Currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate students are encouraged to apply for Bliss Symposium Awards, which support attendance at our annual symposia. Apply by January 31 to attend “Byzantine Missions: Meaning, Nature, and Extent,” the spring Byzantine Studies symposium, being held April 24–25. The history of Christian missions has received little attention in recent scholarship. The symposium aims to illuminate the inner motives that
characterized Byzantine missions, the changing incentives that inspired them, and the nature of their missionary activity; and ultimately to better understand how the Byzantines perceived the universal claims of their empire and their church. At the same time, the organizers hope to throw light on the broader religious dynamics of the medieval world.

Byzantine Greek Summer School Provides Intense Language Training

Applications due February 1

Study medieval Greek intensively for four weeks this summer at Dumbarton Oaks. Students also receive an introduction to paleography and Byzantine book culture, study inscribed objects in the Byzantine Collection, and view facsimiles of manuscripts in the Rare Book Collection. Priority goes to applicants without ready access to similar courses at local or regional institutions. No tuition fees are charged, and successful candidates from outside the
Washington, DC, area are provided housing at no cost and lunch on weekdays. Apply now for the Byzantine Greek Summer School, held June 19–July 24.

Dumbarton Oaks Funds Syriac and Armenian Summer School

Offered in collaboration with the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library
Apply by February 15 for the intensive courses “Intermediate Syriac” or “Introduction to Classical Armenian” this summer, hosted at the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HMML) in Collegeville, Minnesota. Dumbarton Oaks covers costs for tuition, housing, and meals. The courses include morning and afternoon sessions, guest lectures, and an introduction to paleography and the study and use of manuscripts. Doctoral candidates or recent PhD recipients who can demonstrate the need for either language in their research are invited to apply. The 2020 Syriac and Armenian Summer School is being held July 13–August 7.

Applications to Harvard Internships and Humanities Fellowships Due February 1

Supporting careers in the humanities

As a research institute affiliated with the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University, Dumbarton Oaks offers opportunities such as summer internships and nine-month humanities
fellowships to students and recent graduates of Harvard College. Summer internships are stimulating paid experiences in the humanities, running this year from June 8 to August 7. Opportunities are offered in garden history, Syrian late antique heritage, archives digitization, public programming and outreach, medieval translation, cataloguing Byzantine seals, exhibition planning, and oral history. Humanities fellowships offer nine months of professional development at outstanding cultural institutions in Washington, DC. Recipients split their time between Dumbarton Oaks and collaborating institutions, which include the National Gallery of Art, the National Museum of Natural History, and the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Applications Open for the Plant Humanities Summer Program

Study the cultural histories of plants

Join a fully funded four-week summer program focused on the interdisciplinary study of plants, their global travels, and the myriad ways they have shaped human culture.
Participants attend seminars and lectures, visit The Oak Spring Garden Foundation, the United States Botanic Garden, the Smithsonian Herbarium, and other sites, and engage with an open-access digital tool being developed in collaboration with JSTOR Labs. The program is offered in the context of the Dumbarton Oaks and JSTOR Labs Plant Humanities Initiative, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Applicants with special interests in the fields of history of science, environmental studies, digital humanities, art history, and/or botany are given priority, but we also welcome candidates who seek to develop new skills in the digital humanities or the use of special collections. Graduate students and advanced undergraduates may apply by February 28 for the Plant Humanities Summer Program.

Reflecting on Landscapes of Enslavement

Mellon award recipients discuss the 2019 Garden and Landscape Studies colloquium
Held this fall, the colloquium “Interpreting Landscapes of Enslavement” examined strategies for revealing and interpreting histories of slavery and the legacies of racial injustice that are slavery’s aftermath as they are found in the landscapes of eastern North America. Five Mellon Conference Award recipients—all graduate and undergraduate students of landscape architecture, architecture, and the constructed environment—share their reflections. “As an aspiring landscape architect, I gained . . . a timely reminder of the great responsibility inherent in any modification of the landscape,” wrote one award recipient from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Another wrote that “the presentations highlighted the myriad complications that arise within institutions that simultaneously protect their legacies and missions, and answer to demands to examine their histories.”

Encore from an Early-Career Musician in Residence

Robyn Bollinger reflects on researching the history of musical dessert
What is an encore? Today when we think of the word “encore,” we imagine [or picture] a spontaneous performance that follows a planned performance—like a piece of musical dessert to indulge further in the performance experience. During her term as fall 2020 Early-Career Musician in Residence, Robyn Bollinger discovered that this encore practice is very much a modern invention. Read this reflection by Bollinger and find out how a rising star violinist—who has received critical acclaim in the New York Times, Boston Globe, San Francisco Chronicle, and Washington Post—spent her days at Dumbarton Oaks. Highlights include a preview of Bollinger’s new multimedia recital project, an angry 1712 letter to the editor, and an encore entitled “The Hot Canary.”

Stroll the Garden Paths with a Friend

Explore a restored stone walkway in the Forsythia Dell

Enjoy a little-known and picturesque corner of our garden thanks to recent restoration of a meandering stone footpath. The walkway traverses the Forsythia Dell, passes a pebble-and-
stone patio with the beloved “Two Friends Benches,” and finally leads to the west edge of Cherry Hill. Made from mica and schist, the path settled over the years, making it difficult for visitors to use. Longtime stonemason John Allen Pond Jr. reconfigured the walkway base to prevent further settling, cut new edges on many stones, and brought in about three tons of matching mica-schist from local quarries. Two months of work later, the walkway has been fully restored, including improved stepping stones to the “Two Friends Benches”—perfect for resting with a companion after a long stroll. Wander the many pathways of the Dumbarton Oaks Garden free of charge 2–5 p.m., Tuesdays through Sundays, until March 14.

Scholars in the Spotlight

Catch up with our recent speakers and their research

Matthew Crawford works on the first English translation of a surprising treatise from late antique Alexandria, using it as a window into intellectual and social interaction among Christians and pagans. Crawford is an associate professor in the Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry at Australian Catholic University.

Heidi Hohmann explores the park as evolutionary art, charting 150 years of parkways,
playground instructors, and change in Minneapolis and pointing to evidence that park systems lend cities both flexibility and permanence. Hohmann is associate professor of landscape architecture at Iowa State University.

Digital Tools and Online Treasures

Philip Johnson at Dumbarton Oaks

Meet the man who shaped modern American architecture at a pivotal moment in his design history. Philip Johnson received the first Pritzker Architecture Prize here at Dumbarton Oaks, where he built the Pre-Columbian pavilion—now seen as a seminal work in his late 1950s sea-change from International Style modernism to postmodern classicism. Dive into the history of the building and the architect in our Philip Johnson at Dumbarton Oaks resource. In the menu bar to the right of the page, discover the planning behind the pavilion, a biography of Johnson, last-minute concerns before the art collection could be installed, the legacy of the pavilion 50 years later, and more.

Ongoing Programs
Special Displays:

Asian art objects, Roman and Byzantine economic tools

Visit the first exhibit in more than 30 years focused solely on Byzantine seals from the 17,000-strong Dumbarton Oaks collection. The display case reveals how researchers played detective to solve an 800-year-old mystery involving a broken seal and a mysterious and powerful person from the twelfth century. On the reverse of the case, examine weights, balances, and a scale the Romans and Byzantines used to ensure accurate transactions in the marketplace. Nearby and for a limited time, see jade, ivory, and mother-of-pearl Asian art from the seventeenth to twentieth centuries in A Nobility of Matter: Asian Art from the Bliss Collection, with objects ranging from a Qing dynasty cricket container to Japanese scroll weights.

Upcoming Programs
Sunday, January 12, 7 p.m., and Monday, January 13, 8 p.m.
**Aizuri Quartet concert**
Beethoven and Haydn from a prizewinning quartet

Sunday, February 9, 7 p.m., and Monday, February 10, 8 p.m.
**ZOFO concert**
One piano, four hands, and a Grammy nomination

Sunday, March 1, 7 p.m., and Monday, March 2, 8 p.m.
**Sandbox Percussion concert**
Contemporary chamber music and a world premiere

Sunday, April 5, 7 p.m., and Monday, April 6, 8 p.m.
**Ensemble Caprice concert**
A recently unearthed Vivaldi opera comes to life