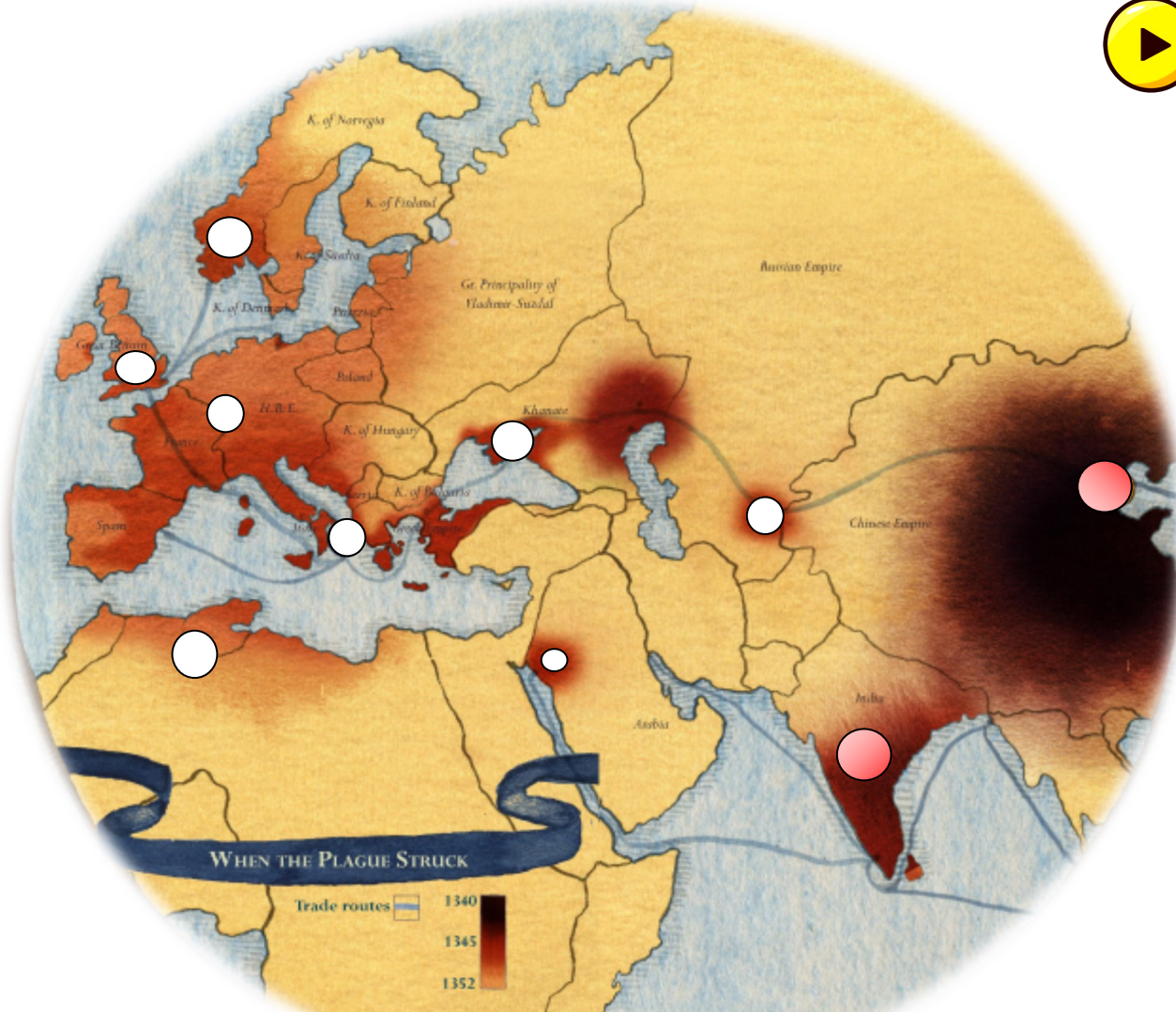


The Path of the Plague, 1347-50



China / India	c1333	
Summary	Sketch	

The Silk Road	



Middle East	
Find out - research	

Sicily, Italy	

North Africa	
Find out - research	

Britain	

Europe - Italy / France	



When people discovered that this sudden death came from the ships they ordered them out of the harbor. But the evil remained. Soon men hated each other so much that if a son was attacked by the disease his father would not tend him. If, in spite of all, he dared to approach him, he was bound to die within three days. Nor was this all; all those living in the same house with him, even the cats and other domestic animals, followed him in death. The disease clung to those who ran and accompanied them everywhere. Many of the fleeing fell down by the roadside and dragged themselves into the fields and bushes to die.

Thus the people of Messina fled over the whole island of Sicily and then onto the mainland carrying with them the disease.

This account is from Michael Platiensis (1357)

The "Black Death" or the Great Plague, originated in China in 1333 and spread west along the trade routes (Silk Road) to the Middle East and then to Europe. Recently the origins of the disease have been challenged.


Some evidence suggests it began in South India.

In October of 1347, several Italian merchant ships returned from a trip to the Black Sea, one of the key links in trade with China. When the ships docked in Sicily, many of those on board were already dying of plague.

By the following August, 1348, the plague had spread as far north as England, where people called it "The Black Death" because of the black spots it produced on the skin. A terrible killer was loose across Europe, and Medieval medicine had nothing to combat (stop) it.



Since China was one of the busiest of the world's trading nations, it was only a matter of time before the outbreak of plague in China spread to western Asia and Europe.



The Plague infected the Black Sea port of Kaffa by 1347. One legend says that the Mongols infected the city of Kaffa by throwing plague victims over the walls with catapults. It is more likely that rats carried infected fleas into the town.

Fleeing ships then carried infected rats to Italy, and Marseilles during the year 1347. In 1348, the first outbreaks appeared in England. In July 1349, it spread to Scotland. In 1350, it stalked Scandinavia. In 1351, it arrived in Kiev, Ukraine.

The Italian owned port of Kaffa in the Black Sea was under Siege by a Mongol army.

'But then, in 1347, to the Italians' delight, their opponents began to die off at an alarming rate – the Mongol army was overcome by the Plague. They had no choice but to call off his siege, but not until he performed one last act of warfare against Italy. Using the catapults designed to throw boulders and fireballs over the walls instead they launched Plague infested corpses of his dead men into the city. The Italians quickly dumped these bodies back into the sea, but the damage was done. Hoping to escape the quickly spreading disease, four Italian ships, thought to be untainted, departed from Kaffa. They sailed home to Italy.

"ate lunch with their friends and dinner with their ancestors in paradise."

"The Silk Road was a trade route that delivered goods like silk and spices from China and India west to Central Asia the Middle East and then Europe.

