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The Ancient Arabs: Nomads on the Borders of the Fertile Crescent, 9th-5th Centuries B.C. by Israel Eph'al

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fairs.) Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 1987. Pp. 226. \$24.95.

This volume draws on a handful of twentieth-century international crises, especially that of July 1914 preceding the outbreak of World War I, to examine the management of nuclear crises. At the present time, Richard Ned Lebow writes, crisis management in the United States, with its emphasis on "organizational structures and decision-making techniques," bears "a disturbing resemblance to the ancient art of alchemy" (p. 18). Rather than searching for new techniques and technologies to avert or defuse crises, we need to focus more closely on the political and psychological dimensions of crisis management. This is the avowed purpose of Lebow's brief book.

The next major war, the author concludes, is likely to result neither from a "bolt-from-the-blue" strike nor from an accident, an act of terrorism, or the machinations of a third party. If there is another global war, it will most probably come about either as a miscalculation or as an act of desperation in a crisis or conventional war. "The paradigm of such a situation," Lebow warns, "is 1914," and the origins of World War I hold significant lessons for today's nuclear strategists. More alarmingly, Lebow finds "many disturbing parallels" between 1914 and the present (pp. 24, 104).

The central military lesson of the July 1914 crisis, Lebow states, is that strategy must be subordinate to policy. The Schlieffen Plan, by contrast, made politics subservient to strategy in order to capitalize on Germany's military advantages. In looking back to 1914 for contemporary relevance, this study focuses on three causal sequences to war: preemption, loss of control, and miscalculated escalation. All three, Lebow writes, were instrumental in bringing about war in 1914. Each of these three could act in a similar fashion today.

The historian is bound to ask whether the author uses his historical case studies judiciously. By and large the answer is in the affirmative, although one must qualify this by adding that Lebow's treatment of each crisis is selective rather than comprehensive. Nowhere does he set forth an extended analysis of the three crises to which he gives most attention—1914, the missile crisis of 1962, and the American strategic alert in October 1973 during the Yom Kippur War. This is intended not as criticism but merely to warn those who might otherwise expect a thorough discussion of these three episodes.

Lebow concludes on a mildly upbeat note. Our expectations about the inevitability of war make war less likely today than it was in 1914. Moreover, there are practical steps that can be taken to reduce crisis instability and thus the likelihood of war. Lebow's discussion of some of these steps will interest na-

tional security analysts far more than historians. But his underlying purpose—to make a nuclear Sarajevo less likely—must of necessity compel the attention of us all.

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## ANCIENT

ISRAEL EPH'AL. *The Ancient Arabs: Nomads on the Borders of the Fertile Crescent, 9th–5th Centuries B.C.* Jerusalem: Magnes or E. J. Brill, Leiden. 1982. Pp. 265. \$32.34.

Based on a solid philological foundation, Israel Eph'al's work on the ancient "Arabs" presents an exhaustive discussion of written sources, a systematic chronicle of known events for the period of the Assyrian empire, and a few forays into matters properly historical. Let me point out at the onset the nature and limits of these historical sections, since they are the ones of special interest to readers of the *AHR*.

An interesting section (pp. 93–100) deals with the issue of the integration of nomads into the Assyrian administrative system during the latter part of the eighth century B.C. The point is made here that nomadic groups were occasionally given preferential treatment over other population groups (see chapters 5 and 6 for the later periods) in order to lessen the need for a direct deployment of Assyrian forces along the edge of the steppe. On pages 126–27 and 137–38 there are some good observations on the role that the policy of relative appeasement toward the nomads played in Assyrian tactics when dealing with both Babylonia and Egypt. Also insightful is the remark (pp. 106–08) that the "deportation" of Arabs to Samaria was in fact quite advantageous to the Arabs as well as the Assyrians when viewed in the light of economic policies that were unique with Sargon ("The diversion of some Arab trade . . . increased Assyrian control and augmented imperial profits" [p. 107]).

Apart from these and a few other insights of genuine historical import, the work primarily remains strong for its philological merits. The data are presented clearly and accurately (although one misses, for example, a bibliography), and the information contained provides an excellent scaffolding for further historical analysis. That such a historical perspective is in fact an unrealized potential can be noted, for instance, in the lack of sufficient definition of the historical entity under consideration. The title presents it as, presumably, an ethnic group (Arabs), and the subtitle qualifies it in terms of life

style or cultural adaptation (nomads). But a definition of the two concepts is given only very summarily in a brief introductory section (pp. 5–11), which develops rapidly into a philological discussion of the use of the term “Arab” in the cuneiform sources. And, although the data from cuneiform sources primarily include references containing these terms, the section on biblical sources is much more diffused (and is then not taken up in the section entitled “Historical Survey”). There is, in other words, a certain unevenness in the selection of sources that derives from a rather uncritical definition of the basic subject of inquiry.

Eph'al pays close attention to the cuneiform sources wherever the term “Arab” occurs to the exclusion of other dimensions that would have been appropriate for a fuller historical consideration of the problem. For instance, the evidence of archaeology and the argumentation from linguistic evidence are dismissed too quickly and are then at times introduced only indirectly into the discussion. For example, on page 9 it is stated that “the term ‘Arab(s)’ in this book has no linguistic meaning,” but then on page 115 we read that “the designation ‘Arabs’ in this case is based on onomastic and linguistic criteria as well as on way of life.” One also misses a sense of perspective vis-à-vis later developments, as known from either the historical or the ethnographic record, as well as certain contemporary theories that are pertinent even if one might disagree with them (I am thinking, among others, of Van Seters's reinterpretation of the Patriarchal tradition—a reference to whose work would seem particularly appropriate, for instance, on page 177).

One may object that I am seeking what the author does not purport to offer. I readily grant that this objection is correct to the extent that the author deals with “history” as generally understood within the field of ancient Near Eastern studies—the chronicling of events sorted from the written sources. But I would stand by my conclusion if by history we mean a more structural understanding of institutions and of process—of which the author gives only a few, however tantalizing, glimpses.

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EVA CANTARELLA. *Pandora's Daughters: The Role and Status of Women in Greek and Roman Antiquity*. Translated by MAUREEN B. FANT. Foreword by MARY R. LEFKOWITZ. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 1987. Pp. xiv, 229. Cloth \$30.00, paper \$9.95.

*L'ambiguo malanno*, which was published in 1981, has been translated into English as *Pandora's Daughters*.

Literally translated, the title means “the ambiguous evil.” Eva Cantarella attempts to prove that from the prehistoric to the Byzantine period women were consistently regarded as malevolent and inferior and were “canceled from history.” The author marshals evidence selectively in order to draw attention to two exceptions in what she considers thoroughly misogynistic millennia: the cult of Isis and the teachings of Christ.

Cantarella announces her intention to give priority to legal texts in reconstructing the lives of women. For the Greek world, however, most of the legal evidence is not codified nor of sufficient quantity to serve as the principal evidence for women's history. Thus, the author begins her discussion of Greek women with the Homeric poems, which she claims describe women in the Bronze Age (p. 32). The Dark Age is skipped completely as the poetry of Hesiod is ascribed to “the period immediately following” (p. 33). Then we are told that “the so-called dark ages were characterized by a certain flexibility that allowed women some freedom of movement” (p. 39). No evidence is cited in support of the last statement; in fact, there is none. There are no chronological or genealogical charts that might help clarify the confusing expositions typical of this book.

Cantarella is on surer footing in the Roman world, but her almost exclusive use of legal evidence distorts the historical picture. She dates the “emancipation” of Roman women to the period between the principate and the empire (p. 140), because at that time women's legal disabilities began to be lifted. However, historical texts including the works of Polybius, Livy, and Plutarch reveal that two centuries earlier, after the second Punic War, upper-class women began to act independently and to manage large fortunes, exploiting legal dodges and amenable guardians. Although the author states that this book is intended for a nonspecialist audience, the lack of subtlety sometimes leads to outright error. Thus, Cantarella's assertion that marriage “gave a woman a new master” (p. 117) ignores the possibility of *sine manu* marriage (which is mentioned as early as the XII Tables) and fails to take into account the consensual basis of Roman marriage. Her discussion of *partria potestas* glosses over the reality that this institution could be more oppressive to adult men whose sisters had left the paternal household on marriage.

Although Cantarella is a professor of Roman law whose analyses of legal language are often original and illuminating, this English version of her book can be recommended for neither students nor scholars. Citations of primary sources are frequently inadequate, and modern secondary works in English have been inserted in the notes without warn-