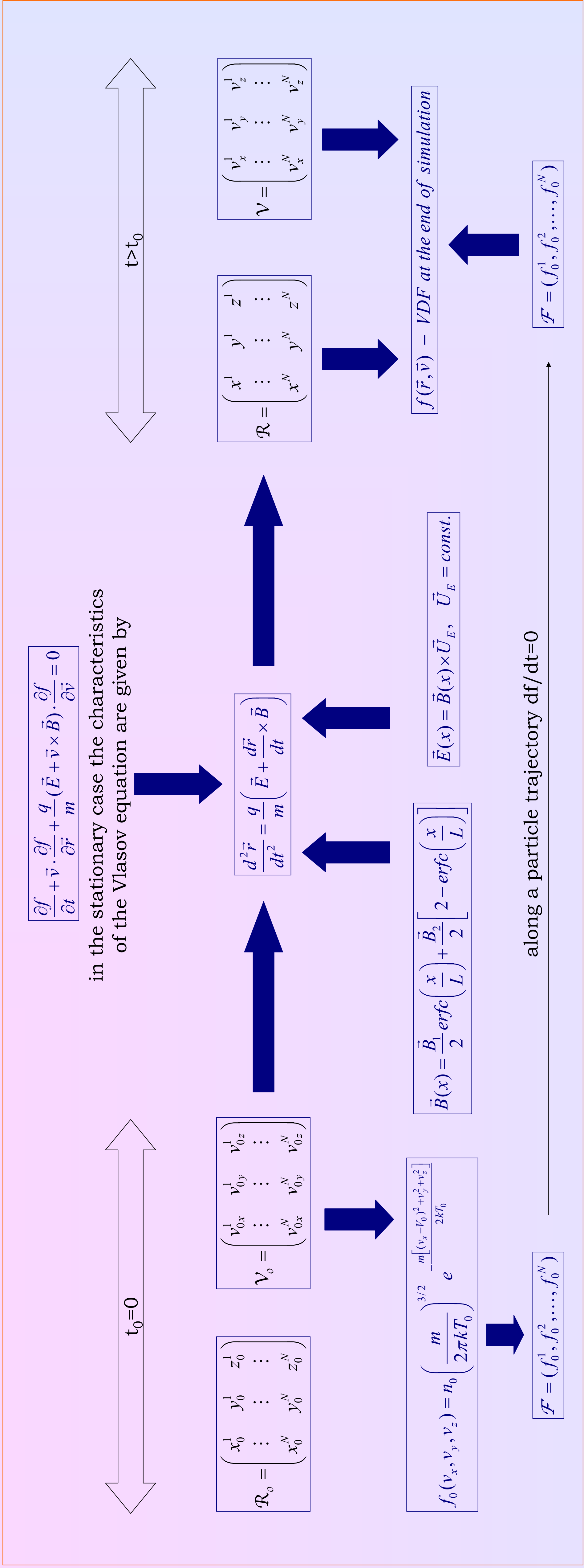


Investigation of anisotropic velocity distribution functions using numerical solutions of the stationary Vlasov equation

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1 Numerical model



3 Results

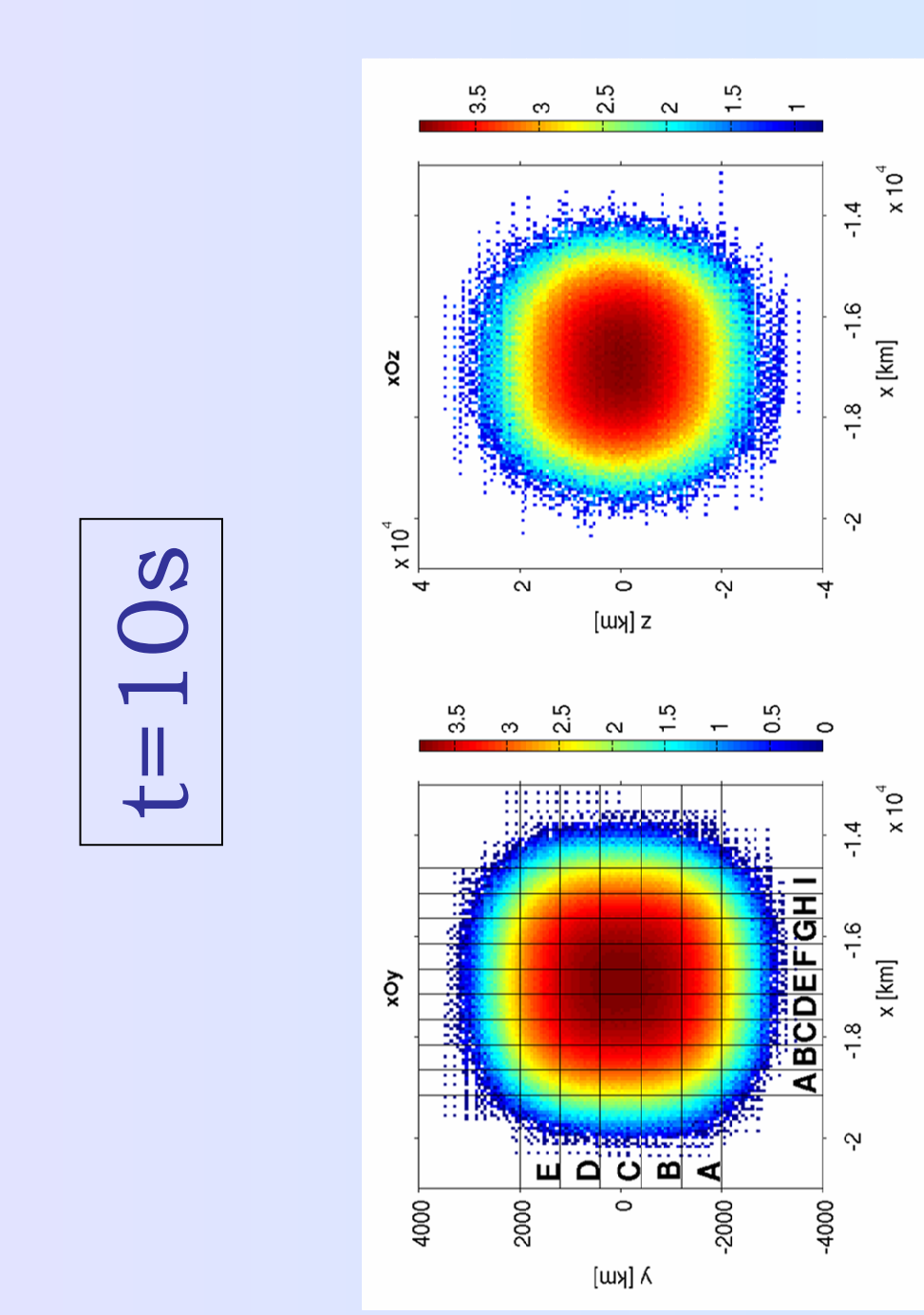


Figure 1 - The position of protons in the xOy and xOz planes obtained at the end of the simulation. Local value of the number density is color coded. The spatial mesh on which the VDF is reconstructed is also shown.

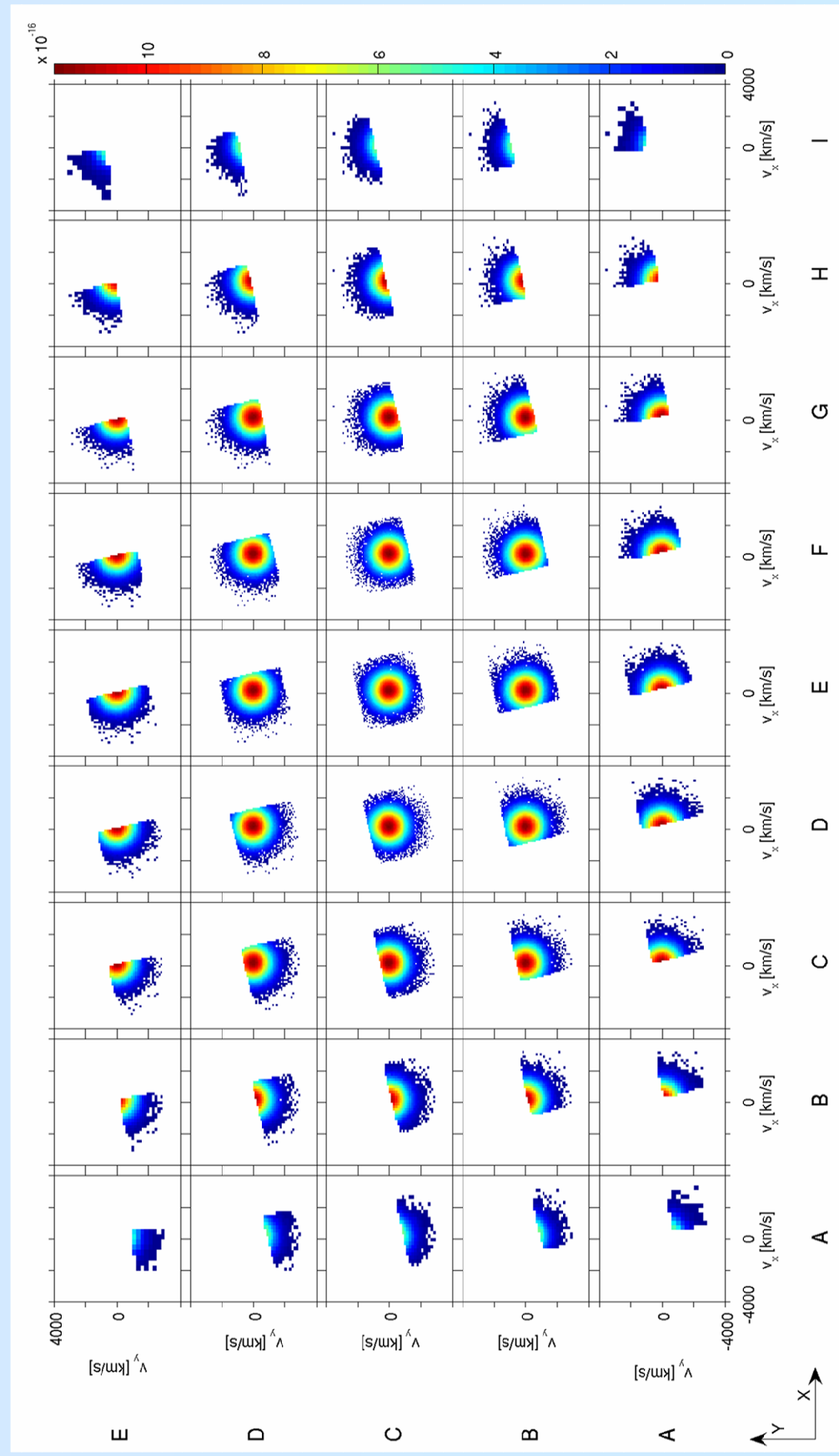


Figure 2 - Kinetic structure of the proton cloud. The spatial variation of the VDF of protons is shown for the mesh defined in figure 1. Note that in the central region of the cloud the VDF remain a displaced Maxwellian.

Case A
t=180s

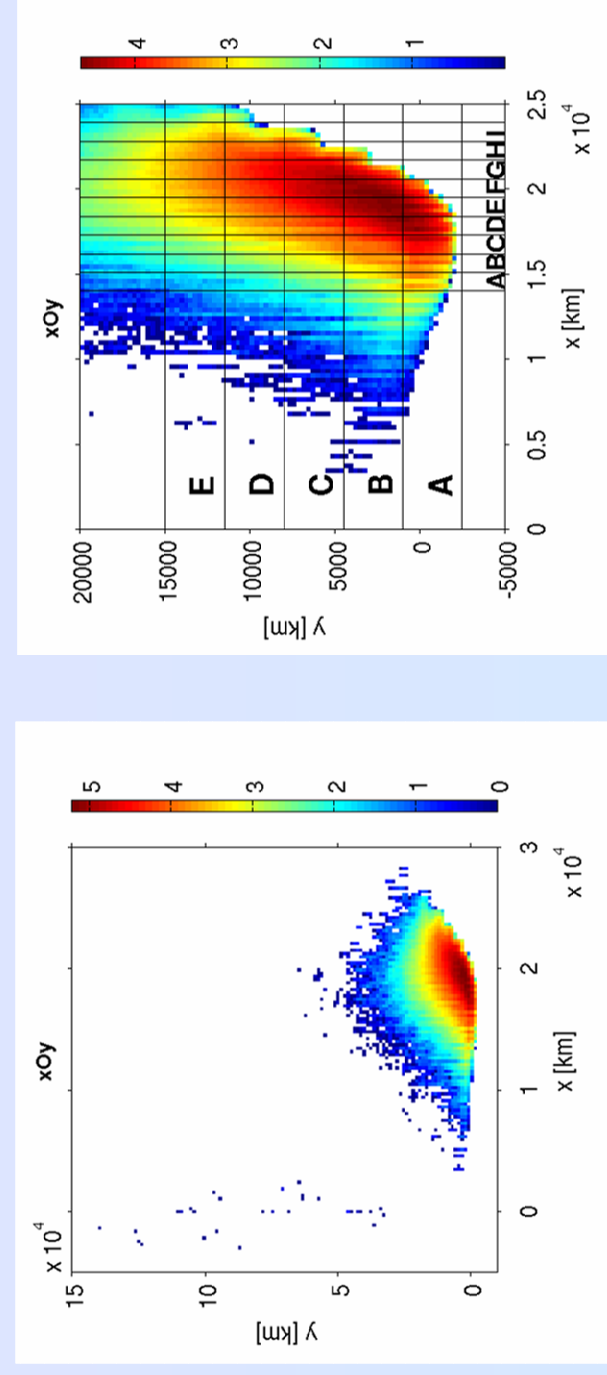


Figure 3 - The position of protons in the xOy plane obtained at the end of the simulation. Local value of the number density is color coded. The spatial mesh on which the VDF is reconstructed is also shown.

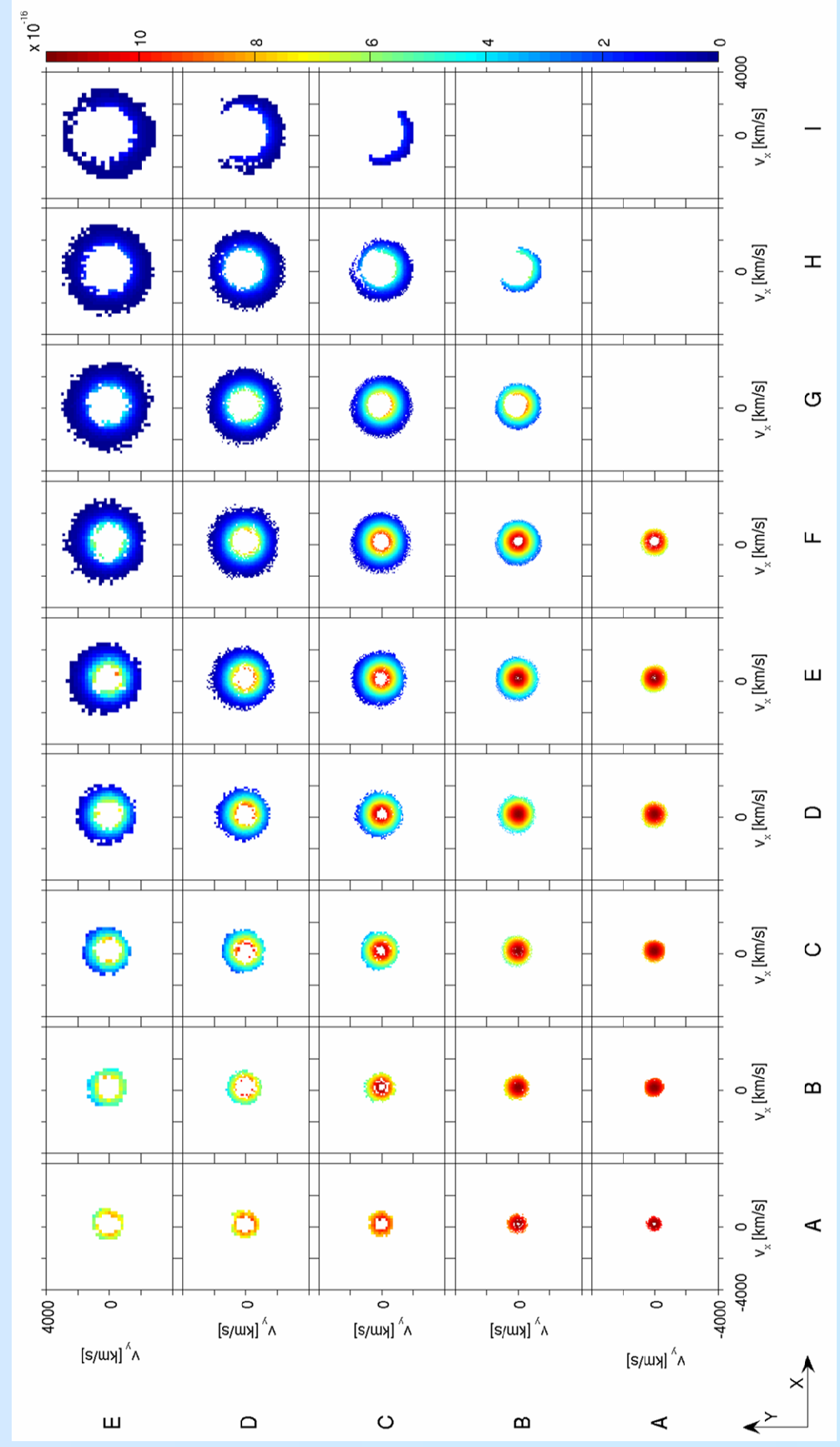


Figure 4 - Kinetic structure of the proton cloud. The spatial variation of the VDF of protons is shown for the mesh defined in figure 3. Note the formation of a cavity in the central region of the VDF.

Case B
t=180s

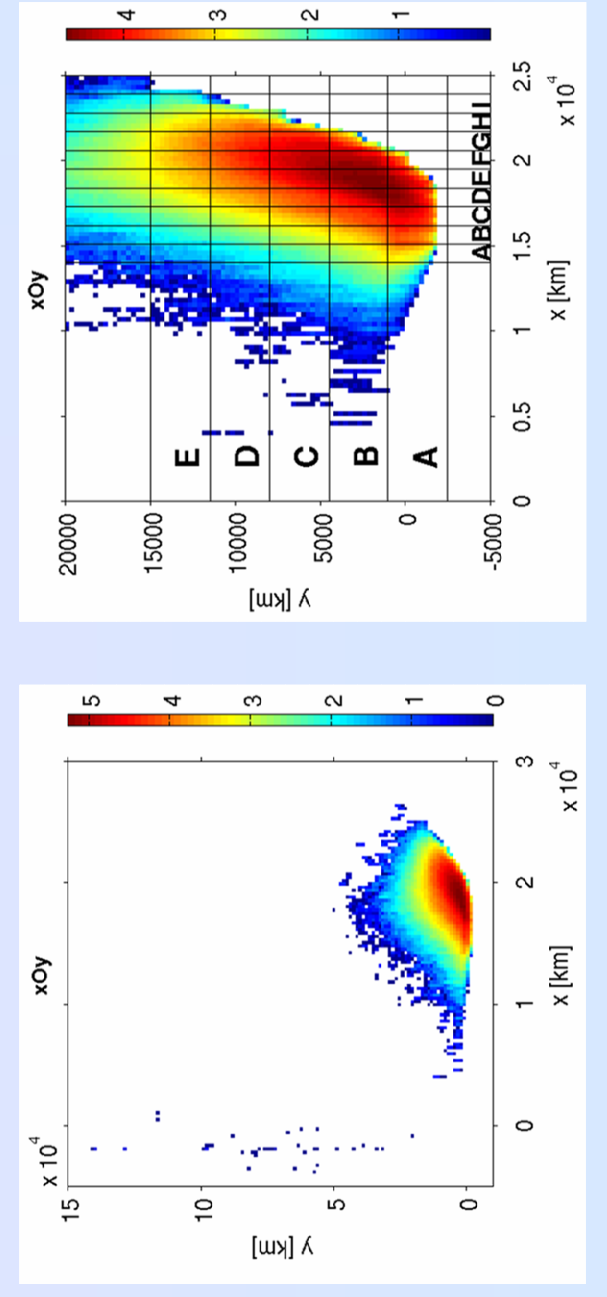


Figure 5 - The position of protons in the xOy plane obtained at the end of the simulation. Local value of the number density is color coded. The spatial mesh on which the VDF is reconstructed is also shown.

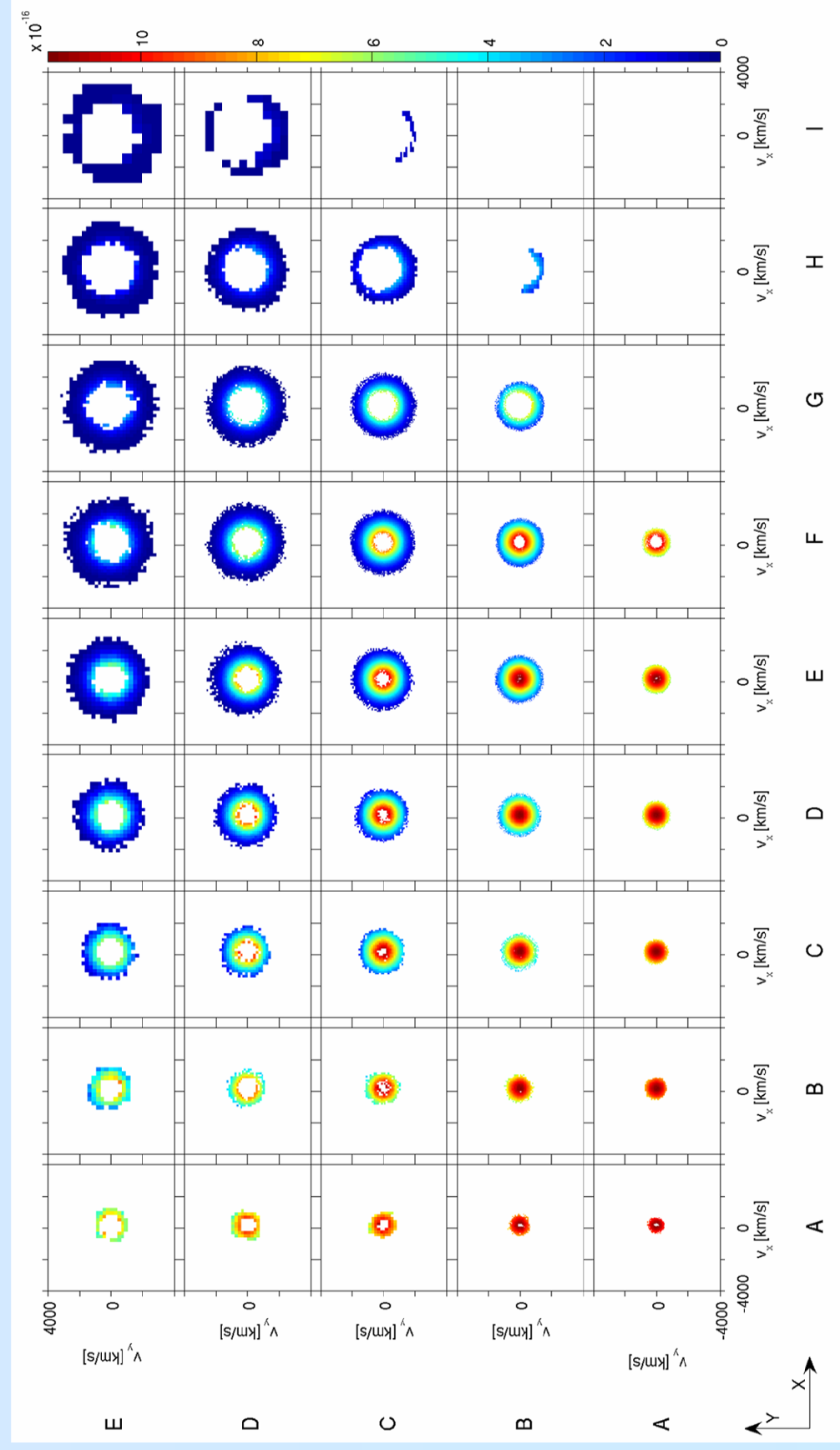
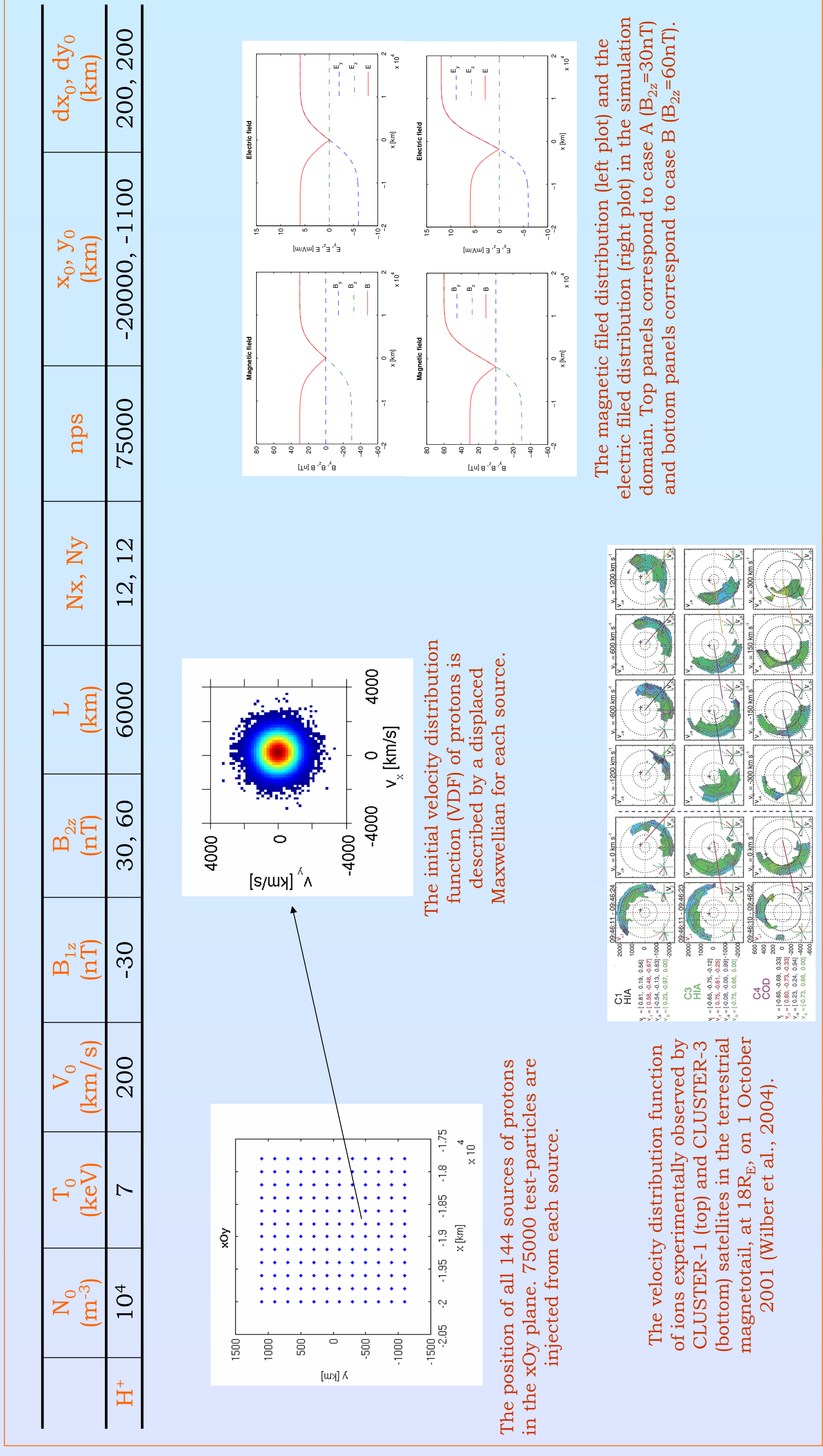


Figure 6 - Kinetic structure of the proton cloud. The spatial variation of the VDF of protons is shown for the mesh defined in figure 5. Note that the dimensions of the cavity are larger when the magnetic field increases.

2 Input parameters



4 Discussion and Conclusions

The results shows that the proton cloud penetrates the TD and moves into the "right hand side" region. The dynamics of the proton cloud reveals asymmetries for both values of the asymptotic magnetic field. The protons are scattered in the positive direction of the y-axis. The asymmetric expansion of the cloud is due to the positive gradient-B drift, acting in the discontinuity region. It can be seen that the spatial scattering of the protons varies inverse proportionally with the asymptotic value of the magnetic field. This confirms the role of the gradient-B drift that varies proportionally with $| \text{grad} B | / B^2$. On the other hand, the Larmor radius varies inverse proportionally with the magnetic induction such that the proton cloud dimensions in the xOy plane are smaller for a larger value of the asymptotic magnetic field intensity. The results shows an interesting property of the VDF: the formation of a cavity region in the central part of the VDF. This effect is observed in spatial regions close to the lateral wings of the cloud. The area of the void formed in the space of perpendicular velocities varies with the distance from the center of the cloud. It is thus suggested that the edges of the cloud are mainly populated by the most energetic particles from the initial distribution. Since everywhere E is perpendicular to B, there is no electrostatic acceleration. We conjecture that the physical mechanism that introduces this anisotropy of the VDF is related to the expansion of the cloud in the +Oy direction. It is thus a finite Larmor effect due to the gradient-B drift. The anisotropy observed in the region of the propagation front is a non-local effect which we associate to the remote sensing of particles. Similar conjectures have been made by Lee et al. (2004) for in-situ magnetospheric data. These authors did not explain the formation of the cavity. VDFs with anisotropic features resembling the ones illustrated in this study have been observed experimentally in the terrestrial magnetosphere close to the neutral sheet.

5 References

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