

## Morag M. Kersel

Dividing her time between Amman and Jerusalem during 2013–2014, **Morag Kersel** used some of her research leave to work on the survey material, architectural plans, and maps from five seasons at Marj Rabba, part of the Galilee Prehistory Project (GPP), directed by Yorke Rowan. Analysis of the material stored in Jerusalem and the coordination of efforts on the comprehensive publication of the site was the focus of the collaborative effort with Yorke Rowan to publish the results of excavation and survey at Marj Rabba. During the year co-authored articles on aspects of Marj Rabba appeared in the *Journal of Archaeological Science* (ground-penetrating radar), *Paléorient* (animal management strategies during the Chalcolithic), and in the edited volume *Material Culture Matters: Essays on Archaeology in the Southern Levant in Honor of Seymour Gitin* (a summary of the first three seasons of excavation).

With Yorke Rowan, she presented the results of the 2013 field season at Marj Rabba at the annual meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research in November. She mentored Anneliese Marty, University of Chicago undergraduate and Metcalf Scholarship intern, who presented a poster on the results of her research into the paleoethnobotanical remains from Marj Rabba at the American Schools of Oriental Research in November 2013.

In the fall of 2013 Morag was a discussant in a symposium at the Royal Ontario Museum, *Robbing the Cradle of Civilization: Preserving the Art and Archaeology of Mesopotamia*, organized by Clemens Reichel. The symposium examined, assessed, and discussed the state of cultural-heritage protection in the ten years since the ransacking of the Iraq Museum in the aftermath of the coalition forces invasion of Iraq. Together with Professor Patty Gerstenblith, Morag organized and participated in *Restitution and Repatriation: The Return of Cultural Objects*, at the Center for Art, Museum, and Cultural Heritage Law, DePaul University. This symposium addressed the underlying legal, ethical, and moral reasons, implications, and policies behind the return of cultural objects. In the spring of 2014 Morag was an invited participant in *Embedded! Archaeologists and Anthropologists in Modern Landscapes of Conflict*, a workshop held at the Middle East Studies Center, Brown University. She presented a paper on her ongoing research into law and archaeology in the Eastern Mediterranean.

During her research leave in Amman, supported by a grant from the American Center for Oriental Research and the Council of American Overseas Research Centers, Morag investigated the varied lives of Early Bronze Age (ca. 3500–3200 BC) pots from the Dead Sea Plain in Jordan (see <http://www.followthepotsproject.org>). In order to study these lives (as ancient grave goods, excavated artifacts, looted items, and modern objects in the antiquities market) she combined new technologies for recording and reconstructing the archaeological evidence of looted cemeteries, such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), with traditional techniques, such as ethnographic interviews with the various individuals associated with this mortuary landscape.



*Kersel with an unmanned aerial vehicle*

Aerial survey at the site of Fifa utilized novel photogrammetric image post-processing to produce high-resolution digital elevation models (DEMs) of the site. A chronological assessment of looting at Fifa will allow for the identification of new looting pits and determinations of whether any of the looter's holes had been revisited; if the looting was recent (indicated by fresh earth); and if there is a discernible difference in looting episodes. The continued mapping and groundtruthing of the landscape during the 2014 season, allowed for the conclusion that looters are revisiting looter's holes, there is ongoing recent looting, and there is a difference in looting episodes. This season of aerial site monitoring was the second of a five-year plan to revisit the site at the same time each year to investigate change over time and to assess the potential impact of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities' anti-looting campaigns and outreach programs.

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