Binary survival in the outer solar system

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A B S T R A C T

As indicated by their special characteristics, the cold classical Kuiper belt objects (KBOs) formed and survived at ≥42–47 au. Notably, they show a large fraction of equal-size binaries whose formation is probably related to the accretion of KBOs themselves. These binaries are uncommon in other –hot, resonant, scattered– populations, which are thought to have been implanted from the massive disk below 30 au to > 30 au during Neptune’s migration. Here we highlight the possibility that equal-size binaries formed in the disk but were subsequently removed by impacts and/or dynamical effects (e.g., scattering encounters with Neptune). We determine the dependence of these processes on the size and separation of binary components. Our results indicate that tighter binaries, if they formed in the massive disk, have relatively good chances of survival (unless the disk was long-lived). In contrast, the widest binaries in the hot population, such as 2002 VF130, have a very low survival probability (< 1%) even if the massive disk was short-lived. They may represent a trace of lucky survivors of a much larger population of the original disk binaries, or they formed at ~30–40 au and dodged the impact- and encounter-related perturbations that we studied here. We find that all known satellites of the largest KBOs would survive during the dynamical implantation of these bodies in the Kuiper belt. The low orbital eccentricities of Pluto’s small moons may have been excited by impacts and/or encounters of the Pluto system to Neptune.

1. Introduction

The Kuiper belt is a population of icy bodies beyond the orbit of Neptune (Fig. 1). The orbital structure of the Kuiper belt is an important constraint on the early evolution of the Solar System. It is thought that much of this structure, with large resonant populations and dynamically excited orbits, has emerged as a result of Neptune’s migration into an outer disk of planetesimals (e.g., Hahn and Malhotra, 2005; Levison et al., 2008). The massive planetesimal disk that presumably existed below 30 au was completely dispersed by Neptune, and a small fraction of the scattered population was implanted onto orbits beyond 30 au, where it overlaps in orbital space with a population of bodies that formed and survived at > 30 au (e.g., Batygin et al., 2011). Here we study an important tracer of this process, the KBO binary, to set constraints on the initial binary fraction, planetesimal disk lifetime and timing of planetary migration.

Observations provide direct evidence for two different populations in the Kuiper belt. On one hand, Plutinos in the 3:2 resonance with Neptune, other resonant populations, Hot Classicals (HCs) and Scattered Disk Objects (SDOs; see Gladman et al., 2008 for a definition of these categories) share similar physical attributes. These populations (hereafter the dynamically hot KBOs) are thought to have been implanted into the Kuiper belt from below 30 au. The Cold Classicals (CCs), on the other hand, have low orbital inclinations (Brown, 2001; Gulbis et al., 2010), distinctly red colors (Tegler and Romanishin, 2000), relatively high albedo (Brucker et al., 2009; Vil Kenius et al., 2014), and a size distribution that shows a very steep slope at large sizes (Bernstein et al., 2004). The CCs are believed to have formed at ≥42–47 au where they are found now.

Another important difference between the dynamically hot and cold populations in the Kuiper belt is the existence and nature of binary objects. A very large fraction of known 100-km-class CCs are resolved binaries with nearly equal-size components (Noll et al., 2008a, 2008b; Fraser et al., 2017; Grundy et al., 2018). These binaries are thought to have formed during the formation of KBOs themselves or by early capture (e.g., Goldreich et al., 2002; Nesvorný et al., 2010). Many CC binaries have widely separated components which can become unbound as a result of small collisions (Petit and Mousis, 2004). In contrast, the equal-size binaries are nearly absent in the hot population. Instead, in the hot population, it is more common to have a small satellite orbiting a much larger primary. These moons are thought to have accreted around primaries from impact-generated disks (Canup, 2005; Leinhardt et al., 2010).

The most straightforward interpretation of these differences is that collisions played an important role in shaping the hot population, whereas the collisional evolution of CCs was relatively modest (Nesvorný et al., 2011; Parker and Kavelaars, 2012). The collisional activity in the present Kuiper belt is low and not very different between the hot and cold populations. This means that the hot population must have collisionally evolved before it was implanted into the Kuiper belt,

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https://doi.org/10.1016/j.icarus.2019.04.030
Received 25 October 2018; Received in revised form 17 April 2019; Accepted 25 April 2019
Available online 09 May 2019
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survived because their binding energy is greater. In addition, impacts (Parker and Kavelaars, 2010). More tightly bound binaries may have migrating Neptune. Wide binaries can become unbound if Neptune’s implantation in the Kuiper belt, binaries have close encounters with binaries that formed in the massive planetesimal disk below 30 au.1

This hypothesis is currently the most frequently asserted and is consistent with several observed features of the population, but many uncertainties remain, for example, related to the radial profile of the planetesimal disk. Here we adopt an assumption that the source of the entire hot population was a massive planetesimal disk with an outer edge at \( \sim 30 \) au. This remains a hypothesis. We find that the existence of very wide binaries in the hot population may not be fully consistent with this hypothesis, possibly indicating that at least part of the hot population started beyond the reach of Neptune at \( > 30 \) au.

2. Previous work on binary survival

The problem of KBO binary survival was considered in several publications. Petit and Mousis (2004) pointed out that small impacts can dissolve a binary if the velocity change produced by impacts is comparable to binary’s orbital speed (typically meters per second for known KBO binaries). The work determined the expected lifetime of several binaries in the current Kuiper belt environment (and discussed the effects of primordial grinding as well). Using a reference size distribution of impactors with \( N(R) \propto R^{-4.5} \) for radius \( R > 5 \) km and \( N(R) \propto R^{-3} \) for \( R < 5 \) km, they found that wide binaries such as 1998 WW31 and 2001 QW322 have expected lifetimes of only \( \sim 1–2 \) Gyr. This would suggest that these binaries have been much more common in the early Solar System (for a few to survive to the present day).

The effect of impacts, however, depends on the assumed size distribution of impactors and much longer lifetimes are inferred if \( N(R) \propto R^{-3} \) for \( 5 < R < 50 \) km, as suggested by modern observational surveys, Charon craters and other constraints (e.g., Bernstein et al., 2004; Morbidelli et al., 2009; Parker and Kavelaars, 2012; Fraser et al., 2014; Nesvorný et al., 2018; Singer et al., 2019). Additional mechanisms studied in Petit and Mousis (2004), such as collisional disruption and gravitational scattering by large KBOs, were found to be less of an issue for binary survival. Shannon and Dawson (2018) modeled the effect of gravitational scattering in detail and concluded that the existence of wide CC binaries is consistent with \( \sim 1000–4000 \) Pluto-mass objects in the original disk (Nesvorný and Vokrouhlický, 2016).

Nesvorný et al. (2011) extended the work of Petit and Mousis (2004) by modeling impacts in the early Solar System. They showed that the existence of CC binaries can be used to set limits on the extent of collisional grinding in the primordial Kuiper belt and suggested that the observed rollover of CCs with \( R > 50 \) km (e.g., Fraser et al., 2014) was probably not produced by disruptive collisions. Instead, it may be a fossil remnant of the KBO formation process. In contrast, the size distribution break at \( R \sim 50 \) km in the hot population was most likely produced by collisional grinding during the early stages (e.g., Nesvorný et al., 2018). Here we consider the effects of primordial grinding on and dynamical perturbations can change binary orbits, leading in some cases to a low-speed collision between binary components (Nesvorný et al., 2018). This could potentially represent an interesting channel for the formation of contact binaries (e.g., Sheppard and Jewitt, 2004; Thirouin and Sheppard, 2018).

Binary survival in the massive planetesimal disk depends on the disk’s lifetime, \( t_{\text{disk}} \). Clearly, if the disk was short-lived (\( t_{\text{disk}} \sim 100 \) Myr), fewer collisions would have occurred, and binaries would have had a better chance of survival than in the case of a long-lived disk (\( t_{\text{disk}} \sim 1000 \) Myr). The disk lifetime, in turn, is related to the timing of Neptune’s migration. In addition, the dynamical survival of binaries during their implantation into the Kuiper belt depends on the number and nature of planetary encounters, and ultimately on the orbital behavior of planets. We thus see that the binary occurrence in the Kuiper belt can be used, at least in principle, to constrain Neptune’s migration and the implantation process itself.

In summary, the goal of this paper is to test a specific hypothesis: that binaries in transneptunian populations other than low inclination CCs originally formed at lower heliocentric distance and were transported to their current orbits by way of interactions with giant planets. This hypothesis is currently the most frequently asserted and is consistent with several observed features of the population, but many uncertainties remain, for example, related to the radial profile of the planetesimal disk. Here we adopt an assumption that the source of the entire hot population was a massive planetesimal disk with an outer edge at \( \sim 30 \) au. This remains a hypothesis. We find that the existence of very wide binaries in the hot population may not be fully consistent with this hypothesis, possibly indicating that at least part of the hot population started beyond the reach of Neptune at \( > 30 \) au.

\[ 1 \text{A handful of equal-size binaries have been detected on highly inclined heliocentric orbits in the dynamically hot population (e.g., 2002 VF130, 2004 PB108; Section 3). Their existence indicates that the formation of equal-size binaries was widespread and also occurred the massive disk below 30 au, which is thought to be the main source of the hot population. Indeed, the suggested binary formation mechanisms show only a weak dependence on the radial distance.} \]
bins found the hot population and show that some of them (e.g., 2002 VF130) are expected to have a very low survival probability. This has interesting implications for the initial binary fraction and/or for the original source reservoir of binaries now found in the hot population.

The dynamical survival of binaries found in the cold population was studied in Parker and Kavelaars (2010) and Fraser et al. (2017). Parker and Kavelaars (2010) showed that the large binary fraction in the cold population is inconsistent with them being implanted at \( \approx 42-47 \) au from a massive disk below \( \approx 35 \) au (Levison et al., 2008). This is because bodies starting below \( \approx 35 \) au often have scattering encounters with Neptune before reaching \( \approx 42-47 \) au, and most wide binaries are dissolved in the process. The binary constraint therefore gives a strong support to the idea that the CC population formed beyond \( \approx 35 \) au (see Section 5.1 for additional discussion of Parker and Kavelaars, 2010).

Fraser et al. (2017) complemented these results by demonstrating that some wide CC binaries (presumably the ones with less red colors) could have been pushed from \( \approx 38-42 \) au to \( > 42 \) au by the 2:1 resonance with migrating Neptune.

Here we study the effects of planetary encounters on binaries starting in the massive disk below \( \approx 30 \) au and reaching orbits in the hot population (i.e., HCs, resonant and scattered objects). This scientific problem was not considered before (see Noll et al., 2006 and Nesvorný et al., 2018 for related studies of Centaurs and Jupiter Trojans) at least partly because we did not have a reliable model for the implantation of objects in the Kuiper belt. Here we use the implantation model of Nesvorný and Vokrouhlický (2016), which has a long heritage in the previous works on the subject (e.g., Hahn and Malhotra, 2005; Levison et al., 2008). The model of Nesvorný and Vokrouhlický (2016) with slow and grainy migration of Neptune was shown to match the observed orbital structure of the Kuiper belt (inclination distribution, ratio of resonant and non-resonant objects, etc.). Some of the model predictions (Kaib and Sheppard, 2016; Nesvorný et al., 2016) have already been confirmed from new observations (e.g., Lawler et al., 2018).

### 3. Known Kuiper belt binaries

A catalog of physical and orbital properties of binary bodies is maintained W. R. Johnston (Johnston, 2018) on the NASA Planetary Data System (PDS) node.² We analyzed the PDS catalog in September 2018. Fig. 2 shows the basic properties of KBO binaries/satellites. Several notable features are apparent in the plot. First, the unequal-size binaries with a large primary and a small moon (\( R_2/R_1 < 0.5 \)) are mainly detected around large primaries in the hot population. They are absent in the cold population either because they did not form or because bodies in the CC population are generally smaller and the moons with large majority of planetesimals started at \( < 30 \) au (e.g., Gomes et al., 2005).

The outer extension of the disk beyond \( 30 \) au was ignored, because various constraints indicate that a large majority of planetesimals started at \( < 30 \) au (e.g., Gomes et al., 2004). The simulations were performed with a modified version of the symplectic N-body integrator known as Swift (Levison and Duncan, 1994).

All encounters of planetesimals with planets were recorded during these simulations. This was done by monitoring the distance of each planetesimal from Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune, and recording every instance when the distance dropped below 0.5 \( R_{\text{Hill},j} \), where \( R_{\text{Hill},j} \) are the Hill radii of planets (\( j=5 \) to 8 from Jupiter to Neptune). We verified that the results do not change when more distant encounters are accounted for.

We selected disk planetesimals that ended up in different KBO populations at the end of simulations (\( t = 4.5 \) Gyr). Specifically, we defined the following four categories: HCs (seminor axes \( 40 < a < 47 \) au, perihelion distances \( q > 36 \) au, orbital inclinations \( i > 5^\circ \)), Plutinos (stable librations in the 3:2 resonance), scattering \( (50 < a < 200 \) au, \( 1.5 \) au change in \( a \) in the last Gyr; Gladman et al., 2008) and detached \( (50 < a < 200 \) au, \( < 1.5 \) au change objects. We used a longer time interval than Gladman et al. (2008) to distinguish between the scattering and detached populations. Our

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³ (82157) 2001 FM185 with \( a = 38.7 \) au was classified as CC by the Deep Ecliptic Survey. Here we prefer to relate it to the 3:2 resonance (\( a = 39.4 \) au) and include it in the present analysis.
Table 1
The wide, equal-size binaries in the hot population of the Kuiper belt (HC stands for Hot Classical, Plu for Pluto, SDO for a scattered disk object). For (47171) Lempo (1999 TC36), which is a triple system, we list parameters of the outer component. All these binaries, except for 1998 WW31 (Veillet et al., 2002), were imaged by the Hubble Space Telescope (Noll et al., 2008a, 2008b; Grundy et al., 2018).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Temp. id.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>KBO class</th>
<th>$R_1 + R_2$ (km)</th>
<th>$a_b$ (km)</th>
<th>$a_u/R_0$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(341520)</td>
<td>2007 TY430</td>
<td>Mors-Somnus</td>
<td>Plu</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>2002 VF130</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>HC</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>22,400</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>1998 WW31</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>HC</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>22,620</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>2004 KH19</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>HC</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(119067)</td>
<td>2001 K796</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>HC</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>8900</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>2004 PB108</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>HC</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>10,400</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(47171)</td>
<td>1999 TC36</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Plu</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>7411</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(82157)</td>
<td>2001 FM185</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Plu</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>3130</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>2006 SF369</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>SDO</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>3120</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2
A two stage migration of Neptune was adopted from Nesvorný and Vokrouhlický (2016); $\tau_1$ and $\tau_2$ define the e-folding exponential migration timescales during these stages, and $N_{\text{fracs}}$ is the assumed number of Pluto-mass objects in the massive disk below 30 au. Neptune's migration is grainy with these objects as needed to explain the observed proportion of resonant and non-resonant populations in the Kuiper belt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$\tau_1$ (Myr)</th>
<th>$\tau_2$ (Myr)</th>
<th>$N_{\text{fracs}}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>case 1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>case 2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2. Collisional survival

The mutual orbit of a binary can be affected by small impacts into its components (Petit and Mousis, 2004). Here we investigate this process with the collision code that we previously developed (Morbidelli et al., 2009; Nesvorný et al., 2011). The code, known as Boulder, employs a statistical method to track the collisional fragmentation of planetesimal populations. It was developed along the lines of other published codes (e.g., Weidenschilling et al., 1997; Kenyon and Bromley, 2001). A full description of the Boulder code, tests, and various applications can be found in Morbidelli et al. (2009), Levison et al. (2009) and Bottke et al. (2010). Here we briefly highlight the main points and differences with respect to these publications.

For each collision, the code computes the specific impact energy $Q$ and the critical impact energy $Q^*$ for catastrophic disruption (see Benz and Asphaug (1999) for definitions). Based on the value of $Q/Q^*$ and available scaling laws, it then determines the masses of the largest remnant and largest fragment, and the power-law size distribution of smaller fragments (e.g., Durda et al., 2007). The $Q^*$ function in Boulder was set to be intermediate between the impact simulations with strong (Benz and Asphaug, 1999) and weak ice (Leinhardt and Stewart, 2009). To achieve this, we multiplied $Q^*$ from Benz and Asphaug (1999) by a factor $f_Q$, where $f_Q = 1, 0.3$ and 0.1 was used in different tests.

The main input parameters are: the (i) initial size distribution of simulated populations, (ii) intrinsic collision probability $P_i$, and (iii) mean impact speed $v_i$. As for $P_i$ and $v_i$, we performed two different tests. The first test was intended to replicate the collisional grinding of the massive planetesimal disk. In this case, we assumed that migrating Neptune removed the disk at $t_{\text{disk}}$ after the dispersal of the protosolar nebula ($t_0$), and let the disk collisionally evolve over $t_{\text{disk}}$. The dynamical state of the disk was taken from Levison et al. (2011). For example, at 300 Myr after $t_0$, the disk at 20–30 au is characterized by $P_i \approx 8 \times 10^{-21} \text{ km}^{-2} \text{ yr}^{-1}$ and $v_i \approx 0.4 \text{ km s}^{-1}$ (Morbidelli and Rickman, 2015).

The second set of tests with Boulder was done under the assumption that the outer planetesimal disk was dispersed by Neptune immediately after $t_0$ (i.e., $t_{\text{disk}} = 0$). The disk was assumed to have started dynamically cold ($e \approx 0$ and $i \approx 0$). It was gradually excited after $t_0$, on a timescale of ~10–30 Myr (Table 2), by migrating Neptune. The Opik algorithm (Wetherill, 1967; Greenberg, 1982) and the simulations reported in Nesvorný and Vokrouhlický (2016) were used to compute $P_i$ and $v_i$ as a function of time. We monitored the collision probabilities and impact velocities of the selected planetesimals (i.e., the ones that ended up in one of the considered KBO categories at $t = 4.5$ Gyr) with all other planetesimals. The $P_i$ and $v_i$ values were computed each $\delta t$ by averaging over the selected planetesimals, where $\delta t = 1 \text{ Myr}$ during the initial stages, when $P_i$ and $v_i$ change quickly, and $\delta t = 10–100 \text{ Myr}$ later on.

The initial size distribution of the massive disk can be informed from the planetesimal formation models (e.g., Simon et al., 2017), but we considered other possibilities as well (Section 5.3). The final size distribution was required to match the shape of the size distribution of Jupiter Trojans (see, e.g., Morbidelli et al., 2009; Nesvorný et al., 2013; Fraser et al., 2014; Singer et al., 2019 for a justification of this assumption), which is well characterized from observations down to at least 3 km diameter, $D$ (Wong and Brown, 2015; Yoshida and Terai, 2017). For $5 \lesssim D \lesssim 100$ km, the cumulative size distribution $N(> D)$ is a
power law \( N(D) \propto D^{-\gamma} \) with \( \gamma \approx 2.1 \). Above \( D \approx 100 \) km, the Jupiter Trojan size distribution bends to a much steeper slope (\( \gamma \approx 6 \)).

To construct the size distribution of planetesimals in the massive disk, the Jupiter Trojan size distribution was divided by \( P_{\text{JT}} \), where \( P_{\text{JT}} = 5 \times 10^{-7} \) is the Jupiter Trojan capture probability determined in Nesvorný et al. (2013) (this is a probability that an outer disk planetesimal ends up on a stable Jupiter Trojan orbit). This gives \( \approx 6 \times 10^9 \) disk planetesimals with \( D > 10 \) km or \( \approx 5 \times 10^7 \) disk planetesimals with \( D > 100 \) km. The total mass of the reconstructed population is \( \approx 20 M_\oplus \), where \( M_\oplus \) is the Earth mass, in agreement with the results of Nesvorný and Morbidelli (2012).

### 4.3. Binary module

The binary module in Boulder (Nesvorný et al., 2011) accounts for small, non-disruptive impacts on binary components, and computes the binary orbit change depending on the linear momentum of impactors. For each impact, the change of orbital speed, the binary orbit change depending on the linear momentum of impactors. Small, non-disruptive impacts on binary components, and computes the impact velocity vectors were assumed to be randomly oriented in the reference frames of binaries. We also factored in that impact collisions are completely inelastic.

The first term in Eqs. (1) and (2) corresponds to the transfer of the impactor's linear momentum to the translational motion (as averaged over all impact geometries). The rest of linear momentum is consumed by the spin vector change of the impacted binary component. Note that this assumes that all collisions are completely inelastic.

The impact velocity vectors were assumed to be randomly oriented in the reference frames of binaries. We also factored in that impact collisions are completely inelastic. Also, in about 10% of cases, binaries end up colliding with each other. The grey area denotes separations for which the binary components are in contact (\( a_B/R_B < 2^{2/3} \)).

A binary with the total mass \( m_B = m_1 + m_2 \) can become unbound when the planetocentric Hill radius of the binary, \( R_{\text{Hill}} < q(m_B/3m_\text{pl})^{1/3} \), where \( q \) is the distance of the closest approach and \( m_\text{pl} \) is the planet mass, becomes smaller than the binary separation; that is \( R_{\text{Hill}} < a_B \). This condition yields

\[
\frac{a_B}{R_B} > \frac{1}{3^{1/3}} \left( \frac{\rho}{\rho_B} \right)^{1/3} \left( \frac{q}{R_{\text{Hill}}} \right).
\]

where \( R_{\text{pl}} \) and \( \rho_B \) are the planet radius and density. Here we assumed that the primary and secondary components of binaries have the same density, \( \rho \). For exactly equal-size binaries with \( R_1 = R_2 \), \( R_B = (R_1 + R_2)/2^{2/3} \).

The close encounters with Neptune typically have \( q/R_\text{pl} \sim 40 \) in our simulations, suggesting that binaries with \( a_B/R_B > 30 \) should often become dissociated. This closely corresponds to Fig. 3, where the survival probability for \( a_B/R_B > 30 \) is < 50%.

The survival probability is a strong function of binary separation (Fig. 3). The binaries with small separations (\( a_B/R_B < 30 \)) are tightly bound together and have high survival probabilities (50%–90%). They are affected only during extremely close encounters to planets, which do not happen too often. The binaries with larger separations (\( a_B/R_B > 30 \)) are more likely to become dissolved. This is expected because the wide binaries suffer larger orbital changes during planetary encounters. Also, in about 10% of cases, binaries end up their existence during a collision between the binary components (the N-body code stops when a collision is identified), which may have interesting implications for the origin of contact binaries in the Kuiper belt (Section 6.1).

The results shown in Fig. 3 were computed assuming the bulk density \( \rho = 1 \) g cm\(^{-3} \). According to Eq. (5), the critical semimajor axis scales with \( \rho^{1/3} \). Therefore, the surviving fraction curve shown in Fig. 3 would shift left by a multiplication factor of 0.79 for \( \rho = 0.5 \) g cm\(^{-3} \) and right by a multiplication factor of 1.26 for \( \rho = 2.0 \) g cm\(^{-3} \). We confirmed this by simulating cases with different densities.

The dynamical survival probabilities shown in Fig. 3 are lower than those reported in Parker and Kavelaars (2010). They found a \( \approx 60\% \) survival probability for \( a_B/R_B = 200 \), whereas we only find \( \approx 5\% \) probability. This is, in part, related to a much richer history of planetary encounters in our model with the slow migration of Neptune. Parker and Kavelaars (2010), instead, assumed a strong instability case from...
Levison et al. (2008). Additional differences arise due to different selection criteria. In Fig. 3, we selected all bodies that ended in the HC population at \( t = 4.5 \) Gyr. Parker and Kavelaars (2010) monitored each particles semimajor axis and eccentricity for 1 Myr after the instability and identified all candidates that passed through “CC-like” orbits (which no longer have close encounters with Neptune). As explained in Levison et al. (2008), these candidates typically start with low orbital inclinations at \( \approx 30-34 \) au and their inclinations remain low because their experience fewer-than-average scattering encounters with Neptune. This can readily explain the difference between our Fig. 3 and Parker and Kavelaars (2010), because fewer and/or more distant encounters imply better chances of binary survival. The minimum encounter distance to Neptune reported in their Fig. 1 is \( q \approx 0.1 \) au, whereas we often have \( q \approx 0.01 \) au.

For Plutinos, HCs and detached objects, all planetary encounters happen during the initial stages before objects are implanted onto stable orbits in the Kuiper belt. Only the scattered disk objects remain coupled to Neptune. For them, > 90% of the recorded planetary encounters happen within the first \( \approx 200 \) Myr of the simulation. This implies that binaries are typically removed early, or never, and the binary fraction in the scattering population does not change much in the last 4 Gyr (see Section 5.5 for a discussion of the Kozai resonance for binaries with \( i_B \approx 90^\circ \); Porter and Grundy, 2012).

Finally, we compare the results for different KBO populations (Fig. 4) and for different migration histories of Neptune (Fig. 5). Fig. 4 shows that no significant differences are expected between different KBO populations. This is a consequence of the statistically similar histories of planetary encounters for bodies implanted into different populations. There are also no important differences between the two cases considered here with different timescales of Neptune’s migration (Fig. 5). In case 1 (Table 2), there are on average \( 12 \) (0.35) encounters within \( 0.1 \) au (0.01 au) to Neptune for each captured HC object. In case 2, there are on average \( 10 \) (0.33) such encounters. The two cases are therefore expected to produce similar survival probabilities.

5.2. Orbits of surviving binaries

Planetary encounters act to change binary orbits. Fig. 6 illustrates the relationship between the initial and final semimajor axes of the surviving binaries. The orbital changes are minimal for \( a_B/R_B < 30 \), but increase with binary separation. For example, 90% of surviving orbits that end up with \( a_B/R_B = 40 \) start with \( 30 < a_B/R_B < 60 \). For \( a_B/R_B > 100 \), the orbital changes are major and the binary semimajor axis can change by more than a factor of 2.

Fig. 7a shows the distribution of final separations for binaries started with \( a_B/R_B = 50 \). Whereas most orbits remain with the same semimajor axes near the original one, the distribution also shows wide wings toward lower and higher values. For example, >10% of surviving orbits end up with \( a_B/R_B > 70 \). This shows that at least some of the wide KBO binaries in the hot populations could have started with tighter orbits.

The binary eccentricity changes can be substantial as well (Fig. 7b). For example, the mean eccentricity of the surviving orbits with initial
$a_B/R_B = 50$ is $e_B \approx 0.3$ (this assumes that $e_B = 0$ initially). Thus, even if the equal-size KBO binaries in the dynamically cold and hot population presumably formed by the same mechanism, and initially had the same distribution of binary orbits, they are not expected to be the same today.

5.3. Collisional survival of binaries in the massive disk

The collisional evolution of the massive outer disk was studied in Nesvorný et al. (2018). They showed that the Patroclus-Menoetius (P-M) binary in the Jupiter Trojan population poses an important constraint on the massive disk lifetime ($t_{\text{disk}}$). This is because the longer the P-M binary stays in the disk, the greater is the likelihood that its components will be stripped from each other (by the impact-related process described in Section 4.3; Petit and Mousis, 2004). They found that the massive disk must have been dispersed by the migrating planets within $\sim 100$ Myr after the removal of the protosolar nebula (i.e., $t_{\text{disk}} \lesssim 100$ Myr). Here we first briefly recall their results related to the collisional grinding of the massive disk.

The collisional grinding of the outer planetesimal disk proceeds fast. For $t_{\text{disk}} > 100$ Myr, the number of $D > 10$ km bodies is reduced at least ten times and the total mass drops to $< 10 M_\oplus$. These results are in conflict with the current size distribution of Jupiter Trojans (Wong and Brown, 2015), the planetesimal disk mass inferred from the Jupiter Trojan capture (Morbidelli et al., 2005; Nesvorný et al., 2013), and other constraints (e.g., Nesvorný and Morbidelli, 2012). The problem could potentially be resolved if a larger initial mass was adopted. Nesvorný et al. (2018) tested several possibilities along these lines. For example, they scaled up the reference size distribution by an additional factor to increase the initial mass to $> 20 M_\oplus$. These tests failed because more massive disks grind faster and end up with $< 10 M_\oplus$ for $t_{\text{disk}} > 100$ Myr. In other tests, they used a steeper slope for $D < 100$ km in an attempt to obtain $\gamma \approx 2$ as a result of collisional grinding. These tests failed as well for reasons similar to those described above.

Given these unresolved issues, we decided to adopt the following scheme for our nominal simulations of impacts on KBO binaries. We used the reference size distribution ($20 M_\oplus$ initially) and switched off the fragmentation of planetesimals ($Q \gg 1$). In this case, the size distribution stayed approximately the same over the whole length of the simulation. This is arguably a very conservative assumption. Other schemes would require that the initial population was larger and decayed over time, implying more impacts overall.

Fig. 8 shows the survival of equal-size binaries in our nominal simulations of the massive planetesimal disk. The panels illustrate the results for $R_1 + R_2 = 30$ km (a), 100 km (b) and 300 km (c). The lines show the surviving fraction of binaries for different assumptions on the planetesimal disk lifetime, $t_{\text{disk}}$ (thin lines are spaced by 10 Myr up to $t_{\text{disk}} = 150$ Myr, bold lines each 100 Myr).
size of binary components, their separation, and $t_{\text{disk}}$. Panel (b) is similar to Fig. 2 in Nesvorný et al. (2018), where the results were obtained for the P-M binary ($R_1 + R_2 = 109$ km and $\rho = 0.88$ g cm$^{-3}$; here we use $R_1 + R_2 = 100$ km and $\rho = 1$ g cm$^{-3}$). It shows that the equal size binaries with $R_1 + R_2 = 100$ km are not expected to survive, on average, unless $t_{\text{disk}} < 100$ Myr. Binaries with smaller (larger) components have lower (higher) survival chances, as already noted in Nesvorný et al. (2011) and Parker and Kavelaars (2012). The implications of these results for the binary occurrence in the Kuiper belt are discussed in Section 6.

Motivated by the results of Nesvorný et al. (2018), we now consider $t_{\text{disk}} < 100$ Myr (Figs. 9 and 10). The rounded shape of the initial size distribution was informed from the hydrodynamical simulations of the streaming instability (Simon et al., 2017). The characteristic size of planetesimals formed by the streaming instability was set to $D = 100$ km. In Fig. 9, we used the initial disk mass $M_{\text{disk}} = 30 M_\oplus$ and $f_Q = 0.1$, and let the disk grind for $t_{\text{disk}} = 10$ Myr. In Fig. 10, we adopted $M_{\text{disk}} = 40 M_\oplus$, $f_Q = 0.3$ and $t_{\text{disk}} = 50$ Myr. In both these cases, the final size distribution was required to fit the size distribution reconstructed from Jupiter Trojans (Section 4.2) and, indeed, Figs. 9 and 10 show that both simulations satisfied this constraint quite well.

The binary survival probability is significantly lower in the case of larger initial disk mass and longer disk lifetime. This is most obvious for binaries with smaller components, $R_1 + R_2 = 30$ km, for which the survival for $M_{\text{disk}} = 40 M_\oplus$ and $t_{\text{disk}} = 50$ Myr is roughly 10 times lower than for $M_{\text{disk}} = 30 M_\oplus$ and $t_{\text{disk}} = 10$ Myr (compare Figs. 9b and 10b). The lower survival probability is expected because more massive disks with longer lifetimes provide more impactors overall. More massive binaries have better chances of survival. For example, for $R_1 + R_2 = 300$ km and $a_B = 10,000$ km, the survival probability is $\approx 45\%$ for $M_{\text{disk}} = 40 M_\oplus$ and $t_{\text{disk}} = 50$ Myr, and $\approx 80\%$ for $M_{\text{disk}} = 30 M_\oplus$ and $t_{\text{disk}} = 10$ Myr.

The two cases described here (Figs. 10 and 11) are not unique. In fact, there is a continuous range of parameters (initial $M_{\text{disk}}$, $t_{\text{disk}}$, $f_Q$, etc.) that satisfy the existing constraints (mainly the size distribution inferred from Jupiter Trojans). It is therefore unclear at this point whether the binary survival was higher, such as in Fig. 9, or lower, such as in Fig. 10, or whether some other case not considered here could end up giving a different result. In any case, our results show how the binary occurrence in the hot population of the Kuiper belt is linked to the mass and lifetime of the massive planetesimal disk. Additional work will be needed to resolve this relationship in more detail.

Fig. 9. Panel (a): collisional evolution of the outer planetesimal disk. The dashed line shows the initial size distribution. It corresponds to the initial disk mass $M_{\text{disk}} = 30 M_\oplus$. The solid line shows the size distribution after 10 Myr of collisional grinding, when $M_{\text{disk}} = 21 M_\oplus$. Here we adopted the disruption law for ice from Benz and Asphaug (1999) and $f_Q = 0.1$. The red line shows the size distribution of known Jupiter Trojans (incomplete for $D < 10$ km) scaled up by their implantation efficiency (Nesvorný et al., 2013). Panel (b): collisional survival of equal-size binaries in the disk. The lines show the results for $t_{\text{disk}} = 10$ Myr and $R_1 + R_2 = 30$, 100 and 300 km. (For interpretation of the references to color in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

Fig. 10. The same as Fig. 9 but for $M_{\text{disk}} = 40 M_\oplus$, $t_{\text{disk}} = 50$ Myr and $f_Q = 0.3$. 56
The massive planetesimal disk below 30 au is dispersed when Neptune migrates into it. A small fraction of disk planetesimals is subsequently implanted into different populations in the Kuiper belt. The exact timing of this process is uncertain, but the P-M binary constraint implies that \( t_{\text{disk}} < 100 \text{ Myr} \) (Nesvorny et al., 2018). Examples with \( t_{\text{disk}} = 10 \) and 50 Myr were discussed in the previous section. Here we adopt \( t_{\text{disk}} = 0 \) and consider a case when Neptune migrates into the planetesimal disk immediately after \( t_0 \). The impact probability \( P_i \) and \( v_i \) were evaluated as a function of time as described in Section 4.2 (Fig. 11). The changing conditions were implemented in the Boulder code, which was then used to determine the collisional survival of binaries over the past 4.5 Gyr.

We found that, to fit the present size distribution of Jupiter Trojans, the shape of the size distribution at \( t_0 + t_{\text{disk}} \) must have been similar to the present one for \( D > 10 \text{ km} \) (Fig. 12a). This is because the impact probability drops relatively fast such that not much grinding happens for \( D > 10 \text{ km} \) over 4.5 Gyr (with \( t_{\text{disk}} = 0 \)). The surviving fraction of equal-size binaries is shown in Fig. 12b. The survival probability is sensitive to the size of binary components and their separation. For \( R_1 + R_2 = 100–300 \text{ km} \), which is the characteristic size of known equal-size binaries, the survival probability is 74–96% for \( a_{\text{crit}} > 1000–10,000 \text{ km} \). Most of these binaries are therefore expected to survive. A sharp drop-off of the probability at \( a_{\text{crit}}/(R_1 + R_2) \sim 10^3 \) occurs because separations approach 0.5 \( R_{\text{Hill}} \), where \( R_{\text{Hill}} \) is the binary heliocentric Hill radius (e.g., \( R_{\text{Hill}} \sim \rho = 250,000 \text{ km} \) for an equal-size binary with \( R_1 + R_2 = 100 \text{ km} \), \( p = 1 \text{ g cm}^{-3} \) and \( a = 30 \text{ au} \)). These very wide binaries are dynamically unstable.

The results shown in Figs. 11 and 12 were obtained for the case2 migration parameters (Table 2) and HCs, but the results for case1 and other KBO populations are similar. The survival probability of binaries is sensitive to our assumption about the number of disk planetesimals at \( t_0 + t_{\text{disk}} \) which is linked, through the implantation probability, to the number of KBOs. We showed previously (e.g., Nesvorny and Vokrouhlický, 2016; Nesvorny et al., 2016) that our baseline dynamical model for the Kuiper belt implantation produces populations that are similar to those inferred from observations of HCs, Plutinos, scattering and detached population. Still, there is some uncertainty in this comparison both on the side of observations (albedo assumptions, survey biases, etc.) and model (dependence on the timescale of Neptune’s migration, number of Pluto-size bodies in the disk, etc.). The initial calibration of the disk population is also uncertain, to within a factor of \( \sim 2 \), because the capture probability of Jupiter Trojans depends on various details of the model setup.

To tentatively account for these uncertainties, we considered cases with \( M_{\text{disk}} = 10 \text{ M}_\oplus \) and 30 \text{ M}_\oplus \) (recall that \( M_{\text{disk}} = 20 \text{ M}_\oplus \) at \( t_0 + t_{\text{disk}} \) in our nominal case). This would correspond to \( P_{\text{Hill}} = 7.5 \times 10^{-8} \) and \( 2.5 \times 10^{-8} \), respectively (see Section 4.2), which is somewhat outside the range of values favored in Nesvorny et al. (2013), but still potentially plausible. By testing these cases, we found that the survival probabilities of equal size binaries are very similar (within \( \sim 20\% \)) to those shown in Fig. 12b. The results shown in Fig. 12b are therefore relatively robust.

In summary, the overall survival of equal-size binaries mainly depends on the early phase, when the binaries are immersed in the massive planetesimal disk and have to withstand an intense initial bombardment. The magnitude of the initial bombardment depends on \( M_{\text{disk}} \) and \( t_{\text{disk}} \). The occurrence of binaries in the Kuiper belt could, at least in principle (i.e., after factoring in the effect of planetary encounters; Section 5.1), be therefore used to constrain \( M_{\text{disk}} \) and \( t_{\text{disk}} \) (see Section 6 for discussion).

5.5. Kozai dynamics and tides

Additional effects that can alter binary orbits, and may therefore influence binary survival, include Kozai dynamics and tides (e.g., Porter and Grundy, 2012). The Kozai dynamics of a binary orbit arises due to the gravitational potential of the Sun. For the Kozai cycles to be effective, the binary components must be roughly spherical and/or the binary separation must be large. If not, the gravitational potential from the \( J_2 \) term of binary components prevails over the solar gravity, resulting in a simple precession of the binary orbit about the heliocentric orbit pole.

Porter and Grundy (2012) studied these effects, including the tidal dissipation (Goldreich and Sari, 2009), and concluded that the combined effect of Kozai cycles and tides can remove binaries with inclinations \( i_B \sim 90^\circ \) and \( a_B > a_{\text{crit}} \), where \( a_{\text{crit}} \) depends on \( J_2 \) and the strength of tidal dissipation. Given that several known Kuiper belt binaries with \( a_B < 0.05 \text{ R}_{\text{Hill}} \) have \( i_B \leq 90^\circ \), this probably implies \( a_{\text{crit}} > 0.05 \text{ R}_{\text{Hill}} \). This reasoning, if applied to the Kuiper belt binaries with \( a_B < 0.05 \text{ R}_{\text{Hill}} \), suggests that these additional effects do not play a major role in their survival. The Kozai cycles and tides probably act to eliminate binaries with \( a_B > 0.05 \text{ R}_{\text{Hill}} \) and \( i_B \sim 90^\circ \) (Grundy et al., 2018).
5.6. Large primaries with small satellites

Our base hypothesis is that the (nearly) equal-size binaries with $R_2/R_1 > 0.5$ formed during the earliest stages (Goldreich et al., 2002; Nesvorný et al., 2010). In contrast, it is not quite clear when the unequal-size binaries with $R_2/R_1 < 0.5$ formed. They are presumably a by-product of large scale collisions (Canup, 2005; Leinhardt et al., 2010). On one hand, the collisional activity is the most intense during the lifetime of the massive disk, before the disk is dispersed by Neptune. On the other hand, there is at least one case where there are good reasons to believe that the satellite-forming collision happened relatively late, that is after the massive disk dispersal. This is the case of two Haumea moons, Hi’iaka and Namaka. Haumea has a collisional family (Brown et al., 2007), which must have formed after the implantation of Haumea onto its current orbit (the family would otherwise be dispersed during implantation). Thus, if Hi’iaka and Namaka formed as a result of the family-forming collision, their formation most likely post-dates the epoch of Neptune’s migration.

For unequal-size binaries that formed before the disk dispersal, the dynamical survival probability can be inferred from Fig. 3. For example, Charon, Styx and Hydra have $a_B/R_B = 15.8, 34.4$ and $52.3$, respectively.6 According to Fig. 3, we find that these moons are expected to survive in 67%, 45% and 31% of cases. In Fig. 3, however, we assumed $\rho = 1 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$, which is not adequate for Pluto ($\rho = 1.9 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$) and Charon ($\rho = 1.7 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$). We therefore opted for simulating the survival of Pluto’s moons directly. The results are given in Table 3 (they are roughly consistent with shifting the lines in Fig. 3 by a factor of $(1.8)^{1/3}$ to the right). Charon survives in 91% of trials in the case2 simulation and in 94% of trials in the case1 simulation. This is comforting (see also Pires et al., 2015).

For Hydra, which is the farthest of Pluto’s known moons, the survival probabilities are 74% in case2 and 82% in case1. Also, in 41% and 53% of trials, respectively, Hydra ends up with the final orbital eccentricity below 0.01 (this assumes that $e = 0$). For Styx, which is the closest of Pluto’s small moons, the eccentricity stays below 0.01 in 56% and 66% of trials. For comparison, the present orbital eccentricities of Hydra and Styx are $\approx 0.006$ (Showalter and Hamilton, 2015). It is plausible that these eccentricities were generated by perturbations during encounters of the Pluto system to Neptune, but the probability of that happening is small (Table 3). In addition, it is possible that Hydra started in the 6:1 resonance with Charon and was displaced from that resonance by planetary encounters. This requires a negative semimajor axis change $\Delta a \approx -140$ km. For comparison, we find that $\Delta a \approx -100$ km in only $\approx 15\%$ of cases.

Eris and Dysnomia with $a_B/R_B \approx 31$ show larger survival probabilities than Styx (Eris’s density is $\rho = 2.5 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$). Makemake’s satellite, known as MK2, has a large orbital uncertainty with semimajor axis ranging between 21,000 and 300,000 km (Parker et al., 2016). This would give $a_B/R_B \approx 29–410$. The cases with $a_B/R_B > 100$ can probably be ruled out because the survival odds are $\leq 10\%$ for these large separations. Quaoar-Weywot and Orcus-Vanth have $a_B/R_B \approx 26$ and 19, respectively, and are safe ($> 50\%$ survival probabilities according to Fig. 3, but this is a generous lower limit given that, for example, Orcus density is $\rho = 1.5 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$). In summary, we find that all known satellites of the largest KBOs are likely to survive during the dynamical implantation of these bodies in the Kuiper belt.

We performed several tests to understand the effect of impacts on unequal size binaries. For example, we considered the small satellites of Pluto during and after the phase of the massive disk dispersal (i.e., the case with $f_{\text{disk}} = 0$). These tests closely followed the setup described in Section 5.4 (see Fig. 12(a)). All moons were started on circular orbits. We found that the survival probability of all small Pluto moons is very nearly 100%. As for Hydra, the characteristic change of the semimajor axis and eccentricity due to impacts is only $\approx 100$ km and $0.001$, too low to explain Hydra’s current orbital eccentricity ($\approx 0.006$). The results for Kerberos are similar, but Kerberos’s eccentricity is smaller ($\approx 0.003$).

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6 For Styx and Hydra, we define $R_B^3 = R_1^3 + R_2^3$, where $R_1$ is the effective radius of Pluto and Charon ($\approx 1238$ km).
For example, in about 30% of cases, Kerberos ends up with $e > 0.0015$ (i.e., at least a half of it present eccentricity). Larger effects are expected for $t_{\text{disk}} > 0$. This shows that at least some of Pluto’s moons (not Charon) may own their slightly excited orbits to small impacts.

6. Discussion

6.1. Contact and very tight binaries

The equal-size ($R_B/R_1 > 0.5$) binaries in the hot population can be divided into several categories. The contact and very tight binaries with $a_B/R_B < 10$, such as 2001 QG298 and the inner pair of (47171) Lempo, are difficult to detect observationally. Here we showed that $\sim 10\%$ of equal-size binaries are expected to collapse into contact binaries during the implantation of objects into the Kuiper belt (Fig. 3). In addition, $\sim 10–30\%$ of equal-size binaries are expected to collapse into contact binaries during the collisional evolution of the massive disk (Nesvorný et al., 2018). Assuming a 100% initial binary fraction, these results imply that the fraction of contact binaries in the hot population should be of the order of $10–30\%$. For comparison, Sheppard and Jewitt (2004) proposed from the detection of 2001 QG298 (contact binary in the Plutino population) that at least $\sim 10\%$ of KBOs are contact binaries, and Thirouin and Sheppard (2018) suggested that up to $\sim 40\%$ Plutinos can be contact binaries. The contact binary fraction among CCs remains to be determined, but if the main channel of contact binary formation is binary collapse from impact and planetary encounter perturbations, the contact binary fraction among $\sim 100$-km-class CCs is expected to be low (most large CC binaries presumably survived). Thirouin and Sheppard (2019) found that only $\sim 10–25\%$ of the Cold Classicals could be contact binaries, suggesting that there is a deficit of contact binaries in this population compared to the abundant possible contact binaries in the 3:2 resonant population. Recent observations of (486958) 2014 MU69 by the New Horizons spacecraft show that contact binaries may be common among smaller, $\sim 10$-km-class CCs.

6.2. Tight binaries

The tightly-bound binaries with $10 < a_B/R_B < 30$ have $> 50\%$ dynamical survival probability (Fig. 3) and do not provide a useful constraint on the implantation process itself. The nine known binaries with $10 < a_B/R_B < 30$ represent a fraction of $\sim 3\%$ of dynamically hot KBOs that were searched for binaries with the Hubble Space Telescope (HST; W. Grundy, personal communication; roughly 300 hot KBOs were imaged by the HST). Some tight binaries may remain unresolved. Thus, as a lower limit, we can estimate that at least $\sim 6\%$ of the massive disk planetesimals were equal-size binaries with $10 < a_B/R_B < 30$. This is similar to the fraction of $a_B/R_B < 10$ binaries inferred from the P-M binary constraint (Nesvorný et al., 2018). Moreover, since the initial fraction of $10 < a_B/R_B < 30$ binaries cannot exceed 100%, their survival probability during the collisional grinding of the massive planetesimal disk cannot be much lower than $\approx 0.06$. This constraint implies $t_{\text{disk}} < 100$ Myr (Fig. 8). It means that the massive planetesimal disk must have been dispersed by migrating planets within $\lesssim 100$ Myr after $t_0$ (Nesvorný et al., 2018).

6.3. Wide binaries

The wide binaries with $30 < a_B/R_B < 100$ have $\sim 10–50\%$ dynamical survival probability (Fig. 3). There are five known binaries in this category in the hot population (2001 KP76, 2004 PB108, 2006 SF369, 2001 FM185 and the outer component of (47171) Lempo; Table 1), representing a fraction of $\sim 2\%$ of all HST targets in the hot population. This implies the original fraction of at least $\sim 6\%$, which is similar to the minimal binary fractions found for $a_B/R_B < 10$ and $10 < a_B/R_B < 30$. Together, we infer that at least $\sim 18\%$ of the massive disk planetesimals were equal-size binaries with $a_B/R_B < 100$. Lower fractions would be inferred from the present analysis if 2001 KP76, 2001 FM185, and possibly (47171) Lempo, turn out to be interlopers from the CC population (these objects have small heliocentric inclinations and may have evolved to their current orbits from $a > 30$ au).

6.4. Very wide binaries

Finally, there are four known equal-size binaries in the hot population with $a_B/R_B > 100$ (1998 WW31, 2002 VF130 and 2004 KH19, all HCs, and Mors-Somnus in the Plutino population). These very wide binaries are puzzling because, according to Fig. 3, they have a very low chance of surviving during their implantation into the Kuiper belt. 1998 WW31, however, has a heliocentric orbit with low inclination ($i \approx 7$) and we are therefore not confident whether it really formed in the massive disk below $30$ au; it may be an interloper from the cold population. Similarly, (341520) Mors-Somnus with $i \approx 11$ may have been swept into the 3:2 resonance from its original formation location at $\sim 35–39$ au (Nesvorný, 2015). If so, this binary could have avoided perturbations during planetary encounters.

2004 KH19 and 2002 VF130, whose classification as hot KBOs is secure, only have 8% and 0.8% dynamical survival probabilities (Fig. 3). This could potentially imply a large fraction of the very wide binaries in the original disk. For example, from 2002 VF130, we could infer that the fraction of equal-size binaries with $a_B/R_B \sim 300$ in the original disk was $\sim 40\%$. And that’s without factoring in the survival probability during the collisional grinding of the massive disk (Fig. 8b) in which 2002 VF130 presumably formed.

6.5. Comparison of cold and hot binaries

Fig. 13 offers a different perspective on the same issue. There we compare the separations of equal-size binaries in the cold and hot populations. The hot population shows a tail of contact and very tight binaries with $a_B/R_B < 10$. These binaries are difficult to detect in the cold population, because of their greater heliocentric distance. If the binaries with $a_B/R_B < 10$ are removed from the hot population, the separations of hot and cold binaries appear to follow the same trend, except that the cold population has nearly 20% of equal-size binaries with $a_B/R_B > 350$. These extremely wide binaries are missing in the hot population either because they did not form or because they were disrupted by impacts and planetary encounters.
Now, the binaries with 100 < $q_B/R_B < 350$ found in the hot population represent a problem, because they should have been removed by planetary encounters as well. To demonstrate this we use the equal-size binaries in the cold population as a template and factor in the dynamical survival probability from Fig. 3. The result is plotted as the “model” distribution in Fig. 13. Indeed, this simple test shows that the binaries with 100 < $q_B/R_B < 350$ should have been nearly completely removed from the hot population, while in reality they represent ~16% of cases (4 out of 25).

This may mean one of several things. It may indicate, for example, that at least some fraction of hot KBOs reached their current orbits without experiencing planetary encounters. For that to work, these KBOs would have to start beyond the reach of Neptune at > 30 au, where they would only be affected by resonances with Neptune (Hahn and Malhotra, 2005), which are known to preserve binarity (Fraser et al., 2017). This scenario appears plausible for 1998 WW31 and 2001 KL5, which are known to preserve binarity (Fraser et al., 2009), remains uncertain and no additional astrometry is currently available.

7. Conclusions

We determined the dynamical and collisional survival rate of KBO binaries before and after their implantation into the dynamically hot population in the Kuiper belt. The main results are:

1. The binary survival is a strong function of the size and separation of binary components. The dynamical survival during scattering encounters with planets only depends on $q_B/R_B$, where $q_B$ is the binary semimajor axis and $R_B = R_1 + R_2$, with $R_1$ and $R_2$ being the radii of binary components. The tight binaries with $q_B/R_B < 30$ are expected to survive in > 50% of cases, whereas the wide binaries with $q_B/R_B > 100$ are expected to die in > 90% of cases (Fig. 3).

2. The existence of equal-size binaries in the dynamically hot population of the Kuiper belt implies that the massive planetesimal disk below 30 au was short-lived ($t_{disk} < 100$ Myr; see also Nesvorný et al., 2018). The disk could have started with a rounded size distribution of planetesimals, as indicated by the streaming instability simulations (e.g., Simon et al., 2017), and $M_{disk} > 20 M_E$. It would subsequently collisionally evolve, within ~10–50 Myr, to a size distribution similar to that of Jupiter Trojans and $M_{disk} \approx 15–20 M_E$ (Figs. 9 and 10). The size distribution and binary fraction are not expected to change much after the implantation of objects into the Kuiper belt (Fig. 12).

3. The initial fraction of tight equal-size binaries in the massive disk should have been at least ~18% for $q_B/R_B < 100$ to account for the present population of equal-size binaries among the hot KBOs. The extremely wide equal-size binaries with $q_B/R_B > 350$ have been removed during the implantation process (< 0.003 survival probability). The existence of wide equal-size binaries with 100 < $q_B/R_B < 350$ in the hot population is puzzling. They may survivors of a much larger original population of wide binaries in the massive disk, or, at least in some cases, are interlopers from the dynamically cold population. 2002 VF130 with the heliocentric orbit inclination $i = 19.5^\circ$ and estimated $q_B/R_B \sim 310$ is an important constraint on the implantation process.

4. All known satellites of the largest KBOs are expected to survive during the dynamical implantation of their primaries in the Kuiper belt. Most of them likely formed during the early stages when their parent bodies were immersed in the massive planetesimal disk below 30 au and sustained intense bombardment. The low orbital eccentricities of Pluto’s small moons may have been excited during encounters of the Pluto system to Neptune, or by small impacts during the massive disk lifetime.

5. The expected fraction of contact binaries from the population of collapsed equal-size binaries is ~10–30% (this estimate assumes that all planetesimals formed as binaries), whereas the observational constraints indicate that the contact binary fraction among hot KBOs is ~10–40% (Sheppard and Jewitt, 2004; Thirouin and Sheppard, 2018).

Acknowledgements

We thank W. Grundy and K. Noll for the list of KBOs that were imaged by the HST. The work of D.N. was supported by the NASA (grant NNX17AE33G) Emerging Worlds program. The work of D.V. was supported by the Czech Science Foundation (grant 18-06083S). We thank J.-M. Petit and an anonymous reviewer for helpful corrections of the submitted manuscript.

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