

THE GREAT MORTALITY:  
HOW THE BLACK DEATH  
CHANGED Europe

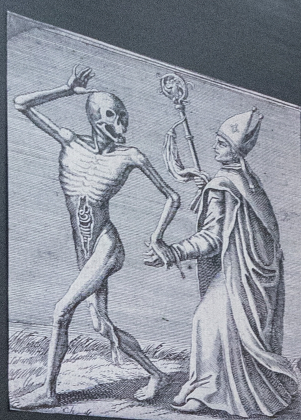
**RELIGION**

Many clergy members lost their lives caring for those infected with the plague. In some monasteries, 50% of monks died. As a result, younger, less experienced priests were appointed to positions of power, eroding public trust in the church.



Citizens' health

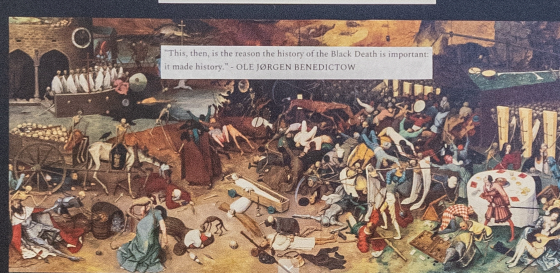
Citizens' belief in traditional religion lessened and practices such as Flagellism – where people would whip themselves with metal “scourges” in penance for human sins, moving in processions from town to town – became popular. Others abandoned their morals, and crime increased.



## THESIS

The Black Death, or Great Mortality, was a deadly medieval pandemic that killed one third of the European population, unsettling and shifting social roles, religious institutions and beliefs, moral codes, and political authority.

The Black Death, or Great Mortality, was a deadly medieval pandemic that killed one third of the European population, unsettling and shifting social roles, religious institutions and beliefs, moral codes, and political authority.



## POLITICS

When plague struck England in 1348, parliament was unable to meet due to the sickness, and this weakened the government. Armies experienced death and illness, and the commonsense trust in their leaders diminished, leading to political radicalism and xenophobic violence.

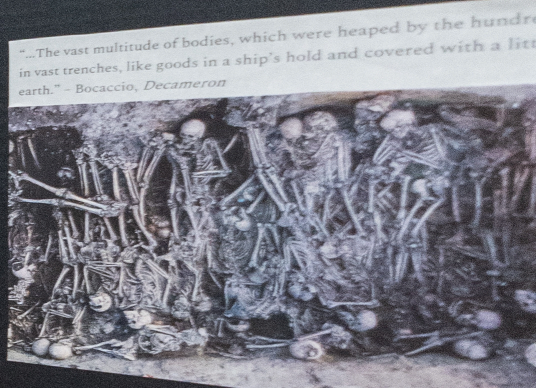
When plague struck England in 1348, parliament was unable to meet due to the sickness, and this weakened the government. Armies experienced death and illness, and the commonsense trust in their leaders diminished, leading to political radicalism and xenophobic violence.



**ORIGIN**

Historians believe that the Black Death spread to Europe from Central Asian steppe regions after Genghis Khan founded the Mongol empire and millions traveled along the "silk road" trade route through areas home to marmots and gerbils hosting fleas with the bacteria *Yersinia Pestis*.

Historians believe that the Black Death spread to Europe from Central Asian steppe regions after Genghis Khan founded the Mongol empire and millions traveled along the "silk road" trade route through areas home to marmos and gerbils hosting fleas with the bacteria *Yersinia Pestis*.



## SYMPTOMS

There are three variants of *Yersinia Pestis*:

- **Bubonic plague** causes "buboes" or skin pustules;
- **Pneumonic plague** spreads through air, infecting the lungs;
- **Septicemic plague**, the rarest and most deadly variant, enters through the blood stream.

There are three variants of *Yersinia Pestis*:

- **Bubonic plague** causes "buboes" or skin pustules;
- **Pneumonic plague** spreads through air, infecting the lungs;
- **Septicemic plague**, the rarest and most deadly variant, enters through the blood stream.



**MEDICINE**

Many trained physicians and surgeons, terrified of contracting the Black Death from ill patients or cities with outbreaks, leaving towns for medical assistance. This opened the way for educated, less experienced practitioners.

Treatments  
from

**MEDICINE**

Many trained physicians and surgeons, terrified of contracting the Black Death from ill patients or cities with outbreaks, leaving and fled from medical assistance. This opened the door for educated, less experienced

Treatments from

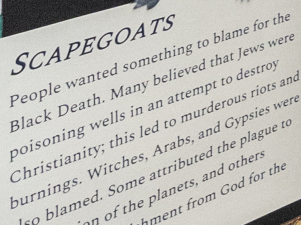


### LABOR

The Black Death killed many who worked for wealthy landowners, resulting in a shortage of agricultural labor. As the remaining workers became more valuable, they could bargain for higher wages. Women were granted new rights, such as the right to take over the home

### LABOR

The Black Death killed many who worked for wealthy landowners, resulting in a shortage of agricultural labor. As the remaining workers became more valuable, they could bargain for higher wages. Women were granted new rights, such as the right to own property.

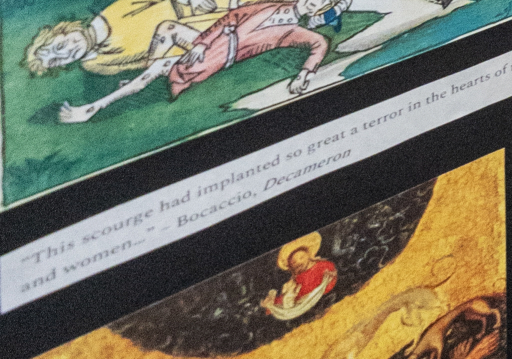
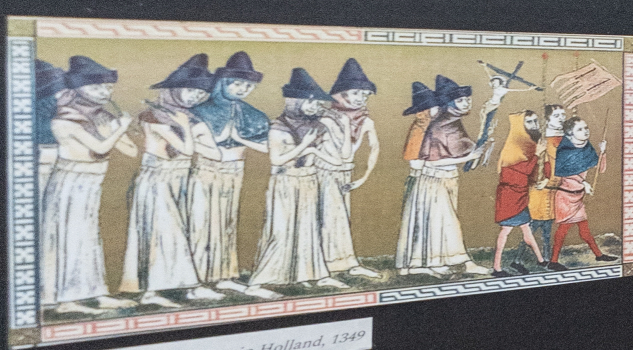
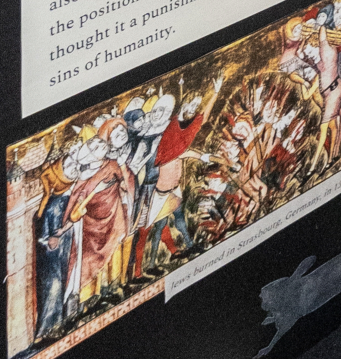


## SCAPEGOATS

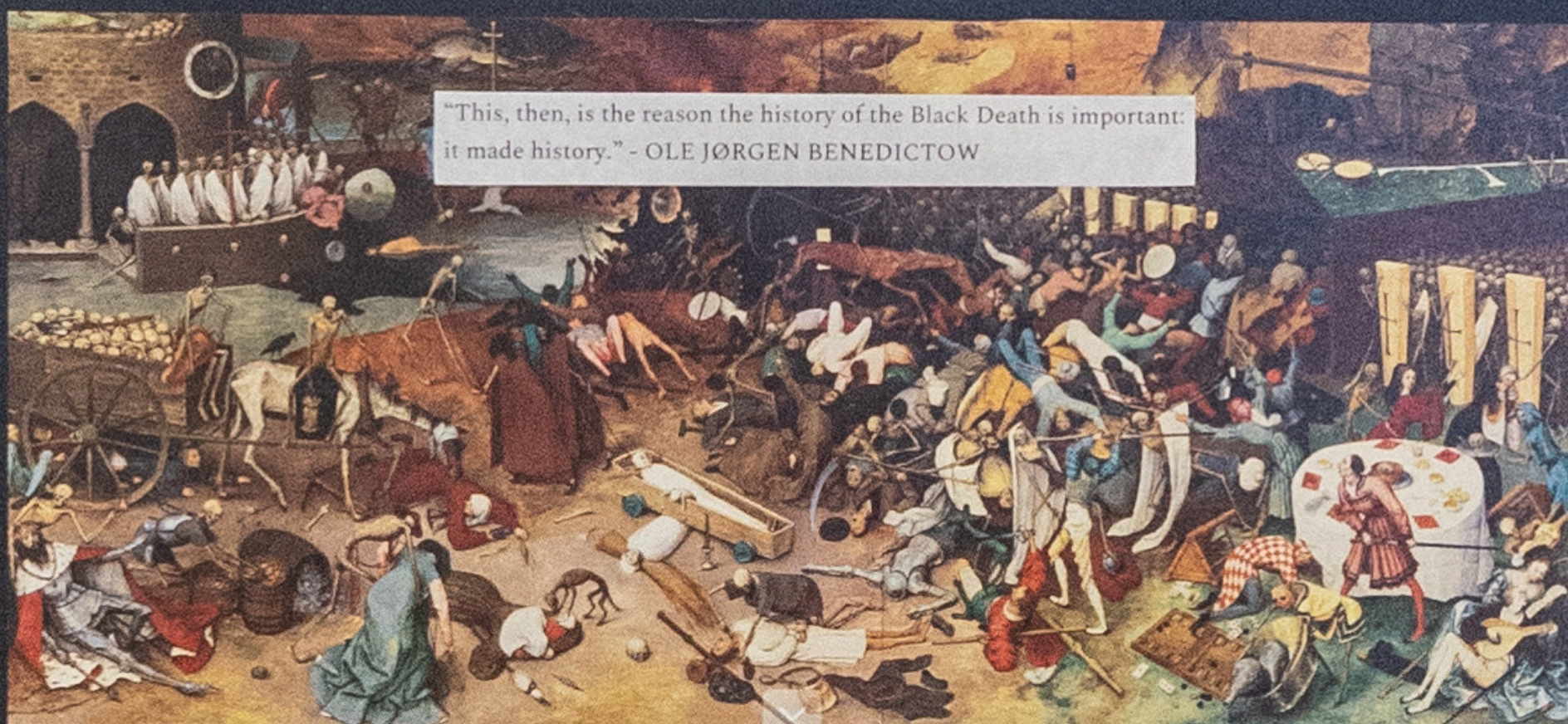
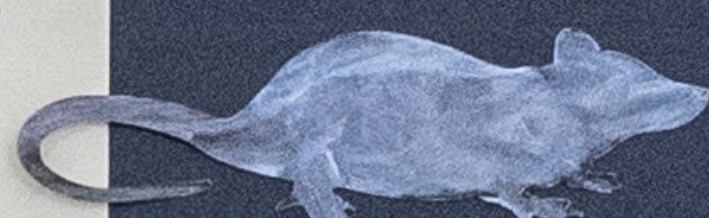
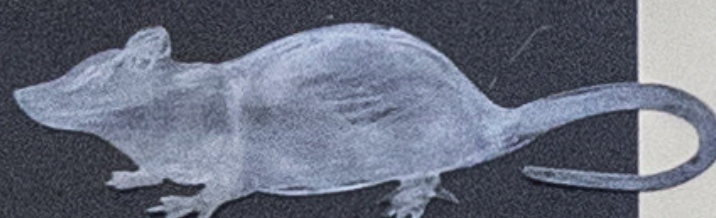
People wanted something to blame for the Black Death. Many believed that Jews were poisoning wells in an attempt to destroy Christianity; this led to murderous riots and burnings. Witches, Arabs, and Gypsies were also blamed. Some attributed the plague to the conjunction of the planets, and others to punishment from God for the

## SCAPEGOATS

People wanted something to blame for the Black Death. Many believed that Jews were poisoning wells in an attempt to destroy Christianity; this led to murderous riots and burnings. Witches, Arabs, and Gypsies were also blamed. Some attributed the plague to the conjunction of the planets, and others to punishment from God for the



The Black Death, or Great Mortality, was a deadly medieval pandemic that killed one third of the European population, unsettling and shifting social roles, religious institutions and beliefs, moral codes, and political authority.



*Triumph of Death* Peter Bruegel (elder)

## POLITICS

When plague struck England in 1348, parliament was unable to meet due to the sickness, and this weakened the government. Armies experienced death and illness, and the commoners' trust in their leaders diminished, leading to political radicalism and xenophobic violence.

When plague struck England in 1348, parliament was unable to meet due to the sickness, and this weakened the government. Armies experienced death and illness, and the commoners' trust in their leaders diminished, leading to political radicalism and xenophobic violence.



"They sickened by the thousands daily, and died unattended and without help." – Boccaccio, *Decameron*



"They died, not like . . . on the roads, in their fields or  
in their houses . . . Boccaccio, *Decameron*



## LABOR

The Black Death killed many who worked for wealthy landowners, resulting in a shortage of agricultural labor. As the remaining workers became more valuable, they could bargain for higher wages. Women were granted new rights and roles outside of the home.

The Black Death killed many who worked for wealthy landowners, resulting in a shortage of agricultural labor. As the remaining workers became more valuable, they could bargain for higher wages. Women were granted new rights and roles outside of the home.