

Kirkbizeh رقبی قزه

Idlib Governorate



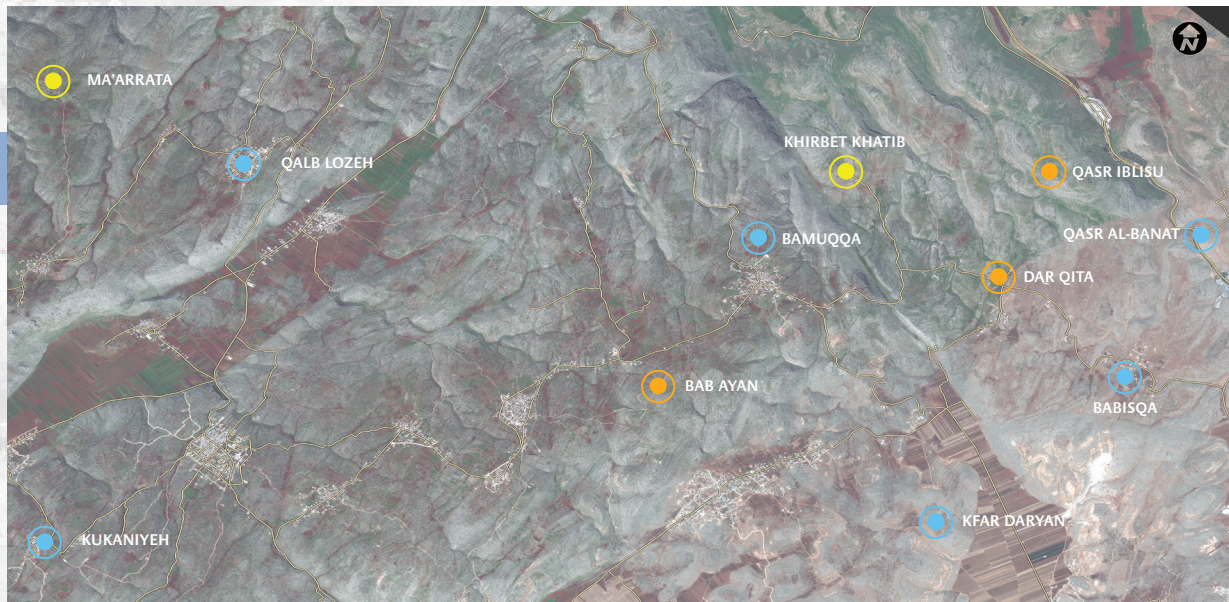


FIGURE 49. Overview of Kirkbizeh and locations where damage has occurred and is visible.

Site Description

This area covers three overlapping areas of interest. It contains 31 of the so-called Dead or Forgotten Cities, seven of which are part of UNESCO World Heritage List, and the fortress of Harim. The Dead Cities, of which there are several hundred, are towns and villages that were built at varying points between the first and seventh centuries AD and abandoned between the eighth and tenth centuries. Many remain today in an exceptional state of preservation; some buildings still have two stories, and much of the surrounding cultural landscape is also still preserved, including some field boundaries, wine presses and other such installations. The 40 most well preserved of the Dead Cities are located in eight archaeological parks that were inscribed together as part of the World Heritage List known as the Ancient Villages of Northern Syria.

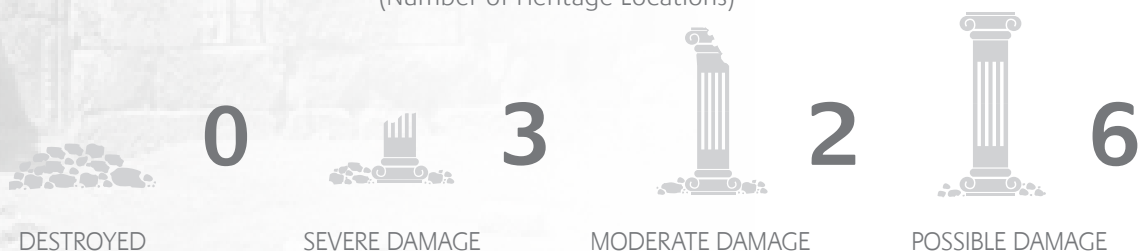
The Ancient Villages of Northern Syria were added to the World Heritage List in 2011 and to the World Heritage in Danger list in 2013. The seven dead cities in this area of interest that are part of the World Heritage List are marked with UNESCO's World Heritage List symbol. All the Dead Cities reviewed in this report that are part of the World Heritage List are collated in Annex 1.

The fortress of Harim is a partially restored, twelfth century AD, Arab military citadel.



Kirkbizeh Damage Level

(Number of Heritage Locations)







Status Overview

The Dead Cities/Ancient Villages examined on satellite imagery (see figure 49) are at severe risk of damage from construction. Of the 31 sites examined, there are new constructions (buildings and roads) on or around eight of them. While some of the construction appears to be avoiding the obvious features of the site, there are two cases where sites have been severely damaged. One has been moderately damaged as large areas of the ruins have been cleared. In addition, the ruins are more than a thousand years old and considerably fragile—the vibrations caused by heavy construction equipment can be extremely damaging, and the chemicals used in construction can be extremely damaging to archaeological soils. No evidence of looting was visible at the sites, but possible stone robbing/stone clearance was noted at one site.

KIRKBIZEH DAMAGE ASSESSMENT SUMMARY	
LOCATION NAME	DAMAGE LEVEL
Babisqa (Dead City)	Possible damage
Babyan (Bab Ayan) (Bab Aynan Dead city)	Severe damage
Bamuqqa (Byzantine Town)	Possible damage
Dar Qita	Severe damage
Kfar Daryan (Dead City)	Possible damage
Khirbet al-Khatib Dead City	Moderate damage
Kukaniyeh	Possible damage
Ma'arrata	Moderate damage
Qalb Lozeh (Byzantine Basilica)	Possible damage
Qasr all-Banat (Byzantine Monastery)	Possible damage
Qasr Iblisu (Dead City)	Severe damage

KIRKBIZEH OVERVIEW MAP

The overview map (figure 47) show the damage level of the different heritage sites analysed in the vicinity of Kirkbizeh. Analysis with satellite imagery found three severely damaged sites, two moderately damaged and six with possible damage.

-  Destroyed
-  Severe Damage
-  Moderate Damage
-  Possible Damage

NOTE

This report provides a detailed analysis of significant changes to the cultural heritage of this site resulting from the ongoing conflict in Syria. World View 1 and 2 satellite imagery acquired on 22 March 2010, 20 August 2014 and 4 October 2014 was used for this report.

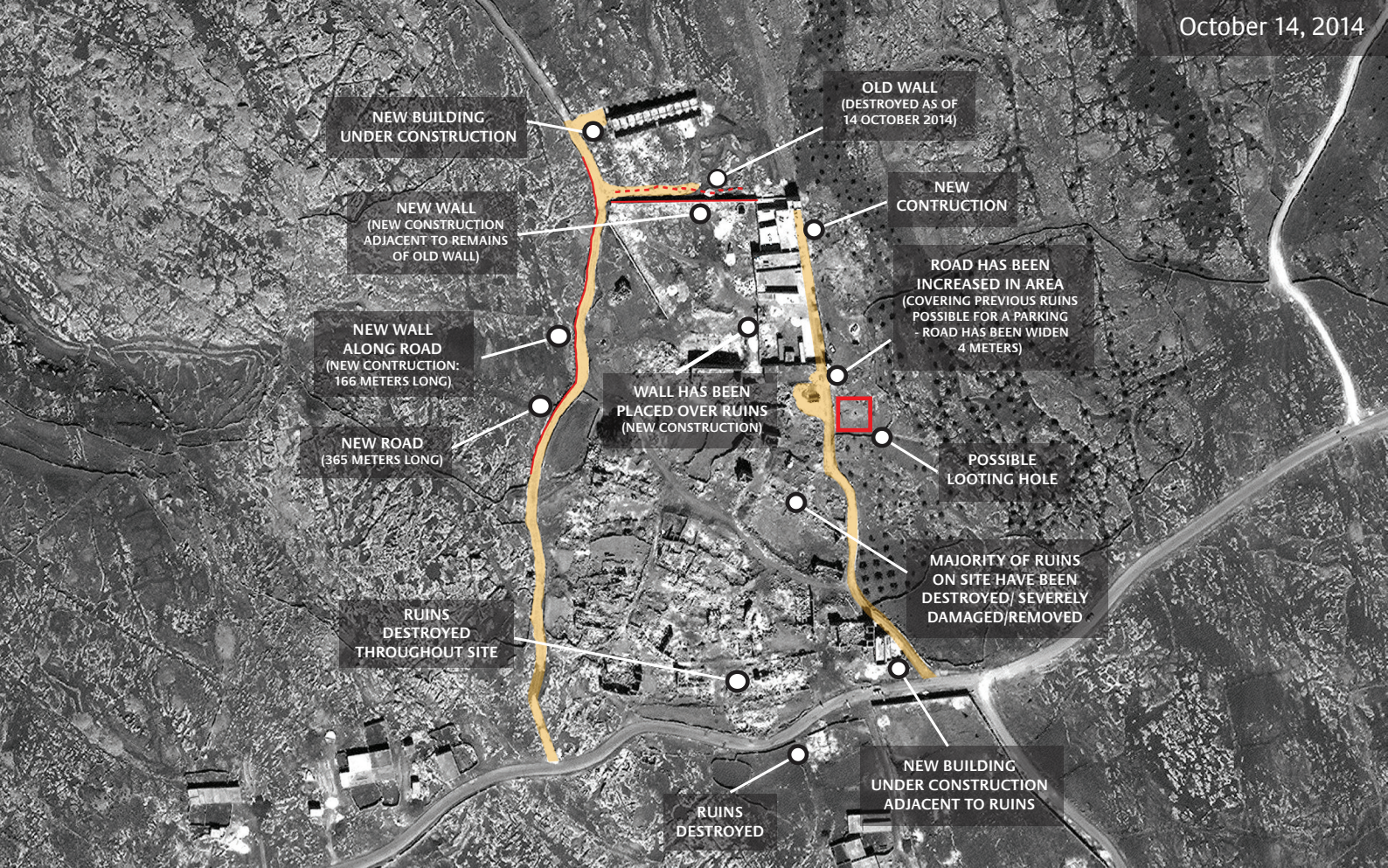


FIGURE 50. Extensive damage to Dar Qita, including road widening, new buildings, the building of stone or concrete walls and earth walls over the ruins, as well as the removal of much of the site.



DAR QITA

Description

This site is part of the Ancient Villages of Northern Syrian World Heritage List Archaeological Park 7 (Jebel Barisha, Harim). Dar Qita was an important village in the Byzantine Period and dates back to at least the first century AD. It has three churches with extensive outbuildings, two baptisteries and towers, as well as around forty houses and a community building.

Damage Assessment

A review of imagery confirms that most of the ruins on the site have been destroyed or severely damaged (see figures 50 and 51). The development in the northeast corner of the site has been rebuilt and substantially increased in size, destroying some original walls and potentially disturbing archaeological levels. The eastern road to the building has been widened by approximately 4 m, covering some ruins. The southern-most ruins (an area of approximately 3,000 m²) have been cleared to increase farmland, and the farm next to them has also been enlarged. No cause of damage can be identified for the rest. In addition, a wall had been added to the western road, which has also been lengthened. There is no evidence of looting, though it has been reported.⁽ⁱ⁾



FIGURE 51. Image of Dar Qita before damage.



Excavation at Dar Qita/Photo: DGAM, 2013.



Severe Damage



FIGURE 52. Bab Aynan.

BAB AYNAN (DEAD CITY)

Description

Ruined Byzantine village built between the first and seventh centuries AD.

Damage Assessment

There are two new constructions to the south and east of the village, in addition to a number of new constructions on the road leading to the site. An area (approximately 2,000 m²) of the eastern ruins has been cleared, destroying them. Soil has also been piled up along the western branch of the road that leads to the site (see figures 52 and 53).



FIGURE 53. Bab Aynan.

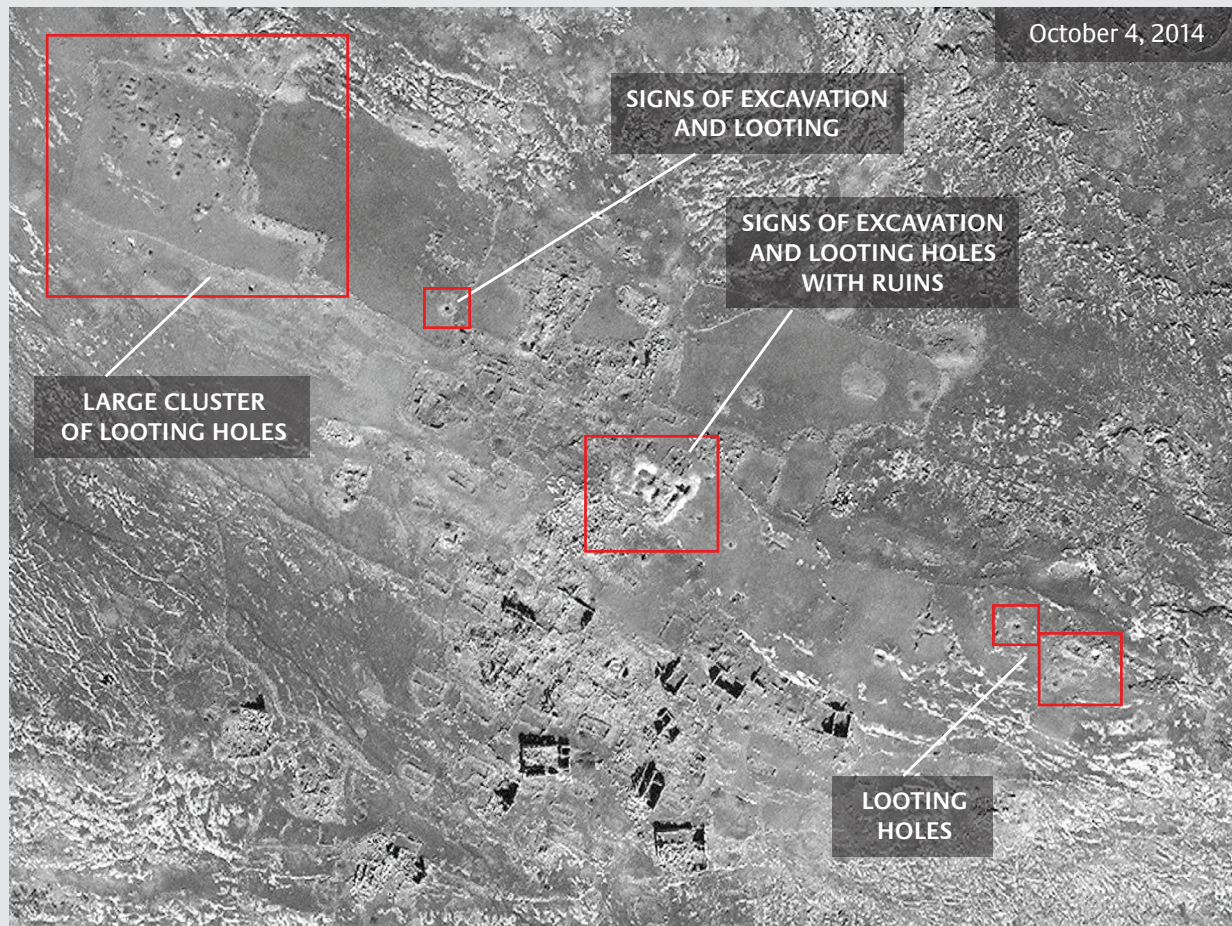


FIGURE 54. Qasr Iblisu.

QASR IBLISU (DEAD CITY)

Description

Ruined Byzantine village built between the first and seventh centuries AD.

Damage Assessment

A review of the imagery shows extensive looting within and around the ruins. Imagery also indicates a heavy concentration of looting occurring to the northwest section of the ruins (approximately 1,000 m²). There are also signs of illegal excavations within the ruins which may likely be related to looting activities. An additional smaller number of looting holes are apparent to the northeast section of the ruins (see figures 54 and 55).

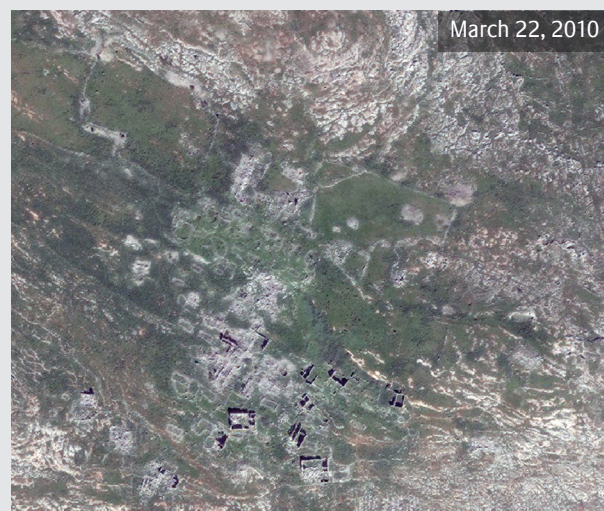


FIGURE 55. Qasr Iblisu.



FIGURE 56. Khirbet al-Khatib.



KHIRBET AL-KHATIB

Description

This site is part of the Ancient Villages of Northern Syrian UNESCO World Heritage List, Archaeological Park 7 (Jebel Barisha, Harim). Ruined Byzantine village that is approximately 1,600 years old.

Damage Assessment

A review of the imagery indicates not only increased construction near the site, but also on it. At least one of the farms at the site has expanded; the roof over one structure, possibly historic, is gone; another has been roofed suggesting it has been re-inhabited. There are a small number of new rectangular enclosures on the site; stone clearing/robbing appears to be occurring (see figures 56 and 57).

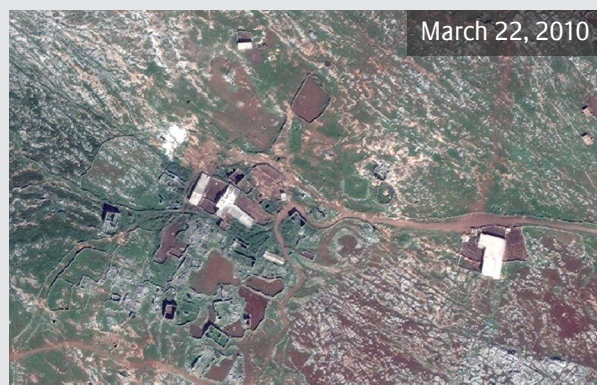


FIGURE 57. Khirbet al-Khatib.

MA'ARRATA

Description

Roman/Byzantine ruins dating back to between the first and seventh centuries AD.

Damage Assessment

A review of the imagery shows new construction on the site. The walls of several buildings have been rebuilt, and one building has been roofed. It is unknown if this was legitimate reconstruction work, or if the site has perhaps been re-inhabited by refugees.



FIGURE 58. Kukaniyed.

KUKANIYEH

Description

Ruined Byzantine village containing two monumental, pyramid-roofed tombs. One tomb still has its pyramid-shaped roof still relatively intact and was inscribed 384 AD. The second tomb contains a beautifully carved sarcophagus and is inscribed as the tomb of Eusebius dating back to 369 AD. The village also contains three churches which date back to the fifth and sixth centuries AD.

Damage Assessment

Multiple new structures have been erected over the ruins with signs of more being constructed (see figures 58 and 59). The construction activities may have damaged or destroyed the ruins in this area, however such damage cannot be confirmed on the imagery.



FIGURE 59. Kukaniyed.

Multiple new structures have been erected over the ruins with signs of more being constructed. The construction activities may have damaged or destroyed the ruins in the area; however, such damage cannot be confirmed on the imagery.



FIGURE 60. Bamuqqa.

BAMUQQA

Description

Roman ruins dating back to between the first and third centuries AD.

Damage Assessment

The car park was redeveloped and covered by 2014, and a number of large vehicles (possibly trucks) are visible on the site. Four small structures (approximately 6 x 6 m) have been built in the clearings among the ruins, as well as a large number around them (see figures 60 and 61). However, none of the visible ruins seem to have been disturbed.



FIGURE 61. Bamuqqa.

KFAR DARYAN

Description

Roman/Byzantine ruins dating back to between the first and seventh centuries AD.

Damage Assessment

A review of the imagery shows construction to the south of the site. The track through the site has been widened, extended by 13 m out the north end of the village, and possibly repaved with gravel. While it follows the original route through the village, trying to avoid existing structures, damage is still possible.

(i) DGAM report of looting and damage, October 2013 [1]

(ii) Burns, R. *Monuments of Syria*, p245.

(iii) DGAM report of looting and damage to the apse of the church, May 2013 [2]

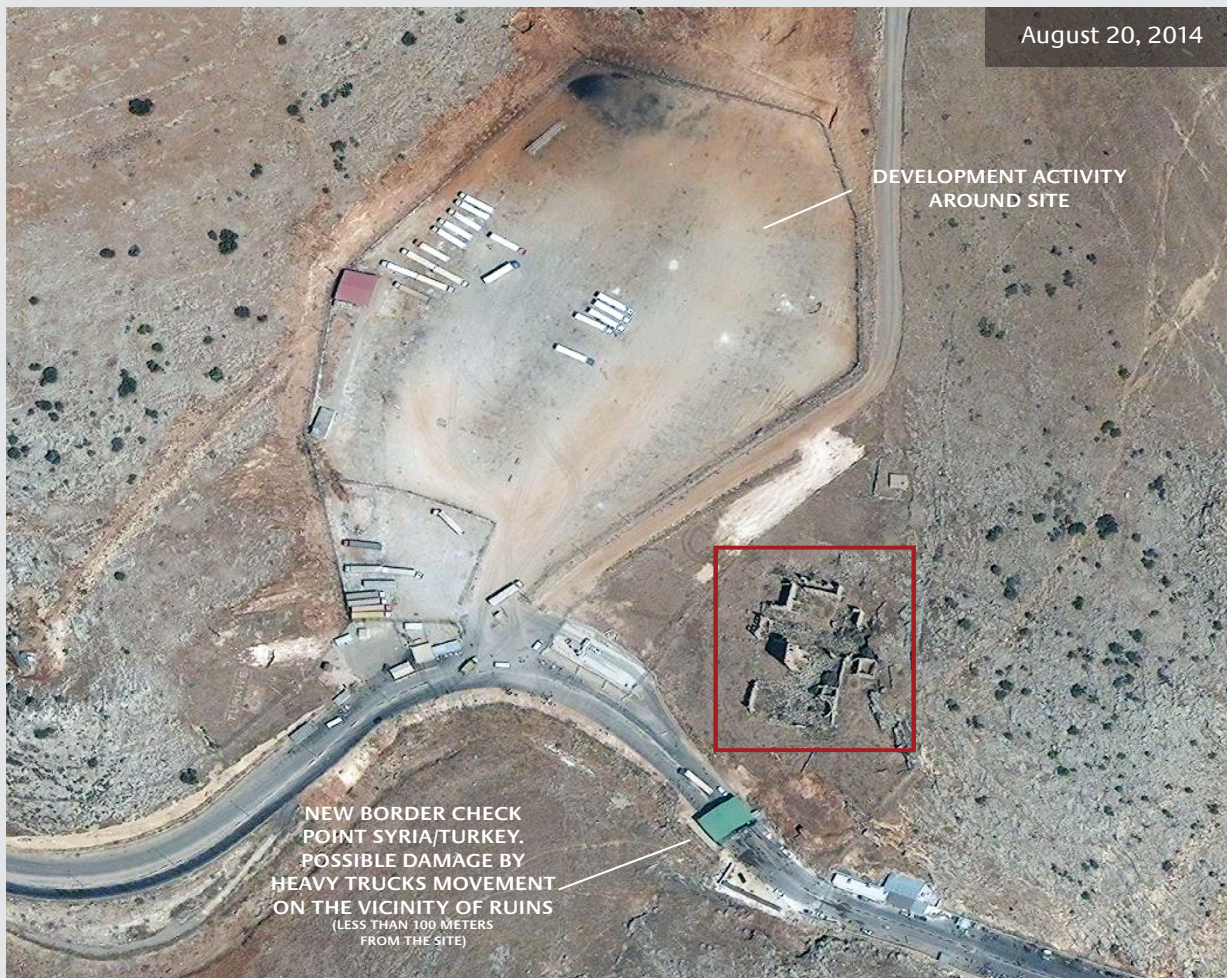


FIGURE 62. Qasr al-Banat.



QALB LOZEH

Description - Ruined Byzantine church, dating back to the fifth century AD. It is “one of the most celebrated ecclesiastical monuments in Syria.”⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

Damage Assessment - No damage to the Church itself is visible on the imagery. However, several new buildings have been erected around the church, though none cross the walls of the compound. No looting was visible.⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾

BABISQA

Description - Ruined Byzantine village surrounded by a modern village, dating back to at least the second century AD.

Damage Assessment - A review of imagery shows the vegetation on the site has been cleared, possibly damaging it.

QASR al-BANAT

Description - Byzantine Monastery dating back to the fourth through sixth centuries AD.

Damage Assessment - A review of the imagery shows extensive new construction and development around the site, which is extremely close to the border crossing with Turkey. Although it appears undisturbed, the possibility remains that the site has been damaged from development activities (see figures 62 and 63).



FIGURE 63. Qasr al-Banat.



Possible Damage