

RJ Hall**Subject:** FW: TeHEP UPDATE 18 DECEMBER 2009

Tall el-Hammam Excavation Project

**Trinity Southwest University,
Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA**

in a Joint Scientific Project with the

**Department of Antiquities,
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan**

TeHEP UPDATE

18 December 2009

An Exclusive Report for TeHEP Alumni, Financial Supporters, and Friends

[GLOSSARY OF CHRONOLOGICAL TERMS FREQUENTLY USED IN TeHEP UPDATES:

Chalcolithic Period = Copper/Stone Age, 4400-3300 BCE; EBA = Early Bronze Age, 3300-2350 BCE; IBA = Intermediate Bronze Age, 2350-2000 BCE; MBA = Middle Bronze Age, 2000-1550 BCE; LBA = Late Bronze Age, 1550-1200 BCE; IA1 = Iron Age 1, 1200-1000 BCE; IA2 = Iron Age 2, 1000-586 BCE; IA3 = Iron Age 3/Persian Period, 586-332 BCE; HP = Hellenistic/Greek Period, 332-63 BCE; ERP = Early Roman Period, 63 BCE-168 CE]

Hello All:

Today, as Dr. Collins and I studied the pottery, we picked up on yesterday's surface survey on Tall el-Hammam's western edge, and identified a large number of hole-mouth jar rims. On closer inspection, a pattern of distinction in rim forms began to emerge. Considering the functional implications of each shape, Dr. C suggested they might indicate the use of a lid.

That particular idea was fresh in his mind because, among the other sherds from the survey, there was also a half-complete lid. Lids are seldom recognized or documented in the archaeological record, from almost any period. Neither of us could remember ever excavating one before, at least from the Bronze Age. And they've rarely appeared in any of the literature. In fact, the only lids from the archaeological record most of us can visualize are the famous ones found with the Dead Sea Scroll jars.

Our lid was quite shallow, with a rounded top and a very short straight sidewall. It was pretty clear this would not have been used as a bowl. In fact, it quite reasonably fit the rims of the hole-mouth jar rims we'd been examining.

As we began to discuss the subject, we realized that virtually nothing is known about lids during the Bronze Age and we also agreed that they were probably much

more common than has been identified in the past. In reality, now that it's on our radar, we'll probably begin to identify other vessel forms that were also probably used as lids. Of course, the ultimate would be to find a lid actually sitting on top of a jar inside one of our Bronze Age houses.

Archaeological work is not unlike the kind of detective work done on CSI. We look at what's there, then reconstruct what happened at that location at some point in the past---in this case, over 4,000 years ago! But, as far as I'm concerned, a lid by any other name is still a lid.

Gary A. Byers, TeHEP Senior Field Archaeologist

P.S. Dr. Collins' ankle is doing much, much better today. That's good, because tomorrow (another "day off") he and I and four other team members are heading out to the site to work with a group of about 30 Boy Scouts from Amman who'll be earning an archaeology badge by experiencing a full day of excavation procedures and actually digging, washing pottery, and generally learning about archaeology.

P.S.S. Please forward this to whomever you like!

You can make donations to TeHEP at the TSU shopping website: www.shop.tsu.edu.us.

Donations can be mailed to: TSU; 5600 Eubank NE, Suite 130; Albuquerque, NM USA 87111.

For detailed information about the Tall el-Hammam Excavation Project, visit the official TeHEP website: www.tallelhammam.com.