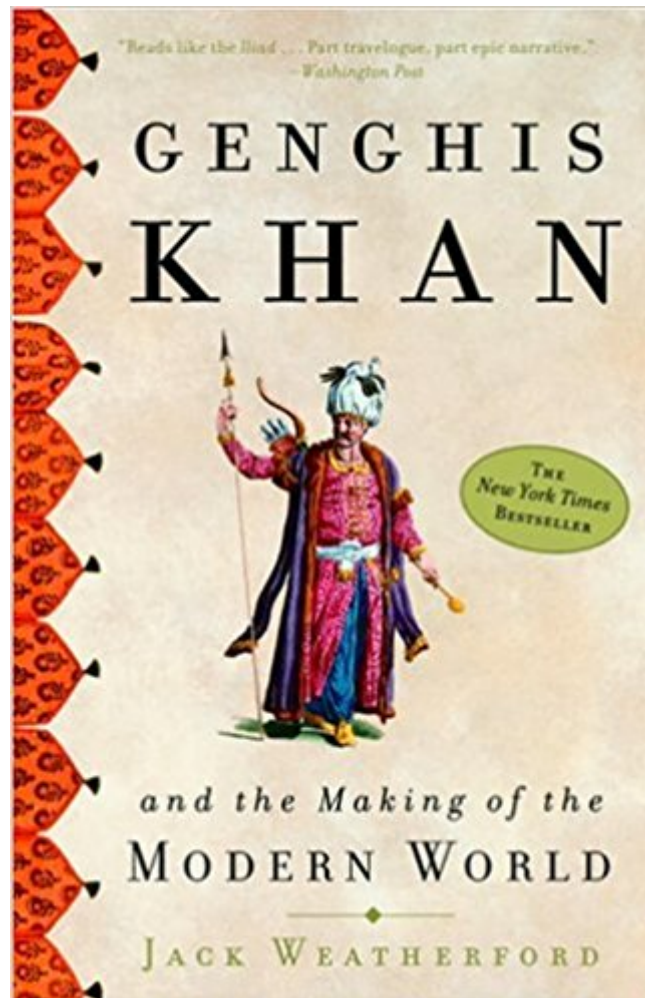




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Genghis Khan And The Making Of The Modern World



Synopsis

The Mongol army led by Genghis Khan subjugated more lands and people in twenty-five years than the Romans did in four hundred. In nearly every country the Mongols conquered, they brought an unprecedented rise in cultural communication, expanded trade, and a blossoming of civilization. Vastly more progressive than his European or Asian counterparts, Genghis Khan abolished torture, granted universal religious freedom, and smashed feudal systems of aristocratic privilege. From the story of his rise through the tribal culture to the explosion of civilization that the Mongol Empire unleashed, this brilliant work of revisionist history is nothing less than the epic story of how the modern world was made.

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Customer Reviews

Apart from its inapt title, Genghis Khan dies rather early on in this account and many of the battles are led by his numerous offspring. This book is a successful account of the century of turmoil brought to the world by a then little-known nation of itinerant hunters. In researching this book, Weatherford (Savages and Civilization), a professor of anthropology at Macalaster College, traveled thousands of miles, many on horseback, tracing Genghis Khan's steps into places unseen by Westerners since the khan's death and employing what he calls an "archeology of movement." Weatherford knows the story of the medieval Mongol conquests is gripping enough not to need superfluous embellishments; "the personalities and the wars they waged provide plenty of color and suspense. In just 25 years, in a manner that inspired the blitzkrieg, the Mongols conquered more lands and people than the Romans had in over 400 years. Without pausing for too

many digressions, Weatherford's brisk description of the Mongol military campaign and its revolutionary aspects analyzes the rout of imperial China, a siege of Baghdad and the razing of numerous European castles. On a smaller scale, Weatherford also devotes much attention to dismantling our notions of Genghis Khan as a brute. By his telling, the great general was a secular but faithful Christian, a progressive free trader, a regretful failed parent and a loving if polygamous husband. With appreciative descriptions of the sometimes tender tyrant, this chronicle supplies just enough personal and world history to satisfy any reader. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Adult/High School — An interesting, thought-provoking account of the conqueror's life and legacy. From his early years as the son of a widow abandoned by her clan, he showed remarkable ability as a charismatic leader and unifier. In 25 years, his army amassed a greater empire than the Romans had been able to achieve in 400. Whether judged on population or land area, it was twice as large as that of any other individual in history. This colorful retelling discusses many of the innovations that marked Khan's rule and contributed to his success. Although his name is now erroneously associated with terror and slaughter, he showed surprising restraint during a time when few others in power did. He allowed freedom of religion, encouraged free trade, developed a paper currency, and observed diplomatic immunity. As he encountered new cultures, he adopted or adapted their best practices, and constantly updated his military strategies. Although Khan's death occurs at the midpoint of this book, the tales of his survivors' exploits and the gradual fall of the Mongol dynasties are engaging and informative. Weatherford's efforts to credit Genghis Khan and his descendants with the ideas and innovations that created the Renaissance are a bit bewildering, but readers will be left with a new appreciation of a maligned culture, and a desire to learn more. — Kathy Tewell, Chantilly Regional Library, VA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Dr. Weatherford's book is an incredible account of the Mongol world of Genghis Khan and his descendents. Once you finish reading Weatherford's book, you will understand how Temujin's reign and his ideas influenced our present day world. Your education and knowledge level of the ancient and modern world is incomplete until you have read this book. Genghis Khan was ahead of his time and has received a "bad rep" by western historians.... until now! At age 66, I feel that I have finally learned the truth.

There are of course exaggerations in the way the author traces the influence of Genghis. It is not easy to accept the fact that the renaissance painting emulated some of the Chinese art.

Nevertheless the book provides seminal knowledge of the Genghis world and describes some of the unintended consequences of terrible invasions and destructions inflicted by him or his successors. Globalization and modernity is coming out as a cyclical phenomenon, related to the global dominance of a force capable of breaking through multiple borders and imposing its rationale on other nations. Rising resistance on a local level poses new threats to globalization, the global empire collapses and the world splits into many fragments that call themselves national states.

Marvelous tale which got better the longer it went on. The first half (at least) was written too much like something for pre-teens. Sad, because this IS a fabulous story that begs a better teller.

Good read if you have interest in the subject matter. Some have graded book down because of the historic analogies by non-historian not being right on, but I blame this on common Editorial demands to get authors out of their box. I enjoyed the contrasts of Chaucer, Islamic and Chinese documentation with long held public opinions of Genghis Khan quite interesting. While Weatherford may put him in a kinder gentler light than seems possible, the Mongolian demographics relative to his opponents offered Mongolians few choice for dealing with the largest ever empire. Intriguing how his upbringing and perhaps own early insecurities lead this uneducated leader to extreme accomplishments as well as documented wisdoms including the extreme benefits of building a government of laws rather than royalty. His genius cannot be underestimated. Strongly recommend this reading to compare and contrast the great impact he had on our history relative to today's world.

This is an outstanding book, up to date and accurate in terms of scholarship, very well organized, and eminently readable. Moreover, it presents a balanced view of Genghis Khan and his successors, not flinching from the brutal and cruel parts of their rule, but at the same time pointing out the contributions they made to the society (e.g., uniform code of laws, ridding the steppes of banditry, establishing religious toleration and meritocracy) and their genius in terms of military tactics. I highly recommend it!

I have been to Mongolia and gained a great respect for its beauty, culture and people,. All know Genghis Kahn. I gained quite a respect and curiosity about him. I learned that his reign actually ran for three generations. This book starts when Genghis is young and continues through the life of his

grandson . It is extremely interesting and one gets the feeling that Genghis, who started life as an unknown , rose to control a very large part of Asia from China and Viet Nam in the east, to Turkey in the west. Basically the entire Eurasian Steppes. Genghis was not just a seeking territory and wealth . He was a forward thinker and was persuing a united, and more peaceful life for the people of the Steppes. His governing was very creative, and fair and he did many good things for his people and was tolerant of religious beliefs. His military tactics were brilliant . It is difficult to imagine how he governed, and expanded his influence over such a massive territory with no communication other than by horse.

Fascinating and well-researched account of a man who literally changed the world. The last part, which many have criticized, is in my opinion very necessary and relevant if one wants to understand the long-term impact of Khan's conquests and his strange combination of brutality, cunning, and tolerance. I was most surprised to learn that it was the Mongolian Khans, rather than the Han Chinese, who founded Peking/Beijing, and that that the last Khan leader in the Near East ruled until just over a hundred years ago. I also ordered Weatherford's Secret History of the Mongol Queens, and also found it very compelling reading.

Fantastic book. This seems like a hot topic in history right now and this book is well written. In high school/college history, they never really make connections between Europe and Asia. How did the spice trade/Silk Route come to be established? What led to the European Renaissance? Sorry, those questions are Euro-centric, this book is really about Asia, but it really helped fill in many questions that I had. It truly expanded my knowledge of Central Asia, Russia, Korea, China, Japan. It explains how many of those countries came to hate the Mongols and have suppressed this history. Some might find it too sympathetic to the Mongols' atrocities. Part I is all about the rise of Genghis Khan and his conquests. Part II is more about his legacy and the governing of the largest empire the world has ever known.

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