

Ground-Based Radar Observations of 65803 Didymos

S. P. Naidu¹, L. A. M. Benner¹, M. Brozovic¹, S. J. Ostro¹, M. C. Nolan², J. L. Margot³, J. D. Giorgini¹, C. Magri⁴, P. Pravec⁵, P. Scheirich⁵, D. J. Scheeres⁶, and M. Hirabayashi⁷

¹ Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology

² University of Arizona, Tucson

³ University of California, Los Angeles

⁴ University of Maine, Farmington

⁵ Astronomical Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

⁶ University of Colorado, Boulder

⁷ Purdue University

contact e-mail: snaidu@jpl.nasa.gov

Binary near-Earth asteroid 65803 Didymos is the target of the proposed Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) space mission. The mission would consist of a spacecraft that would impact the asteroid's satellite and the effect would be measured by space and ground-based observations.

We used radar observations obtained at Arecibo and Goldstone in 2003, and lightcurve data from Pravec et al. (2006) to model the shapes, sizes, and spin states of the components. The primary is top shaped and has an equatorial ridge similar to the one seen on 2000 DP107 (Naidu et al. 2015). A ~ 300 m long flat region is also seen along the equator. The primary has an equivalent diameter of 780 m ($\pm 10\%$) and its extents along the principal axes are 826 m, 813 m, and 786 m (10% uncertainties). It has a spin period of 2.2600 \pm 0.0001 h. A grid search for the spin pole resulted in the best fit at ecliptic (longitude, latitude) = (296, +71) degrees (± 15 degrees). This estimate is consistent with the spin pole being aligned to the binary orbit normal at (310, -84) degrees. Dividing the primary mass of 5.24e11 kg (Fang Margot 2012) by the model volume we estimate a bulk density of 2100 kg m⁻³ ($\pm 30\%$).

We estimated the motion of the satellite in successive images and used a shift-and-sum technique to boost its signal while mitigating smearing due to translational motion. This allowed us to obtain size and bandwidth estimates of the satellite. The visible range extent of the satellite is roughly 60-75 m at the 15 m resolution of the Arecibo images. Assuming that the true extent is twice the visible extent, we obtain a diameter estimate of 120-150 m. The bandwidth of the satellite suggests a spin period between 9-12 h that is consistent with the orbit period of 11.9 hours and with synchronous rotation.

We will present the physical characterization of the system and prospects for radar observations during the planned DART impact date.