

The landing place

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Near the close of the last century there were high expectations that actual remains of Noah's Ark might be found on Mt Ararat in eastern Turkey. After numerous expeditions and much money spent, there is little to show for the effort. Not only have the alleged eyewitness accounts proven unreliable, they are often contradictory. In addition, there are valid geological and historical reasons for rejecting Ararat as the final resting-place of the Ark.

Unlike modern accounts, the best ancient historical sources are in relative agreement about the 'The Landing Place': pagan, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic sources all point to the southern location of Cudi Dagh, a mountain range in southern Turkey near the borders of Syria and Iraq. While actual remains may no longer be extant there is evidence that early in the first millennium remains were observed by pilgrims.

Since the early 1950s the search for Noah's Ark has been the subject of many books and movies.¹ What gave rise to this interest was the distinct possibility that actual remains of Noah's Ark might have been found. The spark which set off this burning interest among Christians was the claim in 1948 of an eyewitness who said he stumbled onto the Ark high on the snowcap of Mt Ararat.² Since that time others have made similar claims. Based on these alleged eyewitness accounts, many expeditions have been launched, countless hours have been spent in research, and large sums have been spent to verify what many critics said was an impossible quest.

More recently, during the 1980s, Col. James Irwin, the late moon-walking astronaut, and his associates, combed most of the mountain on foot. Still not satisfied, they surveyed and photographed the mountain from various aircraft. While the efforts of Irwin and others have received much media attention, there is still no tangible evidence of an ark on Ararat. Indeed, many who have been involved in the search are now becoming convinced that: 1) the Ark may have merged with the elements, or 2) God may not want it revealed at this time.³

I would like to propose a third reason why the search for Noah's Ark has been unsuccessful, namely that it may have landed on another mountain and the remains may no

longer be extant. From the perspective of history, there seems to be compelling evidence in the form of ancient sources which argue for another site as the final berth of Noah's Ark (see below).

Reasons for searching on Mt Ararat

Before we look at this evidence, it might be helpful to give some of the reasons the search has been concentrated on Mt Ararat in eastern Turkey.

First, and foremost, are the alleged eyewitness accounts. If it weren't for these, it is doubtful a search would ever have arisen on the mountain the Turks call 'Agri Dagh' and the Armenians, 'Masis'.

A second reason for searching on Mt Ararat, is its altitude. At nearly 5,200 m it has a permanent icecap which would lend itself to the Ark's preservation.⁴ An Ark perpetually frozen in ice would hardly decay; and could lie undisturbed for thousands of years.⁵

The third reason has to do with the level of the floodwaters. Since Mt Ararat is the highest mountain in the region it is assumed by some that the Ark must have landed on the highest mountain since Noah could not see the tops of any other mountains for some time after the Ark grounded.

After the many expeditions of the past several years, some questions should now be raised about the above reasons for looking for the Ark on Ararat. The eyewitness accounts have not been helpful. The accounts are often contradictory and, under close scrutiny, most are suspect. Some of the sightings have been made by pilots who appear to be of reputable character. However, these sightings are explainable by the fact that the mountain has an abundance of large blocks of volcanically-produced basalt, and when seen under the right conditions, they can easily resemble a huge barge.⁶

Some question the age of the mountain itself. Is it not of recent origin? That is, was it not formed after the Great Flood? There seems to be almost a total lack of evidence this mountain was ever under water.⁷ If the Ark landed on Ararat, why is there not some evidence of flooding such as sedimentation, fossils, etc.? Geologically, we can conceive of a scenario where the mountain may have risen during the Flood, but we still need evidence of the floodwaters.

Others have been attracted to the mountain because of its altitude and its ability to hide and preserve the ship in its icecap. Certainly this could be a valid reason, and it is one that this author once maintained. However, we again have geological problems in that the permanent icecap is not stationary.⁸ It flows down the mountain in several glacial fingers. Any structure would be gradually destroyed because of the uneven rate with which a glacier flows. Like water in a river, a glacier flows faster on the surface than near the bottom.

It is difficult to be optimistic that remains of the Ark of Noah might someday be found on Mt Ararat. Not only has it been thoroughly searched in recent years, an intact Ark

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Figure 1. Map showing the ancient region of Urartu.

500 feet in length would be difficult to hide! The only valid scientific research still needed on Mt Ararat is a complete sub-surface survey of the 45 km², 90 m deep icecap before Ararat should be completely discounted as the final resting place of Noah's Ark. The only organization planning to do this is ArcImaging (see their Website at www.arcimaging.org). Besides the geological reasons, and the dubious eyewitness accounts, there are compelling historical reasons for believing that Noah's Ark will never be found on Mt Ararat. We now turn to these arguments.

If Noah's Ark did land on the 5,200-meter peak of Mt Ararat, one should reasonably expect this event to have support from antiquity. When the search for Noah's Ark became a hot topic in the early '70s, this was assumed to be the case. Evangelical scholar John Warwick Montgomery argued this case in his well-documented book, *The Quest for Noah's Ark*. It is our contention that Montgomery erred in his interpretation of the sources.

As some readers may know, the Bible only gives a general reference to the landing place of the Ark. Many mistakenly believe the Bible names Mt Ararat as the Ark's specific resting place. This is not the case. The Bible says only that the Ark came to rest on 'the mountains (plural) of Ararat' (Gen. 8:4). At the time Moses wrote Genesis, Ararat was a very remote region north of Assyria centered around present-day Lake Van. Modern archaeological studies have pretty well delineated the boundaries of this ancient kingdom (see Figure 1).⁹ A careful study of the historical sources indicates that the earliest undeniable (a key word) reference for present-day Mt Ararat as the landing site is the middle of the 13th century AD.¹⁰ By the end of the 14th century it seems to have become a fairly well established tradition.

The Cudi Dagh mountain as landing place

When Marco Polo traveled past Ararat on his way east he was told by the locals that the mountain sheltered the Ark of Noah.¹¹ But prior to this time the ancients argued that the remains of the Ark of Noah could be found on a mountain known as 'Cudi (or Judi) Dagh'.

'Cudi Dagh is located approximately 200 miles [320 km] south of Mt Ararat in southern Turkey within eyesight of the Syrian and Iraqi borders.'¹² The Tigris River flows at its base. The exact coordinates are 37 degrees, 21 minutes N, and 42 degrees, 17 minutes E. In the literature it has also been called 'Mt Judi', 'Mt Cardu', 'Mt Quardu', 'the Gordyene mountains', 'Gordian mountains', 'The Karduchian mountains', 'the mountains of the Kurds', and to the Assyrians: 'Mt Nipur' (see Figure 2). It is also important



Courtesy of Rex Geisler

Figure 2. The Cudi Mountains.

times this mountain has even been called 'Mt Ararat'. At

2,100 m altitude it is not a terribly high mountain, though it is snow-capped most of the year. The current edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam* lists it as ‘over 13,000 feet [4,000 m] and largely unexplored’. We are unsure of the exact altitude, but it is not noted on modern aerial navigation maps, and this would be strange if it were really 4,000 m.

Most modern maps do not even show the location of Cudi Dagh. It is, however, located about 40 km from the Tigris River (Figure 3), just east of the present Turkish city of Cizre, and still within the bounds of the Biblical region of Ararat (Urartu).¹³

Cudi Dagh overlooks the all-important Mesopotamian plain and is notable for its many archaeological ruins in and around the mountain. There are also many references to it in ancient history.¹⁴ Sennacherib (700 BC), the powerful Assyrian king, carved rock reliefs of himself on the side of a mountain in the area (Figure 4).¹⁵ The Nestorians (a sect of Christianity) built several monasteries around the mountain including one on the summit called ‘The Cloister of the Ark’ which was destroyed by lightning in AD 766.¹⁶ The Muslims later built a mosque on the site. In 1910, Gertrude Bell explored the area and found a stone structure still at the summit with the shape of a ship (Figure 5) called by the locals ‘Sefinet Nebi Nuh’, ‘The Ship of Noah’. Bell also reports that annually on September 14, Christians, Jews, Muslims, Sabians and Yezidis gather on the mountain to commemorate Noah’s sacrifice.¹⁷ As late as 1949 two Turkish journalists claimed to have seen the Ark, a ship 150 m in length, on this mountain.¹⁸

Some of the more important ancient witnesses to this alternate location



Figure 4. Carving of Sennacherib.

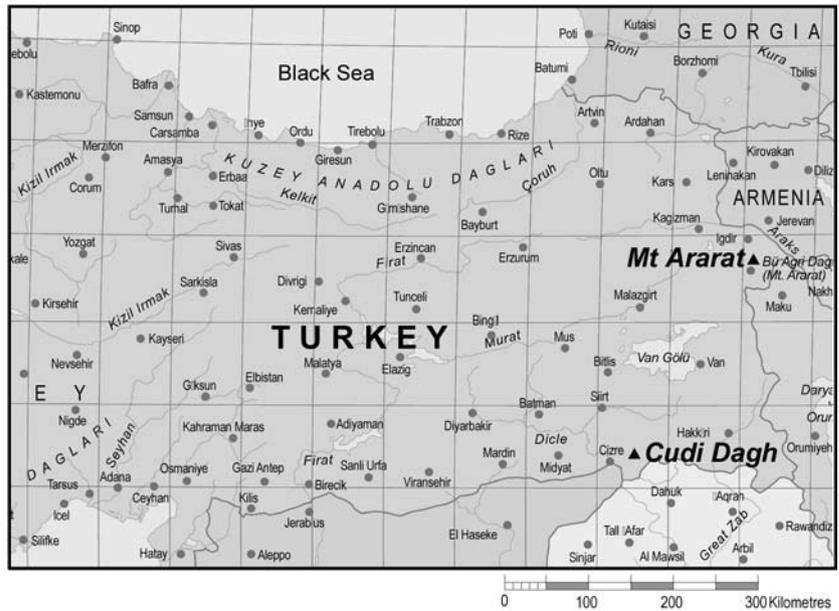


Figure 3. Map of Turkey showing the location of Cudi Dagh (bottom right) and Mt Ararat (Right middle.)

The evidence for Cudi Dagh as the landing place of Noah’s Ark is not so strong that it demands a verdict, yet it is compelling. If all we had were the ancient references, the evidence for this site easily outweighs the evidence for Mt Ararat (excluding modern sightings, of course).

The Samaritan Pentateuch

This manuscript contains only the first five books of the Old Testament. It puts the landing place of Noah’s Ark in the Kurdish mountains north of Assyria. The Samaritan Pentateuch was the Bible used by the Samaritans, a Jewish sect who separated from the Jews about the 5th century BC. Ancestry-wise, they were of mixed blood dating back to the time the Assyrians deported many from the Northern Kingdom. The Assyrians then colonized the area with citizens from that country. The Samaritans were the result of the intermarriage between the Jews who were not deported and these new Assyrian colonists. Their version of the Pentateuch **shows a definite propensity to update geographical place-names** and harmonize difficult passages. There is much evidence that the Samaritan Pentateuch was formulated during the 5th century BC though the earliest manuscript extant today dates to about the 10th century AD.¹⁹

Berosus.

A Chaldean priest of Marduk and historian (3rd century BC). His writings were published about 275 BC but his work survived only as far as it was quoted by others, notably, Alexander Polyhistor (1st century BC), a Greek historian and native of Miletus, and by Josephus (1st century AD).²⁰ He is also quoted by a few others as late as the 9th century AD. Berosus’ account is basically a version of the Babylonian

Photo is from Amaranuth by Amaruth by Gertrude Bell.

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Flood account. He notes that ‘the vessel being stranded in Armenia, some part of it yet remains in the Kurdish mountains in Armenia; and the people scrape off the bitumen, and carry it away, and make use of it by way of an alexipharmic and amulet’.²¹ Some believe that Berossus was acquainted with both the Hebrew version which puts the Ark in Armenia (Urartu), and the Babylonian, which puts the Ark in the Gordyene mountains. They conclude the reason he mentions both territories is that he is trying to reconcile the two accounts. This may be true, but it is an argument from silence. The fact is, this location, Cudi Dag, is both in the Gordyene mountains **and** within the borders of ancient Armenia (Urartu). It may be that Berossus was just trying to be precise!



Figure 5. Stone ‘Ark’ building.

Photo is from Ananuth to Ananuth by Gertrude Bell

The Targums

The targums are Aramaic paraphrases of the Old Testament made by and for the Jews after they returned from the captivity in Babylon (see Nehemiah 8:8). After their long captivity, many of the Jews forgot their native tongue (Hebrew) only understanding the language (Aramaic) of their former captors. These paraphrases were originally oral. They were rather loose paraphrases, and in some instances, were like running commentaries. The targums later attained a fixed form and were written down and preserved. They give Bible scholars a valuable tool for textual criticism and interpretation. Three of these targums (Onkelos, Neofiti, and pseudo-Jonathan) put the landing place of the Ark in the Qardu (Kurdish) mountains. It should be remembered that these mountains were not far from where some of these Jews spent their captivity, and it is probable they did not know much about the kingdom of Ararat since it ceased to exist around the 7th century BC. What the Targums are doing is upgrading the place names for the reader’s benefit. And lo and behold, they do not live too far away from these places!

Josephus

Writing during the 1st century AD, Josephus was a man of Jewish birth who was loyal to the Roman Empire. He was a man of great intellect and a contemporary of the Apostle Paul. As an official historian of the Jews for the Roman Empire he had access to all the archives and libraries of the day. He mentions the remains of Noah’s Ark three times. All mentions are found in the *Antiquities of the Jews*. The first is found in Vol. IV on P. 43 of the Loeb edition.²² Here he says:

‘Then the ark settled on a mountain-top in Armenia: ... Noah, thus learning that the earth was delivered from the flood, waited yet seven days, and then let the animals out of the ark, went forth himself with his family, sacrificed to God and feasted

with his household. The Armenians call that spot the Landing-place, for it was there that the ark came safe to land, and they show the relics of it to this day.’

First, note that Josephus says the remains of the Ark existed in his day though he himself was not an eyewitness. Second, mention of the Armenians assigning a name to the landing site is intriguing, as is even the fact that he calls them ‘Armenians’. They were first called Armenians by the Greek historian, Hecataeus (also from Miletus), who wrote of the ‘Armenoi’ in the 6th century BC. Josephus, who also undoubtedly used the Septuagint (the Greek version of the OT translated about 200 BC), knew that it substituted ‘Armenia’ for ‘Ararat’ (in the Hebrew original) where it occurs in Isaiah 37:38. At the time Josephus wrote (near the end of the First Century), the Armenians were still a pagan nation. However, there is a tradition that some Armenians had been converted by this time through the missionary efforts of Apostles Bartholomew and Thaddeus. Was Josephus quoting Christian Armenians at this early date, or did pagan Armenians know of the Flood? It might be significant if the Armenians had this tradition at this early date. We continue to search for the evidence.

Third, concerning the Armenian name for the landing place, William Whiston in his translation of Josephus, has the following footnote:

‘This *apo bah tay reon* or “Place of Descent”, is the proper rendering of the Armenian name of this very city. It is called in Ptolemy Naxuana, and Moses Chorenensis, the Armenian historian, Idsheuan; but at the place itself Nachidsheuan, which signifies “The first place of descent”, and is a lasting monument of the preservation of Noah in the Ark, upon the top of the mountain, at whose foot it was built, as the first city or town built after the flood. See *Antiq. B. XX. ch. ii. sect. 3*; and Moses Chorenensis, who also says elsewhere, that another town was related by tradition to have been called Seron, or “The Place of Dispersion”, on account of the dispersion of Xisuthrus’s or Noah’s sons, from

thence first made. Whether any remains of this ark be still preserved as the people of the country suppose, I cannot certainly tell. Mons. Tournefort had, not very long since, a mind to see the place himself, but met with too great dangers and difficulties to venture through them.’

Note: Whiston wants to identify ‘the place of descent’, (*apo bah tay reon* in Greek) with the modern day city of Nakhichavan situated about 105 km southeast of Ararat in the former USSR. Ark researchers in the past have used this footnote as early evidence for Mt Ararat being the site for the Ark’s landing place.²³ However, we must ask if this is the intent of Josephus, or the 18th century interpretation of Whiston (from his footnote)? There seems to be linguistic and other evidence that such is not the case. First of all, to identify the current Mt Ararat as the landing place, as per Whiston’s footnote, is contrary to Josephus clearly identifying it as a mountain in Gordyene. Second, the early Armenian historians identified the Gordyene (‘Gortuk’) mountains as the landing place of Noah’s Ark at least up to the 11th and 12th centuries.²⁴ Thirdly, according to the Armenian language scholar, Heinrich Hubschmann, the city of Nakhichavan, which does mean ‘Place of First Descent’ in Armenian, was not known by that name in antiquity. Rather, he says the present-day name evolved to ‘Nakhichavan’ from ‘Naxcavan.’ The prefix ‘Naxc’ was a name and ‘avan’ is Armenian for ‘town’.²⁵

The **second**, and perhaps most important reference is found on page 45 of the Loeb edition, and is a quote from the above-mentioned Chaldean priest, Berossus. We quote here the entire Paragraph:

‘This flood and the ark are mentioned by all who have written histories of the barbarians. Among these is Berossus the Chaldean, who in his description of the events of the flood writes somewhere as follows: “It is said, moreover, that a portion of the vessel still survives in Armenia on the mountain of the Cordyaeans, and that persons carry off pieces of the bitumen, which they use as talismans”. These matters are mentioned by Hieronymus the Egyptian, author of the ancient history of Phoenicia, by Mna-seas and by many others. Nicolas of Damascus in his ninety-sixth book relates the story as follows: there is above Minyas in Armenia a great mountain called Baris, where, as the story goes, many refugees found safety at the time of the flood, and one man transported upon an ark, grounded upon the summit; and relics of the timber were for long preserved; this might well be the same man of whom Moses the Jewish legislator, wrote.’²⁶

Again, note that Josephus is not an eyewitness. Rather he is quoting all the ancient authorities he had access to, most of which are no longer in existence, and indeed are known only from his quotations of them. It is impressive that Josephus seems to indicate there is a consensus among the historians of his day, not only about the remains of the Ark still existing, but also concerning the location.

Josephus also quotes the work of Nicolas of Damascus, the friend and biographer of Herod the Great. Nicolas claimed that he put great labor into his historical studies, and he apparently had access to many resources. It is possible he was one of Josephus’ main sources. His story of the Flood, however, deviates from the Biblical account in that he has some surviving the Flood outside the Ark. His location for the final resting place of the Ark seems to be in harmony with the Gordyene site. He claims the Ark landed above Minyas on a great mountain in Armenia. According to ancient geographers, Minyas was a country slightly below and to the east of Armenia, below present day Lake Urmia in Iran.²⁷ The name he gives this mountain, ‘Baris,’ is a mystery. According to Lloyd Bailey, the Greek word ‘baris’ means ‘height’, or ‘tower’, and can also mean ‘boat’!²⁸

The **third** reference to the remains of the Ark is found in Vol. XX, p. 403 of the Loeb edition.²⁹

‘Monobazus, being now old and seeing that he had not long to live, desired to lay eyes on his son before he died. He therefore sent for him, gave him the warmest of welcomes and presented him with a district called Carron. The land there has excellent soil for the production of amomum in the greatest of abundance; it also possesses the remains of the ark in which report has it that Noah was saved from the flood—remains which to this day are shown to those who are curious to see them.’

The context of this incidental citation of the Ark’s remains has to do with a certain royal family (the King and Queen of Adiabene) who converted to Judaism. In the immediate context of the above citation, Monobazus, the man who converted, gives his son Izates the land of Carron. The clues given as to the location of the Ark’s remains in this passage are ambiguous. The remains are said to be somewhere in a country called Carron which must be found in the greater country of Adiabene. Why? Because the king could not have given what was not his, therefore, Carron must be found within Adiabene.

It is fairly certain that Adiabene is bounded by the Tigris on the west and the Upper (north) and Lower (south) Zab Rivers. Today this would be northeastern Iraq. The land of Carron presents some difficulties. It is mentioned only by Josephus. There does seem to be some doubt about the text here since the Loeb edition amends the text to read ‘Gordyene’ where the same ‘Carron’ is mentioned elsewhere in *Antiquities*.³⁰ If this is the case, then Josephus is not giving us a second location for the remains of Noah’s Ark. He may have associated Adiabene with Gordyene since they were next to each other. There is precedent for this. Pliny, a Roman author and contemporary of Josephus, places the city of Nisibis in Adiabene when it is actually located to the west of Gordyene (*Natural History*, 6.16). It is interesting to note also that Hippolytus (2nd century) agrees. He says, ‘The relics of the Ark are ... shown to this day in the mountains called Ararat, which are situated in the direction of the country of Adiabene.’ This would be correct since he wrote from Rome. (*A Refutation of all*

Heresies, 10, Chapter 26).

From the above there seems to be grounds for arguing that Josephus pinpoints the Gordyene site (Judi Dagh) as the landing place of Noah's Ark. While we cannot say this with absolute certainty, we feel we can conclude that **nowhere** does Josephus say anything definitive that might lead us to assume that present-day Mt Ararat is in view. We also disagree with Bailey who believes that Josephus gives three different locations for the Ark's final resting place.³¹

Eusebius

Eusebius was Bishop of Caesarea in the 3rd century AD. He was the first great historian of the church. In his two-volume work *Chronicle*, he notes that a small part of the Ark still remains in the Gordian mountains.³²

The Pershitta

The Pershitta is a version of the entire Bible made for the Syrian Christians. Scholars are not sure when it was translated, but it shows up for the first time around AD 400. In Genesis 8:4 it reads 'mountains of Qardu' for the resting place of Noah's Ark. This version also shows a definite influence from the Targums mentioned previously.

Faustus of Byzantium

Faustus was an historian of the 4th century AD. Very little is known about him except that he was one of the early historians of Armenia, though he was of Greek origin. His original work is lost but has survived through translations. It is from Faustus that we first hear the story of St Jacob ('Hagop' in Armenian) of Nisibis, the godly monk who asks God to see the Ark.³³ After repeatedly failing to climb the mountain an angel rewards him with a piece of wood from the Ark. It is this story that is oft-quoted in succeeding centuries, and the location given for the event in these later sources is Mt Ararat. Faustus, the one who presumably originated the story, puts this event not on Mt Ararat of the north, but in the canton of Gordukh (in south Armenia). The St Jacob of the story is the Bishop of Nisibis (modern Nusaybin), a city which is only about 110 km (not quite within sight) of Cudi Dagh.³⁴

Mt Ararat (the mountain to the north) to the bishop would have been near the end of the known world. If Faustus had meant this mountain, he undoubtedly would



Ruins and bridge over the Tigris near Cudi Mountains.

Photo is from Amarith to Amarith by Gertrude Bell.

have called it by its Armenian name of 'Massis' as he does elsewhere in his work. Armenian historians agree that the early Armenian traditions indicated the southern location as the landing place of the Ark.³⁵ Until the 10th century, all Armenian sources support the southern location as the landing place of the Ark.

Wouldn't it be strange for the Syrian bishop to ignore what his Syrian Bible (the Pershitta) told him was the landing place of Noah's Ark? Also, St Jacob's own student, St Ephraem, refers to the landing site as 'the mountains of Qardu'. It is hard to believe that one of his intimates could be that confused! The natives of the area even today tell the story of St. Jacob the Bishop, and similar traditions associated with Mt Ararat, i.e. the city built by Noah, and his grave, etc.³⁶

Epiphanius

Epiphanius was the Bishop of Salamis and a fierce opponent of heresy in the 4th century AD. On two occasions he mentions that the Ark landed in the mountains of the Gordians. In fact he says the remains are still shown, and that if one looks diligently, one can still find the altar of Noah.³⁷

Euty chius

Euty chius was Bishop of Alexandria in the 9th century. He says, 'The Ark rested on the mountains of Ararat, that is *Jabal Judi* near Mosul'. Mosul is a city near ancient Ninevah about 80 miles south of Cudi Dagh.³⁸

Muslim Sources

The Quran—7th century

The Quran says: ‘The Ark came to rest upon Al Judi ...’ (Houd 11:44). The *Modern Muslim Encyclopedia* is familiar with the early traditions that the Ark came to rest on Cudi Dagh. However, the writer of the article under ‘Jebel Judi’ believes Mohammed was referring to the Judi mountains in Saudi Arabia. This is not certain. Mohammed was very familiar with Christian and Jewish traditions, not to mention the fact that he probably traveled to this area during his days as a merchant. In the English translation of the Quran made by George Sale in 1734, a footnote concerning the landing place of the Ark states that the Quran is following an ancient tradition.³⁹ At least the following Muslim sources seem to agree’.

Al-Mas’udi—10th century

‘... [T]he ark stood on the mount el-Judi. El-Judi is a mountain in the country Masur, and extends to Jezirah Ibn ‘Omar which belongs to the territory of el-Mausil. The mountain is eight farasangs from the Tigris. The place where the ship stopped, which is on the top of this mountain, is still seen.’ This is approximately 40–50 km **from the Tigris** and puts one right on Cudi Dagh!⁴⁰

Ibn Haukal—10th century

He places Al-Judi near the town of Nesbin (modern Nu-saybin) and mentions that Noah built a village at the foot of the mountain.⁴¹

Ibn al-Amid or al-Amacin—13th century

In his history of the Saracens, he informs us that the Byzantine emperor, Heraclius climbed Mount Judi to see the site in the 7th century. He does not mention whether or not he saw it.⁴²

Zakariya ben Muhammad al Kazwini

A Muslim geographer of the 13th century, he also reports that wood from the Ark was used to construct a monastery. He does not, however, give a location.⁴³

Jewish Source

Benjamin of Tudela—12th century

He says he travelled ‘two days to Jezireh Ben Omar, an island in the Tigris on the foot of Mt Ararat ... on which the ark of Noah rested. Omar Ben al-Khatib removed the Ark from the summit of the two mountains and made a mosque of it’. Note: the ruins of this city, Jezireh Ben Omar, are located at the foot of Cudi Dagh; and also, here is evidence

that this mountain was also called ‘Mt Ararat’; it does have two peaks; and remains were still there at this date.⁴⁴

Conclusion

The above evidence to us seems impressive. As we mentioned already, it is not conclusive, but certainly compelling when compared to the evidence for present-day Mt Ararat. This, of course, does not include the eyewitness accounts for Mt Ararat, which, taken at face value, are spectacular. Only one verified eyewitness would invalidate all of the above! However, since we have no absolutely verifiable eyewitnesses, we wonder if any of the eyewitnesses on the lists given in various books about the search for Noah’s Ark may have possibly been at this southern location. We feel that some of them were, and at least one, seems to us to be certain. Here are two examples:

First, we are not entirely convinced, but it is possible that the discovery of the ark by Prince Nouri may have been at this southern site, and perhaps what he saw was the stone reconstruction somewhat covered with snow.⁴⁵ We find it interesting that he was traveling from India to take over the leadership of the Nestorian church which just happened to have its center a little to the east of this mountain. Certainly he would have been acquainted with the Nestorian tradition which puts the Ark on Cudi Dagh! The Nestorians once had a famous monastery called ‘The Cloister of the Ark’ upon the summit of this mountain. It was destroyed by lightning in AD 766 as mentioned previously. Why did he say he was on Mt Ararat? Because to most Christians, if the Ark is there, it has to be Mt Ararat.

We believe a second and more certain possibility is the chance discovery of the five Turkish soldiers who were returning from Baghdad to their homes in Adana after World War I when they came upon Noah’s Ark.⁴⁶ Why would they deliberately go over a thousand kilometers out of their way toward Ararat, and climb a 5,200 m mountain which was still under the control of their enemies (the Russians) when their home was in the opposite direction? These questions need answers. When one looks at a map, they most likely followed the Tigris River right to their country’s border. This would have put them right on target to Cudi Dagh. They could not have gone a more direct route through Syria because of the British Army. This makes sense!

The above arguments and historical references may not constitute a conclusive argument for the Ark’s landing place, but they are compelling, and, to us, overwhelming. More digging is necessary, perhaps even in the literal sense on Cudi Dagh!

Appendix

Genesis 8:4 only gives a general location for the landing place of the Ark: ‘the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat’. In the Hebrew original which is written only in consonants, Ararat is *rrt* in the English alphabet. A good

paraphrase of the passage would be: ‘The Ark came to rest in the mountains in the region of Ararat’. The question then becomes: where was this region located at the time Genesis was written?

The first time we hear about this region in history (outside of the Bible) is as Urartu, in Akkadian texts about the 13th century BC during the reign of Shalmaneser I. We have more substantial comment about this kingdom in the 9th century BC Assyrian texts. Urartu, is simply a cognate of the Biblical word as many of these ancient languages were written only with consonants. Urartu was then an enemy of Assyria and located due north in a very mountainous region which today would be the area of southeastern Turkey, south of Lake Van. At its zenith (8th century BC), the Kingdom of Urartu extended to the north of Mt. Ararat to Yerevan, the capital city of present-day Armenia, east into Iran and west to the city of Erzincan in Turkey. It even occupied a small area of Iraq south of the Tigris. (For a map of Urartian sites see the work of Zimansky.⁴⁷)

This region, or kingdom, is mentioned three more times in the Old Testament. It is mentioned in 2 Kings 19:37. It was the land where Sennacherib’s sons fled after they killed him in a pagan temple. The passage in Isaiah 37:38 seems to be almost a direct quote of the 2 Kings passage. Ararat is mentioned for a fourth time in Jeremiah 51:27, in a prophecy against Babylon where it is mentioned with Minni, and Askenaz. Minni was located somewhat to the north east of Ararat, east of Lake Urmia and Askenaz is usually identified with the dreaded Scythians, nomadic tribes believed to be from the steppes of Russia.

The King James Version in the two identical passages of 2 Kings and Isaiah change the ‘Ararat’ of the Hebrew to ‘Armenia’. This is undoubtedly due to the influence of the Greek version of the OT, known as the Septuagint, which made this change when the translation was made about 200 BC. Ararat as a Kingdom ceased to be with the defeat of the Medes around 605 BC. The translators of the OT simply were upgrading the geographical names, but it is puzzling as to why they did not update at the other two verses in Genesis 8 and Jeremiah 51!

Our original question was: where was the region of Ararat at the time Genesis was written? We believe strongly from internal evidence and tradition that Moses was the author of Genesis and that it must have been written just before the Israelites entered into the land of Canaan about the middle of the 15th century BC. The earliest mention (yet found) for the region of Ararat as noted earlier was the 13th century BC. At this time, historians do not believe it was a kingdom but rather a loose-knot coalition of tribal groups. What we do know is that Egypt traded for Obsidian from the area of present-day nation of Armenia in the 15th century BC, so Egypt certainly had knowledge of this area. When the Kingdom of Urartu ceased to exist historians believe it was generally taken over by the Armenians who may have come from the Hurrians (the Biblical Horites) or the Hyksos peoples (Armenians to this day refer to their country as Hyastan) who conquered Egypt in the 18th century BC. It

would make sense that later historians would refer to the Landing Place as the land of the Armenians. To say that Ark landed in Armenia in the country of the Kurds, likewise is consistent, for ancient Kurdistan was within the boundaries of Armenia, and was located in the rugged mountainous area in southeastern Turkey, south of Lake Van.

References

1. For the beginner who wants to survey the literature, we recommend four books: Montgomery, J.W., *The Quest for Noah’s Ark*, Bethany Fellowship, Inc., Minneapolis, 1972; LaHaye, T. and Morris, J., *The Ark on Ararat*, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nashville, 1976; Cummings, V.M., *Noah’s Ark: Fact or Fable?* Creation-Science Research Center, San Diego, 1972; Corbin, B.J. (Ed.), *The Explorers of Ararat*, Great Commission Illustrated Books, Long Beach, 1999.
2. For a complete account of this report see: LaHaye and Morris, Ref. 1, pp. 115–116.
3. Many Ark enthusiasts link the discovery of the Ark with end times, an idea which could be true, but as far as we know is without any direct Biblical support.
4. This icecap is approximately 44 km² in size. At some places it is 60–90 m thick.
5. As most of the readers may be aware, woolly mammoths have been found, which ‘date’ via radiometric dating at over 10,000 years. The flesh is still edible!
6. The author has in his possession a collection of photos of these ‘phantom arks.’ Some of these are heart-stoppers. Given the right combination of light and shadows, arks can be seen all over the mountain!
7. The scientist and early Ark searcher, Clifford Burdick, claimed to have found pillow lava on the mountain as well as sedimentation. Neither claim could be substantiated. The sedimentation he found was instead laid down by volcanic action and not by water.
8. There are some areas of the icecap which some thought might be stationary. These areas have recently been bored into and examined with sub-surface radar with negative results.
9. For more information on the land of Ararat, or Urartu, as it is known in non-Biblical literature, we recommend: Yamauchi, E.M., *Foes from the Northern Frontier*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1982; Piotrovsky, B.B., *The Ancient Civilization of Urartu*, Cowles Book Company, New York, 1969; Burney, C. and Lang, D.M., *People of the Hills*, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1971; Zimansky, P.E., *Ecology and Empire: The Structure of the Urartian State*, The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Chicago, 1982.
10. We do not regard this as a settled issue; we are still searching for any references prior to this.
11. Marco Polo, *The Travels*, edited and translated by Ronald Latham, The Folio Society, London, p. 34, 1968.
12. This area was in the news early in 1992, as it was the area to which the Kurds fled Saddam Hussein’s murderous troops.
13. Readers should be aware that there is another Cudi Dagh in Turkey (a mountain of about 640 m) located near the city of Urfa not far from the Biblical city of Haran.
14. One of the most descriptive accounts of the area is by Xenophon in *Anabasis* (5th century BC), see Book Four.
15. King, L.W., Sennacherib and the Ionians, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 30:327–335, 1910; see his footnote on p. 328.
16. Bell, G., *Amurath to Amurath*, McMillan, London, p. 292, 1924.
17. Bell, Ref. 16, p. 292.
18. Parrot, A., *The Flood and Noah’s Ark*, SCM Press Ltd, London, p. 65, 1953. We can’t vouch for the accuracy of this report, in fact it appears to

- be a tabloid story. However, we do know that Kurds in the area say that wood has been found there as recently as 50 years ago.
19. For more information about the characteristics of the Samaritan Pentateuch see: Waltke, B., *The Samaritan Pentateuch and the text of the Old Testament*; in: Payne, J.B. (Ed.), *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, Word Books, Waco, 1970.
 20. The works of Polyhistor were also lost but survived in an Armenian translation in the works of Eusebius. See, Bailey, L.R., *Noah*, University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, footnote 2, p. 211, 1989; and Ref. 33 of this paper.
 21. This translation is found in Parrot, Ref. 18, p. 40. Parrot is citing a translation from Cory, I.P., *The Ancient Fragments*, no page is given.
 22. The most popular translation of Josephus is by William Whiston in 1737. However, the most accurate translation is the Loeb edition from the Classical Library. We also used this edition to enable us to consult the original text. In Whiston's translation this quotation is in Book One, Chapter 3.
 23. Montgomery apparently makes this assumption. See Montgomery, Ref. 1, pp. 60ff.
 24. Bailey, L.R., *Where is Noah's Ark?* Abingdon Press, Nashville, pp. 102ff, 1978; Kurkjian, V., *A History of Armenia*, Armenian General Benevolent Union, New York, pp. 1–2, 1959.
 25. Hubschmann H., Armeniaca; in: *Strassburger Festschrift zur XLVI Versammlung Deutscher Philologen und Schulmänner*, Verlag von Karl Taubner, Strassburg, Section V, 1901; cited in Bailey, Ref. 20, pp. 190ff.
 26. Found in Whiston, Book 1, Chapter 3.
 27. Most scholars agree that Minyas equals 'Minni', 'Mani', or 'Manneans' in ancient literature. See the map in *Foes from the Northern Frontier*, p. 40 for a precise location.
 28. For Bailey's discussion of the etymology of 'baris', see: Bailey, Ref. 20, footnote 19, p. 216.
 29. In Whiston it is found on Book 20, Chapter 2.
 30. The Greek is 'carrown'. The Loeb edition suggests in a footnote that the original reading may have been 'cardu'. This is certainly within the realm of plausibility. This, then would just be another variant spelling of Gordyene, the country of the Kurds. Interestingly enough there is a land called 'Kirruri' located southwest of Lake Urmia. See Levine, L.D., *Geographical Studies in the Neo Assyrian Zagros*, *Iran* 11:105, 1973. This land is a small district adjacent to, and north of Adiabene, just across the little Zab River.
 31. Bailey, Ref. 20, p. 66.
 32. This quote by Eusebius is found in *Chronicle*, vol. 1, pp. 36–37. The actual reference is rather obscure. We quote here in its entirety the note by Bailey: 'Extensive quotations from Berossus were made by Alexander Polyhistor (first century B.C.E.), whose work also was lost, but quotations of it survive in an Armenian translation of Eusebius' *Chronicles*. Eusebius' remarks about the Flood were also preserved by the Byzantine.'
 33. Montgomery's translation of this story from the French can be found in Montgomery, Ref. 1, pp. 66–69. It is important to note that Faustus wrote from the same century as St Jacob.
 34. St Jacob of Nisibis was one of the prominent figures at the Council of Nicea (AD 325). He was known for his ability to perform miracles and was known as the Moses of Mesopotamia. He may also have figured in the evangelization of Armenia.
 35. See footnote 24. Also, see the 10th century Armenian historian, Thomas Artsruni: Thompson, R.W., *History of the House of the Artsrunik*, Wayne State University, Detroit, p. 81, 1985.
 36. Bell, Ref. 16, p. 294. This was also confirmed to me personally by a missionary stationed in that area in 1992.
 37. See Montgomery's translation of the critical passage: Montgomery, Ref. 1, p. 77.
 38. Bailey, Ref. 20, p. 67.
 39. *Koran*, translated by George Sale in 1734. This footnote is found in the Appendix on p. 496. The footnotes were the responsibility of Frederic Mynon Cooper.
 40. Cited in Montgomery, Ref. 1, pp. 325–326.
 41. Cited in Montgomery, Ref. 1, pp.326—327.
 42. Montgomery, Ref. 1, p. 327.
 43. Bailey, Ref. 20, p. 67.
 44. *The Itinerary Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela*, A.Asher, London, vol. I, pp. 90–91, 1840.
 45. For an account of this story see Cummings, Ref. 1, pp. 188 ff.
 46. Cummings, V.M., *Has Anybody Really Seen Noah's Ark?* Creation-Life Publishers, San Diego, pp. 103 ff, 1982.
 47. Zimansky, P.E., *Ecology and Empire: The Structure of the Urartian State*, Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1982. In the back of the book he has included satellite photos of all the Urartian sites. These are then coordinated with maps of the area.

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