

There are a couple of mistakes which are probably just careless errors and probably most readers won't notice them. I almost always quibble about style, though here less so than is usually the case, and there are few actual typos. There are sixteen pages of colour 'plates' near the middle of the book as well as several black-and-white figures scattered throughout. The former are fine, but the latter could use more detail. Even several years ago I encountered books with high-resolution colour figures printed on regular (as opposed to slick) paper, so I wonder if printing prices really still play a role. Three pages of acknowledgements mention, among others, Frank Drake and Carl Sagan, both of whom she knew personally, as well as her husband. As is to be expected, the four pages of image credits often mention NASA. Somewhat unusually for a popular-science book, there are eight pages of 'Notes' (all references rather than endnotes; neither are there any footnotes); the index of somewhat more than twenty pages is especially thorough. The book is not as long as it looks since it is essentially double-spaced, with enough room for a line of text between two others (by contrast, interline spacing in this *Magazine* is less than 19% of the height of a line; the font size is about the same).

The fact that the French book is a best-seller confirms my impression that there should be a wide readership for such a book, from somewhat older children to the proverbial 'interested layman' to professional astronomers (at least those who don't work in planetary science, but maybe some of them as well). Even those who have read many books on the topic will probably learn something new from this well-written up-to-date book. — PHILLIP HELBIG.

### References

- (1) D. Schulze-Makuch & W. Bains, *The Cosmic Zoo: Complex Life on Many Worlds* (Springer), 2017.
- (2) P. Helbig, *The Observatory*, **138**, 174, 2018.
- (3) M. E. Tegmark, *Our Mathematical Universe* (Allen Lane, London), 2014.
- (4) T. Hertog, *On the Origin of Time: Stephen Hawking's Final Theory* (Transworld), 2023.
- (5) P. Helbig, *The Observatory*, **134**, 150, 2014.
- (6) P. Helbig, *The Observatory*, **144**, 201, 2024.

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### Here and There

#### HOW ABOUT PLANET EARTH, FOR EXAMPLE?

Planets smaller than Neptune with a gaseous atmosphere don't exist in the solar system, but they're plentiful around other stars. —*Sky & Telescope*, February 2026, p. 11.

#### A LUCKY REGION?

**MARS** can still be seen in the evening sky, although the length of time during which it is visible is rapidly decreasing. After the middle of the month it will be difficult to still see the red planet without binoculars or a telescope. In northern Germany one will search for it in vain. [Original: **MARS** kann noch am Abendhimmel gesehen werden, wengleich seine Sichtbarkeitszeiten rapide abnehmen. Nach der Monatsmitte wird es schwierig, den roten Planeten noch ohne Fernglas oder Teleskop zu erkennen. In Norddeutschland wird man ihn vergeblich suchen.] —*Kosmos Himmelsjahr 2025*, p. 156