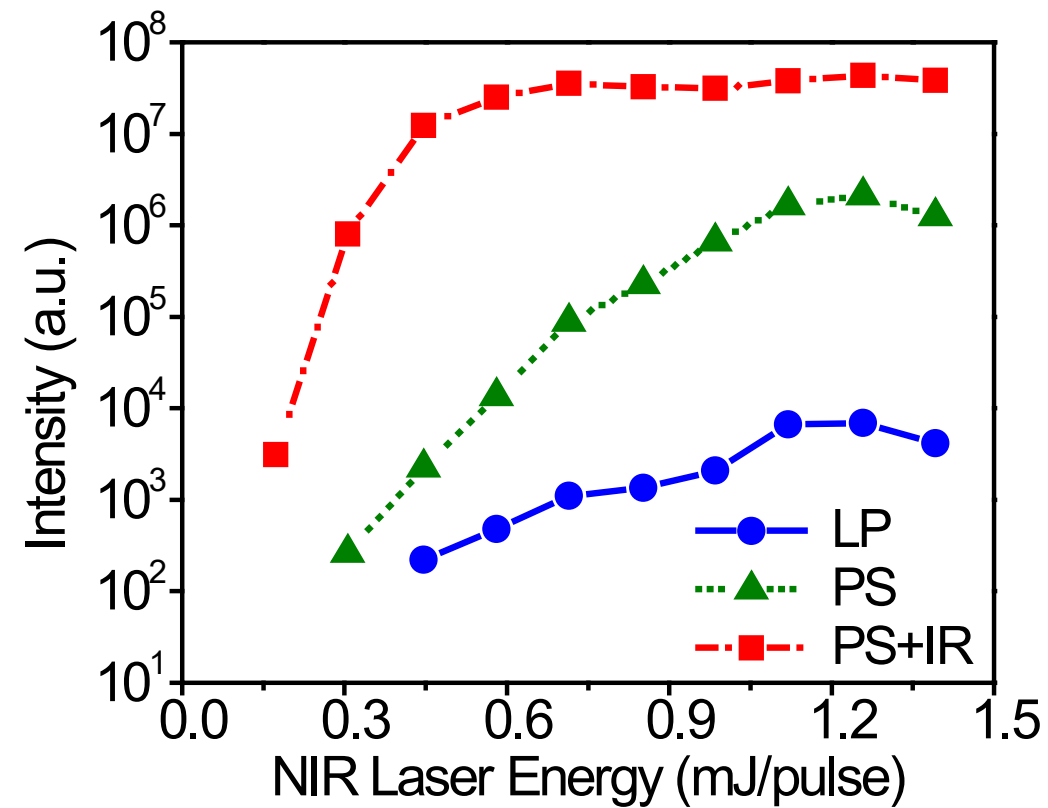
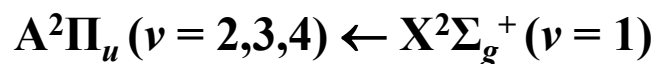
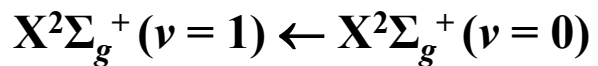
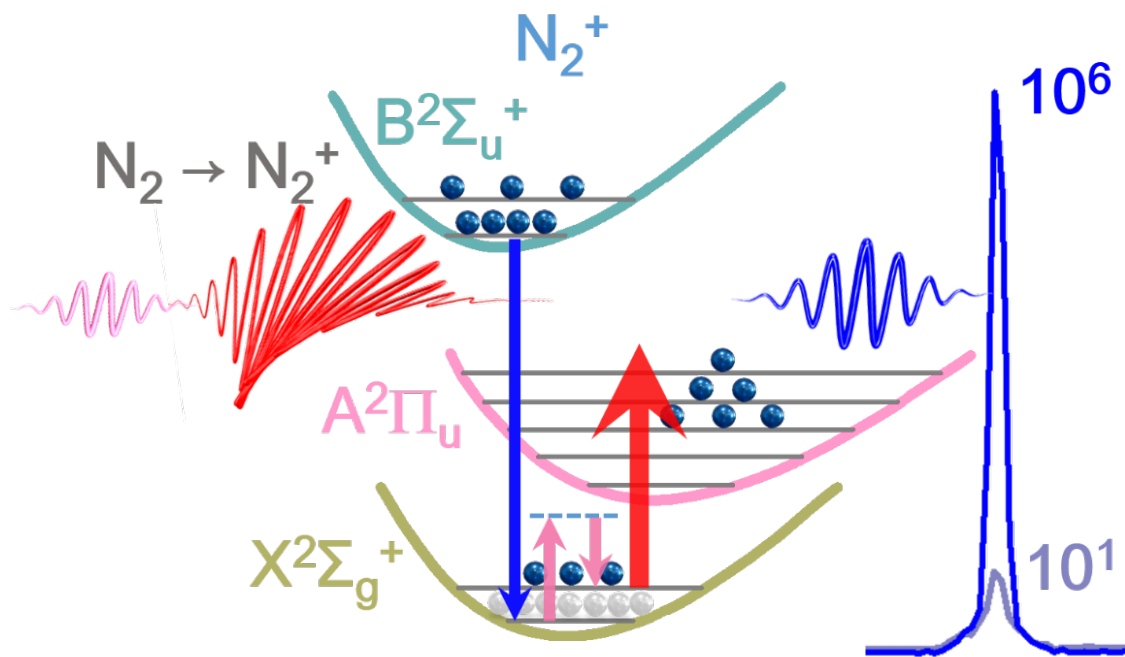
H. Li *et al*, Phys. Rev. Lett. 125, 053201 (2020).

H. Li *et al*, Opt. Lett. 45, 6591 (2020).

Optimizing 391 nm lasing by PS pulse



Enhanced N_2^+ lasing by pulse shaping

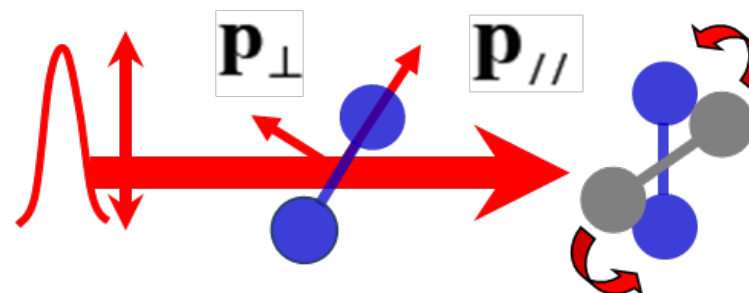
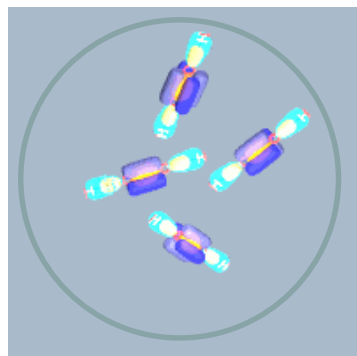


Outline

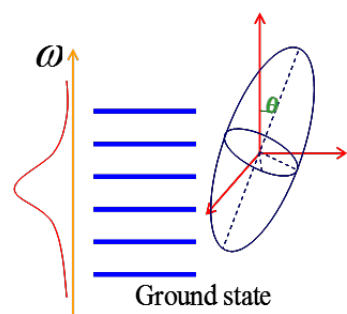
- **Background Introduction**
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Strong-field Rydberg excitation of molecules
An ultrafast stopwatch to clock molecular bond stretching
- **Ro-vibrational dynamics of the nuclear wave-packet**
Visualizing unidirectional molecular rotation
Echoes of molecules
All-optical 3D orientation of molecules
- **Attosecond dynamics of electrons: visualization and control**

Visualizing unidirectional molecular rotation

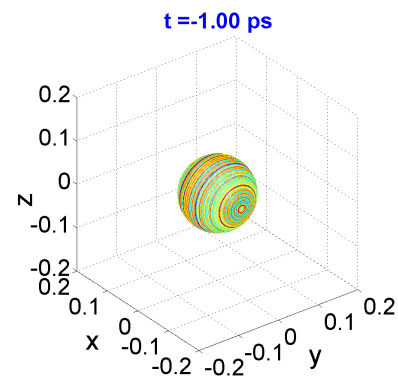
Laser induced alignment of molecules



molecular alignment: impulsive



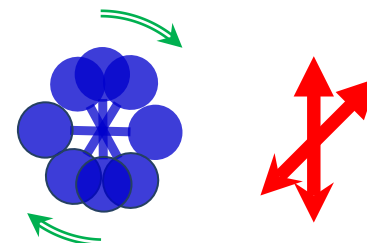
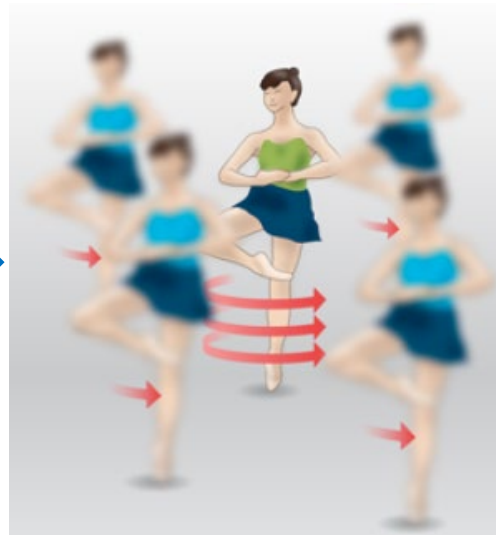
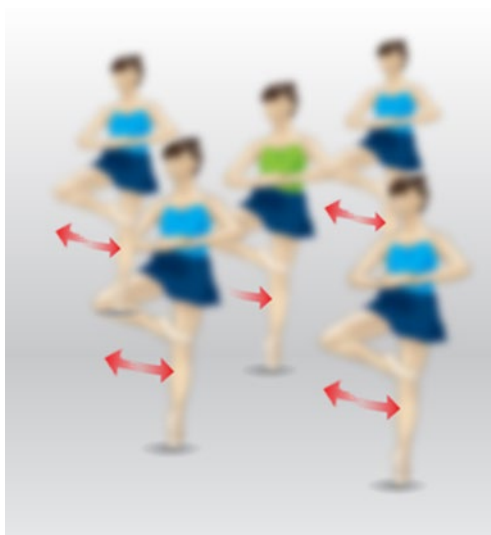
Impulsive rotational Raman excitation



Quantum dynamics: rotational wave packet

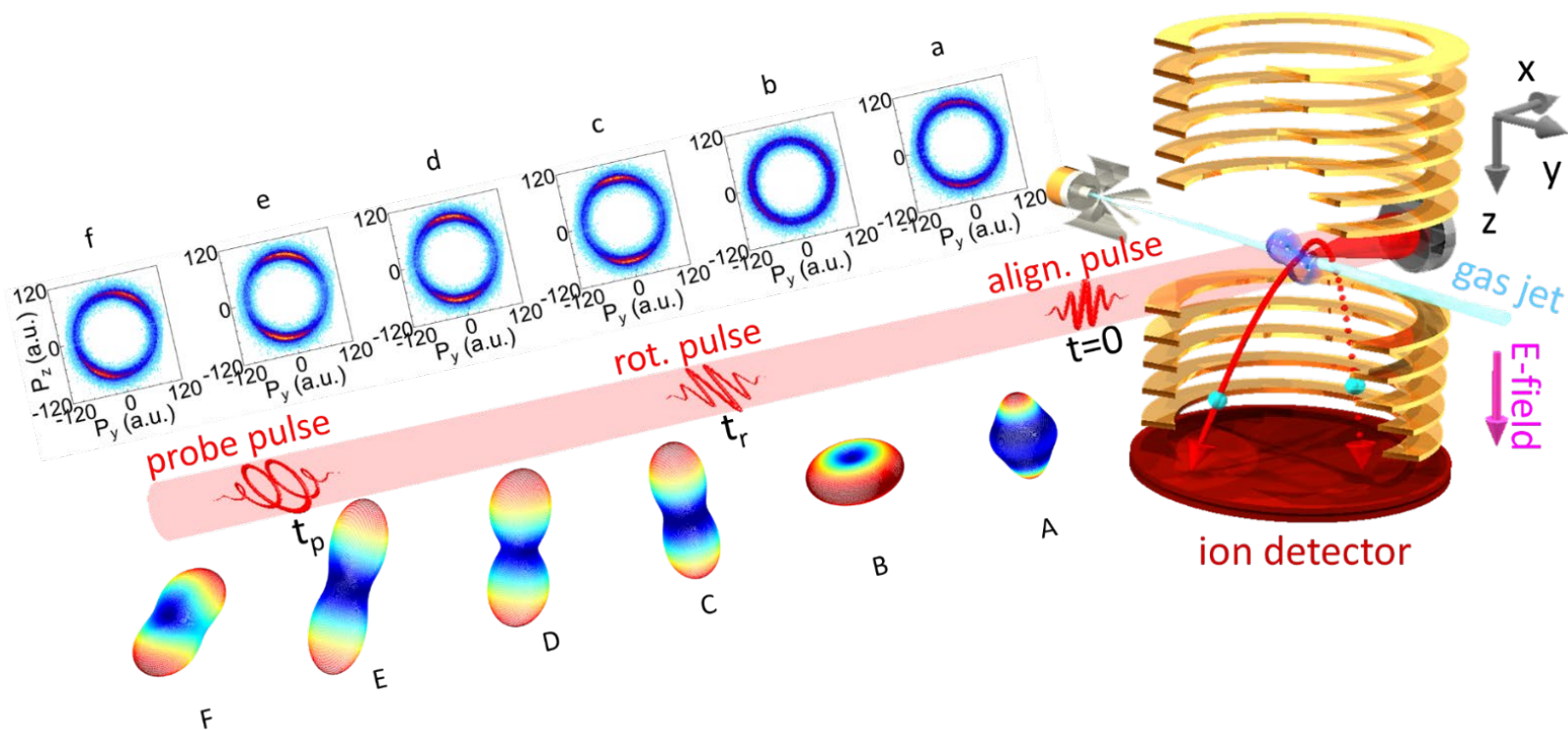
Molecular unidirectional rotation

Molecular unidirectional rotation (UDR): molecular super-rotor



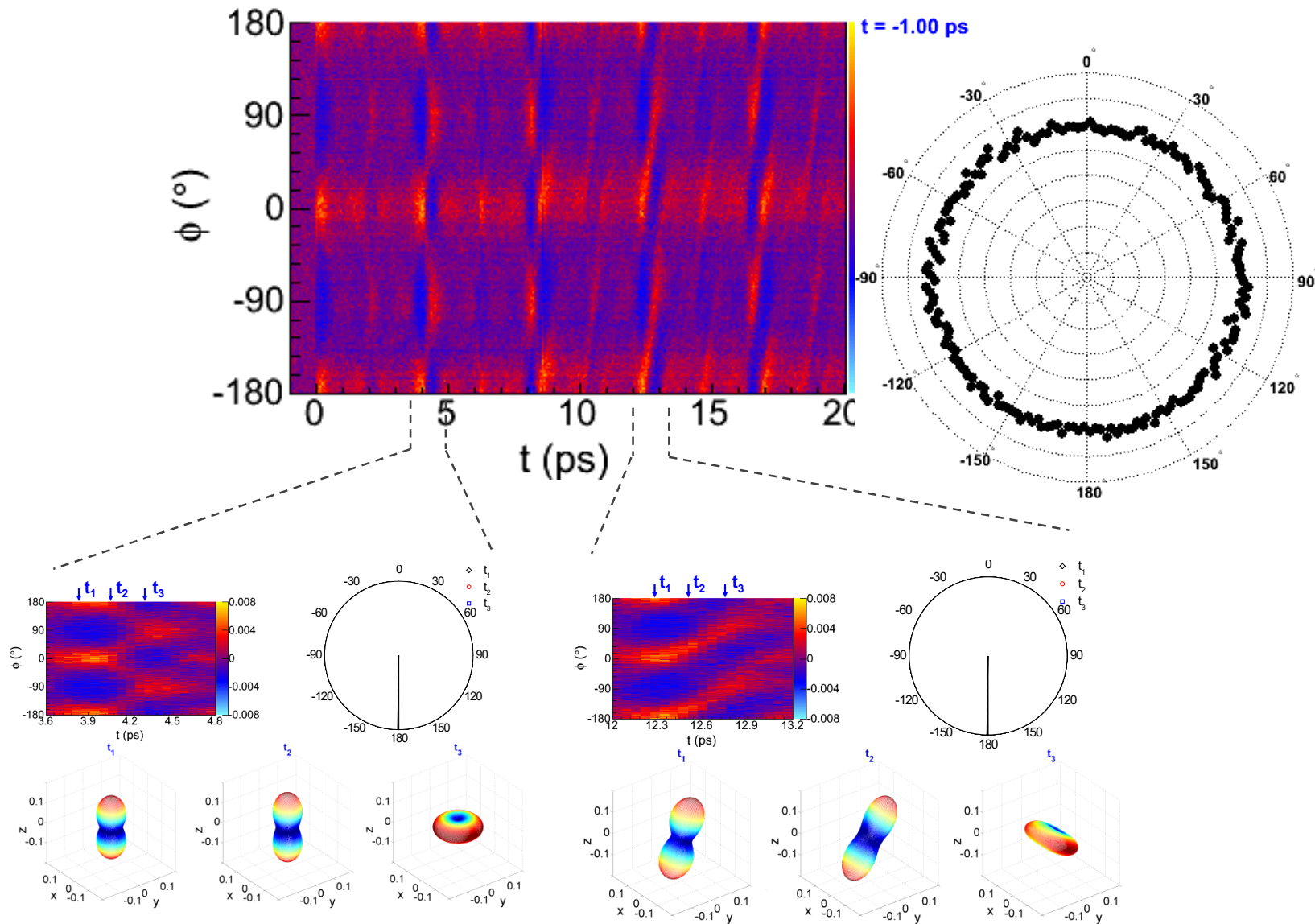
Visualizing rotational wave-packet

Femtosecond coincidence imaging:
Coulomb explosion of molecule

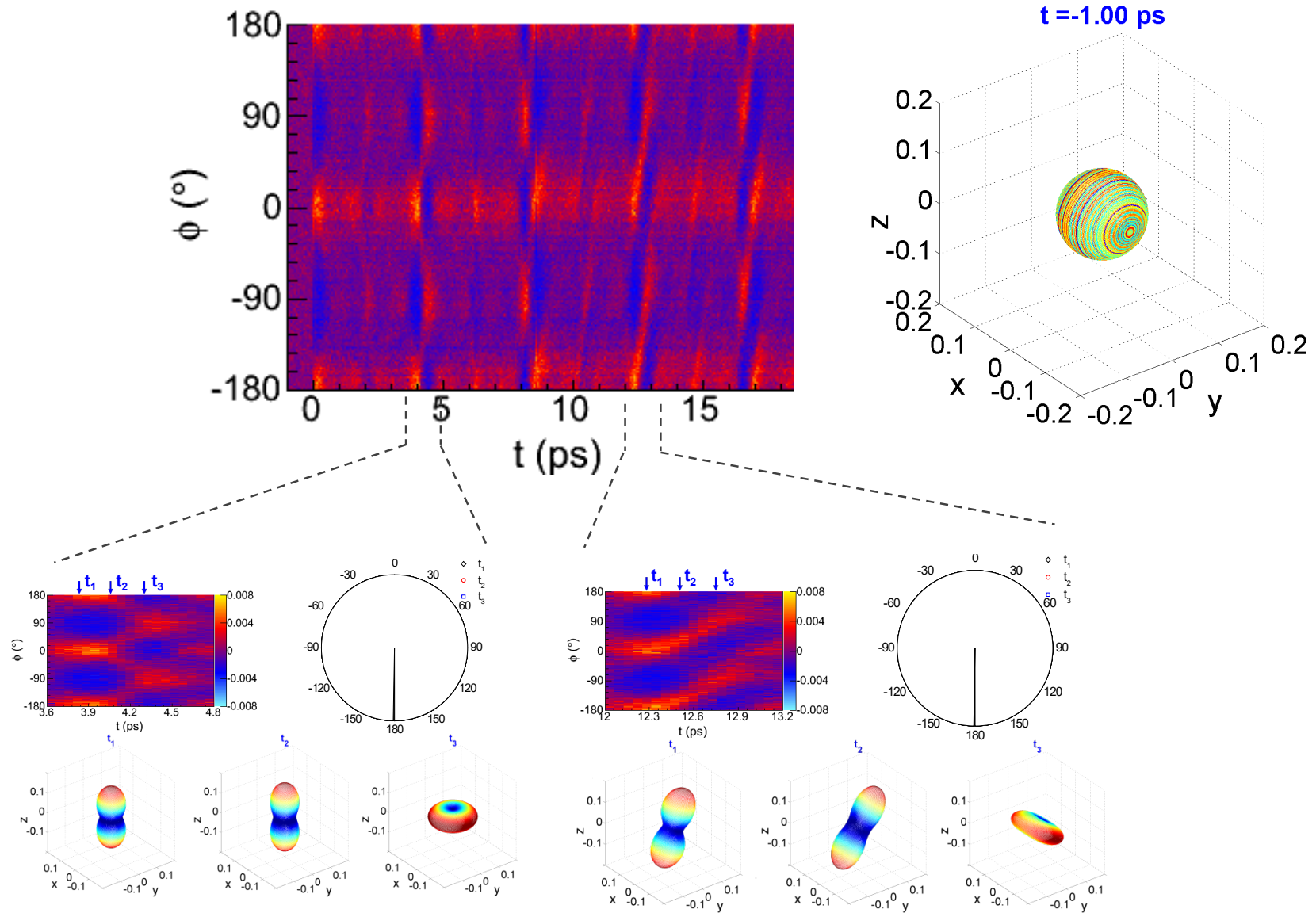


K. Lin *et al.*, PRA 92, 013410 (2015).

Visualizing molecular angular distribution: UDR



Visualizing molecular angular distribution: UDR



Echoes of molecules: rotational & vibrational excitation

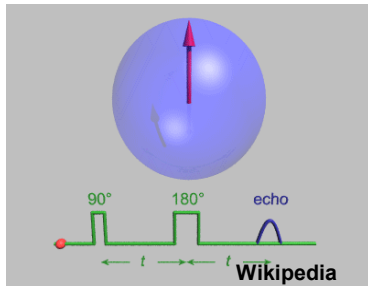


Alignment echoes of molecules



Echo in mountains:
acoustic pulse mirrored by rocks

Spin echo



PHYSICAL REVIEW X

Highlights Recent Subjects Accepted Authors Referees Search Press About Staff

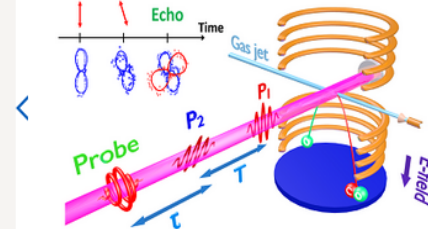
NEW ARTICLE

Echoes in Space and Time

Kang Lin *et al.*

Phys. Rev. X 6, 041056 (2016)

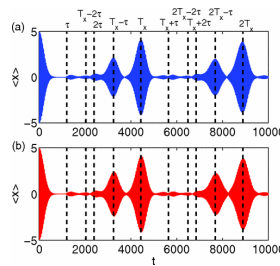
Echo is a fundamental phenomenon observed in both nature and in scientific technique: resonance imaging. Now, researchers demonstrate new echo phenomena in the oriented molecules excited by femtosecond lasers.



K. Lin *et al.*, PRX 6, 041056 (2016).

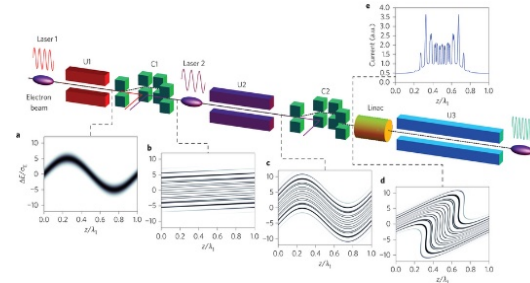
Alignment echoes of molecules

Cold atoms



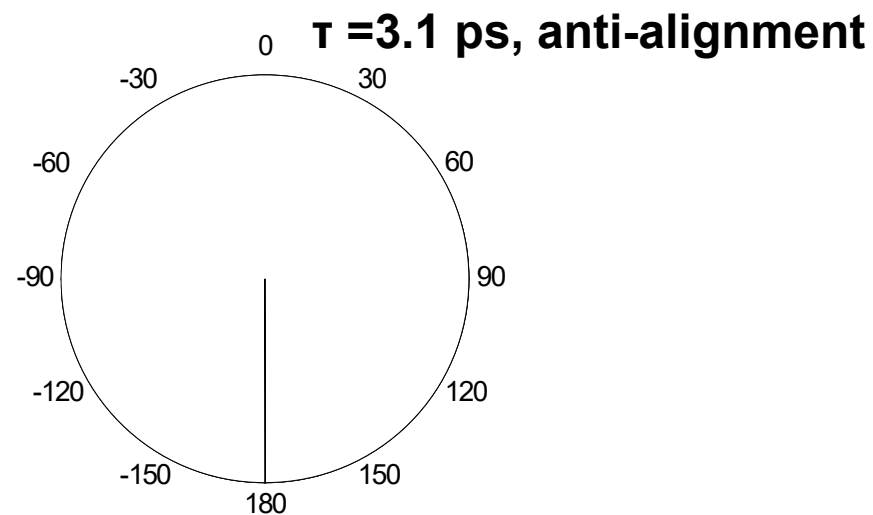
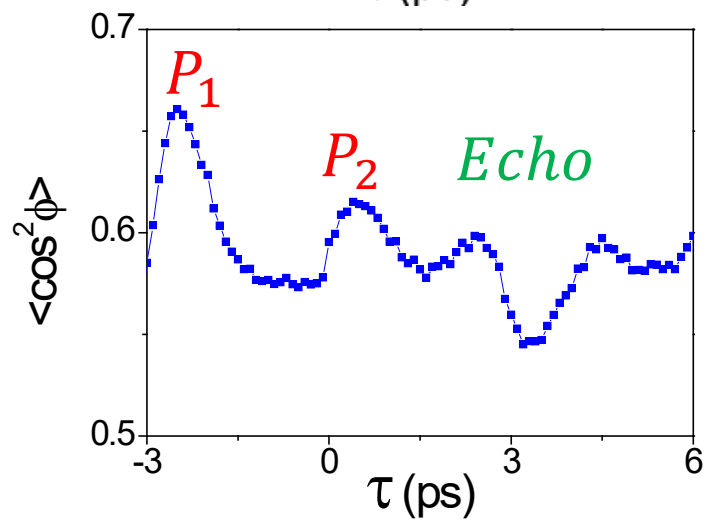
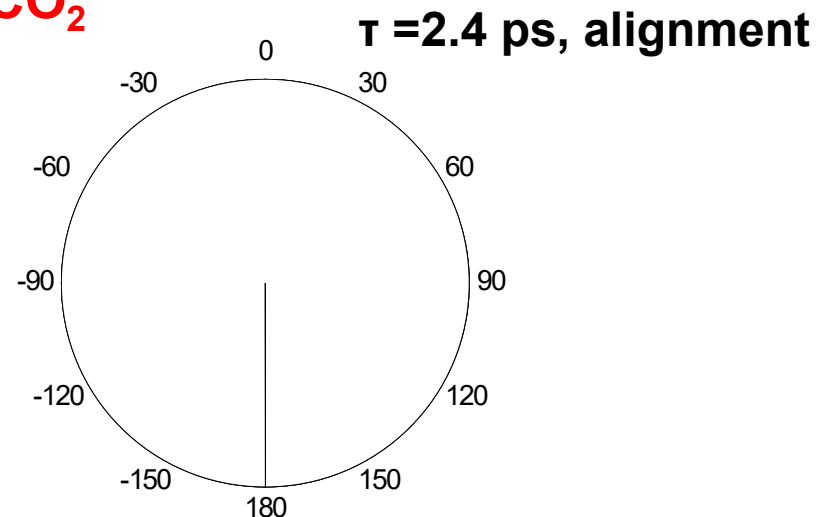
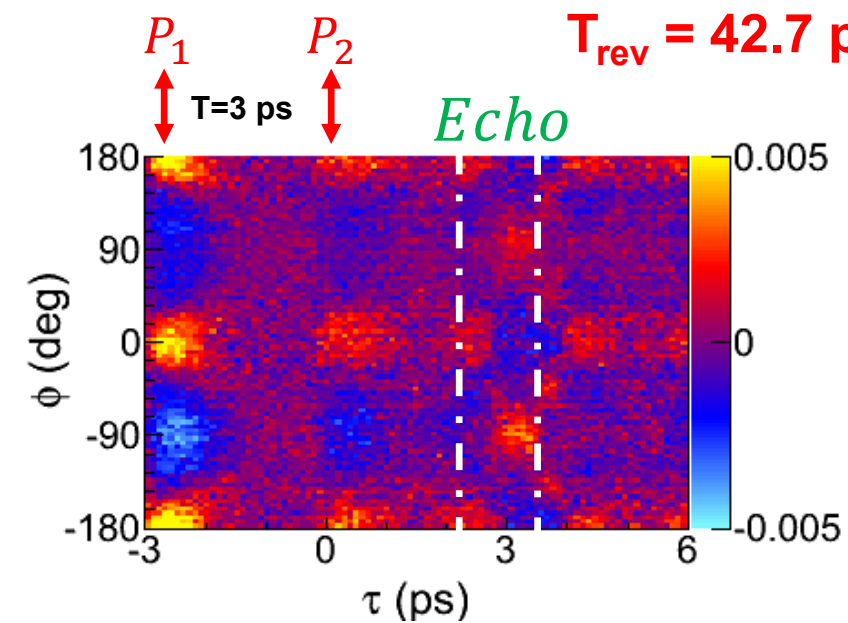
Phys. Rev. A 86, 023613 (2012).

Free-electron lasers



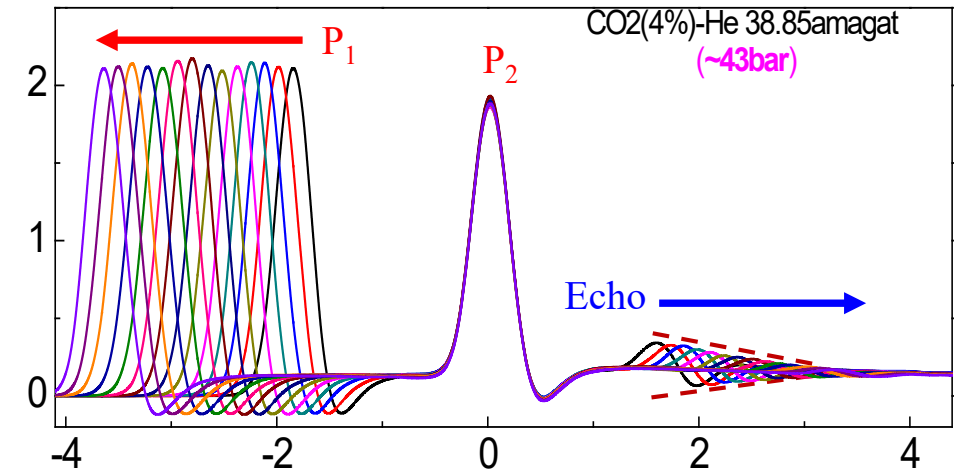
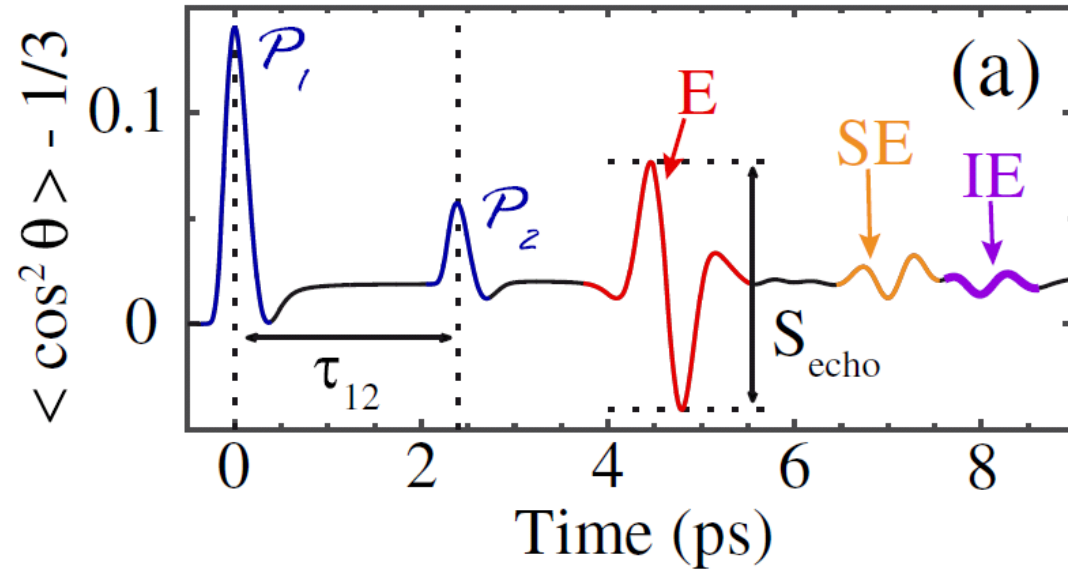
Nature Photonics 10, 512 (2016).

Alignment echoes of molecules: full echoes



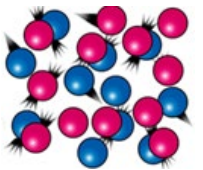
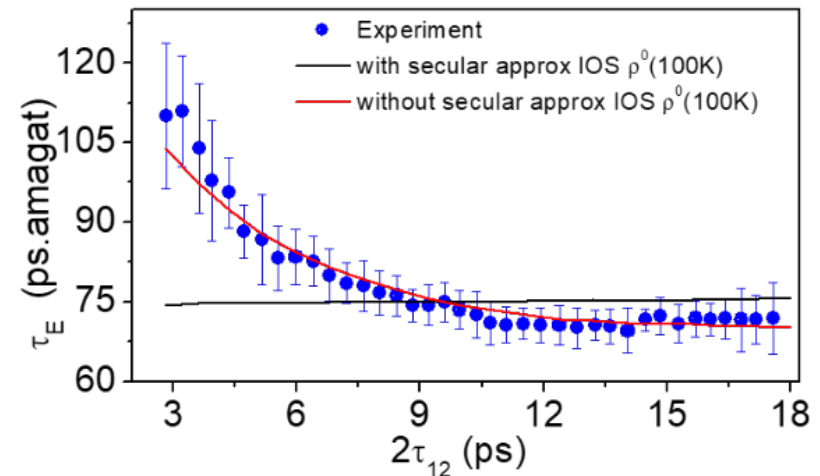


Collisional decay of rotational echoes: dense target

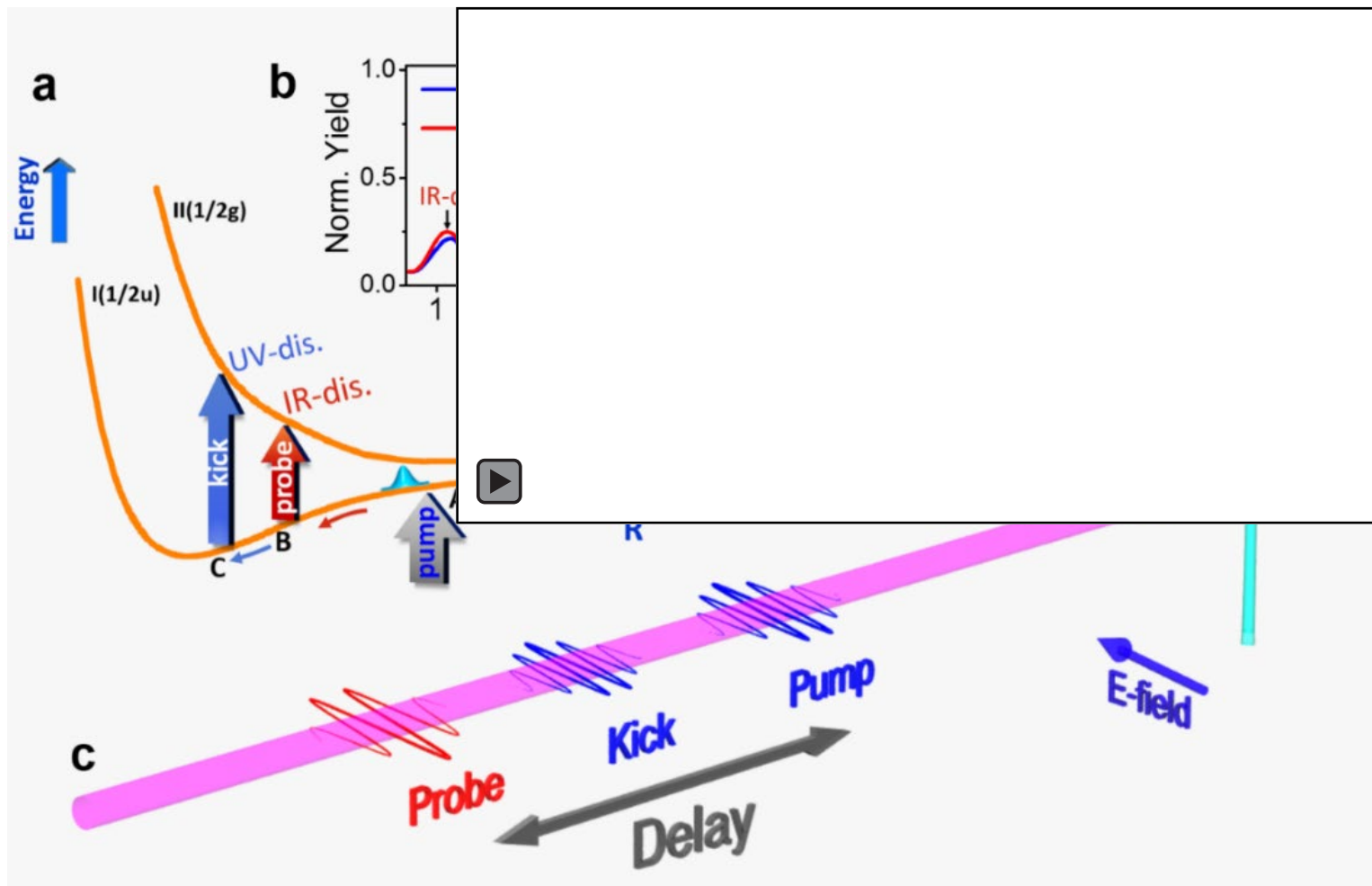


- Timing of the echo is controllable
- Collisional molecular dynamics in dense gas

H. Zhang *et al.* Phys. Rev. Lett. 122, 193401 (2019).
J. Ma *et al.*, Nature Communications 10, 5780 (2019).

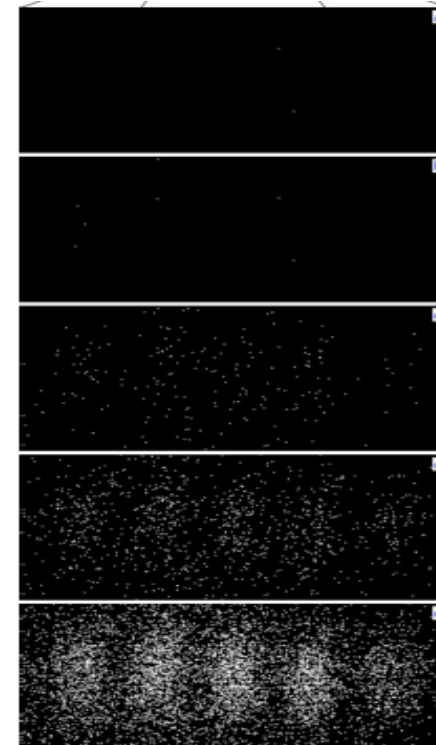
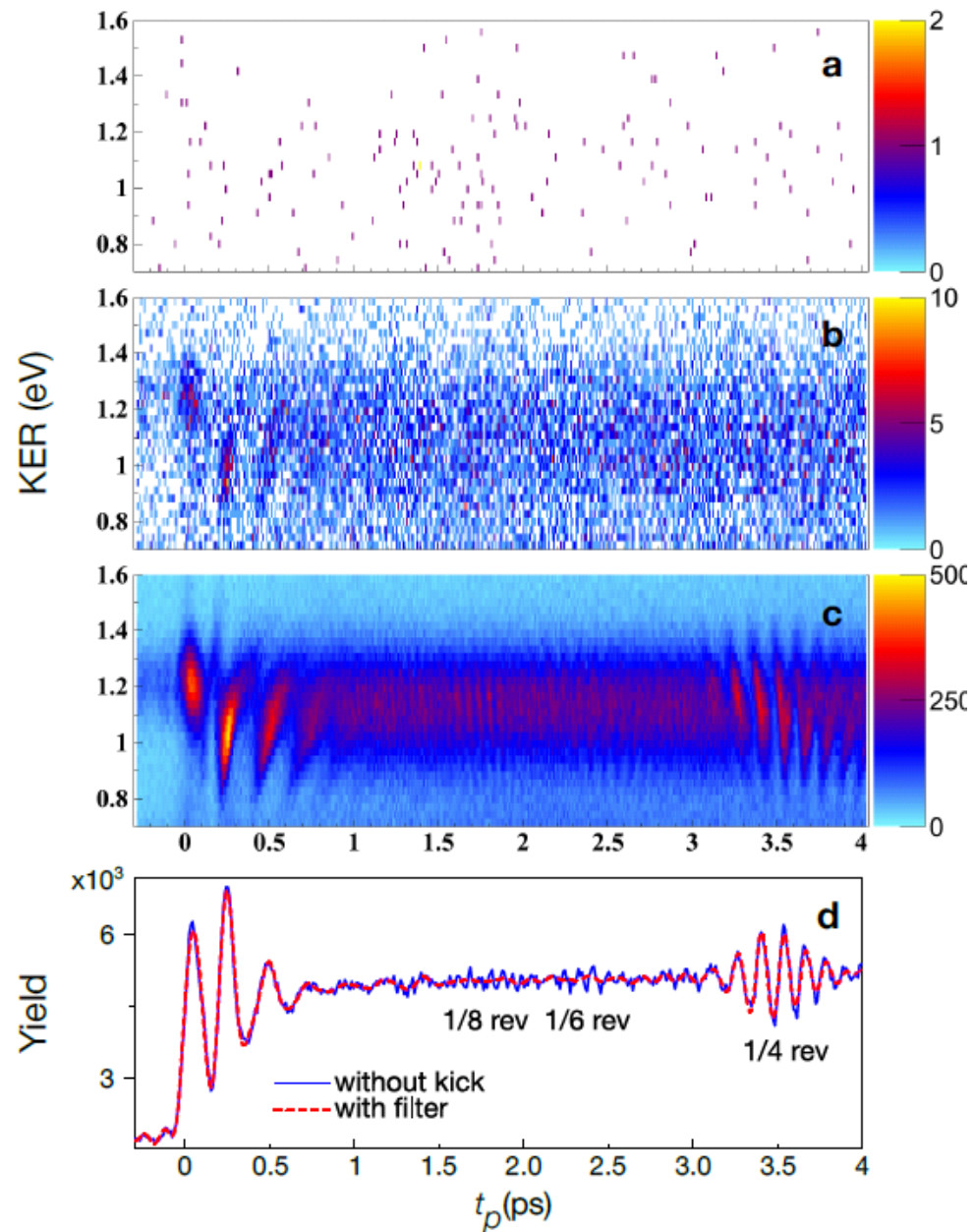


Echoes of vibrational excitation



J. Qiang *et al.*, Nature Physics 16, 328 (2020).
J. Wu *et al.*, Phys. Rev. Lett. 110, 033005 (2013).

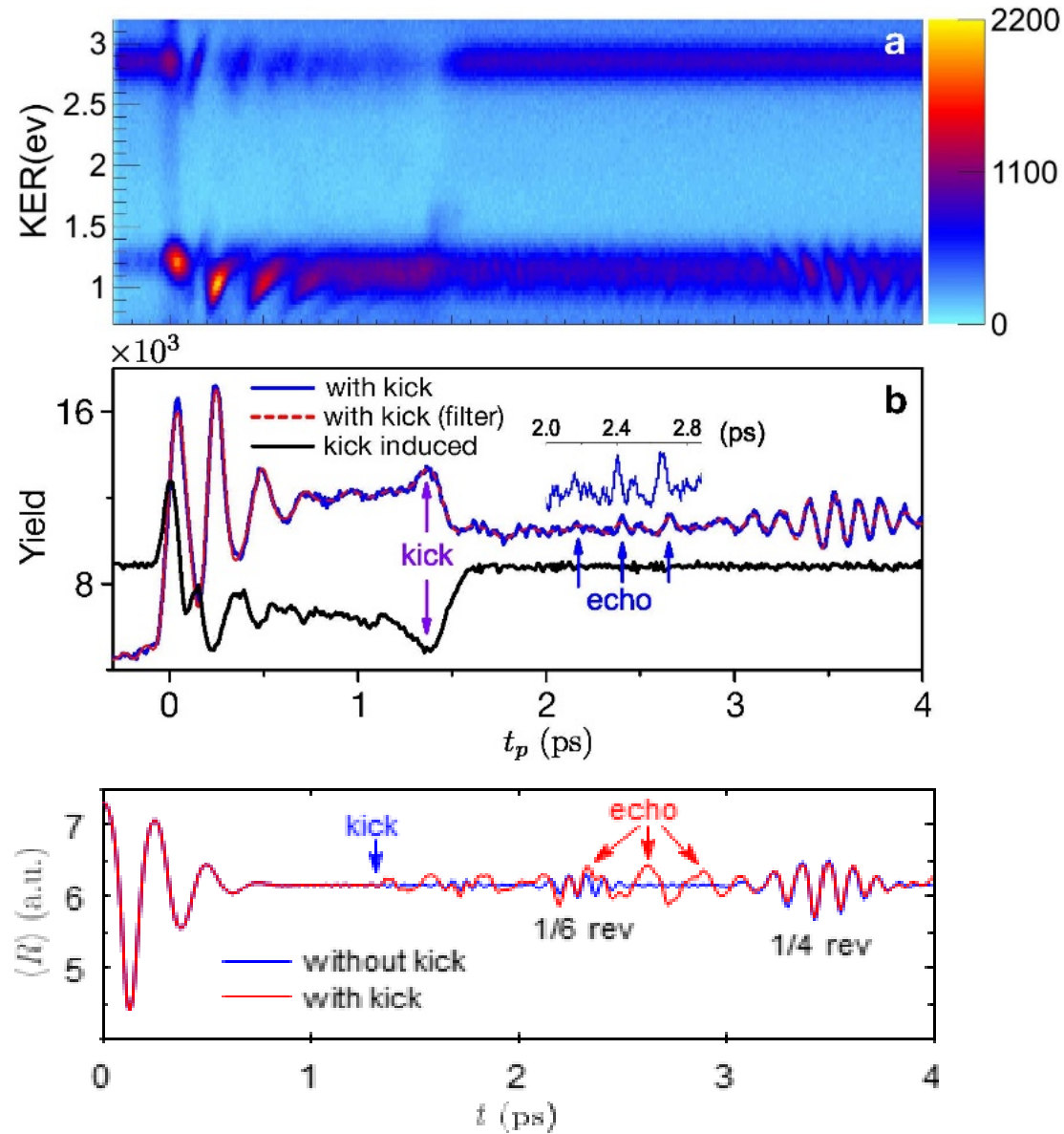
Vibrational wave-packet dynamics



single electron experiment



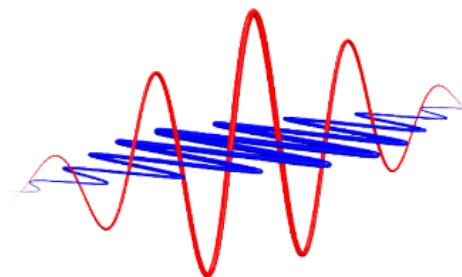
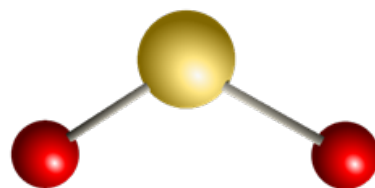
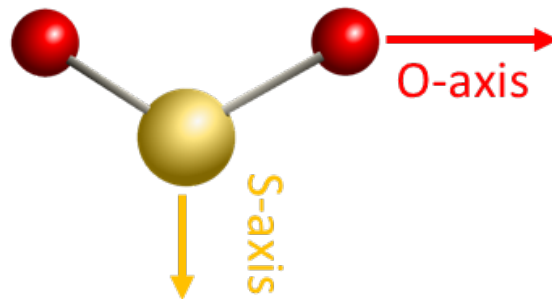
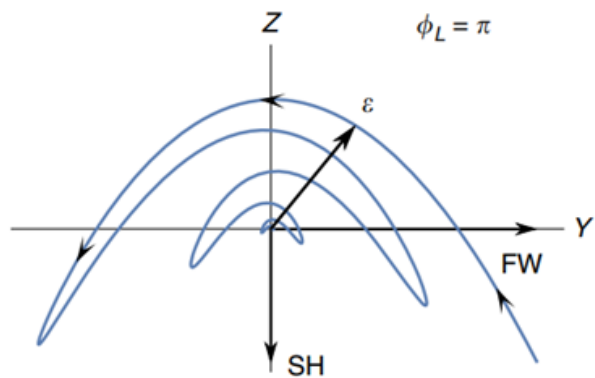
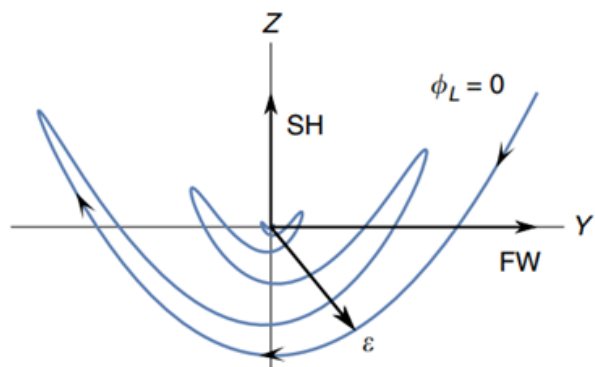
Echoes of vibrational excitation in a single molecule



All-optical 3D orientation of molecules



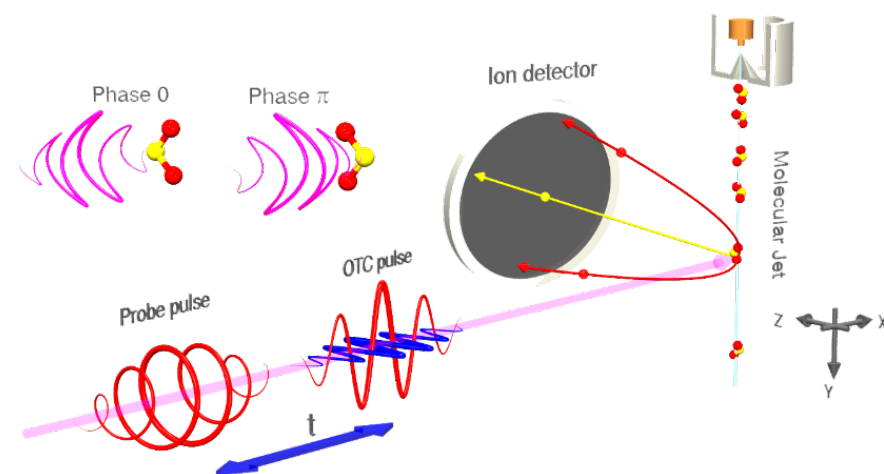
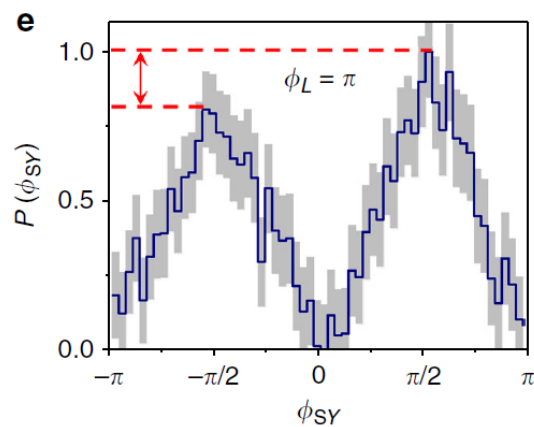
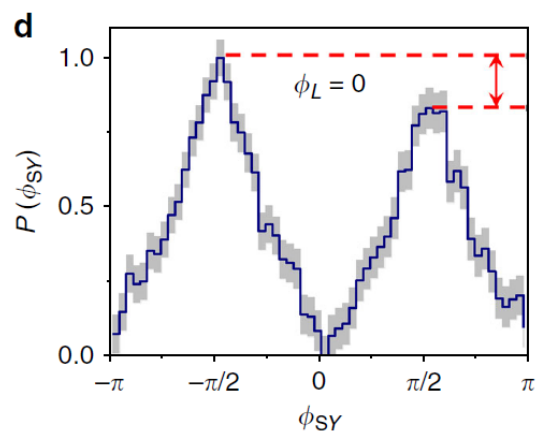
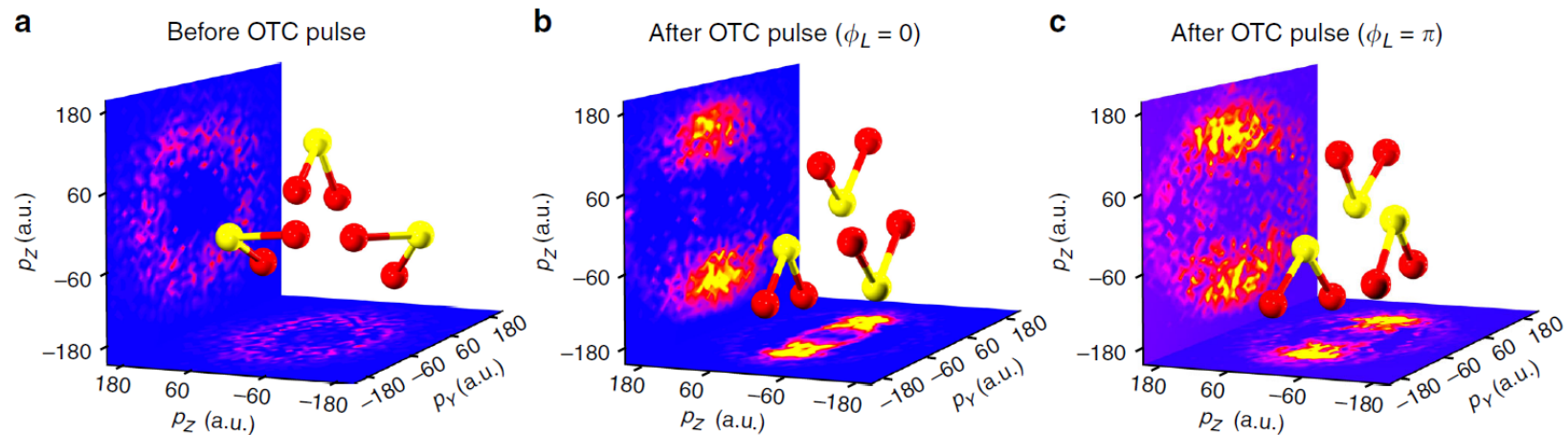
All optical field-free 3D orientation: fixing a molecule in space



For SO_2 , we can use the OTC fields to

- Align the O-axis along FW
- Orientate the S-axis along SH

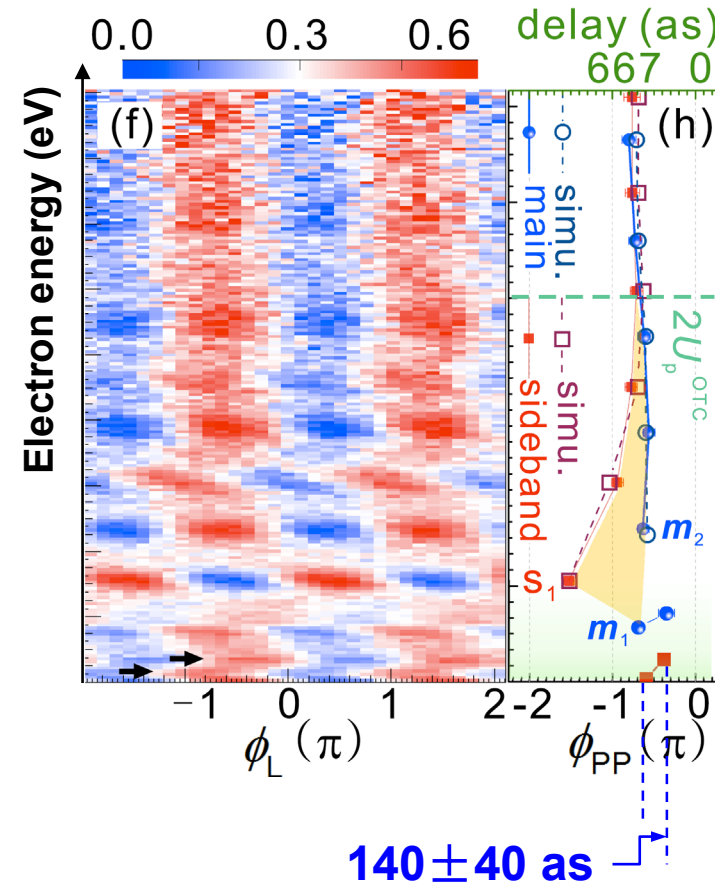
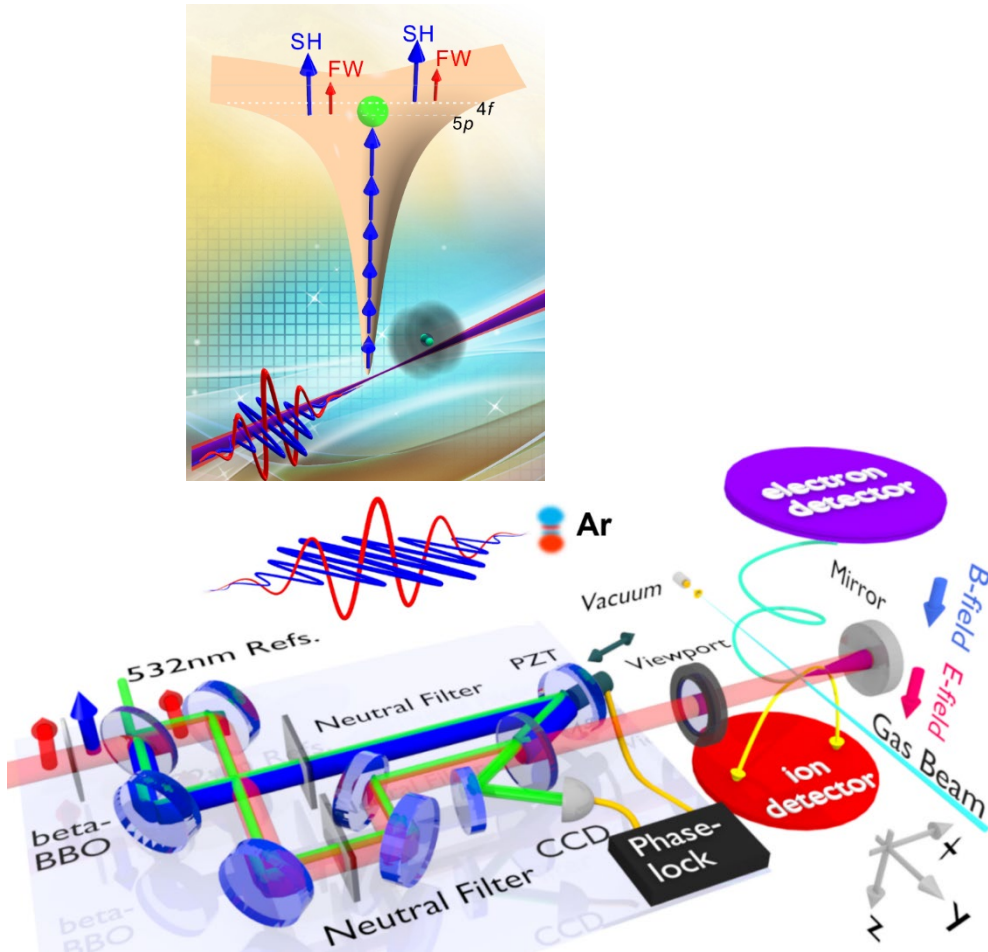
All optical field-free 3D orientation



Outline

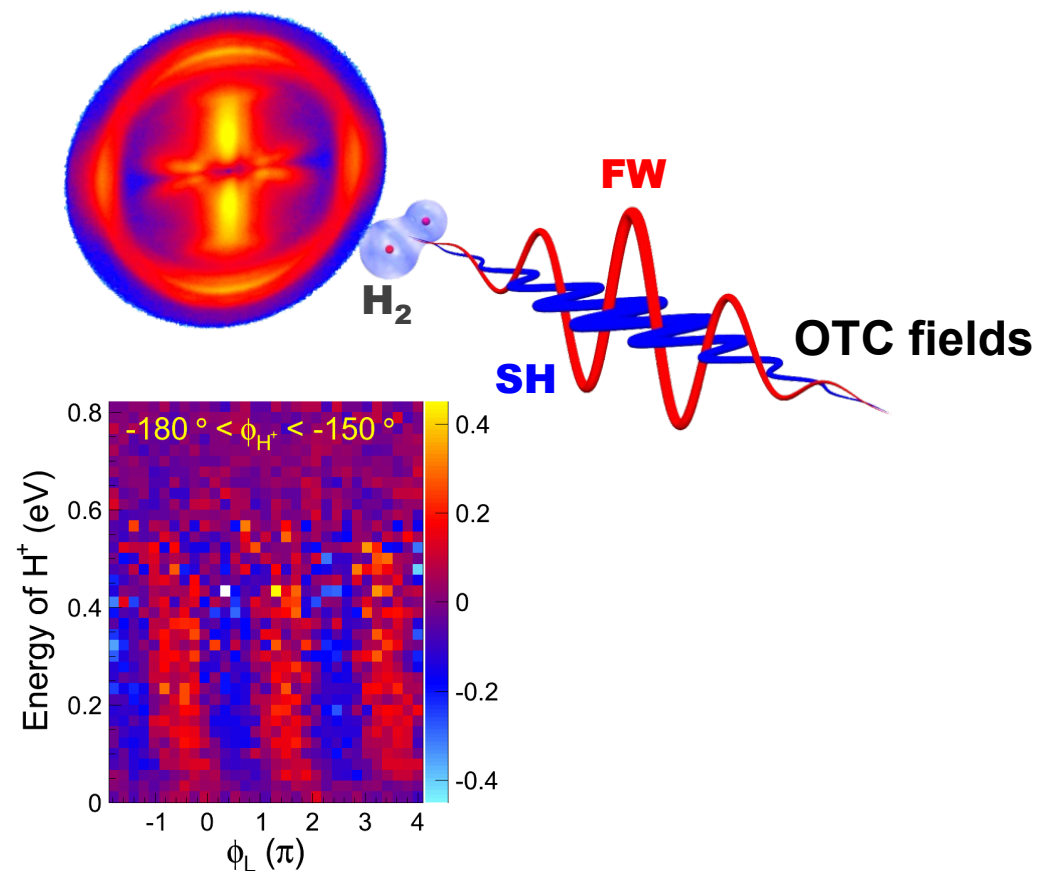
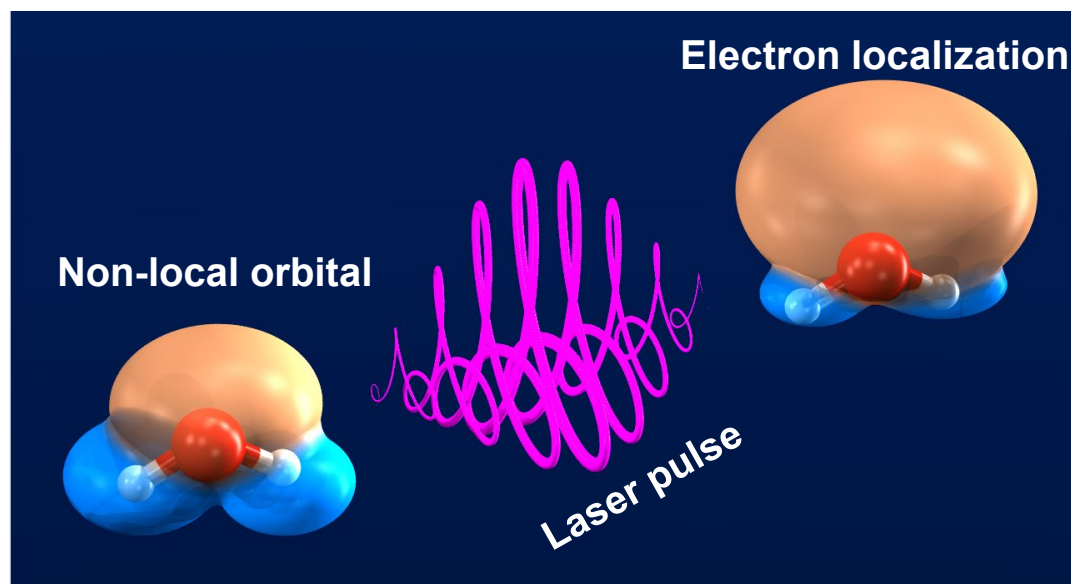
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- **Attosecond dynamics of electrons: visualization and control**

Phase-of-phase (multiphoton) attoclock: Freeman resonance time delay



X. Gong *et al.*, Phys. Rev. Lett. 118, 143203 (2017).

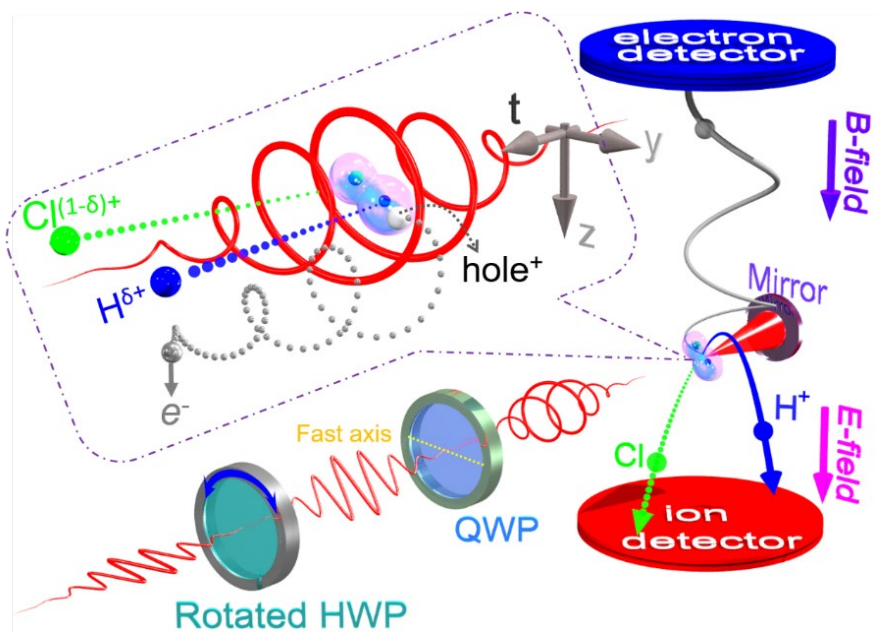
Phase-controlled orthogonally polarized two-color (OTC) laser fields 2D control of the electron localization in molecules



X. Gong *et al.*, Phys. Rev. Lett. 113, 203001 (2014).

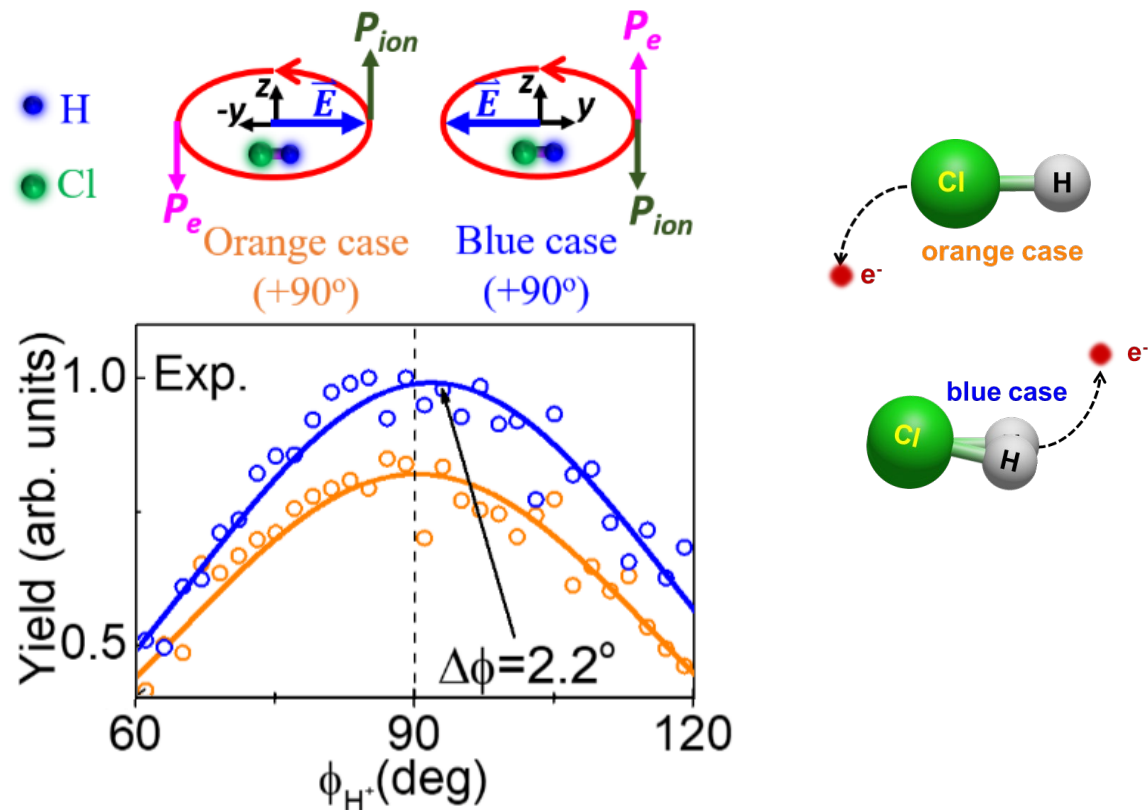
Transient Valence Charge Localization in Strong-Field Dissociative Ionization of Molecules

Tunneling-site-sensitive ultrafast dynamics of molecules



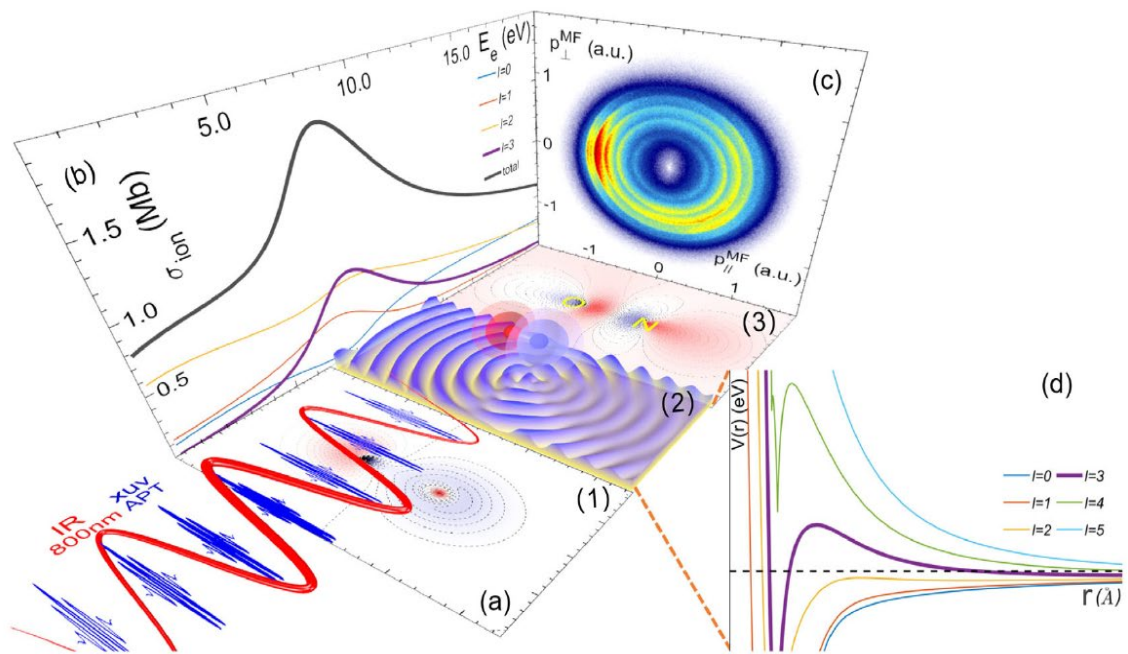
- Where does the e^- recoil go?
- The center of mass of HCl^+ ? If so, H gets 1/36, and Cl gets 35/36.

J. Ma *et al*, Phys. Rev. Lett. 127, 183201 (2021).

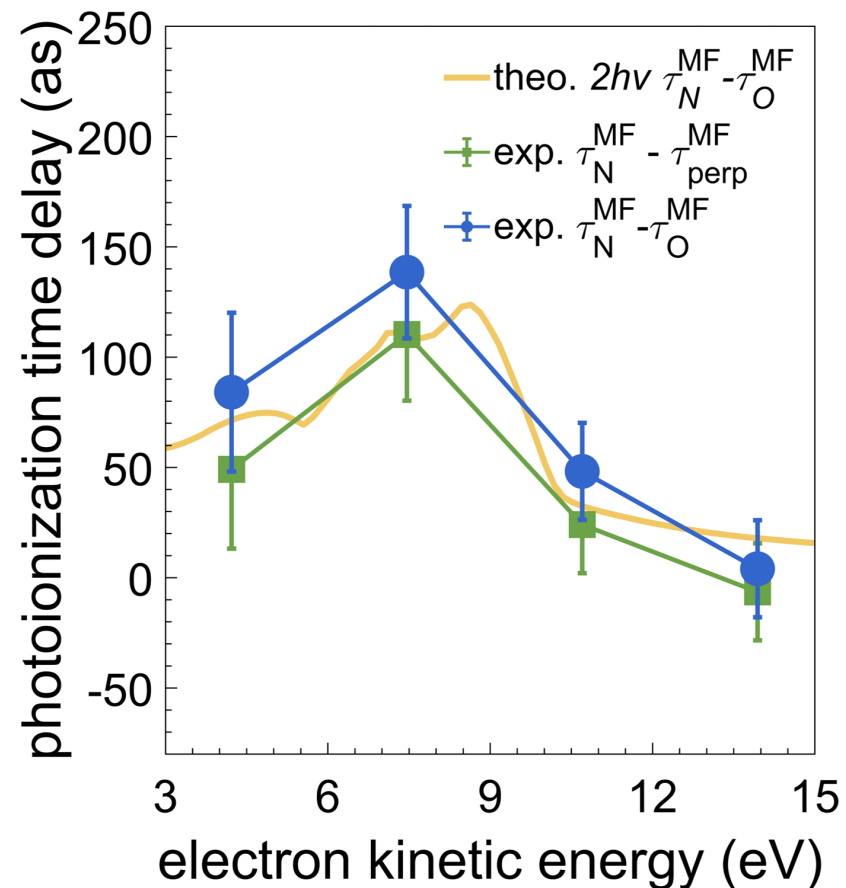


When the electron tunnels out with an exit near H which digs a transient electron hole on this site, a positive transient charge is localized on H, leading to a much larger laser impulse to the H^+ fragments as compared to the mass-dominated scenario.

Asymmetric Attosecond Photoionization in Molecular Shape Resonance



Emission site-resolved photoemission



The asymmetric photoemission time delay between the N end & O end: ~ 150 as

Summary

Ultrafast Dynamics of Molecules in Strong Laser Fields

measurement → physical mechanism → control

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Visualizing unidirectional molecular rotation
Echoes of molecules
All-optical 3D orientation of molecules
- **Attosecond dynamics of electrons: visualization and control**

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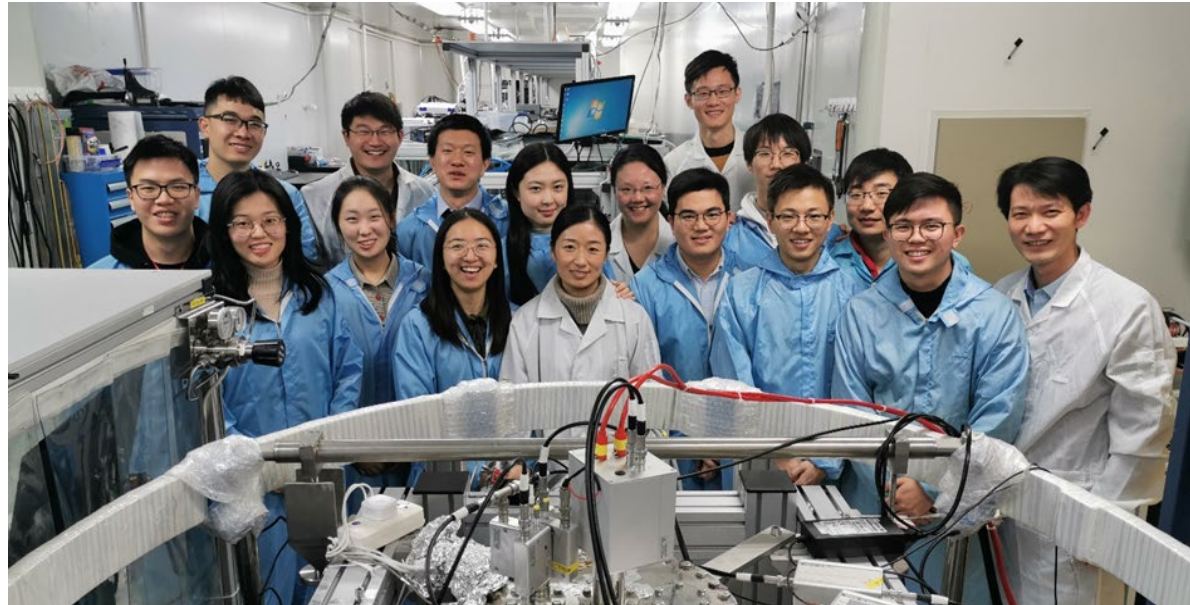
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A panoramic view of the Shanghai skyline at dusk. The Oriental Pearl Tower is the central focus, with its distinctive spheres illuminated. To its right, the Shanghai Tower stands tall, also lit up. The Bund is visible in the foreground, with its buildings and lights reflecting on the water. The sky is a mix of deep blue and orange, indicating the time is either early morning or late evening. The overall scene is vibrant and modern.

Thank you for your attention!

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