

Chermalyn Lujanob  
Student ID No. 118196  
April 18, 2023  
Dropbox 12 – The Mongols

- What were the failures? successes? of the Mongols?

According to John Green of Crash Course, the Mongols have an amazing speed and success on their conquests, how they conquered more land in 25 years than the Romans did in 400 and how they controlled more than 11 million contiguous square miles. He also emphasized the reasons why Mongols are not so great or why they have failed as well as their successes. One of its failures is that their empire didn't last. Within 80 years, they'd left China and been replaced by a new dynasty, the Ming. And in Persia they blended in so completely that by the 15<sup>th</sup> century they were totally unrecognizable. Second, they also weren't particularly interested in artistic patronage or architecture. And lastly, the Mongols were probably responsible for the Black Death. By opening up trade, they also opened up vectors for disease to travel, in the case of the plague, via fleas infected with *Yersinia pestis*. And at least according to one story, the Mongols intentionally spread the plague by catapulting their plague-ridden cadavers over the walls of Kaffa in the Crimea.

Moreover, the Mongols also are awesome in other things. One, the Mongols really did reinvigorate cross-Eurasian trade. The Silk Road trading routes that had existed for about a thousand years by the time the Mongols made the scene had fallen into disuse, but the Mongols valued trade because they could tax it, and they did a great job of keeping their empire safe. It was said that a man could walk from one end of the Mongol empire to the other with a gold plate on his head without ever fearing being robbed. Two, the Mongols increased communication through Eurasia by developing this Pony Express-like system of way stations with horses and riders that could quickly relay information. It was called the Yam system, and it also included these amazing bronze passports, which facilitated travel. Three, another thing that traveled along the Mongol trade routes was cuisine. For example, it was because of the Mongols that rice became a staple of the Persian diet. Four, the Mongols forcibly relocated people who were useful to them, like artists and musicians and especially administrators. The Mongols weren't much for administrative tasks like keeping records, so they found people who were good at that stuff and just moved them around the empire. This created the kind of cross-cultural pollination that world historians these days get really excited about. And five, the Mongols were almost unprecedentedly tolerant of different religions. They themselves were shamanists, believing in nature spirits, but since their religion was tied to the land from which they came, they didn't expect new people to adopt it, and they didn't ask them to.

- What is one thing you found interesting/new about the Mongols?

I was hooked by what John Green had discussed about Genghis Khan descendants. Because right now as he said, on the planet Earth, there are 16 million direct descendants of Genghis Khan, meaning that every day is the birthday of 43,000 of them. It is interesting to know more about this research findings.