

# Silk Roads: Trade and Travel Spread Cultural Ideas

## PART 1 - Background



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PowerPoint prepared in cooperation with Marty Mater, Michigan Geographic Alliance

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# Silk Roads – Geographic Objectives

## Students will be able to:

- 1. Locate *regions* that were part of the Silk Road network (Mediterranean, Arabia, eastern Africa, Persia, Central Asia, India, and China) in 100 CE
- 2. Describe physical *conditions* (deserts, mountains, rivers) at various *places* along the Silk Road.
- 3. Identify important economic goods and cultural ideas (highly valued in 100 CE) that *moved* along the Silk Road.
- 4. Explain *how trade and travel along the Silk Road changed places over time.*

# Silk Roads - Vocabulary

Merchant    Monk    Bandit

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Silk cloth    Glass    Spices  
Heavenly horses    Ivory    Cotton cloth

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Buddhism    Islam

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Caravan  
Bactrian camel    Dromedary camel

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Oasis    Port city

# Silk Roads - Resources

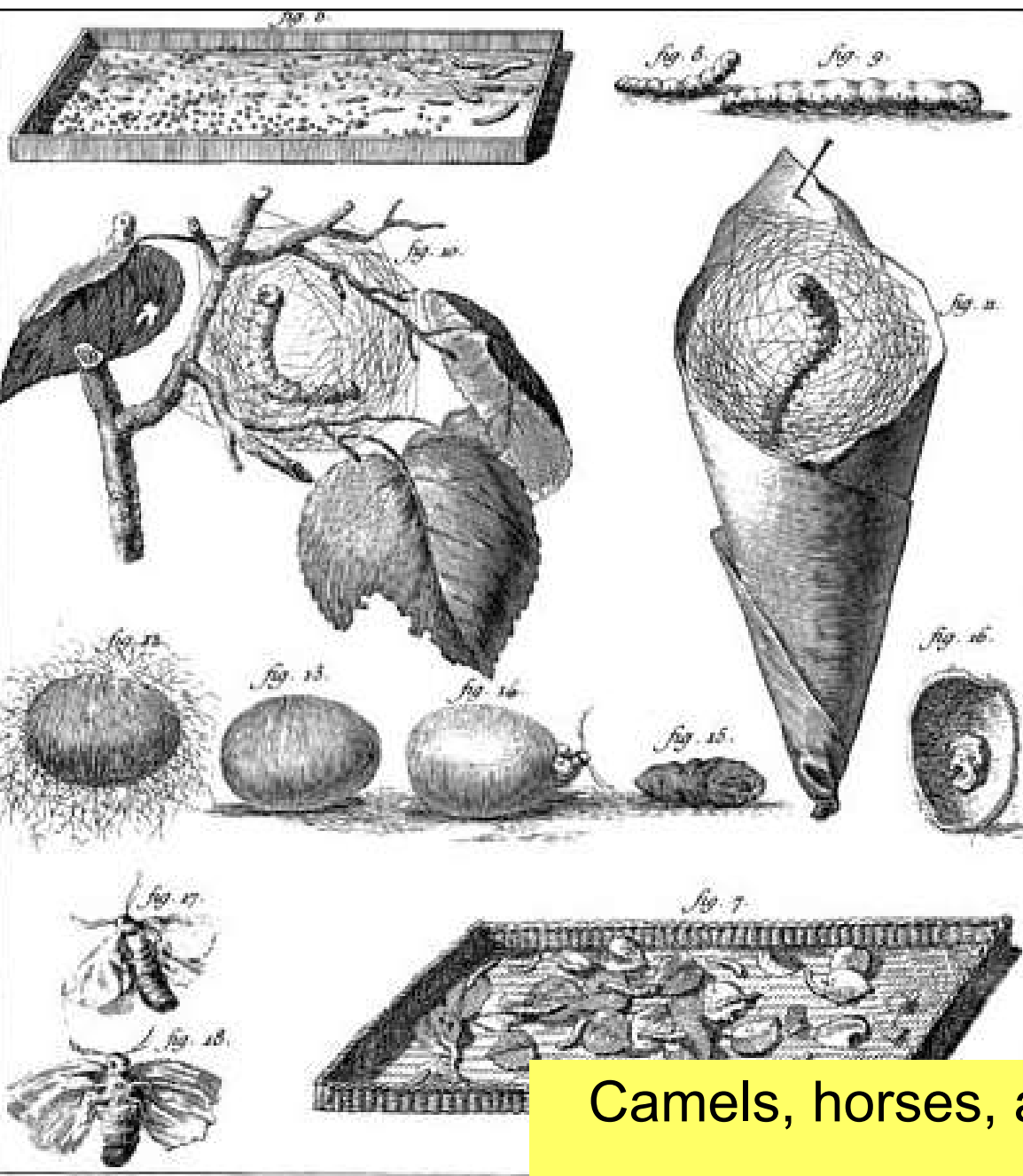
- This lesson is based on content found in ***The Silk Route, 7000 Miles of History*** by John S. Major
- Other books for children:
  - -- ***We're Riding on a Caravan, An Adventure on the Silk Road*** by Laurie Krebs
  - -- ***Stories from the Silk Road*** by Cherry Gilchrist
  - -- ***Caravan to America, Living Arts of the Silk Road*** by John S. Major & Betty J. Belanus (and forward by Yo-Yo Ma)

## Facts about the trade network known as “The Silk Road”

- It was more than one road - actually a network of caravan routes that stretched across the continent.
- Developed over time by many traders and groups.
- Almost no one traveled the whole route. Most people bought and sold goods on either end of one segment of the route.



# Animals



Camels, horses, and

# People

Bandits  
and  
Monks



# Places



Mountains,  
Deserts,  
Oases  
(plural of oasis)

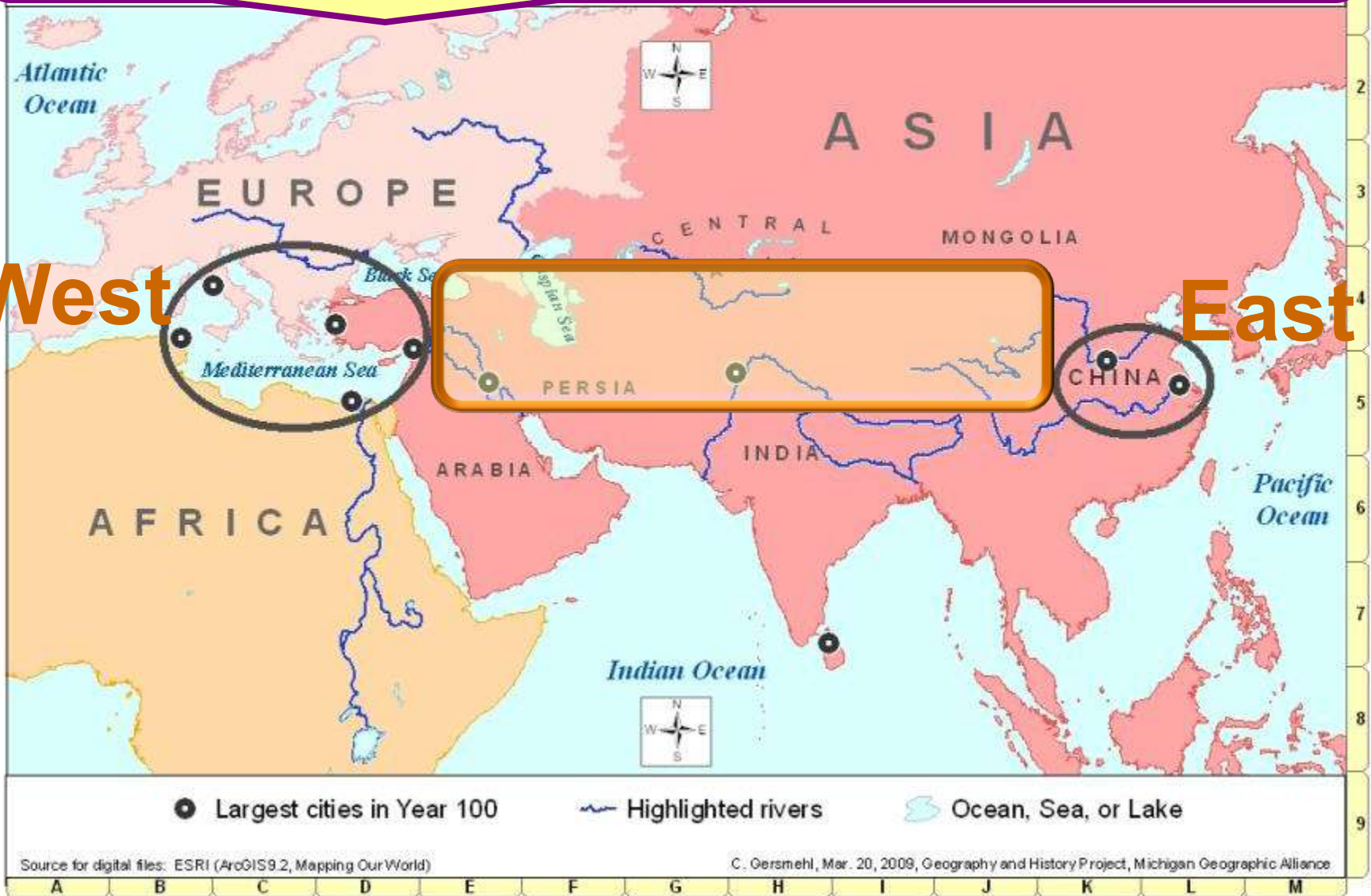




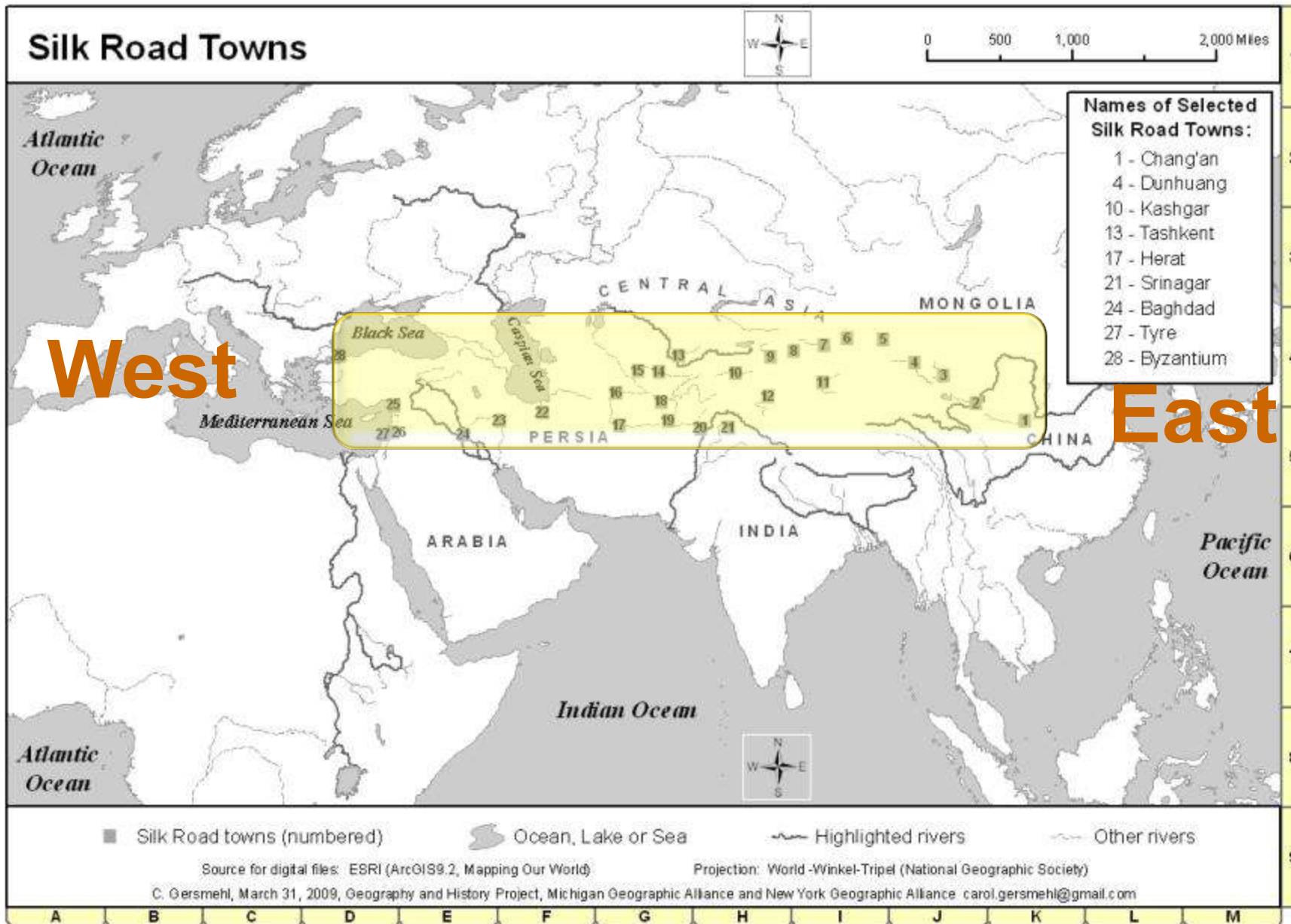
Silk Road towns connected the largest cities of the West and East in 100 CE.

West

East



Students may use this map to see Silk Roads towns between China and the Mediterranean Sea.



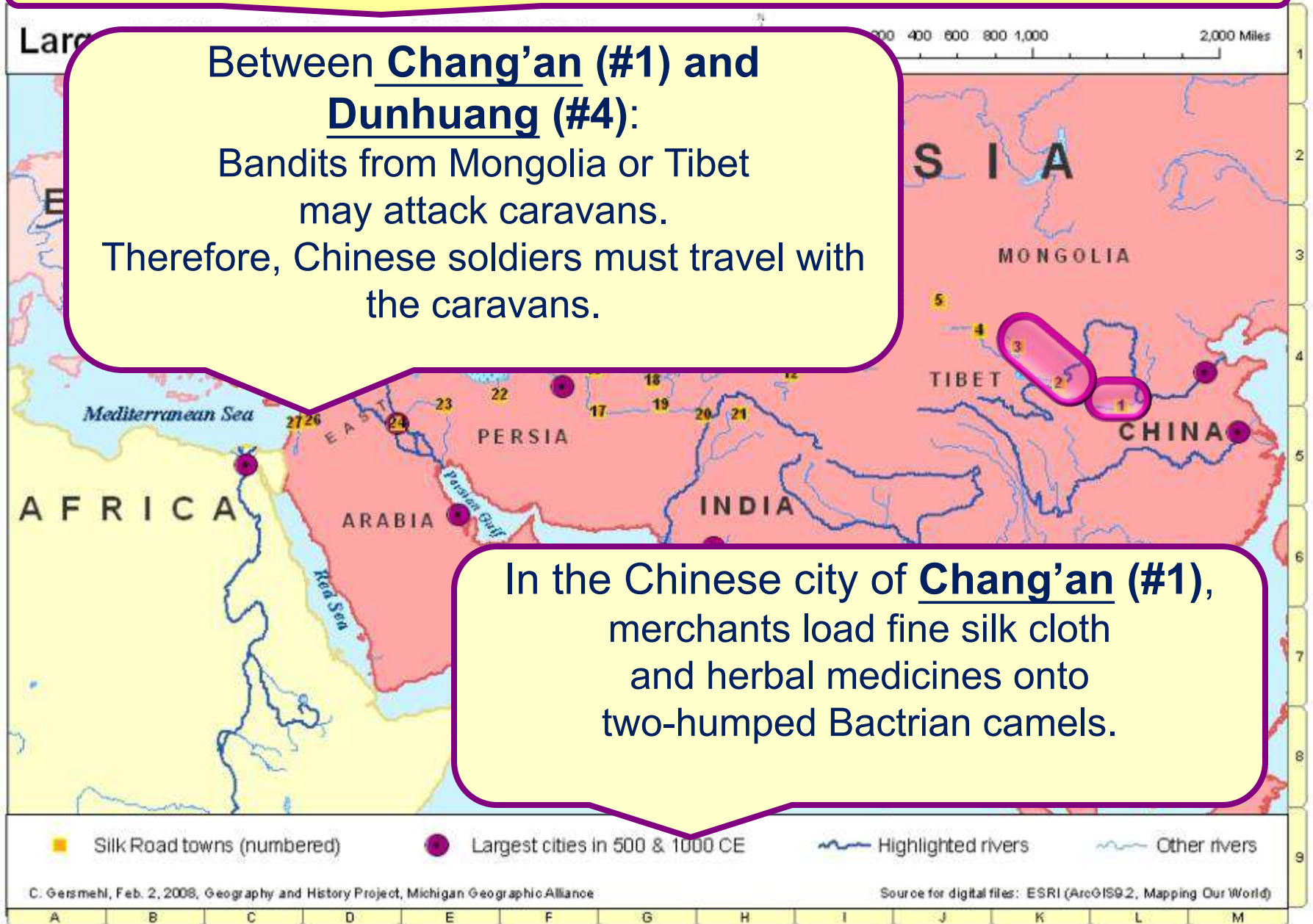
Our Silk Roads journey starts in China.

Between Chang'an (#1) and Dunhuang (#4):

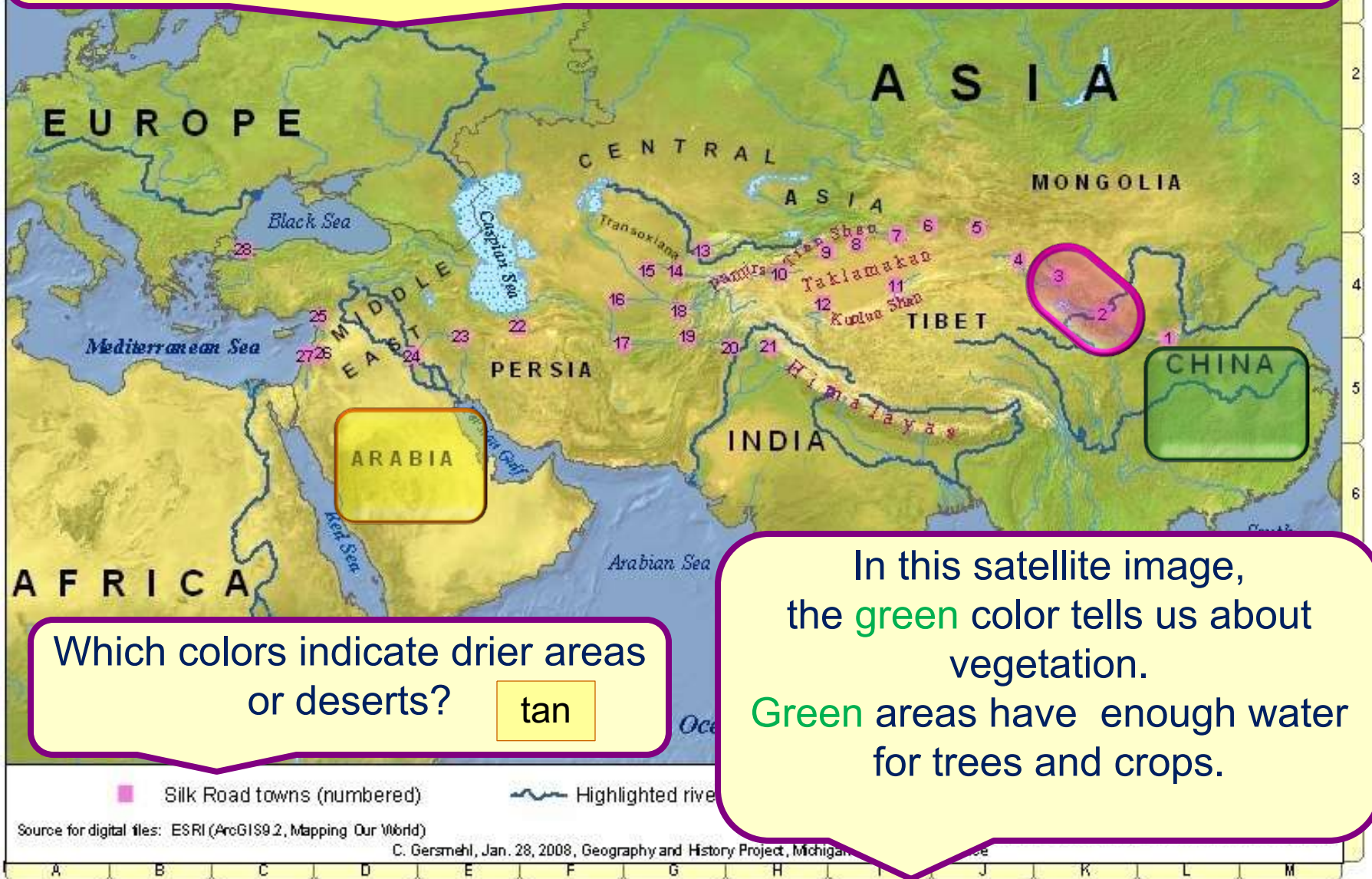
Bandits from Mongolia or Tibet may attack caravans.

Therefore, Chinese soldiers must travel with the caravans.

In the Chinese city of Chang'an (#1), merchants load fine silk cloth and herbal medicines onto two-humped Bactrian camels.



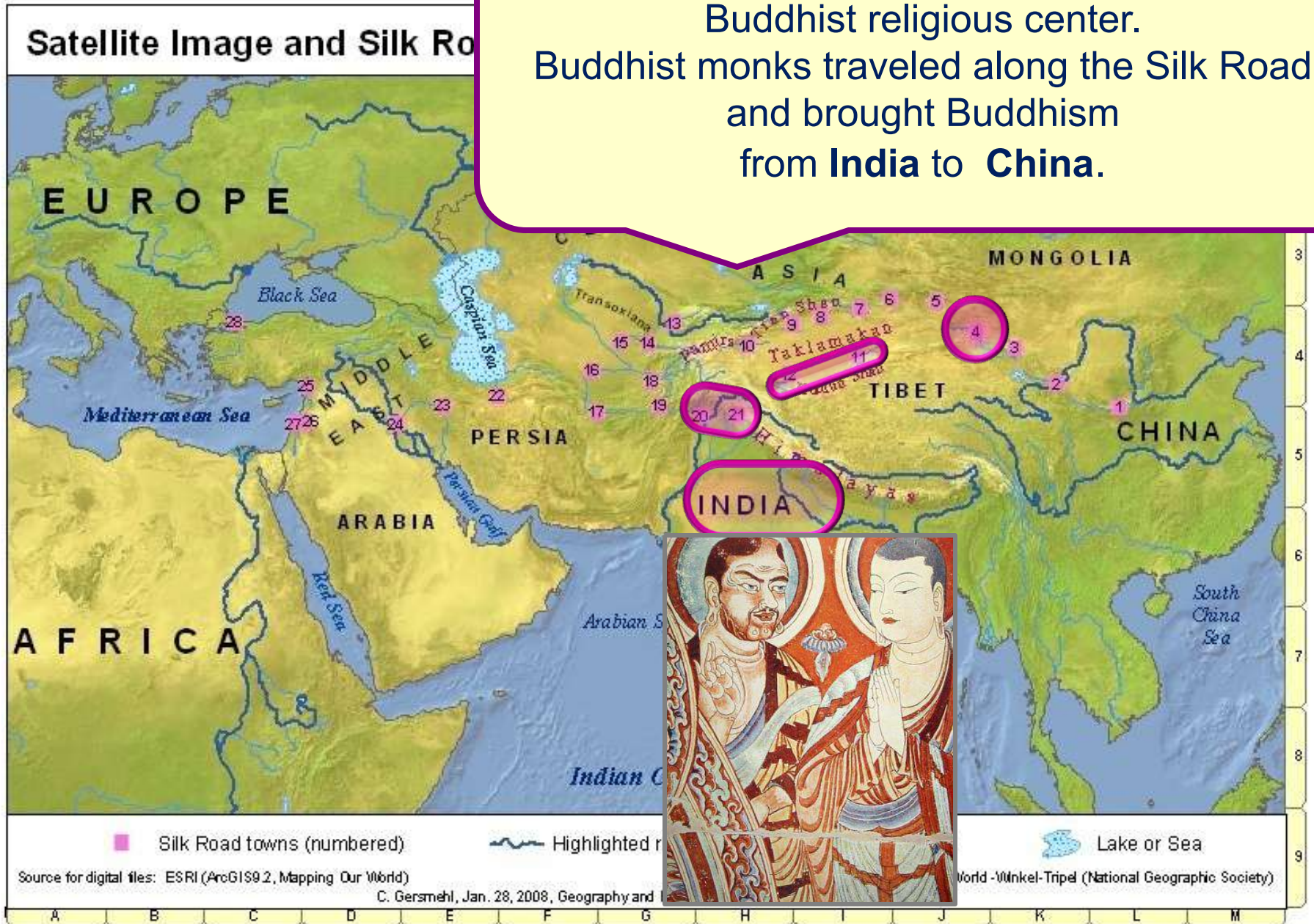
We will explore the Silk Roads using a satellite image.  
Find dry areas near the numbered Silk Road towns.



## Dunhuang (#4) is an important

Buddhist religious center.

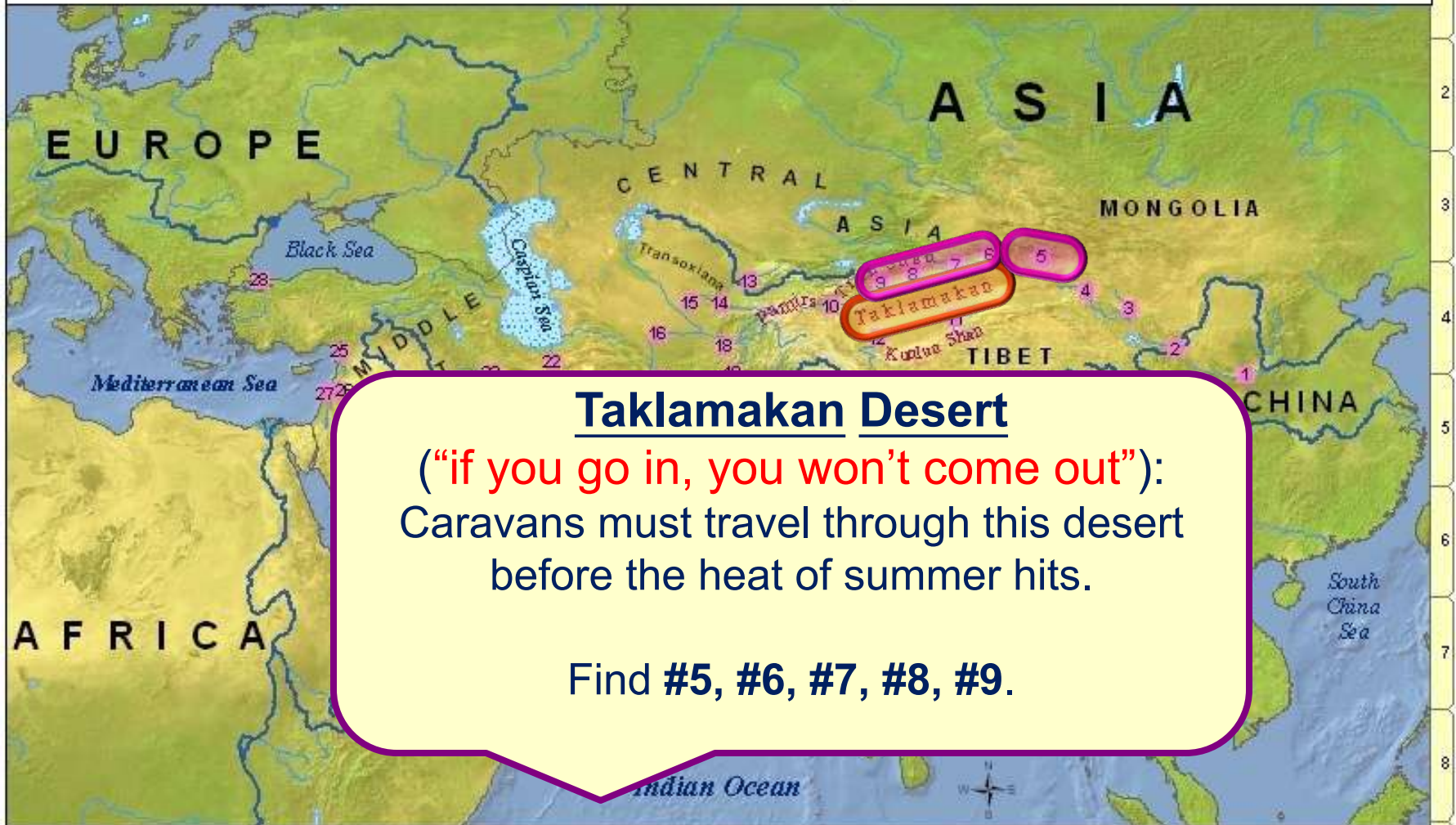
Buddhist monks traveled along the Silk Road and brought Buddhism from **India** to **China**.



# Satellite Image and Silk Road Towns



0 200 400 600 800 1,000 2,000 Miles



**Taklamakan Desert**  
 (“if you go in, you won’t come out”):  
Caravans must travel through this desert  
before the heat of summer hits.

Find **#5, #6, #7, #8, #9.**

■ Silk Road towns (numbered)      ~~~~~ Highlighted rivers      ~~~~~ Other rivers      🌊 Lake or Sea

Source for digital files: ESRI (ArcGIS9.2, Mapping Our World)

Projection: World-Winkel-Tripel (National Geographic Society)

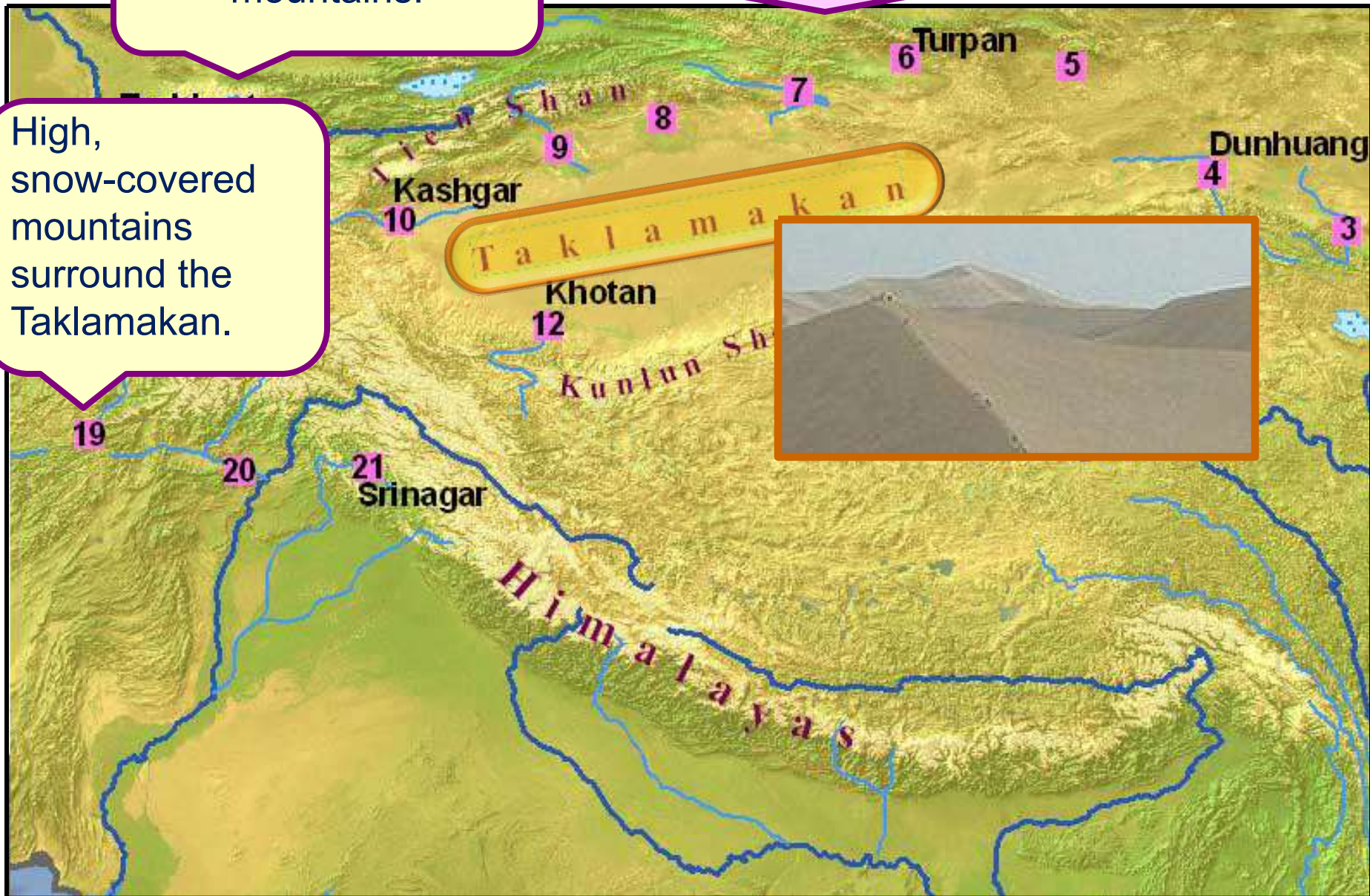
C. Gersmehl, Jan. 28, 2008, Geography and History Project, Michigan Geographic Alliance

A B C D E F G H I J K L M

Rivers carry melted snow down from high mountains!

Oasis towns are located along the edge of the **Taklamakan Desert**.

High, snow-covered mountains surround the Taklamakan.

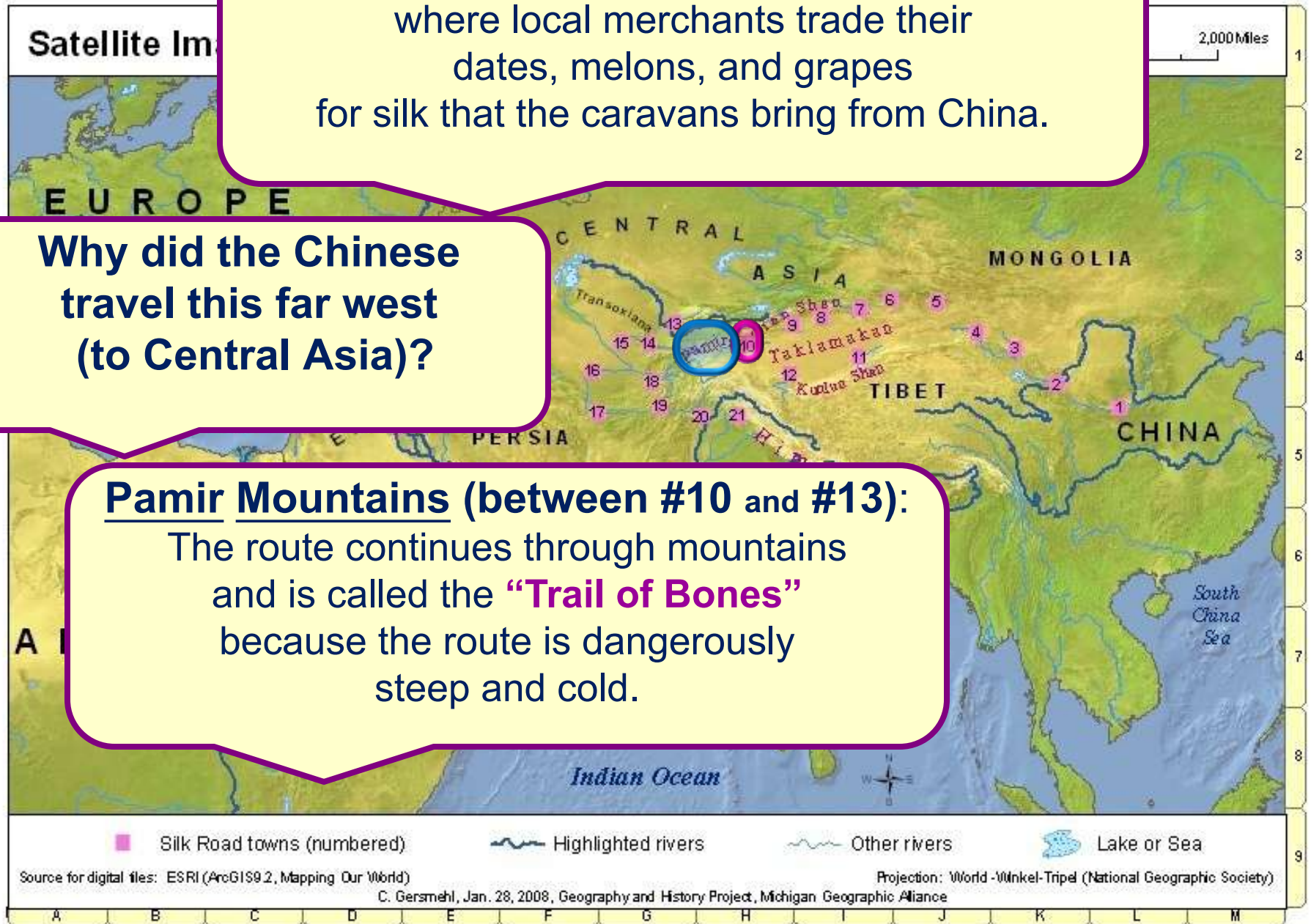


**Kashgar (#10)** is an oasis town, where local merchants trade their dates, melons, and grapes for silk that the caravans bring from China.

**Why did the Chinese travel this far west (to Central Asia)?**

**Pamir Mountains (between #10 and #13):**

The route continues through mountains and is called the **“Trail of Bones”** because the route is dangerously steep and cold.





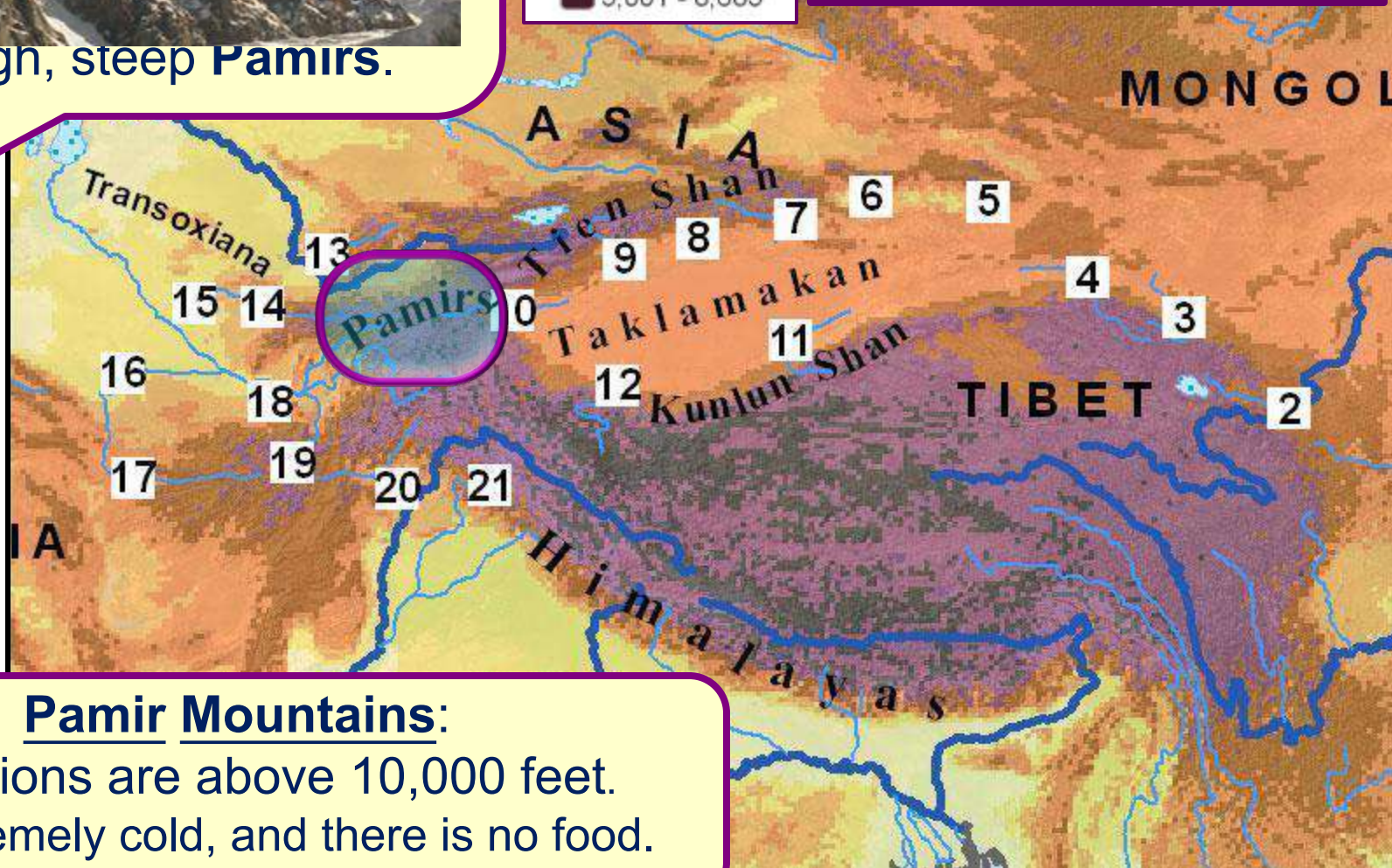


the high, steep **Pamirs**.

**Elevation (meters)**

- up to 100
- 101 - 300
- 301 - 700
- 701 - 1,500
- 1,501 - 3,000
- 3,001 - 5,000
- 5,001 - 8,685

The highest elevations are **purple** and dark gray.



**Pamir Mountains:**

Elevations are above 10,000 feet.  
It is extremely cold, and there is no food.

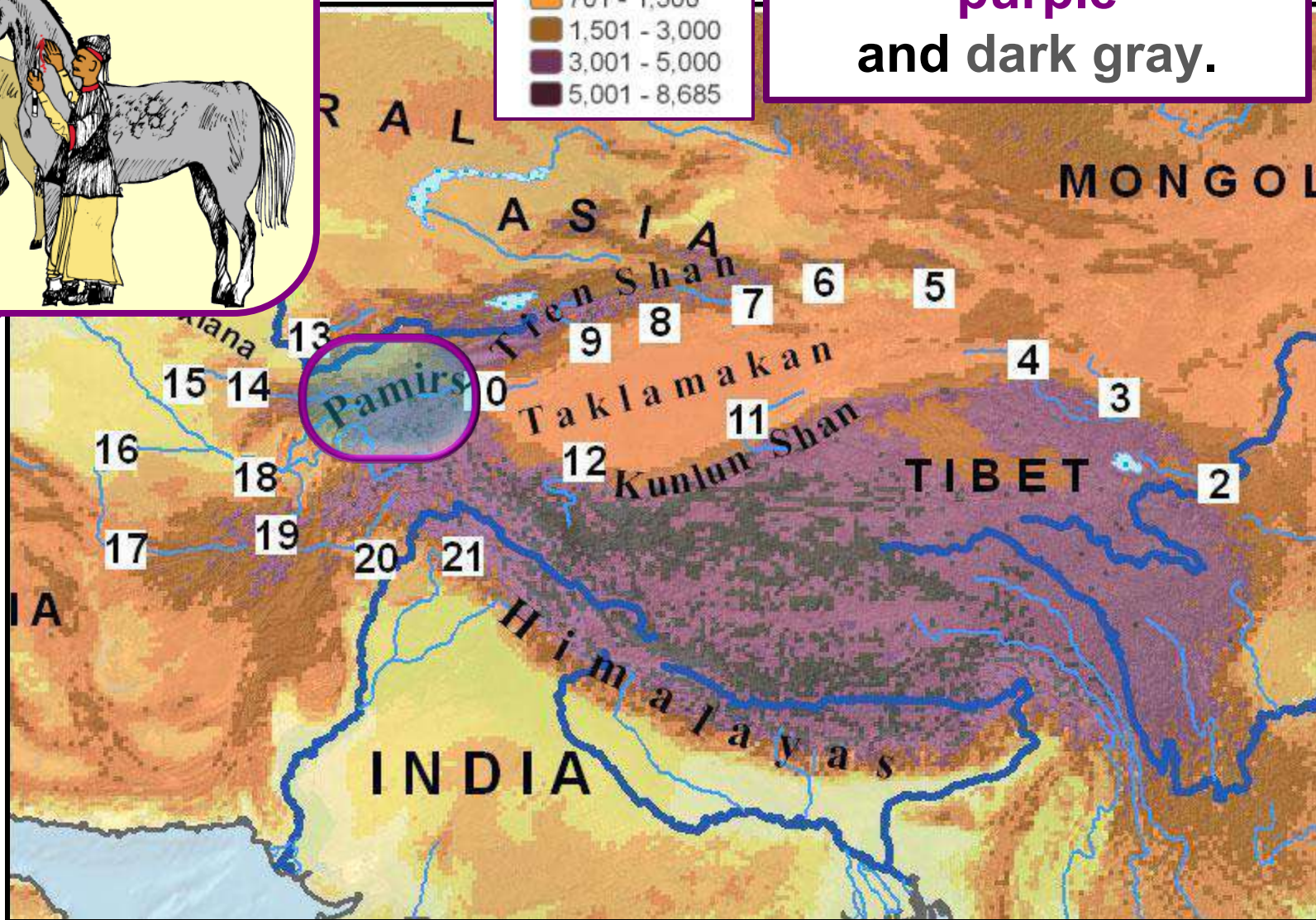
## Why cross the Pamirs?

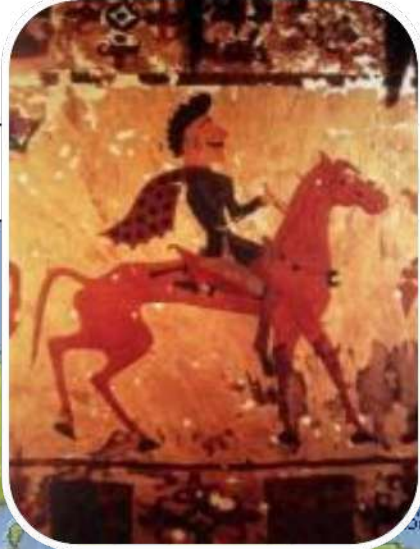


### Elevation (meters)

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In Tashkent (#13), Chinese military use silk to purchase the **strong horses** raised in the grasslands of **Central Asia**.



In Tashkent (#13), local merchants also sell fine locally made wool carpets as well as musical instruments and glass objects that have come from Europe and the Middle East.



■ Silk Road towns (numbered)     
 Highlighted rivers     
 Other rivers     
 Lake or Sea

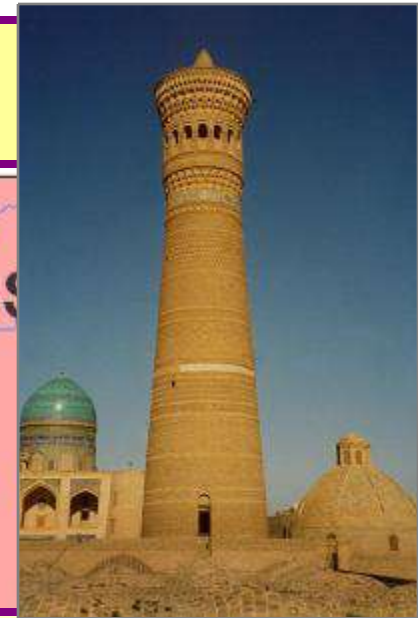
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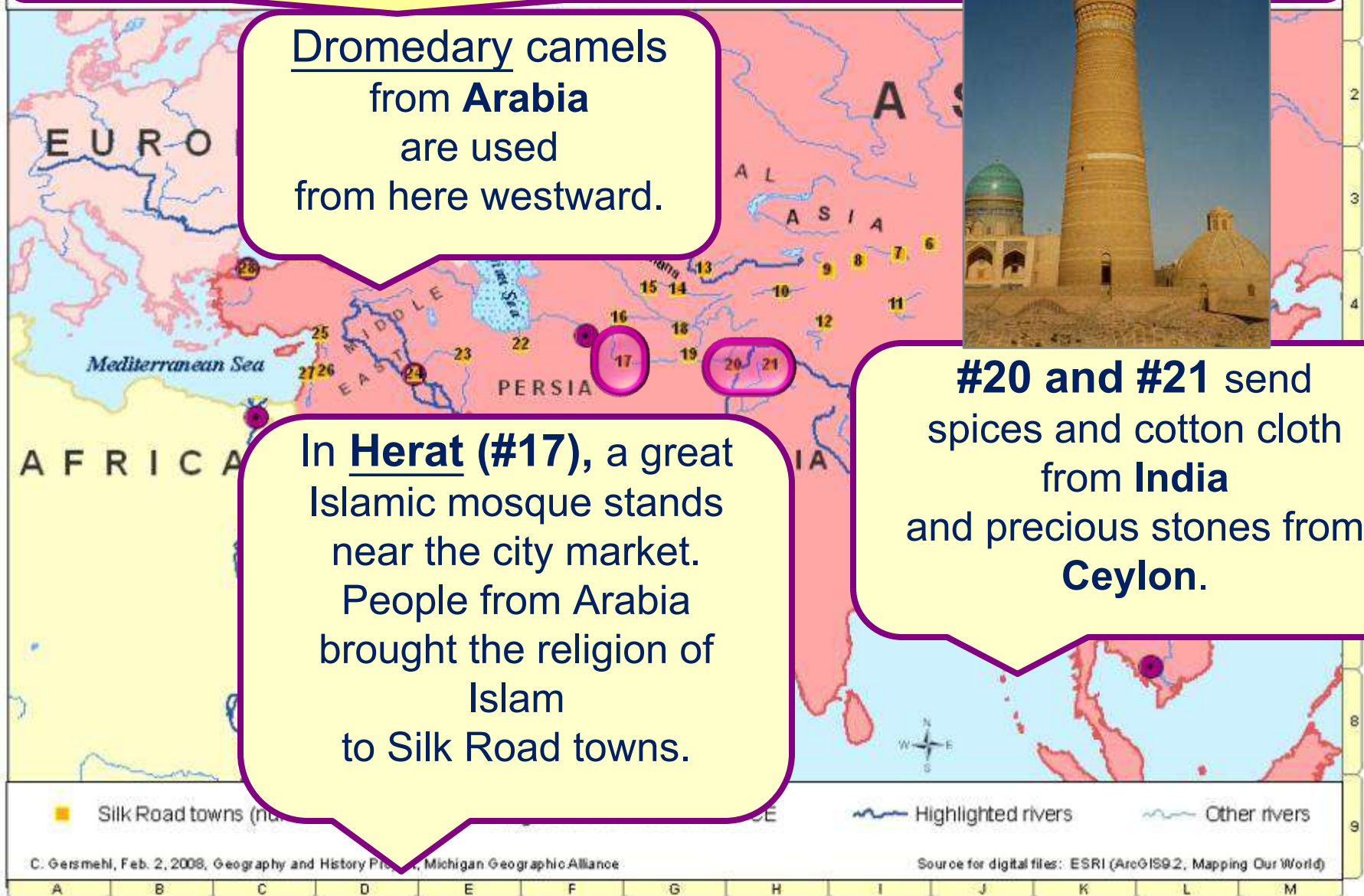
A B C D E F G H I J K L M

Dromedary camels  
from **Arabia**  
are used  
from here westward.



**#20 and #21** send  
spices and cotton cloth  
from **India**  
and precious stones from  
**Ceylon.**

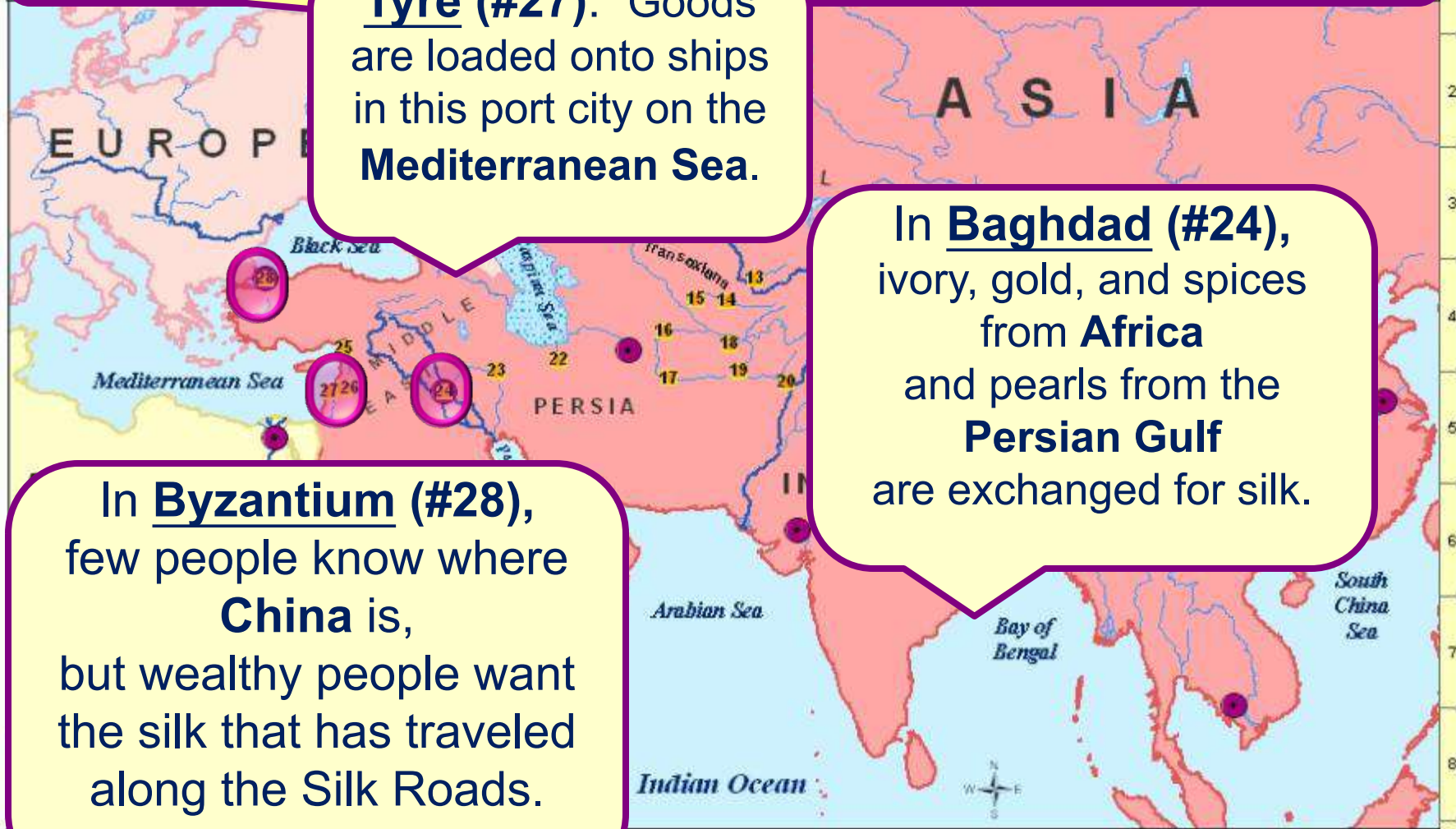
In Herat (**#17**), a great  
Islamic mosque stands  
near the city market.  
People from Arabia  
brought the religion of  
Islam  
to Silk Road towns.



Tyre (#27): Goods are loaded onto ships in this port city on the **Mediterranean Sea**.

In Baghdad (#24), ivory, gold, and spices from **Africa** and pearls from the **Persian Gulf** are exchanged for silk.

In Byzantium (#28), few people know where **China** is, but wealthy people want the silk that has traveled along the Silk Roads.

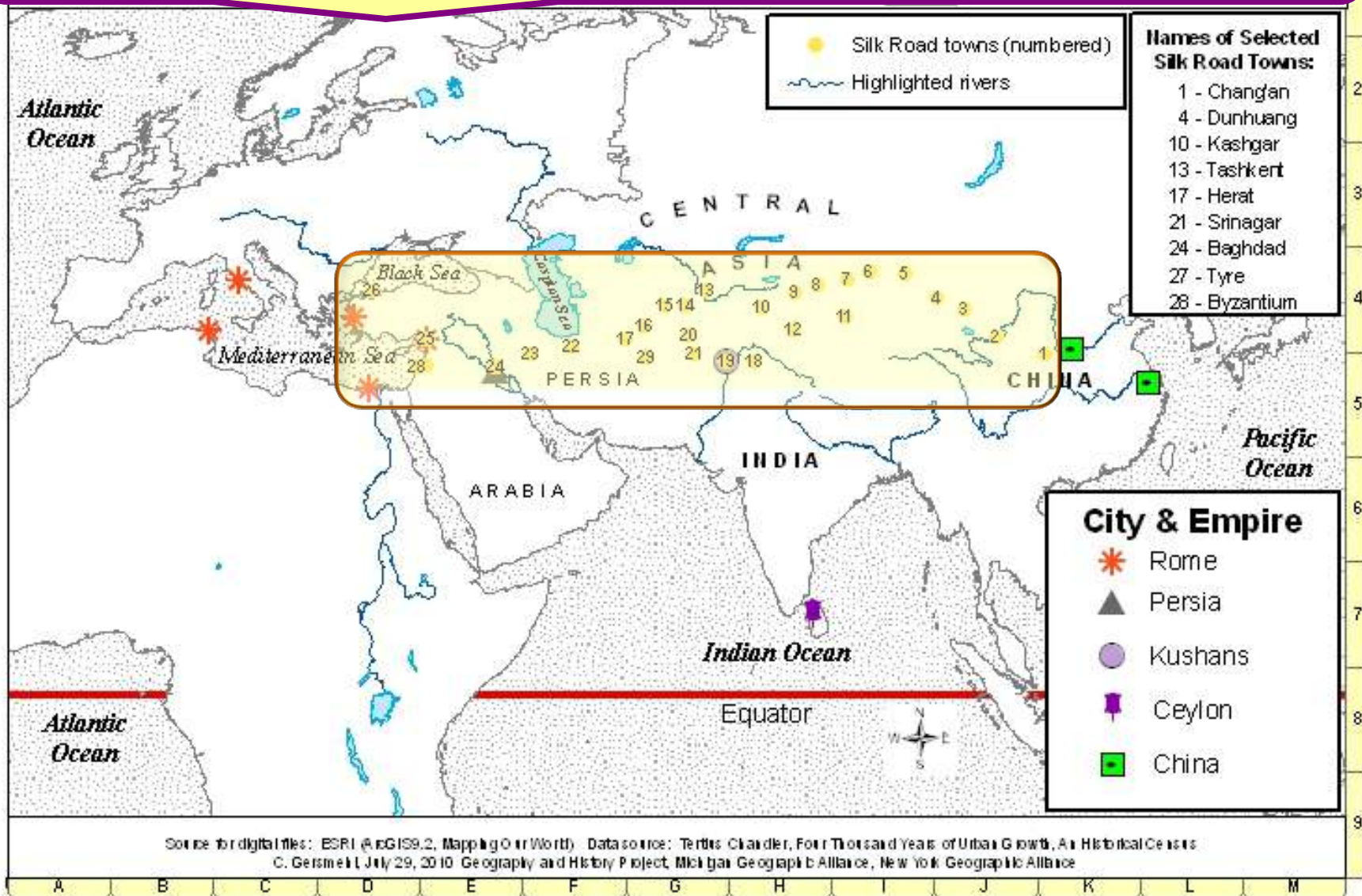


Cities in 500 & 1000 CE

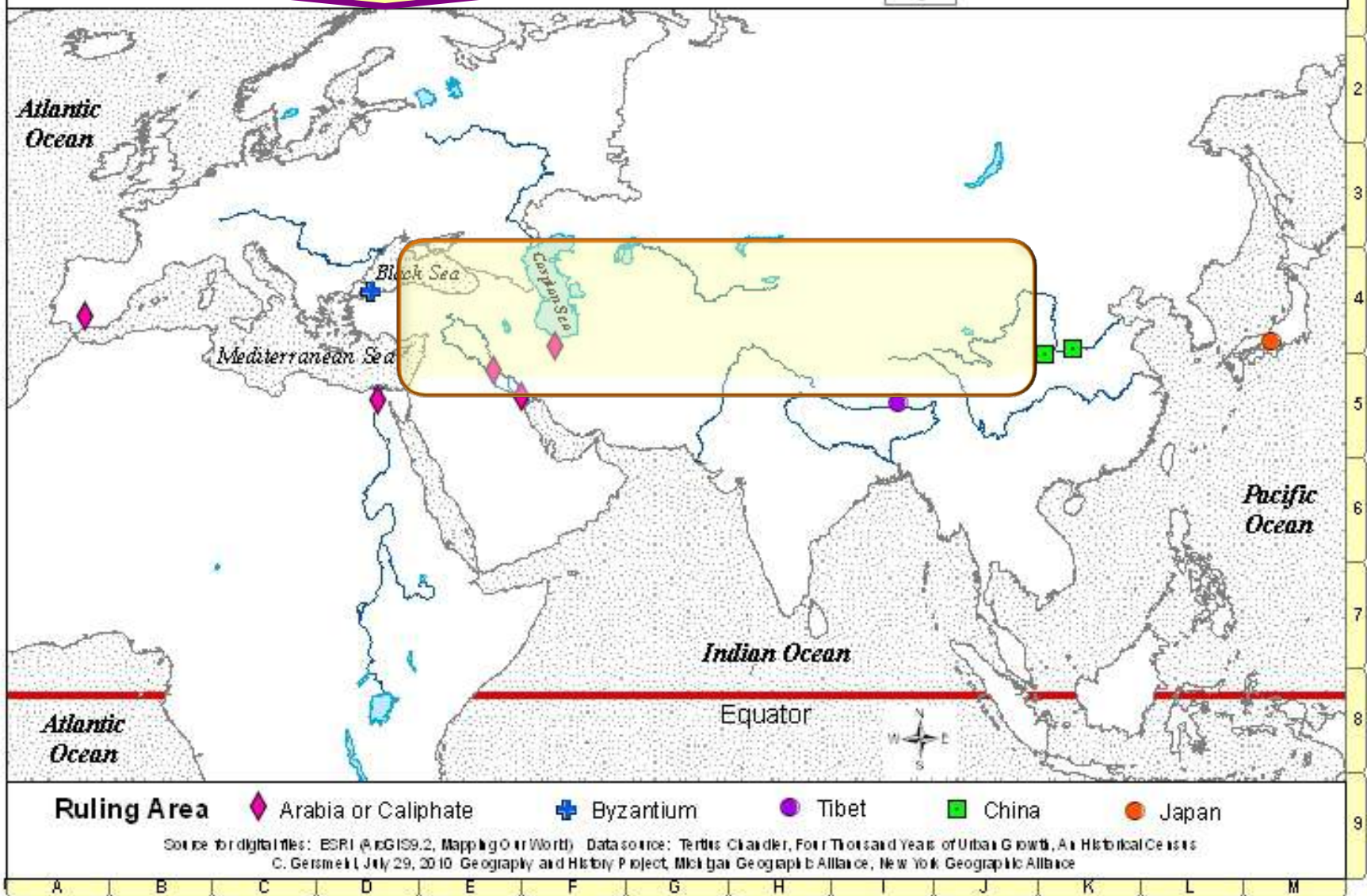
Highlighted rivers

Other rivers

# Silk Road towns connected the largest cities of the West and East in 100 CE.



Silk Road towns connected the largest cities of the West and East in 800 CE.



# Thanks to all of our collaborators!



New York Geographic Alliance

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