

Plague: Scourge of the Ages

Prof. Monica Green

Tuesday, January 19

6:00 p.m., Frazier Jelke B

Knowledge about the history of plague has expanded enormously in recent years because of advances in the sciences and new historical approaches.

Plague, caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*, is one of the most lethal infectious diseases known to humankind, capable of killing between 40% to nearly 100% of its victims. And unlike other pathogens, it can take several different routes into the body. In many respects, only Ebola elicits the same terror. Given the power of this organism, how have we (humans) survived?

Plague's power is a function of its evolutionary development. But its distribution around the world is a function of humans' role in its spread. This talk will summarize the latest findings on plague: its deep history stretching back to the Bronze Age; its geographic home in the highlands of Central Eurasia; the causes of the three Plague Pandemics (including the Black Death) that eventually distributed the disease throughout the world; and plague as a current threat in our age of climate change.



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Sponsored by the Departments of History, Biology and
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