New Results on Massive Winds and X-ray States in Black Hole X-ray Binaries

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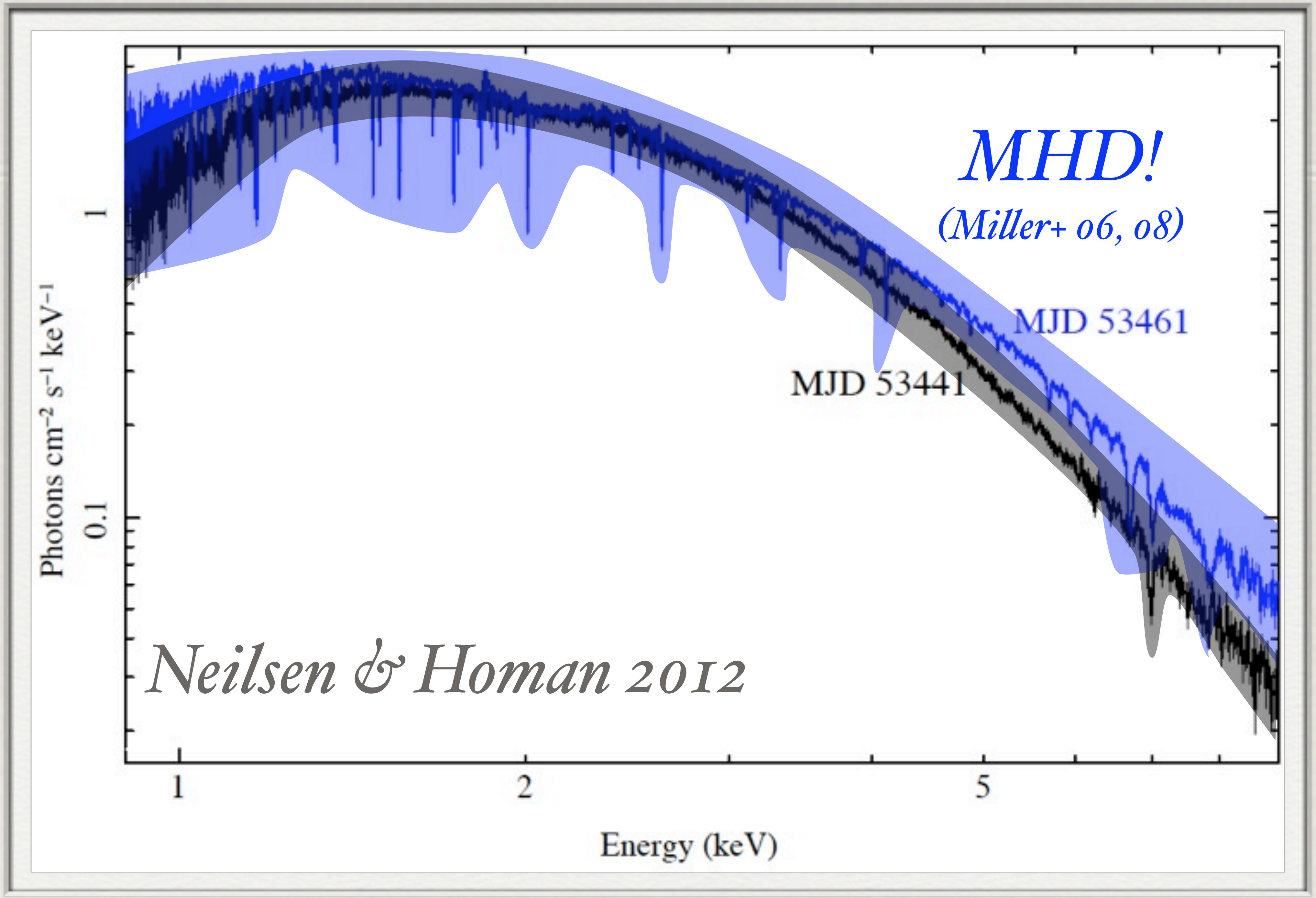
11 July 2012, Boston

A Puzzle

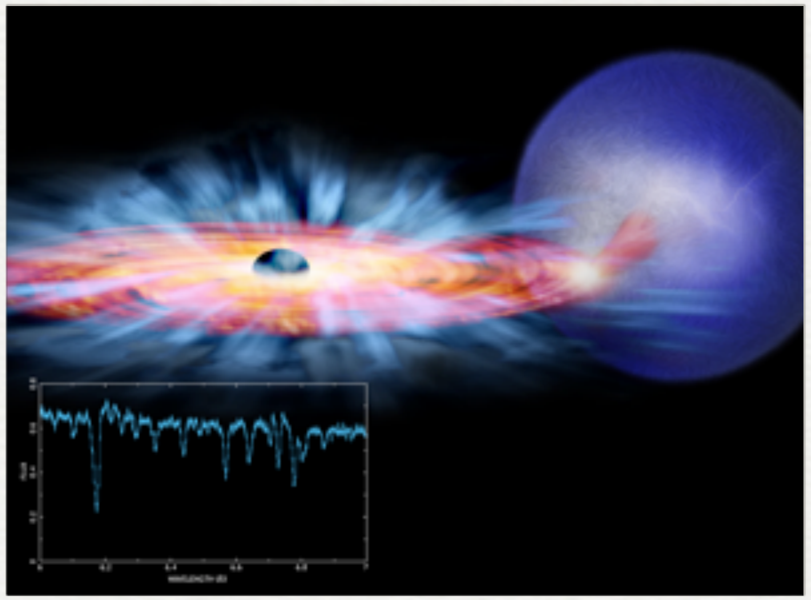


- *Two Chandra HETGS observations of GRO J1655-40, 20 days apart*
- *Obs 1: a single line. Obs 2: a dense forest of lines!*

Outline

- *Crash course in accretion disk winds*
  - *A brief history of winds*
  - *The physics of winds*
  - ***What role do they play in BH outbursts?***
- *Accretion disk winds in GRO J1655-40, 4U 1630-47, and GRS 1915+105*
- *Winds are an important, evolving part of BH accretion flows*

Accretion Disk Winds

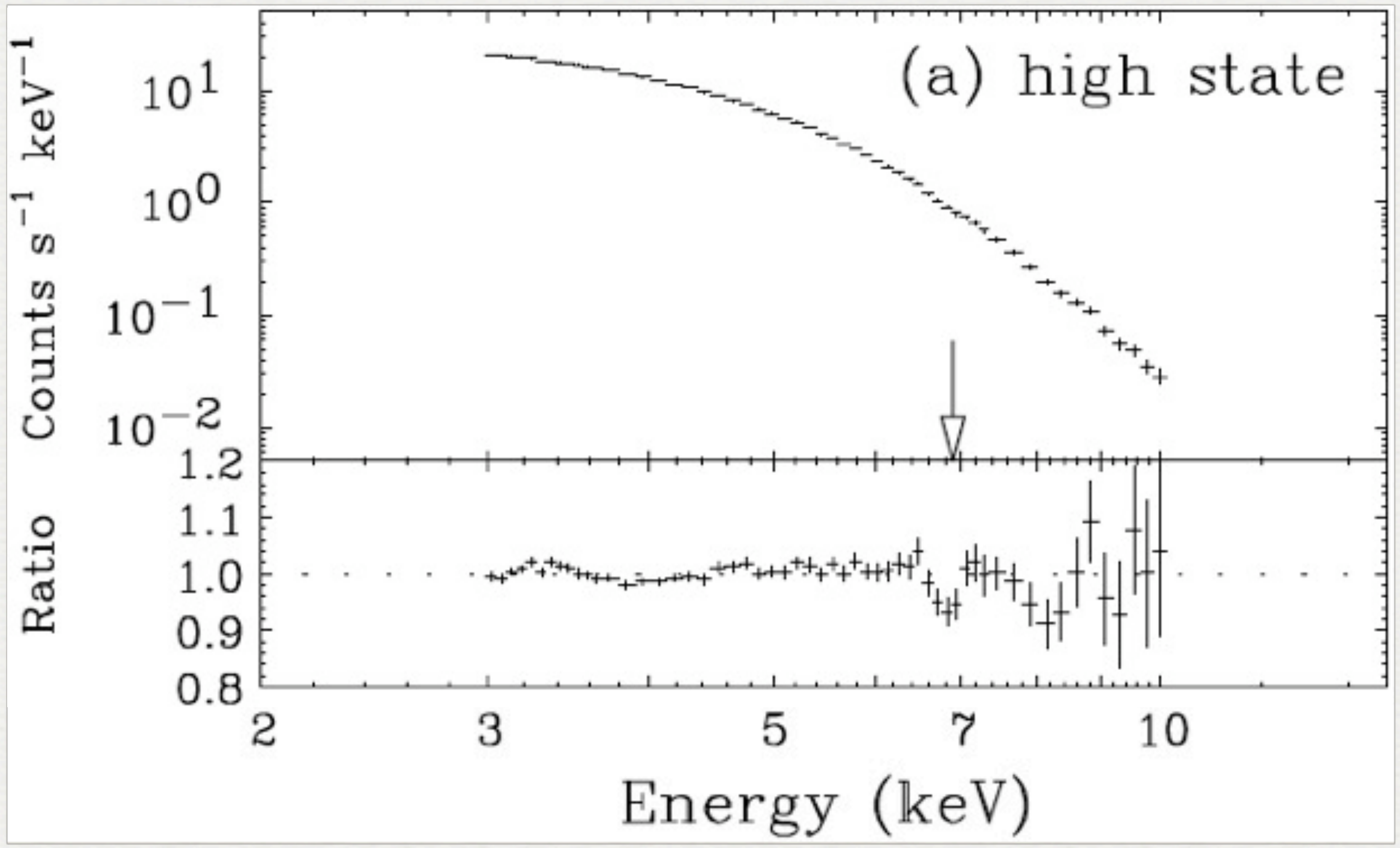


- *What are they?*
  - *Ionized outflow from the accretion disk, driven by radiation, thermal pressure, or magnetic processes*
- *How do we see them?*
  - *Blueshifted ionized absorption lines in X-ray spectra (1000 km/s)*
- *Why are they important?*
  - *Very significant dynamical component: can suppress relativistic jets (Neilsen & Lee 2009)*
  - *Carry most of the infalling matter away from the black hole! (e.g. Neilsen, Remillard, & Lee 2011; Ponti+ 2012; King+ 2012)*

A Brief History of Winds

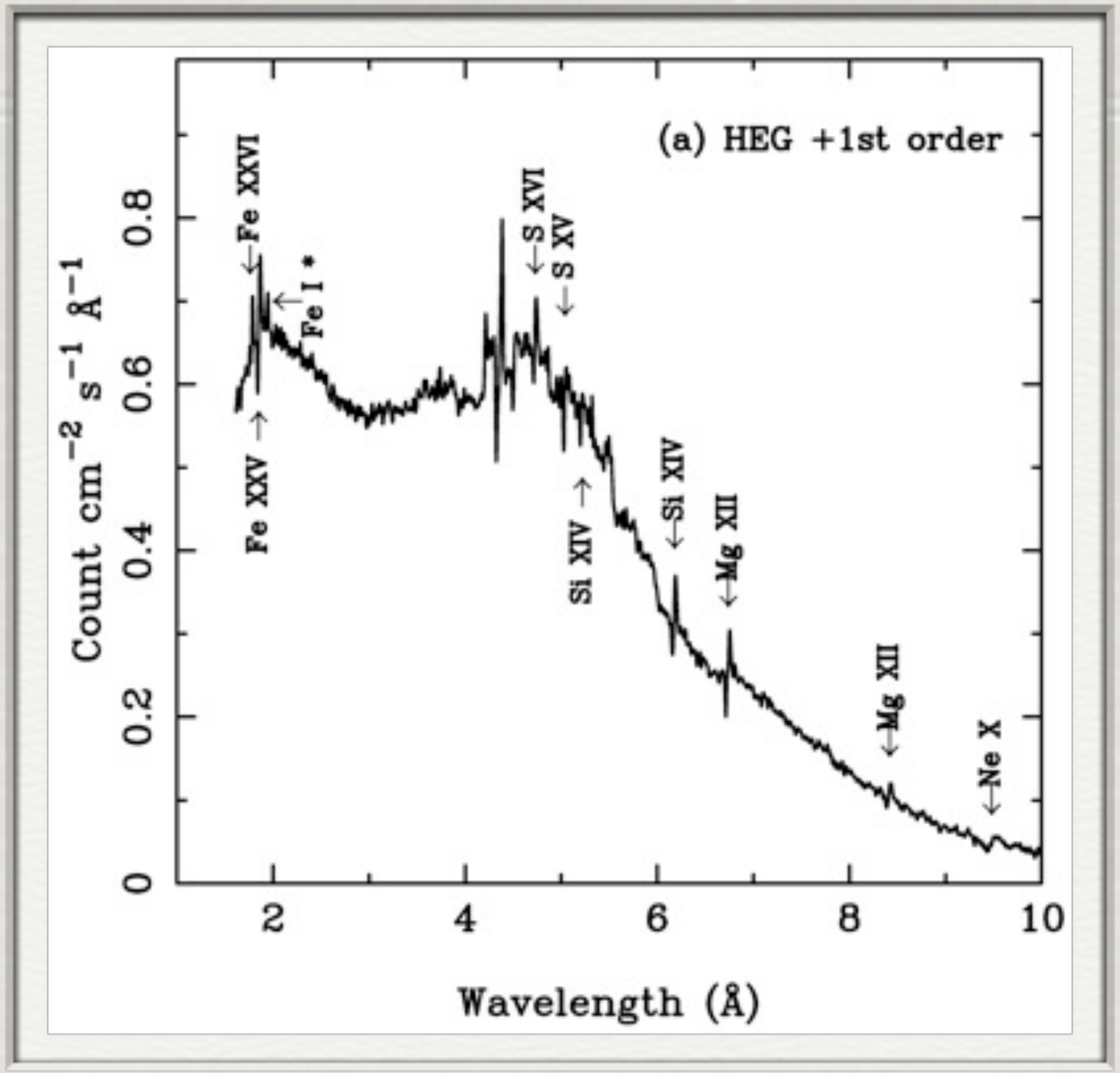
As of 11 July 2009

A Brief History of Winds



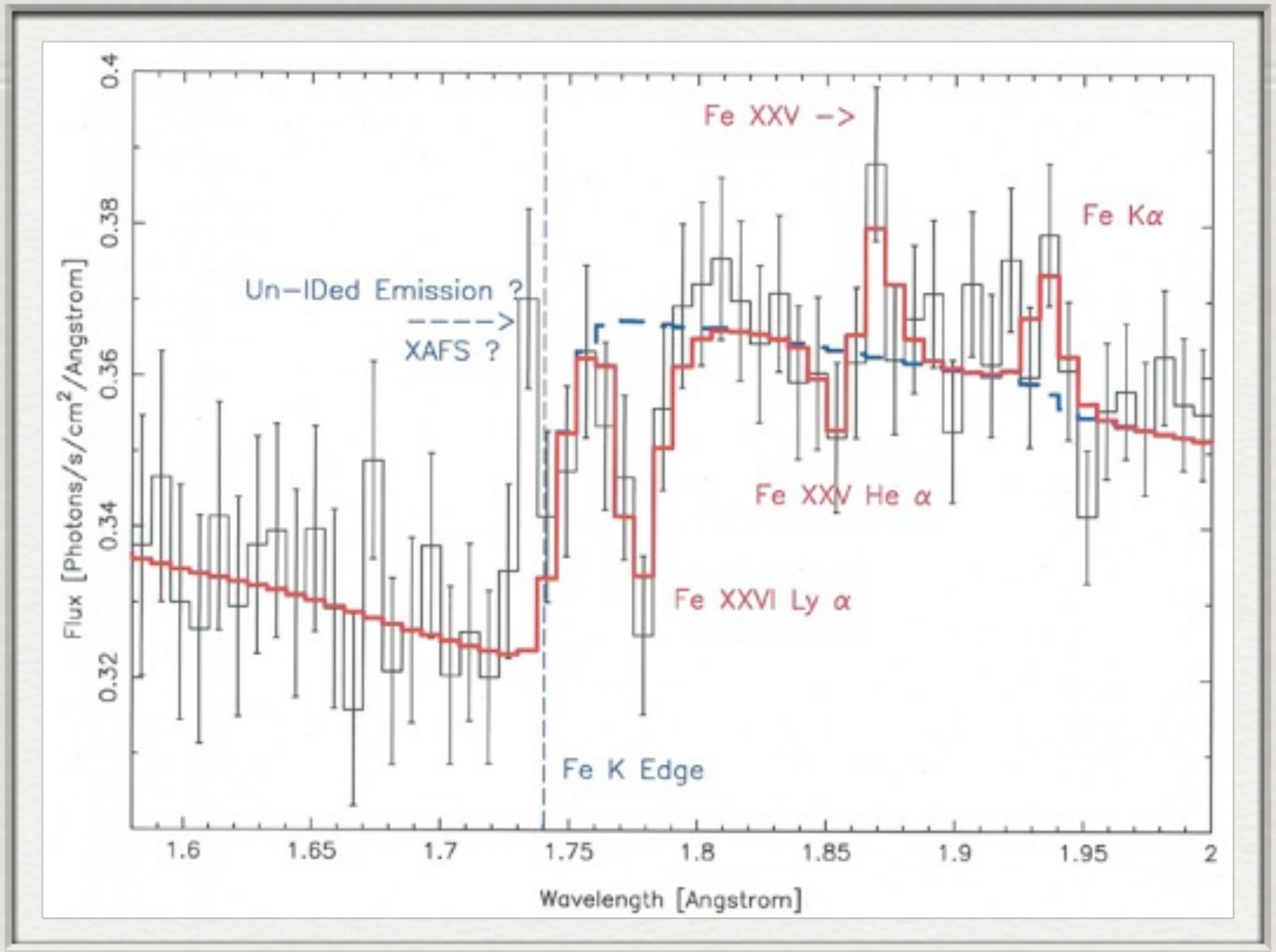
- *ASCA absorbers: Ebisawa 1997, Ueda 1998*
- *Photoionized accretion disk corona:* ***hot gas above the disk?***

A Brief History of Winds



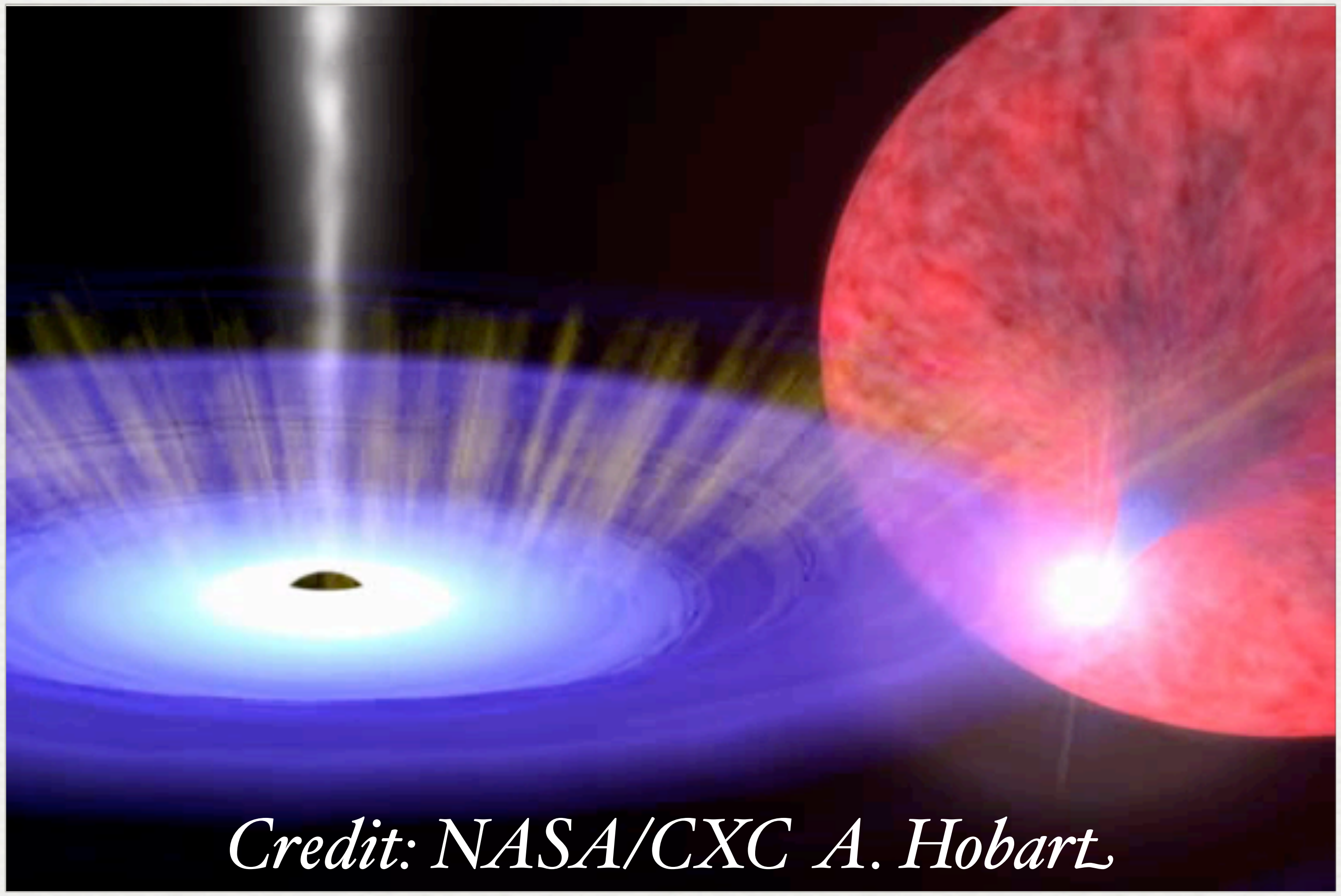
- *Brandt & Schulz (2000): Chandra HETGS, Circinus X-1*
- *First X-ray P-Cygni lines from an XRB:* ***outflowing gas***

A Brief History of Winds



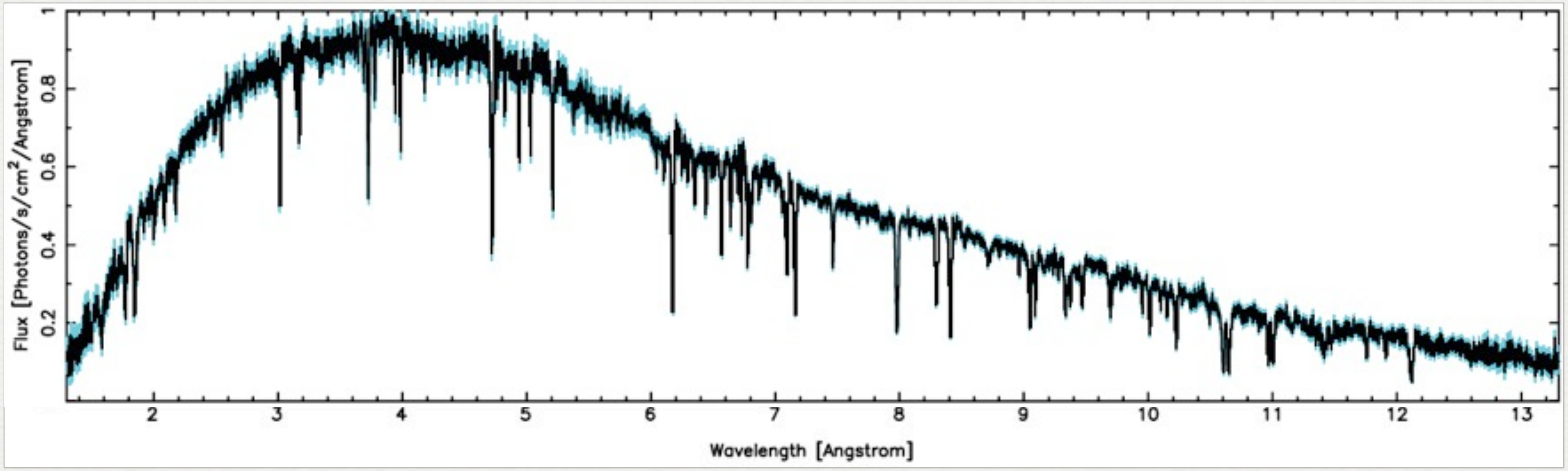
- *Lee et al. (2002): Chandra HETGS, GRS 1915+105*
- *Ionized outflow,* $\dot{M}_{out} \approx \dot{M}_{in}$*?*

A Brief History of Winds



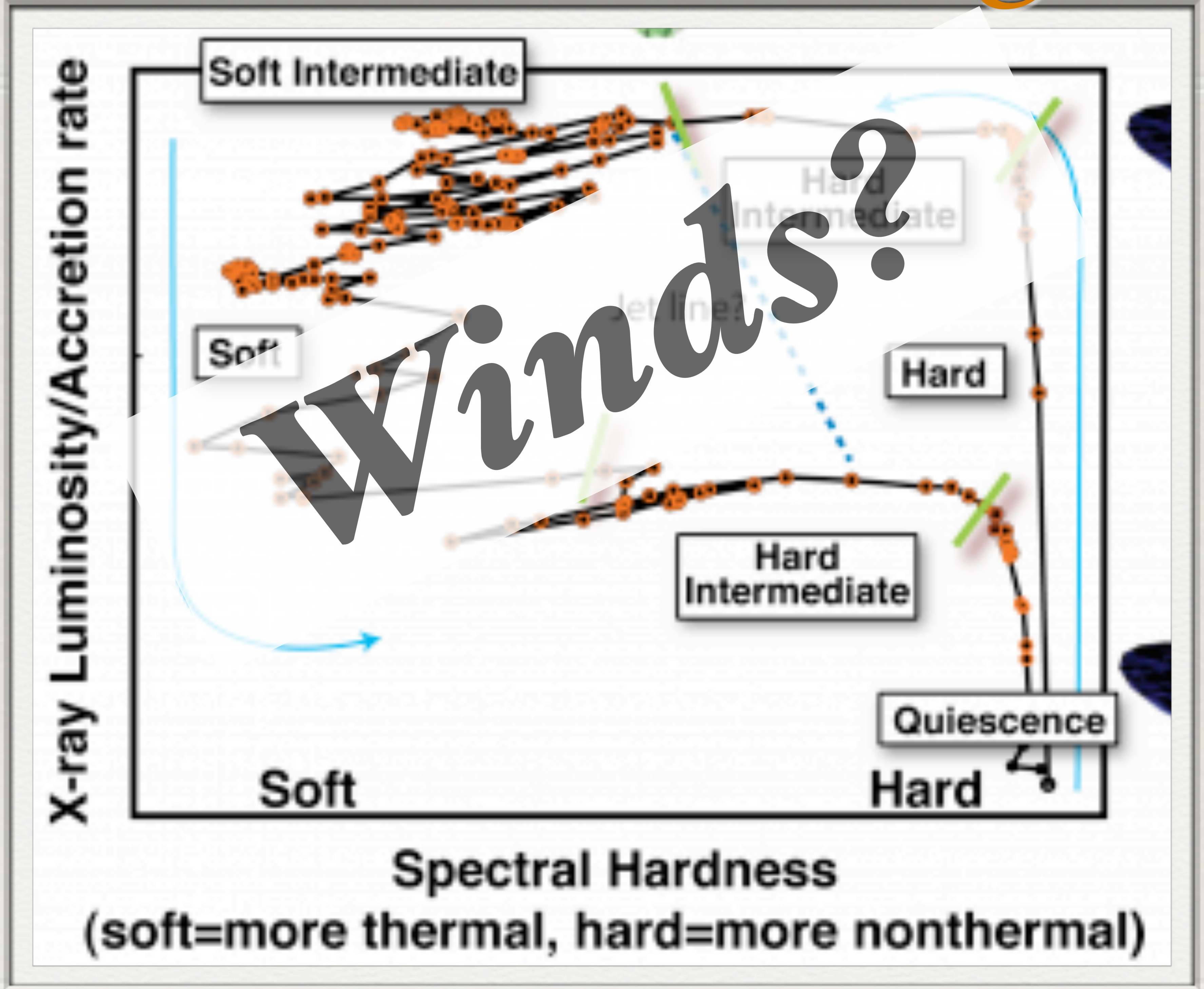
- *Neilsen & Lee (2009): Chandra HETGS, GRS 1915+105*
- *Winds may **quench jets** in GRS 1915 by altering flow of gas*

A Brief History of Winds



- *Miller et al. (2006, 2008): Chandra HETGS, GRO J1655-40*
- *Only definitive observational evidence for **MHD winds** in XRBs*

What's Missing?



The Physics of Disk Winds

As seen by an X-ray observer

How Winds Work

$$\xi = \frac{L_X}{n_e R^2}$$

Ionization Parameter

How Winds Work

- *Three possible origins:*
  - *Radiation pressure (UV line driving)*
  - *Thermal pressure (i.e. irradiation, Compton heating)*
  - *MHD processes*
- *Where is the wind, how ionized is it, and how dense is it?*

- *Wind properties:*
  - *Low-ish ionization < 10^3*
  - *Low-ish density ($<10^{13-14}$),* ***far from BH*** *($>10^{4-5}$ R_g, 10^{11} cm)*
  - *Can be* ***more dense, closer to BH***

How Winds Work

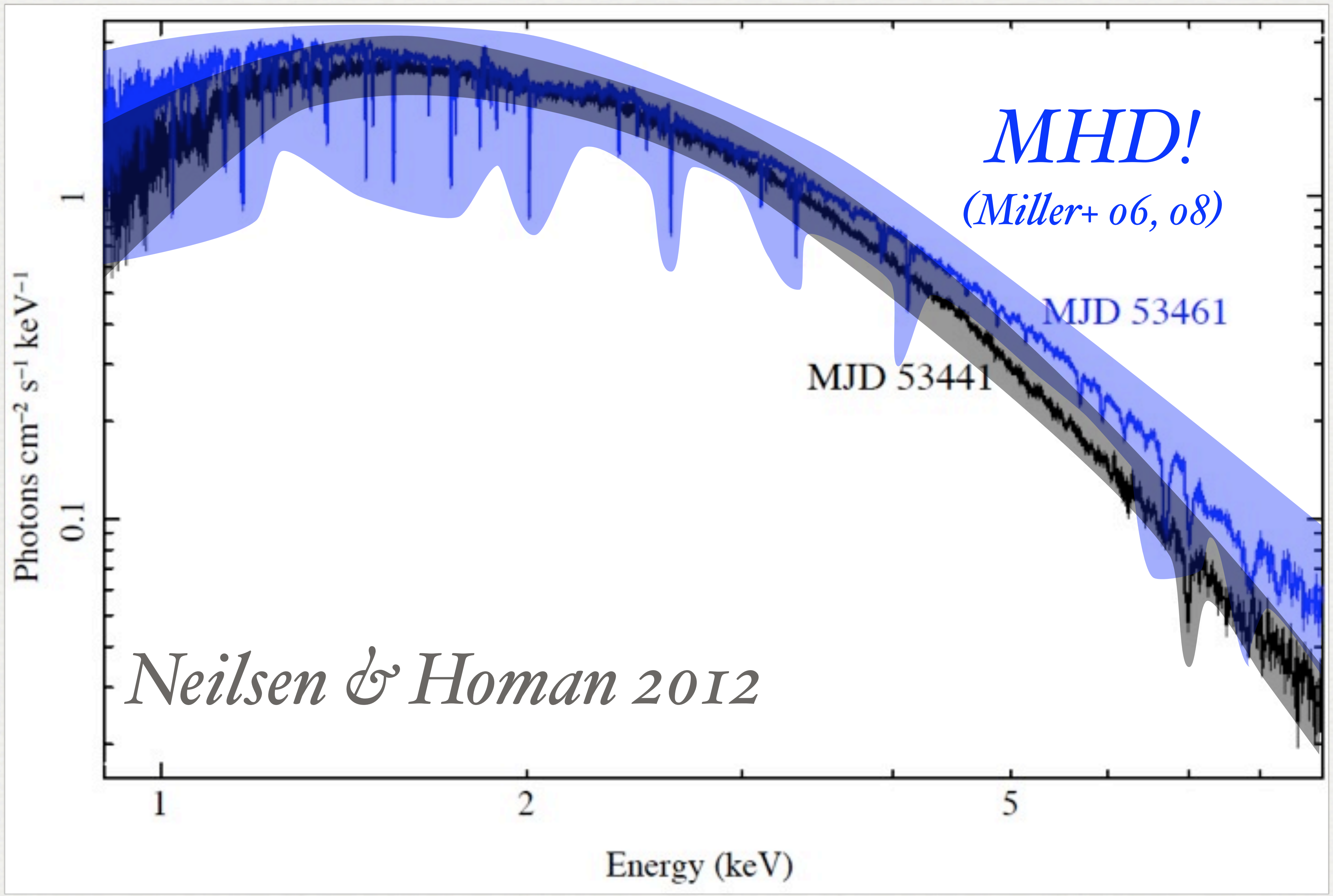
$$\xi = \frac{L_X}{n_e R^2}$$

$$N_H = n \Delta R$$

$$\frac{W_\lambda}{\lambda} = \frac{\pi e^2}{m_e c^2} N_i \lambda f_{ji}$$

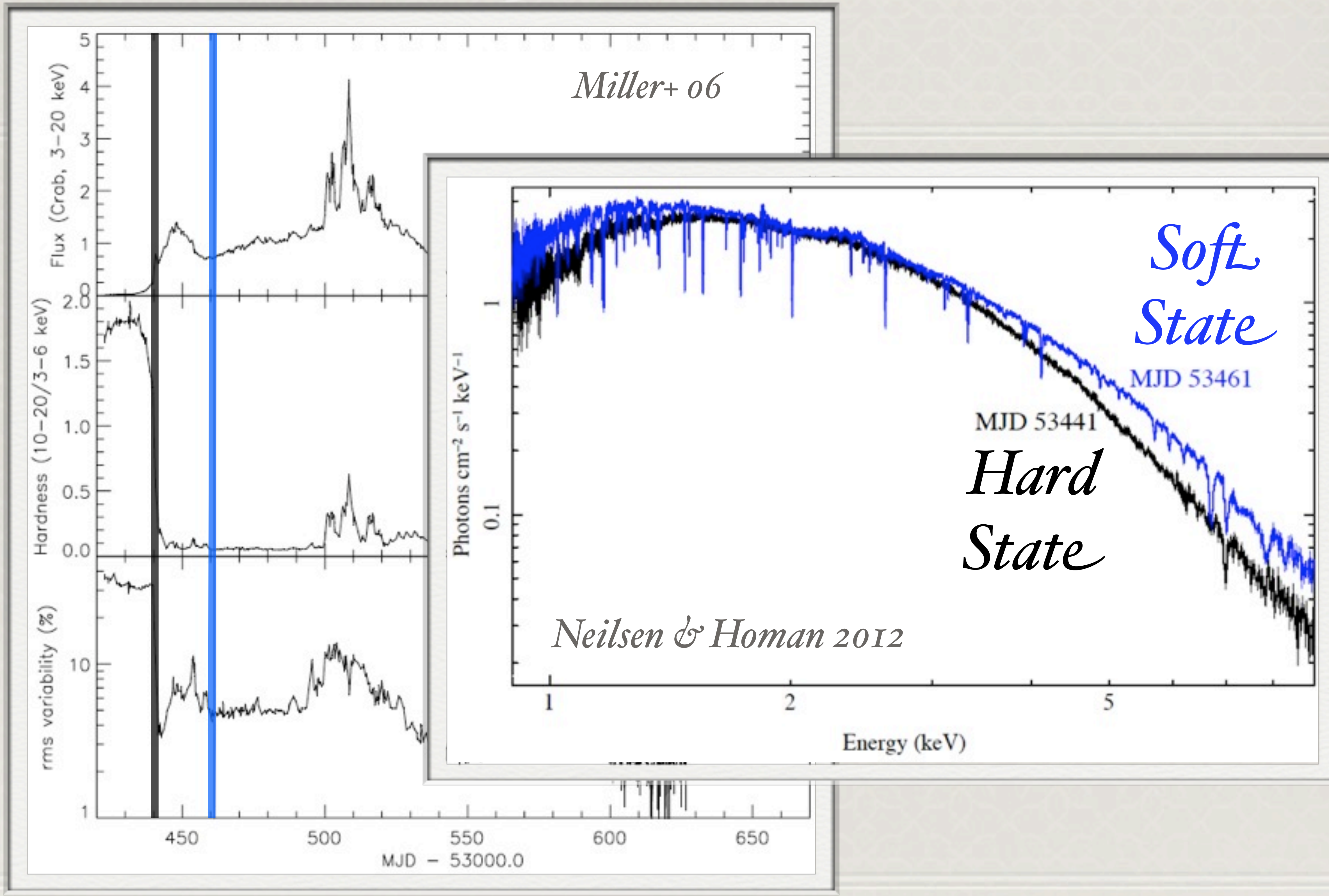
- ***Luminosity***: more photons per electron means hotter, more ionized wind
- ***Broadband spectrum***: a harder spectrum means hotter, more ionized wind; sets which ions visible at a fixed ξ
- ***Location***: larger distance between X-ray source and absorber means fewer photons per electron
- ***Density***: decreases ionization at fixed luminosity, distance, also sets visible ions
- ***Extent/Column Density***: at fixed ionization, more gas in the line of sight means stronger lines
- ***Curve of Growth***: equivalent widths increase with <u>ionic columns</u>; ionization, abundance

Back to Our Puzzle



- *Two Chandra HETGS observations of GRO J1655-40, 20 days apart*
- *Obs 1: a single line. Obs 2: a dense forest of lines!*

2005 Outburst



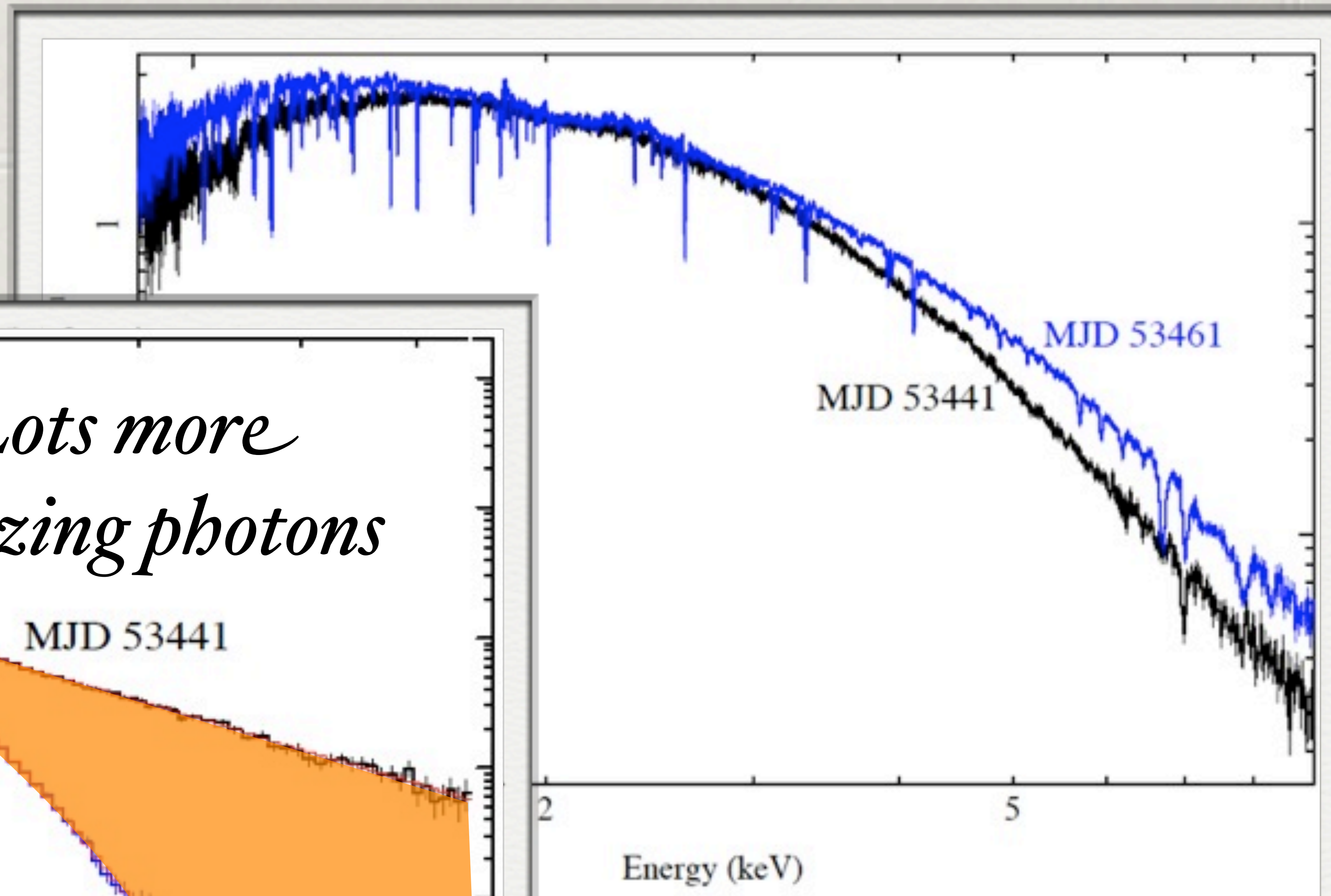
Where Did the Lines Go?

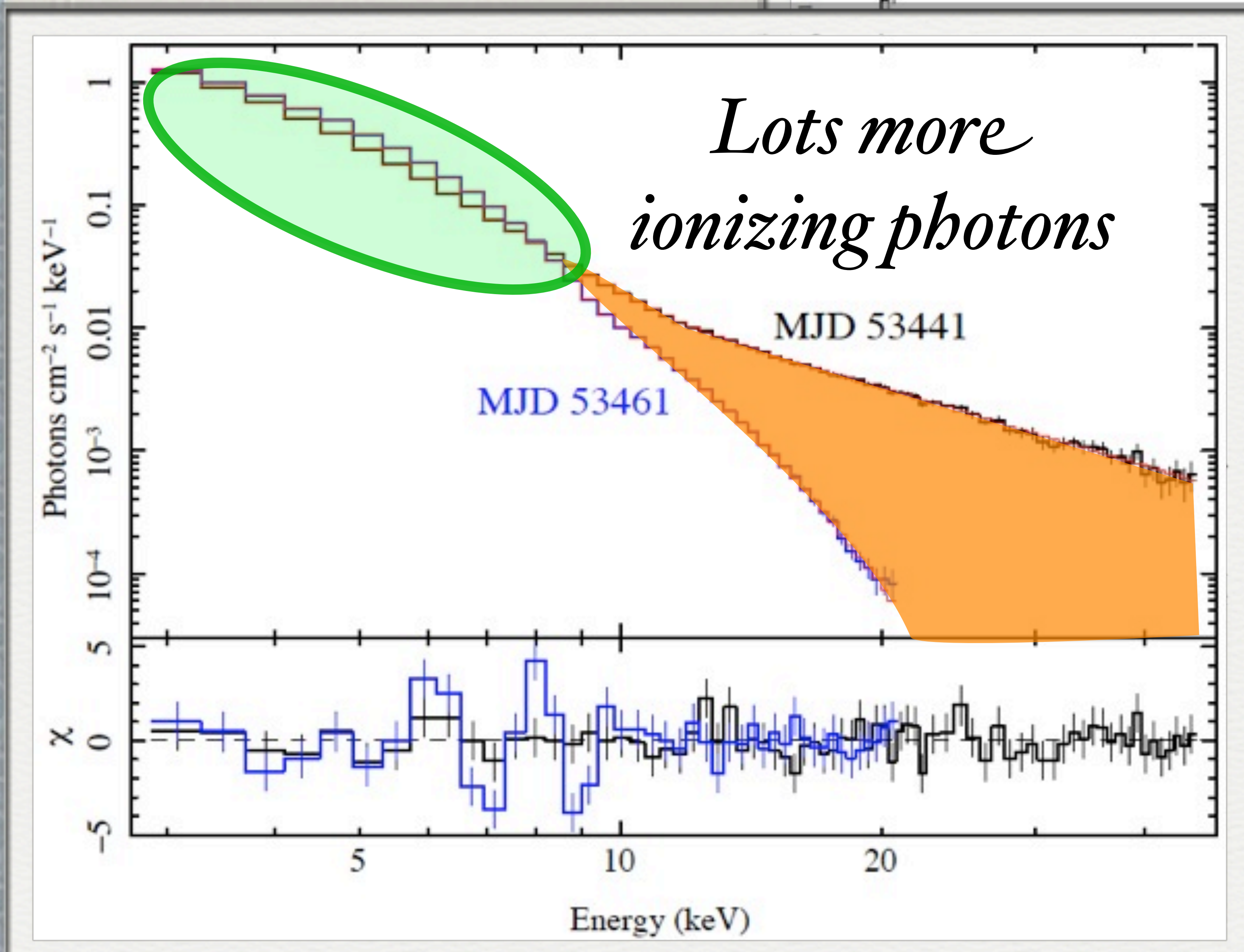
- *Why did the first Chandra observation show only one line, when >100 lines were visible 20 days later?*
  - *Hard state vs soft state: ionization important? Wind present but "fried" by a harder ionizing spectrum?*
  - *Wind really evolving throughout the outburst?*
- *Details in Neilsen & Homan 2012, ApJ, 750, 27*

Can changes in the ionizing spectrum alone explain the differences in the lines?

If the wind were the same in both observations, would the lines be the same?

Testing Ionization: Round 1



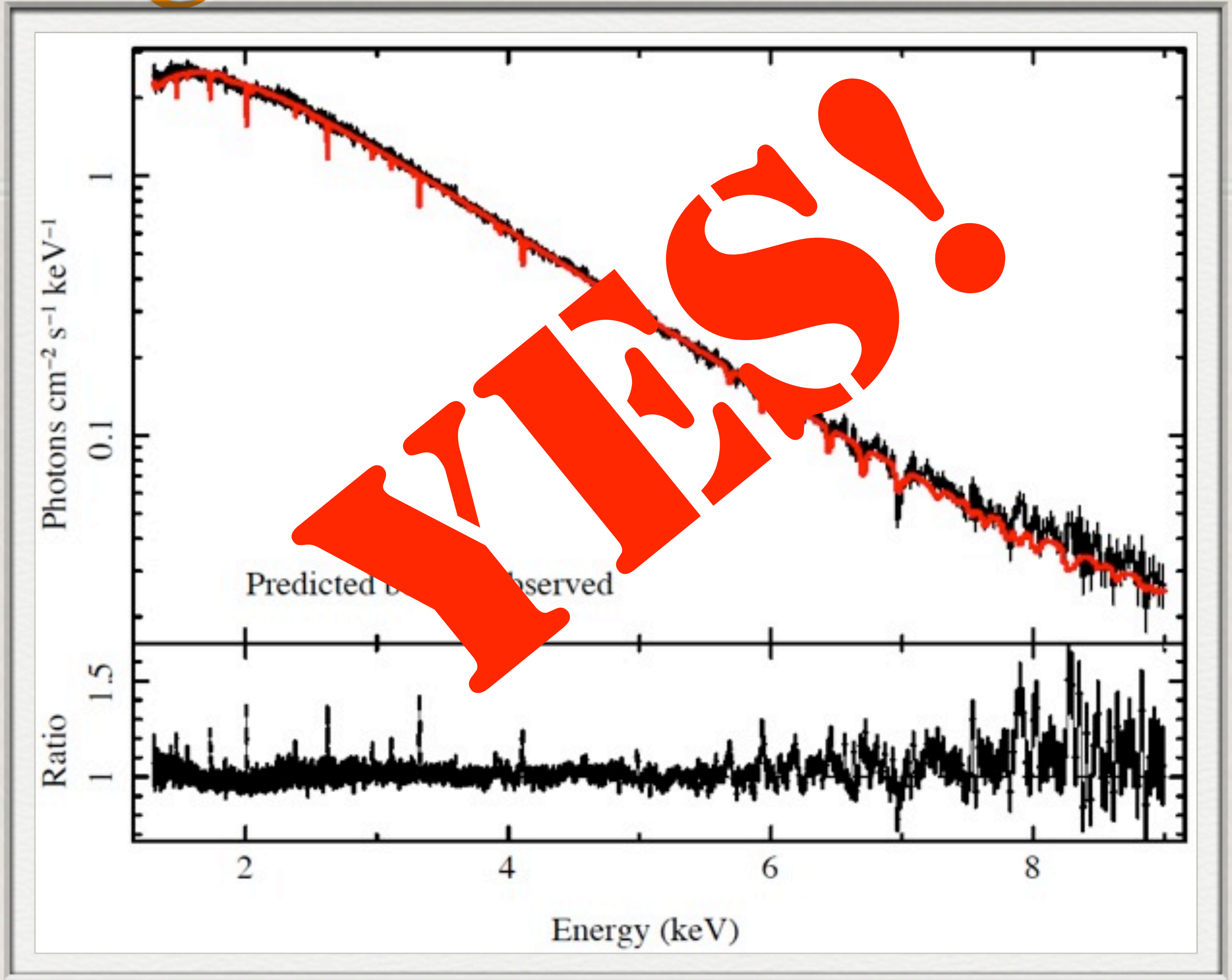


- *Ions with Z≲25 have small cross-sections above 10 keV. So most ions see the same ionizing light!*
- *If the wind were the same, the lines would be the same!!!*

Testing Ionization: Round 2

- *A quantitative version of test 1 with XSTAR:*
- *If the absorber is physically the same but ionized by a different (hard state) continuum, should we see different lines?*
- *Use previous results for wind properties (Kallman+ 09)*

Testing Ionization: Round 2

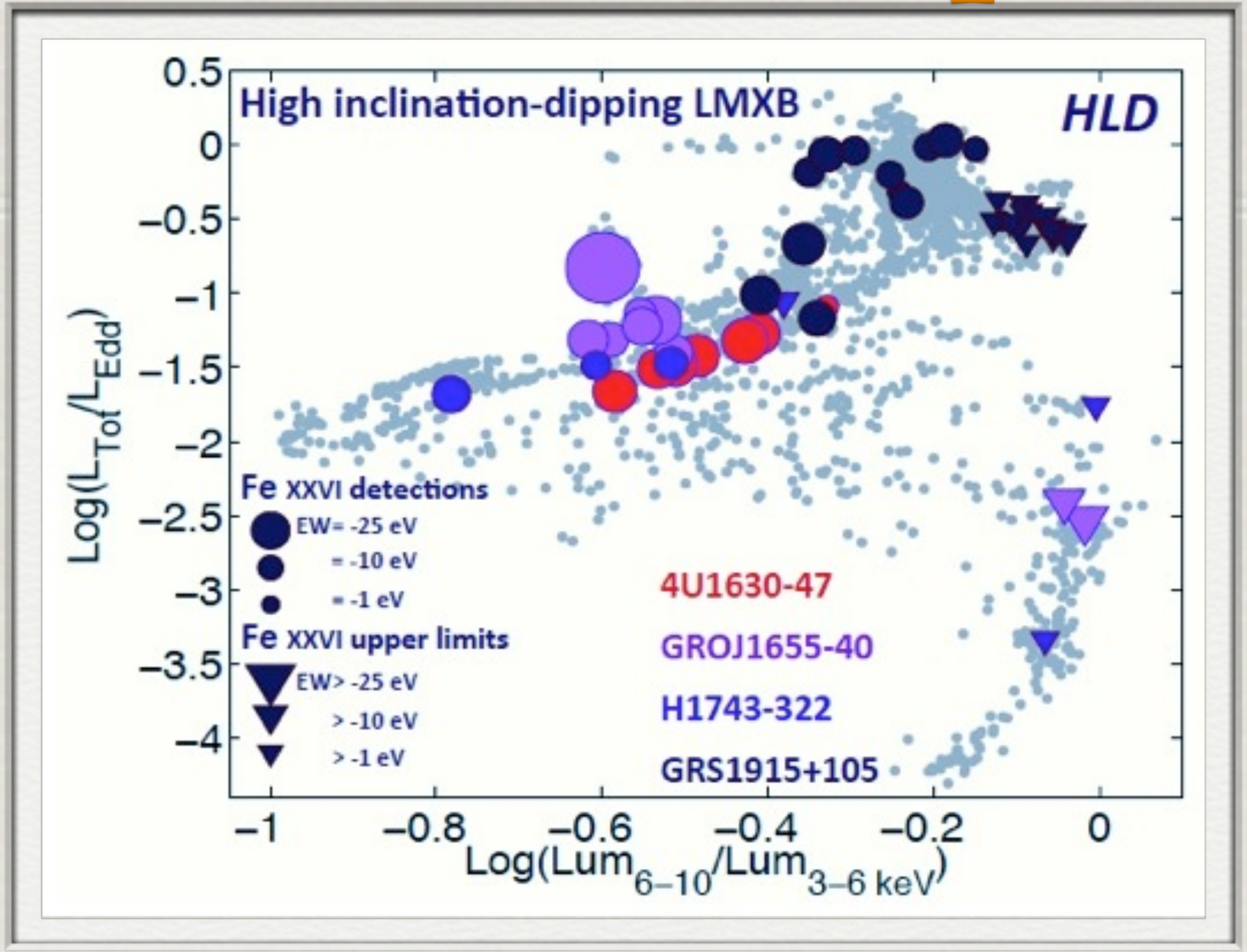


- *Built photoionization models based on obs. 2 (Miller+ 06,08; Kallman+ 09)*
- *Would we have seen all the lines if the same wind were there during obs 1?*

Ionization Explains it All?

- *Definitely not! If the wind were the same, the lines would still be there*
- ***No matter what**, the wind must have evolved significantly during the outburst! (See also Blum et al. 2010, Ponti et al. 2012)*
- *From hard to soft state, density increased by 25x-300x!*

Winds are Ubiquitous

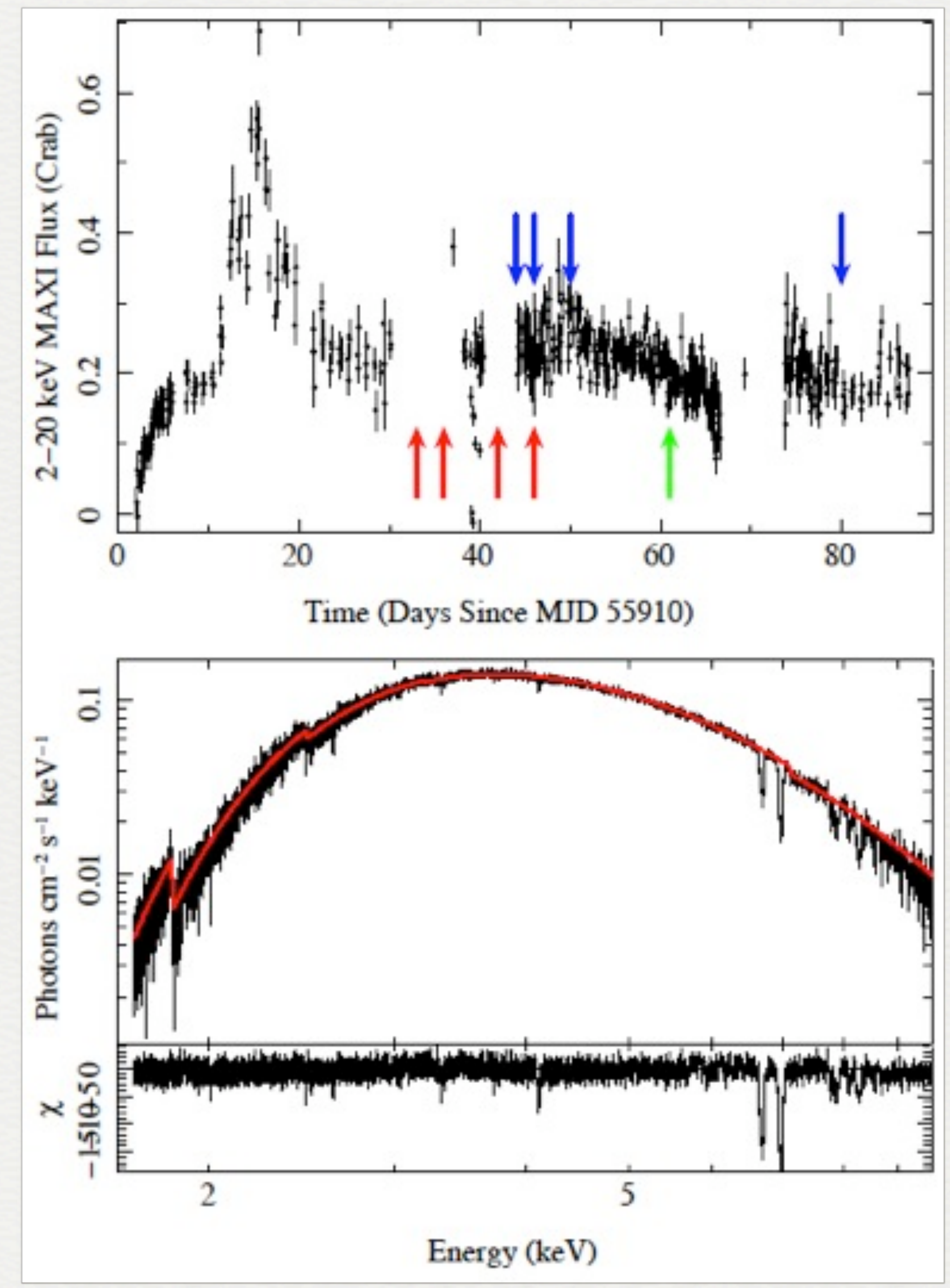


Ponti+ 2012

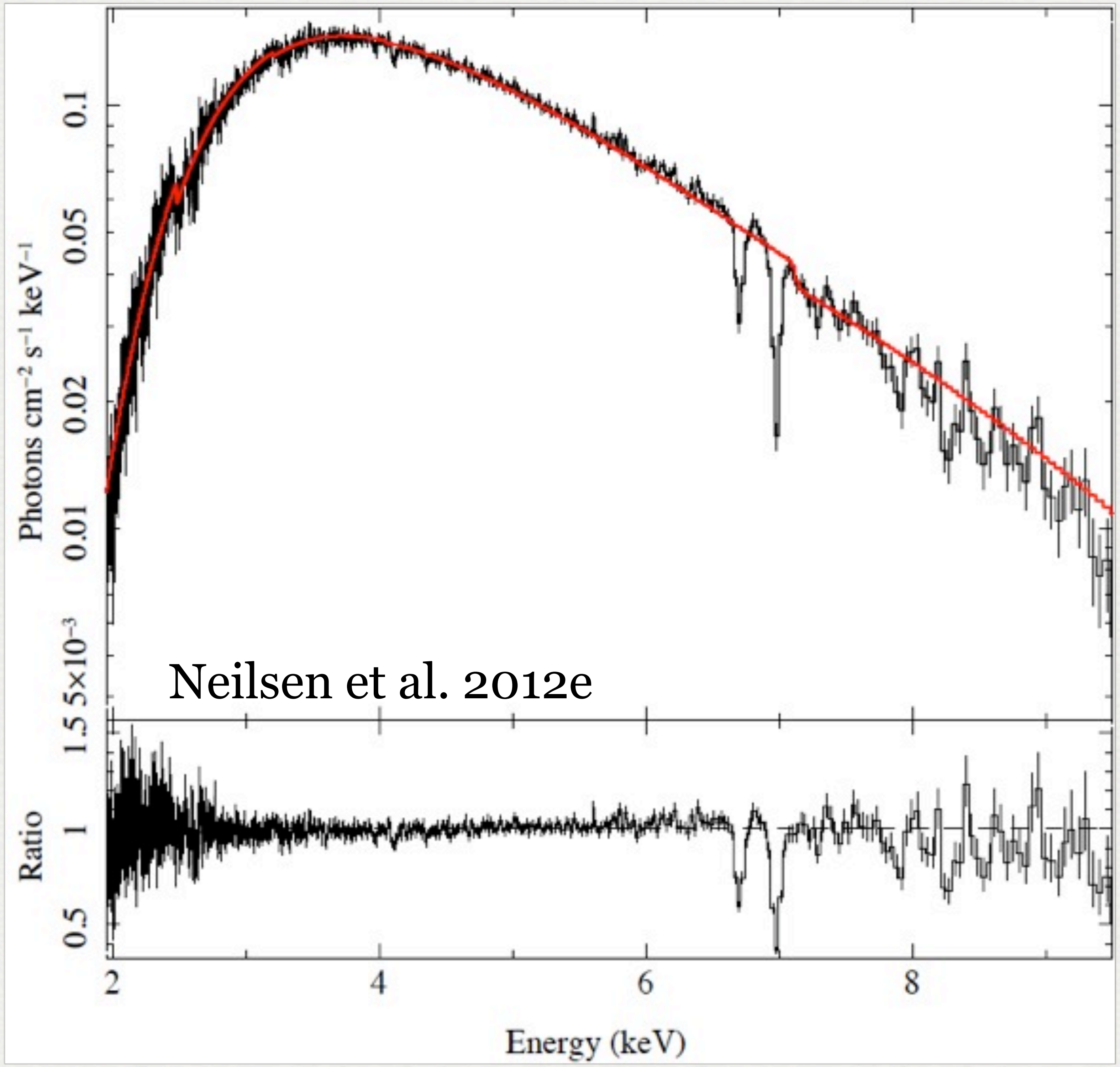
- *Winds dominate the "state transition" phase of the outburst, ~where the accretion flow changes and steady jets disappear*
- *Analysis suggests that in general, winds evolve during outburst!*

Coincidence? I Think Not!

- *Target of Opportunity observations of 4U 1630-47*
- *Based on Ponti 2012, designed to catch a disk wind*
- *Very successful!!!*
- *Winds reliably appear during this state transition*



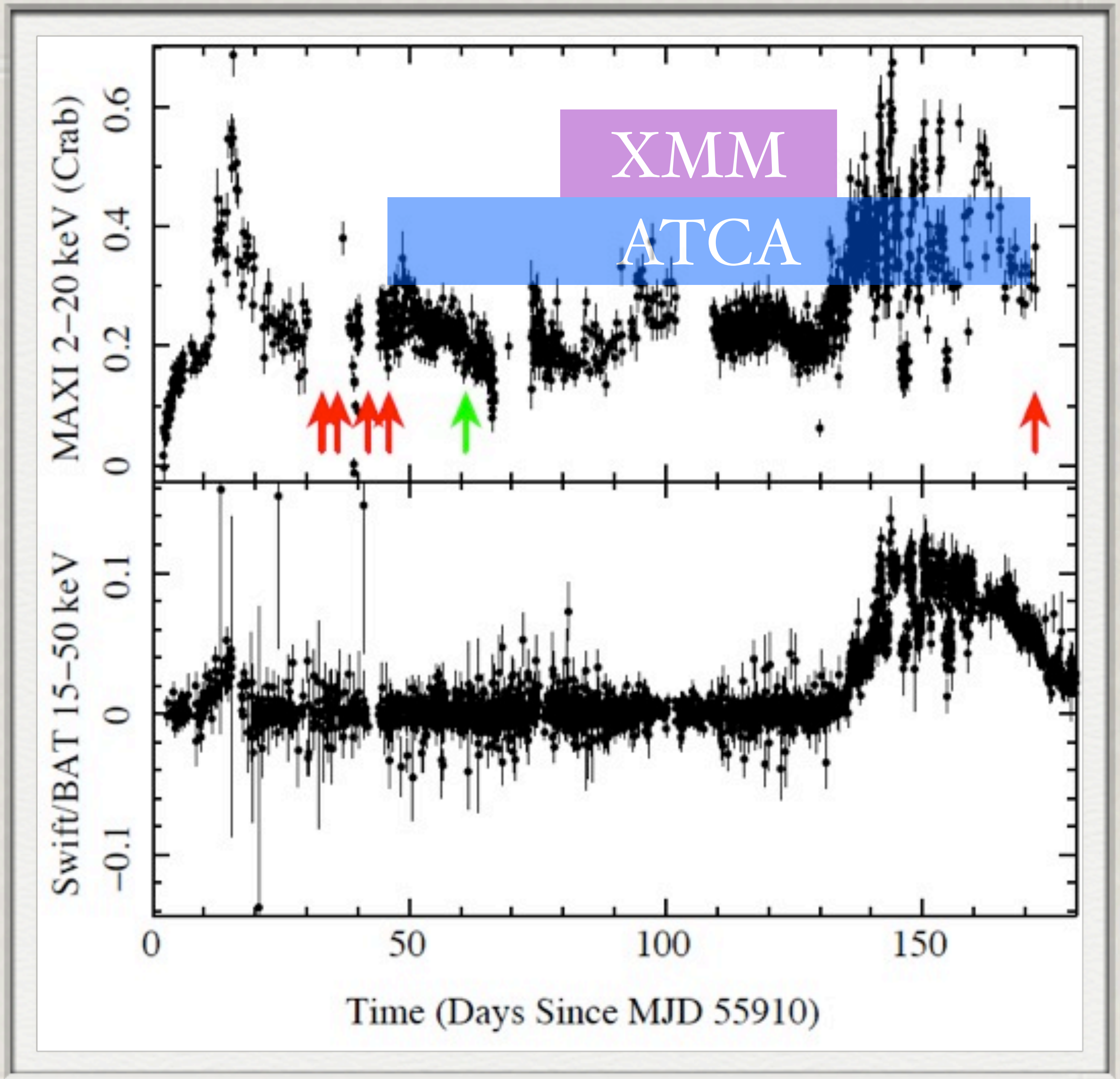
Wow!



Photons cm^{-2} s^{-1} keV^{-1}
0.1
0.05
0.02
0.01
5×10^{-3}
Neilsen et al. 2012e
Ratio
1.5
1
0.5
2
4
6
8
Energy (keV)

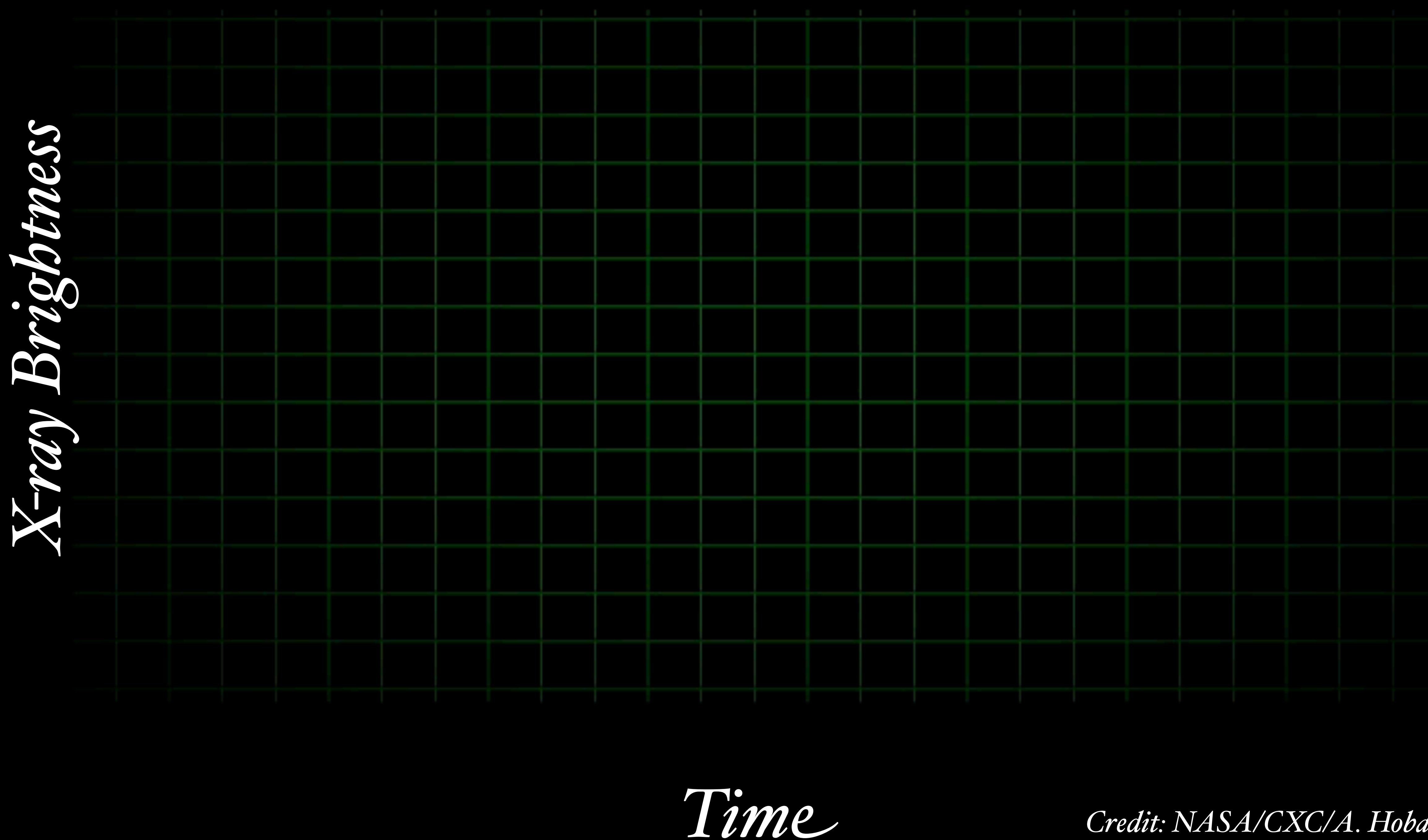
Continued Monitoring

- *Lots of multiwavelength data*
- *Chandra, Suzaku, XMM, ATCA*
- *Neilsen, Ponti, Coriat, Fender, Miller-Jones, Diaz Trigo*



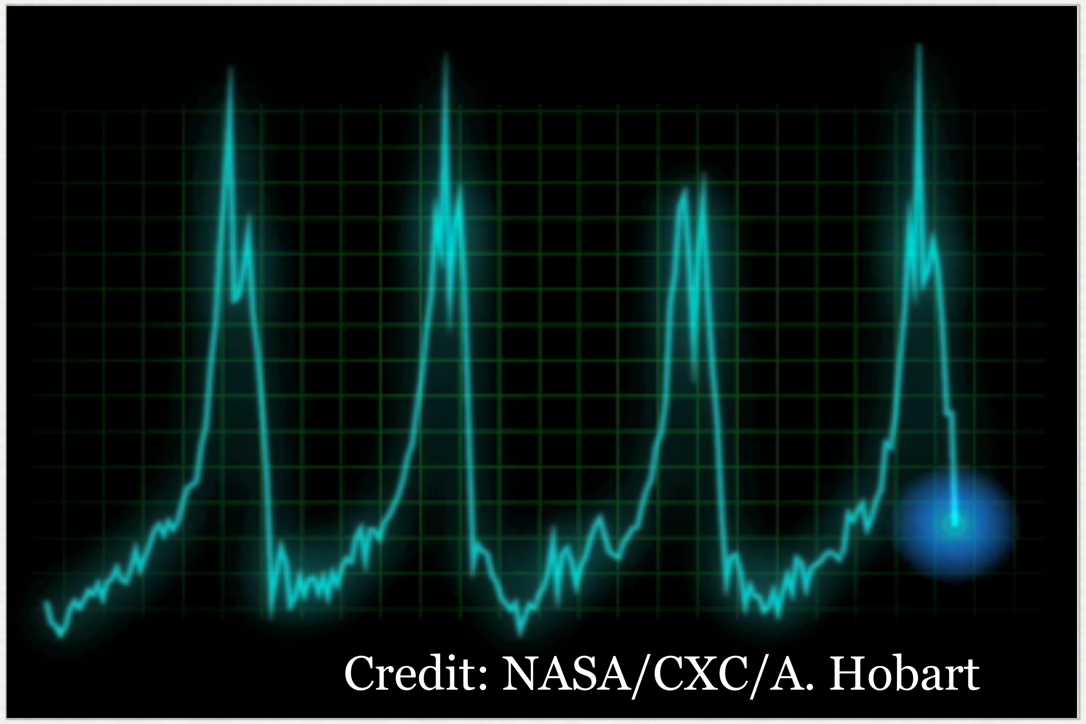
Implications

Winds are preferentially launched at a certain phase of BH outbursts... so what?

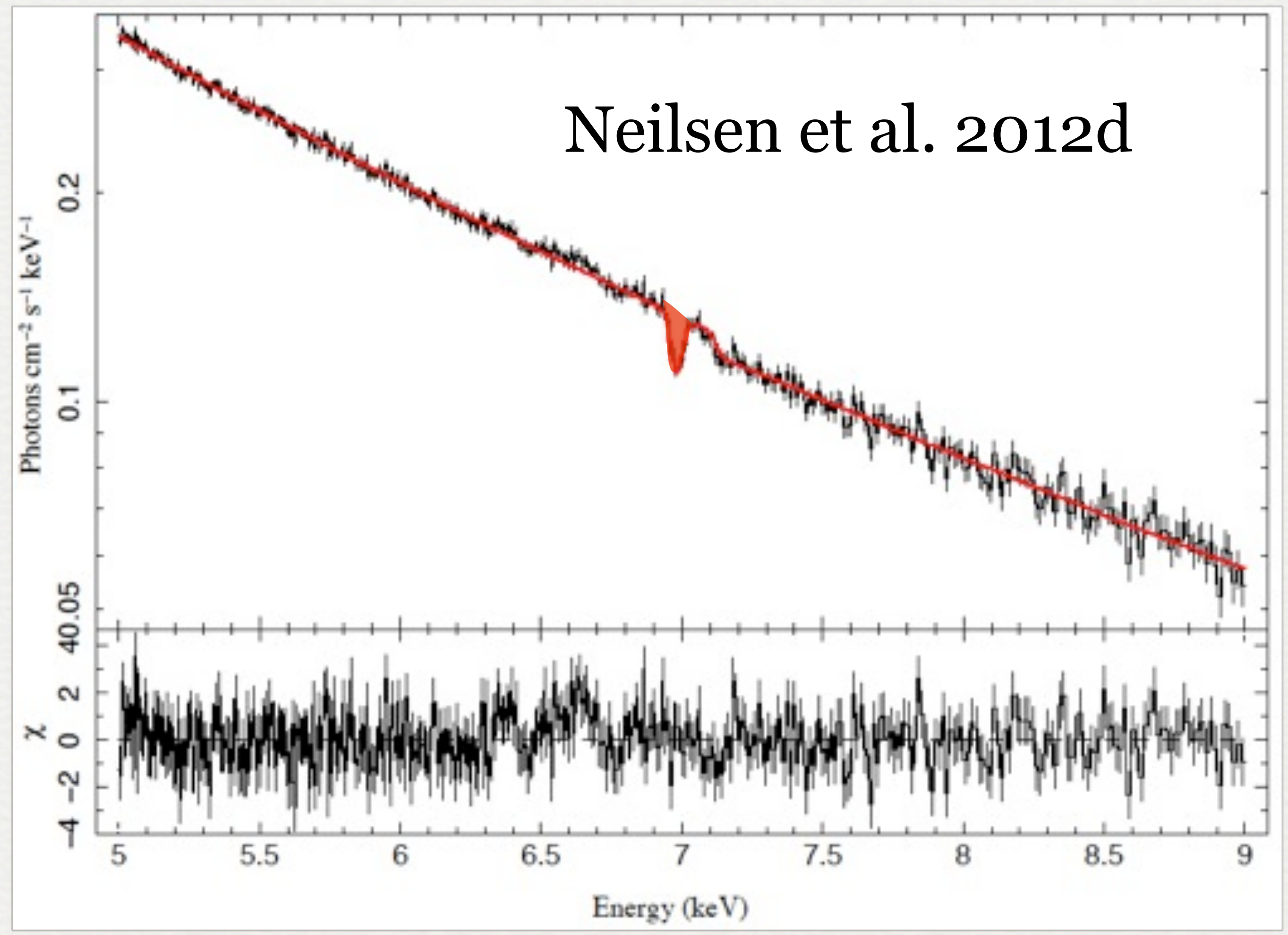


Credit: NASA/CXC/A. Hobart

The 'Heartbeat' State of GRS 1915+105

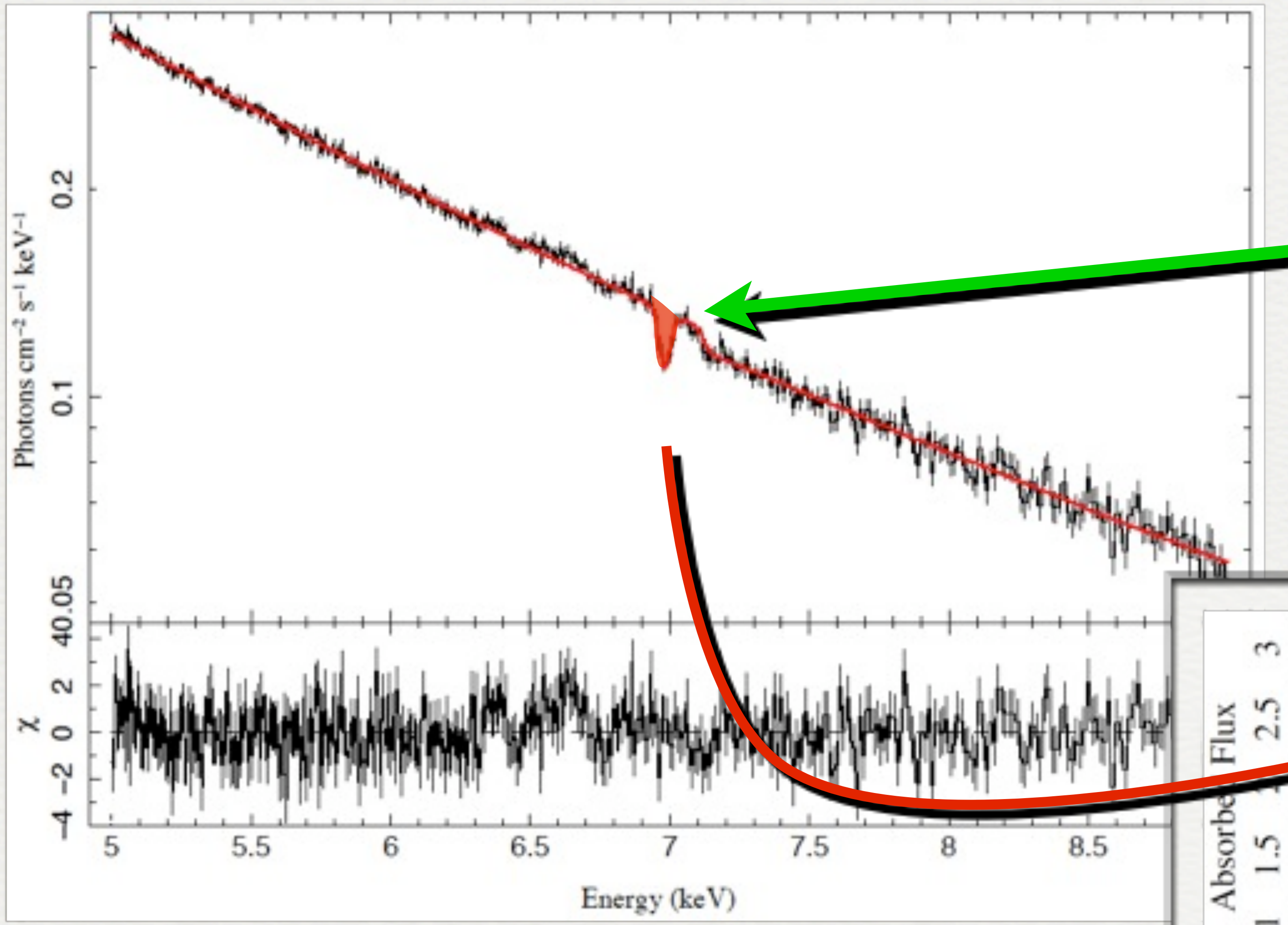


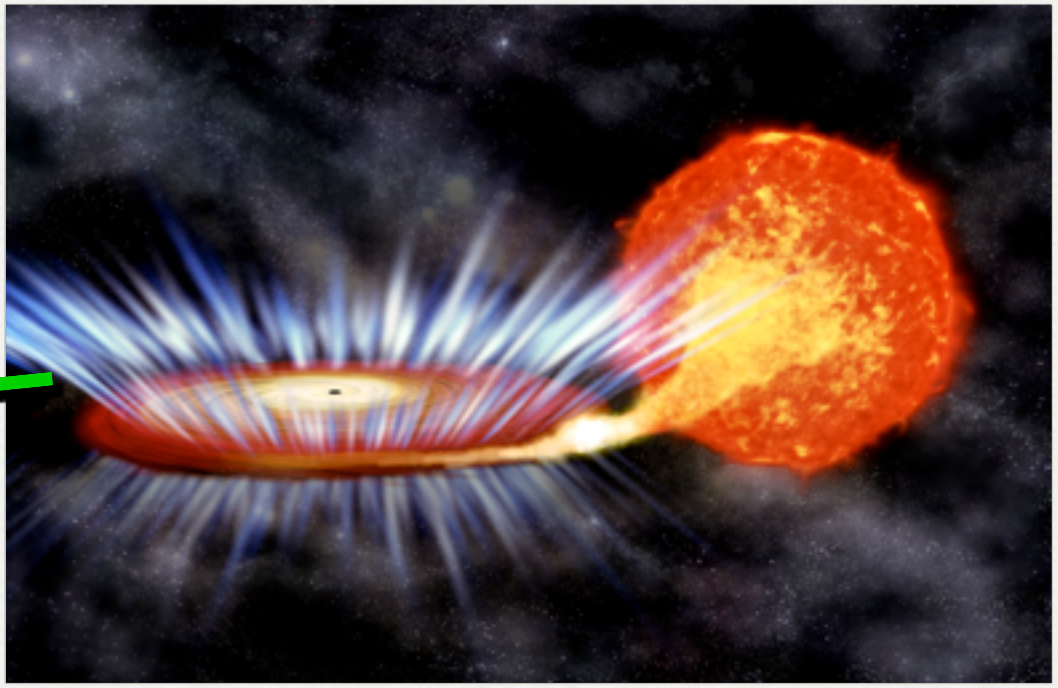
- *Strong, strange 50-second pulse observed by RXTE*

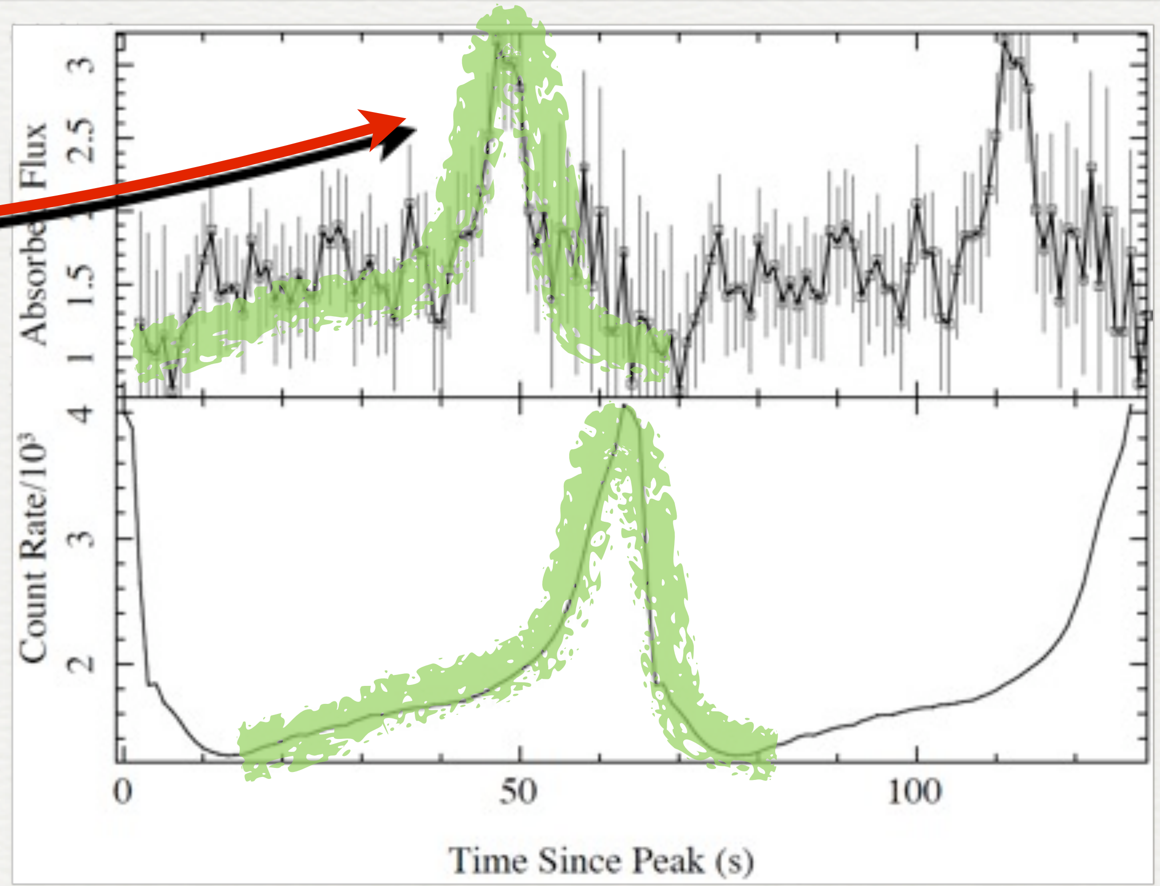


- *Chandra observations of this 'heartbeat' reveal a disk wind!*

Accretion Disk Wind





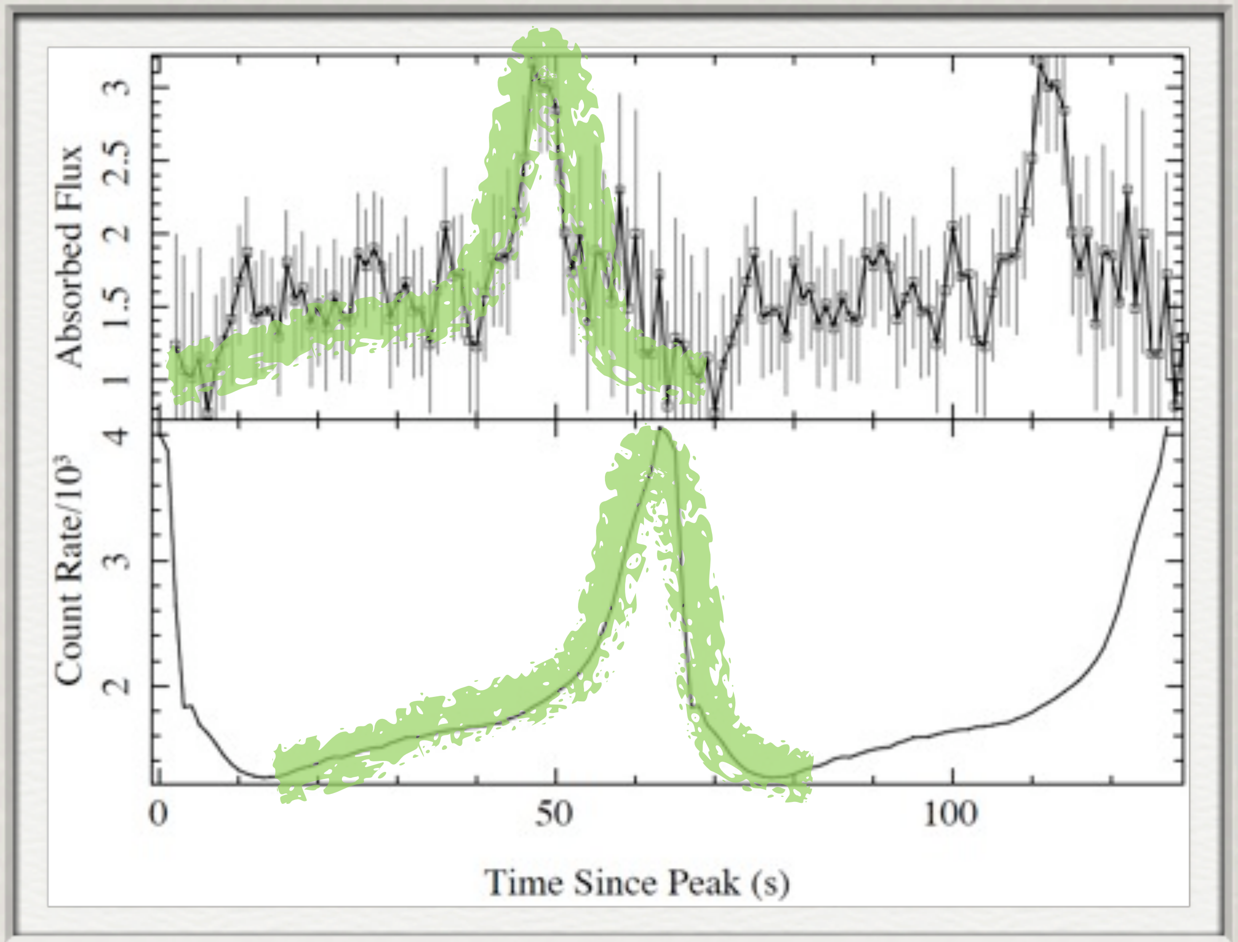


- *Measure wind at each part of the 'heartbeat'*

The Amazing Massive Wind

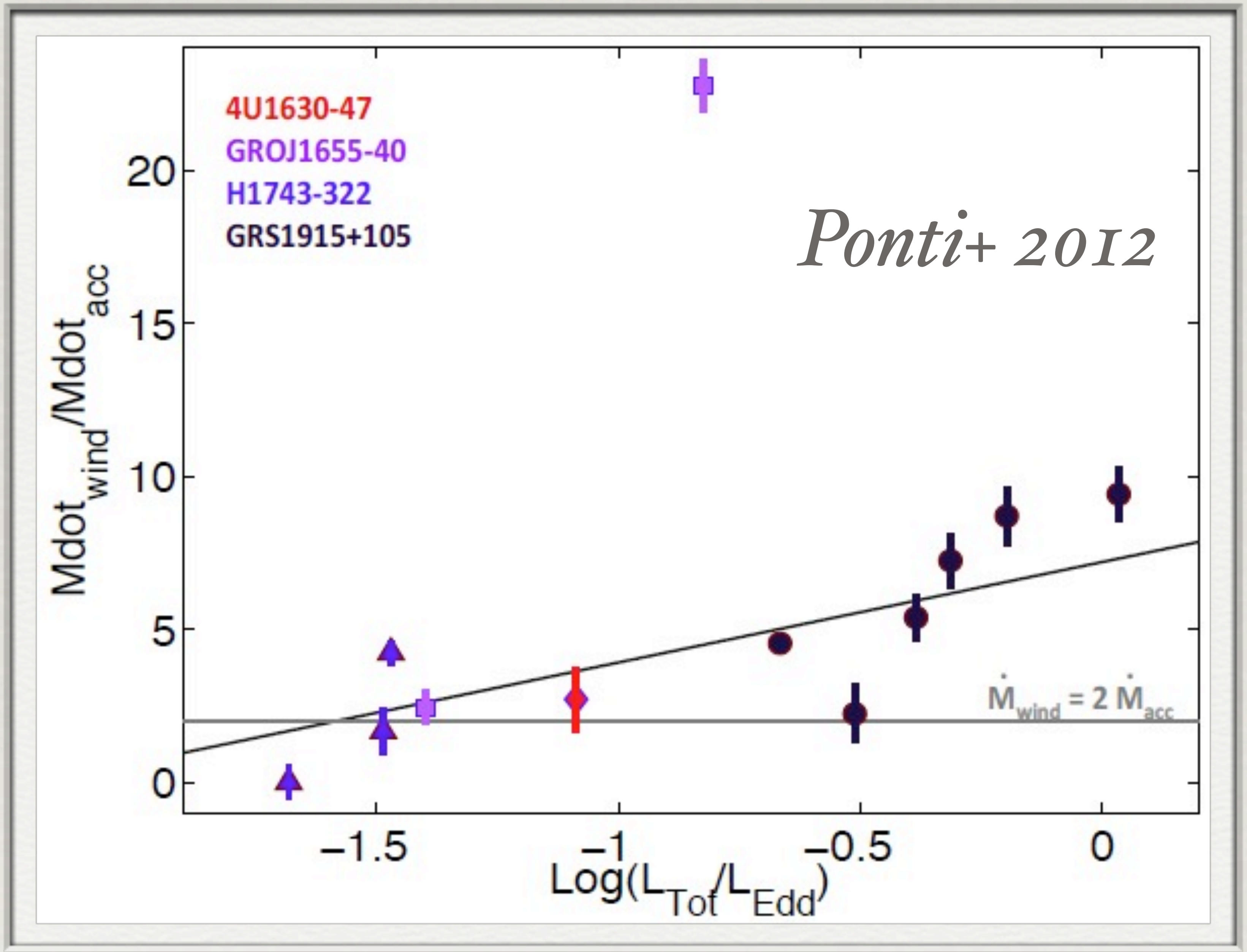
- *Each heartbeat blasts more gas off the disk*
- *R~10^{11} cm, but variable on time scales of 5 seconds*
- *Arguments from geometry, variability, line properties imply $\dot{M}_{out} \approx 25 \dot{M}_{BH}$ (Neilsen, Remillard, & Lee 2011)*
- *Has a huge effect on the disk*

Neilsen et al. 2012d

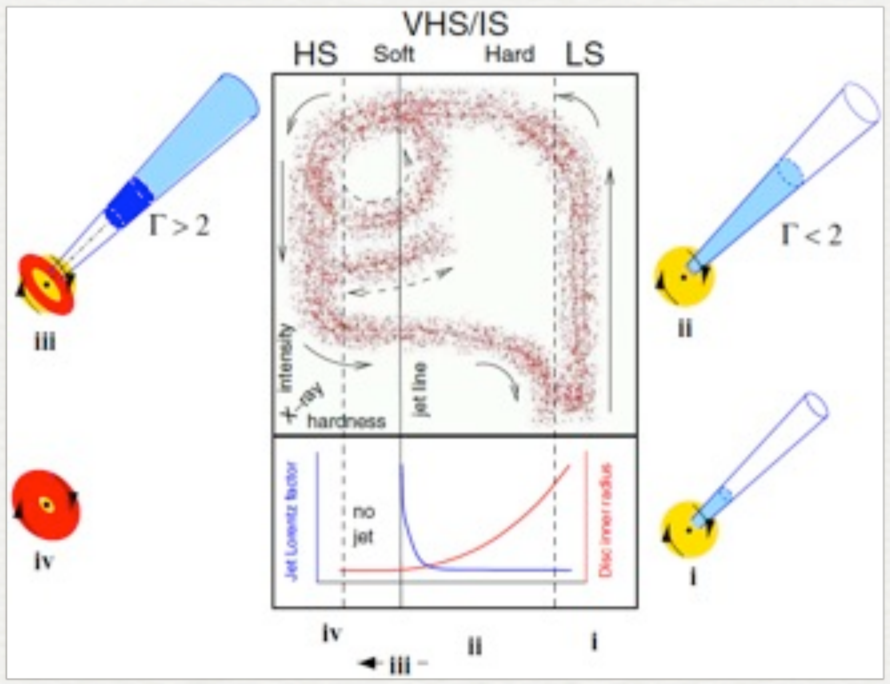


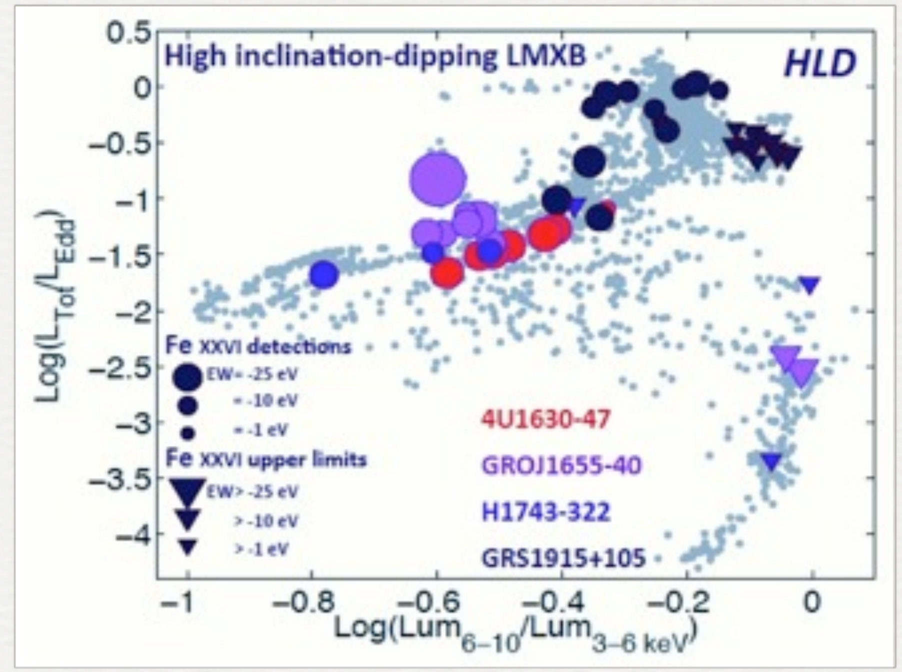
- *Other XRBS too! Ponti et al (2012)*

Massive Winds!



Implications





- *No coincidence that winds appear when they do*
- *Luminosity rises, illuminates disk, drives gas away*
- *Changes BH mass, energy budget*
- *State transition, jet turns off*

Summary

- *In GRO J1655-40, accretion disk winds evolve significantly during outburst (Neilsen & Homan 2012)*
- *This evolution is* ***universal!*** *(Archival studies: Ponti+ 2012; 4U 1630-47: Neilsen+ 2012e, in prep)*
- *Significant because:*
    - *Winds may* ***dominate*** *the mass budget (e.g. Neilsen+ 2011)*
    - *Winds are* ***not a part of the conventional understanding*** *of BH outbursts*