



Palmyra 1885: The Wolfe Expedition and the Photographs of John Henry Haynes

Benjamin Anderson, Robert G. Ousterhout

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European adventurers began exploring Palmyra's priceless Roman ruins in the 17th century, but it wasn't until the advent of photography that the public became aware of its scale and majesty. In 1885, the sight of Palmyra astounded members of the Wolfe Expedition as they journeyed home from Mesopotamia. The group's photographer, John Henry Haynes, documented the monumental temples, tombs and colonnades in more than a hundred invaluable images. Since then, Haynes and his work have largely been forgotten, and the forces of the self-styled Islamic State have destroyed the key monuments of this world-renowned site, including the glorious Temple of Bel. Haynes's images of Palmyra – published here for the first time – are all the more poignant.

The Syrian city of Palmyra – known as 'the Pearl of the Desert' – was one of the most important cultural centres of the ancient world. A key stop on the Silk Road, it was a vital link between the East and the West, and a prize fought over by successive conquering armies.

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