



# King Death: The Black Death and its Aftermath in Late-Medieval England

*Colin Platt*

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The black death came to England in 1347 and for three centuries bubonic plague remained a continual and threatening presence in the everyday life (and death) of the country. The Black Death and subsequent population losses are central, therefore, to any understanding of the period.

From rural labourer to nobleman, from village priest to abbot, contemptuous of rank and wealth, Death was the guest of every late-medieval household in 'pestilence time.' In this masterly survey, Colin Platt examines what it was like to live with plague at all levels of society. Drawing on evidence from architecture and the arts, he examines the visible legacies of the investment that Christian men and women made in the provision of after-death soul-care. In addition he examines the social and economic consequences of a steep and unprecedented population decline. It is argued that the severe labour shortage that persisted for over a century after the Black Death ultimately broke the ties of feudal bondage.

Written with verve and rich in detail, *King Death* offers an important analysis of one of the most potent instruments of change in late-medieval England, and a fascinating insight into the industry of death that pestilence brought with it. It will be required reading for all students of late-medieval England.



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