

The Archaeology of Central Asia, c. 500 BC – AD 200: Alexander in Afghanistan and Buddhas in Bactria



Rachel Mairs

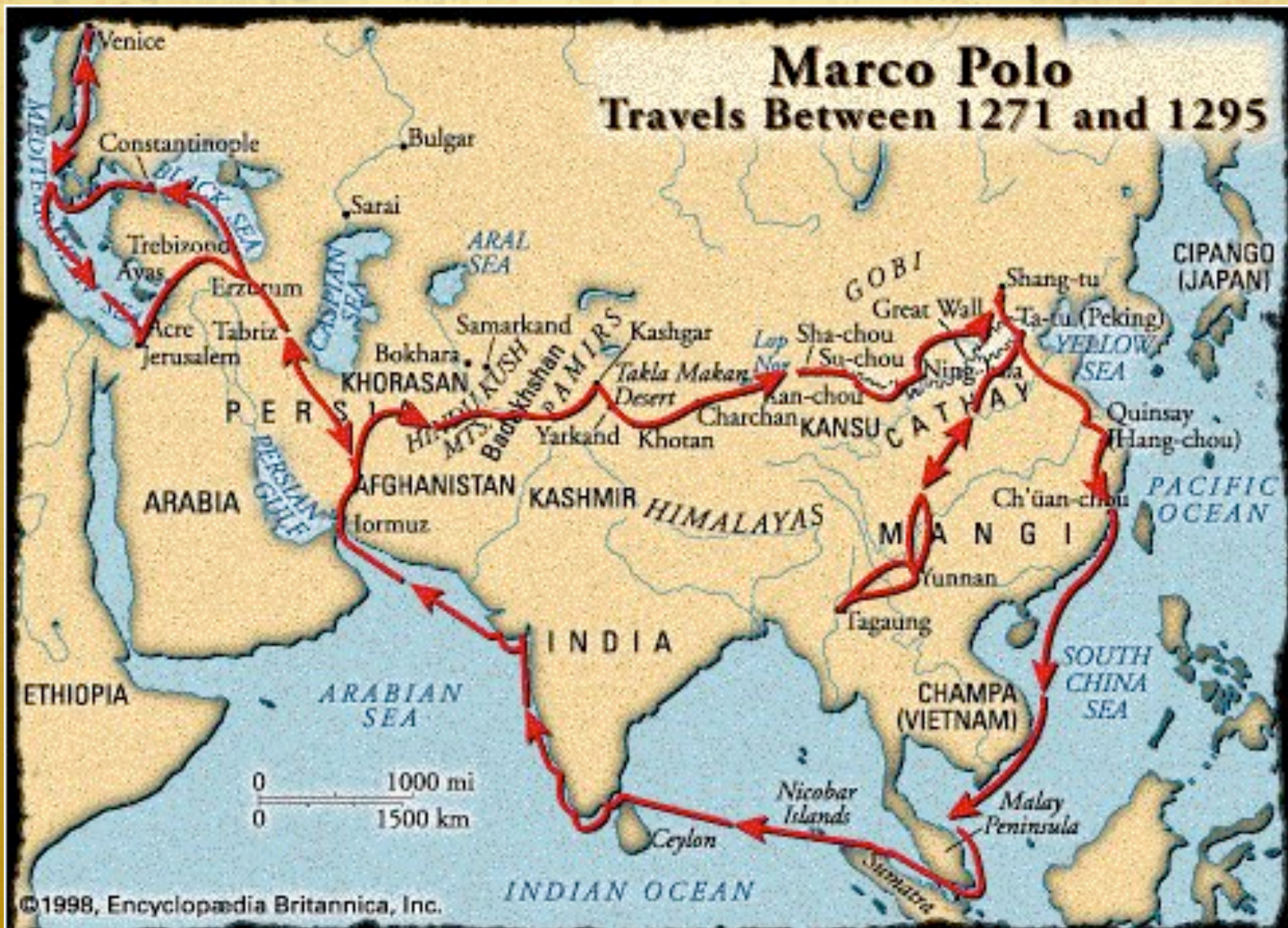
Where is Central Asia?



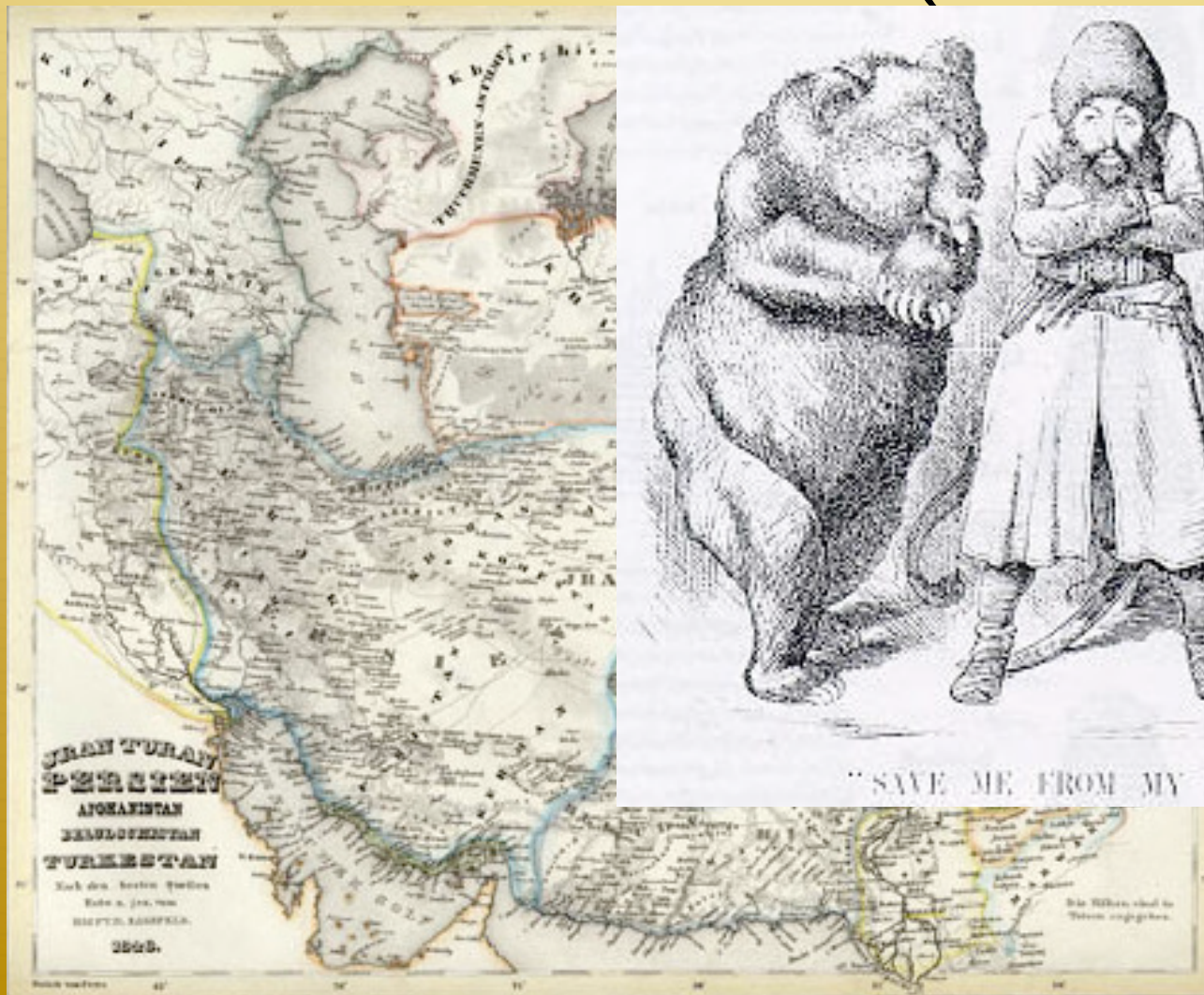


Marco Polo

Travels Between 1271 and 1295

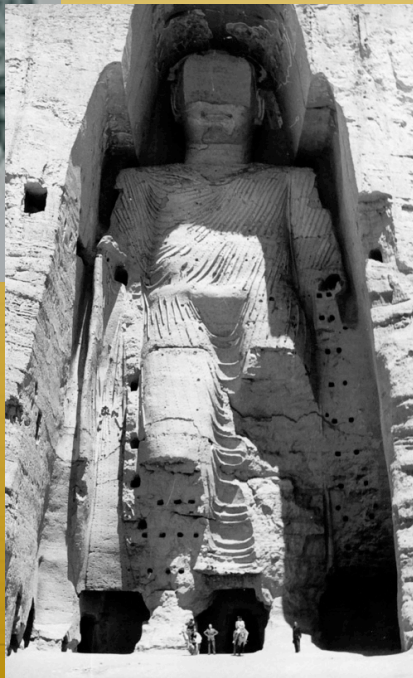


The 'Great Game' between Britain and Russia (C19th)

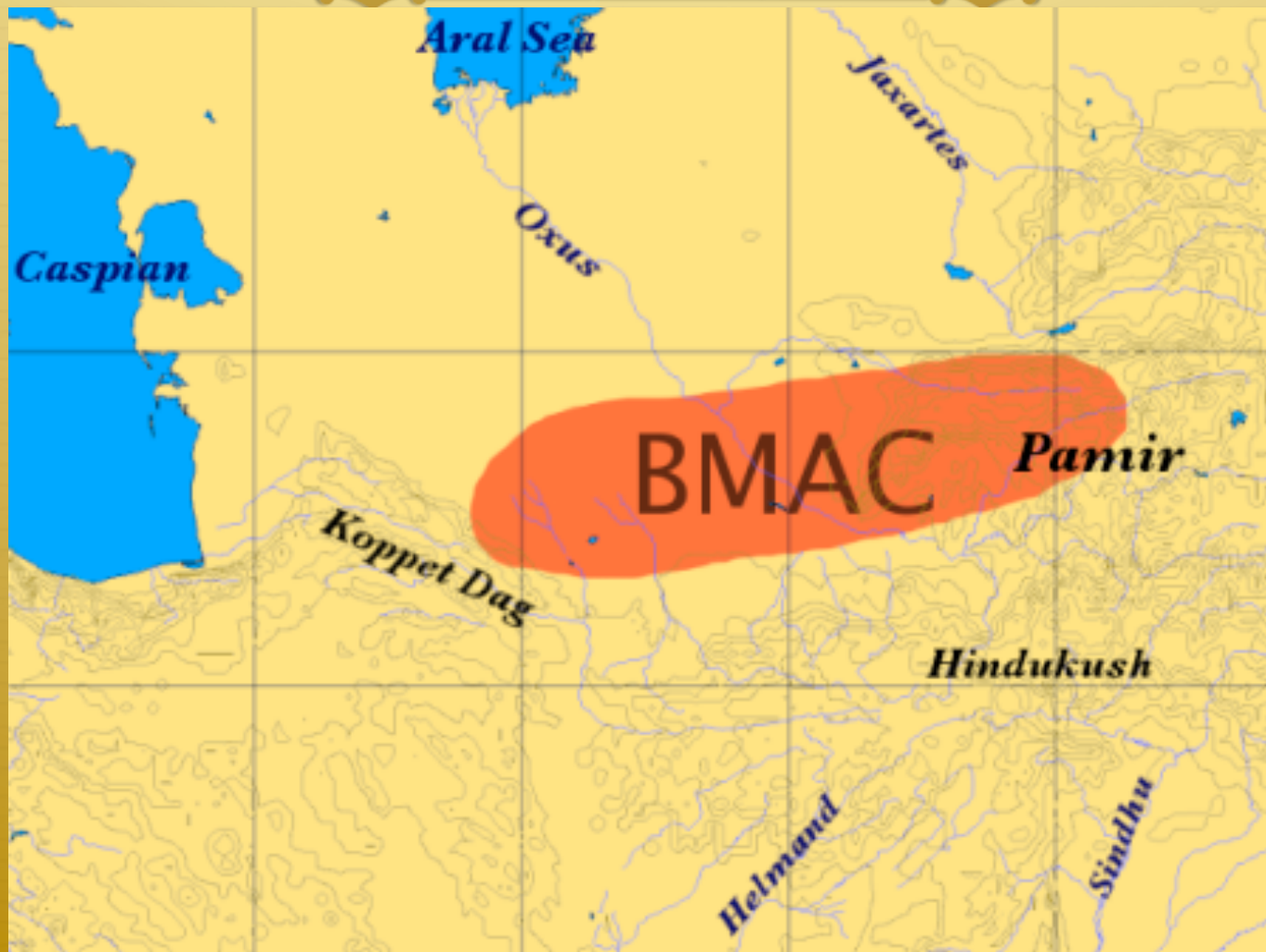




Central Asia, from the Bronze Age, to Buddhism, to Islam



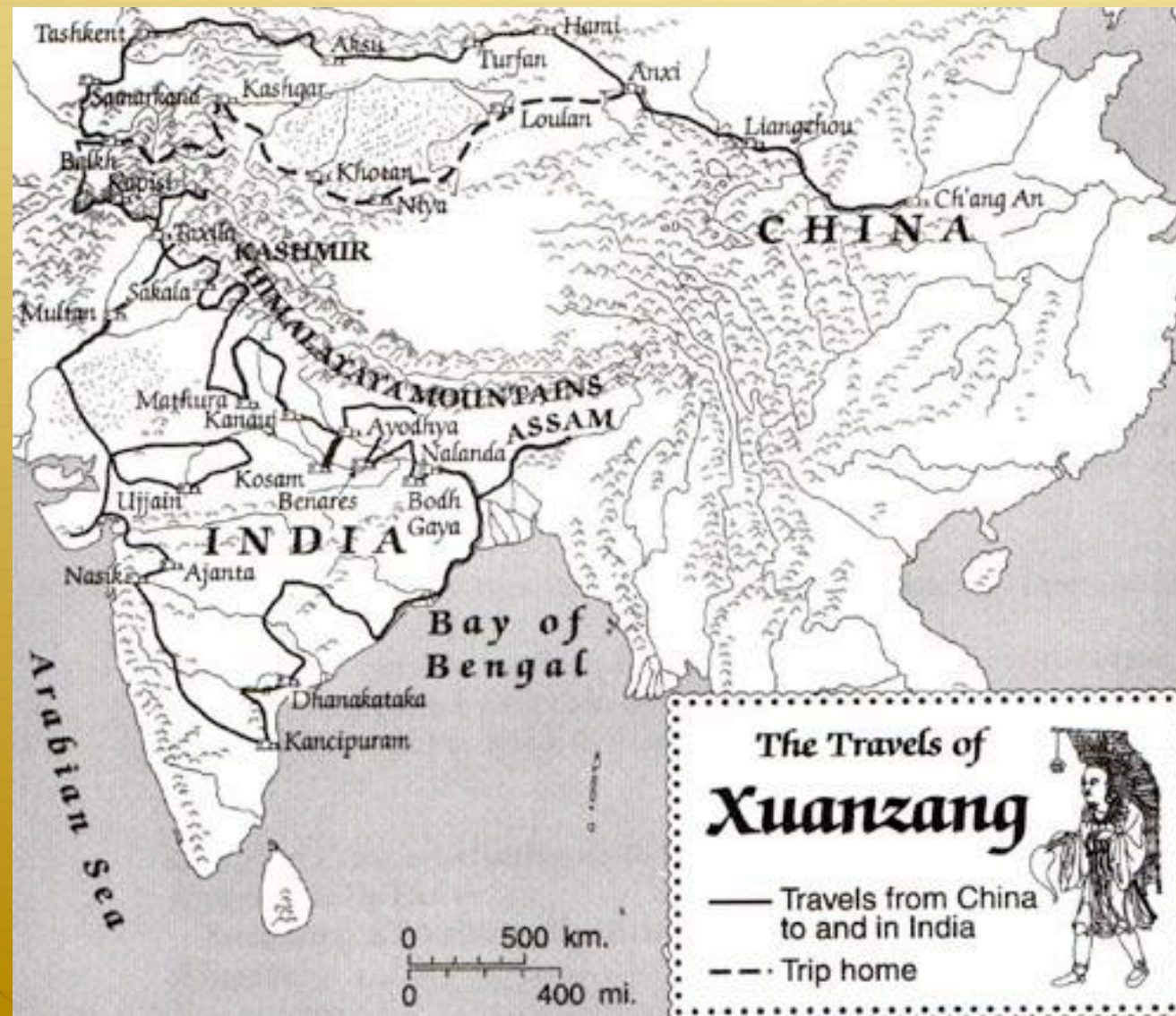
The Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC), c. 2300 – 1700 BC



Gonur-tepe (BMAC)



Buddhism, between India and China via Central Asia



Travels of the
Chinese Buddhist
monk Xuanzang,
AD seventh century

Buddhism in Central Asia



Bamiyan, Afghanistan: Before and after



‘Graeco-Buddhist’ art, Gandhara (NW Pakistan, E Afghanistan): “Buddha in a toga”

Blue Mosque (Shrine of Hazrat Ali), Mazar-i Sharif, Afghanistan





Registan, Samarkand, Uzbekistan



Minaret of Jam, Ghor Prov., Afghanistan

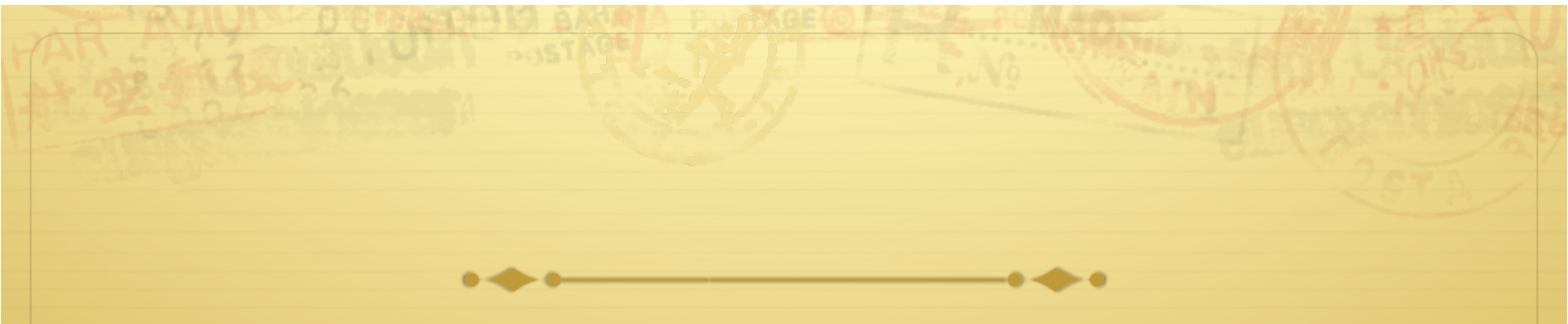




Merv, Turkmenistan

Afrasiab (monuments of Samarkand in background)

Immense, multi-period tell sites
(–AD 1220-1221)



Persian (Achaemenid), Hellenistic
(Graeco-Bactrian, Indo-Greek) and
Kushan Central Asia, c. 500 BC –
AD 200

THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

490 B.C.

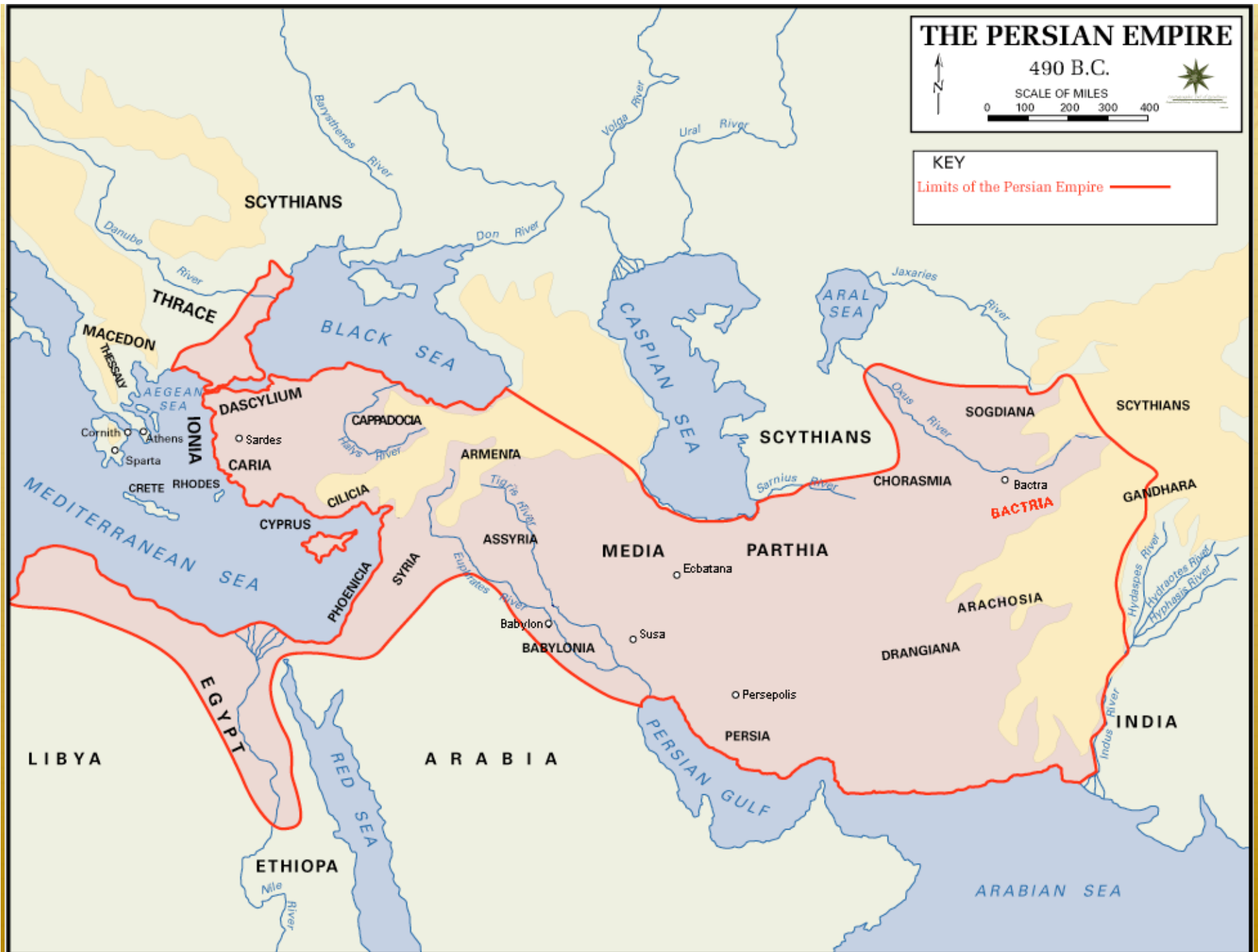
SCALE OF MILES

0 100 200 300 400



KEY

Limits of the Persian Empire ———





Central Asian and Indian 'Alexandrias'



‘Indo-Greeks’ (late third century BC - early first century AD?)



The Kushan Empire (AD first – third centuries)

Persian – Greek – Kushan Central Asia

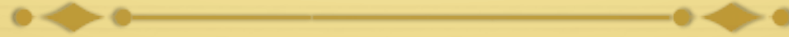


- ✦ **Continuities** in elements of material culture, land management, administration.
- ✦ **Changes** in other elements of material culture, religious practice, language use, etc. etc.

The 'Two Sides of the Coin'

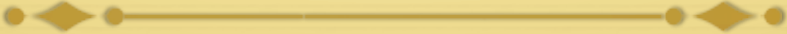


Why this is an exciting time to be doing Central Asian archaeology:




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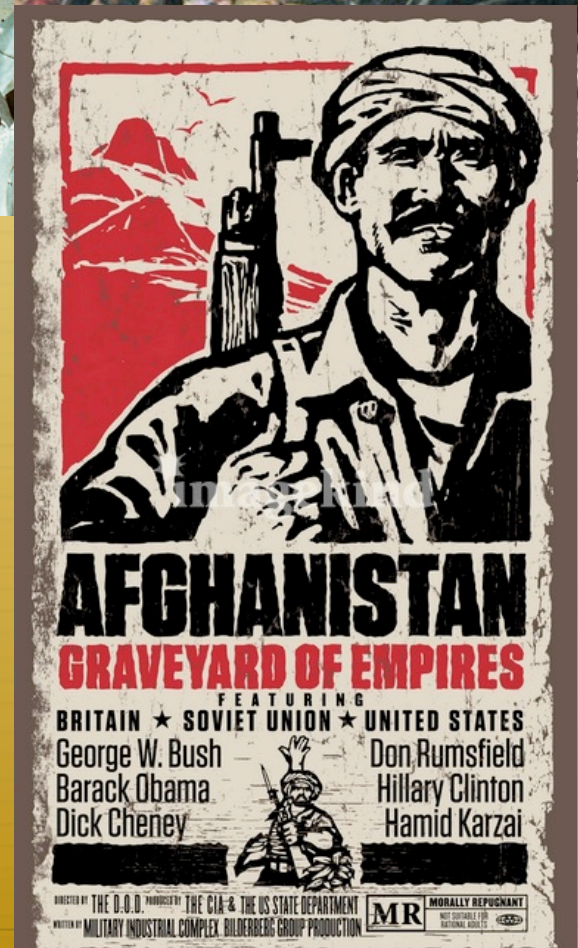
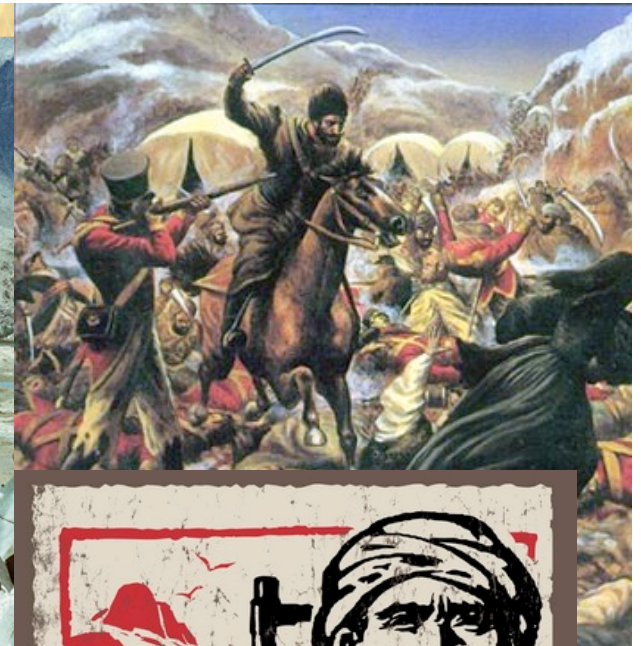
Enlarge



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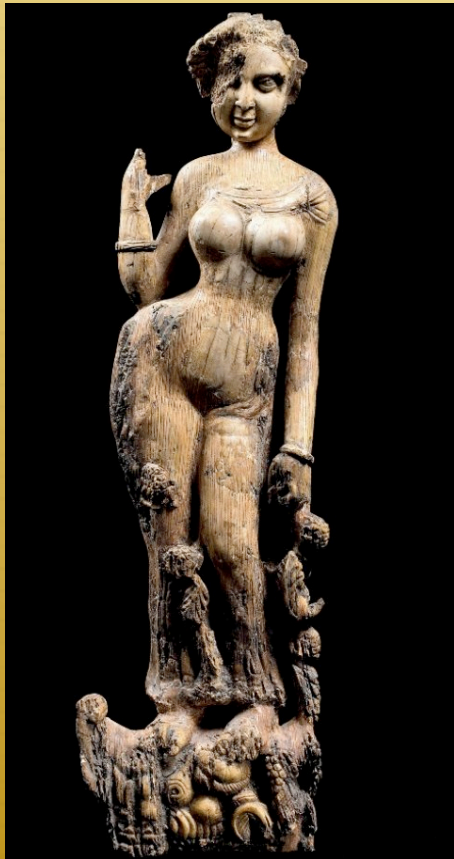


About this course

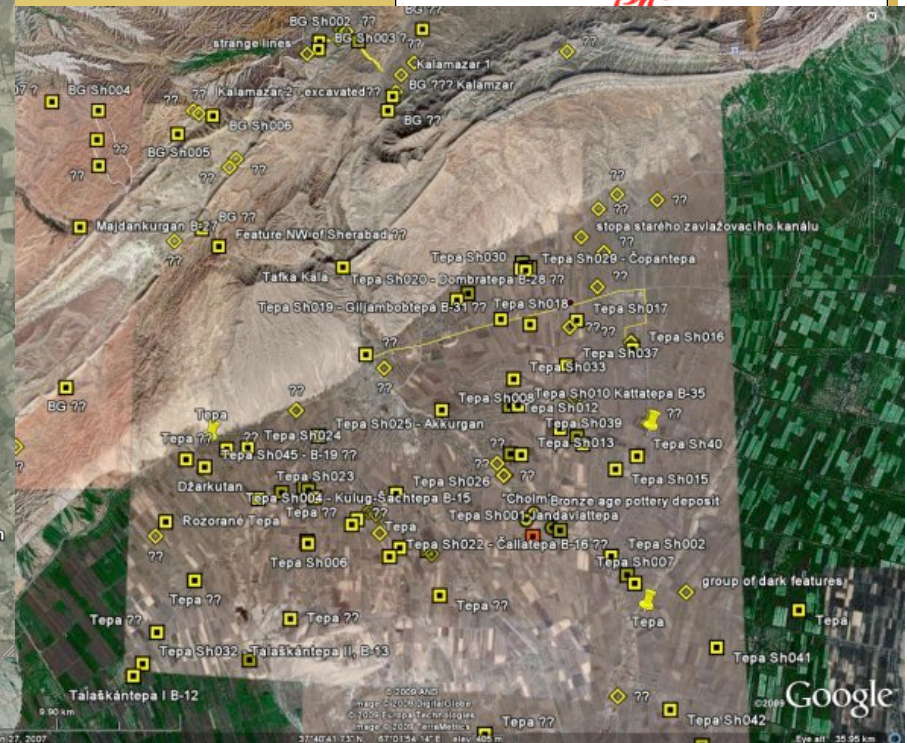


- ✦ Class 2 (Sept 9): Historical sources, the development of archaeology in Central Asia (1960-) and geography.
- ✦ Class 3 (Sept 12): Introducing the archaeology of Central Asia to popular and scholarly audiences (documentary film 'The Forgotten Alexandria').
- ✦ Further topics in the region's history and archaeology, and the political and intellectual context.
- ✦ Topic 2: Alexander the Great (incl. in film and fiction).
- ✦ Topic 3: War in Afghanistan: Alexander to the Taliban.

Material culture: cultural interaction, cultural change, ethnic identities



Archaeological fieldwork: Field survey, satellite images and GIS



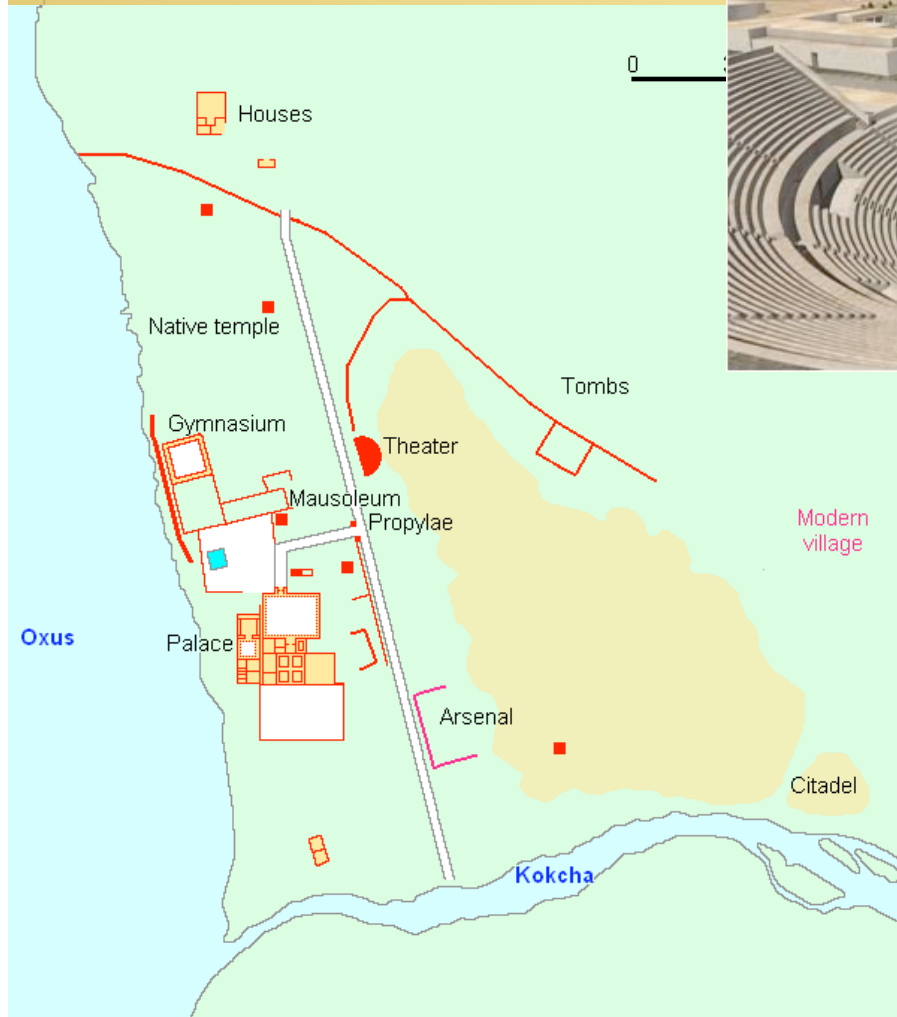
PROSPECTIONS ARCHÉOLOGIQUES
EN BACTRIANE ORIENTALE
(1974-1978)

Sous la direction de Jean-Claude GARDIN

Volume 2
CÉRAMIQUE ET PEUPLEMENT
DU CHALCOLITHIQUE À LA CONQUÊTE ARABE

Bertille LYONNET

Sites: Ai Khanoum



Assignments



- ✦ Map quizzes (learn to tell your Tajikistan from your Kyrgyzstan, and your Bactria from your Sogdiana!). 5%
- ✦ Two papers on set topics (choice between two, c. 4-5 pages). 40% total. Due 21 Oct and 4 November.
- ✦ A review/critique of the 'Forgotten Alexandria' documentary, based on your studies. 15% Due 14 November.
- ✦ An extended essay (c. 12 pages) on individual topics, to be decided in consultation with me. A 5 minute presentation on this in the final class. 40% Due 7 December.

Questions?

- ✦ rachel_mairs@brown.edu
- ✦ Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 2-3 (Rhode Island Hall 210)

