



# The Dancing PLAGUE

Hayqal



# Introduction

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The Dancing Plague was a bizarre phenomenon where people danced uncontrollably, sometimes until they collapsed or even died. It occurred during a time of great hardship in Medieval Europe.



# Choreoma

Also known as Dancing Mania, comes from the Greek words "choros" meaning dance and "mania" meaning madness or compulsion. It refers to episodes where groups of people danced uncontrollably and erratically.



# Description

- Involved hundreds or even thousands of people.
- Caused by wars, famines, and diseases.
- People danced wildly, often until they collapsed from exhaustion or injury.





# Time Period

1374: Aachen, Germany

The people danced involuntarily, and the phenomenon spread to the Netherlands and northeastern France.

1518: Strasbourg, France

A woman named Frau Troffea started dancing, and many others joined her over the weeks.

# Strasbourg 1518



- July 1518, Frau Troffea began dancing in Strasbourg.
- Within weeks, hundreds joined in.
- City authorities provided a stage and hired musicians, hoping to control the situation.
- It only made more people join in

# Theories

Religious beliefs and demonic possession.

Mass poisoning, possibly from ergot (a toxic mold).

Curses from saints like St. John the Baptist or St. Vitus

Mass

hysteria



# Religious Beliefs and Demonic Possession

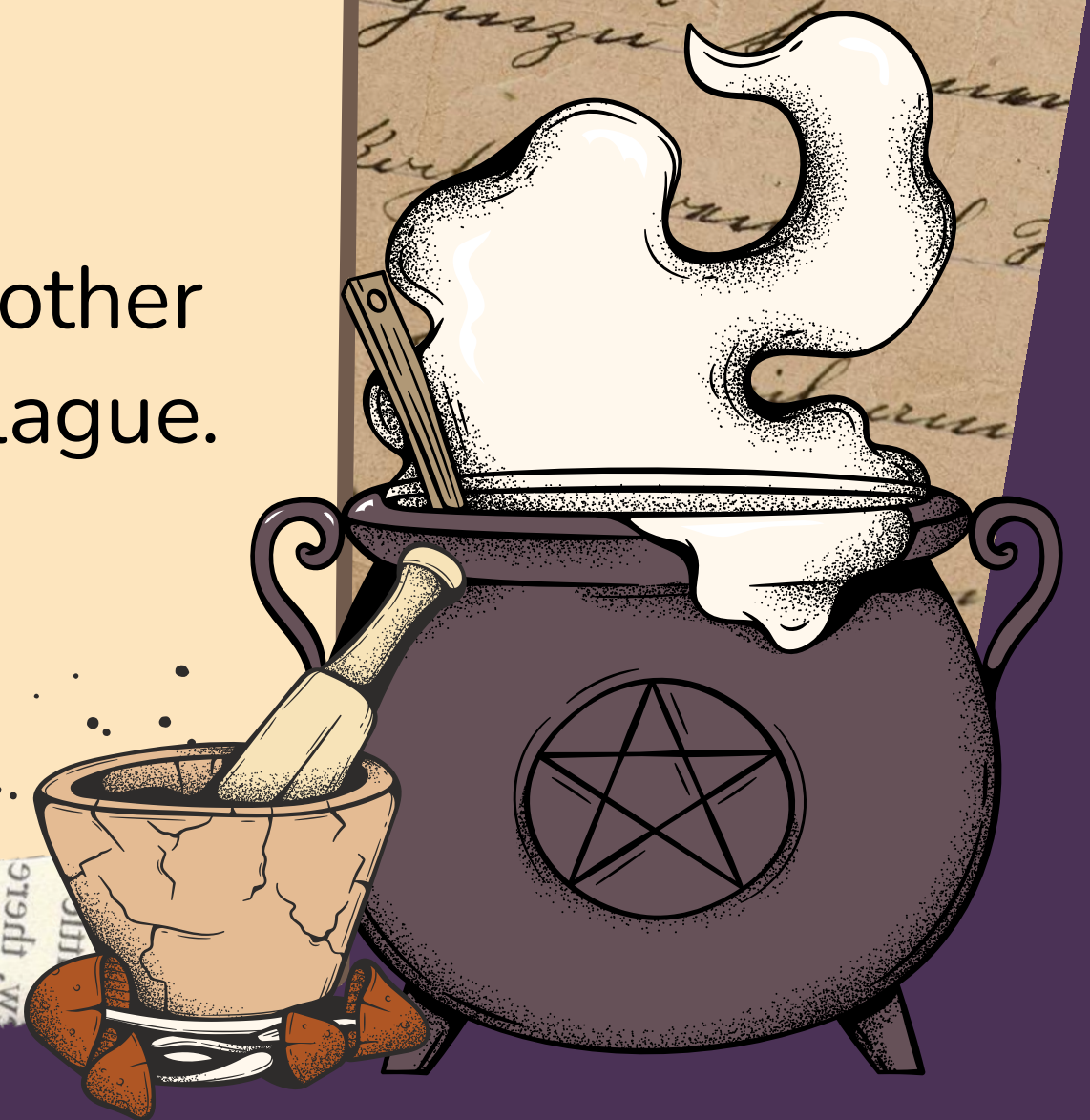
- Many believed the dancing was caused by demonic possession or divine punishment.
- People turned to prayer and religious rituals to cure the afflicted.
- Some outbreaks were linked to specific saints believed to have cursed the population.





# Mass Poisoning Theory

- Some historians suggest mass poisoning by ergot, a fungus that grows on rye and other grains.
- Ergot can cause hallucinations, convulsions, and other symptoms similar to those seen in the dancing plague.



# Curses from Saints

- People believe it was caused by curses from saints like St. John the Baptist or St. Vitus.
- People arranged religious marches and journeys to find relief from these curses.



# Mass Hysteria

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- Researchers believe the Plague was likely a “Mass Hysteria” or Mass psychogenic illness.
- Triggered by extreme stress, fear, and depression.





# TARANTISM

- Similar phenomenon in Italy.
- Believed to be caused by a spider bite or poison.
- Victims danced to rid themselves of the venom.
- Often involved uncontrollable movements.

## Justus Friedrich Hecker

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The Black Death:  
The Dancing Mania

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J. F. C. (Justus Friedrich Carl)  
Hecker

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- In 1888, Hecker wrote "The Black Death and the Dancing Mania."
- Described detailed descriptions of frenzied dancing and exhaustion.
- Provided a historical analysis of the phenomenon.



# Conclusions

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- Exact cause remains unknown.
- This phenomenon emphasizes how severe stress affects human behavior.
- This shows how people deal with tough times, giving us an idea of how humans respond to extreme hardship.
- The Dancing Plague remains a fascinating and mysterious part of history.



Thank You!

# Reference

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