



New Acquisition

Daniele Barbaro, *La Practica della Perspectiva*



Dumbarton Oaks has acquired a first edition, rare second issue of Daniele Barbaro's *La Practica della Perspectiva*. This important cinquecento architectural treatise with a spectacular woodcut title page offers a summary of contemporary architectural theory. In this practical manual, envisioned as a complement to the Vitruvius commentary he wrote with Andrea Palladio, Barbaro offers lessons in projective geometry and the practical applications of perspective.

Read more about the acquisition [online](#).

Left: Barbaro, Daniele. *La Practica della Perspectiva*. Venice: Borgominieri, 1569. Title page.

Farewell for Margaret Mullett

On Monday, June 29, the Dumbarton Oaks community gathered to say farewell to Margaret Mullett, who is retiring after six years as Director of Byzantine Studies. Staff members and Fellows staged their send-off for Mullett at the pool, well known as one of her favorite places in the gardens. Director of Dumbarton Oaks Jan Ziolkowski and Director of Garden and Landscape Studies John Beardsley raised a toast to honor Mullett's contributions to Dumbarton Oaks. Ziolkowski



dwelted especially on Mullett’s contributions to scholarship and community at Dumbarton Oaks: “Margaret has made an amazing mark (among many other things) through her indefatigable hospitality. She has thrown open her hearth and her heart with a breathtaking generosity and has hosted and mentored hundreds of Byzantinists, from the most wizened to the most junior.”

Read more about the farewell [online](#).

Above: Director of Dumbarton Oaks Jan Ziolkowski with Margaret Mullett.

Trivial Treasures

Elizabeth Emery on the Value of Ephemera in Historical Scholarship



“When does bric-a-brac become a historically and socially valuable collection?” asked visiting medievalist Elizabeth Emery in her talk to an audience of faculty, staff, and Fellows at Dumbarton Oaks on June 17. Emery, a professor of French at Montclair State University and an expert on the reception of medieval culture in fin de siècle France, discussed the history of collecting ephemera, its relationship to academic study, and its future in the digital age in her lecture “Bricabracomania?: Collecting Medieval Ephemera from the Musée des Monuments historiques to Pinterest.”

Read more about Emery’s lecture [here](#).

Dumbarton Oaks Publications in the Digital Age

The Publications Department at Dumbarton Oaks is using new digital technologies to serve scholars in the fields of Byzantine Studies, Pre-Columbian Studies, and Garden and Landscape Studies. “We’re really committed to supporting those fields institutionally, and there’s no sign that will change,” says Editor in Byzantine Studies Joel Kalvesmaki, “But the means have changed.”



The department is currently at work on the online publication of the [Bliss-Tyler correspondence](#), which will be complete by this fall, and on a digital catalogue raisonné of late antique, Byzantine, and early Islamic textiles at Dumbarton Oaks. Recent digital projects have included the redesign of the Dumbarton Oaks website and increasing collaboration with databases like JSTOR to make monographs and articles printed by Dumbarton Oaks available online. “The technology changes

constantly, so we’re always open to trying new things,” observes Director of Publications Kathy Sparkes.

Kalvesmaki also notes that Dumbarton Oaks remains committed to its print publications. “There are some signs that print will not go away, that it’s a format people find value in that digital can’t compensate for,” he explains. “The kind of readers we serve tend to be deep readers.” Regardless of changes in their methods of delivering content, members of the Publications Department affirm the continuing relevance of their traditional mission as an academic press. “Scholarly presses make available . . . information that commercial publishers will not touch, because they can’t make money from it,” Sparkes says. “It’s all about serving our community. That’s what we want to continue to do.”

Read more about the digital humanities at Dumbarton Oaks [here](#).

Left: Digital Humanities Fellow Lain Wilson with Director of Publications Kathy Sparkes.

From the Intern Blog

Between Art and Artifice

By Eric Nemarich, second-year graduate student in History and intern for Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library



The Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library aims to make the bountiful and bizarre universe of medieval literature available to a varied readership, and to that end its translations are rethought and refined virtually ad infinitum. This is where I come in, appearing in the invisible interstices of the editing process—fixing a misplaced modifier here, adding a comma there, at times offering my thoughts on a troublesome passage. Over the past three weeks, I’ve cultivated a love-hate relationship with “Track Changes.”

In that time, I have spent dozens of hours becoming closely acquainted with a rhetorical treatise penned by an anonymous fourteenth-century Englishman. As I’ve absorbed and digested chapter after chapter (sixteen in all) of medieval rhetorical theory, one single, troublesome adverb has transfixed my mind: *inartificialiter*.

Read more about Eric’s DOML experience and that troublesome adverb [online](#).

From the Archives

Mildred Bliss Commissions a Sculpture

Mildred Bliss’s correspondence and other ephemera, preserved both in the Dumbarton Oaks Archives and in the Bliss Papers at the Harvard University Archives, reveal that she was intimately involved in most of the commissions and projects that were initiated at Dumbarton Oaks.

In 1934, at the height of the Great Depression, Bliss commissioned the sculptor Daniel G. Olney, of Washington, D.C., to create *Lady with a Unicorn* for the Dumbarton Oaks Gardens. An exchange of two letters, preserved in the Bliss Papers at the Harvard University Archives (HUGFP 76.8, Series I, Box 32, Folder O), details the degree of control that she exerted in the commissioning process.



September 29th, 1934

My dear Dan,

Enclosed is the cheque against the initial expenses for the making of the unicorn.

I have been thinking over this sculpture, and feel that you have hit upon an unusually pleasing composition, and that if you realize it technically and achieve the spirit I hope for,

you will have made a really lovely thing. I think yesterday you understood my approach to the problem, and despite its not leaving the Sculptor's hands as free as is usually the case, I felt it was not altogether unsympathetic to you. So let us definitely agree as follows:

Make a rough profile drawing to the scale we thought right yesterday, which Mr. Davis will convert into a dummy. This you and I must study this week before I go to New York on Wednesday or when I return on Saturday, and once we are sure that we have the right size for the ultimate statue, you will make a half-size model. This we will study in detail, and when all the elements of its charm are "au point," we will see to its being cast in lead.

Now, if in the making of the lady and her unicorn I find you are not interpreting the picture as my inner eye sees it, I will remunerate you for material and time spent, and we will call it off. This seems to me fair to you and to us; but I feel very encouraged by the little model and by our talk about Kolbe, and if you create the lovely unit I am visualizing it will be a lasting pleasure to have a work by a young American artist in the gardens at Dumbarton Oaks.

Let me know when the drawing will be ready, as Davis has a great deal of work pushing him this week, and I want to be sure that he has the dummy for us as soon as we want to see it.

*Yours very sincerely,
Mildred Bliss*

Read Olney's same-day response [here](#).

Above: Daniel G. Olney, *Lady with a Unicorn*, HC.GO.1935.05.(L).

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