



1347 A.D. - a great plague swept over Europe, ravaged cities causing widespread hysteria and death.

One third of the population of Europe died.

The primary culprits in transmitting this disease were oriental rat fleas carried on the back of black rats.

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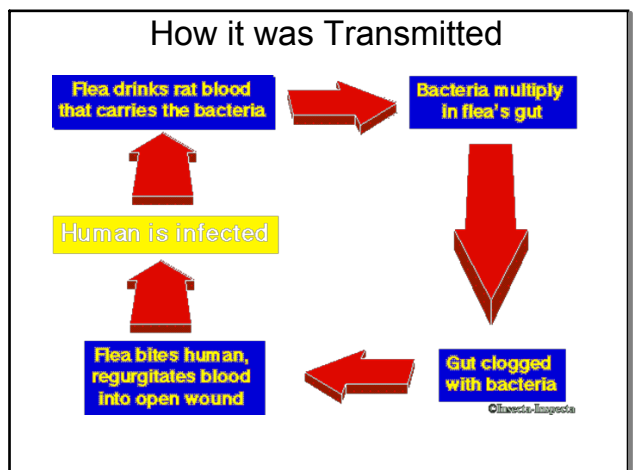
Origins of the Plague

The Black Death erupted in the Gobi Desert in the late 1320s.

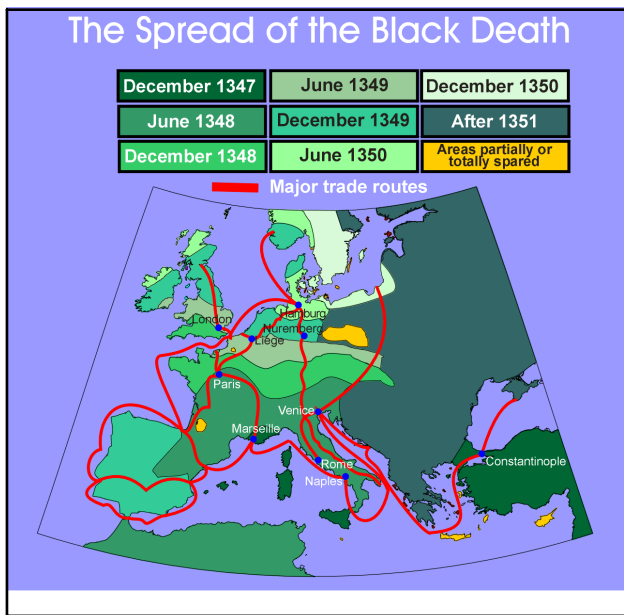
It spread in every direction.

In China, for example, the population dropped from around 125 million to 90 million over the course of the 14th century.

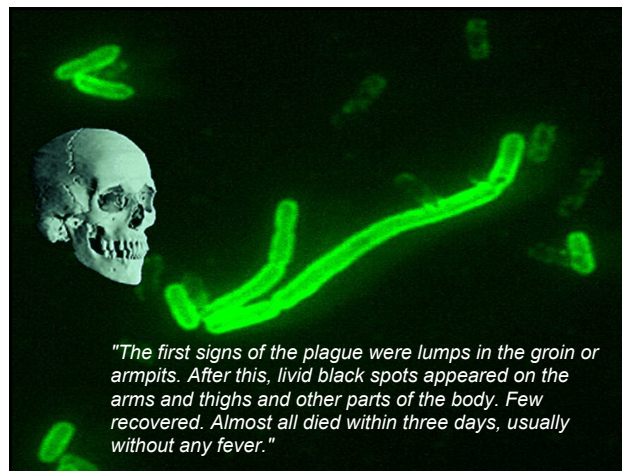
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The bubonic plague was the most commonly seen form of the Black Death. The mortality rate was 30-75%. The symptoms were enlarged and inflamed lymph nodes (around arm pits, neck and groin). The term 'bubonic' refers to the characteristic bubo or enlarged lymphatic gland. Victims were subject to headaches, nausea, aching joints, fever of 101-105 degrees, vomiting, and a general feeling of illness. Symptoms took from 1-7 days to appear.

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Flagellants

Some believed the plague was God's way of punishing them.

The Flagellants were cult who travelled around praying for forgiveness and whipping themselves as a sign of repentance.

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Efforts to Stop the Plague

Although the government had medical workers try to prevent the plague, the plague persisted. Most medical workers quit and journeyed away because they feared getting the plague themselves.

Many believed that the disease was transmitted through air, probably because the smell from the dead and dying was so awful. So, the living turned to scents to ward off the deadly vapors. People burned all manner of incense: juniper, laurel, pine, beech, lemon leaves, rosemary, and sulfur. Others had handkerchiefs dipped in aromatic oils, to cover their faces when going out. Another remedy was the cure of sound. Towns rang church bells to drive the plague away, for the ringing of town bells was done in crises of all kinds. Other towns fired cannons. There were no ends to talismans, charms, and spells that could be purchased from the local wise woman or apothecary.

There were methods that did work. In Milan city officials immediately walled up houses found to have the plague, isolating the healthy in them along with the sick. Venice took sophisticated and stringent quarantine and health measures, including isolating all incoming ships on a separate island. But people died anyway, though fewer in Milan and Venice than in cities that took no such measures. Pope Clement VI sat between two large fires to breath pure air. The plague bacillus actually is destroyed by heat, so this was one of the few truly effective measures taken.

- Medical workers ran away
- Airborne? Burn incense
- Sound
- Charms
- Quarantine
- Fire

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May 26-11:05 AM

*Ring a-round the rosy
Pocket full of posies
Ashes, ashes!
We all fall down!*

Ring around the rosy: rosary beads give you God's help. A pocket full of posies: used to stop the odor of rotting bodies which was at one point thought to cause the plague, it was also used widely by doctors to protect them from the infected plague patients. Ashes, ashes: the church burned the dead when burying them became to laborious. We all fall down: dead. Not only were the children effected physically, but also mentally. Exposure to public nudity, craziness, and abundant death was premature. The decease of family members left the children facing death and pain at an early age. Parents even abandoned their children, leaving them to the streets instead of risking the babies giving them the dreaded "pestilence". Children were especially unlucky if they were female. Baby girls would be left to die because parents would favor male children that could carry on the family name.

Estimated population of Europe from 1000 to 1352:

- 1000 - 38 million
- 1100 - 48 million
- 1200 - 59 million
- 1300 - 70 million
- 1347 - 75 million
- 1352 - 50 million

25 million people died in just under five years between 1347 and 1352.

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