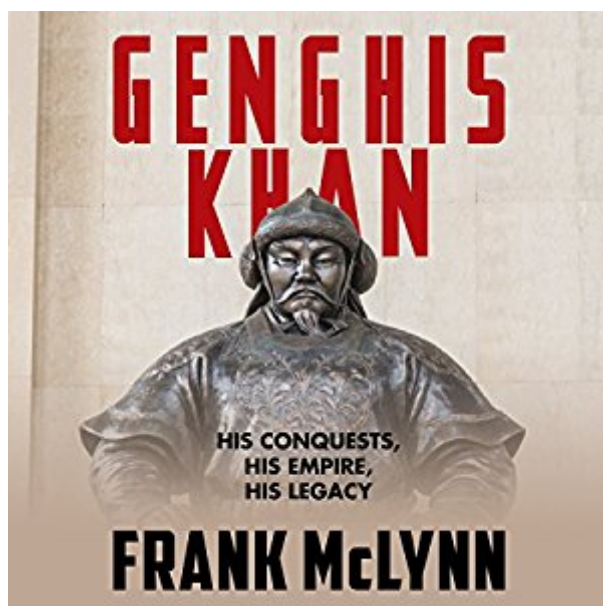


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Genghis Khan: His Conquests, His Empire, His Legacy



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. He begins with the uniting of the different Mongol tribes and then breaks down the conquests into the Jin (northern China), the Khwarezmian Empire (one of my favorite parts of the book), and Eastern Europe (including Russia). I also appreciate the fact that the book doesn't end with the death of Genghis Khan. It goes on to concentrate on his son Ogoidei's role as Great Khan and then glosses over Guyuk and Mongke. It all seems to make more sense (to me) with the way that he put it together.
4. He doesn't go crazy over trying to be a military expert and describe each conquest (battle) with overly small details. I realize this might be a negative to some, but for me, it made the book much more enjoyable.
5. Finally (I'm sure I could find more positives, but I am just including these) McLynn uses the conclusion to do some interesting things like speculate about why the Mongols didn't (or couldn't) take over Western Europe. It included some odd ideas, but it was interesting none the less.

The following is the hopefully small downside to McLynn's book:

1. He adds a lot of cliched type of language throughout the entire book. I would include a specific, but really all you need to do is open the book up and read a page or two and you will find a perfect example. I am not sure if he thinks he is being clever or if he believes this is helpful, but it became a bit of a distraction after a while.
2. He kept emphasizing the result of not surrendering to the Mongols after every single battle. They would kill everyone (brutally), rape (brutally), take artisans captive to be put to use later on, and use any other captives as fodder for future battles (sieges). I liked them including the brutality of the Mongol conquests and why they did what they did, but I found myself reading the same post-battle details over and over (and over). This may seem picky, but it was a negative for me.
3. This next one is something that I picked up on because of my interest in Russian history. McLynn seemed condescending to Russia and their history. One example is the "attack" on Alexander Nevsky and how his accomplishments are over-rated and relatively insignificant compared to other events in

history. You may not view this in the same way, but I thought I would include it anyway.⁴ Finally, McLynn made (in his conclusion) a couple of very odd comparisons between Genghis Khan and Jesus and Genghis Khan and Francis of Assisi. I didn't see the significance of including this in the book. Overall, if you are interested in Genghis Khan and the Mongols this book is a keeper. Feel free to rip it apart if you like. It seems like that is what people do nowadays with reviews online.

This is an excellent bio of Genghis Khan. It has new info that I had not read before. Genghis is one of my favorite people to read about. The conquest of NW China is covered in more detail than I've read before. This is a plus. Usually most bios of Genghis give an overview on this and then move to his conquests in the west. The info on the Mongol early conquests in the muslim occupied lands is somewhat different than other authors. Looks a little pc to me. The Mongol conquests in Eastern Europe is covered, of course, but is after the death of Genghis. I recommend this new bio on Genghis as a book for everyone's library.

I enjoyed this historical account of Genghis Khan and his seemingly ever-expanding empire. It was chock full of well researched anecdotes and theories as to the successes and (few) failures of Genghis Khan, and some of his successors. The only thing I didn't like was the various forays the author took into climate and geography, which was a little dry at times. However, it did add some good context.

I essentially agree with David Preslicka's review of this book so I feel no need to make the same points again. Following my listening to Dan Carlin's excellent podcast series called "Wrath of the Khans", I searched for a book on the subject and found this one. It was the perfect compliment, because like Carlin, Frank McLynn doesn't claim that the Mongol rampage across Eurasia brought great benefits to humanity as do many other historians. The mass murder committed by the Mongols in countless cities is put into the balance and the scale is heavy on the side of nihilistic destruction over civilizing benefits. The Mongols were military geniuses in all senses of this term and were able to rampage from Korea to Hungary and Ghengis along with his generals were genius personified. The organization of Mongol society, discipline, skills with weapons, tactics, brilliant intelligence operations, and mastery of a battlefield were all combined to be able to defeat the armies of all contemporary medieval societies they attacked. All these aspects of the Mongols were their accomplishments and this book emphasizes this point. Human civilization would have done fine without Genghis Khan and the Mongol rampage, just ask the millions of city dwellers who died

horribly at their hands. Without the Mongols, they would have kept living and producing human civilization. This is a great book.

Easily the best book on the subject. I think I have about 20 other books on Genghiz Khan/Mongols. This is the most detailed and accurate of them all. What I like about it even more is that it is written in a way so that it makes the story immediate or come to life. The maps put the place and the action in perspective.

This book has helped me a lot while writing a final year essay. Genghis Khan's early life was detailed- that's one thing that I find lacking in many different biographies. The chapters were well organized and went chronologically and it often felt like reading a roman. Thanks to this book I managed to finish my work on time because I never had trouble staying focused while reading. I would definitely recommend to anyone new to history of Mongol empire since the author describes every little detail well in this book

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