

# Review of Books

Jack Weatherford. *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*. New York, New York: Crown Publishers. 2004. Pp. xxxv, 312. Hardcover \$25.00.

Jack Weatherford has crafted an elegant narrative of Genghis Khan and the Mongolian imperial age expertly synthesizing existing historiography on the Mongols, with a tour through the customs of the Mogul peoples with a cultural history of how Chinese, Middle Eastern, and European peoples rewrote the history of the Mongols as one of sheer barbarism. Throughout, Weatherford threads his expert knowledge of the cultural anthropology of tribal peoples into a broad historiographical context, and argues for the modernity, pluralism, and long-term contributions of Mongolian rule to the political, cultural and military development of Early Modern Europe, Islam, and China.

In the first part of the book, Weatherford traces the rise of Temujin from an impoverished, outcast warrior to the Genghiz Khan of history and follows him through his successful unification of the Mongols and conquest of the other Turko-Mongolian peoples of the steppe. Part two traces the expansion of Genghiz Khan's rule into Muslim Central Asia and Northern China from 1211-1261. In this portion, Weatherford begins by analyzing the tactics that Genghiz Khan blended with the best of Chinese and Muslim warfare and technology, producing frightfully successful onslaughts against the whole of Eurasia; he concludes with Genghiz Khan's death and a period of family rivalry that culminates in the political division of his empire into the Golden Horde in Russia, Mongol Central Asia, the Il-Khanate of Persia, and the possessions of Kublai Khan in China, modern Mongolia, Tibet, Korea and Vietnam. Weatherford argues in the third and final portion of the book that these territorial divisions were preconditions for an era of institutional consolidation, commercial prosperity and cultural integration lasting from 1261 to the eruption of the Bubonic Plague. Weatherford clearly attributes the fall of the entire "Pax Mongolica" across Eurasia to the catastrophic advent of the plague.

The bulk of his work draws heavily on this wide array of primary sources in translation. Weatherford constructs the narrative from a

wide array of primary sources, and relies heavily on *The Secret History of the Mongols*, the rediscovery and translation of which Weatherford gives a remarkable history in the introduction. In addition, Weatherford also builds his narratives of the first Mongol wars and diplomatic relations with the Medieval Islam and Europe upon the diaries and chronicles of William Rubrick, Marco Polo, Ata-Malik Juvaini, and Rashid al-Din. Weatherford's bibliography is, finally, a thorough reference for almost all major primary and secondary works on the Mongols by area historians, anthropologists, linguists, and military historians.

Weatherford's book contains some of the most clearly written chapters on Mongol rule in China yet seen, making it a welcome addition to any Chinese History Survey. Weatherford's chapter on Khublai Khan empire in East Asia, chronicles the administrative and monetary reforms, and cultural politics of the Mongols in China, clearly synthesizing the existing work of many historians of China such as Morris Rossabi on Khublai Khan, Denis Twitchett and Herbert Franke on education and examinations under the Mongols, and the celebrated work of David O. Morgan. Similarly, Weatherford's chapters on European encounters with the rest of Asia during the "Pax Mongolica" of the 1200s would also make a fine supplement to both World History and Early Western Civilization Surveys.

Weatherford's work suffers from just one major, albeit sporadic, problem. In his zeal to show the positive contributions of Mongolian civilization – the core of Weatherford's argument - he is occasionally prone to exaggeration and underestimation of indigenous factors. In chapter nine, for example, Weatherford writes that the "common principles of the Mongol Empire – such as paper money, primacy of state over the church, freedom of religion, diplomatic immunity, and international law – were ideas that gained new importance" in Europe as a result of their contact with Mongolian neighbors and overlords. (p. 236) However, there are far more indigenous European sources for "primacy of state over church," "freedom of religion," "international law," or even "diplomatic immunity" for one to be overly glib here. A similar criticism might be leveled at Weatherford's treatment of the Mongol rule in Southern China. There was certainly Mongolian animosity toward Confucian monopoly within the Sung government, but

for Weatherford to proclaim that “the Mongols consistently rejected some parts of Chinese culture such as Confucianism” (p. 205) because of their decision to abolish civil service examinations and open government offices to groups other than classically-trained Han-Chinese civil servants is too hasty. Historians Hok-Lam Chan and James T.C. Liu have noted that Neo-Confucian Academies flourished under the Mongols and the “orthodox” corpus of Chu-Hsi was itself patronized by the Mongol Dynasty in 1313. Nevertheless, Jack Weatherford has written a significant contribution to our understanding of a still enigmatic empire that changed the entire history of Eurasia.

Jeffrey D. Burson

The George Washington University

Peter M. Beattie, ed. *The Human Tradition in Modern Brazil*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc. 2004. Pp. xi, 304. Hardcover \$65.00 Paper \$21.95.

*The Human Tradition in Modern Brazil* is the seventh volume to appear as part of Scholarly Resources’ “The Human Tradition around the World Series” under the guidance of series editors William H. Beezley and Colin M. MacLachlan. In this volume, editor Peter M. Beattie has gathered fifteen essays by American and Brazilian scholars that traces the lives of non-elite figures in Brazilian history from independence to the twenty-first century under the new “cultural history” banner. By examining the lives of these individuals, claims Beattie, one can learn much of the evolution of Brazilian society and how those from non-elite backgrounds viewed the worlds in which they lived. Through studying the variety of factors that structured average Brazilians’ interpretation of national, local, and self identities over time, and their life actions, a picture of modern Brazil emerges that relies less on elite history and more on the history of the less privileged.

Beattie’s organization of the essays into four major chronological periods is one of the strong points of this edition. The reader is able to gain a sense of developing Brazilian society through the stories of non-elite but not unremarkable people of each time pe-