



Big Era Five

Patterns of Interregional Unity

300 – 1500 CE



Landscape Teaching Unit 5.4

Mongol Empire Builders:

Fiends from Hell or Culture Brokers?

1200-1400 CE

Table of Contents

Why this unit?	2
Unit objectives	2
Time and materials	3
Authors	3
The historical context	3
This unit in the Big Era time line	4
Lesson 1: From tent to palace: A long, rocky road	5
Lesson 2: Testing the fruits of conquest: The sweet and the bitter	25
Lesson 3: Looking at the big picture: what was significant	37
This unit and the Three Essential Questions	42
This unit and the seven Key Themes	42
This unit and the Standards in Historical Thinking	42
Resources	43
Correlations to National and State Standards and to Textbooks	45
Conceptual links to other teaching units	46

Why this unit?

During the thirteenth century, the Mongols built an empire from scratch by remarkable feats of organization, planning, endurance, courage, slaughter, destruction, and terror. The empire was ruled by a combination of exploiting and protecting subject peoples. The large-scale displacements of population, combined with Mongol peace-keeping and encouragement of long-distance communications, resulted in widespread exchanges of ideas, goods, and techniques, as well as in the spread of disease.

Studying the Mongols' rise to power and its consequences helps students to:

grapple with the causes, process, and results of empire-building in the context of the Eurasian steppes.

evaluate the impact of Mongol imperial conquest on both Mongol society and the societies they conquered.

analyze ways in which the Mongol empire reestablished and intensified contact between various parts of Afroeurasia.

develop some empathetic understanding for the Mongols, a people with values and customs very different from students' own.

Although the Mongol empire's heyday ended after its first century and it definitively disintegrated at the end of its second, some of its legacy was long lasting. This legacy included:

a firm and lasting unification of China.

the beginnings of Russian unification and the firming up of Russian identity.

the further expansion of Islam.

Unit objectives

Upon completing this unit, students will be able to:

1. Explain what features of the Mongols' pastoral nomadic way of life were favorable to their creation of an empire.
2. Analyze the impact of the imperial conquests on both Mongol society and on the societies they conquered.
3. Describe the ways that Mongol actions promoted the exchange of goods and ideas within and beyond their empire.
4. Assess the significance of particular individuals and historical processes.
5. Analyze historical documents for reliability.

Time and materials

Lessons 1 and 2 can be accomplished in 180-225 minutes. Actual time taken will vary with circumstances. If time is limited, Lesson 1 can stand alone and be done in about 90 minutes. Parts of Lesson 1 can be adapted to take 45 minutes (for instance, using only the sections on leadership and social organization with their discussion questions.). Student Handouts can be printed out separately.

Author

The principal author of this teaching unit is Dr. Anne Chapman. She served for many years as history teacher and academic dean of Western Reserve Academy in Hudson, Ohio. She has been a history education consultant to the College Board, the Educational Testing Service, and the National Center for History in the Schools.

The historical context

In the grasslands and mountains northwest of the Gobi Desert of East Asia lived a nomadic, tribal, largely illiterate people numbering 700,000 to 1,000,000. These were the Mongols. Economically dependent on flock and herds of sheep, goats, horses, and cattle and on raiding for booty, they were in constant low-level conflict with each other. They fought over pasture, water, and potential slave captives and engaged in long, bloody feuds.

Suddenly, they exploded onto the world scene by conquering the territories of both nomadic and settled peoples, including urbanized, agrarian societies from China to Syria and Russia to Korea in about half a century. They created the world's largest empire and managed to hang on to their conquests for nearly two centuries. The founder of the empire was Chinggis Khan. The unified empire that he forged between 1206 and 1227 broke up about 1260. It did not shatter, however. Rather it divided into four large Mongol kingdoms ruled by his grandsons and later descendants. Therefore, the age of Mongol domination continued far into the fourteenth century.

During that time these Mongol rulers, called khans:

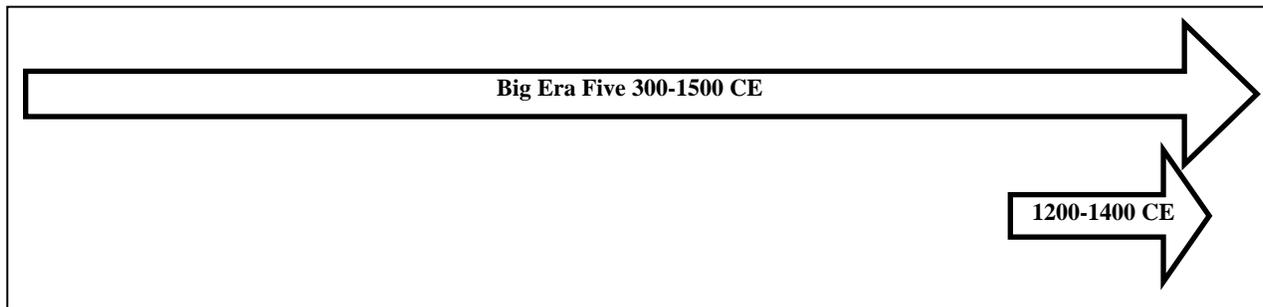
- Facilitated contact between the various parts of the enormous land area from the Mediterranean to the Pacific.

- Promoted interaction between peoples of many different ethnicities, religions, and cultures.

- Enabled the exchange and spread of ideas, goods, technologies, and disease.

What's in a name? The name Chinggis Khan, meaning something like "universal lord, has been spelled in European languages many different ways: Genghis, Chingiz, Djingis, Djenghiz, and Jankiz, also Qan, Kaan, Qhan. Our alphabet can only approximate the sounds of Mongolian, a language in the Altaic family which also includes Turkish.(If you say these different spellings aloud, how different do they sound?) For a while, Genghis was the most popular spelling, but today Chinggis or Chingiz is preferred. Europeans also called the Mongols "Tatars" or "Tartars." Before Chinggis demolished them, the Tatars were the most powerful Mongol tribe, but that name was later loosely applied to all Mongols. In Europe, the form "Tartar" became current, after the Latin name for Hell, "Tartarus."

This Unit in the Big Era Time Line



Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
Vasily Vereshchagin
Apotheosis of War
Photo by R. Dunn

Lesson One

From Tent to Palace: A Long, Rocky Road

Introductory Activities

These activities may be revisited as a wrap-up for this teaching unit. If used, ask students to take and save notes on the ideas and thoughts shared. They can revisit their notes in the closing activities at the end of Student Handout 1.6.

1. Ask the class to:

Share their ideas on what kind of person would be described as “Oh, he’s a real Chinggis Khan!”

Write down in three minutes or so what they think of when they hear the word “Mongol,” then share the results.

Brainstorm the characteristics that they consider define “an empire”. Take a few minutes to try them out on empires they know something about. How well do the characteristics they have hypothesized fit?

2. Ask students to answer the following, individually or in groups:

If you were setting out on a career of conquest, aiming to create an empire, which of the following would you be least willing to do without? Most willing to do without? Explain your reasoning.

A larger army than that of the people you are planning to attack

A better trained, more obedient army than that of your opponents

Charismatic (inspired, forceful) leadership

Ideological (religious or other) support for aggression

A stronger economy or more wealth than your opponents have

Technological superiority in military hardware

Safe, fast supply lines to your homeland

Current, detailed intelligence about your opponents

First-rate communications within your own army

Something not on this list --what?

Have students share their choices and their reasons for them. Ask them to arrive at a consensus on what are the five most important factors in building a successful empire. List them on the board.

Ask students to save the question, their answers, and the consensus list, because they will be working with them again (See closing activities at the end of Student Handout 1.6).

3. Tell students they will be discussing what it was about the Mongols that led to their success by considering the following, which influence the outcome of any empire-acquiring enterprise:

- characteristics of the people
- nature of the leadership
- details of social organization
- features of the environment
- nature of the technology
- features of the ideology

To participate in the discussion, students need to bear in mind the following questions:

In what ways would each of the above have promoted, or hindered, the success of Mongols as conquerors?

Which of the above do they consider to have been most important in the creation of the Mongol empire? Why?

They also need to know the information about the Mongols contained in Student Handouts 1.1-1.6). Some ways of getting them to do this include:

Divide the class into groups, and assign each group one or more of the six Student Handouts below to read, discuss, and summarize within their group. Then report their summaries to the class.

Instead of one person from each group reporting to the class, form new groups, each of whose members have read a different Student Handout. Each student in the group then teaches the knowledge to the rest of the group (Jigsaw method).

All students may be asked to read all the Student Handouts. This allows use of the detailed discussion questions based on the various individual sections.

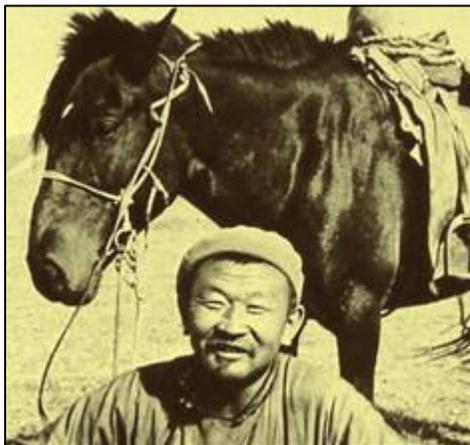


Photo source unknown

Lesson 1

Student Handout 1.1

What Were the Mongol People Like In the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries? Depends on Whom You Ask!

According to Chinggis Khan's shaman, reported in a Mongol-written history in 1228:

Before you were born [1167] . . . everyone was feuding. Rather than sleep they robbed each other of their possessions. . . The whole nation was in rebellion. Rather than rest they fought each other. In such a world one did not live as one wished, but rather in constant conflict. There was no respite [letup], only battle. There was no affection, only mutual slaughter (*Secret History of the Mongols*, sec. 254, qtd. in Ratchnevsky 12).

According to the Italian friar John of Plano Carpini, who spent several months in the Great Khan's court in the late 1240's:

In the whole world there are to be found no more obedient subjects than the Tatar . . . they pay their lords more respect than any other people, and would hardly dare to lie to them . . . Their women are chaste . . . Wars, quarrels, the infliction [causing] of bodily harm, and manslaughter do not occur among them, and there are no large-scale thieves or robbers among them . . . They treat one another with due respect; they regard each other almost as members of one family, and, although they do not have a lot of food, they like to share it with one another. Moreover, they are accustomed to deprivation [doing without]; if, therefore, they have fasted for a day or two, and have not eaten anything at all, they do not easily lose their tempers . . . While riding they can endure extreme cold and at times also fierce heat

They are extremely arrogant toward other people, [and] tend to anger . . . easily . . . They are the greatest liars in the world in dealing with other people . . . They are crafty and sly . . . [and] have an admirable ability to keep their intentions secret . . . They are messy in their eating and drinking and in their whole way of life, [and] cling fiercely to what they have. They have no conscience about killing other people . . . If anyone is found in the act of plundering or stealing in the territory under their power, he is put to death without any mercy.

The chiefs or princes of the army . . . take up their stand some distance away from the enemy, and they have beside them their children on horseback and their womenfolk and horses . . . to give the impression that a great crowd of fighting- men is assembled there. (Qtd. in Spuler 78-79.)

According to the French friar William of Rubruck who spent several months in the Great Khan's court in the early 1250's:

It is the duty of the women to drive the carts, get the dwelling on and off them, milk the cows, make butter and to dress and sew skins . . . They also sew the boots, the socks, and the clothing, make the felt and cover the houses.

The men make the bows and arrows, manufacture stirrups and bits, do the carpentering on their dwellings and carts; they take care of the horses, milk the mares, churn the mares' milk, make the skins in which it is put; they also look after the camels and load them. Both sexes look after the sheep and goats.

At the entrance [of the palace] Master William of Paris has made for him [the Great Khan] a large silver tree, at the foot of which are four silver lions each having a pipe and all belching forth white mares' milk . . . The whole dwelling was completely covered inside with cloth of gold, and in the middle in a little hearth was a fire of twigs and roots of wormwood . . . and also the dung of oxen (Qtd. in Spuler 96-97).

According to a letter by a Hungarian bishop who had custody of two Tartar captives taken in Russia, written to the bishop of Paris in 1257:

I asked them about their belief; and in few words, they believe nothing. They began to tell me, that they were come from their own country to conquer the world. They make use of the Jewish [actually, Uighur; the Uighurs were a semi-sedentary, literate steppe people, and early allies of the Mongols] letters, because formerly they had none of their own . . . They eat frogs, dogs, serpents and all things . . . Their horses are good but stupid (Qtd. in Paris 449).

According to a description by Matthew Paris, English chronicler, in the 1270's :

They are inhuman and beastly, rather monsters than men, thirsting for and drinking blood, tearing and devouring the flesh of dogs and men, dressed in ox-hides, armed with plates of iron . . . thickset, strong, invincible, indefatigable . . . They are without human laws, know no comforts, are more ferocious than lions or bears . . . They know no other language than their own, which no one else knows; for until now there has been no access to them....so that there could be no knowledge of their customs or persons . . . They wander about with their flocks and their wives, who are taught to fight like men (Qtd. in Rockhill).

Discussion questions:

1. What can you infer about the economy, ideology, and technology of the Mongols from the descriptions given?
2. Which of the Mongols' characteristics that are described would make them likely to set out on a career of conquest?
3. Which of their characteristics would be helpful to them during their career of conquest?
4. Which of the descriptions would you be most willing to accept as accurate? Which would you be least willing to accept as accurate? Why?

Lesson 1

Student Handout 1.2

What was the Mongol Leader, Chinggis Great Khan, Really Like? Depends on Whom You Ask!

According to a southern Chinese author who was an eyewitness of the bloody Mongol campaign in north China:

This man is brave and decisive, he is self-controlled, and lenient [merciful] towards the population; he reveres [respects] Heaven and Earth, prizes loyalty and justice (Qtd. in Ratchnevsky 167).

The Indian historian Juzjani wrote in 1256 in the Sultanate of Delhi and had been an eyewitness of Chinggis Khan's raid on India in 1221. According to him:

A man of tall stature, of vigorous build, robust in body, the hair on his face scanty and turned white, with cat's eyes, possessed of great energy, discernment [judgment], genius and understanding, awe-inspiring, a butcher, just, resolute, an over thrower of enemies, intrepid [fearless], sanguinary [bloodthirsty] and cruel (Qtd. in Saunders 63).

Chinggis himself had a letter written to a Chinese Daoist sage whom he had invited to discuss religious topics. The Daoist's companion included the letter in the account of the trip. He said:

I wear the same clothing and eat the same food as the cow-herds and horse-herders. We make the same sacrifices and we share our riches. I look upon the nation as my new-born child, and I care for my soldiers as if they were my brothers (Qtd. in Ratchnevsky 149).

The Muslim historian Rashid al-Din, the official court historian of the Mongol khan of Persia. According to him, some of Chinggis's sayings included.

From the goodness of severity the stability of government.

When the master is away hunting, or at war, the wife must keep the household in good order. Good husbands are known by their good wives. If a wife be stupid or dull, wanting in reason and orderliness, she makes obvious the badness of her husband.

Only a man who feels hunger and thirst and by this estimates the feelings of others is fit to be a commander of troops. The campaign and its hardships must be in proportion with the strength of the weakest of the warriors.

My bowmen and warriors loom like thick forests: their wives, sweethearts and maidens shine like red flames. My task and intention is to sweeten their mouths with gifts of sweet sugar, to decorate their breasts, backs and shoulders with garments [clothes] of brocade, to seat them on good geldings [horses], give them to drink from pure and sweet rivers, provide their beasts with good and abundant [plentiful] pastures, and to order that the great roads and highways that serve as ways for the people be cleared of garbage, tree-stumps and all bad things; and not to allow dirt and thorns in the tents.

It is delightful and felicitous [good] for a man to subdue rebels and conquer and extirpate [destroy] his enemies, to take all they possess, to cause their servants to cry out, to make tears run down their faces and noses, to ride their pleasant-paced geldings [horses], to

make the bellies and navels of their wives his bed and bedding, to admire their rosy cheeks, to kiss them and suck their red lips (Rashid al-Din, *Collected Chronicles*, qtd. in Riasanovsky 91)

According to inference from the laws that by tradition Chinggis set up:

If it is necessary to write to rebels or send messages to them they shall not be intimidated by an excessive display of confidence on our part or by the size of our army, but they shall merely be told: if you submit you will find peace and benevolence. But if you continue to resist—what then do we know [about your future]? Only God knows what then shall become of you (Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, qtd. in Spuler 40-41).

Whoever gives food or clothing to a captive without the permission of his captor is to be put to death.

[Leaders are to] personally examine the troops and their armament before going to battle, even to needle and thread; to supply the troops with everything they need; and to punish those lacking any necessary equipment.

Women accompanying the troops [are] to do the work and perform the duties of men, while the latter are absent fighting.

All religions [are] to be respected and . . . no preference [is] to be shown to any of them (Qtd. in Riasanovsky 83-85).

According to inference from the following decisions made by Chinggis Khan:

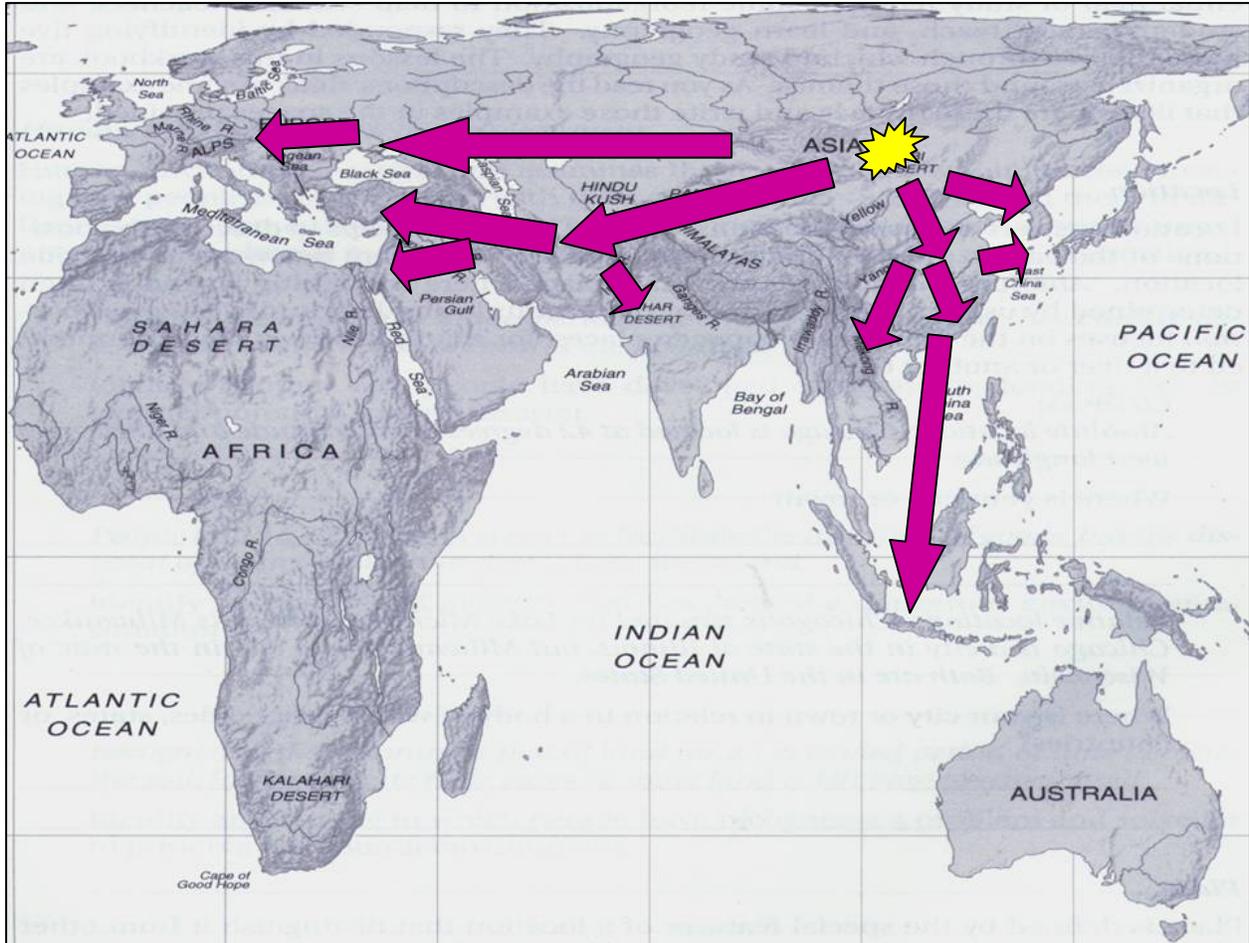
When fighting against hereditary enemies of his tribe, Chinggis's own son begged him to spare the life of the enemy leader's son. Chinggis replied: "How often have we fought them? They have caused us much vexation and sorrow. How can we spare his life? He will only instigate another rebellion. I have conquered these lands, armies, and tribes for you, my sons. Of what use is he? There is no better place for an enemy of our nation than the grave (Rashid al-Din, *Collected Chronicles*, qtd. in Riasanovsky 86)!

At a Grand Council meeting headed by Chinggis in 1202, it was decided that "in days gone by the Tartars killed our ancestors and forefathers. [Therefore] we will sacrifice them in revenge and retribution...by massacring all except the youngest...down to the very last male and the remainder will be shared as slaves among us all (*Secret History of the Mongols*, secs. 148, 154, qtd. in Ratchnevsky 151).

Discussion questions:

1. What characteristics of Chinggis shown by the documents would have been particularly helpful to him in his career of conquest? If you had to choose three characteristics as the most helpful, which would they be? Why?
2. What characteristics of Chinggis shown by the documents would have been particularly helpful to him in governing his empire? If you had to choose three characteristics as most helpful, which would they be? Why?
3. Which of the items of information above about Chinggis's character would you question as to accuracy, and why?
4. How would you explain variations in the descriptions of what Chinggis was like?

5. In what ways could Mongol ideas about women's position in society help the Mongols' career of conquest? To answer this question use information from all parts of this unit so far.
6. Would you agree with Chinggis's idea that severity is good, because it leads to stable government? Why or why not? Did the idea apply more in Chinggis's time and place than today? Why or why not?
7. Which of the accounts above do you consider most reliable, and why?



**Mongol Conquests and Expeditions
1211-1300 CE**

Lesson 1

Student Handout 1.3

How Did Chinggis Turn a Pastoral Nomadic Society Into an Efficient War Machine?

Before Chinggis, the Mongols were organized into tribes that fought and raided each other for plunder, for women (no marriages were allowed between members of the same tribe), and to avenge insults. Largely self-sufficient, they often raided, traded with, and extracted tribute from neighboring settled agricultural communities.

In most tribes, there were no specialists other than shamans and blacksmiths. Women and men both contributed to the economy, and the division of labor by sex was not rigid. Those men who could afford it married more than one wife, each of whom had her separate household, owned property outright, and had considerable freedom of action. Women rode, shot with bow and arrow, and hunted. They gave political advice and could rise to the rank of chief, though rarely. The senior wife had special status and respect, and her children were often favored as heirs. On campaign, wives, children, and flocks often went with the army. Women and even children could be drafted to ride on the fringes of battle to simulate larger numbers. It is unclear whether they ever took an active part in combat. The tribes were divided into nobles and commoners, and only members of noble lineages could become chiefs, though class differences were not strongly marked.

All Mongols were fighters, but Chinggis made a reorganized army the core of the society and the carrier of many of his reforms. Under him and his successors, the Mongol army had the following characteristics, many designed by Chinggis himself:

All males 15-70 served in the army, all as cavalry.

The army's 95 units of 10,000 soldiers were subdivided into units of 1,000, 100, and 10. Members of different tribes were mixed together in units of every size to ensure loyalty to the army above loyalty to the tribe. Allies and levies from conquered territories were also integrated into the fighting force, the latter usually being placed in the front ranks.

Absolute obedience to orders from superiors was enforced.

Officers had tight control over their troops' actions (plunder only with permission, no one allowed to transfer out of their unit).

Officers and men were bound to each other by mutual loyalty and two-way responsibilities.

No one in the army was paid, though all shared to varying degrees in the booty. All contributed to a fund to take care of those too old, sick, or hurt to fight.

During three months every year, large-scale hunting expeditions served as intensive military training simulations.

Cavalry troops had to supply their own bows and other military equipment, which had to meet officers' standards.

Gathering intelligence had high priority. Scouts were sent out, local knowledge sought, and traveling merchants rewarded for information.

Foreign experts and advisors were extensively used, notably Chinese and Persian engineers skilled at making and using siege weapons such as catapults and battering rams.

The highest level of government was Chinggis and his family, especially his sons by his senior wife and their descendants, known as the “Golden Family.” From among their members the Great Khans and after Chinggis Khan’s death the khans ruling the four successor empires were selected by agreement of the Kuriltai, the council made up of Chinggis’s family members and those others they invited.

Lack of clear-cut rules of succession opened the way for power struggles after the death of each ruler. Some earlier pastoral nomadic empires did not long survive the death of the leader who founded them. The Mongol state was unusual in surviving for as long as it did, even though it divided into four separate kingdoms, or khanates after about 1260.

Chinggis Khan’s administrators were picked for demonstrated high performance regardless of their wealth or social class. Among Chinggis’s closest advisors were people from both allied and conquered non-Mongol backgrounds, notably literate scholars and scribes from China, Persia, and the Inner Eurasian oasis towns

Discussion questions

1. What features of Mongol social organization and way of life favored their success in conquest. In what ways?
2. What features of Mongol social organization and ways of life would have favored successful government of conquered territories. In what ways?
3. What features of Mongol social organization and ways of life would have made for difficulties in conquest and in subsequent government of conquered territories?
4. What problems was Chinggis trying to solve by setting up his army the way he did?
5. What features of Mongol society favored the possibility of mobilizing a large proportion of the population for a war effort?
6. In what ways might the diversity and mixing that Chinggis favored have been an advantage, and in what ways a handicap in the conquests and the running of his empire?

Extension

1. Compare the Mongol army to the feudal/mercenary armies of medieval Europe. What were the advantages and disadvantages of each for an initial conquest and for keeping hold of conquered territories afterwards?

Assessment

Discussion question might serve as assessment.

Lesson 1

Student Handout 1.4

What Was it Like to Live in the Mongol Homeland?

John of Plano Carpini, an Italian friar who traveled to Mongolia in the 1240's described the Mongol homeland as follows:

In some parts the country is extremely mountainous, in others it is flat . . . in some districts there are small woods, but otherwise it is completely bare of trees . . . Not one hundredth part of the land is fertile, nor can it bear . . . unless it be irrigated by running water, and brooks and streams are few there and rivers very rare . . . Although the land is otherwise barren, it is fit for grazing cattle; even if not very good, at least sufficiently so.

The weather there is astonishingly irregular, for in the middle of the summer . . . there is fierce thunder and lightning which cause the death of many men, and at the same time there are very heavy falls of snow. There are also hurricanes of bitterly cold winds, so violent that at times men can ride on horseback only with great effort. [Sometimes one can] scarcely see owing to the great clouds of dust. Very heavy hail also often falls there. Then also in summer there is suddenly great heat, and suddenly extreme cold (Qtd. in Dawson 5-6).

Carpini was right. Winters in the Mongol homeland were long and cold and still are today. The average mean temperature in January is minus 34 degrees centigrade, but extremes have been recorded of minus 55 degrees. The air temperature fluctuates heavily from day to day. Even in the mountainous region of the northwest, the heat can hit 40 degrees centigrade. There is little rainfall, and 85 percent of it falls during the three summer months. There is evidence that the climate of the steppes had turned cooler and drier for a while before and during the time of the Mongol conquests. Climatological data shows that the climate of the steppes was turning cooler and drier about the time of the Mongol conquests, reducing the season when ample grazing land was available for horses, sheep, and other stock. We can only speculate, however, about a possible connection between the Mongol conquests and an ecological crisis (Christian 387).

Horses were essential to the Mongol way of life. They were pastured entirely on the open steppe, with no supplementary grain or hay even in winter. Although extremely hardy, Mongol horses could not be ridden day after day or carry heavy loads. Therefore, every mounted soldier ideally possessed not one horse but a string of remounts as well (Lattimore 2).

Long-distance travel was tough. William of Rubruck, a Flemish monk who visited Karakorum, the Mongol capital, in the 1250s, took eleven months to return from there to the island of Cyprus in the Mediterranean. The *Merchant's Handbook*, a book based mostly on information from Genoese traders of the early 1300's, suggests a nine-month journey from the Black Sea to Beijing, the capital of the Chinese Mongol state. People traveled across the steppe by ox-drawn wagon, river boat, camel caravan, donkey, and horse. The Daoist sage Ch'ang Chun took fourteen months to get from the Chinese border to Samarkand in what is today Uzbekistan, a country north of Afghanistan (Larner Appendix II).

His companion Li Chih-Ch'ang's account of the journey suggests some reasons for the length of time taken. He reported that:

The country was now so mountainous, the ascents so formidable and the valley-gorges so deep that the use of wagons became very difficult. The road here was first made for military purposes by the great Khan's third son. Our cavalry escort helped us to deal with the wagons, dragging them up hill by attaching ropes to the shafts and getting them down by tying ropes to the wheels and locking them fast . . . Our oxen were incapable of further effort and abandoning them by the roadside we harnessed six horses to our wagons. Henceforward we did not again use oxen.

We descended a deep ravine . . . Stream after stream rushes into this defile, forming a torrent that bends and twists down the pass . . . It was the Great Khan's second son who when accompanying his father on the western campaign first constructed a road through the defile, piercing the rocks and building no less than forty-eight timber bridges of such width that two carts can drive over them side by side (Li Chih-Ch'ang 76-77, 84-85).

Discussion questions

1. What problems of logistics and provisioning might a Mongol army numbering 100,000 to 120,000 mounted soldiers be likely to encounter? Note: The Persian historian Juvaini estimated that the daily food ration for a few thousand Mongols assembled for a council meeting was 2000 wagon-loads of fermented mares' milk and wine, 300 horses or oxen, and 3000 sheep.
2. How might the Mongols have solved their provisioning problems in the various regions where they fought?
3. What was the potential environmental impact of their provisioning needs?
4. Assess the part that the natural and physical environment is likely to have played in the Mongols' success at conquest.
5. What part does the environment still play in military planning in the twenty-first century?

Activities

1. Write a travel brochure addressed to merchants intending to bring goods for sale from the Black Sea to Karakorum in the 1220s.
2. Assume that you are a spy sent out by the ruler of a neighboring state at the time the Mongols were on the rise. Report on whether it is worthwhile to send an army to invade Mongolia to stop the Mongol advance. What features of the environment might be considered in deciding whether or not to invade.

Lesson 1

Student Handout 1.5

Mongol Technology: Highly Effective Low Tech

The Mongols' own tribal technology was similar to that of other steppe nomads. The weapons their blacksmiths made on portable anvils and forges were relatively crude. The Mongols also acquired by plunder, tribute, and trade high-quality weapons made by urban artisans.

The bow was the Mongols' most important weapon. Made from layers of horn, sinew, wood, and waterproof lacquer, it shot an arrow faster and with more power than a wooden bow could. It had a pull of up to 160 pounds and a range of up to 350 yards.

A stone thumb-ring used in the release further increased the speed and penetrating power of arrows, which were made for different purposes. There were short and long range arrows, "singing" arrows used for signaling, fire-starting arrows, and arrows tipped with tiny gunpowder grenades. The Mongols did not, however, win every battle they fought because mounted enemies usually had similar equipment.

Mongol troops also carried iron or leather helmets, a leather-covered wicker shield, a lasso, a forearm-strapped dagger, a small sword, and if they were heavily armed, a scimitar, battle-axe, and 12-foot lance. Soldiers learned from the Chinese to wear closely-woven silk undershirts. If an arrow hit a soldier's torso, it would drive the silk into the wound without breaking it. Therefore, the arrowhead might do less damage and could more easily be removed.

Mongol saddlebags, made from the waterproof stomachs of animals, could be inflated to help in river crossings. These bags held minimal field rations of millet, dried meat, fermented mares' milk in a leather bottle, and tools such as files and needles for repairing equipment. When a Mongol messenger needed to ride a long distance and had little food and no time to hunt, he sometimes opened a vein in one of his horses and drank the blood.

In military communications, it well-coordinated and efficient use of transport and signaling that gave the Mongols an edge. They signaled by shooting whistling arrows tuned to make different sounds, waving flags (a forerunner of the semaphore), burning torches, and dispatching fast-riding couriers. The army set up and maintained networks of staging posts where riders could rest and exchange horses.

Discussion questions

1. What features of Mongol technology are likely to have contributed to the success of their empire-building, and how?
2. To what extent, and in what ways, was the Mongols' technology connected to their pastoral nomadic way of life?
3. What were the Mongols' most significant technological strengths? What are your reasons for considering them "significant"?
4. Which three of the following did the Mongols need most when fighting other pastoral nomads, and which three did they need the most when fighting against a settled, agricultural state:

bows and arrows

lance, battle-axe, and spear

armor

communication equipment

catapults, battering rams, and other siege equipment

technical advisors

Explain your choices.

Activity

1. Compare the military technology of the Mongols to that of one or more of the following:
 - European crusaders
 - Song Chinese army
 - Armies of Mayan city-states in Mesoamerica

Lesson 1

Student Handout 1.6

Shamans, Heaven, and the Ideology of Conquest

The Mongols' religion was shamanism. They combined this with belief in Tengri, the Eternal Sky, as the supreme supernatural power. They also believed in an earth and fertility goddess and in nature spirits. The major religions, including Tibetan Buddhism, Daoism, Nestorian Christianity, and Islam, were seen as having access to other spiritual beings who might, if properly approached, also be helpful.

Shamans were considered go-betweens or bridges, joining the human and the spirit world. They could be women or men, and they were always people of prestige and importance. They communicated with the spirits in trances, exorcised evil, blessed flocks and herds, and made prophecies by examining cracks in the burnt shoulder-blades of sheep. Mongols had no temples, no hierarchy of religious specialists, no regular public worship, no sacred scriptures, and no required beliefs. Their religious concerns were practical aimed toward ensuring fertility, prosperity, health, and military success. As chiefs usually did, Chinggis Khan and his descendants climbed to high places to pray to Heaven before a decisive battle. The Mongols also regarded vengeance for insult or injury as a moral duty, approved by Heaven. And the duty to avenge was handed down from generation to generation.

It was only gradually that Chinggis and his Mongols arrived at an ideology of conquest. Eventually, he, or at least the sons and grandsons who followed him, came to believe that the Mongols had a mission from Heaven to conquer the world and establish a universal empire. In this, Mongol leaders were almost certainly influenced by contact with the Chinese ideology of the Mandate of Heaven, the belief that the emperor ruled because the Supreme Being wanted him to. Some Mongol tribes professed the form of Christianity known as Nestorian. So Christian monotheism and rituals may have influence them, too.

The Mongol view of Heaven's attitude towards their conquests developed slowly but surely. Chinggis Khan's early campaigns were clearly not part of a larger plan for universal conquest. In 1206, he was named Great Khan primarily because of his military and political successes. However, it helped that one of his followers saw a vision: "A white ox harnessing itself to a wagon and pulling it behind Chinggis, bellowing: 'Heaven and Earth agree, let [Chinggis] be the nation's master! Bearing the nation, I am bringing it to him'" (Onon, 45)!

His first invasion of northern China in 1211 followed the usual pattern of nomad raids. Chinggis made no attempt to occupy or to keep Chinese territory, which was then under the Jin dynasty, a ruling family that had come originally from Manchuria far north of the Yellow River valley. The Mongols returned, however, and in 1215 took the Jin capital of Beijing. Chinese officers deserted to Chinggis in large numbers, some bringing with them tens of thousands of troops.

Determined to crush all resistance, Chinggis discussed with his generals what to do with the land once it was conquered. According to some accounts, they considered exterminating the north Chinese farming population in occupied territories and turning the country into pasture for the Mongols' horses. They were dissuaded when one of Chinggis's valued Chinese advisors pointed

out that taxes from a live population were worth more to the conquerors than a depopulated land occupied by horses.

Evidence suggests that Chinggis originally had no intention of invading the Qara-Khitai and Khwarizm empires, which lay to the west of Mongolia. The populations of these empires varied from highly sophisticated urban Persians to illiterate nomads. Most were unhappy with their own rulers. Chinggis conquered the huge Inner Eurasian territory of the Qara-Khitai without much trouble. He then attacked Khwarizm, which included northern Persia, in revenge for its ruler unwisely killing some Mongol envoys. Chinggis announced that “Heaven has granted me all the Earth, from sunrise to sunset” (Juvaini, Qtd. in Ratchnevsky 159). This was a claim to universal empire. He would stick by it for the rest of his life, and his descendants would echo the claim.

From this time on, he consistently considered those opposing him not as enemies but as rebels. That made resistance to Mongol takeover treasonous, meriting wholesale executions as punishment. By the 1240s, it was reported that “The Mongols do not make peace with anyone who has not submitted to them, because of the instruction of Chinggis Khan that they should seek to bring all peoples under their yoke” (John of Plano Carpini, qtd. in Ratchnevsky 159).

There were other reasons for conquest besides religious ideology:

Enemies and continual conquests were needed to keep the Mongol forces united and not slipping into the old ways of tribal squabbling and feuding.

The army was financed with booty.

Followers needed rewards in plunder, lands, and slave captives to keep them loyal.

The Mongol elite’s newly-honed taste for luxuries could not be satisfied from the old nomad economy.

Each conquest put the Mongols in touch with new enemies and new threats.

Chinggis’s ideology of ruling those he conquered was simple. His rule was intended solely to benefit the Mongols. Subject peoples were seen only as sources of plunder, cannon-fodder, forced labor, taxes, and experts in areas where Mongols were ignorant.

Discussion questions

1. Did ideology cause the Mongols to launch their conquests? How? In what sense are you using the word “cause”? On what evidence are you basing your answer?
2. What part did ideology play in the success of Mongol empire-building?
3. Which Mongol beliefs would be an advantage and which would be a disadvantage in governing their multi-ethnic empire? Explain in what ways each of the beliefs you mentioned would be an advantage or a disadvantage.
4. Based on the evidence you have, would you agree with the idea that the Mongols’ success was due to their enemies’ weaknesses rather than to their own strengths? Explain your answer.

Activities

Ask students to:

1. Develop hypotheses (individually, in groups, or as a class) about how the Mongols would rule their empire, based on information provided so far. Ask them to save their hypotheses since they will work with them again later.
2. Compare the Mongols' career of conquest, and their ideology of conquest, with that of the European Crusaders.

Assessment

1. What advantages and what disadvantages did the Mongols have in their career of world conquest?
2. What contributed most to their conquering success? Explain the reasons for your answer.

Lesson Two

Tasting the fruits of conquest: the sweet and the bitter

Impact of imperial conquests on Mongol society.

Activities

Ask students to do one or more of the following, based on the following Student Handout 2.1:

1. Compare Mongol society under Kubilai Khan with that under his grandfather Chinggis Khan, using the information in Student Handout 2.1, as well as in all the Student Hands for Lesson One and Student Handout 3.1 in Lesson Three.
2. Explain in what ways Mongol society did, and did not, change. Develop hypotheses that explain how the changes are related to the conquest and/or the maintenance of the Mongol empire, giving evidence to support your argument.
3. Determine in what ways the strategies for creating an empire differed from the strategies for ruling it.
4. Compare Khubilai as a leader with Chinggis as a leader, and explain whether their differences were due to personality, or circumstances.

Lesson 2

Student Handout 2.1

Could an Empire be Ruled From Horseback?

Some fifty years after Chinggis's death, the following situation existed. The unified Mongol empire divided about 1260 into four successor empires, or khanates: 1) China and part of Mongolia, where the Mongol regime was called the Yuan dynasty, 2) Inner Eurasia, a state called Chagatay after the name of one of Chinggis's sons, 3) the Khanate of the Golden Horde (or the Khanate of Kipchak), which included the steppes north of the Caspian and Black Seas, as well as domination over Russia, and 4) the Ilkhanate of Persia and Iraq. The Ilkhans had that title because they were in theory "deputies" of the Great Khan in China, though in reality they were independent.

Khubilai Khan was the Great Khan and ruled China. But his relatives who ruled Chagatay, the Golden Horde, and the Ilkhanate in Persia and Iraq were in reality independent, though acknowledging the Great Khan as supreme. The term Ilkhanate means "deputy" of the Great Khan.

The military under Khubilai Khan consisted of an infantry and a navy, as well as cavalry. Soldiers were paid from the government treasury.

In China, Muslims, Christians, and Buddhists from central and western Eurasia were given most key positions because the Mongol rulers distrusted Chinese high officials owing to their local interests and loyalties. Governing methods were a mixture of Chinese, Muslim, Turkish, and Mongol ideas. Finances for the empire came almost entirely from relatively low-level taxation, based on as accurate a census of the population as possible.

Khubilai Khan performed public Confucian rituals prescribed for Chinese emperors, while personally leaning towards Tibetan Buddhism and keeping up to shamanist rituals.

Ideology of conquest showed in Khubilai's thinking of himself as a universal emperor. He made repeated, though mostly unsuccessful, attempts to conquer Japan, Vietnam, Burma, and even Java in Southeast Asia.

Khubilai's ideology of rule was not only to enrich Mongols, but also to serve China as a Son of Heaven. Concerned to establish the legitimacy of his rule, he tried, with some success, to enlist the goodwill and support of the peoples he ruled.

Among Buddhists, his legitimacy was bolstered when monks declared him to be the reincarnation of a Bodhisattva, or Buddhist saint. He worked to keep Mongol backing by acting traditionally in at least some ways, and protecting Mongols' privileged position in the empire. He drew his advisors from many ethnic, language, and religious backgrounds.

In line with Khubilai's ideology of rule, his government had a welfare program. It paid for assistance to the old, infirm, and poor out of taxes. Villages that suffered natural disasters were sent grain, clothes, cash, and had their taxes cancelled.

Khubilai founded the Office for Stimulation of Agriculture; forbade nomad animals from roaming on farmland; arranged for the teaching of advanced agricultural techniques to the population around the old Mongol capital of Karakorum; and forgave taxes for those who chose to become settled farmers.

He moved the Mongol capital to a newly-built city near modern Beijing in China, its site chosen according to the Chinese ideas of feng shui.

The name of the dynasty was changed to Yuan—Chinese word meaning “origin.”

Mongols were forbidden intermarriage with Chinese.

Women’s position under Mongol rule was generally higher than it had been in the agricultural societies the Mongols had conquered. A woman was named provincial governor under Khubilai. Mongol women refused to adopt the Chinese custom of foot binding. Khubilai took his second wife Chabi’s advice on some public issues.

Impact of Mongol imperial conquests on those they conquered.**Introductory Activities**

1. Ask students to brainstorm, in small groups or as a class regarding likely Mongol impact on those they conquered. Students may be asked to consider both short and long-range features of the impact, and to group the results of their brainstorming into positive and negative features. Then ask them to come up with a consensus on what they consider the most significant features of the impact, short-range and long-range, and to make clear on what basis they have made their judgments.
2. Ask students to consider in what ways the Mongol impact on those they conquered would have differed from or been similar to, the impact of other conquerors they know of in eras before the Mongol empire and in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Ask students to read the following statements, made in the second half of the thirteenth century, by two different authors.

Lesson 2***Student Handout 2.2*****It Ain't Necessarily So . . .**

According to the Persian historian Juvaini:

In the Muslim countries devastated by Chinggis Khan, not one in a thousand of the inhabitants survived (Qtd. in Nicolle 46).

According to the Muslim chronicler Ghazi:

Under the reign of Chinggis Khan, all the countries . . . enjoyed such peace that a man might have journeyed from the land of the sunrise to the land of sunset with a golden platter upon his head without suffering the least violence from anyone (Qtd. in Martin 6)

Discussion questions

1. What evidence can you find in this unit that would confirm, modify, extend, or contradict the statements above? (Different students or groups can be assigned to find confirming, modifying, and contradicting evidence.) What might analysis of the statements themselves tell you about their reliability as historical evidence?
2. What questions might you ask to decide on how reliable each of the statements is?

Before having students do the following reading, ask them to discuss these questions: Can the negative impact of conquest on a subject peoples be balanced by the positive impact? Why or why not? (The discussion can be referred to later in the course when introducing the study of colonialism and imperialism.)

Lesson 2

Student Handout 2.3

Judging the Mongols

The impact of the Mongol conquest on the conquered peoples included:

Death

Destruction

Extortion of wealth

Disease

Displacement

It also included:

the intensification of activity on the trade routes connecting East Asia with the Mediterranean lands and Europe.

the further spread of Islam in Asia

the advancement of Tibetan Buddhism in China.

Death: The Mongols inflicted it on a large scale. In battle, their powerful bows caused heavy enemy casualties. Moreover, mass slaughter of defeated enemy soldiers and civilians was used as a deliberate policy of terror in order to:

decrease the enemy's will to fight.

induce cities to surrender without fighting, thus avoiding long sieges, which the Mongol army could not afford because it needed to keep moving to find grazing land for its horses.

avoid the risk of leaving enemies behind that might be capable of renewing resistance.

reduce the size of the occupying detachments needing to be left behind.

The total death toll directly inflicted by the Mongols during the period of their conquests, spanning nearly two centuries, may have been several millions. This includes the deaths by hunger and disease that were by-products of Mongol military operations and rule.

But:

More urban populations were spared than were massacred. Often spared were artisans, clerics of all religions, scribes, scholars, merchants, young women, and often officers, nobles, and administrators.

Mass slaughter was not a Mongol monopoly either in their own time or later. In taking a little Song Chinese town in 1218, the Jin general had 15,000 of the inhabitants put to the

sword. In 1291, King Edward of England slew nearly 10,000 people of Berwick. In 1303, 30,000 Hindus died in a battle at Chitor.

By the time of Mongke's rule, the Great Khan insisted that destruction be limited to a minimum and civilians be left alone. To show he was serious, he had a senior Mongol commander of 10,000 publicly executed for killing a Persian civilian.

Khubilai's revision of the Chinese law code reduced the number of offenses that carried the death penalty to half what it had been under the previous dynasties.

Destruction: The Mongols often destroyed the towns they attacked, usually as a by-product of the battle, sometimes deliberately after their conquest. Mongols traditionally had no use for towns. Destroying them was a practical measure to prevent their use for resistance.

Irrigation channels, without which agriculture in regions with fragile ecosystems was impossible, were in many areas seriously damaged or neglected. Gradually they silted up and became unusable, with serious long-term ecological consequences that resulted in a set-back for agriculture over wide areas for centuries. This problem was especially acute in Persia and Iraq.

Destruction was a by-product of the Mongols' conquests, rather than policy. They were unaware of or uninterested in the damage; while the local population, reduced by flight, massacre, famine, disease, could not spare the labor to restore and maintain the irrigation channels.

But: There was a great deal of construction initiated and supported by the Mongols. Many of the towns the Mongols destroyed rose again a few years later with Mongol help.

Courier services were expanded and many additional way stations were built along trade routes, where both troops and civilian travelers could get food, drink, lodging, and a change of horses. In China under Khubilai Khan, the postal relay system came to include 1400 way stations 14-40 miles apart.

Roads and bridges built originally to service the Mongol military became trade and travel routes.

The extension of the Grand Canal to Beijing by the Mongols allowed cheap transport of rice from southern to northern China.

Extortion of wealth: After first plundering the conquered, the conquerors were for a while satisfied with tribute in the form of demand of silk, grain, precious metals, and sophisticated war machinery. Unpredictable and capricious demands were gradually replaced with regular though intermittently extortionate taxes, sometimes made worse by demands that greedy Mongol princes and officials made for extra payments.

But: Some of the wealth that flowed to the Mongols was redistributed. Only part made its way to Mongolia. Much went back to those conquered areas where Mongols settled as occupying troops, administrators, and governors.

From about 1250, the Mongols undertook reforms. The Great Khan Mongke commanded: "Make the agricultural population safe from unjustified harassment, and bring despoiled provinces back to a habitable condition." He introduced the very modern

graduated income tax; repaid debts of previous rulers said to be owing to merchants; and made it more difficult for princes and high officials to practice extortion.

The lot of some segments of the conquered population actually improved, owing to profits from the trade promoted and supported by the Mongols, to their enforcement of law and order within their territories, and to their opening of careers to merit, not only birth or wealth. The poorest classes received something like government welfare assistance: food, clothes, and money.

Disease: The association of disease and warfare is commonplace. Troops live under more unsanitary conditions than is normal. Unburied corpses often contaminated water supplies. Among the overcrowded and underfed in besieged cities and in close quartered armies, an infectious illness could spread quickly. The existing food supply must be stretched to feed the invading army, leaving little for the local population and thereby reducing its immune system.

The frequent long-distance travel of military personnel, merchants, and others promoted the wider spread of diseases. Of these the Black Death (bubonic plague) was the best known and most severe. This disease may have been carried by soldiers from Inner Eurasia to the Black Sea, and from there to West Asia, North Africa, and Europe. This infection killed about one third of the total population of Europe.

Displacement: During the Mongol campaigns of conquest and later, there was large-scale enslavement and forced movement of populations.

Many fled in terror when news reached them of an approaching Mongol army.

Within the army, peoples of different backgrounds were deliberately mixed in all groupings from 10 men to 10,000. They and their families, who often accompanied Mongol armies, moved long distances on campaigns and spent long periods in far-away places as occupying armies.

In conquered territories, the Mongols usually rounded up the craftspeople, and assigned them to Mongol princes and commanders. These captives, who could number tens of thousands in a single city, were carried off to Mongolia or other parts of the growing empire. This gave rise to considerable population exchanges between Russia, Central Asia, Persia/Afghanistan, Mongolia, and China.

But: Although captive artisans and young women (destined to be slaves, concubines, prostitutes, and entertainers) often remained in their masters' hands for the rest of their lives, some gained their freedom and married locally, some eventually returned to their homelands. Moreover, artisans often gained privileges. The movement of peoples resulted in exchanges of goods, ideas and styles and in frequent and widespread contact between peoples of widely different cultural, ethnic, religious, and language backgrounds.

Thousands of people traveled from western and central parts of Eurasia to serve the Mongol regime in China. Marco Polo, the Venetian merchant who traveled to China with his father and uncle in 1271 and remained there for seventeen years, was just one of these foreigners seeking opportunity in Mongol administration.

Genoese merchants, who traded extensively in the Muslim lands and Inner Eurasia in the Mongol era sold Chinese silk and "Tatar cloth" at the fairs of Northern France.

Chinese artisans designed ceramics especially to appeal to Muslim tastes.

The Chinese exported copper and iron goods, porcelain, silks, linens, books, sugar, and rice to Japan and Southeast Asia in return for spices and exotic items like rhino horns.

At the time of his death in Italy, Marco Polo had among his possessions a Mongol slave, Tartar bedding, brocades from China, and a Buddhist rosary.

Khubilai Khan had Persian copies of the works of Euclid and Ptolemy translated into Chinese.

Egyptian experts were called in to improve Chinese sugar-refining techniques.

Muslim medical and astronomical sciences became known in China. Chinese medical works were translated into Persian.

Buddhist monks built Chinese style pagodas in Persia.

Persian miniatures show Chinese-style mountains and dragons.

A Mongol version of the traditional stories about Alexander the Great was produced.

Diplomatic contact with Western Europe intensified.

Columbus owned a copy of Marco Polo's book, and on his first voyage he took with him a letter from the Spanish king to the Great Khan.

Islam's spread among the peoples of the Mongol empire was also helped by the movement of peoples.

Many of the Turkic groups that allied with the Mongols had earlier converted to Islam. A significant number of them were literate, and employed by the Mongols as clerks, administrators, and translators as well as soldiers. They carried the Qur'an and their beliefs to new potential converts.

Persia and Iraq were overwhelmingly Muslim when the Mongols swept in. Persian became one of the official languages of the Mongol empire, used even in China. And Persian culture, along with Islam, spread into Central and Eastern Asia.

The Mongol Great Khans' preferred Muslims for senior positions in China. They thought that foreign Muslims could be more impartial than local Chinese. The foreign recruits could be blamed in case of Chinese dissatisfaction. Scholars from Persia were especially admired for their scientific and cultural achievements.

Starting in the thirteenth century, the Mongol khans of the Golden Horde and of Persia converted to Islam and threw their governments' power behind the Muslim faith.

Buddhism advanced in China owing partly to direct support from the Great Khans, starting with Khubilai. Tibetan lamas (monks), who had frequently held secular as well as religious power at home, began to move to China. Khubilai, whose wife Chabi was an ardent Buddhist, found the political experience of the lamas useful to him. He put a number of them in positions of power and influence. He also made large donations to Buddhist temples, gave tax-exemption to Buddhist monks, and supported them in their arguments with Chinese Daoists.

Christianity lost out in the long run in Asia, though not through any action of the Mongols. Some members of the Mongol princely houses and senior advisors were Nestorian Christians. Christians also served in the army. Some of the steppe tribes within the Mongol empire were Nestorian Christians. Several Popes, that is, the head of the Latin, or Roman Catholic Christian church, sent several envoys and missionaries from western Europe to Mongolia and China. European leaders had hopes of allying with Mongol leaders against the Muslim powers that challenged European political and commercial interests in the eastern Mediterranean. Neither the political overtures nor missionary labors resulted in much success for the Latin Church in Asia.

Christianity suffered partly because it did not speak with a single voice: believers in Latin Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Nestorian, and other Christian doctrines engaged in heated disputes with one another and competed for converts. Latin Christianity never caught on in any of the Mongol lands, and, with the advance of Islam, Nestorian communities in China and Inner Eurasia gradually shrank.

Discussion questions

1. Go back to the hypotheses you came up with in Student Handout 1.6 about how Mongols would rule their empire. In what ways does the new information you now have confirm, and in what ways disconfirm, your hypotheses? In what ways would you change your hypotheses to bring them in line with the evidence you now have?
2. Explain the differences between the short-term and the long-term consequences of Mongol conquest for subject peoples. What reasons would you give for these differences?
3. What was the advantage for the Mongol rulers of promoting the movement and exchange of goods, peoples, and ideas within and beyond their empire? How did they do the promoting?
4. During the period of their empire, what part did the Mongols play in what happened to the major religions?
5. Identify those consequences of the Mongol conquest that you consider historically significant, and explain the reasons for your choices. Which consequences do you consider most significant? Why?

Assessment

1. In what ways did Mongol actions promote the exchange of goods and ideas within and beyond their empire?
2. Compare the part played by ideologies, both religious and other, in the establishment and government of the Mongol empire
3. Once they had been conquered, what were the advantages and disadvantages of Mongol rule for the subject peoples?
4. Assess the accuracy of this statement by one of the Mongols' Chinese advisors: "The Mongol empire has been won from the saddle [but] it [could] not be ruled from the saddle."

Lesson Three

Looking at the Big Picture: What was significant?

Ask students to read Student Handout 3.1. Its three sections could be assigned to different groups, who would then pool their information.

Explain to students that they will be asked to do the following, based on Student Handout 3.1 as well on what they have learned in the unit so far. This will help focus their reading.

Discussion questions

1. In what ways did Mongols' view of Europe, and Europe's view of Mongols, change? In what ways did diplomatic contact between them change? How would you account for the timing of noticeable shifts? What evidence supports your hypotheses?
2. What features of the Mongol empire were most significant for the Afroeurasian world at the time? Why? Give evidence for your argument.
3. What features of the Mongol empire were most significant for the course of later world history? Why? Give evidence for your argument.

Activities

1. Using information from the lessons and Student Handout 3.1, construct a hypothesis to account for the gradual disintegration of the Mongol empire. What evidence supports your hypothesis? What questions would you ask that might provide additional support?
2. Based on information from the unit so far, and the information in Student Handout 3.1, write an obituary of Chinggis Khan as a significant player in world history. Include specific details to support your statements, making clear why you think he was a "significant player."
3. Explain to students that periodization is the historians' way to divide the flow of history into chunks that have some important things in common. The division in Student Handout 3.1, below uses different phases in the fate of the Mongol empire to distinguish three chronological periods.

Ask students to construct a different way of periodizing the era, dividing up the chronology based on different factors. This activity lends itself to small group work.

Extension

1. Compare the importance for world history of the Mongol empire with that of one or more other empires you know about. If only one of them could be taught about in history courses, which one should it be? Why?

Lesson 3***Student Handout 3.1— Chronological Table*****Building the Mongol Empire**

1188-1204	Temujin wars against, and/or allies with, neighboring tribes
1206	Temujin elected Great Khan by Kuriltai (council of allied nomad tribes and states), and takes name Chinggis (literal meaning: Oceanic)
1211-1216	Mongols under Chinggis Khan war successfully against Jin empire of North China
1219-1222	Mongols conquer Khwarizm empire, after murder of merchants and ambassadors there
1221-1224	First invasion of southern Russian steppe
1229 Chinggis	Election of Ogotai as Great Khan after two years of political infighting following Khan's death
1230-1234	Definitive conquest of Jin empire by Mongols.
1234-1235	Ogotai establishes post-station system for couriers. Kuriltai decides on war against Europe, Korea, and Song empires.
1237	King of Hungary and the Holy Roman Emperor receive letters from Khan Batu, demanding their unconditional surrender in return for holding office under the Mongols. The demand is ignored.
1238	Request by Muslims of Syria and Persia to European rulers for alliance against the Mongols.
1236-1242	Campaign led by Khan Batu, a grandson of Chinggis, against Europe. Mongols invade Poland and Hungary but they withdraw in 1242, though remaining in control of Russia.
1241-1246	Regency of Toregene, widow of Ogotai, as Great Khan.
1244	Crusaders lose Jerusalem to Muslims for good.
1245	Pope sends four friars as ambassadors to "Tartars," who return with Great Khan's orders for submission of Pope.
1248-1251	Regency of Gaimish, widow of Guyuk, as Great Khan.
1248 promising fragment of True submission of the Christian West	Mongol proposal sent to French king for joint action against Muslims in Egypt, help in freeing Jerusalem. An embassy takes gift of portable chapel with Cross, interpreted by Mongols as tribute showing formal submission of the Christian West.
1250	Mamluks (Turkish Muslim slave soldiers) revolt and take over rule of Egypt.
1253	Friar William of Rubruck leaves for the Mongol court at Karakorum. The Great Khan sends him back with a letter to the French king claiming universal rule.
1252-1279	Conquest of Song Empire of South China by Mongols.

- 1258 Mongols conquer Baghdad, killing last Abbasid Caliph and ending the Caliphate; Turkish Mamluks in Egypt now center of Muslim power.
- 1259 Khubilai, grandson of Chinggis, elected Great Khan by a Kuriltai; the same year, his brother elected Great Khan by a rival Kuriltai in the Mongol homeland, but surrenders to Khubilai after four years of bitter civil war.

The Four Mongol Empires

- 1260 Pope's envoy to Khan Hulagu is assured that Latin Christians in Holy Land would be protected by Mongol armies.
- 1260 Major defeat of Mongol army in Palestine by Mamluks of Egypt ends Mongol expansion in Southwest Asia.
- 1262 Khan Hulagu sends Pope and European kings proposal for joint military action against Mamluks. Response urges him to be baptized as precondition for alliance.
- 1260-1309 Intermittent civil war among Mongol rulers descended from the four sons of Chinggis Great Khan.
- 1270 French king leads an unsuccessful eighth crusade; Prince Edward of England plans joint attack with Mongols on Mamluks, but design fails for lack of manpower.
- 1275 Italian merchant Marco Polo arrives at Khubilai's court in China.
- 1287 Nestorian Christian monk from China serves as Mongol envoy in Europe, and returns with Latin Christians' offers of assistance against the Mamluks.
- 1291 Egyptian Mamluk armies conquer last Christian footholds in Western Asia.

Decline and fall of the Mongol empire

- 1294 Death of Great Khan Khubilai. His successor rules for 13 years, but after that Mongol regime in China becomes more and more unstable.
- 1295 Mongols in Persia become Muslim; ties binding them to the Mongol rulers in China weaken and gradually disappear.
- 1306-1316 Several more attempts to coordinate joint Mongol-European military action against Mamluks.
- 1313 Mongols of the Golden Horde become Muslims.
- 1320's to 40's Genoese and other Italian merchant colonies flourish in Chinese cities.
- 1338 Mongol ruler in China sends an embassy to the Pope composed of Frenchmen and Italians living at his court. Simultaneously, Pope's embassy carries gifts to the Great Khan, the last western mission to the Mongols.
- 1360-1405 Tamerlane, who claims descent from Chinggis Khan, conquers and rules what had been the western one-third or so of the Mongol empire.
- 1368 Han Chinese Ming Dynasty ousts the Yuan Dynasty. The last Yuan ruler dies in 1370 in Mongolia.
- 1478 Ivan III of Russia throws off Mongol sovereignty.
- 1526 Babur, a distant descendant of Chinggis Khan, founds Moghul dynasty in India.

- 1696 Chinese forces conquer Western Mongolia.
- 1911 Inner Mongolia declares its independence from China.
- 1924 Mongolia becomes a Communist People's Republic and a satellite of the Soviet Union.
- 1946 China recognizes the Mongolian People's Republic.
- 1961 Mongolia becomes a member of the United Nations.
- 1984 Death of the last supposed descendant of Chinggis Khan, an official of the government of the People's Republic of China.
- 1990s status Mongolia abandons rigid Communist ideology and restores Chinggis Khan from the of "feudal oppressor" to national hero.

Summary Activities for the Unit:

1. Brainstorm what might come to mind if one hears someone say, “He’s a real Chinggis Khan.” Compare with the outcome from the Introductory Activity in Lesson One. Also, ask again what students think of when they hear the word “Mongol.” Compare to the outcome from the Introductory Activity in Lesson One
2. Go back to Student Handout 1.1 and its results. Having reviewed the information in this Teaching Unit, identify which of the ingredients listed there as useful for a career of conquest did the Mongols under Chinggis Khan actually have available to them. Give evidence to back up your answer.
3. Using information from this unit, simulate telling a neighbor about the effects of Mongol rule on your people as though you were one of the following:
 - A Muslim merchant
 - A Persian peasant
 - A Persian bureaucrat at the court of the Mongol ruler
 - A northern Chinese artisan
 - A pastoral nomadic Mongolian woman

Extensions:

1. Discuss what arguments you would use to persuade the Security Council of the United Nations to appoint an International Criminal Tribunal to try Chinggis Khan. If such a trial were held, what would you accuse Chinggis of, on what evidence, and on what basis? (Students might compare the case of Slobodan Milosevich to that of Chinggis Khan.)
2. Compare Chinggis Khan with Alexander the Great. Which of them was of greater historical significance, and why? On what basis are you judging historical significance?

Summary Assessments:

1. In what ways was your early hypothesis about the characteristics of empire confirmed, modified, or disproved by the information about the Mongol empire in this unit?
2. How did the Mongols capitalize on the features that favored their establishment and rule of empire, and how did they make up for those that were disadvantageous?
3. How did the Mongols handle the problem of getting very diverse peoples to live together and cooperate? How would you assess their success in doing so?
4. To what extent, and in what ways, would it be accurate to call the Mongols of the thirteenth and fourteenth century “culture brokers”?
5. How accurate would it be to say of the Mongols, as one Persian historian did: “They came, burnt, killed, plundered, and left”? Explain your reasoning, and give evidence for your arguments.
6. Give an account of an imaginary debate between the English chronicler Matthew Paris (see his description in Student Handout 1.1) who argues that the Mongols were “fiends from hell,” and a Persian Muslim merchant who argues that they were “culture brokers.”

Draw upon all the information in the unit for your arguments, giving evidence to back them up.



This unit and the Three Essential Questions

	<p>Did the Mongol conquests do any long-term or permanent damage to the natural or physical environment in parts of Afroeurasia? How would you set up criteria for examining this question?</p>
	<p>Historians have commonly referred to the century or so following the conquests of Chinggis Khan as the <i>Pax Mongolica</i>, or Mongol Peace. What historical circumstances of the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries might justify this label? Debate in class whether the term is appropriate or not? How might you compare the conditions of the <i>Pax Mongolica</i> with those of the <i>Pax Romana</i> of the second and third centuries C.E. or with the <i>Pax Americana</i> following World War II.</p>
	<p>Research the political and social circumstances in which the Republic of Mongolia has in recent years “resurrected” Chinggis Khan as a national hero. Why do you think the Communist government in Mongolia from 1924 to the early 1990s had no interest in venerating Chinggis Khan? Why do Mongolians today wish to emphasize positive aspects of his conquests and rule?</p>

This unit and the Seven Key Themes

This unit emphasizes:

Key Theme 2: Economic networks and exchange

Key Theme 3: Uses and abuses of power

This Unit and the Standards in Historical Thinking

Historical Thinking Standard 1: Chronological Thinking

The student is able to (F) reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration in which historical developments have unfolded, and apply them to explain historical continuity and change.

Historical Thinking Standard 2: Historical Comprehension

The student is able to (E) read historical narratives imaginatively, taking into account what the narrative reveals of the humanity of the individuals and groups involved—their probable values, outlook, motives, hopes, fears, strengths, and weaknesses.

Historical Thinking Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation

The student is able to (A) compare and contrast differing sets of ideas, values, personalities, behaviors, and institutions by identifying likenesses and differences.

Historical Thinking Standard 4: Historical Research Capabilities

The student is able to (D) identify the gaps in the available records and marshal contextual knowledge and perspectives of that time and place in order to elaborate imaginatively upon the evidence, fill in the gaps deductively, and construct a sound historical interpretation.

Historical Thinking Standard 5: Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making

The student is able to (A) identify issues and problems in the past and analyze the interests, values, perspectives, and points of view of those involved in the situation.

Resources

Instructional resources for teachers

Abu-Lughod, Janet L. *Before European Hegemony: the World System A.D. 1250-1350*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989.

Allsen, Thomas T. *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997.

---. *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001.

---. *Mongol Imperialism*. Berkeley; University of California Press, 1987.

Chambers, James. *The Devil's Horsemen: the Mongol Invasion of Europe*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979.

Christian, David. *A History of Russia, Central Asia, and Mongolia*. Vol.I. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.

Chronicle of Novgorod 1016-1471. Trans. Robert Michell and Nevill Forbes. Camden Third Series, Vol. 25. London: Offices of the Society, 1914.

Curtin, Philip. *Cross-cultural Trade in World History*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1984.

Dawson, Christopher. *Mission to Asia*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995.
Contains travel accounts of John of Plano Carpini and William Rubruck.

Halperin, Charles J. *Russia and the Golden Horde: The Mongol Impact on Medieval Russian History*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985.

Hartog, Leo de. *Genghis Khan: Conqueror of the World*. London: I.B.Tauris, 1989.

Humble, Richard. *Marco Polo*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975.

- Juvaini, 'Ala-ad-Din 'Ata-Malik. *The History of the World-Conqueror*. Vol. I. Trans. John Andrew Boyle. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1958.
- Kwanten, Luc. *Imperial Nomads: A History of Central Asia, 500-1500*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979.
- Larner, John. *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1999.
- Lattimore, Owen. The Geography of Chingis Khan. *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 124, Part 1, March 1963.
- Li Chih-Ch'ang. *The travels of an alchemist; the journey of the Taoist, Ch'ang-ch'un, from China to the Hindukush at the summons of Chingiz Khan, recorded by his disciple, Li Chih-Ch'ang*. Translated, with an introduction, by Arthur Waley. London: George Routledge & Sons, 1963.
- Marco Polo. *The travels of Marco Polo the Venetian*. New York: E.P.Dutton, 1926.
- Marshall, Robert. *Storm from the East*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Martin, H.D. *The Rise of Chinggis Khan*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1950.
- Monks of Khubilai Khan, Emperor of China. (The History of Rabban Sawma)*. Trans. E.A. Wallis Budge. London: The Religious Tract Society, 1928.
- Morgan, David. *The Mongols*. New York: Blackwell, 1986.
- Nicolle, David. *The Mongol Warlords*. Poole, UK: Firebird Books, 1990)
- Onon, Urgunge. *The History and Life of Chinggis Khan. (The Secret History of the Mongols.)* New York: E.J. Brill, 1990.
- Paris, Matthew. *Matthew Paris's English History [Chronica Majora]*. Vol. 3. Trans. J.A. Giles. London: Henry G. Bohn. 1854.
- Phillips, E.D. *The Mongols*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1969.
- Rachewiltz, I. de. *Papal Envoys to the Great Khan*. London: Faber & Faber, 1971.
- Radzinowicz, Leon. *A History of English Criminal Law and its Administration from 1750*. London; Stevens & Sons, 1948.
- Rashid, al-Din. *The Successors of Genghis Khan*. Trans. John Andrew Boyle. New York: Columbia UP, 1971.
- Ratchnevsky, Paul. *Genghis Khan: His Life and Legacy*. Trans. and ed. T.N. Haining. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991.
- Riasanovsky, V. A. *Fundamental Principles of Mongol Law*. Bloomington: Indiana University, 1965.
- Rockhill, W. W., trans. and ed. *The journey of William of Rubruck to the eastern parts of the world, 1253-55, as narrated by himself, with two accounts of the earlier journey of John of Pian de Carpine*. London: Hakluyt Society, 1900.
- Rossabi, Morris. *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

---. *Voyager from Xanadu: Rabban Sauma and the First Journey from China to the West*. New York: Kodansha International, 1992.

Saunders, J.J. *The History of the Mongol Conquests*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971.

Spuler, Bertold. *History of the Mongols Based on Eastern and Western Accounts of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968.

Weatherford, Jack. *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*. New York: Crown, 2004.

Instructional resources for students

Edwards, Mike. "Genghis Khan." *National Geographic*, vol. 190 (Dec. 1996), 2-37.

Edwards, Mike. "The Great Khans." *National Geographic*. Vol. 191 (Feb. 1997), 2-35.

Edwards, Mike. "Marco Polo." *National Geographic*, vol. 199 (May 2001) 2-31; vol. 199 (June 2001), 20-45; vol. 200 (July 2001), 26-47.

Homeric, Frederic Don, and Will Hobson. *The Blue Wolf: The Epic of the Life of Genghis Khan and the Empire of the Steppes*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003.

Lange, Brenda. *Genghis Khan (Ancient World Leaders)*. Langhorne, PA: Chelsea House, 2003.

The Mongol Conquests. Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1989.

"The Mongols." *Calliope*, Nov.-Dec. 1993.

Correlations to National and State Standards

National Standards for World History

Era Five: Intensified Hemispheric Interactions, 3A: The student understands the world-historical significance of the Mongol empire, 3B: The student understands the significance of Mongol rule in China, Korea, Russia, and Southwest Asia.

California: History-Social Science Content Standard

Grade Seven, 7.3.4: Understand the importance of both overland trade and maritime expeditions between China and other civilizations in the Mongol Ascendancy and Ming Dynasty.

New York: Social Studies Resource Guide with Core Curriculum

Unit Three: Global Interactions (1200-1650), B. The rise and fall of the Mongols and their impact on Eurasia.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies

113.33 World History Studies. (c) Knowledge and Skills. B) Identify changes that resulted from important turning points in world history such as the development of farming; the Mongol invasions; the development of cities; the European age of exploration and colonization; the scientific and industrial revolutions; the political revolutions of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries; and the world wars of the 20th century.

Virginia History and Social Science Standards of Learning

World History and Geography to 1500 AD. Era IV: Regional Interactions, 1000-1500 A.D.

WHI.12 The students will demonstrate knowledge of social, economic, and political changes and cultural achievements in the late medieval period by b) by explaining conflicts among Eurasian powers, including the crusades, the Mongol conquests, and the fall of Constantinople.

Conceptual links to other teaching units

The “dark side” of the age of Mongol dominance was that infectious diseases may have spread more easily along the trans-Eurasian trade routes that the Mongols maintained. The pandemic of plague that we know in history as the Black Death appears to have started somewhere in the eastern part of Inner Eurasia around 1330 and spread westward to Southwest Asia, North Africa, and Europe. It may also have caused large-scale die-off in China. Landscape Teaching Unit 5.5, titled Calamities and Recoveries, examines developments in Afroeurasia between 1300 and 1500, a period that saw not only an unprecedented disease pandemic but also a climatic cooling trend that negatively affected agriculture in northerly regions. These developments may be linked both to the breakup of a number of large states and empires, the rise of new ones, and upheavals in Europe that resulted in Portuguese and Spanish mariners sailing into the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.