

Kunara 2016 Season

Area B (Aline Tenu)

In Area B, excavation continued on the monumental building. Access to this structure was from the south-east via a paved walkway which ended at a monolithic doorstep. This opened onto a large L-shaped room. It is possible that the small room measuring less than 10m², located to the south, may have been occupied by a guard who controlled access into the building. Two thresholds led to two other spaces which have not yet been excavated. Very few, if any, large food storage jars were found in this building, but lots of fine table ware was uncovered. In particular, this included large quantities of small shouldered bowls, probably used in practices linked to hospitality and the welcoming of guests. The discovery of moulds for the fabrication of copper alloy objects may indicate the presence of metallurgy activities within or close to the building. Nothing is yet known about the sourcing and production of bronze in the region, but such activities were likely to have been controlled by the authorities. This may be evidence that this building, whose entrance could be easily watched, housed the “lord” of the town, whatever their title and the extent of their power may have been.

Area C (David Sarmiento-Castillo)

In Area C, excavation continued on the cellar. This work was very slow due to the considerable quantities of pottery which covered the floors, and the presence of clay tablets. To the north, more of the floor plan of the two buildings was uncovered, and the floor levels were excavated, revealing circular burnt features which resembled cupules. The remains of Area C comprise two distinct spaces which functioned conjointly: the cellar, containing mostly storage jars, and the buildings to the north. In the latter, many pottery sherds were found, which were finely decorated with animal (scorpions, snakes, rams) and geometric motifs. The analysis of this pottery assemblage is currently ongoing, but the presence of embellished pot stands, in addition to non-functional vessel forms, may indicate that this building was used for worship or ceremonial activities. This hypothesis may also be supported by the discovery of the cupule-like features this season.

Area E (Florine Marchand)

The 2016 excavations demonstrated that the stone features found in 2015 in fact belonged to a small three-room house built against the eastern facade of the monumental building. This domestic unit covered just over 30m² and was surrounded on three sides by exterior spaces. The entrance was via two thresholds built into the north and south walls. The northern room opened onto a third room whose function is unknown and which measured less than 3m². The pottery found in the house is very varied, and includes storage jars, vessel stands and small shouldered bowls. It would have been sufficient for a small family in the late 3rd millennium BC.

The flour office

Approximately forty clay tablets and fragments were found in 2015 and 2016 in the Area C cellar. Analysis of the first tablets has demonstrated that these were administrative documents which recorded the inward deliveries and outgoings of various types of flour: barley, emmer wheat, common wheat, and possibly malt, which is evidence for the diversity and wealth of the agricultural land around Kunara. The names of six or seven places near Kunara have so far been identified, along with the names of a few people. The tablets are written in Akkadian, whose cultural influence is well known for the region. In so far as the proper nouns are not Akkadian, it is not possible to determine what language was spoken at Kunara at the end of the 3rd millennium.