

Lecture 20: The Mongols

❖ Topics:

- ❖ Nomads + Empires = A Nomad Empire
- ❖ After 1000 CE

❖ Questions:

- ❖ How and why did the Mongols conquer such a vast territory?
- ❖ How did they rule it?
- ❖ What consequences did the Mongol invasions have for Eurasia?

Peoples of the Steppe

Turks



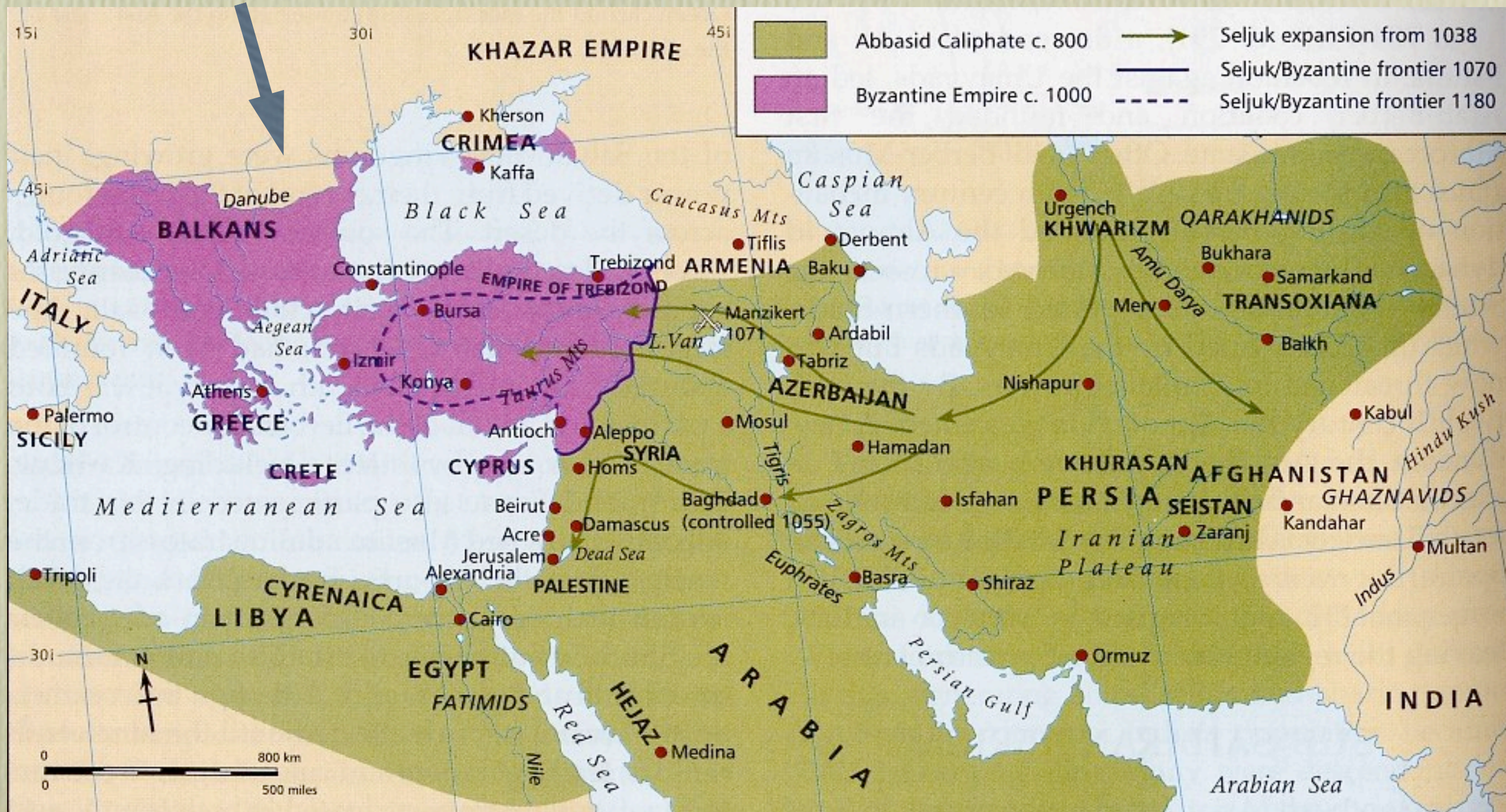
Mongols

- Pastoral & mobile
- Trade relationship with settled agriculturalists
- Independent tribes
- “Khan” chosen only to lead joint military endeavors
- Universal, supreme sky-god (Tenggeri)

Later 'Abbasid Empire

Internal fragmentation

Nomad invaders
Turks



Nomads and Empires II: The Seljuk Turks

Sultans and Caliphs

- Settle on 'Abbasid borders (c. 750-950 CE)
- Convert to Islam in 10th c.
- By mid-10th c., large numbers of Seljuks in 'Abbasid army
- **1055** CE: Tughril Beg = “sultan”
 - Takes power in Baghdad
 - Successors rule Syria, etc.
- Last 200 years of 'Abbasids (750-1258 CE):
 - Caliph = figurehead
 - Seljuk sultan = real power



13th-century Sultan

Turks and Byzantines

11th c. CE: Seljuk Turks
invade Anatolia

1071 CE: Battle of Manzikert



*Reduce Byzantine Empire to
little more than
Constantinople*

Transform Anatolian society

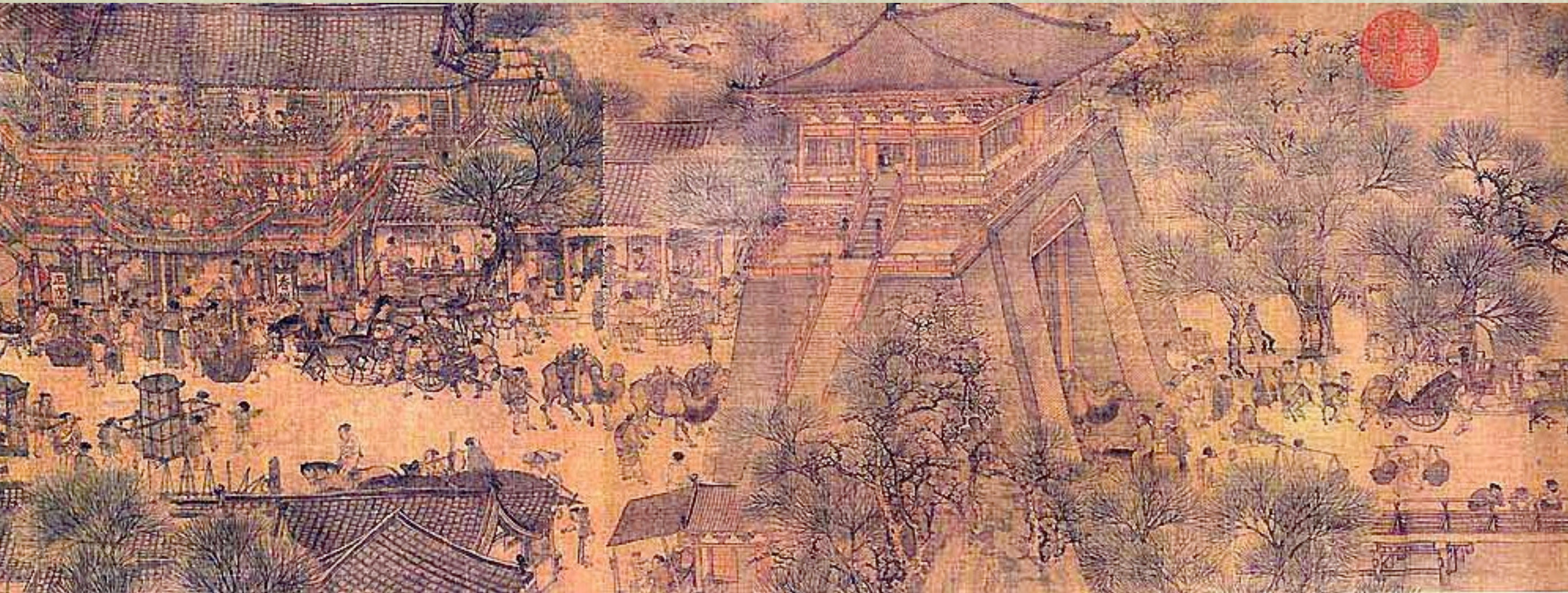
Song Dynasty (960-1279 CE)

Characteristics of Tang intensify!

Economic productivity

Meritocracy of scholar-officials

Cultural “Golden Age”



Spring Festival on the River, by Zhang Zeduan (early 12th c.)

From mid-9th c. CE: Decline in state-sponsorship of Buddhism

Technological innovation



Mass-production of porcelain

Moveable block printing

Magnetic maritime compass

Gunpowder and firearms

Paper money

Song Ceramics

Nomads and Empires II: Song Dynasty China

Political difficulties

Internal

Political “parties” among scholar-officials

Disagreement over social reform

External

Nomads



Partly sedentary & already sinicized

Usual Song policy: Buy them off

1126 Jin (Jurchen) invade northern China

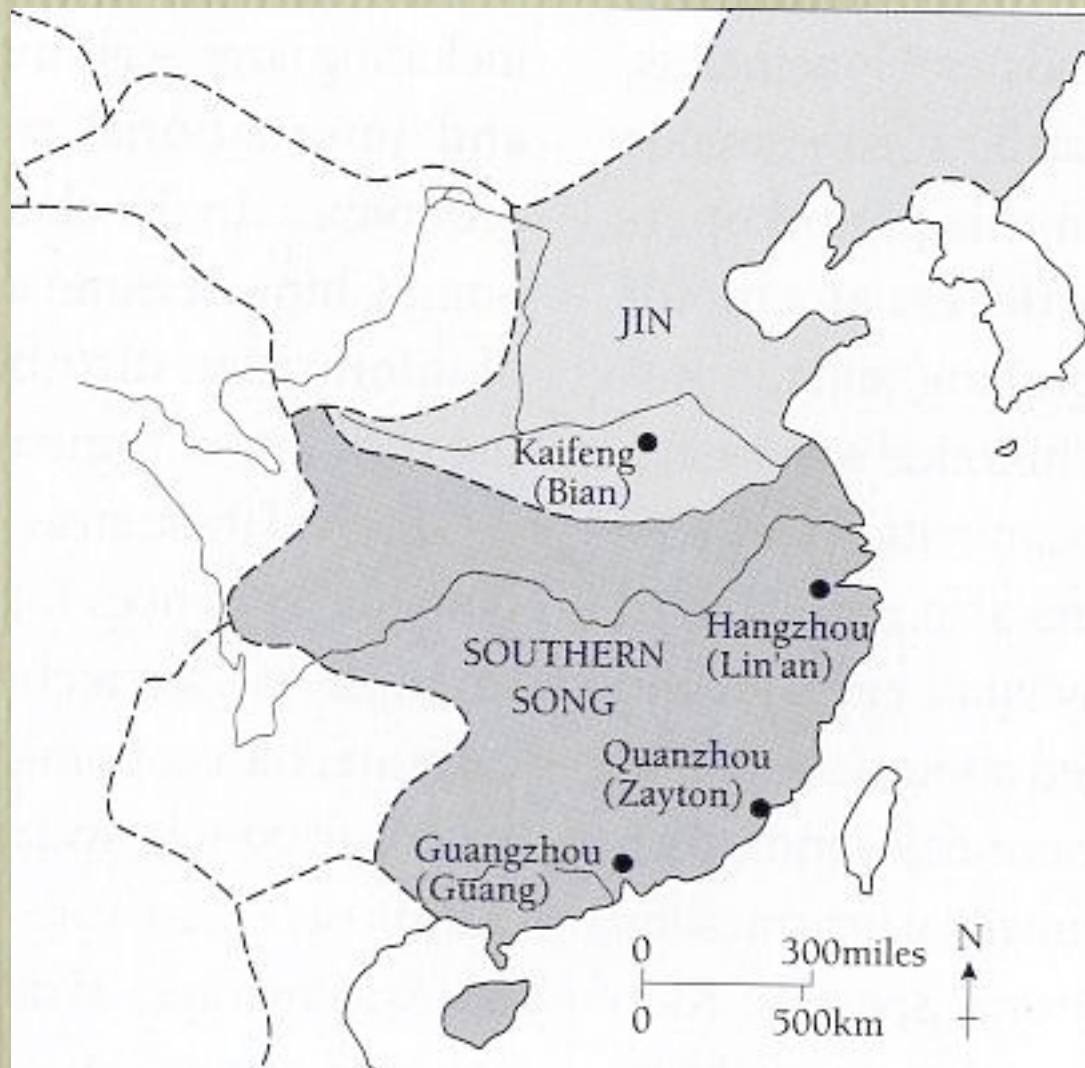
Song emperor flees Kaifeng

Establishes rule from Hangzhou



Jin Dynasty
(1126-1234 CE)

Southern Song
(1127-1279 CE)



The largest land empire in history!



Genghis Khan and the Mongols



Chinggis Khan (1167-1227 CE)

1206 CE: Temuchin = “universal leader” of Mongols

1211-34 CE: Conquest of No. China

1219-21: Conquest of Persia

1237-41: Conquest of Russia

1258: Take Baghdad

1264-79: Conquest of So. China



Siege of Baghdad, 1258 CE

How did they do it?



Genghis Khan's army in action

- Horsemanship
- Archery
- Swift maneuvering
- False retreats

- Very large armies
- Hierarchical but independent military units (100, 1000, 10000)

- **Terror tactics**

Massively destructive!

Why did they do it?

Supplement low-level pastoral economic productivity with agrarian surpluses

Cycle of reward necessary to maintain confederation

How do we know what we know?

- No writing before Genghis Khan
- Among the conquered, in many languages
- *The Secret History of the Mongols*
- Travels of Marco Polo

How did they rule it?



How did they rule it?

- By force, i.e., military organization
- Taxation/extortion
- Efficient, speedy communications
- Low-level native administrators only

Little intervention in daily life:

*so long as cash kept flowing
no signs of rebellion*

