

Trade across Afroeurasia

The hallmark of the era was the growing interconnectedness of the world. This is best symbolized by the Indian Ocean trade. Thanks to the monsoons, or strong seasonal winds, a robust trade network grew in Africa and Asia. The monsoons would blow predictably every year: Southwest between May-Sept, Northeast between Oct-April. These sea-born trade routes allowed for mass shipments of bulk goods, like wood, grain or stone.

Thanks to the monsoons, these bulk shipments were completed with predictable regularity, between a large number of cultures. The Sahara desert and the Himalayan mountains were no longer barriers to trade. The Mediterranean Sea Trade was similar between Italy - Byzantines - Islamic Empire, but it connected far fewer people because there is only one entrance and exit to the Mediterranean Sea. The Silk Roads and Trans-Saharan Trades could not compare because only small goods could be taken along it at great expense across mountains and deserts.

Millions of people benefited from the Indian Ocean trade. New trade cities appeared along the African Coast and the Asian Islands. Raw goods from Africa were used to make finished goods in Asia. Religions and ideas spread rapidly. Rapid developments were made in sailing technology, including better boats and compasses. It allowed for the creation of new economic tools to be developed to allow for more complex businesses.

The Indian Ocean trade was mainly managed by the various Islamic peoples. The Islamic Empires had the ideal location at the center of the Indian Ocean. Thanks to the Golden Age, they had the financial surplus and knowledge to make the ships. The rapid spread of Islam gave the people a common written language (Arabic) to make trading throughout Asia and Africa easier.

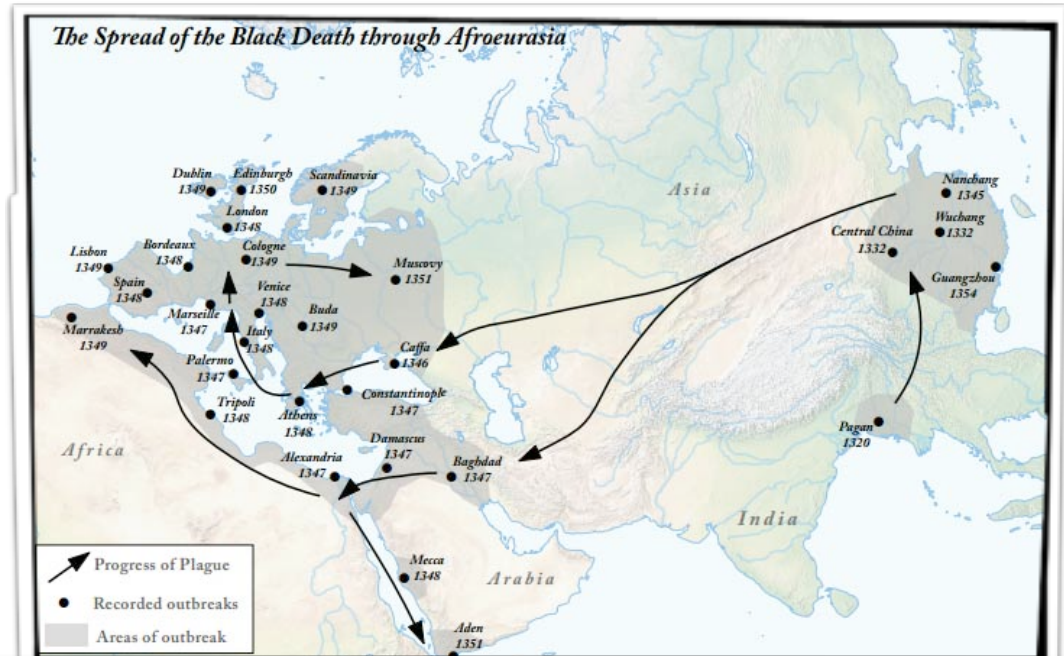
Europe/Middle East/E. Asia: The Black Death

As Europe was rebounding in the early 1300s, it was hit by two devastating disasters. The first was a famine in 1315. Part of the famine was from having a couple years of significantly colder weather. Another part of the famine was a result of the rapid growth of cities. Many forests were chopped down to clear the way for roads and to expand cities, build houses and ships, fuel first, etc. This caused massive erosion and degraded the soil. This in turn, made it more difficult to grow food.

The second was the Bubonic Plague, also known as the “Black Death,” from 1330-1400. It reduced the world's population by 100 million people. Europe was hit particularly hard, as it killed around 60% of the European population.

The Black Death started in China. Thanks to the Pax Mongolia, the disease spread quickly along the Silk Road until it reached the Mediterranean Sea. With the start of the Mediterranean Sea Trade, the disease spread on the trade ships, through the fleas on rats.

It was called the Black Death because the person would get painful tumors, or buboes, all over their body. The person would get a red rash that would eventually turn black. A high fever would hit, followed by vomiting blood as the plague attacked the lungs and then... death. They developed a saying, “ate lunch with their friends and dinner with their ancestors in paradise.” It would go away every winter and come back with a vengeance every spring. Urbanization and sea-based trade routes created the perfect environment for a massive spreading of the plague throughout Afroeurasia.

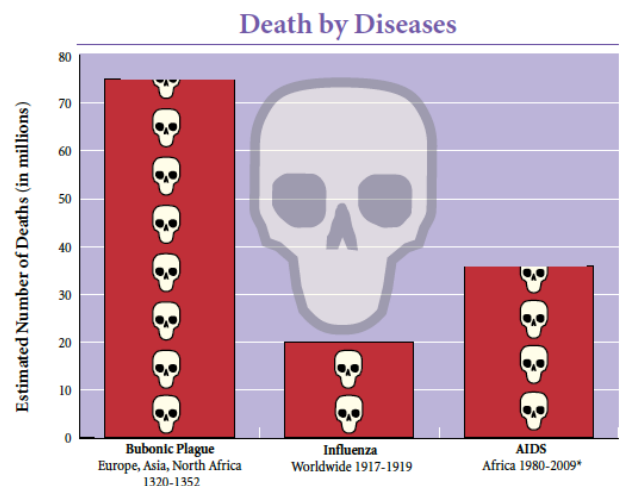


The plague was important for a number of reasons. First, it drastically eliminated a large number of people in a short period of time. This majorly impacted Europe's work force. Second, it weakened the power of the church. No amount of prayers, or incense burning, or sleeping on cooked egg shells, or urine drinking/bathing, or poop smearing or chicken rubbing, or killing of Jews could stop people from dying. Priests would not come to bless the dying, which was the required last right to be allowed to go to heaven.

The people developed a song to commemorate these attempts to avoid the Black Death:

Ring around the Rosey (*Praying the Rosary Beads*)
 Pocket full of Posies (*Flowers to protect you from the plague*)
 Ashes, Ashes, (*Burning the bodies*)
 We all fall down (...yeah)



The Bubonic Plague was the deadliest disease in the history of humanity.



ASSIGNMENT

- 1) Read & Update the Content Matrix
- 2) Fill out this chart with the the strengths/positives and weaknesses/negatives of each region.

Region	Strengths	Weaknesses
Europe		
Middle East		
East Asia		

- 3) Create an impact chart. As you read you are to evaluate each area on the level of impact the people in that region had on the world culturally, militarily, and economically.
 - Rate each area as to how impactful you believe them to be at the at 1300 AD () and at 1500 AD ().
 - Draw arrows to show whether they grew or shrunk in impact and influence.
 - If there is change, ask yourself “What caused them to grow or shrink or stagnate in their influence?” and make note of it on your chart.

Examples

