

Rise of the Mongol Empire: The World's Largest Contiguous Empire

A Brief Mongol History

The Mongol Empire is an oddity in history. Its peoples arose from Mongol and Turkic herding tribes in the steppes of Asia. These people were united under Genghis Khan and primarily utilized mounted archery and an intricate system of wartime travel. Under the great Khans it grew to be the largest contiguous empire in a mere 71 years. The wars, famine, and disease resulting from the Mongol expansion killed three quarters of the population of the world. Despite the destruction under the Mongol empire, Eurasia also experienced a period of religious spread and tolerance, an increase in trade, a consolidated system of laws and rulers and a brief glimpse of globalism.

Sources

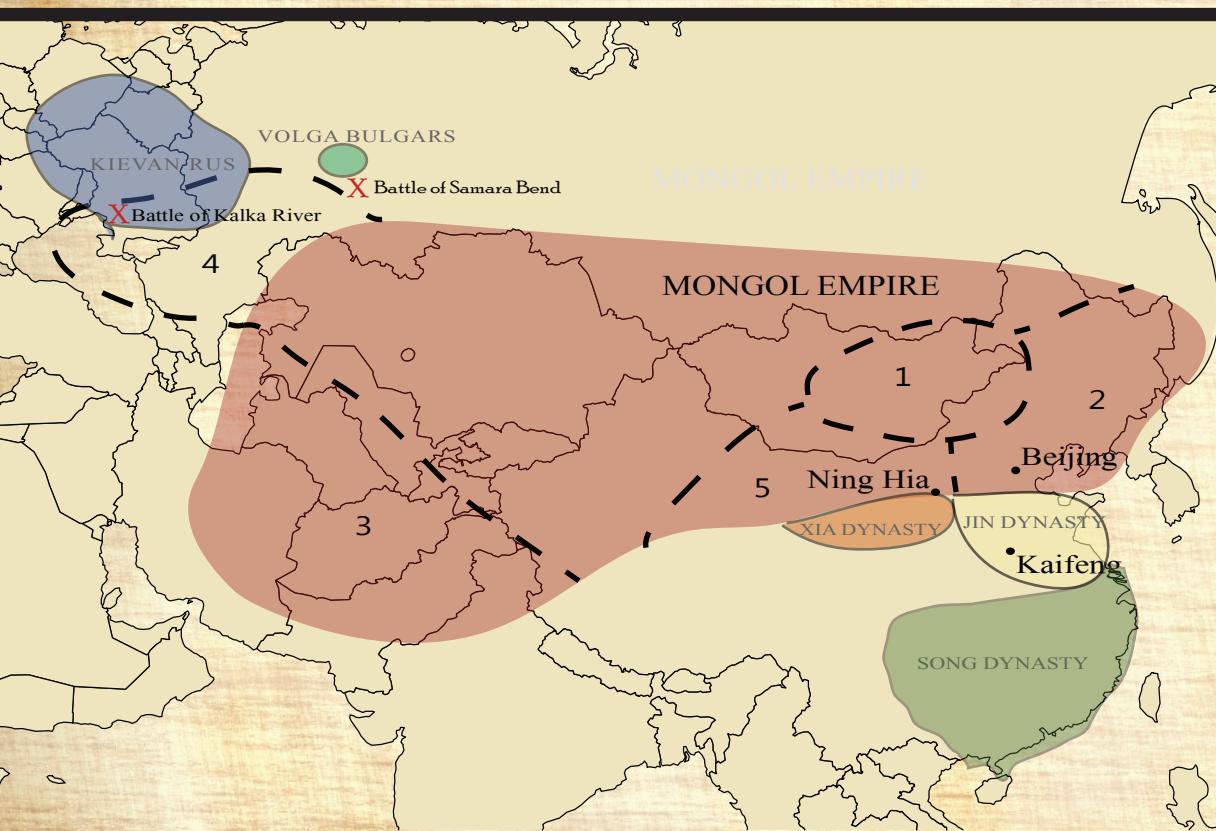
Natural Earth,
"The Mongols" by David Morgan

Projections

Albers Equal Area Conic

Cartographer

Trevor Elifritz



5: Upon returning from the western campaign, Genghis Khan launches a war against the Jin-Xia coalition who formed in Genghis Khan's absence. The coalition is destroyed in 1227 when Mongol forces capture Ning Hia. Genghis Khan dies from debated causes during this war.

Ögedei Khan succeeds Genghis and continues the Mongol empire's expansion.

1206 **2:** 1211-1215- Mongol-Jin wars result in the sack of Beijing and the relocation of the Jin Dynasty southward to Kaifeng.

4: 1220-1223- Mongol forces sweep through the Kingdom of Armenia sacking and destroying it. Mongol forces defeat a Kievan Rus army in the Battle of Kalka river, but face a major defeat at the Battle of Samara Bend by Volga Bulgarian forces. This defeat slows Mongol advances into Europe.

1227

7: 1235-1241- Mongol forces under Batu Khan defeat the Kievan Rus, Volga Bulgars and the Kingdoms of Hungary and Poland. The European campaign is halted with the death of Ögedei Khan in the east which forces Mongol leaders to return as tradition and to vie for power.

3: 1218-1221- Khwarazmian Dynasty is destroyed and taken over through a series of campaigns.

6: 1227-1241- Ögedei Khan defeats Jin Dynasty in 1234 with the capture of Kaifeng. By 1241 the Mongols capture Korea from local resistance.

8: 1239- 1259- Conflicts with the Song Dynasty begin soon after the destruction of the Jin Dynasty. These conflicts come to a head with the election of Möngke Khan. The Battle of Diaoyu Fortress in 1259 results in the death of the Möngke and a victory for the Song Dynasty.

1: Genghis Khan consolidates Mongol tribes and proclaims "a great khan state".



10: The Siege of Baghdad ends in the complete and utter destruction of the intellectual center of Islam. In regards to the loss of Baghdad, historian David Morgan says, "Imagining the Athens of Pericles and Aristotle obliterated by a nuclear weapon begins to suggest the enormity of the blow."

This victory consolidates Mongol control of the Abbasid Caliphate.



12: After years of conflict, Kublai Khan overthrows the Song Dynasty. He supplants them with his own Yuan Dynasty, becoming the first non-Chinese emperor. This marks the height of the Mongol empire. The empire begins to split up and by 1294 with Kublai Khan's death the empire officially breaks into several parts.

At the height of the Mongol empire, it spanned approximately twelve and half million miles, contained a fifth of the world's area and housed a fourth of the world's population.

11: 1260- The Battle of Ain Jalut leads to a Mongol defeat. It is the first time a Mongol advance was beat back permanently. This would be the furthest point of Mongol expansion in the West.

1258

1275-1292- Marco Polo, Venetian merchant traveler, visits the Yuan Dynasty. His accounts are famously written about in "The Book of the Marvels of the World".

1279