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The Mongol Empire in World History: The State of the Field¹

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Abstract

The study of the Mongol Empire has made enormous strides in the past two decades, and its most notable impact is the shift of seeing the Empire not only in national or regional terms but from a holistic perspective, in its full Eurasian context. This focus, credited mostly to the works of Thomas T. Allsen, also means that the scholarly literature now gives more space to topics that interest world historians such as the cultural, economic, religious and artistic exchanges that prevailed in Mongol Eurasia, or the legacy that the Mongol Empire left for the early modern empires. Simultaneously, the Mongols' image begins to shift from the barbarian warriors obsessed with massacres and plunder, to the Mongols as active promoters of cross-cultural connections, who even brought about the transition from the medieval to the modern world. The paper reviews the major trends in the study of the Empire from world history perspective and argues that the nomadic civilization of the Mongols should be taken into account in world history surveys.

In mid November 2012 Mongolia celebrated with great pomp the 850th birthday of Chinggis Khan (1162-1227). The celebrations included an international conference entitled "Chinggis Khan and Globalization." While this was an impressive manifestation of the use of the Mongol Empire for constructing national identity, the conference's title reflects the fascination of our globalised age with periods of early globalization such as Mongol rule in thirteenth and fourteenth century's Eurasia. Indeed the study of the Mongol Empire has made enormous strides in the past two decades, and its most notable impact is the shift of seeing the Empire not only in national or regional terms but from a holistic perspective, in its full Eurasian context. This focus, credited mostly to the seminal works of Thomas T. Allsen, also means that the scholarly literature now gives more space to topics that interest world

historians such as the cultural, economic and religious exchanges that prevailed in Mongol Eurasia. Simultaneously, the Mongols' image in the scholarly literature begins to shift from the barbarian warriors obsessed with massacres and plunder, to the Mongols as active promoters of cross-cultural connections, who even brought about the transition from the medieval to the modern world. Part of this new focus was enthusiastically embraced by world history textbooks, although these works often tend to relate to the Mongols more as a passive medium, the main contribution of which was the unification of a vast territory under one rule, and ignore the Mongols' nomadic culture and its impact. ²

This short survey aims to point up major directions in the study of the Mongol empire in the last two decades, and suggest a few promising directions for future inquiries. First, however, a definition of the Mongol empire is called for:

In the early 13th century Chinggis Khan and his heirs created the world's largest contiguous empire, that at its height stretched from Korea to Hungary. The Chinggisids not only conquered the whole Eurasian steppe, home of the nomads, they also united under their rule three other civilizations: the Chinese, its center and hinterland came under their rule by 1279; the Islamic, where they conquered the former center, Baghdad, in 1258, [P.1022] and even beforehand a large chunk of the eastern Islamic lands; and, since 1241, the Orthodox Christian, where they ruled only the hinterland not the Byzantine center. Moreover, as the only superpower of the thirteenth century, the Mongols had a noticeable impact even on regions and civilizations outside their empire, such as Japan, Southeast Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, the Arab Middle East and Europe, both western and eastern.

The empire existed as a unified, ever expanding, entity, ruled from Mongolia between 1206 to 1260. In 1260 it was devolved into four khanates, each of them a

regional empire headed by a Chinggisid branch. The Khanate of the Great Khan, later known as the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), ruled over China, Mongolia, Tibet and Manchuria, and enjoyed a nominal – though not uncontested- primacy over the other khanates. The Ilkhanate (1260-1335), literally the empire of the submissive Khans, ruled in modern Iran, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, parts of Anatolia and Trans-Caucasus, and maintained especially cordial relations with its sister Khanate in China. The Chaghadaid Khanate held power in Central Asia, from eastern Xinjiang (China) to Uzbekistan, up to Tamerlane's rise to power in 1370, and continued to rule in eastern Central Asia up to the late 1600s. The Golden Horde (1260-1480) governed the north-western Eurasian steppe, from the eastern border of Hungary to Siberia, the Russian principalities and the Crimea. Despite the many – and often bloody – disputes among the four polities, they retained a strong sense of Chinggisid unity.³ In the mid fourteenth century all four khanates were embroiled in political crises that led to the collapse of the Ilkhanate (1335) and of Yuan China (1368) while considerably weakening the steppe khanates. The fall of the Yuan is generally deemed to be the end of the Mongol period (from a Muslim vantage point, however, the "Mongolian moment" sometimes extends until the fall of the Timurids in 1500).

Due to the gigantic dimensions of the empire, the history of Chinggisid expansion and rule was recorded in a bewildering variety of languages—Persian, Chinese, Mongolian, Russian, Arabic, Latin, Old French, Old Italian, Greek, Georgian, Armenian, Tibetan, Korean, Syriac and so on. Naturally no scholar could master all of these languages. Previously scholars tend to choose one corner of the empire, to base their work on sources in one of its two major languages—Persian and Chinese (and sometimes Russian) - and to frame their inquiry in a dynastic or national context, often concentrating on the impact the Mongols had on it. While such works

are not without merit, this state of affairs can easily result in a fractured picture of the empire, which underscores its local components on the expense of its Mongol character. The main reason for this is that the information about the Mongols was mostly penned by their sedentary subjects, each bounded in the models of his own civilization and local tradition. Mongolian institutions and policies therefore often tend to be obscured in the sources, whose authors either did not approve of them or were not too interested: Chinese and Muslim historians endeavoured to portray the Mongols as a "normal" Chinese or Iranian dynasty while the Russian chronicles adopted the "ideology of silence," basically ignoring Mongol dominion over their lands. Reading sources from different parts of the empire together, with full awareness of the various historiographical traditions involved, is thus essential for reconstructing a fuller picture of Mongol institutions and policies, and for writing the history of the Empire, as distinct from its constituent parts.

Indeed, the major breakthrough in the study of the Mongol empire in the last decades came from the works of Thomas T. Allsen, by far the most important historian of the Mongols active today. Equally familiar with the Persian, Chinese and Russian sources, Allsen looks at the empire from a holistic perspective, putting the Mongols and their nomadic culture at the center of his inquiry and highlighting the cultural exchange that took place under their rule.

Allsen has called attention to the impact of demography, mobility and nomadic political culture on the shaping of Mongol imperial policies and institutions. By Chinggis Khan's [P. 1023] times the Mongols numbered less than one million people and yet they soon found themselves ruling over two thirds of the old world. In fact they were able to create such a huge empire only by fully mobilizing the resources- both human and material- that they extracted from the regions under their

control. The formation of the empire, its continued expansion, and the establishment of its administration therefore entailed a vast mobilization of people - and following them artifacts and ideas - throughout its territory and beyond. These huge population movements were often the first step towards robust cross-cultural exchange and integration and in the long run often triggered profound transformations- both intended and otherwise- in the religious and ethnic identities of various communities .

Allsen's first book, *Mongol Imperialism* (1987), which was devoted to the reign of the Great Khan Möngke (r. 1251-59) present an impressive picture of Mongol administration including the military and revenue mobility that enabled the huge expansion in Möngke's reign, into both China and the Middle East. In his *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire* (1997), Allsen focuses on the importance of textile for the empire, highlighting both the economic policies of the Mongols and their cultural preferences (e.g. color symbolism) that affected such policies. His *magnum opus* *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (2001) underlines the cultural exchange between Yuan China and Ilkhanid Iran. It analyses the creation of Mongol imperial culture and manifests the importance of the Mongols' indigenous norms (e.g. Shamanism, redistribution) for determining cultural diffusion: Most of what was conveyed throughout the empire was not the Mongols' own culture, but rather elements from that of their sedentary subjects. However, it was the Chinggisids who initiated the bulk of these exchanges. The prime movers of this culture were imperial agents, including diplomats, merchants, administrators, artisans, soldiers and hostages. The particular cultural goods that diffused across Eurasia were those compatible with Mongol norms and beliefs, such as medicine (i.e. healing), astronomy and divination (reading of heaven), geography and cartography (reading of earth), and thus the Mongols also promoted scientific transfers. The flow of people,

ideas and goods across Eurasia was determined to a large extent by the Mongols' affinities and needs.

Allsen fourth book, *The Royal Hunt in Eurasia*, while not dedicated to the Mongols, puts the Mongol imperial hunt in its widest context in terms of both time and space and reveals its significance for the Mongol imperial culture.

Allsen's work created new standards for the Empire's study and greatly broadened the scope of inquiry. The Eurasian perspective has contributed greatly to specialized works based on either Chinese or Muslim sources, and while scholars that integrate eastern and western sources are still few, this approach will probably dominate the new generation of Mongol empire researchers.

Another way to partly overcome the linguistic barrier is by scholarly translations, and indeed part of the vigor in Mongolian studies in the last twenty years has been the progress made in the translation, editing and publication of primary sources. Of prime importance is Igor de Rachewiltz's 2004 translation of the *Secret History of the Mongols*, the only extant Mongolian source for the rise of Chinggis Khan. The excellent translation is accompanied by an encyclopedic commentary that deals with nearly every aspect of Chinggis Khan's Mongolia. A third volume, containing additions and updates to the commentary, is on its way to the publisher. Wheeler Thackston's translation of the history of the Mongols as recorded in the Persian *Collection of histories (Jami' al-Tawarikh)*, of Rashid al-Din (d. 1317), a polymath of Jewish origin who served as the Ilkhanate's vizier and wrote the first ever world history (including the histories of the Chinese, Indian, Franks (=Europeans), Muslims, Turks and Jews), is also of major importance. Rashid al-Din, one of the main cultural brokers of the empire, included data not only on the United Empire and

the Mongols in Iran [P. 1024] but also on the other Mongol Khanates. While other important Persian sources are available in translation,⁴ Chinese sources on the Mongols have been less accessible to non-Sinologists. This state will hopefully change soon with the publication of Christopher Atwood's annotated translation of the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* (History of the Campaigns of Chinggis Khan), a Chinese chronicle that retained an alternative Mongolian version of the Empire's early years, different from the *Secret History* and used also by Rashid al-Din.⁵ There are even rumors on an expected scholarly translation of extensive parts of the *Yuan shi*, the official history of the Yuan dynasty and the period's most important Chinese source.⁶

In the field of cultural history one should mention especially *The King's Dictionary: The Rasulid Hexaglot*, ed. P. Golden (2000), a late 14th-century Yemeni vocabulary of Arabic, Persian, Greek, Armenian, Turkish and Mongolian, which lists, in parallel columns, terms for everything from clothing and weapons to plants and animals; and Hu Szu-hui (Pinyin: Hu Sihui), *A Soup for the Qan*, tr. P. Buell *et al.* (2000), an exhaustive investigation of the *Yinshan zhengyao*, the Yuan dietary compendium that discusses foods and medicines from across Eurasia. The publication of newly discovered contemporaneous Persian sources on the Mongols is also worth mentioning,⁷ as is the growing use of the Arabic sources for the study of the empire, mainly thanks to the works of Reuven Amitai and Charles Melville. The voluminous Mamluk compilations from Egypt and Syria, the writings of the Ilkhanid school of Iraq, many of which retained a cosmopolitan world-history perspective, and religious and scientific works from Iran and Central Asia, still constitute a largely-untapped reservoir of information about the Empire, and their immense potential for the study of the empire's cultural and economic exchange has hitherto hardly been exploited.⁸

Extensive work has also been done in recent years on documents and inscriptions from the empire's domains, from Ilkhanid documents and edicts of Golden Horde's khans to Mongolian and Uighur contracts, edicts and sutras unearthed in north-west China, and multilingual tomb inscription from China and Central Asia, including the numerous Syriac-Nestorian gravestones. Fruits of archaeological excavations, conducted mainly in Mongolia and Russia, were also published recently.⁹ Most of these findings have yet to be integrated into the study of the Empire.

The new focus created by the rise of the cultural history created strong impetus for looking beyond political and military history into world history favorite themes such as the economic, religious and artistic exchange under Mongol rule as well as the empire's institutions: Thus, for example, the postal systems, that connected Mongol ruled territories, have merited extensive research (Silverstein 2007, Allsen 2011), as did the imperial guard, the incubator for the future Mongol elite, in both China and Iran (Atwood 2006; Melville 2006). A number of works have been written about Mongol diplomacy, (Broadbridge 2008; Aigle 2008; Biran 2008), although the professional cadre of messengers-diplomats (*ilchis*) still require further study. Other institutions that are worth tracking in Eurasian perspective include the court (*Yargu*) and the (rather slippery) Mongol law code (*Jasaq*); the trading partners (*Ortaqs*); the mechanism of gift giving; the functions of the Chinggisids son-in-laws (*Güregens*) in the empire; the multiple and multi-ethnic administrations, including the differentiation between direct and indirect administration - and just to give an example, a comparative study of Mongol indirect rule involves examples from Korea, Tibet, Georgia, Armenia, Anatolia and the Russ principalities.

As for the economic exchange, similar to the cultural sphere, the Mongols cultivated economic ties that extended well beyond the empire's borders. They inherited, invigorated and extended various trade routes as well as sundry means for resource extraction and exchange, including plunder, asset redistribution, taxation or tribute, and gift giving. Not only did the Mongols provide security and transportation infrastructure, but they were active participants in trade as both investors and consumers. The overland routes flourished during [P.1025] the United Empire, and picked up again in the first half of the fourteenth century, after the 1304 peace between the Mongol khanates. Yet the maritime routes also thrived, especially from the 1280s onward, due to the Mongol takeover of the Song dynasty, not least its busy ports, and the enmity between the Yuan and the Mongol princes in Central Asia, which encouraged the shift from land to sea. Recent scholarship gives more attention to the maritime routes in Mongol Eurasia both in the Indian Ocean - connecting south China and south east Asia to India and from there to the Persian Gulf or the Red sea - and in the Black sea and the Eastern Mediterranean,¹⁰ and Gang Deng even argued that Yuan voyages were no less extensive than the now iconic Ming voyages.¹¹ The maritime and overland routes were often closely linked: the Black sea ports serviced luxury goods arriving from the East over continental routes; and caravans headed inland from the Indian coast during seasons unsuited for sailing. This extensive network indeed connected the entire Old World. The key non-Mongol players in this global network were the Indian kingdoms and the Italian city-states. The latter established permanent, government-backed colonies in Kaffa and Tana on the Black Sea and in Ilkhanid Tabriz, while many Italian adventurers and entrepreneurs (foremost among them Marco Polo) embarked on private ventures further east. Much research, of varied quality, was recently dedicated to the monetary

system of the different khanates,¹² while a general Eurasian assessment of the monetary situation revealed that the period spanning the 1280s and 1360s—from the conquest of Song China to the fall of the Yuan—saw a sharp rise in the use of silver across Eurasia. Uncoined silver became the standard unit for pricing transactions from England to Bengal, China and North Africa, even when paid by other means.¹³ Certain commodities, notably porcelain and horses, also deserved specific studies.¹⁴

While all this strongly suggests the global character of Mongol Eurasia,¹⁵ much more work need to be done on the various mechanisms of revenue gathering that coexisted in the Empire from the traditional barter along the fur routes of the far north, via the various taxation and redistribution systems in the different khanates and up to the sophisticated market mechanisms that were used in the south, where, for example, Yuan workshops imported cobalt from northern Europe in order to produce blue and white porcelain, which was in high demand throughout the Muslim world.

The field of religious exchange also has made strides in the last decades: The Mongols have been famous for their "religious tolerance," which was actually a combination of *realpolitik* with the non-exclusive character of religion in East Asia.¹⁶ Yet they did not try to enforce or propagate their Shamanic religion on their subjects and served as a huge reservoir of converts for the existing world religions. So long as the empire was united, the ruling class was mostly satisfied with its indigenous beliefs. However, after its dissolution, each khanate adopted a world religion either to ingratiate itself with the local population or, conversely, to accentuate its ideological independence. Islam, by far the most mobile, mercantile and cosmopolitan religion in the empire, was the great winner in the conversion race, adopted by three out of the four Mongol khanates, and expanding into other regions, like China, India, Southeast Asia and Africa. Mongol China adopted Tibetan

Buddhism as its state religion, although it remained mainly an elitist phenomenon, while Christianity failed, despite intensive missionary efforts, to translate the freedom and access into new territories into durable achievements. The open world of the empire and Mongol interest in religious specialists also increased intra-religion dialogue within the empire and beyond. Much work has been dedicated in the recent years to Mongol islamization, both to how it happened and how it was perceived by its recipients. The major breakthrough in this field has been Devin Deweese's *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde* (1994), that analyzes indigenous Turkic conversion story of Özbek Khan (r. 1313-41) in its widest Inner [P.1026] Asian and Islamic-monotheistic context. The Ilkhanate's Islamization commanded extensive scholarly attention, and that of the Chaghadaids was also treated.¹⁷ For Yuan Tibetan Buddhism we still depend on the classical works of the late Herbert Franke,¹⁸ but Johan Elverskog impressive volume *Buddhism and Islam along the Silk Roads* (2010), stresses inter-religious connections in the Mongol period as well as before and after it. Much piecemeal work has been done on Christian, Manichean and Buddhist tombstones and documents mainly in China and Central Asia, although such works, mainly compiled by philologists, have not yet made its way into the histories of the Empire.

Art historians have long acknowledged the Mongol period as one of unique flourishing. This tradition goes back as far as 1931, when a celebrated Exhibition of Persian Art was held at Burlington House in London,¹⁹ and the various magnificent recent exhibitions that portrayed Mongol material and visual culture have done much to improve the Mongols' images in the popular opinion. Of special importance are the exhibition catalog of *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, ed. by Komaroff and Carboni (2002), and the symposium that followed the exhibition, published as *Beyond the*

legacy of Chinggis Khan, (ed. L. Komaroff, 2006), which suggests various new directions for the study of Ilkhanid cultural and artistic history. No less magnificent but focusing on the Chinese, rather than the Mongolian, facet of Yuan art in James Watt's catalogue of *The World of Khubilai Khan's* exhibition (2010). Yuka Kadoi's *Islamic Chinoiserie* (2009) reviews Chinese influences on Ilkhanid art, and Sheila Blair's numerous articles and her magnificent work on Rashid al-Din's illustrations are of major importance for the study of Muslim art and architecture under the Mongols. Shane McCausland's *Zhao Mengfu: Calligraphy and Painting for Khubilai's China* (2011), which portrays the life and work of a leading Yuan painter, who also held important posts in Qubilai's administration, is the major study in the eastern realm. Roxann Prazniak's work discusses the impact of the artistic forms developed under Mongol rule - in both China and Iran - on the art of Europe.²⁰

The history of science and intellectual history under Mongol rule in Iran and China also received some scholarly attention.²¹ These works now acknowledge the Mongol contribution: Science, philosophy and theology developed not despite of Mongol rule or as a protest against it, but often with the Mongols' blessing or active encouragement. Other world history themes, such as gender history and environmental history, began to be treated in the Mongol context, yet there are still at their infancy.²²

Moreover, the Mongol period and especially Chinggis Khan provided a powerful repertoire of images that have been used throughout the centuries and across Eurasia for constructing collective identities- dynastic, imperial, tribal and national - in which the Mongols were used as either heroes or villains. Much recent work was devoted to the Mongols' image in various contexts especially in the age of nationalism. Whereas in post-Soviet Mongolia, but also in China, Kazakhstan,

Buryatya and Tatarstan, nationalism made the Mongols great heroes, this ideology also turned Chinggis Khan and his heirs to arch-enemies of the Arab world (especially after the 2003 American occupation of Iraq, often compared with Hülegü's 1258 invasion), 19th century Japanese, Iranians and Russians. In contrast to the situation in Japan or Iran, in Russia the modern nationalist view can draw on the medieval and early modern precedents.²³

In recent decades, there has also been an upturn in the amount of excellent works devoted to relations between the Mongols and their neighboring civilizations, be it the European west (notably Jackson 2005); Russia (Ostrowski 1998; Halperin 2007); the Balkans (Vasary, 2005), the Caucasus (Tubach *et. al.*, eds. 2012), Mamluk Egypt and Syria (Amitai-Preiss 1995, Amitai 2007; Broadbridge 2008); India (Jackson 1999; Sen Tansen 2003, 2010; Wink 2004), Korea and North-East Asia (Robinson 2009), South East Asia (Bade 2002) and Japan (Delgado 2008). Of those Jackson's book is the best starting point, due to [P. 1027] its erudite research and wide-ranging cover - it refers not only political and diplomatic contacts but also the issues of trade, missionary activities and European images of the Mongols.

So far I reviewed the research in thematic terms. Looking at it from a regional perspective, it is obvious that the scholarly literature is not evenly split from either a geographic or temporal standpoint, as the better documented polities of Yuan and the Ilkhanate command much more interest than the steppe khanates, especially the Chaghadaids. Likewise, a great deal of research has been conducted on Chinggis Khan and the empire's heydays under his grandsons Qubilai (r. 1260-94) and Hülegü (r. 1260-65), whereas comparatively little work has been devoted to the empire's later stages or its decline.²⁴ Even in the case of Iran and China, where much work has been done, there was no attempt to synthesize the results of the recent research.²⁵ For

political history, the various Cambridge Histories are still the best bet: Boyle's chapter on the political History of the Ilkhanate in *The Cambridge History of Iran vol. 5* (1968) is still useful, although the thematic articles in this volume are much outdated; Vol. 6 of *The Cambridge History of China* (1994) includes the best available coverage of the United Empire (Allsen) and extensive chapters on Yuan history; *The Cambridge History of Russia* (2006) refers to the Golden Horde; and *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia* (2009) includes succinct chapters on the Chaghadaids (Biran) and the Golden Horde (Vásáry) as well as important thematic chapters (Allsen, Golden, DeWeese). *The Cambridge History of the Mongol Empire*, edited by Michal Biran and Kim Hodong and now underway (expected publication 2016-17), will hopefully fulfill this gap, while simultaneously portraying a multi-faceted picture of the Empire's impact on world history and the various sources for its study.

The first attempt to synthesize the results of the recent research in the post-Allsen period is Timothy May's *The Mongol Conquests in World History* (2012). The book is mostly dedicated to "the Chinggis Exchange" in the fields of trade, warfare, administration, religion, the plague, migration and culture. May is at his best in the military field which is his specialty (see his *The Mongol art of War* 2007), while in other chapters one can wish for a more analytical, rather than descriptive, approach. Yet his work will be of great value to world historians or other scholarly communities and can be read together with Morgan's classic *the Mongols* (2nd ed. 2007) as a starting point for the interested student. Such students will also benefit from Paul Buell's *Historical Dictionary of the Mongol Empire* (2003) and Christopher Atwood's *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire* (2004).

One of the advantages of May's book is that it put to rest the famous cliché that the Mongol Empire vanished just as quickly as it emerged, leaving no legacy behind. In fact, the more we know more about the Mongols, the scope of their imperial legacy is getting clearer. While refraining from forcing their language or religion on the people they conquered, the Mongols disseminated their imperial culture, itself composed of various cultural elements. As a result, it was easier for the succeeding regimes that adopted their predecessor's system of governance to ignore their debt to the Mongols. Yet the empire had represented a critical source of political capital for ambitious dynasties across Eurasia, a repository of Imperial glory, and a host of functioning institutions, that were hard to ignore, both for those that cherished their debt to the Mongols (Timurid and Uzbek Central Asia, Qing China, Moghul India) and for those who refuted it (Ming China, Muscovy, the Ottomans).²⁶

The scope and impact of the Chinggisid legacy is still debated. Thus, for example, *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia vol. 2* mentioned above, that covers the thirteenth-eighteenth centuries, is called *The Chinggisid Age*, as its editors see the Chinggisid tradition as the main feature of the region's regimes well after the Empire's collapse. In sharp contrast, Christopher Beckwith's *Empires of the Silk Road* (2009) which portrays Inner Asian history from pre-history to the present, suggests a highly minimalist evaluation of [P.1028] Mongol impact on Inner Asia, partly because of the author's stress on linguistic issues. The issue is also contested in the recent prolific "imperiology" literature: compare, for example, the outdated appraisal of Herfried Munkler, who describe the Mongol empire as one that "fell fast; what they [=steppe empires] left behind was not the testimony of their own achievements and grandeur but the destruction of civilizations that lay in the path of their expansion."²⁷ with the discussion in Buerbank and Cooper that highlights the

impact of Mongol imperial technologies on future empires and the thriving Eurasian connections under their rule.²⁸ The place of the Mongol Empire among world empires and its legacy in the early modern world calls for comprehensive inquiry that takes into account the Eurasian dimensions of the phenomenon, and give the nomadic culture the place it deserved among world civilizations. More broadly, as Steppe empires had their own Inner Asian tradition and often appropriated and disseminated features and institutions of their various sedentary neighbors, the comparative study of empires must take the steppe seriously if it ever to become a vigorous and rigorous field of historical inquiry.

In sum, the main challenge for historians of the Mongol Empire is to synthesize the various data from diverse medias, disciplines and regions, and to add a holistic perspective to their concrete studies. When this becomes the norm, new developments in the study of the Mongol Empire can more easily be integrated into world history textbooks.

The Mongol Empire in World History: The State of the Field

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¹ This survey is partially based on my chapter "The Mongols and the inter-Civilizational Exchange" in Kedar and Wiesner-Hanks (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the World*, vol. 5 (forthcoming). For former reviews see Jackson, 'The State of Research', 189-210; Morgan, *The Mongols*, 2nd edn., 186-206. [P.1028]

² E.g., Tignor *et. al.*, *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart*, 401-407; Bentley *et. al.*, *Traditions and Encounters*, 413-25; Bulliet, *The Earth and its Peoples*, 234-48. For the most best-selling (and vastly exaggerated) claim of the Mongols as harbingers of modernity see Weatherford, *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*.

³ Kim Hodong, 'The Unity of the Mongol Empire and Continental Exchange over Eurasia', 15-42.

⁴ Notably Juwaynī, *The History of World Conqueror*, tr. J. A. Boyle. [P.1029]

⁵ See his Commentary on the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* in <http://cces.snu.ac.kr/com/18swqe.pdf>

⁶ May, *The Mongol Conquest in World History*, 16

⁷ See Seyed-Gohrab and McGlinn,(eds), *The Treasury of Tabriz*; Lane, 'Mongol News', 541-59

⁸ Of special importance are the works of Ibn al-Fuwati (d. 1318), al- 'Umari (d. 1349), and al-Nuwayri

(d. 1333).

⁹ See esp. the items of Bemann, Winkler and Li, and Liu in the bibliography.

¹⁰ For the Indian Ocean see the works of Kauz, Schaemeiser, Yokaicchi and Chaffee; for the Black Sea see DiCosmo's and Ciociltan's works.

¹¹ Gang Deng, *Chinese Maritime Activities*, 163.

¹² See the works of von Glahn, Kolbas and Martinez in the bibliography. Von Glahn's work (on Yuan China) is by far the most useful; Kolbas's book (Ilkhanate) is a strange compilation, while Martinez's important work, also on the Ilkhanate, is extremely technical.

¹³ Kuroda Akinobu, 'The Eurasian Silver Century, 1276–1359', 245–69.

¹⁴ See Finley and Yokkaichi in the bibliography.

¹⁵ Janet Abu Lughod was the first to advance this thesis, already in 1989.

¹⁶ Jackson, 'The Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered,' 245-90.

¹⁷ See DeWeese's chapter in *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia, vol. 2* and the references there (mainly by Amitai, Biran, Kim, Melville and Pfeiffer).

¹⁸ Franke, *China under Mongol Rule* .

¹⁹ On this, see Robinson, 'The Burlington House Exhibition of 1931,' 147-55.

²⁰ R. Prazniak, 'Siena on the Silk Roads' , 177-218.

²¹ See, e.g., the works of Sivin, Schmidtke and Morrison in the bibliography.

²² For women and gender see Betine Birge's work and Bruno De Nicloa's dissertation. For environmental history see P.D.Buell, 'Qubilai and the Rats,' May, *Mongol Conquest* , 199-210; Brook, *The Troubled Empire*, 50-79, 106-33.

²³ See the works of Bulag, Frohlich and Singer as well as Biran 2007 and Halperin 2009 in the bibliography.

²⁴ Notable exceptions are Robinson's *Empire Twilight* (2009) and Melville, *The Fall of Chupan* (1997); the most important works for the Khanates' s founders are Rossabi's *Khubilai Khan* (1988); Lane's *Early Mongol Rule in Iran* (2003), and Biran's *Qaidu* (1997). As for the myriad Chinggis books, the most authoritative is still Ratchnesky's *Genghis Khan* (1991), while recent accessible contributions include Biran's *Chinggis Khan* (2007) and Dannel's *Chinggis Khan* (2010).

²⁵ Brook, *The Troubled Empire*, portrays the Yuan as a Chinese rather than a Mongol dynasty, ignores Mongol rule in north China before 1271 and while it has its merits it cannot serve as an updated

introduction to Yuan history.

²⁶ See the works of McChesney, Fleicher, Ostrowski, Crossley, Manz, Robinson, and Balabanillar in the bibliography.

²⁷ Munkler, *Empires* , p. 56.

²⁸ Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 93-116