

ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives (CHI): Planning for Safeguarding Heritage Sites in Syria and Iraq¹

NEA-PSHSS-14-001

Weekly Report 28 — February 16, 2015

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Key Points

- News sources reported on the unanimous adoption by the United Nations Security Council of Resolution 2199 (2015) under the binding Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, an agreement to “impair, isolate and incapacitate” ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusrah, calling for a crackdown on the trade in oil, looted antiquities, and human hostages out of Syria and Iraq. <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc11775.doc.htm> (p. 3)
- Sources in Syria (APSA) provided data on the condition of archaeological sites in rural areas affected by prolonged conflict, demonstrating that small-scale looting and damage caused by agriculture are proliferating in the absence of central oversight in Syria. (pp. 12–18)
- Preliminary analysis of Digital Globe satellite imagery of the Tell Abyad District of Raqqa Governorate shows recent damage to archaeological sites linked to militarization and unregulated digging since the start of the conflict. Damage has increased since ISIL secured its control over the district in late June 2014. Recent imagery also provides additional evidence that the town of Tell Abyad is an important center for cross-border trafficking. [See Incident Report SHI 15-026 and 15-029](#). (pp. 30–31, 36–37)
- Recent Digital Globe satellite imagery confirms recent DGAM reporting of damage to the site of Resafa (Sergiopolis) in Raqqa Governorate. The images show abundant evidence of militarization, probably linked to control of the area by ISIL and its affiliates. [See Incident Report SHI 15-025](#). (pp. 19–29)

¹ This report is based on research conducted by the “Syria Preservation Initiative: Planning for Safeguarding Heritage Sites in Syria.” Weekly reports reflect reporting from a variety of sources and may contain unverified material. As such, they should be treated as preliminary and subject to change.

Heritage Timeline

February 15, 2015

APSA posted a condition report on the Al-Bayada Mosque in the UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo (also known as the Mosque al-Sarawi or Mosque al-Serwi).
<http://apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/aleppo/monuments.html>

- **APSA** provided access to a large collection of photos showing heritage damage in the area of Deir ez-Zor.
<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.328886440551807.77931.324869057620212&type=3>
- *Al-Gherbal* 24: 29–31 has published “The Oasis of Palmyra” by Cheikhmous Ali and Salem Ali.
<http://www.algherbal.com/2015/02/15/1968/>
- **ASOR CHI** analysis of Digital Globe satellite imagery confirms DGAM reports of damage to the site of **Resafa** (Sergiopolis) in Raqqa Governorate. See [Incident Report SHI 15-025](#).
- **ASOR CHI** analysis of Digital Globe satellite imagery confirms conflict-related damage to sites in the area of **Tell Abyad** in Raqqa Governorate. Recent imagery also provides additional evidence that the town is an important center for cross-border trafficking. See [Incident Report SHI 15-026 and 15-029](#).

February 14, 2015

The Chattanooga Times Free Press published an article by Ben Benton titled “McCallie graduate Dr. Vaughn talks about ISIS looting, civil war erasing Syria, Iraq's cultural history,” detailing activities by ASOR CHI.
<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/business/aroundregion/story/2015/feb/14/islooting-civil-war-erasing-syrias-cultural-h/288348/>

February 13, 2015

The New York Times published an article titled “From Syria, an Atlas of a Country in Ruins,” highlighting the results of satellite imagery analysis by UNITAR-UNISAT. The article focuses, in particular, on damage in Kobani, Aleppo, Homs, and Deir ez-Zor.
<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/02/12/world/middleeast/syria-civil-war-damage-maps.html>

February 12, 2015

APSA released an online report describing the current condition of **Tell Newaaz** in Aleppo governorate, which has been **extensively plowed** for cultivation and subjected to **limited excavation with heavy machinery**. See [Incident Report SHI 15-024](#).

<http://www.apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/aleppo/sites/1126-west-countryside-of-aleppo-the-actual-state-of-the-tell-newaaz.html>

- APSA published an online report on occupation and resulting **damage to rock-cut Byzantine tombs** on the riverbank of the Orontes in the area surrounding Khattab, in the **countryside northwest of Hama**. See [Incident Report SHI 15-023](#).
<http://www.apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/hama/sites/1123-hama-other-villages.html>
- Italian newspaper *La Stampa* published a report on **efforts undertaken by heritage experts and archaeologists**, specifically Francesco Rutelli and Paolo Matthiae, **to obtain UNESCO support in working against heritage destruction in Syria**. Their campaign builds on recent DGAM reports of heritage destruction and calls for a politically neutral police force in Syria to protect heritage in a mode similar to that operating in Iraq.
<http://www.lastampa.it/2014/02/12/cultura/monuments-men-cercansi-per-salvare-larte-siriana-M52teitEJdWgPX0eyjSofN/pagina.html>
- The **United Nations Security Council** adopted a **“binding resolution”** threatening both economic and diplomatic **sanctions against countries or individuals who aid ISIS and other terrorist groups** profiting from trade in oil, illicit antiquities, or human hostages. The text of the resolution, which stops short of threatening the use of force, urges governments to share information on Islamic State’s financing networks, bans exports of all antiquities from Syria, and calls on countries to prevent Islamic State benefiting from political concessions or ransom payments made to secure the release of hostages. It pushes states to stop all freight traffic, including oil tankers, going to or from areas in Syria and Iraq where the extremist groups operate. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-02-12/un-targets-islamic-state-revenue-from-oil-antiquities-ransom>

February 11, 2015

The Independent published continued coverage of the movement by Conservatives in the **British parliament** to draft **legislation to block the trade in looted antiquities out of Syria and Iraq**. The

article pointed to collectors in the Gulf States as the primary market for illicit antiquities. Proposed actions before Parliament include increased manpower for antiquities enforcement in Britain as well as appeals to international bodies such as the Hague Conventions and UN Security Council resolutions regarding the security of cultural property during war.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/archaeology/call-for-uk-to-take-tougher-action-to-save-antiquities-from-isis-10039793.html>

February 10, 2015

The Wall Street Journal published an article addressing the **trade in illicit and looted antiquities out of Syria and its role in the rise of the Islamic State**. The article focuses on both the systematic nature of the ISIS antiquities “industry” and the role of social media and unconventional methods, such as texting, in the rapid sale of Syrian antiquities. The article also mentions that looting is a source of revenue for all sides of the Syrian conflict, not only ISIS. http://www.wsj.com/articles/syrian-monuments-menace-to-protect-antiquities-as-looting-bankrolls-terror-1423615241?mod=WSJ_hp_RightTopStories

February 1, 2015

The **DGAM** released a report titled *State Party Report on the State of Conservation of the Syrian Cultural Heritage Sites (Syrian Arab Republic)*, which provides an update on the current state of the six Syrian World Heritage properties.

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/21/documents/>

Military and Political Context

The main theaters of military operations during the reporting period in Syria were:

1. Northwest Daraa Province
 - On February 9, pro-regime forces, reportedly led by Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and with significant involvement by Hezbollah and Iranian-backed Shi’a militia umbrella group Liwa Abu Fadl al-Abas (LAFA), launched a major operation against rebel-held positions near the towns Deir al-Adas and Kafr Shams south of Damascus.²
2. Damascus Area
 - Within the last two weeks, Syrian Arab Republic Government (SARG) air strikes have killed nearly 200 people around Damascus in the Ghouta area, especially the suburb of Duma.³

² J. Cafarella. “Syria Situation Report: February 03-10, 2015,” <http://iswsyria.blogspot.com/>

³ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-31427471>

3. Kobani Area
 - Several coalition airstrikes targeted ISIS positions in areas around Kobani during the reporting period.⁴
4. Aleppo
 - ISIS continues to lose control of areas northeast of Aleppo at the expense of a strengthened relationship between the YPG and rebel forces allied under the Islamic Front-led Jabhat Shamiya coalition and has withdrawn some fighters and equipment.⁵ According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, ISIS is redeploying these resources to battles with Kurdish and rebel groups farther east.⁶
5. Deir ez-Zor
 - Coalition airstrikes targeted ISIS positions in areas around Kobani during the reporting period.⁷

Other key points:

- On February 2, Al Hayat Media Center, the media wing of ISIS, released the latest video with British journalist John Cantlie, an ISIS hostage that the group forces to make propaganda videos in English in the style of Western news reports. In this latest video, Cantlie reports from inside the city of Aleppo and from the front lines of ISIS-controlled territory outside of Aleppo.⁸
- On February 10, the BBC released an interview with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in which he claimed that Iraq and other third parties were conveying information to SARG about coalition airstrikes in Syria against ISIS and in which he denied the use of barrel bombs by SARG in rebel-held areas, which human rights activists have repeatedly accused SARG of using to kill thousands of civilians.⁹
- On February 10, the Pentagon confirmed the claim by ISIS that its hostage, American aid worker Kayla Jean Mueller, had been killed; ISIS claimed that a Jordanian airstrike had killed Mueller, but the Pentagon disputed this.¹⁰
- Despite coalition airstrikes, U.S. intelligence officials say that recruitment of foreign fighters by ISIS and other extremists groups in both Syria and Iraq has not decreased.
- On February 12, the web portal of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (<http://www.syriahr.com>), a UK-based anti-regime source for information on events in Syria, was hacked by an agent claiming to be the Syrian Army.

⁴ http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

⁵ J. Cafarella. "Syria Situation Report: February 03-10, 2015," <http://iswsyria.blogspot.com/>; <http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2015/02/09/world/middleeast/09reuters-mideast-crisis-syria-islamicstate.html>

⁶ <http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2015/02/09/world/middleeast/09reuters-mideast-crisis-syria-islamicstate.html>

⁷ http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

⁸ <http://linkis.com/us.archive.org/d5Fmi>

⁹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-31312414>

¹⁰ <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/02/10/us/politics/ap-us-american-islamic-state-pentagon.html>

The main theaters of military operations during the reporting period in northern Iraq were:

1. Kirkuk Province:
 - On February 9, coalition airstrikes killed 40–100 ISIS members in southwestern Kirkuk province, according to Wasta Rasul, leader of the Peshmerga in southern Kirkuk.¹¹
 - On February 10, coalition airstrikes in Hawija, 30 miles south of Kirkuk City, reportedly killed 20 ISIS members.¹²
 - On February 11, the Peshmerga and Popular Mobilization forces, with the additional force of coalition airstrikes, reportedly freed three villages in the Riyadh area, west of Kirkuk, from ISIS control, resulting in the deaths of at least 18 ISIS members.¹³
 - On February 11, clashes around Taza, south of Kirkuk City, occurred between the Peshmerga, with support from Popular Mobilization members, and ISIS.
2. Ninawa Province:
 - Several coalition airstrikes targeted ISIS positions in areas around Mosul and Tal Afar during the reporting period.¹⁴ The strikes around Mosul assisted Kurdish forces in successfully seizing three bridgeheads north of Mosul, which, according to US Central Command, means that the Peshmerga “are postured to retake additional territory from Daesh [ISIS] in the vicinity of Mosul.”¹⁵

Other key points:

- As a result of recent talks between the Iraqi government, the Kirkuk local government, and the Badr Organization (a Shi’a political party and militia), Iranian-backed militias have expanded their activities into northern Iraq, likely in response to ISIS attacks inside Kirkuk City; this development signals a shift in the Kirkuk government’s rejection of fighting forces other than the Peshmerga and local tribal fighters in its province.¹⁶

Major international events that impact the ground situation in Syria and Iraq:

1. On February 10, the United Arab Emirates resumed its participation in coalition airstrikes in Syria.¹⁷
2. On February 10, Jordan reportedly deployed thousands of troops to its border with Iraq.¹⁸

¹¹ <http://iswiraq.blogspot.com/2015/02/iraq-situation-report-february-9-2015.html>

¹² <http://iswiraq.blogspot.com/2015/02/iraq-situation-report-february-10-11.html>;
http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

¹³ <http://iswiraq.blogspot.com/2015/02/iraq-situation-report-february-10-11.html>

¹⁴ http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

¹⁵ <http://www.centcom.mil/en/news/articles/isil-pushed-from-bridgeheads-north-of-mosul>

¹⁶ <http://iswiraq.blogspot.com/2015/02/iraq-situation-report-february-10-11.html>

¹⁷ <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/11/world/middleeast/united-arab-emirates-resume-airstrikes-against-isis.html>

¹⁸ <http://abcnews.go.com/International/jordan-deploys-ground-troops-iraq-border/story?id=28856391>

3. On February 11, President Obama formally requested authorization from Congress to use military force in Syria and Iraq, specifically to permit airstrikes and training of local ground forces for a period of three years.¹⁹
4. On February 12, the UN Security Council adopted a Russian-led resolution that authorizes the use of force to enforce a ban on the trade of looted antiquities from Syria and Iraq and on purchase of oil from ISIS, Jabhat al-Nusra, and other al-Qaeda affiliates.²⁰

Key Heritage Recommendations and Actions

- 1) Reports of sustained and ongoing bombardments in Idlib and Aleppo provinces (among others) raise concerns as to as-yet undocumented impacts to archaeological heritage in those areas. ASOR CHI will continue to seek updated imagery and on-the-ground reports as to the condition of sites in regions seeing extra-urban combat.
- 2) ASOR CHI is also working to determine what shifts in approach are required to accommodate an understanding of looting and site destruction in Syria and Iraq, not only as a form of systematic political performance (in the case of shrine destruction and other so-called iconoclastic events), but also as part of an organized and transnational 'industry' in looted antiquities.

¹⁹ http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/obama-makes-formal-request-for-war-authorization-against-islamic-state/2015/02/11/881cc0b0-b1f7-11e4-886b-c22184f27c35_story.html

²⁰ http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50067#.VN1107DF_og

Syria Incident Reports

SHI 15-023

Report Date: February 12, 2015

Site Name: Byzantine tombs in al-Nasiriyah and other villages

Date of Incident: Unspecified

Location: The bank of the Orontes river between Tell al-Nasiriyah and Khattab, approximately 12 km northwest of Hama (Hama governorate)

Coordinates:

Site Description: Located south of Apamea and the dense Byzantine occupation of the limestone massif and northwest of the Roman city of Hama (Emathous), the Byzantine tombs along the Orontes represent part of the overall Byzantine landscape of this region of Syria.

Site Date: Byzantine

Source of Destruction: Probable looting. The use of historic structures for shelter in the limestone massif region.

Pattern:

Though the city of Hama has been impacted relatively little by the combat taking place in the countryside of Aleppo — due to the non-militant approach adopted by its citizens in their opposition to the Assad regime — this area is strategically important within the broader conflict between rebels and the regime west of Aleppo.²¹ In late 2014, rebels captured the arms depot and army base in the town of Khattab (Khitab), followed by a major rebel offensive aimed at the Hama airport: this offensive was ultimately contained by the Syrian Army²². In subsequent weeks the countryside of Hama has been steadily bombarded by SARG with barrel bombs, according to SOHR. Meanwhile, Islamist rebel groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra have increased their presence in the area over this period²³. Both the general state of war and the acute presence of Islamist forces (known to be actively undertaking antiquity prospection) could contribute to the destruction of delicate archaeological contexts like the Byzantine tombs.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: —

ASOR CHI will continue to gather data on the condition of the archaeological landscape of the Aleppo Countryside, which will be a focus for strategies of mitigation and preservation moving

²¹ <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/10/hama-opposition-calm-syria-war.html>

²² <http://www.dawn.com/news/1122061/jihadists-make-fresh-gains-in-syria-ngo>

²³ <http://syriahr.com/en/2014/08/jabhat-al-nusra-is-gathering-1500-fighters-preparing-for-maharda-battle/>

forward due to the importance of the heritage in this region and the heavy impact of combat on the area in recent weeks.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

APSA Website: <http://www.apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/hama/sites/1123-hama-other-villages.html>

Scholarly:



Byzantine tomb (APSA)



Byzantine tomb (APSA)



Byzantine tomb (APSA)



Byzantine tombs (APSA)

SHI 15-0024

Report Date: February 12, 2015

Site Name: Tell Newaaz

Date of Incident: Reported February 12, 2015, but ongoing from late 2014 to the present

Location: Approximately 5 km southwest of al-Atarib, southwest of Aleppo (Aleppo Governorate)

Coordinates:

Site Description: As identified by ASOR CHI in satellite imagery, Tell Newaaz is a mound (approximately 3 ha in area) located near a crossroads in the agricultural fields southwest of the town of al-Atarib. Photographs provided by APSA show a possible stone fortification at the crown of the hill. **NOTE:** Two of the photographs of Tell Newaaz in the APSA condition report discussed here were published by APSA in January 2015 as depictions of nearby Tell Atarib (see Incident Report 15-002).

Site Date:

Source of Destruction: The eleven images provided by APSA show extensive plowing over the surface of the mound, as well as erosion from the top of the mound. A pit has recently been dug into the eroded side of the mound, but it is difficult to ascertain whether this was for looting purposes or for construction material.

Pattern: Tell sites in the intensively cultivated regions of Syria are vulnerable to damage and have suffered due to lapses in law enforcement.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to acquire new imagery in order to monitor threatened tell sites, such as Tell Newaaz, in the extra-urban regions of Syria.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

APSA Website: <http://apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/aleppo/sites/1126-west-countryside-of-aleppo-the-actual-state-of-the-tell-newaaz.html>



Tell Newaaz (APSA)



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Tell Newaaz (APSA)



A GoogleEarth image of Tell Newaaz (imagery dated 10/5/2011)

SHI 15-0025

Report Date: February 15, 2015

Site Name: Resafa (Sergiopolis) = SHI 959

Date of Incident: Site condition assessed with Digital Globe satellite image taken January 22, 2015 and compared with the most recent earlier image taken October 29, 2011. The DGAM released a short update on looting at the site of Resafa on January 21, 2015 (See ASOR CHI Weekly Report 25, Incident Report SHI15-012). The date of the incidents detailed in this report are unknown, but they must have occurred in the timespan bracketed by the two aforementioned satellite images.

Location: 30 km south of Raqqa (Raqqa Governorate)

Coordinates:

Site Description:

According to Ross Burns,

The great Byzantine fortress-city of Resafa grew up on a site 30 km south of the Euphrates River on the edge of the Syrian steppe. Its location resulted from the martyrdom on this spot of the Christian Roman soldier, Sergius, just before the accession of Constantine and the new policy of tolerance towards Christians.

The site became a pilgrimage centre honouring Sergius and attracted crowds from throughout the Syrian desert interior but also acquired an important military function with the advantages of its massive walls (still largely standing today).

Two major churches can be visited, the most important being that associated with St Sergius. As the saint's remains attracted numerous Arabs from the desert tribes, especially those associated with the pro-Byzantine Ghassanid federation, it continued to attract visitors even after the Islamic conquest. For a time, both crowds of Christians and Muslims shared in honouring the saint and a mosque was added to the courtyard south of the massive cathedral.

On the Euphrates directly north of Resafa, the Roman legionary base at Sura continued as the most important military base in the region. Its remains today are scanty though some fragments of walls and of the castrum or central stronghold, survive on the southern riverbank.²⁴

To the south of the town outside of the Roman wall is located the residence of the Umayyad Caliph Hisham b. Abd al-Malik, which comprises several palaces complexes extending over an area of c. 3 km².

²⁴ Burns, Ross. 2009. *The Monuments of Syria. A Guide*. (I. B. Tauris).

Site Date: 9th century BC through Umayyad

Source of Destruction: According to an earlier DGAM website report (1/21/15), the local community reported that limited illegal excavations had been carried out at Resafa during the last year (2014). There have also been reports of theft and vandalism to the archaeological expedition house storage, broken doors, and theft of restoration equipment. The same source reports that an armed gang “destroyed a part of the western ancient city’s wall” in order to let vehicles pass through. The DGAM mentions that the local community played a positive role during the last year in reducing the illegal excavations and preventing damage to the site.

Pattern: Militarization of archaeological sites along major routes.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: Resafa will be closely monitored in the coming months.

Sources:

Online Reporting:



Digital Globe satellite image of Resafa (ancient Sergiopolis): A) Church of St. Sergius, B) Centralized Church, C) "Basilica B," D) caravanserai, E) Cisterns, F) Ghassanid Praetorium, G) main entrance, H) ticket booth and café. The new road is shown in red.



The northeast corner of Resafa showing new features of possible military significance along the road.



The eastern central part of Resafa showing a new, unidentified feature. A similar feature is located just south of the cisterns at the western end of the site.



The northwest corner of Resafa showing probable military features and recent earthmoving activity around the corner tower that extends from the western wall and northern wall.



The southeast corner of Resafa at the main entrance showing recent earthmoving activity to improve road conditions on the new east-west route passing through the site. Rifle pits appear to encircle the ticket booth/café.



The southeast corner of Resafa at the main entrance showing recent earthmoving activity to improve road conditions on the new east-west route passing through the site. Rifle pits appear to encircle the ticket booth/café, and a larger feature is located to the east. Berms have been constructed on the site along the crossroads. White objects (possibly vehicles) are visible on the site, and a large truck is parked just south of the visitor center.



The western-central section of the Resafa fortification wall with the recently constructed east-west road leading to the area of the cisterns and east to the main entrance and visitor center.



Resafa from the Visitor Center looking west. A new ramped road now lessens the grade of the path to the right leading into the site (Michael Danti 2010).



The fortification walls of Resafa as seen from inside the city (Michael Danti 2010).



The cisterns at Resafa (Michael Danti 2010).



The interior of the cisterns at Resafa (Michael Danti 2010).



The interior of the cisterns at Resafa (Michael Danti 2010).



The interior of the cisterns at Resafa (Michael Danti 2010).



The interior of the cisterns at Resafa (Michael Danti 2010).

SHI 15-0026

Report Date: February 15, 2015

Site Name: Unidentified mound near Tell Abyad

Date of Incident: The military trench visible in Digital Globe satellite image was dug on the archaeological mound between December 21, 2014 and February 7, 2015. Tell Abyad District was captured by ISIL in late June 2014.

Location: Mound at western outskirts of modern Tell Abyad (Raqqa Governorate)

Coordinates:

Site Description: This small unidentified archaeological mound has modern houses located on it and has recently had an east-west military trench excavated at its northern summit running parallel to the Turkish border immediately to the north. ISIL currently controls Tell Abyad, although Kurdish YPG forces are currently moving on the town. The Turkish side in Akçakale is dominated by gangs who reportedly control smuggling and are linked to ISIL and other Islamist extremists in Syria. Before ISIL took control of Tell Abyad in June 2014, the town was a smuggling center dominated by Ahrar al-Sham. The organization allegedly profited greatly from taxing cross-border smuggling.

Site Date: Unknown

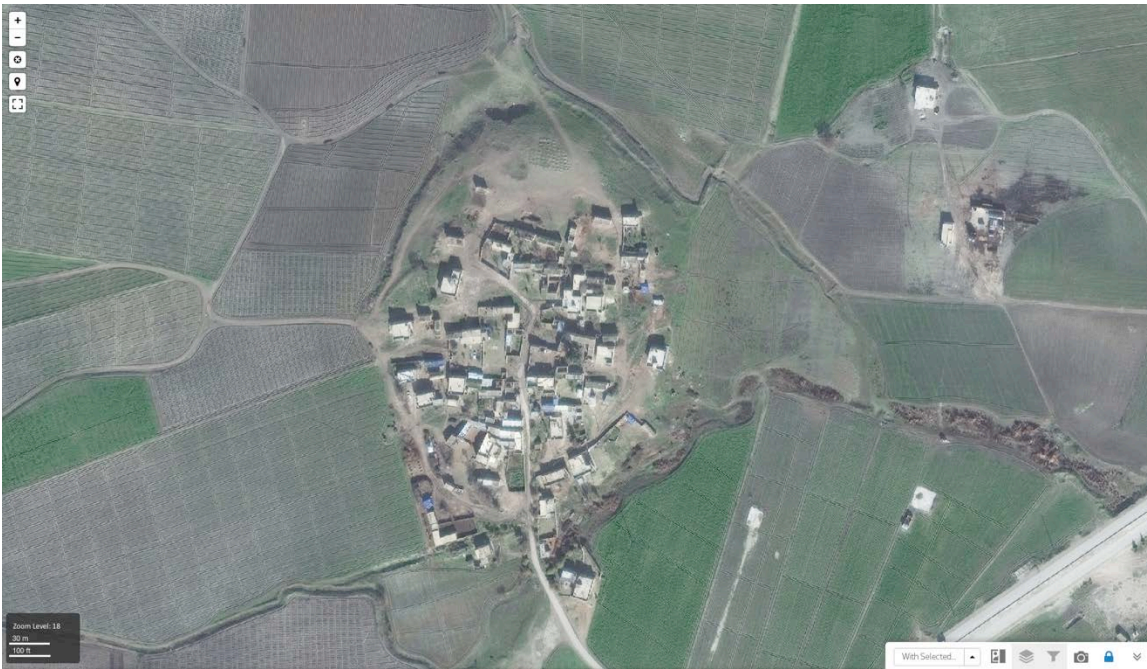
Source of Destruction: Military trench probably dug by ISIL.

Pattern: Militarization of archaeological sites.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: Tell Abyad and other archaeological sites along the border are now a high priority for monitoring.

Sources:

Online Reporting:



The small mound immediately west of modern Tell Abyad, Syria on December 21, 2014 before the military trench was excavated (Digital Globe).



The small mound immediately west of modern Tell Abyad, Syria on February 7, 2015: A = the main footpath to the border; B = the new military trench marked with arrows (Digital Globe).

SHI 15-0027

Report Date: February 15, 2015

Site Name: Unidentified mound near Tell Abyad

Date of Incident: Illegal earth removal from the north end of a probable archaeological mound occurring between May 23, 2014 and December 21, 2014 based on Digital Globe satellite images. Tell Abyad District was captured by ISIL in late June 2014.

Location: Mound to the east of modern Tell Abyad (Raqqa Governorate)

Coordinates:

Site Description: This small oblong mound has a modern house compound on top it.

Site Date: Unknown

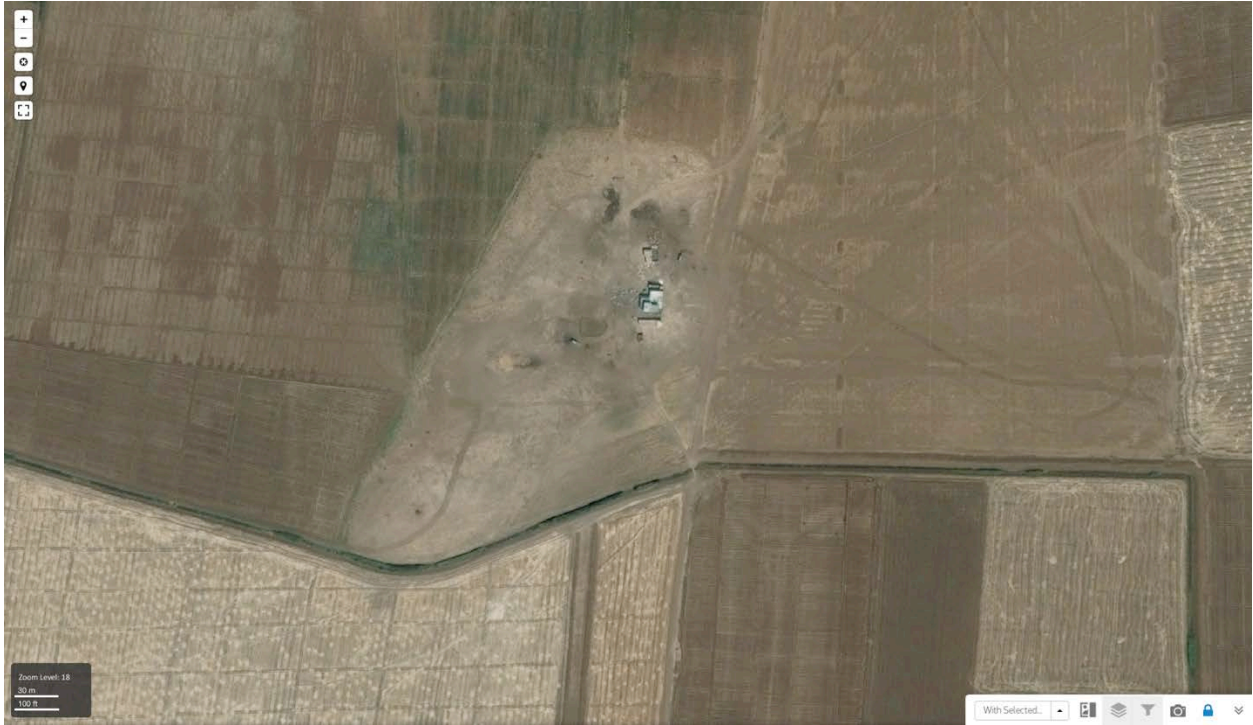
Source of Destruction: Illegal digging. Such earth removal has been widely documented in recent DGAM quarterly reports for Hasakah and Deir ez-Zor Governorates. DGAM has little to no access to information on Raqqa Governorate, but preliminary analysis of satellite imagery in the Tell Abyad region shows similar damage patterns linked to military and agricultural activities. Antiquities looting cannot be ruled out as an additional motivation.

Pattern: Earth removal at archaeological mounds during the conflict using heavy machinery.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: Tell Abyad and other archaeological sites along the border are now a high priority for monitoring.

Sources:

Online Reporting:



A small mound east of modern Tell Abyad, Syria on May 23, 2014 before a large area was removed from the north end (Digital Globe).



A small mound east of modern Tell Abyad, Syria on December 21, 2014 after a large area was removed from the north end with heavy machinery (Digital Globe).

SHI 15-0028

Report Date: February 15, 2015

Site Name: Tell Abyad (SHI # 1738)

Date of Incident: Between February 9, 2014 and May 23, 2014

Location: Raqqa Governorate in the Balikh River catchment

Coordinates:

Site Description: Large high mound that provides the name for this district of Raqqa Governorate.

Site Date: Multiple

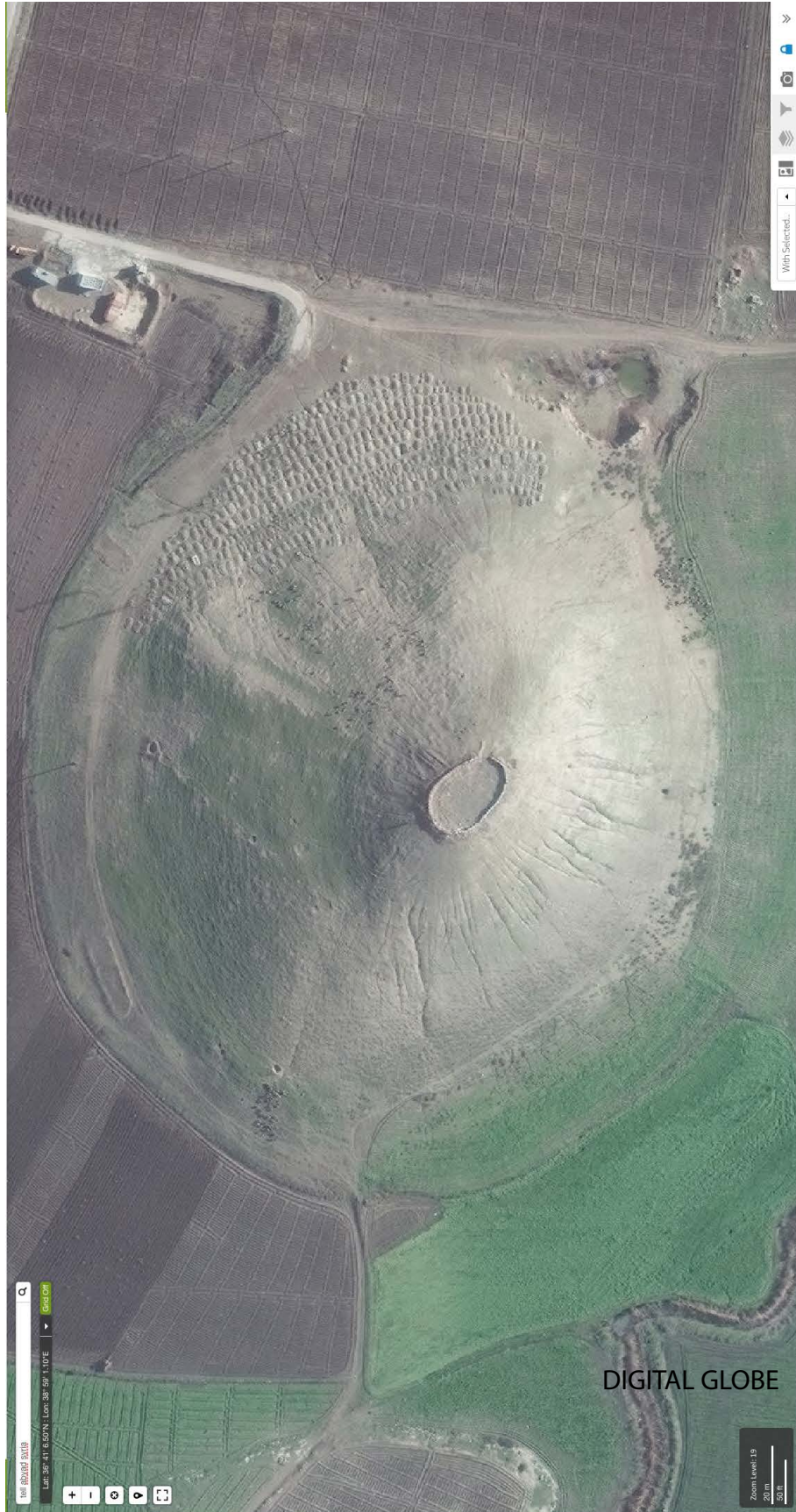
Source of Destruction: An observation post has been constructed at the summit of the mound.

Pattern: Militarization of archaeological mounds.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: Tell Abyad and other archaeological sites along the border are now a high priority for monitoring.

Sources:

Online Reporting:



The mound of Tell Abyad (east up). An enclosure has been recently constructed at the mound's summit (Digital Globe).

SHI 15-0029

Report Date: February 15, 2015

Site Name: Unidentified mound near Tell Abyad

Date of Incident: Between August 28, 2009 and October 12, 2011

Location: Just west of the mound of Tell Abyad (Raqqa Governorate)

Coordinates:

Site Description: Probable medium-sized tell

Site Date: Unknown

Source of Destruction: Trenching with heavy machinery

Pattern: Illegal digging, possibly in the early stages of the Syrian conflict.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: —

Sources:

Online Reporting:



Mound complex immediately west of Tell Abyad on February 7, 2015. The eastern mound was heavily trenched with machinery between August 2009 and October 2011.