

ASOR Syrian Heritage Initiative (SHI): Planning for Safeguarding Heritage Sites in Syria¹

NEA-PSHSS-14-001

Weekly Report 2 — August 18, 2014

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Heritage Timeline

- August 16** APSA website released a video and a short report on alleged looting at **Deir Turmanin** (5th Century AD) in **Idlib Governate**. [SHI Incident Report SHI14-018](#).
- **DGAM** posted a report on alleged vandalism/looting and combat damage sustained to the Roman/Byzantine **Beit Hariri** (var. Zain al-Abdeen Palace) of the 2nd Century AD in **Inkhil, Daraa Governate**. [SHI Incident Report SHI14-017](#).
 - **Heritage for Peace** released its weekly report *Damage to Syria's Heritage 17 August 2014*.
- August 15** **DGAM** posts short report *Burning of the Historic **Noria Gaabariyya** in Hama*. Cf. SHI Incident Report SHI14-006 dated Aug. 9. DGAM report provides new photos of the fire damage. [SHI Report Update SHI14-006](#).
- August 14** **Chasing Aphrodite** website posted an article entitled *Twenty Percent: ISIS "Khums" Tax on Archaeological Loot Fuels the Conflicts in Syria and Iraq* featuring an interview between CA's Jason Felch and **Dr. Amr al-Azm** of Shawnee State University.
- Damage to a 6th century mosaic from **al-Firkiya** in the Maarat al-Numaan Museum. Source: Smithsonian Newsdesk report. [SHI Incident Report SHI14-016](#).
 - **Aleppo Archaeology** website posted a video showing damage in the area south of the **Aleppo Citadel** — much of the damage was caused by the July 29 tunnel bombing of the **Serail** by the **Islamic Front**.
<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=739634902761700&set=vb.459668177425042&type=2&theater>
[SHI Incident Report Update SHI14-004](#).
- August 13** **Aleppo Archaeology** posted two photos showing the current state of the **Great Mosque of Aleppo** and the eastern half of the **Serail** in the **UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo** (2008). Previous reports in social media claimed the Serail had been totally destroyed in the tunnel bombing of July 29.

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

<https://www.facebook.com/459668177425042/photos/a.480200765371783.107575.459668177425042/706452346079956/?type=1&theater>

<https://www.facebook.com/459668177425042/photos/a.480200765371783.107575.459668177425042/738652849526572/?type=1&theater>

SHI Incident Report Update SHI14-004.

- **APSA** websites posted documentation of the **Serail** (3 photos and a video) and the **Hammam Yalbugha** (4 photos and a video) in Aleppo. These photos permit a more detailed assessment of the damage caused by the July 29 tunnel bombing. The video was previously released elsewhere on August 12.
<http://www.apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/aleppo/monuments/913-aleppo-saraya-building.html>

<http://www.apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/aleppo/monuments/911-yalbougha-2.html>

SHI Incident Report Update SHI14-004.

- August 12** **APSA** and **Aleppo Archaeology** websites released video footage of the tunnel bomb destruction in the area of the **Serail** in **Aleppo** (2008). Footage is dated August 8.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnlOxGsvJrw>

SHI Incident Report Update SHI14-004.

- **Aleppo Archaeology** posted two undated photos of mitigation work conducted at the entrance to the Aleppo Museum to protect famous monumental sculptures from Tell Halaf.
- **UNESCO Crisis and Transition Response** posts *UNESCO strengthens action to safeguard cultural heritage under attack* on its website.

- August 11** **APSA** website released a photo of the tunnel-bomb damage to the **Hammam Yalbugha** in **Aleppo**. SHI Incident Report Update SHI14-004.

- August 10** **Islamic State** Twitter accounts posted gallery photos documenting IS's destruction of shrines in Mosul. <http://justpaste.it/Adrah>. Sites were subsequently purged by Twitter.

Military and Political Context

During the reporting period, the primary theaters of military engagement and insurgent activity in Syria were:

- 1) The three-front struggle for Aleppo;
- 2) Small-scale operations in and around Damascus;
- 3) The She'tat tribal *sahwa* and IS reprisals centered on Deir ez-Zor;
- 4) Clashes in the areas of Hassakah and Qamishli.²

Generally, current military operations and terrorist activity revolves around control of border crossings with Turkey, Lebanon, and western Iraq and command of the Damascus-Aleppo (M5) and Aleppo-Raqqa (M15/M4) corridors. The regime (SARG), the opposition, and the al-Qaeda affiliated Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) are increasingly in a reactionary mode, responding to the rapid actions of Islamic State (IS) forces, who hold the strategic initiative. By the end of the reporting period, IS success in the eastern Aleppo theater reportedly motivated opposition forces³ — viz. Free Syrian Army, Islamic Front, and Syrian Revolutionary Front — to assume a higher degree of logistical and battlefield coordination in an attempt to maintain their tenuous grip on the northern and eastern areas of Aleppo city and vital supply lines to Turkey passing through the opposition stronghold of Marea to A'zaz. On August 17, SARG exhibited a major shift in strategy when a large number of airstrikes were conducted on the IS-controlled stronghold of Raqqa, on IS forces besieging the Tabqa Airbase, on IS targets in Deir ez-Zor, and on the towns of Akhtarin and Dabiq, recently captured by IS. Previously SARG refrained from major operations against IS in Syria, allowing the jihadist militants to pressure or radicalize opposition forces and create the politically expedient specter of a jihadist takeover of the country. This shift in SARG behavior suggests acknowledgment that IS now constitutes a clear and immediate threat to the Assad regime. Developments in the three-front battle for Aleppo threaten to cut off regime access to the Alawite heartland in Latakia Governate as IS threatens to capture northern Syria and the opposition and JN pivot toward Idlib and Hama.

With regard to cultural heritage, IS territorial gains mean drastically heightened threats since the newly established caliphate espouses radical policies regarding: 1) the destruction of monuments deemed counter to its vision of Islam (see SHI Weekly Report 1),⁴ and 2) the condoned looting of archaeological sites for *khums* revenue.⁵ The IS capture of the Turkish border crossing at A'zaz would expedite the trafficking of illegal antiquities out of Syria. Moreover, IS may sever key lines of media access in northern Syria through Turkey, vastly diminishing information on the status of heritage in areas outside SARG control. Should IS continue to make gains in the Aleppo theater, IS intentional targeting of religious and ethnic minorities will exacerbate an already deleterious

² For a more detailed overview of military and terrorist activity see Institute for the Study of War (ISW) *Syria Update: August 7–15, 2014*.

³ *ABC News*, “Syrian Airstrikes Target Islamic State Group,” August 17, 2014. *Syria Daily*, “Insurgents Try to Stop Islamic State in Aleppo,” August 17, 2014.

⁴ For IS ideology and policies see most recently Gambhir, Harleen K. 2014. *Dabiq: The Strategic Messaging of the Islamic State*. August 15, 2014 (ISW Backgrounder).

⁵ See most recently, *Chasing Aphrodite*, “Twenty Percent: ISIS ‘Khums’ Tax on Archaeological Loot Fuels the Conflicts in Syria and Iraq,” August 14, 2014. <http://chasingaphrodite.com>

humanitarian crisis⁶ — akin to the recent exodus of Yazidis and Christians in northern Iraq — as Kurds, Christians, Alawites and other religious and ethnic minorities feel increasingly threatened and seek safe havens. Recent events in northern Iraq and northeastern Syria demonstrate IS targets the heritage of religious and ethnic minorities as one of many means to instill fear, promote population displacements, and logistically hinder its opponents through humanitarian crises: the Aleppo region is a target-rich environment since, like Mosul, it is renowned for both its ethnic and religious diversity and its rich cultural heritage.

Key Heritage Recommendations and Actions

1) The westward advance of IS forces and the potential of a protracted and intensified conflict in northwest Syria greatly elevate the risk to the cultural heritage of urban Aleppo and the surrounding area. IS exhibits a pattern of intentionally targeting religious monuments in areas under its control.

*As previously recommended, in coming months SHI should focus monitoring, mitigation, and preservation efforts on this area and on monuments deemed at high risk for intentional destruction. SHI should review capacity with regard to the program's ability to preserve/conservate standing masonry and mud-brick architecture since such remains are ubiquitous here. Concomitantly, SHI should continue to build its heritage network in the areas of Roman/Byzantine and Islamic architectural conservation.

2) Recent IS advances in northern Syria threaten to cut off media sources on the conflict/heritage situation and would impede the implementation of preservation initiatives.

*SHI will develop new data sources to compensate, particularly the use of satellite remote sensing as detailed in the program's grant proposal. SHI has requested access to Digital Globe imagery through DoS — such access would greatly enhance program outcomes. The logistical feasibility of implementing heritage initiatives through southern Turkey should be reviewed. Access to professional-grade media-monitoring software would also improve program outcomes.

3) IS territorial gains correlate with the large-scale looting of archaeological sites given explicit IS encouragement and support of looting as a revenue stream.

*SHI will prioritize IS-controlled areas for searching out evidence of looting using remotely sensed data. Looting in IS areas will be publicized and SHI will alert cultural heritage experts and international monitoring and law enforcement agencies engaged in cultural property protection.

⁶ The UN currently designates the humanitarian crises in northern Iraq and in Syria as Level 3 Emergencies, its highest designation. See *UN News Centre*, "UN declares Iraq 'Level 3 Emergency' to trigger more resources, speed up aid delivery," http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48483#.U_DuPUs2yoN

Incident Reports

Note: SHI Incident Reports SHI14-007 to SH14-015 cover heritage incidents that occurred prior to SHI's implementation and are not included in this weekly report. SHI will complete incident reports spanning the period from the start of the Syrian civil war (March 2011) to the program start date and include them in quarterly reports.

SHI 14-004 update

Report Date: August 8, 2014

Site Name: Ancient City of Aleppo

Date of Incident: July 29, 2014

Location: Aleppo, area immediately south of the Citadel and other damage in the Old City

Coordinates: Various. See "Site Description."

Site Description: A number of historic Islamic structures were severely damaged or destroyed by the detonation of three tunnel bombs by the Islamic Front in the Ancient City of Aleppo, a UNESCO World Heritage Site (see Maps 1–2, 4), and damage was reported in other areas of the Old City (Maps 2–3).⁷ The intended target of the tunnel bombs, the Grand Serail/Palace of Justice area lies at the south edge of the Aleppo Citadel amid a clustering of other historic structures. DGAM responded on August 5 with a report on their website entitled "History and the historical City Fade Away." The following is a brief assessment of the damage caused by the bombing and related fighting:

- **al-Otrush Mosque** (36°11'47.14"N, 37° 9'47.87"E): This mosque was impacted by the tunnel bomb blasts and damaged by falling debris. Ross Burns describes the mosque as follows,

Immediately south of the post-war Justice Ministry complex behind the baths is an intersection, to the left of which stands the al-Otrush Mosque, a small funerary mosque commissioned to serve as his mausoleum by Emir Aq-Bogha al-Otrushi in 1403 (and completed by his successor, Emir Damir Dash). The tall entrance portal is richly decorated. Under the minaret, left of the portal, the inscription reads: *'This is the work of God's slave, the famed Aq-Bogha al Zahiri. God grant him mercy.'* The façade is one of the finest of any Mameluke building in Aleppo. From the courtyard inside, a corridor to the north west gives access to the burial chamber, a small square room covered with a dome resting on four honey-combed corners. The prayer hall is divided into five broken-vaulted segments supported by a row of four columns.⁸

⁷ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/21>

⁸ Ross Burns 1992:39; see also Gaube and Wirth 1984: No. 337, p. 381.

Photographs posted on the APSA website and a number of other online sites show severe damage to the roof, dome, façade, and minaret.

- **Banqusa Mosque** (36°12'12.94"N, 37°10'5.88"E), **Haddadin Mosque** (36°12'15.35"N, 37°10'3.54"E), **Maidani Mosque** (36°12'23.09"N, 37°9'46.26"E), and **Madrassa as-Sahibiya/al-Fustuq Mosque** (36°11'59.11"N, 37°9'30.73"E): Damage occurred in the northern Old City at the Banqusa, Mosque, Haddadin Mosque, and Maidani Mosque related to recent fighting. In the western Old City, the Madrasa as-Sahibiya/al-Fustuq Mosque was also damaged (Maps 2–3).

Gaube and Wirth provide the following information on these structures:

Banqusa Mosque: “Möglicherweise ist der Vorgängerbau der jetzigen Moschee die schon für das 13. Jahrhundert bei Ibn aš-Šaddad belegte Moschee ‘Isa al-Kurdi. Bauinschrift von 1386.”⁹

Haddadin Mosque: “Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts errichtet, der Gründer war der Hagg ‘Ali b. Ma‘tuq ad-Dunaisiri (gest. 1341), trug auch den Namen ‘alte’ Moschee von Banqusa; 1841 wurde sie teilweise erneuert, 1887 erhielt sie im Zuge der Straßenerweiterung eine neue Westseite, 1893 eine neue Südmauer.”¹⁰

Maidani Mosque: “Mit altem Minarett und sekundär eingesetzten alten Fenstergittern, der Gründer Husain b. Muhammad al-Galabi ist 1536 gestorben. Überdem Portal findet sich eine Inschrift von 1722.”¹¹ According to the website of Ross Burns¹², the APSA photo posted July 2014 documenting damage to the Maidani Mosque shows damage from 2011.

Madrassa as-Sahibiya/al-Fustuq Mosque: “Ehemalige Madrasa as-Sahibiye, Bauinschrift von 1364.”¹³

- **Governor’s Office/Serail** (36°11'50.86"N, 37°9'46.10"E): This Mandate-period building is one of the major landmarks south of the citadel and has been hotly contested by SARG and opposition forces given its view shed and fortified character. The east wing of the structure was destroyed in the tunnel bomb blasts the Palace of Justice/police facilities to the east, which postdate WWII, were damaged. The Serail building was historic, dating to the 1930s and was an example of the neo-Saracenic style.

⁹ Gaube and Wirth 1984: no.560, p.403.

¹⁰ Gaube and Wirth 1984: No. 526, p. 400.

¹¹ Gaube and Wirth 1984: No. 486, p. 396.

¹² Burns, Ross. 2014. *Monuments and sites reported damaged in the Syrian conflict since 2011 (as of 3/08/2014)*. <http://monumentsofsyria.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/Syria-damage-report-Aug-20141.pdf>

¹³ Gaube and Wirth 1984: No. 140, p. 361.

- **Hammam Yalbugha** (36°11'51.71"N, 37° 9'50.30"E): These baths, also known as the Hammam al-Lababidiya, were damaged by the tunnel bomb and during the fighting following the detonation. DGAM claims the attack was intentional.¹⁴ The eastern parts of the building were leveled. According to Ross Burns, they are

... the grandest baths in Syria, which since 1985 have been reconstructed and revived for their original purpose by the tourism authorities, having been rescued from service as a felt factory. The *hammam* was built in the 14th century. The restoration has been done in a sober style and the two domed warm rooms achieve a striking impact.¹⁵

Gaube and Wirth provide the following description, “Mamlukisches Bad, vor 1488 errichtet. Es handelt sich um das bei Ibn aš-Šihna erwähnte Bad an-Nasiri, dessen alten Namen auch Gazzi nennt.”¹⁶ A photograph obtained by APSA shows at least the eastern half of the complex (36°11'51.50"N, 37° 9'50.98"E) has been leveled by the blasts, presumably from falling debris.

- **Khan al-Shouna** (36°11'51.06"N, 37° 9'39.62"E): This marketplace¹⁷ was partially destroyed in the tunnel bomb explosions. The complex lies immediately southwest of the main entrance to the citadel. The 16th century “*khan*” (1546 CE) is more properly a *qaisariye* or a gated, covered market with vaulted ceilings along a main nave. The structure was restored in the 1990s, primarily for tourist traffic.
- **Madrasa Khusruwiye** (36°11'49.33"N, 37° 9'38.51"E): This madrasa and mosque faces the south side of the citadel. It was completed in 1547 CE. Satellite imagery (Map 4) shows the majority of the building has been destroyed by a bomb planted beneath the structure. According to Ross Burns,

...initiated in 1537 by Khusruv Pasha, governor of Aleppo. Perhaps constructed under the supervision of the famous Turkish architect, Sinan, then at the beginning of his remarkable career this is the first of the Ottoman-style monuments built in Aleppo. Note that the portico, covered by five domes, is wider than the prayer hall. The minaret is distinctly Turkish in style.¹⁸

Gaube and Wirth describe the complex in some detail, “Aus Moschee, Madrasa, und weiteren Bauten bestehender Komplex, war zu Beginn dieses Jahrhunderts stark zerfallen, und sein großer Waqf war fast vollständig verloren. Bauinschrift von 1546.”¹⁹

¹⁴ DGAM. August 5, 2014. *Aleppo old city Bombing is a Crime against the History and the historical City Fade Away*. <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1360>

¹⁵ Burns 1992: 39.

¹⁶ Gaube and Wirth 1984: No. 339, p. 382.

¹⁷ See Gaube and Wirth 1984: No. 160, pp. 363–4 for a detailed description and additional sources.

¹⁸ Burns 2009: 47.

¹⁹ Gaube and Wirth 1984: No. 159, p. 363.

- **Madrasa Sultaniye** (36°11'50.05"N, 37° 9'42.73"E): This madrasa and mosque (1225 CE) lies immediately south of the citadel's main entrance and was badly damaged in the detonations. It contains the tomb of Sultan Malik al-Zaher. Gaube and Wirth provide the following dating details, "Von Gazi begonnen und im Jahre 1225 vollendet."²⁰ According to Ross Burns,

Across the road and a little to the left as you look from the entrance of the citadel lies the Madrasa Sultaniye completed in 1223–1225 by Governor (Sultan) al-Aziz, a son of Sultan al-Zaher Ghazi, the project having begun under his father. The *mihrab* of the prayer room is particularly commended. To the left lies a modest room which contained the cenotaphs of Sultan al-Zaher Ghazi and his family.²¹

Site Date: See "Site Description" above.

Source of Destruction: Three tunnel bombs; damage from two previous tunnel bombs.

Pattern: The Islamist opposition group Liwa al-Tawhid (part of the Islamic Front) reportedly utilized the first tunnel bombs in the Aleppo Citadel area to destroy the Carlton Hotel (36°11'53.84"N, 37° 9'36.95"E) on May 8 — an historic hospital. The Al-Qalam building was subsequently destroyed. At this time, the neighboring Khan al-Hannadi to the south was likely also destroyed (Map 4). A similar tactic has been used near Maarat al-Numaan and elsewhere in recent months.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: The locations and extent of damage from these tunnel bombings were determined using satellite imagery (Map 4). Sources²² indicate that many tunnels have been prepared in this area and there is a high likelihood more bombs will be detonated and the highly destructive practice may continue to spread to other urban conflict zones. Most shocking is the destruction of the Madrasa Khusruwiye, which has received relatively little attention thus far.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

- DGAM. August 5, 2014. *Aleppo old city Bombing is a Crime against the History and the historical City Fade Away*.
 - <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1360>
- *The Guardian* May 20, 2014 "Aleppo's most wanted man — the rebel leader behind tunnel bombs."

²⁰ Gaube and Wirth 1984: No. 342, p. 382.

²¹ Burns 1992: 38–39.

²² *The Guardian*. May 20, 2014 "Aleppo's most wanted man — the rebel leader behind tunnel bombs."
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/20/aleppos-most-wanted-man-rebel-leader-tunnel-bombs>

- <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/20/aleppo-most-wanted-man-rebel-leader-tunnel-bombs>

Scholarly Sources:

Gaube, Heinz and Eugen Wirth. 1984. *Aleppo: historische und geographische Beiträge zur baulichen Gestaltung, zur sozialen Organisation und zur wirtschaftlichen Dynamik einer vorderasiatischen Fernhandelsmetropole*. Two Volumes. (Wiesbaden: L. Reichert).



Damage to the al-Otrush Mosque (APSA).



Damage to the al-Otrush Mosque (APSA).



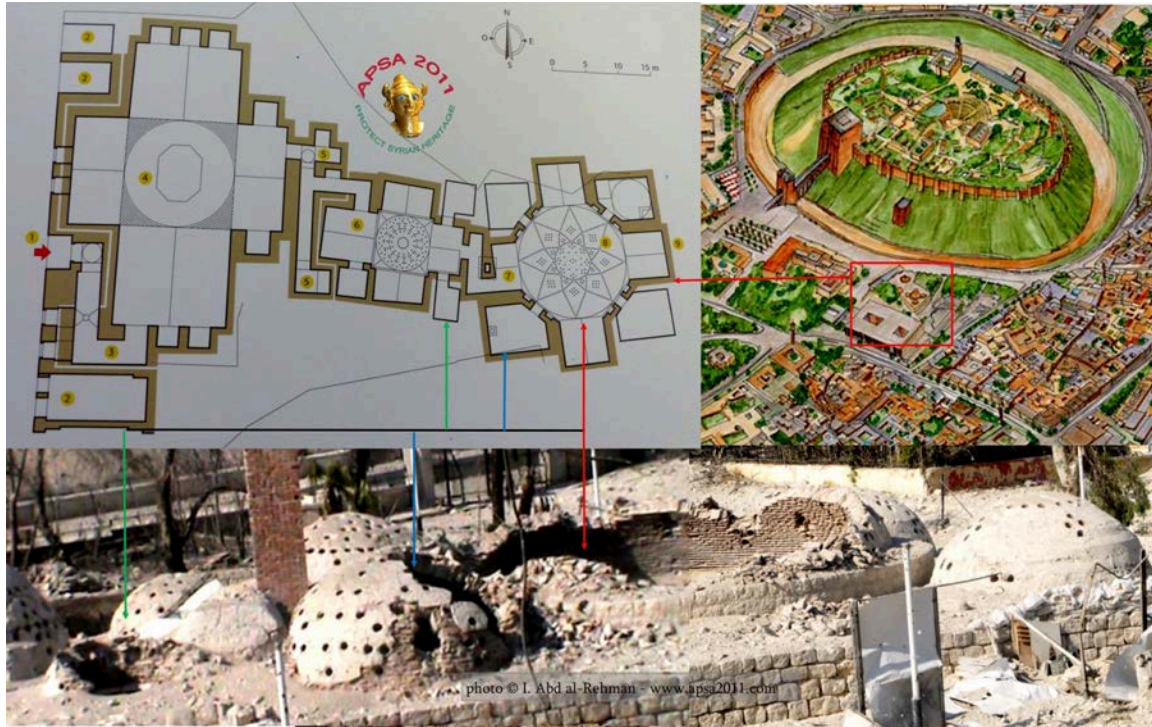
Damage to the al-Otrush Mosque (APSA).



Damage to the Yalbugha Bath. The eastern portion of the bath (left) has been destroyed by the detonation of tunnel bombs nearby (APSA).



View of the rubble field of the east side of the Serail (Aleppo Archaeology, Aug. 12, 2014). The exposed rooms led into the missing east wing.



Damage to the Yalbugha Bath. The eastern portion of the bath (left) has been destroyed by the detonation of tunnel bombs nearby (APSA, Aug. 12, 2014).



View of the historic Serail (APSA, Aug. 12, 2014). The east wing was completely destroyed by a tunnel bomb on July 29, 2014.



View of the historic Serail (APSA, Aug. 12, 2014). The east wing was completely destroyed by a tunnel bomb on July 29, 2014.



View of the historic Serail (APSA, Aug. 12, 2014). The east wing was completely destroyed by a tunnel bomb on July 29, 2014.

SHI 14-006 Update

Report Date: August 9, 2014, Updated August 16, 2014

Site Name: Noria al-J'berihe, Hama

Date of Incident: August 8, 2014

Location: Central City Hama

Coordinates: Ca. 35° 7'54.00"N, 36°45'16.94"E

Site Description:

There are 17 original *norias* (waterwheels) located in Hama along the Orontes River. They were submitted as a tentative World Heritage Site in June 1999.²³ On August 8, one of the larger waterwheels, the *Noria al-J'berihe* burned, allegedly due to an electrical fire in the adjoining al-Sultan restaurant. The earliest waterwheels in Hama likely date to the Byzantine era. The current structures do not predate the Ayyubid period. The majority of the constructions date from the Mamluk period. Ross Burns²⁴ writes,

[at the] N[orth] end of the citadel ... you can continue downstream to a further grouping of *norias*. The largest of all is located 250 m west of the citadel and is known popularly as *al-Muhammediye*. It dates back to the 14th century (inscription on the aqueduct) and has been restored since 1977. About 1 km in the other direction from the central park (to the east) is another cluster of *norias* which you can take in at your leisure from a group of outdoor restaurants.

Site Date: Various, mainly Mamluk Period and modern restorations.

Source of Destruction: Electrical fire in the Sultan restaurant. DGAM claims "burned down by an unknown group."

Pattern: Neglect due to political upheaval and lack of capacity. DGAM unsubstantiated attributions of damage occurring in opposition-controlled areas as intentional and caused by "unknown groups" or "gunmen."

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: This incident may be a deliberate act of arson. SHI will continue to monitor the situation in Hama, which has seen an upsurge in fighting since the spring and the struggle to control routes to Aleppo and Idlib.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

APSA website

<http://apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/hama/monuments/908-hama-la-noria-2.html>

DGAM. August 15, 2014. *Photos: Burning of the Historic Noria Gaabariyya in Hama.* <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1374>

Scholarly:

²³ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/1291>

²⁴ Burns 1992: 125.

De Miranda, Adriana. 2007. *Water Architecture in the Lands of Syria: The Water-wheels*. (Rome: L'erma di Bretschneider).



Fire damage to the Noria al-J'berihe, Hama (DGAM).



Fire damage to the Noria al-J'berihe, Hama (DGAM).



Fire damage to the Noria al-J'berihe, Hama (DGAM).



Fire damage to the Noria al-J'berihé, Hama (DGAM).



Fire damage to the Noria al-J'berihé, Hama (DGAM).



Fire damage to the Noria al-J'berihe, Hama (DGAM).



Fire damage to the Noria al-J'berihe, Hama (DGAM).

SHI 14-016

Report Date: August 16, 2014

Site Name: Farkiya [al-Firkiye] Mosaic, Ma'arra [Maarrat al-Numan] Museum

Date of Incident: Unspecified by source

Location: More specifically the Ma'arrat al- Numaan Museum in the Khan Murad Pasha

Coordinates: The Museum: 35°38'57.50"N, 36°40'47.35"E; The site of al-Firkiye:
35°42'51.87"N, 36°35'48.12"E

Site Description: The Smithsonian post does not disambiguate the location of this damage and the full implications of the incident. The damage shown in the photo, clearly caused by urban combat, occurred within the Maarat al-Numan Museum, which is located in the historic, Ottoman Period, Khan Murad Pahsa, which was restored in 1985. Previous media reports have detailed damage to this building and its collections. A full SHI incident report is in process. The photo suggests heavy combat within the historic structure, which contains large numbers of mosaics and other antiquities. According to Ross Burns²⁵,

In the southeastern part of the central area, an early 16th century khan (Khan Murad Pasha — the largest khan in Syria, 7000 m²) has been converted to a museum with striking effect. It contains an interesting collection of objects including mosaics and pottery from many periods, a tribute to the late curator Kamel Chéhadé. The mosaics have been transferred from nearby sites including a fifth century mosaic from as far as Homs. Note especially the mosaic depicting Romulus and Remus found at al-Firkiye (north of Maarat) and dated to 510. A second mosaic of the same date from al-Firkiye animals in a field bordered by vines [apparently this is the mosaic shown in the Smithsonian online post]...

The DGAM damage report of March 1, 2014 notes minor damage to the building, 30 stolen artifacts, and “a gunmen settlement,” that is, the building is under the control of opposition forces.

The Archnet website provides the following information on the building²⁶,

The intervention consisted of the restoration and partial reconstruction of a caravanserai originally built in the centre of Ma'arat al-Nu'man in 1565.

This one-storey, flat-roofed building is square in plan with a smaller, rectangular extension to the west. It has a large central square courtyard with a house for the poor situated in the middle and a mosque immediately behind. An arcade, around the courtyard perimeter separates it from the surrounding rooms and halls. The complex also comprises public health baths, a bakery and a market. The main entrance is marked by a portal, located to the south.

Site Date: Historic Khan Murad Pasha 1565 AD

Source of Destruction: Urban warfare, collateral damage

Pattern: Heavy fighting in Maarat al-Numan has typified the conflict.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: This museum merits the special attention of SHI given the historic significance of the building, its contents, and

²⁵ Ross Burns. 2009. *The Monuments of Syria. A Guide.* (I.B. Tauris). p. 195.

²⁶ <http://archnet.org/sites/478>

its location at the center of a hotly disputed town controlling several important highway routes on the Damascus-Aleppo corridor.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

DGAM March 1, 2014. *Initial Damages Assessment for Syrian Cultural Heritage During the Crises.*

August 14, 2014 Smithsonian Newsdesk report

<http://newsdesk.si.edu/photos/syrian-cultural-heritage>



The damaged mosaic in the Maarat al-Numan Museum from the site of al-Firkiye (510 AD) (Photo: Smithsonian Newsdesk).



Entrance to the Khan Murad Pasha/Maarat al-Numan Museum (Wikipedia).

SHI 14-017

Report Date: August 17, 2014

Site Name: Beit Hariri (var. Zain al-Abdeen Palace)

Date of Incident: Unspecified. DGAM report posted Aug. 16, 2014.

Location: Inkhil, Daraa Governate

Coordinates: Modern Inkhil: 33° 1'7.55"N, 36° 7'50.65"E (Site as yet unknown)

Site Description: According to Warwick Ball (2007: 105), "Just to the south west of Sanamain, at Inkhil, are the second century AD remains of a superb villa, now a private house (Beit Hariri). It has a façade with an elaborately decorated doorway and conch-head niches. Inside is a large vaulted central hall flanked by smaller rooms, beautifully decorated with busts and other sculptures, all carved from the incredibly hard black basalt of the Hauran."

Site Date: 2nd Century AD

Source of Destruction: The DGAM cites "damages and looting...due to clashes. Daraa Antiquities report mentioned that some ancient stones were stolen and vandalism targets the Eastern part of the palace, the most damage happened to the main facade which was hit by two mortars caused a hole (2-2.5m) and smashed the facade stones."

Pattern: Urban warfare. The Daraa area sustained heavy damage in the early stages of the conflict.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Scholarly:

Ball, Warwick. 2007. Syria. A Historical and Architectural Guide. (Northampton, MA: Interlink Books).



The Beit Hariri before the incident (DGAM).



Beit Hariri before the incident (DGAM).

SHI 14-018

Report Date: August 17, 2014

Site Name: Deir Turmanin

Date of Incident: Unspecified. DGAM report posted Aug. 16, 2014.

Location: Idlib Governate

Coordinates:

Site Description: APSA website provides the following information from Wikipedia,

Turmanin is a town in northern Syria, administratively part of the Idlib Governorate, located north of Idlib. Nearby localities include al-Dana and Sarmada to the southwest, Darat Izza to the northeast and Atarib to the south. The town is notable for the ruins of an ancient basilica in its vicinity. The Basilica, built around 480 AD, was an important influence on later church architecture, and operated as a monastery and a hospice that was noted for its care for the dying. The ruins of the Byzantine monastery of Deir Turmanin, are located northeast of the modern village. The monastery buildings are built around paved courtyard containing two cisterns, a sarcophagus and several tombs. The ruins include a building that housed the monks' dormitories, and the large 5th-century basilica. The twin-towered facade of the church had a colonnade above the portal. The towers were three-stories high and were roofed with gables. The church was probably donated by wealthy patrons. Evidence at the site suggests that the monks were involved in agricultural activity and kept livestock.

Site Date: Byzantine, 480 AD

Source of Destruction: Illicit digging.

Pattern: Widespread looting.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: The limestone massif/Dead Cities area of Syria must be a high monitoring priority for SHI.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

The APSA report contains 21 photographs and a video.

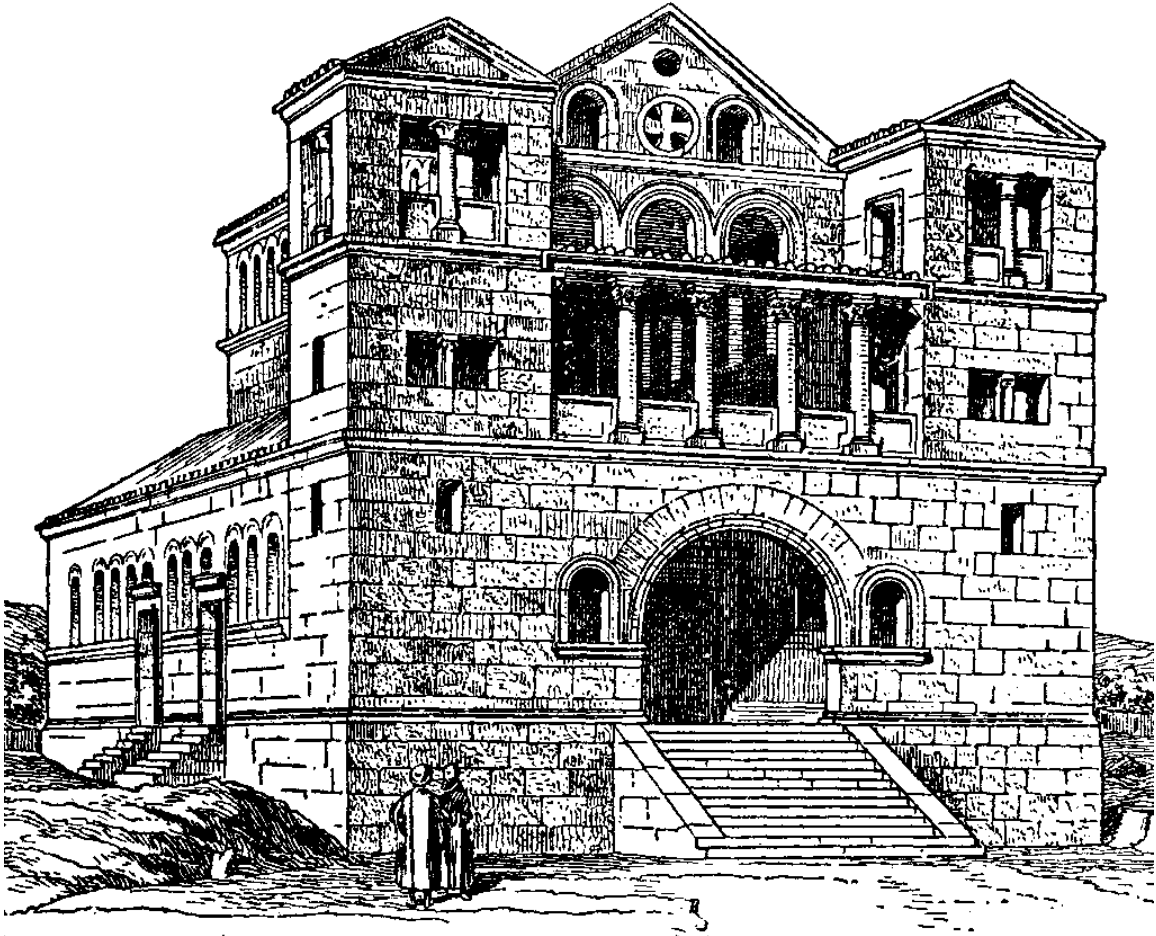
<http://www.apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/idlib/sites/916-idlib-the-limestone-massif-illicit-diggings-at-deir-turmanin-480-ad.html>

Scholarly:



Photo © Abou al-Mothena al-Atarbi - www.apsa2011.com

The site of Deir Turmanin (APSA).



Reconstruction of the Byzantine basilica at Deir Turmanin (Wikipedia).