

the Gempo; but what is singular, it does not receive any on its eastern side; the country on that side being only a desert of sand almost unknown. Czar Peter I. sent some engineers there to design a chart of the Caspian Sea, who discovered that its figure was quite different from that given by former geographers, who had represented it to be round, whereas it is very long and narrow. The eastern coasts of this sea, as well as the neighbouring country, were unknown: even the existence of lake Aral, which is 100 leagues distant from it towards the east, was doubtful, or at least thought to be a part of the Caspian Sea, so that before the discoveries of the Czar there was unknown land in this climate upward of 300 leagues long by 100 or 150 broad. Lake Aral is nearly an oblong, and may be 90 or 100 leagues long, by 50 or 60 broad; it receives two very considerable rivers, the Sideroias and the Oxus, but as well as the Caspian has no outlet for its waters; and it bears the further resemblance, for as the Caspian receives no river on the east, so lake Aral receives none on the west, from which we may presume, that formerly these two lakes were but one, and that the rivers having, by degrees, diminished, left  
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