Lidov-Kozai 90° Attractor

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Date

1 Equations

1.1 Bin's Papers

Our major references will be Bin's paper with Diego + Dong in 2015 (LML15) and Bin's later paper with Dong on spin-orbit misalignment (LL18). The target of study is §4.3 of LL18, where a 90° attractor in spin-orbit misalignment seems to appear when the octupole effect is negligible.

When the octupole effect is negligible, we define vectors

$$\mathbf{j} = \sqrt{1-e^2}\hat{n}, \tag{1}$$

$$\mathbf{e} = e\hat{u}. \tag{2}$$

Here, $\mathbf{j}$ is the dimensionless angular momentum vector and $\mathbf{e}$ is the eccentricity vector; see LML15 for precise definitions. Note that $\mathbf{j}\cdot\mathbf{e} = 0$, $j^2 + e^2 = 1$. Then, the EOM for the inner and outer vectors satisfy to quadrupolar order

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}\mathbf{j}}{\mathrm{d}t} = \frac{3}{4t_{LK}}\left[(\mathbf{j}\cdot\hat{n}_2)(\mathbf{j}\times\hat{n}_2) - 5(\mathbf{e}\cdot\hat{n}_2)(\mathbf{e}\times\hat{n}_2)\right], \tag{3}$$

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}\mathbf{e}}{\mathrm{d}t} = \frac{3}{4t_{LK}}\left[(\mathbf{j}\cdot\hat{n}_2)(\mathbf{e}\times\hat{n}_2) + 2\mathbf{j}\times\mathbf{e} - 5(\mathbf{e}\cdot\hat{n}_2)(\mathbf{j}\times\hat{n}_2)\right]. \tag{4}$$

Let's assume for the time being that $L_1 \ll L_2$, so the system is sufficiently hierarchical that $\mathbf{j}_2$, $\mathbf{e}_2$ are constants. Note for reference that

$$t_{LK} \equiv \frac{L_1}{\mu_1\Phi_0} = \frac{1}{n_1}\left(\frac{m_0+m_1}{m_2}\right)\left(\frac{a_2}{a}\right)^3\left(1-e_2^2\right)^{3/2}. \tag{5}$$

Here, $n_1 \equiv \sqrt{G(m_0+m_1)/a^3}$. Finally, the GR effects (Peters 1964) cause decays of $\mathbf{L}$ and $\mathbf{e}$ as

$$\left.\frac{\mathrm{d}\mathbf{L}}{\mathrm{d}t}\right|_{GW} = -\frac{32}{5}\frac{G^{7/2}}{c^5}\frac{\mu^2 m_{12}^{5/2}}{a^{7/2}}\frac{1+7e^2/8}{\left(1-e^2\right)^2}\hat{L}, \tag{6}$$

$$\left.\frac{\mathrm{d}\mathbf{e}}{\mathrm{d}t}\right|_{GW} = -\frac{304}{15}\frac{G^3}{c^5}\frac{\mu m_{12}^2}{a^4\left(1-e^2\right)^{5/2}}\left(1+\frac{121}{304}e^2\right)\mathbf{e}, \tag{7}$$

$$\left.\frac{\dot{a}}{a}\right|_{GW} = -\frac{64}{5}\frac{G^3\mu m_{12}^2}{c^5 a^4}\frac{1}{\left(1-e^2\right)^{7/2}}\left(1+\frac{73}{24}e^2+\frac{37}{96}e^4\right). \tag{8}$$

Here, $m_{12} \equiv m_1 + m_2$.

Given this system (from LML15), we can then add the spin-orbit coupling term, which is given in LL18 to be

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}\hat{S}}{\mathrm{d}t} = \Omega_{SL}\hat{L}\times\hat{S}, \tag{9}$$

$$\Omega_{SL} \equiv \frac{3Gn\left(m_2+\mu/3\right)}{2c^2 a\left(1-e^2\right)}. \tag{10}$$

Note that μ is the reduced mass of the inner binary. We can drop the back-reaction term since $S \ll L$. What is observed is that, as this system is evolved forward in time and GR coalesces the inner binary, $\theta_{sl} \equiv \arccos\left(\hat{S}\cdot\hat{L}\right)$ goes to $90°$ consistently. The relevant figure is Fig. 19 of LL18, which shows that for a close-in, low-eccentricity perturber ($\bar{a}_{\mathrm{out,eff}} \propto a_{out}$), the focusing is significantly stronger. Note that initially, $I \equiv \arccos\left(\hat{L}\cdot\hat{L}_2\right) \approx 90°$ while $\theta_{sl} \approx 0$.

In LL18, an adiabaticity parameter is defined:

$$\mathscr{A} \equiv \left|\frac{\Omega_{SL}}{\Omega_L}\right|, \tag{11}$$

where $\Omega_L \simeq \left\langle \frac{\mathrm{d}\hat{L}}{\mathrm{d}t}\right\rangle_{LK}$ to quadrupolar order. As the inner binary coalesces, $\mathscr{A}$ transitions from $\ll 1$ to $\gg 1$ (as Ω_{SL} is a GR effect so ramps up very quickly as orbital separation decreases).

1.2 Simulations

First, we run GR-less simulations, so let's take $t_{LK} = 1$ (no semimajor axis evolution), and we reproduce LK oscillations.

Next, when accounting for GR, we should let a evolve as above. Note that since $\mathbf{j}$ and $\vec{e}$ are our dynamical variables, we should use $\mathbf{j} \equiv \sqrt{1-e^2}\hat{L} = \sqrt{1-e^2}\frac{\mathbf{L}}{\mu\sqrt{Gm_{12}a(1-e^2)}}$ and rewrite

$$\left.\frac{\mathrm{d}\mathbf{j}}{\mathrm{d}t}\right|_{GW} = \frac{1}{\mu\sqrt{GMa}}\left.\frac{\mathrm{d}\mathbf{L}}{\mathrm{d}t}\right|_{GW} - \frac{\mathbf{j}}{2a}\left.\frac{\mathrm{d}a}{\mathrm{d}t}\right|_{GW}. \tag{12}$$

To double check, we should verify that $\left.\frac{\mathrm{d}(j^2+e^2)}{\mathrm{d}t}\right|_{GW} = 0$, which can be verified as (Let's set $G = M = \mu =$

$a = c = 1$ for convenience)

$$\frac{1}{2}\frac{\mathrm{d}(j^2+e^2)}{\mathrm{d}t} = \mathbf{j}\cdot\frac{\mathrm{d}\mathbf{j}}{\mathrm{d}t} + \mathbf{e}\cdot\frac{\mathrm{d}\mathbf{e}}{\mathrm{d}t}, \tag{13}$$

$$= \mathbf{j}\cdot\left[\left(-\frac{32}{5}\frac{1+7e^2/8}{\left(1-e^2\right)^2}\right)\hat{L} - \frac{\mathbf{j}}{2}\left(-\frac{64}{5}\frac{1+73e^2/24+37e^4/96}{\left(1-e^2\right)^{7/2}}\right)\right] + \mathbf{e}\cdot\left(-\frac{304}{15}\frac{1+121e^2/304}{\left(1-e^2\right)^{5/2}}\right)\mathbf{e}, \tag{14}$$

$$= \left(-\frac{32}{5}\frac{1+7e^2/8}{\left(1-e^2\right)^{3/2}}\right) + \left(\frac{32}{5}\frac{1+73e^2/24+37e^4/96}{\left(1-e^2\right)^{5/2}}\right) + e^2\left(-\frac{304}{15}\frac{1+121e^2/304}{\left(1-e^2\right)^{5/2}}\right), \tag{15}$$

$$= \frac{1}{15\left(1-e^2\right)^{5/2}}\left[-96\left(1-e^2\right)\left(1+\frac{7e^2}{8}\right) + 96\left(1+\frac{73e^2}{24}+\frac{37e^4}{96}\right) - 304e^2\left(1+\frac{121e^2}{304}\right)\right]. \tag{16}$$

This can be verified to vanish upon term-by-term examination indeed.

For convenience, let's just define $t_{LK} = t_{LK,0}\frac{a_0^3}{a^3}$ and set $t_{LK,0} = 1$. Furthermore, the timescale of relevance for the GW terms is $t_{GW}^{-1} \sim \frac{G^3\mu m_{12}^2}{c^5 a^4}$. Let's express this as some ratio $t_{GW} = \epsilon t_{LK,0}\frac{a_0^4}{a^4}$. Thus, everything should be nondimensionalized this way.

We lastly add de-Sitter precession of the spin of one of the inner binary components, call this $\hat{S}$. Similarly, let's just define a proportionality constant $t_{SL} = \delta t_{LK,0}\frac{a_0}{a}$, then

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}\hat{S}}{\mathrm{d}(t/t_{LK,0})} = \delta\frac{a_0}{a}\hat{L}\times\hat{S}. \tag{17}$$

Our final simulation equations are thus ($\tau = t/t_{LK,0}$)

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{\mathrm{d}\mathbf{j}}{\mathrm{d}\tau} &= \frac{3}{4}\left(\frac{a_0^3}{a^3}\right)\left[(\mathbf{j}\cdot\hat{n}_2)(\mathbf{j}\times\hat{n}_2) - 5(\mathbf{e}\cdot\hat{n}_2)(\mathbf{e}\times\hat{n}_2)\right] \\ &\quad - \left(\epsilon\frac{a_0^4}{a^4}\right)\left(\frac{32}{5}\frac{1+7e^2/8}{\left(1-e^2\right)^{5/2}} - \frac{32}{5}\frac{1}{\left(1-e^2\right)^{7/2}}\left(1+\frac{73}{24}e^2+\frac{37}{96}e^4\right)\right)\mathbf{j},\end{aligned} \tag{18}$$

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}\mathbf{e}}{\mathrm{d}\tau} = \frac{3}{4}\left(\frac{a_0^3}{a^3}\right)\left[(\mathbf{j}\cdot\hat{n}_2)(\mathbf{e}\times\hat{n}_2) + 2\mathbf{j}\times\mathbf{e} - 5(\mathbf{e}\cdot\hat{n}_2)(\mathbf{j}\times\hat{n}_2)\right] - \left(\epsilon\frac{a_0^4}{a^4}\right)\frac{304}{15}\frac{1}{\left(1-e^2\right)^{5/2}}\left(1+\frac{121}{304}e^2\right)\mathbf{e}, \tag{19}$$

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}\hat{S}}{\mathrm{d}\tau} = \delta\frac{a_0}{a}\frac{\mathbf{j}}{\sqrt{1-e^2}}\times\hat{S}, \tag{20}$$

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}a}{\mathrm{d}\tau} = -a\left(\epsilon\frac{a_0^4}{a^4}\right)\frac{64}{5}\frac{1}{\left(1-e^2\right)^{7/2}}\left(1+\frac{73}{24}e^2+\frac{37}{96}e^4\right). \tag{21}$$