

The Mongols Between Gunpowder and Weaponry

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The Mongol army conquered vast parts of Eurasia mostly from the back of the horse using nomadic warfare as they were expert mounted archers. However, the Mongols needed to adopt new military technologies in order to tip the scales in their favor and overcome the ecological barriers, the fortified cities and conquer the sedentary world known to them. Detailed descriptions on these technologies which included weapons, gunpowder and their usage appear in sources across Eurasia from the Mamluk Sultanate (1250-1517) in the Middle East all the way to Yuan China (1260-1368). Based on these Chinese, Arabic and Persian sources, this paper will shed new light on some aspects of the military history of the period and the conquest of vast parts of Eurasia by analyzing the different dynamics and cross-cultural encounters between the political entities in Eurasia during the 13th and 14th centuries. The paper, will examine not only the exchange of military technology but also the movement of military knowledge during the 13th century and even earlier, throughout Eurasia focusing on weaponry and gunpowder that moved from East Asia to Central and West Asia, modified, improved and "returned" from Western Asia to the frontiers in Eastern China.