

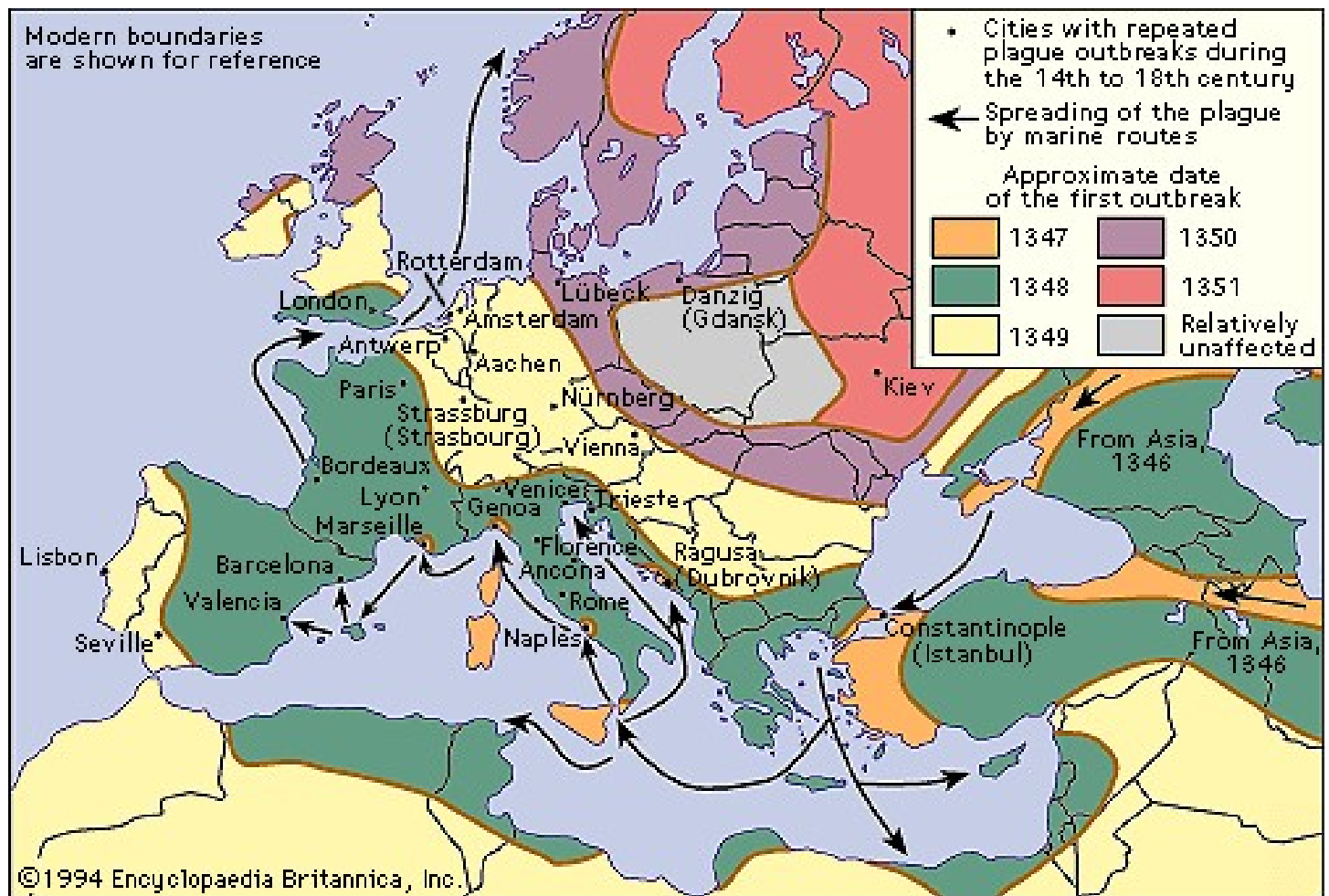
Black Death Station #1

Why is it called the Black Death?

Many think that the Black Death got its name from the blackened tumors that covered the victims' bodies. But it's more likely a mistranslation of the Latin term for the plague, *Atra mors*. "Atra" can be translated as either "terrible" or "black."

People living through the Black Death did not call it by that name. What they called it translates roughly to the "Great Mortality" or the "Big Death." People began using the phrase "Black Death" in the eighteenth century, to distinguish between the deaths of 1347-1351 and the plague that struck London in 1665.

#1.



#2. From Boccaccio's *Decameron*

Thirteen hundred and forty-eight [1348] years had passed since the fruitful Incarnation of the Son of God, when there came into the noble city of Florence, the most beautiful of all Italian cities, a deadly pestilence [disease], which, either because of the operations of the heavenly bodies, or because of the anger of God ordering punishment for our sinful ways, several years earlier had started in the Orient [the East/Asia], where it destroyed huge numbers of lives, barely resting in one place before it moved to the next, and turning westward its strength grew terribly.

#3.

Types of Plague:

Historians believe that there were several different plagues at this time:

Bubonic plague:

This was the most commonly seen form during the Black Death, with a mortality [death] rate of 30-75%. The germ is carried in the bloodstream by rats. Fleas which bite the rats become infected and then pass on the plague when they bite humans. These fleas multiply in the warm weather but die off in the winter. Of those who contracted the bubonic plague, 4 out of 5 died within 8 days.

Pneumonic plague:

Pneumonic plague was the second most commonly seen form during the Black Death, with a mortality rate of 90-95%. This plague is caught through breathing. It attacks the lungs. Patients cough blood and spray out germs when they breathe out. It kills people within 2 days.

Septicaemic Plague:

Septicaemic plague was the least common of the three forms, with a mortality rate close to 100%. When the bacteria multiply in the bloodstream, it is called septicemic plague. When untreated, both bubonic and pneumonic plague can lead to septicaemic plague.

#4. Video: "The past, present and future of the bubonic plague"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySCIB6-OH-Q>



#5

Beak Doctor

A plague doctor would have worn a beak doctor costume in his role as a specialized doctor. He was known then as a “Beak Doctor”. The protective suit consisted of a heavy fabric overcoat that was waxed, a mask of glassed eye openings and a cone shaped like a beak to hold scented substances. Some of the scented materials were amber, balm-mint leaves, camphor, cloves, laudanum, myrrh, rose petals, and storax. A wooden cane pointer was used to help examine the patient without touching.

Historian O’Donnell says that a medieval plague doctor wore a long black oilcloth robe that had a hood. It was intended as a protection suit against the contagious plague. This costume had openings for the eyes that were made of glass. It also had a hollow long beak for the nose, which was filled with camphor, garlic, mint, or a sponge of vinegar. This was all to protect the doctor from miasmatic “bad air.”