



Using Manar al-Athar Online Photo-Archive for teaching, publication, research, and heritage work in the Middle East and North Africa

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Online Photo Archives as Tools for Archaeological Heritage Preservation and Engagement (Workshop)

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The open-access, free Manar al-Athar online Photo Archive (www.manar-al-athar.ox.ac.uk [<http://www.manar-al-athar.ox.ac.uk/>]), founded in 2010, has more than 50,000 high-resolution images of art and architecture of the areas of the former Roman empire, such as Syro-Palestine/the Levant, Egypt, and North Africa (ca. 300 B.C.E. to the present), that later came under Islamic rule. Its strengths include a large number of images of archaeological sites and museums in Syria, as well as photographs of numerous late antique sites. “Manar al-Athar” means Arabic for “Guide to Archaeology.” The material is labeled in both English and Arabic to facilitate its use in the lands in which the sites are located. The archive is composed of photographs taken by archaeologists, art historians, historians, and other academics. Curated by experts in Oxford, who have access to the university’s extensive libraries, the website is designed to be an archive with accurate identifications, unlike flickr, where individuals can upload their own photographs but accuracy is not assured. The archive allows researchers, academics, and educators to access images for a range of purposes, such as publication, research, and teaching. The website, which document sites before 2010 in the MENA region, aims to provide a baseline for destruction and damage to sites, facilitating and supporting cultural heritage work, especially the work of those who are documenting destruction and damage in the region.