

# The impact of the black death

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The Impact of the Black Death Affiliation: What impact did the Black Death have on Medieval Europe and Byzantium?

The Black Death was a pandemic plague that spread and caused massive deaths in the 14th Century (1346-1353) in most parts of the world. It was an endemic caused by a bacterium which was originally from Asia but that found its way to Europe through the Mediterranean in ships and caused massive deaths, averaged at over 20 million people which were around 30-60% of the population of Europe (Benedictow, 2004).

Other than causing massive reduction in human population through deaths, the Black Death plague led to the death of animals and especially sheep in medieval Europe. As a result of the massive deaths of sheep, Europe was plunged in wool shortage and even had to import wool (Byrne, 2012). The other impact is that between 1348 and 1349, Jews were massacred and many others chased or ran away to avoid being killed. The killing was in the name of purging the European community and a way of seeking forgiveness since they believed that the plague was a form of divine punishment (Hamm, 2009).

In the Byzantine Empire, the plague was brought by soldiers from Mediterranean in 1347 and infested Constantinople, the empire's capital and it spread as fast among them. Since it was first discovered among soldiers, it killed so many of them that military power declined sharply (Byrne, 2012). The other impacts were the same as those experienced in Medieval Europe (death that led to decline in population) because they also believed it was divine punishment. The plague killed their animals most of which were for trade since the empire was thriving with merchant trade and hence the economy declined also sharply (Gottfried, 2005).

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## References

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