

Decoding a World Navel “Visual Language” Through Ideational Cognitive Archaeology: A Further Reply

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Abstract

It is reemphasized that the Flood koine is *not* primarily a method of locating the Ark, but a novel synthetic decipherment of (and independent test for) any potential world navel/omphalos cosmic landscape. Hence, all scientific controversy concerned directly with the Durupinar boat-shaped object, and its origin, is totally irrelevant to the new test result. Implied (if not stated) misrepresentations of my paper's claims are corrected, and the three objections raised are each shown to be deeply flawed. My colleague's underpinning assumptions regarding the epistemology of science are questioned (and her heavy reliance on one old-earth, local-flood geologist is noted as somewhat unwise). Finally, in the absence of any (let alone a compelling) alternative scientific explanation for the 'Flood koine pattern of cosmic landscape demarcation' being proffered, one previously published alternative is outlined—and then shown to be inferior. The 'Flood koine pattern of cosmic landscape demarcation' therefore still provides an imperative reason to focus research efforts upon site(s) which best satisfy its multiple criteria, especially the topographically 'saddle-seated' twin mound and 'white wall' of Yigityatagi in Turkey.

Keywords: decipherment, Flood koine, cognitive archaeology, omphalos, navel, Noah's Ark, geology

Introduction

To begin, I would again like to greatly thank my esteemed colleague for her further comments and reflections, as many readers of *Answers Research Journal* might understandably share her concerns (and they are worth addressing at some further length). Habermehl raises three more points of objection in her abstract, consisting of a geographical point and two geological points; the latter comprising of 1) the alleged in situ origin of the boat-shaped object and 2) the question of the Flood/post-Flood boundary. As I shared in my first response, my thesis began when I noted a correspondence between the twin-peaked morphology of the Egyptian mound of creation and the twin-peaked morphology of Yigityatagi (a limestone mound photographed by David Fasold and others). Did this morphological correspondence mean anything? I was determined to find out. Mine was thus a novel, independent, and predictive test of Fasold's thesis, predicated upon the truth of the global Flood and human hyper-diffusion. Open to confirmation bias? Perhaps, in some minor respects it was—but designed so as to seek out as many transcultural descriptors of the *omphalos* as possible and follow the ancient cultural evidence *wherever* it would lead. Read in context, therefore, I was not 'Ark searching' but rather 'cosmic mountain searching' (and the most probable site was only arrived at obliquely through its multi-factor landscape correspondence to the koine synthesis).

Furthermore, I have nowhere claimed that the Durupinar formation *is* Noah's Ark (as is strongly implied in Habermehl's comments). Rather, along

with other reserved creationists (including Ham (2021)), I call for a full excavation of the controversial object to rule out all further ambiguity. Indeed, the sole (and intrinsically sufficient) reason I call for more action is because of the *new* test result, namely Yigityatagi's precise morphological and descriptive match to the koine. Of course, my paper also calls for further ground penetrating radar investigation of the neglected area below the white mound, where an important necropolis might reside buried. This seems only reasonable, one might think! Yet having added these disclaimers for some much-needed perspective, we should point out that evidence *has* recently been gathered from non-invasive techniques of the boat-shape which *can* be interpreted as very interesting anomalies (consistent with the decayed remains of an ancient vessel)—compare Koehler's (2022) early preprint. Only large scale and invasive archaeological techniques are likely to settle the controversy in an appropriately rigorous manner, and my plea is thus for more science to be done at this location (which should not tax or exhaust our considerable creationist resources internationally).

Deciphering a Code with Great Care

At this point, I would like to again stress to my colleague that my *Answers Research Journal* paper was about deciphering the (primarily) pictographic code concerning a cosmic mountain (or navel) in ancient thought. Unlike Champollion's decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphics, however, (which began with the name of 'PTOLEMY' on the Rosetta Stone and the obelisk of Philae), the code of the Flood koine

is not chiefly in alphabetic or phonetic script. This visual nature of the code has encouraged scholars to construct meaningful pictorial dictionaries which encompass ANE, biblical and Egyptian ideas (see Burket 1992; Cornelius 1994; Keel and Uehlinger 1995); and more recently, a Near Eastern lens has also been adopted for reading the visual code of Minoan culture (Marinatos 2010). I consider my paper as a natural extension of this ‘solar koine’, as it has come to be called in certain circles, since many of the riddles of the ancient world seem to revolve around a cosmic landscape which functioned as a point of origin (or *omphalos*)—something which the book of Genesis 8:15–19 clearly also demands. As Professor Marinatos (2010, 95) herself supposes, “tree and stone [an expression found in all three of the Baal Cycle, Hesiod and Homer—Ed.] are elements of a Near Eastern koine. The expression presupposes knowledge of sanctuaries where rock and tree formed a pair and where prophecies took place. Are the *omphalos* stone and laurel tree of Greek Apollo at Delphi part of the same religious vocabulary seen on the Minoan rings? Indeed, this may well be the case...” I too think that her question should be answered strongly in the affirmative, as an application of Occam’s razor would also suggest. Delphi was situated below the symmetrically twin-peaked Mount Parnassus, where the Greek Noah-figure is said to have landed. One benefit of extending the solar koine to encompass cultural Flood accounts, as I have done, is that we can apply these descriptions to known potential landing sites of the Ark and eliminate those which do not conform (regardless of our personal preferences). Logically, the remains of the Ark might still be found somewhere in the near vicinity of those sites which best correspond (even if it is no longer extant as a recognizable vessel). Furthermore, and contra Habermehl, this Flood koine pattern of cosmic landscape demarcation *is* based on sound archaeological research methods, as outlined, for instance, in Renfrew and Zubrow (1994) (a group of scholars whom she has so far failed to interact with at any meaningful level). Neither does it absolutely *require* the current location of the Ark to be found precisely between two peaks of rock as claimed, since over a period of 4,600 years, the surface of our planet cannot reasonably be assumed to be totally static.

Now, having ridden roughshod over what my paper is actually all about, Habermehl’s accusations against what she thinks it is all about come flying thick and fast. My natural extension of the koine is vaguely claimed to be founded upon “unsupported assumptions and foggy arguments from multitudes of pagan sources” and can (by implication) be safely consigned to the esoteric (read: probably wrong) section. Perhaps my colleague is trying to style

herself here upon the gifted debunker Clifford Wilson, whose admirable critiques of the ‘ancient astronaut’ hypothesis in *Crash Go the Chariots* (1972) and *The Chariots Still Crash* (1976) are still worth a read to this day! However, if she is adopting the classic aloof debunker mantle, then she might want to try a different tack, because it is clearly not working at all! Admittedly, when you are not familiar with a culture, you can make just about anything you want out of its visual symbols. However, although my paper is trying to break new ground (by standing on the shoulders of giants), and does contain uncertainties, Habermehl’s pejorative remarks appear mostly based on a deep mistrust of cognitive investigative research methods. Underlying all this negativity, her epistemology of science appears mainly at fault. To illustrate the problem, consider where Habermehl actually describes her methodology: “When we apply science to a question, we must stay with information that is certain. Otherwise we are guilty of speculating; this is unscientific and may not lead to correct conclusions” (Habermehl 2014, 446). Now it has to be said that this is an extremely narrow perspective on science as understood as an enterprise. As Miller (1996) argues convincingly and quite to the contrary, intuition and imagination occupy a central role in good scientific research! Indeed, if scientists of the past had consistently followed Habermehl’s idiosyncratic approach to science alluded to above, there would have been no theories of Special or General Relativity (which Einstein initiated on *Gedankenexperiments*), no ring structures in organic chemistry (which Kekulé based on a strange dream one morning) and no discovery of the structure of D.N.A. (which Franklin, Watson, and Crick initially speculated over without any hard data). And those examples are just off the top of my head, there are many more which could be adduced!

Moreover, my colleague claims (contrary to what I have consistently maintained) that I ask us to “settle for a pseudo ark stone formation.” Not so at all! As careful readers of *Answers Research Journal* will be aware, and at the risk of repeating myself, I called for concerted, culturally sensitive *action*, that is, a full excavation of the Durupinar formation contingent upon international teamwork and a successful petition for governmental approval. Currently, investigations of the ambiguous boat-shape have been limited to scratches of the (extremely hard) surface, various geophysical scans, and one set of flawed water-pressure drillings (where air/foam would perhaps have been more appropriate). Far *more* quality science is needed in this realm, not less! And some of this science is still slowly ongoing in Turkish academic circles—which is a promising sign. I am certainly not asking anyone to settle for

anything, what we need are power-tools and more archaeologists to muscle in!

Understanding Ideational Cognitive Archaeology

My colleague also questions why I accept pagan literature sources to add to what the Bible says. Yet as long as extra-biblical information is employed in a ministerial capacity, taking the Holy Scriptures as magisterial, there is nothing untoward in decoding what the ancients themselves may have believed regarding the global Flood. As Fagan (2004, 194) points out concerning his colleagues pioneering work: "Archaeologists Kent Flannery and Joyce Marcus (1993) consider the archaeology of mind to be the 'study of all those aspects of ancient culture that are the products of the ancient mind.' This includes cosmology, religion, ideology, iconography, and all forms of human intellectual and symbolic behavior. They believe that this form of cognitive-processual archaeology offers great promise *when rigorous methods are applied to large data sets*. To do otherwise, they write, causes archaeology to become 'little more than speculation, a kind of bungee jump into the Land of Fantasy'" (emphasis mine). We commend Fagan for highlighting Flannery and Marcus' wise cautionary caveats concerning the practice of ICA. The late Alan Alford (2000, 39) (although I do not accept his 'bungee jump' conclusion that ancient mythology can be explained via an 'exploded planet cult') echoes their sound words of wisdom when he writes: "Often, when dealing with ancient writings, it can be difficult to establish the correct interpretation of a legend, especially when the pivotal incidents are described using metaphors... In such circumstances, it becomes useful, even essential, to corroborate the understanding of one particular legend by reference to another." Considering these truths, multitudes of pagan sources are clearly essential for *stabilizing* our understanding of the koine. Indeed, decipherment of a transcultural visual code (predicated upon hyper-diffusion) *must* proceed via a review of the visual syntax of each relevant symbol in a variety of contexts. As Fagan (2004, 195) adds: "The archaeology of mind is at its most powerful when archaeologists can work with both historical documents and archaeological data." This is precisely the template my paper has striven hard to follow. Yet Habermehl would have us just throw out the valuable testimony of the ancients (presumably because of her epistemology where only the observational exact sciences are deemed scientific, and verisimilitude is dismissed in favor of comforting apodictic pronouncements).

Now, this author nowhere *knowingly* stated that the Egyptian 'akhet' (sun between two peaks) symbol represented 'the Ark.' If I did, then I apologize for

that and submit that the claim should be retracted as in error. In my Appendix G, the akhet *is* listed as a symbol of the *twin peaked mound of sunrise*. To reiterate, the akhet is a two-component symbol, with a rich polyvalent meaning transculturally. The solar disc component of the symbol probably represents the Ark vessel and has numerous allomorphs within the koine, while the twin-peaked mound also has koine allomorphs and probably represents its landing place after the Flood (more on this later). Incidentally, one archaic Egyptian hieroglyph for akhet was a single ellipse, which meant island (Betro 1996, 157); however, the twin-peaked mound component of the Egyptian symbol is found even earlier, for example on small ivory or bone labels discovered in Tomb U-j at Abydos (dating to Dynasty 0). Here, they form part of inscriptions which can be read as the 'mountains of darkness' and the 'mountains of light' or the western and eastern mountains respectively (compare Davies and Friedman 2001, 37).

What, then, could Habermehl mean by her claim that I state the akhet (as a whole) represents the Ark? My colleague might instead be referring to the Egyptian 'ankh' symbol (briefly mentioned in my Appendix G), which is quite distinct from the akhet symbol. The former symbol, which looks something like a T-shape topped with a droplet shaped loop, means both life and the union of male and female. This meaning would then mirror the Mesopotamian sacred marriage of AN (the Sky-god) and KI (the earth)—who are clearly synonymous with Noah and his wife (and who are imbued with characteristics of the sun and the twin peaked mound, respectively, through a technique known today as *chremamorphism*). As Marinatos (2010, 189) confirms: "[the ankh]... signifies life and the blessings of the sun. The ankh may also be regarded as part of the common language of sun worship, and, because it was utilized on royal seals, it facilitated communication between kings through a common visual language... It is my belief that communication between royal courts and aristocracies played a major (although not the only) role in the creation of the shared religious *koiné*."

What this ancient royal-elite visual language implies is that a cosmic mound known as the 'Hill of Heaven and Earth' (within Mesopotamian Flood tablets), can be safely understood as *synonymous with* the Horizon akhet pictogram (primarily Egyptian), through a vast multitude of shared motifs and cognate ideas. This then illuminates in glorious technicolor why we find a bulging area labelled mountain on the Babylonian Map of the World (reconstruction), located at the source of the Euphrates, where Noah and Sargon the Great (to name two out of three historical figures) arrived at the end of their great

ordeals. This saddle-seat shaped twin mound on the Map was *reconstructed by a computer*, so its distinctive symmetric morphology does not appear to result from any human confirmation bias. Rather, it is because the clay tablet itself provided a tiny yet significant clue (found in a broken, incomplete stylus indentation) which the computer clearly regarded as sufficient evidence to reconstruct a second symmetric peak on the right-hand side (across the circular ocean), with a curved escarpment linking the two peaks (just like a bridge).

Well-Founded Conclusions Not Assumptions

My critic believes that my two most important conclusions regarding ICONS 1 and 2, as outlined above, remain unproven assumptions. I have already demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that the cosmic twin-mountain is to be equated with a world navel in ancient thought (c.f. Eliade (1992, 110) who writes: “this cosmic mountain may be identified with a real mountain, or it can be mythic, but it is always placed at the center of the world” and compare fully Pritchard (1969, 574) where Dur-An-Ki, or the Hill of Heaven and Earth is said to be “in the centre of the four corners of the universe” and Egypt, too, which had life arising on the twin-peaked hill and spreading outwards in all directions, designating it as a world navel in all but name alone—also compare Wyatt (2001, 153, 185–192). Having dealt with ICON 1, we will now review the visual syntax of the sun disc (ICON 2) in various cultural contexts, to further demonstrate its equivalence to an Ark vessel.

To begin with, let us examine the broad mythological picture. Transculturally, the ancients appear to have believed that their gods (described as solar, storm, air, and underworld ‘gods’), *descended to the earth in boats* (this is true of Osiris, Re, Atum, Sokar, Enki, and Enlil, among others). As Alford (2000, 187–188) notes: “Osiris was shut in a ‘box’ and cast into the celestial river Nile, the water of which carried him to the ‘bank’ of the Earth. Similarly, Re and Atum were said to have come to Earth in a *Hnhnw*-bark, which was able to resurrect them back to Heaven by ‘opening the mouth of the Earth.’ And the god Sokar likewise was said to have descended to Earth in a *Hnw*-bark, which had ‘iron’ in its bow” [*Hnw*, meaning ‘vessel’ or ‘ship’—see Gardiner 1994, 530]...Turning to the legends of Mesopotamia,...Enki descended to Earth in a boat, with raging waters and stones [...and] Enlil, ‘the Great Mountain,’ impregnated Ninlil (the Earth) while sailing in a boat.” This intriguing reference to ‘stones,’ which appear to be descending from heaven *with Enki’s boat* (some attacking the keel as the waters raged around him) (compare Alford 2000, 34 and 418, note 21), occurs in *Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Underworld* (also

compare Kramer 1963, 200) where *at the beginning of creation, when heaven was separated from earth*, Enki the son of Anu set sail for the underworld. Many elements of the Flood koine are clearly present here. The journey to the underworld is again modelled upon the journey of the dead and *follows the path of the sun* (see Marinatos 2010, 142). In analogous manner, Egyptian creation legend (gleaned from the Book of the Dead and other sources) speaks of the Ogdoad (“Eight”), who descended from the dark sky-high waters of the limitless Flood called Nun, landed upon the saddle-seated mound of creation, and then emerged like reptiles spontaneously generated in the mud and began farming cereals. Close parallels with the Genesis Flood account are obvious, suggesting the creation legends of Egypt and Mesopotamia have been consistently misinterpreted by generations of scholars and are in fact global Flood legends shrouded in ancient elitist visual code. Common to many of these unfamiliar creation (or storm) legends seems to be, first, a luminous/white world navel/cosmic mountain as the place of descent, second, a mound-as-birthplace or conception-place motif and, third, a notable descending flood waters and raging battle motif.

The broad picture having been discussed, and focusing now more closely on some of these legends, we find that in Egyptian descriptions of the sun’s journey to the underworld, the sun disc descended through the dark night-sky-waterway (and did *not* rise *up* from the underworld itself, but rather travelled *down between* the twin peaked mound-gate) to rest in the underworld, where this object then gave regeneration to the whole world. Marinatos (2010, 108, 117, 121–122 and 194) notes that regarding the cosmic mountain in the Near Eastern koine “the two peaks frame a tree...a double axe...or a god” and “the double axe is interchangeable with the sun disc...A series of Minoan seals show exactly the same thing...a rayed stellar body is shown between the horns of an ox...This is definitive evidence that the ox head functions as a stellar/solar carrier...” and “the rosette, and the double axe are...allomorphs of the sun disc...”. Marinatos’ considered conclusion is that the Minoan double axe is the equivalent of the lotus giving birth to the primeval sun/child. It is sometimes pictured with lilies sprouting from it and it also sometimes merges with the Egyptian ankh sign—because it signifies regeneration and life. Not only was the sun disc demonstrably allomorphic with a stellar body, a double axe, and a god, but it was also allomorphic with a *winged boat* upon which we find the Falcon Horus perching (as depicted on an ivory comb belonging to Pharaoh Djet of the First Dynasty—see Shaw and Nicholson (1995, 305)). This boat or reed was known as The Great Flyer in

Egypt. According to my thesis, we should be able to apply these insights to contemporary riddles found within Flood accounts (which are largely beyond the remit of Marinatos' 2010 study). And this is precisely what we can do, with remarkably consistent results! In the Old Babylonian version of the Gilgamesh Flood Epic, Tablet I, column 5, line 41 (and column 6, line 9), for instance, we find that a fallen star of heaven and a warrior-god named Enkidu are both bizarrely interchangeable with a fallen axe. Why a stellar body, a warrior-god, and an axe should all represent interchangeable terms in Tablet I is a total mystery, confounding scholarly opinion! Yet through the lens of the solar and Flood koine, this riddle can be read in a whole new light. The axe, the god-figure, and the star of heaven in Tablet I are all manifestly *allomorphs* of the Ark vessel itself (or Noah himself as High King). This is also corroborated further by the odd statement of Utnapishtim (Noah) in the Epic of Gilgamesh Tablet XI, concerning the loading of *the Ark* before the Flood ensued: 'The land was gathered [about me]' (Pritchard 1969, 93). Predictably, this very *same* phrase is also found in Tablet I, where in that case the land was gathered about the star or axe or god-figure which had fallen to the earth from heaven (compare Pritchard 1969, 76–77). The Flood koine thus provides a powerful explanation for these ancient foreign metaphors and is already producing meaningful results!

A World–Navel with No Anthropological Boundaries

Moving on now to the location of the Ark, readers of *Answers Research Journal* will note that Habermehl appeals with supreme confidence to a somewhat specious argument regarding the tribal boundaries of thirteenth century B.C. Urartu (Uruatri). Yet in her 2008 paper her language is far more reserved, implying that this whole matter is both debatable and inconclusive. Well, she certainly appears to have changed her tune over the intervening years, that much is sure! Presently, we learn from Assyrian royal inscriptions and war annals that Urartu had its initial political confederacy south-west of Lake Urmia. This conclusion, whilst certainly correct, is based upon a so-called Late Bronze Age or Middle Babylonian inscription of Shalmaneser I, who lived in Nineveh (modern Mosul), inscribed around 1,400 years or more after the Ark had come to rest. Within this inscription, Shalmaneser I actually says concerning the Urartians he was subjugating that he "marched up to the base of their mighty mountains." And yet the Ark landed not "at the base of" the mighty mountain range of Urartu, but rather well "within" the mighty mountain range of Urartu (much further north than the base-point where

Shalmaneser managed to march his cumbersome army in any case)! Now quite irrespective of the fact that the scholarly sources cited by Habermehl are over 25 years old (and thus fail to take account of recent archaeology describing far earlier Urartian settlements further north (see Smith (2007) and Koehler and Wilson (2022) for the latest on this); it seems to have escaped "the majority" of scholars that Genesis tells us that Noah and his family lived in a tent. A pastoral, nomadic style of subsistence such as that recorded in Genesis is found archaeologically in the Middle Bronze age sites adjacent to Lake Sevan and would initially have left little permanent evidence behind. This is followed by Late Bronze age stone fortresses in that area which are built to withstand almost anything. Yet according to my chronological calculations, the Ark landed in 2610 B.C. (classified as Early Bronze III), which if nothing else reveals the profound inadequacy of current archaeological period nomenclature which is based upon faulty evolutionary presuppositions concerning cognitive capacity and human manufacturing techniques (see Powell 2015, 15 for further critique of these assumptions). Regardless of the corresponding period, this was approximately *1,000 years before* Moses composed Genesis (probably by drawing upon even more ancient, God-breathed text written by Noah himself, judging by the astonishing specificity of the Flood chronology in Genesis 7–8 at least).

Contra Habermehl, therefore, when we look at the fuller picture, within a biblical framework, an original Urartu region which included Durupinar certainly can't be ruled out as she so likes to imagine (compare Geissler, Franz, and Crouse 2008 for a more balanced perspective). Indeed, all discussion of tribal boundaries and an eighth century Urartian expansion in the context of an original paper entitled "Decoding a World Navel..." is simply missing the point! This navel existed a considerable time before the Tower of Babel and thus before tribes even came into existence, let alone started marching and warring against each other (as the Assyrians were famous for)! At said earlier time, we might only reasonably expect in the archaeological record some remnants of nomadic settlement that radiate outward, bounded only by limiting geographical features. Yet trying to determine this obscure point of origin merely through the first Assyrian written reference to Urartu (amid previous mass migrations and fluctuating populations over 1,000 years after the Ark landing actually happened) is just an exercise in futility. My Flood koine synthesis, on the other hand, truly excels in this regard because it concerns a once famous, visually distinctive natural landscape feature (white symmetric twin peaks) which does not exist in a state of flux and can be traced through

many streams of ancient evidence, transculturally. By tracing occurrences of the cosmic mountain through time, we have far, far more evidence to go on than just one very late Assyrian inscription.

Desperately Denying the Power of the Koine

Habermehl believes there is no reason at all to think that many of Noah's descendants idolized a twin-peaked mound where they first landed. Yet this position is near impossible to maintain given our current knowledge of the ANE. There is plenty of evidence all through the millennia that symmetric twin-peaked mountain locations were the sacred loci. In Holy Scripture itself, we find a fascinating example of this in Deuteronomy 27:1–30:19. Ramos (2021, sections 3.3 and 3.4), for instance, notes that both pagan Mesopotamian and biblical Hebrew oath ceremonies took place at gateway locations of duality. Regarding the Hebrew phenomenon she writes: “in Deuteronomy and in Joshua, the narrative setting of the covenant oath is Shechem (Nablus) on Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, which is a location with strong religious associations and a setting that is evocative of the concept of a ‘cosmic mountain’ where one ascends to the presence of the deity. . . . The anticipated setting of the oath ceremony in Deut 27 is upon the two peaks enclosing the city of Shechem: Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. . . . Shechem is the location where Abraham built an altar to commemorate the divine promise of the land of Canaan in Gen 12. These same mountain peaks are the setting for Joshua’s renewal of the Sinai covenant in Josh 8:30–35. These mountains are, in Deut 27–30, a cosmic setting, for they form a place of divine disclosure, a gateway to the divine realm.” Yet my colleague dismisses all such evidence out of hand, and after a rather superficial assessment of the extra-biblical criteria found in my paper, concludes from Scripture that Noah's descendants arrived at a plain, not a mountainous place. Indeed, most early civilizations did develop along river valleys where crop irrigation was far easier, which agrees with Genesis. However, let me seize upon this action and then ask the obvious question. What did the people proceed *to do* on this plain? They eventually established a workforce which built no less than 32 huge artificial mountains otherwise known as ziggurats. Based on inscriptional evidence, these ziggurats had two symmetric horns of metal placed at their summits. To be sure, the Sumerians considered their ziggurats to be mountains, calling the one of Nippur *É. kur*, which in Sumerian means house of the mountain. The duality of these ziggurats and their prototype in the original world navel of the Hill of Heaven and Earth (from Flood accounts) is also apparent from some of their names—such as Etemenanki in Babylon, the temple of the foundation of heaven and earth. World-

centrality is also a feature of many of their names too, speaking to their designations as navels of the earth. Contra my esteemed critic, then, the elements of the Flood koine are again apparent when we apply just a little ministerial archaeological background to the question at hand.

A Case of Misplaced Trust and Further Backtracking

At this point, Habermehl shifts our focus to naval officer David Fasold, whose only relevance to my paper is that he took a photograph of Yigityatagi which captured its distinctive white color and symmetric twin-peaked morphology. The irony of Habermehl's caution about choosing references with care is truly palpable! I merely gesture to the elephant in the room—that roughly ¼ or 25% of Habermehl's total references cited in her second response are from a source who is adamant that the Genesis Flood was not global. This source has written no less than 36 articles on the website “Opposition to Creationism” and has also published a piece called “Twenty-One Reasons Noah's Worldwide Flood Never Happened”. Yet Habermehl cites this author as if he were the shining paragon of all scientific objectivity. Were there to exist a sort of metaphysical Richter Scale for biblical faithfulness, Habermehl's most cited scientist would throw several spikes >Magnitude 9 off the top of the chart! And when push comes to shove, who are we really going to trust a) Fasold's old Australian friend June Dawes, or b) a vocal old earth geologist, whom Ken Ham (2018) cautions us is: “helping atheists attack God's Word and the Christian faith”? I will leave readers of *Answers Research Journal* to quietly mull this question over in their own time.

Habermehl is also on violently shaky ground in claiming that the earth-flow hypothesis has only sounded out from non-geologists. The qualified and experienced geologist Dr Mehmet Salih Bayraktutan (of Igdir University), to name one, totally *disagrees* that the boat-shaped object formed naturally and in situ (compare Bayraktutan 2020). As this geologist stated back in 2004: “after 15 years' work, I have reached the conclusion that this find is so meaningful that it shouldn't be given to random people like me and a few others to study it. . . . based on normal hydrodynamic laws, it is impossible for the great stone in the middle of the formation to have caused the formation. Whether the stone was there or not, we would still have this object with its special shape. . . . I thought about the large rock. If it were placed towards the front of the object, I would have gone home right away. But it wasn't. Secondly, I saw the object from a helicopter and could see that it lay at the beginning of the bottleneck. . . . Then I understood that the formation had not emerged around the

great stone which we are quick to conclude. It is independent of the stone. It is its own entity" (Nissen 2004, 241–246). Habermehl already knows of Dr Bayraktutan's published position, and while she may well doubt his personal motivations for making these comments, she is not in any position to question his geological expertise. Indeed, Creation Ministries International have a sympathetic 2006 report on Dr Bayraktutan, which outlines his gracious response to atheist Ian Plimer's court allegations concerning him back in the 1990s. I would venture that there is no apparent reason to question his good character other than rank prejudice!

Now of course, there are other contenders for the Ark Mountain, which partially satisfy some of the criteria of my transcultural Flood koine pattern. Habermehl believes that Mount Cudi near Cizre in Turkey is the place where the Ark landed (based mainly on historical testimony). She explained in Habermehl (2008) that this candidate landing site was a twin peaked mountain, sometimes covered by a blanket of white snow. This description neatly satisfies at least two of the extra-biblical criteria of my Flood koine, but by no means all. And yet in her first reply to my paper, she once again changes her tune entirely (now stating that Mount Cudi is not in fact a twin-peaked mountain at all). This subsequent reevaluation seems to flatly contradict her own 2008 paper, and Crouse (2001, 16) who states, "it does have two peaks," and again Crouse and Franz (2006, 105) where they write concerning Benjamin of Tudela: "What he could mean by the "two mountains" is somewhat problematic. *The Cudi Mountain range does have two higher peaks that are of similar altitude*, though the reference still is uncertain." (Emphasis mine.)

Hopefully, said reference is no longer uncertain when my paper has been fully digested! As I wrote regarding Cudi Dagh in my brief concluding process of deductive elimination: "Site four does have twin peaks, but since the Old Syrian weather/storm god is archaeologically younger than the Mesopotamian and Egyptian solar gods, we are probably looking at a superimposition of cosmography here, not the original location" (Powell 2022).

Cosmographic superimposition is important, but in retrospect the real clinching question is, after decades of searching, have any anomalous features been found in the near vicinity of either site? In the case of Cudi Dagh, a few pieces of petrified wood (probably from an old building) have been found. In the case of Yigityatagi, a currently unexcavated, ambiguous boat-shaped formation. And has there been special attention and scientific rigor in assessing the buried features of the latter? For various reasons, not really, no, there has not. As

Ken Ham (2021) writes: "The reality is that these 'investigators' will never be able to establish what is inside this 'boat-shaped formation' until such time as they actually excavate the site by digging through it. They can theorize all they like about the unusual parallel linear and angular features shown up by the geophysical imaging, but until they actually dig into the site to expose those features for visual identification, their theorizing simply remains that. And we will continue to doubt their claims!" I tend to agree with Ham on this issue, we should be cautious about non-invasive surface scans and their potential for misinterpretation (even if those involved in the scans made personal sacrifices and were met with death threats). However, this caution does not mean we should ignore, hinder, dismiss, or show undue contempt for the site (especially now that it has passed the cultural-historical test with flying colors). No, instead we should double down on efforts to ascertain what the site is truly telling us through further investigations of the highest caliber. Fully funded efforts should surely begin in partnership with Turkish Universities and progress in a series of archaeological peer-reviewed papers on each section of the formation excavated.

The Jury is Still Out on the Intricate Flood/Post-Flood Boundary

Regrettably, after fogging the testimony of David Fasold with the adamant statements of a man who is also adamant that God is wrong to insist on a global Flood, our attention is directed back to the non-argument of Mount Tendurek. Now, having successfully rebutted Habermehl's first incredulous outburst, gaining the major concession that the boat-shape is not on a volcano, but now merely nearby some (in actual fact it is closer by at least three miles to the volcanic calderas of Greater and Lesser Ararat), the goal posts are predictably moved once again. Now we learn that the Ark cannot have even rested on a volcanic base (covered in considerable sedimentary deposits)! First off, how could Habermehl possibly know this with such certainty? Was she there? And second, it must be sorely tempting, in that case, for us all to just throw up our arms and rule out the entire surface of our planet! For, as geologists tell us, all the continents of earth's very thin crust sit upon the deep, semi-molten asthenosphere—which, it must be admitted, is much too hot in itself to preserve a thin layer of flammable pitch-covered wood! All sarcasm aside, the flawed logic of this entire argument is abundantly clear. People walk bare foot on pillow lavas in Hawaii, just hours after they have formed! Of course the Ark could have landed in a volcanic territory covered in alkaline sediments! What does Habermehl think the Ark was covered in, oil-based

pitch or heat-shock sensitive nitrogen triiodide? No, I am not straining at a gnat by pointing out that the underlying volcanic base which the boat-shaped formation is sitting on is totally irrelevant to the question of what the object actually is. Indeed, going on the offensive to emphasize my point here, a recurring geological reason why a landing site just north of Gazir in Turkey on Mount Cudi is so favored by many geologists seems to be their profoundly unbiblical local-flood bias. This certainly appears true of the petroleum geologist Cevat Tasman (1947), who in letting slip that “the undoubted fluvial origin of the greater part of these sediments, together with the proximity of the Tigris and its substantial tributary, lends a scientific background to the Flood...” unwittingly assumes that a scientific background can only be afforded by a local river inundation (and not the super-volcanic cataclysm Genesis actually describes). As another local-flood advocate, named Carol Hill (2002, 179), confirms, “If the ark did land in the Cizre area, then it means that the Flood stayed within the (northern) boundary of the Mesopotamian hydrologic basin. This in turn implies a local flood because if the flood was universal, why would the ark not have floated to somewhere outside the boundaries of Mesopotamia...?” What are discerning believers to make of these dubious comments? They surely suggest that Mount Cudi is well favored at least partly because it is more intellectually acceptable to those who contort the plain sense of Scripture and view a global Flood as geologically absurd. There is no compelling evidence to suggest that the volcanic base on which Durupinar sits dates long after the Flood; that is merely overreach and cannot be sustained with any real confidence. While both Tendurek and Ararat are likely post-Flood volcanoes, this fact does nothing to undermine my thesis whatsoever.

Cover For Absence: A High-Current, Semi-Permanent Aurora in Antiquity?

Finally, a word or two is called for in response to my challenges of the drogue stones and an alternative explanation for the Flood koine pattern. Has Habermehl actually addressed the main issues I raised in my reply? Unfortunately, no she has not. I asked why the stones were only found in this location. Since this query was issued, I have been made aware of one stone in Ankara (to the west) and Habermehl herself has kindly pointed out others located in Zorats Karer (Carahunge, to the east). I had indeed forgotten about those stones to the east! Yet ancient sources themselves might offer us a good explanation for such stones in this location! As Alford (2000, 34) points out, when heaven was separated from earth, Enki’s boat descended with large and small stones overwhelming its keel. As Alford rightly

queries: “If Enki’s boat was a descending spaceship, as some would like to think, why would Enki sail it into the underworld? And, by the same token, why would the supposed spaceship be surrounded by waters, front and back, and by small and large stones which attacked it like a storm?” His answer is that these were a storm of meteorites from an exploded planet, but that is highly tenuous and quite absurd Velikovskian speculation. The more biblically consistent answer, provided by my Flood koine, is obvious: these were variously sized drogue stones surrounding the Ark vessel, which are mentioned in at least four apparently independent ancient Flood myths. Some of these stones were probably relocated eastward from their original location (at the Great Wall of Heaven and Earth) by Sargon the Great. Sargon himself seemed quite proud of the fact his army had removed them (and recorded such in his commemorative inscription—see Powell 2022 and compare Powell 2023, Flood koine criterion 10). I also asked why some of the stones found around Durupinar had anti-chaffing holes cut in them—and this query has (most amusingly) been met with total silence.

Also, conspicuous by its absence is any (let alone a compelling) alternative, non-trivial explanation for the Flood koine pattern of cosmic landscape demarcation. Instead, what we are treated to is a slothful induction fallacy concerning the Flood koine, followed by a somewhat pompous mini-lecture on the merits of verificationism and logical positivism! Such decoy measures are all quite laughable. If one is going to challenge a synthetic theoretical decipherment, the least a critic should do is engage with it on a point-by-point basis and offer a positive alternative, rather than just advocating skipping to the end. The onus is not on this author to prove anything. My paper has already been greeted with appreciative comments from tenured cognitive archaeologists, some conveying it has “opened a new door about Minoan relations with the Near East.” Therefore, it is somewhat premature to demand an entire Ark vessel at this early stage. But I cannot just ignore Habermehl’s omission and leave it there. Has any gifted scholar, the world over, been able to explain the visual code (transcultural pattern of cosmic mountain ideology) which I extensively document in my paper? The bravest attempt I have come across yet is by Van Der Sluijs (2005, 2010, 2019, 2021). His 2005 paper helpfully begins by distinguishing between the world axis (*axis mundi*) and the even more ancient concept of the world navel (*omphalos*). The former is an astronomical concept used to define the apparent daily movement of the stars from the perspective of a viewer on earth. This central point is the pole of

heaven. The latter, however, is attested in "countless other traditions locating the heaven-spanning object in a place called the 'centre' or the 'navel' of the earth, the sea, or the sky, which tends either not to be identified at all or to be associated with another location than the pole—in some cases even in the far west or east, far removed from what one would imagine to be the 'centre.'" Now, since Van Der Sluijs isn't tied to the biblical presupposition of human hyper-diffusion from an Ark vessel in Western Asia, his secular explanation for the fact that many diverse cultures all describe the *omphalos* in remarkably similar terms is that it was once "a visible entity in the sky... the zodiacal light or, as recent insights in plasma physics indicate, an enhanced aurora formed in prehistoric times." As he goes on to explain: "The apparent universality of the dominant themes in this category further suggests that the original referent appeared in the sky, from where it could have been observed by many communities with no cultural connections between each other.... During different phases of its existence, the reconstructed plasma tube must have looked remarkably similar to a shining tree, mountain, or man with uplifted arms." Now, to me at least, this atmospheric-auroral explanation for elements of the Flood koine, although far more ingenious than anything Habermehl herself has submitted, misinterprets the corpus of koine myth and leaves far too many loose ends unaccounted for. Why, for instance, is the world tree so often depicted as a solar palm? Why is Noah so often named and associated with the cosmic mountain? And why, if the object was mainly visible in the night sky (as an electrical discharge), is the cosmic mountain so often associated with dawn and the full-orbed sun disc? Why too, we might query, did ancient deities frequently descend to earth (and the underworld) in boats surrounded by raging waters, or fight sea serpents and wild bovine animals? The global Flood koine makes far better sense of all these mysteries by focusing upon the visual syntax of ICONS 1 and 2 across many cultures (and taking the Holy Scriptures as magisterial in all matters it touches). And that, I think, is where I will need to leave this debate for now, since until Durupinar is actually excavated, we might well continue to argue back and forth indefinitely.

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