



Genghis Khan: Life, Death, and Resurrection

By John Man

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Genghis Khan: Life, Death, and Resurrection By John Man

Genghis Khan is one of history's immortals, alive in memory as a scourge, hero, military genius and demi-god. To Muslims, Russians and westerners, he is a murderer of millions, a brutal oppressor. Yet in his homeland of Mongolia he is the revered father of the nation, and the Chinese honor him as the founder of a dynasty. In his so-called Mausoleum in Inner Mongolia, worshippers seek the blessing of his spirit. In a supreme paradox, the world's most ruthless conqueror has become a force for peace and reconciliation.

As a teenager, Genghis was a fugitive, hiding from enemies on a remote mountainside. Yet he went on to found the world's greatest land empire and change the course of world history. Brilliant and original as well as ruthless, he ruled an empire twice the size of Rome's until his death in 1227 placed all at risk. To secure his conquests and then extend them, his heirs kept his death a secret, and secrecy has surrounded him ever since. His undiscovered grave, with its imagined treasures, remains the subject of intrigue and speculation.

This is more than just a gripping account of Genghis' rise and conquests. John Man uses first-hand experiences in China and Mongolia to reveal the khan's enduring influence. He has traveled the length of the empire. He spotlights the tension between Mongols and Chinese, who both claim Genghis' spirit. He is the first writer to explore the hidden valley where Genghis is believed to have died, and one of the few westerners to climb the mountain where he was likely buried.

This stunning narrative paints a vivid picture of the man himself, the places where he lived and fought, and the passions that surround him still. For in legend, ritual and intense controversy, Genghis lives on.

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Genghis Khan: Life, Death, and Resurrection By John Man Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #388987 in Books
- Brand: Man, John
- Published on: 2007-02-06
- Released on: 2007-02-06
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.24" h x 1.04" w x 5.46" l, .80 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 400 pages

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Editorial Review

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Man posits that this engrossing book is the result of his ambition to travel to somewhere remote, and that Mongolia, China, and the Gobi Desert are such places. He maintains that secrecy is an important theme of the book: how and where Genghis Khan died, and how and where he was buried. Man chronicles the early history of Mongolia, the coming of the Mongols' conquests of China and other Asian kingdoms, and what he calls the Muslim holocaust. He cites that "there were 100,000 to 150,000 soldiers, each with two or three horses . . . they could cover 100 kilometers a day, cross deserts, swim rivers, and materialize and vanish as if by magic." He says that prisoners had a triple use: as a slave labor force of specialist artisans, as soldiers in the army's nonnomadic contingents, and as "cannon fodder." Genghis Khan fell seriously ill, perhaps with typhus, and died in 1227, and not much is certain about his burial site; the record is, according to the author, "infuriatingly vague." *George Cohen*

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Review

"Absorbing and beautifully written . . . A thrilling account." *The Guardian (U.K.)*

"Man has scholarly gifts as well as an acute intelligence and a winning way with words. This is a fine introduction to the subject, as well as a rattling good read." *The Independent (U.K.)*

"Every bit as gripping as its subject deserves. History doesn't get much more enthralling than this." *York Evening Post (U.K.)*

"Chaucer lauded Genghis Khan in his *Canterbury Tales*, while others have compared him to Satan (sometimes to Satan's advantage). In this lively volume, historian and travel writer Man presents parallel yet conflicting views of the imperialist and Mongolian national hero. The Great Khan unified the nomadic Mongols, destroyed obstructive empires, built the largest land empire in history, opened trade from Japan to Europe, and in general made way for the modern world. His tactics included murderous but focused terror, multicultural statesmanship, and sheer energy (DNA studies estimate that his genes are in eight percent of the men of Eurasia)." *Library Journal*

About the Author

John Man is a historian and travel writer with a special interest in Mongolia. His book *Gobi: Tracking the Desert* was the first book on the subject in English since the 1920s. He is also the author of *Atlas of the Year 1000*, *Alpha Beta*, *The Gutenberg Revolution*, *Attila*, *The Terracotta Army*, and *The Great Wall*, among others.

Users Review

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