



Smithsonian Institution Libraries

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Sept. 4, 2002

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Anthony Grafton to Deliver 2002 Dibner Library Lecture

Smithsonian Institution Libraries will hold the 2002 Dibner Library Lecture on Tuesday, October 15 at 5 p.m. in the Carmichael Auditorium of the National Museum of American History, Behring Center. The lecture is free and open to the public.

This year's guest lecturer is historian Anthony Grafton, a contributing editor of *The New Republic* and an eminent critic for *The New York Review of Books*. At the Smithsonian Libraries event, Grafton will speak on "Technica Curiosa: Engineering and Magic in Early Modern Europe."

"We are thrilled to have Dr. Grafton as this year's speaker," said Ronald Brashear, head of special collections at Smithsonian Libraries. "Grafton is one of the premier figures in history of science scholarship today, and he has successfully made his field accessible to an audience that extends well beyond the academic world."

Begun in 1992, the Dibner Library Lecture is held annually and features a distinguished scholar who has made significant contributions to his or her field of study. Previous lecturers include, among others, Owen Gingerich of the Harvard-Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory; Steven J. Dick of the U.S. Naval Observatory; Katherine Park of Harvard University; and Elizabeth Eisenstein, a University of Michigan emerita.

Since 2000, the Dibner Library Lecture has become available in published form. The fully illustrated lectures are also posted online at: <http://www.sil.si.edu/digitalcollections/browse.htm>. The lecture series and its publication are made possible by the generous support of The Dibner Fund.

"At Smithsonian Libraries, our business is knowledge," said Smithsonian Libraries' Director Nancy E. Gwinn. "This includes knowledge about the past, which always impacts the shape of the future, be it in the realm of human affairs, creative expression, or scientific discoveries. The Dibner Library Lecture is evidence of our strong commitment to illuminate the history of scientific study."

Author of more than a dozen books and professor of history at Princeton University, Grafton focuses his scholarly attentions on the history of the classical tradition, particularly during the Renaissance. He lectures on and writes about the history of science, and the history of books and readers.

His most recent book, *Bring Out Your Dead: The Past as Revelation*, published by Harvard University Press in January 2002, looks at collaborative scholarly communities of the Renaissance era and the ways in which their work with ancient texts contributed to a transformation of the study of nature.

The Dibner Library of the History of Science and Technology, one of the Smithsonian Libraries' 20 branches, opened in October 1976. The library's core collection of 10,000 rare books and 1,600 manuscript groups came to the Smithsonian from the Burndy Library, founded by Bern Dibner in Norwalk, Conn., at the time of America's bicentennial celebrations. The collection includes premier scientific texts spanning the 15th to the early 20th centuries and has grown to form one of the cornerstones of the Smithsonian Libraries' collections. For over 25 years, this library has provided vital primary sources to scholars, curators and members of the scientific community.

The Smithsonian Libraries is a 20-branch system with online exhibitions, rare books, and information services online at www.sil.si.edu. The library catalog is available at www.siris.si.edu. The Libraries serves the Smithsonian and the public with information and reference support. Its collections number 1.5 million volumes including 40,000 rare books, 2,000 manuscripts, 180,000 microfilm and microfiche. The Libraries also holds the nation's largest trade literature collection, which includes nearly 300,000 commercial catalogs dating from the 1850s and representing more than 30,000 companies.

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