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PhD enquiry: satellite recharge estimates in built-up catchments (MSc, Birzeit University)

Dear Professor Kessler,

I am completing an MSc in Water Engineering at Birzeit University in Palestine, and I would like to ask whether you plan to take a PhD student in 2027.

Your 2025 paper on estimating groundwater recharge from Sentinel-1 soil moisture tested the method in two catchments with very little building. In the catchment near Nablus where I did my thesis, the built-up share in my land-cover maps rose from 8% to 15% between 2010 and 2024. I wonder whether the soil-moisture signal still tracks recharge when so much of the ground is sealed.

For my thesis I built a monthly water-balance model of that catchment and calibrated it against records from 11 wells (2005–2024). I processed Sentinel-1 and Landsat images in Python and QGIS, and my GPA is 3.8 out of 4. The question I would like to work on is how sealed surfaces bias satellite-based recharge estimates, tested against well data in two or three catchments.

I am applying for a doctoral scholarship this autumn and could start in September 2027. My CV and a one-page thesis summary are attached.

Would you be open to considering a student with this background for your group?

Best regards,

Rami Odeh

WRITTEN WITH HUMANPROSE