

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

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December 2018 Monthly Report

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¹ This report is based on research conducted by the American Schools of Oriental Research Cultural Heritage Initiatives. Monthly 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.

Other Key Points

- Syrian-opposition forces militarized an archaeological site in Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0173**
- Satellite imagery revealed ongoing expansions of illegal excavations at Apamea, Hama Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0174**
- A US-led Coalition airstrike reportedly damaged a mosque in Hajin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0175**
- Photographs and video show the condition of a mosque in Hajin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0176**
- An Iraqi airstrike damaged a mosque in al-Murashidah, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0177**
- Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army members vandalized a cemetery in Tell Qurbê, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0178**
- A video shows the condition of a mosque in Hajin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0179**
- Photographs show the condition of the Tell Bīaa archaeological site in Raqqā, Raqqā Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0180**
- Photographs show the condition of the Qasr al-Banat archaeological site in Raqqā, Raqqā Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0181**
- A historic house collapsed in Damascus, Damascus Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0182**
- A US-backed Coalition airstrike destroyed a mosque in Hajin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0183**
- A video shows the condition of a mosque in Hajin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0184**
- The condition of a historic mosque deteriorated due to lack of maintenance in Raqqā, Raqqā Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0185**
- A heritage organization moved archaeological materials to a more secure location in Manbij, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0186**
- A heritage organization cleaned a looted tomb in Manbij, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Heritage Response Report SHI 18-0187**
- A video shows the condition of a mosque in Hajin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0188**
- A Syrian militia rebuilt a mosque in Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR Heritage Response Report SHI 18-0189**

Military and Political Context

1. Aleppo Governorate:

- On December 2, the Syrian Kurdish YPG fired on a vehicle containing members of the Islamist opposition group Jaish al-Islam near the city of Afrin. The YPG also detonated a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) targeting the Salafi-Jihadist opposition group Ahrar al-Sham near the town of Jinderes.²
- On December 2, Syrian al-Qaeda affiliate Hayat Tahrir al-Sham “reportedly destroyed multiple frontline bridges” near the town of al-Ais. Al-Ais is located in the demilitarized zone brokered by Russia, Iran, and Turkey.³
- On December 12, a car bombing struck the town of Azaz, killing at least one person and injuring 21 more. The bombing reportedly damaged several buildings including a hospital and primary school. A few hours later, similar attacks took place in the city of al-Bab and al-Rai (Cobanbey), killing at least one person and leaving 16 more injured. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.⁴
- On December 28, the Syrian army announced that it had entered the city of Manbij at the request of Kurdish YPG forces. The YPG had previously called on the Syrian regime to “assert control” in the city of Manbij following a “buildup of Turkish troops and tanks in the area.” Turkey denied reports of SARG movement in the area and US-led Coalition military forces based in Manbij reported no “military changes” in the area. According to SOHR, SARG forces initially took up positions near Manbij before later pulling out to avoid any conflict with Coalition forces in the area.⁵

2. Deir ez-Zor Governorate:

- On December 1, Russia reportedly redeployed eight surface-to-air missile launchers and 60–70 missiles, along with personnel, from Maysaf, Hama Governorate to an unknown location in Deir ez-Zor Governorate.⁶
- On December 3, a US-led Coalition airstrike killed ISIS militant Abu al-Umarayn who was believed to have been responsible for the death of several western aid workers.⁷

² <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/12/syria-situation-report-november-29.html>

³ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/12/syria-situation-report-november-29.html>; <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2018/12/tahrir-al-sham-explodes-bridges-connecting-regime-controlled-areas-with-southern-aleppo/>

⁴ <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/car-bombings-kill-2-injure-dozens-in-northern-syria/1336727>

⁵ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/syrian-army-says-its-troops-enter-kurdish-held-manbij-to-thwart-turkish-offensive/2018/12/28/400f4bc2-716b-495d-9f81-d4834174cd33_story.html; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-46701095>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-46723603>

⁶ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/12/syria-situation-report-november-29.html>

⁷ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-46430940>

- On December 5, the United Nations reported that ISIS militants in Deir ez-Zor Governorate were executing people accused of cooperating with Syrian opposition forces. The UN also reported ISIS was using civilians as “bargaining chips” in the ongoing fighting in the area between the group and the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).⁸
 - On December 11, the US-backed SDF advanced further into the town of Hajin amid heavy clashes with ISIS. ISIS militants reportedly have planted mines and IEDs in the neighborhoods they have abandoned in Hajin, dug a wide network of tunnels, and left behind snipers on high buildings. SDF operations have been ongoing in the area since September 11.⁹
 - On December 12, the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported that seven mass graves had been found near the city of al-Bukamal. According to the report, the seven mass graves hold more than 100 bodies that bear marks of being victims of ISIS.¹⁰
 - On December 15, the US-backed SDF captured the town of Hajin from ISIS. According to an SDF commander, the forces are now targeting ISIS in areas surrounding the town.¹¹
3. Hama Governorate:
- On December 5–6, pro-regime forces conducted raids against several opposition positions near the towns of Tell Touqan, Lahaya, and Masasnah near Turkish observations points that monitor the demilitarized zone. Syrian opposition groups including HTS and the FSA repelled the attack.¹²
4. Idlib Governorate:
- On December 3–5, HTS and “rival Salafi-Jihadist group” Ahrar al-Sham agreed to a ceasefire brokered by local elders following several days of clashes between the groups. As part of the deal, HTS retained “at least six villages” captured from Ahrar al-Sham in the Ghab Plain south of Jisr al-Shughour.¹³
 - On December 4–6, suspected ISIS militants conducted at least four explosive attacks in opposition-held areas of Idlib Governorate, including near the city of Ma’arat al-Numan.¹⁴

⁸ <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-un/islamic-state-executing-people-in-syrias-deir-al-zor-un-idUKKBN10418W>

⁹ <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/bbac0f56-fd4c-4355-8ce1-000a48a66f2f>; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/12/syria-situation-report-november-29.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-46544924>

¹¹ <https://au.news.yahoo.com/rubble-charred-cars-former-syria-jihadist-hub-013748593--spt.html>; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-militants/us-backed-fighters-thrust-into-last-big-town-held-by-islamic-state-idUSKBN10C0ZU>;

¹² <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/12/syria-situation-report-november-29.html>

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *ibid.*

Other Key Points:

- On December 10, the Syrian Army announced the demobilization of officers after their completion of five years of compulsory service. This is the second such action by the army in the past year; the first occurred in May 2018.¹⁵
- On December 10, six UN agencies and one international non-governmental organization (INGO) carried out trans-shipment deliveries consisting of 11,200 metric tons of aid for 650,000 Syrians. The convoy utilized the Syrian Jaber-Nassib border crossing with Jordan, which opened in October.¹⁶
- On December 12, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced a new operation against the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), currently engaged in operations against ISIS, east of the Euphrates River.¹⁷
- On December 18, US President Donald Trump announced, via Twitter, the withdrawal of US troops from Syria, citing the defeat of ISIS.¹⁸
- On December 28, Russia condemned an alleged Israeli airstrike that targeted an arms depot in Qatifah, approximately 25 miles northeast of Damascus.¹⁹
- On December 30, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad authorized Iraqi forces to attack ISIS inside Syria without waiting for permission from Damascus.²⁰
- On December 31, US President Donald Trump confirmed that US troops would be withdrawing from Syria; however, at a slower rate than previously announced.²¹

¹⁵ <https://www.france24.com/en/20181210-syria-announces-fresh-demobilisation-army-conscripts>; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-army/syrian-army-demobilises-some-conscripted-reservist-officers-idUSKBN1091SS>

¹⁶ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/12/1028081>

¹⁷ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-46539812>

¹⁸ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-46623617>

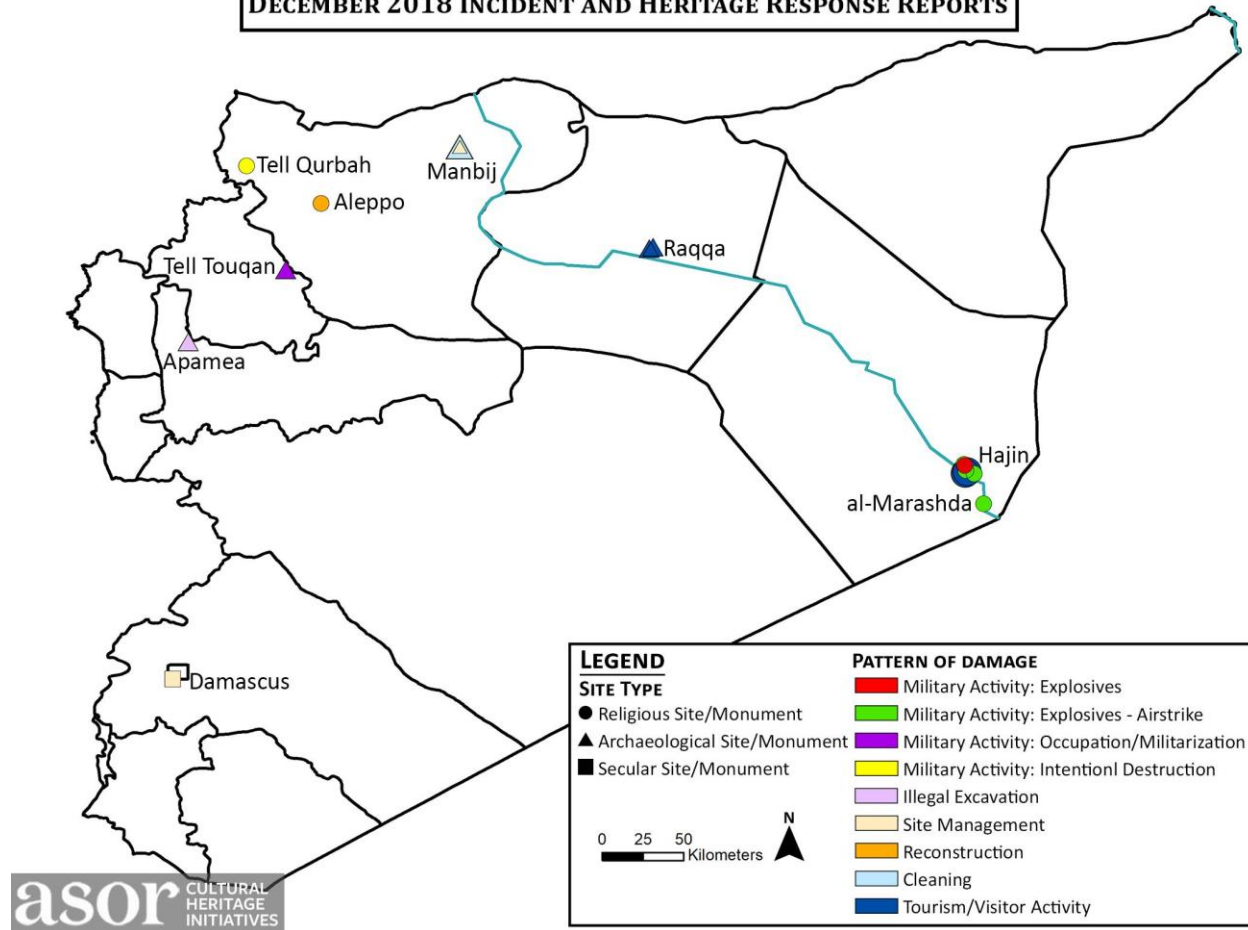
¹⁹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-46682666>

²⁰ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/syrias-assad-authorizes-iraqi-forces-to-strike-is-in-syria/2018/12/30/10da7ec6-0c42-11e9-8f0c-6f878a26288a_story.html

²¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-46723603>

Incident Reports: Syria

DECEMBER 2018 INCIDENT AND HERITAGE RESPONSE REPORTS



SHI 18-0173

Report Date: November 1, 2018

Site Name: Tell Tuqan

Date of Incident: After August 17, 2018

Location: Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Archaeological tell

Site Date: Bronze Age; Hellenistic

Incident Summary: Syrian-opposition forces militarized an archaeological site.

Incident Source and Description: DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows that the site of Tell Tuqan was militarized between August 17 and October 10, 2018. This consists of a network of trenches dug into the upper mound, embankments, and trenches on the lower mound. In addition to the trenching, the image from October 31, 2018 also shows a cluster of looting pits on the western side of the lower mound and new pits near the entrance to the upper mound. The perpetrators of the militarization are unknown; however the archaeological site is located in territory controlled by elements of the Syrian opposition.

Pattern: Military activity: occupation/militarization, earthworks/roadworks; Illegal excavation.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Tell Tuqan, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.



The site of Tell Tuqan with older looting pits shown in black (© 2018 DigitalGlobe; August 17, 2018)



The site of Tell Tuqan with recent looting pits shown in red, and trenching and embankments covering the top of the tells (© 2018 DigitalGlobe; October 31, 2018)

SHI 18-0174

Report Date: December 1, 2018

Site Name: Apamea

Date of Incident: Ongoing

Location: Qalaat al-Mudiq, Hama Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Apamea - Founded ca. 300 BCE by Seleucus Nicator, a general under Alexander the Great, Apamea flourished until its destruction by the Sasanians in the mid-6th century CE.²² By the 1st century CE, Apamea had a population of over 100,000.²³ Despite damage from several earthquakes in the Late Antique era and attacks on the city by Sasanian forces, a number of monumental structures are still standing, including the mile-long colonnade, Roman villas, multiple churches, civic buildings, city gates, and one of the largest theaters of the Roman empire. Apamea is currently on the Tentative List of UNESCO World Heritage sites.²⁴

Site Date: ca. 300 BCE–1300 CE

Incident Summary: Satellite imagery revealed ongoing expansions of illegal excavations at an archaeological site.

Incident Source and Description: DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that between August 11, 2018 and November 25, 2018 illegal excavations continued at the site of Apamea. The new areas of excavation consist of long trenches. The most prominent area of damage is immediately to the east of the Eastern Cathedral, though they do not appear to be damaging the structure. In addition to the trenches, there is one area that appears to be a tunnel entrance close to the eastern wall of the city. Other areas of previous damage have been expanded, likely with heavy machinery.

For more information on previous damage to Apamea, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 14-0024** in **Weekly Report 7**, **SHI 14-0085** in **Weekly Report 16–17**, **SHI 14-0108** in **Weekly Report 21–22**, **SHI 15-0130** in **Weekly Report 57–58**, **SHI 15-0141** in **Weekly Report 63–64**, **SHI 16-0093** in **Weekly Report 97–98**, and **SHI 18-0100** in **May 2018 Monthly Report**.

Pattern: Illegal excavation.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Apamea, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to illegal excavation.

²² <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/1297/>

²³ Burns 2010: 50.

²⁴ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/sy>

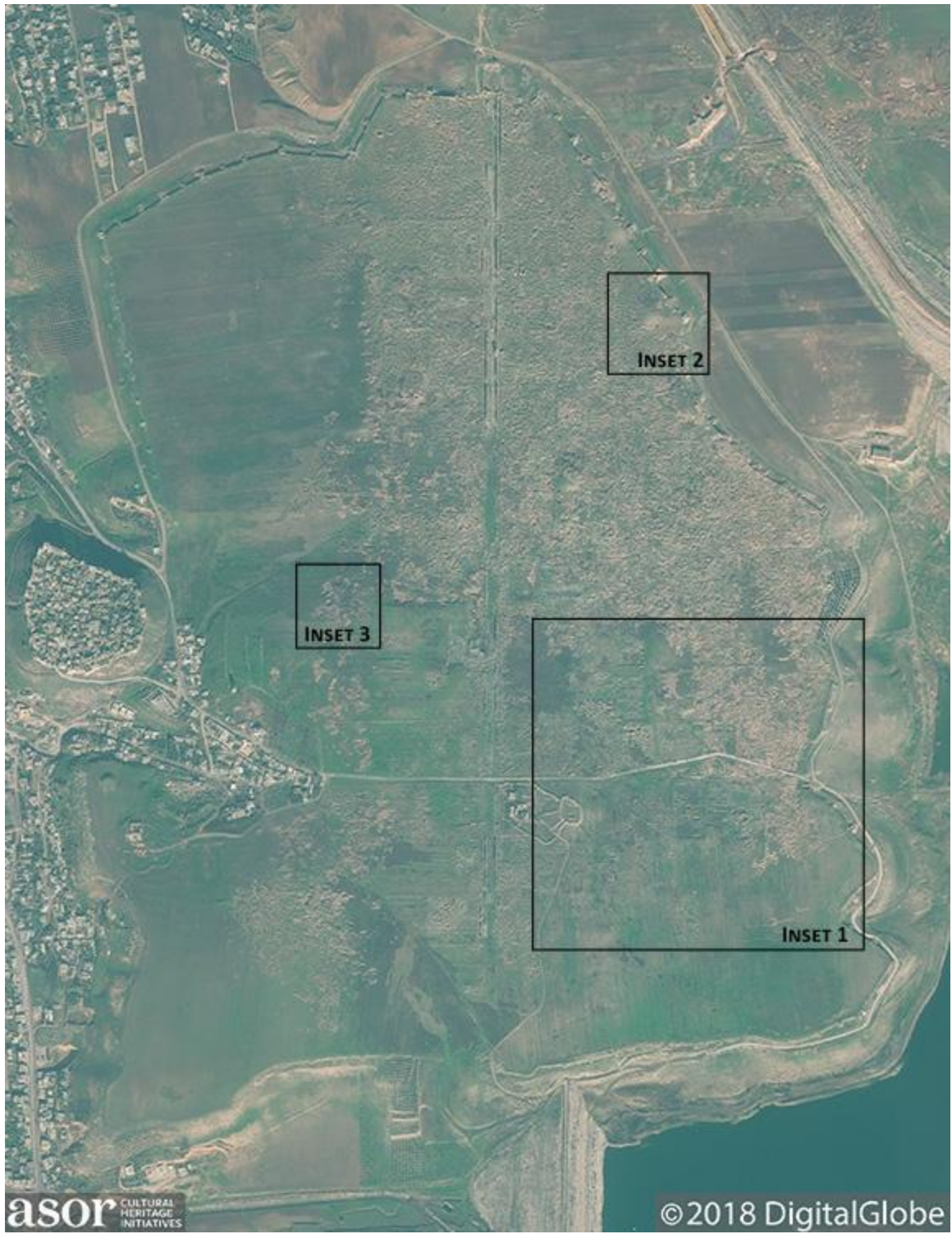
Sources:

Online Reporting:

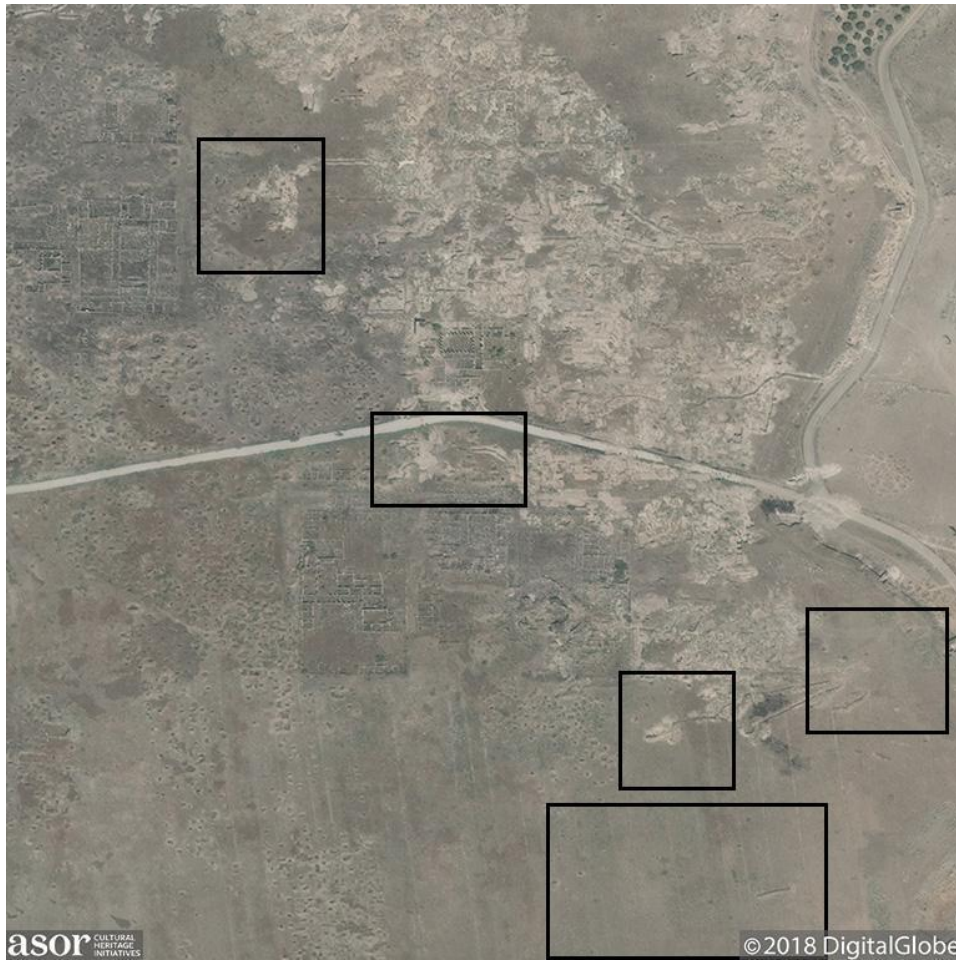
UNESCO: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/1297/> ;
<https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/sy>

Scholarly:

Burns, R. (2010) *Monuments of Syria: A Guide*. London: I.B. Tauris.



Areas of Apamea recently affected by illegal excavations (©2018 DigitalGlobe; November 25, 2018)



Inset 1: The southeastern area of the site prior to recent trenching (©2018 DigitalGlobe; August 11, 2018)



Inset 1: The southeastern area of the site with additional trenching (©2018 DigitalGlobe; November 25, 2018)



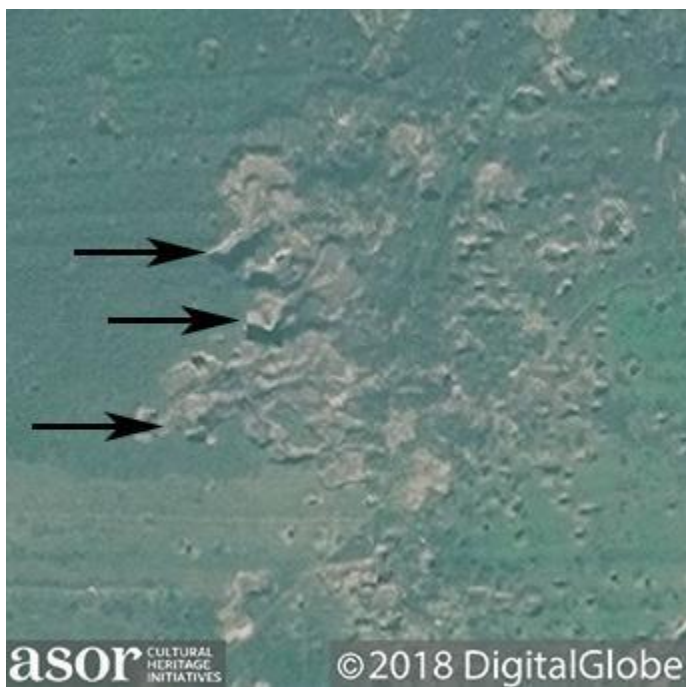
Inset 2 prior to tunneling (©2018 DigitalGlobe; August 11, 2018)



Inset 2 with possible tunnel entrance and dirt pile (©2018 DigitalGlobe; November 25, 2018)



Inset 3 western area prior to recent trenching (©2018 DigitalGlobe; August 11, 2018)



Inset 3 western area with additional trenching (©2018 DigitalGlobe; November 25, 2018)

SHI 18-0175

Report Date: December 5, 2018

Site Name: al-Jaber Mosque (مسجد الجابر)

Date of Incident: December 1, 2018

Location: Hawama Neighborhood, Hajin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A US-led Coalition airstrike reportedly damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On December 5, 2018 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a US-led Coalition airstrike had heavily damaged al-Jaber Mosque in the Hawama Neighborhood of Hajin.²⁵ However, a photograph posted by SNHR shows the mosque to be largely intact.

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from December 11, 2018 confirms that the mosque is intact. An airstrike destroyed a building 40 meters east of the mosque between November 20, 2018 and December 11, 2018. This destruction may be the source of the report of damage to the mosque. It is unknown whether this building belonged to the mosque or was an independent structure.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0176, SHI 18-0177, SHI 18-0179, SHI 18-0183, SHI 18-0184 and SHI 18-0188.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives-airstrike.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the al-Jaber Mosque, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Majlat Hajin: https://www.facebook.com/hajeen.magazen/posts/1784648551657346?_tn=-R

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/12/05/international-coalition-forces-bombed-mosque-hajin-city-deir-ez-zour-suburbs-december-1/>

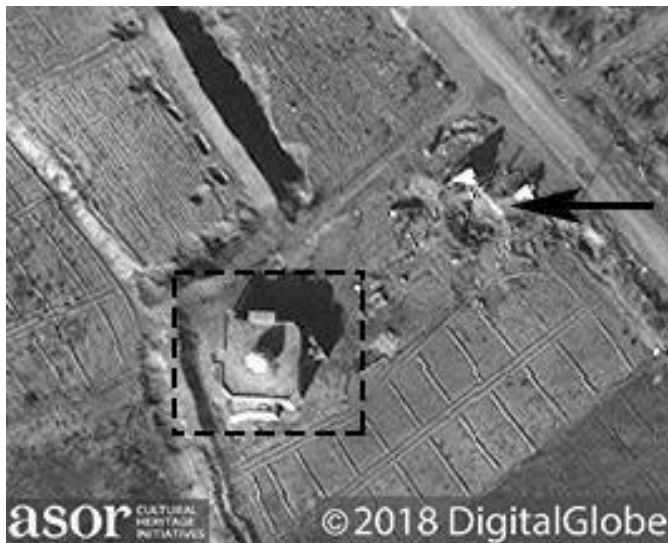
²⁵ <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/12/05/international-coalition-forces-bombed-mosque-hajin-city-deir-ez-zour-suburbs-december-1/>



Al-Jaber Mosque, seen from the northeast (SNHR; December 5, 2018)



Al-Jaber Mosque prior to airstrike (©2018 DigitalGlobe; November 20, 2018)



Al-Jaber Mosque with no visible damage while the building to the east is destroyed (©2018 DigitalGlobe; December 11, 2018)

SHI 18-0176

Report Date: December 4, 2018

Site Name: Omar bin al-Khattab Mosque (جامع عمر بن الخطاب)

Date of Incident: December 4, 2018

Location: Hawama Neighborhood, Hajin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Modern

Incident Summary: Photographs and video show the condition of a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On December 4, 2018 Majlat Hajin posted a video that shows the condition of Omar bin al-Khattab Mosque.²⁶ The mosque has suffered combat damage.²⁷ Bullet pockmarks as well as some holes caused by larger ordnance are visible on the exterior of the building. At least one hole in the roof, presumably due to artillery bombardment, is also present. The interior of the building is covered in debris, including shattered glass and pieces of masonry. Parts of the stonework around the minbar and mihrab are also broken.

DigitalGlobe imagery from December 11, 2018 does not clearly show damage to the mosque, although damage is clear in the videos and photos. This is likely due to the pixel resolution and the shadows. However, damage is clearly seen to the surrounding buildings which occurred during the month of November 2018.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0175, SHI 18-0177, SHI 18-0179, SHI 18-0183, SHI 18-0184 and SHI 18-0188.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Omar bin al-Khattab Mosque, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

²⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/hajeen.magazen/photos/a.612926035496276/1785934198195448>

²⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/hajeen.magazen/videos/2264484060494117/?v=2264484060494117>; <https://www.facebook.com/hajeen.magazen/videos/509698739439457/?v=509698739439457>; <https://twitter.com/VivaRevolt/status/1070720388861186048>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Majlat Hajin:

December 3, 2018: <https://www.facebook.com/hajeen.magazen/posts/1784415318347336>

December 4, 2018: <https://www.facebook.com/hajeen.magazen/photos/a.612926035496276/1785934198195448/>

December 5, 2018: <https://www.facebook.com/hajeen.magazen/videos/2264484060494117/?v=2264484060494117>

December 7, 2018: <https://www.facebook.com/hajeen.magazen/videos/509698739439457/?v=509698739439457>

Twitter Account/@VivaRevolt: <https://twitter.com/VivaRevolt/status/1070720388861186048>



Video still of Omar bin al-Khattab Mosque, seen from the north (Twitter Account/@VivaRevolt; December 6, 2018)



The entrance to the mosque, seen from the west (Majlat Hajin; December 4, 2018)



Video still of the interior of the mosque, seen from the southwest (Majlat Hajin; December 7, 2018)



Video still of the interior of the mosque, seen from the west (Majlat Hajin; December 7, 2018)



Video still of the mihrab, seen from the northwest (Majlat Hajin; December 7, 2018)



Video still of damage to the southwest corner of the mosque (Majlat Hajin; December 7, 2018)



Video still of the damage to the mosque, seen from the east (Majlat Hajin; December 7, 2018)



Video still of the dome of the mosque, seen from the south (Majlat Hajin; December 7, 2018)



مجلة هجين

Video still of a hole in the roof, seen from the east (Majlat Hajin; December 7, 2018)



Possible damage to the roof of the mosque noted with black arrows (©DigitalGlobe 2018; November 13, 2018)



Lower resolution imagery that does not clearly show the damage to the mosque (©DigitalGlobe 2018; December 11, 2018)

SHI 18-0177

Report Date: December 17, 2018

Site Name: al-Murashidah Mosque

Date of Incident: December 11, 2018

Location: al-Murashidah, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: An Iraqi airstrike damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On December 11, 2018 the Iraqi Air Force conducted an airstrike on a building near the al-Murashidah Mosque.²⁸ The explosion launched debris onto the southeastern corner of the mosque, causing minor damage.²⁹ There is no recent DigitalGlobe imagery to show the extent of the damage.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0175, SHI 18-0176, SHI 18-0179, SHI 18-0183, SHI 18-0184 and SHI 18-0188.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives-airstrike.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the al-Murashidah Mosque, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Iraqi Air Force:

December 11, 2018: <https://twitter.com/iqAirForce/status/1072518075449307138>

December 17, 2018: <https://twitter.com/iqAirForce/status/1074608821119696896>

²⁸ <https://twitter.com/iqAirForce/status/1072518075449307138>

²⁹ <https://twitter.com/iqAirForce/status/1074608821119696896>



Video still of debris falling on the mosque, seen from the northwest (Iraqi Air Force; December 17, 2018)

SHI 18-0178

Report Date: December 12, 2018

Site Name: Qurbê Cemetery

Date of Incident: ca. December 12, 2018

Location: Tell Qurbê, Jinderes District, Afrin Canton, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Cemetery

Site Date: Modern

Incident Summary: Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army members vandalized a cemetery.

Incident Source and Description: On December 12, 2018 a Private Twitter User posted a video of damage to a cemetery that was allegedly committed by members of the Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army. The video shows toppled headstones as well as a series of smashed graves.

Pattern: Military activity: intentional destruction.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Qurbê Cemetery, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Private Twitter Account



Video still of damage to a grave (Private Twitter Account; December 11, 2018)



Video still of a toppled headstone (Private Twitter Account; December 11, 2018)



Video still of widespread damage to the cemetery (Private Twitter Account; December 11, 2018)



Video still of a smashed grave (Private Twitter Account; December 11, 2018)



Video still of a toppled headstone and open grave (Private Twitter Account; December 11, 2018)



Video still of the damaged cemetery (Private Twitter Account; December 11, 2018)



Video still of a toppled headstone (Private Twitter Account; December 11, 2018)



Video still of a smashed headstone (Private Twitter Account; December 11, 2018)

SHI 18-0179

Report Date: December 12, 2018

Site Name: al-Kabir Mosque (الجامع الكبير)

Date of Incident: December 12, 2018

Location: Hajin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Al-Kabir Mosque, located on the western side of Hajin, is a multi-story building that is still under construction. A free-standing minaret is situated along the southwestern corner of the building.

Site Date: Modern

Incident Summary: A video shows the condition of al-Kabir Mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On December 12, 2018 the Facebook account Majlat Hajin posted a video that shows the condition of al-Kabir Mosque.³⁰ On December 13, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a US-led Coalition airstrike had severely damaged the mosque on December 10, 2018.³¹

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from December 11, 2018 shows minimal damage to the mosque, primarily on the northwest corner. The mosque was under construction and the minaret was not completed. Damage from small-arms fire is visible on the its western facade. A heavy-caliber weapon may have caused damage visible at the northwestern end of the partially-constructed second story of the building.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0175, SHI 18-0176, SHI 18-0177, SHI 18-0183, SHI 18-0184 and SHI 18-0188.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives-airstrike.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the al-Kabir Mosque, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Majlat Hajin: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=664537533947912>

³⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=664537533947912>

³¹ <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/12/13/international-coalition-forces-bombed-mosque-hajin-city-deir-ez-zour-suburbs-december-10/>

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/12/13/international-coalition-forces-bombed-mosque-hajin-city-deir-ez-zour-suburbs-december-10/>



Video still of the minaret and western facade of the mosque, seen from the southwest (Majlat Hajin; December 12, 2018)



Video still of the base of the minaret, seen from the west (Majlat Hajin; December 12, 2018)



Video still of the western facade of the mosque, seen from the west (Majlat Hajin; December 12, 2018)



Video still of a stairway to the northern end of the unfinished second story of the mosque, seen from the west (Majlat Hajin; December 12, 2018)



Video still of damage to the northwestern corner of the mosque, seen from the west (Majlat Hajin; December 12, 2018)



The mosque prior to recent airstrike (©DigitalGlobe 2018; November 13, 2018)



The mosque with damage on the northwestern corner and possible debris or hole in the roof, noted with red arrows (©DigitalGlobe 2018; December 11, 2018)

SHI 18-0180

Report Date: December 20, 2018

Site Name: Tell Bīaa

Date of Incident: December 14, 2018

Location: Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Ancient Tuttul was a major urban center in the Bronze age situated near the confluence of the Balikh and Euphrates rivers. The city was a transregional cult center of the god Dagan and part of the kingdom of the Amnanum with a predominant Amorite ethnos.

Site Date: Early–Late Bronze Age; Hellenistic; Roman; Islamic

Incident Summary: Photographs show the condition of an archaeological site.

Incident Source and Description: The Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities (ATPA) published photographs that show the condition of Tell Bīaa.³² The photographs show the extensive damage to the site that was caused by illegal excavations with bulldozers during ISIS’s control of Raqqa. Smaller illegal excavation also occurred within the former excavation house and elsewhere on the site.

For more information on previous damage to Tell Bīaa, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 14-0053** in **Weekly Report 9**, **SHI 15-0023** in **Weekly Report 26–27**, and **SHI 15-0131** in **Weekly Report 59–60**.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0180** and **SHI 18-0185**.

Pattern: Site management: tourism/visitor activity.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Tell Bīaa, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

ATPA: <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/palace-al-banat-and-tell-albyaa/>

³² <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/palace-al-banat-and-tell-albyaa/>



The current condition of the excavation house (ATPA; December 14, 2018)



The aftermath of illegal excavation with bulldozers (ATPA; December 14, 2018)



An illegal excavation in the former dig house (ATPA; December 14, 2018)



A trench through part of the site (ATPA; December 14, 2018)



An area of illegal excavation with bulldozers; the area is now used to dump trash (ATPA; December 14, 2018)

SHI 18-0181

Report Date: December 20, 2018

Site Name: Qasr al-Banat

Date of Incident: December 14, 2018

Location: Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Qasr al-Banat is located in the eastern side of Raqqa's Old City along the interior face of the al-Rafiqah Wall (CHI 950). The Syrian Directorate-General for Antiquities and Museums excavated and reconstructed portions of the site between 1977 and 1982.³³ The focus of the building is a central rectangular courtyard with an *iwan* on each side. Additional rooms surround the courtyard on all four sides.

The date and function of Qasr al-Banat are not precisely known. The presence of the four *iwans* around a central courtyard indicates a date between the 11th century CE and the destruction of Raqqa by the Mongols in 1265 CE.³⁴ The size, elaborate ornamentation, and lack of rooms with overtly religious functions suggest that the building functioned as a palace.³⁵

Site Date: ca. 11th–13th century CE

Incident Summary: Photographs show the condition of an archaeological site.

Incident Source and Description: The Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities (ATPA) published photos that show the condition of Qasr al-Banat.³⁶ Illegal excavations, which are attributed to ISIS, are visible at the site. One of these undercuts the foundations of the building. Overall, the site is in poor condition. Trash is present throughout the remains and plaster is visibly falling off the walls in multiple places. Moisture is also present in the foundations of the walls.

For more information on previous damage to Qasr al-Banat, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0111** in **June 2017 Monthly Report**, **SHI 17-0111 UPDATE** in **August 2017 Monthly Report**, and **SHI 17-0111 UPDATE** in **September 2017 Monthly Report**.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0180** and **SHI 18-0185**.

Pattern: Site management: tourism/visitor activity.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Qasr al-Banat, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

³³ Toueir 1985: 298

³⁴ Toueir 1985: 318

³⁵ Toueir 1985: 319

³⁶ <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/palace-al-banat-and-tell-albyaa/>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

ATPA: <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/palace-al-banat-and-tell-albyaa/>

Scholarly:

Toueir, Kassem (1985) "Der Qasr al-Banat in ar-Raqqa. Ausgrabung, Rekonstruktion und Wiederaufbau (1977–1982)" *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 85(2), pp. 297–319.



Moisture in the walls of Qasr al-Banat (ATPA; December 14, 2018)



Illegal excavation beneath standing architecture (ATPA; December 14, 2018)



Illegal excavation on the site (ATPA; December 14, 2018)



The current condition of an *iwan* in the palace; note the loss of plaster near the base of the walls (ATPA; December 14, 2018)

SHI 18-0182

Report Date: December 18, 2018

Site Name: Historic House

Date of Incident: December 15, 2018

Location: Bab Touma Neighborhood, Damascus, Damascus Governorate, Syria

Site Description: House

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A historic house collapsed.

Incident Source and Description: On December 15, 2018 Damascus Now reported that a historic house had collapsed in the Bab Touma Neighborhood in the Old City of Damascus.³⁷ Approximately half the house collapsed. No specific cause for the collapse was given.

Pattern: Site management.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Historic House, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

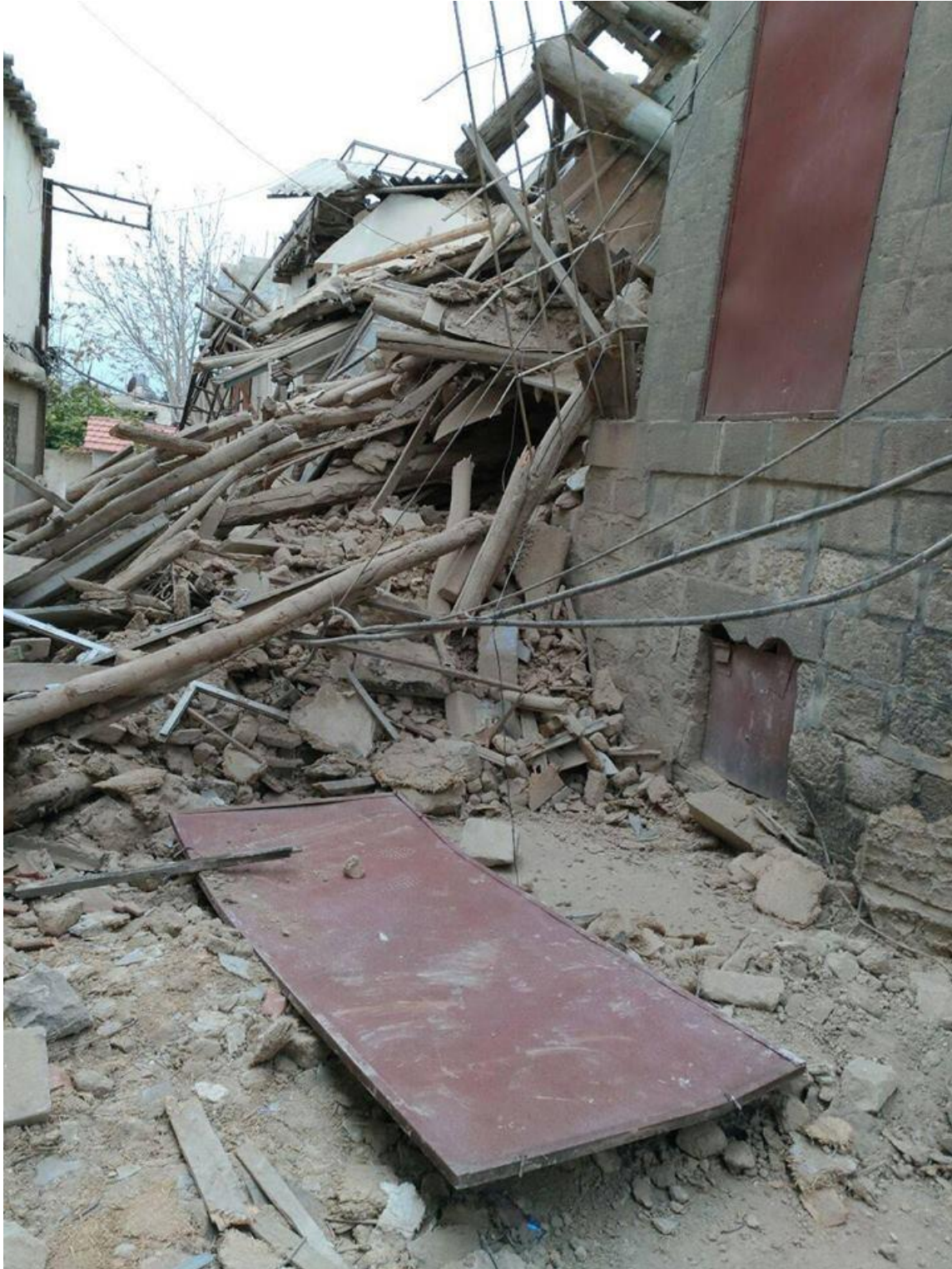
Online Reporting:

Damascus Now: <https://damasnow.com/12/انهيار-منزل-وسط-العاصمة-دمشق/>

³⁷ <https://damasnow.com/12/انهيار-منزل-وسط-العاصمة-دمشق/>



The side of the collapsed house (Damascus Now; December 15, 2018)



Rubble in front of the house (Damascus Now; December 15, 2018)

SHI 18-0183

Report Date: December 21, 2018

Site Name: Salahudin al-Ayubi Mosque

Date of Incident: December 15, 2018

Location: Abu al-Khatir, Hajin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A US-backed Coalition airstrike destroyed a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On December 15, 2018 a US-backed Coalition airstrike destroyed Salahudin al-Ayubi Mosque.³⁸ The Coalition said it targeted the building because of its use by ISIS as a command center.³⁹ The airstrike leveled the mosque and toppled its minaret. The airstrike also reportedly damaged houses and caused civilian casualties.⁴⁰

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0175, SHI 18-0176, SHI 18-0177, SHI 18-0179, SHI 18-0184 and SHI 18-0188.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives-airstrike.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Salahudin al-Ayubi Mosque, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

CJTFOIR: <https://twitter.com/CJTFOIR/status/1074024447093420038>

Deir ez-Zor Now: <https://twitter.com/DeirEzzoreNow/status/1074393418279866368>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/AKMcKeever/status/1074400866378178568>

³⁸ <https://twitter.com/DeirEzzoreNow/status/1074393418279866368>; <https://twitter.com/AKMcKeever/status/1074400866378178568>

³⁹ <https://twitter.com/CJTFOIR/status/1074024447093420038>

⁴⁰ <https://twitter.com/DeirEzzoreNow/status/1074393418279866368>



Video still of the toppled minaret (Deir ez-Zor Now; December 16, 2018)



Video still of the destroyed mosque (Deir ez-Zor Now; December 16, 2018)

SHI 18-0184

Report Date: December 16, 2018

Site Name: al-Rahman Mosque (مسجد الرحمن)

Date of Incident: December 16, 2018

Location: Hajin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A video shows the condition of a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On December 16, 2018 Majlat Hajin posted a video that shows the condition of al-Rahman Mosque. The mosque needs basic site maintenance but is otherwise in fair condition.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0175, SHI 18-0176, SHI 18-0177, SHI 18-0179, SHI 18-0183, and SHI 18-0188.**

Pattern: Site management: tourism/visitor activity.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of al-Rahman Mosque, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:Online Reporting:

Majlat Hajin:

December 16, 2018: <https://www.facebook.com/hajeen.magazen/photos/pcb.1802574129864788/1802574096531458>

December 16, 2018: <https://www.facebook.com/hajeen.magazen/videos/198411664441536/>



The western wall of al-Rahman Mosque (Majlat Hajin; December 16, 2018)



Video still of the mosque, seen from the west (Majlat Hajin; December 16, 2018)

SHI 18-0185

Report Date: December 16, 2018

Site Name: al-Qadim Mosque

Date of Incident: December 16, 2018

Location: Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: The Abbasid caliph al-Mansur built al-Qadim Mosque in 772 CE.⁴¹ The mosque received extensive renovations during the reign of Nur ad-Din Zangi in 1166 CE.⁴² The destruction of al-Raqqa in 1265 CE ended the mosque's use.⁴³

The mosque consisted of a rectilinear structure with rounded towers on all four sides. A single large courtyard lay inside. Multiple arched colonnades flanked the courtyard on all four sides. The mosque's minaret lay in the northeastern corner of the courtyard and a cistern was located in the northwestern corner.

Much of the mosque has disappeared in the centuries since its destruction. However, the exterior wall of the mosque, the minaret, the cistern, and the northernmost colonnade on the southern side of the courtyard remain largely intact. The Syrian Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums conducted restoration activities on these remains between 1983 and 1987.⁴⁴

Additionally, a small, domed shrine was established in the courtyard of the mosque in 1836 CE.⁴⁵ This was located over the purported grave of Wabisa ibn Ma'bad al-Asadi, a companion of the prophet Muhammad.

Site Date: 772–1265 CE

Incident Summary: The condition of a historic mosque deteriorated due to lack of maintenance.

Incident Source and Description: Al-Qadim Mosque has deteriorated due to a lack of maintenance since the recapture of Raqqa in 2017. Photographs posted by the Authority of Tourism and the Protection of Antiquities show rapid weathering of the corners of the exterior walls of the mosque.⁴⁶ The base of the standing colonnade has also deteriorated.

For more information on previous damage to al-Qadim Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0132** in **Weekly Report 59–60**, **SHI 17-0110** in **June 2017 Monthly Report**, **SHI 17-0157** in **August 2017 Monthly Report**, **SHI 17-0157 UPDATE** in **September 2017 Monthly Report**, and **SHI 17-0110 UPDATE** in **March 2018 Monthly Report**.

⁴¹ Hagen, al-Hassoun, and Meinecke 2004: 37

⁴² Hagen, al-Hassoun, and Meinecke 2004: 38

⁴³ Heidemann 2003: 51

⁴⁴ Hagen, al-Hassoun, and Meinecke 2004: 26

⁴⁵ Heidemann 2003: 55

⁴⁶ <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/photographs-showing-the-exposure-of-the-ancient-mosque-in-al-riqqa/>

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0180** and **SHI 18-0181**.

Pattern: Site management.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of al-Qadim Mosque, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

ATPA:

<http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/photographs-showing-the-exposure-of-the-ancient-mosque-in-al-riqqa/>

Scholarly:

Hagen, Norbert, Mustafa al-Hassoun, and Michael Meinecke (2004) “Die grosse Moschee von ar-Rāfiqa,” in *Baudenkmäler und Paläste I*, ed. Verena Daiber and Andrea Becker. Raqqa III. Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 25–39.

Heidemann, Stefan (2003) “Die Geschichte von ar-Raqqa/ar-Rāfiqa – ein Überblick,” in *Die islamische Stadt*, ed. Stefan Heidemann and Andrea Becker. Raqqa II. Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 9–56.



Wall collapse at al-Qadim Mosque (ATPA; December 16, 2018)



Wall deterioration at al-Qadim Mosque (ATPA; December 16, 2018)



Deterioration of the colonnade at al-Qadim Mosque (ATPA; December 16, 2018)

SHI 18-0186

Report Date: December 17, 2018

Site Name: Roman Temple

Date of Incident: Early December 2018

Location: Manbij, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Temple

Site Date: Roman

Incident Summary: ATPA moved exposed archaeological materials to a more secure location.

Incident Source and Description: The Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities (ATPA) moved exposed archaeological materials from the site of a Roman temple to a more secure location in Manbij.⁴⁷ The material will be restored to the original site, now a public park, once its security can be assured.

Pattern: Site management.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the materials from the Roman Temple, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

ATPA: <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/the-antiquities-pieces-were-exposed-in-the-public-park-in-the-city-of-manbaj/>

⁴⁷ <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/the-antiquities-pieces-were-exposed-in-the-public-park-in-the-city-of-manbaj/>



PHOTOS OF THE PUBLIC GARDEN DURING THE VIOLATIONS

The condition of materials prior to their removal (ATPA; December 17, 2018)



AFTER TRANSFER

An artifact at its new location (ATPA; December 17, 2018)



AFTER TRANSFER

Part of a relief at the new storage location (ATPA; December 17, 2018)



AFTER TRANSFER

A general view of the materials at their new location (ATPA; December 17, 2018)



A sarcophagus and other materials at the new storage location (ATPA; December 17, 2018)

SHI 18-0187 Heritage Response Report

Report Date: December 19, 2018

Site Name: Al-'Antabi Tomb

Date of Incident: Unknown

Location: Manbij, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Tomb with painted decoration on the walls and ceiling.

Site Date: 4th–5th century CE⁴⁸

Heritage Response Summary: A heritage organization cleaned a looted tomb.

Heritage Response Source (organization) and Description of Work: The Authority of Tourism and the Protection of Antiquities (ATPA) cleaned a looted tomb in the vicinity of Manbij.⁴⁹

Description of Previous Damage to Site: Al-'Antabi Tomb was looted during ISIS's control of Manbij. After its looting, the local community used it as a place to dump trash.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage response reports in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0189**.

Operating Organization: The Authority of Tourism and the Protection of Antiquities

Pattern: Cleaning.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of al-'Antabi Tomb, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

ATPA: <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/مدفن-يعود-للفترة-الرومانية-في-منبج/>

⁴⁸ ASOR CHI Sources

⁴⁹ <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/مدفن-يعود-للفترة-الرومانية-في-منبج/>



The entrance to the tomb (ATPA; December 19, 2018)



The back of the tomb (ATPA; December 19, 2018)



The ceiling of the tomb (ATPA; December 19, 2018)

SHI 18-0188

Report Date: December 20, 2018

Site Name: Qal'a Mosque

Date of Incident: December 20, 2018

Location: Qal'a Neighborhood, Hajin, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A video shows the condition of a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On December 20, 2018 Majlat Hajin posted a video that shows the condition of the al-Qal'a Mosque, which was recently recaptured from ISIS.⁵⁰ The building is in fair condition. Possible combat damage is visible at the northwestern corner of the mosque and on the aluminum roof in front of it. The interior of the mosque is covered in glass and other debris; however, no significant combat damage is visible.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Deir ez Zor Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0175, SHI 18-0176, SHI 18-0177, SHI 18-0179, SHI 18-0183, and SHI 18-0184.**

Pattern: Site management: tourism/visitor activity.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of al-Qal'a Mosque, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Majlat Hajin: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2208537802744661>

⁵⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2208537802744661>



Video still of the northwestern corner of the mosque; note the damage to the upper corner and the aluminum roof in front of the mosque (Majlat Hajin; December 20, 2018)



Video still of damage to secondary structures near the main entrance, seen from the southwest (Majlat Hajin; December 20, 2018)



Video still of the anteroom of the mosque, seen from the west (Majlat Hajin; December 20, 2018)



Video still of the central room, mihrab, and minbar, seen from the north (Majlat Hajin; December 20, 2018)

SHI 18-0189 Heritage Response Report

Report Date: December 16, 2018

Site Name: Al-Akhal Mosque (جامع الأكل)

Location: al-Jadida District, Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Built in 1485 CE; rebuilt in the 1880s

Heritage Response Summary: A Syrian militia rebuilt a mosque.

Heritage Response Source (organization) and Description of Work: In December 2017, members of the Syrian-government allied Tiger Forces rebuilt damaged portions of the al-Akhal Mosque in Aleppo.⁵¹ This work included the reconstruction of the damaged northeastern corner of the building and the repainting of the dome. Subsequent to the rebuilding of the northeastern corner, the mortar in the wall was painted green.⁵²

Description of Previous Damage to Site: Al-Akhal Mosque was damaged multiple times by bombardment, most recently in May 2015. The bombardment destroyed part of the northeastern corner of the mosque and damaged the contents in its interior.

For more information on previous damage to Al-Akhal Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0097** in **Weekly Report 45**.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage response reports in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0187**.

Operating Organization: Tiger Forces

Pattern: Reconstruction.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of al-Akhal Mosque, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Middle East Eye:

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/syria-s-newest-battle-we-re-living-medieval-times-1350119160>

Shaba Press: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GmpyVu2WHk>

⁵¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2zccz9i_n0

⁵² <https://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/syria-s-newest-battle-we-re-living-medieval-times-1350119160>

Sohayb Masri: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2zccz9i_n0



Video still of damage to the mosque (Shaba Press; May 1, 2015)



Video still of the mosque after repairs (Sohayb Masri; December 9, 2017)



Video still of the repainted dome (Sohayb Masri; December 9, 2017)



The reconstructed corner of al-Akhal Mosque with green mortar (Middle East Eye; December 16, 2018)

Heritage Timeline

- December 30, 2018 *The Sunday Times* published an article titled “**Britain Trains Refugees to Carve Out a New Syria from it’s Ruins.**” The British Government and the World Monuments Fund are training Syrian refugees to help rebuild Syria.
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/britain-trains-refugees-to-carve-out-a-new-syria-from-itsruins-vgzjx99x>
- December 29, 2018 *Enab Baladi* published an article titled “**Cultural Week in Syria’s Idlib Governorate: Female Students Prevented from Attending due to Dress Code Violations.**” The Idlib Cultural Week (November 26–30), included activities like plays, seminars, poetry contests. Some female students were denied access by the Hisbah Apparatus Members due to the color of their outfits.
<https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2018/12/cultural-week-in-syrias-idlib-governorate-female-students-prevented-from-attending-due-to-dress-code-violations/>
- December 24, 2018 *Yahoo News* published an article titled “**Christmas Joy Missing in Rubble of Syria Town?**” (by Maher al Mounes). Saint George Church in Arbin is damaged and Christmas services have not been held there for seven years.
<https://news.yahoo.com/christmas-joy-missing-rubble-syria-town-031817097.html>
- December 21, 2018 UNITAR published a report titled “**The State of Cultural Heritage in the Ancient City of Aleppo.**” The use of satellite imagery shows the extent of damage in Aleppo from 2013 to the present day.
<http://www.unitar.org/unosat/whs-aleppo>
- December 20, 2018 DGAM published an article titled “**Visit of a French Parliamentary Delegation to the National Museum of Damascus.**” A delegation of French parliamentarians visited the Damascus National Museum and discussed Syria’s cultural heritage activities with the DGAM.
<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=2447>
- *Hyperallergic* published an article titled “**Let Them Eat Heritage**” (by Michael Press). Press discusses the rebuilding of heritage while the country’s infrastructure is still destroyed.
<https://hyperallergic.com/477122/let-them-eat-heritage/>
- December 19, 2018 *Apollo* published an article titled “**What Does the Reopening of the National Museum of Damascus Mean for Syria?**” (by Ross Burns). The National Museum of Damascus is discussed in the terms of the reconstruction of Syria’s heritage.
<https://www.apollo-magazine.com/national-museum-damascus-syria-reopening/>

- December 18, 2018 *Damasnow* published an article titled “**The Collapse of a House in Downtown Damascus.**” An old house collapsed in Bab Touma. <https://damasnow.com/12/انهيار-منزل-وسط-العاصمة-دمشق/>
- December 17, 2018 *The Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities* published an article titled “**Concerning the Syriac Church in Manbaj.**” After SANA published a report that the US, French, and Kurdish forces were looting churches in Manbaj, the ATPA published this report showing the mosaic of a church in place. <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/concerning-the-syriac-church-in-manbaj/>
- *The Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities* published an article titled “**The Antiquities Pieces Were Exposed in the Public Park in the City of Manbaj.**” The ATPA moved antiquities that were left by ISIS in a park to a safe storage location. <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/the-antiquities-pieces-were-exposed-in-the-public-park-in-the-city-of-manbaj/>
- December 14, 2018 *Middle East Eye* published an article titled “**The Looting of Aleppo: ‘We’re living in Medieval Times’**” (by Diana Darke). The looting of houses in Aleppo, reportedly by Syrian Forces, is contrasted with the Syrians living in exile struggling to preserve Aleppo’s heritage. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/syria-s-newest-battle-we-re-living-medieval-times-1350119160>
- December 12, 2018 *European Interest* published an article titled “**EPP: EU Protects Cultural Heritage and Fights Terrorist Financing.**” The EU adopted new rules on the import of cultural heritage goods from non-EU countries. <https://www.europeaninterest.eu/article/epp-eu-protects-cultural-heritage-fights-terrorist-financing/>
- *The Nation* published an article titled “**First Tourist Group Travels to Palmyra.**” A group of Syrian and foreign tourists visited Palmyra. <https://nation.com.pk/12-Dec-2018/first-tourist-group-travels-to-palmyra>
- December 11, 2018 *Syrian Arab News Agency* published an article titled “**The Glass Makers of Syria Have a History as Old as Time.**” Syrian glass makers developed and preserved the traditional handicraft of glass making and continue to create Syrian glass in Damascus. <https://sana.sy/en/?p=153264>
- *TASS* published an article titled “**Syria Experiencing Revival of Tourism, Notes Russian Top Brass.**” The heritage sites in Bosra al-Sham are being visited by tourists. <http://tass.com/society/1035446>

- December 10, 2018 *The Syrian Observer* published an article titled “**Aleppo Experience a Shortfall in Reconstruction Funds.**” The head of the Aleppo City Council claims the government’s reconstruction budget will not cover one percent of reconstruction costs in Aleppo.
<https://syrianobserver.com/EN/news/47388/aleppo-experience-a-shortfall-in-reconstruction-funds.html>
- *PressTV* published an article titled “**Official: US, France looting Artifacts in Northern Syria.**” This article discusses the claim by the head of the DGAM that the US, France, and Kurdish troops were looting archaeological sites outside of Manbij.
<https://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/12/10/582513/Syria-accuses-US-stealing-artifacts>
- December 8, 2018 *Gates of Nineveh* published an article titled “**The Great Damascus Antiquities Bust?**” The antiquities found in the house of Brigadier General Suhail al-Hassan in Damascus is discussed in the context of the Syrian Conflict.
<https://gatesofnineveh.wordpress.com/2018/12/08/the-great-damascus-antiquities-bust/>
- *Xinhuanet* published an article titled “**Feature: Syrian Restorer Brings Damaged Artifacts Back to Life**” (by Hummam Sheikh Ali). Heba Jourma, a conservator for the Damascus National Museum, is restoring statues from Palmyra.
http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-12/08/c_137658202.htm
- December 7, 2018 *Floor Nature* published an article titled “**Exhibitions about Reconstruction and the Built Environment at Triennale di Milano.**” “Triennale di Milano hosts two exhibitions addressing the theme of reconstruction. “Ricostruzioni. Architettura, città e paesaggio nell’epoca delle distruzioni” (“Reconstruction: Architecture, city and landscape in the age of destruction”) opened on November 30 , while “re/build in the built environment” opens on December 14 looking at the relationship between architecture and the built environment.”
<https://www.floornature.com/exhibitions-about-reconstruction-and-built-environment-trien-14262/>
- *Syria Deeply* published an article titled “**Women at the Forefront of Saving Syria’s Heritage.**” The article discusses the trend of Syrian women leading the efforts of restoring Syria’s heritage.
<https://www.newsdeeply.com/syria/articles/2017/12/07/women-at-the-forefront-of-saving-syrias-heritage>
- December 5, 2018 *The BBC* published an article titled “**Syria War: Last Puppeteer of Damascus is Given a Lifeline.**” UNESCO added Syria’s Shadow Puppets to their list of cultural activities in danger.
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-46452834>

December 4, 2018

The Syrian Arab News Agency published an article titled “**Insulation of Church Roof at Krak des Chevaliers Castle to Protect Murals Completed.**” The joint Syrian-Hungarian archaeological expedition insulated the church roof at Krak des Chevaliers to preserve the church and ancient murals on its northern wall.

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=152688>

December 1, 2018

La Sapienza Newsletter published an article titled “**La Siria Bizantina Nella Documentazione Fotografica Dal Novecento A Oggi.**” La Sapienza University has an exhibition titled “La Siria Bizantina Nella Documentazione Fotografica Dal Novecento A Oggi” which showcases photographs of Byzantine Syria from 1932 to 1992.

https://news.uniroma1.it/30112018_1700

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The Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities published an article titled “**Confiscated Antiquities.**” The ATPA documented the confiscation of antiquities by Asayish forces in Hasakah.

<http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/confiscated-pieces-3/>