The Mongols - the fastest, meanest, deadliest war machine the world had ever seen. Build a town, they’ll burn it down; Refuse to trade, get a spade - because you will be digging your own grave if you mess with these Asiatic hellhounds.
Mongol Might

- From the steppes of central Asia came a force that influenced the course of history in many ways for many civilizations. That force was the Mongols.
- From the life of Chinggis Khan (1170s-1227) to the life of Timur the Lame (1336-1405) neighboring societies quaked in fear of a Mongol invasion - because they knew that it would end badly for them.
- Mongol invasions ended or interrupted many of the great empires of the postclassical period. They had also extended the world network.
- Under Chinggis’ leadership, the Mongols conquered central Asia, northern China, and eastern Persia. Under his sons and grandsons, the rest of China, Tibet, Persia, Iraq, much of Asia Minor (Turkey) and all of southern Russia were conquered by the Mongols - making the Mongol Empire the largest in world history.
Mongols get a bad reputation

- Most histories depict the Mongols as a horde of barbaric savages that wanted nothing more than to kill sedentary people of the more “civilized world.”
- But the Mongols only destroyed towns and civilizations that did not comply with their request for trade. If a civilization traded with the Mongols or paid them a tribute, everything would be fine. If not, well . . . Death was a common result.
- However, once a land was under Mongol control, it was safe for merchants to travel.
- Despite their reputation for cruelty, the Mongols banished the practice of torture and set-up a pension system for the widows and children of slain warriors.
- The Mongols had no preference for religion and therefore accepted all religions. Many Mongols were of the Nestorian Christianity faith; and had names like ‘Luke’ and ‘Paul.’
Life of Chinggis

- Chinggis’ birth name was **Temujin**; his mother and siblings were abandoned by his tribe after their father had been murdered.
- Life was tough. As a young teenager, he killed his half-brother over a fish he caught. Temujin was very afraid of dogs and he cried a lot.
- Temujin was captured by a rival tribe in 1182 and was humiliated by his enemies as he was led into camp locked in a wooden collar.
- Temujin’s daring escape from his enemies; his teaming up with a clan loyal to his father; his military prowess and a string of victories over other Mongol tribes soon led to a **kuriltai**, or meeting of Mongol chieftains who elected Temujin as **khagan**, or supreme ruler and renamed him Chinggis Khan.
- All of his life, Chinggis saw his people fight and kill each other over grazing rights and the few resources found in the harsh Mongolian landscape. His defeat and unification of the Mongol tribes set the Mongols up for decades of military campaigns and expansion that would shake the world.
Chinggis Khan
The Mongol War Machine

• Mongols were raised tough. Mongol children could ride a horse as soon as they could walk. They were natural hunters and could fight.
• The Mongol army was 100% cavalry. They herded captured enemies (often peasants and farmers), as if they were cattle, to be used as human shields.
• The Mongol weapons included lances, hatchets, and iron maces. But their greatest weapon was the bow and arrow. A Mongol warrior could hit a target at 400 yards while in full stride.
• The Mongols were always looking for ways to improve on their military might, and readily adopted the weapons of their enemies. Captured engineers would teach the Mongols on how to build catapults, battering rams and bamboo rockets. Soon, they were deploying exploding arrows and bronze cannons.
• The Mongols had a great advantage over their enemies through the speed at which they traveled and their deceptive battle tactics which often drew out their enemies from behind the fortress walls. Their network of spies and informants gave them vital information about the lands they were about to conquer.
Mongol War Machine - p.2

- The Mongols were highly disciplined and organized. The basic fighting unit is called a **tumen** - each consisting of 10,000 warriors. Each tumen was further divided into units of 1000, 100, and 10 warriors. Commanders at each level were responsible for the training, arming, and disciplining the calvarymen under their command.

- The Mongols could go for days in the saddle; the messenger force had their bodies tightly bandaged so that they could ride for days.

- The Mongols hunted for their food, so there was no need for a large supply train.

- The Mongol’s code of ethics highly regarded bravery in battle and loyalty to the khan and their commanders; cowards and deserters were executed.
Mongols at Battle

Illustration from History of the Moghuls, a 17th-century Indian text (detail)
Gulestan Palace Library, Tehran
Mongol Battle Dress
Mongol treatment of the conquered

- The Mongols would interview captured people. Those who had useful skills such as scholars, poets, musicians, engineers, carpenters, etc. would be spared and enlisted to aid and entertain the Mongols. Those who did not do anything useful, such as aristocrats, were executed.
- If an enemy warrior proved to be particularly brave, such as Jebe, they would be integrated into the Mongol army.
- City folk and peasants were seen as soft and weak. Towns that resisted the Mongols were burned and the people were slaughtered or sold into slavery. Towns that cooperated were spared but forced to pay a tribute. People, not useful and not executed were herded as human shields for the next attack.
- Chinggis is attributed to have said that his greatest pleasures in life was, “making war, defeating enemies, forcing their beloved to weep, riding on their horses, embracing their wives and daughters.” Translated: he wanted to kill his enemies and take their possessions, particularly their women.
- Chinggis came to feel that it was his destiny to conquer the known world.
Who the Mongols Conquered under Chinggis Khan

• China: In 1207 the Tangut kingdom of Xi Xia in northwest China and the Qin Empire which the Manchu-related Jurchens had established a century earlier in northern China.

• By 1219 they had conquered the Kara Khitai Empire

• The Turkic Khwarazm Empire: the ruler, Muhammad Shah II had some of Chinggis Khan’s envoys killed -- bad move. He died on a desolate island on the Caspian sea and his Turkic horsemen became Chinggis’ horsemen.
Life Under the Mongols

• If one resisted the Mongols, they would be destroyed. But the Mongols as rulers, were eager to learn from those conquered and were remarkably tolerant.

• Chinggis set-up a capital city at **Karakorum** on the steppes in central Asia. It was a city of movable tents. Think of it being similar to a large RV park.

• In Karakorum, Chinggis would bring in scholars and engineers to teach him. He consulted with Confucian scholars on how to rule China, with Muslim engineers on how to build better siege weapons, and his Daoist holy men on how to become immortal.

• These scholars help develop a Mongolian language for recordkeeping and laws.

• Chinggis, himself a *shamanistic* believer of his ancestors(nature spirits), tolerated all religions.

• Trade and cultural diffusion flourished under the Mongols.

• Paradoxically, being invaded by Mongols was terrible. Being ruled by them was stable and peaceful.
The large Mongol empire built by Chinggis was divided by his sons and grandsons upon Chinggis’ death in 1227. Each of the kingdoms was called a **khanate** and the Mongol rulers were called **khans**. The four khanates were:

1. **The Golden Horde** - controlled Russia who called them ‘Tartars’, a Russian word for ‘people from hell’. Kept Russia backwards and out of the progress that eventually occurs in western Europe.

2. **Ilkhan Empire** - includes Persia and many Muslim lands - The Khwarazm Empire This group of Mongols ended the Abbasid dynasty and the Caliphate.

3. **Empire of Kubilai Khan** - later known as the Yuan Dynasty in China.

4. **Chaghatai (or Djagatai)** in central Asia.
Chinggis Khan with Advisors
Kubilai Khan and Chabi
Genealogical Table
The House Of Jenghiz Khan

Borte Cinoa

Legend:ary Ancestors

Borjigdai the Wise

Mongqoljin the Fair

Borjigun Clan

Traditional Ancestors

Yesekei

Oyelin Yakki

Temujin

Borte

Jenghiz Khan

Jochi

Jagadai

Ogodai Khan of Khans

Tolui

Balu

1st Khan of Golden Horde (Russia)

End of Mongol domination of Russia
1481, last Crimean Khan, 1783

Jagadai

Empire in Central Asia

Mogul Emperors of India, Baibar
(mother descended from Jagadai)
to Aurangzeb 1707

Guyuk Khan of Khans

Mongke Khan of Khans

Hulagu 1st Ilkhan (Persia)
The Ilkans' realms disintegrated in 1335

The Ilkhan (Yuan) Dynasty in China
1260-1368

Qubilai Khan of Khans
Describe how life was in the ancestral homelands of Chinggis Khan at the time of his youth

How did Chinggis unite the Mongols? What were some of his policy changes?

Point out some details of the Mongol fighting machine. What made them so feared?

What is the extent of the Mongol empire and what are the four major areas that emerge under separate but related control by the Mongols?

What kind of people would the Mongols want to keep around?

What kind of people would the Mongols not want to keep?

What was the Mongol view of trade and commerce?

Once conquered, how was life under Mongol control?

Who is Prester John and the Nestorians?

Who are the Mamluks? How did they fare with the Mongols?

Ogedei - son #3

Hulegu and Berke