

THE TABLET COLLECTION

Walter Farber

The Tablet Collection is currently in the process of evaluating the physical state of all the tablets under our care, some of which are in dire need of conservation work. In close cooperation with Laura D'Alessandro, I hope to find the necessary means for both our short-term needs and for a long-term plan to ensure the safety and well-being of the Oriental Institute's unique and irreplaceable collection.

During the past year, the Tablet Room, still under the daily care of my assistant Jonathan Tenney, accommodated a number of visitors for short, or sometimes extended, visits to work on cuneiform texts in our collection. The weeks before and after the fifty-first Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale were especially busy, and after a more relaxed fall, traffic picked up again in winter and spring 2006. Jacob Dahl from Berlin spent several weeks scanning published texts from the third and second millennia B.C. from our collection, to be made available online through the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative based at the University of California, Los Angeles. A similar, though much smaller, project for certain astronomical texts from the first millennium B.C. is planned in collaboration with Eleanor Robson from Oxford University. Our facilities were also made available to Matthew Stolper's Persepolis Fortification Tablet Project, and scholars working on these texts have enjoyed the quiet and mostly adequate, albeit sometimes a bit crowded, working conditions of the Tablet Room.
