

Excavation report of C-II (Sq. 6845), 2009

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The square 6845 measures 5.5 x 9m and it is located at the easternmost boarder of Square 6745. The operation supervised by Daniela Crasso comprehends the central area of House I: Room 4, Room 2 (central courtyard) and Room 3. The eastern edge of this area has been partially excavated by the American team of the Oriental Institute and by the Syrian-German expedition in 2001. The main aim of the 2009 season for this trench was to reach the middle-Assyrian levels, in order to identify the eastern development of House I. At the beginning of the season, the modern accumulation that filled up the trenches exposed during the previous excavations had to be removed. In the southern and northern edges of the square, beside this modern accumulation, a series of floors or horizontal beddings evidently cut by the recent material were uncovered. In the southern edge, in particular, a structure with a tannur inserted in an installation formed by two parallel mud-brick lines was found (Fig. 1). All these strata could be dated to the early Islamic or late classical periods. After the complete removal of the modern stratification, we reached the Middle Assyrian cobble-floor already identified by the Oriental Institute team. The cobble-floor (C-360) covered the central and northeastern areas of the square (Fig. 2). At its southern edge, the floor was framed by a regular line of large basalt stones. Near the basalt stones, in the southeastern corner of the trench, an architectural structure dating to the Middle Assyrian period was unearthed. It was formed by two walls, the corresponding doorway with stairs and a progressive stratification of floors. This structure is probably the northwestern corner of a yet unexcavated southeastern room in House I.

Eventually, a 2.5 x 5.5 m sounding underneath the cobble-floor in the central area of the trench was open. Its aim was to investigate the depositions under the Middle Assyrian strata of House I and to analyze the connection with the pre-Middle Assyrian monumental mud-brick structure already seen in 2007 under the western main courtyard of Room 2. Below a series of thin floors and thick ash accumulations, a mud-brick platform with the same orientation as the western one was uncovered. The new mud-brick layers were slightly higher than the platform from 2007 and they were located on two different levels as if they had a kind of terracing development. At the same time, in the northern area of the trench the late-Middle Assyrian wall (C-69) excavated in 2007 was removed. In addition, we decided to enlarge the sounding under the cobble-floor until the northern baulk of the trench, in order to discover the possible northern prosecution of the central mud-brick platform. Layers of beddings were unearthed here, and no further extension of the mud-bricks was seen. Under the beddings, in a back-fill accumulation, a collection of clay tablets was uncovered (see special note "Middle Assyrian text finds from 2009"). The exposure of the tablets took up the last days of the season (Fig. 3).





Fig. 3: From above, the accumulation layer where the first clay-tablets were found.