

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY AND PLACE NAMES

This is a book about, among other things, American missionaries who traveled around the world and positioned themselves as experts, even though they quite often did not understand what they were seeing. They made their homes abroad, but their vision was shaped by their place of origin: the nineteenth-century United States. Their assumptions about race and gender were powerful lenses that could distort the accuracy of missionary reporting, even as they claimed to be uniquely able to see the world as it really was. The power of expertise rests in the perception, not always the reality, of legitimacy and factuality on the part of the purported experts. When I discuss missionary intelligence and missionary expertise throughout the book, it is with the full understanding that missionary intelligence included many errors. How those errors came to be regarded as true—and the effects of those mistakes—is one of the subjects of my inquiry.

Since the nineteenth-century period in which the events in this book took place, many place names have changed—due to political developments as well as shifts in the Anglicization of non-English place names. Throughout the text, I use the place names as they appeared in the contemporary US sources, with the modern name in parentheses at the first appearance.

MISSIONARY DIPLOMACY

