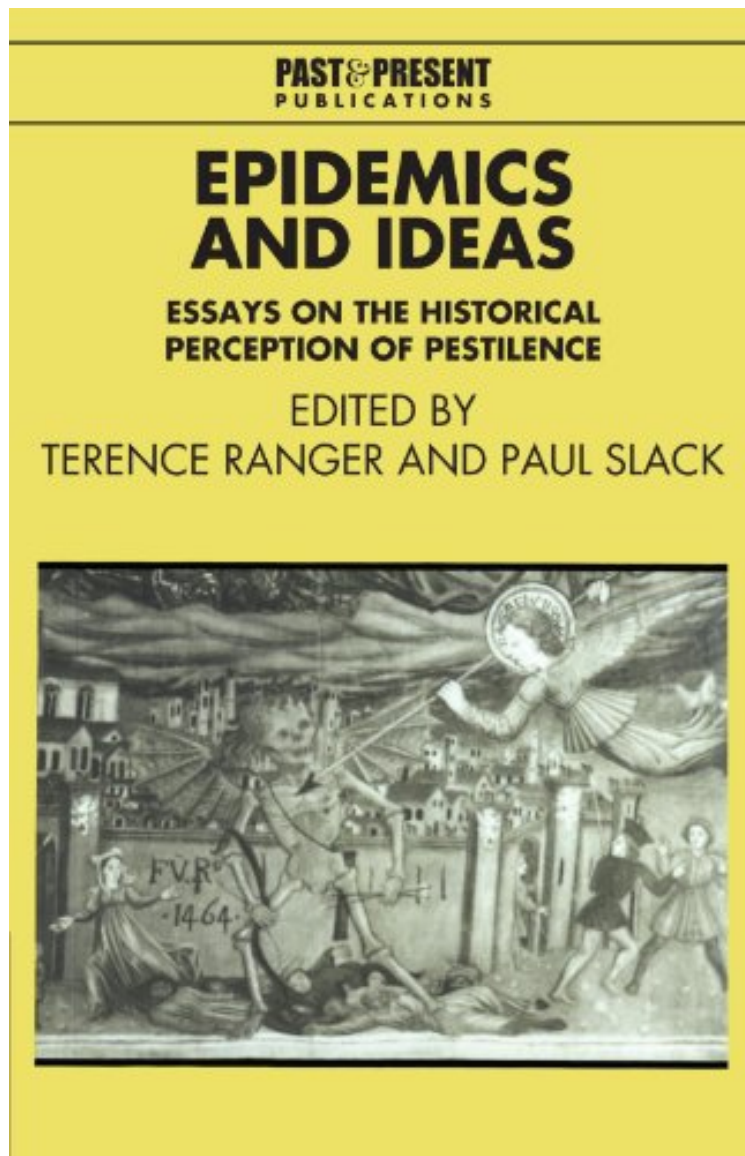


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Epidemic diseases have always been a test of the ability of human societies to withstand sudden shocks. How are such large mortalities and the illness of large proportions of the population to be explained and dealt with? How have the sources of disease been identified and controls imposed? The chapters in this book, by acknowledged experts in the history of their periods, look at the ways in which the great epidemic diseases of the past--from classical Athens to the present day--have shaped not only our views of medicine and disease, but the ways in which people have defined the "health" of society in general terms.

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