

TABLET COLLECTION

Andrew Dix

It has been a very busy year for the Tablet Collection and its study space, the Tablet Room. Nicole Brisch of Cambridge University and Aage Westenholz of the University of Copenhagen each returned for the second consecutive year to continue research on cuneiform tablets

in the Oriental Institute's Tablet Collection. Lance Allred of the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI), based at the University of California, Los Angeles, also returned to continue scanning published tablets belonging to the Oriental Institute. The continued efforts of the CDLI have made several hundred images of tablets housed at the Oriental Institute available for viewing online at the project's website (<http://cdli.ucla.edu/>).

Grant Frame of the University of Pennsylvania visited this spring to check inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian king Sargon II from Khorsabad which will appear in his forthcoming volume on Sargon II's royal inscriptions. Clemens Reichel of the University of Toronto returned to the Oriental Institute on two separate occasions this year to work on seal impressions and sealed tablets from Tell Asmar. Finally, Dominique Charpin of the Sorbonne spent two weeks in the Tablet Room working on an archive of tablets dating to the eighteenth century BC.

The publication of the cuneiform tablets from the Gibson collection (see last year's *Annual Report* for the Tablet Collection, and also this year's contribution by Jack Green for the Museum) by Gertrud and Walter Farber has now appeared in a Festschrift for a Belgian colleague, K. Van Lerberghe.

Throughout the 2011–2012 academic year Andrea Seri used tablets from the Tablet Collection in a seminar designed to teach advanced graduate students in cuneiform studies to read original documents and make hand copies. Several other faculty members, including Robert Biggs, John Brinkman, Walter Farber, and Chris Woods, participated in this seminar, using cuneiform tablets from different periods of Mesopotamian history.

There have been several opportunities over the past year to expand the number of tablets from the Tablet Collection on display to the public. The temporary exhibit at the Oriental Institute, Commerce and Coins in the Ancient Near East, presented in conjunction with the American Numismatic Association's World's Fair of Money, featured four tablets that illustrate some of the ways in which cuneiform tablets documented and facilitated commerce in ancient Mesopotamia. These tablets complemented our permanent display of ancient coins and other objects related to commerce in the ancient Near East.

Two loans of tablets from our collection to other institutions should also be mentioned. Several inscribed objects from the Tablet Collection are included in the Oriental Institute's loan for La Caixa Foundations's 2012 exhibit *Before the Flood: Mesopotamian Art, 3500–2000 BC* in Barcelona. This loan presented the opportunity for Oriental Institute Research Associate Gertrud Farber to publish four unpublished objects from the Tablet Collection which will be part of the exhibition. Closer to home, a three-year loan of three astronomical tablets from Uruk that date to the Seleucid period was made to the Adler Planetarium in Chicago. These tablets may now be seen at the planetarium in a display on the history of astronomy. The idea for this loan came from a talk presented at the Adler Planetarium by John Steele on the Mesopotamian astronomer-scribe Anu-Belshunu, who was the scholar who wrote one of the tablets currently on display at the planetarium.
