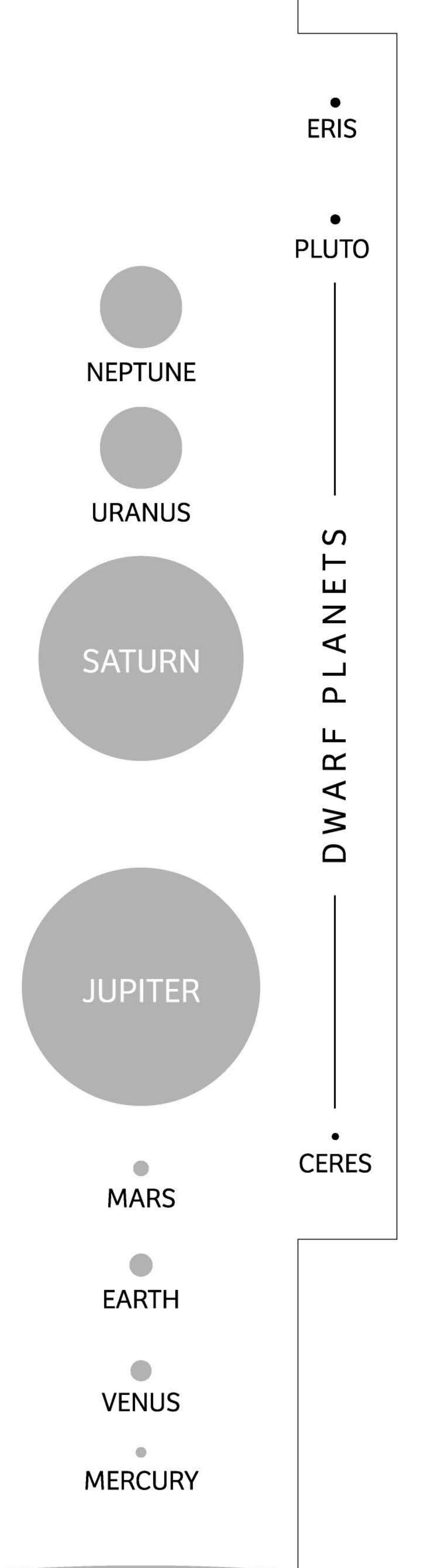
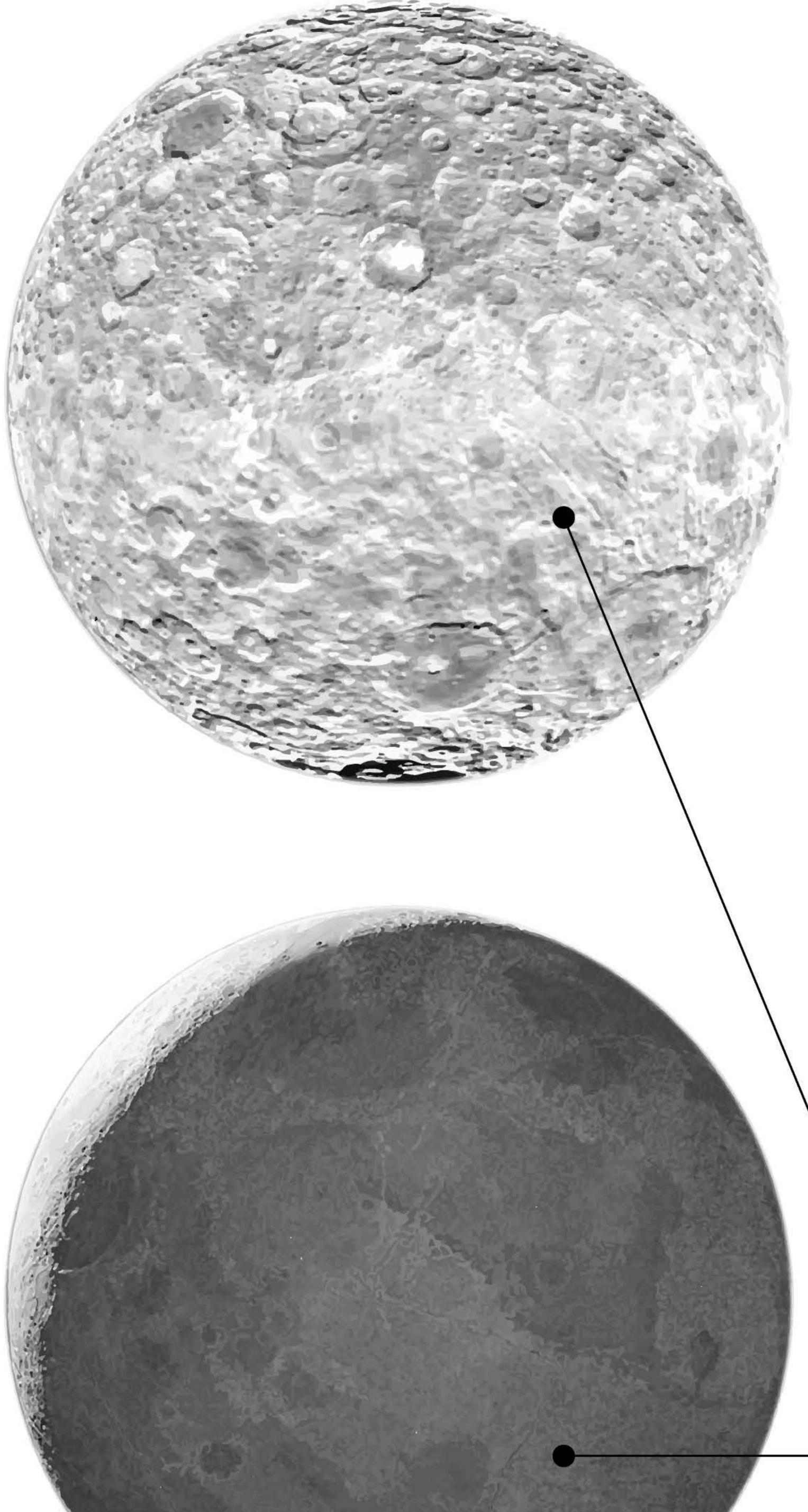


THE DWARF PLANETS: PLUTO, CERES & ERIS





Dwarf planets are a new category of solar system body, defined by the International Astronomical Union in 2006 after the discovery of Eris. There are currently 5 recognised dwarf planets: Ceres, Pluto, Eris, Makemake and Haumea, and there are thought to be many more beyond the orbit of Neptune. Ceres was the first to be officially discovered, on January 1, 1801 by Giuseppe Piazzi. It was named after the Roman goddess of the harvest, of growing plants, and of motherly love.

Pluto was discovered in 1930 by Clyde Tombaugh, and was originally classified as a planet. It is made of rock and ice, and its moon Charon was discovered in 1978. They are only 20,000 km apart, and orbit each other every 6.39 Earth days.

Eris is the largest dwarf planet in the solar system and is the largest object found in orbit around the Sun since the discovery of Neptune and its moon Triton in 1846. It has a diameter between 2,400 and 3,000 kilometres (1,490 to 1,860 miles) and is 27% more massive than Pluto.

PLUTO STATISTICS

Diameter: 2,344 km (0.183 x Earth)

Mass: 1.3 x 10²² kg

Mean distance from the Sun: 39.5 AU*

(5.9 billion km)

CERES STATISTICS

Diameter: 980 x 910 km (0.076 x Earth)

Mass: $9.43 \times 10^{20} \text{ kg}$

Mean distance from the Sun: 2.77 AU*

(414 million km)

ERIS STATISTICS

Diameter: 2,600 km (0.203 x Earth)

Mass: 1.67 x 10²² kg

Mean distance from the Sun: 97 AU*

(14,5 billion km)

SUN

^{*} One Astronomical Unit (AU) = mean distance of the Earth from the Sun.

^{**} Sidereal time is time kept with respect to distant stars.