

Introduction

The Explorers of Ararat—And the Search for Noah's Ark is a compilation of accounts written by experienced explorers who have searched for Noah's Ark since the 1960's. These individuals have been to Mount Ararat in Turkey many times in search of the elusive ark. Each explorer conveys his unique experiences and insights regarding the search.

The potential for the ark's discovery is greatly improved when there is sharing of information and unity among the various researchers. I am grateful for their cooperation and for the participation of each contributor to this book.

The biblical book of Genesis states that the Ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat. Ararat is translated as Armenia or Urartu. Bible scholars describe the mountains of Ararat as a mountain range within the ancient kingdom of Urartu. The NIV Study Bible states in the reference section that the Ark probably landed in southern Urartu. This conflicts with alleged eyewitness accounts of the ark's location on what is today known as Mount Ararat, since it is located in northern Urartu. Mount Cudi (pronounced Mount Judi) is a mountain located in what was ancient southern Urartu. Mount Cudi also has a Noah's Ark tradition, which in ancient texts and references precedes the tradition of Mount Ararat. There are several other mountains outside the boundaries of the "mountains of Ararat" which have a Noah's Ark tradition. This book primarily focuses on the explorers of Ararat, some of whom are also interested in becoming explorers of Mount Cudi (Cudi Dagı).

There are several researchers still interested in Durupinar, the boat-shaped formation near both Mount Ararat and the Turkish-Iranian border. This site received attention by the efforts of Ron Wyatt and the late David Fasold. There is actually a Turkish Visitor's Center above the site with signs stating that the formation is the remains of Noah's Ark. Professor Robert Michelson of Georgia Tech University and David Deal are interested in performing more in-depth research on the formation and areas surrounding the site before dismissing the area as natural. Michelson and Deal speculate that the formation may actually be a "footprint" of the remains of Noah's Ark. Michelson and Deal believe the majority of current reports debunking the site as natural (not a Noah's Ark footprint) are not based on good science, and want to conduct further study of the area.

If the Ark did land on Mount Ararat, where exactly did it land? Given the biblical account, in which it took over seventy days before the tops of other mountains became visible, one would expect a near-summit landing. Greater Ararat dominates the surrounding landscape and is the tallest mountain in the region at nearly 17,000 feet. Lesser Ararat to the southeast is approximately 13,500 feet high. Some consider these two peaks to meet the plural definition of "mountains of Ararat." Mount Ararat's peak is permanently covered with ice and glaciers. The depth of the ice measures over two hundred feet in some areas of the mountain. I should mention that Mount Cudi is a considerably smaller mountain with an



Scott Little and B.J. Corbin at Mihtepe preparing to climb the East Summit 1988
Courtesy of B.J. Corbin

elevation of approximately seven thousand feet.

Most alleged sightings of Noah's Ark on Ararat are near the northeast and northwest glacier areas between 14,000 and 16,000 feet. If the Ark is buried under the ice, and was constructed using pitch inside and out to waterproof it, this would lend credence to stories of its petrification and survival for thousands of years. There are many good books available giving evidences for a universal flood and comparing theories of special creation and evolution. I have personally found marine fossils at an elevation between 8,000 and 10,000 feet near Mount Ararat (in the foothills behind the old Simer Hotel).

Is there conclusive evidence that the remains of Noah's Ark still exist on Mount Ararat? A person may have read books or watched television programs that claim Noah's Ark has already been discovered. It is certainly possible that it has been rediscovered, but the significant problem has always been the validation of the discovery. Why is it so difficult to validate such a discovery? If the reader does not already know the difficulties faced by Ark researchers, they will become quite clear upon reading this book. The obstacles and frustrations are many.

What do these explorers of Ararat have in common? The explorers are joined by a bond created by incredible shared experiences searching for the remains of Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat. They have experienced a foreign culture very different from their own. They have traveled across a rugged, hostile terrain in an ancient land divided by ethnic war and barricaded borders. Most have spent many frustrating hours, days, and weeks wading through a maze of political and bureaucratic processes to obtain a special research permit. Even after special permission to climb Mount Ararat has been obtained, the local military police often restrict, delay or cancel permits to climb the desired, specific areas of the mountain. Many explorers have come across ferocious wolf-like dogs (probably variations on the Kars and Kangal dogs) on their way up the mountain. While climbing there is the possibility of avalanches of snow or lava rocks, lack of water, high winds and bitter cold on top of glaciers with deep crevasses. Altitude sickness is another common problem high on the mountain. Sometimes the difficulties of Mount Ararat can inhibit the climber's critical thinking skills. An often-overlooked hindrance is the fact that a Christian searching for evidences of the Bible in an Islamic country often faces stiff opposition. As an introduction to each explorer, I have given the reader a brief statement about the explorer at the beginning of each chapter.

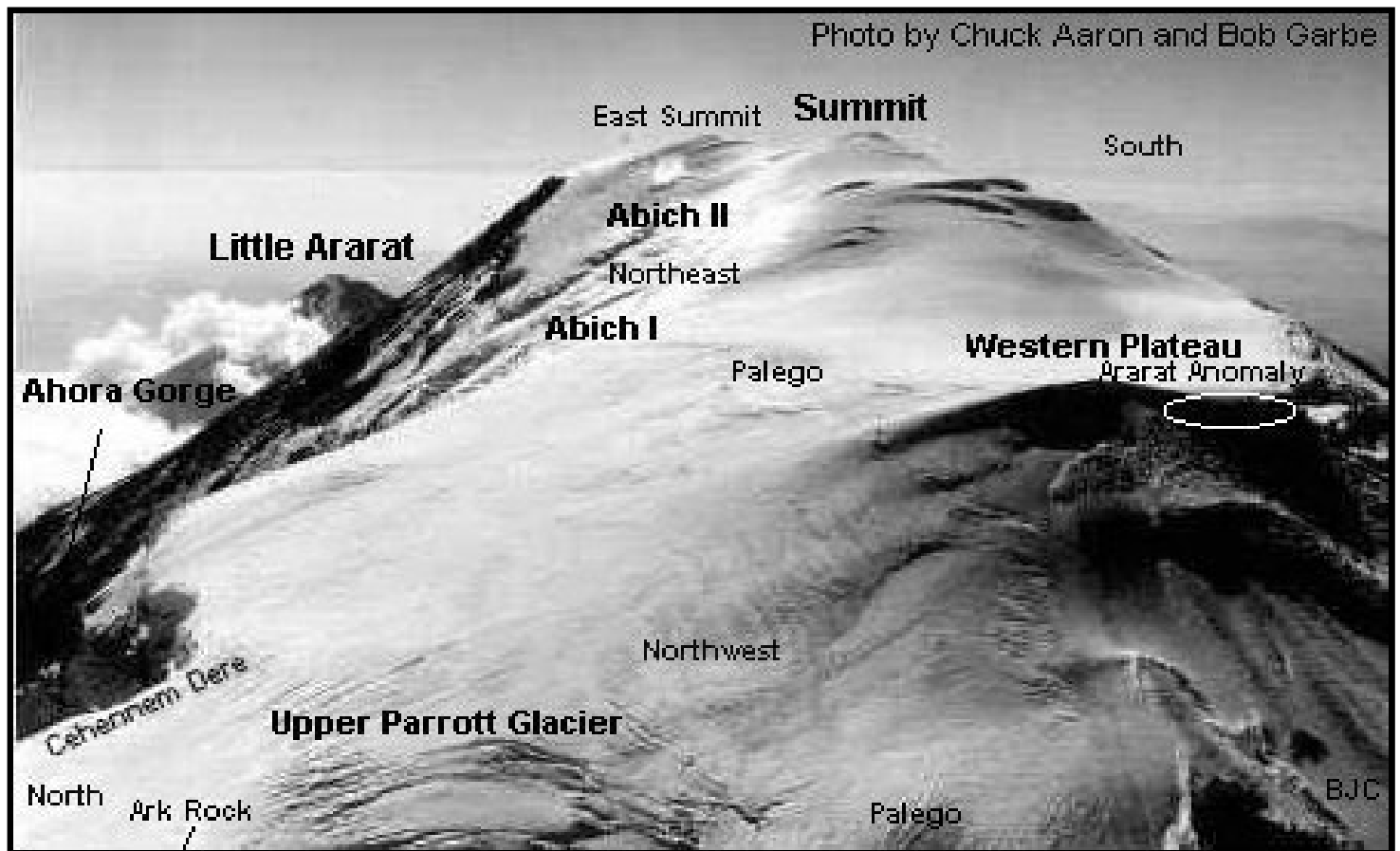
Some ask if we should be searching for Noah's Ark at all. What is God's will concerning Noah's Ark? What should Noah's Ark and the flood story represent to our modern global community? Some people question the efforts of the explorers who search for the remains of Noah's Ark. Christianity is typically accepted on faith rather than geology or scientific exploration, and to some, the search for evidences that prove the truth of the Bible is inappropriate. I obviously do not agree with that particular sentiment or I would not have gone to Mount Ararat four times. If we search the Bible we see the impact the great miracles (evidences) had on the people of their day, and still do today. The miracles of Jesus and the testimony of witnesses tremendously aided the spread of Christianity so that it eventually became a major world religion. If there were no evidences of God's divine power, where would Christianity be? Do not misunderstand. I believe that faith comes from hearing the word of God (Romans 10:15). Trust in the Bible (the word of God) can be built through evidence of its authenticity and validity. These evidences can come through the study of history, archaeology, or fulfillment of prophecy, just as people became followers of Jesus after seeing the word of God confirmed by miracles in the New Testament (Hebrews 2:4 and a few examples from the church history book of Acts 2:1-47, 3:1-16, 5:12-16, 8:4-13, 9:1-19, 9:32-42). In the past, there has been some criticism of Ark research, as explorers have sometimes been viewed as glory-mongers, treasure-hunters, or just out to prove the Bible. To the contrary, most Ararat explorers view themselves as humble archaeologists (or in this case, "arkeologists"), painstakingly (time-wise, health-wise, and monetarily) trying to discover the truth about any possible remains of Noah's Ark. Most of those who search for the remains of Noah's Ark are not searching for proof or validation of the Bible. The majority of the explorers have a Christian background and they believe that the discovery of Noah's Ark would have a positive impact on many people from other backgrounds. There are some people who could take a guided tour through Noah's Ark and still not believe in God. The fact is that they believe the search for Noah's Ark is worth the risk, danger and sacrifice if only one person turns to the Bible. There are many people who have witnessed the power of God and Jesus, and unfortunately still do not accept it. Evidences that support the Bible and creation can be presented as seeds for belief in the Bible and possibly more.

The heart and intent of the Ark researcher must remain true. The sensationalism of the possible discovery of Noah's Ark tugs on our temporal weaknesses. We must not let the desire to be important, significant, or even famous cloud our vision. I was initially lured by the mystery and adventure surrounding the search for Noah's Ark, but God has His ways of humbling and teaching us to seek His will in all things, even the discovery of Noah's Ark. Some attach the discovery of the Ark to end times Bible prophecy. This may be, but I find no basis for this assumption in Scripture. I understand the biblical references comparing the wicked generation of Noah's day to that of the last generation at the end times, which could possibly be the one we live in. If explorers are searching for the remains of Noah's Ark for any other reason than to help people trust in the Bible, they are *missing the boat!* Whatever the reader's views or opinions concerning the search for Noah's Ark, I hope that he or she will come away with a deeper understanding and a respect for the explorers of Ararat.

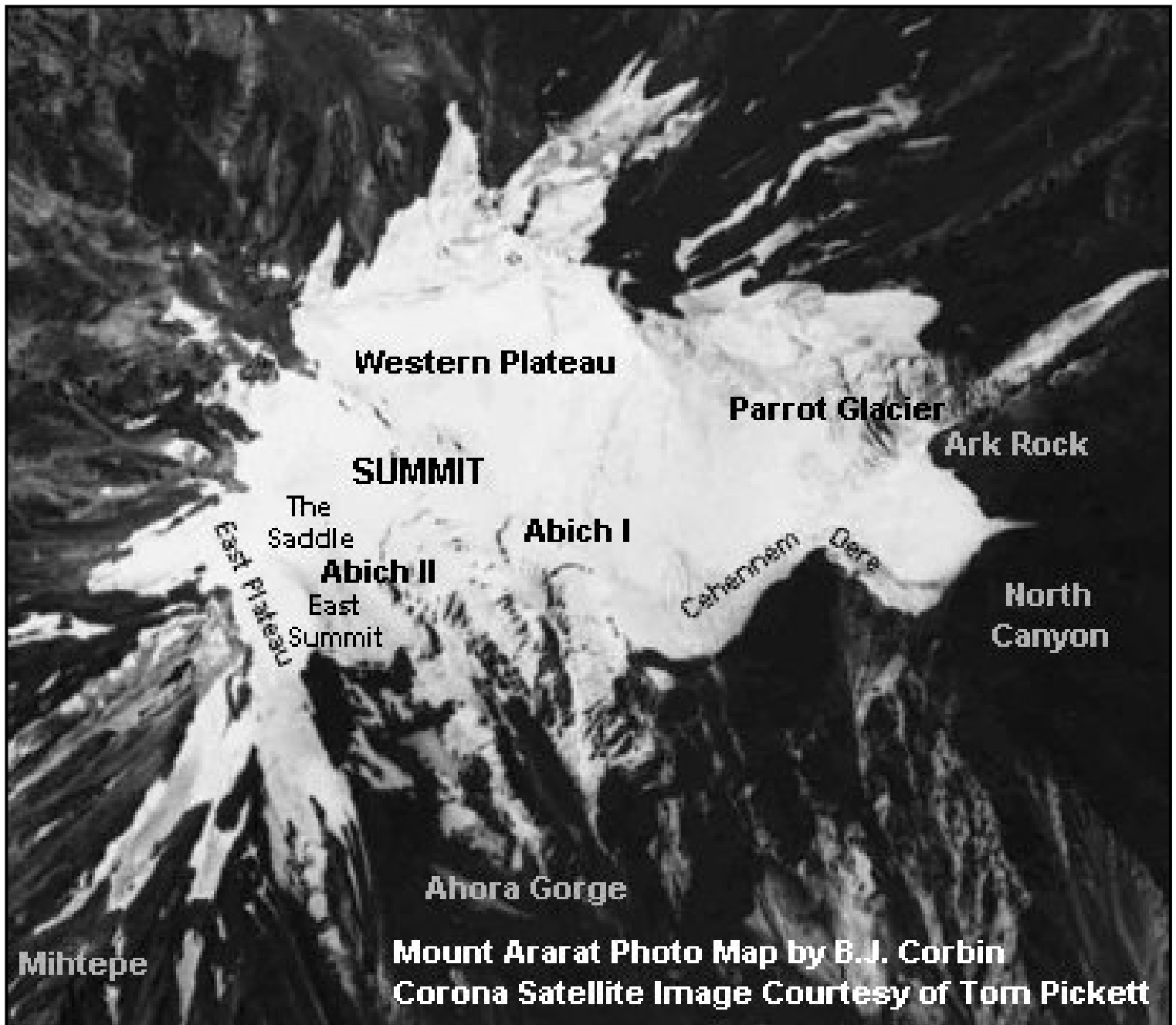


DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS AND LOCATION NAMES

Ark researchers at times seem to be talking in a secret coded language. To overcome this, the following are photos of Ararat throughout this section along with most key terms to familiarize oneself. After the key terms, there is a photo section showing views as if one was literally flying a circle around Ararat.



Northwest Photomap of Mount Ararat by B.J. Corbin 1989
Helicopter Photo Courtesy of Chuck Aaron and Bob Garbe



Abich I and II Glaciers – were named after Herman von Abich who climbed the mountain. They are located between the main summit and eastern peaks on the northeast side of the mountain.

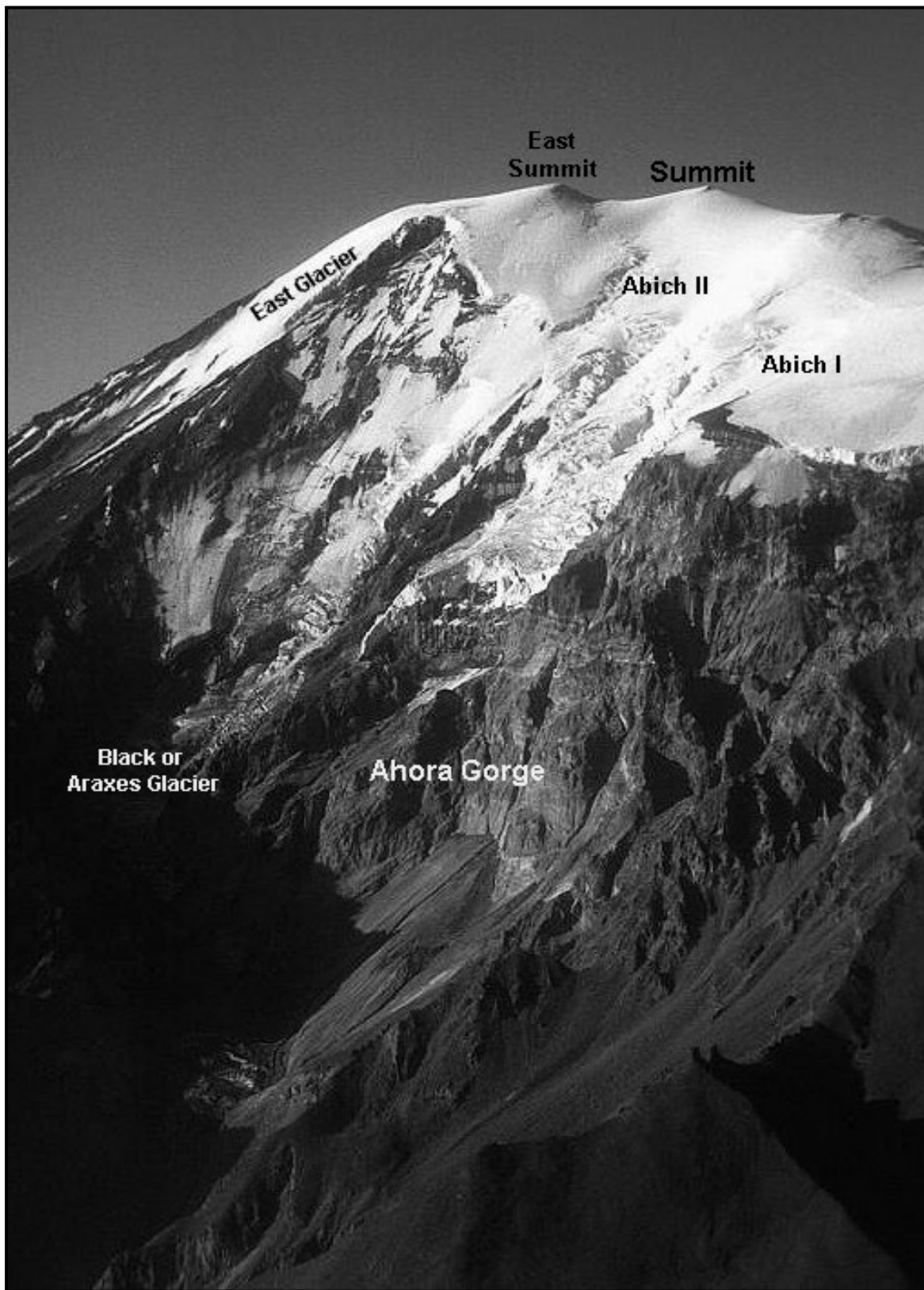


Abich II and Beginning of Abich I Glaciers 1986
Courtesy of Bob Garbe



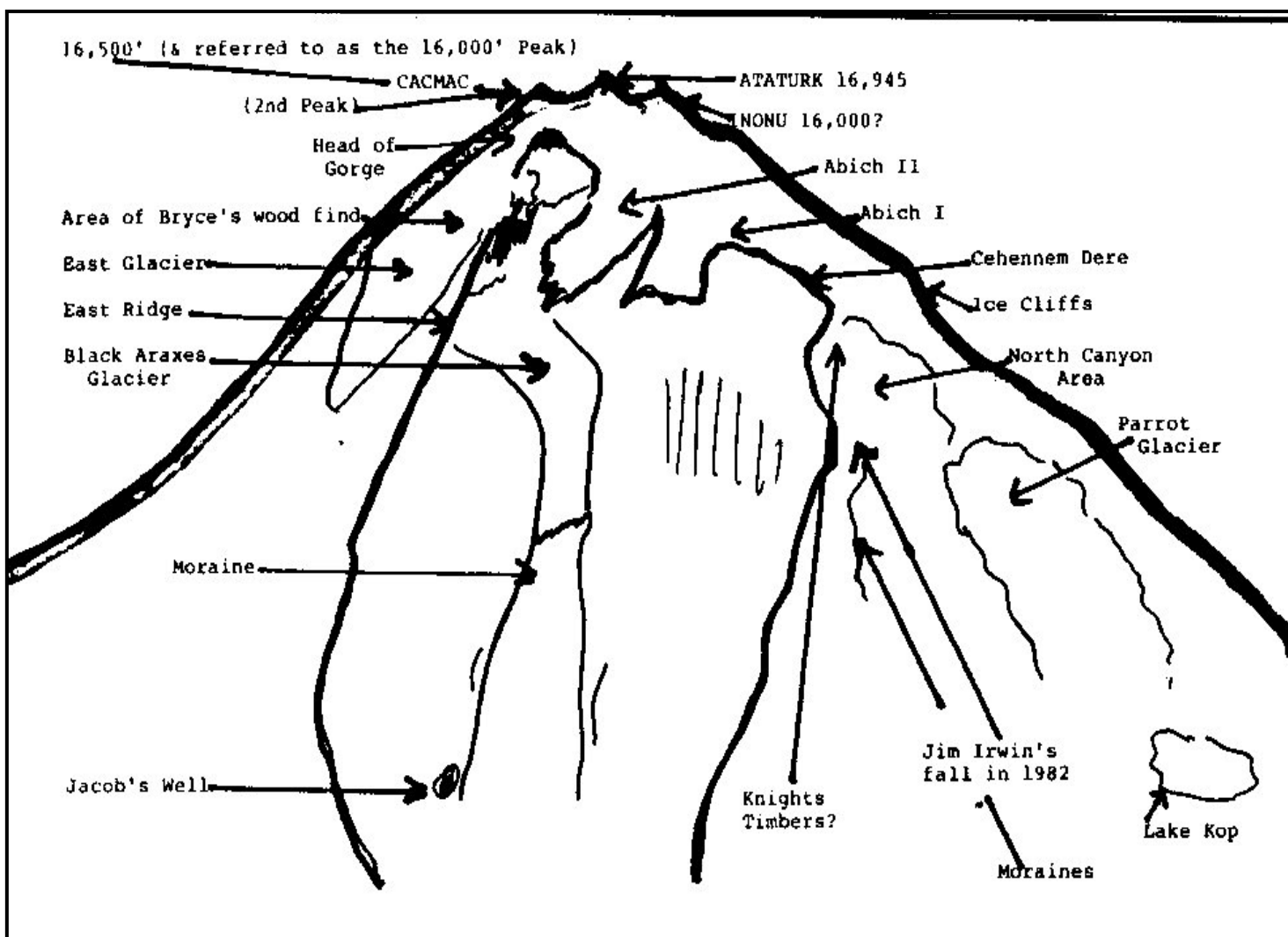
Upper Ahora Gorge with Clouds Moving in 1990
Courtesy of Robin Simmons

Ahora Gorge – is a large canyon or gorge on Mount Ararat. It was enhanced by an earthquake in 1840 and is located on the northeast side of the mountain. The Abich II glacier extends into the gorge in two fingers, one of which continues into the Araxes or Black Glacier, which extends down through the gorge or gulch all the way past Jacob's Well. The Black Glacier is colored black or gray by the rock slides which constantly falls on it.



Ahora Gorge Photomap
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich and B.J. Corbin

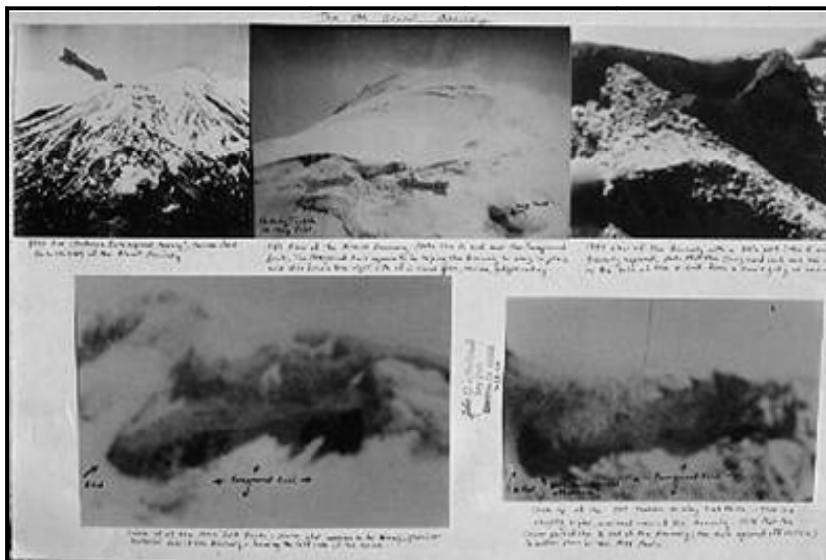
Ark Rock – a rock outcropping landmark on the northwest side on Ararat, with the Parrot Glacier flowing beside it on the right to the northwest.



Map of Northeastern and Northwestern Ararat
 Courtesy of Dick Bright



Parrot Glacier and Moraine with Ark Rock on the Left



Ararat Anomaly photos on the northwestern side of Ararat
Courtesy of John McIntosh

Ararat Anomaly – an area usually associated with the object identified from declassified Defense Intelligence Agency photos. Ark researchers also use the term anomaly to refer to any interesting ark-shaped object.



Cehennem Dere from the Ahora Gorge with triangular "Doomsday Peak" in foreground 1983
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich



Doğubeyazıt with Ararat in the background 1985
Courtesy of Bill Crouse

Cehennem Dere – a V-shaped canyon on the north side of Mount Ararat. A local transliteration is "Valley of Hell."

Doğubeyazıt – a small frontier town at the southern base of Mount Ararat, and a popular starting point for most expeditions.



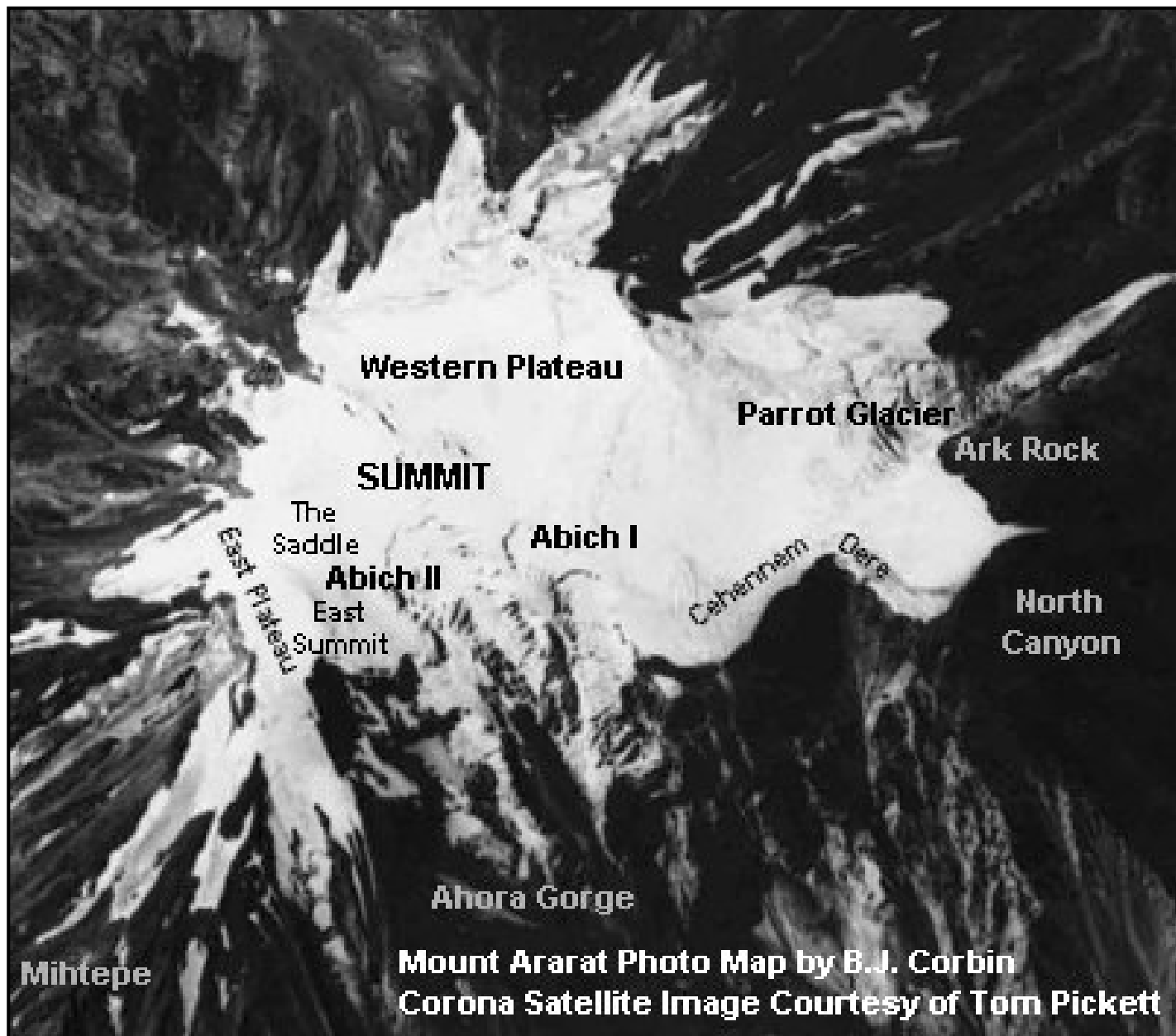
Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) – a unit which can be used to "view" or profile underneath the ice.



Top of Ahora Gorge, Eastern Plateau, Eastern Summit, and actual summit in right background 1988

Courtesy of Chuck Aaron, Al Jenny and John McIntosh via B.J. Corbin

Eastern Plateau, Snowfields, Summit – a relatively large flat area of snow and ice located on the eastern summit area at approximately 16,800 feet. Some call the eastern summit the 16,000 or Cacmac peak, but it is actually more like 16,800 feet.



Ice Cap – the general term for the permanent seventeen square mile ice cap or covering on Mount Ararat.



Ice Cave or "Eye of the Bird" photo 1984
Courtesy of John McIntosh

Ice Cave or Ark Cave or "Eye of the Bird" – a dominant landmark on the south / southwest side of the mountain at approximately 14,500 feet. From the town of Doğubeyazit, you can see a large dark spot on the mountain that some believe may be a volcanic vent and has been mistaken in the past for Noah's Ark.



Jacob's Well – a popular northeast landmark inside the Ahora Gorge. There is also a lesser-known Jacob's Well on the southwest side of Mount Ararat which Arthur Chuchian was referring to. It was his father Jacob's personal well.



Lake Kip with Mike and SEARCH President John Bradley in 1982
Courtesy of John McIntosh

Lake Kip – the only lake on Mount Ararat (really a pond at $\frac{1}{2}$ an acre in size) on the northwest side just below an ice finger from the Parrot Glacier around 11,800 feet elevation. Kurds sometimes wash their sheep in the ice-cold lake.



Base Camp Tents Near Lake Kip with the Parrot Glacier Above the Rock Formation
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich 1983



Little Ararat viewed from Mihtepe Dog's Tooth
Courtesy of John McIntosh

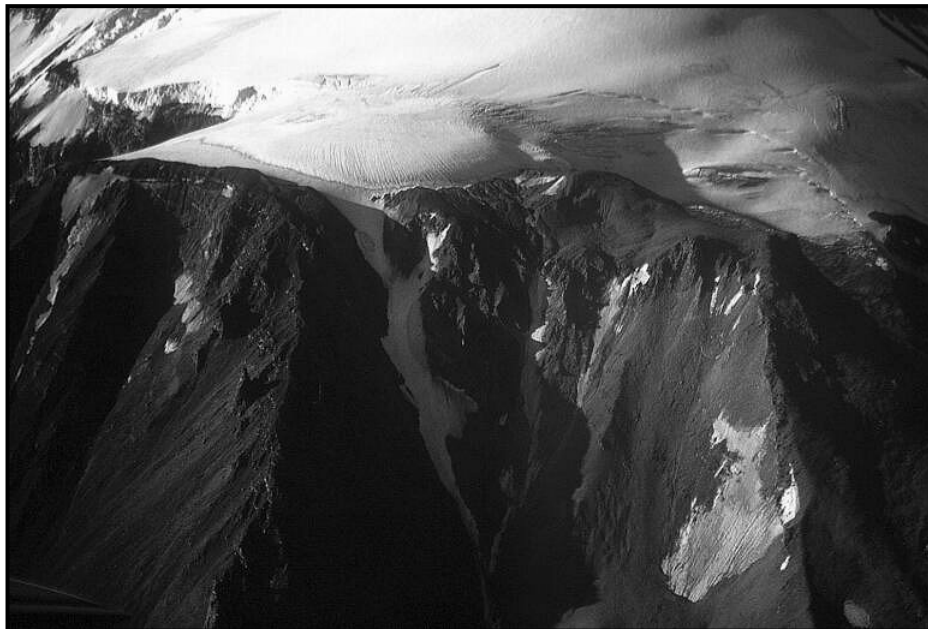
Little Ararat – the smaller sister peak of Ararat at approximately 13,000 feet, located just southeast of Ararat. Some contend that by Ararat being composed of two mountain peaks, this meets the plural definition of "mountains of Ararat."

Mih Tepe – a popular rocky base camp on the southeast side of Ararat at approximately 13,500 feet. The area has a spur and the name means "nail head" or "dog's tooth."



Snow Tiger Team at High Rock Camp 1986
Courtesy of Dr. Charles Willis

North
of steep cliffs and
on the north side of
between the Parrot
Cehennem Dere.



Canyon – an area
glacial ice fingers
Ararat, located
Glacier and the

North Canyon where Jim Irwin fell and nearly died and Dr. John
Morris was struck by lightning 1983
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich



Parrot Glacier on northwest Ararat – Ark Rock is top left with Navarra ice pack is left of photo
Courtesy of Dr. John Morris

Parrot Glacier – a glacier located on the northwest side of Mount Ararat named after Dr. J.J. Friedrich W. Parrot. This glacier was a prime target area for Ferdinand Navarra (1953, 1955) and the SEARCH Team (1968-1969).

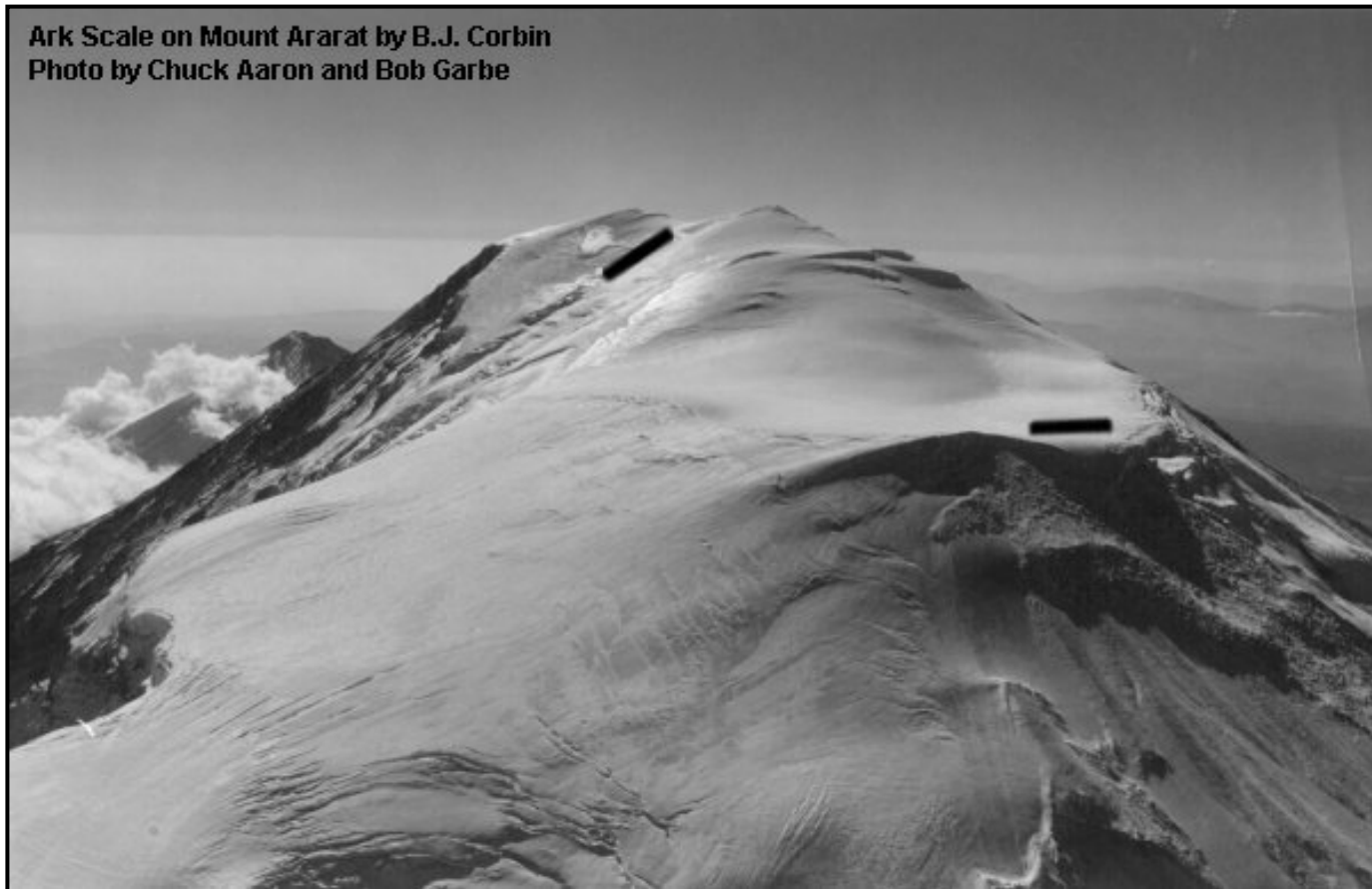


The Saddle is the area between the main peak and the Eastern summit. Some, like Colonel Koor, George Stephen III, and Robin Simmon's grandfather, claimed the Ark was just below the saddle on the Northeast
Courtesy of Dr. Don Shockey 1990

Saddle, The – the area between the two main summit peaks of Greater Mount Ararat that seems to be shaped like a horse's saddle.

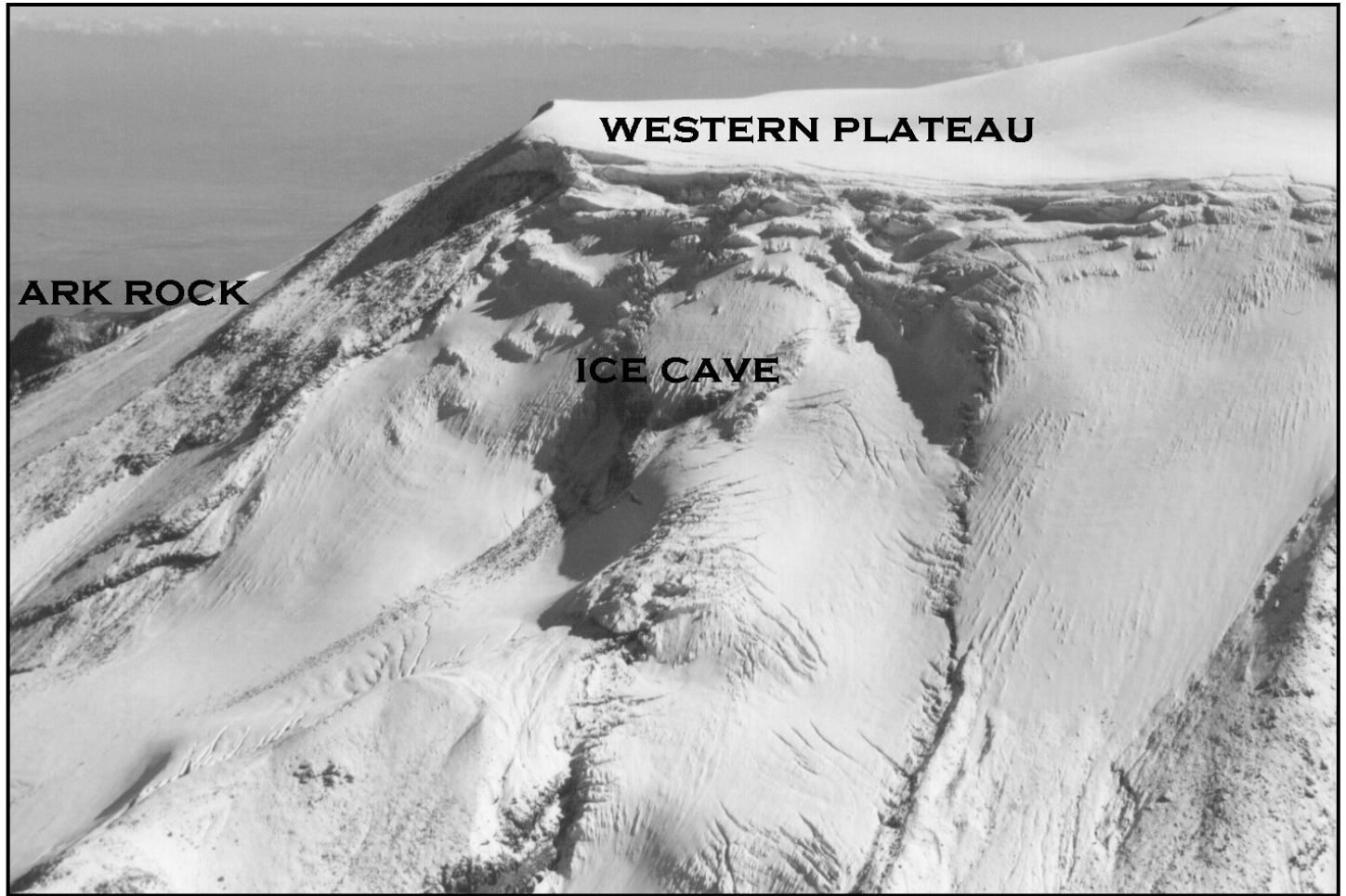
Steven Site – Crevasse area in the Abich II ice pack.

Ark Scale on Mount Ararat by B.J. Corbin
Photo by Chuck Aaron and Bob Garbe



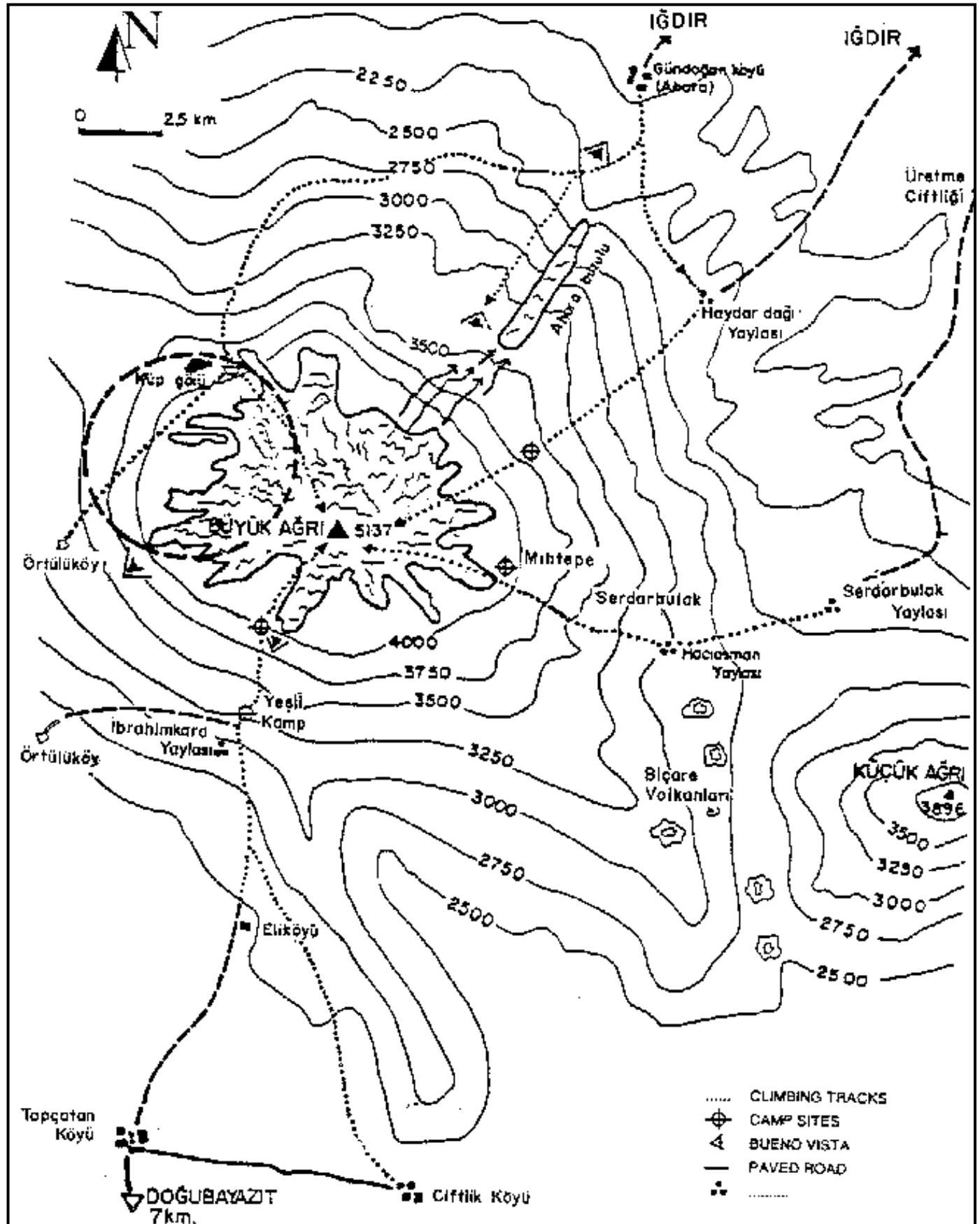
Summit peak in center with Ark scale drawn in for both the upper Abich II and Western Plateau areas 1989
Courtesy of B.J. Corbin, Chuck Aaron and Bob Garbe

Summit – the main or western peak of Mount Ararat. It is also called Atatürk peak. The summit is about 17,000 feet. Various measurements have been given above and below that height but it is consistently changing due to the ice depth also changing.



Western Plateau, Ice Cave, and Ark Rock
Courtesy of Bob Garbe

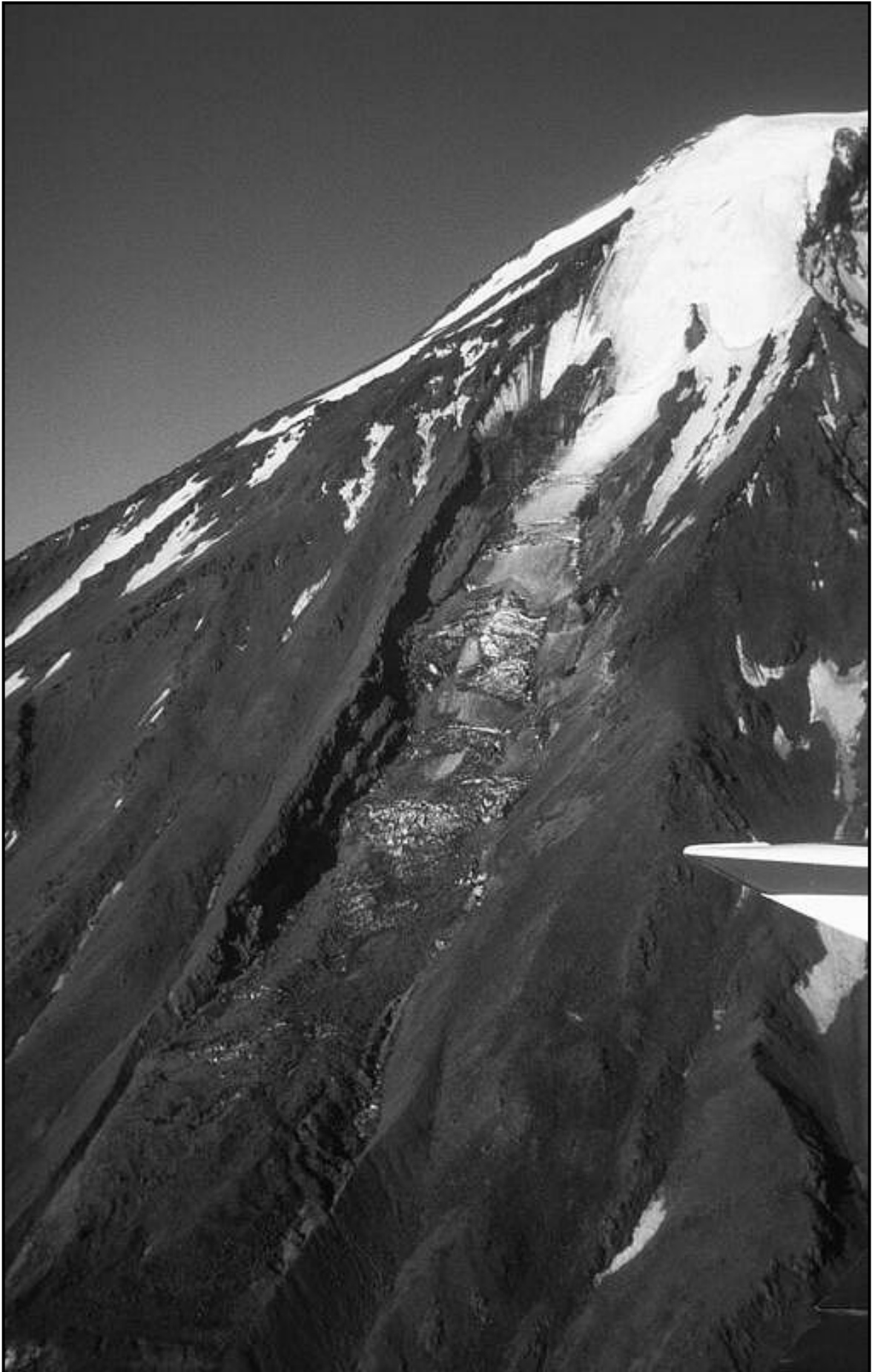
Western Plateau – large area of the western ice cap is believed to be a caldera or sunken volcanic cone at approximately 15,000 feet. In 1989, the ice on the Western Plateau was measured using Ground-Penetrating Radar to an ice depth of over 250 feet.



Mount Ararat Hiking Guide
Courtesy of John McIntosh via B.J. Corbin



East Glacier & Northeast Ahora Gorge 1983
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich



East Glacier 1983
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich



Ahora Gorge with East Wall Ridge 1983
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich



Ahora Gorge with eastern and western walls 1983
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich



Ahora Gorge with eastern and western walls 1983
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich



Ahora Gorge with lower Abich II and heart-shaped glacier 1983
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich



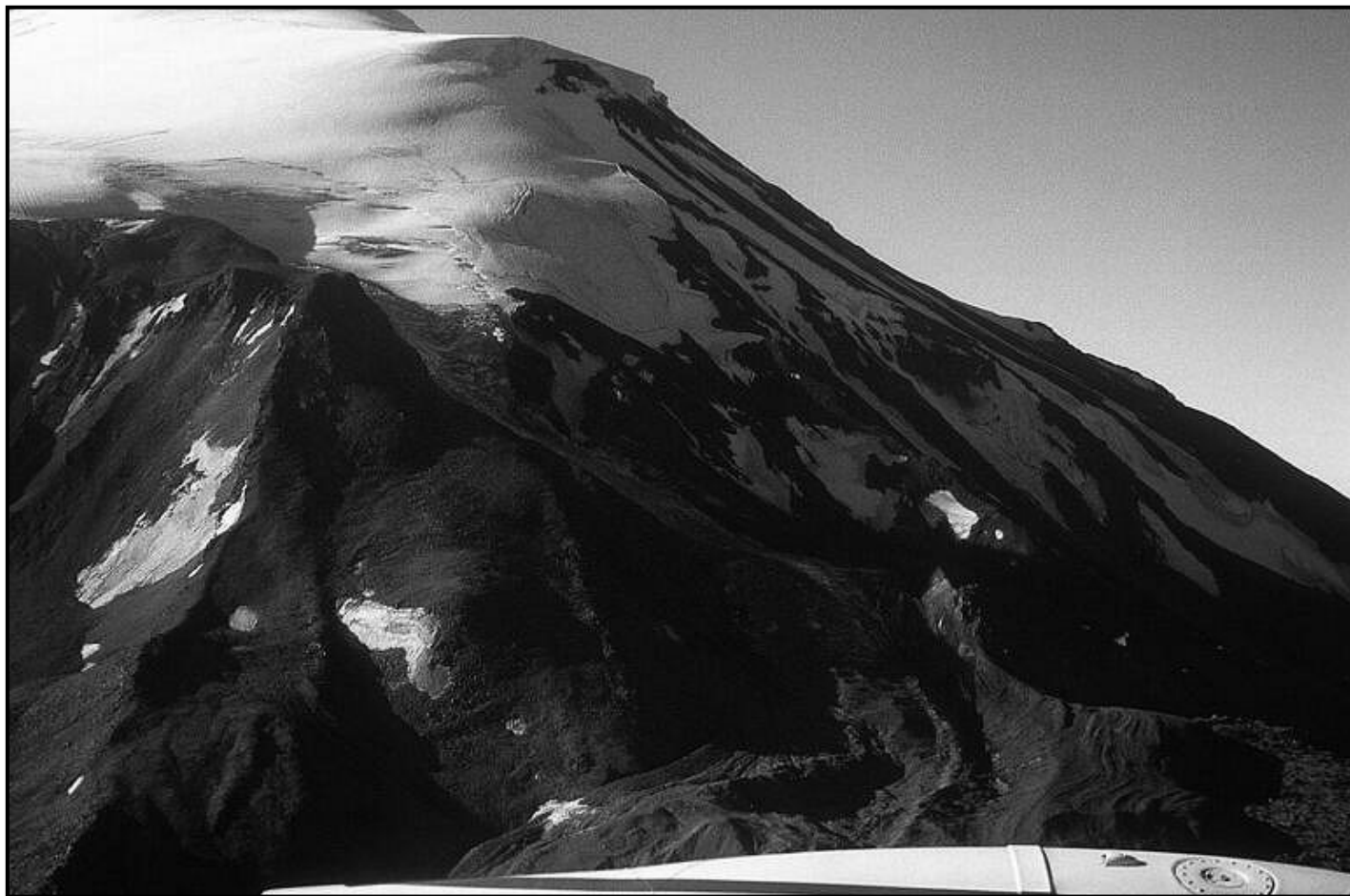
Ahora Gorge with Abich II, Abich I, Inverted Heart-Shape and Cehennem Dere 1983
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich



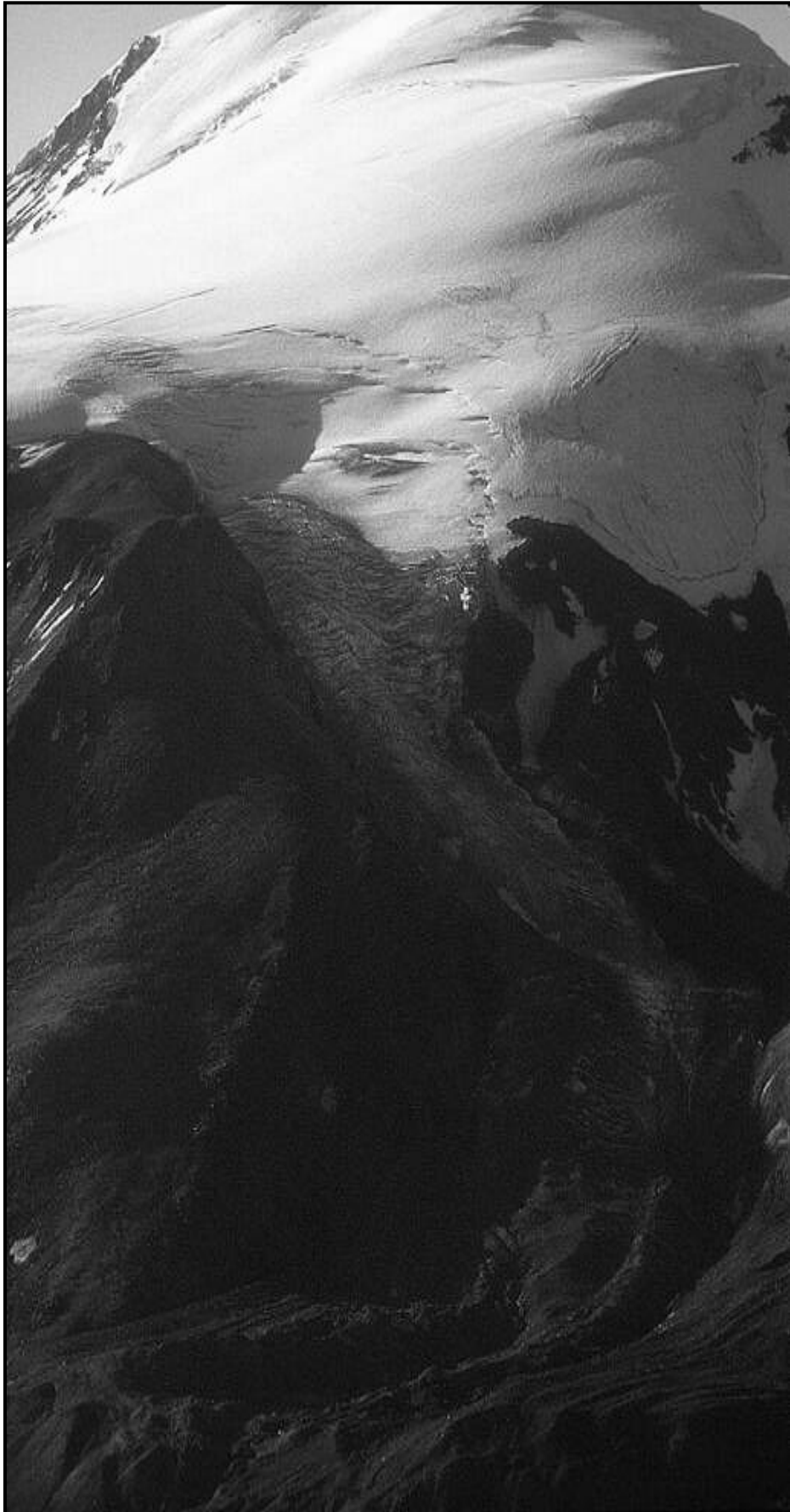
Ahora Gorge photomap and unmarked Inverted Heart-Shaped Glacier
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich and B.J. Corbin 1983



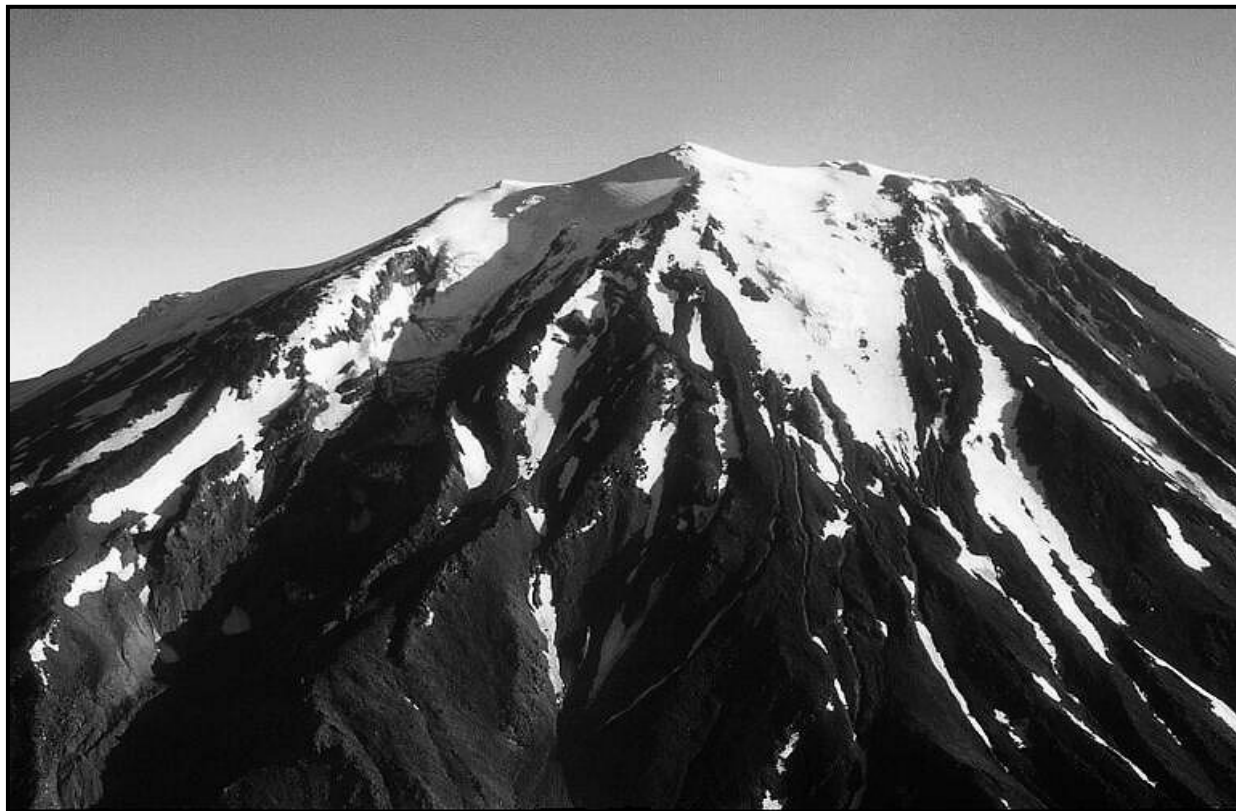
North Canyon area where Jim Irwin fell and Dr. John Morris was struck by lightning 1983
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich



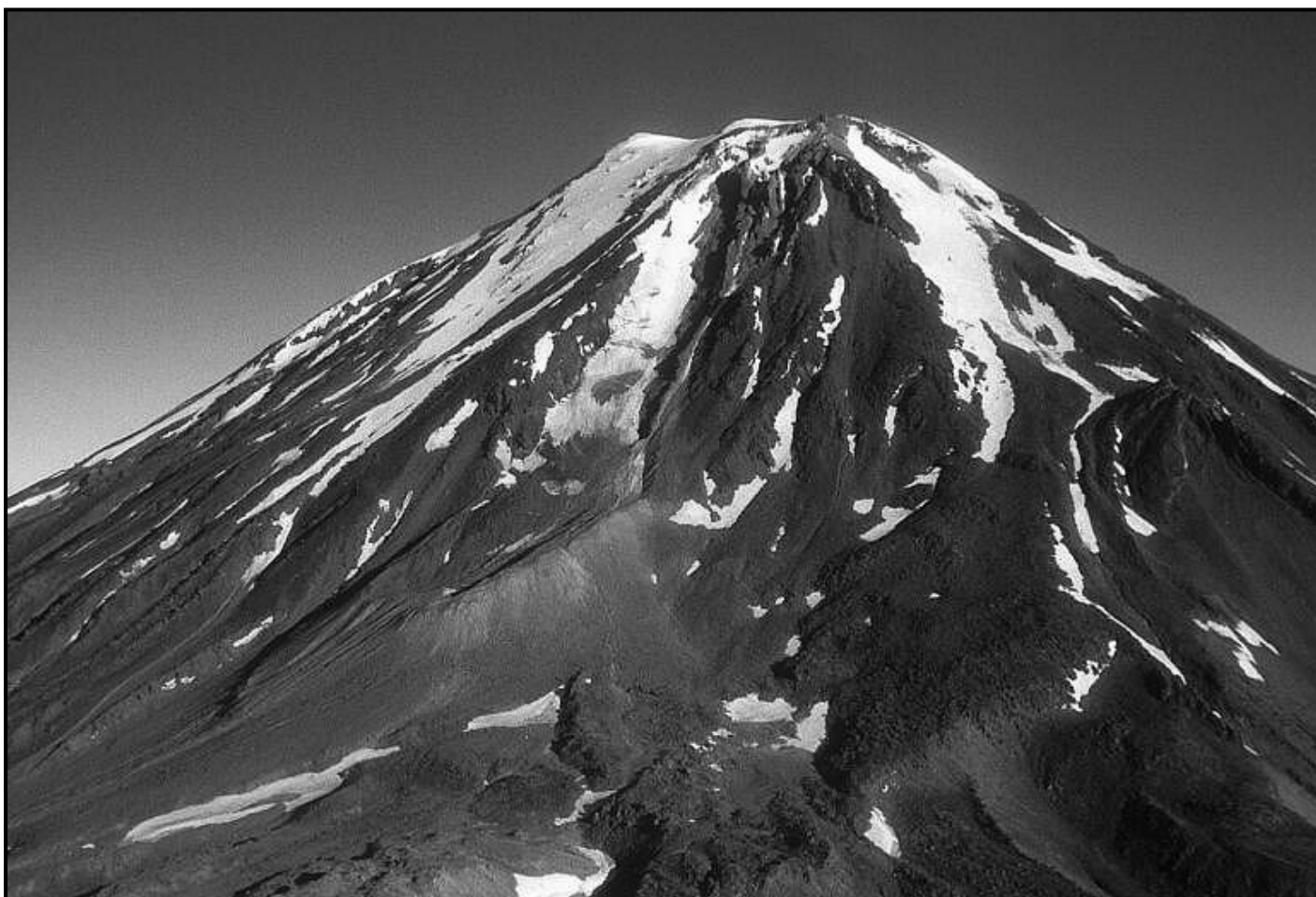
Northwest Ararat with Parrot Glacier snaking down the mountain 1983
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich



Northwest Ararat with Parrot Glacier snaking down the mountain 1983
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich



Southwest Ararat 1983
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich



South Ararat 1983
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich



South Ararat 1983
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich



Southeast and east Ararat 1983
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich