

DIACHRONIC MAPS OF SYRIAC CULTURES AND THEIR GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXTS



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INTRODUCTION

From its origins in Mesopotamia to its continuing development among a worldwide diaspora, the history of Syriac cultures and literature stretches widely across time and space. Conveying a range of nearly two millennia with its diversity of cultural contact from Asia to Africa to Europe and beyond is an inescapable challenge for geographers of Syriac cultures. It is impossible for traditional printed maps to exhaustively represent this extent. At the very least, one would need an entire atlas. Accordingly, the aim of these maps is more modest. Their primary purpose is to illustrate geographically the themes of this book, reflecting in a small way the current state of research on the historical geography of Syriac cultures. By extension, these maps offer a general, but abbreviated, cartography of Syriac cultures and their geographic contexts. As an aid for readers, this introduction explains the design principles of these maps and offers

references for additional resources. The study of Syriac cultural geography is only in its beginning stages. It is hoped that the maps will spur further research. In particular, they are being released under an open license that will allow them to be widely used and re-published.

Selections of sites for inclusion in these maps has been guided foremost by the visualisation needs of individual chapters rather than by an attempt to be comprehensive or representative of the most important locations. The editor, David Michelson, and the cartographer, Ian Mladjov, solicited suggestions from all chapter authors and prepared a series of maps to collectively illustrate the themes of the volume as a whole.

The majority of the maps are diachronic. Not all of the places listed together on any single map were in existence or of historical significance at the same time. The decision to reflect multiple eras on the same map was necessitated by the wide chronological coverage of the chapters in this book and the space constraints of the printed volume. For reasons of simplicity, all of the maps depict modern topography including the present courses of rivers and deltas rather than historically changing river beds and coastlines. This diachronic design helps the reader to situate historical locations relative to modern geography.

Students and researchers in search of greater detail than these maps can provide are referred to a number of resources for historical geography which have been used in preparing the maps. The most recent and comprehensive source for Syriac geography is *The Syriac Gazetteer* (Carlson and Michelson 2014). *The Syriac Gazetteer* is an online reference work continually updated by Syriaca.org and a part of the burgeoning scholarly field of digitally ‘enriched gazetteers’ (Berman, Mostern, and Southall 2016: 5). The editor and cartographer are especially grateful to Thomas A. Carlson, co-editor of *The Syriac Gazetteer*, for his essential and varied assistance in the production of the maps. A number of other digital gazetteers were also indispensable in the creation of the maps. Whenever possible, coordinates for plotting locations were derived from *Pleiades: A Gazetteer of Past Places* (Bagnall et al. 2017), the *iDAI.gazetteer* (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut 2017), and the *Digital Atlas of the Roman Empire* (Åhlfeldt 2015–17). The combined ‘linked open geodata’ of these gazetteers are accessible through the Pelagios Commons project’s *Peripleo* search tool (Pelagios Commons 2017; Simon, Isaksen, Barker, and de Soto Cañamares 2016). These online resources represent the rebirth or resurgence of the genre of ‘gazetteer’ as an essential geographic research tool for ancient and mediaeval historians in the digital age (Berman et al. 2016, 23).

The print maps published here have been prepared following the emerging standards for digital scholarship in historical geography. In particular, all place labels on the maps have been keyed to the unique identification numbers assigned to individual places in *The Syriac Gazetteer*. A place name index is provided on pages 824 ff. This index also contains cross-references to the corresponding numeric identifiers (e.g. Edessa is identified as ‘<http://syriaca.org/place/78>’). These identifiers not only allow for disambiguation of homonyms but also direct the reader to further information online through *The Syriac Gazetteer* and *Peripleo*. In technical terms, these unique identifiers are formatted as URIs (Uniform Resource Identifiers). Following

best practice for publishing linked data on the internet, the URIs of *The Syriac Gazetteer* also function as URLs (Uniform Resource Locators), or in common parlance ‘web addresses’. By following these URLs, readers may find coordinates, additional name forms (including in Syriac script), and further bibliography related to each place. In short, readers are encouraged to use the maps published in this book in close conjunction with the index since the URIs link to a number of other relevant scholarly publications.

The design and compilation of these maps has also relied heavily on the materials which served as the basis of *The Syriac Gazetteer*, especially the *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage* (GEDSH) and the maps created for it by the Ancient World Mapping Center at the University of North Carolina (Brock, Butts, Kiraz, and Van Rompay 2011: 471–80). The sources used for the GEDSH maps have also been consulted, especially the *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World* (Talbert 2000) and the relevant volumes of the *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients* (TAVO) (Sonderforschungsbereich 19 “Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients” 1977–94). These resources were compared with the recently published volume on Syria of the *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* (TIB) (Todt and Vest 2015). In constructing new maps, several other regionally focused geographic and cultural reference works were consulted including the work of T. A. Sinclair on Eastern Turkey (1987), the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, the *Encyclopedia of Islam* (EI2 and EI3), and the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* (Kotyk 2017).

A number of classic publications in Syriac studies also provided essential material for the maps, especially the works of the Syrian Orthodox patriarch I. A. Barsoum (2003), Ernst Honigmann (1951), and J. M. Fiey (see most notably 1965, 1993). These works remain invaluable for the study of Syriac cultural geography, but the exponential growth of Syriac studies in the last two decades now necessitates that they be used only in tandem with more recent literature (Brock 1995). For the Church of the East in Mesopotamia and the Iranian plateau, the maps published here rely heavily on the work of David Wilmshurst (2000, 2016) and Florence Jullien (2008, 2015) and also benefitted from brief personal communications with those same scholars. The map of Neo-Aramaic dialects (see also page 267) was based on the personal direction of Geoffrey Khan and drew in part upon the dialect database he has prepared (Khan 2017).

The above resources notwithstanding, it should be noted that the study of Syriac historical geography is very much in its infancy. For some regions (such as the Arabian peninsula and Central Asia), the maps published here are among only a handful of maps ever printed which focus on the history of Syriac cultures and literature in those areas. Because the historical geography of Syriac Christianity in Arabia and the Gulf has only begun to receive scholarly attention, the summary scholarship of R. A. Carter offered a useful starting point (Carter 2008; see the literature review in Bonnéric 2015). Because of the lack of previous scholarship and the number of languages involved, the maps of Central Asia, East Asia, and India would not have been possible without the extensive suggestions, revisions, and editorial assistance of Thomas A. Carlson, Mark Dickens, Daniel King, István Perczel, and Hidemi Takahashi (all errors of course remain the responsibility of the editor). In addition, recent publications by Li Tang and D. W. Winkler (Tang 2002; Tang and Winkler 2009, 2013),

Takahashi (2013), William Tabbernee (2014), T. H. F. Halbertsma (2015), Dickens (2015), P. G. Borbone and P. Marsonne (2015) were consulted as well as the administrative atlas of Kerala published as a result of the 2011 census of India (Gopala Menon, Singh, Rastogi, and Chandramouli 2012).

Many of these Asian historical locations remain poorly documented in the archaeological literature. When coordinates could not be found in scholarly sources, preliminary data was collected from ‘crowd-sourced’ databases such as Geonames, Wikimapia, and Wikipedia. In all of these cases, however, the coordinates were also visually verified or corrected by the editor or the cartographer based on satellite imagery. For these difficult-to-plot locations, the editor is particularly grateful to the cartographer, Ian Mladjov, for his skill and determination in ensuring accuracy of the locations.

As noted above, the history of Syriac cultures is marked by the breadth of its contact with other cultures and languages, e.g. Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Latin, Malayalam, Mongol, Persian, Turkic, and more. One challenge in the preparation of these maps has been to achieve some limited uniformity in labels across so many languages. In general, the transliteration guidelines of the *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary* have been used (GEDSH 2011: x). These guidelines were also adopted by *The Syriac Gazetteer* and thus are now the prevailing standard for Syriac place names. To facilitate usage, names with widely accepted English spellings, or having a form commonly used in Syriac scholarship, have been retained as exceptions to the rules (e.g. Edessa, Dailam, or Navekath). Otherwise, labels derived from Syriac have been Romanised according to the transliteration system of GEDSH, which for proper nouns requires representing š with *sh* and not marking long vowels. Gemination is generally not marked. In labelling places, preference has been given to Syriac transliteration rather than Arabic or Persian (thus Dinawar not Dīnavar). For Romanisation of other Middle Eastern languages, the transliterations system of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* has largely been followed. Here again, deference has been shown to English usage and common forms, hence some names have been vocalised with Persian rather than Arabic vocalisation (e.g. Hormuz). Chinese names have been rendered using the pinyin system but without tone marks. Modern place names in India are listed as they appear in the official atlas of the 2011 census (Gopala Menon et al. 2012). In some cases, deference to popular spelling in the Romanisation of Malayalam has meant varying usage of *u/oo*, *y/j*, etc. In several cases, exceptions or inconsistencies may also be found on account of the particular needs of the chapter concerned or requests made by authors in this volume. In particular, the Neo-Aramaic labels on the ‘Map of Neo-Aramaic Usage’ reflect the transliteration style found in the corresponding chapter rather than following the above systems.

Labels for physical features are marked in italics (e.g. *Tigris R.*). Labels for regions have been set in capital letters (e.g. in full capitalisation: BETH QATRAYE). These labels include provinces, states, and ecclesiastical jurisdictions, such as dioceses where boundaries may have fluctuated over time. When a diocese shares a name with a city, however, only the city and not the region is listed (e.g. Beth Lapat). For simplicity, types of settlements are not differentiated (e.g. villages, cities, monasteries). Uncertain places are indicated either by a hollow point (for uncertain coordinates) or by a question mark appended to the label (for uncertain names). When a place has been

known by widely varying names, alternate names may be listed separated by ‘/’ (e.g. Martyropolis/Maipherqat). The ‘/’ is also used in a few cases to attach the name of a containing region in order to clarify homonymous settlements (e.g. Yinchuan/Xingqing/Ningxia).

To conclude, it should be noted that monographs and articles on Syriac topics have often lacked maps due to the scarcity of available maps. While the maps published here are only a first step towards correcting this scholarly gap, these maps have been expressly designed to address this problem through the use of open-access licenses. All of the maps published in this volume are licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. They may be freely re-used, reproduced, and re-published with proper attribution to the map editor (David Michelson) and the cartographer (Ian Mladjov) along with the publication details of this volume. In addition, high-resolution digital files of the maps will be permanently available for reuse through the digital repository of the Jean and Alexander Heard Library at Vanderbilt University.

Finally, the editor would like to note that credit for the creation of these maps is shared with the cartographer, Ian Mladjov of Bowling Green State University, who not only plotted the locations and labels but also researched unidentified locations and suggested the inclusion of many relevant places. His cartography was accomplished using Global Mapper software to plot the raw data and projection, and using Corel-Draw for the final design. Once the maps were completed, additional proofreading was undertaken by Stephanie Fulbright, Julia Liden, Elizabeth LeFavour, Will Potter, and Charlotte Lew of Vanderbilt University, to whom the editor is also extremely grateful.

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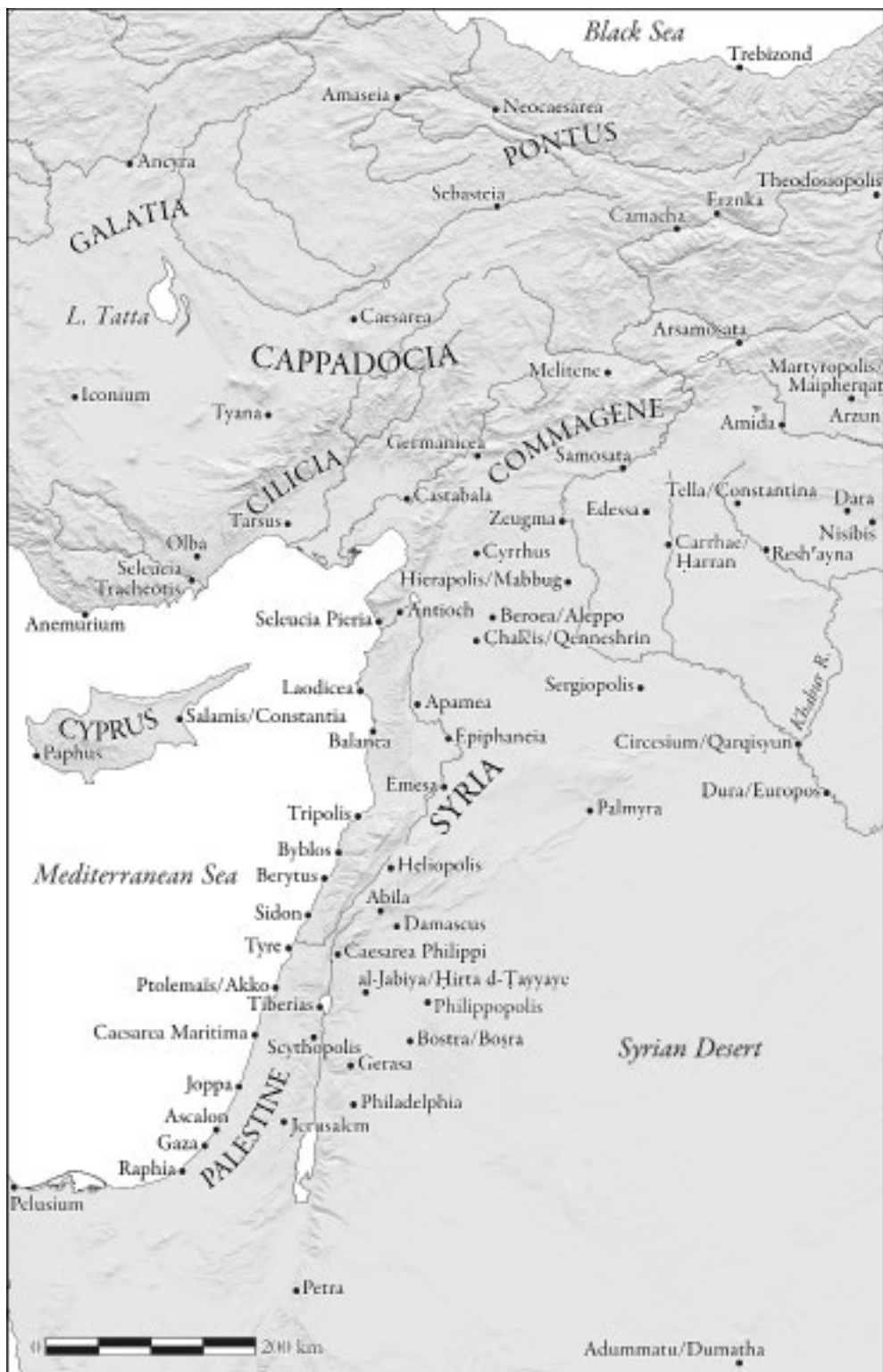
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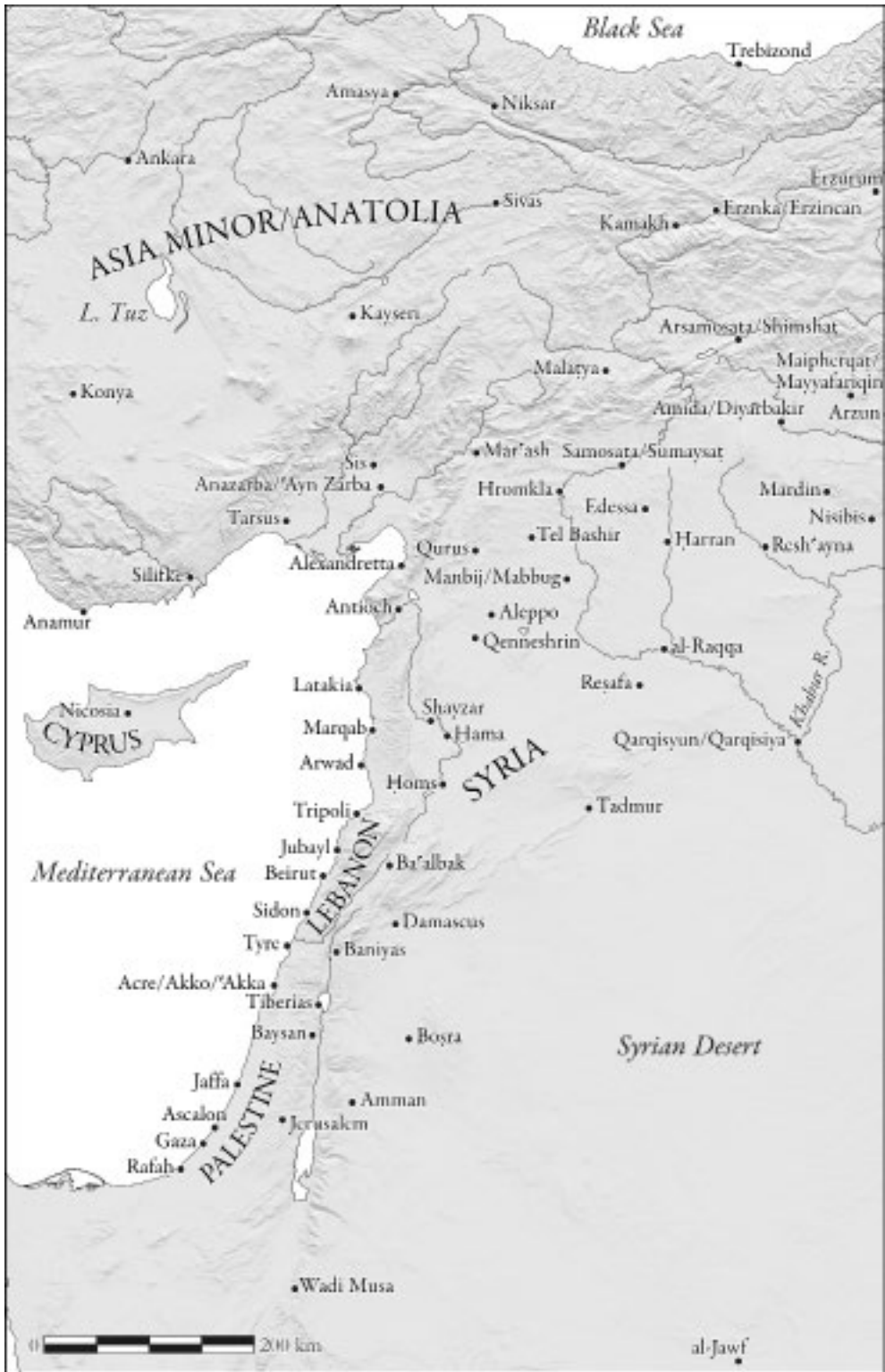
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Map 1 Near East before the Islamic Conquest



Map 1 (continued)



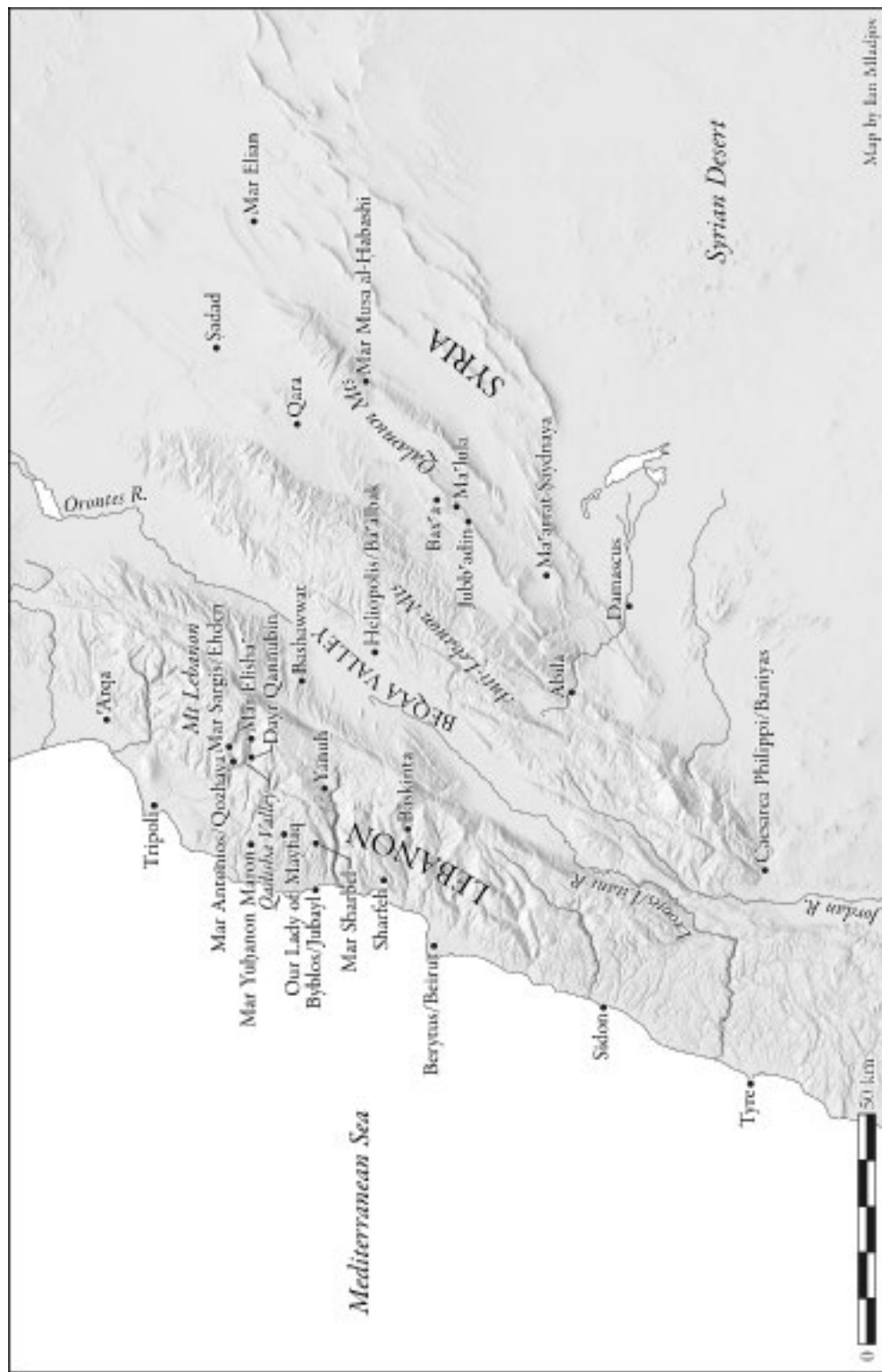
Map 2 Near East following the Islamic Conquest



Map 2 (continued)



Map 3 Northern Syria, Cilicia, and Cyprus



Map 4 Lebanon and southern Syria



Map 5 Egypt and Palestine



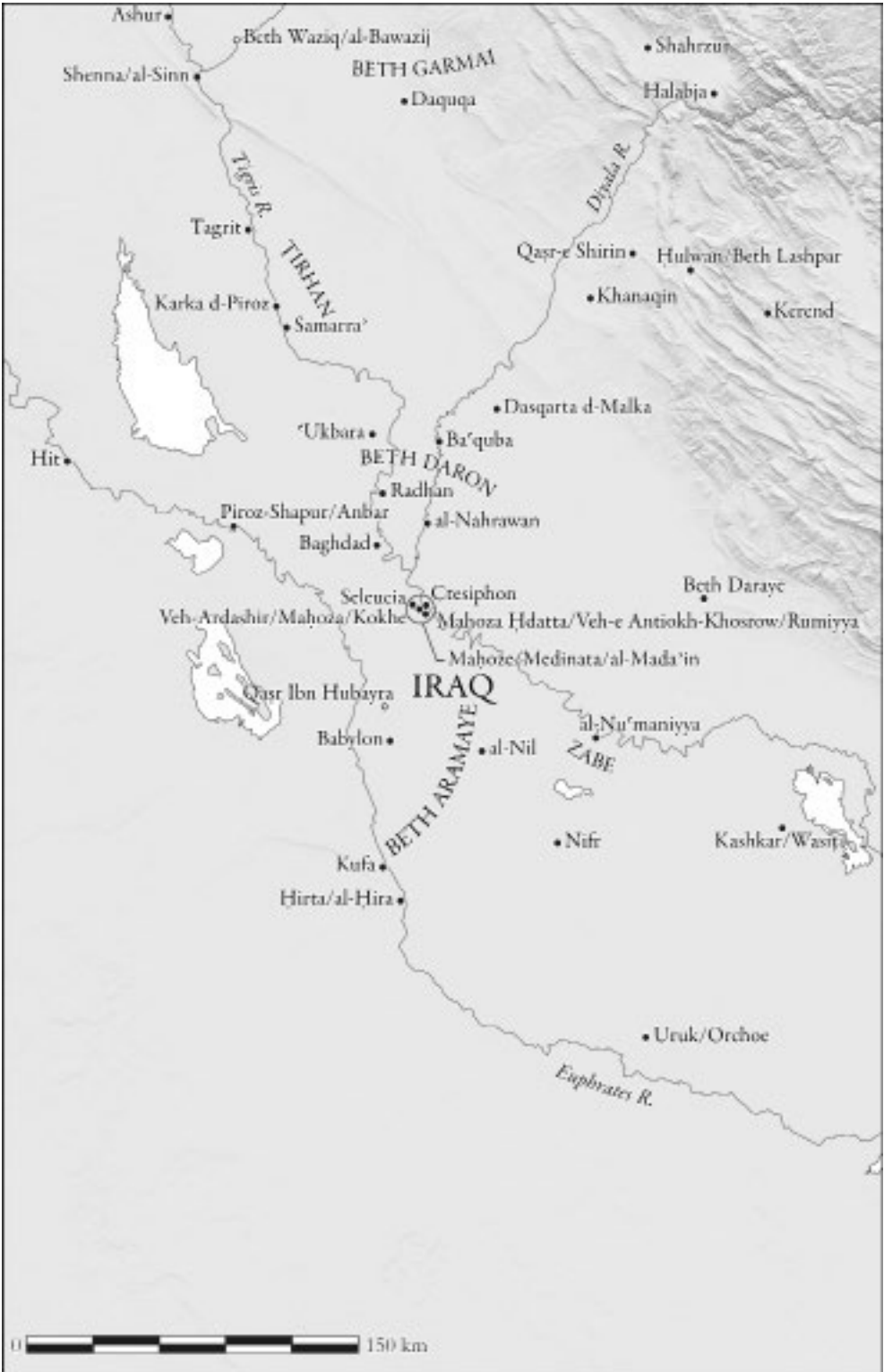
Map 6 Arabia and the Red Sea



Map 7 Northern Mesopotamia



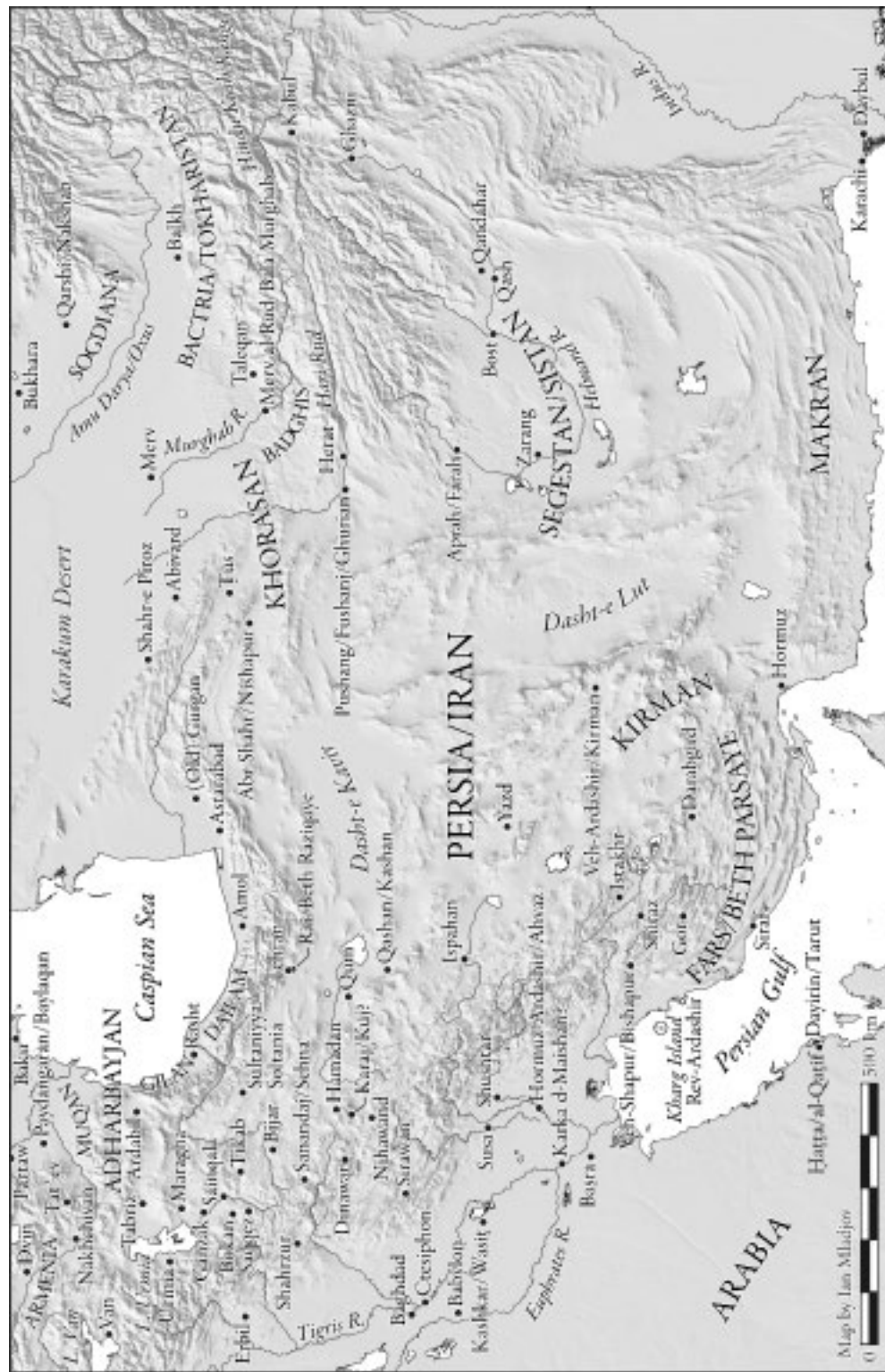
Map 7 (continued)



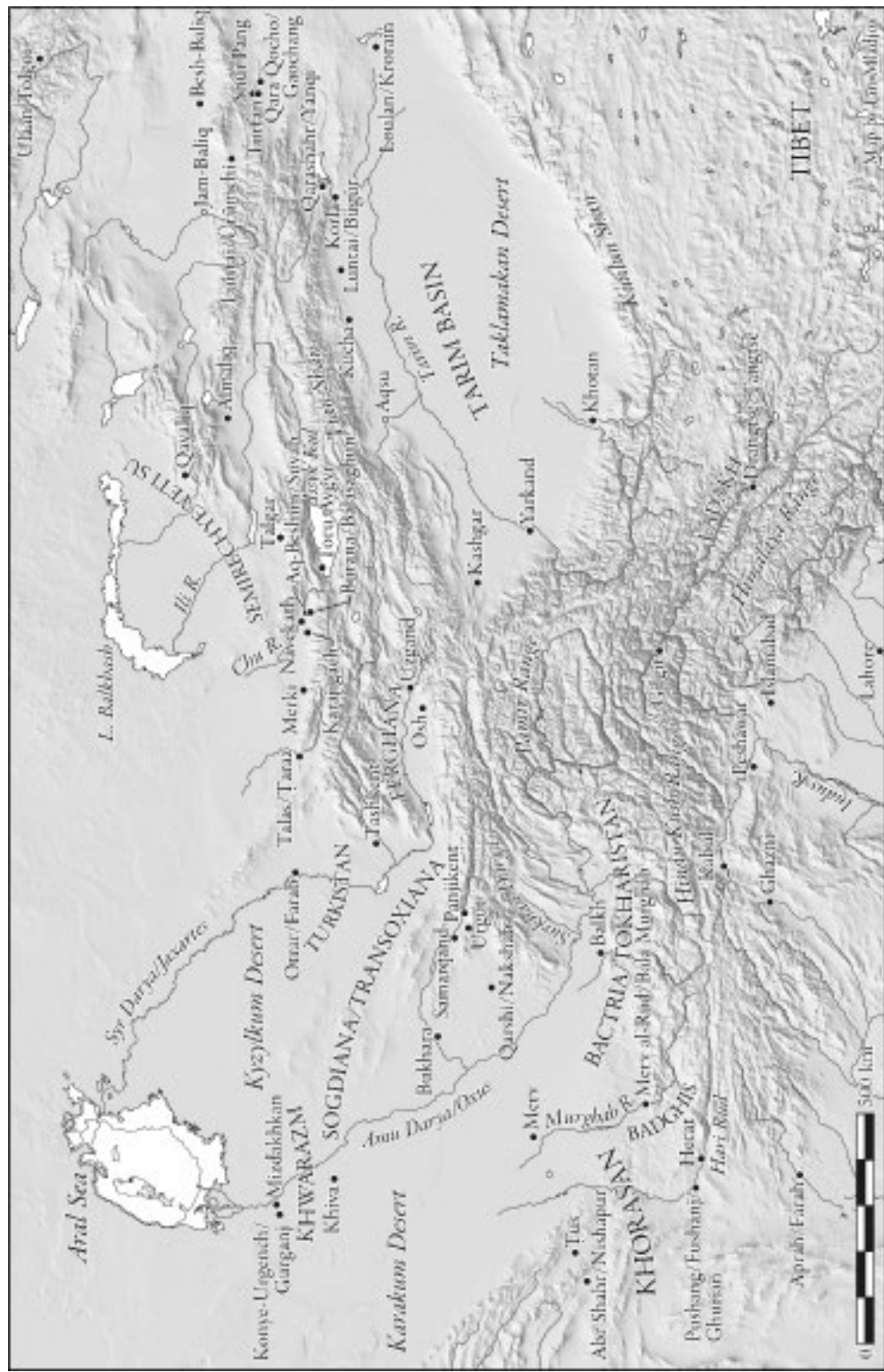
Map 8 Southern Mesopotamia



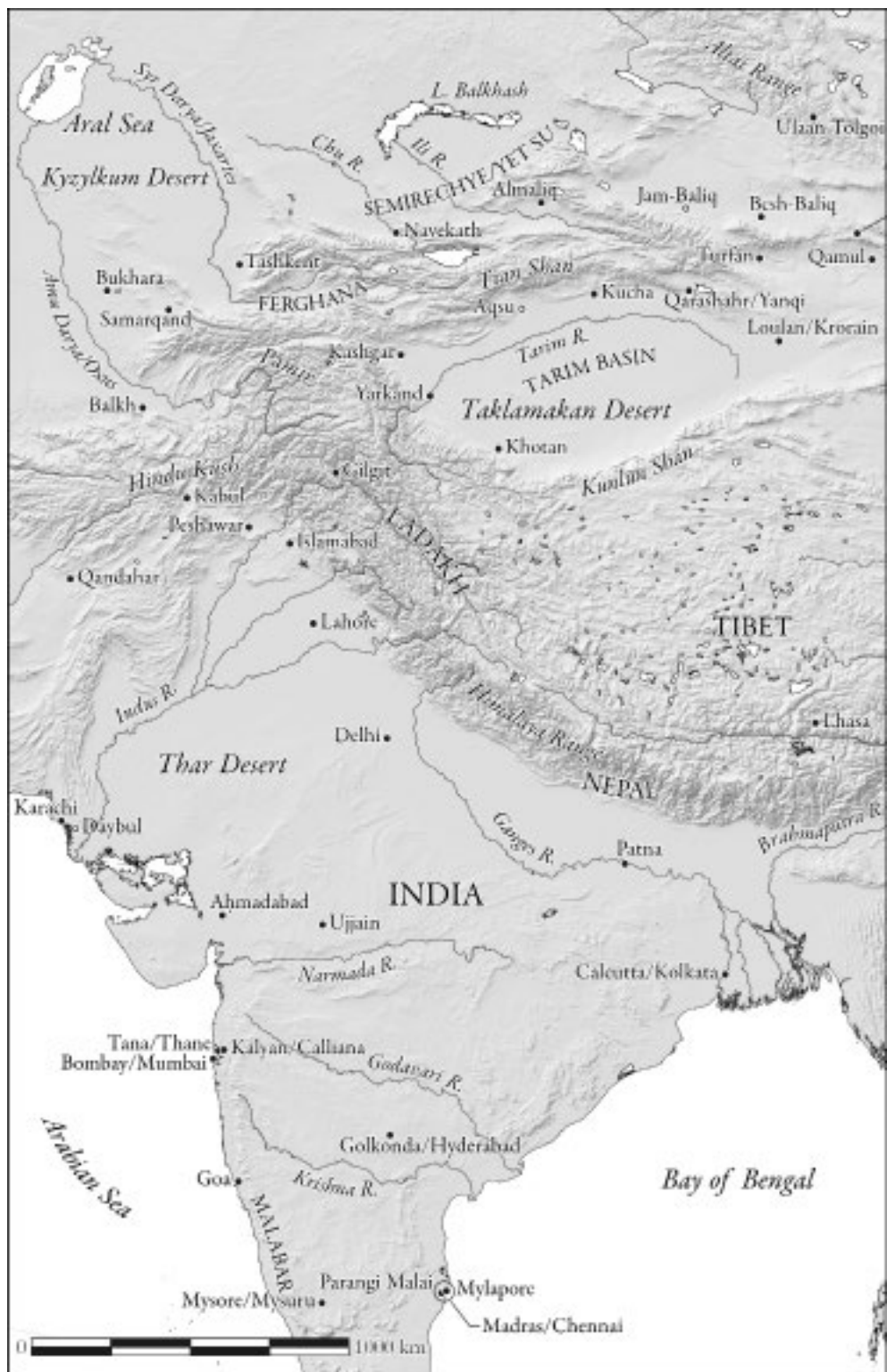
Map 8 (continued)



Map 9 Iranian Plateau



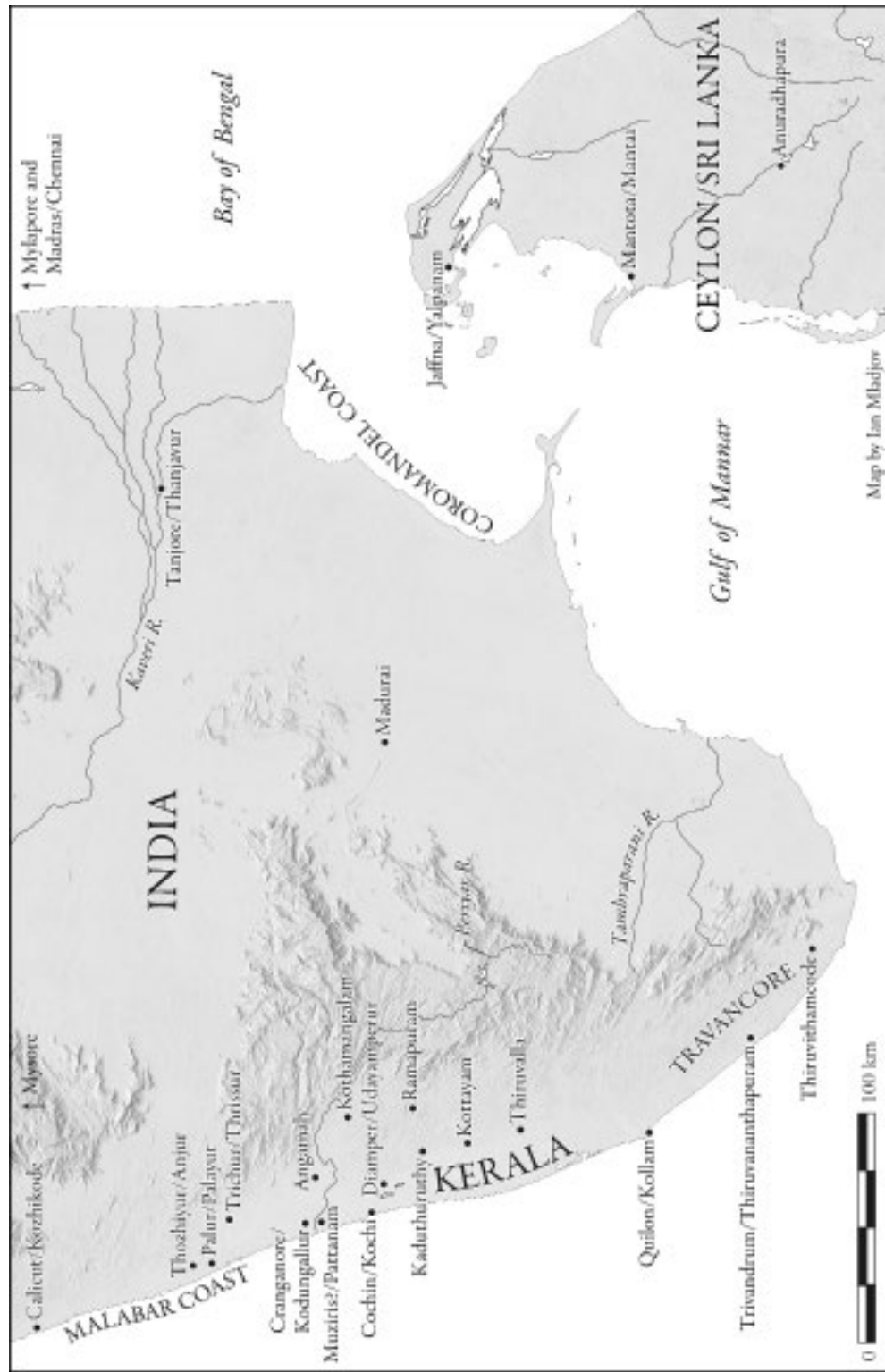
Map 10 Central Asia



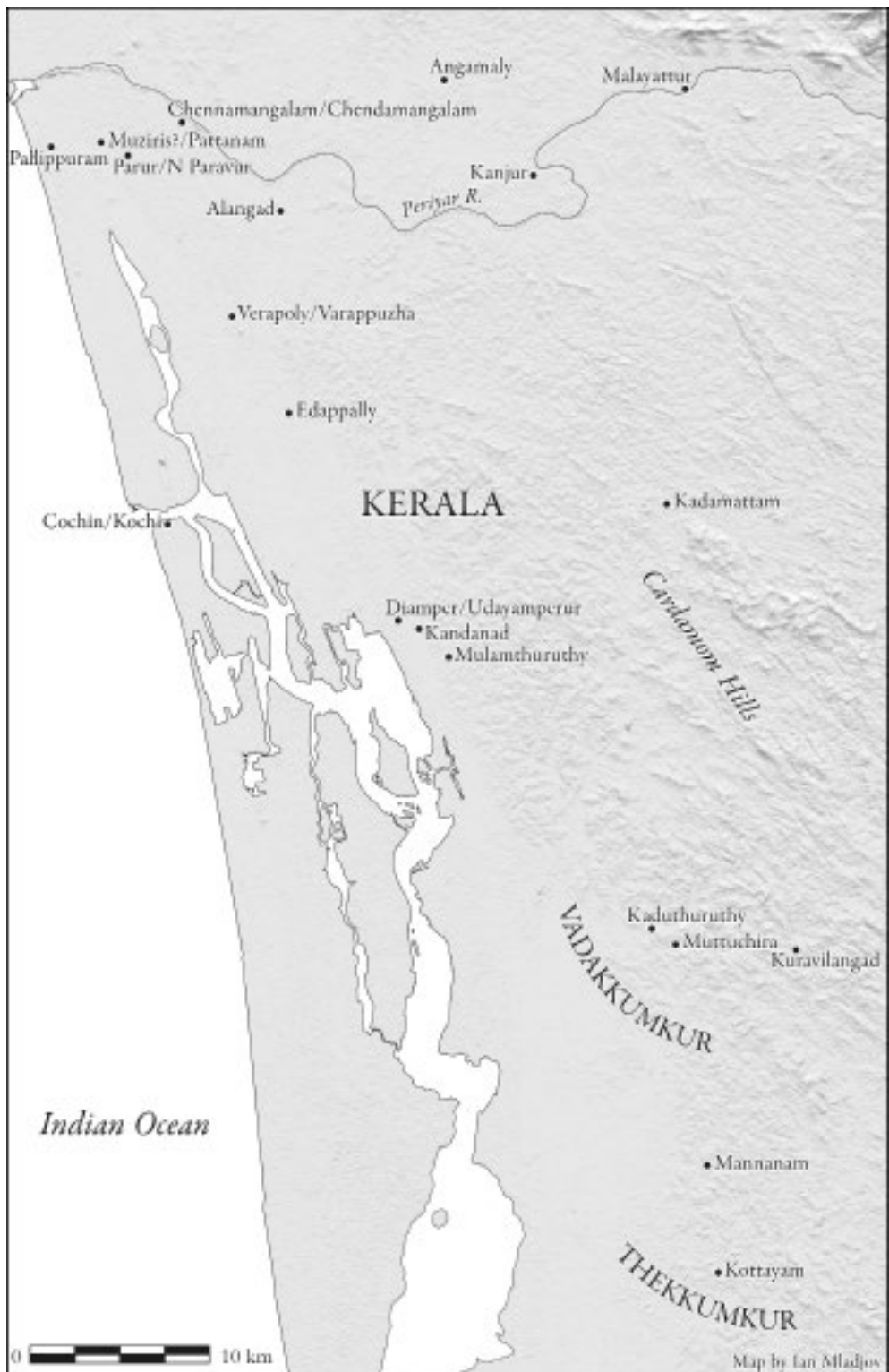
Map 11 East Asia



Map 11 (continued)



Map 12 Southern India and Sri Lanka



Map 13 Central Kerala



Map 14 Map of Neo-Aramaic Usage also found on p. 267