

(Pdf free) Armies of Pestilence: The Impact of Disease on History

# Armies of Pestilence: The Impact of Disease on History

*R S Bray*

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**R S Bray : Armies of Pestilence: The Impact of Disease on History** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Armies of Pestilence: The Impact of Disease on History:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Such a good read!By Amy RSuch a good read!! But it is thick with tiny print. The information is dense and amazing. The narrator is wry, dry, and incredibly witty to the educated reader. So informative and fun.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Armies of PestilenceBy Prof. James T. GriffithAuthoritative, comprehensive, well written. Scientist author tells great story, all-in-all a winner. As a microbiologist myself, I might be biased, but these matters are not totally past us and this book is a great way to be informed. Both the history and science are accurate and delightful.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Academic in ToneBy MetallurgistThis book discusses seven diseases (Plague, Malaria, Yellow Fever, Small Pox, Typhus, Cholera and Influenza) and their impact on history. Each section begins with a discussion of the biology of the disease, followed by chapters that discuss its historical impact. The author is a biologist, so it should be no surprise that I found the biology sections to be the best part of the book.I characterize this book as being academic. Much of the book is taken up by discussions of the literature and where different experts disagree, resulting in an academic and somewhat dry presentation of this material. However, if you are primarily interested in some specific details and you want references to seek out further information, then this might be a four star book.The book discusses not only impacts on European history, but also in that of the Middle East, India, China and the Americas. I found many interesting discussions of the aspects of behavior of the diseases. I was interested in the discussion of the influence of Plague type (Bubonic, Pneumonic or Septicaemic) on the rate of transmission of the Plague and the possibility of land transmission over long distances. I liked the discussion of the different types of Malaria, the different types of

mosquitoes that could carry each, and how this impacted the possible types of Malaria that could be present in a given area at a given time. There was a nice discussion of the 1976 swine flu inoculation program. While I liked these aspects of the book and many others, I found this to be balanced by the dry writing style that made me want to race through parts of the book. This is definitely not the type of book that imparts information by telling exciting stories.

The influence that disease has had on history has often been hidden behind the more 'glorious' exploits of individuals and monarchs. In *Armies of Pestilence* R.S. Bray offers a fresh contribution to the impact that illnesses have had on world history. The periods discussed span from the Biblical accounts of epidemics, through the Justinian plague (what was that deadly disease that has kept scientists in contention right through to the present day'), to the miscalculated 1976 influenza epidemic from which the American government took a long time to recover. Dr. Bray covers the Plague (the scourge of medieval Europe), malaria, yellow fever, smallpox, typhus and cholera. The author offers a comprehensive evaluation of many other works, both scientific and historical, which provide a vast basis for research on this subject. His vigorous style and timely injections of humour make this an absorbing and accessible book.

About the Author R.S. Bray took his BSc at the University of Adelaide and went on to gain two doctorates from the University of London. He has lectured around the world and published many scientific articles. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Biology, an Honorary Fellow of the Society of Protozoologists and the British Society of Parasitology, and former Vice-President of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. His work with the Liberian Institute of the American Foundation for Tropical Medicine gained him the Award of Knight Grand Band of the order of African Redemption.