

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

NEA-PSHSS-14-001

Weekly Report 32 — March 16, 2015

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Key Points

- On March 9 and March 11, 2015, sources in Syria reported the detonation of tunnel bombs in the UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo. The specifics of these putative incidents remain unconfirmed and have not been assessed. [ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 15-0051 and 15-0052](#). (pp. 30–31)
- Sources inside and outside Iraq continue to release reports of intentional destructions of heritage places in northern Iraq by ISIL. Many reports remain unconfirmed and have not been assessed due to a lack of photographic evidence and recent high-resolution satellite imagery or due to the absence of visible damage in recent high-resolution satellite imagery. In some cases of reported but unconfirmed damage to archaeological sites, ISIL has not yet claimed responsibility. ASOR CHI and other monitoring groups urge that caution be exercised in reporting on these alleged incidents. [ASOR CHI Incident Reports IHI 15-0050, 15-0071, 0072, and 0073](#). (pp. 32–41)

Heritage Timeline

March 16, 2015

CNN posted an article titled “**Saddam Hussein’s tomb destroyed, but Babylon is safe as ISIS targets antiquity**” (by Ben Wedeman and Ben Brumfield) and an associated video clip. According to the report, Saddam Hussein’s tomb was reduced to rubble during the battle between Iraqi forces and ISIL to control Tikrit — although it is unclear which party was responsible for the destruction — while the site of Babylon remains safe.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/03/16/middleeast/iraq-isis-babylon-safe/index.html>

- *The Loopcast* posted an interview with **Christopher Jones** (PhD student, Columbia University; Gates of Nineveh blog) titled “**The Destruction of Iraq’s Cultural Heritage.**” <http://www.theloopcast.com/e/the-destruction-of-iraqs-cultural-heritage-1426504110/>

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.

- **Project Mosul** has posted a call for volunteers to help virtually restore the Mosul Museum.
<http://projectmosul.itn-dch.net/>
- March 15, 2015 *The New York Times* published an article titled “**Assyrian Artifacts to be Returned to Iraq**” (by Tom Mashberg), detailing the recent announcement that American officials will repatriate approximately 65 seized antiquities to the Iraqi government.
<http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/03/15/assyrian-artifacts-to-be-returned-to-iraq/>
- March 14, 2015 *The Times* posted an article titled “**Antiquities looted by Islamic State turn up on eBay**” (by Hugh Tomlinson). The article argues that looted artifacts and coins have been posted for sale at various online auction sites in increasing numbers since the rise of ISIL in Syria and northern Iraq.
<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/middleeast/article4381599.ece>
- *The Daily Star* published an article titled “**Narrowing markets for illicit trade of Syrian antiquities**” (by Samar Kadi). The article outlines efforts by UNESCO to reduce demand for illicitly exported antiquities and efforts by the authorities in Lebanon to recover items that are being smuggled across the border from Syria.
<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2015/Mar-14/290754-narrowing-markets-for-illicit-trade-of-syrian-antiquities.ashx>
- *Al Arabiya News* published an article titled “**U.S. to return more than 60 smuggled artifacts to Iraq,**” referencing the recent announcement that the U.S. will return more than 60 illegally smuggled artifacts to the Iraqi government.
<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/life-style/art-and-culture/2015/03/14/US-to-return-more-than-60-smuggled-artifacts-to-Iraq-.html>
- March 13, 2015 *The Telegraph* posted an article titled “**Syria war: drone footage shows destruction of Aleppo’s heritage sites**” (by Lizzie Porter). The article draws on work by AAAS and APSA to discuss the ongoing destruction of cultural heritage in Syria, with a particular focus on the **implications for the tourism industry**.
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/middleeast/syria/11468349/Syria-war-Aleppos-heritage-sites-destroyed.html>
- *Science Magazine* (vol. 347, no. 6227, pp. 1185–1186) published an article titled “**Militants leave trail of destruction at Iraqi sites**” (by Andrew Lawler), detailing the destruction of ancient archaeological sites by ISIL across northern Iraq.
<http://www.sciencemag.org/content/347/6227/1185.full>

- The U.S. Department of State announced that on March 16, 2015, **the United States will repatriate over 60 cultural objects to Iraq** to “demonstrate the United States’ commitment to cultural preservation and respect for the heritage of other countries.” <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/03/238869.htm>
- The **Penn Museum** released a **statement** condemning the ongoing destruction of cultural heritage in Syria and Iraq and calling on colleagues, relevant organizations, and the international community to do all that they can to find a solution to the situation. <http://www.penn.museum/news-and-announcements/1186-the-destruction-of-cultural-heritage-in-iraq-and-syria.html>
- The **Royal Ontario Museum** released a **statement** condemning the deliberate destruction of archaeological sites and museums, as well as the systematic looting and sale of artifacts, in northern Iraq and pledging its resources in the effort to assess and limit the damage. <http://www.rom.on.ca/en/about-us/newsroom/press-releases/royal-ontario-museum-statement-on-the-destruction-of-cultural>

March 12, 2015

- The **DGAM** reported that a **tunnel bomb** was detonated in the **Qastal al-Harami neighborhood of Aleppo** on Wednesday, March 11, 2015. According to the report, an explosion was heard, but no information about damage is yet available. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0052.** <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1617>
- Media outlets reported that **Mar Gorgis** monastery was **not destroyed** (as an earlier report suggested), although its western facade was damaged. It has also been alleged that the **Christian cemetery adjacent to the monastery was bulldozed** by ISIL and that the **church is being used as a detention center.** **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0050.** <http://www.fides.org/en/news/37442-ASIA IRAQ The monastery of St George in Mosul damaged but not destroyed#.VQT3n-Fj3Zi>
- *The Guardian* published an article titled “**ISIS ransacking of ancient Assyrian city confirmed by Iraq’s head of antiquities**” (by Kareem Shaheen). According to the article, the Iraqi Director of Antiquities, Qais Rasheed, has confirmed that ISIL attacked the site of **Khorsabad (ancient Dur-Sharrukin)**. In a statement to Reuters, the director said, “[Dur-Sharrukin’s] city walls were razed, and some elements of the temples, but we don’t know the exact extent [of the damage] ... Looting took place, and then the razing.” <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/12/isis-ransack-ancient-assyrian-city-confirmed-iraq-head-of-antiquities-dur-sharrukin>

- **APSA** posted a series of photos and a video documenting the state of the **Mankalibughâ/al-Rûmî Mosque**, located northeast of Bab Qinnasrin in the **UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo**. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0050**.
<http://apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/aleppo/monuments/1160-aleppo-mankalibugha-al-rumi.html>
- **Conflict Antiquities** posted a blog entry titled “Was most of the looting at the most extensively looted site in Syria conducted under the Islamic State or the Free Syrian Army?” Drawing on satellite imagery and other material collected by AAAS, Heritage for Peace, and ASOR CHI, the post argues that much of the **looting and destruction** at Syria’s major sites (e.g. Dura Europos, Palmyra, and Apamea) **can be attributed, not to ISIL, but to the Syrian Regime and FSA forces** that occupied these sites at various times.
<https://conflictantiquities.wordpress.com/2015/03/12/syria-islamic-state-free-syrian-army-paramilitary-funding-dura-europos/>
- Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* published an opinion article on the destruction of archaeological sites by ISIL in Iraq and Syria, titled “**Why is ISIS destroying Iraq's historical heritage?**” (by Aziz Abu Sarah). The article provides historical context for the ISIL strategy of “erasing history” by destroying archaeological heritage, renaming cities (e.g., Deir ez-Zor), and generally reinventing the landscape of the territories under their control.
<http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.646517>
- *The Guardian* published an article titled “**The war is still raging, but the race to rebuild Aleppo has already begun**” (by Kate Connolly and Werner Bloch). The article describes a group of architects, town planners, engineers, and archaeologists who have joined together to form an initiative known as Strategies for the Reconstruction of Aleppo. The goal is to begin planning for postwar reconstruction now in order to preserve the cultural legacy of the city and avoid the “Dubai-fication” of Aleppo.
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/12/war-rebuild-aleppo-syria-architects-reconstruction>

March 11, 2015

The **Antiquities Coalition** issued a press release calling on the “U.S. and all nations to **use all policy and legal tools to halt the destruction, trafficking and sale of illicit antiquities.**” The statement proposes five actions that can be taken: 1) organize a global response, 2) expeditiously implement import restrictions, 3) stop American consumers from unwittingly supporting ISIL, 4) launch an International Criminal Court war crimes investigation, and 5) support strategic military options.
<http://theantiquitiescoalition.org/press-releases/>

- Archaeologists at the **University of British Columbia** and **Simon Fraser University** released a **statement** condemning the loss of life, the humanitarian crisis, and the systematic destruction and looting of cultural heritage in Syria and Iraq and urging Canadians to voice their support for efforts to protect the culture and history of the communities impacted by the crisis.
<http://cnrs.ubc.ca/2015/03/11/statement-on-the-destruction-of-cultural-heritage-in-iraq-and-syria/>
- Tim Eaton** (with **Benjamin Isakhan**) published the expert comment “**Destroying Cultural Heritage: The End of (Syrian) History**” as a part of the Chatham House spotlight *Four Years On: The Costs of War in Syria*. Eaton and Isakhan identify four drivers of cultural destruction in Syria: opportunistic looting, collateral damage, ethno-religious sectarianism, and Islamic fundamentalism.
<http://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/17117>
- Andrew Moore** (President of the Archaeological Institute of America) wrote a **letter to the editor of the New York Times deploring the deliberate destruction of heritage in Iraq and pledging support to Iraqi antiquities authorities**. The letter was co-signed by leaders of the American Schools of Oriental Research, the Society for American Archaeology, the Association of Art Museum Directors, the American Anthropological Association, and the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/11/opinion/deploring-isis-destroyer-of-a-civilizations-art.html>
- James Cuno** (President and Chief Executive of the J. Paul Getty Trust in Los Angeles) wrote a **letter to the editor of the New York Times, citing the recent destruction of heritage in Iraq as a justification for the distribution of portable works of art around the world** and blaming the intentional destruction and sale of antiquities on UNESCO’s support for the retention of antiquities within the borders of modern nation states.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/11/opinion/deploring-isis-destroyer-of-a-civilizations-art.html>
- Internet news engine *BuzzFeed* generated a list-format article titled “**Here’s A Look At Some Of The Ancient Sites Destroyed By ISIS And The Syrian Civil War.**” The list somewhat misleadingly combines information about sites known to have been destroyed by ISIL (e.g., the Mosul Museum) with sites only rumored to have been destroyed (e.g., Khorsabad) and also includes sites in Syria known to have been looted or destroyed by non-ISIS agents. Explanations for the sources of destruction at these sites are only provided in some cases.
<http://www.buzzfeed.com/davidmack/a-look-at-some-of-the-world-heritage-sites-destroyed>

- It was reported that the 12th-century **Mosque of al-Imam Ibrahim** in central **Mosul** was **demolished by ISIL**. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0073**.
<http://www.alsumaria.tv/news/127427/اداهم الإمام مسجد يهدم داعش/الموصل، غربي>
- March 10, 2015

The *International Business Times* published an article titled “Iraq: **ISIS blows up 10th century Assyrian Catholic monastery near Mosul**” (by Gianluca Mezzofiore). According to sources cited in the article, the **Mar Gorgis** or George (St. George or Markourkas) monastery, which dates to the 10th century AD, has been “wiped out” by ISIL militants. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0050**.
<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/iraq-isis-blows-10th-century-assyrian-catholic-monastery-near-mosul-1491281>
- Reports emerged that the **al-Sabunji Mosque in Mosul** was **demolished by ISIL** sometime in early March. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0072**.
http://www.aleqt.com/2015/03/06/article_937647.html
- WBEZ's Morning Shift* posted an interview with **Jack Green** (Chief Curator, Oriental Institute Museum) titled “**Oriental Institute looks at destruction of artifacts in Iraq**.” The interview covers a range of topics surrounding the recent deliberate destruction of archaeological sites in Iraq by ISIL and the broader pattern of destruction and looting of cultural heritage in Syria and Iraq.
<https://soundcloud.com/morningshiftwbez/oriental-institute-looks-at>
- MSNBC* posted an interview with **Michael Danti** (Co-Director, ASOR CHI) titled “**Video shows ISIS destroying cultural sites**.” Dr. Danti outlines the historical importance of the ancient cities of Nimrud, Khorsabad, and Hatra, all of which have reportedly been attacked by ISIL in recent days. He also draws attention to the intentional destruction of cultural heritage that is taking place on a much broader scale across Syria and northern Iraq — calling these acts a form of “**cultural warfare**.” <http://www.msnbc.com/jose-diaz-balart/watch/video-shows-isis-destroying-cultural-sites-411009091944>
- NPR* posted an interview with Iraqi archaeologist **Abdulmir al-Hamdani** (SUNY Stony Brook) titled “**Iraq Archaeologist Asks U.S. to Help Protect Antiquities**.” In the interview, Mr. Hamdani expresses the heartbreak provoked by the recent destruction of the Mosul Museum and a series of archaeological sites in northern Iraq, and he calls on the US military and others to do more to protect this cultural heritage.
<http://www.npr.org/2015/03/10/392142445/iraq-archaeologist-asks-u-s-to-help-protect-antiquities>

- CNN* posted an interview with **Clemens Reichel** (Assistant Professor of Mesopotamian Archaeology, University of Toronto) titled “**ISIS Wipes Out Revered Ancient Sites.**” Dr. Reichel discusses the historical importance of the sites of Nimrud and Hatra, both reportedly destroyed by ISIL in recent days, as well as recent suggestions that the destruction of cultural heritage should be treated as a war crime. He also addresses the potential need for military intervention and the challenges involved in combating the illicit trade in antiquities.
<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=933901716654443&fref=nf>
 - Abdulmir al-Hamdani** (SUNY Stony Brook) and **Jabbar Jafaar** (American University) organized a **march on the White House** “to urge and pressure the policy and decision makers to take immediate action to stop ISIS from destroying the remaining Mesopotamian Civilization in Mosul as well as other archaeological sites or we will lose an important part of Iraqi and world heritage.”
<http://www.savingantiquities.org/whitehouse-march-stop-isis/>
- March 9, 2015
- NPR* published an article (and associated audio) titled “**In Syria, Archaeologists Risk Their Lives to Protect Ancient Heritage**” (by Deborah Amos and Alison Meuse). The article highlights the high-risk work of “**cultural triage**” being undertaken in Syria by groups of “Monuments Men” and, in particular, a recent effort to protect and preserve **mosaics at the Ma’arra Museum** in Idlib governorate.
<http://www.npr.org/blogs/parallels/2015/03/09/390691518/in-syria-archaeologists-risk-their-lives-to-protect-ancient-heritage>
- U.S. News and World Report* published an article (by Paul D. Shinkman) titled “**ISIS’ Destruction of Antiques at Mosul, Nimrud Hides Sinister Moneymaking Scheme**” which surmises that ISIL is using the public destruction and vandalism of cultural heritage to distract from its efforts to profit from the antiquities trade.
<http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/03/09/isis-destruction-of-antiques-at-mosul-nimrud-hides-sinister-moneymaking-scheme>
 - The **DGAM** reported that a **tunnel bomb** was detonated in the Sweiqa area northwest of the Citadel in the **UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo** early in the morning on Monday, March 9, 2015. According to the report, the explosion caused damage to historical buildings and started a fire in the Sabaa Bahrat neighborhood near the Citadel. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0051.**
<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1611>

- The **DGAM** reported that a number of **artifacts** (four pottery vessels and an Islamic-era water pipe) were **recovered** through the cooperation of the inhabitants of the town of al-Eis in the countryside south of Aleppo.
<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1615>
- Rudaw reported that the **Mosque of al-Sitt Nafisa** in Mosul was **demolished by ISIL**. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0071**.
<http://rudaw.net/arabic/middleeast/iraq/0903201511>

Military and Political Context

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

1. Northeastern Latakia Governorate
 - On March 11, Syrian army troops repelled an intense nighttime offensive by insurgents on the strategic hilltop village of Doreen, which government troops had captured in the preceding week.²
2. Al-Hasakah Governorate
 - During the reporting period, intense clashes have occurred between ISIL and Kurdish YPG forces, especially around the town of Ras al-Ayn on the Turkish border.³
3. Kobani Area
 - During the reporting period, at least a dozen coalition airstrikes hit ISIL positions around Kobani.⁴

Other key points:

- On March 8, Jabhat al-Nusra formally rejected rumors alleging that it was considering a split with al-Qaeda.⁵
- This March marks the 4-year anniversary of the Syrian Civil War, which has so far killed more than 200,000 people.⁶

² <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/12/us-mideast-crisis-syria-doreen-idUSKBN0M814Z20150312>; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-31855050>; <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2015/03/12/Clashes-between-Assad-and-Nusra-forces-kill-50.html>

³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/11/us-mideast-crisis-syria-northeast-idUSKBN0M70X820150311>.

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

⁵ J. Cafarella and the ISW Syria Team. "Syria Situation Report: February 17-23, 2015," http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-oJt-y3G0hPw/VP9ttaVNcuI/AAAAAAAAAC2k/3bF8TQG0nK8/s1600/2015%2B3_2-10_Approved_hi.png

⁶ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2015/mar/12/syria-crisis-four-years-on-a-day-of-in-depth-reports-and-analysis>

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

1. Tikrit Area
 - During the reporting period, according to various reports, Iraqi security forces, Shiite Popular Mobilization militia forces, Sunni tribal fighters, and Iranian military personnel made significant gains in and around the city of Tikrit in their effort to retake the city from ISIL.⁷
2. Kirkuk Governorate
 - During the reporting period, Peshmerga forces worked on clearing ISIL fighters from areas southwest of the city of Kirkuk with the support of at least a dozen coalition airstrikes.⁸
3. Anbar Governorate
 - On March 9, Iraqi security forces and Shiite Popular Mobilization militia fighters, supported by coalition airstrikes, captured the al-Qinatir crossing in northern Karma subdistrict northwest of Fallujah, killing dozens of ISIL fighters.⁹
 - On March 11, intense clashes took place between Iraqi security forces and ISIL fighters in Ramadi.¹⁰
4. Baghdad
 - On March 11, a car bomb killed 11 people and injured 32 others in Baghdad's northwestern al-Hurriya neighborhood.¹¹
5. Mosul Area
 - During the reporting period, at least a dozen coalition airstrikes hit ISIL positions around Mosul.¹²

⁷ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-31849794>;
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/13/world/middleeast/tikrit-isis-iraq.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=first-column-region®ion=top-news&WT.nav=top-news&r=0>; <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/11/iraqi-forces-poised-recapture-tikrit-isis>; <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/12/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-idUSKBNOM810X20150312>; S. Adnan, O. al-Dulimi, and P. Martin. "Iraq Situation Report: March 10-11, 2015," <http://iswiraq.blogspot.com/2015/03/iraq-situation-report-march-10-11-2015.html>

⁸ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/09/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-kirkuk-idUSKBNOM50JY20150309>;
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-31806080>; S. Adnan, P. Martin, and O. al-Dulimi. "Iraq Situation Report: March 9, 2015," <http://iswiraq.blogspot.com/2015/03/iraq-situation-report-march-9-2015.html>; http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

⁹ S. Adnan, P. Martin, and O. al-Dulimi. "Iraq Situation Report: March 9, 2015," <http://iswiraq.blogspot.com/2015/03/iraq-situation-report-march-9-2015.html>; http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

¹⁰ S. Adnan, O. al-Dulimi, and P. Martin. "Iraq Situation Report: March 10-11, 2015," <http://iswiraq.blogspot.com/2015/03/iraq-situation-report-march-10-11-2015.html>; <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/12/world/middleeast/isis-ramadi-tikrit-iraqi-army.html?src=xps>

¹¹ S. Adnan, O. al-Dulimi, and P. Martin. "Iraq Situation Report: March 10-11, 2015," <http://iswiraq.blogspot.com/2015/03/iraq-situation-report-march-10-11-2015.html>

¹² http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html

Other key points:

- On March 12, the BBC published videos of controlled explosions of IEDs by Iraqi bomb disposal teams that emit plumes of orange smoke, which Iraqi officials say is caused by chlorine gas; there have been several reports of the use of chlorine gas by ISIL since late last year, but this is the first time that verifiable video of the chemical weapon has emerged.¹³

The major international events during the reporting period that impact the ground situation in Syria and Iraq were:

- On March 9, Czech Defense Minister Martin Stropnický announced that his country has approved the sale of 15 fighter jets to the Iraqi government.¹⁴
- In an interview with CBS that aired on March 15, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said that the U.S. is open to negotiating a political solution with Syrian president Bashar al-Assad — including, eventually, negotiating with him directly — to end the conflict in Syria. He also said that the U.S. is currently working with allies in an attempt to restart the diplomatic process.¹⁵ Although the U.S. has long seen a negotiated political settlement with Assad as the end goal in Syria, Kerry’s public reference to direct talks with Assad indicates a stronger focus on achieving peace through diplomatic means.¹⁶

Key Heritage Recommendations and Actions

- ASOR CHI and SREO continue to gather rapid survey data on the looting, trafficking, and sale of antiquities in northern Syria. Data suggest that media reports and in-country reports of ubiquitous looting and the taxation of looting by extremists are true.
- New satellite imagery is needed to confirm reports of the deliberate destruction of heritage places in Aleppo and the Mosul area.
- Accurate assessments of the deliberate destruction of heritage places in Tikrit alleged to have occurred in 2014 and early 2015 depend on obtaining accurate current maps of the area and the geospatial coordinates of heritage places.

¹³ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-31847427>

¹⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/09/us-iraq-security-czech-idUSKBN0M51QI20150309>

¹⁵ <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/us-willing-to-negotiate-with-syria-assad/>

¹⁶ <http://www.vox.com/2015/3/15/8218177/kerry-assad-syria>

Incident Reports: Syria

SHI 15-0050

Report Date: March 12, 2015

Site Name: Mankalibughâ/al-Rûmî Mosque

Date of Incident: Ongoing (beginning prior to June 8, 2013)

Location: 200 meters northeast of Bab Qinnasrin, UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo

Coordinates:

Site Description: The Mosque al-Rumi is located in the Saffahiya District northeast of Bab Qinnasrin and was formerly known as the Mankali Bagha Mosque after Seif al-Din Mankali Bagha al-Shamsi, the Mamluk governor of Aleppo who funded its construction.¹⁷ The architecture of the mosque is notable for its round minaret, which is a rare feature in Aleppo. According to Gaube and Wirth (1984), the mosque (Gaube and Wirth number 404) was built in 1367, restored in 1521, and restored again in 1853.¹⁸

Site Date: 14th century (Mamluk)

Source of Destruction: On March 11, 2015, APSA published photos showing the general condition of the Mosque al-Rumi, including severe damage to the top of the minaret, impact damage to the roof, and cracks in the arched ceilings of the courtyard galleries. Some of the ashlar facing has collapsed from the facade of the northwest corner of the courtyard. One of the images posted by APSA was dated June 8, 2013, which suggests that the damage to the minaret occurred prior to this date.

Pattern: Heritage places impacted by ongoing urban combat, tunnel bomb detonations, and aerial bombardments within the city of Aleppo over the last 18 months.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:

¹⁷ <http://archnet.org/sites/1815/publications/1289>

¹⁸ Gaube, H. and E. Wirth 1984. *Aleppo : historische und geographische Beiträge zur baulichen Gestaltung, zur sozialen Organisation und zur wirtschaftlichen Dynamik einer vorderasiatischen Fernhandelsmetropole*. Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des vordern orient, Reihe B (Geisteswissenschaften) Nr. 58. Weisbaden: Reichert.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

APSA: <http://apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/aleppo/monuments/1160-aleppo-mankalibugha-al-rumi.html>

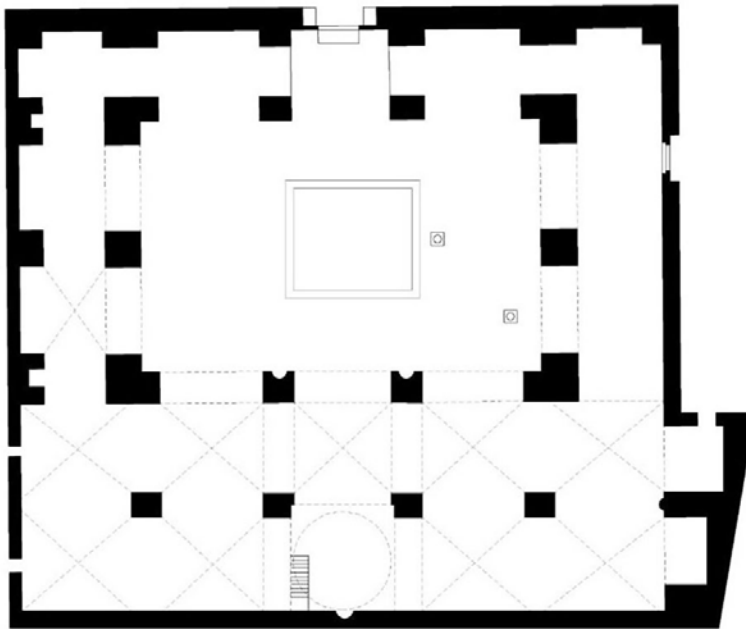
Scholarly:

Meinecke, Michael. 1992. *Die Mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien (648/1250 bis 923/1517)*. Glückstadt: Verlag J. J. Augustin, I/68, II/236.

Gaube, H. and E. Wirth 1984. *Aleppo : historische und geographische Beiträge zur baulichen Gestaltung, zur sozialen Organisation und zur wirtschaftlichen Dynamik einer vorderasiatischen Fernhandelsmetropole*. Beihefte zum Tubinger Atlas des vordern orient, Reihe B (Geisteswissenschaften) Nr. 58. Wiesbaden: Reichert.



Mankalibughâ/al-Rûmî Mosque, Aleppo (APSA; image from Shahbapress.com)



Plan de la mosquée Mankalibughâ
source: Meinecke (1992)

Plan of the Mankalibughâ/al-Rûmî Mosque, Aleppo, not orthorectified (APSA; Source: Meinecke, Michael. 1992. *Die Mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien* (648/1250 bis 923/1517). Glückstadt: Verlag J. J. Augustin, I/68, II/236.)



Mankalibughâ/al-Rûmî Mosque, Aleppo (APSA)



Mankalibughâ/al-Rûmî Mosque, Aleppo (APSA)



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Mankalibughâ/al-Rûmî Mosque, Aleppo (APSA)

SHI 15-0051

Report Date: March 9, 2015

Site Name: Sweiqqa area (Aleppo)

Date of Incident: March 9, 2015

Location: Northwest of the Citadel, UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo

Coordinates:

Site Description:

Site Date:

Source of Destruction: Tunnel bomb. The DGAM reported that a tunnel bomb was detonated in the Sweiqqa area northwest of the Citadel early in the morning on Monday, March 9, 2015. According to the report, the explosion caused damage to historical buildings and started a fire in the Sabaa Bahrat neighborhood near the Citadel.

Another tunnel bomb (or two) was detonated in the area on December 20, 2014, destroying the Khan at-Tutun and the as-Sanjir Mosque, located approximately 180 m east of Sabaa Bahrat square (See Weekly Report 23, Incident Report SHI 14-107 Update).

Pattern: Tunnel bombing in the UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI has designated the Old City of Aleppo a high priority for monitoring and mitigation efforts. New satellite imagery of Aleppo is needed to verify the damage of recent tunnel bombs (since mid-December 2014).

Sources:

Online Reporting:

DGAM: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1611>

Scholarly:

SHI 15-0052

Report Date: March 12, 2015

Site Name: Qastal al-Harami neighborhood (Aleppo)

Date of Incident: March 11, 2015

Location: UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo

Coordinates:

Site Description:

Site Date:

Source of Destruction: Tunnel bomb. The DGAM reported that a tunnel bomb was detonated in the Qastal al-Harami neighborhood on Wednesday, March 11, 2015. According to the report, an explosion was heard, but no information about damage is yet available.

Pattern: Long-term pattern of tunnel-bombing in the Old City of Aleppo, and ongoing urban warfare in the neighborhood of Qastal al-Harami, which was occupied by the FSA through 2013-2014 and by rebel and Islamist forces in early 2015.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI has designated the Old City of Aleppo a high priority for monitoring and mitigation efforts. New satellite imager of Aleppo is needed to verify the damage of recent tunnel bombs (since mid-December 2014).

Sources:

Online Reporting:

DGAM: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1617>

Scholarly:

Incident Reports: Iraq

IHI 15-0050 Update

Report Date: January 16, 2015; updated March 10, 2015

Site Name: Mar Gorgis (St. George/St. Markourkas) Monastery

Date of Incident: Reported March 10, 2015

Location: Ba'werah neighborhood, northern Mosul, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

Coordinates:

Site Description: The Monastery of St. George was founded in the 10th century CE by the Assyrian Church of the East and was then rebuilt as a seminary by the Chaldean Catholic Church in 1846. The church is located on a hillside on the east bank of the Tigris in the northeastern section of Mosul, less than 5 km from the walls of the Assyrian site of Nineveh. The Chaldean Catholic Church, which is made up of people in Iraq who self-identify as Assyrian, uses Syriac as a liturgical language.

Site Date: originally built in the 17th century CE; rebuilt in 1931

Source of Destruction: On November 24, 2014, multiple news outlets reported the demolition of the monastery and church; these were proven to be false.¹⁹ On December 2, 2014, Agenzia Fides reported that ISIL was using Mosul churches as prisons and that the Monastery of St. George was being used as a female detention center; local informants feared the women held there were being sexually abused.²⁰ On December 18, 2014, it was reported that ISIL had removed the cross from the church.²¹ On March 10, 2015, the Iraq Press Agency reported that ISIL had bulldozed the cemetery adjacent to the St. George complex,²² and the Daily Sabah reported that ISIL had bulldozed and detonated the church.²³ Reports on March 11, 2015, state that only part of the church was demolished.

Pattern: ISIL deliberate destructions of religious places significant to Shia or Sufi populations as well as other religious and ethnic minorities. ISIL vandalism and appropriation of cultural property for military purposes.

This is the most recent in a string of public acts of destruction carried out by ISIL within the city of Mosul over the last year, directed at the city's archaeological and cultural heritage. The destruction of Mar Gorgis monastery follows close on the February 27 release of a video showing the destruction of Assyrian and Hatrean artifacts at Nineveh and the Mosul Museum and is contemporary with reports that ISIL may have destroyed standing architecture at Nimrud and

¹⁹ <http://rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/241120143>;
<http://albaghdadianews.com/security/item/64732-DAIyo-nJvE-KlnYO%D8%A9-KNEKnYO-yoLAKn-AkLNZHk.html>; <http://www.coptstoday.com/Copts-News/Detail.php?Id=103578>

²⁰ http://www.fides.org/en/news/36879-ASIA_IRAQ_Churches_in_Mosul_are_used_as_prisons_by_jihadist_of_the_Caliphate#.VH8o_DHF_T8

²¹ <http://english.ankawa.com/?p=13342>

²² <http://www.iraqpressagency.com/ar/2015/03/10/كنيسة ماركوركييس التي فجرها داعش شمال/>

²³ <http://www.dailysabah.com/mideast/2015/03/10/isis-destroys-historical-church-in-mosul-iraqi-official>

Hatra. While recent commentators have proposed that ISIL is perhaps locking down control in Mosul by obliterating sources of civic pride and ties to the past (See ASOR CHI Weekly Report 30), journalistic coverage has also suggested that the ISIL actions in Mosul represent part of a systematic campaign against cultural difference in the territories under its control, targeting both *jahiliyya* antiquities and minority communities.²⁴

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI is continuing to monitor the condition of ethnic and religious minority heritage, as well as Shi'a and other sectarian heritage, in Syria and Iraq.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Iraq Press Agency: <http://www.iraqpressagency.com/ar/2015/03/10/صاركوركيس كنيسة/>

<http://www.iraqpressagency.com/ar/2015/03/10/%D9%83%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B3%D8%A9-%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%8A-%D9%81%D8%AC%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%B4-%D8%B4%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84/داعش فجرها الـتبي-شمال/>

Daily Sabah: <http://www.dailysabah.com/mideast/2015/03/10/isis-destroys-historical-church-in-mosul-iraqi-official>

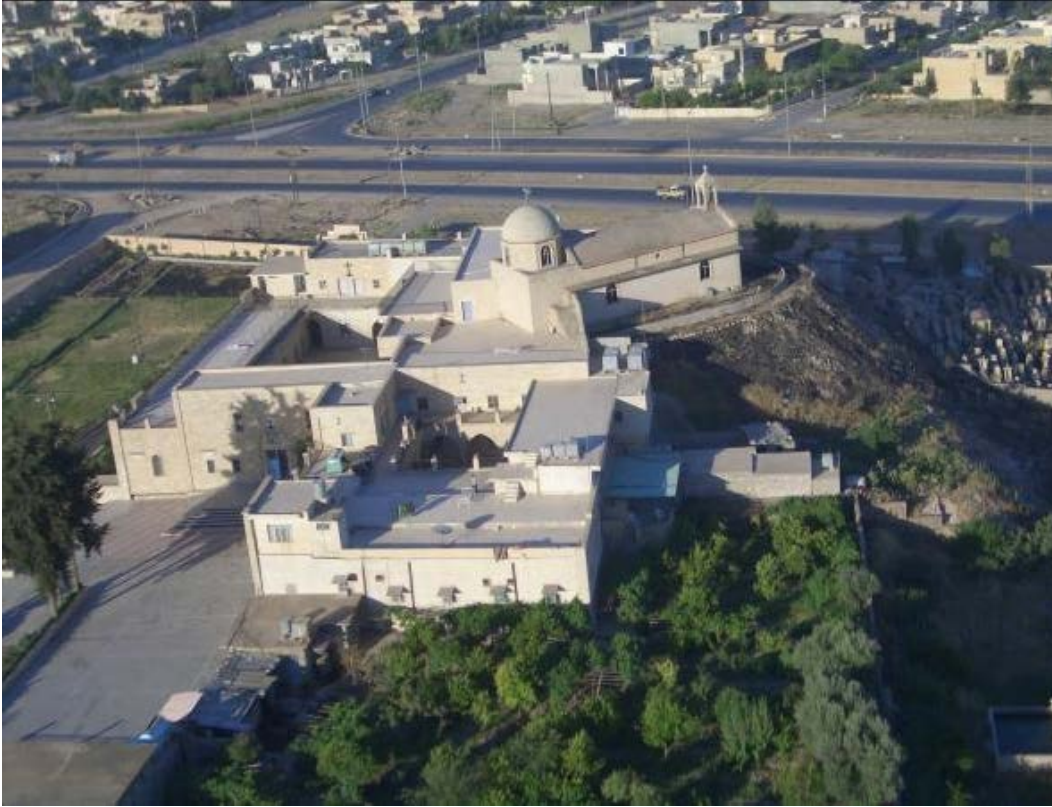
International Business Times: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/iraq-isis-blows-10th-century-assyrian-catholic-monastery-near-mosul-1491281>

Agenzia Fides: http://www.fides.org/en/news/37442-ASIA_IRAQ_The_monastery_of_St_George_in_Mosul_damaged_but_not_destroyed#.VQT3n-Fj3Zi

Barely.net: <http://barely.net/index.php?topic=45612.0>

Scholarly:

²⁴ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28381455>
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/27/world/middleeast/more-assyrian-christians-captured-as-isis-attacks-villages-in-syria.html>
<http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.646517>



Mar Gorgis Monastery (Wikimapia/Google Earth)



Mar Gorgis Monastery, photo showing alleged damage (published on baretley.net)



Mar Gorgis Monastery, photo showing alleged vandalism (<http://www.vocativ.com/world/isis-2/isis-saint-georges-church-mosul/>)



Mar Gorgis Monastery, photo showing alleged vandalism (<http://www.vocativ.com/world/isis-2/isis-saint-georges-church-mosul/>)



Mar Gorgis Monastery, photo showing alleged vandalism (<http://www.vocativ.com/world/isis-2/isis-saint-georges-church-mosul/>)



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Mar Gorgis Monastery, photo showing alleged vandalism (<http://www.vocativ.com/world/isis-2/isis-saint-georges-church-mosul/>)



Mar Gorgis Monastery, photo showing alleged vandalism (<http://www.vocativ.com/world/isis-2/isis-saint-georges-church-mosul/>)

IHI 15-0071

Report Date: March 10, 2015

Site Name: Mosque of al-Sitt Nafisa

Date of Incident: March 9, 2015

Location: Mosul, Ninawa governorate, Iraq

Coordinates:

Site Description: One of the oldest mosques in Mosul.

Site Date: 13th century CE

Source of Destruction: ISIL deliberate destruction.

Pattern: ISIL deliberate destructions of religious places significant to Shia or Sufi populations as well as other religious and ethnic minorities.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI is continuing to monitor the condition of ethnic minority heritage, as well as Shi'a and other sectarian heritage, in Syria and Iraq.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Rudaw: <http://rudaw.net/arabic/middleeast/iraq/0903201511>

Scholarly:

IHI 15-0072

Report Date: March 10, 2015

Site Name: al-Sabunji Mosque

Date of Incident: early March 2015

Location: Mosul, Ninawa governorate, Iraq

Coordinates:

Site Description:

Site Date: built 1933–1934 CE

Source of Destruction: ISIL deliberate destruction

Pattern: ISIL deliberate destructions of religious places significant to Shia or Sufi populations as well as other religious and ethnic minorities.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI is continuing to monitor the condition of ethnic minority heritage, as well as Shi'a and other sectarian heritage, in Syria and Iraq.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Aleqt:

http://www.aleqt.com/2015/03/06/article_937647.html

Scholarly:

IHI 15-0073

Report Date: March 12, 2015

Site Name: Mosque of al-Imam Ibrahim

Date of Incident: March 11, 2015

Location: Mosul, Ninawa governorate, Iraq

Coordinates:

Site Description: Mosque located in the Ra's al-Kuwar neighborhood.

Site Date: 12th century CE

Source of Destruction: ISIL deliberate destruction

Pattern: ISIL deliberate destructions of religious places significant to Shia or Sufi populations as well as other religious and ethnic minorities.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI is continuing to monitor the condition of ethnic minority heritage, as well as Shi'a and other sectarian heritage, in Syria and Iraq.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Al Sumeria : <http://www.alsumeria.tv/news/127427/غربي ابراهيم الامام مسجد يهدم داعش/ar>

Scholarly: