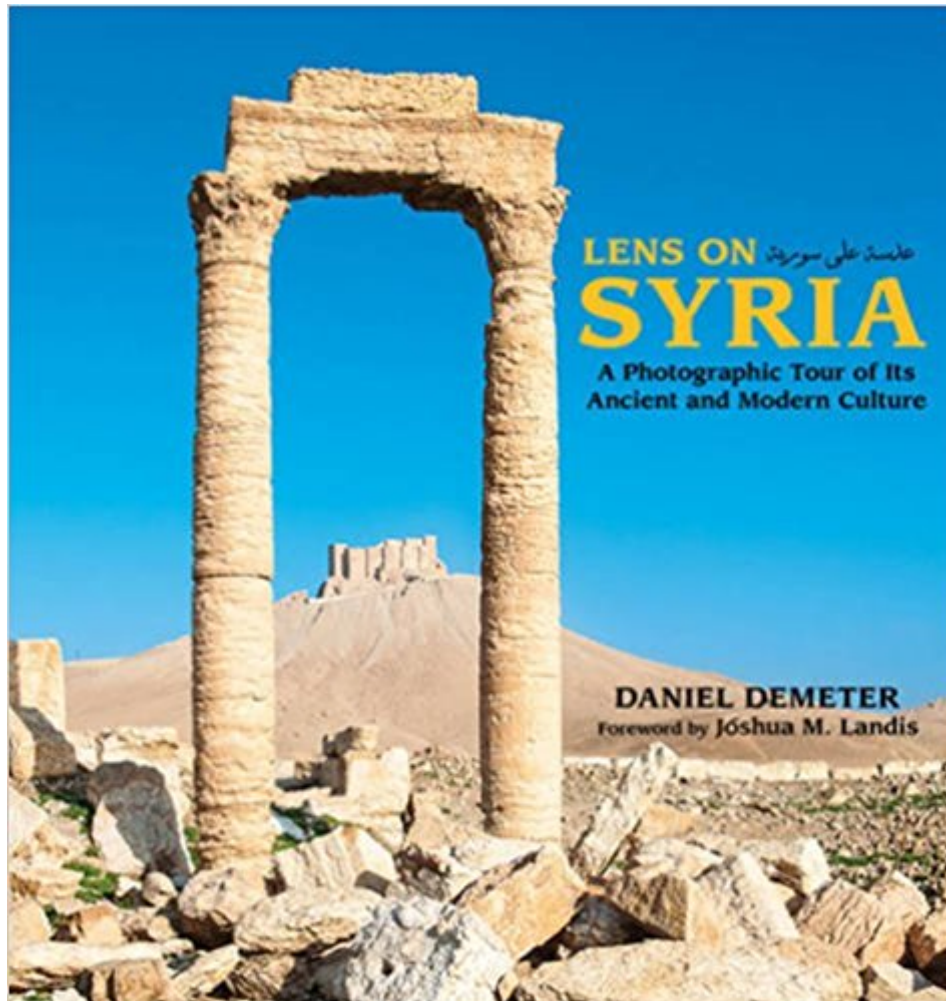




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Lens On Syria: A Photographic Tour Of Its Ancient And Modern Culture



Synopsis

Thousands of remarkable monuments and relics fill the land of Syria from the coast of the Mediterranean to its desert borders, dating back to the dawn of human history. The sites include: Bronze Age ruins, Roman temples and necropolises, churches and monasteries from the early Christian and Byzantine eras, Muslim forts and mosques, Crusader castles, and many more. When conflict broke out in 2011, these treasures were put at great risk and in subsequent years, many were destroyed in battles – some were even the intentional targets of extremists. From 2006 – 2009, American photographer Daniel Demeter traveled broadly throughout Syria, documenting the country – its warm and kindhearted people, vibrant markets, exciting landscapes, archaeological sites, historic monuments, and religious architecture. In seven chapters organized by region, *Lens on Syria* offers a unique visual experience of pre-war Syria and serves as an invaluable record of the country – its long history, rich heritage, and diverse culture.

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Customer Reviews

"Daniel has a wonderful eye for the people, the landscapes and for the beauty of its extraordinary range of historic buildings. It is important . . . [to] keep alive the memory of a society whose interwoven pattern of faiths, ethnicities and cultures is now threatened." – Ross Burns, historian, professor, author, *Monuments of Syria* "Daniel Demeter's photos make up one of the most important recent collections of photographs concerning the cultural heritage in Syria. These pictures reflect his love and knowledge of Syria and its heritage as well as perfection of photography." – Dr. Abdalrazzaq Moaz, Senior Scholar, Bonn University, former

Director-General, Antiquities and Museums of Syria"Unreservedly recommended for community, college, and university library Photography collections in general, and Syrian Cultural History supplemental studies reading lists in particular." *Midwest Book Review* --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Daniel Demeter was born and raised in Los Angeles, California. With a desire to travel and explore from a young age, he undertook several journeys abroad starting at age 17. Over the next decade he traveled independently to more than 35 countries throughout Europe, the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia. He found himself particularly captivated by Syria, developing a deep appreciation for the country's rich culture, history, and archaeological heritage, and its kind and hospitable people. He then spent more than three years exploring the country in depth, combining his passion for photography with his desire to share the beauty of Syria with the world. He currently resides in San Luis Obispo with his wife and cat, pursuing a degree in cultural anthropology and maintaining a website dedicated to Syria's cultural and historic sites. Joshua Landis is Director of the Center for Middle East Studies and Associate Professor at the University of Oklahoma's College of International Studies. He writes "Syria Comment," a daily blog on Syrian politics that attracts over 100,000 readers a month. He was educated at Swarthmore (BA), Harvard (MA), and Princeton (PhD). He has lived over 14 years in the Middle East and speaks Arabic and French fluently. He has lived four years in Syria, and spent most summers in Damascus until the revolution began. He is a frequent consultant to government agencies and think tanks and is invited as an analyst on TV and radio.

Lens on Syria is a revelation. If your knowledge of Syria is limited to its current sectarian agonies, you need this book. Within the modern borders of this ancient land lies a wealth of cultural treasures that can only be described as grand. Home to cities older by millennia than Athens or Rome, terminus of the Silk Road, honored, coveted and shaped by every world empire; Hittite, Babylonian, Persian, Hellene, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Ottoman, Syria is the crossroads of history. This rich heritage is evident in an astounding variety of ancient ruins, relic cities and religious and civic architecture that will fascinate the reader. Amphitheaters, mosaics, temples, churches, mosques, monasteries, fortresses, castles, citadels, the author, in his long sojourn there, has captured them all in this beautifully presented book. Lovingly photographed, with expert text, this is the definitive work of its kind on this subject, a country and history few of us know. Included is a portrait of modern life amidst a broad historical range of a spectacular yet graceful blending of architectural

styles in palatial homes, public markets and houses of worship. Comprehensive, intimate and inclusive this book is a testimonial to the beauty, diversity and grandeur that is Syria ancient and modern. Most importantly it memorializes the many now damaged historic sites and those under threat in this time of troubles. For this reason alone this book is worth having, but if you or anyone you know enjoys history, architecture, archaeology, travel, current events or just great photography, *Lens on Syria* is a worthy addition to any book shelf and would make the perfect gift.

It is a really good book on all levels, and especially important now during the disintegration of the state of Syria and ISIS' wanton destruction of many of the grand and important ruins in the country. Demeter's photos and words reveal his deep affection for Syria. Highly recommended to past and future travelers, and anyone interested in Syria and the Middle East.

What a great book. Great photos that capture the essence of the oldest civilisation in history that was let down by the whole world. Thank you Daniel Demeter for giving us such a great book.

Lens on Syria is an amazing collection of photographs with interpretative text that gives the reader a sense of pre-war Syria. As an archaeologist, I appreciated the detailed photographs of ancient structures--both ruins and active spaces--that fill the pages. Even more so, however, I appreciated the street photography that Demeter interprets with an anthropological sensitivity to the subjects of the work and the ways in which the scenes may change given recent events. It is my hope that Demeter is able to return to the area and produce something comparable and even more ethnographical--his nuanced understanding of Syria is something that is lacking in our media and our collective imagination. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in exploring culture through photographs, as well as any specialists (archaeology of the Levant, Syrian history/culture, etc.)

This beautiful book is a poignant, photographic love letter to a land that in so many tragic places no longer exists. It stirred in me great sadness for the destruction of Moslem, Byzantine, Roman and Crusader monuments and ruin sites that stood for centuries and millennia, yet were destroyed in a matter of hours and days by those history will judge as war criminals. Demeter captures the mystery, beauty and magnificence of an historic heritage subjugated to the worst qualities of man. This is a revelation to both savor and be disturbed by, not to be missed by lovers of visual history and historic architecture. Randy Gudeika

This may be the finest collection of images of pre-war Syria available - anywhere. The pictures are well presented and the photograph quality is excellent. The commentary is succinct and factual with minimal editorializing. Thank you for this most worthwhile book.

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