People of several faiths are reading Noah again. It is the environmental crisis that is doing it. We are looking for ‘true truth’ that helps us grasp again our responsibility for the goodness of creation.

Did I say ‘grasp’? Noah? It is hard to talk about Noah’s ark (in Genesis chapters 6-10 inclusive) without triggering pictures from some childhood games and books. You know, the one with giraffes and polar bears standing next to koala and kangaroo, coping in a small wooden boat on a rough sea, rainbow overhead. I want to have an adult conversation about this ancient story, but my major handicap is that it is such a superb children’s topic. The cute visuals are burned into the imaginal retina. Look at this pic – isn’t it fabulous! Ridiculous but fabulous.

Where debate occurs, therefore, Noah’s Ark runs hot, with bogus claims, naive conclusions and outright fraud. How many arks have been found up there? We are not going that way today. The pre-conceptions are going to make it hard to get anywhere, but here goes.

It is agreed at the outset that many cultures around the world have “myths” (by which we do not mean the common vernacular meaning “fiction” but ancient stories that may be historical to varying degrees of interpretation) of major floods.

Close to Noah in time and geography, for instance, are the very similar legends of Gilgamesh and The Epic of Atrahasis. The ingredients of Noah’s story in Genesis are not all replicated in those myths, namely: a man Noah is warned by God of an impending deluge and he builds a big boat, others mock him, he gathers a big load of animals into it, the deluge comes and many die. He is ‘shut up’ inside. When the flood subsides, he runs
aground on the Ararat Range. Here, God re-affirms the importance of His Creation, a rainbow in the sky shows that God won’t do the extermination thing again, and Noah’s family disperses to build a technological society. Read it properly in Genesis 6-10.

It’s a complex story, full of then-as-now resonances, empty of historical references as we would understand them today (which is only fair), and partially located in a regional geography. Note that it is not a story that builds up any one’s land claim or other self-interests. Even Noah comes out with feet of clay – this is not the hero-worship that is in *Gilgamesh*. The Noah narrative just sits there in the history, and in sacred text, witness to a positive view of the world and supernatural reasons to hold it. What evidence could count for it to be called true? What evidence is there?

**Four small points first**

1. The Bible does not say when it happened. In the Middle Ages some scholars thought they could date it, but Christian historians before and since have dismissed this attempt. It is ‘pre-history’, when people did not have linear concept of time, when cyclic seasons were the measure of time, and they may not have a base ten number system with which to count the numbers we love.

2. How much of the earth was covered? The Biblical word for “earth”, does not mean the whole planet. ‘Eretz’ can simply mean an area of land - small, large or very large. Children’s texts paint the whole round planet in to the story but it is not required from the original text.

3. The text is not saying that this was the first rainbow. The rainbow existed before this event, of course, but not with this meaning fastened to it. We know as an image it points mostly to the renewal of creation, a meaning taken up by *Greenpeace*, but which secondarily implies great diversity, a meaning claimed by Gays and Lesbians.

4. There can be no external archaeological evidence that God spoke to Noah. That is beyond the reach of the tools of archaeology. We have found no rotting timbers, and no kangaroo tracks in the mud, but there is some interesting light being shed in the sea beside the Ararat Ranges. We are looking for corroborating or contextual evidence only, that will restore the respect that I feel is owed to an ancient culture. So let’s look to the Ararat Range, and begin to make serious headway.

**Let’s start where the story happens.**

This map is modern Turkey. On the top is the Black Sea, on the bottom the Mediterranean Sea,
on the left bordering greater Europe is the Bosphorus and Gallipoli. Along the top right, most importantly, where the land borders the Black Sea, the Pontic Range runs east to another range near the eastern border (on the right, near Kurdistan, Armenia, Iraq). This is the Ararat Range, named after an ancient people, the Urartu. Sumerians called it Arrata. Mount Ararat is one point at the eastern end of the range and towers above it. Most attention is upon this point, because it looks so dramatic, but it is likely the biblical text refers to the range as a whole.

Mount Ararat is an extinct volcano at the end of a long range of other volcanic ridges. The Ararat Massif is about 25 miles (40 km) in diameter. Ararat itself consists of two peaks, their summits about 7 miles (11 km) apart - Great Ararat, (5,165 metres) and Little Ararat, (3,896 metres). Both Great and Little Ararat are the product of eruptive volcanic activity. Neither retains any evidence of a crater, but well-formed cones and fissures exist on their flanks. Most of the Great Ararat is treeless so any timber found here is imported. If this is the final resting place of the Ark, as some say, then it suggests that the great flood of Noah reached 4000 m above current sea levels. I wonder if there is enough water in all the ice caps and glaciers to accommodate that rise of level? Maybe someone could research that and let me know.

What was Noah’s Flood?

the new scientific discoveries about the event that changed history

William B. F. Ryan, Walter Pitman
29 Reviews
Simon & Schuster, 2000 - History - 320 pages
Over the millennia, the legend of a great deluge has endured in the biblical story of Noah and in such Middle Eastern myths as the epic of Gilgamesh, and the Epic of Atrahasis, who also built boats in a flood launched by the gods.

Now two distinguished geophysicists have discovered a catastrophic event that changed history, a gigantic flood 7,600 years ago in what is today the Black Sea.
Using sound waves and coring devices to probe the
sea floor, William Ryan and Walter Pitman revealed clear evidence that this inland body of water had once been a vast freshwater lake lying hundreds of feet below the level of the world's rising oceans. Sophisticated dating techniques confirmed that 7,600 years ago the mounting seas had burst through the narrow Bosporus valley, and the salt water of the Mediterranean had poured into the lake with unimaginable force, racing over beaches and up rivers, destroying or chasing all life before it. The rim of the lake, which had served as an oasis, a Garden of Eden for farms and villages in a vast region of semi-desert, became a sea of death. The people fled, dispersing their languages, genes, and memories.

Here's how Ryan and Pitman believe it happened: Beginning about 12,500 B.C., at the end of the Ice Age, meltwater from the retreating glaciers flowed south into the Black Sea basin creating a giant freshwater lake that emptied into the Aegean Sea via the valley of the Sakarya River east of the Bosporus, which was then dry land. After a brief return to a colder climate, the discharge of glacial meltwater resumed at about 10,500 B.C., but most of it flowed not south, but west across Europe to the North Sea. Cut off, the Black Sea shrank, over time dropping 350 feet below the Bosporus. Meanwhile, the influx of glacial meltwater continued, raising the level of the world's oceans until around 5600 B.C., when the water crested the Bosporus. According to Ryan and Pitman the force of the water coursing through the narrow channel would have been tremendous: “Ten cubic miles of water poured through each day, two hundred times what flows over Niagara Falls, enough to cover Manhattan Island each day to a depth of over half a mile.” The water, they claim, would have raised the Black Sea's surface by six inches per day, flooding some 60,000 square miles within a few years. Remains of freshwater creatures killed by the saltwater and of terrestrial plants inundated by it settled in an organic rich blanket over the bottom, the sapropel found throughout the Black Sea basin today. Ryan and Pitman may be right.

http://www.archaeology.org/9901/abstracts/books.html
However, the author of this review disagrees with the book’s later conclusions that all civilizations radiated from this point, which seems to him to be too much like a kind of ‘Eden’ narrative. The two tangible elements of this research are the nature of the sudden flooding of the Black Sea, and the spread of civilisation thereafter. Both have received major scientific attention, in particular the theory would require the search for signs of human settlement, 150 m below the surface. Are they there?

Here is one example of such scientific attention.

**ARCHEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY CONFIRMS EVIDENCE OF A FLOOD**

A National Geographic report documents the discovery of a Bronze-Age village 100 meters under the Black Sea. According to archeologists, this confirms evidence of a great flood in Noah’s days, as described in the Old Testament.

The Neolithic settlement, 12 miles from the Turkish coastal city Sinop, was discovered by Robert Ballard, an American oceanographer who previously discovered the Titanic and Bismarck wrecks. The discovery seems to confirm that people lived on the Black Sea coast 7,500 years ago, before being driven inland by a great flood. There is strong geological evidence for a flood which caused the Mediterranean to rise until it breached the natural dam of the Bosporus, flooding the Black Sea. “Today, we know that these people were killed by a flood. This is an amazing discovery,” says Dr. Ballard.

The settlement was discovered with the assistance of a sonar device attached to a submarine. Dr. Fredrik Hiebert, the team's chief archeologist, spoke of a "landscape as in Pompeii." "This discovery is the first evidence that the Black Sea region was settled before it was flooded. The history of this region, which is so important for Europe, must be rewritten," says Hiebert.

Walter Pitman, geologist at Columbia University who first presented the 'Black Sea Flood Theory' in his book 'Noah's Flood', commented: "I always knew that people had lived there, but finding the village is like finding the proverbial needle in the haystack."

Source: National Geographic Society
http://www.nationalgeographic.com/blacksea/ax/frame.html

**NEW YORK TIMES**

**Found: Possible Pre-Flood Artifacts**
Published: September 13, 2000
WASHINGTON, Sept. 12 — Scientists said today that they had discovered remnants of human habitation under the Black Sea that they believe is the first proof that people thrived along an ancient shoreline before it was inundated by a great flood thousands of years ago.

Dr. Robert D. Ballard, the undersea explorer whose robotic devices have resolved many underwater mysteries, including the resting place of the Titanic, said an expedition he is leading had discovered a well-preserved structure that might be thousands of years old 12 miles off the coast of Turkey, near Sinop.

An underwater robot, scouting about 300 feet below the surface two days ago, found a rectangular area measuring about 12 feet by 45 feet on which there appeared to be a collapsed wood and clay structure.

"Artifacts at the site are clearly well preserved, with carved wooden beams, wooden branches and stone tools collapsed amongst the mud matrix of the structure," Dr. Ballard said.

The expedition, sponsored by the National Geographic Society and others, is part of a project to survey the coastal waters of northern Turkey for signs of human settlement around the time of a great flood. Some scholars believe that such a flood inspired the biblical story of Noah; it may also be the source of the flood tale in the Babylonian story of Gilgamesh.

Using sonar equipment, the expedition has mapped large areas of the coastline and found hundreds of potential targets to examine more closely with the underwater robots operated from the research ship Northern Horizon.

In a telephone interview from the ship, Dr. Ballard said the site near Sinop could be the first of many in the area that could answer questions about the habits and lifestyles of a little-known ancient culture suddenly uprooted and forced to flee by flooding water.

"Now that we know what these sites look like on sonar, now that we recognize their signatures, we're regrouping to continue the search," he said, noting that the target area was about 200 square miles of what would have been livable terrain before the flood. Researchers have already identified a second site seven miles away. Pieces of ceramics suggest that it, too, may have been an inhabited area, he said.

Dr. Fredrik T. Hiebert of the University of Pennsylvania, chief archaeologist on the project, also was enthusiastic about the find, occurring two weeks into the five-week mission. "This is a discovery of world importance," Dr. Hiebert said from the ship. "We have the first site with direct evidence of human occupation on the old coast.

"Now we can say there were people living around the Black Sea when it was a freshwater lake before it was flooded."

Dr. Hiebert said the underwater structure closely resembled the wood-and-clay "wattle and daub" buildings still common in the area. "This style is distinctively Black Sea," he said.
"This discovery will begin to rewrite the history of cultures in this key area between Europe, Asia and the ancient Middle East," he said.

Dr. Ballard said earlier studies of seashells from the area helped to date the underwater coastline. Shells from an extinct type of freshwater creature are all 7,000 years old or older, and shells from saltwater shellfish date from 6,500 years ago.

"We know that there was a sudden and dramatic change from a freshwater lake to a saltwater sea 7,000 years ago," he said. "And we know that as a result of that flood a vast amount of land went underwater."

Dr. William B. F. Ryan and Dr. Walter C. Pitman 3rd, two geologists at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory in Palisades, N.Y., a branch of Columbia University, speculated in their 1997 book, "Noah's Flood" (Simon & Schuster), that melting European glaciers at the end of an ice age unleashed a great flood that changed a small freshwater lake into the saltwater Black Sea.

According to the book, melting glaciers raised the level of the Mediterranean, causing water to break through the narrow Bosporus and rapidly flood the lake. Water poured in so rapidly, the Columbia researchers said, that it would have widened the surface of the lake by as much as a mile a day, submerging the original shoreline and causing any population to flee.

Dr. Ryan said in an interview that he was thrilled to hear of Dr. Ballard's discovery and was surprised that evidence of human habitation on the old shore had been found so quickly.

Dr. Ryan likened the discovery to finding Pompeii, the ancient city buried by Mount Vesuvius. "Peel away the ash of Vesuvius and you see life on the day of the eruption," he said. "Here you have Neolithic life on the day of the flood."

Dr. Ballard said that no artifacts had been removed from the first site and that it would not be disturbed until it was thoroughly mapped. The first priority, he said, is finding and mapping more sites.

"We're just beginning our work and understanding what we have here," he said. "At some point, after we fulfill all the requirements of mapping the site, we hope to recover some artifacts to learn what kind of people lived here."

Dr. Jerome L. Hall, president of the Institute of Nautical Archaeology at Texas A&M University, praised Dr. Ballard's work.

"According to the scientific method, you formulate a hypothesis, in this case the flood spillage theory for the Black Sea, and then you test it," Dr. Hall said. "One test is finding remnants of a civilization that was affected and looking for evidence to support the flood theory. This is how you do good science."
Other interpretations of Ryan and Pitman’s Hypothesis.

SEE http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Sea_deluge_theory


A major scientific colloquium has published on this and related matters. It provides other interpretations of the data, particularly previously untranslated from Soviet science, which is great but cannot be considered entirely academically neutral either:

The Black Sea Flood Question: Changes in Coastline, Climate and Human Settlement

Yanko-Hombach, V.; Gilbert, A.S.; Panin, N.; Dolukhanov, P.M. (Eds.)

2007, XXVIII, 971 p. 246 illus., Hardcover


ABOUT THIS BOOK

Stimulated by "Noah’s Flood Hypothesis" proposed by W. Ryan and W. Pitman in which a catastrophic inundation of the Pontic basin was linked to the biblical story, leading experts in Black Sea research (including oceanography, marine geology, paleoclimatology, paleoenvironment, archaeology, and linguistic spread) provide overviews of their data and interpretations obtained through empirical scientific approaches. Among the contributors are many East European scientists whose work has rarely been published outside of Cyrillic. Each of the 35 papers marshals its own evidence for or against the flood hypothesis. No summary or overall resolution to the flood question is presented, but instead access is provided to a broad range of interdisciplinary information that crosses previously impenetrable language barriers so that new work in the region can proceed with the benefit of a wider frame of reference. The three fundamental scenarios describing the late glacial to Holocene rise in the level of the Black Sea—catastrophic, gradual, and oscillating—are presented in the early pages, with the succeeding papers organized by geographic sector: northern (Ukraine), western (Moldova, Romania, and Bulgaria), southern (Turkey), and eastern (Georgia and Russia), as well as three papers on the Mediterranean. The volume thus brings together eastern and western scholarship to share research findings and perspectives on a controversial subject. In addition, appendices are included containing some 600 radiocarbon dates from the Pontic region obtained by USSR and western laboratories.
Here is a second article extolling the cultural centrality of this area for the history of Europe and the middle east, and maybe beyond.

**Ararat, the Cradle of Civilization?**

The Sumerians, an ancient peoples and one of the first civilizations in the world called Ararat, Arrata. In their great epic poems of Gilgamesh and Arrata, they tell of the land of their ancestors, the Arratans in the Highlands of Armenia. The Sumerians also in the epic poems describe the Great Flood and the rebirth of life after the terrible deluge that fell from the Highlands of Armenia unto the lands of Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent. The Sumerians had a very close connection with the ancestral Land of Ararat and considered it as their ancestral homeland (many historians and archaeologists are convinced that the Sumerians initially lived in Northern Mesopotamia and Armenian Highland). The Greeks believed that the people who first worked with bronze and iron came from the same area, they called them Khaldi.

"The great majority of the cultivated plants of the world trace their origin to Asia. Out of 640 important cultivated plants, about 500 originated in Southern Asia. In Asia alone we have established five of the principle regions of cultivated plants.... The fifth region of origin in Asia is the Southwestern Asiatic centre and includes Asia Minor, Trans-Caucasia, Iran and Western Turkmenistan. This region is remarkable, first of all, for its richness in numbers of species of wheat resistant to different diseases...There is no doubt that Armenia is the chief home of cultivated wheat. Asia Minor and Trans-Caucasia gave origin to rye which is represented here by a great number of varieties and species....

Our studies show definitely that Asia is not only the home of the majority of modern cultivated plants, but also of our chief domesticated animals such as the cow, the yak, the buffalo, sheep, goat, horse, and pig...The chief home of the cow and other cattle, the Oriental type of horse, the goat and the sheep is specifically Iran....

As the result of a brilliant work of Dr. Sinskaya, the discovery was recently made that the home of alfalfa, the world's most important forage crop, is located in Trans-Caucasia and Iran....

From all these definitely established facts the importance of Asia as the primary home of the greatest majority of cultivated plants and domesticated animals is quite clear."
The above quotes from the book by Vavilov, N., "Asia: Source of Species" in Asia, February 1937, p. 113, indicate a long held belief by many that cradle of civilization was in the hills of Armenia. Also the location of the Garden of Eden and the location of the flood and the landing place of the Ark of Noah!

More recent studies conducted by Melinda A Zeder and Brian Hesse (Science 287 (2000) 2254-57) place the initial domestication of goats to the Zargos Mountains at about 10,000 years ago. And Manfred Heun's (Science 278 (1997) 1312-14) studies indicate that large scale wheat cultivation began from 8,000 to 9,000 years ago near the Karacadag Mountains. Both areas are very near where the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers come close together.

"The cradle of agriculture generally has been placed in the Jordan Valley of the southern Levant (today's Israel and Jordan). But work by Simcha Lev-Yadun of Israel's Agricultural Research Organization and colleagues suggest the first farms may have been farther north, between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in what is today northeastern Turkey and northern Syria. Wild progenitors of the main Neolithic founder crops (einkorn wheat, emmer wheat, barley, lentil, pea, chickpea, bitter vetch, and flax) are found together only in this small core area of the Fertile Crescent. Lev-Yadun reports that wild chickpea especially is extremely rare, yet it was a staple crop of Neolithic life 10,000 years ago. Agriculture, therefore, probably began in an area where chickpea is native. Archaeological evidence shows that the earliest known farming settlements of the Fertile Crescent were in this core area. Also, the limited genetic variability of these crops implies that they were domesticated only once — rather than by several different cultures at roughly the same time. Evidence of domesticated crops in the core area dates to about 10,000 years ago, while the earliest signs of farming elsewhere are about 9,300 years ago.

Neolithic sites discovered in the core area indicate that a society with plenty of food thrived there. In sites such as Cayonu, Novali Cori, and Gobekli Tepe, impressive architecture, images, and artifacts have been found. Settlement sites are also larger in this area than many others of the same time in other parts of the Fertile Crescent. "...

The emphasized areas of the above quote are indicators that this part of the Fertile Crescent was settled and developed first, consistent with the Genesis record.


YHoTaLuCo-muQPLiyYnLdW
On the Other Hand,
Chris Rowan has another view that dismisses the biblical record.

**The Black Sea 'flood' and the rise of European agriculture**

Posted on: November 23, 2007 10:53 AM, by Chris Rowan

The Black Sea has only a tenuous connection to the rest of the world's seawater. The Bosporus are not only very narrow, but very shallow: at one point in the channel, the water is only 30m deep. At the height of the last ice age 18-20,000 years ago, more water was stored in much larger polar ice caps and global sea-level was about 130 metres lower than at present; this is more than enough to have left the Bosporus high and dry, and the Black Sea completely cut off from the Mediterranean. Past studies of sediments dating from this time confirm that the Black Sea basin was indeed a freshwater lake, filled to about 150 metres below present day sea-level; they also indicate that there was an abrupt switch to marine conditions between 6000 and 7500 BC, when sealevel rose enough to send a torrent of marine water rushing into the Black Sea, flooding tens of thousands of square kilometres of what was, up to that point, dry land.

A catastrophic flood in Asia Minor, back in the mists of human prehistory? Cue endless twittering about certain myths in certain holy books whenever this story comes up in the media. An interesting new paper in *Quaternary Science Reviews* by Chris Turney and Heidi Brown is no exception. However, although their work suggests that there may be a link between this event and an important transition in European culture, it makes the (in my opinion) already tenuous alleged connection to 'Noah's Flood' (there was no 40 day and 40 nights of rain. There was no rain - just 40 years of inexorably rising water as the Black Sea Basin filled up to sea-level. Even accounting for a few thousand years of distortion and exaggeration, that seems a bit of a stretch) even more difficult to support.

At the heart of this study is the detailed analysis of many, many radiocarbon dates, in the quest for an accurate chronology. If you want to examine the possible effects of a geological event on prehistoric cultural evolution, you need to have accurate dates for
both the event - in this case, the Black Sea flood - and the relevant cultural changes - in this case, the spread of Neolithic culture, which represents the transition from a Mesolithic hunter-gatherer lifestyle to a more sedentary one based on agriculture and pot-making. Without a robust chronology, you can end up with actual causes appearing to happen after their effects, or occurring hundreds or thousands of years too early, both of which make it very difficult to unravel the true story.

The change to marine conditions in the Black Sea is clearly marked in the sedimentary record: out go the shells of freshwater molluscs, in come the shells of salt-tolerant species. In between is a reworked debris, or 'hash', layer, which probably records the Bosporus breakthrough itself. Radiocarbon ages of the youngest freshwater mollusc provide a maximum age for this debris layer; the oldest marine molluscs provide a minimum age. A best fit model for all the available age data suggests that the sea first forced its way into the Black Sea between 8350 and 8230 years BP (BP = before present, with 'present' defined as 1950), or around 6400 BC. This more precise date suggests an association with a specific geological event: the final collapse of the Laurentide ice sheet which covered North America during the last glacial period (Ole has more on this aspect of the study). More interesting, though, is how this date correlates precisely with a sharp acceleration in the spread of agricultural societies across Western Europe. The figure below, taken from the paper, summarises the Neolithic archaeological record:
After the first Neolithic sites (red dots) sprung up in the Near East between 13 and 11.5 thousand years BP (9,11,500 BC), the initial spread of agricultural practices was apparently pretty slow - almost 5,000 years later, in 8,500 BP (6,500 BC), Neolithic settlements had appeared in Turkey and Greece (yellow dots), but most of Europe was still happily hunting and gathering. In the 1500 years following the breach of the Bosporus, however, the pace of change really picked up, and by 7,000 BP (5,000 BC) Neolithic sites could be found across most of continental Europe. The neat explanation, therefore, is that prior to 8,500 BP there were Neolithic settlements on the ancient shores of the Black Sea; as the basin filled up with increasingly saline water, the original inhabitants of these settlements were forced westward into new pastures, where they set about establishing new agricultural settlements at the expense of the native hunter-gatherers.

It may be a neat picture, but there are still some missing pieces. It is still not proven, despite some suggestive evidence from under the waves, that Neolithic cultures had reached the Black Sea region prior to 8,500 BP. And, as the figure above illustrates, no Neolithic settlements sprung up immediately to the west of the Black Sea at the beginning of the great European expansion, as you might expect if agriculturally-inclined people were moving away from the rising waters.

One thing does seem pretty clear to me, however: even if the inundation of the Black Sea did displace large numbers of people, it seems exceedingly unlikely that the story of this exodus is (rather imperfectly) preserved in the Biblical Flood account. They all moved west, whereas Babylon, from whose mythology the Biblical flood story was borrowed wholesale, is in completely the opposite direction. The story is wrong, and the source culture is wrong, although I somehow doubt that will stop the headline writers.


COMMENT: Rowan agrees with the overall theory of a spread-of-technology after inundation which this paper claims is consistent with the Bible. But Rowan does not want this to support the Bible. To keep the Bible at bay, Rowan has to speculate on why the red dots don’t turn yellow to the east of the Black Sea ( I think he meant to say east, his text says west and there are clearly many dots there). He also misplaces the biblical tradition with Gilgamesh at Babylon, when the Biblical story and Gilgamesh both say they arose where the red dots are – Ararat. Lastly, he confidently claims that there was no rain accompanying the inundation, for which he has neither discussion nor evidence. Could such a cataclysm have triggered unusual rain? Is the ’40 days of rain’ a stylized
symbol of climatic change? Rowan’s protest is not evidence-based scientific argument, just an assertion of prejudice that is remarkably common in scientific schools, just as it is among the religious. Despite his hope, I still have my ‘headline’.

On the other hand, as a Christian I admit to the bogus publications from freelance fundamentalists. They set up pictures and entice your imagination like this below, which evidently represents the remains of Noah’s Ark found on Mount Ararat, as cited on a Muslim site. This rock formation on a volcanic ridge at high elevation near the peak of Mt Ararat is imagined as the fossilized remains of an ark, with a theoretical reconstruction. Ref: [http://www.islam101.com/images/ark.jpg](http://www.islam101.com/images/ark.jpg) The original source: http://anchorstone.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=28&Itemid=51
Note that the middle picture above is an imaginative reconstruction based on form, not the result of excavations. Even the writer of the following article has been sucked in to think they are actually reputable investigators. No evidence of wood fossilized or otherwise is offered.

AND FROM ANOTHER BLOGSPOT, same information:


According to the Bible account in the book of Genesis, Noah's Ark came to rest over 4300 years ago on the mountains of Ararat.

So far, its been pronounced as a myth. TILL NOW!!!!

YES, Its been found in Turkey on the mountains of Ararat!! Recently some archeologists claim that they've found exclusive evidences of the great mythical story of Noah's arc which holds tightly to the beliefs of Christianity. It is a great surprise that the Noah's ark is specified on other religious books such as Koran and Zend Avesta. This is the mountain block where the excavators have found the remains of the Noah's Ark.

The team claims to have found in 2007 and 2008 seven large wooden compartments buried at 13,000 feet (4,000 meters) above sea level, near the peak of Mount Ararat. Many Christians believe the mountain in Turkey is the final resting place of Noah's ark, which the Bible says protected Noah, his family, and pairs of every animal species on Earth during a divine deluge that wiped out most of humanity.

The team of explorers haven't said anything to the media about this fact until the full site have been fully excavated.

I've got some very exclusive photos which tell the story is very real. The archeologists said they've made a historical discovery!! The remains were found on the top of the mountain and nothing but a great flood at that time can get such a great vessel on top of such a big mountains a matter of astonishment!

Look at the pictures below:
These are just the outside views. Let me show you some more inside pics..... In the following pic, we can see the beam from inside of the vessel where animals are said to be tied on.

Other inside pictures:
I think this one is the real Noah's ark. Its really huge and look at its Anchor stones:

Sooner or later I think the excavators will find the truth..... and lets wait for it!!!!

Yep, wait for it. For someone who has 'exclusive' photos , I found them on another source quite easily. The several photos of the interior are graphical reconstructions, here represented as photos inside the mound! These 'excavators' will have worldwide speaking tours attracting thousands of paying punters, a TV show, and a request will go out for donations to continue this amazing research....
Back to reality now.

OLD STORIES
Are old stories unreliable? Are they handed down from mouth to mouth getting more and more scrambled? These are the worries, even the assumptions, of literate cultures like mine. But oral cultures are not like that.

Firstly, living oral cultures like the Aboriginal in Australia keep very accurate records orally. Stories exist that can be verified to be accurate over 10,000 years when the sea levels rose. This is the same period as the Noah story. Accuracy is quite feasible.

Secondly, oral cultures are communal not individual. When we make books, it means mean I can read and write alone. Change one line and the story is changed forever. Oral cultures are different – they tell and retell stories, time and again, elders making sure that they stay accurate. Those cultures knew as well as we do that whispers can change a story. It was often for their livelihood, for instance in remembering their way to waterholes, that they kept the story accurate through generation after generation.

Thirdly, oral histories are not just aural. They often keep marked objects that anchor the story, like message sticks and hieroglyphs. Some have a fixed code that makes them translatable and some have an interpretive key specific to the narrative and given to the story owners, a key that must be passed on. It helps the teller to not leave something out, and the objects are kept sacred for centuries.

Ancient cultures deserve to have their stories respected. We keep finding, in post-literate society, that they knew what they were talking about. What we call science and history is not how they looked at it, not how they talked about it, not how they chose to remember it. It would be mere arrogance to conclude that there was no science or history in the ancient stories.

CONCLUSION

So where has this selection of articles brought us? If we put aside the global inundation to the level of 4000m above current sea levels, if we put aside the children’s illustrated version of a global inundation, if we put aside the search for timber that has not rotted in 10 thousand years, who was Noah and what happened? How do I imagine it in terms of today’s language and mindset?

Historically, an Arrata farmer around 6500BC saw a catastrophe coming ahead of time and built a huge barge to get his animals out of there. It was the brutal end of a whole sequence of post-glacial climatic changes that he had no idea about. Something finally
triggered a huge salt water inundation of the valley and many perished. Goodbye to a fresh water paradise. He washed up on the south shore of the new lake, a salt water lake. The water was everywhere but you couldn’t drink it, for the first time in living memory. From this poisonous water you had to ‘shut yourself in’.

How did he know it was coming? Did God tell him? Was it a divine spark of genius? Was there a raven? A dove with an olive branch? Was there an unusual north westerly rain system? Did Noah wash up on the south east coast and climb a hill and find he was near the dramatic Ararat Range?

We do know that they had to make a whole new start, drying climate up on the plains had thinned out the hunter-gatherer staples. They invented new technology for a post-glacial global environment, used natural resources and seed selection, came to depend almost entirely on settled agriculture. Both the inundation and the scattering of the new technology are now able to be remembered historically and scientifically, as we understand those terms now.

But in the science and history of an earlier time, it was also remembered as a sacred moment in the human history of tribes of the region. What made it sacred? Was it the stunning coincidence of barge-building and inundation, was it the art of pure genius, or was it the renewal of civilization – these are all sacred sites. But maybe, then as now, there was also a personal God looking for someone who would listen and act. Then as now, a theology arrived that said the environment is good and needs preserving by persons of humble obedience and action. God’s active presence in it gave it the gravitas it needed - to say that this has to be done now, before (too late then) we see the consequences. Maybe God was tapping everybody on the shoulder but they all said :’Nah it will never happen.’ Plus ca change.

Until we find Noah’s name on an anchor stone somewhere, and get past decades of argument that it is a forgery, we can’t use archaeology for the particulars or the theology of the Biblical narrative. But there is evidence a plenty that the Biblical story captures in ancient form a real history of epochal and environmental change. Maybe the ancient wisdom has a message for our environmental crisis. I believe God is tapping shoulders again.

Maybe the exploration of those settlements deep below the waves of the Black Sea, rather than the boat-like forms on top of the Mountain, will reveal more interesting facts to test this theory.