



**Life in Medieval Italy**

**Siena**





**Florence** – Wealth and art, ruled by powerful families like the Medici.

**Venice** – A major trading power, ruled by a group of wealthy merchants.

**Milan** – A strong military city-state, ruled by the Sforza family.

**Papal States** – Controlled by the Pope, covering central Italy.





**How was to live  
with a plague?**

**Engraving  
depicting the  
burning of Jews,  
accused of  
poisoning  
Christian wells.**



## **How did all begin? – Sicilian chronicler Michele da Piazza**

It so happened in the month of October in the year of our Lord 1347, around the first of that month, twelve Genoese galleys, fleeing our Lord's wrath which came down upon them for the misdeeds, put in at the port of the city of Messina. They brought with them a plague that they carried down to the very marrow of their bones, so that if anyone so much as spoke to them, he was infected with a mortal sickness which brought on an immediate death that he could in no way avoid.

“Above all, students of medieval history must learn to read and view **records** and artifacts through medieval eyes. Only in this way can we begin to comprehend what it was like to experience the **Black Death**”

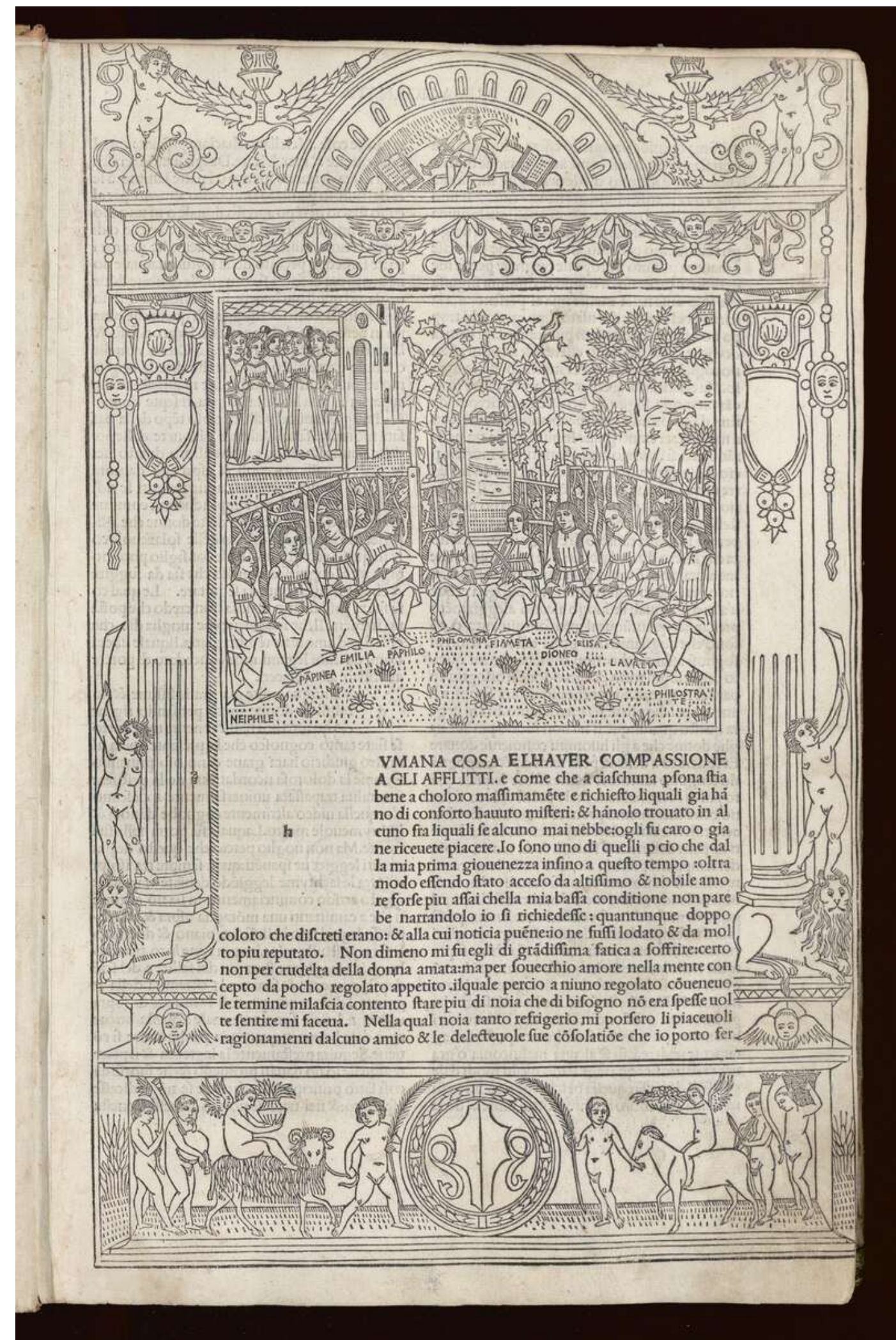
“The noble city of Florence was visited by the deadly pestilence. The plague began in a terrifying and extraordinary manner, to make its disastrous effects apparent”

“...Was the appearance of certain swellings in the groin or armpit”

“Against these maladies, it seemed that all the advice of physicians and all the power of medicine was such that it allowed no remedy. Few of those who caught it ever recovered and the death occurred within three days”

“I was a witness. One day the rags of a pauper who had died from the disease were thrown into the street and pigs were attracted to the extend of being poisoned”





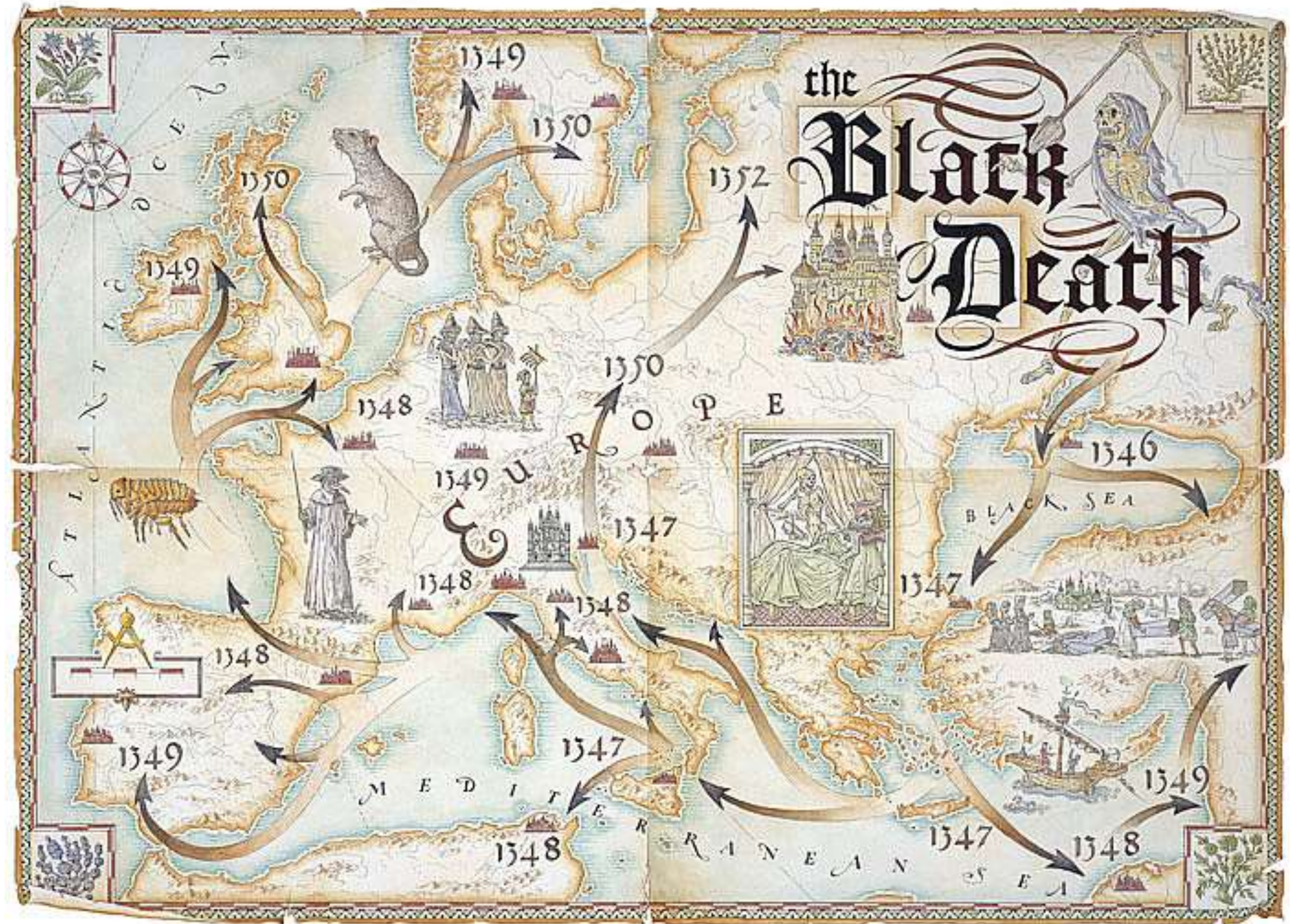


Fear or not?

Leave your home!!



What can  
historical  
pandemics  
teach us  
about  
COVID-19?





**1348 – 1350**

Most devastating outbreak  
50% mortality rate in Europe

Eurasian foothills / Mongol empire

Effects and reactions?

- Shortage of labor
- Women as saviors
- Technological innovations

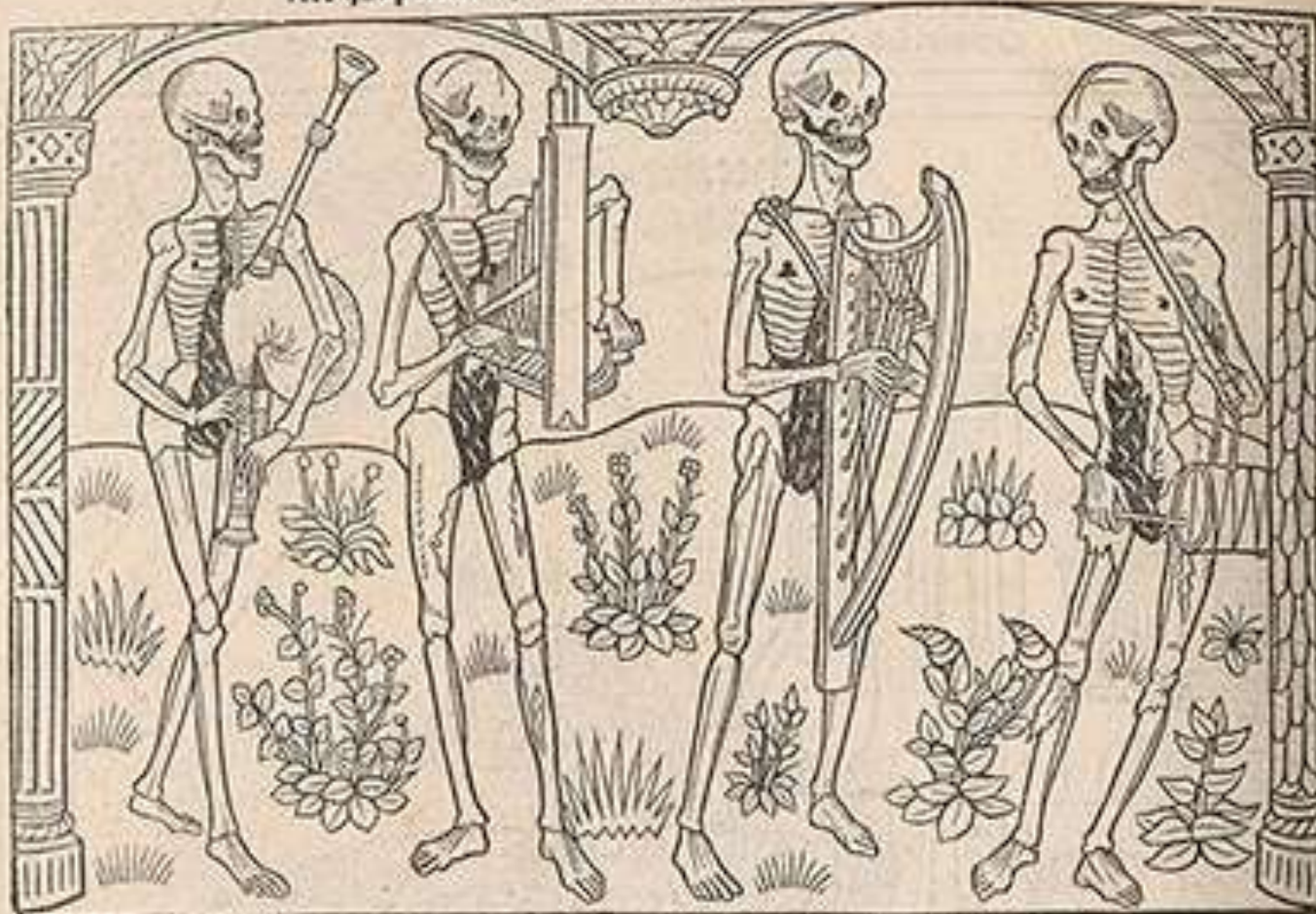


“As far as possible one must refuse to be on the side of the pestilence.”

- Albert Camus, *The Plague*



Ludite foinose tenere cantate puelle.  
 Nam defluunt anni more fluentis aque  
 Nec que preterit iterum reuocabitur vnda.  
 Nec que preterit hora redire potest.



**Le p̄mier menestrel**

Venez dames et damoiselles  
 Du siecle et de religion.  
 Vefues. maries. et pucelles.  
 Et autres sans exception  
 De quelconque condition  
 Toutes: danser a ceste danse  
 Vous y venrez. veuillez ou non.  
 Qui sage est souvent y pense.

**Le second**

Quoy s̄ot voz corps: ie vo<sup>s</sup> demāde  
 Femmes folies tant bien parēe:  
 Ilz sont pour certain la viande  
 Qu'un iour sera aux vers donnee.  
 Des vers sera doncques deuoree  
 Vostre char: qui est fresche et tendre  
 Il n'en demourra goulee.  
 Vos vers apres deuendront cendre

**Le tier**

Compaignon bonne est ta raison  
 De les femmes oultreuidee:  
 Que leurs corps sera venaison  
 De vers puans vng iour mengēe.  
 En porroient elles estre gardee  
 Pour or. argent. ne rien qui soit:  
 Penny. bien sont doncques abusee.  
 Qui ne s'amende il se decoit.

**Le quart**

O fēmes mitez vous en vng tas  
 Dosemens de gens trespassez:  
 Lesquelz ont en diuers estas  
 Au monde estez leurs temps passez  
 Et maintenant sont entassez  
 Lun sur lautre: gros. et menus.  
 Ainsi sere: or y pensez.  
 La char pourrie les os tous nus.

Ex vitro natio posita est lex ire: sed esse  
 Certos: sub sole perpetuare nichil.  
 Ex vitro natio pedetentim calle sub ipso  
 Subdola moro comica est: nos laqueare studens.



**La morte**

Noble royne de beau couraige  
 Sente et ioyeuse a laduenant:  
 Ilay de par le grāt maistre charge  
 De vous en mener maintenant  
 Et comme bien chose aduenant  
 Ceste dance commencerez.  
 Faites deuoir au remenant  
 Vous qui viuez ainsi ferez.

**La royne**

Ceste dance mest bien nouvelle  
 Et en ay le cuer bien surprins  
 Vee dieu: quelle dure nouvelle  
 A gens qui ne l'ont pas apprins  
 Las en la mort est tout comprins  
 Royme. dame. grant ou petite  
 Les plus grās s̄ot les p̄miers prins  
 Contre la mort na point de fuyte

**La morte**

Après ma dame la duchesse  
 Vous bien querir et pourchasser  
 Ne pensez plus a la richesse:  
 A biens ne ioyaulx amasser.  
 Auiourdny vous fault trespasser.  
 Pour quoy de vostre vie est fait  
 Folie est de tant embrasser.  
 On n'emporte que le bienfait.

**La duchesse**

Je nay pas encore trente ans  
 Velas: a leure que commence  
 A sauoir que cest de bon temps  
 Mort me vient tolly ma plaissance  
 Ilay des amis. et grant cheuance.  
 Soulas. el bas. gens a deuio  
 pour quoy moigz me plaist cest dāce  
 Gens'ailes si meurent enuys.

*La danse  
 macabre  
 nouvelle*

Paris: Guy  
 Marchant

1486

Morgan  
 Library &  
 Museum





*The Dance of  
Death (1493) by Michael  
Wolgenut, from  
Nuremberg Chronicle.*



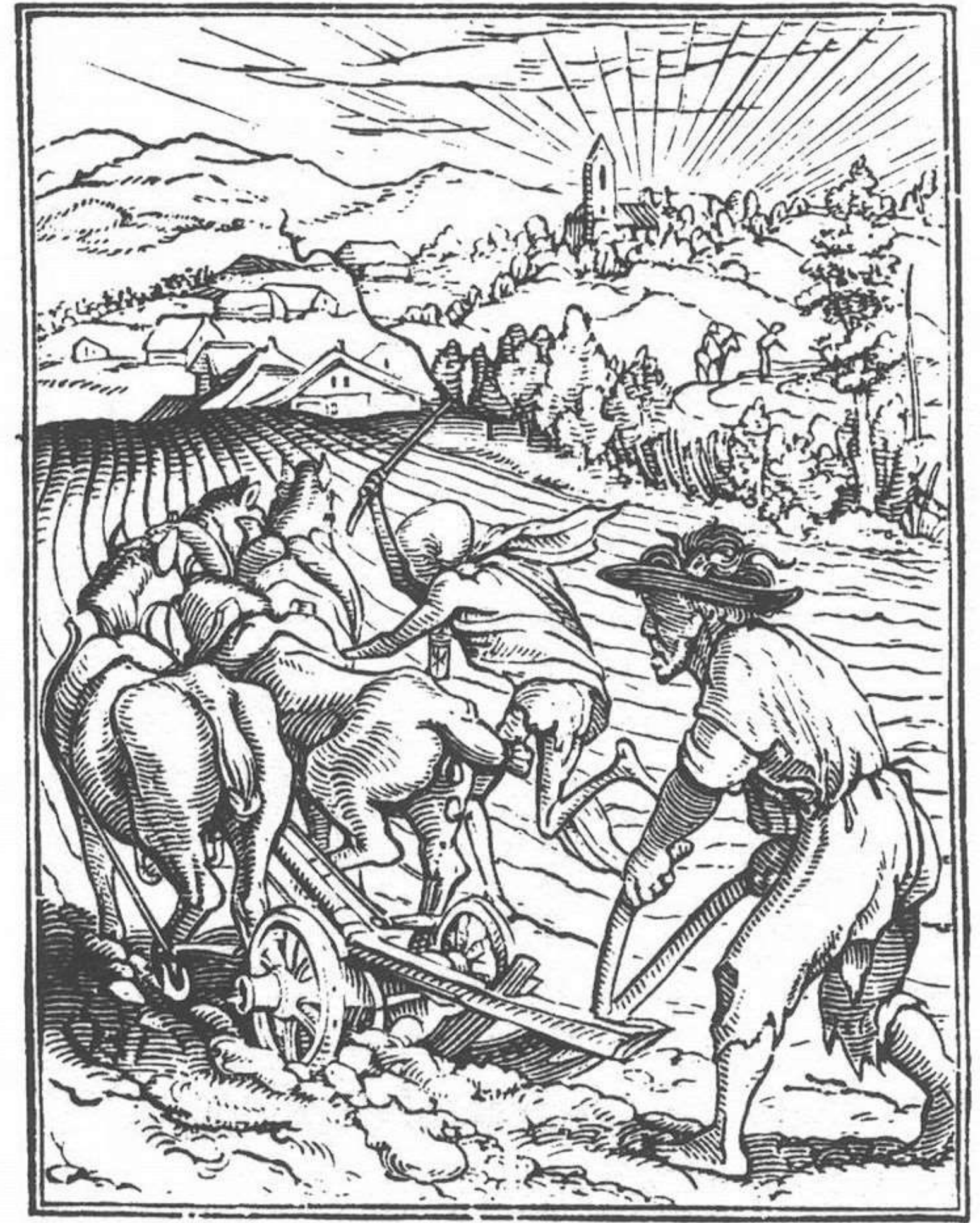
*The Abbess from Holbein's Simolachri,  
Historie, e Figure de la Morte, 1549*



The Pedlar from Holbein's *Simolachri, Historie, e Figure de la Morte*, 1549



The Plowman from Holbein's *Simolachri, Historie, e Figure de la Morte*, 1549







“Not One But Many  
Separate Cities”

Housing Diversity in 16-  
century Venice

Patricia Fortini Brown

FIGURE 13. Hans Heinrich Schweitzer (1618–1673), *Visiting the Sick in a Venetian Hospital*, engraving (after Titian?). Rome, Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica. Fondo Pio, Inv. 35171, F. H. 1457. By the kind permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali.







**A place of habitation + sou**

**HOME**

**“Most of their people are foreigners”**

**PATRICIANS  
CITTADINI  
POPOLANI**





Ca Bembo at Santa Maria Nova



View of Corte dei Preti



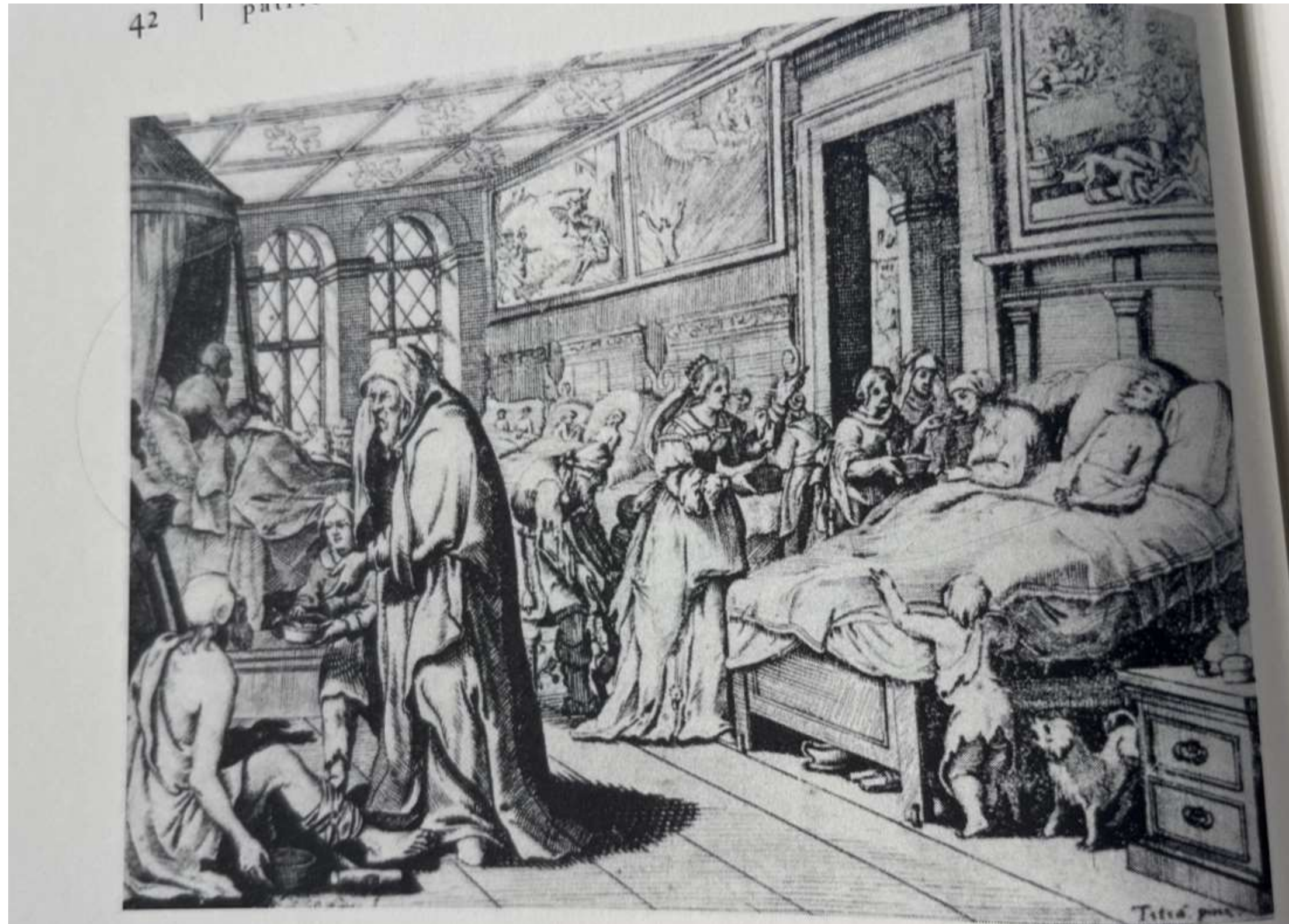


# Hospice of Crociferi





“The rich are necessary to the Republic;  
and the poor are necessary to the rich”











## Casebook

“Men should appropriately consume fine food and drink in measured quantities”

“Should take at least 3 times a week the **antidote**”

“Poor men should consume leeks or holy water and scabiosa (plant) or scallions whether by boiling or liquefying in wine, or eating them finely chopped”



