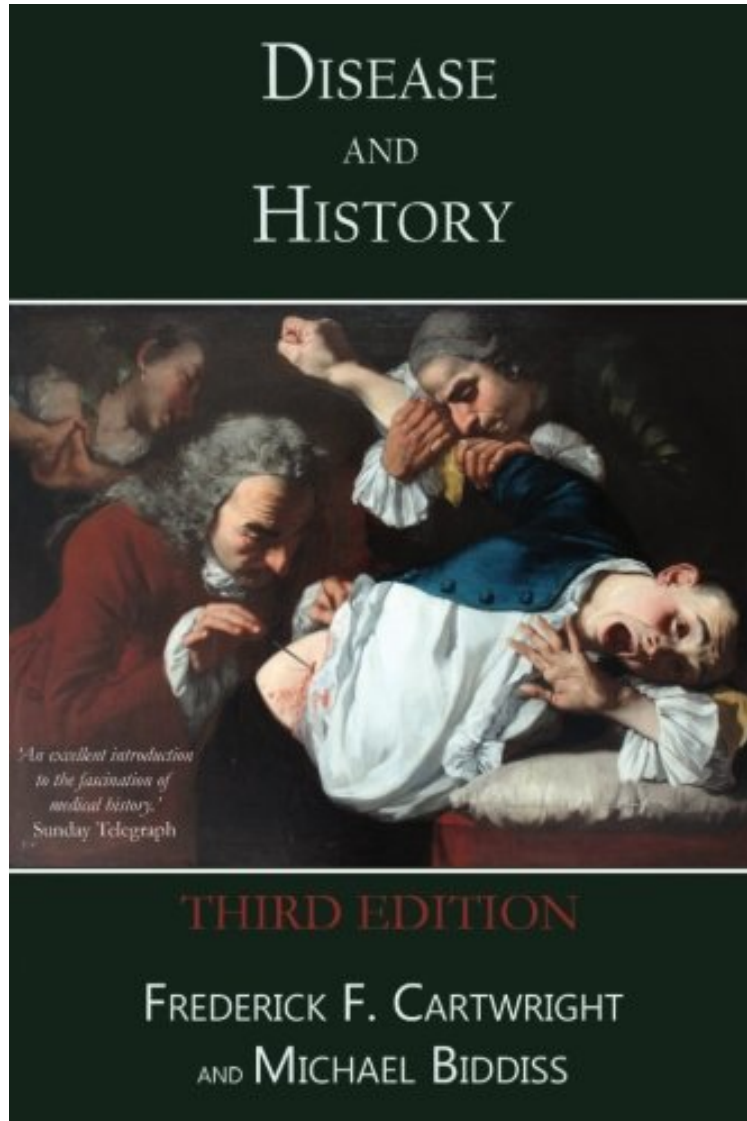


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## Disease History: Third Edition

*Frederick F. Cartwright, Michael Biddiss*  
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**Frederick F. Cartwright, Michael Biddiss : Disease History: Third Edition** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Disease History: Third Edition:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. I Love This Book By Janet K. Schwartzkopf This is one of those books I stumbled over while reading the end notes of another tome, and I'm glad I did. I've always had an interest in the Black Death that swept Europe in the 14th century, and the Spanish influenza which struck almost a century ago now, so I bought this book to see what it had to say on my "favorites." However, it greatly expanded my horizons by talking about such topics as the spread of measles and small pox to the New World, and the advent of venereal

diseases and what that meant to England (Henry VIII) and Russia (Ivan the Terrible). The authors even speculate that Joan of Arc's visions might have been due to an inner ear problem. And, they address the mass psychological disorder that produced the Nazis. While I was certainly more interested in some topics than in others, perhaps the most fortunate thing about this book is that it's co-authored by a doctor and an historian, so the writing is generally crisp and knowledgeable without getting bogged down in medical terms. It provides a great deal of context to what diseases have done to society over the centuries, gives the reader much to speculate about, and was interesting reading from first page to last. I thoroughly enjoyed it. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. How Epidemics Affected People By Acute Observer Disease and History Diseases have influenced the course of history in many ways. This 1972 book of 248 pages has only a selection, much has been omitted. There are no reference notes but a bibliography for each of the 9 chapters. Historians and doctors both study the impact of disease upon history (Introduction). Primitive man lived in tribes such as in some remote jungles today. They ate a high carbohydrate diet which leads to early obesity, suffered from uncurable diseases, and had a high infant mortality rate (p.2). Civilization brought benefits but also hazards (p.3). Famine, war, or pestilence were always a threat. This very readable book tells about some diseases. [War is not a mass psychotic disorder but a way to grab wealth or possessions from others. Wars come upon people like an epidemic of disease.] Chapter 1 discusses disease in the Ancient World. The plague of Athens (like scarlet fever) led to their downfall. Rome built a sewage system, a pure water supply, and clean streets. Their Empire was widespread, but this allowed the spread of new diseases (p.11). Malaria led to the downfall of Rome. There were recurrent plagues (p.12). Hippocrates is regarded as the founder of medicine (p.20). He taught that disease was not a punishment from the gods. Nursing the sick was a Christian duty (p.23). Galen acquired a great reputation, his teachings were followed for over a thousand years (p.27). Chapter 2 discusses The Black Death. The bubonic plague that is most deadly in its pneumonic form. The three years of wet and cold summers in 1346-1348 resulted in malnutrition and reduced resistance to disease (p.36). The deaths marked the greatest catastrophe in European history. This led to higher wages and better working conditions (p.44). The Wars of the Roses ended the old feudal aristocracy in England (p.45). This plague mysteriously disappeared from Europe in the 18th century (p.52). Chapter 3 discusses the emergence of syphilis in Europe. Yaws and syphilis are bacteriologically indistinguishable (p.60). Many examples are cited to show how a sick ruler brings unhappiness to his subjects. Penicillin was shown to be a cure in 1943, until penicillin-resistant organisms emerged (p.81). Chapter 4 discusses typhus, spread by lice among people who are unwashed, wearing the same clothes, and herded closely together (p.83). This disease decimated Napoleons Grand Army in 1812. A famine or poverty is needed for its spread (p.84). Pages 90 to 102 explain the failure of Napoleons War of 1812. The rest of this chapter provides a medical analysis of Napoleon, who was poisoned by small doses of arsenic (p.112). Chapter 5 discusses the diseases developed in civilized countries that were transmitted to less developed countries. A new disease will cause more deaths because of lesser immunity. A smallpox epidemic helped Cortez to conquer Mexico. In the late 19th century a British ship visited the Fiji islands. The result was a measles epidemic that killed 25% of the population (p.135). Chapter 6 tells about the diseases of Africa spread by mosquitoes and tsetse flies: malaria, yellow fever, and sleeping sickness. This prevented exploration of this continent (p.138). Malaria attacked people in Greece and Italy (p.142). Quinine effectively prevents malaria (p.144). Dynastic marriages transmitted the hereditary disease of hemophilia A, where blood doesnt clot normally (Chapter 7). But claiming this caused the end of the Romanoff dynasty ignores everything else that was happening. Other royal houses in Europe also ended by 1919. Chapter 8 discusses Mass Suggestion as a psychiatric disease. People tend to copy one another (p.201). Is there another explanation for the dancing mania of the Middle Ages (p.202)? Why did the Renaissance create a witch hysteria (p.204)? Cartwright needs to learn more about the Salem witchcraft trials (p.206). They ended when the plainly innocent were accused. Cartwrights analysis of Hitler fails to mention the forces that backed him for political and economic purposes (p.208). Given the previous good news, the loss of World War I created a panic in Germany. The economic situation became worse (p.209). [No mention of the ruling class of the aristocracy and industrialists that put Hitler into power (p.213).] Chapter 9 discusses Man-made Problems of the Present and Future. Thalidomide seemed to be a safe sedative in 1956. Then phocomelia broke out in West Germany. Heating homes results in air pollution, so too automobiles (p.218). The canyon-like streets of New York attracts pollution (p.220). Elsewhere chemicals can harm fish and animals (p.221). Nitrate fertilizers can poison young children (p.223). The use of DDT causes a build-up in humans (p.224). Noise is another form of pollution (p.226). The authors show an anti-human outlook in predicting disaster in future decades (p.236). Can you believe them? The past forty years mock their predictions: global war would inevitably result (p.237). [This last chapter is lessened by their political outlook.] 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. How Epidemics Affected People By Acute Observer Disease and History Diseases have influenced the course of history in many ways. This 1972 book of 248 pages has only a selection, much has been omitted. There are no reference notes but a bibliography for each of the 9 chapters. Historians and doctors both study the impact of disease upon history (Introduction). Primitive man lived in tribes such as in some remote jungles today. They ate a high carbohydrate diet which leads to early obesity, suffered from uncurable diseases, and had a high infant mortality rate (p.2). Civilization brought benefits but also hazards (p.3). Famine, war, or pestilence were always a threat. This very readable book tells about some diseases. [War is not a mass

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A newly revised edition of an established classic in the history of medicine. Arising from collaboration between a doctor and a historian, *Disease and History* offers the general reader a wide-ranging and most accessible account of some of the ways in which disease has left its often dramatic mark on the past. It reviews, for example, the impact made by bubonic plague and other infections upon the ancient and medieval worlds; the likely role of syphilis in the careers of Henry VIII and Ivan the Terrible; the significance of smallpox for the conquest of Mexico; and the contribution of typhus to Napoleons downfall and of haemophilia to the collapse of Tsarist rule in Russia. Other topics surveyed include the influence of tropical diseases in the history of the colonization of Africa, and the global death-toll taken by the so-called Spanish influenza of 1918-9. The authors show how successive eras have registered some progress against pestilence, even while also experiencing confrontation with new and often unforeseen threats. Thus the final section of the book highlights how this field of history serves to illuminate many of the current problems now facing a world where disease especially when combined with war, famine, and ecological recklessness presents an ongoing challenge to human survival. A study whose outstanding virtues are economy, clarity and readability. *New Statesman* A welcome updating and careful revision of one of the pioneering accounts of the social history of medicine. Roy Porter, Professor of the Social History of Medicine, UCL Fascinating and highly recommended. *Library Journal*

About the AuthorThe late Frederick Cartwright headed the Department of the History of Medicine at King's College Medical School, London. Michael Biddiss is Emeritus Professor of History and former Dean of Letters and Social Sciences at The University of Reading. Each was President of the Faculty of the History of Medicine at the Society of

Apothecaries of London, during 1980-1 and 1994-8 respectively.