

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

S-JO-100-18-CA-004

November 2018 Monthly Appendices

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## Table of Contents:

Other Key Points	2
Military and Political Context	3
Other Key Points	5
Incident Reports: Syria	7
Heritage Timeline	61

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

## Other Key Points

### Aleppo Governorate

New video shows restoration and cleaning at the Bab al-Faraj Clock Tower in Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate. [ASOR CHI Heritage Response SHI 18-0142](#)

New video shows reconstruction and cleaning of the Aleppo Citadel, Aleppo Governorate.

## Military and Political Context

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

1. Idlib Governorate:

On November 1, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) reported, via the group's Telegram channel, that the group had raided SARG positions in eastern Idlib Governorate, killing 10 SARG fighters.<sup>2</sup>

On November 2, SARG shelling struck the town of Jarjanaz, killing at least eight people.<sup>3</sup>

On November 23, unidentified gunmen assassinated Syrian activist Raed al-Fares

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

On November 12, SARG and pro-regime shelling struck the towns and villages of al-Mutnah, al-Khuwayn, and Jarjanaz.<sup>11</sup>

On November 24, the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported that Syrian opposition shelling wounded dozens of people in the city of Aleppo. SANA accused the opposition of using chemical weapons in the attack. The Syrian regime called on the United Nations to condemn the opposition for the use of chemical weapons. The Turkish-backed Syrian National Liberation Front (NLF) denied the use of chemical weapons in the reported attack and accused the Syrian regime of perpetrating the attack in an attempt to “frame” the opposition.<sup>12</sup>

On November 24, SARG and Syrian opposition groups exchanged prisoners near the town of al-Bab. The Turkish foreign ministry reported that ten prisoners on either side were exchanged, in what it called a “pilot project.”<sup>13</sup>

3. Deir ez-Zor Governorate:

On November 8–16, the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) reportedly sent 1,700 reinforcements from Ain al-Arab (Kobani) and Manbij to support ongoing military operations against ISIS near Hajin.<sup>14</sup>

On November 9, the Syrian Arab Army and members of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) reportedly began mining the western bank of the Euphrates River, south of the city of Deir ez-Zor, reportedly to prevent “cross-river infiltration” by ISIS.<sup>15</sup>

On November 11, the SDF resumed operations against ISIS in remaining territories held by the group in the governorate following an October pause in the offensive following Turkish threats against the YPG in Syria. The US-led Coalition has continued aerial bombardment over the area.<sup>16</sup>

On November 17, reported US-led Coalition airstrikes struck a village in the Buwan area near the town of Hajin, reportedly killing at least 29 civilians. According to the SOHR, ISIS militants in the village were stopping civilians from leaving areas still held by the group in the governorate. The US-led Coalition denied reports that its airstrikes killed civilians, stating that it struck only “legitimate militant targets,” and adding that an additional ten strikes in the area were not carried out by the Coalition.<sup>17</sup>

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

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

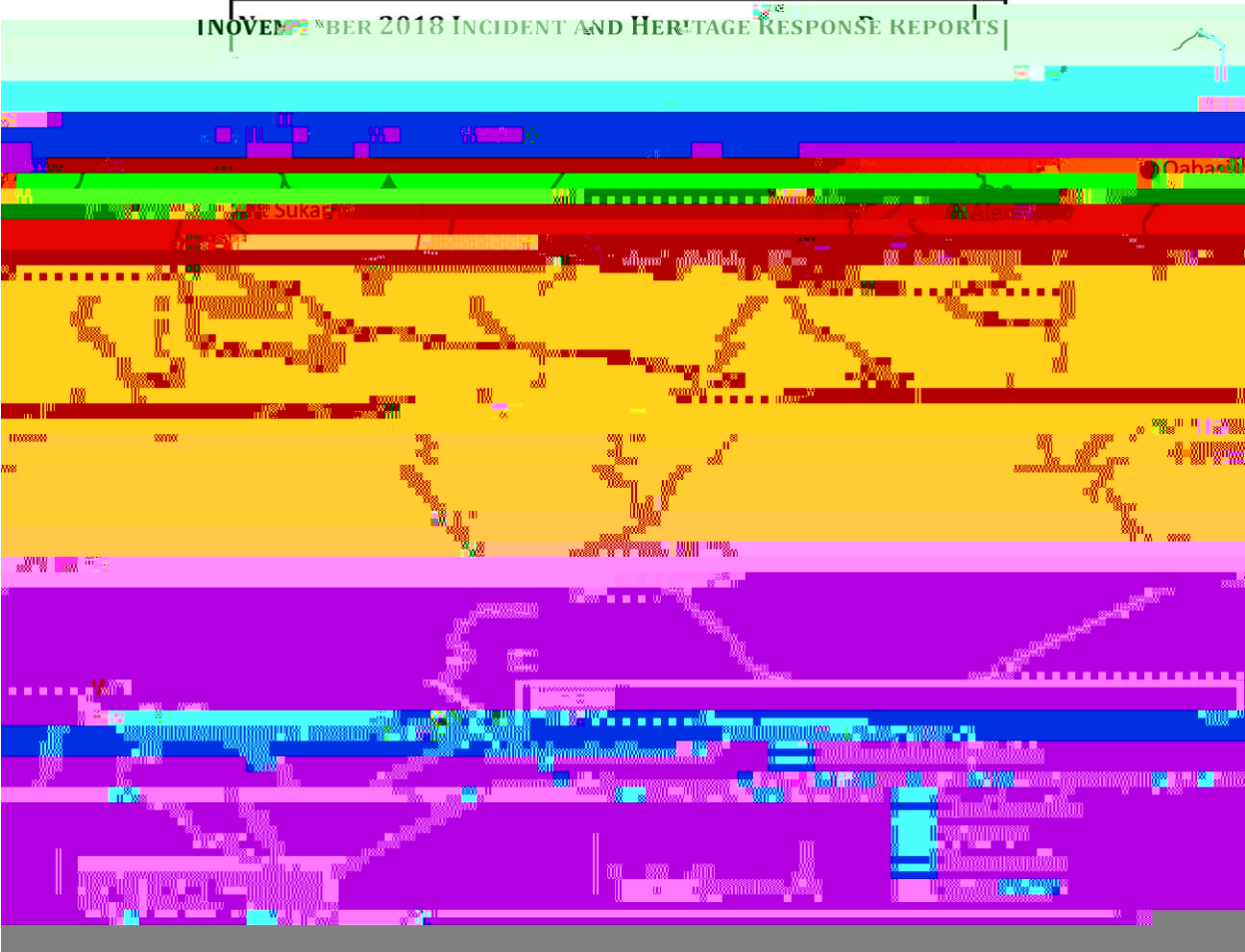
<sup>12</sup> <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-idlib/shelling-kills->



On November 17, the Syrian opposition group National Liberation Front (NLF) reported that SARG and pro-regime allies were intensifying shelling and rocket attacks on demilitarized villages and towns in Hama, Idlib, and Latakia Governorates.<sup>27</sup>

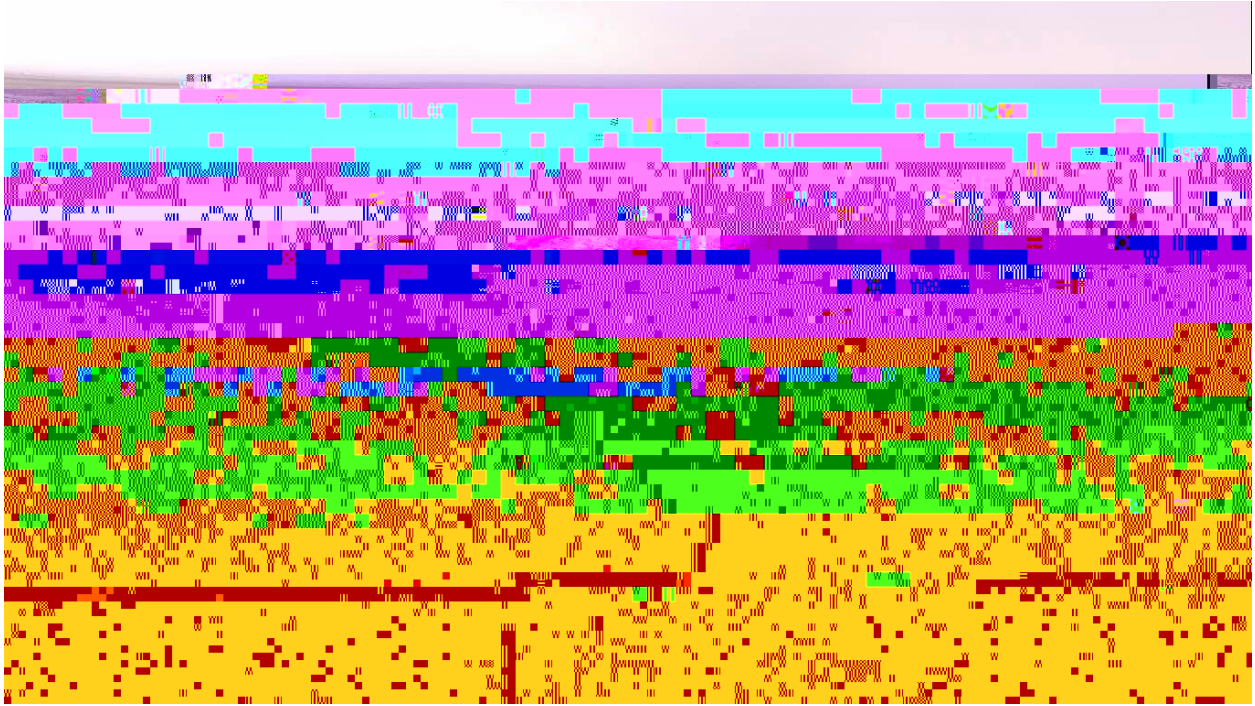
On November 22, a Turkish official announced that Syrian Turkmen had agreed to “unite under a single flag” following a congress in the town of al-

Incident Reports: Syria

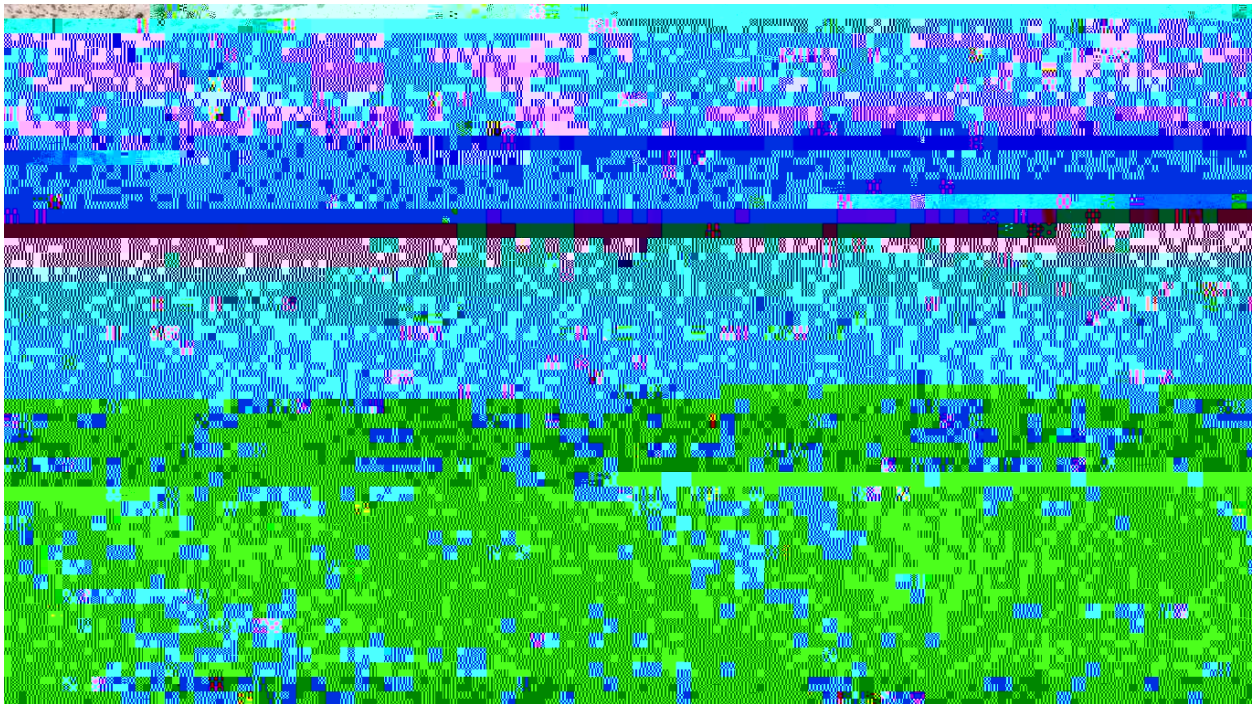








A drone photo of Abu Hafour (ATPA; October 24, 2018)



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

SHI 18-0142 Heritage Response Report

Report Date: November 9, 2018

Site Name: Bab al-Faraj Clock Tower

Location: Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: The Bab al-Faraj Clock Tower was built between 1898–





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

SHI 18-0143 Heritage Response Report

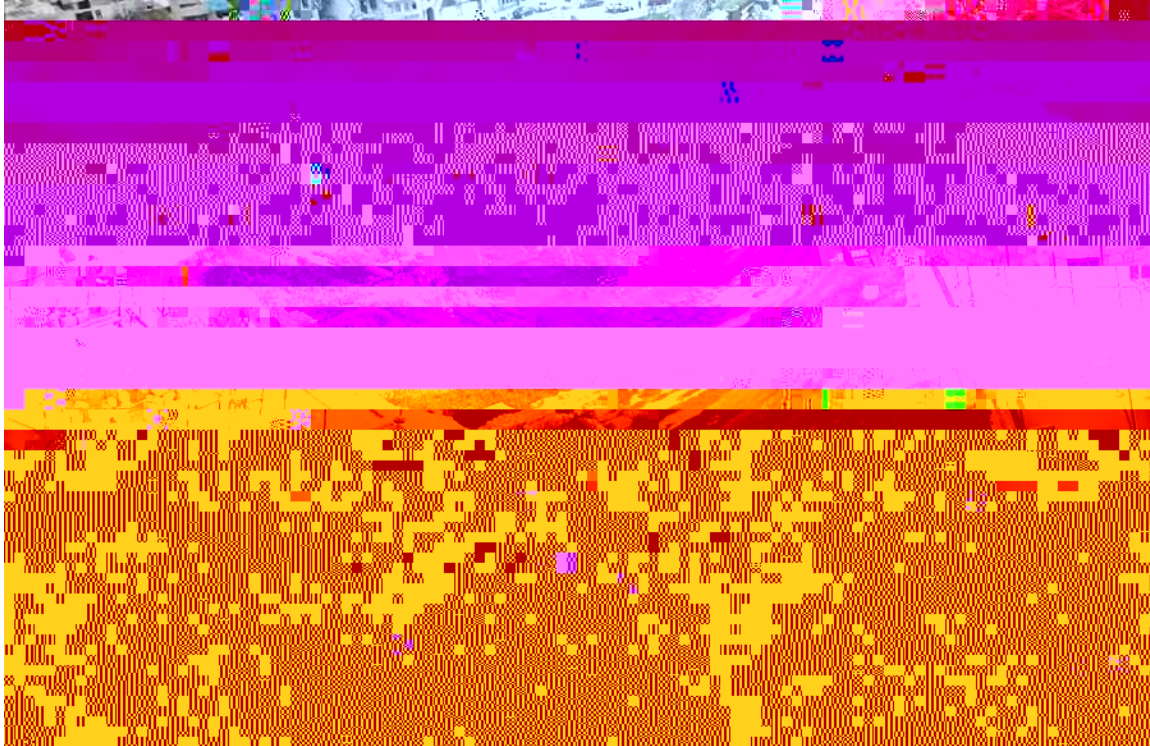
Report Date: November 9, 2018

Site Name: Aleppo Citadel

Location: Aleppo, Aleppo Governorate, Syria

Site Description: From UNESCO: "The monumental Citadel of Aleppo, rising above the suqs, mosques and madrasas of the old walled city, is testament to Arab military might from the 12th to the 14th centuries. With evidence of past occupation by civilizations dating back to the 10th century B.C., the citadel contains the remains of mosques, palace and bath buildings. The walled city that grew up around the citadel bears evidence of the early Graeco-





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



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



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



## SHI 18-0144 Heritage Response Report

Report Date: November 11, 2018

Site Name: Qalaat Sukara

Location: Qalaat Sukara, Hasakah Governorate, Syria

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

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

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

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

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

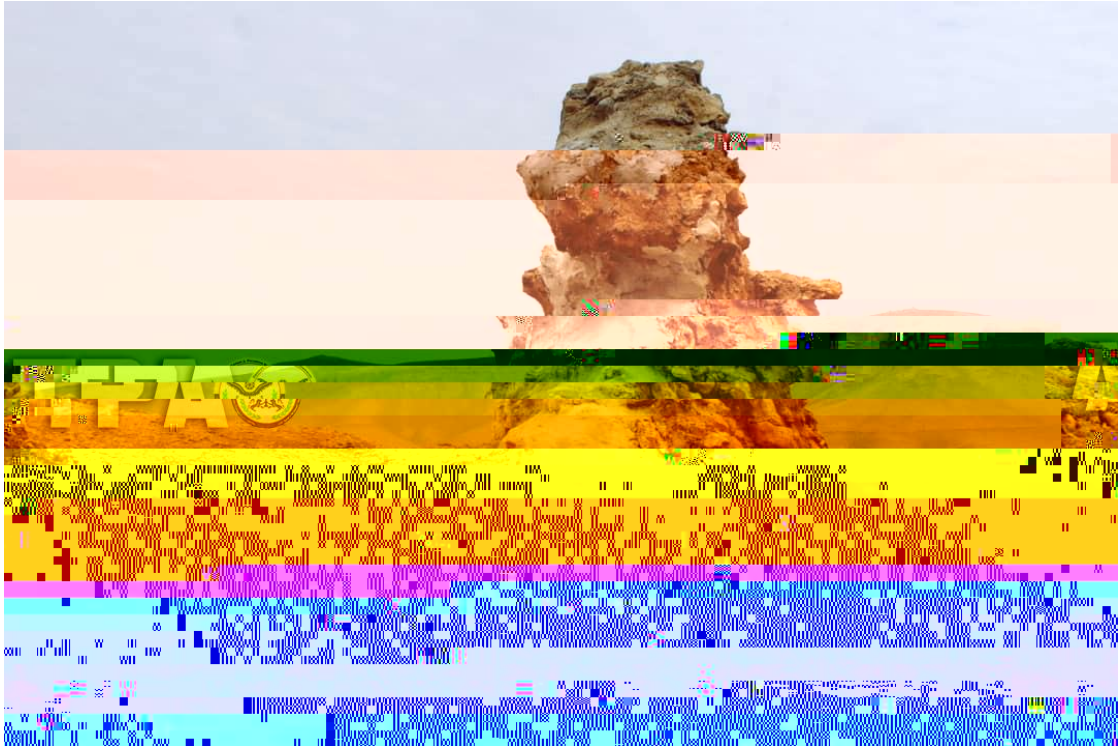
Operating Organization: Authority of Tourism and Protection of Antiquities (ATPA)





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

Conservation work at Qalaat Sukara with the



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



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





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



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

SHI 18-0145



Qalaat al-Mudiq:



Video still of

## SHI 18-0146 Heritage Response Report

Report Date: November 13, 2018

Site Name: Raqqa Clock Tower

Location: Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, Syria

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

Site Date: 1950s CE

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

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

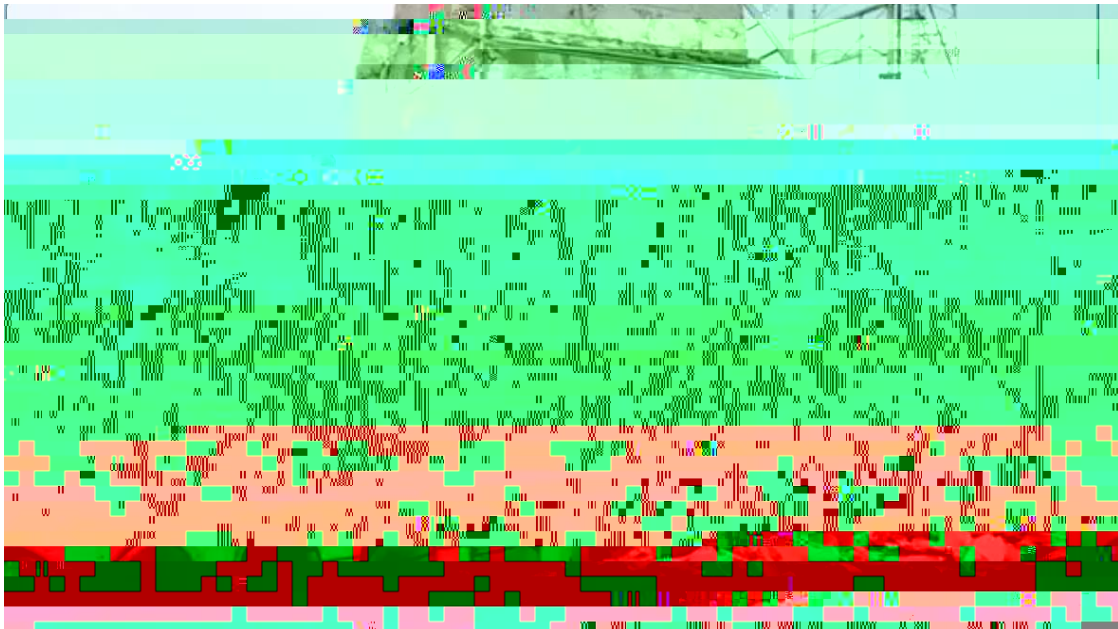
Description of Previous Damage to Site: The SDF recaptured Clock Tower Square in August 2017.<sup>56</sup> The clock tower was a common location for executions during ISIS' control of the city.<sup>57</sup> A

Sources:

Online Reporting:

Syrian Forces from the Front:

[https://twitter.com/QSD\\_Jabha/status/1062412849534898177](https://twitter.com/QSD_Jabha/status/1062412849534898177)



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



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

SHI 18-0147

Report Date: November 19, 2018

Site Name: Qabr Sheikh Hussein ( )

Date of Incident: November 16, 2018

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

Site Description: Tomb.

Site Date: Unknown.

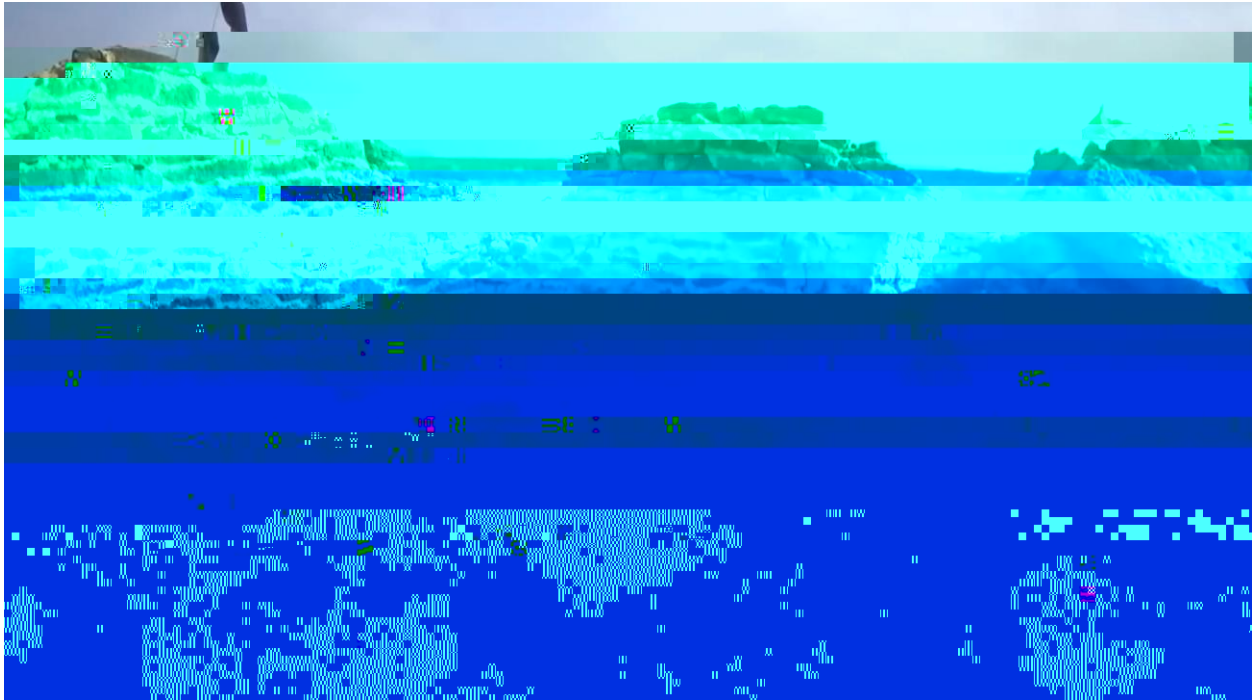
Incident Summary: Video footage shows a heavily damaged tomb.



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



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

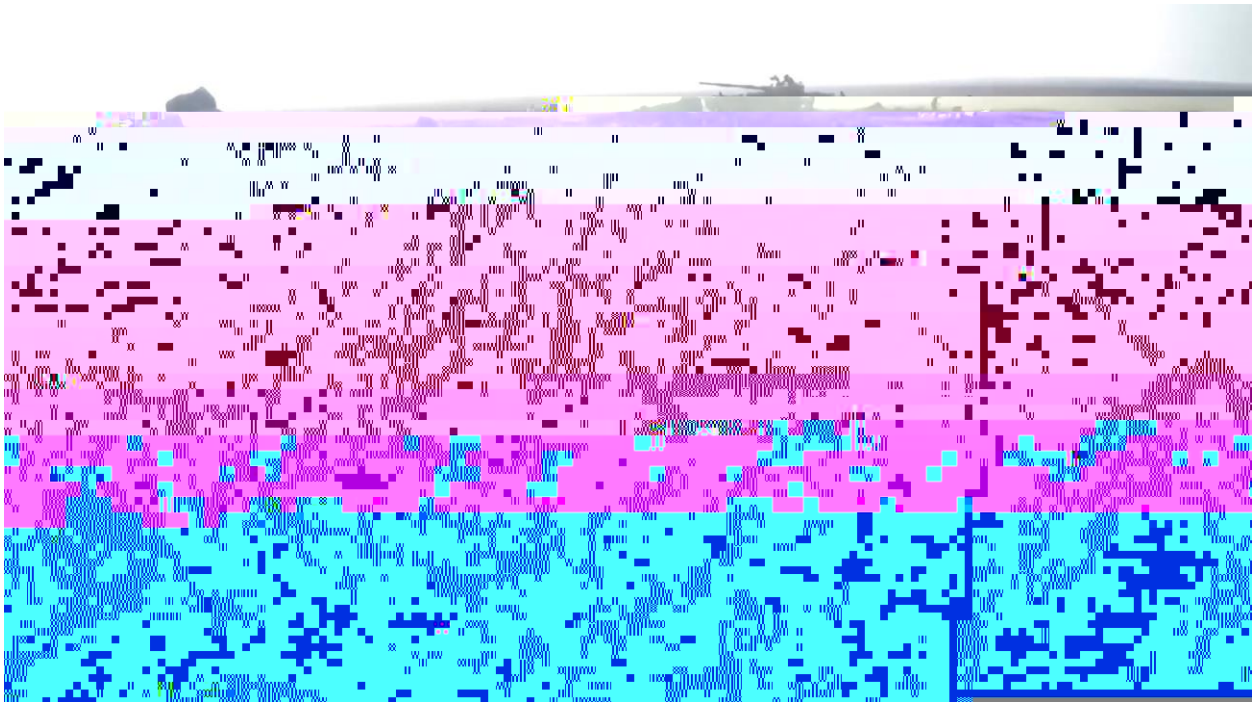


Video still of the walls of the tomb (War Media; November 18, 2018)





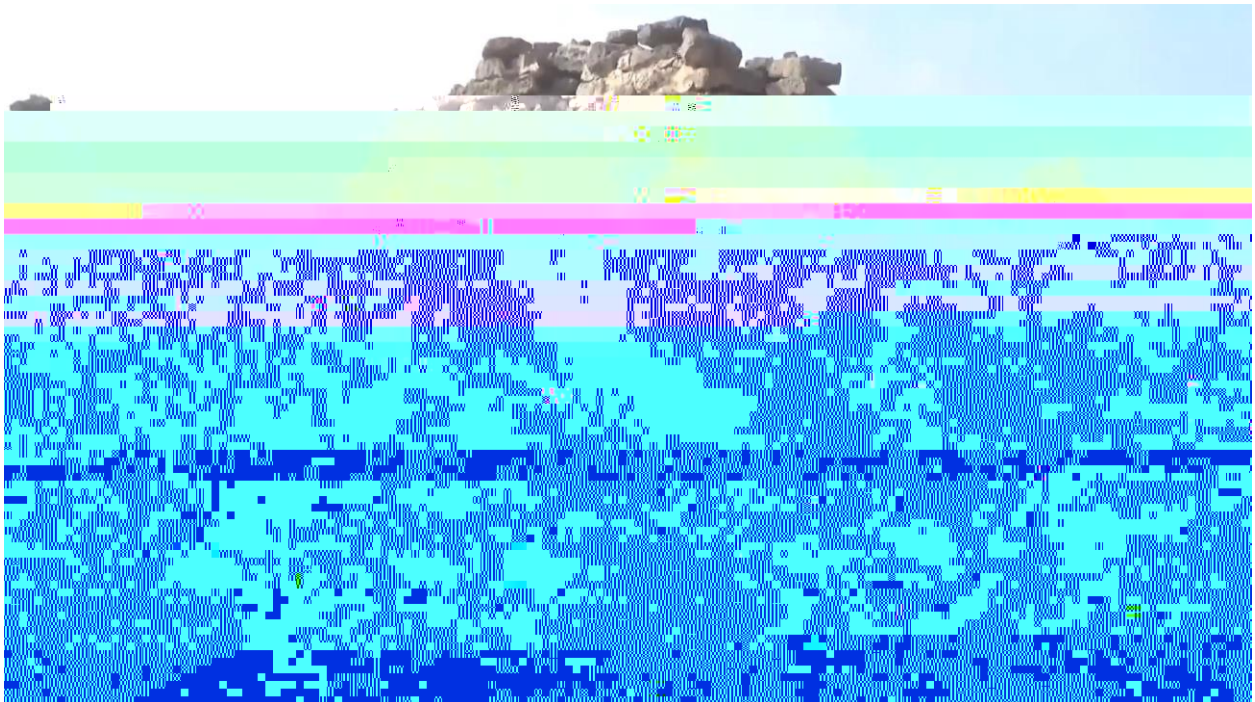
Video still of an entrance into the tomb (War Media; November 18, 2018)



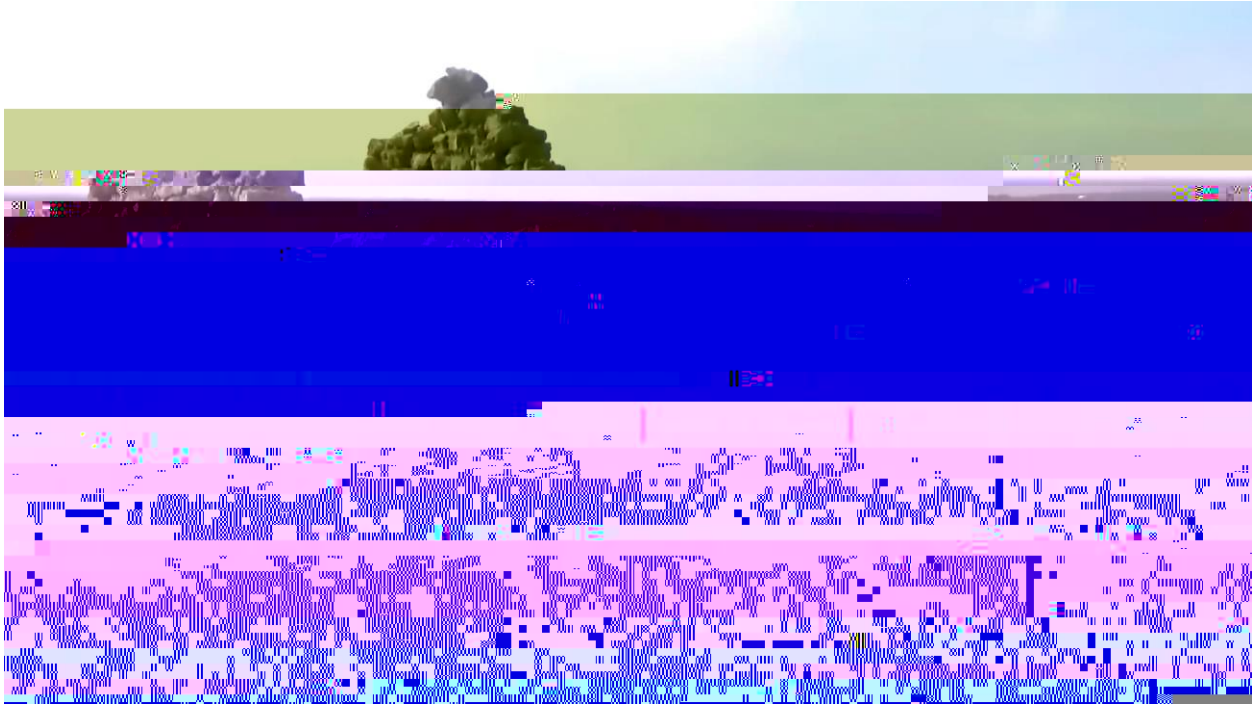
Video still of the remains of the tomb with Syrian forces visible in the background (War Media; November 18, 2018)



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



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



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

SHI 18-0148 Heritage Response Report

Report Date: November 20, 2018

Site Name: Khaled ibn al-Walid Mosque ( )

Location: Homs, Homs Governorate, Syria

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

Site Date: 1 n0Jg.

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

Operating Organization: Local community with local experts.<sup>74</sup>

Pattern: Reconstruction.

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

Sources:

Online Reporting:

APSA:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Institute of Historic Building Conservation:

[https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Rebuilding\\_and\\_reconciliation\\_in\\_Homs](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Rebuilding_and_reconciliation_in_Homs)

Le Figaro:

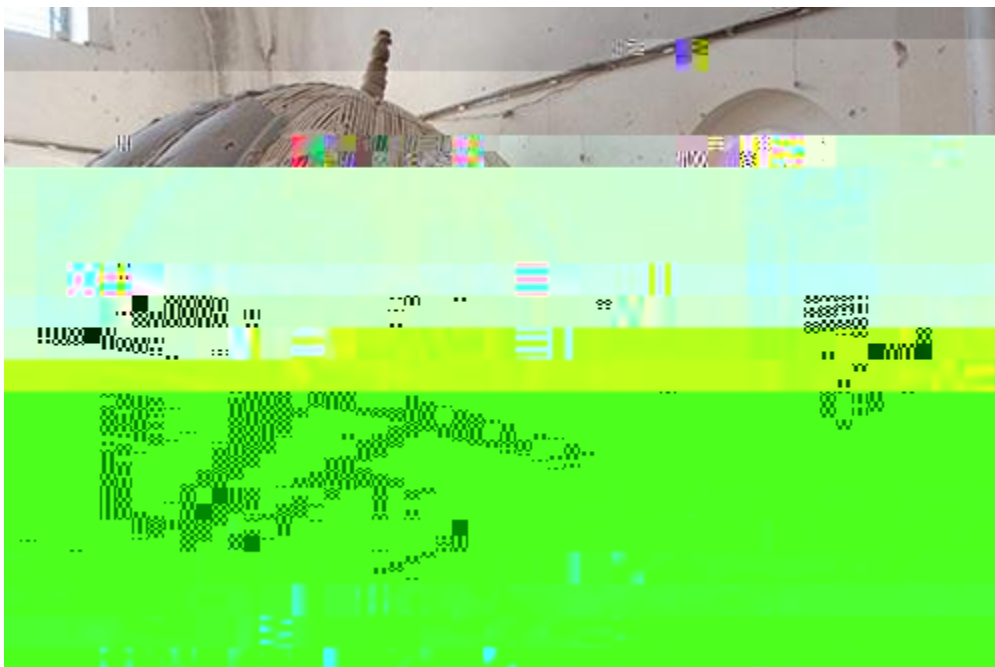
<http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2013/07/29/01003-20130729ARTFIG00374t://www.designi>

Scholarly:

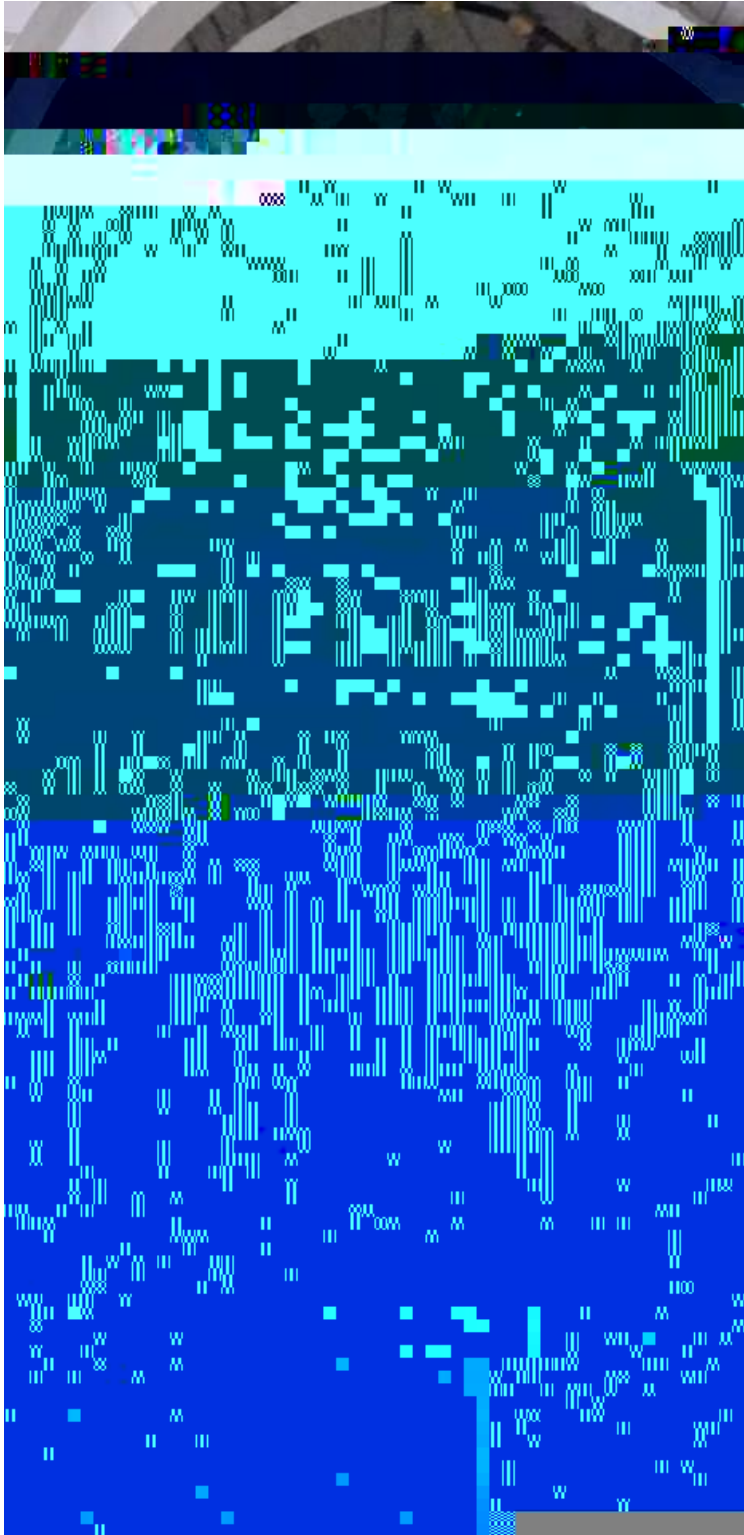
Hillenbrand, Car (2000). *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*. Psychology Press.



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



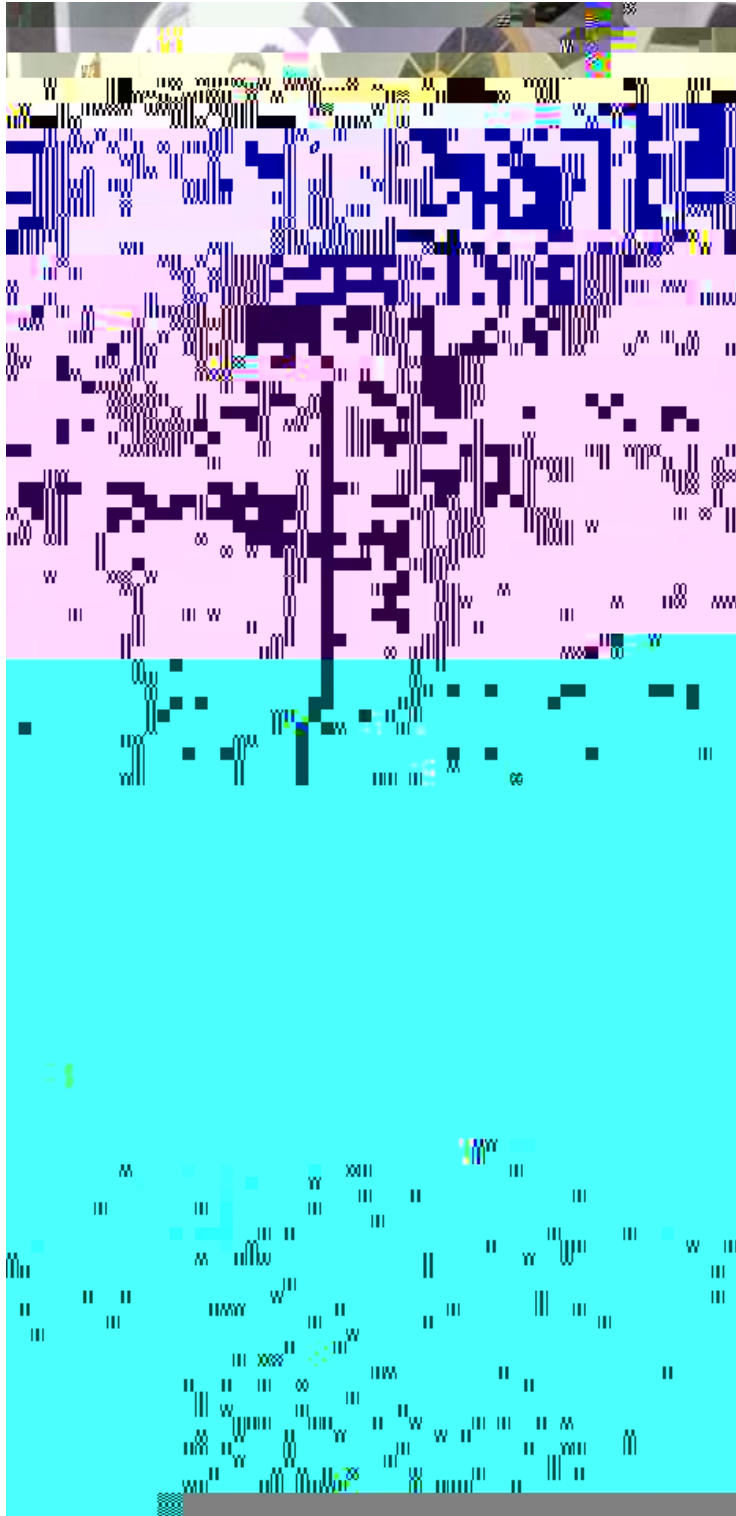
The tomb inside the Khaled ibn al-Walid Mosque after destruction (DGAM; October 8, 2013)



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







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



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



SHI 18







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

SHI 18-0150

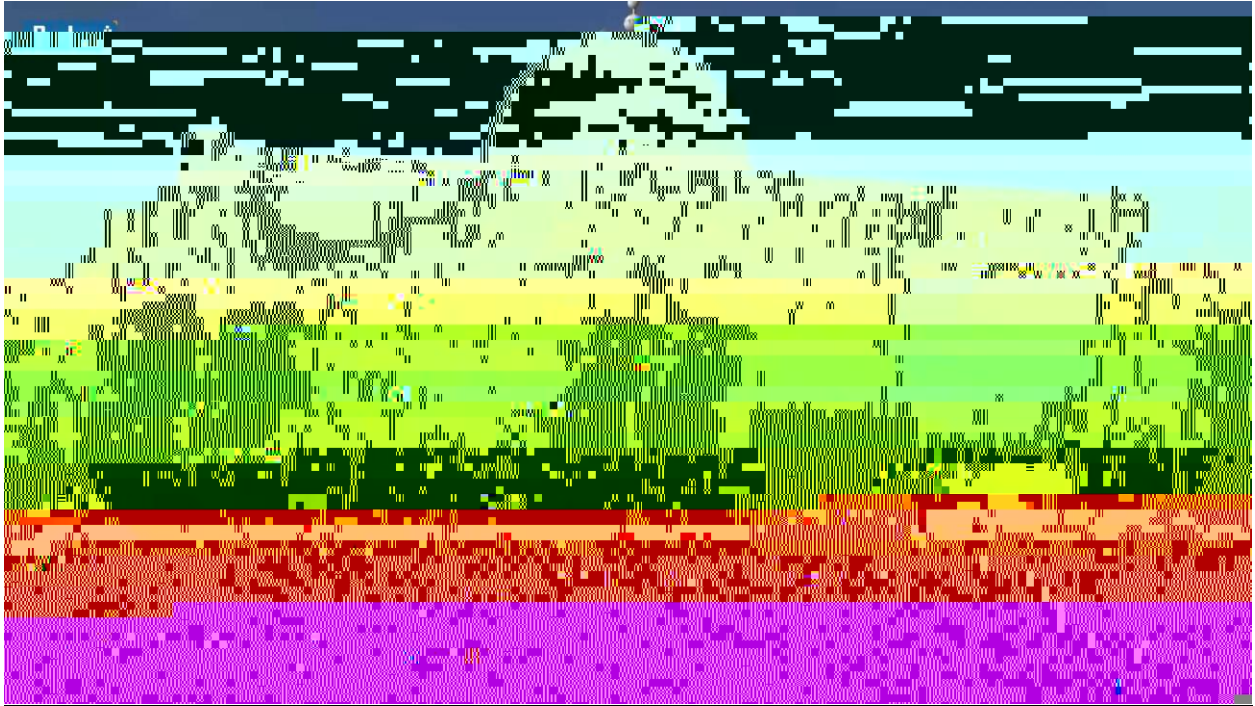
Report Date: November 26, 2018

Site Name: Qatra Mosque ( )

Date of Incident: November 17, 2018

Location: Qatra (





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



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

SHI 18-0151

Report Date:

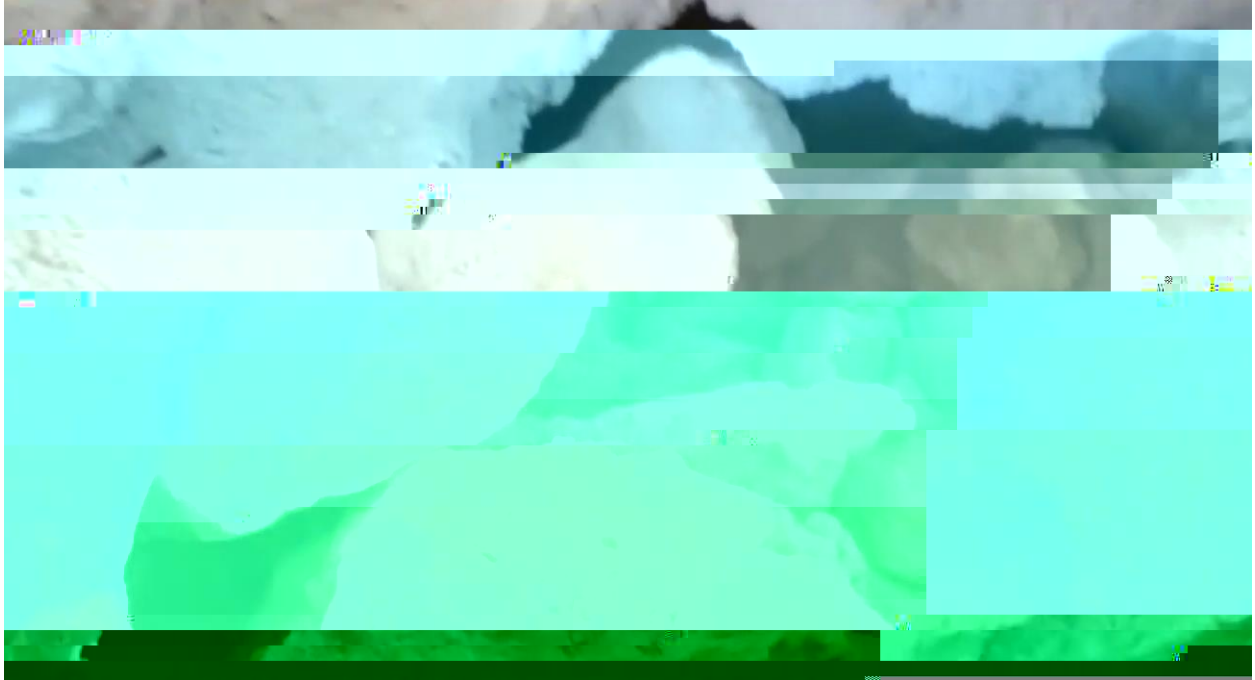
Sources:

Online Reporting:

ANF News: <https://anfarabic.com/...-41846>

Hawar News (ANHA):

November 11, 2018: <http://www.hawarnews.com/ar/haber/d8a7d984d8a7d8add8aad984d8a7d984->



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

SHI 18-0152 Heritage Response Report

Report Date: November 30, 2018

Site Name:

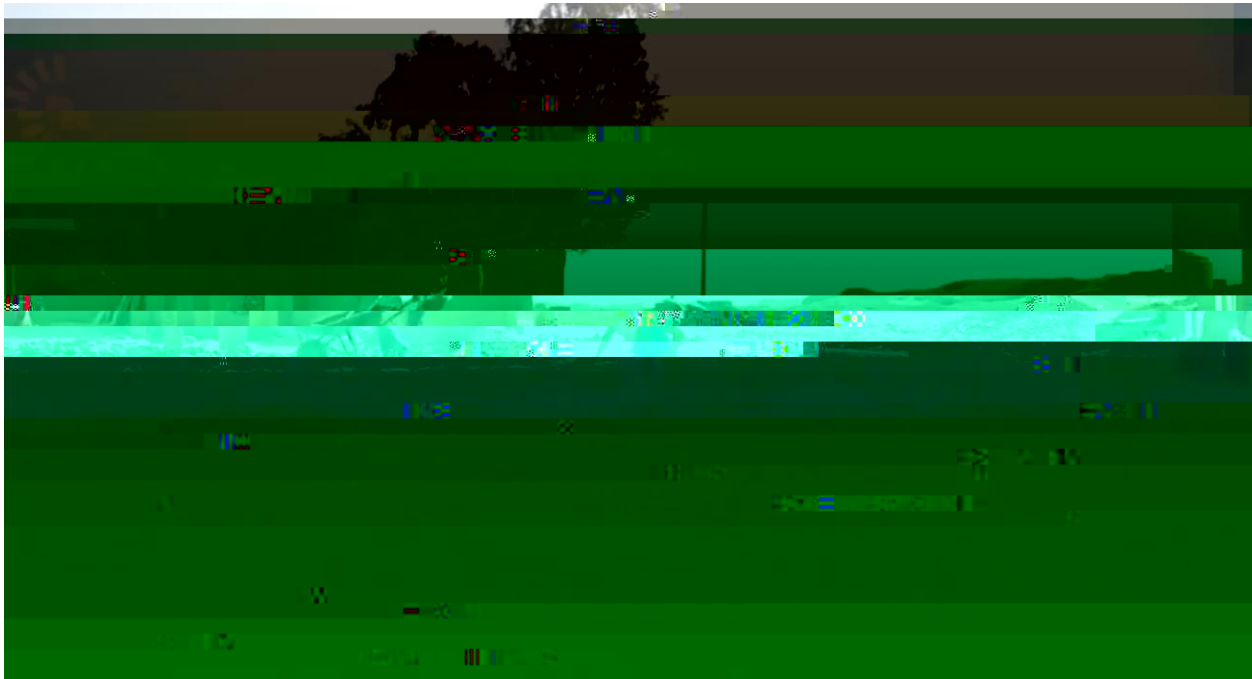
Monitoring Recommendations and Mitigation Measures: ASOR CHI will continue to monitor the condition of the Heraqla Archaeological Storage Facility and Brickyard, as well as the condition of other cultural heritage sites located in regions subject to military activity.

Sources:

ASOR CHI: 20180928\_Raqqa\_Museum\_Stabilization\_Final\_Report

Online Reporting:

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



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



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



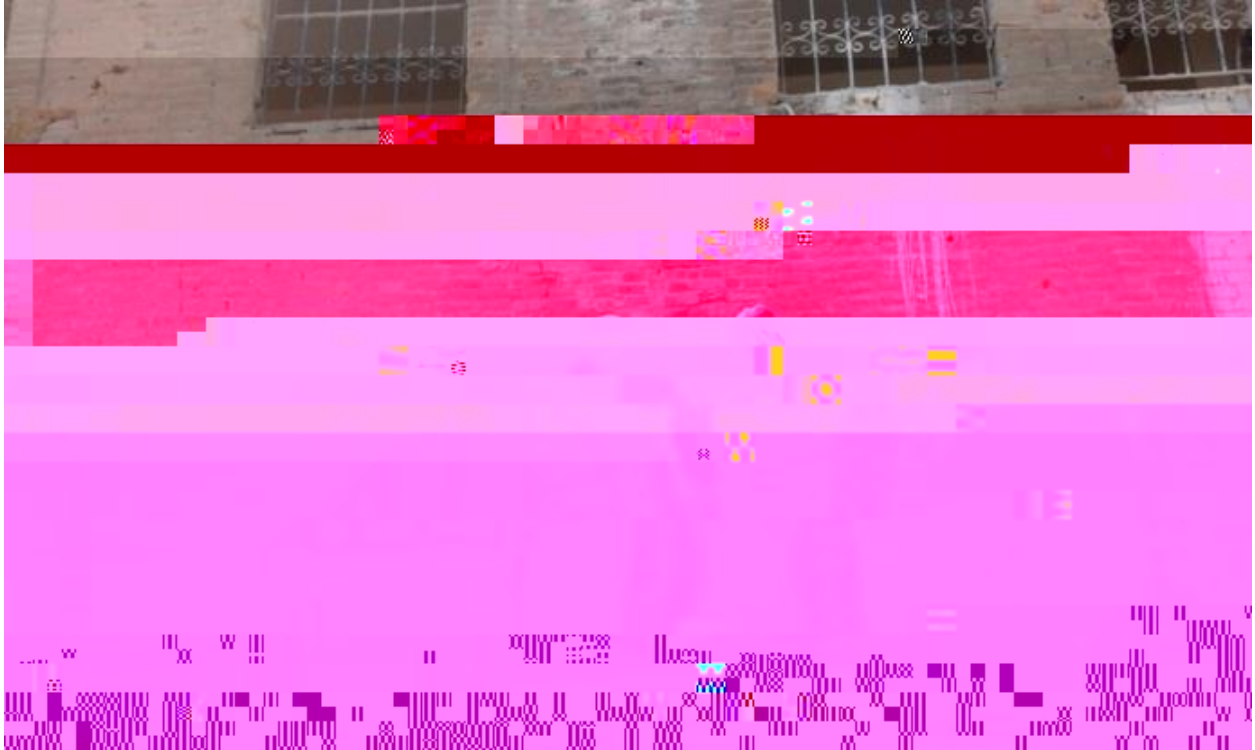
Video still of sun-dried bricks outside of the kiln (Rudaw; November 23, 2018)

The ASOR CHI sponsored project to restart production at the Heraqla brickyard near Raqqa to produce appropriate



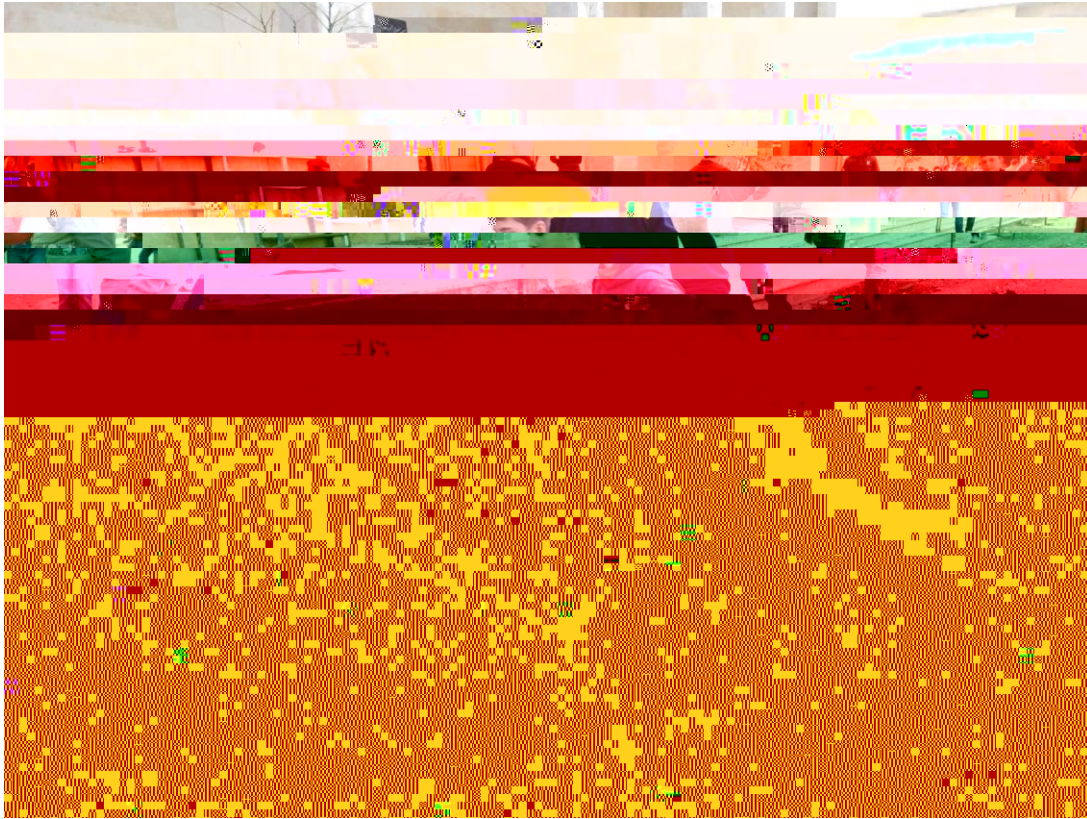


The ASOR CHI sponsored project to rebuild the east wall of the heavily damaged Raqqa Museum. This construction was one part of a much larger stabilization effort focused on the building's interior, exterior, and gardens (ASOR CHI).



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





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

# Heritage Timeline

November 29, 2018

*Asharq al-Awsat*



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

