**Undergraduate Research Opportunity**

**STUDENT PROJECT**

**Biraben 2.0: A Black Death Digital Archive**

Prof. Monica Green  
History

This project involves preparing background readings for a small international conference that will bring together the world’s top researchers working on the history of the 2nd Plague Pandemic (13th-18th centuries). The 2nd Plague Pandemic, which includes the devastating Black Death of the 14th century, plus all persisting outbreaks in Eurasia and Africa for the next 500 years, has produced a considerable amount of historiography, and is increasingly also being researched by archaeologists and paleogeneticists. But the data that has been used to study this largest pandemic in human history is very uneven, widely scattered, and difficult to synthesize. The participants will be meeting to discuss plans for a comprehensive Digital Humanities (DH) database that brings together data from a variety of sources and begins to standardize it for common use by researchers, be they historians, biologists, or epidemiologists. This is a prime opportunity for a student wanting to see how a major research project gets started from the ground up.

**Research assistant’s duties:**
The RA will assist Dr. Green in preparing background materials and doing logistical planning for a small symposium that will be held at Harvard University in the 2018-19 academic year. A Drupal website will be set up, and we will populate it with selected readings. Student will also be asked to design a small project of their own (e.g., a Wikipedia page, a small online exhibit) that shows some new understanding of plague’s history that can be uncovered by using Big Data.

**Required skills or qualifications:**
Required: background coursework (at least 1 course) on Africa or Eurasia in the medieval or early modern period. Desired: any of the following. Languages: Latin, Arabic, Persian, Russian, or any other Eurasian or African language. Computer skills: GIS or any mapping technologies; Drupal. Science skills: background in basic Biology will be very helpful; background in genetics or bioarchaeology would be superb. People skills: strong, courteous writing; ability to work independently and against a deadline.

**Skills student will acquire:**
This project is suitable for a student interested in (a) history of medicine; (b) global history; or (c) Digital Humanities. Student will learn the skills involved in targeted interdisciplinary research; the objectives of bibliographic review; and the logistics of conference organizing.