



Fig. 31. A crushed pottery bowl found next to the remains of a mudbrick building. In the left corner are the remains of a tabun (photo courtesy of Lucas Petit)

## TALL DAMIYAH

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As part of the larger “Recycling the Valley” Project, the seventh season of excavations was undertaken at Tall Damiyah in September and October 2016. Tall Damiyah, a small settlement mound on the east bank of the Jordan River, reveals a continuous occupation history during the Iron Age in contrast to the broken histories at neighboring sites. During previous excavation work at Tall Damiyah, the remains of an Iron Age IIC sanctuary were encountered on the summit and it was proposed that this cultic place was used primarily by traders and travelers, even during unfavorable living conditions in the Jordan Valley (Petit and Kafafi 2016). This would explain the continuous occupation at Tall Damiyah, whereas other sites in the vicinity, like Tall Mazar and Tall Dayr ‘Alla, show occupational gaps.

Excavations in 2016 were carried out in three squares on the summit and aimed at investigating the southwestern corner of the sanctuary, unravelling its relationship with a domestic building located to the south, and studying older occupation phases. The area southwest of the sanctuary was unfortunately heavily disturbed by later burials and pits, making it hard to add new information to the already existing plan (Petit and Kafafi 2016: Figure 5). It is, however, clear from results encountered during previous seasons that this area was part of a street or courtyard between the sanctuary and the southern domestic building. Part of it was most likely roofed since several clay loom weights were encountered on the surface in 2016 (Fig. 32). The complete difference of the inventories of the two buildings is

intriguing. It is suggested here that the southern building was primarily used as a living area, whereas the main rectangular building on the summit was intended for cultic purposes. Some of the finds from this phase, such as an Iron Age I figurine, advocate that Tall Damiyah was also used as a cultic place before Iron Age IIC.

An important aim of the 2016 field season was to investigate occupational remains below the phase of the sanctuary, especially in the southern square. The uncovered courtyard layers with several tabuns point to a domestic function, at least of this part of the site. Most of the finds in these layers were extremely fragmented due to frequent trampling.

Below these series of courtyard layers, a fragment of a mudbrick structure appeared that suffered a major conflagration. The wall and associated finds, such as a typical Iron Age II bowl, were dated to the 8th century B.C. (Fig. 31). Excavations of these earlier levels will be resumed in 2018.

### REFERENCES:

Petit, L.P. and Z. Kafafi. 2016. "Beyond the River Jordan: a Late Iron Age Sanctuary at Tell Damiyah." *Near Eastern Archaeology* 79/1: 18–26.



Fig. 32. Loom weights on the surface southwest of the sanctuary (photo courtesy of Lucas Petit)