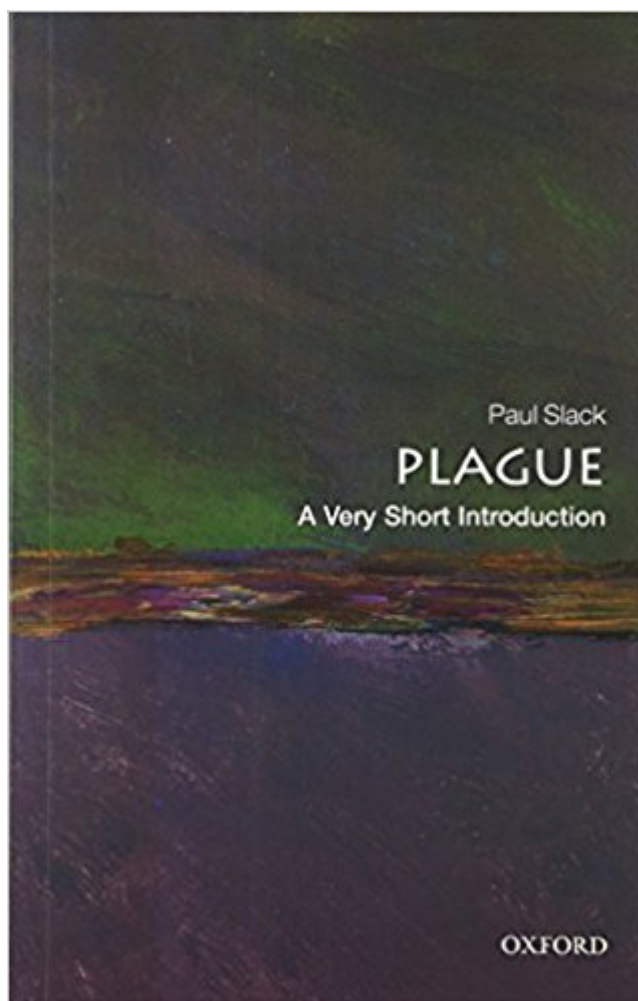


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Plague: A Very Short Introduction



Synopsis

This Very Short Introduction explores the historical impact of plague over the centuries, the ways in which it has been interpreted, and the powerful images it has left behind in art and literature. Paul Slack assesses its causes, which have often been disputed and are now being illuminated by microbiologists and archaeologists, and he looks at possible reasons for its periodic disappearance from whole continents. He shows what plague meant for those who suffered from it, and how governments began to fight against it and in doing so invented modern notions of public health. His focus throughout the book is on how people coped with death and disease in epidemic crises.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is not a textbook on *Pasteurella pestis*. Rather, using the disease it causes as a link, the text has the potential to attract the interest and attention of a wide range of readers, encompassing historical, social, geographical and economic factors and the role they played in changing European and wider social development. In these days of internet access, soundbites and the decline of text on paper, this book presents an excellent opportunity for those who wish for an absorbing and educational narrative, contained within an extremely portable package and with no risk of the battery losing its charge at an inconvenient moment. * The Bulletin of The Royal College of Pathologists, April 2013 * Slack takes a thematic approach to the global and comparative history of plague that provides a wonderful survey for the newcomer to the topic, while still providing food for thought to readers already well versed in the literature. * Patrick Wallis, LPS *

Paul Slack is Emeritus Professor of Early Modern Social History at Oxford University and author of the classic study *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England*.

For reasons ununderstood to even myself, I love factual books about epidemiology, especially the plague and influenza. I've read a lot of books on the subjects. This was a particularly good one.

If you are looking for a book on a topic like "The Black Death" or some such turn elsewhere. This book conflates at least three major historical incidence of plague and it can be difficult and confusing to know which one the author is writing about. I don't agree with the author that basically plague is plague, whether it's from the 4th or 5th century BCE or an outbreak in the 6th century CE or 19th century CE China. The book also tries to convey that our ancestors must have greatly inflated death counts and social disruption, all the while using so-called experts to basically say they're guessing just as much as the older, more "imaginative" generations. And wasting time pretending to be a literary critic for low and high brow artworks is space that could have been used to better craft the storyline he's trying to promote. Three stars for some interesting information on new historical and medical perspectives.

Failed to produce that vivid picture hoped for in good historical non fiction. Quite technical and a bit repetitive through out.

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