



Rex Geissler

**The Meteor Crater on the Iranian border** with Great Ararat and Little Ararat in the background, as well as parasite volcanic cones visible between the two large volcanoes.

about 12 in by 9 in (30.5 by 23 cm) and about 1 in (2.5 cm) thick. The relic does appear to be an organic material with noticeable striations in it. The missing portion of the petrified wood on the lower left was broken off and given as a gift in the 18th century to the Russian Orthodox Queen Catherine the Great (sovereign of Russia from 1763 until her death in 1796). The name Echmiadzin itself means “those who descended.” Noah’s wife’s tomb is said to be at Marand, the Marunda of Ptolemy (meaning “the mother is there”). The eastern district of Ararat, named Arnoiodn, means “at Noah’s foot.” The town name Kargakonmaz means “the raven won’t land.” The town named Temanin means “the eight.” The name Ahora (Arghuri) means “he planted the willow (or vine),” which is where Noah allegedly planted a vineyard and where a glacier-fed stream continues down the mountain to the fertile Aras River Valley. One of the meanings of the town name Nakhechivan is “the place of descent” (Corbin 1999).

### **2001 Mount Ararat Survey Summary and Future Plans**

Finally, the pottery discoveries, tombs and graves, rock dwellings and corridors found by the 2001 Mount Ararat Archaeological Surface Survey and other pre-classical surveys in the same region clearly manifest that Mount Ararat and its surrounding area have seen uninterrupted settlement by various cultures from at least the Late Chalcolithic to modern times. Estimates of the time periods of these Chalcolithic sites

include the Amuq E/Early Amuq F of the early to middle fourth millennium BC (Marro and Özfirat 2003), which is obviously close to the timeframe of the Flood. Archaeological evidence has been found around Mount Ararat for the Late Chalcolithic, Early/Middle/Late Bronze Ages, Iron Age, Urartian Kingdom, Byzantine/Armenian Christian Period, Bagratide Kingdom, Arab Period, Akkoyunlu State/Karakoyunlu State, and the Ottoman Period. At this date, ancient textual evidence is lacking from the region around Mount Ararat. Particularly for the time periods until Urartu and its cuneiform writing, there is no known textual evidence. This emphasizes the need for more archaeological research in the numerous cemeteries on the slopes of Mount Ararat that are typically flanked by fortresses, as well as along the Aras River Valley.

Atatürk University in Erzurum and ArcImaging have already signed and notarized contracts to continue with more surveys of the region. In future archaeological surveys, plans are being made to focus on the Mount Ararat Chalcolithic sites and Early Bronze Age sites (dated around 3400–2200 BC), including Iğdir and Ağrı Province *höyüks* (Kuftin 1944; Barnett 1963). In addition, plans are being made to study the ruins and caves at Korhan Pasture, Korhan Castle, Ahora Cemetery and Ahora Valley, as well as performing a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey of the Mount Ararat ice cap.







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**An inside view of the Meteor Crater on the Iranian border,** with the sun providing the lighting. Great Ararat and little Ararat in the background.



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**Fossil sand dollars and marine animals or plants** in limestone or sandstone sediments of the Ararat Valley plain.



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**Detailed view of the salt** in the Tuzluca salt layer.



Bill Crouse

**Petrified wood relic** that Armenian bishops at Echmiadzin claim was a portion of Noah's Ark.