

New Support for Alleged Noah's Ark Discovery

Archaeologist states there is scientific merit to recent discovery of site associated with the legendary ark of Noah.

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Miami, FL – (SBWIRE) – 11/15/2011 – In 2010, the Hong Kong organization Noah's Ark Ministries International or NAMI announced they had discovered the legendary vessel on Mount Ararat in eastern Turkey and were subsequently accused of perpetrating a hoax. Now, a professional archaeologist states there is significant merit to their discovery.

Harvard University educated archaeologist and director of the Paleontological Research Corporation, Dr. Joel Klenck, surveyed the site, analyzed the archaeological remains and completed a comparative study. "The site is remarkable", states Klenck, "and comprises a large all-wood structure with an archaeological assemblage that appears to be mostly from the Late Epipaleolithic Period." These assemblages at other sites in the Near East have calibrated radiocarbon dates between 13,100 and 9,600 B.C. Located at elevations above 4,200 meters on Mount Ararat and covered by layers of ice and stones, he states: "The site is wonderfully preserved, exhibits a wide array of plant materials including structures made of cypress and one room with a floor covered by chickpea seeds." Klenck additionally notes, "I was most impressed by the artifactual assemblage, particularly the basalt bowls, stone cores and debitage."

It also appears that the site was visited in later periods. Two small ceramic bowls from the Chalcolithic (5,800-3,000 B.C.) and Bronze Age (3,000-1,200 B.C.) periods were placed in one of the rooms of the structure. He adds, "These artifacts most likely represent brief later visits to the site since these bowls differ from the Epipaleolithic remains that comprise nearly all of the assemblage."

Klenck reports, "The surface scatter of the wood above the large structure is 121.1 meters in length and 23.8 meters in width. The construction is at least 5.2 meters deep and several measurements of the exterior walls exhibit angles moving inward toward the base of the edifice. Also, there are stair-like features that descend through the middle of the multi-storied structure and mortise-and-tenon construction." He remarks, "That this large wood structure is located on Mount Ararat, with what appears to be a mostly Epipaleolithic assemblage, is noteworthy."

"The site is no hoax," Klenck states, "and the size and excellent preservation of the edifice will enable it to be studied by numerous scholars." He notes, "The large wood structure is buried under tons of stones and ice and most of the edifice remains unexplored."

Regarding the initial carbon dating of the site at 4,800 B.C. by NAMI, Klenck states the initial discovery team comprised people with limited archaeological experience. He remarks, "Instead of obtaining samples from cores and unexposed locales and wrapping them in tin-foil, surface samples were retrieved with bare hands or cotton gloves. The date most likely reflects a sample that was contaminated by ancient visitors or modern explorers to the site. Most of the assemblage portrays a much earlier period." He notes that all future radiocarbon samples should be delivered to archaeology departments at Istanbul University that will date the artifacts or send the samples to archaeometry facilities at the University of Berlin.

He also notes that a nearby cave exhibits artifacts similar to those in the large wood structure. Klenck states the cave site possesses botanical remains of chickpea, flax fibers and rope, pieces of fabric, bone artifacts, and vessels made of an organic material. He adds, "In both the large wood structure and cave, most of the bowls are made of an organic material, perhaps animal stomachs, and the flaps are folded over wood or bone collars. Several of these bowls resemble early ceramic types from the subsequent Pottery Neolithic Period (6,400-5,800 B.C.)." Klenck opines, "These artifacts prompt questions if bowls made from organic materials influenced the first pottery styles."

"These sites are extremely important for archaeologists and conservators," states Klenck, "particularly with regard to the preservation of wood and plant materials and the examination of architectural features. He is emphatic that the Antiquities Authority of Turkey needs to protect the research area and allow only approved archaeologists and conservators to visit the sites. "These precautions must be completed", remarks Klenck, "to prevent adventurers and local mountain guides from breaking off pieces of wood and removing artifacts from the research area."

He states the initial skepticism of the archaeological community is understandable but will fade as more researchers and conservators complete their analyses and publish reports in scientific journals. Klenck adds, "Here, the evidence is wide ranging. Also, very little of the structure is surveyed and much of the site is inaccessible being covered or blocked by ice."

The discoveries on Mount Ararat coincide with academic discussions on the transition between the Pleistocene and Holocene epochs during the Younger Dryas stadial (10,900-9,500 B.C.) and the beginning of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Period, around 9,600 B.C., where the first village communities in southeastern Turkey became associated with intensive agriculture and plant and animal domestication. Klenck states, "Some scholars see this transition period as cataclysmic with dramatic increases in sea-levels, flooding, animal extinctions, and decreases in human populations; others assert this phase was simply a cold, dry period evidenced by sparse vegetation." "In the midst of this debate," he notes, "there is a large all-wood structure and a cave, with artifacts resembling an Epipaleolithic assemblage, at a high elevation on Mount Ararat." Klenck concludes: "The Ararat sites are very special because of their preservation and unique insight into the prehistoric past."



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2010年，一所位於香港並名為「挪亞方舟國際事工」(簡稱“NAMI”)的組織公佈，在土耳其東部的亞拉臘山上，發現了傳說中的巨船，及後，該組織被外界質疑，現下有專業考古學家按上述發現的是非曲直提出正面的論述。

畢業於哈佛大學的考古學家並現任古生物研究公司研究部主管的祖克蘭克博士 (Dr. Joel Klenck)，曾調查過該發現地點，就遺跡作出考古分析，並完成了有關的對比研究。「該遺跡是令人驚異的，」克蘭克博士表示，「內裡包含一個大型全木造結構及考古遺物群，極有可能是屬於晚期後舊石器時代。在其他近東地區類似的遺物群已被標定的放射性碳年份為公元前13,100年至9,600年之間。」

該遺跡地處亞拉臘山海拔約 4,200米之上，被冰和石塊覆蓋，他指出：「該遺跡被奇妙地保存著，並展示整列的植物物質和木材，包括以柏木為材的結構、一個地板灑滿鷹嘴豆種子的房間。」克蘭克博士續指出：「此外，最令我印象深刻的是那些古文物群，特別是那些玄武岩碗、石核 (譯者按：在打制石器時，為生產石片所使用的石料，常見於舊石器時代遺迹中。) 和打制石器的廢料。」

該遺跡看似之後曾被人造訪：木結構其中一個房間裡頭有兩個細小的陶碗，年代介乎紅銅時代 (公元前5,800-3,000年) 和青銅時代 (公元前3,000-1,200年) 之間。他補充：「這些文物標示著極有可能曾經有人進入木結構，因為那兩個小碗，與出現於木造結構內，絕大部分屬於晚期後舊石器時代的古文物群，截然不同。」

克蘭克博士表示，「量度大型木結構的散射曲面(surface scatter)，所得長度是121.1米，寬度 23.8米。木結構的深度最少有5.2米，對外牆進行過數次測量，結果顯示外牆角度朝著建築物內部傾斜。此外，還有狀似樓梯一樣的裝置，通過中間的多層結構，與及以樁頭卯眼接合的木工建設。」他表述：「這個位於亞拉臘山上的晚期後舊石器時代的大型木結構，是值得備受注視的。」

「該遺跡不是騙人的，」克蘭克博士謂，「究其體積之規模與絕佳的保存狀態，可以為眾多學者提供研究機會。」他指出：「大型木結構被埋藏在萬噸重的石頭和冰塊之下，大部分的建築仍待探索。」

關於NAMI最初提供的碳測年份為公元前4,800年這一點，克蘭克博士的見解為探索團隊在初期欠缺有豐富考古經驗的成員。他指出：「在蒐集樣本時，只是徒手或戴著棉手套撿拾表面或暴露於外的樣本，而非選擇在一些表層以下、沒受過干擾的位置採集樣本，並且將樣本小心用錫箔包裹好。NAMI最初所採擷的樣本極有可能已受某位曾進入木結構的古代訪客或近代探索者所污染，再者，整個木結構組群所反映的年代其實比上述標定年份要早得多。」他了解到未來所有要進行放射性碳測試的樣本將會被送交伊斯坦堡大學的考古部門進行年份檢測和發表，或安排送往柏林大學考古系進行古文物研究。

他還指出，發現地點附近的另一洞穴內的考古文物，與大型木結構所藏的相類似。克蘭克博士陳述洞穴內遺有鷹嘴豆、纖維用亞麻、亞麻繩、布料塊、骨文物，和一種以有機物製成的器皿。他補充說，「在大型木結構和洞穴內，大多數的盆碗是以有機物製造，可能是用動物的胃，盆的碗口覆蓋一個木造或骨造的環圈。」當中有些盆碗的形狀近似陶器新石器時代 (公元前6,400-5,800年) 的容器。克蘭

克博士認為，「這些文物所引伸出的問題是：世上最早期的製陶風格是否受著這些以有機物製成的盆碗所影響？」

克蘭克博士指出：「該遺跡對考古學家和從事古文物保育研究的學者而言，尤其在古代樹木與植物保存研究，和古代建築特色究兩方面上，是極其重要的。」他強調，土耳其的古物事務管理局有需要把遺跡列為受國家保護的研究區域，並且只允許獲正式批准的考古學家和古文物保育研究的學者進入該遺跡。克蘭克博士表示：「為要防止有探險人士和當地登山導遊進入該遺跡斬下木塊並搬走其中的文物，這些預防措施都必須落實執行。」

對於今次方舟發現，考古學界在有關消息的公布初期抱持質疑態度，克蘭克博士認為這現象是可以理解的，但他也同時相信，隨著越來越多的專家學者完成研究分析工作，並在科學期刊上發表有關報告，之前的質疑態度將會淡化。克蘭克博士補充：「現有的證據是廣泛的。此外，整個木結構被冰覆蓋和封鎖，現行可供檢測的只是一小部分。」

亞拉臘山上的發現與考古學界研究關於更新世與全新世的替迭(公元前10,900 – 9,500年)，發生於新仙女木時期(譯按：距今12800年至11500年的一段持續1300年左右的冰期)，與及陶器前新石器時代的萌芽於約公元前9,600年的學術討論不謀而合。其時，在土耳其東南部出現首個從事務農和馴養牲畜的村莊社群。克蘭克博士補充：「有學者認為這兩個地質時代的替迭與海平面急劇上升有關，是為災難性的過渡期，那時期洪水湧現，動物滅絕，世上人口減少，有些人則認為當時的生物群滅絕不過是因為植被縮減，從而彰明了該段時期只是另一個冰河期。」

克蘭克博士補充：「在這次辯論中所觸及的議題，涉及一個大型的全木結構，一個山洞，一批類同晚期後舊石器時代的古物群，位於亞拉臘山高海拔的地段。」他的結論認為亞拉臘山上所發現的遺跡是異常特殊的，究其良好的保存狀態，與及能夠為史前歷史提供獨一無二的寶貴線索。

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資料來源：古生物研究公司 (以上中譯版本與原載英文版本如有任何歧義，一切以英文為準。)

祖·克蘭克博士(Dr. Joel Klénck)畢業於西北大學(Northwestern University in Evanston, IL)並取得人類學與考古學學士學位(B.A. in Anthropology/Archeology)。西北大學乃一所著名的大規模研究大學，位於美國伊利諾伊州的埃文斯頓市。克蘭克博士亦於哈佛大學(Harvard University)進行同一學科的研修並獲頒授文學碩士及哲學博士學位(M.A. and Ph.D. in Anthropology/Archeology)及於英國頂尖研究學府之一的雪菲爾大學(University of Sheffield)，研修史前史與考古學(Prehistory and Archaeology)。他曾於多間著名大學(包括哈佛大學)任教有關科目並於過去二十年發表多份有關史前史與考古學的學術文章。

祖·克蘭克博士專門從事考古與生物化石的研究，與及在考古遺址挖掘和分析動物的骨頭。經他發表或尚在進行中的研究課題非常廣泛，包括古生物和古植物學的全球分佈研究、考古學中的異教文化研究、與及實驗考古學和其他主題。