From the Garden Blog

Dumbarton Oaks Announces 2015–2016 Fellows

In the 2015–2016 academic year, Dumbarton Oaks will host fifty-seven scholars from around the world as Fellows. Dumbarton Oaks has awarded thirteen Fellowships, nine Junior Fellowships, eighteen Summer Fellowships, four Tyler Fellowships, four Mellon Fellowships, eight Project Grants, and one Early-Career Musician Residency.

View the official list of the 2015–2016 Fellows and their project titles here.
Public Lecture in Garden and Landscape Studies

“Culture, History, and Context: Inspiring Contemporary Landscapes” with Thomas Woltz | April 30, 2015, at 5:30 p.m.

The landscape at the new Dumbarton Oaks Fellowship House was designed by Thomas Woltz, of Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects, with close attention to Beatrix Farrand’s working methods and her designs for the Bliss family. Farrand’s gardens inspired the use of specific materials, patterns, and plants for the new Fellowship House. The resulting courtyard and roof garden are decidedly contemporary and avoid recreating a Farrand design, yet they generate a respectful and resonant echo of the masterpiece only one block away. Woltz will discuss this project and three others at a range of scales that emerge from the firm’s extensive cultural and historical research.

Thomas Woltz was named Design Innovator of the Year by WSJ. Magazine in 2013. In 2011, he was inducted into the American Society of Landscape Architects Council of Fellows, among the highest honors achieved in the profession.

The event is free and open to the public. Registration is required and is first come, first served. The lecture will take place in the Oak Room of the Fellowship House, 1700 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20007.

Find out more about the event here. To register, email landscape@doaks.org.

Above: Rendering of the landscape at the new Fellowship Building, Dumbarton Oaks. Courtesy Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects.

Invitation to the Byzantine Symposium

In the early years of Dumbarton Oaks, one of the research projects initiated by A. M. Friend was devoted to the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople. This early humanities collaboration of a literary scholar (Glanville Downey), an architectural historian (Paul Underwood), and an art historian (Friend) represented an attempt to reconstruct a lost building. A three-volume publication on the subject was envisaged, and a symposium was held in 1948, in which major scholars were involved, with Sirarpie Der Nersessian as symposiarch.

Unlike the Dumbarton Oaks projects on Norman Sicily or on Venice, the results of the Holy Apostles initiative were never published, nor was the 1948 symposium. In the seventy-fifth year of Byzantine Studies at Dumbarton Oaks, a symposium devoted to the church of the Holy Apostles will complete the task of those early years by assessing the significance of the church, its milieu, and its legacy.

Read more about both the 1948 and the upcoming symposium [here](#).


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**Visiting Scholar Interview: Pierre du Prey**

Pierre du Prey, professor emeritus of art history at Queen’s University, joined Dumbarton Oaks as the Garden and Landscape Studies Visiting Scholar for the month of March. Professor du Prey, who specializes in the relationship of architects’ works and their biographies, dedicated the majority of his stay at Dumbarton Oaks to continuing his work on the seventeenth-century architect and playwright Francesco Ignazio Lazzari, and on Beatrix Farrand’s Chinese Garden at Applegreen, in Old Westbury, New York.

Here, you’re working on documents about the villas of Pliny.

Yes, one in particular—one in central Italy, in Umbria, we think. Pliny refers to it in his ancient Latin letters, published sometime around 100 CE. He dies a little bit after that, on the Black Sea. In the meantime, he writes ten books of letters that survive, written to various correspondents who may or may not be real people. It may be a literary effort.

To come to the manuscript that’s here at Dumbarton Oaks: in the late seventeenth century in
Umbria, in a charming little town called Città di Castello, a local priest and member of the minor aristocracy, Francesco Ignazio Lazzari, writes a twenty-six-folio-long description of where he thinks the villa of Pliny the Younger is located. . . . Lazzari comes up with the idea that he's found it, and archaeology seems to bear him out. But what’s really interesting about this manuscript is not so much that it connects to archaeology, but that it connects to the love of one’s own country, the pride in Città di Castello, and the local antiquarianism of the intellectuals in this small little town.

Read the rest of the interview here to discover more about Lazarri’s manuscript, as well as du Prey’s other research interests.

**Middle East Garden Traditions**

A Legacy Digital Humanities Project

Between 2004 and 2007, an international team of scholars collaborated on an online resource of garden traditions in the Islamic world, from the eighth century to the present. The project accompanied and supplemented a Garden and Landscape Studies Symposium, which was jointly sponsored by Dumbarton Oaks and the Smithsonian Institution’s Freer and Sackler Galleries, in 2007. Its papers were edited by Michel Conan and published by Dumbarton Oaks as *Middle East Garden Traditions: Unity and Diversity; Questions, Methods and Resources in a Multicultural Perspective* (2007).

The vast chronological and geographical scope of this project, and its rich source materials, including texts, illustrations, and archaeology, resulted in a number of valuable resources for scholars. These include catalog entries for Umayyad, Abbasid, Andalusian, Ottoman, Mughal, and Safavid gardens; a multilingual glossary of terms in Ottoman Turkish, Persian, Arabic, Hebrew, and Urdu; a glossary of tree and shrub species in Al-Andalus, known from medieval botanical texts; and a historical dictionary of Ottoman Turkish terms for gardens and gardening comprising some twelve thousand entries.
Byzantine Textile Conference

“Liminal Fabric: Furnishing Textiles in Byzantium and Early Islam”

On March 26 and 27, a group of fifteen specialists gathered to discuss Byzantine and early Islamic textiles at the Dumbarton Oaks Museum conference “Liminal Fabric: Furnishing Textiles in Byzantium and Early Islam,” organized in conjunction with the Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Collection’s catalogue raisonné project. Almost eighty participants from local and national universities and museums gathered for talks in the Oak Room of the Fellowship House. They included art historians, archaeologists, conservators, curators, and historians, and they discussed the theme of furnishing textiles, a topic largely neglected in scholarly literature. Papers addressed theoretical and practical approaches for understanding textiles in context, including questions of production, design, and consumption, and the uses of furnishing textiles in a range of environments.

Read more about the conference here.


From the Archives

Holy Apostles Symposium Redux

This month, the Byzantine Studies program hosts a symposium on the lost Constantinopolitan church of the Holy Apostles, the second time that Dumbarton Oaks has sponsored a symposium on this
A little-known component of the 1948 symposium was the simultaneous meeting at Dumbarton Oaks of the Trustees for Harvard University, which included Harvard’s president, James Bryant Conant, and six other members of the University Corporation. This would be the first, as well as one of the very few times, that the Trustees would meet in Washington and observe directly the activities of the research institution. In a letter to Robert Bliss dated on March 25, 1948, and preserved in the Dumbarton Oaks Archives, Paul Sachs, chairman of the Dumbarton Oaks Administrative Committee, outlined the implications of the Trustees’ visit:

We have all been anxious for a long time to have the seven members of the Corporation as guests at Dumbarton Oaks and to be in a position to have you and Bert [Albert Mathias Friend Jr.] and Jack [John S. Thacher, Director] and others concentrate attention on these seven men and on them alone; and I have a feeling that they, also, would welcome an opportunity for such close and undisturbed cooperation, in order that they may get clearly in mind the exact nature of the important work that scholars and staff are doing at Dumbarton Oaks.

Read more about the 1948 symposium here.


**Good Ink**

The *Huffington Post* published a piece about Mildred Barnes Bliss’s activities during the First World War, written by Dr. Lindsay Krasnoff, policy studies historian at the U.S. State Department and a speaker at the Dumbarton Oaks’ Wintersession program. Read her piece here.

According to *Garden and Gun* magazine, Dumbarton Oaks is reason number twenty-five to “love the south right now.” Find out why, and the other reasons here.

This month’s *Professional Roofing* magazine features the work of James Myers Co. in revitalizing the roofs at Dumbarton Oaks. Read more here.

Check out the *Georgetowner’s* roundup of our cherry blossoms.

Athena Ruby, Dumbarton Oaks’ award-winning font for Byzantine inscriptions, has recently been featured in *Inscriptions in Byzantium and Beyond: Methods—Projects—Case Studies* (ed. A. Rhoby), just published by the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna. “Introducing Athena Ruby, Dumbarton Oaks’ New Font for Byzantine Inscriptions” (121–26), by Joel Kalvesmaki, provides a general introduction to the font and its use, and is available online as an open access publication. This study was drafted just before another was independently published, by Florence Codine and Guillaume Sarah (“Du plomb au pixel: Transcrire les légendes des monnaies du haut Moyen Âge,” *Revue Numismatique* 169 [2012]: 261–77).
Behind the Scenes

Photographer Joe Mills reached his fortieth year at Dumbarton Oaks on the first of April. On the occasion, he gifted to the institution the message below, from Hollywood legend Elizabeth Taylor. He found the note on his car in 1978, after he had parked in front of the home Taylor shared with her then-husband, U.S. Senator John Warner. Taylor and Warner’s former home is now the Dumbarton Oaks Director’s Residence.