

MEETINGS WITH REMARKABLE MEN

Some of the places and the events occurring in Gurdjieff's stories are real but little if anything is known of his characters (if they ever existed) and some of the episodes are most unlikely. However, Gurdjieff prepares us in the Introduction for a kind of writing that is more eastern than western. In his chapter on his father, he tells us that his early childhood was filled with stories from *The Thousand and One Nights* and some familiarity with that classic tale is helpful. In the chapter on Professor Skridlov he announces he is going to use an ancient style of writing called 'creation of images without words', a tantalising clue to what he is doing in this book. Almost certainly, he is invoking the sense of 'mentation by form' in place of our entrenched 'mentation by word' while, of course, still using words. The two kinds of mentation are suggested in many ways throughout 'Meetings'; for example by the story Father Giovanni tells of the travelling preacher-monks brothers Sez and Ahl.

The stories evoke images or forms that speak to our essential nature. John Henderson speaks of a passage in *Herald of Coming Good* in a way that can illuminate what this means in all of Gurdjieff's books:

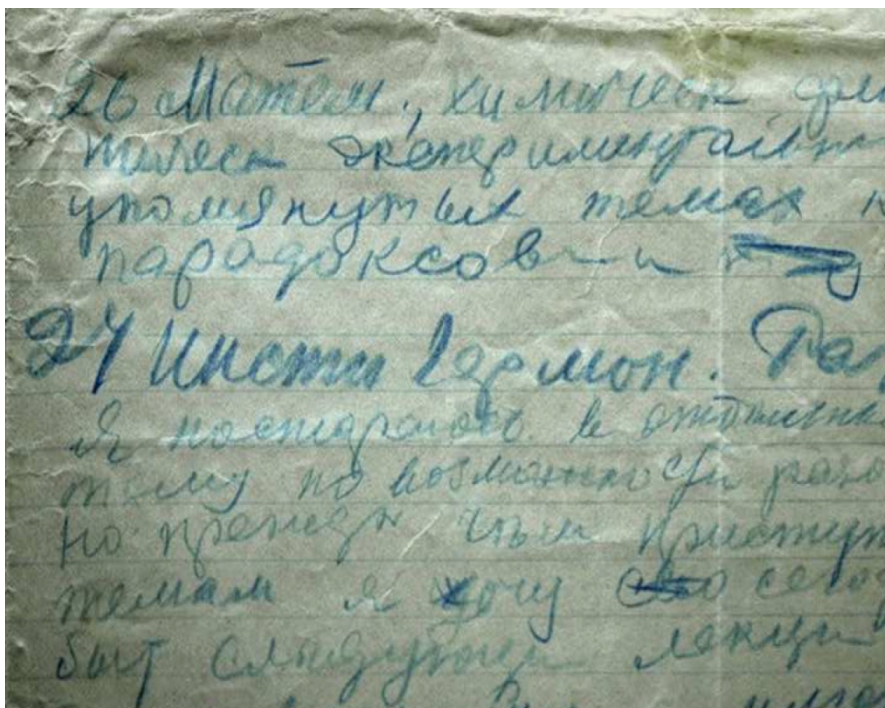
.... this time, to my amazement, as I read and reread that material, the words slowly turned into a "moving picture" - the images created by that script *began to move* and I became an audience to a "play", a wordless mime*



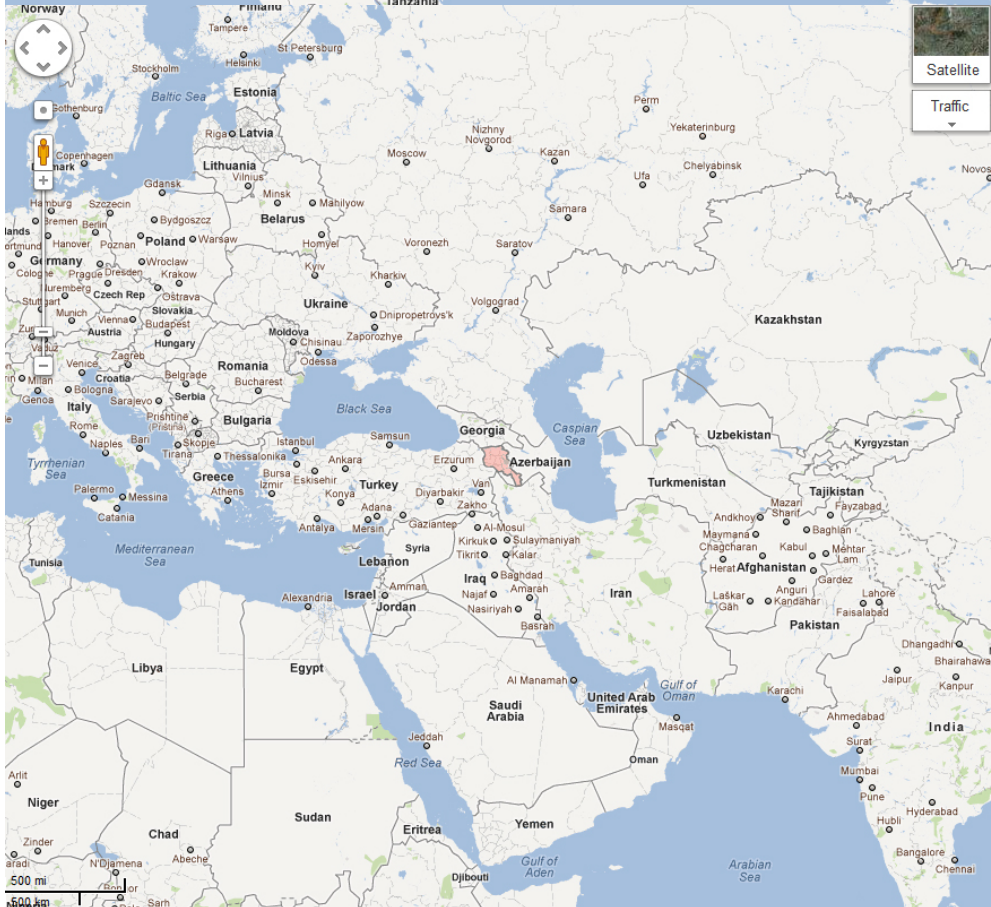
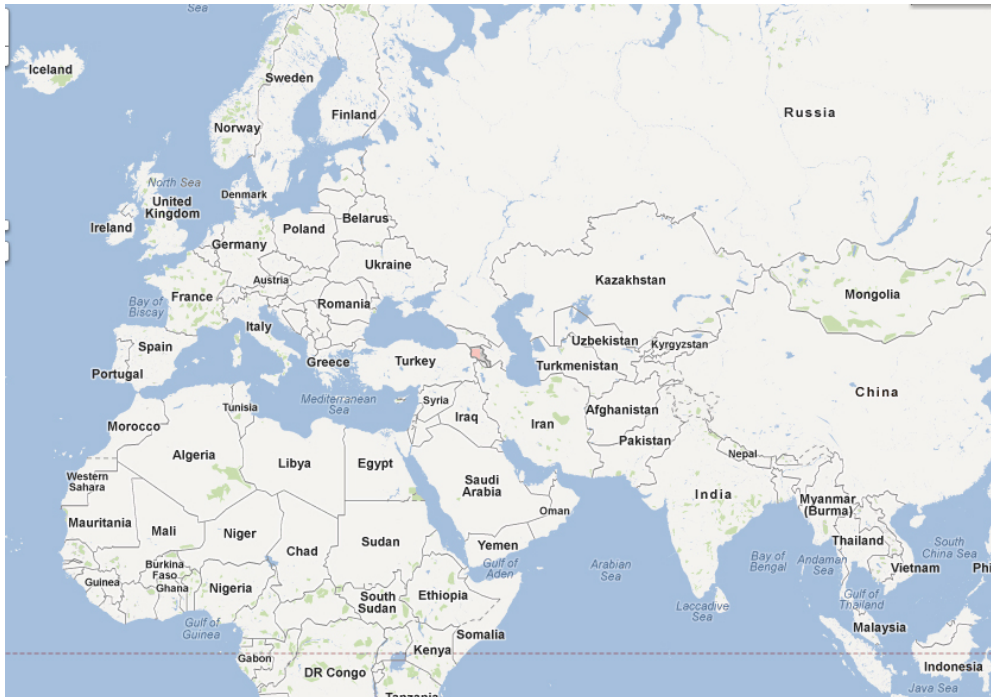
In reading the book, some people realise that although Gurdjieff talks about numerous expeditions and investigations, he rarely if at all says what he and his friends were seeking - except as e.g. 'answers to certain questions that had been troubling us'. Again, as Henderson remarks, what would be the point of going on such journeys anyway? In nearly every case, the expedition or journey is abandoned or turns out fruitless.

What of the characters? If we count only those given a chapter or section for themselves, there are *twelve*. These might be taken as analogous to the disciples of Christ (Knights of the Round Table for that matter) or a set of 'types'. They die, disappear or emigrate: Lubovedsky at peace in an unknown monastery, Pogossian to become an engineer and rich shipowner, Yelov to emigrate to the USA, Skridlov disappearing in the chaos of the Bolshevik revolution, and so on. In the following notes and illustrations I provide some background on the various places mentioned in the book. In the companion piece called 'People' I look at relevant cultural features with notes on e.g. the Bektashi and the Yezidis.

**Hidden Meanings and Picture-form Language in the Writings of G. I. Gurdjieff (Excavations of the Buried Dog), John Henderson, Authorhouse 2007*



Gurdjieff's World



CHRONOLOGY (from James Moore, maybe 'fanciful')

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1866	G. born in Cappadocian Greek quarter of Alexandropol on Russian side of Russo-Turkish border.
1870–72	Birth of G.'s only brother Dmitri Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (?1870) and eldest sister (?1871).
1873	G.'s father Giorgios Giorgiades, impoverished when rinderpest wipes out his large cattle herd, opens a lumber-yard. [M41]
1874–76	Birth of three further sisters.
1877	Giorgiades' lumber-yard fails and he opens a small carpentry shop. G. precociously begins to contribute to family income. <i>Russia declares war on Turkey (24 Apr.) and captures Turkish border citadel town of Kars (18 Nov.)</i> .
1878	Giorgiades moves his family to Kars, and re-establishes his carpentry shop in the Greek quarter. Father Dean Borsh of Russian military cathedral assumes responsibility for G.'s private education, co-opting as tutors four graduates of the Theological Seminary. G. reads intensively in library of Kars military hospital. [M52]
1879–80	G. falls under moral influence of his tutor Dean Bogachevsky.
1881	G.'s eldest and favourite sister dies. G. narrowly escapes death in shooting accident on Lake Alageuz. He becomes fascinated by witnessing certain 'paranormal phenomena'.
1882	In an adolescent duel of sorts with Piotr Karpenko, G. narrowly escapes death on an artillery range. [M204]
1883	Leaving home, G. moves to Tiflis but fails to enter the Archdeacon's choir or the Georgian Theological Seminary. During breaks from casual work as a stoker for the Transcaucasian Railway Company, he makes pilgrimage on foot to Echmiadzin and studies for three months at Sanaine Monastery under Father Yevlampios. He develops close friendships with Sarkis Pogossian and Abram Yelov.
1884	G. crystallizes his motivational question as to significance of organic and human life.

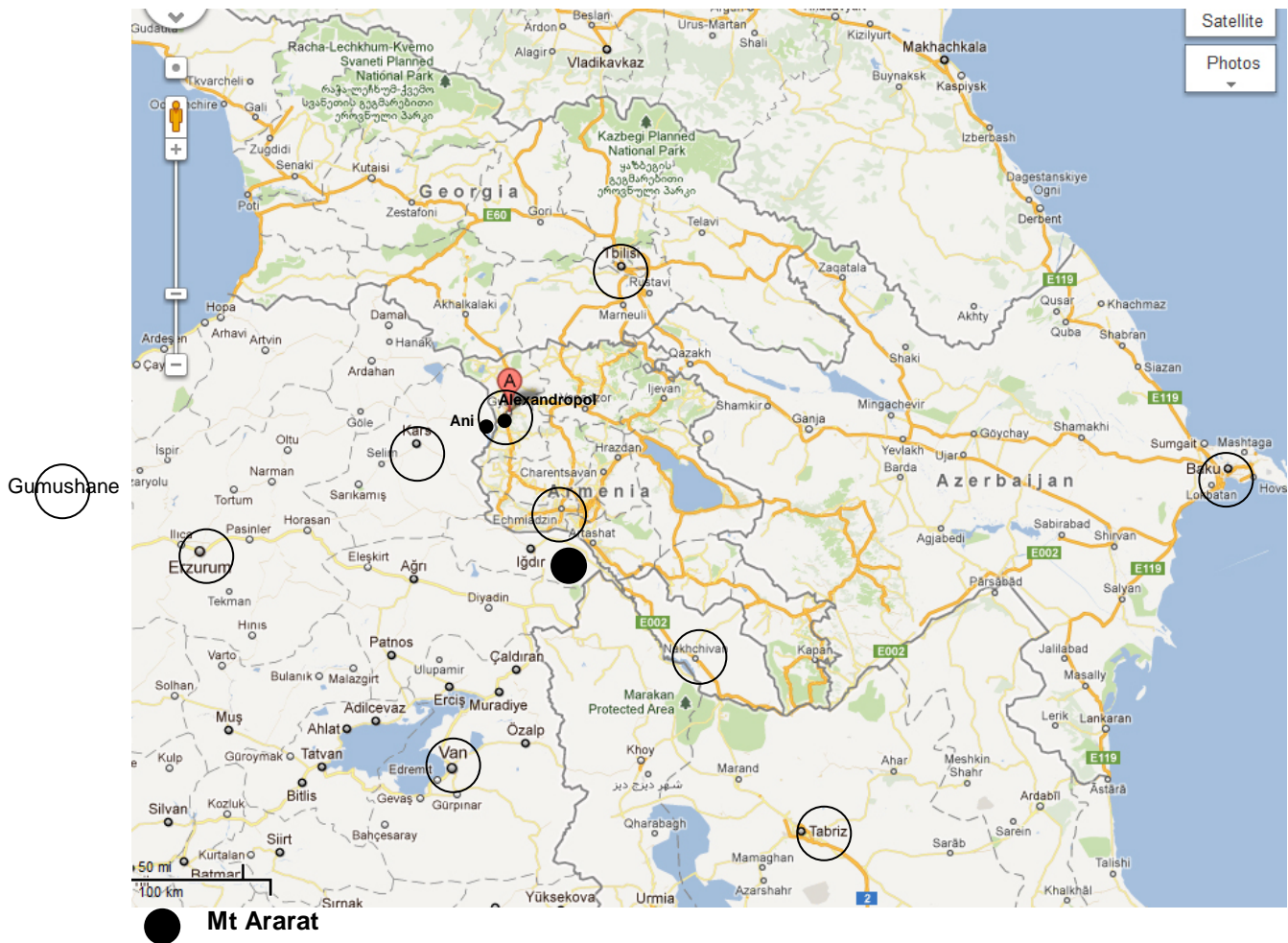
- 1885 G. visits Constantinople (where he meets Ekim Bey [M182]) to study the Mevlevi and Bektashi dervishes. He returns to Alexandropol, where his parents now again live, via Hadji Bektash, Konya, and Aksehir.
- 1886 G. and Pogossian, digging haphazardly in the ruined city of Ani, find reference to the 'Sarmoung Brotherhood', supposedly a wisdom school founded in Babylon c. 2500 BC. [M90]
- 1887 As a courier of the Armenian protectionist society, the Armenakans, G. sets out with Pogossian for Kurdistan, quixotically resolved to 'find the Sarmoung'. En route however, his chance discovery near Zakho of a 'map of pre-sand Egypt' diverts him circuitously to Alexandria (where Pogossian leaves him [M106]). In Cairo, G. makes a strong bond with two elder seekers: Prince Yuri Lubovedsky and Professor Skridlov.
- 1888–9 G. visits Thebes with Lubovedsky; Abyssinia and the Sudan with Skridlov; and Mecca and Medina alone and in disguise. G. and Skridlov visit remains of Babylon at Nippur, Iraq. Returning to Constantinople, G. meets Vitvitskaia and escorts her to Russia. [M126]
- 1890–93 As a political envoy (probably of the newly constituted Armenian Social Revolutionary Party, the Dashnakzutiun) G. visits Switzerland and subsequently bases himself in Rome.
- 1894–5 *Sultan Abdul Hamid II instigates massacre of Armenians throughout Turkey.* Again centred on Alexandropol, G. is prime mover in the foundation (1895) of the 'Seekers of Truth', a heterogeneous and youthful grouping seeking traditional and esoteric knowledge.
- 1896 G. goes to Crete, seeking traces of the ancient 'Imastun brotherhood', but also as an agent of the Ethniki Hetairia, a Hellenist Spartacist society. *The Greek population revolts (Feb.) against Turks.* While in the Sfakia region, G. is shot [TS7] and evacuated, unconscious, to Jerusalem. He recuperates at Alexandropol.
- 1897 Accompanying the Seekers of Truth, G. sets out [M183] from Nakhichevan (1 Jan.) through Turkestan to Tabriz and Baghdad (Expedition 1). (Episode of Ekim Bey and the Persian dervish.) To facilitate wider travels in Central Asia, G. becomes a Tsarist political agent and ? establishes some connection with the Buryat Mongol Agwhan Dordjjeff, a high Tibetan official. With the Seekers G. travels from Orenburg through Sverdlovsk to Siberia (Expedition 2).
- 1898 In New Bokhara (Easter) G. befriends Soloviev a physical and social derelict. Guided blindfold by intermediaries on a twelve-day pony-trek from Bokhara,

- G. and Soloviev gain access to the chief Sarmoung Monastery (purported source of G.'s profoundest insights, symbolism and Sacred Dances). Unexpectedly they find Lubovedsky already there but in failing health. To G.'s sorrow, Lubovedsky promptly leaves to end his days under spiritual supervision elsewhere. Following a period of monastic study, G. explores the Gobi (?Taklamakan) desert with Skridlov and the Seekers of Truth (Expedition 3). After Soloviev's accidental death [M165], G. returned to Keriya Oasis.
- 1899 G. stays in Merv. In dervish disguise he and Skridlov travel up the river Amu Darya (Oxus) into Kafiristan. (Episode of Skridlov and Father Giovanni. [M237]) G. returns to Baku and studies Persian magic. In Ashkhabad he and Vitvitskaia (only woman member of the Seekers) earn large sums with his 'Universal Traveling Workshop'.
- 1900 G. sets out (2 Jan.) from Chardzhou with Seekers (Expedition 4) through the Pamirs to India [M252]. (Episode of Karpenko and the *ez-ezounavouron*.) The Seekers then disband and separate.
- 1901 ? G. presented to Tsar Nicholas II (23 July) in Livadia. ? Disguised as a Transcaspian Buddhist, G. enters Upper Tibet and studies with the 'Red Hat' Lamas. ? He marries a Tibetan.
- 1902 Shot a second time [TS9] during a mountain clan affray, G. recovers in the Yangi Hissar oasis on the edge of the Taklamakan desert. He takes an oath to abjure hypnotism and animal magnetism except for scientific and altruistic purposes.
- 1903 G. returns to Tibet. Col. Francis Younghusband invades Tibet (5 Jul.) from India.
- 1904 British massacre Tibetans at Guru (31 Mar.) Younghusband enters Lhasa (3 Aug.). Anguished at the untimely killing of an initiated lama, G. resolves to combat the mass suggestibility and hysteria which occasion wars. Hydropsy obliges him to leave Tibet and return to his parents in Alexandropol. Having recuperated, G. sets out again (winter) for Central Asia but, near the Chiatura railway tunnel, is accidentally shot a third time [TS9] in a skirmish between Cossacks and Gourians. With difficulty he goes via Ashkabad to Yangi Hissar where he again recuperates.
- 1905–7 ?After two years in an indeterminate Central Asian Sufi community, G. settles in Tashkent, the Uzbek capital of Russian Turkestan. He briefly visits Samara, comforting Vitvitskaia on her deathbed.
- 1908–10 Based in Tashkent as a 'Professor-instructor' in supernatural sciences, G.

begins teaching in a deliberately charlatanesque mode, while studying the reaction among his Europeanized Russian 'guinea-pigs'. He amasses considerable wealth by trading in oil, fish, cattle, carpets, cloisonné, etc. Slowly he gravitates west towards metropolitan Russia.

Geography

Gurdjieff's family lived in Alexandropol (Gyumri) in Armenia and Kars in Turkey. Most of the places mentioned in *Meetings* are in the region shown below consisting of Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and parts of Turkey, Russia and Persia



The descriptive material that follows starts with Alexandropol, Ani and Kars but is then somewhat arbitrary. Readers can use the index at the end to locate particular places. The region where Gurdjieff lived and travelled (early on) had a long history of wars and massacres, leading up to the genocide of the Armenians by Turks and Kurds in 1915 (during which his father was fatally wounded). By Gurdjieff's time it was becoming known by Europeans. It is sometimes impossible to decide whether any particular story he tells is true. His father brought him up with tales from *The Thousand and One Nights* and he was widely read. One of our fanciful ideas is that he used Kipling's story *The Man Who Would Be King* (1888) as a basis for his account of travelling with Professor Skridlov into Kafiristan.

ALEXANDROPOL (Gyumri) capital of Armenia



View of the town in the 19th century.

Inhabitants saw their city as the successor to Ani.



Surp Amenaprkich (Church of the Holy Saviour of All) 1858/73

ECHMIADZIN (Vagharshapat) spiritual centre for the Armenians

The area has been inhabited since the third millennium BC. Vagharshapat got its name from Vagharsh 1 who restored the city in the 2nd century AD. It took on the name Echmiadzin from its mother cathedral built in the 4th century with the coming of Christianity. It means 'the place where the Only Begotten descended'.

Echmiadzin Cathedral



Sanahin Monastery in Armenia

"Father Yevlampios" has disappeared in the mists of time but the monastery of Sanaine or Sanahin is a celebrated foundation dating from the tenth century and situated just south of Tiflis. James Webb The Harmonious Circle.

The name Sanahin literally translates from Armenian as "this one is older than that one", presumably representing a claim to having an older monastery than the neighbouring Haghpat Monastery.

ANI City of a Thousand Churches

Ani is now situated near Kars just inside the present border of Turkey with Armenia. It was once a major trading hub and had some of the most advanced structures in the world. It was sacked by the Turks in 1064 and the Mongols in 1236 both times resulting in the massacre of its inhabitants. Thereafter it declined because of continuing uncertainties and unrest. Europeans discovered it in the early 19th century. With Kars, it was incorporated into Russia in 1878. Official excavations were made in 1892, possibly a few years after Gurdjieff had been there.



City Walls

Church of the Redeemer 11th c.



Near it is the Arpa river referred to by Gurdjieff as *Arpa Chai*. The Church of the Holy Redeemer had 19 sides on the outside and 8 apses inside. It was built to contain a fragment of the True Cross in 1035. By the end of the 19th century Ani for Armenians had become more than a place - it had become an ideal. Novels, plays, and even operas were written using Ani as inspiration. Many buildings put up in the Russian controlled parts of Armenia during this period have architectural motifs derived from buildings in Ani. The cathedral was a particular source of inspiration and new churches based on its design were built in the towns of Kars and Alexandropol. After the Turkish genocide of Armenians in the region, the Turks tried to eradicate any trace of Armenian culture and orders were given to completely destroy Ani (though not much carried out since the city was ruin already)

VIRTUALANI.ORG



Cave dwellings near Ani

The first systematic investigation of the rock-cut chambers at Ani was done in 1915 by David Kipshize, a member of Nikolai Marr's team excavating Ani. He identified, explored, and classified more than 800 chambers, produced an overall map, numerous plans, and

made panoramic photographs of the canyon walls that were annotated to show the location of specific rock-cut complexes. His results were not published - wartime conditions were soon to stop all work at Ani, and Kipshize died in Tiflis in 1919.



The Church of the Shepherd



Reconstruction of the bridge over the Arpa river with the Virgin's Convent in the foreground

The most important description of Ani at the end of the 19th century was written by the British traveller H. F. B. Lynch in his book "Armenia: Travels and Studies", published in 1901.

KARS (now in Turkey but was part of Russia in Gurdjieff's childhood)



Citadel of Kars

Kars became part of Russia in 1878 after a previous occupation by Russian forces in 1828. Turkey regained control of the region in 1921 but trouble between Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey continued throughout the twentieth century and today the border between Turkey and Armenia near Kars remains closed. In 1915 there a genocide of Armenians by

the Nationalist Turks and in 1921 Kars was attacked with thousands of Armenians fleeing in the onset of Turko-Armenian war. It was probably then when Gurdjieff's father was shot and died.



Kars Military Cathedral

Refugees from Kars in 1921



Twelve figures carved around the drum of the Cathedral



VAN



A city on the shores of Lake Van it is a cultural centre for the Kurdish population. Habitation dates back 7,000 years. In the 1915 genocide, the Turks slaughtered all the Armenians in the city. The original city was left in ruins and rebuilt later east of the citadel.

The Citadel of Vans



The Monastery of Varak in 1900 9km east of the city of Van

It was the seat of the archbishop of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Van

GUMASHANE (Turkey)

In connection with movements, where Gurdjieff saw spinning dances.

SARI KAMISH (forest region)

This could be the region between Kars and Ezurum that was the site of a major battle between the Russians and the Ottomans in 1920

EZURUM (Turkey)

The name "Erzurum" derives from Artsn (Arcn, Artze), a neighboring commercial city that was subjected to a heavy sack by the Seljuk Turks in 1048-49. When its Armenian, Syrian, and other Christian inhabitants relocated to Erzurum (then named Theodosiopolis), they began calling it "Artsn Rum" (Arzan ar-Rum). To the Arabs, the city was known as *Ḳālīḳalā* (which was adopted from the original Armenian name *Karno K'aghak'*, or *Karin City*, to differentiate it between the canton of *Karin* (*Կարին*). It was still referred to as "Karin" (Armenian: *Կարին*) by Armenians during the modern period. During Roman times it was renamed Theodosiopolis (Latin: *Theodosiopolis*, Greek: *Θεοδοσιούπολις*), acquiring its present name after its conquest by the Seljuks following the Battle of Manzikert in 1071.



Seljuk Twin Minaret Madrassa



Mass Grave of Armenians in Ezurum 1895

BAKU (capital of Azerbaijan)

By the beginning of the twentieth century more than half of the world's production of oil came from Baku. Conflicts between Muslims, Soviets and others brought about another massacre of Armenians in 1918 and Azerbaijan became a Soviet Socialist Republic in 1920.



Oil Fields of the Nobel Brothers, late 19th century



The 13th century Bibi-Heybat Mosque.

The mosque was built over the tomb of a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad

KARABAKH

This is a region now in both Armenia and Azerbaijan, mostly under Azerbaijan rule. Stemming from the two Russo-Turkish wars of 1855-6 and 1877-8, Russian authorities moved Armenians into the region and Azeris out of it. By 1880 more than half the population was Armenian.

GUMUSH-KHANEH (Gümüşhane)

Is situated in North Eastern Turkey on the shore of the Black Sea: the chief town of a vilayet of the same name in Asiatic Turkey, on high ground in the valley of the Kharshut Su, south of the Trebizond [Trabzon] Erzerum chaussee. The silver mines from which the place takes its name were noted in ancient times and are mentioned by Marco Polo.

TIFLIS (Tbilisi: capital of Georgia)

Throughout the nineteenth century, the political, economic and cultural role of Tbilisi with its ethnic, confessional and cultural diversity was significant not only for Georgia but for the whole Caucasus. Hence, Tbilisi took on a different look. It acquired different architectural monuments and the attributes of an international city, as well as its own urban folklore and language, and the specific *Tbilisuri* (literally, belonging to Tbilisi) culture. It was taken over by the Soviets in 1921.



Painting of the Metakhi cliff in Tiflis 1939



Old Winesellers



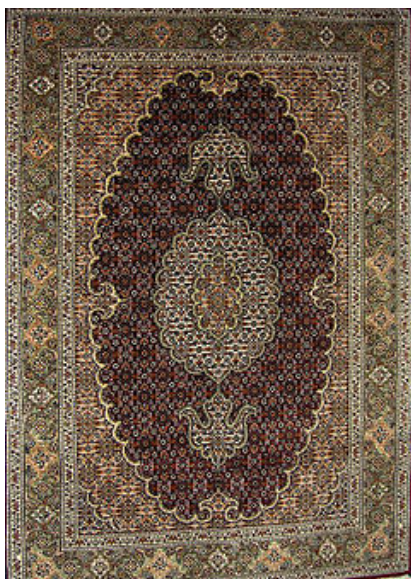
View of the city, nineteenth century

TASHKENT

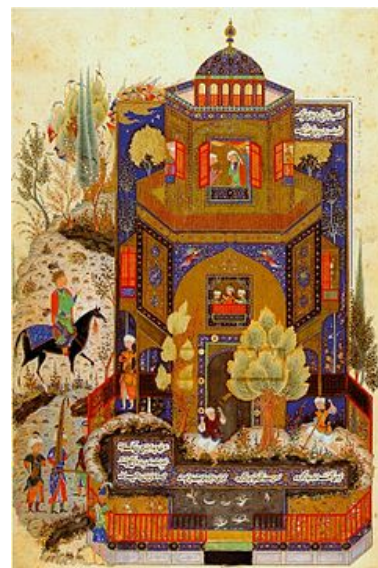


Tashkent is north east of Samarkand in Uzbekistan. In Gurdjieff's time it was under Russian rule and the event which led to this is interesting. In May, 1865, Mikhail Grigorevich Chernyayev (Cherniaev), acting against the direct orders of the tsar, and outnumbered at least 15-1 staged a daring night attack against a city with a wall 25 kilometres (16 mi) long with 11 gates and 30,000 defenders. While a small contingent staged a diversionary attack, the main force penetrated the walls, led by a Russian Orthodox priest armed only with a crucifix. The Trans-Caspian Railway arrived in 1889, and the railway workers who built it settled in Tashkent as well, bringing with them the seeds of Bolshevik Revolution.

TABRIZ (Iran)



Carpet



Miniature Painting



19th century view of city with procession.

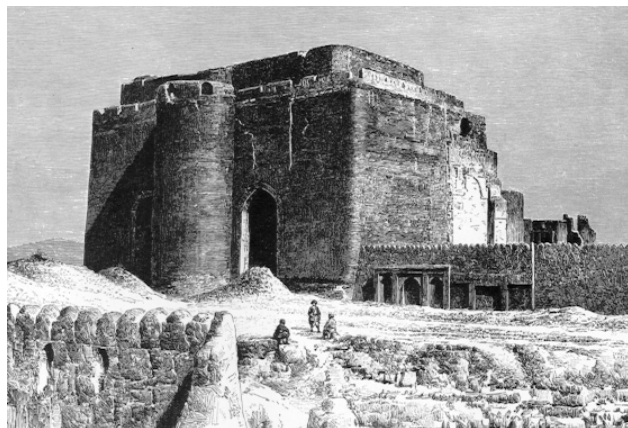
Between 1585 and 1603, Tabriz was occupied by the Ottomans but was then returned to the Safavids after which it grew as a major commercial center, conducting trade with the Ottoman Empire, Russia, central Asia, and India. In 1724–1725 the city was again occupied by the Ottomans, and two hundred thousand of its inhabitants were massacred. The city was retaken later by the Iranian army. In 1780, a devastating earthquake near the city killed over 200,000 which is regarded as 25th most deadly disaster of all times. Between 1790 and 1797, Jews in Tabriz were accused of a blood libel and massacred. By 1828, the Jewish community in Tabriz had ceased to exist.

The city was captured by Russia in 1826 after a series of battles but the Iranian army retook Tabriz in 1828. Tabriz was the residence for the Crown Prince during the Qajar Dynasty.

During Qajar dynasty Tabriz was the residence of the crown prince of Iran who often served as governor of Azerbaijan province. In the early 19th century and after the Russo-Persian War, Abbas Mirza, a Qajar Prince and the governor of Azerbaijan, launched a modernization scheme from Tabriz. He introduced Western-style institutions, imported industrial machinery, installed the first regular postal service, and undertook military reforms. He rebuilt the city and established a modern taxation system.^[22]

Tabriz was the homeland of the mysterious teacher of Rumi, Shems-i-Tabriz.

The Ark of Tabriz



ISTANBUL (Constantinople, Turkey)

Gurdjieff was here in 1895, when he met Ekim Bey and later in 1920 on his way to Germany and France.

The city in the 19th century



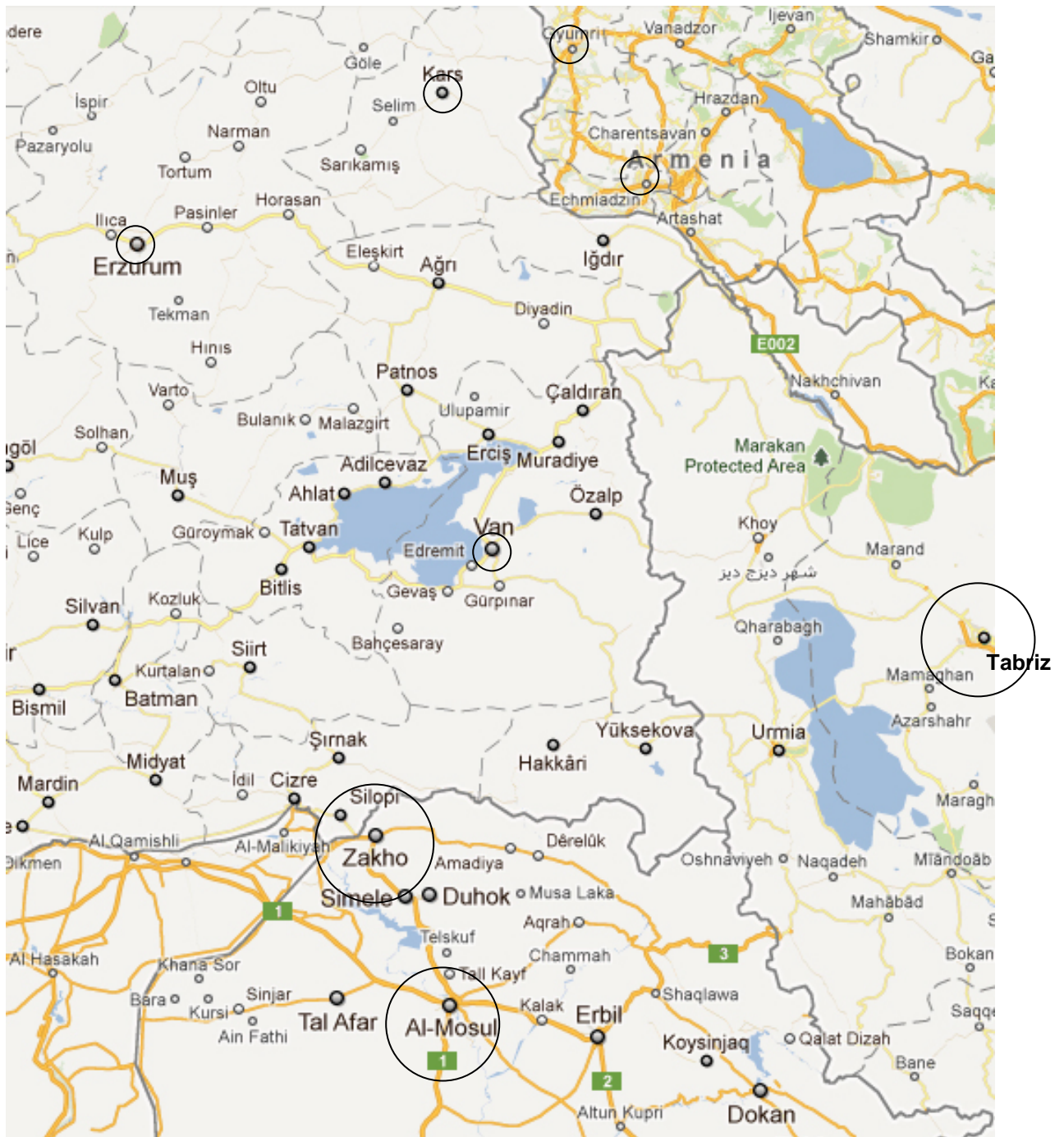
Galata Bridge 1890-1900

where Gurdjieff dived for coins

Mevlevi dervishes 1887



MOSUL (Iraq)



Mosul (Arabic: الموصل *al-Mawṣil*, North Mesopotamian Arabic: *el-Mōṣul*, Syriac: ܡܘܨܠ)

Nînwe; Kurdish: *Mûsil/Nînewe*; Turkish: *Musul*), is a city in northern Iraq and the capital of the Nineveh Province, some 400 km (250 mi) northwest of Baghdad. The original city stands on the west bank of the Tigris River, opposite the ancient Assyrian city of Nineveh on the east bank, but the metropolitan area has now grown to encompass substantial areas on both banks, with five bridges linking the two sides. The majority of its population is Arab (with Assyrians, Turcoman and Kurdish minorities).

The city is a historic center for the Nestorian Christianity of the Assyrians, containing the tombs of several Old Testament prophets such as Jonah.



Coffee House c. 1914



St Elijah's Monastery south of Mosul, Iraq's oldest Christian monastery

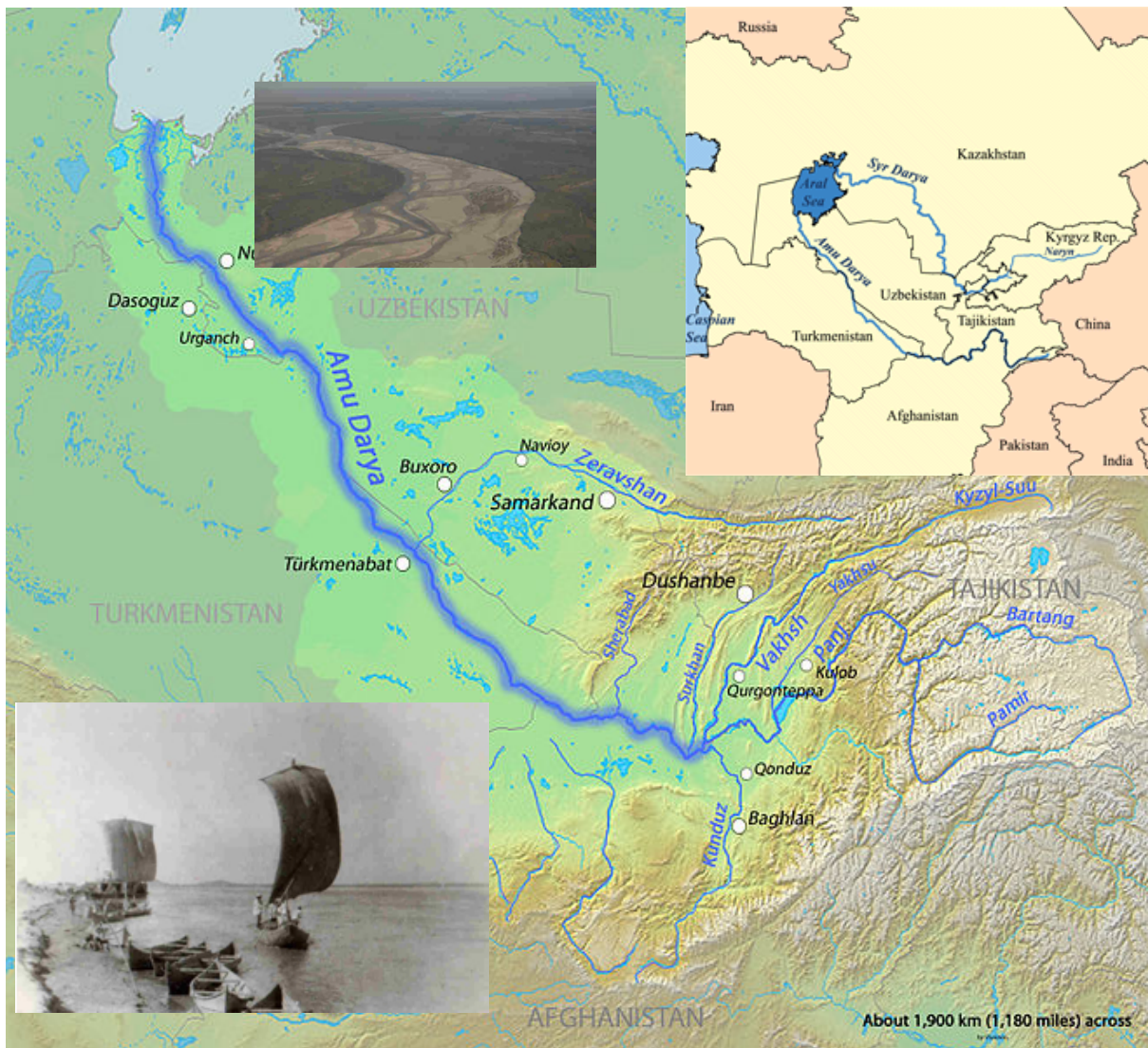
ZAKHO (Iraq)

Zakho has served as a checkpoint for many decades. It is a major market place with its goods and merchandise serving not only the Kurdish controlled area, but most of north and middle Iraq. Writing in 1818, Campanile described the town as a great trading centre, famous for its gallnuts as well as rice, oil, sesame, wax, lentils and many fruits.



Unique Delai bridge in Zakho

AMU DARYA (river also known as the Oxus)



In the past the Amu Darya provided a major transport route into and out of the region. However navigation of the Amu Darya has always been a precarious venture requiring intimate knowledge of the constantly shifting sandbanks and shallows.

In the 19th century passenger and cargo vessels sailed downstream from Chardjou (modern Turkmenabat) to Khanqa - which provided access to Khiva by canal - and on to Qipchaq, Xojeli, and Qon'irat. Boats returned under sail or were physically hauled back upstream by teams of barge haulers.

In 1899 Ole Olufsen sailed downstream from Chardjou in a wooden *qayıq* with a single square sail crewed by a dozen Turkmen, navigating between sandbanks and islands. He visited Khiva, New Urgench, and Xojeli and returned via Hazarasp and Petro-Aleksandrovsk. Even at that time larger Russian paddle steamers were working the river. Colonel Le Messurier observed in 1887 that two fast and armed steamboats were nearing completion at Chardjou, along with two barges, having been transported there in parts by rail.

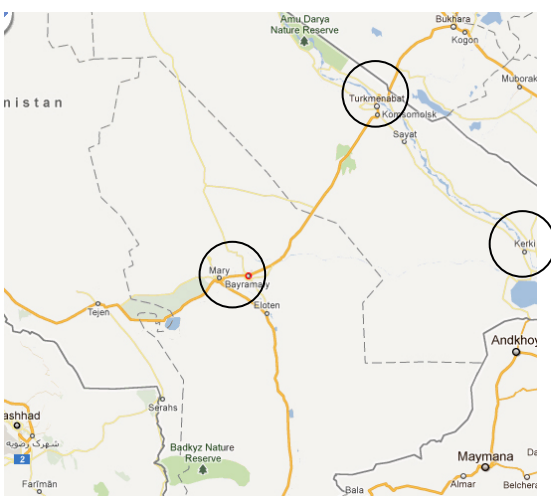
MERV



Old Merv dates back 3 millenia and was mentioned with Balkh in the commentaries on the Zoroastrian *Avesta*. It is claimed that in the 12th century it was the largest city in the world. Its biggest destruction was by the Mongols in the 13th century. By 1883 the area was occupied by the Russians. It was situated near present day town of Mary.



BAIRAM ALI



CHARDZHOU (Türkmenabat)

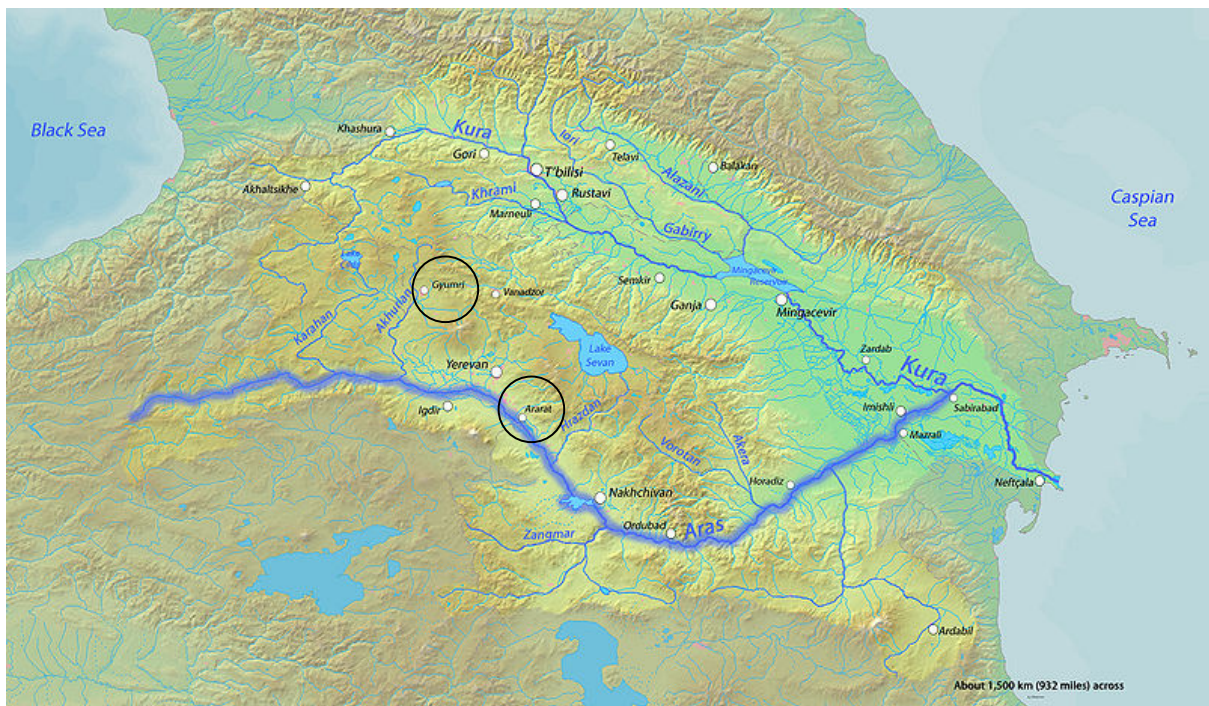
In ancient times it was known as Amul, a hub for the Great Silk Way that connected with Bhukara, Kiev and Merv. The river Amu Darya is said to have taken its name from 'river of Amul'. The modern city was founded in 1886 under the Russians and became a major railway junction. It is situated south west about 100 kilometres from Bukhara.

KERKI

Like Merv, Bairam Ali and Chardzhou, Kerki is a town in Turkmenistan situated on the river Amu Darya near the Afghanistan border.

ARAX (Aras, river)

In Armenian tradition, the river is named after *Arast*, a great-grandson of the legendary Armenian patriarch Haik.



EGRI DAGH (Agri Dagh, also known as Mount Judi)



Said to be where the Ark came to rest, but location is unclear other than it is near **Mount Ararat** which is the main contender for the resting place.

Mount Ararat

BUKHARA

The Persian poet Dehkhoda defines the name Bukhara itself as meaning "full of knowledge", referring to the fact that in antiquity, Bukhara was a scientific and scholarship powerhouse. Rumi verifies this when he praises the city as such:

دوب شناد ندعم اراخب نأ

"Bukhara is a mine of knowledge,

دوب شنأ کره تسی ی اراخب سپ

Of Bukhara is he who possesses knowledge."



Poi-Kalun Complex 12-14th century.

Bukhara is now in Uzbekistan, as is **Samarkand**.



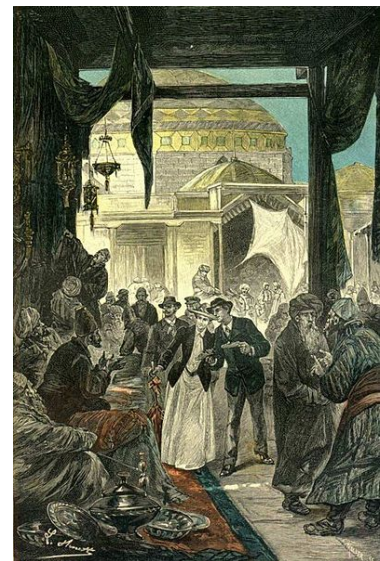
SAMARKAND

The city is most noted for its central position on the Silk Road between China and the West, and for being an Islamic centre for scholarly study. In the 14th century it became the capital of the empire of Timur (Tamerlane) and is the site of his mausoleum (the *Gur-e Amir*). The Bibi-Khanym Mosque remains one of the city's most notable landmarks. The *Registan* was the ancient center of the city.



The Registan

Bazaar in Samarkand, an illustration for a Jules Verne novel reflecting the city's exotic image for Europeans in the 19th century.



KASHGAR (China)



From 1877 Kashgar was under Chinese rule after being Muslim held.



Mosque in Kashgar

Road scene 1870



YANGI-HISSAR (China)

CHIITTRAL (Pakistan)

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Afghanistan)

Mentioned in connection with the movements as location of the monastery where Gurdjieff learned the Great Prayer.

ANDIJAN (Uzbekistan)

The city of Andijan is located in the eastern point of the chain of the first settlements of the early civilizations of Fergana Valley. In the first quarter of the 13th century, Andijan was the capital of Fergana region. Both Babur, Ark Andijan wrote on its largest was in Maveraunnahre following after Samarkand and cache. At that time in Andijan also operated his Mint.

Consequently, Andijan is located in one of the hotbeds of Central Asia, which appeared early farming, formed the first samples of urban culture. In this territory were the ruins of an early city Dalvarzina (IX-VII centuries BC) and the ancient city of Ejlata (VI-III centuries BC). To its geopolitical location Andijan served as a bridge between Bactria, Sogdiana, Chach with China (East Turkestan).

Andijan was an important stop on the Silk Road, lying roughly mid-way between Kashgar and Khodjend. Destroyed by Genghis Khan, it was rebuilt by his grandson Kaidu Khan in the late 13th century, and became the capital of Ferghana for the next three centuries. It is perhaps best known as the birthplace of Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur (Babur), who founded the Mughal dynasty that ruled much of today's India, Pakistan, and South Asia, born in 1483.

The city was the center and flashpoint of the Andijan Uprising of 1898, in which the followers of Sufi leader Madali Ishan attacked the Russian barracks in the city, killing 22 and injuring 16-20 more. In retaliation, 18 of the participants were hanged and 360 exiled.

OSH (Kyrgyzstan)

The city is among the oldest settlements in Central Asia. Osh was known as early as the 8th century as a center for silk production along the Silk Road. The famous trading route crossed Alay Mountains to reach Kashgar to the east. In modern times, Osh has become also the starting point of the Pamir Highway crossing the Pamir Mountains to end in Khorog, Tajikistan.

Inhabitants of Osh drive back invaders to hold the city for Babur



GOBI DESERT



The Gobi desert, one of the world's great deserts, covers much of the southern part of Mongolia. Unlike the Sahara there are few sand dunes in the Gobi; rather you'll find large barren expanses of gravel plains and rocky outcrops. The climate here is extreme. Temperatures reach +40° C. in summer, and -40 in winter. Precipitation averages less than 100 mm per year, while some areas only get rain once every two or three years. Strong winds up to 140 km/h make travel dangerous in spring and fall.

The Keriya river can just be seen in this view.

The Keriya River rises in the Kunlun Mountains, flows northwards into the Tarim Basin, and disappears in the desert. The town of Keriya is on the edge of the desert in the south. In 1896, an ancient site, named Kara - dong, was found at an old delta of the Keriya River.

Taklamakan desert: There is no water on the desert and it is hazardous to cross. Takla Makan may be derived from Turki *taqlar makan*, which means "the place of ruins" but is often thought to mean "you can get into it but you can't get out". Merchant caravans on the Silk Road would stop for relief at the thriving oasis towns. The key oasis towns, watered by rainfall from the mountains, were Kashgar, Marin, Niya, Yarkand, and Khotan (Hetian) to the south, Kuqa and Turfan in the north, and Loulan and Dunhuang in the east. Now many, such as Marin and Gaochang are ruined cities in sparsely inhabited dusty spots with poor roads and minimal transportation in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region of the Peoples Republic of China.



The archeological treasures found in its sand buried ruins point to Tocharian, early Hellenistic, Indian and Buddhistic influences. Mummies, some 4000 years old, have been found in the region. They show the wide range of peoples who have passed through. Some of the mummies appear European. Later, the Taklamakan was inhabited by Turkic peoples. Starting with the Tang Dynasty, the Chinese periodically extended their control to the oasis cities of the Taklamakan in order to control the important silk route trade across Central Asia. Periods of Chinese rule were interspersed with rule by Turkic and Mongol and Tibetan peoples. The present population consists largely of Turkic, Uyghur and Kazakh people.

"In the northeastern edge of the desert, archaeologists from 2002 until 2005 excavated an extraordinary cemetery called Xiaohe, which has been radiocarbon-dated to as early as 2000 B.C.E.... A vast oval sand hill covering 25 hectares, the site is a forest of 140 standing poles marking the graves of long-lost society and environment. The poles, wood coffins, and carved wooden statues with pronounced noses come from the poplar forests of a far cooler and wetter climate."

KERIYA (KHOTAN)



Old housing in Keriya

Present day inhabitant



Taklamakan desert outside Keriya

The small modern town of Keriya is situated on the western bank of the Keriya River. Approximately 180 km north along the Keriya River is the ancient fortified site of Karadong where the world's oldest Buddhist murals have been found. It was abandoned in the 4th century CE. Another site, Yuan Sha, some 40 km north of Karadong, dates from the Iron Age but was abandoned by about 130 BCE.

There is a village about 75 km south of Keriya called Pulu. There are a number of peaks over 6,000 metres to the south of the oasis including Qong Muztag at 6,962 m (22,841 ft) in the upper Keriya River Valley. About 100 families of the distinctive Keriya Uyghurs, who are said to be quite distinct from other Uyghurs, live at Tangzubasti Village, about 170 km north of the town of Yutian. It is said to be on the ruins of the ancient city of Keladun where artifacts from the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-222 CE) have been found.

Marco Polo visited the oasis in the late 13th century. He described it as being five day's journey in extent, but with sandy deserts to both east and west. Both the Province and the "most splendid" capital city were called Pem. He notes that the people "all worship Mahomet" and that there were many towns and villages. "It is amply stocked with the means of life" with rich estates including orchards, vineyards, and lots of cotton and the people "live by trade and industry" and were "not at all war-like."



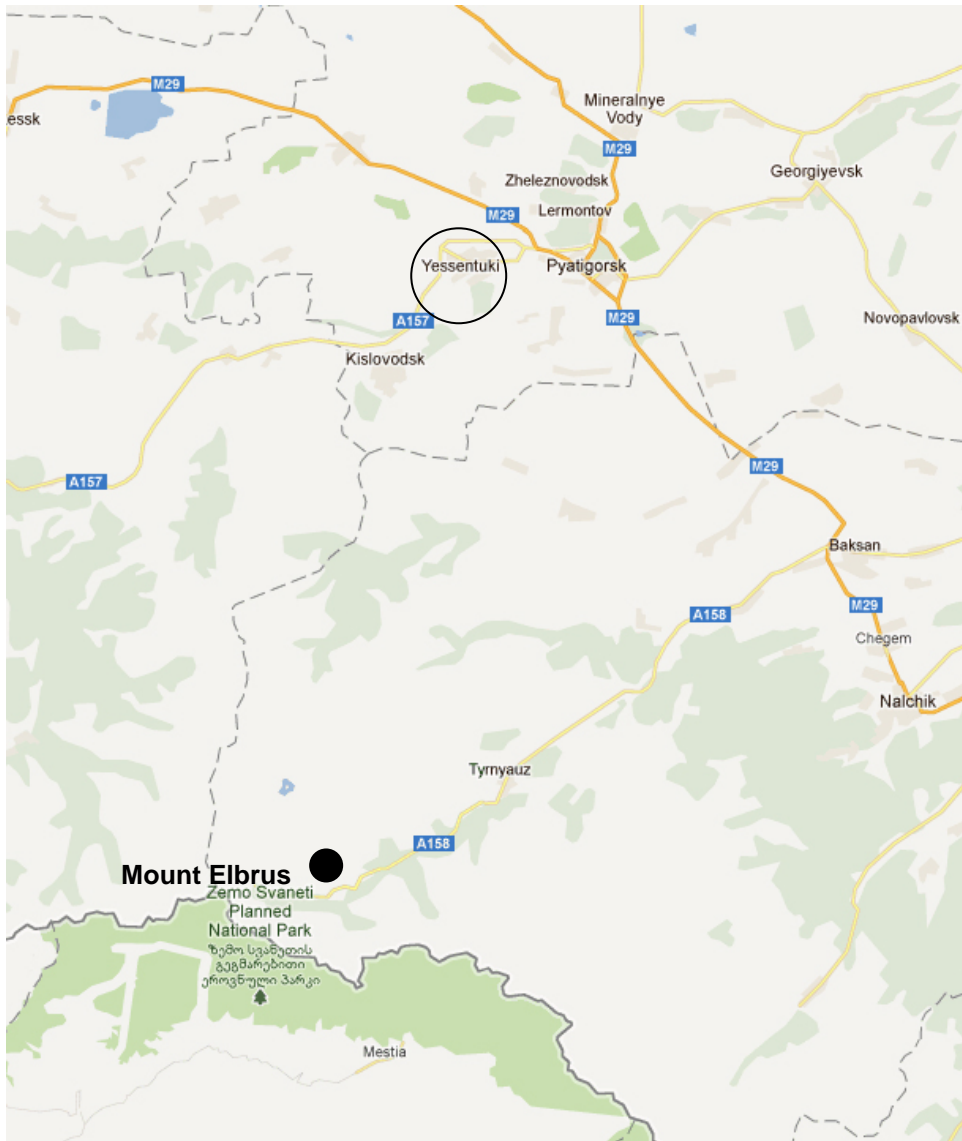
Old Gateway Mosque

Gurdjieff's buried city in the Gobi Desert may have derived from the Buddhist site *Dandān-Uilliq* which was first discovered in 1896 by Swedish explorer Sven Hedin, known for his crossing of the Taklamakan desert. Although Hedin understood the archaeological significance of the Dandan-Uilliq site when he discovered the remains of canals, streets lined with trees, and orchards, not being an archaeologist, he decided to leave its excavation to the specialists. He himself simply left records of the site including its whereabouts, under the title "ancient city of the Taklamakan." Aurel Stein took particular interest in Hedin's article and set out to see the site for himself.

In the winter of 1900, Stein set his eyes on Dandān-Uiliq for the starting point of his excavations. He began in Khōtan, where he gathered his team and prepared the necessary equipment and goods for his expedition. Upon leaving Khōtan, he first advanced northward along the river, and then changed his direction eastward, heading toward Dandān-Uiliq. During the day, the team dug wells seeking subterranean water sources, and at night they endured the biting cold, which at times reached as low as minus 20 degrees celsius. Thus the gruelling journey continued until finally, the team reached Dandān-Uiliq, the site where they were to enjoy immense rewards.

MOUNT BECHOW

Somewhere near Piatigorsk, Russia north of Georgia and Kars. Mount Elbrus is visible to the south and Zheleznovodsk to the north.



Notice **Essentuki** the health resort with mineral springs where Gurdjieff spent some time and lived with his pupils and family in 1918.

ASHKHABAD (Turkmenistan)

A young city started by the Russians in 1881. It was quite European in style.



ODESSA

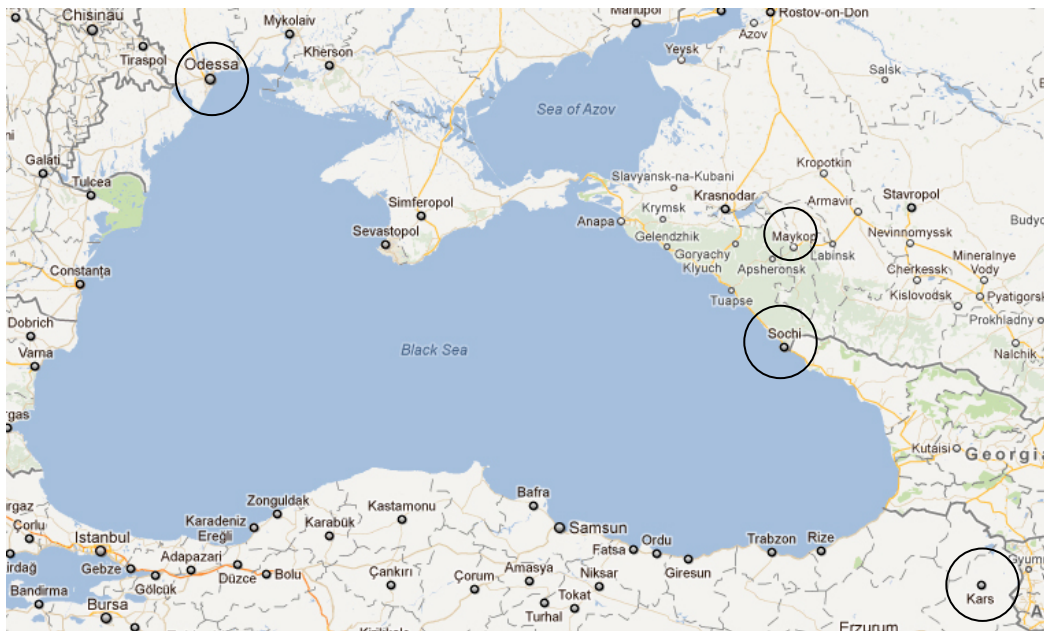
A major city of the Ukraine, situated on the north west of the Black Sea. In the 19th century it became home to many Jews, but they were subject to persecution. Pogroms were carried out in 1821, 1859, 1871, 1881 and 1905.



Odessa 1890-1900

SOCHI

A town on the Black Sea that grew as a resort after 1900. Sochi is on the east coast of the Black Sea very close to Georgia. **Maikop** where Gurdjieff set out on his expedition to Sochi is to the north. **Kumichki** is not known.



THE RUSSIAN PERIOD

This map shows places featuring in *In Search of the Miraculous*.

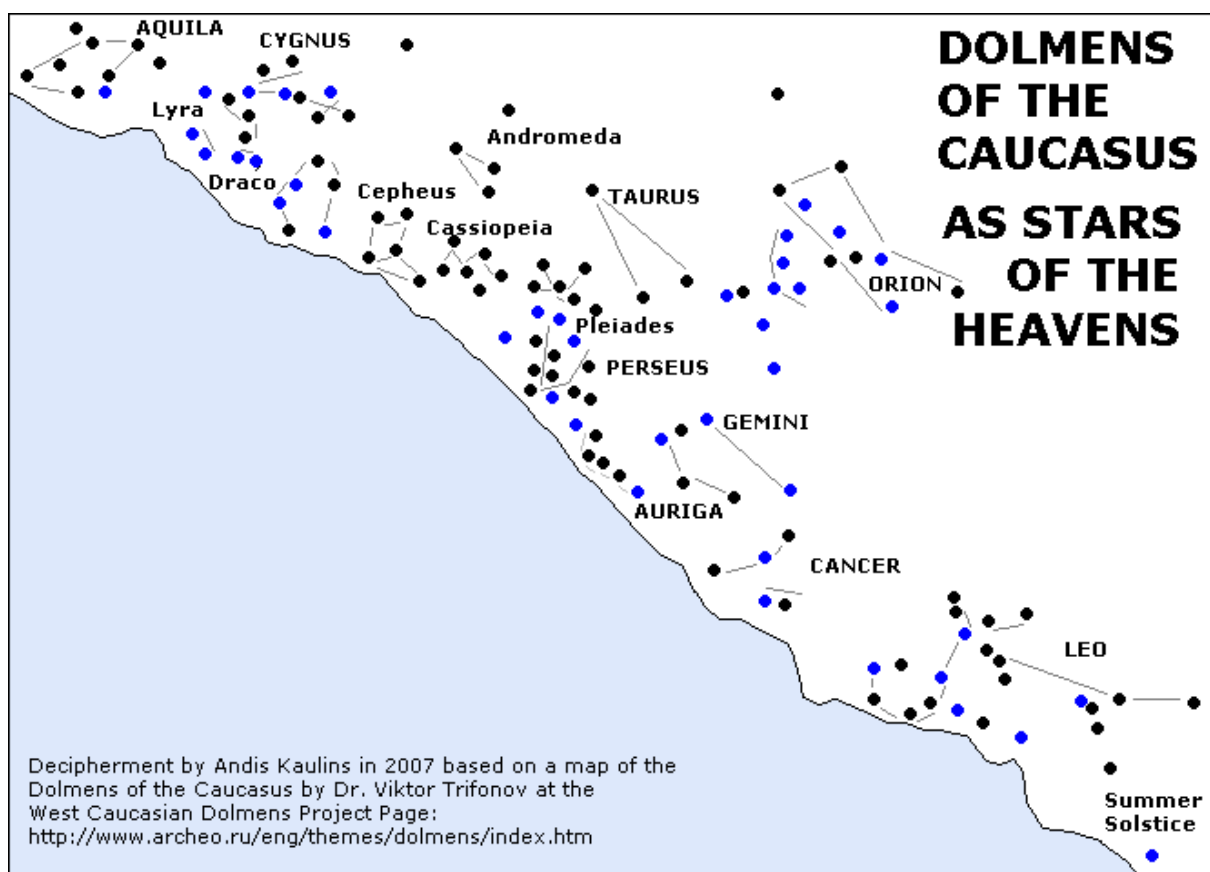


Gurdjieff with his dogs and cat, Oblinka, 1917

DOLMENS (Caucasus, Russia)

Concentrations of megaliths, dolmens and stone labyrinths have been found (but little studied) throughout the Caucasus Mountains, including the Abkhazia (a disrupted area bordering the Black Sea). Most of them are represented by rectangular structures made of stone slabs or cut in rocks with holes in their facade. These dolmens cover the Western Caucasus on both sides of the mountain ridge, in an area of approximately 12.000 square kilometres of Russia and Abkhazia.

The Caucasian dolmens represent a unique type of prehistoric architecture, built with precisely dressed large stone blocks. The stones were, for example, shaped into 90-degree angles, to be used as corners or were curved to make a circle. The monuments date between the end of the 4th millennium and the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.





Map showing Abkhazia, major site of Dolmens. Note Tblisi (Georgia) and Gyumri (Alexandropol, Armenia)



FRANCE



Front row, Julia Gurdjieff, G's mother and Sophia Ivanova

NEW YORK (America)



Childs Restaurant c. 1900



Fifth Avenue 1926 (42nd Street)



New York Stock Exchange - time of crash of 1929



Gurdjieff - New York, 1924



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