



## Upcoming Events

### Pre-Columbian Studies Public Lecture

"Chak Aktuun: A Monumental Maya Pilgrimage Shrine at Lake Mensabak, Chiapas, Mexico"

Joel W. Palka, University of Illinois, Chicago

Thursday, October 25, 5:30–7:00pm

Dumbarton Oaks Music Room



In the 2010 field season, members of the Mensabak Archaeological Project discovered a major ancient Maya pilgrimage shrine. This sanctuary, called *Chak Aktuun* (Red Cave-Stone) by local Lacandon Maya who still utilize it, consists of a mountain filled with caves on an island in Lake Mensabak. This shrine represents an archetypal Mesoamerican ritual landscape: a mountain of abundance in an ancestral homeland, much like the mythological Aztlán of the Aztecs. The presentation will cover the investigation of the architecture and art at this and other Maya ceremonial sites at Lake Mensabak. Comparative information from pilgrimage shrines across the world, in addition to contemporary Maya beliefs, will be used to show that Mensabak was an important place for Maya to communicate with ancestors and divine forces to maintain human existence and cosmic balance.

*Seating is limited. Please **RSVP** to attend.*



## Pre-Columbian Studies Symposium

**"The Measure and Meaning of Time in the Americas"**

Friday, October 5–Saturday, October 6



## Sign and Design Symposium

"Script as Image in a Cross-Cultural Perspective (300-1600 CE)"

Friday, October 12–Sunday, October 14



## Museum Illustrated Talk

"Behind the Mask: Gaining a Better Understanding of Maya Craftsmanship"

Dr. Reiko Ishihara-Brito, in conjunction with the special exhibit *All Sides Considered*

Saturday, October 27, 3pm

*Seating is limited. Please RSVP to attend.*



## Friends of Music

Wind Soloists of New York

Sunday, October 14 and Sunday, October 15

Dumbarton Oaks Music Room

The 2012–2013 Friends of Music concert season begins with a performance by The Wind Soloists of New York. For ticket information, please contact [Cindy Greene](#).

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## New Exhibit: *Water in the Garden*



The Catalogue House, an octagonal stone building in the [Dumbarton Oaks Gardens](#), is dedicated to Charlotte and Vernon Kellogg, friends of Mr. and Mrs. Bliss. Vernon Kellogg was a professor of entomology at Stanford University and an important figure in the popularization of science and the

early organization of the National Research Council. Herbert Hoover was his student at Stanford, and later appointed him director of the Commission for Relief in Belgium. The Catalogue House features a line of Charlotte Kellogg's poetry, which rings the top of the interior wall. The structure was originally intended to serve an educational purpose by illustrating the various animals and plants encountered in the Garden.

The new exhibit in the Catalogue House focuses on "Water in the Garden." The uses of water in the Dumbarton Oaks Garden are both functional and decorative. Beatrix Farrand's work at Dumbarton Oaks incorporated existing "water elements," such as the Lovers' Lane Pool (below), into the design of the overall garden. Farrand also created a variety of fountains for specific locations, such as the Fountain and Arbor Terraces and the swimming pool. This exhibit covers four areas of the garden and provides a visual record of the evolution of their design.



## **Recent Acquisition**

Humphry Repton, *Designs for Strood Manor*



Dumbarton Oaks recently purchased an original drawing by Humphry Repton (1752-1818) of the front of the house and property for Strood Manor, Horsham, Sussex, ca. 1801. This is a companion piece to Repton's illustration of the back of the house and property, already in the Dumbarton Oaks [Rare Book Collection](#) (below). Both drawings are pen-and-ink and watercolor, with yellow and gray wash borders and additional pen-and-ink outlines. They depict finished designs for improvements of Strood Manor and may have functioned as an abbreviated form of Repton's *Red Books*. The drawing of the back of the house has the movable flap employed by Repton to depict the property before (below left) and, when lifted, after his suggested improvements (below right). John William Commerell purchased Strood Manor in 1801 and the drawings appear to depict an original architectural design that Repton undertook shortly after Commerell acquired the property.



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## From the Collection

### The So-Called “Dollar of the Middle Ages”: The *Hyperpyron* of Manuel I Komnenos (1143-1180)



This large coin (31mm diameter; i.e., 25% larger than a quarter) shows the emperor wearing the ceremonial costume (an ornate *chlamys* with *tablion* and conspicuous border of dots, probably actual precious stones or glass pearls inserted into the silk mantle), holding a *labarum* scepter in his right hand and a globe with patriarchal cross in the left. (A similar globe is found on the Dumbarton Oaks [marble roundel](#) representing his father John II Komnenos.) The columnar legend, spread on several lines left and right, proclaims proudly “Manuel despot (= emperor) the porphyrogennitos,” stressing the legitimacy of the ruler. After his father John II, Manuel was the second of the dynasty to have been

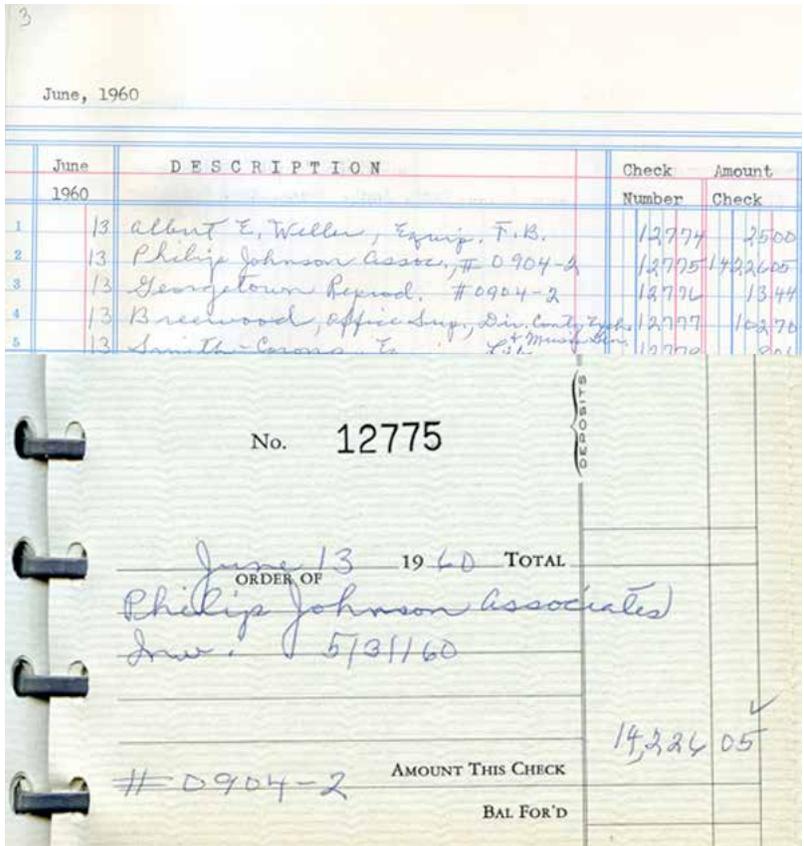
“born in the purple,” meaning the porphyry chamber of the Great Palace. [Read more >>](#)

Image: Manuel I Komnenos (1143-1180), hyperpyron, Constantinople mint, first issue. BZC 1960.125.78.

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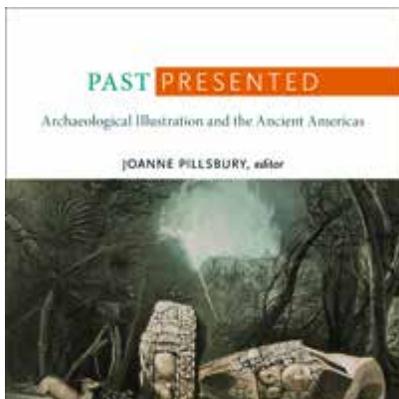
## From the Archives

### Footing the Bill for a Museum Gallery



The [Dumbarton Oaks Archives](#) is presently processing nearly 100 check registers and financial ledgers that were recently recovered from a storage facility. Dating to the pre-digital age, ca. 1940-1985, these hand-written and typed documents offer an informative record of the institute's daily expenditures for, among other items, staff, fellows, book and art acquisitions, garden improvements, music performances, building maintenance, and capital campaigns. The two detail images at the left are of (1) the financial ledger book for June 1960 and (2) check stub 12775 for June 13, 1960, both of which record an initial payment of \$14,226.05 to Philip Johnson Associates for the design and development stage of the [new museum wing](#) to house the Robert Woods Bliss [Collection of Pre-Columbian Art](#). Philip Johnson's building was completed and opened to the public in 1963, and next year will mark its fiftieth anniversary.

## Off the Press



Dumbarton Oaks Publications announces the publication of *Past Presented: Archaeological Illustration and the Ancient Americas*, edited by former Dumbarton Oaks Director of Pre-Columbian Studies, Joanne Pillsbury.

Illustrations remain one of the fundamental tools of archaeology, a means by which we share information and build ideas. Often treated as if they were neutral representations, archaeological illustrations are the convergence of science and imagination. This volume, a collection of fourteen essays addressing the visual presentation of the Pre-Columbian past from the fifteenth

century to the present day, explores and contextualizes the visual culture of archaeological illustration, addressing the intellectual history of the field and the relationship of archaeological illustration to other scientific disciplines and the fine arts.

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## Recent Talk



### "Old Glyphs, New Findings: Tales from a Late Classic Maya Panel"

**Dr. Alexandre Tokovinine, in conjunction with the special exhibition *All Sides Considered***

**Saturday, September 29**

Recent research on a **carved limestone panel** in the Dumbarton Oaks Museum collection offers important new insights into the political turmoil that characterized the twilight of Classic Maya civilization. The Terminal Classic Period (A.D. 800-909) saw the demise of the great city of Palenque. In its wake, the neighboring city of Chancala rose to prominence. Glyphic decipherments and recent archaeological findings combine to suggest that the Dumbarton Oaks panel originated in Chancala at this time. Dr.

Tokovinine's talk detailed how 3-D optical imaging of the monument revealed previously-overlooked details of the carving. Examination of the panel's imagery and texts has provided intriguing new perspectives on Maya writing, politics, and beliefs.

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## Now on View



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## Good Ink

*Cloud Terrace*, an installation by Cao|Perrot Studios currently on view on the Arbor Terrace in the Gardens at Dumbarton Oaks, was recently featured in the September/October 2012 issue of *The American Gardener*.

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## Further Afield

Jan Ziolkowski, Director of Dumbarton Oaks, recently gave a talk on "Vergilius Magus" at the conference "Dall'Antico al Moderno," at the American Academy in Rome.

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## Museum Day



On Saturday, September 29, the Dumbarton Oaks Museum and Gardens participated in the D.C. Museum Day with free admission to the Gardens and a discount in the Museum Shop.

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1703 32nd Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20007

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