

Order of the Slayers of the Undead - *Ordinem Interfectores Immortui*

The Black Death was one of the most devastating pandemics in human history, peaking in Europe between 1348 and 1350. Although there were several competing theories as to the etiology of the Black Death, it has been conclusively proven via analysis of ancient DNA from plague victims in northern and southern Europe that the pathogen responsible is the *Yersinia pestis* bacterium. Thought to have started in China or central Asia, it travelled along the Silk Road and reached the Crimea by 1346. From there it was probably carried by Oriental fleas living on the black rats that were regular passengers on merchant ships. It spread throughout the Mediterranean and Europe. The Black Death is estimated to have killed 30-60 percent of Europe's population, reducing world population from an estimated 450 million to between 350 and 375 million in the 14th century. The aftermath of the plague created a series of religious, social and economic upheavals, which had profound effects on the course of European history. It took 150 years for Europe's population to recover. The plague returned at various times, killing more people, until it left Europe in the 19th century. Or so you were told to believe.....

The Truth is that the Black Death was the original Zombie Apocalypse, a virulent pestilence spread not by the bites of vermin but by the bites of its very victims. Spreading across The Orient, Middle East and Europe, the disease went unchecked until finally an Order of Knights composed of members of the Templars, Hospitallers, Teutonic Knights and other Orders came together to face this hellish nightmare. Thus was the *Ordinem Interfectores Immortui* created. The brave Knights faced certain death to eradicate the doom which had befallen all mankind.

At first the peoples of the villages, cities and towns initially struck by the Plague thought it no more than another disease brought down upon them. Why should they have thought otherwise? Life in the Middle Ages was uncertain at best. Every man, woman and child walked side by side with Death in all its forms of War, Sickness and Mishap. What made this affliction so different was that after the prayers were said and the dead buried, was that they did not stay dead and buried. Open graves were discovered, people began disappearing and frightening stories began circulating in the alehouses of horrible shuffling figures emerging from the dark, followed by the screams of their victims who were torn apart and consumed. Entire communities were wiped out by these nightmarish creatures, dead, yet not dead, the *Immortui* as they became known.

As was true in Lands both far and near, the Knightly Orders guarded and protected their peoples. They did not shirk their duties when faced with the sudden onslaught of the Undead. However it was a losing battle, many knights were slain and joined the numbers of the Horror overtaking the Land. By chance a group of knights supported by archers happened upon the way to defeat these creatures. The Knights were in pitched battle, striking limbs and heads from the Dead. The archers shot forth volley after volley of arrows, striking down the waves of attacking creatures. Then one group of archers ignited their arrows to better see their effect on the enemy in the fading light of evening. The Undead burst into flames as if soaked in oil and reduced them utterly to ashes. From that point on, all victims of the Plague were burned instead of buried and the disease was brought finally to a conclusion....or was it?

Valiant Knights of the Order still serve unto this very day, ever ready to quell the outbreaks that still occur from place to place. Honouring their proud Traditions and the brave Knights who served before them, they gather training in their ancient weapons. Much like the Swiss Guard of the Vatican, they have one foot in the past and the other in the present, but their mission is unchanged....to exterminate the *Interfectores Immortui*.