

# Multidisciplinary non-destructive investigation of cuneiform tablets (case study)

PETRA ŠTEFCOVÁ, LUBOS POLÁK, O. KOHOUT\*,  
JAROSLAV VALACH\*\*, PETR ZEMÁNEK\*\*\*

**Abstract:** Cultural heritage artefacts made of ceramic materials (burnt/unburnt clay) are an important part of nearly all museum collections. Nondestructive investigation methods can help specify the provenience of the artefacts, but only concomitant with methods applied in other fields of study such as humanities, e.g. history, archaeology, linguistics, philology, paleography, etc. The present study is the partial outcome of a multi-disciplinary project, which connected humanities and technical sciences, and whose main goal is to devise a system for the documentation and analysis of cultural heritage artefacts with the aid of computer-supported imaging and documentation methods. A part of the project work entails creating 2d/3d models of cuneiform tablets, which make the documentation of the surface of the investigated objects or the imaging of the internal structure of the material used possible; the final outcome will be a database linking all the results obtained.

**Keywords:** Non-destructive research methods, Digital humanities, Clays, Cuneiform tablets.

## 1. Introduction

It is generally known that the simplest way to transfer information is with spoken language. The disadvantage of this is the transience of what is communicated and the need for the simultaneous presence of the conveyor of the information and the recipient of it. The effort to remove these limitations led, in all likelihood, to the development of a means of transferring information in other ways, especially by recording it on a specific recording medium. While it may seem that all the communicated information is contained only the record itself, it is necessary to take into account the actual recording medium, which may at first glance include little apparent additional information.

\* National Museum, Prague, Czech Republic.  
fabrice.papy@univ-lorraine.fr.

\*\* Institute of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics, Prague, Czech Republic.  
epierot@free.fr.

\*\*\* Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic.  
petr.zemanek@ff.cuni.cz.