



Mongolia

RULING AND CULTURE

BY RALPH, NOT THE EYEBITER

agenda

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Sources

Mongolian sources: HAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH very few, actually. Not even The Secret History of the Mongols (THE definitive history).

Chinese Sources: Quite a bit. This is where we have found the oldest copy of the Secret History of the Mongols (It is in Chinese.).

Russian Sources: Much more on late period / Golden horde period (after ~1390)

Persian Sources

- Two of the largest and most expansive chroniclers: the first is Rashid al Din 1247?-1318 Jewish, court official of the Ilkans and writer of the “Compendium of Chronicles” the Jami’ al-Tawarikh (great if one wanted to find period illuminations).
- The second was Ata-Malik Juvayni 1225-1280, who had written his “History of the World Conqueror” the Tarikh-I Jahan Gusha.

Western Sources

- The kingdom of Georgia was a satellite state. “The History of the Nation of Archers” by Grigory Akner 1250-1335
- Travelogues from Priests, Traders and official letters to and from the likes of the Pope and Philip of France. Including John of Plano Carpini, Benidict the Pole, William Rubruck, and though out of period Huc and Gabet being the best known. Except for, of course,.....Marco Polo.

Other sources: Japan, Korea, Vietnam, India all have their own recorded encounters with the Mongols.

So if you want to study Mongolian history, pick a language (not Mongolian) to study.

Time Period

Chinggis Khaan 1158-1227

- Empire established 1206 (Chinggis, Ogedei, Guyuk, Mongke, Kublai, Toghon Temur)
- “Pax Mongolica” 1250-1350
- Division of the empire 1260-1294
- Fall of the Ilkhante 1335
- Fall (division) of the Yuan Dynasty 1368
- Fall of the Golden Horde 1502 (Crimea 1783, Kazakh Khanate 1847)
- Fall of the Chagatai Khanate 1687
- Dzungaria 1620-1755/9
- Last “direct” acknowledged Chinggisiad leader died in China (elected county leader) childless in the early 1970s. DNA says otherwise 1 in 200 men in the world.

Geography

Central Asia has a long history of people leaving and expanding outward. The harsh steppe life encourages people to move out and find easier places to live. How do we know? Where did the invaders of the Middle East and Europe generally come from? The Sythians, the Parthians, the Saka during the classical antiquity period. The Alans, Avars, Huns, Xiongnu, and others during the Migration period. In the Early Middle Ages, a whole host of smaller groups of central Eurasian nomads were on the move, including the Turks, the Goturks, Cumans, the Magyar, the Kipchaks, the Bulgars, Khitans, and Khazars. Finally, during the High Middle ages into the Early modern period, we have the most successful of the Central Asians: the Mongols, but they were not the only ones on the move (the Turkomen, the Khazaks, the Kyrgyz, the Tartars and then finally ending back with the Mongol Dzungars).

Geography



Geography



Geography



Geography



Military Success

The Mongols were a poor small appendage to other tribes. Until Chinggis Khaan 1158-1227, not his name but rather a title, his name was Temujin. And it was the campaign against the Khwarezm Shah that kicked off the conquering of the world.

They were successful because they took Chinese engineers west with their armies; they took Persian siege experts east into China; and they used Chinese generals, Jewish ministers of government, Muslim ministers of finance, and European traders. Even a Parisian silversmith is specifically mentioned: Guillaume Bouchier (the tree!)

Successful because they let the locals rule themselves within the bounds of not revolting, paying taxes, and knowing that a Mongol Army was in the area.

Breakup of the Empire



Law

The Yassa (the Law)

Not extant. Did it exist? Was it actually written? Three separate attestations that it was written and used: Juvayni, Rashid al-Din, and an Egyptian historian.

So what do we know about it? What about it was “radical”?

- First, all were subject to the law, even the nobility 11 versus 7
- Religion was protected and exempted from taxation. 1279 restatement of Munke-Temur “As the former Kings protected priests, monks and paupers and we do not mean to change their charter we also protect them. He who would rob them be he baskak, scribe, prince, tax gather, or customs officer, will not be forgiven, but like the Great Yassa will be punished with death”
- Plano Carpini made comment in his letter about the law in 1246 That “no one has the right to stay in the country without his [the Khan’s] permission.”

Law

- We know that the Yassa maintained the principle of religious toleration. We have letters of priests writing back to the Pope full of indignation of being forced to debate religious issues with not just Muslims or Taoists or Jews but with other sects of Christianity, such as the Nestorians. There was also no clean vs unclean and ALL clergy were exempted from taxation.
- The Yam was also established.
- Taxation rules were set up.
- William of Rubruck, a Franciscan priest, was shocked that those convicted of not just rape but of cohabitation with another man's wife OR maidservant was put to death. He was also not pleased about the polygamy, the ease of divorce, nor the practice of a man's youngest son receiving all of his father's wives to dispose of as he saw fit, except his mother.
- The law was harsh in many ways, such as ordering death for those who stepped on the threshold of a ger, peed on a fire, fouled moving water; those who choked on food were to be driven out of the camp.
- Read some of the legal pieces from Juvayni

Culture

Chinggis did not support drinking, though was unable to control it.

- “IF one is able to abstain from drinking, a man may get drunk 3 times a month; if he does it more than three times he is culpable; if he gets drunk 2 a month it is better; if once a month it is still more laudable; and if one does not drink at all what can be better? But where can such a man be found? If such a man were found he would be worthy of the highest esteem.”

Marriage and divorce

Love marriages, sit in front of her ger until invited in, arranged marriages, bought wives. Divorce? Toss him out take the ger go home to mom and dad.

Plano Carpini very unhappy that women and girls wore pants, rode horseback alone and with men and doing archery, hunting and war as well as the men.

Culture



Guillaume Bouchier (Parisian silversmith)

Silver and gold tree actually tree sized. 4 snakes wound around the trunk each dispensing booze. Yes a multi-headed tap invented in period. Out of them poured fermented mare's milk, wine of the grape, wine of rice and mead. At the top of the tree was an angel with a trumpet that blew and sounded when signal when the reservoir was low not empty but just low.

Language

Mongolian is not Chinese is not related to Chinese, is not based on tones and is more closely related to Finnish or Hungarian than Chinese, despite their closeness in distance. Its language history is in question and a state of flux as the linguists can't come to an agreement. While it used to be thought of as springing from or giving birth to Turkic, Tungusic, Korean, Japonic families most disparage this now. Rather, the theory is that all of these make up an Altaic language family that may or may not include Korean and the Japonic languages.

Mongolian is a lot like English for similar reasons: they are word thieves.

Several writing forms, currently the most common are Cyrillic and Script. Script is written vertically and left to right. Script was designed by an artist so there are up to 6 different ways to write each letter. Sogdian back to Aramaic and Phoenician. Teach a few words (yes, no, ok, BS, eat, magic)

Language

**MONGOLIAN
ALPHABET & NUMERALS**

Vowels		Consonants				Numerals	
	а а		н n		ш sh		0
	э е		ng		т t		1
	и і		б б		д d		2
	о о		п p		ч ch		3
	у u		х h		ж dzh		4
	ө ou		г g		й y		5
	ү oo		м m		р r		6
	еe		л l		в v		7
			с s		ф f		8
			ч ch		9		



Language

Transliteration RAGE

There are MULTIPLE MANY A LOT of ways to properly transliterate Mongolian. IF anyone tells you that your Latin alphabet based English transliteration of Mongolian is “wrong” first spit in their eye and then ask which transliteration system you should use. Unless they are an actual academic scholar in the field they will just look at you blankly. At that point ask which scholar’s system they are using, then laugh.

The word Khan, Khaan, Khagan, Xan, Xaan, Xagan, Han, Haan, Hagan are all varied acceptable transliterations. Take the word beki “strong” it could be properly spelled bek, beg, baki, begi, bagi or beghi.

At this point most scholars use multiple systems as many common names of people and places use a more familiar older system more recognizable and then a different more personally pleasing system for other translations. Historians and linguists do not use the same systems, different generations of scholars use different systems, scholars from different nations use different systems, scholar from different teachers use different systems.

My Favorite Mongolian

Mandukhai the wise

Wait who? Not Chinggis? Not Toloi? Not Kubalai? Not Batu? Come on who is Mandukhai?

Mandukhai (1449-1510? 1517?)

SHE was the daughter of the Chingsang of the Ongud “Tribe” and so was a member of the aristocracy and at 16 (1464) was made the second wife of Manduul Khan who ruled over the northern Yuan. His first wife produced no children and Mandukhai produced 2 daughters and began to eclipse the first wife. Manduul died under a cloud in 1478, and his first wife well we don’t know anything, leaving no heirs but did leave a wife a queen Mandukhai. So she is a hot commodity! But she has a plan! Bat Mongke they year is 1470. Now She can rule in her own right until the boy is grown. She is a master of marketing Dayan Khaan “Whole” “Complete” ruler of all the Mongols, All of the Yuan Dynasty.

Mandukhai

Has she just declared war on all the rest of the Mongols? On the Ming Chinese? She doesn't have Army she has a young sickly kid of about 3 years old. One General remained loyal despite being passed over as husband material, Une-Bolod (maybe he was playing the long game). And so now her threats were to the south and west across the gobi the Ming and the Oirats ruled by their Turkic warlords Beg-Arslan and Ismayil along the silk road. She went to War. The chronicle Altan Tobchi is clear as to her actions that she removed her boqta (tall hat not the leg and foot of a man!) (for a bad "LARPing" look to the Hennis of Europe) Fixed her hair and took up a helmet. She put the young Khan in a box on her horse's saddle at her knee, who else could she trust? Many small skirmishes no major battles winning. Finally the battle came the Yellow Chronicle of the Oirat is clear "her enemies swarmed around her as thick as a cloud of dust but she fell upon them and destroyed them entirely and annihilated them...taking prisoners beyond counting...killing their leaders the eastern and western Mongols are now united. She avoided the 5 baits of the Chinese (Luxurious clothes, superior cuisine, Beautiful women and music, wine and feasts, and finely slaves and grain) the Chinese were confused as to why she refused them. The Ming catch out Beg-Arslan and Ismayil in ordos but do not kill them 1475. Three Guard betrayal.

Mandukhai

At last now Mandukhai can go home to the lands of her childhood Ordos. Now she has a base to operate from south of the Gobi. Now she can act. 1479 Dayan Khaan is 15 and sent out on his first independent command Kill Beg-Arslan. 1480 the marriage is consummated and completed, now they had already been formally married and together for 10 years (one could argue that she had raised her husband) twelve years 8 kids three sets of twins. During which time they are at war, raiding, moving, Together as one large army separately in smaller armies. Think of something like yo-yo with attack and counter attack throughout northern China below the Gobi. War like the Mongols want to wage. Oh and Mandukhai was not a passive woman she planned these fights, she was leading from the front sword and bow in hand. And just to prove how much of a Badass she was remember she is having kids, 15 years in the saddle fighting

Mandukhai

In one battle 1488 she fell from her saddle and delivered a set of twins under the protection of some of her most loyal soldiers holding the line. . Really what soldier isn't going to follow this queen into any fight? Remember when I said that she was a great marketer? Her children all using the name Bolod "steel". Toro-Bolod steel Government, Ulus-Bolod Steel Nation, Steel Tiger, Steel Lion. 1488 was an important year Ismayil dead, the Ming Emperor Dead, the Mongol Empire now back to strength stretching from the Tarim basin across Ordos up over the Gobi in the traditional home of the Mongols. Now was the time for peace. And so diplomatic ties were established with the Ming and now like Chinggis Khan of old it was time to reorder the Mongol nation. Establishing new laws and rules ending the growing use of titles, now there would be just one Khan not one for every tribe again. Ended the 4 separate lines of Chinggis descendants and trying to end the internecine fighting, now there would be just one the Borjigin and it would include Chinggis' brother's lineage. Reestablished older tax methods.

Mandukhai

In 1508 one of her sons was assassinated, after over 30 years of war and fighting and being almost 60 she just couldn't actively fight anymore and so her husband set out to avenge their son's death. They would never see each other again. Dayan Khaan would live until 1543 a single man. Their lineage would include Khans and Dalai Lamas. They would keep the Mongols a separate nation until the Manchu and their Qing dynasty. Which they joined, there were not conquered they were invited and willingly joined the dynasty. The family staying in power (of varied strengths) until the twentieth Century.

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