

Palmyra: Heritage Adrift

Detailed report on all damage done to the archaeological site between February 2012 and June 2015

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I. Introduction

Palmyra is one of six Syrian sites registered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the World Heritage List since 1980.¹ On June 20, 2013, Palmyra and the other five sites (Bosra, Damascus, Crac des Chevaliers and the Citadel of Salah ed-Din, Aleppo, and the Ancient Villages of Northern Syria) were then registered on the List of World Heritage in Danger.



Figure 1: Plan of the archaeological area in Palmyra

II. Damage caused by bulldozers in the archaeological area

On February 4, 2012, military units of the Syrian army were deployed in the city of Tadmor. They were installed in certain strategic areas within the modern city and within the old city of Palmyra until May 20, 2015.

¹ For more information concerning the history and importance of Palmyra, see Syrian Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM) (2013) “Palmyra.” <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=245&id=683>; Michael Danti, Tate Paulette, LeeAnn Barnes Gordon, Abdalrazzaq Moaz, Cheikhmous Ali, Kathryn Franklin, and David Elitzer (2015) “Special Report on the Importance of Palmyra.” American Schools of Oriental Research Cultural Heritage Initiatives (ASOR CHI). <http://www.asor-syrianheritage.org/special-report-on-the-importance-of-palmyra/>

During this period, the Syrian army made significant changes in the structure of the archaeological site and its surroundings to ensure better control and to install armored vehicles and other military equipment. The changes included the following:

- Removing soil and digging trenches.
- Building roads, dumps, and levees.

The different types of damage include:

- Building of roads within the archaeological area
- Building of levees
- Creation of positions for military equipment
- Creation of spaces to collect and bury scrap metal
- Removing and displacing ancient stone blocks in the center of the archaeological site for defensive purposes (especially to protect tanks, rocket launchers, and other armored vehicles positioned in the archaeological area, including adjacent monuments such as funerary towers).



Figure 2: DigitalGlobe satellite of the old town of Palmyra showing some important monuments and archaeological sites (Courtesy of ASOR CHI)

1. Installation of military vehicles in the archaeological area

Heavy armaments (e.g. tanks and multiple rocket launchers) were installed at the foot of the mountain on which the citadel sits on hills such as Gabal al-Hysaniyat and Gabal al-Rwissat, and at strategic points within the Northern Necropolis area. The main center of military operations and ammunition depots was built on top of Gabal al-Rwissat next to the telecommunications tower. Surveillance equipment has also been installed on site immediately adjacent to the telecommunications tower. Since 2012, APSA has published several videos and photos concerning this issue, as part of the documentation of damage to the site.²



Figure 3: The installation of heavy weapons and soldiers in the archaeological area (Source: Press TV; May 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35kvAx-smKc>)

2. Road building

Despite the existence of a relatively wide road that is in good condition, running from the citadel and Gabal al-Rwissat to the police station (al-Badya), the Syrian army opened several roads through the archaeological site in order to facilitate transport and communication between the citadel, the modern city, the center of military operations (next to the telecommunications tower on Gabal al-Rwissat), and the police station in the modern city (Mukhabarat al-Badya).

² <http://apsa2011.com/apsanew/category/provinces/homs/palmyra/>

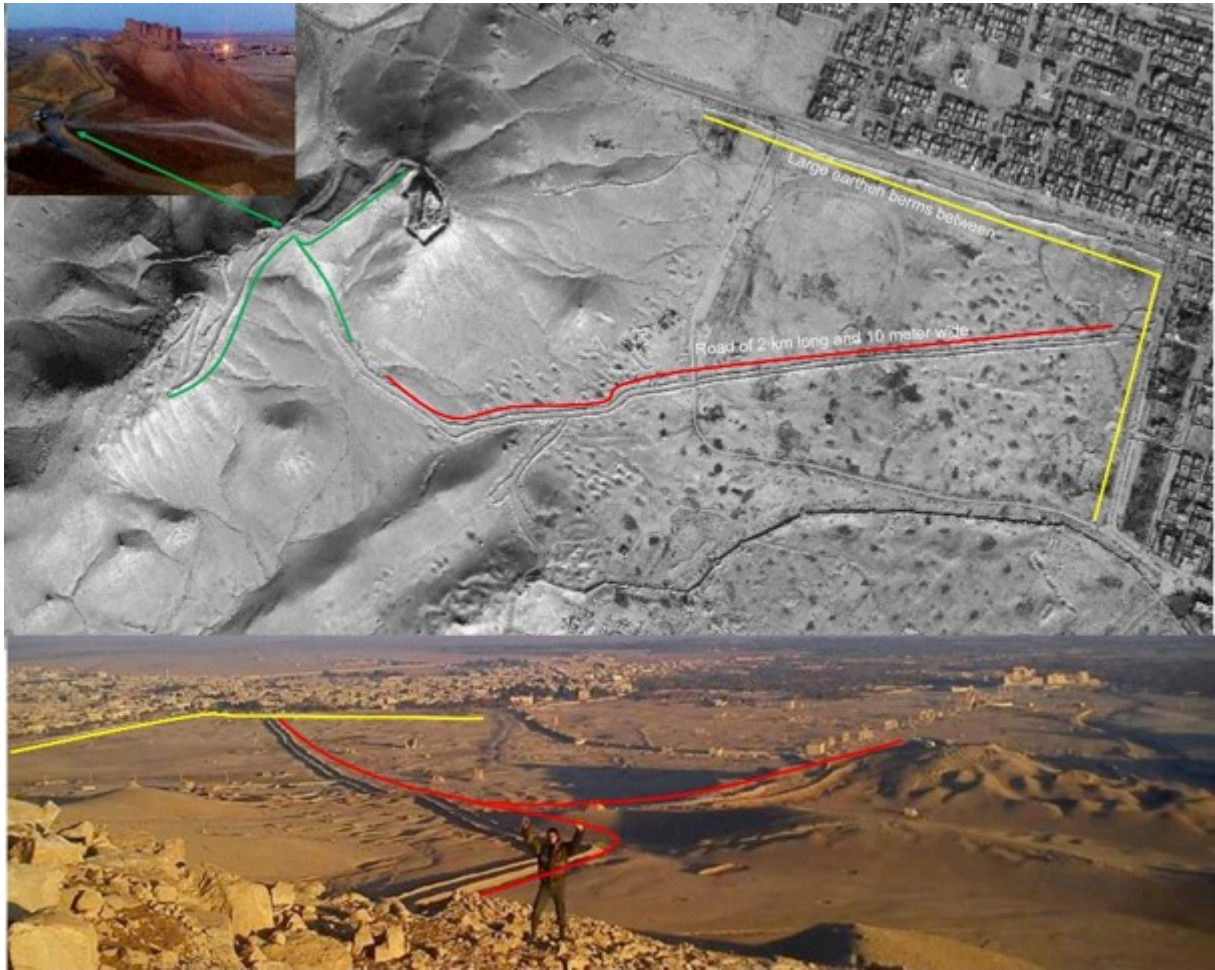


Figure 4: Road that runs through the archaeological area of Palmyra (Sources: ASOR [top]; APSA [bottom])

One of these roads was made in order to easily connect the police station with the center of military operations (close to the telecommunications tower). This route is 10 meters wide and is protected all along its path by large lateral levees. It runs from the police station (al-Badya), located east of the northern tomb area, to the citadel and the center of military operations on Gabal al-Rwissat. (**Figure 4**). This road was made in an area containing numerous tombs. All archaeological remains that stood in the way of the road and, in particular, the foundations of the tombs were removed. The road splits in order to give access to a small 5-meter-wide road that leads south to the foot of Mount Um al-Hysaniyat. The creation of this road caused partial damage to the Diocletian rampart and led to the removal of the foundations of some funerary towers order to build a position for the artillery (**Figure 4**). The road runs to the northwest of the Mount and is related to the road leading to the citadel and al-Badya police station order to build a position for the artillery (**Figure 5**).

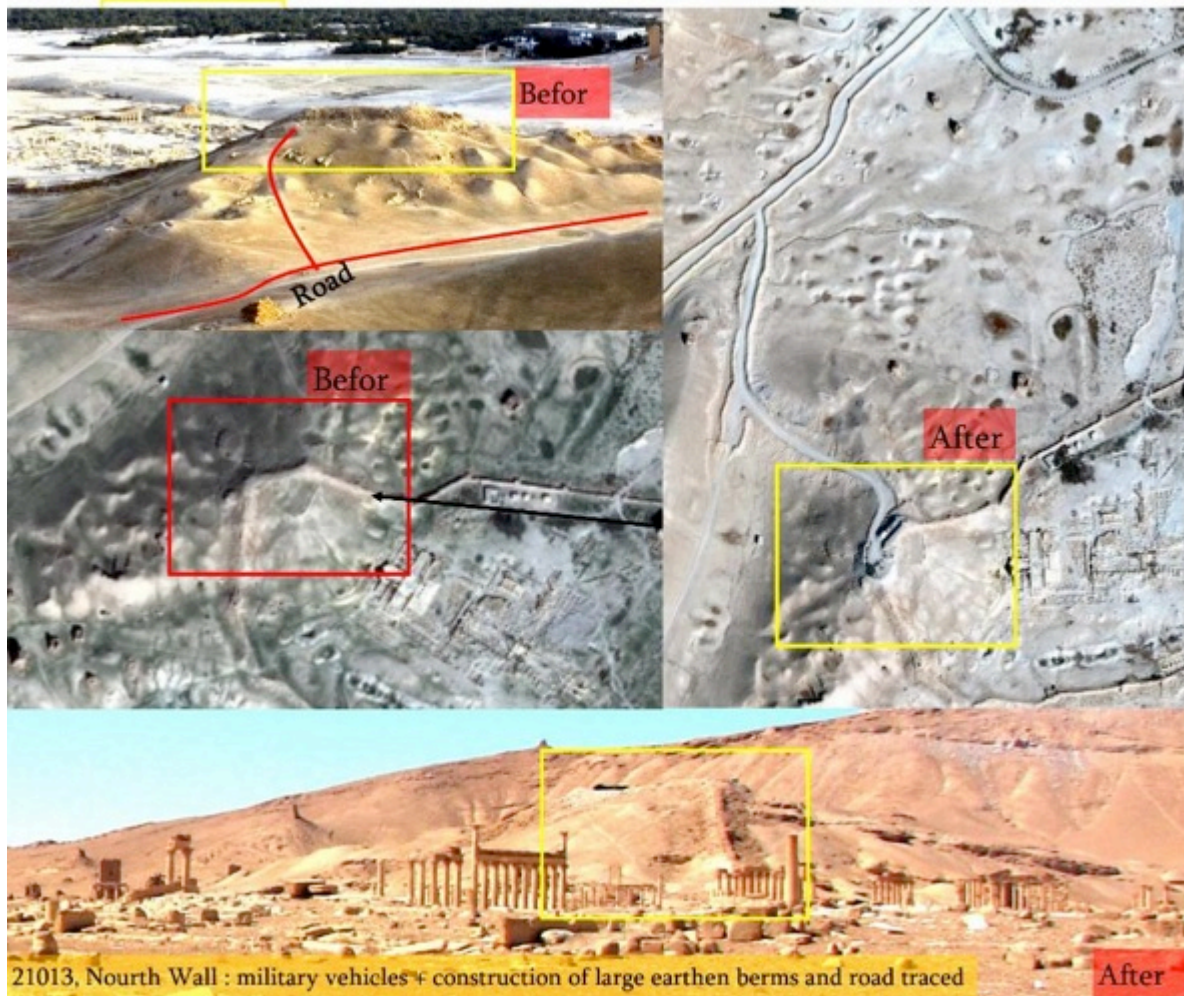


Figure 5: The road leading to the artillery position at the foot of Mount Um al-Hsaniyat. (Sources: HRW [aerial]; APSA [other photographs])

3. Building of levees

The Syrian army has erected a 2-meter-high levee or earthen dyke. It extends from the northern side of the citadel to the northwest corner of the police station (west-east direction). The levee runs parallel to the main road leading to the modern city and then turns to the south in an irregular and intermittent fashion. (Figures 4, 6–8).



Figure 6: Levee measuring 2 meters in height, created by dredging within the archaeological area opposite the police station (Sources: Coordination of the City of Palmyra [inset] and HRW [aerial])



Figure 7: Levee in the archaeological area immediately adjacent to the rampart (Source: Press TV; May 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35kvAx-smKc>)



Figure 8: Levee in the archaeological area near the police station (Source: Coordination of the City of Palmyra)



Figure 9: Soil removal in the area of the Marona tomb; creation of a rubble repository and an area for vehicle disposal (Sources: Coordination of the City of Palmyra [left] and HRW [inset])

4. Work with bulldozers, removal of archaeological layers

In February 2013, archaeological layers were removed in a wide area lying to the west of the police station on the right side of the road that connects the entrance to the police station and the citadel. The area has been used to collect concrete rubble and ancient architectural elements (**Figure 9**). A large space has been dug deep in the same area to dispose of the large number of scrap vehicles that have been destroyed or burned during military operations. The area in question has been completely surrounded by levees built using soil removed from the same area.

5. Preparation of artillery positions

Another dredging operation, involving the construction of high earthen levees, was conducted in a vast area within the northern tombs area. The aim of the operation was the preparation of protected positions for artillery, rocket launchers, and tanks. This equipment was installed west of the tomb of Marona (Qaser Al-Hayaa) and close to several other funerary towers, leading to the complete or partial removal of the foundations of some tombs. On top of al-Gabal Hussiyinat, a vast archaeological area was completely destroyed in order to build a heavy artillery position, other military emplacements, and an ammunition depot.

These military works have resulted in the clearance of parts of the defensive walls and their towers that are joined at the top of Gabal al-Hussiyinat (this hill overlooks the Diocletian camp) and in the removal of the foundations of some tombs in the area. A small path was made next to the northwest foot of the hill to connect the camp with the road network (**Figures 5, 11**). In the southern part of the Valley of the Tombs area, an earthen levee (200 meters long, 10 meters wide, and 2–4 meters high) was built between three funerary towers. This resulted in the removal of some archaeological layers (**Figures 11-12**).



21013, Nourth Necropolis : military vehicles and construction of large earthen berms near two ancient towers
Figure 10: The position of cannons and rocket launchers near the tower-tombs west of the Marona tomb
 (Sources: APSA; Coordination of the City of Palmyra [insets]; HRW[aerial])

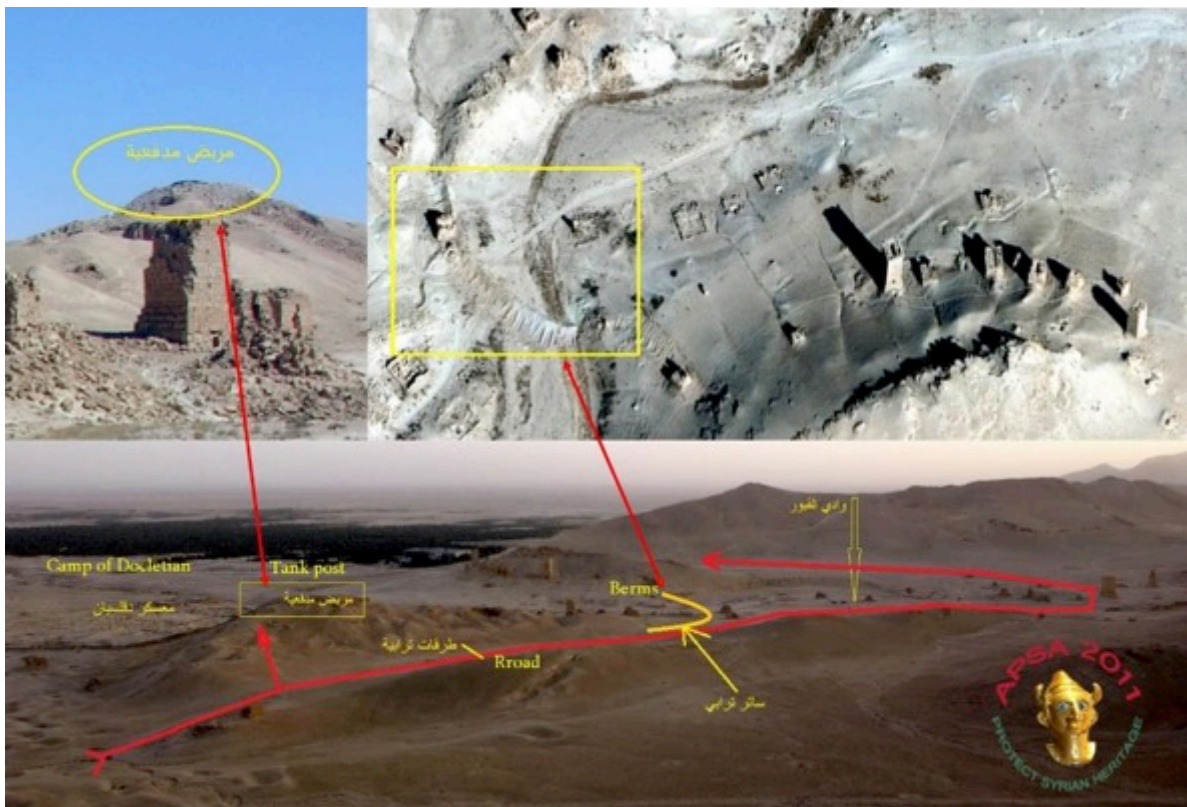


Figure 11: Artillery positions on top of Gabal al-Hussiyniat and levees in the area of the Valley of the Tombs
 (Sources: APSA and HRW [aerial])



Figure 12: Levees in the Valley of the Tombs area (Source: APSA)

III. Buildings damaged between February 2012 and May 2015

1. The citadel

Up to now, there has been no observed damage, according to ground-level observations from local sources and published reports. It should be noted that the area around the citadel was bombed during the fighting between the Syrian army and ISIL that began on May 14, 2015.³



Figure 13: The ancient citadel under the control of ISIL (Source: APSA)

³ M. Danti, et al. (2015) "Special Report on the Importance of Palmyra." ASOR CHI, pg. 6.

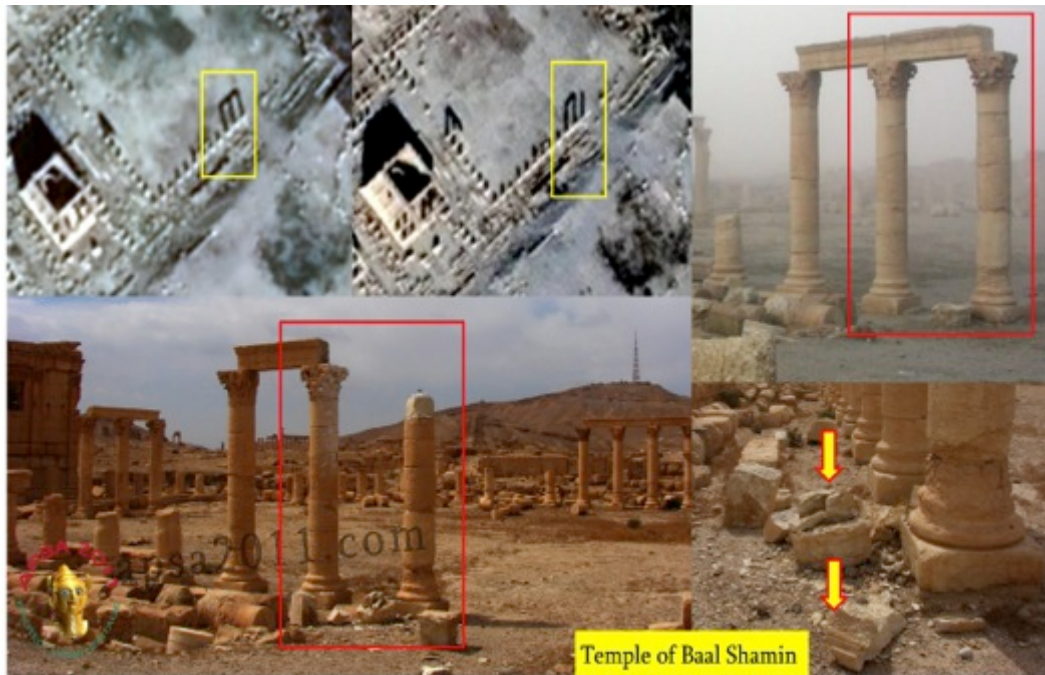


Figure 14: Damage in the portico of the temple of Baal-Shamin. (Sources: APSA and HRW)



Figure 15: Damage in the portico of the temple of Baal-Shamin. (Sources: APSA and HRW)



Figure 16: Damage to the frieze and the column of the eastern portico (Source: APSA)

2. The temple of Baal-Shamin

Figures 14–16 show direct damage to a frieze and a column of the portico, which resulted in the collapse of the damaged part of the frieze and the upper drum and capital of the column.⁴

3. The temple of Baal

Several parts of the temple, which was built in 32 AD, were damaged to varying degrees by bombings in 2013.⁵ Additionally, looters created two openings at the southeastern corner of the temple wall in order to steal the furniture of the guesthouse. According to reports published by the DGAM, analysis of aerial photos, data from our team on the ground, the Coordination of Palmyra, and the Media Centre, we can identify a number of areas of damage.

⁴ For more, see <http://apsa2011.com/apsanew/pictures-of-archaeological-monuments-posted-by-isis-27-05-2015/>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTarYxt8ujo>

⁵ M. Danti, et al. (2015) “Special Report on the Importance of Palmyra.” ASOR CHI

A. The portico and the western wall

Damage is present in three main areas:

1. The northwestern corner of the outer wall of the temple
2. The front side of the western wall
3. The columned portico in the southwestern corner. (**Figure17**)

Damage includes the following:

- Traces of a shell that left minor damage on the northwestern corner of the outer wall of the temple (**Figure 18**).
- A few stones from the upper part of the western wall were destroyed by a direct hit (**Figure 19**). The inner facade of the temple was hit by two shells. The damage appears to be light (**Figure 20**).
- Traces of two shells that impacted the porch located in the southwestern corner. The first shell broke a part of the lintel (**Figure 21-point 3**), while the second caused the structure of the lintel to crumble (**Figure 21-point 2; Figure 22**).
- The deterioration of the top of a column (where statues were deposited) after a direct hit. (**Figure 21, point 4; Figure 23**)
- A direct hit to a column in the southwestern corner of the portico (**Figure 21-point 5**) has led to crumbling and a partial shift of two parts of the column (**Figure 24**).
- Part of the capital of a restored column now lies on the ground and has been broken. (**Figure 25**).

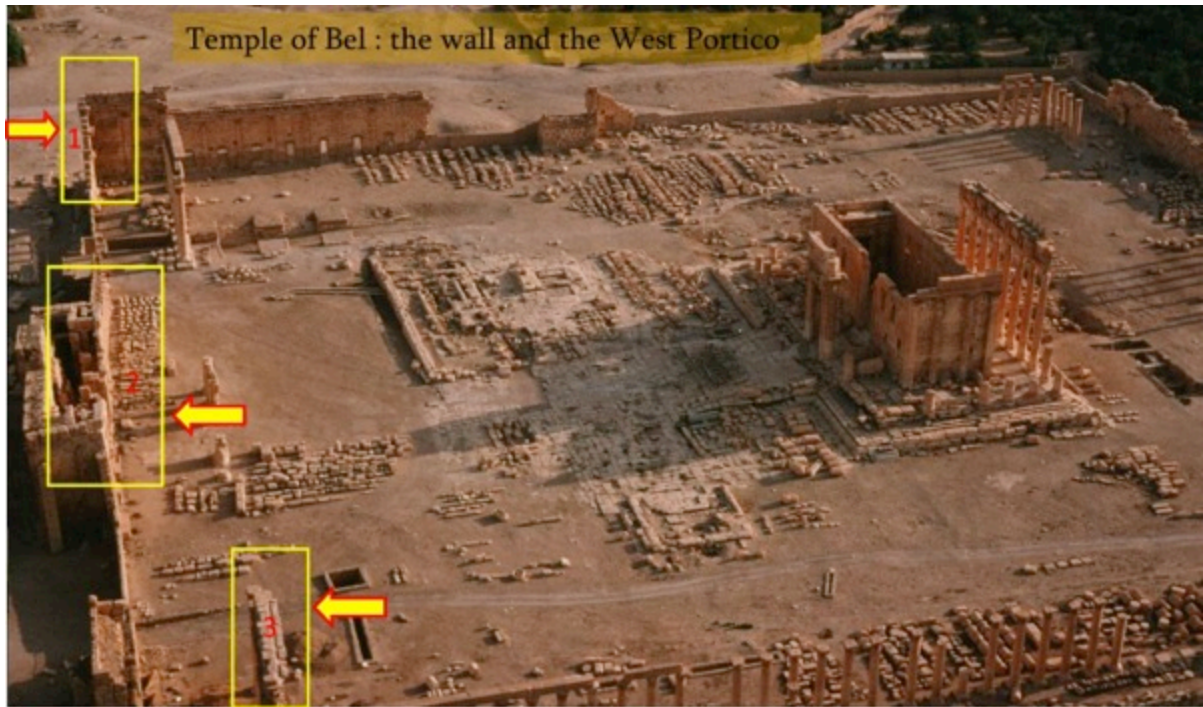


Figure 17: Damage to the portico and the western wall of the Temple of Baal (Source: APSA)

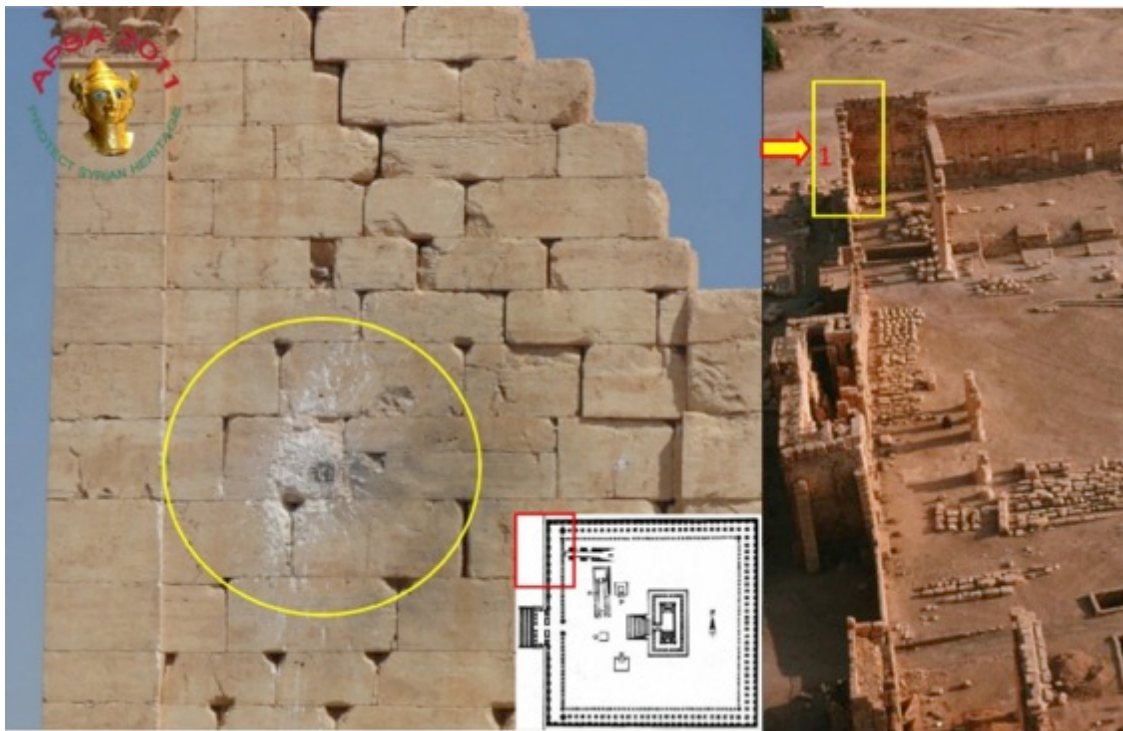


Figure 18: Temple of Baal; damages to the northwest corner of the outer enclosure (Source APSA [left] and Cliolamuse[plan])

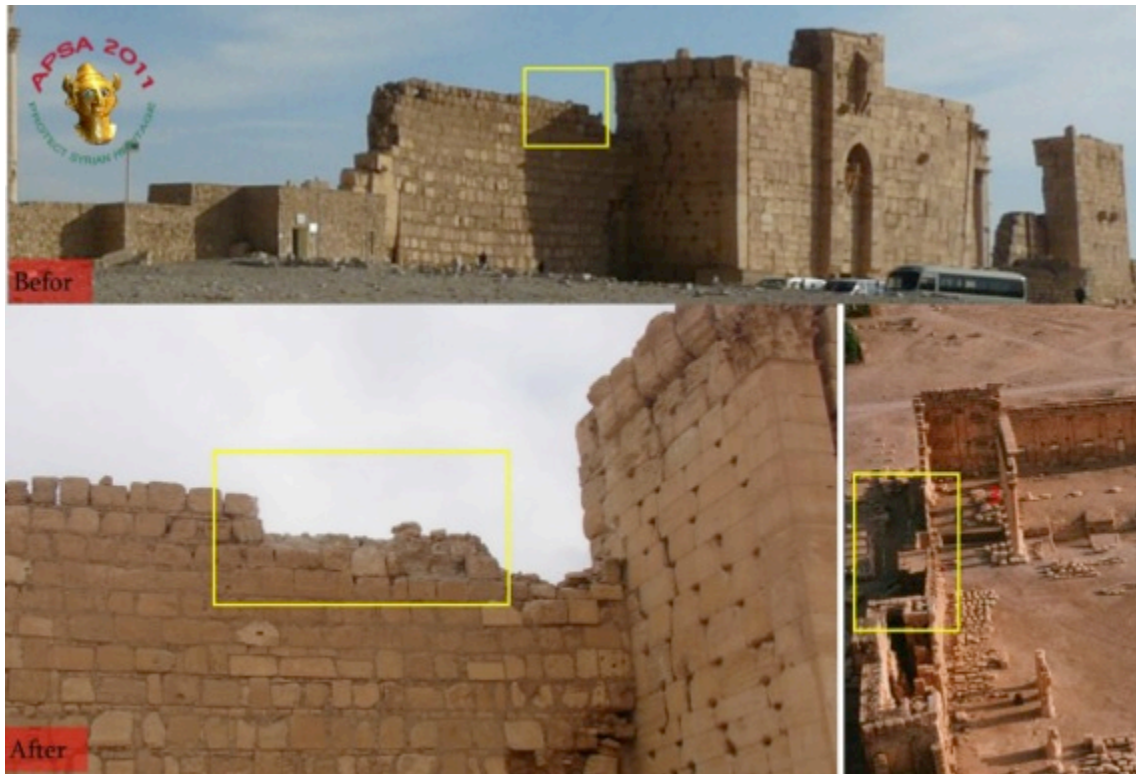
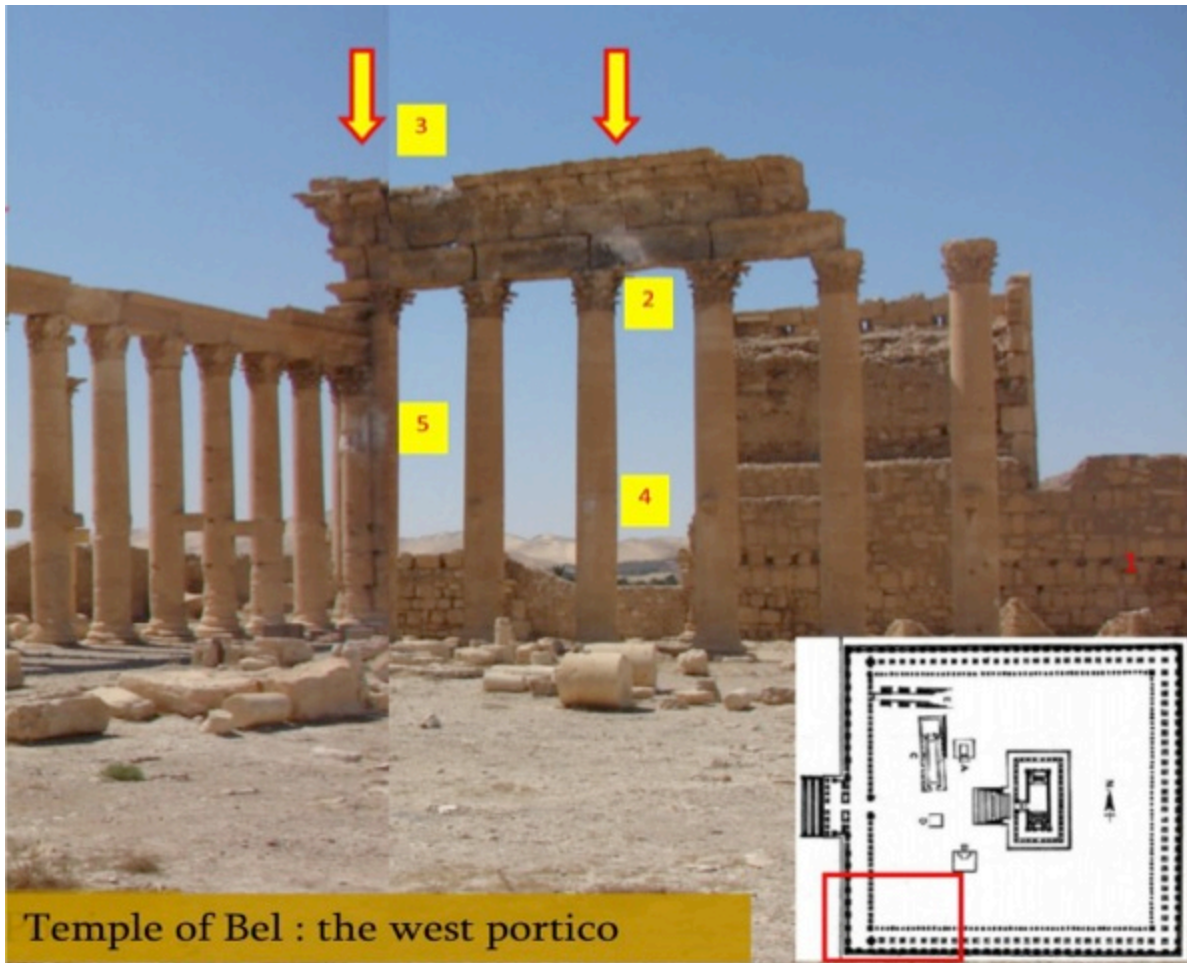


Figure 19: Damage to the exterior facade of the western enclosure (Source APSA)

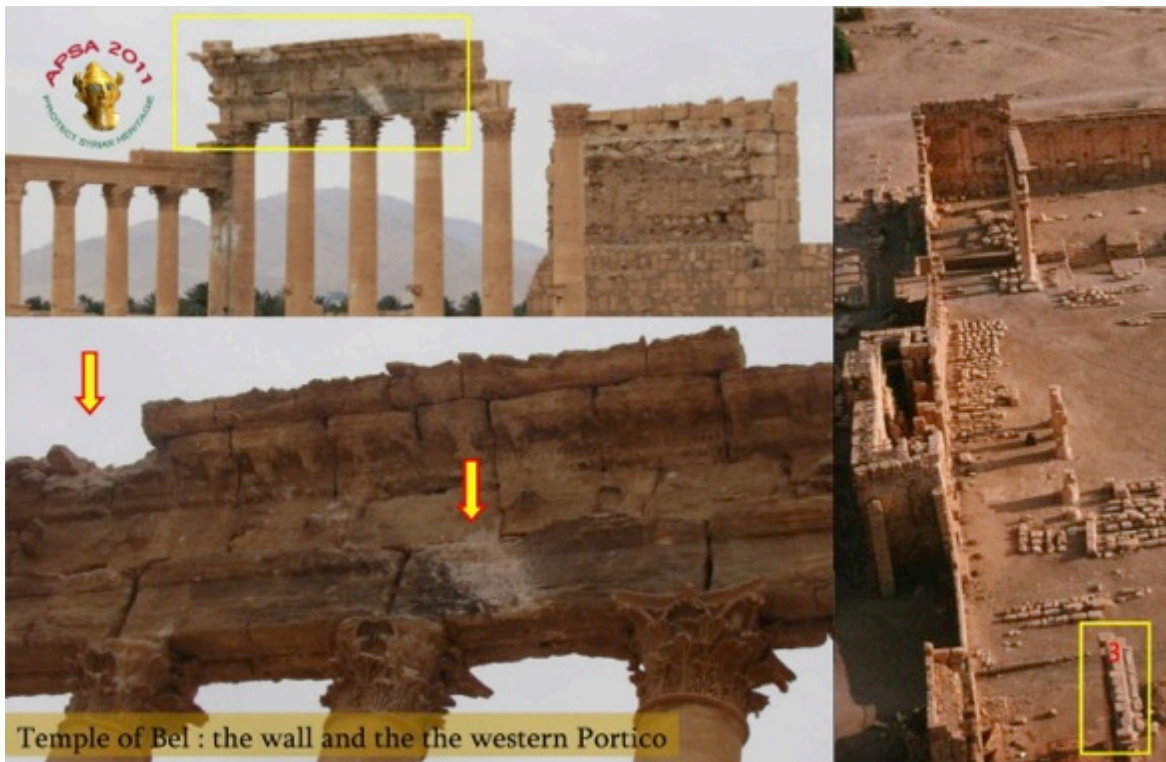


Figure 20: Damage to the interior facade of the western wall (Source: APSA and Lens Young Tadmouri)



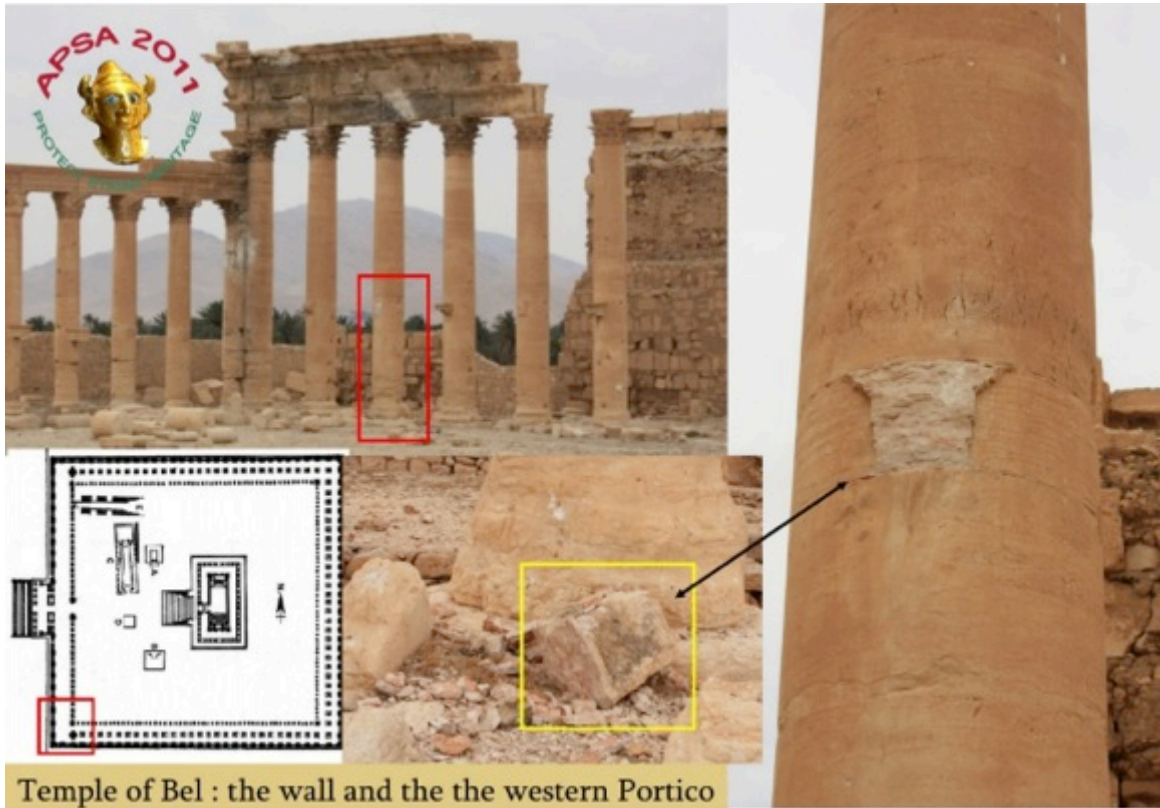
Temple of Bel : the west portico

Figure 21: Western portico; damage in the southwestern corner (Source: APSA and Cliolamuse [plan])



Temple of Bel : the wall and the the western Portico

Figure 22: Damage to the frieze of the Western corridor (Source: APSA)



Temple of Bel : the wall and the the western Portico

Figure 23: Collapse of a statue support from a column following a direct hit (Source: APSA and Cliolamuse [plan])

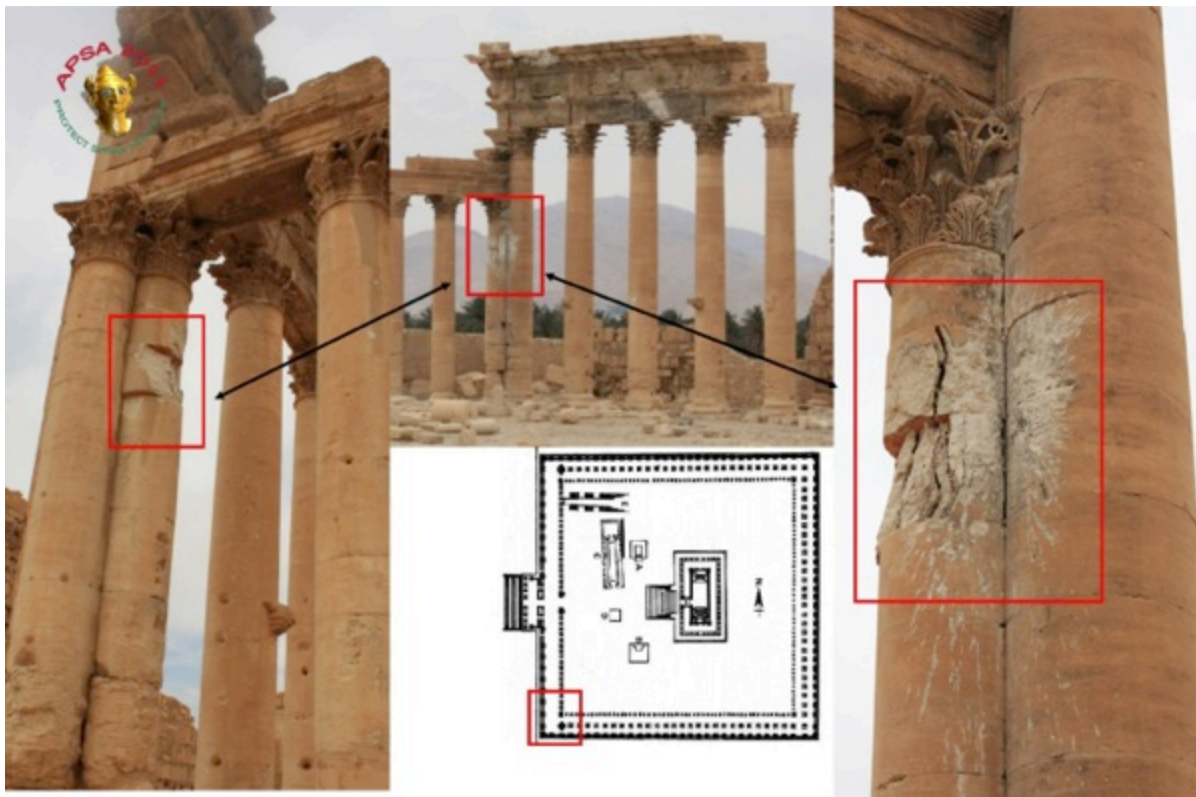


Figure 24: Western corridor; damage to the columns of the southwestern corner (Source: APSA and Cliolamuse[Plan])



Temple of Bel : the wall and the the western Portico

Figure 25: Damage to the capital of a column previously restored (Source: APSA)

B. The portico and the southern wall

Ten columns in the portico (**Figures 26-27**) were damaged due to shelling. Damage includes the following:

- Columns 1, 2, 7, 8, and 9 and point 11 on the wall were damaged by bullets and/or fragments of shells. Columns 1, 2, 7, and 8 show relatively minor damage, while columns 9 and 10 have crumbled significantly at their base but without collapsing. (**Figure 31**).
- Columns 3 and 5 were subjected to a direct hit that caused significant crumbling and the shift of a drum within each column. (**Figures 28-29**) The structure of these columns is now very weak, and another direct hit with shells would probably lead to collapse.
- A direct hit on column 4 caused the collapse of the upper part (capital) and two drums of the column and left traces of fire. (**Figure 29**). A direct hit caused the collapse of the upper drum of Column 6, which is made up of three drums (**Figure 29**).
- A direct hit by a shell left a hole in the southern enclosure facing column 3 (**Figure 27**). In addition, some drums and capitals that had been placed on the ground in the southern portico area have crumbled due to shelling. (**Figure 32**).

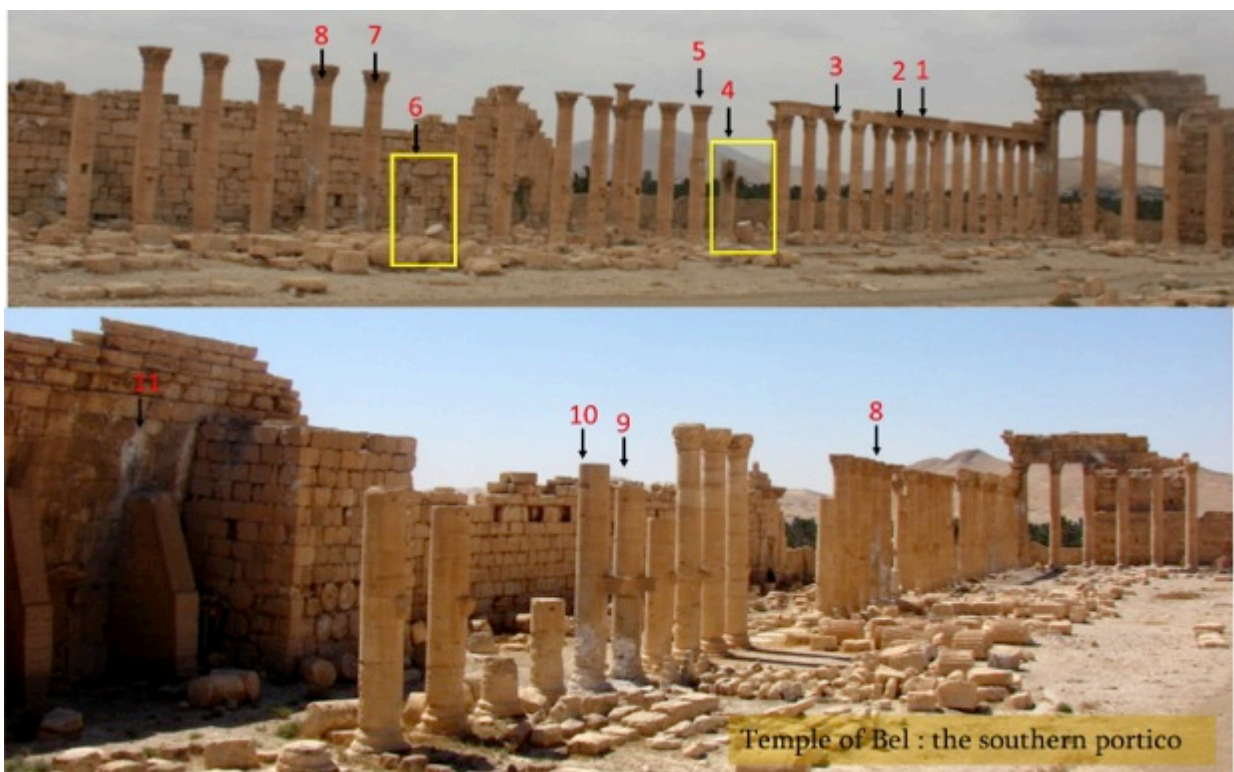


Figure 26: Damaged areas in the southern corridor (Source: APSA)

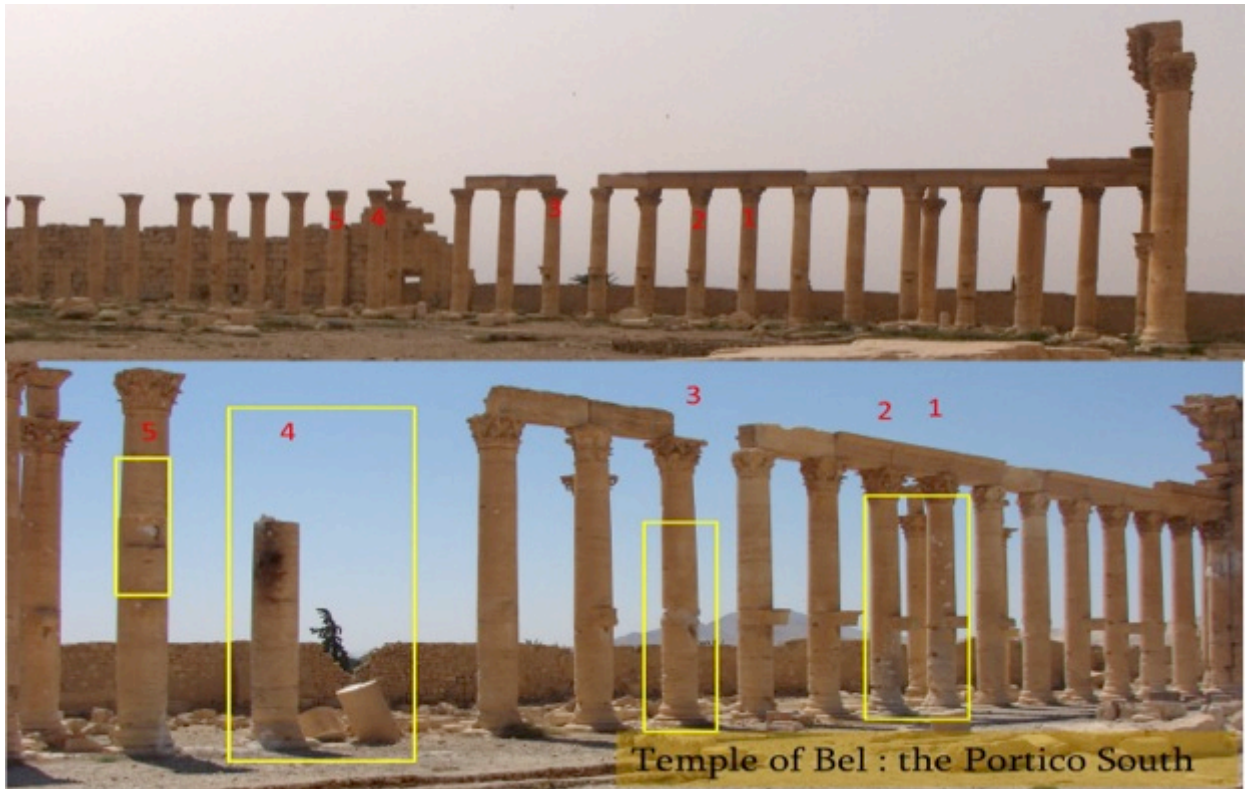


Figure 27: Damage to columns 1–5 (Source: APSA)

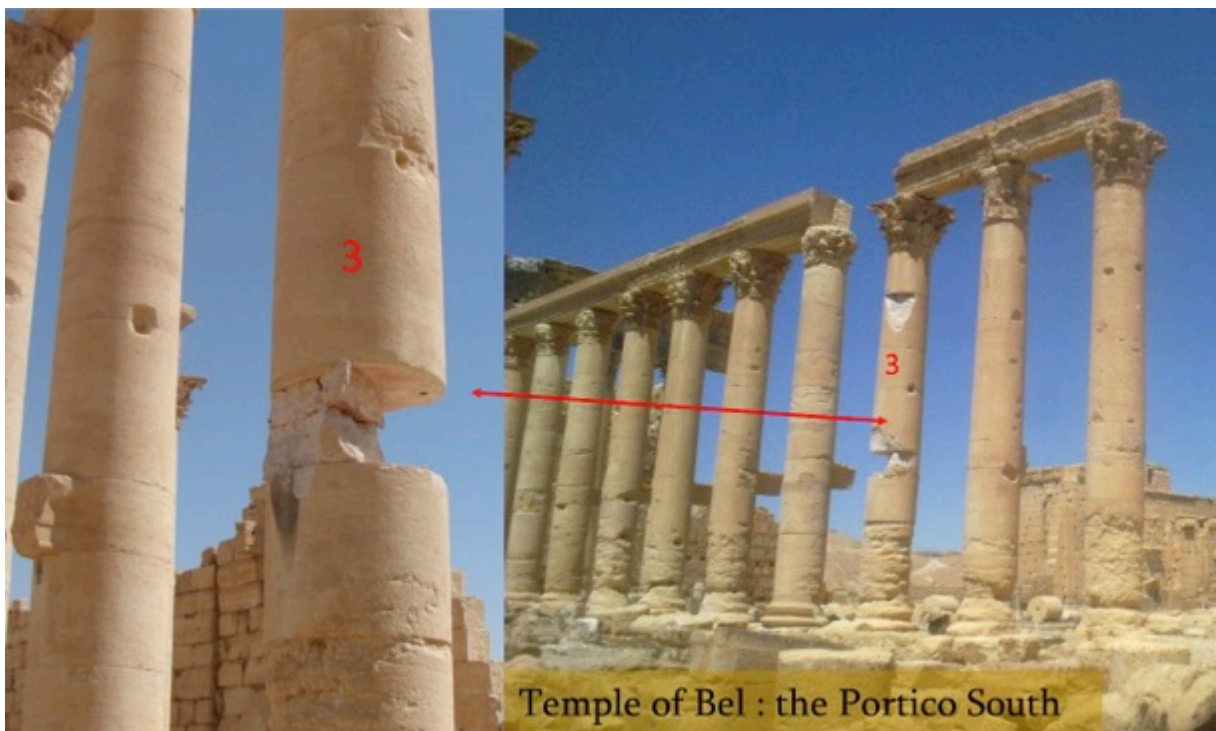


Figure 28: Column 3 is under threat of collapse (Source: APSA)

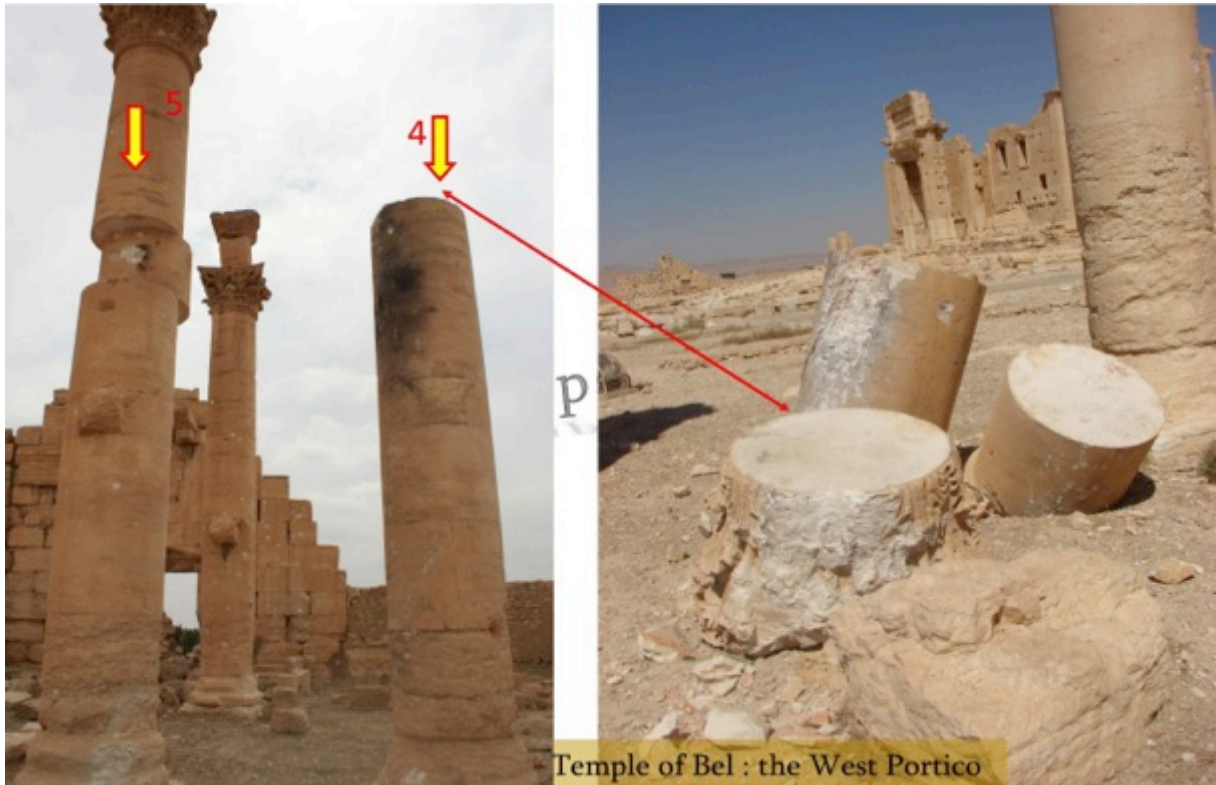


Figure 29: Damage to columns 4 and 5 (Source: APSA)

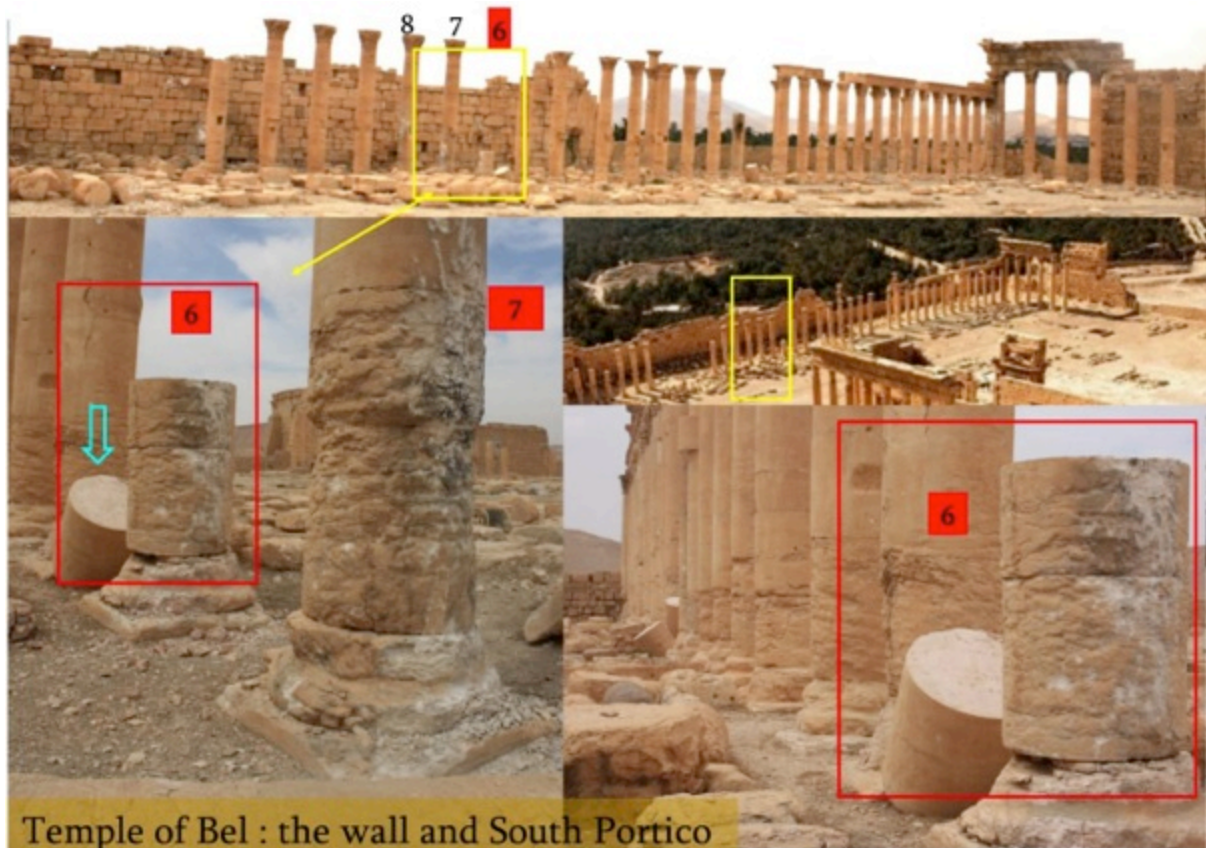
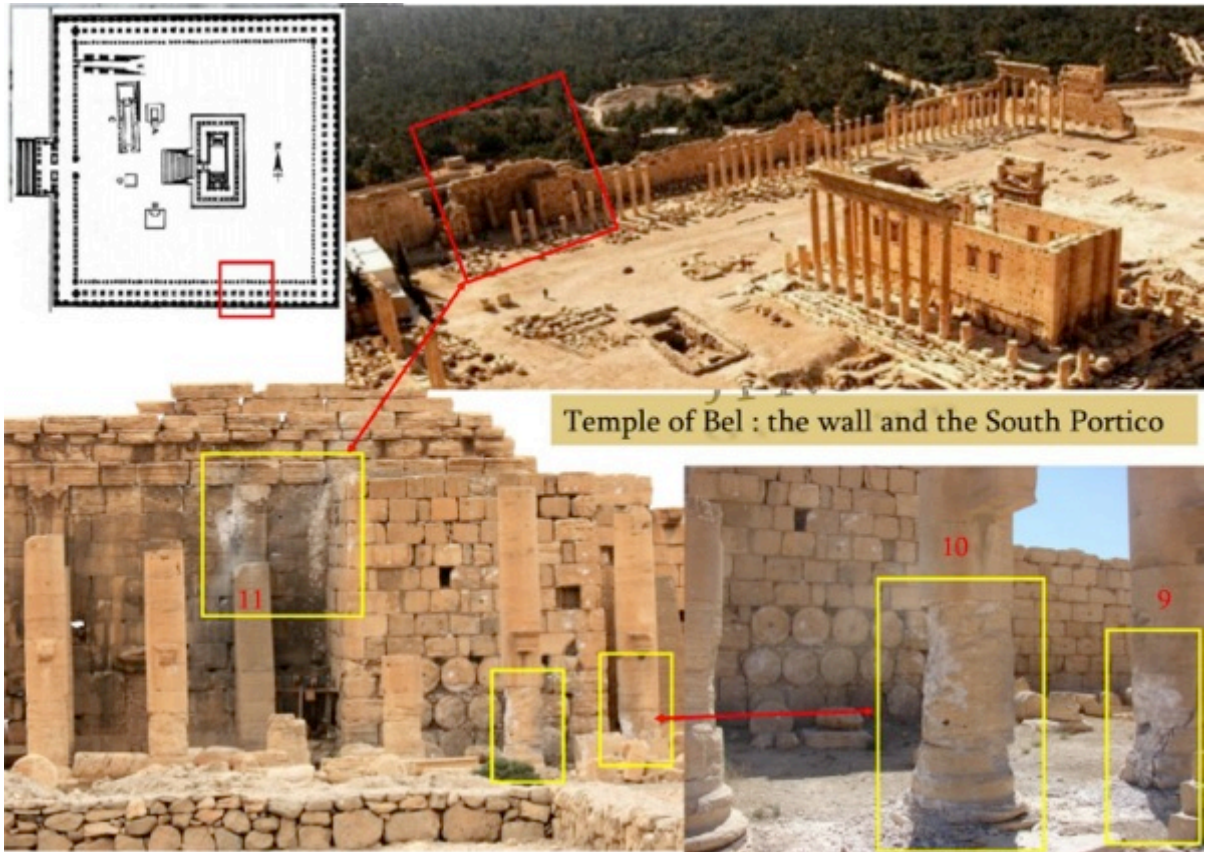


Figure 30: Damage to columns 6 and 7 (Source: APSA)



Temple of Bel : the wall and the South Portico

Figure 31: Partial collapse of the southern rampart wall and the bases of columns 9 and 10 (Source: APSA and Cliolamuse [plan])



Figure 32: Shell traces in the south portico area (Source: APSA)

C. The portico and the eastern wall

As for the east side of the temple of Baal, twelve points of damage have been identified in the southern enclosure, but no damage has yet been identified in the column portico (**Figure 33**).

- In the southeastern corner of the temple of Baal, two openings were created by thieves. The first is located in the southern enclosure and measures 2 x 1 meters; the second (1.5 x 1.5 meters) is located in the wall adjacent to the guest house on the southern side (**Figures 34, 35 - points 1-2**).⁶
- The rest of the damage is relatively minor damage to the top of the wall (**Figures 36-37**), including two holes (**Figure 38**).

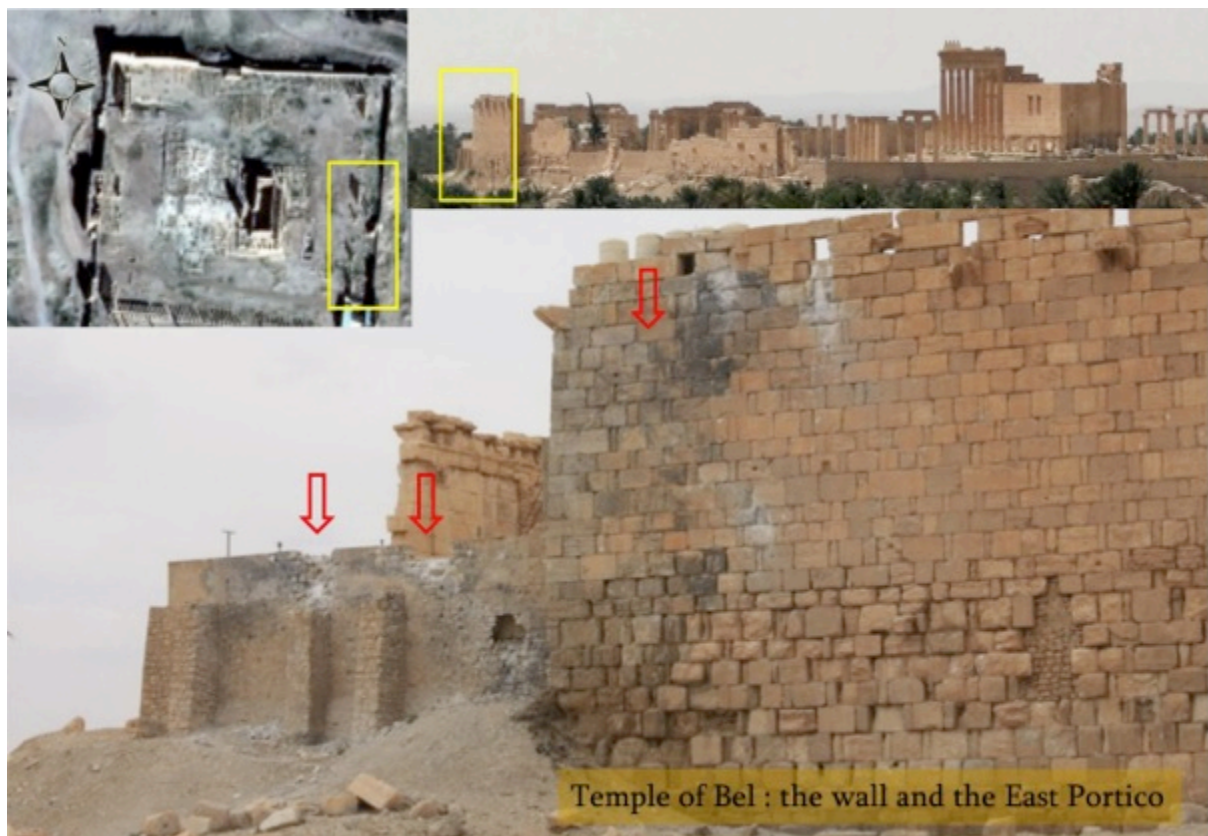


Figure 33: Traces of shell impacts on the southeastern corner of the temple enclosure (Source: APSA)

⁶ See the DGAM report: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=983>

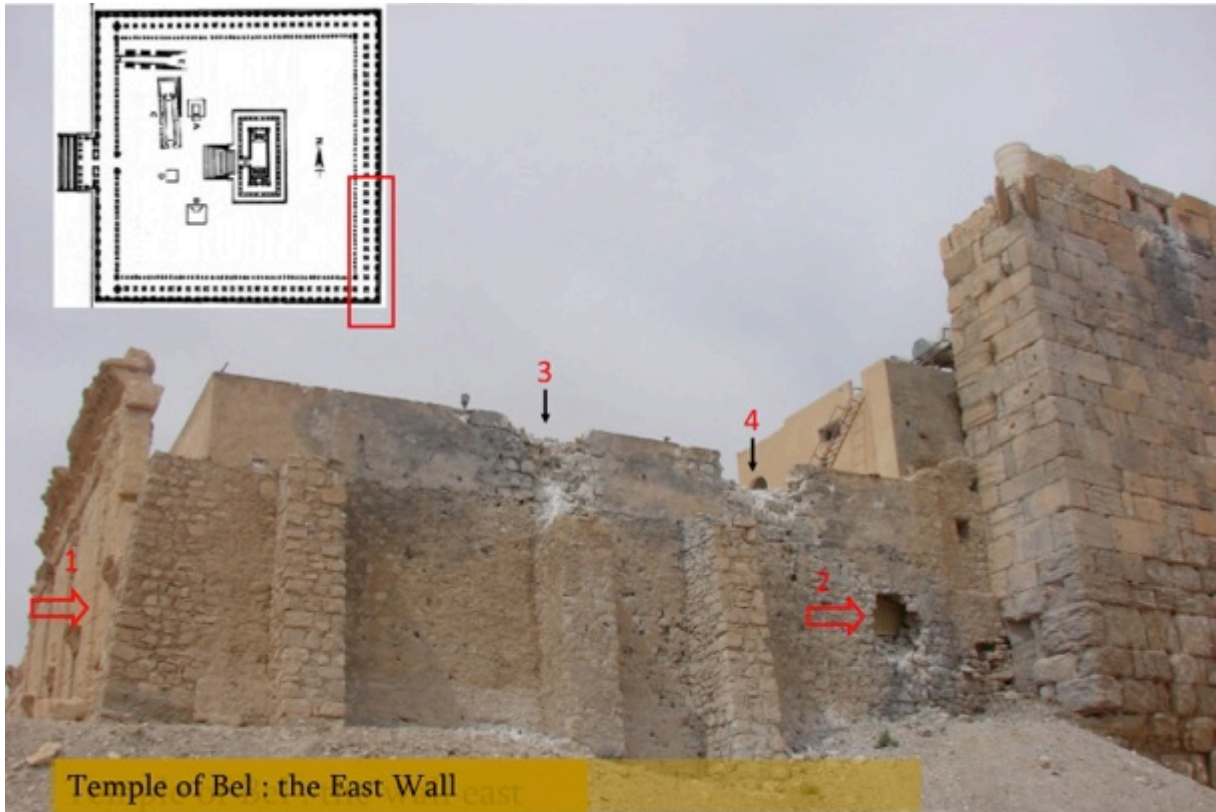


Figure 34: Damage to the southeastern corner of the enclosure of the temple of Baal (Source: APSA and Cliolamuse [plan])



Figure 35: The two openings created by thieves at the southeastern corner of the enclosure of the temple of Baal (Source: APSA)

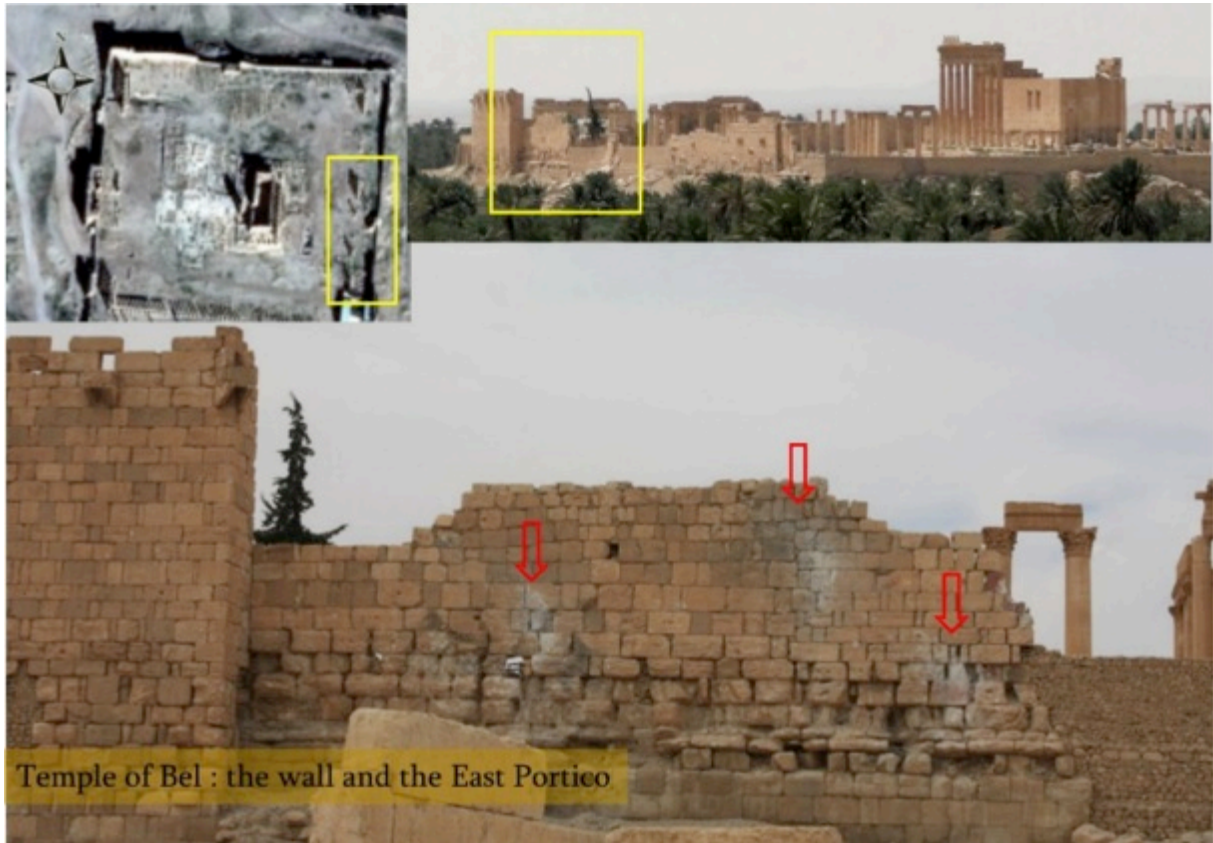


Figure 36: Traces of shrapnel in the eastern wall (Source: APSA)



Figure 37: Traces of shrapnel in the eastern wall (Source: APSA)

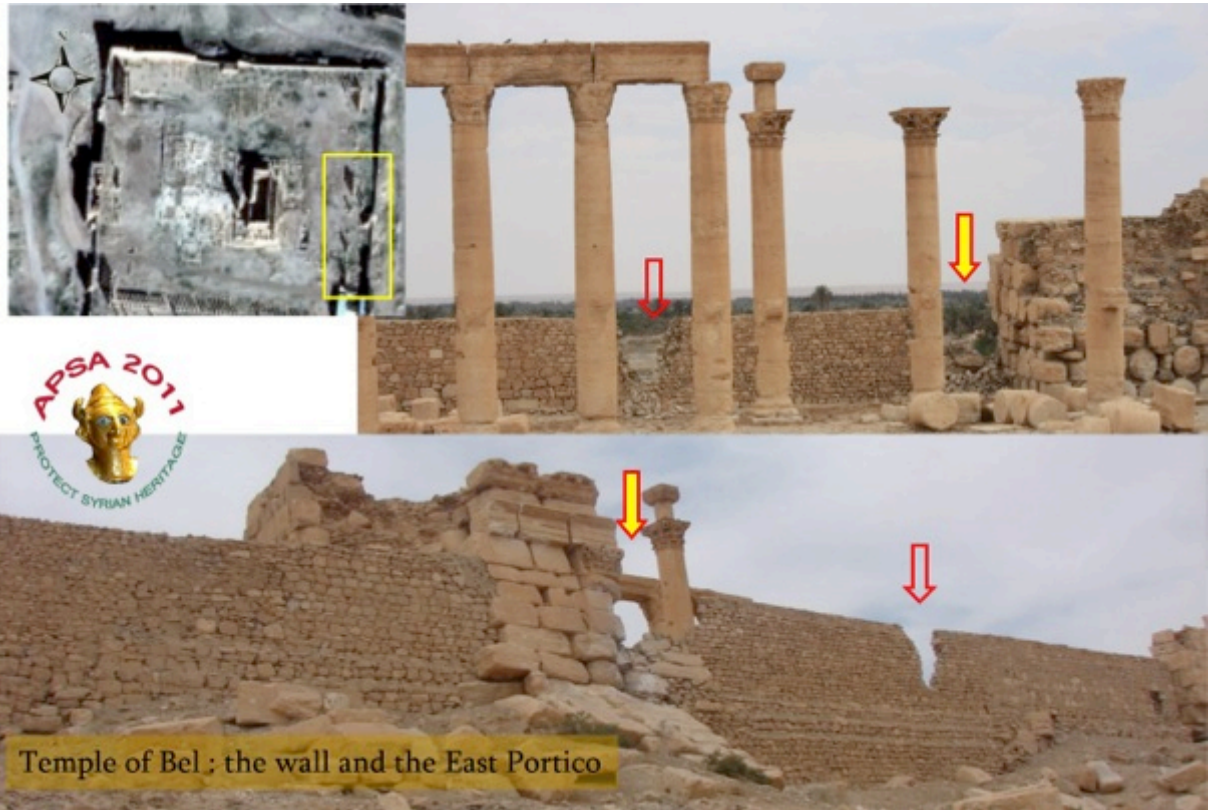


Figure 38: Shell holes in the enclosure wall of the temple of Baal (Source: APSA)

D. The portico and the northern wall

According to a DGAM report, there is a break in the column at the northeastern corner of the enclosure of the temple portico, as well as traces of fire on the north wall⁷ (**Figure 39**).

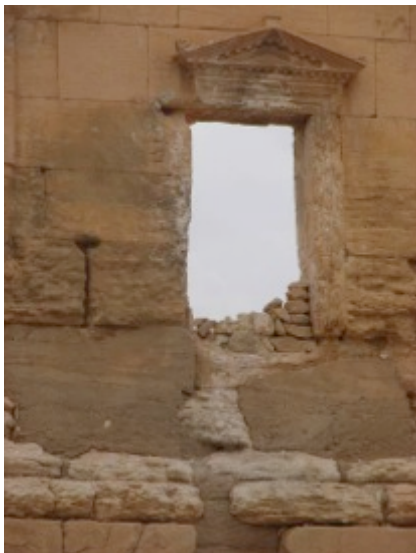


Figure 39: Shell holes in the enclosure wall of the temple of Baal (Source: APSA)

⁷ <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=983>

E. The sanctuary of the temple

We can specify the damage to the sanctuary in 7 points (Figures 40 -41), in which we note traces of fire and shrapnel and different degrees of crumbling.

- Five points show damage in the east side of the portico and the wall of the sanctuary (Figure 40 points 1–4, 6). The facade of the eastern wall of the sanctuary was damaged by shrapnel, causing crumbling of some stone blocks. (Figures 41–43, 44 points 1-3). The frieze of the portico and the decorative elements of the columns of the eastern portico of the sanctuary have partially collapsed. (Figures 41, 45-46 and 11)
- The northern wall of the sanctuary was damaged (chipped), as was the upper part of the column, due to a direct hit. (Figure 47).
- The southwestern corner of the wall of the sanctuary was damaged by a shell fragment. (Figure 48).

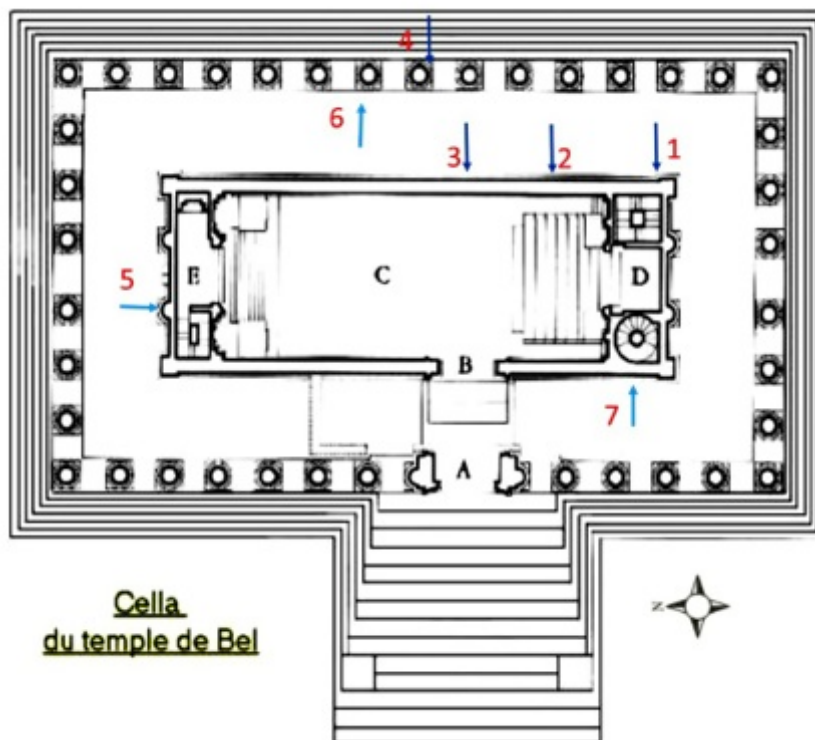


Figure 40: Plan of the temple of Baal (Source : <http://www.cliolamuse.com/spip.php?article505>)

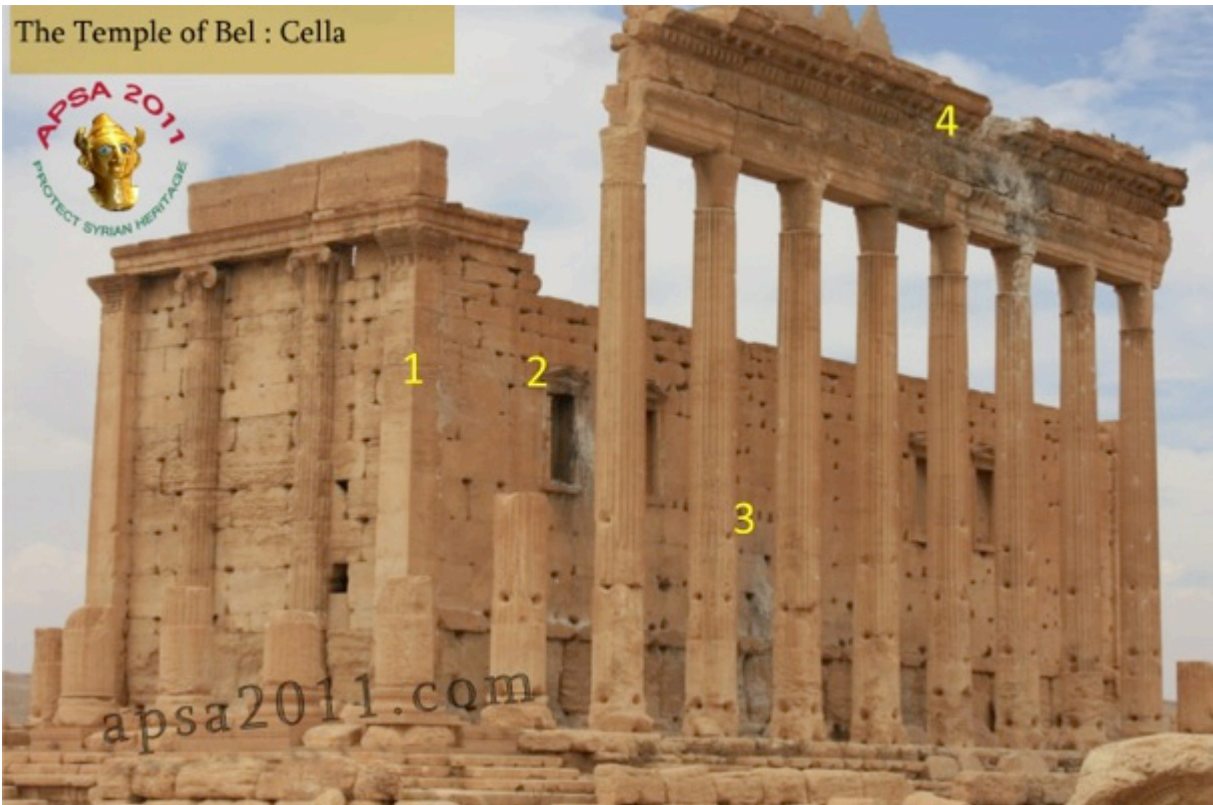


Figure 41: The facade of the eastern wall and the eastern portico of the sanctuary (Source: APSA)



Figure 42: Sanctuary of the temple, damage to the southeastern corner of the eastern wall (Source: APSA)

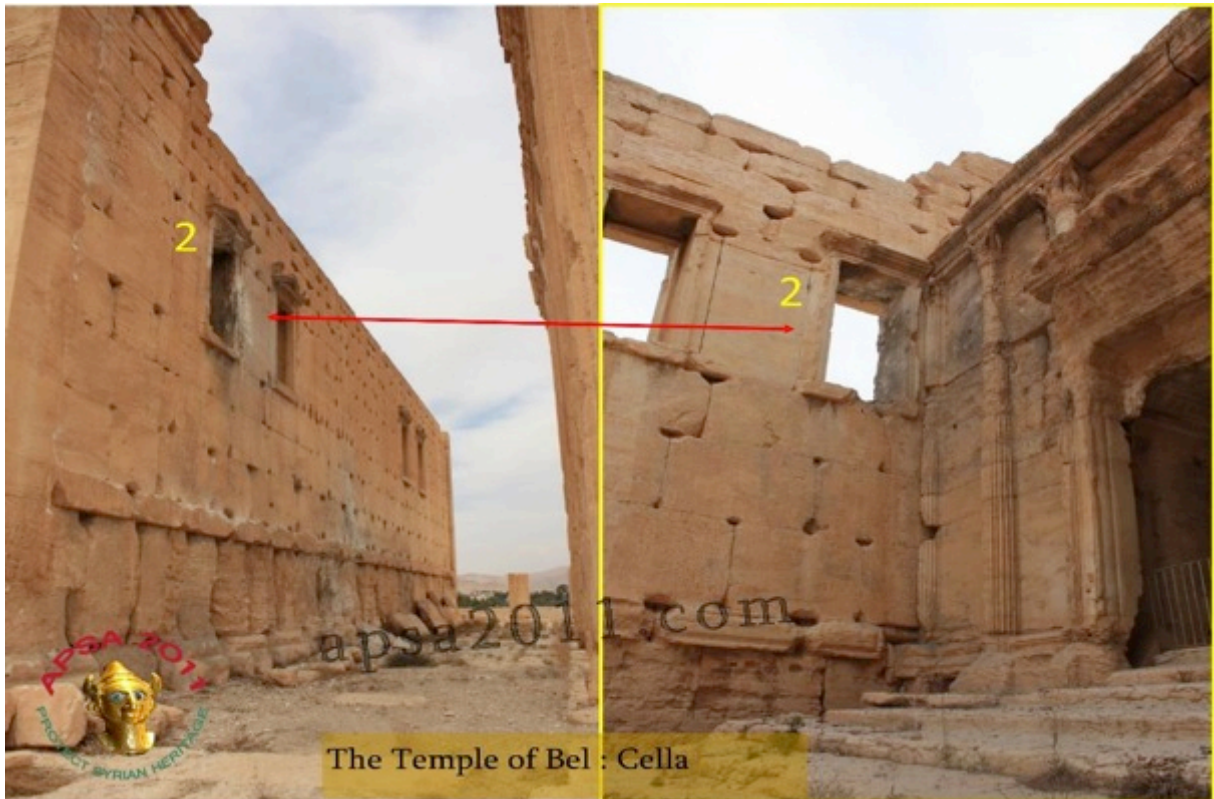


Figure 43: Sanctuary of the temple, damage to the window at the southeastern corner of the eastern wall (Source: APSA)



Figure 44: Sanctuary of the temple, shell traces on the outer facade of the eastern wall (Source: APSA)

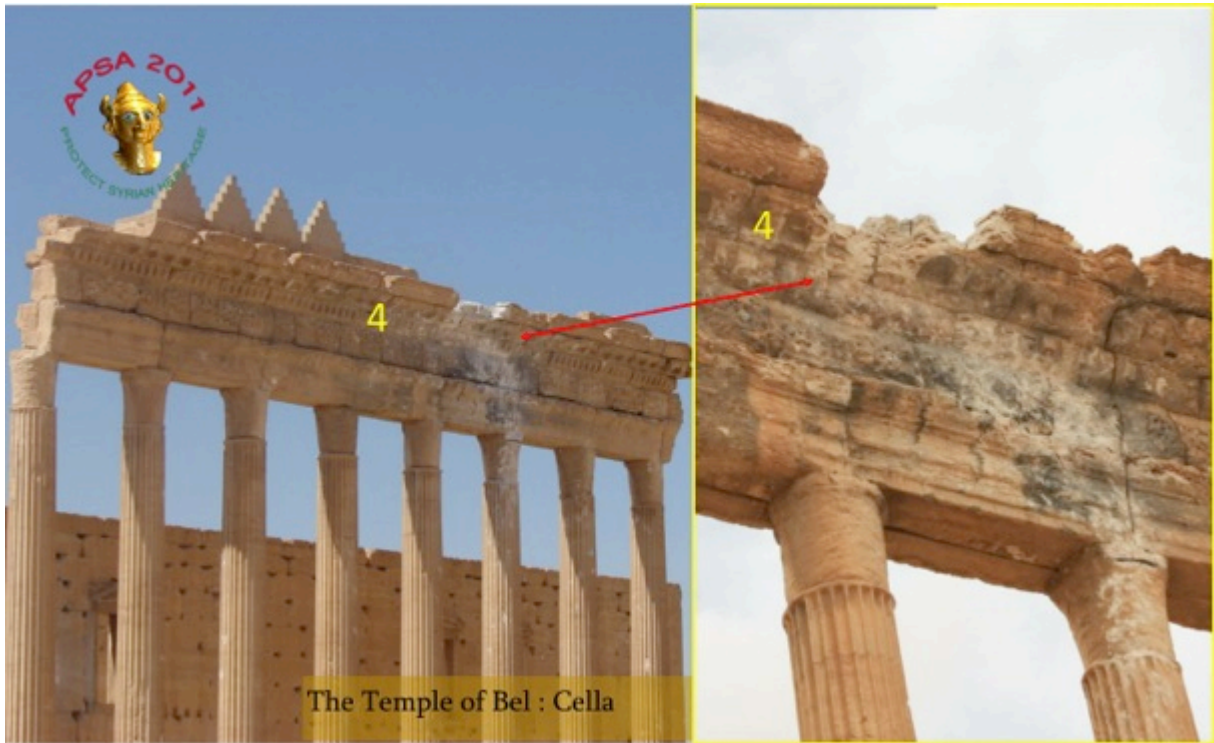


Figure 45: Sanctuary of the temple, damage to the frieze of the eastern portico (Source: APSA)

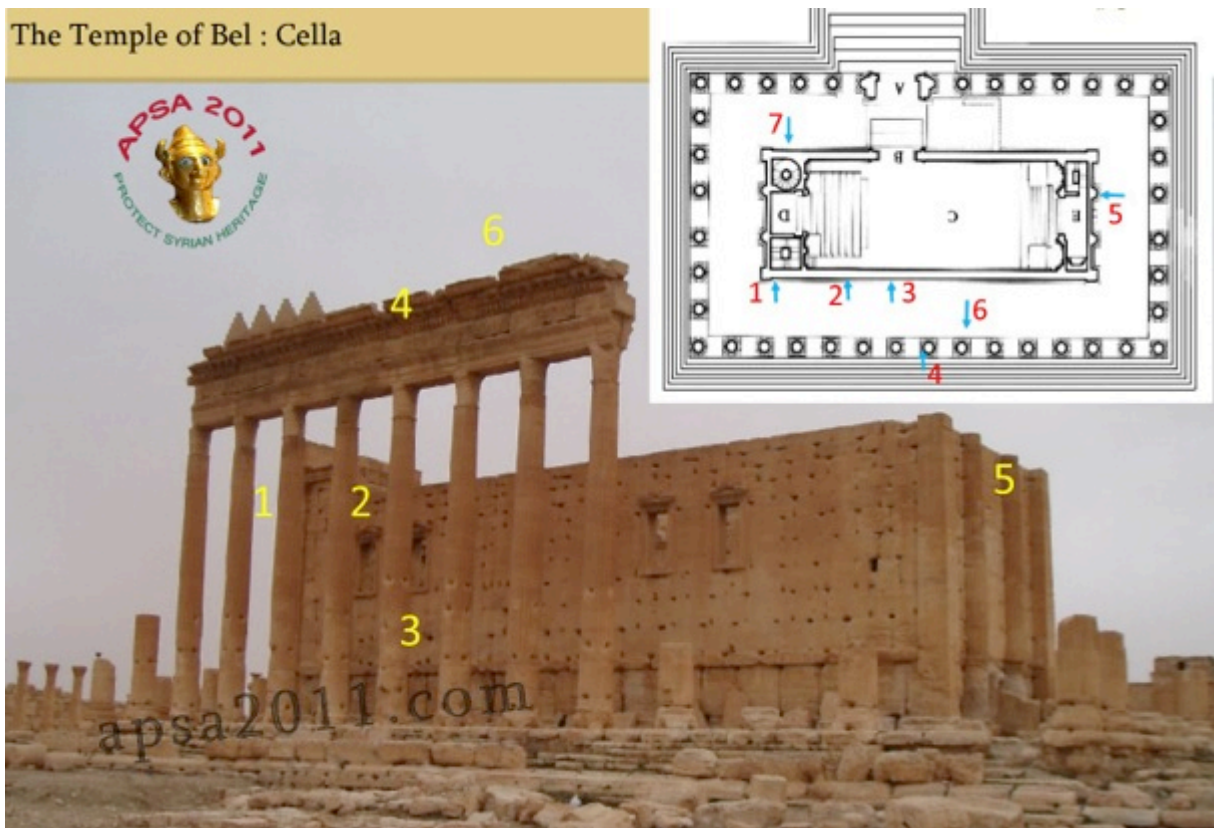


Figure 46: Sanctuary of the temple, damage to the northern wall, point 5 (Source: APSA and Cliolamuse [plan])



Figure 47: Sanctuary of the temple, crumbling of the upper part of a column and the northern wall, Point no. 5 (Source: APSA)

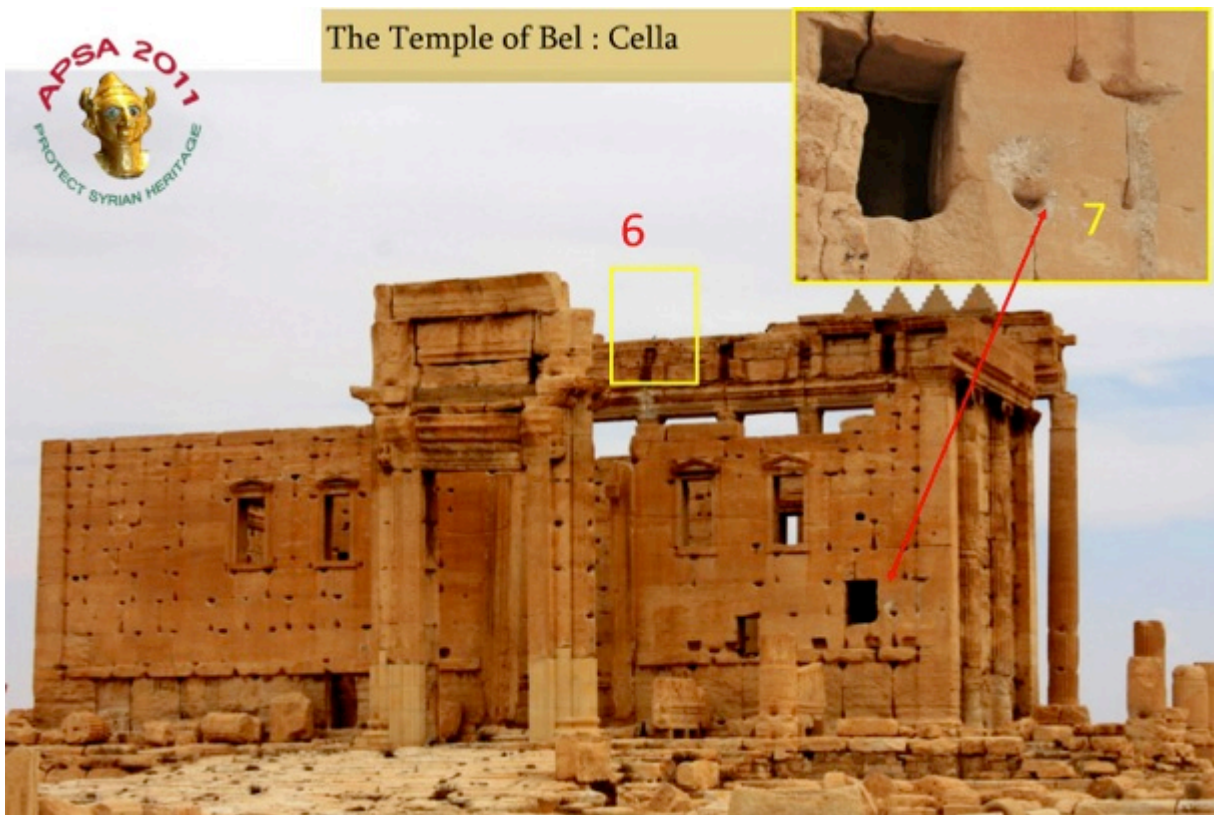


Figure 48: Sanctuary of the temple, shell traces on the facade of the western wall and the eastern portico (Source: APSA)

4. The Greek house (Al-daar Alyonaniaa)

A filmed report by the DGAM shows some slight damage to the Greek house located east of the temple of Baal.⁸

5. The area of the colonnaded street

Several monuments have been damaged, including the triumphal arch, the colonnaded street, the amphitheater, the hammam, and the camp and wall of Diocletian.

- **Figure 49** shows that the facade of the small northeastern arch next to the triumphal arch has suffered some damage due to a shelling.
- Four columns situated 200 meters west of the tetrapylon and near basilica I (**Figure 50**) were subject to a direct hit. This caused the collapse of three columns and their frieze, while a drum of the fourth column was shifted without collapsing completely (**Figures 51-52**).
- A report published by the DGAM shows that the locks on the doors of the amphitheater were broken and that the furniture and electrical equipment of the theater box office were damaged. So far, the architectural structure of the amphitheater has not been damaged.⁹
- Two columns belonging to the Diocletian hammam were damaged with minor crumbling in the structure (**Figure 54**).
- The area of the Diocletian camp was subject to bulldozer work, which resulted in heavy damage to the archaeological deposits (**Figures 55-56**).
- In order to make a position for artillery on top of Gabal al-Hysaniyat, a significant amount of bulldozer work has been undertaken by the Syrian army.
- Military work has resulted in the clearance of parts of the defensive walls and towers that are joined at the top of Gabal al-Hussiyniat (this hill overlooks the Diocletian camp). The foundations of some tombs in the area have also been removed. (**Figure 57**).

⁸ <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=1016>

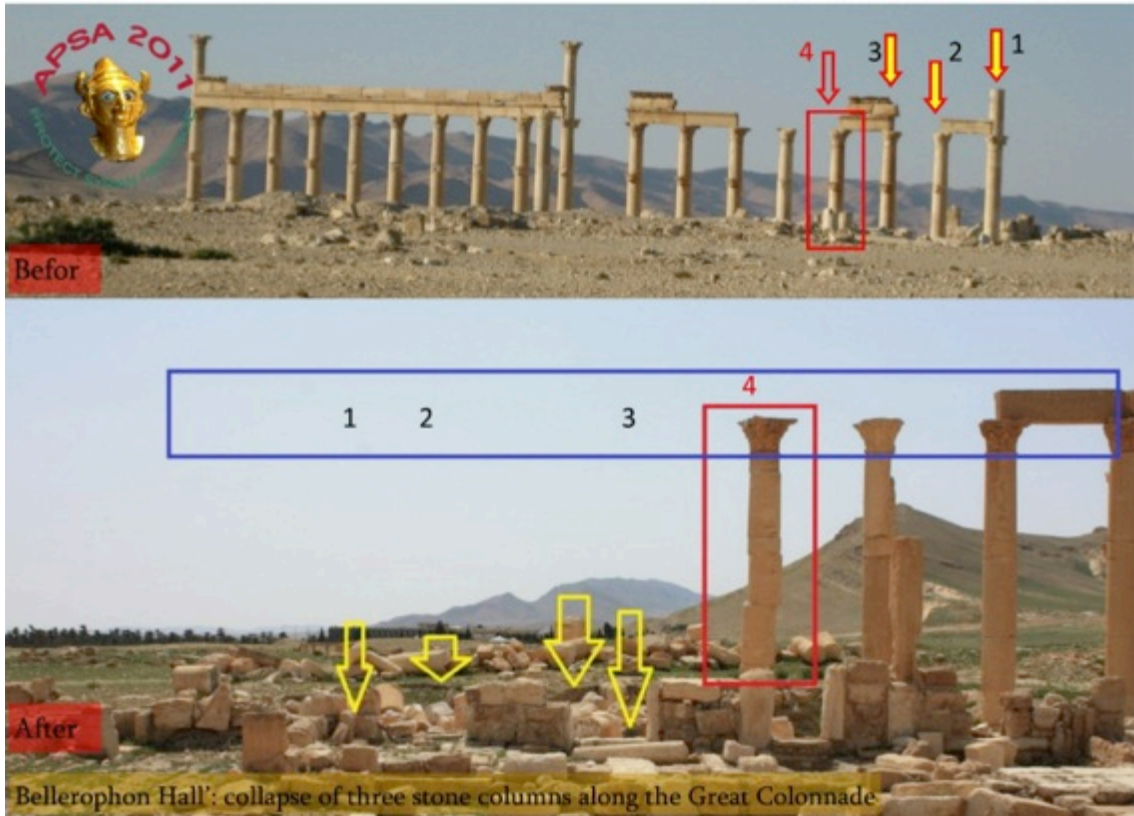
⁹ <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=1014>



Figure 49: Shell damage to facade of the small northeastern arch next to the triumphal arch (Source: APSA)



Figure 50: The colonnaded street; damage to three columns and the shifting of a drum of the fourth column (Sources: APSA and HRW)



Bellerophon Hall: collapse of three stone columns along the Great Colonnade

Figure 51: The colonnaded street; damage to three columns and the shifting of a drum of the fourth column (Source: APSA)



Bellerophon Hall: collapse of three stone columns along the Great Colonnade

Figure 52: The colonnaded street; damage to three columns and the shifting of a drum of the fourth column (Source: APSA)



Figure 53: The amphitheater (Source: DGAM)



Figure 54: The Baths of Diocletian (Source: APSA)



Figure 55: Bulldozer work in the area of the camp of Diocletian, resulting in heavy damage to the archaeological deposits (Source: APSA)



Figure 56: Bulldozer work in the area of the camp of Diocletian, resulting in heavy damage to the archaeological deposits (Source: APSA)

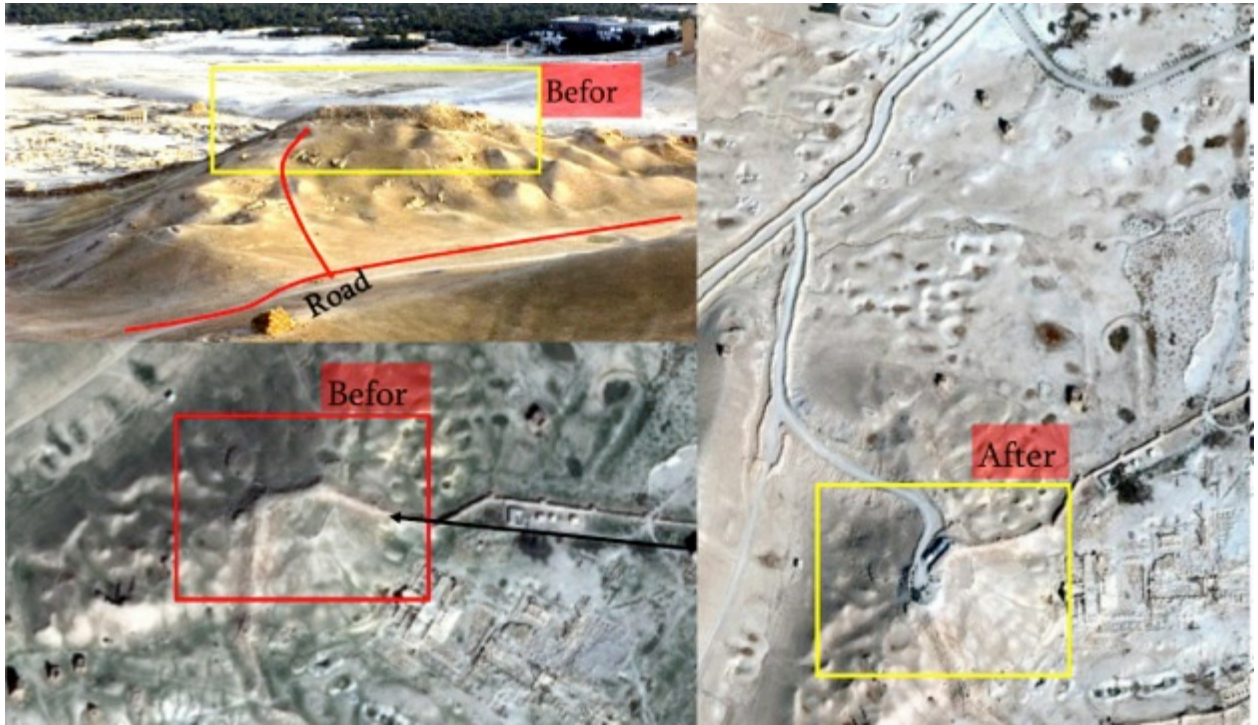


Figure 57: Clearance of part of the Diocletian rampart on top of Gabal al-Hysaniyat (Source: APSA and HRW)

IV. The tombs

The DGAM took steps to protect the tombs, discovered several years ago. These tombs contain funerary objects and have been restored to be accessible to tourists. The DGAM closed the doors of the tombs and blocked the entrances with large amounts earth to protect against looting. Looters ransacked the entries of the tombs and penetrated each tomb through openings made in the entrance walls above the doors. They looted archaeological objects, including funerary busts, from the tombs (such as the tomb of Artaban).

The tombs of Palmyra are grouped into four main areas: the southeastern tombs, the southwestern tombs, the northwestern tombs, and the valley of the tombs (**Figure 1**, pp. 3).

A. Northern tombs

As mentioned above (**Figure 1**, pp. 3), this area has undergone massive destruction due to bulldozer work carried out by the Syrian army, including the construction of levees, and roads leading from the police station (al-Badya) to Gabal al-Hysaniyat, the Citadel, and Gabal al-Riwyssat. In addition, archaeological deposits and earth were removed to a depth of approximately 2 meters over a large area in the northern tombs area. This space, located 200 meters west of the police station, is used to house damaged vehicles (see **Figures 6–10**, pp. 8-11).

B. Southeastern tombs

The southern tombs area has suffered massive illegal excavations by looters, most often using bulldozers, particularly in the palm fields and especially in those located near the tombs and the rampart. This area was bombed, and archaeological deposits were destroyed by bulldozers for military purposes. On March 25, 2015, the DGAM published photos showing damage in the southeastern tombs area and the Valley of the Tombs area.¹⁰

C. Southwestern tombs and the Valley of the Tombs

Syrian army bulldozers have created roads and built levees for the positioning of tanks beside the tower tombs. Some tombs have undergone illegal excavation by looters.

¹⁰ <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=1628>



Figure 58: Illegal excavation in the Valley of the Tombs (Source: DGAM)



Figure 59: Some damage in the area of Valley of the Tombs area (Source: APSA)

V. The most important tombs looted and damaged

According to reports released by the DGAM and information collected by members of APSA in Palmyra, many tombs have suffered looting, including unexcavated tombs in the southeastern tombs area. As for the tombs excavated previously by archaeological missions, we can document the following cases:

1. The tomb of Artaban in the Southeastern area

According to a report by the DGAM, the tomb of Artaban (Tomb number 5, discovered in 1958 and restored by a Syrian mission in 1964–1966) suffered destruction and looting. Looters were able to break through the entrance of the tomb and enter by expanding a vent opening.¹¹ They stole all 22 funerary busts from the tomb and the head of a child depicted in a funeral banquet scene that was exposed in the tomb.

¹¹ For more photos, see <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=1482> ; <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.689303941168228.1073741872.227270824038211>



Figure 60: The tomb of Artaban before and after the looting (Source: Palmyra History and Civilization)



Figure 61: The tomb of Artaban before and after the looting (Source: Archaeology in Syria)

2. The tomb of Tybul in the Southeastern area

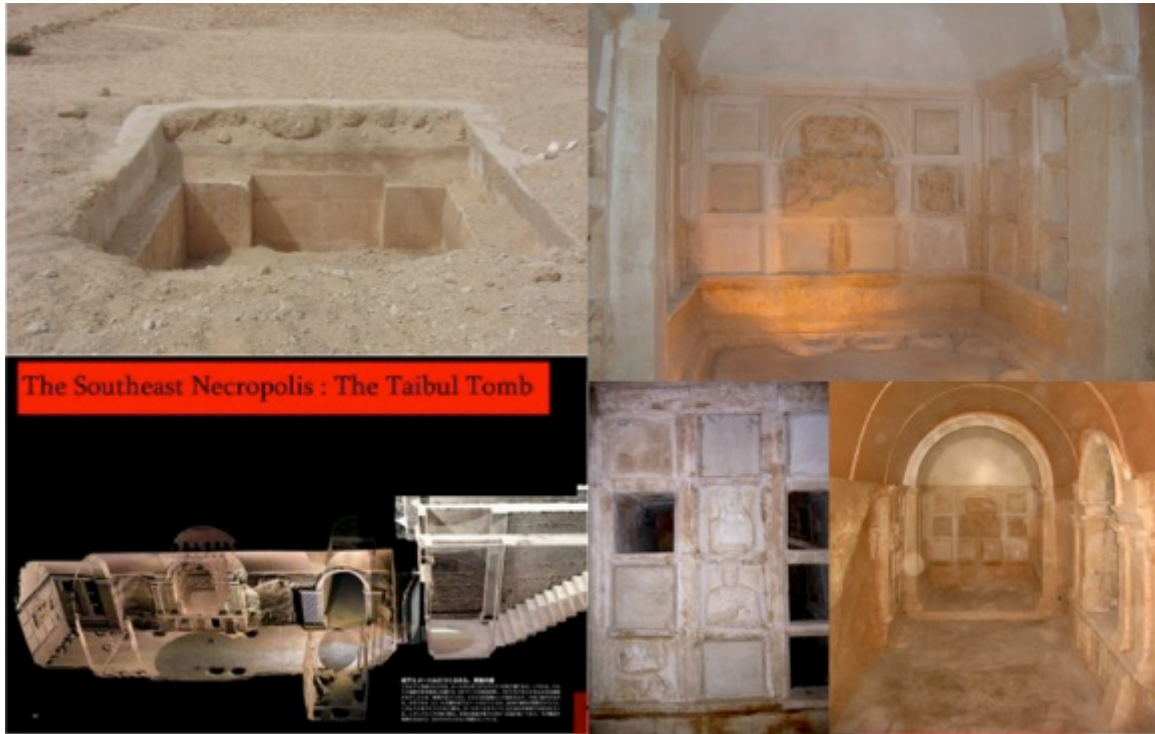
The tomb of Tybul (Tomb H), which was discovered by the Syro-Belgian mission between 2001 and 2005, was also robbed by looters who entered the tomb by removing a large amount of earth set by the Department of Archaeology in Palmyra at the main entrance of the tomb.¹² As in the case of the tomb of Artaban, they entered the tomb through an opening located in the upper part of the entrance wall and looted the archaeological pieces that were inside.

On November 22, 2014, the DGAM announced that the authorities had confiscated funerary statues looted from the tomb. The confiscated items are statue busts made of limestone; two of them are women, while the third is a man, all dressed in clothing typical of Palmyra (**Figure 63**).¹³

On August 25, 2014, another piece was confiscated. It shows a woman wearing Palmyrene clothing and necklaces and is engraved with an inscription on the left shoulder that specifies her name (Amta bent Yarhi). The dimensions of the statue are 45 x 50 cm.

¹² For more photographs before 2011 see https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=758083210919790&id=103105249750926; <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.586221481439298.1073741859.103105249750926>

¹³ For more photographs, see <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=1388>; <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=1510>



The Southeast Necropolis : The Taibul Tomb

Figure 62: The tomb of Tybul in the southeastern area (Source: Palmyra History and Civilization)



Figure 63: Busts of funerary statues of the tomb of Tybul, confiscated and deposited in the Department of Archaeology of Palmyra (Source: DGAM and Palmyra History and Civilization)

3. The tomb of Bulha in the Southeastern area

Tomb No. 7, discovered in 1958, was built by Ibn Bulha Nabushori in 88 CE for his family and children.¹⁴ Looters breached the entrance of the tomb and created an opening in the wall to gain access to the interior. So far we have no information about the number of items looted in this tomb.

In January 2015, APSA received information and photos of one of the items looted from the tomb, a funerary bust. The file was sent to Interpol and to other relevant institutions in order to stop traffickers and to aid in recovering the item.



Figure 64: The entrance of the tomb of Bulha Ibn Nabushori after the looting (Source: APSA)

¹⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.549728485088598.1073741847.103105249750926;>
<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.541799245881522.1073741843.103105249750926>

4. The tomb of the Iarhai family in the Valley of the Tombs area

Information provided by members of APSA in Palmyra indicates that the Iarhai tomb, dating from the second century AD, was looted. We do not, however, have any information about the number and nature of the objects that were looted from this tomb because some of the items had been transported to the National Museum in Damascus when the tomb was reconstructed in the 1930s.¹⁵

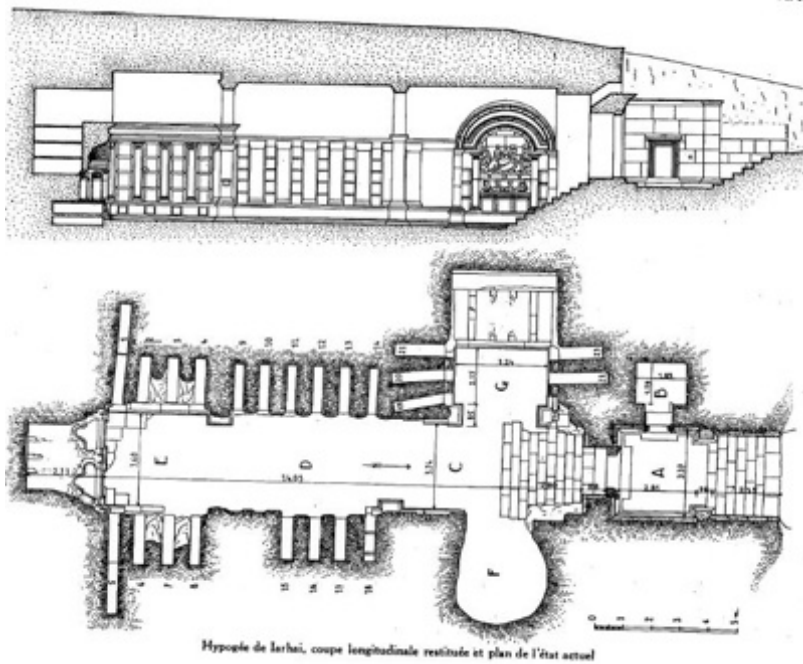


Figure 65: Plan of the tomb of Iarhai (Source: Amty and Seyrig, 1936: pl. XXVII.)

¹⁵ Amty and Seyrig, 1936: "Recherches dans la nécropole de Palmyre." *Syria* 17(3), 229-266.

5. Tomb number 9

Figure 66 shows that tomb 9 has also suffered looting, but we have no information about the number and nature of objects looted from the tomb.



Figure 66: Illicit excavations at the entrance of tomb 9 (Source: APSA)

VI. Archaeological objects confiscated between 2012 and 2015

1. As pointed out above, according to reports published by the DGAM, four statues, among the pieces looted from the tomb of Tybul, were confiscated and taken to the Department of Archaeology of Palmyra.
2. On November 12, 2012, the DGAM published a report on a collection of archaeological items confiscated in Homs. In this collection were found the following items:
 - a. 16 funerary panels, made of limestone, representing women and men of Palmyra,
 - b. 11 statue heads from Palmyra.¹⁶
3. On December 11, 2012, the DGAM published a report about 8 funerary statues looted from tombs in Palmyra that were confiscated.¹⁷
4. On June 13, 2013, the DGAM published a report claiming that authorities had confiscated a collection of archaeological items from Palmyra. These items included three terracotta lamps, and three color ornaments in Palmyrene style, as well as damaged coins and other bronze items, probably from the Byzantine era, representing human figures on one face and the letter M surmounted by a cross on the other. The confiscated items also included a bronze coin, perhaps showing a Roman emperor, and another bronze coin.¹⁸
5. On July 1, 2013, the Italian authorities in Turin confiscated a funerary panel from Palmyra depicting the bust of a man with two children on his shoulders on either side of its head. This panel also contains Aramaic script (**Figure 67**).¹⁹
6. On November 10, 2013, the DGAM reported that it had received a collection of 69 archaeological items from the Lebanese Antiquities Authority. These items were confiscated by the Lebanese authorities on May 18, 2013. Among them were 14 funerary statues from Palmyra (**Figure 68**).²⁰

¹⁶ For more photographs, see <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=604>

¹⁷ For more photographs, see <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=607>

¹⁸ For more photographs, see <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=864>

¹⁹ Sirioni, Francesca (2015) "Rubato in Siria, venduto in Italia." *Espresso*.

<http://espresso.repubblica.it/internazionale/2013/07/01/news/rubato-in-siria-venduto-in-italia-1.56168>

²⁰ For more information, see <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=1053> ;

<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=1053>

7. On March 6, 2014, the DGAM announced the confiscation of 9 limestone statues representing figures from Palmyra (4 men and 5 women) (**Figure 69**).²¹
8. On March 16, 2014, the DGAM reported that four statues from Palmyra had been confiscated.²²
9. On March 30, 2014, the DGAM published a report about 8 Palmyra-style statues that had been confiscated (**Figure 70**).²³
10. On April 1, 2015 a report by the DGAM mentions that 15 funerary statues (men, women and children) were confiscated by the authorities on March 30, 2014.²⁴
11. On April 8, 2014, the DGAM reported that 18 statues from Palmyra had been confiscated (**Figure 71**).²⁵
12. On June 19, 2015, another published report shows that 10 funerary statues from Palmyra were confiscated.²⁶
13. The APSA Association has received information and documents about 6 authentic archaeological items looted in Palmyra. These include three funerary statues (one stolen from the tomb of Ibn Bulha Nabushori) and fragments of statues. APSA has provided all information about these items to Interpol.²⁷

To summarize: Between 2012 and May 2015 125 archaeological items from Palmyra were confiscated by authorities. The majority of these pieces are funerary statues looted from unexcavated tombs that have undergone illegal excavations. A small percentage of the items are coins dating from various periods. At least 24 objects that were looted from Palmyra are still missing (18 items from the tomb of Tybul and 6 archaeological items documented by APSA). These figures provide some indication of the large quantity of archaeological objects that have been looted from Palmyra, many stolen from tombs and sectors that have not yet been excavated by archaeologists. The total number of archaeological items looted from Palmyra, however, remains unknown.

²¹ For more photographs, see <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=1160>

²² For more photographs, see <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=1176>

²³ For more photographs, see <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=1199>

²⁴ For more photographs, see <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=1200>

²⁵ For more photographs, see <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=1206>

²⁶ For more information, see: <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=1273>

²⁷ **NB:** APSA has not published the images of these items in order to ensure the safety of its sources, but we are ready to submit the document to representatives of the cultural institutions concerned, provided that they do not disseminate it to the public.



Figure 67: Funerary statue from Palmyra confiscated in Lebanon (Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35rvzWFMAu4>)



Figure 68: Funerary statue from Palmyra confiscated in Turin, Italy (Source: DGAM)



Figure 69: 9 limestone statues representing figures confiscated in Palmyra (Source: DGAM)



Figure 70: Funerary statue confiscated in Palmyra (Source: DGAM)



Figure 71: 18 statues from Palmyra had been confiscated (Source: DGAM)



Figure 72: Fragments of statues looted in Palmyra (Source: APSA)

VII. The National Museum of Palmyra

According to reports published by the DGAM and information reported from Palmyra, the museum has not suffered looting, but the building was slightly damaged due to shelling. The glass of some windows, the furniture of some offices, and part of the ceiling were damaged.²⁸ On Thursday, May 21, 2015, the jihadi group ISIL entered the museum but did not destroy any valuable archaeological items, according to the Director-General of the DGAM, Mr. Maamoun Abdelkarim (reported on Saturday, May 23). They "have broken plaster replicas representing people that lived there 100,000 years ago and came back on Friday, closed the doors and put guards in front." A member of APSA confirmed that the main door of the museum is broken. Members of ISIL reported that this door was torn off by a tank of the Syrian army (probably during the transportation of archaeological items by truck before the Syrian army left Palmyra). Regarding the archaeological collections, the DGAM transported the most important objects from Palmyra to Damascus some time ago. The DGAM could also have removed other archaeological items, just before ISIL took control of Palmyra, but the displacement of large items was very difficult.

²⁸ For more information, see <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=912>

VIII. Damaged infrastructure in the archaeological site

1. The Guesthouse

Much of the guesthouse furniture, located in the temple of Baal, was sacked, and some was damaged.²⁹



Figure 73: The Guesthouse in the temple of Baal (source: APSA and DGAM)

²⁹ For more information, see <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=1013>;
<http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=983>

2. Warehouses

Looters entered the lumber yard, next to the guest house, through an opening made in the structure of the wall of the temple of Baal. The contents, along with the contents of the Tower Tomb and the warehouse of the Japanese mission, were stolen by looters.

The warehouse called Dar Moujahed, located west of Baal's temple also fell victim to looting. This warehouse contained office furniture, excavation tools belonging to Syrian and foreign archaeological missions, and objects belonging to the collection of the Museum of Arts and Popular Traditions in Palmyra (for example, a Bedouin tent and plowing tools). In general, though, no particularly valuable objects were stored in these warehouses.

3. The guard room and ticket sales offices

Several amenities, such as toilets at the service of tourists and rooms allocated to guards in the southeastern tombs area, were destroyed. In 2013–2014, ticket sales offices (for example, at the theatre and the temple of Baal) were also looted.³⁰



Figure 74: The ticket sales office of the Baal temple after looting and a security room in the southeastern area of tombs destroyed (Source: APSA)

4. The electricity grid

The electricity network used to illuminate monuments such as the temple of Baal and the great colonnade suffered damage and looting.

³⁰ For more information about the looting of the ticket sales office, see https://youtu.be/Ppu_B0sJF8g?list=PL6UJTlcjAWFj3A-dJdnC0ihlCpLm_EO-7

5. The Oasis of Palmyra

Finally, it should be noted that the areas around the spring of Afqa, the Meridien Hotel, and the palm fields have suffered damage due to work carried out by the Syrian army bulldozers for the purpose of building roads and levees. Moreover, a large part of the fields were burned. For example, the fields in the area around the hotel Dedeman and the spring of Afqa were damaged, and farmers' shelters were destroyed when the army built roads and levees for the purpose of strengthening the defenses of the hotel, which has become a national Defense Forces Centre in Palmyra.^{31 32}



Figure 75: Roads built in the palm field area in Palmyra (Source: APSA)

6. Present situation

Since the jihadist group ISIL took Palmyra, the group's flags have been planted on some monuments, and some modern replicas have been broken, but no archaeological building has been damaged. The group has suggested to certain Palmyra citizens that ISIL will not destroy the ancient city of Palmyra. For example, a post in this vein was issued by a jihadist named Abu al-Oumer Khelafa on Twitter.

³¹ For more information about the oasis of Palmyra, see <http://www.algherbal.com/2015/03/30/2084/>

³² Bombing of the palm oasis in 2013 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78SbOTQ7jdl>

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