

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

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November 2018 Monthly Appendices

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¹ This report is based on research conducted by the American Schools of Oriental Research Cultural Heritage Initiatives. Monthly reports reflect reporting from a variety of sources and may contain unverified material. As such, they should be treated as preliminary and subject to change.

Other Key Points

- **Aleppo Governorate**
 - New video shows restoration and cleaning at the Bab al-Faraj Clock Tower in Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Heritage Response SHI 18-0142**
 - New video shows reconstruction and cleaning of the Aleppo Citadel, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Heritage Response Report SHI 18-0143**
 - A reported SARG artillery bombardment damaged the Talafah Mosque in Talafah al-Jadida, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0149**
 - Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army members reportedly vandalized Af Ghiri Shrine, an Alawite shrine, in Mobata, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0151**
 - A VBIED damaged a mosque in Qabasin, Aleppo Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0153**
- **Hasakah Governorate**
 - Illicit excavation occurred at Abu Hafour and Abu Hujayrah in Hasakah Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0141**
 - A local organization is completing stabilization work at Qalaat Sukara, Hasakah Governorate. **ASOR CHI Heritage Response Report SHI 18-0144**
- **Homs Governorate**
 - New photographs detailed the reconstruction of the Khaled ibn al-Walid Mosque in Homs, Homs Governorate. **ASOR CHI Heritage Response Report SHI 18-0148**
- **Idlib Governorate**
 - Reported SARG aerial bombardment damaged the Qatra Mosque in Qatra, Idlib Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0150**
- **Raqqa Governorate**
 - New video footage shows damage to the archaeological tells of Tell Bandar Khan in Achbach, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0145**
 - A team is cleaning and restoring the Raqqa Clock Tower in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Heritage Response Report SHI 18-0146**
 - Funding from ASOR CHI helped sponsor the restoration of the Heraqla Archaeological Storage Facility and Brickyard in order to facilitate stabilization projects in the city of Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate. **ASOR CHI Heritage Response Report SHI 18-0152**
- **Rif Dimashq Governorate**
 - Video footage shows a heavily damaged Qabr Sheikh Hussein Tomb in al-Safa, Rif Dimashq Governorate. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0147**

Military and Political Context

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

1. Idlib Governorate:
 - On November 1, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) reported, via the group's Telegram channel, that the group had raided SARG positions in eastern Idlib Governorate, killing 10 SARG fighters.²
 - On November 2, SARG shelling struck the town of Jarjanaz, killing at least eight people.³
 - On November 23, unidentified gunmen assassinated Syrian activist Raed al-Fares and his friend Hamoud al-Juneid in the town of Kafr Nabl.⁴
 - On November 24, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that SARG shelling had killed nine people in Jarjanaz. The shelling followed reports of a Syria opposition shelling attack in the city of Aleppo that included chemical weapons.⁵
2. Aleppo Governorate:
 - On November 1, Turkish and US troops began joint patrols around the town of Manbij.⁶
 - On November 1, Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar reported that 260,000 Syrian nationals had returned to areas of northern Syria, where Turkish forces carried out a cross-border operation known as "Euphrates Shield." Akar reported that efforts by the Turkish Armed Forces in "infrastructure work and security and stability" had facilitated the return.⁷
 - On November 8, Syrian opposition activists and members of the Syrian Civil Defense (White Helmets) reported two explosions in opposition-held areas of Aleppo Governorate. The first explosion reportedly occurred in the town of Azaz, wounding four including three children. The second explosion occurred in the town of Jindaris outside an office of the Turkish-backed Syrian opposition group Failaq al-Sham.⁸
 - On November 8–9, the Syrian Kurdish YPG claimed an IED attack targeting the headquarters of the Turkish-backed Syrian opposition groups Sultan Murad Division and Faylaq al-Sham in Afrin City and Afrin Canton respectively.⁹
 - On November 11, the Syrian regime issued a warning that pro-regime forces would launch an operation to capture the opposition-held Zahra District in Western Aleppo

² <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idlib/shelling-kills-eight-in-de-escalation-zone-around-syrias-idlib-idUSKCN1N718U>

³ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idlib/shelling-kills-eight-in-de-escalation-zone-around-syrias-idlib-idUSKCN1N718U>; <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/11/02/syrian-regime-forces-killed-several-civilians-jarjanaz-town-idlib-suburbs-november-2/>; <http://www.syriaahr.com/en/?p=105794>

⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-activist/armed-men-in-syrias-idlib-kill-prominent-activist-idUSKCN1NS1G3>

⁵ <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-idlib/shelling-kills-five-in-idlib-syrian-observatory-idUKKCN1NT0L7>

⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey-usa/turkey-u-s-start-joint-syria-patrols-but-turkey-strikes-at-kurds-idUSKCN1N6574>

⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey/turkey-says-260000-syrians-have-returned-to-euphrates-shield-operation-area-idUSKCN1N648Q>

⁸ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/casualties-in-blasts-in-rebel-held-parts-of-northern-syria/2018/11/08/a0ef717c-e35e-11e8-ba30-a7ded04d8fac_story.html

⁹ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/12/syria-situation-report-november-8-29.html>

City, unless those forces leave by November 21. HTS and other opposition groups retain positions in the district.¹⁰

- On November 12, SARG and pro-regime shelling struck the towns and villages of al-Mutnah, al-Khuwayn, and Jarjanaz.¹¹
- On November 24, the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported that Syrian opposition shelling wounded dozens of people in the city of Aleppo. SANA accused the opposition of using chemical weapons in the attack. The Syrian regime called on the United Nations to condemn the opposition for the use of chemical weapons. The Turkish-backed Syrian National Liberation Front (NLF) denied the use of chemical weapons in the reported attack and accused the Syrian regime of perpetrating the attack in an attempt to “frame” the opposition.¹²
- On November 24, SARG and Syrian opposition groups exchanged prisoners near the town of al-Bab. The Turkish foreign ministry reported that ten prisoners on either side were exchanged, in what it called a “pilot project.”¹³

3. Deir ez-Zor Governorate:

- On November 8–16, the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) reportedly sent 1,700 reinforcements from Ain al-Arab (Kobani) and Manbij to support ongoing military operations against ISIS near Hajin.¹⁴
- On November 9, the Syrian Arab Army and members of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) reportedly began mining the western bank of the Euphrates River, south of the city of Deir ez-Zor, reportedly to prevent “cross-river infiltration” by ISIS.¹⁵
- On November 11, the SDF resumed operations against ISIS in remaining territories held by the group in the governorate following an October pause in the offensive following Turkish threats against the YPG in Syria. The US-led Coalition has continued aerial bombardment over the area.¹⁶
- On November 17, reported US-led Coalition airstrikes struck a village in the Buwan area near the town of Hajin, reportedly killing at least 29 civilians. According to the SOHR, ISIS militants in the village were stopping civilians from leaving areas still held by the group in the governorate. The US-led Coalition denied reports that its airstrikes killed civilians, stating that it struck only “legitimate militant targets,” and adding that an additional ten strikes in the area were not carried out by the Coalition.¹⁷

¹⁰ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/12/syria-situation-report-november-8-29.html>

¹¹ <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20181112-dozens-dead-as-syria-regime-opposition-clash-in-the-north/>

¹² <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-idlib/shelling-kills-five-in-idlib-syrian-observatory-idUKKCN1NTOL7>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/25/world/middleeast/syria-chemical-weapons-un.html>; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/11/syria-opposition-denies-launching-poison-gas-attack-aleppo-181125104423008.html>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-46337143>

¹³ <https://www.france24.com/en/20181124-syria-regime-rebels-swap-prisoners-turkey-says>

¹⁴ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/12/syria-situation-report-november-8-29.html>

¹⁵ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/12/syria-situation-report-november-8-29.html>

¹⁶ <https://apnews.com/eda126855cef4e968bafef19fd467a>

¹⁷ <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=106938>; <https://apnews.com/ef139cd774ca448db6deccafc5b82ee8>; <http://www.inherentresolve.mil/News/News-Releases/News-Article-View/Article/1693352/false-accusations-of-civilian-casualties/>; <https://news.sky.com/story/syria-us-led-airstrikes-targeting-is-kill-more-than-40-people-including-civilians-11557086>

4. Hama Governorate:
 - On November 8, forces from Hezbollah and the IRGC reportedly raided a Syrian-opposition checkpoint near the village of Zilaqiyat, a village that is included in the ceasefire zone, killing at least 23 opposition forces from FSA-affiliate Jaish al-Izzah.¹⁸
 - On November 10, an elite group of HTS opposition forces known as the ‘Red Bands’ conducted a “surprise raid” against pro-regime positions in the village of Tarabiya, allegedly killing 20 pro-regime forces, including Russian fighters.¹⁹
 - On November 12, SARG and pro-regime shelling struck towns and villages in Hama Governorate, including Halfaya and Lataminah.²⁰
 - On November 16, al-Qaeda linked Syrian opposition groups, “Incite the Believers” Operations Room and Jabal al-Islam Battalion, launched separate raids on pro-regime positions in Hama and Latakia Governorates.²¹
5. Suwayda Governorate:
 - On November 18–19, hundred of ISIS militants withdrew from Tulul al-Safa heights, an area they had held for the past three months. ISIS militants reportedly have fled to areas west of the heights, including the towns of al-Hasa and al-Rahba. ISIS militants first seized territory in the area after an offensive in Suwayda City, killing more than 200 people and abducting dozens more in July of 2018.²²
6. Homs Governorate:
 - On November 8, Syrian state media reported the rescue of 19 Druze hostages kidnapped by ISIS in July 2018 in Suwayda Governorate.²³
7. Latakia Governorate:
 - On November 14, the Abu Amara Special Tasks Battalion—an opposition group affiliated with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and Ahrar al-Sham—announced that it had expanded its operations to the majority-Alawite city of Latakia. Pro-regime forces reported disabling two IEDs in Latakia City. It is unknown if the IEDs were planted by the group.²⁴
 - On November 16, al-Qaeda linked Syrian opposition groups, “Incite the Believers” Operations Room and Jabal al-Islam Battalion, launched separate raids on pro-regime position in Hama and Latakia Governorates.²⁵

Other Key Points:

- On November 5, French prosecutors issued international arrest warrants for Syrian security chief Ali Mamlouk, head of Air Force Intelligence Jamil Hassan, and senior Air Force Intelligence official Abdel Salam Mahmoud for collusion in war crimes.²⁶

¹⁸ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/12/syria-situation-report-november-8-29.html>

¹⁹ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/12/syria-situation-report-november-8-29.html>

²⁰ <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20181112-dozens-dead-as-syria-regime-opposition-clash-in-the-north/>

²¹ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/12/syria-situation-report-november-8-29.html>

²² www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-syria-militants/syrian-army-advances-against-islamic-state-in-southeastern-desert-idUSKCN1NN0S8; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/12/syria-situation-report-november-8-29.html>

²³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-46143750>

²⁴ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/12/syria-situation-report-november-8-29.html>

²⁵ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/12/syria-situation-report-november-8-29.html>

²⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-crisis-france/france-issues-arrest-warrants-for-senior-syrian-officials-idUSKCN1NA11L>

- On November 17, the Syrian opposition group National Liberation Front (NLF) reported that SARG and pro-regime allies were intensifying shelling and rocket attacks on demilitarized villages and towns in Hama, Idlib, and Latakia Governorates.²⁷
- On November 22, a Turkish official announced that Syrian Turkmen had agreed to “unite under a single flag” following a congress in the town of al-Rai (aka. Cobanbey). According to Anadolu Agency, 250 Syrian Turkmen representatives attended the congress, along with Turkmen civil society representatives and army commanders.²⁸
- On November 27, the Pentagon warned Russia against interfering with the site of a reported chemical weapons attack in the city of Aleppo, cautioning that the Syrian regime may try and tamper with the site in order to “build a narrative” that would justify striking Idlib Governorate. Much of Idlib Governorate remains under ceasefire provisions negotiated by Russia, Iran, and Turkey. The Syrian regime has officially asked the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to investigate the attack.²⁹
- On November 27, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated, during a parliamentary meeting, that there were no ISIS elements in Syria. According to Erdogan, “there are only a small number of gangs who are kept in reserve, trained and equipped, allowed to mix in this country and the region under the guise of [ISIS].” The statement comes as Turkey has expressed unease for joint US posts along the Turkish-Syrian border.³⁰
- On November 30, the Institute for the Study of War reported that Russia had completed an “advanced anti-access / area denial (A2AD) network” that will constrain US access to airspace over Syria. This action widens Russia’s geographic reach in its Syrian air defense network. ISW also reported that Russia is testing new “electronic warfare systems” in Syria that are capable of suppressing satellite navigation, jam mobile devices, etc.³¹

²⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-idlib/rebels-say-syrian-army-steps-up-attacks-in-idlib-idUSKCN1NM00E>

²⁸ <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/syrian-turkmens-to-unite-under-single-flag/1318693>

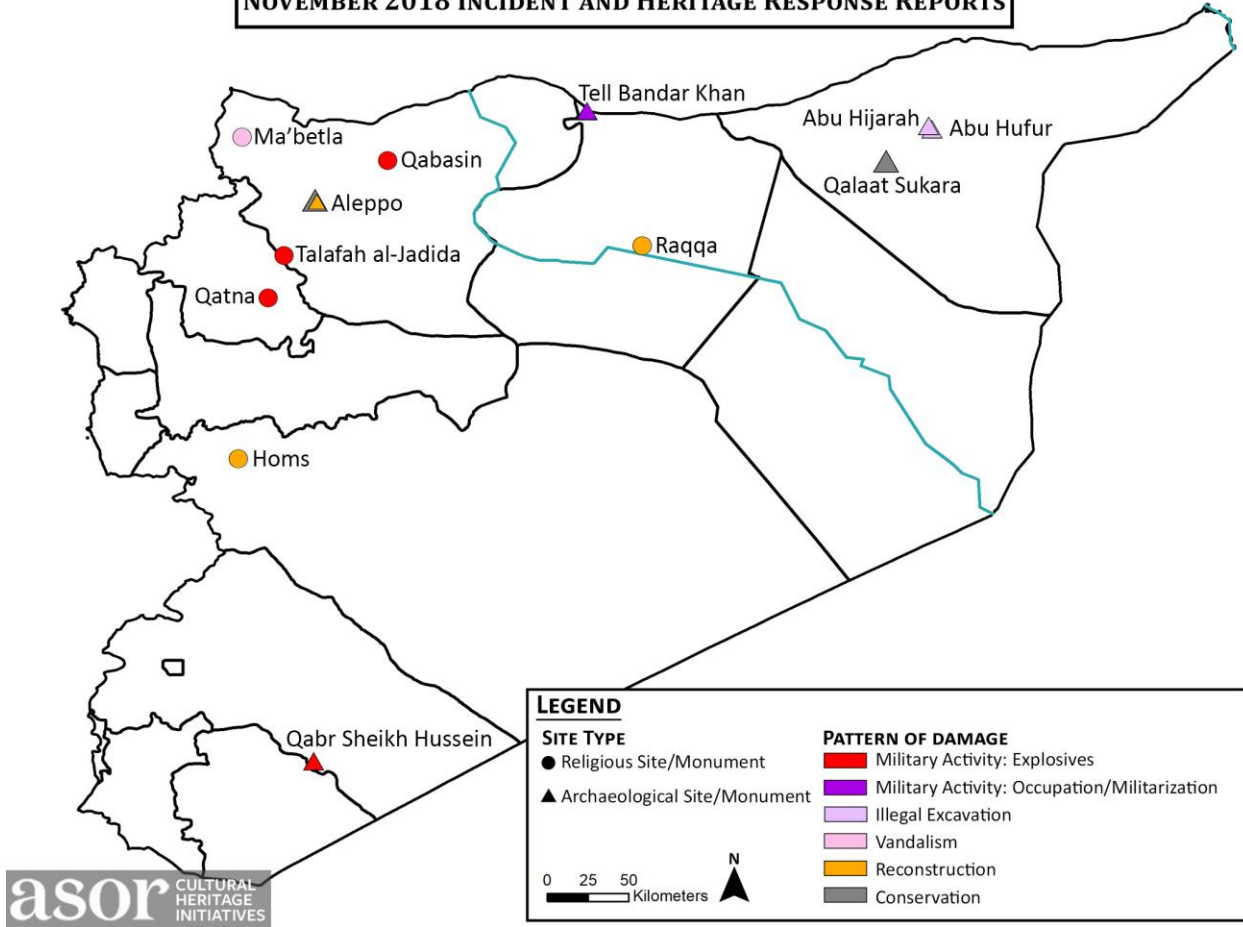
²⁹ <https://www.france24.com/en/20181127-us-warns-russia-over-syrian-site-alleged-chemical-attack>; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aleppo-usa/pentagon-tells-russia-not-to-tamper-with-alleged-aleppo-attack-site-idUSKCN1NW28Q>

³⁰ <https://www.newsweek.com/no-isis-syria-turkey-us-sends-troops-border-isis-1233699>

³¹ <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/11/russia-expands-its-air-defense-network.html>

Incident Reports: Syria

NOVEMBER 2018 INCIDENT AND HERITAGE RESPONSE REPORTS



SHI 18-0141

Report Date: October 24, 2018

Site Name: Abu Hafour and Abu Hujayrah

Date of Incident: After July 10, 2018

Location: al-Hasakah Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Archaeological mounds

Site Date: Early Bronze Age

Incident Summary: Illicit excavation occurred at two archaeological sites.

Incident Source and Description: On October 24, 2018 the Authority of Tourism and the Protection of Antiquities (ATPA) reported that illicit excavations had occurred at an unspecified time at the archaeological sites of Abu Hafour and Abu Hujayrah.³² Photographs posted by the ATPA show a small number of possible looting pits along the slopes of the two sites. Their depth and width are unclear. This damage occurred after July 10, 2018 as these pits are not visible in DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from that date.

Pattern: Illegal excavation.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

ATPA:

<http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/secret-excavation-at-the-site-of-abu-hafour-and-abu-hujayrah>

Scholarly:

Akkermans, Peter M. M. G., and Glenn M Schwartz. *The Archaeology of Syria: From Complex Hunter-Gatherers to Early Urban Societies (c. 16,000-300 BC)*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Sallaberger, W., and J. A. Ur. "Tell Beydar/Nabada in its Regional Setting," in *Third Millennium Cuneiform Texts from Tell Beydar (Seasons 1996-2002)*, Subartu 12. Edited by L. Milano, W. Sallaberger, P. Talon, and K. Van Lerberghe, pp. 51-71. Turnhout: Brepols, 2004.

³² <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/secret-excavation-at-the-site-of-abu-hafour-and-abu-hujayrah/>



A drone photo of Abu Hafour (ATPA; October 24, 2018)



A drone photo of Abu Hujayrah (ATPA; October 24, 2018)

SHI 18-0142 Heritage Response Report

Report Date: November 9, 2018

Site Name: Bab al-Faraj Clock Tower

Location: Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: The Bab al-Faraj Clock Tower was built between 1898–1899 by Charles Chartier with the Syrian engineer Bakr Sidqi.³³

Site Date: 1898 CE

Heritage Response Summary: New video shows restoration and cleaning of the Bab al-Faraj Clock Tower.

Heritage Response Source (organization) and Description of Work: On November 9, 2018 RT published a video from the Syrian Ministry of Tourism showing reconstruction and cleaning activities around Aleppo.³⁴ As seen in the video, the Bab al-Faraj Clock Tower has been cleaned and the clock faces have been replaced. The square surrounding the clock tower has also been cleaned and restored.

Description of Previous Damage to Site: The clock tower is located on the edge of the historical city, and was always in control of the Syrian Armed Forces. The nearby Sheraton Aleppo Hotel was used as a military barracks for the SARG forces.³⁵ In 2016, a photo showed piles of rubble around the clock tower and missing clock faces, but no other damage was noted to the tower.³⁶

See the associated incident report in this monthly report for other restored cultural heritage sites in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0143**.

Operating Organization: Unknown, however the Syrian Ministry of Tourism released the video showing the reconstruction and cleaning activities around Aleppo.

Pattern: Conservation.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Bab al-Faraj Clock Tower, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to reconstruction.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Al-Majhar: <http://www.almjhar.com/ar-sy/NewsView/230/38492.aspx>

³³ <http://www.almjhar.com/ar-sy/NewsView/230/38492.aspx>

³⁴ <https://www.rt.com/news/443590-syria-aleppo-reconstruction-video/amp/>

³⁵ https://syrianobserver.com/EN/news/30128/syria_hotels_face_conversion_into_military_barracks.html

³⁶ <https://www.rferl.org/a/syria-war-aleppo/28090852.html>

Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty: <https://www.rferl.org/a/syria-war-aleppo/28090852.html>

Russian Times: <https://www.rt.com/news/443590-syria-aleppo-reconstruction-video/amp/>

Syrian Observer:

https://syrianobserver.com/EN/news/30128/syria_hotels_face_conversion_into_military_barracks.html



The Bab al-Faraj Clock Tower showing the missing clock faces and piles of rubble in the background (Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty; November 4, 2016)



Video still of the Bab al-Faraj Clock Tower showing the tower's current condition (RT; November 9, 2018)

SHI 18-0143 Heritage Response Report

Report Date: November 9, 2018

Site Name: Aleppo Citadel

Location: Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: From UNESCO: “The monumental Citadel of Aleppo, rising above the suqs, mosques and madrasas of the old walled city, is testament to Arab military might from the 12th to the 14th centuries. With evidence of past occupation by civilizations dating back to the 10th century B.C., the citadel contains the remains of mosques, palace and bath buildings. The walled city that grew up around the citadel bears evidence of the early Graeco-Roman street layout and contains remnants of 6th century Christian buildings, medieval walls and gates, mosques and madrasas relating to the Ayyubid and Mamluk development of the city, and later mosques and palaces of the Ottoman period.

A ring of crenellated walls and towers rise 50m above the city from a steep glacis, encircling a mass of ruins of every period. The nail-heads on the doors themselves are beautifully worked, the lintels have comic or enigmatic carvings on them, and there are fine Kufic inscriptions calling upon the power and the mercy of Allah. The interior of the citadel shows all too clearly how it has been ravaged by enemies (the Mongols invaded it twice) and shattered by earthquakes (that of 1822 was particularly devastating).³⁷

Site Date: Early Bronze Age–Ottoman Period.

Heritage Response Summary: New video shows reconstruction and cleaning of the citadel.

Heritage Response Source (organization) and Description of Work: On November 9, 2018 RT published a video from the Syrian Ministry of Tourism showing reconstruction and cleaning activities around Aleppo.³⁸ Restoration work at the Citadel of Aleppo is visible in the film. The video shows the reconstruction of a tower on the western side, the cleaning of the top of the citadel, and large banners of President Bashar al-Assad hanging from the walls and the main entrance gate.

Description of Previous Damage to Site: In early-2012, Syrian opposition forces captured the citadel, only for it to be retaken by SARG forces. Under its control, SARG used the site as a firing position against the Old City.³⁹ On May 19, 2015 APSA published a video showing damage to the citadel with impact damage visible to the towers and curtain walls.⁴⁰ On July 11, 2015 opposition forces detonated a tunnel bomb under the citadel damaging a portion of the wall.⁴¹ Part of the wall between two towers on the northeastern side of the citadel was destroyed and the main entrance to the citadel along with its northern tower have sustained damage.⁴² On November 8, 2015 the DGAM reported that opposition forces detonated another tunnel bomb between the citadel and Khan

³⁷ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/21>

³⁸ <https://www.rt.com/news/443590-syria-aleppo-reconstruction-video/amp/>

³⁹ <http://monumentsofsyria.com/syria-conflict/>

⁴⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EdunFOq8gdM>

⁴¹ <http://sana.sy/en/?p=48157>

⁴² <http://sana.sy/en/?p=48157>

Souneh which damaged the gate and the entrance to the site.⁴³ On August 11, 2016 Thiqa News Agency published a video showing the aftermath of an explosion on the northern side of the citadel, which destroyed a section of the fortification walls and the western side of the citadel museum. SARG forces reportedly set off the explosion in order to prevent advancement through tunnels in the side of the citadel.⁴⁴

For more information on damage to the site, see: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 14-0035** in **Weekly Report 7**; **SHI 14-0076** in **Weekly Report 14**; **SHI 15-0085** in **Weekly Report 41**; **SHI 15-0087** in **Weekly Report 41**; **SHI 15-0093** in **Weekly Report 42-43**; **SHI 15-0110** in **Weekly Report 49**; **SHI 15-0148** in **Weekly Report 67-68**; **SHI 16-0018** in **Weekly Report 79-80**; **SHI 16-0124** in **Weekly Report 105-106**; **SHI 16-0191** in **Weekly Report 123-124**; and **SHI 16-0192** in **Weekly Report 121-122**.

See the associated incident report in this monthly report for other restored cultural heritage sites in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0142**.

Operating Organization: Unknown, however the Syrian Ministry of Tourism released the video showing the reconstruction and cleaning activities around Aleppo.

Pattern: Reconstruction.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Aleppo Citadel, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to reconstruction.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

DGAM: <http://dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1857>

Russian Times: <https://www.rt.com/news/443590-syria-aleppo-reconstruction-video/amp/>

SANA: <http://sana.sy/en/?p=48157>

Thiqa Agency: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khh1-e5SMYE>

⁴³ <http://dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1857>

⁴⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khh1-e5SMYE>



Video still of the reconstruction of a tower on the western side of the citadel (RT; November 9, 2018)



Video still of the Aleppo Citadel with a poster of President Bashar al-Assad visible on the wall (RT; November 9, 2018)



Video still of the entrance to the Aleppo Citadel with a poster of President Bashar al-Assad and a Syrian flag hanging from the top of the gate (RT; November 9, 2018)

SHI 18-0144 Heritage Response Report

Report Date: November 11, 2018

Site Name: Qalaat Sukara

Location: Qalaat Sukara, Hasakah Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Pottery sherds on the surface of this castle are typical of the Ayyubid Period. The site was probably constructed during the reign of Nur al-Din (1146 to 1174 CE) or by an earlier Seljuk ruler. The castle guards a pass within the Jebel Abdel Aziz mountains.⁴⁵

Site Date: Ayyubid to Mamluk (1174 – 1517 CE)

Heritage Response Summary: A local organization is completing stabilization work at a castle.

Heritage Response Source (organization) and Description of Work: On October 31, 2018 the Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities (ATPA) reported the beginning of stabilization work on Qalaat Sukara.⁴⁶ On November 15, 2018 the group reported the first phase of cleaning was completed, and that the rest of the maintenance to the towers, walls of rooms, and stairs to the castle would take 15 days.⁴⁷ On November 26, the ATPA reported the end of restoration work and shared several photographs of the site.⁴⁸

Description of Previous Damage to Site: According to APSA, airstrikes were conducted against ISIS militants that were believed to be occupying the site. In addition, there are unconfirmed reports of damage to the north side of the castle.⁴⁹ For more information on previous damage to Qalaat Sukara, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 14-0075** in **Weekly Report 14**.

Operating Organization: Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities (ATPA)

Pattern: Conservation; Cleaning.

Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Qalaat Sukara, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to reconstruction.

Sources:

Online Reporting:

APSA:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1077737529000024.1073741889.324869057620212>

⁴⁵ <http://users.stlcc.edu/mfuller/Medieval/Sukara.html>

⁴⁶ <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/preventive-maintenance-of-the-castle-of-sakra/>

⁴⁷ <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/بدء-المرحلة-الأولى-من-عمليات-التنظيف-و/>

⁴⁸ http://desteya-shunwaran.com/الإنهاء-من-المرحلة-الأولى-من-التنظيف/?fbclid=IwAR3SmrNPO1Wp09IvqyL9d_caMB5ZGvEF22O9c9Vd8_te_t1IqgwN8dNmjhl

⁴⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1077737529000024.1073741889.324869057620212>

ATPA:

October 31, 2018: <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/preventive-maintenance-of-the-castle-of-sakra>

November 15, 2018: <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/بدء-المرحلة-الأولى-من-عمليات-التنظيف-و/>

November 26, 2017: http://desteya-shunwaran.com/-المرحلة-الأولى-من-الانتهاج-من-المرحلة-الأولى-من-التنظيف/?fbclid=IwAR3SmrNPO1Wp09IvqyL9d_caMB5ZGvEF22O9c9Vd8_te_t1IqgwN8dNmjhl

Hawar News: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NmRlniGKdmA>

Medieval Era Archaeological Sites: <http://users.stlcc.edu/mfuller/Medieval/Sukara.html>



Qalaat Sukara before cleaning and restoration (ATPA; October 31, 2018)



Qalaat Sukara before cleaning and restoration (ATPA; October 31, 2018)



The cleaning of the steps leading up to Qalaat Sukara (ATPA; November 15, 2018)



The cleaning of the steps leading up to Qalaat Sukara (ATPA; November 15, 2018)



Conservation work at Qalaat Sukara with the application of plaster to stabilize the bricks (ATPA; November 26, 2018)



Conservation work at Qalaat Sukara with the application of plaster to stabilize the bricks (ATPA; November 26, 2018)



Conservation work at Qalaat Sukara with the application of plaster to stabilize metal grates that show the underground chambers (ATPA; November 26, 2018)



Conservation work at Qalaat Sukara with the application of plaster to stabilize metal grates that show the underground chambers (ATPA; November 26, 2018)



The completed stairs from the parking lot to Qalaat Sukara (Hawar News; November 22, 2018)



Conservation work in progress at Qalaat Sukara (Hawar News; November 22, 2018)



The top of Qalaat Sukara showing conservation work (Hawar News; November 22, 2018)

SHI 18-0145**Report Date:** November 12, 2018**Site Name:** Tell Bandar Khan (Kana)
Tall Bandar Khan Nord**Date of Incident:** November 6, 2018**Location:** Achbach, Raqqa Governorate, Syria**Site Description:** Two archaeological tells are located in the modern day city of Bandar Khan. They are separated by a modern day road and are both named Tell Bandar Khan. The one located to the south is sometimes referred to as Kana.⁵⁰**Site Date:** Unknown**Incident Summary:** New video footage shows damage to archaeological tells.**Incident Source and Description:** On November 6, 2018 TRT Haber published a video showing drone footage over two tells: Tell Bandar Khan and Tell Bandar Khan Nord.⁵¹ Screenshots of this video were published on the individual Twitter feed Qalaat al-Mudiq.⁵² The video shows that the tops of the mound have been bulldozed, creating berms around the top of the tells. Military emplacements have also been built into the tops of the mounds and trenches have been dug around the base of the northern tell. Both TRT Haber and Qalaat al-Mudiq stated that the damage is due to YPG/SDF forces militarizing the mounds. On December 30, 2017 the Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities (ATPA) reported that the top of the mound had been bulldozed.⁵³**Pattern:** Military activity: occupation/militarization; Military activity: earthworks/roadworks.**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of Tell Bandar Khan, as well as the condition of other sites located in regions subject to military activity.**Sources:**Online Reporting:

ATPA:

<http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/detection-report-about-the-archaeological-sites-in-al-balikh-basin-and-euphrates-valley/>

⁵⁰ <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/detection-report-about-the-archaeological-sites-in-al-balikh-basin-and-euphrates-valley/>

⁵¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYMtP4Y06_0

⁵² <https://twitter.com/qalaatalmudiq/status/1059774749532917760>

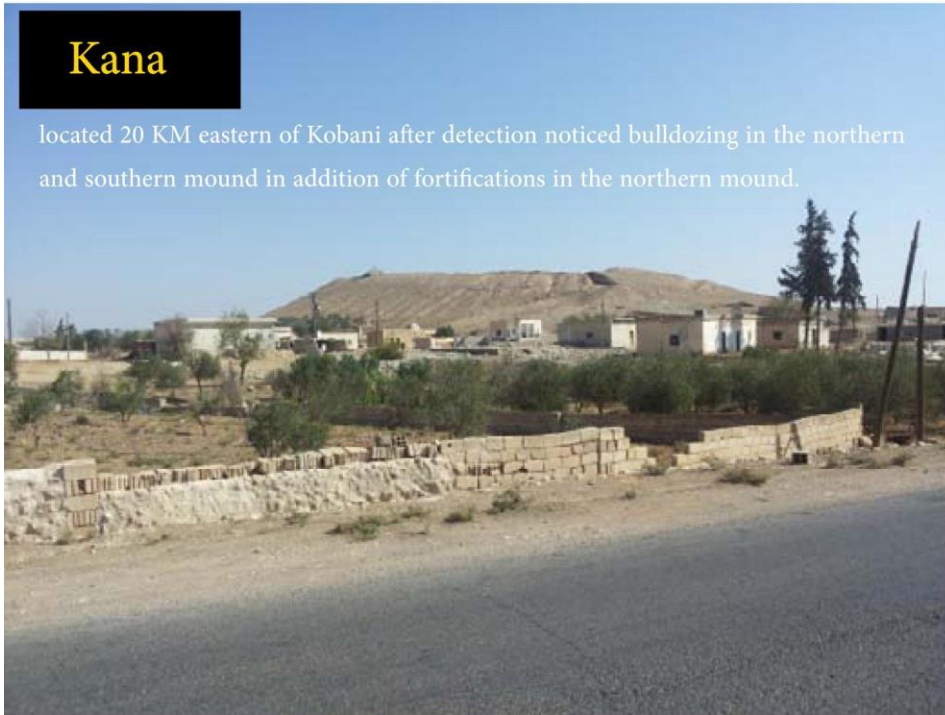
⁵³ <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/detection-report-about-the-archaeological-sites-in-al-balikh-basin-and-euphrates-valley/>

Qalaat al-Mudiq: <https://twitter.com/qalaatalmudiq/status/1059774749532917760>

TRT Haber: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYMtP4YO6_0

Kana

located 20 KM eastern of Kobani after detection noticed bulldozing in the northern and southern mound in addition of fortifications in the northern mound.



Bulldozing of the top of the mounds; the southern mound is at the top of the image and the northern mound is on the bottom (ATPA; December 30, 2017)



Video still of the top of the northern mound showing bulldozing, creation of berms, and military emplacements around the top of the tell and trenching around the base of the tell (TRT Haber, November 11, 2018)



Video still of the top of the northern mound showing bulldozing, creation of berms, and military emplacements around the top of the tell and trenching around the base of the tell (TRT Haber, November 11, 2018)



Video still of the top of the southern mound showing bulldozing, creation of berms, and military emplacements around the top of the tell and trenching around the base of the tell (TRT Haber, November 11, 2018)

SHI 18-0146 Heritage Response Report

Report Date: November 13, 2018

Site Name: Raqqa Clock Tower

Location: Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: The four-sided clock tower is located in the eponymous Clock Tower Square, located near the Raqqa city center. Each face of the tower has a clock embedded near its top. Additionally, a statue of two figures originally rested on top of the tower. Prior to the 1950s, a 12th-century CE citadel occupied the area of Clock Tower Square.⁵⁴

Site Date: 1950s CE

Heritage Response Summary: A team is cleaning and restoring a tower in Raqqa.

Heritage Response Source (organization) and Description of Work: On November 13, 2018 Syrian Forces from the Front published a video showing the cleaning and restoration of the Raqqa Clock Tower.⁵⁵ A team from the Civil Council and the People's Council of Raqqa is cleaning the clock tower, repairing the faces, and creating a mosaic of cultural art on the roundabout where the tower is located. According to the video, this work is being done to erase the memories of the executions that were committed in the square.

Description of Previous Damage to Site: The SDF recaptured Clock Tower Square in August 2017.⁵⁶ The clock tower was a common location for executions during ISIS' control of the city.⁵⁷ A drone strike killed the notorious executioner known as "Jihadi John" near the roundabout.⁵⁸ A photograph published on August 24, 2017 showed that the base of the clock tower had been painted with the ISIS flag.⁵⁹ On October 6, 2017 Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS) posted a photograph showing extensive damage to the clock tower.⁶⁰

For more information on previous damage to the clock tower, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0190** in the **October 2017 Monthly Report**.

See the associated incident report in this monthly report for other restored cultural heritage sites in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0151**.

Operating Organization: The Civil Council and the People's Council of Raqqa.

Pattern: Cleaning; Reconstruction.

⁵⁴ <http://www.homsonline.com/ES/Ciudades/ArRaqqa.htm>

⁵⁵ https://twitter.com/QSD_Jabha/status/1062412849534898177

⁵⁶ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/raqqa-s-historic-clock-tower-falls-to-advancing-kurdish-forces-lcdbrgxf>

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

⁵⁸ <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/jihadi-john-first-picture-spot-6824834>

⁵⁹ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/raqqa-s-historic-clock-tower-falls-to-advancing-kurdish-forces-lcdbrgxf>

⁶⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1713435942000983>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Syrian Forces from the Front:

https://twitter.com/QSD_Jabha/status/1062412849534898177



Video still showing the base of the clock tower (Syrian Forces from the Front; November 13, 2018)



Video still showing the base of the clock tower and the roundabout (Syrian Forces from the Front; November 13, 2018)

SHI 18-0147

Report Date: November 19, 2018

Site Name: Qabr Sheikh Hussein (قبر الشيخ حسين)

Date of Incident: November 16, 2018

Location: al-Safa Volcanic Field, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Tomb.

Site Date: Unknown.

Incident Summary: Video footage shows a heavily damaged tomb.

Incident Source and Description: On November 16, 2018 SARG forces recaptured the area of Qabr Sheikh Hussein in the al-Safa Volcanic Field from ISIS.⁶¹ Photographs and video taken by regime soldiers reveal that Qabr Sheikh Hussein has been heavily damaged.⁶² Only parts of the walls and a few doorways remain standing. The circumstances surrounding the destruction of the site as well as its condition prior to the recent fighting in the area are unknown.⁶³

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Military Media: <https://youtu.be/akqHMcroq4U?t=330>

Qalaat al-Mudiq: <https://twitter.com/QalaatAlMudiq/status/1063477377592889344>

Reuters:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-syria-militants/syrian-army-advances-against-islamic-state-in-southeastern-desert-idUSKCN1NN0S8>

⁶¹ <https://twitter.com/QalaatAlMudiq/status/1063477377592889344>

⁶² <https://youtu.be/akqHMcroq4U?t=330>

⁶³ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-syria-militants/syrian-army-advances-against-islamic-state-in-southeastern-desert-idUSKCN1NN0S8>



Pro-regime forces active in the vicinity of the tomb, seen in the background (Qalaat al-Mudiq; November 16, 2018)



Video still of a Syrian flag installed on top of the tomb (War Media; November 18, 2018)



Video still of the walls of the tomb (War Media; November 18, 2018)



Video still of an entrance into the tomb (War Media; November 18, 2018)



Video still of the remains of the tomb with Syrian forces visible in the background (War Media; November 18, 2018)



Video still of a doorway into the tomb (War Media; November 18, 2018)



Video still of an entrance into the tomb (War Media; November 18, 2018)



Video still of one corner of the tomb (War Media; November 18, 2018)

SHI 18-0148 Heritage Response Report

Report Date: November 20, 2018

Site Name: Khaled ibn al-Walid Mosque (مسجد خالد ابن الوليد)

Location: Homs, Homs Governorate, Syria

Site Description: The Ottoman style mosque was built directly before the First World War and holds the tomb of the great Muslim leader Khaled ibn al-Walid who lived in Homs for the last seven years of his life. This building is distinguished by its metal dome which reflects sunshine. It is also famous for its two high minarets and narrow galleries built with black and white stones in a horizontal manner. The slender colonnade in black and white stone in horizontal rows is representative of traditional Syrian architecture. The original tomb structure was built in the 11th century CE, the original mosque was built in the 13th century. These were torn down and rebuilt in the early 20th century.⁶⁴

Site Date: 1912 CE.

Heritage Response Summary: New photographs show the reconstruction of a mosque.

Heritage Response Source (organization) and Description of Work: On November 20, 2018 the Museum of Ancient Photos of the City of Homs posted photographs of the restored Khaled ibn al-Walid Mosque.⁶⁵ A new structure over the old tomb was constructed, with views of the old tomb, and a new shrine was also constructed over the tomb. The black and white decoration from the previous mosque has been continued, but reportedly made out of granite instead of the original basalt. Comments on the Facebook post ask why the reconstruction was not carried out to look like the 20th century version. The restoration of the mosque began in December 2017.⁶⁶

Description of Previous Damage to Site: Early protests against the Syrian Regime in 2011 occurred in Homs. By 2012, the city had become a battlezone between opposition and regime forces. On May 13, 2013 APSA released video footage of aerial bombardment of the Khaled ibn al-Walid Mosque.⁶⁷ On May 27, 2013 APSA released photographs showing damage to the courtyard, exterior walls, and domes showing damage due to shelling.⁶⁸ The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported on July 22, 2013 that SARG airstrikes had struck the Khaled ibn al-Walid Mosque.⁶⁹ The Syrian army claimed that opposition forces were storing weapons and munitions inside the mosque.⁷⁰ On May 10, 2014 APSA released more photographs showing damage to the interior of the mosque, with a large hole in the center dome, debris inside the mosque, and damage to the tomb structure.⁷¹ At the end of May 2014, Syrian Regime forces regained control of Homs.

⁶⁴ Hillenbrand. 2000. *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*.

⁶⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/mothafassowaralkademadenathoms/posts/2421680577862011>

⁶⁶ https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Rebuilding_and_reconciliation_in_Homs

⁶⁷ <http://apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/homs/monuments/359-palmyra-tank-3.html>

⁶⁸ <http://apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/homs/monuments/282-deir-ez-zor-etat-des-lieux-du-al-souk-al-moukebi-apres-le-bombardement-5.html>

⁶⁹ <https://middle-east-online.com/en/assad-army-destroys-historic-khaled-bin-walid-mausoleum-syria>

⁷⁰ <http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2013/07/29/01003-20130729ARTFIG00374-syrie-l-armee-en-voie-de-controler-totalement-homs.php>

⁷¹ <http://apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/homs/monuments/634-homs-state-of-the-bombing-of-khalid-ibn-al-walid-mosque-29-06-2013.html>

The DGAM conflict report, released May 2015, stated that severe damage was sustained with approximately 40% of the mosque sustaining structural damage; approximately 80% of the damage was to the interior, including furnishing and decoration. On October 21, 2015 the DGAM reported the restoration of the outer walls and minaret had begun.⁷² In September 2016, photographs showed scaffolding on the exterior of the mosque.⁷³

Operating Organization: Local community with local experts.⁷⁴

Pattern: Reconstruction.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

APSA:

May 13, 2013: <http://apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/homs/monuments/359-palmyra-tank-3.html>

May 27, 2013: <http://apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/homs/monuments/282-deir-ez-zor-etat-des-lieux-du-al-souk-al-moukebi-apres-le-bombardement-5.html>

May 10, 2014: <http://apsa2011.com/index.php/en/provinces/homs/monuments/634-homs-state-of-the-bombing-of-khalid-ibn-al-walid-mosque-29-06-2013.html>

Bab al-Shiba: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5flyhsCHsE>

DGAM: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1832>

Homs Media Center: <https://www.facebook.com/Homs.Media.Center/posts/1775617356037359>

Institute of Historic Building Conservation:

https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Rebuilding_and_reconciliation_in_Homs

Le Figaro:

<http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2013/07/29/01003-20130729ARTFIG00374-syrie-l-armee-en-voie-de-controler-totalement-homs.php>

Middle East Online:

<https://middle-east-online.com/en/assad-army-destroys-historic-khaled-bin-walid-mausoleum-syria>

Museum of Ancient Photos of the City of Homs:

<https://www.facebook.com/mothafassowaralkademaladenathoms/posts/2421680577862011>

⁷² <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1832>

⁷³ <https://www.facebook.com/Homs.Media.Center/posts/1775617356037359>

⁷⁴ https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Rebuilding_and_reconciliation_in_Homs

Scholarly:

Hillenbrand, Car (2000). *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*. Psychology Press.



The condition of the tomb inside the Khaled ibn al-Walid Mosque following aerial bombardment and shelling (Bab al-Shiba; July 10, 2013)



The tomb inside the Khaled ibn al-Walid Mosque after destruction (DGAM; October 8, 2013)



The tomb inside the Khaled ibn al-Walid Mosque after reconstruction (Museum of Ancient Photos of the City of Homs: November 20, 2018)



The tomb inside the Khaled ibn al-Walid Mosque after reconstruction (Museum of Ancient Photos of the City of Homs: November 20, 2018)



The tomb inside the Khaled ibn al-Walid Mosque after reconstruction (Museum of Ancient Photos of the City of Homs: November 20, 2018)



The tomb inside the Khaled ibn al-Walid Mosque after reconstruction (Museum of Ancient Photos of the City of Homs: November 20, 2018)



The mihrab inside the Khaled ibn al-Walid Mosque after reconstruction (Museum of Ancient Photos of the City of Homs: November 20, 2018)

SHI 18-0149**Report Date:** November 26, 2018**Site Name:** Talafah Mosque (مسجد طلافح)**Date of Incident:** November 20, 2018**Location:** Talafah al-Jadida, Aleppo Governorate, Syria**Site Description:** Mosque**Site Date:** Unknown**Incident Summary:** A reported SARG artillery bombardment damaged a mosque.**Incident Source and Description:** On November 20, a SARG artillery bombardment damaged the Talafah Mosque.⁷⁵ The shelling caused multiple holes in the walls of the building and spread debris over the floor. The bombardment was reportedly in response to casualties inflicted on SARG forces during an attempt to infiltrate opposition territory.⁷⁶

See the associated incident report in this monthly report for other damaged cultural sites in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0151** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0153**.

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

Media Center in Talafah Village:

November 20, 2018: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=741561306178531&id=574515916216405November 20, 2018: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=741509716183690&id=574515916216405Syrian Network for Human Rights: <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/11/22/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-mosque-talafeh-village-aleppo-suburbs-november-20/>

⁷⁵ https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=741561306178531&id=574515916216405;
<http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/11/22/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-mosque-talafeh-village-aleppo-suburbs-november-20/>

⁷⁶ https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=741509716183690&id=574515916216405



The interior of the mosque (Media Center in Talafah Village; November 20, 2018)



Damage to a wall in the mosque (Media Center in Talafah Village; November 20, 2018)



Damage to a wall in the mosque (Media Center in Talafah Village; November 20, 2018)

SHI 18-0150

Report Date: November 26, 2018

Site Name: Qatra Mosque (جامع قطرة)

Date of Incident: November 17, 2018

Location: Qatra (قطرة), Idlib Governorate, Syria

Site Description: Mosque

Site Date: Unknown

Incident Summary: SARG artillery bombardment damaged a mosque.

Incident Source and Description: On November 17, 2018 a SARG missile-artillery bombardment damaged the Qatra Mosque.⁷⁷ A hole is visible at the top of the eastern wall of the mosque as well as scorching around the opening. Debris is strewn across the interior of the mosque, but its contents appear to be largely intact. Based on the location of the damage to the mosque, the bombardment likely came from SARG positions east or southeast of Qatra. The bombardment also damaged tents in an IDP encampment west of Qatra and killed at least two civilians.⁷⁸

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Shaam Network: <https://youtu.be/EfElwheZlaM>

Syrian Network for Human Rights:

<http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/11/19/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-idps-camp-qatra-village-idlib-suburbs-november-17/>

⁷⁷ <https://youtu.be/EfElwheZlaM>

⁷⁸ <http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/11/19/syrian-regime-forces-shelled-idps-camp-qatra-village-idlib-suburbs-november-17/>



Video still of a hole in the eastern wall of the mosque (Shaam Network; November 19, 2018)



Video still of the interior of the mosque (Shaam Network; November 19, 2018)

SHI 18-0151

Report Date: November 29, 2018

Site Name: Af Ghiri Shrine (مزار آف غيري)

Date of Incident: November 11, 2018 or earlier

Location: Mobata (Ma'batla) District, Afrin Canton, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: The Af Ghiri Shrine is important to the Alawite community in Mobata District. It is located near a water reservoir in the middle of Mobata District, Afrin Canton.

Site Date: 19th Century CE

Incident Summary: Members of the Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army reportedly vandalized an Alawite shrine.

Incident Source and Description: On November 11, Hawar News reported that members of Ahrar al-Sharqiya, a unit in the Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army, had vandalized the Af Ghiri Shrine in search of gold and other treasure.⁷⁹ A video posted by Hawar News showed damage to the sarcophagus in the middle of the shrine as well as possible graffiti on the interior walls.⁸⁰ The damage to the sarcophagus consisted of a hole smashed through one end of the feature. A pile of stones is visible within the sarcophagus.

The Alawite community decried the damage to the Af Ghiri Shrine and accused Turkey of attempting to erase the Alawite presence in the region.⁸¹ The region around Mobata contains a large Alawite population, which arrived in multiple waves over the last few centuries in response to repression in the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey, as well as a number of Alawite shrines.⁸²

See the associated incident report in this monthly report for other damaged cultural sites in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0149** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0153**.

Pattern: Vandalism.

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

⁷⁹ <http://www.hawarnews.com/ar/haber/d8a7d984d8a7d8add8aad984d8a7d984-d8a7d984d8aad8b1d983d98a-d98ad8afd985d8b1-d985d8b2d8a7d8b1-d8aed8a7d8b5-d8a8d8a7d984d8b9d984d988d98ad98ad986c2a0-h10347.html>

⁸⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54nBH0yqgXI>

⁸¹ <http://vdc-nsy.com/en/2018/11/14/the-alawin-community-in-afrin-accuses-turkey-of-seeking-to-eliminate-their-presence-in-the-region/>

⁸² <https://anfarabic.com/ملجأ-العلويين-في-موباتا-هي-ملجأ-العلويين>; <http://lokmanaftrin.com/images/almazarat/almazarat%20alislamia.htm>

Sources:

Online Reporting:

ANF News: <https://anfarabic.com/روح-أفا-سوريا/موباتا-هي-ملجأ-العويين-41846>

Hawar News (ANHA):

November 11, 2018: <http://www.hawarnews.com/ar/haber/d8a7d984d8a7d8add8aad984d8a7d984-d8a7d984d8aad8b1d983d98a-d98ad8afd985d8b1-d985d8b2d8a7d8b1-d8aed8a7d8b5-d8a8d8a7d984d8b9d984d988d98ad98ad986c2a0-h10347.html>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54nBH0ygqXI>

November 11, 2018: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54nBH0ygqXI>

Lokman Afrin: <http://lokmanaftrin.com/images/almazarat/almazarat%20alislamia.htm>

Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat: <https://pydrojava.net/arabic/archives/42600>

VDC-NSY:

November 11, 2018: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5klFEL-P2qM>

November 14, 2018: <http://vdc-nsy.com/en/2018/11/14/the-alawin-community-in-afrin-accuses-turkey-of-seeking-to-eliminate-their-presence-in-the-region/>



Video still of the damage to the sarcophagus (Hawar News; November 11, 2018)



Video still of the stones inside of the sarcophagus (Hawar News; November 11, 2018)

SHI 18-0152 Heritage Response Report

Report Date: November 30, 2018

Site Name: Heraqla Archaeological Storage Facility and Brickyard

Location: Heraqla, al-Raqqa Governorate, Syria

Site Description: The facility consists of a series of warehouses distributed around the archaeological site of Heraqla. Prior to the Syrian Civil War, the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM) used these warehouses to store artifacts and other materials that were associated with foreign and domestic excavations, as well as other activities in Raqqa Governorate. The site also contains a brickyard and ovens, which produced the bricks that the DGAM used to repair the al-Rafiqah Wall.

Site Date: 20th Century CE

Heritage Response Summary: Funding from ASOR CHI helped sponsor the restoration of a brickyard in order to facilitate stabilization projects in the city of Raqqa. The project completed maintenance on the kilns, the firing chamber was set, and the cutting halls and setting tanks were refurbished. Diesel was supplied to fire the kilns.

Heritage Response Source (organization) and Description of Work: During July 2018, ASOR CHI sponsored the clean-up of the brickyard at the Heraqla Archaeological Storage Facility so that the facility could be used to produce bricks for the contemporary stabilization work at the Raqqa Museum. On November 23, 2018 Rudaw published a video of the brickyard that showed the manufacturing of bricks in the traditional style.⁸³ Both men and women work at the brickyard, which continues to produce bricks for construction projects in Raqqa and the surrounding countryside.

Description of Previous Damage to Site: Prior to the Syrian Civil War, the Heraqla Archaeological Storage Facility housed the majority of the archaeological material in the collections of the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums in Raqqa Governorate. Armed groups looted the facility in 2013. Since then, the warehouses and brickyard have suffered from a lack of maintenance and the accumulation of trash and vegetation in unroofed spaces.

For more information on previous damage to the storage facility and brickyard, see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 17-0228** in the **December 2017 Monthly Report**.

See the associated incident report in this monthly report for other restored cultural heritage sites in Raqqa Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0145**.

Operating Organization: ASOR CHI

Pattern: Cleaning; Conservation.

⁸³ <http://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/23112018>

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

Sources:

ASOR CHI: 20180928_Raqqa_Museum_Stabilization_Final_Report

Online Reporting:

Rudaw: <http://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/23112018>



Video still of clay preparation (Rudaw; November 23, 2018)



Video still of clay preparation and the brick-drying shed (Rudaw; November 23, 2018)



Video still of sun-dried bricks outside of the kiln (Rudaw; November 23, 2018)



The ASOR CHI sponsored project to restart production at the Heraqla brickyard near Raqqa to produce appropriate, traditional bricks for the stabilization of the Raqqa Museum (ASOR CHI).



The ASOR CHI sponsored project to rebuild the east wall of the heavily damaged Raqqa Museum. This construction was one part of a much larger stabilization effort focused on the building's interior, exterior, and gardens (ASOR CHI).



The repaired east wall of the Raqqa Museum using bricks from the refurbished Heraqla Brickyard (ASOR CHI).

SHI 18-0153**Report Date:** November 30, 2018**Site Name:** Al-Yakn Mosque (جامع اليكن)**Date of Incident:** November 10, 2018**Location:** Qabasin, Aleppo Governorate, Syria**Site Description:** Mosque**Site Date:** Unknown**Incident Summary:** A VBIED damaged a mosque.**Incident Source and Description:** On November 10, 2018 a VBIED (motorcycle) exploded in front of al-Yakn Mosque in Qabasin.⁸⁴ The explosion caused minor damage to the facade of the mosque. The group responsible for the attack is unknown.

See the associated incident report in this monthly report for other damaged cultural sites in Aleppo Governorate: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0149** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 18-0151**.

Pattern: Military activity: explosives.**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of al-Yakn Mosque, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.**Sources:****Online Reporting:**Syria TV: <https://www.syria.tv/content/انفجار-در-اجتین-مفختین-قرب-مسجدین-شرق-حلب-صور>

⁸⁴ <https://www.syria.tv/content/انفجار-در-اجتین-مفختین-قرب-مسجدین-شرق-حلب-صور>



The aftermath of the explosion (Syria TV; November 10, 2018)

Heritage Timeline

- November 29, 2018 *Asharq al-Awsat* published an article titled “**Shadow Play in Syria, Egypt’s Al-Aragoz on List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.**” The Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has inscribed the “Shadow Plays” in Syria to its List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. <https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1483601/shadow-play-syria-egypt%E2%80%99s-al-aragoz-list-intangible-cultural-heritage>
<https://www.devdiscourse.com/Article/arts/277664-syrias-shadow-puppeteer-a-art-of-heritage>
- November 28, 2018 UNHCR published an article titled “**Exile from Aleppo Envisages a Democratic Rebuilding of his City**” (by Helen Womack). The Aleppo Project is a virtual database of photos and documents from Aleppo as well as a plan for rebuilding Aleppo. <https://www.unhcr.org/ceu/10375-exile-from-aleppo-envisages-a-democratic-rebuilding-of-his-city.html>
- November 26, 2018 *The ATPA* published an article titled “**Confiscated Pieces.**” The ATPA documented a group of antiquities seized from traders. <http://desteya-shunwaran.com/ar/confiscated-pieces-2/?fbclid=IwAR3XsJzT4rQQu3H4uZKw-2euIcx22uNVOzYIulIV7FCicaUtlRq9jFa> 4s
- *Xinhuanet* published an article titled “**Feature: Antique Collector Turns Guest House into Small Museum in Syria’s Sweida**” (by Shi Yinglun). Esmat Zain al-Deen has turned his guest house in Sweida into a small museum showcasing 2500 antiques dating from the 1850s to the present. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-11/26/c_137630892.htm
- November 25, 2018 *Today* published a video titled “**Meet the People Racing to Save War-Torn Syria’s History.**” The video talks about the destruction of Syria’s history and mentions ASOR CHI’s Partner Amr al-Azm and he is the Director of The Day After-Heritage Protection Initiative. <https://www.today.com/video/meet-the-people-racing-to-save-war-torn-syria-s-history-1379843139858>
- *The Peninsula Qatar* published an article titled “**Exhibition on Syria’s History Opens at QNL.**” An exhibition illustrating the history of Syria from 1918 to 1946 opened on November 24, 2018 at the Qatar National Library. <https://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/25/11/2018/Exhibition-on-Syria%E2%80%99s-history-opens-at-QNL>

- *Prensa Latina* published an article titled “**Syrian Authorities Recover Stolen Pieces in Ancient City of Bosra.**” Syrian authorities recovered 103 pieces of artifacts stolen from the Bosra Museum. <https://www.plenglish.com/index.php?SEO=syrian-authorities-recover-stolen-pieces-in-ancient-city-of-bosra&id=36303&o=rn>
- November 24, 2018 *Culture Box* published an article titled “**Dans le sud de la Syrie, le grandiose théâtre romain de Bosra a résisté à la guerre.**” The Syrian Minister of Tourism organized a trip from Damascus to Bosra for 150 Syrians. <https://culturebox.francetvinfo.fr/patrimoine/dans-le-sud-de-la-syrie-le-theatre-romain-de-bosra-a-resiste-a-la-guerre-282409>
- November 22, 2018 *Kurdistan 24* published an article titled “**After Syrian Accusation, Kurds Stress Protection of National Antiquities**” (by Wladimir van Wilgenburg). The head of the DGAM claimed the YPG in Northern Syria was looting sites and selling antiquities. The YPG responded and stated they are preserving the heritage of Northern Syria. <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/31018573-d804-4689-a7b6-5468f80ba5d5>
- November 20, 2018 *The Guardian* published an article titled “**Mohamed Hafez: How He Uses Artwork to Celebrate Syria’s Past.**” The Syrian Contemporary Artist launches a new show at the Brooklyn Museum and discusses his art. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/nov/20/mohamad-hafez-the-syrian-artist>
- **Heritage for Peace** published its bi-weekly newsletter titled “**Damage to Syria’s Heritage- 20 November 2018.**” <http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/damage-to-syrias-heritage-20-november-2018/>
- The *Wisconsin Muslim Journal* published an article titled “**A Legacy in Stone: Photos from Syria before War.**” The Metropolitan Museum of Art has a new exhibit titled “Legacy in Stone: Syria Before War,” which contains a collection of 100 black-and-white photographs immortalizing the ancient monuments of Syria. <https://wisconsinmuslimjournal.org/a-legacy-in-stone-photos-from-syria-before-war/>
- November 19, 2018 *SANA* published an article titled “**Yabroud City, Historical and Archaeological Wealth.**” The city of Yabroud, located outside of Damascus, was visited by SANA to learn about the history and archaeology of the region. <https://sana.sy/en/?p=151429>

- City Metric* published an article titled “**Upon Land Soaked with the Blood ‘: On the Architects Planning the Reconstruction of Syria**” (by Ammar Azzouz). Azzouz discusses the challenges of rebuilding while the country is still at war, as well as the global nature of the rebuilding, which has a tendency to ignore the local culture. There is a stress for a “need to build a new Syria, for Syrians, by Syrians.”
<https://www.citymetric.com/fabric/upon-land-soaked-blood-architects-planning-reconstruction-syria-4298>
- November 18, 2018 *SANA* published an article titled “**Syria, Home to Oldest Archaeological village and Human Settlement in the World.**” *SANA* interviewed Historian Mahmoud al-Sayyed about the oldest sites in Syria.
<https://sana.sy/en/?p=151355>
- November 17, 2018 *Al Jazeera* published an article titled “**Syrian Refugees Guide Their Way to Integration in Oxford Museum**” (by Ruairi Casey). Syrian Refugees are giving tours at the History of the Museum of Science in Oxford, following the program started in Berlin.
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/11/syrian-refugees-guide-integration-oxford-museum-181117091158256.html>
- Prensa Latina* published an article titled “**Innovative Exhibition in Cultural Center in Damascus.**” Musical instruments, music and recordings are on display at the al-Midan Cultural Center in Damascus.
<https://www.plenglish.com/index.php?o=rn&id=35988&SEO=innovative-exhibition-in-cultural-center-in-damascus>
- SANA* published an article titled “**Sweida Museum: A History of Basalt.**” *SANA* documents the Sweida Museum and it’s exhibits.
<https://sana.sy/en/?p=151332>
- SANA* published an article titled “**The Artist Re-creating and Preserving Palmyra...In Metal**” (by Bridey Heing). Leila Khoury, a Syrian Artist recreates memories from Syria in metal and concrete.
<https://www.ozy.com/rising-stars/the-artist-recreating-and-preserving-palmyra-in-metal/88216>
- November 8, 2018 *Al-Monitor* published an article titled “**Al-Bab’s Historical Covered Marketplace Back in Business**” (by Khaled al-Khateb). Al-Bab’s market opened its doors for the first time in two years on October 31, 2018. <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/11/syria-al-bab-market-opens-fsa-battles.html>

November 5, 2018

The First News published an article titled “**Ancient Lion of Al-Lat Stands Proud Again After Being Restored by Polish Archaeologists**” (by Joanna Jasinska). Polish archaeologists restored the Lion of Al-Lat. <https://www.thefirstnews.com/article/ancient-lion-of-al-lat-stands-proud-again-after-being-restored-by-polish-archaeologists-3081>

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Heritage for Peace published its bi-weekly newsletter titled “**Damage to Syria’s Heritage- 05 November 2018.**” <http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/damage05nov2018/>

November 4, 2018

The Arab Weekly published an article titled “**Brooklyn Museum Dedicates Exhibit to Syrian Refugees**” (by Noah Habeeb). “Syria, Then and Now: Stories from Refugees a Century Apart,” opened at the Brooklyn Museum featuring 13th century ceramics from Raqqa with contemporary works from Syrian and Lebanese artists. <https://theArabweekly.com/brooklyn-museum-dedicates-exhibit-syrian-refugees>