

***Planet* — The Birth of a New Epoch in Planetary Science**

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The story of planetary science is one of audacity and ingenuity. The Apollo missions of the 1960s–1970s, which brought lunar samples to Earth, revolutionized our understanding of the Moon’s origin and the solar system’s violent infancy. These endeavors were not merely scientific triumphs but geopolitical statements, emblematic of humanity’s dual drive for knowledge and dominance.

In recent decades, the field has undergone a renaissance. NASA’s *Perseverance* rover drills into Martian bedrock, ESA’s *Rosetta* comet mission unveiled primordial organic molecules, and Japan’s *Hayabusa2* returned asteroid samples that may hold clues to Earth’s watery origins. China, too, has emerged as a cosmic trailblazer: the *Chang’e* lunar missions (2004–present) have retrieved pristine samples from the far side of the Moon and laid groundwork for a permanent scientific research station. Moreover, *Tianwen-1* mission’s successful landing on Mars in 2021 marked China’s arrival as a first-tier spacefaring nation.

The geopolitical undertones of space exploration are undeniable. The competition in deep-space exploration reflects underlying contests over national governance ideologies and prestige. A nation’s ability to shape the narrative of planetary science—through mission design, data interpretation, and theoretical frameworks—is inextricably linked to its soft power. Of the 16 SCI-indexed planetary science journals, 10 are US-based; the remainder are European. This asymmetry not only stifles diverse perspectives but also makes it extremely difficult for scientists in developing countries to publish their work in elite western journals, especially in an age of intensifying techno-nationalism.

Furthermore, China’s 15th Five-Year Plan (2026–2030) explicitly prioritizes deep-space exploration, with upcoming missions targeting near-Earth asteroids, Jupiter and Venus. These projects endeavors will generate petabytes of data, demanding robust platforms for analysis, interpretation, and open dissemination.

The launch of *Planet* under the aegis of Research Center for Planetary Science (RCPS) at Chengdu University of Technology represents a new platform for innovation, collaboration, and discovery. We are honored to contribute to this global endeavor and look forward to engaging with the international scientific community to advance our understanding of the planets and the solar system.

Planetary science, once confined to telescopic observations and theoretical models, has evolved into a multidisciplinary juggernaut propelled by robotic explorers, sample-return missions, and cutting-edge simulations. As we stand at the precipice of a new era in cosmic exploration, the launch of *Planet*—a peer-reviewed, open-access journal dedicated to planetary science—is both a response to history’s call and a beacon for future discovery.

In 1968, as Apollo 8 captured Earthrise over the lunar horizon, Archibald MacLeish wrote “To see the Earth as it truly is—small and blue and beautiful in that eternal silence... —is to see ourselves as riders on the Earth together.” *Planet* embodies this ethos. As we chronicle the birth cries of distant worlds and the whispers of ancient meteorites, let us remember: every discovery is a mirror—reflecting not just the cosmos but also the boundless potential of a united scientific community.

Welcome to *Planet*. Let’s explore.