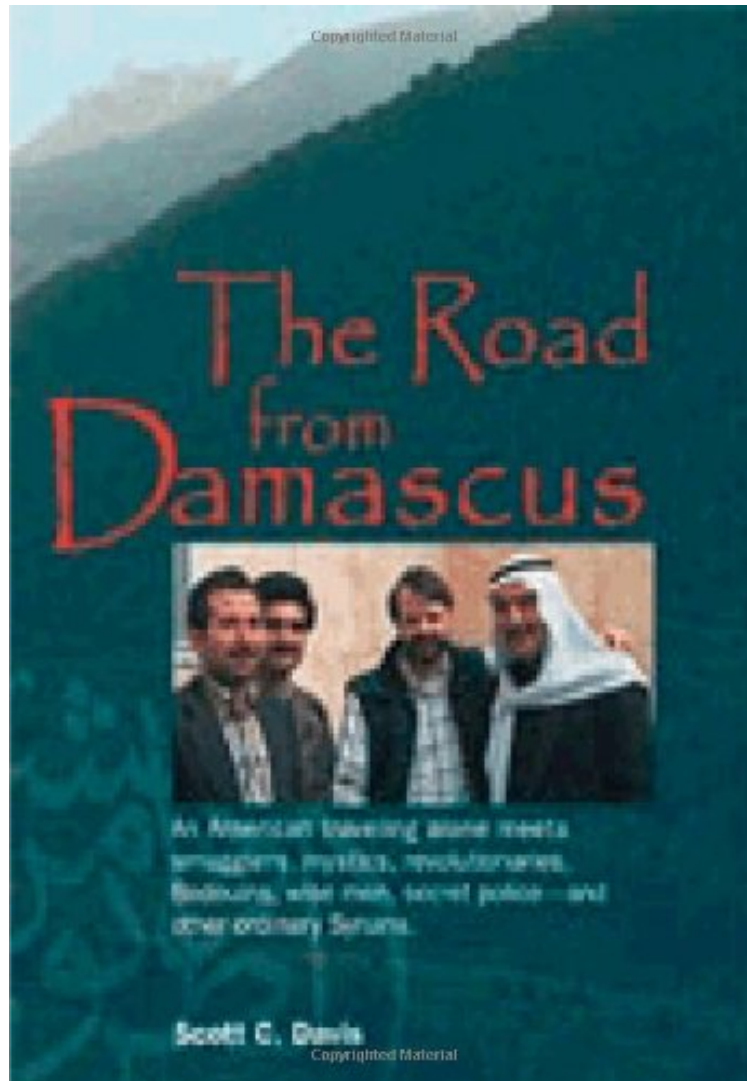


[PDF] The Road from Damascus: A Journey Through Syria (Bridge Between the Cultures Series)

## The Road from Damascus: A Journey Through Syria (Bridge Between the Cultures Series)

*Scott C Davis*

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**Scott C Davis : The Road from Damascus: A Journey Through Syria (Bridge Between the Cultures Series)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Road from Damascus: A Journey Through Syria (Bridge Between the Cultures Series):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Before there were blogs....By Abu SeyameDavis' travelogue of his two visits to Syria would have been much more appropriate as an amateur travel blog than a +200 page book. Davis tends to sensationalize the stories of his first visit to Syria in order to create suspense and excitement. Most of his

"captivating" encounters stem from his inherent and unfounded suspicions of the Syrian police and the fact he does not know a lick of Arabic. Perhaps this review is overly critical, but, in my opinion the genre of privileged Westerners heading off to some "intimidating" and "unknown" foreign land for a few months and then writing about their experiences has been overdone. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Useless book for sure! By Ameer Hamza Adhia Just wasted my time and money on this one. Nothing really to add. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Syria By Eve It is an interesting read, but much historical information is given without references. Literature citations would be a vast improvement. Also, it was a little hard to believe that the author had so many difficulties with police, secret police, highway bandits and so on. In a way I felt that he embellished the circumstances in order to provide an exciting read. A lot of the book is about him getting from place to place so he could write a book, which I thought was a bit odd. A follow-up trip some day would be interesting because I know a lot has changed in Syria since Mr. Davis's travels there, but this would not be a good time.

In February 2001 Scott C. Davis flew to Damascus, attended raucous political salons, talked all night, and sat in local cafes debating the nature of the evolving Syrian nation. Such openness was new in Syria. Was it a sign of things to come? Would the Damascene Curtain fall as heavily and permanently as did the Berlin Wall? Would Damascus become another tourist trap bursting with American franchise restaurants, another Amman? To answer these questions, and to give a feel for the real country beneath the rapidly changing surfaces, Davis tells a story of an earlier time when Syrians did not discuss politics for fear of the 'mukhabarat' and when some hesitated, in their own homes, even to mention the name of the Syrian president. Fourteen years earlier, in October 1987, Davis had come to Damascus and begun a slow, difficult journey through Syrian society. He met artists and intellectuals, wealthy landowners, retired mystics, and also slept on the floor beside humble peasants and working folk. The times were quiet, jobs scarce, and ordinary folk could take a few moments for tea with a guest. Many of those Davis met took pride in their own simplicity. Denied political power and wealth, they aspired instead to wisdom - or at least to perfecting a sardonic wit. This tale of grace, humour, and humanity turns on the author's search for truth and, also, for a few good quotes for his book - a search that took him across Syria in the footsteps of Alexander to the ancient Roman Bridge over the Tigris River in the far eastern tip of the country - and then brought him racing back to Damascus to find the Patriarch of Antioch.

From Publishers Weekly In a historical moment when the Western world's antennae are zeroed in on all things Middle Eastern, books about that part of the world, such as Scott C. Davis's *The Road from Damascus: A Journey through Syria*, take on heightened significance. In 1987, five years after the Hama massacre, and with Syria seemingly on the brink of war with Israel, a naive Davis made his first visit. Fourteen years later he returned to find the country radically different: less militarized, less uneasy, less frightening. Refreshingly candid about his pre-1987 ignorance about the Arab world and about his sometimes overblown but very real fears, Davis chronicles his meetings with Christian, Muslim and Jewish members of all stations of Syrian society, painting a cultural portrait that is vivid, moving and wise in its humble, wide-eyed approach. Photos and maps. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Over a decade ago, Davis, a sometimes carpenter/writer (*The World of Patience Gromes*), decided to leave family, friends, and job behind in Seattle and travel to Syria for a few months. Concerned friends warned him not to go as he was not an experienced traveler and knew only a few words of Arabic and no French. But he went anyway, first in 1987 and then again in 2001. He visited Roman ruins and Islamic and Christian sites and met artists, intellectuals, smugglers, and mystics, as well as many ordinary Syrians, experiencing their openness and hospitality. At the end of his first visit, Davis met with the patriarch of Antioch, who reminded him that according to the Bible, St. Paul experienced his conversion via a vision of God on the road to Damascus. But, as Davis learned during his second visit to Syria, it is not the vision of God that a seeker receives on the road to Damascus that is important but rather how the seeker puts it into practice in life (i.e., how he or she walks the road from Damascus). While the premise of this travelogue is interesting (a novice in Syria), Davis's writing is sometimes plodding, and the text falters. Overall, however, this is a worthwhile addition to most libraries. Lee Arnold, Historical Soc. of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. *The Road from Damascus* is more than travelogue... Insight, humor, and offhand eloquence are on every page of this book. -- *Al-Jadid Magazine*, Summer 2001