

counts are, in parts, rather elliptic.

The book's analytical — as opposed to documentary — value would also have been enhanced by a substantial engagement with existing writings on monarchical rule, notably Michael Herb's *All in the Family*, the main political science work on family politics and succession issues in MENA monarchies.

A book of this scope will always contain some mistakes. Yet, given its ambition as compendium, a bit more editing and fact checking could have helped to make it the undisputed standard reference of the field. The Saudi section alone contains a number of inaccuracies: King Fahd took the title of "Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques" not in 1995 (p. 80), but in 1986. Saudi Prince Waleed does not have a 14% share of Citicorp (p. 267), but a 4.4% share. The Saudi state's comptroller-general in the 1950s and 1960s was not Musaid bin Abdulaziz (p. 270) (who was a religious recluse), but Musaid bin Abdulrahman, an uncle of Kings Saud and Faysal, and probably the most important princely technocrat before 1975. The ruling family in 1992 contained hundreds of grandsons of the founder king Abdulaziz rather than "more than 60" (p. 240). Page 247 contains contradictory information about King Khalid's maternal background.

This being said, Kéchichian has done a considerable service to Middle East studies by assembling by far the most comprehensive source book on Middle East monarchies to date. Shot through with new insights and nuggets of previously unavailable information, the book will be a resource that scholars will gratefully mine for many years to come.

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American Priestess: The Extraordinary Story of Anna Spafford and the American Colony in Jerusalem, by Jane Fletcher Geniesse. New York: Nan A. Talese, 2008. xvii + 313 pages. Acknowledgments to p. 316. Notes to p. 348. Bibliography to p. 364. Index to p. 378.

Reviewed by Heather J. Sharkey

In this riveting account, Jane Fletcher

Geniesse tells the story of Horatio Spafford and his Norwegian-born wife Anna, who arrived in Jerusalem in 1881 as leaders of a small group of Chicagoans known as the "Overcomers." The group's ostensible goal was to witness the second coming of Christ, though the Spaffords themselves had another purpose. Horatio had squandered \$100,000 of his own and others' money; he was fleeing from debt and the law. In time, Anna Spafford presided over the creation of a Jerusalem commune that became known as the "American Colony," even though many of those who joined were Swedes.

Under Anna Spafford's autocracy, and following a period of hand-to-mouth living, the Overcomers went into the hotel business and tourist trinket trade, and saw their enterprise flourish. The American Colony eventually won the respect of many local Muslims, Christians, and Jews because its members did not proselytize and because they unstintingly helped the destitute and sick. The American Colony also won appreciation from rich tourists who stayed in their lodgings without realizing that the Colony children who carried their luggage, made their meals, and did their laundry had been yanked out of school just to serve them.

Outsiders seldom saw the strange and seamy side of the group's practices. Its members yielded to dictates from Anna Spafford, who claimed to receive messages from God. These messages ordered Colony members to practice first celibacy and later the sharing of beds (swapping husbands and wives and placing young girls with older men), as a way of testing their ability to resist temptation. (Many failed the test.) Spafford separated parents from offspring, discouraged children from getting too much education, forbade reading for pleasure, saw that misbehaving youngsters were stripped naked and whipped, and provided followers with meager meals. However, she exempted her own daughters, Bertha and Grace, from this regimen, and insured that they received French and piano tutoring (and good food) in addition to academic training. When Bertha reached maturity, Anna Spafford received a "message" relaxing the ban on marriages. When Bertha went into childbirth, Spafford relaxed the ban on seeking professional med-

ical help (since she had for years insisted on the exclusive healing power of prayers).

Periodically, a member of the American Colony would escape, bringing news of the Spaffords' abuses to the attention of Americans consuls. One consul in particular, the Reverend Selah Merrill, was so appalled that he sent regular reports to the US State Department, which filed them away. Protestant missionaries in Jerusalem also were appalled, and shunned the group. Perhaps missionaries had heard, for example, of Anna Spafford's belief that death, however caused (by heart attack, tuberculosis, or otherwise), was God's punishment for an individual's sin and that she herself, being blameless, would never die. But Anna did die, in 1923, leaving her followers stunned and adrift. The American Colony soon collapsed as a religious cult, and an acrimonious fight over Colony assets ensued. Anna's daughter Bertha obtained control of the American Colony Hotel, which flourishes even today, and devoted her spare energies to social service. Years later, King Husayn of Jordan awarded Bertha the Jordanian Star in recognition of her work on behalf of Jerusalem's children, making her "the only Christian woman ever to have received that honor" (p. 309).

Geniesse's occasional insertion of imagined dialogue and of stereotyped summaries of Middle Eastern history (e.g., her dismissal of the Sudanese Mahdist movement as a "revolt by Muslim fanatics" [p. 124], and reduction of the 1860 civil war in Mount Lebanon to a "terrifying massacre of Christians" [p. 184]) weakens the book. Nevertheless, Geniesse succeeds in bringing this story of the American Colony alive, and the result is a memorable account. Particularly fascinating is the way she connects the Spaffords to contemporaries like Dwight L. Moody, the most popular American evangelical of the 19th century; Eliezer ben Yehuda, who engineered the modern revival of Hebrew; Charles Gordon, the British general who later died in Khartoum; Djemal Pasha, the Young Turk who presided over the Ottoman army in Palestine during World War I; and Selma Lagerlöf, the Swedish writer, whose novel *Jerusalem* drew inspiration from the American Colony and helped her to win the Nobel prize for literature.

After reaching Jerusalem in 1881, the Spaffords and their fellow Overcomers had initially sympathized with the Jewish return to Palestine, which they regarded as a prerequisite for Christ's second coming. Perhaps the most surprising turn in their history is that they did not become Christian Zionists, as the term is now understood, and that they watched the Jewish Zionists' state-like organization with mounting unease. By the time World War I ended, Anna Spafford and the members of the American Colony had developed a vision of a Jerusalem that would be open to all people who called it their home, including the Arab Muslims and Christians of Palestine.

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WATER

Cooperating Rivals: The Riparian Politics of the Jordan River Basin, by Jeffrey K. Sosland. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007. xii + 212 pages. Notes to p. 275. Selected Bibl. to p. 284. Index to p. 293. \$80 cloth; \$25.95 paper.

Reviewed by Anders Jägerskog

The book under review focuses on the riparian politics of the Jordan River Basin, covering both the bilateral tracks as well as the multilateral track. While many books have been written on the Jordan River Basin, Jeffrey K. Sosland's contribution to the debate is welcome in particular as it offers a very detailed exposé of the linkages between water issues and the wider political developments and conflicts. The book dwells on two main issues: the usefulness of functional cooperation on water in the region and the related matter of whether third parties should facilitate such cooperation.

Well written and well structured, the book starts with a general theoretical background focusing on relevant international relations