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# On the Erigone family and the $z_2$ secular resonance

V. Carruba,<sup>1,2★</sup> S. Aljbaae<sup>1★</sup> and O. C. Winter<sup>1★</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Grupo de dinâmica Orbital e Planetologia, UNESP, Univ. Estadual Paulista, Guaratinguetá SP 12516-410, Brazil

<sup>2</sup>Department of Space Studies, Southwest Research Institute, Boulder, CO 80302, USA

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## ABSTRACT

The Erigone family is a C-type group in the inner main belt. Its age has been estimated by several researchers to be less than 300 Myr, so it is a relatively young cluster. Yarko-YORP Monte Carlo methods to study the chronology of the Erigone family confirm results obtained by other groups. The Erigone family, however, is also characterized by its interaction with the  $z_2$  secular resonance. While less than 15 per cent of its members are currently in librating states of this resonance, the number of objects, members of the dynamical group, in resonant states is high enough to allow us to use the study of dynamics inside the  $z_2$  resonance to set constraints on the family age. Like the  $\nu_6$  and  $z_1$  secular resonances, the  $z_2$  resonance is characterized by one stable equilibrium point at  $\sigma = 180^\circ$  in the  $z_2$  resonance plane  $(\sigma, \frac{d\sigma}{dt})$ , where  $\sigma$  is the resonant angle of the  $z_2$  resonance. Diffusion in this plane occurs on time-scales of  $\simeq 12$  Myr, which sets a lower limit on the Erigone family age. Finally, the minimum time needed to reach a steady-state population of  $z_2$  librators is about 90 Myr, which allows us to impose another, independent constraint on the group age.

**Key words:** celestial mechanics – Minor planets, asteroids: general – Minor planets, asteroids: individual: Erigone.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Erigone family is a C-type group in the inner main belt. Its age has been estimated to be  $280_{-50}^{+30}$  Myr by Vokrouhlický et al. (2006c) with a Yarkovsky and Yarkovsky -O’Keefe -Radzievsky -Paddack (YORP, overall we defined this method as Yarko-Yorp) Monte Carlo approach,  $170_{-30}^{+25}$  Myr by Bottke et al. (2015) with a modified Yarko-Yorp Monte Carlo approach that also includes the effect of stochastic YORP, and as  $220_{-80}^{+60}$  Myr in Spoto, Milani & Knežević (2015). There seems therefore to be a significant consensus in the literature that the Erigone family should be a relatively young C-type cratering family. Much less attention has been given to its secular properties. This group is characterized by its interaction with the  $z_2$  secular resonance (Carruba & Michtchenko 2009), a resonance of the  $(2g + s)$ -type introduced by Milani & Knežević (1994) using the perturbation theory of Milani & Knežević (1990).<sup>1</sup> About 15 per cent of the current Erigone family members are in

librating states of the  $z_2$  secular resonance. While this is not a majority of the members, as for the case of the Tina family and the  $\nu_6$  secular resonance (100 per cent, Carruba & Morbidelli 2011), the Agnia and Padua families, with more than 50 per cent of the members in  $z_1$  librating states (Vokrouhlický et al. 2006b; Carruba 2009), dynamics inside the  $z_2$  secular resonance can still be used to obtain estimates, or at least lower limits, of the family age.

Also, dynamics inside the  $z_2$  secular resonance has not so far been given a lot of attention. As for the  $\nu_6$  and  $z_1$  secular resonances, we found an equilibrium point in the  $(\sigma, \frac{d\sigma}{dt})$  plane at  $\sigma = 180^\circ$ , where  $\sigma$  is the resonant argument of the  $z_2$  secular resonance. The minimum time needed to fully disperse an originally compact family in this plane fully around the equilibrium point can be used to set constraint on the group age. Furthermore, checking the minimum time needed to inject a steady-state librating population into the  $z_2$  secular resonance can also provide constraints on the Erigone family age of a nature not previously used in the literature.

This paper is so divided: in Section 2, we obtain dynamical maps and synthetic proper elements for asteroids in the orbital region of Erigone. Section 3 deals with secular dynamics in the area. In this section, we estimate the population of likely resonators of the main secular resonances in the region (Carruba 2009), and verified their resonant behaviour by studying their resonant arguments. Section 4 revisits physical properties of the local asteroids such as taxonomy, geometric albedo, and estimated masses. In Section 5, we identify the Erigone family in various domains of proper elements,

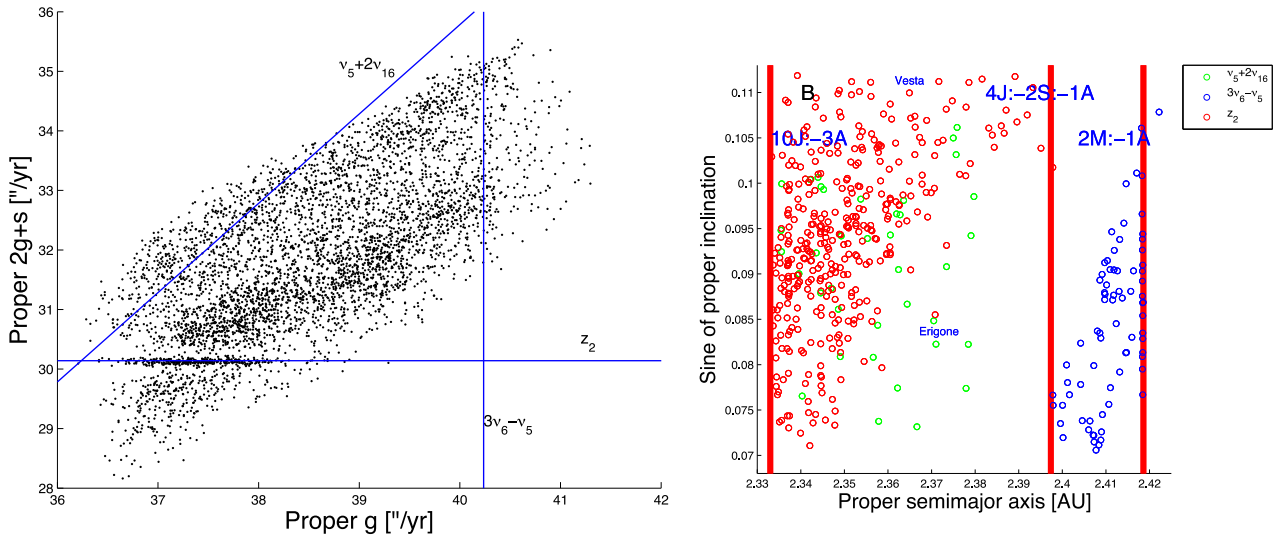
\* E-mail: [vcarruba@feg.unesp.br](mailto:vcarruba@feg.unesp.br) (VC); [safwanaljbaae@obspm.fr](mailto:safwanaljbaae@obspm.fr) (SA); [ocwinter@feg.unesp.br](mailto:ocwinter@feg.unesp.br) (OCW)

<sup>1</sup> Secular resonances involve commensurabilities between the asteroid proper frequency of precession of argument of pericentre  $g$  and longitude of the node  $s$  and that of planets. The  $z_2$  secular resonance is a non-linear secular resonance that involves the combination of the two linear resonances  $\nu_6 = g - g_6$  and  $\nu_{16} = s - s_6$ , where the subscript 6 is associated with the sixth planet, Saturn. In particular,  $z_2 = 2\nu_6 + \nu_{16} = 2(g - g_6) + (s - s_6)$ .



**Table 1.** Main secular resonances in the Erigone region labelled in terms of combination of linear resonances and proper frequencies, frequency value, number of likely and actually resonant asteroids.

Resonance argument in terms of linear resonances	Resonance argument in terms of proper frequencies	Frequency value (arcsec yr <sup>-1</sup> )	Likely resonators	Actual resonators
g resonances $3\nu_6 - \nu_5$	$2g - 3g_6 + g_5$	40.236	397	75
g+2s resonances $\nu_5 + 2\nu_{16}$	$g + 2s - g_5 - 2s_6$	-48.433	192	38
2g+s resonances $z_2 = 2\nu_6 + \nu_{16}$	$2g + s - 2g_6 - s_6$	30.345	493	367


**Figure 2.** Panel A: a  $(g, 2g+s)$  projection of the 4171 asteroids with known proper elements in our sample. Blue lines identify the location of the secular resonances listed in Table 1 with a number of ‘likely resonators’ larger than 1. Panel B: an  $(a, \sin(i))$  projection of the actual resonators population listed in Table 1.

the location of the secular resonances listed in Table 1. Note the horizontal alignment of objects along the  $z_2$  secular resonance, suggesting the dynamical importance of this commensurability. Panel B displays an  $(a, \sin(i))$  projection of the actual resonators population. Some of the asteroids in  $3\nu_6 - \nu_5$  librating states are also inside the 2M:-1A mean-motion resonance, whose dynamics has been studied in Gallardo et al. (2011). Despite all three studied resonances being of order 6, the  $z_2$  resonance plays by far the major role in dispersing asteroids in the Erigone area. This may be caused by the fact that the torsions of the secular resonances, even if associated with terms of the same order, can be different by an order of magnitude (Milani & Knežević 1994). The role of the  $z_2$  resonance in affecting the evolution of members of the Erigone family will be investigated in further detail in later sections. Here, we start by having a closer look at the main frequencies involved in this dynamics.

Fig. 3, panel A, shows the time behaviour of the resonant argument  $\sigma = 2(\varpi - \varpi_6) + (\Omega - \Omega_6)$  for (8089) Yukar, the lowest numbered among the  $z_2$  resonant asteroids (black dots). To emphasize the long-time behaviour of the angle and eliminate all short-period perturbations such as the  $g_5$  frequency in the precession of Saturn’s pericentre, the argument  $\sigma$  was digitally filtered, so to eliminate all frequencies with period less than 700 000 yr (Carruba et al. 2005). Results are shown as red asterisks.

The reader may notice that there are two main frequencies, one associated with short-period oscillation around the centre of libration, with a period of  $\simeq 0.06$  Myr, and another with oscillations of

the centre of libration itself, with a period of  $\simeq 6.1$  Myr. Fig. 3, panel B, shows the orbital evolution in a polar diagram, with axes  $(\psi_1^S, \psi_2^S)$  defined as

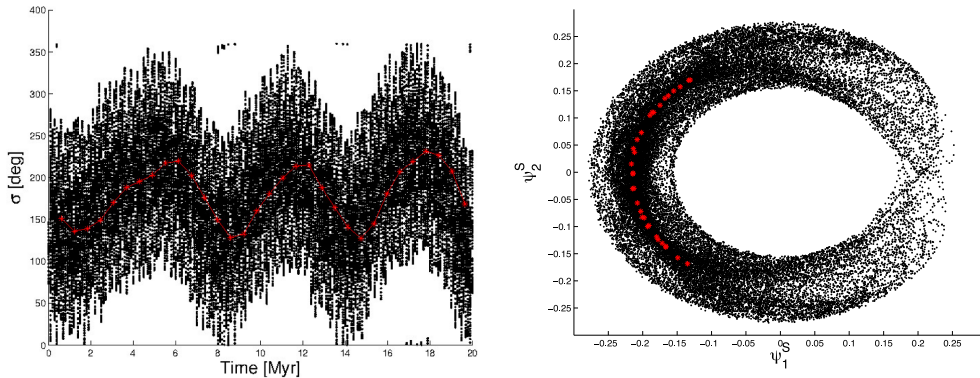
$$\psi_1^S = \sqrt{2(1 - \sqrt{1 - e^2})} \cos [2(\varpi - \varpi_6) + (\Omega - \Omega_6)], \quad (1)$$

and,

$$\psi_2^S = \sqrt{2(1 - \sqrt{1 - e^2})} \sin [2(\varpi - \varpi_6) + (\Omega - \Omega_6)], \quad (2)$$

where  $e$  is the asteroid eccentricity. Charlier (1902) introduced these variables (which are asymptotically equal to  $e \cos \sigma$  and  $e \sin \sigma$  for small  $e$ ) in his theory for secular resonances. Again, black dots show the evolution with orbital elements filtered up to a period of 700 yr, while the curve shows the evolution with elements filtered up to a period of 700 000 yr. The red asterisks describe an arc associated with a banana-shape orbit, visible at higher resolutions than that used for Fig. 3, panel B, with period of about 6.1 Myr, a similar behaviour is shared by other resonant asteroids in the region.

Having examined the effect of local dynamics, we are now ready to analyze the taxonomical properties of asteroids in the Erigone region.



**Figure 3.** Panel A: the time evolution of the resonance argument  $\sigma = 2(\varpi - \varpi_6) + (\Omega - \Omega_6)$  (black dots). The red asterisks show the argument after being digitally filtered so as to remove all frequencies corresponding to periods less than 700 000 yr. Panel B: orbital evolution in the polar plane  $(\psi_1^S, \psi_2^S)$ . The resonant elements  $(\psi_1^S, \psi_2^S)$  were also digitally filtered with the same procedure (red asterisks).

#### 4 COMPOSITIONAL ANALYSIS: TAXONOMY AND PHYSICAL PROPERTIES

Only five objects had taxonomical data in three major photometric/spectroscopic surveys (ECAS (Eight-Colour Asteroid Analysis; Zellner, Tholen & Tedesco 1985; Tholen 1989), SMASS (Small Main Belt Spectroscopic Survey; Xu et al. 1995; Bus & Binzel 2002a, Bus & Binzel 2002b), and S3OS2 (Small Solar system Objects Spectroscopic Survey; Lazzaro et al. 2004): 60 Echo (S-type), 163 Erigone (C), 571 Dulcinea(S), 2763 Jeans (V), and 2991 Bilbo (C). Using the classification method of De Meo & Carry (2013) that employs Sloan Digital Sky Survey-Moving Object Catalog data, fourth release (SDSS-MOC4 hereafter; Ivezić et al. 2001) to compute *gri* slope and  $z' - i'$  colours, we obtained a set of 470 observations of asteroids (including multiple observations of the same object) in the Erigone region. This corresponds to 276 asteroids for which an SDSS-MOC4 taxonomical classification and proper elements are both available. We found 30 X, 7 D, 103 C, 52 L, 66 S, 3 V, and 5 B type objects, respectively. There were data for 18 objects currently inside the  $z_2$  secular resonance, 6 were L-, 4 S-, 4 C-, 2 K-, and 2 B-types.

Fig. 4, panel A, displays a projection in the *gri* slope versus  $z' - i'$  plane for the 276 observations in the SDSS-MOC4 catalogue for asteroids in the Erigone region, while panel B shows an  $(a, \sin(i))$  projection of asteroids in the same region. As in Carruba et al. (2013), that, however, used a simplified method allowing only to distinguish if an asteroid belonged to the C-complex, S-complex, or was a V-type, we found that the Erigone region is dominated by the C-type Erigone family, but with significant mixing of other S- and V-type objects.

Concerning albedo information, we identified 1053 asteroids with *WISE* albedo information (Masiero et al. 2012) in the Erigone region. Our analysis confirms that of Carruba et al. (2013): the Erigone region has a predominance of lower albedos, with 802 asteroids (76.2 per cent of the total) with  $p_V < 0.15$ , associated with C-complex objects, and 251 (23.84 per cent of the total) bodies with  $p_V > 0.15$ , associated with S-complex and V-type objects.<sup>3</sup> Using

<sup>3</sup> The boundary between C- and S-complex classes in albedo varies in the literature. While most of C-type objects have values of albedos less than 0.1, recent results from *WISE* showed that some C-type families, such as 2782 Leonidas, 1128 Astrid, and 18405 FY12, have significant tails at higher albedos than previously thought. Also, *WISE* albedo data has usually errors of the order of 10 per cent, 20 per cent for  $p_V \simeq 0.1$ . In this work, we prefer

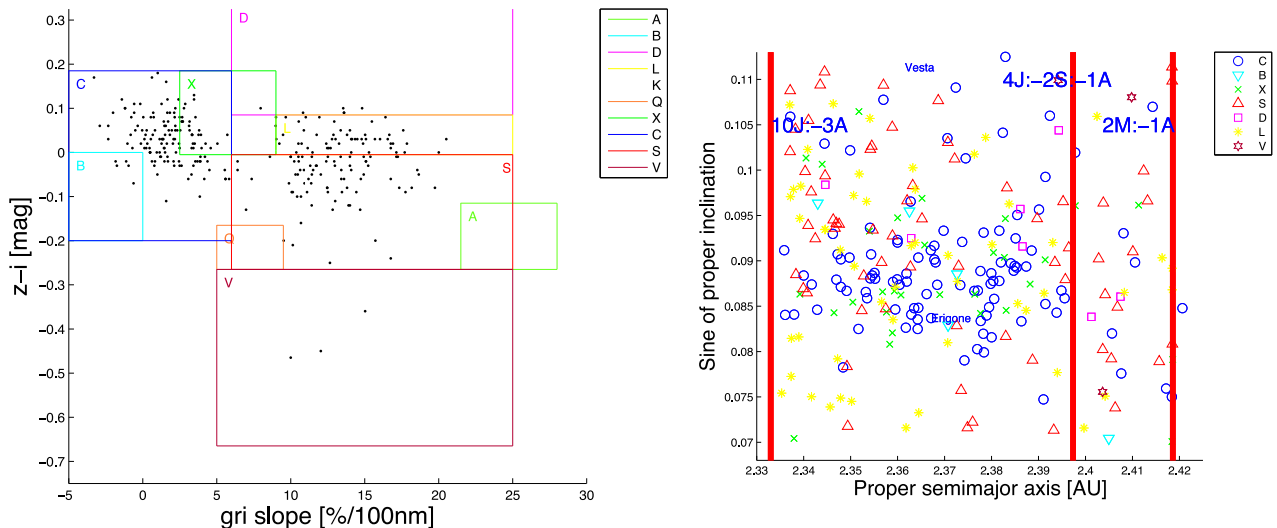
the values of the diameters from *WISE*, when available (otherwise diameters are estimated using absolute magnitudes and the mean value of geometric albedo in the Erigone region, i.e.  $p_V = 0.033$  via equation 4 in Carruba et al. 2003), and the density of 163 Erigone from Carry (2012), we computed the masses of asteroids in the Erigone region, assumed as homogeneous spheres. For the few asteroids where an estimate of the mass was reported in Carry (2012), we used the values from that paper. The only two objects with a mass larger than  $10^{17}$  kg in the region are 163 Erigone itself, and the family-less S-type 60 Echo. This would suggest that the only large C-type family in the region should be the one associated with 163 Erigone. We will further investigate this issue in the next section.

#### 5 FAMILY IDENTIFICATION

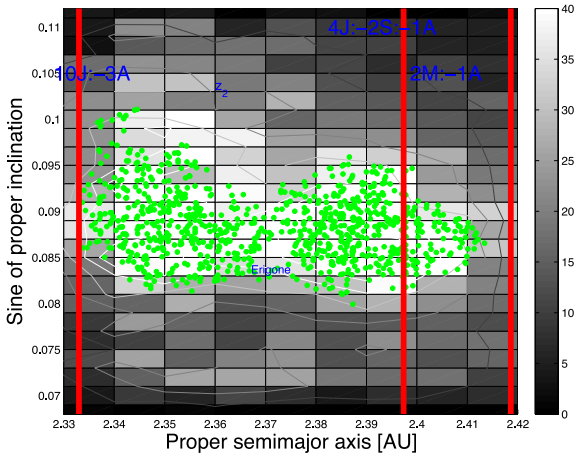
To obtain family membership of the Erigone family (FIN 406, according to Nesvorný, Broz & Carruba 2015), we first followed the approach of Carruba et al. (2015), where the hierarchical clustering method was used in a domain of proper elements  $(a, e, \sin(i))$  and *gri* slope and  $z' - i'$  colours from SDSS-MOC4, in the restricted sample (280 asteroids, 5.94 per cent of the 4717 asteroids in the area), for which this information is available. While the sample of asteroids in this domain is reduced, this method is more efficient in eliminating possible interlopers than standard HCM in the domain of proper  $(a, e, \sin(i))$  only, and can provide clues about the possible existence (or not) of large families in the area. The value of the minimal distance cut-off  $d_0$  defined as in Beaugé & Roig (2001) was of  $154.5 \text{ m s}^{-1}$  and the minimal number of objects to have a group statistically significant was 25. In this five-dimension domain the Erigone family merged with the local background for a cut-off of  $225 \text{ m s}^{-1}$ , and we did not find any other significant groups in the region, so confirming the hints provided by the analysis of asteroid masses in the region in the previous section. Following Spoto et al. (2015), we considered the groups around 163 Erigone and 5026 Martes as belonging to the same dynamical family.

We then used a standard HCM approach in the  $(a, e, \sin(i))$  domain, with the methods described in Bendjoya & Zappalà (2002) for the 4717 asteroids with synthetic proper elements in the area. As in Carruba et al. (2013), we decided to work with a family obtained

to exclude less objects by using a higher threshold ( $p_V = 0.15$ ), rather than run the risk of eliminating possible family members.



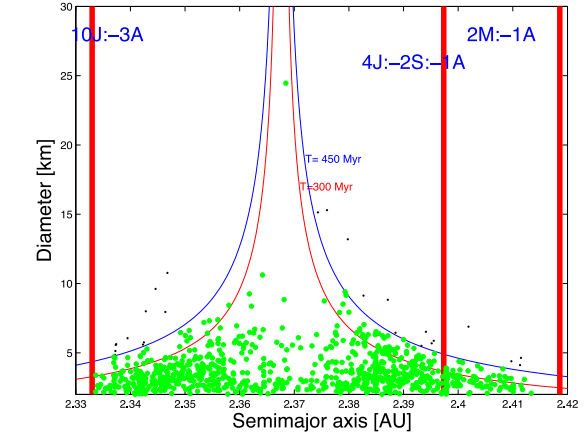
**Figure 4.** Panel A: a projection in the  $gri$  slope versus  $z' - i'$  plane of the 276 observations in the SDSS-MOC4 catalogue for asteroids in the Erigone region. Panel B: an  $(a, \sin(i))$  projection of the 280 asteroids with taxonomical information in the same area.



**Figure 5.** Contour plot of number density of asteroids in the same region. Green dots show the location of members of the identified Erigone family.

at a cut-off of  $40 \text{ m s}^{-1}$ . After eliminating nine asteroids with incompatible taxonomy, and eight objects with albedo  $p_V > 0.15$ , we were left with a family of 880 members. Fig. 5 displays a contour plot of number density of asteroids in the Erigone region, where green full dots identify the orbital location of the family identified in this work. We plotted a contour plot of the number density of background asteroids, rather than showing the location of each asteroid orbit as a dot, so as to facilitate the visual identification of the Erigone family members. We computed the number of asteroids per unit square in a 30 by 30 grid in the  $(a, \sin(i))$  plane, with  $a$  between 2.3 and 2.45 and  $\sin(i)$  between 0.065 and 0.95. Regions with lower number of asteroids are usually (but not always) associated with dynamically unstable region. Number density of asteroids may therefore provide clues about the local dynamics. As discussed before, no other significant group was identified in the Erigone area.

We identified 123 members of the Erigone dynamical family in librating states of the  $\nu_2$  secular resonance, but only five members in  $3\nu_6 - \nu_5$  librating states, and none in  $\nu_5 + 2\nu_{16}$  librating states. Because of the very low numbers of resonant objects (less than



**Figure 6.** A proper  $a$  versus diameter projection of members of the Erigone family. The red and blue curves display isolines of maximum displacement in  $a$  caused by Yarkovsky effect after 300 Myr (red line) and 450 Myr (blue line). Green full dots are associated with Erigone family members, black dots display the location of dynamical interlopers.

0.6 per cent of the  $(a, e, \sin(i))$  family at most), no statistically significant information can be unfortunately derived from an analysis of the dynamical evolution of the resonant populations of the latter two resonances.

As a next step in our research, we then obtained a preliminary estimate of the age of the families and attempted to eliminate possible dynamical interlopers using the method of Yarkovsky isolines. Following the approach of Carruba et al. (2015), we computed isolines of displacements caused by the Yarkovsky effect for a C-type family. Dynamical interlopers are objects that reside beyond the maximum possible Yarkovsky isoline, and could not have reached their current orbital position since the family formation. Fig. 6 displays the results of our method. Overall, we found 26 asteroids that could be classified as dynamical interlopers, leaving us with a family of 854 objects.

In the next section, we will use the so-called Yarko-YORP Monte Carlo method of Vokrouhlicky et al. (2006a,b,c), modified to account for new developments in our understanding of the YORP

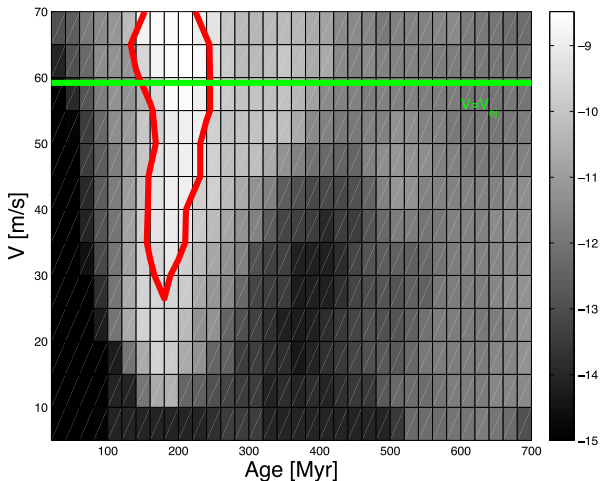
effect, to try to refine the preliminary estimates of the family age obtained in this section.

## 6 CHRONOLOGY

Monte Carlo methods to obtain estimates of the family age and ejection velocity parameters were pioneered by Milani & Farinella (1994) and improved by Vokrouhlický et al. (2006a,b,c) for the Eos and other asteroid groups. They were recently modified to account for the ‘stochastic’ version of the YORP effect (Bottke et al. 2015), and for changes in the past values of Solar luminosity (Vokrouhlický et al. 2006a) for a study of dynamical groups in the Cybele region (Carruba et al. 2015). We refer the reader to the latter paper for a more in depth description of the method. Essentially, the semimajor axis distribution of various fictitious families is evolved under the influence of the Yarkovsky, both diurnal and seasonal versions, and YORP effect (and occasionally other effects such as close encounters with massive asteroids (Carruba, Aljbaae & Souami 2014) or changes in past solar luminosity values (Carruba et al. 2015). The newly obtained distributions of a  $C$ -target function are computed with the relationship:

$$0.2H = \log_{10}(\Delta a/C), \quad (3)$$

where  $H$  is the asteroid absolute magnitude. We applied this method to the Erigone group obtained in Section 5. Fig. 7 displays  $\psi_{\Delta C}$  values in the  $(Age, V_{EJ})$  plane for this family. Values of the  $V_{EJ}$  parameter have to be lower than the estimated escape velocity from the parent body (Bottke et al. 2015),  $59.2 \text{ m s}^{-1}$  for the case of the Erigone family. Using  $\psi_{\Delta C} = 9.4$  (red line in Fig. 7), corresponding at a confidence level of 81.2 per cent to the two distribution being compatible (Press et al. 2001, there were 12 intervals in the  $C$  distribution), the Erigone family should be  $190^{+50}_{-40}$  Myr old, with  $V_{EJ} = 55^{+5}_{-30} \text{ m s}^{-1}$ . As discussed in the introduction, Vokrouhlický et al. (2006c) used a Yarko-Yorp approach to find an age of  $280^{+30}_{-50}$  Myr. The slightly smaller value found in this work could be caused by the fact that we are including the stochastic version of the YORP effect. Our estimate seems to be more in agreement with that of Bottke et al. (2015),  $170^{+25}_{-30}$  Myr, that included this effect, and with the age estimate of Spoto et al. (2015), who found an age



**Figure 7.** Target function  $\psi_{\Delta C}$  values in the  $(Age, V_{EJ})$  plane for Erigone family. The horizontal green line displays the value of the estimated escape velocity from the parent body.

of  $220^{+60}_{-80}$  Myr with an independent method.<sup>4</sup> Overall, there seems to be a consensus in the literature that the Erigone family should be a relatively young  $C$ -type cratering family.

In the next section, we will study the constraints that can be put on the Erigone family age by dynamics inside the  $z_2$  secular resonance.

## 7 DYNAMICS INSIDE THE $z_2$ SECULAR RESONANCE

About 14.4 per cent of the members of the Erigone family identified in the  $(a, e, \sin(i))$  domain are currently in librating states of the  $z_2$  secular resonance. While well below 50 per cent of the family membership, there is still quite a significant population of Erigone members in librating states to allow us to infer some constraints on the dynamical evolution and age of the Erigone group.

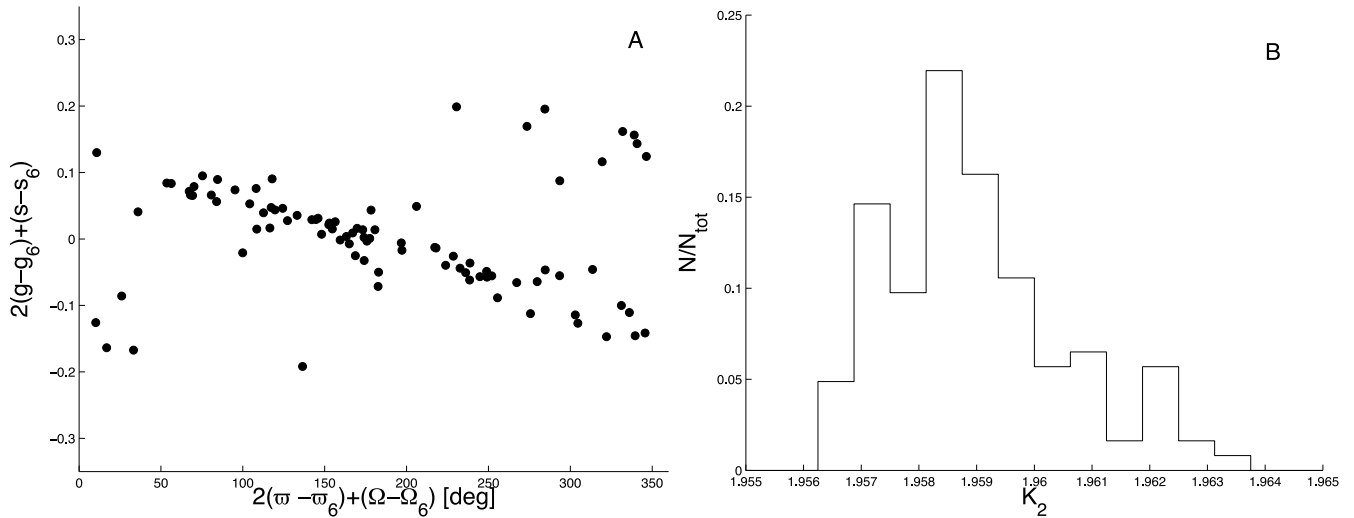
First, we analysed the current dispersion of librating asteroids in the plane  $(\sigma, \frac{d\sigma}{dt})$ , where  $\sigma$  is the  $z_2$  resonant argument  $2(\varpi - \varpi_6) + (\Omega - \Omega_6)$ , and  $\frac{d\sigma}{dt}$  is the associated frequency  $2(g - g_6) + (s - s_6)$ . The procedure followed to compute the quantities in Fig. 8, panel A is as follows. The orbital elements results of the numerical simulation over 30 Myr are used to obtain equinoctial, non-singular element of the form  $(e \cdot \cos \varpi, e \cdot \sin \varpi)$ , and  $(\sin(i/2)\cos \Omega, \sin(i/2)\sin \Omega)$ . The equinoctial elements of the test particles and of Saturn are then Fourier filtered to obtain the  $g, s, g_6, s_6$  frequencies and their associated phases. The frequencies are then plotted on the ordinates and their phases are used to construct the resonant angle  $\sigma$ , for the 92 objects that remained in librating states for the whole length of the simulation.

The reader may notice in Fig. 8, panel A, that no resonant asteroid was found at values of  $2(g - g_6) + (s - s_6)$  greater than  $0.3 \text{ arcsec yr}^{-1}$  or lower than  $-0.3 \text{ arcsec yr}^{-1}$ , so confirming the criteria of Carruba (2009) used in Section 3. One can also notice that, as for the case of the  $\nu_6$  (Carruba & Morbidelli 2011) and  $z_1$  resonances (Vokrouhlický et al. 2006b; Carruba 2009), there is an equilibrium point at  $\sigma = 180^\circ$ . Contrary to the cases of the  $\nu_6$  and  $z_1$ , data has a poor signal-to-noise ratio and is difficult to interpret. The resonant behaviour of a single particle will be better displayed later on in this section (see Fig. 9).

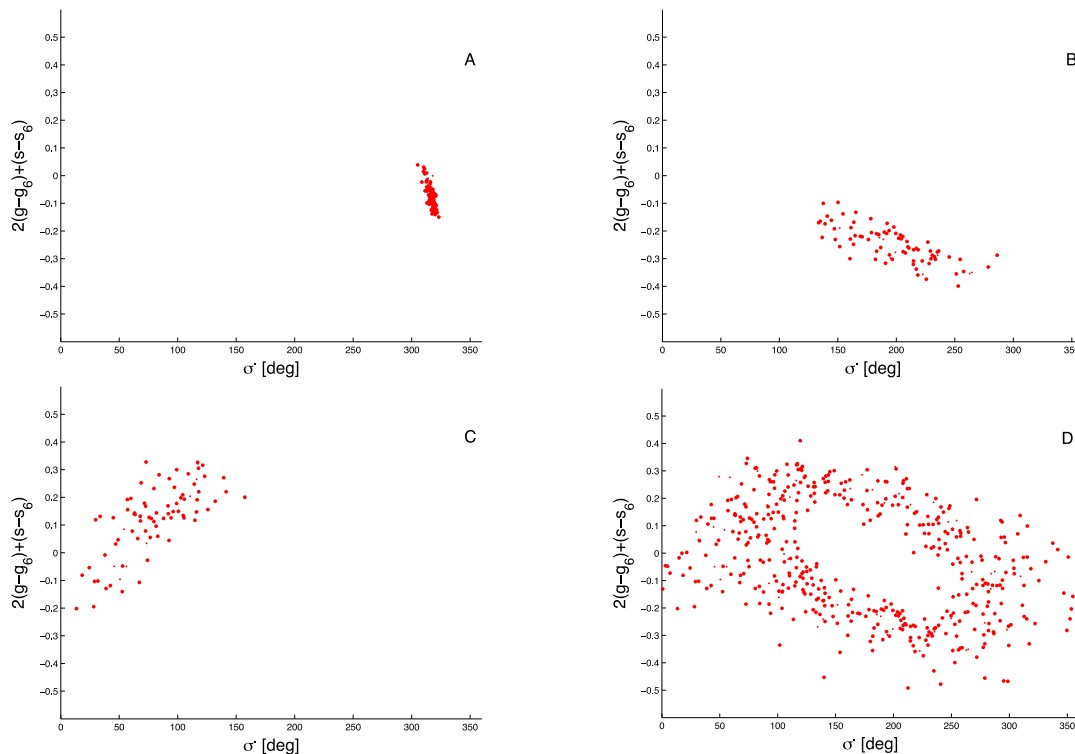
Fig. 8, panel B, deals with conserved quantities of the  $z_2$  secular resonance. It is possible to show (see Carruba & Morbidelli 2011; Vokrouhlický et al. 2006b; Carruba 2009, and calculations therein) that  $K_2' = \sqrt{1 - e^2}(1 - \cos i)$  is conserved for the  $\nu_6$  resonance,  $K_2' = \sqrt{1 - e^2}(2 - \cos i)$  is preserved for the  $z_1$  resonance, and  $K_2' = \sqrt{1 - e^2}(3 - \cos i)$  is conserved for the  $z_2$  one. Fig. 8, panel B, displays normalized distributions of the quasi-integral  $K_2'$  for the  $(a, e, i)$  (black line), and  $(n, g, 2g + s)$  (green line) groups. Since less than 50 per cent of the Erigone members are in  $z_2$  librating states, we cannot use the conservation of this quantity to set constraints on the original ejection velocity field, as done for the Tina, Agnia and Padua family. Yet, checking its behaviour as a function of time, may show how well this quantity is actually preserved for the  $z_2$  resonance, and if it could be possibly used for other  $z_2$  resonant groups, should they ever be discovered.

To further investigate dynamics inside the  $z_2$  resonance we devised this numerical experiment: we started with a synthetic Erigone family as a tightly compact cluster in  $a, e, \sin(i)$  and  $\sigma$ . This family is initially a compact cloud as shown in the first panel of Fig. 9. To

<sup>4</sup> In Spoto et al. (2015), the Erigone family is considered as the merger of the Erigone family and the 5026 Martes group.



**Figure 8.** Panel A:  $z_2$  librating members of the ( $a, e, i$ ) (full black dots) Erigone family, displayed in a plane where the  $x$ -axis is the  $z_2$  resonant argument  $2(\varpi - \varpi_6) + (\Omega - \Omega_6)$  and the  $y$ -axis is the associated frequency  $2(g - g_6) + (s - s_6)$ . Panel B: normalized distribution of the quasi-integral  $K_2' = \sqrt{1 - e^2}(3 - \cos(i))$  values for the Erigone ( $a, e, i$ ) (black line) members currently inside the  $z_2$  resonance.



**Figure 9.** Snapshots of the numerically integrated evolution of clones of Erigone family member 8089 Yukar (red dots) projected on to the  $z_2$  resonance variables: the state after  $t = 1.2$  Myr (panel A), after 3.7 Myr (panel B), after 6.1 Myr (panel C), and all data points between 3.7 and 9.8 Myr, panel D).

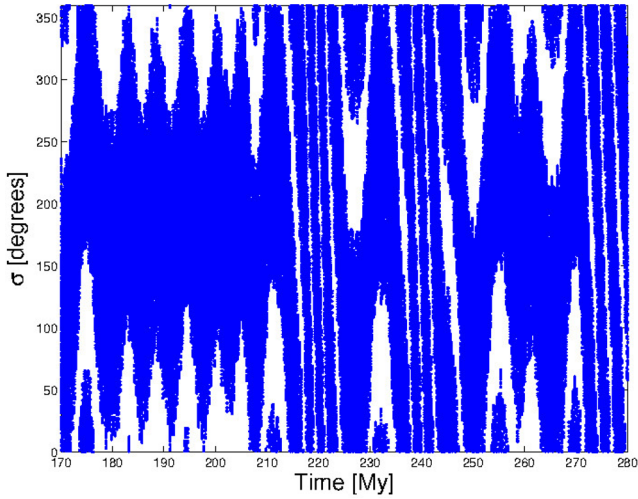
better define the time it takes for the cloud to disperse, the fake family is composed by 81 ‘clones’ produced by adding and subtracting small values to the eccentricity (0.0001) and inclination (0.001) of 8089 Yukar, the lowest numbered asteroid in our sample in a  $z_2$  librating state.

Fig. 9 shows the evolution of the synthetic family as tracked in the space of the  $z_2$  resonance variables ( $\sigma, d\sigma/dt$ ). The last panel show all data points between 3.7 and 9.8 Myr, a period that covers

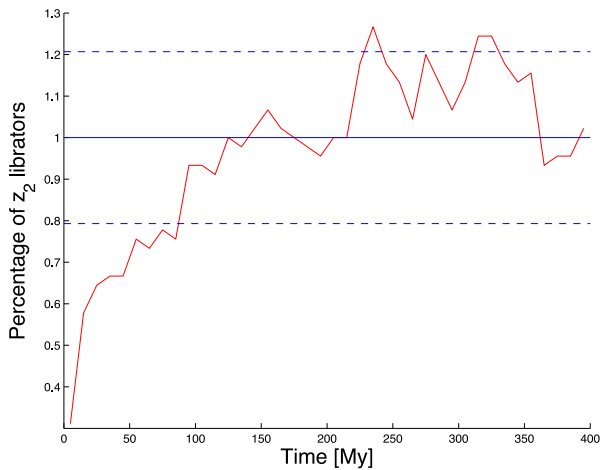
an entire  $z_2$  libration cycle. After  $\simeq 12.3$  Myr, the initially tight cluster becomes uniformly dispersed along the separatrix of the  $z_2$  resonance. Notice that, contrary to the cases of the  $\nu_6$  and  $z_1$  secular resonances, while the period of libration remains approximately constant, the amplitude changes in a chaotic fashion. After a few libration cycles, particles with very close initial conditions may find themselves quite apart in the  $(\sigma, d\sigma/dt)$  plane, as indeed observed in Fig. 8, panel A. To quantitatively describe the distribution of







**Figure 11.** Time behaviour of the  $z_2$  resonant argument of a simulated particle between 170 and 280 Myr.



**Figure 12.** Fraction of simulated Erigone family members in  $z_2$  librating states as a function of time, normalized with respect to the median value. The horizontal blue line displays the median percentage of objects in the  $z_2$  states, dashed lines display levels of median fraction plus or minus its standard deviation.

this and other works, and, (ii) most importantly, is obtained using a new technique, purely based on secular dynamics, not previously used in the literature.

## 9 CONCLUSIONS

In this work, we:

(i) Computed proper elements for a dynamical map and real asteroids in the Erigone family region. The Erigone family is characterized by its interaction with the  $z_2$  secular resonance, and we found synthetic proper elements for 4717 asteroids.

(ii) Studied the local secular dynamics. There are 367 asteroids currently in  $z_2$  librating states. Other important non-linear secular resonances in the area are the  $3\nu_6 - \nu_5$ , a  $g$ –type resonance, with 75 librators, and the  $\nu_5 + 2\nu_{16}$ , a  $(g + 2s)$ –type resonance, with 38 librators.

(iii) Revised current knowledge on the taxonomy and physical properties of local asteroids. The Erigone region is dominated by

the C-type Erigone family, but with significant mixing of other S- and V-type objects. Except for the family-less S-type 60 Echo, the only other object with a mass larger than  $10^{17}$  kg in the region is 163 Erigone itself, with other bodies being most likely either members of the Erigone or of other families.

(iv) Identified the Erigone family in the domain of proper  $(a, e, \sin(i))$  elements and proper  $(n, g, g + s)$  and  $(n, g, 2g + s)$  frequencies, the latter domain being the most efficient in identifying objects in  $z_2$  librating states. After eliminating taxonomical and dynamical interlopers, we obtained an  $(a, e, \sin(i))$  family of 854 members, 14.4 per cent of which in  $z_2$  librating states.

(v) Obtained estimates of the Erigone family age with a Yarko-Yorp Monte Carlo method that also accounts for the ‘stochastic’ version of the YORP effect, and for changes in the past values of Solar luminosity (Carruba et al. 2015). At a 81.2 per cent confidence level, the Erigone family should be  $190^{+50}_{-40}$  Myr old, with  $V_{EJ} = 55^{+5}_{-30}$  m s $^{-1}$ . Results are in agreement with those of other groups (Vokrouhlický et al. 2006c; Bottke et al. 2015; Spoto et al. 2015).

(vi) Studied the dynamics inside the  $z_2$  secular resonance. We observe one stable equilibrium point at  $\sigma = 180^\circ$  in the  $z_2$  resonance plane  $(\sigma, \frac{d\sigma}{dt})$ , with  $\sigma = 2(\varpi - \varpi_6) + (\Omega - \Omega_6)$  the resonant angle of the  $z_2$  resonance. Current members of the  $(a, e, \sin(i))$  and  $(n, g, 2g + s)$  Erigone families are fully dispersed around the equilibrium point. Since the minimum time to achieve such configuration is  $\simeq 12$  Myr, this sets a lower limit on the Erigone family age.

(vii) Studied the dynamics of the Erigone family as a whole, and showed that the minimum time to inject into  $z_2$  librating states a steady-state population is 90 Myr, which sets another constraint on the family age.

Overall, our estimate of the Erigone family age is compatible with values in the literature. More important, by studying the very interesting dynamics inside the  $z_2$  secular resonance, we were able to set two additional independent lower limits to the family age. These new tools based on secular dynamics of a resonant family constitute, in our opinion, one of the main results of this work.

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