

LA-UR-15-28231 (Accepted Manuscript)

## Survey of radiation belt energetic electron pitch angle distributions based on the Van Allen Probes MagEIS measurements

She, R.  
Summers, D.  
Ni, B.  
Fennell, J. F.  
Blake, J. B.  
Spence, H. E.  
Reeves, Geoffrey D.

Provided by the author(s) and the Los Alamos National Laboratory (2017-10-17).

**To be published in:** Journal of Geophysical Research: Space Physics

**DOI to publisher's version:** 10.1002/2015JA021724

**Permalink to record:** <http://permalink.lanl.gov/object/view?what=info:lanl-repo/lareport/LA-UR-15-28231>

**Disclaimer:**

Approved for public release. Los Alamos National Laboratory, an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer, is operated by the Los Alamos National Security, LLC for the National Nuclear Security Administration of the U.S. Department of Energy under contract DE-AC52-06NA25396. Los Alamos National Laboratory strongly supports academic freedom and a researcher's right to publish; as an institution, however, the Laboratory does not endorse the viewpoint of a publication or guarantee its technical correctness.

---

1 **Survey of radiation belt energetic electron pitch**  
2 **angle distributions based on the Van Allen**  
3 **Probes MagEIS measurements**

4 Run Shi<sup>1</sup>, Danny Summers<sup>1</sup>, Binbin Ni<sup>2</sup>, Joseph F. Fennell<sup>3</sup>, J. Bernard Blake<sup>3</sup>, Harlan  
5 E. Spence<sup>4</sup> and Geoffrey D. Reeves<sup>5</sup>

6 <sup>1</sup>Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Memorial University of Newfoundland,  
7 St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada

8 <sup>2</sup>Department of Space Physics, School of Electronic Information, Wuhan University,  
9 Wuhan, Hubei, China

10 <sup>3</sup>Space Science Applications Laboratory, Aerospace Corporation, El Segundo,  
11 California, USA

12 <sup>4</sup>Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space, University of New Hampshire,  
13 Durham, New Hampshire, USA

14 <sup>5</sup>Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, New Mexico, USA

15

---

**16 Abstract**

17 A statistical survey of electron pitch angle distributions (PADs) is performed based on  
18 the pitch angle resolved flux observations from the Magnetic Electron Ion  
19 Spectrometer (MagEIS) instrument on board the Van Allen Probes during the period  
20 from 1 October 2012 to 1 May 2015. By fitting the measured PADs to a  $\sin^n\alpha$  form,  
21 where  $\alpha$  is the local pitch angle and  $n$  is the power law index, we investigate the  
22 dependence of PADs on electron kinetic energy, magnetic local time (MLT), the  
23 geomagnetic Kp index and  $L$ -shell. The difference in electron PADs between the inner  
24 and outer belt is distinct. In the outer belt, the common averaged  $n$  values are less than  
25 1.5, except for large values of the Kp index and high electron energies. The averaged  
26  $n$  values vary considerably with MLT, with a peak in the afternoon sector and an  
27 increase with increasing  $L$ -shell. In the inner belt, the averaged  $n$  values are much  
28 larger, with a common value greater than 2. The PADs show a slight dependence on  
29 MLT, with a weak maximum at noon. A distinct region with steep PADs lies in the  
30 outer edge of the inner belt where the electron flux is relatively low. The separation  
31 between the two belts and the intensity of the geomagnetic activity together  
32 determines the variation of PADs in the inner belt. Besides being dependent on  
33 electron energy, magnetic activity and  $L$ -shell, the results show a certain dependence  
34 on MLT with higher  $n$  values on the dayside.

35

**36 1. Introduction**

37 Energetic electrons in the Earth's radiation belts are strongly influenced by the

---

38 transport, energization, and loss processes which are dependent on different  
39 parameters such as electron kinetic energy, geomagnetic activity, spatial location and  
40 time. Variations of both electron flux and its pitch-angle distribution (PAD) can be  
41 essential indicators of underlying physical processes. PADs exhibit different forms in  
42 the outer and inner belt. PADs of outer belt electrons can be categorized into three  
43 types:  $90^\circ$  peaked, flat-top, and butterfly, which are associated with different  
44 mechanisms [Gannon *et al.*, 2007]. Butterfly distributions due to the effects of drift  
45 shell splitting and magnetopause shadowing usually occur outside  $6 R_E$  throughout the  
46 nightside [West *et al.*, 1973; Sibeck *et al.*, 1987], while normal ( $90^\circ$  peaked or pancake)  
47 PADs dominate the dayside magnetosphere as well as the nightside within  $6R_E$  of  
48 Earth [Sibeck *et al.*, 1987]. Horne *et al.* [2003] investigated the evolution of electron  
49 PADs during storm time and found that at  $L \sim 4-6$ , butterfly distributions formed at  
50 storm onset which could be caused by nonlocal acceleration occurring at higher  
51 (lower) latitudes. They further found that the PADs become broadly fla- top during the  
52 recovery phase. By fitting to a  $\sin^n\alpha$  form, Vampola [1998] explored PADs using data  
53 from the Medium Electrons A instrument on the Combined Release and Radiation  
54 Effects Satellite (CRRES). Vampola [1998] calculated the averaged pitch-angle  
55 distribution coefficient  $n$  for 510keV and found a clear  $L$ -shell dependence but only a  
56 slight energy dependence. Applying the same method, Gannon *et al.* [2007]  
57 performed a more detailed study based on the CRRES MEA data. They examined the  
58 PADs as a function of  $L$ -shell and orbit number at the energies 153 keV, 510 keV and  
59 976 keV. They concluded that the PADs on the dayside are predominately  $90^\circ$  peaked

---

60 distributions while butterfly distributions become more common on the nightside at  
61 higher  $L$ -shells. *Gannon et al.* [2007] also showed that the PADs depend on MLT and  
62 magnetic activity. A further interesting finding was that the steepness of the  
63 distribution coefficient  $n$  at lower  $L$ -shell and the  $L$ -shell variation of the steepness is  
64 related to the plasmapause location for electron energy 153keV. In the present  
65 research, we will show that this steepness corresponds to the outer edge of inner belt  
66 and its features also depend on MLT and magnetic activity. *Gu et al.* [2011] performed  
67 a detailed statistical analysis of electron PADs near geostationary orbit ( $6R_E$  and  
68  $6.6R_E$ ), using CRRES MEA data. The dependence on kinetic energy, MLT and the  
69 level of geomagnetic activity are quantified. The results show that the values of the  
70 distribution coefficient  $n$  peak within the 1200-1600 MLT sector. It is also shown that  
71 the values of  $n$  are smaller at lower energies and the variation of  $n$  is stronger for  
72 higher energies. The  $\sin^n\alpha$  variation for electron PADs is a useful practical assumption  
73 in radiation belt studies [e.g., *Summers et al.*, 2009; *Summers and Shi*, 2014]. Recently,  
74 *Chen et al.* [2014] developed a new empirical model, called the relativistic electron  
75 pitch angle distribution (REPAD), to present statistical pictures of electron PADs by  
76 using Legendre polynomials to fit long-term in situ directional fluxes. This model  
77 provides higher-order information for PADs, thereby making butterfly distribution  
78 easier to identify.

79 PADs of the inner belt have received more attention recently thanks to the Van Allen  
80 Probes [*Zhao et al.*, 2014a, 2014b]. Based on the Magnetic Electron Ion Spectrometer  
81 (MagEIS) measurement, *Zhao et al.* [2014a] reported that a new type of PAD for

---

82 hundreds of keV electrons has a minimum at  $90^\circ$ . Furthermore, *Zhao et al.* [2014b]  
83 identified normal and cap PADs in addition to the  $90^\circ$  minimum PAD at low  $L$  shells.  
84 They found that for  $\sim 460$  keV electrons,  $90^\circ$  minimum PADs dominate at  $L \sim 1.4$ -1.8,  
85 while normal PADs dominate at  $L \sim 3.5$ -4; in between,  $90^\circ$  minimum PADs dominate  
86 during injections, while afterward minimum  $90^\circ$  PADs gradually disappear and  
87 normal PADs become dominant; cap PADs generally appear at  $L = 2.5$ -3.5 during the  
88 flux decay period following an injection.

89 Most recently, *Ni et al.* [2015] investigated pitch angle distributions of radiation belt  
90 ultrarelativistic ( $> 2$  MeV) electrons during storm conditions and during the long-term  
91 poststorm decay, based on the Van Allen Probes Relativistic Electron-Proton  
92 Telescope (REPT) measurements. The observed PAD coefficient  $n$  increases with  
93 magnetic activity in general, which suggested chorus acceleration outside the  
94 plasmasphere and electromagnetic ion cyclotron (EMIC) wave scattering inside the  
95 plasmasphere.

96 In the present study, by fitting the electron PADs into a  $\sin^n\alpha$  form, we investigate in  
97 detail the PAD dependence on kinetic energy, MLT, magnetic activity and  $L$ -shell,  
98 using the MagEIS measurement onboard the Van Allen Probes during the period from  
99 1 October 2012 to 1 May 2015. Although fitting the PADs into a  $\sin^n\alpha$  form may not  
100 be fully accurate, especially for distinguishing between the normal cap PAD and the  
101  $90^\circ$  minimum PAD in the inner belt, it does give us a first-order approximation of  
102 PADs for a statistical survey.

103

---

**2. Data and Method of Analysis**

104 The MagEIS (Magnetic Electron Ion Spectrometer) instrument onboard the Van Allen  
105 Probes with an apogee of  $\sim 5.8 R_E$  [Mauk *et al.*, 2012], provides high resolution  
106 electron flux measurements over an energy range of  $\sim 30$  keV to 4 MeV [Blake *et al.*,  
107 2013; Spence *et al.*, 2013]. Our focus in the present study will be on the MagEIS  
108 measurements made by Probe B at energies below 1 MeV. We utilize the level 3  
109 MagEIS data set which is pitch-angle binned. Although this data set lacks resolution  
110 when analyzing the electron pitch angle distributions, it still provides a good general  
111 evolution of the PADs.

113 Following previous studies (Vampola [1998], Gannon *et al.* [2007] and Gu *et al.*  
114 [2011]), we assume the electron pitch angle distribution can be modeled by the form  
115  $\sin^n \alpha$ , where  $\alpha$  is the local pitch angle. Specifically, we use the same method as  
116 applied by Carbary *et al.* [2011]. The observed differential fluxes are fitted to the  
117 function  $f = J \sin^n \alpha$ , where  $\alpha$  is the pitch angle,  $n$  is the exponent, and  $J$  is a constant. A  
118 standard least squares fit is performed, and the goodness of fit is quantified by a  
119 normalized standard deviation  $\sigma_N = \sigma / [\max(f) - \min(f)]$ , where  $\sigma$  is the usual  
120 standard deviation of the fit,  $\max(f)$  is the maximum of the observed pitch angle  
121 distribution, and  $\min(f)$  is the minimum. The normalized uncertainty  $\sigma_N$  is constrained  
122 to be less than 0.2. The data with magnetic latitudes  $< 85^\circ$  and  $> 95^\circ$  are excluded.  
123 The  $L$  parameter in this study is McIlwain's  $L$ -shell parameter, computed for  $90^\circ$   
124 particles using the OP77Q external field and IGRF internal field.

125

---

### 3. Results and Discussion

Figure 1 shows the solar wind  $B_z$  component, solar wind speed  $V_{sw}$  and dynamic pressure  $P_{dyn}$ , and the Dst, Kp and AE indices during the period from 1 October 2012 to 1 May 2015. These data were obtained from the OMNI website (<http://omniweb.gsfc.nasa.gov>).

Examples of the electron PAD fitting are given in Figure 2. The top panels are the fittings for 100 keV electrons at the indicated four  $L$ -shells. The first panel shows the fitting at  $L=2.09$  (inner belt). The electron flux at  $90^\circ$  pitch angle is slightly smaller than the values at  $74^\circ$  and  $106^\circ$ , which is consistent with the  $90^\circ$  minimum PAD reported by *Zhao et al.* [2014a, 2014b]. However, in our study, this type is not specifically distinguished and is regarded as a normal PAD. At  $L=3.3$ , the  $n$  value is extremely high ( $n=9.1$ ). As shown by *Gannon et al.* [2007], such steep PADs are common near the plasmapause for 157 keV. The sharply peaked PAD is also present for 350 keV electrons as shown in Figure 2. All three cases shown in the last column indicate poor fittings with  $SDn > 0.2$  which are discarded from the subsequent statistical survey.

Figures 3 to 6 show the results of the  $n$  values and  $\log_{10}(J)$  obtained from the analysis of the 31-month data corresponding to four electron energies, i.e., 100, 200, 350 and 1000 keV, respectively. The superimposed white lines give the estimated location of the plasmapause based on the model of *Carpenter and Anderson* [1992]:  $L_{pp} = 5.6 - 0.46Kp^*$ , where  $Kp^*$  is the maximum value of the Kp index in the previous 24 h. The black area below the white curves indicates the slot region which is energy dependent

---

148 at the lower energy channels. Note that some part of the black area may result from  
149 the data gap, for example, from 22 May 2013 to 17 February 2014 above  $L=3$  at 100  
150 and 200 keV. As pointed out by *Fennell et al.* [2014], no electrons with energy higher  
151 than 900 keV are observed with equatorial fluxes above the background noise level in  
152 the inner zone, so that no data exist in the inner belt for 1 MeV. As shown in Figure 3  
153 to Figure 5, the PADs in the outer radiation belt and inner belt are distinctly different.  
154 For the lower energies (100, 200 and 350 keV)  $n$  values are mostly less than 1.5 in  
155 the outer radiation belt in the region from  $L = 6$  to the inner edge of the outer belt. In  
156 contrast, inside the inner belt,  $n$  values are rarely less than 2. This strong distinction  
157 between the  $n$  values for the outer and inner belt is consistent with previous studies  
158 (e.g., *Vampola* [1998], *Gannon et al.*, 2007 and *Zhao et al.* [2014]).  
159 A clear feature is the occurrence of high  $n$  values near the plasmapause, which was  
160 also reported by *Gannon et al.* [2007] for 157 keV electrons. Since this feature  
161 appears to correlate with, and remain inside of, the minimum plasmapause boundary,  
162 *Gannon et al.* [2007] suggested that pitch angle scattering by plasmaspheric hiss  
163 could be a possible explanation. Comparing the pitch angle distributions at 100, 200  
164 and 350 keV, we find that the high  $n$  values mainly exist at the outer edge of the inner  
165 belt and slot region accompanying low energy fluxes. The small values of electron  
166 flux are easily captured from the bottom panels of the figures (i.e., the results of  
167  $\log_{10}(J)$ ), specifically around  $L = 3.5$  for 100 keV,  $L = 3.0$  for 200 keV and  $L = 2.7$  for  
168 350 keV, respectively. *Lyons et al.* [1972] predicted that the interaction between  
169 plasmaspheric hiss waves and electrons leads to a bump near 90°. *Lyons and Williams*

---

170 [1975] showed that injections during major storms result in electron pitch angle  
171 distributions and radial profiles that are greatly distorted from their quiet time  
172 equilibrium structure. *Zhao et al.* [2014b], by investigating an event in detail, found  
173 that inward radial diffusion may lead to the formation of a steep PAD at the beginning  
174 of the injection. While during the decay period, plasmaspheric hiss scattering plays an  
175 important role in shaping the steep PADs in the slot region and inner belt [e.g., *Thorne*  
176 *et al.*, 2013; *Ni et al.*, 2013]. Thus, the injection of outer belt electrons and consequent  
177 inward radial diffusion and hiss scattering can lead to the structure of peaked PADs.  
178 According to *Li et al.* [2006], the innermost plasmapause indicates the inner edge of  
179 outer radiation belt. The position of the plasmapause roughly gives the location where  
180 the outer belt MeV electrons can reach. From Figure 3 to Figure 5, it can be seen that  
181 the spatial structure and the steepness of the PADs respond differently at the specific  
182 three energies. At 100 keV, steep PADs almost fill the slot region due to the injection  
183 of outer belt electrons, while at 200 and 350 keV the steep PADs tend to restrict to the  
184 inner belt and weaken with increasing energy. Since the inner radiation belt extends to  
185 higher  $L$ -shell at lower energies, the outer edge of the inner belt is more vulnerable to  
186 the intrusion of the outer belt electrons. It can be seen that even weak magnetic  
187 activity would enhance the  $n$  values at the outer edge of the inner belt at 100keV. In  
188 the slot region and inner belt, following storms it takes a period of several days for  
189 PADs to return to their prestorm shape [*Lyons and Williams*, 1975]. Due to the  
190 constant injection (over an interval of, say, several days) of outer belt electrons into  
191 the inner belt, the steep PADs become a common structure in the slot region for

---

192 100keV. When the Kp index is so large that the innermost plasmapause reaches the  
193 core of the inner belt, the strong injection of high fluxes overwhelm the electrons at  
194 the outer edge of the inner belt, as typified by the small flux. The large  $n$  values are  
195 then superseded by the small  $n$  values that characterize strong electron flux. Since  
196 inside the inner belt the flux is also strong, the injection does not change the  $n$  values  
197 in this region significantly. In contrast, for higher energies (200 and 350 keV) the slot  
198 region extends over a broader range of  $L$  shells, therefore the inner belt is not so  
199 vulnerable to the intrusion of outer belt electrons. A higher Kp index is then needed to  
200 affect the  $n$  values at the outer edge of the inner belt. We also see a reduction of  $n$   
201 values for much higher Kp index at 350 keV. The high  $n$  values at 350 keV tend to  
202 decay during quiet times, but this is not apparent at 100 keV. Hence, the reason why  
203 the high  $n$  values always exist near the plasmapause at 100 keV can be that the  
204 constant injection of outer radiation belt electrons and consequent inward radial  
205 diffusion and particle scattering by hiss waves sustains very strongly peaked  
206 pitch-angle distributions. At higher energies (200 and 350 keV), due to weaker  
207 injection, the features of high  $n$  value structures are not so strong.

208 To investigate the MLT and magnetic activity dependence of PADs, we calculated  
209 averaged  $n$  values in the  $L$ -MLT domain at 100, 200, 350 keV and 1MeV for three  
210 geomagnetic conditions. That is, as shown in Figure 7, we chose (from left to right)  
211 geomagnetically quiet, moderate, and active times parameterized by the Kp indices  
212 for the 31-month period. At 100keV, during quiet times ( $Kp < 2$ ), large  $n$  values are  
213 distributed around  $L=3.8$ , the location of the outer edge of the inner belt. Since the

214 plasmapause position reaches lower  $L$ -shells for large  $K_p$  indices, the peak of the  
215 averaged  $n$  values tends to be dominated by the injection of outer belt electrons.  
216 Therefore, the peak values are relatively small for  $2 < K_p < 4$ , and the strong peak  
217 vanishes under the disturbed condition with  $K_p > 4$ . At 200 and 350 keV, the steep  
218 PADs exist around  $L=3.2$  and  $L=2.8$ , respectively. The steepness of the PADs also  
219 attenuates with increments in  $K_p$  index. However, when the separation between the  
220 outer belt and inner belt is relatively large, the injected electrons cannot easily reach  
221 the inner belt, resulting in that the peaks in  $n$  values do not vanish completely at 200  
222 and 350keV.

223 The steep PADs show a certain MLT dependence with larger values of averaged  $n$  on  
224 the dayside. Most recently, a statistical survey of plasmaspheric hiss based on the  
225 measurements from the Van Allen Probes [Li *et al.*, 2015] shows that the hiss wave  
226 intensities predominate on the dayside. The relatively intense hiss may be responsible  
227 for the steeper PADs on the dayside [e.g., Ni *et al.*, 2013, 2014].

228 In the outer belt, the dependence of the PAD coefficient  $n$  on MLT,  $K_p$  and  $L$ -shell is  
229 also clear. The  $n$  values increase with increasing  $K_p$  index, especially at noon. With  
230 decreasing  $L$ , the variation in the  $n$  values tends to weaken in response to increase in  
231  $K_p$ . The MLT dependence is more evident at larger energies and for higher  $K_p$  index.  
232 These features are consistent with the detailed statistical results of PADs at  $L=6.0$   
233 and  $L=6.6$  by Gu *et al.* [2011].

234 In the inner belt, there is no strong dependence of the  $n$  values on MLT. We calculated  
235 the averaged  $n$  values inside the inner belt at  $L = 2.0 \pm 0.1$  as a function of MLT for

236 100, 200 and 350keV, the results of which are shown in Figure 8. The PADs exhibit a  
 237 weak dependence on MLT, with a small peak around 12 MLT for all three energies. It  
 238 can be also seen that the  $n$  values increase with increasing electron energy at  $L=2.0$ .  
 239 Figure 9 shows the averaged  $n$  values with an error bar, as a function of  $L$ -shell at five  
 240 different energies for  $K_p < 2$ ,  $2 < K_p < 4$ ,  $K_p > 4$  and also for all  $K_p$  indices. At  
 241  $E=100$ keV, the peak of the averaged  $n$  values is about 9 for  $K_p < 2$  at  $L=3.8$ . As  $K_p$   
 242 grows, the peak value of  $n$  decreases to 6 at  $L=3.4$  for  $2 < K_p < 4$ , and almost vanishes  
 243 for  $K_p > 4$ . With increasing energy, the inner belt shrinks to lower  $L$ -shell, and as a  
 244 consequence, the peak of the  $n$  values moves to lower  $L$ -shell, e.g.,  $L = 3.0$  at 200 keV,  
 245  $L = 2.8$  at 350 keV and  $L = 2.5$  at 600 keV. Different from the case of 100 keV, at  
 246 350keV, the peak  $n$  values still exist around  $L = 2.5$  for  $K_p > 4$ , since the particle  
 247 injection is not strong enough to reach inside of the inner belt. Thus the  $n$  values at the  
 248 outer edge of the inner belt are not strongly affected by the injections.  
 249 Inside the inner belt, the averaged  $n$  values increase slightly with  $K_p$  index at  $L=2.0$   
 250 for the lower energies, i.e., 100, 200 and 350 keV.

251

## 252 **4. Conclusions**

253 Based on the data from the Magnetic Electron Ion Spectrometer (MagEIS) instrument  
 254 onboard the Van Allen Probes during the period from 1 October 2012 to 1 May 2015,  
 255 a statistical analysis of the energetic radiation belt electron pitch angle distributions  
 256 (PADs) has been performed. By fitting the measured pitch angle distributions with a  
 257 power-law function of the sine of the local pitch angle, the power law index  $n$  is

---

258 quantified as a function of electron kinetic energy, MLT interval, and geomagnetic  
259 index  $K_p$ . The main conclusions are summarized as follows:

260 1. At the outer edge of the inner belt radiation belt energetic electrons primarily  
261 present a steep distribution (corresponding to a large  $n$  value) at lower energies (below  
262 700 keV). This can be caused by the injection of outer belt electrons that severely  
263 affect the PADs of energetic electrons that initially have low values of flux.

264 2. The steep distributions at  $90^\circ$  pitch angle are dependent on electron energies,  
265 geomagnetic activity and MLT. The  $L$ -value of these structures decreases with  
266 increasing energy since the structures lie at the outer edge of the inner belt. The  
267 strength of the magnetic activity and the distance between the inner and outer belt  
268 (which depends on energy) determine whether the injection of outer belt electrons can  
269 reach or at least approach the inner belt. Together with the effects of wave-particle  
270 interactions and radial transport, the injection modifies the electron distributions in the  
271 slot region and the outer edge of the inner belt [Zhao *et al.*, 2014b]. With increasing  
272  $K_p$  index, the averaged  $n$  values of the steep PADs decrease and their location shifts  
273 to lower  $L$ -shells. The night-side PADs of these structures are flatter than on the  
274 dayside.

275 3. The pitch angle distributions in the outer belt from  $L = 4$  to  $L = 6$  also show  
276 considerable dependence on electron energy, geomagnetic activity and MLT. The PAD  
277 coefficient  $n$  is higher on the dayside compared to the nightside, which becomes more  
278 pronounced when the geomagnetic activity intensifies and electron energy increases.  
279 This feature is consistent with the analysis of PADs near the geostationary orbit using

280 CRRES observations [Gu *et al.*, 2011]. In addition, the  $n$  values on the dayside  
281 decrease with decreasing  $L$ -shell.

282 4. In the inner belt, the PADs are weakly dependent on MLT, while the PAD  
283 coefficient  $n$  reaches relatively high values around 12 MLT.

284

285 **Acknowledgements** This work is supported by a Discovery Grant to D.S. from  
286 the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada. BN thanks the  
287 support from the NSFC grants 41204120 and 41474141, the Fundamental Research  
288 Funds for the Central Universities grant 2042014kf0251, and the Project supported by  
289 the Specialized Research Fund for State Key Laboratories. All electron data analyzed  
290 in this study are obtainede from the MagEIS instrument via the website  
291 <http://www.rbsp-ect.lanl.gov/science/DataDirectories.php>.

292

---

293 **References**

294 Blake, J. B., et al. (2013), The Magnetic Electron Ion Spectrometer (MagEIS)  
295 instruments aboard the radiation belt storm probes (RBSP) spacecraft, *Space Sci. Rev.*,  
296 *179*, 383 – 421, doi:10.1007/s11214-013-9991-8.

297 Carbary, J. F., D. G. Mitchell, C. Paranicas, E. C. Roelof, S. M. Krimigis, N. Krupp, K.  
298 Khurana, and M. Dougherty (2011), Pitch angle distributions of energetic electrons at  
299 Saturn, *J. Geophys. Res.*, *116*, A01216, doi:10.1029/2010JA015987.

300 Carpenter, D. L., and R. R. Anderson (1992), An ISEE/whistler model of equatorial  
301 electron density in the magnetosphere, *J. Geophys. Res.*, *97*(A2), 1097–1108,  
302 doi:10.1029/91JA01548.

303 Chen, Y., R. H. W. Friedel, M. G. Henderson, S. G. Claudepierre, S. K. Morley, and H.  
304 Spence (2014), REPAD: An empirical model of pitch angle distributions for energetic  
305 electrons in the Earth’s outer radiation belt, *J. Geophys. Res. Space Physics*, *119*,  
306 1693–1708, doi:10.1002/2013JA019431.

307 Fennell, J. F., S. G. Claudepierre, J. B. Blake, T. P. O’Brien, J. H. Clemons, D. N.  
308 Baker, H. E. Spence, and G. D. Reeves (2015), Van Allen Probes show that the inner  
309 radiation zone contains no MeV electrons: ECT/MagEIS data, *Geophys. Res. Lett.*, *42*,  
310 1283–1289, doi:10.1002/2014GL062874.

311 Gannon, J. L., X. Li, and D. Heynderickx (2007), Pitch angle distribution analysis of  
312 radiation belt electrons based on Combined Release and Radiation Effects Satellite

---

313 Medium Electrons A data, *J. Geophys. Res.*, *112*, A05212,  
314 doi:10.1029/2005JA011565.

315 Gu, X., Z. Zhao, B. Ni, Y. Shprits, and C. Zhou (2011), Statistical analysis of pitch  
316 angle distribution of radiation belt energetic electrons near the geostationary orbit:  
317 CRRES observations, *J. Geophys. Res.*, *116*, A01208, doi:10.1029/2010JA016052.

318 Horne, R. B., N. P. Meredith, R. M. Thorne, D. Heynderickx, R. H. A. Iles, and R. R.  
319 Anderson (2003), Evolution of energetic electron pitch angle distributions during  
320 storm time electron acceleration to megaelectronvolt energies, *J. Geophys. Res.*,  
321 *108*(A1), 1016, doi:10.1029/2001JA009165.

322 Li, X., D. N. Baker, T. P. O'Brien, L. Xie, and Q. G. Zong (2006), Correlation  
323 between the inner edge of outer radiation belt electrons and the innermost  
324 plasmapause location, *Geophys. Res. Lett.*, *33*, L14107, doi:10.1029/2006GL026294.

325 Li, W., Q. Ma, R. M. Thorne, J. Bortnik, C.A.Kletzing, W. S. Kurth, G. B. Hospodarsky,  
326 and Y. Nishimura (2015), Statistical properties of plasmaspheric hiss derived from  
327 Van Allen Probes data and their effects on radiation belt electron dynamics, *J.  
328 Geophys. Res. Space Physics*, *120*, doi:10.1002/2015JA021048.

329 Lyons, L. R., and D. J. Williams (1975), The storm and poststorm evolution of  
330 energetic (35–560 keV) radiation belt electron distributions, *J. Geophys. Res.*, *80*(28),  
331 3985–3994.

---

332 Lyons, L. R., R. M. Thorne, and C. F. Kennel (1972), Pitch-angle diffusion of  
333 radiation belt electrons within the plasmasphere, *J. Geophys. Res.*, 77(19), 3455–  
334 3474.

335 Mauk, B. H., N. J. Fox, S. G. Kanekal, R. L. Kessel, D. G. Sibeck, and A. Ukhorskiy  
336 (2012), Science objectives and rationale for the Radiation Belt Storm Probes mission,  
337 *Space Sci. Rev.*, 1–15, doi:10.1007/s11214-012-9908-y.

338 Ni, B., J. Bortnik, R. M. Thorne, Q. Ma, and L. Chen (2013), Resonant scattering and  
339 resultant pitch angle evolution of relativistic electrons by plasmaspheric hiss, *J.  
340 Geophys. Res. Space Physics*, 118, 7740–7751, doi:10.1002/2013JA019260.

341 Ni, B., W. Li, R. M. Thorne, J. Bortnik, Q. Ma, L. Chen, C. Kletzing, W. Kurth, G.  
342 Hospodarsky, G. Reeves, H. Spence, J. Blake, J. Fennell, and S. Claudepierre (2014),  
343 Resonant scattering of energetic electrons by unusual low-frequency hiss, *Geophys.  
344 Res. Lett.*, 41, 1854–1861, doi:10.1002/2014GL059389.

345 Ni, B., Z. Zou, X. Gu, C. Zhou, R. M. Thorne, J. Bortnik, R. Shi, Z. Zhao, D. N.  
346 Baker, S. G. Kanekal, et al. (2015), Variability of the pitch angle distribution of  
347 radiation belt ultrarelativistic electrons during and following intense geomagnetic  
348 storms: Van Allen Probes observations, *J. Geophys. Res. Space Physics*, 120,  
349 doi:10.1002/2015JA021065.

350 Sibeck, D. G., R. W. McEntire, A. T. Y. Lui, R. E. Lopez, and S. M. Krimigis (1987),  
351 Magnetic field drift shell splitting: Cause of unusual dayside particle pitch angle

---

352 distributions during storms and substorms, *J. Geophys. Res.*, 92(A12), 13,485 –  
353 13,497, doi:10.1029/JA092iA12p13485.

354 Spence, H. E., et al. (2013), Science goals and overview of the Energetic Particle,  
355 Composition, and thermal plasma (ECT) suite on NASA's Radiation Belt Storm  
356 Probes (RBSP) mission, *Space Sci. Rev.*, 179, 311 – 336,  
357 doi:10.1007/s11214-013-0007-5.

358 Summers, D., R. Tang, and R. M. Thorne (2009), Limit on stably trapped particle  
359 fluxes in planetary magnetospheres, *J. Geophys. Res.*, 114, A10210,  
360 doi:10.1029/2009JA014428.

361 Summers, D., and R. Shi (2014), Limiting energy spectrum of an electron radiation  
362 belt, *J. Geophys. Res. Space Physics*, 119, 6313–6326, doi:10.1002/2014JA020250.

363 Thorne, R. M., W. Li, B. Ni, Q. Ma, J. Bortnik, D. Baker, H. Spence, G. Reeves, M.  
364 Henderson, C. Kletzing, W. Kurth, G. Hospodarsky, D. Turner, and V. Angelopoulos  
365 (2013), Evolution and slow decay of an unusual narrow ring of relativistic electrons  
366 near  $L \sim 3.2$  following the September 2012 magnetic storm, *Geophys. Res. Lett.*, 40,  
367 3507–3511, doi:10.1002/grl.50627.

368 Vampola, A. L. (1998), Outer zone energetic electron environment update, in  
369 *Proceedings of the Conference on the High Energy Radiation Background in Space*,  
370 pp. 128–136, Inst. of Electr. and Electr. Eng., New York.

---

371 West, H. I., Jr., R. M. Buck, and J. R. Walton (1973), Electron pitch angle  
372 distributions through the magnetosphere as observed on Ogo 5, *J. Geophys. Res.*, 78,  
373 1064 – 1081.

374 Zhao, H., X. Li, J. B. Blake, J. F. Fennell, S. G. Claudepierre, D. N. Baker, A. N.  
375 Jaynes, D. M. Malaspina, and S. G. Kanekal (2014a), Peculiar pitch angle distribution  
376 of relativistic electrons in the inner radiation belt and slot region, *Geophys. Res. Lett.*,  
377 41, 2250–2257, doi:10.1002/2014GL059725.

378 Zhao, H., X. Li, J. B. Blake, J. F. Fennell, S. G. Claudepierre, D. N. Baker, A. N.  
379 Jaynes, and D. M. Malaspina (2014b), Characteristics of pitch angle distributions of  
380 hundreds of keV electrons in the slot region and inner radiation belt, *J. Geophys. Res.  
381 Space Physics*, 119, 9543–9557, doi:10.1002/2014JA020386.

---

382 **Figure Captions**

383 Figure 1. Solar wind  $B_z$  component; solar wind speed  $V_{sw}$  and dynamic pressure  $P_{dyn}$ ;

384 Dst, Kp and AE indices from Oct 1, 2012 to May 1, 2015.

385 Figure 2. Examples of the PAD fitting.

386 Figure 3. The  $n$  values (top) and  $\log_{10}(J)$  values (bottom) of PADs of  $\sim 100$  keV

387 electrons based on the formula  $f = J \sin^n \alpha$  as a function of  $L$ -shell from 1 October

388 2012 to 1 May 2015. The overlay white lines give the estimated location of the

389 plasmapause based on *Carpenter and Anderson* [1992]:  $L_{pp} = 5.6 - 0.46Kp^*$ , where

390  $Kp^*$  is the maximum value of the Kp index in the previous 24 h.

391 Figure 4. As in Figure 3 except for  $\sim 200$  keV electrons.

392 Figure 5. As in Figure 3 except for  $\sim 350$  keV electrons.

393 Figure 6. As in Figure 3 except for  $\sim 1$  MeV electrons.

394 Figure 7. Averaged PAD coefficient  $n$  as a function of  $L$  and MLT at 100 keV, 200 keV,

395 350 keV and 1 MeV under three geomagnetic conditions ( $Kp < 2$ ,  $2 < Kp < 4$  and  $Kp >$

396 4).

397 Figure 8. The averaged  $n$  values in the inner belt ( $L = 2.0 \pm 1$ ) as a function of MLT at

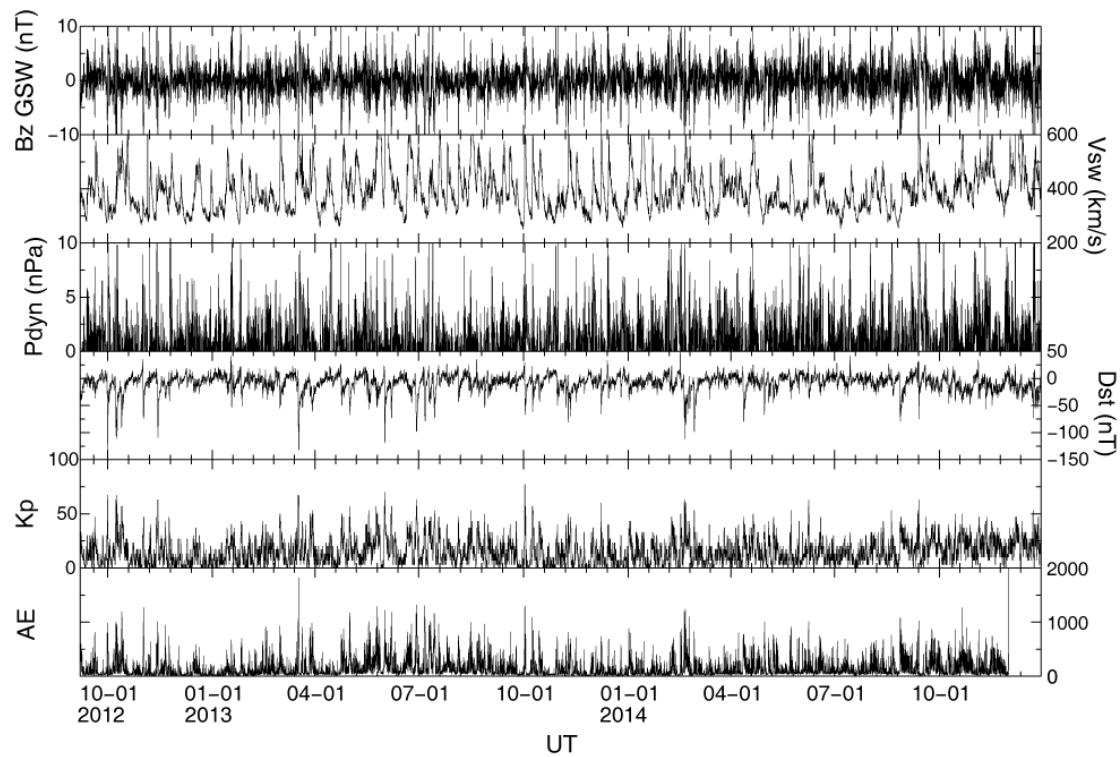
398 three energies.

399 Figure 9. The averaged  $n$  values as a function of  $L$ -shell at 100 keV, 200 keV, 350 keV,

400 600 keV and 1 MeV under quiet, moderate, active and all geomagnetic conditions.

401

402 Figure 1



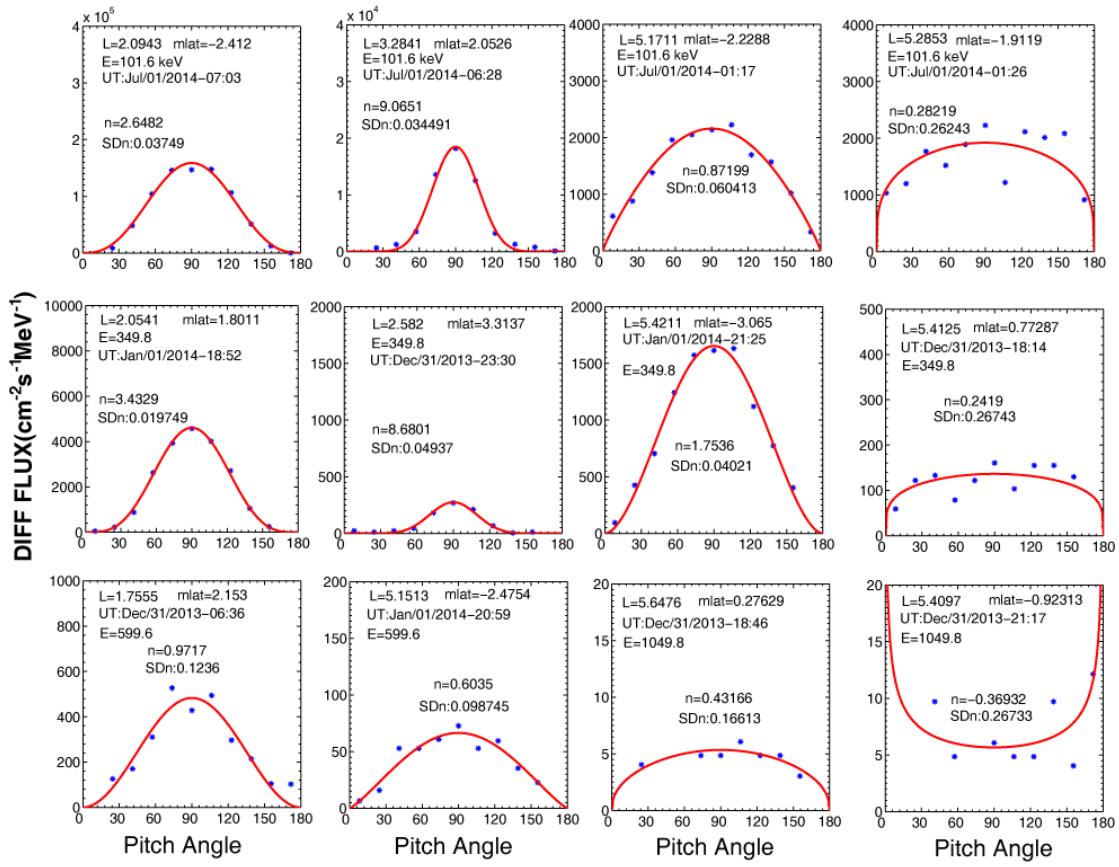
403

404 Figure 1. Solar wind  $B_z$  component; solar wind speed  $V_{sw}$  and dynamic pressure  $P_{dyn}$ ;

405 Dst, Kp and AE indices from Oct 1, 2012 to May 1, 2015.

406

407 Figure 2

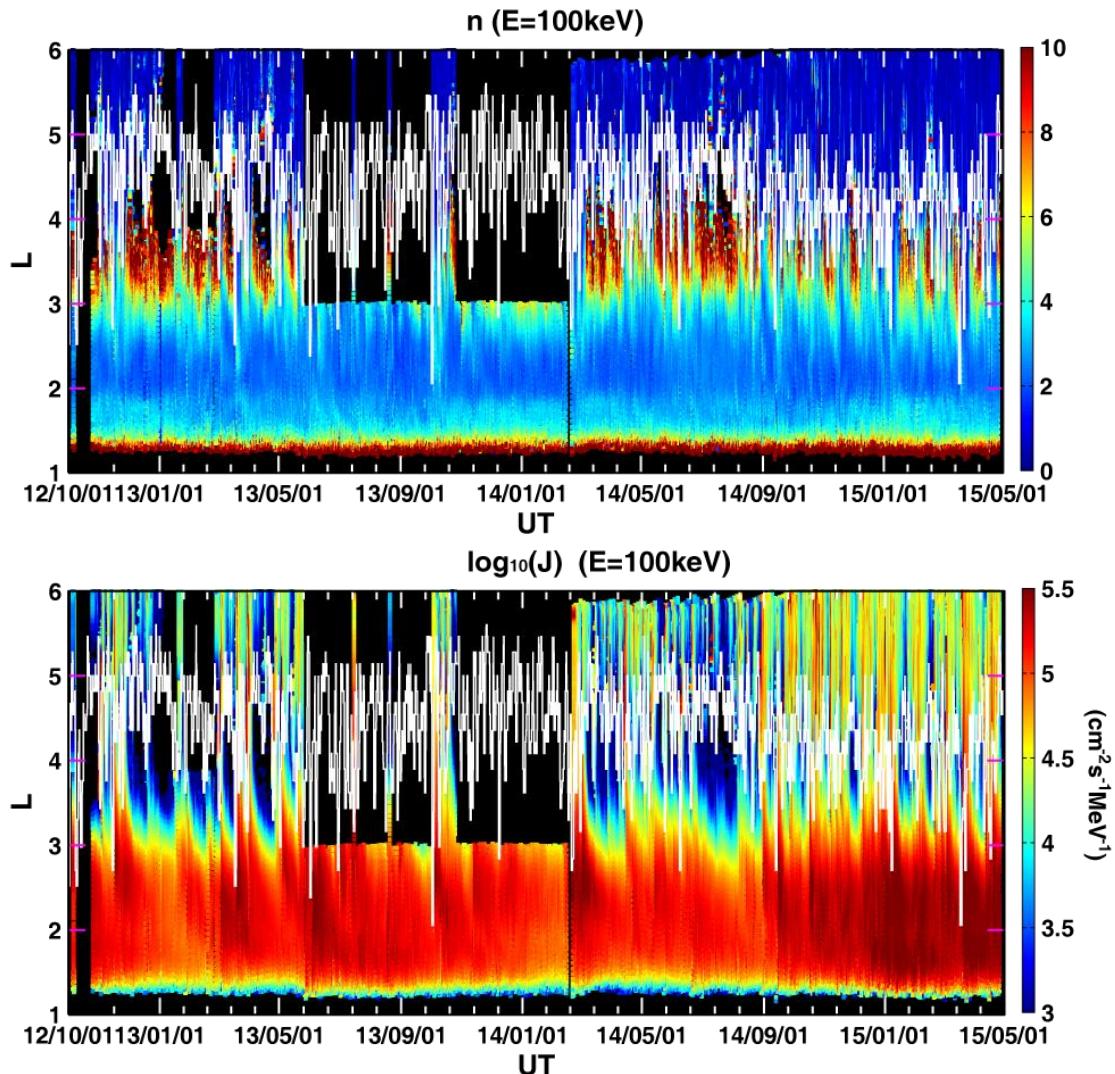


408

409 Figure 2. Examples of the PAD fitting.

410

411 Figure 3



412

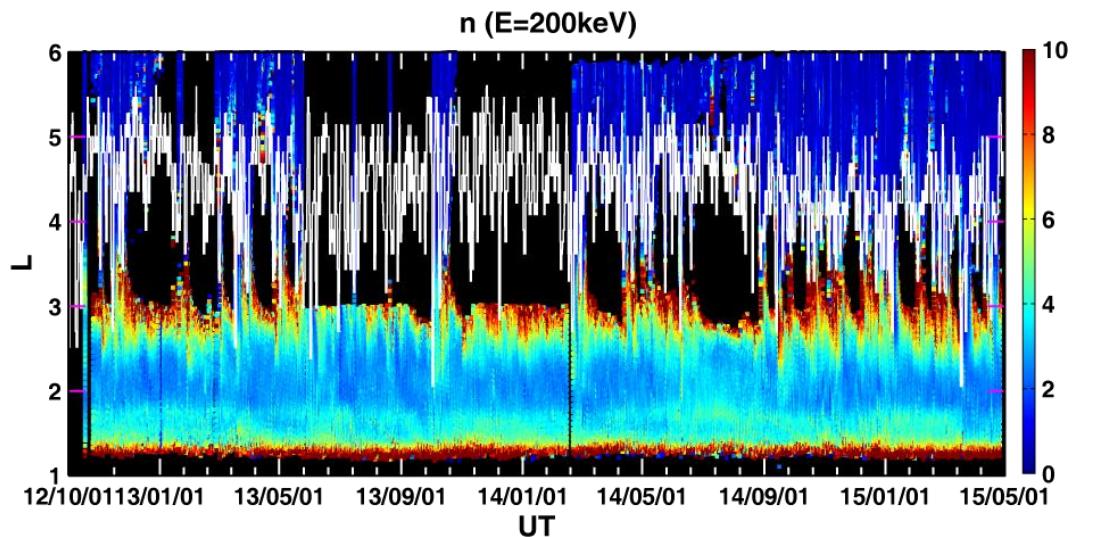
413

414 Figure 3. The  $n$  values (top) and  $\log_{10}(J)$  values (bottom) of PADs of  $\sim 100$  keV

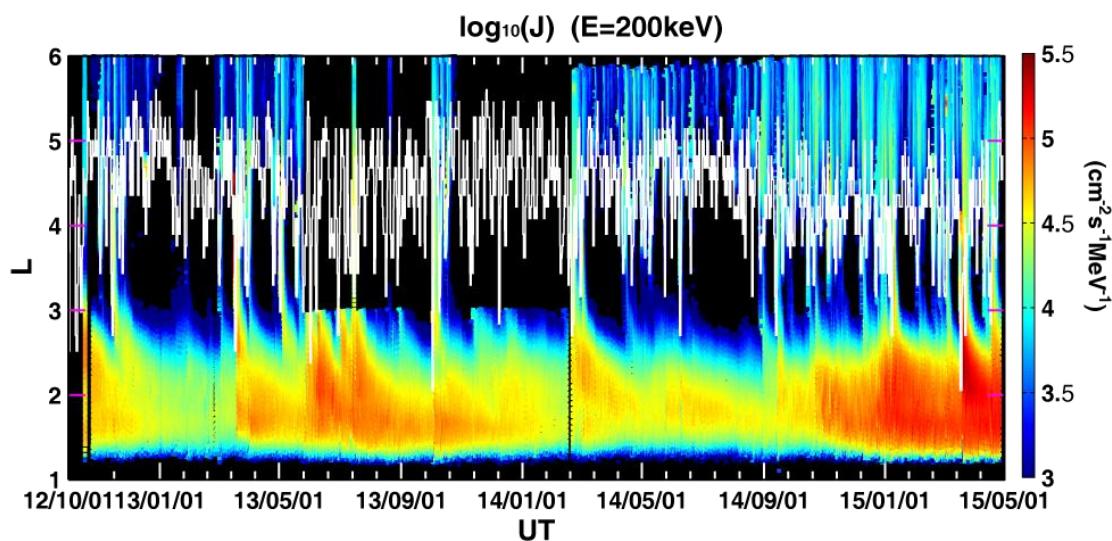
415 electrons based on the formula  $f = J \sin^n \alpha$  as a function of  $L$ -shell from 1 October  
 416 2012 to 1 May 2015. The overlay white lines give the estimated location of the  
 417 plasmapause based on *Carpenter and Anderson* [1992]:  $L_{pp} = 5.6 - 0.46K_p^*$ , where  
 418  $K_p^*$  is the maximum value of the  $K_p$  index in the previous 24 h.

419

420 Figure 4



421

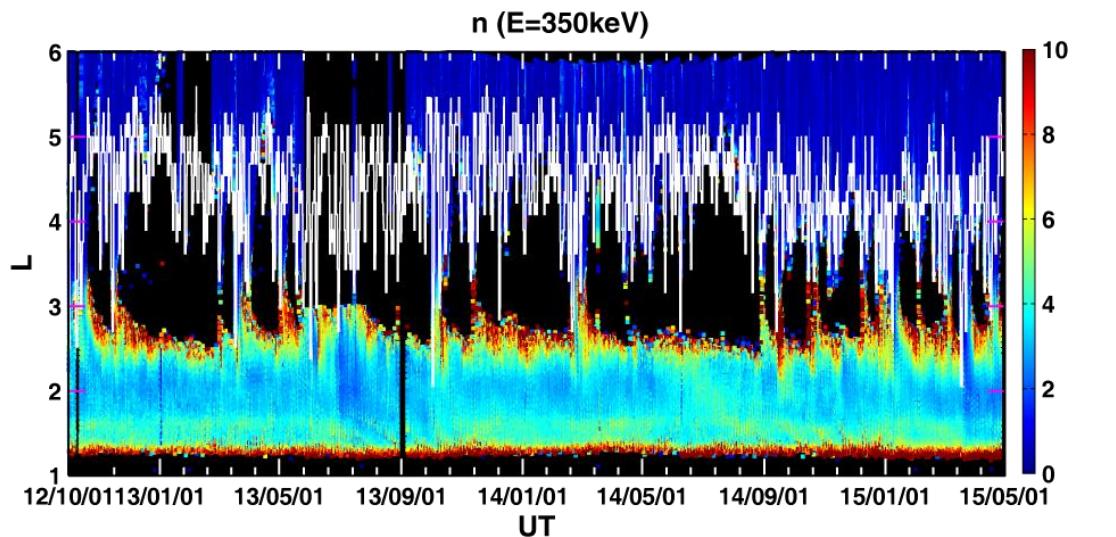


422

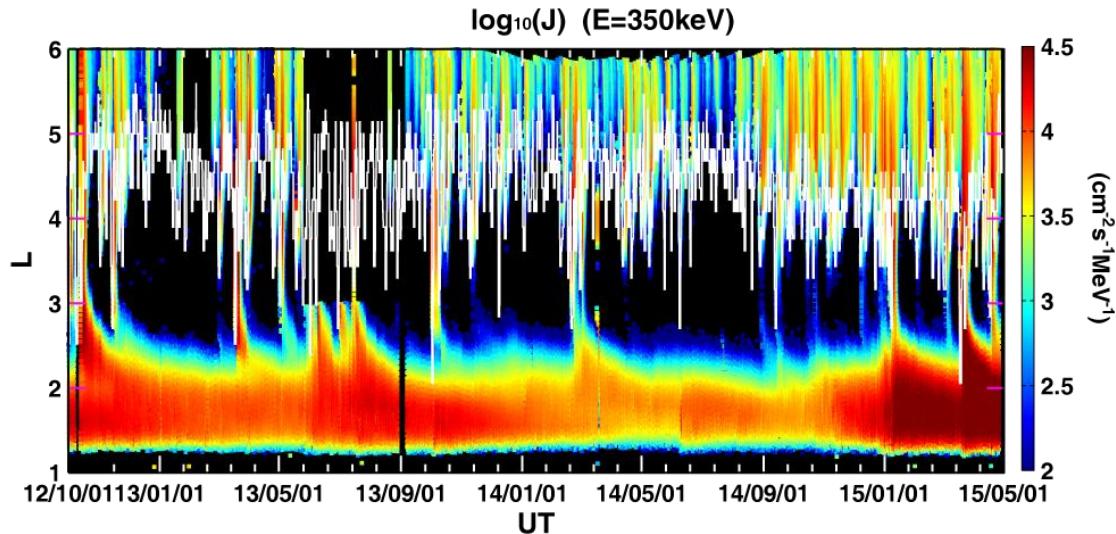
423 Figure 4. As in Figure 3 except for  $\sim$ 200keV electrons.

424

425 Figure 5



426

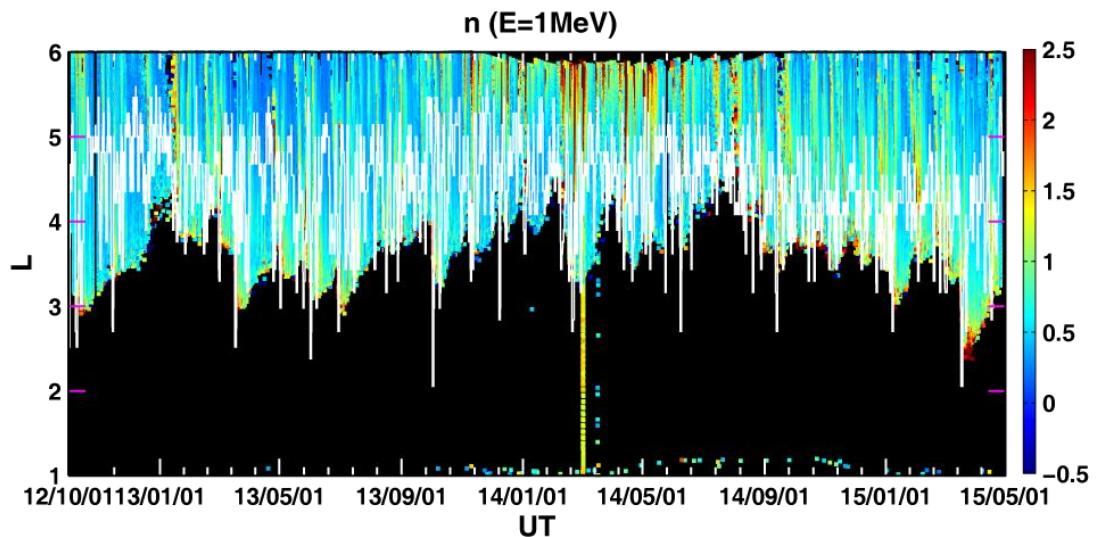


427

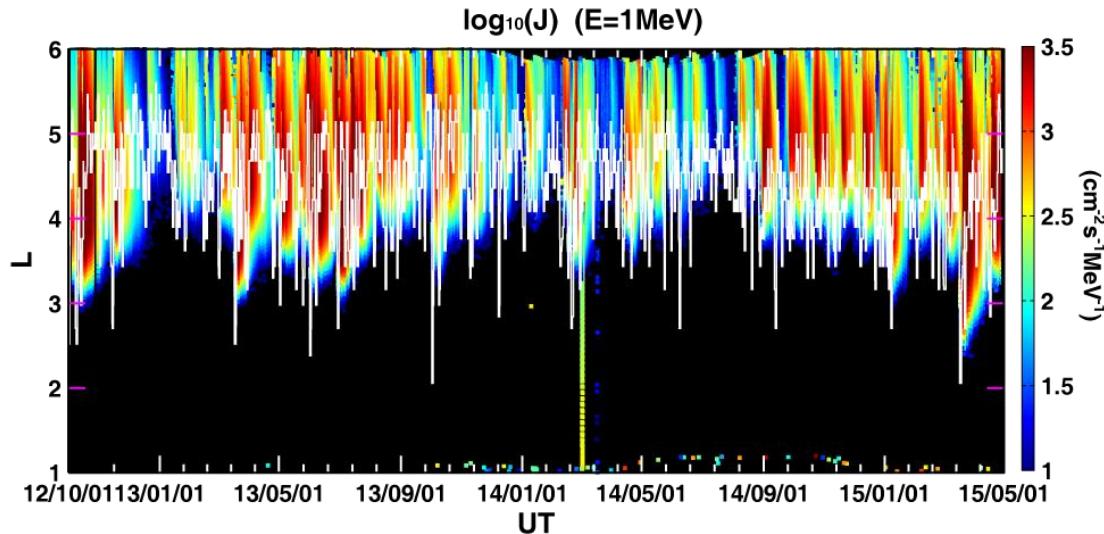
428 Figure 5. As in Figure 3 except for  $\sim 350\text{keV}$  electrons.

429

430 Figure 6



431

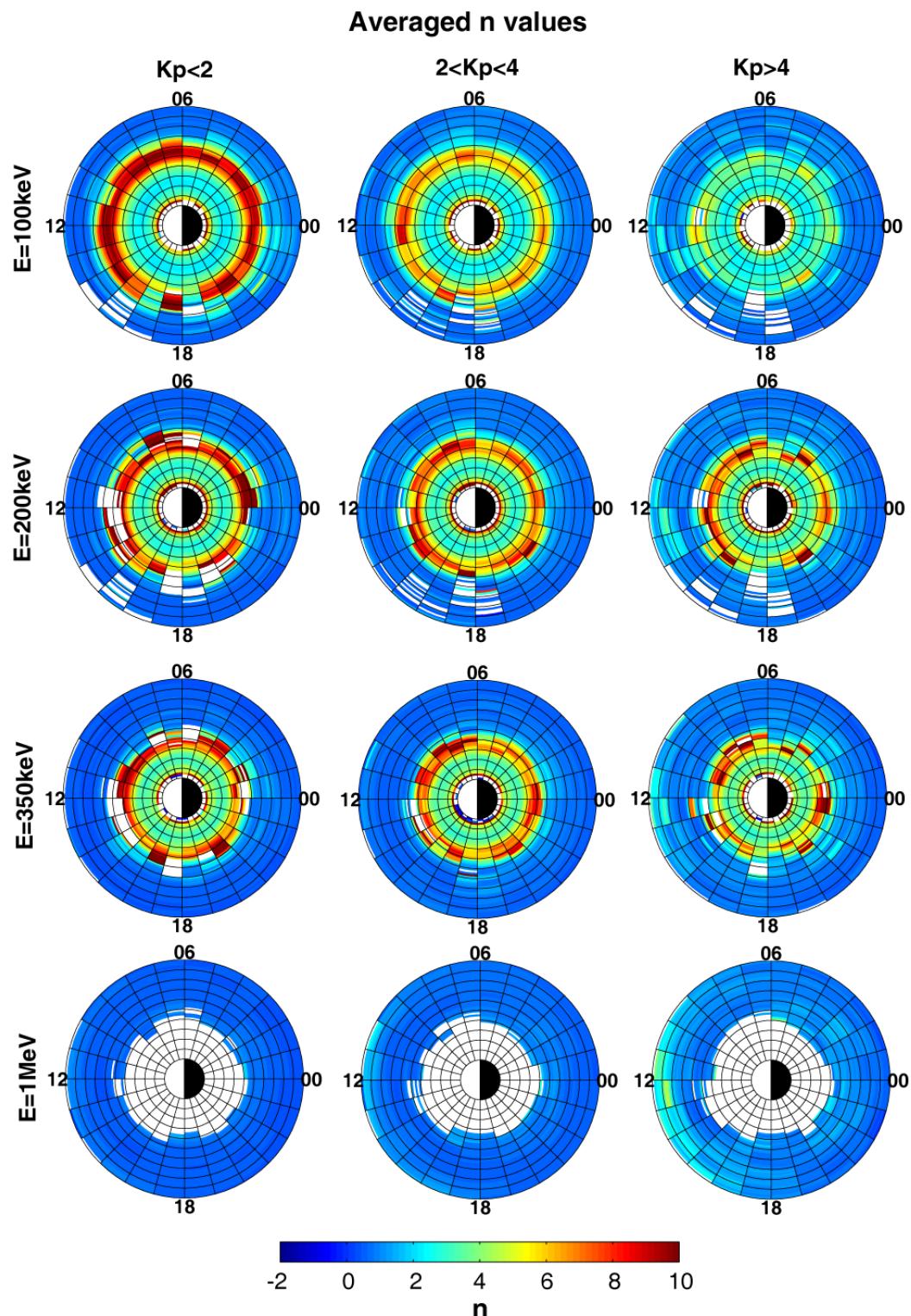


432

433 Figure 6. As in Figure 3 except for  $\sim 1$  MeV electrons.

434

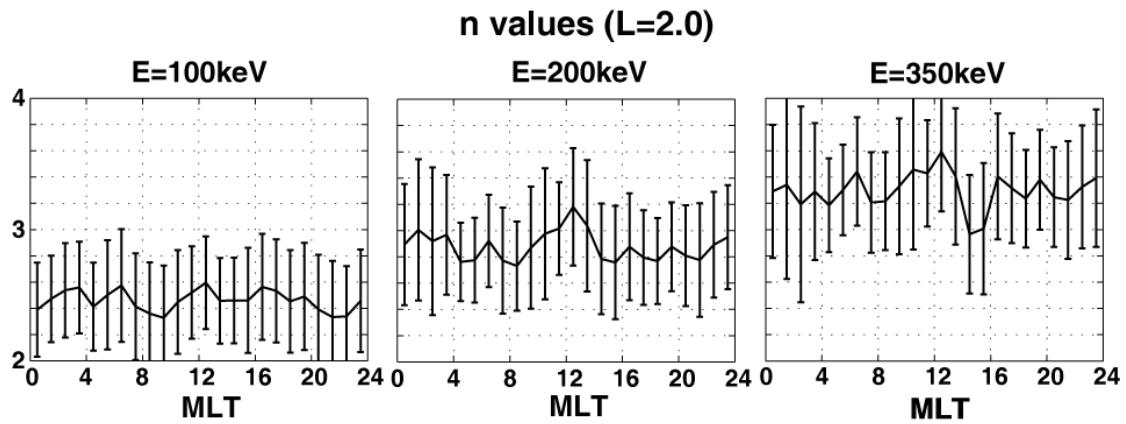
435 Figure 7



436

437 Figure 7. Averaged PAD coefficient  $n$  as a function of  $L$  and MLT at 100keV, 200keV,  
 438 350keV and 1MeV under three geomagnetic conditions ( $Kp < 2$ ,  $2 < Kp < 4$  and  $Kp >$   
 439 4).

440 Figure 8

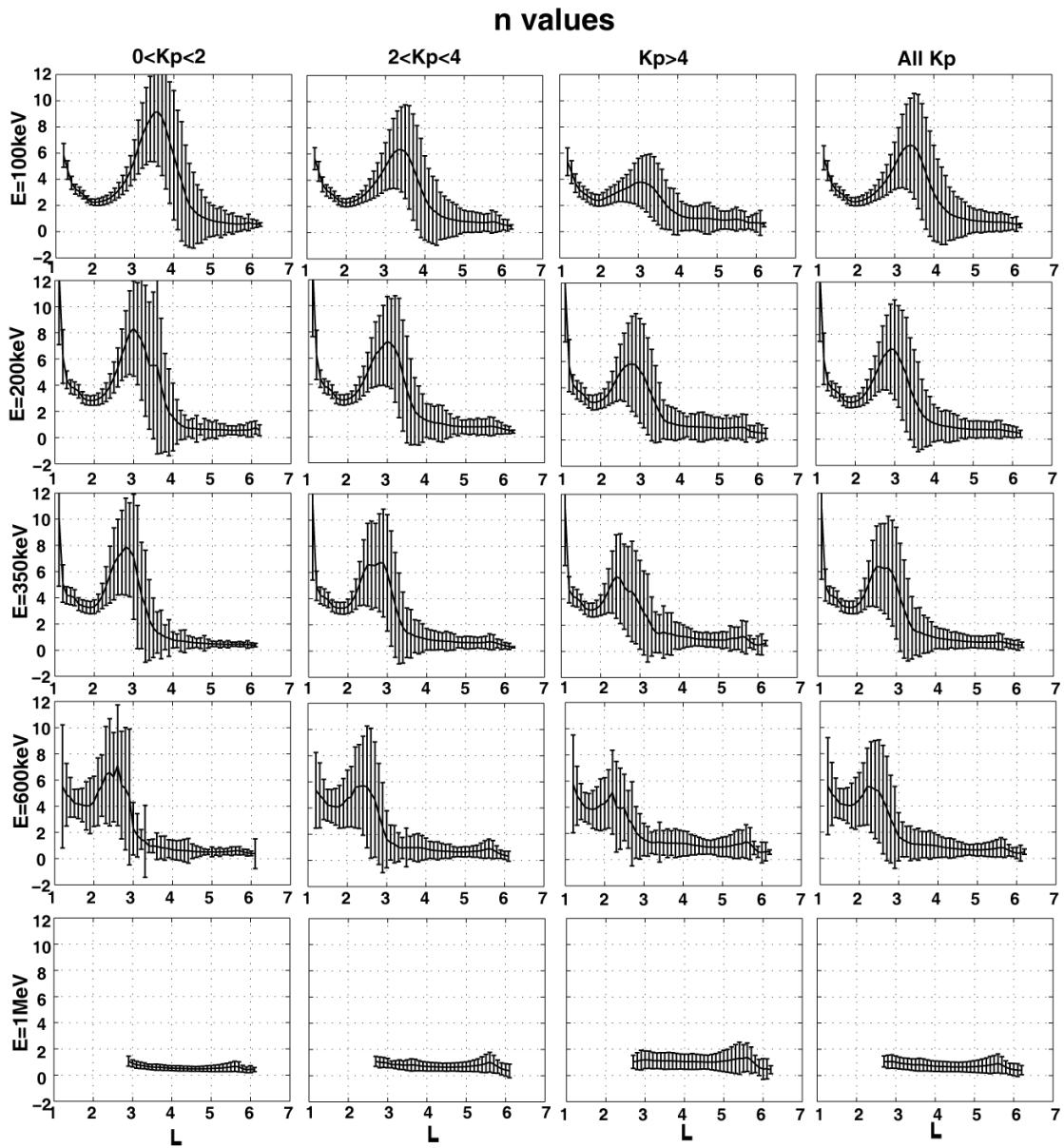


441

442 Figure 8. The averaged  $n$  values in the inner belt ( $L = 2.0 \pm 1$ ) as a function of MLT at  
443 three energies.

444

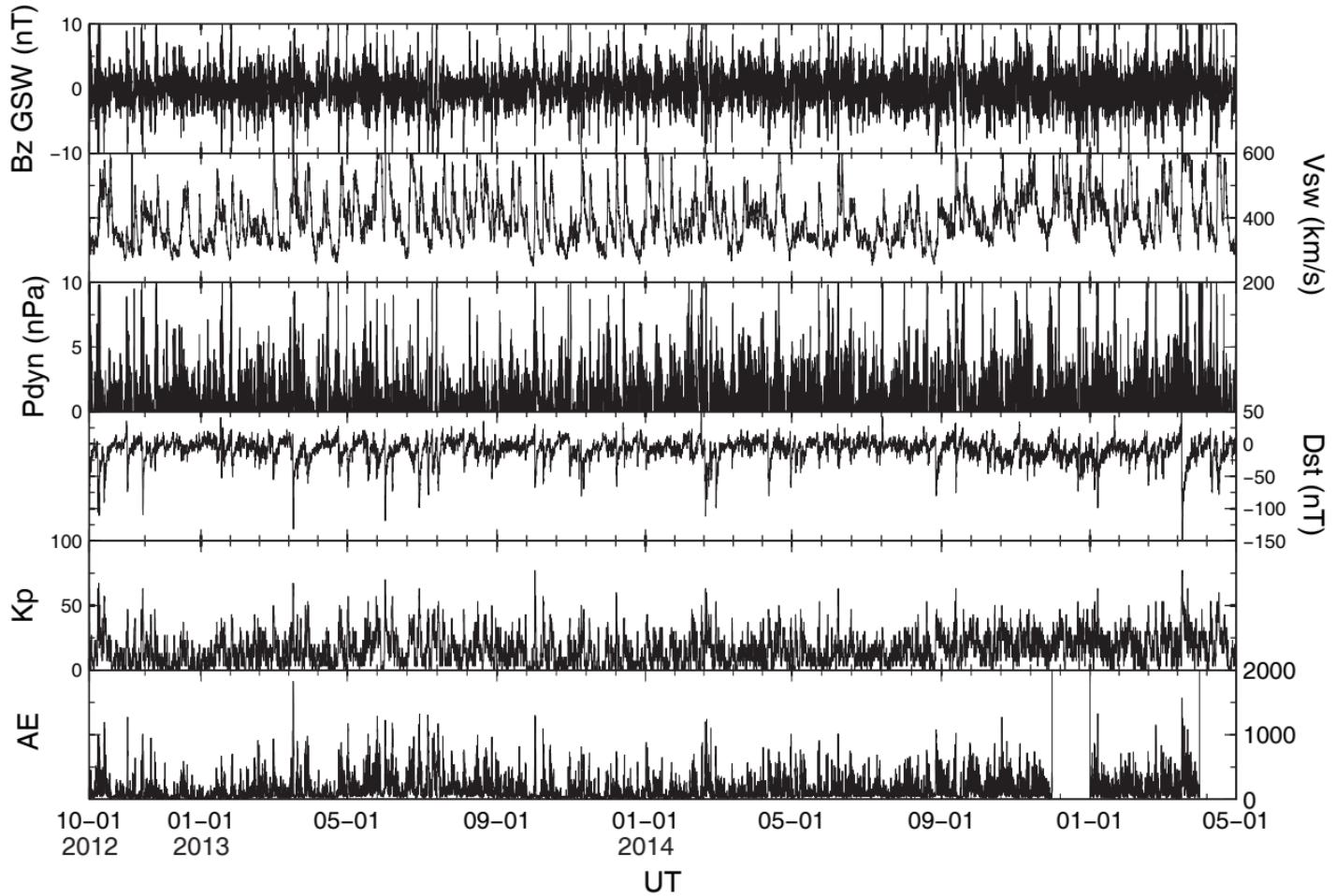
445 Figure 9

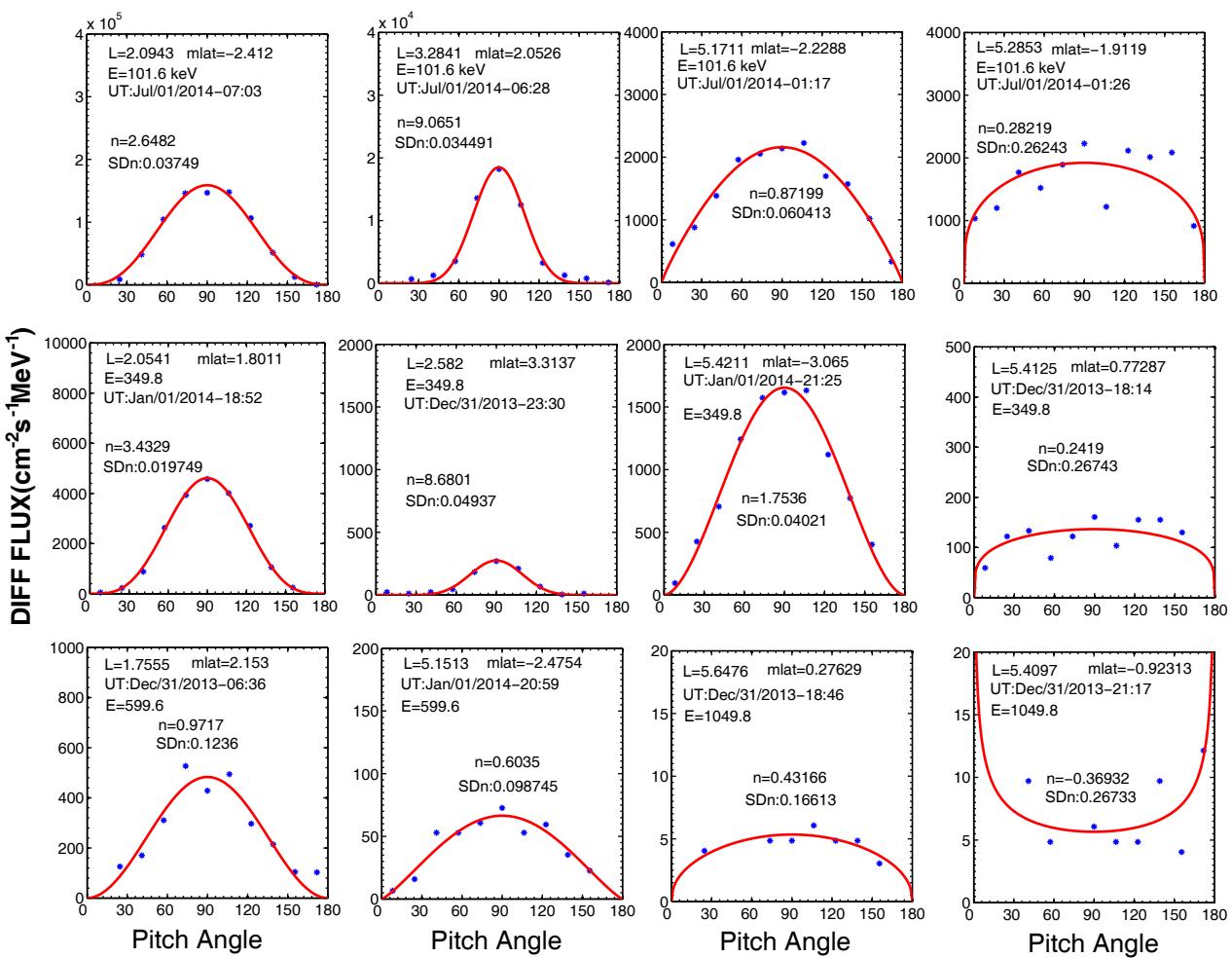


446

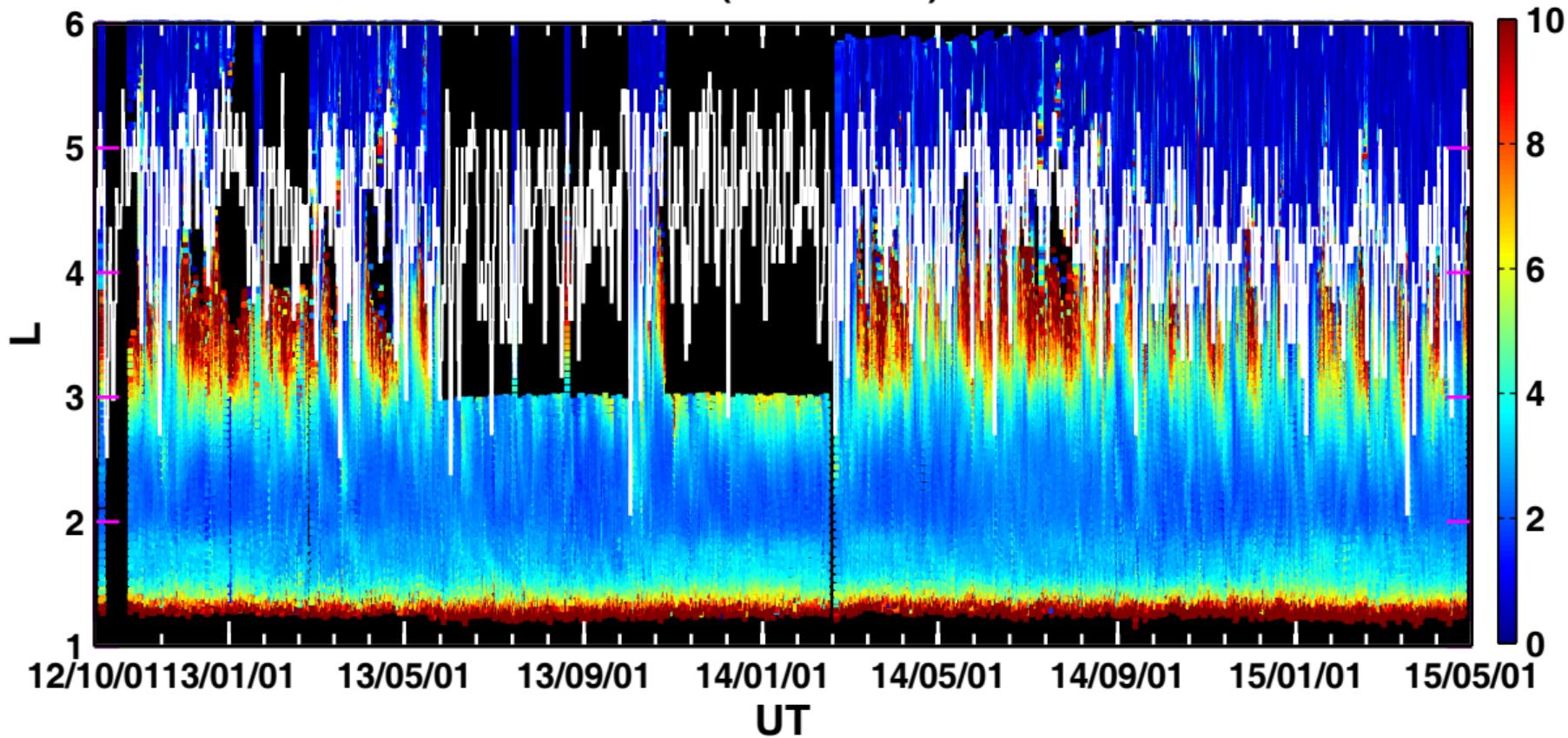
447 Figure 9. The averaged  $n$  values as a function of  $L$ -shell at 100keV, 200keV, 350keV,

448 600keV and 1MeV under quiet, moderate, active and all geomagnetic conditions.

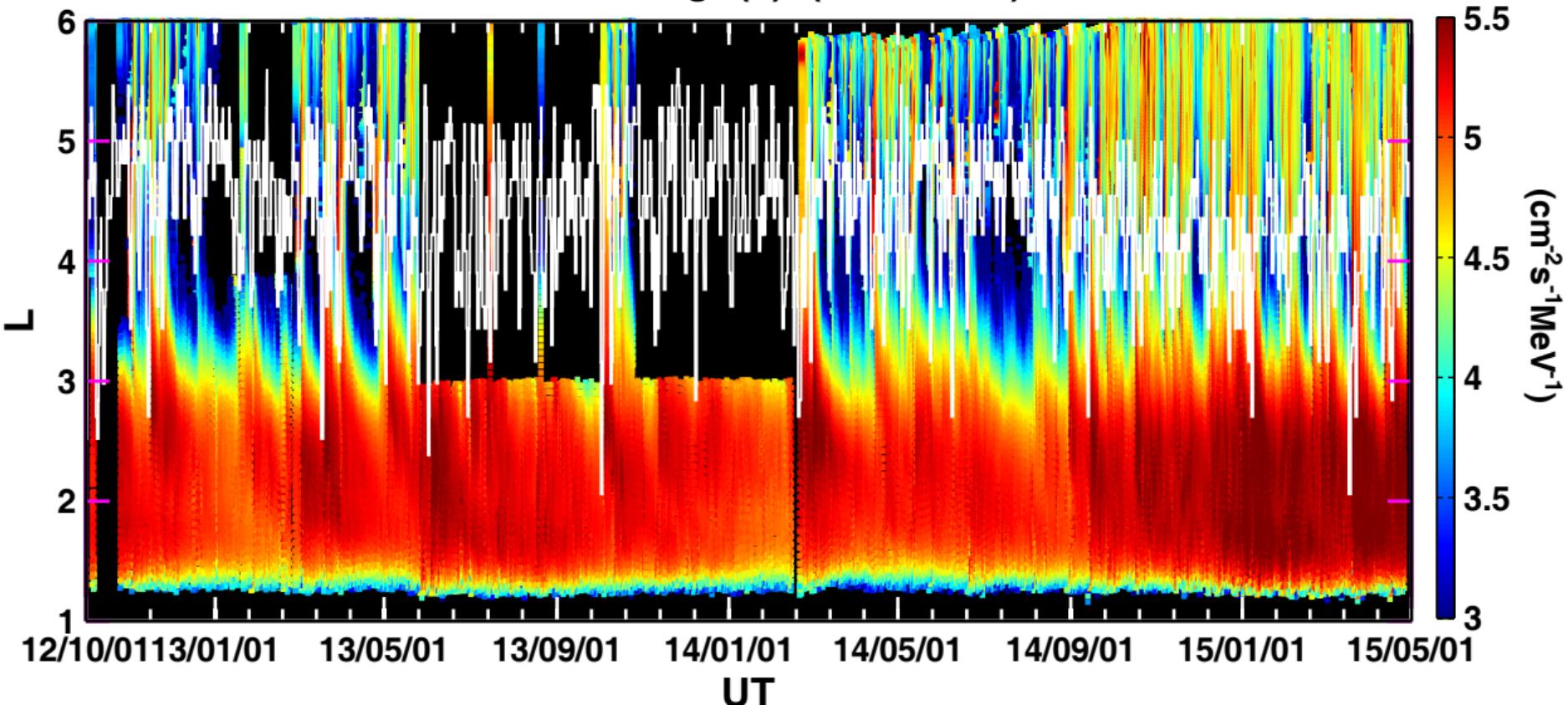




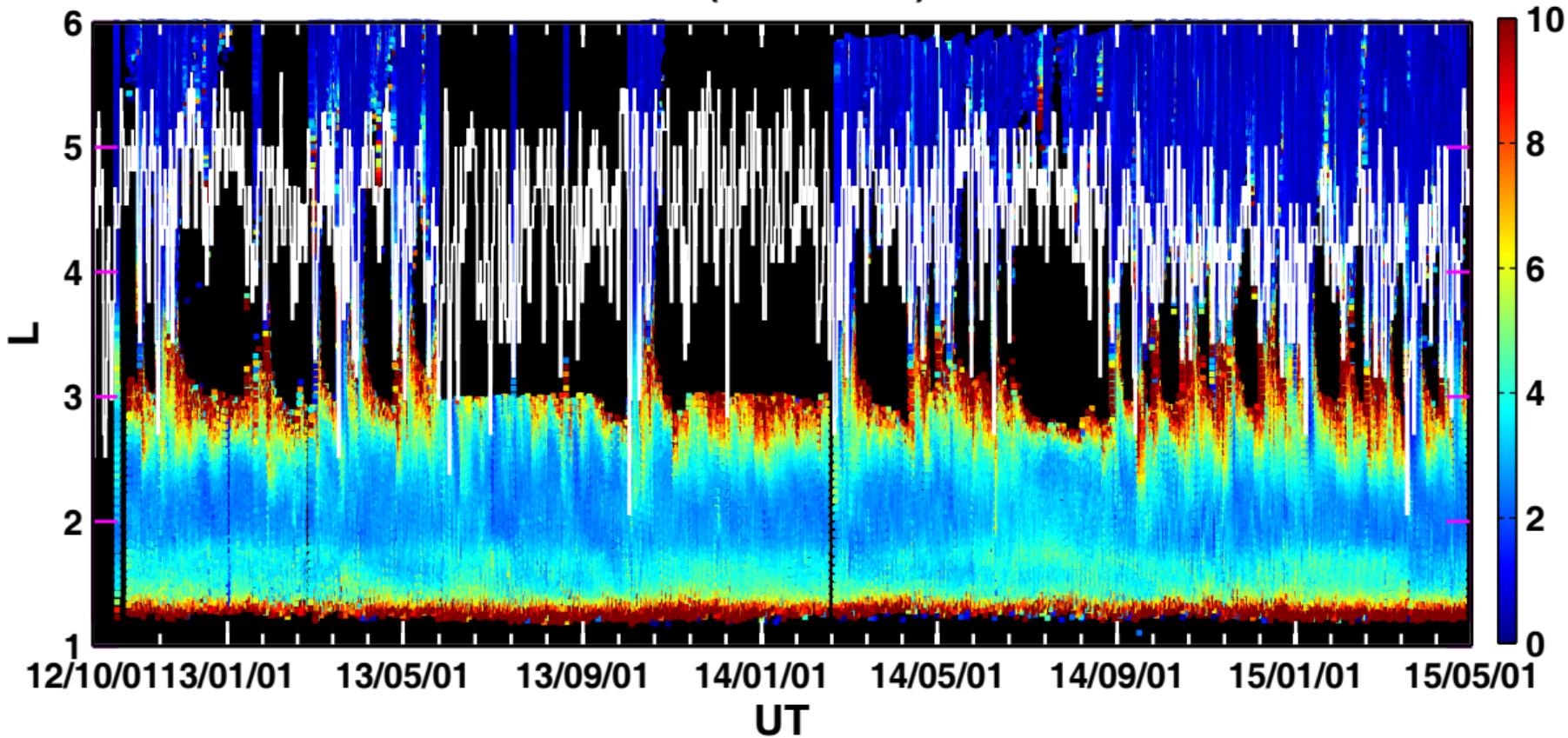
$n$  (E=100keV)



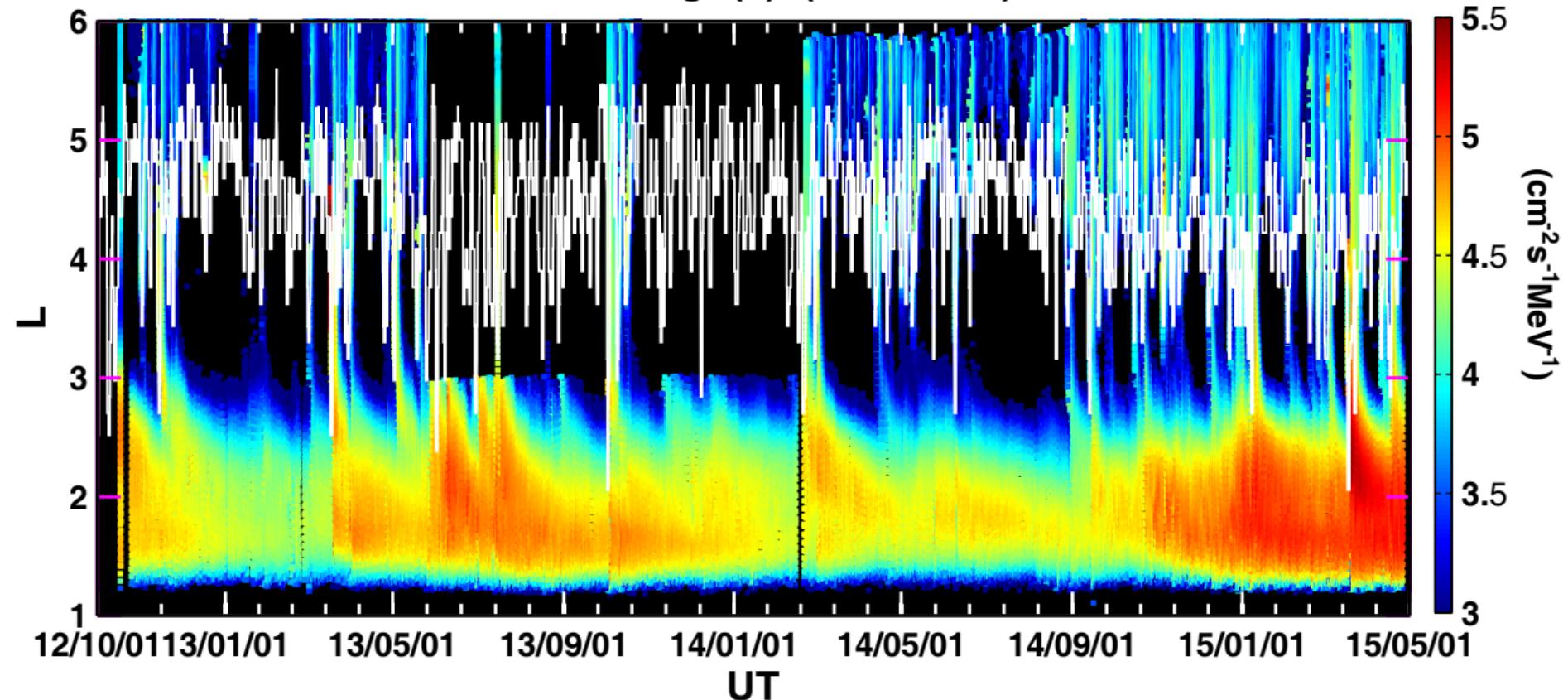
$\log_{10}(J)$  (E=100keV)



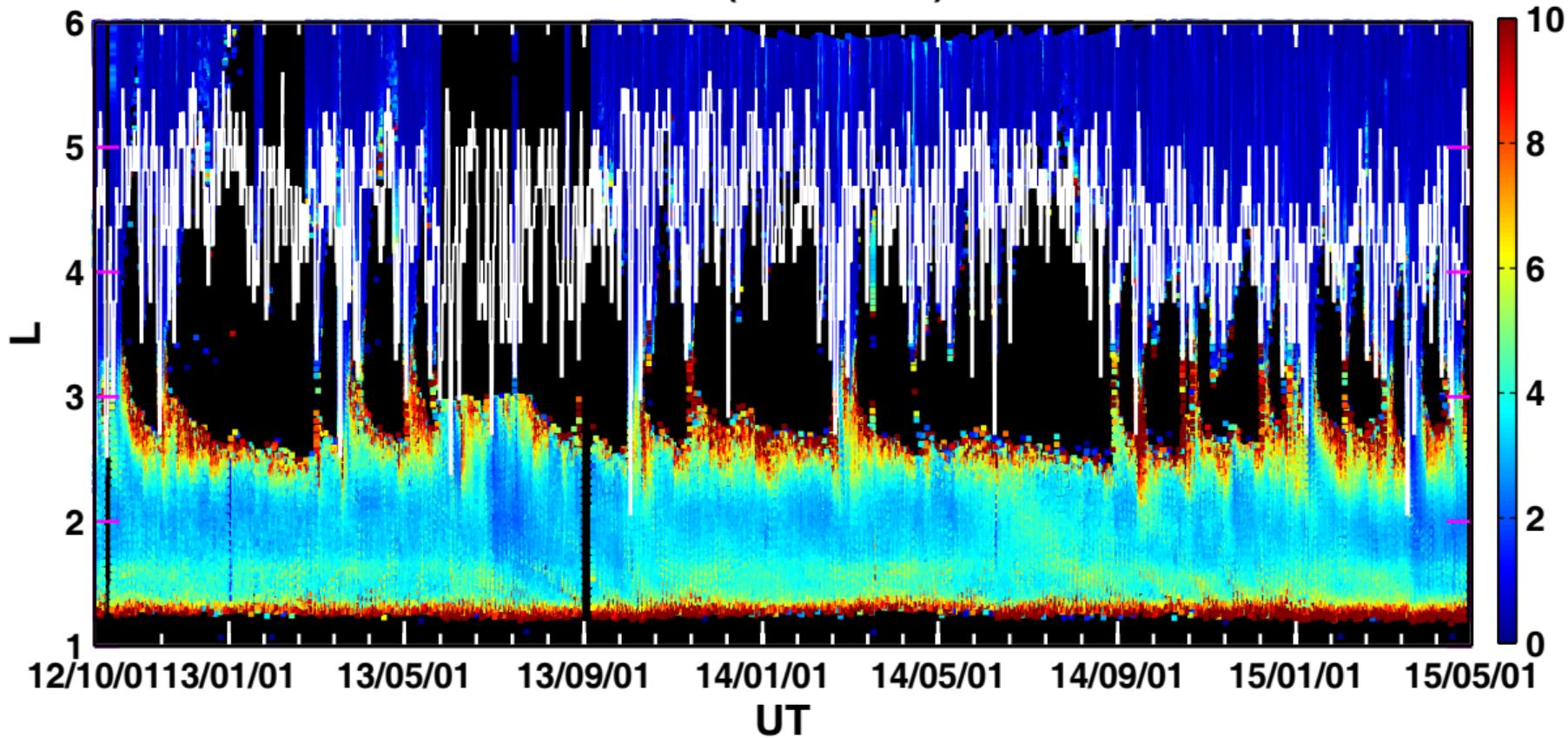
$n$  (E=200keV)



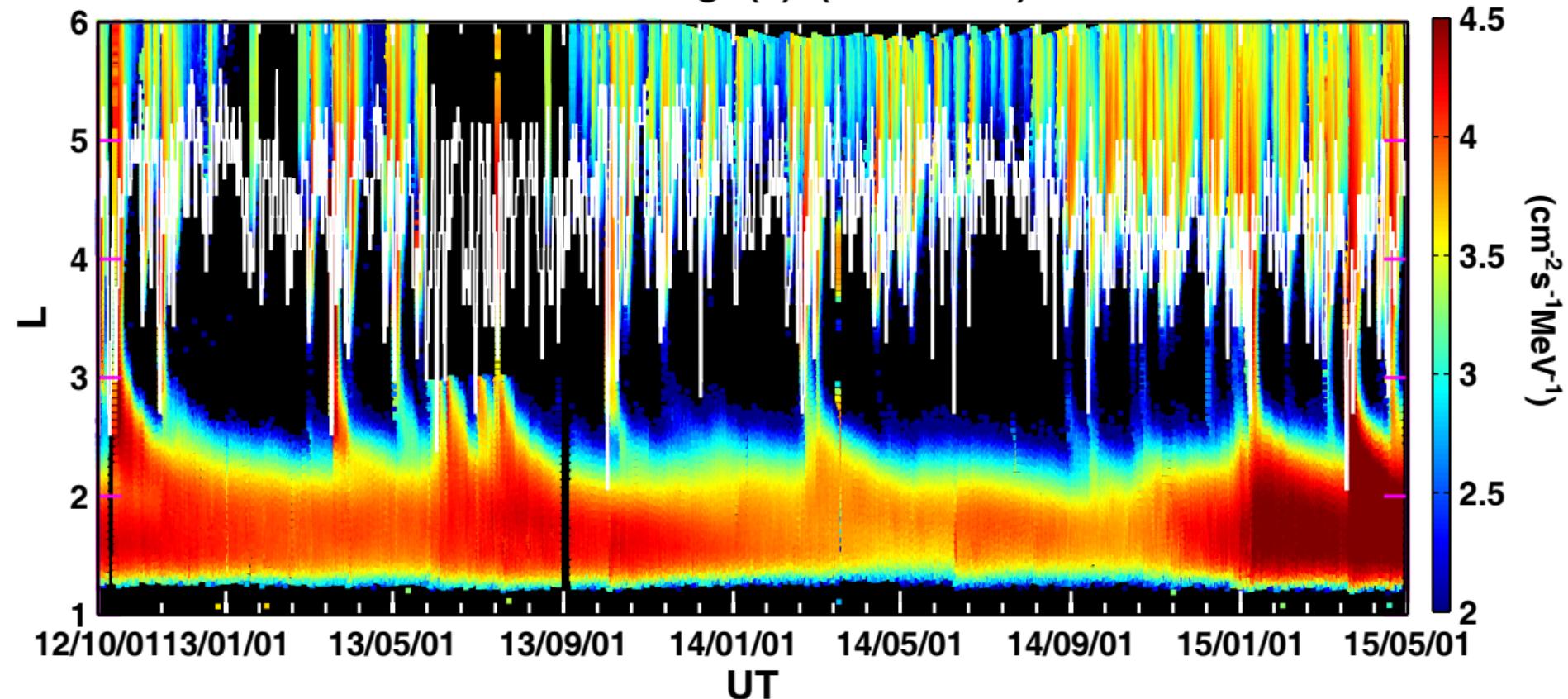
$\log_{10}(J)$  (E=200keV)



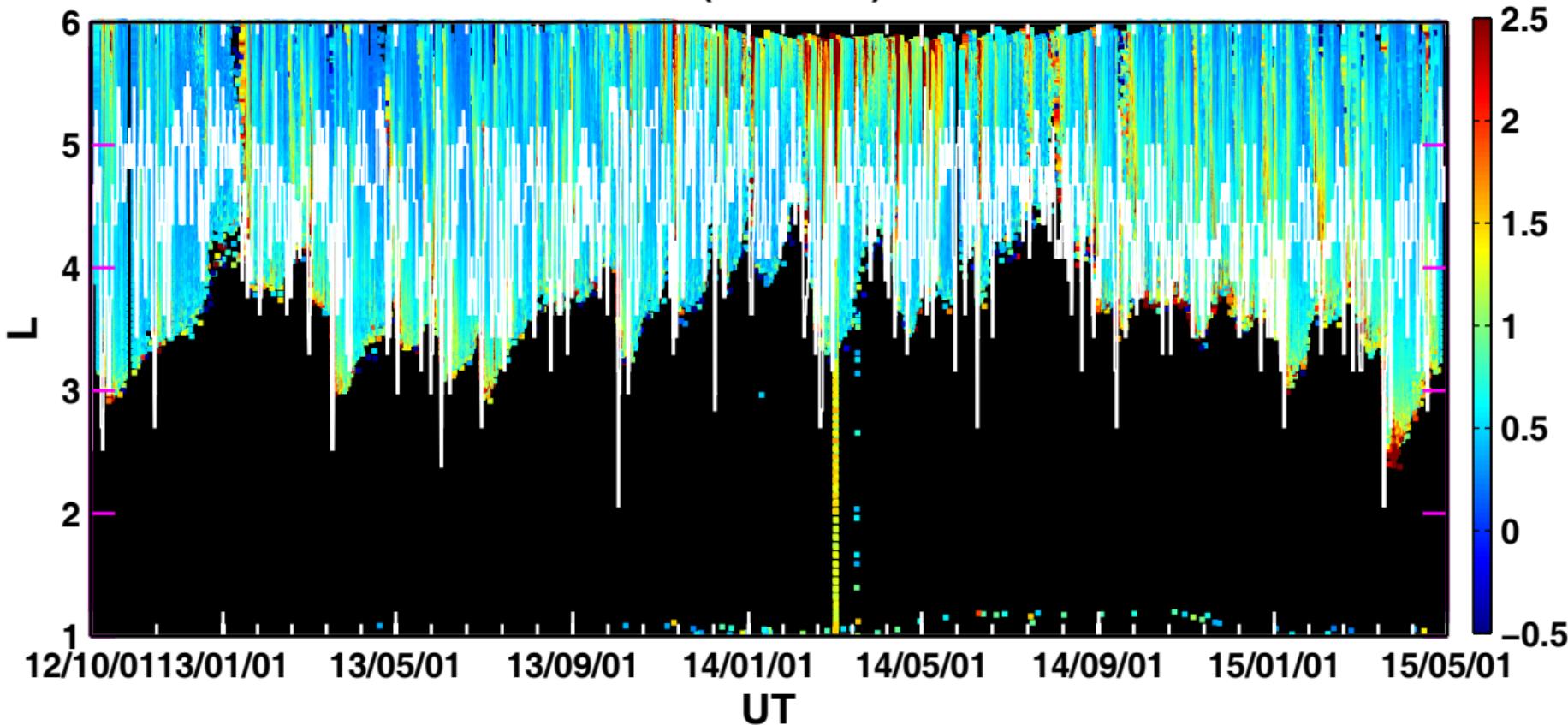
$n$  ( $E=350\text{keV}$ )



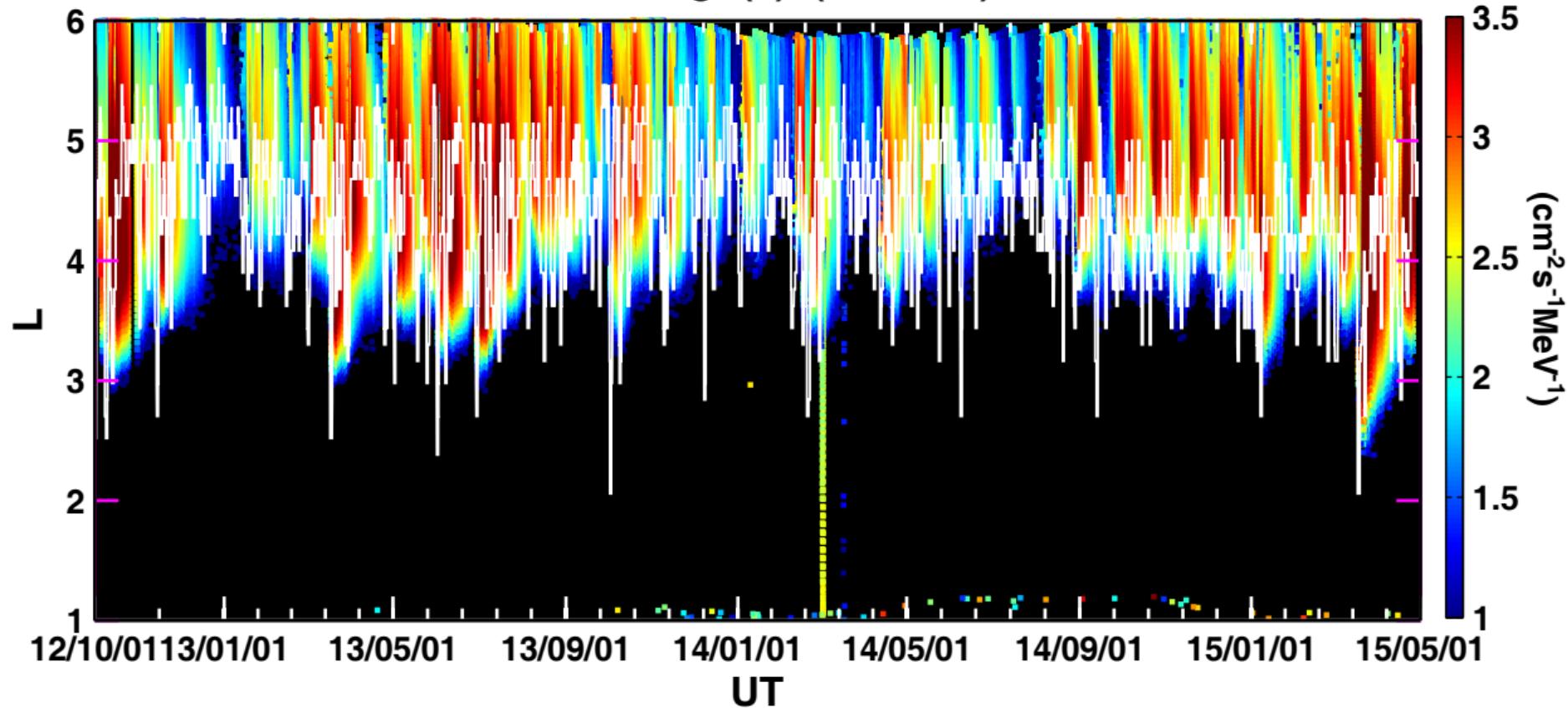
$\log_{10}(J)$  (E=350keV)



$n$  (E=1MeV)



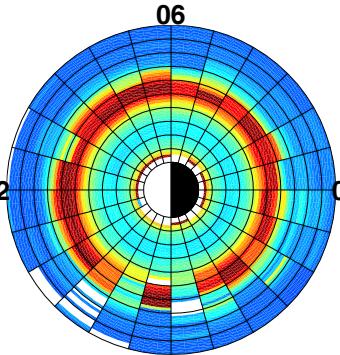
$\log_{10}(J)$  (E=1MeV)



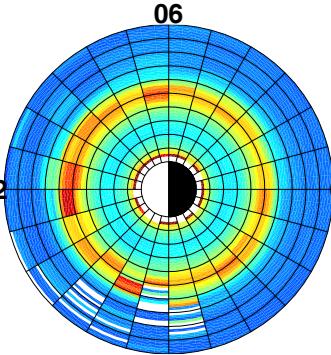
# Averaged $n$ values

$Kp < 2$

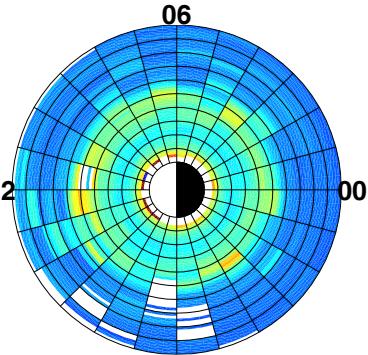
$E = 100\text{keV}$



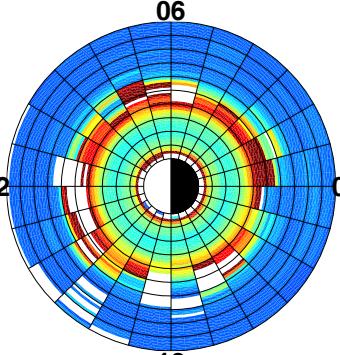
$2 < Kp < 4$



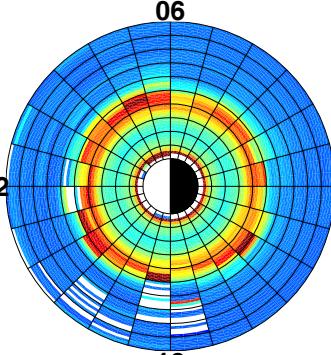
$Kp > 4$



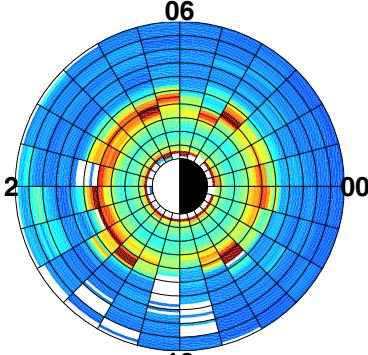
$E = 200\text{keV}$



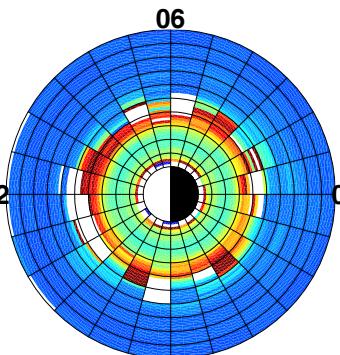
$2 < Kp < 4$



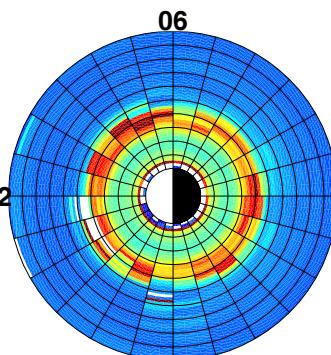
$Kp > 4$



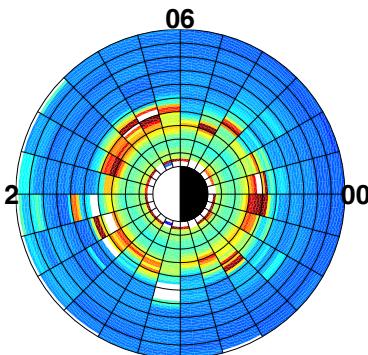
$E = 350\text{keV}$



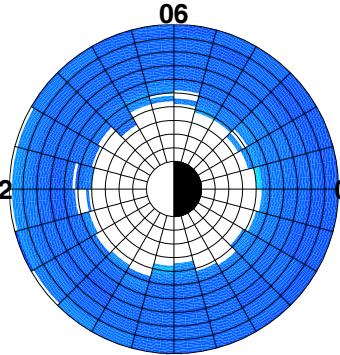
$2 < Kp < 4$



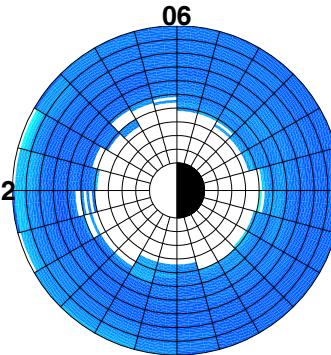
$Kp > 4$



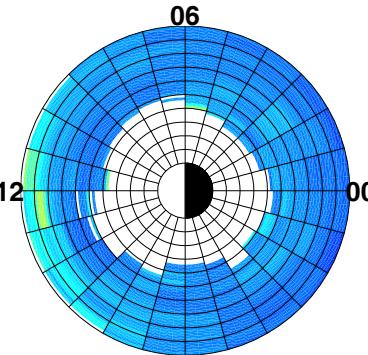
$E = 1\text{MeV}$



$2 < Kp < 4$

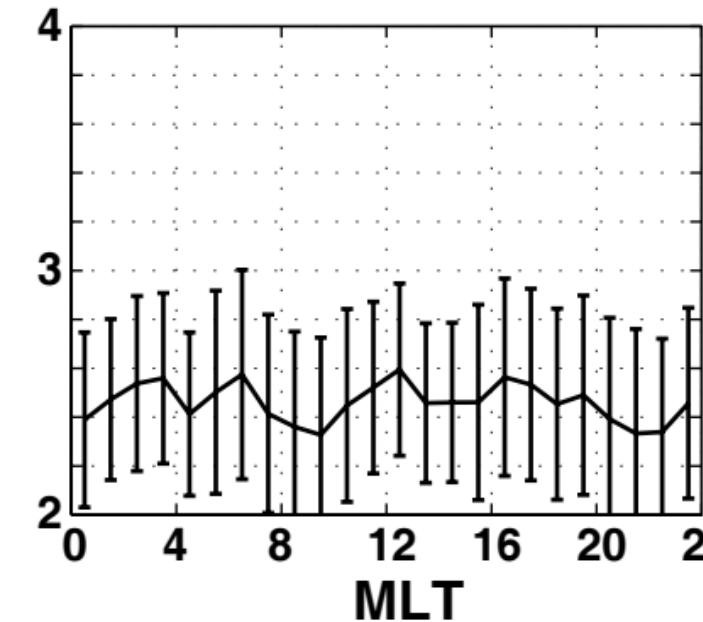


$Kp > 4$

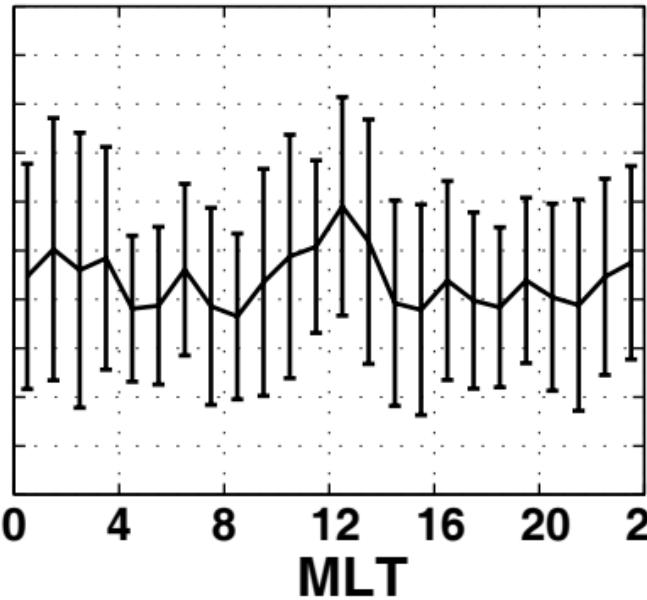


## $n$ values ( $L=2.0$ )

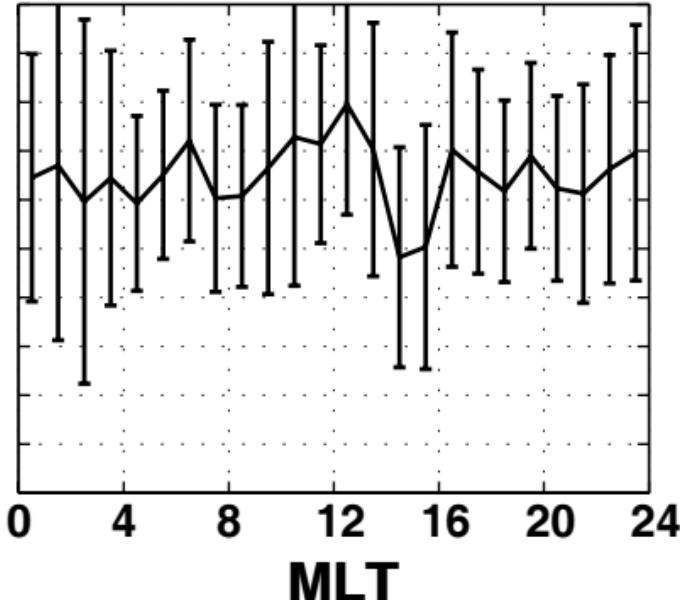
$E=100\text{keV}$



$E=200\text{keV}$



$E=350\text{keV}$



# $n$ values

