

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

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## Executive Summary

The ancient site of Palmyra, as well as the nearby Deir Mar Elian (St. Julian) Monastery in al-Qaryatayn and the Bilal Mosque in Tadmor, are now accessible to journalists and civilians, resulting in a flood of photographs and video footage of these sites. These images document months of accumulated vandalism and combat damage. DGAM officials conducted a preliminary visit to ancient Palmyra on March 30, 2016, but the team was only able to access a limited portion of the site due to ISIL IEDs. As a result, the on-site photographs and images of ancient Palmyra focus on a limited and biased sample of monuments within the Roman city, leading many commentators to assert that the destruction was not as severe as anticipated. However, DigitalGlobe satellite imagery released on March 30, 2016 showing portions of the site inaccessible to the DGAM team reveals that since September 2, 2015 — when the last DigitalGlobe imagery was available — an additional 12 tower tombs and one funerary temple in the site’s necropoli were intentionally damaged or destroyed, often with explosives. They are:

- Tower Tomb # 22
- Tower Tomb #65
- Tower Tomb #87
- Tower Tomb #91
- Tower Tomb #95
- Tower Tomb #96
- Tower Tomb #98
- Tower Tomb #100
- Tower Tomb #102
- Tower Tomb #103
- Tower Tomb of Bene Ba’a
- Tower Tomb of Hairan Belshuri
- Funerary Temple # 186

Looting of the ancient site, an attested problem before the ISIL occupation, continued while under control of the militants. Furthermore, military occupation of the site has resulted in damage to or the destruction of many standing remains, particularly evident in the

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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.

Northern Necropolis. A comprehensive, in-depth site assessment will not be possible for some time since the full negative impacts of aerial bombardment, heavy weaponry, and light weaponry cannot be assessed from a distance. Moreover, such combat damage often results in sub-surface structural damage to standing remains, and many of Palmyra's significant monuments are subterranean tomb complexes. Ultimately it is too early to comment on the site's overall condition.

In recent days a great deal of discussion has focused on the next steps for Palmyra, with UNESCO, the Russian federation, and other organizations offering to assist the Syrian regime in rebuilding the damaged monuments, and the question of Palmyra has become increasingly politicized. ASOR CHI reiterates the concerns raised in our most recent Special Report "The Recapture of Palmyra,"<sup>2</sup> published on April 3, 2016:

The capture of Palmyra from ISIL militants does not necessarily safeguard the region's heritage. Palmyra suffered significant damage while previously under SARG military control, prior to ISIL's capture of the site in May 2015, and subsequently was subject to an extended aerial bombardment campaign by SARG and Russian forces to expel ISIL militants. The World Heritage Site and surrounding area are still occupied by armed forces actively engaged in combat, which continues to pose a significant threat to the region's heritage.

Over the longer term, the greatest threat to Palmyra is mismanagement stemming from prioritizing immediate and highly visible results, ultimately grounded in larger political objectives, and not guided by conservation best practices, community-based heritage management, and sustainability. The immediate (and politically expedient) reconstruction of the demolished Baalshamin Temple and Temple of Bel is currently an active topic of discussion amongst some scholars, politicians, and pundits. This not only poses an unfeasible and misguided heritage management solution, but it also fails to address the greatest threats to ancient Palmyra, let alone the needs of the modern community. The negative impacts of aerial bombardment, heavy weaponry, and light weaponry cannot easily be seen from a distance or may result in sub-surface, invisible structural damage. While it is tempting to immediately respond to the most glaring damage, a better use of resources would involve the implementation of a coherent emergency response plan and triage that prioritizes the intact monuments in need of repair and maintenance. The full extent of the damage will not be known until heritage experts are allowed full access to the site to complete a thorough and detailed assessment.

By contrast, at this point very little discussion has been devoted to what will become of modern Palmyra. The Syrian regime is eager to reopen the site to the visitors and residents, but this begs the question to what end if there are no residents to enjoy the site once again. Instead the conversation of reconstruction should focus on modern Palmyra. The modern city's population has been forced to flee and continues to be traumatized by the war. The most important priority is to assist with the rebuilding of housing, hospitals, houses of worship, schools, and other infrastructure, so that these civilians have an opportunity to eventually return to their community.

Since the capture of Palmyra the Syrian cessation of hostilities, declared in February 2016, has become increasingly tense and fragile. Toward the end of the reporting period, increasing violations of the ceasefire had been reported as clashes continued between SARG

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.asor-syrianheritage.org/4290-2/>

and opposition forces in Aleppo, Homs, and Damascus.<sup>3</sup> Many sites have been damaged by fighting during this reporting period, including the al-Nur Mosque in Raqqa, the al-Kabir Mosque in Ma'arat al-Numan, and the Sheikh Saeed Mosque in Saraqib.

Iraqi security forces have halted their operations to reach the ISIL-held city of Mosul until reinforcements arrive. The Iraqi security forces have faced strong resistance from ISIL militants. In addition, efforts by the Shia Popular Mobilization Front have thus far been unsuccessful in recapturing villages near Kirkuk and Fallujah.<sup>4</sup> There were no incidents documented in Iraq during this reporting period.

## Key Points

- New video and photographs emerge of Deir Mar Elian Monastery in al-Qaryatayn emerge after pro-regime forces captured the area (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0123 UPDATE**).
- New video footage of Bilal Mosque in the city of Tadmor, showing extensive damage, was recorded on April 5, 2016 (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0160 UPDATE**).
- New footage shows ongoing looting at the site of Rafid on April 9, 2016 (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0004 UPDATE**).
- Images from the UNESCO World Heritage site of Palmyra and the museum continue to emerge as civilians gain access the site (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0041 UPDATE** and **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0043 UPDATE**).
- DigitalGlobe satellite imagery of Palmyra from March 30, 2016 shows many more tombs have been destroyed than previously reported (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0044**).
- SARG airstrikes damage four mosques in Rif Dimashq Governorate (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0045**).
- The al-Nur Mosque in the city of Raqqa was damaged, reportedly by US-led coalition airstrikes, on April 1, 2016 (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0046**).
- Looting and illegal excavations in the Bosra Roman ruins continues (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0047**).
- The al-Kabir Mosque in the town of Ma'arat al-Numan, Idlib Governorate was damaged by a car bomb (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0048**).
- The Church of the Child Jesus in Tadmor, Homs Governorate was damaged (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0049**).
- The Sheikh Saeed Mosque in Saraqib, Idlib Governorate was reportedly damaged by SARG airstrikes (**ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0050**).

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKCN0X70GE>

<sup>4</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/04/iraq-situation-report-april-5-11-2016.html>

## Heritage Timeline

April 12, 2016

*Fars News Agency* published an article titled “**Official: ISIL Plunders Syria's Artifacts in Coordination with Foreign Countries.**” The head of Syria’s Antique Buildings Department says ISIL and other terrorist groups have plundered the country's artifacts in clandestine operations directed by foreign countries.

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13950124001373>

- **UNESCO** published an article titled “**UNESCO reiterates call for unity and coordination to protect Syrian Cultural Heritage.**” UNESCO has held several information sessions in April to discuss with member states to discuss the current condition of World Heritage Sites in Syria.  
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1475>
- *National Geographic* published an article titled “**Iraq Is Turning Saddam Hussein’s Palace Into a Museum**” (by Andrew Lawler) Saddam Hussein’s former palace in Basra will open as a public museum in September 2016, containing 3,500-4,000 Sumerian, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Islamic era objects.  
<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/04/160411-iraq-saddam-palace-basra-art-museum/>
- *Enab Baladi* published an article titled “**Training Begins in Kafranbel to Document Violations of Archaeological Sites.**” The Lawyers for Justice organization in Kafranbel in Idlib Governorate has carried out a joint training session with the Idlib Antiquities Department to discuss artifacts and antiquities theft in local and international law, as well as ways of investigating and examining looting and other violations.  
<http://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2016/04/training-begins-kafranbel-document-violations-archaeological-sites/>
- *Sputnik News* published an article titled “**UNESCO Executive Board Approves Russian Proposal on Palmyra Restoration.**”  
<http://sputniknews.com/politics/20160412/1037901555/unesco-palmyra-restoration-russian-proposal.html>
- *SANA* published an article titled “**Restoration of Palmyra Museum Starts with the Participation of Syrian and Polish Experts.**” A team from the DGAM has begun restoration works at the National Museum of Palmyra, with assistance from Polish experts.  
<http://linkis.com/sana.sy/en/qiYAZ>

- NRT* published an article titled “**UNESCO, Syrian Culture Minister Discuss Restoration of Palmyra.**” A delegation from UNESCO met with Syrian Culture Minister Issam Khalil on April 11 in Damascus to discuss the restoration of the ancient city of Palmyra.  
<http://www.nrttv.com/EN/Details.aspx?jicare=6304>
- April 11, 2016

*The Guardian* published an article titled “**Palmyra must not be fixed. History would never forgive us**” (by Jonathan Jones). The author argues the Palmyra monuments destroyed by ISIL should be preserved as they are, and should not be reconstructed as the DGAM has promised.  
<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2016/apr/11/palmyra-isis-syria-restored-3d-printers-vandalism>
- SNHR* published a report titled “**Despite the Cessation of Hostilities agreement, 60 civilian vital facilities were attacked in March 2016.**” According to SNHR, “vital facilities” attacked between February 18, 2016 and the end of March included nine mosques, eight of which were attacked by SARG forces and one by the International Coalition.  
[http://sn4hr.org/wpcontent/pdf/english/60\\_vital\\_center\\_in\\_March\\_2016\\_en.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/wpcontent/pdf/english/60_vital_center_in_March_2016_en.pdf)
- April 10, 2016

*ABNA* published an article titled “**Syrian authorities recover five archeological artifacts stolen by ISIS from Palmyra Museum.**” Artifacts stolen from the Palmyra Museum were found buried in a house in the area of al-Maalaf, a neighborhood in northern modern Palmyra.  
<http://en.abna24.com/service/middle-east-west-asia/archive/2016/04/10/746286/story.html>
- April 9, 2016

APSA posted a YouTube video titled “القنيطرة : إستخدام احجار أثرية لبناء منازل جديدة **Quneitra: reuse of ancient materials at al-Rafeed.**” Locals are stealing building materials from ancient buildings in ar-Rafid for modern construction.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuvrVabssQg&feature=em-subscriptions>
- Countercurrents* published a post titled “**Iran And Russia Join The Global Alliance To Preserve Syria's Endangered Heritage**” (by Franklin Lamb). Iran announced that it is ready to take part in the restoration of archeological monuments damaged or destroyed by ISIL in Palmyra.  
<http://www.countercurrents.org/lamb090416.htm>

- SANA published an article titled “**DGAM: Tomb of the Three Brothers in Palmyra in Good Condition.**” The tomb, built around in 142 CE and considered one of the most beautiful and important in Palmyra, was restored in 2000.  
<http://sana.sy/en/?p=73997>
- April 8, 2016 *The Art Newspaper* published an article titled “**Yale hosts United Nations colloquium on preservation of heritage sites**” (by Gabriella Angeleti). The eighth-annual United Nations Global Colloquium of University Presidents will congregate at Yale University on April 12-13 to discuss threats to cultural heritage sites, which include warfare, climate change, development, theft, and neglect.  
<http://theartnewspaper.com/news/yale-hosts-united-nations-colloquium-on-preservation-of-heritage-sites/>
- April 7, 2016 *The Art Newspaper* published an article titled “**The lessons of Palmyra: Islamic state and iconoclasm in the era of clickbait**” (by Jason Felch & Bastien Varoutsikos). The authors discuss the “collision of iconoclasm and clickbait” in Palmyra, and warn scholars and journalists against using pieces of ISIL propaganda uncritically.  
<http://theartnewspaper.com/comment/comment/lessons-from-palmyra-where-islamic-state-combined-iconoclasm-and-clickbait/>
- *Sketchfab* published a post entitled “**Palmyra Citadel Comparison**” (by ICONEM). In partnership with the DGAM, ICONEM has created 3-D models of Qalaat Shirkuh in Palmyra, representing the castle before and after the conflict and giving a detailed view of recent damage to the monument.  
<https://sketchfab.com/models/604478ecf58a45228a4b895bd362ac10>
- **Revolutionary Forces of Syria Media Office** published an article titled “الجيش الحر والشرطة ومركز آثار إدلب الحرة.. جهود متضافرة لحماية كنوز سوريا (The concerted efforts of the Free Syrian Army, the police, and the Centre for Antiquities Idlib to protect the treasures of Syria).” A spokesperson discusses recently confiscated artifacts and the efforts of the FSA and others to stop looting in Idlib.  
<https://rfsmediaoffice.com/2016/04/07/30388/#.Vxkv7yMrI1h>

- *Reuters* published an article titled “**Turkey investigating Russian claims on smuggled Syrian antiquities**” (by Nick Tattersall). Turkey is investigating Russian claims that ISIL has profited from smuggling stolen antiquities through its territory, but it believes the charges are politically motivated. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-antiquities-turkey-idUSKCN0X42K9>
- *AP* published an article titled “**AP PHOTOS: Iraqi museum refuge for relics of the past.**” AP published a series of photos of important artifacts in Iraq’s National Museum in Baghdad. <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/5f5c28dfa3e24c65b505b00a7bdded22/ap-photos-iraqi-museum-refuge-relics-past>
- *Al-Monitor* published an article titled “**Private collectors fuel demand for looted Mideast antiquities**” (by Barbara Slavin). Archaeological experts say social dislocation and terrorism are increasing the ability of organized gangs to traffic artifacts to clients in Europe, Asia, and the United States. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/04/syria-egypt-yemen-antiquities-smuggling-illegal-collectors.html>
- **UNITAR** published a map entitled “**Damage Assessment of Tadmur and al-Amiriyah, Homs Governorate, Syria.**” The map illustrates the location of damaged structures within the modern city of Tadmor. <http://www.unitar.org/unosat/node/44/2379>
- *Live Science* published an article titled “**Are These 'Antiques' Imported from Syria Funding Terrorists?**” “Antiques” of unknown provenance, age, and destination with a declared value of \$26 million have been imported to the United States from Syria since 2011. <http://www.livescience.com/54343-are-antiques-imported-from-syria-funding-terrorists.html>
- *Artsy* published an article titled “**If Passed, Could a New Law Stop ISIS Profiting from Looted Syrian Antiquities?**” (by Isaac Kaplan) The Protect and Preserve International Cultural Property Act currently awaits attention from the Senate. <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-can-this-new-law-stop-isis-profiting-from-looted-antiquities>
- *Time* published an article titled “**Inside War Ravaged Syria**” (by Andrew Katz). Italian photographer Lorenzo Meloni documented the damage in Homs, Aleppo, and Palmyra. <http://time.com/4284588/inside-war-ravaged-syria/>

April 6, 2016

Several media outlets published articles discussing **the claims of Russia's ambassador to the UN, who wrote a letter to the UN Security Council asserting ISIL makes between \$150-\$200 million per year from the illegal antiquities trade.**

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-antiquities-russia-idUSKCN0X32HK>

[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/298](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/298)

<http://www.newsweek.com/isis-syria-antiquities-millions-profit-money-russia-islamic-state-palmyra-444805>

[http://www.haberler.com/rusya-isis-suriye-den-caldigi-tarihi-eserleri-8333502-haberi/?utm\\_source=haberler.com&utm\\_campaign=facebook\\_paylas](http://www.haberler.com/rusya-isis-suriye-den-caldigi-tarihi-eserleri-8333502-haberi/?utm_source=haberler.com&utm_campaign=facebook_paylas)

- **BBC** published an article titled **“Palmyra: Mines cleared from ancient Syrian city by Russians.”**  
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35982804>
- **NBC News** published an article and video titled **“Smuggler of Stolen Antiquities Speaks Out About ISIS’ Illicit Operation”** (by Richard Engel et al.). NBC speaks with a smuggler for ISIL and discusses the illicit antiquities trade with Amr al-Azm.  
<http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/smuggler-stolen-artifacts-palmyra-speaks-out-about-isis-illicit-operation-n551806>
- **DGAM** published an article titled **“In aerial photos: Conflicted monuments in Palmyra.”** DGAM received aerial photos taken by drone that show the current state of the Lion of al-Lat, the *cella* of the Temple of Bel, the Temple of Baalshamin, the Triumphal Arch, the Temple of Nabu, the Baths of Diocletian, and the tower tombs of the Valley of the Tombs.  
<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1965>

April 5, 2016

*Der Tagesspiegel* published an article titled **“Wiederaufbau von Palmyra: Die Sprache der Steine”** (“Reconstruction of Palmyra: The Language of Stones”). Archaeologists discuss whether a destroyed monument like the *cella* of the Temple of Bel should be rebuilt.

<http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/wiederaufbau-von-palmyra-die-sprache-der-steine/13401382.html>



- *PBS Newshour* published an article titled “**As ISIS loses ground, scholars return to beloved historical sites**” (by Jane Ferguson). Scholars and archaeologists have been able to return to certain sites in Iraq with sufficient security, but much of Iraq and all of Syria remains too dangerous for work to be carried out.  
<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/as-isis-loses-ground-scholars-return-to-beloved-historical-sites/>
  - *SNHR* published an article titled “**Regime forces targeted Abu Bakr Al Sedeiq Mosque in Al Dumair city in Damascus suburbs in April 5.**” SARG forces allegedly launched an airstrike on a mosque outside of Damascus, damaging it severely.  
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/05/20082/>
  - *SNHR* published an article titled “**Car bomb targeted Al Kabir Mosque in Ma’aret Al Numan city in Idlib governorate in April 5.**” A car bomb detonated outside of al-Kabir Mosque, damaging it severely.
  - *Sputnik News* published an article titled “**Syrian Authorities Hid Items from 34 Museums Before Daesh Offensive.**” Russia’s envoy to UNESCO reports that Syrian authorities hid items in order to prevent their destruction or theft by ISIL.  
<http://sputniknews.com/middleeast/20160405/1037527122/syria-palmyra-museums.html>
  - *Egypt Independent* published an article titled “**Arab League draft resolution to protect Arab antiquities: Araby**” (by Al-Masry Al-Youm). On April 4, 2016 the Arab League hosted the second international conference on "Archaeological Heritage in the Arab World," organized by the Faculty of Archaeology at Fayoum University. The Arab League will draft a resolution that criminalizes the theft of antiquities from any Arab country.  
<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/arab-league-draft-resolution-protect-arab-antiquities-araby>
- April 4, 2016
- The New York Times* published an article titled “**A Jewel in Syria Where ‘Ruins Have Been Ruined’ by ISIS**” (by Bryan Denton).  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/05/world/middleeast/palmyra-syria-isis.html? r=0>

- The Wall Street Journal* published an article titled “**Hope for Palmyra’s Future**” (by Karen Leigh). Experts discuss how and if Palmyra’s destroyed monuments should be reconstructed.  
<http://www.wsj.com/articles/hope-for-palmyras-future-1459807486>
- April 3, 2016      **SNHR** published an article titled “**Regime forces targeted Al Huda Mosque in Khan Al Sheih town in Damascus suburbs in April 2.**” A SARG airstrike allegedly caused severe damage to a mosque outside of Damascus. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0045.**  
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/03/19954/>
- April 2, 2016      *NPR* published an article titled “**Upon Reclaiming Palmyra, The Controversial Side of Digital Reconstruction**” (by Scott Simon). Roger Michel, director of the Institute for Digital Archaeology, is interviewed.  
<http://www.npr.org/2016/04/02/472784720/upon-reclaiming-palmyra-the-controversial-side-of-digital-reconstruction%5C>
- April 1, 2016      **Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently** posted new photos of damage to the Nur Mosque in Raqqa.  
<https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1178095558868360>
- SNHR** published an article titled “**International Coalition forces targeted Al Nour Mosque in Al Daraiyeh neighbourhood in Raqqa governorate in April 1.**” Coalition forces allegedly fired two missiles near al-Nur Mosque. **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0046.**  
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/01/19905/>
- The Wall Street Journal* published an article titled “**Islamic State Hijacks Mosul University Chemistry Lab for Making Bombs**” (Margaret Coker and Ben Kesling). This article claims the Islamic state is using Mosul University’s labs to create new bombs, and train militants how to make bombs.  
<http://www.wsj.com/articles/islamic-state-hijacks-mosul-university-chemistry-lab-for-making-bombs-1459503003>
- Al Arabiya* published an article titled “**Experts: Palmyra’s Dynamited Temple can be Restored**”. Despite extensive damage to the Temple of Bel, it can be rebuilt with the help of international teams and funding.  
<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/04/01/Experts-Palmyra-s-dynamited-temple-can-be-restored.html>

- AP published an article titled **“With Jihadis at the Door, Syrians Rush to Rescue History”**(by Maeva Bambuck). Undercover archaeologists and curators have been smuggling artifacts out of Islamic State territory in the hope of preserving them from looting and destruction.  
<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/d3da220f6d364c00bd21f01c7e87ca51/jihadis-door-syrians-rush-rescue-history>
  - USA Today published an article titled **“Demand still high for ISIL’s stolen antiquities from Palmyra, elsewhere”**(by Jim Michaels). This article discusses the global antiquities market and the role ISIL is playing in the looting of sites.  
<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2016/03/31/demand-still-high-isils-stolen-antiquities-palmyra-elsewhere/82476346/>
  - ABC News published an article titled **“Syria’s Palmyra: Ghost town bearing scars of IS destruction”**(by Albert Aji). This article discusses the global antiquities market and the role ISIL is playing in the looting of sites.  
<http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/syrias-palmyra-ghost-town-bearing-scars-destruction-38088388>
  - The Guardian published an article titled **“Isis destruction of Palmyra antiquities revealed in new pictures”** (by Patrick Wintour).  
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/01/isis-destruction-of-palmyra-antiquities-revealed-in-new-pictures>
  - Atlas Obscura published an article titled **“Newly-released Satellite Images Show Shocking Destruction of Palmyra”** (by Megan Gannon). This article talks about the ASOR project and the satellite images of Palmyra.  
<http://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/newlyreleased-satellite-images-show-shocking-previously-unknown-destruction-of-palmyra>
- March 31, 2016
- New York Times* published an article titled **“Palmyra’s Dynamited Temple can be Restored, De-Miners Use Robots.”** Despite extensive damage to the Temple of Bel, it can be rebuilt with the help of international teams and funding.  
<http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2016/03/31/world/europe/31reuters-mideast-crisis-syria-palmyra.html>

- *International Business Times* published an article titled “**Don’t pretend Assad will save Palmyra when he has destroyed the rest of Syria**” (by Martin Makinson).  
<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/dont-pretend-assad-will-save-palmyra-when-he-has-destroyed-rest-syria-1552279>
- *Middle East Online* published an article titled “**Son Begins Quest to Bury ‘Father of Palmyra’**”. This article talks about the death of Khaled al-Assad, and his re-burial. His head is buried in one place, his body in another, and they will reunite the body and give him a burial near Palmyra.  
<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=76084>
- *The Conversation* published an article titled “**Should we 3D print a new Palmyra?**” This article discusses the ethics of restoring Palmyra, either using 3D technology or by large-scale restoration, especially while the war is continuing in other areas of the country.  
<https://theconversation.com/should-we-3d-print-a-new-palmyra-57014>
- *Counterpunch* published an article titled “**The Wounded Phoenix of Palmyra**” (by Franklin Lamb). This article applauds the local community and the DGAM for helping to protect what remains of Palmyra, and discusses the possible reconstructions.  
<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/03/31/the-wounded-phoenix-of-palmyra/>
- *WNPR* published an article titled “**A Long Road to Rebuild the Damage in Palmyra, Says Yale Cultural Heritage Expert**” (by Diane Orson). This interview with Stefan Simon discusses the possible reconstruction of Palmyra.  
<http://wnpr.org/post/long-road-rebuild-damage-palmyra-says-yale-cultural-heritage-expert#stream/0>
- *International Business Times* published an article titled “**Don’t Pretend Assad will save Palmyra when he has destroyed the rest of Syria**” (by Martin Makinson).  
<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/dont-pretend-assad-will-save-palmyra-when-he-has-destroyed-rest-syria-1552279>
- *NPR* published an article titled “**Syrians Take Drastic Measures To Hide Antiquities Amid ISIS Takeover**” (by Audie Cornish).  
<http://www.npr.org/2016/03/31/472577684/syrians-take-drastic-measures-to-hide-antiquities-amid-isis-takeover>

- Zpravy* published an article titled “**Čeští archeologové sbírají podklady pro obnovu památek v iráckém Mosulu**” “Czech Archaeologists collect materials for the restoration of monuments in Iraq’s Mosul”  
[http://www.rozhlas.cz/zpravy/blizkyvychod/\\_zprava/cesti-archeologove-sbiraji-podklady-pro-obnovu-pamatek-v-irackem-mosulu--1598602](http://www.rozhlas.cz/zpravy/blizkyvychod/_zprava/cesti-archeologove-sbiraji-podklady-pro-obnovu-pamatek-v-irackem-mosulu--1598602)
- March 30, 2016

**DGAM** published an article titled “**In Photos: Primary Field Visit to the Ancient City of Palmyra**”. The DGAM visited the site of Palmyra and posted photos of the Temple of Bel, Triumphal Arch, and the Colonnade.  
<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1962>
- Several media outlets published articles discussing archaeologist Annie Sartre-Fauriat’s assertion that **Palmyra is still in danger despite the site having been recaptured** from ISIL militants.  
<http://www.dw.com/en/why-palmyra-is-a-pawn-in-assads-game-with-the-west/a-19151498>  
  
<http://fr.etilaf.org/all-news/nouvelles-politiques/une-archeologue-francaise-palmyre-est-un-pion-dans-le-jeu-d-assad-avec-l-occident.html>
- Middle East Eye* published an article titled “**Palmyra and Propaganda: Assad’s Latest Game**” (by Lizzie Porter). This article talks about the damage the Syrian Regime has inflicted on various sites around Syria and how Assad is using Palmyra for political gain.  
<http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/palmyra-and-propaganda-assads-latest-game-1286614971>
- SNHR** published an article titled “**Regime forces targeted mosque in Harasta City in Damascus Suburbs in March 30**”. This article claims regime warplanes fired missiles on Aqil Bin Abi Taleb Mosque, partially damaging it.  
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/03/30/19827/>
- SNHR** published an article titled “**Regime forces targeted Al Raqda Mosque in Duma City in Damascus Suburbs in March 30**”. Regime warplanes allegedly fired missiles on Al Rawda Mosque, partially damaging it.  
<http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/03/30/19822/>

- *Rep tv* published a video titled “**Palmira, Carandini: Per ricostruire in 3D e necessario rilievo delle rovine**”. This video shows the drone footage of Palmyra and discusses proposals to 3D print and survey Palmyra.  
<http://video.repubblica.it/mondo/palmira-carandini-per-ricostruire-in-3d-e-necessario-rilievo-delle-rovine/233985/233601>
- *Repubblica* published an article titled “**Amr Al-Azm: ‘Palmira, lasciamo perdere il 3D, crea solo dei simulacri**” (by Anna Lombardi). This article interviews Amr al-Azm about the reconstruction of Palmyra  
[http://www.repubblica.it/cultura/2016/03/30/news/amr\\_al-azm\\_palmira\\_lasciamo\\_perdere\\_il\\_3d\\_crea\\_solo\\_dei\\_simulacri\\_-136551810/](http://www.repubblica.it/cultura/2016/03/30/news/amr_al-azm_palmira_lasciamo_perdere_il_3d_crea_solo_dei_simulacri_-136551810/)

## Military and Political Context

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

1. Aleppo Governorate:
  - During the reporting period clashes between opposition forces and ISIL militants were ongoing in the town al-Rai, located on the Syrian border with Turkey. al-Rai had served as ISIL’s main supply route from Turkey. On April 5, Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) advanced on the town, after capturing at least 16 ISIL-held villages.<sup>5</sup> On April 7, “a coalition of opposition groups” captured al-Rai<sup>6</sup> but only a few days later, on April 11, ISIL militants were able to retake the town.<sup>7</sup>
  - During the reporting period, clashes between Islamist opposition groups and SARG forces were ongoing in the SARG-held village of al-Eis, south of the city of Aleppo. On April 2, members of Al-Nusra Front, along with allied opposition groups, captured the village. On April 7, SARG forces, backed by Hezbollah fighters and “heavy airstrikes”, began a new assault to capture the area.<sup>8</sup> In the western part of the Aleppo Governorate SARG forces, backed by Hezbollah fighters, clashed with opposition forces near the village of Khan Touman and the town of Al-Eis.<sup>9</sup>
  - On April 5, Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and Kurdish YPG forces clashed with Al-Nusra Front and other Islamist groups in the district of Sheikh Maqsoud in the city of Aleppo.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-rebels-idUSKCN0X20QI>

<sup>6</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/04/aleppo-province-update-april-7-2016.html> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-rebels-idUSKCN0X428P>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36014027>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35979147>

<sup>9</sup> <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/f02392eacc6548ebbd452b492fbfae3b/most-300-cement-workers-abducted-syria-freed>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2016/04/05/world/middleeast/ap-ml-syria.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/04/aleppo-province-update-april-7-2016.html>

- On April 8, SARG forces and opposition groups, including Al-Nusra Front and the SDF, clashed near the Palestine Handarat refugee camp, north of the city of Aleppo.<sup>11</sup>
  - On April 10, the Syrian Prime Minister stated that the Syrian military and the Russian Air Force were preparing for a “joint operation” to retake the city of Aleppo from opposition groups. In addition, clashes around the city killed 35 fighters.<sup>12</sup>
2. Idlib Governorate:
- On April 3, an airstrike struck and killed Al Nusra Front leader Abu Firas, as well as 20 other members of the group, in the village of Kafr Jales, though it is unclear if US drones or SARG and Russian forces were responsible<sup>13</sup>
  - On April 5, a car bomb attack occurred in the town of Ma’arat al-Numan, killing at least one person and injuring several more. No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>14</sup>
  - On April 5, a US airstrike struck a vehicle transporting “several members of the Khorasan Group” in the city of Idlib. Witnesses reported that three people in the vehicle and one bystander were killed.<sup>15</sup>
  - On April 12, the Turkish army carried out ground-based strikes on ISIL targets in northern Aleppo in response to “cross-border rocket fire” that struck the town of Kilis, across the border in Turkey.<sup>16</sup>
3. Homs Governorate:
- On April 2, a mass grave containing at least 40 bodies was discovered in the city of Palmyra.<sup>17</sup>
  - On April 3, SARG forces, backed by Russian air strikes, recaptured the ISIL-held town of al-Qaryatayn after a three-day offensive.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>11</sup> <http://en.abna24.com/service/middle-east-west-asia/archive/2016/04/09/746099/story.html>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKCN0X70GE> ; <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Apr-10/346574-fierce-fighting-kill-35-around-syrias-aleppo-activist.ashx> ; <http://tass.ru/en/world/868560>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-idlib-idUSKCN0X00WD> ; <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Apr-04/345567-syrias-qaeda-spokesman-20-extremists-dead-in-strikes-activists.ashx> ; <http://www.defense.gov/News/News-Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/713174/departments-of-defense-press-briefing-by-pentagon-press-secretary-peter-cook-in> ; <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/04/06/Al-Qaeda-confirms-death-of-senior-Syrian-figure.html> ; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/04/06/u-s-strikes-al-qaeda-affiliate-in-syria-for-the-second-time-in-a-week/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/NewsReports/566827-car-bomb-rocks-idlib-town-protesting-nusra>

<sup>15</sup> <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/06/u-s-hits-al-qaeda-in-syria-for-second-time-this-week/> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fna1lGyMir0> ; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/04/06/u-s-strikes-al-qaeda-affiliate-in-syria-for-the-second-time-in-a-week/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Apr-12/346925-cross-border-fire-from-syria-hits-turkish-border-town-agency-says.ashx>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/04/mass-grave-discovered-syria-ancient-palmyra-city-160402125704244.html> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35950517> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35968604>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/04/syrian-army-captures-isil-held-town-homs-160403131645820.html> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-town-idUSKCN0X00BL> ; <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Apr-03/345453-syrian->

- On April 4, Bilal Nadir Khairuddin (aka Abu Jaafar), the founder of Hezbollah's 'Redha Forces' in Syria, was killed during clashes near the town of al-Qaryatayn.<sup>19</sup>
  - On April 12, a Russian helicopter crashed in the town of Talbiseh, killing two Russian servicemen. The cause of the crash is under investigation.<sup>20</sup>
4. Rif Dimashq Governorate:
- On April 5, ISIL militants attacked the government-held Tishrin Power Station, 30 miles north of the capital of Damascus, along with other SARG positions near the Dumair military airport, 25 miles northeast of the capital.<sup>21</sup>
  - On April 7, 250 Syrian civilians were reported as missing after an ISIL attack on a 'cement factory' outside of the town of Dumair. On April 9, it was reported that most of those kidnapped had been released, however four members of the Druze minority community were killed by ISIL.<sup>22</sup>
5. Raqqa Governorate:
- On April 1, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that a high-ranking ISIL commander known as Abu al-Hija was likely killed in a US-led coalition drone strike as he traveled to Aleppo.<sup>23</sup>
  - On April 3, SOHR reported that ISIL militants arrested 35 of their own members and executed 15 other in the city of Raqqa. The executions were reportedly connected to the US-Coalition strike on Abu al-Hija.<sup>24</sup>
6. Damascus Governorate:
- On March 31, airstrikes of an unknown origin struck the town of Deir al-Asafir in the suburb of Eastern Ghouta. According to Syrian activist groups the strikes occurred near a hospital and a school, killing at least 30 civilians.<sup>25</sup>

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[forces-enter-isis-held-town-near-palmyra.ashx](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Apr-04/345533-syrian-forces-seize-daesh-held-town.ashx) ; <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Apr-04/345533-syrian-forces-seize-daesh-held-town.ashx> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35957942>

<sup>19</sup> <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/04/05/Hezbollah-leader-Abu-Jaafar-killed-in-Syria.html>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.wsj.com/articles/russian-helicopter-crashes-in-syria-killing-two-1460454765> ; <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/13/world/middleeast/syria-cease-fire-assad-civil-war-us-un.html>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-damascus-idUSKCN0X314I>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Apr-07/346120-250-syrians-disappear-after-isis-attack-east-of-damascus-residents.ashx> ; <http://www.cnn.com/2016/04/07/middleeast/syria-war/> ; <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/f02392eacc6548ebbd452b492fbfae3b/most-300-cement-workers-abducted-syria-freed>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Mar-31/344943-isis-commander-killed-in-strike-near-syrias-raqqa-activist.ashx>

<sup>24</sup> <http://mobile.reuters.com/article/idUSKCN0X000G> ; <http://www.voanews.com/content/islamic-state-suffers-more-reversals-syria/3268963.html>

<sup>25</sup> <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/syrias-pm-damascus-subjected-economic-war-38048928> ; <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/04/01/France-Syrian-govt-airstrikes-erode-peace-efforts.html> ;

<http://mobile.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSKCN0WY3RX>



- From April 8-9, ISIL captured several positions from Al-Nusra Front in Yarmouk Camp.<sup>26</sup>
7. Deir ez Zor Governorate:
- On April 4, ISIL reportedly used mustard gas against SARG forces during an offensive on a Syrian air base.<sup>27</sup>

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Ayn Isa, Deir ez Zor, Hasakah, al-Hawl, Idlib, Manbij, Mar'a, and Raqqa.<sup>28</sup>
- On March 30, Reuters reported that Russia had increased its shipping of military equipment to Syria. Russia also reportedly increased its number of warships located off of the coast with Syria.<sup>29</sup>
- On March 30, the transparency group AirWars released a report concluding that Russian airstrikes in Syria were responsible for the killing of 1,100 or more non-combatants.<sup>30</sup>
- On April 1, the US military announced that it had begun a new training program for “dozens” of Syrian opposition fighters in order to prepare them to fight against ISIL militants.<sup>31</sup>
- On April 3, leaders of Syria’s minority Alawite sect released a document distancing themselves from Shia and Sunni Islam, calling for secularism in Syria, and passively distancing themselves from the Assad regime.<sup>32</sup>
- On April 11, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that Israel had carried out dozens of airstrikes against Hezbollah in Syria in an attempt to prevent advanced weapons from reaching the group.<sup>33</sup>

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

1. Al Anbar Governorate:
- On March 31, an ISIL suicide car bomber killed eight Iraqi soldiers as they advanced towards the ISIL-held city of Hit.<sup>34</sup>
  - On March 31, an ISIL assault on al-Habbaniyah Air Base, northeast of Ramadi, killed at least seven Iraqi soldiers.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>26</sup> <http://post.understandingwar.org/backgrounders/syria-situation-report-april-9-15-2016>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-militants-idUSKCN0X12G7> ; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35968604>

<sup>28</sup> See: “US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIL in Syria, Iraq”. *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [707960](#), [709274](#), [710822](#), [711927](#), [712033](#), [712307](#), [713389](#), [714311](#), [715478](#), [716447](#), [717094](#), [717213](#), [717444](#), [718633](#), [719792](#)

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-supplies-idUSKCN0WW0D>

<sup>30</sup> <http://airwars.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Reckless-Disregard.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/04/01/US-trains-dozens-of-Syrians-in-new-push-against-ISIS-.html>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35941679>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Apr-11/346794-netanyahu-israel-has-carried-out-dozens-of-strikes-in-syria-targeting-hezbollah-arms.ashx>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/03/iraqi-special-forces-lead-march-isil-controlled-heet-160331151456076.html> ; <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Mar-31/344959-iraqi-forces-advance-towards-western-town-held-by-isis.ashx>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/03/iraqi-special-forces-lead-march-isil-controlled-heet-160331151456076.html> ; <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Mar-31/344959-iraqi-forces-advance-towards-western-town-held-by-isis.ashx>

- On April 7, ISIL militants reportedly “launched indirect fire” from Jazeera Khalidiyah into residential areas in the cities of Ramadi, Khalidiyah, and Habbaniyah.<sup>36</sup>
  - On April 11, Iraqi security forces, backed by US-led coalition airstrikes, reached the center of the city of Hit.<sup>37</sup>
2. Ninawa Governorate:
- During the reporting period, the US-led Coalition reported that it had carried out airstrikes on ISIL telecommunication infrastructure, disrupting the group’s ability to disperse propaganda.<sup>38</sup>
  - On April 1, the Wall Street Journal released a report detailing ISIL’s use of chemical laboratories at the University of Mosul in manufacturing chemical weapons and training bomb makers. The university has been the site of several recent US-led coalition airstrikes.<sup>39</sup>
  - On April 3, a US airstrike killed ISIL rocket expert Jasim Khadijah near the town of Makhmour.<sup>40</sup>
  - On April 4, the US-led coalition carried out airstrikes on the Turkish consulate in Mosul. According to the US Department of Defense, ISIL had “repurposed the compound” using it as a headquarters for senior ISIL leaders.<sup>41</sup>
  - On April 7, the US-led coalition announced that two ISIL foreign fighters, Haris Cary Saneen (aka Abu Zubari al-Bosni) and Khalid Osman Timayare (deputy emir of the Anwar Awlaki brigade), had been killed in two separate airstrikes in Ninawa Governorate.<sup>42</sup>
3. Dhi Qar Governorate:
- On April 4, an ISIL suicide bomber attacked a well known restaurant, located in the Umm Ayouj area between Nasiriyah and Basra, killing at least 14 people and wounding 27 more. The attack reportedly targeted members of Shia militias.<sup>43</sup>
4. Basra Governorate:
- On April 4, a suicide car bomber struck a commercial area in the city of Basra, killing at least 6 people and wounding 12 more. The intended target of the attack was reportedly members of the Iraqi police force and the Shia Popular Mobilization Front.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>36</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/04/iraq-situation-report-april-5-11-2016.html>

<sup>37</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/04/iraq-situation-report-april-5-11-2016.html>

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.defense.gov/News/News-Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/715790/departments-of-defense-press-briefing-by-col-warren-via-teleconference-from-baghdad>

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.wsj.com/articles/islamic-state-hijacks-mosul-university-chemistry-lab-for-making-bombs-1459503003>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.wsj.com/articles/islamic-state-rocket-expert-killed-in-u-s-airstrike-1459699320> ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-usa-idUSKCN0X00JS>

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-turkey-idUSKCN0X1098> ; <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/714065/coalition-airstrike-destroys-isil-headquarters-compound-in-mosul>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/715735/coalition-kills-2-foreign-fighters-in-iraq-oir-spokesman-says>

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2016/04/04/world/middleeast/ap-ml-iraq.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/04/iraq-situation-report-march-29-april-4.html>

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2016/04/04/world/middleeast/ap-ml-iraq.html> ; <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/04/iraq-situation-report-march-29-april-4.html>

5. Baghdad Governorate:
  - On March 31, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announced a new cabinet aimed at fighting corruption in the Iraqi government. In response, prominent Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr called on his followers to end their ongoing sit-in.<sup>45</sup>
  - On April 4, a suicide car bomber struck a security checkpoint in the northeastern suburb of Sadr al-Qanat in the city of Baghdad, killing six Iraqi troops and wounding 13 more.<sup>46</sup>
  - On April 10, a bombing killed four “young men” and injured 18 more at a soccer field in the town of Madain, southeast of the capital of Baghdad. No group has yet taken responsibility for the attack.<sup>47</sup>
6. Salah ad Din Governorate:
  - On April 4, a suicide car bomb struck a convoy of the Shia Popular Mobilization Front in the town of Mishahda, killing five members of the group.<sup>48</sup>
7. Erbil Governorate:
  - On April 5, the Turkish forces carried out airstrikes against PKK targets in the northern Qandil mountains.<sup>49</sup>
8. Dohuk Governorate:
  - On April 1, Turkish forces carried out airstrikes against PKK targets in the area of Amedi.<sup>50</sup>

Other Key Points:

- During the reporting period, the US-led coalition conducted airstrikes in the areas of Albu Hayat, Baghdadi, Fallujah, Habbaniyah, Haditha, Hit, Huwayjah, Kirkuk, Kisik, Makhmour, Mosul, Qaim, Qayyarah, Ramadi, Rawah, Rutbah, Sinjar, Sultan Abdullah, and Tal Afar.<sup>51</sup>

**Other significant political and military events during the reporting period:**

- On March 30, ISIL claimed an attack in Russia’s Dagestan region that killed at least one police officer.<sup>52</sup>
- On April 12, Pentagon officials stated that “American airstrikes” had killed 25,000 ISIL militants in Iraq and Syria and “incinerated millions of dollars plundered by the militants.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> <http://uk.mobile.reuters.com/article/idUKKCN0WX1D9>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2016/04/04/world/middleeast/ap-ml-iraq.html>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.wsj.com/articles/bomb-kills-four-outside-baghdad-1460312707>

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2016/04/04/world/middleeast/ap-ml-iraq.html>

<sup>49</sup> <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/04/05/Turkey-strikes-PKK-rebels-in-northern-Iraq.html>

<sup>50</sup> <http://rudaw.net/NewsDetails.aspx?pageid=205451>

<sup>51</sup> See: “US DOD News Release Military Strikes Hit ISIL in Syria, Iraq”. *Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve*. News Release No: [707960](#), [709274](#), [710822](#), [711927](#), [712033](#), [712307](#), [713389](#), [714311](#), [715478](#), [716447](#), [717094](#), [717213](#), [717444](#), [718633](#), [719792](#)

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-car-blast-idUSKCN0WW0M6>

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/13/world/middleeast/isis-iraq-syria.html>

## **Satellite Imagery and Geospatial Analysis**

Satellite imagery of northern Syria analyzed during the reporting period revealed damage concordant with previously attested patterns. Images from Aleppo and Northern Hasakah Governorates show widespread militarization, berms, and small fortifications built on top of archaeological mounds. Additional damage due to continuing airstrikes was also observed.

An in-depth analysis of the DigitalGlobe satellite imagery over Palmyra from March 30, 2016 can be found in the Incident Reports within this report and the most recent CHI Special Report on Palmyra. This includes detailed analysis of the Necropoli of Palmyra and observed damage to multiple tower tombs.

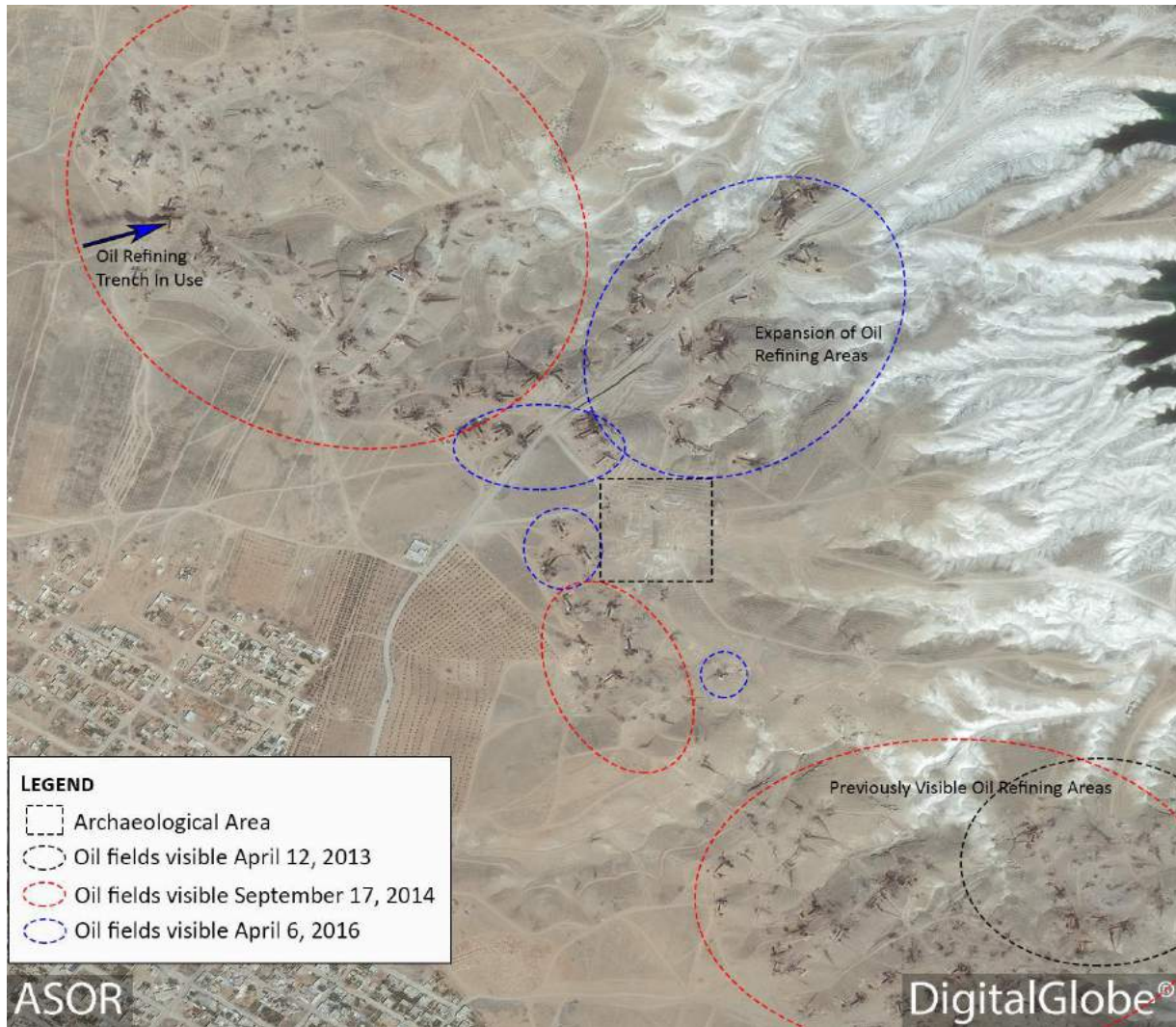
In addition to the militarization of sites, there is also continued oil refining occurring on and encroaching upon archaeological sites. The site of Meskene (ancient Emar) in Aleppo Governorate has been the site of crude oil production since at least April 12, 2013. This early activity was located south of the site. By September 17, 2014, refining areas were located closer to the archaeological site, with work areas to the north, to the south, and close to the southern edge of the site. The most recent DigitalGlobe image from April 6, 2016, shows the oil production areas ringing the archaeological site with new oil trenches on the northern and western edges of the site. While the oil refining areas have gotten closer to the site, there does not appear to be clear damage to the site itself at this time.



A small number of oil refining trenches are visible southeast of the archaeological area of Meskene (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; April 12, 2013)



Expanded oil refining areas slowly encroaching upon the archaeological area (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; September 17, 2014)



Continued expansion and use of refining pits now visible on three sides of the archaeological area. The blue arrow points to a clearly in use oil trench with visible smoke (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; April 6, 2016)

## Incident Reports: Syria

### SHI 15-0123 UPDATE

**Report Date:** April 4, 2016

**Site Name:** Deir Mar Elian; Monastery of St Julian; Mar Elian Monastery

**Date of Incident:** August 21, 2015

**Location:** al-Qaryatain (var. Qaryatayn), Homs Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** According to UNESCO:

Deir Mar Elian al-Sheikh is located in Al-Qaryatain, a city in the Syrian Desert steppes. It is located on the road between Damascus and Palmyra ... Al-Qaryatain is strategically positioned for trade routes and pilgrim routes, with Damascus to the south, Palmyra to the north-east, and Hawaren village and the bath of Abu Rabah, Sadad and Homs to the west. It formed an important station on the road of the commercial caravans between Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean Coast. It was also an important station on the Silk Road as it was considered a necessary resting point where water can be found after the long passing of the desert. The Romans stationed garrisons of soldiers there to protect the commercial caravans.... The prominent status of the city continued during the Byzantine period when the city's importance increased because it was also an important path for pilgrims who were heading to Jerusalem. Thus, many churches were built on this road, and the church of Deir Mar Elian is one of these churches....The principal structure of the Mar Elian monastery dates to 1938 but its ancient foundations house the 5th century tomb of Mar Elian....who was martyred in the 3rd century AD.<sup>54</sup>

According to Beattie and Pepper:

The church is dedicated to the son of a Roman officer [Elian] who was martyred at the hands of his own father in 284 for refusing to renounce Christianity, and indeed is said to have been founded in 432 on the very site of the martyrdom, with Elian's remains placed in a sarcophagus in the crypt. A major renovation of the church in 1970 led to the discovery of some colourful murals of Christ, Mary, the prophets and the Apostles which had been brilliantly preserved under a layer of plaster. These date back to the 12th century at least and, if the claims of some experts are to be believed, possibly right back to the sixth century, making them the oldest surviving church paintings in Syria. The rest of the church is covered with modern... paintings depicting the life of St Elian.<sup>55</sup>

As the conflict in Syria worsened the grounds of Mar Elian Monastery served as a sanctuary for many internally displaced Syrians from Damascus, Palmyra, and Homs.<sup>56</sup> When ISIL captured the town of al-Qaryatain, they kidnapped as many as 230 civilians including Christians, women, children, and families. Some of the Assyrian Christians (also known as Chaldeans) were reportedly kidnapped from the Mar Elian Monastery.<sup>57</sup> In May 2015, ISIL militants abducted Syrian Priest Father Jacques Mourad and a deacon known as Botros from

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<sup>54</sup> <http://en.unesco.org/news/director-general-irina-bokova-condemns-destruction-mar-elian-monastery-syria>

<sup>55</sup> Beattie and Pepper 2001

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35725220>

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/syria-isis-kidnaps-150-assyrian-christians-qaryatain-including-women-children-1514496> ; <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2015/11/4094706/>



Mar Elian Monastery.<sup>58</sup> As was later accounted by Father Jacques, he and Deacon Botros were taken to Raqqa where they were held prisoner. Later the two were moved to Palmyra, where they were reunited with 250 of Father Jacques' parishioners, forcibly relocated by ISIL.<sup>59</sup> On April 11, 2016 Patriarch Ignatius Aphrem II, the head of the Syrian Orthodox Church, told the BBC that 21 Christians were murdered after ISIL captured the city; some while trying to escape and other for failing to comply with ISIL rulings. Five more Christians, according to the patriarch, are still missing.<sup>60</sup>

**Site Date:** Tomb of Mar Elian: 5th Century CE; Mar Elian Monastery 1938 (church renovated in 1996)

**Incident Summary:** New photographs and video footage of Mar Elian Monastery shows destruction by ISIL.

**Incident Source and Description:** On April 4, 2016 SARG forces, backed by Russian airstrikes and pro-regime militias, recaptured the town of al-Qaryatain from ISIL militants and eventually entered the Mar Elian Monastery. An Associated Press crew entered al-Qaryatain on April 4, 2016 and described the extent of the damage inflicted on the town. The AP crew was only able to explore 1.5 miles into the town because SARG experts were still clearing mines and explosives left by ISIL. According to their eyewitness report, the Mar Elian Monastery had been "reduced to a pile of stones."<sup>61</sup> In addition, "the church's doors and windows were blown out and its interior appeared to have been used by the militants as a workshop for manufacturing bombs and booby traps, its floor littered with gas canisters, metal kettles, coffee pots and blue pails."<sup>62</sup> Another eyewitness report states that:

The jihadists apparently used a bulldozer to partially destroy St Elias Monastery... Human bones from ancient graves are strewn amidst the rubble. Inside the monastery there is an Assyrian church and all Christian symbols in it have been destroyed. In the church graveyard, the gravestones have been trashed and all the crosses removed... the monastery's ... old church is still standing, but has been severely desecrated. After an apparent attempt to set the building on fire from inside, the old beams look burnt and the floor is covered with burnt pages with texts in Assyrian from Christian holy books. (M)any Assyrian churches in the area have been either demolished or badly damaged"<sup>63</sup>

On August 21, 2015 the DGAM reported the destruction of Mar Elian Monastery by ISIL militants.<sup>64</sup> The building, restored in 1996, was destroyed by heavy machinery used by ISIL.<sup>65</sup> ISIL militants "trashed an ancient church next to the Assyrian Christian monastery, and desecrated a nearby cemetery, breaking the crosses and smashing nameplates",<sup>66</sup> and

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<sup>58</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35725220> ; <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2015/08/07/ISIS-abduct-dozens-of-Syrian-Christians-after-capturing-a-town-Homs-.html>

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35725220>

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36011663>

<sup>61</sup> <http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:d0c5642ed67342ce9cd9e313e416458c>

<sup>62</sup> <http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:d0c5642ed67342ce9cd9e313e416458c>

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.rt.com/news/338453-syria-christian-al-qaryatain-retaken/>

<sup>64</sup> For additional information on the August 21, 2015 ISIL intentional damage to Mar Elian Monastery see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0123** in **Weekly Report 55-56** and **SHI 15-0123 UPDATE** in **Weekly Report 57-58**.

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1777>

<sup>66</sup> <http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:d0c5642ed67342ce9cd9e313e416458c>

exhumed the remains of Saint Elian.<sup>67</sup> The group shared photographs and video footage of the destruction as it took place. Recently shared video footage and photographs confirm the extent of the damage to Mar Elian Monastery.<sup>68</sup> Heavy fire damage is apparent in the interior of the church as is graffiti written by ISIL.<sup>69</sup> The video footage also shows the repurposing of what is reportedly the monk's quarters in the monastery by ISIL.<sup>70</sup> In addition to the intentional destruction carried out by ISIL on the Mar Elian Monastery, the photographs and video footage recently obtained from the site show extensive damage possibly caused by heavy weaponry and explosives.<sup>71</sup> Extensive airstrikes have been carried out over al-Qaryatain in the efforts to recapture the town from ISIL. One report states that not one building in the entire town was left undamaged in the offensive to reclaim the town.<sup>72</sup>

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives, intentional destruction; Vandalism.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** In addition to the intentional destruction wrought by ISIL militants, the recent photographs and video footage of the site appears to show extensive damage possibly caused by other explosives. ASOR CHI will attempt to determine the cause of such damage, and follow up on any additional reporting.

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<sup>67</sup> <http://en.unesco.org/news/director-general-irina-bokova-condemns-destruction-mar-elian-monastery-syria>

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<sup>70</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUWYhpnRk10&feature=youtu.be>

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUWYhpnRk10&feature=youtu.be>

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Mar Elia Monastery (Maher al Mounes; April 4, 2016)



Detail of Mar Elia Monastery (Valery Sharifulin/Getty Images; April 7, 2016)



Damage to the interior of Mar Elian Monastery (AP; April 4, 2016)



Video still of possible burned ceiling beam inside Mar Elian Monastery (AFP; April 4, 2016)



Damage to the altar in Mar Elia Monastery (Dimashq Al An; April 4, 2016)



Detail of damage to the altar in Mar Elia Monastery (Joseph Eid/Getty Images; April 4, 2016)



Detail of damage to the altar in Mar Elian Monastery (Joseph Eid/Getty Images; April 4, 2016)



Detail of damage to the altar in Mar Elian Monastery(Dimashq Al An; April 4, 2016)





Detail of damage to the altar in Mar Elian Monastery (Dimashq Al An; April 4, 2016)



Burned religious texts inside Mar Elian Monastery (Lizzie Phelan; April 4, 2016)



Damage to Mar Elian Monastery (Lizzie Phelan; April 4, 2016)



Damage to Mar Elia Monastery (Valery Sharifulin/Getty Images; April 7, 2016)



Detail of damage to Mar Elia Monastery (Valery Sharifulin/Getty Images; April 7, 2016)



Damage to Mar Elia Monastery (Valery Sharifulin/Getty Images; April 7, 2016)



Detail of damage to Mar Elia Monastery (Dimashq Al An; April 4, 2016)



Damage to Mar Elian Monastery (Valery Sharifulin/Getty Images; April 7, 2016)



Damage to Mar Elian Monastery (Dimashq Al An; April 4, 2016)



Video still of damage to Mar Elian Monastery (Channel 4 News; April 4, 2016)



Damage to Mar Elian Monastery (Dimashq Al An; April 4, 2016)



Damage to Mar Elian Monastery (Dimashq Al An; April 4, 2016)



Damage to Mary Elian Monastery (Dimashq Al An; April 4, 2016)



Damage to Mar Elian Monastery (Dimashq Al An; April 4, 2016)



Broken plate on the church with the name Mar Elian (Joseph Eid/Getty Images; April 4, 2016)





Damage to Mar Elia Monastery (Joseph Eid/Getty Images; April 4, 2016)



Damage to Mar Elia Monastery (Dimashq Al An; April 4, 2016)



Damage to Mar Elia Monastery (Joseph Eid/Getty Images; April 4, 2016)



Damage to Mar Elia Monastery (Lindsey Hilsum; April 4, 2016)



Bones and a sarcophagus present on the grounds of Mar Elian Monastery (Lindsey Hilsum; April 4, 2016)



Video still of what was reportedly the monks' quarters at Mar Elian Monastery later repurposed by ISIL (Channel 4 News; April 4, 2016)



Video still of the monks' quarters, repurposed by ISIL (Channel 4 News; April 4, 2016)



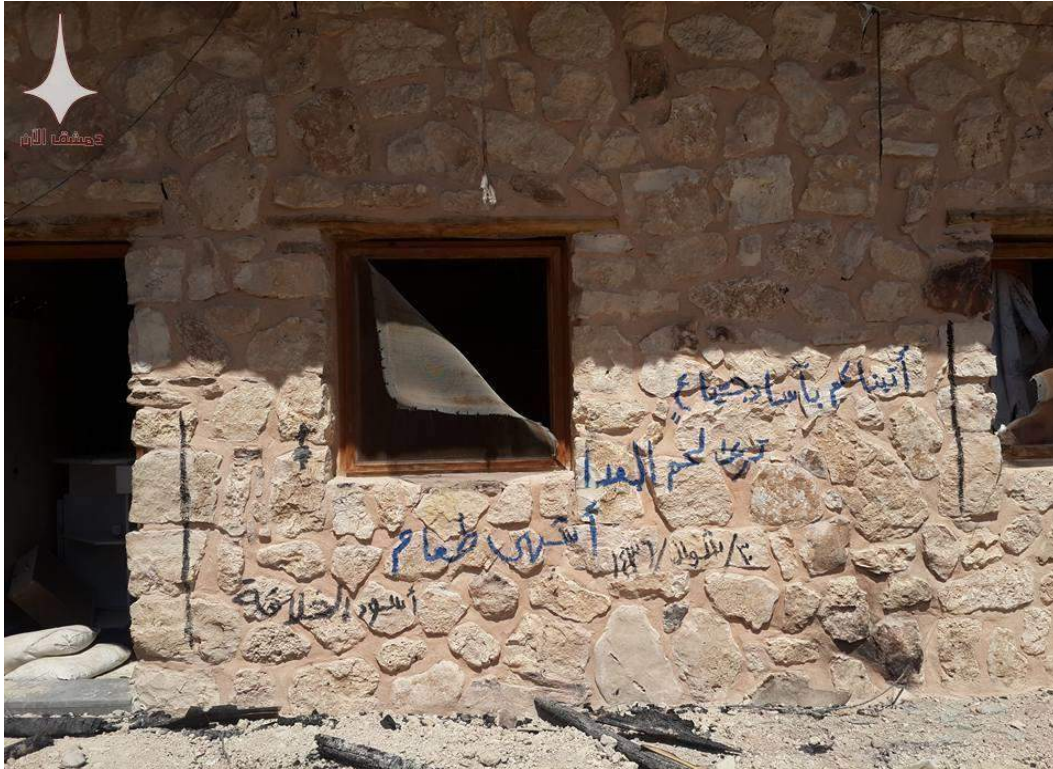
What was once reportedly a library, burned by ISIL (Valery Sharifulin/Getty Images; April 7, 2016)



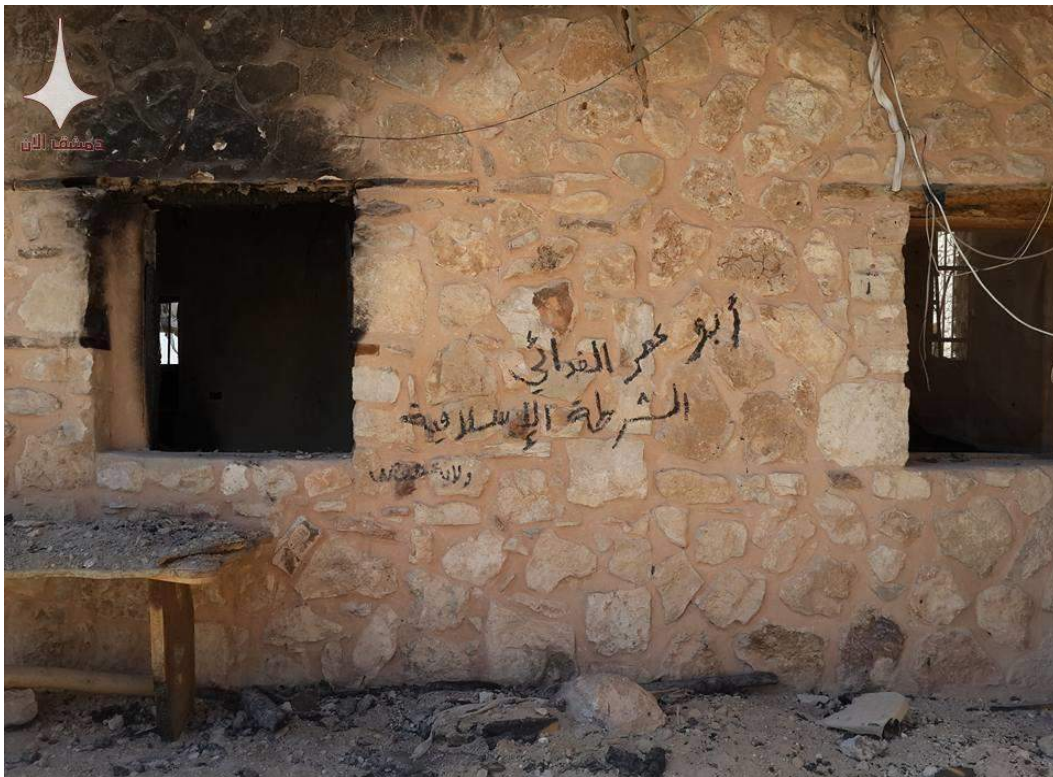
Damaged Christian Graves at Mar Elian Monastery (Joseph Eid/Getty Images; April 4, 2016)



Damage to graves at Mar Elian Monastery (Valery Sharifulin/Getty Images; April 7, 2016)



Graffiti at Mar Elian Monastery (Dimashq Al An; April 4, 2016)



Graffiti at Mar Elian Monastery (Dimashq Al An; April 4, 2016)



Bones reported to be of Christian saints, cast haphazardly by ISIL into what appears to be a storage room (Lindsey Hilsum; April 4, 2016)

## SHI 15-0160 UPDATE

**Report Date:** April 5, 2016

**Site Name:** Bilal Mosque (Bilal ibn Rabia Mosque) (مسجد بلال)

**Date of Incident:** December 9, 2015; March 16, 2016

**Location:** Palmyra, Homs Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown, likely modern.

**Incident Summary:** New video report shows damage to mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On April 5, 2016 Channel 4 News released a video report that included footage of Bilal Mosque. The video footage shows extensive damage to the interior of the mosque as well as ISIL paraphernalia on the walls of the mosque, namely instructions on how to pray in coherence with the group's requirements.<sup>73</sup>

The Bilal Mosque has been recorded by the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) as having been damaged by airstrikes on two separate occasions: first by SARG airstrikes on December 9, 2015 and second by Russian airstrikes on March 16, 2016.<sup>74</sup>

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Bilal Mosque, other heritage sites within the city of Palmyra, and the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to ongoing aerial bombardment campaigns and intense military activity.

ASOR CHI is directing critical attention to the condition of all periods of cultural heritage of Palmyra and the Tadmor area given its significance as UNESCO World Heritage Site and with a vulnerable civilian population.

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<sup>73</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kn8jpmZrrE8>

<sup>74</sup> See **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0160** in **Weekly Report 71-72** and **SHI 16-0039** in **Weekly Report 85-86**





Video still of Channel 4 News Report Lindsey Hilsum enters the damaged Bilal Mosque (Channel 4 News; April 5, 2016)



Video still of the damaged interior of Bilal Mosque (Channel 4 News; April 5, 2016)

## SHI 16-0004 UPDATE

**Report Date:** April 9, 2016

**Site Name:** Rafid

**Date of Incident:** Unknown, likely ongoing

**Location:** ar-Rafid Village, Southern Quneitra Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** The DGAM describes Rafid as “rich with historical residences, churches, khans, and some tombs dating to the Byzantine and Islamic periods.”<sup>75</sup> Rafid has many Byzantine and Ghassanid-era buildings constructed of local basalt and provides a fine example of medieval Hauran-style architecture.<sup>76</sup> First settled in the late 1st century BCE, the site grew prosperous in the late Roman era, as evidenced by its many large and high quality villas and private residences. Rafid was the heart of Ghassanid settlement in the Hauran following the decline of the Byzantine population there, until the site became virtually uninhabited from the 8th to 13th centuries.<sup>77</sup> Rafid flourished under the Mamluks, but was once again abandoned for centuries. The area was resettled in the 19th century.<sup>78</sup>

**Site Date:** Roman, Byzantine, Ghassanid, Mamluk, modern

**Incident Summary:** New video shows theft of ancient stones for rebuilding of local homes.

**Incident Source and Description:** On April 9, 2016 APSA released a video showing the theft of ancient stones at Rafid. Men interviewed in the video discuss how local homes have been damaged in airstrikes and need repair. Local building materials in the area have become expensive, therefore the ancient stones have become the preferred material with which to rebuild local homes. The men interviewed report that no authority has attempted to stop them from taking the stones. The DGAM has previously reported instances of “several unauthorized works of diggings and constructions... observed by the local society in the village of al-Rafid.”<sup>79</sup>

**Pattern:** Theft; Reuse of ancient/historic structures (non-combatants).

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the situation in ar-Rafid, Quneitra, and other Syrian heritage sites vulnerable to theft as a result of decreased local security and economic instability.

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<sup>75</sup> <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/?d=314&id=1894>

<sup>76</sup> Urman 2006: 9

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* 269.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* 290.

<sup>79</sup> For further information see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0004** in **Weekly Report 75-76**;

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Video still of ancient ruins at Rafid (APSA; April 11, 2016)



Video still of theft of ancient stones at Rafid (APSA; April 11, 2016)



Video still of theft at Rafid (APSA; April 11, 2016)



Video still of damage caused by what appears to be ongoing theft at Rafid (APSA; April 11, 2016)



Video still of possible looting pit at Rafid (APSA; April 11, 2016)

## SHI 16-0041 UPDATE

**Report Date:** April 12, 2016

**Site Name:** Palmyra (تدمر)

- Baths of Diocletian (الحمامات)
- Decumanus (Great Colonnade; الشارع الطويل)
- Caesareum
- Triumphal Arch of Septimius Severus (Monumental Arch; قوس النصر)
- Temple of Baal-Shamin (معبد بعلشمين)
- Temple of Bel (معبد بل)
- Temple of Nabu (معبد نبو)
- Tetrapylon (التتراپيل)
- Theater (مسرح)

**Date of Incident:** March 25–28, 2016

**Location:** Tadmor, Homs Governorate, Syria

### Site Description:

- Palmyra (تدمر) - From UNESCO: "First mentioned in the archives of Mari in the 2nd millennium BC, Palmyra was an established caravan oasis when it came under Roman control in the mid-first century CE as part of the Roman province of Syria. It grew steadily in importance as a city on the trade route linking Persia, India, and China with the Roman Empire, marking the crossroads of several civilisations in the ancient world. A grand, colonnaded street of 1100 meters' length forms the monumental axis of the city, which together with secondary colonnaded cross streets links the major public monuments including the Temple of Bel, Diocletian's Camp, the Agora, Theatre, other temples, and urban quarters. Architectural ornament including unique examples of funerary sculpture unites the forms of Greco-Roman art with indigenous elements and Persian influences in a strongly original style. Outside the city's walls are remains of a Roman aqueduct and immense necropolises. An oasis in the Syrian desert, north-east of Damascus, Palmyra contains the monumental ruins of a great city that was one of the most important cultural centers of the ancient world. From the first to the second century, the art and architecture of Palmyra, standing at the crossroads of several civilizations, married Greco-Roman techniques with local traditions and Persian influences."<sup>80</sup>
- Agora (الأغورا) - Palmyra's massive Agora was built ca. 150 CE as part of a complex that also included the Tariff Court and the Senate.<sup>81</sup> The structure has 11 entrances and contains the remains of 200 columns that once held statues of prominent citizens. The inscriptions on the column bases indicate the manner in which these statues were grouped: the eastern side was reserved for senators, the northern side for Palmyrene officials, the western side for soldiers, and the southern side for caravan chiefs.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/23>

<sup>81</sup> Browning 1979: 157

<sup>82</sup> Darke 2006: 240

- Baths of Diocletian (الحمّامات) - The Baths of Diocletian, built during the reign of Diocletian (r. 284-305 CE) in Palmyra following the defeat of the Palmyrene queen Zenobia, are for the most part not visible above the level of the foundation. The complex's entrance may still be seen and is marked by four massive red Egyptian granite columns. Inside, the outline of a bathing pool surrounded by a colonnade is still visible, as well as an octagonal room that served as a dressing room containing a drain in its center.<sup>83</sup>
- Decumanus (Great Colonnade; الشارع الطويل) - The Decumanus Maximus (or Great Colonnade) at Palmyra was the main colonnaded avenue in the city. The colonnade was built in several stages during the second and third centuries CE and stretched for over a kilometer.<sup>84</sup> The Decumanus (as in most Roman cities) is on an east-west axis, linking the Temple of Bel in the southeastern end of the city to the West Gate and the Funerary Temple in the northwestern section. Several other colonnaded streets branch off perpendicularly from the Decumanus. The entrances to several monuments, including the Temple of Nabu, the Baths of Diocletian, and two nymphaea, are incorporated into the colonnade. Many of the columns of the colonnade (which is around 1.2 km long) still bear protruding brackets, on which statues of the city's patrons and elite would have been placed.<sup>85</sup>
- Camp of Diocletian (معسكر ديوقلسيان) - The Camp of Diocletian was a Roman military complex built between 293 and 305 CE under the emperor Diocletian at the western end of the colonnaded Decumanus. This construction was part of a refortification plan for Palmyra following the defeat of the independent Palmyrene Empire and the Roman recapture of the city in the 270s CE.<sup>86</sup> The camp was laid out around two colonnaded streets, the *via praetoria* and the *via principalis*, which intersected at a tetrapylon. The *via praetoria* ran from the Praetorian Gate to the *principia* (military headquarters). Within the *principia*, and located at the highest point in the camp, was the so-called "Temple of the Standards," where the legion's standards were likely kept. The Temple of Allat is also located within the camp.<sup>87</sup>
- Funerary Temple (المعبد الجنائزي) - The Funerary Temple is actually a second century CE temple tomb, and is one of the only tombs found within the city walls. The building consists of a portico supported by six Corinthian columns, behind which is a large room with steps leading down to the underground burial chambers.<sup>88</sup> No inscriptions have been found to identify this tomb.
- Triumphal Arch of Septimius Severus (Monumental Arch; قوس النصر) - Also known as the Monumental Arch or Victory Arch, the Triumphal Arch was constructed during the reign of Septimius Severus (r. 193 to 211 CE). The arch is impressive from an architectural standpoint as it solves a problem somewhat unique to Palmyra. The layout of this

<sup>83</sup> Beattie & Pepper 2001: 288

<sup>84</sup> Burns 2009: 214

<sup>85</sup> Butcher 2003: 244ff

<sup>86</sup> Millar 1993: 182, 227

<sup>87</sup> Burns 2009: 216

<sup>88</sup> <http://www.syriaphotoguide.com/home/palmyra-funerary-temple>

ancient city was unusual for the Roman period because its main streets did not completely align with the four cardinal points of the compass. The monumental arch was constructed at the point of a thirty-degree turn in the Decumanus. To solve this issue, the arch incorporated two facades angled apart from one another, one leading to the Tetrastyle and the other forming the entrance to the *via sacra* (or sacred road) leading to the Temple of Bel. The arch is richly decorated with stone carvings and is one of the most lavishly adorned monuments in the city.<sup>89</sup>

- Senate (مجلس الشيوخ) - The small structure thought to be the Senate building of Palmyra consists of an entrance hall, a peristyle court, and a chamber with an apse surrounded by rows of seating. The building was likely once larger but was partially demolished ca. 150 CE to make room for the curved portico that encloses the theater. The building probably dates to the early first century CE.<sup>90</sup>
- Tariff Court (قاعة الضرائب) - The Tariff Court is so named because it is the site of the discovery of a massive stone block called the Tariff of Palmyra. Inscribed on the block in Greek and Aramaic were the rates of taxes on goods entering or leaving the city. The block dates to 137 CE and is now in the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg.<sup>91</sup>
- Temple of Bel (معبد بل) - The Temple of Bel is one of the most recognizable monuments of Palmyra, and one of the most important first century CE religious buildings in the Near East. Evidence of a temple at the site dates to the Hellenistic era (although the site probably dates to at least ca. 2000 BCE). Construction began on the temple *cella* around 17 CE, and it was dedicated in 32 CE. Between 80 and 120 CE, the temple's *temenos* was enlarged, and a colonnaded portico was added on the north, east, and south sides of the complex. In the late second century CE, a larger colonnaded portico and a propylaeum (entrance) were added to the west side (the current entrance dates to the 12th century, when the temple complex was fortified by the Burids).<sup>92</sup>

The design of the temple complex belongs to a style variously known as Palmyrene, Phoenician, Roman, or Syro-Phoenician. Essentially, this consists of design with many Roman or Greek attributes, but also with typically Near Eastern features. For example, this design of a temple complex with small *cella* or *naos* surrounded by a large open space can be traced back to Syria's Ugaritic civilization. The colonnaded portico is a typically Classical feature, but it does not diminish the size of the enclosed *temenos*.<sup>93</sup> The Corinthian columns on the Temple of Bel *cella* are a typically Greco-Roman addition, and the stepped merlons (the triangular structures on the *cella* roof) are a Mesopotamian feature.<sup>94</sup> The *cella* at the Temple of Bel stood on a podium at the center of the *temenos*, surrounded by a prostyle of Corinthian columns. The interior of the *cella* was unique in that it contained two *adyta* (inner sanctuaries containing cult images). While the complex is called the Temple of Bel, several other local deities were there

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<sup>89</sup> Burns 2009: 214

<sup>90</sup> Darke 2006: 240

<sup>91</sup> Darke 2006: 240; Burns 2009: 215

<sup>92</sup> Burns 2009: 210

<sup>93</sup> Burns 2009: 20

<sup>94</sup> <http://www.syriaphotoguide.com/home/palmyra-temple-of-bel>



worshipped, as well.<sup>95</sup> The *temenos* contains the remains of a lustral basin (used to purify oneself before making an offering), an altar, a banquet hall, and an unidentified building with niches. In the northwest corner of the *temenos* there is a ramp along which sacrificial animals were led into the temple area, to be sacrificed on the altar. There were three monumental gateways, of which the main entry was through the west gate. The temple *cella* was converted to a mosque when the temple complex was fortified by the Buyids in the 12th century, and remained in service until 1929. By then, the temple complex had become a small village, whose inhabitants were expelled in order to conduct excavations.<sup>96</sup>

- Temple of Nabu (معبد نبو) - The remains of the Temple of Nabu consist only of the temple podium and the bases of the columns that formed the porticos of the temple *cella* and *temenos*. The *cella* opened south onto an outdoor altar. It dates to ca. 75-100 CE.<sup>97</sup>
- Tetrapylon (التترايبل) - Unlike most Roman cities in the region, Palmyra did not conform to the standard city plan of two intersecting streets (a *decumanus* running east-west and a *cardo* running north-south). The main colonnaded street of Palmyra changes direction twice, and at these points unique architectural devices, namely as the Triumphal Arch and the Tetrapylon, were built to make the route appear more harmonious.<sup>98</sup> The Tetrapylon consists of four large plinths, each supporting four columns topped by a massive cornice. This type of tetrapylon is called a *tetrakionion*, in which the four corners of the structure are not connected overhead. Only one of the original pink Egyptian granite columns survives – the other are modern reproductions.<sup>99</sup>
- Theater (مسرح) - Palmyra's late second century CE Severan-period theater is located southwest of the colonnaded Decumanus. The theater is unfinished, consisting only of the lowest level of seating, the *ima cavea* (the *media* and *summa caveae* would normally be above this lowest section, which is reserved for the elite), but still represents one of the best-preserved Roman theaters in Syria. The Theater is ringed by a colonnaded portico, which opens onto a colonnaded street leading to Palmyra's Southern Gate.<sup>100</sup>

#### Site Date:

- Palmyra: early 2nd millennium foundation, primarily Hellenistic, Palmyrene, Roman, Byzantine, Umayyad
- Baths of Diocletian: ca. 150 CE
- Decumanus: late 2nd-century CE
- Caesareum: 2nd-century CE, 7th-century CE (use as mosque), 13th-century CE (construction of new mosque)
- Triumphal Arch: 193–211 CE
- Temple of Baal-Shamin: ca. 1st - 5th-century CE
- Temple of Bel: Hellenistic, 1st-century CE–late 2nd-century CE, 12th-century CE - 1929 CE (use as mosque)

<sup>95</sup> Gates 2003: 390ff

<sup>96</sup> Kaizer 2002: 67

<sup>97</sup> Burns 2009: 214

<sup>98</sup> Darke 2006: 238

<sup>99</sup> <http://www.syriaphotoguide.com/home/palmyra-tetrapylon>

<sup>100</sup> Darke 2006: 240

- Temple of Nabu: 75–100 CE
- Tetrapylon: late 2nd–century CE
- Theater: late 2nd–century CE

**Incident Summary:** New images of Palmyra are available following the recapture of the city and archaeological area by SARG and Russian forces.

**Incident Source and Description:** New photographs published by various media outlets (including photographs taken by drone and published by the DGAM) allow for initial damage assessments of the Caesareum and Temple of Baal-Shamin.<sup>101</sup> Additional photographs of sites covered in **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0041**, namely the Baths of Diocletian, Decumanus, Triumphal Arch of Septimius Severus, Temple of Bel, Temple of Nabu, Tetrapylon, and Theater, are also examined.

Below is a short summary of the current state of each monument featured by these sources, as well as past damage:

- Baths of Diocletian: There is no reported damage. No major damage is apparent. DGAM photographs show some vegetation overgrowth.<sup>102</sup>
- Decumanus: No specific incident of damage to the Colonnaded Avenue has been reported, but photographs shows a large amount of debris on the ground probably consisting of collapsed columns and pieces of the entablature from the colonnade, as well as vegetation overgrowth.<sup>103</sup>
- Caesareum: There is no reported damage. No major damage is apparent.<sup>104</sup>
- Triumphal Arch of Septimius Severus: Photographs provided by the DGAM are clearer evidence of ISIL’s deliberate destruction of the arch in October 2015 (previously published photographs were of fairly low quality).<sup>105</sup>
- Temple of Baal-Shamin: No new damage is apparent in satellite footage or photographs published by the DGAM and other outlets, but these confirm the complete destruction of the *cella* of the Temple of Baal-Shamin reported in September 2015.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1965>

<sup>102</sup> <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1955>

<sup>103</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/view-of-the-great-colonnade-in-the-ancient-city-of-palmyra-news-photo/518509632> ; <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1955>

<sup>104</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/the-damaged-great-colonnade-in-the-ancient-city-of-palmyra-news-photo/518878104> ; <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/the-great-colonnade-in-the-ancient-city-of-palmyra-a-unesco-news-photo/518895740>

<sup>105</sup> <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1955> ; <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1823> ; For additional information on damage to the Triumphal Arch, see **SHI 15-0138** in **Weekly Report 61-62**.

<sup>106</sup> <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1965> ; <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/general-view-of-the-remains-of-baalshmin-temple-which-was-news-photo/518515258> ; For additional information on damage to the Temple of Baal-Shamin, see **SHI 15-0096** in **Weekly Report 45**; **SHI 15-0124** in **Weekly Report 55-56**.

- Temple of Bel: Photographs published by the DGAM display the extensive destruction to the *cella* of the Temple of Bel. Also, the modern wall on the west side of the *temenos* to the right of the temple's monumental gateway has partially collapsed.<sup>107</sup>
- Temple of Nabu: There is no reported damage. No major new damage is apparent.<sup>108</sup>
- Tetrapylon: There is no reported damage. No major new damage is apparent.<sup>109</sup>
- Theater: No new major structural damage is apparent, though the site clearly suffers from neglect and a great deal of vegetation overgrowth.<sup>110</sup>

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives, gunfire/light weaponry, occupation/militarization, vehicles/heavy weaponry, reuse of ancient/historic structure, landmines, intentional destruction, intentional performative destruction; Vandalism; Illegal excavation; Theft; Agricultural disturbances; Site management.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI is directing critical attention to the condition of all periods of cultural heritage at Palmyra, given the high visibility and ongoing significance of the city and UNESCO World Heritage Site. As new photographs of the site are released, careful analysis will be required to determine the extent and cause of the damage.

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BBC: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35906568>

U.S. Department of Defense: <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/703953/coalition-strikes-target-isil-terrorists-in-syria-iraq>

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<sup>107</sup> <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1955> ; For additional information on damage to the Temple of Bel, see **SHI 15-0055** in **Weekly Report 33**; **SHI 15-0127** in **Weekly Report 55-56**; **SHI 16-0026** in **Weekly Report 79-80**.

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1965> ; <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/columns-in-the-ancient-city-of-palmyra-a-unesco-world-news-photo/518896436>

<sup>109</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/the-great-colonnade-in-the-ancient-city-of-palmyra-a-unesco-news-photo/518895740> ; <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/columns-in-the-ancient-city-of-palmyra-a-unesco-world-news-photo/518896038>

<sup>110</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/the-roman-amphitheatre-in-the-ancient-city-of-palmyra-a-news-photo/518895780> ; <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/partial-view-of-the-roman-theatre-in-the-ancient-city-of-news-photo/518512092> ; For additional information on damage to the Theater, see **SHI 15-0096** in **Weekly Report 45**; **SHI 15-0104** in **Weekly Report 47-48**; **SHI 16-0026** in **Weekly Report 79-80**.

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[http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x403jpk\\_drone-footage-shows-ongoing-battle-for-palmyra\\_news](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x403jpk_drone-footage-shows-ongoing-battle-for-palmyra_news)

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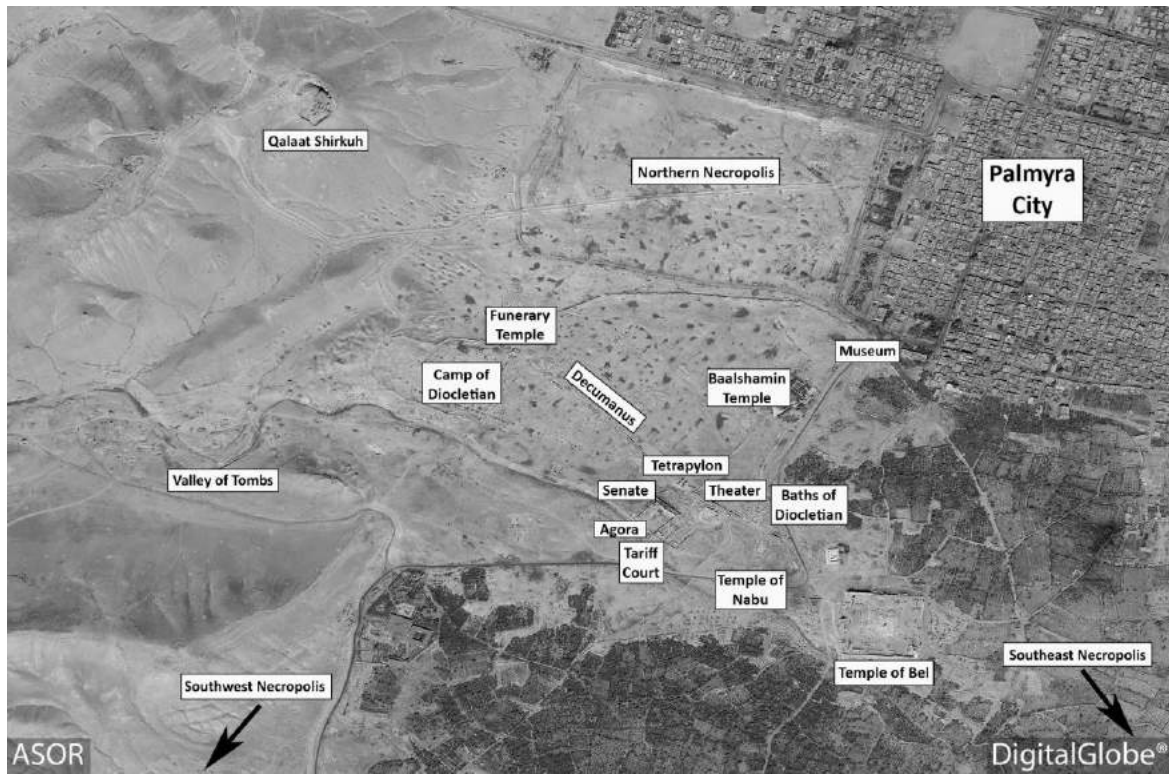
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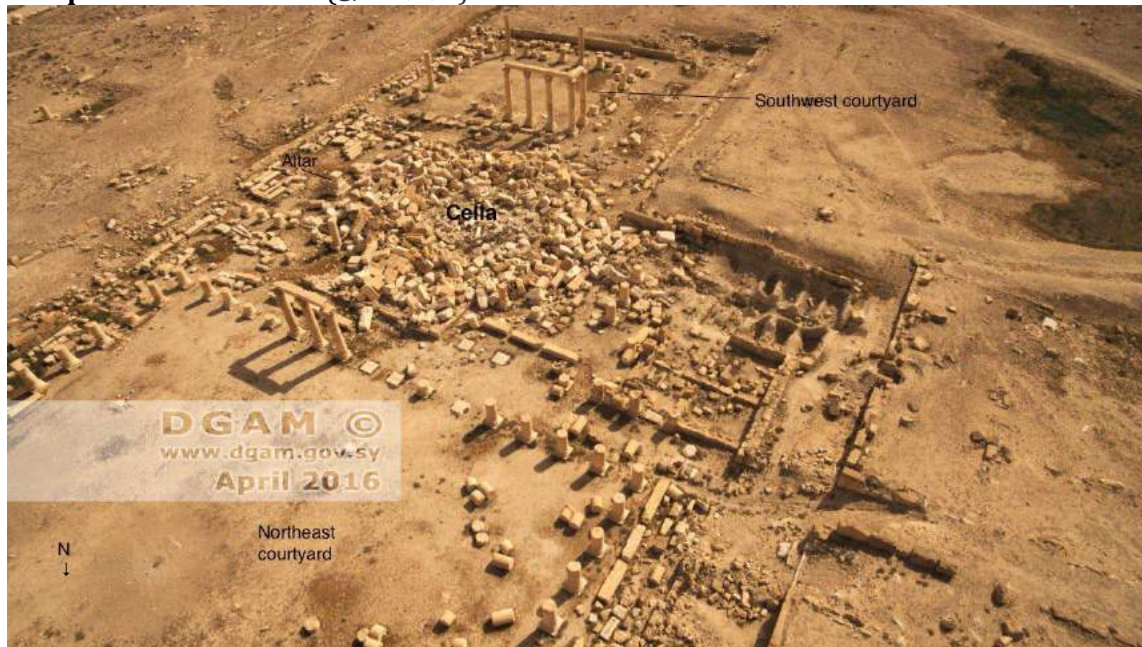
Demeter, D.: Syria Photo Guide <http://www.syriaphotoguide.com/>  
<http://www.syriaphotoguide.com/home/palmyra-funerary-temple>  
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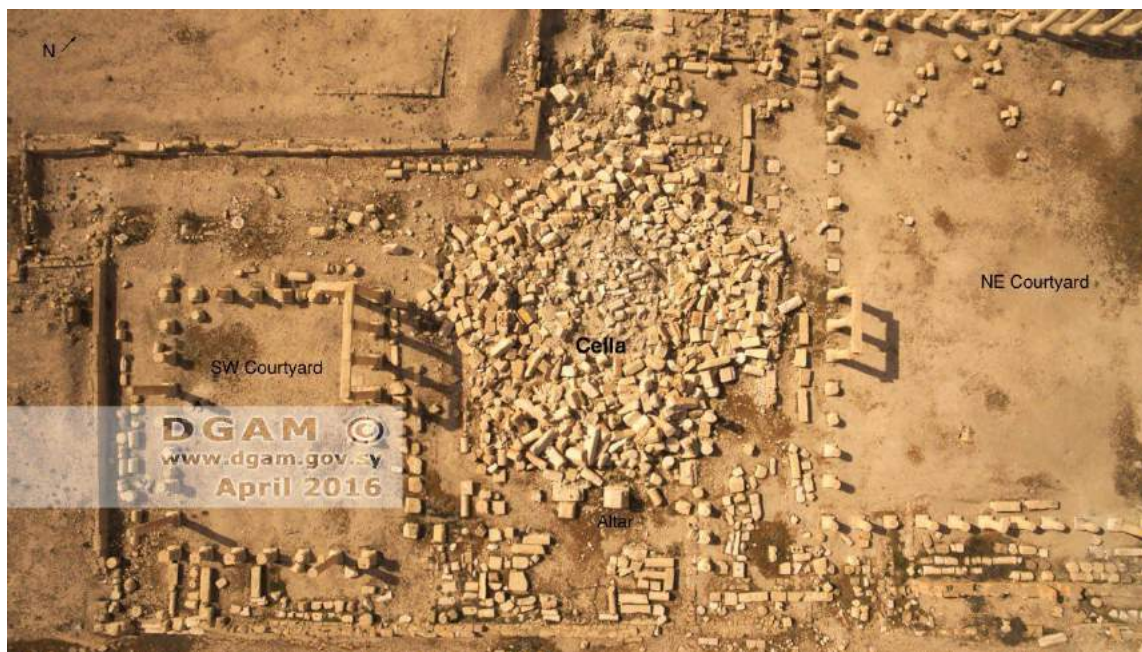


Overview of the archaeological site of Palmyra (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; March 30, 2016)

Temple of Baal-Shamin (معبد بعشمين)



Destroyed *cella* of Temple of Baal-Shamin as seen by drone (DGAM; April 6, 2016)<sup>111</sup>



Destroyed *cella* of Temple of Baal-Shamin as seen by drone (DGAM; April 6, 2016)

<sup>111</sup> ASOR annotations to images are in black text.



Destroyed *cella* of Temple of Baal-Shamin facing northwest (Joseph Eid/Getty; March 31, 2016)<sup>112</sup>



Undamaged portico of Temple of Baal-Shamin southwest courtyard facing northeast (Joseph Eid/Getty; March 31, 2016)<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/general-view-of-the-remains-of-baalshmin-temple-which-was-news-photo/518515258>

<sup>113</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/view-of-the-remains-of-baalshmin-temple-which-was-destroyed-news-photo/518515432>



Rubble of destroyed Temple of Baal-Shamin *cella* facing northwest (Joseph Eid/Getty; March 31, 2016)<sup>114</sup>



Southwest courtyard and destroyed *cella* of Temple of Baal-Shamin facing northeast (Joseph Eid/Getty; March 31, 2016)<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/view-of-the-remains-of-baalshmin-temple-which-was-destroyed-news-photo/518515424>

<sup>115</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/view-of-the-remains-of-baalshmin-temple-which-was-destroyed-news-photo/518515450>





Altar of Temple of Baal-Shamin (circled right) in front of destroyed *cella* facing northwest (Joseph Eid/Getty; March 31, 2016)<sup>116</sup>

**Temple of Nabu (معبد نبو) and Baths of Diocletian (الحممامات)**



Aerial view of Temple of Nabu (top right) & Baths of Diocletian (bottom left) (DGAM; April 6, 2016)

<sup>116</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/view-of-the-remains-of-baalshmin-temple-which-was-destroyed-news-photo/518515480>



Temple of Nabu portico (right) facing east (Valery Sharifulin/Getty; April 3, 2016)<sup>117</sup>



Temple of Nabu *temenos* with Decumanus facing northeast (Valery Sharifulin/Getty; April 3, 2016)<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/columns-in-the-ancient-city-of-palmyra-a-unesco-world-news-photo/518896436>

<sup>118</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/the-great-colonnade-in-the-ancient-city-of-palmyra-a-unesco-news-photo/518896486>



Temple of Nabu *temenos* with entrance to Baths of Diocletian (top) facing northwest (Valery Sharifulin/Getty; April 3, 2016)<sup>119</sup>



Entrance to Baths of Diocletian (left) and Decumanus facing southwest (DGAM; March 30, 2016)

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<sup>119</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/the-great-colonnade-in-the-ancient-city-of-palmyra-a-unesco-news-photo/518896520>



Entrance to Baths of Diocletian (right) & eastern end of Decumanus (left) facing southwest (DGAM; March 30, 2016)



Entrance to Baths of Diocletian (left) and Tetrapylon (middle) facing south west (DGAM; March 30, 2016)

Temple of Bel (معبد بل)



Soldiers standing in rubble of *cella* of Temple of Bel under the monumental doorway (Joseph Eid/Getty; March 31, 2016)<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/syrian-soldiers-stand-on-march-31-2016-on-the-ruins-of-news-photo/518513258>



Destroyed *cella* of Temple of Bel, with monumental doorway facing northwest (DGAM; March 30, 2016)



Destroyed *cella* of Temple of Bel, with monumental doorway facing northeast (DGAM; March 30, 2016)



Destroyed *cella* of Temple of Bel, with graffiti on monumental doorway facing northeast (DGAM; March 30, 2016)



Destroyed *cella* of Temple of Bel with monumental doorway facing northwest (DGAM; March 30, 2016)



Destroyed *cella* of Temple of Bel with monumental doorway facing northeast (DGAM; March 30, 2016)



Destroyed *cella* of Temple of Bel with monumental doorway facing northeast (DGAM; March 30, 2016)





Rubble of destroyed *cella* of Temple of Bel, including stepped merlons (top left) from *cella* roof (DGAM; April 6, 2016)



Destroyed *cella* of Temple of Bel with monumental doorway facing northeast (DGAM; March 30, 2016)



Northern exterior wall of Temple of Bel (DGAM; March 30, 2016)



Monumental gateway of Temple of Bel (DGAM; March 30, 2016)



Modern exterior wall of Temple of Bel (DGAM; March 30, 2016)



Interior of monumental gateway of Temple of Bel and collapsed wall to its left (DGAM; March 30, 2016)



Exterior of Temple of Bel facing southeast (DGAM; March 30, 2016)



Exterior western wall of Temple of Bel with columns of *via sacra* in front, and piles of debris in foreground (Joseph Eid/Getty; March 31, 2016)<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/view-of-the-external-columns-of-palmyras-temple-of-bel-in-news-photo/518512358>



Aerial view of destroyed Temple of Bel *cella* with monumental doorway still standing (DGAM; April 6, 2016)

**Triumphal Arch of Septimius Severus (Monumental Arch; قوس النصر)**



Aerial view of destroyed Triumphal Arch (DGAM; April 6, 2016)



Aerial view of destroyed Triumphal Arch (DGAM; April 6, 2016)



Rubble of Triumphal Arch (DGAM; March 30, 2016)



Rubble of Triumphal Arch facing west (DGAM; March 30, 2016)



Destroyed Triumphal Arch with parts of northern and southern gateways still standing (Joseph Eid/Getty; March 31, 2016)

## Tetrapylon (التتراييل) and Caesareum



Tetrapylon (right) & portico of *Caesareum* (left) facing northwest, with vegetation overgrowth (Valery Sharifulin/Getty; April 3, 2016)<sup>122</sup>



Tetrapylon facing northwest (Valery Sharifulin/Getty; April 3, 2016)<sup>123</sup>

<sup>122</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/the-great-colonnade-in-the-ancient-city-of-palmyra-a-unesco-news-photo/518895740>

<sup>123</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/columns-in-the-ancient-city-of-palmyra-a-unesco-world-news-photo/518896038>



**Decumanus** (Great Colonnade; الشارع الطويل)



Decumanus facing east with vegetation overgrowth (Joseph Eid/Getty; March 31, 2016)<sup>124</sup>



Decumanus facing east with vegetation overgrowth (Joseph Eid/Getty; March 31, 2016)<sup>125</sup>

<sup>124</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/view-of-the-great-colonnade-in-the-ancient-city-of-palmyra-news-photo/518509632>

<sup>125</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/picture-shows-on-march-31-2016-the-remains-of-arch-of-news-photo/518509680>



Decumanus facing south (Joseph Eid/Getty; March 31, 2016)<sup>126</sup>



Entrance gateway to portico surrounding Theater, facing north (Joseph Eid/Getty; March 31, 2016)<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/view-of-the-great-colonnade-in-the-ancient-city-of-palmyra-news-photo/518516128>

<sup>127</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/view-of-the-great-colonnade-in-the-ancient-city-of-palmyra-news-photo/518516010>



Tetrapylon (left) with portico of *caesareum* (middle) (Valery Sharifulin/Getty; April 3, 2016)<sup>128</sup>



Decumanus facing north with modern Tadmor and smoke in background (Valery Sharifulin/Getty; April 3, 2016)<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/the-damaged-great-colonnade-in-the-ancient-city-of-palmyra-news-photo/518878104>

<sup>129</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/the-great-colonnade-in-the-ancient-city-of-palmyra-a-unesco-news-photo/518895722>



Colonnaded street north of Agora facing northwest, vegetation overgrowth (Valery Sharifulin/Getty; April 3, 2016)<sup>130</sup>

### Theater (مسرح)



Theater with vegetation overgrowth facing northwest (Valery Sharifulin/Getty; April 3, 2016)<sup>131</sup>

<sup>130</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/the-great-colonnade-in-the-ancient-city-of-palmyra-a-unesco-news-photo/518896010>

<sup>131</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/the-roman-amphitheatre-in-the-ancient-city-of-palmyra-a-news-photo/518895780>



*Pulpitum* of Theater with vegetation overgrowth (Joseph Eid/Getty; March 30, 2016)<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/partial-view-of-the-roman-theatre-in-the-ancient-city-of-news-photo/518512092>

## SHI 16-0043 UPDATE

**Report Date:** March 28, 2016

**Site Name:** Palmyra Museum

**Date of Incident:** Unknown, post-May 2015

**Location:** Palmyra City, Homs Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Built in 1961 to house artifacts from Palmyra and the surrounding area. The museum is located in the southwestern part of the modern day city of Palmyra in a location known as the Museum Square, which is a vital strategic cross section for the two vital roads linking the town; the road to Homs in the west and the road to Damascus in the southwest. The Museum Square is also considered as the northern entrance to the archaeological area. The museum building is surrounded by the relatively modern (ca. 1940) town of Palmyra to the north and the east, and the archeological area to the south and west.

The Palmyra Museum was extensively damaged from May 2015-March 2016 as a result of ISIL's occupation and intentional destruction, as well as SARG and Russian airstrikes. On April 12, 2016 the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported that the DGAM, with the participation of Polish experts, had begun restoration works at the museum, "operating on a number of artifacts and statues." According to Hossam Hamish, Head of the DGAM Department in Homs, the restoration will "continue for an indefinite period of time and will include restoring the museum's building and restoring and preserving a number of archeological artifacts, statues and mosaic pictures" as well as "documenting and creating an inventory of the artifacts, furniture and offices in the building."<sup>133</sup>

**Site Date:** 1961

**Incident Summary:** New photographs and video footage show clear examples of iconoclasm and suspected airstrike damage to museum.

**Incident Source and Description:** New video footage and photographs released by both local and international media show clear examples of iconoclasm as well as additional evidence of airstrike or heavy weaponry damage at the Palmyra Museum.<sup>134</sup> A large number of Palmyrene artifacts that remain in the museum have been defaced, some of which have had their hands damaged or removed. The floor of the museum is also littered with fragments of faces and heads of artifacts. Information is continuing to surface regarding the museum, as have uncorroborated reports and photographs of damage to museum artifacts. ASOR CHI has already identified at least one photograph that has been labeled incorrectly as the Lion of al-Lat.<sup>135</sup> Photographs and video footage show large holes in the roof as well as large amounts of debris in the museum. Local activists have reported ongoing airstrikes by

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<sup>133</sup> <http://linkis.com/sana.sy/en/qiYAZ>

<sup>134</sup> For additional information on the first reports regarding the condition of the Palmyra Museum see: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 16-0043** in **Weekly Report 85-86**

<sup>135</sup> <http://tass.ru/en/society/866984>

both SARG and Russian forces since ISIL militants took control of Palmyra in May 2015.<sup>136</sup> In addition, ASOR CHI sources report that the Palmyra Museum had been hit by mortar shells as ISIL militants took control of the city.<sup>137</sup> Airstrikes were increasingly frequent, particularly by Russian forces, during the offensive to recapture Palmyra.<sup>138</sup> As is apparent in the videos and photographs, many windows and doors of the museum have been broken and several portions of ceiling have collapsed while others have detached and remain hanging. In the museum halls display cabinets and showcases have been broken or damaged. The date of the damage is unknown, but the overall damage likely occurred during ISIL's occupation.<sup>139</sup> In addition, on November 11, 2015 the Palmyra Committee reported that Russian airstrikes were hitting "large parts of [the] National Museum in Palmyra and its contents."<sup>140</sup> It is important to note that while ISIL released several videos of its intentional destruction inside the archaeological site, no such video footage was released by the group of its damage to the Palmyra Museum or the artifacts within the museum.

On April 6, 2016 Channel 4 News reported that the basement of the Palmyra Museum had been repurposed by ISIL into a court.<sup>141</sup> According to the video report, at least one woman was convicted in that court and executed just outside of the entrance to the museum. In addition, Channel 4 interviews the son of Khaled al-Assad who indicated that his father was brought to the outside of the museum and then executed.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives, intentional destruction, light weaponry, occupation, reuse of historic structure; Vandalism; Theft.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI is directing critical attention to the condition of all periods of cultural heritage at Palmyra, given the high visibility and ongoing significance of the city and UNESCO World Heritage Site. As new photographs of the museum are released, careful analysis will be required to determine the extent and cause of the damage.

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<sup>136</sup> <http://airwars.org/russia-dec2015/>; <http://airwars.org/russia-nov2015/>; <http://airwars.org/russia-oct2015/>; <http://airwars.org/russia-sept2015/>; <http://airwars.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Reckless-Disregard.pdf>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9o3v2JVUtAo>; <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/02/07/18073/>; <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/01/17/16586/>; <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2015/12/17/15667/>; <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2015/11/10/14411/>; <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2015/10/09/13014/>

<sup>137</sup> **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0086** in **Weekly Report 41** (mid-May 2015); **SHI 15-0114** in **Weekly Report 41** (mid-July 2015); **SHI 15-0116** in **Weekly Report 42-43** (early-August 2015); <https://twitter.com/PalmyraPioneer/status/664217837838458881/photo/1> (November 2015).

<sup>138</sup> <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/03/russian-syrian-iranian-coalition-seizes.html>; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-palmyra-idUSKCN0WC26G>; <http://slnnews.co/?p=41297>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4aAkadE4vTU>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uc6lGcbEC3s>; [https://twitter.com/mod\\_russia/status/706780565870092288](https://twitter.com/mod_russia/status/706780565870092288); <http://www.globalpost.com/article/6744609/2016/03/10/syria-russia-strikes-kill-20-jihadists-palmyra>; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-palmyra-idUSKCN0WD1GN>

<sup>139</sup> For additional information on damage to the museum, see: **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0086** in **Weekly Report 41**; **SHI 15-0086** in **Weekly Report 42-43**; **SHI 15-0114** in **Weekly Report 51-52**, **ASOR CHI Incident Report 15-0116** in **Weekly Report 53-54**.

<sup>140</sup> <https://twitter.com/PalmyraRev1/status/664218008550776832>

<sup>141</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWwpxUDoleg>

ASOR CHI has not been able to verify the exact number of Palmyrene statues and artifacts that were removed by Syrian authorities prior to the invasion of ISIL in May 2015, nor the exact number of statues and artifacts damaged inside the museum at the present time. In addition, ASOR CHI cannot confirm if or how many artifacts were looted by ISIL after their capture of the city of Palmyra.

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The Athena Statue (seen at the end of the Eastern Corridor) as seen on March 22, 2014  
(New York Times; March 28, 2016)



Damage to the Athena Statue (BBC; March 31, 2016)



Palmyrene artifacts located in the Palmyra Museum prior to damage (Dr. Michael Danti; 2010)



Possible defacement of artifact seen in the above photograph (Valery Sharifulin/TASS; April 2, 2016)



Damage to Palmyrene artifacts (Maher al Mounes; April 1, 2016)



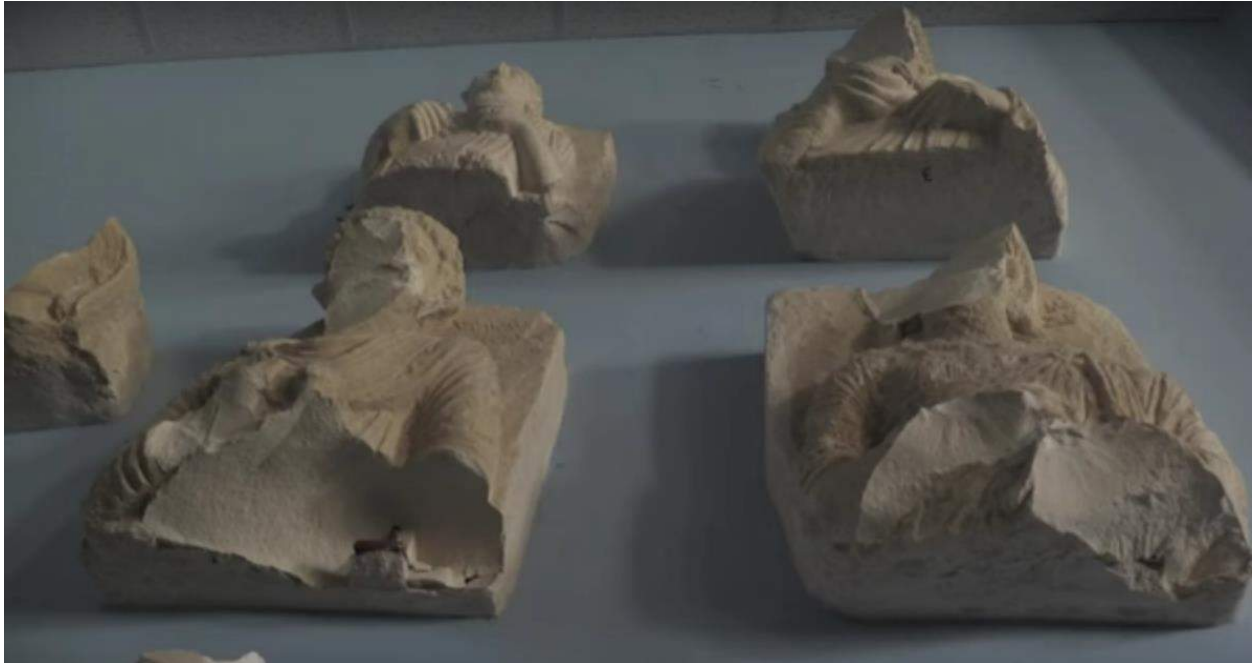
Damaged Palmyrene artifacts (Valery Sharifulin/TASS; April 2, 2016)



Video still of damage to Palmyrene artifacts (AFP; April 1, 2016)



Video still of damage to Palmyrene artifacts (AFP; April 1, 2016)



Video still of Palmyrene artifact with damage to faces and hands (AFP; April 1, 2016)



Damage to Palmyrene artifacts (Joseph Eid/AFP/Getty Images; Published by NPR April 2, 2016)



Palmyrene artifacts with damage to faces and hands (Joseph Eid/AFP/Getty Images; Published by NPR on April 2, 2016)



Damaged Palmyrene artifacts (Valery Sharifulin/TASS; April 2, 2016)



Video still of damaged Palmyrene artifacts (AFP; April 1, 2016)



Detail of video still of detail damaged Palmyrene artifacts (AFP; April 1, 2016)





Possible defacement of Palmyrene artifact (Valery Sharifulin/TASS; April 2, 2016)



Video still of Palmyrene artifact with damage to faces and hands (AFP; April 1, 2016)



Detail of Palmyrene artifact with damage to faces and hands (AFP; April 1, 2016)



Video still of damaged Palmyrene artifact (AFP; April 1, 2016)



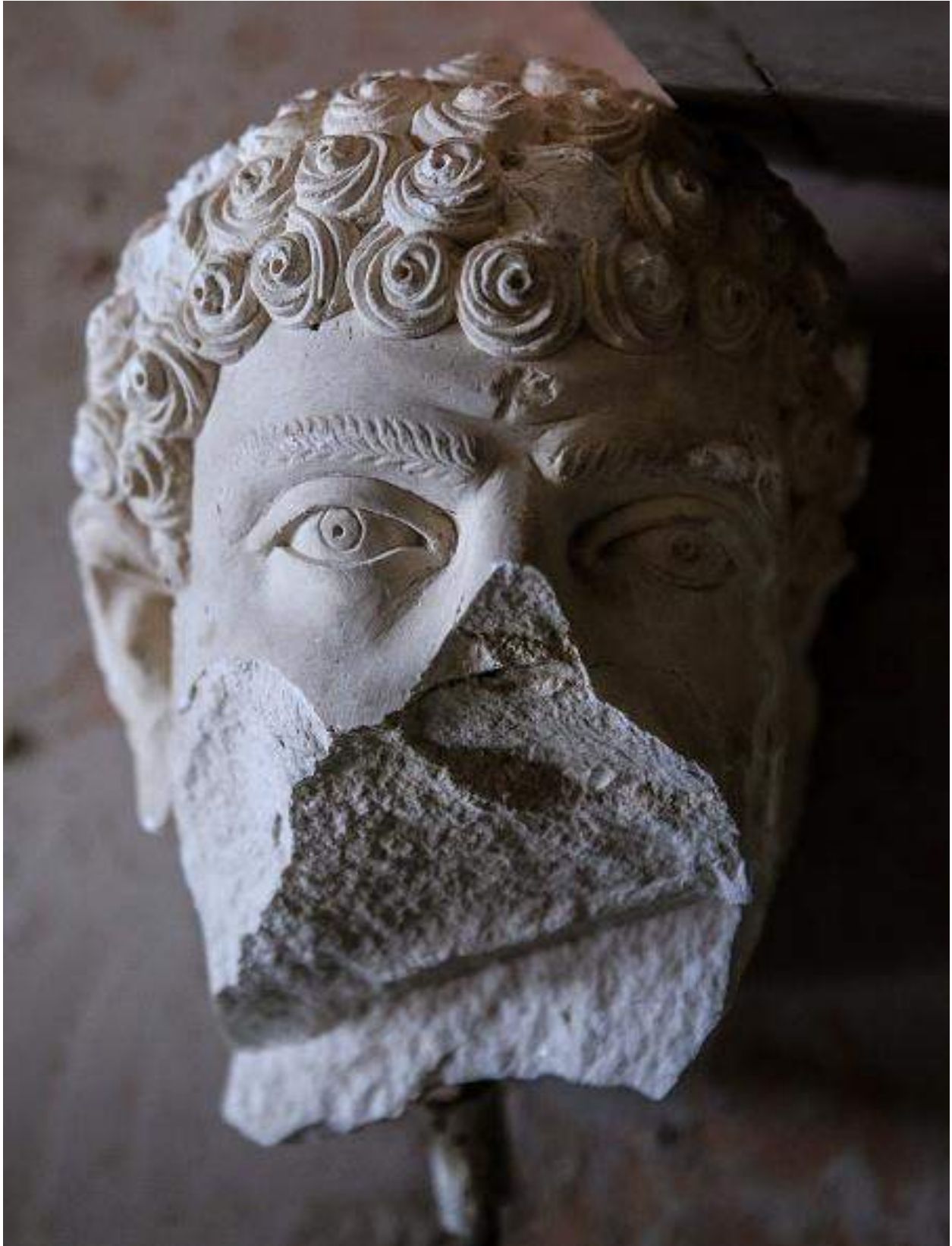
Video still of damaged Palmyrene artifacts (AFP; April 1, 2016)



The face of a Palmyrene artifact on the floor of the museum (Joseph Eid/AFP/Getty Images; Published by NPR April 2, 2016)



Video still of Palmyrene artifact with damage to face and hands (AFP; April 1, 2016)



Detail of damaged Palmyrene artifact (Valery Sharifulin/TASS; April 2, 2016)



Damage to Palmyrene artifact (Valery Sharifulin/TASS; April 2, 2016)



Possible airstrike damage to the ceiling of the museum (Valery Sharifulin/TASS; April 2, 2015)



Video still of possible airstrike damage to the ceiling of the museum (AFP; April 1, 2016)



Video still of debris on the floor of the Palmyra Museum (AFP; April 1, 2016)



Video still of possible airstrike damage to the floor of the museum (AFP; April 1, 2016)





Damage to exterior of Palmyra Museum (Valery Sharifulin/TASS; April 2, 2016)



Damaged Palmyrene artifacts outside of the Palmyra Museum (Valery Sharifulin/TASS; April 2, 2016)



Photo mislabeled as the Lion of al-Lat showing a charred palm tree (Valery Sharifulin/TASS; April 4, 2016)



Graffiti on a container outside of the museum (Lindsey Hilsum; April 3, 2016)



New photograph of damage to the Lion of al-Lāt (Dimashq al-An; April 12, 2016)

**SHI 16-0044**

**Report Date:** March 30, 2016

**Site Name:**

Palmyra (Tadmor; Tadmur; تدمر)

- Valley of the Tombs (وادي القبور)
  - Tower Tomb #65 (Q213)
  - Tower Tomb of Hairan Belshuri (#67; Q214)
  - Tower Tomb of Elahsa (#69; Q216)
  - Tower Tomb of Bene Ba'a (#68; Q215)
  - Tower Tomb #22 (Q264)
- Southeast Necropolis (الجنوب الشرقي مدافن)
  - Funeral Temple (186; S103)
- Southwest Necropolis (جنوب غرب مقبرة)
  - Hypogeum of the Three Brothers (111; R238)
  - Hypogeum of Dionysos (R254)
  - Hypogeum of 'Abd 'Astor Nurbel (R258)
  - Hypogeum of Lišamš (R257)
  - Tower Tomb #91 (R230)
  - Tower Tomb #87 (R232)
  - Tower Tomb #95 (R227)
  - Tower Tomb #96 (R216)
  - Tower Tomb #98 (R208)
  - Tower Tomb #100 (R247)
  - Tower Tomb #103 (R249)
  - Tower Tomb #102 (R248)
  - Tower Tomb #99 (R246)
- Northern Necropolis (مقبرة الشمالية)
  - Unknown Structure #526 (P311)
  - Tomb #115a (525, P310)
  - Funerary Temple #115 (P317)
  - Tower Tomb #114 (P316)
  - Tower Tomb #113 (P315)
  - Tomb #120 (P323)
  - Tower Tomb #121 (P334)

**Date of Incident:** August 2015 - March 30, 2016

**Location:** Tadmor, Homs Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:**

- Valley of the Tombs (Western Necropolis; مقبرة الغربية) - The Valley of the Tombs is an area of the Palmyra necropolis located west of the city's ancient walls where around 100 tower tombs, *hypogea* (underground tombs), and funerary temples (tombs built to look like small temples or houses) have been discovered.<sup>142</sup> The most eye-catching monuments in this area are the tower tombs. Often several stories high, each floor of a

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<sup>142</sup> Schnädelbach 2010: 42-43

tower had multiple chambers containing *loculi*, or small spaces for individual remains. Some towers could thus hold the remains of over 100 people, who were all theoretically relatives or clients of the tomb's founder. Though many were looted in antiquity or more recently, it is clear that these were often highly decorated with murals, intricate architectural features and reliefs, often portraying the tomb founder and his family or characters from myth.<sup>143</sup> Many of these towers are now missing their foundation inscriptions and cannot be dated precisely, however the earliest dated tower was erected in 9 BCE. Changes in construction techniques and architectural features have allowed scholars to group undated towers according to several phases and narrow down a date range for their foundation.<sup>144</sup> The construction of tower tombs continued until around the mid-2nd-century CE (the last dated tower was constructed in 128 CE, though some were used well into the 3rd-century), after which only *hypogea* and funerary temples were built in this section of Palmyra's necropolis. *Hypogea* were used concurrently with tower tombs (which often also included a *hypogeum* chamber below), but independent, dated *hypogea* range from 108-232 CE, and dated funerary temples range from 148-171 CE in the Valley of the Tombs.<sup>145</sup>

- Tower Tomb #65 (Q213) - Tomb 65 was an undated, poorly preserved tower tomb, with extant remains only up to the floor of the third level of the tomb (as well as a badly ruined *hypogeum*). The ground floor contained nine side chambers, each containing eight *loculi*. Decoration included a bas-relief with eight carved figures. The second floor contained eight chambers, each with ten *loculi*. Many of the bas-reliefs mentioned in early excavation notes were stolen in the 20th-century.<sup>146</sup>
- Tower Tomb of Hairan Belshuri (#67; Q214) - According to its foundation inscription, the Tower Tomb of Hairan Belshuri was erected in 33 CE by Hairan, son of Belshuri. Another tomb for the Hairan family (Tower Tomb #21) was already in use at this time. The front of Tower Tomb #67 contained the foundation inscription, as well as a relief with the head of a Gorgon. It stood at least four stories tall. On the ground floor there were eight chambers, each containing four *loculi*. Including the *hypogeum*, there was room for a least 150 burials, but most of the *loculi* went unused. This tower tomb was meant to be used for many generations, and was built on a much larger scale than any built before it.<sup>147</sup>
- Tower Tomb of Elasa (#69; Q216) - The Tower Tomb of Elasa lacks a foundation inscription, but based on its style it probably dates to the end of the 1st-century CE. It is in a very ruinous state, containing only three superimposed rooms each with four chambers for *loculi*. The facade of the tomb has a lintel bearing a very damaged inscription accompanying a missing relief. The inscription, dated 166 CE, enumerates the figures in the relief, including Moqimo, Taimisha, and Zabida, the sons of Elahsha.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Henning 2013: 159-176

<sup>144</sup> Henning 2013: 160-4; Gawlikowski 1970: 44; 93-97

<sup>145</sup> Gawlikowski 2005: 55-59

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 103-104.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 69-71.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 99-100.

- Tower Tomb of Bene Ba'a (#68; Q215) - An inscription on the facade of Tower Tomb of Bene Ba'a states that it was constructed in 83 CE by four brothers: Sabi, Nebuzabad, Taimai, and Nebula, the sons of Belshuri and the grandsons of Hairan (whose tomb was constructed nearby). Interestingly, the Tower Tomb of Hairan remained largely empty when the brothers built this larger, more lavish tomb. The Tomb of Hairan continued to be used, but was perhaps reserved for clients and slaves of the family. The brothers' surname Bene Ba'a is used here to distinguish tombs 67 and 68 from one another. The ground floor of the Tomb of Bene Ba'a contained seven chambers, each with five *loculi*. This room was large enough to fit both a sarcophagus and the entrance to the unfinished *hypogeum*. The higher floors were identical, and differed from the ground floor in that they each had two entrances and seven chambers, each with six *loculi*. A number of reliefs were found within the tower, several of which were moved to the Palmyra Museum and the Hermitage Museum. Inscriptions on these and other reliefs indicate that the tomb contained at least two generations of the brothers' descendants. Therefore, there are records of this particular family at Palmyra spanning over 100 years and five generations.<sup>149</sup>
- Tower Tomb #22 (Q264) - Tower Tomb #22 lacks a foundation inscription, but a floral design surrounding a *loculus* found in several other dated tower tombs suggests it was constructed in the first half of the 1st-century CE.<sup>150</sup>
- Southeast Necropolis (مقبرة جنوب شرق) - The Southeast Necropolis lies over a kilometer southeast of the Temple of Bel, on the other side of the Orchards area from the rest of the necropolis.<sup>151</sup> This area consists of *hypogea* and funerary towers, many of which have never been systematically excavated. The construction of the first dated *hypogeum* dates to 83 CE, and the last to 138 CE. Only two dated funerary temples have been found, with construction dates of 143 and 184 CE.<sup>152</sup> These should not serve *termini ante quem* for the construction of *hypogea* funerary temples in this area as, again, many foundation inscriptions are missing and much of the area is not yet excavated. Around 46 tombs and funerary temples have been discovered in this area of the necropolis.<sup>153</sup>
- Funeral Temple (186; S103) - This type of tomb appeared in Palmyra around 140 CE, and along with the *hypogeum* came to replace the tower tomb burial in the 2nd and 3rd-centuries. Generally, the Palmyrene funerary temples are in a much more ruinous state than the tower tombs, with a large amount of their building materials having been stolen over the years.<sup>154</sup> Funeral Temple 186 was at some point turned into a house, which saved it from being razed to the ground like other funeral temples in the Southeast Necropolis.<sup>155</sup> It has no foundation inscription, but probably dates to the second half of the 2nd-century CE.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 81-83.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 161

<sup>151</sup> Burns 2009: 220

<sup>152</sup> Gawlikowski 2005: 58-9

<sup>153</sup> Schnädelbach 2010: 64-5

<sup>154</sup> Gawlikowski 1970: 129

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 136

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 129

- Southwest Necropolis (جنوب غرب مقبرة) - The Southwest Necropolis mainly consists of *hypogea* (14 of which are dated) and a few undated and poorly preserved tower tombs. The earliest of the dated *hypogea* in this area dates to around 95 CE, and the latest to 186 CE, although a funerary inscription in one of the tombs dates to 279 CE.<sup>157</sup> Some of the most beautiful funerary monuments of Palmyra are found here, including the *hypogea* of the Three Brothers, Atenatan, and Hairan.<sup>158</sup>
- Hypogeum of the Three Brothers (111; R238) - The Hypogeum of the Three Brothers is considered one of the most beautiful and important tombs in the necropoli of Palmyra. Constructed around 142 CE, the tomb was carefully restored by the DGAM in 1947 and 2000. The tomb consists of a main corridor and two side wings. There are a total of 65 side-chambers within these, each containing six *loculi* for a total of 360 *loculi*. One of the corridors contains three beautiful sarcophagi. The tomb also offers rich insight into Palmyrene painting. The main corridor has a fresco displaying the eponymous three brothers in circular frames carried by winged victories. Other frescoes include Zeus with Ganymede and a depiction of Achilles at Skyros.<sup>159</sup> A sarcophagus for one of the brothers is dated 142 CE. Several inscriptions in the tomb state that in 160, 191, and 241 CE, parts of the tomb were sold or granted to a non-relatives and their families, including (in one inscription) to a freedman.<sup>160</sup>
- Hypogeum of Lišamš (R257) - The 2nd-century CE Tomb of Lišamš consists of a central gallery and two side galleries, forming a T-shape. The tomb has around 60 side chambers for interment, but many of these are unfinished. The tomb was looted, perhaps even in antiquity, and contains no sculptures. However, it does contain numerous inscriptions describing the sale by Lišamš of sections of the tomb to non-relatives in 181, 186, and 188 CE. A later inscription describing a sale dates to 251 CE.<sup>161</sup>
- Tower Tomb #91 (R230) - Tower Tomb #91 was poorly preserved, but contained the rare use of a barrel vault instead of a flat ceiling on its ground floor. It probably dated to the second half of the 1st-century CE.<sup>162</sup>
- Tower Tomb #98 (R208) - Tower Tomb #98 was the best preserved tower tomb in the Southwest Necropolis, with standing remains up to its fourth story. It probably once had a relief niche above its entrance. The tower had several unique features which made dating it difficult. For example, the second floor had near its staircase a square alcove covered by a cupola rather than a flat ceiling. The tomb can probably be dated to the second half of the 1st-century CE.<sup>163</sup> There is also graffiti within the tower that dates to the 3rd-century CE.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Gawlikowski 2005: 58-9; Gawlikowski 1970: 162

<sup>158</sup> Burns 2009: 219-20

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 220

<sup>160</sup> Gawlikowski 1970: 204-206

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 120; 207

<sup>162</sup> Henning 2001: 54; Gawlikowski 1970: 161

<sup>163</sup> Gawlikowski 1970: 100-1

<sup>164</sup> Henning 2001: 157; Gawlikowski 1970: 101

- Tower Tombs #87 (R232); #95 (R227); #96 (R216); #99 (R246); #100 (R247); #102 (R248); #103 (R249) - Tower Tombs #87, #95, #96, #100, #103 were all in a very ruinous state, but probably dated to the second half of 1st-century CE.<sup>165</sup> Tower Tomb #99 probably dates to the 1st-century CE. Tower Tomb #102 probably dated to the first half of 1st-century CE.
- Northern Necropolis (مقبرة الشمالية) - The Northern Necropolis is located directly north of the main group of ruins at Palmyra, and abuts the modern town on the necropolis' north and east side. This necropolis has not been extensively excavated. Though it has around the same number of tower tombs as the Valley of the Tombs (as well as many *hypogea* and several funerary temples), these are spread over a wide area and badly maintained.<sup>166</sup> The Northern Necropolis once included tombs as far south as the Temple of Baal-Shamin, but the construction of Diocletian's Wall (a fortification built around Palmyra ca. 303 CE) cut the area in half, and broke with the Roman custom that *necropoli* must be outside a city's walls. Some of the extant tombs were even incorporated into the wall itself. The eastern part of the Northern Necropolis is especially difficult to study because it was the site of a village built in the 1930s by residents evicted from the Temple of Bel.<sup>167</sup>
- Tomb #115a (525, P310) - Tomb #115a in the Northern Necropolis is one of monumental proportions. It consists of a round structure surrounded by a hexagonal wall with a diameter of 17 meters. 63 *loculi* were built in the space between round structure and the outer hexagon, with space for ten burials within each *loculus*. This style of tomb is unique in Palmyra. It was discovered using aerial photography of the necropolis and excavated by the archaeologists Khaled al-Asaad and Ali Taha. Inside they found 3rd-century CE portrait heads of exceptional quality probably representing men of high rank from the Palmyrene army. This suggests the tomb belonged to a very wealthy family. However, no inscriptions were discovered with the tomb. A coin from the reign of the Emperor Claudius (r. 268-270 CE) was discovered within, indicating the tomb was constructed or in use before or around the time of his reign.<sup>168</sup>
- Tower Tombs #114 (P316); #113 (P315); #121 (P334) - As with most monuments in the Northern Necropolis, these tower tombs are in a very ruinous state and have not been studied extensively. But given that the construction of tower tombs at Palmyra ceased around the middle of the 2nd-century CE, these tombs must date to the 1st-century or first half of the 2nd-century CE.
- Funerary Temple #115 (P317) - Funerary Temple #115 is in a very ruinous state, but as Funerary Temples at Palmyra first appeared in the 140s CE, this structure must date to the second half of the 2nd-century or 3rd-century CE.<sup>169</sup>
- Unknown Structure #526 (P311) and Tomb #120 (P323) - Unknown Structure # 526 has not yet been studied or identified. Tomb #120 is an unstudied or unknown tomb type.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Gawlikowski 1970: 103

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 162-5

<sup>167</sup> Piacentini 2005: 246

<sup>168</sup> Henning 2001: 26

<sup>169</sup> Gawlikowski 1970: 129



**Site Date:**

- Valley of the Tombs (ادي القبور): 1st-century BCE - 2nd-century CE
- Southeast Necropolis (الجنوب الشرقي مدافن) : 1st-century CE - 3rd-century CE
- Southwest Necropolis (جنوب غرب مقبرة) : early 1st-century CE - late 3rd-century CE
- Northern Necropolis (مقبرة الشمالية): 1st - 3rd century CE

**Incident Summary:** Since September 2015, eight additional Tower Tombs and a funerary temple were destroyed while three Tower Tombs were damaged.

**Incident Source and Description:** Following SARG's March 27, 2016 announcement that it had recaptured Palmyra from ISIL militants, new DigitalGlobe satellite imagery of ancient Palmyra became available.<sup>171</sup> Below is an evaluation of satellite imagery from March 30, 2016 concentrating on the Valley of the Tombs (Western Necropolis), as well as the Southwest, Southeast, and Northern Necropoli. The March 2016 imagery is compared with older satellite imagery from August and September 2015.

This evaluation demonstrates that between the end of June 2015 and March 30, 2016, at least 19 tombs in the various necropoli were intentionally destroyed, often with explosives. Looting of the archaeological area, rampant even before the capture of the city by ISIL, has continued. Military occupation of the site has resulted in damage to or the destruction of many ruins, particularly evident in the Northern Necropolis. Below is a short summary of the current state of each monument featured by these sources, as well as past damage:

**Valley of the Tombs**

- **June 26, 2015 – August 27, 2015:** DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from August 27, 2015 indicates that the Tower Tombs of Atenatan, the Banai Family, and Iamliku were destroyed with explosives on or before August 27, 2015 (imagery from June 26, 2015 shows the tombs undamaged).
- **August 27, 2015 - September 2, 2015:** DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from September 2, 2015 indicates that ISIL militants destroyed, with explosives, the Tower Tombs of Elahbel, Kithoth, J. Aurelius Bolma, and Tomb #71. DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from March 30, 2016 showed no new damage to these tower tombs. For a detailed report on the damage to these tombs see **ASOR CHI Incident Report SHI 15-0128** in **Weekly Report 57-58**.<sup>172</sup>
- **September 2, 2015 - March 30, 2016:** DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from March 30, 2016 indicates that the Tower Tombs of Bene Ba'a , Hairan Belshuri, and Tomb #65 were severely damaged between September 2, 2015 and March 30, 2016. The Tower Tomb of Elasa appears to still be standing without damage, while the three to its east have all sustained various degrees of damage. Some walls of the tombs are still standing, but the large rubble piles at their bases illustrate some destruction from unknown causes. Based on this debris pattern, these do not appear to have been destroyed with

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<sup>170</sup> Schnädelbach 2010: 40

<sup>171</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-palmyra-idUSKCN0WT04R>

<sup>172</sup> <http://www.asor-syrianheritage.org/special-report-update-on-the-situation-in-palmyra/>

large amounts of explosives in the same manner as other tower tombs in the area (see **ASOR CHI Special Report: The Recapture of Palmyra**).<sup>173</sup>

### **Southeast Necropolis**

- **November 1, 2014:** DGAM reported on November 1, 2014 that the Hypogeum of Artaban had been looted, with over 20 funerary statues stolen. DGAM reported on November 28, 2014 that the looting of the Hypogeum of Artaban was ongoing and that the Hypogeum of Taibul had also been heavily looted, though some of its contents have been recovered. On March 25, 2015, DGAM reported that looting of the tombs was ongoing, and had resulted in structural damage (see **SHI 14-0073** in **Weekly Report 13**; **SHI 14-0086** in **Weekly Report 16-17**; **SHI 15-0058** in **Weekly Report 34**).
- **September 2, 2015 - March 30, 2016:** DigitalGlobe imagery from September 2, 2015 shows the Southeast Necropolis as being largely intact, though there is evidence of the construction of military berms on the site. DigitalGlobe imagery from March 30, 2016 indicates that Funerary Temple # 186 was severely damaged with explosives between September 2, 2015 and March 30, 2016. Moreover, there is evidence of extensive illegal excavation throughout the area (see **ASOR CHI Special Report: The Recapture of Palmyra**).<sup>174</sup>

### **Southwest Necropolis**

- **August 27, 2015 - September 2, 2015:** DigitalGlobe imagery from September 2, 2015 shows the Hypogeum of Lišamš was uncovered with visible vehicle tracks and piles of sand located nearby. A few additional looting holes can be seen to the east of the hypogeum as well. The Hypogeum of ‘Abd ‘Astor Nurbel does not appear to have been damaged.
- **September 2, 2015 - March 30, 2016:** In the DigitalGlobe imagery from March 30, 2016 there are serious changes to the landscape. A single new looting pit is visible in the southern area of the necropolis. There are visible bulldozer marks to the northeast of the Hypogeum of the Three Brothers and to the west of Tower Tomb #87. There are also newly constructed berms and an enlarged entranceway to the Hypogeum of the Three Brothers. To the north of the Hypogeum is a possible dirt pile though it is unclear from where the debris originated. The DGAM has reported that the interior statues and murals are all intact.<sup>175</sup>

The largest change in the Southwest Necropolis is the intentional destruction of eight tower tombs, including Tower Tombs #87, #91, #95, #96, #98, #100, #102, and #103. Tower Tomb #95 was located directly next to the entrance to the Hypogeum of the Three Brothers, just 10 meters apart. Only #87 has any remaining visible architecture. The others have been reduced to rubble piles. Tower Tomb #99 appears intact with no clear damage.

The Hypogeum of Dionysos also appears to be undamaged. There is no clear additional damage to the Hypogeum of Lišamš or the Hypogeum of ‘Abd ‘Astor Nurbel.

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<sup>173</sup> <http://www.asor-syrianheritage.org/4290-2/>

<sup>174</sup> <http://www.asor-syrianheritage.org/4290-2/>

<sup>175</sup> <http://sana.sy/en/?p=73997>

## Northern Necropolis

- **2012 - October 2014:** The Northern Necropolis has been damaged over a lengthy period of time with the first new constructions in the area taking place between 2012 and 2013. A road was constructed across the entire necropolis, and berms were built around the exterior of the entire area. This was previously reported upon by UNOSAT based upon DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from October 26, 2014.<sup>176</sup> Berms were also placed around specific tombs in the area. Circular missile defense areas were also built within the necropolis area. Multiple tombs were affected by this construction as the road went over or near several tombs. UNOSAT also noted additional excavation of Unknown Structure # 526.
- **October 2014 - March 30, 2016:** Since 2014, a few additional berms were placed around tombs located close to the road. These include Tomb #120 and Tower Tomb #121. Additional disturbances have been observed in the northeastern corner of the necropolis. Military trucks are parked just south of Unknown Structure #526 partially on top of the southern wall, with large oil pools visible on the ground. Additional bulldozing is taking place at the northeast corner of the necropolis with dirt piles encroaching upon the tombs located in this area, specifically Tower Tombs #113 and #114, Tomb #115a, and Funerary Temple #115. Smaller roads or tracks can also be seen in this area with additional bulldozing of the northeastern extent and new berms being built. No change was observed in the most recent period between September 2, 2015 and March 30, 2016. The standing tower tombs in this area were not intentionally destroyed, but have likely been damaged due to the nearby use of heavy equipment such as trucks and bulldozers.

**Pattern:** Military activity; explosives, occupation/militarization, vehicles/heavy weaponry, construction, earthworks/roadwork, intentional destruction; Illegal excavation; Theft; Natural impacts; Site management.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI is directing critical attention to the condition of all periods of cultural heritage at Palmyra, given the high visibility and ongoing significance of the city and UNESCO World Heritage Site. Photographs from the ground were not available at the time of publication, but they will be analyzed if and when they are published to determine the extent and cause of damage to the Necropolis archaeological features.

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<sup>176</sup> <https://www.unitar.org/unosat/chs-syria>

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Location of Palmyra's necropoli (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; March 30, 2016)

## Valley of the Tombs



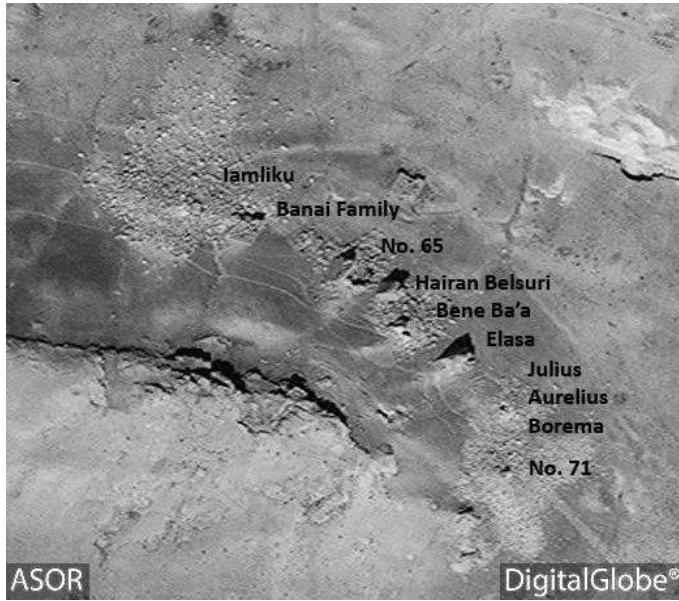
No visible damage to the tower tombs in the Valley of the Tombs (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; June 26, 2015)



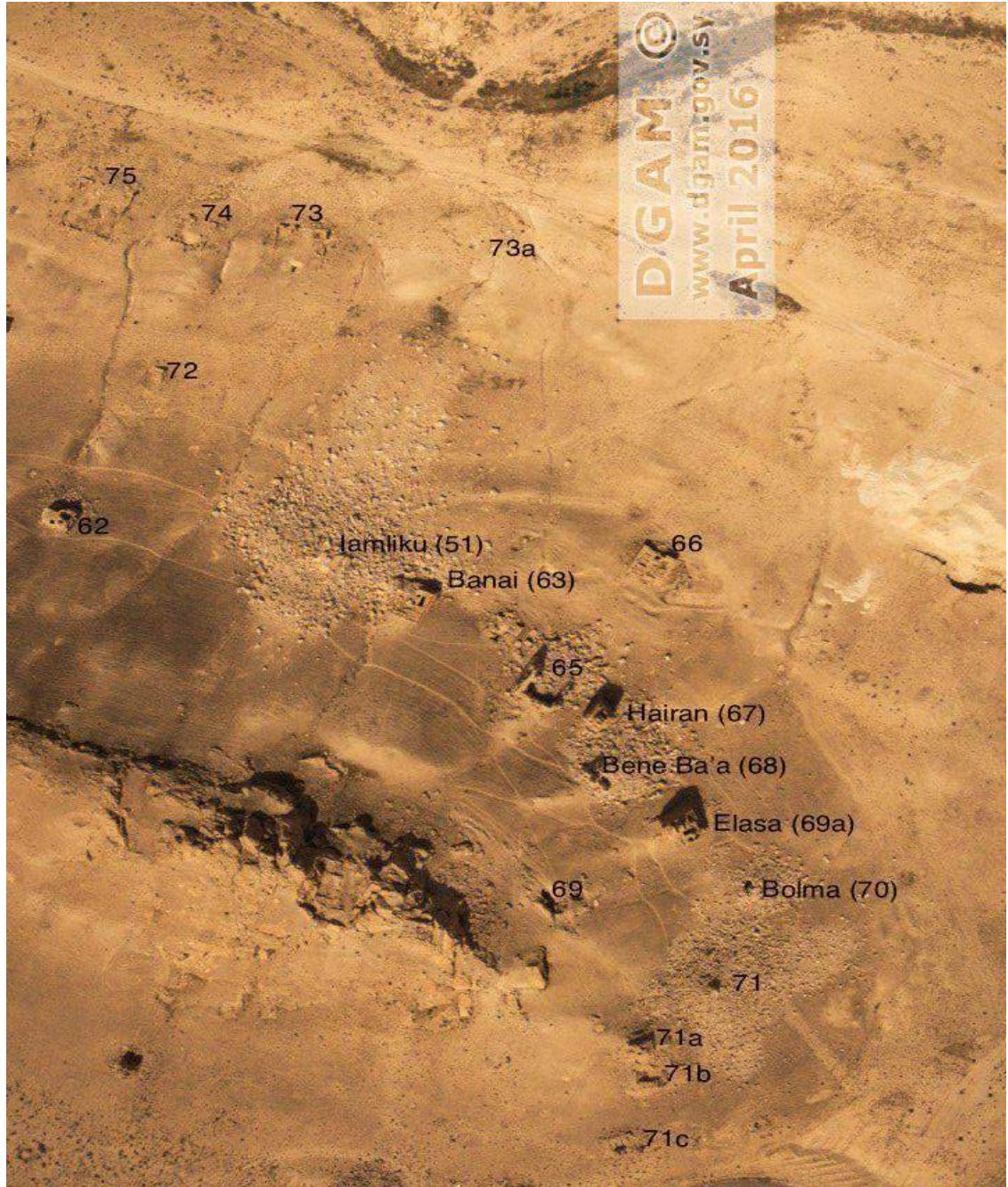
Visible damage to Tomb of Iamluku and Tomb of the Banai Family (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; August 27, 2015)



Visible damage to Tomb of J. Aurelius Bolma and Tomb # 71 (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; September 2, 2015)

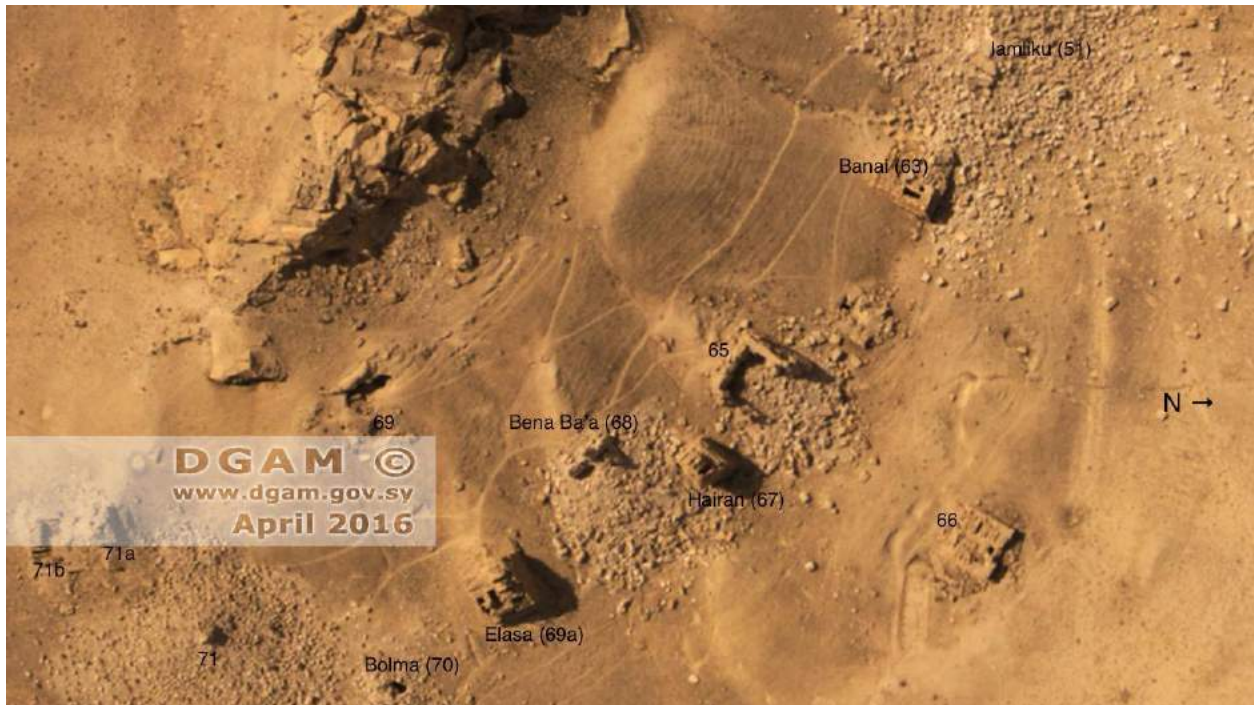


Visible damage to Tombs of Bene Ba'a, Hairan Belsuri, and #65 (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; March 30, 2016)



Damage to tower tombs as seen by drone (DGAM with ASOR CHI annotations; April 6, 2016)





Close up of damage to tower tombs as seen by drone (DGAM with ASOR annotations; April 6, 2016)



No visible damage to tower tombs (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; June 26, 2015)



Visible destruction of the Tomb of Atenatan (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; August 27, 2015)



Visible damage to Tomb of Elahbel. Tomb No. 22 remains intact (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; September 2, 2015)



Visible damage to Tomb No. 22 (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; March 30, 2016)

### Southeast Necropolis



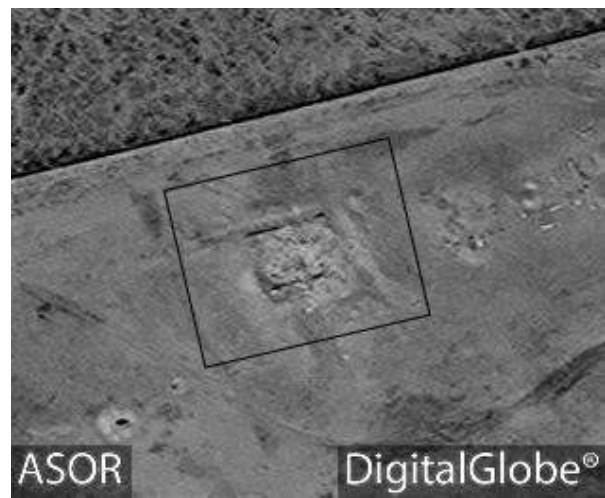
Southeast Necropolis with military berms built around the area. (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; September 2, 2015)



Southeast Necropolis with illegal excavation areas highlighted with dotted ovals and the destroyed Funerary Temple S103 outlined. (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; March 30, 2016)



No visible damage to Funerary Temple S103 (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; September 2, 2015)

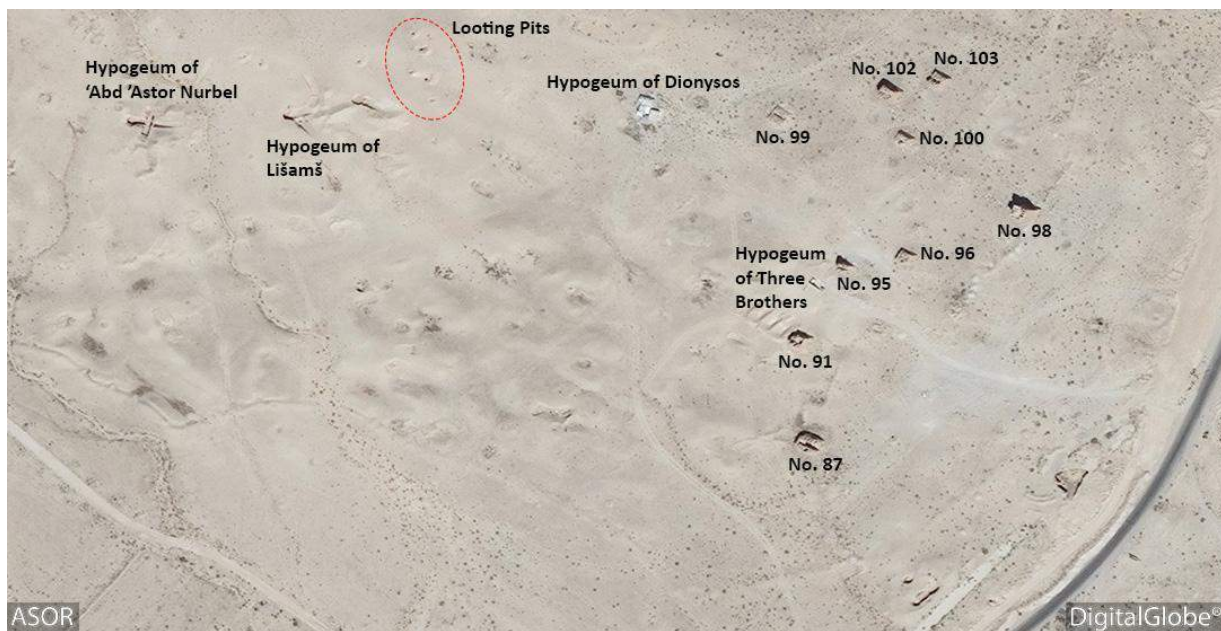


Funerary Temple S103 after destruction (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; March 30, 2016)

## Southwest Necropolis



No visible damage to the Southwest Necropolis (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; August 27, 2015)



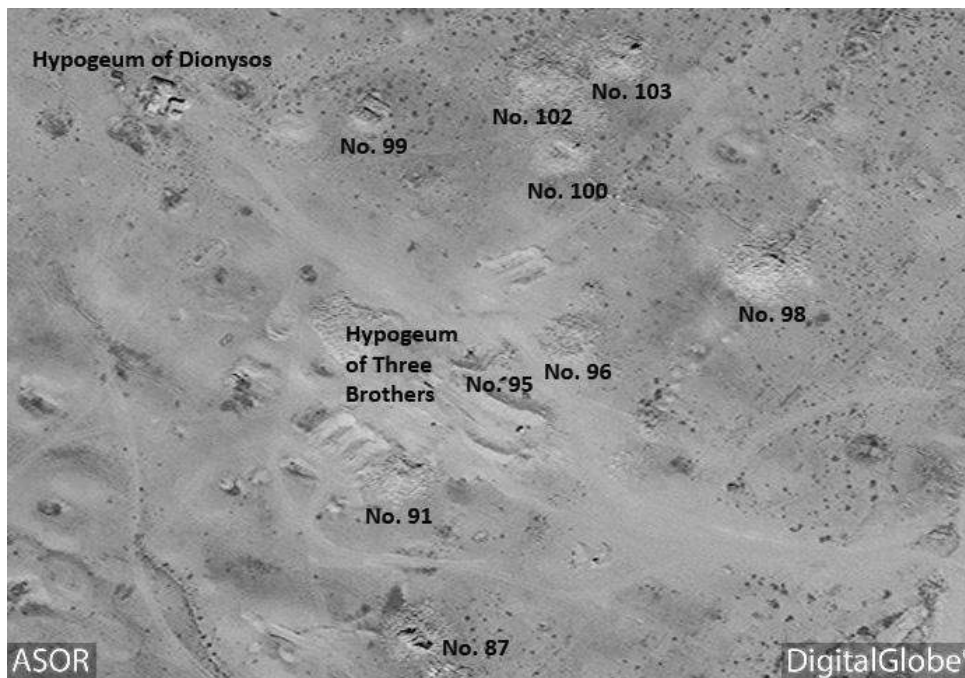
The Hypogeum of Lišamš uncovered and visible looting pits (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; September 2, 2015)



Arrows point to the destroyed tower tombs while bulldozer marks, a looting pit, and berms are outlined (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; March 30, 2016)



No visible damage to the Tower Tombs in the Southwest Necropolis (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; September 2, 2015)

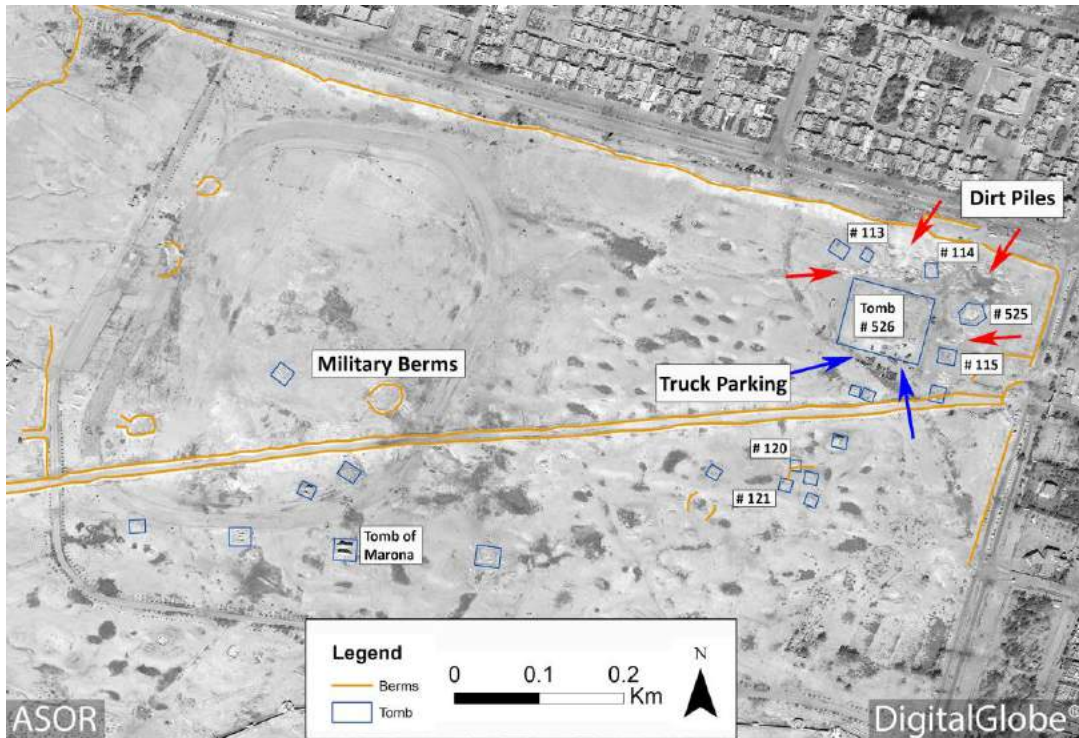


Intentional destruction of 8 Tower Tombs (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; March 30, 2016)

## Northern Necropolis



DigitalGlobe image from January 9, 2012 prior to the construction of the road or military berms within the Northern Necropolis (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; January 9, 2012).



Map of the Northern Necropolis outlining the placement of the road and berms within and around the site. The red arrows point towards dirt piles on site and the blue arrows point to the truck parking (ASOR CHI/DigitalGlobe; March 30, 2016).



**SHI 16-0045**

**Report Date:** March 30, 2016

**Site Name:**

- ar-Rawda Mosque (مسجد الروضة);
- Aqil ibn Abi Talib Mosque (مسجد عقيل بن أبي طالب)
- al-Huda Mosque (مسجد الهدى)
- Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque (مسجد أبو بكر الصديق)

**Date of Incident:** March 30, 2016; April 2, 2016; April 5, 2016

**Location:**

- ar-Rawda Mosque: Duma, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria
- Aqil ibn Abi Talib Mosque: Harasta, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria
- al-Huda Mosque: Khan al-Sheih, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria
- Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque: Dumeir, Rif Dimashq Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosques

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** Severe damage to four mosques in the suburbs of Damascus.

**Incident Source and Description:**

- ar-Rawda Mosque - On March 30, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a SARG airstrike had damaged ar-Rawda Mosque in the suburb of Duma, Damascus. This caused structural damage to the building and destroyed the mosque's minaret.<sup>177</sup> A member of the Syrian volunteer rescue group, the White Helmets, filmed the moment the airstrike hit the mosque and the collapse of the minaret.<sup>178</sup> The ar-Rawda Mosque has sustained previous damage from at least two other SARG airstrikes. Douma Revolution posted a photo on Tumblr on November 3, 2012 showing a large hole in the northeastern side of the mosque.<sup>179</sup> A video posted on YouTube by Free Syr on April 23, 2013 shows more damage to the mosque reportedly due to a SARG airstrike.<sup>180</sup> The video footage shows that all of the windows have been bombed out and severe structural damage to the exterior of the mosque.
- Aqil ibn Abi Talib Mosque - On March 30, 2016 SNHR reported that the Aqil ibn Abi Talib Mosque in the suburb of Harasta, Damascus had been hit by a SARG airstrike. A photograph provided by SNHR shows fairly extensive damage to the exterior of the mosque.<sup>181</sup> The entrance to the mosque appears to have collapsed. The Aqil ibn Abi Talib Mosque has been damaged previously. The Local Coordination Committee for Harasta released a video on YouTube on October 1, 2012 allegedly showing vandalism within the

<sup>177</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/03/30/19822/>

<sup>178</sup> <https://twitter.com/sakirkhader/status/715201684994199553>

<sup>179</sup> <http://doumarevolution.tumblr.com/post/34908336639/تنسيقية-دوما-جامع-الروضة-بعد-قصفه-من-قبل-قوات>

<sup>180</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWIGwPvLu60>

<sup>181</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/03/30/19827/>

interior of the mosque, including broken glass and graffiti, which they blamed on “Assad gangs and Shabiha (pro-Assad thugs).”<sup>182</sup>

- Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque - On April 5, 2016 SNHR reported that SARG airstrikes severely damaged the Abu Bakr al-Sidiq Mosque in Dumeir, northeast of Damascus.<sup>183</sup> No photographs of the damage were provided. Overall, on April 5 SNHR reported that SARG airstrikes resulted in the deaths of at least eight people.<sup>184</sup>
- al-Huda Mosque - On April 3, 2016 SNHR reported that SARG artillery fired shells on al-Huda Mosque in Khan al-Sheih, south of Damascus, damaging the mosque severely.<sup>185</sup> No photographs of the damage were provided. The al-Huda Mosque has been hit by airstrikes at least three times before. The Action Group for Palestinians of Syria reported that a barrel bomb struck near the mosque at prayer time on June 19, 2015 causing extensive damage to the surrounding area.<sup>186</sup> The group also reported on July 7, 2015 that a mortar shell struck the mosque, causing “material damages.”<sup>187</sup> On October 13, 2015 they reported that two shells hit the mosque, causing severe damage to its minaret.<sup>188</sup>

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the situation of these mosques as well as other cultural heritage sites in areas under aerial bombardment and intense military activity, like Damascus.

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<sup>182</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-VaoMwsNc4>

<sup>183</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/05/20082/>

<sup>184</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/05/20080/> ; <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/05/20062/>

<sup>185</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/03/19954/>

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<sup>187</sup> <http://www.actionpal.org.uk/en/post/1458/mortar-shell-targeted-a-mosque-at-khan-al-sheih-camp>

<sup>188</sup> <http://www.actionpal.org.uk/ar/post/-/اخبار-وتقارير-استهداف-مخيم-خان-الشيخ-ومسجد-الهدى-بقذائف-المدفعية-تخلف-اضرار-امادية>

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April 3, 2016: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/03/19954/>

March 30, 2016: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/03/30/19827/>

March 30, 2016: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/03/30/19822/>



Damage to ar-Rawda Mosque and minaret (SNHR; March 30, 2016)



The collapsed minaret of the ar-Rawda Mosque (Conflict News/Twitter; March 30, 2016)



Video still shows smoke from the first of two airstrikes on the ar-Rawda Mosque (Sakir Khader/Twitter; March 30, 2016)



Video still shows the collapse of the ar-Rawda Mosque's minaret after the second airstrike hit the building (Sakir Khader/Twitter; March 30, 2016)



Damage to ar-Rawda Mosque after an airstrike in November 2012 (Douma Revolution/Tumblr; November 3, 2012)



Severe damage to the ar-Rawda Mosque from an airstrike (Free Syr/Youtube; April 23, 2013)



Severe damage to the ar-Rawda Mosque from an airstrike (Free Syr/Youtube; April 23, 2013)



Damage to the entrance of Aqil ibn Abi Talib Mosque and its fence (SNHR; March 30, 2016)



Glass on the floor of the Aqil ibn Abi Talib Mosque (Coordination Harasta; October 1, 2012)





A broken mirror or window in the Aqil ibn Abi Talib Mosque (Coordination Harasta; October 1, 2012)

**SHI 16-0046**

**Report Date:** April 1, 2016

**Site Name:** al-Nur Mosque (Bassel Mosque; مسجد النور)

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

**Location:** Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** 1990s CE

**Incident Summary:** Mosque damaged during an airstrike reportedly carried out by Coalition forces. .

**Incident Source and Description:** The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that US-led Coalition airstrikes fired two missiles near al-Nur Mosque in Deriyeh neighborhood in Raqqa, causing damage to the mosque and its surroundings.<sup>189</sup> The activist group Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS) provided photographs of the damage to the mosque, which show broken glass and other debris in the mosque interior, and damage to the area around the mosque, especially the street in front of the building.<sup>190</sup> According to Qasioun News, the airstrike occurred during Friday prayers, killing three people and injuring at least 30 others.<sup>191</sup> RBSS reports the airstrike struck a car on al-Nur Street outside of the mosque.<sup>192</sup> ARA News reports several ISIL militants were among the dead and wounded.<sup>193</sup>

US-led coalition (International Coalition) airstrikes against ISIL targets have been frequent in Raqqa and the surrounding area,<sup>194</sup> supporting the claim that the damage to the mosque was caused by Coalition forces. On April 2, 2016 the US Department of Defense stated that they had conducted a strike within the past 24 hours “near Raqqah (sic)”, striking “an ISIL tactical unit and destroyed an ISIL vehicle.”<sup>195</sup>

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

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<sup>189</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/01/19905/>

<sup>190</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1178095558868360> ;  
<https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1178102788867637>

<sup>191</sup> [http://qasioun.net/en/news/show/22053/Casualties And Injuries While US Warplanes Mounts Airstrikes Over Raqqa](http://qasioun.net/en/news/show/22053/Casualties%20And%20Injuries%20While%20US%20Warplanes%20Mounts%20Airstrikes%20Over%20Raqqa)

<sup>192</sup> [https://twitter.com/Raqqa\\_SL/status/715966696058699776](https://twitter.com/Raqqa_SL/status/715966696058699776)

<sup>193</sup> <http://aranews.net/2016/04/u-s-led-coalition-hit-isis-mosque-syrias-raqqa/>

<sup>194</sup> <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Mar-31/344943-isis-commander-killed-in-strike-near-syrias-raqqa-activist.ashx> ; <http://mobile.reuters.com/article/idUSKCN0X000G> ;  
<http://www.voanews.com/content/islamic-state-suffers-more-reversals-syria/3268963.html>

<sup>195</sup> <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/711927/inherent-resolve-strikes-target-isis-in-syria-iraq>

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the situation of these mosques as well as other cultural heritage sites in areas under aerial bombardment and intense military activity.

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Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently:

<https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1178095558868360> ; <https://www.facebook.com/Raqqa.SI/posts/1178102788867637> ; [https://twitter.com/Raqqa\\_SL/status/715966696058699776](https://twitter.com/Raqqa_SL/status/715966696058699776)

SNHR: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/01/19905/>

US Department of Defense:

<http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/711927/inherent-resolve-strikes-target-isil-in-syria-iraq>



Broken glass and debris inside al-Nur Mosque (RBSS; April 1, 2016)



Broken glass and debris inside al-Nur Mosque (RBSS; April 1, 2016)



Broken glass and debris inside al-Nur Mosque (RBSS; April 1, 2016)



Broken glass and debris inside al-Nur Mosque (RBSS; April 1, 2016)



Damage to street outside of al-Nur Mosque (RBSS; April 1, 2016)



Damage to street outside of al-Nur Mosque (RBSS; April 1, 2016)



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Damage to street outside of al-Nur Mosque (RBSS; April 1, 2016)



**SHI 16-0047**

**Report Date:** April 5, 2016

**Site Name:** Bosra - Theater

**Date of Incident:** Unknown

**Location:** Bosra al-Sham, Daraa Governorate, Syria

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

"The theatre owes its exceptional state of preservation (from both the ravages of earthquakes and the building programs of later centuries) to its conversion into an Ayyubid fort guarding the southern approaches to Damascus.<sup>196</sup>

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

... The Ayyubid upper ramparts now house, on the upper terrace, a collection of sculptures from the Roman period as well as Roman and Arabic inscriptions. Al-Salih established a palace complex and mosque within the Roman auditorium, remains of which were removed during the reconstruction program. One surviving remnant is the water basin of the palace hammam which has been transferred to the ethnographic (folklore) collection in the southwestern tower."<sup>197</sup>

**Site Date:** Roman to Ayyubid

**Incident Summary:** Looting in Bosra Roman ruins.

**Incident Source and Description:** On March 20, 2016 Baladi News reported on ongoing illegal excavations and looting in Bosra.<sup>198</sup> The Director of the Bosra al-Sham Antiquities Department, Suleiman al-Issa, blamed the current looting on young people rendered unemployed by the siege of Bosra by SARG forces in 2013, and the SARG takeover of the city in 2014. However, al-Issa states that most looting damage was done by SARG forces, and that the FSA takeover of the city in March 2015 succeeded in stopping up to 90% of the looting. A battalion of the FSA has been assigned to assist the Department of Antiquities with protecting archaeological sites from looting and vandalism.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Burns 2009: 79

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>198</sup> <http://baladi-news.com/ar/news/details/4343>

<sup>199</sup> <http://levantmagazine.net/index.php/reports/item/638--التنقيب-عن-الأثار-في-الجنوب-السوري-بديل-للعمل-التجاري>

The Roman Theater and Ayyubid Citadel have sustained damage multiple times since 2013.<sup>200</sup> Most recently, on December 22, 2015 the Bosra al-Sham Antiquities Department reported SARG helicopters had dropped barrel bombs on the on site, causing massive damage to the western side of the Theater and Citadel. See **ASOR Incident Report SHI 15-0166** in **Weekly Reports 71-72** and **73-74**

**Pattern:** Vandalism; Illegal excavation; Theft.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI remains concerned about looting throughout Syria and will continue to monitor reports of illegal looting and excavation throughout the country.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Baladi News:

<http://baladi-news.com/ar/news/details/4343>

Bosra al-Sham Antiquities Department:

[https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=1741445886098570&id=1642112122698614](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1741445886098570&id=1642112122698614)

Levant Magazine:

<http://levantmagazine.net/index.php/reports/item/638-التقيب-عن-الأثار-في-الجنوب-السوري-بديل-638-للعمل-التجاري>

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<sup>200</sup> For earlier incidents of damage, see **ASOR CHI Incident Reports SHI 15-0133** in **Weekly Report 59-60**; **SHI 15-0057** in **Weekly Reports 33-34**; **SHI 14-0037** in **Weekly Report 8**



A looting pit in the courtyard overlooking the eastern side of the Theater (Bosra al-Sham Antiquities Department; March 21, 2016)

**SHI 16-0048**

**Report Date:** April 5, 2016

**Site Name:** al-Kabir Mosque (جامع معرة النعمان الكبير)

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

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

**Site Description:** Located in the main square of Ma'arat al-Numan, al-Kabir Mosque was built on the site of an earlier temple, the remains of which were used in the construction of the mosque. For example, the two domed pavilions in the central courtyard are supported by Roman or Byzantine-era columns. The mosque's minaret was originally erected in the early 12th century CE, but was rebuilt after an earthquake in 1170. This rebuilding is attributed to the Kahir al-Sarmani, whose signature appears on the on the west face of the building and who sought to imitate the minaret of the Great Mosque of Aleppo.<sup>201</sup>

**Site Date:** 12th century CE

**Incident Summary:** A car bomb of unknown origin damaged mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** On April 5, 2016 the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reported that a car bomb detonated in a market near al-Kabir Mosque in Ma'arat al-Numan, "damaging it severely."<sup>202</sup> A photograph provided by SNHR shows severe damage to the street and nearby buildings on the eastern side of the mosque. A building attached to the mosque, but which appears to be a more modern construction, appears to have sustained damage to its southeastern facade. The car bomb killed one person and wounded at least ten others.<sup>203</sup> AFP published a video taken by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights that shows debris in what appears to be the entryway to the mosque or a side room on the southeast side of the building. No group has yet taken responsibility for the attack. Ma'arat al-Numan residents have protested daily against Jabhat al-Nusra in support of FSA Division 13 since mid-March.<sup>204</sup>

Al-Kabir Mosque was previously damaged on November 2, 2015 when a series of airstrikes damaged the exterior and roof of the minaret. Photographs provided by ASOR CHI in-country sources indicate minor damage to the exterior of the minaret. Al Marra Today reported the airstrikes were launched by Russian forces and were aimed at the nearby market.<sup>205</sup>

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

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<sup>201</sup> Burns 2009: 194-195

<sup>202</sup> [https://twitter.com/snhr/status/717392988440289280/photo/1?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw](https://twitter.com/snhr/status/717392988440289280/photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

<sup>203</sup> <https://en.zamanalwsl.net/news/15053.html>

<sup>204</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m41Fy98SSaQ> ;  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m41Fy98SSaQ>

<sup>205</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4sYAihXD-U>

## Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:

### Sources:

#### Online Reporting:

AFP: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m41Fy98SSaQ>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m41Fy98SSaQ>

Al-Marra Today:

April 5, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUPqXrgRe6g>

April 5, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84a299rB1u0>

Now Media: <https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/NewsReports/566827-car-bomb-rocks-idlib-town-protesting-nusra>

SNHR:

[https://twitter.com/snhr/status/717392988440289280/photo/1?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw](https://twitter.com/snhr/status/717392988440289280/photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

#### Scholarly:

ArchNet: [http://archnet.org/sites/1857/media\\_contents/35437](http://archnet.org/sites/1857/media_contents/35437)

Burns, Ross (2009) *The Monuments of Syria: A Guide*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Rihawi, Abdul Qader (1979) *Arabic Islamic Architecture in Syria*. Damascus: Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.



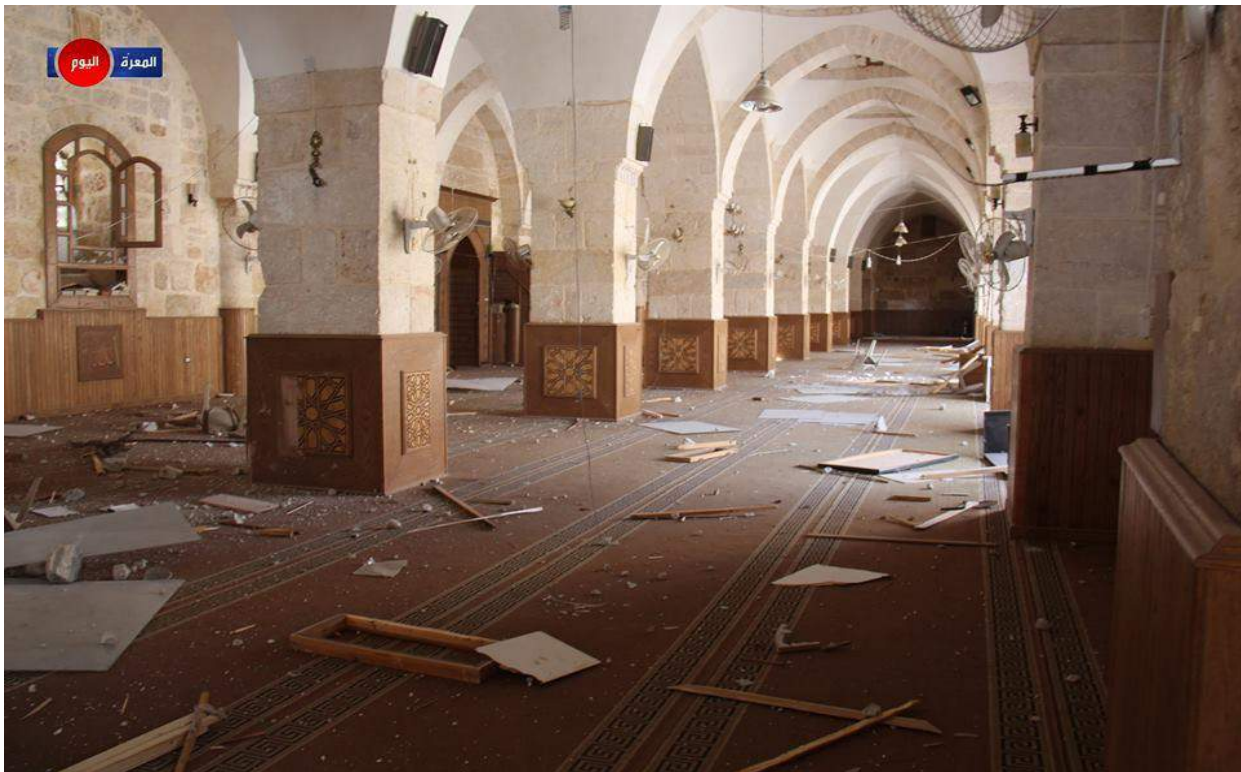
Damage to southeast side of al-Kabir Mosque (SNHR; April 5, 2016)



Damage to southeast side of al-Kabir Mosque (Now Media; April 5, 2016)



Damage and debris in interior of al-Kabir Mosque (AFP via SOHR; April 5, 2016)



Damage and debris in interior of al-Kabir Mosque (Now Media; April 5, 2016)



Video still of damage and debris in interior of al-Kabir Mosque (Al-Marra Today; April 5, 2016)



Damage to the exterior of al-Kabir Mosque (The Day After Heritage Protection Initiative (TDA); Provided to ASOR CHI on April 7, 2016)





Damage to the exterior of al-Kabir Mosque (TDA; Provided to ASOR CHI on April 7, 2016)



Damage to the exterior of al-Kabir Mosque (TDA; Provided to ASOR CHI on April 7, 2016)



Damage surrounding al-Kabir Mosque (TDA; Provided to ASOR CHI on April 7, 2016)



Damage surrounding al-Kabir Mosque (TDA; Provided to ASOR CHI on April 7, 2016)



Damage surrounding al-Kabir Mosque (TDA; Provided to ASOR CHI on April 7, 2016)



Damage to the exterior of al-Kabir Mosque (TDA; Provided to ASOR CHI on April 7, 2016)



Damage surrounding al-Kabir Mosque (TDA; Provided to ASOR CHI on April 7, 2016)



Damage surrounding al-Kabir Mosque (TDA; Provided to ASOR CHI on April 7, 2016)

**SHI 16-0049**

**Report Date:** April 8, 2016

**Site Name:** Church of the Child Jesus (كنيسة يسوع الطفل) ; Teresa Church [كنيسة تريزا]

**Date of Incident:** Unknown

**Location:** Palmyra, Homs Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Named as the only church in Palmyra by the Palmyra Coordination.

**Site Date:** Unknown, likely modern

**Incident Summary:** Video footage shows damage to church in Palmyra.

**Incident Source and Description:** On April 3, 2016 Channel 4 News published a video of the damage to a church in the modern city of Palmyra.<sup>206</sup> The exterior of the church shows damage possibly caused by explosives or nearby fighting. The interior of the church is bare with what appears to be some intentional damage. ISIL militants are known to desecrate churches, as well as mosques and other religious sites, in areas under their control. We currently do not know when this damage occurred.

On March 10, 2016 the Palmyra Committee released an urgent bulletin calling the city of Palmyra a “disaster zone.”<sup>207</sup> The bulletin remarked that the city’s only church had been damaged. The Palmyra Committee appears to blame Russian airstrikes as causing the damage to the church.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives, intentional destruction.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Church of the Child Jesus, other heritage sites within the city of Palmyra, and the condition of other heritage sites located in regions subject to ongoing aerial bombardment campaigns and intense military activity.

ASOR CHI is directing critical attention to the condition of all periods of cultural heritage of Palmyra and the Tadmor area given its significance as UNESCO World Heritage Site and the presence of a vulnerable civilian population.

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<sup>206</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hu5xfjSgGA;>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kn8jpmZrrE8>

<sup>207</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/revo.palmyra3/photos/pb.410518082406470.-2207520000.1460139188./483939621730982/>

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

Channel 4 News:

April 5, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kn8jpmZrrE8>

April 3, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hu5xfjSgGA>

Palmyra Coordination:

<https://www.facebook.com/revo.palmyra3/photos/pb.410518082406470.-2207520000.1460139188./483939621730982/>



The interior of the Church of the Child Jesus (Channel 4 News; April 5, 2016)



The interior of the Church of the Child Jesus, showing the altar (Channel 4 News; April 5, 2016)



A damaged bible in the window of the Church of the Child Jesus (Channel 4 News; April 5, 2016)





A photograph depicting a religious ceremony found on the floor of the Church of the Child Jesus (Channel 4 News; April 5, 2016)

**SHI 16-0050**

**Report Date:** April 9, 2016

**Site Name:** Sheikh Saeed Mosque (مسجد الشيخ سعيد)

**Date of Incident:** April 8, 2016

**Location:** Saraqib, Idlib Governorate, Syria

**Site Description:** Mosque

**Site Date:** Unknown

**Incident Summary:** An airstrike reportedly conducted by SARG forces damaged a mosque.

**Incident Source and Description:** Syrian Network for Human Rights reported that SARG forces fired missiles on Sheikh Saeed Mosque in Saraqib, “damaging it and rendering it inoperable.”<sup>208</sup> No photographs of the damage were available at the time of reporting.

**Pattern:** Military activity: explosives.

**Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures:** ASOR CHI will continue to monitor reports of cultural heritage destruction in Idlib Governorate and other areas of heavy aerial bombardment.

**Sources:**

Online Reporting:

SNHR: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/09/20427/>

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<sup>208</sup> <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2016/04/09/20427/>