Asian Empires of the Middle Ages: The Mongols

Background

- Established Empires
  - Kwarazm
    - Persia
    - To their southwest
  - Kara Khitay
    - Central Asia
    - To their West
  - China
    - To their South
    - Xixia
    - Chin
    - Southern Song

- Geography
  - Grew up on Steppes of Central Asia
    - Wide open expanses
      - Perfect for grazing herds
        - Sheep and Yaks
    - Perfect for horses
      - Mongols learned how to ride at age 3
      - Could ride without holding reins
      - Shoot bows at full gallop
    - Nomadic
      - Lived in Yurts
        - Could move in about 15 min
        - Had to burn animal dung for heat
        - Always faced door to south
  - Global Warming
    - Turns steppe into desert
    - Force Mongols south in search of better pastures

Origins of Conquest

- Division
  - Tribal conflicts
    - Ancient Rivalries
  - Chin puppet masters
    - Would pit them against each other to keep tribes from becoming too powerful
    - Divide and Conquer
    - Scared of unified Mongols
    - Great wall meant to keep Mongols in North

- Genghis Khan's Origins
  - Born as Timujin
    - “Iron Worker”
  - Father Chieftain
    - Poisoned by Tatars
    - Mother has his promise revenge
  - Betrothed wife Borte captured by rivals
    - Bribed other nobles and uncles to help him get her back
  - Builds power to become chieftain
- Highly spiritualistic
  - Begins wars to unite tribes
    - 1196
      - Attacks Tatars
      - Vengeance for father’s murder
      - Chases them across Asia
    - Use of Horses
      - Each warrior had 4
        - Ate and slept on horseback
      - More mobile than enemies
      - Early version of Blitzkrieg
        - Highly mobile and quick attacks
    - Changes society
      - Breaks tribal loyalties
        - Loyal to him
      - Women
        - High in Mongol society
        - Women received shares of plunder
    - Wipes out Tatars
      - Anyone taller than axel of a wagon
  - Named Genghis Khan
    - 1206
    - Universal Leader
    - Head ruler of the Mongols

Mongol Conquests
- Chin
  - Begin attacks on Chinese in 1211
    - China is the wealthiest kingdom with plenty of good land
    - Song viewed Mongols as barbarians that they can ally with
  - Chin conquered quickly
    - Used captured Chinese to build siege machines
  - Zhongdu Captured
    - 1215
    - Modern day Beijing
- Tools of the Mongols
  - Drums
    - Inspired fear in cities
  - Used prisoners to fill in moats around cities
  - Killed everything in cities who refused to surrender
  - Tales of atrocities
    - Psychological warfare
    - Rape
      - 1/200 people on earth is related to Genghis Khan
  - Communication
    - Pony express style communication network
      - Posts every 25-30 miles with fresh horses
    - Official couriers carried medallions signifying their role
      - First style of passport
        - Allowed holder to move everywhere in empire
- Rebellion
  - Western tribes rebelled
    - Genghis Khan stopped invasion of China to deal with them.
- Chased them into Muslim lands
- Annexed land into Empire
  - Conquering
    - Ultimatums to cities
    - Surrender or be destroyed
- Kwarazam
  - Genghis stopped at border
    - Attempted to start trading relationships
      - With Sultan Muhammad
      - First envoy murdered
      - Second envoy shamed
      - “You have chosen war”
    - 1219
      - “No eye left open to weep for the dead”
      - Otrar
        - Governor had molten silver poured in eyes and ears
      - Samarkand
        - Mongols attack out of desert
        - City falls in 10 days
        - Sultan Muhammad makes a run for it
        - Ultimate destruction
          - Salt in Fields
          - Flooded cities
          - Destroy Walls
          - Destroy Farms
  - Once finished turns back to China
    - Dies en route
- Impacts
  - Pax Mongolica
    - Mongolian Peace
    - Golden age of Mongolia
    - Travel from Rome to Beijing easily doable
    - Largest continuous land empire in history
  - After death of Genghis Empire divided into 4 Khanates
    - Kingdoms

Administration
- Genghis’ Control of Empire
  - Karkorum
    - Capital of Mongol Empire
    - Imported Artisans from conquered areas to turn city into thriving center of Arts and culture
  - Religious tolerance
    - Shamanism
      - Personal beliefs of Genghis
      - Religion of natural Spirits
    - Confucius scholars
      - Helped advise in how to rule Chinese
    - Islamic Scholars
      - Helped with siege weapons
    - Daoist
      - Searched for elixir of life for Genghis
Cultures used to help empire
- Chinese and Muslim bureaucratic system
- Helped develop written language for Mongols

Trade
- Opened land route from Europe to Korea

The Khanates
- After death of Genghis Empire divided into 4 Khanates
  - Kingdoms

Ögedei Khan
- 1229 – 1241 C.E.
- Great Khan who succeeded Genghis
- Third son of Genghis Khan from first wife
  - 1230-1231 – Conquered Persia
  - 1230-1234 – Conquered Jin Empire
    - Kaifeng
    - With help of Song
      - who then betrayed Mongols
        - killed envoy
      - 1235-1245 – Attacked Song
  - 1232-1240 – Conquered Caucuses
    - Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia
  - 1224-1241 – Conquest of Korea
    - Started when Mongol envoy killed
  - 1241 – Conquered Northwest India

Kublai Khan
- Grandson of Genghis
- 1235-1279 C.E.
- 1271 C.E.
  - Establishes “Yuan” Dynasty
- Cultural Changes
  - Chinese not allowed to learn Mongol script
  - Mongols not allowed to marry Chinese
  - Mongols retained customs
  - Established capital at Tatu
    - Beijing
    - Kublai adopted Chinese culture
  - New Social Hierarchy
    - Mongols – Top
    - Central Asians
    - North Chinese
    - South Chinese – Bottom
  - Cultural flourishing
    - Brought scholars and artisans from all over
      - Many Muslims
      - Persians
Astronomers fixed Chinese Calendar
  - Welcomed travelers from all over
    - Marco Polo

Batu Khan
  - Golden Horde
    - Aka Tatars
    - Aka Tartars
      - “People from Hell”
  - Grandson of Genghis
  - Mongols Invade Russia
    - 1236 C.E.
      - Rus too weak to resist
        - Russian Princes terribly divided
        - Seen as a war-up to invasion of Western Europe
    - Only successful winter invasion of Russia
      - Vladimir, Ryazan, Moscow all wiped out
    - 1240 C.E.
      - Mongols turn to Kiev
        - Mongol Envoys thrown from Walls
        - City destroyed except Cathedral of St Sophia
      - Novgorod
        - Spared due to Alexander Nevskii
        - Mongols focused on Western Europe
    - Forced Rus to act as tributary states
      - Peasants gave grain to lords and Mongols
      - Moscow built back up
        - Tribute collector for Khans
        - Annexed other towns
        - Became seat for Eastern Orthodox Church
      - Broke away in 1380
        - Battle of Kulikova
  - Impacts
    - Russia Modernized to deal with Mongols
    - Moscow gains importance
    - Cut off from Western Europe

- Invasion of Europe
  - King Bela
    - Hungarian
    - Harshly dismissed Mongol Envoys from Batu
      - Wanted nomads who were in Hungary running from Batu
    - Batu uses as excuse to invade Hungary
      - 1240 C.E.
      - Germans Respond
        - Also beaten
    - Free reign to attack Eastern Europe
      - Stopped by death of Ogedei
        - Power struggle ensues

Kublai Khan
  - 1260-1294 C.E.
  - 1279 C.E.
    - Finally conquered remainder of Song Empire
- Established capital in Khanbaliq where he ruled Korea, China, and Tibet
- 1279 and 1281
  - Tried to invade Japan
- 1287
  - Vietnam
- 1277, 1283, 1287
  - Conquest of Burma

**Islamic World**

- Europeans first thought of Mongols as their Prester John
  - Savior of Christendom against Muslims?
  - Mongols reaped destruction all over Islamic World
    - Viewed them as catastrophe
- Hulegu
  - Grandson of Genghis
  - Captured and destroyed Baghdad
    - 1258 C.E.
    - Murdered Abbasid Calip
    - 800,000 People died for resisting
- Mamluks
  - Egyptian Dynasty
  - 1260 Defeat Mongol Army
    - With help of Crusaders
      - Let them pass through their lands
- Timur
  - Tamerlane
  - Not of Mongol Birth
  - Conquests
    - 1260s-1405
    - Used fear
  - Based out of Samarkand
    - Brought back artisans to build up capital
  - Died in 1405
    - Empire torn apart by civil war
    - End of Mongol Era