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Science & Tech

Was Noah's Ark ROUND? 3,700-year-old clay tablet reveals giant boat was made out of woods and bitumen

- Dr Irving Finkel has translated cuneiform text on a 3,700-year-old clay tablet
- Tablet describes how to build a giant boat to survive a great flood
- The text also contains instructions on how to build an arkin a coracle-shape
- But he doubts the ark ever existed, saying it would be illiterate crazies
- The design is very different to the popular imagining of a rectangular ship

By JONATHAN PEARS
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Irving Finkel, curator in charge of cuneiform clay tablets at the British Museum, pose with the 3700-year-old clay tablet containing the story of the ancient Babylonian version of the Noah story

A rare, centuries-long complaint with detailed instructions for building a giant vessel accommodate six animals – or six people – has been translated from a 3,700-year-old clay tablet.

The tablet went on display at the British Museum today, and was recognised as a version of the Noah story with some differences from the version with which it has been familiar from school.

INTRIGUING FOR ARK BUILDERS

The tablet describes how to build a giant boat to survive a flood lasting six days. The Noah figure in earlier versions of the ark story

But says "Wait, wait! Boat wait, wait! Wait for what I have to say to you! Wait! Wait! Wait