

## Document 1



Source: Map created from various sources.



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## Size of World Conquests

| Conquerors                             | Square Miles Conquered |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Genghis Khan (1162-1227)            | 4,860,000              |
| 2. Alexander the Great (356 - 323 BCE) | 2,180,000              |
| 3. Tamerlane (1336 -1405)              | 2,145,000              |
| 4. Cyrus the Great (600 - 529 BCE)     | 2,090,000              |
| 5. Attila (406 - 453)                  | 1,450,000              |
| 6. Adolf Hitler (1889 -1945)           | 1,370,000              |
| 7. Napoleon Bonaparte (1769 -1821)     | 720,000                |

**Note:** The area of the continental United States (excluding Alaska and Hawaii) is 3,036,885 square miles.

## Document 4

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**Source:** Ata-Malik Juvaini, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*, edited by UNESCO and Manchester University Press, © UNESCO 1997. Reprinted by permission.

In the spring of 618/1221, the people of Nishapur (a city in Persia) saw that the matter was serious ... and although they had three thousand crossbows in action on the wall and had set up three hundred mangonels and ballistas and laid in a correspondent quantity of missiles and naphtha, their feet were loosened and they lost heart....

By the Saturday night all the walls were covered with Mongols;... The Mongols now descended from the walls and began to slay and plunder.... They then drove all the survivors, men and women, out onto the plain; and ... it was commanded that the town should be laid waste in such a manner that the site could be ploughed upon; and that ... not even cats and dogs should be left alive....

They severed the heads of the slain from their bodies and heaped them up in piles, keeping those of the men separate from those of the women and children.

**Note:** Juvaini was a Persian chronicler who was in the employ of the Mongol Il-khan of Persia who served under the Mongols as the governor of Baghdad. He wrote this account about forty years after the destruction of Nishapur.

### Reported Inhabitant Deaths From Varied Sources

| Year | Place                | Reported Deaths     | Source              |
|------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1220 | Bukhara (Khwarazm)   | 30,000              | Juvaini             |
| 1220 | Samarkand (Khwarazm) | 30,000              | Persian chronicler  |
| 1221 | Merv (Khwarazm)      | 700,000             | Persian chronicler  |
| 1221 | Nishapur (Khwarazm)  | 1,747,000           | Persian chronicler  |
| 1223 | Herat (Khwarazm)     | 1,600,000           | Chronicler          |
| 1237 | Riazan (Russia)      | Few survivors       | Russian chroniclers |
| 1237 | Kozelsk (Russia)     | No survivors        | Russian chroniclers |
| 1258 | Baghdad (Persia)     | 800,000 - 2,000,000 | Persian chroniclers |

**Note:** These casualty figures are found in George Marshall's *Storm from the East*. Despite very probable exaggeration, there is agreement among chroniclers of the time and historians of today that the number of deaths at Nishapur was staggering.

## Document 5

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**Source:** Persian manuscript, "The Shah Namah" or "Book of Kings," c. 1300, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. In Robert Marshall, *Storm from the East, From Genghis Khan to Kubilai Khan*, University of California Press, 1993. Reproduced with the permission of BBC Worldwide Limited. Copyright © Robert Marshall 1993.



A scene from a Persian manuscript c.1300, showing the execution of a prisoner by a Mongol soldier. Others are being buried alive upside-down.

## Document 6

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**Source:** Charles J. Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde*, Indiana University Press, 1985.  
Reprinted by permission of Indiana University Press.

### Mongol Commerce in China and Persia

The Mongols conquered nearly all of Asia and achieved what all Inner Asian steppe empires had dreamed of, control of the continental caravan routes from China to Persia. The enormous destructive cost of the Pax Mongolica cannot be denied, but the Mongol Empire made significant contributions to the political institutions, economic development, and cultural diversity of many lands. No history of the Mongol Empire ... which dwells only on Mongol destruction, can be satisfactory.

- In both China and Persia the Mongols had taken up residence among their new subjects, garrisoning cities and gradually blending to a degree with the (local) societies. As a result, their economic interests coincided with those of the native peoples, and the Mongols, after the destruction of the initial conquest, promoted diversified economic development.
- The (Mongol) Yuan emperors built canals to improve transportation and communication. In China agriculture and (craft) production ... continued unabated.
- The same was true in Persia, partly because Persian craft traditions were well-established, but also because the Ilkanids (Mongol rulers) were patrons of the arts.
- Persian viniculture (winemaking) ... thrived under the Mongols, who were great drinkers, even after their conversion.
- The Persian silk industry also benefitted from the Mongol conquest because of the contacts that opened up with China.
- Cities along the caravan routes, in Persia, Armenia-Georgia, Central Asia, and China, prospered as part of the tax-free customs zones protected by the Pax Mongolica.

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## Document 7

**Source:** Paul Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan: His Life and Legacy*, translated by Thomas Nivison Haining, 1991. Reprinted by permission of Blackwell Publishing. (Italics added.)

The evidence of the chroniclers and travelers enables us to identify the striking changes wrought on Mongol morality by Genghis' Khan legislation. *Juvaini* comments that Genghis Khan rooted out...adultery and theft. "War, strife, bodily harm or murder do not exist, robbers and thieves on a grand scale are not to be found among them," remarks *Plano Carpini*, "and for this reason their houses and the carts in which they store their wealth have neither locks nor bolts." *Juzjani* writes that no one except the owner would dare pick up even a whip lying on the ground. *Ibn Battuta*, describing how during travels in Iraq two horses went astray during the night, reports that although the travelers left the country soon afterwards the horses were brought to them on their journey twenty days later. He also comments that although there were many pack animals in the Kipchak area, these could be left unattended because of the severity of (Mongol) laws against theft.

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## Document 8

**Source:** Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, Penguin Books, 1958.

**Document Note:** Marco Polo journeyed to China from 1271 to 1295. For 17 of these years, Polo served Kubilai Khan in various capacities, including ambassador.

### The Yams

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Let us now turn to the system of post-horses by which the Great Khan sends his dispatches.

You must know that the city of Khan-balik (modern-day Beijing) is a centre from which many roads radiate to many provinces.... When one of the Great Khan's messengers sets out along any of these roads, he has only to go twenty-five miles and there he finds a posting station, which in their language is called a yam.... And at each of these posts the messengers find three or four hundred horses in readiness awaiting their command, and palatial lodgings such as I have described. And this holds throughout all the provinces and kingdoms of the Great Khan's empire.

By this means the Great Khan's messengers travel throughout his dominions... (M)ore than 200,000 horses are stabled at these posts for the special use of the messengers. Moreover, the posts themselves number more than 10,000, all furnished on the same lavish scale. The whole organization is so stupendous and so costly that it baffles speech and writing....

If it happens at any point that there is some river or lake over which the couriers and mounted messengers must pass, the neighboring cities keep three or four ferryboats continually in readiness for this purpose.

...When the need arises for the Great Khan to receive immediate tidings (news) ... I assure you that the messengers ride 200 miles in a day, sometimes even 250. Let me explain how it is done.... They tighten their belts and swathe their heads and off they go with all the speed they can muster, till they reach the next post-house twenty-five miles away. As they draw near they sound a sort of horn which is audible at a great distance, so that horses can be got ready for them. On arrival they find two fresh horses, ready harnessed, fully rested, and in good running form. They mount there ... and off they go again.... And so it goes on till evening.

**Note:** The Great Khan is Kubilai Khan.

## Document 9

**Source:** William of Rubruck, *The Journey of William of Rubruck*, translated by a nun of Stanbrook Abbey, edited by Christopher Dawson, London: Sheed and Ward, 1955.

### Karakorum, Mongolia, May 30, 1254

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*The next day he (Mongke Khan) sent his scribes to me, who said: “Our master sends us to you and he says: ‘Here you are, Christians, Saracens (Muslims), and tuins (Rubruck would translate tuins as pagans; in fact, they were Buddhists), and each of you declares that his law is the best and his literature, that is his books, are the truest.’ He therefore wishes you all to meet together and hold a conference and each one is to write down what he says so that he can know the truth.”*

*(On the day following the exchange between the religious spokesmen Mongke Khan made this profession of faith to Rubruck:) “We Mongols believe that there is but one God, by Whom we live and by Whom we die and towards Him we have an upright heart. But just as God gave different fingers to the hand so has He given different ways to men.”*

- Notes:**
- Mongke Khan was the fourth Great Khan, the grandson of Genghis, and the brother of Kubilai who would succeed Mongke upon his death in 1259.
  - Over the course of the next two centuries Mongol leaders often converted to the region’s dominant religions – Christianity, Islam, or Buddhism.

## Document 10

One major scholar of Chinese history even wrote: "The Mongols brought violence and destruction to all aspects of China's civilization."

It is true that the Mongols, in their conquest of China, did considerable damage to these territories, and that great loss of life certainly ensued. It is also true that the Mongols eliminated one of the most basic of Chinese institutions — the civil service examinations. The Mongols perceived China as just one section of their vast empire. And they classified the population of their domain in China into a different hierarchy-- with the native Chinese at the bottom. The Mongols, of course, were at the top; then came the non-Han, mostly Islamic population that was brought to China by the Mongols to help them rule; at the very bottom were the Chinese.

On the other hand, the Mongols did begin many policies that supported and helped China. For example, Khubilai founded ancestral temples for his predecessors — his father and Genghis Khan (his grandfather) — in order to carry out the practices of ancestor worship that were so critical for the Chinese. Furthermore, Khubilai gave his son, Jin Chin, a Chinese-style education. Confucian scholars tutored the young boy, and he was introduced to both Confucianism and Buddhism. Finally, Khubilai also set up institutions to rule China that were very familiar to the Chinese, adapting or borrowing many of the traditional governmental organizational systems of China.

Source: "The Mongols in World History", Columbia University, 2004.  
<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/mongols/china/china2.htm>