THE HUMANITIES INSTITUTE PRESENTS

“The Odyssey of a Royal Inca Tunic: Regalia, Heirloom, Art”

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An intricately patterned tunic in the collection of the Dumbarton Oaks Museum is the most famous work of Andean art in the world. However, little has been known of its life before it was acquired by Robert Woods Bliss, the founder of Dumbarton Oaks, in the 1950s. This talk explores how the 500-year-old tunic, originally destined for the wardrobe of an Inca emperor, may have journeyed to the walls of a museum. At the same time, it considers the consequences of its transformation as an object—from regalia, to heirloom, to art—for those who have cared for and about it.