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Detection and Characterization of Oscillating Red Giants: First Results from the *TESS* Satellite

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Abstract

Since the onset of the “space revolution” of high-precision high-cadence photometry, asteroseismology has been demonstrated as a powerful tool for informing Galactic archeology investigations. The launch of the NASA *Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite* (*TESS*) mission has enabled seismic-based inferences to go full sky—providing a clear advantage for large ensemble studies of the different Milky Way components. Here we demonstrate its potential for investigating the Galaxy by carrying out the first asteroseismic ensemble study of red giant stars observed by *TESS*. We use a sample of 25 stars for which we measure their global asteroseismic observables and estimate their fundamental stellar properties, such as radius, mass, and age. Significant improvements are seen in the uncertainties of our estimates when combining seismic observables from *TESS* with astrometric measurements from the *Gaia* mission compared to when the seismology and astrometry are applied separately. Specifically, when combined we show that stellar radii can be determined to a precision of a few percent, masses to 5%–10%, and ages to the 20% level. This is comparable to the precision typically obtained using end-of-mission *Kepler* data.

Unified Astronomy Thesaurus concepts: [Asteroseismology \(73\)](#); [Fundamental parameters of stars \(555\)](#); [Red giant stars \(1372\)](#)

Supporting material: machine-readable table

1. Introduction

Asteroseismology of red giant stars has been one of the major successes of the *CoRoT* and *Kepler* missions. The unambiguous detection of non-radial oscillations has fundamentally widened our understanding of the inner workings of red giants, including the conditions in their core (e.g., Bedding et al. 2011). The observed frequency spectra have allowed the determination of the physical properties of thousands of red giants to an unprecedented level of precision (e.g., Miglio et al. 2013), paving the way for the emergence of asteroseismology as a powerful tool for Milky Way studies and Galactic archeology (e.g., Miglio et al. 2009; Casagrande et al. 2016; Anders et al. 2017; Silva Aguirre et al. 2018; Sharma et al. 2019). The *Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite* (*TESS*; Ricker et al. 2015) is on the path of continuing this legacy with its all-sky survey that is expected to increase the number of detected oscillating red giants by an order of magnitude compared to the tens of thousands reported by its predecessors *CoRoT* and *Kepler*.

In the nominal *TESS* mission, the ecliptic northern and southern hemispheres are each observed during thirteen 27 day-long sectors, and most (92%) of the surveyed sky will be monitored for just 1–2 sectors. Except for the 20,000 targets pre-selected in each sector for 2 minutes cadence observations, all stars are observed as part of the full-frame images obtained in 30 minutes cadence, similar to the long-cadence sampling of the *Kepler* satellite. The length of the observations sets the

lower limit on the oscillation frequencies one can resolve, and the sampling sets the upper frequency limit. We know from previous *Kepler* observations that one month of 30 minutes cadence data should be well suited to detect oscillations in the low red-giant branch and sufficient to measure the global oscillation properties characterizing the frequency spectrum, in particular, its frequency of maximum power, ν_{\max} , and the frequency separation between overtone modes, $\Delta\nu$ (Bedding et al. 2010). These in turn can be used in combination with complementary data such as the effective temperature, T_{eff} , the relative iron abundance, [Fe/H], and parallax, to obtain precise stellar properties (including ages) when applying asteroseismic-based grid modeling approaches (see, e.g., Rodrigues et al. 2017; Pinsonneault et al. 2018).

Due to the large sky coverage, approximately 97% of asteroseismic detections in red giants from the *TESS* nominal mission data are expected to come from stars observed for only one or two sectors.⁶⁴ Here we set out to explore the capability of *TESS* to detect the oscillations in giants ranging from the base of the red giant branch to the red clump, determine their stellar properties, and use that to assess the prospects for Galactic archeology studies using one to two sectors of *TESS* data.

2. Target Selection

Our goal is to have a representative sample of giants including the types of stars in which we can expect to detect

⁶² NSF Astronomy and Astrophysics Postdoctoral Fellow and DIRAC Fellow.⁶³ Hubble Fellow.⁶⁴ Based on a preliminary simulation of the full *TESS* sky (*TESS* GI Proposal No. G011188).

oscillations from one sector 30 minutes cadence *TESS* data. We selected red-giant candidates observed during sectors 1 and/or 2 that were deemed viable for asteroseismic detections according to their predicted properties based on the *Hipparcos* catalog (Van Leeuwen 2007). We first estimated the stellar T_{eff} and luminosity using $B-V$ color, V -band, and *Hipparcos* parallax, and the color-temperature and bolometric correction relations of Flower (1996). We then obtained a prediction of ν_{max} ($\propto T_{\text{eff}}^{3.5} M/L$; solar scaled, e.g., Yu et al. 2018) for each star assuming a mass of $1.2 M_{\odot}$, which is representative of a typical red giant as observed by *Kepler* (and unlikely to be more than a factor of two from the true value of each star, e.g., Yu et al. 2018). We note that one of our targets (TIC 129649472) is a known exoplanet host star recently analyzed by Campante et al. (2019).

To ensure that the selected targets were amenable to asteroseismic detection from one sector of 30 minutes cadence data, we required that they would have an expected ν_{max} in the range 30–220 μHz and T_{eff} in the typical range of red giants of 4500–5200 K. In addition, we applied a narrower T_{eff} range of 4500–4700 K for the stars with ν_{max} between 30 and 70 μHz , to avoid having red clump stars dominating our sample. The resulting sample of stars span evolutionary phases from the base of the red giant branch to the red giant branch bump, as well as some clump stars.

From this sample, we selected the 25 brightest targets for light curve extraction and asteroseismic analysis. The faintest stars in our sample turned out to be ~ 6 –7th magnitude in the V -band (see Table 1). Under the assumption that the photometric performance of *TESS* is similar to *Kepler*'s, apart from its smaller aperture, this magnitude limit is equivalent to 11–12th magnitude for *Kepler*. Because single-quarter observations from *Kepler*'s second life, K2, showed no oscillation detection bias for red giants brighter than around twelfth magnitude (Stello et al. 2017), we would expect to detect oscillations in all 25 giants with *TESS*.

Figure 1 illustrates the location of the selected stars in the Hertzsprung–Russell (HR) diagram and the applied selection criteria. We confirmed that the stars were in sectors 1–2 using the Web *TESS* Viewing Tool (WTV).⁶⁵

3. Data Processing and Asteroseismic Analysis

The stars selected were included in an early release of processed data from the TASOC pipeline.⁶⁶ The calibrated full-frame images were produced by the *TESS* Science Processing Operations Center (SPOC) at NASA Ames Research Center (Jenkins et al. 2016), and processed by combining the methodology from the K2P2 pipeline (Lund et al. 2015) for extracting the flux from target pixel data with the KASOC filter for systematics correction (Handberg & Lund 2014). The resulting TASOC light curves were high-pass filtered using a filter width of 4 days, corresponding to a cut-off frequency of approximately 3 μHz , and 4σ outliers were removed. Finally, we used linear interpolation to fill gaps that lasted up to three consecutive cadences and derived the Fourier transforms (power frequency spectra) of each light curve.

The light curves for the seven stars observed in both sectors were merged. To follow the approach anticipated for the

millions of light curves from the *TESS* full-frame images in the future, we first applied the neural-network-based detection algorithm by Hon et al. (2018) resulting in detection of oscillations in the power spectra of all stars except one. The non-detection (TIC 204314449) is listed as an A2 dwarf and a “Visual Double” in the University of Michigan Catalog of two-dimensional spectral types for the HD stars (Houk 1994), and hence possibly too hot to show solar-like oscillations, or potentially contaminated. For the current test case, the number of stars was small enough that we visually checked the results, which confirmed all detections and the non-detection. The power spectra of a representative sample of the stars are shown in Figure 2, showing clear oscillation excess power and the frequency pattern required to measure both ν_{max} and $\Delta\nu$.

The neural network also supplies a rough estimate for ν_{max} , which we provided as a prior to 13 independent groups analyzing the power spectra to extract high-precision values of both ν_{max} , $\Delta\nu$, and their respective uncertainties using their preferred method. These methods have been thoroughly tested and described in the literature (see, e.g., Gaulme et al. 2009; Huber et al. 2009; Hekker et al. 2010; Mathur et al. 2010; Mosser et al. 2011; Kallinger et al. 2012; Corsaro & De Ridder 2014; Davies et al. 2016; Campante et al. 2017; Zinn et al. 2019).

From the 13 independent determinations of the global asteroseismic parameters we adopted as central reference value for $\Delta\nu$ and ν_{max} the results from the pipeline by Gaulme et al. (2009), as this method was on average closest to the ensemble mean after applying a 2σ outlier rejection. Uncertainties in the global asteroseismic parameters obtained by the selected pipeline are at the 1.9% and 2.4% level for $\Delta\nu$ and ν_{max} , respectively. These uncertainties are of comparable magnitude to those obtained from a single campaign with the K2 mission (see the Appendix in Stello et al. 2017) and about twice as large as those extracted from 50 days of *Kepler* observations (see Figures 3 and 4 in Hekker et al. 2012). We report the central values and statistical uncertainties in $\Delta\nu$ and ν_{max} from the selected pipeline for all targets in Table 1.

For each star, we take into account the scatter across the different methods by adding in quadrature the standard deviation among the central values retained after the 2σ outlier rejection procedure to the formal uncertainty reported by the selected reference method. This consolidation process yields median uncertainties of 3.9% in $\Delta\nu$ and 2.6% in ν_{max} , where the individual contribution arising from this systematic component to the total uncertainty is listed in Table 1. We note that we could decrease the level of uncertainties resulting from our “blind” statistical consolidation approach by for example checking the $\Delta\nu$ and ν_{max} results against the power spectra and/or échelle diagrams (see Figure 5 in Stello et al. 2011). However, we want to draw a realistic picture of the uncertainties one can expect when dealing with large ensembles of stars (as expected from *TESS*) where detailed “boutique” analysis/checking on a star-by-star basis is not practically feasible. Hence, our quoted uncertainties are conservative, but representative for analysis of *TESS* red giants where several pipelines are involved.

4. Derived Stellar Properties

We have determined stellar properties for a subsample of 17 stars that had spectroscopic measurements of effective temperature and chemical composition available in the literature. As

⁶⁵ <https://heasarc.gsfc.nasa.gov/cgi-bin/tess/webtess/wtv.py>

⁶⁶ TDA Data Release Notes—Data Release 3 for *TESS* Sectors 1+2 (<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2510028>).

Table 1
Measured and Derived Stellar Properties of Our Targets

TIC	HIP	ν_{\max} (μHz)	$\Delta\nu$ (μHz)	V (mag)	T_{eff} (K)	[Fe/H] (dex)	R (R_{\odot})	M (M_{\odot})	Age (Gyr)	Atmospheric Properties
13097379	114842	$59.10 \pm 1.50 \pm 1.01$	$6.02 \pm 0.03 \pm 0.24$	6.646 ± 0.010	4634 ± 80	0.04 ± 0.08	$8.49 \pm 0.28 \pm 0.17$	$1.22 \pm 0.08 \pm 0.06$	$6.10 \pm 1.06 \pm 0.97$	Luck (2015)
38574220	19805	$29.40 \pm 0.90 \pm 0.72$	$4.06 \pm 0.20 \pm 0.26$	5.577 ± 0.009	...	...	...	...	...	...
38828538	21253	$189.90 \pm 1.60 \pm 0.42$	$14.90 \pm 0.10 \pm 0.13$	5.896 ± 0.009	4828 ± 80	0.11 ± 0.08	$4.66 \pm 0.10 \pm 0.06$	$1.21 \pm 0.05 \pm 0.03$	$6.20 \pm 0.50 \pm 1.02$	Alves et al. (2015)
39082723	4293	$49.30 \pm 2.10 \pm 1.99$	$5.20 \pm 0.10 \pm 0.06$	5.574 ± 0.009	4706 ± 80	-0.05 ± 0.08	$9.30 \pm 0.27 \pm 0.17$	$1.19 \pm 0.09 \pm 0.07$	$5.90 \pm 1.20 \pm 1.37$	Alves et al. (2015)
47424090	112612	$28.30 \pm 1.80 \pm 1.90$	$3.40 \pm 0.10 \pm 0.29$	6.930 ± 0.010	...	...	...	...	...	...
70797228	655	$31.80 \pm 1.50 \pm 0.75$	$4.37 \pm 0.20 \pm 0.37$	5.787 ± 0.009	4750 ± 80	0.12 ± 0.08	$11.27 \pm 0.61 \pm 0.47$	$1.19 \pm 0.13 \pm 0.11$	$6.80 \pm 2.20 \pm 2.20$	Jones et al. (2011)
77116701	103071	$48.30 \pm 7.60 \pm 29.85$	$5.64 \pm 0.20 \pm 3.37$	8.568 ± 0.018	...	...	...	...	...	...
111750740	113148	$142.60 \pm 2.70 \pm 1.11$	$11.80 \pm 0.10 \pm 0.23$	5.658 ± 0.009	4688 ± 80	0.16 ± 0.08	$5.11 \pm 0.16 \pm 0.09$	$1.06 \pm 0.07 \pm 0.05$	$10.80 \pm 1.78 \pm 1.71$	Wittenmyer et al. (2016)
115011683	103836	$58.80 \pm 1.20 \pm 0.97$	$6.10 \pm 0.10 \pm 0.01$	6.057 ± 0.010	4590 ± 80	-0.13 ± 0.08	$7.92 \pm 0.21 \pm 0.22$	$1.04 \pm 0.07 \pm 0.07$	$9.90 \pm 1.63 \pm 2.01$	Wittenmyer et al. (2016)
129649472	105854	$31.80 \pm 1.20 \pm 1.39$	$4.20 \pm 0.20 \pm 0.11$	5.755 ± 0.009	4748 ± 80	0.28 ± 0.08	$10.85 \pm 0.60 \pm 0.24$	$1.13 \pm 0.12 \pm 0.06$	$8.50 \pm 2.76 \pm 1.87$	Jofré et al. (2015)
139756492	106566	$27.60 \pm 0.90 \pm 0.35$	$4.16 \pm 0.20 \pm 0.65$	6.819 ± 0.010	...	...	...	...	...	...
141280255	25918	$150.40 \pm 1.00 \pm 0.57$	$12.52 \pm 0.02 \pm 0.10$	5.307 ± 0.009	4630 ± 80	0.33 ± 0.08	$4.98 \pm 0.12 \pm 0.05$	$1.07 \pm 0.06 \pm 0.03$	$11.70 \pm 2.62 \pm 2.39$	Meléndez et al. (2008)
144335025	117075	$68.50 \pm 1.60 \pm 0.64$	$7.35 \pm 0.20 \pm 0.39$	6.194 ± 0.010	...	...	...	...	...	...
149347992	26190	$165.80 \pm 4.10 \pm 16.12$	$11.10 \pm 0.40 \pm 0.60$	6.405 ± 0.010	5132 ± 80	-0.17 ± 0.08	$7.20 \pm 0.38 \pm 0.20$	$2.17 \pm 0.22 \pm 0.06$	$0.80 \pm 0.30 \pm 0.10$	Randich et al. (1999)
155940286	1766	$73.20 \pm 1.30 \pm 0.32$	$7.40 \pm 0.02 \pm 0.11$	6.810 ± 0.010	4630 ± 80	0.03 ± 0.08	$6.95 \pm 0.18 \pm 0.14$	$1.01 \pm 0.06 \pm 0.04$	$12.00 \pm 1.78 \pm 36.07$	Wittenmyer et al. (2016)
175375523	114775	$60.00 \pm 1.10 \pm 0.30$	$5.80 \pm 0.10 \pm 0.14$	5.899 ± 0.009	4660 ± 80	0.26 ± 0.08	$9.00 \pm 0.30 \pm 0.58$	$1.38 \pm 0.09 \pm 0.21$	$4.50 \pm 0.76 \pm 1.35$	Jones et al. (2011)
183537408	117659	$57.90 \pm 1.10 \pm 0.80$	$6.20 \pm 0.20 \pm 0.42$	6.781 ± 0.010	...	...	...	...	...	...
204313960	113801	$106.00 \pm 3.30 \pm 1.47$	$9.40 \pm 0.50 \pm 0.43$	6.083 ± 0.010	4897 ± 80	-0.20 ± 0.08	$6.50 \pm 0.18 \pm 0.13$	$1.32 \pm 0.07 \pm 0.05$	$3.80 \pm 0.57 \pm 0.57$	Randich et al. (1999)
220517490	12871	$117.30 \pm 1.20 \pm 0.60$	$10.87 \pm 0.02 \pm 0.15$	5.846 ± 0.009	4961 ± 80	-0.26 ± 0.08	$5.61 \pm 0.11 \pm 0.10$	$1.10 \pm 0.04 \pm 0.04$	$6.10 \pm 0.50 \pm 1.18$	Alves et al. (2015)
237914586	17440	$47.00 \pm 1.40 \pm 1.33$	$5.74 \pm 0.20 \pm 0.08$	3.959 ± 0.009	...	...	...	...	...	...
270245797	109584	$72.20 \pm 1.70 \pm 0.64$	$6.60 \pm 0.10 \pm 0.27$	6.239 ± 0.009	4824 ± 80	-0.10 ± 0.08	$8.73 \pm 0.23 \pm 0.39$	$1.60 \pm 0.09 \pm 0.13$	$2.10 \pm 0.22 \pm 0.64$	Alves et al. (2015)
281597433	2789	$73.30 \pm 1.00 \pm 1.37$	$7.20 \pm 0.03 \pm 0.19$	6.163 ± 0.010	4700 ± 80	-0.41 ± 0.08	$6.77 \pm 0.15 \pm 0.24$	$0.95 \pm 0.05 \pm 0.08$	$11.00 \pm 1.35 \pm 2.73$	Randich et al. (1999)
439399563	343	$44.30 \pm 1.40 \pm 0.66$	$4.54 \pm 0.06 \pm 0.11$	5.892 ± 0.009	4778 ± 80	0.11 ± 0.08	$10.69 \pm 0.34 \pm 0.40$	$1.44 \pm 0.11 \pm 0.14$	$3.50 \pm 0.71 \pm 0.78$	da Silva et al. (2015)
441387330	102014	$46.60 \pm 0.80 \pm 0.86$	$5.25 \pm 0.10 \pm 0.25$	5.592 ± 0.009	4710 ± 80	-0.02 ± 0.08	$10.18 \pm 0.34 \pm 0.68$	$1.40 \pm 0.09 \pm 0.20$	$3.40 \pm 0.57 \pm 1.19$	Jones et al. (2011)

Note. Observed V -magnitudes are extracted from the Tycho-2 catalog. The global asteroseismic quantities and stellar properties include a statistical and systematic component derived as described in Sections 3 and 4, respectively. We report them here as $value \pm \sigma_{\text{sta}} \pm \sigma_{\text{sys}}$. The last column gives the reference from which we retrieved the central values of T_{eff} and [Fe/H] used for the grid-based modeling. Their uncertainties have been homogenized to 80 K and 0.08 dex, respectively (see Section 4).

(This table is available in its entirety in machine-readable form.)

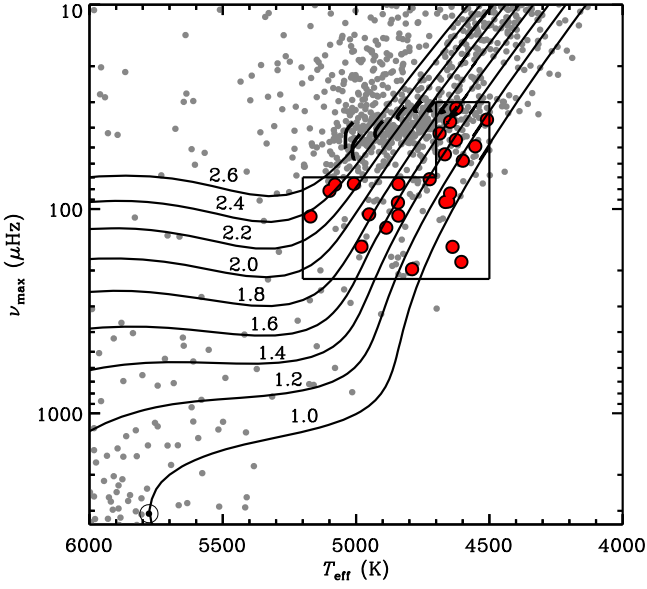


Figure 1. Asteroseismic HR diagram showing (predicted) ν_{\max} instead of luminosity. Red dots show the selected targets inside the black selection box. For reference, the Sun is shown as well as all *Hipparcos* stars brighter than sixth magnitude (gray dots). Solar metallicity MESA tracks from Stello et al. (2013) are shown to guide the eye with masses in solar units indicated (pre- and post- helium core-ignition phases are shown separately).

one of our goals is to follow the same analysis procedure expected for large ensembles of stars, we assumed fixed uncertainties in T_{eff} and $[\text{Fe}/\text{H}]$ of 80 K and 0.08 dex, which are at the level of those provided by current large-scale spectroscopic surveys. To extract the physical properties of our sample, the atmospheric information was complemented with the asteroseismic scaling relations:

$$\left(\frac{\Delta\nu}{\Delta\nu_{\odot}}\right)^2 \simeq \frac{\bar{\rho}}{\bar{\rho}_{\odot}} \quad (1)$$

$$\left(\frac{\nu_{\max}}{\nu_{\max,\odot}}\right) \simeq \frac{M}{M_{\odot}} \left(\frac{R}{R_{\odot}}\right)^{-2} \left(\frac{T_{\text{eff}}}{T_{\text{eff},\odot}}\right)^{1/2}, \quad (2)$$

where we adopted $\Delta\nu_{\odot} = 135.5$ (μHz) and $\nu_{\max,\odot} = 3140$ (μHz) as obtained by our reference pipeline from the analysis of solar data.

Seven teams independently applied grid-based modeling pipelines based on stellar evolution models or isochrones to determine the main physical properties of the targets (see Basu et al. 2012; Silva Aguirre et al. 2015; Rodrigues et al. 2017; Mints & Hekker 2018; Yıldız et al. 2019, and references therein). When matching the models to the atmospheric properties and the global asteroseismic parameters $\Delta\nu$ and ν_{\max} the pipelines yielded median uncertainties of $\sim 6\%$ in radius, $\sim 14\%$ in mass, and $\sim 50\%$ in age. These statistical uncertainties are of the same magnitude to those obtained with the K2 mission (Sharma et al. 2019), as expected from the similar resulting errors in the global seismic parameters described in Section 3, and about a factor of two larger than what can be achieved with the full duration of the *Kepler* observations (Pinsonneault et al. 2018).

In addition to the asteroseismic information, five of the pipelines can include parallaxes from *Gaia* DR2 (Gaia Collaboration et al. 2018) coupled with Tycho-2 (Høg et al. 2000) observed V -magnitudes in their fitting algorithm to

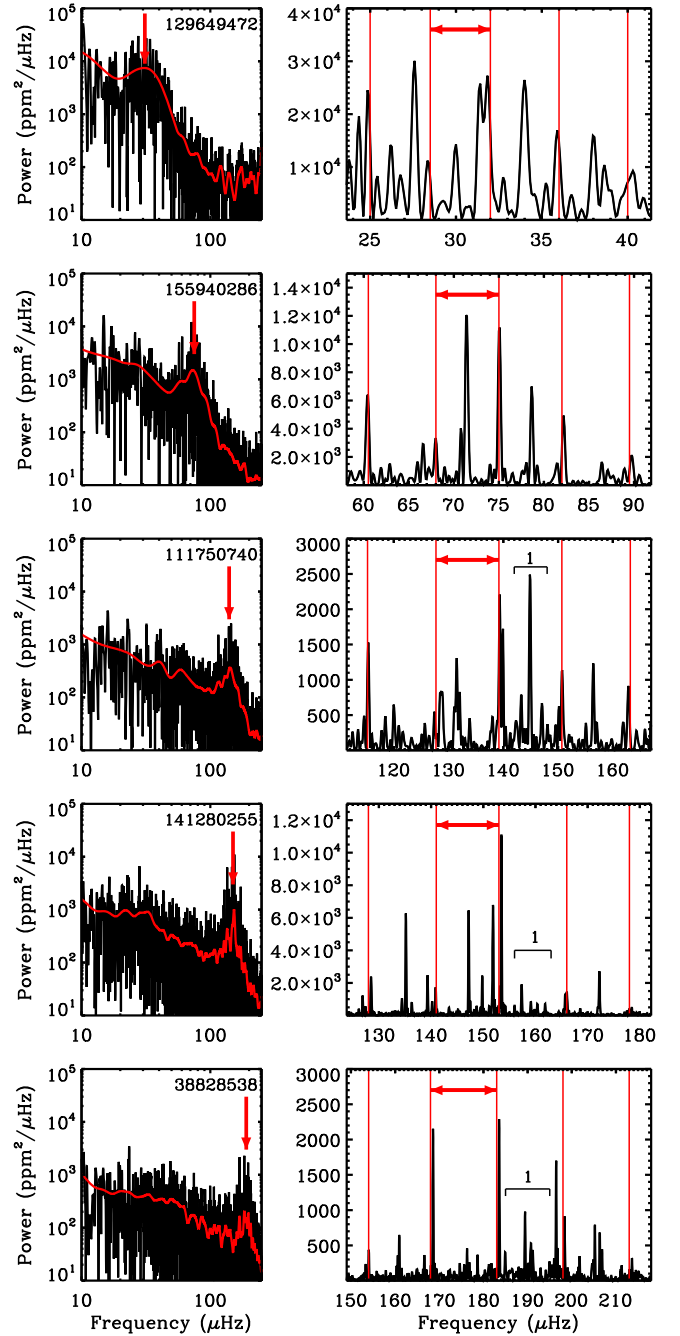


Figure 2. Power spectra sample of our targets representative of the ν_{\max} range that they cover from around the red clump (top) to the low luminosity red giant branch (bottom). Left panels: spectra shown in log–log space (smoothed in red) showing the location of the oscillation power excess, ν_{\max} , indicated by red arrows on top of a frequency-dependent granulation background and flat white noise component. Right panels: close-up of spectra showing locations of the roughly equally spaced radial modes (using red equally spaced vertical lines to guide the eye) and their average separation, $\Delta\nu$ (red horizontal arrows). In the three bottom rows multiple dipole ($l = 1$) mixed modes are resolved in between consecutive radial modes as indicated by the black brackets.

further constrain the stellar properties. As a consequence of having the additional constraint on stellar radius from the astrometry, the resulting uncertainties decrease to a level of $\sim 3\%$ in radius, $\sim 6\%$ in mass, and $\sim 20\%$ in age. This level of precision resembles that obtained with the use of the full length of asteroseismic observations from the nominal *Kepler* mission, and emphasizes the potential of *TESS* for Galactic studies using

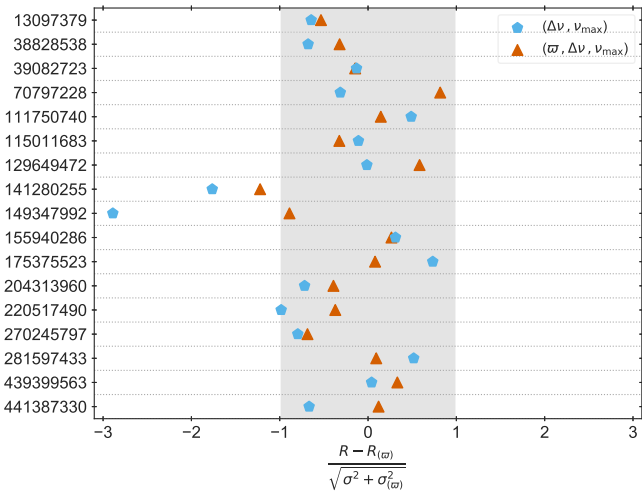


Figure 3. Comparison of stellar radii obtained with BASTA when fitting different combinations of input parameters: *Gaia* DR2 parallax and *V*-band magnitude (ϖ), global asteroseismic parameters ($\Delta\nu, \nu_{\max}$), and all combined ($\varpi, \Delta\nu, \nu_{\max}$). Effective temperature and composition are also fitted in all cases. See the text for details.

red giants given its larger sky coverage, simple and reproducible selection function, and one order of magnitude higher expected yield of asteroseismic detections than any other previous mission.

To illustrate the differences in the obtained stellar properties arising from the selection of fitted observables, Figure 3 shows the stellar radius obtained with one of the pipelines (BASTA; Silva Aguirre et al. 2015) when fitting different combinations of input parameters. The figure uses as the reference value the case when, in addition to the atmospheric properties, only the *Gaia* DR2 parallax and observed *V*-band magnitude are included in the fit. For the majority of the targets the results are consistent across the three sets within their formal statistical uncertainties. A summary of the measured and derived stellar properties for our targets can be found in Table 1, where we have listed the central BASTA pipeline, and determined the systematic contribution as the standard deviation across the results reported by all pipelines.

Two targets (TIC 141280255 and TIC 149347992) present a larger disagreement between the radii obtained with parallax and the seismic set ($\Delta\nu, \nu_{\max}$). We investigated whether these discrepancies were due to the quality of the astrometric data by computing the re-normalized unit weight error (RUWE)⁶⁷ for our sample of stars. In the case of TIC 141280255 we obtained a $\text{RUWE} = 1.98$, which is above the value recommended by the *Gaia* team as a criterion for a good astrometric solution ($\text{RUWE} \leq 1.4$). Therefore, we adopt for this star the stellar properties obtained from fitting the asteroseismic input only ($\Delta\nu, \nu_{\max}$).

In the case of TIC 149347992 the discrepancy is the result of predicted evolutionary phases: while the parallax-only solution suggests that the star is in the clump phase, the asteroseismic fit favors a star in the red giant branch. The combined fit therefore presents a bimodal distribution that encompasses these two families of solutions. A similar situation occurs in the fit of TIC 175375523, which shows agreement in the radius

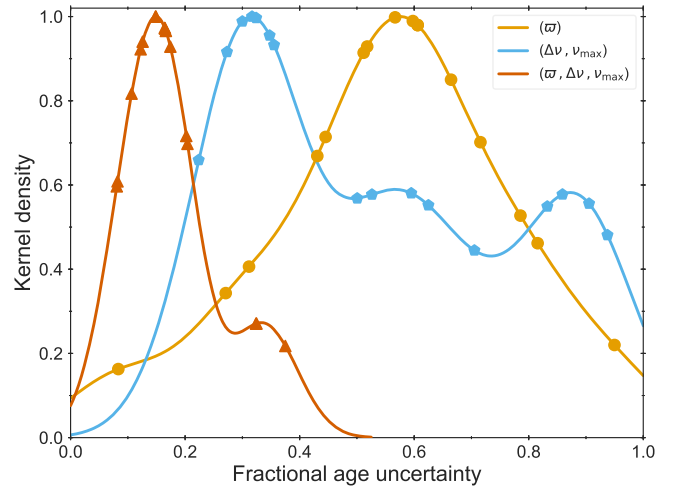


Figure 4. Distribution of fractional age uncertainties for our sample of stars determined by the BASTA pipeline fitting different combinations of available observables. The points indicate the individual values used to construct the Gaussian kernel density estimation. For better visualization we have excluded TIC 175375523 from the figure. See the text for details.

determined from different sets of input but has a fractional age uncertainty above unity when only ($\Delta\nu, \nu_{\max}$) are included in the fit. Its resulting age distribution is bimodal in this set as both red giant branch and clump models can reproduce the observations, but the inclusion of parallax information favors the red giant branch solution and accounts for the $\sim 17\%$ statistical uncertainty reported in Table 1. The availability of evolutionary classifications from deep neural networks trained on short *Kepler* data (Hon et al. 2018) would further decrease the obtained uncertainties by clearly disentangling these two scenarios.

In Figure 4 we plot the distribution of fractional age uncertainties obtained with BASTA for the three considered cases of input, showing the clear improvement in precision when asteroseismic information and parallax are simultaneously included in the fit. For visualization purposes we have excluded the target TIC 175375523 from the figure. Our stellar ages at the 20% level are significantly more precise than what is obtained by data-driven and neural-network methods trained using asteroseismic ages from *Kepler* (above the 30% level, see e.g., Mackereth et al. 2019). As a final remark, we note that asteroseismically derived properties of red giants are accurate to at least a similar level than our statistical uncertainties (below $\sim 5\%$ and $\sim 10\%$ for radii and masses, respectively; see the discussion in e.g., Pinsonneault et al. 2018, and references therein). We have made emphasis on our achieved precision instead of accuracy as our results could still be affected by a systematic component arising from uncertainties in evolutionary calculations, although recent investigations quantifying these effects at solar metallicity suggest that they are smaller than our statistical uncertainties (Silva Aguirre et al. 2019).

5. Conclusions

We presented the first ensemble analysis of red giant stars observed with the *TESS* mission. We selected a sample of 25 stars where we expected to detect oscillations based on their magnitude and parallax value, and analyzed the extracted light curves in search for asteroseismic signatures in the power spectra. Our main findings can be summarized as follows.

⁶⁷ See *Gaia* technical note GAIA-C3-TN-LU-LL-124-01 (<https://www.cosmos.esa.int/web/gaia/dr2-known-issues>).

1. We detected oscillations in all the stars (except one that was likely incorrectly listed as a red giant). Despite the modest number of stars in our sample, our detection yield supports that the *TESS* photometric performance is similar to that of *Kepler* and *K2* except shifted by about 5 magnitudes toward brighter stars due to its smaller aperture.
2. Individual pipelines retrieve the global asteroseismic parameters with uncertainties at the $\sim 2\%$ level in $\Delta\nu$ and $\sim 2.5\%$ in ν_{\max} , which, respectively, increase to $\sim 4\%$ and $\sim 3.5\%$ when we take into account the scatter across results. We consider these uncertainties to be representative for the forthcoming ensemble analysis of *TESS* targets observed in 1–2 sectors, as individual validation of the results will not be feasible due to the large number of targets observed.
3. Grid-based modeling techniques applying asteroseismic scaling relations were used to retrieve stellar properties for the 17 targets with spectroscopic information. Radii, masses, and ages were obtained with uncertainties at the 6%, 14%, and 50% level, and decrease to 3%, 6%, and 20% when parallax information from *Gaia* DR2 is included.

The expected number of red giants with detected oscillations by *TESS* ($\sim 500,000$ ⁶⁸) greatly surpasses the final yield of *Kepler* ($\sim 20,000$). In this respect, the combination of *TESS* observations, *Gaia* astrometry, and large-scale spectroscopic surveys holds a great potential for studies of Galactic structure where precise stellar properties (particularly ages) are of key importance. We note that the recently approved extended *TESS* mission will change the 30 minutes cadence to 10 minutes, making it possible to detect oscillations of stars of smaller radii using the full-frame images. This will enable more rigorous investigations of the asteroseismic mass scale for giants when anchored to empirical mass determinations (e.g., from eclipsing binaries) of turn-off and subgiant stars.




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⁶⁸ Based on a preliminary simulation of the full *TESS* sky (*TESS* GI Proposal No. G011188).

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