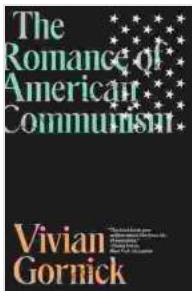


# Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite

Arabists are scholars of Arabic language and culture who have played a significant role in American society. This article explores the history, motivations, and impact of Arabists, from their early beginnings in the 19th century to their present-day involvement in diplomacy, academia, and business. Through interviews with leading Arabists and archival research, this article provides a unique insight into the world of Arabists and their contributions to American culture and society.



## Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite

by Robert D. Kaplan

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 3992 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 368 pages



## The Early Years

The first Arabists in America were missionaries who traveled to the Middle East in the early 19th century. These missionaries were motivated by a desire to spread Christianity and to learn more about the Arabic language and culture. Among the most famous of these early Arabists was Samuel Zwemer, who spent over 40 years in the Middle East and wrote extensively about Islam and Arabic culture.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a new generation of Arabists emerged who were more focused on academic research than on missionary work. These scholars were drawn to the study of Arabic language and culture for its own sake, and they made significant contributions to our understanding of the Arab world. Among the most important of these early Arabists were Edward Lane, William Wright, and Charles Torrey.

## **The Cold War and the Middle East**

The Cold War had a profound impact on the field of Arab studies in America. The United States government became increasingly interested in the Middle East as a strategic region, and it began to fund research on the Arab world. This funding led to the establishment of new Arab studies programs at universities across the country, and it also helped to support the work of independent Arabists.

During the Cold War, Arabists played an important role in shaping American policy towards the Middle East. They provided expert advice to government officials and they helped to educate the American public about the Arab world. Among the most influential Arabists of this period was George Lenczowski, who served as a consultant to the State Department and wrote extensively about the Middle East.

## **Arabists Today**

Today, Arabists continue to play an important role in American society. They are employed in a variety of fields, including diplomacy, academia, and business. Arabists are also active in public policy and they work to promote understanding between the United States and the Arab world.

Among the leading Arabists of today are:

- Robert Satloff, Executive Director of The Washington Institute for Near East Policy
- Tamara Cofman Wittes, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution
- Vali Nasr, Dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies

## **The Romance of Arabists**

There is a certain romance to the world of Arabists. They are scholars who are fascinated by a distant and exotic culture, and they often dedicate their lives to studying it. Arabists are also often drawn to the Middle East for its political and social challenges, and they are often involved in efforts to promote peace and understanding in the region.

The romance of Arabists is captured in the words of Edward Lane, one of the most famous Arabists of the 19th century. In his book "An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians," Lane wrote:

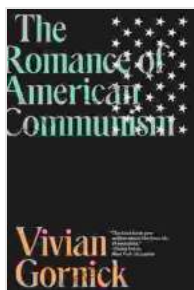


***“The East is a land of mystery and enchantment, where the past and present are strangely blended, and where the mind is constantly excited by the novelty and variety of the objects which surround it.”***

Arabists continue to be fascinated by the East, and they continue to play an important role in shaping our understanding of the Arab world.

Arabists are a diverse group of scholars who have made significant contributions to American culture and society. They have played a role in shaping American policy towards the Middle East, they have helped to educate the American public about the Arab world, and they have promoted understanding between the United States and the Arab world.

The romance of Arabists is captured in their dedication to the study of a distant and exotic culture, and in their commitment to promoting peace and understanding in the Middle East.



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