

Rise of the Mongol Empire: The World's Largest Contiguous Empire

A Brief Mongol History

The Mongol Empire is an oddity in history. Its peoples arose from Mongol and Turkic herding tribes in the steppes of Asia. These people were united under Genghis Khan and primarily utilized mounted archery and an intricate system of wartime travel. Under the great Khans it grew to be the largest contiguous empire in a mere 71 years. The wars, famine, and disease resulting from the Mongol expansion killed three quarters of the population of the world. Despite the destruction under the Mongol empire, Eurasia also experienced a period of religious spread and tolerance, an increase in trade, a consolidated system of laws and rulers and a brief glimpse of globalism.

Sources

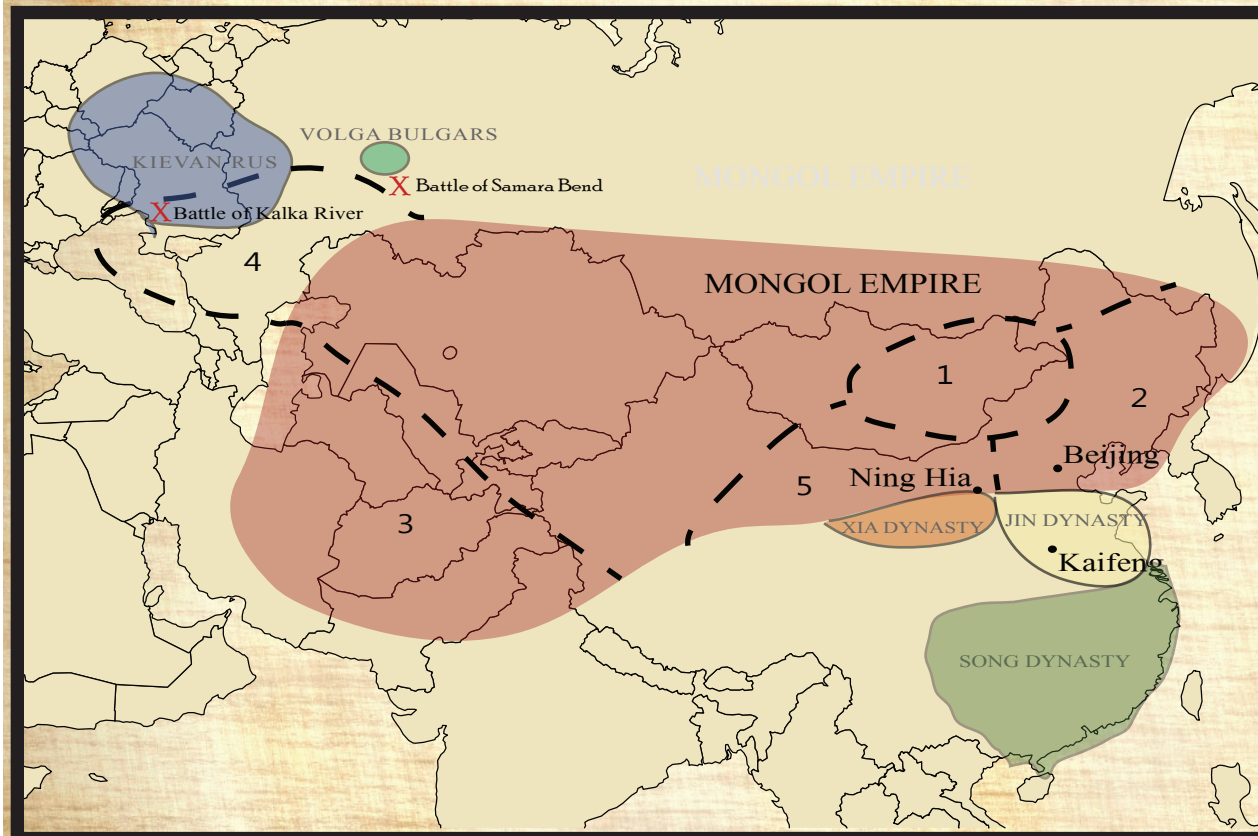
Natural Earth,
"The Mongols" by David Morgan

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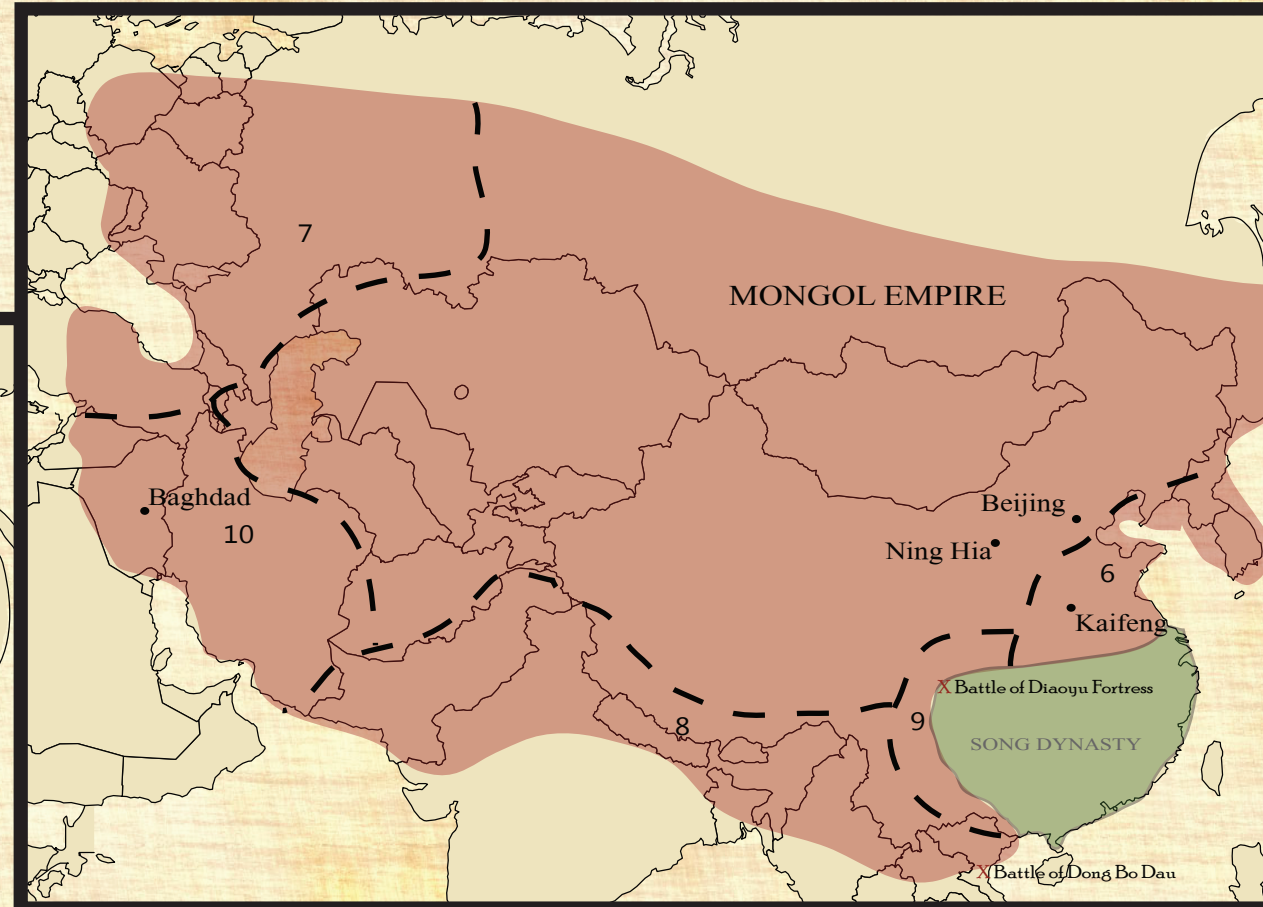
Cartographer

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5: Upon returning from the western campaign, Genghis Khan launches a war against the Jin-Xia coalition who formed in Genghis Khan's absence. The coalition is destroyed in 1227 when Mongol forces capture Ning Hia. Genghis Khan dies from debated causes during this war.

Ögedei Khan succeeds Genghis and continues the Mongol empire's expansion.



10: The Siege of Baghdad ends in the complete and utter destruction of the intellectual center of Islam. In regards to the loss of Baghdad, historian David Morgan says, "Imagining the Athens of Pericles and Aristotle obliterated by a nuclear weapon begins to suggest the enormity of the blow."

This victory consolidates Mongol control of the Abbasid Caliphate.



12: After years of conflict, Kublai Khan overthrows the Song Dynasty. He supplants them with his own Yuan Dynasty, becoming the first non-Chinese emperor. This marks the height of the Mongol empire. The empire begins to split up and by 1294 with Kublai Khan's death the empire official breaks into several parts.

At the height of the Mongol empire, it spanned approximately twelve and half million miles, contained a fifth of the world's area and housed a fourth of the world's population.

