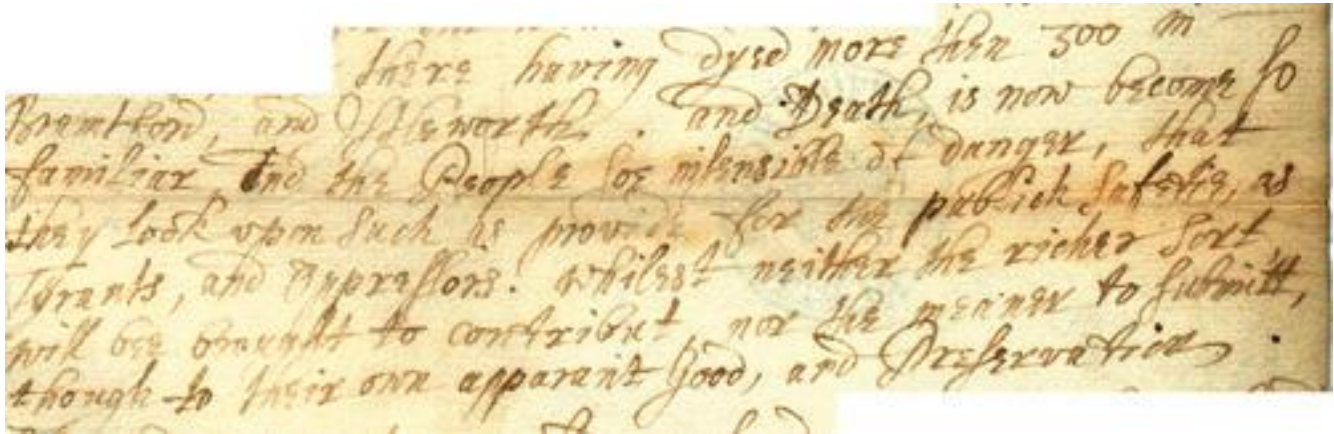


Source Three (a) – Letter from Thomas Povey

What do sources 3a and 3b reveal about people's attitudes to the authorities during the plague?



This letter was written by Thomas Povey, a civil servant in the Naval Office who knew Samuel Pepys. The letter is to Joseph Williamson, an important politician in Charles II's government, who was Under Secretary to the Secretary of State.

Transcript

... there having dyed more than 300 in Brentford and Isleworth, and Death is now become so familiar, and the People soe insensible of danger, that they look upon such as provide for the publick safety, as Tyrants and Oppressors, whilst neither the richer sort, will be brought to contribut, nor the meaner to submit, though to their own apparant good, and preservation.

Glossary

insensible – not caring about, having no regard for

Tyrants – people who exercise power in a cruel way

meaner – low in social status, poor

preservation – safety, protection

Source Three (b) – A case discussed at court

Order to Lord Chief Justice to enquire after the Ryott about the houses infected

Upon Information given unto this Board, that the house, the signe of the ship in the New buildings, in St Giles in the fields, was shutt up as suspected to be infected with the Plague, & a Cross and paper fixed on the doore; And that the said Cross & paper were taken off, & the doore opened, in a riotous manner, & the people of the house permitted, to goe abroad into the street promiscuously, with others; It is this day ordered (his Majesty present in Councell) that the Lord Chief Justice, of his Majesty's Bench, & other his Majesty's Justices of the peace, for the County of Middlesex, be and are hereby desired, to make dilligent & strict enquiry, after the Offenders in the said Ryott; And inflict upon them, for such of them as they shall find, the severest punishment, the Right of the Law, will allow, against offenders in such dangerous a consequence; And soe much to the contempt of his Majesty's orders as theirs;

Record of a case discussed at court at Whitehall in the presence of Charles II, 28 April 1665

Transcript

Order to Lord Chief Justice to enquire after the Ryott about the houses infected

Upon Information given unto this Board, that the house, the Signe of the ship in the New buildings in St.Giles in the fields, was shutt up as suspected to bee infected with the Plague, and a Cross and paper fixed, on the doore; And that the said Cross and paper were taken off, and the door opened, in a riotous manner, and the people of the house permitted, to goe abroad into the street promiscuously, with others; It is this day ordered (his Majesty present in Councell) that the Lord Chief Justice, of his Majesty's Bench, and other his Majesty's Justices of the peace, for the County of Middlesex, bee and are hereby desired, to make dilligent and strict enquiry, after the offenders in the said Ryott; And inflict upon them, for such of them as they shall find, the severest punishments, the Right of the Law, will allow, against offenders in [?], of soe dangerous a consequence; And soe much to the contempt of his Majesty's orders as theirs;

Glossary

Ryott – riot

riotous – disorderly

goe abroad – go about

promiscuously – freely

dilligent – diligent, a thorough effort