Week 8: Chapter 14: Part 1: Terms

Example Answer

**Mongols/Mongol Empire** - A nomadic culture that depended on the well-being of their herds of goats and sheep.

**Chinggis Khan (Temujin)** – Under him the Mongols and many neighbors were formed into a mighty war machine. He was born in the 1170s by the name of Temujin.

**kuriltai** - A meeting of all of the Mongol chieftains. He was elected to be the khagan of the Mongol tribes.

**khagan** - Supreme ruler of the Mongol tribes

**tumens** - The mongolian forces were divided into armies made up of fighting units called tumens, each consisting of 10,000 warriors.

**Tangut** - Khan’s first campaigns humbled the Tangut of Xia-Xia in northwest China.

**Muhammad Shah II** - He was a Turkic ruler of the Khwarazm ruler to the west. Khan demanded that he submit to Khan, but he was outraged and killed his envoys and sent their shaved heads back to Khan. Khan overwhelmed the empire.

**Karakorum** - Khan established this as a capital on the steppes and had the wise and the clever come to live in lavish tents which made up a palace.

**shamanistic religion/beliefs** - Khan’s belief system. They were focused on nature spirits.

**Batu** – He was the son of Jochi and the grandson of Khan. Jochi died before Khan did, and Khan honored Batu with a share of the kingdom.

**Ogadei** - Chosen by Khan to be his successor. He directed Mongolian energies into campaigns and conquests.

**Alexander Nevskii** - He spared his city, Novgorod, from Mongolian invasion because he was willing to give in to their demands, instead of resisting.

**Moscow** - It was badly damaged but it was gradually rebuilt because of the Golden Horde. It also became the tribute collector and annexed towns as punishment for falling behind on payments. It became the center of Russian political power.

**Golden Horde** – Russian princes were forced to submit as vassals to them and pay tribute.

**Metropolitan** - Head of the Orthodox Church. He was made representative of all of the clergy in Russia, and this enhanced the church’s standing.
**Prester John** - The Europeans believed that the Mongols were Prester John, a mythical rich and powerful Christian monarch whose kingdom had been cut off from Europe by Muslim conquests.

**King Bela (Hungary)** - One of the Christian kings who did not realize that the Mongols were strong enough to conquer them. He insulted the envoys, and consequently he was beaten in 1240.

**Hulegu** - He was another grandson of Chinggis Khan. He worked on conquering the Muslim empires of Mesopotamia and North Africa.

**Nestorians** – Christians who lived in the Middle East.

**Mamluks** - They defeated the Mongols at Ain Jalut. They were slave armies.

**Baibars** - The commander of the Egyptian force, he had been enslaved by the Mongols and sold to the Egyptians. **Berke** - He was the new Khan of the Golden Horde and had converted to Islam. He challenged his cousin Hulegu and caused Hulega not to conquer the Muslim world.

**Kublai Khan** - Another grandson of Chinggis Khan. He became the great Khan in 1260.

**Yuan** - In 1271, he was recommended by his Chinese advisors to change his name to this Chinese-language dynastic title.

**Tatu** - Kublai Khan’s capital in the north of China.

**Chabi** - Kublai Khan’s wife. She exemplified the free-thinking spirit of the Mongol women. She helped Kublai Khan in political matters

**Marco Polo** - Traveled through the Mongol Empire and served as an administrator for 17 years. His account is the most famous travel account written by a European.

**Romance of the West Chamber** - written during the Yuan period, it is possibly the most famous dramatic work.

**White Lotus Society** - One of the secret religious sects that tried to overthrow the dynasty.

**Ju Yuanzhang** - Rose to power, even though he was only a poor man from a peasant family.

**Ming Dynasty** - Ruled china for most of the next 3 centuries.

**Week 8: Chapter 14: Part 2: Questions**

1. Describe the Mongol society/culture and the rise of Chinggis Khan. How does his early career reflect the values of the Mongol culture?
Mongols were nomads. They moved from pasture to pasture following the change in the seasons so that their herds of sheep and goats (upon whom the depended for meat and milk) had an adequate food supply year-round. They often traded with the farmers they encountered in their travels. Horseback riding was essential to rounding up the herds as well as in war, which is why Mongol children learned to ride as they learned to walk. The basic social unit was the tribe, which was subdivided into family clans. Leaders were elected, and women exercised influence within the family.

Chinggis Khan’s great grandfather had won glory in defeating an invading army, yet his successors were weak and cast aside. Chinggis’ father was poisoned by rivals and as a teenager, Chinggis was expected to take on a leadership role. Many refused to follow the teenager and he was later captured and led away in a locked collar. He escaped from the enemy camp and with his dwindling band of followers joined a rival Mongol’s clan. With support, he then grew strong enough to exact revenge and demonstrate his prowess as a military leader. Soon others offered to ally with him and within 10 years he became the supreme ruler of the Mongol tribes.

2. Why did the Mongols adopt a strategy of “terror”?

The Mongols held little regard for those who lived in fortified cities, considering them to be “soft,” not hardened by war as the Mongols were. Having neither the taste for war nor the ability to fully pursue it, the townspeople often found themselves severely punished for this stance – many slaughtered or sold into slavery.

3. How were the Mongols able to conquer northern China under Chinggis Khan?

Using the expertise of captured Chinese artisans and military commanders, the Mongol developed weapons that would be effective in conquering Chinese cities. Battering rams, catapults and bamboo rockets proved especially effective.

4. Describe the division of the Mongol empire after the death of Chinggis Khan.

The pasturelands were divided between the 3 sons and a grandson (heir of Khan’s recently deceased son.) Conquests in China and Persia were seen as common property of the ruling family and a successor was selected to rule (Ogedei, Chinggis’ 3rd son and preferred heir.)

5. Describe the Mongol attack on Europe. Why did it eventually fail?

The Mongols moved west and effectively carried out the only successful winter invasion sin Russian history. With crushing victories in had, the Mongols were able to dominate Russia for 2 and a half centuries. As they moved west, they were summarily dismissed which resulted in large-scale invasions (such as in Hungary.) Just as they were on the verge of taking what they pleased of Western Europe, they began to retreat, called back in order to settle the line of succession as Ogedei had died. The Mongols did not return, satisfied to plunder in the east instead.
6. How did the Mongols govern their empire and peoples? Give specific examples.

Religious tolerance for all, trade routes secured, allowed for conquered people to retain their own laws distinct from Mongolian ones (the 2 did not mix), Mongols were subject to the Yassa (code of laws devised by Chinggis Khan), military run as a meritocracy, thievery strictly prohibited.


Europe: sacking of Moscow allowed for it to be rebuilt in splendor, peasant seeking protection turned to serfdom giving more power to the landed nobility, keeping the Orthodox church in tact allowed it to center itself in Moscow bolstering claims for it to be Russia’s leading city, military styles in Europe – Russia in particular – were heavily influenced

Muslim World: ended the Abbasid dynasty, destroyed the city of Baghdad ending the pretense that it was still the center of the Muslim world, attacks demonstrated cities vulnerabilities and encouraged the development of war technology,

China: Mongols remained isolated from Chinese, advice from Chinese scholars was encouraged, refused to reinstate civil service, became patrons of the arts & scholars, Muslims were included in the social hierarchy – just below the Mongols, Persian astronomers brought ideas to China - correcting the Chinese calendar, Leaders of all religions were welcomed at court, Marco Polo is believed to have visited – writing down all he saw and composing one of the most famous travel accounts written by a European, cities flourished as the Mongols supported artisans, merchants prospered with improved transportation and the expansion of paper money, written arts – such as poetry faltered, but dramatic arts flourished

8. Why did nomads cease to be a threat to the various Eurasian civilizations after the Mongols?

While their tactics were at one time unique, prolonged exposure allowed those living sedentary lifestyles to develop ways to resist and eventually dominate the nomadic people. The spread of the Black Death helped thin out an already dwindling nomadic population. Those in China, the Islamic World and Europe, found ways to solidify and expand their power while also developing greater military technology The advent of lighter armor made the cavalry advantage the nomads once had almost obsolete. Growing peasant populations also began to encroach on nomadic pasturelands, severely limiting options.