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Date _____

Methods of Mongol Conquest

Directions: How did the Mongols conquer other places? Write a paragraph using these three documents that explains how the Mongols were able to conquer most of Asia in just 30 years.

... The Mongols had developed a composite bow made out of sinew and horn and were skilled at shooting it while riding, which gave them the upper hand against ordinary foot soldiers. With a range of more than 350 yards, the bow was superior to the contemporaneous [co-existing] English longbow, whose range was only 250 yards. A wood-and-leather saddle, which was rubbed with sheep's fat to prevent cracking and shrinkage, allowed the horses to bear the weight of their riders for long periods and also permitted the riders to retain a firm seat. Their saddlebags contained cooking pots, dried meat, yogurt, water bottles, and other essentials for lengthy expeditions. Finally, a sturdy stirrup enabled horsemen to be steadier and thus more accurate in shooting when mounted. A Chinese chronicler recognized the horse's value to the Mongols, observing that "by nature they [the Mongols] are good at riding and shooting. Therefore they took possession of the world through this advantage of bow and horse."...



Source: Mou-Sien Tseng, painting, New Masters Gallery online (adapted)

Source: Morris Rossabi, "All the Khan's Horses," *Natural History*, October 1994

Beginning with the Tangut campaigns, Genghis Khan had discovered that Chinese engineers knew how to build siege machines that could batter city walls with massive stones from far away. The Chinese had already developed a number of those devices: the catapult hurled stones, flaming liquids, and other harmful substances at or across city walls; and the trebuchet, a catapult powered by the drop of a heavy counterweight, threw objects even faster than the torsion catapult. The ballista was a mechanical device that shot large arrows that could damage buildings and structures and kill any person or animal in its path. Although quite old in the military history of siege warfare, the weapons were new to the Mongols, but they soon became a permanent part of the arsenal of Genghis Khan, who appreciated the efficiency and ingenuity behind them. More than merely using the weapons, Genghis Khan acquired the engineering intelligence needed to create them. The Mongols eagerly rewarded engineers who defected to them and, after each battle, carefully selected engineers from among the captives and impressed them into Mongol service. Genghis Khan made engineering units a permanent part of the Mongol army, and with each new battle and each conquest, his war machinery grew in complexity and efficiency.

Source: Jack Weatherford. *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*. Three Rivers Press, 2004

