

'No Stone Unturned'

ARARAT REPORT

FEB-MAR 1990

Bill Crouse, Editor
Fred Reed, Managing Editor

NUMBER 24



Photo #1 Copyright Bob Garbe 1986 Used by Permission

PHANTOM ARKS ON ARARAT

The dictionary defines a phantom as "one that is something in appearance but not in reality." Anyone searching for Noah's Ark on Mt. Ararat can readily attest to the fact that the Ark *can* be seen on Ararat. In fact, it can be seen in many locations! The truth is, there are many Arks on Ararat, phantom arks, that is. The mountain is very active geologically. The scene changes from year to year. New arks are constantly being made and destroyed.

With the absence of hard evidence that remains of Noah's Ark still exist, or even that the Ark landed on this mountain, all we are left with are some intriguing "phantom arks." To those with an advanced case of Ark fever, these phantoms have caused many heart palpitations, sleepless nights, visions, dreams, and many

cases of premature egg-counting.

In the light of last summer's most recent phantom ark discovery (although it probably needs some further reconnaissance), we thought it might make an interesting story to document some of the most famous "phantom arks" that have turned up in the Ark search. We worked hard to be able to make these graphic to our readers by reproducing photographs. Unfortunately, we must confess we did not succeed in locating the most clear shots for all our examples.

We start with what we feel in our opinion was the best effort by the forces of nature to deceive Ark hunters. This is what we have dubbed "the Garbe Object" (see photo #1). It was first seen on a slide taken

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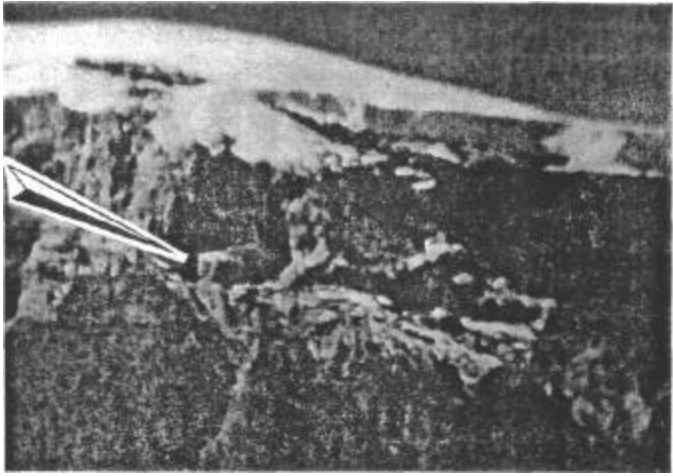


Photo #2 Courtesy D. Cory, E. Cummings, and M. Harris

by Bob Garbe in 1986. Bob was standing near the summit of the Northeast peak area over-looking the Ahora Gorge. Bob admits to being somewhat overcome with the awesome scenery of the gorge and by the lack of oxygen.

Wanting to document the moment, he set his camera on infinity and panned the gorge shooting perhaps a half a dozen or more shots. The object was not spotted until he carefully scrutinized his slides upon his return. A print was sent to this office, and our immediate response was "If this isn't the Ark there is a supernatural deceiver at work."

Nothing we have ever seen looked so identical to Elfred Lee's drawing from Hagopian's recollection! Notice the louvres at the top and the straight lines. On our print, with the aid of a magnifying glass, we could clearly discern a very large, but closed door. This photograph literally gave me one totally sleepless night.

[If some of our readers wish to see this photograph in color it has been reproduced and enlarged in *Noah's Ark and the Lost World* by John D. Morris (see p. 31).]

We immediately had geologists and photographic experts examine this mystery object. All of them said it was an optical illusion. We held out, however, until some Ark searchers got back there the following year. But their report was negative. There is nothing there 450-500 in length resembling a ship.

Our vote for the second best "phantom ark" goes to a shot recently sent to us by David Cory (see photo #2). David was part of a team with Eryl Cummings and Mike Harris in 1978. The photo was taken by a Turkish team member using a Hassalblad camera. In our original photo, it looks exactly like a ship parked below what Ark researchers call the "the upside down heart".

This is an area that was under a great deal interest until 1988, when it was thoroughly searched by the helicopter piloted by Chuck Aaron. It is also the area indicated by Ed Davis as to where he might have seen the Ark in the '40s (see *AR* Jan-Feb. 1989).

We would also add, that it was the area Kurdish shepherd boys might have been pointing out to Navarra in 1952. As Navarra's team rested by Jacob's Well

inside the gorge, one of Navarra's team members asked: "Which way did they go [to get to the Ark]? A young shepherd who had hitherto said nothing, rose and pointed in a southwesterly direction to a gap in the right wall on the versant (slope).

"That way," he said. "But you can't go that way, because there's magic there." All the shepherds murmured their agreement (see *The Forbidden Mountain*, by Navarra, pp. 124ff.).

The shepherds were undoubtedly indicating the area of the rock chimneys (pinnacles) inside the gorge on the west side.

The third "phantom ark" gained quite a bit of publicity when it was featured in the Hollywood docu-drama produced by Sun-Schick Productions (see photo #3). The movie was entitled *In Search of Noah's Ark*. We reviewed this movie earlier (*AR* Feb-Mar. 1987).

We call this "phantom" "the Holy Ground Mission Ark". It was photographed by cult leader, Tom Crotser, in the mid '70s. It does look like the prow of a huge ship. In reality, it is a huge chunk of basalt. We believe this is also the "ark" seen by George Greene in 1953.

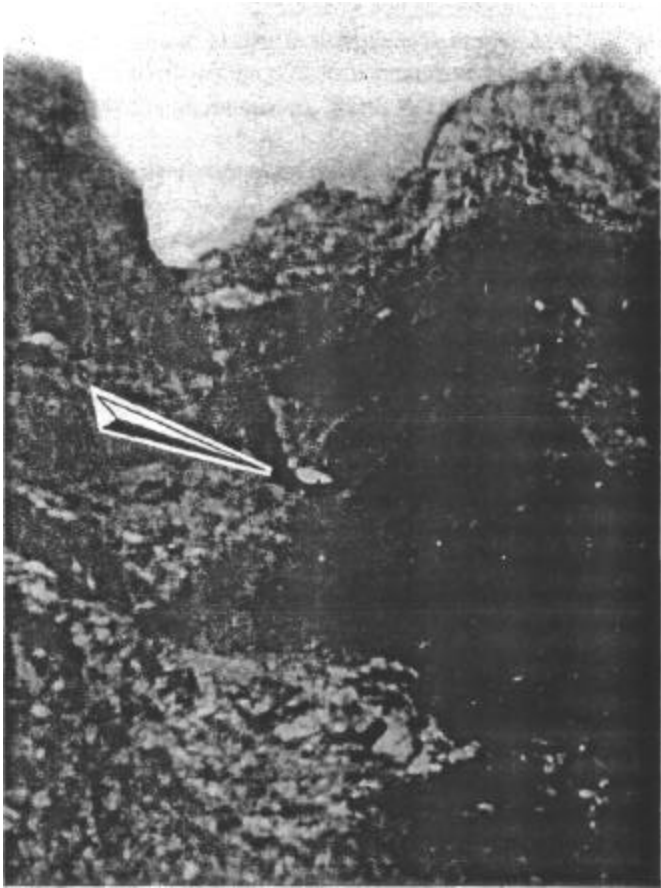
Our story in the previously mentioned *AR*, in our opinion, confirms this. For an even better photo of this "phantom ark" we refer you again to the photo in that issue. The location of this object is the east side of the gorge at about 11,000 feet

Photo #3 Courtesy of John McIntosh



Photo #4 Courtesy D. Cory, E. Cummings, and Af. Harris

In 1966, veteran Ark researcher, Eryl Cummings, photographed an object in the Ahora Gorge with a



telephoto lens which caused some excitement (see photo #4). After some photo-analysis it was decided that this object must be further identified.

In the early '80s it was positively identified as another large chunk of basalt. It too, is in the Gorge on the east side somewhat south and below the previous "Holy Ground Mission Ark."

Our final "phantom ark" is one that drove your editor and John McIntosh ("Sir John" that is!) excitedly crazy in 1985. Earlier that year, while visiting John in his California home, and during a marathon all night session of viewing John's voluminous slide collection, we noticed a rectangular object between two small peaks in the northeast peak area (see photo #5).

We had read of eyewitnesses telling that the Ark was to be found between two small peaks right near the summit of the mountain with the Ark perched on the edge of a cliff overlooking what seemed to them as a bottomless canyon.

They also described it as pointing in a north-northwest direction with melting water causing a little waterfall to cascade into the abyss. The description seemed to match. We were ecstatic! It is an

understatement for us to say we were optimistic.

Our quest to see this object in 1985 was interrupted by the Kurdish guerilla group, PKK. It was their mountain they told us, and they wanted Americans to go home. With AK-47s in our back we were forced to oblige.

In 1986, Bob Garbe got to this spot and found the distance between the two peaks to be around 50 feet or less, and no Ark was seen. He was, however, able to electrify us all with his photograph above (#1) taken approximately from the spot of our "phantom ark."

There have been other objects in bygone years that have caused a surge in Ark fever for some. But so far as we know, the above are the best representatives of these phantoms. It very well may be that the object discovered last summer (see previous AR) will also fit in this category. Most Ark researchers think that it will be. We are likewise of the opinion that the Durupinar object promulgated by Fasold and Wyatt is also in this category.

So, what can we learn from this? Much we think. Given the human imagination, we are convinced that what we have listed here can account for a large number of sightings over the years. Undoubtedly, one or more of these objects is what have been sighted by pilots in the '40s and '50s.

The natives also have assuredly perpetuated the excitement of the search by their own belief that one or more of the above objects was really Noah's Ark.

What is interesting about most "phantom arks" is that when they are actually viewed close up they are dwarfs compared to what the real Ark would have been. We've said it before, but it is pretty difficult to lose or hide a 450-500 foot long three-deck ship! If the Ark

Photo #5 Courtesy of John McIntosh

landed on this mountain (which we are definitely not sure of) the options are these:

- (1) It is no longer extant, meaning it is gone.
- (2) It is buried in ice. But the evidence is accumulating that the whole ice cap is moving which would have destroyed the Ark.
- (3) It is buried somewhere on the mountain in volcanic ash.
- (4) It is there but highly camouflaged. This certainly seems unlikely with the human

activity that takes place on the mountain and in view of recent helicopter and fixed wing flights

So far as we know these are all the options available. If we missed one or two we stand corrected.

Will Ark searchers give up their efforts in the light of a lack of clear evidence? Probably not for three reasons: (1) Belief that it is there; (2) adventure, and (3) availability of funds.

John McIntosh also contributed to the research of this article.

THE WORLD'S LARGEST REED SHIP PART II

by David Doerr

In the March-May, 1989 issue of *Ararat Report*, I explained why Noah's Ark would have been a reed ship. I quoted Dr. Thor Heyerdahl's *Tigris Expedition* as my primary source of information. I had written to Thor Heyerdahl last December 1, and I received his reply the day after my last article arrived here!

I don't believe that he would mind if I shared with you the information that he sent me, regarding the history of ancient reed ships. I am deleting only a few personal remarks that have no bearing on this science:

"Thank you for your letter of 1 December 1988 with enclosures that has finally caught up with me in Peru where I am organizing an archaeological project in a major pyramid complex built in pre-Inca times by real experts in reed-ship building of the same type as those we know from the ancient Middle East.

"... From the time of Pharaoh Kheops the Egyptians imported cedar planks from Lebanon (they had their own section of the port in Byblos) to build wooden ships with hull, but these first wooden ships were "papyroform," that is, they maintained the characteristic shape of the earlier reed-ships even to the curved papyrus-form of the lofty bow. All earlier ships depicted in the religious art of the first Pharaohs, as well as in pre-Pharaonic petroglyphs, and on pre-Pharaonic ceramics, were reed-bundle ships with compact body and no hull, as in the earliest epoch of Mesopotamia.

"However, before the Sumerians turned their forest-covered river valley into cultivated fields and finally a desert, they had easier access to wood (including cedar) than the people in the Nile valley, and we know from early tomb models that the Sumerians in a very early period built reed ships with a hull. This was done by waterproofing woven reed mats with a blend of natural asphalt, pitch and fish oil, and using them as a thick skin cover outside a skeleton of wooden ribs. Such reed boats have been in use until the present century on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers.

"As you know ... *The New English Bible* (and *The New Jerusalem Bible*) in Gen. 6:14 make it clear that the vessel is of reeds (papyrus). The ribs only are of *gopher* (cedar??)." Sincerely Yours, Thor Heyerdahl, Ph.D. Dr. David Noel Freedman is not an expert on ancient ship-building. He is an expert in the area of ancient cultural

linguistics. Professor Freedman explained to me that the word "gopher" occurs only once in the entire Hebrew Bible. He noted that Claus Westermann has offered various views, including the opinion that this word could refer to the word "Cypress," based on the similarity between the words "gopher" and "kupru."

He further writes that, Skinner in the *International Critical Commentary* reports the two meanings ... 'pinewood' and 'cypress,' connecting the latter with a Greek word for 'Cypress', which was used by the Phoenicians in shipbuilding."

From my efforts to augment Dr. Freedman's information, I have this to offer: we have the Latin words "Cypressus" and "cupressus" which mean "cypress"; and these are related to the name of the island of Cyprus, as evidenced in the use of the word to describe textile fabrics made on that eastern Mediterranean island (i.e. "cypress" textile fabrics). Also, the letters "g" and "k" are common dialectal variants. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that "gopher," "kupru," "cupressus," "cypressus," and "Cyprus," all relate to the word "cypress."

Although the wood in the frame was plausibly made of cypress, the type of wood may be a minor point, in relation to the fact that Thor Heyerdahl's entire argument seems to hold water (pun intended!). As he has noted, we must be careful not to assume that because a technology is ancient, it is therefore borne on the wings of ineptitude. Thor Heyerdahl points out that the Mayan calendar is still 8.64 seconds per year more accurate than is ours.

As regards the resources to build a reed-ship the size of the Titanic, Dr. Clifford Wilson, (author and college president), has made it clear that there was plenty of natural asphalt in the vicinity of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Dead Sea.

Just as Dr. Heyerdahl has repeatedly explained, we have become too distant from reed-ship technology to appreciate the durability of these remarkable vessels. And so it holds that we cannot easily imagine virgin forests of towering cedars that are as wide as a man is tall. The amount of pitch in the Biblical "cedars of Libanus" would indeed be significant. Now, ten of these giants would have provided an incredible amount of resinous oil-base to add to the vats of natural asphalt needed to seal Noah's Ark!

Arthur

Chuchian
claimed his
father, Jacob,

THE ARTHUR CHUCHIAN STORY

The goat
trail branches off
in several
directions at

happened upon the Ark as a young boy while chasing a wild-goat upon the ice cap of Ararat. Arthur presently lives in a large mid-western city. He is of Armenian descent and in his late sixties.

Arthur Chuchian's story was first heard by the Lutheran minister, Rev. Stuart Brassie, in the mid-'70s. Chuchian was then subsequently interviewed by Eryl Cummings, Scott Van Dyke, Dr. John W. Montgomery, your editor (2/4/85), and possibly by others.

Chuchian claims his father saw the Ark on several occasions during the previous century, and early into the 20th century. He possibly saw the Ark last just before he escaped his homeland during the massacres, somewhere around 1914-15. He says whole villages would climb to the Ark in the summer for worship services.

When large groups would go to the Ark they would camp out along the way. Otherwise, a good climber could make it to the Ark in a day. He assumes they began from the village of Ortulu (S W side of Ararat) where he claims his father lived.

Mr. Chuchian relates that his father talked a lot about the Ark, and that he gave specific directions as to how to get there, with the hope that one day he, Arthur, his son would return to see it. We must therefore, bear in mind that Arthur is remembering what his father told him.

He says they began in the village of Ortulu, and that they began their trek near a spring not far from the village. (This spring is noted on the map in *The Quest for Noah's Ark* by J.W. Montgomery, p. 299.) Near this spring they took a goat path that traversed the grasslands on the western side of the mountain. The goat path took them in the direction of the snow-fingers and led them in a north east direction around the mountain.

He says that one can avoid the tremendous winds by taking the path. They passed Lake Kop on the left. Chuchian says his father told him that he could see where the Ark is from the rim of the crater of Lake Kop. However, he says that you would have to know exactly where it is or you would not see it.

From this point the directions are more obscure. He says that after passing Lake Kop, they continued in a north-easterly direction around the mountain. In doing so, the path led through small valleys and along rock walls. Sometimes they had to climb almost on their hands and knees as they gained altitude.

various times. Armenians knew which path to take to the Ark because of special insignia marking the path. From his father's directions, he says it is approximately two canyons to the east of Lake Kop. This isolated canyon that the Ark is in is very difficult to locate. It is supposedly within a larger canyon.

Once the right canyon is located, the goat trail will continue on the right side of the canyon up a slight grade. The path then separates at some point. The left branch takes you to below the cliff on which the Ark rests. The right branch will take you up and around to a cliff over-looking a bowl or cove. The entire hike on this goat trail is about three miles, and takes about three hours according to Chuchian.

The path will dead-end at a rock wall. At this point, if one looks to the left and down, one can see the Ark which is about 100 feet down from that vantage point. The canyon is surrounded by small peaks especially on the left side. At one time, his father says, another trail led down from the top right to the Ark.

He told this editor that his father had been on the Ark, and that he and others had gone inside. Arthur thinks his father was only 9 years old when he first saw the Ark and about 19 when he saw it last,

Chuchian says the Ark is wedged between large rocks. The Ark is lying roughly in a north-south direction and just a little to the west. It is slightly tilted to the left side with the front slightly raised. The right side is exposed and the left side is against the rocks. Parts of the front side are missing as well as parts from the bottom.

Only the front 40 feet was exposed at the time, but this varies according to the time of the year and previous precipitation. Another 30-50 feet could be seen in water and ice. The water from the melting ice formed a little pool. This run-off formed a little waterfall. He says the water is very clear as well as the ice.

He also notes that there is definitely a catwalk on top of the Ark. He remembered that the wood of the Ark had a reddish-brown appearance.

As Chuchian's father stood above the Ark he was facing in a northwesterly direction. The summit was around to his right and to his back, and Lake Kop was down to the left. (He says you could only see the rim of the crater.) A village could be seen off in

the distance. (Possibly he refers to the city of Yerevan. According to Armenian tradition, "Yerevan" means "the line of first sight.")

Chuchian says his father was more than halfway up the mountain just above the ancient timber line. He also adds that while standing on a the ledge above the Ark, if you looked toward the summit (by turning a bit clockwise), and put your arms in a roughly 45 degree angle, with the left pointing toward the summit, and the right toward the pasture-lands, you would be looking in the direction of the village of Ortulu as the crow flies.

In 1982, Cummings and Jim Irwin used a map drawn with the help of Arthur Chuchian. An old goat trail (at least it was a trail!) was actually located and followed for a time. However, according to Robbie Gowdy of Dallas, Irwin's team leader in '82, the trail dead-ended and did not seem to be heading high enough.

Arthur Chuchian shared with Stuart Brassie that his father brought a large steamer trunk with him when they escaped. In this trunk was a piece of the Ark and a piece of the rock the Ark rests on, as well as other documents and artifacts.

He acknowledged the trunk during my visit, but did not know what happened to it Brassie however, says that he had it in 1974, and that he took out a rock and put it under ultraviolet light for him to see (Chuchian is a "rock hound").

In a later phone conversation, he said he found a book written in Armenian that had photos of Mt. Ararat in it. He assumed also that it might have important information in it. Since he reads very little Armenian he took it to someone — "some authority" (his words), to translate it. He wouldn't tell who. He claims this person kept the book and wouldn't give it back.

Whenever we hear stories like this we propose that certain procedures are necessary to be able to judge the truthfulness of the account.

- *First*, it is essential to get all the facts as presented.
- *Second*, as we query the individual, it is highly important that the questions do not put words in the mouth of the witness in such a way as to be suggestive. The facts must be unvarnished.
- *Third*, we try to ascertain if the witness has seen any of the Ark movies or read any of the many Ark books available. If he has, this is likely to prejudice the witness. [If our readers

recall, this question was posed to witness, Ed Davis during his polygraph test with apparent unfavorable results. If the test was accurate at this point, it indicated the possibility that he had some exposure to Ark materials.]

- *Fourth*, we consider the character of the witness. In other words, what is his reputation among his peers as to how he deals with facts?
- *Fifth*, how does the story stand up against known facts? And ...
- *Finally*, does the witness tell the story consistently over a period of time as the story is told and re-told? I suppose we could effectively summarize our method with the *Three C's*: Character, Consistency, and Correspondence
- a good approach for any detective!

How does Chuchian's story hold up?

We compared the reports gathered by other Ark researchers. However, in February of 1985 we decided to personally visit with Mr. Chuchian. We found him a delightful person who bent over backward to be hospitable. It is the Armenian way!

We found that he had lived his entire life in the St. Louis area. He was born in this country. He was at that time an engineer for Channel 2, a position he had held for some time. In 1983, he suffered a heart attack and missed 103 days of work.

Chuchian gives assent to Christian values and beliefs, but seemed basically ignorant of Christian teachings. We found that he was rather cynical and had a paranoid view of life.

For example, he believed the government was suppressing a lot of news. He claimed he saw many items come over the wire service that never made the news. He believed the government was responsible for flu outbreaks, and was involved in altering the weather.

He also related to this editor that he believed there was a civilization of small beings living inside the earth. They were discovered by Admiral Byrd in the '30's when he visited the North Pole. He believes the government squelched the story by confining Byrd and his crew to a mental institution.

We also found Chuchian to be somewhat superstitious. He claimed bad things happened to him whenever he got involved with the Ark search. He has dabbled in the occult. Stuart Brassie recalls that he was into pyramidology.

I have reason to believe he was also interested in and a participant in the occult practice of "remote viewing" (by traveling out of body). When I related to him about my intention of returning to Mt. Ararat the summer of '85 he wished for me to keep him informed as to the exact dates we would be there because it was possible that he would "join" us.

Chuchian informed us that his mother had seen the Ark as well, and that she recounts an experience whereby the groups journeying to see the Ark would be transported down to the base of the mountain during the night as they slept.

This is reminiscent of the Armenian tradition concerning St. Hagop (Jacob) who also continually found himself at the base of the mountain in the morning as he tried to climb the mountain to get wood from the Ark.

Arthur's father, Jacob, was born in the old country (Armenia) now occupied by the Turks. He escaped to this country about 1915. He died about 1963, and his son thinks he was in his mid-90s. This means he was born around 1865-70. Arthur says his father was a shepherd and a metal craftsman (brass and gold) in the village of Ortulu.

Brassie notes in his report that Chuchian claimed his father was a chieftain over several villages. Chuchian claims he and the villagers hid some of their wealth in caves on Ararat hoping to return someday and to begin a new life.

He gave the impression that his father was once well-off in that he paid for the passage of 120-130 Armenian refugees, and bought many of them homes. He says his father donated his remaining wealth to the war effort (WWI), and then started from scratch in the steel mills of St. Louis. He did not work there long, however, as he spent the rest of his life as a shoemaker.

Upon returning home from the visit with Chuchian, we contacted his employer for his impression. The man was blunt and to the point: "The man does his job faithfully, otherwise he ought to be in a mental institution." At the time we took this comment to mean that Chuchian was somewhat of an eccentric and not actually mentally impaired.

But what about the facts of Chuchian's story?

Is it consistent?

We have the following problems with the account, some of them, in our opinion, render it a very doubtful story.

(1) Chuchian holds to some very strange

beliefs. Can we really trust this man? He gives very detailed descriptions about the climb and the condition of the Ark. One almost gets the impression he is an eyewitness and not his father. In fact, some of the earlier interviewers were under the impression it was he who had seen the Ark.

(2) When all the reports are compared we are left with a great deal of contradiction. He told Stuart Brassie his father last saw the Ark in 1933 whereas to us he said 1914 or '15. In earlier reports Chuchian reports that his father got no closer to the Ark than the upper ledge. He elaborated further that Armenians are superstitious about touching it since it is holy. However, he indicated to us that his father and others had gotten inside it. His father even brought a piece of it to America.

(3) In one interview he claimed the Ark was in a large body of water. To our knowledge there is no large body of water on Ararat.

(4) Chuchian says the canyon in which the Ark is located is just above the ancient timber line. We also find no reference to there ever being trees on Ararat. It's possible he meant the grassline.

(5) Chuchian claims his father discovered the Ark quite by accident while chasing after a wild goat. However, this does not seem to harmonize with his story that hundreds of pilgrims would visit the Ark at one time during the summer months. And if this is true, how could so many people keep such an event to themselves all these years? And why would no one know anything of this at the Armenian church headquarters which is only about 30 to 40 miles from there?

(6) Perhaps the most perplexing thing about his story are the directions he gives (coming from his father) for climbing to the Ark. At one point he seems to be taking you into the North Canyon area, but then he says when you are at the Ark itself (with the Ark in the foreground), looking toward the village of Ortulu, the Summit is on your right, with Lake Kop at your left. This is simply impossible!

When Scott Van Dyke interviewed Chuchian, he indicated the Ark was in terrain similar to the rock chimney area inside the Ahora Gorge. But Lake Kop can certainly not be seen from this location. Also from this location one cannot see the village of Ortulu.

Conclusion: It is another tantalizing story! Perhaps Chuchian's father saw something as a young child. We will never know. However, we have ample reason to doubt the facticity of this report. Even if it has a grain of truth we cannot be sure what it is, nor can we put any stock in any of the detail.

PLEASE NOTE: If the date on the label is
the same as the date of this issue it is
your last unless we hear from you.

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New Ararat Movie Being Made

Several weeks ago we were informed of a movie being made about ML Ararat produced by Atlantis Productions, Inc. of Thousand Oaks, CA. It is advertised as a movie of "Adventure, History, and Passion." It is narrated by Mike Connors, star of the old Joe Mannix series.

Specifically, the movie is about three Armenian Americans who climbed the mountain in 1986. These three men were: Masis Parseghian, Gregory Parseghian,

and Hamlet Nercessian. The movie is meant to be inspirational to those of the Armenian race. For them Ararat is a symbol of their enduring nation. It is their "wailing wall."

This movie will be of interest to all who have any interest in Ararat and its history. It will premier on May 2. Since we have been invited to the premier, we will have a more detailed report at a later date along with details for ordering copies.



SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

PURPOSE STATEMENT: The *Ararat Report* exists to defend the biblical doctrine of Creation and the Universal Flood, to be a reliable source of information on the ongoing search for the remains of Noah's Ark, to thoroughly investigate claims of Ark sightings, and to provide a forum for various opinions on related subjects. The *Ararat Report* is published bimonthly by Christian Information Ministries, International, 2050 N. Collins Blvd., Suite 100, Richardson, TX 75080, phone (214) 690-1975. Subscriptions are \$25/year. A sample issue will be sent free on request.

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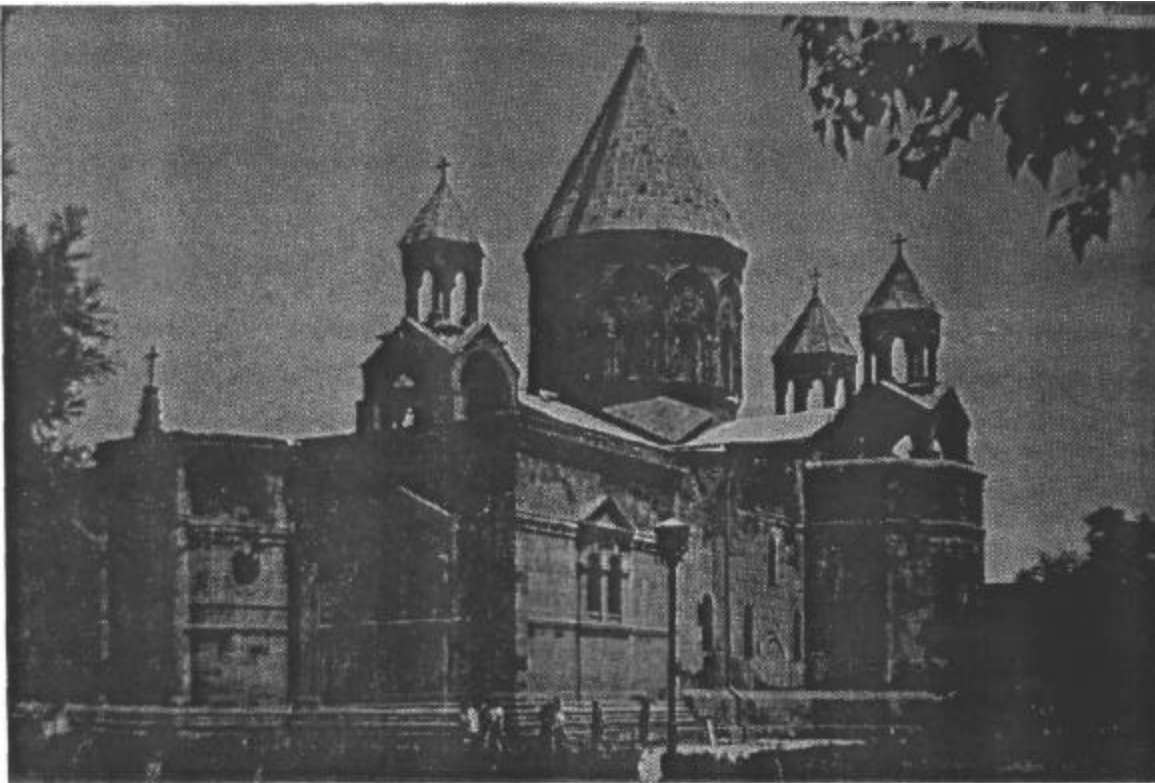


Photo m
*Etchmiadzin
Cathedral built
in the early 4th
century. (Photo
by Bill Crouse)*

JOURNEY TO ETCHMIADZIN

Last September I had the privilege of traveling to Soviet Armenia. Most of the readers of *AR* will know this is the tiny republic in the U.S.S.R. that lies on the northern side of ML Ararat. The purpose of the trip was to minister to victims of the devastating earthquake of December '88. My two traveling companions and dear brothers in Christ were Aram Stepanian and Habib Alajaji, both of Armenian descent, and both in full time ministry to their people.

To someday travel to Armenia had been a long-time dream of mine. After all the years of research on the Ararat region, I had become very interested (my wife would say obsessed!) with the Armenian people and their history.

The purpose of this trip was purely ministry, but I somehow hoped the opportunity would arise during our busy schedule to visit the most holy shrine of all Armenians, the Church at Etchmiadzin. It is here that I knew religious officials had in their possession what is supposed to be a piece of Noah's Ark. Of all the priceless treasures in this monastery, the piece of Noah's Ark is considered by them as their most holy relic.

Our visit there was rather rushed, but one that will always live in my memory. When the attending religious officials heard I had climbed their holy mountain, and that I

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