

# The bubonic plague essay



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The Black Death As a pandemic that was able to spread from country to country and kill millions in the process, the Black Death, also known as the Bubonic Plague, was able to leave a mark on almost all of the Eastern hemisphere. Additionally and ironically, the impact the Black Death had on many countries was both negative and positive. While killing millions and destroying economies, the Bubonic plague also helped Improved health care and sanitation. By far, It Is easy to see that the Black Death was no simple disease and its effects would carry on for some time.

Black Death is a mistranslation of the Latin word “Tara” meaning both terrible and black” (Benefited 42). Its meaning is nothing short of the impact it had, especially in the eastern hemisphere. The Bubonic Plague swept away 20-30 percent of Rupee’s population (49). Sixty percent of Florescence’s population died from the plague (42). In her book, *Epidemics: Deadly Diseases throughout History: the Plague*, Holly Jeffrey gives an exact determination of the path that the Black Death took in sweeping across the eastern hemisphere. She states: In 1334, the plague originated in Asia, and in 1345, was carried west along the Silk Road east.

By 1347, the plague struck the Italian peninsula and in 1348, it spread to France, England, Ireland, and Germany. Norway and Scotland were infected by 1349 (Jeffrey 8-9). The Black Death was not an easy disease to contract and It tends to spread episodically or incidentally (Benediction 43). The disease originated from fleas and small animals such as rats. “It was able to spread considerable distances by rodents on ships” (Benediction 43). It was caused by a bacterium called *Yersinia Pestis* which tends to circulate among wild rodents Benefited 43).

In the early asses, unusual weather patterns caused the plague bacteria to infect humans (Chester 90). Unlike many other illnesses, the Black Death took some time to infect humans but took very little time to kill them. “ The infection takes three to five days to Incubate In people before they fall Ill and another three to five days before the victims die. ” (43) And among those who died from the plague, there was a larger death rate of women and children than there was of men (49). Additionally, the weakness caused by chronic hunger among the poor made people ore vulnerable to illness (McGill 2).

The Black Death was not an unnoticeable disease. Unlike many deadly diseases and Illnesses that show few or no signs of Infection until later on. , It was Impossible to not know you had the plague. Some of the regular symptoms of the Black Death were high fever, chills, headaches, and delirium which could be mistaken for any illness. Some of the more extreme and very general symptoms were helplessness, hemorrhages under the skin, darkened skin, swollen lymph nodes, white coating under the tongue, and sensitivity to light (Jeffrey 47).

While extreme and very different, these symptoms were all expected of those who were Infected with the plague. Ranged from religious beatings to cutting the skin. But even with all the theories of healing created during the time, there was never a working cure for the black plague. Bloodletting was a common form of treatment where blood was drained until the patient fell faint. Another so called “ treatment” was cupping which was the placement of heated cups on the skin. When the cups cooled, suction was created and caused the skin to swell (Jeffrey 11-12).

Herbal remedies such as potions and Ionics were also used, and the most popular form of treatment for the plague was prayer. There were just as many superstitions for preventing the plague as there were for curing it. To prevent a direct transfer of bacteria from rodent to human, many people wore blood-soaked cloths inside ivory flea trap necklaces to keep fleas away (15). In a more radical view of the plague, an extremist group known as Flagellants believed that self-desecration would make up for their sins and keep them from getting ill.

This group of men and women traveled together in groups and beat each other for 33 days (McGill 2). With more than half the population sick and random fallacies floating through the air, the daily life of citizens in these sick nations changed drastically. There was rarely anybody to care for the sick (1). Doctors and priests usually fled from infected victims (Chester 91). “Many infected people were abandoned on ships until the plague was gone to keep it from spreading” (Jeffrey 14). A large number of clergy died from the disease as well, lowering the standards for priestly ordination (McGill 3).

During the asses, there were many explanations for what might have caused the league. Fleas and rats had not been discovered as the source until later years when technology and science had expanded. Some historians still believe that some other disease may have caused the mortality (Mesenteric 213) “Before the Black Death, most beliefs on illnesses were based on myths and superstitions” (Jeffrey 9). And as it would seem, Christianity played a large role during the Bubonic Plague. Many Christians believed that the plague was the God’s punishment for everyone’s sins (McGill 2).

While this was common belief among Christians, there were some who leveled the Jewish population had started the plague to destroy Christians. Many Jews were taken captive and tortured until they agreed to committing crimes such as poisoning the water (Jeffrey 39). Religious explanations for the plague were infinite, but there were many different approaches to what might be the cause. Scholars at the University of Paris faculty of Medicine used astrology to answer the cause of the plague (McGill 3). They believed that on March 1345, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn were all aligned, and the terrible combination pointed to the plague (3).

The effects the Bubonic Plague had on most of the nations features more than death. There were many unpredicted impacts the Black Death brought to infected areas, ranging from education to economic stability.

Economically, the impacts the Black Death had were highly unexpected. “There were many peasant revolts in France and England” (Chester 92). Abandoned villages meant unplowed farmland and shortages of food (91). These shortages raised prices and the need for workers (91). Farming became a less profitable venture, since there were not enough people to work the land (McGill 3).

Death in cities meant fewer craftspeople to make products (Chester 91). The lowering population and abandoned cities caused landowners had to rent out their entire estates because they lacked workers (Chester 92). The religious and educational impacts were also unforeseen. Many people turned away from religion living luxuriously and recklessly (91). Many clergy died, leaving a great need for more priests caused the standards for priestly ordination were lowered (McGill 3). Nevertheless, the Bubonic Plague did have positive

outcomes. Its huge impacts allowed for cities and towns to learn from it and grow.

It is because of the Bubonic Plague that health care and sanitation grew. Hospitals sprung up everywhere in the west during the middle ages and physicians and surgeons started to provide medicine for the poor (Mesenteric 213). Towns and city councils began sanitary legislation that improved the standards of living and created new jobs in sanitation (213). In order to prevent the spread of the smell of human and animal waste, citizens were required to keep the streets clean (Mesenteric 213). There were also many unseen positive effects the plague as well.

The incalculable inheritance unlocked by high mortality led to the contracting of lavish building and works of art. New themes in religious sensibility also emerged (213). The Bubonic Plague was a complex, destructive, and on the ironic side, a positive pandemic that's wiped away populations, yet at the same time, improved health care and caused cities to flourish later on. It was unlike any other illness and it is for that reason that it was given the name "Black Death". Its impression on the world is one that is unforgettable and will be perpetually noted.