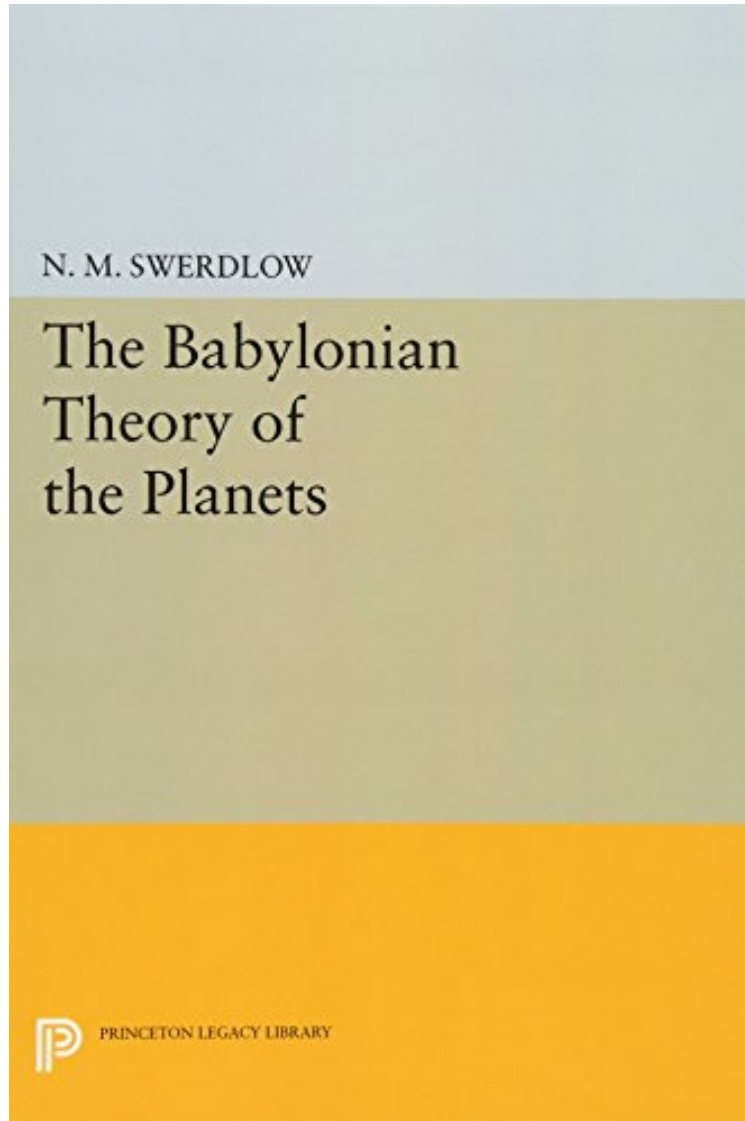


## The Babylonian Theory of the Planets (Princeton Legacy Library)

*N. M. Swerdlow*

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#4275362 in Books N M Swerdlow 2014-07-14 2014-07-14Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.25 x .60 x 5.90l, .83 #File Name: 0691605505266 pagesThe Babylonian Theory of the Planets Princeton Legacy Library | File size: 61.Mb

**N. M. Swerdlow : The Babylonian Theory of the Planets (Princeton Legacy Library)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Babylonian Theory of the Planets (Princeton Legacy Library):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Essential reading for ancient historyBy Kerry V. MagruderThis is the most authoritative and significant single volume available dealing with ancient Near Eastern mathematical astronomy. The mathematics may be difficult in places for non-specialists, but that fact alone confirms Swerdlow's

argument that the accomplishments of the ancient scribes were impressive and sophisticated. Technical aspects are explained as clearly as possible, yet Swerdlow does not duck larger issues, such as the significance of Near Eastern astronomy for the rise of ancient science. No longer will historians wish to credit the first origin of science to the (non-mathematical) pre-Socratic philosophers of ancient Greece. Everyone interested in ancient science will need to take account of Swerdlow's arguments in this book. It will be a classic, and should come out in a less expensive paperback edition!

2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. The best treatment.  
By R. E. Hall  
This is the authoritative account. It could be more pellucidly presented, but I'd have supposed that any high school junior who has studied his arithmetic, basic algebra, and plane geometry decently well would have no problems working through the mathematics.

6 of 13 people found the following review helpful. a difficult read  
By Michael G McGauley  
Even with a B.S. degree in physics, I had a hard time keeping up with the mathematical and scientific details in this book. It is very hard reading.

In the second millennium b.c., Babylonian scribes assembled a vast collection of astrological omens, believed to be signs from the gods concerning the kingdom's political, military, and agricultural fortunes. The importance of these omens was such that from the eighth or seventh until the first century, the scribes observed the heavens nightly and recorded the dates and locations of ominous phenomena of the moon and planets in relation to stars and constellations. The observations were arranged in monthly reports along with notable events and prices of agricultural commodities, the object being to find correlations between phenomena in the heavens and conditions on earth. These collections of omens and observations form the first empirical science of antiquity and were the basis of the first mathematical science, astronomy. For it was discovered that planetary phenomena, although irregular and sometimes concealed by bad weather, recur in limited periods within cycles in which they are repeated on nearly the same dates and in nearly the same locations.

N. M. Swerdlow's book is a study of the collection and observation of ominous celestial phenomena and of how intervals of time, locations by zodiacal sign, and cycles in which the phenomena recur were used to reduce them to purely arithmetical computation, thereby surmounting the greatest obstacle to observation, bad weather. The work marks a striking advance in our understanding of both the origin of scientific astronomy and the astrological divination through which the kingdoms of ancient Mesopotamia were governed.

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About the Author is Professor in the Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics and the Department of History at the University of Chicago.