

RJ Hall

To: RJ Hall**Subject:** FW: TeHEP UPDATE 17 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

17 December 2009

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

IGLOSSARY 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]

Dear TeHEP Friends:

Today was one of those difficult days of winter digging at Tall el-Hammam. Our weekly dig schedule has us in the field from Sunday through Thursday, and we have been in shirtsleeves all week. But today a western wind filled the sky with dust and consistently blew so hard that we regularly had to stop working, close our eyes and turn away. It was not nearly as fun as the other days this week, and we were not a pretty sight when we arrived back at the hotel! And since Dr. Collins twisted his ankle yesterday and did not go out with us to the site, we all had visions of just sneaking away for a field trip to the super Safeway grocery store in Amman!

Yet, the dedicated professionals and committed volunteers that we are, nobody stopped working and we accomplished important dig objectives. We continued to excavate through the destruction ash layer from the time of Abraham in two squares. In two others we continued to expose the 5 meter (16 feet) thick Early Bronze Age mudbrick city wall. In fact, today we exposed over a meter of the outside stone face of that wall, complete with whitish plaster *in situ* at places along the wall. While the upper reaches of the wall were mostly mudbrick, we expect its stone foundation to stand something like 9 feet high.

We also continued a probe down through the stone foundation of the monumental building at the high place in the center of the lower tall. And, finally, we did a surface survey to collect pottery in a field outside the western extreme of the lower city. We collected a wide variety of sherds from across the Bronze Age.

Not a bad day's work from a grumbling, mumbling group of diggers! In fact, we looked so pathetic and wind-battered when we arrived back at the hotel that Dr. Collins told us to forget washing the pottery we found that day and go get cleaned up and relax. Everyone scattered and we haven't seen some of them since!

Thanks so much for your prayers and continued financial support as the dig season continues. This is a labor of love, but it is great to know of the interest and care so many others have in what we are doing. I would like to write more, but my weekend just began! See you next week.

Gary A. Byers, TeHEP Senior Field Archaeologist

P.S. Dr Collins' ankle still hurts, but he is getting around pretty well.



TRENCH LA 28



EBA CITY WALL 5M THICK



LORETTA AND JEFF WORK ON MBA CITY WALL



JUGLET FRAGMENT



PICKWORK BY LOCAL WORKERS

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.