

THE 2019 WORK IN KUNARA

In 2019, two operations were carried out as part of the French Archaeological Peramagron Project:

- the study mission from May 15 to 31 at the Directorate General of Antiquities in Suleymaniyeh
- the excavation campaign in the field at Kunara from September 14 to October 13.

The study mission (Philippe Clancier & Julien Monerie)

It was mainly devoted to the study of the cuneiform tablets and tablet fragments discovered in 2018 in Area E. Only two of them still had readable cuneiform signs, including M. 632, on which the Subartu GUR is mentioned. Cleaning work on several tablets discovered in previous campaigns was also continued.

The excavation campaign

The work continued in the three areas excavated since 2015, Areas B? C and E.

Area B (Aline Tenu)

The main objective of the 2019 campaign was to begin excavation of building B. 715 located southwest of the area. A room has been discovered there, L. 742, covering at least 30 m² and its southern end has not yet been discovered. It was deliberately filled and an occupation dating back to the 2nd millennium was brought into light. This level is characterized by richly decorated sherds with geometric, zoomorphic and anthropomorphic motifs. Later, the area was occupied again in the Iron Age.

Area C (Barbara Chiti)

This year, research focused on the northwestern part of the area. To the north of Building B. 517, open space has been uncovered. On its floor, carefully covered with pebbles, we discovered broken material: jars, bowls with inverted handles, but also a sea shell from which mother-of-pearl had been removed and a fragmented stone mace head. A small building possibly housing ovens opened onto this space to the west. Two other buildings have also been identified but their clearance has barely begun. The excavation of the north room of Building B. 517 has been resumed, allowing the discovery of new floor. More recent walls, built at the end of the 3rd millennium, and perhaps altered in the Iron Age, have also been excavated.

Area E (Florine Marchand)

The excavation of Area E was first extended to the north, revealing the northern limit of the monumental building B. 659, its northeast corner and a new room (L. 911).

Exploration of B. 659 continued south of room L. 692 discovered in 2018. Another room L. 915, whose floor has been carefully covered with baked brick coated and jointed with bitumen, has been uncovered.

Tombs and stone structures with an undetermined function, all probably dating from the medieval or modern period, have been found in this area.

Archaeozoological study (Michaël Seigle)

The fauna study focused mainly on the bone elements uncovered during the excavation on the three areas, as well as on batches, not studied so far, also from Areas B, C and E, for a total of 3304 remains. The fauna is dominated by goats and sheep, but there is a great diversity of wildlife. Remains of aquatic species, such as the water mussel and the crab, have been found, as well as large mammals, such as deer, Persian gazelle, mouflon and aurochs. Several predators are also documented such as bears, lions, panthers and red foxes. This variety reveals an important breeding practice for meat and products such as milk, wool, horn or bone, but also an exploitation of the environment more or less close to the site with river, mountain, forest and steppe areas.

Geo-archaeological study (Pantelitsa Mylona)

The objective of this geo-archaeological study was to evaluate its for the analysis of construction techniques (walls and floors) and to draw up an initial inventory of the types of earth superstructure visible on the areas under excavation, B, C and E. Two main types of superstructure can be distinguished: those using "bricks" or "earthen loaves" and those made by earth or cob layers.

32 samples were taken, half of which could be exported this year.

Lithics study (Florine Marchand)

Twenty-two lithic pieces (seventeen in flint, four in stone of an undetermined nature and one in porphyry) were collected during the mission on areas B and C. No obsidian pieces were found this year. In addition, Area E did not deliver any lithic objects.

A hard stone hammer and several stone tools were discovered on Area B, supporting the hypothesis that at least part of the lithic artefacts was made on site.

Pottery study (Cécile Verdelle)

In 2019, the pottery study focused on the discoveries made in Areas B, C and E. Several lots of Areas B and C have delivered Iron Age sherds, confirming the occupation of the lower town on that date. On Area B, sherds with various decorations, modelled and incised were discovered. They date from the 2nd millennium but as they are a corpus reduced to a few very particular forms, a more precise dating is not yet possible. Many fragments of Interned-Handles Bowls were discovered again this year on Area C. Some of them form a new category, unknown to date.