

HIS4B05 HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL WORLD  
MODULE-4 TRANSFORMATION OF MEDIEVAL  
WORLD

Topic : BLACK DEATH : EASTERN CONTACTS


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# BLACK DEATH

- Name of a terrible disease that spread through out Europe from 1346-1353
- No cure for disease
- highly contagious
- bubonic plague
- Large epidemic- struck entire European continent
- 75 to 200 million people lost their lives

- Thought to have started in China- travelled along silk road- reached Crimea in 1346- from there probably carried by oriental rat fleas residing on black rats regular passengers on merchant ships – spread throughout Mediterranean and Europe
- Estimated to have killed 30-60% of European population

- Caffa in Crimea- where plague first reached in Europe
- The Mongol army marching to Sicily in Italy were the carriers of plague from Crimea
- By 1348 plague spread to France, Spain, Portugal, England
- From there it spread to Eastern Europe- Germany, Scandinavia, Iceland etc
- By 1352 it reached Russia
- The countries having less trade contacts with other countries like Poland, Holland, Belgium were less affected by Plague

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- It reduced the population of Europe in to half
  - Created socio-economic changes
  - Also reached Egypt through trade
  - Also spread to Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Palastine & Antioach
  - People of affected areas migrated to other places to escape from plague
  - Also reached Mecca, Mosule Baghdad & Yemen
  - Contemporary writers called it as 'Great Plague'

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- The world famous work 'Decameron' written by Boccaccio, Italian writer was based on theme of black death
  - Serious consequence- drastic reduction of the amount of land under cultivation, due to the death of so many labourers- led to the ruin of many landowners
  - Shortage of labour compelled them to substitute wages or money rents in place of labour services in an effort to keep their tenants
  - Rise in wages for artisans & peasants