

Oldest map of the world on nearly 3,000-year-old Babylonian tablet deciphered to reveal surprisingly familiar story

The “oldest map of the world in the world” on a Babylonian clay tablet was deciphered over multiple centuries to reveal a surprisingly familiar story, according to a recent video published by the British Museum.

The cuneiform tablet from the 6th century BC shows an aerial view map of Mesopotamia — roughly modern-day Iraq — and what the Babylonians believed lay beyond the known world at the time.

The ancient artifact, discovered in the Middle East, was acquired by the British Museum in 1882 but remained a mystery for centuries until curators found a missing part and transcribed its cuneiform.

The tablet has several paragraphs of the cuneiform on its backside and above the map diagram describing the creation of the Earth and what its writer believed existed beyond it.

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