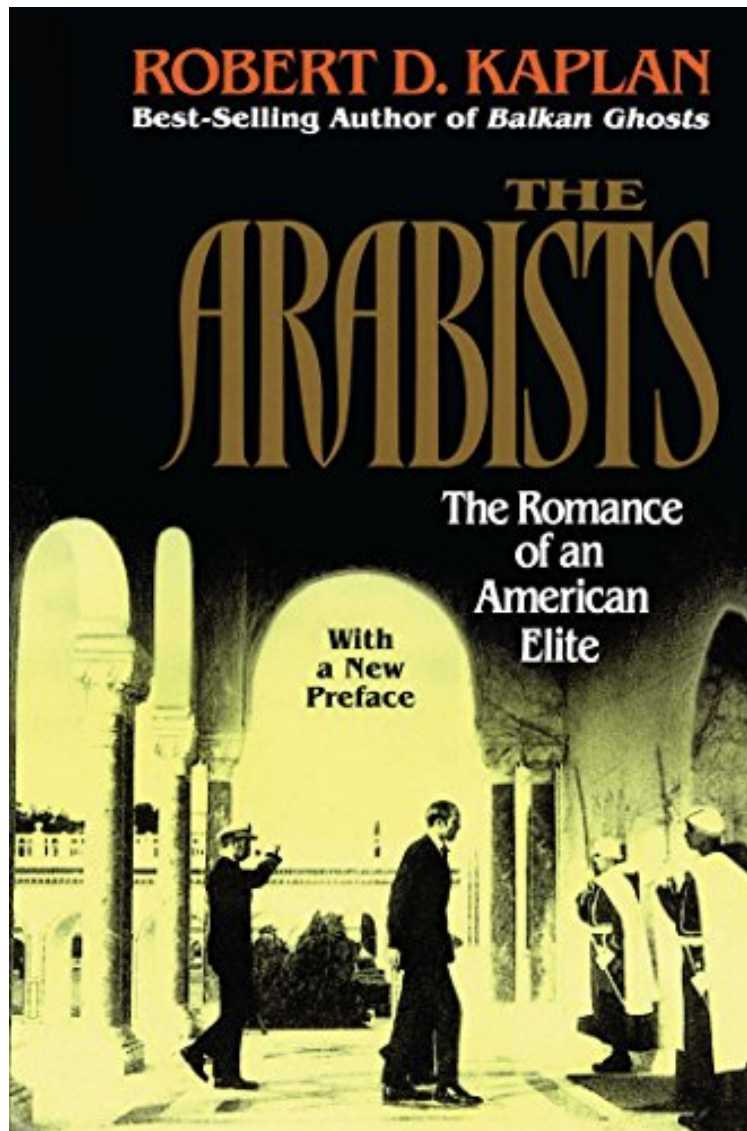


(Read now) Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite (English Edition)

Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite (English Edition)

Von Robert D. Kaplan
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Von Robert D. Kaplan : Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite (English Edition):

Kurzbeschreibung A tight-knit group closely linked by intermarriage as well as class and old school ties, the Arabists were men and women who spent much of their lives living and working in the Arab world as diplomats, military attaches, intelligence agents, scholar-adventurers, and teachers. As such, the Arabists exerted considerable influence both as career diplomats and as bureaucrats within the State Department from the early nineteenth century to the present. But over time, as this work shows, the group increasingly lost touch with a rapidly changing American society, growing both more insular and headstrong and showing a marked tendency to assert the Arab point of view. Drawing on interviews, memoirs, and other official and private sources, Kaplan reconstructs the 100-year history of the Arabist elite, demonstrating their profound influence on American attitudes toward the Middle East, and tracing their decline as an influx of ethnic and regional specialists has transformed the State Department and challenged the power of the old elite. From Publishers Weekly Blending history, reportage and sharp profiles of key players, this insightful study tells how American "Arabists"--diplomats, intelligence agents, scholar-adventurers, Protestant missionaries, military attaches--formed an elitist, expatriate professional caste in the 19th-century Middle East. The Arabists, in Kaplan's (*Balkan Ghosts*) view, carried on a "romance" with exotic Islamic cultures, and many supported pan-Arab nationalism. Blind to what Kaplan deems the inevitability of the birth of Israel in the aftermath of the Holocaust, American Arabists today often see Israel "in only the simplest stereotype," he asserts. Kaplan charges that Arabists adapted to and promoted the Bush administration's appeasement of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, as exemplified by U.S. ambassador April Glaspie's wooing of Saddam right up to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Occupational hazards facing the latest crop of Arabists, warns Kaplan, include rampant shallowness, careerism and an insular, sterile embassy life divorced from local realities. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Kaplan turns his attention to the myths and realities of the State Department's Arabists: "men and women . . . who read and speak Arabic and who have passed many years of their professional lives . . . in the Arab world." Tracing the origins of the Arabist tradition to the Protestant missionary families who established schools and hospitals during the nineteenth century in Beirut, Cairo, eastern Turkey, western Iran, and the Saudi peninsula, Kaplan contrasts the idealism of Americans' initial involvements with the Arab world with the imperial machinations of "sand-mad Englishmen" such as T. E. Lawrence. After World War II, Arabists whose families had lived in the Middle East for generations hoped for stronger ties between the U.S. and the young Arab nations; however, the cold war and U.S. support for Israel dashed their hopes. The Arabists blends graceful, empathetic portraits of specific individuals with succinct descriptions of developing trends in U.S. politics and diplomacy and Mideast relations up to the Gulf War. A thoughtful, reflective analysis of a subject painfully immersed in controversy. Mary Carroll