



One of our planets is missing!

What science has to say

About 4.4 billion YA, with our Earth still forming, an ancient, Mars-sized celestial body that we have named Theia collided with the planet then occupying the orbit now taken up by the Earth. The impact was violent, temporarily deforming the Earth and eventually giving birth to the Moon and Asteroid Belt.¹ The hit is thought to have given Earth its characteristic tilted axis (and seasons), to have kicked off plate tectonics, and to have helped to moderate the climate. A huge amount of debris was blasted into space, some of it coming together to form first a disk around the shattered Earth and, by the pull of gravity, eventually the Moon. Other debris, like the shattered pellets of a broken windshield, became the Asteroid Belt.

This is the lead theory on the origin of our Moon, inasmuch as it is unusually large for a satellite and its geology is very similar to that of Earth. Also, the original impact would have loaded Earth with a lot of energy, accounting for its relatively rapid spin for a rocky planet.

Scientists cannot, however, explain where, for sure, Theia went after the collision. Their best guess is that it wound up *under* Africa and the Atlantic Ocean, in the form of so-called large low-shear velocity provinces (LLSVPs), discovered by means of seismic studies. LLSVPs are not only denser than the surrounding mantle, but they have a different mix of rock. If the LLSVPs are indeed leftovers of Theia, they would be physical evidence of the long-ago celestial event.²

There are other theories. In the capture theory, the Moon is thought to have been snagged by Earth's gravity. But the similarity of the Moon and Earth geologies renders this theory hard to accept. The conformation theory, where the two bodies formed simultaneously but separately, is supported by that similarity, but there are other questions about the theory.

According to NASA, even the Theia theory raises questions: How much of Theia got blown into space and how much became embedded in Earth? Particularly, scientists have some evidence of Theia's mantle, but what happened to its core?³

One possibility is that a lot of Theia ricocheted into a prolonged elliptical and eccentric orbit *within* the solar system. Separately from that conjecture, two California Institute of Technology astrophysicists, Mike Brown and Konstantin Batygin, published a paper in January 2016 "suggesting that a massive planet could be stirring up the icy bodies of the Kuiper Belt, a ring of material at the edge of the solar system."⁴ To account for the detected disturbances, they projected an orbit of about 200 astronomical units (AU) from the sun and a maximum distance of 1,200 AU. (One AU = ca. 93 million miles [150 million kilometers], the distance from the Sun to Earth.) That makes for an orbit of roughly 10,000 Earth years.⁵

See an enlightening [interview with Konstantin Batygin](#). In another interview that, unfortunately, I could not locate, Batygin asserts he is better than 99.9% sure of his conclusion.

Not everyone agrees with Batygin and Brown. Sitchin would agree with the presence of a planet and with the prolonged and eccentric orbit. He predicted as much from his extensive work with the Mesopotamian sources. However, he might well have pinpointed the actual duration of the orbit: 3,600 Earth years. He dubbed the length a *shar*, based on a name mentioned by Berosus (fl. ca. 290 BCE), a Chaldean priest of Bel (aka Marduk) in Babylon.⁶ Among the reasons to accept that this number is the correct one is the *Sumerian King List*. In the prediluvian part of the list, Sumerian kings are listed with reigns that span thousands of years—all multiples of 3,600, rather as the U.S. president's terms are measured in multiples of four whole years. Sitchin maintains that 3,600 Earth years was the "year" (the full orbit) on the home planet of Nibiru (*12th Planet*, pp. 247–250).

Another dissenter, Ann-Marie Madigan asserts that the objects in the solar system could have "self-organized," accounting for their unusual orbits. She and her co-author Michael McCourt of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics found that, "if the objects in the scattered disk roughly equal the mass of Earth, they could have dragged themselves to

their current orbits within about 600 million years of the solar system's birth." Hence there is no need for a missing planet.

But, say Batygin and Brown, there isn't enough mass—now. "[T]he disk of material that birthed the planets may have started out with enough mass, but interactions with the giant planets would have quickly tossed it out of the solar system."⁷ Although the Cassini space probe (launched October 15, 1997, targeted on the Saturn system⁸) is not sensing any such disturbances, researchers at the University of Arizona "reveal half a dozen ice-covered rocks whose orbits appear to fit with the presence of a distant planet."⁹

So we can say the jury is still out, except for the fact that NASA has invited the public to search for "undiscovered worlds in the outer reaches of our solar system and in neighboring interstellar space." A NASA-funded website called Backyard Worlds: Planet 9 (<http://backyardworlds.org>) asks anyone to take part in the search, supplying short videos captured by NASA's Wide-field Infrared Survey Explorer (WISE). (It is called NEOWISE now, upon its reinitiation in 2013 after a two-year shutdown). Calling on human eyes to do the search enables searchers to distinguish artifacts ("false bogies") from actual targets and is reminiscent of Clyde Tombaugh's technique that he used to discover Pluto in 1930.¹⁰ Although the initiative's stated aim is to detect near-earth objects (NEOs), the shout-out can certainly serve as a means of spotting an oncoming planet.

What the Ancients have to say

The Sumerian *Enuma Elish* (*Epic of Creation*) is regarded by scholars as the fundamental Mesopotamian creation story. It is an epic poem that speaks of the creation of humankind, as well as the struggle between chaos and order preceding the creation of the universe, and the rise of Marduk as the supreme deity of Babylon.¹¹ (See Chapter 3 of *Listening to the Ancients* for a fuller description of the *Epic*, its history, and Sitchin's interpretation.) The poem was copied again and again over the centuries for reading during Akitu, the Babylonian festival of the New Year held in the spring, which celebrated the annual flooding of the Mesopotamian rivers—so needed for the growing season.¹² With each copying, the champion of the gods and ultimately the chief deity was the god of the day. All of the tables found at the city of Ashur, Kish (Ashurbanipal's library at Nineveh, Sultantepe), for example, depicts its tutelary god Assur as the hero. Marduk, the god of Babylon, is prominent in most of the copies we have because Babylonian scribes produced most of them.

All the tablets containing the myth found at Ashur and other sites were created ca. 1200 BCE. However, they are—so say the experts—all clearly copies of a much older version going back to long before the reign of King Hammurabi of Babylon (1792–1750 BCE, i.e.,

2800–2400 BCE¹³), who designated the god Marduk as the patron and supreme deity of Babylon.¹⁴

Strikingly, the *Epic* has more of an astronomical context than just about all other creation tales: “[T]he *Enuma Elish* turns out to be a mixture of theogony and cosmogony, since every divinity is associated with a planet or a star according to the Sumerian and Babylonian customs, translating the myth into a cosmogonic form.”¹⁵

Enuma Elish raises a disquieting question: How did people in the early third millennium know about the solar system, planets, moons, and the like? As it turns out, they seemed to have known a lot.

In fact, the early Mesopotamians kept surprisingly accurate track of astronomical events. Not only were they proficient in sky watching, but their system was at the roots of modern astronomy. For example, ephemerides are tables of the predicted positions of celestial bodies. George Sarton¹⁶ found two sets of Mesopotamian ephemerides: a Babylonian-era (later) version and a much, much earlier one from Uruk (one of the first of Sumerian cities), which was “more sophisticated and more accurate” (than its later version). This finding was buttressed by O. Neugebauer, who concluded that the latter-day tables, as precise as they were, were derived arithmetically and were givens, not to be questioned. This finding was further confirmed by Alfred Jeremias, who concluded that the Mesopotamians understood the phenomenon of *retrograde*, by which some planets seem to be going in the wrong direction—“backing up.” To understand the reasons, astronomers back then would have had to have grasped the notion of a solar system with orbiting planets and, sometimes, apparent retrograde motion.¹⁷

Where did they get such sophisticated tables and notions? Don’t forget: Sumeria was full-blown civilization just a few steps out from the Stone Age (see *Listening to the Ancients*, “Sumeria: A History of Firsts,” pp. 52ff., for more on the sudden appearance of Sumeria). Where else could they have gotten such information except from space-faring colonizers of Earth?

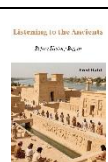
Nibiru

For our purpose here, however, the *Enuma Elish* (the *Epic*) speaks of an unknown planet, the home planet of the colonizers: Nibiru. Not only that, it describes its origin and the creation of the Moon in a catastrophic collision between Tiamat, a former dweller of what is now Earth’s orbit, and a rogue celestial body. (Sound familiar?) The impact resulted in the formation of the Earth, Moon, and Asteroid Belt and in the leftovers of the rogue careening

into a multi-millennial, elliptical, and eccentric orbit. This is the home planet of Earth’s colonizers, the Anunnaki.¹⁸

Now, Nibiru, although recognized in Sumerological scholarly literature, has been snatched up into pop lore. It has become associated with the likes of Nancy Lieder, who founded Zetatalk, the website (<https://www.zetatalk.com/>) in 1995. According to Lieder, the grays, called Zetans, implanted a communication device in her brain, and they told her the Hale–Bopp comet was a fraud—merely another star in the heavens and nowhere near Earth. She did warn, however, that a Planet X was going to collide with Earth and wipe us all out. The prediction became associated with the Mayan calendar event of 2012, was embraced by various doomsday groups, obliged Zecharia Sitchin to publicly disavow any connection between his writings and predictions of a cataclysm, and had to “survive” Christian numerologist David Meade’s announcement that Nibiru would hit on September 23, 2017.¹⁹

Despite these unfortunate associations, Nibiru is a player in the *Epic*. It is likely (to me) that Nibiru the planet was more of a player than Marduk the “god” was in the later copies—and perhaps the hero—of the original versions. That is, the planet had more of a subordinate role in the latter-day copies, while Marduk stepped into the role of supremacy. Although Sitchin never said so (that I could find), my speculation is that the original *Epic* might have been closer to an account of the event that spun off the home planet Nibiru to the outer reaches of the solar system (the Abzug): It was a stylized telling of where the Anunnaki came from. By the time of the late Babylonian days (reign of Hammurabi [ca. 1792–ca. 1750 bce]²⁰), Marduk—the living, breathing “god”—had achieved his goal of supremacy through conspiracy and conflict, becoming the national god of Babylon (*Genesis Revisited*, p. 41). The *Epic* had to be dusted off and revamped as a testament to that supremacy: Marduk *had to* come away as the greatest of all the gods.²¹



For a fuller account of the story the missing planet, see [Listening to the Ancients: Before History Began](#).

Takeaway

It seems astounding that recognized astrophysicists can propose a theory that the solar system is missing a planet but avert their gaze from accounts of the distant past.

Particularly in these times when the U.S. federal government is releasing *some* of what it

knows about UFOs/UAPs, I find it odd that a mega-agency of the U.S. federal government and eminent, respected astrophysicists can take an investigation into a missing planet as a legitimate professional pursuit but consistently refer to a documented corpus of (ancient) testimony as pseudoscience. Perhaps someday we can scrape away the adherents with tinfoil headgear and follow up on what the ancients have actually told us.

Notes

¹ “Asteroid Facts,” NASA, n.d., <https://science.nasa.gov/solar-system/asteroids/facts/>

² On this point, see also “Where Is Planet Theia Now? Inside Earth and the Moon,” ScienceInsights, March 14, 2025, <https://scienceinsights.org/where-is-planet-theia-now-inside-earth-and-the-moon/>

³ nasaspacenews, “4.4 Billion Years Ago, a Planet Collided with Earth—And Changed Everything,” NASA Space News, February 19, 2025, <https://nasaspacenews.com/2025/02/4-4-billion-years-ago-a-planet-collided-with-earth-and-changed-everything/>

⁴ Nola Taylor Redd, “Planet Nine: Theories about the Hypothetical Planet,” Space.com, November 29, 2017, <https://www.space.com/33480-planet-nine.html>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ “Berosus,” Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Berosus>

⁷ Redd.

⁸ “Cassini-Huygens,” NASA, n.d., <https://science.nasa.gov/mission/cassini/>

⁹ Redd.

¹⁰ Francis Reddy, “NASA-funded Website Lets Public Search for New Nearby Worlds,” NASA, February 15, 2017, <https://www.nasa.gov/solar-system/nasa-funded-website-lets-public-search-for-new-nearby-worlds/>

¹¹ “The Enuma Elish: Creation and the Stars Above,” Mythology Worldwide, <https://babylonian.mythologyworldwide.com/the-enuma-elish-creation-and-the-stars-above/>

¹² “Enuma Elish: Assyro-Babylonian Epic,” Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Enuma-Elish>

¹³ Alessandro Demontis, “Astronomic Analysis of the Enuma Elish,” n.d., https://www.academia.edu/44642366/ASTRONOMIC_ANALYSIS_OF_THE_ENUMA_ELISH

¹⁴ Joshua J. Mark, “Enuma Elish—the Babylonian Epic of Creation—Full Text,” World History Encyclopedia, May 4, 2018, <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/225/enuma-elish---the-babylonian-epic-of-creation---fu/>

¹⁵ Demontis.

¹⁶ George Sarton, “Chaldean Astronomy of the Last Three Centuries b.c.,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 75, no. 3 (1955): 166–173.

¹⁷ Alfred Jeremias, “Astronomical Cuneiform Texts: Babylonian Ephemerides of the Seleucid Period for the Motion of the Sun, the Moon, and the Planets in vol. 5, in book series *Sources in the History of Mathematics and Physical Sciences* (Institute for Advanced Study and Lund Humphries in English, 1955). See also *12th Planet*, pp. 185–186 and Fred Dahl, *Listening to the Ancients: Before History Began* (Chester, NY: Inkwell, 2026), pp. 89–90.

¹⁸ Center for Astrophysics and Space Astronomy (CASA), “Nibiru,” n.d., <https://casa.colorado.edu/~dduncan/pseudoscience/Nibiru.html>. This description is presented from the perspective of Nibiru being the stuff of myth; however, the description of the collision and its effects is close enough to Sitchin’s description.

¹⁹ “Nancy Lieder and the Origins of Nibiru,” ScienceABC, n.d., <https://www.scienceabc.com/nature/universe/what-is-nibiru>; see also “Nibiru Cataclysm,” Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nibiru_cataclysm

²⁰ “Neo-Babylonian Empire,” Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neo-Babylonian_Empire

²¹ Dahl, p. 94.