

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **DUMBARTON OAKS AND JSTOR TO LAUNCH PLANT HUMANITIES INITIATIVE Andrew W. Mellon Foundation provides support for digital tool and research and scholarly programming**

**New York and Washington, D.C., October 4, 2018** -- Dumbarton Oaks, a research institute of Harvard University, and JSTOR, the digital library for research and teaching that is part of the non-profit ITHAKA, are launching, with the support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Plant Humanities Initiative: a digital tool with related research and scholarly programming to advance the field of Plant Humanities. To this end, the Foundation has awarded JSTOR a grant of \$750,000 for developing a digital tool, with a parallel grant of \$700,000 to Dumbarton Oaks for the research and programming over three years.

Building on the [Global Plants](#) Initiative, and working in close collaboration, Dumbarton Oaks and JSTOR propose a new model of integrating digital humanities with scholarly programming that has three main goals: to provide innovative research and professional development opportunities for early-career humanists; to create a digital tool informed by the insights and needs of teachers and students as well as librarians and technical experts; and to supplement existing digitized resources with new primary source material, contextualize them, and disseminate them.

The ultimate focus of the digital tool will be determined in the first year of the project in consultation with the advisory committee. Content for the digital tool will then be developed by intergenerational teams of students and scholars who will come to Dumbarton Oaks to receive training and conduct research in the research institute's special collections during a four-week summer school and nine-month academic year fellowships.

"We are thrilled to be working with Dumbarton Oaks on this exciting project and grateful for Mellon's support to make this a reality," said Alex Humphreys, Director of JSTOR Labs and Associate Vice President of JSTOR. "This is a unique opportunity to foster the development of a new scholarly field by creating a new digital tool built with a constant feedback loop with its first set of scholar users."

"The Plant Humanities Initiative allows us to take to the next level a set of goals that we have been pursuing for several years, including providing skill-building opportunities for early-career humanists, sharing our collections more broadly, and developing innovative digital humanities projects," added Yota Batsaki, Executive Director of Dumbarton Oaks. "We could not wish for better partners than the Mellon Foundation and JSTOR in this undertaking."

The idea for the digital tool grew out of extended conversations between JSTOR and Dumbarton Oaks. In December 2017, Dumbarton Oaks and JSTOR [hosted a workshop](#) that brought together 30 scholars and librarians representing 16 institutions and a range of disciplines, including botany, history of science, and landscape architecture. Those who took part singled out the study of plants as a node around which a multidisciplinary field could be further developed, as plants lend themselves to a range of methodological approaches—scientific, cultural, historical, aesthetic, and environmental.

JSTOR and Dumbarton Oaks have a fruitful history of working together, having partnered to digitize and bring the [Dumbarton Oaks Papers](#) online, and to digitize [Studies in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology](#). For the current project, the development of the digital component will be carried out by the JSTOR Labs group, which is composed of technologists and designers who have experience developing digital tools for research and teaching; Dumbarton Oaks will provide the academic laboratory for this collaborative experiment, contributing their experience in fostering communities of scholars through their fellowship programs and the rich resources of their special collections.

## **ABOUT JSTOR**

Launched in 1997, JSTOR is a cloud-based library where scholars, students, and the public can access thousands of journals, books, images, and other content as well as tools that promote research, teaching, sharing, and contribution. JSTOR includes content from more than 1,000 publishers and serves 10,000+ universities, schools, and institutions across 176 nations. Learn more at [about.jstor.org](http://about.jstor.org).

## **ABOUT DUMBARTON OAKS**

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. Learn more at [www.doaks.org](http://www.doaks.org).