The Beggar Chiefs of St. Zaia Nestorian 'Great Deceivers' in South Africa and the Benevolent Empire, c. 1860s-1940s

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**Draft **

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O almighty Lord God, examiner of the heart and kidneys, before you my God I worship, and from you I ask for mercy upon this land of Jīlū and its inhabitants, and also upon every man that recounts or every one that writes and hangs upon himself your holy name, almighty Lord God, and my own name, your servant Zaia, and pleads and kneels before you: cause to pass from them, and may there not be in their houses, neither hail nor famine, neither plague nor anger, nor the Angel of Destruction, and neither illness nor disease. Amen.

The Prayer of St. Zaia, Jīlū district.

Germany is his Diocese!

Rev. Perkins, Urmia, 1863

Why did Allah create fools if not for the profit of wise men?

Rev. Wigram, Eastern Kurdistan,1922

Yonkers, New York, 1936-38

In front of a 100-strong congregation of Assyrian emigrés at the St. Andrew's Memorial Episcopal Church, the Rev. Emmanuel Awdisho found himself humiliated.¹ As the 44-year old priest began to pronounce a Lent benediction, he was interrupted by the entrance of three detectives and the 68-year old Rev. Dr. Marcus George Daniel, of the Assyrian National Church of Philadelphia. The intruders stopped proceedings and took the blessed bread from Awdisho's hands. Daniel accused Awdisho of stealing \$1125 from him and of being of religious charlatan who profited from credulous marks. Awdisho was frog-marched to the police station. Relieved of his vestments, he was called "vile names", punched, had his hair and clothes torn, and was forced to

This espidode constructed from material relating to Emmanuel Awdisho in *The Herald Statesmen* (Yonkers, NY), 2 July 1936, p. 2; 30 July 1936, p. 3; 7 April 1937, p. 14; 10 May 1937, p. 12; 23 November 1937, p. 12; 19 May 1938, p. 1; 26 May, 1938, p. 13; 27 May 1938, p. 1; 30 May 1938, p. 1; 20 July 1938, p. 13; 28 July 1938, p. 2; 30 July 1938, p. 11; 11 March 1939, p.6.

sign a confession amid threats that the party would kill him otherwise. Awdisho was brought before court and charged with violating immigration law. But the case was dropped because the Rev. Daniel, who had promised incriminating evidence of Awdisho's guilt from the French Consul in Manhattan, had in fact left New York for home, in a bohemian neighbourhood of Philadelphia.

Rev. Awdisho countered with a charge of wrongful arrest. He might have regretted it when the second case came before court in mid-1938: the jury unanimously found Awdisho had *not* been wrongfully arrested, had shown no signs of a beating, and was unable to provide proof of his priestly ordination. Six weeks later, Awdisho was arrested at his Yonkers home and taken to Ellis Island. During a closed hearing, American officials discovered Awdisho had entered the US illegally in 1933. Deportation proceedings were inaugurated but then suspended while a broader investigation was made into a global, ancient and wildly profitable system of collecting, whose epicentre lay in a rugged pastoralist district of the Taurus mountains of Turkish Kurdistan. Rev. Awdisho, it seems, was saved by the outbreak of World War and then Rev. Daniel's death, from causes unknown, sometime in late 1940 or early 1941.

The Awdisho affair proved to be one of Rev. Daniel's last appearences on the public stage in a fifty-year career that crossed twenty-one countries on six continents. During that time Rev. Daniel was a translator, a medical student, a school master, a reformed captain of brigands, an archdeacon of the St Thomas Church of the Ottoman Empire, the son of a Kurdish duke, a secret intelligence agent, a labour-recruiter, a consecrator of bigamist marriages, a successful beggar, an excommunicated priest, a felon, a missionary, an international tourist lecturer, a revealer of corruptions and father of four. It was, by any stretch, one of the more unusual lives of the 'Benvolent Empire', the period roughly stretching the years of Daniel's life when formal and informal colonies were stiched together by networks of religious philanthropists and civic reformers. It was also a fertile period for creative, propesterous lives. Daniel took full advantage as he carved a career in the crevices of multiple empires, an emerging global economy, evengelical Christianity, genocide and nationalism. This paper, inspired by examples elsewhere and exploiting the possibilities of digital research, deploys transnational biography to illuminate some unpredictable geographical and temporal connections, and what globalisation might looked like from below.²

Clare Anderson, Subaltern Lives. Biographies of Colonialism in the Indian Ocean World, 1790-1920 (Cambridge, 2012); Linda Colley, The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh, a Woman in World History (London, 2007); Kirsten MacKenzie, A Swindler's Progress. Nobles and Convicts in the Age of Liberty (Sydney, 2010); Miles Ogborn, Global Lives. Britain and the World, 1500-1800 (Cambridge, 2008); Charles van Onselen, The Fox and the Flies. The World of Joseph Silver, racketeer and psychopath (London 2007); Natalie Zemon Davies, Trickster Travels. A

This short biography of Rev. M.G Daniel is also inter-weaved with a social history of a fraternity of collectors known variously as *Great Decievers*, *Jīlū Men* or *Hachaqoge* ('Thieves of the Cross'). It shows how the fraternity, from Mar Zaia, a tiny landlocked village in south-east Turkey, travelled along global networks established by Christian paternalists between about 1850 and 1940. The fraternity, this paper argues, did so through a sometimes startling but ultimately simple re-appropriation of the 'social gospel', literacy, and the "trust signals" of empire-builders' associations and networks.³ In this, the fraternity resurrected a vernacular, and even anachronistic, culture of itinerancy, closely linked to 'collecting' (a form of religious begging or mendicancy) with which the village had been associated for centuries.

The historiography on begging shows that in most if not all pre-modern contexts, religious mendicancy enjoyed special status and legitimacy, for a wide variety of reasons: giving to mendicants displayed a donor's piety, status, hospitality, honour or atonement, and forged community solidarity. Mendicants were seen as noble and holy, or useful, or even entertaining. Giving was informal, haphazard and very common. As a consequence, mendicancy became well-organised through guilds, fraternities and castes, able to survive and even flourish on patronage networks. The emergence of governmentality in the early modern world, and then the subsequent development of market capitalism, utilitarian liberalism and 'national efficiency' pushed mendicany to the margins of society. A vast literature exists on institutionalised efforts toward rationalised relief, eradication and policing of beggary in general, and the regulation and discipline of mendicancy in particular. As much of this literature makes clear, the break was nowhere so sharp. Premodern societies had long tried to seperate the authentic from the false. What is less clear in the existing scholarship is whether mendicancy was able to persist in some way. Social and cultural histories of modern mendicants, their forms of association, motivations and strategies are still all too rare. But we will begin in late antiquity, with the history of an uncommon village.

Sixteenth Century Muslim Between Worlds (London, 2007).

For 'trust signals' – letters, photographs, awards, gifts and, sometimes, skin colour – see David Sunderland, *Social Capital, Trust and the Indusrial Revolution 1780-1880* (London, 2007). For associations and the benefits they brought to Empire-builders, see Andrew Thompson and Gary Magee, *Empire and Globalisation. Networks of Goods, People and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-194*.

⁴ For different contexts, see for example John Illife, *The African Poor. A History* (Cambridge 1987); Hanchao Lu, *Street Criers. A Cultural History of Chinese Beggars* (Stanford 2005); Adam Sabra, *Poverty and Charity in Medieval Islam: Mamluk Egypt 1250-1517* (Cambridge, 2000); David Gordon White, *Sinister Yogis* (Chicago, 2009); Thomas M. Safely, ed., *The Secular and the Religious in Early Modern Poor Relief* (Leiden, 2003).

Besides classic accounts by Weber and Foucault, see also Stenton and Cowan, *Doctrines of Development;* Radhika Singha, "Settle, Mobilize, Verify: Identification Practices in Colonial India" in *Studies in History* 16 (2000), pp. 151-198; K. Breckenridge and S. Szreter, eds. Recognition and Registration: Documenting the Person in World History (Oxford, 2012).

The Village of Mar Zaia, 427 CE – 1889 CE.

Marcus Gilliyana Daniel was born in 1869 in Mar Zaia, a terraced village that clung to the slopes mid-way up the 14,000 ft Mt. Jīlū, near the Ottoman-Persian border (see appended map). That year, the village was populated by about seventy families of the Jəlwé, an East Syriac Christian clan who spoke a dialect of neo-Aramaic. The houses clustered around the ancient but still well-serviced 'ūmrā (church or monstery) of Mar Zaia, which was staffed by two priests. The 'ūmrā, and the comparatively large size of the village, made Mar Zaia a centre of Jəlwé life, and it was well-known among the other East Syriac clans who lived in adjoining districts. Besides their clan name, these highland villagers identified themselves as *Sooriyá* (Syrian), nāšē d tūrā (mountaineers) or *Meshihayé Nestoraya* (followers of Messiah Nestorius); English speakers of the 1860s labelled them Nestorians; Arabic and Turkish speakers called them *Kildani* or *Nasturi*.

The Jīlū district, and the village itself, had a long history of which its inhabitants would have been broadly aware, due in part to manuscripts in the 'ūmrā and popular narrative traditions. In late antiquity – between the 3rd and 5th centuries of the Christian Era – the district was part of a small but wealthy frontier kingdom straddling the Royal Road that connected the Roman east and the great Universities of Edesssa and Nisibis, with Ctesiphon and Estakhr in Sassanid Persia. Christian merchant-saints, charismatic preachers and wandering monks travelling east from Syria, Palestine and Egypt converted pastoral communities of obscure Hellenic and Jewish origins living near the road (these travellers in turn looked to the even earlier, apochryphal, eastward journeys of St. Thomas and the 'Seventy Two' apostles of Luke). It was one such Palestinian-born wandering holy man, Zaia, who made an eventful journey from Jerusalem, via Baghdad and Mosul, to found a settlement high up on Mt. Jīlū. Probably chosen for its natural water wells, Zaya's followers built him a church, where he was buried upon his death in perhaps 427 CE.⁸ In time (certainly by the 9th century CE), Zaia became the patron *Mar*, or Saint, of Jīlū and its travellers. The settlement became know as the *Mata d' 'ūmrā d' Mar Zaia*, or the village of the church of St. Zaia.

⁶ Tkhuma, Baz, Tiari, Tal and Diz.

⁷ See George Percy Badger, *The Nestorians and their Rituals with the Narrative of a Mission to Mesopotamia and Coordistan in 1842 to 1844*. Part 1. (London: J. Masters, 1852), pp. 177-180; Bruce Masters, *Chrisitans and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (Cambridge, 2004).

Mar Zaya's *Vita* has it that he was born to a Christian merchant family. Zaya learned to read the scriptures at age 3, and spent much of his adolescence in the Palestinian desert nourished by a mountain-goat. Zaya's first convert was Tawor, a prince who had chanced upon Zaya while out hunting. Tawor become his disciple. On the journey to Jīlū, Zaya had cause to slay 5,000 warriors with the help of an angel, resurrect 200 from the dead, cleave a dragon in two, heal 500 cripples and halt several plagues. He died near his church, after a one-day illness, at the grand age of 121. It is likely his *Vita* is exaggerated in parts. See Paul Bedjan, *Acta Martyr, et Sanctor* (1898) and Jean Maurice Fiey, *Saints Syriaques* (New Jersey, 2004).

While much of the socio-historical detail of Mar Zaia's journey is now lost in the fog of hagiography of subsequent centuries, by the time of his death, Jīlū district was a confirmed part of the suffragan diocese of Beth Bgash, in the embryonic Church of the East's ecclesiastical province of Adiabene. Governed from the Patriarchal Throne at the twin-cities of Seleucia-Ctesiphon (on the banks of the Tigris a short distant from Baghdad), the Church of the East grew strong from the 6th century onward, after irresolvable doctrinal disputes and weakening ties with western Christians. In western languages, the Christians living east of Jerusalem became known, pejoratively, as 'Nestorians', after Nestorius, the 'heretical' Bishop of Alexandria who had caused a founding dispute.

Under the Abassid Caliphate (c. 750 CE -1258 CE), the Church of the East was able to carve out a productive niche in northern Iraq. During this period, Jīlū and immediate surrounds supported numerous convents, hermitages and monasteries, the most famous of which was that of Beth 'Abhe, which flourished in the 8th century CE.¹⁰ From here many – perhaps hundreds - of bishops, missionaries and monks were trained for an expanding network of churches across Eurasia that reached its greatest extent at the end of the first millennium (see map). This early 'missionary field', involving some epic overland and ocean journeys, was motivated by clerical dependence on, and desire for, the patronage and related endowments of wealthy hosts, as well as market opportunities (in the form of land, precious objects and flocks) to fund monasteries and charitable projects.

Before setting off, some of the missionaries probably stopped at the 'ūmrā of Mar Zaia, the traveller saint. They certainly returned again and again to it with votive offerings from distant lands. These included Chinese vases and jars, silks, sea corals, bells, porcelain birds and animals, bronze figurines, and painted ostrich eggs from the outer reaches of the Silk Road and beyond. The collection assumed a sacred aura and, astonishingly, were still to be seen in the 'ūmrā 1,200 years later. European travellers who visited the church in the 19th century stood amazed before the items "black with the dust of ages..relics of the most singular and motely description..the strangest collection of objects that might well be imagined".11

For this history, wee are indebted to J.M Fiey. See his "Proto-histoire chrétienne du Hakkarī Turk" in L'Orient Syrien 4, 36 (1964), pp. 443-72 and Assyrie chrétienne: Contribution à l'étude de l'histoire et de la géographie ecclésiastiques et monastiques du nord de l'Iraq. 3 vols (Beirut: 1965). See also Joel Walker, The Legend of Mar Qardagh. Narrative and Christian Heroism in Late Antique Iraq (Berkely, 2006); Daniel Caner, Wandering, begging monks: spiritual authority and the promotion of monasticism in late antiquity (Berkeley, 2002). There are many general histories of the Church of the East. The most recent is David Wilmshurst, The Martyred Church. A History of the Church of the East (Los Angeles, 2012).

Cynthia Villagomez. "The Fields, Flocks, and Finances of Monks: Economic Life at Nestorian Monasteries, 500-800." (Ph.D dissertation, UCLA, 1998).

The two best decriptions, seperated by several decades, are Henry A. Layard, *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh*

The Church of the East flourished under the patronage of the Mongul Court until the 13th century. But the combined effects of Islamic consolidation across south and central Mesopotamia, and then of bubonic plague, meant it shrank rapidly thereafter. Hope of any revival was snuffed out by the Timurid conquest of Central Asia and related destablization. Under these 15th century pressures, the Church of the East split into Chaldean, Jacobite and 'traditionalist' factions. Many mesopotamian Christians converted to Islam or escaped from the towns of the plains to the mountains of the north, only to find themselves directly in the path of colliding armies. In 1448, Jīlū took heavy blows from an advancing confederation of Shi'ite Turkic clans (the so-called Qara *Qolunyu*, or Black Sheep Turkomen). The already ancient 'umrā of Mar Zaya, at least, avoided destruction because one of its most valued posesions was a firnam (decree or order) of protection believed to have been written by Prophet Muhammed himself and brought to Jīlū by a missionary centuries earlier. 12 Jəlwé fled as refugees to the plains around the ancient walled city of Urmia. about 100km east of Mar Zaya, and there remained for three or four generations. Thereafter, they returned to the mountains of Jīlū to rebuild around the still-standing 'ūmrā. By 1550, Jīlū was again a functioning diocese, and the 'umrā at Mar Zaia a working monastery. By the early 1600s, Jīlū was brought under the nominal authority of the Ottoman Sultanate. A bishop sat at the old village, and was able to furnish 4,000 men for the jannissary in 1610.

During the 17th century, Mar Zaya bishops responded positively to Jesuit entreaties to 'convert' to Catholicism (the ancient heresy now forgiven) and several parties of men from the village made trips to Florence and Rome. The interregnum was relatively short. By 1700, the *Jalwé* returned to their traditional 'Nestorian' roots and re-pledged allegiance to Patriarchal Throne, which by now had moved to the tiny mountain hamlet of Qudshanis, 25km north west of Mar Zaya (in much reduced circumstances as compared to the Church of the East's golden age at Seleucia-Ctesiphon a millenium prior). Little is known of the village Mar Zaya during the 18th century, though it almost certainly continued to exist as an 'ūmrā with a small population to service it. *Jalwé* travelling days had undoubtedly declined, although in the 1790s the mountain dialects included a word for 'returned pilgrim' (mookdusees, who probably went to Jerusalem¹³), and an informant in the 1820s had mentioned a bishop who "many years ago" had sent some priests to China (who had never returned).¹⁴

and Babylon, etc.(New York 1853) p.433-34 and W.A Wigram, The Cradle of Mankind. Life in Eastern Kurdistan (London: 1914).

Wigram was able to see the document itself in the late 1890s, although he could not tell if it was genuine. *Ibid.*

See David Wilmshurst, *The Ecclesiastical Organisation of the Church of the East* (Leuven, 2000), especially pp. 40-41; Justin Perkins et al, *Nestorian biography: being sketches of pious Nestorians who have died at Oroomiah, Persia* (Boston, 1857), p. 178.

¹⁴ E. Smith and H.G.O Dwight. *Missionary Researches in Armenia, etc.*, Vol 2. (London: 1834)

Jīlū comes into clearer focus in the middle of the 19th century, shortly before Marcus Gilliyana Daniel's birth. The formidable mountains gave the Nestorians - the alpine districts now numbered about 11,000 in total - *ashiret* status, which allowed them a good measure of formal autonomy from the distant Sultanate and his local governors. As the steep valleys gave way to arable foothills and then upland plains, the surrouding lands of Hakkari supported about 280,000 people, half of whom were an overlord class of pastoralist Sunni Kurds. They dominated a large minority of Christians of *rayyat*, or subject, status, and smaller numbers of Turks, Armenians, Jews and Yezidis. The Christians here were split along the old denominational lines (Chaldean, Jacobite and Nestorian), but also contained Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant adherents, owing to the recent arrival of foreign missions. Americans came first and had established themselves at Urmia by 1840, later to be joined by English, French and Russian stations. The foreign missions, forbidden to proselytize Muslims, concentrated on the 'recovery' of the Eastern Christians, whom they saw variously as "the lost tribes of Christendom", "the Protestants of Asia" and as useful proxies against, or potential converters of, local Muslims. The mission stations became alternative centres of power, and further undermined the already strained cohesion of the East Syriac communities.

Meanwhile in Jīlū, mid-century life was no idyll. The mountaineers subsisted mainly on some small-scale cropping as best as the steep geology and snowy winters would allow, and reared sheep by moving to open camps in the summer months. It seems there was a small-scale intradistrict trade in woven crafts. Irregular tribute was due to hereditary village *maləks*, priest-chiefs who combined civic and religious authority and controlled followers and resources at the local level. Tribute in the form of informal taxes flowed upwards to the Patriarch at Qudshanis. The Patriarch, in turn, answered to the Kurdish Emirate of Hakkari, whose deferred to more powerful Emirs further west. Nor were the Emirs always able to hold their own subjects, many being seminomadic herders, to account. The latter were prone to raiding Nestorian flocks when opportunity arose. The exposed *rayyat* Christians were the worst affected, but even the *ashiret* groups in the mountains had to manage stock losses from the summer camps, and launched counter-raids of their own. Raiding and feuding of this nature also lead to many local cross-ethnic alliances, leading to a precarious syncretism in the mountains.¹⁶

I rely on Arthur J. Maclean and William H. Browne, *The Catholicos of the East and His People: being the impressions of five years work in the Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission, etc* (London:1892); John Joseph, *The modern Assyrians of the Middle East: encounters with Western Christian missions, archaeologists, and colonial powers*. 2nd edition (Leiden, 2000); Hirmis Aboona, *Assyrians, Kurds, Ottomans. Inter-communal relations on the periphery of the Ottoman Empire* (Amherst: 2008).

For example, in language, rituals of worship, and some conversion, thought most groups remained endogamous. See Justin Perkins, *A Residence of Eight Years in Persia, among the Nestorian Christians* (Andover, 1842), p. 7, 16, 22; Badger, *The Nestorians and their Rituals*, p. 133, 253. W.A Wigram, *The Cradle of Mankind*, p. 85, 116, 172, 279.

All this made for a delicate balance of power in mountain politics. In the mid-1840s, a complicated and cynical four-way struggle linked to Ottoman vulnerabilities, Kurdish state-building, and factional enmities resulted in several Kurdish attacks on mountain villages, and the massacre and enslavement of several thousand.¹⁷ Again, Mar Zaya's relative isolation was an advantage. But the Ottoman Sultanate was still too weak to enforce much authority on the eastern frontier, and the conflicts began a period of economic decline, ethnic competition and endemic banditry across the Hakkari region. The raiding economy – which had at least enjoyed a degree of reciprocity - turned to something more predatory and cynical as better-armed Kurdish nomads continued to plunder villages. Drought in the 1850s and 1860s did nothing to improve the general difficulties.

This was the world into which Marcus Gilliyana Daniel was born in 1868. He grew up in Jīlū, in his own words, as "a weed." At 12, his father presented him a gun and taught him how to shoot. In Daniel's teens and early twenties he was probably involved in some low-profile brigandage typical of the region, and received a gunshot wound to the leg that would give him a life-long limp. The prospects for young *Jalwé* looked dim in the 1880s. The eastern Ottoman frontier saw a resurgence of violence when the Ottoman Sultanate forming an irregular cavalry of loyal Kurds in response to Russian aggression, western European meddling, ambitious sheikhdoms and the ever confounding Christian minorities. But organised on clan lines, the cavalry provided opportunities for accumulation and score-settling by local warlords and ex-raiders. Ethnic tensions heightened further still.

There were still options for young *Jalwé*, who embarked on seasonal migrant labour tours to off-set the decline in fortunes. The men typically headed for Mosul or Yerevan to work as steelworkers or masons, or even as manual labourers on archaeological digs around Ninewa. Some women, meanwhile, went to Turkish towns to sell weaved baskets, splitting the various towns between small groups.¹⁹ Urmia had a (rather impoverished) Nestorian quarter. Another option for

Briefly: The Emir of Bhotan was seeking a way to expand his territorial domains and so formed an alliance with the Emir of Hakkari, whose own court was riven by factions. The Nestorian Patriach, seeing an opportunity against his overlord, sided with rebels at Hakkari. For the Hakkari-Bhotan allies, the Patriach's disloyalty became a pretext to attack the mountains Christans. Meanwhile, the Sultan, weak on the eastern frontier and nervous of both Kurds and Western-backed Nestorians in the wake of sharp defeats against Muhammed Ali's Egyptians, raised no objections because the attacks diminished the independent Nestorians' power by proxy and offered him a pretext to subdue the Kurdish aggressors. For a general history, see David McDowell, *A Modern History of the Kurds*. 3rd edition (London, 2007), pp. 38-65.

Details of his early life are drawn from "Archdeacon Daniel. Once Chief of Brigands, Now a Minister" in *The Sunday Review* (Fort Way, IL.), 9 December 1901; "Dr M. George Daniel" in *Des Moines Daily News*, 4 October, 1902; "Not Brigand or Missionary" in *Des Moines Daily News*, 15 November 1902; "Rev. Mr. Daniel" in *The Lowell Sun* (MA.), 15 September 1908.

¹⁹ See *The Missionary Herald at home and abroad* Vol. 44 (1848), p. 419.

men was to try to join the lower levels of the Nestorian clergy, perhaps as a sub-deacon, deacon or even priest, which gave the incumbent access to tributary 'fees' and a measure of local standing. But the real attraction to many young *Jəlwé* were the foreign mission stations at Urmia.

Urmia, 1889-1894 CE

In 1888, after meeting a convert in the mountains, Marcus, age 30, left Jīlū for Urmia, and enrolled as a "charity student" at the American Mission School, or the *Qal'ah* (or Citadel) as it was colloquially known. Daniel spent four or five years at the *Qal'ah*, doing a basic medical course.²⁰ The school was part of the *Mission to Persia*, which the American Presbyterians had opened in 1836 (until 1868 it had been called the *Mission to the Nestorians*). The mission had sought to transform the ancient, almost anachronistic Nestorian communities living under a heriditary theocracy into modern Protestants in doctrine, structure and comportment.²¹ The English mission, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Assyrian Christians, attempted something similar. ²² Like missions in other contexts where literacy was uneven or non-existant, among the first aims of the mission was to create a written form of vernacular language²³ and to teach additional western European tongues. The missionaries set up primary and secondary seminaries for both sexes, and imported, at some expense, an unwieldy press to Urmia in the 1840s. Under the inventor of fonts and general printer Mr. Edward Breath and his successors, the press churned out several million pages by the 1880s.²⁴ Beyond religious instruction, the students were also taught a wide range of secular subjects. Popular texts in circulation among pupils at the time included modern geographies, histories (particularly of the Church of the East's early expansions to Asia), some "rags-to-riches" biographies, medicine, natural sciences and newspapers covering current affairs.

Daniel spent his years at the school with about 100 other students and evidently absorbed much. For pupils, there were distinct material opportunities beyond the spiritual. Graduates had opportunities for paid work as assisitants, printers, translators and teachers. Some became colportuers, and dispersed Protestant literature and ideas through dozens of small schools

⁰ Galen B. Royer, Urmia, Persia. The Nestorians. Great Deceivers. 'Cross Stealers'. [1910?], p. 14.

Recent book-length treatments include Ussama Makdisi, Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East (Ithaca: 2009); H.L Murre van den Berg, From a Spoken to a Written Language. The Introduction and Development of Literary Urmia Aramaic in the Nineteenth Century (Leiden, 1999); Adam Becker, Religion and National Awakening in the Modern Middle East: Mission, Orientalism and the American Evangelical Roots of Assyrian Nationalism (1834-1906), [forthcoming].

J.F Coakley, The Church of the East and the Church of England: a history of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission (Oxford, 1992).

Many manuscripts were kept in Nestorian churches, but were written in arcane scripts of classical Syriac, and were generally only intelligible to higher-ranking clergy who had been educated at distant literary centres.

Between c 1840 and 1859, it had printed thirteen and half million pages, in sixty-four thousand volumes. In 1883 alone the press had published a million more pages. David G. Mallick, The American Mission Press: A Preliminary Bibliography. The American Protestant Mission to the Assyrians, 1835-1934. (Harvard, 2008).

surrounding the countryside. Missonaries also publicized the Nestorian plight in periodicals and churches in the Angloworld; attendence at the mission put converts in close proximity to charitable donations that regularly arrived from western philanthopists. Graduates were introduced to these networks, and some were able to accompany Americans on home furloughs, or study further at the North Atlantic colleges. These men returned to Urmia with tales of being feted in North Atlantic towns, and out of this local mission elite emerged leaders of emigrant parties, and ultimately the region's first nationalists.

During these formative years, Daniel 'converted' to Prostestantism. He also married a woman not of his fathers choice (and had to pay the Patriach a mule in compensation). With this woman, of whom there is unfortunately no record, he fathered a son. For reasons uncertain the marriage did not last, although it was not formally annulled. Graduting from the *Qal'ah* in 1892/3, Daniel found himself at a loose end. Daniel first conceived of translating the *New Testament* into Kurdish, and sold it to the American Bible Society for \$90. Now in his late 20s, Daniel considered one other strategy of aspirant, or needy, or adventure-minded *Jalwé*: begging or, to put it more accurately, collecting.

Collecting was embedded in the *Jalwé* world view: the very founder of the village of Mar Zaya had, after all, been an itinerant holy man. As we have seen, collecting tours from the mountains began in late antiquity. When the missionaries of the great eastward expansion between c.700-1300 CE had travelled far and wide, they had done so as pious strangers whole lived off the hospitality and patronage of local rulers.²⁵ To do so they had carried elaborate canonical introduction letters along the way and were materially rewarded for their holy, charitable works. It is uncertain what part collecting played in *Jalwé* life during the Nestorian 'dark ages' – recall there was a refugee movement to Persia, and some trips to Rome and Jerusalem. By the mid-19th century *Jalwé* publically and widely remembered their deep past as mendicants.²⁶ The wandering saints lives were celebrated at church readings, fast, feats and local pilgrimages. Of the missionary heritage, there could be no greater reminder than the wondrous interior of the 'ūmrā of Mar Zaya, or "the church of hundred courses" as it was now locally called. Possibly, *Jalwé* took some inspiration

A remarkable Syriac manuscript source is *The Monks of Kublai Khan, Emperor of China, or, the History of the Life and Travels of Rabban Sawma*, transl. E.A Wallis Budge (London, 1928). See also Maribel Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims: Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, A.D. 300-800* (Pittsburgh, 2005).

See Eli Smith and H.G.O Dwight. Missionary Researches p.367-; Badger, Rituals, pp. 102-3, 136-148; Perkins, Eight Years, pp. 2-3; Maclean and Brown, Catholicos of the East, pp. 238-260; M.Y.A Lillian, Assyrians of the Van District During the Rule of the Ottoman Turks, trans. Rabi F. Babilla (1914; repr., Tehran: 1968), pp. 10-17; Fiey, "Proto-histoire." John Murry, Water into Wine. A Study of Ritual Idiom in the Middle East (London, 1956).

from traditions of *maqamāt* poetry common to the region.²⁷ To many *Jəlwé*, there was a certain logic in setting off to seek one's fortunes in the name of the charity.

As Daniel grew up in Jīlū and Urmia, he also would have become aware of the collecting tours of his parents' generation. These tours were usually referred to "going to countries," or "going to the other side". The first modern reference we have to collecting comes in as early as 1826 when we learn from a passing traveller that itinerant Nestorians were earning notoriety in and around Urmia for "practising all manner of deceptions...a certain number go to Turkey every year as professional beggars and they practice so successfully that they are said one year to have brought back 11,000 lira in cash." In the 1830s, the *British Foreign Bible Society* reported illiterate men from the region travelling overland to England, collecting funds on dubious pretexts and carrying the credentials of a Jesuit missionary who had been dead for a decade.

Western missionaries predictably found these practices troubling, and it is their reports that, in part, give a sense of the vast geographical extent of *Jalwé* travels. In 1860, Justin Perkins, the head of the American Mission, had waxed indignant in a 30-page sermon in Syriac to his Nestorians parishoners, entitled *Voice of a Friend of the Syrians on Begging: its Shame and its Sin.* In 1863, he complained that the *Jalwé* had sent "scores, perhaps hundreds" of men to Azerbaijan "to practice impositions on credulous adherents of the Greek religion, [who] return after a time, proclaim their success and inflame others." The tours to around Azerbaijan, probably started by migrant labourers, involved selling sacraments ostensibly from Jerusalem (one *Jalwé* was found in a possession of a hoof from the very donkey that had borne Jesus unto Jerusalem, but was duly arrested when it was discovered that he had already sold four of them). Besides the small matter of the donkey, another Azerbaijan technique involved staying at wealthy homes while claiming to be on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. They enjoyed the patron's hospitality and donations, promising the

This is speculative. *Maqāma* was a form of rhymed verse that delighted in the exploits of itinerent tricksters and bogus preachers. Made famous in classical Arabia, Nestorians were aware of the form and well appreciated it. A Syriac language *maqama* of the 14th century had copies made every decade and or two down to the early 20th century and were scattered across the mountains districts. Complicating this, however, is that while the text in question maintained the classical *maqama* form, it actually jettissoned the trickster figure in favour of serious theological themes. Ongoing research suggests more texts may be discovered. See Helen Younansardaroud, "A list of the known Manuscripts of the Syriac Maqāmat of 'Abdīšō' bar Brīkā († 1318): 'Paradise of Eden' in *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 20,1 (2006); N Katsumata, "The Style of the Maqāma: Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Syriac" in *Middle Eastern Literatures* 5, 2 (2002), pp. 117-137.

²⁸ Maclean and William H. Browne, *The Catholicos of the East*.

²⁹ James B. Fraser, *Travels and Adventures in Persian Provinces* (London: 1826), p. 324.

Perkins, *Residence of Eight Years*, p. 6, 350.

^{31 &}quot;Nestorians" in *The Missionary Herald at home and abroad* Vol. 59 (1863), pp. 199-200.

See SAB/BNS 1/2/366/A2554. D. Yonan, London to Department of Interior, Pretoria, 19 November, 1924 and Wigram, *Eastern Kurdistan*.

mark holy relics on their return trip the following summer, only to move on the next town.³³

By 1865, Rev. Perkins had noticed that collecting had gone transcontinental, calling it a "Giant Evil." Perkins was dismayed that one young man had returned from Europe with \$1500, bought an "immense vineyard" near Urmia and "decoyed girls from the seminary" on the boast that "Germany is his diocese" [original emphasis]. In the 1870s, another Jəlwé had travelled through Calcutta, Hanoi, Singapore, Australia and Hong Kong before finally being arrested in Shanghai for collecting funds on false pretences - and beating his new Australian wife. Another turned up in Cape Town in 1878. Confused New York papers reported finding sanctified Jəlwé in Manhatten in the 1880s, one among many trips to North America. That decade, Jəlwé collectors were spotted in Honolulu, Cuba and Mexico, and another was noticed leaving Penang for Rangoon. While Daniel pondered his next move in 1894, Jəlwé were even working Samoa, Mashonaland and Durban. Few places in the Benovelent Empire escaped a visit in the following decades, as the chart below demonstrates.

It worked like this⁴¹: a little before the first winter snows, a party of about fifty men gathered at the $'\bar{u}mr\bar{a}$ for a blessing. Setting off for the plains, the group then split into cells of two or four in number. Some headed by donkey-cart to Damscus and onto transcontinental liners. Others made

H.M Barclay and Gabhrī'el Bar Alekhsandros, *Mountain Men* (London: 1910).

J. Perkins, "Letter from Oroomiah", 22 August 1865 in *The Missionary Herald at home and abroad*, Vol. 61 (1865), pp. 391-392.

[&]quot;Alleged Frauds by Armenian Clergyman" in *The North China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette* (Shanghai), 23 September 1882, pp. 333-334.

[&]quot;The Rev. S.E Sooltan" in *The Natal Witness*, 15 October 1878.

A Talk with Syrian Beggars" in *The New York Times*, 7 July 1882; "Sanctified Arab Tramps" in *The New York Times*, 25 May, 1890; "Exposed as an Armenian Fake" in *The Daily Mail and Empire* (Toronto, Canada), 19 November 1898; "Visitor from Afar" in the *Weekly Sentinel*, February 13 1895; "Two men came a-begging" in *The Denver Sunday Post*, 25 June 1899.

[&]quot;Said to be a fraud" in *The Daily Bulletin*, 1 April 1895; "Miscaellanous News" in *The Galveston Daily News*, 5 Sep 1889; "The Penang Herald and Pierre Elie" in *The Straits Times* (Singapore), 11 August 1888

³⁹ "Nestorian Beggars" in *Natal Diocese Magazine* 37, 1894; "Mexican Affairs" in *Daily Express*, Jan 20, 1894.

This running list has been compiled from many immigration, police, prison and political records. It is impractical to list every source, but see SAB/GG 1908/66/921, "Schedule of Assyrians reported by the CID to belong to the 'Collecting Fraternity", NAA-/B741/3 /10132. TNA/MEPO 3/743; NAA-/GG/ A11803/1918/89/690. Additional newpaper sources include, chronologically: "The Nestorian Mendicants" in *The Times* (London), 26 May, 1870; "An Alleged Impostor" in *The Argus* (Melbourne, Australia), 24; "A Visitor from Persia" in *Southland Times* (Invercargill, New Zealand), 20 January 1903; "Social and Personal" in *The Straits Times* (Singapore), 21 August 1908; "Armenian Begging Imposters in Madras" in The Straits Times, 4 October 1909; "Visiting Nestorian Clerics" in *Northern Territory Times & Gazette* (Darwin, Australia), 16 July 1914; "Seize Reputed Priests in Chaldean Frauds. Paris Police Arrest Two Men" in *The New York Times*, 26 July 1921; "Syrian 'Prince' Held as Swindler King. Chambard Head of Band Operating in Many Countries Seized in Berlin" in *The New York Times*, 20 April, 1927; "Bogus Collector in Clerical Garb Robbed Ottawans" in *The Ottawa Citizen* (Canada), 11 January 1928; "Bogus Priests. An Ingenious Swindle in Poland" in *The Observer* (London), 18 March 1928.

Good single source descriptions are Heazell's testimony at the trial of Isaac George in "Alleged False Pretences" in *The Herald*, 13 March 1909, Galen B. Royer, *Urmia, Persia. The Nestorians. Great Deceivers;* "Storm Signals Hoisted for Oriental Solicitors" in *The Survey* XXXI (1913/14), p. 629-35; "Trapping Ancient Chaldean Conmen in America" in *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette* (Fort Wayne, IN.), 28 October 1917.

longer overland journeys through the Caucases, and then took either a northerly course through Russia to the Baltic, or a more westerly course through central Europe and Germany to Hamburg port. The small groups resembled a typical Nestorian clerical arrangment: a deacon or priest headed the party, with an accompany sub-deacon and/or servant. Membership was linked to fraternal kin, but occassionally extended beyond *Jalwé* to incorporate deracinated individuals from adjoining districts. Estimates of their total number varied wildly – in the 1860s Perkins mentioned fully 4,000 were involved. In an otherwise accurate general US report in 1917, 800 were estimated to be working America alone; British police maintained files on no more than 50 of the more notorious in the 1920s. As

The World of the *Great Decievers*, 1860s-1940s

Peking, Shanghai, Tianjin

Angola – Lobito Bay Argentina – Buenos Aries, La Plata, Rossario Australia – Adelaide, Brisbane, Darwin, Hobart, Melbourne, Sydney, Austria – Innsbruck, Vienna Belgium – Antwerp, Brussels, Liege Brazil - Rio de Janeiro **British Honduras (Belize)** Burma (Myanmar) -Rangoon Canada - Montreal, Ottawa, Saskatchewan, Toronto, Vancouver Canary Islands -

Colombo China – Hankou, Harbin Hong Kong, Nanjing,

Ceylon (Sri Lanka) -

Las Palmas, San Felipe

Cuba - Camaguey, Havana Dahomey (Benin) Denmark - Copenhagen, Esbjerg **Dutch East Indies** Batavia (Jakarta), Medan, Surabaya Egypt - Cairo, Port Said England – Brighton, Bristol, Crewe, Hull, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle **Federated Malay States** Finland - Helsinki France – Bordeaux. Boulogne, Marseille, Nice, Paris, Rouen, Toulouse French Indo-China -

Saigon
Guadeloupe
Germany – Berlin,
Nuremberg, Potsdam

Gibraltar Guatemala Holland – Rotterdam India – Asansol, Bangalore, Bombay, Delhi, Madras, Malabar, Pondicherry Iraq – Baghdad, Basra, Mosul **Ireland** – Belfast, Cork, Derry, Dublin, Dundalk Italy - Livorno, Naples, Rome, Sicily, Turin, Venice Jamaica - Kingston Japan – Kobe, Kyoto, Tokyo, Yokohama Korea Lebanon – Beirut, Zalleh, Maalakat Macedonia - Skopje Martinique Mexico - Monterrey

Morocco New Zealand Panama

For routes, see "Oroomiah to London: Remarkable Journey of Two Nestorians" in *Evangelical Christendom: Its State and Prospects* Vol. 2. (London: William J. Johnson, 1861), pp. 421-426l Nestorius Khnaaneshoo Marcus and P. Grant, *A Persian in Scotland: being the story of the life of Nestorius Marcus of Urmia, Persia, student of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1898).

For the 1860s figures, see "Vagrant Nestorians" in *The Missionary Herald; Reports from Northern Iraq, 1833-1870.* Vol. 3, edited by Kamal Suleiman Salibi et al, p. 435; "Tapping Ancient Chaldean Conmen in America" in *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette* (Fort Wayne, IN.), 28 October 1917. For official reports, see TNA/MEPO 3/743. SAB/GG 1908/66/921; NAA-M, B741/3 V/10132.

Perú
Phillipines
Puerto Rico – San Jose
Poland – Gdina, Krakow,
Warsaw
Portugal - Lisbon
Portuguese East Africa
(Mozambique) –
Beira, Lorenço Marques
(Maputo)
Romania
Russia - Ormsk, Irkutsk,
Vladivostok,

Scotland – Dunbarton,
Edinburgh, Glasgow
South Africa - Cape Town,
Durban, Johannesburg,
Kimberley, Pretoria
Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe)
Bulawayo, Mtali
(Mutare), Salisbury
(Harare)
Spain – Almeira,
Barcelona, Madrid,
Majorca, Valencia,
Saragossa

Straits Settlements –
Penang, Singapore
Switzerland – Berne,
Geneva, Lausanne,
Zurich
Syria – Aleppo, Damascus
Turkey – Constantinople
(Istanbul)
United States – All states
except Alaska.
Uruguay - Montevideo
Venezuela – Caracas
Yugoslavia – Rijeke (Fiume)

Europe, the United States and Urmia, 1894-1910 CE

Daniel decided to followed the example of his peers and set off on a three-year tour of western Europe. 44 He first changed his middle name from Gilliyana to George. Carrying another copy of his manuscript with him, and passing through Berlin and Brussels, he earned money by a mixture of collecting and translating more biblical texts into Kurdish. Little is known of this early period of his life, but he apparently picked up several languages and could pass himself off as a theology and medicine student. In London, he won some sustained financial support – possibly from *The Nestorian Mission* in Bermondsley – and visited the University College of London. While there, he also met a young English woman. He engaged to marry her.

Meanwhile, American travellers who had cause to make the rugged trip to Daniel's home in Jīlū in the 1890s were surprised to find at Mar Zaya a village of "jovial beggars" who had travelled the world. A British surveyor, exhausted after a two-day hike, found himself "disconcerted" at being addressed in Mar Zaya in "a strong American accent" by an "old fellow....long finished with his travelling days [in] London, Lisbon and the Brazils." Others remarked on *Jəlwé* telling of their "adventures in every part of the world – Australia, America, China, Africa and Europe" before displaying several letters as proof of their many border-crossings. Like their ancestors, Mar Zaya villagers had brought back offerings for their patron saint; to the ancient Chinese and Malabar treasures were added American clocks, Russian bells, watches, modern bowls and so on.

The letters were key for Daniel, and for the fraternity more generally. One impact of the missionary literacy drive had been a kind of mania in the mountains for highly stylised letter-

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See fn. 18, above.

From F.R Maunsell, "Central Kurdistan" in *The Geographical Journal* XVIII, 2 (1901), pp. 137-138; William A. Shedd, "The Syrians of Persia and Eastern Turkey" in *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 35, 1 (1903), pp. 1-7; Lillian, *Assyrians of the Van District*, "Customs"; Wigram, *The Cradle of Mankind*, pp. 169-173.

writing, qualification certificates, authorative letter-heads and so forth. According to one source, no Nestorian clergyman worth his title left his church without a servant equipped with seal, paper and pen; the style of such letters is captured in the following description in the 1890s: "[The] whole epistle is taken up with compliments, and the gist of the letter comes in a sentence at the end...Or, a schoolmaster will fill a whole page with titles and phrases, and add in a corner, "if you ask, I am well, and please send six slate-pencils by the bearers, from your loving and deficient servant."

For the fraternity, their travels began at home with a search for a high-ranking Nestorian clergyman prepared to write an introduction letter in both Syriac and English. Where this was not possibly, the letters were forged (with copied or stolen stamps). The texts consisted of titular salutations, seals, and a plea for funds to build (imaginary) orphanages, schools and churches for displaced Christians. The trick was to take both documents to an official translator – usually an unwitting western missionary or a junior-ranking European consular official. The dupe issued a third document approving and repeating the contents of the first two documents, and affixed a (genuine) consular seal. This third document was the most valuable, used to petition for donations, to get travel documents, and to build a spurious reputation. After successfully winning a donation on their travels, collectors were quick to ask for another testimonial. Before long, the collector had an impressive chain of testimonials (some carried several hundred with them), which made it even harder for marks to doubt their sincerity.

After his three-year stint on 'the other side', in 1897 Daniel returned to Jīlū with the intention of using the proceeds of the tour to set up a small missionary school. He planned to bring his English fiancée with him, but first travelled ahead with the fiancé's brother. On arrival, however, the Englishman was appalled to discover Daniel's existing marriage and young son, which Daniel had evidently failed to mention while in London. All marriage arrangements were hastily called off, and the unfortunate bother had to enlist local help to persuade Daniel, who kept all the money, to pay the Englishman's fare back home. The Patraich punished Daniel by ex-communiticaing him, an institution of long-standing designed to isolate the guilty not just from the clergy but from civil life more generally. Daniel's life in Jīlū was made difficult by his domestic tensions, and with stories circulating of another round of Christians massacres in near-by Diyabakr during his absence in 1895-96, he fled to the United States in 1898.

He survived his first few months there by collecting. Who did the collectors approach on

⁴⁶ Maclean and Browne, *Catholicos of the East*, pp. 29-30 and p.115-116.

See "Daniel's Remarkable Career" in *Des Moines Daily News*, 15 November, 1902.

their tours? When they arrived in a town, they studied a local civic directory to plot potential targets in a methodical, business-like manner. Some collectors aimed for local clergy, magistrates, business men, diplomats, college heads, army staff and high-ranking state officials – in short, social elites - and called upon their homes, offices or club-houses unannounced (famously, one *Jalwé* had to be removed from the verandah of Sagamore Hill, the residence of ex-president Roosevelt). Others thought a more efficient way was to hire, or get invited to, a church, social club or community hall. Here, they offered a sermon or a lecture, made sure it was well advertised in the local press, and encouraged the middle-class congregations to make a 'free-will' donation at the end. Educated as he was, Daniel decided to offer public lectures of this kind, and became something of a pioneer of the art.

Travelling through small towns in the mid-west between 1899 and 1900, he presented himself as "the son of a Kurdish duke and Captain of a Band of Brigands", who had been "married at age 6 to a 16 year old Mohammedan girl," and who had twenty times been "cast into the noisome dungeons of Kurdish fortresses." He claimed to have been chained and sentenced to death for tipping off foreign consuls about an immanent Kurdish rebellion, but told his relieved audience that the sentence was naturally commuted thanks to his high credentials. This bout of self-orientalizing

was accompanied by a rather dashing photograph and a somewhat cheaper to reproduce lithograph, reproduced here.



Mıly 1910. Re Republic, 19 August 190



Around 1901, Daniel began styling himself as an "Archdeacon of the Thomas Christian Church of the Ottoman Empire." That year, in St. Louis, Missouri, he used his credentials to successfully gain American citizenship.⁵¹ He generally maintained the "reformed brigand" or "converted Kurd" posture, but sometimes elaborated that he had also survived the Diyabakr massacres of 1895 and been "robbed fifty times and wounded thirty times", pointing to the gunshot in his leg as evidence. He also kept abreast of topical news, which was weaved into his lectures. 'The Miss Stone Affair', for example, came as a boon; Daniel claimed personal acquaintance of the irredentist Macedonian brigands who had kidnapped and ransomed the young American missionary.⁵²

Daniel narrowly avoided the controversies of the following decade that would make it more difficult for 'Syrians' to succeed in their applications. See Sarah Gaulteri, "Becoming 'White': Race, Religion and the Foundations of Syrian/Lebanese Ethnicity in the United States" in *Journal of American Ethnic History* 20, 4 (2001), pp. 29-81.

⁵² "Dr M. George Daniel" in *Des Moines Daily News*, 4 October, 1902. There was a widely publicised subscription

Daniel's changing repertoire was typical of the fraternity's denominational flexibility. As they travelled the world they appeared as "converted Kurds", "Nestorians", "Chaldeans", "Syrians" "St Thomas Chrisitans". "Jersulamites", "Eastern Baptists", "Protestant Christians of the East" and other variations thereof. As one commentator back in Urmia put it: "With historic, pios-sounding names, they sally forth from this land, study the denomination they wish to solicit, represent their faith 'nearly like yours', tell in touching terms the wonderful work they are doing, every bit of which is untrue, and melt the heart and open the pocket books most surprisingly." What the writer calls 'touching terms' involved ornate clerical robes, glib quotations of scriptute, fake sacraments and a degree of affective performance to win a donation. Consider the following remarks by a dupe in America when confronted by the fraternity:

When I declined to join this well-meaning company they looked upon me with unutterable reproach, departed with impressive gulping of injured self-sacrifice and left me feeling like a hard-hearted wretch disposed to recall them to receive the dollar I jumbled in my pocket.⁵⁵

Another in New Zealand, said:

What was I to do? The man had letters from people all over the colonies – Bishop this and Rev. Dr. that – setting forth the urgent spiritual needs of the Ninevites, though I suspect they knew no more about it than I did. There was positively no getting rid of the fellow after I had committed the folly of consenting to examine his papers; he stuck to me like a leech, and I was afraid I should have to ask him to stay to dinner. But luckily he shambled off as he as soon as he had pouched my two half-crowns. 56

It is obviously difficult to evaluate the emotional reponses of audiences in general terms. As exotic, oriental strangers, Daniel and other collectors partly calculated their appeals to incite curiosity, fascination, and sympathy. As Susan Nance shows, in early twentieth century America there had already been "tens of thousands" of perfomers "playing Eastern" to feed a strand of popular orientalism.⁵⁷ The specific appeals of the fraternity also chimed well with contemporary

campaign to raise her ransom. Emma Stone herself gave an illustrated lecture tour on her return. See "Miss Stone Describes her Captivity" in *The New York Times*, 29 April 1902; Randall B. Woods, "Terror in the Age of Roosevelt: The Miss Stone Affair, 1901-2" in *American Quarterly* 31, 4 (1979), pp. 478-495

⁵³ Gallen, Cross-Stealers.

See for eg., "Thinks they are Imposters" in *Reading Eagle*, 23 July 1907.

J.W Langfield, "Letters to Editor" in *The Daily Times*, 21 November 1911.

⁵⁶ "Passing Notes" in *Otago Witness*, 28 January 1892.

Nance argues that the popularity of so many performers (Arab horsemen, belly-dancers, turbaned vaudeville acts and so on) was due to powerful resonances between the ideals of American consumer capitalism and a certain kind of Orientalist fantasy that spoke to Eastern leisure, abundance, femine self-discovery and contentment. See Nance, *How the Arabian Nights Inspired the American Dream*, 1790-1935 (Raliegh, 2009).

concerns for 'the derving poor', the Social Gospel, the extension of philanthropy and the racialised threat of Muslim Asia to the liberal civilizing mission. In Protestant circles – in what is sometimes called the *Chautauqua movement* - many audiences expected the social gospel to be mixed with light entertainment.⁵⁸ Pious folk were also weary of turning down an appeal that *might* well be genuine. As a New York Reverend explained after capitulating to a collector: "I have always been taught never to turn away an angel unawares." In short, like Herman Melville's *Confidence Man*, the collectors traded on the faiths, fears and conceits of those they met en-route. ⁶⁰

Daniel circulated through the US mid-west for another four years. During his travels through Iowa, Indiana, and Oklahoma, doubts about his authenticity were periodically raised. Suspicious local clergy wrote to colleagues connected with the Persia mission. Enquiries were typically sent Dr. Robert Speer, the Secretary to the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions, who knew Daniel well from his days as student at the *Qal'ah*. Speer replied without hesistation and exposed Daniel's trickery. The contents of his correspondence were republished in numerous midwestern newspapers under headlines like: "A Very Venerable Fraud," "Not Brigand or Missionary" and "Daniel's Remarkable Career".61 Collectors greatest threat often came from men like Speer who exposed swindles in newspapers and circulated warnings in the middle-class and tabloid press, which was only too happy to mobilise against beggars, fakers and others disruptive of bourgeois instincts.⁶². They headlines rang out in local newspaper, usually too late: "Spot them! The Shrewdest of All Beggars", "Colossal Fakirs of Modern Times", "Storm Signals Hoisted for Oriental Solicitors" and "Those Eastern Mendicants." Few seemed to defend the collectors, although some missionaries with first-hand knowledge of the region suggested, in mitigation, that deception had simply become a means of survival in the distressed mountains. This view was not much shared by respectable Jalwé, who tipped-off police and immigration authorities to the collectors activities. Daniel, though, always kept a step or two ahead of his detractors, and countered that he had 400 testimonials confirming his unsoiled reputation.

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Andrew Rieser, *The Chautauqua Moment: Protestants, Progressives and the Culture of Modern Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

⁵⁹ "Storm Signals Hoisted for Oriental Solicitors" in *The Survey* XXXI (1913/14), p. 629.

On Melville's Misissippi boat, "charity believeth all things". Herman Melville, *The Confidence Man: His Masquerade* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans & Roberts, 1857), p 4.

See also "Casts Slurs on Daniel. F.B Cowgill Hints at Dark Charges" in St Paul Globe, 16 October 1900; "Archdeacon Contradicts" in Waterloo Courier (Iowa), 3 November 1900; "A Very Venerable Fraud" in Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette (IA), 14 November, 1902; Robert Speer exposed him in a letter published as "Daniel's Remarkable Career" in Des Moines Daily News, 15 November, 1902; "Churchly Robes Used by Eastern Mendicants" in Muskogee Democrat (OK.), 6 November 1905.

⁶² ee Susan Schweik, *The Ugly Laws. Disability in Public* (New York, 2009).

In 1905, having made an acceptable some of money and sensing his luck might be running thin, Daniel returned to Urmia to make good on his earlier dream of opening a small school. 63 Whilst there, he formally cut ties with his first wife and remarried, this time to the 17 year-old Nargis Pera, a school teacher. But Daniel's new fee-taking school also rubbed up against Urmia locals. He used his American citizenship papers to claim exemption from taxation; rumours circulated that he was running the enterprise solely for his own benefit. Daniel claimed that, as a result of ill-feeling toward him, he was abducted, imprisoned and beaten by the Persian police, and had his capital confiscated. There is no independent confirmation of this but in 1906, Daniel – along with Nargis - travelled once more for the United States (via Riga), hoping that his earlier controversies had been forgotten. His citizenship papers, at least, entitled the family to residency. In Washington D.C he attempted but failed to gain compensation from the Secretary of State for the ordeal with Persian tax-collectors. During 1906-7, Nargis fell pregnant with their first child, George Jnr.

Daniel began to tour the eastern United States as a "teacher, scholar and traveller", raising holy money at each stop. ⁶⁴ During his lectures on this second American tour, Daniel dropped the 'Captain of Brigands' performance to focus more on the 'lost tribes of Christendom' motif, and also began to style himself an *Assyrian* refugee. At the turn of the century there was a general shift in East Syriac nomenclature from 'Nestorian' to 'Assyrian'. This was due to Urmia-trained Christians attempting to unify the several amorphous denominations of region into a politically viable single identity. To do so they read the work of archaeologists and laid claim to the classical empire of Assyria (2400 BCE – 605 BCE), whose rediscovered ruins at Ninewa and Babylon had been a topic of much interest in the Anglo-world for several decades. ⁶⁵ Nestorians, Chaldean and Jacobites and others claimed they were these lineal descendants of the ancients. For Daniel and others in the fraternity, it was a sure money spinner. During his lectures, Daniel's repertoire also turned in a kind of feminist direction, as he bemoaned the condition of Persian and Kurdish women, for whom he now presented himself as liberator. He invested in a stereopticon for 'magic lantern shows'. Nargis participated by performing Urmia-region folks songs in a range of Turkish, Kurdish and Nestorian

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Details for this period are drawn principally from "Horrible Tortures. Fate of Preacher While in Persia" in *The Washington Times*, 18 December 1906; "Ask Indemnity of Persia" in *The Washington Times*, 22 December 1906.

For this period, I draw from "Kurd at St. John's" in *Hamilton Daily Republican News* (OH.), 7 December 1907; "An Interesting Lecture" in *The Evening News* (Cumberland, MD.), 27 February 1908; "Is Advocate of Wife-Spanking?" in *The Post-Standard* (Syracuse, NY), 1 June 1908.

See Joseph, The Modern Assyrians. For a metropolitan perspectives, see Shawn Malley, From Archaeology to Spectacle in Victorian Britain: The Case of Assyria, 1845-1854 (London, 2012) and Frederick N. Bohrer, "Inventing Assyria: Exoticism and Reception in 19th century England and France" in The Art Bulletin 80, 2 (1998), pp. 336-356

'national' costumes.

Daniel suffered another set of controversies: theft of his belongings while he preached one evening; a small housefire in which he had to flee the building with George Jnr. in one arm; and a public spat with the leader of the fashionable Mazdaznan cult (in which Daniel questioned its authenticity). Further accusations from Urmia-based missionaries concerning Daniel's own authenticity, and that of the fraternity more generally, continued to dog him. In 1909, fearing his game was finally up in America, he departed Boston for Urmia, just as the Young Turks settled into Istanbul.

Ilater that year, another American missionary, Galen B. Royer, met Daniel and some of his Jīlū relatives living in a "splendid home" in Urmia. Although Daniel was shy to admit it, a relative confessed that the latest US trip had brought home \$7,500 (about \$180,000 at today's value). Profits of this kind were not that unusual for some of the better collectors in the fraternity. Over the 1910s, a collector could realistically hope to make about \$2,000 on a tour of 2-3 months, but others enjoyed even wilder success by earning \$10,000 or more. Typically, they stored takings in deposit boxes before leave a country, or arranged unwitting clergymen to act as temporary banks. About 1910, a banker at Tabriz – through which all Urmia remittances were channelled - noted that, of the approximately \$10,000 remitted weekly, "an alarming proportion of money has been gotten through this begging fraud." Sometimes collectors converted the money into gold and travelled with it sewn into robes worn on the person. Once home, they invested in property and vineyards around Urmia, paid off debts, or bought weapons for the inevitable skirmishes.

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See: "To Appear in Garb of Turk" in *The Post Standard* (NY.), 1908; "Rev. Dr. Daniel. Native of Persia challenges Mazdaznan Leader" in *The Lowell Sun* (MA.), 16 September 1908;

See "Gives Daniel a Black Eye. Churchmen on Trial of the Persian Lecturer" in *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette* (IN.), 3 December 1907; other well reported cases include "Bogus Catholic Beggars" in *The Sun* (New York), 7 June 1907; "Missionary's Arrest. Money for Syrian Lepers Seems to Have Gone on Liquor" in *New York Daily Tribune*, 25 July 1908.

⁶⁸ Galen B. Royer, Urmia, Persia. The Nestorians. Great Deceivers. 'Cross Stealers'. [1910?], p. 14,

For these figures see: "Bogus Catholic Beggars" in *The Sun* (New York), 7 June 1907; "Syrian's Bogus Mission" in *The Colonist (Nelson, New Zealand)* 17 November 1908; 'Rev Dr' Kirreh Gets into Jail" in *The New York Times*, 28 July, 1908; "Spot Them! Shrewdest of All Beggars" in *Los Angeles Times*, 2 March 1913; "Persian Relief Solicitor Admits He's a Fraud" in *The Hartford Courant* (CT.), 6 October 1917; "That Chaldean Fake" in *The Presbyterian*, 4 April 1918; "Hold 'Rev' Danoo as Relief Grafter" in *The New York Times*, 5 March 1922; SAB/GG 1908/66/921. Schedule of Assyrians, etc. 1927; SAB/BNS 1/2/66 A2554. Prince Leon D. Nemrod Shimmon, Marseilles to the Central Commissioner [Marseilles]. Undated.

⁷⁰ Gallen, Cross Stealers.

For examples of what the fraternity did with their proceeds, see: *The Missionary Herald at home and abroad* Vol. 61 (1865), pp. 391-392; "A Warning" (from English Mission House, Urmia) in *The Guardian* (Manchester), 11 January 1888; LPA/BP 138, ff. 17-18. Letter from Revd. W.H Browne, 29 September 1894; "The Chaldean Beggars" in *The Daily Gleaner* (Kingston, Jamaica), 5 December 1902; "Weekly Whispers" in *Nelson Evening Mail* (Nelson, New Zealand), 7 November 1908; Royer, *Great Deceivers*; "America – The Land of the 'Easy

collectors used the proceeds to launch political careers: as Daniel thought about his next move, Elia Petros was raising the funds that would later allow him to lead a large Assyrian miltia during the Great War and to eventually attend the 1923 Lausaanne Peace Conference as a chief negotiatior for the British, having contrived to meet the Pope at the Vatican en-route.⁷²

M.G Daniel and the World, 1910-28 CE.

For all Daniel's good fortune, conditions in Urmia were hardly conducive to health and happiness. Ottoman officials raged against the dying of the empire by deflecting their numerous external and internal pressures onto minorities. The irregular Kurdish cavalries continued to do much of the dirty work, with Assyrians suffering another round of violent repression in 1908. While connecting with his relatives, Daniel talked with two collectors - brother or cousins – who had been working the southern Indian Ocean circuit for much of the previous decade. From them Daniel gained valuable intelligence on the new Union of South Africa. Thus in 1910, we find Daniel in the Canary Islands boarding a ship for Cape Town. Here Daniel was to have the first of many encounters with international border officials. In the previous decade the constituent colonies of South Africa had witnessed intense anti-Asian jealousies and 'sanitation syndromes'. In a concerted effort to establish a White Man's Country's, legislators had passed draconian, racial international migration laws in which 'Asiatics' and 'poor whites' alike were forbidden, relying on literacy and means tests to achieve it. Daniel was up for the challenge.

In fact, Daniel – educated, wealthy and in possession of American papers – had no trouble in landing and soon commenced lecturing to the city's commercial and colonial elite. He wrote home and asked three other *Jəlwé* to join him. They agreed, but had more difficulty on arrival at Table Bay. 'Syrians' – as all near-Easterners were generally known in South Africa – were profoundly

Mark" in *The Hartford Courant* (CT.), 7 May 1913; "Storm Signals Hoisted for Oriental Solicitors" in *The Survey* XXXI (1913-14), p 623 and 629; "Spot Them! Shrewdest of All Beggars" in *Los Angeles Times*, 2 March 1913.

Petros now occupies a lofty status as hero of the Assyrian national cause and is the subject of much hagiography in book and song. As such these facts may startle some patriotic readers. The evidence, however, leaves little ambiguity and is broadly consistent in a variety of sources. See "Peter is a Fraud" in *Dawson Daily News*, 16 July 1909; Wigram, *Cradle of Mankind*, pp. 218-9, 381; TNA/MEPO 3/749. Vol. 1. Statement by E. Sapaz, [undated. c. 1925]; "Autor de l'incendie criminal de Gagnac" in *La Depeche*, 16 March, 1928.

Cape Archives Bureau, Cape Town (KAB)/Department of Home Affairs, Asian Series (IRC) 1/1/31/730 A. Immigration Papers. Mr Nicola David and Elias George; NANZ)/Customs Service(BBAO) 5544/105A/1908/944. Elias George, Nicholas George, etc, 1908; Pietermartizburg Archives Repository (PAR)/Immigration Restriction Department(IRD)/64/892/1907, Chaldean Missionaries, etc, 1907; "Local and General" in *Fielding Star* (New Zealand), 18 June 1908.

The section, unless otherwise stated, is drawn from Transvaal Archives Repository, Pretoria (TAB)/Chief Immigration Officer (CIO) 33/N2310. Correspondence relative to the Naturalisation. MG Daniel et al., 1910-11.

See my own "Colonial Trespassers in the Making of South Africa's International Borders" (PhD diss, University of Cambridge, 2012).

ambiguous to border officials in South Africa, as they were elswhere in the Empire. Like Jews they were stereotyped as illicit distillers, "white nomads", "clannish to a degree" petty criminals and prone to too much social intercourse with migrant African workers, yet were wealthy, Christian and fair-skinned. Daniel's relatives were confined to their cabins while the bureaucracy pondered a decision on the men. Frustrated, Daniel paid a personal visit to the Ottoman consulate to obtain Turkish passports for the men and then visited the regional head of the Cape immigration department, Wilfred Cousins, to press his case. South African exclusion was never achieved with ease, and Cousins had by now become well-accustomed to delegations from Indian and Jewish elites who demanded, and generally won, important concessions for priests, welfare workers and the respectable classes narrowly defined. Cousins was himself an active Christian and the social gospel was in full in swing in South Africa as reformers tried to respond to widespread urban poverty, white and black. Daniel was able to win their trust, and his relatives were allowed to land.

The group travelled throughout the Cape. At Montagu, the well-watered town on the western edge of the Karoo, Daniel called upon a young, recently graduated minister of the Dutch Reformed Church called Rev. D.F Malan. In Malan's parsonage, a gift of money and short but valuable testimonial was given to the travelling *Jalwé*. Before long Daniel had raised £400 for Assyrian refugees. Moving to Lourenço Marques for a short period, the group decided they wanted to tour the Transvaal.

Daniel had again to convince skeptical officials: the Transvaal's infamous Registrar of Asiatics, Lionel Curtis, was not at first well disposed to giving the group any rights of passage. Daniel travelled ahead of the party from Lourenco Marques and paid a personal visit to Curtis. He presented glossy illustrated pamphlets of his relief work, and of his resplendent self with family, shown here. This came with a collection of personal testimonials.⁷⁹ He visited the American

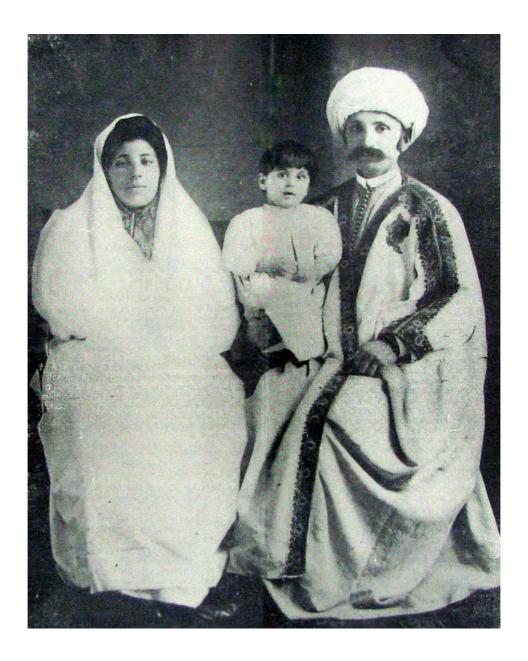
See Thomas Scheffler, 'Fertile crescent', 'Orient', 'Middle East': the changing mental maps of Southwest Asia' in *European Review of History* 10 (1993), pp. 253–72; James Renton, 'Changing languages of Empire and the Orient: Britain and the invention of the Middle East, 1917-1918' in *The Historical Journal* 50, 3 (2007), pp. 645-667.

Most 'Syrians' in South Africa were actually Maronite Catholics from northern Lebanon. 'Syrians' routinely confounded bureaucratic racial categorisation in South Africa and, from 1913, a peculiar situation evolved where internally Syrians were 'European', while at the border they were 'Asiatic'. See for example SAB/CIAA 30/M12. Lionel Curtis to Malcolm, 6 June 1906; *Judgement by Chief Justice Lord de Villiers in the Supreme Court of South Africa* (Johannesburg: Syrian (Lebanon) Christian Association, 1913).

See Richard Elphick, "The Benevolent Empire and the Social Gospel: Missionaries and South African Christians in the Age of Segregation" in *Christianity in South Africa, a political, social and cultural history,* edited by Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 347-368. For Cousins, see UCT/MA BC 1154. CW Cousins Papers, especially E3 and H1.

Daniel presented personal letters from those he had met in the Cape: Besides the one from Malan, he included the Rev. J. Du Plessis (Southern Life Buildings), Alex Pitt (Union Church), H.J Baits, F.J Retief (Minister of the Evangelistic Lutheran Church), Ludwig Wiener (Imperial Ottoman Consul); C.E Derham (General Secretray of the

Ambassador and enlisted his help, then gave Curtis a long verbal petition peppered with the usual diatribes about "Kurds, Persians, Fire worshippers and Devil Worshippers [and other] heathens". Temporary permits were awarded to the group.



During the Transval tour the group fell out, probably over the division of funds. Daniel, irked by his co-collectors, responded by denouncing them in a personal letter to Wilfred Cousins in Cape Town, suggesting to him that his 'relatives' were in fact were bogus priests and money launderers. This kind of snitching was typical among the collectors. As riches and risk grew, so did

YMCA), A. Steytler (Predicant of the Dutch Reformed Church), B.P.J Marchand, A. Dreyer, A.M McGregor, J.C Truter. C.J Bam (all of Dutch Reformed Church in Cape Town, Montagu, Oudtshoorn, Prince Albert and Riversdale), G.P van der Merwe (Kaapshe Bijbelgenootschap).

avarice and factionalism. The arguments seemed to be over unpaid loans or the embezzlement of the proceeds of a tour. Like Daniel, other collectors tipped-off officials about their rivals and enemies. In doing so they sometimes accused each other of scarcely believable acts of narcotics trafficking, murder, adultery, incest, insanity, espionage, fratricide, infanticide, kidnapping and suicide. If the fraternity had mastered the honourable petition to social elites, it was not difficult for them to amplify the dishonourable when denouncing their rivals. These unsolicitied communications generated useful information for police, ironically making it harder for the fraternity to continue their trade. But for police to genuinely suffocate the collectors required a level of international co-operation and capacity that did not yet exist.

Realising he had incriminated himself with his emotional letter to Wilred Cousins, Daniel again fled to Lourenço Marques, the Union's city of refuge. The relatives, after being discovered working in "Syrian" restaurants in Kimberley, followed suit and journeyed in haste to the Portuguese East African port separately. They would later re-enter South Africa surreptitiously via Swaziland and continue collecting, winning a personal recommendation from the Prime Minister Louis Botha in 1917.⁸¹ As for Daniel, he began a period of wider wanderings with his family.

Daniel immediately returned to the United States, where he refrained from public lecturing. It is uncertain if he engaged in much collecting, or merely lived off the fruits of his South African labours. By 1915 the prospects of a return home was lower than ever. Urmia, always strategic, had become an important theatre of war. A tenuous Turkish-Kurdish alliance squared up to Russian forces, with whom the Christian minorities quickly sided. Following multiple preliminary 'expulsions' of seditious Christians, the Turkish-Kurdish forces embarked on the first of several grim projects of ethnic cleansing - it is now widely accepted that an 'Assyrian Genocide' took place, beginning in Diyabakr, within the context of the larger Armenian killings. It must have nauseated *Jalwé* collectors especially to learn that in late June of 1915, the 1500-year old '*ūmrā* of Mar Zaya was sacked, its collection of ancient artefacts and manuscripts put to the torch. ⁸³

That year, Daniel visited state departments in New Orleans and San Francisco, at each declaring himself a secret intelligence officer able to supply information on "false passports and

⁸⁰ See the many colourful denouncements throughout the case files in TNA/MEPO 3/743. Vols. 1-7.

⁸¹ SAB/GG 707 9/133/103. Passport. Reverend Z. Hanna. Officials were oblivious to the Cape Town scandal of 1910.

The most recent synthesis of the literature is Hannibal Travis, *Genocide in the Middle East: the Ottoman Empire, Iraq and Sudan* (Rock Hill, 2010).

See David Gaunt, Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War I (Piscataway, 2006). p. 144.

draft breakers." When his cover was blown he was deported – to where is uncertain - but not before earning some notoriety whilst detained at Angel Island for trying to obtain legal assistance "by means of a trick." Thereafter, Daniel decided to re-establish himself as an itinerant lecturer of even wider range, raising awareness of the destruction of his ancestral homeland, and a little money in the process.

In his subsequent travels, Daniel exploited any of five key opportunties. Firstly, moments of political or electoral change, when local elites were most invested in the future. Secondly, moments of economic prosperity, or at least wherever could be found an economically active class with disposable income and charitable dispositions. Thirdly, moments of topical interest in the Assyrian resettlement question (Assyrian refugees had started to gather in international ports to await transshipment to host countries). Fourthly, moments of fashionable interest in archaeological expeditions uncovering artefacts of ancient Nestorian Christianity, particularly in East Asia. Finally, moments where enemies of the liberal empire could be readily conjured, be it the usual anti-liberal suspects: Muslims, Young Turks, German Axis powers, Bolshevists, or Socialists.

East Asia and the Indian Ocean, 1918-1924 CE

We cannot, owing to space, cover all of these movements in detail, but after his deportation Daniel headed to Argentina and Brazil, getting caught out again in Rio and serving a 9 month sentence for false pretences in 1917. He must have at least considered a return home with war drawing to a close, but in 1918 the Nestorian Patriarch and his 150 bodyguards were assassinated by an anti-Qajar Kurdish Agha who used the war to establish his pre-eminence in and around Urmia. By then, the genocidal killing fields had moved east from Diyabakr to Urmia – the *Qal'ah* was destroyed and two hundred surrounding Assyrian villages attacked, with morbid results. Surviving Christians from the Urmia region became refugees in Iraq, Syria and Turkey. Some of those who remained, including many *Jalwé*, were organised into a small army by the ex-collector Petros, and carried out counter-attacks around the Persian town of Salmas. Despite some quite tenacious resistance to their predicament, Petros' men were outnumbered and the Assyrians continued to suffer periodic violence as they were squeezed out of any viable post-war state by

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SAB/BNS 1/2/66/A2554. "History Sheet" (1924), Criminal Investigation Department (Baghdad) and "Marcus Gilliyana Daniel" Suspect Branch, CID (Cape Town), 19 August 1924. The question of re-settlement of displaced Christians in Latin America was becoming prominent and controversial in public debate at this time. See J. Lesser and I. Kilch (eds.), *Arab and Jewish Immigrants in Latin America: Images and Realities* (London: Frank & Cass, 1998); see also Ignacio Klich, "Argentine-Ottoman Relations and their Impact on Immigrants from the Middle East: A History of Unfulfilled Expectations, 1910-1915" in *The Americas* 50, 2 (1993), pp. 177-20.

Kurdish revolts, Arab Nationalism, Turkish Republicanism, Persian distraction and British and French apathy (for some, betrayal).⁸⁵

Daniel followed these developments with interest. After leaving South America, he managed a short collecting tour of British Honduras (Belize). Depression soon hit the fruit economy there, to which Daniel responded by returning to the old World. He journeyed to Russia from where he picked up the Trans-Siberian Express for China. He lectured in several cities in China and Japan over 1918-1919. In Shanghai he equipped himself with a French passport. Perhaps hustling for a quieter life, Daniel made several applications to settle in Australia or to find a position as a translator within the British administration in Iraq. Both failed. Daniel then embarked on a maritime trip to Mesopotamia, stopping in Singapore where he gave several well received lectures. His next stop was India – probably Calcutta, Madras and Bombay - proclaiming himself "Archdeacon of the Nestorian Church" through the local English press, again lecturing and accumulating donations en-route.

Daniel knew he would not be able to get away with his more outlandish claims closer to home. In Iraq in early 1920, he offered himself as an informal labour-recruiter for the British at Baqubah refugee camp near Baghdad. Daniel was likely at another of his loose ends, and he made a short trip to America in October 1920, seemingly to settle a score. By now he had lost his churchly robes.

Sami Zubaida, "Contested Nations: Iraq and the Assyrians" in *Nations and Nationalism* 6, 3 (2004), pp. 363-382.

His trip to East Asia (visiting Harbin, Nanking, Peking, Shanghai, Tsingdao, Kobe, Kyoto, Tokyo and Yokohama) was especially timely given pan-Asian interest in the rediscovery of the Nestorian monument near Xian and attempts to drawing symbioses between a 'protestant Buddhism' and Christian tradition. See Yoshiro Saeki, *The Nestorian Monument in China* (London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1916); Fritz Holm eventually published, in 1924, *My Nestorian Adventure in China. A Popular Account of the Holm-Nestorian expedition to Sian-Fu and its results* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1924). For larger context, see Michael Keevak, *The Story of a Stele. China's Nestorian Monument and its Reception in the West*, 1625-1916 (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008).

The Australians were by now well aware of the fraternity. NAA/Canberra GG/A11803/1918/89/690. British Embassy, Tokyo to Governor-General, 18 May 1918. The British had more enthusiasm and sensed Daniel's utility as a "propagandist" in Mesopotamia. They ultimately declined Daniel's applications because they felt that he was angling for steamship tickets home for himself and family. See India Office Records. London (IOR) L/PS/11/150 P 1586/1919. Offer of services for work, etc. 20 December 1918.

See "Help for Assyria" in *Straits Times*, 15 January 1920; "Assyrian Christians" in *Straits Times*, 22 January 1920; "Bolshevism and the Young Turks" in *Straits Times*, 30 January 1920. He won direct support from Tisdall, the agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society. See C.E.G Tisdall, "Land of the Stalking Death" in *Straits Times*, 20 January, 1920.

Assyrian refugees were soon to be found gathered, some stranded, in Bombay. See "Refugees in Bombay", in *Times of India*. 9 May 1921. India was by now well-established on the collector's circuits, see TNA/Foreign Office (FO) 95/2458. Correspondence re: Nestorian Imposters, 1914.

⁹⁰ Solomon Sawa Solomon, The Genesis of the Modern Assyrian Community of Baghdad (1997).



In Chicago he approached Dr. Malek Yonan, from an old Jīlū family and then an Assyrian delegate to the Versailles Peace Conference. Daniel asked Yonan the time of day, and then assaulted the diplomat with several swift blows to the head. One can only speculate on his motivations: Yonan had certainly been an 'Assyrian lecturer' in his younger days, and their may have been some residual jealousies. Alas, Yonan did not press charges and Daniel was soon back in Iraq in early 1921. Here he offered his skills as a priest to conduct birth, marriage and death rituals for displaced Christians refugees.

As ever, he remained unwilling to play by anybody's rules. The British intelligence state, then mobilizing against unruly elements across its Near-Eastern mandates, snared Daniel for performing a bigamist marriage in 1922. He was imprisoned for a year. As might be guessed Daniel was not easily reformed. On release in mid-1923, he took his family to Beirut. Here he obtained French-Syrian documents on the basis that he wished to travel to Japan to school George Jnr. En-route the family stopped in Cairo, where Daniel had a new set of glossy pamphlets printed up. Nargis also gave birth to a daughter, christened Mary. They did not make it to Japan. When a

^{91 &}quot;Persian Peace Envoy Attacked by 3 Foes here. Assyrian Comes Down Like Wolf, Lands in Fold" in *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 30 October 1920.

⁹² See Martin Thomas, *Empires of Intelligence*. *Security Services and Colonial Disorder after 1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

⁹³ The timings here offer a small mystery since Daniel had presumably been goaled at the approximate time of conception. Exact dates around this period are presently unclear and further research ought to shed some light.

party of dubious mendicants provoked suspicion in Bengal in 1923, a *Jalwé* informant wrote from Tabriz that "it must be Markoos of Jeloo, a mountaineer. He is the devil and son of the devil. He must be insane." Daniel's next confirmed appearance was at Beira, in Portuguese East Africa. From there he lectured his way through southern Rhodesia, reprinting pamphlets at Salisbury and gathering a wad of testimonials en-route. His accoutrements by now required a leather case. Daniel returned to his old stomping ground of South Africa, arriving at Mafikeng on an autumn afternoon.

Since his last visit in 1911, Syrians had been unambiguously declared Asiatic and therefore prohibited. Daniel was sent to Durban to await deportation, but was able to take private lodging in the YMCA on the city's esplanade The situation forced Daniel into writing a series of stentorian screeds in the direction of Prime Minister Jan Smuts and his ministers. Through a number of letters and personal visits, he drew attention firstly to his personal honour as a well-off man of the cloth, accompanied by a young family. Then he played up more collective forms of honour, highlighting the horrors of the genocide. He couched this within a nationalist argument for Assyrian regeneration and appealed to religious ecumenism with the ministers. He confirmed his work in training schools, orphanages and hospitals around Urmia. He also pronounced his loyalties to British imperialism as evidenced by his volunteer services in Iraq and his membership of a martial race.

Daniel was also at pains to point that he was a "white man" - something other *Jalwé* did when confronting border-police elsewhere. As for Daniel at Durban, he reminded the minister of minority rights – white South Africans were after all engaged in struggle to protect to their own minority status. This displayed a shrewd awareness of international context by Daniel. The South Africans were simultaneously involved in League of Nations debated over the problems of stateless refugees from the near-East. ⁹⁶ Smuts ideological predispositions in this period valued international solidarities of white-men acting as trustees of the world's subjects to offset the apparent disintegration of empire. ⁹⁷ As ever, Daniel produced vivid aide-de-memoires in his appeal – photographs, letterheads, testimonials ⁹⁸ from his travels and pamphlets that all gave material form to

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⁹⁴ IOR/L/PS/11/236 f.3325/1923. .B Dooman to A. Worral, 20 June 1923.

This section of Daniel's life, unless otherwise stated, drawn from SAB/BNS 1/2/66/A2554. Assyrian Priest, Prohibition of M.G. Daniel, etc. Correspondence from 16 May 1923 to 10 March 1925.

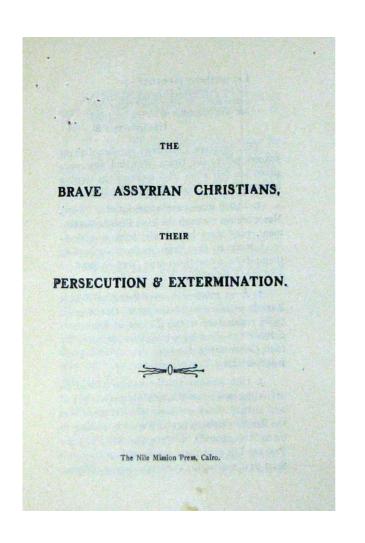
⁹⁶ See the League of Nations documents under discussion in SAB/Secretary of Foreign Affairs (BTS) 2/1/143/LN 20/3. Russian and Armenian Refugees, Assyrian, Assyro-Chaldean and Turkish Refugees, 1923-28.

⁹⁷ Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: PUP, 2009), pp. 28-65.

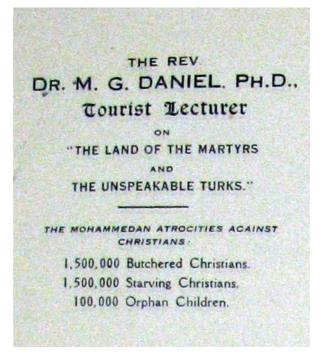
From: General Gouroud (French High Commissioner to Syria and Lebanon), Department of Justice (United States of America), US Embassy (Tokyo), French Consul-General (Shanghai), British General Consul (Makelin, Harbin, Tsingtau), Japanese Consul (Manchuria), Doshisha University of Kyoto; University of Nanking; Imperial University of Tokyo; The Assyrian Archbishop, Jerusalem, The Rev. Bishop Norris, Peking, The Rev. Bishop Cecil,

his combined arguments.

Tokyo, Ven. Archdeacon Caddy, St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem, YMCA (Cairo, Port Said, Tokyo, Kyoto, Tientsin), Friend Foreign Missionary Association, China, The Theological College of Hankau











Whilst ministers sat on the petition, Daniel was able to lecture in crowded halls in Durban and Pietermartizburg. He approached the Durban press who covered his story with sympathy and finally made a visit to the local branch of the South Africa Party. All this eventually succeeded, with just a few days to go on his permit. The Churches celebrated Daniel as a "man of superior education" and recommended the immigration minister perform "a Christian action" by cancelling the deportation. Decal party officials agreed by telling the minister that Daniel was a "harmless and inoffensive individual" and that "the Durban church people would take it as very amiss if he [Daniel] were to be dragged from under their sheltering wing." Mindful of a brewing scandal, the minister cancelled "the order of the boot" and gave Daniel a year's permit to follow his calling. The churches offered a prayer of thanks. Whilst in Cape Town during 1923, a second daughter – Martha – was born. Daniel took the opportunity to take out a French passport.

Daniel always lived on borrowed time, however. In 1924 a request was made to the British High Commission in Baghdad for permission for a party of Assyrians to emigrate to South Africa. ¹⁰² It quickly aroused suspicion in Mesopotamia because the party's *Jəlwé* leader had been involved in collecting, news of which was passed on to Pretoria. Whilst the South Africans reviewed Daniel's files, Baghdad CID furnished Pretoria with an incriminating criminal history sheet of the "successful beggar, liar, bigamist and ex-communicated impostor" named M.G Daniel. Pretoria set to the chase, but Daniel was always one step ahead. He and family had left for Australia and New Zealand in July 1924. Despite failing to fully convince Australian officials of his bona-fides, his lecture tour of New Zealand was a success. ¹⁰³

The Caribbean and the United States, 1925 – 1941 CE

In late 1924, Daniel and family crossed the Pacific in a north easterly direction. After

SAB/BNS 1/2/66/A2554. Taylor (Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church) to Patrick Duncan (Minister of the Interior), 14 June 1923. See also "Assyrian Refugees and their Pitiable Story. Rev. Dr. M.G. Daniel in Durban" in South African Woman's Weekly, 31 May 1923.

SAB/BNS 1/2/66/A2554. Blaney to Patrick Duncan,, 3 June, 1923

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

SAB/BNS 1/1/363/139/74 Vol. 3. Secretary for High Commissioner of Iraq to Minister of the Interior, Pretoria, 11 August 1924.

Daniel was able to land without challenge in Perth, but found himself barred at Adelaide. At Melbourne a compromise was reached where he could land provided he didn't lecture. See "Visiting Syrian Preacher. Curious Customs Procedure" in *The Argus* (Melbourne), 8 August 1924; "Tragedy of Assyrian Christians" in *Evening Post* (New Zealand), 27 September 1924.

spending some time in Panama City, they moved on to Kingston, Jamaica. ¹⁰⁴ Reaching his target of £400 for refugee orphans, Daniel and family then shifted to Havana, Cuba to continue the tour. Whilst in Havana, Daniel hankered after South Africa. A new government had been installed in Pretoria and with it a new Minister responsible for immigration, the Afrikaner nationalist D.F Malan whom Daniel had met in Montagu 1910. Daniel wrote to him and requested permission to immigrate, mentioned his "good works" in Cape Town, expressed a desire to work with converting Cape Muslims and allied himself, shrewdly, with the Dutch Reformed Church. ¹⁰⁵ As usual a sheaf of testimonials was attached to the letter. Malan was alert enough to refuse him a gift this time around.

Around 1926 Daniel and family returned to the United States, where he lectured sporadically until the mid-30s.¹⁰⁶ Daniel also passed on the techniques to his son, George Jnr., who began to hold lectures of his own, updated to include tirades against Nazism and Russian Communism.¹⁰⁷ In 1935 Daniel was based in Camac Street, Philadelphia, now styling himself "Archdeacon of the Assyrian Apostolic Church in the USA and the Assyrian National Union of America"; the grandness of the title somewhat in-congruent in a notably bohemian neighbourhood.¹⁰⁸

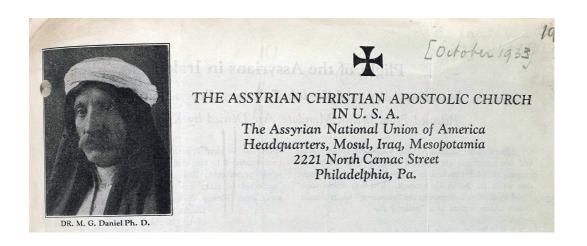
[&]quot;Assyrian Minister now in Jamaica" in *The Daily Gleaner* (Kingston), 3 February 1925; "The Assyrian Relief Fund. Appeal to Jamaicans by the Ven. Archdeacon Daniel" in *The Daily Gleaner*, 5 March, 1925.

SAB/BNS 1/2/66/A2554. M.G. Daniel, Havana to Malan, 20 March, 1925; Malan to M.G. Daniel, Havana, 7 May, 1925.

See "Dr M.G. Daniel, Native of Turkey, Coming to Lebanon to Lecture" in *Lebanon Semi-Weekly News* (Lebanon, PA.), 17 February 1930; "World Traveller Will Speak Here" in *The Altoona Mirror* (AL.), 17 December 1932

See "Among the Churches" in *Chester Times* (Chester, PA.), 24 August 1935; "Daniel Gives His Opinion on the League of Nations" in *The Florence Times* (AL.) 20 April, 1937; "Assyrian Student Speaker at Elon Chapel Exercises" in *The Daily Times* (Burlington, AL.), 10 March 1941.

A journalist at the described it thus "Here are foregathered a representative number of local artists, sculptors, musicians and bank clerks who want to have a fling at romance. The street has a faintly disrespectable look: it is close to a dangerous section of the city after nightfall. But, whatever else it is, it is romantic. It smacks of the Montmartre of Paris." "Migration" in *The Altoona Mirror*, 15 September 1938.



If Camac Street was a suitably eclectic place for Daniel to see out his dotage – it had been over 45 years since he had made his first trip from the mountains to the *Qal'ah* - he was not yet bereft of energy. In 1934 he telegraphed Scotland Yard to denounce a rival priest in London as a "swindler [and] international crook." Then came the Awdisho affair in Yonkers where we began this story, in 1936-38. Daniel's controversies were still not over. In calling his church "The Assyrian National Union of America", he had drawn the attention of the sitting Patriarch, Mar Eshai Shimun the 23rd, who had been installed after the assisination of the previous incumbent in 1918. In exile in Cyprus, Britain and the United States during the 1930s, he had become much closer to the Protestant churches than his forebears. Shimun saw in Daniel's games a challenge to his fragile authority. Shimun ex-communicated Daniel from the Church of the East for a second time, although Daniel had never formally rejoined. Some of the Patriarch's followers in the United States urged Nargis to leave her husband. The enquiry into Emmanuel Awdisho's imposture turned police attention to Daniel's own chequered history, and deportation proceedings seem to have been inaugurated.

In 1940, Daniel wrote the very last public document of his life, entitled *The Life of Clergy of the Eastern Assyrian Church. An Appeal Before the United States Department of Justice.* It amounted to four confused, rambling pages, by turns suggesting Daniel had not full control of his faculties, at others displaying the peculiar logic which had served him all his life. The Nestorians, he said, where similar to Kurds in the beginning. Then Daniel turned on his own: he suggested the Patriach's alliance with the English protestants after war's end had provoked further Kurdish attacks that "had brought down the whole Assyrian race". Styling himself "Revealer of Corruptions" and

¹⁰⁹ TNA/MEPO 3/743. Sergeant to Chief Inspector, Criminal Investigation Dept., Metropolitan Police, 2 May 1934.

reproducing the same photographs that he had used on his pamphlets to Jan Smuts in the 1920s, Daniel then attacked the Patriach personally He called the Patriach uneducated, his title a feudal relic, and his ordination a contravention of his Church's clerical laws laid down in the fourth century. Increasingly angry in tone, he said the Patriarch was the head of a "great movement of gangsters and criminals", involved in the "the business of robbery" and even murder. The Patriarch's senior staff were "drunkards" and adulters at the head of "wicked cabals". The Patriach's sister, Lady Surma, was accused of being "a jezebel" pursuing a secret love affair with an English missionary. The bishop of Jīlū "was the most immoral man known in his birthplace". Daniel, on the other hand, was the true Christian, a Protestant who had been welcomed the world over because he was "something new". Now, following the Patriarchal decision to ex-communicate him, his "drunken wife" and children had chased him from his house. His home and love, Daniel concluded, was destroyed. He now faced the United States Department of Justice.

It is not clear if M.G Daniel lived long enough for further action against him. His son, George Jnr., lecturing to a concerned audience in Burlington, Alabama in 1941, said his father had been killed in 1910 by a "Moslem Raid". Even in death, M.G Daniel had a yarn to spin. By the 1940s, most of the fraternity were reaching old age. The fraternity did not survive the War; by then the Benevolent Empire has run its course.

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¹¹⁰ "Assyrian Student Speaker at Elon Chapel Exercises" in *The Daily Times* (Burlington, AL.), 10 March 1941.