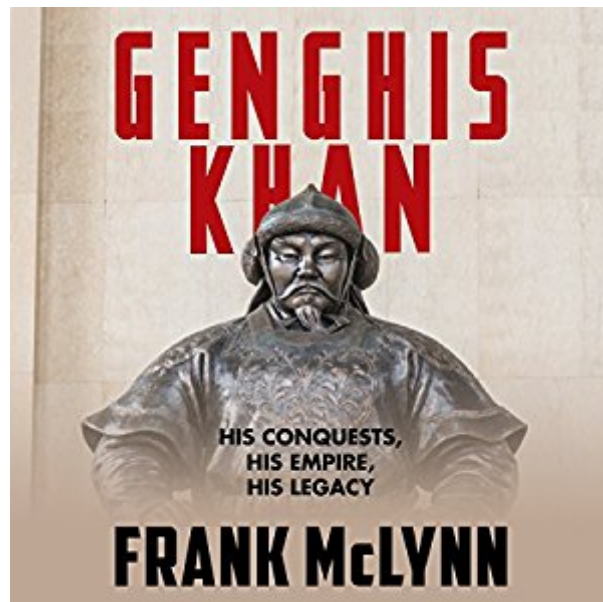


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Genghis Khan: His Conquests, His Empire, His Legacy



Synopsis

Mongol leader Genghis Khan was by far the greatest conqueror the world has ever known. His empire stretched from the Pacific Ocean to Central Europe, including all of China, the Middle East, and Russia. So how did an illiterate nomad rise to such colossal power and subdue most of the known world, eclipsing Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, and Napoleon? Credited by some with paving the way for the Renaissance, condemned by others for being the most heinous murderer in history, who was Genghis Khan? His actual name was Temujin, and the story of his success is that of the Mongol people: a loose collection of fractious tribes who tended livestock, considered bathing taboo, and possessed an unparalleled genius for horseback warfare. United under Genghis, a strategist of astonishing cunning and versatility, they could dominate any sedentary society they chose. Combining fast-paced accounts of battles with rich cultural background and the latest scholarship, Frank McLynn brings vividly to life the strange world of the Mongols, describes Temujin's rise from boyhood outcast to becoming Genghis Khan, and provides the most accurate and absorbing account yet of one of the most powerful men ever to have lived.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a lover of history, I want to go on record and say that this is my favorite book to date on Genghis Khan (or Mongols in general). I don't think it deserves 5 stars, but because of the rating system this is the closest I can come to how I truly feel about the book. If I was being honest, I would say it deserves between 4.5 and 5 stars. That being said, I would like to provide some likes and dislikes of the book so that others can decide whether or not they would like to also read it. Although I fully

understand that a lot of people won't agree with me on some (or all) of the things I have to say, I truly hope it helps someone in their decision of a possible future purchase. I believe Frank McLynn's book does the following things well: 1. He writes the book in a way that isn't too academic. It is an academic book (and has over 100 pages of notes and bibliography that he drew his information from), but it didn't read like one. Once I started the book it was very hard to put down. 2. He provides a very detailed (and in my opinion needed) couple of chapters on the geography of central Asia and what the "Mongols" were like before being united by Genghis Khan. The geography part is a little long-winded, but the history behind what was there prior to Temujin and the dynamic between the different nomadic tribes is truly essential to a full understanding of (or appreciation of) what Genghis Khan accomplished in a relatively short period of time. 3. He breaks the book down into logical parts instead of just trying to run through everything with a straight chronology.

Initially, the length of the e-book of 757 pages was very daunting to me. However, my curiosity of the life and legacy of Genghis Khan urged me to read this book. To begin with, the author did a wonderful thing by placing the reader squarely on the Mongolian steppes. This was helpful to me in order to visualize and orient myself to the setting of where Genghis lived. The author goes further by describing the climate, flora, fauna, and livestock. By accounting the nomadic pastoralist's way of life, the reader can better understand the Mongol culture and how it affected future military strategy. Their diet that included koumiss (and later more potent alcohol), attire, and religion were also thoroughly discussed. Nearly 200 pages were devoted exclusively to Temujin's (future Genghis) childhood, his military prowess, and eventual title of Genghis Khan. The military battles were described with great details as are the brutal aftermath of victories. The author's description of battle attire and combat weapons were essential in helping me picture military clashes in my brain. What was most astounding to me about Genghis, among other things, was that he was also an administration genius. His military organization of the decimal system and formation of the Great Yasa (Mongol code of conduct) was fascinating. My favorite chapters would have to be the conquest of the Khwarezmian Empire and the Eastern Europe. The events were done chronologically with few diversions. One interesting unexpected positive aspect of this book was that the reader will not only learn about the Mongol Empire but also the histories of the other empires.

Genghis Khan was the greatest conqueror the world has ever known. He consolidated the disparate clans and tribes of Mongolia. He conquered the Jin (northern China) and Khwarezmian (Persia) empires. "The Mongol empire covered twelve million contiguous square miles" an area as large

as Africa and bigger than North America; by contrast the extent of the Roman empire was about half that of the continental U.S.A. . . . The modern population of the countries ruled by the empire at its greatest extent [today] contain three billion of the world's seven billion population. • He also totally ravaged Oshman's Sporting Goods. MyLynn seeks to provide a synthesis of all the scholarship done in the major European languages in the past forty years relating to Genghis and his sons. • (McLynn covers not only Genghis but the three great khans between Genghis and the break-up of the empire—Ogodei, Guyuk, and Mongke—with Ogodei being the most substantial, taking up multiple chapters.) And indeed one of McLynn's strengths is discussing the varying scholarly views. His other strength is providing social history. He stumbles when forced to relay events and battles, and it can sometimes seem no more than an endless recital of massacres with pyramids of skulls. • The other weakness is his writing, which is heavy on 4 words in 2 sentences and tortured metaphors and figures of speech.

FROM SEA TO SHINING
SEAMcLynn's book covers much more than you might expect from an ostensible biography of Genghis Khan. He attempts to give a history of the Mongols and the steppe to Genghis. In addition to Genghis's exploits, McLynn frequently provides contextual information, not only about the later Mongol empire(s) but also about other societies (notably the birth of the Jin Empire).

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