DANIEL KNORR

Placing the U.S. State in the Interior of China

The Jinan Missionary Case, 1881–1891

ABSTRACT Scholars acknowledge the role of U.S. missionaries in the expansion of U.S. influence across the Pacific. However, labeling their activities "informal" imperialism underplays their political ramifications. Missionaries were not simply beneficiaries of the state; they actively constructed it. Simultaneously, missionaries participated in the physical and discursive construction of local communities. This article examines the intertwined nature of these two processes—state-extension and place-making—through property disputes in the 1880s between Presbyterian missionaries and the local elite in Jinan, China. This case demonstrates how both state-extension and place-making generated conflicts between a range of Chinese and American actors. These tensions underscore the utility of understanding "place" and "state" not as static constructs but as products of dynamic social interactions. KEYWORDS U.S. missionaries, China, imperial state, law, diplomacy, Shandong, place-making

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

In 1881 a group of American Presbyterian missionaries in Jinan, the capital city of Shandong Province in eastern China, faced a disheartening turn of events. In late 1880, they had arranged to purchase property on the city's main thoroughfare to use for a chapel and dispensary. They occupied the property the next year and initiated renovations, but soon scholars associated with the nearby Luoyuan Academy raised objections to the transaction. Some of the academy's students gathered a crowd, assaulted the men working on the renovations, and forced the magistrate to seal up the property.[1] The missionaries would never be able to occupy this plot, and it would take three years before they could obtain an alternative location for their chapel and dispensary. Even then, the Jinan missionaries became entangled in another series of disputes that would drag on through the end of 1891.

1. John Murray and Stephen Hunter to James Angell, July 20, 1881, in *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1881* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1882), 289. This series is hereafter referred to as *FRUS [Year].*

Pacific Historical Review, Vol. 90, Number 3, pps. 279–313. ISSN 0030-8684, electronic ISSN 1533-8584 © 2021 by the Pacific Coast Branch, American Historical Association. All rights reserved. Please direct all requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content through the University of California Press's Reprints and Permissions web page, https://www.ucpress.edu/journals/reprints-permissions. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1525/phr.2021.90.3.279.

These missionaries found securing property in Jinan so difficult because they inhabited the frontier of U.S. empire. Jinan had long been a major administrative center for both the Qing (1644–1912) and its predecessor the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). By contrast, there were no representatives of the U.S. government in Jinan, nor would there be, at least on a permanent basis, for another twenty years. Indeed, Jinan's location in inland North China had largely shielded it from the direct effects of foreign imperialism, including military power. Moreover, when the missionaries' property troubles in Jinan began, the United States itself was still almost twenty years away from the Spanish-American War and the annexation of Hawai'i, which in conventional accounts mark the beginning of formal, overseas U.S. empire.[2] Even then, Jinan remained under the territorial sovereignty of the Qing and subsequent Chinese governments, making it substantially more peripheral to imperial power than formal colonial possessions or even territorial concessions elsewhere in China.

The Jinan missionaries experienced this frontier as a place, which anthropologist Arturo Escobar defines as "a particular location with some sense of boundaries, grounds, and links to everyday practices."[3] As Escobar and others have observed, places do not simply exist but are made through physical, affective, and discursive processes. For the missionaries, place-making in Jinan was, on one hand, an effect of decisions they made about where to center their lives in terms of residence, work, and recreation. On the other hand, place-making entailed meta-judgments about how to make these decisions, how to situate themselves with reference to indigenous understandings and practices of Jinan as a place, and how to articulate and defend their developing sense of place to others. Place-making was both the subtle and unintentional effect of accumulated decisions and habits, and a conscious, genuinely conflictual process.[4] It encompassed a wide range of activities, including elements of their religious mission, and it also entailed engagement

2. Alfred McCoy, Francisco Scarano, and Courtney Johnson, "On the Tropic of Cancer: Transitions and Transformations in the U.S. Imperial State," in *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State*, ed. Alfred McCoy and Francisco Scarano (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 5; Paul Kramer, "Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World," *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 5 (2011): 1354; A.G. Hopkins, *American Empire: A Global History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 31–32, 337–82.

3. Arturo Escobar, "Culture Sits in Places: Reflections on Globalism and Subaltern Strategies of Localization," *Political Geography* 20, no. 2 (2001): 152.

4. On conflict and place-making, see Doreen Massey, *For Space* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2005), 152–53; Joseph Pierce, Deborah Martin, and James Murphy, "Relational Place-Making: The Networked Politics of Place," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 36, no. 1 (2011): 60.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

with a wide range of Chinese actors.[5] This article focuses on aspects of place-making directly related to the missionaries' troubles in acquiring property.

One way of looking at the Jinan missionaries' troubled place-making is as a confirmation of the theory that both at home and abroad, the weakness of the U.S. state differentiated it from the activist states of major European powers. For example, the limited aid the missionaries received from their home government appears to have set them apart from their Catholic counterparts, who received vigorous support from the French Religious Protectorate and later the German government, especially in Shandong.[6] British diplomats were similarly hesitant to support missionaries' interests, but they expended great energy in advancing British economic concerns in a way that was very different from the image of the U.S. "open door" policy that still shapes popular imagination of the Sino-American relationship. This idea of a "special relationship" between China and the United States, based on shared antipathy to the aggressive imperialism of European states and Japan, fits neatly with the narrative that U.S. influence in China grew primarily through well-intentioned, if not always successful, cultural exchange undertaken through non-governmental actors rather than the exertion of state power. To capture how the activities of non-governmental actors like missionaries produce or reinforce unequal power relationships, some scholars have adopted the term "cultural imperialism."[7] However, scholars have critiqued even this framework for implying that a coherent imperial culture existed and that it was unilaterally imposed on subordinate societies.[8] Conventional wisdom, then, is that even if American

5. For more comprehensive accounts of Christianity in specific Chinese localities, see, among others, Ryan Dunch, *Fuzhou Protestants and the Making of a Modern China, 1857–1927* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Henrietta Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse and Other Tales from a Chinese Catholic Village* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013); Lawrence Kessler, *The Jiangyin Mission Station: An American Missionary Community in China, 1895–1951* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

6. Ernest Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony: China's Catholic Church and the French Religious Protectorate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

7. In referring to missionaries' activities as "imperialism," Emily Conroy-Krutz acknowledges the political implications of missions but asserts that missionaries "were not themselves agents of a formal political empire." Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 10–13.

8. Ryan Dunch, "Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity," *History and Theory* 41, no. 3 (2002): 301–25; Connie Shemo, "Directions in Scholarship on American Women and Protestant Foreign Mission: Debates Over 'Cultural Imperialism,'" *History Compass* 10, no. 3 (2012): 270–83; Andrew Porter, "'Cultural Imperialism' and Protestant Missionary Enterprise, 1780–1914," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25, no. 3 (1997): 367–91.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

missionaries were engaged in a kind of imperial project in China, they were far removed from the U.S. state, especially when operating away from the treaty ports, as the Jinan missionaries were.

This article argues that the U.S. missionaries' place-making was constitutive of state power, not distant from it. This argument draws on scholarship that has challenged the mythology of a weak U.S. state and reconceptualized the nature of the democratic state. Rather than viewing the state as an autonomous historical agent, these scholars consider the state as an *effect* of social action.[9] Similarly, the concept of empire is best used as a way of describing how historical agents *acted* as opposed to what certain political units *were*. Formal and informal imperialism thus have no clear distinguishing line of demarcation.[10] The Jinan missionary case shows how American actors living beyond the territorial and institutional bounds of the government were nevertheless intimately connected with the state. Rather than pigeonholing missionaries as "local," "state," or "imperial" agents, I use all of these frames of analysis for analyzing the effects of their actions in local and global contexts. In the context of foreign missions in China, Americans received less robust support from their home government than some of their foreign colleagues received from their own countries. Paradoxically, rather than distancing the missionary project from the U.S. state, this dynamic actually drew missionaries into a process of state extension. This article examines the behavior of missionaries within a particular local context and thus does not explicitly track bi-directional imperial exchanges across the Pacific.[11] However, it demonstrates that voluntary associations were just as crucial an element of U.S. state-building abroad as at home.[12]

The first section of the article provides a narrative outline of the Jinan missionaries' conflict with local officials and elites. This conflict provides

9. William Novak, "The Myth of the 'Weak' American State," *The American Historical Review* 113, no. 3 (2008): 752–72; Desmond King and Robert Lieberman, "Ironies of State Building: A Comparative Perspective on the American State," *World Politics* 61, no. 3 (2009): 547–88; William Novak, Stephen Sawyer, and James Sparrow, "Beyond Stateless Democracy," *The Tocqueville Review/La Revue Tocqueville* 36, no. 1 (2015): 21–41.

10. Kramer, "Power and Connection," 1349–50, 1374–75. See also John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," *The Economic History Review* 6, no. 1 (1953): 1–15.

11. On bi-directional imperial exchanges and U.S. state-building, see, among others, Alfred McCoy, *Policing America's Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

12. On the usefulness of "boundary conditions" as a lens for studying state-building, see James Sparrow, William Novak, and Stephen Sawyer, eds., *Boundaries of the State in U.S. History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

a window into the emergence of a new imperial borderland where recourse to brute force was impractical, and negotiation and invention were therefore necessary. The second section demonstrates that in the process of negotiating this borderland, the missionaries extended the force of the U.S. state through law. In doing so, the missionaries were not simply utilizing or cooperating with the state but were actively redefining its borders through their efforts to be physically present in Jinan and to reinterpret and enforce the scope of U.S. treaty privileges. In this way, missionaries acted not only as beneficiaries of legal imperialism but as local agents of its instantiation.

A natural response to this portrayal of U.S. missionaries as state-extenders would be to inquire about conflicts between the general interests of the state and missionary place-making. The final section addresses this problem directly, examining conflicts among the Jinan missionaries, their colleagues elsewhere, and members of the U.S. government. The same motivations and actions through which the missionaries extended U.S. state power generated these conflicts—a reminder that states, like places, are not static entities but products of accumulated layers of negotiation (a quality of place that Doreen Massey refers to as "throwntogetherness").[13] The broader theoretical intervention of this paper, then, is to bring place-making—a concept usually deployed in the fields of anthropology, geography, and urban planning—to the attention of scholars in political theory and history. Since place and state may be co-effects of the same sets of actions, we need to understand the place-situated nature of the state and the political implications of place-making.[14] This understanding of place and state best reflects the complex mix of interests, motivations, and activities that characterized the Jinan missionary case.

THE ORIGIN OF MISSIONARY TROUBLES IN JINAN

The Jinan missionary case unfolded in the context of several major historical developments. The coming of Presbyterian missionaries to Jinan was part of a tremendous expansion in the number of U.S. missionaries in China (ruled by the Manchu Qing Dynasty) and around the world after the Civil

13. Massey, *For Space*, 140.

14. On place as a translocal and political construct, see Ulrike Freitag and Achim von Oppen, eds., *Translocality: The Study of Globalising Processes from a Southern Perspective* (Boston: Brill, 2010); Escobar, "Culture Sits in Places," 149; Massey, *For Space*, 130–41, 151–52; Stephan Feuchtwang, "Theorising Place," in *Making Place: State Projects, Globalisation and Local Responses in China*, ed. Stephan Feuchtwang (Portland, Ore.: Cavendish Publishing, 1994), 10–12.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

FIGURE 1. Map of Shandong and Zhili provinces. *Source*: Map by author with QGIS. Based on GIS data from Natural Earth and "CHGIS, Version: 5," (c) Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies and the Institute for Chinese Historical Geography at Fudan University, 2012.

War and, even more so, after the end of Reconstruction.[15] Not only did the number of missionaries grow, but they increasingly pushed beyond the coastal treaty ports into the interior of China. In Shandong, missionaries moved out from coastal bases in Dengzhou and Yantai (Chefoo) into the countryside and cities of central and western Shandong. This ingress was made possible by the restoration of order by the Qing government itself, following more than a decade of ruthlessly destructive rebellions and wars in the 1850s and 1860s. The legal basis of missionary activity came from a series of treaties the Qing government signed with imperialist powers, including the United States, starting with the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing that concluded the First Opium War between the Qing and Great Britain. When local officials failed to ensure the safety of missionaries and Chinese Christians in their jurisdictions, they risked diplomatic protests and even direct military intervention by

15. Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 175–76; Ian Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective since 1789* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 94–98; Jost Oliver Zetsche, "Protestant Missionaries in Late Nineteenth-Century-China" in *A Handbook of Christianity in China, vol. 2, 1800–present*, ed. R.G. Tiedemann (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 175–76.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

foreign gunboats.[16] Missionaries' movement into the interior would pose a number of legal, diplomatic, and social problems, especially in immiserated rural areas of western Shandong, where the control of the government and an elite class that prioritized stability was far weaker than in Jinan.[17] This rural area of Shandong became the spawning ground for the infamous Boxer Uprising that swept across large swaths of North China from 1899 to 1901.[18]

Both contemporaries and subsequent scholars have recognized that Catholic missionaries tended to be particularly aggressive in asserting political prerogatives and defending their converts in legal disputes. Protestants, however, also became embroiled in conflicts, especially over land; although, in the Jinan case it was the interests of the mission station, not individual converts, that was at stake. The missionaries' search for property stemmed from their desire to build housing, a place of worship, schools, and hospitals.[19] In the case of the Presbyterian mission, "social" institutions such as schools and hospitals did not supplant the primary goal of conversion, but both served as practical means to that end (by attracting people to Christian organizations) and manifested the generally accepted belief that conversion would entail cultural transformation.[20] Through their work in China, some missionaries became deeply invested in medical and education work, but the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A (based in New York) demanded that they not turn their attentions exclusively to secular affairs. Some missionaries eventually left the Presbyterian Board in order to pursue diplomatic, educational, or medical work full time.

The second half of the nineteenth century had also been eventful for the city of Jinan itself. Although the city had mostly avoided direct attacks from

16. Dong Wang, *The United States and China: A History from the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 101–2.

17. Paul Cohen's book remains a well-regarded account of the causes of missionary cases. See also R. G. Tiedemann and Philip West on cases in Shandong and the Jinan case in particular. Paul Cohen, *China and Christianity: The Missionary Movement and the Growth of Chinese Antiforeignism, 1860–1870* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963); R. G Tiedemann, "Protestant 'Missionary Cases' (Jiao'an) in Shandong Province, 1860–1900," *Ching Feng* 8, no. 1–2 (2007): 153–95; Philip West, "The Tsinan Property Disputes (1887–1891): Gentry Loss and Missionary 'Victory,'" *Papers on China* 20 (1966): 119–43.

18. Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

19. On the role of educational and medical institutions in Protestant missions, see Kathleen Lowdick, "Good Works" in *A Handbook of Christianity in China*, vol. 2, 429–34.

20. Daniel Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 69–72.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

Taiping and Nian forces in the 1850s and 1860s, extra defensive measures had been necessary, such as the periodic organization of militias and an extension of the city's walls. The immiseration of much of the province's countryside due to manmade and natural disasters prompted the migration—both permanent and temporary—of tens of thousands of people into and around the city's newly enlarged walled area.[21] Like their counterparts in other parts of China, Jinan's elite participated in a range of public projects, like charitable relief, to help alleviate these crises.[22] In the process of doing so, they built close relationships with the powerful officials who staffed the provincial government and who were, by law, not allowed to be natives of the province.[23]

It was in this context that the itinerant missionary Jasper McIlvaine first began Presbyterian mission work in Jinan in 1871.[24] He preached in the city consistently but did not settle there permanently. McIlvaine tried for years to secure property for a permanent chapel but was hampered by both a lack of funds and difficulty finding a willing seller.[25] McIlvaine solved both of these problems in 1880, donating a large sum of his own money to purchase a place for a permanent street chapel and dispensary and arranging to buy a plot owned by one Jiao Tongxing on the western side of the city's main thoroughfare, near both Luoyuan Academy and the examination hall. McIlvaine arranged for a Chinese convert, Liu Yuting, to purchase the property on behalf of the mission. That way, the property could pass into the hands of a Chinese member of the church without anyone, especially neighbors (who had to consent to the sale of adjacent properties), having the chance to raise objections—stemming from religious prejudice or material interests—to the

21. David Buck, *Urban Change in China: Politics and Development in Tsinan, Shantung, 1890–1949* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 25–31; Daniel Knorr, "Putting Empire in Its Place: Urban Elites and the Qing Imperial State in Jinan, Shandong, 1639–1926" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2020), 233–382.

22. James Polachek, "Gentry Hegemony: Soochow in the T'ung-Chih Restoration," in *Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China*, ed. Frederic Wakeman Jr. and Carolyn Grant (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 211–56; Philip Kuhn, *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796–1864* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980); Mary Backus Rankin, *Elite Activism and Political Transformation in China: Zhejiang Province, 1865–1911* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986).

23. David Buck, "Public Monuments as a Guide to Political Leadership," *Ch'ing-Shih Wen-T'i* 3, no. 1 (1974): 62–70.

24. On the history of Presbyterian missions in China, see G. Thompson Brown, *Earthen Vessels and Transcendent Power: American Presbyterians in China, 1837–1952* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1997).

25. John Murray, "Tsinanfu Station in the Earlier Years—And Now," in *A Record of American Presbyterian Mission Work in Shantung, Province, China, 1861–1913*, 2nd ed. (1914), 29–31.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

missionaries taking ownership.[26] McIlvaine died unexpectedly from pneumonia in February 1881, and his colleagues Stephen Hunter and John Murray occupied the property in May of that year. Reflecting on the loss of McIlvaine, they wrote to the mission board back in the United States, "His hopes and aspirations are realized. How have we wished he could be with us to carry out his cherished plans on earth. To preach in that chapel and otherwise work for China as none of us can." Judging from the celebratory tone of their letter, they did not expect serious opposition to their use of the property once they had the deed in their hands.[27]

They were surprised, then, on July 13 when a group of thirty scholars from the academy gathered a crowd of three or four hundred people at the examination hall and led them in ransacking the premises and assaulting the workmen.[28] After posting an official notice to stay off the property, the authorities took custody of Liu and Jiao, beat them, and imprisoned them in the prefect's compound. After a tense few days, during which threats against the missionaries circulated on the streets but no attempt on their persons was made, the governor and circuit intendant (*daotai*, whose duties included dealing with foreigners) issued proclamations protecting the missionaries, and the immediate crisis abated.

The strong support the scholars received from politically prominent figures in the city made it difficult for the officials to settle the case quickly. The missionaries reported that the scholars had acted contrary to the orders of their superiors at the academy and that the daotai had been at the academy the day of the incident, trying to diffuse tensions. These facts, they argued, demonstrated that the action against the missionaries was neither unanimous nor backed by the officials.[29] Powerful people in the city supported the students, though. Foremost among these was Li Qing'ao, who had built an impressive resumé as an official, attaining the highest degree in the examination system (*jinshi*), working in the Hanlin Academy, assisting with the mobilization of local militia during the Taiping War, and serving as governor

26. Murray and Hunter to Angell, August 6, 1881, in *FRUS 1881*, 288; "Summary of News: Reuters's Telegrams," *North China Herald* [*NCH*], January 18, 1881, 105.

27. Hunter to Ellinwood, February 5, 1881, p. 4–5 in *Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions: Correspondence and Reports* [*PBFM*], Roll 203; Murray to Ellinwood, May 23, 1881, p. 8 in *PBFM*, Roll 203.

28. Murray and Hunter to Angell, July 20, 1881, in *FRUS 1881*, 287–89; "Shu Jinan minjiao anhou" [The Aftermath of a Missionary Case in Jinan], *Shenbao*, August 27, 1881, 1; "Outports: Tientsin," *NCH*, August 5, 1881, 143; Murray, "Tsinanfu Station," 32.

29. Murray and Hunter to Angell, July 20, 1881 in *FRUS 1881*, 288.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

of Henan Province from 1875 to 1877. It is not clear if Li involved himself in the dispute because of his personal opposition to the missionaries or because he saw an opportunity to extend his patronage to the scholars of the academy. Both are possible.[30] Li's prestige made it practically impossible for even Governor Ren Daorong, who was the highest ranking official in Jinan, to dismiss out-of-hand the concerns of the missionaries' antagonists.

In all likelihood, ignorance of, rumors about, and prejudice against Christian teachings motivated at least some of those who opposed the missionaries. In an 1888 memorial responding to a series of missionary cases in Shandong, including Jinan, Governor Zhang Yao addressed the problem of the unfamiliarity of the Christian religion, saying "[H]uman nature is to practice that which is familiar to them and be shocked at that which is strange, to follow what they believe in and reject that which they find dubious. The Catholic and Protestant religions are piously worshipped by every country in Europe and America, but the people of China only know and study the books of Confucius and Mencius." Zhang further noted that Shandong's status as the birthplace of Confucius and Mencius—two of China's greatest sages—heightened suspicion of foreign religion. But he did not see this aversion to foreign religions as a peculiarly Chinese phenomenon, speculating that a Chinese person propagating the teachings of Confucius in Rome or Palestine would meet similar opposition, since "although China and foreign countries are each different, the hearts of their people are not so distant."[31] Ideological objections to foreign missionaries were interwoven with social concerns. By presenting themselves as teachers, missionaries threatened not just Confucian orthodoxy but the intellectual and cultural hegemony of the scholarly elite.[32]

However, these explanations do not necessarily account for specific aspects of the case: the timing and targets of physical violence, the rationales offered

30. Li's younger cousin, Li Qingxiang, had been a supervisor of Luoyuan Academy and a confidante of Kuang Yuan, the head of the academy in the late 1870s. The *North China Herald* would later report repeatedly on Li's hostile attitude toward foreigners. Besides his involvement in this case, though, the only concrete explanation of his hostility was a "humiliation" he suffered at the hands of a Catholic bishop while serving as an official. Mao Chenglin, ed., *Xuxiu Licheng xianzhi* [Revised Licheng County Gazetteer] (Jinan: Licheng xianzhi ju, 1924), 40:16b–17b; West, "The Tsinan Property Disputes," 126.; "Outports: Chi-Nan Fu," *NCH*, February 10, 1888, 157; "Outports: Chi-Nan Fu," *NCH*, February 24, 1888, 208.

31. "Shandong Xunfu Zhang Yao zougao" [Memorial from Shandong Governor Zhang Yao], June 16, 1888 in *Fanyangjiao shuwen jietie xuan* [Selection of Anti-Foreign Religion Writings and Placards], ed. Wang Minglun (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1984), 313.

32. Cohen, *China and Christianity*, 84; Bays, *A New History*, 75–76.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

by the elite to officials, and the ways the case was settled. The elite's objections in 1881 centered on two issues that would be recurring themes throughout the case. First was the location of the property and the potential that the missionaries' construction on it might harm the *fengshui* (i.e. favorable geomantic properties) of the surrounding area. This is the only rationale that appears in a brief mention of the missionary case in the biography of one of the purported leaders of the opposition, Liu Zhengji.[33] To the missionaries, these complaints were—at best—based on heathen superstition and more likely simply excuses to throw up obstacles, especially when the missionaries made an effort to renovate their buildings in the Chinese style.[34] The merit of these claims likely varied from property to property. Given the proximity of this first property to important educational institutions, not to mention the missionaries' habit of proselytizing to exam-takers, location-based objections are understandable and likely compounded local elites' anxieties that the missionaries aimed to usurp their intellectual prerogatives. A correspondent for the *North China Herald* suggested a similar uproar would ensue in England if a "joss-house" were built next to Trinity College, Cambridge.[35]

The second rationale for objections was the legality of the transactions. In some cases, the elite questioned the validity of the deeds involved. In the case of the first property, they claimed the land belonged to a special category (*weiliang di*) that could not be legally bought and sold. These objections may well have had merit in at least some cases, although there was a lively, complex land market in China at the time, and even land that was technically inalienable was often traded. Even more frequently, the various Chinese agents in these and other transactions came in for harsh scrutiny. Suffice it to say that the actions of these agents—who included a mix of Chinese Christians and professional brokers—likely ran a broad gamut of legality. Moreover, strictly legal concerns about their behavior melded into more general anxieties about the intentions of people who associated with missionaries. In 1882, Shandong Director of Education Zhang Baixi referred to the people employed by missionaries as "bandits" (*feiren*), which evoked a range of anxieties about unattached troublemakers—especially in the context of the social dislocation of the late nineteenth century—and contrasted them to the basically good and loyal, albeit ignorant, subjects who opposed the

33. Mao Chenglin, *Xuxiu Licheng xianzhi*, 40:24b.
34. Murray and Hunter to Angell, July 20, 1881, in *FRUS 1881*, 287–89.
35. "Outports: Tientsin," *NCH*, August 12, 1881, 163.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

missionaries.[36] Six years later, Zhang Yao elaborated on these concerns, saying, "Now the [Christian] teachings are those of a foreign country, but the people are still of China. Thus, when a Chinese rascal (*wulai*) becomes a person of these teachings, his disposition suddenly changes, and when he looks at people outside these teachings, it is as if he were not of our kind (*ruo fei wu zulei*)."[37] Thus, missionaries both brought new threats into the local community and exacerbated existing anxieties about people whose loyalty to the community and the state were suspect.

Despite the array of objections the gentry could bring to bear, the officials did protect the missionaries and attempt to broker a compromise. They convinced the missionaries to give up the property they had purchased through Liu and then attempted to identify another site that would be acceptable to both the missionaries and the gentry. This kind of collaboration between officials and the local elite was a hallmark of Qing governance. The small size of the imperial bureaucracy in the provinces coupled with the rule of avoidance, which prohibited officials from taking up posts in their home regions, made Qing officials dependent on the local elite who, ideally, shared their interest in enhancing the welfare of the locality through effective governance.[38] Jinan possessed a strong class of local elite, such as Li Qing'ao, and housed a large number of officials, headed by the governor of Shandong Province. The governor could communicate directly with the throne and exercised considerable autonomy in dealing with affairs like missionary cases, so long as he did not let things get out of hand. While the Office of Foreign Affairs (*Zongli yamen*) in Beijing could issue him instructions, it could not simply order him to take certain measures, a feature of the Qing bureaucracy that foreigners struggled to grasp.[39] The local gentry's access to and influence over such a powerful official was obviously a boon to them and may have dissuaded them from deploying greater violence against the missionaries.

36. "Shandong xuezheng Zhang Baixi zouchen . . . " [Memorial by Shandong Director of Education Zhang Baixi . . .], July 2, 1882 in Zhu Jinfu and Lü Jian, ed., vol. 2 of *Qingmo Jiao'an* [Late Qing Missionary Cases] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996), 360.

37. "Shandong Xunfu Zhang Yao zougao," 313.

38. Scully notes that the cooperation of the local elite was also an important element of foreign imperialism in China and that the extension of U.S. legal sovereignty abroad was a means to prevent U.S. citizens from upsetting this relationship. Eileen Scully, *Bargaining with the State from Afar: American Citizenship in Treaty Port China, 1844–1942* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 9–10.

39. Richard Horowitz, "Central Power and State Making: The Zongli Yamen and Self-Strengthening in China, 1860–1880" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1998), 61–132.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

Beyond the objections of Jinan's elite and their sway over officials, there were other reasons a compromise proved difficult to reach. First, the missionaries were dissatisfied with the quality of the properties offered for exchange, especially since none of them were on the heavily trafficked west side of the city where the original property had been.[40] Second, the frequent rotation of Qing officials—not all of whom were sympathetic to the missionaries—and the inability of the U.S. legation in Beijing to exert enough pressure on the Office of Foreign Affairs to force a resolution undermined their position in the bargaining process. The lack of any U.S. diplomatic representation in Jinan itself only exacerbated these problems. Even when the Tianjin Consul James Zuck went to Jinan in 1882, the legation complained to the Office of Foreign Affairs that his trip had proved "entirely fruitless" since "no serious effort was made by [the local officials] to right the wrongs to which the citizens of the United States had been subjected."[41] These factors combined to prolong the negotiations.

By the end of 1882, the missionaries began to soften their position and, under the encouragement of the U.S. Minister John Young, began to consider accepting cash as part of an exchange for a less-than-ideal property. However, they remained unenthusiastic about both the property—because it was located near the prefect's compound closer to the city center and farther away from the heavily trafficked west end of the main street—and the amount of money (one thousand taels) being offered.[42] The final push to resolve the case came from Young's reluctant decision to send Chester Holcombe, the Secretary to the Legation (and a former missionary), to Jinan.[43] Whereas Zuck's 1882 trip had been a failure, punctuated by his being pelted with dirt and rocks as he had passed through the nearby city of Dezhou, the officials in Jinan treated Holcombe royally, under instructions from Li

40. Holcombe to Prince Gong, November 11, 1881, p. 18–19, enclosure 4 in No. 16, Holcombe to Blaine, November 17, 1881 in vol. 58 (Roll 59) of *Despatches from United States Ministers to China, 1843–1906* (Washington: National Archives and Record Services, General Services Administration, 1958). This series of documents is hereafter referred to as *Despatches*.

41. Holcombe to Prince Gong, May 20, 1882, p. 8, enclosure 1 in No. 114, Holcombe to Frelinghuysen, May 25, 1882 in vol. 60 (Roll 61) of *Despatches*.

42. A tael was a Chinese ounce of silver. Murray to Young, November 6, 1882, p. 17–21, enclosure 2 in No. 60, Young to Frelinghuysen, November 24, 1882 in vol. 62 (Roll 63) of *Despatches*; Young to Murray, November 18, 1882, p. 24–25, enclosure 3 in No. 60, Young to Frelinghuysen, November 24, 1882 in vol. 62 (Roll 63) of *Despatches*; Gilbert Reid, "An Experience of Missionary Troubles in China," *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* 23, no. 6 (1892): 277.

43. No. 285, Young to Frelinghuysen, November 14, 1883, p. 2–4 in vol. 67 (Roll 68) of *Despatches*; Paige McWilliams, "Chester Holcombe: The Christian Gentleman in Victorian America" (M.A. thesis: University of Alabama in Birmingham, 1980).

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

Hongzhang (the powerful statesman and Governor-General of Zhili, stationed in Tianjin). They even paraded him into Jinan in the governor's own sedan chair. Although the officials offered the same property as before, Governor Chen Shijie acceded without argument to the missionaries' demand for three thousand taels—more than 80 percent of the original purchase price—to make up for the discrepancy in value, even though both he and Holcombe knew that this was considerably more than ought to have been necessary (and three times the initial offer).[44]

Even so, some of the underlying issues of the case remained unresolved, including whether the missionaries had a firm legal right to purchase property in Jinan, what the correct procedures for buying such property should be, where they might be allowed to buy and build on property, and so forth. Meanwhile, the cash included in the final settlement left the missionaries with funds for renovating the new building and seeking additional property they could use to expand their medical work.[45]

Unsurprisingly, the missionaries, elites, and officials soon found themselves entangled in another dispute. In 1887, opposition emerged to the missionaries' lease of a property in the east suburb for use as a school, and, on one occasion, what missionary Gilbert Reid later described as a "riot" led by the headmen of the east suburb actually entered the property.[46] Governor Zhang Yao, whose favor Reid had courted since his arrival in 1886, sided with the missionaries, settling matters by ordering the gentry not to bother the missionaries or the property owner anymore.[47]

Four months later, as part of their efforts to secure land for a hospital, the missionaries secured a perpetual lease on property in the southeast suburb. Again, the gentry raised objections and the officials arrested the landlord, Liu Mengkui, and middleman, Chen Wanping, and refused to stamp the deed to the property.[48] The elite presented two successive petitions, arguing first that

44. Holcombe to Young, February 12, 1884, enclosure 1 in No. 413, Young to Frelinghuysen, April 1, 1884, p. 14–15 in vol. 70 (Roll 71) of *Despatches*; *FRUS 1884*, 92–94.

45. Murray to Ellinwood, January 27, 1885, p. 1 in *PBFM*, Roll 205.

46. "Suburb" here refers to the area surrounding the old city that was enclosed by walls in the 1860s.

47. Gilbert Reid's forwardness in seeking appointments with officials may have exacerbated the elite's animosity toward the missionaries. Gilbert Reid, *Glances at China* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1892), 141, 154–57; Chalfant to Ellinwood, July 28, 1887, p. 7 in *PBFM*, Roll 206.

48. Coltman to Ellinwood, November 27, 1887, p. 1 in *PBFM*, Roll 206; Denby to Prince Gong, December 21, 1887, p. 15–17, enclosure 1 in No. 529, Denby to Bayard, December 20, 1887 in vol. 82 (Roll 83) of *Despatches*; *FRUS 1888*, 240–241.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

this property was "public" and then that the treaties did not allow the missionaries to purchase it. Li Qing'ao, who supported the second petition, again emerged as the missionaries' chief antagonist. This time his influence was even greater due to his personal relationship with Zhang Yao, whom Li had promoted earlier in his career.[49] Li was joined by Chen Ruheng, a wealthy philanthropist and founder of the government-supported philanthropic institution, the Bureau for Spreading Benevolence (*Guangren shanju*).[50] Chen's role in the case, however, was more ambiguous. Several reports from the *North China Herald*'s anonymous correspondent claim he was sympathetic to the missionaries.[51] Another implies his hostility to foreigners on the basis of his family history: his father, a customs officer, was reportedly demoted when the court discovered that the efficiency of the Imperial Maritime Customs increased markedly after it was transferred to British control.[52] Chen and Li mediated between the headmen, or the lower level of the elite in the suburbs, and the officials. The involvement of the lower elite suggests that whatever Li's and Chen's personal feelings were, they were not simply manufacturing opposition to the missionaries.[53]

With the officials unable to offer an agreeable compromise because of the opposition of Li and other prominent individuals, the missionaries decided to take matters into their own hands, but to no avail. Reid gave the officials thirty days to offer an exchange, but he received no reply. Having reached an agreement with the family of the owner, who was still in prison, and notified the daotai of his intentions, he went to the property—which was still inhabited by its current tenants—on the evening of November 28 to occupy a single room. According to Reid, after he had been there for about an hour a crowd gathered, ejected him from the building, beat him, and left him in the street in a semi-conscious state. He remained there for more than an hour until a constable arrived and took him to an inn for the night since the city gates were already closed. He returned to his residence the next morning and spent the entire day, which was, coincidentally, his thirtieth birthday, in

49. West, "The Tsinan Property Disputes"; Reid, "An Experience," 279.

50. West, "The Tsinan Property Disputes," 127; Mao Chenglin, *Xuxiu Licheng xianzhi*, 40:35a–36b.

51. "Outports: Chi-Nan Fu," *NCH*, February 10, 1888, 157; "Outports: Chi-Nan Fu," *NCH*, June 22, 1889, 767.

52. "Outports: Chi-Nan Fu," *NCH*, July 1, 1887, 10.

53. Ibid; "Outports: Chi-Nan Fu," *NCH*, July 15, 1887, 70; "Outports: Chi-Nan Fu," *NCH*, February 10, 1888, 157.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

bed.[54] The Chinese officials denied Reid's version of events, saying he had been injured when, as he tried to force his way into the building, the women and children inside pushed him out and he fell down, knocking his head and scraping his hands and arms. Governor Zhang speculated that the crowd to which Reid referred consisted merely of curious onlookers.[55] After this incident, the missionaries turned to Charles Denby, the U.S. minister plenipotentiary in Beijing, for help, with Reid even traveling to Beijing to press the case. However, the missionaries' position was again weak. While a missionary had been physically harmed, unlike the 1881 incident, Reid's injuries were not serious and he recovered fully. Moreover, the details of his assault were both disputed by the Qing officials and questioned by Denby, who thought Reid had acted rashly by attempting at night to take possession of an already occupied property without explicit support from the officials. Finally, the missionaries' lack of clear treaty rights to purchase property continued to dog them. Denby thought it best to pursue a local agreement since, in his opinion, "The case of the missionaries is not strong, tested by the treaties."[56]

The missionaries made two more separate attempts to resolve the case by finding property themselves, each time meeting with opposition. In 1888, Dr. Robert Coltman with permission from his colleagues purchased property in the country, about one mile west of the city suburbs. After the elite opposed his purchase of this property, Coltman took over the work of handling the station's official business from Reid. During this period (winter and spring of 1889), the local officials, the Office of Foreign Affairs, and Minister Denby all came to believe that the missionaries would be willing to let the property in the southeast suburb go if they would be allowed to occupy the country property purchased by Coltman. Under this assumption, which turned out to be mistaken due to indecision among the missionaries, Governor Zhang secured the elite's consent to let the missionaries have this property and thereby close the case.

After determining that the property purchased by Coltman was unsuitable and deciding to sell it, the other missionaries again searched for property on

54. Denby to Prince Gong, December 21, 1887, p. 15–17, enclosure 1 in No. 529, Denby to Bayard, December 20, 1887 in vol. 82 (Roll 83) of *Despatches*,

55. Zongshu shou Shandong Xunfu Zhang Yao wen [Dispatch from Shandong Governor Zhang Yao to the Foreign Office], March 29, 1888 in Huang Jiamo, ed., vol. 2 of *Zhongmei guanxi shiliao: Guangxu chao* [Historical Materials on Sino-American Relations: Guangxu Reign] (Taibei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo, 1988), 1267.

56. This quotation is omitted from the corresponding entry in *FRUS*. No. 529, Denby to Bayard, December 20, 1887, p. 4 in vol. 82 (Roll 83) of *Despatches*.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

their own. In February 1891, Reid negotiated a lease on a property in the east suburb and agreed to take back the money the missionaries had paid for the southeast suburb property and hand over the deeds, which were still in their possession. The elite, though, objected to the missionaries' occupation of this property on the grounds that the planned construction would disrupt the fengshui of the area.[57] The case may have reverted to deadlock had it not been for a series of anti-foreign riots that broke out in central China in the summer of that year, after which local officials received instructions to expeditiously settle all outstanding missionary cases.[58] At a meeting at the end of October, two of the leading gentry consented to the missionaries' occupation of the property they had secured in the east suburb.

In both 1884 and 1891, the missionaries won only conditional victories. Not only did they fail to receive the property they initially desired, but in both cases purchasing and occupying any property at all took years of negotiation and compromise. On the one hand, this difficulty was a product of the strength of the Qing imperial state in Jinan, the close relationship between the elite and the officials, and the elite's tenacious guardianship of local and imperial concerns with managing the people and space of their city. On the other hand, the course of this case was shaped by Jinan's location on the periphery of U.S. empire and the diplomatic apparatus's limited capacity to intervene. The missionaries' circumscribed successes demonstrated the boundaries of state power and the capacity for individuals acting outside formal government institutions to extend this power into the interior of China.

AN EMPIRE OF LAW

The missionaries' troubles seem like they ought to have boiled down to a simple legal question: did they or did they not have the right to purchase property in Jinan? In reality, the legal ramifications of this dispute were much more complicated, involving questions about the missionaries' presence in Jinan, their right to purchase property outside the treaty ports, and their relationships with Chinese individuals, particularly officials, middlemen, and converts. The Sino-American treaties were not objective and autonomous bodies of law: their effectiveness required activation and interpretation by

57. Reid, "An Experience," 283.

58. Bergen to Ellinwood, November 2, 1891, p. 4 in *PBFM*, Roll 208; Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, 93–94.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

actors both inside and outside the government. The missionaries effected the extension of the U.S. imperial state to Jinan through these processes, even though they acted from outside the government itself.

The first legal question raised by this case was whether the missionaries could be present in Jinan and in what capacity. Article VI of the Additional Articles to the Treaty of Tianjin (1858) granted American citizens the same rights as their British and French counterparts to travel in the interior.[59] In theory, the missionaries' right to *reside* in the interior was not guaranteed.[60] However, neither the gentry nor the officials showed any real interest in disputing this nuance, essentially accepting the missionaries' residential presence in Jinan as a given.

The missionaries' presence in Jinan re-marked the boundaries of the U.S. and Qing states in two important ways. The first was the extension of extraterritorial protections that exempted them from punishment according to Qing law. Extraterritoriality simultaneously restricted the scope of Qing sovereignty—which is why it is a stock feature of discussions of imperialism in China—and established an overseas "citizenship regime" whose geographical limits were defined by the movements of individual citizens.[61] As Teemu Ruskola says, "when Americans entered China, American law traveled with them, effectively attaching to their very bodies."[62] Like other large, ethnically heterogenous empires, the Qing already practiced a form of "legal pluralism," where particular communities were subject to their own forms of law administered by members of the local elite. In this sense, extraterritoriality and the consular jurisdiction it entailed was less a *de novo* imposition than a logical extension of existing practices.[63] However, the Qing predicated their form of legal pluralism on confining legally distinct communities to discrete areas, which led the court to strongly but unsuccessfully oppose extending extraterritorial privileges to missionaries residing outside the treaty ports (and

59. Inspector General of Customs, ed., *Treaties, Conventions, Etc., between China and Foreign States*, vol. 1, *Russia, International Protocol, Great Britain, United States of America, France, Import Tariff Agreement* (Shanghai: Statistical Department of the Inspectorate General of Customs, 1908), 215, 528, 607.

60. The foreign community recognized this lacuna in treaty rights. See, for example, [No Title], *NCH*, April 12, 1882, 381.

61. Scully, *Bargaining with the State*, 3–5.

62. William Novak also discusses the suitability of law to the extension of state power. Teemu Ruskola, *Legal Orientalism: China, the United States, and Modern Law* (Cambridg: Harvard University Press, 2013), 111; Novak, "The Myth," 767–68.

63. Pär Cassel, *Grounds of Judgment: Extraterritoriality and Imperial Power in Nineteenth-Century China and Japan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

away from the consuls who had jurisdiction over them). Instead, the Qing insisted that they should be subject to the jurisdiction of local officials, but to no avail.[64] By moving into the interior, missionaries thus bored channels that extended the reach of U.S. legal sovereignty and deformed the terrain of Qing legal practice.[65]

More pertinent to this case was the positive responsibility that both Qing and U.S. officials bore for protecting the rights the treaties accorded U.S. citizens. In the early nineteenth century, American merchants' relationship with the U.S. government had been strained and inconsistent. The vulnerability of the pre-Opium War American ex-patriot community was demonstrated by their capitulation in the 1821 Terranova Affair, when American merchants handed over a sailor accused of killing a Chinese woman after officials in Canton levied an embargo against American trade.[66] His strangled body—returned to the merchants after his execution—strikes a chilling contrast to the legally privileged bodies of the U.S. missionaries in Jinan, who could turn a few scrapes and bruises into an international incident. The presence of the missionaries in Jinan activated the responsibilities of Qing officials to protect the persons and property of foreign citizens and the possibility of their being held accountable for failing to do so. While the treaties theoretically made local officials and elites guardians of U.S. interests, it was engagement with the missionaries that activated these responsibilities in practice.[67]

The nature of the protections that U.S. and Qing officials had to extend to missionaries related to the second category of legal questions this case raised: the rights of the missionaries to purchase property. In contrast to treaty protections of missionaries' bodies—which extended across the entirety of the Qing Empire—stipulations regarding the purchase of property were territorially delimited. While temporary lodging and renting were treated as extensions of the right to physical presence in the interior, the treaties did not explicitly guarantee the right to purchase property. In responding to the missionaries' original complaint in 1881, Minister James Angell

64. Ibid, 62.

65. As Lauren Benton shows, the portability and malleability of law is an imperial practice not unique to extraterritoriality. Lauren Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400–1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3.

66. Michael Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and China to 1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 12–13; Scully, *Bargaining with the State*, 49, 63.

67. Ibid, 9–10.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

acknowledged that, in contrast to the treaty ports and areas contiguous with them, "I think we have, strictly speaking, no *treaty right* to *demand* a site as our own anywhere in Chi-nan-fu" (emphasis in original). He noted, though, that Americans and other foreigners had generally been allowed to purchase property outside the treaty ports, which could allow them to protest a "discontinuance" of this "indulgence."[68] This position represented the general consensus of the foreign community, and U.S. diplomats would maintain it throughout the case.[69]

Consequently, the missionaries in Jinan depended on de facto rather than de jure rights to purchase property in Jinan. Had Qing officials or subjects interfered with foreigners purchasing property in a treaty port as they did in Jinan, then the diplomats in Beijing would have had a firmer bargaining position.[70] In Jinan, though, they were limited to supervising and encouraging the creation of a favorable precedent; they could not demand it. The animating force had to come from the missionaries themselves.

Such a precedent also depended on the cooperation of the Office of Foreign Affairs, the officials in Jinan, and the local elite. Interestingly, none of these parties held firm against the missionaries purchasing any property whatsoever in the city. Some members of the elite may have conceived this as a legal possibility, and more may have desired it as an outcome. Instead, they adopted a case-by-case approach to frustrating the missionaries' advances. Had the officials floated an unequivocal prohibition against foreigners buying property in Jinan, the missionaries certainly would have been upset, but American diplomats may have been stymied. The officials' hesitance to adopt this stance was probably because they, like their American counterparts, recognized an effective precedent for foreigners purchasing property outside the treaty ports, not to mention the existence of a French Catholic mission not far outside the city.[71]

68. Angell to Murray and Hunter, July 30, 1881 in *FRUS 1881*, 290.

69. [No Title], *NCH*, April 12, 1882, 381; "Purchase of Land in the Interior," *NCH*, September 9, 1882, 263.

70. The right to purchase property in treaty ports was not, however, iron-clad. Local people could still object to transactions; the potential violation of cemeteries was a particular concern. See, for example Bryna Goodman, "The Locality as Microcosm of the Nation?: Native Place Networks and Early Urban Nationalism in China," *Modern China* 21, no. 4 (1995): 387–419.

71. Technically, the Catholic mission and its ownership of property was a separate matter. The mission acquired this property through a stipulation in the French Treaty of Tianjin that land formerly owned by Catholic missions but subsequently confiscated after the proscription of Christianity would be returned to the church.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

Rather than an outright prohibition, Chinese actors asserted the prerogative of the local officials and, through them, the elite to restrict the places where the missionaries could buy property and what they could build there. By acting as guardians of local space, the elite were fulfilling a long-recognized function as partners of bureaucrats and as constitutive agents of the Qing state. When members of the elite like Li Qing'ao elaborated their objections to the missionaries' purchase of property, they were not speaking as members of society who stood outside the state. In fact, their concerns were intimately intertwined with those of the state. For example, in 1881 the missionaries had purchased property next to Luoyuan Academy. This was, in fact, a government academy, constructed in 1733 in response to an edict from the Yongzheng Emperor. Nevertheless, it was not officials but students (many of whom were presumably not from Jinan) and local elites who raised objections to the missionaries moving in next door. Moreover, in both 1881 and 1888 the elite based their objections in part on legal concerns with the transaction. In 1881 they claimed that the land purchased through Liu Yuting was a type of public land called *weiliang di* that was not legally alienable. In 1888 it emerged that a member of the Tan family had illegally sold family land in the country to a middle party who then sold it to Dr. Robert Coltman. Remarkably, after negotiations the elite decided to allow the missionaries to purchase this land anyway in the interest of convincing them to drop the case of the property in the southeast suburb, the purchase of which they opposed on the basis that it abutted a temple. In both cases, the gentry acted not simply in their capacity as private subjects but in the interest of the public and the state.

The small size and geographic concentration of the U.S. diplomatic service on the coast likewise meant that advancing the interests of the U.S. state in the interior depended on individuals who did not hold government positions. On one hand, the missionaries played the role of private plaintiffs, writing for support to the U.S. legation in Beijing. On the other hand, since there was no diplomatic representation in Jinan, the missionaries also had to take on the role of negotiators—with the backing of the discussions that took place in Beijing between the U.S. minister and the Office of Foreign Affairs.[72] Like the Chinese elite, they represented both local (not to mention personal) and state interests. Both the missionaries themselves and the broader expatriate community recognized the potential utility of missionaries' legal work. In

72. Andrew Preston observes this as a general pattern. Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith*, 191–92.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

1882, the *North China Herald* commented, "We therefore consider ourselves justified in hoping that the facilities granted to missionaries in the interior of China may lead to an extension of the privilege to members of other professions."[73] The foreign community thus recognized that the missionaries' negotiations had ramifications beyond their own religious work.

The missionaries did, of course, succeed in establishing the right of Americans to purchase property in Jinan, albeit with much difficulty. The elite also succeeded, however, in circumscribing this right, repeatedly intervening to limit where the missionaries could buy land and forcing them to accept restrictions on how they could use their property. The final settlement of the case included a stipulation that "no high-storied building be erected, and no ditch dug out, to destroy the geomantic influence."[74] This restriction protected the aesthetics of urban space and allayed concerns that foreign-style structures could disrupt the good fortune brought by the existing relationship between natural topography and human construction.

This balance between allowance and restriction would continue into the early twentieth century, as Jinan's interactions with foreigners increased dramatically. To help check growing German influence in the province, in 1904 Yuan Shikai, the powerful governor-general of Zhili, and Zhou Fu, the governor of Shandong, proposed establishing a commercial settlement outside Jinan's west suburbs modeled on foreign concessions in the treaty ports. However, the Qing retained full sovereignty over this land, and foreign merchants had to rent parcels of property directly from the settlement's governing board, which had purchased the land from its Chinese owners and set rules for how rented property could be used.[75] The establishment of the commercial settlement did not, however, dislodge the Presbyterian missionaries from the various plots of land they had already acquired in and around the old city.

The third legal question that this case raised concerned the relationship between Chinese actors and the U.S. state. Even more than the previously discussed issues, this question displayed the limits of U.S. state power.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

73. [No Title], *NCH*, April 12, 1882, 381; Reid to Ellinwood, March 17, 1890, p. 2–3 in *PBFM*, Roll 207.

74. Maurice Freedman discusses how vertical construction could disrupt *fengshui*. Denby to Blaine, December 5, 1891 in *FRUS 1892*, 73; Maurice Freedman, "Geomancy," in *The Study of Chinese Society*, ed. G. William Skinner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), 318–21.

75. Buck, *Urban Change*, 50–53; Dang Mingde, ed., *Jinan tongshi* [A Comprehensive History of Jinan], vol. 5 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2008), 129–34.

Throughout the case, the missionaries repeatedly engaged local officials to help them purchase property. The officials did help, but only after the missionaries had arranged a purchase and (almost inevitably) encountered opposition—they did not help the missionaries find property in the first place.

The status of the Chinese actors who helped the missionaries purchase property was even more problematic. The treaties extended the protection owed to foreign missionaries to Chinese Christians and, practically, to anyone who helped them with their work, including purchasing property. Article XXIX of the U.S. Treaty of Tianjin stated, "Any persons, whether citizens of the United States or Chinese converts, who according to these tenets peaceably teach and practice the principles of Christianity shall in no case be interfered with or molested."[76] Missionaries could claim that any mistreatment Chinese converts suffered was because of their religious convictions, which gave the latter a form of de facto immunity from prosecution by virtue of their association with missionaries, an effect that historian Eileen Scully calls a "Midas touch."[77] Catholic missions were particularly notorious for utilizing these protections on behalf of converts, some of whom actively agitated for and anticipated benefitting from their association with foreign missionaries. Protestants, including the Jinan missionaries, tended to be more discriminating, but they too fought for the rights of their associates. Protecting Chinese associates was a regular occurrence because missionaries, including the Presbyterians in Jinan and elsewhere in Shandong, often depended on Chinese agents—Christians or otherwise—to arrange and even execute property transactions.[78] These arrangements caused great consternation to the local officials, who had to confront not only the elite's opposition to the missionaries but also their grievances against the Chinese agents who helped foreigners circumvent this opposition by finding willing sellers or purchasing the land in their own names.

Throughout the Jinan case, though, individuals who helped the missionaries purchase property received limited aid from them. There was little the missionaries could immediately do to interfere with local officials' handling of Chinese persons, especially since the consequences for mistreating a Chinese subject were far less severe than those for harming an American citizen.

76. Inspector General of Customs, ed., *Treaties, Conventions, Etc.*, 522.

77. Scully, *Bargaining with the State*, 5.

78. Irwin Hyatt Jr., *Our Ordered Lives Confess: Three Nineteenth-Century American Missionaries in East Shantung* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 146–57.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

The legation did succeed in winning the release of Liu Yuting, the agent in the original transaction, so that he could attend to the burial of his mother who had died while he was in jail. Subsequently, however, either the officials or the elite forced Liu to leave the province.[79] The landlord in the 1887 case was even less fortunate: he died in 1890 only several days after having been released from custody.[80]

Doubts about the character and intentions of the middlemen and even professed converts also posed an obstacle to vigorous intervention on their behalf. Accusations that the middlemen in the transactions had acted dishonestly often accompanied the elite's complaints. Sometimes these claims were at least questionable, as when they accused Liu Yuting of illegally selling *weiliang di*. Even if doing so may have been technically illegal, officials often tacitly allowed such transactions. Other times, the illegality of the transactions was indisputable, as in 1888 when the missionaries bought the property belonging to the Tan family. Likewise, in 1885 John Murray reported that one of the church elders had attempted to embezzle money that had been entrusted to him in order to purchase property.[81] These doubts limited the protections enjoyed by the missionaries' associates in several ways. First, they gave the officials a justification to arrest and interrogate them apart from their religious association. Second, they forced the missionaries to consider how robust to be in standing up for their associates. Officials' success in exerting jurisdiction over Chinese subjects represented a kind of victory for Qing sovereignty in marking the limits of foreign imperialism. This victory also reflected how missionaries functioned as gatekeepers of the U.S. citizenship regime. Chinese actors could seek foreign diplomatic protection either in response to hardships they faced due to their religious associations or as a proactive strategy for advancing their interests, but they could not enjoy treaty privileges without the advocacy of foreign missionaries.[82]

79. Prince Gong to Angell, September 26, 1881, p. 12, enclosure 1 in No. 16, Holcombe to Blaine, November 17, 1881 in vol. 58 (Roll 59) of *Despatches*; Holcombe to Prince Gong, June 28, 1882, p. 26, enclosure 2 in No. 136, Holcombe to Frelinghuysen, June 29, 1882 in vol. 60 (Roll 61) of *Despatches*.

80. It was much more convenient for the officials for a prisoner to die after release than while still in custody. Denby to Zongli yamen, August 11, 1890 in *FRUS 1890*, 195.

81. Murray to Ellinwood, January 27, 1885, p. 2 in *PBFM*, Roll 205.

82. For further examples of this kind of policing, see, among others Susan Carruthers, "Between Camps: Eastern Bloc 'Escapees' and Cold War Borderlands," in *Legal Borderlands: Law and the Construction of American Borders* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 319–50; Andrew Friedman, *Covert Capital: Landscapes of Denial and the Making of U.S. Empire in the Suburbs of Northern Virginia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

These three aspects of legal contention—over the bodily presence of the missionaries in Jinan, their right to purchase property, and the protections they could offer to those associated with them—allow us to observe how missionaries extended the U.S. state into the interior of China through law, even though they were positioned outside of government institutions. While the treaties themselves did not territorially incorporate Jinan into the U.S. state, they created the conditions under which individuals like the missionaries could do so. The missionaries were not, however, indiscriminate extenders of state power. Their localized interests and prejudices shaped the ways in which state power was both extended and confined.

A HOUSE DIVIDED

Understanding how U.S. state power grew requires accounting for how particular goals shaped the actions of different sets of actors. The missionaries' fundamental goal was religious conversion, but a host of considerations that can be reduced to neither the logic of state power nor missionaries' basic religious motivation shaped their ways of living and working in Jinan. Negotiating these considerations in the context of the property case led to several layers of conflict that are the focus of this section. Missionaries in Jinan experienced conflict with American diplomats, with colleagues in the United States and elsewhere in Shandong, and among themselves. These conflicts brought into the open self-reflexive contemplation and argumentation about Jinan as a place. They demonstrate how place, like the state, is a construct open to contestation, which is contrary to our habit of referring to both as unitary objects and even as agents in their own right.

The crux of the property case itself was the missionaries' belief that the ability to purchase property in Jinan was essential to their work. In fact, the missionaries could have adopted strategies to conduct missionary work without purchasing property. Missionaries frequently distributed religious literature and practiced itinerant preaching in the countryside and in cities that did not yet have permanent stations. This approach did not require property ownership, but it failed to establish the missionaries as a permanent physical presence in the community. Not having a permanent chapel limited their visibility, which was an obvious concern for the missionaries, evidenced by both McIlvaine's original choice of property and his colleagues' subsequent reticence to accept an exchange for property in a less-trafficked—but not necessarily less prestigious—part of the city. Moreover, the lack of property

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

circumscribed the scope of activities in which the missionaries could engage. Access to land allowed them to establish schools and medical institutions, including both the dispensary attached to the chapel opened in 1884 and the hospital completed in 1892. These institutions served the missionaries' evangelistic ends but also reflected their "formalist" inclination to pursue broad social transformation alongside religious conversion.[83] Even more practically, owning property was a wise financial strategy, especially given the high cost of rent in the city.[84]

The foreign community supported missionaries acquiring property, so long as they met expectations for what a mission station should look like, which was not always the case. The station in Weixian, where buying land proved easier than in Jinan, provoked both private and public criticism. Writing to the mission board in 1883, Hunter Corbett—a powerful figure in the Shandong mission—bemoaned the decision-making of newly arrived missionaries at Weixian who, rejecting the wisdom of the "old fogies," had quickly constructed large foreign houses.[85] Echoing this opinion several years later, the *North China Herald* reported, "The American missionaries at Weihsien are becoming secularised by too much material prosperity . . . and are presenting a 'bold front' to the man of two thousand years ago [i.e. Jesus Christ]."[86] Buying property for a chapel and hospital, however, fell within the bounds of what the ex-patriot community expected of missionaries, so long as they were not too extravagant in their demands.

For much of the case, then, the Jinan station enjoyed the sympathy of compatriots, diplomats, and missionaries alike. This front broke, however, under the assertive stance taken by Gilbert Reid in the wake of the 1887 incident in which he was beaten. The first source of tension was Reid's insistence that the Sino-American treaties did, in fact, explicitly permit the missionaries to purchase property outside the treaty ports. As discussed above, U.S. diplomats maintained throughout the case that while the missionaries could claim precedent as support for purchasing property, the treaties themselves did not guarantee them this right. Before Reid arrived in Jinan in 1886, the other missionaries there had accepted the legation's opinion on this

83. Jay Riley Case, *An Unpredictable Gospel: American Evangelicals and World Christianity, 1812–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 12–14.

84. Chalfant to Ellinwood, July 28, 1887, p. 5 in *PBFM*, Roll 206.

85. Corbett to Ellinwood, June 21, 1883, p. 1–2 in *PBFM*, Roll 204.

86. "Western Shantung," *NCH*, August 3, 1889, 143.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

matter.[87] Reid's more expansive interpretation of the treaties implied that the Jinan officials' refusal to confirm property transactions the missionaries negotiated constituted a dereliction of their duties. Had Reid convinced both U.S. and Qing officials of his position, then he might have broadened the rights enjoyed by foreigners in the interior and, more directly, allowed the Jinan station to acquire any property in the city for which it could successfully negotiate a price.

Reid was convinced that Minister Denby was being negligent in his duty to protect the missionaries' rights. He wrote an article in Chinese for *Wanguo gongbao* and English for *The Chinese Recorder* laying out his position on the rights of missionaries to purchase property in the interior. His interpretation of the treaties hinged on two points. First was a dubious clause in the 1860 French treaty, which was surreptitiously inserted into the Chinese version, that explicitly allowed missionaries to reside, purchase property, and build churches in the interior as they pleased. However, since the French version of the treaty was the binding one, this clause was generally recognized as legally void.[88] Reid also based his position on the 1858 British treaty that gave foreigners the right to buy property in the treaty ports and "other places." On face, this language seemed to justify Reid's position, but foreign diplomats generally interpreted "other places" to mean areas within or near treaty port cities but outside the ports themselves. Reid's position, then, hinged on how Qing officials had interpreted the treaties—that is, he needed them to have interpreted them permissively. Of course, since his objection was that officials in Jinan had not been so permissive, his argument was essentially self-invalidating.[89]

Reid also bristled at Denby's hesitance to press his personal claim for redress for the 1887 incident. Although Denby rejected Chinese officials' attempts to downplay Reid's injuries, he suggested Reid may have brought the incident on himself by going at night (how late was disputed) to take possession of a property that the officials had told him he had no right to occupy since they had refused to stamp the deeds. Denby concluded that Reid had no

87. Murray to Ellinwood, January 25, 1883, p. 7–8 in *PBFM*, Roll 204.

88. Louis Napier Richards, "The Rights of Foreigners to Reside and Hold Land in China," *Harvard Law Review* 15, no. 3 (1901): 192–93.

89. Li Jiabai, "Jiaotang zuzhi fangdi anli," *Wanguo gongbao* 15 (1890): 11063–93; Gilbert Reid, "Chinese Law on the Ownership of Church Property in the Interior of China," *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* 20, no. 9, 10 (1889): 420–26, 454–60; West, "The Tsinan Property Disputes," 130.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

right to claim compensation from the Qing government, stating, "I must frankly say that the conduct of Mr. Reid now and heretofore, does not demand approbation."[90] As the case dragged on, Denby eventually—under pressure from the missionaries—submitted the claim to the Office of Foreign Affairs, but he hesitated to demand monetary compensation, instead preferring an apology from the local officials and punishment for the ringleaders. The Office of Foreign Affairs continued to resist the claim, though, and it was allowed to lapse when the whole case was settled.

In the meantime, Reid took his grievances directly to the U.S. State Department, further fracturing his relationship with Denby. In a letter to Washington, he claimed that the Qing government had agreed to allow German missionaries to purchase property in the interior. Observing that "The Chinese Government is inclined to give toleration to Christianity and to missionaries," he hoped that the U.S. government would not botch this opportunity and thereby "injure the efforts of missionaries merely because they are Americans."[91] Denby conveyed his consternation with Reid's amateur interpretation of the treaties and maverick correspondence with Qing and German officials to the State Department, writing in 1888, "It is just such litigious and annoying gentlemen as he who embarrass diplomatic work."[92] Denby's tone softened as he reported the final settlement of the case back to the State Department, but he could not resist referring back to the headaches the missionaries had caused: "The contest between the missionaries and the officials has been long and severe. The missionaries have demonstrated pluck and endurance and will receive my congratulations. . . . Both on your account and on account of this legation I fervently hope that the Chinanfu missionaries will not get into any more trouble."[93] This hope stemmed from Denby's conviction that further missionary troubles might interfere with U.S. interests, but Reid saw himself as an even more robust advocate of U.S. interests than Denby.

Beyond these concerns about the interests of the U.S. state as a whole, local circumstances in Jinan and Reid's personal disposition both prolonged the dispute and generated conflict within the missionary community. Taught the Confucian classics as a child by his father in preparation for missionary service in China, Reid tried to conduct himself as a Confucian scholar and

90. No. 720, Denby to Bayard, October 3, 1888, p. 8 in vol. 83 (Roll 84) of *Despatches*.
91. Reid to Bayard, May 24, 1888 in *FRUS 1888*, 325.
92. No. 693, Denby to Bayard, September 2, 1888, p. 2 in vol. 83 (Roll 84) of *Despatches*.
93. Denby to Blaine, December 5, 1891 in *FRUS 1892*, 73.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

courted the favor of local officials in the course of his travels.[94] Naturally, he took charge of prosecuting the property case, which entailed communicating with both Qing officials and U.S. diplomats. At least some of his colleagues appreciated this service. However, Reid's habit of calling on officials when conducting itinerant preaching caused tension. In response to his paying a visit to the magistrate in Weixian without informing the Presbyterian missionaries living there, the Shandong mission voted to censure Reid. Receiving word of his colleagues' rebuke—passed by resolution at a meeting he could not attend—Reid tendered his resignation.[95] Although the board and his colleagues convinced him to stay for a time, Reid eventually left the Presbyterian mission in 1894 to pursue his vision of a mission specifically to China's upper classes, which the Presbyterian Board was unwilling to sanction under its auspices.

Reid was not the only missionary who attached importance to Jinan being a center of official life. He and his colleagues believed Jinan possessed great symbolic value as the capital of Shandong Province, which itself was the home of China's great sages, Confucius and Mencius. Describing the pride of Shandong's people in Jinan and its proximity to both Mt. Tai (one of China's five sacred peaks) and the ancestral home of Confucius, Paul Bergen called the city "a gem in the bosom of the Province."[96] Despite the difficulty of actually converting officials, the prospect for such a high-profile success was tantalizing. Writing to the board in the summer of 1887, W.P. Chalfant explained the challenge but also temptation of evangelizing among Jinan's many officials:

> The peculiar importance of the city as a missionary center lies in the fact that it is the capital of Shantung Province. . . . Here lives the Governor of the Province and a legion of minor officials. . . . It is an advantage because any advance which is made thru our work here will be felt more or less directly throughout the Province. It is a disadvantage because these officials do not present promising materials for converts being as a rule avaricious and deceitful or at best utterly engrossed in gaining their own selfish ends.[97]

94. Tsou Mingteh, "Christian Missionary as Confucian Intellectual: Gilbert Reid (1857–1927) and the Reform Movement in the Late Qing," in *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, ed. Daniel Bays (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 73–74; Reid, *Glances at China*, 123–51.

95. Bergen to Ellinwood, November 22, 1887, p. 1–2 in *PBFM*, Roll 206.

96. Paul Bergen, "The Followers of Confucius and Buddha discussing . . .," June 8, 1885, p. 1 in *PBFM*, Roll 205.

97. Chalfant to Ellinwood, July 28, 1887, p. 4–5 in *PBFM*, Roll 206.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

Although proselytizing in Jinan was difficult, the potential reward was great.

However, not all of the Presbyterian missionaries in Shandong believed the rewards were worth the trouble. The question of how to handle the aftermath of the 1887 incident occasioned an irksome dispute that touched on the broader issue of Jinan's place in the mission. Dr. Coltman, who took charge of the property matters in Reid's absence, concurred with the opinion of the Shandong mission and the Presbyterian Board that the Jinan missionaries should shift their focus to purchasing property in the country. Coltman advocated building residences and a hospital outside the city in order to take advantage of the "pure air" and to escape the disease-infested city, where the small group of missionaries had in the space of a year suffered cases of smallpox, diphtheria, typhus, malaria, dysentery, boils, and ulcers. The Board agreed with him.[98] Even Chalfant—who supported continuing the work in the city—repeatedly noted that having residences in the city center restricted space for physical exercise. "It is trying, especially upon the ladies, to live, often the year around, in these narrow courts," he wrote to the Board.[99] When he took charge of the station's property affairs from Reid, Coltman successfully negotiated for the mission to occupy the country land previously owned by the Tan family, on which they intended to build a hospital. Based on his communications with Coltman and Reid, Denby believed that this agreement brought the case to a close.[100]

Upon inspection, the other missionaries decided that the country property was inadequate because of its poor drainage and distance from the city. Gravely disappointed, Coltman resigned from the Jinan station, and the Board transferred him to Dengzhou.[101] Even then, the Shandong mission, with the support of the Presbyterian Board, continued to press the Jinan missionaries to abandon the city, even going so far as to take up a resolution to this effect at a mission meeting in 1890. Reid and the other Jinan missionaries persisted, however, convincing their colleagues that they had been poorly apprised of the situation. Reid specifically disputed the claim that the Jinan station had suffered more than its fair share of health problems and the

98. Coltman to Ellinwood, January 11, [1890], p. 3–4 in *PBFM*, Roll 207; Reid to Ellinwood, November 14, 1890, p. 1–2 in *PBFM*, Roll 207.

99. Chalfant to Ellinwood, July 28, 1887, p. 5 in *PBFM*, Roll 206; Chalfant to Ellinwood, January 15, 1887, p. 4 in *PBFM*, Roll 206; Bergen to Ellinwood, January 1, 1889, p. 1 in *PBFM*, Roll 207.

100. Denby to Members of the American Presbyterian Mission at Chi-nan-fu, November 19, 1889, in *FRUS 1890*, 151.

101. Coltman to Ellinwood, January 11, [1890], p. 4 in *PBFM*, Roll 207.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

Board's conclusion that the need to move outside the city was therefore "too plain to be disregarded."[102] Reid continued to press the importance of maintaining a base in the "greatest center of this Province," saying, "Hard and trying as it is, the work of the city is all-important, and must be done by some. If some cannot stand it, I do not deem it a sin to be condemned, but I would still long to see others able and ready to work this call."[103] Bergen echoed Reid's argument, citing the inconvenience of splitting work between the city and country and saying that officials all over the province were watching to see if they would yield to local pressure and give up the city work.[104] Reassuring the board that the missionaries were by no means fond of the lawsuits, Bergen wrote, "If these Chinan property difficulties have been a source of uneasiness to the Board and our secretaries, they have been to us on the field a burden of simply crushing weight. We have on the one hand felt heavily the opposition of the gentry and officials, and on the other the criticism of our action by those who mean well, but who have not appreciated the circumstances."[105] Despite the opposition of their colleagues, the Jinan missionaries persisted in asserting the importance of their urban station.

The missionaries who favored a city-centered mission prevailed in large part because they had unusual financial autonomy. Normally, the home board had the power to grant or deny requests for money to purchase new property, and its funds were limited.[106] This is why the Jinan missionaries had to contend with both the board and their colleagues in Shandong about the issue of residing in the city. The main concern in the 1887–1891 portion of the case, though, was land for the hospital, and the funds for this project came not from the board but rather the residual money from the McIlvaine donation that had been refunded as part of the 1884 settlement and remained at the disposal of the station. Once the Jinan station was able to procure land for the hospital, its missionaries were in a stronger position to pursue their vision of an urban-based mission in Jinan, in keeping with McIlvaine's dedication to the city.

In their letters to the board about the status of the property case, the missionaries revealed concerns for how purchasing land and building in certain places would help or hinder their mission's impact on and perception

102. Reid to Ellinwood, November 14, 1890, p. 1–3 in *PBFM*, Roll 207.

103. Reid to Ellinwood, March 3, 1890, p. 1–3 in *PBFM*, Roll 207.

104. Bergen to Ellinwood, January 1, 1891, p. 3 in *PBFM*, Roll 207.

105. Ibid, 4.

106. See, for example, Reid to Ellinwood, November 14, 1890, p. 4 in *PBFM*, Roll 207.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

among Chinese individuals. The missionaries did not, however, indicate much interest in the preferences of Chinese church members. In general terms, this silence runs against the grain of scholarship that has shown how local people played a crucial role in the missionary enterprise, in China and elsewhere.[107] However, it does reflect the persistent differential power relationship between foreigners and Chinese Christians in the church in China, which continued to be the source of much debate into the twentieth century. In addition to racist assumptions about "Western" superiority, the source of financial support for foreign missionary enterprises and local church operations was a central issue in these discussions. The "Nevius Method," developed by the Presbyterian missionary John Nevius, who spent much of his career in Shandong, hinged on local Chinese ministers and communities being financially self-supporting from the beginning so that they could grow without overrelying on the financial assistance and direction of foreign organizations. Despite some significant successes, especially in Korea, to which this method was exported from Shandong, it did not win universal acceptance, even among Nevius's Presbyterian colleagues.[108]

Even within the framework of this method, though, it was unlikely that Chinese Christians would assume a leading role in determining the shape of the mission in Jinan, especially in its early years. As the missionaries' justification for remaining in the city indicated, Jinan functioned as an urban station that was permanently staffed by foreign missionaries, except during the hot summer months, when many of the foreigners would retire to the coast. In this way, the Jinan station with its collection of residences, chapel, school, and hospital was very different from the rural "sub-stations" through which the foreign missionaries would periodically pass but whose responsibilities fell mostly to Chinese preachers. Moreover, far from relying on the financial contributions of its Chinese congregants, the Jinan station benefited from the McIlvaine fund, which the missionaries managed. Thus, the fund not only afforded the American Jinan missionaries autonomy vis-a-vis the home board to pursue a locally directed strategy but also sharpened racial and national divisions that shaped place-making in the context of missionary work. Chinese church members certainly participated in place-making

107. Bays, *A New History*, 77–84; Dunch, *Fuzhou Protestants*; Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse*; Case, *An Unpredictable Gospel*; Edward Andrews, *Native Apostles: Black and Indian Missionaries in the British and Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

108. Bays, *A New History*, 71–73; Brown, *Earthen Vessels*, 69–71, 84–85.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

through missionary work in Jinan, but their role is fully evident only when looking beyond the property case itself.

These disagreements show that establishing a local missionary enterprise in Jinan was a conflictual process that required negotiation between a great variety of actors. For the missionaries, no less than for Jinan's gentry who actively patronized temples, academies, and scenic spots, place was both a social and a physical construction, and reshaping Jinan required the construction of houses, chapels, schools, and hospitals. The Jinan missionaries' specific priorities brought them into conflict with not only the local elite, but also their Christian colleagues. They extended U.S. state power into Jinan through this process of place-making, but their insistence on local prerogatives created tensions with Qing and U.S. officials alike, while apparently failing in important ways to engage their fellow Chinese Christians in shaping this community.

The Jinan missionaries were equally engaged in state-extension and place-making. These behaviors proceeded alongside each other and were mutually constitutive rather than mutually exclusive. However, the relationship between place-making and empire was not necessarily harmonious. Have we, then, come full circle to an antagonistic model of the relationship between state and society?

If we understand state, society, empire, and place as static constructs, then we have already answered the question in the affirmative. However, this article treats these categories of analysis as processes rather than structures. This approach is better suited to identifying how even actors outside the government generate state power, thereby lending the state both "durability" and "dynamism."[109] Likewise, thinking about place as a process rather than a fixed entity allows us to see how "outsiders" like the missionaries can quickly develop strong local attachments and motivations. As the Jinan missionary case shows, both state and place are best studied less as preexisting and autonomous objects than as mutual consequences of parallel processes.

Empire is a useful way to describe the relationship between these processes. The characteristic feature of empire is a tendency towards pluralistic and uneven relationships between localities and a hegemonic center.[110] One way

109. "Introduction" in Sparrow, Novak, and Sawyer, *Boundaries of the State*, 6.

110. See, for example: Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 8; Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

to understand empire is as a force that maintains or expands this web of relationships. This approach, however, excludes the production of localities from the equation. Although place-making generated conflict in the Jinan case, it was also a necessary condition for state-extension. Instead of seeing place-making as merely an incidental and disruptive side-effect of empire, let alone a means of resisting it, we should understand it as a constitutive feature. Of course, place-making is not inherently imperial since not all place-making (re)produces an imperial political order. Interrogating the relationship between place-making and empire is a framework that can be used for exploring the trans-local political ramifications of particular sets of local practices.

Another characteristically imperial feature of the case was the cross-enlisting of American and Chinese actors into each other's imperial regimes. The security of Americans in Jinan and their capacity to purchase property depended on the cooperation of the local officials and, by extension, the elite. Just as the treaties provided the conditions for missionaries to extend the U.S. imperial state into Jinan, they also generated responsibilities for Qing officials to uphold the treaty provisions and made them objects of the U.S. government's scrutiny. On the other side, while the missionaries caused considerable consternation for the Qing, they also represented opportunities to exert control over converts to Christianity—subjects who otherwise seemed to be slipping out from under Qing sovereignty. In his 1882 memorial referencing the case, Zhang Baixi noted that because of the treaties it was unfeasible to simply remove the missionaries from Jinan. Instead, he suggested enlisting the missionaries' help to police converts who might try to use their connections to foreigners for personal gain. Zhang recommended having the missionaries report the names of converts to local officials to avoid the problem of people seeking special treatment by pretending to be Christians. The court agreed with this approach, expressing concern only that this measure would be insufficient to solve the problem.[111] The Qing government's capacity to coerce or cajole the missionaries into performing these functions was far more limited than the power it exercised vis-à-vis its own elite. As we have seen, though, the missionaries did serve as gatekeepers of the benefits the American state afforded to Qing subjects. By policing the borders of U.S. empire, they were also, in a sense, guarding the frontiers of the Qing state.

111. "Shandong xuezheng Zhang Baixi zouchen," 361–62.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023

The flexible, overlapping, and even promiscuous operation of sovereignty that we observe in the Jinan missionary case is indicative of empire.[112] Rather than a static, monolithic structure exerting singular sovereignty and attracting simple allegiances, we see empire as the consequence of plural and complex interactions among local agents.[113] To be sure, building empire was hardly the only or even primary aim of these agents. However, in Jinan, missionary place-making was inseparable from extending U.S. empire to the new frontier of inland China.

DANIEL KNORR is a temporary lecturer in the Faculty of History at the University of Cambridge.

NOTE

The author would like to thank the reviewers and editors at the *Pacific Historical Review* for their tremendous help in preparing this article for publication, as well as Ann Walthall, Miri Kim, Kwangmin Kim, Evelyn Atkinson, Xia Shi and others who offered feedback on previous versions of this article.

112. Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 17.
113. Kramer, "Power and Connection," 1378–83.

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/phr/article-pdf/90/3/279/469922/phr.2021.90.3.279.pdf by University of Cambridge user on 16 January 2023