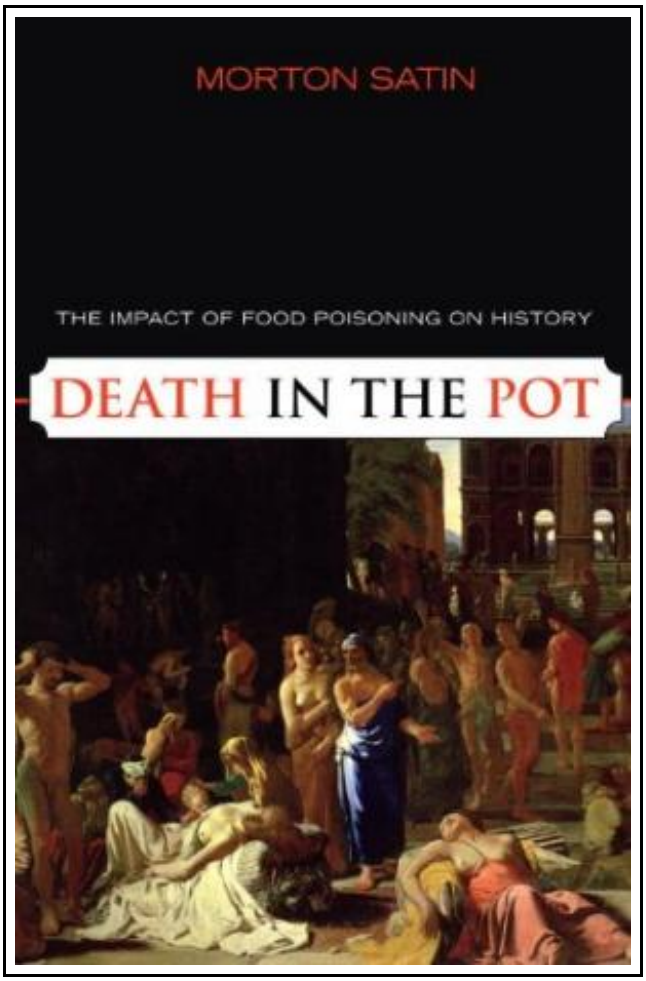
Death in the Pot: The Impact of Food Poisoning on History



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Reviews

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Prometheus Books. Hardback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Death in the Pot: The Impact of Food Poisoning on History, Morton Satin, In 2005, the Argonne National Laboratory proved that the great German composer Ludwig van Beethoven died prematurely from lead poisoning. This is just one example of how poisoning, both natural and deliberate, has affected the course of history. Battles have been lost or won - as internationally renowned food expert Morton Satin shows - because of unclean, adulterated food. In this engrossing narrative, Satin spans the ancient world to the present day, documenting events both tragic and bizarre through the ages. In the fifth century B.C.E., the great plague of Athens, probably caused by contaminated cereals, led to the defeat of the Athenians in the Peloponnesian War. In the pre-scientific Middle Ages, illnesses resulting from contaminated food were often attributed to the wrath of God or malevolent spirits. Heavily infectious ergot induced a spasmodic muscle condition, which the Church named "St. Anthony's Fire" and interpreted as retribution by God on heretics. Similarly, in seventeenth-century America the hallucinogenic symptoms of mouldy grain were thought by Puritans to be signs of witchcraft. Even the madness of King George III, which played a role in the American Revolution, may have been induced by accidental arsenic poisoning. In the twentieth century, Satin recounts the efforts of modern industrial societies to make food safer; in some cases these efforts were heroic. For example, in the early days of the Food and Drug Administration a "Poison Squad" was formed, consisting of young scientists who willingly acted as guinea pigs to test the toxic effects of chemical additives. Today, the government has focused on the hazards of food bioterrorism. Satin concludes by describing measures taken to protect the public from intentional and unintentional poisoning, as well...

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