

1348

Events

In the year 1348, the Black Death is spreading rapidly and unstopably across Europe. It first appeared in Sicily in 1347, apparently brought from the Crimea to Italy by Genoese merchants. From Sicily it spread in every direction. By the spring of 1348, it was in Avignon, France and by the summer, it had reached northern France, Gascony, Bavaria, and had even crossed into England. By the autumn, London was affected; the plague lasted through the following winter and spring. Northern England would be struck in 1349. By the end of 1348, the plague was in Austria; northern Germany would not be affected until 1349.

There was no cure and no prevention that worked, although countless remedies were attempted. People in the path of the plague heard of its coming from those already affected, and lived in fear of its arrival. Entire towns shut themselves off from the world in futile efforts to avoid the disease. Those with means often fled to remote countryside estates. Those without means prayed instead. Some gave in to debauchery and wildness, living up to the maxim of “eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we shall die.”

The disease killed quickly, sometimes in a matter of hours, but usually after a few days of intense suffering—fevers, boils, nausea, headaches, and pain. Few survived once infected and those who cared for the ill—physicians and clergy alike—often died as a result of their services. Many people turned their backs on the sick, even abandoning family and friends in an effort to keep themselves from falling ill.

The dead were buried in mass graves, if they were buried at all. In some places, entire villages were depopulated, with no one left to tend to the dead. By the thousands, people died, and there was often no place to put the bodies and no one to take them. Bodies could be sometimes be found in the street, either where they fell or where they were abandoned.

To the people of 1348, it seemed as if the end of the world was at hand. God had turned his back on man, and the plague was the tool of his divine justice. To other people, the plague was the work of diabolical forces, or sinister conspiracies. In many places, Jews were accused of causing the disease by poisoning wells; Jews were charged, convicted, and killed, sometimes in mass. Especially in Germany, entire Jewish communities were destroyed. In Solden, in November of 1348, all the Jews were burned after a rumor spread that they had poisoned

the wells and rivers. In December, the Jews of Esslingen were burned in their houses and in their synagogue. Between November, 1348, and September, 1349, it was recorded that all the Jews from Cologne to Austria had been burned or otherwise killed. Some towns and lords tried—often in vain—to protect their Jewish communities, seeing the hysteria for what it was, but Jews continued to be put to death.

The Black Death would continue to ravage Europe until 1352 and then reappear periodically for centuries.

In England, 35-year-old Edward III is king and has been for over twenty years. He is married to Philippa of Hainault, the daughter of the former Count of Hainault and a relative of the French royal family through her mother, Jeanne of Valois.

Edward and Philippa have four sons and four daughters: Edward (born 1330), Isabella (born 1332), Joan (born 1335), Lionel (born 1338), John (born 1340), Edmund (born 1341), Mary (born 1344), and Margaret (born 1346). A fifth son, William, will be born on June 24 of this year, but will die in infancy on September 5. Joan is betrothed to Peter I, son of the King of Castile, but on her way to marry him, she will die of the plague in Bayonne on September 2. Two other sons and a daughter have died in infancy in previous years (1337, 1342, and 1347). One more son, Thomas, will be born in 1355.

King Edward will establish the knightly Order of the Garter this year, an order consisting of the king and 25 companions. The original 25 companions named by Edward are:

- Edward, the Prince of Wales
- Henry of Grosmont, Earl of Derby
- Roger Mortimer, Earl of March
- William Montacute, Earl of Salisbury
- Thomas de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick
- John de Lisle, Baron Lisle
- John de Mohun, Baron Mohun
- Ralph de Stafford, Baron Stafford
- Jean de Grailly, Captal de Buch
- Sanchet d’Abrichecourt
- James Audley
- John de Beauchamp
- Bartholomew Burghersh
- John Chandos
- Hugh Courtenay
- Henry Eam
- Richard Fitz-Simmon
- John de Grey
- Otho Holland
- Thomas Holland
- Nele Loring

- Walter Paveley
- Miles Stapleton
- Thomas Wale
- Hugh Wrottesley

In France, the king is Philip VI, 55 years old and the first in the Valois line of kings. Philip came to the throne in 1328 after the death of Charles IV, edging out a claim by King Edward of England by applying ancient Salic law that declared inheritance through the female line invalid.

Philip is married to Jeanne of Burgundy, the daughter of the former Duke of Burgundy. They have had seven children, but only two still live: John (born 1319) and Philip (born 1336). Jeanne will die this year and Philip will remarry in 1350 to Blanche d'Evreux, the princess of Navarre, although Philip will die later that same year, on August 22.

France and England are at war, though the year 1348 is relatively uneventful, owing largely to the plague sweeping the land. Two years ago, the French suffered a major defeat at Crecy where English longbows devastated the French forces. The French suffered enormous losses, including a great number of knights and nobles, and King Philip fled the battlefield, narrowly escaping capture.

After their victory at Crecy, the English continued on to the city of Calais, which was besieged, blockaded by sea, and ultimately captured on August 4, 1347. With the capture of Calais, the English had a strong foothold in France, a foothold they would continue to control for over 200 years, until 1558.

The reputation of King Philip was damaged by the losses of the last two years, and he finds himself unable to raise money to build a new army and carry out a planned invasion of England.

The next major action of the war will come in 1356, when the French will again suffer great defeat at English hands at the battle of Poitiers.

The Holy Roman Empire has recently and only narrowly avoided a civil war. The Emperor Louis IV had been growing increasingly unpopular with the German princes through his policy of acquiring lands and conferring them on his own relatives. In 1346, Louis gave the lands of Friesland, Hainaut, Holland, and Zeeland to his wife, Margaret. In response, the princes, with the support of Pope Clement VI, deposed Louis and elected a rival king—Charles, the Count of Luxembourg and King of Bohemia. Louis gathered his supporters, mostly from the Imperial Free Cities and the Teutonic Knights, and prepared for war. But on October 11, 1347, while out on a bear hunt, Louis suffered a stroke and died, leaving

Charles the uncontested King of Germany, although Charles would not be crowned emperor until 1355.

Under the reign of Charles, Prague becomes a major city in the Holy Roman Empire, and he founds the Charles University of Prague in 1348. Charles is married to Blanche, a half-sister to King Philip of France, and they have two daughters: Margaret (born 1335) and Katherina (born 1342). Margaret married Louis the Great of Hungary in 1342, and will die in 1349. Blanche will die in 1348.

To the east of Germany, Casimir the Great sits the throne of Poland. Casimir will be remembered in the future as the greatest of the Polish kings. He came to power in 1333, inheriting a small and weak land, surrounded by enemies who refused to recognize his rule and referred to him as the King of Krakow. By the time he dies in 1370, Poland will be larger, stronger, and wealthier.

Casimir is in the process of reforming the kingdom. He introduced legal reforms in 1347 and codified the legal system. A number of new castles are being built to strengthen the military power of the kingdom and Casimir has his sights set on the future. The King of Hungary, Louis I, has been declared his successor.

Casimir is a rare monarch in his relations to the Jews. They are protected in Poland, invited to settle in large numbers, and are called the “king’s people.”

The Iberian Peninsula is still divided into a number of small kingdoms, including Aragon, Castile, Navarre, and Portugal.

The King of Castile and Leon is Alfonso XI, a king known for violent repression of his opponents, a king who would kill for the sake of the kingdom without worrying about the niceties of trials. Alfonso is married to Maria of Portugal, the daughter of King Afonso IV of Portugal, but is more committed to his mistress, Eleanor of Guzman, with whom he has had ten children between 1330 and 1345, although not all of them are still alive.

Peter IV is King of Aragon and Valencia. In 1344, Peter deposed the King of Majorca, James III, and added the Balearic Islands to the Kingdom of Aragon. Peter has two daughters from a previous marriage, Constanca and Joan, and is currently married to Leonor of Portugal, daughter of Afonso IV of Portugal. Leonor will die of the Black Death in 1348, however. Peter will soon afterward marry Eleanor of Sicily, the daughter of Peter II, the former King of Sicily (died 1342), and they will have four children before her death in 1375.

Navarre is currently ruled by Joan II as queen. Joan is the daughter of King Louis X of France; after the death of Charles IV of France in 1328, Joan

received the crown of Navarre from Philip VI in return for renouncing any claim she might have to the French throne, as well as other family estates such as Champagne.

Joan was married to the Count of Evreux, Philip III, until his death in battle in 1343. Together, they had eight children that lived to adulthood; the eldest, Maria, died in 1347, but the others are all still alive and range in age from 17 to 7. Joan will die in 1349 and be succeeded by her son, Charles II, who will eventually come to be called Charles the Bad and will play a pivotal role in the events of the Hundred Years War in the 1350s and 1360s.

The King of Portugal is Afonso IV, a worthy soldier and general who would be known as Afonso the Brave. He is now an aging man, 57 years old, and is involved less in war and more in political intrigue, particularly with Castile. He is also involved in a struggle with his own son, Peter, brought about by Peter's taking of a Castilian maid, Ines de Castro, as his mistress and his open recognition of the illegitimate children of that union.

Afonso is responsible for the growth of the Portuguese navy, having granted public funds to support its growth and having initiated maritime explorations. These policies will one day lead to Portugal's pre-eminence as a worldwide sea power.

People of Note

King of England: Edward III (1312-1377)

Also, **Lord of Ireland, Duke of Aquitaine**

Prince of Wales: Edward of Woodstock (1330-1376)

Also, **Duke of Cornwall, Earl of Chester**

Later would be known as The Black Prince, but that name not used during his lifetime

Lord Chancellor of England: John Offord (r. 1345-1349)

Earl of Arundel: Richard FitzAlan (1307-1376)

Also, **Earl of Surrey**

Earl of Cambridge: William of Juliers (1299-1361)

Duke of Clarence: Lionel of Antwerp (1338-1368)

Earl of Derby: Henry of Grosmont (1306-1361)

Also, **Lord High Steward** (1345-1361)

Earl of Leicester

Earl of Desmond: Maurice Fitz-Thomas Fitzgerald (d. 1356)

Also, **Earl of Kildare**

Earl of Devon: Hugh de Courtenay (1303-1377)

Earl of Essex: Humphrey de Bohun (1309-1361)

Also, **Earl of Hereford**

Earl of Huntingdon: William de Clinton (1304-1354)

Countess of Lincoln: Alice Plantagenet (1281-1348)

Title reverted to crown on Alice's death

Earl of March: Roger Mortimer (1328-1360)

Countess of Norfolk: Margaret (1320-1399)

Also, **Lord Marshal** (1338-1377)

Margaret is the only woman ever to have held the office of Lord Marshal.

Earl of Northampton: William de Bohun (1310-1360)

Earl of Ormonde: James Butler (d. 1382)

Earl of Oxford: John de Vere (1312-1360)

Earl of Pembroke: Lawrence Hastings (1318-1348)

Succeeded by John Hasting (1347-1375)

Earl of Richmond: John of Gaunt (1340-1399)

Earl of Salisbury: William Montacute (1328-1397)

Earl of Suffolk: Robert de Ufford (1298-1369)

Countess of Ulster: Elizabeth de Burgh (1332-1363)

Earl of Warwick: Thomas de Beauchamp (d. 1369)

King of Scots: David II (1324-1371)

Also, **Earl of Carrick**

Earl of Angus: Gilbert de Umfravill (d. 1381)

Earl of Atholl: Robert Stewart (1316-1390)

Later, **King of Scots** (r. 1371-1390)

Earl of Dunbar: Patrick de Dunbar (1284-1368)

Earl of Fife: Duncan MacDuff (1285-1353)

Earl of Lennox: Donald Mcarkill (d.1373)

Earl of Mar: Thomas of Mar (1330-1377)

Countess of Moray: Agnes Dunbar (1312-1369)

Earl of Ross: William de Ross (d. 1370)

Earl of Sutherland: William de Moravia (d. 1370)

Earl of Wigtown: Malcolm Fleming (d. 1360)

King of Denmark: Valdemar IV Atterbeg (1320-1375)

King of Norway: Magnus II Erikson (1316-1377)
Co-ruler with son, Haakon IV Magnusson (1340-1380)
Magnus is also **King of Sweden**

King of France: Philip VI of Valois (1293-1350)

Count of Alençon: Charles III of Alençon (1337-1375)

Count of Anjou: John II (1319-1364)
Also, **Count of Maine, Duke of Normandy, Count of Poitiers, Duke of Guienne**
Later, **King of France** (r. 1350-1364)

Count of Artois: Philip of Rouvres (1346-1361)
Later, **Duke of Burgundy** (r. 1350-1361)

Duke of Brittany: Charles of Blois (1319-1364)
Also, **Count of Penthièvre**

Duke of Bourbon: Peter I of Bourbon (1311-1356)
Also, **Count of La Marche, Count of Clermont-en-Beauvaisis**

Duke of Burgundy: Eudes IV (1295-1350)

Count of Etampes: Louis II d'Evreux (1336-1400)

Count of Eu: Raoul II of Brienne (d. 1350)
Also, **Count of Guînes, Constable of France**

Count of Foix: Gaston III of Foix-Béarn (1331-1391)

Duke of Orleans: Philip of Valois (1336-1376)
Also, **Count of Valois**

Prince of Orange: Raymond V of Baux (r. 1340-1393)

Holy Roman Emperor: *Title not held since death of Louis IV in 1347*

King of the Romans: Charles IV (1316-1378)
Also, **King of Bohemia, Count of Luxembourg**
Later, **King of Germany and Holy Roman Emperor** (r. 1355-1378)

Count Palatine of the Rhine: Rudolf II the Blind (1306-1353)

Count of Arenberg: Eberhard I (r. 1308-1387)

Duke of Austria: Albert II (1298-1358)
Also, **Duke of Carinthia**

Count of Bar: Edward II of Bar (r. 1344-1352)

Margrave of Brandenburg: Louis V the Brandenburger (1315-1361)
Also, **Count of Tyrol**

Count of Castell: Frederick IV (r. 1347-1349)

Burgrave of Nuremberg: John II (1309-1357)

Duke of Saxe-Wittenberg: Rudolf I (r. 1298-1356)

Count of Wurttemberg: Eberhard II (r. 1344-1392)

Duke of Brabant: John III van Brabant (1300-1355)
Also, **Duke of Lothier, Duke of Limburg**

Countess of Holland: Margaret (1311-1356)
Also, **Countess of Hainaut**

Count of Flanders: Louis II of Flanders (1330-1384)
Also, **Count of Nevers, Count of Rethel**

Duke of Lorraine: John I (1346-1390)

Marquis of Namur: William I (r. 1337-1391)

King of Aragon: Peter IV of Aragon (1319-1387)
Also, **King of Valencia, Count of Barcelona**

King of Castile: Alfonso XI (1311-1350)
Also, **King of Leon**

Queen of Navarre: Joan II (1311-1349)
Also, **Countess of Angoulême, Countess of Mortain, Countess of Longueville**

King of Portugal: Afonso IV the Brave (1291-1357)

Count of Urgell: Pere of Urgell (1340-1408)

Captain-General of the People of Mantua: Luigi I Gonzaga (r. 1328-1360)

Doge of Genoa: Giovanni Valente (r. 1344-1356)

Lord of Milan: Luciano Visconti (r. 1339-1349)

Count of Savoy: Amadeus VI the Green Count (1334-1383)

Duke of Randazzo: Giovanni d'Aragona (d. 1348)
Also, **Duke of Athens, Duke of Neopatria**
Regent for King of Sicily (1342-1348)

King of Sicily: Louis of Sicily "the Child" (1337-1355)
Regent: Giovanni d'Aragona

Doge of Venice: Andrea Dandolo (r. 1342-1354)

Duke of the Archipelago: Giovanni I (r. 1341-1361)

Prince of Taranto: Robert of Taranto (1299-1364)
Also, **King of Albania, Prince of Achaea, Latin Emperor** (Title only)

Grand Khan of the Mongols: Uhkaatu Khan (1320-1370)
Also, **Emperor of China**

Khan of the Golden Horde: Jani Beg (r. 1342-1357)

King of Poland: Casimir III the Great (1310-1370)

Grand Prince of Moscow: Simeon of Russia (1316-1353)

Grand Prince of Lithuania: Algirdas (1296-1377)

King of Hungary: Louis I the Great (1326-1382)

Prince of Wallachia: Basarab I (1310-1352)

King of Bulgaria: Ivan Alexander of Bulgaria (r. 1331-1371)

Tsar of Serbia: Stefan Dusan (1308-1355)
King 1331-1346, Tsar 1346-1355

King of Georgia: David IX (r. 1346-1360)

Byzantine Emperor: John VI Cantacuzenus (1292-1383)
Co-emperor with John V Palaeologus (1332-1391)

Emperor of Trebizond: Michael Comnenus (1285-1356)

King of Armenia: Constantine V of Armenia (r. 1344-1362)

Ottoman Ruler: Orhan I (1284-1359)

Caliph of Cairo: Al-Hakim II (r. 1341-1352)

Sultan of Egypt: an-Nasir Nasir-ad-Din al-Hasan (r. 1347-1351)

Emir of Damascus: Yilbugha al-Nasiri (r. 1340-1350)

Pope: Clement VI (1291-1352)
Born Pierre Roger

Archbishop of Bremen:
Otto I of Oldenburg (r. 1344-1348)
Gottfried of Arnsberg (r. 1348-1359)

Archbishop of Canterbury:
John de Stratford (r. 1333-1348)
John de Ufford (r. 1348-1349)

Archbishop of Cologne: Walram von Jülich (r. 1332-1349)

Archbishop of Mainz: Gerlach von Nassau (r. 1346-1371)

Archbishop of Prague: Arnost of Pardubice (r. 1344-1364)

Archbishop of Reims: John of Vienne (r. 1335-1351)

Archbishop of Riga: Bromhold von Vyffhusen (r. 1348-1369)

Archbishop of Salzburg: Ordulf von Wiesseneck (r. 1343-1365)

Archbishop of Toledo: Gil Alvarez de Albornoz (r. 1338-1350)

Archbishop of Tours: Pierre Frétaud (r. 1336-1357)

Archbishop of Trier: Baldwin von Luxembourg (r. 1307-1354)

Archbishop of Utrecht: Jan IV van Arkel (r. 1342-1364)

Archbishop of York: William Zouche (r. 1342-1352)

Bishop of Basel: Johann II von Munsingen (r. 1335-1365)

Bishop of Bath and Wells: Ralph of Shrewsbury (r. 1329-1363)

Bishop of Beauvais: William Bertran (r. 1347-1356)

Bishop of Carlisle: John Kirkby (r. 1332-1352)

Bishop of Condom: Pierre de Galard (r. 1340-1369)

Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield: Roger Northburgh (r. 1322-1360)

Bishop of Ely: Thomas de Lisle (r. 1345-1362)

Bishop of Exeter: John Grandisson (r. 1327-1369)

Bishop of Glasgow: William Rae (r. 1338-1367)

Bishop of Krakow:

Piotr of Falkow (r. 1347-1348)

Bodzenta of Wrzesnia (r. 1348-1366)

Bishop of Liege: Englebert of La Marche (r. 1345-1364)

Bishop of Lincoln: John Gynwell (r. 1347-1363)

Bishop of London: Ralph de Stratford (r. 1340-1354)

Bishop of Norwich: William Bateman (r. 1344-1355)

Bishop of St. David's (Wales): John Thoresby (r. 1347-1350)

Bishop of Salisbury: Robert Wyville (r. 1330-1375)

Bishop of Winchester: William Edendon (r. 1345-1366)

Also, **Lord High Treasurer of England**

Bishop of Worcester: Wolstan de Braunsford (r. 1339-1349)

Bishop of Worms: Salomon Waldbott (r. 1332-1350)