Accreting millisecond X-ray pulsars, from accretion disk to magnetic poles

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Dear friends, the time has come. Here you can finally check if your name appears in the list below. As my mother, my partner and Michiel often say (Freud might want to comment on this...), I usually say the opposite of what people claim. Therefore this acknowledgments do contain a list of people I’d like to thank, since the original sentence “I will skip the acknowledgments” has been already used and consumed by Nacho and Salvo. So, no more fun.

The first two persons I’d like to thank are of course my bosses Rudy and Michiel for the constant support and for believing in my skills. Since Rudy offered me a job here in Amsterdam I’m afraid I can’t say anything naughty about him... I’ve to thank Michiel for impressing me with his proverbial charisma since my very first day here in The Netherlands. I was just arrived for the interview, and right after that, we went for lunch where I clashed with the world famous dutch delicacies. Michiel took a whole bite of raw herring and drank some karmemelk\(^1\) on top of it. In that moment I saw the light: my roaming was finally over, I had found the beloved country I’d been always looking for. Two angels, fiery in aspect, came on a bike holding a Columbus and brought me in the magic world of Amsterdam. A few weeks later, Rudy and Michiel decided to offer me the Ph.D. position, and I accepted with great joy.

The first year wasn’t that productive, I have to admit. But that was mainly because Nanda kept confusing me with weird plots on the meaning of “magnitude”. After deep searches, and with the help of an anonymous referee, she arrived at the conclusion that a magnitude is 2.5 times the log of flux plus an aubergine. You’ll understand this was too much to handle for a young Ph.D. student. In this first year of deep thoughts I was helped by Peter Curran (still single, at those glorious times...), Martin and the East of Eden crew. It

\(^1\)very typical Dutch drink consisting of cow milk left under the Sun for 4-5 weeks (according to the definition of Simone Migliari).
took several months to recover, but at the end it did pay off. Thanks to the
growth of my knowledge and my spirit, Rudy had the fantastic idea to send
me around the world to spread the message. Dubna, Gregynog, Ladek Zdroj.
Places as unforgettable as their names... Rudy, I thank you for this!

The fact that these expeditions were tough was finally proved by my office
mate prof. dr. drs. mr. miss Diego Altamirano (as he likes to be called by
Indians students). He went once in an expedition in India, and came back
with unexpected skills: Diego, I thank you for teaching me how a blatant
asymmetric object can be somehow-what-kind-symmetric.

I’d like to spend also some nice words on Gemma, former office-mate, that
could handle two Italians and a half\textsuperscript{2} for about two years. Thanks for that,
Gemma. I’m sure that reading the best seller “The Xenophobe’s guide to the
Italians” gave you a lot of strength during these hard times.
And how to forget Pg...

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Clearly there are others in the institute I’d like to thank, for the fantastic
atmosphere and the myriad gossips I enjoyed with many of you (also for the
scientific discussions, of course...). I have to thank therefore Rudy and Yuri
for the coffee sessions and especially Yuri for bringing us the “Midget Dance”.
Thanks Yuri, also for reading the draft of this thesis in my place. I’ve also to
thank Paolino for being so Italian to let us understand why Berlusconi rules
undisturbed. Also for the fights with Valeriu about the best technique to
clean dishes. Thanks to Lucinda for interesting discussion on the only topic
she likes to talk about, Lianne for trying to poisoning me at dinner, Atakan
for his Turkish coffee and his sense of humor, Arjan for his conspiracy theories,
Eduardo for not paying dinners, Huib for paying me a lunch, Kostadinos for
cigarettes, Manu for his pilgrimage in Molfetta and Dave for further clarifi-
cations on the concept of magnitude. Special mention goes to Hendrik that
explained me that it’s possible to get a free herring the 4th of October in
Leiden by filling a form at the municipality. I won’t forget.

I’d like to thank also Marta and Cinzia, especially for the very relaxing
moments in Ireland. Marta, I apologize for talking with your boss Gino. I
couldn’t believe he wanted really to fire you after the nice chat I had with him
!

Thanks goes also to Flavio, that came here in Amsterdam to leave the
homophobic and clerical atmosphere one breathe in Italy, and showed me

\textsuperscript{2}controversies exist among ethologists, about the possibility of defining Diego a whole
Italian.
that being an atheist in The Netherlands is no fun: the Dutch don’t care about God (which is a not enough practical concept) but they do believe in Sinterklaas\footnote{a small (but growing) dutch sect guided by Peter Polko does also believe in lobsters walking in the city streets}.

Great thanks goes also to Stratos, for gambling my life by locking me out of the room in Montreal, while a furious black giant was looking for me in the streets (to kill me).

Thanks to Claudio Germana’ for his impossible theories and questions that stimulated several non-sense discussions.

A great thanks goes to Nathalie, that helped me with the “samenvatting in het Nederlandse”. Thanks a lot ! Great thanks also to Jake Hartman, nice discussions and lots of fun when we meet and when you are not sleeping in my room on a couch with a beer in a hand (contact me for videos on the episode). Thanks to Anna for all her support and the very nice discussions on theories of neutron stars. I enjoyed a lot !

Thanks goes also to my cousin Nadia, for puking every day (for different reasons) when she came visiting me here. Thanks also to my cousin Claudia and my brother Fabrizio that blamed me constantly for not calling home during these four years. Thanks also for not throwing up every day (differently from Nadia) when visiting me. Thanks to all those friends in Molfetta and many others that I cannot mention ’cause the list is too long.

And finally...thanks to Paola, that always supported me and was willing to fight at the expense of the house integrity, and that still wonders who’s that woman that once told me I’m a too modest guy.

Groetjes !

Alessandro