

Genghis Khan

Nobody asked but ...

I am listening to Dan Carlin's Hardcore History 5-part series, The Wrath of the Khans. Dan does a great job telling this story, and I suppose I will make use of the learning, but frankly I am not impressed with Genghis Khan, the Mongol Hordes, Kublai Khan, *et al*. It seems to me to be a zero sum game, and a fool's errand. To be sure there were significant impacts on the peoples who fell to the swords and arrows of the steppe marauders, but what did the steppe marauders have to show for it? Not much but a few better clothes and some other commodities to fritter away. Where are they today? I would ask the same question of all those who have sought world conquest, Alexander, Caesar, Attila, Charlemagne, and so forth. I'll leave you with the truest poem that was ever written:

Ozymandias

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed.
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away".

— Percy Bysshe Shelley

Kilgore