

Year 7 History

Historical Sources

Source A:

An engraving of two men self-flagellating from 1485.

Flagellants were a medieval religious group that whipped themselves as a way to punish their sins.

The logic was that if they punished themselves, then God didn't need to punish them and give them the plague.



Guidance:

What does this suggest about medieval beliefs about the cause and prevention of the plague?

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geisslerlieder>



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Source B:

Henry Knighton, a religious writer from Leicester, 'Chronicle' (1398)

The King of Tharsis (a non Christian area of Europe), seeing so sudden and unheard of death among his subjects, set out with a large number of nobles towards the Pope... He proposed to be baptised a Christian, believing that God's vengeance had fallen upon his people by reason of their evil lack of faith. But, after twenty days' journey, hearing that the plague had created a great havoc among Christians... turned and went no farther on that way, but hastened home unto his own country.

Guidance:

What does this suggest about the King's beliefs about the plague?

Definitions:

Pope- Head of the Catholic Church

Vengeance- revenge

Havoc- destruction, chaos

Source: Knight, H. 'Knighton's Chronicle' Translated by Geoffrey Howard Martin, Clarendon Press 1995



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Source C

Extract from a historian on WorldHistory.com

Aside from potions, clearing the air was considered another effective remedy. Since the plague was thought to spread by “bad air” (often called “miasma”) homes were fumigated with incense. People carried bouquets of flowers which they held to their faces, not only to ward off the stench of decomposing bodies, but because it was thought this would fumigate one's lungs.

It was this practice which gave rise to the children's rhyme:

“ring around the rosy
a pocketful of posies
ashes, ashes, we all fall down”

This was in reference to the practice of filling one's pockets with flowers or sweet-smelling substances to keep one safely fumigated at all times. As the rhyme suggests, this was as ineffective as any of the other cures.

Definitions:

Fumigated- to purify/ clean the air

Think

- Was fumigation used in the COVID 19 pandemic?
- Was this always the response?

Source: https://www.worldhistory.org/Black_Death/ Mark Cartwright



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Source D: Manuscript of the barber-surgeons of York, 1400



This manuscript was for members of the Guild of Barber-Surgeons of the city of York.

In the Middle Ages, barbers were not only responsible for cutting hair, but also for surgeries such as tooth-extractions and amputations.

This manuscript demonstrates how medieval medical knowledge and practice was influenced by religion and astrology.

This manuscript contains medical and astrological drawings and diagrams such as the Four Humours, and a circular zodiac chart, known as a volvelle which has moving parts. The volvelle would have been used to predict the best time to provide medical treatment to a patient, based on astrology.

Definitions:

- Astrology- the study of the movements and positions of the sun, moon, planets, and stars in the belief that they affect the character and lives of people.

Guidance:

- What does this suggest about how the Plague would have been treated?
- What does it tell us about what people believed caused disease?

Source <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/guild-book--of-the-barber-surgeons-of-the-city-of-york>



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Source E:

Engraving; 'Young Woman Chopping Onions', by Louis Surugue, 1472, (via the Metropolitan Museum, France)

The onion was one of the home remedies that desperate doctors and patients alike tried to use to cure the plague.

They rubbed chopped raw onion on the buboes (the large pus-filled boils that turned black, hence the name, the Black Death).

Not only would the onion draw out toxins, it was thought that onion fumes could combat miasma. Miasma was what medieval folk called poisonous fumes.



Source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/387966>

Guidance:

What does this suggest about how the Plague would have been treated?

What does it tell us about what people believed caused disease?



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Source F: Painting from medieval manuscript (fourteenth century).

Bloodletting was used as a treatment to draw 'bad' blood out of the patient. Leeches were also used. The leech would be placed on the patient's buboes, to draw out toxins and therefore restore the balance of the four humours.



Guidance:

What does this suggest about how the Plague would have been treated?

What does it tell us about what people believed caused disease?

Definitions-

The Four Humours: Medieval doctors based their natural cures on the Ancient Greek theory of the Four Humours. It suggested the body was made up of four humours: blood, yellow bile, black bile and phlegm.

They believed that if a person became ill, one of the four humours was out of balance. A doctor's job was to restore that balance by bloodletting, sweating or cooling a patient or encouraging vomiting.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:WMS_990_Bloodletting_Wellcome_L0041074.jpg

