

# ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives (CHI): Planning for Safeguarding Heritage Sites in Syria and Iraq<sup>1</sup>

NEA-PSHSS-14-001

Weekly Report 33 — March 23, 2015

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## Executive Summary

During the reporting period, ISIL continued its accelerated campaign of performative deliberate destructions of religious heritage sites in northern Iraq and Syria. Recent video footage and photographs released by ISIL make most reports readily verifiable; in February and March, however, there have been a number of unverified reports posted by Iraqi sources. These reports lack video/photographic evidence and have not as yet been claimed by ISIL. In Aleppo, unidentified attackers have allegedly detonated two tunnel bombs in the UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo. While these reports are credible, ASOR CHI has been unable to verify these attacks, establish details, and assess the resulting damage. In the past, factions within or associated with Islamic Front (e.g. Liwa al-Tawhid, Jabhat al-Shamiyya) have been responsible for most of these highly destructive deliberate (often performative) attacks on heritage places. Militants claim they carry out such attacks based on military necessity and also cite tunnel bombings as effective reprisals in response to SARG's well documented use of barrel bombs and airstrikes in the densely settled urban areas of Aleppo and other towns and cities. Barrel bombs represent another highly destructive form of deliberate attack in which heritage places are frequently targeted.

The results of the first rapid response survey designed by ASOR CHI and implemented by the Syrian Research and Evaluation Organization (SREO) are now available (see below). This ten-question survey is designed to investigate antiquities looting, sales, and trafficking in Syria and northern Iraq. The first survey, comprising 100 responses from the area of Raqqa, Syria, confirms the ubiquity of antiquities theft, its profitability, and its facilitation by foreigners — here understood to be ISIL. The survey supports previous claims that ISIL has been taxing revenues/rights to loot, traffic, and sell antiquities and claims that the organization has been outsourcing cultural property crime.

## Key Points

- ISIL continued its accelerated campaign of performative deliberate destructions of religious heritage places in northern Iraq and northern and eastern Syria. (pp. 19–24, 44–58)
- The results of the first ASOR CHI/SREO rapid survey on antiquities looting, sales, and trafficking are now available. The survey confirms previous claims of ubiquitous looting in the Raqqa area facilitated by ISIL. (pp. 9–13)
- There have been two credible but unverified reports of tunnel bomb detonations in March in the UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo. (p. 41)

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

## Heritage Timeline

- March 23, 2015
- APSA** posted a YouTube video showing what appears to be a **missile strike** against a sniper position on the fortification wall of the Citadel at the **UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Bosra** on March 22, 2015. [ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0057](#).  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrAjZ8kgTEQ&feature=youtu.be>
- Al-Fanar Media published an article titled “**Iraqis Watch Antiquities Take Hit After Hit**” (by Gilgamesh Nabeel and Sarah Lynch), which **interviews multiple Iraqi archaeologists** about the destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq.  
<http://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2015/03/iraqis-watch-antiquities-take-hit-after-hit/>
- March 22, 2015
- Reports indicate that the **Minaret of Qutb al-Din Muhammad**, dating to the 13th century AD and located in **Sinjar, Iraq** was filled with explosives and **demolished by ISIL militants**. The site was seen as a religious symbol for Yezidi Kurds. [ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0076](#).  
<http://rudaw.net/sorani/kurdistan/220320155>
- *BBC News* published an article titled “**The men who uncovered Assyria**” (by Daniel Silas Adamson). The article recounts the history of early excavations at the sites of Nineveh and Nimrud and, at the same time, the set of circumstances that led to many objects being shipped to foreign museums, where they remain to this day.  
<http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-31941827>
- March 21, 2015
- The **DGAM** reported that a tunnel bomb was detonated in the **UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo** on Friday, March 20, 2015, in the al-Bandara area at the front of al-Mawazin Souq, which leads to the Bab al-Nasr police office. According to the report, no information about damage is yet available. [ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0056](#).  
<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1625>
- *Red Arch* published a blog post titled “**Cultural Property Protection Bill Reintroduced in the House**” (by Rick St. Hilaire), drawing attention to the introduction of **H.R. 1493**, a bill designed to “protect and preserve international cultural property at risk due to instability, armed conflict, or natural or other disasters, and for other purposes.”  
<http://culturalheritagelawyer.blogspot.com/2015/03/cultural-property-protection-bill.html>

- *The Independent* published an article titled “**Isis militants blow up 4<sup>th</sup>-century Christian Mar Behnam monastery in Iraq**” (by Heather Saul).  
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-militants-blowup-ancient-4th-century-christian-mar-behnam-monastery-in-iraq-10123238.html>
- March 20, 2015 *CBS News* published an article titled “**Dangerous ‘uphill battle’ to save Syria’s history**” and an associated video clip titled “Saving history: Archaeologists race to protect relics from ISIS.” Based around an interview with **Amr al-Azm** (Assistant Professor of History, Shawnee State University), the report highlights the work of modern-day “**monuments men**” who are risking their lives to document and prevent the destruction of cultural heritage in Syria.  
<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/syria-antiquities-looted-destroyed-war-isis-modern-monuments-men/>
- The **shirín** initiative posted a **statement** urging organizations engaged in cultural heritage monitoring to exercise caution in the reporting of destruction events and to insist on the careful cross-checking of information.  
[http://shirin-international.org/?page\\_id=2721](http://shirin-international.org/?page_id=2721)
- March 19, 2015 The **DGAM** published a series of images showing the condition of the **Temple of Bel** at the Roman-era **UNESCO World Heritage Site of Palmyra**. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0055**.  
<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1623>
- **APSA** posted a video on YouTube showing the bombing of the **Al-Omari Mosque in Daraa** on March 18, 2015. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0054**.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EP7xgsUvUQU&feature=youtu.be>
- Reports emerged that the fourth century **tomb complex of Mar (Saint) Behnam and Mart (Saint) Sarah** in Qaraqosh, southeast of Mosul, was **destroyed by ISIL militants**. **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0075**.
- *Red Arch* published a blog post titled “**The Assyrian Head Repatriation: Filling in the Details of ICE’s Investigation**” (by Rick St. Hilaire). The post provides detailed information about a **fragmentary, limestone head of Assyrian king Sargon II** that was looted in Iraq, exported from Dubai to the U.S., seized by U.S. special agents in 2008, and **returned to Iraq this week**.  
<http://culturalheritagelawyer.blogspot.co.uk/2015/03/the-assyrian-head-repatriation-filling.html>

- *The Guardian* published an article titled “**Syrian seedbank wins award for continuing work despite civil war**” (by Fiona Harvey). The article describes Syria’s **ICARDA** genebank, which was just awarded the **Gregor Mendel award** for preserving 150,000 seed samples in the midst of a civil war.  
<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/19/syrian-seedbank-wins-award-for-continuing-work-despite-civil-war>
  - *Reuters* published an article titled “**Syria says reclaims 120 looted antiquities from Palmyra ruins**” (by Kinda Makieh). According to the article, the Director of Museums, Ahmad Deeb, stated that special authorities working over the past year have returned more than 120 artifacts (e.g., tombstones) looted from the site, while some artifacts from Palmyra have left Syria. Deeb stated that **all Syrian museums were emptied two years ago** and that **the artifacts were put in storage**; he also estimated that **more than 1,500 items may have been stolen** from museums in Raqqa, a city in northeastern Syria now controlled by ISIL militants, and Deir Atiyah in northern Damascus.  
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/19/us-mideast-crisis-syria-antiquities-idUSKBN0MF1D020150319>
- March 18, 2015
- APSA** posted a series of images and a video documenting damage to the **Tekyyet al-Rawi mosque and other structures in the region of Deir ez-Zor**. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0013 Update and SHI 15-0053**.  
<http://apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/deir-ez-zor/monuments/1163-deir-ez-zor-tekyyet-al-rawi.html>
- The **DGAM** reported on a meeting, held in Beirut on March 15, concerning **Syria-Japan cooperation** in the effort to safeguard Syrian cultural heritage.  
<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1621>
  - In a speech held at the Louvre, **French president Francois Hollande** expressed solidarity with the people of Iraq and Syria and **pledged support for the effort to preserve endangered cultural heritage**. In particular, president Hollande said that experts from the Louvre will soon be traveling to Baghdad to evaluate the situation. Excavation records held in France will also be scanned and sent to the Iraqi authorities, and some Iraqi students will be invited to France to complete doctoral degrees.  
<http://www.culturecommunication.gouv.fr/Actualites/En-continu/Destructions-archeologiques-par-Daesh-cri-d-alerte-et-travail-d-inventaire>  
<http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2015/mar/18/french-president-calls-for-preservation-of-iraq/>

- *Conflict Antiquities* published a blog post titled “**Conflict antiquities from Apamea do not finance the Islamic State — they finance the Assad regime**” (by Sam Hardy). Written in response to a recent article in *The Times* (“Antiquities looted by Islamic State turn up on eBay,” by Hugh Tomlinson), the post attempts to disentangle some of the recent, conflicting reports and timelines of site destruction, looting, and antiquities trafficking by ISIL and other groups.  
<https://conflictantiquities.wordpress.com/2015/03/18/syria-apamea-ebay-islamic-state-assad-regime/>
- *Al Monitor* published an article titled “**Iraqis struggle to maintain architectural heritage**” (by Wassim Bassem) which discusses the difficulties faced in the protection and maintenance of continuously inhabited historical architecture, particularly commercial properties.  
<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/03/iraq-heritage-architecture-destroyed-modern-buildings.html>
- *FOX News* published an article titled “**Experts harness 3D printing to recreate ancient artifacts destroyed by ISIS**” (by James Rogers). The article highlights **Project Mosul**, an effort to digitally reconstruct objects destroyed by ISIL in the Mosul Museum using crowdsourced photographs.  
<http://www.foxnews.com/tech/2015/03/18/experts-harness-3d-printing-to-recreate-ancient-artifacts-destroyed-by-isis/>
- *Global News* published an article titled “**Destruction of Iraq’s ancient artifacts a ‘cultural genocide’ say researchers**” (by Andrew Russell). Drawing on interviews with **Clemens Reichel** (Professor of Mesopotamian Archaeology, University of Toronto) and **McGuire Gibson** (Professor of Mesopotamian Archaeology, University of Chicago), the article highlights the unprecedented scale on which ISIL has been attacking cultural heritage in Iraq and the difficulty of protecting cultural property during the “unofficial” war against ISIL.  
<http://globalnews.ca/news/1890794/destruction-of-iraqs-ancient-artifacts-a-cultural-genocide-say-researchers/>

March 16, 2015

*CNN* aired an interview with **Elizabeth Stone** (Professor of Anthropology, Stony Brook University) titled “Keeping Ancient Artifacts Safe from ISIS.” The focus of the interview was the **recent deliberate destruction** of ancient sites in northern Iraq and artifacts held at the Mosul Museum, but Prof. Stone drew attention to the fact that these actions are **part of a much broader attempt by ISIL to destroy cultural heritage (e.g. shrines, tombs, mosques) that does not fit within their worldview**.  
<http://sb.cc.stonybrook.edu/happenings/facultystaff/iraq-expert-elizabeth-stone-interviewed-on-cnn/>

March 13, 2015

The **DGAM** reported that a **tunnel bomb** was detonated on Thursday, March 12, 2015, near the Abdul Hamid al-Zahrawi school, which is located near the Citadel in the **UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo**. No information about damage was provided.

<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1619>

## Military and Political Context

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

1. Northwestern Al-Hasakah Governorate
  - During the reporting period, clashes took place between Kurdish YPG, supported by U.S. airstrikes, and ISIL forces in the countryside of Ras al-Ayn on the Turkish border and around the town of Tel Tamr, both of which the YPG controls.<sup>2</sup>
2. Northeastern Homs Governorate
  - During the reporting period, clashes took place between ISIL and Syrian government forces.<sup>3</sup>
3. Handarat, Aleppo Governorate
  - On March 18, after 10 days of fighting, Syrian government forces and allied militias reportedly seized the village of Handarat north of the city of Aleppo from Jabhat al-Nusra and other Islamist groups; Handarat is strategically important because it is part of a supply route used by rebel groups in Aleppo.<sup>4</sup>
4. Sarmin, Idlib Governorate
  - On March 16, according to video and testimony from anti-government activists, the Syrian government dropped barrel bombs with chlorine gas on the village of Sarmin, killing six civilians and harming dozens more.<sup>5</sup>
5. Latakia Governorate
  - On March 17, the Syrian government claimed that it shot down a “hostile” drone, which, if it is confirmed that this incident happened and that the drone was American, would mark the first time in this conflict that the Syrian government has shot down a U.S. aircraft; although the U.S. government has not confirmed this incident, U.S. officials conceded that the U.S. had lost contact with one of its drones.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> J. Cafarella. “Syria Situation Report: March 9-17, 2015,” [http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-XBMcfW7goPA/VQnV80YX5HI/AAAAAAAAAC3s/nKnCdHuAT3I/s1600/SYR%2BSITREP%2BMap%2B18%2B MAR%2B2015\\_HIGH.png](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-XBMcfW7goPA/VQnV80YX5HI/AAAAAAAAAC3s/nKnCdHuAT3I/s1600/SYR%2BSITREP%2BMap%2B18%2B MAR%2B2015_HIGH.png); [http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814\\_iraq/Airstrikes6.html](http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html)

<sup>3</sup> J. Cafarella. “Syria Situation Report: March 9-17, 2015,” [http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-XBMcfW7goPA/VQnV80YX5HI/AAAAAAAAAC3s/nKnCdHuAT3I/s1600/SYR%2BSITREP%2BMap%2B18%2B MAR%2B2015\\_HIGH.png](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-XBMcfW7goPA/VQnV80YX5HI/AAAAAAAAAC3s/nKnCdHuAT3I/s1600/SYR%2BSITREP%2BMap%2B18%2B MAR%2B2015_HIGH.png)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/18/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aleppo-idUSKBNOME1EN20150318>

<sup>5</sup> <http://syriahr.com/en/2015/03/6-killed-while-dozens-others-suffered-from-suffocation-after-barrels-bombardment-on-idlib-countryside/>; <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/17/mideast-crisis-syria-chemicalweapons-upd-idUSL6N0WJ1DS20150317>;

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/18/world/middleeast/syria-activists-say-chlorine-gas-attack-kills-6-in-idlib.html?src=xps>; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-31930181>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-31932233>; <http://www.sana.sy/en/?p=32449>; <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/18/us-mideast-crisis-syria-usa-idUSKBNOME2IY20150318>; J. Cafarella. “Syria Situation Report: March 9-17, 2015,” <http://2.bp.blogspot.com/->

6. Kobani Area
  - During the reporting period, more than half a dozen coalition airstrikes hit ISIL positions around Kobani.<sup>7</sup>

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

1. Central Kirkuk Governorate
  - During the reporting period, clashes in and around the Shiite Turkmen village of Bashir south of the city of Kirkuk pushed ISIL out of the immediate area.<sup>8</sup>
2. Kuwaiti Border
  - On March 18, a truck exploded at the port of Umm Qasr on the Kuwaiti border, killing 3 civilians; no group has claimed responsibility for this attack that disturbed the relative quiet that southern Iraq has recently enjoyed.<sup>9</sup>
3. Baghdad Area
  - On March 17, suicide and bomb attacks reportedly killed at least 9 people in and around Baghdad.<sup>10</sup>
4. Fallujah Area
  - During the reporting period, more than half a dozen coalition airstrikes hit ISIL positions around Fallujah.<sup>11</sup>
5. Ramadi Area
  - During the reporting period, more than half a dozen coalition airstrikes hit ISIL positions around Ramadi.<sup>12</sup>
6. Mosul Area
  - During the reporting period, at least half a dozen coalition airstrikes hit ISIL positions around Mosul.<sup>13</sup>
7. Kirkuk Area
  - During the reporting period, about half a dozen coalition airstrikes hit ISIL positions around Kirkuk.<sup>14</sup>

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[XBMcfW7goPA/VQnV80YX5HI/AAAAAAAC3s/nKnCdHuAT3I/s1600/SYR%2BSITREP%2BMap%2B18%2B  
MAR%2B2015\\_HIGH.png](http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814\\_iraq/Airstrikes6.html](http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html)

<sup>8</sup> S. Adnan, P. Martin, and O. al-Dulimi. "Iraq Situation Report: March 13-18, 2015," <http://iswiraq.blogspot.com/2015/03/iraq-situation-report-march-13-18-2015.html>; <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/03/iraq-shiite-hezbollah-nujaba-victory-islamic-state.html>

<sup>9</sup> S. Adnan, P. Martin, and O. al-Dulimi. "Iraq Situation Report: March 13-18, 2015," <http://iswiraq.blogspot.com/2015/03/iraq-situation-report-march-13-18-2015.html>; <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/18/mideast-crisis-kuwait-idUSL6N0WK15G20150318>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/03/17/world/middleeast/ap-ml-iraq.html>

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814\\_iraq/Airstrikes6.html](http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html)

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814\\_iraq/Airstrikes6.html](http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html)

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814\\_iraq/Airstrikes6.html](http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html)

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814\\_iraq/Airstrikes6.html](http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/Airstrikes6.html)

Other key points:

- The Iraqi government and its allies have temporarily put a hold on the offensive to take Tikrit from ISIL, which still controls parts of the city; Iraqi governmental officials say that they have done this to allow time for reinforcements to arrive and for civilians to be able to evacuate the area.<sup>15</sup> The stall, however, is likely necessary because of the absence of support from coalition airstrikes.<sup>16</sup>

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

- On March 16, both the White House and the State Department backed away from a statement by U.S. Secretary of State Kerry on March 15 during a CBS interview, suggesting that the U.S. might engage in direct talks with Assad; these more recent comments, which came amid criticism from European and Arab allies, maintain that although representatives from Assad's government could be included in talks, the U.S. would never negotiate directly with Assad himself.<sup>17</sup>
- On March 16, the New York Times reported that Iran has sent advanced rockets and missiles to Iraq.<sup>18</sup>
- On March 18, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced that he would present a plan to Parliament the following week to expand Canada's military involvement in Iraq.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/17/world/middleeast/islamic-state-tikrit-iraq-offensive.html?src=xps>

<sup>16</sup> S. Adnan, P. Martin, and O. al-Dulimi. "Iraq Situation Report: March 13-18, 2015,"

<http://iswiraq.blogspot.com/2015/03/iraq-situation-report-march-13-18-2015.html>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/16/us-mideast-crisis-syria-usa-idUSKBN0MC2BF20150316>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/17/world/middleeast/iran-sent-arms-to-iraq-to-fight-isis-us-says.html?src=xps>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/harper-to-propose-to-extend-expand-iraq-mission/article23518076/>; <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/03/18/world/middleeast/ap-cn-canada-iraq.html>; <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/18/us-mideast-crisis-canada-idUSKBN0ME26Y20150318>



## **Rapid Antiquities Survey in Raqqa, Syria Conducted by the Syria Research and Evaluation Organization (SREO)**

SREO conducted a ten-question survey in Raqqa, Syria, to assess antiquities looting, trafficking, and revenues. In each of two stages, SREO contacted 50 respondents and provided the survey results and a report on methodology to ASOR CHI. We include abbreviated versions of both reports here.

### **SREO Analytics: First Rapid Antiquities Survey in Raqqa**

March 11, 2015

#### Brief Methodology

A ten-question survey was developed by ASOR staff in order to obtain a preliminary understanding of the heritage-looting situation on the ground in Raqqa. The questions were translated into Arabic by SREO, with recommendations by ASOR staff regarding the correct translation of terms. In early March, the survey was delivered to 50 respondents in areas with high probabilities of looting around the city of Raqqa. A nonrandom sampling methodology was employed. The completed surveys were submitted to SREO and then entered into survey software that SREO regularly employs to quickly tabulate and arrange findings.

### **SREO Analytics: Second Rapid Antiquities Survey in Raqqa**

March 20, 2015

#### Brief Methodology

A ten-question survey was developed by ASOR staff in order to obtain a preliminary understanding of the heritage-looting situation on the ground in Raqqa. The questions were translated into Arabic by SREO, with recommendations by ASOR staff regarding the correct translation of terms. In mid-March, the survey was delivered to 50 respondents in areas with high probabilities of looting around the city of Raqqa. A nonrandom sampling methodology was employed. The completed surveys were submitted to SREO and then entered into survey software that SREO regularly employs to quickly tabulate and arrange findings.

### **SREO/ASOR CHI Survey Results**

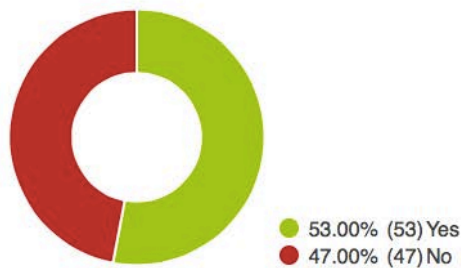
The survey found that 53% of respondents were aware of looting and that a similar number (47%) were aware of antiquities sales. 18% of respondents were aware of smuggling — a less visible and less frequently undertaken activity. 48% of respondents claimed that foreigners were involved in the digging, smuggling, and selling of antiquities, suggesting a strong link between the ISIL presence and the putative proliferation of cultural property crimes. Previous claims that ISIL and other extremists groups have imposed a *khums* (one-fifth) tax on looting, smuggling, and antiquities sales

seem well supported with 45% of respondents claiming that taxation exists. 43% of respondents also claimed that foreigners were hiring others to dig, smuggle, and sell antiquities. Few respondents (3%) claimed that foreigners were directly involved in digging, smuggling, or selling antiquities. 35% of respondents knew someone personally involved in the looting, smuggling, and sale of antiquities. Of the positive respondents from the aforementioned question, nearly all asserted that those involved in looting, smuggling, and the sale of antiquities could derive enough income to support their family and “get rich” through such activity. A current working assumption is that Raqqa Governorate respondents are most familiar with local conditions and, hence, that survey responses primarily pertain to the current situation in the Raqqa area as opposed, for example, to northern Syria generally.

The results suggest that looting is both ubiquitous and lucrative in the Raqqa area, which has been independently suggested by other in-country (especially, Raqqa) narrative reporting to ASOR CHI, as well as independent reports and media stories. The ubiquity and intensity of looting in areas under ISIL control has been verified by ASOR CHI analyses of satellite imagery. ASOR CHI has documented numerous illicit Syrian antiquities being marketed, cached, or smuggled in Syria, Turkey, and Lebanon. To date, few of these antiquities have been directly linked to looting/theft in the Raqqa area. The results of the survey indicate that ISIL is indirectly involved in looting, smuggling, and trafficking, acting as a capacity builder by hiring locals in the Raqqa area to undertake such activities for the organization and/or taxing such activities/revenues in its Raqqa territory. The specifics of this taxation and the “outsourcing” of cultural property crime must be further clarified, but it is clear that these cultural property crimes are lucrative for those directly engaged and, by extension, for groups such as ISIL indirectly supporting and taxing these activities. Additional survey data gathered in other areas of the conflict zone will help to contextualize the Raqqa results in the coming months.

### 1. Are you aware of any people who are digging up antiquities?

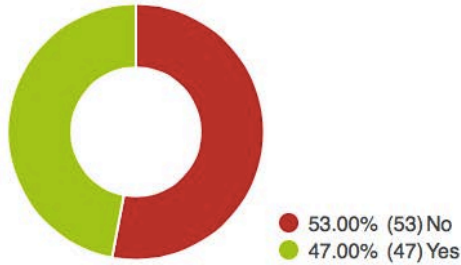
Results based on 100 responses to this question



## 2. Are you aware of any people who are selling antiquities?

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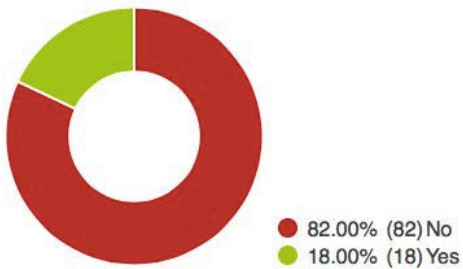
Results based on 100 responses to this question



## 3. Are you aware of any people who are smuggling antiquities out of Syria/Iraq?

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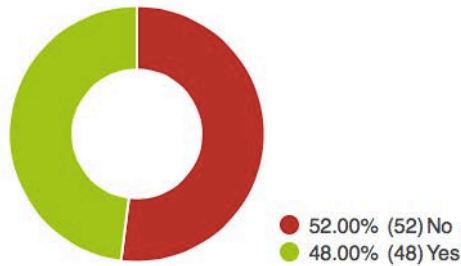
Results based on 100 responses to this question



## 4. Are there foreigners involved in digging, smuggling, or selling antiquities?

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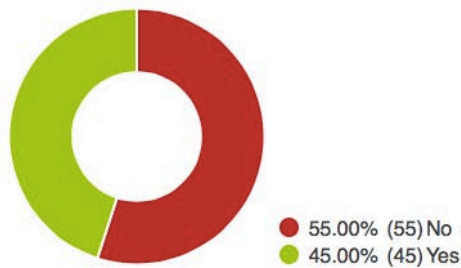
Results based on 100 responses to this question



## 5. Are foreigners collecting a tax from digging, smuggling, or selling antiquities?

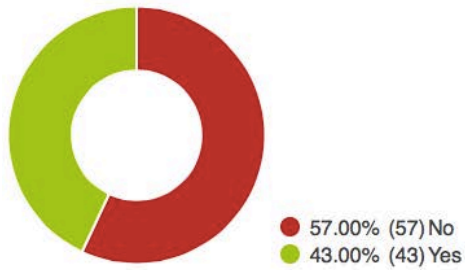
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Results based on 100 responses to this question



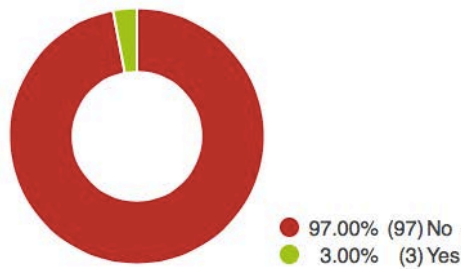
## 6. Are foreigners hiring people to dig, smuggle, or sell antiquities?

Results based on 100 responses to this question



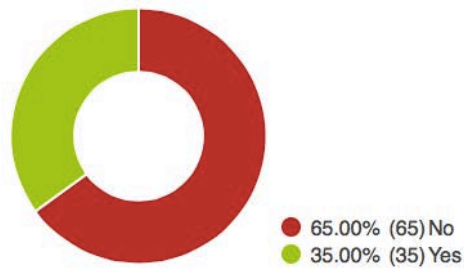
## 7. Are foreigners themselves digging, smuggling, or selling antiquities?

Results based on 100 responses to this question



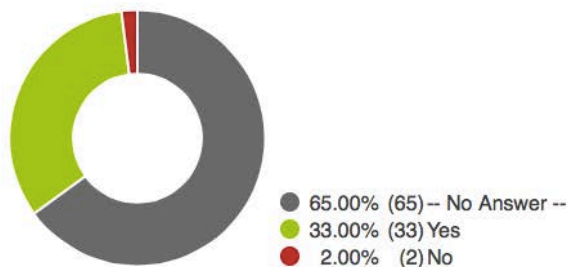
## 8. Do you personally know someone who is involved in digging, smuggling, or selling antiquities?

Results based on 100 responses to this question



## 9. Are they able to support their family digging, selling, or smuggling antiquities?

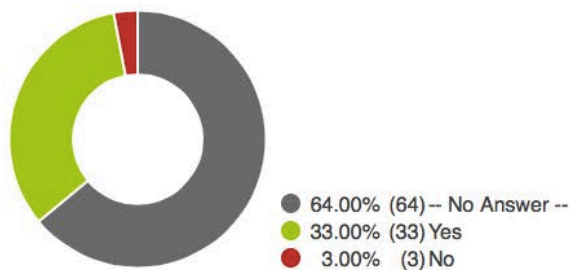
Results based on 100 responses to this question



## 10. Are they able to get rich digging, selling, or smuggling antiquities?

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Results based on 100 responses to this question



### Key Heritage Recommendations and Actions

In the effort to develop strategies for protecting archaeological heritage and to understand the role of cultural heritage in the ongoing conflict in Syria and Iraq, it is becoming increasingly clear that ASOR CHI and other groups need to be careful in reconstructing the timeline of looting and destruction incidents. This is not a matter of laying blame but of achieving a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which material culture and the built environment are being used in the current conflict.

## Incident Reports: Syria

### SHI 15-0013 UPDATE

**Report Date:** January 21, 2015; updated March 18, 2015

**Site Name:** Al-Rawi Tekkiye

**Date of Incident:** Various, 2013–2015

**Location:** Deir ez-Zor, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

#### **Coordinates:**

**Site Description:** Sheikh al-Rawi Tekkiye is a late 19th century building at the northeastern corner of Sheikh Yassin Garden. It was built in 1886 as a charitable endowment for teaching and worship. The Tekkiye (such structures can also be called *zawiya* in Syria) was extensively restored in 2005–2008, including the building of a new dome and restoring of the minaret, which was built during the reign of the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid.

**Site Date:** 1886

**Source of Destruction:** In March 2013, the al-Rawi Tekkiye dome (mosque) was destroyed in an explosion. In March 2014, the DGAM listed the condition of the al-Rawi Tekkiye as “damage to the building.” According to a report by SANA, the hospice and shrine portion of the al-Rawi Tekkiye were destroyed by ISIL on January 6, 2015. (See CHI Weekly Report 25, Incident Report 15-0013). On March 18, 2015, APSA posted a video showing a series of destruction events and then the current (?) state of the Al-Rawi Tekkiye, as well as a series of images showing the state of the structure at various points in time. According to the photo captions, the structure was bombed by the Syrian army on January 7, 2013, and then exploded by ISIL on February 17, 2015.

**Pattern:** Sectarian targeting of Sufi shrines by various factions within the Syrian civil war, as well as general exposure of built heritage in Deir ez-Zor to damage during urban combat. As a point of particular local significance, the al-Rawi Tekkiye continues to be a target for performative acts of violent cultural destruction.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI is actively collecting data on sites in Deir ez-Zor, which has been a front line for both illicit looting and intentional destruction.

#### **Sources:**

Online Reporting:

APSA Website: <http://www.apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/deir-ez-zor/monuments/1163-deir-ez-zor-tekyyet-al-rawi.html>

Scholarly:



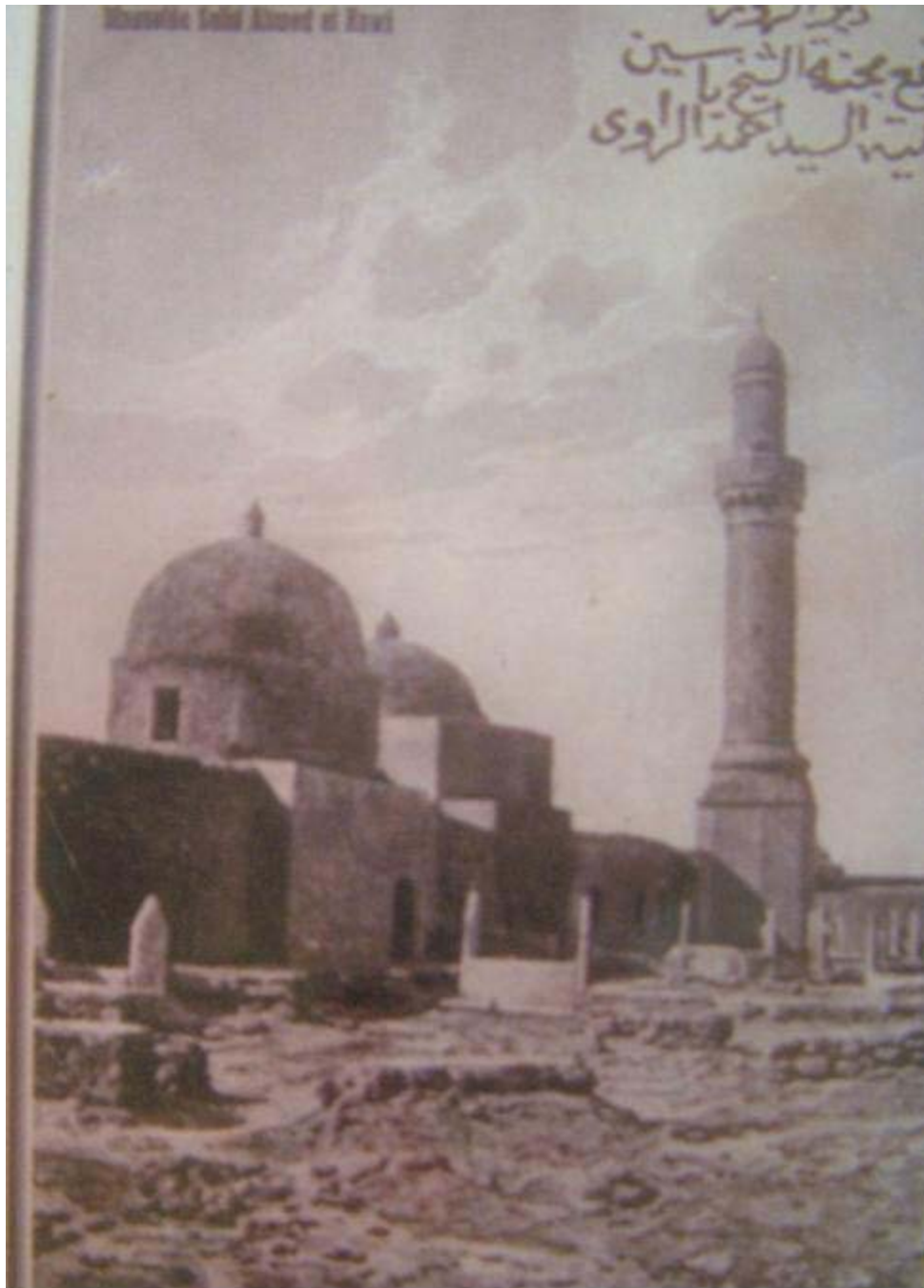
**Tekyyet al-Rawi—07. 01. 2013**

Al-Rawi Tekkiye, Deir ez-Zor, Syria (APSA; posted March 18, 2015)



**07.01.2013. bombed by Syria army | Tekyyet al-Rawi | 17.02.2015. explodes by ISIS**

Al-Rawi Tekkiye, Deir ez-Zor, Syria (APSA; posted March 18, 2015)



Al-Rawi Tekkiye and adjacent cemetery, Deir ez-Zor, Syria (undated historical photograph posted by APSA on March 18, 2015)





Al-Rawi Tekkiye, Deir ez-Zor, Syria (APSA; posted March 18, 2015)



Al-Rawi Tekkiye, Deir ez-Zor, Syria (APSA; posted March 18, 2015)



**Tekyyet al-Rawi : Video posted by ISIS on YouTube 17.02.2015**

Al-Rawi Tekkiye, Deir ez-Zor, Syria (APSA; posted March 18, 2015)



**Tekyyet al-Rawi—08.03.2013**

Al-Rawi Tekkiye, Deir ez-Zor, Syria (APSA; posted March 18, 2015)

**SHI 15-0053**

**Report Date:** March 18, 2015

**Site Name:** Shrines in Deir ez-Zor area

**Date of Incident:** unknown 2013–2015

**Location:** Deir ez-Zor, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria

**Coordinates:**

**Site Description:** Four structures, all of which appear to be constructed of mudbrick and plaster. Three of the structures appear to be in ruins or have a ruin component. The last structure is only shown from a distance and has two conical domes.

**Site Date:** unknown

**Source of Destruction:** APSA posted a video and a series of images showing the destruction of four small shrines that have not as yet been identified but which appear to be located within rural areas in the Deir ez-Zor region. The images are stills taken from YouTube videos posted by ISIL on February 17, 2015, showing ISIL agents destroying standing structures and mudbrick tomb markers. In the original video footage (also included in the video posted by APSA), ISIL agents are shown wiring the structures with bombs and then exploding them. In the case of one arched ruin on a hillside (the first structure in the images below), it is unclear whether or not the explosion is authentic, but two structures were completely destroyed by the explosions. Mudbrick tombs are shown being destroyed with shovels and by hand.

**Pattern:** Ongoing destruction of Sufi and other sectarian built heritage within areas under ISIL control. Although the sites have not been positively identified and the video footage has not been dated, it is clear that ISIL agents are continuing to choose sites of local cultural value, which contradict their doctrinal/political program, as targets for performative destruction.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI is actively collecting data on sites in Syria and Iraq that have become the material casualties of policies of cultural terror.

**Sources:w**

Online Reporting:

APSA Website: <http://apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/deir-ez-zor/monuments/1163-deir-ez-zor-tekyyet-al-rawi.html>

Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ncmRfttr9ds&list=UUAIWkoCIJ4VIFP1A3fC3G5Q&t=177>

Scholarly:



Deir Ez-Zor area : Mausoleum - tome Unknown : Video posted by ISIS on YouTube, 17.02.2015

Unknown site, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria



Deir Ez-Zor area : Mausoleum - tome Unknown : Video posted by ISIS on YouTube, 17.02.2015

Unknown site, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria



Unknown site, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria



Deir Ez-Zor area : Mausoleum - tome Unknown : Video posted by ISIS on YouTube, 17.02.2015

Unknown site, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria



Deir Ez-Zor area : Mausoleum - tome Unknown : Video posted by ISIS on YouTube, 17.02.2015

Unknown site, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria



Deir Ez-Zor area : Mausoleum - tome Unknown : Video posted by ISIS on YouTube, 17.02.2015

Unknown site, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria



Deir Ez-Zor area : Mausoleum - tome Unknown : Video posted by ISIS on YouTube, 17.02.2015

Unknown site, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria



Deir Ez-Zor area : Mausoleum - tome Unknown : Video posted by ISIS on YouTube, 17.02.2015

Unknown site, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria



Deir Ez-Zor area : Mausoleum - tome Unknown : Video posted by ISIS on YouTube, 17.02.2015

Unknown site, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Syria



**SHI 15-0054**

**Report Date:** March 19, 2015

**Site Name:** Omari Mosque, Daraa (SHI# 676)

**Date of Incident:** Ongoing destruction; most recent incident March 18, 2015

**Location:** Old city center (Daraa al-Balad), Daraa, Daraa Governorate, Syria

**Coordinates:**

**Site Description:** The Omari Mosque is located in the old city center of Daraa, across a narrow street from the remains of the Roman amphitheater. The minaret (located at the northwest corner) and part of the mosque date to the 8th century AD, but the complex has since been enlarged and modified.

**Site Date:** 8th century AD and later

**Source of Destruction:** On March 22, 2013, APSA posted photos and video showing the condition of the Omari Mosque after sieges and months of combat within the city of Daraa. This included damage to the minaret and galleries, as well as holes in the walls and roof.

On April 12, 2013, APSA published footage that appears to show the prolonged bombardment of the minaret of the Omari Mosque.<sup>20</sup>

On April 13, 2013, APSA published footage taken from the roadway south of the mosque, showing the destroyed minaret (see images below).<sup>21</sup>

On April 14, 2013, news sources reported that the minaret of the Omari Mosque had been destroyed. According to these same sources, the Syrian National Council blamed the Assad regime for the attack and destruction, stating "This regime of unrestrained barbarism targeted with tanks the minaret of the Omari mosque, a place full of symbols of civilisation and spirituality and humanity...The minaret of this mosque, which was build [sic] by Caliph Omar bin al-Khattab, is the first in the whole of the Levant, and has been destroyed by the soldiers of the tyrant."<sup>22</sup>

On June 15, 2013, APSA reported illicit digging inside the Omari Mosque, publishing an image of a pit which had been dug in a section of floor (see images below).<sup>23</sup>

On March 18, 2015, APSA posted a video showing the bombardment of the Omari Mosque.<sup>24</sup>

**Pattern:** From the beginning of the civil war until its destruction in 2013, the Omari Mosque was a gathering place for protesters and a center of anti-government demonstrations in Daraa. At the

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgSHCe-p0y0&t=16>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuZhbwIQvLU>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.albawaba.com/news/omari-mosque-syria--484375>

<sup>23</sup> <http://apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/daraa/monuments/603-deraa-illicit-diggings-inside-the-mosque-al-omari-15-06-2013.html>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EP7xgsUvUQU>

start of the uprising, it was briefly used as a civilian hospital for wounded protesters. In March 2011, protesters gathered at the Omari Mosque to protest the arrest and alleged torture of teenagers accused to spraying anti-Assad graffiti.<sup>25</sup> This protest was the largest of the broader wave of protests ongoing across Syria at the time. In a series of violent clashes between March 23 and April 22, 2011, regime and affiliated buildings were burned, and protesters and soldiers were killed, leading to a sustained siege of the city<sup>26</sup> by the Fourth Armored division of the Syrian Army.<sup>27</sup>

As a stronghold of rebel activity and sentiment through the civil war, Daraa has continued to be a target for regime bombardment. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported the barrel bombing of parts of Daraa, including Daraa al-Balad, on March 18, 2015, coinciding with the most recent destruction of the Omari Mosque.<sup>28</sup>

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI is continuing to monitor sites of particular heritage significance, such as the Omari Mosque, which have been the targets of extreme and repeated destruction during the Syrian conflict.

### **Sources:**

#### Online Reporting:

#### APSA:

March 18, 2015: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EP7xgsUvUQU>

June 15, 2013: <http://apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/daraa/monuments/603-deraa-illicit-diggings-inside-the-mosque-al-omari-15-06-2013.html>

April 13, 2013: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuZhbwlQvLU>

April 12, 2013: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgSHCe-p0y0&t=16>

March 22, 2013: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmwgNjrc2aQ>

#### Scholarly:

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/13/world/meast/syria-civil-war/>

<sup>26</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege\\_of\\_Daraa#cite\\_note-LA30-4-11-10](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Daraa#cite_note-LA30-4-11-10)

<sup>27</sup> <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/apr/30/world/la-fg-syria-protests-20110430>

<sup>28</sup> <http://syriahr.com/en/2015/03/the-helicopters-drop-barrel-bombs-on-the-countryside-of-daraa-and-the-regime-troops-shell-areas-in-rif-dimashq/>



Omari Mosque from the southwest, Daraa, Syria. Note the differential masonry of arcade, minaret base, and minaret tower. (Panoramio; dated 3/15/2011)



Omari Mosque, Daraa, Syria. Images showing the condition of the courtyard and minaret due to prolonged siege and combat damage. (APSA, Facebook page; posted March 22 2013)



Omari Mosque, Daraa, Syria. This is a still image taken from footage filmed from the street south of the mosque, facing approximately the same direction as the first photograph above. Note the arcade, minaret base, and minaret tower, now truncated. (APSA; posted April 12–13, 2013)



Omari Mosque, Daraa, Syria. Images showing the destruction of the minaret. The central images are taken from the street to the north of the mosque. (APSA; posted April 13, 2013)



Omari Mosque, Daraa, Syria. Image showing apparent looting beneath the floor of the mosque. (APSA, Facebook page; posted June 15, 2013)



Omari Mosque, Daraa, Syria. Image showing the condition of the minaret and outer walls of the mosque. (APSA, Facebook page, posted September 22, 2013)



Omari Mosque, Daraa, Syria. The image shows the Omari mosque from the south and shows that the minaret has been further destroyed by a successive bombardment, perhaps a barrel bomb. (Still taken video footage posted by APSA on March 18, 2015)

**SHI 15-0055**

**Report Date:** March 20, 2015

**Site Name:** Temple of Bel, Palmyra (SHI# 881)

**Date of Incident:** ongoing damage due to successive episodes of militarization at the site

**Location:** UNESCO World Heritage Site of Palmyra, Homs Governorate, Syria

**Coordinates:**

**Site Description:** The Roman-era (1st century CE) Temple of Bel at Palmyra is a large, rectangular complex that was constructed on a stratified hill with deposits dating back to the third millennium BCE. Among these earlier remains were prior instantiations of the Bel sanctuary, indicating the centrality of the cult within the social life of the city. A synthesis of ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman architecture, the temple is surrounded by a precinct delimited by porticos and centered on a *cella* (temple) surrounded by a prostyle of Corinthian columns.<sup>29</sup>

**Site Date:** Various; mainly 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries CE; also Byzantine and Ayyubid components

**Source of Destruction:** The site of Palmyra and, specifically, defensive positions like the Bel Temple were fortified by SARG in efforts to defend this oasis and transport hub. Palmyra was especially vulnerable in late 2014 as ISIL captured SARG positions in Deir ez-Zor Governorate and was, therefore, provided with access to sites in Homs Governorate (see ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 14-019). The DGAM posted new (though undated) images on March 19, 2015, but these images do not seem to show any new, acute damage to the Temple structures beyond that inflicted by the bombardments attributed to SARG in August 2013 (reported by APSA<sup>30</sup>). The DGAM posted images showing very similar damage to the Bel Temple (though a more nuanced analysis would require a more detailed comparison) on October 10, 2013.

**Pattern:** Tactical/strategic use of built heritage during the Syrian conflict. Combat damage.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** Palmyra remains a key focus for monitoring by ASOR CHI.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

APSA: <http://apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/homs/palmyra.html>

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<sup>29</sup> Gates, C, 2003. *Ancient cities: the archaeology of urban life in the ancient Near East and Egypt, Greece and Rome*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>30</sup> <http://apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/homs/palmyra/671-palmyra-bombing-of-the-archaeological-area-of-the-ancient-site-of-palmyra-03-08-2013.html>

DGAM

March 19, 2015: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1623>

October 10, 2013: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1073>

October 10, 2013: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1074>

Scholarly:



Temple of Bel, Palmyra (DGAM; posted March 19, 2015)



Temple of Bel, Palmyra (DGAM; posted March 19, 2015)





Temple of Bel, Palmyra (DGAM; posted March 19, 2015)



Temple of Bel, Palmyra (DGAM; posted March 19, 2015)



Temple of Bel, Palmyra (DGAM; posted March 19, 2015)



Temple of Bel, Palmyra (DGAM; posted March 19, 2015)



Temple of Bel (*cella*), Palmyra (DGAM; posted March 19, 2015)



Temple of Bel (portico), Palmyra (DGAM; posted March 19, 2015)



Temple of Bel (portico), Palmyra (DGAM; posted March 19, 2015)



Temple of Bel (portico), Palmyra (DGAM; posted March 19, 2015)



Temple of Bel (portico), Palmyra (DGAM; posted March 19, 2015)



Temple of Bel (portico), Palmyra (DGAM; posted March 19, 2015)



Temple of Bel (portico), Palmyra (DGAM; posted March 19, 2015)



Temple of Bel (portico), Palmyra (DGAM; posted March 19, 2015)



Temple of Bel (*cella*), Palmyra (DGAM; posted March 19, 2015)



Temple of Bel (portico), Palmyra (DGAM; posted March 19, 2015)



**SHI 15-0056**

**Report Date:** March 21, 2015

**Site Name:** al-Bandara area (Aleppo)

**Date of Incident:** March 20, 2015

**Location:** al-Bandara area at the front of al-Mawazin Souq, UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

**Coordinates:**

**Site Description:**

**Site Date:**

**Source of Destruction:** Tunnel bomb. The DGAM reported that a tunnel bomb was detonated in the Old City of Aleppo on Friday, March 20, 2015, in the al-Bandara area at the front of al-Mawazin Souq, which leads to the Bab al-Nasr police office. According to the report, no information about damage is yet available.

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

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:**

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

DGAM: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1625>

Scholarly:

**SHI 15-0057**

**Report Date:** March 23, 2015

**Site Name:** Ayyubid Citadel (SHI #354), Bosra

**Date of Incident:** March 22, 2015

**Location:** UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient City of Bosra, Daraa Governorate, Syria

**Coordinates:**

**Site Description:**

According to Ross Burns:

The theatre owes its exceptional state of preservation (from both the ravages of earthquakes and the building programs of later centuries) to its conversion into an Ayyubid fort guarding the southern approaches to Damascus.<sup>31</sup>

In plan, 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 five subsidiary towers around the arc of the semi-circle. The first use of the theatre as a fortification dates back to the Umayyad and Fatimid eras and the first three towers (east and west of the stage and on the southeast rim of the theatre) were constructed under the Seljuk governors, Gumushtakin (1089) and Altuntash (mid 12th century). However, the major work, including the encircling ditch, dates from the Ayyubid response to the Crusader threat after 1200, particularly under Adil (sultan in Damascus 1196–1218) and his son, al-Salih Imad al-Din, who alternated as governor of Bosra and sultan of Damascus between 1218 and 1238. The later work relies less on smaller recycled stone and more on massive blocks up to 4.5 m long, particularly in the central tower of the north face.

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. Al-Salih established a palace complex and mosque within the Roman auditorium, remains of which were removed during the reconstruction program. One surviving remnant is the water basin of the palace hammam which has been transferred to the ethnographic (folklore) collection in the southwestern tower.<sup>32</sup>

**Site Date:** Roman–Ayyubid

**Source of Destruction:** APSA posted a YouTube video showing what appears to be a missile strike against a sniper position on the fortification wall of the Citadel on March 22, 2015. No further information was provided.

**Pattern:** Use of cultural heritage sites for military purposes.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:**

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<sup>31</sup> Burns, Ross. *The Monument of Syria: A Guide*. London: I. B. Tauris. p. 79

<sup>32</sup> Burns, Ross. *The Monument of Syria: A Guide*. London: I. B. Tauris. p. 82

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

APSA: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrAjZ8kgTEQ&feature=youtu.be>

Scholarly:

Burns, Ross. *The Monument of Syria: A Guide*. London: I. B. Tauris. pp. 79–82

## **Incident Reports: Iraq**

**IHI 15-0074**

**Report Date:** March 19, 2015

**Site Name:** Christian cemetery of Tel Kaif

**Date of Incident:** early March 2015

**Location:** Tel Kaif (Tel Keppe or Tel Keiphe), 8 miles from Mosul, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

**Coordinates:**

**Site Description:** Christian cemetery

**Site Date:** 1900 to present

**Source of Destruction:** ISIL deliberate destruction

**Pattern:** ISIL deliberate destructions of religious places significant to religious and ethnic minorities. Tel Kaif is one of the largest historically Assyrian towns in northern Iraq and is known as a center of the Chaldean Catholic community in Iraq.

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

**Sources:**

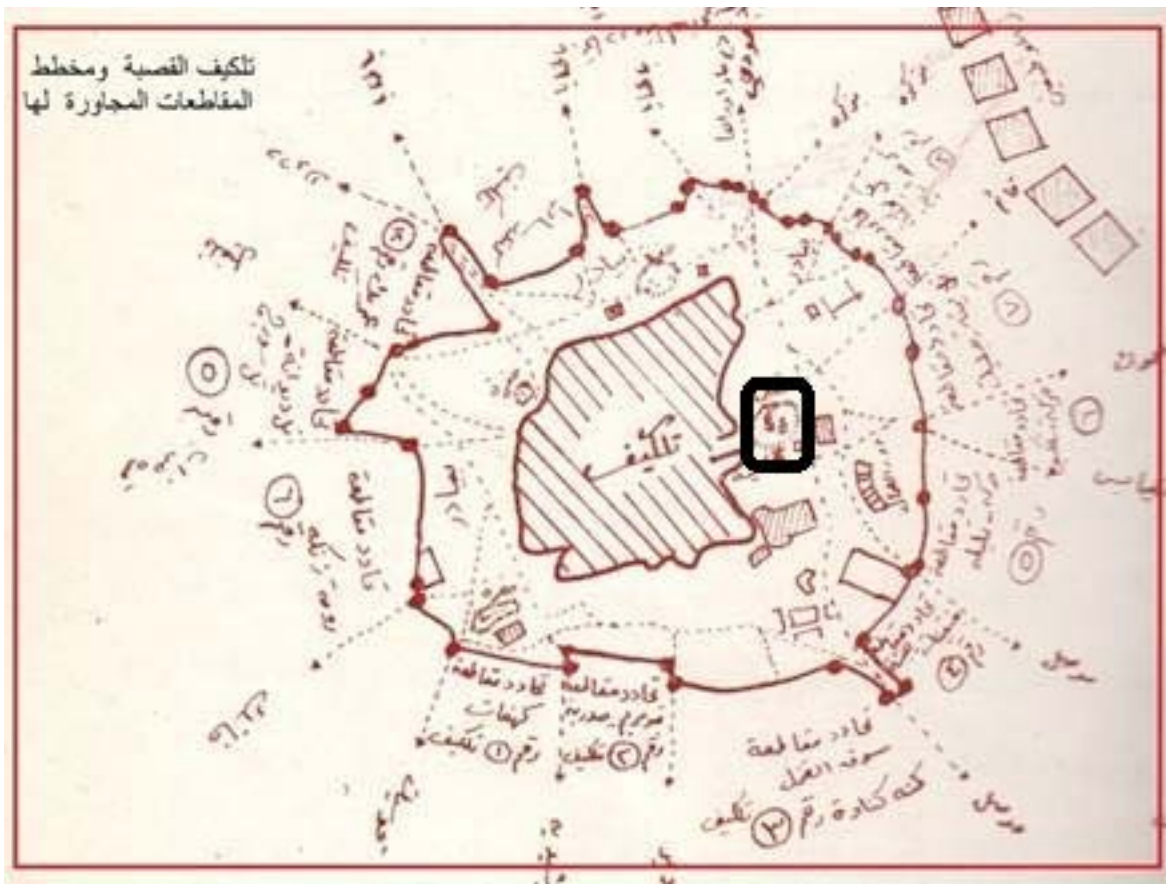
Online Reporting:

Ankawa: <http://english.ankawa.com/?p=14081>

Scholarly:



Christian cemetery of Tel Kaif, image (Ankawa; undated)



Christian cemetery of Tel Kaif, plan (Ankawa; undated)

**IHI 15-0075**

**Report Date:** March 19, 2015

**Site Name:** Monasteries of Mar Behnam and Mart Sarah

**Date of Incident:** March 19, 2015

**Location:** Qaraqosh, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

**Coordinates:**

**Site Description:** Syriac Catholic monastery dedicated to the martyrs Mar Behnam and Mart Sarah, children of the Assyrian King Sennacherib II of Asuristan. Mar Behnam was converted to Christianity and was baptized by Mar Mattai (St. Matthew), later bringing his sister, Sarah, to be cured of leprosy. Following her healing, Mart Sarah and forty companions of Mar Behnam were also baptized. Sennacherib had Mar Behnam and Mart Sarah and the forty companions killed for converting, but he later was baptized and built the monastery where Sarah was healed out of regret for their deaths.

The church on the site was originally founded by the Assyrian Church of the East, but in the 7th century CE it became part of the Syriac Orthodox Church. In the 19th century CE, the complex then transitioned to a Syriac Catholic Church.

**Site Date:** The complex originates in the 4th century CE, with renovations in the 12th and 13th centuries CE as well as a modern restoration in 1986.

**Source of Destruction:** ISIL deliberate destruction.

**Pattern:** ISIL deliberate destructions of religious places significant to religious and ethnic minorities. The town of Qaraqosh, southeast of Mosul, is predominantly Christian, and the monastery was an important pilgrimage site for Syrian Catholics. ISIL took control of Qaraqosh in July 2014, forcing Christians to either convert to Islam or pay a tax. Monks from the monastery were then expelled by ISIL militants, who refused to allow the monks to take the monastery's religious relics with them.<sup>33</sup> On March 19, 2015, ISIL militants demolished the tombs associated with Mar Behnam and Mart Sarah with explosives.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI is continuing to monitor the condition of ethnic and religious minority heritage in Syria and Iraq.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

International Business Times: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/isis-blows-famed-4th-century-mar-behnam-catholic-monastery-iraq-1492703>

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28408926>

Scholarly:

Wolper, Ethel Sara (2014) "Khidr and the politics of translation in Mosul: Mar Behnam, St. George and the Khidr Ilyas" in *Sacred Precincts: The Religious Architecture of Non-muslim Communities Across the Islamic World (Arts and Archaeology of the Islamic World)* by Mohammed Gharipour. Leiden: Brill, pg. 379-392.



Mar Behnam (undated photograph on social media)



Mar Behnam (undated photograph on social media)

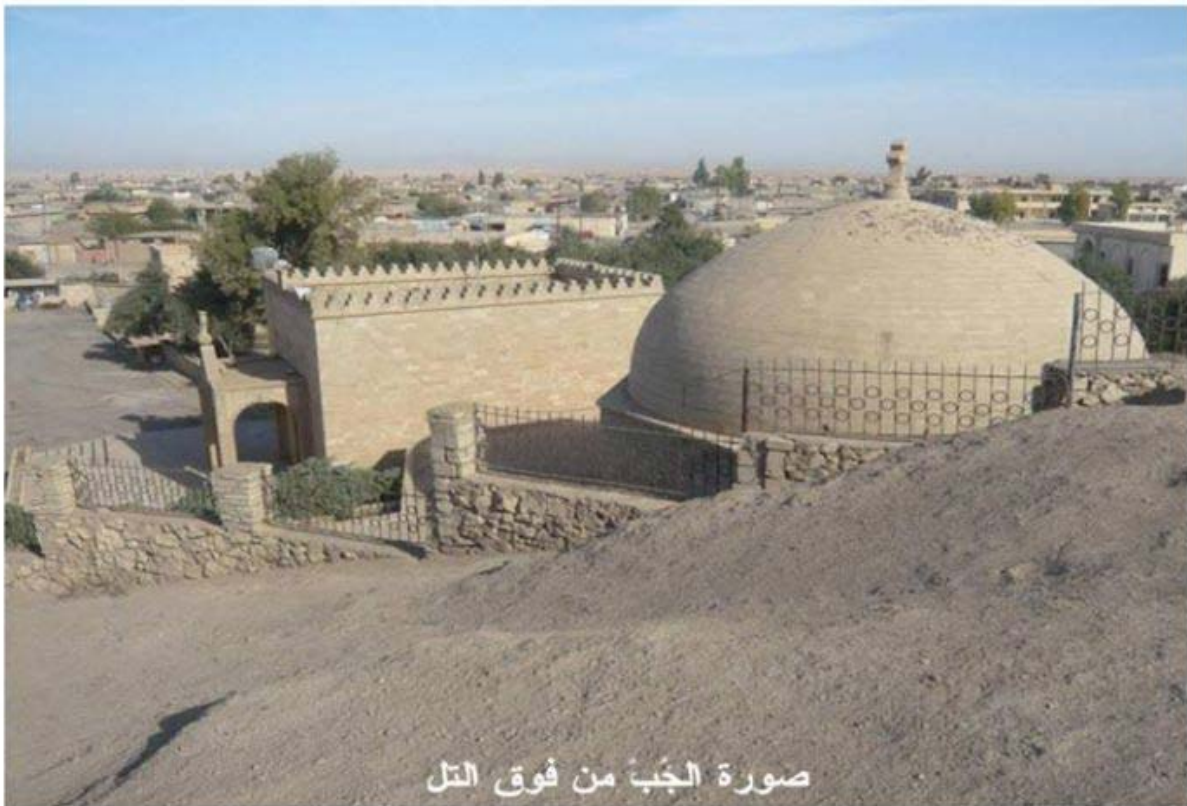


Mar Behnam (undated photograph on social media)





Mar Behnam (undated photograph on social media)



Mar Behnam (undated photograph on social media)



Mar Behnam (undated photograph on social media)



Demolition of the tombs of Mar Behnam and Mart Sarah by ISIL (on social media)



Demolition of the tombs of Mar Behnam and Mart Sarah by ISIL (on social media)



Demolition of the tombs of Mar Behnam and Mart Sarah by ISIL (on social media)



Demolition of the tombs of Mar Behnam and Mart Sarah by ISIL (on social media)

**IHI 15-0076**

**Report Date:** March 23, 2015

**Site Name:** Minaret of Qutb al-Din Muhammad

**Date of Incident:** March 22, 2015

**Location:** Sinjar, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

**Coordinates:**

**Site Description:**

According to ArchNet:

The minaret lies in the Mosul district and is built on flat land 1.5 kilometers south of Sinjar. It is said to belong to a madrasa built by Qutb al-Din Mahmud ben Emad al-Din Zengi ben Aqsunqur Atabeg of Mosul and an inscription below the balcony refers to its erection in 1202. Built of bricks and covered with *juss*, or gypsum, this minaret is said to having been built between 990 and 1095 by the Uqaylids who also sponsored several other monuments in the city. As for the inscription, it might refer to the restoration works carried out by Qutb al-Din Mahmud.

As seen today, the top part of the minaret has collapsed while the Iraq Ancient Monument Directorate restored the bottom before 1965. Historical travelers' accounts describe the minaret as having two balconies none of which exist except traces of muqarnas support. The minaret is made of bricks and has an octagonal shaft with only five sides decorated; it was probably joined to the walls of the madrasa on its remaining three undecorated sides. The five sides are decorated with niches framed with two rectangles surmounted by decorative panels that have mostly fallen off. The interior of these niches is decorated with geometric compositions of eight sided stars. In three of these niches the Quranic chapter called the Fatiha is inscribed in Kufic script. Above the decorative panels a historical inscription is unclear having mostly fallen off. The shaft is circular and it is punctured by arched openings above which lie two narrow tiled bands composed of stars and geometric motifs and topped with a brick band of Kufic inscription.

The internal body of the minaret is empty and shows no trace of a possible staircase, even though it has a door on its northern side; the balcony must have been accessible from the adjacent madrasa rooftop probably at the same level.<sup>34</sup>

**Site Date:** 1201–1202 CE

**Source of Destruction:** ISIL deliberate destruction

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<sup>34</sup> <http://archnet.org/sites/3839>

**Pattern:** ISIL deliberate destructions of religious places significant to Shi'a or Sufi populations as well as other religious and ethnic minorities, particularly Yazidis located in northwestern Iraq. Reports indicate that ISIL militants filled the structure with explosives and then demolished the minaret. These reports were later confirmed by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.<sup>35</sup>

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

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Rudaw: <http://rudaw.net/sorani/kurdistan/220320155>

International Business Times: <http://www.ibtimes.com/islamic-state-iraq-battle-isis-bombs-yazidi-religious-site-sinjar-destroys-homes-1855556>

Ara News: <http://aranews.net/2015/03/islamic-states-militants-destroy-yezidi-monument-in-shingal/>

Scholarly:

ArchNet: <http://archnet.org/sites/3839>

Bosworth, Clifford Edmond (1996) *The New Islamic Dynasties*. New York: Columbia University Press, pg. 190-191.

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<https://www.facebook.com/1492622900992041/photos/a.1492629317658066.1073741828.1492622900992041/1555145968073067>



Minaret of Qutb al-Din Muhammad, historic image (photo by Friedrich Sarre; published on ArchNet)



Minaret of Qutb al-Din Muhammad, historic image, view from minaret toward the town of Sinjar (photo by Friedrich Sarre; published on ArchNet)





Minaret of Qutb al-Din Muhammad, historic image, detail showing the lower two-thirds of the minaret with inscription (photo by Friedrich Sarre; published on ArchNet)



Minaret of Qutb al-Din Muhammad, undated modern image (Rudaw)