

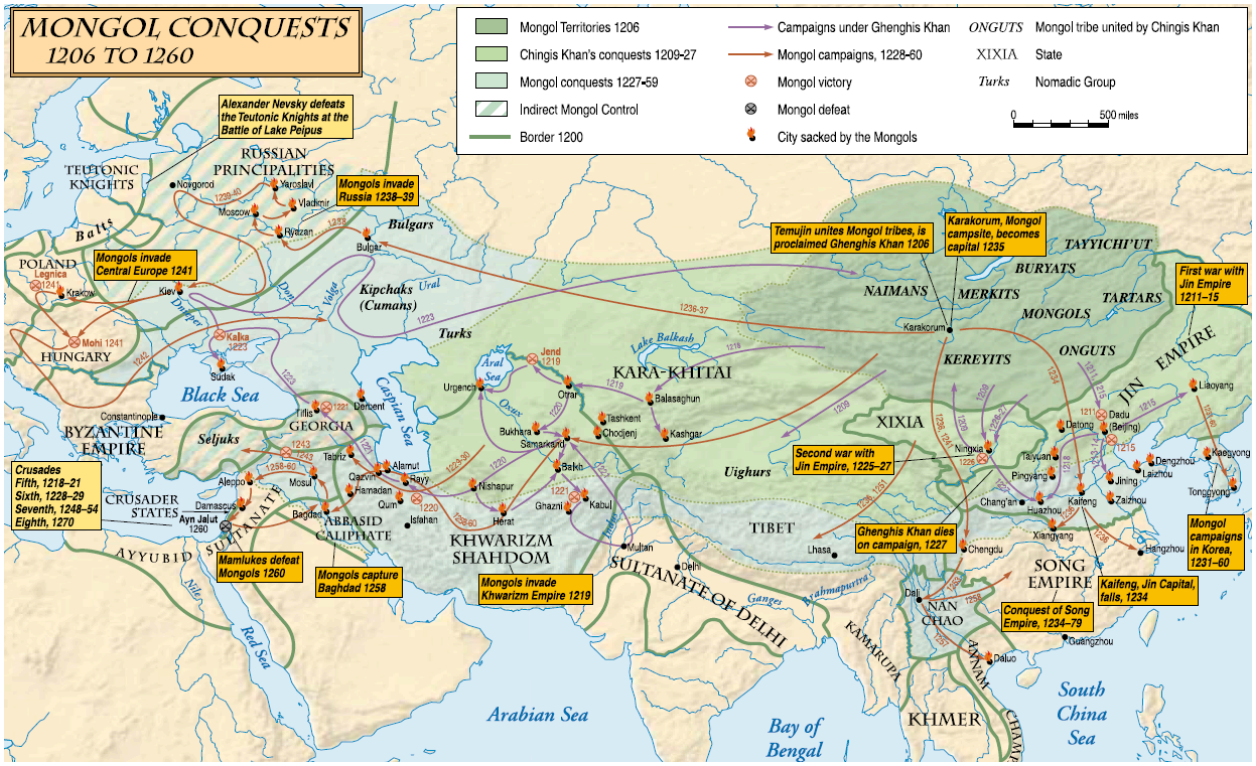
A Medieval Chinese Depiction of Subutai

Subutai Baghatur ('The Hero') was a Mongolian general handpicked from obscurity by Genghis Khan during the unification of the Mongolian tribes (1175-1248). At this point Genghis Khan merely held the allegiance of a small fraction of the Mongolian tribes and a minor stretch of territory. By Subutai's death he would stand atop the most powerful empire in history, which stretched from Korea to the Arctic, the Mediterranean, the Adriatic and the Baltic. This is all the more remarkable when one accounts for the fact that this was almost all unknown territory to the Mongols. Aside from parts of the north China campaign, Subutai's conquests were in all areas the Mongols had never set foot in, let alone heard of prior to his campaigns. At this point in history the east was firmly separated from the Middle East, and the western most part of the Middle East was the edge of the world for the west. It was Subutai's willingness to venture against these unknown foes that helped lead to Eurasia becoming connected for the first time. Subutai was recognized as someone special even by his foes. After he had defeated the primary Jin army of Wanyan Heda at Sanfeng Mountain, Heda was captured and led to be executed. Heda, one of the two generals to have won several battles against the Mongols, including Subutai himself, had completely lost to Subutai in the end. For his final wish, he asked to see Subutai, the man who had conquered him, and exclaimed: *"It is not chance but destiny that makes conquerors such as you. Having seen you, I am ready to die."****[1]***

Any serious student of military history knows who Subutai is because of his campaigns in the Middle East, Russia, and Central Europe. But due to the opacity of the East Asian sources, they are almost inevitably unfamiliar with a number of Subutai's campaigns in China. As a result, Subutai is regularly considered one of the greatest generals in history without ever factoring in the other half of his overall campaigns against more formidable opposition, including his masterpiece. Would Napoleon be considered one of the greatest generals if his campaigns of 1796-7, 1805, and 1806 were never known? Would Hannibal be truly special with no knowledge of Trebia, Trasimene or Cannae? Would Caesar be relevant with his Civil War victory unknown? That is how Subutai is currently viewed, with no real knowledge of his Chinese campaigns from 1226-1235, as well as his independent command in Central Asia from 1216-1218.

What emerges in the most recent scholarly analysis is that the period of the late 900's to the late 1200's was an extraordinary moment of military and technological innovation due to competing warring states, similar to what would happen in Europe after they caught up and made large innovations starting in the late 1500's.[2] It was in this brutally competitive environment that the Mongols and Subutai carved their names. Since so much of his campaigning is little known to the west, I will cover his eastern campaigns in greater depth. What he did speaks for itself.

In short, Subutai conquered more than anyone else in history. He also defeated a greater variety of opponents under such heavy restrictions that normally make such conquests impossible. The fact that the Mongol Empire is the largest in history is not due to happenstance or luck. Extremely difficult obstacles had to be overcome to make it possible, and Subutai was the primary mover behind it after Genghis Khan.



Career

Campaigns into Central Asia and Khwarezm: 1216-1220

Subutai first began as a vanguard unit commander, where he displayed personal heroism. His men were feared by their Naiman Mongol enemies in 1204, and during the invasion of Jin China in 1211 he was the first man to scale the ways of a town called Huanzhou during a siege. During this time he apprenticed under the overall command of one of the best Mongol generals, Jebe. Subutai and Jebe would remain partnered most of their career, to great effect.

In 1216 Subutai was given independent command to take a 20,000 man force from Mongolia to attack their fleeing nomadic enemies, the Merkits, in modern day northern Kazakhstan. Here his creativity was first demonstrated: because their foes were also mounted and wary of any Mongol attack, Subutai ordered his vanguard commander to

pose as a small force with their families. The commander was to use and leave children's toys behind when they retreated, acting as though either they were just some families scared of the Merkits, or that the Mongols were retreating in haste. The Merkits lowered their guard, and Subutai was able to surprise and destroy them at the battle of the Chu River.[3] Over the next year he advanced further into Kazakhstan, all the way to the Ural River near the Caspian Sea, where he defeated a Kipchak confederacy who was allied to the Merkits.[4]

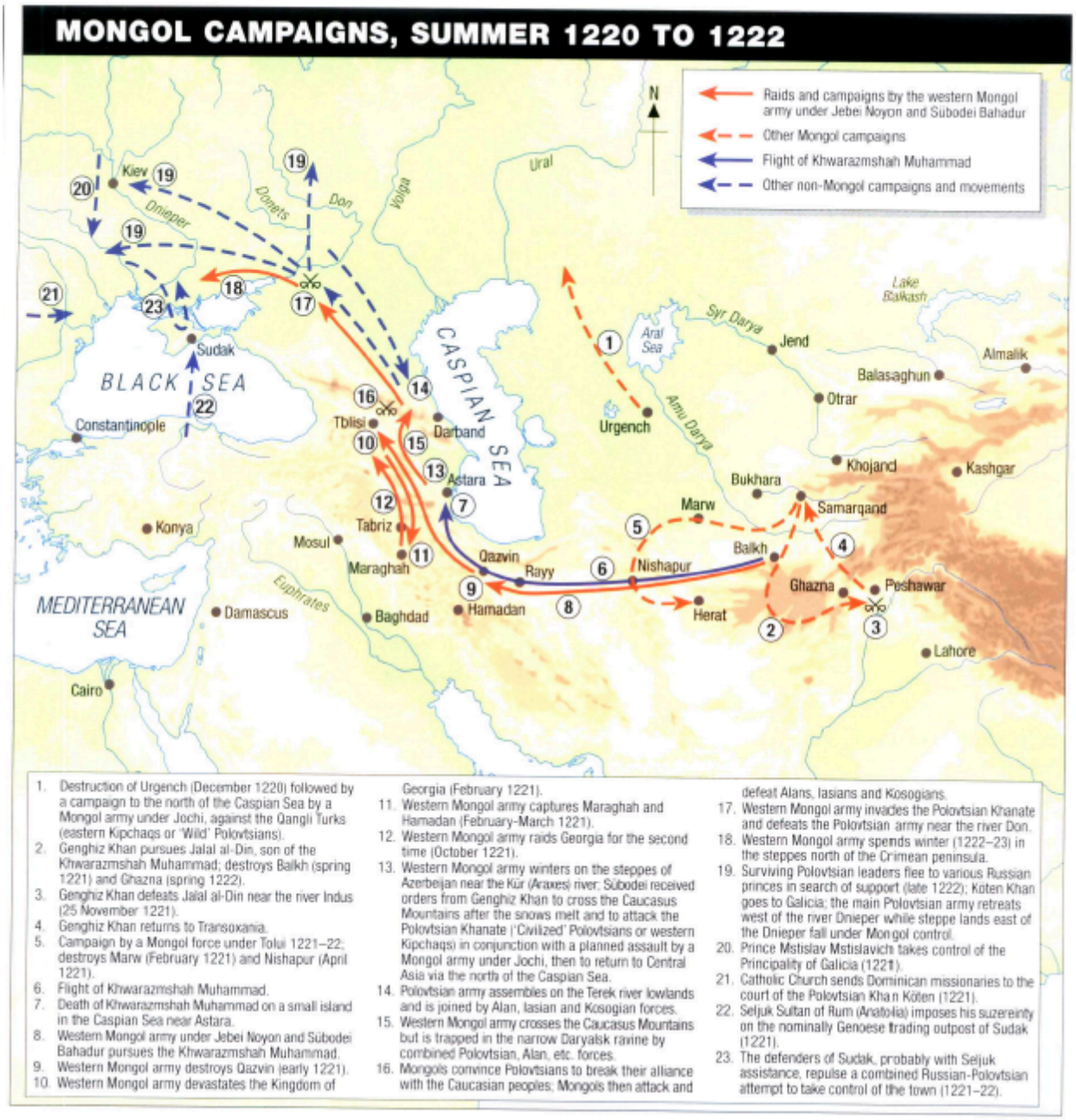
Given Subutai's extraordinary strategic aptitude, he almost never had to fight an 'even' battle, because his enemies were almost always maneuvered into a hopeless position before they ever fought. The Quyli river battle immediately following his defeat of the Kipchaks in 1218 is a rare exception, because he was attacked by an unknown third party in a little known area far from home. Here he would have to prove his tactical skill from a disadvantageous position. Shah Mohammed II of Khwarezm, a great conqueror who had carved out one of the largest Central Asian Empires from the Indus to central Kazakhstan and the Caucasus in just 18 years, had just killed Mongol envoys and implicitly declared war on Genghis Khan. Word had certainly not yet reached Mongolia, and it certainly hadn't reached Subutai. Having heard about Subutai's army in the steppe, Mohammed marched 1,200 km north to attack him as a preemptive attack. Subutai tried to bribe Mohammed to leave them in peace, saying they had no quarrel and would offer captured Kipchak loot, but Mohammed was determined to fight. He also had 60,000 fresh men, all seasoned Turkic cavalry who had participated in his wars of conquest, against Subutai's 20,000, minus his losses during the campaign and the invalids from the battle the previous day.[5]

Details on the battle are fuzzy, as are most cavalry versus cavalry battles. From what we can tell, both sides refused their left wing and allocated more troops to the right wing: hence both right wings pushed back the enemy left wing. What is notable is that Subutai fed small reserve units to stall the Khwarezmian right wing, while having his center and right wing commit heavily to attack the Khwarezmian center.[6] He also seems to have had some of his men dismount, presumably on the left wing, to help bolster the wing and increase their firepower.[7] This forced the Khwarezmian right wing to break off its own attack on the Mongol left and rescue its center.[8] At this point darkness enveloped the battlefield, and Subutai later lit three campfires for each man in his army, to signify that he had received reinforcements. One or both of the sides left the battlefield during the night (sources do not agree), but sources on both sides indicate that Mohammed had sustained heavy losses, possibly a third of his army.[9] This 'draw' shook Mohammed's nerve, as he realized just the caliber of opponent he had instigated a war with.

A year later (1219-1220), Genghis Khan invaded the Khwarezm Empire in force. After achieving a central position and dissolving Khwarezmian organized resistance, he sent Jebe and Subutai to chase the fleeing Mohammed. Though Shah Mohammed II escaped the Mongol pincer maneuvers, Subutai and Jebe managed to cut off his further retreat westward into Azerbaijan by marching through the day and night. Mohammed was forced to flee into the Caspian Sea, where he died shortly after from a disease acquired during the withering pursuit[10]. Khwarezmian resistance was mopped up over the next two years.[11] Subutai then came up with another of his highly unorthodox strategies: in order to subjugate the Kipchaks living in northwest Kazakhstan, he wanted to invade not from northeast Kazakhstan, but by attacking from the southwest through Georgia, across the Caucasus and the Pontic steppe. By approaching from the Kipchak's rear, they would have no way to evade the Mongols. This of course was all unknown territory for the Mongols. Jebe was designated as the primary commander for the Khwarezm campaign, but Subutai took the lead for the western campaign.[12]

The Mongol Expedition West: 1221-1224

What followed, in the words of Edward Gibbon, was a cavalry raid "which has never been attempted, and has never been repeated."[13] Ibn Al Athir, the great Muslim historian, mentioned that he thought it unlikely that his future readers would believe the stories of this campaign, because such an unprecedented accomplishment was “unheard of in ancient or modern times.”[14]The Mongols first plundered the powerful kingdom of Georgia, a mountainous kingdom that fought in a European and steppe hybrid with renowned knights and horse archers. The Georgians had continuously defeated their steppe neighbors, the Seljuk Turks, and had shepherded a powerful army of possibly some 50-60,000,[15] with a renowned core of knights and Cuman horse archers.[16] Subutai made use of Christian traditions of carrying a large cross at the head of their armies and tricked local Georgian forces into thinking the Mongols were allies and defeated an initial Georgian army.[17] He returned to Iran to finish the Khwarezm war, and returned a year later.



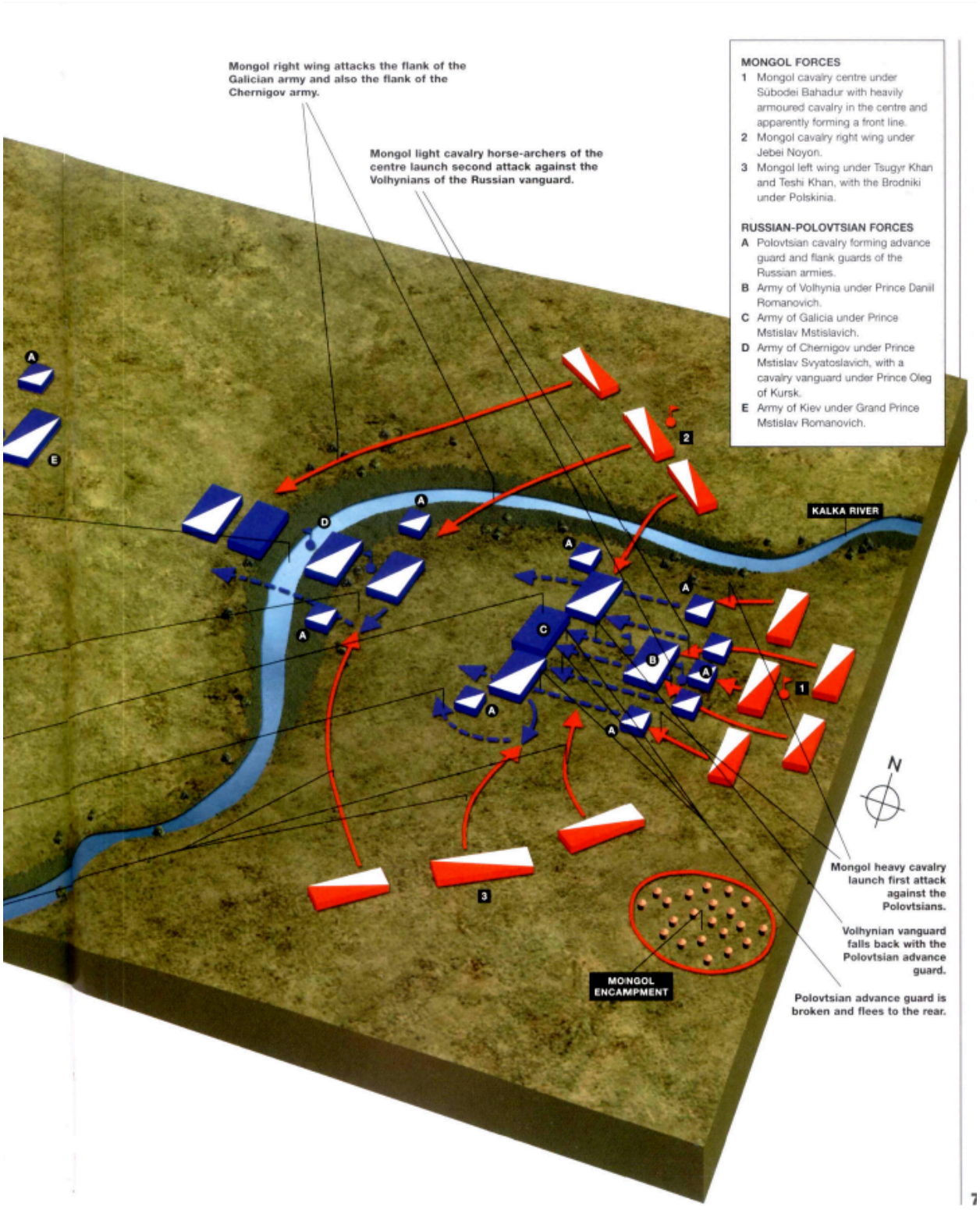
Courtesy of D. Nicolle, Kalka River 1223.

After ravaging the countryside, he forced the Georgian army to fight him near the Caucasus Mountains, at a battle called the plain of Khunan, or the river Kotman. [18] The disciplined Georgian army kept its formation, so Subutai retreated, with the Georgians in orderly pursuit, past a mountain pass that Jebe was hiding behind. After this, the Mongols enveloped and separated the Georgian wings from each other. Each Georgian wing was continually threatened in from multiple angles by the two Mongol forces. On one wing, a smaller Mongol force pulled the Georgian cavalry away from its

comrades by using a feigned retreat. That gave the remainder of the Mongol army the opportunity to completely envelop and conduct successive attacks from multiple sides against the core Georgian army. Each part was surrounded and defeated them in turn. The Georgian army was annihilated and its king died of his wounds, which unintentionally doomed the Fifth Crusade that was awaiting a Georgian attack from the north.[19] This battle, over what was perhaps the finest army of Christendom, would have been a fitting capstone to a career of almost any general. Yet for Subutai, it was just a footnote in a long series of conquests.

The Mongols then ventured north. They wanted to attack the heavily fortified city of Derbent, and did so by marching through the Caucasus Mountains in winter and surprising it from the more vulnerable northern side. This was the first time an enemy had done such a maneuver, and Derbent immediately submitted.[20] The Mongols then crossed the Caucasus completely but were attacked by a powerful coalition of Alans, Circassians, and Cumans upon descending. After some skirmishing, Subutai judged that he would be unable to break the enemy without used diplomacy to break up the coalition, which he then defeated in turn.

After enveloping another Cuman army, Subutai plundered the Russian steppe. In response, the Rus and Cumans created a vast coalition force, which numbered possibly upwards of 80,000 men.[21] Subutai attempted to diplomatically detach the Rus from the Cumans, but the Rus, bound by blood ties, refused. The Mongols then declared war, but then acted in fear of the Rus army, and marched 9-11 days east in a vast feigned retreat. Along the way, the Rus scored a minor victory over a rearguard, as well as seizing numbers of livestock.[22] These victories and the Mongol flight gave the Rus extra confidence, and led to discord between their three leaders who could not agree on how boldly they should pursue. As a result, the Rus and Cuman columns did not stay compact in marching order, but became slightly spread apart.



Courtesy of D. Nicolle, Kalka River 1223.

Finally, the Mongols suddenly turned and enveloped. Subutai's tactics were on display here: without waiting for a missile assault, the Mongols immediately delivered a lance charge to the coalition front, while flanking with their horse archers. The horse archers seemed to have been firing at the reserve units. They also deployed a smoke screen in between the Rus/Cuman vanguard and their second army, the Chernigov force. The coalition was unprepared for this fierce and abrupt onslaught, and the vanguard broke and fled: right into the approaching Chernigov army that had just emerged from the smokescreen.[23] Rus forces had been transformed into a kinetic weapon against their own comrades. With the front half of the army retreating in chaos, and the Mongols enveloping the remainder, the coalition resistance collapsed and fled. The Rus rearguard managed to create a fortified position to cover the retreat. The Mongols simply masked their position while pursuing the fugitives; afterwards, they stayed out of range and starved them out.[24] Rus losses were heavy, between 50-90% of their army likely perished.[25]

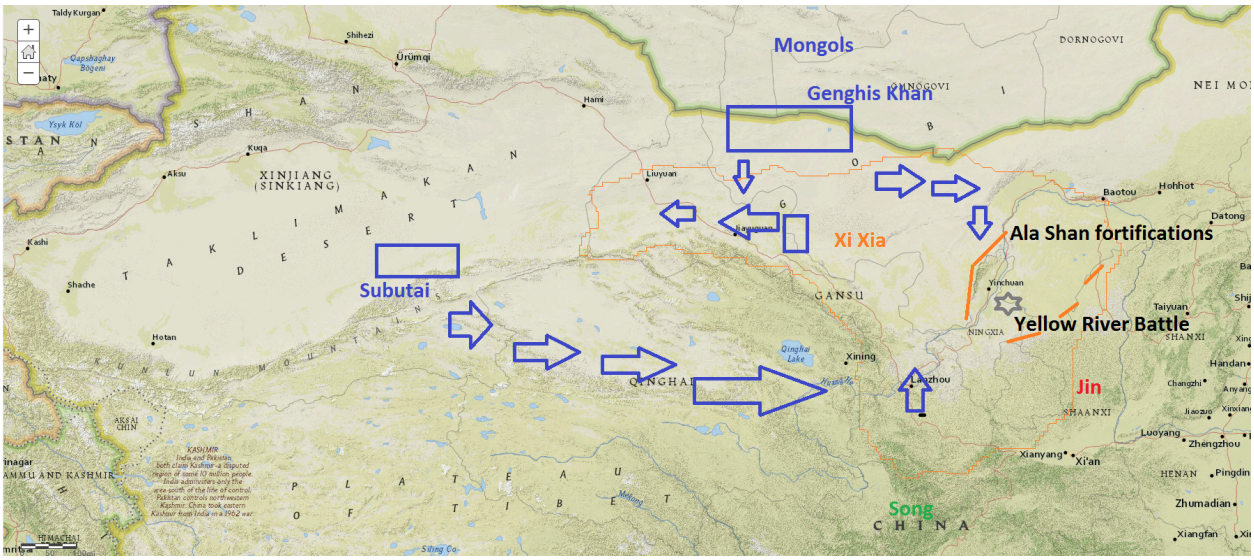


The Mongols then turned east, as they had a specific date to rendezvous with Genghis Khan. They ventured into the territory of the Volga Bulgars, where Ibn al Athir and Friar

Julianus, using traders from the region, record a significant defeat. This is corroborated with Friar Julian's later visit to the area, and an oblique mention in the Secret History.[26] However, Subutai's Chinese biography does not record this 'defeat' [it does record his later defeat at Daohui Valley], but it does note that in 1224 Subutai formed a new Mongol division composed of thousands of impressed or mercenary troops he had incorporated during the campaign.[27] This force included Volga Bulgar troops, so while the Volga Bulgars likely inflicted some kind of defeat on the Mongols, any losses suffered during the Volga Bulgar campaign must have been relatively minor. From other sources, we also know that after departing from the Volga region, Subutai defeated the Kipchaks in Kazakhstan, his original objective.[28] With some 12-20,000 starting men, Subutai had marched around 5500km into unknown territory, defeating the main armies of a number of nations and acquiring many new troops.

Conquest of the Xi Xia: 1226-7

In 1226, Genghis Khan invaded the Tanguts of Xi Xia for the second time, located in the Ordos Loop of the western Yellow River. Though they were the weakest of the Chinese kingdoms overall, the Liao, Jin, and Song had never managed to penetrate the Tangut's enormous mountain fortresses and walls, located around the Ala Shan mountains and anchored on the formidable Yellow River. The Mongols in this case would divide into three armies, one to threaten the Tangut front and one to attack the western half of the Tangut Empire. The last army would start in modern day Xinjiang and attack through the Tibetan kingdoms in modern day Amdo region, south of Qinhai lake.[29] Though the path would be treacherous and they would effectively be attacking an uninvolved third party, it would allow them both total surprise and the ability to circumvent the Ala Shan fortifications.[30] This plan was originally Subutai's idea, and he led the army that attacked through Tibet. After defeating and incorporating the locals into his forces, he emerged behind the Ala Shan in the Tangut rear and forced the Tangut army to retreat. Maneuvered outside of its fortifications, it was destroyed in battle by Genghis Khan.[31] After the Mongol victory, Subutai then campaigned in Jin territory to the south, becoming familiar with the mountainous regions of western China. That knowledge would become crucial a few year later.



Campaigns in Jin China: 1230-34.

After Ogedei Khan's succession in 1229, he sent Subutai to campaign in the Pontic Steppe, while Ogedei himself went to defeat the Jin dynasty. [32]However, Ogedei's army suffered an embarrassing series of defeats at Dachangyuan and Weizhou in 1229-30 to a resurgent Jin, who then boasted about it through an envoy to Ogedei's face.[33] With his prestige at stake, Ogedei recalled Subutai back to China to take command.[34] Like Scipio and the Romans had learned firsthand from Hannibal, the Jin had learned firsthand from decades of defeats to the Mongols. But they resisted as tenaciously as the Romans ever did, and created a new army and defensive strategy to weather the storm.

The Jin relied on a cordon defense: passage from the north was impeded by the Yellow River, while in the west lay the daunting Qinling Mountains. The Yellow River defense was anchored by a large number of heavily fortified cities along with the vast Yellow River simply being difficult to cross. The Jin used a scorched earth strategy on all their territory outside this core region. The Jin core of Henan also held some of the most heavily fortified cities in the world. Kaifeng's metropolis held over 10 million people, and its walls were dozens of kilometers in circumference and several meters thick. The Song stationed large forces to the south, and the only possible access point to the Jin domain was Tong Pass, in between the Qinling and the Yellow River. Tong Pass was heavily fortified with a defense in depth across its hills and outfitted with siege weaponry and the Jin's state of the art gunpowder shrapnel bombs. The Jin main field army that repeated inflicted defeats on the Mongols had 150,000 highly paid crack units, though only 20,000 cavalry. A number of these men were deserters from Mongol forces who

were lured over by the Jin government offering triple the standard pay. Including garrisons, militia and other armies, their forces totaled 348,000 on paper at the start of the campaign. Mongol forces were unknown, but were somewhat in excess of 100,000.[35]

In 1231, Subutai first tried to bypass the Jin fortified position by maneuvering through the Qinling mountains south of Tong Pass. The main Mongol army would threaten a key Yellow River fortress of Weizhou in the north as a diversion. The diversion worked, and the Jin main army was drawn to the north. However, their scouts performed well, and their crack cavalry moved with alacrity. Subutai's army, still in the mountains, was threatened from the plains to the northeast as well as from Tong Pass to the north. With the Jin threatening to cut off his retreat and envelop him, he was forced to retreat the way he came and lost a battle at Daohui Valley.[36] The Jin, though victorious, were unable to pursue and exploit the victory. Though the Mongols won a siege of the powerful Wei River fortress of Fengxiang by a focused mass artillery barrage, the Jin had held the Mongols to an impasse in regards to their core territory of Henan. With his prestige and security of rule on the line, Ogedei furiously berated Subutai for his failure. Subutai would get another chance, with everything at stake.[37]

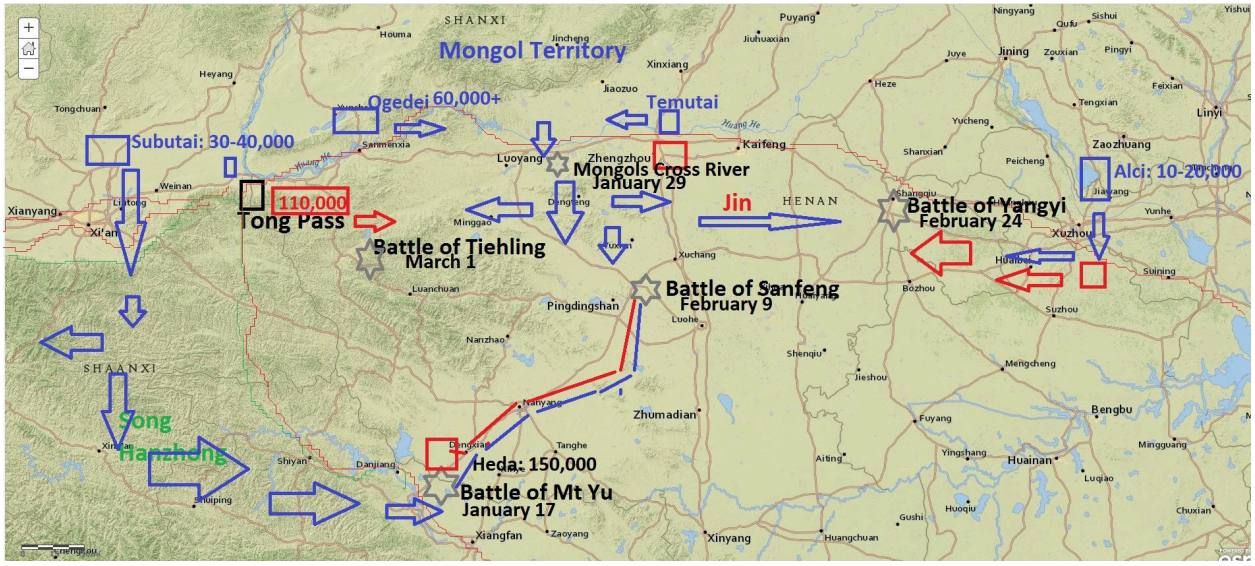
The Sanfeng Campaign: 1231-2

Subutai's campaign of 1231-1232 was the apex of his career. He fought against a far more capable foe in a much more dangerous position than in any other campaign.[38] The stakes were the highest they had been for the Mongols since Genghis Khan's initial invasion of China, with Ogedei’s very rule on the line. Few generals in history have had to confront as difficult a problem as Subutai faced, and the way he solved it is simply stunning.

Rather than trying to force his way through the Jin cordon again, Subutai instead decided to expand the war to Song territory. This was not an easy decision, for the Song had underwent a sort of military revitalization after their defeat to the Jin in 1207-1208 war, and they inflicted serious losses on Jin forces during the war from 1217-1223. The Song, though an enemy of the Jin, executed the Mongol envoys sent to demand passage through their territory; this decision ensured war.

The Mongol army, numbering something over 100,000 men, was to be split into 5 forces. Four of these were to be dispersed along the wide frontage of the Yellow River defense line, including one decoy force threatening Tong Pass, one small army at Weizhou, the main Mongol army west of Weizhou along the Yellow River, and the other

important army east in Shandong.[39] These armies would threaten various fortresses and crossing points, while the decisive army under Subutai invaded Henan through Song territory from the south.[40]



The Song, rivals of the Jin, controlled the forested and mountainous Hanzhong, with up to 100,000 men in the overall sector. More militia was drafted over the course of the fighting. The Mongols tried to obtain peaceful passage, but the Song refused and executed their envoys. The Song had a defense-in-depth system of fortifications, stockades, and cities. Some were surmountable from the front, but they had several serious fortifications, like Raofeng pass, that were completely unassailable.[41]
The actual campaign is far too complex to get into in detail. In brief, Subutai maneuvered his forces around Song fortifications step by step. He would feint an attack from the front, while maneuvering around the rear by taking byroads, bridging cliffs, or fording rivers using chopped down houses. In particular, when he pierced one of the Song positions at Wuxiu Pass, one army moved quickly to the south through Song resistance, until it was stalled at Da'an. Meanwhile, another army crossed the Jialingjiang River on makeshift rafts, many miles behind the Song army of He Jin, who was easily defeated.[42]

When he was unable to find a way past strong Song positions in the center, where they were reinforcing their army, he expanded his efforts further to the west. Note that this was the opposite direction he wanted to go (Henan was east), but he was determined to outflank Song positions. Once one area had been isolated, the Mongols would then take fortified positions or cities by siege. As the Mongols continued to expand the war and stretch the Song defenses, the Song tried to hurry forces to meet new threats, but the Mongols would attack elsewhere or sometimes move faster. When opposed, they would

not attack, but continued to find unorthodox paths. Subutai also sent decoy forces deep into Song territory to the southwest (Langzhong, Sichuan) to plunder and deceive the Song as to his area of attack.[43] Following a defeat of the Song force at Jinzhou, after almost 6 months of continuous defeats and a devastated Hanzhong, the Song agreed to let the Mongols pass in peace.[44]

At some point during this campaign, the Jin became aware of what Subutai was trying to do. After much confusion and discussion, they agreed to send Wanyan Heda's elite army south to defeat the Mongols when they entered Henan. The Jin army marched from Tong Pass over 200km to the south in the middle of December and January. Heda attempted to ambush the Mongols, but they detected and avoided it. Heda then took up a strong position at Mt Yu (a hill), where the Mongols attacked him. After several waves of attacks, the Mongols maneuvered their entire army around to the other side of the hill in an attempt to catch the Jin shifting formations to match him. However, Heda kept his army in formation and was able to repel further Mongol assaults. Subutai attempted a feigned retreat, but Heda did not bite; he had lost to one a decade earlier against Muqali. The Mongols melted away into the darkness, unwilling to seriously force the Jin position.[45]

The Jin had held off the Mongols in battle, but that would prove to be the easy part. Seeing that an even pitched battle would be costly, Subutai shifted gears. The Mongols withdrew into the fog of war, blinding the Jin beyond a certain distance with their scouting screens and hiding their armies in the forests of Henan. While cavalry armies were supposed to prefer the open plain and have difficulty with dense forests, Subutai turned this weakness into a weapon. Mongol armies would sleep and graze during the day, and march during the night to cover their movements and keep the Jin uncertain. It is also important to note that this was during January and February of 1232: the average January temperature in Henan today is around 0 degrees Fahrenheit. After several tense days of uncertainty for the Jin, the Mongols suddenly attacked from the forests. The Jin, wary of an ambush, managed to hold them off, but realized too late that the threatened ambush itself had been a diversion: a small force of Mongols had managed to get behind the Jin and seized their supplies, the real target. Heda now had to march east to the fortified city of Deng to resupply.[46]

Subutai, still hiding most of his forces beyond the Jin's reconnaissance screen, now separated his army into many detachments. Some 3,000 men would mask the Jin army directly. Another 3,000 men were sent ahead to the north, along the probable route the Jin would take to return to Kaifeng: the main army remained in between in dispersed forces, alternating between harassing the Jin army and obstructing its supply line and

communications back to Kaifeng. The Jin had last sent out a message to the capital proclaiming their victory at Mount Yu. They would not be able to send or receive another one until they got near to Sanfeng Mountain, almost 3 weeks later.[47]

During all of this, the chaos caused by Subutai in central Henan, as well as the vigorous activity of the other Mongol armies, gave Ogedei a window to cross the Yellow River in the center, north of Luoyang. The entire Jin strategy was based around preventing the Mongols from entering Henan, and now two armies had made it inside.[48]
The Jin army was now subjected to continual torment. In addition to having to march hundreds of kilometers in 0 degree weather, they were unable to sleep due to continuous Mongol threats, phantom ambushes, and Mongol soldiers making loud noises near the Jin encampments throughout the night. The Jin army, having lost its supplies and only partially refilled it at Dengzhou, found their supply depots burned or stolen. The Mongol advance forces blocked their passage through the main road to Kaifeng by cutting down trees, which forced the Jin to take an alternative, and longer, western route. Overall, the sleep deprived Jin army was cold, miserable, and hungry.[49]

All was not rosy for the Mongols, as their harassing force under Jalar was lured into an ambush and apparently lost enough men that the commander was replaced. This enabled the Jin to double their marching speed going forward: during the constant Mongol harassment and shadowing, they only marched at 15km a day on average. Afterwards, they moved at over 30km a day. Though the Mongol shadowing forces did not act so aggressively, they still continued to fake attacks, and even crossed a bridge to feign an attack on the Jin rear.

The Jin commanders were despondent at this point. Not only had the Mongols managed to cross the Yellow River line to the north in the ensuing chaos, but they were also running out of options to deal with Subutai's army. In addition, Ogedei had secretly sent fresh reinforcements to Subutai, who would play a crucial role in the upcoming battle. The Jin, confident in their ability on the field, wanted so badly to bring the Mongols to battle, but Subutai refused to allow them that opportunity. At long last, it looked like their wish would be granted at Sanfeng Mountain. The Jin held the high ground and saw the Mongols arrayed in battle formation in a wide arc. The Mongols did not attack such a strong position, but waited in plain sight for the Jin to make a move. The arrival of a blizzard tormented both armies, though the Mongols weathered it inside houses in nearby villages. Finally the Jin attempted to march north again and possibly fight the Mongol army stationed in view to their east, but as they embarked on the northern road to safety, a separate army of Mongols that had been hiding in the forests

attacked them from the west. The Jin soldiers, who were sleep deprived, cold and frostbitten, and hungry, were easily massacred.[50]

With the destruction of the best Jin army at Sanfeng, the Mongols now held the central position in Henan. The Jin still had field armies to the northwest, at Tong pass, and to the northeast along the Yellow River, as well as large garrison and royal forces, but these were now in great danger. The Mongols enveloped the Jin Yellow River army from the east and west, defeating it at Yangyi on February 24th. The Tong pass army, realizing the danger, attempted to march back to Kaifeng. Its commander decided to march through the Qinling mountains to avoid Mongol cavalry superiority in the plains: the Jin had an army of some 110,000, most infantry. However, the Mongols found the mountains to be no impediment: the Tong pass army became encircled and stranded in the mountains by Mongol forces, with dwindling supplies and many dropping dead due to the cold. The remainder of the army was liquidated at Tiehling on March 1st.

After this victory, Ogedei Khan and his brother Tolui departed for Mongolia with most of the Mongol army, leaving Subutai with a small force to finish the job. Subutai then spent months raising auxiliary Chinese forces to reduce the strain on his Mongols.[51]
After their field armies were destroyed, the Jin still had substantial garrison armies, and Mongol forces were depleted by Ogedei going home. Due to a mixture of the divided Jin command (with Heda dead) and Mongol quickness, one of the main Jin forces was ambushed and destroyed before it could combine with the rest. The remaining forces had to retreat south to stay safe, which meant they were isolated from the Emperor's army, trapped inside Kaifeng. With the blockade making the situation in Kaifeng untenable, the Emperor’s army sallied and attempted to attack a Mongol supply depot at Weizhou. Subutai followed at his heels and defeated portions of the Emperor’s army when it was crossing the Yellow River on both sides, sending the remnants fleeing to Guide.[52] Shortly after, Subutai made an alliance with the Song, likely to conserve his Mongol troops and feed his Chinese levies. The Song, eager to defeat their hated Jin enemies, did the bulk of the remaining cleanup battles and sieges. The Jin Dynasty was finally defeated after 23 years of fierce and stubborn resistance.[53]

After the Jin fell in 1234, the Song declared an unprovoked war on the Mongols to seize Henan. The Song sent two armies totaling 60,000 men deep into Henan to secure the Yellow River and Tong pass line. Subutai, with far fewer men, retreated north of the Yellow River. He also broke the dykes and flooded Henan, while evacuating many people.[54] The Song armies were forced to march through waist deep water, while interfered with their logistics. The Song armies split up to secure different strong points, though they could not advance all the way to the edge of Henan due to logistical

problems. The most advanced Song army was ambushed during meal time by the Mongols, who secretly crossed the Yellow River and had gotten close by marching secretly through a wormwood forest.

When the other advanced Song army learned what happened to their vanguard army, they began to retreat. The Mongols tried to fight them head on, but the Song resisted their charge by breaking off into separate infantry squares. Subutai was unwilling to commit to a battle on even terms against a strong foe, so he stayed out of range and shadowed them until they had been worn out due to hunger. Then the Song were routed and destroyed with ease. The remaining Song forces retreated back in disgrace, as their position had become untenable.[55]

The Invasion of Russia and Europe

In 1235, the Mongols assembled an elite force to invade Russia and expand westward. Subutai first disposed of the Volga Bulgars, sending one army to attack north up the Volga as a decoy. The real threat was the Mongol army that marched through the Ural Mountains deep to the northeast and emerged behind the Bulgar cities and fortifications[56]. Guerrilla Kipchak forces were subjugated with a vast encirclement campaign that deprived them of areas to hide.[57] The Mongols next conquered the Rus, though as they had not allied like in 1223, the campaign was more of an exercise in logistics and wide envelopment maneuvers than an actual military affair. The Rus were so outmatched that when the most formidable of the Rus princes, Grand Duke Yuri of Vladimir, had finally organized an army and sent out 3,000 men to scout, he was in turn informed that his army had been completely encircled by the Mongols. It was completely annihilated.[58]



By 1241, the Mongols had subjugated all of modern Russia and Ukraine and were ready to invade Europe.[59] Their primary target was Hungary, ostensibly to punish King Bela IV for harboring Cumans that were the enemies of the Mongols. Subutai once

again dispersed his 40,000 man forces into five armies across a 1000km front, though his choice of strategy was different. Unlike the Chinese professional, fully maintained armies, the European forces lived in widely dispersed contingents among the various lords and clergy. Four of the Mongol columns would attack in a wide arc from Poland to Transylvania, creating uncertainty and attacking the European contingents before they could group up. The main Mongol force in the center, under Subutai's direct command, would dash forward to occupy and later defeat the Hungarian King. This meant that each Mongol army would be free to crush the enemy in front of it without worrying, all while preventing the Europeans from properly concentrating their entire forces.[60] King Bela had known the Mongols were coming since as early as 1237. He attempted to form an alliance with the fleeing Kipchak tribes, but this was later sundered when the Mongols approached. The Hungarian army under Bela's father had numbered 10,000 cavalry and many more infantry, while the entire Mongol invasion force was said to be around 40,000 at this point.[61]



Mongol Invasion in East-Central-Europe (1241–1242)

The Mongols defeated the Hungarians and Polish contingents in over a dozen battles. The means varied: Subutai lured Archbishop Ugolin's knights into a swamp, Orda used his own camp and booty stash to occupy Polish attention during a feigned retreat, while Kadan tricked the enemy into a rout at Oradea by deceiving them into thinking that he

had lured them into an ambush by mounting straw soldiers for a “flanking force” on a hill. [62]

The Mongols stayed in constant communication despite the distances and foreign terrain. The army in Poland defeated a combined Polish/German force under Duke of Silesia Henry II at Liegnitz by the use of a feigned retreat and smokescreen. This was remarkably similar to what Subutai used at the Kalka River.[63] The battle at Liegnitz occurred on April 9, 1241; Subutai then attacked Bela’s army at Mohi two days later on April 11.

Mongol scouts reported that the Hungarian army was twice as large as the Mongol force.[64] Subutai suffered a stroke of bad luck at Mohi, as their plans to launch a night attack were revealed by a Rus deserter. However, he recovered by use of a brilliant strategy that will be covered later. After defeating the Polish and Hungarian armies, the Mongols proceeded to chase Bela into the Mediterranean while besieging and occupying most of Hungary and Transylvania.[65] The Mongols had defeated many disparate European forces before they could coalesce into one powerful body. In this regard, they operated similarly to that of Napoleon. In particular, the Polish army under Orda and Baidar defeated Henry II at Liegnitz, while his relative King Wenceslas of Bohemia was just a day away with 50,000 men.[66] Even though Wenceslas had a powerful army, the threat of the Mongols in Poland ambushing him was too high, so he retreated and fortified his own lands. However, this left the beleaguered kingdom of Hungary helpless. After subjugating most of Hungary and beginning to launch raiding parties into neighboring lands, the Mongols suddenly retreated. There is no consensus on exactly why this happened, but the death of Ogedei Khan is likely to have played a large role.[67]

The Mongols left Hungary by invading yet untouched lands of Bulgaria and Thrace. Bulgaria was vassalized, while the powerful Latin Emperor of Constantinople, Baldwin II, suffered a severe defeat, despite having just spent a fortune to raise a large army.[68] Subutai, in his seventies at this point, spent two years at the end of his life planning an invasion of the Song dynasty that would only materialize in 1258. He would die in peace with his family in 1248, at 72.

Analysis

Subutai inherited a great army and a potent military tradition, and he innovated greatly on top of that. Other exceptional Mongol generals also found great success, but none

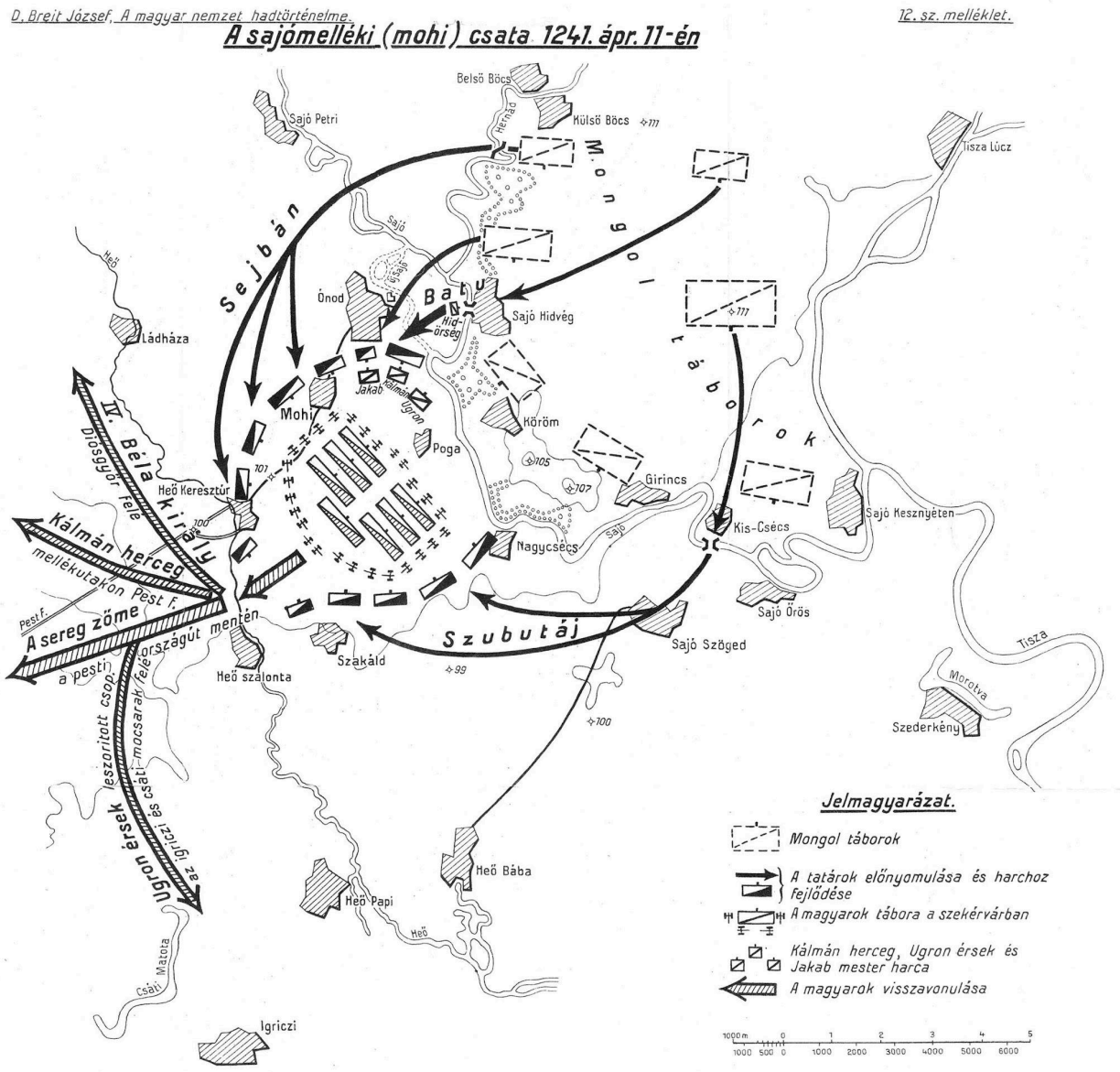
had to confront the obstacles that he encountered. His innovations would be so far reaching that many could not be replicated until the 20th century.

Subutai had incredibly varied means of obtaining victory, always with the goal to break their will to resist as cheaply as possible. His basic approach was the feigned retreat, leading the enemy to an ambush, exposed position, or attacking the enemy when they were strung out. Against more skilled foes, the feigned retreat did not lead to immediately tangible gains. Often Subutai used it to bring his foe to a battlefield he could not easily retreat from.[69] In Europe, the Mongol general seized a deep central position against the Hungarians to occupy their main army, while his other forces defeated a dozen now-isolated enemy forces along a 1000km frontage from Poland to Transylvania. The battles at Liegnitz, Mohi, and Hermannstadt were all fought within 1 day of the other. Once the Hungarian army was put to flight, a separate army was dispatched to chase down the Hungarian king.[70]

In other instances, such as Rus and China, he used a mass envelopment to herd the rural people into fortified cities and cut off local forces from each other. This not only provided a supply of levied workers and soldiers, but also overloaded the food supply of a strong fortress. In all cases, the enemy field forces were defeated first, even if they were deep inside enemy territory. Once the field army threat was removed, the Mongols could disperse their forces to besiege and control dozens of areas and fortresses simultaneously. Any guerrilla uprisings were immediately stalled by massacres and devastating the nearby agriculture.

Tactically, Subutai showed that he could fight a pitched battle against vastly superior odds at the Quyli River. However, this type of even battle was inevitably bloody, and he always tried to obtain a superior position before any actual combat took place. The Battle of Mohi is much more in line with this philosophy. He occupied the enemy with a frontal night assault at Mohi, using field artillery to blast open the forces defending the main bridge, while other Mongol units forded the river to the north. While the Hungarian attention was occupied with this attack to their front, he crossed over the river to the south where it was deep and required a pontoon bridge. The Hungarians, locked in a fierce battle against the Mongols in the center, panicked when the fresh forces Subutai emerged from their rear. The Hungarians barricaded themselves inside their fortified camp, but the Mongols attacked it from afar with artillery and some sort of gunpowder weapons. But rather than letting the Hungarians fight to the last man, Subutai opened up a hole in his formation during the battle that allowed the Hungarians to retreat. The Hungarians eagerly took the chance to flee, but the Mongols had used it as a trap. At first they shadowed the fleeing Hungarians on two sides, and then finished them off

when they became exhausted. Thus they easily slaughtered most of the Hungarian army, including the King's martial brother. Other fleeing Hungarian contingents were again driven into a swamp.[71]



Some enemies required even more advanced strategies. In order to defeat Wanyan Heda's army, Subutai forced it away from its central bases in the middle of winter, and then made it march along a route through its own territory that had been stripped of supplies in advance. During the march, the Jin army was attacked psychologically and physiologically until the army could no longer properly function, giving him an easy victory.

He used decoy armies and feints to occupy enemy attention while also attacking along a vast frontage, including allied kingdoms; this made it difficult for them to assess where

the real blow would come from, and it usually came from a completely unexpected angle. With attention occupied elsewhere, the primary army repeatedly invaded along routes that defenders must have considered impassable or unthinkable. These indirect routes included Amdo Tibet and the Taklamakan desert against the Xia, crossing the Caucasus and attacking from western Russia against the Kipchak rear, invading the mountainous and forested Hanzhong against the Jin and Song, and crossing the northern Urals against the Volga Bulgars. In the 1232 invasion of Henan, he was able to coordinate his four dispersed armies in the face of the enemy to a degree unmatched until the World Wars. Against these strategies, his foes became overloaded, and unable to concentrate their forces properly or form proper responses. This strategy was also applied operationally in Hanzhong. The Mongols continued outflanked Song mountain fortifications by bridging cliffs, crossing rivers using the lumber from felled houses, and expanding the war to unexpected sectors. Though the Song positions were presumably powerful from the front, the Mongol forces only occupied their attention from the front

Just as important were his methods outside of traditional military force. He lured the Merkits into complacency by using discarded children's toys to simulate nomadic families in flight. He broke up the coalition at the northern foot of the Caucasus by playing on shared roots and offering up a bribe. He tricked the Georgians and Armenians by sending merchants with rumors ahead of his army that his army was a Christian force from the east coming west to defeat the Muslims, then "proved it" by carrying a cross at the head of his columns like the Christians did.[72] This method later worked against the Rus as well.[73] After defeating the Hungarians at Mohi, Subutai used a stolen royal seal to issue bogus decrees to unsuspecting civilians in the name of the king, preventing them from organizing a resistance and leaving them in their villages where the Mongols could forcibly impress them into service. The actual Hungarian King was unable to countermand these false orders, as he was fleeing for his life to a ship in the Mediterranean.[74]

Though we have almost no internal records on Mongol logistics, it is self-evident that Subutai's campaigns were logistical masterpieces. He was able to project his army further on land than any army in history, all without noticing a significant drop in performance. The distance from Henan to Hungary is around 8,000 km, and while much of this is steppe, he also had to circumvent many areas that contained difficult terrain as well. Mongol armies could sustain themselves effectively in the steppe, but we are at a loss to describe how they managed to do so during the Hanzhong campaign, as well as living in the forests of Henan during winter, without any rest. Perhaps his foray over the Caucasus in winter and the maintenance of his army in hostile territory for four years

was just as impressive. Subutai's armies proved adept at manipulating the environment to their advantage: he impeded Heda's path to Junzhou by blocking the road with felled trees. On the other side, when King Bela of Hungary personally oversaw the Carpathian passes fortified with booby traps, logs, trenches, and thorns, it barely seemed to slow the Mongol army at all.[75] Furthermore, even though eastern Hungary had few real roads and was overgrown with shrubbery, he still managed to cover 180km in three days after crossing the Carpathians.[76]

Following Genghis Khan's example, he impressed locals to do the dirty, dangerous work of sieges. He also made use of freebooters, mercenaries, and local levies to serve in the front ranks in battle.[77] He then went a step further and made an alliance with the Song to finish off the Jin and conserve his manpower. When the Song invaded Mongol Henan, Subutai flooded the roads and evacuated the people and supplies. Finally, when invading Hungary, the Hungarian/Cuman alliance abruptly imploded, removing a powerful contribution to Hungarian manpower. The means of it spreading are unclear beyond the Mongol ultimatums to the King, but the pattern holds true.[78] Even though the Cumans had settled peacefully for years, the populace suddenly began believing that the Cumans were the cause of their misfortune, and turned on them with the frenzy of a mob. Thus instead of fighting alongside the Hungarians, the betrayed Cumans ransacked western Hungary.[79]

As with logistics, we have few internal records of Mongol espionage operations. Nevertheless, it is clear that this arm played an extraordinary role in Subutai's success. Given he was operating in completely unknown territory for much of his career, he had to obtain his information somehow. Not only did he learn the lay of the land, and how to use terrain across vast distances to his advantage, he also learned the internal divisions of his foes. This enabled him to act as a savior to the Christians against the Muslims, to cause rifts between the Europeans and the Cumans, and convince the Song to do his dirty work against the Jin. Lastly, he knew how to plan in advance and lay the seeds for espionage networks, as he made an alliance with Venetian traders during his 1222-23 western expedition that provided excellent intelligence in his later conquests of Russia and Europe.

Like Genghis Khan, Subutai made highly effective use of terror to paralyze his foes. This wasn't a universal strategy, but was carefully applied when it was best suited. As the Mongols were a known quantity in China, Subutai did not wantonly massacre.[80] Chinese sources do not seem to report the same tales of horror and futility that Muslim and western sources give. These sources, ranging from Ibn Al Athir to Grigor Aknerc'I, Thomas of Spalato, Master Roger, John of Plano Carpini, Matthew Paris, and the Rus

chronicles, all portray the Mongols as unstoppable hellish demons to some degree. The more gullible of these sources believed their presence was evidence of divine punishment, while the more rational recognized the Mongols deliberately used terror to erode the enemy's will to resist.[81] To many foes, they were incomprehensible and irresistible. But their message was clear: surrender peacefully, or you all will die. Naturally, many people resisted, but they were also able to gain willing collaborators and bloodless surrenders. The psychological power of this approach is best summarized by Master Roger of Torre Maggiore, who experienced it firsthand:

"*Soon rumors spread that the Tartars had occupied the German village of Thomasbrucke where they slaughtered everyone not fit for slavery. Hearing such news my head stood on end with fright, my whole body started trembling, and my tongue refused its duty because of the unavoidable and terrible death which awaited me. In my mind's eye I saw the slaughterers and the cold sweat of death that made the blood freeze in my veins. I saw people in fear of death, unable to control their hands and weapons, unable to raise their arms or legs only staring into space. And what more? I laid my eyes on people half-dead from panic."****[82]***

The end result of all of these diverse methods was that more Mongol soldiers rode home in one piece.

Obstacles

No commander in history has fought such a variety of opponents as Subutai. He campaigned against fellow Mongol tribes, the Xia, the Jin, the Song, a number of Kipchak and Cuman tribes, the Kangli tribes, the Khwarezmians, Georgians and Armenians, Alans and Circassians, the Rus, Volga Bulgars, Polish, Germans, Knightly Orders, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Croatians and Serbians, and the Latin Empire of Constantinople. Subutai did not have the luxury of being excellent in one environment, against one opponent: he had to be adaptable enough against everyone, including people he had never heard of. This also meant that he fought many different types of generals as well: some seemed incompetent, like the Rus leaders, while the Jin leaders performed superbly.

In some cases, Subutai had to deal with internal problems as well. As Subutai was not a member of the royal family, all princes of the blood technically had prerogative over him. Thus he had to command by persuasion as much as by authority. This was particularly a problem during the invasions of Russia and Europe, where the nominal head of the army was Batu, grandson of Genghis. Many Mongol princes had been sent on the

campaign, likely to apprentice under Subutai and gain command experience. However, Batu was at times incompetent, defeatist, and overbearing. He continually made mistakes in the field, such as failing to take Torzhok in two weeks, or failing to take the citadel of Gran at all. Subutai took over the siege for him at Torzhok and finished it in three days. Then Batu blundered the attack on the bridge at Mohi, losing far more forces than he needed to. At the subsequent victory banquet, Batu and other princes got into a vicious feud, which resulted in the princes Guyuk, Buri, and Mongke and their forces being sent home.[83] This was a critical loss of forces for the Mongol campaign, although internal unity was likely restored after Batu publicly praised Subutai for engineering their great victories.[84]

Subutai encountered a phenomenon that has thwarted many of the great generals in history: fighting one resilient enemy long enough for them to adapt. No matter how incompetent an enemy may have seemed in the beginning, if they had enough time to reform their army and learn from their failures, they would transform into a fearsome opponent. For example, both Napoleon and Hannibal were eventually felled by the exact same peoples they had been crushing for over a decade. Both of them made major innovations in the art of warfare, but they didn't keep innovating when on top. Eventually, the Prussians, Austrians, British, and Romans all adapted and started winning.

By 1231, the Jin had fought the Mongols for 20 straight years with incredible tenacity. Though they suffered many defeats, they used them to completely reform their army. Not only did they borrow Mongol concepts, they even lured over Mongol deserters with extremely high pay. Subutai, of all the great generals in history, is the possibly the only one to face and defeat a foe who had so comprehensively adapted to the strategies of their own army. The Jin anchored their defenses a fortress-based, river and mountain cordon, and refused to fight except on their own terms. Most great leaders like Temur, Alexander, Heraclius, or Scipio defeated powerful, but more fragile foes that collapsed before they could adapt to the victor's strategies. Those who did face enemies with great staying power who had time to adapt, like Napoleon, Hannibal, Charles XII, the Sassanids during the 602-628 Byzantine-Persian War, the Nationalists in the Chinese Civil War, and the Germans on the Eastern Front in WW2, eventually found themselves outmatched and defeated. On top of that, the Jin also possessed a technological and major terrain advantage. This was no ordinary victory, and the extraordinary lengths Subutai had to go through during the Sanfeng campaign is proof of the difficulty. Not only did he win decisively, but he preserved his men, and avoided a bloody meat grinder type of battle.

Unique Advantages

Subutai kept his Mongol troops alive at all costs. Though he was a military adventurer, eager to explore new territories, he went to highly unusual lengths to preserve the lives of his Mongols. He avoided committing into battles without a large strategic advantage, and almost always got one. He did not fight needless battles, nor did he burn his army out in costly sieges. He used diplomacy, bribes, and threats to break apart enemy coalitions as well as luring reluctant third parties to helping him. The Jin were all but finished in 1233 when he brought the Song into the war as an ally, but not only did the Song provide food to supply the Mongol armies to let them continue the assault, Subutai also had them fight the remaining battles of the war.

There is a general perception that nomadic cavalry armies are inherently poor at fighting in rough terrain such as forests and mountains. While this may be true for nomads in general, it certainly has no basis in reality for Subutai's campaigns. In order to even reach Jin territory, Subutai had to use 30-40,000 Mongol and Khitan cavalry to defeat the 100,000 Song forces holding the fortifications of Hanzhong. Hanzhong is a part of the Qinling Mountains, which even today still remains a thoroughly forested mountainous region. Then in Henan, when the Jin were stuck marching on roads during winter in their home territory, the Mongols were living and marching through forests to obscure their movements and intentions. The Mongols later ambushed the Song near Luoyang by creeping forward through a wormwood forest. Subutai fought ably in the mountains and highlands of Georgia and the Caucasus, the forests of Russia and Poland, as well as marching over 1,200 miles through Xinjiang and Tibet to invade the Tanguts.

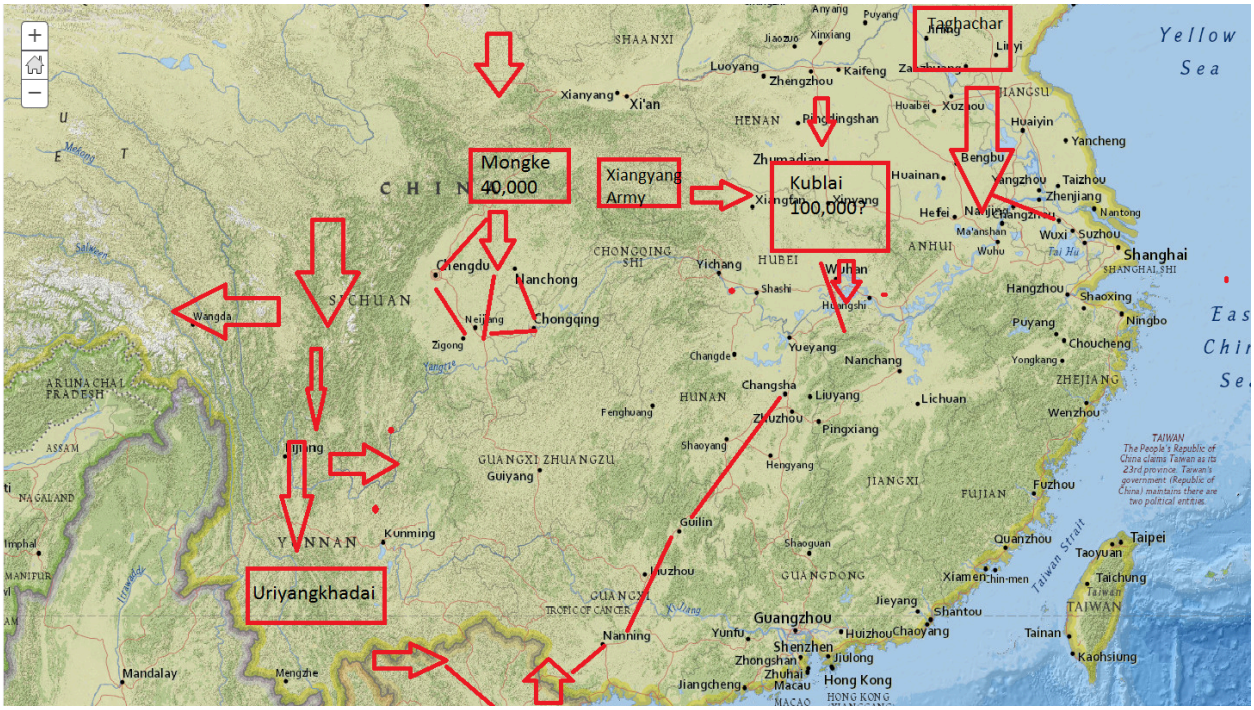
Subutai had a deep understanding of geography, despite operating in unknown regions. He continually attacked his foes from completely unexpected angles while occupying their attention from traditional routes. These types of attacks, like Hannibal’s crossing of the Alps on a vaster and more complex scale, are obviously very difficult for any general to conceive and execute even if they are familiar with the area. Subutai was doing it while attacking into previously unknown regions! He invaded Volga Bulgar by crossing the Urals deep into Siberia in addition to destroying the Kipchaks by crossing the Caucasus and attacking in their rear across the Pontic steppe. He circumvented the Xi Xia defense line by invading across the Taklamakan desert into Tibet, and dislocated the Jin defenses by attacking through the fortified mountains of Hanzhong held by the Song, a third party. Terrain had foiled many other nomadic armies in history, but Subutai always seemed more comfortable in adverse terrain than his foes, even when in their territory.

Some may claim that while Subutai conquered more land than anyone else in history, much of it was empty. However, this is inaccurate. Subutai conquered both sparsely populated areas - The Russian Steppe - as well as some of the most densely populated places on earth: Henan and central China. Furthermore, Central Asia and the steppe, while seemingly empty, contained arguably the most valuable resource of the medieval world: horses and experienced horsemen. It was because of Subutai's conquests that the Imperial Mongol Empire could field a larger highly-trained cavalry force than anyone in history.

Subutai left a powerful imprint beyond just his direct military legacy. The Subutai family was a uniquely successful military dynasty for three generations: they were certain the most successful of the Mongol military families, and may well have been the best in history. Though Uriyangkhadai and Aju are all but unknown to specialists, this is solely due to the opacity of Chinese sources. Both were extremely accomplished, particularly Uriyangkhadai, who was certainly one of the great generals of the era.[85]

Uriyangkhadai was Mongke Khan's personal tutor and Kublai's primary commander who strategized the conquest of Dali using a multi-pronged invasion over mountain passes and deep forests (Yunnan province in modern China). Uriyangkhadai then successfully subjugated the Dai Viet kingdom (Vietnam) in a year as well as the eastern kingdoms of Tibet. He then invaded the Song Dynasty through Dai Viet, defeating many armies in his path and marching all the way through core Song territory to the Yangtze River in a little over a year.[86] It was only the death of Mongke Khan from disease that halted the campaign. Aju successfully commanded the siege of Xiangyang and Fancheng, and played a key role in the subsequent campaign to subjugate the Song.

Lastly, given Subutai's chief command role in China from 1245-47, it is likely that he played a significant part in creating the Mongol Invasion plan against the Song. His son Uriyangkhadai would command the decisive flanking force through Vietnam, as Subutai himself would have done. In addition, the Khan at the time (1258-1259) was Mongke, who had been personally tutored by Uriyangkhadai and fought under Subutai during the western campaign. This plan is far too complex to go into detail, but a quick look at a Mongol operations map will display the sheer audacity and imagination behind it.



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[1] Carl Fredrik Sverdrup, “Sübe'etei Ba'atur, Anonymous Strategist”, Journal of Asian History, vol. 47 (2013), 1.

[2] Tonio Andrade, *The Gunpowder Age (2016),* 1-40.

[3] Christopher P. Atwood, “Jochi and the Early Western Campaigns,” 42-3, citing the Yuan Shi biography of Subutai, YS 121.2975-6.

[4] Ibid, 43-44. This campaign stretched from 1216-1219, which included the three battles at the Chu River, the Irtysh/Chem River, and the Quyli River. The long length of the campaign is explained by the fact that this was an expedition from Mongolia to the Caspian Sea, into uncharted territory.

[5] Ibid, 44. Primary sources for this battle include YS 121.2976, Nasawi 16, Juvaini 370, and Juzjani 267-8. The Chinese/Mongol sources include the base Yuan Shi, 149, Yelu Liuge’s biography in YS 149.3514, and Guo Dehai’s Yuan biography in YS 3522-3. Carl Sverdrup’s translation is used for Guo Dehai’s biography: Sverdrup, *Campaigns*, 188-190.

[6] The 1,000 man reserve rescue detail comes from Genghis Khan’s conversation about Yelu Liuge’s son Yelu Xieshe or Seche in his Yuan biography, who rescued the beleaguered Jochi with 1,000 men on the left wing. This is corroborated by the Muslim sources which place the Mongol left wing in dire straits, but unbroken.

[7] Ibn al Athir, 207-8 (D.S Richard’s translation).

[8] Juvaini, 370-1.

[9] All Muslim sources agree that Shah Mohammed’s nerve was badly shaken, which significantly affected his mentality for the subsequent Mongol invasion of Khwarezm. “The Shah realized his weakness since he had been unable to win a victory over a part of Chingiz Khan’s army. How would it be if they all came with their ruler?” However, there is disagreement on losses and who left the battlefield. Ibn al Athir says Mohammed lost a third of his men (20,000),

Juvaini and Juzjani say that the Mongols retreated during the night. The Yuan Shi base annals and the Subutai biography say that Mohammed fled during the night, while Guo Dehai's biography says not only did the Shah flee, but the Mongols pursued him and killed 30,000 men. See Atwood, "Jochi," 46-8, on the disputed chronology of the campaign.

[10] YS 121, 2797.

[11] Yuan Shi 121.2976, Nasawi, 66;87, Rashid al Din, *Compendium of Chronicles* (Thackston translation), 158;227-8;380-1, and Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror* (Boyle Translation), 143-7.

[12] Jebe's primacy is established in the Secret History (Rachewiltz translation), 178. Subutai's lead role in the western expedition is established in the Secret History, 183, and the Armenian Chronicle of Kirakos Ganjekec`I, *History of the Armenians* (Robert Bedrosian translation), 167.

[13] Paul D. Buell, "Subotei Ba`atur" in I. de Rachewiltz, *In The Service of the Khan,* 19.

[14] Ibn Al Athr, 215.

[15] The numbers of the two armies are difficult to ascertain. The Mongols had two tumens, which theoretically means 20,000 men. Kirakos (p.167) reported that they had 12,000 men, which seems feasible as well. Older Georgian Chronicles reported that their army was some 56,000 men at the epochal battle of Didgori in 1121. This included thousands of knights, crusaders, Alans, the 5,000 man King's personal guard, and Cuman allies. The Georgians had only expanded their power since then, so their army in the 13th century should have been if anything larger. See *The Georgian Chronicles,* vol. 1, 335-340 (Bedrosian translation).

[16] The Georgian military had been heavily shaped by its experiences with the First Crusaders and their knights. The Georgians accordingly adopted the couched lance charge, roughly similar levels of equipment, as well as European-type castles to defend their lands. As they were continuously fighting with nomadic opponents, they also settled in Cuman families of their own and added them to their forces. Thus of all the European-style powers, they were ones with the most experience fighting against nomadic armies. See Mamuka Tsurtsumia, "Couched Lance and Mounted Shock Combat in the East The Georgian Experience," in the Journal of Medieval Military History vol. XII, and P.B. Golden, 'Cumanica I: The Qipcaqs in Georgia.' Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi 4 (1984): 45–87.

[17] *The Mongols and the Armenians,* 48-50.

[18] Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West,* 71-2. For the location of the battle, see *The Mongols and the Armenians,* 48.

[19] I am using Carl Sverdrup's reconstruction of the battle; it is difficult pierce together a full picture because of discrepancies between the Armenian sources and Ibn al Athir. Sverdrup, *Campaigns,* 196-7; Grigor Aknerc'I, *History of the Nation of the Archers* (Robert Bedrosian translation), 291; Kirakos, 167-8; Barthold, *Turkestan down the Mongol Invasions,* 420-7; Ibn Al Athir, 210-218.

[20] Sverdrup, *Campaigns,* 200-1.

[21] David Nicolle, *Kalka River 1223,* 56. Some have doubted this number, however, it is absolutely clear that the unusually lengthy Mongol feigned retreat was made because they viewed the Rus army as extremely powerful.

[22] Ibid, 57-61: 70-75; Ibn Al Athir, 223-5; The Chronicle of Novgorod, 285-90; Buell, *In the Service of the Khans,* 19-20; John Fennell, *The Crisis of Medieval Russia,* 64-66.

[23] Richard Gabriel, *Subotai the Valiant,* 100.
[24] This army surrendered and was killed for their unprovoked slaughter of the Mongol envoys earlier.
[25] Fennell, 65-66; *The Chronicle of Novgorod*, 290.
[26] Ibn Al Athir, 223-5; Secret History, 270; Riccardus; Gockenjan and Sweeny, Der Mongolenstrum, 79.
[27] YS 121.2977 (Buell translation).
[28] Juvaini, 149.
[29] Christopher P. Atwood, “The First Mongol Contacts with the Tibetans,” 29-31.
[30] Buell, *In the Service of the Khan,* 20.
[31] Sverdrup, *Campaigns,* 215-221; H.D. Martin, Rise of Cinhigs Khan, 283-308.
[32] Rashid al-Din, *Successors* (Boyle translation), 33.
[33] Christopher P. Atwood, “Pu’a’s boast and Doqolqu’s Death,” 1-10.
[34] Atwood, “Pu’a’s Boast,” 10-20.
[35] Ibid, 10-35; Sverdrup, *Campaigns,* 234-6.
[36] Ibid; Atwood, “Pu’a’s Boast, 15-25.” The details of the Daohui battle are not clear. Atwood suggests that Subutai had his forces spread over 33 miles, devastating the land, and was defeated piecemeal. Sverdrup thinks Subutai tried to retreat but was caught before he could extricate himself.
[37] Ibid, 20-25; 35-37; Buell, *In the Service of the Khans,* 21-2.
[38] Sverdrup, *Campaigns,* 233.
[39] Sverdrup, *Campaigns,* 234-7.
[40] Ibid, 233-238; Atwood, “Pu’a’s Boast,” 34-5.
[41] Ibid, 238.
[42] Ibid, 238-41.
[43] Ibid; Atwood, “Pu’a’s Boast,” 35.
[44] Sverdrup, 240-41.
[45] Ibid, 243-6.
[46] Ibid, 246-7.
[47] Ibid; Sverdrup, “Sube’etei,” 12-15.
[48] Sverdrup, *Campaigns,* 247-8.
[49] Ibid, 248-50.
[50] Ibid, 250-1.
[51] Ibid, 252-7.
[52] Ibid, 260-269; YS 121.2979.
[53] Ibid, 269-79.
[54] Ibid, 284-88.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Sverdrup, 300-304.
[57] This guerrilla suppression of Bachman may have occurred in 1229-30; the sources are ambiguous: see Rashid al Din, *Successors*. I am going with Thomas Allsen’s analysis in “Prelude to the Western Campaigns.”

[58] Sverdrup, *Campaigns*, 302-310; The Chronicle of Novgorod, 81-3; Rashid al Din, 477-82; Fennell, 82.
[59] Sinor, 5-30; Istvan Zimonyi, *The Mongol Campaigns against Eastern Europe,* 1-18.
[60] Frank McLynn, *Genghis Khan,* 450-457.; Buell, 23-25; YS 121.2979-80.
[61] Thomas gives the crusading army of Bela's father at 10,000 cavalry and "uncountable infantry." Bela's army at home would undoubtedly have been larger, though concentrating it would have been a challenge. See Thomas of Spalato, *Chronicles of the Bishops of Split,* 180-200; Rashid al Din, Successors, Annals of Ogedei, for the Mongol numbers.
[62] McLynn, 461-69.
[63] Jan Dlugosz, 176-178.
[64] Juvaini, 270-1; Thomas and Roger also agree that the Mongol force was larger: see Thomas*, 260-266, and Roger,* 161-171.
[65] Thomas, 271-285.
[66] McLynn, ; Zimonyi, 20-26.
[67] Stephen G Haw, The Death of two Khaghans, 1-5.
[68] John Giebfried, "The Mongol Invasions and the Aegean World," 132-134. Baldwin had just raised an army of mercenaries and French crusader knights, as well as Cuman horse archers. This defeat crippled the Latin Empire, and a source in Paris believed him dead [he surfaced alive months later].
[69] In the Yuan Shi Subutai biography (121.2980), it says specifically for the invasion of Hungary and the battle of Mohi: *"Subutai produced a remarkable plan to lure the army of Qielin* [Hungary] *to the Huoning* [Sajo] *River. The princes' armies took position at the headwaters, where the water was shallow, and horses could ford, and in the middle, where there was a bridge. Downstream, where the water was deep, Subutai wanted to build a pontoon bridge,* [to] *secretly cross, and go around to the rear of the enemy."*
[70] There was, oddly enough, a several month gap in between these events. We do not know why, other than the fact that the Mongols were experiencing several internal discord at around that time.
[71] Thomas of Spalato, 261-271.
[72] Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog, *The Mongols and the Armenians,* 46-49; Peter Jackson, "The Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered," in *Mongols, Turks, and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World,* 249-250. Jackson notes that while the means of deception differed between regions, both the Georgians and Rus had some cities or initial forces taken unawares by Mongols pretending to be Christians.
[73] Jackson, *Mongols and the West,* 71.
[74] Denis Sinor, "The Mongols in the West," 35-38.
[75] Thomas, 245-264.
[76] McLynn, 465-66.
[77] Johannes Giessauf, "A Programme of Terror and Cruelty."
[78] Batu's letters to Bela IV emphasized that the Mongols wanted only to punish the Cumans, and recommended that Bela give them up peacefully to avoid his own destruction. This method of separating two allies to avoid a Causus Belli was the exact same ploy used against the Caucasus tribal coalition and the Rus/Cuman alliance.

[79] McLynn, 460-4; Zimonyi, 18-24.
[80] Though to be clear, he certainly was not kind. He did devastate Hanzhong until the Song agreed to give them guides and safe passage into southern Henan. But we don't see the same perceptions as we do in the western sources.
[81] Giessauf, "A Programme of Terror and Cruelty."
[82]*Master Roger's Epistle*, in: *Anonymus and Master Roger* (Translated by Martyn Rady), 161-171.
[83] See Hodong Kim, "A Reappraisal of Guyug Khan," in Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran, *Mongols, Turks, and Others.*
[84] YS 121.2980.
[85] Haw, 365-6; Sverdrup, Campaigns, 337; David Curtis Wright, *Debates in the Field During Bayan's Campaigns against Southern Song China, 1274-76,"* in Peter Lorge*, Debating War in Chinese History* (2013), 141-162.
[86] Haw, 365-7.