Byzantine Coins and Seals Summer Program

July 6–31, 2015

In July 2015, Dumbarton Oaks will again offer its unique summer program on Byzantine numismatics and sigillography, drawing upon its extensive holdings of coins and seals. Through access to the collections, participants will be trained how to read, identify, and interpret coins and seals. Further seminars will place coins and seals in their historical context and instruct the participants on how to incorporate these valuable historical sources into their own research. The program will be under the direction of Dr. Eric McGeer, consultant for Byzantine sigillography, and Professor Vasiliki (Vasso) Penna (University of the Peloponnesse). A limited number of places will be available for students of any nationality.

Please visit our website to learn more and to apply to the program.
Pre-Columbian Public Lecture on December 4: Francisco Valdez

The Mayo Chinchipe-Marañón Culture: Pandora's Box in the Upper Amazon

This lecture will present the results of recent archaeological work carried out on the eastern slopes of the Andes and focuses on the discovery of a new Prehispanic culture that originated in the Chinchipe river basin on the border of present day Ecuador and Peru. Carbon dating (5500 BP) places the finds in the early Formative Period in Ecuadorian chronology and in the Archaic or Preceramic period of Peru. These exciting finds show that the upper Amazon selva was a key node in the early cultural developments of Northwestern South America and in the emergence of Andean Civilization.

Francisco Valdez is a research fellow at the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement in France, and holds a PhD in Ethnologie et Sociologie Comparative from the University of Paris X (Nanterre) and l’École Pratique des Hautes Etude. Valdez specializes in the ethnological prehistory of tropical America, and has led archaeological research in Ecuador, Mexico and France.

The lecture will be held on Thursday, December 4th, 2014 at 5:30 pm in the Music Room of Dumbarton Oaks 1703 32nd Street, NW Washington, DC 20007. This event is open to the public without charge. Advance registration is required. RSVP: mckennak@doaks.org or 202-339-6440.

Visiting Scholar: Charles Stang

Harvard Divinity School professor Charles Stang was the Director’s Visiting Scholar at Dumbarton Oaks during the week of October 20. Margaret Mullett sat down with Stang, whose research focuses on the history of Christian thought in late antiquity, to discuss his experiences as a scholar and at Dumbarton Oaks, as well as his upcoming book, Our Divine Double.
Charlie, it has been great to have you here as Director’s Visiting Scholar this week. How did you first hear about Dumbarton Oaks?

It was when I was a first year doctoral student and my adviser Nicholas Constanas told me about the Greek Summer School. My father-in-law grew up in Georgetown, and he knew Dumbarton Oaks very well, mostly at night in the traditional Georgetown way: over the wall and into the pool. The Summer School was amazing: there was wonderful teaching from Alice-Mary Talbot and Alex Alexakis, and I was excited and daunted by the difficulty of the palaeography exercises in the afternoons. My Greek improved tremendously over the month. I felt in a way like a fish out of water: it was a spur really to exploring the riches of Greek late antiquity and beyond. When I look back at that month, I have very strong memories: I spent every minute I was not preparing or reading in the pool and gardens.

Your new book on twins sounds exciting. Were you working on it while you were here?

It is about the idea one finds in certain second- and third-century sources in various traditions—Christianity, Manichaenism, Neoplatonism—that everyone has a divine alter-ego counterpart. It has led me into discussions of selfhood and deification in early Christianity.

Read more about Charles’s perspective on Byzantine studies here.

Tyler Fellow in Residence: Merih Danalı

Merih Danali stands at the top of the Galata Tower in Istanbul, where she conducted research during her first year as a Tyler Fellow.

My research focuses on visual and cultural encounters between Byzantium and the Islamic world (ca. 1300–1453), and the impact of these encounters on late Byzantine artistic, cultural, and political identity.

My institutional project at Dumbarton Oaks involves some of ICFA’s most frequently used photographers’ collections, those of Ihor Ševčeňko, Cyril Mango, Beat Brenk, Slobodan Ćurčić, Ann Wharton, and Thomas F. Mathews. At the very initial stages of my work here, I browsed several hundred photographs taken by each art historian, representing Byzantine
monuments and artifacts from a wide geographical and chronological range, from Syria to Serbia and from late antiquity to the Ottoman period. Having familiarized myself with their work, I was then able to assess, identify, and describe a large corpus of physically separated visual material for each photographer.

My work at the ICFA has also been very beneficial for my dissertation research. I was informed about the existence of a restoration report dated to 1989 as well as some unpublished photographs of a partially uncovered mosaic panel in Hagia Sophia, which is the subject of one of my chapters. In addition, while accessing the material that will form Cyril Mango’s collection, I was very excited to find out that Mango deposited color slides of the watercolor reproductions of this mosaic panel. These watercolors, which were executed by the Fossati brothers in the nineteenth century, constitute important visual documents for the study of the mosaic portrait.

My dual status here at Dumbarton Oaks as a Fellow as well as a staff member significantly enhanced my experience, and I am grateful for the opportunity.

Read more about Merih’s work with ICFA here.

Fellows Field Trip

Paul Kelsch on Two Presidential Memorials Less Visited

Paul Kelsch discusses the history of the memorial built at Teddy Roosevelt Island as Fellows Michael Maas, Alicia Boswell, and Caitlin Early look on.

Dumbarton Oaks Fellows are no strangers to sharing their academic projects with their colleagues, whether over lunch in the Refectory or during their hour-long research
presentations. However, due to the vast geographical and topical spread of Fellows’ topics, the currency of sharing is typically in ideas, descriptions, and photographs.

But for Paul Kelsch, a 2014–2015 Garden and Landscape Studies Fellow, his topic, “Natural Histories of the Theodore Roosevelt and Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Memorials,” provides a unique opportunity not only to present his research to his colleagues but to offer an immersive experience. On November 5, Kelsch traveled with ten other Fellows to the Theodore Roosevelt and Lyndon B. Johnson Memorials, both lesser-known National Park Service-run memorials located on islands along the Potomac.

After a quick drive from Georgetown to Arlington, the group came to the Pentagon parking lot, where one entrance to the Lyndon B. Johnson Memorial Grove is located. As they crossed the bridge from the lot onto the island, Kelsch explained, “Lady Bird Johnson had a capital beautification program, and the cornerstone of that was this island.” For Lady Bird, who dedicated the memorial in 1976, the spot of the memorial had special significance: as she and her husband drove into Washington, D.C., from Texas, they would often stop at the island to look over the Potomac, their view framed by the Washington Monument and the Jefferson Memorial.

Read more about the field trip to the Lyndon B. Johnson and Teddy Roosevelt memorials here.

From the Archives

Happy Anniversary

On November 1, the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection marked its 74th anniversary. On that same date in 1940, Mildred and Robert Woods Bliss hosted a black-tie reception in the newly finished pavilions for the Byzantine library and collection. Dignitaries, museum directors, Harvard’s president, and friends from both Washington and across the country were in attendance.
The reception celebrated the transfer of Dumbarton Oaks from the Blisses to Harvard University as well as the inception of a research study program in Byzantine art and culture.

On the following two days, Dumbarton Oaks hosted in the Music Room inaugural lectures by Henri Focillon, Michael Rostovtzeff, Charles Rufus Morey, and Wilhelm Koehler, which were subsequently published as the first volume of *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*.

Next year, Dumbarton Oaks will celebrate its 75th anniversary. In preparation for this milestone observance, the Dumbarton Oaks Archives would welcome any written reminiscences, images, or artifacts that anyone associated with Dumbarton Oaks throughout its history would care to share. Submittals can be made through a form on the Dumbarton Oaks website found [here](#).

Read more about the 74th anniversary celebrations [here](#).

**How Many Fellows Does It Take. . .**

To Carve a Pumpkin?
Fellow Jorge Ramos, Post-Baccalaureate Fellow Anne Marie Creighton, Professor-in-Residence Gary Urton, and Tyler Fellow Coleman Connelly inspected a carving design during the annual Dumbarton Oaks Halloween Pumpkin Carving, held in the Director’s Residence on October 31.

Meanwhile, three Baby Fellows engaged in a serious academic discussion on the floor of the Director’s Residence.
Images: Top photograph courtesy of Caitlin Early, bottom photograph courtesy of Merih Danali.