



The Path of the Black Death in Europe

Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity 1: Mapping the Black Death

Use the map of Europe attached at the end of this document showing the cities and regions affected by the Black Death. For reference, use [this map](#) from the [Decameron Web](#), and this other one [showing the spread of the Black Death](#) from the [Geoffrey Chaucer](#) site.

The Black Death is first reported in Messina, Italy, on the island of Sicily, in October, 1347, and then moves through Europe. Below are the likely dates of the arrival of the Black Death in a variety of cities:

- Genoa, Italy January, 1348
- Pisa, Italy February, 1348
- Marseilles, France February, 1348
- Rome, Italy March, 1348
- Avignon, France March, 1348
- Valencia, Spain May, 1348
- Paris, France June, 1348
- London, England June, 1349
- Liege, Belgium June, 1349
- Hamburg, Germany, June 1350

Your task is to trace the path of the Black Death through Europe by locating these cities and looking for patterns. What can you learn about the source, spread, and extent of the disease?

Using the same map, place numbers—some duplicated—on the map.

Place a:

- 1 on Messina.
- 2 on Genoa
- 3 on Pisa
- 3 on Marseilles
- 4 on Rome
- 4 on Avignon
- 5 on Valencia
- 6 on Paris
- 7 on London
- 7 on Liege
- 8 on Hamburg

The duplicate numbers indicate that the plague arrived in two cities at about the same time. Do you notice any patterns.

Now draw a:

1. red line connecting one set of numbers 1 to 4 from Messina to Rome.
2. blue line connecting one set of numbers 1 to 7 from Messina to Paris.
3. yellow line connecting one set of numbers 6 to 8 from Paris to Hamburg.

Go to the map [Medieval Trade Routes](#) (accessible through EDSITEment resource [Geoffrey Chaucer](#)). Using the information on your map and on [Medieval Trade Routes](#), and consulting as necessary the arrival dates of the plague as listed above, what answers would you offer to the following:

1. Is it more likely that the plague originally entered Europe on the Venetian or Genoese trade route? Cite some evidence for your answer.
2. Did the plague seem to travel more quickly along the shipping routes or overland? Cite some evidence for your answer.
3. How do you believe the plague traveled to Paris, overland or along the shipping routes? Cite some evidence for your answer.
4. Why did the plague take so long to reach London, when it had arrived in nearby Paris a year earlier? Cite some evidence for your answer.
5. How do you believe the plague traveled to Hamburg, overland or along the shipping routes? Cite some evidence for your answer.
6. Is it possible, given the information you have, to tell if the plague traveled to Hamburg overland directly from Genoa or by way of Paris? Cite some evidence for your answer.

MAP OF 14TH CENTURY EUROPE

