



**Syria**  
Archéologie, art et histoire

**83 | 2006**  
**Hommage à Henri de Contenson**

---

## Henri de Contenson's archaeological fieldwork in the Eastern part of the Jordan Valley: a re-evaluation

Zeidan A. Kafafi

---



### Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/syria/170>  
DOI: 10.4000/syria.170  
ISSN: 2076-8435

### Publisher

IFPO - Institut français du Proche-Orient

### Printed version

Date of publication: 1 January 2006  
Number of pages: 69-82  
ISBN: 9782351590515  
ISSN: 0039-7946

### Electronic reference

Zeidan A. Kafafi, « Henri de Contenson's archaeological fieldwork in the Eastern part of the Jordan Valley: a re-evaluation », *Syria* [Online], 83 | 2006, Online since 01 July 2016, connection on 07 November 2020. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/syria/170> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/syria.170>

---

© Presses IFPO

## HENRI DE CONTENSON'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK IN THE EASTERN PART OF THE JORDAN VALLEY: A RE-EVALUATION \*

Zeidan A. KAFABI  
Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology  
Yarmouk University  
Irbid, Jordan

**Résumé** – Suite à la reprise de travaux à Tell esh-Shuneh esh-Shamaliyyeh (Shuneh Nord) et aux fouilles conduites sur la rive orientale du Jourdain, à Pella, Abu Hamid, Ghassul et sur la rive occidentale à Tell Tsaf, cet article se propose de revoir la périodisation des trois sites de la Vallée du Jourdain, Shuneh, Abu Habil et Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta sondés par H. de Contenson en 1953. Ces établissements, au vu de la céramique et de quelques rares vestiges architecturaux, nous paraissent avoir été occupés pour la première fois à la période chalcolithique et Shuneh Nord l'être resté aussi au Bronze ancien.

**Abstract** – Considering recent work at Tell esh-Shuneh esh-Shamaliyyeh (Shuneh North) and the results of the excavations conducted at Pella, Abu Hamid and Ghassul on the eastern bank, at Tell Tsaf on the western bank of the Jordan River, this article offers a re-evaluation of the periodisation of three sites tested by H. de Contenson in 1953: Tell esh-Shuneh esh-Shamaliyyeh, Abu Habil, Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta. Regarding the ceramics and architectural remains these settlements seem to us to have been occupied for the first time during the chalcolithic period and North Shuneh remaining alive in the EB period as well.

خلاصة – يهدف هذا البحث إلى إعادة تقييم لنتائج الحفريات الأثرية التجريبية التي قام بها هنري دي كونتنسون عام ١٩٥٣م في مواقع تل الشونة الشمالية وأبو هابيل وتل السعيدية التحتا ؛ وجميعها تقع على الضفة الشرقية لنهر الأردن ؛ وذلك اعتمادا على ما نشر حول نتائج الحفريات التي جرت خلال العقود الأخيرة في مواقع تل الشونة الشمالية وطبقة فحل وأبو حامد وتلبيات الغسول وتل تساف. وبعد أن تم إعادة دراسة للمخلفات الأثرية المكتشفة حديثا ومقارنتها مع مانشره دي كونتنسون، خاصة الأواني الفخارية والبقايا المعمارية، تبين بأن المواقع الثلاث المذكورة أعلاه قد سكنت خلال العصر الحجري النحاسي (حوالي ٤٥٠٠-٣٥٠٠ ق.م). علما بأن موقع تل الشونة الشمالية قد شهد استمرارية في السكن خلال العصر البرونزي القديم أي المبكر.

### INTRODUCTION

In 1953 Henri de Contenson and James Mellaart started an archaeological survey in the area extending from the Yarmuk River in the north, to the plains of Moab in the south <sup>1</sup>. The main aim of the survey was to sound and register archaeological sites threatened by demolishing due to the diversion of the Yarmuk River to the Tiberias Lake <sup>2</sup>. In addition to the surveying operations, few sites were sounded, and only three of them, Tell esh-Shuneh, Tell Abu Habil and Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta are located in the eastern side of the Jordan Valley (fig. 1) <sup>3</sup>.

\* Thanks are due to Dr. Geneviève Dollfus, Dr. Yorke Rowan and Dr. Khairieh 'Amr for reading the manuscript, making the necessary remarks and editing the English language, to Mr. Yusef Al-Zu'bi for arranging the plates and to Mr. Ali Omari for drawing the map.

1. CONTENSON 1960a.

2. CONTENSON 2004, p. 177.

3. MELLAART 1962, map.

During the last decades regular excavations have been re-started only at Tell esh-Shuneh, in the meantime, others were undertaken at contemporaneous sites also situated at the eastern side of the Jordan River, such as Tabaqat Fahil (*Pella*), Abu Hamid and Teleilat Ghassul. The results of the excavations conducted at sites located on the western part of the Valley such as Neve Ur, Tell Tsaf and Munhata are of great importance for re-evaluating the material culture published by Contenson.

To study the excavated archaeological objects encountered by Contenson and Mellaart in 1953, we present first a brief discussion about the investigated sites.

#### TELL ESH-SHUNEH ESH-SHAMALIYYEH <sup>4</sup>

Tell esh-Shuneh el-Shamaliyyeh is located in the northern part of the eastern side of the Jordan Valley. It is situated on one of the main routes which connect northern Palestine and Jordan, a fact that probably contributed to its importance. The site overlooks the Wadi el-‘Arab at about 4 km southeast of the confluence of the Yarmuk and the Jordan Rivers, and is part of a large tell ca. 1 km long and 10 m high.

The site was originally surveyed and sounded in 1953 by J. Mellaart and H. de Contenson <sup>5</sup>. The test trench, excavated in three units, was carried down 4 m to bedrock, 19 layers belonging to six levels were recognized. Level I (Layers 19-17) was first dated from the Middle Chalcolithic <sup>6</sup>, but this date has been reconsidered by the excavator and thought to belong to the Early Chalcolithic <sup>7</sup>. Level II (Layers 15-14) was dated from the Late Chalcolithic. Both levels were separated by a sterile layer (Layer 16). Levels III (Layers 13-8), IV (Layers 7-4), and V (found only in Mellaart’s probe trench) were dated from the Early Bronze Ages I, II and III, respectively. Level VI (Layers 3-2) yielded objects of the Medieval Arabic period. This level is located under a disturbed layer (Layer 1) <sup>8</sup>.

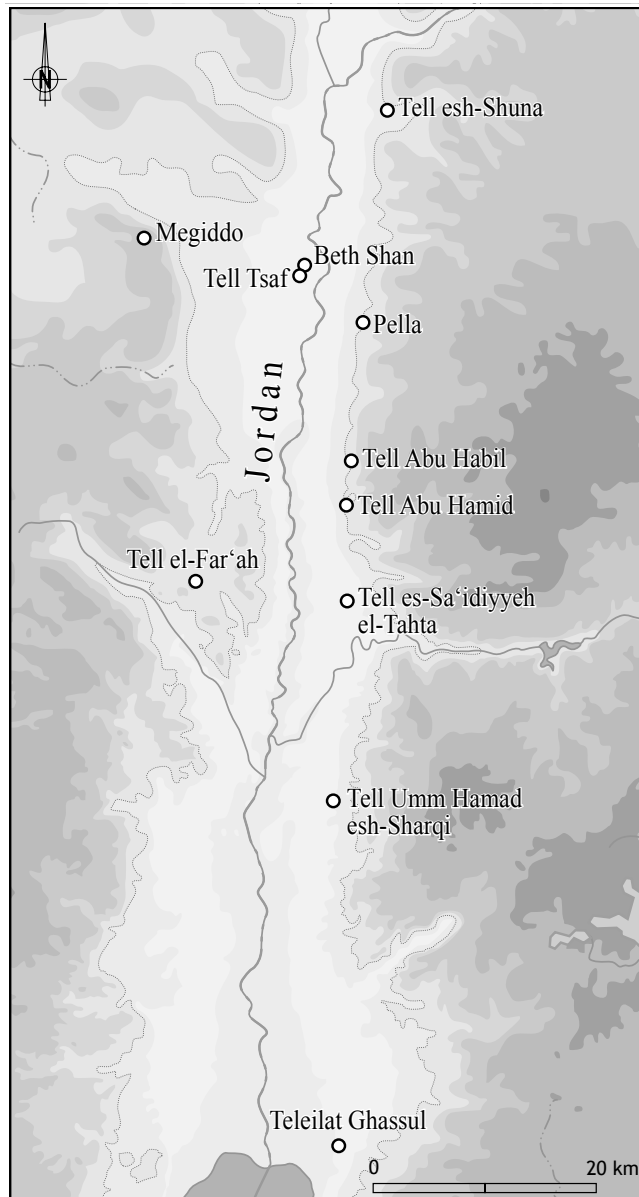


Figure 1 : map showing major IVth millennium sites in the Jordan Valley.

4. Map reference 207224.

5. CONTENSON 1960a, 1960b, 1960c.

6. CONTENSON 1960b, p. 58.

7. CONTENSON 2004, p. 178.

8. CONTENSON 1960b, p. 58.

Contenson noted that level I produced bow-rim jars and connected it with Jericho VIII, Beth Shan Pits and Stratum XVIII, Tell Abu Habil I, Murrabba'at, 'Amuq D, and the upper part of Ras Shamra IV<sup>9</sup>. Level II was said to be contemporary with Beth Shan XVIII-XVI, Megiddo XIX and with Tell el-Far'ah II<sup>10</sup>. It should be noted that, during a visit to the site in 1975 by the Jordan Valley Survey team, no sherds of level I were found<sup>11</sup>. By this time the tell was badly eroded and threatened by human activities.

During the 1980s, Carrie Gustavson-Gaube excavated several test trenches at the site<sup>12</sup>. The results of her work are presented below. Moreover, the site has been re-excavated by G. Philip and D. Baird during the early 1990s of the last century<sup>13</sup>.

#### TELL ABU HABIL<sup>14</sup>

Tell Abu Habil is located south of the Wadi el-Rayyan (el-Yabis). It was first explored by N. Glueck<sup>15</sup>, and later sounded by Mellaart and Contenson in 1953<sup>16</sup>. In 1975 it was again resurveyed by Ibrahim, Sauer and Yassine, whose Neolithic/Chalcolithic pottery sherds and flint tools were studied by myself<sup>17</sup>. Contenson and Mellaart excavated two soundings. The excavated archaeological material was 2 m thick, containing a series of superimposed dwellings pits<sup>18</sup>.

In Trench II (3 x 2 m) bedrock was reached at a depth of ca. 2.5 m, and ten layers belonging to three levels were recognized. Level I (Layers 10-8) corresponds with Tell esh-Shuneh I, Jericho VIII, Beth Shan Pits and Stratum XVIII and Tell el-Far'ah I. It was called by the excavator Middle Chalcolithic<sup>19</sup>. Level II, called Middle Chalcolithic B, was called Ghassulian although no typical Ghassulian elements were found. The loop-handle with splayed attachment found here appears to be a survival from level I<sup>20</sup>. Level III is also related to the Ghassulian Culture, or Middle Chalcolithic B, and Contenson considered it contemporary with level II<sup>21</sup>.

#### TELL ES-SA'IDIYYEH EL-TAHTA<sup>22</sup>

During the 1953 survey conducted by J. Mellaart and H. de Contenson in the Yarmuk and the Jordan valleys, four sites in the Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh vicinity were identified and named as : Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh esh-Sharqi, Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Gharbi, Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh esh-Shemali and Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta. The last site is situated to the west of Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Gharbi on a terrace among the "qattar hills" overlooking the Jordan River. The site has been assigned to the Late Chalcolithic and described as a Ghassulian site<sup>23</sup>. However, Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta was first visited by N. Glueck who collected pottery sherds with herringbone incisions<sup>24</sup>. This site was later sounded by Mellaart and Contenson who related the material excavated to the Chalcolithic period<sup>25</sup>.

9. CONTENSON 1960a, p. 20 ; 1960b, p. 69-75.

10. CONTENSON 1960a, p. 25.

11. IBRAHIM *et alii* 1976, p. 49.

12. GAUBE 1985; 1986.

13. BAIRD & PHILIP 1992; PHILIP & BAIRD 1993.

14. Map reference 20451972.

15. GLUECK 1951, p. 275-276.

16. CONTENSON 1960a, p. 31-49.

17. KAFABI 1982.

18. CONTENSON 2004, p. 177.

19. CONTENSON 1960a, p. 35.

20. CONTENSON 1960a, p. 37.

21. CONTENSON 1960a, p. 44.

22. Map reference 20461861.

23. CONTENSON 1964, p. 37.

24. GLUECK 1951, pl. 149.

25. CONTENSON 1960a, p. 56; 1960b.

Five layers were recognized, of which Layers 5 and 4 were found in a pit, while Layers 3, 2 and 1 covered the whole excavated area of the site<sup>26</sup>. According to the excavators, the excavated pottery sherds and flint tools agree to date this settlement to the Middle and Late Chalcolithic periods (Ghassulian). This puts it on the same horizon as Tell esh-Shuneh II and Tell Abu Habil II-III levels<sup>27</sup>. Unfortunately, the excavator did not publish the excavated archaeological material according to their stratigraphic sequences.

Period	Tell esh-Shuneh	Tell Abu Habil	Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta
Early Chalcolithic / Middle Chalcolithic	Level I	Level I	
Middle Chalcolithic B		Level II + III (Ghassulian)	Ghassulian
Late Chalcolithic	Level II		Ghassulian
Early Bronze Age I	Level III		
Early Bronze Age II	Level IV		
Early Bronze Age III	Level V		
Islamic (Ayyubid / Mamluk)	Level VI		

#### CHRONOLOGY

The excavators of the sites Tell esh-Shuneh, Tell Abu Habil and Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta based their dating on the study of the excavated pottery. A parallel study of the recognized forms has been done. Unfortunately, not a single C<sup>14</sup> date has been obtained from the three sites at that time as this scientific dating method was not in common use by archaeologists working in the Levant during the 1950s and 1960s.

Period	Contenson 1953	Gustavson-Gaube 1984-1985	Philip and Baird 1991-1992
Early Bronze Age III	Shuneh V		
Early Bronze Age II	Shuneh IV		
Early Bronze Age I	Shuneh III Curvilinear structures	Phase III Early EBI	Area A: Loci 73, 23 Area D: Locus 66 = pit Locus 42 = curvilinear wall
Late Chalcolithic	Shuneh II Ghassulian+Esdraelon Red-burnished Ware Rectilinear Structures	Phase II Chalco./Esdraelon	Area D, Locus 93 = mudbrick platform
Middle Chalcolithic	Gap (Layer 16)		
Early Chalcolithic	Shuneh I (PNB)		
Late Neolithic / Chalcolithic		Phase I Chalco./PNB-related	
Late Neolithic			

Figure 2 : chronology of Tell esh-Shuneh esh-Shamaliyyeh as suggested by the excavators.

26. CONTENSON 1960a, p. 49-50.

27. CONTENSON 1960a, p. 56-57.

During the last decades several archaeological excavations which produced levels dated from the VIth, Vth and IVth millennium BC have been conducted in the Jordan Valley. Based on the results of these excavations Y. Garfinkel<sup>28</sup> proposed three different sub-phases to the Chalcolithic: Early, Middle and Late. The phases are correlated with a number of sites and different fabrics. The Early Chalcolithic includes Jericho VIII/PNB and Wadi Rabah; the Middle Chalcolithic comprises Tell Beth Shan XVIII, Tell Tsaf, the lower levels at Teleilat Ghassul and the Qatifian Culture and the Late Chalcolithic contains the upper level at Ghassul, the Beersheba sites, ossuary burial caves in the coastal plain, the Golan Heights and the Hula Valley cultures<sup>29</sup>. However, his understanding of the term Chalcolithic seems to be different than those offered until the end of the 1950s<sup>30</sup>, which is as the following:

Term	Wright 1937; Albright 1949, Glueck 1951 and Contenson 1960a	Garfinkel 1999
Late Chalcolithic	Esdraeolon (Gray Burnished Ware)	Ghassul E-A Beer Sheba'
Middle Chalcolithic	Ghassul-Beer Sheba' Beth Shan XVIII	Beth Shan XVIII Ware Qatifian Ware Tel Tsaf Tell esh-Shuneh 19-17, Tell Abu Habil, Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta, Ghassul Phases I-F
Early Chalcolithic	Yarmukian Jericho PNB/VIII	Jericho PNB/VIII Wadi Rabah

E. Braun<sup>31</sup> denied considering Beth Shan ware as a truly ware and to be used as an indicator for the Middle Chalcolithic as explained by Garfinkel. In addition, he declared that the term Middle Chalcolithic used by Garfinkel is not acceptable<sup>32</sup>. To define, the Beth Shan XVIII pottery assemblage was encountered in the basal levels of the tell and the pits excavated under it<sup>33</sup>. This pottery assemblage has been studied by Y. Garfinkel and he described it as all handmade, with a finish of poor quality compared to the Wadi Rabah pottery and decorated with applied and red/brownish paintings<sup>34</sup>. In fact, it is clear that Beth Shan XVIII includes a mixture of wares. For example, pottery sherds related to the Ghrubba ware excavated at Abu Thawwab<sup>35</sup> are identical with those published by Y. Garfinkel from both Beth Shan XVIII and Tell Tsaf<sup>36</sup>. This remark invites us to raise the question: is the Beth Shan XVIII pottery assemblage, as identified by Garfinkel, identical with the Ghrubba clay vessels industry?

The published pottery vessels from the three sites under discussion are dated from the Middle Chalcolithic by Y. Garfinkel<sup>37</sup>. However, it should be mentioned that these sites are located in the middle and northern parts of the Jordan Valley. In this area, the Tell Abu Hamid site is the only site to produce a stratigraphical sequence from the late VIth millennium to the middle IVth millennium BC which was supported by C<sup>14</sup> dates<sup>38</sup>. It is very much obvious that Abu Hamid produced three different pottery assemblages, the earliest named as post-Yarmukian (lower levels), Wadi Rabah (middle levels)

28. GARFINKEL 1999.

29. GARFINKEL 1999, p. 104.

30. WRIGHT 1937; CONTENSON 1960a.

31. BRAUN 2004, p. 39-41.

32. BRAUN 2004, p. 41.

33. FITZGERALD 1934; 1935.

34. GARFINKEL 1999, p. 153-188.

35. KAFABI 1998.

36. GARFINKEL 1999: photos 96-97; fig. 114.

37. GARFINKEL 1999.

38. LOVELL 2001.

and the Ghassulian (upper levels)<sup>39</sup>. Based on a parallel morphological study we think that the majority of the published pottery sherds from Tell esh-Shuneh North, Abu Habil and Tell es-Sa‘idiyyeh el-Tahta are closer in date to the excavated pottery assemblage from Abu Hamid upper levels rather than to the ones of the middle or the lower levels.

Using the terms Early, Middle and Late for the Chalcolithic period seems a misleading one and more stratified pottery assemblages are still necessary to reach a sub-division of the Chalcolithic period<sup>40</sup>. However, in my opinion, the Chalcolithic term should not exceed the pottery assemblages attributed to the Ghassulian/Beer Sheba’ culture. Though scholars, such as S. Kerner<sup>41</sup> and Y. Garfinkel<sup>42</sup>, agree upon using the term Early Chalcolithic for the Wadi Rabah and Jericho PNB/VIII pottery assemblages, I would argue that the archaeological remains attributed to those pottery assemblages reflect in several ways a development from the preceding Pottery Neolithic assemblages. This might enforce our claim that scholars cannot decide on a sharp line which separates between the Late Neolithic and the beginning of the Chalcolithic. Several sites (Pella, Abu Hamid and Ghassul) showed a continuation and succession of occupation from the Late Pottery Neolithic through the Chalcolithic.

## POTTERY

### *Tell esh-Shuneh Pottery*

In order to ascribe a date for level I, other than an “Early” or “Middle Chalcolithic”, it is essential to take a closer look at the material.

The pottery vessels from level I at Tell esh-Shuneh are handmade. The ware is crude and poorly fired and small inclusions are found; red slip or paint is used for decoration. One rim sherd in the collection is slightly burnished, while another has a red burnished slip covering the entire surface. Thumb intended bands or straight horizontal incisions made with fingernail are also found.

Very few forms were distinguished within the sherds found in level I, but they include cups, bowls, hole-mouth jars, straight-necked jars and jars with swelling neck (bow-rim). Handles are large loop-handles with elongated attachment. They are occasionally decorated with painted vertical bands of red paint. Lug handles are also found. Bases are flat, with either a sharp join at the base and angular sharp, or with a smooth, curving join. They are sometimes decorated with a red slip outside, or a red burnished inside and outside; painted red bands or a white slip on the outer surface occurs<sup>43</sup>.

Parallels for these types have been found at Beth Shan Pits and Stratum XVIII<sup>44</sup>, Tell el-Far‘ah<sup>45</sup>, Jericho VIII<sup>46</sup> and Tell Abu Habil<sup>47</sup>. Contenson reported that the earliest phase of occupation at Tell esh-Shuneh is related to the Early Chalcolithic (Layers 19-17) which yielded pottery sherds parallel to those excavated at Jericho VIII/PNB<sup>48</sup>. He added that a gap of occupation (Layer 16) followed and separated it from the Late Chalcolithic phase (Layers 15-14)<sup>49</sup>.

In addition to the published information by Contenson, it has already been published that the excavations conducted by James Mellaart near the western edge of Tell esh-Shuneh did not show any

39. DOLLFUS & KAFABI 1993.

40. DOLLFUS & KAFABI 2001.

41. KERNER 2001, p. 54, Table 3.9.

42. GARFINKEL 1999.

43. CONTENTSON 1960a, p. 16.

44. FITZGERALD 1934; 1935.

45. DE VAUX 1947; 1948; 1955; 1961.

46. DROOP 1935; BEN DOR 1936.

47. CONTENTSON 1960a.

48. CONTENTSON 1960b.

49. CONTENTSON 1960b.

archaeological evidence earlier than the EBI<sup>50</sup>. Carrie Gustavson-Gaube who resumed the excavations in 1984 and 1985 at Tell esh-Shuneh came to the same conclusion as Contenson did. She connected the earlier phase of occupation with rectilinear multi-room structures and dated it from the PNB/Chalcolithic period. This, according to her, was developed into Early Bronze Age I<sup>51</sup>. It must be noted that the excavated areas by Gustavson-Gaube (5 m x 5 m) and Mellaart (undecided) were too small to come to a final conclusion.

### *Abu Habil Pottery*

Contenson's use of the terms Early Chalcolithic or "Yarmukian" for Megiddo XX, part of Tell el-Far'ah North I, Mugharet Abu Usba' and parts of Jericho IX and VIII<sup>52</sup> is no longer acceptable, in light of the Munhata, Pella, Abu Hamid and Teleilat Ghassul recent excavations.

The pottery from levels I and II is similar to that found in level I at Tell esh-Shuneh. The ware is coarse, with small mineral inclusions<sup>53</sup>. It is handmade, using the technique of coil construction. Decorations include thumb impressions and red slips. Very few forms occur in level I; they include bowls with a band of red paint over and inside the rim, hole-mouth jars, jars with a swelling neck (bow-rim), and pot-stands. Bases are either flat or concave. Some of the flat bases have mat impressions. Parallels for these forms occur at Tell esh-Shuneh I, Beth Shan Pits and Stratum XVIII, and Jericho VIII<sup>54</sup>.

Level II produced only bowls and jars. The bowls are painted with red paint around the rim, while the jars are hole-mouth jars or jars with short, everted necks. These can be paralleled with examples from Megiddo XX-XIX, Tell Fendi, Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta, Tell el-Far'ah I, Jericho VIII and Murabba'at<sup>55</sup>.

### *Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta Pottery*

As for Tell esh-Shuneh and Tell Abu Habil, the pottery vessels were handmade. Bowls, jars and *pithoi* are the main forms recognized in the excavated pottery assemblage. Some of the published sherds<sup>56</sup> may also have been used as cups. This is based on the parallel study of the published pottery from Tell esh-Shuneh and Tell Abu Habil. Moreover, the published bowls with a sharp lip<sup>57</sup> are typical with those called V-shaped bowls sometimes with a red painted band on the rim. This form is typical to those found at Abu Hamid in the upper levels (ca. 4200-3800)<sup>58</sup>.

### POTTERY FORMS

Several forms of clay pots were recognized amongst the assemblages excavated at the three sites under study. For example, the sites of Tell esh-Shuneh and es-Sa'idiyyeh yielded small cups (n° 1-3) and V-shaped bowls (n° 4-6) with a red-painted band on the rim similar to those excavated at Teleilat Ghassul and dated from the Late Chalcolithic<sup>59</sup>. In addition, parallel cups and V-shaped bowls were encountered at Abu Hamid/upper levels<sup>60</sup>.

50. LEONARD 1992.

51. GUSTAVSON-GAUBE 1985; 1986.

52. CONTENSON 1960a, p. 45.

53. CONTENSON 1960a, p. 33.

54. CONTENSON 1960a, p. 34.

55. CONTENSON 1960a, p. 37.

56. CONTENSON 1960a, fig. 32: 7 and 8.

57. CONTENSON 1960a, fig. 32: 14, 17.

58. LOVELL *et alii* 2004, p. 264.

59. LOVELL 2001, p. 34.

60. ALI 2005, fig. 33, 45.



During the Jordan Valley Survey in 1975, the collected pottery sherds assemblage from Abu Habil included spoons, V-Shaped bowls and jars and were considered to be parallel to the Jericho PNB/VIII and the Chalcolithic period<sup>61</sup>. However, it should be noted that based on a parallel study with those excavated in stratigraphical contexts such as Abu Hamid, they should be dated from the Late Chalcolithic period.

The most dominant form of the published pottery pots from the three sites published by Contenson is the jar type. Different forms were recognized and may be classified as the followings:

1. Bow-rim Jars (no. 7-12): two types of jar belonging to this form were published by Contenson from the three sounded sites and are as follows:
  - a. High-necked bow-rim jars (nos. 7-10);
  - b. Short-necked bow-rim jars (nos. 11-12).
2. Hole-mouth jars (no. 13-22):
  - a. Simple hole-mouth jars (no. 13-15);
  - b. Hole-mouth with a red painted band on the rim (no. 16-20);
  - c. Hole-mouth jars with a red paint and rope-moldings (no. 21);
  - d. Hole-mouth jars with fingernail impressions (no. 22).
3. Globular jars (no. 23).
4. Necked-Jars (no. 24-25).
5. *Pithoi*/Large Jars (no. 26-28).

#### ARCHITECTURE

The published information from Tell esh-Shuneh esh-Shamaliyyeh discussing the excavated architectural remains is scanty (**fig. 3**). It includes a pit (Layer 19) dug into the virgin soil, which is dated from the Middle Chalcolithic and represents the earliest occupation of the site and a fragmentary wall dated from the Late Chalcolithic (Layer 14)<sup>62</sup>. In the area located very close to the opening of the pit, there was a hearth measuring about 75 cm in diameter and walls made of round pebbles coated with clay. Additionally, a platform built of large flat unfired pebbles was found<sup>63</sup>. This type of structure reminds us of what has been uncovered in the upper levels at Tell Abu Hamid, in the middle of the Jordan Valley and dated from the IVth millennium<sup>64</sup>.

Contenson also published a fragmentary wall and a platform dated from the Early Bronze Age I and II period (Layers 13 and 7) which were uncovered at Tell esh-Shuneh esh-Shamaliyyeh<sup>65</sup>. Several walls and floors were also uncovered at Tell esh-Shuneh esh-Shamaliyyeh during the archaeological excavations conducted

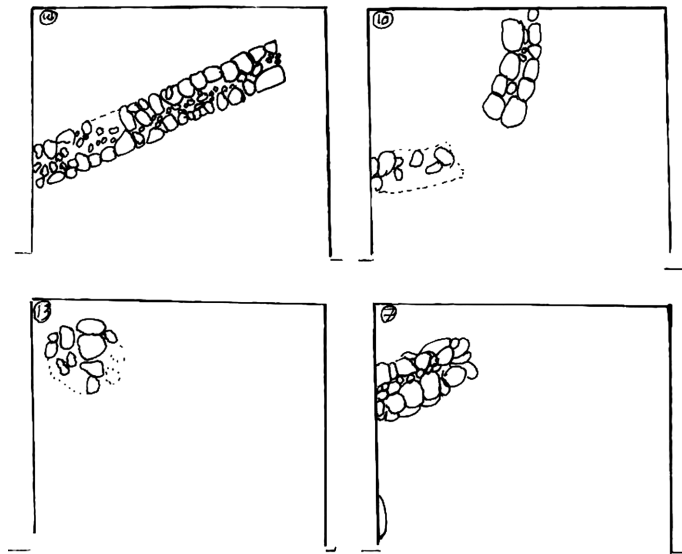


Figure 3 : Chalcolithic architectural remains excavated at Tell esh-Shuneh (after CONTENSON 1960a: Fig. 18).

61. KAFABI 1982, fig. 10-12.

62. CONTENSON 1960a, p. 13, 20; fig. 18.

63. CONTENSON 1960a, p. 14.

64. DOLLFUS & KAFABI 1988; DOLLFUS *et alii* 1988.

65. CONTENSON 1960a, p. 25-28.

by C. Gustavson-Gaube<sup>66</sup> and G. Philip and D. Baird<sup>67</sup>. Unfortunately, due to the small size of the excavated area at Tell Abu Habil, only very little can be said about the architectural remains from the site. However, a pit dug into the virgin soil and filled up with ashes belonging to level I has been encountered. In addition, a very thick hard floor related to level III was reported<sup>68</sup>.

### DISCUSSION

First it has to be noted that after the archaeological fieldwork conducted by Contenson and Mellaart in 1953, archaeological excavations resumed at the site of Tell esh-Shuneh esh-Shamaliyyeh alone. Thus, it is obvious that our discussion is mainly focused on this site; in the meanwhile, we have only presented the results of the soundings of the other two sites, Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta and Abu Habil. However, the recent studies published from other sites such as Pella, Abu Hamid, Teleilat Ghassul and Tell Tsaf helped in the re-evaluation process of the published material from those sites<sup>69</sup>. Based on the parallel study presented above, it has to be noted that the three sites were first established during the Chalcolithic period (the Contenson Late Chalcolithic) and Tell esh-Shuneh esh-Shamaliyyeh continued to be occupied during the Early Bronze Age I.

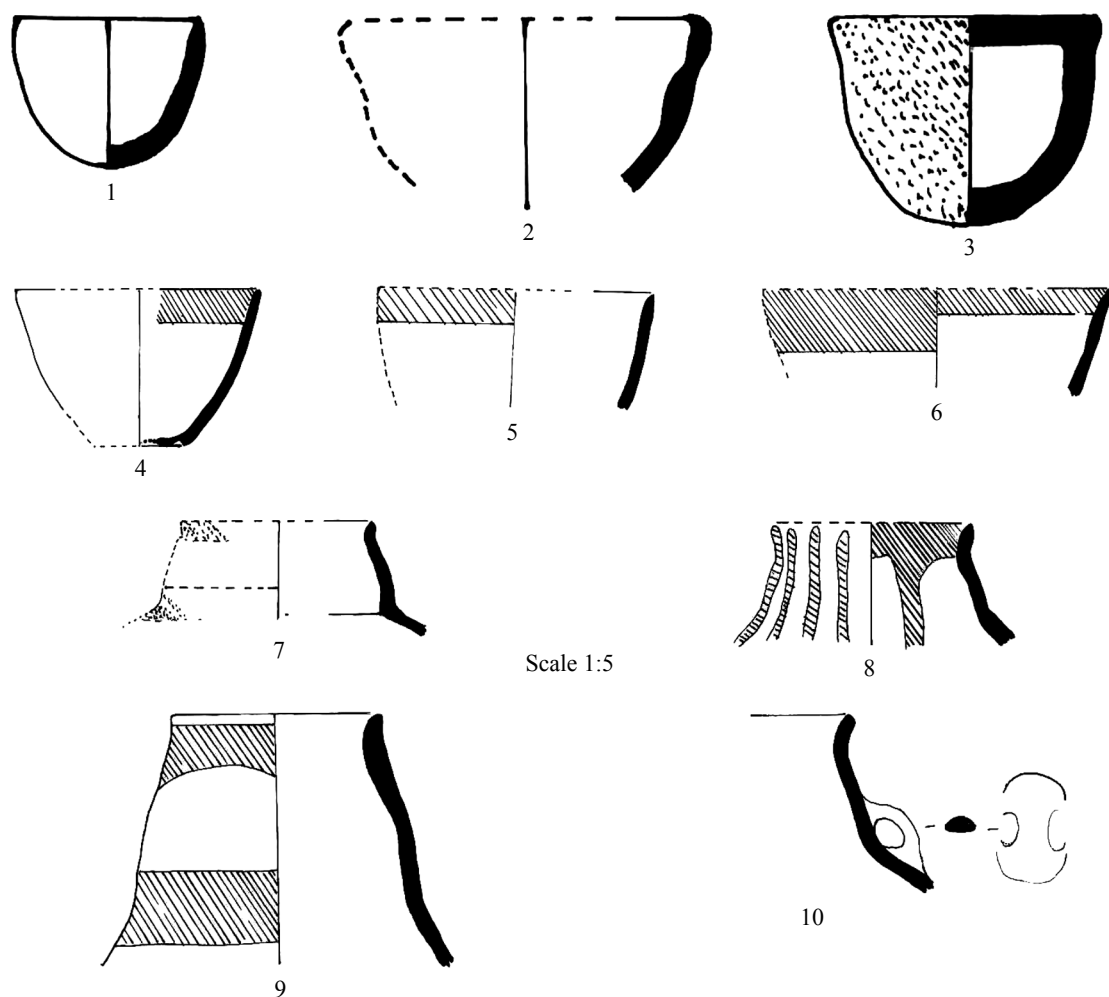
Henri Contenson has to be greatly thanked for his work at the three studied sites for such a work opened doors for more studies of the Chalcolithic period in the south of the Levant. He is one of the pioneers in studying the early village communities in the Levant.

66. GUSTAVSON-GAUBE 1985; 1986.

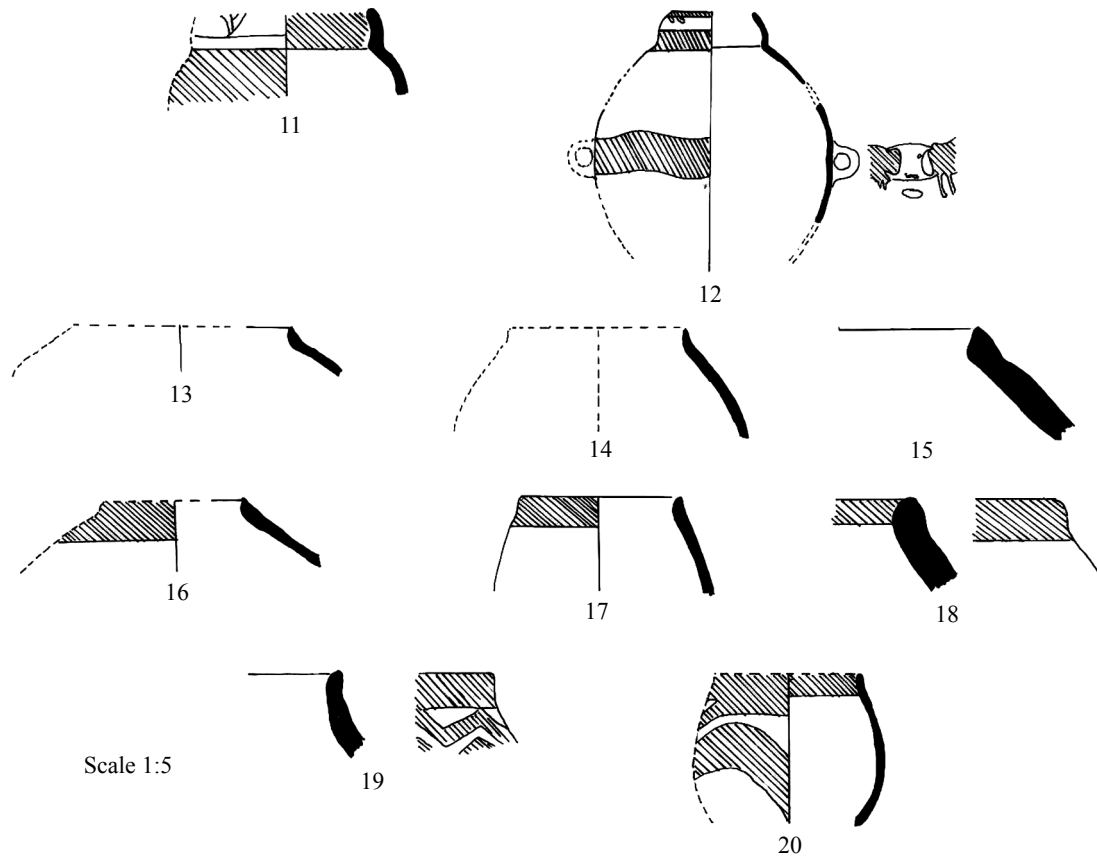
67. BAIRD & PHILIP 1992; PHILIP & BAIRD 1993.

68. CONTENSON 1960a, p. 32.

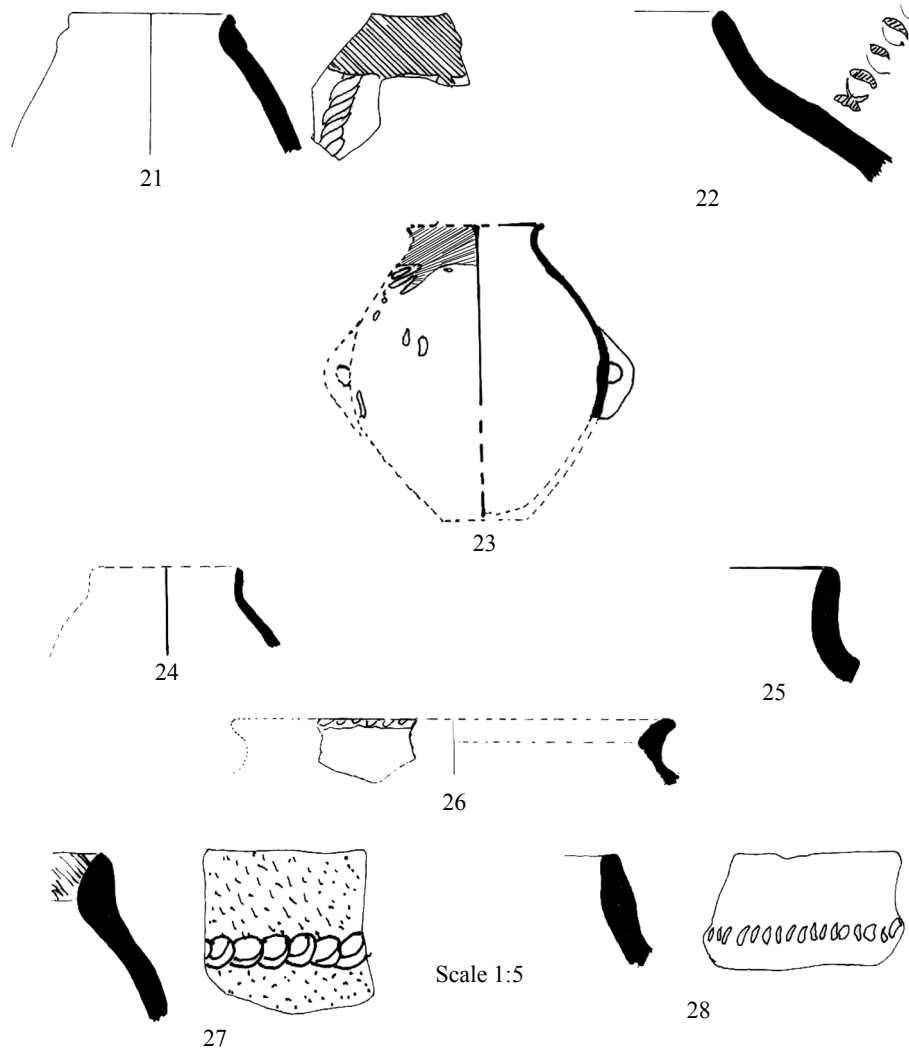
69. MASSON *et alii* 1934 ; GOPHNA & SADEH 1989 ; LOVELL 2001 ; LOVELL *et alii* 2004 ; ALI 2005.



Number	Site	Form	Parallels
1	Tell esh-Shuneh	Cup/small bowl	Tell el-Mafjar (Leonard 1992: Pl. 2:12).
2	Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta	Cup/small bowl	Beth-Shan XVIII (Garfinkel 1999: Fig. 94:13).
3	Tell esh-Shuneh	Cup/small bowl	Abu Hamid, Upper levels (unpublished). Tell Tsaf (Gophna and Sadeh 1989: Fig. 9:4).
4	Tell esh-Shuneh	V-shaped bowl	Abu Hamid (1988: Fig. 8.1).
5	Tell Abu Habil	V-shaped bowl	Abu Hamid (1988: Fig. 8.1).
6	Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta	V-shaped bowl	Ghassul (Lovell 2001: fig. 4:31).
7	Tell Abu Habil	High-necked bow-rim jar	Tell esh-Shuneh North (Baird & Philip 1994: Fig. 9:4). Tell Beth Shan XVIII (Garfinkel 1999: Fig. 108:12).
8	Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta	High-necked bow-rim jar	Abu Hamid, Upper levels (Dollfus <i>et al.</i> 1988: Fig. 9:3?).
9	Tell esh-Shuneh	High-necked bow-rim jar	Tell 'Ali Ib (Garfinkel 1999: Fig. 108:1).
10	Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta	High-necked bow-rim jar	No parallels



Number	Site	Form	Parallels
11	Tell Abu Habil	Short necked bow-rim jar	Tell Tsaf (Gophna & Sadeh 1989: Fig. 11:2). Tell esh-Shuneh (Contenson 1960a).
12	Tell esh-Shuneh	Short necked bow-rim jar	Tell Abu Habil (Contenson 1960a). Tell 'Ali Ib (Garfinkel 1999: Fig. 108:1?).
13	Tell Abu Habil	Simple hole-mouth jar	Abu Hamid, Upper levels (Dollfus <i>et al.</i> 1988: Fig. 9).
14	Tell Abu Habil	Simple hole-mouth jar	Abu Hamid, Upper levels (Dollfus <i>et al.</i> 1988: Fig. 9).
15	Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta	Simple hole-mouth jar	Tell Tsaf (Gophna & Sadeh 1989: Fig. 11:13).
16	Tell Abu Habil	Hole-mouth jar with a red band of paint on the rim	Abu Hamid, Upper levels (unpublished). Tell 'Ali Ib (Garfinkel 1999: Fig. 106:7).
17	Tell esh-Shuneh	Hole-mouth jar with a red band of paint on the rim	Abu Hamid, Upper levels (unpublished). Tell 'Ali Ib (Garfinkel 1999: Fig. 106:7).
18	Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta	Hole-mouth jar with a red band of paint on the rim	Abu Hamid, Upper levels (unpublished). Tell 'Ali Ib (Garfinkel 1999: Fig. 106:7).
19	Tell esh-Shuneh	Hole-mouth jar with red painted decoration	Tell esh-Shuneh North (Gustavson-Gaube 1986: Fig. 48:A).
20	Tell Abu Habil	Hole-mouth jar with red painted decoration	Tell 'Ali Ib (Garfinkel 1999: Fig. 106:3).



Number	Site	Form	Parallels
21	Tell esh-Shunch	Hole-mouth jar with applied and red painted decoration	Tell 'Ali Ib (Garfinkel 1999: Fig. 106:4).
22	Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta	Hole-mouth jar with incised decoration	Ghassul (Mallon <i>et al.</i> 1934).
23	Tell Abu Habil	Globular jar with red painted decoration	Abu Hamid, Upper levels (Dollfus <i>et al.</i> 1988: Fig. 10:13).
24	Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta	Necked jar	Abu Hamid, Upper levels (Dollfus & Kafabi 1988). Tell Ghassul, late Chalcolithic (Lovell 2001).
25	Tell esh-Shunch	Necked jar	Ghassul, late Chalcolithic (Lovell 2001).
26	Tell Abu Habil	<i>Pithos</i> /large jar	Abu Hamid, Upper levels (Dollfus <i>et al.</i> 1988: Fig. 10).
27	Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta	<i>Pithos</i> /large jar	Tell Beth Shan XVIII (Fitzgerald 1935: Pl. I:26).
28	Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh el-Tahta	<i>Pithos</i> /large jar	Abu Hamid, Upper levels (Dollfus <i>et al.</i> 1988: Fig. 10).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ALI (N.)  
2005 *The Development of Pottery Technology from the Late Sixth to the Fifth Millennium BC in Northern Jordan. Ethno- and archaeological Studies : Abu Hamid as a Key Site*, BAR International Series 1422, Oxford.
- BAIRD (D.) & G. PHILIP  
1992 "Preliminary Report on the First (1991) Season of Excavations at Tell esh-Shuna North", *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*, 31, p. 461-480.  
1994 "Preliminary Report on the Third (1993) Season of Excavations at Tell esh-Shuna North", *Levant*, 26, p. 111-133.
- BEN-DOR (I.)  
1936 "Pottery of the Middle and Late Neolithic Periods", dans J. GARSTANG, I. BEN-DOR & G.M. FITZGERALD éd., *Jericho: City and Necropolis. Report for the Sixth and Concluding Season 1936*, II, *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, XXII.
- BRAUN (E.)  
2004 *Early Beth Shan (Strata XIX-XIII): G. M. Fitzgerald's deep cut on the Tell*, Philadelphie, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University Museum Monograph 121.
- CONTENSON (H. de)  
1960a "Three Soundings in the Jordan Valley", *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*, 4-5, p. 12-99.  
1960b "La chronologie du niveau le plus ancien de Tell esh-Shuna (Jordanie)", *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth*, 57, p. 55-77.  
1960c "Tell esh-Shunah", *Revue Biblique*, 68, p. 546-556.  
1964 "The 1953 Survey in the Yarmuk and Jordan Valleys", *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*, 8-9, p. 30-47.  
2004 *50 ans des tessons. Propos sur l'Archéologie Palestinienne*, Paris.
- DOLLFUS (G.) & Z. KAFAFI  
1988 *Abu Hamid, village du IV<sup>e</sup> millénaire de la vallée du Jourdain*, Amman, Economic Press.  
1993 "Recent Researches at Abu Hamid", *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*, 27, p. 241-262.  
2001 "Jordan in the Fourth Millennium", dans F. KHRAYSHEH éd., *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan*, VII, Amman, Department of Antiquities of Jordan, p. 163-172.
- DOLLFUS (G.) et alii  
1988 "Abu Hamid, an Early Fourth Millennium Site in the Jordan Valley", in A. N. GARRARD & H.-G. GEBEL éd., *The Prehistory of Jordan. The State of Research in 1986*, Part II, BAR International Series 396 (II), Oxford, p. 567-601.
- DROOP (J. P.)  
1935 "The Pottery of the Chalcolithic and Neolithic Levels", dans J. GARSTANG, J. P. DROOP & J. CROWFOOT éd., *Jericho : City and Necropolis, Fifth Report, Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, XXII, p. 169-173.
- FITZGERALD (G.)  
1934 "Excavations at Beth-Shan in 1933", *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*, 66, p. 123-134.  
1935 "The Earliest Pottery of Beth-Shan", *Museum Journal*, 24, p. 5-7.
- GARFINKEL (Y.)  
1999 *Neolithic and Chalcolithic Pottery of the Southern Levant*, Jerusalem, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Qedem, Monographs of the Institute of Archaeology, 39.
- GLUECK (N.)  
1951 "Exploration in Eastern Palestine, Part I-II", *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 25-28.
- GOPHNA (R.) & S. SADEH  
1989 "Excavations at Tell Tsaf: An Early Chalcolithic Site in the Jordan Valley", *Tel Aviv*, 15/16, p. 3-36.
- GUSTAVSON-GAUBE (K.)  
1985 "Tell Esh-Shuna North 1984: A Preliminary Report", *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*, 29, p. 43-87.  
1986 "Tell Esh-Shuna North 1985: A Preliminary Report", *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*, 30, p. 65-114.
- IBRAHIM (M.), J. SAUER & K. YASSINE  
1976 "The East Jordan Valley Survey, 1975", *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 222, p. 41-67.
- KAFAFI (Z.)  
1982 *The Neolithic of Jordan (East Bank)*, Unpublished Ph. D. submitted to the Freie Universität Berlin.  
1998 "Late Neolithic in Jordan", dans D. O. HENRY éd., *The Prehistoric Archaeology of Jordan*, British Archaeological Reports, 705, Oxford, p. 127-138.
- KERNER (S.)  
2001 *Das Chalkolithikum in Jordanien. Die Entwicklung handwerklicher Spezialisierung im 6. bis 4. vorchristl. Jts. in der südlichen Levant*, Rahden, Verlag Marie Leidorf.
- LEONARD (A.)  
1992 "The Jordan Valley Survey, 1953: Some Unpublished Soundings conducted by James Mellaart", *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 50.

- LOVELL (J. L.)  
2001 *The Late Neolithic and Chalcolithic Periods in the Southern Levant. New Data from the Site of Teleilat Ghassul, Jordan*, Monographs of the Sydney University, Teleilat Ghassul Project 1, BAR International Series 974, Oxford.
- LOVELL (J. L.), G. DOLLFUS & Z. KAFABI.  
2004 "The Middle Phases at Abu Hamid", dans F. AL-KHRAYSHEH éd., *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan*, VIII, Amman, Department of Antiquities of Jordan, p. 263-275.
- MALLON (A.), R. KOEPEL & R. NEUVILLE  
1934 *Teleilat Ghassul I. Compte rendu des fouilles de l'Institut Pontifical 1929-32*, Rome, Biblical Institute Press.
- MELLAART (J.)  
1962 "Preliminary Report of the Archaeological Survey in the Yarmuk and Jordan Valley for the Point Four Irrigation Scheme", *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*, 6-7, p. 126-158.
- PHILIP (G.) & D. BAIRD  
1993 "Preliminary Report on the Second (1992) Season of Excavations at Tell esh-Shuna North", *Levant*, 25, p. 13-36 (with contribution by D. Rowan and T. Holden).
- VAUX (R. de)  
1947 "La première campagne de fouilles à Tell el-Far'ah, près Naplouse. Rapport Préliminaire", *Revue Biblique*, 54, p. 394-433.  
1948 "La seconde campagne de fouilles à Tell el-Far'ah, près Naplouse. Rapport Préliminaire", *Revue Biblique*, 55, p. 544-580.  
1955 "Les Fouilles de Tell el-Far'ah, près Naplouse. Cinquième Campagne, Rapport Préliminaire", *Revue Biblique*, 62, p. 541-589.  
1961 "Les Fouilles de Tell el-Far'ah. Rapport Préliminaire sur les 7<sup>e</sup>, 8<sup>e</sup>, 9<sup>e</sup> Campagnes, 1958-1960", *Revue Biblique*, 68, p. 557-592.
- WRIGHT (G. E.)  
1937 *The Pottery of Palestine from the Earliest Times to the End of the Early Bronze Age*, New Haven, American Schools of Oriental Research.