

The Black Death

Bubonic plague

This is a bacterial disease that is carried by fleas and infest rats, affects people for over 1000 years.



Pieter Bruegel's *The Triumph of Death* (c. 1562) reflects the social upheaval and terror that followed the plague which devastated medieval Europe

The Black Death was one of the most devastating pandemics in human history.

In 1346, the population of Europe, North Africa and the western part of the Middle East was about 100 million. Over the next few years a quarter of them died. They were victims of a new horrible disease that has spread in these areas and it killed most of those infected.

The reason for such a gloomy picture was the bubonic plague. Then it was known as "the great plague" or "the great contagion". Later it was called "Black Death". It keeps that name for the present day.

It started in Europe in **1346**, and lasted until **1353**. Almost **one of every three people** in Europe got the disease and **died**.



Black Death - Disaster Strikes

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

Estimated population of Europe from 1000 to 1352:

❖ Year	❖ Population
❖ 1000	❖ 38 million
❖ 1100	❖ 48 million
❖ 1200	❖ 59 million
❖ 1300	❖ 70 million
❖ 1347	❖ 75 million
❖ 1352	❖ 50 million



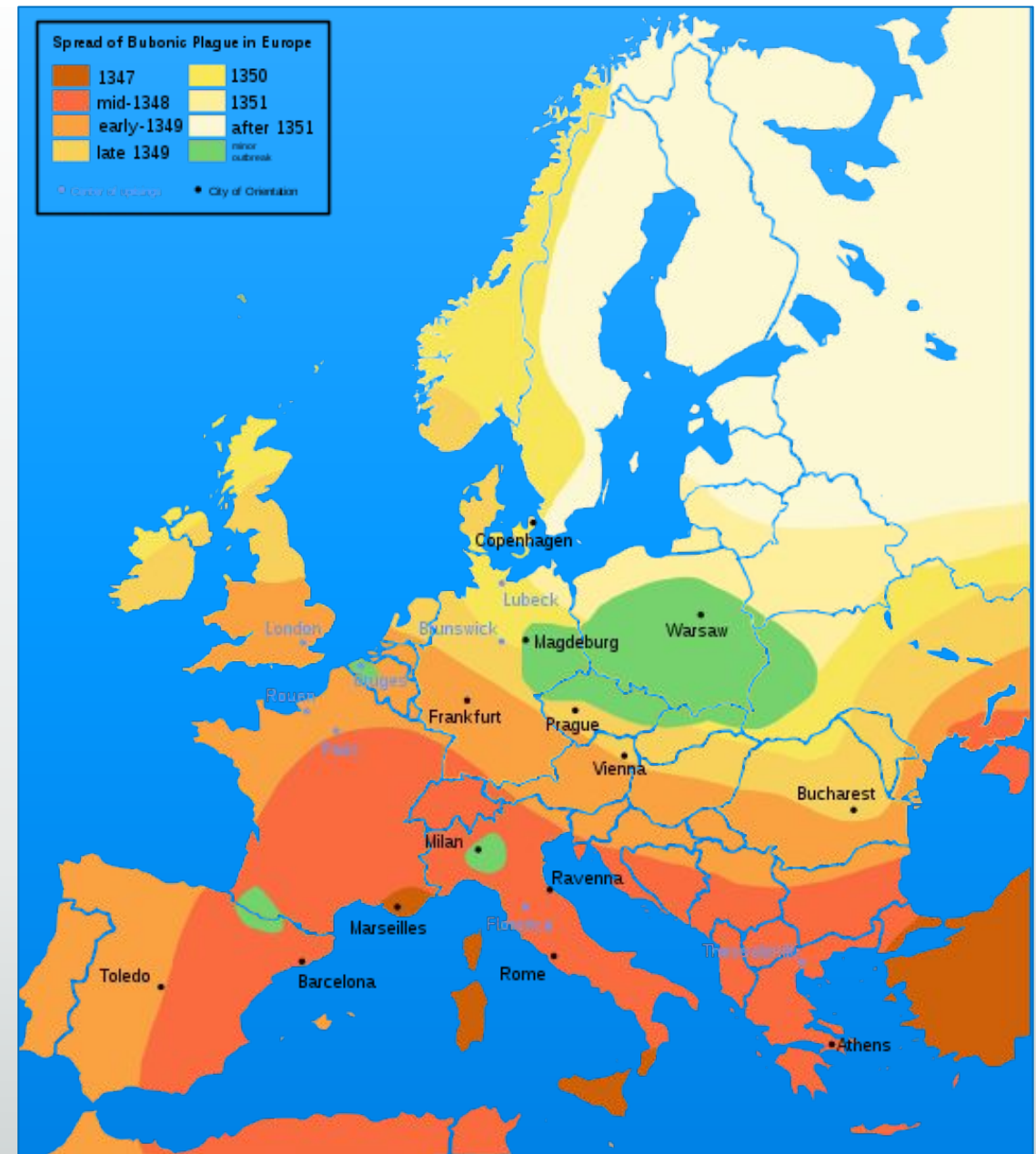
The disease struck and killed people with terrible speed. The Italian writer Boccaccio said its victims often

"ate lunch with their friends and dinner with their ancestors in paradise."

The Black Death started in China or central Asia, before spreading west.

It is estimated to have killed 25 million people or 30% of the population of China.

The plague then travelled along the Silk Road with Mongol armies and trade caravans and reached the Crimea by 1346.



From there, it was probably carried by rat fleas living on the black rats that were regular passengers on trade ships.

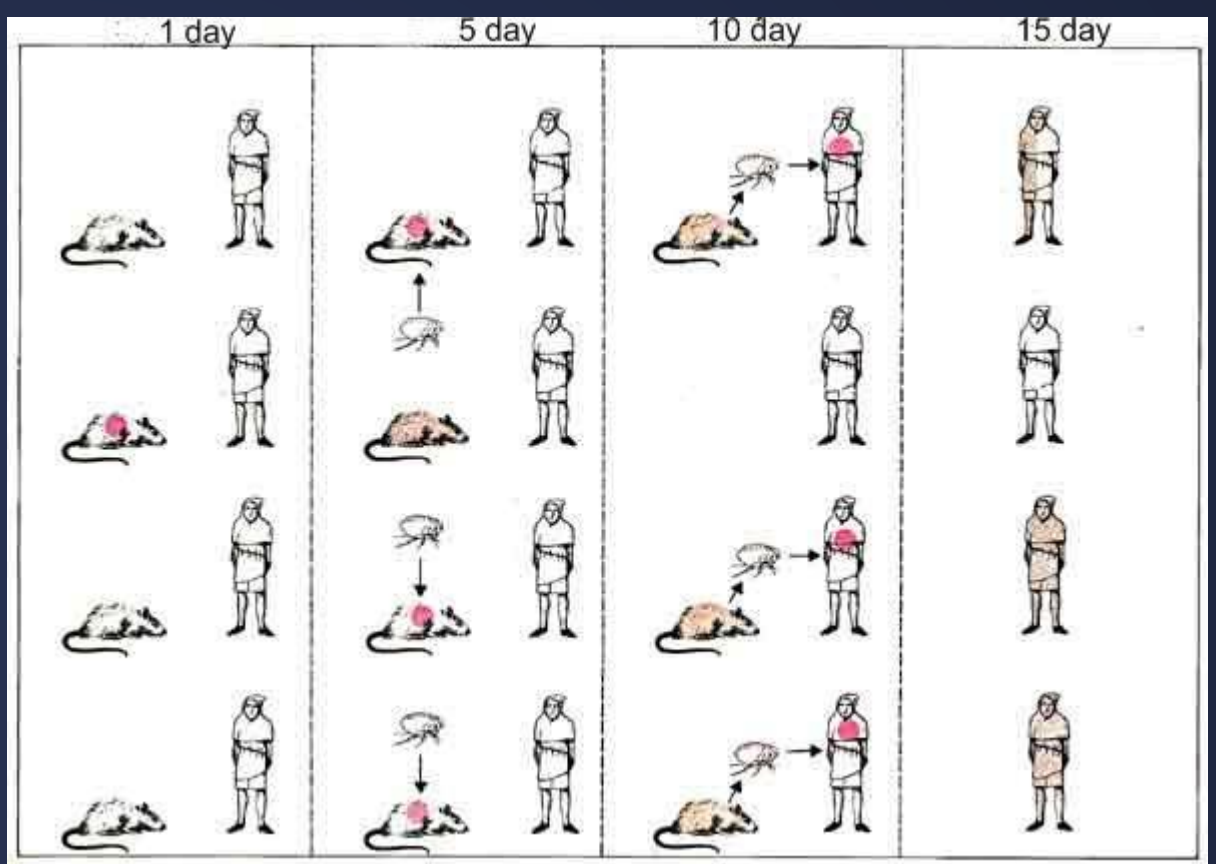
Spreading throughout the Mediterranean and Europe, the Black Death is estimated to have killed 30–60 percent of Europe's population.

People thought that the transmission of the disease from person to person can pass through physical contact or through clothes and bedding. In many cities and country sides have been established quarantine regulations. For example, the British government advised to lock sick in their homes or placed them in a special "plague houses".



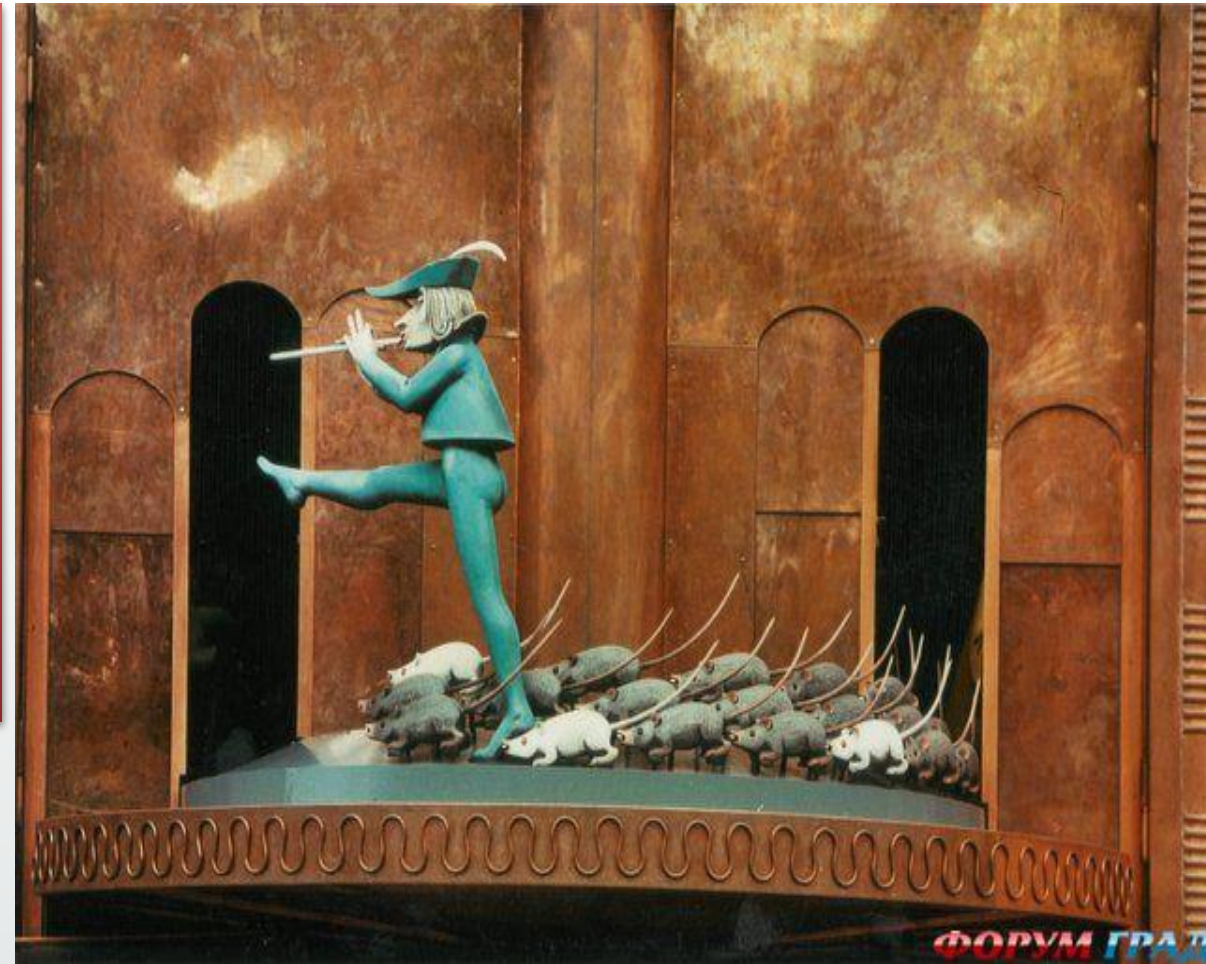
Isolation in homes was of course one of the worst ways to fight the plague. Plague appears when rats, fleas, and people are in close contact with each other. In finding the people locked up a chance to be bitten by fleas, which transmit plague, or infected through close contact with the other person even more increased.

Spread of plague among the members of one family in the Middle Ages could be very fast if the rats living in the house, was infected. The infected rat, marked with a red dot in the "Day 1", on the 5th day died from the disease. When a rat is dying, fleas leave it, bringing the plague to other rats in the house. By the 10th day all the rats died, and now the fleas move on people, infecting about 75% of them. By the 15th day about half of the people in the house will die of the plague, a quarter will recover, and the quarter will avoid infection.



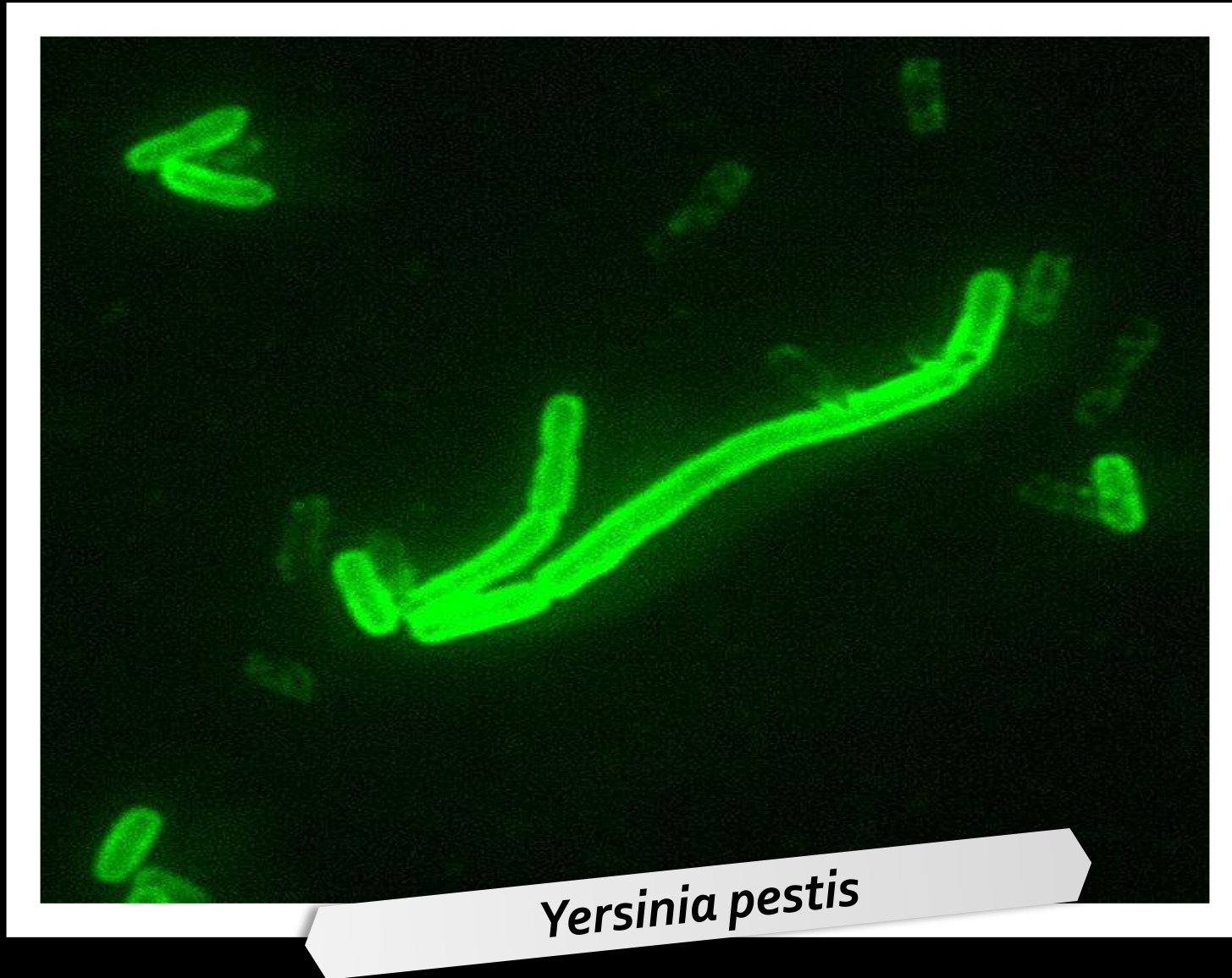
Thanks to murdering cats by Christians rats and plague fleas had spread across Europe, that is why half of Europe died. Spontaneously, appeared a new and much needed in those times profession - rat catcher.

The power of these people on rats explained only as given by devil, and therefore the Church and the Inquisition made short work of ratcatchers, contributing the further extinction of people from hunger and plague. People in the Middle Ages knew nothing about bacilli, they just noticed that after the rats plague came to the city, so the rats were considered messengers of disaster and death.



Ratcatcher

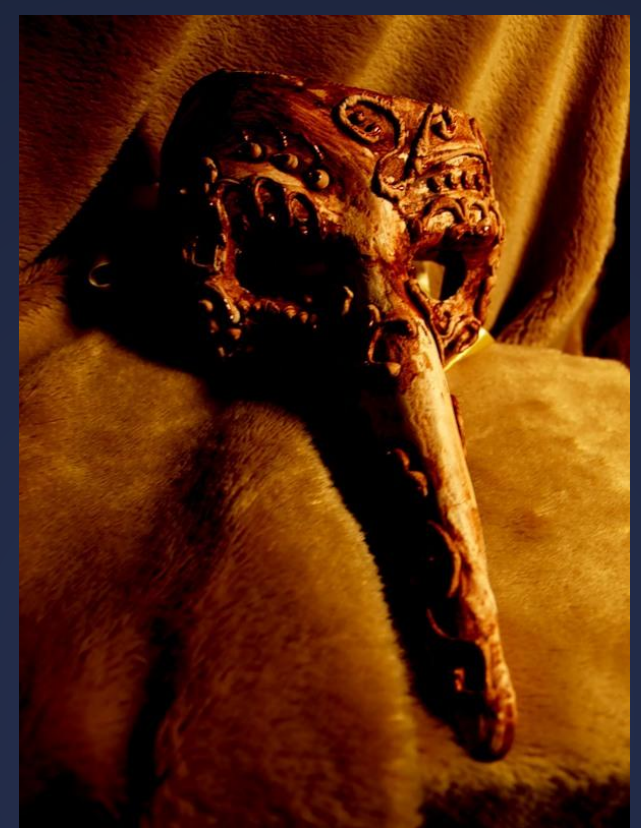
The causative agent of the plague is *Yersinia pestis* bacterium.



Plague doctor

In the 14th century in Europe appeared one new profession - a plague doctor, whose duty was the treatment of patients with bubonic plague, or "Black Death", especially during epidemics. Feature of the plague doctor was a protective suit with the original "big-nosed" mask that looked like a bird's beak.

Because of its specific appearance, and also a mystical aura given to them, plague doctors had a significant impact on European culture, as expressed in the appearance of the famous Venetian masks.







All in all, the plague cut the world population from 450 million to between 350 and 375 million in the 14th century.

The plague led to a series of religious, social and economic upheavals which had profound effects on the course of European history. It took 150 years for Europe's population to recover. The plague reoccurred occasionally in Europe until the 19th century.

But now there is no plague in the world, and I hope we will never see such a disease.



Thanks for watching!

THE END.



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