Chapter 15

The West and the Changing Balance of World Power

(A.D. 500 – A.D. 1450)
Lasting Effects of the Mongol Conquest?

- Initial destruction & shock of conquest yielded quickly to an unprecedented rise in cultural communication, expanded trade, & improved civilization.
Regional Effects: Europe

- Mongols defeated Germans, Poles, Bulgars, & Hungarians (whose land was most desired because of grassy plains).

- Eastern Europe was poor compared to Chinese & Muslim areas, so the Mongols turned away from several areas leaving Europe to suffer the least from the Mongol attacks.

- Europe gained much from the advantages of the contact through merchants & exchange of diplomatic & religious envoys.

- Clerics looked to Bible for answer & thought the Mongols were a missing Hebrew tribe that was acting in collusion with European Jews.

  Unable to defeat the Mongols, the Europeans could defeat the Jews (their imagined enemies at home) and began attacking Jewish quarters in cities throughout Europe: setting fire to homes, massacring residents, forcing Jews to flee as refugees thru Europe ...prompting the Catholic Church to order Jews to wear distinctive clothes & emblems in order to identify newly arrived Jews in communities.
Invasions of Eastern Europe

The Mongol invasion of Europe, 1237–1242
More Effects on Europe

- Disappointed with loot from European invasions, Mongols allowed **Italian merchants** in Crimea to take many of their European prisoners to sell as slaves (esp. to Egypt) in exchange for large amounts of trade goods.

- This began a long & profitable relationship between **Mongols & merchants of Venice & Genoa** who set up trading posts in Black Sea: Italians supplied Mongols with manufactured goods in return for the right to sell the Slavs as slaves in the Mediterranean market ...slaves who would ultimately defeat the Mongols as the Mamluks in Egypt.

- Silk routes opened ... & then **spread Bubonic Plague** to Europe.
Western Expansion: The Experimental Phase

- In 1291, two Italian brothers, the Vivaldis from Genoa, sailed with two galleys through the Straights of Gibraltar, seeking a western route to the “Indies” to obtain spice.

- They were never heard from again.

- In the 14th century, explorers rediscovered the Canary Islands and the Madeiras, possibly reaching the Azores by 1351 and eventually Sierra Leone.

- Until 1430, technological barriers prevented further exploration.
  - Innovations in cartography, the compass, the astrolabe, and oceangoing ships eventually made it possible for Vasco de Gama to reach the Indian Ocean

- Henry the Navigator sponsored Portuguese voyages until his death in 1460.
Regional Effects: Russia “the Golden Horde

- In Russia...After the initial attack of Eastern Europe in 1221, Mongol forces successfully attacked Russia in 1224 by defeating Kiev Rus.

- Destroyed most cities & demanded **high tribute**.

- However, the Mongols left Russia largely to its own devices & few Mongol officials were there (**INDIRECT** rule). Russia had lots of independent principalities, each required to send tribute ...or else.

- New places --like **Moscow** (Muscovy) to the north --began to grow with the Mongol’s implementation of a postal system, financial structures, & census. Moscow & it’s ruling prince (Ivan) became a cultural & economic center.

- Armenians, Georgians, & Russians thought Mongols were a punishment from God who “fetched the Tartars against us for our sins.”

- **Limited Russia’s interaction** with Western Europe (e.g. Russia was isolated from the cultural effects of the Renaissance) --a period of cultural decay except in northern Russia.

- Lasted the **longest** of the all the khanates (until 1480)
Regional Effects: East Asia

- Failed to invade Japan twice (kamikaze)
- **Korea:** conquered Koryo dynasty; burdened economy & peasants (ordered to build ships for Japanese invasion); left existing Koryo ruling family in place but forcibly arranged marriages to legitimize rule as well as Mongolize it.

- Conquered & directly ruled **China;** abolished exams, patronized popular culture & identified with masses.
Regional Effects: SE Asia

- After failed invasion of Japan, Mongols turned toward SE Asia & went back to land conquests: success in Burma & Laos, which became **tribute areas** (not directly administered by Mongols).

- Conquests results in gradual increase in trade volume & value.

- Kublai Khan launched 3 **failed invasions** of Vietnam in the late 13th c. and sacked the capital each time but it had already been evacuated.
  
  - Disease, supply shortages, the climate, and the Vietnamese strategy of harassment and scorched earth tactics stopped the first two invasions.

  - The 3rd invasion, of 300,000 men & a vast fleet, was also defeated by luring the Mongols across a riverbed nested with iron-tipped stakes --resulting in the sinking, capture, and/or burning of the 400 ships ...after which the army retreated to China.
Vietnam defeats Mongols

- Didn’t conquer Java (Indonesia islands) -- couldn’t translate successfully land campaigns to sea ones despite the newly built massive navy.

- Less Indian influence in region as a result of conquests: Mongols encouraged Chinese to emigrate to SE Asia & establish trading stations in foreign ports (in order to expand trade into new areas)
Regional Effects: SW Asia

- Muslim societies had highest levels of commerce & had renowned civilization -- likewise, Mongol invasion did **most damage** here.

- They sacked **Baghdad** -- the heart of the Muslim world -- using pontoon boats along rivers, more powerful gunpowder, & exploiting religious differences among people.

- No other non-Muslim troops would conquer Baghdad until 2003 & not since the birth of Islam had so much of the Muslim world by ruled by non-believers.

Mongols besieging Bagdad in 1258
Regional Effects: SW Asia

- While the Crusaders had only managed to seize a few ports, the Mongols had then conquered every Muslim kingdom & city from the Indus River to the Mediterranean.
  - *Only* the Arabian Peninsula & North Africa were outside their control.

- Finally, in 1260 the **Mamluks** slave warriors of Egypt led by Babar defeated the Mongols near the Sea of Galilee, marking the western border of the Mongol Empire.

- Under the Ilkhanate of Persia, **Persian culture** reemerged from centuries of Arab domination.
Decline after Kublai & in Timurlame’s wake

- In 1294 Kublai Khan died in China, and Mongol power began to decline in Asia & elsewhere.
- The Yuan suffered from financial woes from the failed invasions of Japan & Java.
- In 1368 the Yuan dynasty was overthrown by the Ming.

- In the 1370s Tamerlane (“Timur the lame”) --a Turkish-Mongol warrior claiming descent from Genghis Khan -- fought his way to leadership of the Mongol states of Central Asia and tried to restore the Mongol Empire.
Decline after Kublai & in Timurlame’s wake

- He swept into Russia & Persia fighting mainly other Muslims.
- In 1398 he sacked Delhi & murdered 100,000 people, and then died in 1405 while marching on China.
- He preferred capturing wealth and lots of slaughtering, without pausing to install stable governments.
- Because of this, the huge realm inherited by his sons fell apart quickly after his death.
The Ming Empire Restores Chinese Rule

- Heavy taxes, corruption, and natural disasters had led to many uprisings.
- Zhu Yuanzhang, a peasant leader, and his rebel army defeated the Mongols.
- He started the Ming dynasty and restored Chinese culture, including Confucian thought and the civil service.
In 1368, the Mongol forces retreated here after the Chinese succeeded in overthrowing them.

In 1374, the new Chinese ruler, Zhu Yuanzhang, sent an envoy to Yunnan, urging the Mongol prince Basalawarmi to accept Ming rule.

In 1381, the emperor ordered one of his most capable generals and an army of 300,000 to invade Yunnan and subdue the Mongols.

The Chinese showed no mercy, butchering 60,000 Miao and Yao tribesmen, as well countless Mongols.