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# NOAH'S ARK IS A GEOLOGICAL STRUCTURE FORMED BY LANDSLIDES

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# NUH'S SHIP

## A GEOLOGICAL STRUCTURE FORMED BY LANDSLIDES

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Noah's Ark, which is mentioned in the holy books or mythological stories of many cultures and is believed to have saved only the prophet Noah and those who believed in him from the great flood, which is assumed to be the wrath of God, is actually a kind of flood story told in detail especially in the Genesis (creation) chapter of the Torah.

According to the legend, it is believed that the ark was built by the Prophet Noah; that only a small number of people who believed in Noah and a couple of each species, one male and one female, were taken on board during the flood; that all people and living creatures on the face of the Earth were destroyed by the flood except those on board; and that the ark hit a hill and ran aground during the flood.

In the Sumerian flood tablet, the first flood text, there is no information about the place where the ark ran aground. However, according to one belief, the ark landed on the top of Mount Ararat. When the waters receded, Prophet Noah got out of his ark and founded a village at the foot of the mountain, and thus the people and other living creatures with him were able to reproduce. In order to fulfill this legend, which is also mentioned in the Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh and known all over the world, people have been searching for the remains of Noah's ark on Mount Ararat for many years. However, the remains of the ark have not been found.

As it may be remembered, in recent years, Dr. Yavuz Örnek, a faculty member at Istanbul University, Faculty of Marine Sciences, who was a guest on the program Öteki Gündem (The Other Agenda) broadcast on TRT, claimed that **"technology was very advanced in the times of Noah's Flood; technologies such as cell phones and drones were used; Noah built a ship made of steel plates that withstood 400-meter waves; he used cell phones to convince his disbelieving son to get on the ship and that this ship used nuclear energy"**. Although he claims **that Noah built a ship made of steel plates that withstood 400-meter waves, that he used a cell phone to convince his son, who did not believe in him, to board the ship, and that this ship used nuclear energy** (<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x6couc4>), these claims have no scientific equivalent. In other words, it is not accepted information in the scientific community.

**On May 30, 2025, during my on-site investigations, although I was excited(!) to learn that there was a structure resembling Noah's Ark among the people, I must state that the structure in question, which resembles a boat, is a synclinal structure formed by the folds of the rock layers due to the Eastern Anatolian tectonic compression regime. This structure is a kind of mass movement that has taken its current shape with a possible landslide that took place during the natural erosion/erosion process that has been going on for many years.**

**The harder and more resistant rock layer on the outer part of the moving mass took the shape of a ship during the curvature, even if it did not look exactly like one. In other words, it is not the remains of Noah's Ark as popularly believed, but a GEOLOGICAL CREATION.**

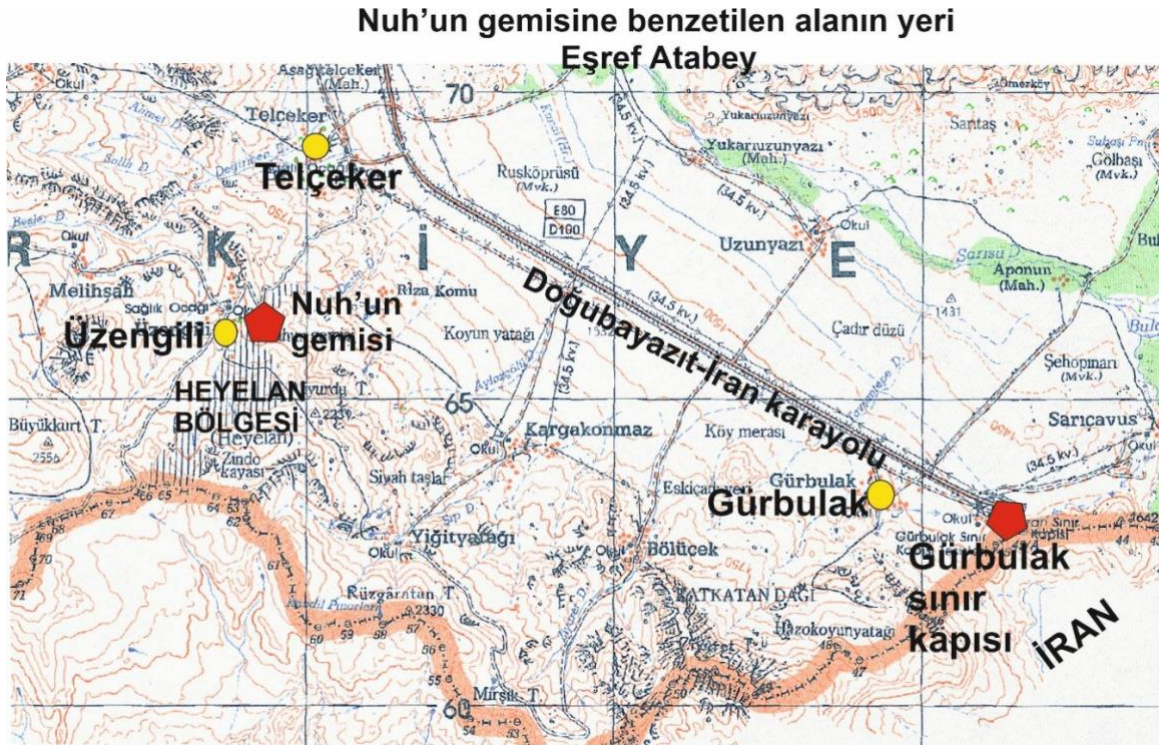
**A natural rock structure was mistakenly identified as Noah's Ark.**



The geological structure described as Noah's Ark.

## WHERE NOAH'S ARK WAS FOUND

It is located on the slope about 30 kilometers south of the summit of Mount Ararat. It is a natural formation between Telçeker and Üzengili villages of Doğubayazıt district. In fact, this monument is a silhouette in the shape of a ship. The ruin is 3.5 km from the Turkey-Iran Transit Road.





## The location of the area likened to Noah's ark Eşref Atabey







*A distant view of the geological structure described as Noah's Ark (Photo: Eşref Atabey).*



*A distant view of the geological structure described as Noah's Ark (Photo: Eşref Atabey).*

## THE MYTH OF SURVIVING THE GREAT FLOOD

The word "ark" derives from the Old English word meaning "chest or box". *The Hebrew word teva* was also used for the small papyrus boat that rescued Moses. In this sense, both served as "vessels of salvation" for the Jewish people (*Rebecca Denova. 2022*)

When God sent the flood waters, "it rained for forty days and forty nights" and the waters of the earth remained "150 days". When the waters receded, the ark sat on the top of Mount Ararat, which today straddles the border between Turkey and Russia.

When the ark was on land, Noah let out a raven and then a dove to keep watch (Genesis 8:8-12). Seven days later, the dove returned with an olive leaf. This showed that there were now patches of dried earth. Noah, his family and the animals emerged to "multiply on the earth, to be fruitful and increase in number". It is said that there were thousands of animals on the ark, even dinosaurs.

In the Sumerian flood tablet, the first flood text, there is no information about the place where the ark ran aground. According to the Gilgamesh Epic the place where the ark ran aground is "Mount Nissir", according to Torah it is "Ararat Mountains" (Ararat), and according to the Qur'an it is "Mount Cûdî" (<http://www.dogubayazit.gov.tr/nuhun-gemisi>).

## NOAH'S ARK LEGENDS

Ancient civilizations have similar stories associated with devastating floods. For example, in the so-called "Fertile Crescent" between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, flood myths were created based on the periodic overflowing of rivers and irrigation canals were built.

The Fertile Crescent, the Munbit Crescent or the Fertile Crescent is the region in the Middle East where the Western and Middle Eastern civilizations were born; it is a crescent-shaped, very fertile area dominated by the Mediterranean climate with rainy winters and dry summers.

It lies between the Arabian Desert in the south and the mountainous areas of the Eastern Anatolia Region in the north, and extends from the lands of ancient Babylonia and the nearby southwestern Iran, namely Elam, through the Tigris and Euphrates rivers to the Assyrian lands. From the Zagros Mountains, it extends westward through Syria to the Mediterranean Sea and southward to the south of Palestine. Some people also include the Nile Valley of Egypt in this region.

*The Fertile Crescent is also called the "Cradle of Civilization" because, according to radiocarbon dating data, it hosted the transformation of hunter-gatherer groups into the first settled agricultural communities in the Middle East and the Mediterranean basin from the early 9000s BC. It is the name of a crescent-shaped region that covers today's Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, the northeastern and Nile valley regions of Egypt, as well as southeastern Turkey and western Iran. Although the climate is semi-arid, the humidity created by the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in Mesopotamia and the Nile River in Egypt and its proximity to agricultural lands enabled the cultivation of crops. Easy access to water helped not only agriculture but also trade routes* (<https://ozhanoturk.com/2020/06/03/bereketli-hilal/>)

The Nile river in Egypt overflowed every summer, sometimes providing enough water to feed farms, but at other times overflowing and destroying farmland. Scientists have also tried to measure ancient floods in coastal areas of the Black Sea to determine the frequency of floods. Other world cultures shared ancient, universal flood traditions, such as China. Many flood stories involved similar concepts, such as punishment or "starting over." (Rebecca Denova. 2022)

In the Victorian era, with the new science of archaeology, Europeans began to excavate all over the Middle East. Uncovering great libraries of cuneiform tablets, they discovered an early version of this story in the Sumerian, Mesopotamian, Babylonian *Epic of Gilgamesh* (ca. 1300-1000 BC). *Gilgamesh* was the legendary king of the Sumerian city of Uruk. Gilgamesh sought the secret of immortality. During his travels he told the story of a great flood. One of the gods, Enlil, sent the flood to punish humans for their "great

noise" (or evil). *The Epic of Gilgamesh* is not only



is notable for similar details of not only the story of a flood, but also of the "arch", the use of "pitch" (tar) to seal the structure, and even the sending of birds (*Rebecca Denova. 2022*).



*The Flood tablet from the Epic of Gilgamesh (Osama Shukur Muhammad Amin).*

### **Stories of the great flood**

Hesiodos' Theogonia (8th century BC), Plato's Timeaus (5th century BC), Aristotle's Meterology (4th century BC)

It was found in the *Library* of Pseudo-Apollodorus (50 BC).

The Greek/Roman version of the Flood story is told in *Ovid's* Metamorphoses (c. 8 CE) (*Rebecca Denova. 2022*).

After Zeus/Jupiter appeared in human form to visit Lykaon's house, he was angered by the lack of piety of Lykaon who served him a meal containing human flesh and so he wanted to punish all humans. Deucalion ("son of foresight"), son of the Titan Prometheus, and his wife Pyrrha ("daughter of afterthought") were warned of an impending flood and built a boat to survive (*Rebecca Denova. 2022*).

Many Bible stories (especially miracles) were met with skepticism because of their improbable events. The details of the ark were often considered impossible. There were the problems of building such a large ship, gathering "all the animals of the world" including carnivores, feeding them and cleaning up after them (*Rebecca Denova. 2022*).

William, B. F. Ryan and Walter, C. Pitman. 2003, in their book "Noah's Flood", mention different flood stories.



## CHARACTERISTICS OF NOAH'S ARK

According to the legend, the mass of the ship remained stable and its shape remained intact even though it was on the slope where there was a continuous landslide and the current was in full force. The shape of the mass is similar to the first ships built by mankind. It is very narrow at the bow and narrowed towards the center at the back. Its dimensions are 165 m x 50 m x 13 m. (These figures correspond to the dimensions mentioned in the holy books) (<http://www.dogubayazit.gov.tr/nuhun-ship>).

"In the Bible, Noah is commanded to build an ark 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high. Although conversions from biblical units are difficult, interpreting 52.4 cm as the standard Egyptian cubit, the length of Noah's Ark is assumed to be 157 m.



Noah's Ark representation (Cimerondagert CC BY-SA).

Noah was 500 years old when his first son, Japheth, was born, and Sam, born shortly after, was 98 years old when the Flood occurred. Noah's sons also needed time to grow up and find wives, and taking these factors into account, a reasonable estimate for the construction time of the ark would be between 55 and 75 years. The ark was completed before the animals were loaded. It required time to gather and store food. It is therefore concluded that the actual construction time was about 75 years, rather than the full 120 years mentioned in the Bible. [https://answersingenesis.org/noahs-ark/?gad\\_source=1&gad\\_campaignid=](https://answersingenesis.org/noahs-ark/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=)

## THE SEARCH FOR NOAH'S ARK

The "search for Noah's Ark" has been going on since ancient times. The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus wrote: The Christian historian Eusebius (ca. 275-339 AD) reported that people were searching for Noah's Ark.

Research has focused on the slopes of Mount Ararat in Turkey. Some locate it in the mountains of Armenia. The first attempt to climb Mount Ararat was made by Friedrich Parrot in 1829.

It was then carried out by James Bryce in 1876. He claimed to have found a piece of wood four feet long and five inches thick, cut with a tool.

As an April Fool's joke in New Zealand, George Reed published a story in 1883 about an avalanche on the mountain revealing the Ark, which was picked up by several other newspapers, reviving interest in the relic (Rebecca Denova. 2022).

In 1940, an article appeared in an edition of *New Eden*, a booklet published by Floyd M. Gurley of Los Angeles. The article is called "Noah's Ark Found". Vladimir Roskovitsky, a Russian aviator in World War I, was reported to have flown to Ararat

He claimed to have flown over the mountain and seen a huge shipwreck on the shore of a lake. A report was allegedly sent to Tsar Nicholas. However, the report was destroyed because he was executed by the "anti-religious" Bolsheviks.

Over the next few decades, expeditions were organized in which local "guides" living in the area were found and questioned. All of them allegedly told stories of having seen the Ark from their fathers and grandfathers (Rebecca Denova. 2022.)

The flood is mentioned in Nineveh (Kuyuncak), north of Mosul.

Various organizations have claimed to have photos of Mount Arafat via satellites and commercial drones from a region known as the "Ararat anomaly".

The interest in finding Noah's Ark continues to be important in evangelical communities concerned with proving this story and other stories in Genesis. Evangelical organizations have sponsored several life-size replicas of the Ark as theme parks (along with a zoo), such as the one in Williamstown, Kentucky (Rebecca Denova. 2022).

### **GEOLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF THE STRUCTURE LIKENED TO NOAH'S ARK**

In a paper published in 2016, Professor Lawrence Collins of California State University Northridge showed that the ship-like structure was actually formed when landslide debris eroded the surrounding rock. Furthermore, in a separate study by Professor Collins, geological evidence made it clear that the so-called 'ark' was much older than the surrounding floods. Many studies have pointed out that it takes millions of years for wood to turn to stone, so it is unlikely that the ark could have petrified in just 5,000 years.

The geologically ship-like structure is a SYNCHLINAL structure formed by the compression and curling of the rocks with the Eocene marine limestone-sandstone layers aged about 55-33 million years and the different Eastern Anatolian tectonism of lake, volcanoclastic origin aged about 23-5 million years. It is the product of andesitic and basaltic gravelly coarse mud flow.

### **THE ICE AGE AND THE FLOOD**

115,000-15,000 years ago there was an ice age. Sea level fell in the Persian Gulf (- 120 meters). Between 20,000 and 8,000 years ago, the sea rose by 120 meters.

**The shape formed by the grounding of Noah's ark and the geological history of the region's marine conditions do not coincide.**

*"Since glaciers are formed when water in the seas evaporates and is stored on land as snow and ice, the water level in the seas is low enough to correspond to the amount of glaciers on land. This means a sea level drop of about 130 meters before 20,000 years ago, when the temperature was at its lowest. This lowering of the sea level shows the most geographical change in the region between Basra and the Strait of Hormuz. This is because the deepest point of the Persian Gulf is about 90 meters and is located just west of the Dubai-Bander-e Lengeh line (İsmet Gedik, 2022).*

*The Dubai-Bander-e Lengeh line runs between Iran and Dubai in the form of a ridge about 70 meters deep. Because of these geographical features, when the sea level drops by 130 m, the sea recedes from the entire Persian Gulf and this huge area turns into a very fertile plain irrigated by two large rivers. Only a shallow lake, 15-20 meters deep, remains at the south-eastern end. The water in this lake will turn into fresh water within a few years. There are a few islands with dense human life (İsmet Gedik, 2022).*

*While the Zagros Mountains in the north are covered in snow and ice, and the Arabian plain in the south is an arid region without water, this huge plain is both cold*



Protected from the north winds, below sea level and irrigated by two large rivers, it was a great blessing for its inhabitants. All kinds of fruits and vegetables grow abundantly in this fertile plain, and there is a dense animal population, providing an extraordinary living environment for the people of that time who lived by hunting and gathering.

For humanity in the post-glacial period, it has turned into an environment of torture. This is because the glacial ice caps on the peaks and slopes of the Zagros Mountains began to melt due to the warming of the climate; the water formed by the melting of the glaciers was added to the soil, which turned into a fluid mud with the melting of the ice crystals in the frozen soil under the glacier cover. Thus, large mud and flood disasters begin to occur in the valleys, which are repeated every year (a phenomenon known in geology as solifluction).

To these muddy floods, which are repeated every year, a new catastrophe is added: Sea advance and rise. By 15,000 years ago, the ice age had ended and temperatures were rising. So the glaciers started to melt again and raise the sea level. 14,000 years ago, the sea entered the Persian Gulf again. People living on the plains invaded by the sea (İsmet Gedik, 2022):

- or going north-west along the river valleys,
- or flee north towards the Zagros mountains,
- or flee south to the plains of Arabia,
- or they had to take shelter in the 50-60 m high elevations they would encounter in this huge plain. Those who chose one of the first three options were spared from this chain of disasters. But for those who chose the last option (and who were already living on an island), the torments were just beginning. Because they are imprisoned on these heights!

The sea level rises by about 1.5 cm every year. Therefore, it will take about 7,000-8,000 years for the Persian Gulf to be covered by the sea again - that is, flood disasters and sea level rise (Brentjes 1981 in İsmet Gedik, 2022). The wild people stranded on the islands, which were gradually submerged in water and subjected to constant floods every year, sought a solution to this difficult situation.

In the past, there was no such thing as a bricklayer, but now there is a profession called "bricklayer". Whereas everyone used to pick as much fruit as they needed, now they have to allocate a share for the mason, who has to pick more fruit. In this way, while some people were busy building walls on the edge of the island against flood disasters, others specialized in different fields such as animal husbandry and agriculture in an effort to obtain more nutrients to provide them with food (İsmet Gedik, 2022).

These difficult conditions have made people mutually dependent on each other. In an individualistic lifestyle based on hunting and gathering wild fruits, the animal and plant products grown within a 100 km<sup>(2)</sup> radius can only meet the needs of one family. In a system based on interdependence, thousands of families can live in this area. The mystery of socialization lies in this feature (Haken (2000 in İsmet Gedik, 2022).

Social life required a new system of agreement and reconciliation and brought people face to face with a major problem once again. The first written elements of agreement consisted of pictures. Over time, the pictures were transformed into simpler and simpler symbols, and around 5,000-6,000 years ago, the first cuneiform documents were created and put into use in the regulation of mutual relations in social life, and thus many new types of professions and new structural elements (various law books, written professional texts, etc.) began to emerge (İsmet Gedik, 2022).

This is why the Sumerians, who initiated socialization in such an environment, were called "cultured masters" in Mesopotamia, where they arrived after the flood (Ceram 1972 in İsmet Gedik, 2022).

The muddy floods caused by melting glaciers are most frightening in the year when the last "glacier" mass melts. This is because the last year's ice, when it starts to melt, is like a balloon filled with water. In earlier years, the outer membrane of the ice mass

*While only a small portion of the ice melts, in the final stage all the remaining ice mass suddenly liquefies and causes massive damage to its surroundings, like water pouring out of a burst balloon. The water released in this last flood is tens of times more than the water released in previous years. It is in this last year that the so-called flood takes place.*

*In short, the people who were imprisoned on their island struggled with difficulties, improved their level of knowledge, started a social life with a system of mutual service-exchange, but with the last flood, they fled from the island they lived on with rafts and boats and left themselves to their fate (İsmet Gedik, 2022).*

*These people, whose level of knowledge was incredibly high compared to other peripheral societies, were treated like "masters" by the people in the places they reached.*

*Archaeological findings reveal that this tremendous development in the so-called Fertile Crescent began with the arrival of a tribe called the Sumerians. The name Sumer comes from the word "Sumeru" meaning "land of the civilized lords" in the language of the Akkadians, a Semitic (Arab-Israeli) people living in the region. The Sumerians defined themselves as "the black-headed people" and stated that they came from the sea to the land of the two rivers (Ceram 1972 in İsmet Gedik, 2022).*

*The Sumerians are of great importance as the first tribe in the history of mankind to invent and practice writing and creating written documents. According to archaeological excavation data, the history of the Sumerians is divided into two distinct periods: pre-flood and post-flood. Pre-flood period*

*It is stated that it takes place on an island called Dilmun, the place where creation first began, and that humanity was very happy at that time and lived in its golden age. Dilmun is also described as the place where the sun rises" (İsmet Gedik, 2022).*

*"..." Text in quotation marks is from İsmet Gedik, 2022.*

Samuel Noah Kramer, History Begins with Sumer, pp. 128-132. Sumerian poets not only narrated the Flood as a story, but also described its catastrophe in compositions on other subjects.

According to Kramer;

In southern Mesopotamia, during the Abbasid period in the 7th and 8th centuries, and in the 10th and 12th centuries.

There were floods in the century.

Before the glaciers melted, the Black Sea was 85 meters deeper than the bottom of the Bosphorus. Marmara water flowed into the Black Sea. 11,000 years ago, just like in the Persian Gulf, when the ice melted, the seas suddenly rose and the waters poured into the sea in great waterfalls through the Bosphorus. Places on the seashore were submerged. The survivors migrated to Mesopotamia. After the invention of writing, this event, which was passed down by word of mouth, was written down (Samuel Noah Kramer, 1986 by Muazzez İlmiye Çığ, 1995).

Pliny, in his Natural History, described the Black Sea as "swallowing up a large landmass that retreats in front of it" (William, B. F. Ryan and Walter, C. Pitman. 2003).

## **NOAH'S ARK IS A SYNCLINAL STRUCTURE**

**Synclinal** is the name given in geology to the basin- or trough-shaped folds of strata. In such structures, the upper component is younger than the lower one.

The shape, which is likened to Noah's ark, is a geological formation of a synclinal structure shaped by the processes of folds, erosion and landslides due to the Eastern Anatolian compression tectonics. The convergence of the ridges on the side ridge is due to the fact that the structure is an eroded, double-dipping synclinal.

It is even possible to see the same oval shape down the slope of the area where this shape is located, which is likened to the ship running aground, just like here.





### A natural rock structure mistakenly identified as Noah's Ark

The visible structure is steeply dipping sedimentary layers of limonite and magnetite on the arms of a double-dipping syncline. The fossiliferous limestone cross-cutting the syncline disproves the structure as Noah's Ark. Because these supposed "Flood" deposits are younger than the Ark (Lorence Gene Cllins and David Franklin Fasold. 2018).

### GEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE AREA

The rocks in the putative Vessel, which conform to the U-shape of the synclinal, were initially deposited in a horizontal or nearly horizontal position. These rocks consist of small compositions of clay, quartz, calcite, anthophyllite and local ilmenitic magnetite, as well as poorly sorted pebbles and andesite and basalt rocks.

These were formed by the erosion and weathering of volcanic rocks in the nearby mountains and were carried by streams and deposited in a basin. Later, these layers were compressed into rock and folded into a syncline that went twice as deep. It moved over the marine rocks, eroded and then cut a channel where fossilized limestone was deposited.

This was followed by uplift and then erosion, which steepened the limestone layer and carved the fold, creating the boat-shaped profile. Then, clays swelling in the mud (bentonite) from the surrounding mountains caused a large landslide. This landslide carried disoriented blocks of rock and mud moving around the synclinal structure. Sediments were then deposited both inside and outside the synclinal structure (Lorence Gene Cllins and David Franklin Fasold. 2018).

**Due to their different physical and chemical structures, it is a fact encountered in the field that humanoid and animal figures are formed in different shapes through abrasion, melting and folding processes in rocks.**

The marine fossils exhibited in the cafeteria were collected from Eocene 55-33 million years old fossiliferous limestones surfacing in the Doğubayazıt region. The object shown to visitors as a wooden piece of Noah's ark is basalt slag shaped by the flow of lava.

The Flood is rumored to have occurred in the 5th or 8th century BC. If the creationist Flood hypothesis were valid (*Baumgardner, 1988*), the "dead animals" represented by the fossils in this limestone should have died in the supposed Flood. However, the Eocene fossils, 55-33 million years old, reflect the marine conditions of that time and have nothing to do with the time of the Flood.

🟡 **Nuh'un gemisine benzetilen jeolojik yapı.**



### PROTECTION STATUS OF NOAH'S ARK

It is claimed that the ship that ran aground as a result of Noah's Flood, which is believed to have happened, stayed here. The popular name of this place is Mount Cudi. Since 1983, the search for the remains of the sacred ark has accelerated.

The trace of Noah's Ark On September 11, 1959, while studying aerial photometric maps of Turkey's eastern region, Map Captain İhsan Durupınar found an interesting picture. The picture interested the whole world. There was a possibility that it could be Noah's Ark. After this date, the search for the ark accelerated in the landslide area above Mount Ararat and the village of Telçeker.

It is located between the villages of Telçeker and Üzengili, just south of the Doğubayazıt-Gürbulak highway, on the southern face of Mount Ararat, which is a landslide zone, and the shape is as interesting as Noah's Ark, but it has been decided that it is a natural monument (<http://www.dogubayazit.gov.tr/nuhun-gemisi>).

Turkish scientists (Atatürk University, Yüzüncü Yıl University, MTA Institute staff) have also studied this formation scientifically.



With the decision of the High Council of Immovable Cultural and Natural Assets of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism dated September 17, 1987 and numbered 3657, this place **was taken under protection as a natural protected area and an open-air museum** on the grounds that the ship mass has the characteristics of "**Immovable Cultural and Natural Assets to be protected**". A tourist cafeteria was also built in a place where the remains of the ship can be seen from a bird's eye view (<http://www.dogubayazit.gov.tr/nuhun-gemisi>).

## GEOLOGICAL HERITAGE AND GEOTOURISM

Geological heritage (geoheritage) is a rare, endangered geosite of significant scientific or visual value, threatened by natural or man-made extinction, the destruction of which would result in the loss of information and a geological document of the region in which it is located.

They are typical localities that help to understand the evolution of the Earth's crust. They are essential both for learning about the earth and for geoscience education. If they disappear, a part of geological evolution, a record, is erased. It is not possible to understand the earth without them (Kazancı, N., 2001)

Places declared as "protected areas" are closed to public activities. Geosite does not mean geological protected area in this sense. Geosite means "place or locality" that represents a geological feature and is used to easily describe the relevant formation that can be visited by those who want to see and learn about this feature. There is no size limit. It can be very small or cover very large areas. Whichever geological event, process or product is best represented, that locality is a "geosite". If there is more than one feature in an area, not the feature, but the area, region, locality is considered a "geosite" (Kazancı, N., 2001).

Being aware of geosites, knowing their existence and formation is a prerequisite for geological conservation. The 13-point "Declaration of Digne", a milestone in geological conservation, was published. This declaration, which was the rebellion of geoscientists against increasing destruction, emphasized for the first time that the inorganic part of the earth also needs protection, that they are non-renewable and irreplaceable, and that some formations such as rocks, fossils and stacks are documents of the earth's past, and the concepts of "geological site-geosite" and "geological heritage" were expressed (Kazancı et al. 2015).

Geotourism is a tourism activity of scientific value, aesthetic, educational, historical and international importance that informs tourists about the geological and geographical character of an area, introduces the cultural identity of local people and provides them with economic resources. In my opinion, the inclusion of the structure called Noah's Ark within the scope of geotourism will not be a sustainable situation for the reasons I have stated below.

## IS THE AREA AN IMMOVABLE CULTURAL AND NATURAL ASSET IN NEED OF PROTECTION?

The protected geological structure, popularly called Noah's Ark, is located in a landslide zone and is constantly shifting. The shape of the structure, which was formed by landslides and likened to Noah's Ark by local people, will change again over time or will be buried under the rock mass that will move from above with the landslide.

In this respect, the structure described as Noah's Ark is an ordinary structure that can be found in many areas where tectonism is effective, geologically formed as a result of the curvature of the layers of the earth's crust, and has taken its present form with a synclinal and landslide. It is not a geological heritage item or

**a cultural asset.**

It is possible to see similar geological structures, such as the steepened red sandstone strata in the south of Sivas and folded strata structures in many parts of Turkey.

There are many natural or man-made sites of scientific, cultural or visual value in Turkey that are under threat of extinction. If these sites disappear, all information and geological records/documents pertaining to their location will also be lost.

While many geosite areas and natural and cultural heritages in Turkey, which are rare and under threat of extinction, are awaiting registration and protection, it is unnecessary to put such an ordinary geological structure "**under protection as a natural protected area and open-air museum**" on the grounds that it is an "**Immovable Cultural and Natural Property in need of protection**".

20.6.2025-Dr. Ashraf Atabey

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