X-Ray Binaries

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Outline

X-Ray Binaries
16 Apr Introduction, History
23 Apr Accretion in X-Ray Binaries
30 Apr Accretion in X-Ray Binaries, cont'd
Neutron Star X-Ray Binaries
7 May LMXBs
14 May **no lecture**
21 May Aperiodic Variability, QPOs
28 May **no lecture** – Pentecost
4 Jun X-Ray Bursts
11 Jun X-Ray Pulsars, Accretion Column, Magnetic Fields
Black Hole X-Ray Binaries
18 Jun Black Hole X-ray Binaries
25 Jun Microquasars
2 Jul X-Ray Transients
XRB statistics
9 Jul Formation and Evolution of XRBs
16 Jul XRBs in other Galaxies

Outline

Why are X-ray binaries interesting?

- access to exotic end-points of stellar evolution
- studies of accretion and accretion disks on long timescales
  with respect to the dynamic timescale
- probe physical processes close to surface of neutron star or BH event horizon
- some are are galactic micro-scale analogues of active galactic nuclei
- they allow mass/size constraints, or even accurate measurements, of their fundamental properties
- they allow to constrain evolution of binary star systems

After P.A. Charles

Textbooks on XRB

LEWIN, W.H.G., VAN DER KLIS, M., 2006, Compact Stellar X-Ray Sources, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 706pp., €155.90

Graduate level summary of all aspects of X-ray binary research. Overpriced. The articles are also available on http://www.arxiv.org.

LEWIN, W.H.H., VAN PARADIJS, J., VAN DEN HEUVEL, E.P.J., 1995, X-Ray Binaries, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 662pp., €58.90

Predecessor to Lewin & van der Klis, summarizes the knowledge before the launch of the current satellites. Many of the general overview articles in this reference are still worthwhile reading.

CHARLES, P.A., SEWARD, F.D., 1995, Exploring the X-Ray Universe, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 398+XVIpp., out of print

The only more or less recent textbook on X-ray astronomy. Does not cover the past 20 years, however, still a good summary of the basic physics.

Other Textbooks

FRANK, J., KING, A., RAINE, D., 2002, Accretion Power in Astrophysics, 3rd edition, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 398pp., €55.90

The standard textbook on accretion, covering all relevant areas of the field, including X-ray binaries.

PADMANABHAN, T., 2000, Theoretical Astrophysics: Volumes 1–3, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, $\sim$ 500pp. each, $\sim$€60 per volume

Introduction to the (theoretical) physics of astrophysics. Short, concise, great. Graduate level, but understandable, although not for the faint hearted...

BRADT, H., 2003, Astronomy Methods: A Physical Approach to Astronomical Observations, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 458pp., €57.50

Summary of many technical details that are useful to know if you want to become a professional astronomer. Detectors, radiation processes, etc.

History: What are X-ray Binaries?

End Stages of Stellar Evolution, IV

Stars end their life as one of three kinds of different compact objects:

White Dwarf: $\rho \sim 10^5 \dots 10^6\,\mathrm{g\,cm^{-3}}$, $R \sim R_\oplus$, Equilibrium between gravitation and pressure from degenerate electrons, $M < 1.44\,M_\odot$ (Chandrasekhar-limit; 1931).

Neutron Star: $\rho \sim 10^{13} \dots 10^{16}\,\mathrm{g\,cm^{-3}}$, $R \sim 10\,\mathrm{km}$, this density causes inv. β-decay (p + e$^-$ $\longrightarrow$ n), i.e., star consists (mainly) of neutrons. $1.44\,M_\odot < M \lesssim 3\,M_\odot$ (Oppenheimer-Volkoff limit; 1939).

Black Hole: For $M \gtrsim 3\,M_\odot$ no stable configuration known

$\Longrightarrow$ Star collapses completely

$\Longrightarrow$ Black Hole

Size scale: $R_\mathrm{S} = 2GM/c^2 = 3(M/M_\odot)\,\mathrm{km}$

Detectability, I

Sirius A+B (McDonald Observatory)

Luminosity of a sphere of radius R and temperature T:

$$L = 4\pi R^2 \cdot \sigma_\mathrm{SB} T^4 \qquad (2.1)$$

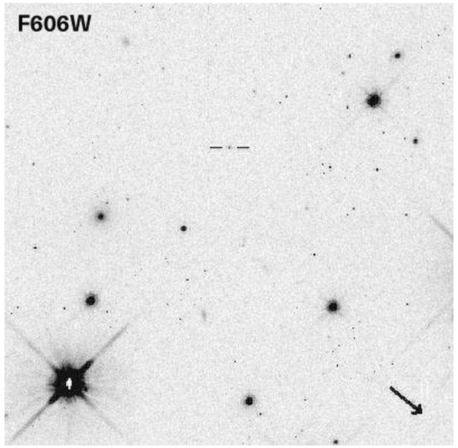
($\sigma_\mathrm{SB} = 5.67 \times 10^{-5}\,\mathrm{erg\,cm^{-2}\,K^{-4}\,s^{-1}}$)

For a typical white dwarf, $R \sim 6000\,\mathrm{km}$, $T \sim 10000\,\mathrm{K}$ $\Longrightarrow L = 2.6 \times 10^{30}\,\mathrm{erg\,s^{-1}} \sim 6.6 \times 10^{-4}\,L_\odot$ corresponding to an absolute magnitude of $M_\mathrm{WD} = 15.9\,\mathrm{mag}$.

$\Longrightarrow$ with a limiting magnitude of 25 mag for today's telescopes, isolated WDs are detectable out to $\sim$700 pc.

First discovery: Alvan Graham Clark, 1862

Detectability, II



(17.5′ × 17.5′ Walter & Matthews, 1997, Fig. 1)

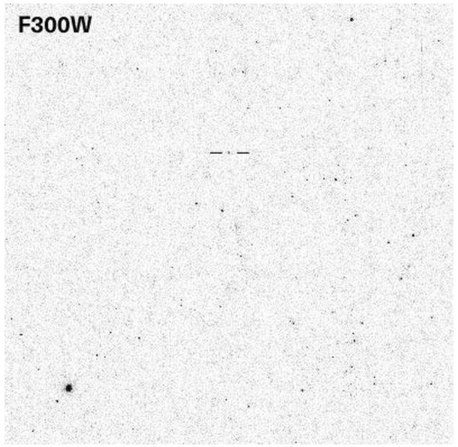
Same calculation for a neutron star ($R = 10$ km, $T = 10^6$ K) gives $L_{NS} \sim 7 \times 10^{28}$ erg s $\sim 2 \times 10^{-5} L_\odot$, or an absolute magnitude of 19.7 mag.

Pre VLT/Keck: practical limit of surveys ~20 pc, 10 m class and space based telescopes of today extend this to ~100 pc.

$\Longrightarrow$ It is virtually impossible to discover isolated neutron stars in the optical.

HST Image of the isolated neutron star RX J185635−3754, which has a visual magnitude ~25.6 mag

Detectability, III



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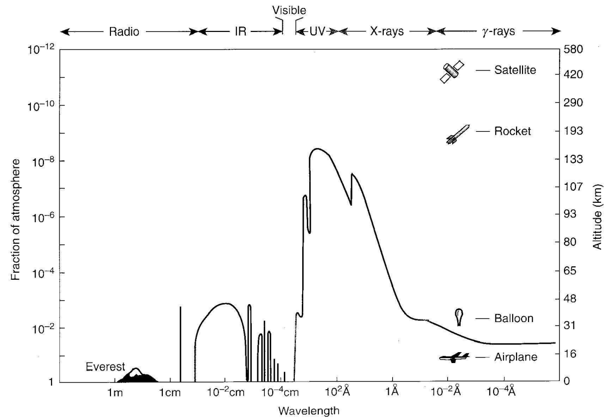
What are XRBs?, I



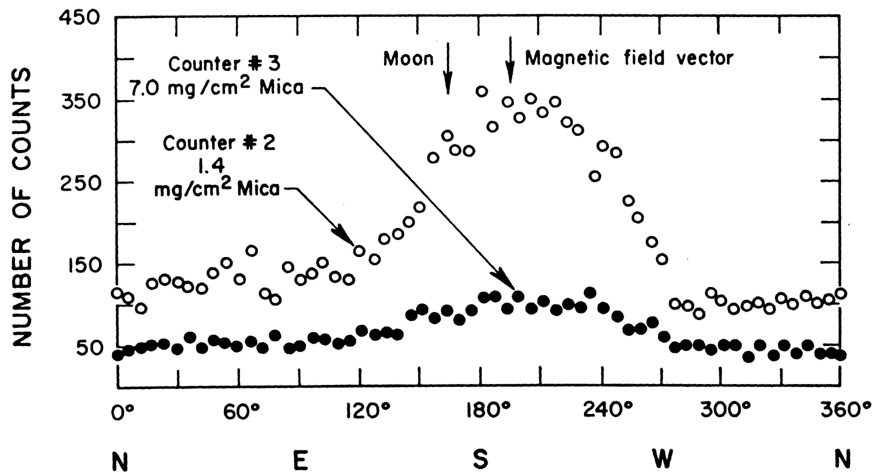
Earth's atmosphere is opaque for all types of EM radiation except for optical light and radio.

1940s: first opening of other wavebands than the optical: radio and X-rays

1948: first detection of X-rays from Sun from (modified V2 rocket; Friedman et al.)

(Charles & Seward, 1995, Fig. 1.12)

Sun's relative weakness stopped search for other cosmic X-ray sources for 13 years.



Early 1960s: First X-ray observations of the sky with collimated Geiger counters (Riccardo Giacconi et al. at American Science & Engineering, Boston, prompted by B. Rossi): Search for X-ray fluorescence emission from the Moon

18 June 1962: 1st scan of the sky during an Aerobee flight (Giacconi et al., 1962): First discovery of an extrasolar X-ray source – Sco X-1

Nobel prize in 2002 to R. Giacconi

The moon was first detected in the X-rays by *ROSAT* in the 1990s.

What are XRBs?, III

Throughout the 1960s further detections of X-ray sources with X-ray detectors using rocket flights:

- 18 June 1962: **Sco X-1** (Giacconi et al., 1962) [AS&E]
- 29 April 1963: **Crab nebula** (Bowyer et al., 1964) [NRL]
- 16 June 1964: **Cygnus X-1** (Bowyer et al., 1965)
- 16 June 1964: **Galactic Center** (Bowyer et al., 1965)
- 16 June 1964: **SN 1604** (Kepler's SNR Bowyer et al., 1965)
- . . .

Some sources were speculated to be neutron stars

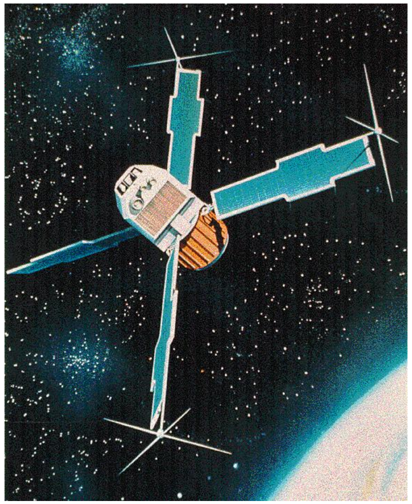
confirmation of these observations by teams from MIT (Clark, Oda), Lawrence Livermore Laboratory (Chodil et al.), Leicester (Pounds et al.), and others.

End of 1960s: ~60 sources known.

Problems of rocket and balloon studies: pointing accuracy, short observing time.

To be able to have longer observing times, one needs to go to space!

UHURU



12 Dec 1970: launch of *UHURU*:
First satellite sensitive to X-rays

UHURU: Swahili for "freedom"

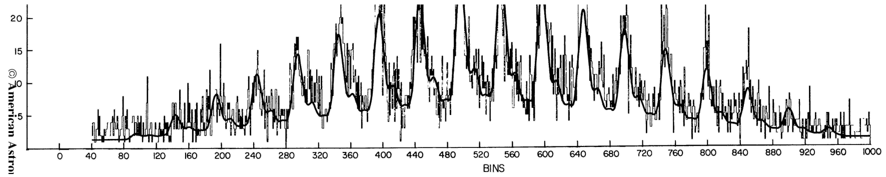
Detailed observations/positions for many bright X-ray sources (e.g., Cygnus X-1, Hercules X-1, etc.), discovery of many more

Discovered sources summarized in the 4th *UHURU* catalog (339 sources, Forman et al. 1978).

Source names: e.g., 4U0115+63, 4U1957+11,. . .

NASA/GSFC

Discovery of X-ray Binaries, I

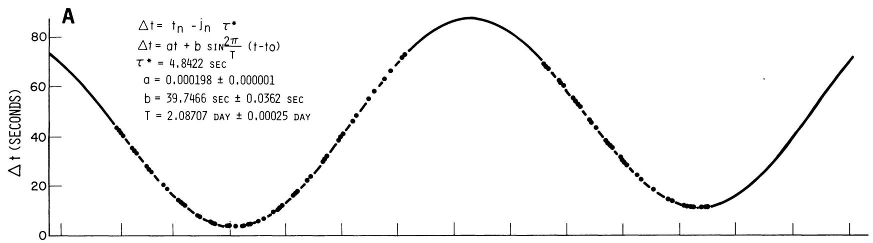


(Schreier et al., 1972, Fig. 4a)

Schreier et al. (1972): Detection of 4.8 s **pulsations** from Centaurus X-3 with *UHURU*: Cen X-3 is an X-ray Pulsar.

⟹ at least some X-ray sources are rotating.

Discovery of X-ray Binaries, II



(Schreier et al., 1972, Fig. 4a)

Schreier et al. (1972): Time delay in arrival time of pulses from Cen X-3:

Cen X-3 is an X-ray Pulsar.

Discovery of X-ray Binaries, III

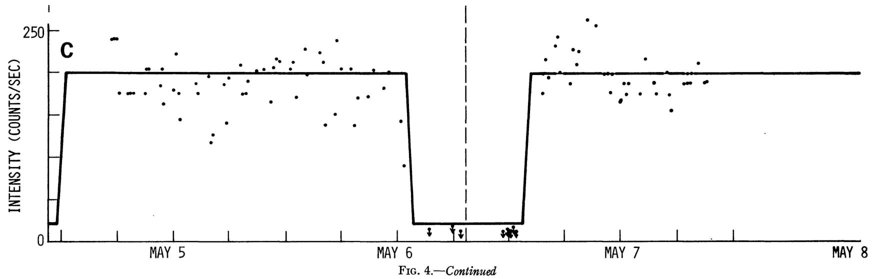


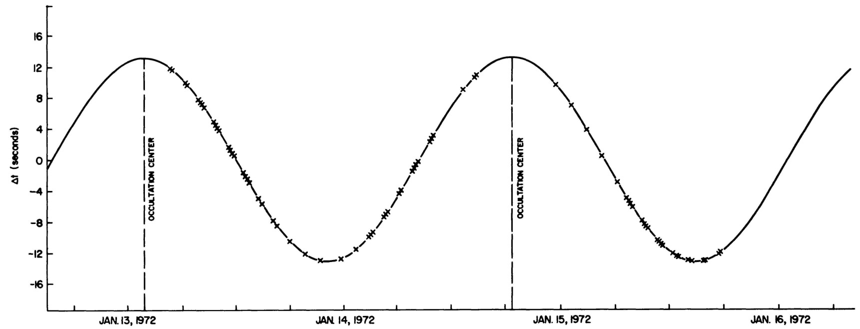
FIG. 4.—*Continued*

(Schreier et al., 1972, Fig. 4c)

Schreier et al. (1972): Cen X-3 shows periodic drops in X-ray count rate on a timescale of 2.08 d.

$\Longrightarrow$ eclipses by a star?

Discovery of X-ray Binaries, V

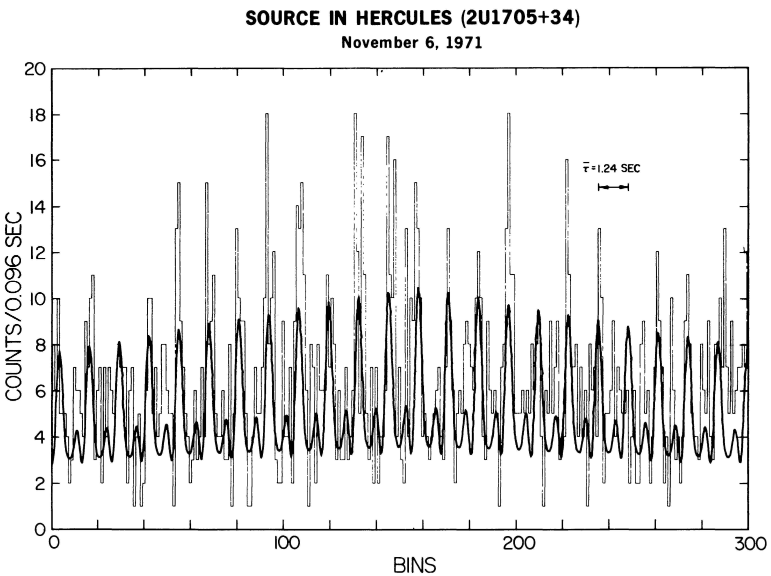


(Tananbaum et al., 1972, Fig. 3)

Similar to Cen X-3, X-ray pulsations of Her X-1 show periodic delays

(timescale: 1.7 d)

$\Longrightarrow$ X-ray binaries as class of objects

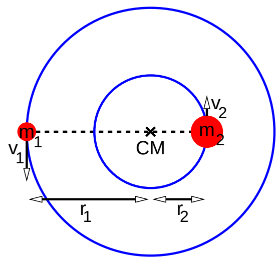


(Tananbaum et al., 1972, Fig. 1)

Detection of 1.24 s pulsations from Hercules X-1 with *UHURU*:

$\Longrightarrow$ X-ray pulsars as class of objects

The observed amplitude of the time delays seen in Her X-1 is ± 13.19 s. Since it is sinusoidal the X-ray emitting object is very likely to move on a circular orbit together with the optical star around their center of mass (CM).



The distances from the CM are given by

$$m_1 r_1 = m_2 r_2 = m_2(r - r_1) \tag{2.2}$$

where $r = r_1 + r_2$. Therefore

$$m_1 r_1 + m_2 r_1 = m_2 r \quad \Longrightarrow r_1 = \frac{m_2 r}{m_1 + m_2} \tag{2.3}$$

The velocity of object 1 is then

$$v_1 = \frac{2\pi r_1}{P} \tag{2.4}$$

where P is the observed period.

The observed velocity component (perpendicular to the plane of sky) is

$$v_{1,\mathrm{obs}} = v_1 \sin i = \frac{2\pi r_1}{P} \sin i = \frac{2\pi r}{P} \frac{m_2}{m_1 + m_2} \sin i \tag{2.5}$$

where i is the system's inclination ($i = 90^\circ$ is an "edge on orbit").

To replace r with observables, we derive Kepler's 3rd law for the special case of a circular orbit where the centripetal force is balanced by the gravitational force:

$$\frac{m_1 v_1^2}{r_1} = G \frac{m_1 m_2}{r^2} \tag{2.6}$$

Therefore, inserting v_1 from above

$$\frac{4\pi^2}{P^2} \frac{r}{m_1 + m_2} = G \frac{m_2}{r^2} \quad \Longrightarrow \quad \frac{r^3}{P^2} = \frac{G}{4\pi^2}(m_1 + m_2) \tag{2.7}$$

We can now use Eq. (2.7) to eliminate r in Eq. (2.5):

First, solve Eq. (2.5) for r/P...

$$\frac{r}{P} = \frac{v_{1,\mathrm{obs}}}{2\pi} \frac{m_1 + m_2}{m_2} \frac{1}{\sin i} \tag{2.8}$$

2–13

take the cube of this equation. . .

$$\frac{r^3}{P^3} = \frac{v^3_{1,\mathrm{obs}}}{8\pi^3}\frac{(m_1+m_2)^3}{m_2^3}\frac{1}{\sin^3 i} \qquad (2.9)$$

insert Eq. (2.7). . .

$$\frac{G}{4\pi^2}(m_1+m_2) = \frac{P v^3_{1,\mathrm{obs}}}{8\pi^3}\frac{(m_1+m_2)^3}{m_2^3}\frac{1}{\sin^3 i} \qquad (2.10)$$

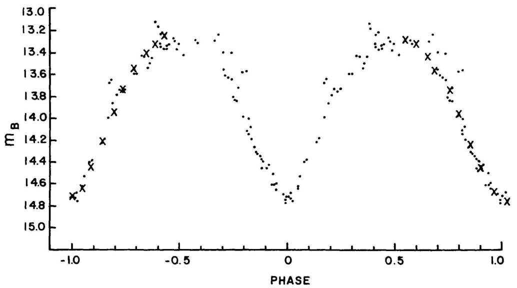
and move all known quantities to one side of the $=$-sign to obtain the **mass function**:

$$\frac{m_2^3 \sin^3 i}{(m_1+m_2)^2} = \frac{P v_1^3}{2\pi G} =: f_M \qquad (2.11)$$

Note that the mass function gives a *lower limit* for m_2 when the velocity amplitude of the other object, v_1, has been observed.

For the case of Hercules X-1, the observed time delay is $\Delta t = 13.19\,s$. This corresponds to an orbital radius of $r_1 = c\Delta t = 4\times10^6$ km and the velocity is $v_1 \sim 170\,\mathrm{km\,s^{-1}}$. Since eclipses have been observed in Her X-1, the inclination is $i = 90°$. Therefore, the mass function of Her X-1 becomes $f_M = 1.75\times10^{33}$ g $= 0.876\,M_\odot$.

Discovery of X-ray Binaries, VI



(Bahcall & Bahcall, 1972, Fig. 2)

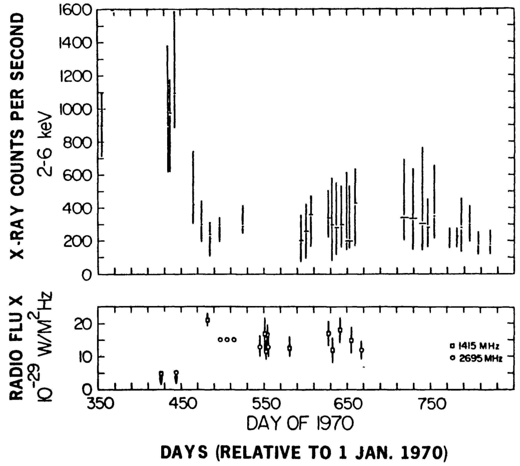
Shortly after the *UHURU* measurements, HZ Her was identified as the optical companion, which is varying on the 1.7 d orbital period.

HZ Her was recognized as a variable star by C. Hoffmeister in 1936.

This allowed the mass of the companion to be measured to $m_2 = 2.3\,M_\odot$, and the mass of the X-ray source to $m_1 = 1.4\,M_\odot$.

Her X-1 is a neutron star.

Black Hole Binaries, I



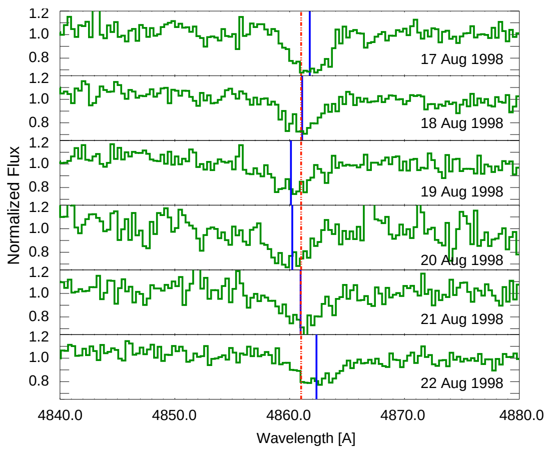
In Cyg X-1, no coherent periodicities were found.

However, Cyg X-1 showed correlated behavior in the radio and in the X-rays

$\Longrightarrow$ source localization, counterpart is HDE 226868, an O-star

(Murdin & Webster, 1971; Hjellming & Wade, 1971)

Black Hole Binaries, II



Motion of the Hβ line in HDE 226868/Cyg X-1 (Pottschmidt, Wilms)

For Cygnus X-1, the mass function is $f_M = 0.252\,M_\odot$, however, the companion is an O-star with $> 10\,M_\odot$, and this puts a lower limit of $\sim 8\,M_\odot$ to the mass of the compact object (Webster & Murdin, 1972)

The X-ray emitting object in Cygnus X-1 is a black hole.

Accretion, III

Why are X-ray binaries so bright?

1. Fusion

Reactions à la

$$4\text{p} \longrightarrow {}^4\text{He} + \Delta mc^2$$

Energy released:

Fusion yields $\sim 6 \times 10^{18}\,\text{erg}\,\text{g}^{-1} = 6 \times 10^{11}\,\text{J}\,\text{g}^{-1}$

$(\Delta E_{\text{nuc}} \sim 0.007 m_{\text{p}} c^2)$

2. Gravitation

Accretion of mass m from ∞ onto Black Hole M with radius R_{S} yields

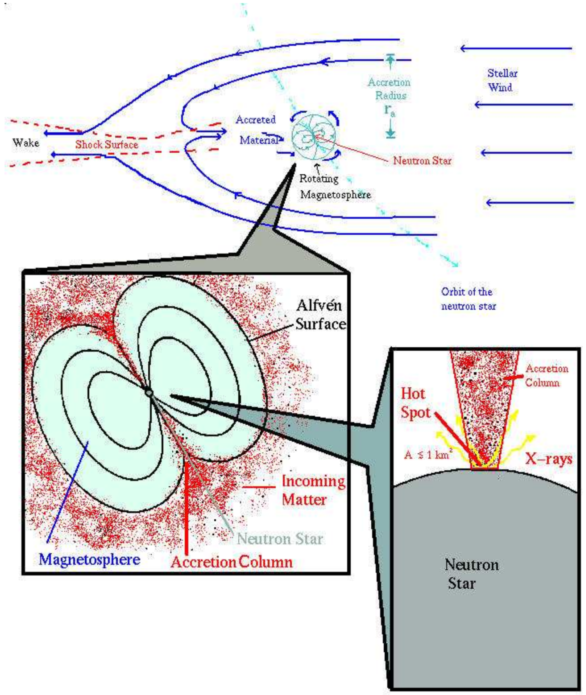
$$\Delta E_{\text{acc}} = \frac{GMm}{R_{\text{S}}} \quad \text{where } R_{\text{S}} = \frac{2GM}{c^2}$$

Accretion produces $\sim 10^{20}\,\text{erg}\,\text{g}^{-1} = 10^{13}\,\text{J}\,\text{g}^{-1}$

$(\Delta E_{\text{acc}} \sim 0.1\, m_{\text{p}} c^2)$

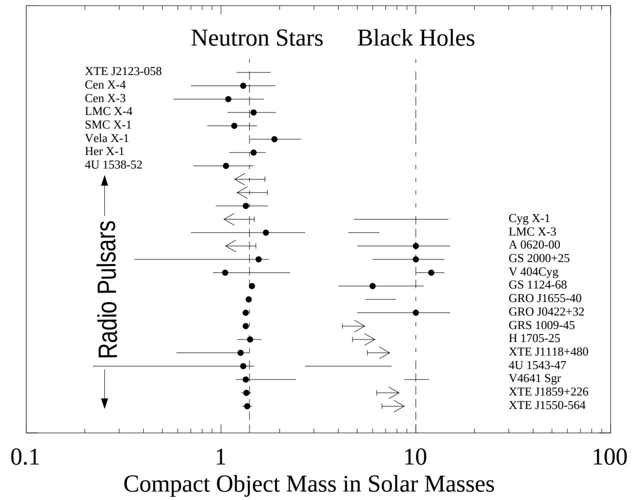
$\Longrightarrow$ Accretion of material is the most efficient astrophysical energy source.

. . . therefore accreting objects are the most luminous objects in the whole universe.



courtesy I. Negueruela, based on Davidson & Ostriker (1973)

X-Ray Binaries



(Kalemci, priv. comm.)

X-ray binaries are neutron stars or black holes accreting material from a normal star.

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