



# ASTEX

## – Near-Earth Asteroid Mission Concept Study –

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# Primary Objectives of the ASTEX Study



Identification of the required technologies for an in-situ mission to two near-Earth asteroids.

- Selection of realistic mission scenarios
- Definition of the strawman payload
- Analysis of the requirements and options for the spacecraft bus, the propulsion system, the lander system, and the launcher
- Definition of the requirements for the mission's operational ground segment

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# ASTEX Primary Mission Goals



- The mission scenario foresees to visit two NEAs which have different mineralogical compositions: one “primitive” object and one fragment of a differentiated asteroid.
- The higher level goal is the provision of information and constraints on the formation and evolution history of our planetary system.
- The immediate mission goals are the determination of:
  - Inner structure of the targets
  - Physical parameters (size, shape, mass, density, rotation period and spin vector orientation)
  - Geology, mineralogy, and chemistry
  - Physical surface properties (thermal conductivity, roughness, strength)
  - Origin and collisional history of asteroids
  - Link between NEAs and meteorites

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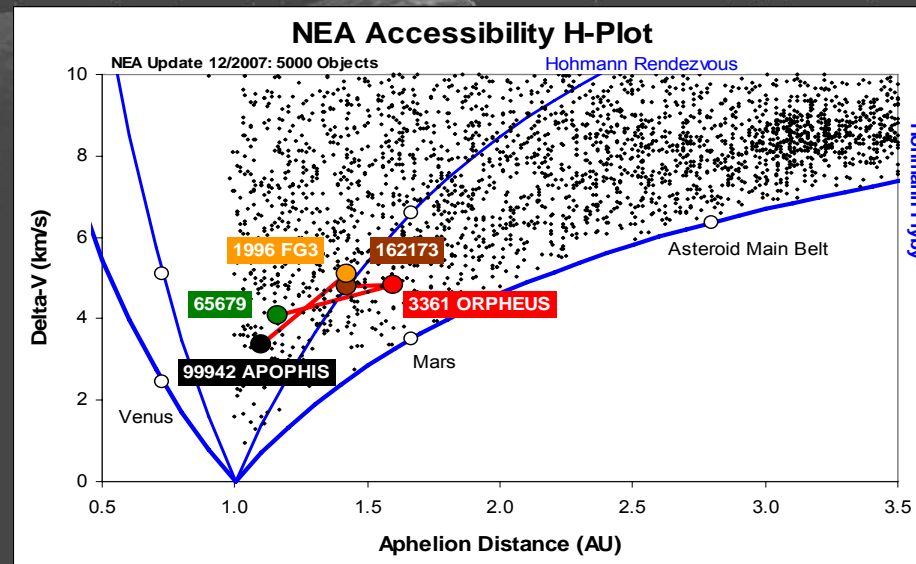




# Target Selection (II)



1. **Pre-selection**
  - $H < 22.5 \text{ mag}$
  - $\Delta v < 7 \text{ km/s}$  for 1<sup>st</sup> target
2. **Hohmann transfer computations**
  - Combinations with  $\Delta v > 11 \text{ km/s}$  rejected
3. **Patched conics computations**
  - Time interval of missions: 2015 to 2040
  - Max. mission duration: 15 years
4. **Identification of interesting NEA pairs**
  - Primitive asteroid of type: C, D, P, B, F
  - Evolved fragment of type: E, V, M, S, A, Q, R
5. **Prioritizing**
  - V and E types favored
  - Rotation period between 2h and 80h
  - Min. time of stay around NEA: 6 months
  - Max. total mission duration < 10 years
6. **Low-thrust computations of complete transfers for 29 missions scenarios and selection.**
  - **Output: 3 primary missions**



Mission Index	1st Target	Taxonomy of 1st	2nd Target	Taxonomy of 2nd
38	99942 Apophis	Sq	1996 FG3	C
150	162173 1999 JU3	Cg	3361 Orpheus	S, V
152	65679 1989 UQ	B	3361 Orpheus	S, V

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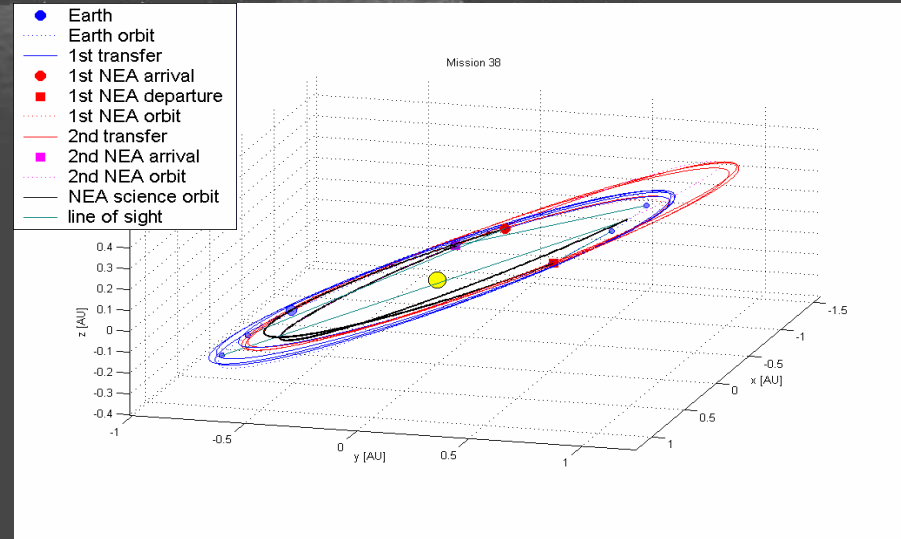
# Mission Analysis -Transfer-

## • Propulsion system

- $\Delta v$  requirement of up to 11 km/s
- Chemical propulsion system is insufficient
- High Isp for low fuel consumption
- ➔ Ion engines required

Index	38
1st Target	99942 Apophis
2nd Target	1996 FG3
Taxonomy 1st	Sq
Taxonomy 2nd	C
Start Mission	20 May 2023
Arrival 1st	08 Jun 2027
Departure 1st	05 Dec 2027
Arrival 2nd	30 Dec 2031
End Mission	27 Jun 2032
1st Transfer Time	1480 d
Stay Time 1st	180 d
2nd Transfer Time	1486 d
Stay Time 2nd	180 d
Mission Duration	9.11 years
Delta-V to 1st	3.838 km/s
Delta-V to 2nd	5.276 km/s
Delta-V Mission	9.114 km/s
Fuel Mass	287.3 kg

ASTEX baseline mission



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# Proximity Operations



## • Orbiting

- Uncontrolled stable orbiting (thrust free)
- Controlled orbiting (periodic correction maneuvers required)

## • Flyovers

- High-altitude flyovers
- Low-altitude flyovers

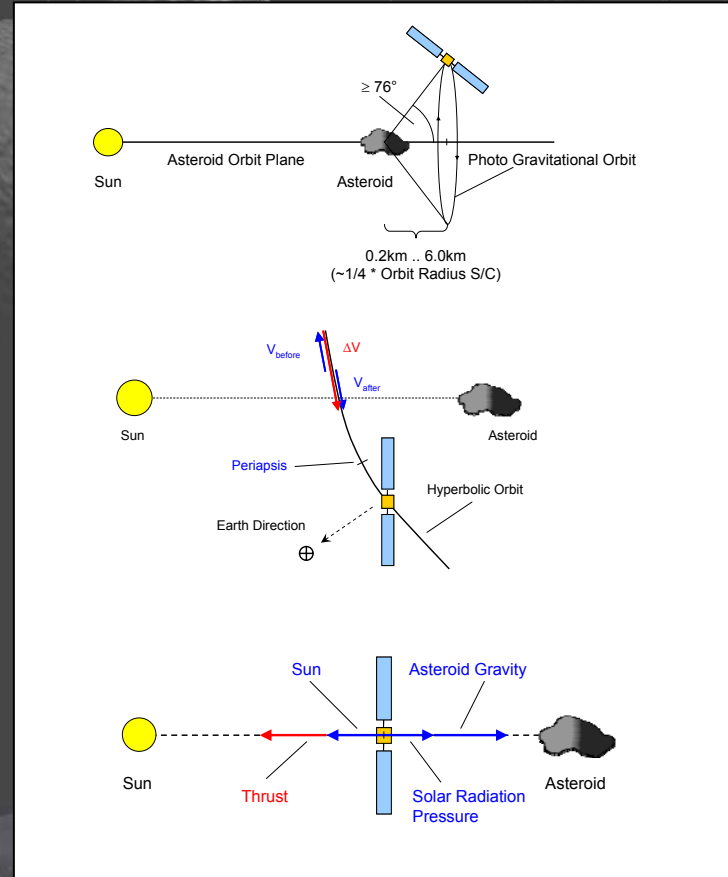
## • Hovering

- Inertial hovering
- Body-fixed hovering

## • Landing

### Conclusions:

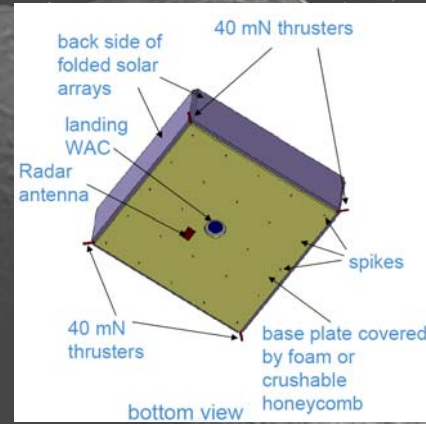
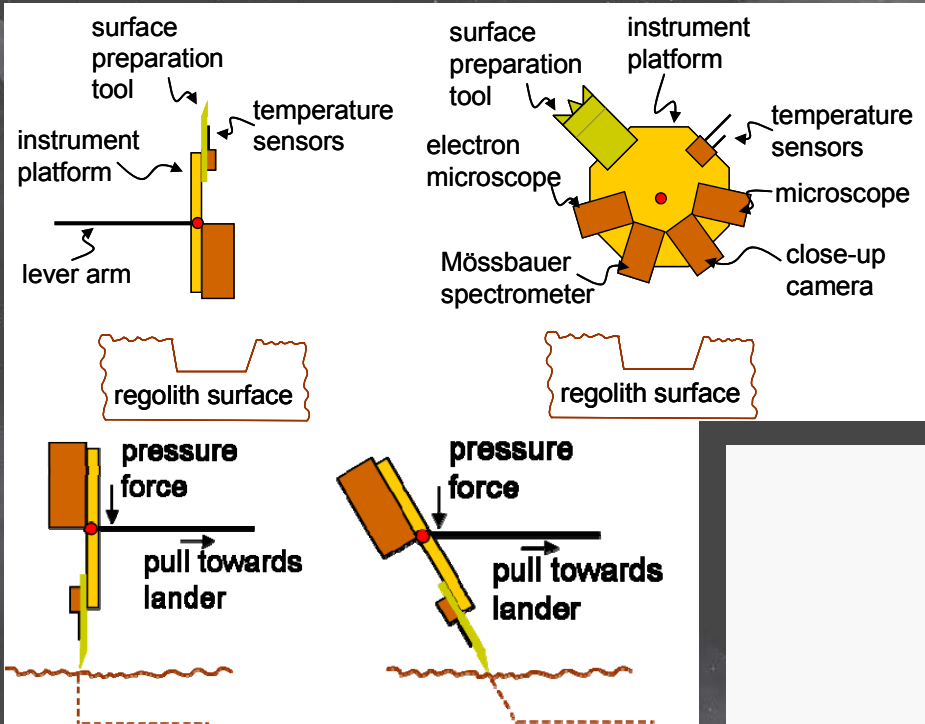
- Hovering [imaging phase] and (stable) terminator orbit [radar phase]
- Autonomous active lander descent with visual navigation on sunlit asteroid side
- Further investigations especially for binary systems needed



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# ASTEX Lander



Lander rear side



Surface analysis

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Payload platform with surface preparation tool

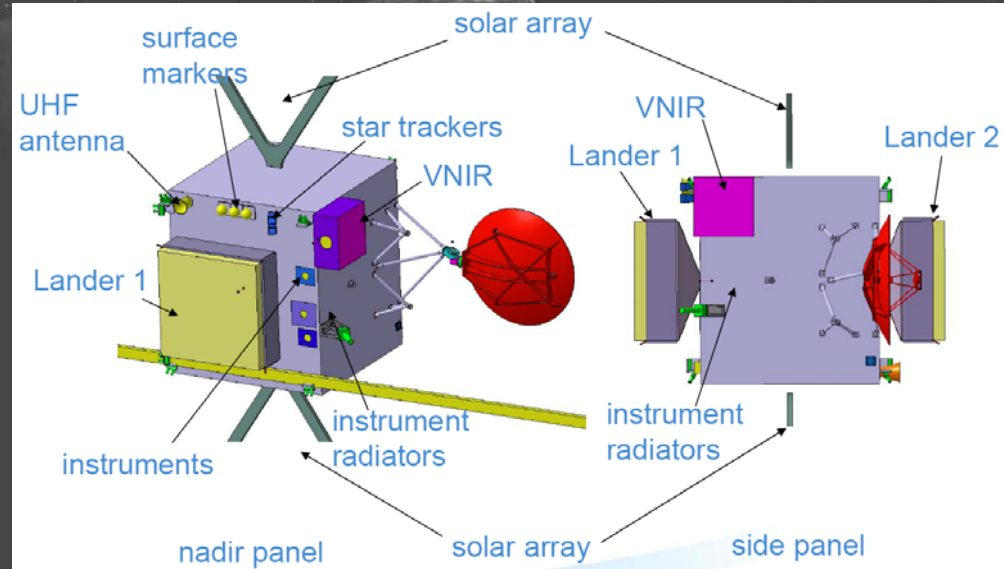




# ASTEX Spacecraft



- Carries two landers and the remote sensing payload
- SEP
- Power generation by 40 m<sup>2</sup> solar arrays
- Visual navigation during target approach
- Autonomous collision avoidance
- Mono-prop system for proximity operations
- Extended tracking mode at second target possible



Low cost launcher: Soyuz-Fregat ST offers sufficient performance for direct Earth escape of the ASTEX S/C (mass 1598 kg, incl. 20% margin).

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# ASTEX Strawman Payload



Orbiter Instruments	Mass [kg]	Size [mm <sup>3</sup> ]	Power Consumption [W]
<b>Radar Reflection Tomographer</b>	12	Antennas: 15 m length each Electronics: 160 x 250 x 110	100 (peak)
<b>Cameras</b>	2 * 5.5	160 x 190 x 380	18 (average)
<b>VNIR Spectrometer</b>	15	500 x 500 x 110	20 (average)
<b>Laser Ranger</b>	5	140 x 120 x 120	9 (peak)

Lander Instruments	Mass [kg]	Size [mm <sup>3</sup> ]	Power Consumption [W]	Comment
<b>Panoramic Camera (two camera heads)</b>	2 x 0.5	2 x (90x60x80)	2 x 2.5 (peak)	On robotic arm or elevated rotatable platform
<b>Microscope</b>	0.3	125x60x50	5 (peak)	On robotic arm
<b>Close-Up Camera</b>	0.5	90x60x80	6 (peak)	On robotic arm
<b>Electron Microscope</b>	0.5	50x50x80	3 (peak)	On robotic arm
<b>Temperature Sensor (16 sensors)</b>	16 x 0.02	10x10x3	16 x 0.01	On robotic arm and distributed over lander on representative positions
<b>Mössbauer-Spectrometer</b>	0.8	90x50x40	5 (peak)	On robotic arm
<b>Common DPU/ PSU</b>	4.0	120x120x60	12	On lander base

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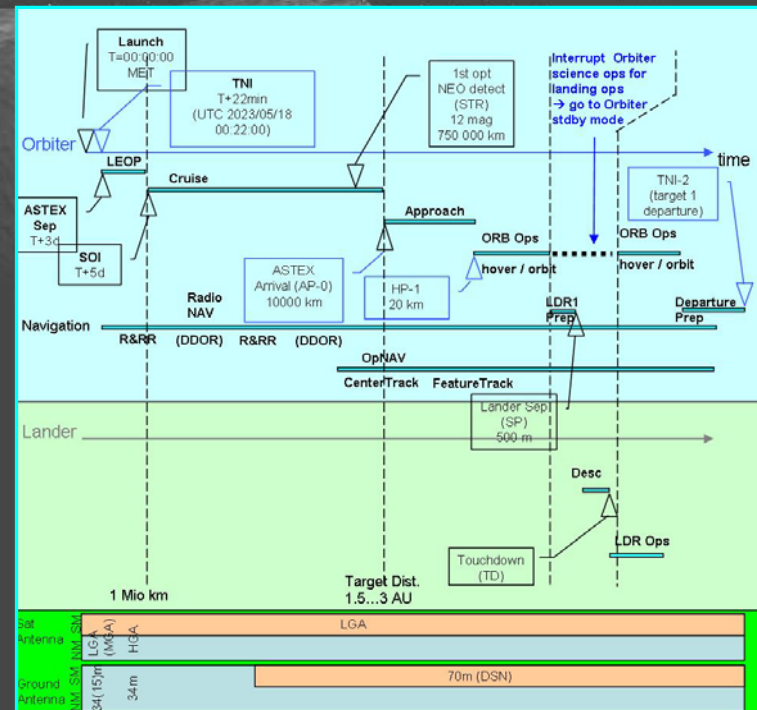


# Mission Flight Phases



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ORBITER	Phase	Description	Distance from Target [km]	LANDER	Phase	Description
Launch and Cruise	LEOP					
	Commissioning					
	IC	Interplanetary cruise starts at SOI distance				
Approach	AP-0	initial approach point	10000			
	AP-1	approach step 1	2000			
	AP-2	approach step 2	100			
	AP-3	approach step 3	50			
Hovering and / or Orbiting	HP-1	hover position 1	20			
	HP-2	hover position 2	10			
Orbiting	HP-3	hover position 3	1.5			
	OP-1	orbit insertion 1 (optional)	1			
	OP-2	orbit insertion 2 (optional)	0.5			
Lander Separation	SP	Lander separation betw. HP-2 and OP-2 (interrupt Orbiter Ops)	0.5 .. 10		SP	Lander separation position
Target Science Ops	HP-X	...further hover positions		Lander Ops	LP	Touchdown at landing point
	OP-X	...further orbit phases			LO-1	Start lander ops 1
	FO-X	...further fly-overs		LO-2	Start lander ops 2	



ASTEX timeline for the baseline mission in graphical form



# Conclusions

- The ASTEX mission to two NEAs of different composition would represent a giant step forward in the exploration of the Solar System.
- The ASTEX study demonstrates the overall technical feasibility of the mission and highlights some technological challenges that require further study and development.
- The favoured system concept being one orbiter to perform the remote-sensing campaigns and carry two identical lander units.

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