Now on View:

Special Exhibition: *Written in Knots*

*Written in Knots: Undeciphered Accounts of Andean Life* puts on display a remarkable communication system. Portable and precise, it has complexities that have challenged and inspired decipherers. Long before the arrival of the Spaniards, the people of the Andes shared information using khipus—textiles that encoded economic, political,
and perhaps narrative data in their cords, knots, and colors. Written in Knots is the first exhibition to bring together such records that cover more than 1,300 years of South American history, from the Wari civilization to the Inka empire to the Spanish colonial period. The exciting collection of never-before-seen khipus on display includes the largest, most complex Wari specimen known to museums and the latest research into what stories the knots might tell.

Special Displays: A Nobility of Matter & Beyond Knotting

Now on view are two temporary exhibits showcasing rarely-viewed Asian art and Pre-Columbian textiles. A Nobility of Matter: Asian Art from the Bliss Collection explores Chinese art collected by the cofounders of Dumbarton Oaks, beginning with finely-crafted Song dynasty vessels. Beyond Knotting: Wari and Inka Tunics from the Collection is an installation of luxurious tunics from the Andes—some more than 1,000
years old. It appears in conjunction with *Written in Knots*, examining the relationship between two major components of the Andean woven world.

**2019 Plant Humanities Summer Program Launched**

**Applications due April 5**

Fascinated by the power of plants to shape human culture around the globe? Apply by this Friday, **April 5**, to spend four weeks in July exploring connections between botany, cultural history, environmental studies, botanical art, and more through a new interdisciplinary program. Participants conduct research in a superb rare book collection, attend seminars, visit major gardens in and around Washington, DC, and train in digital storytelling with JSTOR Labs. Thanks to the Plant Humanities Initiative—
a collaboration between JSTOR and Dumbarton Oaks, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation—accommodation, round-trip travel reimbursement, and weekday lunches are provided. Graduate students and advanced undergraduates with interests in botany, the history of science and medicine, environmental studies, digital humanities, or art history are invited to apply now.

Digging into DOML

Explore what makes a medieval city great with Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library

The mysterious and gilded Empire of Trebizond cast a spell on visitors for centuries. Nicole Eddy, managing editor of the Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (DOML), introduces the city Cervantes called up in the same breath as serpents, monsters, and
swashbuckling women. DOML’s new publication *Two Works on Trebizond* includes a chronicle by the Trapezuntine emperor’s personal secretary and praise of the city by influential cardinal and philosopher Bessarion. What makes a great city in the medieval world, according to these authors? It’s not the shimmering church, royal palace, gardens, or formidable walls. Find the answer in Eddy’s captivating look at this medieval Silk Road trading center.

**Caroline Shaw's Dumbarton Oaks Commission Available April 19**

New music from the 2014-2015 Early-Career Musician in Residence

A piece for strings commissioned by Dumbarton Oaks and inspired by the garden, archives, and fellows is being released to the public on April
19. Forthcoming album *Orange* features Caroline Shaw's compositions performed by award-winning chamber ensemble Attacca Quartet. Shaw is the youngest recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for Music and won a Grammy with the vocal ensemble Roomful of Teeth. The inaugural holder of our Early-Career Musician Residency, she was recently featured in the *New Yorker*. Her new album includes the series *Plan + Elevation (The Grounds of Dumbarton Oaks)*, a Dumbarton Oaks commission that premiered at the 75th Anniversary Gala Concert and Reception in 2015. Watch a video for *Orange* filmed in the Orangery, and preorder the album from Nonesuch Records and New Amsterdam Records.

A Byzantine Mystery Enters the Museum

First Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine seals exhibit since 1980 soon to open
The first exhibit in more than 30 years solely focused on Byzantine seals from the 17,000-strong Dumbarton Oaks collection opens later this month. In the Byzantine world, metal seals identified owners and protected things, such as securing a string that kept a letter closed. The display reveals how Dumbarton Oaks researchers played detective to solve an 800-year-old mystery involving a broken seal and a mysterious and powerful person from the 12th century. A number of other important lead seals—including one commissioned by a Byzantine empress—will also be on view. Located across from the museum shop, the Byzantine seals case launches a new series of temporary displays highlighting recent discoveries and new acquisitions.

Cherry Blossoms in Full Splendor

Stroll in the garden under iconic pink-and-white blooms
Springtime has arrived in the garden, and Cherry Hill is bursting with the quintessential flora of Washington, DC. Skip the crowds on the National Mall and contemplate wafting petals peacefully. Landscape architect Beatrix Farrand designed Cherry Hill to transform into one of the most magical places in the garden for this brief moment each year, and it shows. The viewing period is extended thanks to the staggered blooms of several cherry species, including Prunus sargentii, Prunus subhirtella, and Prunus × yedoensis. Through October 31, the garden is open from 2 to 6 PM, Tuesday through Sunday.

Scholars in the Spotlight

Catch up with our recent speaker and his research

Ángel González López reconstructs the Aztec-Mexica empire by documenting and analyzing more than 2,300 sculptures, revealing political goals hidden in the stone. González López is a PhD candidate in anthropology at the University of California, Riverside.

Digital Tools and Online Treasures
Garden Archives

Discover a rich trove of garden and landscape history featuring more than 6,000 drawings, historic photographs, invoices, receipts, plant lists, and letters amassed by the only female founding member of the American Society of Landscape Architects. In 1950, the garden’s designer Beatrix Farrand made plans to send Dumbarton Oaks more than 20 years of plans documenting the creation of its garden. Farrand considered such “a continuous history of a place” to be of “real value . . . for the art of landscape.” After more than six decades, the voluminous and consequential Garden Archives are now in the final stages of a digitization project aimed at making it publicly available. Examine the archive’s maps, designs, biographies, correspondence, and more, with supplementary documentation extending into the present day.

Upcoming Programs
Friday, April 12, 8:30 am–Saturday, April 13, 5 pm
Processions: Urban Ritual in Byzantium and Neighboring Lands
Annual Byzantine Symposium

Beginning Friday, April 12, 3–4 pm
Written in Knots Curator Tours
Explore a South American information technology

Thursday, April 25, 6–8 pm
Keys to the Empire: Wari Religion and Politics in City and Country
Lecture by Professor Anita Cook

Friday, May 3, 8:45 am–Saturday, May 4, 5 pm
Landscape, Sport, Environment: The Spaces of Sport from the Early Modern Period to Today
Annual Garden and Landscape Symposium