China and the Mongols

- Most difficult and lengthy conquest for the Mongols
- Took 70 years (1209 to 1279) to conquer
- Violently conquered northern China \(\rightarrow\) then controlled by various nomadic states
- More peacefully conquered southern China \(\rightarrow\) then controlled by the Song Dynasty
- Result = unification of a divided China
  - Gave the Mongols legitimacy
  - Believed they had earned the Mandate of Heaven
China and the Mongols

- Goal = extract wealth from China
- In order to do so → must accommodate the Chinese
- Accommodations included:
  - Use of Chinese administrative practices, taxation systems, and postal system
  - Took a Chinese dynastic title = the Yuan
  - Transferred capital from Karakorum in Mongolia to Beijing in China
Kublai Khan

- Mongol ruler of the Yuan dynasty (1271-1294)
- Improved roads
- Built canals
- Lowered some taxes
- Supported scholars and artists
- Limited the death penalty and torture
- Supported peasant agriculture
China and the Mongols

- Mongol rule in China was still harsh, exploitative, foreign and resented

- Mongols did NOT become Chinese and they did not accommodate EVERY aspect of Chinese culture
Mongols Being Mongols

- Many still lived, ate, slept, and gave birth in yurts they put up everywhere
- Planted steppe grass within the capital and let animals roam freely
- Didn’t use civil service exams
- Didn’t learn Chinese
Mongols Being Mongols

- Mongol women never adopted foot binding
- Intermarriage = forbidden
- Chinese scholars = couldn’t learn Mongol script
- Supported artisans and merchants → opposite of Confucian values

Mongol women mixed freely with men, rode horseback, and hunted
China and the Mongols

- Mongol rule in China declined in the mid-1300s
- Many factors caused this decline:
  - Division among the Mongols
  - Rising prices (inflation)
  - Epidemics of the plague
  - Growing peasant rebellions

1368 = all Mongols forced out of China and returned home to the steppe
Persia and the Mongols

- Conquest of Persia = much quicker and more violent than that of China
- 1258 = capital of Baghdad sacked
  - End of Abbasid dynasty
  - More than 200,000 people massacred
Devastation to Persia

- Peasants pushed off their land due to heavy taxation
- Nomadic Mongols with their herds of animals turned agricultural land into pasture, wasteland, and desert
- Irrigation channels = neglected
Persia and the Mongols

- Many Mongols in Persia were heavily influenced by the Persians there:
  - Adopted Islam
  - Left government operation in Persian hands
  - Learned Persian
  - Some turned to farming and abandoned nomadic ways
  - Some married local people

Mongol man and Persian woman
Russia and the Mongols

- Heavy devastation to Russia → perhaps more than in Persia
- Mongol conquest of Russia = called the “Khanate of the Golden Horde”
- Mongols defeated the Russians, but did NOT occupy Russia
  - Russia had little to offer
  - Less developed economy
  - Not located along any major trade routes
Exploitation of the Russians

- Russian princes required to send tribute to the Mongols
- Variety of heavy taxes on Russian people
- Continuing border raids
- Tens of thousands of Russians sent into slavery
Influence on the Russians

- Although the Mongols weren’t influenced much by the Russians, the Russians were influenced by the Mongols:
  - Adopted Mongols’ weapons, court practices, diplomatic rituals, taxation system, and military draft
End of Mongol Rule in Russia

- Mongol rule in Russia started to decline by the end of the 1400s.
- Major causes of this decline:
  - Divisions among Mongols
  - Growing strength of Russian state → now centered on the city of Moscow