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Groundbreaking Ceremony for New Fellowship Building
A groundbreaking ceremony was held on May 21st, to mark the beginning of renovations to the new Fellowship Building. Work will be completed by September 2014, in time for the arrival of the 2014-2015 Fellows. Located on 1700 Wisconsin Avenue, much closer than the current Fellows' accommodations, the Fellowship Building will provide state-of-the-art living facilities and is projected to satisfy a LEED gold standard. Its proximity to the library, gardens, and museum will round off the Dumbarton Oaks campus and maximize opportunities for Fellows, Visiting Scholars, and accompanying families to meet and make the most of campus and local amenities. The building will also afford opportunities to accommodate short-term stays by resident musicians and practicing landscape architects, as well as longer residencies for scholars involved in Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library projects, to mention but a few of the ways in which it will complement and enhance the mission and activities of Dumbarton Oaks.

Read the Director’s remarks here>>

Upcoming Exhibition

Inspiring Art: The Dumbarton Oaks Birthing Figure

June 27, 2013 through March 2, 2014

An Aztec-style birthing figure in the Dumbarton Oaks collection has incited fascination and controversy for over a century. Celebrated as a masterpiece, touted by some as an icon of Aztec sculpture, maligned by others as a fake, it has provided inspiration to successive generations of artists, filmmakers, and other creative spirits. Featuring a variety of photographic and other
reproductions, this exhibition illustrates one object’s powerful hold on the human imagination—and traces a century of changing perceptions of Pre-Columbian art.

Of note: A famous re-incarnation of the Birthing Figure is the golden idol in Steven Spielberg’s *Indiana Jones- Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Dupont Festival presents a free screening of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* in Dupont Circle Park, Washington, D.C., at 8:30 pm on Friday, June 21, 2013. Miriam Doutriaux will give a short presentation on the Dumbarton Oaks Birthing Figure before the screening. Click here for more information about the festival.

Learn more and explore the Museum through the exhibition’s [webpage](#).

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**Upcoming Symposium**

**The Botany of Empire in the Long Eighteenth Century**

**October 4-5, 2013**

This two-day symposium will bring together an international body of scholars working on botanical investigations and publications within the context of imperial expansion in the long eighteenth century. The period saw widespread exploration, a tremendous increase in the traffic in botanical specimens, significant taxonomic innovations, and horticultural experimentation. We will revisit these developments from a comparative perspective that will include Europe, the Ottoman Empire, Africa, Asia, and the Americas. The symposium will coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the Rare Book Room at Dumbarton Oaks, and will feature an exhibit of botanical works from our collections.

Registration is now open. For more information you can visit the [website](#) or write to BotanySymposium@doaks.org.

Image: Durian, from an album of watercolors of Asian fruits and flowers, ca. 1798-1810. Dumbarton Oaks Rare Book Collection.

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**Visiting Scholar Interviews**

**Katharina Schreiber**

Katharina Schreiber, Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, was a Dumbarton Oaks Visiting Scholar in Pre-Columbian Studies in April and May. While at Dumbarton Oaks, Professor Schreiber presented her research
and theories on the Wari collapse; and gave an interview to Colin McEwan, Director of Pre-Columbian Studies.

Colin McEwan: You recently presented a tertulia focused on theorizing the Wari collapse and this seemed to strike a chord not only with the Andeanists but also with Fellows from other area studies. What unexpected and helpful feedback did you receive?

Katharina Schreiber: Well, the collapse of any ancient society strikes a note with scholars from other areas because, if you think about it, all ancient societies collapsed. So it is an issue with broad appeal, even if the reasons for collapse are quite different from region to region. It is also the case that the reasons for collapse are so complex that few collapses can be explained to the satisfaction of all, so new ideas from one region naturally stir the creative juices in scholars of other regions. In my case, it was useful to discuss the role of maize in the political economy of the Maya, for example, and how their collapse might have paralleled that of the Wari in some ways. And it was entirely unexpected to find that among the audience there were bits of esoteric knowledge (e.g., the timing of the peopling of the Pacific islands) that in turn helped clarify various factors I was considering.

Read the full interview here>>

John Magee

John Magee, Professor of Classics and Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto, and Director of the Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies, visited Dumbarton Oaks in the last week of term and gave a scintillating paper on Calcidius. He generously spent some of his short time with us drinking tea and talking to Margaret Mullett, Director of Byzantine Studies, about scholarship, research centers and (often) the end of administration.

Margaret Mullet: John, how would you introduce yourself?

John Magee: Although my research interests extend into the twelfth century, they’re primarily focused on Greek philosophy and its late Roman reception. I continue to work on a critical edition of Boethius’ *Peri Hermeneias* commentaries, and am entering into the last stages of work on a translation of Calcidius’ Latin *Timaeus* for the Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library series. Calcidius is the main focus right now, and he is the happy connection that led to my wonderful week at Dumbarton Oaks. It is definitely a challenge to get his strange, rebarbative Latin into readable English, but I am very much looking forward now to seeing the translation safely into the series.

Read the full interview here>>

Harvard University Class Visits

In the spring, Dumbarton Oaks welcomed three class visits by Harvard professors and students interested in studying the special collections of museum objects, manuscripts, coins and seals.
Students from Professor Dimiter Angelov’s class on Byzantine Civilization, in the Dumbarton Oaks Gardens.

Professor Ioli Kalavrezou and her students during a visit to Dumbarton Oaks to study the Byzantine manuscript collection.
Dumbarton Oaks Welcomes 2013 Summer Interns

Dumbarton Oaks is pleased to welcome nine interns for the summer of 2013!

Over the next two months our interns will be working on projects as diverse as the online publication of the Byzantine Seals; the editing of volumes in The Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (DOML); Garden and Landscape projects combining work in the gardens with garden conservation, historical research, or georefencing; transcriptions of interviews for the Oral History Project; and curatorial exhibits in the Rare Book Collection.

You can follow the interns’ progress by reading their blog.
Introducing ICFA’s 16mm Film Collection

The Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives (ICFA) is proud to announce the online publication of its 16mm film collection. The thirteen (13) films are now available through Vimeo and are embedded on ICFA’s Moving Image collection webpage.

For more information, see our blog post.

Off the Press

The Life of Patriarch Ignatius
By Nicetas David
Edited and translated by Andrew Smithies
Notes by John M. Duffy

*The Life of the Patriarch Ignatius* is the vivid and partisan account of two tremendous ecclesiastical struggles of the ninth century. One was between opposing patriarchs of Constantinople—the learned Photius (858-867, 877-886) and the monk Ignatius (847-858, 867-877)—and gave rise to long periods of schism, intrigue, and scandal in the Greek Orthodox world. The other was between Patriarch Photius and the papacy, which at its low point saw Photius and Nicholas I trade formal condemnations of each other and adversely affected East-West relations for generations afterwards. As much a frontal attack on Photius as a record of the author’s hero Ignatius, *The Life of Patriarch Ignatius* offers a fascinating, if biased, look into the complex world of competing church factions, imperial powers, and the papacy in the ninth century. This important historical document (supplemented by annotations, maps, and indexes) is here critically edited and translated into English for the first time.

*Four Seasons of Flowers: A selection of botanical illustrations from the Rare Book Collection at Dumbarton Oaks*

By Linda Lott

*Four Seasons of Flowers* presents a selection of the manuscripts, herbals, and printed botanical texts from the Rare Book Collection at Dumbarton Oaks. Representing pivotal works in the intellectual history of Europe from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, these drawings, books and manuscripts are among the most significant materials conserved in the Rare Book Reading Room. They offer an illuminating overview of the history of botany as a modern science, from its inception to the present day.

*From the Archives*

*Ex Libris, Dumbarton Oaks—The First Bookplate*

In December 1940, one month after the inauguration of Dumbarton Oaks as a research library, Robert Woods Bliss asked the artist Rudolph Ruzicka (1883-1978) to design an *ex libris* bookplate for the library’s volumes. He wanted the bookplate to combine the Harvard and Bliss coats of arms, and he sent Ruzicka his own rough sketch with two shields at the center and oak-leaf and acorn clusters in the four corners. He also sent a sample of Italian Fabriano hand-laid paper that he inscribed, “This paper to be used.” Ruzicka immediately wrote back, “It occurred to me that the two shields could be connected by a decorative background, of laurel for the Harvard and oak for the Bliss arms. Also, I’ve made the shields vertical—they seemed unfriendly leaning away from each other.”

The correspondence on the design of the *ex libris* bookplate as well as the trial drawings and completed design remain in the Dumbarton Oaks Archives.

*Read more*>>
Image: Robert Woods Bliss’s drawing for the Dumbarton Oaks Ex Libris bookplate (left) and Rudolph Ruzicka’s completed 1941 proof (right). Dumbarton Oaks Archives.

Now on View

Four Byzantine Manuscripts
through September 2013