

The Cultural Heritage Crises in Syria and Northern Iraq: Recent Developments

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Cultural Heritage Initiatives (NEA-PSHSS-14-001)

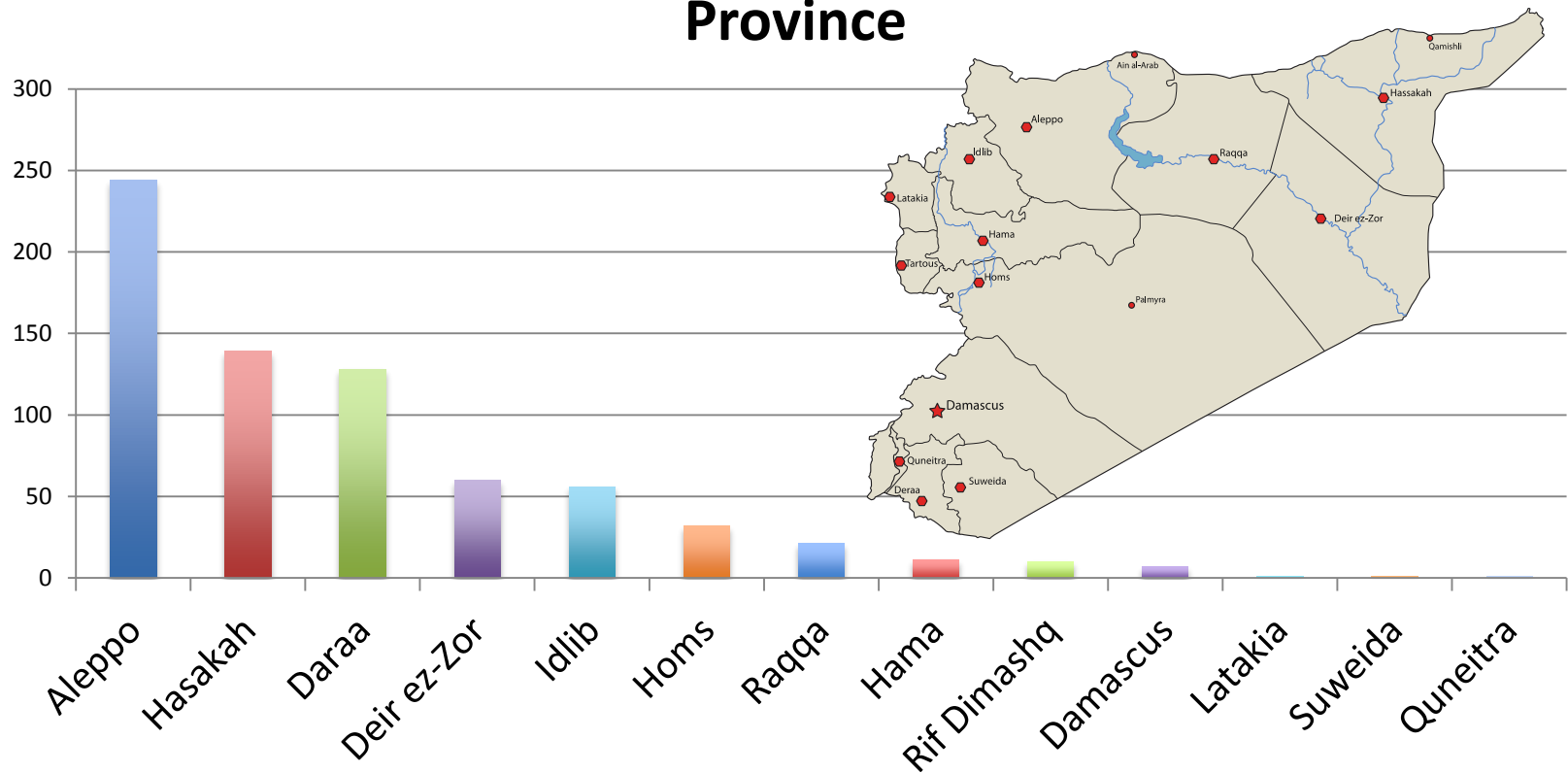
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American Schools of Oriental Research Cultural Heritage Initiatives (NEA-PSHSS-14-001)



- Providing U.S. Department of State with accurate and timely analyses of the cultural heritage situation in the conflict zones of Syria and Iraq:
 - Information collected from people on the ground
 - Open source information
 - High resolution satellite imagery
- Funding extended for year 2

Total Reported Incidents in Syria in Year 1 by Province



In Year 1, ASOR CHI reported on 711 heritage incidents in Syria and 80 incidents in Iraq

In Year 1, antiquities looting in Syria represented the most frequently reported heritage incident with 164 known incidents (25%). This number does not include antiquities thefts from cultural repositories or other illegal digging on archaeological sites (e.g., farming, development, military) that potentially produces illicit antiquities.

- 1) Looting — 164 (25%)
- 2) Combat Damage — 126 (20%)
- 3) Illegal Digging — 115 (18%)
- 4) Illegal Construction — 72 (11%)
- 5) Deliberate Destruction of Heritage Places — 65 (10%)
- 6) Vandalism — 33 (5%)



Looted Palmyrene Sculpture

Who's Looting? All the Main Belligerents in the Conflict

Kurdish (yellow)

Severe: 1

Moderate: 2

Minor: 28

31/132 (23.5%)

Opposition (green)

Severe: 2

Moderate: 6

Minor: 53

61/232 (26.3%)

ISIL (blue)

Severe: 8

Moderate: 18

Minor: 42

68/412 (16.5%)

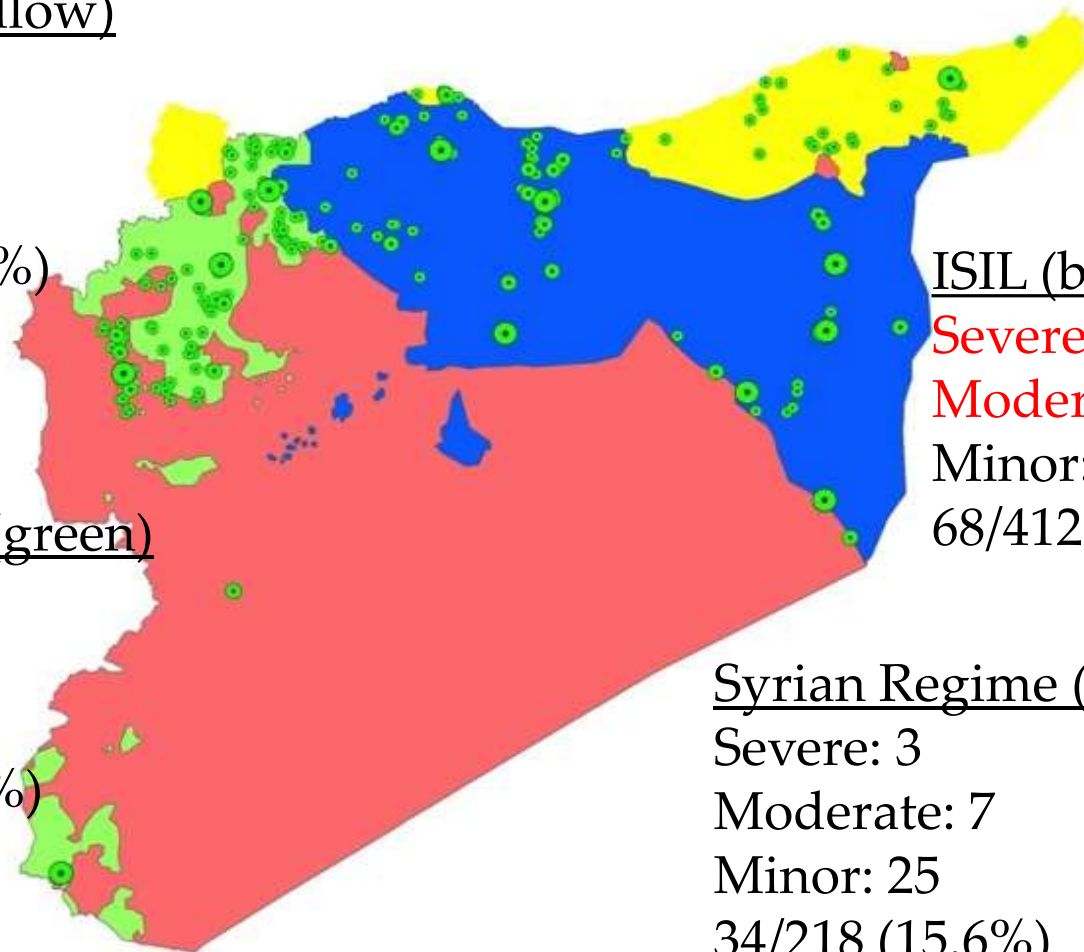
Syrian Regime (red)

Severe: 3

Moderate: 7

Minor: 25

34/218 (15.6%)

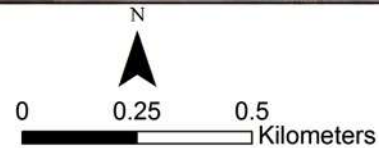
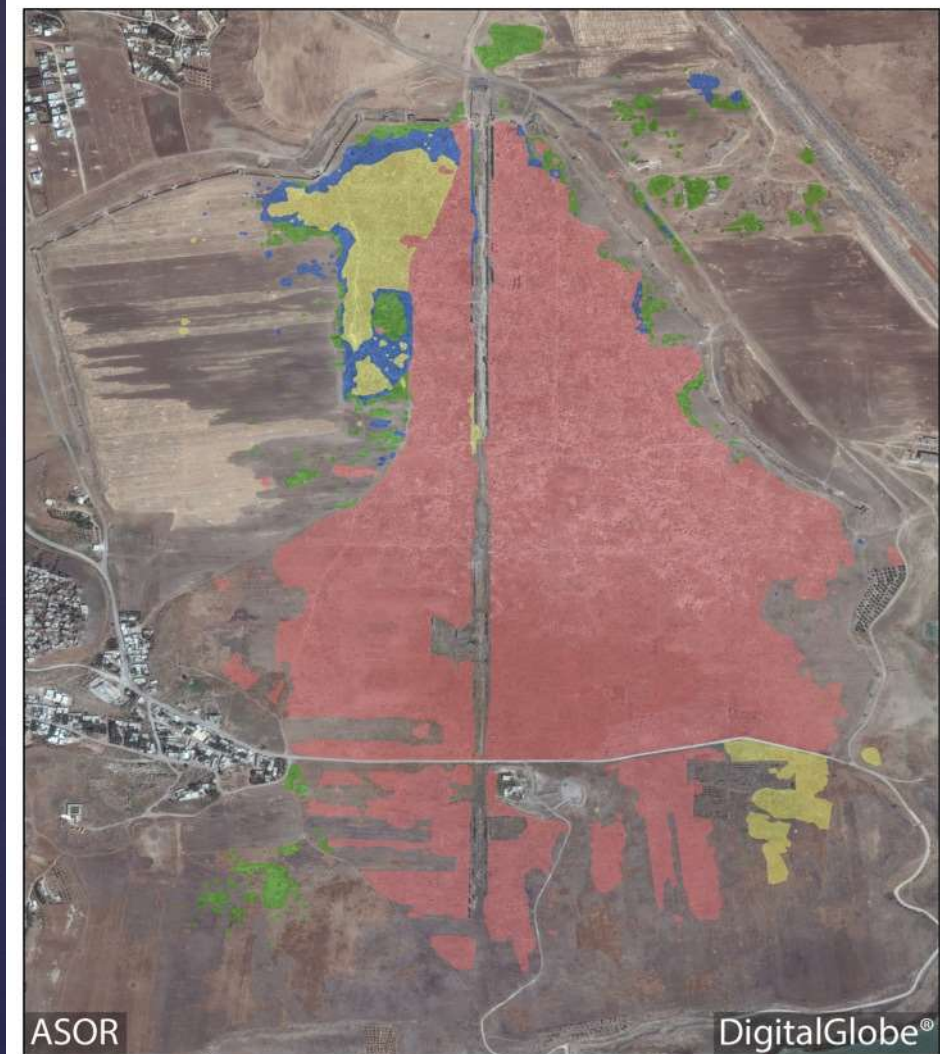


Looted sites identified in satellite imagery samples
(Jesse Casana).

Apamea: Intensive Looting



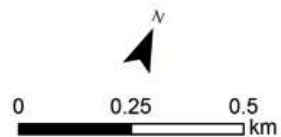
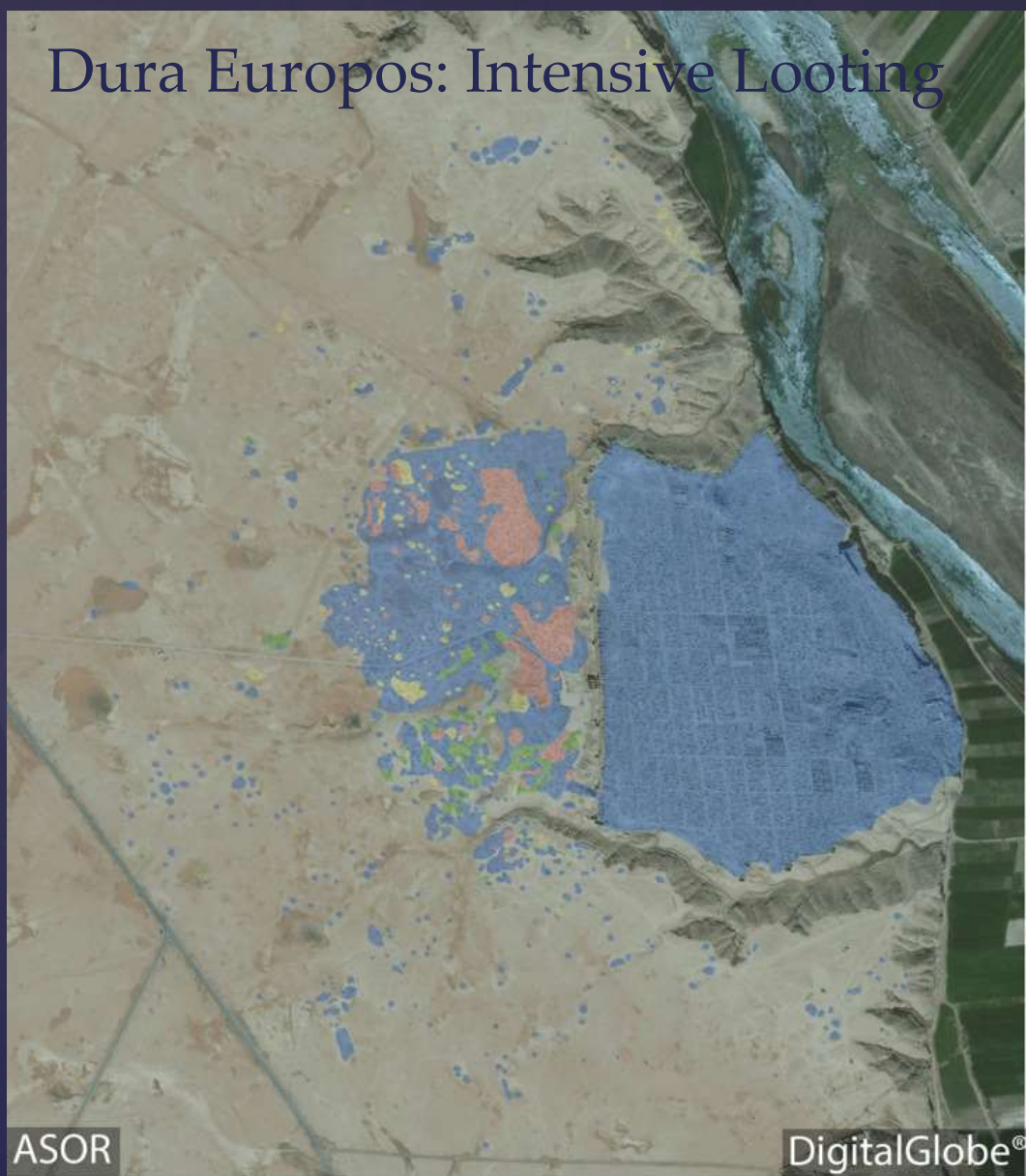
August 24, 2015



Legend

4/3/2012	11/28/2013
12/15/2012	8/24/2015

Dura Europos: Intensive Looting



Legend



Dura Europos: Intensive Looting

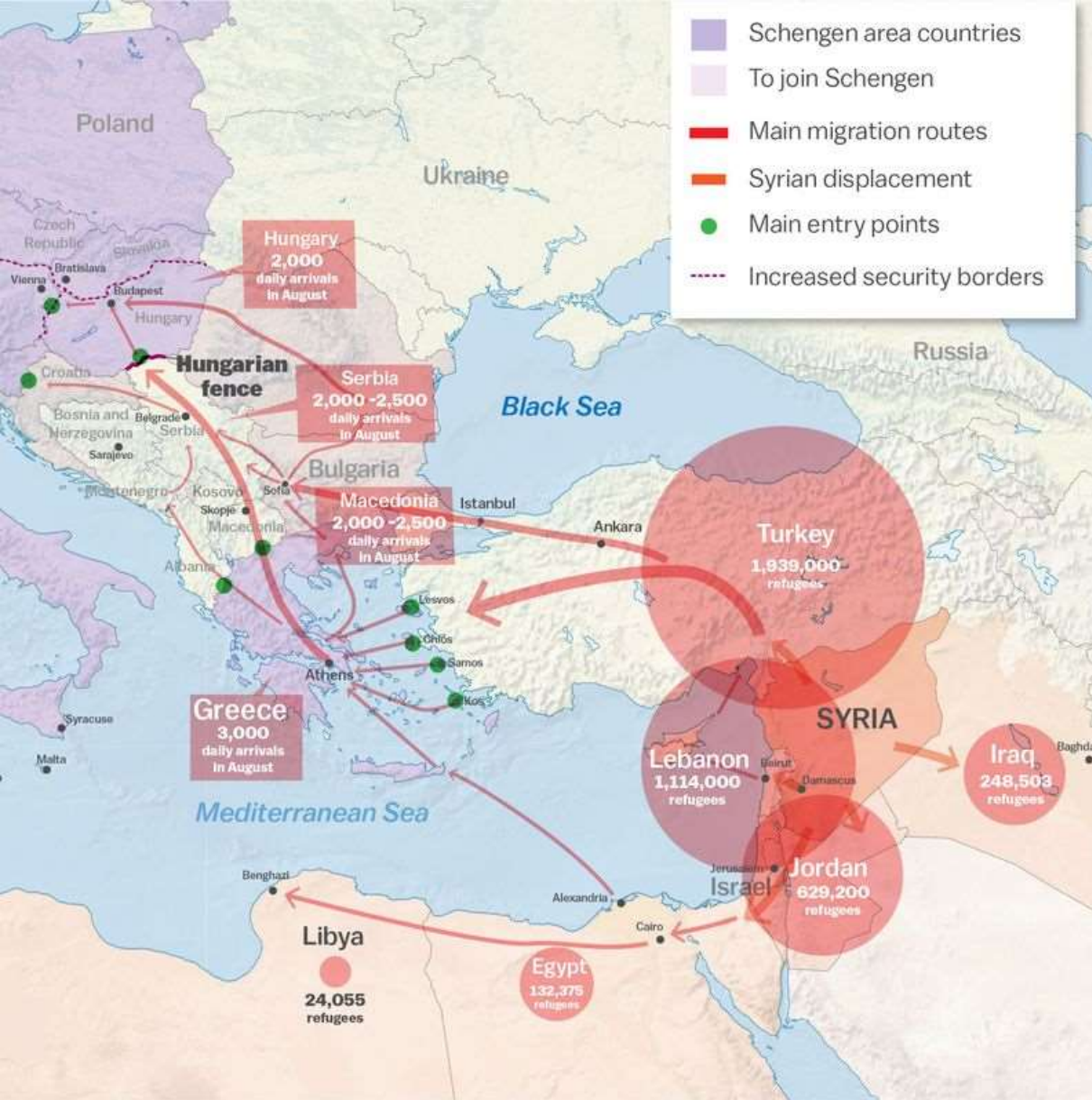


Mari, Syria



11/11/2014

DigitalGlobe®



Initial data on trafficking suggest antiquities are smuggled out of Syria and Iraq following routes similar to those of refugees fleeing the conflict zone.

Syrian Refugees
4,087,139 people

Syrian Internally Displaced People
7,632,500 people

12.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria

Antiquities Trafficking and Sales



Facebook page to sell looted Syrian artifacts.

ASOR CHI documented ca. 1000 antiquities on the illicit market from Syria and Iraq.

Antiquities are marketed globally using digital photographs via cell phones and social media sites — there is a digital trail.

Dealing appears to be fairly direct.

Looting and Trafficking Data — Caching Antiquities



ISIL and other groups are caching material for later trafficking and sales, but a surprising amount of material is already in circulation on illicit markets.

Winged victory bas-relief cached by ISIL with other antiquities near Hasakah, northern Syria.

Marketed Antiquities



Cell phone image of coins and other metal artifacts for sale
— typical of metal detecting.

Marketed Antiquities — “Dura”



Marketed Antiquities



Marketed Antiquities



Marketed Antiquities



Marketed Antiquities



Marketed Antiquities



Marketed Antiquities



Marketed Antiquities — Palmyrene Sculptures



Marketed Antiquities





Sumerian inscribed wall plaque from southern Iraq 3rd millennium BC (supposedly the Lagash area).



Tetradrachm of Phillip III of Macedon (323–317 BCE)



Athenian dekadrachm — likely fake (467–465 BCE)

Marketed Antiquities



Marketed Antiquities with Registration Numbers



Revenue Streams and ISIL Cultural Property Crime

- Looting
 - ISIL hires workmen to loot, licenses looting by others, and taxes looting (there has been a shift toward increased control/organization)
 - ISIL occasionally engages directly in looting, but most involvement has been indirect
 - ISIL robs cultural repositories and steals cultural property from its opponents
- Trafficking
 - ISIL taxes smuggling through its territory/border crossings
 - ISIL caches material for later distribution and sale
- Illicit Antiquities Sales
 - ISIL sells material and taxes the antiquities sales of others
 - Digital marketing is used to reach global buyers and circumvent vulnerabilities in traditional distribution and marketing



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asor-syrianheritage.org

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