

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

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## Executive Summary

DigitalGlobe satellite imagery and in-country sources clarified reports of intentional destruction at Nineveh. Sources on the ground in Mosul and DigitalGlobe satellite imagery show that the Nergal Gate still stands, but the Mashki and Adad Gates are confirmed destroyed. ASOR CHI received photographs on April 13, 2016 from a Mosul civilian, who at great risk to his/her personal safety took pictures of earth movers leveling parts of Nineveh. The source identified the Mashki Gate and Nergal Gate as being destroyed. This source contacted ASOR CHI again on May 4, 2016 and provided an update. The Nergal Gate is intact, and provided photographic evidence as proof. All photographs were taken from a moving car as it is forbidden for civilians to take photographs and video within ISIL territory or suffer severe punishment. The source misidentified the Adad Gate as the Nergal Gate, and understandably so. DigitalGlobe satellite imagery released May 2, 2016 provides further confirmation. Both the Mashki and Adad Gates as well as large portions of the exterior city wall were all leveled. Additionally, there are multiple tunnels within the archaeological site, reaffirming in-country reports of looting. There is also evidence of a large bridge crossing the Khosr River under construction. This repeats an observed pattern of commercial and infrastructure expansion within the site boundaries of ancient Nineveh. This latest DigitalGlobe imagery also corroborates earlier reports of looting at Nineveh, with four tunnels visible in the imagery available of the northern half of the archaeological area. Furthermore, DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from May 8, 2016 shows the Palace of Sennacherib (Southwest Palace) at Nineveh has been completely dismantled, likely the result of scrap metal harvesting. This new imagery demonstrates that the economic exploitation of ancient Nineveh is becoming increasingly more severe.

Multiple aerial bombardment incidents resulted in severe damage to multiple heritage sites and repositories. Both the Al-Ma'arra Museum, where The Day After Heritage Protection Initiative (TDA HPI) and ASOR CHI just completed a mitigation plan to protect the collection and repair previous airstrike damage, and the Idlib Museum were directly hit by airstrikes. Mosques in Idlib and Deir ez-Zor Governorate were also damaged in aerial campaigns, but the city of Aleppo was the most devastated with eight mosques damaged in the city alone. This activity represents a significant escalation in bombardment campaigns by SARG and Russian forces. This reporting period has seen a sharp uptick in the level of damage inflicted on cultural heritage sites. Damage was particularly devastating in areas that had seen less fighting and destruction during the declared "cessation of hostilities". Local sources reported a particular increase in damage inflicted to discernable civilian sites including hospitals, markets, aid and food disbursement centers, and places of worship.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Key Points

- New photographs show damage to Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque in Dumeir, Rif Dimashq Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0045 UPDATE**).
- Aerial bombardment and clashes between armed groups damaged eight mosques in Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0060**).
- An alleged SARG airstrike reportedly damaged the Iman Mosque in Deir ez-Zor, Deir ez-Zor Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0061**).
- Alleged SARG airstrikes damage the Idlib Museum, Al-Jawari Mosque, and Omari Mosque in Idlib, Idlib Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0062**).
- Alleged SARG airstrikes damaged Al-Ma'aara Museum in Ma'arat al-Numan, Idlib Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0063**). The Day After Heritage Protection Initiative has produced two reports on the damage and subsequent cleanup of the museum.
- Alleged SARG airstrike damaged Sheikh Shuayab Mosque in Binnish, Idlib Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0064**).
- New satellite imagery confirms that ISIL militants have leveled several gates of Nineveh in Mosul, Ninawa Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0010 UPDATE**).
- New satellite imagery shows ongoing damage to the site of Nineveh, including the ongoing looting and destruction of the Southwest Palace of Sennacherib in Mosul, Ninawa Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0013**).

## Heritage Timeline

May 10, 2016

**Syrian Network for Human Rights** published an article titled “**Government forces (allies) targeted Al Sheikh Shu’ayeb Mosque in Binnish city in Idlib governorate in May 10.**” A SARG airstrike allegedly damaged a mosque and killed at least 9 civilians. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0064.**  
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/10/government-forces-allies-targeted-al-sheikh-shuayeb-mosque-binnish-city-idlib-governorate-may-10/>

May 9, 2016

**SNHR** published an article titled “**Government forces targeted National Museum in Idlib city in May 9.**” A SARG airstrike allegedly damaged the fence of the National Museum in Idlib city. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0062.**  
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/09/government-forces-targeted-national-museum-idlib-city-may-9/>

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*Artsy* published an article titled “**How Crowdsourcing Brought an Isis-Destroyed Museum Back to Life**” (by Abigail Cain). Rekrei, an organization that uses a process called “photogrammetry” to produce digital 3D models of cultural artifacts from crowd-sourced photographs, was initially intended as a response to the ISIS-led demolition of the Mosul Museum.  
<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-how-crowdsourcing-brought-an-isis-destroyed-museum-back-to-life>

- *Algerie Presse Service* published an article titled “بعد خمس سنوات عن بداية النزاعات.. تراث الشرق الأوسط يتهدده الزوال (Five years since the beginning of the conflict: Middle East heritage is threatened by extinction)” (by Idris Boskin). Threats to cultural heritage are ongoing throughout the Middle East, including Egypt, Yemen, Syria, and Iraq.  
<http://www.aps.dz/ar/culture/29915--عن-بداية-النزاعات--تراث-الشرق-الأوسط-يتهدده-الزوال>
- *OECD Insights* published an article titled “**Where’s the corporate responsibility for blood antiquities?**” (by Annis Turner) This article argues that the antiquities trade should adhere to international standards on supply chain responsibility and take proactive measures to set up an industry-wide program to certify and publish their due diligence and acquisition practices.  
<http://oecdinsights.org/2016/05/09/wheres-the-corporate-responsibility-for-blood-antiquities/>
- *Sputnik News* published an article titled “**Some 150 Scholars to Attend Int’l Syrian Heritage Forum in Germany.**” At least 150 international experts are expected to take part in a June conference on Syrian cultural heritage in Germany.  
<http://sputniknews.com/middleeast/20160509/1039314896/germany-syria-unesco-conference.html>
- The **White House Office of the Press Secretary** published a press release titled “**Statement by the Press Secretary on H.R. 1493 and H.R. 2908.**” President Obama signed into law H.R. 1493, the "Protect and Preserve International Cultural Property Act," which directs the President to exercise his authority to impose import restrictions with respect to archaeological or ethnological material of Syria.  
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/05/09/statement-press-secretary-hr-1493-and-hr-2908>
- *Metropolis* published an article titled “**After ISIS: The Challenge of Preserving Palmyra**” (by Vladimir Gintoff). ArchDaily interviewed Stefan Simon, the Director of the Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage (IPCH) at Yale University, who discussed cultural preservation in the wake of conflict.  
<http://www.metropolismag.com/Point-of-View/May-2016/After-ISIS-The-Challenge-of-Preserving-Palmyra/>

- SNHR published an article titled “**Government forces targeted Khan Murad Basha Museum in Ma’aret Al Numan city in Idlib governorate in May 9.**” A SARG airstrike allegedly struck a museum (CHI # 824) causing structural damage. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0063.**  
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/09/government-forces-targeted-khan-murad-basha-museum-maaret-al-numan-city-idlib-governorate-may-9/>
- May 8, 2016

*Sputnik News* published an article titled “**Thanks for Nothing: Archeologists Turn on Russia Despite Palmyra Liberation.**”  
 Sputnik News accuses Western archaeologists of turning the capture of Palmyra by Russian and SARG forces into a “political sideshow.”  
<http://sputniknews.com/middleeast/20160508/1039262326/russia-palmyra-architects-complaints.html>
- Almada Press* published an article titled “ناشطو ذي قار يطلقون حملة لترشيح “الأهوار ومواقع الآثار للأنحة التراث العالمي (Dhi Qar activists launch campaign for the nomination of the marshes and archaeological sites to the World Heritage List).” Activists in Dhi Qar province are calling for the nomination of the marshes of the southern Iraq and archaeological sites in Dhi Qar to the UNESCO World Heritage list this year.  
<http://almadapress.com/ar/news/69737/ناشطو-ذي-قار-يطلقون-حملة-لترشيح-الأهوار-ومواقع-الآثار-للأنحة-التراث-العالمي>
- May 7, 2016

**Heritage for Peace** published its bi-weekly “**Damage to Syria’s Heritage**” newsletter.  
<http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/>
- Artribune* published an article titled “**Al Maxxi una mostra racconta l’intervento della Cooperazione Italiana per tutelare il patrimonio archeologico in Iraq. Un viaggio in 3D nei luoghi della guerra** (The Maxxi exhibition recounts the intervention of the Italian Cooperation to protect archaeological patrimony in Iraq. A trip in 3D to the locations of war)” (by Ilenia Maria Melis). The Maxxi gallery in Rome will hold an exhibition titled “Rinascere dalla bellezza. La più grande storia mai scritta sulla sabbia (Born again by the beauty. The greatest story ever written on the sand).”  
<http://www.artribune.com/2016/05/al-maxxi-una-mostra-racconta-lintervento-della-cooperazione-italiana-per-tutelare-il-patrimonio-archeologico-in-iraq-un-viaggio-in-3d-nei-luoghi-della-guerra/>

- **SNHR** published an article titled “**Government forces targeted Al Eman Mosque in Al Sheikh Yassin neighborhood in Deir Ez-Zour city in May 7.**” A SARG airstrike reportedly damaged a mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0061.**  
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/07/government-forces-targeted-al-eman-mosque-al-sheikh-yassin-neighborhood-deir-ez-zour-city-may-7/>
- May 6, 2016 *Tech Radar* published an article titled “**Can 3D printing save history?**” (by Jamie Carter) The efforts of the Institute for Digital Archaeology to reconstruct Palmyra’s monuments used 3D technology are discussed.  
<http://www.techradar.com/news/world-of-tech/can-3d-printing-save-history--1320111>
- *SANA* published an article titled “**Gate of the Sun event held at Palmyra amphitheatre.**” The Syrian National Symphony, the National Ensemble for Arabic Music, the Mari Orchestra, and al-Farah Choir all performed at the event.  
<http://sana.sy/en/?p=76623>
- *CBS News* published an article titled “**Syria’s “monument men” save thousands of historic artifacts**” (by Elizabeth Palmer). CBS speaks with Maamoun Abdulkarim, who describes how he and a small group of colleagues hid 300,000 artifacts before the arrival of ISIL militants in Palmyra.  
<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/syrias-monument-men-save-thousands-of-historical-artifacts/>
- The **Metropolitan Museum of Art** in New York City will hold a symposium titled “**Palmyra: Mirage in the Desert**” on May 23, 2016. Lecturers will discuss various aspects of the history of ancient Palmyra.  
<http://metmuseum.org/events/programs/met-speaks/symposia/palmyra>
- *The Washington Post* published an article titled “**How ancient ruins are perfect propaganda in the Middle East**” (by Ishaan Tharoor). The use of the recapture of Palmyra by SARG and Russian forces as a tool for propaganda is discussed.  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/05/06/how-ancient-ruins-are-perfect-propaganda-in-the-middle-east/>

May 5, 2016

*The Art Newspaper* published an article titled “**Russia’s Mariinsky Orchestra to play concert in Palmyra**” (by Sophia Kishkovsky). A classical music concert by St. Petersburg’s Mariinsky Orchestra titled “Prayer for Palmyra: Music Revives Ancient Walls” took place on May 5, 2016 in the Theater at Palmyra.

<http://theartnewspaper.com/news/news/russia-s-mariinsky-orchestra-to-hold-concert-in-palmyra/>

- Several media outlets published articles discussing the classical music **concert by St. Petersburg’s Mariinsky Orchestra performed in the Theater of Palmyra** and the Russian delegation who toured the damage at the on May 5, 2016.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/hmeimim-air-base-still-humming-after-russian-victory-in-syrian-intervention/2016/05/04/ea2fe936-1230-11e6-a9b5-bf703a5a7191\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/hmeimim-air-base-still-humming-after-russian-victory-in-syrian-intervention/2016/05/04/ea2fe936-1230-11e6-a9b5-bf703a5a7191_story.html)

<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1982>

[http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/06/world/middleeast/syria-russia-palmyra-isis-classical-music.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/06/world/middleeast/syria-russia-palmyra-isis-classical-music.html?_r=0)

<http://tass.ru/en/politics/874215>

- *Sputnik* published an article titled “**Syrian Minister Accuses Ankara of Aiding Terrorists to Smuggle Artefacts.**” Syrian Culture Minister Isam Halil has accused the Turkish government of “helping terrorists, stealing oil, and the theft of historic artefacts.”

<http://sputniknews.com/politics/20160505/1039128961/syria-turkey-artefacts.html#ixzz47oFGeGof>

May 4, 2016

**DGAM** posted an article titled “**Statement about the Threat to Cultural Heritage in the Near East and North Africa.**” DGAM participated in a conference titled “Cultural Heritage under Threat: Challenges and Solutions” in Vienna on April 27, 2016.

<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1979>

- *Popular Archaeology* published an article titled “**French company documents destruction of archaeological sites in Syria.**” In partnership with the DGAM, ICONEM is studying the destruction affecting the temples of Bel and Baalshamin, the Monumental Arch, the Valley of Tombs and the museum at Palmyra.

<http://popular-archaeology.com/issue/june-2013/article/french-company-documents-destruction-of-archaeological-sites-in-syria>

- Pravda* published an article titled “**How much of Palmyra was destroyed?**” The UNESCO rapid assessment mission to Palmyra from April 24-26, 2016 reported that despite the destruction of many monuments, “the archaeological site of Palmyra retains a large part of its integrity and authenticity.”  
[http://www.pravdareport.com/history/04-05-2016/134326-palmyra\\_destroyed-0/](http://www.pravdareport.com/history/04-05-2016/134326-palmyra_destroyed-0/)
  - Al Jazeera* published a video report titled “ هذه قصتي - سليمان العيسى.. مهتم بحماية آثار بصرى الشام (Suleiman al-Issa: Committed to Protecting the Artifacts of Bosra al-Sham).” This report discusses the efforts of Suleiman al-Issa, head of the Bosra al-Sham Department of Antiquities, in protecting and restoring cultural heritage sites in Bosra.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLLUxXOZ-3U>
  - Al Jazeera* published an article titled “**Rebuilding Syria’s Aleppo under fire.**” The **Aleppo Project**, based at the Central European University’s Centre for Conflict, Negotiation and Recovery, conducts public opinion surveys, maps destruction, examines historical precedents for rebuilding war-ravaged cities, and seeks to envision ways to implement an inclusive reconstruction process in the future.  
<http://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2016/rebuilding-syrias-aleppo/#top>
- May 3, 2016
- UNESCO published an article titled “**Curbing the illicit trafficking of cultural property: focusing on countries of transition and the application of criminal justice.**” On April 28, 2016 the Permanent Missions of Jordan and Italy to the United Nations, together with UNESCO, INTERPOL, and UNODC, organized an expert meeting that focused on the illicit trafficking of cultural property in transit countries.  
[http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/curbing\\_the\\_illicit\\_trafficking\\_of\\_cultural\\_property\\_focusing\\_on\\_countries\\_of\\_transition\\_and\\_the\\_application\\_of\\_criminal\\_justice/#.VzCkaWQr11j](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/curbing_the_illicit_trafficking_of_cultural_property_focusing_on_countries_of_transition_and_the_application_of_criminal_justice/#.VzCkaWQr11j)
- May 1, 2016
- Boston Globe* published an article titled “**Can technoheritage be owned?**” (by Sonia K. Katyal & Simone C. Ross). The authors argue that while technology has the power to preserve and protect ancient artifacts, it also invites a dizzying array of legal conflicts over their digitization and replication, particularly regarding the intersection of copyright law with cultural identity.  
<https://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2016/04/30/katyal/jUr7WJ5XdIUm5yLLB7HGFP/story.html>



April 30, 2016

The **American University of Iraq, Sulaimani** (AUIS) announced it will host a conference on May 10-11, 2016 titled “**Conflict and Living Heritage in the Middle East: Researching the Politics of Cultural Heritage and Identities in Times of War and Displacement.**”

April 29, 2016

SNHR published a post titled “**Government forces targeted Owais Al Qarni Mosque in Al Sukari neighborhood in Aleppo city in April 29.**” A SARG airstrike partially damaged a mosque in Aleppo. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0060.**

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/29/government-forces-targeted-owais-al-qarni-mosque-al-sukari-neighborhood-aleppo-city-april-29/>

- SNHR published a post titled “**Government forces (allies) targeted Al Hussein Mosque in Aleppo in April 29 Keywords.**” A Russian airstrike targeted a mosque in the Qaterji neighborhood of Aleppo. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0060.**

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/29/government-forces-allies-targeted-al-hussein-mosque-aleppo-april-29-keywords/>

- *Co.Create* published an article titled “**How UNESCO Is Crowdsourcing The Preservation Of World Heritage**” (by Dan Solomon). The website ReclaimHistory.org (launched on April 29, 2016 by the founders of Project Mosul) creates virtual versions of artifacts which can be interacted with in virtual reality or through 3-D printing.

<http://www.fastcocrete.com/3059431/how-unesco-is-crowdsourcing-the-preservation-of-world-heritage>

- *ARA News* published an article titled “**ISIS hiding weapons inside mosques of Iraq’s Mosul**” (by Sarbaz Yousef). ISIL militants have taken to hiding weapons and other materials in Mosul mosques in order to avoid Coalition airstrikes.

<http://aranews.net/2016/04/isis-hiding-weapons-inside-mosques-iraqs-mosul/>

April 28, 2016

*Counterpunch* published an article titled “**Can Responsibility to Protect Preserve our Cultural Heritage in Syria?**” (by Franklin Lamb) The author discusses the potential use of the controversial doctrine Responsibility to Protect (R2P) to protect cultural heritage threatened by ISIL and others.

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/04/28/can-responsibility-to-protect-preserve-our-cultural-heritage-in-syria/>



- International Business Times* published an article titled “**Ancient Mosul museum artefacts destroyed by Isis recreated with 3D technology and tourist photos**” (by Umberto Bacchi). 3D models of artifacts destroyed by ISIL and reconstructed with a pioneering crowdsourcing system are going on show at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York City.  
<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/ancient-mosul-museum-artefacts-destroyed-by-isis-recreated-3d-technology-tourist-photos-1557266>
- April 27, 2016

*Pacific Standard Magazine* published an article titled “**There’s More to Syrian Archaeology Than Palmyra**” (by Francie Diep). Emma Cunliffe discusses the cultural heritage crisis in Syria and her work with Heritage for Peace.  
<https://psmag.com/theres-more-to-syrian-archaeology-than-palmyra-33650c86f7b1#pmr77fjbh>
- UNESCO published an article titled “**UNESCO experts take preliminary stock of destruction in World Heritage site of Palmyra.**” UNESCO experts conducted a technical rapid assessment mission to Palmyra. A full report will be presented in July 2016 to the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session, while an international meeting of experts on the preservation of Syria’s heritage sites will be held in early June.  
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1488>

## Military and Political Context

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

1. Aleppo Governorate:
  - On April 27, ISIL militants captured five villages from Syrian opposition forces in the district of Azaz, near the Turkish border with Syria. ISIL’s media outlet Amaq News Agency listed the captured villages as al-Fayruziyyah, Dudiyan, Tulayl al-Hisn, Jariz, and Yahul.<sup>2</sup>
  - On April 27, clashes between Syrian opposition forces killed at least 64 fighters in northern Aleppo. Kurdish YPG forces paraded the bodies of 40-50 Syrian opposition fighters who were killed in battle through the city of Afrin.<sup>3</sup>
  - From April 27-May 10, clashes between SARG and opposition forces, exacerbated by SARG and possible Russian airstrikes, killed over 250 civilians in the city of Aleppo. Areas of the fighting included the neighborhoods of Sukari, Salhin, Bustan al-Qasr, al-Kalassa, Al-Marja, Al Ameriyah, al-Nayrab, Al Firdous, al-Midan, al-Lairamon, al-Sulaimaniyah, al-Sayyid Ali, Helluk, al-Zahra, Muhafaza and the old city of Aleppo, in addition to the nearby village of Kafr Hamra.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Apr-27/349510-isis-advances-against-rebels-in-north-syria.ashx>

<sup>3</sup> <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/204645/World/Region/Fighting-between-rebels-Kurds-kills--in-north-Syr.aspx>; <http://understandingwar.org/backgrounders/syria-situation-report-april-27-may-6-2016>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.yahoo.com/news/syria-army-set-offensive-retake-aleppo-pro-regime-101840074.html> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-101840074>

- On April 29, Syrian state media (SANA) reported that opposition forces shelled the “neighborhoods of Bab al-Faraj, al-Midan, al-Muhafaza, Seif al-Dawla, al-Iza’a, al-Martini, and al-Nile street” during weekly Friday prayers.<sup>5</sup>
- On May 2, Turkish shelling and drone strikes killed 34 ISIL militants across the border in Syria. The attacks were in response to recent ISIL attacks that struck the Turkish province of Kilis. On May 7, Turkish forces again shelled areas of northern Aleppo, killing 55 ISIL militants.<sup>6</sup>
- On May 3, ISIL militants reported that they had captured the northern Aleppo villages of Doudayan, Tel Shaer, and Iykda from opposition forces.<sup>7</sup>
- On May 5, a 48-hour ceasefire agreed upon by Russia and the United States took effect in the city of Aleppo and the surrounding countryside. Despite the ceasefire, shelling and airstrikes continued sporadically across the city and in the surrounding areas. On May 7, the ceasefire was extended for an additional 72 hours. On May 9, the ceasefire was extended for a third time for 48 hours.<sup>8</sup>
- On May 6, Jaish al-Fatah, an alliance of Islamist opposition forces, captured the village of Khan Touman from SARG forces after an overnight battle.<sup>9</sup>

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[36158947 ; http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/May-03/350311-clashes-near-damascus-despite-truce-there-five-killed-in-aleppo.ashx](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/May-03/350311-clashes-near-damascus-despite-truce-there-five-killed-in-aleppo.ashx) ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/04/hospital-syria-hit-air-strike-reports-160429103454466.html> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKCN0XR0CT> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/aleppo-bombing-syria-160501080245660.html> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/aleppo-onslaught-bid-extend-pause-syria-fighting-160502151123042.html> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-idUSKCN0XS140> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/aleppo-john-kerry-syria-160502120213094.html> ; <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/05/09/Assad-forces-shell-capital-outskirts-clash-with-rebels.html> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/syria-aleppo-hospital-attack-160503101336566.html> ; <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/May-04/350488-ferocious-fighting-in-syrias-aleppo-after-rebel-offensive.ashx> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-hospital-idUSKCN0XU0X9> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/syria-aleppo-hospital-attack-160503101336566.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://sana.sy/en/?p=75966> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36169006> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aleppo-idUSKCN0XQ0LP>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.newsweek.com/turkey-isis-drones-artillery-attack-syria-454480> ; <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/05/08/Turkish-military-kills-55-ISIS-fighters-in-Syria.html>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/aleppo-onslaught-bid-extend-pause-syria-fighting-160502151123042.html>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-truce-idUSKCN0XW0C3> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/fresh-strikes-syria-aleppo-ceasefire-160505073507489.html> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36218997> ; <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/05/07/Russia-says-truce-in-Aleppo-extended-for-72-hours.html> ; <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/14eb5034d9d7439db0d60c625b88de2e/air-raids-syrias-aleppo-end-cease-fire-nears>

<sup>9</sup> <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-village-idUKKCN0XXOCR> ; <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/05/06/Report-says-rebels-seize-village-near-Aleppo-Syrian-army-denies.html>

2. Idlib Governorate:
  - On May 5, an airstrike reported to be of SARG or Russian origin struck the Kamouna IDP camp near the town of Sarmada, killing more than 30 people.<sup>10</sup>
  - On May 9-10, SARG airstrikes struck several areas across Idlib Governorate including the towns of Maaret al-Numan, Binnish, and Hafsarja, resulting in civilian casualties.<sup>11</sup>
3. Hama Governorate:
  - On May 2-6, hundreds of prisoners detained in Hama Central Prison took over the jail and captured several guards in protest of the transferring of prisoners to the Sednaya Military Prison located outside of Damascus. Opposition groups threatened SARG-held areas if the prisoners demands were not addressed. On May 6, SARG security forces stormed the prison. On May 9, a negotiated deal was reportedly reached with the facilitation of an opposition and a tribal leader.<sup>12</sup>
4. Raqqa Governorate:
  - On May 2-3, as many as 35 airstrikes of either SARG or Russian origin struck areas of the ISIL-held city of Raqqa, killing at least 13 civilians and five ISIL militants.<sup>13</sup>
5. Hasakah Governorate:
  - On April 28, the Syrian government reported the arrival of 150 US troops into the town of Rmeilan, deeming the action an “illegitimate intervention.”<sup>14</sup>
6. Damascus Governorate:
  - On April 28, major Islamist opposition factions clashed in the towns of Misraba, Zamalka, and Kafr Batna.<sup>15</sup>
7. Rif Dimashq Governorate:
  - On May 2, shelling and clashes between opposition groups occurred in the town of Beit Sawa, killing at least three civilians as well as a senior leader of Jaish al-Islam.<sup>16</sup>
  - On May 4, clashes between opposition groups Faylaq al-Rahman (backed by Al Nusra Front) and Jaish al-Islam in the area of Eastern Ghouta killed at least 10 civilians and dozens of opposition fighters. In addition, Syrian activists reported that SARG forces carried out more than 20 airstrikes over the area.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idlib-idUSKCN0XW1WN> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36218997> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/deadly-air-strike-hits-syrian-refugee-camp-idlib-160505171436082.html>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idlib-idUSKCN0Y112I> ; <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2016/05/10/world/middleeast/ap-ml-syria.html>

<sup>12</sup> <http://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-april-27-may-6-2016> ; <http://rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/09052016> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-hama-idUSKCN0XT1FW> ; <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-prison-idUKKCN0XX1BC>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/World/2016/May-03/350288-efforts-to-save-syrian-truce-shift-to-moscow.ashx> ; <http://www.raqqa-sl.co/?p=2822> ; <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/syria-rebels-shell-aleppo-bashar-assad-cease-fire-russia-truce/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36162701>

<sup>15</sup> <http://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-april-23-29-2016>

<sup>16</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/02/civilians-died-armed-opposition-shelling-beit-sawa-town-damascus-suburbs-may-2/> ; <http://www.syriahr.com/en/2016/05/03/rahman-corps-and-islamic-factions-regain-most-of-beit-sawa-town-and-kill-a-senior-leader-in-jaysh-al-islam-and-the-fate-of-some-of-the-towns-citizens-is-unknown/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/May-03/350361-intra-rebel-clashes-east-of-syria-capital-kill-dozens-activists.ashx> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36202438>

8. Homs Governorate:
  - On May 4, ISIL militants captured Shaer Gas Field, north of the city of Homs.<sup>18</sup>
  - On May 5, an ISIL car and suicide bombing attack struck the majority-Alawite town of Mukharam al-Fawkani, east of the city of Homs, killing at least 10 civilians and wounding over 40 more.<sup>19</sup>
  - On May 10, ISIL militants took control of the road between the SARG-held cities of Homs and Palmyra, “near the Tayfur military airport”, cutting a key supply route.<sup>20</sup>
9. Quneitra Governorate:
  - On May 4, a car bomb struck a meeting at the office of the ‘Syrian Revolutionaries Front’ opposition group in the town of Asheh, killing 18 fighters including the commander of the group. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>21</sup>

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in ISIL-controlled areas of Ayn Isa, Deir ez Zor, Al-Hawl, Manbij, Mara, Palmyra, Shaddadi, Raqqa, Waleed, and Washiyah.<sup>22</sup>
- On April 29, the US and Russia reportedly agreed on a “regime of silence” in the areas of Latakia Governorate (for 72 hours) and the suburbs of Damascus (for 24 hours) to begin at midnight the same day. On May 2, the truce in Damascus was extended for an additional 24 hours.<sup>23</sup>
- On May 10, US officials reported that Turkish special military forces carried out an intelligence-gathering mission in Syria.<sup>24</sup>

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

1. Baghdad Governorate:
  - On April 30, hundreds of supporters of prominent Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr (aka Sadrists) stormed the Green Zone, entering and occupying the Iraqi parliament building and leading to a declared “state of emergency” in Baghdad. On May 1, the demonstrators began exiting the Green Zone, however some protesters set up tents in the Green Zone signaling the possibility for an ongoing sit-in.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-truce-idUSKCN0XW0C3> ; <http://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syria-situation-report-april-27-may-6-2016>

<sup>19</sup> <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/fda2cf471e7349bbb68b071257a1fc7a/continues-hit-turkish-border-town-rockets> ; <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/06/massacre-due-isis-car-bomb-explosion-al-makhram-al-fouqani-town-homs-governorate-may-5/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/05/11/ISIS-cuts-regime-supply-route-to-Syria-s-ancient-Palmyra.html>

<sup>21</sup> <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/1f1987aa4967444ebf56447981bfe1d6/kurdish-led-fighters-close-syrian-city-aleppo>

<sup>22</sup> See: “US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIL in Syria, Iraq”. *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [744897](#), [746798](#), [747152](#), [746876](#), [749863](#), [752076](#), [753590](#), [754240](#), [754459](#), [756013](#), [756933](#)

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-usa-idUSKCN0XQ0US> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKCN0XR0CT> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/aleppo-john-kerry-syria-160502120213094.html>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.wsj.com/articles/turkeys-elite-force-stages-raid-against-islamic-state-fighters-in-syria-1462868840> ; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/turkey-special-forces-operation-syria-160509055126949.html>

<sup>25</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/04/warning-sadrists-storm-green-zone.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/05/sadr-attempts-de-facto-coup-in->

- On May 2, a car bombing struck the neighborhood of Saydadiyah, killing at least 18 Shia pilgrims en route to the neighborhood of Kadhimiyyah and wounding 45 more. ISIL later claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>26</sup>
  - On May 6, a suicide car bomb detonated at an army checkpoint the area of Bismaya, west of the city of Baghdad, killed at least four Iraqi soldiers. Two bombings also struck near Abu Ghraib, killing three people and wounding 13 more.<sup>27</sup>
2. Erbil Governorate:
- On April 27, Iraqi military forces, backed by US-led coalition airstrikes, restarted their offensive on the Makhmour area after a three week pause. Iraqi forces captured the village of Mahana.<sup>28</sup>
  - On April 30, the Turkish air force conducted airstrikes against Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) targets in northern Iraq.<sup>29</sup>
3. Ninawa Governorate:
- On April 27, Iraqi security forces captured the village of Al-Mihana.<sup>30</sup>
  - On May 2, ISIL militants staged a large-scale attack on the town of Tel Eskof before being pushed back by Kurdish Peshmerga, Christian militia forces, and US-led coalition airstrikes. The attack killed an American serviceman who was part of a “quick reaction force.”<sup>31</sup>
  - On May 4, ISIL militants attacked Peshmerga frontlines in the village of Qasabatal Rai, near the ISIL-held town of Tel Afar.<sup>32</sup>
  - On May 9, Iraqi security forces recaptured the village of Kabrouk, near the town of Qayyara.<sup>33</sup>
4. Al Anbar Governorate:
- On May 3, Iraqi security forces were reported to have captured “all areas between Hit and al-Baghdadi”, west of the city of Ramadi.<sup>34</sup>
  - On May 6, a US-led coalition airstrike near the town of Rutba struck and killed ISIL Anbar Province commander Abu Wahib and three other ISIL militants.<sup>35</sup>

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[iraq.html](http://iraq.html) ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36181310> ; <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/05/02/Iraqis-end-Green-Zone-protests-after-issuing-demands.html>

<sup>26</sup> <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/9fd29807c6354f5f91f13024f15a69be/iraq-car-bombing-kills-least-13-pilgrims-baghdad> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-blast-idUSKCN0XT0QA>

<sup>27</sup> <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-iraq-politics-idUKKCN0XX187> ; <http://rudaw.net/NewsDetails.aspx?pageid=213902>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-makhmour-idUSKCN0XO24E>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-kurds-strikes-idUSKCN0XR062>

<sup>30</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/05/iraq-situation-report-april-26-may-10.html>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-peshmerga-idUSKCN0XU0NE> ; [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/defense-secretary-carter-american-killed-in-combat-in-iraq/2016/05/03/42e9da3a-1116-11e6-a9b5-bf703a5a7191\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/defense-secretary-carter-american-killed-in-combat-in-iraq/2016/05/03/42e9da3a-1116-11e6-a9b5-bf703a5a7191_story.html) ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36193142> ; <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/may/04/charles-keating-iv-navy-seal-isis-battle-video>

<sup>32</sup> <http://rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/04052016>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-islamicstate-idUSKCN0Y01TL>

<sup>34</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/05/iraq-situation-report-april-26-may-10.html>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/10/world/middleeast/iraq-airstrike-isis-wahib.html> ; [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/iraq-officials-suicide-bomb-kills-at-least-13-near-baghdad/2016/05/10/9b901822-1687-11e6-971a-dadf9ab18869\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/iraq-officials-suicide-bomb-kills-at-least-13-near-baghdad/2016/05/10/9b901822-1687-11e6-971a-dadf9ab18869_story.html)



- On May 9, Iraqi security forces uncovered “a large chemical weapons factory” in the ‘4 Kilo Area’ in the city of Hit.<sup>36</sup>
- 5. Kirkuk Governorate:
  - On April 30, Kurdish Peshmerga forces and Shia militia forces, backed by US-led coalition airstrikes, recaptured the village of Bashir from ISIL militants. Peshmerga forces also reported regaining control of the villages of Abu Mafraj and Mazargay Imam, south of the city of Kirkuk.<sup>37</sup>
  - On May 4, explosions struck oil wells at Khabbaz oilfield near ISIL-held territory. No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>38</sup>
- 6. Salah ad Din Governorate:
  - On April 29, senior Shia and Kurdish leaders agreed to withdraw their forces from the town of Tuz Khurmato in an effort to end the ongoing violence in the area. Local police will now take control of the town.<sup>39</sup>
- 7. Al Muthanna Governorate:
  - On May 1, ISIL carried out two suicide car bombings near a local government building and a nearby bus station in the city of Samawah, killing at least 37 people and wounding nearly 90 more.<sup>40</sup>
- 8. Diyala Governorate:
  - On May 9, an ISIL car bombing occurred in the Baquba city neighborhood of Shifta, killing at least 13 people and wounding 60 others.<sup>41</sup>
- 9. Babil Governorate:
  - On May 5, an IED detonated at a funeral in the al-Hasawa cemetery, north of the city of Hilla, killing five people and wounding 12 more.<sup>42</sup>

#### Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Albu Hayat, Baghdadi, Bashir, Beiji, Fallujah, Habbaniyah, Huwayjah, Hit, Kirkuk, Kisik, Makhmour, Mosul, Qaim, Qayyarah, Ramadi, Rutbah, Sinjar, Sultan Abdullah, Tal Afar, and Waleed.<sup>43</sup>
- On April 30, Sadrist protesters attacked Dawa party headquarters and other governmental buildings in the cities of Nasriyah (Dhi Qar Governorate), Diwaniyah (Al Qadisiyah Governorate), and Karbala (Karbala’ Governorate).<sup>44</sup>
- On May 7, UN Envoy for Iraq reported that more than 50 mass graves had been uncovered in formerly controlled ISIL territories across Iraq.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>36</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/05/iraq-situation-report-april-26-may-10.html>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.rferl.org/content/iraqi-kurdish-forces-fight-is/27709372.html>

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-oil-idUSKCN0XV1YB>

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-withdraw-idUSKCN0XO2EW> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/05/iraq-situation-report-april-26-may-10.html>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-blast-idUSKCN0XS0ZN> ; <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/02/world/middleeast/iraq-protesters-leave-baghdad-green-zone-on-clerics-order.html>

<sup>41</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/iraq-officials-suicide-bomb-kills-at-least-13-near-baghdad/2016/05/10/9b901822-1687-11e6-971a-dadf9ab18869\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/iraq-officials-suicide-bomb-kills-at-least-13-near-baghdad/2016/05/10/9b901822-1687-11e6-971a-dadf9ab18869_story.html) ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/05/iraq-situation-report-april-26-may-10.html>

<sup>42</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/05/iraq-situation-report-april-26-may-10.html>

<sup>43</sup> See: “US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIL in Syria, Iraq”. *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [744897](#), [746798](#), [747152](#), [746876](#), [749863](#), [750843](#), [752076](#), [753590](#), [754240](#), [754459](#), [756013](#), [756933](#)

<sup>44</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/05/sadr-attempts-de-facto-coup-in-iraq.html>

## Satellite Imagery and Geospatial Analysis

While recent reports have described the damage done to the al-Ma'arra Museum in Ma'arat al-Nu'man (see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0063** in this weekly report), little has been reported about the other historical sites in the city. DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from April 22, 2016 shows the continuing damage to sites within Ma'arat al-Nu'man. ASOR CHI previously reported the Khan Assad Pasha al-Azem was damaged in a raid by an armed faction (see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0120** in **Weekly Report 55-56**). This new satellite imagery showed the damage to the center of the north wall as well as damage to the northwest corner of the roof with a small hole and debris on top of the building.

In addition to the Khan Assad Pasha al-Azem, the Madrasa Abu al-Fawaris also appears to have been severely damaged. While the DigitalGlobe imagery is not of the highest quality, the building is no longer visible. Either the building is no longer standing or the roof is so covered with debris from the combat that it completely blends into its surroundings. ASOR CHI has not recorded any previous incidents to this specific building so it is unclear when this damage occurred. The building is no longer seen after July 4, 2015. More monitoring is necessary to confirm or understand the situation on the ground.

Recent image over Mosul has allowed ASOR CHI to check some unconfirmed damage reports within the city. Previous reports stated that the Kanisat al-Sa'a, also known as the Latin Church or the Clock Tower Church, had been blown up by ISIL militants on April 25, 2016. However, recent DigitalGlobe imagery from May 9, 2016 shows the church is completely intact with no obvious damage.

The recent DigitalGlobe imagery from May 2, May 8, and May 9, 2016 also showed multiple forms of damage to the ancient site of Nineveh. ASOR CHI was able to confirm the intentional destruction of the Adad and Mashki Gates, the dismantling of the Sennacherib Palace, continuing construction on site, and multiple examples of tunnel looting (see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0010 UPDATE and IHI 16-0013** in this report.)

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<sup>45</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/dozens-isil-mass-graves-iraq-envoy-160507053015812.html>





Khan Assad Pasha al-Azem with visible damage on eastern wall from previous combat (DigitalGlobe; July 4, 2015)



Damage to the northern wall and northwest corner (DigitalGlobe; April 22, 2016)



Madrasa Abu al-Fawaris still visible, note the dome and the wall edges (DigitalGlobe; October 12, 2013)



Madrasa Abu al-Fawaris not visible with no clear indication of standing walls (DigitalGlobe; April 22, 2016)



Kanisat al-Sa'a still standing intact after false reports of its destruction by ISIL (DigitalGlobe; May 2, 2016)

## Incident Reports: Syria

### SHI 16-0045 UPDATE

**Report Date:** April 5, 2016

**Site Name:** Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (مسجد أبو بكر الصديق)

**Date of Incident:** April 5, 2016

**Location:** Dumeir, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** 2010

**Incident Summary:** New photographs of the damage to Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On April 5, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights reported that SARG airstrikes severely damaged the Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque in Dumeir, northeast of Damascus.<sup>46</sup> No photographs of the damage were provided at the time. Overall, on April 5 SNHR reported that SARG airstrikes resulted in the deaths of at least eight people.<sup>47</sup>

On April 28, 2016 the activist group Integrated Relief Office for Dumeir posted on its Facebook page a video of the mosque and the damage it sustained, as well as a list of the costs associated with the renovation and repair of the mosque. In total, the renovations are expected to cost around 2.5 million Syrian pounds, which includes repair or replacement of the front wall, one of the main doors, windows, speakers, water tanks, the minaret, and light fixtures and the removal of rubble.<sup>48</sup> The video provided by Integrated Relief Office for Dumeir shows the moment the mosque was hit by the airstrike and the damage it sustained.<sup>49</sup> A photo posted by the group on May 6, 2016 shows an earthmover removing rubble from the area around the mosque.<sup>50</sup>

On May 11, 2016 SNHR provided a photograph of the damage to the mosque in its “Most Vital Facilities Report” for April 2016, which shows damage to the mosque’s entrance.<sup>51</sup>

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI remains concerned about SARG airstrikes on mosques and other cultural heritage in and around Damascus. ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the situation of these mosques as well as other cultural heritage sites in areas under aerial bombardment.

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<sup>46</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/05/20082/>

<sup>47</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/05/20080/> ; <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/05/20062/>

<sup>48</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=1885865274973427&id=1769688036591152](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1885865274973427&id=1769688036591152)

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9N0XwifsD8&feature=youtu.be>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/1769688036591152/photos/a.1792754457617843.1073741829.1769688036591152/1889335337959754/?type=3&theater>

<sup>51</sup> [http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/Assault\\_on\\_the\\_vital\\_center\\_in\\_April\\_2016\\_en.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/Assault_on_the_vital_center_in_April_2016_en.pdf)

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<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/05/20080/>

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/05/20082/>

May 11, 2016:

[http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/Assault on the vital center in April 2016 en.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/Assault%20on%20the%20vital%20center%20in%20April%202016%20en.pdf)

Integrated Relief Office for Dumeir:

April 28, 2016:

[https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=1885865274973427&id=1769688036591152](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1885865274973427&id=1769688036591152)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9N0XwifsD8>

May 6, 2016:

<https://www.facebook.com/1769688036591152/photos/a.1792754457617843.1073741829.1769688036591152/1889335337959754/?type=3&theater>



Damage to the exterior of the Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (Media Abu Mohammad; April 28, 2016)





Damage to the exterior of the Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque and minaret (Media Abu Mohammad; April 28, 2016)



Damage to the exterior of the Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (Media Abu Mohammad; April 28, 2016)



Damage to exterior of the Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque and minaret (Media Abu Mohammad; April 28, 2016)



Interior damage and broken glass inside the Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (Media Abu Mohammad; April 28, 2016)



Interior damage to the Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (Media Abu Mohammad; April 28, 2016)



Detail of damage to the minaret (Media Abu Mohammad; April 28, 2016)





Broken windows and shattered glass inside the Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (Media Abu Mohammad; April 28, 2016)



Damage to the exterior of the Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (Media Abu Mohammad; April 28, 2016)



Removal of rubble from outside of the Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (Integrated Relief Office for Dumeir; May 6, 2016)



Damage to the entrance of the Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (SNHR; May 11, 2016)

**SHI 16-0060**

**Report Date:** April 29, 2016

**Site Name:**

- ☒ Owais Al Qarni Mosque (مسجد أويس القرني)
- ☒ Al Hussein Mosque (جامع الحسين)
- ☒ Mawla Khan Mosque (Takiyya al-Mawlawiye; مسجد الملخان)
- ☒ Nabhaniyah Institute—Nahdat House of Religious Science
- ☒ Great Prophet Mosque (جامع الرسول الأعظم)
- ☒ Aisha Mosque (جامع السيدة عائشة أم المؤمنين)
- ☒ Al Hajjar Mosque (جامع الحجار)
- ☒ Al Farouq Mosque (جامع الفاروق)

**Date of Incident:** April 29, 2016; May 2, 2016; May 3, 2016; May 9, 2016

**Location:** Neighborhoods in Aleppo City

- Owais Al Qarni Mosque - Al Sukari Neighborhood
- Al Hussein Mosque - Al Qaterji Neighborhood
- Mawla Khan Mosque - Bab al Faraj Neighborhood
- Nabhaniyah Institute - Bab al Hadid Neighborhood
- Great Prophet Mosque - az-Zahraa Neighborhood
- Aisha Mosque - az-Zahraa Neighborhood
- Al Hajjar Mosque - Suleiman al-Halabi Neighborhood
- Al Farouq Mosque - Karm al-Jazmati Neighborhood

**Site Description:** Mosques in several neighborhoods in Aleppo, including:

- Takiyya Mawlawiye - is a lodge for Sufi dervishes located west of the Old City of Aleppo. Its foundation date is unclear, but the structure was probably built in the mid- to late 16th-century CE after the Ottoman takeover of Aleppo. The Mawlawi Sufi brotherhood was introduced to Aleppo province at this time. Additions were made to the original structure until the 20th-century (the Mawlawi order was banned in Aleppo in 1950). The Takiyya consists of several buildings. An outer wall surrounds a cluster of freestanding buildings, pierced by a doorway surmounted by an octagonal minaret. The inner courtyard contains a pool and is surrounded by structures from various periods, including a mosque (probably added in the late 17th-century), a *sama khana* (a space where the *Sama*, the traditional ritual dance of the whirling dervishes is conducted), a kitchen, cells for the dervishes, and tombs.<sup>52</sup>
- Nabhaniyah Institute - An older building converted to a school in 1964 CE.

**Site Date:** Various, some modern sites; Takiyya Mawlawiye: ca. 1650 CE

**Incident Summary:** Shelling and airstrikes damage several built heritage sites in the city of Aleppo.

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<sup>52</sup> Watenpaugh (2004): 130-3; Hadjar(2000): 69

**Incident Source and Description:** Between April 29-May 9, 2016 various built heritage sites in the city of Aleppo were damaged by airstrikes, shelling, and other collateral violence. During this period SARG (and possibly Russian) airstrikes reportedly struck and damaged the following sites: Owais Al Qarni Mosque, Al Hussein Mosque, and the Nabhaniyah Institute. Syrian armed opposition forces shelled and reportedly struck the Mawla Khan Mosque, the Aisha Mosque, and stormed the SARG-held Great Prophet Mosque. In addition, unknown shelling and explosives struck and damaged Al Hajjar and Al Farooq Mosque.

On April 29, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG warplanes fired two missiles on Owais Al Qarni Mosque in Al Sukari neighborhood, causing partial damage to the building.<sup>53</sup> In a report by SNHR published on May 1, 2016 the mosque is described to have suffered 'medium' damage to the building and partial damage to the surrounding fence.<sup>54</sup>

On April 29, 2016 SNHR reported that airstrikes by either SARG or Russian forces damaged Al Hussein Mosque in the opposition-held neighborhood of Al Qaterji.<sup>55</sup> Video footage re-published by SNHR depicts extensive damage to the mosque as well as damage to the buildings and street surrounding the mosque.<sup>56</sup> In a report generated by SNHR on May 1, 2016 Al Hussein Mosque was reported to be partially destroyed and rendered out of service.<sup>57</sup> A Syrian Civil Defense member reported that many airstrikes on Friday, April 29 struck areas around mosques in the city of Aleppo. This led to accusations that SARG forces were deliberately targeting areas such as these in an effort to force civilians to abandon the city.<sup>58</sup>

On April 29, 2016 the Syrian state news agency SANA reported that armed opposition group shelling on the Mawla Khan Mosque killed 16 civilian worshippers and injured 41 more.<sup>59</sup> The shelling reportedly occurred as Friday prayers were ongoing in the neighborhood of Bab al-Faraj.<sup>60</sup> The extent of the damage to the mosque is unknown.

On April 29, 2016 Khaled al-Homsi, a Syrian opposition activist, posted photographs on Twitter showing severe damage to the Nabhaniyah Institute that he alleges were caused by SARG airstrikes.<sup>61</sup> Previous damage to the building occurred on August 11, 2014 when SARG forces dropped a barrel bomb on or near the school, causing material damage.<sup>62</sup>

On May 2, 2016 Ahlu Bayt News Agency reported that opposition forces made up of Al Nusra Front, the Free Syrian Army (FSA), Jaish Al-Mujahideen, and Harakat Nourideen Al-Zinki launched a coordinated offensive against the regime-held areas of Al-Khalidiyah and az-Zahraa in western Aleppo city. The opposition forces began their assault by storming the Great Prophet Mosque,

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<sup>53</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/29/government-forces-targeted-owais-al-qarni-mosque-al-sukari-neighborhood-aleppo-city-april-29/>

<sup>54</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/01/21272/>

<sup>55</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/29/government-forces-allies-targeted-al-hussein-mosque-aleppo-april-29-keywords/>; <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/01/21272/>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XJ2NvoLH0M>

<sup>57</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/01/21272/>

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aleppo-idUSKCN0XQ0LP>

<sup>59</sup> <http://sana.sy/en/?p=75966>; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/04/30/syria-disregard-civilian-life-hospital-attacks>

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36169006>

<sup>61</sup> <https://twitter.com/PalmyraPioneer/status/725858311300612096>

<sup>62</sup> [http://www.aksalser.com/?page=view\\_news&id=e46e1f11550ab42d15b265560afeba8d](http://www.aksalser.com/?page=view_news&id=e46e1f11550ab42d15b265560afeba8d)



which was occupied by SARG forces. This attack was repelled and the mosque was regained by SARG forces.<sup>63</sup> No damage to the mosque was reported. SARG forces captured the mosque from FSA control in May 2014.<sup>64</sup>

On May 3, 2016 az-Zahraa Neighborhood News Network in Aleppo reported that opposition shelling struck the area surrounding Aisha Mosque.<sup>65</sup> The mosque subsequently caught fire, forcing those inside and in the surrounding area to flee.<sup>66</sup> Aisha Mosque has been previously damaged by shelling (see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0040** in **Weekly Report 85-86**).

On May 9, 2016 Idlib News Network reported that shelling struck Al Hajjar Mosque in the neighborhood of Suleiman al-Halabi. Al Hajjar Mosque has been struck by explosives at least once before according to the local source 'Eye on Halab'.<sup>67</sup>

On May 9, 2016 Halab News Network reported that airstrikes of unknown origin struck Al Farooq Mosque in the neighborhood of Karm al-Jazmati, causing damage.<sup>68</sup> Photographs taken of the mosque show interior and exterior damage to the mosque.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives, occupation/militarization.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI remains concerned about SARG airstrikes on mosques and other cultural heritage in and around Aleppo. ASOR CHI will attempt to gather further information on damage to the sites listed as damaged in this incident report, and will continue to monitor heritage sites in regions subject to ongoing aerial bombardment campaigns and intense military activity.

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Halab News: <http://halabnews.net/?p=75585>

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<https://www.facebook.com/HNN.Halab/posts/753730241396907>

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<sup>63</sup> <http://en.abna24.com/service/middle-east-west-asia/archive/2016/05/02/751438/story.html>

<sup>64</sup> <http://halabnews.net/?p=52966&lang=en>

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/617319418327102/photos/a.617421408316903.1073741828.617319418327102/1086924574699915/>

<sup>66</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=1086890991369940](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1086890991369940)

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=178133259031725>

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/HNN.Halab/posts/753730241396907>

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April 29, 2016:

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Twitter (Al Hafz Nazir): <https://twitter.com/naziralhafz/status/726017597779677186>

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<https://www.facebook.com/617319418327102/photos/a.617421408316903.1073741828.617319418327102/1086224628103243/>

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Scholarly:

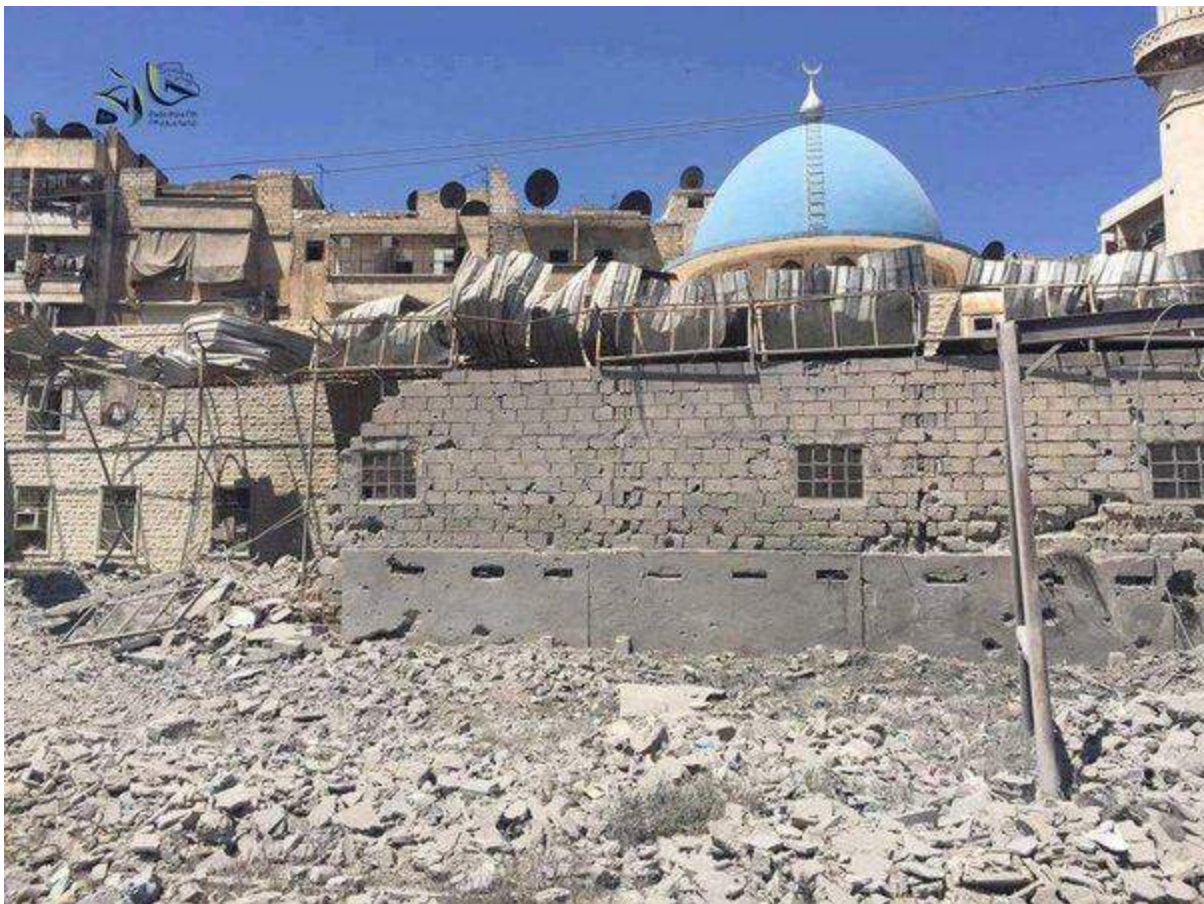
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Damage to Oweis Al Karni Mosque (SNHR; April 29, 2016)



Damage to Oweis Al Karni Mosque (Al Hafz Nazir Twitter; April 29, 2016)





Severe damage at the Nabhaniyah Institute (Twitter; April 29, 2016)



Severe damage to the Nabhaniyah Institute (Twitter; April 29, 2016)





Damage to the Nabhaniyah Institute (Twitter; April 29, 2016)



Significant damage and rubble present at the Nabhaniyah Institute (Twitter; April 29, 2016)







Smoke rising around Aisha Mosque following shelling (News Network az-Zahraa Neighborhood in Aleppo; May 3, 2016)

**SHI 16-0061**

**Report Date:** May 7, 2016

**Site Name:** Iman Mosque (مسجد الإيمان; Takiyat of Sheikh Abdallah; تكية الشيخ عبد الله)

**Date of Incident:** May 7, 2016

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

**Site Description:** The Takiyat of Sheikh Abdallah is one of three Ottoman-era *takaya* (Sufi lodges) remaining in Deir ez-Zor. It was built in 1906 CE by Sheikh Ahmed al-Ezzi al-Niqashbandi al-Sagheer. In 2014, ISIL militants occupying Deir ez-Zor attempted to close the Takiyat as part of a campaign to close or destroy structures (often belonging to Sufi or Shiite sects) they deem “un-Islamic.” An ISIL judge apparently objected to the presence of the tomb of the founder within the Takiyat. A local religious leader argued that the tombs had already been removed, and that the Takiyat should be reopened. The ISIL judge acquiesced, although he insisted the Takiyat of Sheikh Abdallah be renamed “Iman Mosque.”<sup>69</sup>

**Site Date:** 1906 CE (minaret added 1978)

**Incident Summary:** A SARG airstrike reportedly damaged a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On May 7, 2016 Syrian Network for Human Rights reported that a SARG airstrike hit the Iman Mosque in Deir ez-Zor, damaging the building and its minaret, and rendering it inoperable.<sup>70</sup> No photographs were made available at the time of publication.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will attempt to gather further information on damage to the Iman Mosque and will continue to monitor heritage sites in regions subject to ongoing aerial bombardment campaigns and intense military activity.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/07/government-forces-targeted-al-eman-mosque-al-sheikh-yassin-neighborhood-deir-ez-zour-city-may-7/>

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<sup>69</sup> <https://www.alsouria.net/content/البقاء-أجل-من-صراع-الزور-دير-تكايا/>

<sup>70</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/07/government-forces-targeted-al-eman-mosque-al-sheikh-yassin-neighborhood-deir-ez-zour-city-may-7/>

**SHI 16-0062**

**Report Date:** May 9, 2016

**Site Name:**

- Idlib Museum (متحف إدلب)
- Al-Jawari Mosque (جامع الجوهرري)
- Omari Mosque (جامع عمري), possibly known as Abi Thar al Ghafari Mosque

**Date of Incident:** May 9, 2016

**Location:** Idlib City, Idlib Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:**

- Idlib Museum - The main tourist attraction for the city, the Idlib regional museum reportedly contained more than 17,000 tablets from Ebla as well as other artifacts, including ceramics dating to the Ayyubid period.
- Al-Jawari Mosque - Mosque
- Omari Mosque - Mosque

**Site Date:**

- Idlib Museum - Modern
- Al-Jawari Mosque - Unknown
- Omari Mosque - Unknown

**Incident Summary:** SARG airstrikes allegedly cause damage in Idlib city.

**Incident Source and Description:** On May 9, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that SARG airstrikes struck near the National Museum in Idlib city, causing partial damage to the museum's fence.<sup>71</sup> Photographs shared by Idlib Antiquities Center labeled three photographs as the Idlib Museum. The photographs appear to show damage to an exterior area of the museum, possibly confirming that the damage was limited to the fence.<sup>72</sup>

The National Museum in Idlib city has previously been damaged by military activity, as well as theft (see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 14-0020** in **Weekly Report 3** and **SHI 15-0060** in **Weekly Report 35**).

On May 9, 2016 the Syrian Press Center reported that SARG airstrikes also struck Al-Johari Mosque in the city of Idlib, causing damage and civilian casualties.<sup>73</sup> Dozens of airstrikes were reported across Idlib Governorate on May 9-10, 2016.

On May 9, Orient News and other local sources reported that Omari Mosque in the city of Idlib had been damaged by airstrikes.<sup>74</sup> Little detail was known as to the damage inflicted as a result of these strikes. In addition, other mosques were named as being struck, however it is unclear if these

<sup>71</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/09/government-forces-targeted-national-museum-idlib-city-may-9/>

<sup>72</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=1193595783992015&id=1070868956264699](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1193595783992015&id=1070868956264699)

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/syrian.press.center/posts/1750566535185950>

<sup>74</sup> [http://www.orient-news.net/en/news\\_show/111666/0/Assad-jets-kill-civilians-in-Idlib](http://www.orient-news.net/en/news_show/111666/0/Assad-jets-kill-civilians-in-Idlib) ; <https://www.facebook.com/LCCSy/posts/1387461577947641>







Photograph from Idlib Antiquities Center reported to be of the Idlib Museum (Idlib Antiquities Center; May 9, 2016)



Photograph from Idlib Antiquities Center reported to be of the Idlib Museum (Idlib Antiquities Center; May 9, 2016)



Possible image of interior damage to Al-Johari Mosque (El Dorar al-Shamia; May 9, 2016)



**SHI 16-0063**

**Report Date:** May 9, 2016

**Site Name:** Al-Ma'arra Museum (Khan Murad Basha Museum) (متحف خان مراد باشا)

**Date of Incident:** May 9, 2016

**Location:** Ma'arat al-Numan, Idlib Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** According to Ross Burns:

"[The Maarat al-Numan Museum] contains an interesting collection of objects including mosaics and pottery from many periods...The mosaics have been transferred from nearby sites including a fifth century mosaic from as far as Homs... In the centre of the courtyard is a *tekkiye* or foundation for the instruction of initiates to the Dervish sect. A doorway to the left once led to the hammam and suq attached to the khan (now managed separately). Opposite the museum is another Ottoman khan, the Khan Assad Pasha al-Azem. [The Khan Murad Pasha] 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...."<sup>76</sup>

**Site Date:** Historic Khan Murad Pasha 1565 CE

**Incident Summary:** SARG airstrikes damage museum.

**Incident Source and Description:** On May 9, 2016 ASOR CHI in-country sources reported that airstrikes had hit the Al-Ma'arra Museum in the city of Ma'arat al-Numan, causing partial damage to the building. Local news reports confirmed this incident and attributed the damage to SARG airstrikes.

Al-Ma'arra Museum has been struck several times by airstrikes in the past, causing increasing damage to the interior and exterior of the building as well as the artifacts located within the site (see [ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 14-0016](#) in [Weekly Report 2](#); [SHI 14-0041](#) in [Weekly Report 9](#); [SHI 14-0101](#) in [Weekly Report 20](#); [SHI 15-0098](#) in [Weekly Report 46](#)).

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will attempt to gather further information on damage to Al-Ma'arra Museum and will continue to monitor heritage sites in regions subject to ongoing aerial bombardment campaigns and intense military activity.

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<sup>76</sup> Burns 2010: 195

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<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/09/government-forces-targeted-khan-murad-basha-museum-maaret-al-numan-city-idlib-governorate-may-9/>

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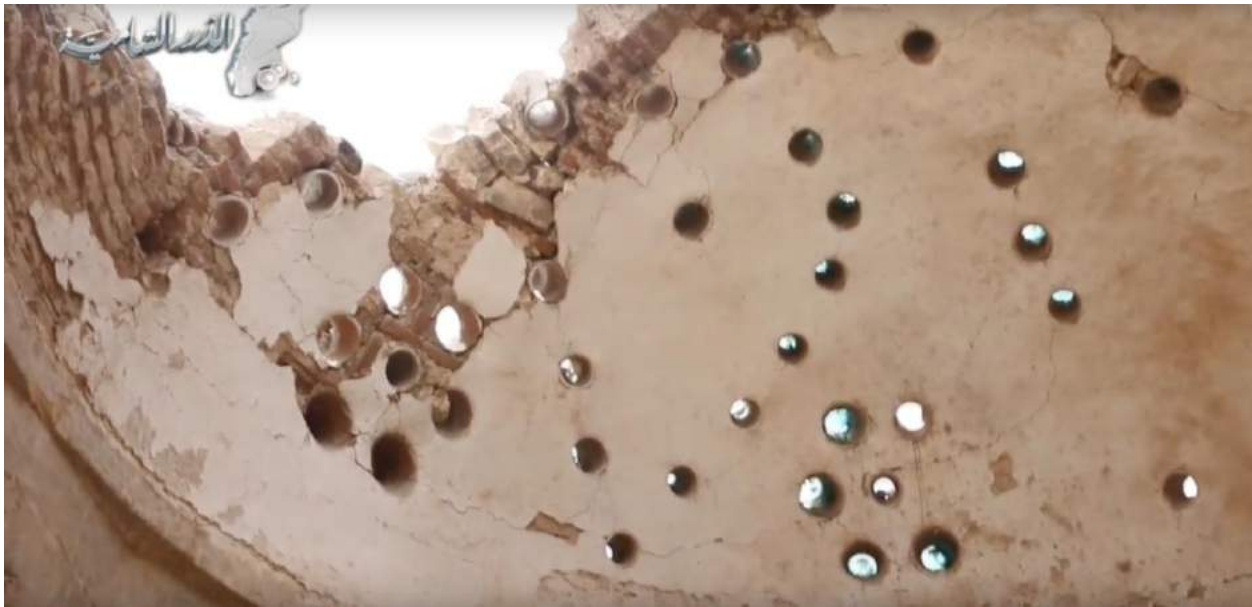
Burns, Ross (2009) *The Monuments of Syria: A Guide*. I. B. Tauris; Revised and expanded edition.



Video still of damage to the Al-Ma'arra Museum (El-Dorar Al Shami; May 9, 2016)



Video still of the damage to the interior of the Al-Ma'arra Museum (El-Dorar Al Shami; May 9, 2016)



Video still of damage to the Al-Ma'arra Museum with large hole present in the dome the Al-Ma'arra Museum (ASOR CHI In-Country Sources; May 9, 2016)





Damage to the dome of the Al-Ma'arra Museum (El-Dorar Al Shami; May 9, 2016)



Damage to the Al-Ma'arra Museum (SNHR; May 9, 2016)





Airstrike debris next to sandbags lining the walls of the Al-Ma'arra Museum (ASOR CHI In-Country Sources; May 9, 2016)



Airstrike debris next to sandbags lining the walls of the Al-Ma'arra Museum (ASOR CHI In-Country Sources; May 9, 2016)





Protective sandbags and debris inside of the Al-Ma'arra Museum (ASOR CHI In-Country Sources; May 9, 2016)





Airstrike damage to the Al-Ma'arra Museum (Al Marra Today; May 9, 2016)



Damage to the dome at the Al-Ma'arra Museum (Al Marra Today; May 9, 2016)



Airstrike damage on the roof of the Al-Ma'arra Museum (republished by APSA; May 9, 2016)



Airstrike damage at the Al-Ma'arra Museum (republished by APSA; May 9, 2016)





Airstrike damage to the Al-Ma'arra Museum (Republished by APSA; May 9, 2016)



A crumbled exterior wall at the Al-Ma'arra Museum (Republished by APSA; May 9, 2016)



Airstrike damage at the Al-Ma'arra Museum (Republished by APSA; May 9, 2016)





Exterior of the Al-Ma'arra Museum showing dust and debris (Al Watan FM; May 9, 2015)



Damage to the exterior of the Al-Ma'arra Museum (Al Watan FM; May 9, 2015)





Damage to an exterior wall of the Al-Ma'arra Museum (Al Watan FM; May 9, 2015)



Exterior of the Al-Ma'arra Museum (Al Watan FM; May 9, 2015)





Damage to exterior wall of the Al-Ma'arra Museum Al-Ma'arra Museum (Al Watan FM; May 9, 2015)



A hole through the domed ceiling at the Al-Ma'arra Museum (Al Watan FM; May 9, 2015)





Rubble inside a room of the Al-Ma'arra Museum (Al Watan FM; May 9, 2015)



Interior damage at the Al-Ma'arra Museum (Al Watan FM; May 9, 2015)



Interior damage at the Al-Ma'arra Museum (Al Watan FM; May 9, 2015)



Interior damage in a room of the Al-Ma'arra Museum (Al Watan FM; May 9, 2015)





Interior damage at the Al-Ma'arra Museum (Al Watan FM; May 9, 2015)



Airstrike damage to the Al-Ma'arra Museum (Al Watan FM; May 9, 2015)





Airstrike damage to the Al-Ma'arra Museum (Al Watan FM; May 9, 2015)



## **The Day After Heritage Protection Initiative<sup>77</sup>** **Site Monitors Project**

### **Preliminary Damage Report on the Ma'arra Museum Due to Regime Airstrike May 9, 2016**

On Monday May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at noon, the Museum of Ma'arrat Al-Noman was struck for the second time by the Syrian regime air force with two thermobaric bombs. The attack targeted the museum also known as Khan Murad Basha which was built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century during the Ottoman era (1564) and served as a Caravanserai, restaurant, and rest area for travelers.

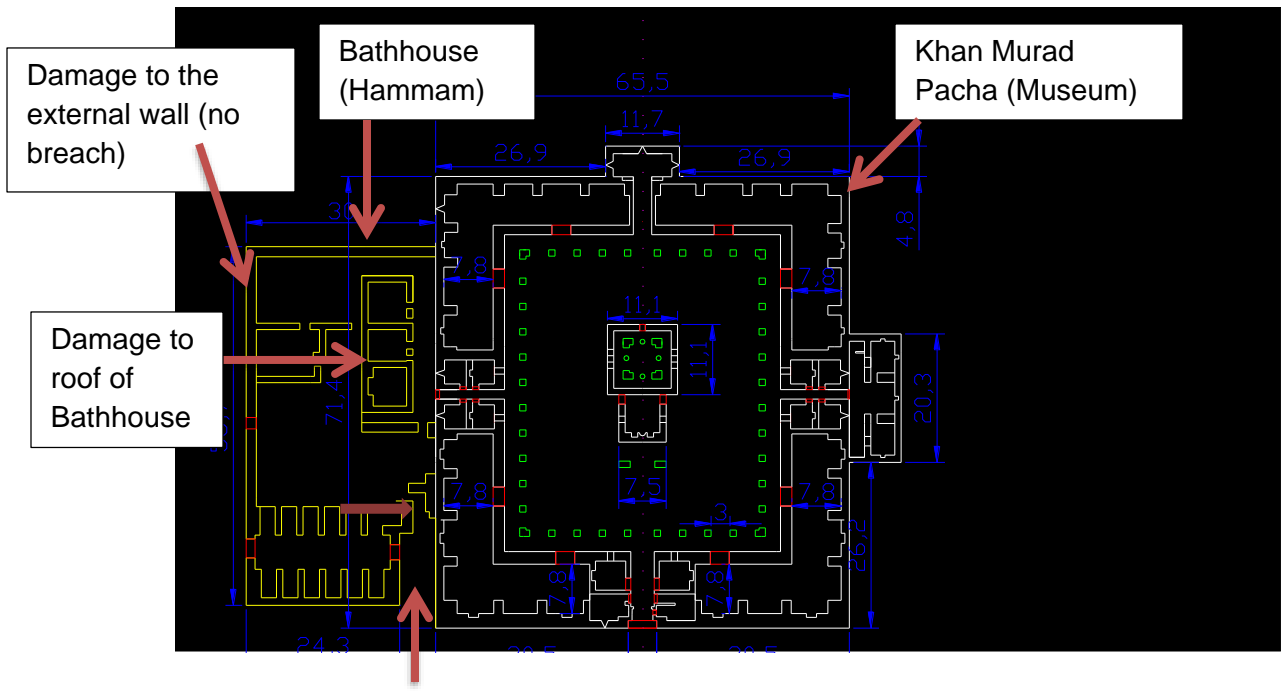
The Khan occupies an area of 1.7 acres and is divided into 4 wings topped with domes. The wings are connected to service facilities: The central courtyard included a mosque and a restaurant, whereas the west wing housed a market place, a bathhouse, a bakery, grains storage area, and a water station that supplies the whole facility.

The damage caused by this most recent airstrike is severe especially in the bathhouse area and in the fourth ward on the west side of the building. The Day After Heritage Protection Initiative (TDA-HPI) site monitors team in conjunction with the Cultural Heritage Preservation Center (from Ma'arra) conducted an onsite assessment of the damage and documented it along with recommended urgent repairs stabilize the damaged areas and prevent further deterioration. The documented damage:

- 1- A breach in the western wall of the building in the fourth wing. The resulting rubble landed inside on the mosaics that the TDA Site Monitors team had previously sandbagged for protection. This measure was effective in preserving the mosaics, the most important of which is that of "Hercules".
- 2- Damage to the northwestern wall separating the Khan/museum from the bathhouse, which caused part of the exterior wall to collapse into the narrow corridor separating the two buildings.
- 3- The bathhouse roof including the dome and cupolas sustained severe damages.

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<sup>77</sup> These reports are based on research conducted by "The Day After Heritage Protection Initiative." This report reflects analysis from an independent organization. As with the Weekly Reports produced by ASOR CHI, it should be treated as preliminary and subject to change.



Narrow corridor/between Bathhouse and Khan (Museum). Damage cause a breach/opening in the external wall of the museum.





Damage causing a breach in the wall (inside)



Damage causing a breach in the wall (outside)



Rubble collapse over the mosaic of Hercules. The mosaic appears to be undamaged due to the protection provided by the sandbags.







Rubble collapse over mosaic



Damage to external wall (see plan above)





Roof of the Bathhouse (Hammam)



Damage to the main dome on the Bathhouse (Hammam) roof

Reported by:  
Eng. Abdul Rahman Alyehia (Syrian Heritage Centre)

**Site Monitors Project Coordinator**  
**Dr. Amr Al-Azm**

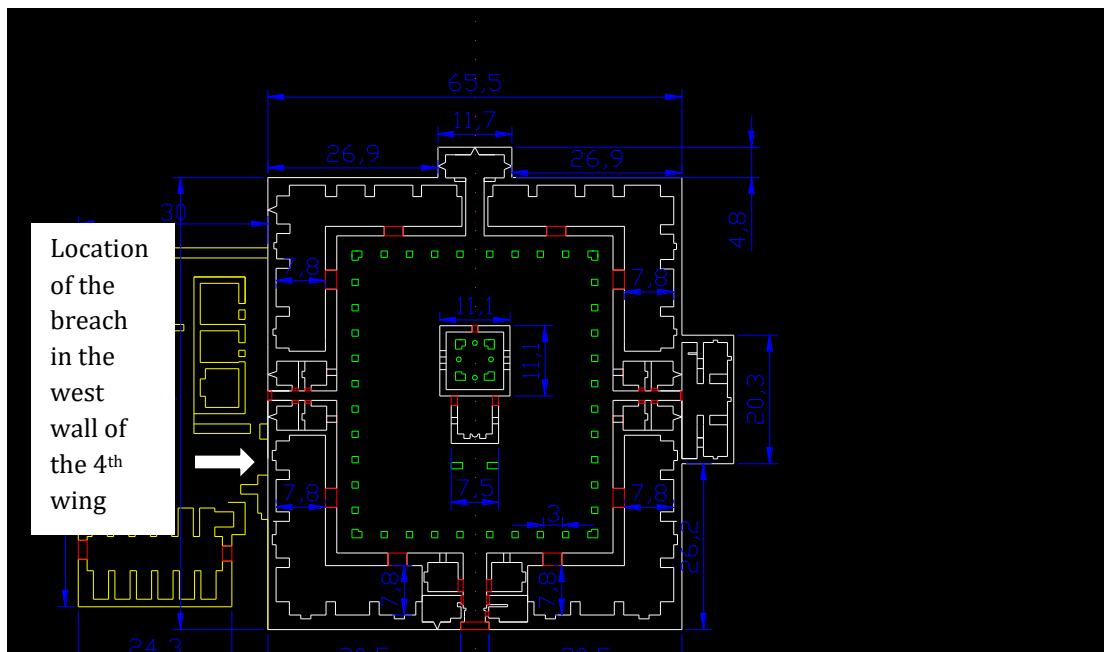


## The Day After Heritage Protection Initiative Site Monitors Project

### Update on: Preliminary Damage Report Ma'arra, Museum Airstrike May 9, 2016.

Follow up report on the emergency cleanup operation in the damaged fourth wing of the Ma'ara museum by the TDA-HPI Site Monitors team in cooperation with Syrian Culture Centre, May 11, 2016.

Work began to clear the rubble, and the fallen stone masonry was gathered and placed to one side. The sandbagged floor mosaics near the strike zone were uncovered and inspected then recovered with additional new sandbags for increased protection. A number of mosaics that had been stored in this wing were also moved as a precautionary measure to the first wing for safety.







Cleanup operations in the west wing of the museum





Filling up new sandbags







Moving mosaics for better protection







Moving mosaics





Stone masonry piled up for safekeeping

Reported by:  
Eng. Abdul Rahman Alyehia (Syrian Heritage Centre)

**Site Monitors Project Coordinator**  
**Dr. Amr Al-Azm**





**SHI 16-0064**

**Report Date:** May 10, 2016

**Site Name:** Sheikh Shuayab Mosque (مسجد شيخ شعيب)

**Date of Incident:** May 10, 2016

**Location:** Binnish, Idlib Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Modern

**Incident Summary:** A SARG airstrike allegedly damaged a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On May 10, 2016 Syrian Network for Human Rights reported a SARG airstrike damaged the Sheikh Shuayab Mosque in Binnish, damaging the mosque severely.<sup>78</sup> In addition, video footage was published online, allegedly showing the moment a missile struck the mosque.<sup>79</sup> Overall, airstrikes in Binnish on May 10 killed at least nine civilians.<sup>80</sup>

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will attempt to gather further information on damage to Sheikh Shuayab Mosque and will continue to monitor heritage sites in regions subject to ongoing aerial bombardment campaigns and intense military activity.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Al Aan: <http://www.alaan.tv/news/world-news/154107/regime-air-strikes-binnish-idlib-killed-10>

Al Jazeera:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/syria-deaths-air-strikes-hit-binnish-town-idlib-160510134320838.html>

Coordinators of the Revolution in the city of Binnish:

<https://www.facebook.com/binnish.revolu12/posts/573801509461961>

DOAM - Documenting Oppression Against Muslims:

<https://twitter.com/doammuslims/status/730057678131728385>

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<sup>78</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/10/government-forces-allies-targeted-al-sheikh-shuayeb-mosque-binnish-city-idlib-governorate-may-10/>

<sup>79</sup> <https://twitter.com/Conflicts/status/730013892932440065>

<sup>80</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/10/victims-died-government-forces-shelling-binnish-city-idlib-governorate-may-10/>

New York Times:

<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2016/05/10/world/middleeast/ap-ml-syria.html>

Reuters: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKCN0Y112I>

SNHR:

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/10/victims-died-government-forces-shelling-binnish-city-idlib-governorate-may-10/>

<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/05/10/government-forces-allies-targeted-al-sheikh-shuayeb-mosque-binnish-city-idlib-governorate-may-10/>

Syrian Revolution Network:

<https://www.facebook.com/Syrian.Revolution/photos/pb.420796315726.-2207520000.1462880390./10157106477975727/>

Youtube (tHeinsider sy): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Na5DtOIK-iA>



Photograph showing severe damage to Sheikh Shuayab Mosque (SNHR; May 10, 2016)



Photograph showing hole through the roof of Sheikh Shuayab Mosque (Coordinators of the Revolution in the city of Binnish; May 10, 2016)



Photograph of interior damage to Sheikh Shuayab Mosque (Coordinators of the Revolution in the city of Binnish; May 10, 2016)





Interior damage at Sheikh Shuayab Mosque (Coordinators of the Revolution in the city of Binnish; May 10, 2016)



Interior damage to Sheikh Shuayab Mosque showing crumbling and partial wall collapse (Coordinators of the Revolution in the city of Binnish; May 10, 2016)



Interior damage to Sheikh Shuayab Mosque (Coordinators of the Revolution in the city of Binnish; May 10, 2016)



A photograph showing where the dome of Sheikh Shuayab Mosque once was (Coordinators of the Revolution in the city of Binnish; May 10, 2016)





A photograph showing where the dome of Sheikh Shuayab Mosque once was (Coordinators of the Revolution in the city of Binnish; May 10, 2016)



Exterior damage to the Sheikh Shuayab Mosque and nearby rubble on the street and stairs (Coordinators of the Revolution in the city of Binnish; May 10, 2016)





Interior damage to Sheikh Shuayab Mosque (Al Jazeera/Reuters; May 10, 2016)



Interior damage to Sheikh Shuayab Mosque (DOAM; May 10, 2016)



Light shines through where the dome once stood at Sheikh Shuayab Mosque (DOAM; May 10, 2016)



Video still showing explosive falling onto Sheikh Shuayab Mosque (Youtube/tHeinsidersy; May 10, 2016)





Video still of explosion at Sheikh Shuayab Mosque (Youtube/tHeinsidersy; May 10, 2016)



Video still of smoke billowing after explosion at the Sheikh Shuayab Mosque (Youtube/tHeinsidersy; May 10, 2016)



## Incident Reports: Iraq

IHI 16-0010

**Report Date:** April 14, 2016

**Site Name:** Nineveh including the Mashki Gate (بوابة المسقى), Adad Gate (بوابة ادد), and Nergal Gate (بوابة نركال)

**Date of Incident:** Mashki Gate: April 10, 2016; Adad and Nergal Gates: April 14, 2016

**Location:** Mosul, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

### Site Description:

- Mashki Gate (بوابة المسقى) - The Mashki Gate is dated to the reign of Sennacherib (701-681 BCE). Located on the Tigris River, the gate's name may be translated as the "Gate of Watering Places." The exterior of the gate included stone steps leading down to the river, an indication that livestock would be driven through this gate to drink. Excavation and reconstruction of the gate took place between 1967-1971 under the auspices of the Iraq Department of Antiquities. The interior of the gate was excavated by David Stronach of UC Berkeley in 1989-1990.<sup>81</sup>
- Adad Gate (بوابة ادد) - The Adad Gate, named for the storm-god Adad or Hadad, is located east of the Nergal Gate, on the northern side of Nineveh. Excavations at this site turned up large tiles dating to the reign of Sennacherib (701-681 BCE).<sup>82</sup> This gate was excavated and reconstructed by the University of Mosul in the 1960s.<sup>83</sup> The reconstruction is a mixture of concrete and mudbrick.<sup>84</sup>
- Nergal Gate (بوابة نركال) - The Nergal Gate, named for the god Nergal, was located on the northern side of Nineveh. The gate was reconstructed by Iraq's Department of Antiquities in the 1950s in order to protect winged bulls located there and create a local museum.<sup>85</sup> Dating to the reign of Sennacherib, A.H. Layard, one of the first archaeologists to explore Nineveh, offers this description of the gate: It was apparently the remains of a gate leading into this quarter of the city, and part of a building, with fragments of two colossal winged figures, had already been discovered in it . . . Following the rows of limestone slabs, from the south side of the mound, and passing through two halls or chambers, we came at length to the opposite entrance. This gateway, facing the open country, was formed by a pair of majestic human-headed bulls, fourteen feet in length, and still entire, though cracked and injured by fire.<sup>86</sup>

**Site Date:** 700-681 BCE (Assyrian)

**Incident Summary:** ISIL militants level several of the gates of Nineveh.

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<sup>81</sup> Madhloum 1968: 24-45

<sup>82</sup> Madhloum 1966: 22

<sup>83</sup> Sulaiman 1971: 45-97

<sup>84</sup> el-Wailly 1966: a-j

<sup>85</sup> al-Asil 1956: 3-9

<sup>86</sup> Layard 1853:120

**Incident Source and Description:** ASOR CHI can now confirm via satellite imagery and on the ground photography that the Mashki and Adad Gates have been destroyed. However the Nergal Gate is still standing undamaged. The photo previously attributed to the Nergal Gate was actually the Adad Gate or a section of the ancient wall. In DigitalGlobe satellite images from May 2, 2016, both the Mashki and Adad Gates have been demolished to their foundations. Only the base of the Adad Gate is still visible. The city walls around these gates were also destroyed by earthmovers and the debris from these destructions was cleared away. Looting tunnels were also visible.

On April 10, 2016 the Iraqi activist group Mosulyoon reported that ISIL militants destroyed the Mashki Gate at Nineveh using earthmovers. According to other news sources, local activists in Mosul reported the damage to the Mashki Gate and provided unconfirmed reports that the stones from the gate were being sold by ISIL.

On April 14, 2016 Al Masdar and other news outlets reported that ISIL destroyed the Adad Gate and other portions of the ancient wall of Nineveh. In addition, the Facebook group Endangered Heritage Sites in Iraq reported that ISIL militants had also destroyed the Nergal Gate. The Nergal Gate suffered significant damage by ISIL militants, who in February 2015 released a video in which militants defaced the winged bulls at the gate with sledgehammers and drills (see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0033** in **Weekly Report 30**).

An in-country ASOR CHI source provided photographs showing the destruction of the Mashki and Nergal Gates, taken from inside a moving vehicle on the road outside the walls of the ancient site. The images of the Mashki Gate shows the structure in ruins. In the other photograph, an earthmover is leveling the hill and moving toward what the photographer reported is the Nergal Gate; it is assumed by the photographer that the gate has been destroyed.

Sputnik Arabic and Russia Today also reported that ISIL militants were digging tunnels within the archaeological boundaries at Nineveh and provided a video of the activity. DigitalGlobe satellite imagery dating to May 2, 2016 show four looting pits within the northern portion of Nineveh. A more recent DigitalGlobe satellite image from May 9, 2016 covered the southern part of the image where an additional four looting pits were identified. These pits were created by tunneling into the side of the mound. This type of tunnel excavation was detailed in **ASOR CHI Weekly Report 85-86** within the region of Tel Afar.

The site of Nineveh and the surrounding area has been subject to urban development by ISIL authorities. For further details, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0095** in **Weekly Report 59-60**, **IHI 15-0097** in **Weekly Report 67-68**, and **IHI 15-0097 UPDATE** in **Weekly Report 79-80**. For further discussion of the newest dismantling of the Southwestern Palace, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 16-0013** in this report.

**Pattern:** Military activity: intentional destruction; Military activity: earthworks/roadwork; Illegal excavation.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor reports of damage to Nineveh and other cultural heritage sites in the city of Mosul and in Ninawa Governorate.

## Sources:

### Online Reporting:

ABC Internacional:

[http://www.abc.es/internacional/abci-daesh-destruye-puerta-mashqi-historica-ciudad-asiria-ninive-201604122311\\_noticia.html](http://www.abc.es/internacional/abci-daesh-destruye-puerta-mashqi-historica-ciudad-asiria-ninive-201604122311_noticia.html)

ARA News:

<http://aranews.net/2016/04/isis-destroys-archaeological-symbol-mosul-dates-7th-century-bc/>

Assyrian Media Network: <https://www.facebook.com/Assyrian.M.N/posts/591523854347199:0>

Al-Hayat: <http://www.alhayat.com/m/story/15062463>

The Independent:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-destroys-gates-ancient-city-nineveh-mosul-a6980686.html>

Al Masdar: <https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/isis-ruins-priceless-historical-sites-iraq/>

Al Mawsiliat Fadaiya: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErPWXrqdfjw>

Mosulyoon: <https://www.facebook.com/mosulyoon/posts/973626796066385:0>

National Geographic:

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/04/160419-Islamic-State-ISIS-ISIL-Nineveh-gates-Iraq-Mosul-destroyed/>

New York Times:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/27/world/middleeast/historians-pore-over-isis-video-of-smashed-statues-for-clues-to-whats-been-lost.html>

Radio Nawa: <http://www.radionawa.com/arabic/videoview.aspx?v =214>

Rudaw: <http://rudaw.net/NewsDetails.aspx?pageid=208881>

Al Sumaria: <http://www.alsumaria.tv/news/165665/من-وأجزاء-الموصل-في-إدب-بوابة-يدير-داعش/>

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al-Asil, N. (1956) "Recent Archaeological Activity in Iraq." *Sumer* 12: 3-9.

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Ibid. (1968) "Nineveh. The 1967-1968 Campaign". *Sumer* 24: 45.



Ibid. (1969). "Excavations at Nineveh. A Preliminary Report (1965-1967)." *Sumer* 23: 76-9.

Madhloum, T. A. & A.M. Mahdi (1976) *Nineveh. Historical Monuments in Iraq I*. Directorate General of Antiquities, Baghdad.

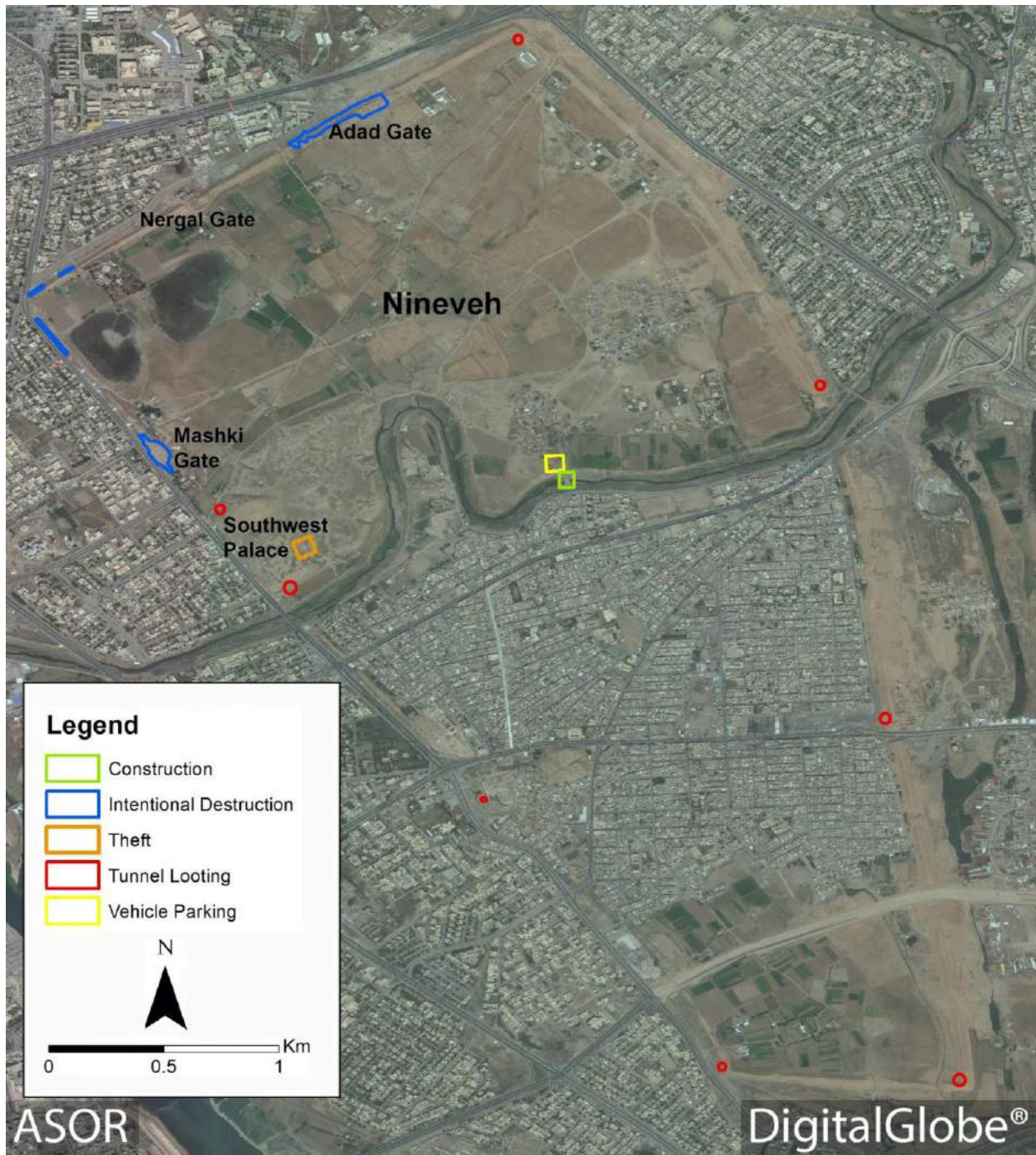
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Scott, L. M. & J. MacGinnis (1990). "Notes on Nineveh" *Iraq* 52: 63-73.

Stronach, D. (1994) "Village to Metropolis: Nineveh and the Beginnings of Urbanism in Northern Mesopotamia," in *Nuove fondazioni nel Vicino Oriente antico: Realtà e ideologia*. ed. S. Mazzone. Pisa: Giardini. pp. 85-114.

Sulaiman, 'Amer (1971) *Adab al-Rafidain*. 1. 45-9.

el-Wailly, F. (1966) "Forward" *Sumer* 22: a-j.



Map of Nineveh outlining the looting, construction, and theft from the site (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; May 9, 2016)





Mashki Gate from above, with protective covering (DigitalGlobe; April 1, 2016)



Mashki Gate post destruction, with city wall destroyed and area bulldozed. (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; May 2, 2016)





Ruined Mashki Gate (ASOR CHI in-country sources; received April 14, 2016)



Adad Gate and city wall prior to destruction (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; April 1, 2016)



Adad Gate and city wall destroyed, with debris removed. Some foundation for Adad Gate still visible (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; May 2, 2016)



Adad Gate with working earthmover in foreground leveling the mound by the gate as well as the site wall (ASOR CHI in-country sources; received April 14, 2016)

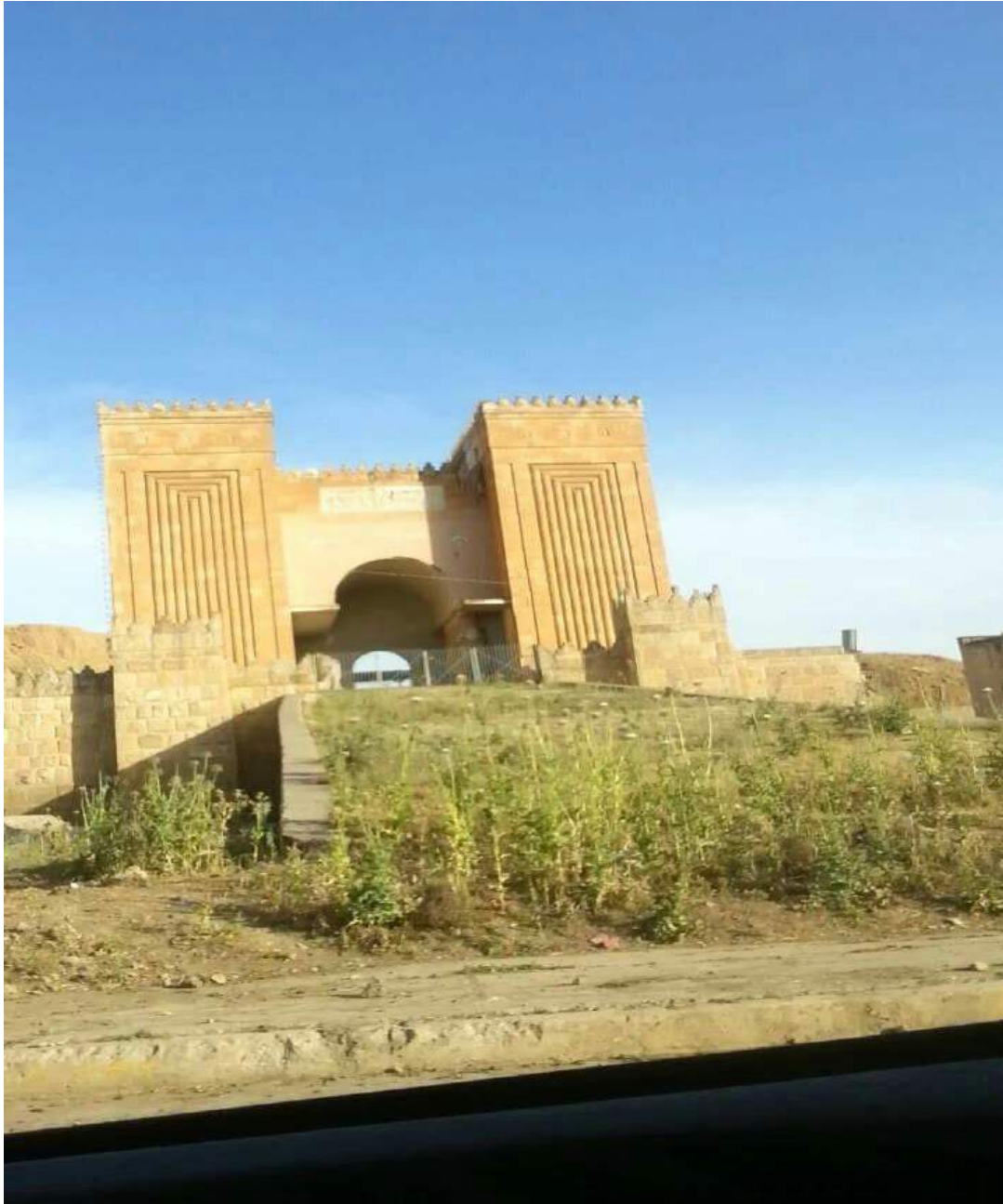




Nergal Gate (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; April 1, 2016)



Nergal Gate still intact (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; May 2, 2016)



Nergal Gate (ASOR CHI in-country sources; received May 4, 2016)





Video still of alleged looting tunnel at Nineveh (Sputnik Arabic; April 22, 2016)



Example of a tunnel looting pits located within the site of Nineveh. (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; May 2, 2016)





Screenshot of Google Map marking the location of the alleged looting tunnel at Nineveh, which does not correspond with the DigitaGlobe imagery results (Sputnik Arabic; April 22, 2016)

## IHI 16-0013

**Report Date:** May 9, 2016

**Site Name:** Nineveh, including the Southwest Palace of Sennacherib

**Date of Incident:** Ongoing since April 1, 2016

**Location:** Mosul, Ninawa Governorate, Iraq

**Site Description:** In 705 BCE, the Assyrian king Sennacherib moved his capital from Dur Sharrukin to Nineveh, where he built a palace that he called the “Palace without rival.” The palace was situated on the southwest corner of the mound of Kouyunjik within the walls of ancient Nineveh and consisted of at least 80 rooms, nearly all lined with stone slabs carved with scenes commemorating Sennacherib’s military campaigns and with doors guarded by winged bulls and other protective figures. It was destroyed in 612 BCE and rediscovered and excavated in 1847 by Austin Henry Layard, who discovered several wall reliefs and cuneiform inscriptions describing Sennacherib’s sieges of the cities of Lachish and Jerusalem, events also described in the Old Testament. A number of important cuneiform tablets were also discovered in the palace. These discoveries continue to garner a huge degree of public interest in Sennacherib’s palace and the site of Nineveh.<sup>87</sup>

In the 1960s, the Iraq Department of Antiquities consolidated the walls and sculptures and roofed the site over as the Sennacherib Palace Site Museum. This consists of four restored rooms in the throne-room suite, which contained at the time around 100 carved reliefs in various states of preservation.<sup>88</sup> In the 1990s and 2000s, some of these reliefs were looted or partially looted. 10-15 fragments of these reliefs appeared on the art market. No recent publications discuss exactly what still remains in situ. A 1991 publication indicates that at that time, Room I had 17 whole and fragmentary slabs on display in situ, Room IV had 14, and Room V had 51.<sup>89</sup> By 1996, at least three reliefs from Room I, one from Room IV, and six from Room V were at least partially looted (meaning a section of the relief was removed), as well as several from other rooms in the palace.<sup>90</sup>

**Site Date:** 700 - 681 BCE (Neo-Assyrian)

**Incident Summary:** Ongoing damage to site of Nineveh, including looting and dismantling of site museum.

**Incident Source and Description:** Between April 1, 2016 and May 2, 2016 the protective roof over the southwest palace area, installed in 2004, was removed and the metal likely sold for scrap or reused. The DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from May 2, 2016 showed the mudbrick towers flanking the Grand Entrance intact, but the brick walls dividing the Throne Room (Room I) from Room V are mostly gone. Only the metal support pillars, surrounded by brick, remain. The southwestern corner of Room V is still intact possibly with the reliefs in place along the western wall. Room IV appears untouched with all walls still intact. Vehicle tracks leading up to the Grand Entrance of the Palace are visible.

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<sup>87</sup> Russell 1991: 2-5

<sup>88</sup> <http://archive.archaeology.org/online/features/nineveh/>

<sup>89</sup> Russell 1991: 47, 50, 52

<sup>90</sup> <http://archive.archaeology.org/online/features/nineveh/illustrations.html> ; <http://archive.archaeology.org/online/features/nineveh/captions/plan.html>

Between May 2 to May 8, 2016, the palace was further dismantled with the remaining metal pillars between Rooms I and V completely removed and the rest of the brick walls of Rooms I, IV, and V almost totally dismantled. Only small sections of the southern and western walls of Room V and the south wall of Room IV remain. Vehicle tracks now can be seen going inside the palace rooms, likely to remove the debris from the interior walls, and also now running directly through the Grand Entrance, which still appears to be relatively intact. There is no clear additional damage visible between May 8 and May 9, 2016.

Additionally, construction was also identified on these recent satellite images. A bridge was constructed over the river from the north part of the site to the southern city area. This bridge was then used to park trucks and large vehicles onto the archaeological site. The multi lane road through the southern portion of Nineveh has not been completed with no new construction since April 1, 2016, and is only partially paved.

The site of Nineveh and the surrounding area has been subject to urban development by ISIL authorities. For further details, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report IHI 15-0095 in Weekly Report 59-60, IHI 15-0097 in Weekly Report 67-68, and IHI 15-0097 UPDATE in Weekly Report 79-80.**

**Pattern:** Military activity; intentional destruction; Illegal excavation; Theft.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor reports of damage and looting at this and other cultural heritage sites in the city of Mosul and in Ninawa Governorate.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Scholarly:

al-Asil, N. (1956) "Recent Archaeological Activity in Iraq." *Sumer* 12: 3-9.

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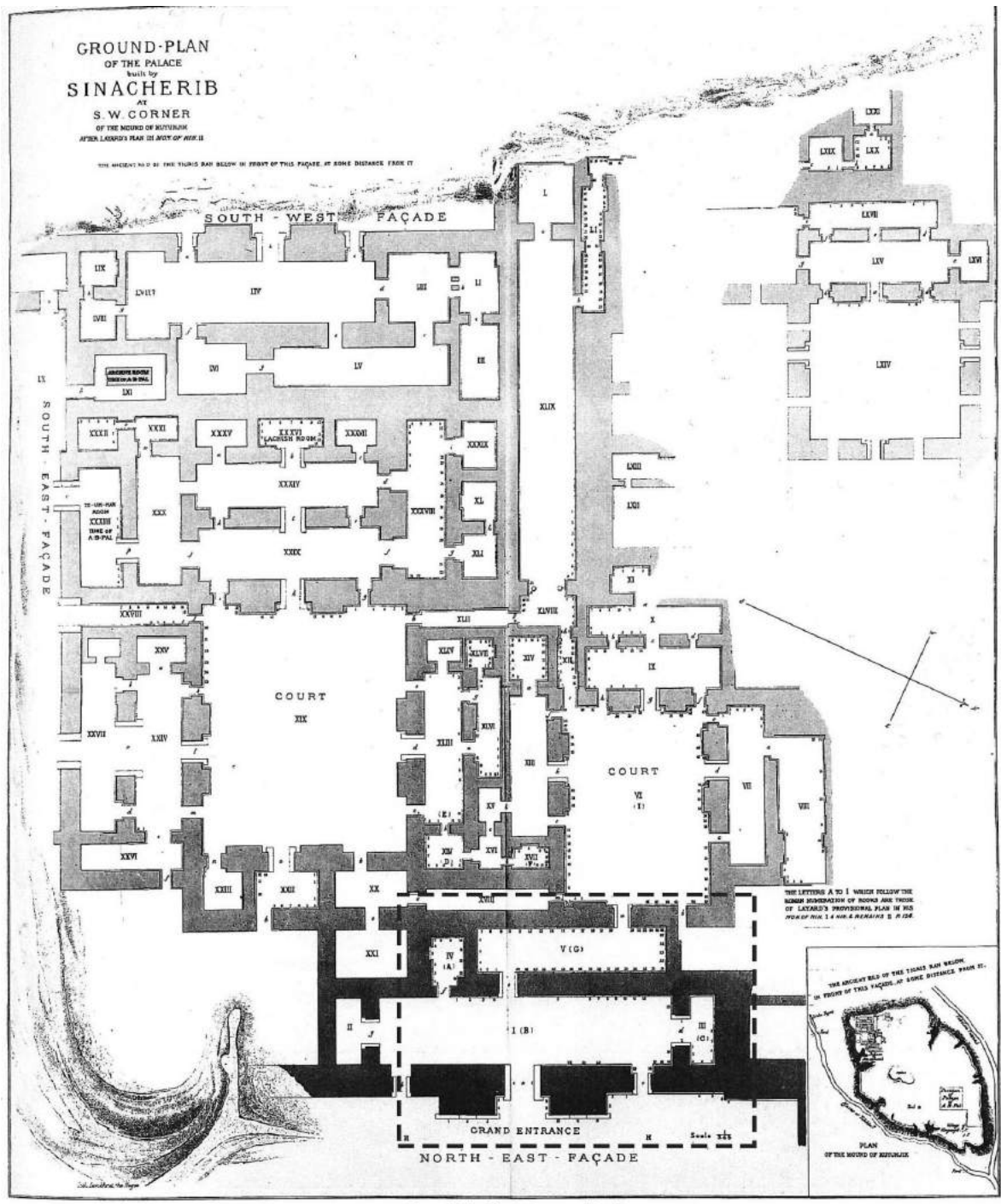
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el-Wailly, F. (1966) "Forward" *Sumer* 22: a-j.



Southwest Palace of Sennacherib (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; May 2, 2016)



Plan published by A. Paterson (1915)

Plan of the Southwest Palace with the portion still intact outlined (Patterson 1915)



Protective Cover over the Southwest Palace (DigitalGlobe; April 1, 2016)



Partial dismantlement of the walls between Room V and Room I (DigitalGlobe; May 2, 2016)





Black arrows highlight the intact walls and reliefs in Room V (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; May 2, 2016)



Continued dismantling of the walls and removal of reliefs (DigitalGlobe; May 8, 2016)



Vehicle tracks visible through the Grand Entrance and inside the Palace (DigitalGlobe; May 9, 2016)



Room IV in the foreground with Room V to the rear. The entryway connecting Room I to Room V is to the right behind Room IV (ASOR CHI in-country contacts; 2013)



Room V, in 2013, looking north, taken from the wall between Room V and Room IV. The reliefs to the left are visible in the May 2, 2016 satellite imagery, whereas the reliefs to the right would have been destroyed (ASOR CHI in-country contacts; 2013)

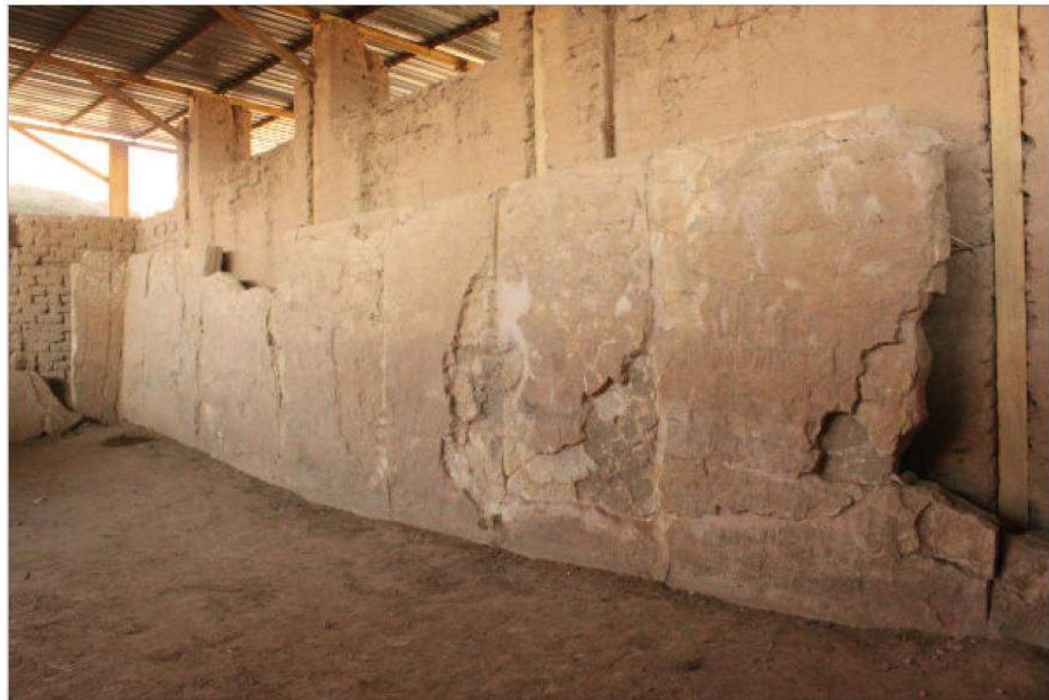


Room V from 2013 looking south toward Room IV. The reliefs to the left near the doorway are not visible in the May 2, 2016 imagery. The reliefs on the right and ahead are still visible on May 2 (ASOR CHI in-country contacts; 2013)





Detail of reliefs from Room V looking north. These reliefs are not visible in the May 2, 2016 imagery (ASOR CHI in-country contacts; 2013)



Reliefs in Room V looking northeast, which are not visible in the May 2, 2016 imagery (ASOR CHI in-country contacts; 2013)

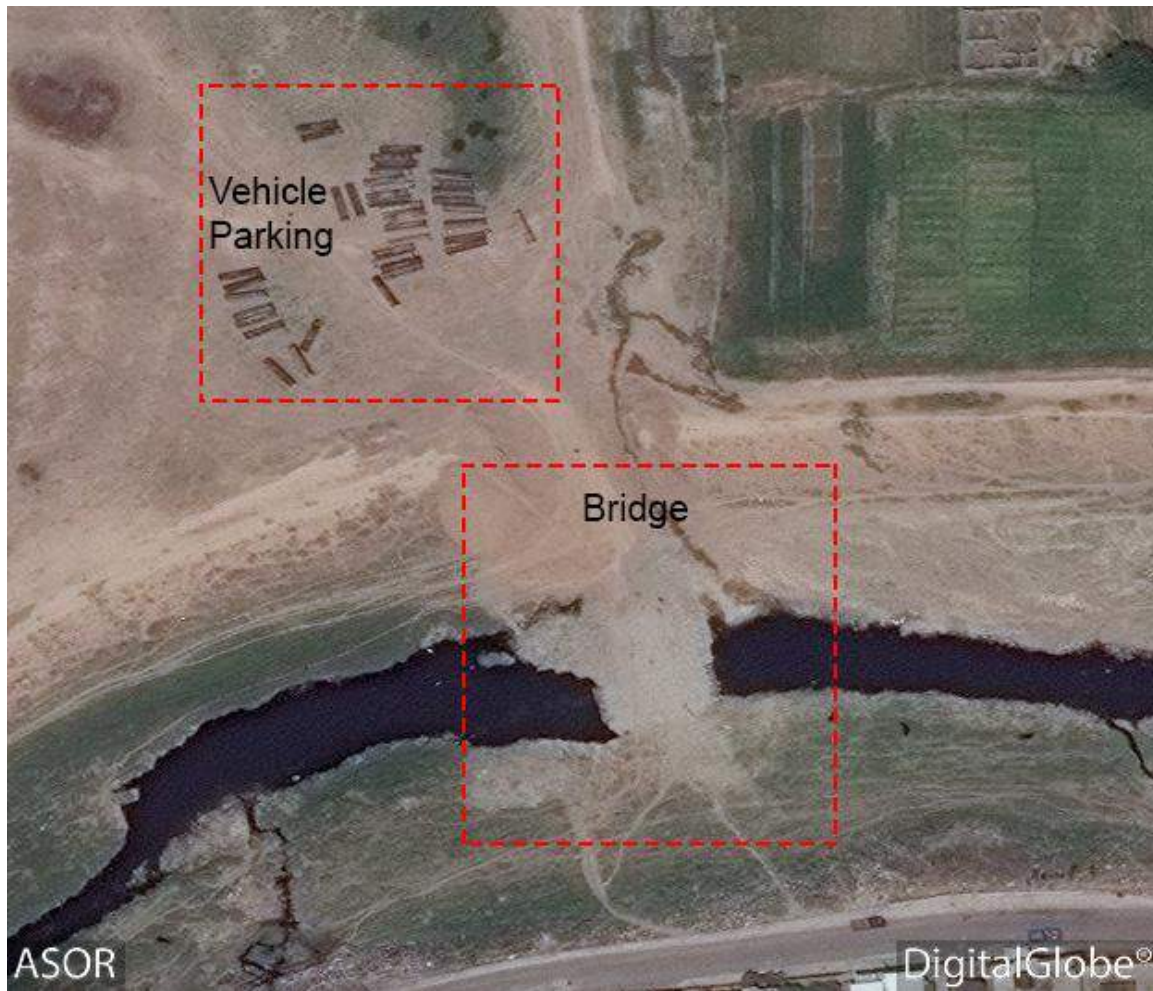


Throne Room (Room I) looking south (ASOR CHI in-country contacts; 2013)



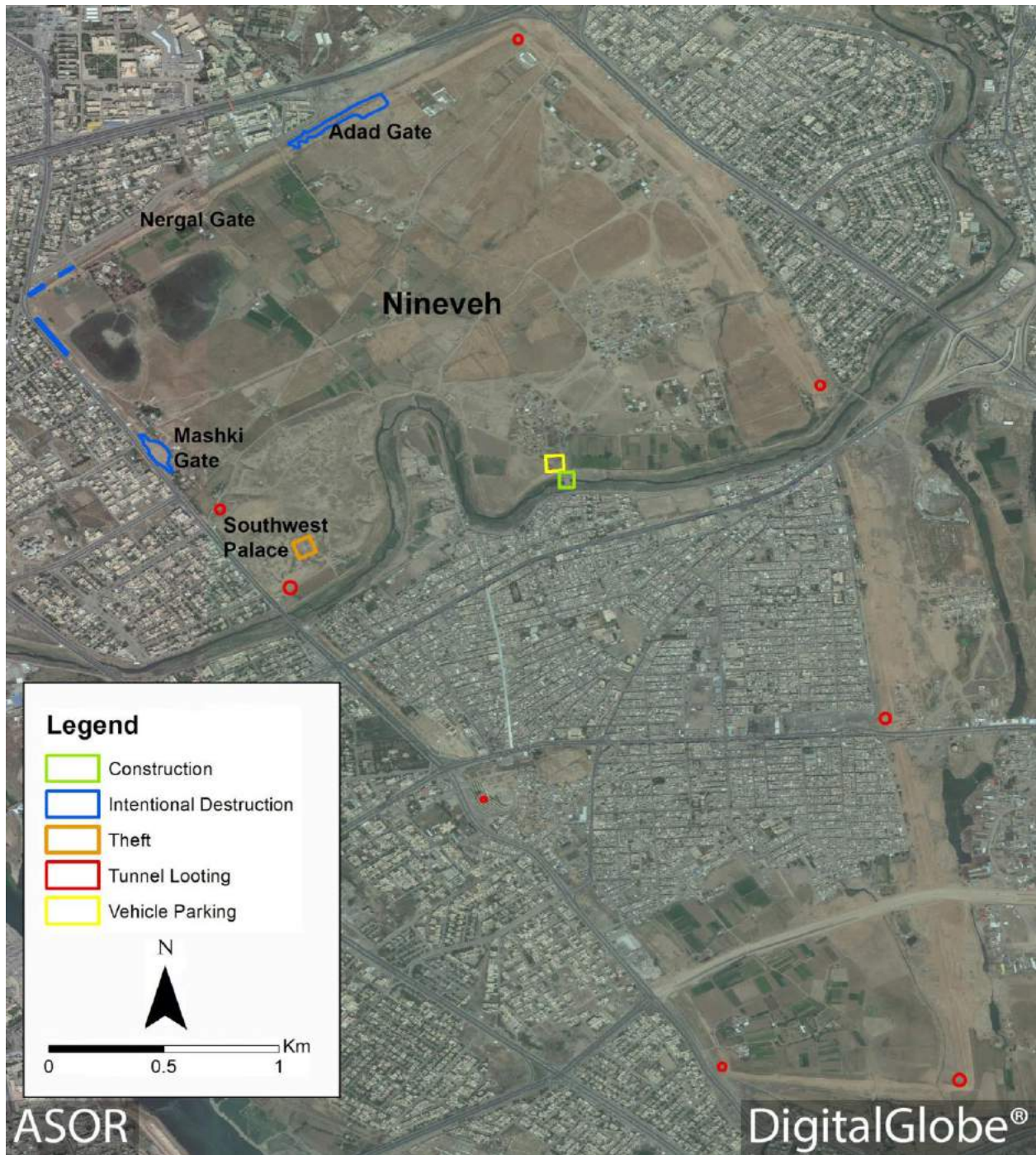
Throne Room (Room I) looking north (ASOR CHI in-country contacts; 2013)





New bridge constructed and large trucks parked on the site of Nineveh. (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; May 2, 2016)





Map of Nineveh outlining the looting, construction, and theft from the site (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; May 9, 2016)