

## “NOAH’S ARK” DOCUMENTARY

Cem SERTESEN\*

Topographical Engineer Captain İlhan Durupınar is working on the map of Eastern Anatolia at the General Directorate of Mapping in Ankara on Friday, September 11, 1959. Among the thousands of mapping films, a very interesting ship-like formation attracts his attention. Because the region is Ağrı Doğubeyazıt, he examines it in detail. Measurements given in the holy books for Noah’s Ark. It is situated at the foot of Tendürek Mountain between Doğubeyazıt Üzengili Village and Telçeker Villages, 17 km south of Ağrı Mountain. Did İlhan Durupınar find Noah’s Ark which was searched for centuries?

This news spreads within the institution as soon as possible. The next day, journalists come to the General Directorate of Mapping to interview İlhan Durupınar. To the question “Did you find the Noah’s Ark?” İlhan Durupınar answers the question of journalists: “It is too early to say that it is the Noah’s, nothing can be said without going to that area, conducting on-site investigations, geophysical and archaeological detailed work “. The first news about the discovery was written exactly one week after the discovery on the 18th of September 1959 and published on the front page of Milliyet Newspaper with the headline: “A boat seems to be Noah’s ark has been seen”.

The second news of the discovery was published in the 43rd issue of Hayat Magazine on the 23rd of October 1956 with the title “Photograph to Engage the World”. The map photograph of Noah’s Ark and photos of Captain İlhan Durupınar are used for the first time with the permission of the



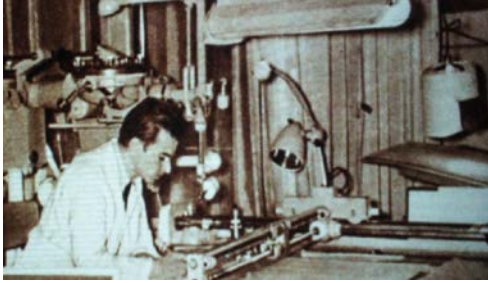
*Map picture*

Turkish Armed Forces. Born in Amasra in 1925, 34-year-old Survey Engineer, Captain İlhan Durupınar, is acquainted with this news both in Turkey and the world.

The third new of the discovery took place again in Hayat Magazine ten months after the discovery. In its 30th issue dated 22nd of July 1960, the magazine reports on two full pages

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with the title "Is this the Noah's Ark?" The delegation led by Captain İlhan Durupınar, includes a world-renowned topographical engineer of the time, Professor Arthur Brandenburger from Ohio State University, USA. The news describes the visit of the foreign delegation of six people to the shape of "Noah's Ark" in Doğubeyazıt Telçeker on Monday, June 6, 1960.



*Topographical engineer Captain İlhan Durupınar  
11.09.1959*

Durupınar saw his discovery with the naked eye for the first time that day. A month and a half after this news, which was published by Hayat Magazine, the same news appeared in Life Magazine of the 5th of September 1960. In an interview for Life Magazine, Professor Brandenburger said, "It is too symmetrical to be a natural formation. I have no doubt that this object is a ship. In all my career I have never seen such an object in stereo photography."

The news of Life Magazine dated September 5, 1960 had a great impact in America and in the world. On those days, one of Turkey's most important archaeologist Professor Ekrem Akurgal, said "In any case, this is an ancient ship and must be protected," for the discovery of Durupınar. The greatest misfortune of those news and discovery was that it coincided with military coup which happened on the 27th of May 1960. Since the agenda was very different in the country, these news have not attracted enough public attention.

After this latest news, letters from İlhan Durupınar started to come from various countries of the world. The most important of these letters came in September 1960. Walt Disney says it is ready to build hotels, roads and airports on a fairly large budget. They wanted to invest in Doğubeyazıt and they asked Durupınar for help to meet with government officials. In this document, they said, this region will soon become the center of visit of all faiths and will be the world's most important tourism center. They were ready to finance the project "Noah's Ark Theme Park" and claimed that it would be a lucrative project for Turkey. However Walt Disney's dream did not come true due to the military coup that happened the same year.

## DOĞUBAYAZIT

My documentary adventure started with the following photo frame taken on August 10, 1995 in Doğubeyazıt. 22 years later, my documentary was selected to the finals among 750 films in the 9th TRT Documentary Awards competition in 2017 and was screened to the audience on the 11th and 12th of May during the "TRT Documentary Days". In the first 10 of the 22 years, I spent my time searching for the explorer İlhan Durupınar. I waited for ten years for this story (1995-2005). It was a good thing I had waited because İlhan Durupınar's precious story would remain in his family and be forgotten after a few generations. Explorer İlhan Durupınar passed away on April 23, 2017. May he rest in peace.

## ISTANBUL

Until 1961, except a map photograph taken at 4500 meters, this discovery did not have a professional photograph taken to show the shape. In those years, the young Ara Güler, born in Istanbul in 1928, was the photojournalist for the magazines Hayat, Time-Life, Paris-Match and Der



*Cem SERTESEN Doğubeyazıt - 10.08.1995 – The moment I decided to make a documentary of this place  
Photo: Gürkan SEVİNÇ*

Stern. On April 17, 1961, Doğubeyazıt took photographs of this shape in Telçeker from a two-seat propeller military plane that was allocated to him.

This duty was assigned to Ara Güler by the General Staff. The photographs he took show a very clear trail of ships. When I asked him, “How did you feel when you saw the trail of Noah’s Ark from the air, what were your feelings at that moment?” He said, “If this trail is the trail of Noah’s Ark, it’s like seeing God down there!”

Der Stern wants to cover the photo of Noah’s Ark taken by Ara Güler. But the day before the magazine went into print, Svetlana, Stalin’s daughter, sold her father’s letters to the magazine. The cover photo also changes before printing. The cover photo was also changed before printing. Although Ara Güler’s “Noah’s Ark” photo cannot be on the cover of Der Stern, the photographs and news appear in detail in that issue and attracted great attention.

When I interviewed Ara Güler for my

documentary on June 16, 2005, which lasted about five hours, when the great master told me; “I have never been interviewed by anyone for so long,” I realized that it was the most valuable photo he had taken in his career. If I had asked, I might not have received a clear answer, but it was Ara Güler’s most valuable photograph in her career.

### **THE LAST PHOTO FILM PUT BY ARA GÜLER IN HIS CAMERA**

In my documentary “Noah’s Ark 2” which I started to prepare in 2017, I wanted to take the great master to Doğubeyazıt where he photographed the area in 1961. My goal was him to take the photo he took 60 years ago again after 60 years with the same camera. The date was 11 November 2017 when he brought the camera from his assistant Fatih Aslan. The location was Istanbul Beyoğlu Ara Cafe. That day I asked him to put a film in the camera and I recorded it with two cameras. With the film in the camera, we were now waiting to go to Doğubeyazıt in the summer of 2018.

He told me something very interesting that



*Photo: ARA GÜLER – April 17, 1961 Doğubeyazıt – Source: "Noah's Ark" Documentary 1995 – 2017*



*Photo: Ara GÜLER 17.04.1961 – Source: Noah's Ark Documentary 1995 - 2017*

day; “This camera is the first camera I’ve ever had. That is why it is so valuable.” The great master gave value not because it was his first camera. With this camera, he photographed maybe all the famous politicians, statesmen and artists on earth. He photographed over a million frames and saw four wars with that camera. They did not matter to the great master.

And continued; “With this camera, I shot the Noah’s Ark 60 years ago. I am the first person in the world to see the trail of Noah’s Ark with the naked eye. This camera is also the first camera who took the photo of the trail. So this camera is very valuable to me.”

In my guess 12 years ago, I knew I wasn’t wrong. That was the most precious photo he’s ever taken. Unfortunately, Grand Master’s health did not allow and we could not go to Doğubeyazıt. He was sent off to eternity on

17 October 2018. May he rest in peace.

The film that Ara Güler had installed on Leica Camera, with the serial number 382418, to shoot Noah’s Ark 60 years later, was the last film he had attached to a camera in his career. The story of the 382418 serial numbered Leica camera will be displayed soon at Ara Güler Museum.



*Photo: Cem SERTESEN – Ara Güler puts the last film in the camera for the documentary “Noah’s Ark – 2” - 11.11.2017*



*Photo: Mahmut GENÇ -11.11.2017 "Noah's Ark -2"*

The moment when Ara Güler said, "That's the camera! The camera he used to photograph the Noah's Ark in Doğubeyazıt Telçeker from a two-seat propeller military plane that was allocated to him.

### **SCIENTIFIC RESEARCHES MADE IN DOĞUBEYAZIT FOR THE "NOAH'S ARK"**

In 1983, there is a state of emergency period in Turkey. In that year, 12 American adventurers were caught by gendarmes while illegally digging and performing radar imaging on Noah's Ark in the village of Dogubayazit Telçeker. Adventurers are arrested and their devices were confiscated.

M.Salih Bayraktutan, a geological engineer who graduated from METU in 1972, has just completed his Ph.D. Upon

the letter from the Third Army Command to the rector, Bayraktutan was send to duty to Doğubayazit. Bayraktutan's task was to report what the adventurers were doing. The Rectorate also forwarded these reports to the Chief of General Staff. After the reports, the adventurers got deported from the country.

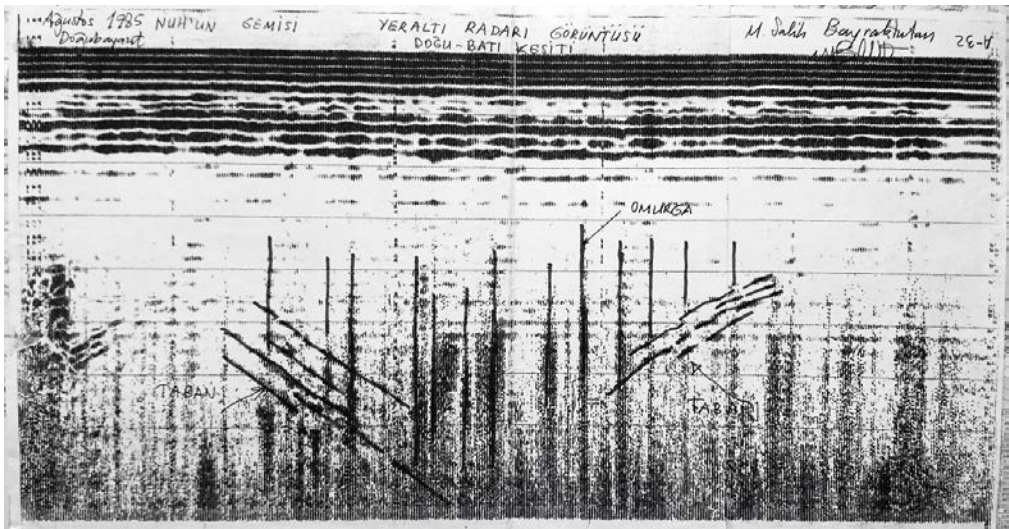
Geological Engineer Dr. M.Salih Bayraktutan accomplished radar imaging studies in the region conducted by a number of independent researchers such as David Fasold, Bill Fry and Ron Wyatt who came from the USA in 1984-1985 with the permission from Turkish authorities.

The first and only formal research conducted on behalf of Turkey was made between 1985-87 and jointly made by the University of California – Los Alamos National Laboratory chaired by John Baum; and Erzurum Atatürk University chaired by Salih Bayraktutan.

At the end of the weeks-long work, the final report given to the authorities on 10 November 1985 is as follows: "This is a trace of ship formation, we have seen the hull. The studies we have done have shown that this is a structure who has two floors in the shape of a ship made by human hand. Although all of these studies are interesting, we think that a very detailed archaeological study should be done." This study was the most comprehensive study in the conditions of those days.

### **DURUPINAR SITE**

Upon all these studies and the final report, a scientific committee consisting of Atatürk University, Yüzüncü Yıl University and MTA examined the region on behalf of the Ministry of Culture. As a result of the investigations carried out by scientists: The Ministry of Culture and Tourism High Council of Immovable Natural and Cultural Properties stated on September 17, 1987, with



*An example of the research co-conducted by the University of California – Los Alamos National Laboratory and Erzurum Atatürk University – 1985 Doğubeyazıt Telçeker – Source: Dr.M.Salih BAYRAKTUTAN's archive*

the decision number “3657”, that it shows the property of immovable cultural and natural assets that needs to be protected. The name of the explorer was given to the area known as “Durupınar Site”.

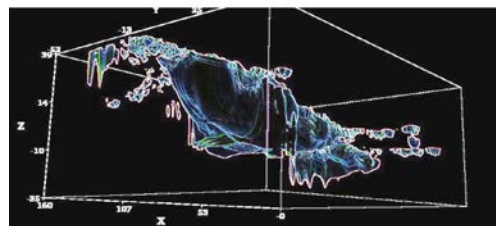
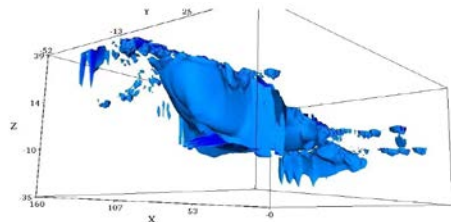
### THREE DIMENSIONAL UNDERGROUND IMAGERY TAKEN

Going beyond the latest surface scanning and underground radar imaging in 2014, the “3D” images of this ship shape were taken for the first time. This was done by John Larsen, a New Zealand geophysic geographer and underground imaging expert, and Andrew Jones, an American Computer Engineer and Archaeologist who was a member of his team.

In my interview for the second part of the Noah's Ark – 2 documentary, Andrew Jones told me that in this two-week study, they detected the hull in three dimensions.

Larsen and Jones shared the photos and videos of their work with me to use in my documentary. The image was very amazing and exciting. Andrew Jones told me, “Any scientist who is an expert on the subject can

do this work and can reach this conclusion. It's a ship, yes, but it's too early to say it's the Noah's Ark. We have to do a lot of work. This can only be done with the support of universities and the Turkish State.



*Doğubeyazıt Telçeker - Underground 3D image of “Noah's Ark” formation – 2014 – (Copyright John Larsen 2017)*

## RECENT NEWS

On October 17, 2019, the director of the Discovery Channel, came to London to interview me about my documentary and the books I had written in Doğubeyazıt about the Noah's Ark. He asked me, "What is going to happen if the shape here is proved to be the Noah's Ark?" I replied "If after all completed scientific studies, it is proven by scientist that there is a shape of a ship (perhaps the Noah's Ark), it would be like visiting the center of the whole world but also to visit a symbol of world peace located in Doğubeyazıt, the eastern part of Turkey.

I was invited to the International Mount Ararat and Noah's Ark Symposium which was held for the fifth time at Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University on 16-18 October 2019. Regarding the region; the Governor of Ağrı Süleyman Elban, the Mayor of Ağrı Savcı Sayan, Ağrı Provincial Culture and Tourism Director; Muhsin Bulut, Rector of Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University Prof.Dr. Abdülhalik Karabulut, Vice Rector Dr. Faruk Kaya and Prof. Dr. Oktay Belli had common views. Under the threat of landslide, this shape, which is a gift from God, must be protected by taking the necessary precautions.

## NOAH'S ARK DOCUMENTARY (1995-2017)

58 years after the discovery, this documentary tells the story of a discovery occurred in 1959 in Turkey. Today the east of Turkey could have been very different the region of Doğubeyazıt and could have been the humanity's visiting zone. While İlhan Durupınar and Ara Güler were being told their stories, the documentary made a kind of a flashback story to that period. In 1960 Walt Disney was willing to invest in Turkey but neither Turkey nor the other countries did not know. This information was included for the first time in this documentary.

In 1985, a joint effort was made with the scientists of Erzurum Atatürk University and the Los Alamos National Laboratory within the University of California, America's largest space and space science research center. As a result, scientific reports, which are shown for the first time in this documentary, detected in underground through radar images the "Ship hull".

The documentary "Noah's Ark" succeeded in entering the finals of the 9th International TRT Documentary Awards competition in 2017 among the 750 films and entered into the top 10 films. The documentary Turkey and World premiere was made during the TRT Documentary Days in Istanbul during the 11-14th of May 2017 and attracted the attention of the audience and the press.

Due to the great interest in the documentary, on 27 May 2017, NTV Television broadcasted the documentary with a single screening. The documentary director Cem Sertesens compiled the story of the 22-year-long documentary (1995-2017) in two books, "Noah's Ark, The Discovery of The Century" and "We Were on The Same Ark" and were published respectively in 2018 and 2019.

He wrote his first book with Erkan Köseadağ, Deputy Director of Culture and Tourism of Ağrı Province. Also translated into English, Theologian Dr. Amata Dekaroğlu made a contribution for the book with his scientific essay "Noah Flood in Heavenly Religions". The latest book "We Were on The Same Ark" which is sold with the DVD of the documentary, will be translated into English in 2020, will be presented to readers in Turkey and abroad in the same year.





Cem SERTESEN - Doğubayazıt - 11.09.2019

## THE REGION GOT A SIGNBOARD 60 YEARS AFTER THE DISCOVERY (11.09.2019)

After my documentary and the two books I wrote about the Noah's Ark, it was very nice to see this signboard, which a summary of my 24 years labor, written in three languages. First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Muhsin Bulut, Governor of Ağrı Culture and Tourism affairs and Mr. Yıldız Acar, Mayor of Doğubeyazıt, and all those who contributed.

The happiness of being able to fulfill the promises I made myself to the explorer İlhan Durupınar and Ara Güler, who both took photographs and introduced them to the world, is priceless.

While taking photos of the region for the first time, those who come to the region will learn who discovered this place and who introduced it to the world.

Nowadays, we live in a world where each value is consumed very quickly, even the most important value is forgotten in the following days. As the late Ara Güler said in my documentary, "We live in a world of bragging and emptying everything."

In a time when such a civilization reigned, I would be glad if I could draw some attention to Ağrı and Doğubeyazıt with my documentary and two books I wrote in two and half years.

I believe that in the near future, millions of tourists will book years in advance to arrive in the region. Then I will be happy to say that I have a finger in the pie.

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