



## MĀLIK, DĀWĪD GĪWARGĪS

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**MĀLIK**, Mīrzā' **DĀWĪD GĪWARGĪS**, [Assyrian](#) poet and historian (1861-1931; [Figure 1](#)). Mīrzā Dāwīd was born in the village of Sipūrḡān (Per. [Sopurḡān](#)) in the Urmia plain, [Azarbaijan](#). He was the older son of Šamāšā' (deacon) [Gīwargīs Dāwīd Mālik](#). After completing studies in the village primary school and Urmia College, Mīrzā Dāwīd traveled to Russia to study history at the University of St. Petersburg, from which he graduated in 1900 (Baaba, p. 60). Upon his return to Urmia, he served as secretary of the Patriarchal Church Committee ([Figure 2](#)), which was created to help support and preserve the Church of the East in Urmia. The committee sponsored a number of schools and attempted to reclaim some of the church buildings and property that had been confiscated by the recently arrived Russian Orthodox Mission (Malech, pp. 351-73). In 1903, he participated in a delegation that was sent to Tabriz to argue the case for the return of churches before the Persian government. In connection with this partially successful effort, he was given the title of Ḥān (Per. *kān*) and was thereafter called Mīrzā' Dāwīd Ḥān (Baaba, p. 67). He also participated in the establishment of the Ḥūyādā' 'Ūmtānāyā' (National Union), which sought to promote the unity of the Assyrians by discouraging tribal and sectarian divisions (Macuch, p. 224).

Mīrzā' Dāwīd was a prolific writer in both Assyrian (see [NEO-ARAMAIC](#)) and [Azeri Turkish](#). Some of his poems appeared in various contemporary Assyrian periodicals, but only two of his books were published during his lifetime. Neither is mentioned by P. Sarmas or R. Macuch. The first was published in Chicago in 1916 by the Māṭba'tā' d-Mašḥidānā' Sūrāyā' (Assyrian Herald Press),



while he was still in Iran, under the title of *Kūrsyā' d-Sālīq* (The throne of Saliq). This book of eighty pages consists of an essay on the Patriarchate of the Church of the East and five poems: *'Ūlītā' w-bā'ōtā'* (Lamentation and petition); *l-'idā' d-biyt yaldā' d-ša(n)tā' 1914 qā' Sūrāyē' d-'Īrān wad-Kūrdistān* (For Christmas 1914 for the Assyrians of Iran and Kurdistan); *Mālik malkē'* (King of Kings), in honor of Tsar Nicholas II; *Ktābhā' mūšhā'īt min 'Āmariqā' l- 'Ūrmī* (Poetical letter from America to Urmia); and *Ḥūbā' šarīā'* (True love; for tr. of selected verses, see Becker, pp. 340-51). At the end of the book, he adds an eleven-page glossary to explain new or difficult words used in his writings. This glossary provides an early witness to the attempts of Assyrian writers to replace foreign vocabulary in Assyrian with new words based on Syriac (e.g., *'asyā'* instead of *hakīm* for “doctor”).

The second book was published in Chicago in 1931, after he had left for Baghdad, by the *Māḥba'tā' d-'Aprēm 'Aḥrāhām d-Dēzātakyā'* (The Press of Aprem Abraham of Dezatakya). It is entitled *Pāsīqātē' 'al tāš'ītā' d-Ātōr* (Notes on the history of Assyria; Figure 3). Its ninety-two pages contain a speech on the Patriarchate of the Church of the East; a list of the names and dates of the Patriarchs; various poems; lists of names and dates of Assyrian and Babylonian kings; and outlines of his unpublished works.

Both works have been reprinted (*The Throne of Saliq and Notes on the History of Assyria*, Chicago, ATOUR Publications, 2005).

Sarmas lists three works attributed to Mīrzā Dāwīd in addition to “various dramas, novels and poems” (I, p. 236): *Tāš'ītā' d-mdī(n)tā' d-'Ūrmī* (History of the city of Urmia); *Mi'mrē' 'al ḥayē' d-ḥa(d)kmā' malkē' Ātōrāyē'* (Essay on the lives of some Assyrian kings); *Nūhāre' 'al tāš'ītā' d-Mōgōlāyē'* (Commentaries on the history of the Mongols). None of these appears to survive today. It is possible that some of this material was incorporated into his other works that have survived in manuscript (Sarmas, I, p. 236). Sarmas provides the text of four of Mīrzā Dāwīd's poems: *Bā'ōtā'* (Petition); *'Ūdrānā' d-milat* (Help of the nation); *'Aḡrā' u-qūštā'* (Reward and justice); and *'al tāš'ītā' d-Ātōr rabtā'* (On the history of Assyria the Great) (Sarmas, II, pp. 71-82).

Mīrzā' Dāwīd survived World War I and the exodus of the Assyrians from Urmia in July, 1918. He was forced to leave behind all of his writings in Urmia. The manuscripts that survive today were written during his years as a refugee in France and Chicago. He was unsuccessful in getting his works published in Chicago and decided to rejoin the Assyrians in the Middle East. He died shortly



after his arrival in Baghdad in 1931. His surviving works in manuscript include (1) *Tāš'ītā' d-Ātōr min šūrāyā' hal zāḥnā' d-qā'im* (History of Assyria from the beginning to the present time), a massive work of 1,290 pages covering ancient Assyrian history, Syriac Christian history, and the modern history of the Assyrian people (fac. repr., 3 vols., Chicago, ATOUR Publications, 2005). (2) *Hāqyat d-Šamīrām maliktā' d-Ātōr* (Story of Shamiram, queen of Assyria), 350 pages. (3) *Hāqyat d-'Aslē' w-Kārām* (Story of Asli and Karam), 240 pages. (4) *Hāqyat d-Kūriš gūrā' wad- 'Ānūh brātā' d-ḥāltēh* (Story of Cyrus the Great and his cousin Asnuh), 240 pages. (5) *Dkārā' min Dāwīd Gīwargīs Mālik qā' brōnōh mūḥibā' Šmū'ēyl* (Remembrance from Dāwīd Gīwargīs Mālik for his beloved son Samuel), 230 pages. This manuscript contains a collection of poems in Assyrian and Azeri Turkish, written in Assyrian letters, and a short history entitled *Bēt ma'mrā' w-šarbtā' d-mālikē' d-Sipūrḡān* (The house and genealogy of the Maliks of Sipūrḡān).

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