Silk Road GIS Assignment

Open this link in your web browser. Be patient – this website is data heavy.

You are seeing a map of the Silk Road network. ***Answer the questions below on a piece of notebook paper.***

Let's begin by learning to navigate a GIS map.

1. Zoom - Use the mouse scroll wheel or the scroll bar at the left of the screen to zoom in. Zoom until you see the warning "Map data not yet available." Zoom out until you can tell where you are. Where are you? Zoom out again.
2. Move – Click and drag the map to move it. Move it until the green star marker in the Shaanxi region of China is visible. Click on the green star. What city is that? Besides being the terminus for the Silk Road, what made this city important in ancient China?
3. Looking at locations – You can see details (called "metadata") about the major points by clicking on them. Click on the star for Byzantium (a.k.a. Constantinople; a.k.a. Istanbul). Visit the Wikipedia page. What was the *actual* name Constantine gave the city?
4. Search – Next we'll visit the ancient city of Merv. At the upper right portion of the web page there is a search box. Type the latitude/longitude coordinates for Merv (62.1925, 37.662778) and press enter.
5. Change Basemap – You can't see anything here – there is no map data available. Click on "basemap," then select "Imagery with Labels." Draw a diagram of Merv's walls.
6. Zoom out. What modern city is closest to Merv?
7. Measure – Click on the measure button at the top. Select the option that shows are ruler with two arrows above (when you hover above it, it says "distance." How many miles is it from Chang'an in the east to Tyre in the west (both are capitals, so both are fancy stars)?

Now that you know how to use the program, answer the following questions:

8. If you were sailing from Guangzhou to Ankamedu, in what cities could you make landfall and replenish supplies?
9. Switch your basemap to the Bing maps hybrid. Search for the Takla Makan Desert. Zoom out (put the zoom slider about in the middle). Why did people choose to go to the north or south, instead of through, this desert?
10. On that same desert, would you have gone north or south? Justify your answer.
11. Zoom in on Tyre (ancient Phoenicia). The city was originally an island, but it was connected to the mainland at one point. How wide is that connection?
12. There is a link in the city of Tyre. Follow it. Who connected the city to the mainland?
13. No one is sure where Rhapta actually was, but the best guess is that it's near Dar es Salaam. I placed four points near Dar es Salaam and labeled Rhapta (Rhapta #1, Rhapta #2, etc.). Name the Rhapta you think is the most likely candidate and explain your reasoning.