

DUMBARTON OAKS

RESEARCH LIBRARY AND COLLECTION

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Dumbarton Oaks Museum Acquires Important 9th Century Byzantine Manuscript

WASHINGTON – Dumbarton Oaks recently acquired a Byzantine manuscript of John Chrysostom’s Homilies on St. Matthew, written very likely at the end of the ninth century in Constantinople. The new acquisition broadens the scope of [Dumbarton Oaks’ collection of Byzantine manuscripts](#), which now spans from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries and offers a valuable cross section of Byzantine manuscript production.

John Chrysostom, an Early Church Father and the Archbishop of Constantinople, was a renowned orator and his homilies were recorded and circulated. This manuscript comprises the first forty-four of ninety homilies on the Gospel of Matthew delivered by this influential theologian. The condition of the well-preserved manuscript is only part of what makes this acquisition so special. The manuscript is a rare example of the early phase of Byzantine codex production after the eighth century. The first and two last parchment leaves were rewritten to replace lost pages in the thirteenth century. Added liturgical and other annotations of the fourteenth century provide a link to the Hodegon Monastery in Constantinople, where the manuscript seems to have been at that time.

Byzantium’s role in preserving and transmitting early versions of New Testament texts is a focus of ongoing research and discovery. As a center of advanced research in Byzantine Studies, Dumbarton Oaks holds the premiere collection of scholarly literature on the transmission of the Bible in Greek and continues to grow the collection and the resources available to scholars.

ABOUT DUMBARTON OAKS

Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection is the legacy of Robert and Mildred Woods Bliss, collectors and patrons of art and scholarship in the humanities. The multiple aspects of the Blisses’ gift include historic gardens and buildings, world-class collections for researchers and the public to enjoy, and generous support for fellowships and scholarly endeavors on the local, national, and international levels. Dumbarton Oaks is a research institute of Harvard University that exists to further and publish research in the three areas of study: Byzantine Studies, Pre-Columbian Studies, and Garden and Landscape Studies. Residential fellowships for an academic year, semester, or summer are awarded in all three areas of study to scholars from around the world. In addition, Dumbarton Oaks offers one-month non-residential awards to researchers and short-term pre-doctoral residencies to advanced graduate students. Each of the three programs of study supports and disseminates research in its relevant

fields through an annual symposium; a program of public lectures, informal talks, and colloquia; and publications. The Dumbarton Oaks Museum contains the Byzantine Collection, one of the finest collections of artifacts from the Byzantine Empire with more than twelve hundred objects from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries. The Robert Woods Bliss Collection of Pre-Columbian Art is housed in the Pre-Columbian Pavilion, designed by architect Philip Johnson. This collection comprises objects from the ancient cultures of Mesoamerica, the Intermediate Area, and the Andes. The House Collection consists primarily of the historic interiors, Asian, European and American artworks, and interior furnishings. Ten acres of formal gardens surround the 1801 Federal-style house. Mildred Barnes Bliss worked closely with renowned landscape designer Beatrix Farrand to transform the land surrounding the house into terraced gardens and vistas. The Dumbarton Oaks Research Library has extensive holdings in our three dedicated areas of study and the Rare Book Collection is strong on works of landscape architecture, botany, and horticulture, while also reflecting the research focus of Dumbarton Oaks. The Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives (ICFA) documents and preserves material from fieldwork and the Dumbarton Oaks Archives inventories, conserves, stores, and makes accessible the institute's past, current, and future records and artifacts.
