



**The Abdus Salam  
International Centre for Theoretical Physics**



**2063-26**

**ICTP/FANAS Conference on trends in Nanotribology**

***19 - 24 October 2009***

**Triggering frictional slip**

Stefano Zapperi  
*CNR-INFN  
Modena  
Italy*

# Triggering Frictional slip

Stefano Zapperi  
CNR-INFM, Modena

Vibration induced slip:  
Rosario Capozza  
Andrea Vanossi  
Alessandro Vezzani

Thermal induced slip:  
Marco Reguzzoni  
Mauro Ferrario  
M. Clelia Righi

see: Phys. Rev. Lett. 103, 085502 (2009)

submitted to PNAS

Supported by EU-FP6:



# Questions

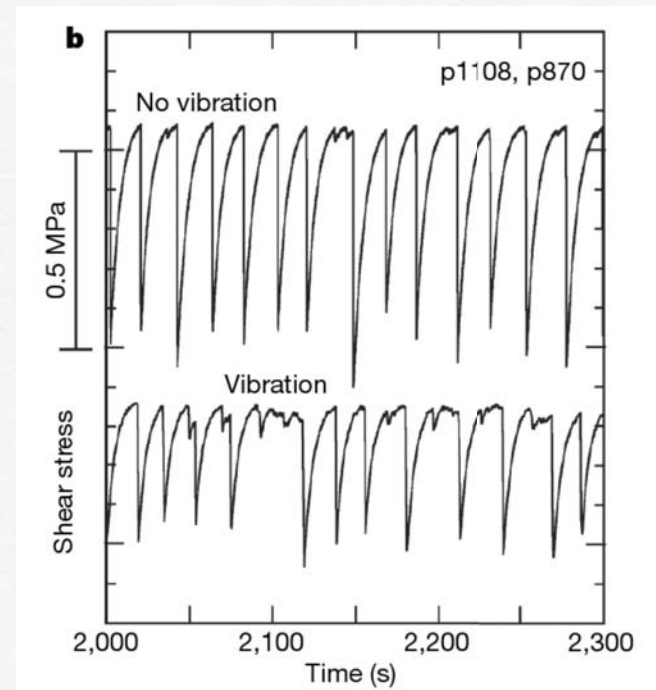
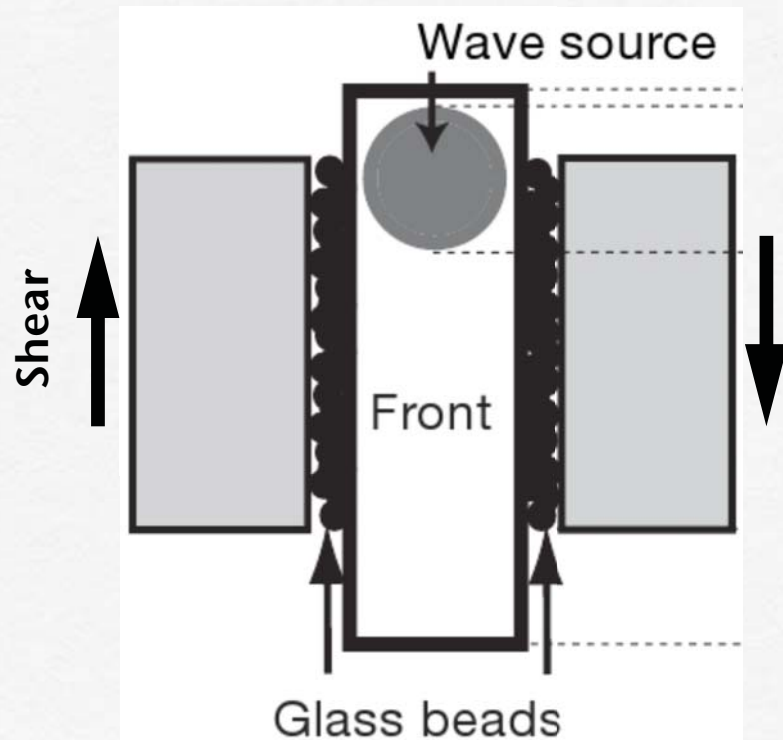
- Mechanical triggering:  
can we understand the role of vibration in stick-slip and friction?
- Thermal triggering:  
How does frictional slip occur in subcritical conditions?



# Part I

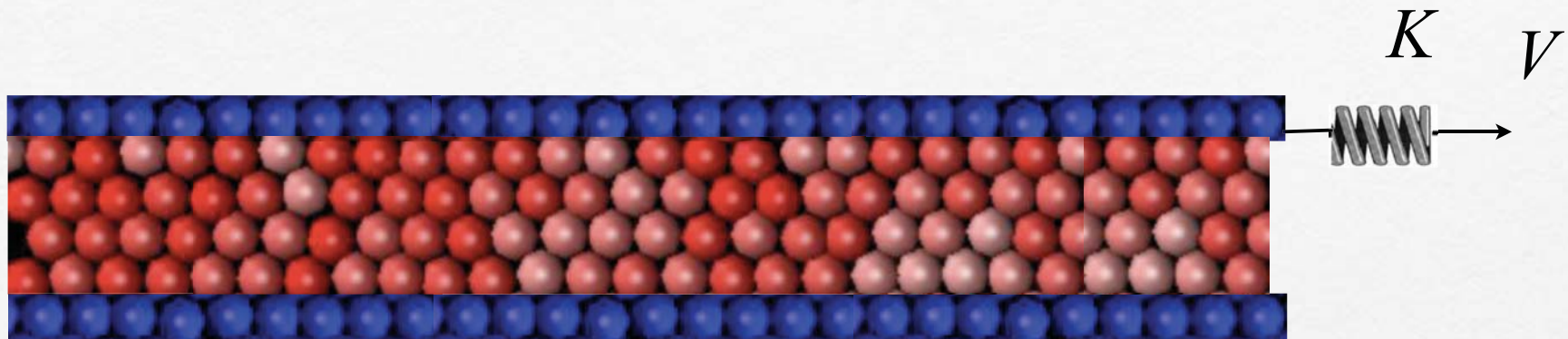
## Vibration induced slip

# Suppression of stick-slip by vibration



Johnson, P., Savage, H., Knuth, M., Gombert, J., and C. Marone, Nature, 451, doi:10.1038/nature06440, 2008.

# Model

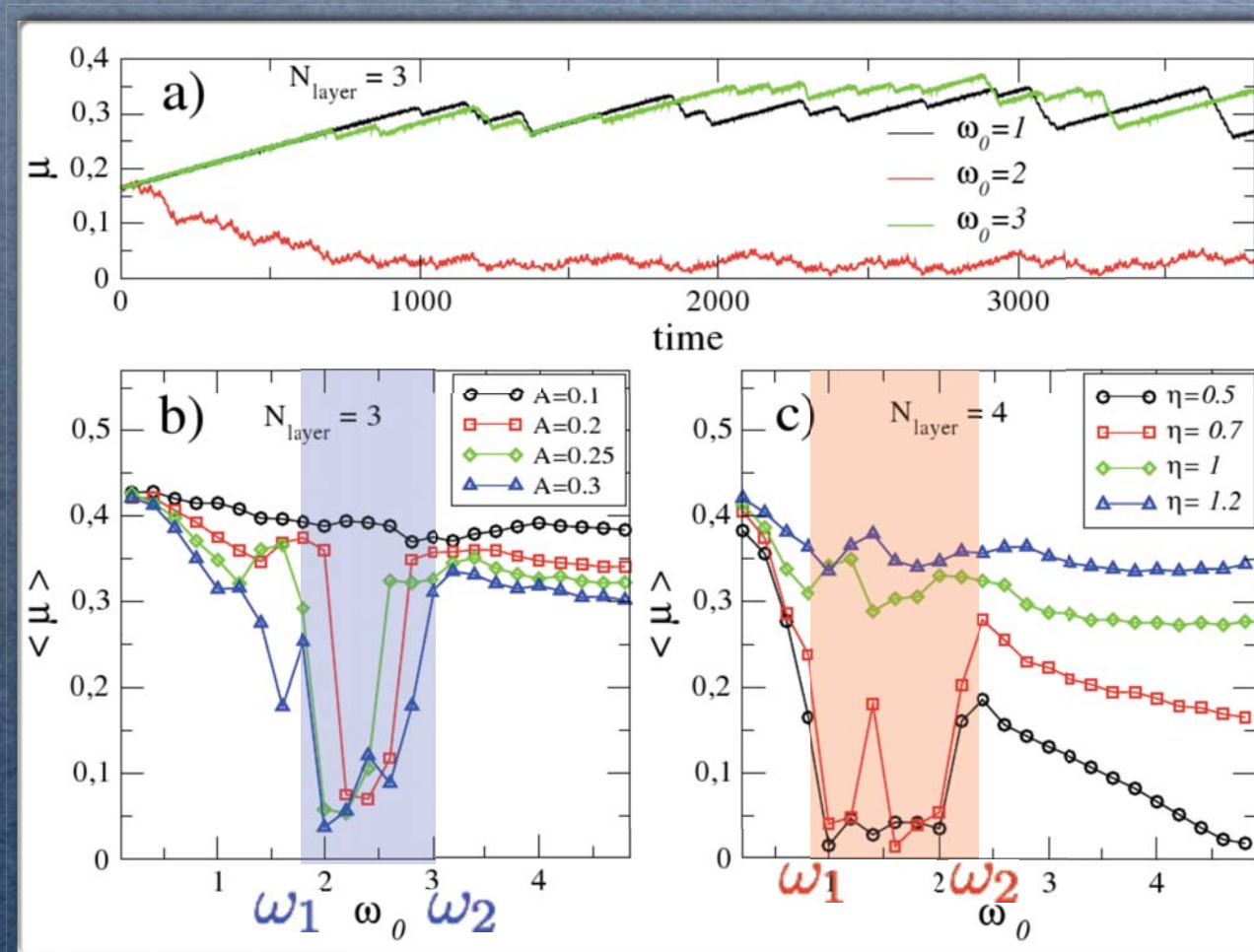


Langevin simulations  
Repulsive particles  
Normal load  
Low driving velocity  
Low temperature  
Rigid top & bottom plates

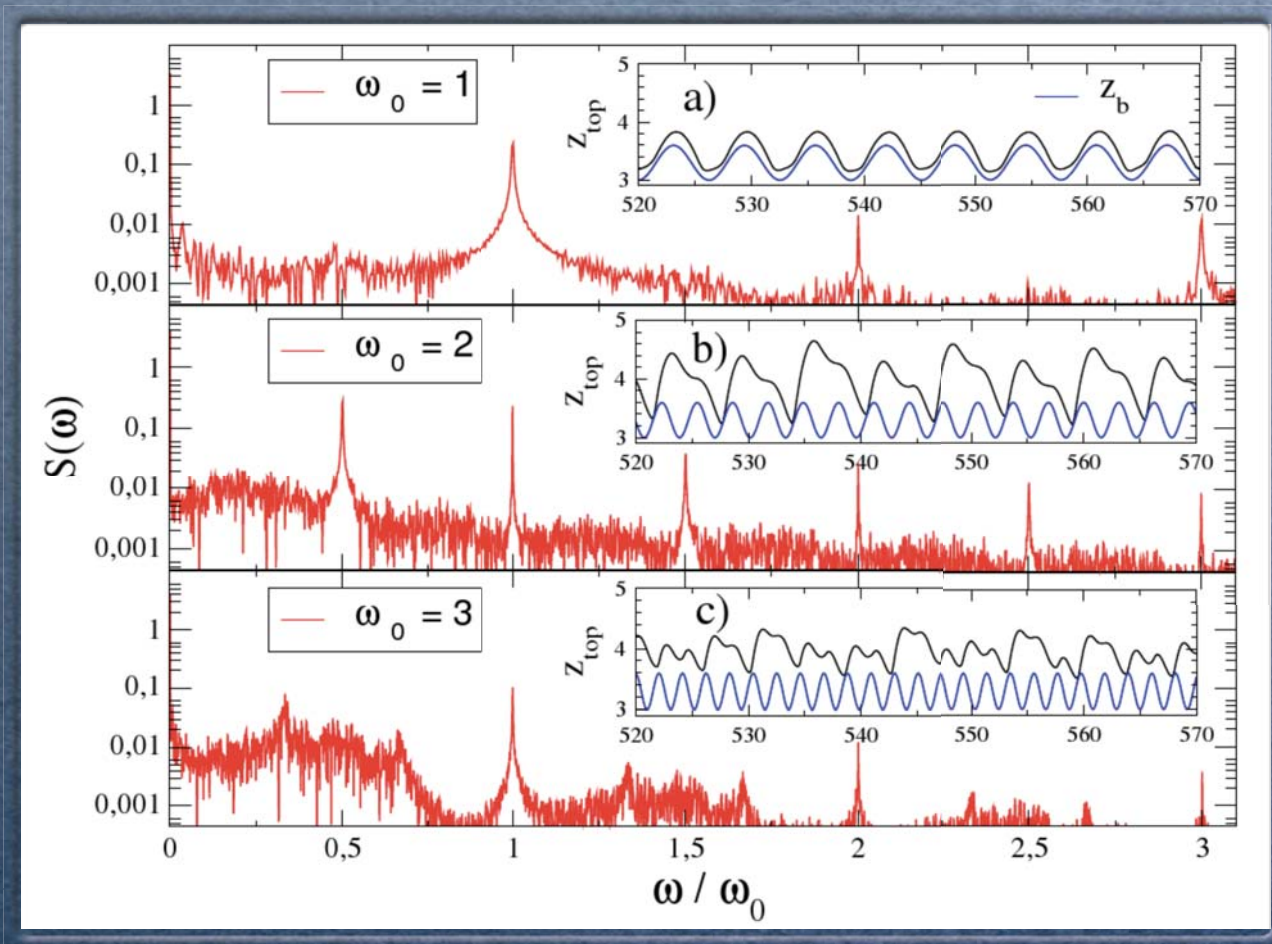
Sinusoidal vibration of  
the bottom plate

$$Z = A \sin(\omega_0 t)$$

# Friction suppression



# Spectral properties





# Friction suppression

To compute the frequency  $\omega_1$  we compare the inertial force due to the vibration to the sum of the load and the damping

$M$ : is the total mass  
(particles+plates)

$M_p$ : is the mass of the particles

$F_N$ : is the load

$\eta$ : is the damping constant

$A$ : is the vibration amplitude

Using dimensionless variables:

$$\tilde{f} \equiv \frac{F_N}{MA\eta^2} \quad \tilde{m} \equiv \frac{M_p}{M} \quad \tilde{\omega} \equiv \frac{\omega}{\eta}$$

$$F_{in}(\omega_1) \simeq F_N(\omega_1) + F_{damp}(\omega_1).$$



$$MA\omega_1^2 = F_N + M_p\eta A\omega_1$$



$$\tilde{\omega}_1 = \frac{1}{2} \left( \tilde{m} + \sqrt{\tilde{m}^2 + 4\tilde{f}} \right)$$

# Friction recovery

Detachment time from  
the bottom substrate:

$$\Delta t \simeq \dot{Z}_b M / F_N \simeq A \omega_0 M / F_N$$

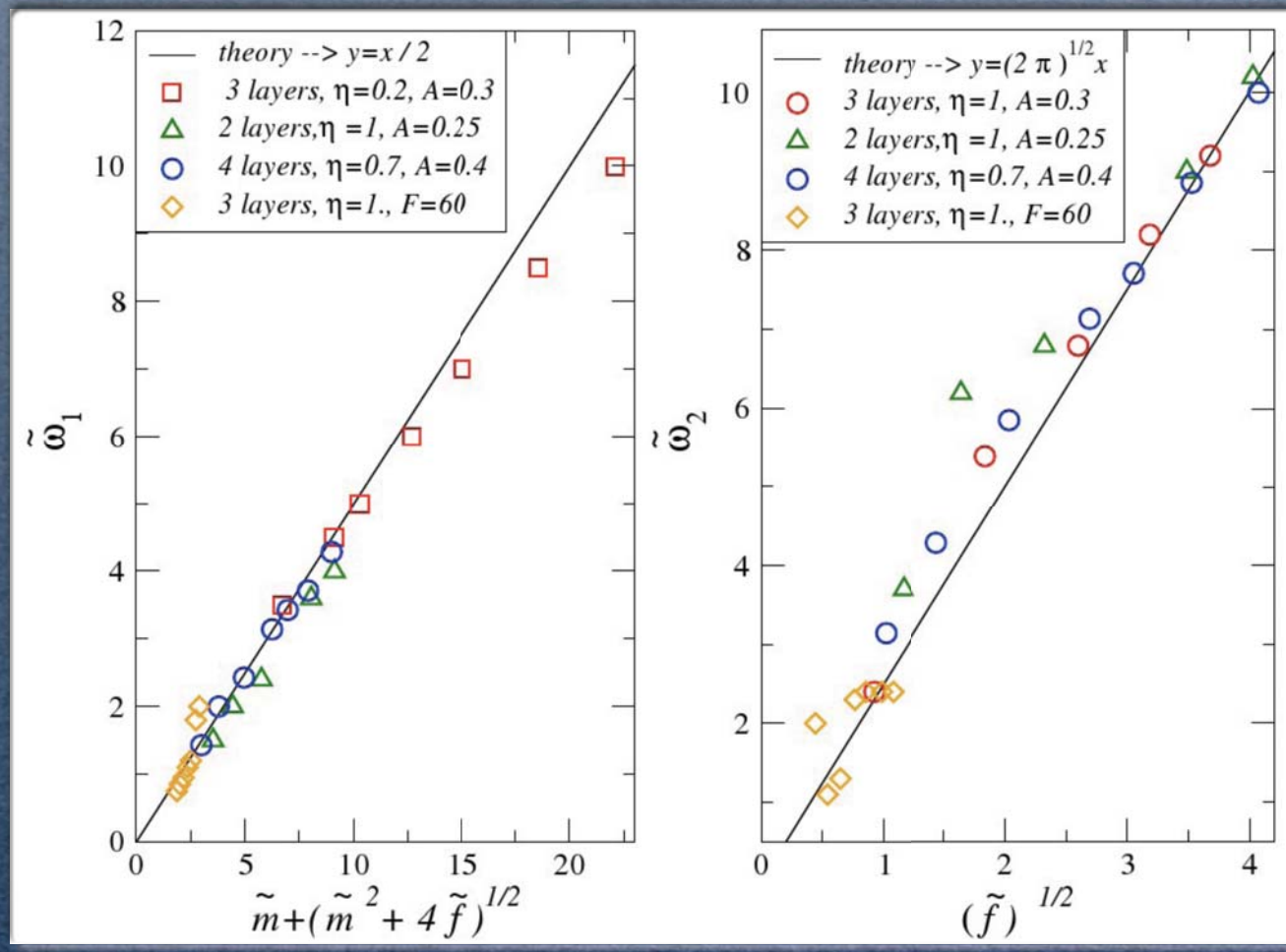
Rise time of the  
bottom substrate:

$$t_{rise} = \frac{2\pi}{\omega_0}$$

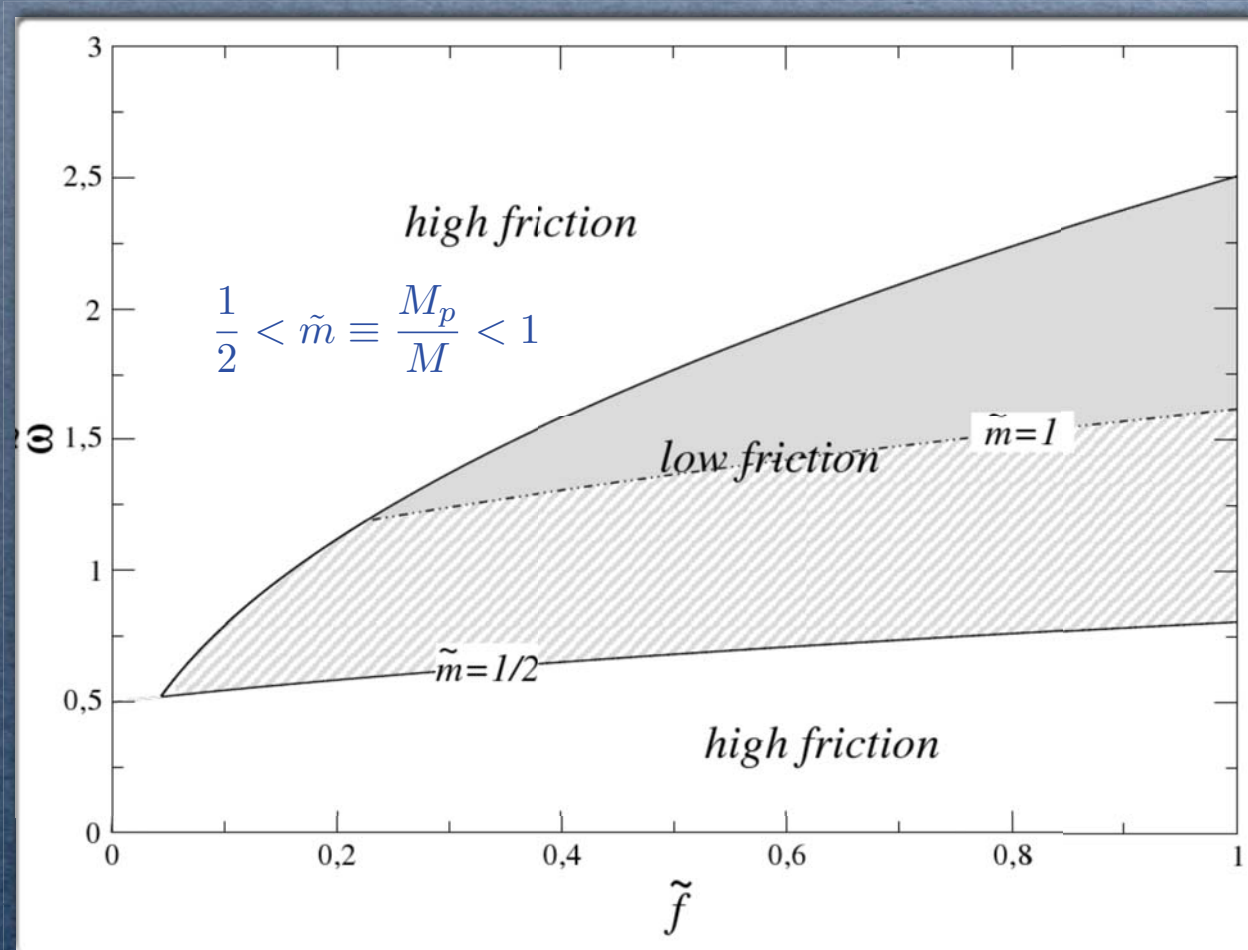
When the rise time is equal  
to the detachment time  
friction is recovered:

$$\tilde{\omega}_2 = \sqrt{2\pi \tilde{f}}.$$

# Comparison with simulations



# Phase diagram



A blue spiral-bound notebook cover with a silver metal spiral binding at the top. The cover has a fine, woven texture. The text is centered on the cover in a white, sans-serif font.

# Part II

## Thermally induced slip

# Subcritical slip: creep

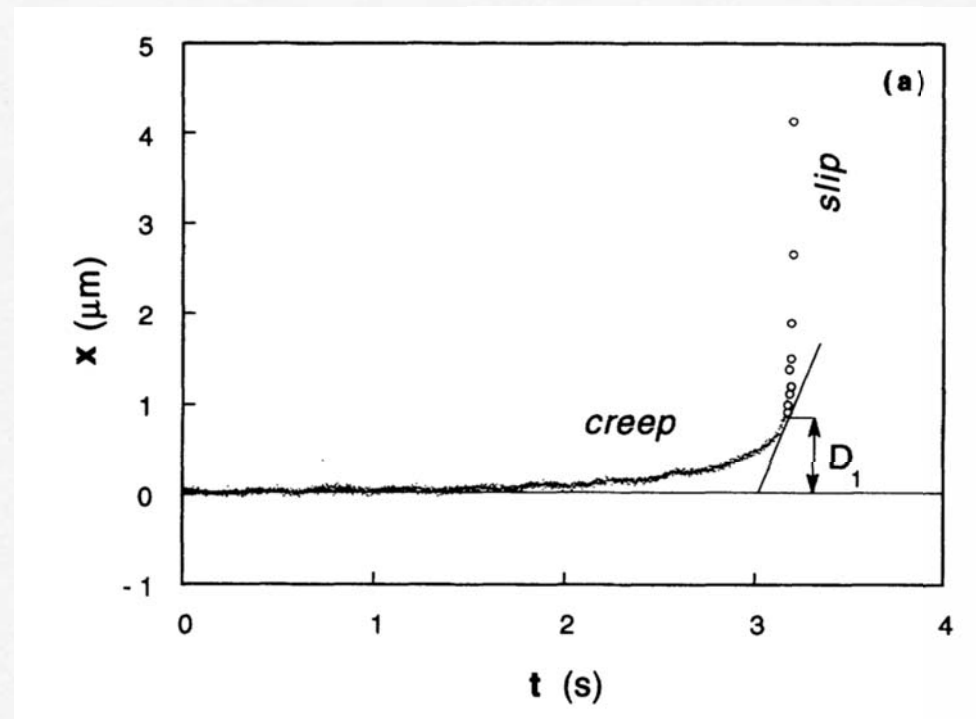
According to Amontons-Coulomb two surfaces in contact slide if the later force exceeds the static friction force:

$$F_L > F_s = \mu_s F_N$$

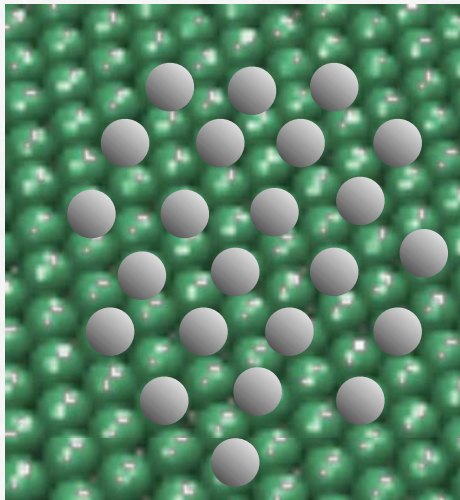
and when they move they are subject to the dynamic friction force:

$$F_d = \mu_d F_N$$

but real interfaces creep even below the static limit.



# Onset of slip: Xe monolayer on Cu substrate



Cu (111) surface  
adsorbed Xe atom  
form a commensurate  
interface

Xe atoms interact  
via LJ interactions:

$$\epsilon = 20\text{meV}$$

Xe-Cu potential  
obtained from  
ab-initio calculations:

$$V_0 = 1.9\text{meV}$$

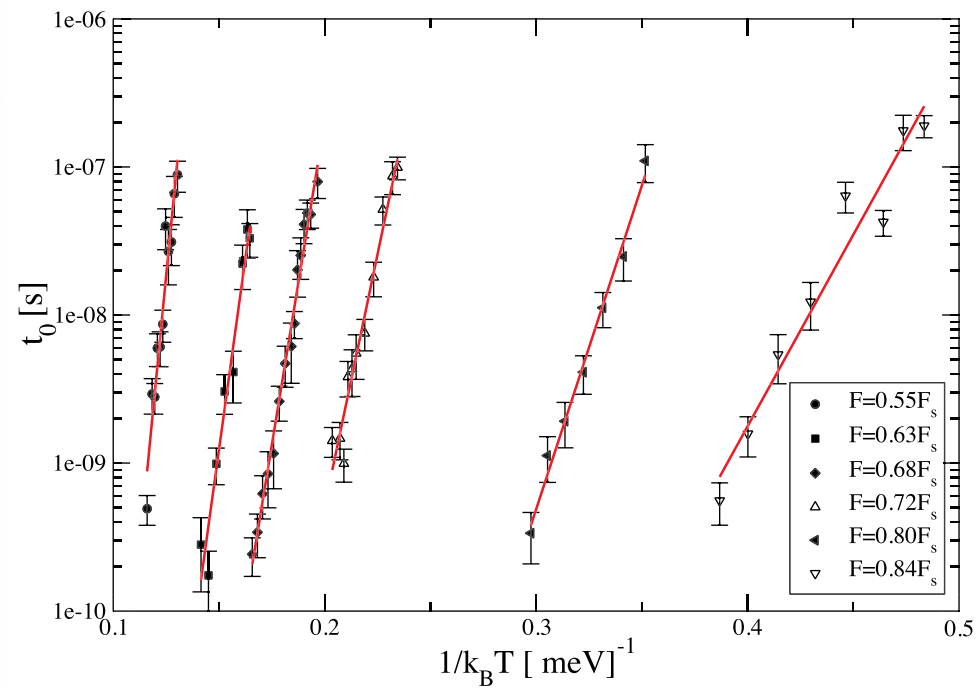
Constant temperature  
MD simulations:

$$25^\circ\text{K} < T < 100^\circ\text{K}$$

Apply a subcritical  
force to Xe atoms:

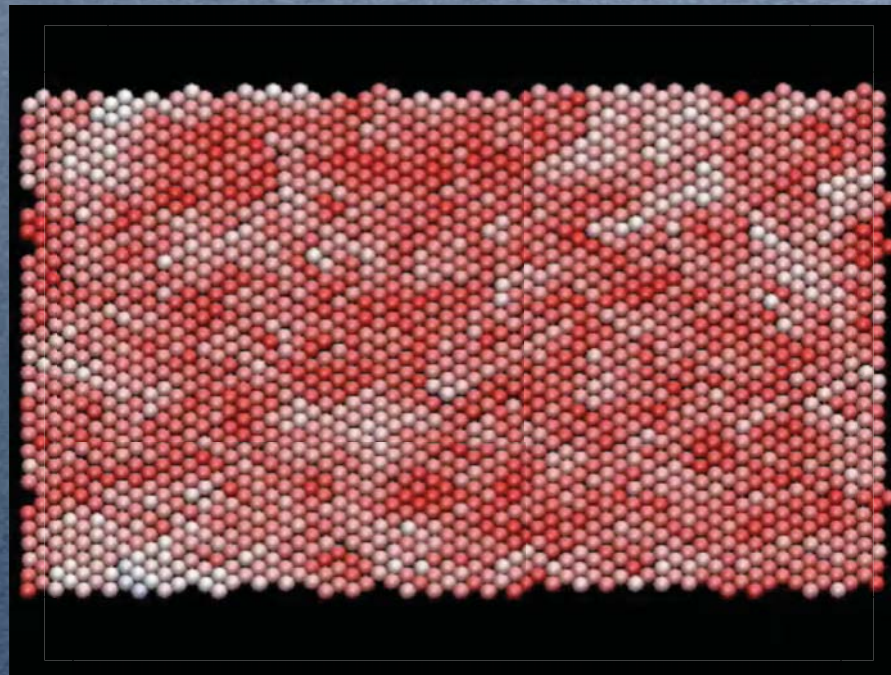
$$F < F_s \simeq 2.4\text{meV}/\text{\AA}$$

# Slip activation time

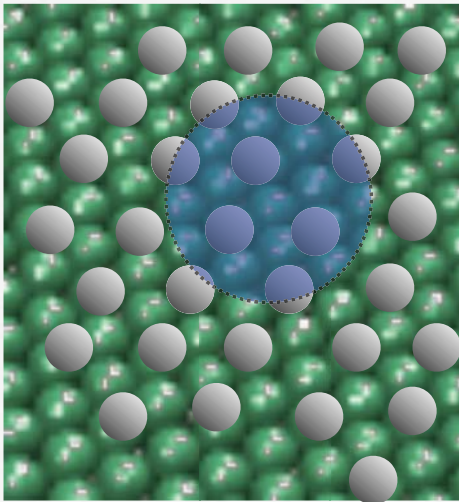




# Onset of slip



# Nucleation theory



Energy cost of a commensurate domain:

$$\Delta E = 2\pi r \Gamma - \frac{2\pi r^2}{\sqrt{3}b^2} F a$$

domain wall energy

gain from the force

Critical domain size:

$$r_c = \frac{\Gamma \sqrt{3} b^2}{2aF}$$

Energy barrier:

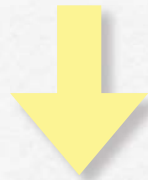
$$U = \frac{\sqrt{3}\pi\Gamma^2 b^2}{2aF} - E_s$$

# Domain wall: theory

$$E = \int dx dy \left[ \frac{1}{2} B (\nabla u)^2 + \rho V(u) \right]$$

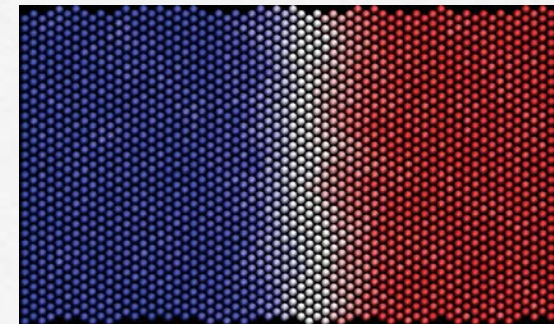
$$\left| \begin{array}{l} B \simeq 57\epsilon/\sigma^2 \\ V(u) \simeq \frac{V_0}{2}(1 - \cos(2\pi u/a)) \end{array} \right.$$

$$E_{el} \simeq Ba^2/w \quad E_{sub} \simeq V_0\rho w$$



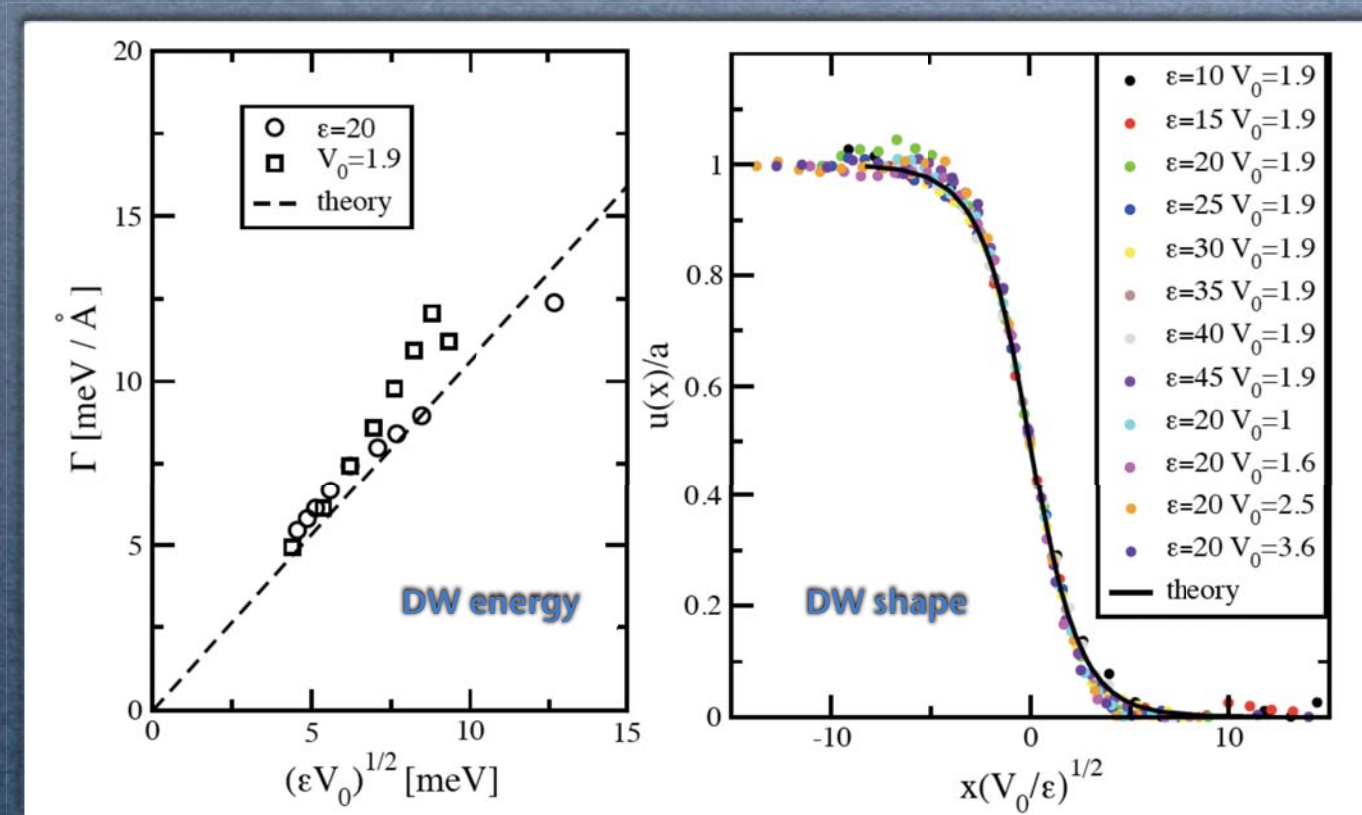
$$w \propto \sqrt{Ba^2/V_0\rho}$$

$$\Gamma \propto a\sqrt{\rho BV_0}$$

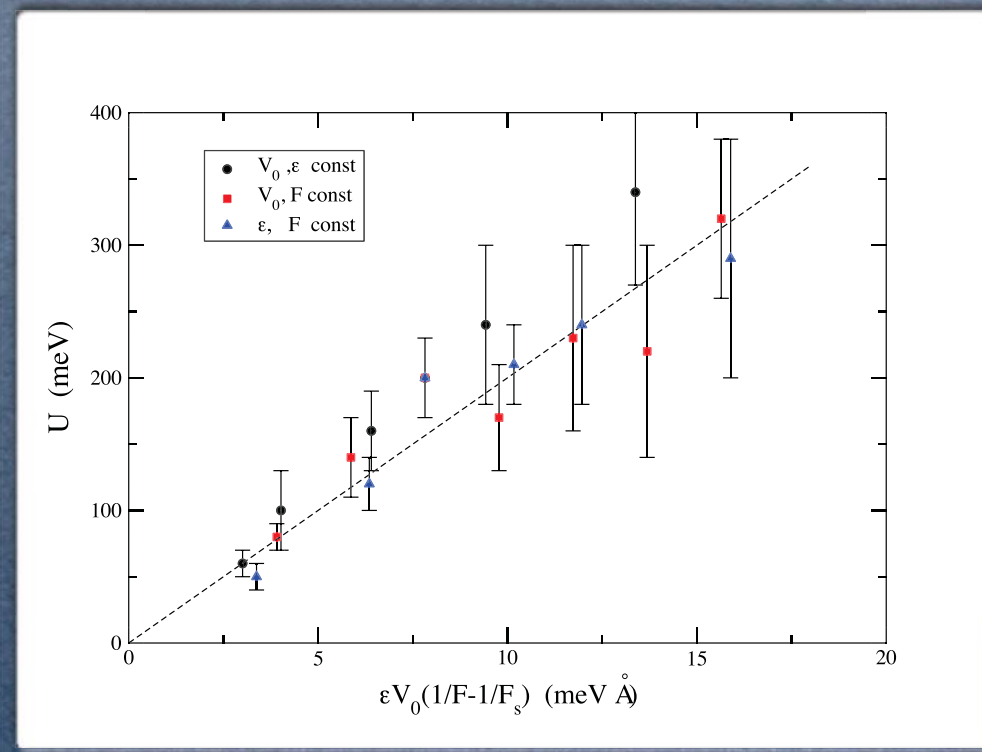


$\longleftrightarrow$   
 $w$

# Domain walls: simulations



# Nucleation barrier



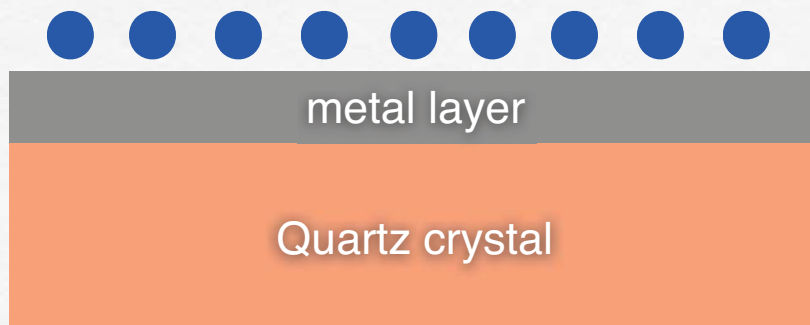
# Comparison with QCM experiments

Coffey & Krim Phys. Rev. Lett. 2005;95:076101.

A typical QCM operates at the resonance frequency of  $\omega_0 \simeq 10^7 \text{ s}^{-1}$

with an amplitude  $A \simeq 100 \text{ \AA}$   
corresponding to a maximum lateral inertial force on the monolayer

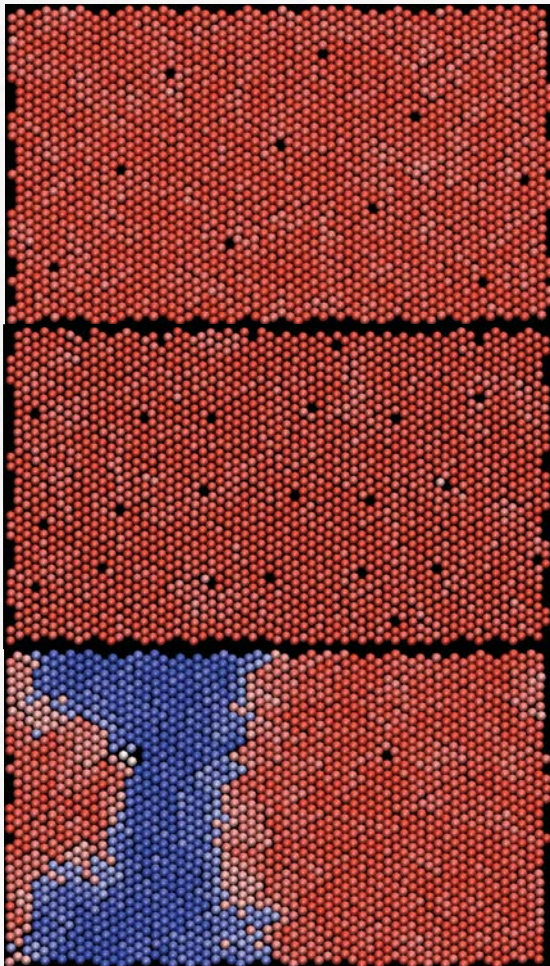
Adsorbed noble gas



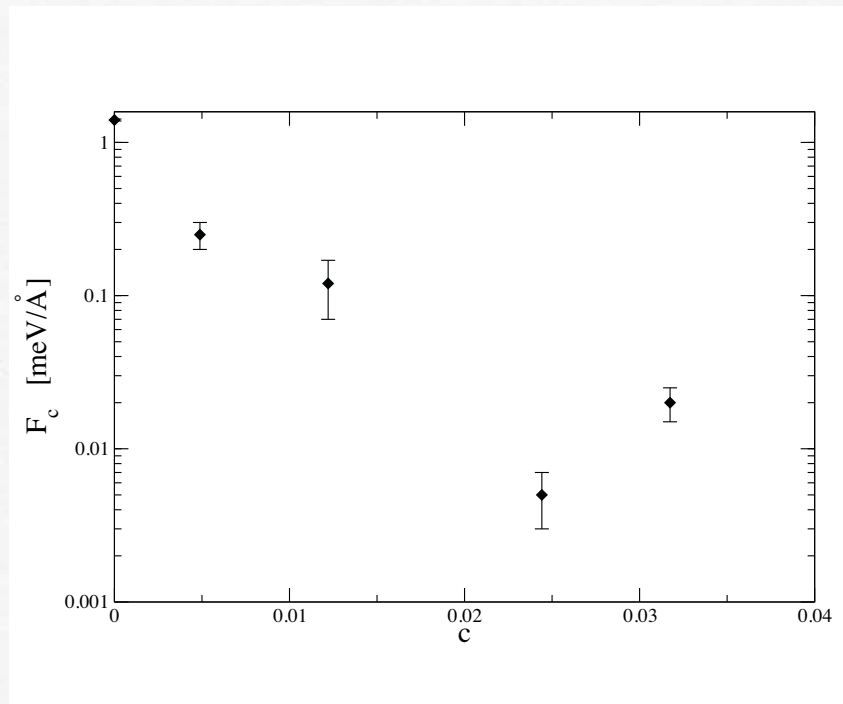
$$F_{QCM} = m\omega_0^2 A \simeq 10^{-7} \text{ meV/\AA}$$

In order for the film to slide, the nucleation time should be smaller than the experimental time scale. This would be impossible for a perfect Xe/Cu interface where  $F_s \simeq 2.4 \text{ meV/\AA}$

# The role of defects



Vacancy concentration



Defects could allow commensurate interfaces to slip in the QCM!

## Conclusions

- Mechanical triggering:  
Under vibration friction is suppressed in a well defined frequency range.
- Thermal triggering:  
Creep in commensurate interface can be understood as a nucleation problem.  
Disorder induced nucleation could explain QCM experiments.



A blue spiral-bound notebook with the text "Thank you for your attention!" written in white. The spiral binding is visible at the top edge.

**Thank you  
for your attention!**