

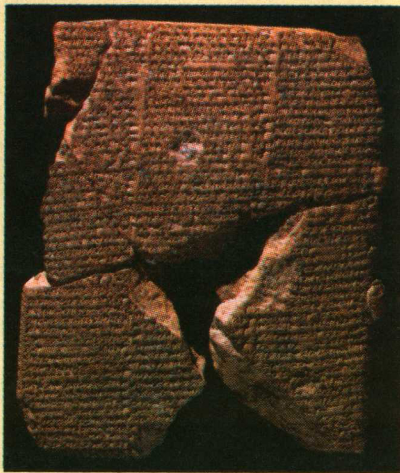
Babylonian Collection celebrates centennial

The Yale Babylonian Collection will celebrate its 100th year with a series of events on Saturday, Nov. 14, that include a concert of music with Mesopotamian themes, a symposium, a film screening and two exhibitions showcasing selected holdings.

The program has two interrelated goals, according to Karen Foster, a lecturer in the history of art and Near East Languages and Civilizations (NELC), who helped organize the centennial celebration. One is to "further understanding of the role of ancient Mesopotamia in the wider context of humanistic and scientific traditions in the United States and abroad," and the other is to "show how notable discoveries made in the Yale Babylonian Collection over the past century have significantly advanced knowledge in diverse fields," she says.

"The program has particular relevance in light of the current American involvement in Iraq and the ongoing destruction of that nation's cultural heritage," adds Foster.

The celebration will begin at 1:30 p.m. with a symposium in Rm. 101 of Linsly-Chittenden Hall, 63 High St. Featured topics and the speakers are "Yale and the Babylonians, 1909" by Benjamin Foster, the William M. Laffan Professor of Assyriology and Babylonian Literature, chair of NELC and curator of the Babylonian Collection; "They Wrote Against Clay: Panbabylonism and the Language of Cultural Diffusionism" by Steven W. Holloway of The American Theological Library Association; and "Sherlock



The "Treasures of the Yale Babylonian Collection" exhibition includes this cuneiform tablet which relates the "Epic of Gilgamesh."

Holmes in the Yale Babylonian Collection" by Marc Van de Mieroop of Columbia University.

Later in the afternoon, at 4 p.m., Karen Foster will briefly discuss "Babylon and Hollywood a Century Ago" before the screening of the Fall of Babylon episodes from the classic silent film "Intolerance."

Tours of two exhibitions at Sterling Memorial Library — "Treasures of the Yale Babylonian Collection" and "From Nineveh to New Haven" — that highlight some of the ancient Near Eastern treasures will be offered at 5:30 p.m. The library is located at 120 High St.

The day's celebration will conclude with

an evening concert, "From the Euphrates to the Nile," at 8 p.m. in Battell Chapel, corner of Elm and College streets. The event will feature the Saybrook College Orchestra, conducted by Arianne Abela and Ng Tian Hui, in a performance of Rossini's Overture from "Semiramide," Saint-Saëns's Piano Concerto No. 5 ("Egyptian") and selections from Handel's "Belshazzar's Feast." Soloists for the choral work are Michael Sansoni, Awet Andemicael, Peter Minnig and Judith Malafronte.

The Yale Babylonian Collection began in 1909, when financier J. Pierpont Morgan offered one thousand shares of U.S. Steel for the foundation of a collection of cuneiform tablets and other material from Mesopotamia, as well as the establishment of the William M. Laffan Professorship of Assyriology and Babylonian Literature. Presently, the Yale Babylonian Collection holds over 40,000 tablets and related artifacts — the largest assemblage of objects from ancient Iraq in the western hemisphere. It maintains an active program of research, publication, conservation, educational outreach and international collaboration, most recently teaming with the Kyoto Institute for the Study of the Environment and the Atominstitut of the Austrian Universities to perform the first scientific analyses of Babylonian clay tablets.

The centennial celebration is sponsored by the Edward J. and Dorothy Clarke Kempf Fund, the MacMillan Center, the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, the Marilyn M. and William K. Simpson Egyptology Endowment and the Yale Babylonian Collection.