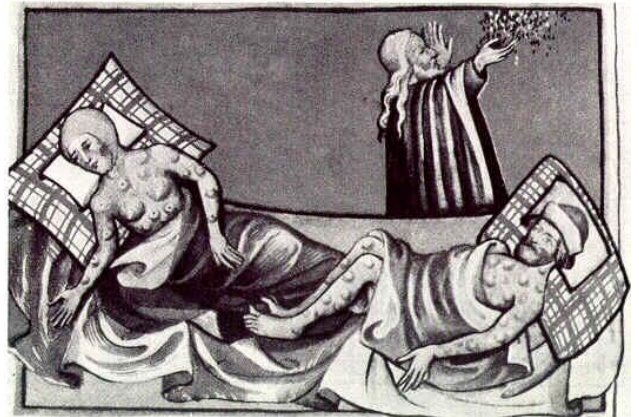


WORDS

accuse = to say that you think someone else did something bad
amber = a hard yellow or brown material that is used to make jewellery
appear = to show up, to be seen
average speed = how fast something normally moves
cause = reason for
celebrate = to have fun, to be happy
century = a hundred years
cough = to suddenly push air out of your throat with a short sound
cover = here: to be over
cure = medicine that makes an illness go away
desperate = here: very hard
devastating = shocking, damaging, destructive
disappear = to go away
disease = illness
dot = a small round mark or spot
faith = trust, belief
flea = a very small insect without wings that jumps and bites animals and people to eat their blood
frame = border made of wood
graveyard = the place where dead people are buried
horrible = very bad, awful
infected = here: to have the disease
infectious = to pass from one person to another
labour = work
lymph node = a small round swelling in your body which a liquid passes through before it enters your blood stream
Mediterranean = the area between Europe and Africa
muscle = here: power
originate = come from
poison = to put something into your food or drink so that it will kill you
polluted = dirty
population = the people who live in an area
prevent = to stop from happening
public = for all people
punishment = something you must do because you have done something illegal
quarantine = to keep a person away from others if they have a disease
rosemary = narrow leaves of a bush
rot = decompose, decay
scent = a nice smell that something has
space = room
spread = to move from one place to another
strange = unusual
strike -struck = hit, come to
survive = to live on after a dangerous situation
sweep -swept = to move very fast
swelling = a place on your body that becomes larger than normal because of an illness or disease
victim = a person who has died because of the illness
vomit = to bring food or drink from your stomach out through your mouth because you are ill
wander = to walk around without really knowing where to go
well = a deep hole in the ground from which people take water
widespread = something that happens very often or in many places

During the 14th century about 25 million people died from a **disease** that became known as the plague, or Black Death. It **swept** through Europe and killed about 40% of the continent's **population**. Historians think the Black Death **originated** in Central Asia. Rats and **fleas spread** the **infectious disease**.



In 1347 the plague hit Messina in Sicily and soon **spread** to cities all over the **Mediterranean** Sea. It **struck** London in 1348 and Scandinavia and Russia soon after that.

Doctors at that time did not know the **cause** of the disease. They could not **prevent** it from **spreading** and didn't have any **cure**. It **caused** panic among the population and many people tried **desperately** to save themselves. In Spain, France and Germany people **accused** the Jews of **poisoning wells** to **spread** the **disease**. Others thought that the plague was God's **punishment**.

The symptoms were **horrible**. Tumours, sometimes as big as an egg or an apple, as well as purple **dots covered** the whole body. People showed **swellings** in their **lymph nodes** and smelled badly because they were **rotting** from the inside.

Widespread fever drove people mad, **wandering** around and shouting in the streets. Many infected **vomited** and **coughed** up blood. When the symptoms **appeared** the **victim** only had a few days left to live. There wasn't enough **space** in the **graveyards**, so the bodies were often left on the streets.

The population used **strange** methods to fight against the plague. Fires were started to clean the air and people took **scents**, like **rosemary**, **amber** with them. Some put wooden **frames** over their windows to stop the **polluted** air from coming in. Most of the **population** didn't eat meat. Those who could **fled** to the countryside where there were not so many people who were **infected**. In order to control the **disease** people were **quarantined** and many areas built **public** hospitals for all people. Once it hit Europe the Black Death moved fast and travelled at an **average speed** of 4 km a day.

By 1352 the plague slowly lost its **muscle**. Those who **survived** lost **faith** in the church because God turned against them. People started to **celebrate** because they had survived, drank wildly and organized death dances.

The plague returned to Europe in following **centuries** but it was not as **devastating** as during the 14th century. The Black Death changed Europe completely. There were not enough people to work any more so **labour** became more expensive. Some villages in the countryside even **disappeared**.