

**EMPIRES AND EXCHANGES IN EURASIAN LATE ANTIQUITY**

*Empires and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity* offers an integrated picture of Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppes during a formative period of world history. In the half-millennium between 250 and 750 CE, settled empires underwent deep structural changes, while various nomadic peoples of the steppes (Huns, Avars, Türks, and others) experienced significant interactions and movements that changed their societies, cultures, and economies. This was a transformational era, a time when Roman, Persian, and Chinese monarchs were mutually aware of court practices, and when Christians and Buddhists criss-crossed Eurasian lands together with merchants and armies. It was a time of increased circulation of ideas and material goods. This volume provides a conceptual frame for locating these developments in the same space and time. Without arguing for uniformity, it illuminates the interconnections and networks that tied countless local cultural expressions to far-reaching interregional ones.

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# EMPIRES AND EXCHANGES IN EURASIAN LATE ANTIQUITY

*Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe, ca. 250–750*

*Edited by*

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*IN MEMORIAM*  
*MARK WHITTOW*  
*(1957–2017)*

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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This volume introduces, in an integrated way, the Eurasian world stretching from Rome to China in the half-millennium between 250 and 750 CE so that the interchanges among its different cultures and political realms, as well as the internal consequences of those contacts, can be seen as part of a unified picture. Collectively, the contributors have pushed beyond familiar borders to reveal a remarkable panorama of Eurasian history in an era of profound political and cultural change. Our first thanks go to the contributors to this volume for illuminating with new research the road opened more than a century ago by giants such as Aurel Stein, Paul Pelliot, Sven Hedin, Albert von Le Coq, and Ōtani Kōzui. These pioneers focused on large-scale history by tracing connections across far-flung regions, an approach still influential in world history and Silk Road studies today. Many scholars have followed their lead, and some of them have contributed to this volume.

Rarely if ever, though, has this vision been pushed back to the time that we call Eurasian Late Antiquity and cast as a distinct historical period embracing Rome, Iran, China, and the Inner Asian steppes. By bringing regional histories and historiographies into a discussion with cross-regional issues and topics, this volume presents historical change as a function of material, religious, economic, and political contacts generated by greater connectivity.

The international aspect of this volume, which includes authors from Austria, China, France, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Russia, and the United States, is a testimony to an effort to bring a variety of scholarly traditions under a common roof. At the same time, each chapter stands on its own, and differences of approach and style are the norm. We have tried to coordinate these differences rather than impose a rigid model to which each chapter should adhere. To facilitate reading across different disciplines, we have limited the footnotes to basic information, which is meant to be introductory and to point the way to further reading. In the same spirit, foreign terms have been translated into English, a degree of uniformity has

been sought in representing these terms across different transliteration systems, and a glossary of Chinese terms has been included in the back matter of the volume.

We are happy to thank the institutions and individuals who helped bring this book to light. First of all, we acknowledge the Provost's Office of Rice University (Houston, Texas) and the Director's Office as well as the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton, New Jersey) for the financial and material support that helped underwrite the 2013 conference "Worlds in Motion: Rome, China, and the Eurasian Steppe in Late Antiquity," from which this volume largely is derived. In particular, we would like to thank the scholars who, even though their papers do not appear in the present volume, participated in the conference, sharing ideas and comments. These scholars include Michael Alram, Glen Bowersock, John Haldon, Guy Halsall, Amy Hessl, Tia Kolbaba, Noel Lenski, Richard Payne, Helmut Reimitz, Derek Ruths, and Bryan Ward-Parkins. Moreover, we thank Kathy Collins, Vice President of Finance at Rice University, and Robbert Dijkgraaf, Director of the Institute for Advanced Study, for their personal involvement and interest. The staff of the School of Historical Studies – Marian Zelazny, Maria Tuya, Sharon Tozzi-Goff, and Sarah Rich – provided support, ensuring the smooth running of every aspect of the conference. Some of the work in preparing the manuscript was completed at the Dumbarton Oaks Research Center and Library in Washington, DC, when Michael Maas was a Fellow in Byzantine Studies (2014–2015) and then Director of Byzantine Studies (2015–2016). He wishes to thank the director, Jan Ziolkowski, the librarians Deborah Stewart and Daniel Boomhower, and the entire staff for creating such a pleasant working environment.

Cambridge University Press editors Beatrice Rehl and Asya Graf were extremely helpful in guiding the initial phases of this book, and we are grateful for their advice and support. Maura High, of High Editorial LLC, edited the entire manuscript prior to its submission to the press. Her invaluable experience and wisdom brought order to a confusing set of chapters. Suzette Andre Costello edited final copy and proofs with great care. Daniel Paradis, a student at Georgetown University, was a tireless and careful assistant in editorial matters. Kate Mertes, of Kate Mertes Editorial Services, prepared the index with her customary skill and accuracy. We wish to thank also Brett Savage at the Institute for Advanced Study for his assistance in logistical matters. We thank Carissa Fletcher for translating Chapter 5 from the Chinese. Tsering Wangyal Shawa, the Geographic Information Systems and Map Librarian at Princeton University, created the numbered maps for us, and we are most grateful for his elegant work. We thank Dr. Nikolaus Boroffka, Professor Murtazali Gurdjiev, and Dr. Betsy Hensellek for advice on maps and illustrations. The Department



*Preface and Acknowledgments*

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ABBREVIATIONS

AEMAe	<i>Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi</i>
Amm.	Ammianus Marcellinus, <i>Res gestarum</i>
AOH	<i>Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae</i>
BS	<i>Beishi</i>
CAH	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i>
CCAA	<i>The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Attila</i>
CHC	<i>Cambridge History of China</i>
Chin.	Chinese
Cosm. Ind. Top.	Cosmas Indicopleustes, <i>Christian Topography</i>
EMC	Early Middle Chinese
FCH	<i>The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire</i>
Hdt.	Herodotus
HHJ	<i>Hou Han Ji</i>
HHS	<i>Hou Hanshu</i>
HJAS	<i>Harvard Journal of Asian Studies</i>
JTS	<i>Jiu Tangshu</i>
Maur. Str.	Maurice, <i>Strategikon</i>
Men. Prot. Hist.	Menander Protector, <i>Historia</i>
Nat. Hist.	Pliny the Elder, <i>Natural History</i>
NCMH	<i>New Cambridge Medieval History</i>
PO	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i>
Prisc.	Priscus of Panium, <i>Fragmenta</i>
Proc.	Procopius, <i>Wars</i>
SC	Sources chrétiennes
Skt.	Sanskrit
ŠKZ	<i>The Ka'ba-ye Zardošt Inscription</i>
SS	<i>Suishu</i>
Theoph. Sim.	Theophylact Simocatta, <i>History</i>
THY	<i>Tang hui yao</i>
WS	<i>Weishu</i>
XTS	<i>Xin Tangshu</i>
ZS	<i>Zhoushu</i>
ZZTJ	<i>Zizhi tongjian</i>

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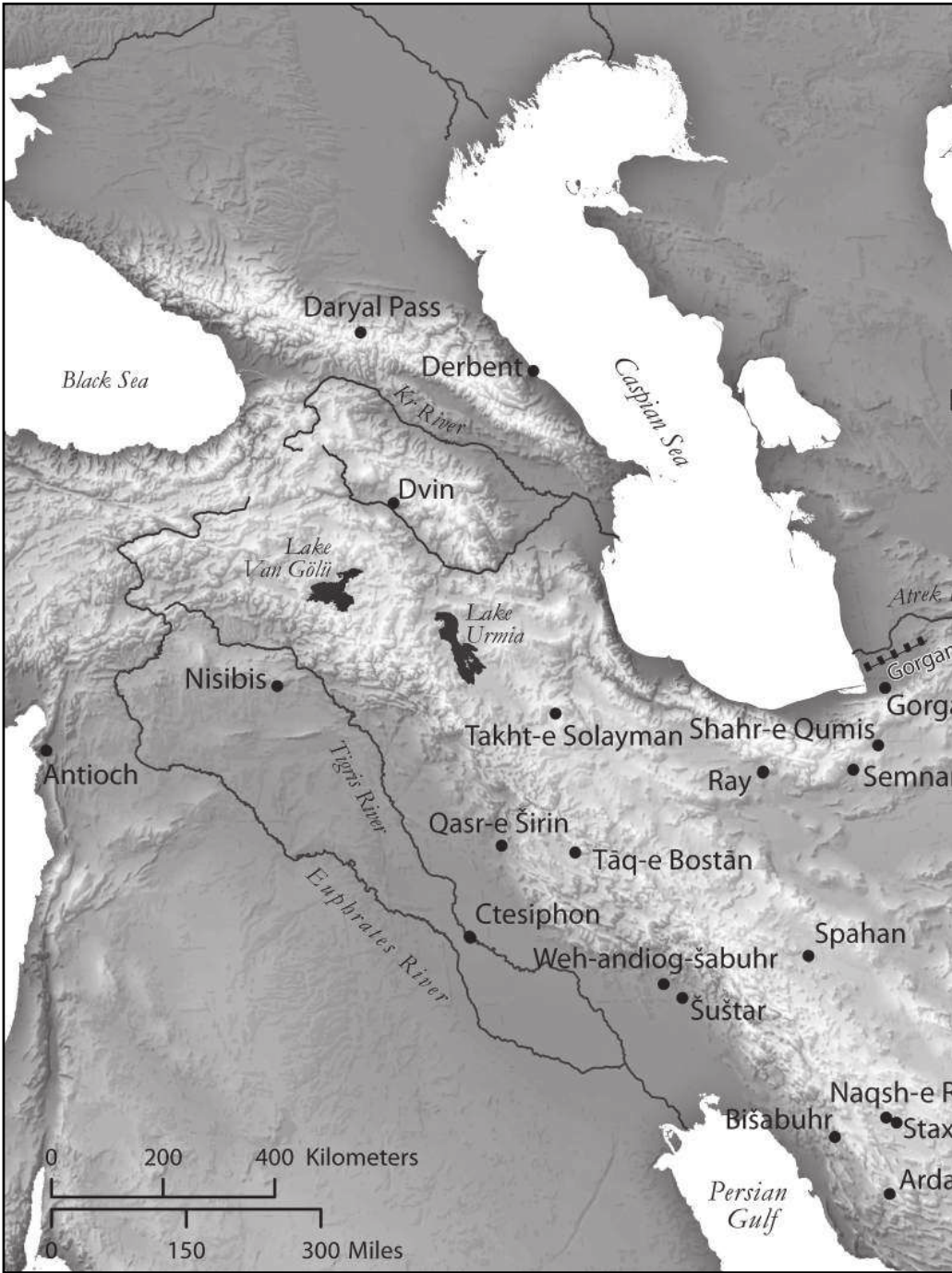
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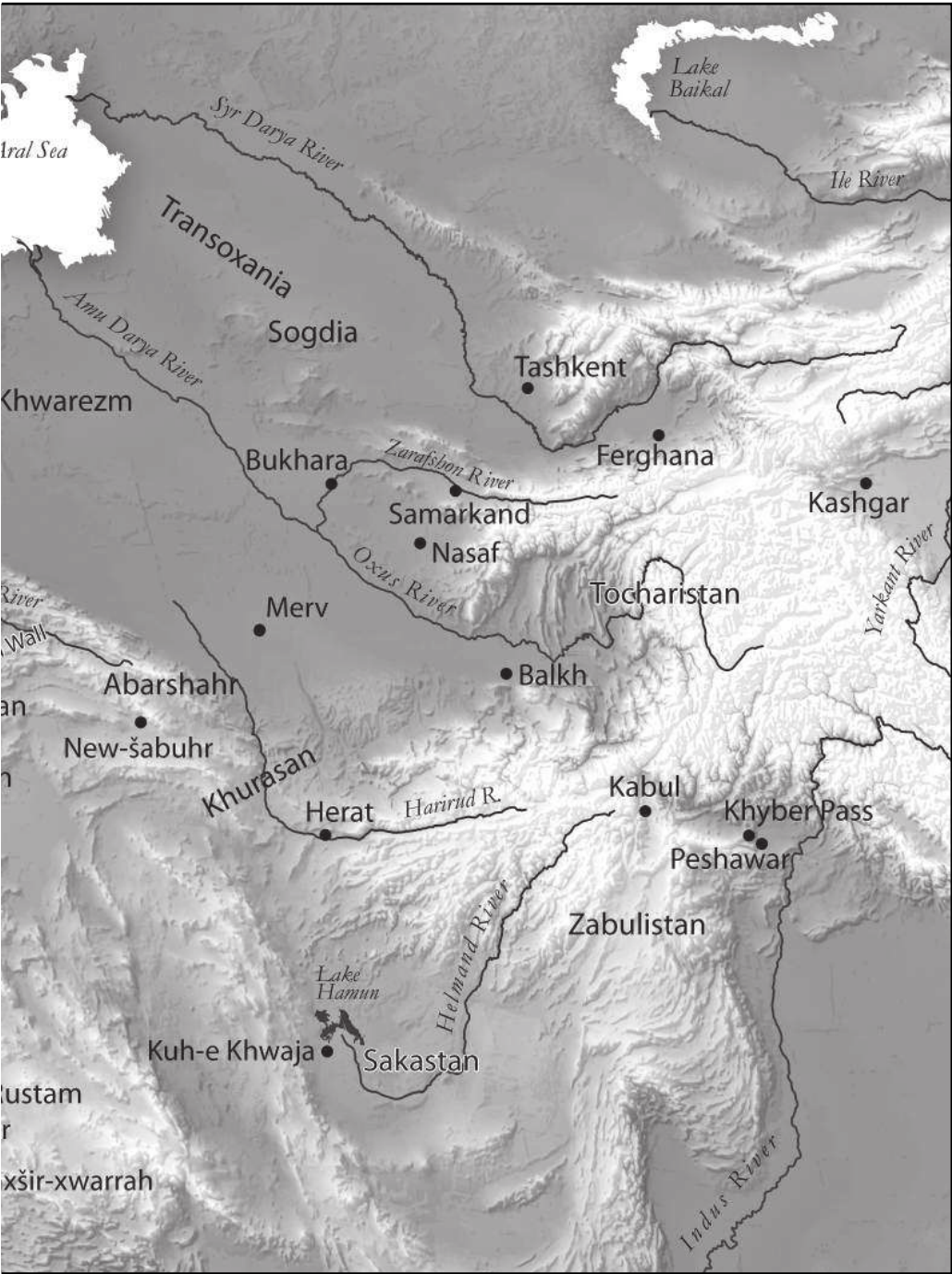
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2. Iran and neighboring regions during the Sasanian Empire



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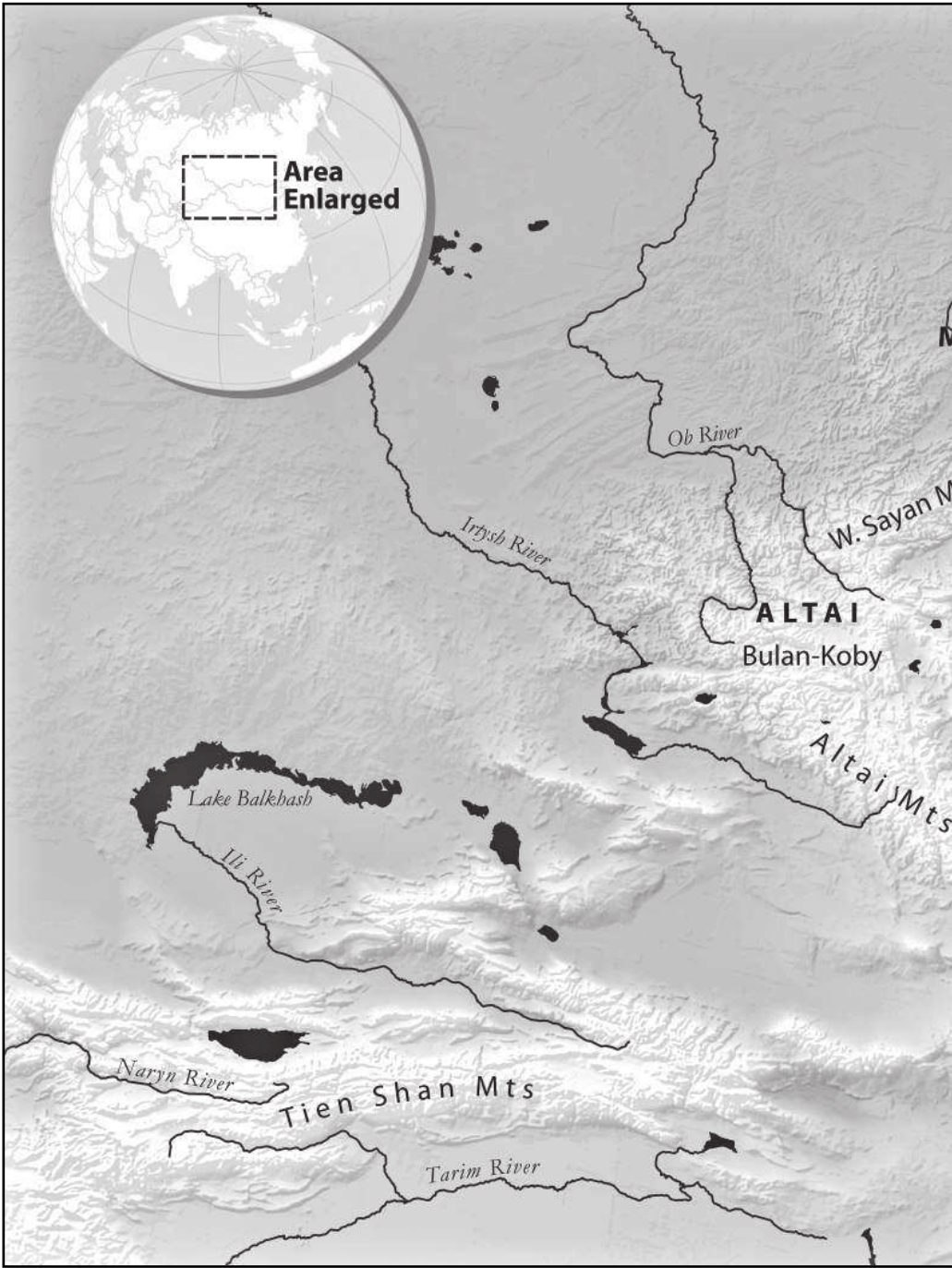
3. The Middle East



4. Eurasian Trading Centers, 6th – 7th Centuries

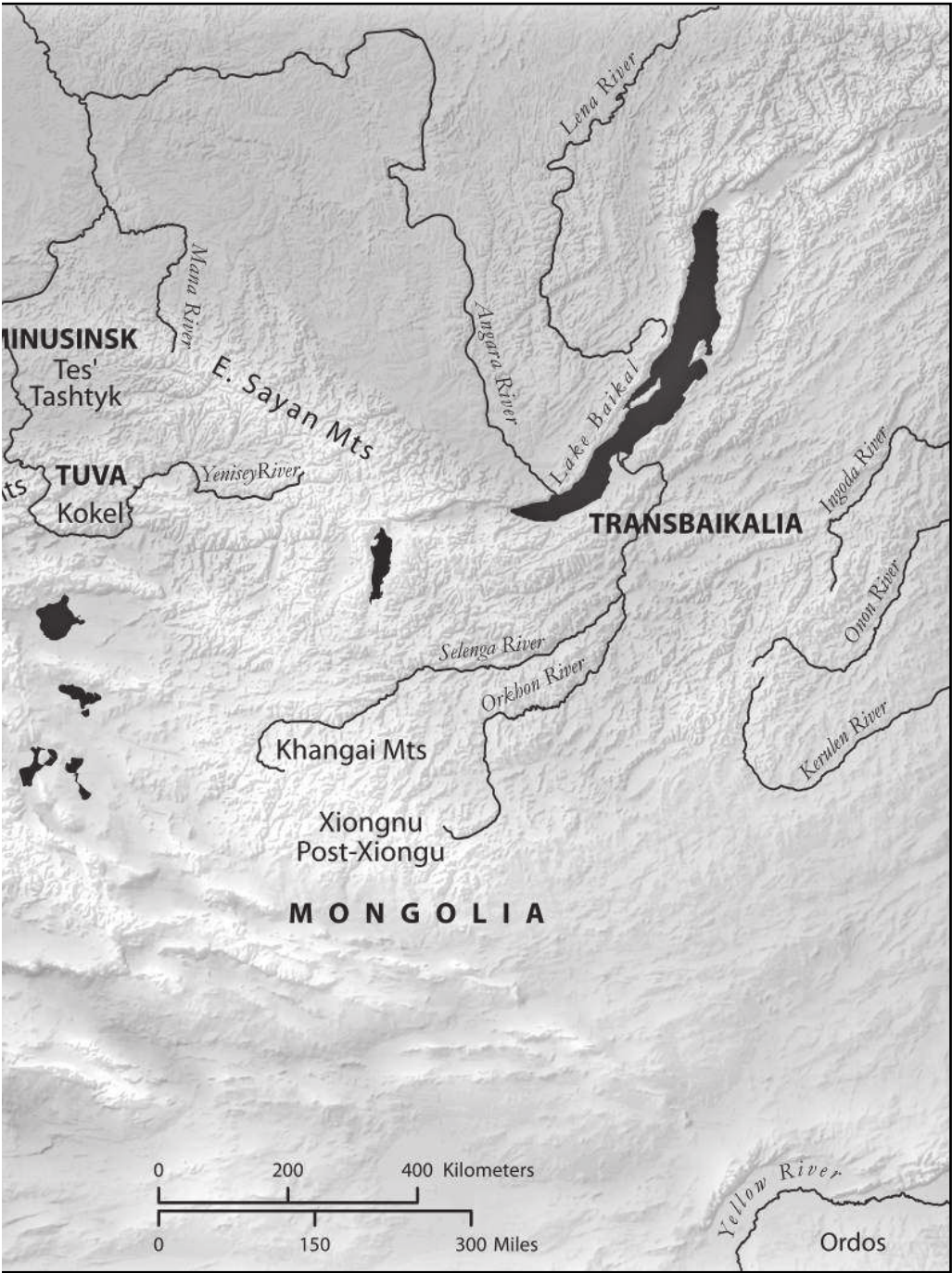


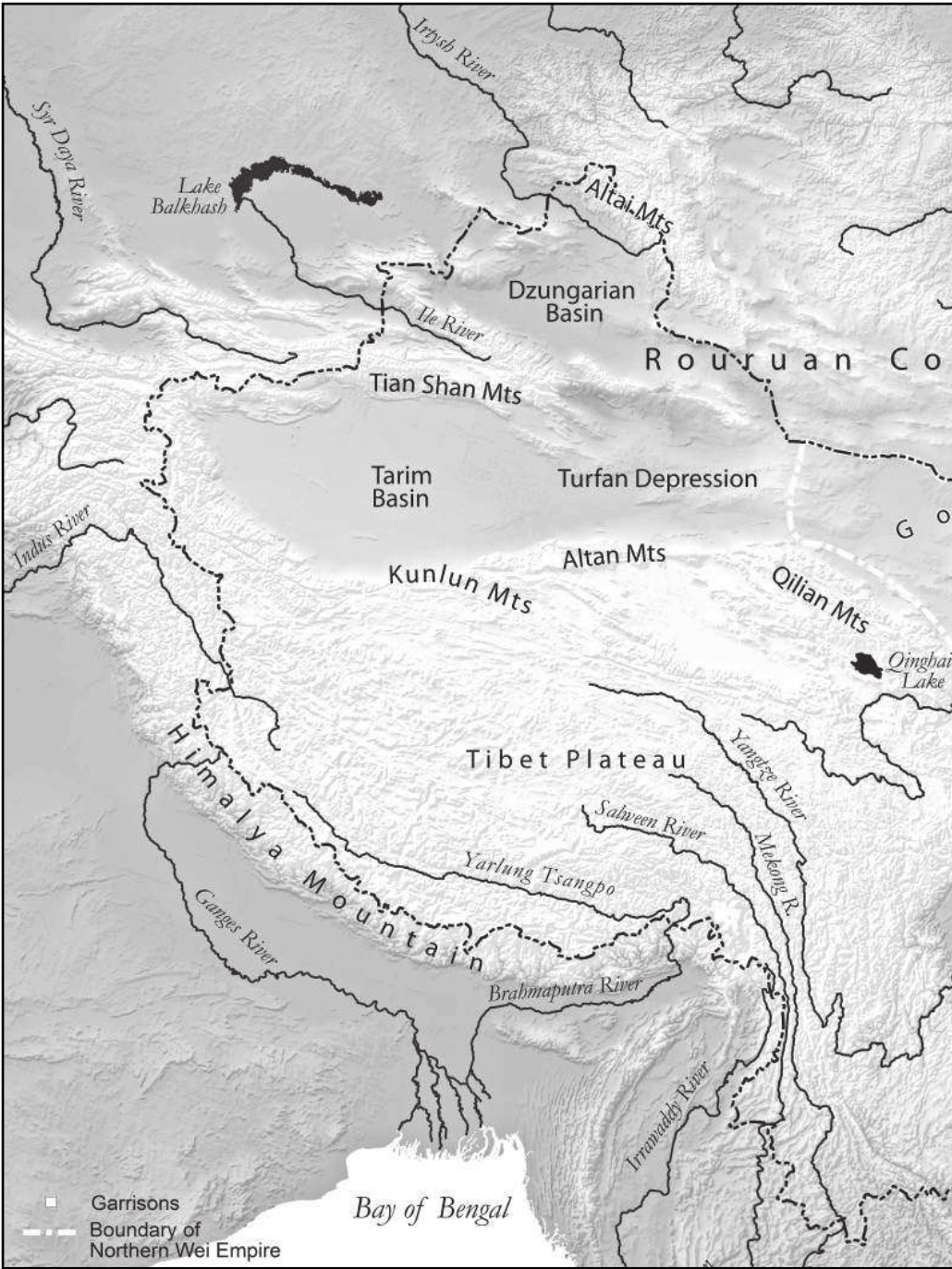




5. Inner Asia

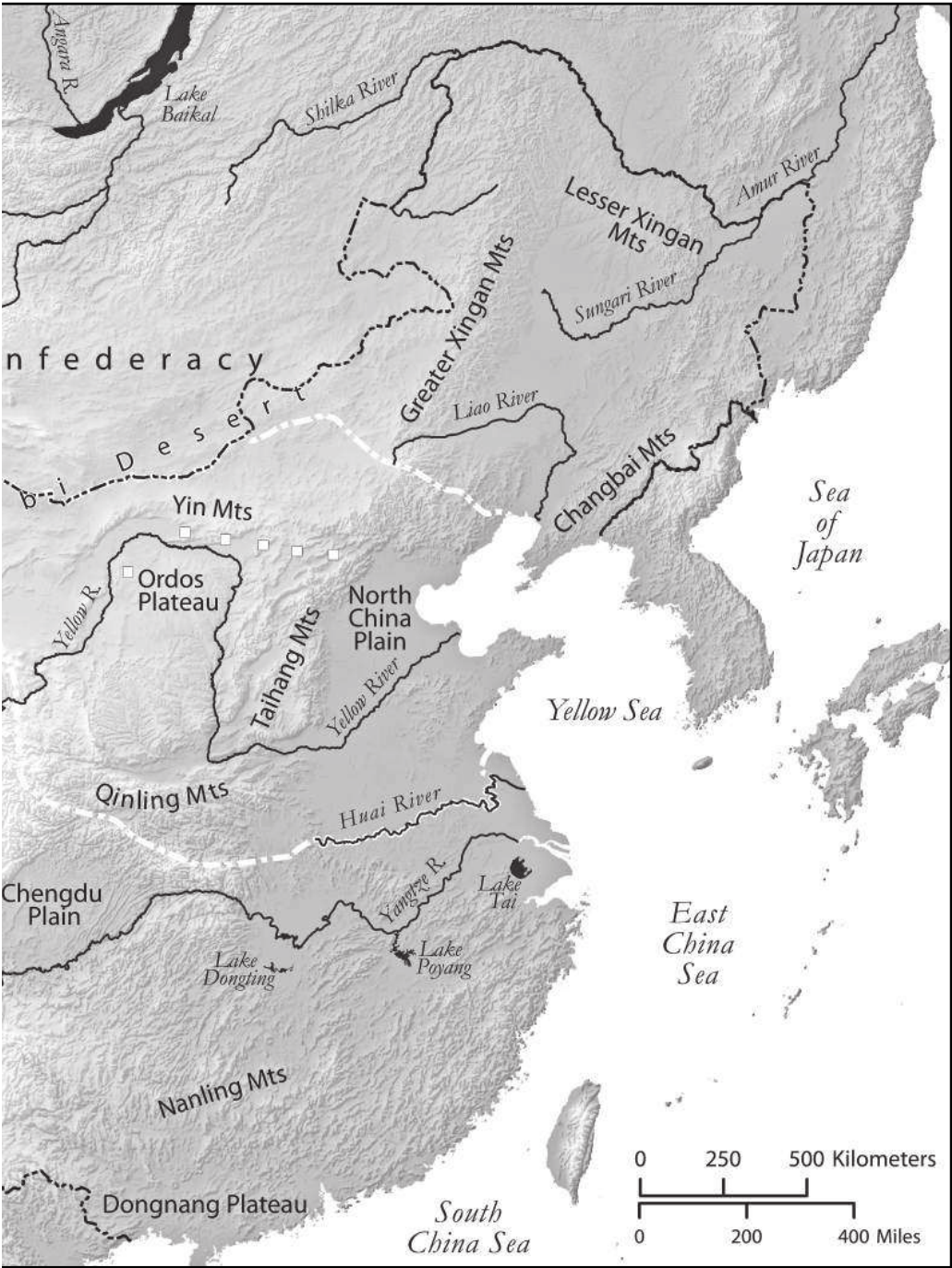


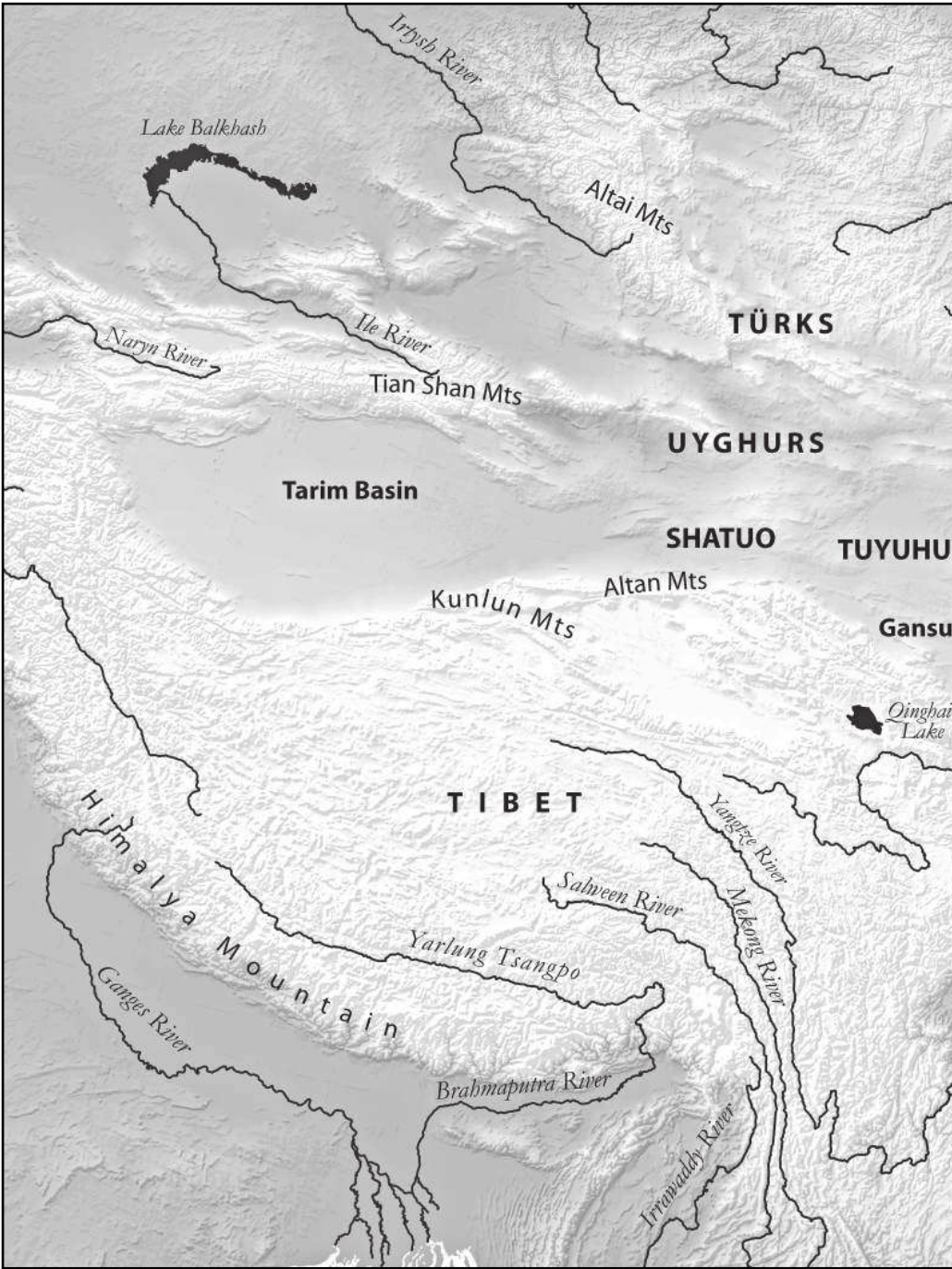




6. The greatest extent of the Northern Wei, 469–530



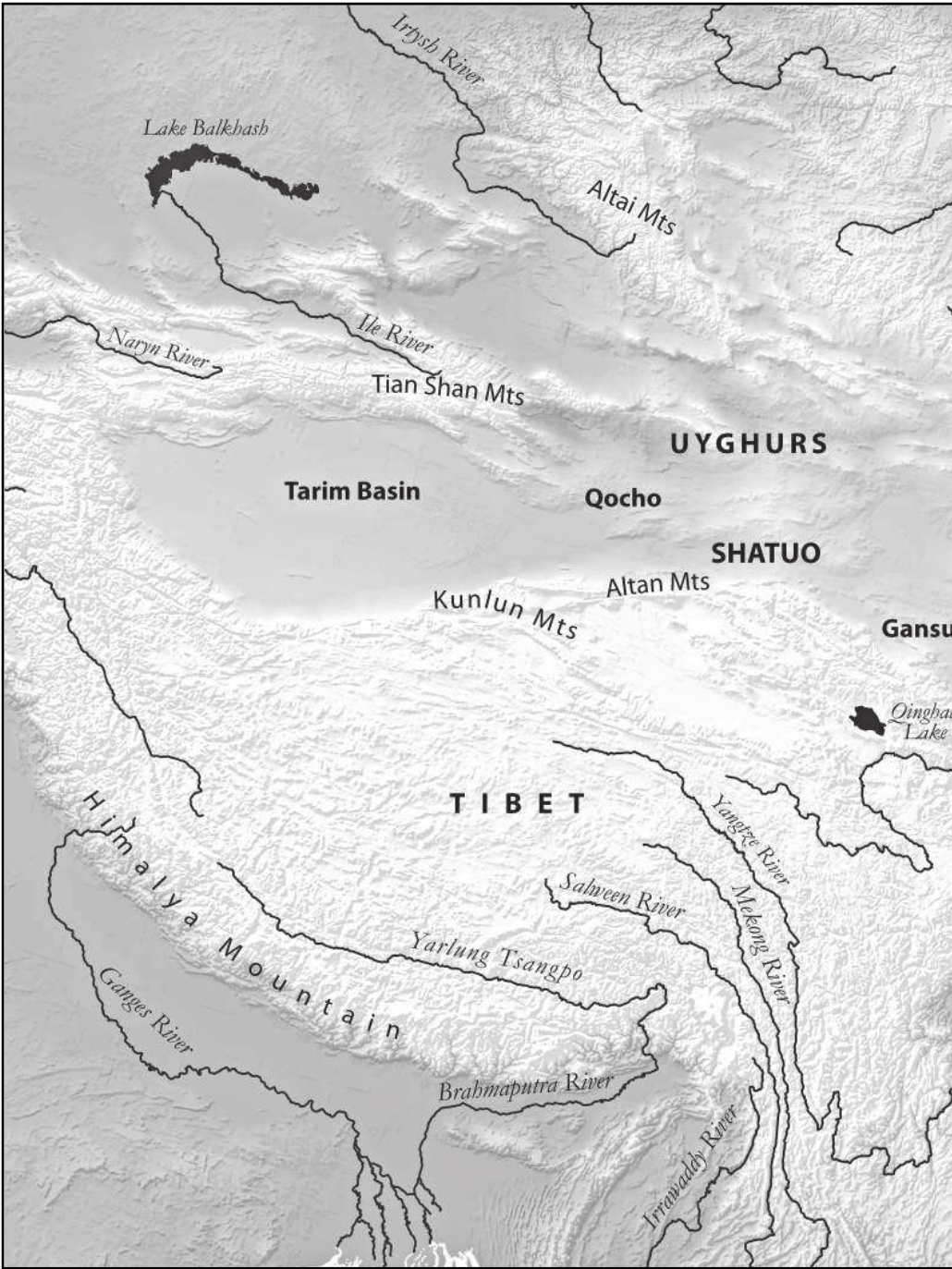




7. Northeastern Eurasia, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries





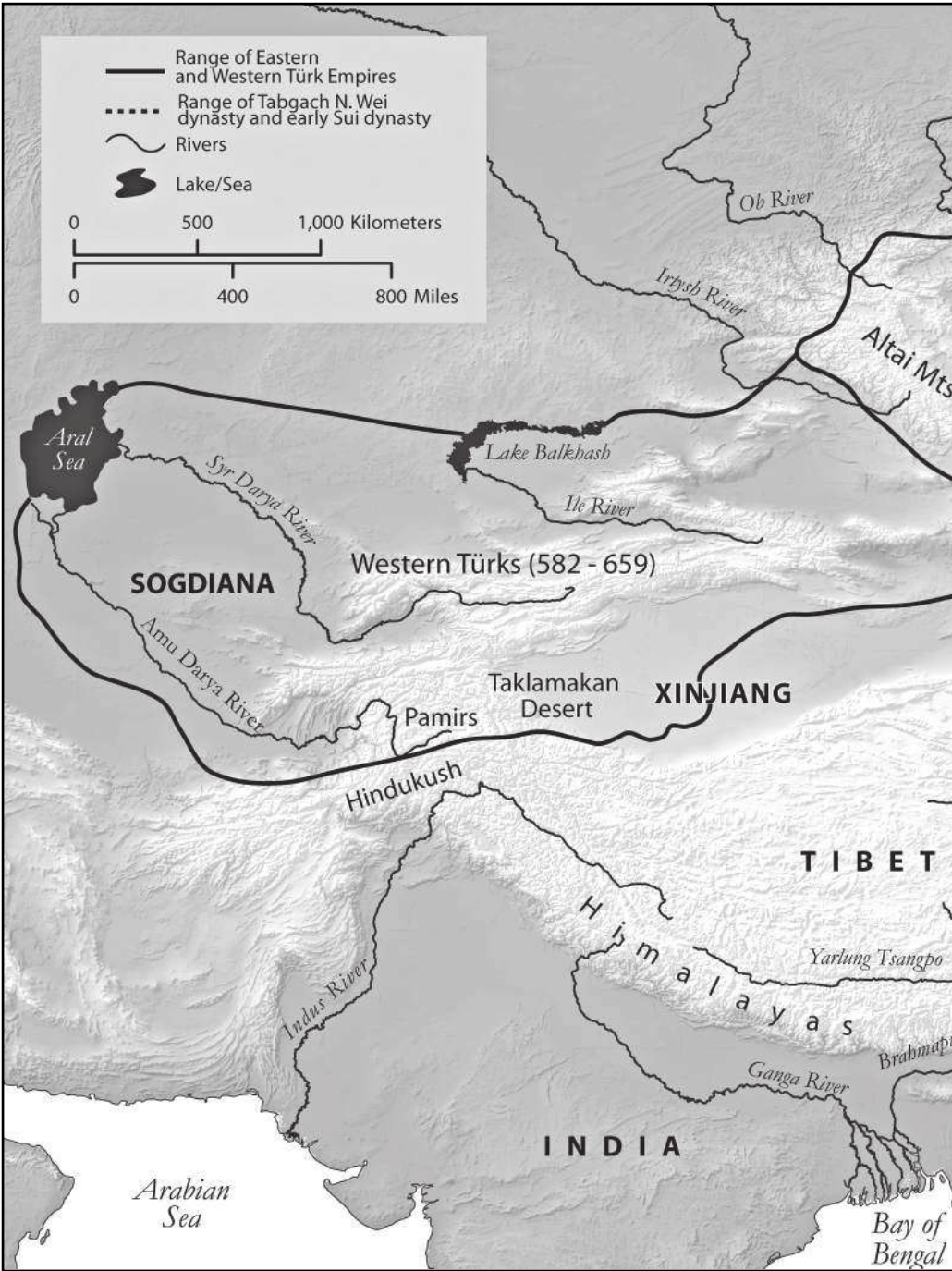


8. Northeastern Eurasia, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries



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9. Eastern Eurasia, ca. 582





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