

## CHI 2024–2025 Year in Review

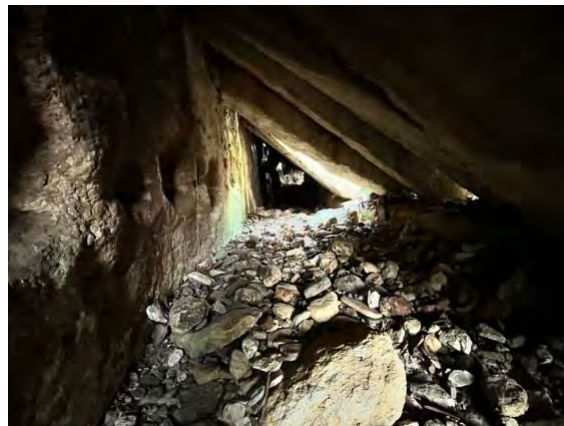
May 2024–April 2025

In the past twelve months, ASOR CHI activities have focused on three main categories: project implementation, project development, and program development and outreach. The operating environment for CHI's work has changed significantly in the last three months due to changes implemented by the Trump Administration at the U.S. Department of State (DOS) and other offices of the Federal government. These changes have impacted CHI activities in the latter half of the current year and will likely strongly influence program priorities in the year to come.

Project implementation in 2024–2025 focused primarily on the continuation of pre-existing grant-funded work. CHI concluded two projects in Libya during this period: LEO 2019 (concluded in October 2024) and CPAIG 2022 (concluded in December 2024). Both of these DOS-funded projects focused on advancing the objectives of the bilateral Cultural Property Agreement between the United States and Libya. As part of CPAIG 2022, CHI supported stabilization projects implemented by the Libyan Department of Antiquities (DOA) on heritage affected by Storm Daniel in 2023 at the archaeological sites of Cyrene, Ptolemais, and Tocra. In complement to this work, CHI also developed mobile didactic signage about the impact of climate change on Libyan heritage and installed solar-powered lighting and tables at heritage sites to encourage local use and appreciation of heritage resources as part of LEO 2019.



CPAIG 2022: The location of the mini-grant projects at Cyrene, Ptolemais, and Tocra in Libya.



CPAIG 2022 Cyrene Mini-grant: Canal conditions before restoration.



CPAIG 2022 Cyrene Mini-grant: During and after restoration.



CPAIG 2022 Ptolemais Mini-grant: Flooding inside and around the Ptolemais Museum.



CPAIG 2022 Ptolemais Mini-grant: Flooding mitigation activities.





CPAIG 2022 Tobra Mini-grant: Condition of Byzantine mosaics after Storm Daniel.



CPAIG 2022 Tobra Mini-grant: Panels after conservation and rehousing.



LEO 2019: Didactic paneling and seating at Tobra (left) and Hun (right).



LEO 2019: Mobile didactic signage at Ptolemais (left) and Tobra (right).



Concurrent with the two projects in Libya, CHI also continued its Heritage Advocacy in the Sahel project (DRL 2022) until its conclusion in December 2024. During the period under discussion, project activities largely focused on forging cooperative relationships to improve the protection and preservation of religious and cultural heritage, and on events designed to actualize this collaboration through heritage protection work that prioritized interfaith collaboration and intercommunal dialogue. Examples of the cooperative work conducted by the project include a collaboration between Animist, Christian, and Muslim community members to clean-up and restore graves in a shared cemetery in Mali; an event to learn about the Forgeron (blacksmith) caste and building a furnace together in Burkina Faso; and a cooking exchange between local Nigerien women and female refugees from Mali in Niger. The project culminated with an in-person conference co-hosted with ICOM-Africa in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in October 2024. A delegation from each of the project's main local partners attended the event to showcase their heritage advocacy work and to meet peers from across Africa's cultural heritage and museum sectors. A central theme of the conference was the role of technology in cultural heritage documentation and preservation. ASOR's partners showcased their use of accessible tools provided through training by ASOR, emphasizing how these technologies have empowered local communities.



DRL 2022: Community planning and cemetery cleaning in Mali.



DRL 2022: Furnace construction and awareness event in Arbolle, Burkina Faso.

In October 2025, ASOR started a two-year heritage stabilization and stewardship project (AFCP 2024) at Ksar Douiret in Douiret, Tunisia with supported from the U.S. Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation. Formed in partnership with the Douiret Women's Collective, this project seeks to stabilize architecture that is at risk of imminent collapse and that threatens the health and safety of site visitors; improve site access and education infrastructure to promote inclusivity; and engage local

communities and civil society organizations to valorize minority Tunisian heritage and begin to establish networks for sustainable stewardship. The project is currently suspended, pending a review by DOS.



AFCP 2024: Site assessment and preparation of baseline documentation at the Douiret Women's Collective (Wakry Association).

CHI has also continued documentation of Jewish and Amazigh minority heritage in Morocco through the generous support of private donors. This work resulted in the addition of 127 predominantly Jewish heritage sites to CHI's database. This documentation has also contributed to the development of grant submissions to the U.S. Department of State and the ALIPH Foundation for Amazigh and Jewish heritage preservation.

Alongside project implementation, CHI has focused on project development. This led to the submission of seven new major proposals to funding organizations. In many cases, project development has grown out of ongoing or recently concluded programming. In the past year, project development centered primarily on North Africa and the Sahel. In Libya, CHI submitted four project proposals to funding organizations. These consisted of two versions of a stabilization and stewardship project at the site of Gergarish (DOS; ALIPH Foundation), an inventory and site security project at the DOA main storeroom at Sarayah al-Hamra (DOS), and a stabilization and stewardship project on the Sanctuary of Apollo terrace at Cyrene (American Institute for Roman Culture). In Morocco, CHI partnered with the Moroccan civil society organization Dilal Argane to submit a stabilization and stewardship project proposal (DOS) at the Amazigh fortified granary site of Agadir Ouamaloukt in southern Morocco. CHI submitted two proposals in the Sahel region. In November 2024, CHI delivered a regional proposal to the ALIPH Foundation that focuses on protecting and preserving tangible and intangible aspects of traditional metalworking in Burkina Faso and Mali. Alongside this regional project, CHI submitted a proposal to DOS for an inventory and site security project that combines work at the National Museum of Mali with archaeological site assessments in collaboration with Mali's National Directorate of Cultural Heritage. In addition to these submitted proposals, CHI also explored projects in Lebanon, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Tunisia that could be developed into full proposals in the future.



Finally, CHI worked on program development and outreach throughout the past year. The primary focus of this work was the promotion of CHI's existing suite of tutorials for documentation and mapping software as well as the identification of future paths of development. Alongside this, CHI has been actively offering free training in these tools to heritage professionals and civil society groups who are based in Syria in order to support the documentation initiatives in the aftermath of the fall of the Assad regime. CHI has also worked to increase public awareness of its activities through posting on project activities on the ASOR blog and through ASOR's social media accounts. As part of this work, CHI has created a publicly available Google Map that contains information on more than 800 sites that ASOR and its partners have documented in North Africa and the Sahel.



Sites in North Africa and the Sahel documented by ASOR & its partners during recent projects.