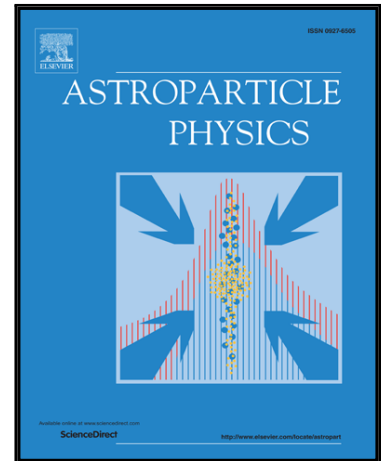


## Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0927-6505(16)30054-8  
DOI: [10.1016/j.astropartphys.2016.04.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.astropartphys.2016.04.006)  
Reference: ASTPHY 2120



To appear in: *Astroparticle Physics*

Received date: 1 October 2015  
Revised date: 12 March 2016  
Accepted date: 30 April 2016

Please cite this article as: A. Chilingarian , G. Hovsepyan , L. Kozliner , Extensive Air Showers, Lightning, and Thunderstorm Ground Enhancements, *Astroparticle Physics* (2016), doi: [10.1016/j.astropartphys.2016.04.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.astropartphys.2016.04.006)

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## Extensive Air Showers, Lightning, and Thunderstorm Ground Enhancements

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### **Abstract**

For lightning research, we monitor particle fluxes from thunderclouds, the so-called thunderstorm ground enhancements (TGEs) initiated by runaway electrons, and extensive air showers (EASs) originating from high-energy protons or fully stripped nuclei that enter the Earth's atmosphere. We also monitor the near-surface electric field and atmospheric discharges using a network of electric field mills.

The Aragats "electron accelerator" produced several TGEs and lightning events in the spring of 2015. Using 1-s time series, we investigated the relationship between lightning and particle fluxes. Lightning flashes often terminated the particle flux; in particular, during some TGEs, lightning events would terminate the particle flux thrice after successive recovery. It was postulated that a lightning terminates a particle flux mostly in the beginning of a TGE or in its decay phase; however, we observed two events (19 October 2013 and 20 April 2015) when the huge particle flux was terminated just at the peak of its development. We discuss the possibility of a huge EAS facilitating lightning leader to find its path to the ground.

### **1. Introduction**

Considered the highest peak in the South Caucasus, Mount Aragats is a dormant volcano with a 400-m deep crater that has become an ice basin. Its central highlands cover an area of  $>820 \text{ km}^2$  and generate huge summer storms that flow down its slopes into the surrounding valleys. The four crests that top Mt Aragats once reached heights  $>10,000 \text{ m}$  1.5 million years ago, before a massive eruption lowered them to its current 4095 m.

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