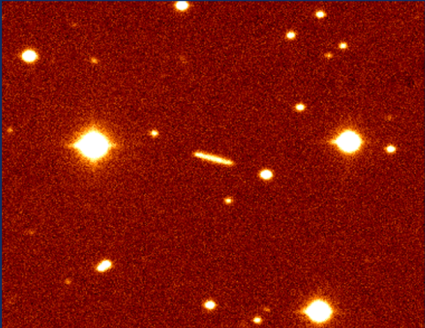


Summary Information Sheet

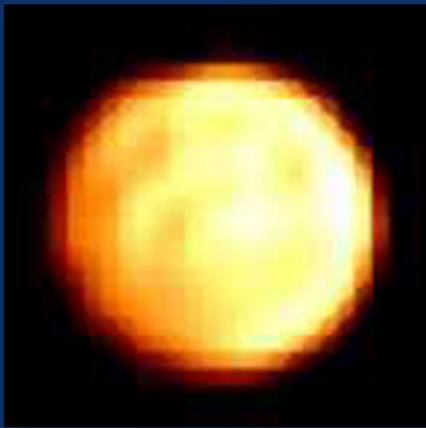
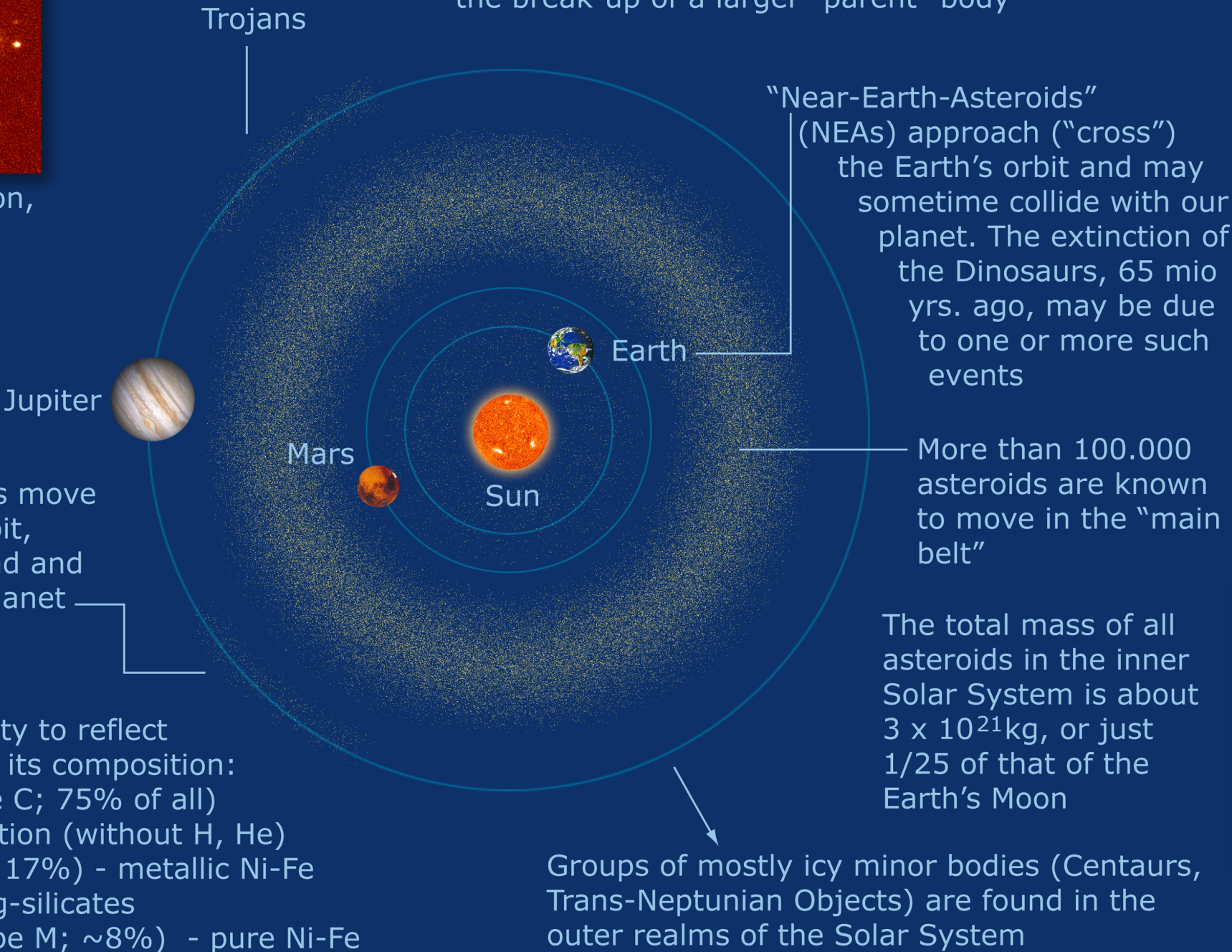
Asteroids

Asteroids – also known as “minor planets” – are small rocky bodies that orbit the Sun along with the major planets. The first asteroid, Ceres, was found in 1801 and, as most of the others, moves in the “main belt” between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. With ~950 km diameter, it is also the largest asteroid known there.



Due to their motion, asteroids produce “trails” on long-exposure photos

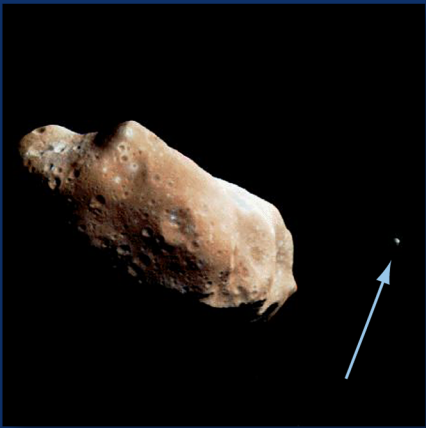
Many asteroids move in similar orbits and belong to “families”. Each family probably represents the break-up of a larger “parent” body



Asteroid Ceres
(ground-based photo)



Asteroid Gaspra
(NASA Galileo 1991)



Asteroid Ida with moon Dactyl
(Galileo 1993)



Asteroid Eros
(NASA NEAR 1999)

Physical Data

For comparison

Property
Distance from the Sun
Rotation period
Dimensions
Mass
Density

Ceres
414 mio km
9.074 hrs
960 x 933 km
9.4×10^{20} kg
2050 kg/m ³

Gaspra
332 mio km
3.29 years
19 x 12 x 11 km
?
?

Deimos
-
1.26 days
15 x 12 x 11 km
1.8×10^{15} kg
1700 kg/m ³

Images from ESO, ESA or NASA except otherwise stated

Concept: Bernhard Mackowiak