Announcing the 2019-2020 Fellows and Visiting Scholars

More than 50 researchers from around the world offered residential fellowships

Hailing from a dozen countries and 13 American states, scholars supported by Dumbarton Oaks this year conduct research across Garden and Landscape, Byzantine, and Pre-Columbian studies. The more than 50 fellows and visiting scholars study such areas as late antique Alexandria, marginalized labor in the Andes, and food and landscape at borderlands of Algonquin and Iroquoian territory. Their ranks include inaugural Plant Humanities fellows, who research special collections to discover how plants have shaped human culture, and summer fellows, who this past summer worked on topics ranging from Mexica dance to the architecture of
Constantinople. **Apply for 2020–2021 fellowships by November 1**, including two new Mellon fellowship opportunities in “Democracy and the Urban Landscape: Race, Identity, and Difference”: **Urban Landscape Fellowships** for relevant researchers and **History Teaching Fellowships** for faculty instructors. Finally, Dumbarton Oaks offers a number of shorter-term opportunities. **Apply by October 1** for **One-Month Research Awards** (proposed visits between January and June), **by November 1** for **Project Grants**, and at least 60 days before preferred arrival for **Short-Term Predoctoral Residencies**.

**Ornament: Fragments of Byzantine Fashion Opens Next Week**

**Exhibition on view September 10**

Excavations in the 19th century unearthed scores of the ornate dress textiles that wrapped the people of medieval Egypt in their graves. Now open, **Ornament: Fragments of Byzantine Fashion** brings together complete tunics, parts of garments, and contemporary replicas of ancient dress to evoke the fashions of this lost world. **Ornament** is the largest-ever exhibition of the rare Byzantine textiles held by Dumbarton Oaks, showcasing close to 60 pieces. These
textiles often preserved traces of their wearers in the form of folds and stains, providing researchers important information about the people buried in these garments. With their spectacular range of colors, patterns, and ornamental motifs, the textiles display the remarkable skill of ancient craftspeople and a compellingly modern aesthetic.

First English Translation of Morel's 1776 Theory of Gardens Now Available

Read a critical text in the history of landscape architecture
Now published for the first time in English, the earliest edition of *Théorie des jardins* by Jean-Marie Morel shaped the functions of landscape architecture and opened up a new professional domain by coining the term *architecte-paysagiste*, the precursor to the modern designation
“landscape architect.” Morel stands out among 18th-century theorists because of his interest in the natural processes that underlie the formation of landscape. He believed awareness of the character of each landscape was particularly important because of the emotional response it was likely to elicit. Order Theory of Gardens, translated by Emily T. Cooperman and edited by Joseph Disponzio, from Dumbarton Oaks and Harvard University Press.

Call for Papers: 55th International Congress of Medieval Studies

Submit by September 15 for our sponsored sessions

Scholars of the Middle Ages east and west are welcome to submit papers for five panels sponsored by Dumbarton Oaks at the 2020 International Congress on Medieval Studies.

- “Inventing the Text: Fictitious Narratives of Composition and Transmission” (cosponsored by the Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library) explores how many medieval texts carefully transmit invented, misleading, or incomplete stories of the circumstances of their own composition and transmission across cultures and time periods.
- “Biblical Storytelling in Verse: Poetic Traditions around Mary from East to West” invites scholars working in Greek, Syriac, and Latin to examine the reception and transformation
of Mary, as well as the representation of female speech and action.

- “Christian-Muslim Exchange in Art, Literature, and Science” examines the processes by which Christians and Muslims exchanged ideas, texts, and techniques, and conceptualized those exchanges.
- “Identity and Status in Byzantine Material Culture” considers how objects provide a window on how individuals and groups at all levels understood and presented themselves and their place in society.
- “Topics in Byzantine Numismatics” (cosponsored by the Princeton University Numismatic Collection) invites papers making arguments about or based on evidence from coins, and in doing so complementing and extending other areas of inquiry relevant to Byzantinists and all those who study the medieval world.

Scholars Uncover the Lost History of a Rare Southeast Asian Book

The mystery of the pink pineapple
At the turn of the 19th century, Arab merchants, European travelers, and Malay and Javanese locals intermingled with Chinese and South Asian people in the bustling port cities of the Straits of Malacca. For at least fifty years, this lost world hid silently in the rare book collection of Dumbarton Oaks cofounder Mildred Bliss, tucked away in a large album of pink pineapples, watermelons, rambutans, and other Southeast Asian fruits. Thanks to the Plant Humanities Initiative, a team of intergenerational and interdisciplinary scholars reexamined the volume, solving many of its mysteries and revealing new questions for future research. Read the story of how scientists, historians, digital humanists, curators, and an undergraduate literature student uncovered long-forgotten human narratives by paying attention to plants.

Subscribe Now to Music at Dumbarton Oaks

Last chance to secure your seat before concerts sell out

Besides a discounted rate, season subscribers receive exclusive access this month to tickets for seven evenings of world-renowned musical talent in an intimate venue. Subscribe now to experience a composer hailed by BBC World News as one of the most talented of his generation; the only winner of both of the world’s most important cello contests; and the most
important Vivaldi discovery in 75 years. Hear a world premiere alongside orchestral, chamber, and classical pieces from beloved composers like Debussy, Philip Glass, Bach, Haydn, and Sibelius. Ranging from an innovative harpist who has collaborated with Iggy Pop and Sufjan Stevens to an ensemble lauded by the Washington Post for “revitalizing the world of contemporary music,” this season’s artists perform with impressive skill and emotional power. Mohammed Fairouz kicks off the season, followed by Lavinia Meijer, The Knights, the Aizuri Quartet, István Várdai, Sandbox Percussion, and Ensemble Caprice.

Enjoy a Summer Day in the Cutting Garden

Butterflies, sunflowers, and zinnias galore

Orange, purple, and gold delight late-summer visitors in the Cutting Garden area of the Kitchen Gardens, where charming European-style flowerbeds meet functional resource. Here, greenhouse specialist Melissa Brizer carefully selects stock to create fresh floral arrangements for scholarly events at Dumbarton Oaks. The array of bright blooms—plus a special protocol to minimize spraying for pest management—also attracts butterflies, bees, and other pollinators. Complementing the scene are 18th-century English lead cisterns, a toolshed with terra-cotta
roof, and a goose motif weathervane. Reserve tickets to see the spectacular colors of the Cutting Garden and beyond.

**Scholars in the Spotlight**

**Catch up with our recent speakers and their research**

![Scholars in the Spotlight](image.jpg)

*Traci Ardren* looks at plants, like chile habanero, that acted as agents to shape ancient Maya knowledge and culture. Ardren is professor of anthropology at the University of Miami.

*Yingzhi Zhao* uncovers political resistance in 17th-century Chinese poems and garden dreamscapes like the “tree nest.” Zhao is senior lecturer of premodern Chinese literature at Kyoto University.

*Sara Zewde* revisits slavery and Central Park, assessing the legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted, a founding figure in American landscape architecture. Zewde is founding principal of design firm Studio Zewde.

*Alexandre Tokovinine* shifts focus to little kings: smaller Maya kingdoms with big impacts on their geopolitical landscape. Tokovinine is assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Alabama.

**Digital Tools and Online Treasures**
The Autograph Letter Collection

“How much finer the feeling—how much truer the feeling—how much more delicate the mind here revealed!” wrote Charlotte Brontë on September 13, 1849. Few know that Dumbarton Oaks holds a collection of autograph letters by famed writers, artists, and thinkers from the 18th and 19th century. Six are available online, from Brontë’s to a letter in purple ink by Claude Monet to a note from John Ruskin fixating on a snail shell and declaring that “the middle ages are to me the only ages.” Cofounder Mildred Bliss collected the correspondence, presumably begun when she was a young woman traveling Europe, and the collection was expanded by gifts from friends later in life. Besides large-scale photographs of the letters themselves, the resource contains transcriptions, translation when necessary, and extended commentary on the style of letter, the personalities mentioned, historical and biographical context, and any known information about the acquisition of the letters.

Ongoing Programs

Woven Interiors: Furnishing Early Medieval Egypt at The Textile Museum
In the early medieval era, the eastern Mediterranean's palaces, villas, and sacred spaces were richly decorated with hangings, curtains, and other luxury fabrics. Co-organized with Dumbarton Oaks, Woven Interiors: Furnishing Early Medieval Egypt brings together rarely displayed artworks from the 4th to 12th centuries to reveal how textiles infused warmth and beauty into Egypt's interiors. This exhibition is at the George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum.

**Special Displays:**

Chinese cricket container, Holy Land ephemera, mysterious Byzantine seals, and more
Three exhibits showcase Byzantine seals and weights, new acquisitions to the Ephemera Collection, and finely crafted Asian art. A new rotation of jade, ivory, and mother-of-pearl Asian art from the 17th to 20th centuries is now on display in *A Nobility of Matter: Asian Art from the Bliss Collection*, with objects ranging from a Qing dynasty cricket container to Japanese scroll weights. In the adjacent galleries, special display *Piety and Pleasure: Western Travel to the Holy Land* uses postcards, posters, magazines, rare books, and more to examine the Western pilgrims, tourists, and scholars who made the Holy Land a popular destination at the turn of the 20th century. Finally, see a case of weights, balances, and a scale the Romans and Byzantines used to ensure accurate transactions in the marketplace. On the other side of the case, discover an *800-year-old mystery* in the first display in more than 30 years solely focused on Byzantine seals from the 17,000-strong Dumbarton Oaks collection.

Upcoming Programs
Thursday, September 19
6–8 pm
Ornament Exhibition Opening Event
Curator talk, reception, after-hours gallery access

Saturday, September 21
2 pm
Dress and Identity in Byzantine Egypt
Gallery talk by Ornament curator

Sunday, September 22
2–4 pm
Mount Vernon Virtuosi Concert
Free concert by emerging leaders in chamber music

Saturday, September 28
2 pm
Ancient Fabrics, Modern Aesthetics
Gallery talk by Ornament curator