Pastoral Peoples on the Global Stage: The Mongol Moment
1200–1500

CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

• To make students aware of the significance of pastoral societies in world history
• To examine the conditions of nomadic life
• To investigate the impact of the Mongol Empire on world history
• To consider the implications of the Eurasian trade sponsored by the Mongols

CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. Opening Vignette
   A. Legacy of Chinggis Khan in Mongolia
      1. his spirit banner was destroyed by Communists in 1937
      2. late twentieth-century revival of Chinggis Khan’s memory
      3. 2006 was 800th anniversary of foundation of Mongol Empire
   B. The story of the Mongols is an important corrective to historians’ focus on agriculturalists.

II. Looking Back and Looking Around: The Long History of Pastoral Nomads

   A. Economies focused on livestock production emerged around 4000 B.C.E.
      1. dependent on horses, camels, goats, sheep, cattle, yaks, reindeer
      2. pastoral societies developed in:
         a. grasslands of Eurasia and sub-Saharan Africa
         b. Arabian and Saharan deserts
         c. subarctic regions, Tibetan plateau
         d. not in Americas: lack of large animals for domesticating
   B. The World of Pastoral Societies
      1. standard features of pastoral societies:
         a. generally less productive than agricultural societies
         b. needed large grazing areas
         c. populations much smaller than in agricultural societies
         d. lived in encampments of related kinfolk, usually common ancestry in male line
         e. clans sometimes gathered as a tribe; could absorb unrelated people
f. more egalitarian than sedentary societies, but sometimes distinguished between nobles and commoners
g. women usually had higher status and greater freedom than in sedentary societies
h. mobility—nomads

2. pastoralists had deep connections to agricultural neighbors
   a. sought access to foodstuffs, manufactured goods, luxury items
   b. especially in inner Eurasia, longing for civilized products encouraged formation of nomadic states

3. formation of nomadic states was difficult
   a. charismatic leaders like Chinggis Khan could make a series of tribal alliances that became powerful states
   b. when formed, almost the whole male population (and some women) became warriors
   c. held together as long as wealth flowed into pastoral states

4. cultural interaction with agricultural lands
   a. inner Eurasian nomads adopted Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Manichaeism at various times

5. mastered environments unsuitable for agriculture
   a. brought food-producing revolution and significant human presence to fringe regions
   b. life changed significantly for Inner Asian steppe peoples with introduction of horseback riding ca. 1000 B.C.E.

C. Before the Mongols: Pastoralists in History
   1. mounted warfare made nomadic empires possible
   2. the Xiongnu (in Mongolian steppes north of China) formed an important early confederacy (from Manchuria to central Asia) in third to second centuries B.C.E.
   3. ruler Modun (r. 210–174 B.C.E.) revolutionized nomadic life

D. The Arabs and the Turks
   1. nomads made their greatest impact on world history between 500 and 1500 C.E.
      a. Arabs, Berbers, Turks, and Mongols created largest empires of that millennium
      b. Islam derived from largely nomadic Arabs, carried by Turks
      c. Byzantium, Persia, and China were all controlled at least for a time by formerly nomadic people
   2. Bedouin Arabs became effective fighters with development of a good camel saddle (sometime between 500 and 100 B.C.E.)
      a. made control of trade routes through Arabia possible
      b. camel nomads were shock troops of Islamic expansion
   3. Turkic-speaking nomads (homeland in Mongolia and southern Siberia)
      a. gradual southward/westward spread
      b. series of short-lived nomadic empires 552–965 C.E.
      c. spread of Turkic language and culture over much of Inner Asia and beyond
      d. Turkish conversion to Islam between tenth and fourteenth centuries
      e. Seljuk Empire (eleventh to twelfth centuries): Turks began to claim the Muslim title sultan; exercised real power
      f. carried Islam to India and Anatolia
   4. Berber societies of North Africa and the Sahara emerged with introduction of camel to region
   5. adopted Islam
6. Sanhaja Berbers in the western Sahara built Almoravid Empire in 1000s
   a. encompassed much of northwestern Africa and southern Spain
   b. collapsed by the mid-twelfth century

III. Breakout: The Mongol Empire

A. The Mongols formed the greatest land-based empire in history following their breakout from Mongolia in the thirteenth century.
   1. extensive linkage of nomads of inner Eurasian steppes with agricultural civilizations
   2. created far greater contact between Europe, China, and Islamic world than ever before
   3. total Mongol population was only about 700,000
   4. did not have a major cultural impact on the world
      a. did not try to spread their ancestor worship/shamanism to others
      b. mostly interested in exploiting conquered peoples
      c. Mongol culture today largely confined to Mongolia
      d. Mongol Empire was the last great nomadic state

B. From Temujin to Chinggis Khan: The Rise of the Mongol Empire
   1. Temujin (1162–1227) created the Mongol Empire
   2. Mongols before Temujin were unstable collection of feuding tribes and clans
   3. Temujin’s rise
      a. father was a minor chieftain, but was murdered before Temujin turned ten
      b. Temujin’s mother held family together after they were deserted by the clan
      c. when Temujin grew up, he drew together a small following of friends, allied with a more powerful tribal leader
      d. shifting series of alliances, betrayals, military victories
      e. won a reputation as a great leader
   4. 1206: Mongol tribal assembly recognized Temujin as Chinggis Khan (“universal ruler”)
   5. Chinggis Khan then began expansion to hold his followers together
      a. major attack on China in 1209 started 50-year Mongol world war
      b. Chinggis Khan, Ogodei, Mongke, and Khubilai created an empire that included China, Korea, Central Asia, Russia, much of Middle East, and parts of Eastern Europe
      c. setbacks marked outer limits of Mongol Empire

C. Explaining the Mongol Moment
   1. Mongol Empire grew without any grand scheme
   2. by the time of his death, Chinggis Khan saw conquests as a mission to unite the whole world
   3. Mongols were vastly outnumbered by their enemies
   4. good luck and good timing played a role
      a. China was divided
      b. Abbassid caliphate was in decline
   5. Key to Mongol success was their well-led, organized, disciplined army
      a. military units of 10, 100, 1,000, and 10,000 warriors
      b. conquered tribes were broken up and scattered among units
      c. tribalism was also weakened by creation of imperial guard
      d. all members of a unit were killed if any deserted in battle
      e. leaders shared the hardships of their men
      f. elaborate tactics: encirclement, retreat, deception
      g. vast numbers of conquered peoples were incorporated into army
   6. Mongol reputation for brutality and destructiveness
      a. those who resisted were destroyed
      b. kingdom of Khwarizm murdered Mongol envoys
7. ability to mobilize resources
   a. elaborate census taking and systematic taxation
   b. good system of relay stations for communication and trade
   c. centralized bureaucracy began
d. encouraged commerce
e. gave lower administrative posts to Chinese and Muslim officials
f. practiced religious toleration

IV. Encountering the Mongols: Comparing Three Cases
A. China and the Mongols
   1. Mongol conquest of China was difficult, took from 1209 to 1279
   2. began in northern China (ruled by dynasties of nomadic origin), was vastly destructive
   3. conquest of southern China (ruled by Song dynasty) was far less violent
      a. more interest in accommodation of local populace
      b. landowners were guaranteed their estates in return for support
   4. Mongols unified a divided China, made many believe that the Mongols had been granted the Mandate of Heaven
   5. Mongols didn’t know how to govern an agricultural society, so they used many Chinese practices
      a. gave themselves a Chinese dynastic title, the Yuan (“great beginnings”)
      b. built a new capital—Khanbalik (“city of the khan”; now Beijing)
   6. Khubilai Khan (r. 1271–1294) had a set of ancestral tablets made
      a. undertook some policies that evoked values of a benevolent Chinese emperor
   7. still, Mongol rule was harsh, exploitative, and foreign
      a. Mongols did not become Chinese
      b. “Forbidden City” in the capital was set up like the steppes
   c. relied heavily on foreigners for administration, rather than the traditional administrative system
d. few Mongols learned Chinese
e. Mongol law discriminated against the Chinese
f. Mongol women were shockingly free by Chinese standards
8. by 1368, rebellions had forced the Mongols out of China

B. Persia and the Mongols
   1. conquest of Persia: first invasion led by Chinggis Khan 1219–1221; second assault under his grandson Hulegu 1251–1258
   2. massive impact of invasion
      a. very destructive
      b. shook faith: how could Muslims be savaged so badly by infidels?
      c. sacking of Baghdad in 1258 ended the Abbasid caliphate
      d. profound damage to Persian/Iraqi agriculture
      e. increase in wine and silk production
   3. Mongols were transformed far more in Persia than in China
      a. extensive use of Persian bureaucracy
      b. Ghazan (r. 1295–1304) tried to repair some of their earlier damage
      c. Mongols in Persia converted to Islam on a large scale
      d. Mongol elites learned some Persian
      e. some Mongols took up agriculture
   4. Mongol dynasty collapsed in 1330s

C. Russia and the Mongols
   1. Mongol devastation of Russia 1237–1240
      a. Russia was a number of independent principalities
      b. could not unite against Mongol threat
c. destruction of cities, widespread slaughter, and deportation of skilled workers
   2. Russia was integrated into Mongol Empire as the Kipchak Khanate (Russians called it the “Khanate of the Golden Horde”)
      a. but Mongols did not occupy Russia
b. instead, they remained on steppes north of Black and Caspian seas and collected tribute and heavy taxes
c. also raided for slaves
3. some Russian princes and the Russian Orthodox Church flourished
4. Moscow became primary tribute-collector for the Mongols
5. Mongol rulers of Russia were far less assimilated or influenced
6. Russian princes adopted Mongol weapons, diplomatic rituals, court practices, tax system, and military draft
   a. Moscow became the core of a new Russian state
   b. used the Mongol mounted courier service
7. Russians broke free of Mongol rule by the end of the fifteenth century

V. The Mongol Empire as a Eurasian Network
A. Toward a World Economy
   1. Mongols produced little for distant markets; were not active traders
   2. but they promoted international commerce as source of tax revenue
   3. made it relatively safe to travel across Central Asia
   4. Mongol trading circuit was central to larger Afro-Eurasian commercial network
B. Diplomacy on a Eurasian Scale
   1. Mongol encroachment into Eastern Europe led both the pope and European rulers to dispatch diplomatic missions to the Mongols
      a. had no diplomatic or religious consequences
      b. but brought back valuable information about the East
   2. Persian and Chinese courts developed close relationships
C. Cultural Exchange in the Mongol Realm
   1. thousands of craftsmen and educated people were forcibly relocated by the Mongols
   2. Mongol religious tolerance and support of merchants drew foreigners
3. the Mongol capital of Karakorum was a cosmopolitan center
4. lively exchange of ideas and techniques
   a. westward flow of Chinese technology and art (painting, printing, gunpowder weapons, compass navigation, high-temperature furnaces, medical techniques, etc.)
   b. Muslim astronomy spread to China
   c. circulation of plants and crops
   d. Europe benefited particularly from new contact with Asia
D. The Plague: An Afro-Eurasian Pandemic
   1. the plague (a.k.a. pestilence, Black Death) spread across trade routes of the Mongol Empire in early fourteenth century
      a. probably originated in Central Asia
      b. carried by rodents and transmitted by fleas
   2. the plague broke out in northeastern China in 1331
      a. reached Middle East and Western Europe by 1347
      b. Mongol siege of Caffa (in the Crimea) in 1346: Mongols catapulted plague-infected corpses into city
      c. in 1409 reached East Africa
      d. massive death toll, half of Europe’s population perished 1348-50, perhaps a third of the population in the Middle East
      e. periodic returns of the plague for centuries
   3. India and sub-Saharan Africa were much less affected
   4. Black death changed European society in the long term
      a. labor shortages undermined the practice of serfdom
      b. may have fostered greater technological innovation
      c. for a time created more employment opportunities for women
   5. the plague was a primary reason for the breakdown of the Mongol Empire in fourteenth to fifteenth centuries
a. with population contraction, volume of trade was reduced
b. by 1350, the Mongol Empire was in disarray
c. within a century, Mongols had lost control of China, Persia, and Russia
d. the Central Asian trade route largely closed

6. disruption of land routes to the east encouraged Europeans to seek trade routes by sea
a. European naval technology gave them an advantage
b. similarity of sixteenth-century Europeans to Mongols: people on the periphery who were economically less developed and who forcibly plundered wealthier civilizations

VI. Reflections: Changing Images of Pastoral Peoples
A. Pastoral nomads have often received “bad press” in history books.
1. only mentioned in regard to their destruction of established civilizations
2. educated, sedentary peoples have feared and usually despised nomads
3. pastoral peoples were usually illiterate, so we don’t have their perspective
4. agricultural societies eventually won out
B. Historians have made recent efforts to present a more balanced view.
1. emphasize what pastoralists achieved as well as what they destroyed
2. the total wars and genocides of the twentieth century have made people less judgmental toward the Mongols
3. historians are shaped by their times

CHAPTER QUESTIONS
Following are answer guidelines for the Big Picture Questions, Seeking the Main Point Questions, Margin Review Questions, Portrait Question, and Documents and Visual Sources Feature Questions that appear in the textbook chapter. For your convenience, the questions and answer guidelines are also available in the Computerized Test Bank.

Big Picture Questions
1. What accounts for the often negative attitudes of settled societies toward the pastoral peoples living on their borders?
   • Settled societies feared pastoral peoples, seeing them as bloodthirsty savages or barbarians who brought only chaos and destruction in their wake.
   • Settled societies often despised the lifestyle of pastoral peoples, who lacked proper houses and had a diet that was very different from that of settled societies.
   • Settled societies on occasion competed for resources with their pastoral counterparts.

2. Why have historians often neglected pastoral peoples’ role in world history? How would you assess the perspective of this chapter toward the Mongols? Does it strike you as negative and critical of the Mongols, as bending over backward to portray them in a positive light, or as a balanced presentation?
   • Historians have tended to neglect nomadic peoples because they generally did not have written languages, and thus the sources available came from adjacent agricultural civilizations. Also, agricultural civilizations ultimately triumphed in their long-running conflict with nomadic peoples.
   • While the second question is a matter of opinion and so has no correct answer, a strong answer will acknowledge that the chapter addressed explicitly the issue of balanced presentation.
   • A good answer would also include at least some of the following points. The chapter examines the often brutal methods of conquest used by the Mongols, and it discusses their harsh, often exploitative regimes, especially in China.
   • However, it also highlights the importance of the Mongol Empire as a facilitator of trade and their role in the exchange of ideas and technologies.
   • It gives credit to the Mongols’ skills in mobilization and organization that in part explain their military success.
   • It notes the Mongols’ tolerance of the religions of conquered peoples.
3. In what different ways did Mongol rule affect the Islamic world, Russia, China, and Europe? In what respects did it foster Eurasian integration?

- In the Islamic world, the Mongol conquest of Persia resulted in the conversion of large numbers of Mongols to the Muslim faith. While Mongol domination of Persia did damage Persian agriculture, the Mongols had less of an impact on Persian government, as Mongol rulers made extensive use of the sophisticated Persian bureaucracy. Ultimately, a number of Mongols turned to farming, married local people, and were assimilated into Persian society.
- The Mongols conquered but did not occupy Russia. Instead, Russian princes received appointment from the khan in return for sending substantial tribute. The impact of the conquest was uneven, but in general the absence of direct Mongol rule meant that the Mongols were far less influenced by or assimilated within Russian cultures than their counterparts in China and Persia had been. Russians, on the other hand, were profoundly affected by Mongol domination. Russian princes found it useful to adopt the Mongols’ weapons, diplomatic rituals, court practices, taxation system, and military draft.
- The Mongols united a divided China. However, in terms of governing techniques and the position of the emperor, the Mongols adopted many pre-existing Chinese systems and ideas.
- Europe was stimulated by a flow of ideas and technologies through Mongol-facilitated networks of exchange, by the opportunity for Europeans to travel the length of the Mongol Empire (expanding the mental horizon of Europe), and by the collapse of the Mongol Empire (which provided an incentive for Europeans to take to the sea in their continuing efforts to reach the riches of Asia). Europe was also affected adversely by the spread of the Black Death along these same networks of exchange.
- Mongol rule facilitated long-distance commerce across Eurasia by providing a relatively safe environment for merchants making the long journey across Central Asia between Europe and China. Additionally, the Mongol Empire prompted diplomatic relationships from one end of Eurasia to the other. Fearful of the possible return of the Mongols, both the pope and European rulers dispatched diplomatic delegations to the Mongol capital hoping to learn about Mongol intentions, secure Mongol aid in a crusade against Islam, and if possible, convert them to Christianity. While these efforts were mostly in vain, these diplomatic missions brought useful information about the East back to Europeans. Within the Mongol Empire itself, close relationships developed between the courts of Persia and China, as they regularly exchanged ambassadors, shared intelligence information, fostered trade, and sent skilled workers back and forth between the two regions.

4. Why did the Mongol Empire last only a relatively short time?

- Intense factionalism among the Mongols, rapidly rising prices, furious epidemics of the plague, and growing peasant revolts forced the Mongols out of China by 1368, less than a century after they had finally conquered the Chinese.
- A succession crisis in the Mongol regime in Persia resulted in the collapse of their rule in the 1330s and the subsequent assimilation of many Mongols into Persian society.
- Divisions among the Mongols and the growing strength of the Russian state enabled the Russians to break the Mongols’ hold by the end of the fifteenth century.
- On a broader level, the rapid spread of the Black Death in the 1330s and 1340s destabilized the Mongol Empire, decimated the pastoral populations of steppe lands, and damaged long-distance commerce.

5. Looking Back: In what ways did the Mongol Empire resemble previous empires (Arab, Roman, Chinese, or the Greek empire of Alexander, for example), and in what ways did it differ from them?

- It bears closest resemblance to the Arab empire in that it mobilized a pastoralist army and created its empire very quickly. It differed however in that unlike the Arab empire, the Mongols had no single faith tying them together.
- It resembles all previous empires in its use of conquest to bring it together, its extraction of resources from conquered peoples, and its ultimate demise.
- It differs from all but the Arab empire in its reliance on the military capabilities of pastoralist peoples and the coming together of pastoralist peoples to form its army.
- It also differs in its unprecedentedly immense size.
Seeking the Main Point Question

Q. What has been the role in world history of pastoral peoples in general and the Mongols in particular?

• They have occupied and made productive lands where settled agriculture was impossible.
• They have played important roles as traders and bandits on the long-distance trade routes of central Asia and the Sahara.
• Various nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples played a role in the collapse of the second-wave Chinese and Roman empires and the subsequent rebuilding of those civilizations.
• Pastoral conquerors helped to establish Buddhism in China.
• It was within the Arab world that Islam, the largest and most expansive religious tradition of the second-wave period, emerged. Nomadic Bedouin Arabs also provided the shock troops of the Islamic expansion that carved out the Arab Empire.
• The Turks carried Islam to new regions, including northern India and Anatolia; played an increasingly important role in the heartland of an established Islamic civilization, as the Seljuk Turks became the de facto power behind the Abbasid caliphate in the Middle East; and carved important empires out of settled societies, including the Ottoman Empire.
• The Mongols created the largest empire ever to that time, linking China and the Near East.
• The Mongols facilitated closer connections across Eurasia, increasing the rate of technological and crop exchange, the mixing of peoples, and the spread of epidemic diseases.
• Their tolerant attitude towards religion also facilitated the spread of faiths.

Q. In what ways did pastoral societies interact with their agricultural neighbors?

• Economically, nomads sought access to the foodstuffs, manufactured goods, and luxury items available only from their agricultural neighbors.
• Politically and militarily, pastoral peoples at times came together to extract wealth from agricultural societies through trading, raiding, or extortion.
• Culturally, members of some pastoral societies adopted the religions of their agricultural neighbors, including Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Manichaeanism.

Q. In what ways did the Xiongnu, Arabs, Turks, and Berbers make an impact on world history?

• The Xiongnu effected a revolution in nomadic life, transforming earlier fragmented and egalitarian societies into a far more centralized and hierarchical political system in which power was concentrated in a divinely sanctioned ruler and differences in the status of clans were more pronounced. The Xiongnu system created a model that later Turkic and Mongol empires emulated.
• It was within the Arab world that Islam, the largest and most expansive religious tradition of the third-wave period, emerged. Pastoral Arabs also provided the shock troops of the Islamic expansion that carved out the Arab Empire.
• The Turks carried Islam to new regions, including northern India and Anatolia; played an increasingly important role in the heartland of an established Islamic civilization, as the Seljuk Turks became the de facto power behind the Abbasid caliphate in the Middle East; and carved important empires out of settled societies, including the Ottoman Empire.
• The Sanhaja Berbers built the Almoravid Empire in the 1000s which through its conquest of southern Spain brought the sophisticated Islamic culture of this region back to the empire’s heartland in modern Morocco.

Margin Review Questions

Q. In what ways did pastoral societies differ from their agricultural counterparts?

• Pastoral societies supported far smaller populations.
• Pastoral societies generally lived in small and widely scattered encampments of related kinfolk.
• Pastoral societies generally offered women a higher status, fewer restrictions, and a greater role in public life.
• Pastoral societies were far more mobile.

Q. Identify the major steps in the rise of the Mongol Empire.

• Temujin, later dubbed Chinggis Khan, succeeded in bringing the Mongols together, unifying them in the Great Mongol Nation by 1206.
• In order to hold his alliance together, Chinggis Khan launched a series of military campaigns against the settled agricultural societies of Eurasia over the half century after 1209.
• Through this Mongol world war, Chinggis Khan and his successors constructed an empire that included China, Korea, Central Asia, Russia, much of the Islamic Middle East, and parts of Eastern Europe.

Q. Summing Up So Far: What accounts for the political and military success of the Mongols?

• By the end of Chinggis Khan’s reign, the Mongol Empire had developed an ideology centered on a mission to unite the whole world in one empire.
  • The Mongol army was better organized, better led, and better disciplined than the armies of its opponents.
  • The Mongol army was organized to diminish the divisive tribalism of the pastoral clan structure, partly by spreading members of tribes among different units of the army.
  • The Mongols made up for their small numbers by incorporating huge numbers of conquered peoples into their military forces.
  • The Mongols quickly acquired Chinese techniques and technology of siege warfare, which allowed them to overcome the elaborate fortifications of walled cities.
  • Mongol forces were effective in part because of their growing reputation for a ruthless brutality and utter destructiveness. Their reputation served as a form of psychological warfare, a practical inducement to surrender.
  • The Mongols displayed an impressive ability to mobilize both the human and material resources of their growing empire through census taking, an effective system of relay stations for rapid communication, and the beginnings of a centralized bureaucracy in the capital of Karakorum.
  • The Mongols fostered commerce.
  • The Mongols drew on conquered peoples to fill advisory and lower-level administrative positions.
  • The Mongols welcomed and supported many religious traditions as long as they did not become the focus of political opposition.

Q. How did Mongol rule change China? In what ways were the Mongols changed by China?

• The Mongols united a divided China.
  • The Mongols took a Chinese dynastic title, the Yuan, and moved their capital to a new capital city known as Khanbalik, the “city of the khan” (present-day Beijing).

• The Mongols made use of Chinese administrative practices and techniques of taxation and their postal system.
  • Mongol khans made use of traditional Confucian rituals, supported the building of some Daoist temples, and were particularly attracted to a Tibetan form of Buddhism, which returned the favor with strong political support for the invaders.

Q. How was Mongol rule in Persia different from that in China?

• Heavy taxation pushed Persian peasants off their land, while Mongol herds of sheep and goats and Mongol neglect of fragile underground water channels did extensive damage to Persian agricultural land.
  • The Mongol rulers in Persia were transformed far more than their counterparts in China were, as the Mongols made extensive use of the sophisticated Persian bureaucracy.
  • Unlike what occurred in China, the Mongols who conquered Persia converted in large numbers to the local Muslim faith.
  • A number of Mongols turned to farming and married local people, so when their rule in Persia collapsed, they were not driven out as they had been from China. Instead, they were assimilated into Persian society.

Q. What was distinctive about the Russian experience of Mongol rule?

• The Mongols conquered Russia but did not occupy it as they had Persia and China. Instead, Russian princes received appointment from the khan and were required to send substantial tribute to the Mongol capital at Sarai.
  • Russia was still exploited, but the Mongol impact there was much more uneven than it had been in Persia or China.
  • The absence of direct Mongol rule meant that the Mongols were far less influenced by or assimilated within Russian cultures than their counterparts in China and Persia had been.
  • On the other hand, Russians were, if anything, more affected by Mongol domination than the Persians and Chinese had been. Russian princes found it useful to adopt the Mongols’ weapons, diplomatic rituals, court practices, taxation system, and military draft.
Q. What kinds of cross-cultural interactions did the Mongol Empire generate?

- The Mongols actively promoted international commerce, and the Mongol trading circuit that stretched from China to the Near East was a central element in an even larger commercial network that linked much of the Afro-Eurasian world in the thirteenth century.
- The Mongol Empire also prompted diplomatic relationships from one end of Eurasia to the other, especially between Western Europe and the Mongols and between Persia and China.
- The Mongol Empire also spurred a substantial exchange of peoples and cultures through its policy of forcibly transferring many thousands of skilled craftsmen and educated people from their homelands to distant parts of the empire.
- The Mongol Empire, through its religious tolerance and support of merchants, facilitated the spread of religions.
- The Mongol authorities actively encouraged the exchange of ideas and techniques. A great deal of Chinese technology and artistic conventions flowed westward, including painting, printing, gunpowder weapons, compass navigation, high-temperature furnaces, and medical techniques. Meanwhile, Muslim astronomers brought their skills and knowledge to China.
- Crops were also exchanged.

Q. Disease changes societies. How might this argument apply to the plague?

- The loss of population due to the plague created labor shortages that provoked sharp conflict between scarce workers and the rich, which in turn undermined the practice of serfdom in Europe.
- Labor shortages also fostered a greater interest in technological innovation in Europe and created more employment opportunities for women.
- The plague contributed to the downfall of the Mongol Empire.
- The plague caused significant disruption to trade routes to the east, and this trade disruption, along with a desire to avoid Muslim intermediaries, provided an incentive for Europeans to take to the sea in their continuing efforts to reach the riches of Asia.

Portrait Question

Q. What does the life of Khutulun reveal about Mongol gender relationships?

- Elite women, especially, in Mongol society possessed relative freedom and influence in both the public and private spheres.
- While her story is clearly extraordinary, it indicates that women in Mongol society had some say over who they married.
- Mongol women could participate in military operations and receive military offices usually reserved for men.
- Mongol women could participate in recreational activities usually associated with men like archery, wrestling, and horse riding.
- Mongol women participated in public competitions.
- A Mongol princess could at least be considered to succeed her father even if she had brothers.

Using the Documents and Visual Sources Features

Following are answer guidelines for the headnote questions and Using the Evidence questions that appear in the documents and visual sources essays located at the end of the textbook chapter.

Headnote Questions

Document 11.1: Mongol History from a Mongol Source

Q. How would you describe the anda relationship?

- The anda relationship was a form of political alliance in pastoral societies.
- It drew on symbols of personal friendship, including gift exchanges, socializing, and sleeping in close proximity, to cement broader alliances between powers.

Q. What does the Secret History suggest about the nature of political authority and political relationships among the Mongols?
Political authority was personal rather than institutional in nature. Political relationships were also personal, and drew on ritual exchanges and socializing associated with personal friendships like the anda to cement them. They also involved oaths of fidelity and service in exchange for leadership and protection. The nature of this exchange is highlighted in Ogodei’s reasoning for why he regretted harming Dokholkhu.

Q. What did Ogodei regard as his greatest achievements and his most notable mistakes?

Ogodei believed his greatest achievements were that he conquered China; established a network of post stations that sped up communications across the empire; had wells dug in the desert to create pasture and water for the people; placed spies and agents among all the people of the cities; and brought peace to the Nation and the people. He admits that his notable mistakes were that he let himself be conquered by wine; allowed himself to be convinced by a woman to break established principles by taking away the daughters of one of his uncles; secretly harmed Dokholkhu; and desired too much, as reflected in his decision to build walls to keep wild game in his territories.

Q. What evidence do these selections from the Secret History provide that the author was an insider?

The author’s nuanced understanding of the anda system and the relationship of service for leadership and protection that defined the political authority of a khan indicate that the author was part of the culture that he or she describes. The passage concerning Ogodei’s accomplishments and failures reveals an in-depth knowledge not only of the great events of his reign but of internal family and court affairs, like the taking of his uncle’s daughters or the mistreatment of Dokholkhu, that most likely comes from being present at Ogodei’s court or being well-informed of affairs there.

Document 11.2: A Letter from Chinggis Khan

Q. Why did Chinggis Khan seek a meeting with Changchun?

He takes an interest in talented subjects. He is seeking worthy men to occupy high offices. He hopes to gain wisdom from a meeting. He hopes to perhaps learn the secret to preserving life (by which he may mean immortality).

Q. How does Chinggis Khan define his life’s work? What is his image of himself?

Chinggis Khan defines his life’s work by his conquests, which were divinely sanctioned to create a world empire by seizing China, an inconstant state tainted by haughtiness and extravagant luxury. He presents himself as living simply—eating and dressing as his herdsmen; as a man who hates luxury and exercises moderation; leads from the front in military affairs; and takes an interest in ruling his people and in finding talented officials to rule under him.

Q. How would you describe the tone of Chinggis Khan’s letter to Changchun? What does the letter suggest about Mongol attitudes toward the belief systems of conquered peoples?

The letter’s tone is one of pride in his accomplishments, even though he seeks to downplay his pride in the letter, and also one of deference to Changchun and his learning. The letter suggests that Mongols were open to the teachings of their conquered peoples’ belief systems, and believed that the belief systems contained wisdom (and perhaps the secrets to an extended life) that Mongols could benefit from.

Q. How do Documents 11.1 and 11.2 help explain the success of the Mongols’ empire-building efforts?

Document 11.1 provides a sense of how political alliances were formed in Mongol society and how khans secured the allegiance of their followers; how Temujin became Chinggis Khan; and the personality and leadership style of Ogodei. It also provides insight into how Ogodei understood the empire and his conquests, and court life and court intrigue.

Document 11.2 provides insight into how Chinggis Khan presented his conquests and himself, and his motivations and character. It reveals how he viewed wisdom traditions of conquered peoples; sought counsel and knowledge; and sought to administer his empire.
Q. What core Mongol values do these documents suggest?

- Document 11.1 reveals that political alliances were personal in nature, based on trust and sealed with ritual exchanges and socializing. Other values include giving good counsel; respecting and rewarding those who served the khan loyally; and respecting established principles, as revealed when Ogodei regretted taking away the daughters of his uncle.
- Document 11.2 reveals that Mongols valued simplicity and moderation; and respected talent, learning, and personal military courage.

**Document 11.3: A Russian View of the Mongols**

Q. How did the Russian writer of the Chronicle account for what he saw as the disaster of the Mongol invasion?

- The Mongol invasion was a punishment by God for sinfulness.

Q. Can you infer from the document any additional reasons for the Mongol success?

- The Russian princes failed to coordinate their resistance to the Mongols and frequently failed to send aid to each other.
- The Mongols had successful siege tactics, building stockades and using battering rams to good effect.

Q. Beyond the conquest itself, what other aspects of Mongol rule offended the Russians?

- Their demand for tribute
- Their plunder of the towns
- Their destruction of churches
- Their massacring of urban populations

Q. To what extent was the Mongol conquest of Russia also a clash of cultures?

- Russia was a settled agricultural society while the Mongols were a pastoral society.
- Russia was Christian; the Mongols were not.

**Document 11.4: Chinese Perceptions of the Mongols**

Q. Why might Menggu’s children have requested such a document and asked a Chinese scholar to compose it? What does this suggest about Mongol attitudes to Chinese culture?

- Menggu’s career was that of an administrator, a profession for which the Mongols had no tradition. Thus his children sought to honor him by drawing on the traditions of China where he served.
- In the administrative milieu in which his family lived, this was considered normal and served to strengthen the prestige of the family among its peers.
- The Mongols adopted some aspects of Chinese culture, particularly those for which they had no indigenous equivalent.

Q. What features of Menggu’s governorship did this Chinese author appreciate? In what ways did Menggu’s actions and behavior reflect Confucian values? What might the writer have omitted from his account?

- The Chinese author appreciated Menggu’s enforcement of the law; his efforts to secure pardons for rebels; his efforts to alleviate famines and the burdens on commoners during times of dearth; and his lack of greed, as reflected in his failure to accumulate wealth.
- Menggu’s actions were Confucian in that he selflessly served the emperor; looked after the interests of his social inferiors by enforcing the law, securing clemency for low-ranking rebels, and providing help to commoners during periods of famine. Also Confucian was his failure to use his position of authority for personal gain.
- This document was meant to extol the virtues of Menggu and therefore was likely to pass over any weaknesses in his character, his decisions, or his abilities.

Q. What might inspire a highly educated Chinese scholar to compose such a flattering public tribute to a Mongol official?

- The Chinese scholar may have had an honest appreciation of Menggu’s virtues and talents.
- He may have wanted an opportunity to curry favor with a powerful Mongol administrative family or to serve a patron.
- He may have written the account simply for personal gain.

Q. Why might historians be a bit skeptical about this document? Which statements might be most suspect?

- The source was written specifically to celebrate the career of Menggu and to record his
merits for posterity, not as a balanced account of his life and career. It was commissioned by his family.

- Suspect statements include the passages that record the admiration and devotion of common people to Menngu, and the statement that he accumulated no wealth during the course of his career.

**Visual Source 11.1: The Flagellants**

Q. Flagellation was but one form of penance. What other forms of self-inflicted punishment for sin are suggested in the image?

- Also suggested is processing barefoot.
- The thinness of the flagellants implies doing penance through fasting.
- The wearing of white in the Medieval Christian tradition was also associated with penance, as the simple white attire is meant to strip away the wearer’s social status.

Q. What is the significance of the Christ on the cross that precedes the flagellants?

- Through their self-flagellation, participants in this movement sought to identify with Christ who was himself whipped prior to his crucifixion.
- Christ was the figure to whom the flagellants turned to as an intercessor when they sought forgiveness for their sins.
- Christ’s suffering on the cross, as depicted in this image, represents the penance he did for all mankind, which brought meaning to the personal penance practiced here by the flagellants.

Q. Does the procession seem spontaneous or organized? Do Church authorities appear to have instigated or approved this procession?

- The evidence points to an organized rather than spontaneous procession because the flagellants all wear the same white clothing with black hats, are barefoot, are led by a banner and crucifix, and are lined up in a clear order.
- There is some evidence in the image that the procession was not organized, including the lack of an obvious leader of the procession and the absence of clerics.
- There is no evidence in this image that the church authorities approved the procession because there is no clerical presence in the image.

Q. How might the flagellants have understood their own actions?

- The flagellants may have intended it as an effort to placate an angry God for the community as a whole through public penance.
- It may have been an act of penance to atone for personal sins.
- It may have been a public act designed to inspire society as a whole to repent and do penance.

Q. Why do you think Church authorities generally opposed the flagellant movement?

- It was inspired by the laity rather than clerics.
- The Church had little control over these movements.
- It provided an alternative way of doing penance outside of the established, Church-sponsored approaches.

**Visual Source 11.2: Burying the Dead**

Q. How does this visual source support or contradict the written accounts excerpted above?

- It supports the written accounts because as Boccaccio indicates, most of the figures burying the dead in this image show little emotion for those they are burying. It supports the account of the French observer in that no priests are depicted.
- It contradicts the written account because there are no signs of the idleness or dissolution that the Italian observer recounts, and no signs of debauchery in the graveyard, which concerned the pope. Also, the woman in the shawl in the top center of the image helping to lower a corpse into a grave does convey a sense of loss or grief, contradicting Boccaccio’s account.

Q. How would you characterize the burial scene in this visual source?

- The scene is very busy, which might seek to convey a large number of burials taking place at the same time.
- The scene is orderly; the figures burying the dead in individual graves convey a sense of industry and determination.

Q. How does it differ from what an image of a proper Christian burial might contain? How might survivors of the plague have regarded such a burial?
• There are no priests and no grieving friends, neighbors, and relatives present at these burials. There are no signs of the status of the dead.
• Burial without a priest present would have led to concerns for the soul of the departed. The lack of grieving friends, neighbors, and relatives would be seen as problematic, because their failure to turn out for the funeral marked a break with social conventions concerning family, good neighborliness, and the Christian sense of community.

Visual Source 11.3: A Culture of Death

Q. How is the status of each of the various living figures—from left to right: the pope, the emperor, the empress—depicted?
• The pope carries the symbol of his office in the form of an ornate bishop’s miter and wears elaborate clerical garb that denotes his status, especially his long crimson robe and papal tiara.
• The emperor carries the symbols of an emperor (a battleaxe and an orb) in his hands, and wears an imperial crown. His clothing also denotes his status, with an elaborately ornate gold pattern on his inner robe and the use of ermine on his cape.
• The empress is depicted with signs of her status, including a gown and headgear made of luxurious fabrics illustrating the height of current fashion.

Q. What does the white sheet around each of the death images represent? What do their expressions suggest about their attitude toward the living?
• The white sheet represents a burial shroud. Symbolically it represents the lack of status distinctions after death.
• The expressions of the death images reveal a lack of deference to the status of the living figures. They could be interpreted as authoritative or commanding as they take control of their charges who in life ruled over society.

Q. Notice that the living figures face outward toward the viewer rather than toward the entreatling death figures on either side of them. What might this mean?
• The positioning of the figures could depict their desire to stay with the living rather than join the dead.
• The positioning might also represent their failure to prepare for the next life because of their involvement in worldly affairs.

Q. Does the portrayal of death pictured here reflect Christian views of death or does it challenge them?
• The portrayal of death reflects Christian ideas by emphasizing that everyone will die regardless of wealth or status, which disappear at death.
• Elements of a Christian burial ceremony are present, including the shroud and coffin.
• There is a Christian cleric in a pulpit to the far left observing the scene. Most likely he is present to interpret the scene in a Christian context to his flock.
• The portrayal challenges Christian ideas as well. For example, the death figures that lead the living into the afterlife are not noted in biblical texts.
• Important elements of a Christian death, including Extreme Unction and a burial ceremony, are not depicted.
• While a priest is present (to the far left of the scene), his role in securing safe passage into the next life is not emphasized, as he is placed away from the central action. Instead the death figures seem to be the chief guides.

Q. Why is the death figure smiling?
• He enjoys taking human life.
• He enjoys inflicting pain and suffering.

Q. How does this skeletal figure differ from the ones in Visual Source 11.3?
• This figure is merely a skeleton, without human flesh; it possesses a less expressive face; it is smiling; it does not wear a burial shroud; and it is armed with a spear.

Q. How does this skeletal figure differ from the ones in Visual Source 11.3?
• This figure is merely a skeleton, without human flesh; it possesses a less expressive face; it is smiling; it does not wear a burial shroud; and it is armed with a spear.
• The priest and Christ figure are depicted at the side of the dying man’s bed at his time of need. Both can be seen as aiding the dying figure.

Visual Source 11.4: In the Face of Catastrophe—Questioning or Affirming the Faith

Q. Why is the death figure smiling?
• He enjoys taking human life.
• He enjoys inflicting pain and suffering.

Q. How are the priest and the Christ figure depicted? What possible interpretations of their gestures can you imagine?
• The priest and Christ figure are depicted at the side of the dying man’s bed at his time of need. Both can be seen as aiding the dying figure.
The gesture of the priest may be one of a blessing at the time that last rites are administered. Jesus’ right hand is raised in the sign of a blessing.

Jesus’ left hand holds a communion wafer, which has literal and symbolic representations for Christians. It represents the final communion the dying man takes when he receives last rites. It also represents Christ’s body and the sacrifice he made on the cross for all of mankind’s sins. This sacrifice secured the pathway to salvation for all believers.

Q. Notice that the death figure spears the dying person in the side, an action that evokes the biblical account of Jesus being speared in his side during his crucifixion. What might the artist have sought to convey by such a reference?

- The suffering of the dying is similar to Christ’s human suffering on the cross when he died for the sins of all of humankind.
- The last rites administered by the priest link the dying man to his own salvation as secured by Christ’s sacrifice on the cross.

Q. The captions, from top to bottom, read: Christ figure: “Tho it be late ere thou mercie came: yet mercie thou shalt have.” Priest figure: “commit thy body to the grave: pray Christ thy soul to save.” Death figure: “I have sought thee many a day: for to have thee to my pray.” How do these captions influence your understanding of the painting?

- The painting was didactic in nature, intended to help guide the believer to a good death.
- The painting is intended to give spiritual meaning to the suffering caused by epidemic diseases through the promise of eternal mercy.

Q. Would you characterize the overall message of this painting as one of hopefulness, despair, or something else? What elements in the painting might support each of these conclusions?

- The painting concerns Christ’s sacrifice and the promise of salvation in an afterlife, so for the Christian viewer its message is primarily one of hopefulness. The countenance of the dying figure supports this interpretation.

Using the Evidence Questions

Documents: Perspectives on the Mongols

1. Assessing sources: What are the strengths and limitations of these documents for understanding the Mongols? Taking the position of their authors into account, what exaggerations, biases, or misunderstandings can you identify in these sources? What information seems credible and what should be viewed more skeptically?

- One strength is that the selections provide a wide variety of perspectives on the Mongols from observers both within and outside of their society. Also, they address a number of features of Mongol social and political culture.
- The documents are limiting because all were written by elites. They focus largely on the elite and provide snapshots rather than systematically describing Mongol society.
- The author of Document 11.1 was a Mongol, well-informed about the political history and court life of Ogodei’s reign. Though well-positioned to avoid misunderstandings, the author is more likely to provide positive accounts of the great Mongol leaders of his or her time.
- The description of the successes and failures of Ogodei seem credible, even if the assertion that Ogodei recognized and explicitly admitted his failures might be treated with more skepticism.
- The account of Chinggis Khan’s rise and declaration as khan is convincing, but was written decades after his death and should be treated with some skepticism.
- The document could credibly represent the khan’s public understanding of himself and his empire, as well as his attitude toward wisdom traditions of conquered peoples.
- The author of Document 11.3 also possesses potential biases that could lead to misunderstandings. The author is a member of a society conquered by the Mongols, a member of a settled agricultural society describing pastoralists, and a Christian commenting on the Mongols, who do not subscribe to his faith.
- The document is most likely credible when recounting Mongol military tactics and the lack of coordination and mutual aid among Russian princes.
- Its account of Mongol atrocities may be exaggerated, given the perspective of the author.
- The author of Document 11.4 was a Chinese scholar commissioned by the family of Menggu, a Mongol administrator, to write a short biography of Menggu’s life after his death. He is biased because he is writing for a patron who would want and expect
an account that emphasized (perhaps even exaggerated) Menggu’s accomplishments and positive traits while leaving aside his shortcomings. This literary tradition required an emphasis on the positive aspects of Menggu’s life, character, and career.

- The document is most likely to be credible on basic biographical information, such as the positions Menggu held and the official actions he took.
- Students could reasonably doubt those aspects of the account that cast Menggu as an ideal Confucian, such as his dying without accumulating wealth, as these characteristics were traditionally part of the genre in which the document was written. Some of the more colorful passages, such as the delight expressed at his appointment by those he was assigned to administer, could also be read with skepticism.

2. **Characterizing the Mongols:** Based on these documents and on the text of Chapter 11, write an essay assessing the Mongol moment in world history. How might you counteract the view of many that the Mongols were simply destructive barbarians? How do your own values affect your understanding of the Mongol moment?

* A good essay would address most of the following:
  - The Mongols built the largest land-based empire in history.
  - They created far greater contact between Europe, China, and the Islamic world than ever before, including diplomatic and cultural exchanges.
  - They had less of a cultural impact on the societies that they conquered than many other conquerors did.
  - They had a reputation for brutality and destructiveness.
  - In terms of counteracting the Mongol reputation for destructiveness and brutality, students could note that other empires were also constructed using destructive and brutal means.
  - The Mongols were tolerant of the belief systems of conquered peoples. They fostered trade; long-distance cultural, technological, and intellectual exchanges; and diplomatic contact on a Eurasian scale.
  - Students are members of a settled agricultural society, which makes understanding the pastoralist Mongol society more difficult.
  - Adhering to a belief system shapes one’s understanding of Mongol society.
  - The norms of students’ own society concerning marriage can shape their understanding of Mongol marriage practices.
  - Living in a system other than a large multi-ethnic empire can shape one’s view of the Mongol Empire.

3. **Considering values and practice:** How would you describe the core values of Mongol culture? (Consider their leaders’ goals, attitudes toward conquered peoples, duties of rulers, views of political authority, role of women.) To what extent were these values put into practice in acquiring and ruling their huge empire? And in what ways were those values undermined or eroded as that empire took shape?

- Mongol leaders were to be charismatic makers of political alliances who actively led in military conflicts and ruled in adherence to Mongol customs.
- Political authority was personal rather than institutional in nature, based on relationships between a ruler and his followers that required the ruler to reward his followers and his followers to devote themselves loyally to his service.
- In Document 11.2, Chinggis Khan makes clear that he sees his conquests as sanctioned by God. Document 11.4 indicates that the Mongols were willing to adopt some features of conquered government to rule their empire. It’s also clear that the Mongols were open to borrowing from the wisdom traditions of their conquered peoples if they found them instructive or useful.
- The Mongol society was clearly patriarchal, but had distinctive pastoralist characteristics.
- Mongol values were put into practice by the political structure and attributes of their rulers, which lay at the heart of their military successes. Their political alliance system allowed a large confederation of pastoralists to come together as a military force, and Chinggis Khan’s military prowess and political acumen allowed him to effectively lead this force.
- Students could propose that Mongol values were undermined in Document 11.4, in which Menggu indicates that the Mongols in China adopted some of the core values of the Chinese bureaucrats to rule this region of the empire.
Visual Sources: The Black Death and Religion in Western Europe

1. Assessing motives: Do you think the artists who created these visual sources sought to reinforce traditional Christian teachings or to challenge them?
   - Visual Source 11.2 might be seen as reinforcing orthodox Christian teachings, as it portrays efforts to bury the dead according to Christian burial traditions in trying circumstances.
   - Other images, such as Visual Source 11.3, also reinforce some Christian teachings about the inevitability of death and the need to prepare for it in this life.
   - Visual Source 11.4 most clearly reinforces orthodox Christian teachings about what death means, how to accept death, and the idea that another life follows this one.
   - Visual Source 11.1 emphasizes how pious people sought to atone for their sins outside the institutional church and its sanctioned teachings and rituals.
   - Visual Source 11.2 challenges Christian teachings by revealing that plague victims often did not receive traditional Christian burials.
   - Visual Source 11.3 introduces figures of death that are not explicitly referred to in the Bible.

2. Using art as evidence: What do these visual sources tell you about the impact of and responses to the plague in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Western Europe?
   - The plague led to both the embracing of traditional Christian teachings concerning death and penance and the emergence of new ideas and new ways of depicting death in art. Visual Source 11.2 reveals the problems associated with burying the large number of dead associated with the plague.
   - The visual sources reveal that the population reacted to the plague in a variety of ways, for example, participating in penance movements outside the official church like the flagellants in Visual Source 11.1; partaking in the official rites and teachings of the Christian church as seen in Visual Source 11.4; and emphasizing the unpredictability of death and developing new ways of expressing that unpredictability, as shown in Visual Source 11.3.

3. Connecting past and present: Considering the various ways that people sought to avert, cope with, or explain the plague in these visual sources, what parallels to the human responses to crises or catastrophes in more recent centuries or in our own time can you identify?
   - Parallels include doing penance for perceived misbehavior; redefining ideas about death or penance at times of crisis; turning to traditional teachings; and coping in practical ways with the public health problems associated with the burial or cremation of the dead.

LECTURE STRATEGIES

Lecture 1: Nomads: A people without history?

The purpose of this lecture strategy is to explore in greater detail what we know about nomads and how we know it. It is intended to be comparative, rather than focusing on a single nomadic culture. The lecture strategy’s main objectives are:

- to explore with students what we can reasonably infer about a culture by means of physical artifacts alone, without the benefit of written accounts
- to practice with students how to weigh evidence that comes from prejudiced outsiders
- to consider the strengths and limitations of sources written by a culture, but well after the events described or mediated through another culture

Choose three pastoral peoples for which available materials survive that can be used to explore the three lecture objectives. For the “physical artifacts alone” category, we recommend the Scythians—the extremely rich finds from their burial mounds, some of great beauty, make them particularly accessible to students. Some written evidence about Scythians, too, mostly from Herodotus, can help confirm theories based on physical remains. Show images of various Scythian finds, encouraging the students to discuss what those artifacts can teach modern scholars. For example:

- The sheer size and structure of royal tombs suggest an ability to organize labor to a high degree.
- The complex tattooing found on several well-preserved bodies suggests that Scythians were marked to identify their clan and perhaps their rank.
- Elaborate felt garments suggest the climate they confronted.
- Elaborate Greek-made wine services, some depicting scenes of Scythian life, show
interaction with the Greek world, Scythian fondness for wine, and at least one way in which members of the elite showed their status.

- Hemp seeds and objects that fit Herodotus’s description of small steam tents are also possibilities for discussion.

Go on to a second nomadic culture for which our main source is the accounts of their enemies, such as the Huns or the Xiongnu confederation. Distribute short excerpts of accounts, such as Ammianus Marcellinus’s description of the Huns, and go over them in class. Some possible questions you can ask your students are:

- Is everything in the account actually physically possible?
- What is the author’s relationship to the subject (e.g., neutral visitor, part of a society actively threatened by nomads, ambassador, etc.)?
- What can the account tell about what the author valued from his own culture?
- What parts of the account can be confirmed by other means?
- Which parts of the account are least plausible? (This is a good point at which to emphasize that one can rarely trust numbers in premodern accounts.)

Finally, consider a written source that comes from a nomadic or formerly nomadic society, such as The Secret History of the Mongols or the Turkish Book of Dede Korkut. With the students, build a list of questions that should be asked of such a source, such as:

- When was it written?
- What were the author’s possible sources of information?
- What was the author’s intention in writing?

It may be useful to refer to the chapter’s Document feature during your lecture.

Lecture 2: The Middle East in 1200

This lecture strategy is intended to provide the context for the Mongol eruption into the Middle East in the early thirteenth century. As such, its objectives are:

- to consider the political, economic, and social worlds of Middle Eastern and Central Asian societies around the year 1200
- to explore ways in which this situation might have affected the Mongol onslaught

A good place to begin is where the chapter on the Islamic world left off, going into more detail about circumstances in the region. This topic can be approached in many ways; some points to consider for inclusion are:

- the reality of many Muslim-ruled states, rather than the centralized rule of the Abbasid caliph
- what it meant to be an Abbasid caliph in Baghdad ca. 1200
- the rise of the Ayyubid dynasty of Egypt and Syria
- Saladin’s conquest of most of the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade
- the cultural divide between the Arabic-, Persian-, and Turkic-speaking parts of the Islamic world
- the conditions of ordinary people in the Islamic world, such as merchants and peasants
- the potential for unified action against the Mongols

Lecture 3: Disease in human history

This lecture strategy provides an opportunity to look back and consider the role of disease in the societies already studied, as well as to look forward to the second half of the course. Its objectives are:

- to help students to consider the role of epidemic disease in history
- to help students avoid an overly simplistic understanding of that role
- to encourage students to understand the spread of epidemic disease as an inevitable part of interaction between societies

Begin with two modern cases: the AIDS epidemic and fears about the spread of “bird flu.” Here is a good point at which to educate students about contemporary issues; now that AIDS is, to a considerable extent, treatable with drugs in affluent societies, it has largely fallen out of U.S. news coverage. It is, of course, still an ongoing, catastrophic human tragedy in much of Africa. After establishing this context, explore the Black Death in Eurasia in greater detail than space allowed in the textbook. Some points to consider for inclusion:

- the fear that can be generated when people don’t understand how a disease is spread (Comparison to the plague pandemic of the sixth century C.E., or to the spread of smallpox among the population of the Americas when Europeans established contact, can be instructive.)
• what means the society had to help those suffering from the Black Death (It is helpful to emphasize how recently scientists have developed antibiotics and other medications, and the great degree to which care of the sick in the premodern world was simply a matter of nursing.)
• the actual effect on a population of one epidemic outbreak, as opposed to cyclic reoccurrences (Point out that most who die in epidemics are those with weak immune systems—the elderly, who have already finished reproducing, and the young, who in a premodern society had a very good chance of dying of something or other anyway.)
• what a catastrophe such as the Black Death can mean in terms of spiritual crisis

It may be useful to refer to the chapter’s Visual Sources feature during your lecture.

THINGS TO DO IN THE CLASSROOM

Discussion Topics

1. Comparison (large or small group). “Women in agricultural and pastoral societies.”

Ask students whether it was better to be a woman than a man in a pastoral or a farming society, and ask them to explain why. Make sure they consider both elites and commoners.

2. Contextualization (large or small group). “How Temujin became Chinggis Khan.”

Distribute to the class the passage of The Secret History of the Mongols in which the young Temujin first begins to build up a following from among the Mongol tribes. Ask the students to discuss how he does it. Some supplementary questions to ask are:

• Is money involved?
• What can Temujin offer to his followers?

3. Misconception/Difficult Topic (large or small group). “Nomads, especially the Mongols, were utterly vicious savages who specialized in large-scale massacres.”

Ask students to discuss this stereotype of the Mongols and to list points in the text that suggest the need to revise this opinion.

Classroom Activities

1. Map-analysis exercise (large or small group). “Where were the nomads?”

Using a physical map of the world, ask students to locate the territory of the following groups of pastoral nomads:

• Scythians
• Xiongnu
• Huns
• Magyars
• Turks
• Mongols
• Tibetans
• Lapps
• Bedouin
• Masai

Then ask students to discuss why these regions might have been particularly suitable for nomads.

2. Role-playing exercise (small group). “Life among the pastoralists.”

You are a member of a pastoralist society (pick whichever one you prefer). How would you spend a typical day if you were a man? If you were a woman?

3. Clicker question.

Regarded as a whole, was the Mongol impact on world history more positive or negative?
Class Discussion for the Documents and Visual Sources Features

Comparative (large or small group): When the Losers Write the History Books

The Mongols, like many other pastoralist empires, left few written documents of their own, and thus historians rely to an unusual extent (in comparison with other empires) on those conquered for information about the Mongols. Expand on Using the Evidence question 1 by asking students to reread Document 11.3, along with Ibn al-Athir’s easily accessible and readable account of the Mongol conquest of Islamic lands. What do settled societies emphasize about the Mongols—their approach to warfare? Their treatment of the conquered? Are the two accounts similar or are significant differences evident? If you would like to extend the discussion, ask students to compare these accounts of Mongol conquest with those of outsiders who traveled peacefully within the Mongol Empire. Some possibilities include Marco Polo’s trip to the court of Kubilai Khan, Ibn Battuta’s account of his travels in the Mongol khanates of Russia and Central Asia, or further extracts from the mission of William of Rubruck. How do these travelers’ accounts add to our understanding of the Mongols? How do they differ from the accounts of Mongol conquests? Conclude by turning to the broader question of how historians deal with sources when losers write the history books. Is this any less problematic than when winners write the history books?

Critical Analysis (large or small group): Sources on the Plague

A number of easily accessible written sources concerning the plague in Europe can allow students to both further explore this topic through discussion and consider the strengths and weaknesses of different types of sources for scholars. Have your students read before discussion a set of written documents describing the plague and in particular the reactions of those affected by it. In class, ask students:

• How did the written documents add to your understanding of the plague?
• Did the written documents change the way you interpret any of the images?

• Did the images alter the way you read the documents?
• Did you prefer one type of source or the other?
• What specific advantages can you identify for scholars who use both written and visual sources together?

Then broaden the discussion by noting that the richest set of surviving sources on the plague are European:

• How does the European origin of these sources shape our understanding of the plague?
• How might these sources be different if they were written or drawn in the Islamic Near East? In China?
• What should scholars do when the survival of sources is uneven (as in this case)?

Classroom Activities for the Documents and Visual Sources Features

Critical Analysis (large or small groups): Defining an Ideal Mongol Ruler

Ask students to read Documents 11.1 and 11.2 carefully in order to identify the ideal characteristics of a Mongol leader. Then ask them to decide which elements of leadership were distinctly Mongol and which were common to rulers more generally. Do the distinctive features help to explain the success of Chinggis Khan and the Mongols? You may want to conclude by asking students whether the very personal nature of political power in pastoralist societies, compared to the more institutional power in settled societies, helps to explain the extraordinary success of Chinggis Khan.

Role-Playing (large or small group): Living through the Plague

Students sometimes have a hard time realizing just how disruptive the plague was on culture and the social and political order. This role-playing exercise can help them to better understand the plague’s outcomes. Draw up a list of common occupations in a particular town, being sure to include both elite and nonelite roles (a ruler, several clerics, merchants, artisans, bakers, laborers, the unemployed poor). Assign each student an occupation. Have them imagine they are settled into life in their late
Medieval town—and then the plague strikes. Have students draw cards out of a hat that indicate whether they survived or died (with about a forty percent mortality rate). Those that survive should gather in the middle of the room. Who is left? What occupations or positions must be filled? Who is likely to gain in this situation? Who is likely to lose?

WHAT’S THE SIGNIFICANCE?

**Almoravid Empire:** Emerging out of an Islamic reform movement among the Sanhaja Berber pastoralists in the eleventh century, the Almoravid Empire incorporated a large part of northwestern Africa with its capital in Marrakesh. In 1086 it crossed into southern Spain where it offered vigorous opposition to Christian efforts to conquer the region. The empire had collapsed by the mid-twelfth century. (*pron.* al-muh-RAH-vid)

**Black Death:** Name later given to the massive plague pandemic that swept through Eurasia beginning in 1331; it is usually regarded as an outbreak of bubonic plague.

**Chinggis Khan:** Title meaning “universal ruler” that was given to the Mongol leader Temujin in 1206 after he united the Mongols. (*pron.* CHENG-iz KAHN)

**Hulegu Khan:** Grandson of Chinggis Khan (ca. 1217–1265) who became the first il-khan (subordinate khan) of Persia. (*pron.* hoo-LAY-goo KAHN)

**Khubilai Khan:** Grandson of Chinggis Khan who ruled China from 1271 to 1294. (*pron.* KOO-bilie KAHN)

**Khutulun:** A Mongol princess (ca. 1260–1306) whose exploits in battle and wrestling, along with her choice of husbands, provide insight into the relative freedom and influence of elite Mongol women in their societies. (*pron.* hoo-TE-yun)

**Kipchak Khanate:** Name given to Russia by the Mongols after they conquered it and incorporated it into the Mongol Empire in the mid-thirteenth century; known to Russians as the “Khanate of the Golden Horde.” (*pron.* KIP-chak KAHN-ate)

**Modun:** Great ruler of the Xiongnu Empire (r. 210–174 B.C.E.) who created a centralized and hierarchical political system. (*pron.* moe-DOON)

**Mongol world war, the:** Term used to describe half a century of military campaigns, massive killing, and empire building pursued by Chinggis Khan and his successors in Eurasia after 1209.

**pastoralism:** Way of life in which people depend on the herding of domesticated animals for their food.

**Pastoralism:** an alternative kind of food-producing economy focused on the raising of livestock. Pastoralism emerged only in the Afro-Eurasian world, for in the Americas the absence of large animals that could be domesticated precluded a herding economy.

**Temujin:** Birth name of the Mongol leader better known as Chinggis Khan (1162–1227). (*pron.* TEM-uh-jin)

**Turks:** Turkic speakers from Central Asia, originally nomads, who spread westward into the Near East and into India; they created a series of nomadic empires between 552 and 965 C.E. but had a more lasting impact on world history when they became dominant in the Islamic heartland and founded a series of states and empires there.

**Xiongnu:** People of the Mongolian steppe lands north of China who formed a large-scale nomadic empire in the third and second centuries B.C.E. (*pron.* SHE-OONG-noo)

**Yuan dynasty:** Mongol dynasty that ruled China from 1271 to 1368; its name means “great beginnings.” (*pron.* yu-wen)

FURTHER READING

• Web Site of the UN OCHA Pastoralist Communication Initiative, http://www.pastoralists.org/. The focus of this Web site is pastoralism today. It includes nice photos and interesting news from the world of the surviving nomads.

LITERATURE


• Herodotus. The Histories. Trans. Aubrey de Sélincourt. London: Penguin, 1996. The father of history included an entire book on the Scythians in his Histories. It needs to be taken with a grain of salt, but many passages from his writings have been confirmed by archeologists.


• Kahn, Paul, trans. The Secret History of the Mongols. Boston: Cheng & Tsui, 1998. The Secret History is the best source we have for the early history of the Mongol Empire, and this is a beautiful translation.


FILM


• “In Search of Genghis Khan.” From Retracing History. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 1994. 54 minutes. Traces the life and legends surrounding Chinggis Khan.

• Mongols: Storm from the East. Four-part series. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 1994. 50 minutes each. Explores the emergence of the Mongol Empire and examines Mongol art, culture, science, and technology.

• World Conquerors. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 1993, 50 minutes. Explores the emergence of the Mongol Empire under the rule of Chinggis Khan and his son Ogodei.

ADDITIONAL BEDFORD/ST. MARTIN’S RESOURCES FOR CHAPTER 11

PowerPoint Maps, Images, Lecture Outlines, and i>clicker Content

These presentation materials are downloadable from the Media and Supplements tab at bedfordstmartins.com/strayer/catalog, and they are available on an Instructor’s Resource CD-ROM. They include ready-made and fully customizable PowerPoint multimedia presentations built around lecture outlines that are embedded with maps, figures, and selected images from the textbook and are supplemented by more detailed instructor notes on key points. Also available are maps and selected images in JPEG and PowerPoint format; content for i>clicker, a classroom response system, in Microsoft Word and PowerPoint formats; the Instructor’s Resource Manual in Microsoft Word format; and outline maps in PDF format for quizzing or handouts. All files are suitable for copying onto transparency acetates.
Documents and Essays from *Worlds of History: A Comparative Reader, Fifth Edition*

The following documents, essays, and illustrations to accompany Chapter 11 are available in this reader by Kevin Reilly:

Chapter 11:
- Gregory Guzman, *Were the Barbarians a Negative or Positive Factor in Ancient and Medieval History?*
- Yvo of Narbona, *The Mongols*
- *The Secret History of the Mongols*
- Ibn al-Athir, *The Mongols*
- John of Plano Carpini, *History of the Mongols*

Chapter 12:
- Mark Wheelis, *Biological Warfare at the 1346 Siege of Caffa*
- Gabriele de’ Mussis, *Origins of the Black Death*
- Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Plague in Florence: From The Decameron, c. 1350*
- *Images of the Black Death*
- Ahmad al-Maqrizi, *The Plague in Cairo*
- Michael W. Dols, *The Comparative Communal Responses to the Black Death in Muslim and Christian Societies*

**Online Study Guide at bedfordstmartins.com/strayer**

The Online Study Guide helps students synthesize the material from the textbook as well as practice the skills historians use to make sense of the past. Each chapter contains specific testing exercises, including a multiple-choice self-test that focuses on important conceptual ideas; a flashcard activity that tests students on their knowledge of key terms; and two interactive map activities intended to strengthen students’ geographic skills. Instructors can monitor students’ progress through an online Quiz Gradebook or receive email updates.

**Computerized Test Bank**

This test bank provides over fifty exercises per chapter, including multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, short-answer, and full-length essay questions. Instructors can customize quizzes, add or edit both questions and answers, and export questions and answers to a variety of formats, including WebCT and Blackboard. The disc includes correct answers and essay outlines.