

# The thermal excess in the X-ray spectra of accreting binary pulsars

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## Overview

- Summary on High Mass X-Ray Binaries
- HMXRBs in the Galaxy and in the Magellanic Clouds
- XMM observations of 4U 0352+309 and RX J0146.9+6121
- Thermal excess in X-ray Binary Pulsars
- Origin of the thermal component
- Future work



## High Mass X-Ray Binaries

Components:

- a compact accreting stellar object (NS or BH)
- a high mass donor star (OB supergiant or Be)

X-ray variability:

- persistent bright sources ( $L_X > 10^{36}$  erg s<sup>-1</sup>)
- transient sources: quiescent phases ( $L_X < 10^{35}$  erg s<sup>-1</sup>) interrupted by intense ( $L_X > 10^{36}$  erg s<sup>-1</sup>) outbursts
- persistent low-luminosity sources ( $L_X \sim 10^{34-35}$  erg s<sup>-1</sup>)

Several HMXRBs show pulsed emission, with  $P = 0.03-10000$  s



## Be X-Ray Binaries

Dominant population of HMXRBs in the Milky Way and in the Magellanic Clouds

Elliptical orbits with eccentricities  $e = 0.1-0.9$  and  $P_{\text{orb}} = 17-263$  d

Optical component not evolved (luminosity class III-V) => smaller than its Roche lobe

Be star surrounded by an extended circumstellar envelope of ionized gas (decretion disc), which disperses and refills on time scales  $\sim$  years and is truncated by the orbiting NS (relation  $H_{\alpha} - P_{\text{orb}}$ )

- emission lines and IR excess compared to normal B stars
- rotationally dominated disc; fast radiative wind in the polar regions and slow high density outflow in the equatorial regions



## Typical Be X-Ray Binaries....

Transient nature of the X-ray emission controlled by the centrifugal gate mechanism (operated both by the periastron passages and by the dynamical evolution of the decretion disc)

Two types of outbursting activity:

- Type I: periodic outbursts due to periastron transit of the NS; short duration ( $0.2-0.3 P_{\text{orb}}$ ); peak luminosities  $L_X \sim 10^{37} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$
- Type II: aperiodic outburst due to decretion disc instability; long duration (up to several  $P_{\text{orb}}$ ); peak luminosities  $L_X \sim 10^{38} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$  ( $\sim L_{\text{EDD}}$ ); possible formation of an accretion disc (pulsar spin-up)

Hard spectrum ( $kT > 15 \text{ keV}$ ,  $E_{\text{cut}} = 10-20 \text{ keV}$ )  $\Rightarrow$  hard X-ray transients



## ...and persistent Be X-Ray Binaries

Classification by Reig & Roche (1999):

- persistent low luminosity ( $L_X \sim 10^{34-35} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$ ) with small fluctuations
- no outbursts
- long pulse periods ( $P_{\text{spin}} > 200 \text{ s}$ )
- low cut-off energy ( $\sim 4 \text{ keV}$  instead of 10-20 keV)
- absence or very weak Iron line at 6.4 keV
- $P_{\text{spin}} \sim P_{\text{orb}}^2$  (Corbet 1986)  $\Rightarrow$  large orbits ( $P_{\text{orb}} > 100 \text{ d}$ )  
 $\Rightarrow$  accretion from low density regions
- no outbursts  $\Rightarrow$  low eccentricity

no tidal circularisation  $\Rightarrow$  primordial low eccentricity



low kick velocity at birth for the NS



## An increasing family...

Several HMXRBs discovered in the latest years in the Magellanic Clouds: 92 in the SMC and 36 in the LMC (Liu et al., 2005)

- small angular size
- close and known distance
- low absorption due to high Galactic latitude

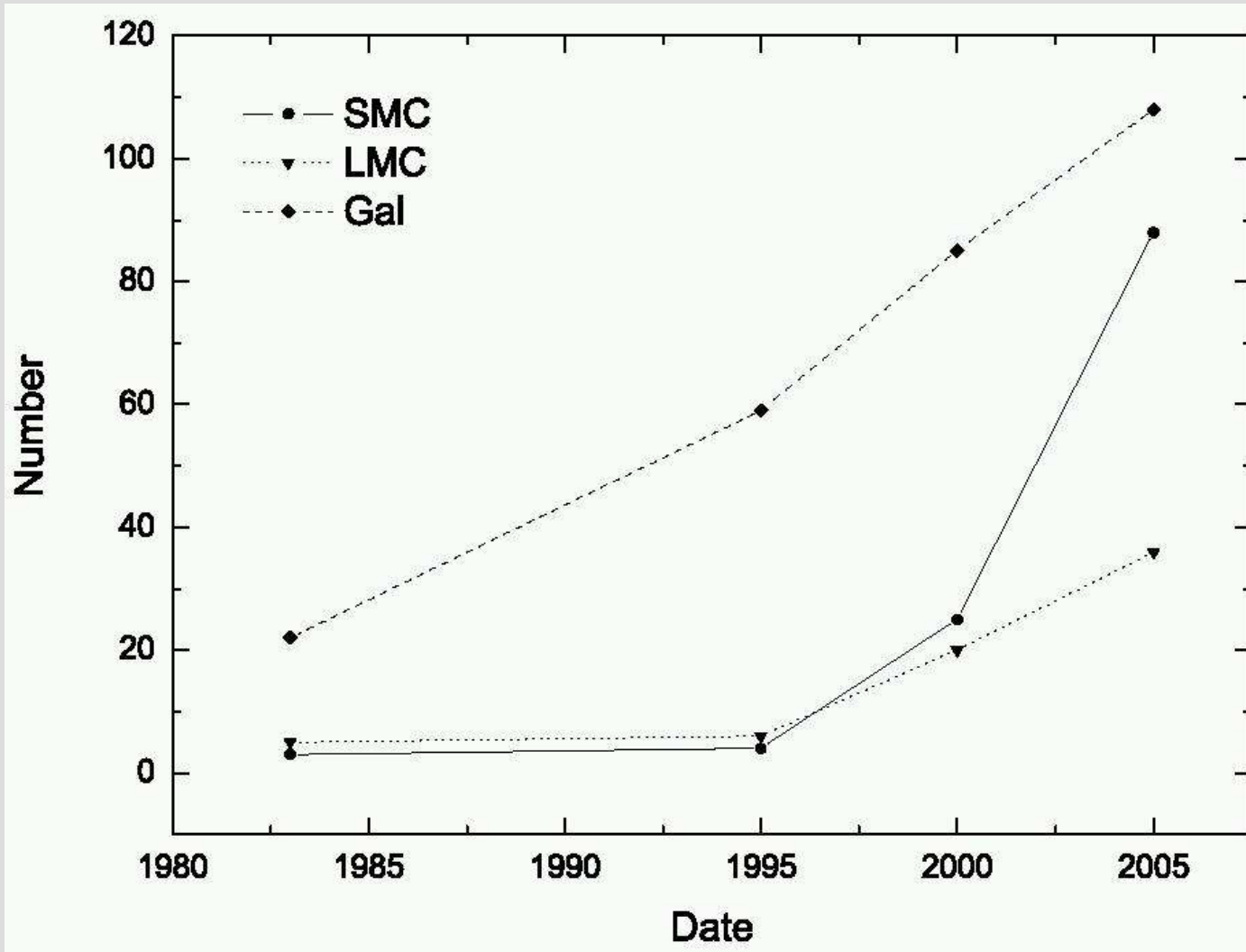
Overabundant population of HMXRBs in the SMC relative to the MW

Galaxy	HMXBs	
	Total	Pulsar
SMC	92	47
SMC*100	9200	4700
LMC	36	7
LMC*10	360	70
Galaxy	108	57

Unusually high concentration of BeXRB systems in the SMC (> 90 % of all the HMXRBs, compared to 60-70 % in MW and LMC), in a region of recent (< 30 My) star formation



# An increasing family...

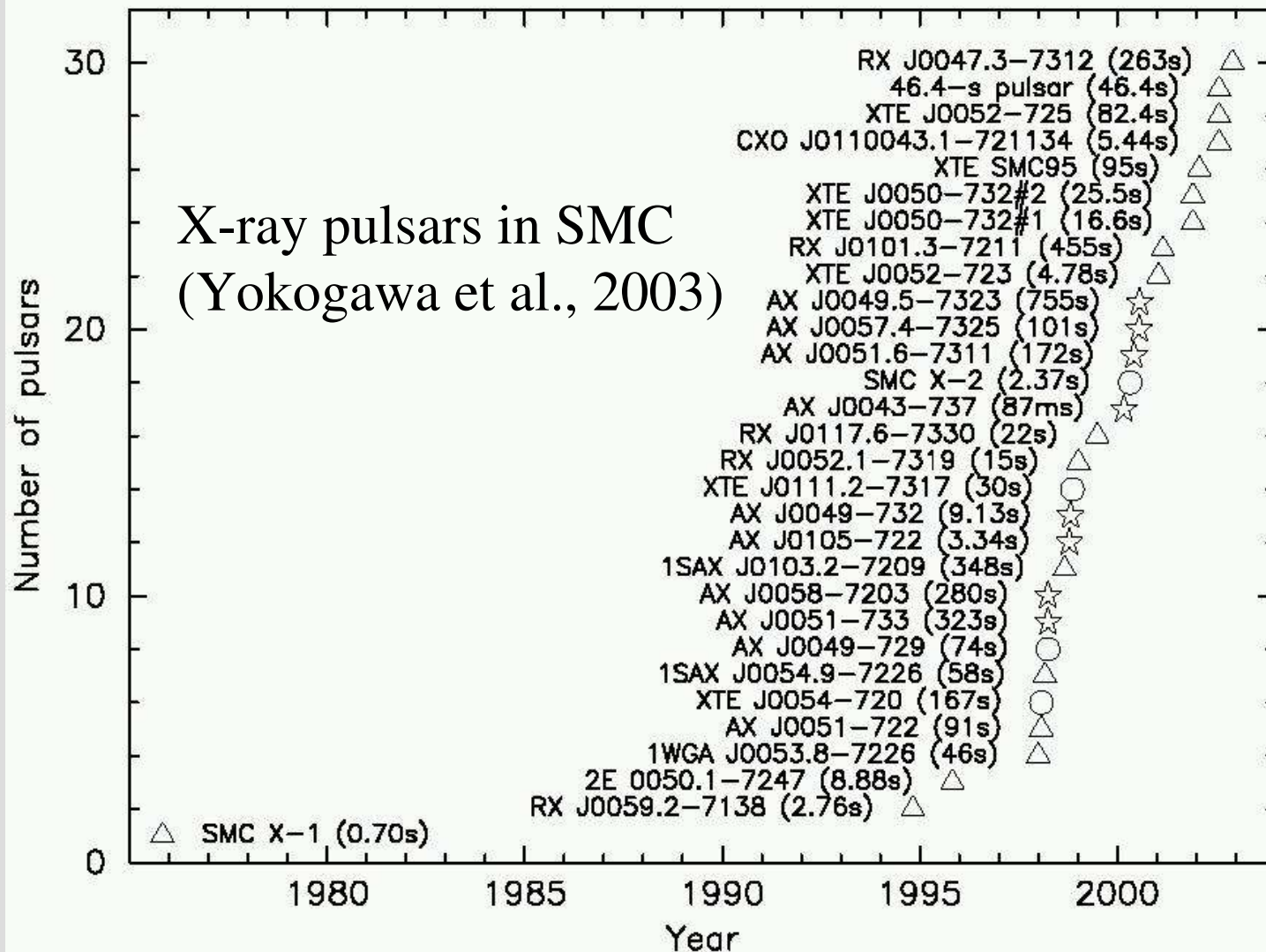


Liu et al., 2005

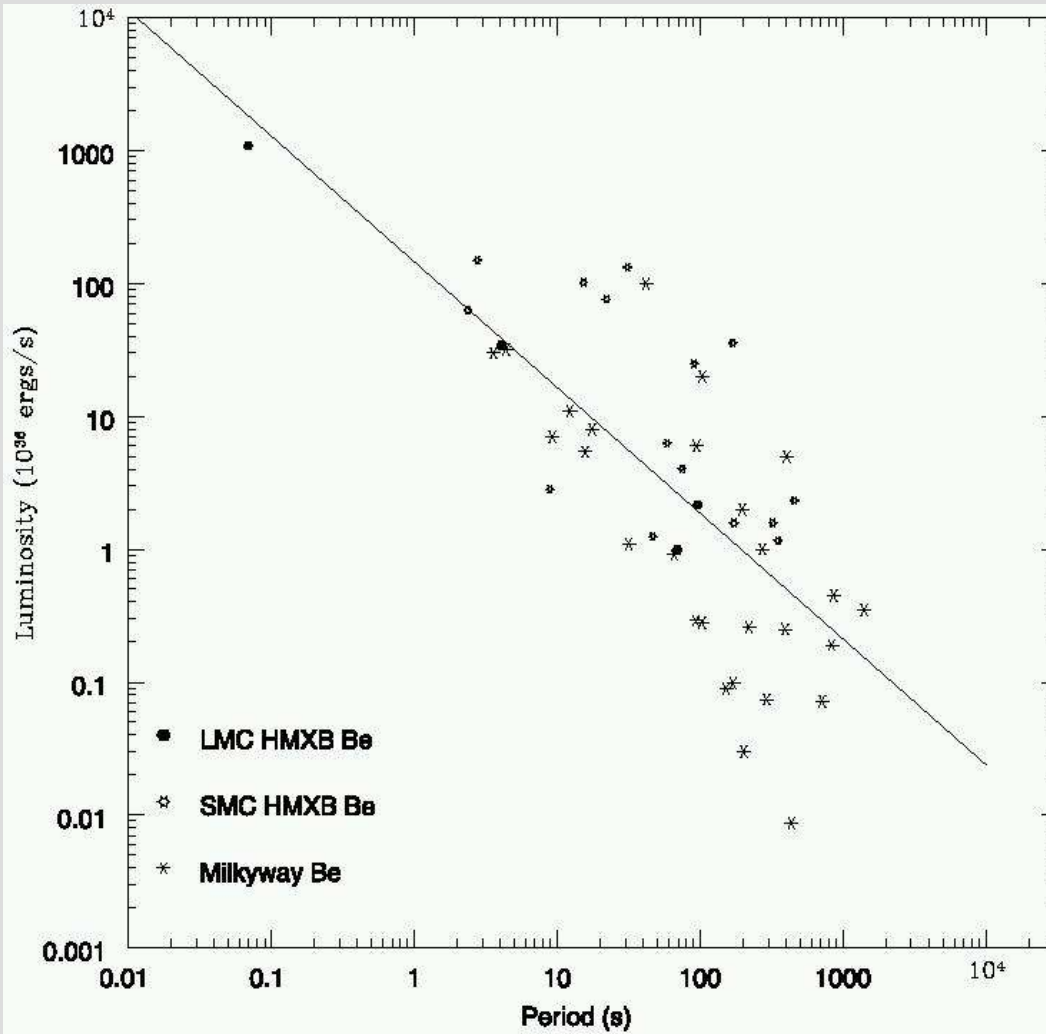




# An increasing family...



## An increasing family...



Inverse correlation between maximum X-ray flux density and spin period, due to accretion physics:

- accretion rate  $\sim 1/r^n$ ,  $n \sim 3$
- $r \sim P_{\text{orb}}^{2/3}$
- $P_{\text{spin}} \sim P_{\text{orb}}^2$

$$\Rightarrow L \sim P_{\text{spin}}^{-1}$$

Majid et al., 2004

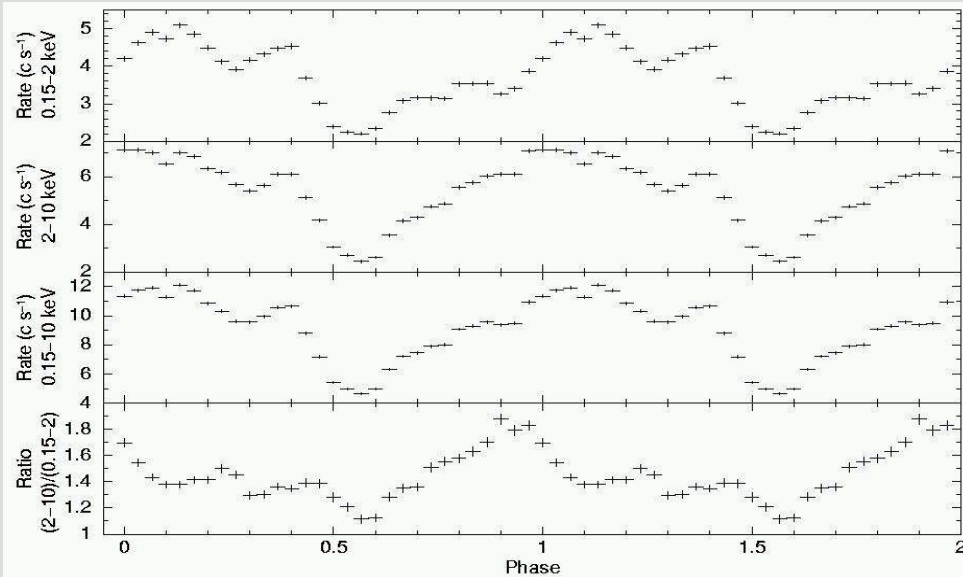
## XMM observation of two persistent BeXBRs

X-ray source	4U 0352+309	RX J0146.9+6121
Luminosity (2-10 keV)	$\sim 10^{35}$ erg s <sup>-1</sup>	$\sim 10^{34}$ erg s <sup>-1</sup>
Pulse period	$839.3 \pm 0.3$ s	$1396.1 \pm 0.2$ s
Orbital period	250.3 d	?
Orbital eccentricity	0.11	?
Optical counterpart	X Persei	LS I +61 <sup>0</sup> 235
Spectral type	O9.5 IIIe	B0 IIIe
Source distance	0.95 kpc	$\sim 2.5$ kpc

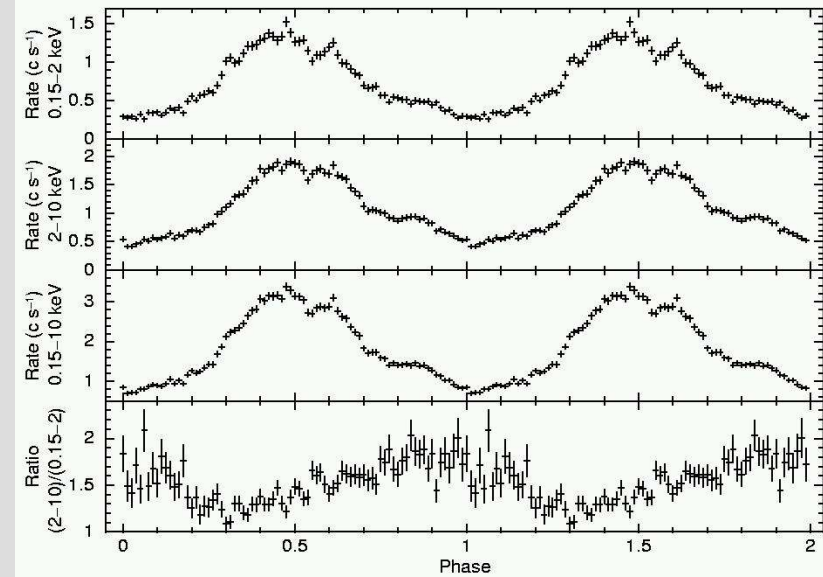


# Folded light curves

4U 0352+309



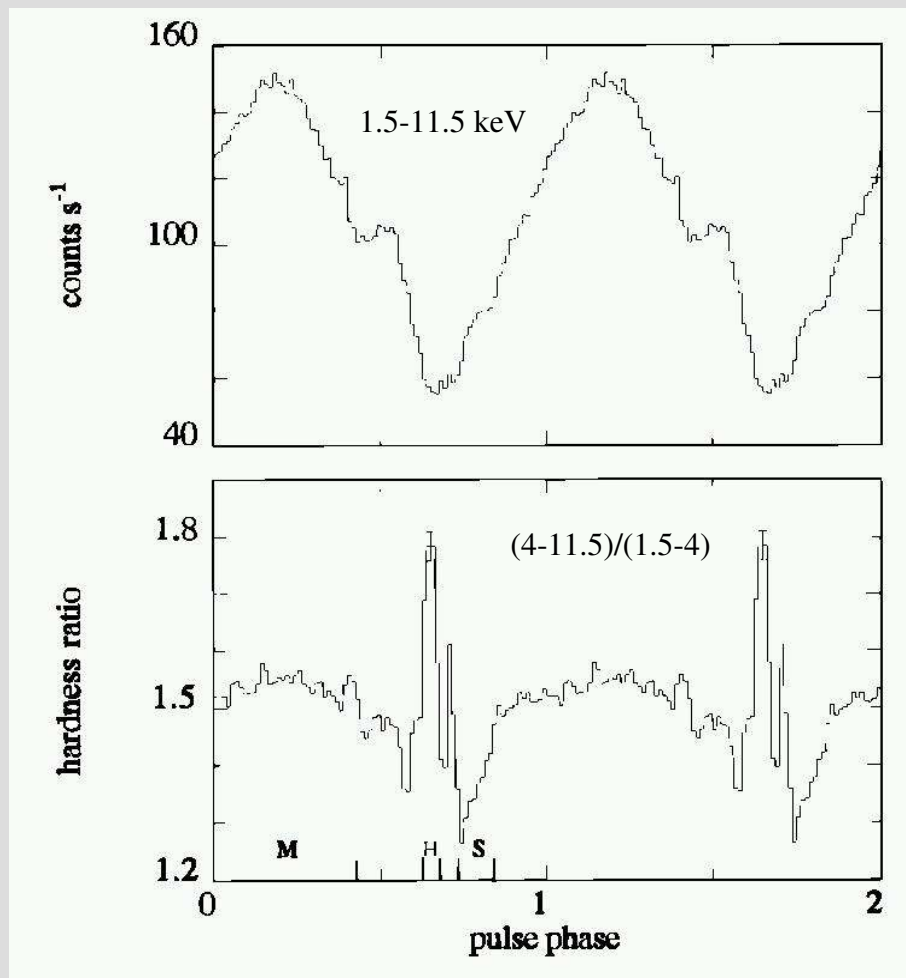
RX J0146.9+6121



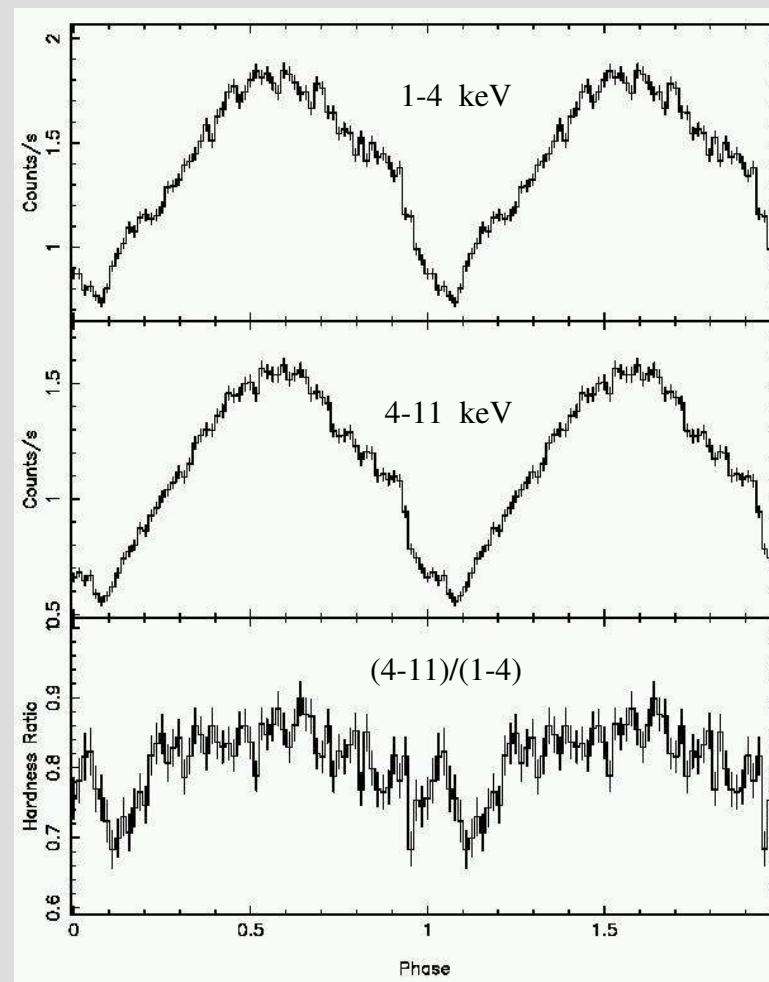
=> the pulse profile is energy dependent

=> the pulse shape is not simply sinusoidal

# Timing analysis - 4U 0352+309

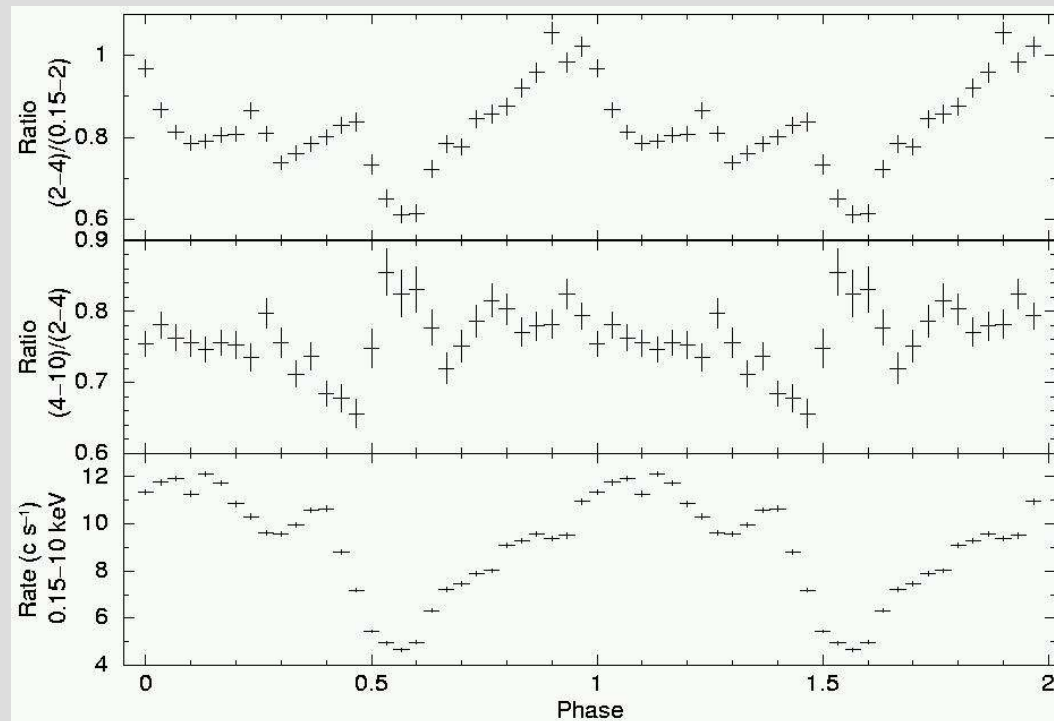
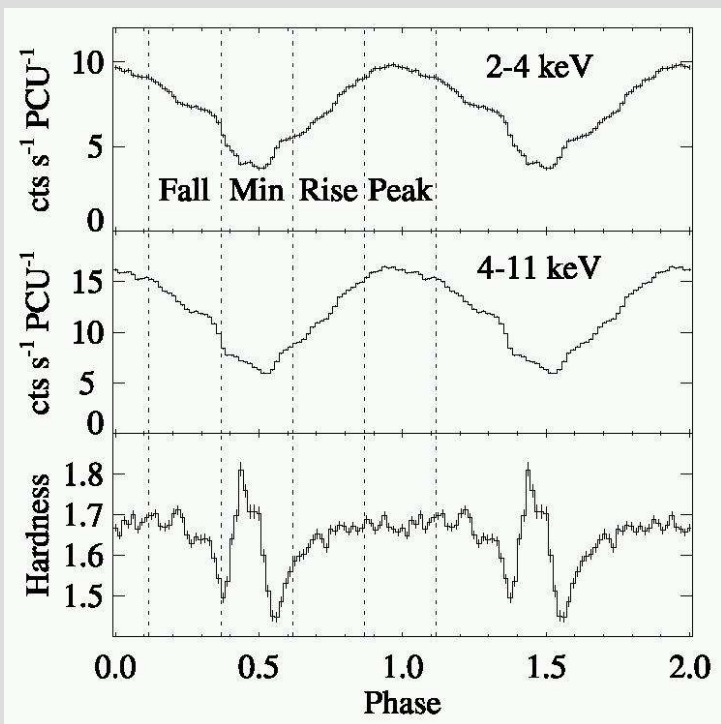


GINGA (Robba et al., 1996)



SAX (Di Salvo et al., 1998)

# Timing analysis - 4U 0352+309



RXTE (Coburn et al., 1998) XMM (La Palombara & Mereghetti, 2007)

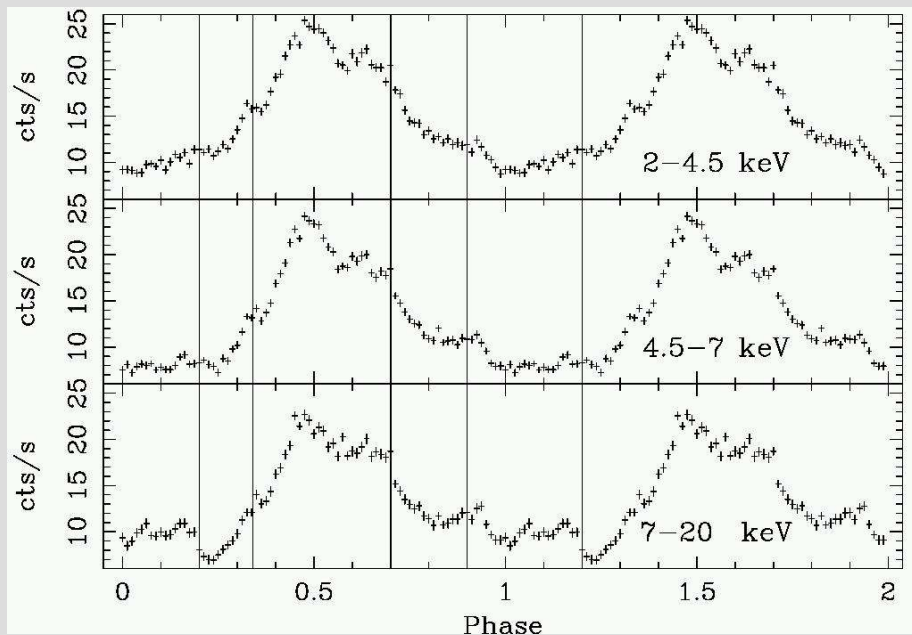


**The opposite behaviour of the two HRs**  
**reveals a complex spectral evolution**

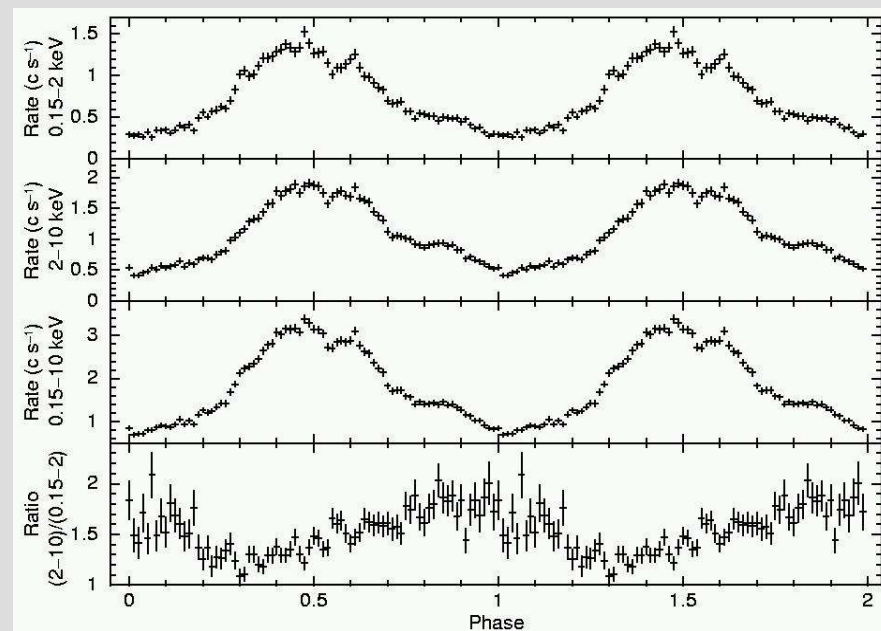




# Timing analysis - RX J0146.9+6121



RXTE (Mereghetti et al., 2000)



XMM (La Palombara & Mereghetti, 2006)



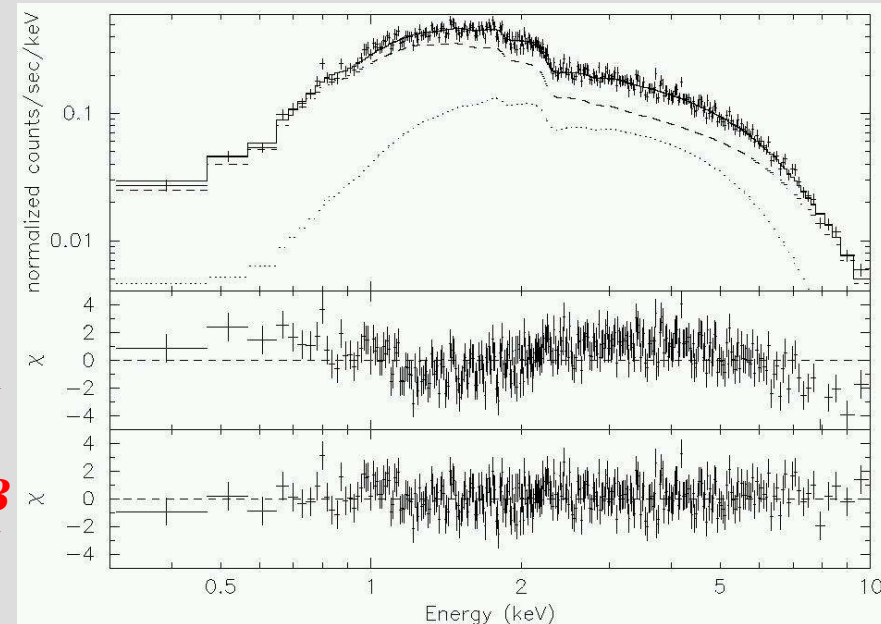
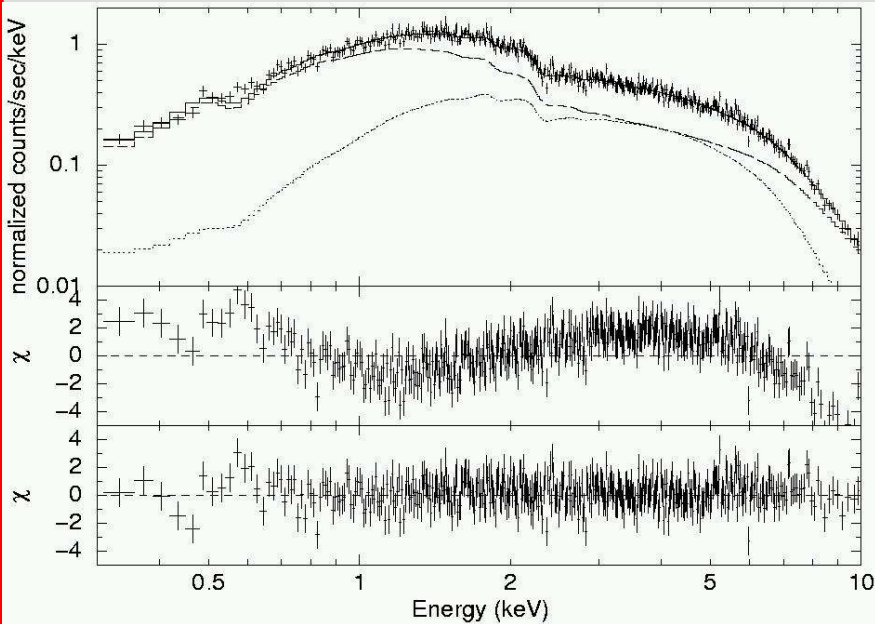
**detection of pulsed emission also below 2 keV**



# Phase-averaged spectra - I

4U 0352+309

RX J0146.9+6121



- => a single power-law component does not describe the observed spectra
- => the addition of a black-body component improves the fit quality
- => no evidence of an Iron line between 6 and 7 keV



## Phase-averaged spectra - II

X-ray source	4U 0352+309	RX J0146.9+6121
Photon index	$1.48 \pm 0.02$	$1.34 \pm 0.05$
Black-body temperature (keV)	$1.42 \pm 0.03$	$1.11 \pm 0.06$
Black-body radius (m)	$361 \pm 3$	$140 \pm 15$
Luminosity (0.3-10 keV, erg s <sup>-1</sup> )	$\sim 1.4 \times 10^{35}$	$\sim 1.5 \times 10^{34}$
Flux PL (%)	$\sim 61$	$\sim 76$
Flux BB (%)	$\sim 39$	$\sim 24$
Upper Limit EQW Fe (keV)	$\sim 0.1$	$\sim 0.15$



## Phase-averaged spectra - 4U 0352+309

Observation	XMM (2003)	RXTE (1998)
Photon index	$1.48 \pm 0.02$	$1.83 \pm 0.03$
Black-body temperature (keV)	$1.42 \pm 0.03$	$1.48 \pm 0.02$
Black-body radius (m)	$361 \pm 3$	$130 \pm 30$
Luminosity (2-10 keV, erg s <sup>-1</sup> )	$\sim 1 \times 10^{35}$	$\sim 2 \times 10^{34}$
Flux PL (%)	$\sim 56$	$\sim 65$
Flux BB (%)	$\sim 44$	$\sim 35$

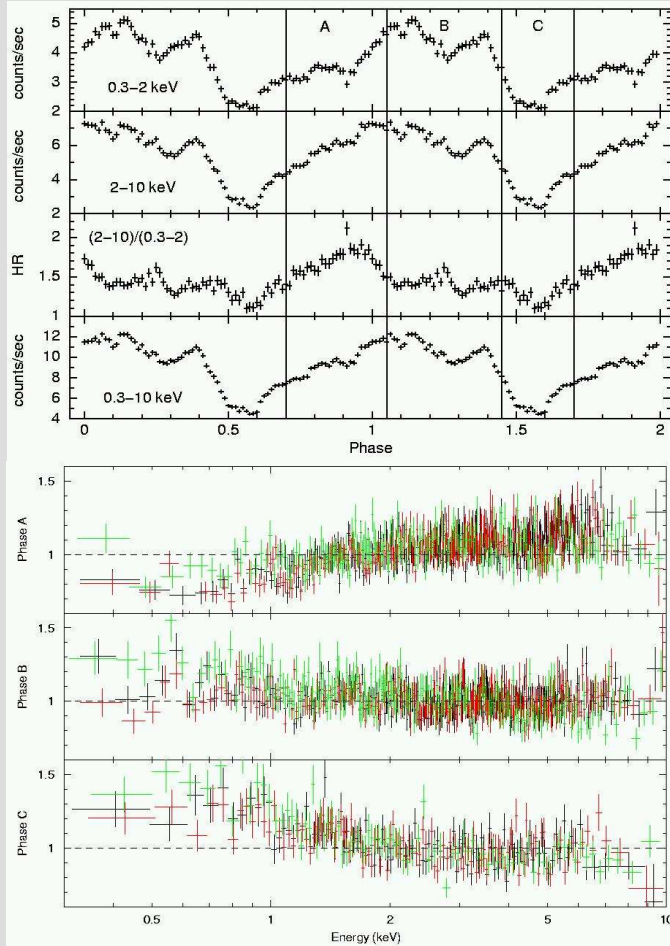


BB temperature and contribution to the total flux independent of the source luminosity

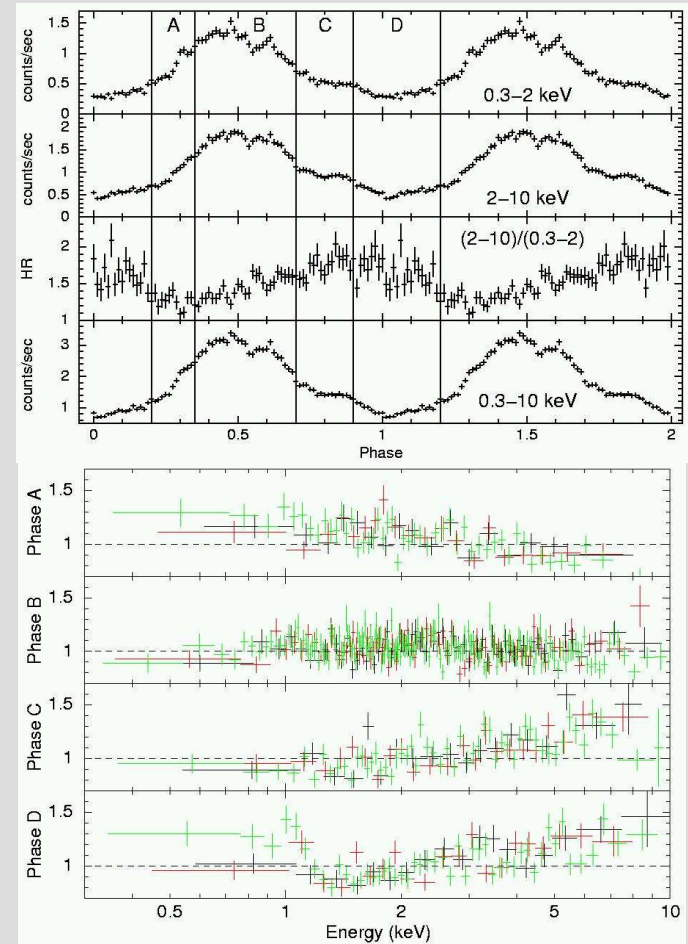


# Phase-resolved spectroscopy - I

4U 0352+309



RX J0146.9+6121



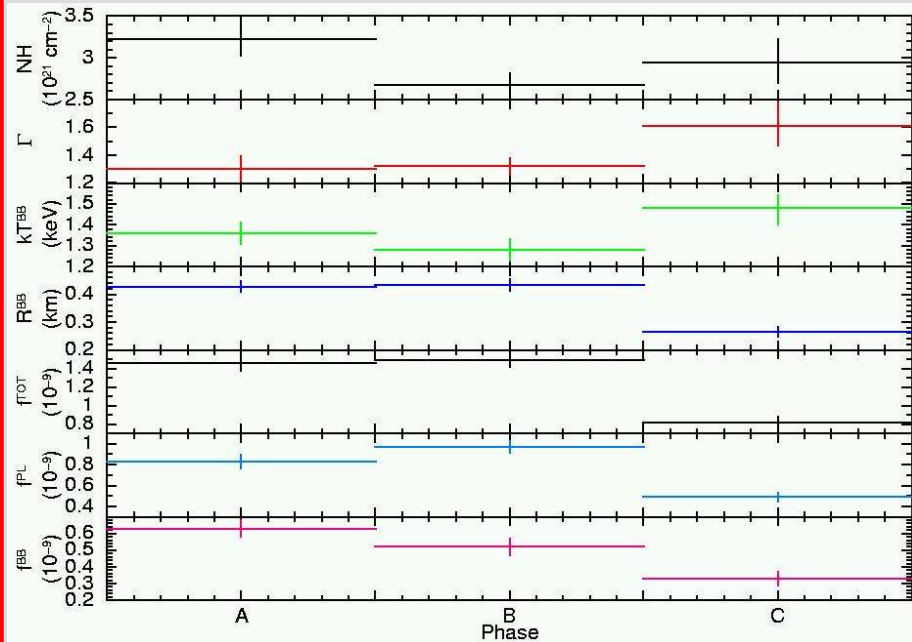
spectral variability with the pulse phase

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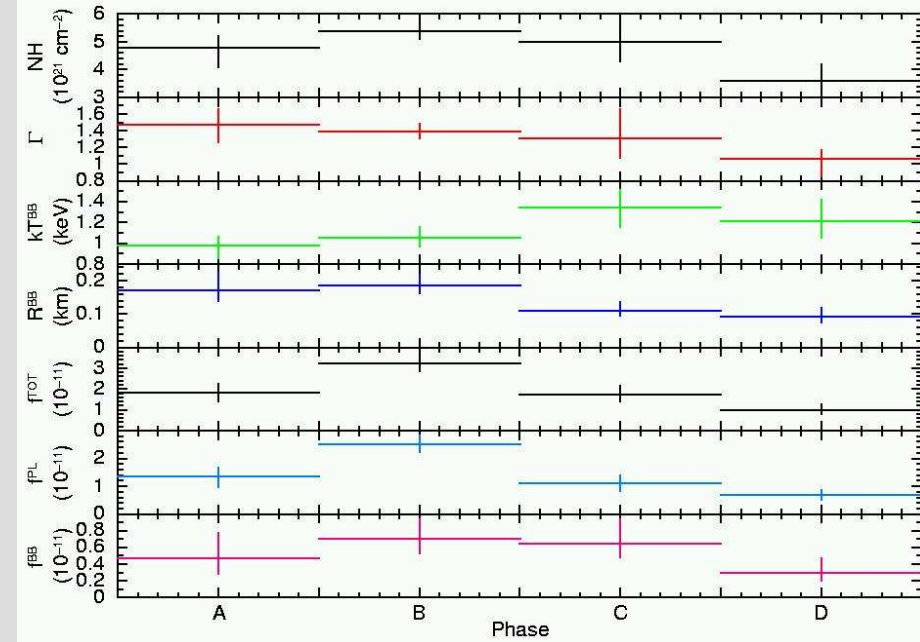


# Phase-resolved spectroscopy - II

4U 0352+309



RX J0146.9+6121

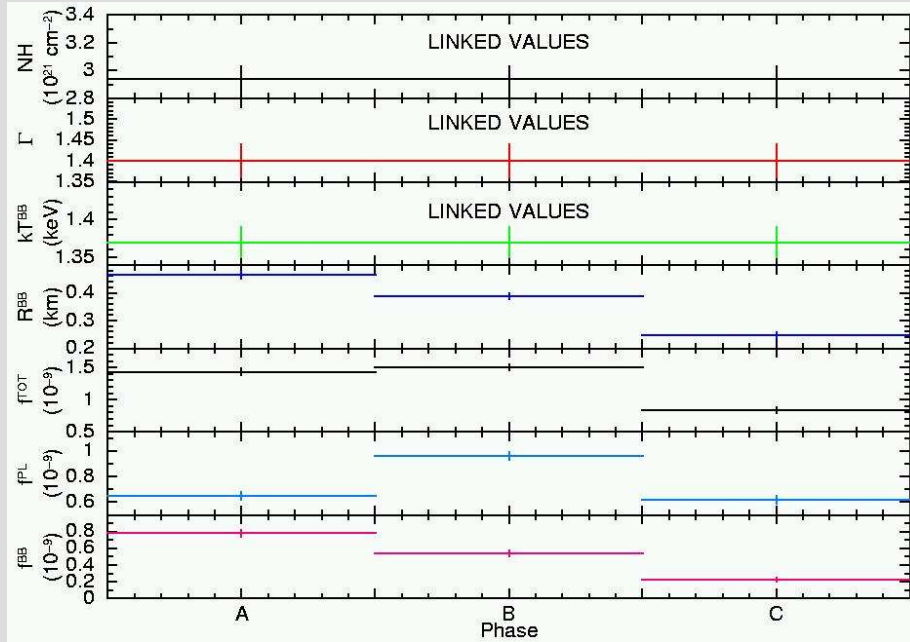


- $N_H$  nearly constant along the pulse phase => interstellar extinction
- $\Gamma$  variations only at the pulse minimum
- Significant variations of the BB Temperature and Radius
- Variations of the total flux, but ~ constant BB fraction along the pulse phase

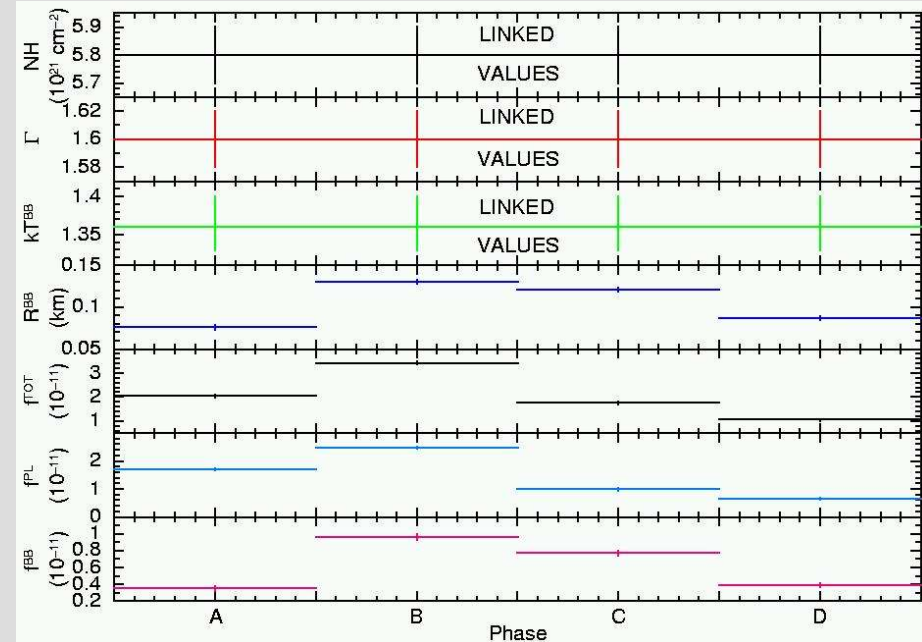


# Phase-resolved spectroscopy - III

4U 0352+309



RX J0146.9+6121



forced common values for  $N_H$ ,  $\Gamma$  and  $kT_{BB}$



variations in the relative contribution of the PL and BB components



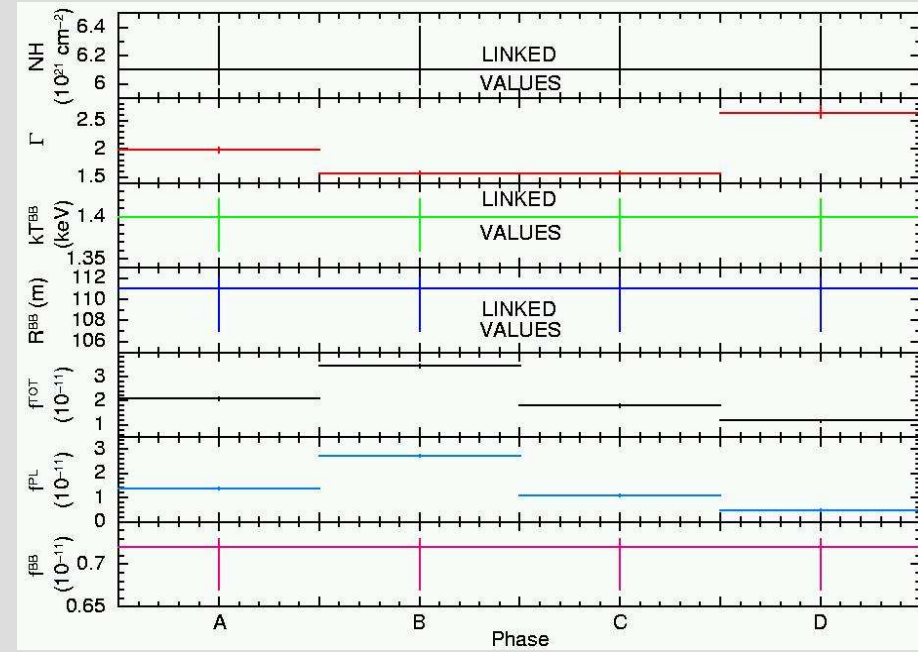
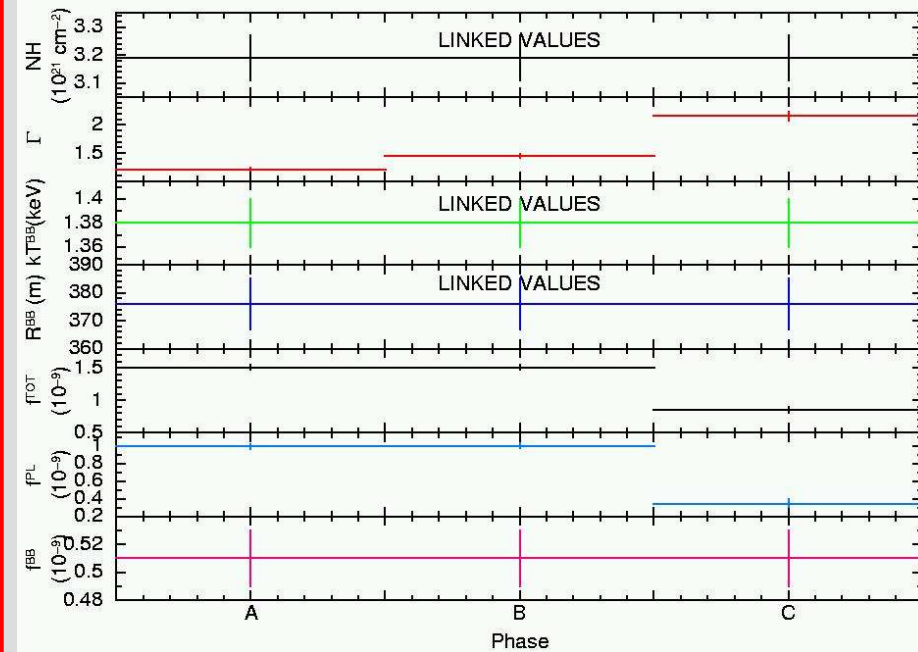
**evidence that the BB component is really variable?**



# Phase-resolved spectroscopy - IV

4U 0352+309

RX J0146.9+6121



a constant BB component is not rejected by the data



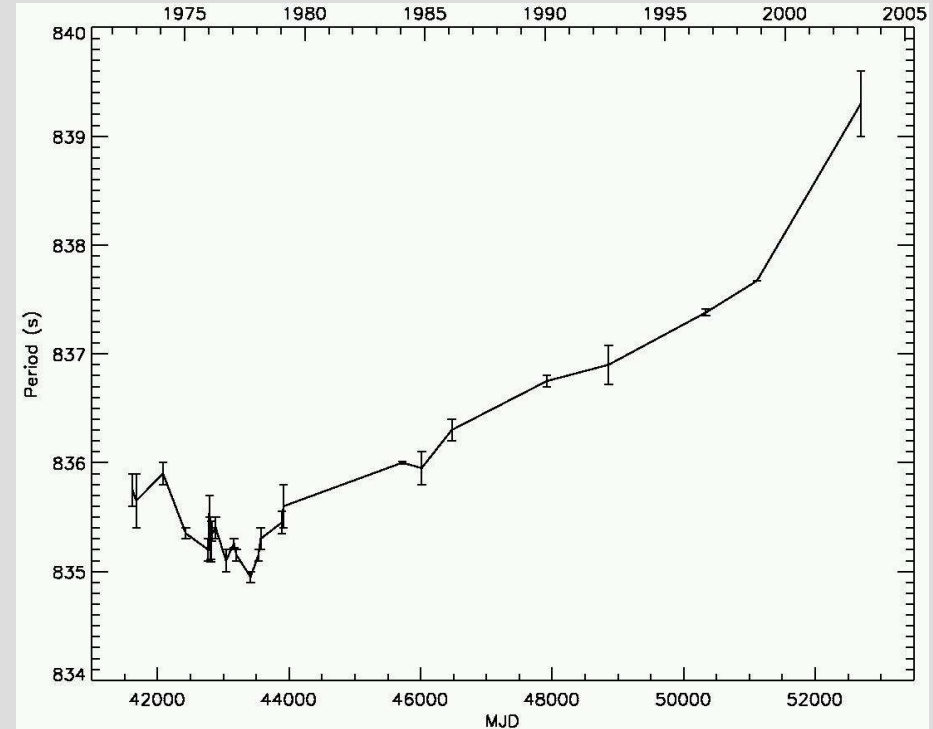
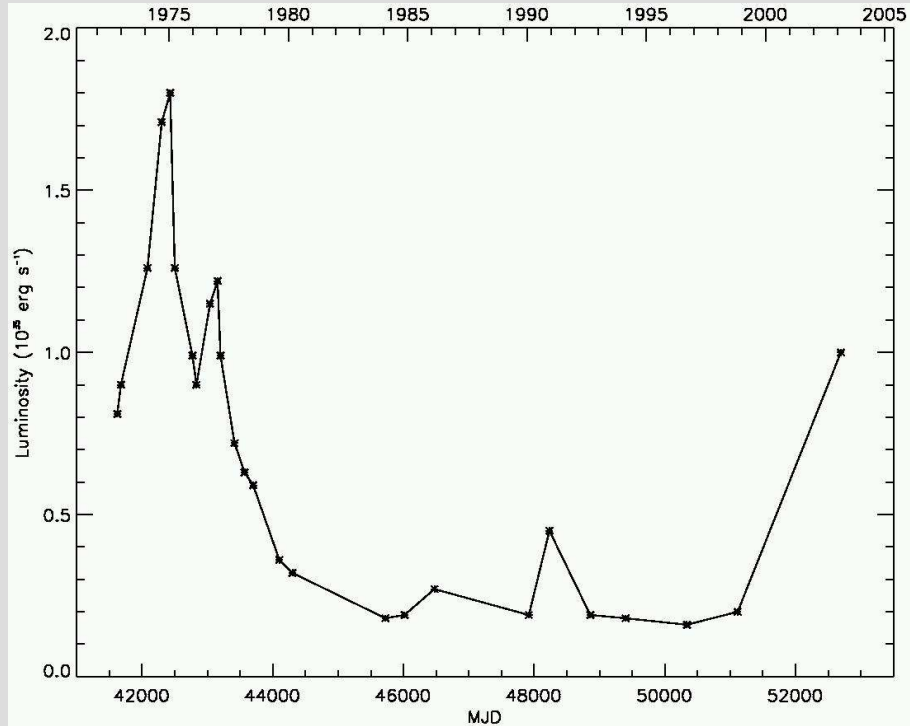
**the spectral variability can be attributed to the PL component**





# Luminosity and pulse period history

4U 0352+309



the pulsar spin-down has proceeded also during the luminosity increase

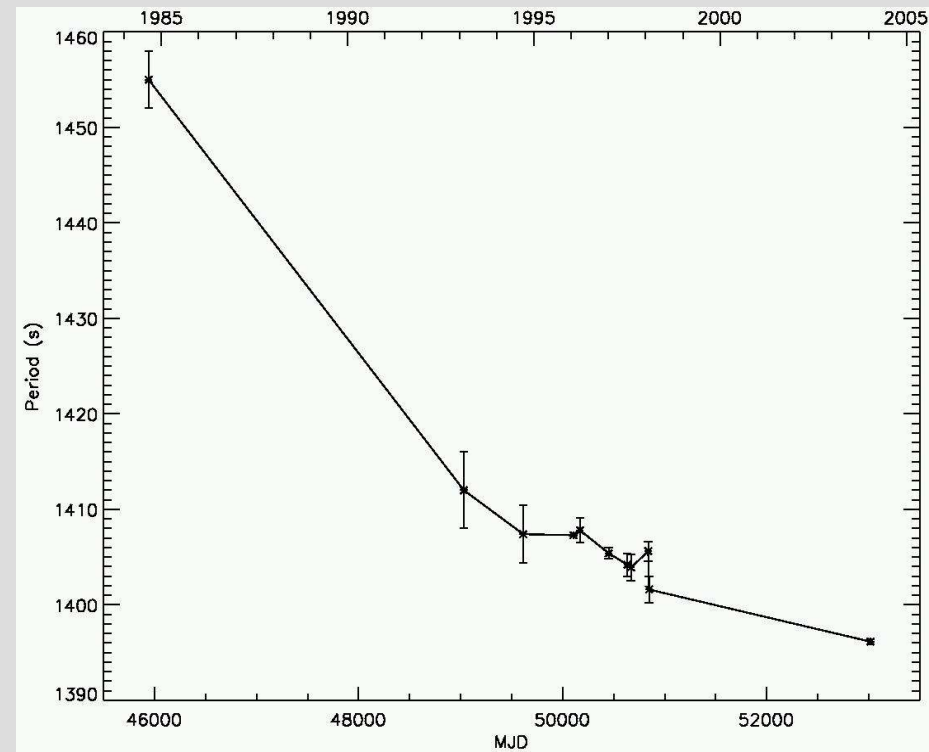
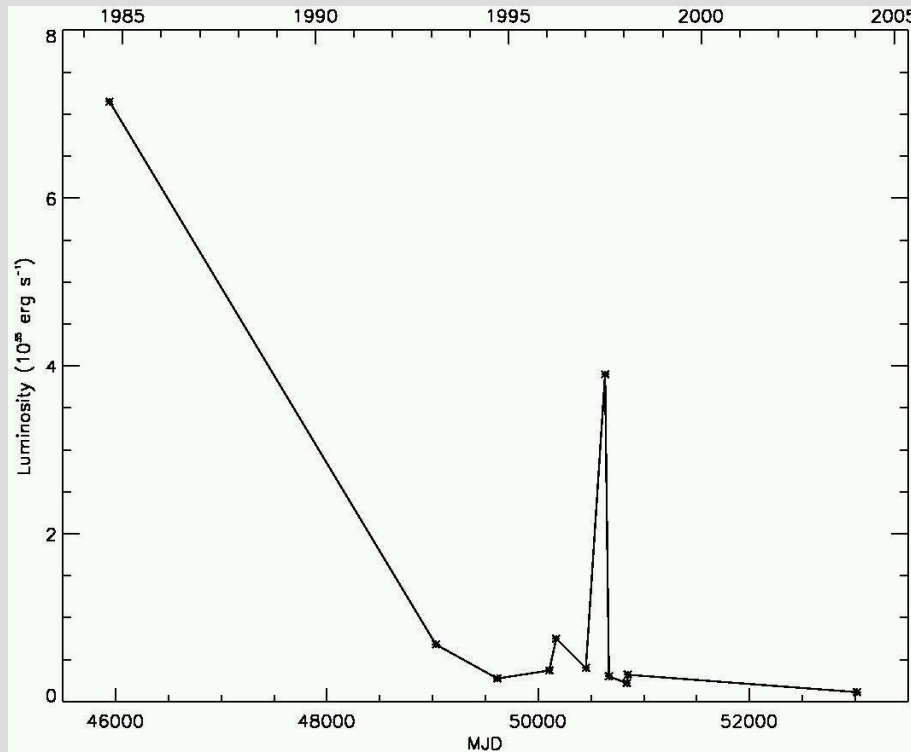


**no evidence of accretion disc**



# Luminosity and pulse period history

## RX J0146.9+6121



in spite of the source decreasing luminosity, the pulsar is still in a spin-up phase



**momentum transfer to the NS even with low accretion rates**





## Common properties of 4U 0352+309 and RX J0146.9+6121

Persistent sources

Low luminosity ( $L_X < 10^{36}$  erg s $^{-1}$ )

Long pulse period ( $P > 100$  s)

Data excess over the main PL component of BB type

High BB temperature ( $kT > 1$  keV)

Small emission area ( $R < 0.5$  km)

~ 30 % of the total flux due to the thermal component



# X-ray Binary Pulsars with an observed data excess

La Palombara & Mereghetti, 2006

Source <sup>a</sup>	Location	Distance (kpc)	Companion Star	P <sub>pulse</sub> (s)	L <sub>X</sub> <sup>b</sup> (ergs s <sup>-1</sup> , keV)	Flux (ergs cm <sup>-2</sup> s <sup>-1</sup> )	N <sub>H</sub> <sup>c</sup> (10 <sup>21</sup> cm <sup>-2</sup> )	L <sub>SE</sub> /L <sub>X</sub>	SE model <sup>d</sup>	kT <sub>BB</sub> (keV)	SE Pulses <sup>e</sup>
Her X-1 <sup>1</sup>	Galaxy	~5	A7 V	1.24	1.0 × 10 <sup>37</sup> (0.3-10)	3.3 × 10 <sup>-9</sup>	0.05	0.04-0.10	BB, BB+LE	0.09-0.12	Yes
SMC X-1 <sup>2</sup>	SMC	65	B0 Ib	0.7	2.4 × 10 <sup>38</sup> (0.7-10)	4.7 × 10 <sup>-10</sup>	2-5	0.036	BB, TB, SPL	0.15-0.18	Yes
LMC X-4 <sup>3</sup>	LMC	50	O7 III-O IV	13.5	1.2 × 10 <sup>38</sup> (0.7-10)	4.0 × 10 <sup>-10</sup>	~0.5	0.064	BB, BB+TB, COM, SPL	0.15	Yes
XTE J0111.2-7317 <sup>4</sup>	SMC	65	B1 IVe	30.95	1.8 × 10 <sup>38</sup> (0.7-10)	3.6 × 10 <sup>-10</sup>	1.8	~0.10	SPL	...	Yes
RX J0059.2-7138 <sup>5</sup>	SMC	65	B1 IIIe	2.76	2.6 × 10 <sup>38</sup> (0.1-10)	5.1 × 10 <sup>-10</sup>	0.42-0.50	0.31	MEK, SPL	...	No
4U 1626-67 <sup>6</sup>	Galaxy	?	Low-mass	7.7	2.6 × 10 <sup>34</sup> D <sub>2 kpc</sub> <sup>2</sup> (0.5-10)	2.2 × 10 <sup>-10</sup>	0.6	0.10	BB	0.34	No
Cen X-3 <sup>7</sup>	Galaxy	~8	O6-O8 II	4.8	2.4 × 10 <sup>38</sup> (0.1-10)	3.2 × 10 <sup>-8</sup>	19.5	~0.7	BB	0.11	Yes
Vela X-1 <sup>8</sup>	Galaxy	1.9	B0.5 Ib	283	2.2 × 10 <sup>36</sup> (2-10)	5.1 × 10 <sup>-9</sup>	4.2	~0.01	TB	...	No
X Per <sup>9</sup>	Galaxy	0.95	O9.5pe	837	1.8 × 10 <sup>34</sup> (0.3-10)	1.7 × 10 <sup>-10</sup>	1.5	0.24	BB	1.45	?
EXO 053109-6609.2 <sup>10</sup>	LMC	50	B0.7 Ve	13.7	4.6 × 10 <sup>37</sup> (0.2-10)	1.5 × 10 <sup>-10</sup>	6.9	?	MEK+PL	...	Yes
A 0538-66 <sup>11</sup>	LMC	50	B2 IIIe	0.069	4.0 × 10 <sup>37</sup> (0.1-2.4)	1.3 × 10 <sup>-10</sup>	0.8	?	BB, TB	~0.2	?
RX J0047.3-7312 <sup>12</sup>	SMC	65	B2e	263	1.5, 2 × 10 <sup>36</sup> (0.7-10)	3.0, 4.0 × 10 <sup>-12</sup>	0.96, 3.4	0.03-0.09, 0.68	BB	0.6, 2.2	Yes
RX J0101.3-7211 <sup>13</sup>	SMC	65	Be	452	1.6 × 10 <sup>35</sup> (0.3-10)	3.2 × 10 <sup>-13</sup>	0.6	?	MEK	...	?
RX J0103.6-7201 <sup>14</sup>	SMC	65	O5 Ve	1323	0.8 - 7.5 × 10 <sup>36</sup> (0.2-10)	1.6 - 14.8 × 10 <sup>-12</sup>	1.9	?	MEK	...	No
AX J0049.5-7323 <sup>15</sup>	SMC	65	B2 Ve	751	7 - 9 × 10 <sup>35</sup> (0.2-10)	1.4 - 1.8 × 10 <sup>-12</sup>	3.6	?	?	...	Yes
AX J0058-720 <sup>13</sup>	SMC	65	Be	281	1.2 × 10 <sup>35</sup> (0.3-10)	2.4 × 10 <sup>-13</sup>	0.6	?	?	...	Yes
AX J0103-722 <sup>13</sup>	SMC	65	B0 IV	342	1.8 × 10 <sup>35</sup> (0.3-10)	3.6 × 10 <sup>-13</sup>	0.6	?	MEK	...	?
3A 0535+262 <sup>16</sup>	Galaxy	2.0	O9.7 IIIe	103.4	3.9 × 10 <sup>33</sup> (2-10)	8.2 × 10 <sup>-12</sup>	6.0	0.35	BB	1.33	?
RX J0146.9+6121	Galaxy	2.5	B0 IIIe	1395	1.5 × 10 <sup>34</sup> (0.3-10)	2.0 × 10 <sup>-11</sup>	5.1	0.25	BB	1.11	?

<sup>a</sup> References: (1) dal Fiume et al. (1998), Endo et al. (2000), Ramsay et al. (2002); (2) Woo et al. (1995), Paul et al. (2002); (3) Woo et al. (1996), La Barbera et al. (2001), Naik & Paul (2004); (4) Yokogawa et al. (2000b); (5) Kohno et al. (2000); (6) Schulz et al. (2001); (7) Burderi et al. (2000); (8) Haberl (1994), Orlandini et al. (1998), Kreykenbohm et al. (2002); (9) di Salvo et al. (1998), Coburn et al. (2001); (10) Haberl et al. (2003); (11) Mavromatakis & Haberl (1993); (12) The two set of values are base on Ueno et al. (2004) and Majid et al. (2004), respectively; (13) Sasaki et al. (2003); (14) Sasaki et al. (2003), Haberl & Pietsch (2005); (15) Yokogawa et al. (2000a), Haberl & Pietsch (2004); (16) Mukherjee & Paul (2005).

<sup>b</sup> For each source the reference energy range is also reported.

<sup>c</sup> The reported values refer only to the interstellar absorption, not to the source intrinsic absorption.

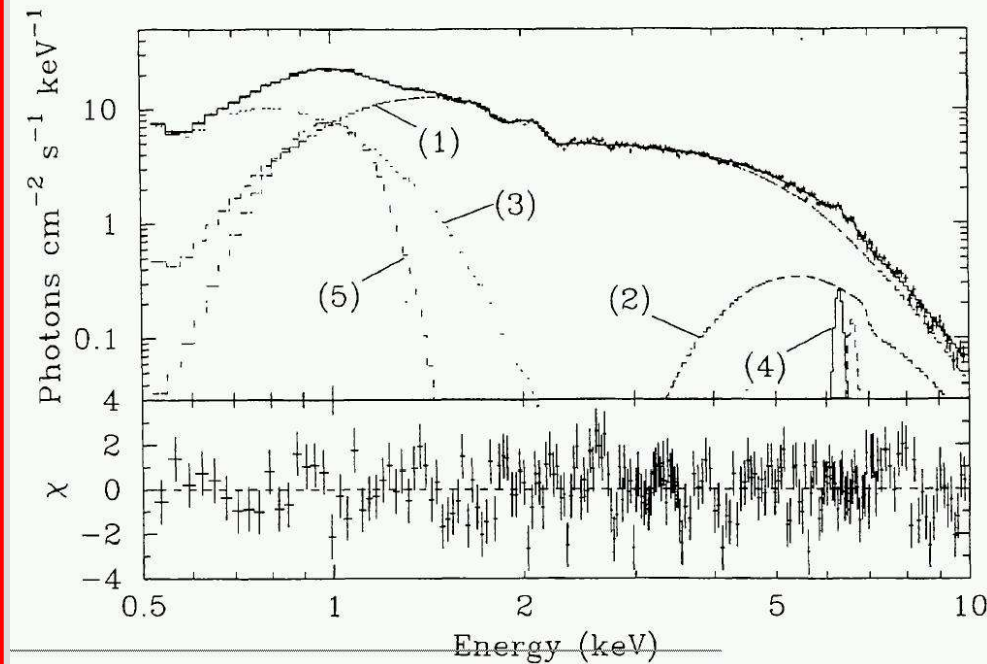
<sup>d</sup> Spectral models used for the soft excess are: BB = blackbody; TB = thermal bremsstrahlung; SPL = soft power-law or broken power-law; MEK = MEKAL thin thermal model; COM = Comptonization model; LE = broad low-energy line emission. Commas indicate separate fits, plus signs indicate fits with two components.

<sup>e</sup> Pulsation of the emission component that traces the soft excess.

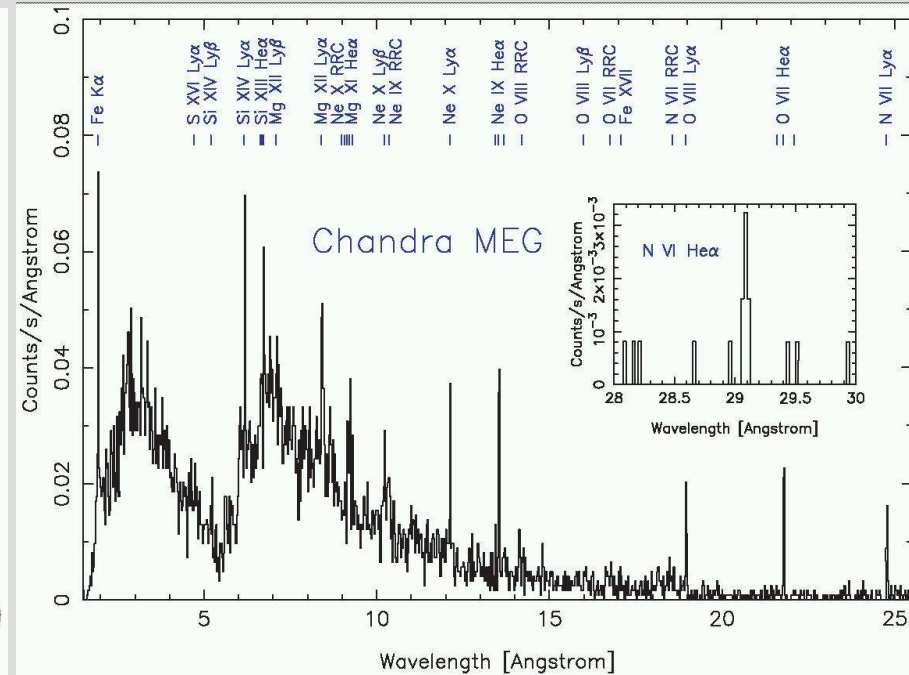
**the soft/thermal component can be a common feature intrinsic to accreting X-ray pulsars**



# Her X-1



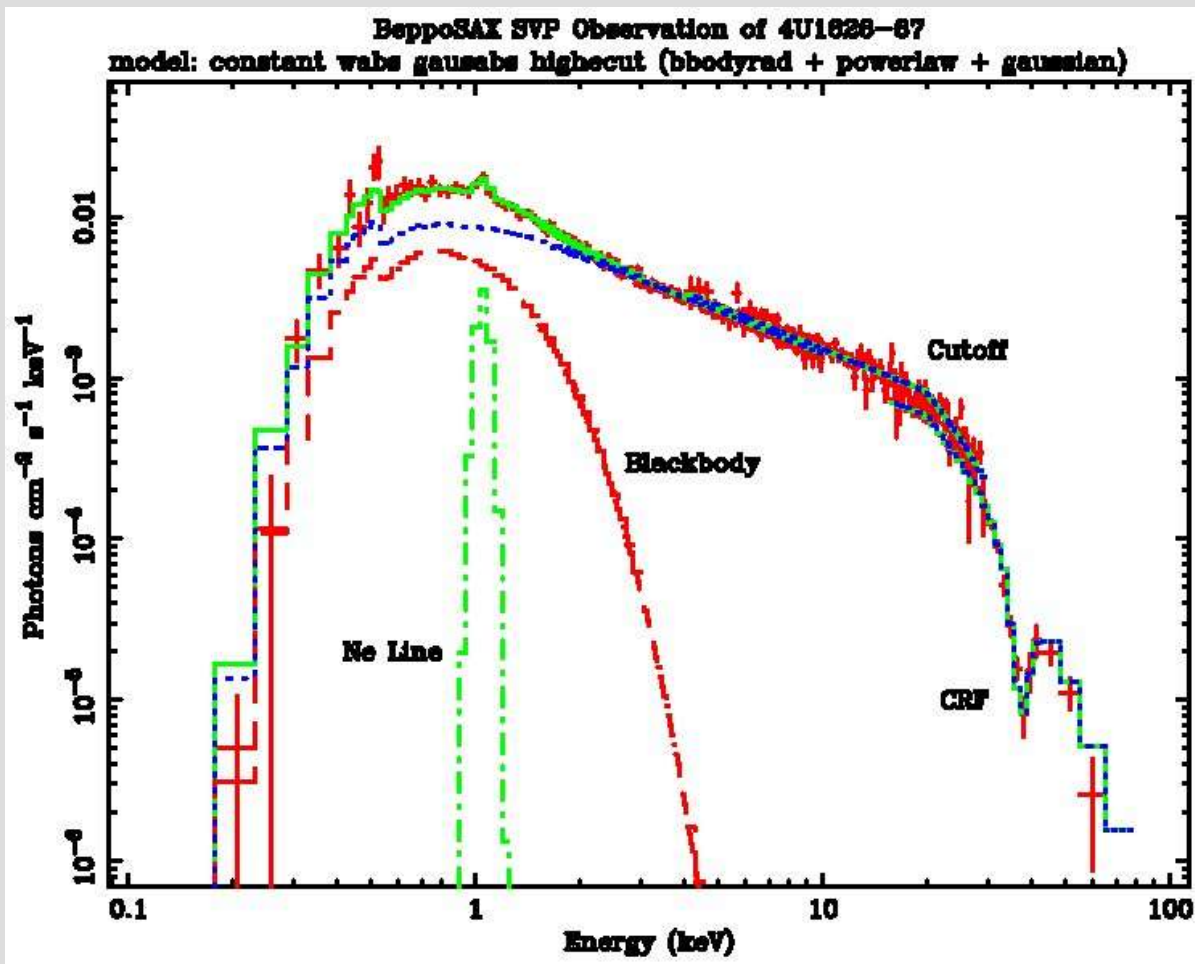
ASCA - Endo et al., 2000  
 $kT_{\text{BB}} = 0.16 \text{ keV}$   
 $L_{\text{X}}(0.1-10) = 1.8 \times 10^{37} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$



Chandra - Jimenez-Garate et al., 2005  
 PL+BB,  $kT_{\text{BB}} = 0.18 \text{ keV}$   
 $L_{\text{X}}(0.1-10) = 2.5 \times 10^{35} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$

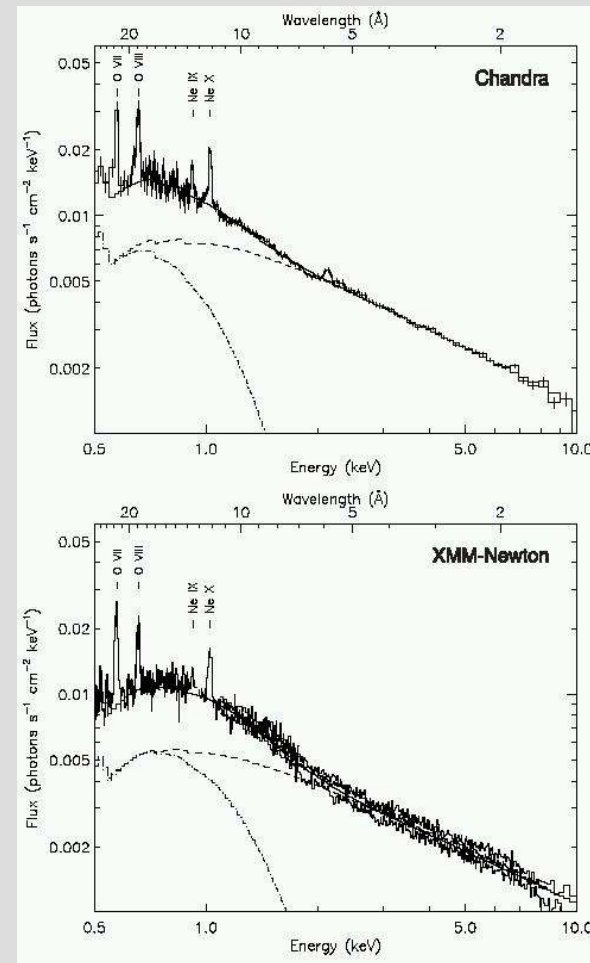


# 4U 1626-67



Orlandini et al., 1998:

$$kT_{\text{BB}} = 0.29 \text{ keV}, L_{\text{X}}(0.1-200) = 7.7 \times 10^{34} d_{\text{kpc}}^2 \text{ erg s}^{-1}$$



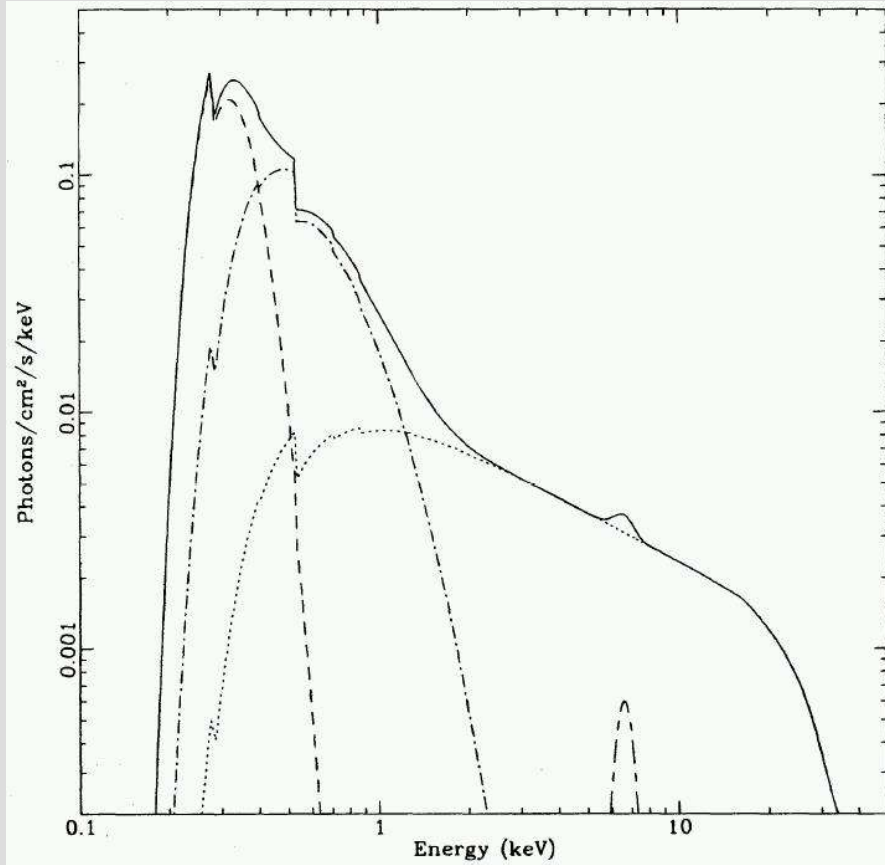
Krauss et al., 2007:

$$\text{PL+BB}, kT_{\text{BB}} = 0.25 \text{ keV}$$





# LMC X-4

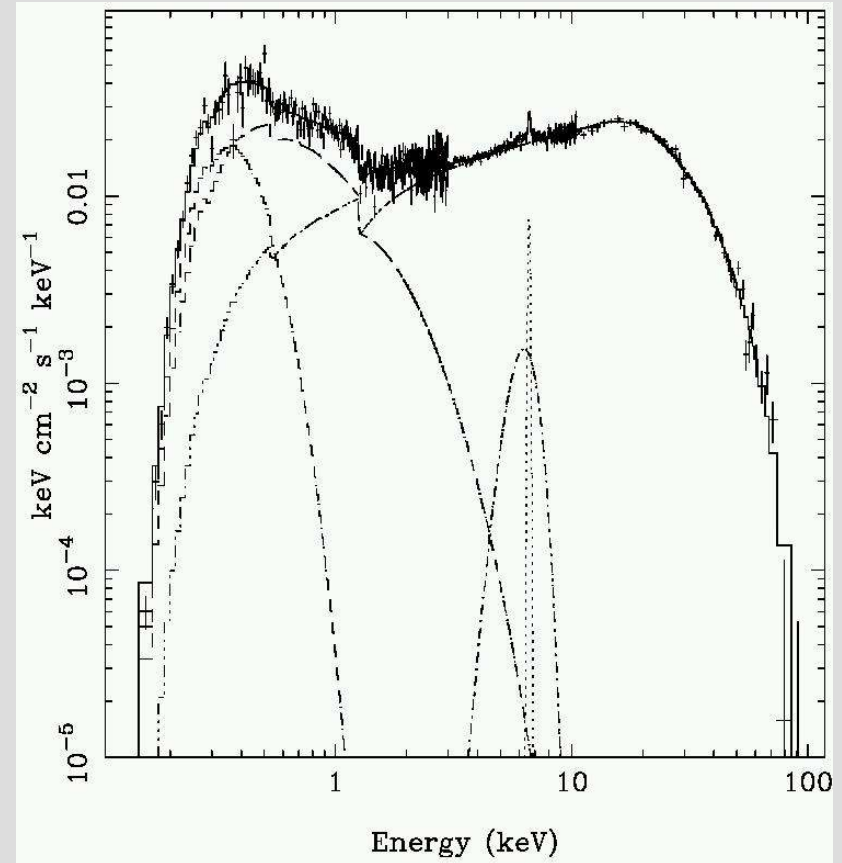


GINGA+ROSAT - Woo et al., 1996:

PL+BB+TB

$kT_{\text{BB}} = 0.03 \text{ keV}$ ,  $kT_{\text{TB}} = 0.35 \text{ keV}$

$L_{\text{X}}(2-10) = 9.3 \times 10^{37} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$



SAX - La Barbera et al., 2001:

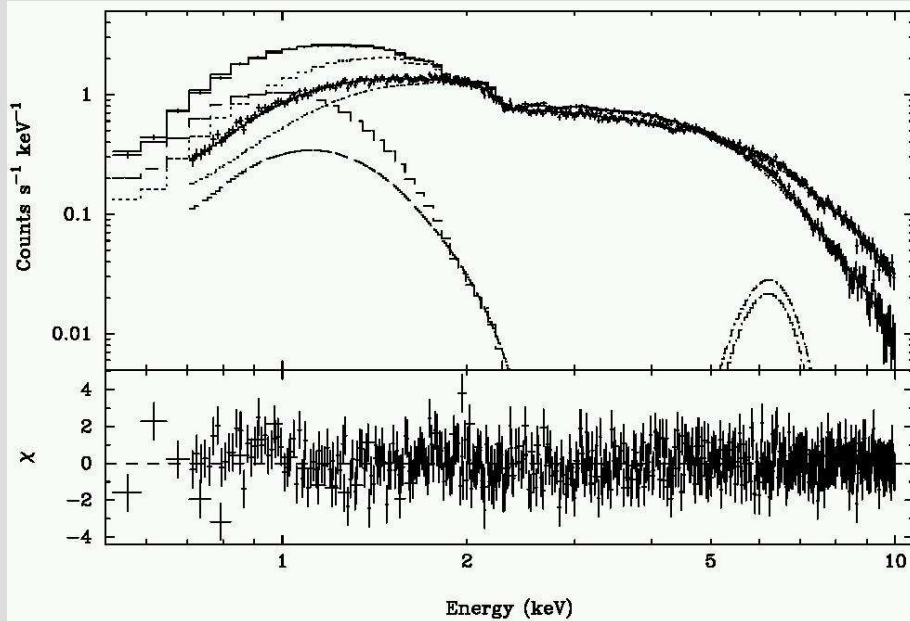
PL+BB+BR

$kT_{\text{BB}} = 0.06 \text{ keV}$ ,  $kT_{\text{TB}} = 0.8 \text{ keV}$

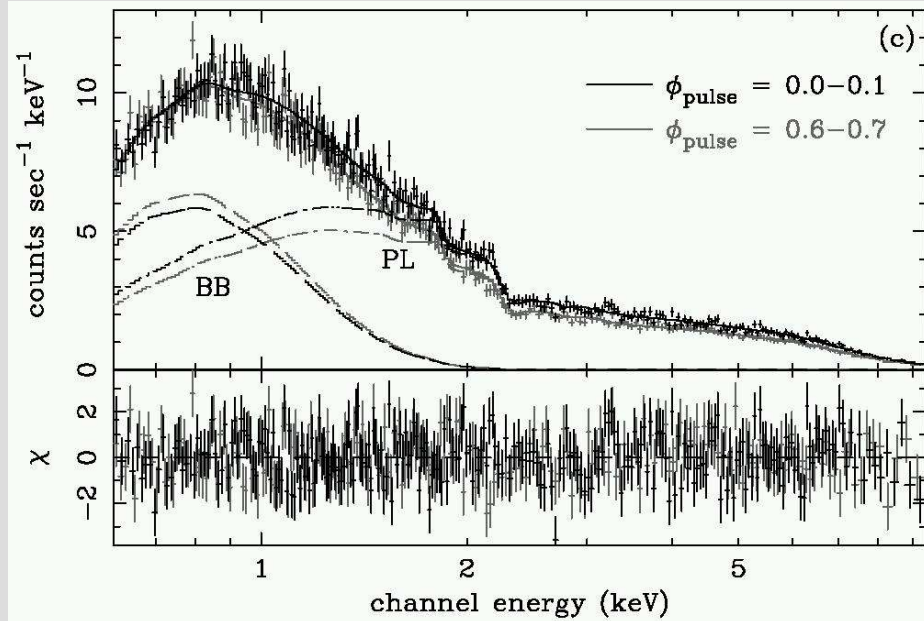
$L_{\text{X}}(0.1-10) = 2 \times 10^{38} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$



# SMC X-1

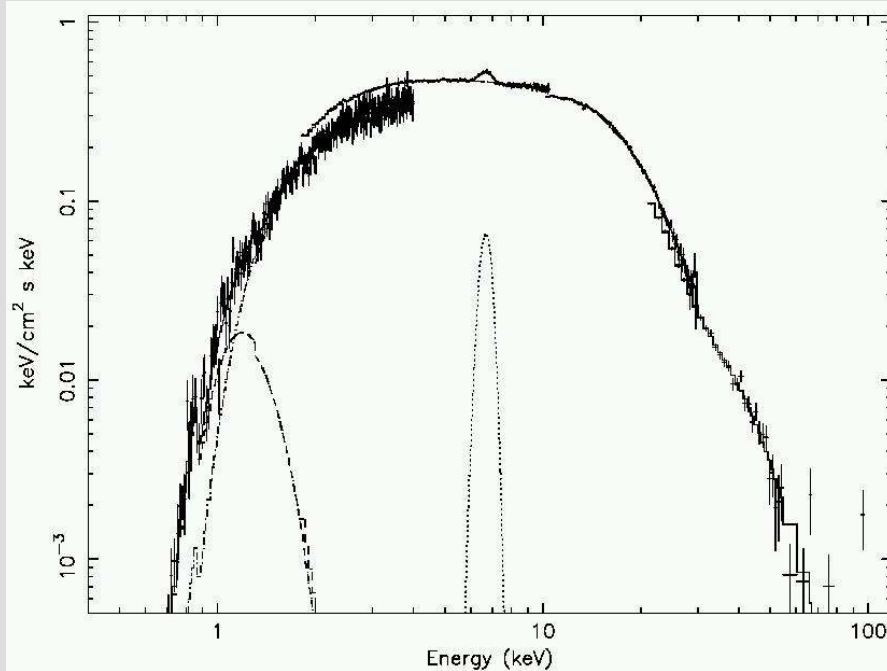


ASCA - Paul et al., 2002:  
 PL+BB  
 $kT_{\text{BB}} = 0.18 \text{ keV}$   
 $L_{\text{X}}(0.1-10) = 2.9 \times 10^{38} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$



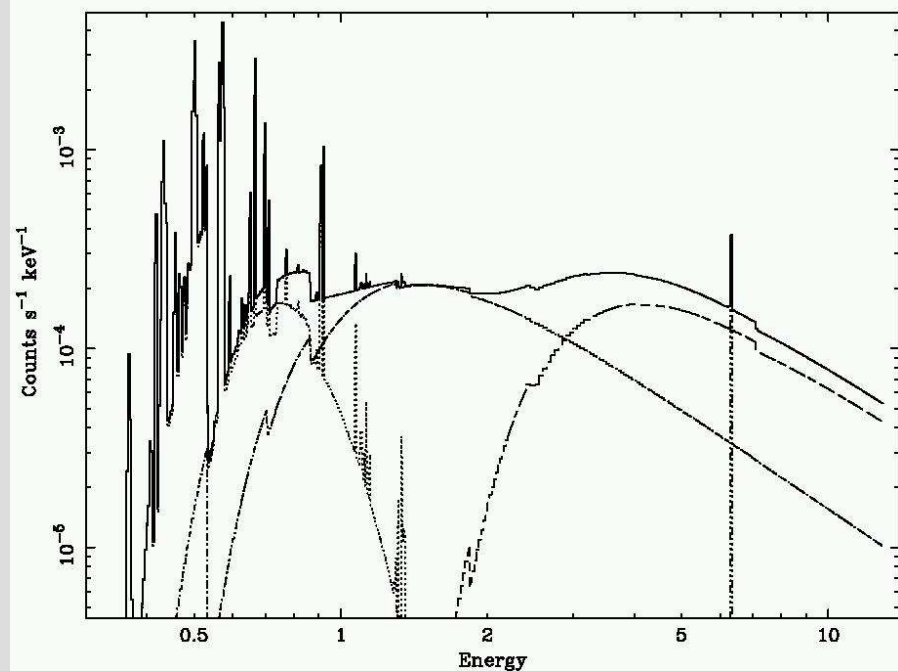
XMM - Hickox et al., 2005:  
 PL+BB  
 $kT_{\text{BB}} = 0.17 \text{ keV}$   
 $L_{\text{X}}(0.1-10) = 3.8 \times 10^{38} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$

## Cen X-3



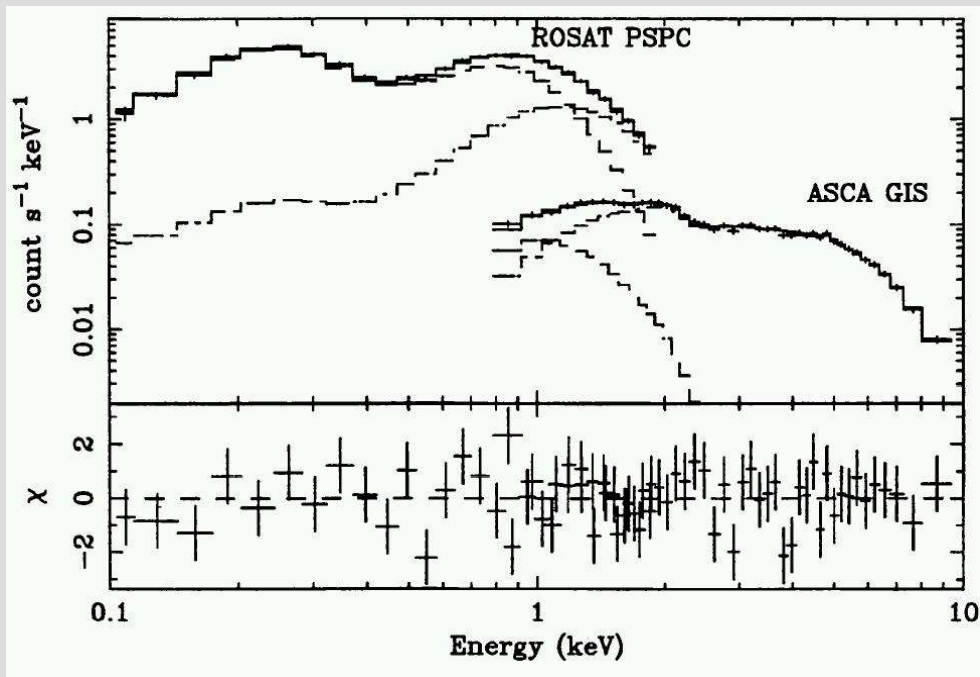
SAX - Burderi et al., 2000:  
PL+BB  
 $kT_{\text{BB}} = 0.11 \text{ keV}$   
 $L_{\text{X}}(0.1-10) = 2.3 \times 10^{38} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$

## EXO 053109-6609.2



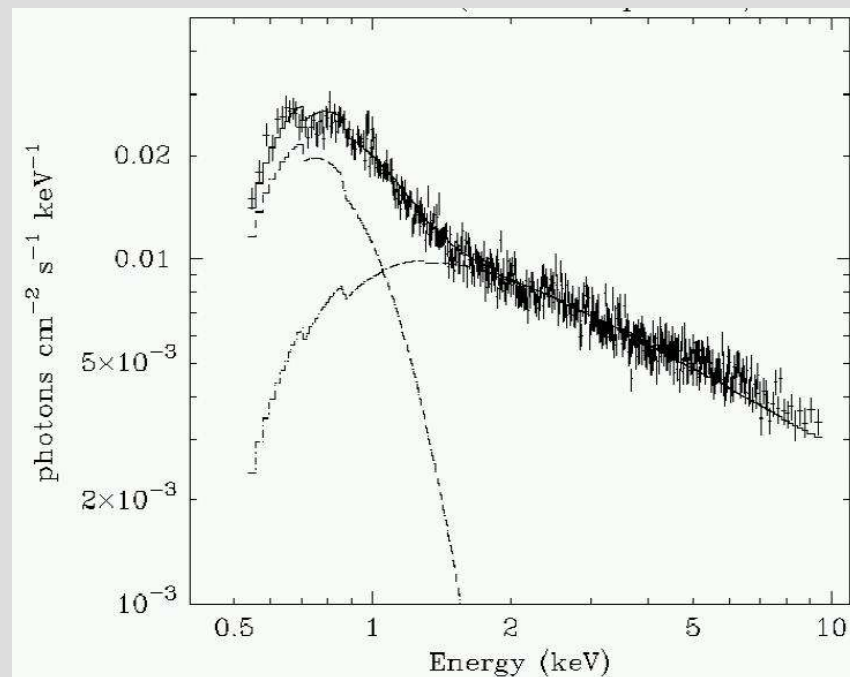
Haberl et al., 2003:  
PL+MEKAL  
 $kT_{\text{MEK}} = 0.1 \text{ keV}$   
 $L_{\text{X}}(0.1-10) = 1.2 \times 10^{38} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$

## RX J0059.2-7138



Kohno et al., 2000:  
PL+MEKAL  
 $kT_{\text{MEK}} = 0.37 \text{ keV}$   
 $L_X(0.1-10) = 3.1 \times 10^{38} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$

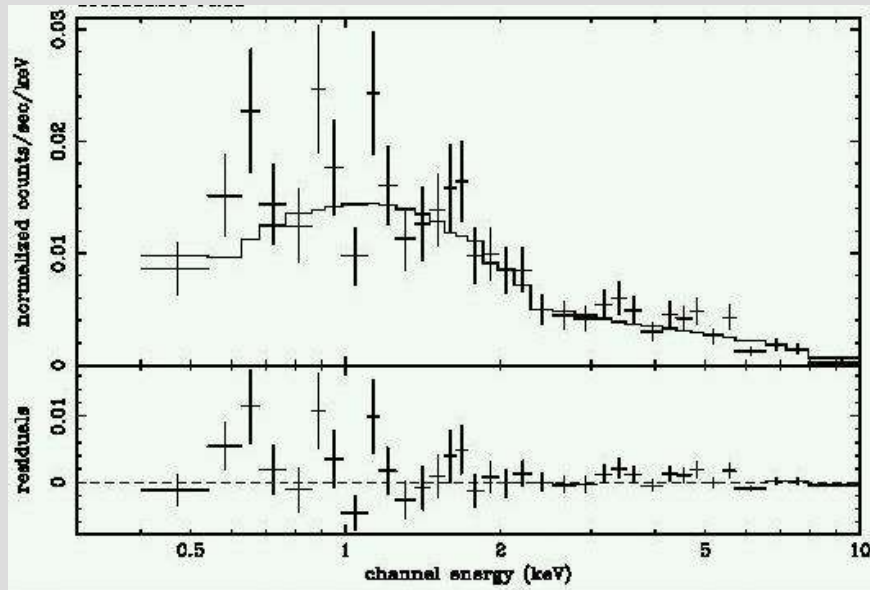
## XTE J0111.2-7317



ASCA - Yokogawa et al., 2000:  
PL+BB  
 $kT_{\text{BB}} = 0.15 \text{ keV}$   
 $L_X(0.1-10) = 2.5 \times 10^{38} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$



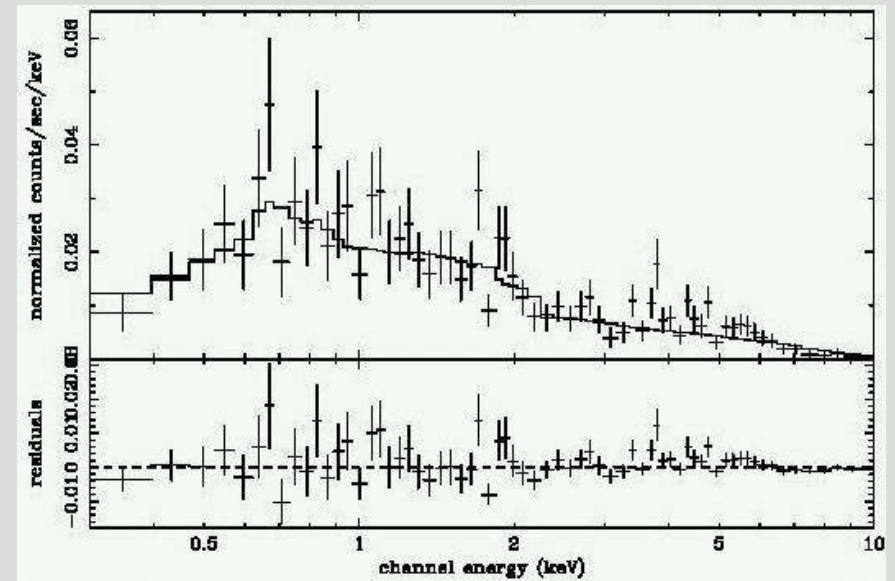
## AX J0058-720



PL

$$L_X(0.1-10) = 1.2 \times 10^{35} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$$

## AX J0103-722



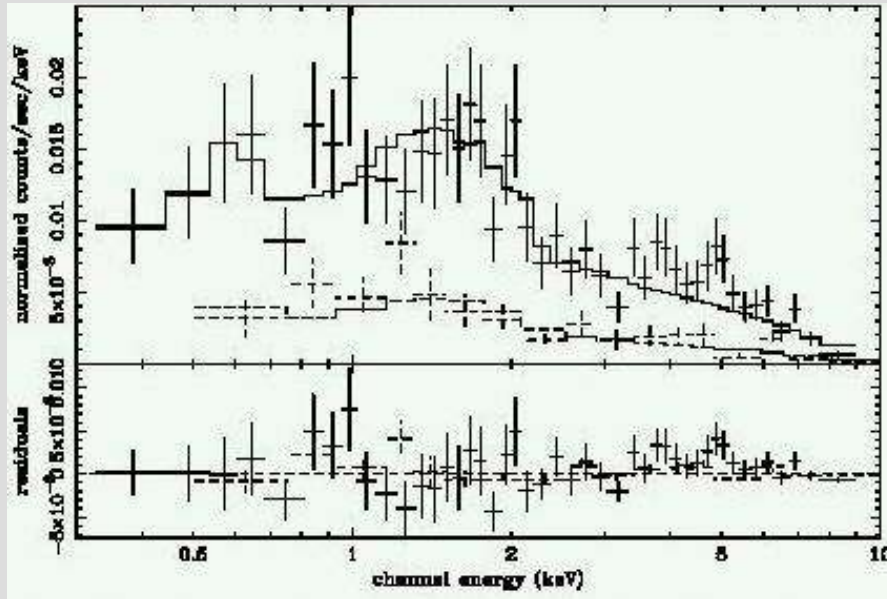
PL+MEK

$$kT_{\text{MEK}} = 0.27 \text{ keV}$$

$$L_X(0.1-10) = 3.5 \times 10^{35} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$$

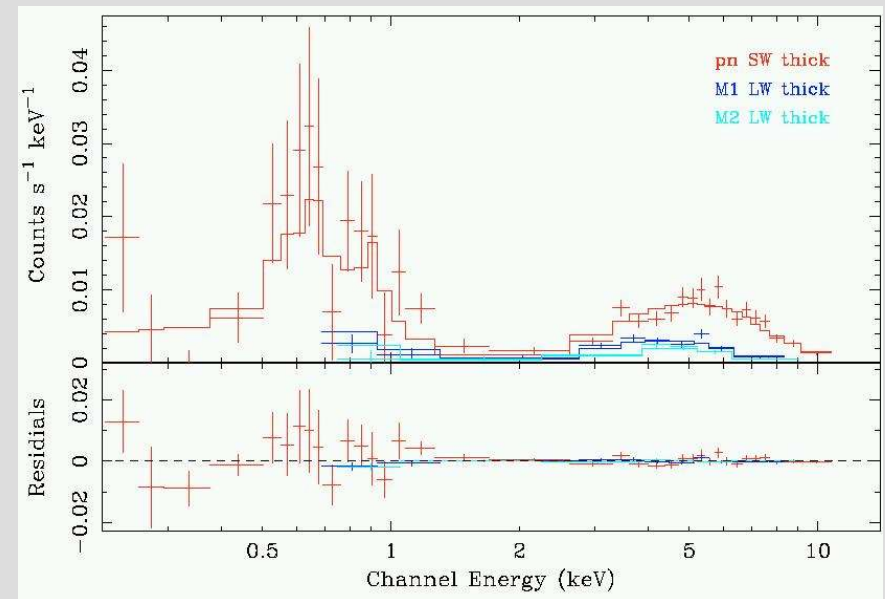
XMM - Sasaki et al., 2003

## RX J0101.3-7211



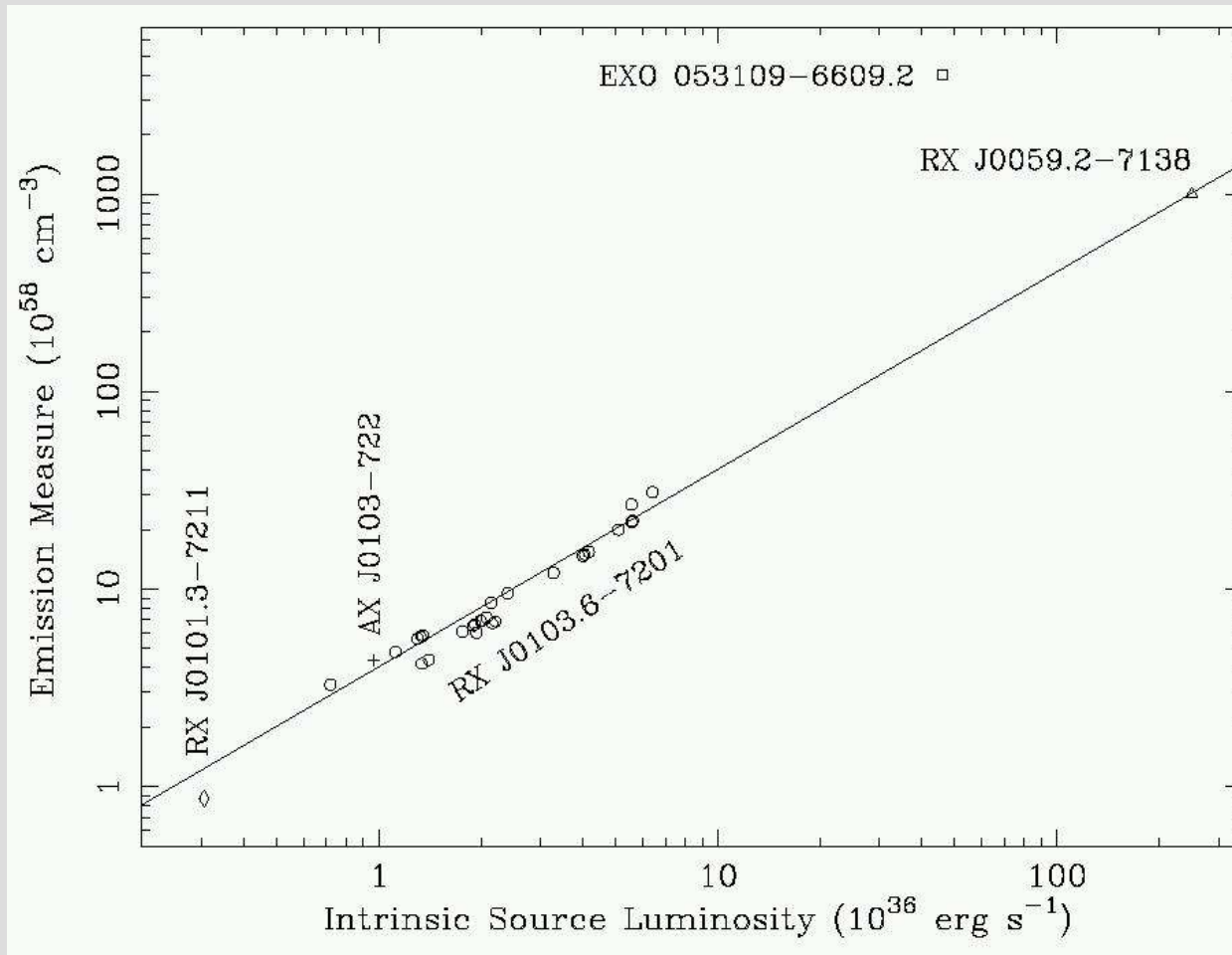
XMM - Sasaki et al., 2003:  
PL+MEKAL  
 $kT_{\text{MEK}} = 0.2 \text{ keV}$   
 $L_X(0.1-10) = 1.4 \times 10^{35} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$

## RX J0103.6-7201



XMM - Haberl et al., 2005:  
PL+MEKAL  
 $kT_{\text{MEK}} = 0.15 \text{ keV}$   
 $L_X(0.1-10) = 1.1 \times 10^{36} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$

# EM dependence on total luminosity



SE due to reprocessing of primary radiation?

Haberl et al., 2005



# The SFXT IGR J11215 5952

Spectrum	$N_{\text{H}}$ ( $10^{22} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ )	$\Gamma$	$E_{\text{c}}$ (keV)	$kT_{\text{bb}}$ (keV)	$R_{\text{bb}}$ (km)	Flux ( $10^{-11} \text{ erg cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ )	red. $\chi^2$ (dof)
Cut-off powerlaw							
A1	$0.62 \pm 0.04$	$0.60 \pm 0.11$	$11^{+4}_{-2}$	–	–	6.7	1.29 (532)
A2	$0.56 \pm 0.04$	$0.25 \pm 0.10$	$7.3^{+7.3}_{-1.0}$	–	–	9.9	1.18 (589)
B1	$0.71 \pm 0.11$	$0.0 \pm 0.23$	$4.1^{+1.1}_{-0.7}$	–	–	0.5	0.99 (427)
B2	$0.79 \pm 0.07$	$0.0 \pm 0.15$	$4.8^{+0.8}_{-0.6}$	–	–	1.3	1.08 (574)
Powerlaw plus blackbody							
A1	$0.73^{+0.07}_{-0.06}$	$1.23^{+0.22}_{-0.16}$	–	$2.0^{+0.2}_{-0.3}$	$0.24 \pm 0.03$	6.7	1.29 (531)
A2	$0.64 \pm 0.05$	$0.89^{+0.11}_{-0.09}$	–	$1.7 \pm 0.2$	$0.37 \pm 0.05$	10	1.19 (588)
B1	$0.8^{+0.1}_{-0.2}$	$0.96^{+0.21}_{-0.39}$	–	$1.4 \pm 0.2$	$0.14^{+0.06}_{-0.01}$	0.5	1.0 (426)
B2	$0.65^{+0.11}_{-0.07}$	$0.4 \pm 0.3$	–	$1.3 \pm 0.1$	$0.27 \pm 0.04$	1.3	0.99 (573)

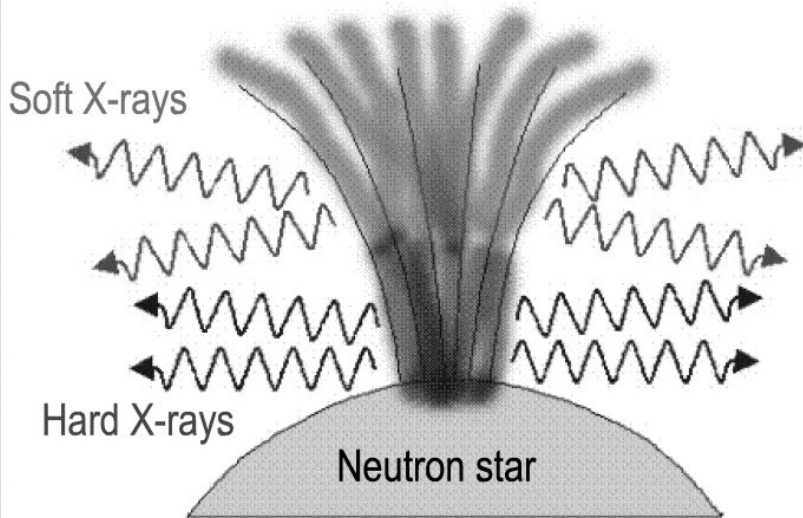
Sidoli et al., 2007



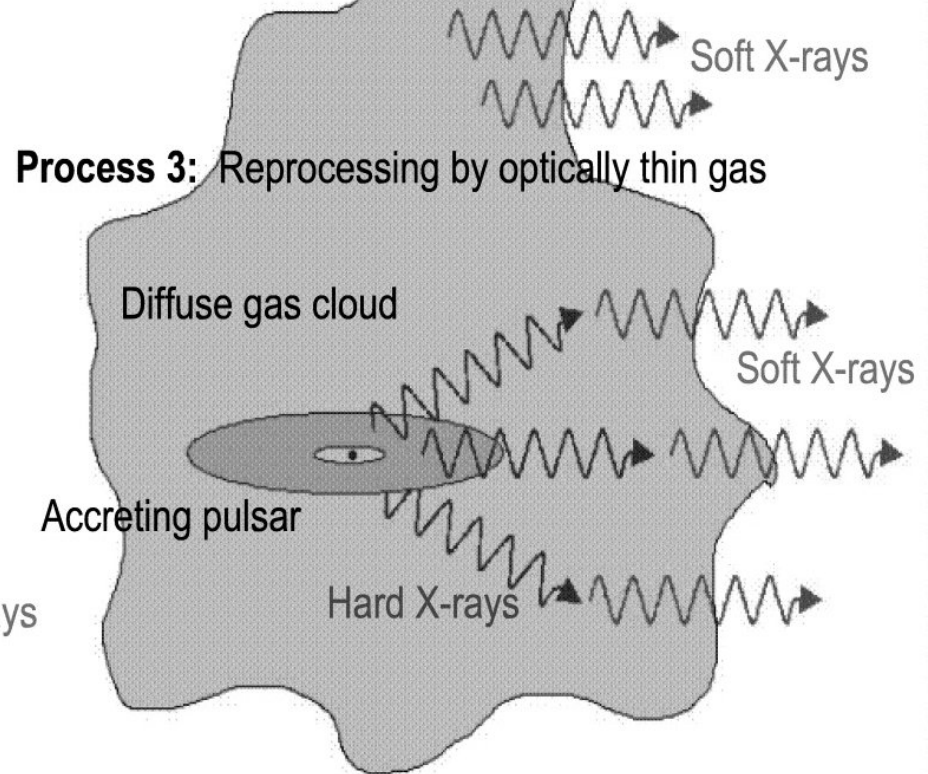


# Possible emission processes for the data excess - I

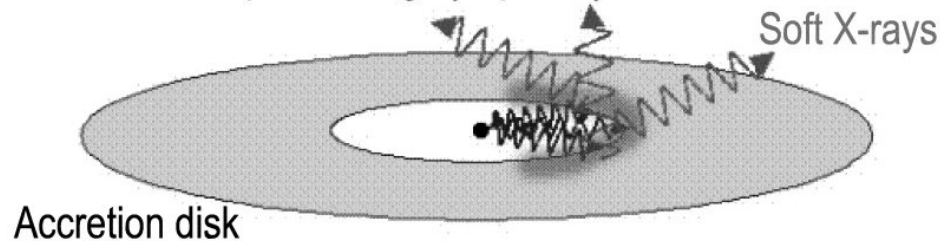
**Process 1:** Emission from the accretion column



**Process 2:** Collisionally energized emission



**Process 4:** Reprocessing by optically thick material



Hickox et al., 2004

## Possible emission processes for the data excess - II

Hickox et al., 2004: the origin of the data excess depends on the luminosity of the source

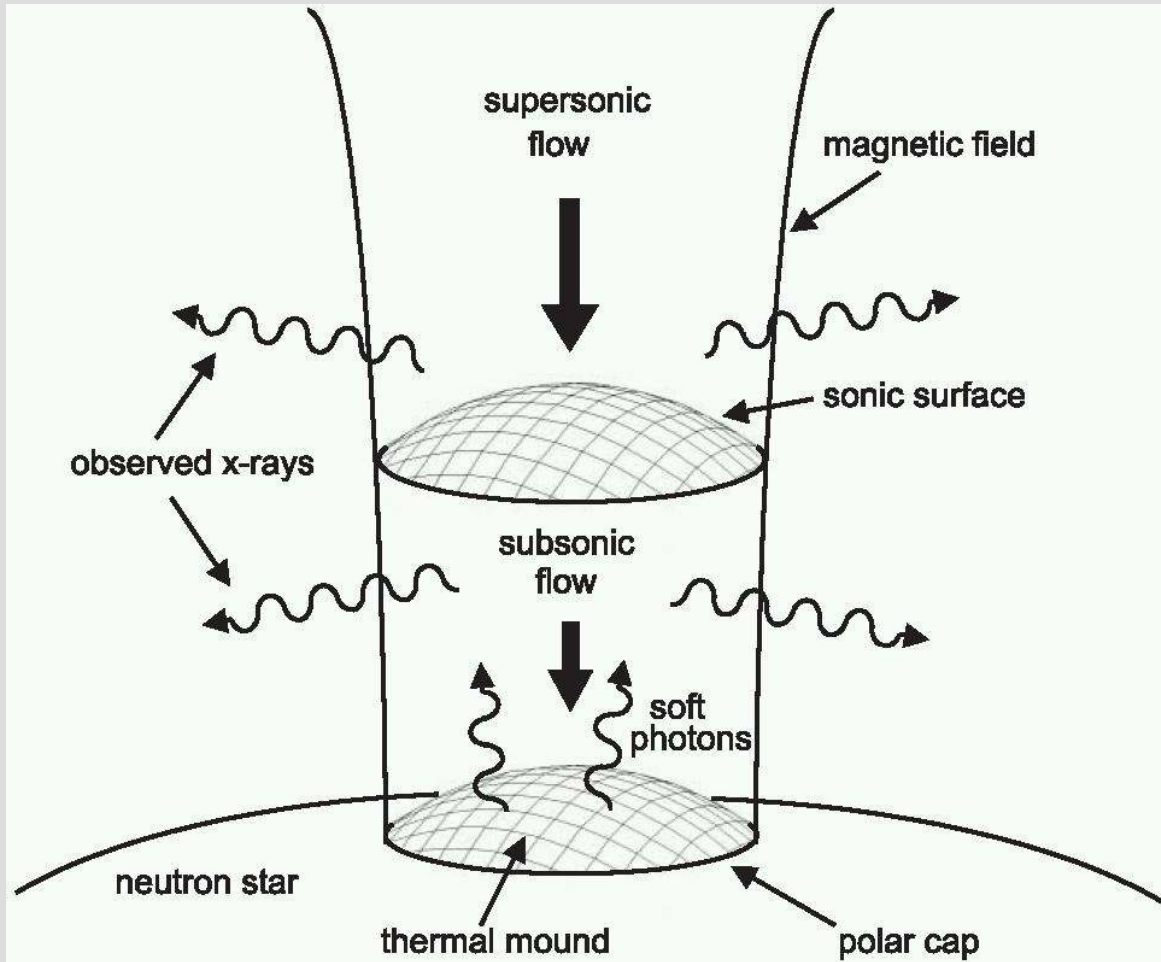
$L_x \geq 10^{38} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$ :	reprocessing of hard X-rays by the optically thick accretion material	SMC X-1, LMC X-4, Cen X-3, RX J0059.2-7138, XTE J0111.2-7317
$L_x \leq 10^{36} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$ :	emission by photoionized or collisionally heated gas or thermal emission from the neutron star surface	Vela X-1, RX J0101.3-7211, AX J0103-722  4U 1626-67, X Per
$L_x \sim 10^{37} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$ :	either or both the above processes are possible	Her X-1, EXO 053109-6609.2, A0538-66





# Possible emission processes for the data excess - III

Becker & Wolff, 2005: bulk Comptonization in a radiation dominated accretion column



$$v_{\text{bulk}} \gg v_{\text{thermal}}$$



bulk Comptonization dominates  
over thermal Comptonization

$$P_{\text{radiation}} \gg P_{\text{gas}}$$



radiation dominated shock

- PL: upscattering of low-energy photons in the radiative shock and diffusion through the column walls
- BB: escape of low-energy photons without upscattering

# Origin of the thermal excess in 4U 0352+309 and RX J0146.9+6121

- $L_x \leq 10^{36} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$   $\Rightarrow$  no reprocessing by optically thick accreting material
- the excess can be described by a black-body model  $\Rightarrow$  no emission by photoionized or collisionally heated gas
- the black-body temperature is high ( $> 1 \text{ keV}$ )  $\Rightarrow$  thermal emission from the neutron star polar caps?  
AND
- the emission radius is small ( $< 0.5 \text{ km}$ )

Assuming  $M_{\text{NS}} = 1.4 M_{\text{SUN}}$ ,  $R_{\text{NS}} = 10^6 \text{ cm}$  and  $B_{\text{NS}} = 10^{12} \text{ G}$ , we can estimate:

- the accretion rate:  $dM/dt = LR_{\text{NS}} / (GM_{\text{NS}})$
- the magnetic dipole momentum:  $\mu = B_{\text{NS}} R_{\text{NS}}^3 / 2$
- the magnetospheric radius:  $R_m = \{\mu^4 / [2GM(dM/dt)^2]\}^{1/7}$
- the accretion column radius:  $R_{\text{col}} \sim R_{\text{NS}} (R_{\text{NS}} / R_m)^{1/2}$



# Origin of the thermal excess in 4U 0352+309 and RX J0146.9+6121

X-ray source	4U 0352+309	RX J0146.9+6121
Luminosity (2-10 keV)	$\sim 10^{35}$ erg s $^{-1}$	$\sim 10^{34}$ erg s $^{-1}$
Accretion rate	$\sim 5 \times 10^{14}$ g s $^{-1}$	$\sim 5 \times 10^{13}$ g s $^{-1}$
Magnetospheric radius	$\sim 9.5 \times 10^8$ cm	$\sim 1.8 \times 10^9$ cm
Polar cap radius	$\sim 330$ m	$\sim 230$ m
Black-body radius	$361 \pm 3$ m	$140 \pm 15$ m



the BB size is in agreement with the polar-cap origin of the thermal excess!

**BUT**

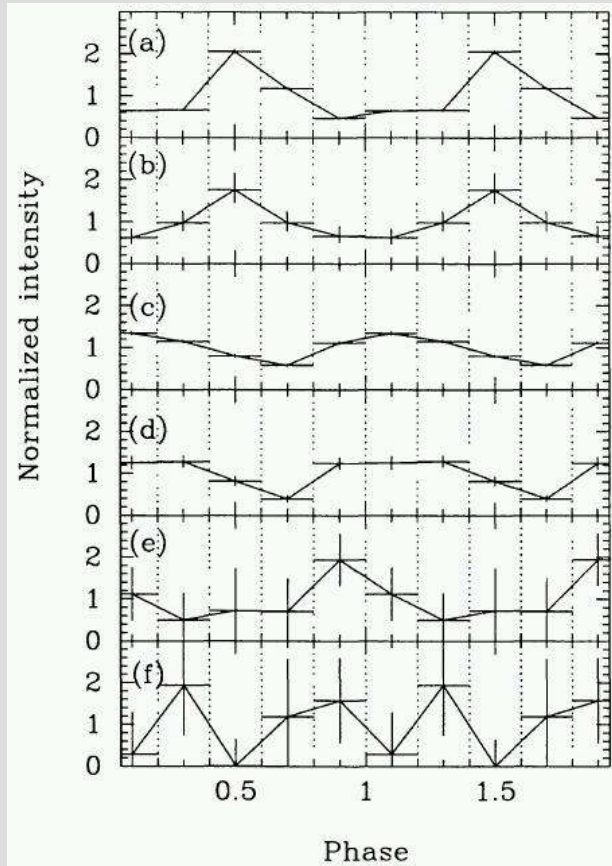
there is no clear evidence of the BB variability along the pulse phase....



# Soft excess variability: other results...

Her X-1: common  $\Gamma$ ,  $kT_{\text{BB}}$ ,  $E_{\text{GAU}}$

LMC X-4: free parameters



direct PL

absorbed PL

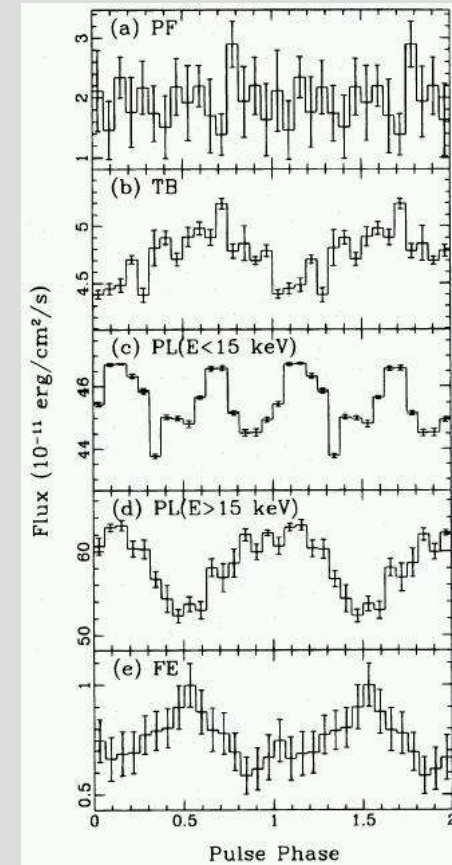
BB

gaussian @ 1keV

gaussian @ 6.4 keV

gaussian @ 6.7 keV

Endo et al., 2000

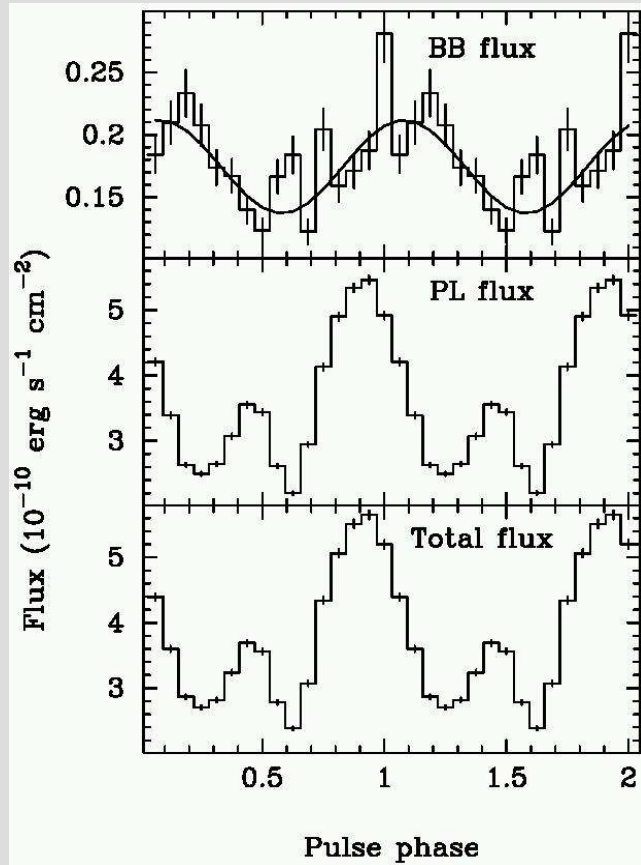


Woo et al, 1996



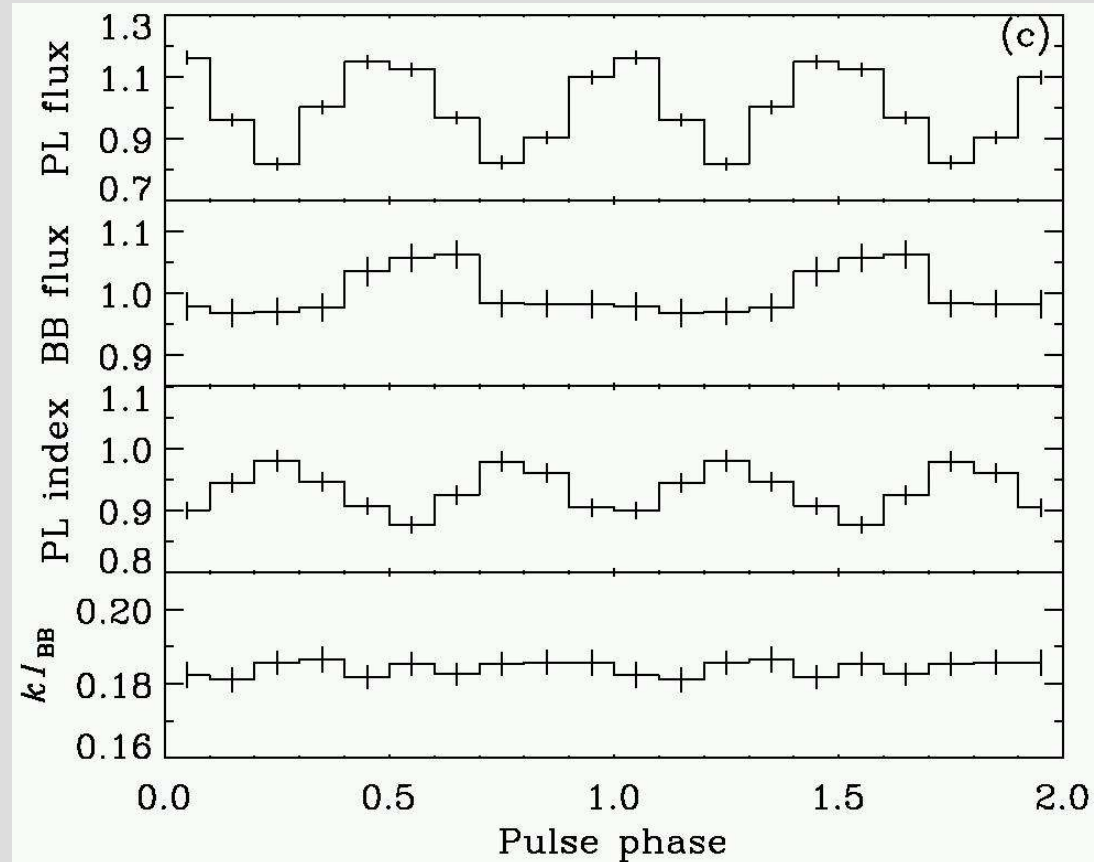
# Soft excess variability: other results...

SMC X-1: free parameters



Paul et al., 2002

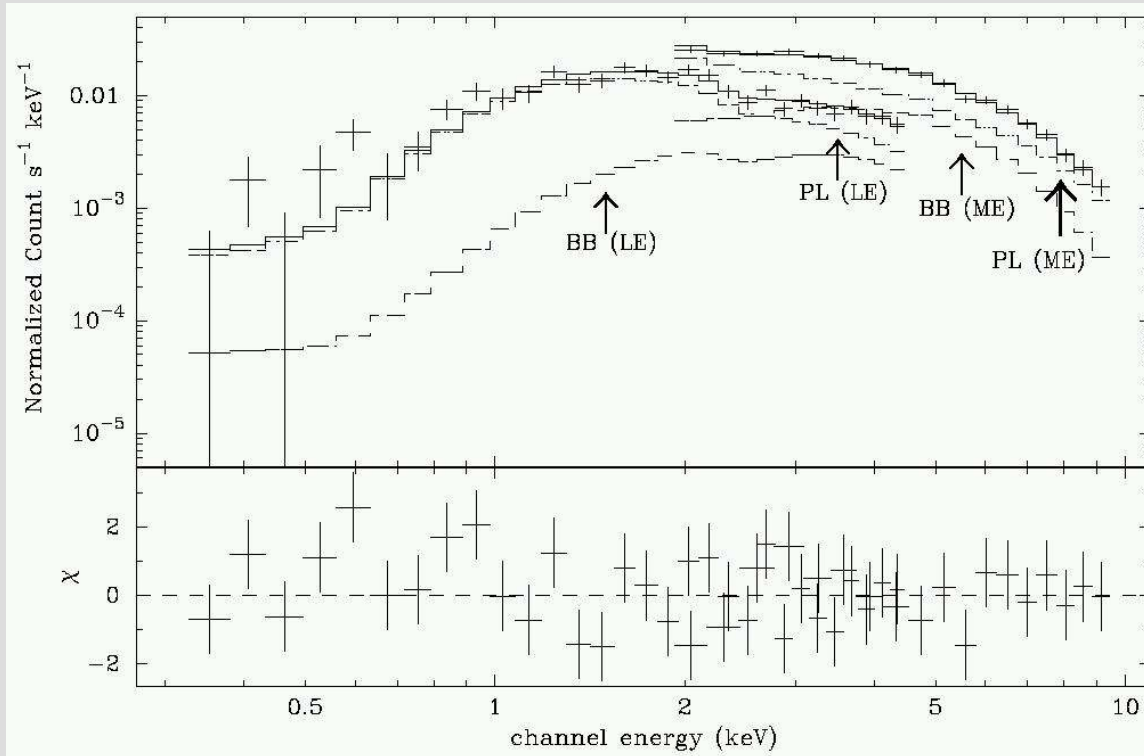
SMC X-1: free parameters



Hickox et al., 2005



# Observation of the transient Be pulsar 3A 0535+262 in quiescence



Long pulse period:  $P_{\text{spin}} = 103.4 \text{ s}$

Wide orbit:  $P_{\text{orbit}} = 111 \text{ d}$

Large eccentricity:  $e = 0.47$

$L_{\text{TOT}} = 4 \times 10^{33} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$

$kT_{\text{BB}} = 1.33 \text{ keV}$

$R_{\text{BB}} = 80 \text{ m}$

$L_{\text{BB}} = 1.4 \times 10^{33} \text{ erg s}^{-1} (35 \%)$

SAX, Mukherjee & Paul (2005)



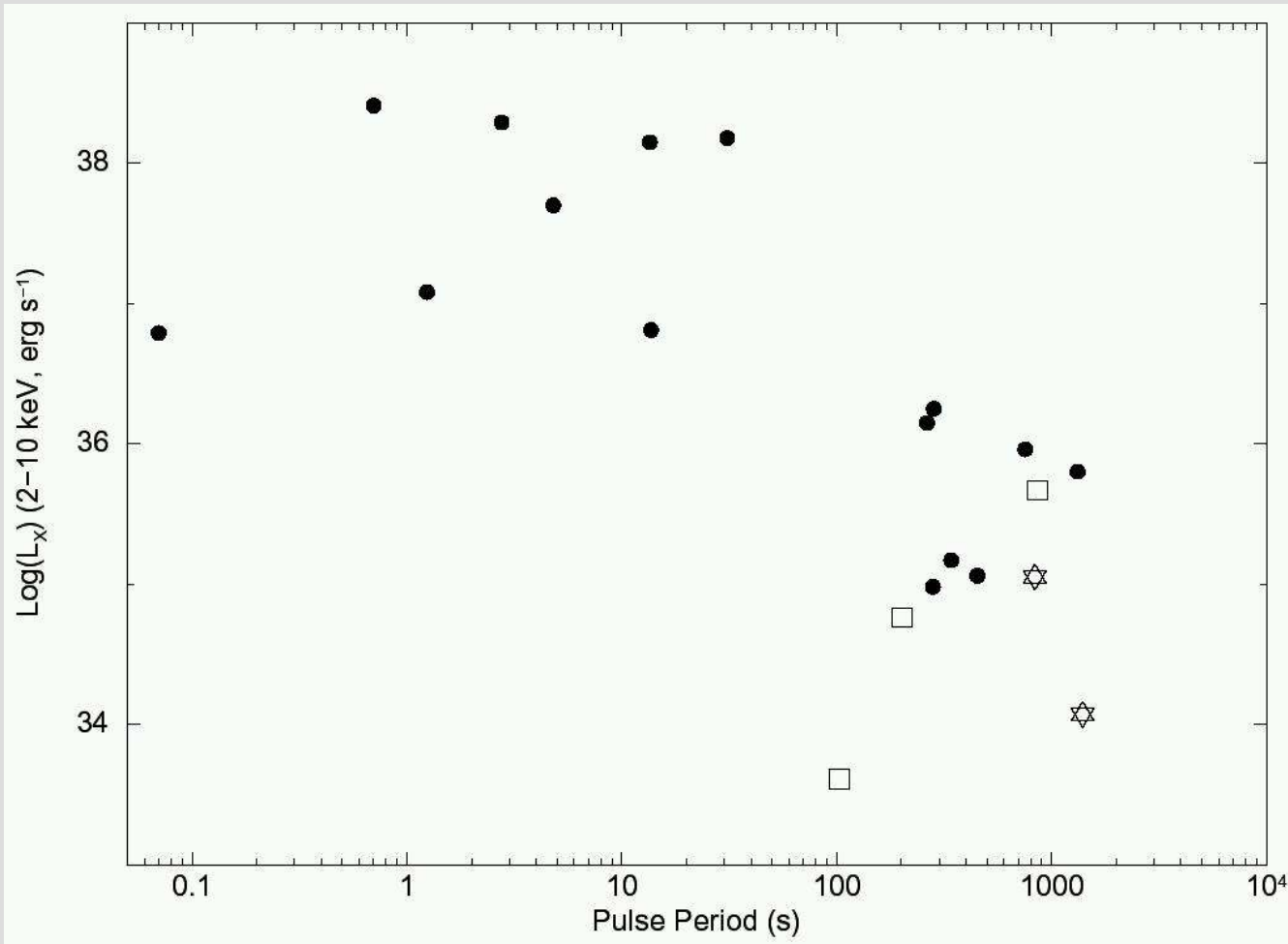
**Is this spectral feature a COMMON property of the low-luminosity, long-period Be pulsars?**





# Future perspectives

4U 0352+309 and RX J0146.9+6121 are at the low L - long P end of the accreting pulsars



We wish to observe with XMM the other two confirmed persistent Be binary pulsars:

- RX J0440.9+4431  
P = 202 s  
L<sub>X</sub> ~ 2 x 10<sup>34</sup> erg s<sup>-1</sup>

- RX J1037.5-5647  
P = 860 s  
L<sub>X</sub> ~ 2 x 10<sup>35</sup> erg s<sup>-1</sup>

and also 3A 0535+262  
in quiescence

**proposal for XMM AO7**

**LET'S HOPE...**



**...otherwise, other types of “winds” are waiting to be studied:**





CARASCO

**THANKS!**



**Nicola La Palombara - Astrosiesta 8/11/2007**



# $P_{\text{spin}} - P_{\text{orb}}$ relation

