



Dumbarton Oaks

NEWSLETTER

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NOVEMBER 1980

UPDATE ON REPAIR AND RENOVATION PLANS:

Permission is being sought from the Trustees for the renovation of the Fellows Building this coming summer. It is hoped that they will permit an extensive job, but at the very least there is a substantial amount of work that has been deferred for some time which must be done without delay. Since deferred maintenance is a false economy, it is on this basis that permission for at least some of the work is anticipated. Absolutely essential is the renovation of the heating system, the repair of the roof and plumbing and the installation of an updated smoke detection and fire prevention system.

Additional work would include renovation and expansion of the kitchen which is no longer adequate, air conditioning throughout the building (to allow full use year-round), baths and telephones for each room upstairs, as well as a small powder room for downstairs guests. A wrought iron porch is being considered for the second floor on the front of the building which would conceal fire escape ladders while serving as a portico for the front door. On the first floor the main changes would be in the dining room and kitchen. The space occupied by the East Cottage would be used to enlarge the kitchen to provide adequate space for storage and service. Increased storage space should lead to more economical buying and preclude the necessity for daily shopping trips, which will save staff time. The new kitchen access door would be the former East Cottage entrance. A new bathroom would be built in the kitchen area. The manager's office would be relocated in the kitchen area thus freeing a room for guests on the second floor. The present butler's pantry and kitchen would function primarily as the new serving area with a new butler's pantry/fellows kitchen installed adjacent to it. It would be used by the staff during lunch and by the residents of the building for breakfast and dinner preparation. The dining room would be enlarged with the removal of the lavatory and the side door hallway. The increase in dining space will allow visiting researchers to come to lunch (perhaps six to ten daily). It is hoped that ultimately this new arrangement will result in economies of staff by making it possible for residents to prepare their own breakfasts and dinners, which would no longer be served by the staff. This should reduce the long-range expense of the Fellows Building.

Still under consideration is the relocation of the swimming pool which, if it is to be done, would be done in conjunction with the Fellows Building work. Changing rooms would be located either in the Fellows Building basement or built out from the present wall just north of the East Cottage patio. If the changing rooms were to be built there, the patio would be enlarged thus allowing for meals to be eaten outside in good weather. This would result in an attractive social and recreational "center" for Dumbarton Oaks. The main reason for relocating the pool would be to extend the open hours of the gardens, which are now closed at five in order that staff and fellows may use the pool.

Review of Security and Fire Protections:

An extensive review of security and fire protection systems and procedures at Dumbarton Oaks is still underway which it is hoped will lead eventually to increased and better safety and security of staff and property as well as economies in manpower. (A great deal of money is now spent on an outside security force which patrols the gardens with the main goal of safeguarding the building and collections.) A new system would rely heavily on electronic and mechanical equipment. A proposal is now being drawn up, but it may be some time even if it is approved before it is implemented.

It should be stressed that while many of these plans seem to involve substantial capital outlays some of the expenses (such as in the case of the Fellows Building) are unavoidable and inevitable and it would be unwise to defer the work for very long; other short-run expenses are seen to prepare the way for savings in the long-run in the areas of staff or services purchased from outside contractors. It is on this basis that approval for a renovation of the security system will be sought from the Trustees.

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BYZANTINE COLLECTION NEWS:

Exhibitions

In early September the two temporary exhibitions, "The Sion Silver Treasure: Conservation and Restoration" and "Security in Byzantium: Locking, Sealing and Weighing" were dismantled. While on display these exhibits elicited a great deal of interest both from the Dumbarton Oaks community and from the general visitor to the collection. Work is now progressing on the forthcoming exhibition, "Fakes and Forgeries in Byzantine Art," scheduled to open in January 1981.

In early October the large display case with objects from the Sion Silver Treasure was reorganized so that additional, recently-restored pieces could be exhibited for the first time. These include a large and handsome cruciform polycandelon, the only known surviving sixth century asterisk, a restored openwork lamp (previously in the conservation and restoration exhibit), another openwork lamp which has not yet been restored, plus several chains which have just been cleaned. More informative captions have also been added to the case.

Conservation

Exciting progress continues in the restoration of the Sion silver treasure. During the summer, work was completed on the cruciform polycandelon, which is now in one piece again after being superbly cleaned and restored by the Fogg Conservation Laboratory. The unique silver asterisk and two sets of chains from the treasure were also cleaned. All of these pieces are now on exhibition. Further, one of the flattened column shafts has been cleaned and reshaped and will be returned to D.O. shortly; a second shaft is in the process of restoration. All objects are being subjected to a full range of technical and scientific analysis. Progress is being made on the identification of the probable function of some of these fragments and will be reported on in the near future.

In response to several requests to have the pigments of Byzantine manuscripts analyzed, one of our Byzantine manuscripts (the 11th century Gospel lectionary) was taken to the National Gallery of Art Conservation Laboratory. Thanks to the collaboration of the National Gallery of Art, Jeffrey Anderson of George Washington University and Susan Boyd participated in an examination of the manuscript with Anne Hoenigswald, Assistant Conservator of Paintings at the NGA. The manuscript was first studied with the binocular microscope and then with the Gallery's energy dispersive X-ray fluorescence unit. The latter determines the inorganic matter in the pigments through non-destructive analysis, and so is useful for

identifying their mineral content. In order to determine the organic matter not identifiable through X-ray fluorescence, microscopic pigment samples were taken from offprints of the illuminations. These analyses are not yet completed, but we hope in the future to collaborate with the NGA on the analysis of several other of our manuscripts, to provide more complete documentation of the pigments used in Byzantine manuscript illumination.

Pedagogy

After the much deserved summer lull, a full schedule of tours of the Byzantine Collection commenced in September, with the arrival of school and other groups visiting Washington.

Didactics

New color postcards of nine objects in the Collection arrived from the printer in Germany in August and are on sale at the Front Desk. In addition, four sets of duplicate color slides of objects in the Collection will soon be available for sale at the Front Desk and by mail. They will be sold in four sets of ten each, accompanied by a list of identifications and descriptive material. They will replace the old set of twenty slides, which is nearly sold out, and will sell for \$7.50 per set (plus \$1.50 postage and handling). A few of the old sets of original slides are still available for sale at \$21 per set. Please see Carol Moon for details.

Study Room Furnished and Occupied

Following the arrival of the new coin safe early this summer, about 7,000 coins were moved to this more secure environment. In addition, 15,000 lead seals were transferred from the sub-basement storage room to the Study Room, where they are at last easily accessible to Professor Nicholas Oikonomides, Advisor in Sigillography, who is preparing the catalogue of Byzantine seals in the Dumbarton Oaks and Fogg Collections. Professor Oikonomides was in residence at D.O. from June 15 to July 30. Dr. Werner Seibt, a summer fellow from the Institut für Byzantinistik in Vienna, worked on seals in the Shaw Collection during the month of July. In August the sigillographers were replaced by numismatists as Professor Philip Grierson, Advisor in Numismatics, and Simon Bendall, from Baldwin's in London, arrived to work on volume IV of the Catalogue of Coins (Paleologan). The summer's activities thus represent a very active and successful inauguration of the now completed Study Room, which houses the coins, seals, and textiles. The center room is shared with the Pre-Columbian Collection and is available for study sessions of collection materials or for seminars.

The End of the Search

Most of July was devoted to resume reading and interviewing of candidates for the job of Assistant for the Byzantine Collection. We were delighted to welcome Carol Moon to our staff as of September 15. She comes to D.O. from Bryn Mawr, where she has been working toward her doctorate, writing her dissertation on the Theodotus Chapel of Sta. Maria Antiqua.

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BYZANTINE LIBRARY NEWS:

Michael Wolyniec completed his thesis and was awarded a Master of Arts degree in Russian Studies by The George Washington University in September 1980.

Mark Warren, a second year student at Georgetown University, continues as a Student Assistant in the Library. John Hurley stayed with us also. Jill Bonner, a senior from Georgetown, joined our staff to help Mark and John in shelving, filing, and finding books. We are most pleased to have friendly and helpful students in the Library.

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GARDEN LIBRARY NEWS:

Betty MacDougall returned from her sabbatical leave to resume her responsibilities as Director of Studies. Laura Byers attended the annual meeting of the Council of Botanical and Horticultural Librarians at the New York Botanical Garden from October 1-3 and included visits to the International Antiquarian Book Fair and the recently opened exhibition on flower illustration at the Pierpont Morgan Library. Bonnie Billman prepared an exhibition of Monnoyer prints which is still on display.

Recent acquisitions in the Garden Library include two additions to the prints and drawings collection. A watercolor by Humphrey Repton and a French watercolor, a plan of a formal garden, were purchased at a Sotheby auction in June.

The photo collection has been substantially enlarged by purchases of copies of the display photos from the Garden History exhibition held at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London in 1979. Professor Alan Tait of the Landscape Architecture Advisory Committee has chosen aerial views of Scottish gardens made by the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments, and a project has been started to acquire selected photos from the archives of the Committee for Aerial Photography at Cambridge University. Similarly, the older Dumbarton Oaks photographs have been organized to serve as an embryonic photo archives for the history of the property.

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PRE-COLUMBIAN NEWS:

Carlos Arostegui, a cultural anthropologist who is finishing his dissertation at Yale on Mixtec manuscripts, joined the Pre-Columbian staff on September 1 as the new Assistant Curator. Carlos brings to the program a solid balance between art history and anthropology, providing additional expertise in Pre-Columbian cultures, the resources needed to study these, and the conservation of objects in the Collection. His arrival occasioned the installation of new low-energy lights in what had been the Audio Visual Room and a thorough rearrangement of the Pre-Columbian offices to make the library room a sanctuary for research by fellows and outside readers and to provide each staff member easy access to the materials they use most.

In other staff news, Elizabeth Boone lectured on "Approaches to the Study of Sixteenth-Century Mexican Manuscript Painting" at the initial meeting of area art historians, sponsored on October 23 by the new Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts. She and Carlos also attended the conference on "The Style and Iconography of Classic Maya Vases" held November 7-9 at Princeton.

Work with the Pre-Columbian collection continues at an advanced pace, with the remounting of several objects and the photographing of pieces that are inadequately documented pictorially, the latter being a project that will still take some time. Conservation work was completed on the 10-foot Paracas textile, and a frame is now under construction in preparation for the textile's display.

In the area of publications, the Pre-Columbian program adopted its initial Style Guide for Authors, which will go far in bringing the publication procedures and policies more in line with those of various university presses and will consequently smooth and make more clear our editorial and production obligations. This was accompanied by a thorough study of the publications program itself (including the costs of production and the pricing policy). Glenn Ruby and Carlos Arostegui also conducted the first inventory of the Pre-Columbian publications stored both within the main building and beneath the Fellows Building, and plans are underway to determine the most suitable solution to the storage problem that has plagued the Pre-Columbian program for some years.

In a move to broaden the activities of Dumbarton Oaks locally, the program is also sponsoring a series of informal seminars on Pre-Columbian art and intellectual culture for interested scholars in the area. The gatherings are held on Monday nights at 7:30 in the Study and are intended to enable Pre-Columbianists to share their research and expand their understanding of ancient America. Some fourteen persons regularly attend.

The highlight of recent months was, of course, the annual Pre-Columbian conference, held on October 18-19. This year's conference, "Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Study of Mesoamerican Highland-Lowland Interaction," was a bit different from previous meetings, in that it included nearly twice the number of papers as usual as well as panelists and summarizers. Attendance was equally large, with ninety scholars from a variety of disciplines and often very diverse perspectives coming together to examine the problem of cultural interaction during the Classic Period (c. 300-900 AD) in Mesoamerica. The participants and invited audience included scholars who had never previously been associated with Dumbarton Oaks, and many of them brought to the conference a vitality that led to quite exciting discussions.

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FRIENDS OF MUSIC NEWS:

The season opened on November 5-6 with a recital by Charles Bressler, tenor, and Menahem Pressler, piano, in a performance of Lieder and Sonata by Beethoven, Ravel, and Schumann. We are offering seven concerts this season, which is one more than usual, and two musical lectures.

A black and white postcard has been made of the opening bars of the "Dumbarton Oaks Concert" by Igor Stravinsky and is on sale at the entrance.

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HOUSE COLLECTION NEWS:

Restoration of the frames of the five Alfred Stevens paintings hanging near the entrance to the Garden Library has begun. The painting of "La Japonaise" will be re-hung in its restored frame early in November.

There is a plan to put up in the Founders Room in place of the Chinese scroll the drawing of Mrs. Bliss which has hung for some time in the Rare Book Room of the Garden Library, the frame of which is now being restored. With this drawing will be arranged photographs of Mr. Bliss and the Directors of Dumbarton Oaks, together with photographs of the early Directors of Studies. It is hoped to have this ready by the Fortieth Anniversary which we are celebrating on November 29th.

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PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION NEWS:

Several student assistants have joined the staff of the Photograph Collection: Cynthia Davis (Greenway), a graduate of Georgetown University and a jeweler who has lived, among other places, in Romania where her father served the U. S. State Department. Cynthia has already taken her first approved vacation--her honeymoon in Bermuda. Magda Jabbour from Memphis, Tennessee, spent last year in Vienna on her junior year abroad and is presently a senior undergraduate student at Georgetown University. She is working on a senior thesis on Color Symbolism in Byzantine Mosaics under Cara Ferguson O'Meara. Robert Kurtz, an MA Graduate Student at George Washington, worked in the Photo Collection during the month of October until he left for greener pastures, a full-time position with a national association. Jane Fisher will join the staff in January 1981.

Charlotte Burk and Claudia Vess attended the Byzantine Studies Conference in Oberlin, Ohio, the last weekend in October.

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ADDITIONAL NEWS OF INTEREST:

Senior Financial Administrator sought:

Based on a recent review of financial activities at D.O., it has been determined that accounting and financial reporting procedures must be clarified and that existing systems need to be revised and updated in some cases with some new ones developed and implemented. D.O. is therefore seeking to hire on a short-term basis a person skilled in financial management who can carry out the recommendations that have been made by establishing the necessary procedures and controls. It is hoped that after this work has been done, because of a streamlined and more efficient operation, Dumbarton Oaks financial affairs can be maintained by a staff of two (instead of the previous three) thus recognizing further staff economies in the long-run.

NOVEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1 Luttrell arrives
2	3 7:30 P-C Seminar	4	5 Sherry Concert	6 Kuban arrives thru-11/9 Concert	7	8
9	10 7:30 P-C Seminar	11 VETERAN'S DAY	12	13	14	15
16	17 7:30 P-C Seminar	18	19 P.L. Luttrell	20 2:30 Board of Advisors mtg.	21	22
23	24 7:30 P-C Seminar	25 Grierson arrives thru-12/1 thru-12/1	26 Sherry Music Lecture	27 THANKSGIVING	28	29 Senior Fellows mtg. 40th Birthday Party
30	7:30 P-C Seminar	5 Shboul talk				

DECEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2 Jade Conf. 9:30-4 (Study)	3 Sherry	4	5 Harvard Club Lecture	6
7	8 7:30 P-C Seminar	9 Grierson arrives thru-12/12	10	11 Harvard Energy Mtg. 1:30-5	12	13
14	15	16	17 P.L. Kaegi	18	19	20
21	22 7:30 P-C Seminar	23	24 Sherry	25 MERRY holiday begins at noon	26	27
28	29 7:30 P-C Seminar	30	31			

JANUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1 HAPPY NEW YEAR!! 1981	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 7:30 P-C Seminar	13	14 P.L. Jacoby	15 Concert	16 Concert	17
18	19	20	21 Sherry	22	23	24
25	26 7:30 P-C Seminar	27	28	29	30	31 Concert