

Mongol expansion

The Mongol Empire began as small tribes of nomadic animal herders on the vast grasslands of northern Asia. Around 1206, a number of these tribal groups united to form a great army that began to invade and conquer neighbouring lands.

Even though the Mongol Empire only lasted for about 150 years, it became one of the largest and most powerful empires the world has ever known. Although they were feared as violent and merciless warriors, the Mongols also made many positive contributions. They allowed religious freedom across their empire and introduced many inspired policies and laws. They were also responsible for establishing vital trading routes between the East and West.



chapter 14

Source 1 These ruins in the Gobi Desert in Mongolia are all that remains of the great city of Karakorum, once capital of the Mongol Empire.

14A

How was Mongol society organised?

- 1 Traditional Mongols were nomadic animal herders. How might this have influenced their lifestyles?
- 2 How and why might traditional Mongol customs have changed after all Mongol tribes united to become part of the powerful Mongol Empire?

14B

Why did the Mongols expand their territory?

- 1 Genghis Khan, the first great leader of the Mongol Empire, conquered much of eastern Europe. What characteristics do you think he might have had as a man and as a leader? How might these characteristics have helped him achieve the power and success that he did?

14C

What were the consequences of Mongol expansion?

- 1 Whenever the Mongols conquered a new territory, they introduced immediate changes to ensure that the defeated enemy would become part their empire. What do you think these changes might have included?

14.1 Mongol expansion: a timeline

An artist's impression of the Mongol army invading Poland at the Battle of Legnica, 1241



1241 Mongol forces invade Poland (Battle of Legnica) and Hungary (Battle of Mohi); in the same year, the Great Khan Ogodei dies

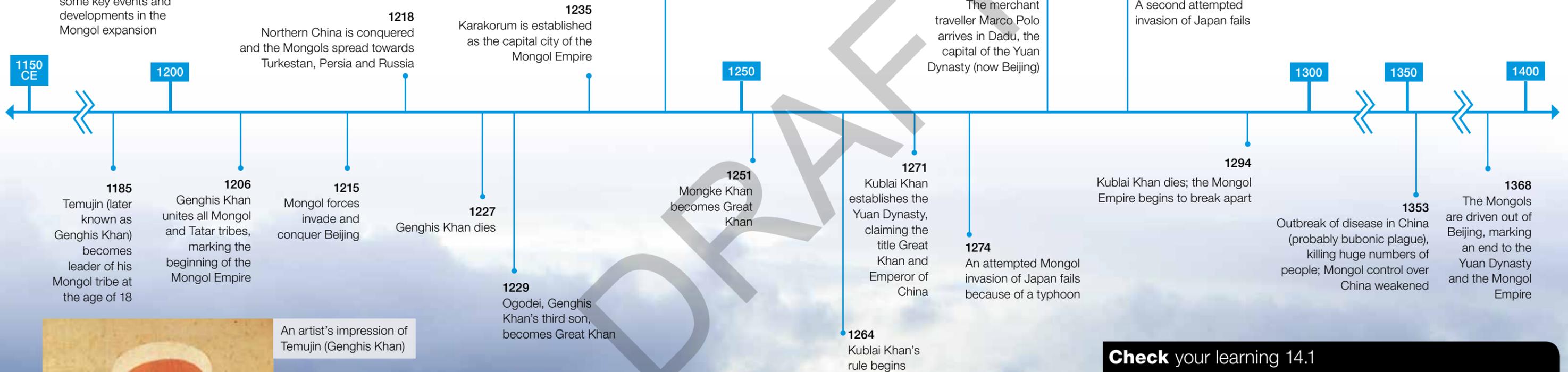


An artist's impression of Marco Polo at the court of Kublai Khan



Japanese illustration showing samurai defending Japan against Mongolian invaders

Source 1 A timeline of some key events and developments in the Mongol expansion



An artist's impression of Temujin (Genghis Khan)

Check your learning 14.1

Remember and understand

- 1 In what year did Temujin become leader of his tribe?
- 2 In what year did the Mongols conquer Beijing?

Apply and analyse

- 3 Use the timeline to calculate how many years there were between Kublai Khan's election as Great Khan and his death.

Evaluate and create

- 4 Conduct some Internet research to find out the dates of some other significant Mongol invasions and conquests of European countries. Add these events to a simple timeline in your notebook.

14.2 Traditional Mongol culture and society

The Mongol Empire had humble beginnings on the vast grasslands and plains of northern Asia. These grasslands are part of a region known today as the Eurasian Steppe. The steppe is known for its severe climate and extreme temperatures. In the spring there is plenty of food for horses and sheep, but spring on the steppe is short. In summer, the sun beats down and temperatures can reach 40° Celsius, turning the grass to straw; in winter, the ground is covered with a thick blanket of snow and raging winds sweep across the plains pushing temperatures as low as -40° Celsius. Short, hot summers and long, cold winters made life hard for the Mongols and had a major influence on the way in which their society evolved and was organised.

Source 1 A re-enactment of a 13th-century Mongol army expedition on part of the Eurasian Steppe

The nomadic way of life

Because of the harsh environment in which they lived, the Mongols were **nomads**. They lived in tribal groups that would camp and move around together according to the weather and available resources. Each tribe was led by a chief. The tribe was divided into **clans** along family lines and each clan had its own leader. The **clans** lived as independent groups but would occasionally join together for security in the case of outside threats.

The Mongols were an adaptable and versatile people who moved from one location to another across a wide region, taking their homes and families with them. They moved in response to the seasons, taking their animals (such as sheep and horses) to the plains to graze in the summer months, and then into the valleys to take shelter during the bitter winter months. They tamed and rode the wild horses native to the region, hunted wild game, and traded with more settled societies in the south for foods and materials they could not source themselves (such as grain, and metals for their weapons).

Shelter and transportation

The Mongols lived in large, portable, circular tents called **yurts** (see Source 3). Yurts consisted of a circular wooden frame covered in felt made from sheep's wool. The felt coverings were often colourfully decorated. Yurts were designed so that they could be easily transported and reassembled – an important feature for nomads. Inside each yurt, carpets covered the floor. A hole (which could be covered over in bad weather) was left at the top to let smoke escape from the fires used for cooking and heating (see Source 4).

The animals they kept provided for most of the Mongols' needs. Horses were used for transport and enabled the Mongols to hunt. Female horses also provided milk. This was the Mongols' main source of nutrition, from which they also made yoghurt and cheese. Sheep provided skin and wool for clothing; bones for arrowheads; wool to make felt for yurts; meat, milk and cheese; as well as dung to burn for cooking and heating. Less important, but still

Source 3 Yurts on the Mongolian steppe



MONGOL HOMELANDS



Source 2

Source: Oxford University Press

essential to life and trade on the steppe, were camels and oxen. These were transport animals used to pull carts full of goods as the Mongols travelled across the vast areas of the steppe.

Food

The traditional Mongol diet consisted of ‘white’ and ‘brown’ foods – essentially, dairy products and meat products. Cheeses and yoghurts, usually made from sheep’s milk, were an important staple in Mongol diets during summer months, when meat was seldom eaten. In the winter, however, meats were the main staple food. Sheep from their herds, as well as some wild game animals, such as birds and rabbits, provided the bulk of the Mongols’ meat intake.

Horses provided milk for a fermented (and mildly alcoholic) drink called *kumis*. This drink was produced by churning the milk inside a bag made of animal skin. The churning process involved moving the bag regularly. This could be accomplished by hanging the bag on the saddle of a horse or near the entrance of the yurt so every person who entered would churn the mixture as they passed through.



Source 4 The interior of a modern-day Mongolian yurt

Clothing

Everyday clothing for both men and women were long robes called *deels*. For most herders, these were long woollen coats, buttoned on the side and belted around the middle. Wealthy members of Mongol society might have colourful *deels* made of brocade (a very delicate and decorative woven fabric) or silk. Men wore trousers under their *deels*, and women wore either trousers or skirts. Both men and women wore leather boots.

Source 5 A *deel* worn by a Mongolian herder

Religion

The ancient religious beliefs and practices of the Mongols were based on a system known as shamanism (see Source 6). This tradition involved interaction between the spirit world and a shaman – a holy person with special powers to communicate with and interpret the spirits. Spirits did not only include ‘human’ entities, such as ancestors, but the natural world of animals and the environment. The shaman’s role was to speak with the spirits on behalf of people, bless the herds and young children, and predict the future.

Shamans, who could be male or female, also provided medical care. Because of their knowledge of the natural world, they were able to create medicines from local plants. That practical knowledge, combined with their spiritual gifts, gave shamans an important role and a certain amount of power in Mongol society.

The Mongol people were not limited in their spiritual beliefs to shamanism. They were also willing to embrace other religious teachings and traditions they encountered as their empire expanded. Some adopted Islam from Persia, others adopted Buddhism from Tibet. Some of the Mongol tribes even followed an early form of Christianity called Nestorianism.



Source 6 A northern Mongolian shaman enters into a trance to communicate with ancestral spirits and seek their advice

Check your learning 14.2

Remember and understand

- 1 What word is used to describe people who travel from place to place according to the season?
- 2 In your own words, explain the tradition of shamanism.

Apply and analyse

- 3 Write a paragraph describing the climate of the Eurasian Steppe and how this influenced the Mongol way of life.
- 4 Create a diagram to demonstrate the different uses of animals in traditional Mongol society.

Evaluate and create

- 5 Make a model of a yurt. If necessary, consult Internet sites to find out more about the detail of a yurt’s construction.

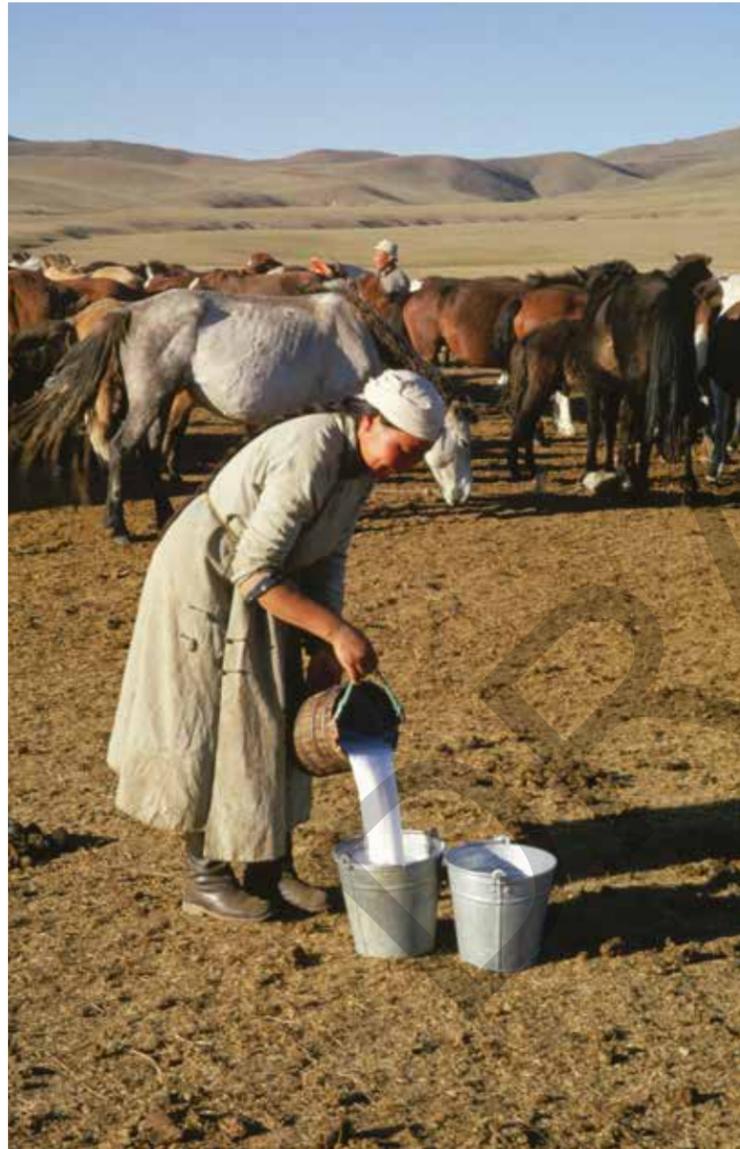
14.3 Social roles in Mongol society

Early Mongol society, like many tribal nomadic societies, was clan based. A clan is a group of people who are blood relations, each sharing a common ancestor. Within each clan, there was a head man who led the group and was responsible for it. Before the unification of the Mongols under Genghis Khan, there was no single great leader. As a result, wars between clans were common. Tribal warfare was therefore a part of life for Mongol men. They were skilled horsemen and fighters – skills that would help the Mongols to become a great power in their time. As the Mongol Empire grew and unified, senior leadership in the form of **khans** (leaders) emerged.

Each Mongol man was the head of his own family, which could consist of several wives and many children. Because men spent a great deal of their time fighting wars between the clans, women were responsible for day-to-day outdoor work. This included the management of livestock, milking the animals, the making of felt for yurts, and breaking down and rebuilding the yurts whenever a move to a new territory was necessary. They were also responsible for household chores, such as cooking and sewing.

Although men were regarded as the natural leaders in Mongol society, Mongol women held a strong social position as well. Women were seen to possess wisdom, so it was common for men to have older wives to advise and guide them. It was considered unmanly if a husband did not listen to his wife. Also, it was not unknown for women to receive military training, and at times fight beside the men in battle. Mongol women could also be shamans. This meant that they too could have great influence in their clans.

Genghis Khan (also known as Temujin), the first great Mongol leader and founder of the Mongol Empire, is said to have listened carefully to his wife, Yesui. When she advised him to choose a successor in case he was injured or killed in battle, he is reported to have said, 'Even though she is only a woman, what Yesui says is quite right.' Temujin's mother also had a great influence over him. His career and leadership were inspired by her.



Source 1 A Mongolian woman pouring horse's milk into buckets for fermenting

keyconcept: Evidence

Abilities and strengths of Mongol women

At times, women in the Mongol Empire exercised great political power and strength. Evidence shows that they not only took part in hunting and heavy labour, they also assumed leadership roles, usually because a male leader was absent or unavailable.

From 1227 until 1260, when Ogodei was Great Khan, his wife Toregene gradually assumed power. This was necessary because Ogodei is rumoured to have spent much of his time drunk. On Ogodei's death, Toregene became regent (a temporary ruler) because their son Guyuk was too young to assume power. She appointed her own ministers, including a woman called Fatima who was her close confidante.

Other powerful women who ruled Mongolia included Sorghaghtani, the widow of Genghis Khan's son Tolui, who ruled northern China and eastern Mongolia; and Ebuskun, the widow of Genghis Khan's son Chaghatai, who ruled Turkestan. Both these women were Mongol only by marriage.

Source 2

[Genghis Khan] ordered women accompanying the troops to do the work and perform the duties of the men, while the latter were absent fighting.

An extract from *The Mongols and Russia*, by Russian historian George Vernadsky, 1953

Source 3

Girls and women ride and gallop as skilfully as men. We even saw them carrying quivers and bows, and the women can ride horses for as long as the men; they have shorter stirrups, handle horses very well, and mind all the property. The [Mongol] women make everything: skin clothes, shoes, leggings, and everything made of leather. They drive carts and repair them, they load camels, and are quick and vigorous in all their tasks. They all wear trousers, and some of them shoot just like men.

A description of Mongol women's skills by Giovanni di Plano Carpini (1182–1252), a European who lived for a time at the court of the Great Khan Ogodei, in *The Story of the Mongols Whom We Call the Tartars*, 1245

For more information on the key concept of evidence, refer to page XX in 'The history toolkit'.



Source 4 Female archers from Mongolia taking part in a *Naadam* – a traditional games festival involving wrestling, horse racing and archery. Mongolian women participate in all contests except for wrestling. These young women carry on the traditions and skills of their female ancestors.

Check your learning 14.3

Remember and understand

- 1 What were the main roles of men in Mongol society?
- 2 Study Sources 1 and 4 carefully. List the evidence these sources provide about Mongol women.

Apply and analyse

- 3 Even though men were seen as natural leaders in Mongol society, women held strong social roles.
 - a What roles did women adopt that helped to strengthen their influence in Mongol society?
 - b Why were women often responsible for the day-to-day outdoor work?
 - c Why do you think it was considered unmanly for Mongol men to ignore the advice of their wives?
 - d List three adjectives that you think best capture your impression of Mongol women. Give reasons for your choices.

14.4 Significant individual: Temujin (Genghis Khan)

Genghis Khan is regarded as the first great leader of the Mongol Empire. Given the name Temujin at the time of his birth around 1162, he was the eldest of five sons. Temujin's father, Yesugei, was a minor Mongol clan leader who was poisoned by a neighbouring Tatar tribe when he was only nine years old. The **Tartars** were a rival ethnic group who also lived on the steppe. Despite his age, Temujin took up his father's position as clan leader because he was the eldest son. The other members of the clan did not want such a young leader so they deserted Temujin, leaving him alone with his mother, Ho'elun, and younger siblings. For protection, the family was forced to move to the upper reaches of a river between the plain and the steppe, where they survived on berries and roots, as well as small wild animals.

As Temujin grew to become a teenager, other Mongol clans feared his potential. One Mongol clan decided to capture him. He was placed in a cage with a large wooden collar around his neck. He was unable to feed himself as his hands were tied. One of the clan members took pity on him, and eventually helped Temujin to escape. The man removed the wooden collar and gave him a horse so that he could return to his family.

Temujin becomes the khan

Temujin believed that he had survived his misfortunes because he was destined for greatness. Influential shamans supported him. A shaman named Kokuchu, the son of Yesugei's old servant, claimed that he had ascended into heaven in a trance and had been given the message that Temujin and his sons would one day rule the whole world.

In 1185, when Temujin was about 18, he was chosen as the khan of his tribe. He immediately began to organise and train an army, making them into a strong fighting force.



Source 1 A Western artist's impression of Genghis Khan

He also created alliances with other clans and tribal groups to increase his power. One such group was known as the Kerait. Their khan, Toghrol, had been a blood brother of Temujin's father, Yesugei, and was happy to support Temujin. Together, they launched attacks on groups of Tartars. Temujin's attacks on the Tartars were also helped by a change in attitude by the Jin Dynasty. The Jin Dynasty were a powerful Manchurian tribe that had conquered northern China a century before. The Jin had been allies with the Tartars in the past but now feared their growing strength. As a result, the Jin formed an alliance with Temujin and Toghrol to defeat the Tartars.

Defeat of the Tartars

In 1202, Temujin's well-trained and disciplined army defeated the **Tatars**, even though his forces were outnumbered. They killed and captured thousands. The days that followed were bloody and brutal. Tatar women and young boys were taken into slavery, and any Tatar boy who stood taller than a wagon axle was put to death.



Source 2 A scene from the 2007 film *Mongol: The rise of Genghis Khan* showing the Mongol cavalry

The rise of Genghis Khan

In the summer of 1204, Temujin entered into a battle with the Naiman tribe (one of 13 tribes still hostile to his alliance). At the battle of Chakirma'ut, Temujin was heavily outnumbered, but again the superior organisation of his army brought him success. A childhood friend and blood brother of Temujin, called Jamuka, fought against him at the battle. Jamuka escaped from the battlefield with a few followers and hid in the mountains. A year later he was betrayed by a supporter and executed by Temujin.

Temujin also fell out with Toghrol, his father's old blood brother. Toghrol felt threatened by Temujin's rise. When Temujin attacked his camp, the older man fled. The way now lay open for Temujin to assume control of all the Mongol tribes.

When he was about 40 years old, Temujin became the undisputed leader of Central Asia. In 1206, a Great Council (known as a *kuriltai*) was summoned. Tens of thousands of Mongols attended. They selected Temujin as their khan. As part of this ceremony, the Mongols gave Temujin a new title – Genghis Khan, meaning 'ruler of the world'.

Genghis was now the ruler of about one million people living in an area roughly the size of western Europe. With this, the Mongol Empire was born. Not content with this, however, he soon began the real expansion of his empire.

Check your learning 14.4

Remember and understand

- 1 Who was Temujin? By what name is he more commonly known today?
- 2 When was Temujin born?
- 3 Why did the Jin Dynasty stop supporting the Tartars and begin to support Temujin instead?

Apply and analyse

- 4 Using the life of Genghis Khan as a model, discuss the following questions in small groups. Record your ideas and report back to the class at the end of your discussion.
 - a What qualities does a person need to become a powerful leader in a society?
 - b What conditions within a society allow one person to become powerful enough to take control of it?

Evaluate and create

- 5 On a scale from 1 (very weak) to 5 (very strong), rate Genghis Khan as a leader. In a paragraph, explain your rating.

14.5 The Mongol army

Under Genghis Khan's leadership, the Mongol Empire expanded rapidly, eventually growing to cover an area larger than the Roman Empire had centuries earlier. To survive and thrive, the empire needed organisation and stability – in other words, the traditional nomadic lifestyle of the Mongols would need to change. To achieve this, Genghis Khan immediately introduced a series of new measures, many of which centred on the organisation of the Mongol army.

Organising the Mongol army

Because the Mongols had traditionally always been warriors, Genghis Khan chose to use this to his advantage. He was determined to break the old tribal loyalties. He did this by emphasising each soldier's loyalty to his military unit. Beyond that, loyalty was to the house of the khan himself. To enforce this, he set about organising Mongol warriors from all different tribes into one unified fighting group based on the decimal system.



Source 1 A re-enactment of a Mongol army battle

The decimal system meant that all Mongol warriors were organised into groups by multiples of 10:

- The whole army was made up of large fighting units known as *tumen* (which had 10 000 members).
- Each *tumen* was then broken into *minghan* (which each had 1000 members).
- Each *minghan* was then broken into *zuut* (which each had 100 members).
- Finally, each *zuut* was broken into *arav* (which each had 10 members).

In addition to organising the army in this way, Genghis Khan created an imperial guard known as the *keshig*. At first, this was made up of his original and most faithful supporters. By 1206, however, the imperial guard was 10 000 strong. Recruits came from all tribes, and membership was regarded as a supreme honour. The imperial guard also provided Genghis Khan with people he could trust to organise and administer his empire. Later, members of the *keshig* became the basis of the Mongol Empire's ruling class.

Mongol weapons and fighting tactics

Each group within the Mongol army had specific tasks and functions that they were responsible for in battle, such as carrying messages or scouting enemy movements. Regardless of which group they belonged to, all Mongol warriors were trained to ride and fight on horseback. Genghis Khan divided these horsemen into light and heavy cavalry.

The light cavalry consisted mainly of archers. Each archer carried two bows and two quivers (containers) of arrows. Mongol archers could string and fire their arrows while riding at full gallop, timing their release so precisely that the jolt of galloping hooves did not affect their aim. Each man in the light cavalry also carried two or three javelins.

The heavy cavalry consisted of soldiers carrying battle axes or hooked lances (poles). Many members

of the heavy cavalry also carried a sword and wooden shield covered in leather. Some also carried lassos.

In battle, the light cavalry galloped back and forth in front of the enemy, showering them with arrows. After this, the light cavalry withdrew, leaving the heavy cavalry to charge. A favourite tactic of the Mongol army was to attack, then pretend to retreat. This would draw the enemy forward into a line of waiting archers. As well as cavalrymen, the Mongol army also had soldiers that would fight on foot. Often, these soldiers were recruited from societies the Mongols conquered, like China. They were assigned to a Mongol soldier on horseback and would move across the battlefield ensuring any wounded enemy soldiers were killed. Even in victory, the Mongol army often slaughtered entire cities full of civilians and enemy troops. During the rule of the Mongol Empire, it is estimated that between 80 and 150 million people were killed in wars.

Horsemanship and horses

Mongol horsemen were renowned for their riding skills. So central to their lives was horse-riding that children began riding at three or four years of age (and still do so today).

Mongol horsemen wore baggy trousers, long coats (fur-lined in winter), high leather boots and caps with thick fur brims. Every horseman carried a large waterproof saddlebag, which could be inflated and used as a flotation device for crossing rivers (similar to a modern-day life jacket).

Mongol horsemen used much shorter stirrups than European horsemen at the time (a bit like those used by professional jockeys today). This helped them to balance better on a galloping horse, and to stand in the saddle to shoot their arrows.

The breed of horses used by the Mongols are known as *takhi*. Over centuries, *takhi* horses were bred to be tough enough to withstand the harsh environmental conditions of Central Asia with its long, cold winters and short, hot summers. The lives of these horses were made much more difficult by the Mongols – they were a vital part of battles and were often pushed to their limits, being ridden huge distances each day. A rider and his horse could cover about 130 kilometres per day.

Horses also played an important role in the diet of the Mongols. Milk from female horses, often mixed with some of the horses' blood, was an important food. When riding long distances without food, Mongol warriors sometimes also slit a vein in the neck of their horses and drank the vitamin-rich blood. Despite this, horses were never killed for their meat. Those that outlived their usefulness were often put out to pasture to spend the rest of their days grazing.



Source 2 An artist's impression of a member of the light cavalry in the Mongol army

Check your learning 14.5

Remember and understand

- 1 What is meant by the term cavalry?
- 2 How did Genghis Khan go about breaking down the old tribal loyalties in his new empire?
- 3 How many soldiers were in the Mongol imperial guard by 1206?

Apply and analyse

- 4 Write a paragraph outlining the significance of horses in Mongol society.

Evaluate and create

- 5 Create a labelled diagram that shows the main characteristics of both heavy and light cavalry.

14A rich task

Naadam – ‘Three manly games’

Each summer across Mongolia, the festival of *Naadam* (meaning ‘three manly games’) is celebrated. These ‘three manly games’ are wrestling, archery and horse racing. These skills can all be traced back to traditional Mongol society and were of particular importance during the time of Mongol expansion. The *Naadam* festival is a good example of continuity and change in Mongolian culture.



Source 1 An archer competing at the festival of *Naadam*

The tradition of *Naadam* is thought to have started in the 13th century, when Genghis Khan used them as a form of celebration at the end of successful military campaigns. Warriors returned from battle and, along with feasting, had the opportunity to show off their manly skills. This also became a way to train young men in the essential skills of the Mongolian warrior.



Source 2 A 14th-century image showing Mongol archers in battle

Since Mongolia’s revolution in 1921 *Naadam* has been officially celebrated every year and formalised into the modern competition we see today. Teams from all over the country compete for a place at the finals which are held in Ulan Batar. The day of this event is even a national holiday.

The *Naadam* today follows many historic traditions. Competitors wear traditional costumes to compete in. For example, wrestlers are all dressed in leather boots, open-front jackets and briefs, all embroidered with traditional patterns. Archers compete in the traditional Mongolian silk robe. Before each race, the child jockeys, aged seven to 12, gather on horseback to sing the folksong, the *Giigoo*, to their horses to encourage them to run well.

skilldrill: Continuity and change

Creating and delivering an audiovisual presentation

It is likely that as part of your school work, you have already created many PowerPoint presentations. You may have also tried out some other audiovisual presentation software, such as Prezi, which is freely available on the Internet. Whichever program you use, it is important to use it effectively, and avoid the common problems of these types of presentations. Use the following steps to help you avoid these typical problems.

Step 1 Design your presentation

- Plan your presentation carefully so it has a clear beginning, middle and end.
- Make sure you present the content in clear, concise dot-point form, *not* huge slabs of information in paragraph form. You do not need to put your whole talk up on the screen.
- Do not fill up your slides with a lot of random pictures that only loosely relate to the content. Include visuals that *relate* to the content on that particular slide. Make sure each visual has a caption that explains why it is relevant to the presentation.
- A common mistake is to have objects and text moving on the screen in a way that just distracts the audience. Use graphics, sound, video, animations and transitions only if it adds value to the point being made, not just because you think it will look good.
- Use a design that ensures your audience can clearly see and read the slides. You need enough contrast between the text colour and the background colour on the slide, and make sure your font size is large enough.

Step 2 Deliver your presentation

- When delivering an audiovisual presentation to an audience, do not just stand up and read out the text on each slide. Rather, you should be talking in a way that develops and expands the points on each slide. Carefully plan in advance what you are going to talk about during each slide. Record this plan on cue cards, and refer to these cue cards during your speech to remind you of what to say.
- One thing at a time – at any moment, what is on the screen should be the thing you are talking about. Your audience will quickly read every slide as soon as it is displayed. If there are four points on the slide, they will have read all four points while you are still talking about the first point. Plan your presentation so just one new point is displayed at any given moment. Click to go to the next point only when you are ready to talk about that next point.
- Speak clearly – not too fast, not too slow. Vary your tone and pitch to make your presentation more interesting.
- Make eye contact with different members of your audience. Do not just look down at your cue cards!

Apply the skill

1 Prepare and deliver an audiovisual presentation on the *Naadam* in Mongolia today. Your presentation should focus on each of the ‘three manly games’. In particular you should explore elements of continuity and change for each activity. Use the following questions to guide you:

- What is the nature of the three activities in the ‘manly games’?
- Who participates in each of these activities?
- Why are these three activities still considered important today?
- What do you think is the link between today’s *Naadam* and 13th-century Mongol society?

Your presentation should be well researched and based on relevant and reliable sources. For detailed information on this skill, refer to page xx of ‘The history toolkit’.

Your presentation should be no longer than seven minutes.

Extend your understanding

- Choose a similar kind of cultural event celebrated somewhere in the world today that has its origins in a much earlier time – for example Carnival in Brazil, Rodeos in the USA, or Guy Fawkes Night in England. Consider various aspects of this event both now and in the past, such as:
 - the name of the event
 - the nature of the event
 - where and when the event takes place now
 - who participates in the event
 - how the event has changed (or not changed) over time.
- Use the Internet or your local library to research the event you have chosen, then prepare an audiovisual presentation for your class.

14.6 Expansion of the Mongol Empire under Genghis Khan

The Mongol Empire expanded for a number of reasons. Living conditions in its homelands in the eastern part of the Eurasian Steppe were very harsh – even in good seasons. From around 1180 to 1220, the **steppe** experienced unusually cold weather. As a result, there was less grass available, which meant that the Mongols needed to find alternative ways of providing for themselves and their animals. This was a strong motivating factor for expanding their territory.

Another key factor for expansion was the will of Genghis Khan. Only a few years after becoming Mongol leader, Genghis Khan began a policy of conquest that would eventually see him control China, a vast **empire** that stretched over much of central Asia and eastern Europe.

Conquests in China

One of Genghis Khan's first concerns as Mongol leader was to invade and conquer territory in China. China at this time had been a divided country for many years. The Jin Dynasty ruled in the north, the Xia Dynasty in the north-west, and the Song Dynasty in the south.

Traditionally, the Mongols had traded with these dynasties for the items that they needed but could not produce themselves (such as grain, metals and fabrics). This made the Mongols heavily dependent on the Chinese, and gave the Chinese a great deal of power over the Mongols. In the early 13th century, the Chinese tried to limit trade with the Mongols. At first, the Mongols issued threats and launched raids against the Chinese. Soon though, Genghis Khan launched a full-scale attack.

In 1209, during the Xia Dynasty, the Mongol army attacked a Chinese tribal group known as the Tanguts. The Tanguts commanded a strong army and were protected by walled cities. These types of defences were still quite new to the Mongols and it took them time to develop ways to defeat them. Initially, Mongol forces simply laid **siege** to these



Source 1 The Great Wall of China was built by the Chinese to keep out Mongol invaders, led by Genghis Khan.

cities – this meant waiting outside the walls until the starving citizens surrendered. Over the course of the conflict with the Tanguts, though, the Mongols learned many new warfare tactics, including how to invade fortified towns using ramps and catapults.

Around 1215, Genghis Khan attacked the Jin **Dynasty**. Their territory was protected behind the Great Wall of China, but the Mongol army was able to break through its defences to capture the Jin capital, Beijing. Genghis Khan was then able to increase his army with many Chinese recruits, who brought with them knowledge of new weapons and explosives, **siege** engines and ships. More importantly, the Mongols now had access to all of the goods they had once had to trade for. The expansion of the empire had begun in earnest.

THE EXPANSION OF THE MONGOL EMPIRE



Source 2

Source: Oxford University Press

Conquests in Central Asia and Russia

Next, Genghis Khan set his sights on the Khwarezm Empire – a large territory in western Central Asia. Initially, Genghis Khan was interested in becoming trading partners with Khwarezm, so in 1218 he sent a group of Mongol merchants to establish trading ties. However, the governor of Khwarezm became suspicious and attacked the group. Genghis Khan was deeply insulted and immediately moved to take revenge. He planned one of his largest invasion campaigns ever, gathering over 200,000 soldiers and leading them into Khwarezm. The Mongol conquest of Khwarezm was brutal. A large percentage of the population was massacred.

Genghis Khan then moved towards Persia in 1219. Northern India and Afghanistan were also brought into the Mongol Empire. The Rus (early ancestors of modern-day Russians) and the Bulgars challenged the Mongols but both of these armies were defeated.

At the time of Genghis Khan's death in 1227, the Mongol Empire stretched almost 3,000 kilometres from east to west (see Source 2).

Check your learning 14.6

Remember and understand

- 1 Why was one of Genghis Khan's main concerns to invade and conquer China when he first became Mongol leader?
- 2 Why did the Mongols initially find it difficult to conquer the Tanguts in the Xia Dynasty?
- 3 Why did Genghis Khan invade Khwarezm?

Apply and analyse

- 4 How do you think the Mongols were able to get past the Great Wall of China?

Evaluate and create

- 5 Conduct some research into developments in Mongol weaponry. Prepare a short report that shows how these developments contributed to the Mongols' success in expanding their empire.

14.7 Expansion of the Mongol Empire under Ogodei and his descendants

Before his death, Genghis Khan divided the Mongol Empire into four parts. Three sections were given to his sons Ogodei, Chagatai and Tolui. The fourth part was given to the wives and family of his eldest son, Jochi, who had recently died. On Genghis Khan's death, Ogodei – the third son – became Great Khan. He soon set about expanding the empire once more.

Ogodei

Ogodei was confirmed as Great Khan in 1229 (see Source 1). The main achievements of his reign were:

- the invasion of Russia and eastern Europe
- the establishment of the Golden Horde – a vast Mongol territory that stretched from the Danube River, across the top of the Black and Caspian seas, into Siberia (see Source 2 on page XX)
- the completion of the conquest of the Jin Dynasty in northern China and Manchuria.



Source 1 An artist's impression of Ogodei receiving gifts

Ogodei turned the settlement of Karakorum into the first Mongol capital, building a large city wall in 1235. By European standards of the time, Karakorum was not impressive; this is not surprising when you consider that the Mongols were not natural city dwellers.

Under the rule of Ogodei, new regulations were also introduced across the empire to encourage and develop trade. These included the standardisation of weights and measures, and the introduction of paper money (an idea borrowed from the Chinese). Paper money was easier to carry on long journeys than gold and silver.

Renewed expansion of the empire

Under Ogodei's leadership, the Mongol Empire continued to grow. In 1235, after conquering the Jin Dynasty, Ogodei decided to expand his empire westwards. The first stage of the assault, in 1237, was directed against the Bulgars on the Volga River (see Source 2 on page XX). A series of campaigns against the Russians followed between 1237 and 1240, under the leadership of Batu Khan, Ogodei's nephew.

The Mongols then invaded eastern Europe in 1241 in a two-pronged attack. A smaller force attacked through Poland and headed towards eastern Germany. It defeated a combined European army in 1241 at Legnica in Poland. The larger Mongol army attacked Hungary and crushed its army at Mohi, two days after victory at Legnica. Hungary was occupied and seemed destined to become part of the empire. The Mongols continued their advance to the west as far as Austria. At this point they seemed on the verge of conquering all of western Europe. However, in December 1241, the Great Khan Ogodei died. In response to this, Mongol forces withdrew from Europe and returned to their homelands to decide on the next leader.

Power struggles

When Ogodei died in 1241, there was much disagreement about who should be appointed Great Khan. At this time, there were signs that the empire was starting to break up into different regions – based largely on areas that certain khans had conquered and controlled. Each of these khans could not agree on a single leader to become Great Khan. After a five-year stalemate, in 1246 Guyuk (Ogodei's son) was appointed leader. He died only two years later, and his mother then became **regent** for a few years. In 1251, Guyuk's cousin Mongke (Genghis Khan's grandson) was elected as Great Khan.

Mongke Khan

Mongke quickly carried out a series of important reforms (see Source 2) and military campaigns. Under his leadership, the Mongol Empire became powerful once more. He sent his brother Kublai to take the city of Dali (in south-west China) in 1254. He also sent other generals to attack Annam (in Vietnam) and the area surrounding it. He continued to push into Tibet, India and parts of the Middle East – eventually reaching the Egyptian border.

Mongke appointed another brother, Hulagu Khan, to look after Persia. In the 1250s, the Mongol army attacked and conquered the city of Baghdad. It then moved into Palestine.

Some of Mongke Khan's reforms

- Ordered census of households, fighting men, fields, livestock, vineyards and orchards to help establish a fixed tax
- Continued to exempt religious leaders from taxation, and allowed his people religious freedom
- Appointed or confirmed leadership positions in the Buddhist and Taoist religions, and intervened to resolve religious disputes
- Established a department of monetary affairs that controlled the issue of paper money

Source 2 Some of the reforms implemented by Mongke Khan



Source 3 Mongke Khan

At this time, Mongke was still fixed on conquering the remainder of China. Kublai was ordered to supervise northern China while Mongke renewed his assault on southern China. Mongke took personal command of the army and attacked the province of Sichuan in 1258. However, he died in August 1259, during a siege.

Check your learning 14.7

Remember and understand

- 1 When was Genghis Khan's grandson Ogodei elected as Great Khan?
- 2 What were some of Ogodei's main achievements as Great Khan?

Evaluate and create

- 3 Create a flow chart to show the changes in Mongol leadership over the period 1229 to 1246.
- 4 In what year was Mongke Khan elected Great Khan?
- 5 What are some of the main reforms Mongke Khan introduced and how successful were they?

14.8 Kublai Khan and conquests in Asia

After Mongke's death, there was once again a power struggle to decide who would become the next Great Khan. This carried on for years and eventually resulted in a civil war.

An empire divided

By 1263, the result was an empire split into four regions known as **khanates**. Each khanate was administered and controlled by a different khan (see Source 2). Over time, each khanate began to take on its own characteristics and adopt different traditions from the region, such as religions and languages.

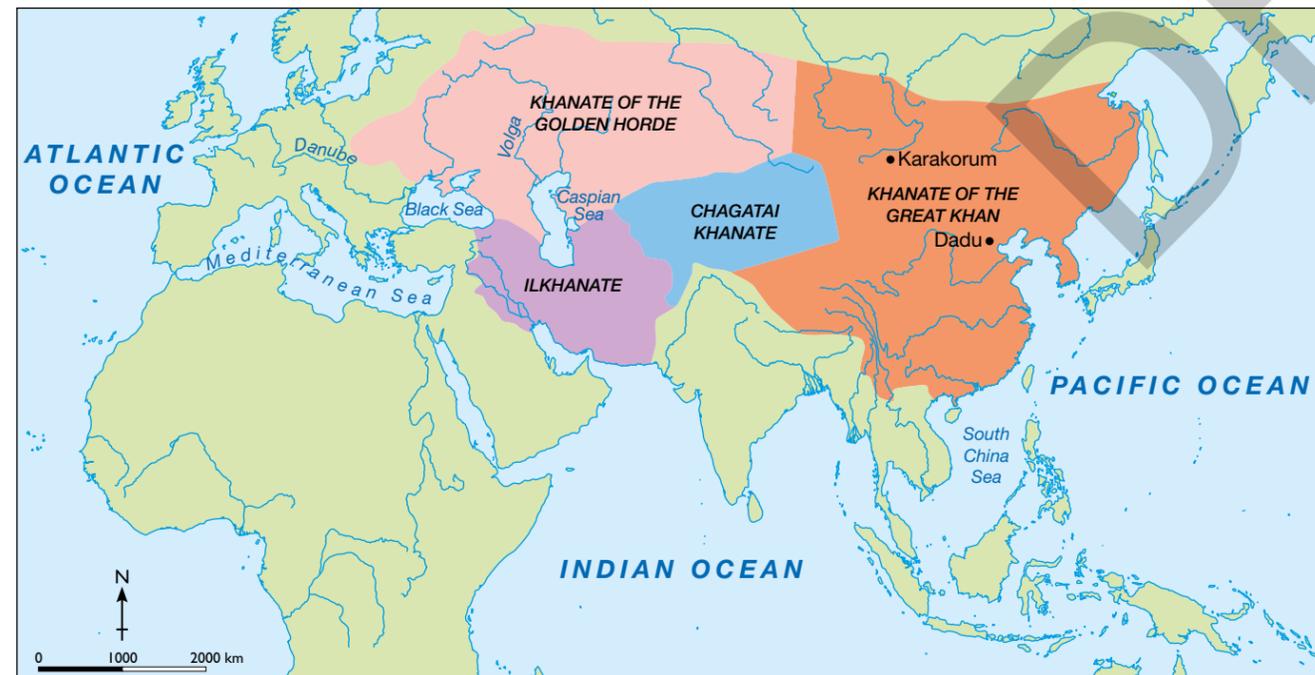
The rise of Kublai Khan

From around 1264, after many battles, Kublai Khan gradually became accepted unofficially as Great Khan. The brother of Mongke and the grandson of Genghis, Kublai Khan would go on to rule for 30 years. Throughout his rule there were many attempts to rebel against his leadership – mainly from his relatives.

Khanate of the Great Khan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led by Kublai Khan (1215–1294) • Covered parts of China during the Yuan Dynasty • Mongols in the region adopted many Chinese customs
Khanate of the Golden Horde	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlled by Batu Khan (1207–1255) • Covered regions of Central Asia and Russia • Mongols in the region adopted many Russian customs • Internal fighting among Mongol leaders in the region resulted in loss of Mongol control
Ilkhanate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlled by Hulagu Khan (1217–1265) • Covered parts of the Middle East • Mongols in the region converted to Islam • Turkish became the common language
Chagatai Khanate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administered by Chagatai Khan (c. 1185–1242) • Covered parts of modern-day Mongolia

Source 1 The four khanates of the Mongol Empire

THE MONGOL EMPIRE AND ITS FOUR KHANATES



Source 2

Source: Oxford University Press

The conquest of southern China

Almost immediately after taking power, Kublai Khan continued the conquest of the Song Dynasty in southern China, which Mongke had begun before his death. Kublai Khan's army took the Song capital, Hangzhou, in 1276, and wiped out the remains of any resistance by 1279. Kublai was still Great Khan, but now also controlled northern and southern China. There he founded a new imperial dynasty in China – known as the Yuan Dynasty. At this time, Kublai Khan also declared himself the **emperor** of the Yuan Dynasty. He renamed his base Dadu (meaning 'great capital'). From these roots grew the city we know today as Beijing.

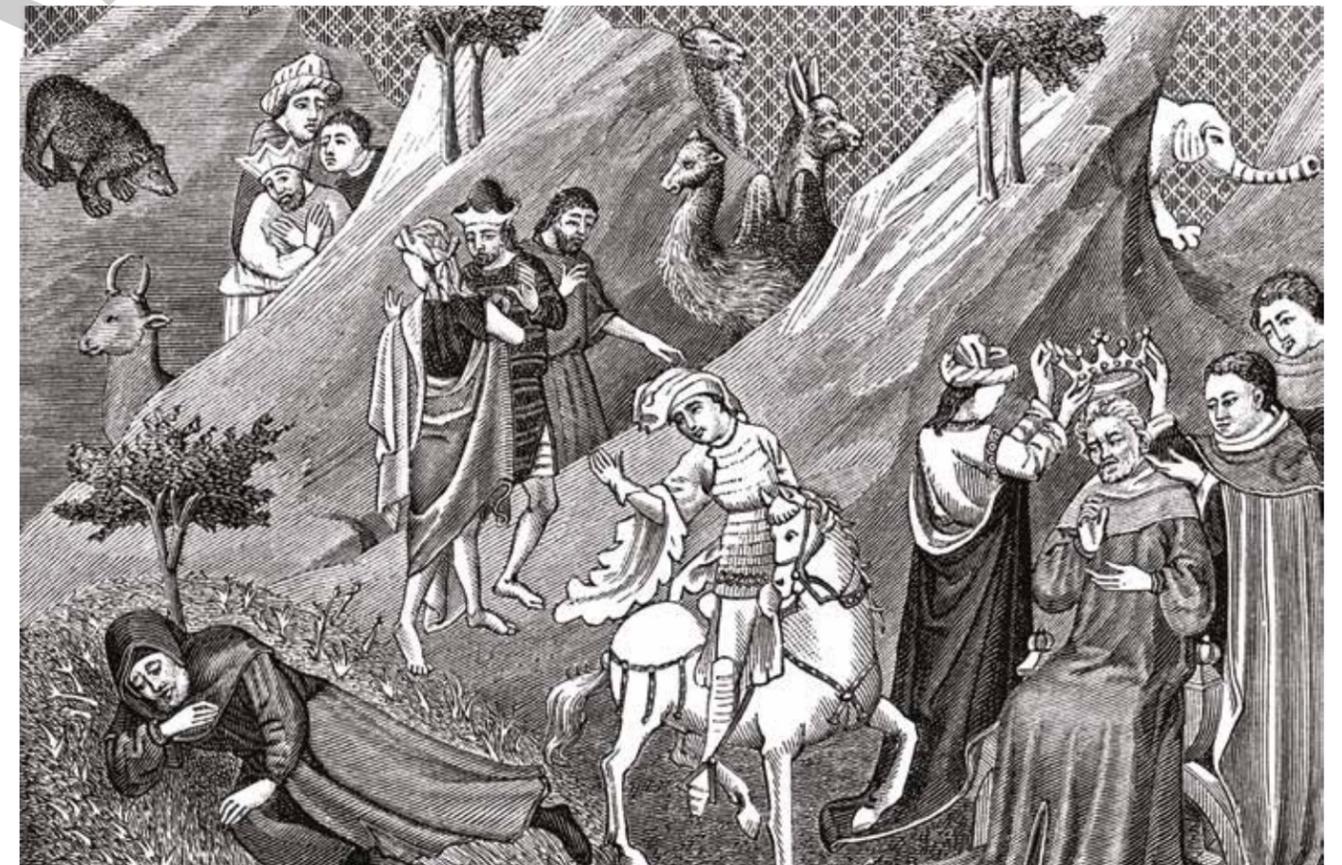
Governing China

Kublai Khan understood the importance of agriculture and appreciated both architecture and city life. As a result, the destruction of homes and temples across southern China was kept to a minimum – this was very unlike the way earlier

khan had treated cities they conquered in China's north. In the south, landowners who surrendered to Mongol rule were allowed to keep their estates. This move helped to ensure their loyalty to the new regime.

The Mongols adopted any institution and employed any servant (even foreigners) that would provide effective government, as long as nothing was done to endanger Mongol military power. The large amounts of money the Mongols earned from taxes suggest that this policy worked.

Chinese junior civil servants were allowed to keep their positions. However, Kublai preferred to appoint administrators from other parts of the Mongol Empire for the highest offices. For example, he put a Muslim governor from the west in charge of Yunnan in the east, and a Tibetan officer from the far west in charge of temple renovation in Hangzhou on the east coast. He also gave a number of official posts to the European traveller and writer Marco Polo (see Source 3 on page XX).



Source 3 This engraving of the coronation of Kublai Khan first appeared in the 13th-century French book *Fleur des Histoires de la Terre d'Orient* and shows a very European interpretation of the event.

Crushing opposition

Despite many laws and new policies introduced to govern China and protect his power, Kublai Khan still faced opposition – both from the Chinese and from rival Mongol warlords keen to overthrow him.

In 1287, a Mongol warlord by the name of Nayan rose up against Kublai Khan in a great battle known as the Rebellion of Nayan. The battle was fought on the grasslands of Mongolia in north-eastern China. Nayan was a warlord and ruler of an administrative region within the Mongol Empire. He challenged Kublai Khan's rule and demanded greater independence from the laws and bureaucracy governing the empire.

Kublai Khan, now in his seventies, personally led his troops into battle against Nayan. He was so overweight that he was no longer able to ride. Instead, he travelled in a mobile fort carried by four elephants – known as a palanquin.

Both armies were made up of Mongol horsemen and Chinese foot soldiers. Marco Polo accompanied Kublai Khan and his army and wrote what he saw. According to his records, hundreds of thousands of troops fought on both sides.

Nayan's army was defeated and Nayan was put to death. According to Mongol law, however, it was illegal for the blood of a Mongol prince to touch the ground. In accordance with this law, Nayan was wrapped in a carpet and trampled to death.

Check your learning 14.8

Remember and understand

- 1 What image was on Kublai Khan's imperial standard (banner)?
- 2 Why did Nayan's troops carry a giant crucifix with them?
- 3 Why was the defeated Nayan rolled up in a carpet and trampled to death?

Source 1 An artist's impression of Kublai Khan's forces fighting their enemies at the Rebellion of Nayan in 1287

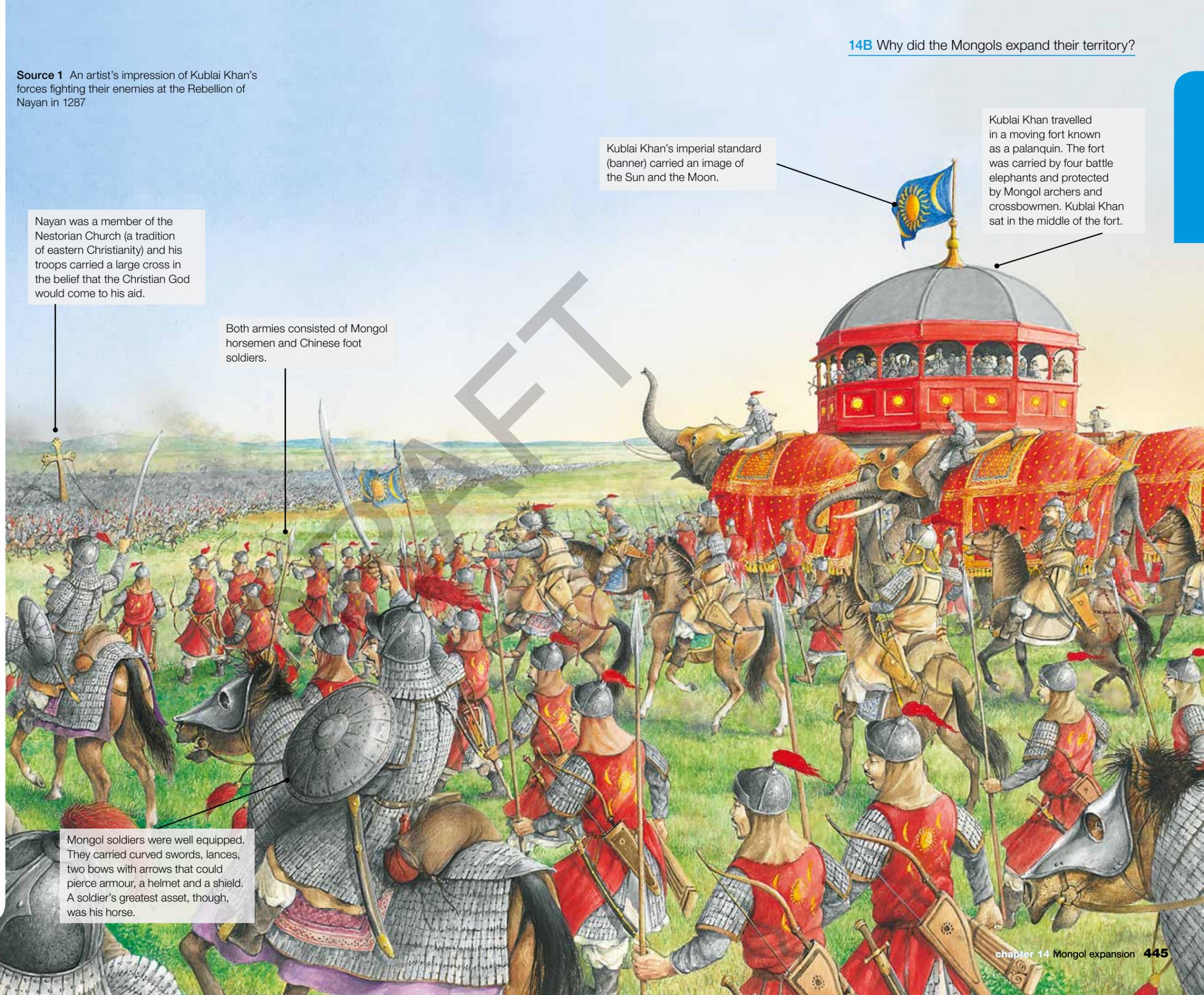
Nayan was a member of the Nestorian Church (a tradition of eastern Christianity) and his troops carried a large cross in the belief that the Christian God would come to his aid.

Both armies consisted of Mongol horsemen and Chinese foot soldiers.

Mongol soldiers were well equipped. They carried curved swords, lances, two bows with arrows that could pierce armour, a helmet and a shield. A soldier's greatest asset, though, was his horse.

Kublai Khan's imperial standard (banner) carried an image of the Sun and the Moon.

Kublai Khan travelled in a moving fort known as a palanquin. The fort was carried by four battle elephants and protected by Mongol archers and crossbowmen. Kublai Khan sat in the middle of the fort.



14.9 End of Mongol rule in Asia



Source 1 A 13th-century Japanese painting showing Japanese samurai boarding a Yuan ship in 1281

Failed expansion into Japan

One of the effects of shifting the Mongol centre of power from the old capital of Karakorum to the new capital in Dadu, China, was that regions of Central Asia became more difficult to oversee. These areas gradually slipped from Kublai's direct control. At this time, Kublai was more intent on spreading Mongol influence further into South-East Asia, with hopes of even controlling the wealthy trading island Java

(a part of modern-day Indonesia), however this was not to be.

Kublai's campaigns against the Song Dynasty had introduced him to ships. Now with ships

Source 2 This portrait of Kublai Khan was painted by Nepalese artist Anige in 1294, shortly after Kublai Khan's death. It is painted using a Chinese portrait style popular at the time.



of their own, the Mongols launched two attacks on Japan, one in 1274 and another in 1281 (see Source 1). Both attempts to conquer Japan were disastrous, largely because of bad storms at sea. The Japanese named the stormy typhoon winds that ended the larger Mongol invasion of 1281 the **kamikaze** ('divine wind') because they believed the gods had sent these winds to protest and defend them.

End of Mongol rule in China

Kublai Khan died in 1294. After his death, Mongol control over China was weakened. A series of natural disasters contributed to the problems facing the Mongols in China, including extensive flooding of the Yellow River and outbreaks of disease. In fact, the outbreak of disease in 1353–54, which killed huge numbers of people in the region, was probably **bubonic plague**. Many scholars believe Mongol traders then carried this disease across Asia into parts of Africa and Europe, leading to the deadly **pandemic** known as the Black Death.

keyconcept: Evidence

The writings of William of Rubruck and Marco Polo

Much of what Western historians know about the Mongol Empire and some of its significant people comes from evidence provided by two written works:

- a journal written by William of Rubruck
- a book written by Marco Polo called *The Travels of Marco Polo*.

William of Rubruck (c. 1210–1270) was a Franciscan monk. He had heard about the Mongols while fighting in the Crusades with King Louis IX of France. He wanted to gain the support of the Mongols in fighting the Muslims in the **Holy Land**, so he undertook a three-year journey to the Mongol capital of Karakorum, travelling through the lands of the Golden Horde to get there. His detailed account provided information not only about the lands he crossed, but also great detail about the people and customs of the regions he visited and the layout of the cities in which he stayed.

Marco Polo (1254–1324) was a Venetian traveller and merchant who, at 17 years of age, first accompanied his father and uncle on a trip through Asia. He returned 24 years later. Five years after leaving Venice he was in Dadu, where he met Kublai Khan in 1276. He described what he saw and did (including the diplomatic duties he carried out for Kublai Khan) in his book *The Travels of Marco Polo*.

Both of these historical sources provide a great deal of information and evidence about the Mongol Empire and the ways in which their society functioned. Much of what we know today has been attributed to them. Unlike the work of William of Rubruck, the accuracy of Marco Polo's accounts are being questioned by some historians today. For example, English historian Frances Wood argues that the lack of detail about Chinese culture and customs in Marco Polo's book indicates that he never even reached China – instead using information from merchants and travellers he met closer to home.

For more information on the key concept of evidence, refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.



Source 3 An artist's impression of Marco Polo (along with his father and uncle) meeting Kublai Khan

Check your learning 14.9

Remember and understand

- 1 What are some of the primary sources of evidence that Western historians have relating to the life and times of Kublai Khan?

Apply and analyse

- 2 Kublai Khan and Marco Polo came from quite different cultures. Conduct some additional research using your school library or the Internet and complete the following activities.
 - a What do you think might have been the reaction (and thoughts) of Marco Polo on meeting Kublai Khan?

- b What might have been the reaction (and thoughts) of Kublai Khan on meeting Marco Polo and his family members?

Evaluate and create

- 3 Draw a concept map to reflect on some of the factors that helped to end Mongol rule in China.
- 4 Look closely at the images of Kublai Khan in Source 3 on page XX and Source 2 on page XX.
 - a Describe the different ways in which Kublai Khan is presented in each of the artworks.
 - b How accurate do you think each of these portrayals of Kublai Khan are?
 - c How useful are each of these primary sources to a historian?

14B rich task

The changing nature of Mongol warfare

The Mongols created their empire by invading and conquering the peoples and lands surrounding their traditional homelands. The speed, skill and discipline of the Mongol army, along with the way in which they treated the enemies they defeated, made them a truly terrifying force. Their traditional tactics and weapons, however, were not always effective against the armies and fortified cities they encountered as they ventured south and west. The Mongols' ability to adapt their fighting methods to new challenges and technologies was a significant factor in their success.

Source 1

As the Mongols chalked up victory after victory, they readily adapted any weapon or method of attack which was an improvement on their own. The catapult and the cataphract (a heavily armoured catapult) are two examples of this. The use of flaming naphtha (a flammable liquid) hurled into a walled city is another.

The art of the siege was unknown to the Mongols when Genghis Khan was forming his empire. His warriors quickly learned it when they invaded China. They also used prisoners of war, forcing their captives to lead parties storming the walls of a besieged city. In the capture of Nishapur in Khurasan, the heart of Muslim power in the east, the Mongols made effective use of prisoners taken in preceding battles. The prisoners were forced to build siege engines at the walls of the city under heavy fire from the city's defenders. Then these same captives were driven ahead of the Mongols, assaulting the city's walls. Nishapur fell to the Mongols in less than a month.

Extract from *Genghis Khan: Conqueror of the Medieval World* by Robert Webb.

skilldrill: Chronology

Generating historical inquiry questions

One of the first and most important steps in conducting a historical inquiry is to generate or pose key questions. The questions that you generate will frame or direct the research that you then undertake.

Usually, historians generate one broad, overarching question for their inquiry, for example: 'How did Mongol warfare change over time?' After that, you need to generate more specific questions that are related to your overall inquiry question. You will need to generate a mixture of:

- closed or simple questions (e.g. 'When did event X occur?')
- open or probing questions (e.g. 'Why did event X occur?')
- questions that relate to the process of historical inquiry (e.g. 'What evidence is there?', 'What other sources might be needed?')

The first step in generating questions is to think about what you already know about the topic. Use this knowledge as a springboard for questions that will help you understand the topic in more depth. Use a table like the one below to brainstorm all the things you know in dot-point form in one column. In the second column, use each dot point in the first column to generate a related question that will help to deepen or build your understanding. Remember to include a mix of the three question types described above.

Overarching inquiry question:

What I already know	Questions to help me deepen or build my understanding
Point 1	• Question/s related to point 1
Point 2	• Question/s related to point 2

Apply the skill

- 1 Use the process described above to generate a range of questions related to the overarching historical inquiry question: 'How did Mongol warfare change over time?' Copy the following table into your notebook. First, identify what you already know as a result of reading Source 1 and examining Source 2. List these ideas in dot points in the first column. Then, in the second column, generate related questions that help to deepen or build your understanding. The first few have been done for you.

Overarching inquiry question: 'How did Mongol warfare change over time?'

What I already know	Questions to help me deepen or build my understanding
Mongols readily adapted any weapon or method of attack which they saw as an improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the Mongols' traditional weapons and tactics? (Simple or closed question) • What new weapons did they discover and where did they come from? (Open or probing question)
Mongols soon became experts at siege warfare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did the Mongols have to change some of their tactics and weapons as they expanded? (Open or probing question)

Extend your understanding

- 1 Compare the warfare tactics of the Mongols with those of another civilisation you have studied (either this year or last year).
 - a Create a Venn diagram or use another type of graphic organiser to help you evaluate the tactics employed by the different armies.
- 2 Which civilisation do you think had the most 'successful' army? Provide reasons for your opinion.



Source 2 Manuscript illustration of Mongols besieging a city using a catapult. The round objects in the bottom left corner are most likely ceramic bombs containing naphtha.

14.10 The impact of expansion on traditional Mongol life

The expansion of the Mongol Empire brought about massive changes – not only to the societies that it conquered, but also to Mongol society itself. The traditional nomadic lives of many Mongol people changed significantly as the empire grew, cities were established and government regulations (in the form of laws and taxes) were introduced.

The creation of a single legal system

Before Genghis Khan united the Mongol clans and formed the empire, there was no single set of laws. To resolve this, Genghis created a legal system that would apply across all the lands he controlled. This system was known as the *Yasa*.

The introduction of the census

With the creation of the Mongol Empire also came the **census**. All existing and new territories had to submit to a census in order to provide the administration with an idea of the size and number of people living in various parts of the empire. This ensured that the **khan** knew details of the population and value of his empire. For an empire with a strong army, it was important to know where the money and other important holdings were if they had to be secured quickly for the defence of the state.



Source 1 A painting of a *darugha* (a Mongol tax collector) in a Russian city

Laws under the rule of Genghis Khan

- All children were considered legitimate, whether born to a wife or a concubine (mistress)
- It was illegal to buy or sell a woman, or kidnap a woman to marry
- No Mongol could enslave another Mongol
- Hunting was forbidden during the animal breeding season (March to October)
- Livestock theft was punishable by death
- Hunters could kill only what was needed for food

Source 2 Some of the laws imposed under Genghis Khan's rule

The introduction of taxation

After his defeat of the Jin Dynasty in China, Genghis Khan selected a former Jin minister as one of his key advisors. This minister created an effective and efficient administration system that included a taxation scheme for everyone living in the empire.

Whenever new territory was taken over, a *darugha* (a person in charge of taxes and administration of a province within the empire) was appointed. A *darugha* had authority over any previous local rulers, and could charge taxes as he saw fit. A *darugha* would usually impose taxes of 1 per cent on herds, and up to 5 per cent on commercial transactions. Before the formation of the Mongol Empire, no members of Mongol tribal groups were required to pay taxes to the khan, so this was a significant change to traditional society.

The introduction of a communication system

Genghis Khan and the rulers who followed him developed a complex communications system that covered the whole Mongol Empire. It was known as the *yam*. The *yam* operated by setting up a series of staging posts across the empire. Each post was 40 kilometres from the next – this is the distance a good horse could cover at a gallop without needing to stop. Each post was guarded by at least 10 men and contained food, shelter and horses. The *yam* was capable of carrying messages from one side of the empire to the other at the rate of nearly 200 kilometres a day.

The army was responsible for ensuring the security of the system and its messengers. Over time, the guarded paths of the khan's couriers became commercial routes for travelling merchants, and the staging posts safe overnight shelters. When the first European ambassadors and merchants travelled to the east to the court of the khan, they reported that unescorted travellers were safer in the Mongol Empire than in any other kingdom on Earth.



Source 3 A Mongolian horse like those that would have been used for the *yam*

keyconcept: Cause and effect

Religious tolerance in the Mongol Empire

Cause and effect is a concept used by historians to identify why certain events took place (causes) and analyse the outcomes (effects). The acceptance of different religions during the Mongol Empire's expansion is an interesting topic to think about in terms of cause and effect. As you read the information below, think about the events you consider to be causes, and those you consider to be effects.

When Mongol forces conquered and invaded new territories, Mongol rulers encouraged religious freedom. Kublai Khan, for instance, never proclaimed his belief in any one religion. Such an approach helped to ensure the support of many different religious groups in his empire.

In addition, many of the invading Mongols themselves adopted the religious beliefs and practices of the people they conquered. For instance, in the eastern khanates Buddhism flourished; in the western khanates Islam became the dominant religion.

For more information on the key concept of cause and effect, refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.

Check your learning 14.10

Remember and understand

- 1 Why would the *yam* have been a vital part of the Mongol Empire?

Apply and analyse

- 2 In the Mongol Empire, religious leaders (of all faiths) were exempt from taxation and did not have to carry out any public service. Successive khans allowed places of worship to be built for many different religions. How would this religious tolerance have benefited the Mongol Empire?
- 3 Look at Source 2. Why do you think each of these laws would have helped to secure peace and security?

14.11 The impact of Mongol expansion on other societies

As the Mongol Empire grew in size, so too did the consequences for the people and societies that were conquered.

New dynasties

One significant impact of Mongol expansion was the creation of new dynasties. Genghis Khan and his successors founded **dynasties** in several other parts of the world. Kublai Khan's Yuan Dynasty in China also lasted for 100 years.

Impact on China

The initial consequences of Mongol expansion on China were negative. Mongols raided Chinese settlements, looting and murdering as they went. Chinese soldiers were sent off to die in Mongol wars, and the citizens had to submit to foreign officials. But these foreigners also brought enriching ideas and technologies from Arabia, western Asia and Mongolia.

Perhaps the most positive impact that Mongol expansion had on China was the reunification of northern and southern China under the Yuan Dynasty of Kublai Khan during the 1270s.

Impact on Russia

Between the 9th and 13th centuries, there was a region in eastern Europe known as Rus. It covered western parts of modern-day Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. In numerous raids during the 1230s, the Mongols defeated individual princes of Rus, causing many negative changes in Rus society. But it resulted in a united territory ruled by regional administrators.

After the fall of the Mongol Empire, the rulers in Rus continued to conduct a census every two to three years. This would not be introduced in other parts of Europe for another 120 years. A regular census strengthened the idea of firm and strong central government in Rus. The Mongols' efficient communication system – the *yam* – was also continued,

and later developed into a postal system, something that a large territory like Rus greatly needed.

Rise of Moscow

The rise of Moscow was perhaps one of the greatest effects of the Mongols in Rus. The Muscovite princes cooperated with the Mongols, even helping to prevent an uprising against the Mongol army in 1327. As a reward, Moscow was given the right to raise and collect taxes for the khan, which lifted the city's wealth and power. As Mongol rule declined, the power of Moscow grew and spread over neighbouring cities and principalities.

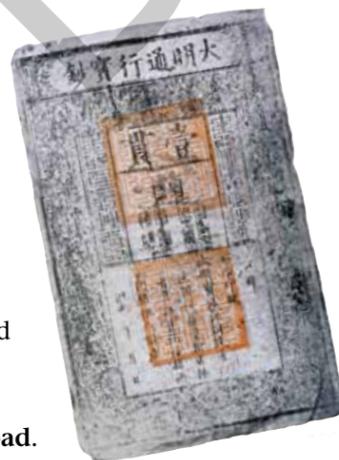
About 250 years after Rus was conquered, it was able to overthrow Mongol control. Rus, like China, ended as a more unified country with a strong political and administrative centre.

Impact on Europe

European interaction with the growing Mongol Empire brought Europe out of its isolated view of the world. Travellers such as Marco Polo and William of Rubruck developed an interest in the learning and wealth of the east. The safety of the trade routes established by the Mongols attracted Europeans to build trade and political contacts. Europe's knowledge of the world was greatly increased by the information brought back by ambassadors and merchants.

The development of paper currency came about in Europe because of the influence of the Mongols. Paper money was used by merchants to lighten their load on their long travels along trade routes such as the **Silk Road**.

Source 1 A copy of a banknote first issued by Kublai Khan in China



MONGOL TRADE ROUTES



Source 2

Source: Oxford University Press

Impact on trade

The Mongols established, enhanced and protected trade routes stretching from the Chinese coast to the fringes of Europe. They encouraged trade, which helped to spread knowledge in the medieval world. As the empire expanded, the Mongols developed many trade and political contacts. Trade grew rapidly – particularly given the tight controls that the Mongols had introduced to create safe and profitable trading routes. Under the rule of Genghis Khan, all traders were assured of their safety while on the road. Genghis Khan valued them as sources of information from outside the empire. He also used some as diplomats.

The Black Death

An unfortunate legacy of the Mongol Empire for the rest of the known world was the spreading of the **bubonic plague**. Many historians believe that it originated in the Gobi desert and spread through China, India and then into Europe and the Middle East along the established trade routes of the Mongol Empire. The Black Death – the terrifying **pandemic** of bubonic plague that spread across Asia and Europe in the Middle Ages – was carried by

fleas and the rats on which they fed. It severely reduced the populations of all societies with which it came into contact. In Europe alone about one-third of the population died.

Check your learning 14.11

Remember and understand

- 1 In what ways did the Mongol Empire open European eyes to the rest of the world?
- 2 List some of the benefits of Mongol rule in China.
- 3 Why did Moscow grow in importance under the Mongols?
- 4 Why is the spread of the Black Death blamed on the Mongol Empire?

Apply and analyse

- 5 Conduct some research into the development of money. How did the Mongol adoption of paper money in China affect the rest of the world?

14C rich task

Life in China under Mongol rule

As you have learned, the Mongols had a big influence on the regions they ruled and did much more for the countries they conquered than simply pillage and destroy. But what sort of rulers were the Mongols really? What were the positives for those living under Mongol rule and what were the negatives? Much can be learned about this by looking at Mongol rule in China.

Mongols created their own hierarchy in China with themselves at the top as the rulers. They held onto their own culture fiercely and took many steps to preserve the rituals and ceremonies of traditional Mongol life. In this way, they set themselves apart from the Chinese.

Directly below the Mongols were other foreigners, mostly Muslims that were brought to China by the Mongols to help them rule. These two groups filled the vast majority of government positions. After that were the northern Chinese and at the very bottom were the southern Chinese.

The Chinese that had previously formed the ruling class were at a massive disadvantage under the Mongols. For other groups within Chinese society, however, their status improved.

The status of peasants, merchants and artisans improved under the Mongols. Under the Chinese, these groups were all seen as having low status in society but the Mongols thought that their contributions to society were valuable and gave them a higher status accordingly.

The Mongols also brought in changes to support these groups in their enterprises. Peasants were encouraged to organise themselves into cooperative rural groups



Source 1 A Yuan Dynasty watercolour of peasants harvesting rice

comprising of about 50 households under a village leader. They were also expected to pay a fixed tax rate, which meant that they would know how much of their crops they would have to live on. For merchants they increased the availability of paper money and reduced some of the tariffs which encouraged a large increase in trading activity. For the artisans, the Mongols reduced taxes and made them exempt from any labour obligations. The Mongols were great cultural **patrons**, and theatre, painting, pottery and textiles all flourished under Mongol rule.

On top of this, the Mongols were tolerant of different religious beliefs and people were free to practise the religion of their choice.

Despite these improvements, the Chinese were given few rights under the Mongols and were punished harshly if they did not fulfil their obligations to the Mongol rulers. One of these obligations was to provide free labour for public works projects, such as building a new capital city in Daidu (present-day Beijing). Most of this labour was provided by the peasant class and this was deeply resented by them.

skilldrill: Historical sources as evidence

Using the Internet to find relevant, credible and reliable sources

Being able to locate relevant primary and secondary sources using the Internet is an important historical skill. However, you need to keep in mind that not all information you find on the Internet is necessarily true, accurate, reliable or credible. So, in addition to being able to find source material online, you need to be able to evaluate the reliability and credibility of the information you find.

Use the following steps to apply this skill:

- Step 1** Identify keywords related to your topic and type these into a search engine such as Google. (Use only these keywords – do not type in whole sentences or questions.)
- Step 2** Add further relevant keywords to refine your search if you cannot find what you want on your first attempt.
- Step 3** Look beyond the first page of results. The best results do not always appear first.

Step 4 Assess the reliability of each site by asking yourself:

- Who is the author or creator? If it is an individual, do they have credentials listed (e.g. a degree, title)? If it is an organisation, is it a reputable organisation like a government or university department?
- What is the purpose of the website? Is it trying to inform, persuade or sell?
- Is the site objective? Is the author's point of view biased?
- Is the information accurate? Can the information be verified if you cross-check it with other sources of information?
- Does the site contain spelling mistakes or grammatical errors? (If so, this is usually an indication that the site is not particularly reliable.)
- Is the information current? Can you find evidence of recent updates?

Apply the skill

- Conduct an Internet search to find relevant, credible and reliable source material about Mongol rule in Yuan China using the steps outlined above.
- From the credible information sources you have found, prepare a table for completion of the pros (positives) and cons (negatives) of living under Mongol rule in Yuan China. Source 2 is an example of the sort of table you will need to set up. Remember to record the URLs of the sites you have found in the fourth column of the table.

Pros (positives)	Cons (negatives)	Neither positive or negative	Information source

Source 2 Positives and negatives of Mongol rule in China

Extend your understanding

- From the information you have gathered in the exercise above, make an assessment of the positives and negatives and see if you can come to a point of view of whether Mongol rule was positive for China overall or negative for China. Once you have decided on your point of view, write a short essay explaining your response.