Stars, neutral hydrogen and ionised gas in early-type galaxies
Serra, Paolo

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It is a pleasure to thank who offered me the opportunity to come to Groningen and to the Kapteyn Institute as a Ph.D. student. Scott, you have given a fundamental contribution to my experience here. Your enthusiasm for anything that smells like science is beautiful and enlightening. It is also reassuring and comforting when one is lost in unpleasant, technical work, or frustrated by seeing people dealing with astronomical research as if it were just a business or a diplomacy exercise. Thanks also for letting me experiment and follow my curiosity and taste, for not answering my questions right away but letting me think things over (and sometimes come back!), for being so discretely present. And thank you for letting me drive you through a snow storm in Spain, for forgetting your passport during our first observing-trip to Chile...and I guess much more!!!

Thijs, Tom and Raffaella, you've been valuable collaborators. Your comments and suggestions have always been most welcome, the chats with you always rich of new inputs. I would like to thank you for the time that you’ve dedicated to me and to this project. Tom and Raffaella, I am glad that we’ll keep working together during the coming years.

Jacqueline, thanks for the enthusiasm, the many comments on my work and the many questions you have asked which I still have no answer for. I’ll keep thinking!

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Peter, you’re very strange and you play terrible music, but it’s been a pleasure sharing with you the initial, easy time as well as this final, harder one. Thanks for having me look at your colourful disc-model plots, for working for hours on wrong formulas sitting at the same desk; for playing music in bars. It’s been nice trying to teach you (hopelessly and unsuccessfully) that eating is something more than the most effective way to survive – but I see that someone else has finally managed; I guess my arguments were not convincing enough!

Yang Shyang, you definitely deserve the first prize for the slowest cyclist ever! Your cycling challenges gravity, I’m sure one could write a Ph.D. thesis about that! But well,
those long rides have been a good occasion for talking about the most serious and the
most stupid subjects...there was always enough time! Thank you for the many discussions
about astronomy, politics, Taiwanese history, food, and for the care in the hard days.

Giusy, I’ll never forget that you’ve tried to kill me with your green curry (twice!!!),
but well, I reckon that you’ve also fed me pretty good stuff, occasionally...Thanks for
the discussions, for the books (given and taken), for the movies, for showing me what
Groningen is like the first day (in fact, night) I was here.

Bruno. Bruno!!! They stole your old moped, my bike is dead, you’re on the other
(wrong?) side of the Ocean...I wonder how we can keep teasing each other with stupid
jokes. In any case, I’m sure that one day your grandchildren will be wondering why on
Earth their grandpa has a yellow banana slicer stored under his bed...

Martin, the level of my English has been steadily going down since you left. But well,
at least I don’t have to hear all that nagging about Italian football anymore. By the
way, we’ll be world champions until 2010, so you better get over it!!! Anyway, thanks for
being always so active in finding gigs, and for wanting so badly to give me a hug once in
a while...

Jelte, thanks for the coffee (terrible), for playing guitar (still better than Peter’s
music) and for Monty Python. Elif, you know what, you may actually be a slower cyclist
than Yang Shyang!!! It’s been comical and unbelievable witnessing all your unlucky
accidents in Leiden. Believe me, that’s just not normal! Ayçin, please keep feeding me
one of those “light” Turkish desserts once in a while, they’re just delicious (as far as you
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the mate, empanadas, panes rellenos, for bringing a bit of Latin America to Groningen.
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the Sirens of Titan and for laughing so hard for the Banana Phone (TiRiriTiri...!). Beike,
thanks for the coffee (the real one!).

Isa, thank you for the most funny observing trip ever, for the science, for sharing re-
results, questions, and for caring about what’s around you. Stephanie, buurvrouw! Thanks
for your energy and your good mood.

Teffie, you’re as guilty as Peter for playing bad music and not wanting to admit it,
but I forgive you (at least, unlike him, you don’t shout on stage like a mad person!).
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for looking at the cubes! Dieter and Paul, thank you for the easy-going atmosphere
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when you need an advice. Emanuele, thanks for discussing about photos, trips, movies.
Gianni, it’s been a pleasure blabbing with you about Italian politics. Unfortunately, we
may have very good reasons to keep doing that soon.

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that time.

Questi anni via dall’Italia sono stati ricchi da un punto di vista umano e professionale.
Sono però felice che i legami con la mia terra e con gli amici siano rimasti. Mi sono stati
di grande sostegno. Grazie a tutti gli amici di Cagliari per esserci sempre quando torno e per aver reso quel 9 Giugno così bello. Grazie a Fabio per le lunghe passeggiate, anche quando siamo lontani; e grazie per l’Argentina, Marseille, Granada, La Palma...e per le prossime puntate, sempre equipaggiati con gli ultimi ritrovati tecnologici, più o meno. Grazie a Marco per le risate, la comprensione, le mille discussioni. A Simone per le zingarate. A Matteo perché prima o poi mi toglierai una multa. A Francesco per quel biglietto che ha detto tutto quello che c’era da dire. A BeboF per il tuo “search statistics” e simili. A Laura ed Hector, a Luca e Mommi, a BeboV e Francesca, a Silvia, a Claudia. Grazie a tutti voi per rendere i ritorni in Sardegna così belli.

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