

Acknowledgements

It is hoped that this work not only meets the intended goals of the series, but will serve as an introduction to the Mongol Empire. Writing it was a challenging task and forced me to reconceptualise many ideas and reconsider my own understanding of events. For that alone, it was worth the effort.

No book is written alone, and a number of individuals who have been instrumental in this project must be recognised. First and foremost are the two individuals who recommended me to Edinburgh University Press for this series: Jack Weatherford and David Morgan. I will always be in David's debt for his mentoring, friendship, and conversation about the Mongol Empire. Also, I thank Peter Jackson and Thomas Allsen, whose works have always been inspirational. Their comments and support during the initial stages undoubtedly made this a much-improved book. Peter also read the entire manuscript and provided useful commentary throughout. His wisdom is always appreciated.

Nicola at Edinburgh University Press will forever have my gratitude for patience, as my deadline increasingly became a suggestion rather than a date. Ian Netton, as the editor of the series, also had the foresight to include the Mongols, often a black sheep in Islamic history, in a series on Islamic Empires.

I also thank Don Larson and Glen Pawelski of Mapping Specialists, who patiently created my maps; Art Resource and the Granger Collection for some of the images used here; Will Tomlinson of Kojima Jade for permitting me to use an image from their collection; and the numerous museums which permitted me to photograph items from their exhibits in Mongolia and the UK.

A number of people, colleagues and minions, have my gratitude for their comments on various chapters and pieces. Conversations with Bruno de Nicola and Anne Broadbridge about the Mongol queens were particularly fruitful, as well as several others on a variety of matters with Michael Hope, Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran. Paul D. Buell and Jeremy Black have always been reliable readers and critics. The same goes for Scott Levi

and Charles Halperin. Three years' worth of students took my course on the Mongols and read earlier unedited drafts. Many provided useful comments and questions that helped refine the drafts. Robert Klemm always asked probing questions that forced me to elaborate and reconsider certain points. My research assistants, Minion William Zopff and the Redshirt Amy Collerton, both served well in their duties as reader, commenter and copy editors. The book is undoubtedly better thanks to these people. Despite all their assistance, any errors remain the fault of the author. I also thank Scott Jacobs for his support of my research and work.

The Royal Asiatic Society graciously permitted me to use sections of my 'Commercial Queens' article that appeared in the festschrift volume for David Morgan (*JRAS* 26 (2016)). Edinburgh University Press has kindly permitted me to use sections of my chapter from *Violence in Islamic Thought from the Mongols to European Imperialism*.

Finally, my departmental colleagues, librarians and family have long endured my constant ramblings and rants about the Mongol Empire. To my colleagues and to His Deanliness Christopher Jespersen (who also provided the photograph of the Basilica of St Mary's in Krakow), I offer thanks for respecting my 'writing time'. The staff and faculty of the UNG library have always been of great assistance. New Glarus' Brewing Company's Spotted Cow ale and the music of Ritchie Blackmore (in all forms) are constant inspiration. To my wife and children, thank you for putting up with me and letting me write, even when we'd all rather do something else. Finally, to my cat Leia: it is better if you sit on my lap and not on the keyboard when I write at home. We do not have to have this discussion every time.