

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

NEA-PSHSS-14-001

Weekly Report 185-188 — April 1–30, 2018

Michael D. Danti, Marina Gabriel, Susan Penacho, William Reynolds, Kyra Kaercher, Darren Ashby, Gwendolyn Kristy, Jamie O’Connell, Nour Halabi

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¹ This report is based on research conducted by the “Cultural Preservation Initiative: Planning for Safeguarding Heritage Sites in Syria and Iraq.” 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.

Other Key Points

Syria

- Aleppo Governorate
 - A car bomb damaged al-Kabir Mosque in al-Bab, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0081**
 - Satellite imagery shows evidence of illegal excavation at Cyrrhus in Nebi Hourri, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0090**
 - Unknown perpetrators damaged a Kurdish cemetery, Martyr Seydo in Kafr Safra, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0092**
- Damascus
 - SARG forces captured the Ali Bin Abi Talib Mosque in Damascus, Damascus Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0085**
 - Heavy shelling damaged the Palestinian Mosque in Damascus, Damascus Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0087**
 - Possible SARG shelling damaged the Palestinian Arab Cultural Center in Damascus, Damascus Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0095**
 - Possible SARG shelling damaged the Palestinian Martyrs Cemetery in Damascus, Damascus Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0096**
- Daraa Governorate
 - Photographs reveal flooding in the Roman Theater in Bosra, Daraa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0091**
- Deir ez-Zor Governorate
 - The Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM) in Syria published a new report about Mari, Tell Hariri, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0224 UPDATE**
 - A reported Iranian organization built a shrine at Ein Ali, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0088**
 - Unknown forces destroyed the Tell Ein Ali Tower in Deir ez-Zor Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0089**
- Homs Governorate
 - An alleged SARG airstrike damaged al-Omari Mosque in Rastan, Homs Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0098**
- Idlib Governorate
 - Reported Russian airstrikes damaged al-Kabir Mosque in Ariha, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0079**
 - Reported SARG airstrikes damaged al-Rahman Mosque in al-Bara, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0080**
 - Reported SARG shelling damaged al-Maghrebi Mosque in Jisr al-Shughour, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0082**
 - Satellite imagery reveals ongoing damage due to illegal excavations and military occupation at Ebla, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0083**
 - An explosion damaged Suhaib al-Rumi Mosque in Idlib, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0084**
 - Alleged Hayat Tahrir al-Sham militants destroyed a Roman column in Banabel, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0086**

- An alleged Russian airstrike damaged al-Kabir Mosque in Ma'ar Zita, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0097**
- Rif Dimashq Governorate
 - Possible SARG shelling damaged al-Bara bin Azab Mosque in Hajar al-Aswad, Rif Dimashq Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0093**
 - Possible SARG shelling damaged al-Abbas Mosque in Hajar al-Aswad, Rif Dimashq Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0094**

Iraq

No Incident Reports

Libya

- Fezzan
 - Ongoing fighting damaged Sabha Castle in Sabha, Fezzan. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 18-0016 UPDATE**
- Tripolitania
 - Natural impacts and lack of maintenance caused the collapse of historic buildings in Ghadames, Tripolitania. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 18-0002 UPDATE**
 - Thieves allegedly stole bells from the Anglican Church of Christ the King in Tripoli, Tripolitania. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 18-0019**
- Cyrenaica
 - A fire broke out in a storeroom containing artifacts in Sidi Khrebish (Berenice) in Benghazi, Cyrenaica. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 18-0020**

Military and Political Context

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

1. Rif Dimashq Governorate:
 - On April 1, *Reuters* reported that Jaish al-Islam, civic leaders, and Russia had reached an agreement to evacuate critically injured people from the town of Douma. Hezbollah media reported that an agreement for the evacuation of Jaish al-Islam fighters had also been reached.²
 - On April 2, Syrian state media reported that initial evacuations of Jaish al-Islam, the last opposition group in Eastern Ghouta, had begun. Members of Jaish al-Islam were reportedly evacuated to the northern towns of Jarablus, Idlib Governorate and al-Bab, Aleppo Governorate.³
 - On April 3, members of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) reported that the Syrian regime had warned them, via civilian channels, that “they must accept state rule or leave.” The FSA holds several towns in Eastern Qalamoun. According to the FSA, an offer was made to the regime for the opposition forces to withdraw from the towns and into the mountains, allowing civilians to stay.⁴

² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43609046> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ghouta/last-eastern-ghouta-rebels-poised-to-surrender-syrian-state-media-idUSKCN1H8116>

³ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43617097> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ghouta/syrian-state-media-last-rebel-group-starts-leaving-ghouta-idUSKCN1H90PN>

⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/russia-assad-give-ultimatum-to-syria-rebels-northeast-of-damascus-idUSKCN1HA0VP>

- On April 3, the Russian Defence Ministry reported that more than 40,000 civilians had returned to Eastern Ghouta after fleeing the violence in the area. International aid organizations, present on the ground, have not confirmed the return.⁵
- On April 7–8, local sources reported that a suspected SARG chemical weapons attack in Duma killed at least 40 people, including children. The Syrian regime and Russia denied that a chemical attack had taken place. According to the World Health Organization, 500 Syrians had been treated for exposure to chemical agents as a result of the attack.⁶
- On April 8, Syrian opposition fighters belonging to Jaish al-Islam began evacuating Duma in the “first phase” of a Russian-negotiated agreement with the Syrian regime. The evacuations was overseen by Russian military police. The opposition forces were permitted to travel to opposition-held areas of northern Syria in exchange for the release of “hundreds of hostages and prisoners of war.”⁷
- On April 9, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) reported that they would be sending a team to Duma to investigate claims that the Syrian regime conducted chemical weapons attacks.⁸
- On April 10, dozens of evacuated Syrian opposition fighters and residents from Duma reached opposition-held areas of Aleppo Governorate. Evacuations continued in Duma.⁹
- On April 11, the Russian military announced that the Syrian regime had taken full control of Duma.¹⁰
- On April 13–14, US, UK, and French military jets took part in targeted airstrikes in Syria in response to a reported chemical attack in Duma. According to the Pentagon, the strikes targeted a scientific research facility in Damascus, a chemical weapons storage facility west of the city of Homs, and a chemical weapons equipment storage site and command post near Homs.¹¹
- On April 14, members of the Syrian army entered Duma. The Syrian regime now controls the entirety of Damascus and the suburbs of Eastern Ghouta.¹²

⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ghouta/more-than-40000-people-returned-to-syrias-ghouta-agencies-idUSKCN1HAOUT>

⁶ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43697084> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ghouta-who/who-500-syrian-patients-show-symptoms-pointing-to-toxic-weapons-exposure-idUSKBN1HI18D> ; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/dozens-killed-in-apparent-chemical-weapons-attack-on-civilians-in-eastern-ghouta--rescue-workers/2018/04/08/231bba18-3ac0-11e8-af3c-2123715f78df_story.html

⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ghouta-negotiati/rebel-fighters-begin-leaving-syrias-douma-after-weeks-long-military-assault-idUSKBN1HF09Z>

⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/international-experts-to-inspect-attack-site-in-syria-as-u-s-ponders-response-idUSKBN1HG0D8>

⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ghouta/syrian-rebels-evacuated-from-douma-reach-northwest-monitor-idUSKBN1HH19M>

¹⁰ <https://apnews.com/66d16129a1314273b5194f540f6c59b8>

¹¹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-explosions/explosions-rock-damascus-reuters-witness-idUSKBN1HL02U> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43762251>

¹² <http://www.latimes.com/world/middleeast/la-fg-syria-ghouta-2018-story.html>

- On April 19, the Syrian military reportedly gave ISIS fighters 48 hours to leave their pockets of control near Damascus, namely the Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmouk, the district of Hajar al-Aswad, and surrounding neighborhoods. Syrian opposition forces also began leaving the northeast enclave of Dumayr. Opposition forces based in areas of Eastern Qalamoun also reportedly agreed to withdraw.¹³
 - On April 20, ISIS fighters reportedly agreed to evacuate the Yarmouk refugee camp, the district of Hajar al-Aswad, and neighboring areas. Despite this supposed agreement, military activity continued in the area, including aerial bombardment. The surrender of the area will bring the entire region surrounding Damascus back under Assad control.¹⁴
 - On April 21, chemical weapons experts from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) finally visited a suspected chemical attack site in Duma.¹⁵
 - On April 22–23, the Syrian army targeted areas south of Damascus that remain under ISIS control.¹⁶
2. Homs Governorate:
- On April 9, the Syrian regime and Russia accused Israel of carrying out an airstrike on the Tiyas Airbase (aka T4 Airbase), located near the city of Homs. According to reports, 14 pro-regime forces, including seven Iranian nationals, were killed in the strike. A report by the *New York Times* later reported that the US conferred with Israeli officials prior to the strike.¹⁷
 - On April 24, the “Syrian minister responsible for national reconciliation,” Ali Haidar, told *Reuters* that the Syrian government would focus on the opposition-held pocket in the city of Homs following the securing of areas around Damascus.¹⁸
 - On April 30, the Syrian army launched a “massive bombardment,” including airstrikes and artillery, against opposition-held areas of Homs Governorate between the cities of Hama and Homs. A reported 140 Syrian army strikes hit the town of Rastan and surrounding villages.¹⁹
3. Aleppo Governorate:
- On April 12, a car bomb exploded near the district council building in the opposition-held city of Azaz. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.²⁰

¹³ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/isil-48-hours-evacuate-area-south-damascus-180419085855224.html> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/insurgents-south-of-syrian-capital-surrender-says-state-tv-idUSKBN1HR00B>

¹⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/insurgents-south-of-syrian-capital-surrender-says-state-tv-idUSKBN1HR00B> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/syrian-army-bombards-yarmouk-camp-war-monitor-says-idUSKBN1HR00B> ; <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=89898>

¹⁵ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43850979>

¹⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/syrian-army-targets-south-damascus-insurgent-enclave-idUSKBN1HU16E> ; <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/syrian-military-pummels-isis-held-districts-in-damascus>

¹⁷ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43694588> ; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/syria-says-strike-on-military-base-carried-out-by-israeli-warplanes/2018/04/09/4179f3a2-2864-46ec-9b35-fef7c4eaf247_story.html ; <https://www.wsj.com/articles/israel-conferred-with-u-s-on-strike-in-syria-to-target-iranian-war-gear-1524001066>

¹⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/syrian-government-plans-to-retake-north-homs-from-rebels-next-minister-idUSKBN1HV1LE>

¹⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria/syrian-army-renews-push-on-besieged-areas-idUSKBN1I10HT>

²⁰ <https://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/car-bomb-injures-10-in-syria-s-azaz-local-sources/1116183>

- On April 22, Syrian opposition forces, including fighters from Jaish al-Islam, arrived in Aleppo Governorate from the area of Eastern Qalamoun after a Russian-negotiated evacuation deal with the Syrian regime.²¹
- On April 29–30, missiles struck the Neirab Airbase near Aleppo. No group claimed responsibility for the attack, however suspicion fell on Israel.²²
- 4. Deir ez Zor Governorate:
 - On April 29, US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) repelled a SARG attack against several villages located on the Euphrates River. US officials confirmed the attack. SARG and pro-regime forces reportedly captured the town of Jeneina.²³
- 5. Hama Governorate:
 - On April 29–30, missiles struck munitions warehouses at a Syrian military base near the city of Hama, killing at least 16 people, including Iranian forces. No group claimed responsibility for the attack, however suspicion fell on Israel.

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of al-Bukamal (Abu Kamal) and Shadaddi.²⁴
- During the reporting period, ISIS militants released a pledge of loyalty to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi via their social media groups. Al-Baghdadi's whereabouts remain unknown.²⁵
- On April 25, the Russian military stated that Russia would supply the Syrian regime with a “new missile defense system,” following targeted airstrikes by the US, France, and UK.²⁶

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

1. Anbar Governorate:
 - On April 2, Iraqi Security Forces reportedly carried out an operation that targeted ISIS militants in the town of al-Rutbah. A reported 65 ISIS militants were killed in the operation.²⁷
 - On April 19, the Iraqi Air Force reported that it had carried out airstrikes against ISIS in areas near the border with Syria. The strikes reportedly took place in cooperation with the Syrian army.²⁸

²¹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/syria-qalamoun-fighters-arrive-aleppo-evacuation-deal-180422171944816.html> ; <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1288721/middle-east>

²² <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/30/world/middleeast/strikes-syria-iran-israel.html> ; [https://www.qasioun-](https://www.qasioun-news.com/en/news/show/143660/Pictures>Show>The>Areas>Hit>By>The>Missiles>Attack>Near>Aleppo>City)

[news.com/en/news/show/143660/Pictures>Show>The>Areas>Hit>By>The>Missiles>Attack>Near>Aleppo>City](https://www.qasioun-news.com/en/news/show/143660/Pictures>Show>The>Areas>Hit>By>The>Missiles>Attack>Near>Aleppo>City) ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43947019>

²³ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/syria-sdf-reclaim-territory-hours-government-capture-180429184747155.html> ; [https://www.qasioun-](https://www.qasioun-news.com/en/news/show/143510/Syrian>Regime>Attacks>SDF>And>Controls>A>Village>West>Deir>Ezzour)

[news.com/en/news/show/143510/Syrian>Regime>Attacks>SDF>And>Controls>A>Village>West>Deir>Ezzour](https://www.qasioun-news.com/en/news/show/143510/Syrian>Regime>Attacks>SDF>And>Controls>A>Village>West>Deir>Ezzour)

²⁴ See: “US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIS in Syria, Iraq”. *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [1486368](#), [1499545](#)

²⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-islamic-state/islamic-state-militants-renew-loyalty-pledge-to-caliph-baghdadi-idUSKCN1HB1TC>

²⁶ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/russia-bashar-al-assad-syria-new-missile-defense-system-reports-s-300-system/>

²⁷ <https://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/iraqi-security-65-islamic-state-militants-killed-in-anbar-ambush/>

²⁸ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/iraq-fighter-jets-strike-isil-targets-syria-180419125454310.html> ; <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1498576/iraqi-air-force-conducts-strike-against-isis-terrorists-in-syria/source/GovDelivery/>

2. Diyala Governorate:
 - On April 19, ISIS militants staged two attacks on Iraqi forces in the districts of Hawija and Khanaqin.²⁹
3. Baghdad Governorate:
 - On April 30, the Combined Joint Forces Land Component Command headquarters was “deactivated” at a ceremony in Baghdad. The ceremony signified the end of “major combat operations” against ISIS in Iraq.³⁰

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Asad, Baghdad, Baiji, Huwajjah, Qaim, Qayyarah, and Tal Afar.³¹
- On April 20, Human Rights Watch (HRW) released a report accusing Iraqi officials of destroying possible war crime evidence after a room containing the bodies of reported ISIS members was burned down in Mosul.³²
- On April 22, ISIS spokesman Abu Hassan al-Muhajir released an audio recording calling on fighters to “redirect their ire toward the leaders of Arab nations in the region.” Al-Muhajir specifically mentioned upcoming elections in Iraq, calling “anyone who collaborates with the Iraqi government a legitimate target.”³³

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

1. Tripolitania:
 - On April 3, the Libyan Government of National Accord (LNA) announced a military operation to eliminate ISIS fighters near the city of Misrata.³⁴

Other Key Points:

- On April 11, international and Libyan media reported that General Khalifa Haftar, commander of the Libyan National Army (LNA), had been flown to Paris from Jordan after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage and losing consciousness. An LNA spokesman denied the reports, stating that the 75-year old was in good health.³⁵
- On April 25, a spokesman for LNA reported that General Haftar would be returning to Benghazi following two weeks of medical treatment in Paris. Haftar returned the following day.³⁶

²⁹ <http://www.nrttv.com/en/Details.aspx?jicare=20720>

³⁰ <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1506474/land-component-command-headquarters-in-iraq-holds-deactivation-ceremony/source/GovDelivery/> ; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-usa/u-s-led-coalition-signals-end-of-major-operations-against-islamic-state-in-iraq-idUSKBN1I11S1>

³¹ See: “US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIS in Syria, Iraq”. *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [1486368](#), [1499545](#)

³² <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/04/20/iraq-officials-dispose-potential-war-crime-evidence>

³³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/22/world/middleeast/isis-arabs-attacks.html>

³⁴ <https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1225756/libya-sarraj%E2%80%99s-gna-kicks-anti-isis-military-operation>

³⁵ <http://www.france24.com/en/20180411-libya-khalifa-haftar-strongman-paris-hospital-val-de-grace> ; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/libyan-commander-khalifa-haftar-coma-paris-hospital-180411152936655.html> ; <https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/libya-warlord-khalifa-haftar-suffers-stroke> ; <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/04/12/libyan-strongman-khalifa-haftar-coma-paris-hospital/>

³⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security/east-libya-commander-haftar-returning-after-treatment-in-paris-idUSKBN1HW2EN> ; <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/strongman-haftar-returns-to-benghazi-after-treatment-in-paris-1.724944>

Other significant political and military events during the reporting period:

- On April 30, twin ISIS suicide bombings struck near an Afghan security compound in Kabul, killing at least 25 people, including as least seven journalists.³⁷

Incident Reports: Syria**SHI 17-0224 UPDATE****Report Date:** April 1, 2018**Site Name:** Mari (Tell Hariri; تَلّ حريري ; ماري)**Date of Incident:** Between November 13, 2017 and December 2, 2017**Location:** Tell Hariri, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mari is an ancient Mesopotamian city on the Euphrates River. Archaeological evidence from the site has been crucial for understanding Mesopotamian civilization during the Bronze Age. The city was founded in the early 3rd millennium BCE and prospered as an important stop along trade routes. The city grew throughout its history, eventually spreading over more than 14 hectares and rising 14.5 meters above the surrounding plain.

By approximately 1800 BCE, Mari's political control extended from Babylon in the south to the modern Turkish border in the north. The site was abandoned after its destruction 1759 BCE by the Babylonian king Hammurabi.³⁸ Mari is also known for an archive containing 50,000 clay tablets that were excavated at the site during the French Mandate period in the 1930s.³⁹ Until the current conflict, conservation efforts at the site were ongoing. Mari was nominated to the World Heritage Tentative List in 1999 and again as part of the Euphrates Valley Landscape in 2011.⁴⁰

Site Date: 2900–1759 BCE

Incident Summary: The Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM) in Syria published a new report about an archaeological site.

Incident Source and Description: On March 27, 2018 the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM) in Syria published a report stating that DGAM archaeologists had conducted a field assessment of the site of Mari in Deir ez-Zor Governorate. According to the DGAM, the site has been heavily damaged by natural impacts and illegal excavations conducted by 'terrorists.'⁴¹ The DGAM also noted that the Palace of Zimri-Lim, located within the ancient site, suffered extensive damage. Photographs published with the report show a number of looting pits at the site, as well as damage to a modern structure protecting part of the palace. On April 19, 2018 *The Guardian*

³⁷ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/suicide-bombings-in-kabul-kill-seven-including-a-journalist-rushing-to-the-scene/2018/04/30/88ae0af2-4c31-11e8-b725-92c89fe3ca4c_story.html

³⁸ Burns 1999: 126–129.

³⁹ <https://www.aaas.org/page/ancient-history-modern-destruction-assessing-status-syria-s-tentative-world-heritage-sites-7#Mari>

⁴⁰ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/1294/>; <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5702/>

⁴¹ <http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=2386>

published an article reporting that most of the damage occurred under ISIS rule of the area, citing imagery showing extensive looting at the site in 2014.⁴²

However, as previously reported by ASOR CHI using DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, damage to the Palace of Zimri-Lim occurred between November 13, 2017 and December 2, 2017. During this time period, the central portion of the palace zone was damaged. The walls on the northern side of the central courtyard appear to have been mostly leveled, with a darkening of the soil and visible ash and discoloration on the remaining parts of the structure suggesting the damage was the result of an airstrike or explosives. There is also a crater visible in the soil just south of the covered area of the palace.

There is no visible evidence of increased illegal excavation in late 2017, although the walls of the palace are in poor condition as a result of a lack of maintenance.

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 18-0088** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0089**.

For information on previous damage to the site of Mari, see **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 14-0044** in **Weekly Report 9**, **SHI 14-0078** in **Weekly Report 15**, **SHI 14-0098** in **Weekly Report 19**, **SHI 17-0140** in the **August 2017 Monthly Report**, and **SHI 17-0208** in the **November 2017 Monthly Report**, and **SHI 17-0224** in the **December 2017 Monthly Report**.

Pattern: Site management; Military activity: explosives; Illegal excavation.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

DGAM: <http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=2386>

The Guardian:

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2018/apr/19/destruction-at-the-ancient-site-of-mari-in-syria>

Scholarly:

Burns, R. (2009) *The Monuments of Syria*. London: I.B. Tauris. 126–129.

Margueron, Jean-Claude (2004) *Mari. Métropole de l'Euphrate au IIIe au début du IIe millénaire av. J.C.* Paris: Éditions A. et J. Picard.

⁴² <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2018/apr/19/destruction-at-the-ancient-site-of-mari-in-syria>



A photograph of a looting pit within the walls of Mari (DGAM; March 27, 2018)



A photograph of a looting pit within the archaeological site of Mari (DGAM; March 27, 2018)



A photograph of a possible looting pit at Mari (DGAM; March 27, 2018)



A photograph showing a section of the site of Mari (DGAM; March 27, 2018)



A photograph showing the collapsed modern structure covering a section of the Palace of Zimri-Lim (DGAM; March 27, 2018)



A photograph shows a possible looting pit at Mari (DGAM; March 27, 2018)



A photograph shows evidence of possible looting at Mari (DGAM; March 27, 2018)



A photograph of a section of Mari (DGAM; March 27, 2018)



A photograph shows a looting pit at Mari (DGAM; March 27, 2018)



The modern covering over the Palace of Zimri-Limon prior to any explosive damage (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; October 19, 2017)



Previously reported damage to the modern structure covering the temple area of the Palace of Zimri-Lim, along with soil discoloration indicated by red arrows (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; November 13, 2017)



Increased damage to the covering over the temple area of the Palace of Zimri-Lim, indicated by red arrows. Just south of the structure is a crater also indicated by an arrow (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; December 2, 2017)



The extent of illegal excavation at Mari indicated by the orange areas (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 14, 2018)

SHI 18-0079

Report Date: April 3, 2018

Site Name: al-Kabir Mosque (مسجد الكبير)

Date of Incident: April 3, 2018

Location: Ariha, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Al-Kabir Mosque is a Mamluk-era mosque in the town of Ariha. The current building largely dates to the reign of the Mamluk Sultan Baybars (r. 1260–77 CE), who had an earlier mosque replaced with the one in question. The minaret was commissioned during the reign of the Mamluk ruler al-Muzaffar Hajji (r. 1346–7). The mosque was renovated and expanded in the early 20th century.⁴³

Site Date: built ca. 1270 CE; expanded 1916

Incident Summary: Reported Russian airstrikes damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On April 3, 2018 a Private Twitter Account published a video showing the aftermath of reported Russian airstrikes on the town of Ariha near al-Kabir Mosque in the Old City neighborhood. The footage appears to indicate that the front entrance of the mosque beneath the minaret sustained damage, although the extent of the damage is currently unknown.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Idlib Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0080, SHI 18-0082, SHI 18-0083, SHI 18-0084, SHI 18-0086, and SHI 18-0097.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Archnet: https://archnet.org/sites/5572/media_contents/44561

ESyria:

<http://www.esyria.sy/Idleb/index.php?p=stories&category=places&filename=2008071218300321>

Private Twitter Account

⁴³ <http://www.esyria.sy/Idleb/index.php?p=stories&category=places&filename=2008071218300321>

Scholarly:

Meinecke, M. (1992) *Die Mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien* (648/1250 bis 923/1517). Glückstadt: Verlag J. J. Augustin, I/68, II/45.



Video still showing damage to entrance of al-Kabir Mosque (Private Twitter Account; April 3, 2018)

SHI 18-0080

Report Date: April 5, 2018

Site Name: al-Rahman Mosque (الرحمن مسجد)

Date of Incident: April 5, 2018

Location: al-Bara, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Reported SARG airstrikes damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On April 5, 2018 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG airstrikes damaged al-Rahman Mosque and a nearby school in al-Bara.⁴⁴ A photograph accompanying the report shows damage and debris in the mosque interior, including blown out windows. Qasioun News Agency published more extensive video footage showing damage to the mosque's interior and a school building adjacent to the mosque.⁴⁵ Most of the mosque damage appears to be material rather than structural.

Al-Rahman Mosque has been damaged on at least one prior occasion. Video footage published by Shaam News Network in March 2012 shows significant damage to the interior of the mosque, including a large hole in a wall.⁴⁶ This was reportedly the result of shelling by SARG forces.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Idlib Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0079, SHI 18-0082, SHI 18-0083, SHI 18-0084, SHI 18-0086, and SHI 18-0097.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Qasioun News Agency:

<https://www.qasioun-news.com/ar/video/view/16608/طيران النظام يدمر أجزاء من مدرسة ومسجد في بلدة البارة بريف إدلب>

⁴⁴ <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/04/05/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-mosque-al-bara-village-idlib-subu-rbs-april-5/>

⁴⁵ <https://www.qasioun-news.com/ar/video/view/16608/طيران النظام يدمر أجزاء من مدرسة ومسجد في بلدة البارة بريف إدلب>

⁴⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6hQwV2dZ0o>

Shaam News Network: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6hQwV2dZ0o>

SMART News Agency: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GK9-yITf6EY>

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/04/05/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-mosque-al-bara-village-idlib-suburbs-april-5/>



Image shows the destruction of al Rahman Mosque in the middle of al Bara village in Jabal al Zaweya in Idlib governorate southern suburbs, due to Syrian regime warplanes missile, on April 5, 2018

©SNHR

Damage to the interior of al-Rahman Mosque (SNHR; April 5, 2018)



Damage to the interior of al-Rahman Mosque (SMART News Agency; April 5, 2018)



Damage to the interior of al-Rahman Mosque (SMART News Agency; April 5, 2018)

SHI 18-0081

Report Date: April 9, 2018

Site Name: al-Kabir Mosque (جامع الكبير)

Date of Incident: April 7, 2018

Location: al-Bab, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Early 20th century CE or earlier

Incident Summary: A car bomb damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On April 7, 2018 Euphrates Post reported that a car bomb damaged al-Kabir Mosque in al-Bab.⁴⁷ Video footage released by SMART News Agency indicates that the car bomb detonated outside of a fuel shop located in front of the mosque, resulting in damage to the mosque and surrounding shops.⁴⁸ The explosion killed at least 10 civilians.⁴⁹ No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Initial photographs and video from the site of the attack suggest that the wall of the mosque was damaged by shrapnel and stained by the soot from the adjacent fire. A series of makeshift structures between the explosion and the mosque appear to have partially shielded the mosque from the blast. DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from April 15, 2018 does not show any significant damage to the mosque.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0090** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report 18-0092**.

For more information on previous damage to al-Kabir Mosque, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0020** in **February 2017 Monthly Report**, **SHI 17-0048** in **April 2017 Monthly Report**, **SHI 17-0048 UPDATE** in **May 2017 Monthly Report**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

⁴⁷ <https://twitter.com/EuphratesPost/status/982610401727836162>

⁴⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOKBD0xtY14>

⁴⁹ <https://www.yenisafak.com/en/world/explosion-kills-10-civilians-in-syrias-al-bab-3248533;http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/04/07/massacre-civilians-unknown-source-ied-explosion-planted-car-middle-al-bab-city-aleppo-suburbs-april-7/>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Anadolu Agency:

<https://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/car-bomb-kills-8-people-in-syria-s-al-bab/1111354>

Archnet: <https://archnet.org/sites/4344>

Euphrates Post: <https://twitter.com/EuphratesPost/status/982610401727836162>

Halab Today: <https://twitter.com/HalabTodayTV/status/982609104362463232>

al-Jisr Satellite Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zN4nSq3bKfY>

Orient News: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOKBD0xtY14>

SMART News Agency: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6arsYnMk3aE>

Syrian Network for Human Rights:

<http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/04/07/massacre-civilians-unknown-source-ied-explosion-planted-car-middle-al-bab-city-aleppo-suburbs-april-7/>

Yeni Safak:

<https://www.yenisafak.com/en/world/explosion-kills-10-civilians-in-syrias-al-bab-3248533>



The area of the explosion near al-Kabir Mosque, seen from the west (Euphrates Post; April 7, 2018)



A video still shows attempts to extinguish the fire caused by the explosion near al-Kabir Mosque (Orient News; April 7, 2018)



The area of the explosion near al-Kabir Mosque, seen from the east (Yeni Safak; April 7, 2018)



The area of the explosion near al-Kabir Mosque, seen from the west (Yeni Safak; April 7, 2018)



The plume of smoke above the site, seen from the west (Yeni Safak; April 7, 2018)



The extinguishing of the fire near al-Kabir Mosque, seen from the northwest (Euphrates Post; April 7, 2018)



The remains of the car used in the attack near al-Kabir Mosque, seen from the west (Yeni Safak; April 7, 2018)



A video still shows Civil Defense members attempting to put out the fire near al-Kabir Mosque (al-Jisr Satellite Channel; April 7, 2018)



The aftermath of the attack near al-Kabir Mosque, seen from the east (Anadolu Agency; April 7, 2018)



The aftermath of the attack near al-Kabir Mosque, seen from the west (Anadolu Agency; April 7, 2018)



The aftermath of the attack near al-Kabir Mosque, seen from the west (Euphrates Post; April 7, 2018)



Al-Kabir Mosque prior to any reported damage (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 2, 2018)



Possible minor damage to the southwest part of al-Kabir Mosque indicated by red arrows. No severe damage is seen in this image (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 15, 2018)

SHI 18-0082**Report Date:** April 10, 2018**Site Name:** al-Maghrebi Mosque (المغربي مسجد)**Date of Incident:** April 10, 2018**Location:** Jisr al-Shughour, Idlib Governorate, Syria**Site Description:** Mosque**Site Date:** Unknown**Incident Summary:** Reported SARG shelling allegedly damaged a mosque.**Incident Source and Description:** On April 10, 2018 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG shelling on the town of Jisr al-Shughour damaged al-Maghrebi Mosque, damaging the building and its furniture.⁵⁰ No photographs of the damage were available at the time of publication.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Idlib Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0079, SHI 18-0080, SHI 18-0083, SHI 18-0084, SHI 18-0086, and SHI 18-0097.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of al-Maghrebi Mosque, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to intense military activity.**Sources:**Online Reporting:

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/04/10/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-mosque-jisr-al-shoghour-city-idlib-suburbs-april-10/>

⁵⁰ <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/04/10/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-mosque-jisr-al-shoghour-city-idlib-suburbs-april-10/>

SHI 18-0083

Report Date: April 17, 2018

Site Name: Ebla (Tell Mardikh; تل مردیخ)

Date of Incident: Ongoing

Location: Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Ebla (Tell Mardikh) is located 60 km southwest of Aleppo in Idlib Governorate. Occupied from the Early Bronze Age (ca. 3500 BCE) until the 7th century CE, the site consists of a central high mound (the “Acropolis”) surrounded by a lower mound comprising the Bronze Age lower town, which is in turn encircled by the remains of a large Middle Bronze Age earth and stone fortification wall and rampart with four gates.⁵¹ Ebla is best known for the discovery of a large Early Bronze Age palace, Palace G, which was destroyed by fire in antiquity. This destruction has been variously attributed to the Akkadian king Sargon, his grandson king Naram-Sin, and the rival city-state of Mari located on the Euphrates River.⁵² Excavations in the palace recovered an important archive of more than 5,000 complete and fragmentary administrative documents known as the ‘Ebla Tablets’.⁵³ The Bronze Age city was destroyed and rebuilt a number of times, until its final destruction ca. 1600 BCE by the Hittites.⁵⁴ Ebla never recovered, though small occupations continued to appear at the site until its final abandonment in the 7th-century CE.⁵⁵ The Italian Archaeological Expedition of the University ‘La Sapienza’ under the direction of Paolo Matthiae began excavating the site in 1964 and continued until 2011.⁵⁶

Site Date: c. 3500 BCE - 7th century CE

Incident Summary: Satellite imagery reveals ongoing damage due to illegal excavation and military occupation.

Incident Source and Description: DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows ongoing damage to archaeological material at the site of Ebla. Illegal excavation at the site has been ongoing since before May 31, 2012. The majority of the illegal excavation is centered on the acropolis area of the mound primarily around the Early and Middle Bronze Age Palaces. Other looting pits are visible around and within exposed areas from previous archaeological excavations. Since June 30, 2016 illegal excavations have increased, specifically on the southwestern side of the acropolis near the Resheph Temple and Early Bronze Age Palace.

Between February 21, 2017 and April 13, 2018 the remains of the Resheph Temple and the Early Bronze Age Palace disappeared. In addition to these illegal excavations there was an expansion to the bulldozing at the base of the acropolis mound on the northwestern corner close to the Middle Bronze Age Palace. The northwestern corner of the Palace of the Crown Prince has also been

⁵¹ Akkermans, P.M. & Schwartz, G. M. (2003), p. 295.

⁵² Biga, Maria Giovanna (2014), p. 103.

⁵³ Akkermans, P. M. & Schwartz, G. M. (2003), pp. 235, 240.

⁵⁴ Matthiae, Paolo (2013), p. 106.

⁵⁵ Pettinato, Giovanni (1991), p. 16.

⁵⁶ Matthiae, Paolo (2013), p. 37.

disturbed due to illegal excavations. Bulldozing is also seen around the northern corner of the mound near the Aleppo Gate.

Illegal excavations are not the only cause of the ongoing damage to the site of Ebla. The site was damaged by the construction of military occupation seen in embankments, bunkers, and impact craters from airstrikes. Between February 21, 2017 and April 13, 2018 there is increased damage to several parts of the tell. New earthworks have been constructed on the southeastern area of the mound and in the northeastern corner near the Euphrates Gate. Additional trenches have been dug around the mound for military vehicles. Satellite imagery has also shown multiple impact craters on the mound, often located close to a military trench or vehicle.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Idlib Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0079, SHI 18-0080, SHI 18-0082, SHI 18-0084, SHI 18-0086, and SHI 18-0097.**

For more information on previous damage to Ebla, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 14-0101 in Weekly Report 20, SHI 15-0137 in Weekly Report 61-62, SHI 15-0150 in Weekly Report 69-70, SHI 17-0167 in September 2017 Monthly Report.**

A detailed report of damage to the site compiled by The Day After - Heritage Protection Initiative (TDA-HPI) is available here:

<http://hpi.tda-sy.org/en/2016/07/15/تقرير-عن-استهداف-الطيران-الروسي-لموقع/>

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

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

New York Times:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/07/world/middleeast/syrian-war-devastates-ancient-sites.html>

TDA-HPI: <http://hpi.tda-sy.org/en/2016/07/15/تقرير-عن-استهداف-الطيران-الروسي-لموقع/>

Scholarly Sources:

Akkermans, P. M., & Schwartz, G. M. (2003). *The archaeology of Syria: from complex hunter-gatherers to early urban societies (c. 16,000-300 BC)*. Cambridge University Press.

Biga, Maria Giovanna (2014). "Inherited Space – Third Millennium Political and Cultural Landscape". In Cancik-Kirschbaum et al. *Constituent, Confederate, and Conquered Space: The Emergence of the Mittani State*. Walter de Gruyter.

Matthiae, Paolo (2013). "A Long Journey. Fifty Years of Research on the Bronze Age at Tell Mardikh/Ebla". In Matthiae, Paolo; Marchetti, Nicolò. Ebla and its Landscape: Early State Formation in the Ancient Near East. Left Coast Press.

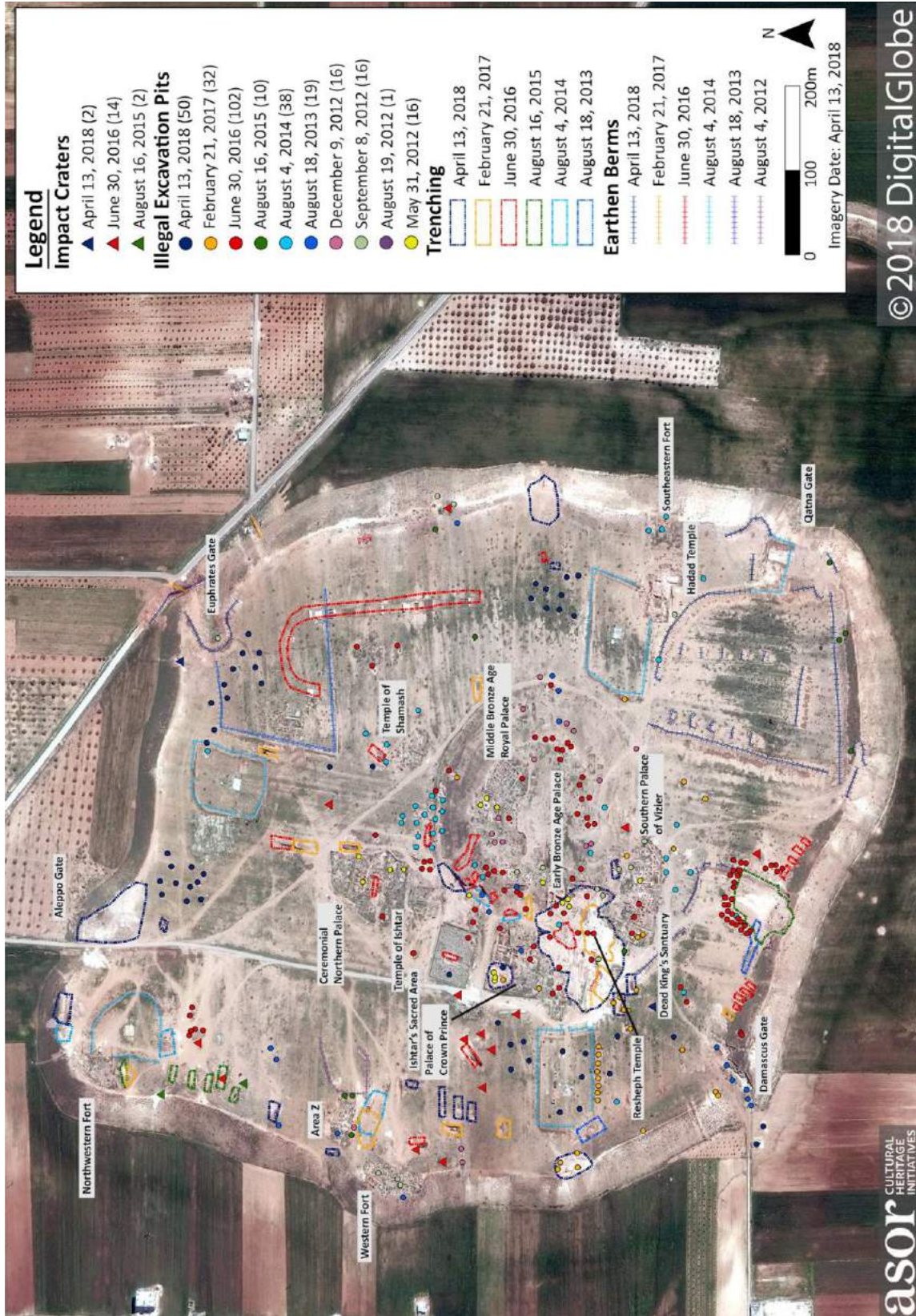
Pettinato, Giovanni (1991). Ebla, a new look at history. Johns Hopkins University Press.



Military vehicles (red circles), a military training course, and earthen berms (red arrows) on the mound of Ebla in addition to ongoing illegal excavations (outlined in blue) (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; February 21, 2017)



Severe damage to Ebla due to ongoing illegal excavations (outlined in blue) (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 13, 2018)



ASOR CHI analysis of ongoing damage to Ebla through April 13, 2018 (ASOR CHI/Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 13, 2018)

SHI 18-0084

Report Date: April 19, 2018

Site Name: Suhaib al-Rumi Mosque (مسجد صهيب الرومي)

Date of Incident: April 19, 2018

Location: Idlib, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: An explosion damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On April 19, 2018 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that an explosion of unknown origin damaged Suhaib al-Rumi Mosque in the Industrial Neighborhood in the city of Idlib.⁵⁷ SNHR was unable to identify the type of explosive or the perpetrator. Orient News reported the explosion was the result of a car bomb detonated near the mosque.⁵⁸

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Idlib Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0079, SHI 18-0080, SHI 18-0082, SHI 18-0083, SHI 18-0086, and SHI 18-0097.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Orient News:

April 19, 2018: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9BeaG9m8cc> ;

http://orient-news.net/ar/news_show/148044/0/انفجار-عبوة-ناسفة-في-مدينة-إدلب-صور

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/04/19/unknown-source-explosion-near-suhaib-al-roumi-mosque-east-idlib-city-april-19/>

⁵⁷ <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/04/19/unknown-source-explosion-near-suhaib-al-roumi-mosque-east-idlib-city-april-19/>

⁵⁸ http://orient-news.net/ar/news_show/148044/0/انفجار-عبوة-ناسفة-في-مدينة-إدلب-صور



A photograph showing severe damage to the interior of Suhaib al-Rumi Mosque after an explosion (SNHR; April 19, 2018)



Video still showing damage to the interior of Suhaib al-Rumi Mosque (Orient News; April 19, 2018)



Video still showing remains of alleged car bomb and damage to Suhaib al-Rumi Mosque (Orient News; April 19, 2018)



Video still showing damage to the exterior of Suhaib al-Rumi Mosque (Orient News; April 19, 2018)

SHI 18-0085**Report Date:** April 20, 2018**Site Name:** Ali Bin Abi Talib Mosque (مسجد علي بن أبي طالب)**Date of Incident:** April 20, 2018**Location:** Tadamon, Damascus, Damascus Governorate, Syria**Site Description:** Mosque**Site Date:** Unknown**Incident Summary:** SARG forces captured a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On April 20, 2018 a Private Twitter Account reported that SARG forces entered Tadamon district in Rif Dimashq Governorate, capturing Ali Bin Abi Talib Mosque from opposition forces in the area. Photographs show alleged SARG forces in the mosque interior, which shows damage and debris. One wall of the mosque has been sandbagged.

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that Ali Bin Abi Talib Mosque was initially damaged between April 9, 2012 and August 2, 2012. At that time, there was visible damage from heavy shelling in the surrounding area and visible damage to the roof of the mosque. The majority of the infrastructure around the mosque was destroyed between September 25, 2012 and November 6, 2012. There was an increase in the number of holes in the roof of Ali Bin Abi Talib Mosque between November 6, 2012 and December 23, 2014. The minaret also collapsed during that time frame. Recent DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows that all the buildings within the neighborhood around the mosque were also destroyed. There is no recent visible damage to the mosque.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Damascus Governorate: [ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0087](#), [SHI 18-0095](#), and [SHI 18-0096](#).

Pattern: Military activity: occupation/militarization.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Ali Bin Abi Talib Mosque, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:Online Reporting:

Private Twitter Account



SARG forces enter a mosque in Tadamon (Private Twitter Account; April 20, 2018)



SARG forces enter a mosque in Tadamon (Private Twitter Account; April 20, 2018)



Ali Bin Abi Talib Mosque prior to any visible damage (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 9, 2012)



First signs of damage to the roof of Ali Bin Abi Talib Mosque from shelling, indicated by red arrows (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; August 2, 2012)



Visible in this image is severe damage surrounding Ali Bin Abi Talib Mosque, as well as the collapse of the minaret on the northwest part of the mosque and at least three holes in its roof (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; December 23, 2014)



A recently available satellite image of Ali Bin Abi Talib Mosque, showing no increase in visible damage (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 20, 2018)

SHI 18-0086

Report Date: April 22, 2018

Site Name: Banabel Column (بنابل)

Date of Incident: March 17–April 22, 2018

Location: Banabel, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: The village of Banabel contains the ruins of what may be the earliest residences of the Roman period in North Central Syria. According to H.C. Butler, the ruins include three well-preserved houses, a small tower, and several other miscellaneous buildings, all dating to the 2nd century CE.⁵⁹ The most conspicuous of these is a large column around 30 meters high that stands to the southwest of the rest of the site. Crosby theorizes this structure was original a bicolumnar funerary monument.⁶⁰

Site Date: ca. 2nd century CE

Incident Summary: Alleged Hayat Tahrir al-Sham militants destroyed a Roman column.

Incident Source and Description: On April 22, 2018 a Private Twitter Account reported that Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) militants destroyed an ancient Roman column in the town of Banabel. On April 23, 2018 Aleppo Archaeology published a video on Facebook showing the moment the column collapsed.⁶¹

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from April 24, 2018 confirms the column was destroyed between March 17 and April 24, 2018.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Idlib Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0079, SHI 18-0080, SHI 18-0082, SHI 18-0083, SHI 18-0084, and SHI 18-0097.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives, intentional destruction.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Aleppo Archaeology:

<https://www.facebook.com/aleppoarchaeology/videos/1763788770346303/>

⁵⁹ Butler, H.C. (1903) *Publications of an American Archaeological Expedition to Syria in 1899–1900* (Band 2): *Architecture and other arts*. New York. 69.

⁶⁰ Butler 63.

⁶¹ <https://www.facebook.com/aleppoarchaeology/videos/1763788770346303/>

APSA 2011: <http://apsa2011.com/apsanew/idlib-limestone-massif-report-on-the-site-of-benabil/>

Private Twitter Account

Scholarly:

Butler, H.C. (1903) *Publications of an American Archaeological Expedition to Syria in 1899–1900* (Band 2): *Architecture and other arts*. New York.

Princeton University Visual Resource Collection:
<http://vrc.princeton.edu/archives/items/show/9525>



Ruins of a funerary monument near Banabel, seen from the southwest (Crosby archive Princeton; ca. 1899)⁶²

⁶² <http://vrc.princeton.edu/archives/items/show/9525>



Pre-damage photographs of the Banabel column (APSA 2011; July 21, 2015)



A video still shows the Banabel column in the moments before its destruction (Aleppo Archaeology; April 23, 2018)



A video still shows the Banabel column as it collapses (Aleppo Archaeology; April 23, 2018)



A video still shows the location of the collapse of the Banabel column (Aleppo Archaeology; April 23, 2018)



The Banabel column prior to damage (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; March 17, 2018)



The Banabel column post-collapse (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 24, 2018)

SHI 18-0087

Report Date: April 23, 2018

Site Name: Palestinian Mosque (مسجد فلسطين)

Date of Incident: Between April 14, 2018 and April 20, 2018

Location: Yarmouk, Damascus, Damascus Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Heavy shelling damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: Recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that the roof of the Palestinian Mosque in Yarmouk has been damaged as a result of heavy shelling of the area. At least three small holes are visible on the roof of the mosque in imagery released on April 20, 2018 that were not apparent in imagery from April 14, 2018. On April 21, 2018 a Private Twitter Account published photographs of damage to the Palestinian Mosque and the surrounding area.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Damascus Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0085**, **SHI 18-0095**, and **SHI 18-0096**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Private Twitter Account



Severe damage to the exterior of the Palestinian Mosque and surrounding area (Private Twitter Account; April 21, 2018)



Severe damage to the exterior of the Palestinian Mosque and surrounding area (Private Twitter Account; April 21, 2018)



Severe damage to the exterior of the Palestinian Mosque and surrounding area (Private Twitter Account; April 21, 2018)



The Palestinian Mosque prior to damage from shelling (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 14, 2018)



Damage to the roof of the Palestinian Mosque from heavy shelling, indicated by red arrows (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 20, 2018)

SHI 18-0088

Report Date: April 23, 2018

Site Name: Ein Ali Shrine

Date of Incident: Between November 10, 2017 and April 2018

Location: Ein Ali, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Shrine

Site Date: Modern

Incident Summary: An organization built a shrine at a historic site.

Incident Source and Description: On April 23, 2018 Euphrates Post reported that the organization known as the Authority of the Shrines of the “People of the House,” which is allegedly supported by Iran, built a shrine at the spring of Sayyid Ali bin Abi Talib.⁶³ A pair of before-and-after photographs in the report imply that the earlier remains, including a standing tower, were damaged or destroyed during the construction of the shrine. However, there is nothing in the photos themselves that definitively shows that the construction of the shrine damaged any remains.

Based on DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, construction of the shrine began between November 10, 2017 and December 2, 2017, as evidenced by numerous bulldozer scars at the location. Construction continues to the most recently available image from December 31, 2017. The shrine’s location is 155 meters southeast from the historic tower. However, the tower and site were damaged between March 23, 2013 and June 5, 2016, prior to the start of construction of the shrine.

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 17-0224 UPDATE** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0089**.

For more information on the site of Ein Ali and the tower, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0089**.

Pattern: Development disturbances.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Ein Ali Shrine, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject reconstruction and clean-up.

⁶³ <https://twitter.com/EuphratesPost/status/988406715988217856>; <http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/26472/Video-Iran-turns-Syria-into-Shia-region>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Baghdad Post:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/26472/Video-Iran-turns-Syria-into-Shia-region>

Euphrates Post: <https://twitter.com/EuphratesPost/status/988406715988217856>



The completed shrine, seen from the east (Baghdad Post; April 24, 2018)



An undated view of the spring and the tower prior to the tower's destruction in March 2013 (Baghdad Post; April 24, 2018)



Video still of the shrine during its construction, seen from the southeast (Baghdad Post; April 24, 2018)



Video still of the channel running from beneath the shrine, seen from the west (Baghdad Post; April 24, 2018)



Video still of the concrete skin laid down over the natural embankment (Baghdad Post; April 24, 2018)



This graphic misleadingly implies that the construction of the shrine resulted in the destruction of the tower (Euphrates Post; April 23, 2018)



Additional misinformation that erroneously connects the construction of the shrine with the destruction of the tower (Euphrates Post; April 23, 2018)



The location of the Ain Ali Shrine prior to completed construction. Numerous bulldozer scars are visible inside of the red rectangle, and construction vehicles line the road leading to the construction zone (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; December 2, 2017)



The foundations of the shrine itself are shown within the red square (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; December 31, 2017)



Ein Ali Shrine in relation to Tell Ein Ali and the location of the destroyed Tell Ein Ali Tower shown in the Euphrates Post photos (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; December 31, 2017)

SHI 18-0089

Report Date: April 24, 2018

Site Name: Tell Ein Ali Tower

Date of Incident: Between March 23, 2013 and September 28, 2016

Location: Tell Ein Ali, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

Site Description: An ancient tower in Deir ez Zor Governorate.

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A historic tower was destroyed.

Incident Source and Description: Recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that the tower at the southeastern part of Tell Ein Ali was destroyed between March 20, 2013 and September 28, 2016. Illegal excavations along the tell's western slope, as well as bulldozing north of the tell, also occurred during this time period. The perpetrators of this destruction are not known.

The Euphrates Post recently implied that the construction of a shrine at a nearby natural spring was connected to the destruction of the tower.⁶⁴ However, DigitalGlobe satellite imagery demonstrates that at least 2 years separate the destruction of the tower from the construction of the shrine, which is located 155 meters to the southeast.

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 17-0224 UPDATE** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0088**.

Pattern: Military activity; intentional destruction; Illegal excavation.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Tell Ein Ali Tower, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject reconstruction and clean-up.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Euphrates Post: <https://twitter.com/EuphratesPost/status/988406715988217856>

⁶⁴ <https://twitter.com/EuphratesPost/status/988406715988217856>



An undated picture of the tower is visible on the right (Euphrates Post; April 23, 2018)



An undated picture of the tower is visible on the right (Euphrates Post; April 23, 2018)



Tell Ein Ali prior to the destruction of the tower (shown within the red oval) (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; March 20, 2013)



Illegal excavation on the western slope of the tell indicated by red arrows, bulldozing marks on the northern side, and the location of the now destroyed tower as shown by the red oval (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe: September 28, 2016)

SHI 18-0090

Report Date: April 24, 2018

Site Name: Cyrrhus (Nebi Hourri; نبي حوري)

Date of Incident: Between April 15, 2018 and April 24, 2018

Location: Nebi Hourri, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Cyrrhus was founded ca. 330 BCE by the Hellenistic general Seleucus Nicator. The city remained in Seleucid hands until the 1st century BCE, when it was captured by Armenia during the reign of Tigranes II. He was later defeated and Cyrrhus, along with much of Syria, was annexed to Rome. Cyrrhus was captured at least twice by the Sasanians in the 3rd century CE, causing the city to fall into decline. It was captured by the Arabs in 637. By the 13th century, Cyrrhus appears to have been largely deserted.⁶⁵ Visible remains include a large theater (built ca. 150 CE), a Byzantine-era citadel, two Roman-era bridges, a hexagonal mausoleum, a church, a basilica and several gateways.⁶⁶

Site Date: ca. 330 BCE–1050 CE

Incident Summary: Satellite imagery shows evidence of illegal excavation at an archaeological site.

Incident Source and Description: DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from April 15 and 24, 2018 shows at least five new instances of illegal excavation at the archaeological site of Cyrrhus. The illegal excavation pits are located southeast of the theater.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0081** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0092**.

For more information on previous damage to the site of Cyrrhus, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0033** in the **January 2018 Monthly Report**.

Pattern: Illegal excavation.

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

Sources:

Online Source:

World Monuments Fund: <https://www.wmf.org/project/cyrrhus-nebi-houri>

⁶⁵ <https://www.wmf.org/project/cyrrhus-nebi-houri>

⁶⁶ Ball 2016: 187.

Scholarly:

Ball, W. (2016) *Rome in the East*. London: Routledge.



The area southeast of the theater at Cyrrhus prior to new illegal excavation pits (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 15, 2018)



New illegal excavation pits southeast of the theater at the archaeological site of Cyrrhus (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 24, 2018)

SHI 18-0091

Report Date: April 29, 2018

Site Name: Bosra Roman Theater (المسرح الروماني ببصرى)

Date of Incident: April 29, 2018

Location: Bosra, Daraa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: The Roman Theater at Bosra was built in the mid-2nd century CE of locally available black basalt. The theater is one of the largest and most intact in the Roman world, with seating for 15,000 people.⁶⁷ Ross Burns writes, “the Ayyubid fortifications fit like a jacket around the half-circle of the Roman building, with major towers at the northeast and northwest corners, a central bastion along the diameter (north) and give subsidiary towers around the arc of the semi-circle.”⁶⁸ The Ayyubid upper ramparts now house, on the upper terrace, a collection of sculptures from the Roman period as well as Roman and Arabic inscriptions. The southwestern tower houses an ethnographic collection of artifacts.⁶⁹

Site Date: Roman, Ayyubid

Incident Summary: Photographs reveal flooding in the Roman Theater in Bosra.

Incident Source and Description: On April 29, 2018 Aleppo Archaeology published photographs showing flooding in the orchestra of the Roman Theater at Bosra.⁷⁰ The flood waters rose to cover much of the stage and several rows of seats.

A photograph published by the Facebook page Syrian Archaeological Sites Under the Crisis shows flooding around the base of the Ayyubid-era ramparts surrounding the Roman theater.⁷¹

Pattern: Natural impacts.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Bosra Roman Theater, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to natural impacts.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Aleppo Archaeology: <https://www.facebook.com/aleppoarchaeology/posts/1770409589684221>

Al Monitor: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BiM6jy3hJdb/>

⁶⁷ Ball 2002: 200.

⁶⁸ Burns 2009: 79

⁶⁹ Ibid. 82.

⁷⁰ https://www.facebook.com/aleppoarchaeology/?hc_ref=ARQytQDLzEShPW690o-68wFIWwqrs5FgQpyW8x_B4g0KgJMh11Fkm3kLYavlUHXngNHM&fref=nf

⁷¹ <https://www.facebook.com/Syrianarchaeologicalsitesunderthecrisis/posts/674719296252850>

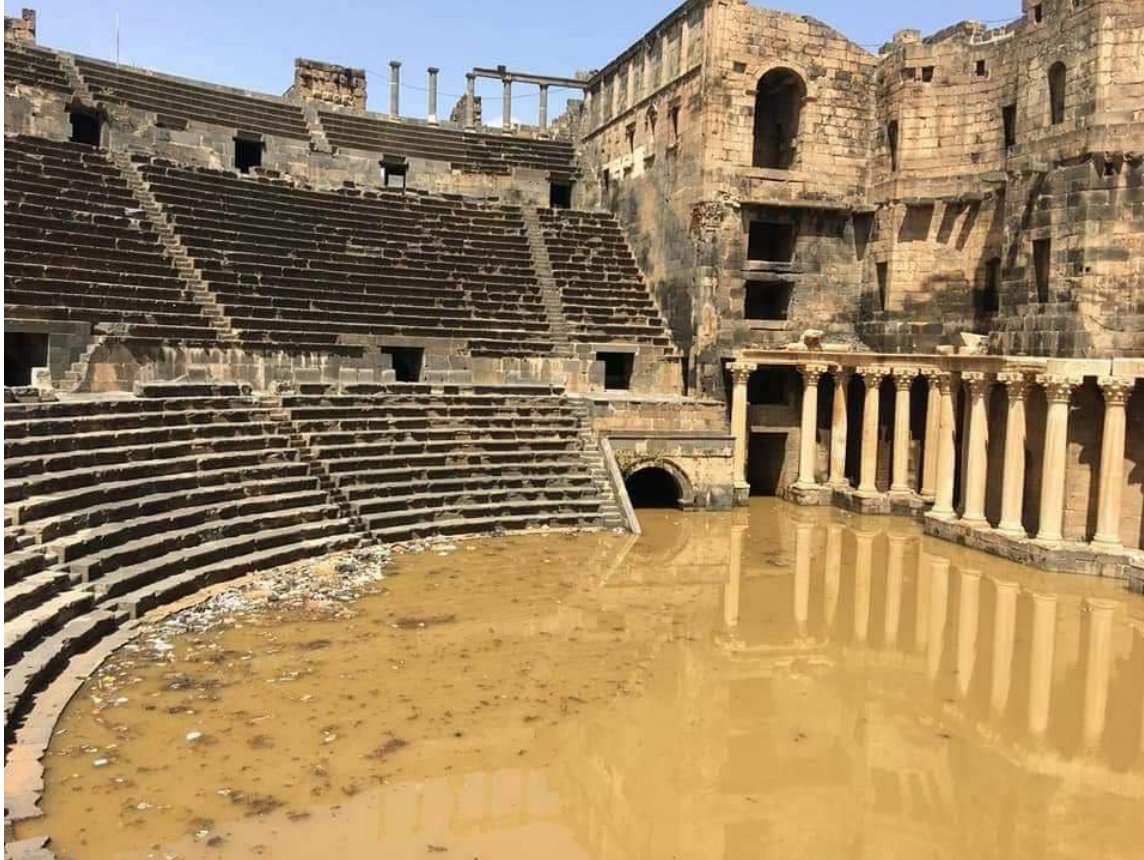
Syrian Archaeological Sites Under the Crisis:

<https://www.facebook.com/Syrianarchaeologicalsitesunderthecrisis/posts/674719296252850>

Scholarly:

Ball, W. (2002) *Rome in the East: The Transformation of an Empire*. London: Routledge.

Burns, R. (2009) *Monuments of Syria: A Guide*. London: I.B. Tauris.



Flooding in the Roman Theater, seen from the east (Aleppo Archaeology; April 29, 2018)



Flooding in the Roman Theater, seen from the west (Aleppo Archaeology; April 29, 2018)



Flooding in the Roman Theater (Syrian Archaeological Sites Under the Crisis/Facebook; April 29, 2018)



Flooding in the Roman Theater (Al Monitor/Instagram; April 29, 2018)



Flooding around the Ayyubid walls surrounding the Roman Theater (Syrian Archaeological Sites Under the Crisis/Facebook; April 29, 2018)

SHI 18-0092

Report Date: April 30, 2018

Site Name: Maryr Seydo Cemetery (مقبرة الشهيد سيدو)

Date of Incident: Between March 13, 2018 and April 24, 2018

Location: Kafr Safra, Afrin District, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Cemetery for Kurdish fighters in the Afrin region.

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: A Kurdish cemetery was damaged.

Incident Source and Description: On April 30, 2018 a Private Twitter Account published a photograph of damage to Martyr Seydo Cemetery in Kafr Safra. The Private Twitter Account alleged that the damage to the cemetery was the result of attacks by Turkish forces. Photographs show that headstones have been smashed and removed, and there is rubble and possibly litter amongst the graves. Recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery shows damage to the cemetery occurred between January 29, 2018 and March 13, 2018. The cause of damage is not clear. DigitalGlobe satellite imagery showed that additional damage to the cemetery also occurred between March 13 and April 24, 2018.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0081** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0090**.

Pattern: Military activity: intentional destruction.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

ANF Arabic:

<https://anfarabic.com/akhr-l-khbr/l-hly-wmmthlw-ldr-ldhty-b-fryn-yzwrwn-drh-lmndlyn-21875>

Private Twitter Account



A pre-damage photograph of Martyr Seydo Cemetery (ANF Arabic; September 24, 2015)



Damage to the Martyr Seydo Cemetery, with numerous headstones destroyed (Twitter; April 30, 2018)



Martyr Seydo Cemetery before damage (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; January 29, 2018)



Martyr Seydo Cemetery with damage to graves (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; March 13, 2018)



Additional damage to Martyr Seydo Cemetery (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 24, 2018)

SHI 18-0093

Report Date: April 30, 2018

Site Name: al-Bara bin Azab Mosque (مسجد البراء بن عازب)

Date of Incident: Between April 20 and April 27, 2018

Location: Hajar al-Aswad, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Possible SARG shelling damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: Recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that the northeastern part of al-Bara bin Azab Mosque has been damaged as a result of heavy shelling between April 20, 2018 and April 27, 2018. From April 20–27, 2018 SARG and pro-regime forces carried out aerial bombardment and shelling over Hajar al-Aswad in an attempt to force Syrian opposition forces from the area. A hole in the southern part of the roof occurred prior to April 17, 2015, although the exact time period could not be deduced from the available satellite imagery.

See an associated incident report in this monthly report for another heritage site that was damaged in Rif Dimashq Governorate: [ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0094](#).

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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



Al-Bara bin Azab Mosque prior to increased damage with the red arrow indicating a hole in the southern area of the roof (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 14, 2018)



Two red arrows indicate the part of al-Bara bin Azab Mosque with structural damage as a result of heavy shelling (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 27, 2018)

SHI 18-0094

Report Date: April 30, 2018

Site Name: al-Abbas Mosque (جامع العباس)

Date of Incident: Between April 20 and April 27, 2018

Location: Hajar al-Aswad, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Possible SARG shelling damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that between April 20, 2018 and April 27, 2018 al-Abbas Mosque and the surrounding neighborhood was severely damaged as a result of heavy shelling and airstrikes. Two large holes are visible along the southern edge of the mosque's roof. From April 20–27, 2018 SARG and pro-regime forces carried out aerial bombardment and shelling over Hajar al-Aswad in an attempt to force Syrian opposition forces from the area.

See an associated incident report in this monthly report for another heritage site that was damaged in Rif Dimashq Governorate: [ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0093](#).

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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



Al-Abbas Mosque, shown within the red square, prior to any visible damage (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 20, 2018)



Two holes, indicated by red arrows, are visible in the southern part of the roof of al-Abbas Mosque. Red circles also show the severity of damage to the surrounding neighborhood from heavy shelling (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 27, 2018)

SHI 18-0095

Report Date: April 30, 2018

Site Name: Palestinian Arab Cultural Center (المركز الثقافي العربي الفلسطيني)

Date of Incident: Between April 20 and April 27, 2018

Location: Yarmouk, Damascus, Damascus Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Cultural center

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Possible SARG airstrikes damaged a cultural center.

Incident Source and Description: DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that between April 20, 2018 and April 27, 2018 the Palestinian Arab Cultural Center in Yarmouk was damaged by explosives. A large hole is present on the north-central edge of the building's roof, and is likely the result of heavy shelling. A second impact crater is visible just south of the Cultural Center. From April 20–27, 2018 SARG and pro-regime forces carried out aerial bombardment and shelling over Yarmouk in an attempt to force ISIS militants from the area.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Damascus Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0085**, **SHI 18-0087**, and **SHI 18-0096**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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



The Palestinian Arab Cultural Center, shown within the red rectangle, prior to damage from heavy shelling (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 20, 2018)



A large hole in the roof of the Palestinian Arab Cultural Center is indicated by an arrow. Evidence of shelling is visible immediately north of the center, also indicated by an arrow (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 27, 2018)

SHI 18-0096

Report Date: April 30, 2018

Site Name: Palestinian Martyrs Cemetery

Date of Incident: Between April 20 and April 27, 2018

Location: Yarmouk, Damascus Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Cemetery

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: Possible SARG airstrikes damaged a cemetery.

Incident Source and Description: Recently released DigitalGlobe satellite imagery indicates that between April 20, 2018 and April 27, 2018 the Palestinian Martyrs Graveyard was damaged as a result of airstrikes and heavy shelling. The most heavily damaged area appears to be on the eastern edge of the cemetery, where a large section of the graveyard was totally destroyed. Crumbling modern buildings around the edges of the cemetery have also resulted in damage to the site. From April 20–27, 2018 SARG and pro-regime forces carried out aerial bombardment and shelling over Yarmouk in an attempt to force ISIS militants from the area.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Damascus Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0085**, **SHI 18-0087**, and **SHI 18-0095**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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



The Palestinian Martyrs Cemetery prior to significant visible damage (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 20, 2018)



Damage from heavy shelling and airstrikes in several sections of the cemetery, with the most severe damage concentrated in the far eastern section of the site (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 27, 2018)

SHI 18-0097

Report Date: April 30, 2018

Site Name: al-Kabir Mosque (مسجد الكبير)

Date of Incident: April 29, 2018

Location: Ma'ar Zita, Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: al-Kabir Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: An alleged Russian airstrike reportedly damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On April 30, 2018 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a suspected Russian airstrike damaged al-Kabir Mosque in Ma'ar Zita.⁷² The airstrike was one of a series that occurred in Idlib Governorate on the night of April 29.⁷³ Video footage published by Orient News and Qasioun News Agency indicates the mosque suffered significant damage.⁷⁴ One section of the mosque roof has collapsed.

See associated incident reports in this monthly report for other heritage sites that were damaged in Idlib Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0079, SHI 18-0080, SHI 18-0082, SHI 18-0083, SHI 18-0084, and SHI 18-0086.**

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Orient News: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzwoKGAlto8>

Qasioun News Agency: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zay4e4WlOH4>

Syrian Network for Human Rights: <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/04/30/russian-forces-shelled-al-kabir-mosque-maar-zita-village-idlib-governorate-april-29/>

Syrian Observatory for Human Rights: <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=90783>

⁷² <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/04/30/russian-forces-shelled-al-kabir-mosque-maar-zita-village-idlib-governorate-april-29/>

⁷³ <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=90783>

⁷⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzwoKGAlto8> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zay4e4WlOH4>



Destruction of al-Kabir Mosque and surrounding neighborhood (Qasioun News Agency; April 30, 2018)



Damage to the roof of al-Kabir Mosque (Qasioun News Agency; April 30, 2018)



A damaged vehicle outside of al-Kabir Mosque (Qasioun News Agency; April 30, 2018)



Damage to the area surrounding al-Kabir Mosque (Qasioun News Agency; April 30, 2018)



Severe damage to the roof of al-Kabir Mosque (Qasioun News Agency; April 30, 2018)



Damage to the area surrounding al-Kabir Mosque (Orient News; April 30, 2018)



Damage to the area surrounding al-Kabir Mosque (Orient News; April 30, 2018)



Damage to al-Kabir Mosque (Orient News; April 30, 2018)



Damage to al-Kabir Mosque (Orient News; April 30, 2018)



Damage to the area surrounding al-Kabir Mosque (Orient News; April 30, 2018)



Damage to al-Kabir Mosque (Orient News; April 30, 2018)



Damage to the interior of al-Kabir Mosque (Orient News; April 30, 2018)



Damage to the interior of al-Kabir Mosque (Orient News; April 30, 2018)



Damage to the exterior of al-Kabir Mosque (Orient News; April 30, 2018)

SHI 18-0098

Report Date: April 30, 2018

Site Name: al-Omari Mosque (جامع العمري; Sahaba al-Jalil Mosque)

Date of Incident: April 30, 2018

Location: Rastan, Homs Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: An alleged SARG airstrike reportedly damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On April 30, 2018 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG warplanes fired missiles near al-Omari Mosque in the town of Rastan, Homs Governorate, causing unspecified damage to the mosque and its contents.⁷⁵ A video uploaded to Youtube shows the aftermath of the airstrike.⁷⁶ At least one wall of the mosque has collapsed, while the exterior facade also shows significant damage. The interior of the mosque is filled with debris.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives - airstrike.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/04/30/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-mosque-al-rastan-city-homs-suburbs-april-30/>

Suhaib al-Ali - Homs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INaL4GbdMKs>

⁷⁵ <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/04/30/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-mosque-al-rastan-city-homs-suburbs-april-30/>

⁷⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INaL4GbdMKs>



Damage to the southwest exterior corner of al-Omari Mosque (Suhaib al-Ali - Homs; April 30, 2018)



Damage to the interior of al-Omari Mosque (Suhaib al-Ali - Homs; April 30, 2018)



Damage to the eastern exterior side of al-Omari Mosque (Suhaib al-Ali - Homs; April 30, 2018)



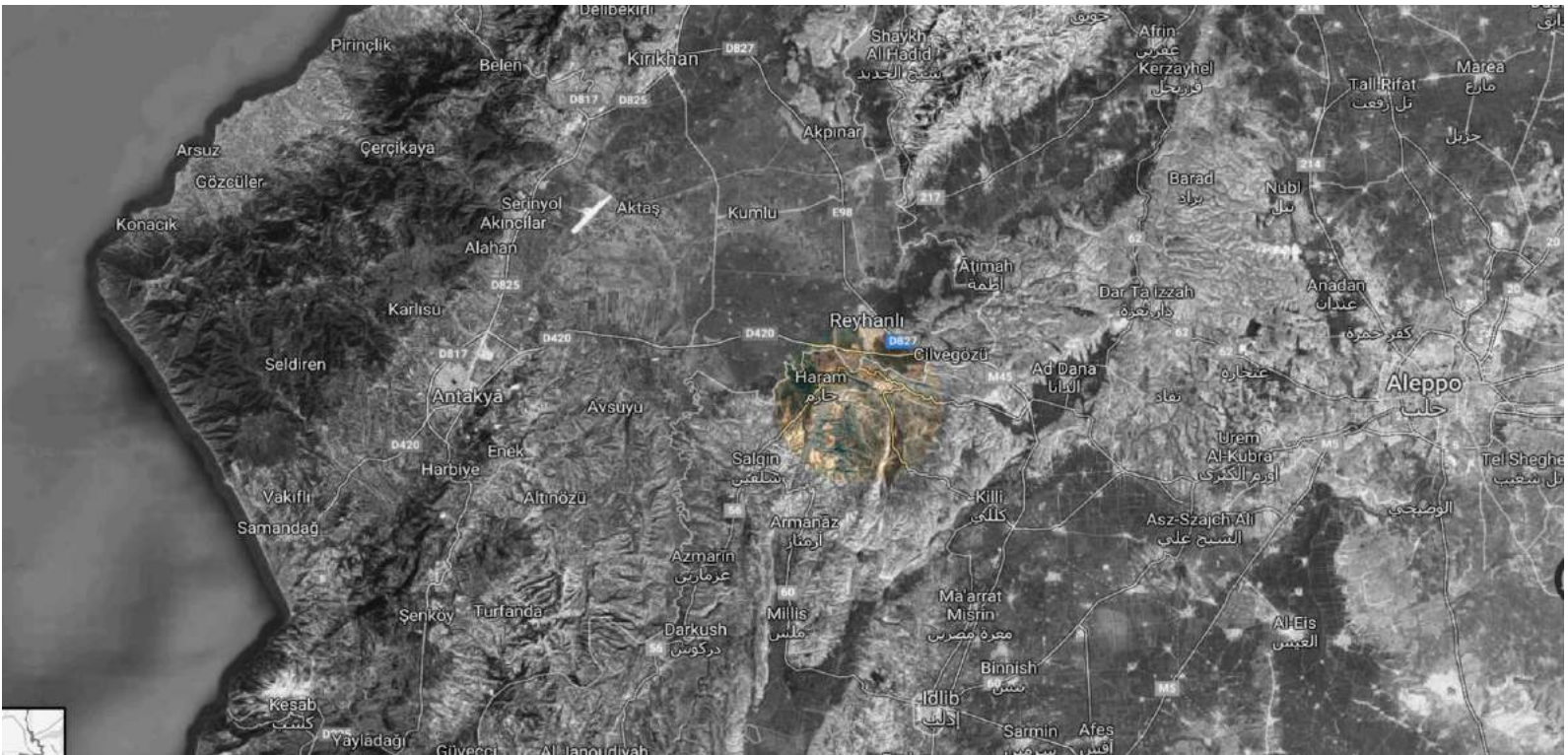
Damage to the northern entrance of al-Omari Mosque (Suhaib al-Ali - Homs; April 30, 2018)

The Day After Heritage Protection Initiative

Site Monitors Project

Damage Report on Banabel Column

24 April, 2018





Banabel Column

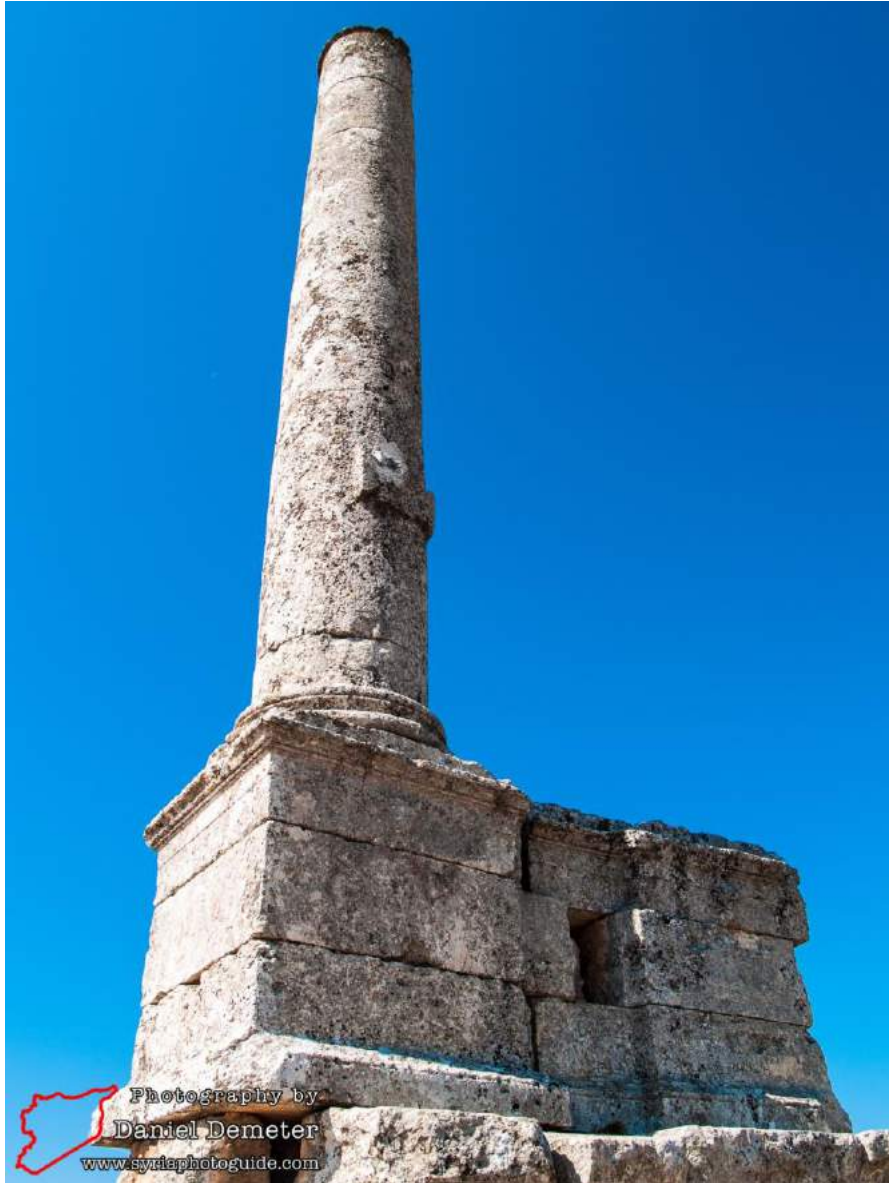


Jabal Al-Summaq (Or Jabal Sharqi), located 20 km north of Idlib city and 8 km east of Kafr Takharim, is home to nine villages of a mix of Druze and Sunni populations: Banabel, Qalb Lozeh, Bshendelti, Bshendlaya, Kafr Maris, Teltita, Hallah, Koko, and Kafr Kila” with a total population of about 15 thousand in all villages.

Qalb Lozeh is 13 km away from Kafr Takharim and 11 km from Qurqanya, while Banabel Village is closer to Harem which is 10 km away. The longest distance between any two villages on the mountain is no greater than 5km, while many others are 1 km or less apart.

Jabal Al-Summaq residents grow olive trees on the rocky mountain, though few and far in between, and raise cattle like goats, sheep, and cows. The mountain has more rocky unclaimed land than reclaimed ones.

On Tuesday, 4/24/2018, Cultural Heritage Center/TDA site monitors conducted a field survey of Banabel Village and documented the damage to the Banabel Column. The site and column were destroyed by looters in an effort to uncover would be treasure they assumed to be buried treasure underneath the site. The looters are believed to be members of one of the local brigades affiliated with Hay’at Tahrir Al Asham (HTS).



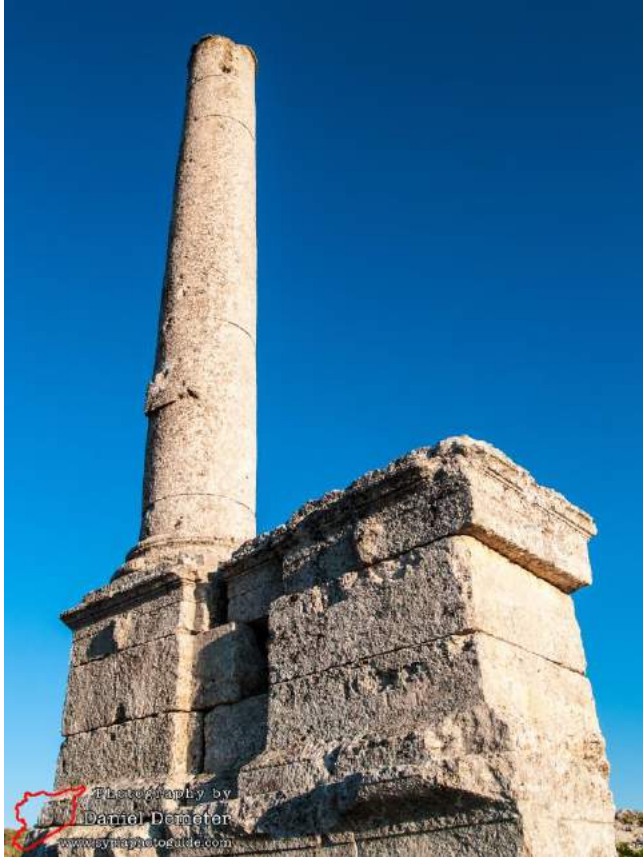
Banabel Column before destruction



Banabel Column before destruction



Banabel Column before destruction



Banabel Column before destruction

All damage has been documented.



Destruction of the column with soil and stones moved by bulldozer





Stone masonry and columns damaged/broken and pushed to the side.





Stone masonry and columns damaged/broken and pushed to the side.



Damaged and smashed stone masonry and columns





Damaged stone masonry





Illicit digging at the site



Reported by:
Eng. Abdul Rahman Alyehia (Syrian Heritage Centre)
Arch. Khaled Hiatlih, ASOR

Site Monitors Project Coordinator
Dr. Amr Al-Azm



The Day After Heritage Protection Initiative

Site Monitors Project

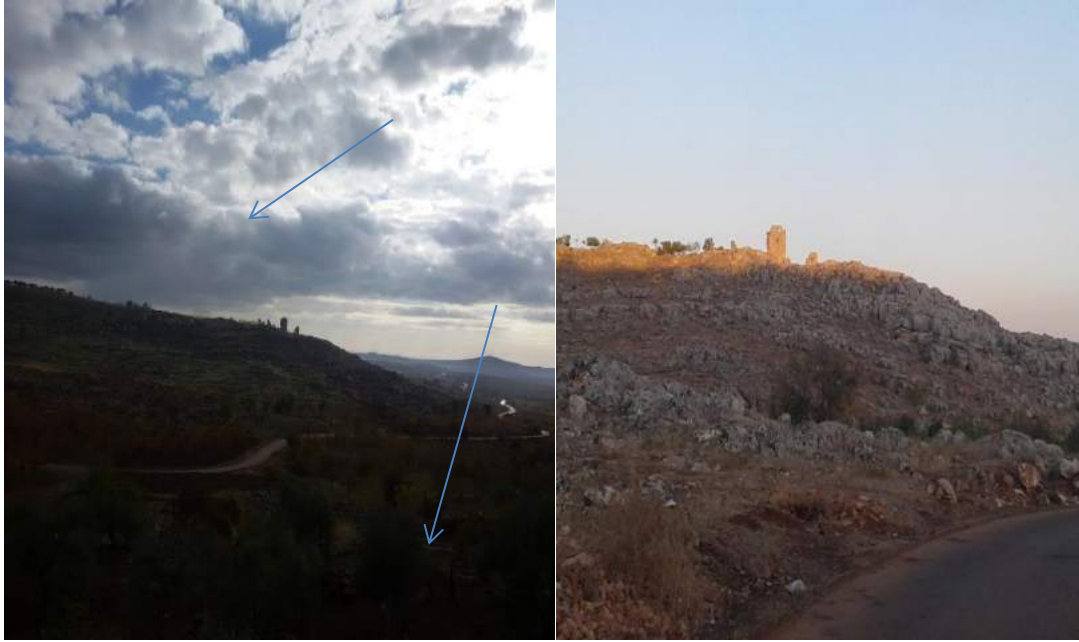
Site Monitoring Report Al-Qasr

11 April 2018



Located southeast of the road connecting Ain Larose and Kansafra, Al-Qasr is one of the most prominent archaeological sites in the village of Ain Larose in Jabal Al-Zawiyah.

It was built in the fifth century A.D. (Byzantine period) and is comprised of several residential buildings sitting on a rocky hill that overlooks farmlands in all directions.



The palace from its south side and the road that runs to Ain Arouz



The southwest side of the site



The southwest side of the site

There are a number of burial sites carved in the bedrock inside the homes.





A group of unexcavated tombs

There are also several water wells.





The southern side and illegal excavations

Oil and wine presses and can be found on the site.



The northeast side of the site

Numerous looting pits and other signs of illicit digging have been noted at various points on the site.



The northern side with evidence of looting



The northern side shows recent looting activity



Illegal excavation as seen from the east

Overall the site appears to be in relatively good condition. There is evidence of some recent digging in some areas of the site indicating occasional looting activity. The pits/holes in the ground are 2X2m and 1m deep from illicit digging. There is no evidence of significant destruction, demolition, or dredging done on the site.

Reported by:

Eng. Abdul Rahman Alyehia (Syrian Heritage Centre)

Arch. Mohammed Qintar

Arch. Khaled Hiatlih

Site Monitors Project Coordinator

Dr. Amr Al-Azm



The Day After Heritage Protection Initiative

Site Monitors Project

Site Monitoring Report Tell Al-Tah (South)

25 March 2018



The tell is located south of Al-Tah village along the road leading to Khan Sheikhoun. The tell is 500m long and 485m wide. Unlike other nearby hills, it has a modest elevation of about 20m. With the onset of the Syrian uprising and the state of anarchy that prevailed in the region, opportunists used heavy machinery for digging/looting and dredging activity on the site, leaving holes up to 12m deep, disturbing the soil layers. Tell Al-Tah (South) is registered as an archaeological site and protected by the Ma'arrat Al-Numan Department of Antiquities.

A team from the Syrian Cultural Heritage Center and TDA-HPI, visited the site in June 2017 and took photos of visible damage and violations. A huge press made of basalt stone was also found.



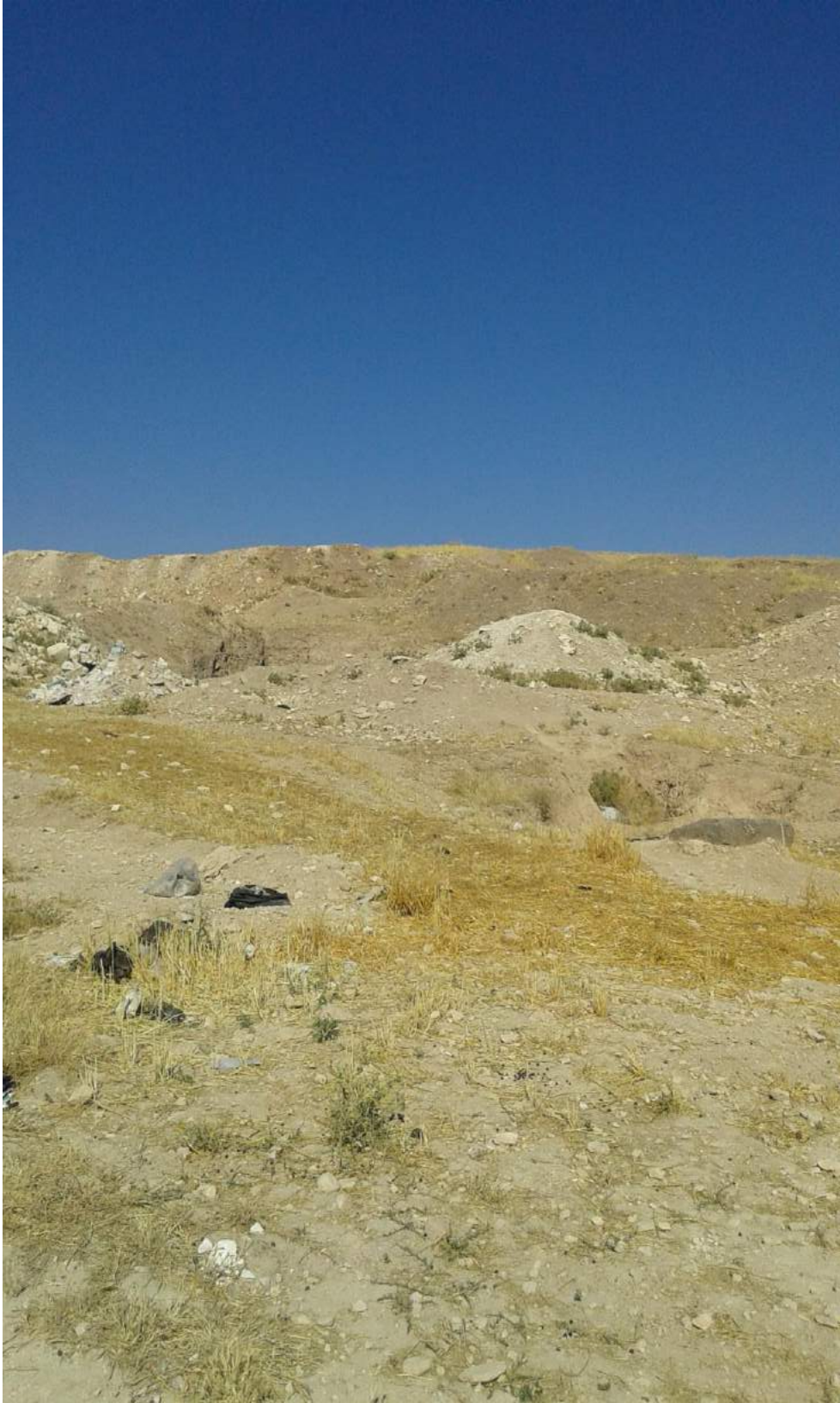
Tell al-Tah from the western side, showing illegal excavation and heavy equipment dredging



Tell al-Tah from the western side, showing illegal excavation and heavy equipment dredging



Tell al-Tah from the northern side, showing illegal excavation and heavy equipment dredging



Illegal excavation and heavy equipment dredging



An illegal excavation hole from the north



An illegal excavation hole



An illegal excavation hole seen from the north



An illegal excavation hole



An illegal excavation hole seen from the south



An illegal excavation hole



An illegal excavation is recorded



An illegal excavation shows some old foundations



Evidence of illegal excavation on the hill



The northern side of the site shows signs of illegal excavation



The northern side and a hole in it that is the result of illegal excavation



The northern side and a hole caused by illegal excavation



Neglected artifacts on the surface resulting from illegal excavations



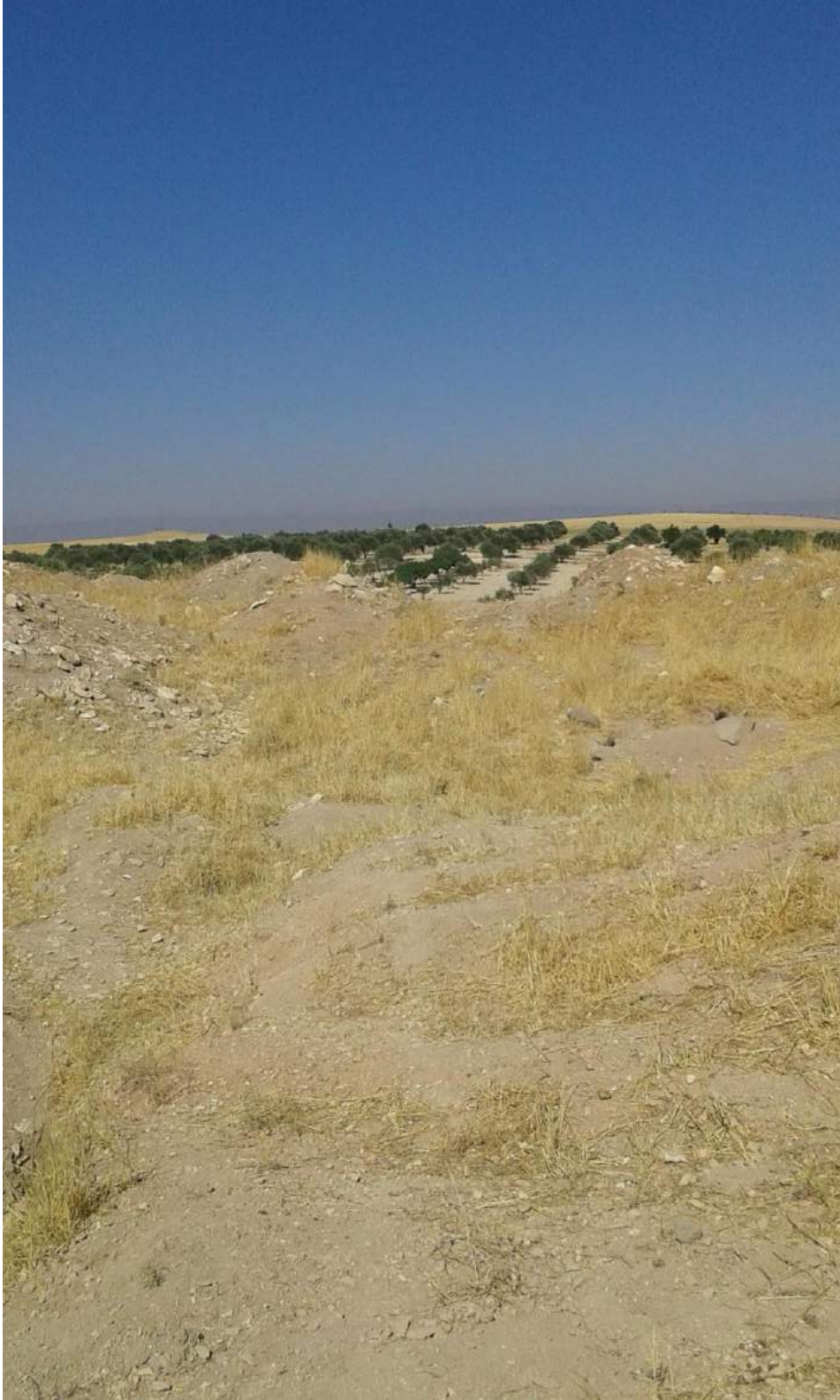
Neglected artifacts on the surface resulting from illegal excavations



A view inside the illegal excavation pit from the north



The eastern side of an illegal excavation



The tell from eastern side



The hole caused by illegal excavation



The southeast side shows excavation and the accumulation of soil



Illegal excavation seen from the eastern side



Dredging from the northeastern side



Traces of illegal excavation and vandalism from the southeast side



The tell from the northeast side



Excavations showing the remains of a building on the northeastern side



Building remains emerged as a result of illegal excavations of the north-eastern side



An illegal excavation on the eastern side



An illegal excavation on the eastern side



An illegal excavation and accumulation of rubble in the eastern side



Illegal excavations at the site



An illegal excavation shows some old foundation



Illegal excavation from the eastern side



Remains of a winepress resulting from random excavation



Remains of a winepress resulting from random excavation



The southern side shows the traces of illegal excavations and the accumulation of dirt used as military barriers

Reported by:

Eng. Abdul Rahman Alyehia (Syrian Heritage Centre)

Mowaffaq Al-Tuwair - Arch. Ahmad Anan

Arch. Khaled Hiatlih

Site Monitors Project Coordinator

Dr. Amr Al-Azm



Incident Reports: Libya

LHI 18-0002 UPDATE

Report Date: April 16, 2018

Site Name: Ghadames (غدامس)

Date of Incident: Ongoing

Location: Tripolitania, Libya

Site Description: The Old Town of Ghadames is one of five Libyan sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List (1986). Consisting of a tightly clustered series of mud-brick houses in a palm oasis that served as a key nexus in the trans-Saharan trade routes, Ghadames is an outstanding example of a Saharan oasis town.⁷⁷

Ghadames is first recorded in history in connection with a Roman expedition to conquer the region in the late 1st century BCE.⁷⁸ Pottery sherds and Latin inscriptions discovered in and around the town indicate a Roman garrison was stationed there until the 3rd century CE. In 667, Ghadames, by then a Christian town, was conquered by the Arabs under Uqba ibn al-Nafi.

Traditional Berber buildings in Ghadames were constructed using locally available materials, including mud, stone, lime, palm trees, and straw.⁷⁹ Mud-brick walls were built on stone foundations and braced with palm trunks, with lime used to whitewash walls. The Old Town contains around 20 mosques and numerous religious schools (zawiya) within its six neighborhoods.⁸⁰

Site Date: ca. 1st century BCE to present

Incident Summary: Natural impacts and lack of maintenance caused the collapse of historic buildings.

Incident Source and Description: Following a complaint from the Department of Antiquities (DoA) in Ghadames regarding collapse in the Old Town in December 2017, the DoA in Tripoli dispatched a delegation to the site to document the aftermath of the storms.⁸¹ This effort is part of a larger DoA project to prepare comprehensive reports on the status of each of the five UNESCO World Heritage sites in Libya, all of which are currently listed on the World Heritage List in Danger. Mahmoud Hadia and Safa al-Hagi of the archives team in Tripoli documented damage for their internal report, and provided ASOR CHI with photographs of the damage to the Old Town of Ghadames, including collapsed mud-brick structures weakened by rains and lack of maintenance.

⁷⁷ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/362>

⁷⁸ P. Kenrick (2010) *Tripolitania (Libya Archaeological Guides)*. Silphium Press. 85

⁷⁹ <https://archnet.org/sites/3551>

⁸⁰ <https://archnet.org/sites/3550>

⁸¹ <https://www.218tv.net/الإهمال-يدق-ناقوس-الخطر-حول-الأثار-الل/>

Since the visit of the delegation from Tripoli at the end of 2017, several additional buildings have collapsed. According to the DoA, moisture that penetrated the walls during the heavy rains caused the mudbrick walls to swell. As they dried out, these walls began to gradually buckle, resulting in significant structural damage.

DoA employees in Ghadames have continued to document these ongoing collapses, and report that they expect more damage in the future as temperatures continue to rise in Ghadames during the transition from spring to summer. Hassan Hammoudeh has been directly in contact with ASOR CHI, and has provided descriptions of the most recent damage. Hammoudeh identified five previously unrecorded instances of collapse. He reports that neither the DoA nor the Historic Cities Authority, which is nominally in charge of the site, have been able to provide assistance due to the lack of an operating budget. The newly reported collapses occurred at five locations, namely four residential buildings (Location 1, 3-5) and one disused Sufi school (Location 2).

For information on previous damage to the site of Ghadames, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 18-0002** in the **January 2018 Monthly Report**.

Pattern: Natural impacts; Site management.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Old Town of Ghadames, as well as the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to natural impacts.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Archnet: <https://archnet.org/sites/3551> ; <https://archnet.org/sites/3550>

Libya218: <https://www.218tv.net/الإهمال-يدق-ناقوس-الخطر-حول-الأثار-الل/>

Private Facebook Account

UNESCO: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/362>

Scholarly:

Abu Fayed, A., A. Rghei & A. Aboufayed (2005) "Urban planning and architecture of the historic city of Ghadames, Libya: Lessons from the past for cities of the future." *WIT Transactions on the Built Environment* 83: 3-14.

P. Kenrick (2010) *Tripolitania (Libya Archaeological Guides)*. Silphium Press.



Location of damage within Ghadames (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; December 16, 2017)

Location 1: Two adjacent houses



A view of Location 1, where portions of two adjacent houses separated by a partition wall have collapsed. Date palm trunks and woven mats that once supported the floors and roof can be seen in the debris pile (Hassan Hamoudeh; April 4, 2018)



A view of the scar of the collapsed partition wall that once separated two houses (Hassan Hamoudeh; April 4, 2018)



The interior of one of the two houses at Location 1. Cracks have proliferated in the lime plaster of this wall, suggesting that the earthen mass behind it has started to shift and may soon collapse (Hassan Hamoudeh; April 4, 2018)



Location 1 before damage (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; December 16, 2017)



Location 1 after damage and collapse (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 5, 2018)

Location 2: Sufi Zawiya



A view of a debris pile where the roof and interior walls of the Sufi school collapsed (Hassan Hamoudeh; April 4, 2018)



An exterior view of the collapsed school (Hassan Hamoudeh; April 4, 2018)



A DoA Ghadames employee examines the damage to the collapsed roof of the school. Many of the timbers remain intact (Hassan Hamoudeh; April 4, 2018)



Location 2 before damage (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; December 16, 2017)



Location 2 after damage and collapse (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 5, 2018)

Location 3: Exterior wall of a house



Sections of collapse, like those at Location 3, may be stabilized using infill of adobe brick. If such actions are taken swiftly, it is possible to save the structure as a whole (Hassan Hamoudeh; April 4, 2018)



A close-up view of the collapse of a section of a wall at Location 3 (Hassan Hamoudeh; April 4, 2018)



Location 3 before damage (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; December 16, 2017)



Location 3 after damage and collapse (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 5, 2018)

Location 4: Exterior and passageway of a house



Damage to an exterior wall and entranceway at Location 4 (Hassan Hamoudeh; April 4, 2018)



The entrance passage of this house showed signs of collapse and has been stabilized with provisional shoring (Hassan Hamoudeh; April 4, 2018)



A view of the palm wood supports in the passageway near Location 4, which are beginning to buckle and crack (Hassan Hamoudeh; April 4, 2018)



Location 4 before damage (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; December 16, 2017)



Location 4 after damage (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 5, 2018)

Location 5: House near al-Atiq Mosque



A view of a collapsed house near al-Atiq Mosque (Hassan Hamoudeh; April 4, 2018)



An exterior view of collapsed house near al-Atiq Mosque (Hassan Hamoudeh; April 4, 2018)



A debris pile from a collapsed house near al-Atiq Mosque (Hassan Hamoudeh; April 4, 2018)



Some of the walls at Location 5 remain standing but have separated entirely from other nearby walls, suggesting that collapse is imminent (Hassan Hamoudeh; April 4, 2018)



A view of one of the smaller outbuildings associated with the house at Location 5 (Hassan Hamoudeh; April 4, 2018)



A view of a partially collapsed building at Location 5, with the minaret of al-Atiq Mosque in the background (Hassan Hamoudeh; April 4, 2018)



Location 5 before damage (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; December 16, 2017)



Location 5 after damage and collapse (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 5, 2018)

LHI 18-0016 UPDATE

Report Date: April 2, 2018

Site Name: Sabha Castle (Fort Elena; Fortezza Margherita; قلعة سبها)

Date of Incident: March 31, 2018

Location: Sabha, Fezzan, Libya

Site Description: Sabha Castle was originally constructed ca. 1870 during the Ottoman Period. It was expanded in the 1930s during the Italian Colonial era.⁸²

Site Date: Built 1870 CE, restored during Italian Colonial era.

Incident Summary: Ongoing fighting in Sabha damaged a historic castle.

Incident Source and Description: On April 1, 2018 multiple news outlets reported that ongoing fighting in the city of Sabha between the forces of the Government of National Accord-aligned 6th Brigade (stationed in Sabha Castle) and armed tribal groups damaged the castle for the second time in less than one month.⁸³ Recent shelling caused the partial collapse of a watchtower on the western side of the castle and a section of the wall on the right side of the main entrance on the southern side.

For information on previous damage to the site of Sabha Castle, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 18-0016** in the **March 2018 Monthly Report**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Al Jazeera:

<http://www.aljazeera.net/knowledgegate/magazine/2016/2/11/مراسلو-الجزيرة-قلعة-سبها-الليبية-تستغيث-العال>

Libya Akhbar: <https://www.libyaakhbar.com/libya-news/615908.html>

⁸² <http://www.aljazeera.net/knowledgegate/magazine/2016/2/11/مراسلو-الجزيرة-قلعة-سبها-الليبية-تستغيث-العال>

⁸³ <https://www.libyaakhbar.com/libya-news/615908.html> ; <https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/sabhas-historic-castle-hit-rockets-tribal-tension-continues> ; <https://almarsad.co/2018/04/01/بالصور-عدسة-المرصد-ترصد-أضراراً-بالغة>

Libya Observer: <https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/sabhas-historic-castle-hit-rockets-tribal-tension-continues>

Libya's Channel: <https://libyaschannel.com/2018/04/01/أمر-اللواء-السادس-قلعة-سبها-تعرضت-لقصف/>

Al Marsad: <https://almarsad.co/2018/04/01/بالصور-عدسة-المرصد-ترصد-أضراراً-بالغة/>



Pre-damage photograph of affected sections of Sabha Castle, seen from the southwest (Al Wasat; March 21, 2014)



Smoke rises after shelling to the western wall of Sabha Castle (Libya's Channel; April 1, 2018)



Collapse of a section of southern wall of Sabha Castle to right side of entrance (Al Marsad; April 1, 2018)



Collapse of a section of southern wall and entrance of Sabha Castle (Al Marsad; April 1, 2018)



Damage to the southwestern watchtower of Sabha Castle (Al Marsad; April 1, 2018)



View of the rear of Sabha Castle, with damage to northwestern watchtower (Al Marsad; April 1, 2018)



View of the rear of Sabha Castle, with damage to northwestern watchtower (Al Marsad; April 1, 2018)



View of the partially collapsed western side of Sabha Castle (Al Marsad; April 1, 2018)



View of the partially collapsed western side of Sabha Castle (Al Marsad; April 1, 2018)

LHI 18-0019

Report Date: April 30, 2018

Site Name: Anglican Church of Christ the King (Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli)

Date of Incident: April 16, 2018

Location: Tripoli, Tripolitania, Libya

Site Description: Located in the Old City of Tripoli, the Roman Catholic Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli was founded around 1645 CE.⁸⁴ In 1970, the church was ordered closed by Muammar Qaddafi. It reopened in 2007 and was transferred to the Anglican community. The church is now known as the Anglican Church of Christ the King.

Site Date: 1645 CE

Incident Summary: Thieves allegedly stole bells from a church.

Incident Source and Description: On April 16, 2018 Asharq al-Awsat reported that thieves stole two copper bells from the historic Church of Santa Maria (Anglican Church of Christ the King) in Tripoli and sold them for scrap.⁸⁵ The Tripoli Security Directorate (TSD) arrested two people after they admitted to stealing two bells from the church and selling them to a scrap merchant. One of the bells was subsequently recovered but the other remains missing.

Pattern: Theft.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Asharq al-Awsat:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1239126/two-thieves-steal-bells-historic-church-libya>

Church Times:

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2011/7-october/news/uk/resurrection-in-tripoli-former-chorister-returns>

⁸⁴ <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2011/7-october/news/uk/resurrection-in-tripoli-former-chorister-returns>

⁸⁵ <https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1239126/two-thieves-steal-bells-historic-church-libya>

LHI 18-0020

Report Date: April 16, 2018

Site Name: Storeroom of Sidi Khrebish (Berenice)

Date of Incident: April 15, 2018

Location: Berenice, Benghazi, Cyrenaica, Libya

Site Description: This storeroom was built on the archaeological site of Sidi Khrebish/Berenice in downtown Benghazi to protect artifacts discovered on site. It is a simple masonry structure with a sheet metal roof.

Site Date: 20th century CE

Incident Summary: A fire broke out in a storeroom containing artifacts.

Incident Source and Description: On April 16, 2018 a representative of the Libyan Department of Antiquities (DoA) in Benghazi reported via Facebook that a fire had broken out in the storeroom of Sidi Khrebish. Fortunately, in recent months, DoA staff had transported most of the artifacts from this storeroom to a more secure location. Nevertheless, enough flammable debris remained in storage and caught fire. The cause of the fire remains under investigation, and it may have damaged several mosaic panels that had not yet been removed from the storeroom.

Pattern: Natural impacts.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Sidi Khrebish/Berenice, and reports of the conditions in museums and storerooms around the country.

Sources:

Private Facebook Account



Interior of the storeroom at Sidi Khrebish after the fire (Private Facebook Account; April 16, 2018)



View of a mosaic panel that remained in storage at Sidi Khrebish and may have been damaged by the fire, which was still burning at the time this photograph was taken (Private Facebook Account; April 16, 2018)



Detailed view of a mosaic panel in the Sidi Khrebish storeroom that may have been damaged by the fire (Private Facebook Account; April 16, 2018)

Satellite Imagery and Geospatial Analysis

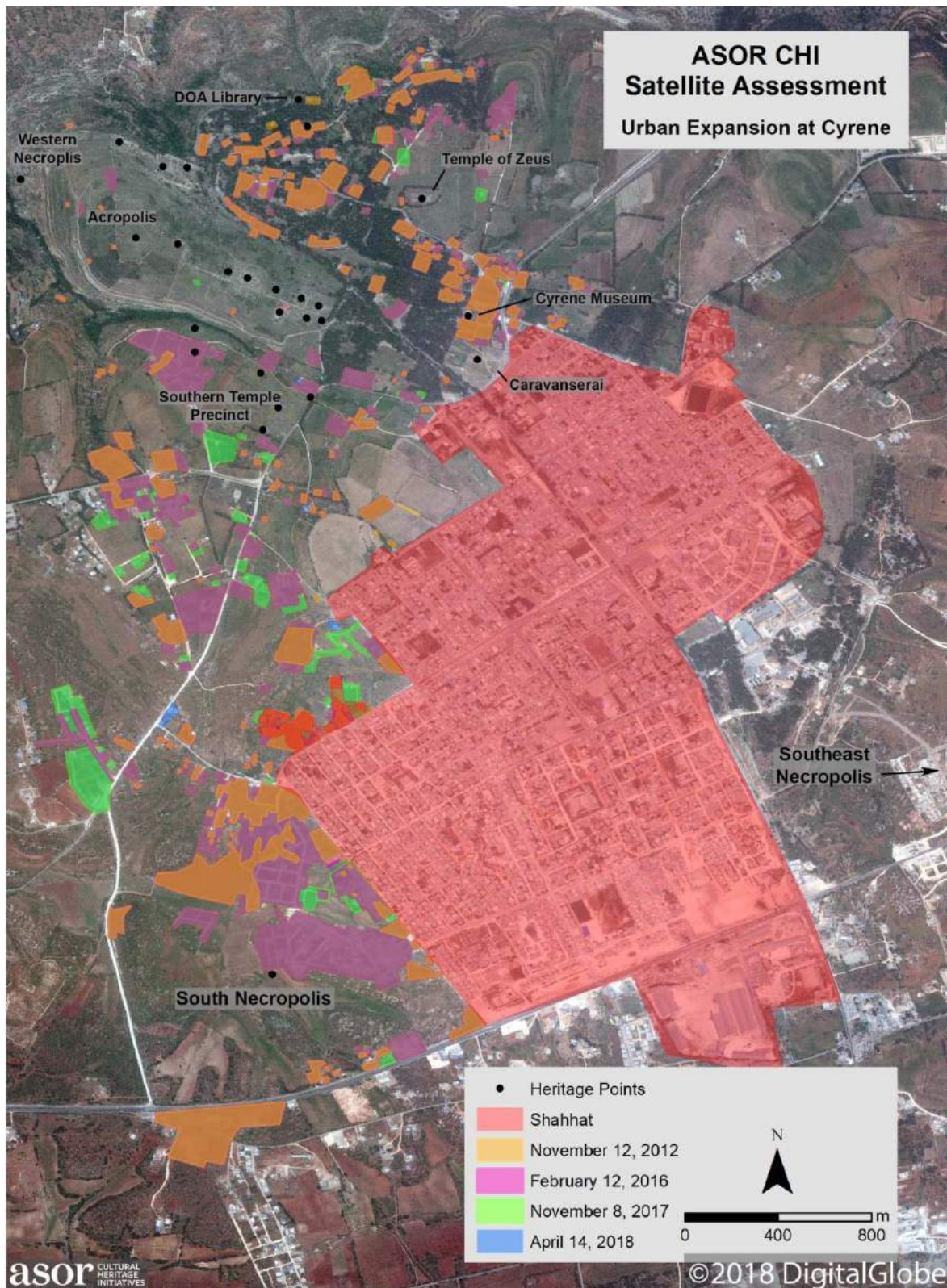
Cyrene was founded ca. 630 BCE by Greek colonists from the island of Thera. In the 1st century BCE, Cyrene became a Roman province.⁸⁶ By 410 CE, the city was abandoned as a result of frequent barbarian raids. The site consists of the remains of a number of temples dedicated to Isis, Serapis, Apollo, Demeter, Zeus, and other deities, as well as many villas, baths, markets, and administrative buildings. Cyrene is one of the five Libyan sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list and is one of the best preserved Greco-Roman cities of North Africa.⁸⁷ The archaeological site is located in the area surrounding and underneath the modern city of Shahat.

Despite the importance of the archaeological site, the ASOR CHI Geospatial Team has found that Cyrene is suffering from on-going urban encroachment on much of the site. ASOR CHI has previously reported on some of this urban encroachment within the area of Wadi Belgadir in **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0031** in **October 2017 Monthly Report**. In order to better understand the extent of the encroachment, four satellite images were used to assess urban expansion and development overtime: November 12, 2012, February 12, 2016, November 8, 2017, and the most recently available image from April 14, 2018. In each image, modern buildings, construction, and bulldozing within the archaeological area were outlined. In this way, we were able to determine which time periods saw the largest amount of urban encroachment and which parts of the archaeological site have been most impacted by this growth. The extent of urban encroachment in each image can be seen in the map below.

The Controller of Antiquities for the Libyan Department of Antiquities (DoA) in Shahat, reports that since late 2017, DoA has been able to confront the issue of illegal urban encroachment more directly with the help of municipal law enforcement. A recent workshop in Shahat bringing together judges, law enforcement, and archaeologists to discuss this problem has resulted in better application of the existing laws protecting Libyan heritage. The municipality of Shahat has opened cases against residents living in the zones of urban encroachment detailed in the following maps, and the police have delivered summons for them to report to court. While the punishment for these crimes may not exceed a modest fine, this preliminary judicial action appears to have slowed the rate of illegal construction considerably in recent months. As seen in our time-stamped geospatial analysis of urban encroachment, these efforts seem to have been successful as there has been very little recent urban encroachment.

⁸⁶ P. Kenrick (2013) *Cyrenaica: Libya Archaeological Guides*. The Society for Libyan Studies. London: Silphium Books. 148 ff.

⁸⁷ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/190>



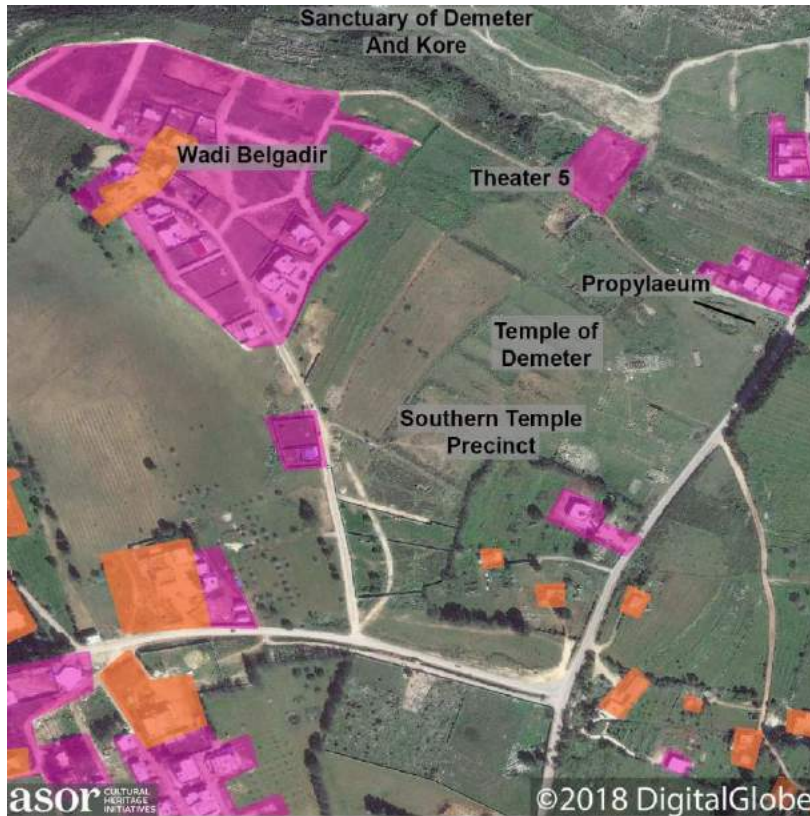
Overview of urban expansion at Cyrene, and the location of the modern city Shahhat, since November 12, 2012. The most dramatic urban expansion has been at the South Necropolis and the Southern Temple Precinct (ASOR CHI/Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 14, 2018)

Wadi Belgadir and Southern Temple Precinct

As can be seen in the map above, the most expansive period of urban encroachment at Cyrene occurred between November 12, 2012 and February 12, 2016. This was also the largest gap in time that the ASOR CHI geospatial team was able to analyze as a result of the lack of available imagery. Only mosaicked images prior to 2016 were available. These images are difficult to use in longitudinal analyses due to the unclear nature of the date the image was taken. Therefore, the earliest available image is the only mosaic used in this analysis in order to avoid inaccuracy. During this time period, much of the archaeological area of Wadi Belgadir was severely encroached upon by the creation of a modern subdivision. This encroachment also compromised other archaeological features in the Southern Temple Precinct, such as the Propylaeum. There were only minor increases in development within this area between February 12, 2016 and November 8, 2017 and this expansion does not appear to directly affect any archaeological remains. This is likely the result of the injunction on new development issued by the Department of Antiquities in November 2017. There was no visible urban development between November 8, 2017 and April 14, 2018.



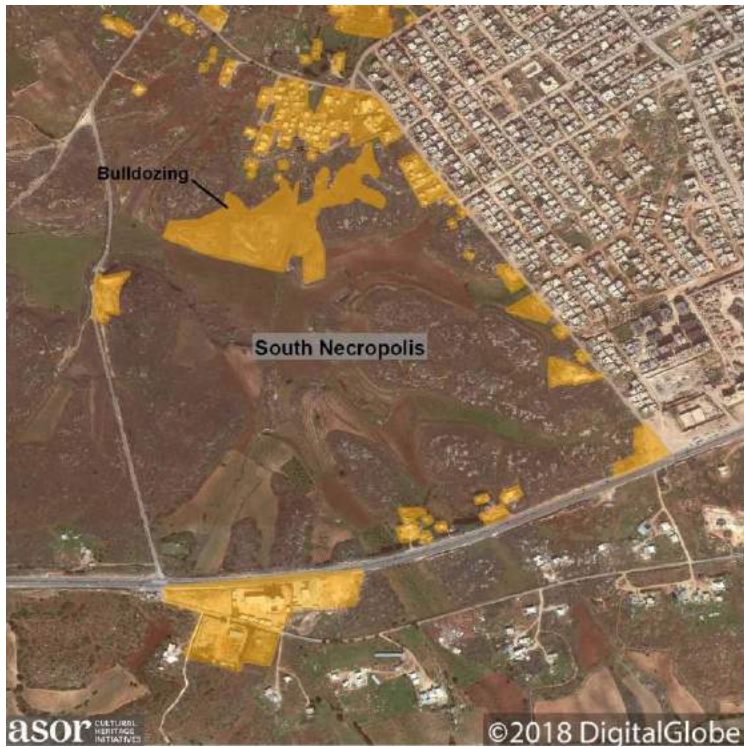
The area of the southern temple precinct prior to increased urban expansion, with areas of urban development shown in orange (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; November 12, 2012)



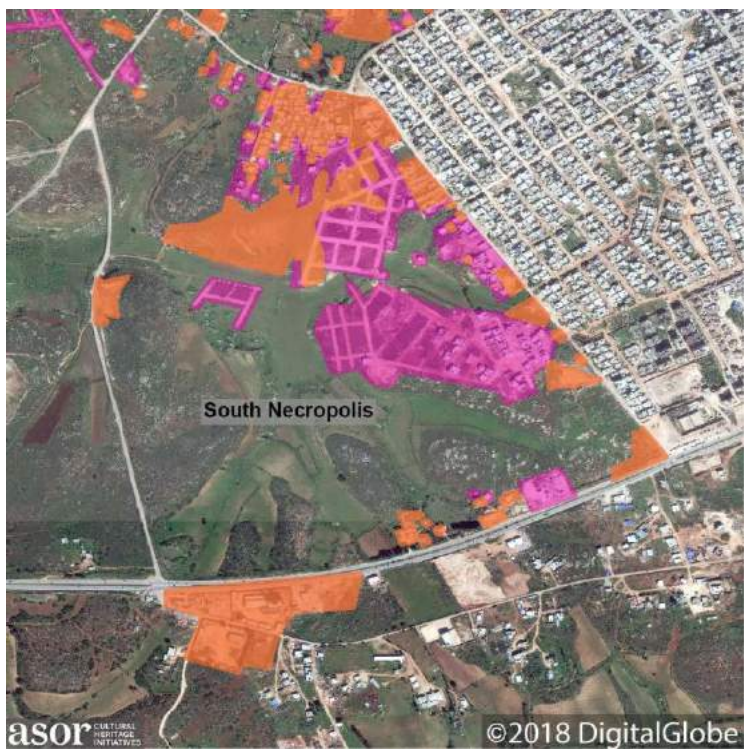
Increased urban development, shown in pink, built over the remains at Wadi Belgadir and compromising other archaeological features in the Southern Temple Precinct, including the Propylaeum (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; February 12, 2016)

South Necropolis

Another area that has suffered immensely as a result of on-going urban encroachment is the South Necropolis. By November 12, 2012 new subdivisions were being constructed along the northern and northeastern parts of the heritage site. Bulldozing extended almost to the center of the Necropolis. By February 12, 2016 nearly half of the site had been consumed by newly constructed subdivisions. Very little expansion has occurred since 2016, and much of the new construction has taken place within previously bulldozed areas. There was no visible increase in development between November 8, 2017 and April 14, 2018 in the South Necropolis.



Urban development, within the orange areas, on the South Necropolis of Cyrene (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; November 12, 2012)



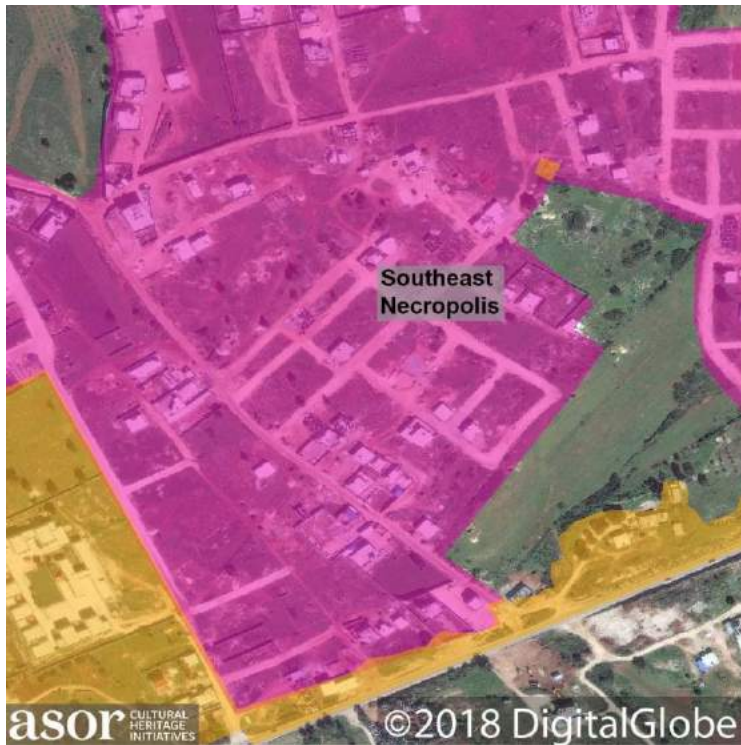
Urban development increased dramatically, as shown by the pink areas, onto the South Necropolis by February 12, 2016, damaging much of the northern and eastern parts of the site (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; February 12, 2016)

Southeast Necropolis

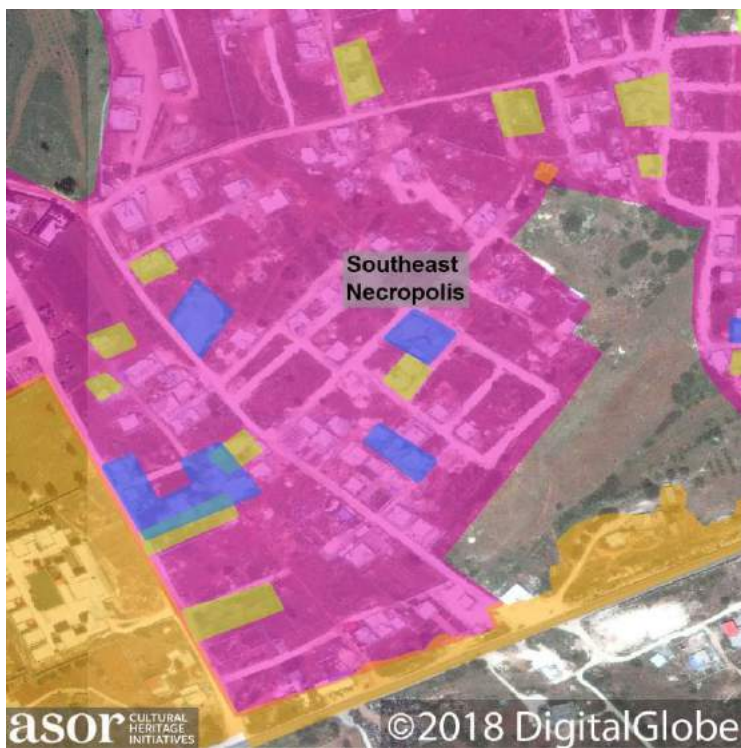
In the earliest image used for analysis, November 12, 2012, there was already visible urban development on the southern and southwestern parts of the Southeast Necropolis. Between November 12, 2012 and February 12, 2016 a large housing development was constructed over the site. Dirt roads and modern buildings were built within the archaeological area. A few new buildings were visible in the November 8, 2017 image. Though the expansion has slowed, there were a small number of new constructions within the development area in the image from April 14, 2018.



Urban development, within the orange areas, as of 2012 on the Southeast Necropolis (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; November 11, 2012)



Intense increase in urban development onto the Southeast Necropolis, shown in pink (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; February 12, 2016)



Buildings constructed on the Southeast Necropolis during 2017 are shown in green and those constructed in 2018 are shown in blue (Imagery courtesy of DigitalGlobe; April 14, 2018)

For more information on previous damage to the site of Cyrene, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 17-0031** in the **October 2017 Monthly Report**; **LHI 17-0029** in the **October 2017 Monthly Report**; **LHI 17-0032** in the **October 2017 Monthly Report**; **LHI 17-0044** in the **December 2017 Monthly Report**; **LHI 17-0045** in the **December 2017 Monthly Report**; **LHI 18-0003** in the **January 2018 Monthly Report**; **LHI 18-0008** in the **February 2018 Monthly Report**; **LHI 18-0017** in the **March 2018 Monthly Report**.

SNHR Vital Facilities Report

On April 9, 2018 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) released a vital facilities report for March 2018.⁸⁸ According to SNHR, there were 56 attacks against vital civilian facilities. The sites attacked include four mosques and a museum.

- On March 1, 2018 SARG or Russian warplanes reportedly fired missiles at al-Sulayq Mosque in Duma, Rif Dimashq Governorate, severely damaging the building. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0065**
- On March 12, 2018 SARG warplanes reportedly fired a missile near the National Museum in Idlib, Idlib Governorate, damaging furniture in the museum.
- On March 14, 2018 SARG helicopters reportedly dropped a barrel bomb on al-Mahmoud Mosque in Duma, Rif Dimashq Governorate, severely damaging the building. The mosque was being used as a shelter by locals at the time of the incident. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0075**
- On March 23, 2018 Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) militants reportedly fired a shell from a tank at a mosque in Makalbis village, Aleppo Governorate, severely damaging the mosque.
- On March 30, 2018 SARG forces reportedly fired rockets near al-Hussein ibn Ali Mosque in the Tariq al-Sadd neighborhood in Daraa, Daraa Governorate, moderately damaging the mosque.

Heritage Timeline

April 30, 2018

Live Science published an article titled “**Stolen Sumerian Tablets Come from the Lost City of Irisagrig**” (by Owen Jarus). US Immigration and Customs Enforcements recently announced that hundreds of cuneiform tablets that were looted in Iraq and bought by the US Company Hobby Lobby appear to hail from the Sumerian city of Irisagrig, the location of which is unknown.
<https://www.livescience.com/62437-stolen-sumerian-tablets-from-lost-city.html>

- *The Libya Observer* published an article titled “**Ottoman Holy Quran seized at Misrata airport before smuggling**” (by Abdullah Ben Ibrahim). Customs agents at Misrata airport foiled an attempt to smuggle a late 17th-century Quran out of Libya.
<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/inbrief/ottoman-holy-quran-seized-misrata-airport-smuggling>

⁸⁸ <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2018/04/09/51934/>

- *The Guardian* published an article titled “**Mosul library recreated in Norfolk country house installation**” (by Mark Brown). The U.K. National Trust’s Blickling Estate will host “The Word Defiant,” an art installation exploring the importance of books. Part of this project will consist of a recreation of the Mosul University Central Library. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/apr/30/mosul-library-recreated-in-norfolk-country-house-installation?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

- *Al Shahid* published an article titled “**Benghazi Residents Lament The Destruction Of The City's Heritage Sites.**” Residents of Benghazi express concern about the state of the many heritage sites that have been looted or destroyed in the city. <https://alshahidwitness.com/benghazi-residents-heritage-destruction/>

- April 29, 2018 *Ean Libya* published an article titled “استمرار التدريبات لمكافحة تهريب الآثار (Continuing training to combat the smuggling of antiquities).” The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities Protection recently held a workshop to train employees to combat antiquities looting and smuggling in Libya. <http://www.eanlibya.com/archives/170759>

- April 25, 2018 *DGAM* published an article titled “اكتشاف ثاني أكبر لوحة فسيفساء في سورية (The discovery of the second largest mosaic in Syria).” A large, fifth-century CE Byzantine mosaic discovered in Uqayrbat in early 2018 has been excavated and will be transferred to the Hama National Museum. <http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=177&id=2390>

- *The Libya Observer* published an article titled “**Libya UNESCO representative says investigations into Libyan stolen artifacts underway.**” Abdul-Qader Maleh, Libya’s representative to UNESCO, has confirmed that the process of tracking and returning Libyan artifacts smuggled to Spain is continuing through coordination between the Libyan and Spanish authorities. <https://www.libyaobserver.ly/culture/libya-unesco-representative-says-investigations-libyan-stolen-artifacts-underway>

- April 28, 2018 *The Libya Observer* published an article titled “**Italy concludes first stage of renovating Villa Selene, says Tripoli Old City is next**” (by Abdulkader Assad). The first phase of the renovations of Villa Selene near Leptis Magna, carried out jointly between the Libya Archaeology Authority and Roma Tre University, are complete. <https://www.libyaobserver.ly/culture/italy-concludes-first-stage-renovating-villa-selene-says-tripoli-old-city-next>

April 24, 2018

Niqash published an article titled “**Searching For Iraqi Antiques On A Sunken British Treasure Ship**” (by Saleem al-Wazzan). The director of Basra’s Museum of Antiquities recently discovered a clue that he believes will lead him to a British military ship that sank while transporting ancient artifacts in the early 20th century. He hopes to bring more attention to the hundreds of historical and archaeological sites in Basra Governorate.

<http://www.niqash.org/en/articles/society/5883/>



The Art Newspaper published an article titled “**Syria’s war-ravaged heritage to be the focus of new Qatar show**” (by Gareth Harris). The destruction of Syria’s cultural heritage over the past eight years is the subject of a show entitled “Syria Matters,” due to open at the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) in Doha, Qatar in November 2018.

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/qatar-show-to-highlight-syria-s-lost-heritage-after-years-of-civil-war>



Al Jazeera published an article titled “**How the NYT partook in the plunder of Iraq**” (by Sinan Antoon). The author objects to the removal from Iraq of documents from areas previously under ISIS rule in Iraq by New York Times journalists.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/nyt-partook-plunder-iraq-180424100839509.html>

April 23, 2018

Multiple news outlets published articles discussing a recent agreement between the UAE Minister of Culture, UNESCO, and the Iraqi Minister of Culture to rebuild al-Nuri Mosque and al-Hadba minaret in Mosul within five years, using \$50.4 million USD in funding promised by the UAE. The mosque and minaret were destroyed by ISIS militants in June 2017.

<https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/uae-launches-greatest-cultural-restoration-project-in-iraq-to-revive-al-nuri-mosque-1.724233>

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/230420183>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-unesco/uae-to-fund-50-4-million-project-to-rebuild-mosuls-grand-al-nuri-mosque-idUSKBN1HU2LO>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43878017>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/24/world/middleeast/mosul-al-nuri-grand-mosque.html>

- *The Peninsula* published an article titled “**New exhibition explores vanishing heritage of Syria at Museum of Islamic Art in Qatar.**” The Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) in Doha will present an exhibition entitled “Syria Matters,” opening on November 23, 2018 as part of the MIA ten-year anniversary celebrations. The exhibition will consist of Syrian artifacts largely from the early Islamic period and later.
<https://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/23/04/2018/New-exhibition-explores-vanishing-heritage-of-Syria-at-Museum-of-Islamic-Art-in-Qatar>
 - *The Independent* published an article titled “**I was a tour guide in Syria – here's what it was like before the war**” (by Emad Nor Eldeen). A former tour guide at historical and archaeological sites in Syria discusses her experiences before and after leaving Syria.
<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/syria-civil-war-before-life-assad-regime-tourism-travel-a8317676.html>
- April 22, 2018
- The Intercept* published an article titled “**Destroyed and saved: To Defeat ISIS, the U.S. Helped Turn Old Mosul Into Rubble — but Won't Help Rebuild It**” (by Pasha Magid & Shawn Carrié). The authors report that state-led rebuilding efforts in the Old City of Mosul are almost non-existent, and the US has refused to provide any of the \$88 billion the Iraqi government estimates is required for reconstruction efforts.
<https://theintercept.com/2018/04/22/to-defeat-isis-the-u-s-helped-turn-old-mosul-into-rubble-but-wont-help-rebuild-it/>
- April 21, 2018
- The National* published an article titled “**Restoring Mosul's lost treasures one byte at a time**” (by James Langton). ICONEM is joining international efforts to document and restore the Old City of Mosul.
<https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/restoring-mosul-s-lost-treasures-one-byte-at-a-time-1.723514>
- April 20, 2018
- BBC News* published an article titled “**Saddam's 'Disney for a despot': How dictators exploit ruins**” (by Paul Cooper). The author describes how Saddam Hussein appropriated ancient ruins, including Babylon, to tell a flattering story about his own authoritarian regime.
<http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20180419-saddam-disney-for-a-despot-how-dictators-exploit-ruins>
- April 19, 2018
- Al Monitor* published an article titled “**Iraqi musicians fight to revive ancient art of maqam**” (by Adnan Abu Zeed). A group of Iraqi artists are trying to revive the traditional art of maqam, a musical style played with Iraqi instruments and strong vocals.
<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/04/iraqi-maqam-under-threat-of-disappearance.html>

- *The Guardian* published an article titled “**Destruction at the ancient site of Mari in Syria**” (by Mary Shepperson). Recent damage to the site of Mari is discussed.
<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2018/apr/19/destruction-at-the-ancient-site-of-mari-in-syria>

- *The Washington Post* published an article titled “**How American neglect imperils the victory over ISIS**” (by Tamer El-Ghobashy). The author reports on a growing sentiment in Raqqa, which remains largely in rubble, that “the United States wrecked the city but is unwilling to take responsibility for putting it back together.” Local officials in Raqqa are concerned that the US objective of ridding Syria of ISIS has been undermined by its lack of engagement with rebuilding Raqqa, which may contribute to the emergence of another insurgency.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/world/syria/raqqa-residents-abandoned-and-forgotten/?utm_term=.108c0e0aba41

April 18, 2018

The University of Pennsylvania will host a lecture titled “**The Evolution of Archaeological Research in Duhok Province, Kurdistan Region**” by Hasan Ahmed Qasim, Director of Antiquities and Museums in Dohuk.
<https://www.sas.upenn.edu/ancient/events.html>

- *TRT World* published an article titled “**Libya's dwindling number of traditional pit houses**” (by Rahul Radhakrishnan). The tradition of building subterranean pit houses in towns like Gharyan in Libya is in decline.
<https://www.trtworld.com/life/libya-s-dwindling-number-of-traditional-pit-houses-16812>

- *Kurdistan 24* published an article titled “**VIDEO: Kurdish cultural museum in Rojava hopes to attract international visitors**” (by Karzan Sulaivany). The **Sehid Ferhad Museum of Cultural Heritage** in Qamishlo, Rojava houses 1,060 Syrian Kurdish artifacts and antiques.
<http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/bd300ed7-cf42-445e-a602-c940d28d54ad>

April 16, 2018

Asharq al-Awsat published an article titled “**Two Thieves Steal Bells from Historic Church in Libya**” (by Jamal Jawhar). Thieves stole two copper bells from the historic Church of Santa Maria in Tripoli and sold them for scrap. **ASOR CHI Incident Report LHI 18-0019**
<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1239126/two-thieves-steal-bells-historic-church-libya>

- *OnuItalia* published an article titled “**Unite4Heritage: carabinieri addestrano specialisti iracheni per tutela patrimonio (Unite4Heritage: Carabinieri train Iraq specialists for heritage protection).**” Officers of the Italian Carabinieri held a training course for 31 Iraqi police officers, cultural heritage experts, and academics that taught techniques to protect cultural heritage and combat looting.
<http://www.onuitalia.com/2018/04/16/unite4heritage-carabinieri-addestrano-specialisti-iracheni-per-tutela-patrimonio/>

- *Wired* published an article titled “**Google's 3D models are saving the world's most at-risk heritage sites**” (by Phoebe Braithwaite). Google Arts and Culture will partner with CyArk for a project known as Open Heritage that will create 3D models of heritage sites at risk of destruction, including al-Azem Palace in Damascus.
<http://www.wired.co.uk/article/google-arts-culture-cyark-open-heritage-chichen-itza-bagan>

- April 15, 2018 *Iraqi News* published an article titled “**Iraq declares UN initiative to rehabilitate ancient sites in Nineveh**” (by Mohammed Ebraheem). Qais Hussein Rashid, Deputy Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, reports that an initiative brokered by the UN and several other countries aims at “re-constructing touristic, archaeological and heritage sites destroyed by terrorist IS gangs in the city of Mosul.”
<https://www.iraqinews.com/features/iraq-declares-un-initiative-to-rehabilitate-ancient-sites-in-nineveh/>

- April 14, 2018 *Apollo Magazine* published an article titled “**Ancient civilisations get a modern makeover at the Penn Museum**” (by Eve Kahn). New galleries dedicated to the Penn Museum’s enormous collection of Near Eastern artifacts will open in April.
<https://www.apollo-magazine.com/ancient-civilisations-get-a-modern-makeover-at-the-penn-museum/>

- *The Syria Times* published an article titled “**Tour in Prof. Fawaz Azki's Geological Museum.**” The Dr. Fawaz Azki Geological Museum, Syria’s first museum dedicated to geology, is located in the village of Kismin in Lattakia Governorate. It is home to hundreds of fossils and other artifacts.
<http://syriatimes.sy/index.php/tourism/35949-tour-in-prof-fawaz-azki-s-geological-museum>

- April 13, 2018 *Trade Arabia* published an article titled “**Arab engineers to discuss Iraq, Syria reconstruction.**” The Federation of Arab Engineers and International Fairs and Promotions will jointly host a major summit in Baghdad on October 18–19, 2018 to discuss reconstruction plans for cities in Iraq and Syria.
http://tradarabia.com/news/MISC_339067.html

- **UNESCO World Heritage Centre** published an article titled “**Geneva Declaration ‘Human Rights and Culture Heritage: Committed Cities Working Together’ adopted.**” The Declaration, adopted in Geneva on March 26, 2018, aims to “clarify cities’ obligations in the area of cultural heritage rehabilitation, particularly in relation to intentionally destroyed cultural heritage” and “puts forward proposals for implementation.” The cities of Mosul, Timbuktu, and Diyarbakir were among the first to sign the Declaration.
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1808>

- April 12, 2018 *Mada* published an article titled “**Plan(s) for Greater Baghdad: How hidden stories shape iconic cities**” (by Ala Younis). Ala Younis has developed “Plan for Greater Baghdad,” an art installation focused on the Baghdad Gymnasium, a stadium designed by renowned architect Charles-Édouard “Le Corbusier” Jeanneret in the 1950s. The installation includes a model of the complex, 3D-printed representations of key figures in the story of its construction, and “layered timelines that blend archival material with artistic responses.”
<https://www.madamasr.com/en/2018/04/12/feature/culture/plans-for-greater-baghdad-how-hidden-stories-shape-iconic-cities/>

- April 11, 2018 *Iraqi News* published an article titled “**Iraq thwarts Islamic State’s plot to explode ancient citadel in Nineveh**” (by Mohammed Ebraheem). Iraqi security forces reportedly thwarted an attempt by ISIS militants to detonate explosives at Tal Afar Citadel.
<https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/iraq-thwarts-islamic-states-plot-to-explode-ancient-citadel-in-nineveh/>

- *Syria Deeply* published an article titled “**Expert Views: Beyond a Top-down Approach to Aleppo’s Reconstruction**” (by Jenny Morber). The Syrian government and Damascus-affiliated institutions have near-complete control over the planning and implementation of reconstruction projects in Aleppo. Experts warn that excluding Aleppo’s local population from urban planning efforts could be detrimental to the city’s recovery.
<https://www.newsdeeply.com/syria/community/2018/04/11/expert-views-beyond-a-top-down-approach-to-aleppos-reconstruction>

- *Niqash* published an article titled “**Tikrit Turns Saddam Hussein’s Palaces Into Tourist Attractions**” (by Ghazwan Hassan al-Jibouri). Dozens of palaces built by Saddam Hussein in the Tikrit area are in a state of decay. The local council in Tikrit hopes to turn some into tourist attractions.
<http://www.niqash.org/en/articles/society/5877/Tikrit-Turns-Saddam-Hussein%E2%80%99s-Palaces-Into-Tourist-Attractions.htm>

- *Al Hurra* published a video report titled “ في الموصل ... وفد من وزارة السياحة “ **(In Mosul, a delegation from the Ministry of Tourism and UNESCO announced the launch of projects for the rehabilitation of archaeological sites and places of worship).**”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpqhhuIrbcQ>
 - *The Libya Observer* published an article titled “**Fine arts exhibition held at Youth Houses of Shahhat Municipality**” (by Housam Najjair). The Department of Fine Arts at the University of Sabratha organized an art exhibition at the Youth Houses of Shahhat Municipality in cooperation with the Union of Libyan World Heritage Municipalities. The exhibit is intended to create awareness of the importance of preserving Libyan cultural heritage and protecting archaeological sites from damage and looting.
<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/art/fine-arts-exhibition-held-youth-houses-shahhat-municipality>
 - **Heritage for Peace** published its bi-weekly newsletter titled “**Damage to Syria's Heritage - 11 April 2018.**”
<http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/5199-2/>
- April 10, 2018
- *The Conversation* published an article titled “**Fifteen years after looting, thousands of artefacts are still missing from Iraq's national museum**” (by Craig Barker). A discussion of the 2003 looting of the National Museum of Iraq and the scale of the illegal antiquities market today.
<https://theconversation.com/fifteen-years-after-looting-thousands-of-artefacts-are-still-missing-from-iraqs-national-museum-93949>
 - *Al Monitor* published an article titled “**Iraqi boat-makers struggle to keep their trade afloat**” (by Wassim Bassem). The craft of boat-building, one of Iraq's oldest industries, is disappearing, with only a few dozen artisans remaining in the country.
<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/04/iraqi-mashoofs-on-verge-of-disappearance.html>
 - *Science Magazine* published an article titled “**War savages ancient sites in Yemen and Iraq, destroying archaeological record**” (by Andrew Lawler). A discussion of the devastation war has wrought on archaeological sites in Yemen, Syria, and Iraq.
<http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/04/war-savages-ancient-sites-yemen-and-iraq-destroying-archaeological-record>

April 8, 2018

The Arab Weekly published an article titled “**World heritage in Syria and Libya agonising under the world’s idle eyes**” (by Samar Kadi). Cheikhmous Ali, the founder of the Association for the Protection of Syrian Archaeology (APSA), discusses damage to sites and museums throughout Syria.

<https://thearabweekly.com/world-heritage-syria-and-libya-agonising-under-worlds-idle-eyes>

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Al Monitor published an article titled “**Iraqi churches shoulder burden of reconstruction, for now**” (by Judit Neurink).

Approximately 22,000 people have returned to the town of Qaraqosh, largely due to clean-up and reconstruction efforts led by the local church.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/04/iraq-christian-kurdistan.html>

April 7, 2018

The Libya Observer published an article titled “**U.S. Embassy holds training to safeguard Libya’s rich cultural heritage**” (by Safa Alharathy). The US Embassy in Libya organized a workshop in Tunis in partnership with Oberlin College to train attendees from the tourist police and customs, as well as archaeologists, in strategies and procedures used to investigate the illegal trafficking of cultural property.

<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/inbrief/us-embassy-holds-training-safeguard-libya%E2%80%99s-rich-cultural-heritage>

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Al Jazeera published an article titled “**Syria: 'Absentees law' could see millions of refugees lose lands**” (by Arwa Ibrahim). New legislation could allow the Syrian government to confiscate properties of displaced Syrians unless they prove ownership in 30 days.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/syria-absentees-law-millions-refugees-lose-lands-180407073139495.html>

April 5, 2018

The Irish Times published an article titled “**Syria: ‘We received money for documentation but not restoration’**” (by Michael Jansen). According to the author, foreign archaeologists (with the exception of teams from Hungary) no longer work in Syria, and no funds are available for the restoration of monuments even in relatively peaceful regions.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/middle-east/syria-we-received-money-for-documentation-but-not-restoration-1.3452100?mode=amp>

April 4, 2018

Voice of America published an article titled “**Mosul Artist Paints Over IS Graffiti With Murals of City's Old Glory**” (by Rikar Hussein & Kawa Omar). Walid Dabagh, an artist in Mosul, paints over the remains of ISIS graffiti in the city with murals recounting life in the Old City of Mosul before ISIS rule.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/mosul-artists-paints-over-islamic-state-graffiti-with-murals-city-old-glory/4332824.html>

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The New York Times published an article titled “**The ISIS Files**” (by Rukmini Callimachi). The author describes finding caches of documents in Mosul and the surrounding region to help create a narrative of daily life under ISIS rule.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/04/04/world/middleeast/isis-documents-mosul-iraq.html>

April 3, 2018

Reuters published an article titled “**Letters from Baghdad' shows Iraq through eyes of British female explorer and spy who shaped it**” (by Maher Chmaytelli). A new documentary on Gertrude Bell focuses on the life of a female explorer who helped shape modern Iraq. Screenings of the film in Baghdad and elsewhere in Iraq have been organized by the Iraqi Ministry of Culture.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-movie/letters-from-baghdad-shows-iraq-through-eyes-of-british-female-explorer-and-spy-who-shaped-it-idUSKCN1HA1L9>

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Al Jazeera published an article titled “**Mosul post-ISIL: Iraq seeks to rebuild its 'destroyed' heritage**” (by Imran Khan). Iraqi archaeologists say the Iraq government has done little to assess the damage and destruction caused by the ISIS.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/mosul-post-isil-iraq-seeks-rebuild-destroyed-heritage-180403120141676.html>

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Digital Library of the Middle East (DLME) published an article titled “**Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Gives CLIR \$1.12M Grant for DLME**” (by Peter Herdrich). The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) \$1.12 million “to implement a sustainable, extensible digital library platform and set of curatorial processes to federate records relating to the cultural heritage of the Middle East.”

<https://dlme.clir.org/2018/04/03/andrew-w-mellon-foundation-gives-clir-1-12m-grant-for-dlme/>

April 2, 2018

The Libya Observer published an article titled “**Sabha's historic castle hit with rockets as tribal tension continues**” (by Safa Alharathy). The southern walls of Sabha Castle were reportedly damaged during ongoing fighting in the city.

<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/sabhas-historic-castle-hit-rockets-tribal-tension-continues>

- **The British Museum** published a blog post titled “**Trade and contraband in ancient Assyria**” (by Mathilde Touillon-Ricci). The author discusses merchant activity and correspondence in the ancient cities of Ashur in Iraq and Qanesh in Turkey, ca. 1900 BCE. <https://blog.britishmuseum.org/trade-and-contraband-in-ancient-assyria/>

April 1, 2018

The Guardian published an article titled “**UK archaeologists help Iraqis restore their Isis-ravaged heritage**” (by Peter Beaumont). The British Museum will train groups of female archaeologists in archaeological restoration at the world’s oldest-known bridge, located at the entrance to the ancient Sumerian city of. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/01/uk-archaeologists-help-iraqis-restore-their-isis-ravaged-heritage>

- *Deutsche Welle* published an article titled “**Mali: Alleged Timbuktu destroyer to appear at International Criminal Court.**” A second member of the Al Qaeda-linked militant group Ansar al-Dine will be tried at the International Criminal Court on charges of destroying cultural heritage in Timbuktu, among other crimes. <http://www.dw.com/en/mali-alleged-timbuktu-destroyer-to-appear-at-international-criminal-court/a-43212936>