



## PÎREMÊRD

---

**PÎREMÊRD** (Pers. Piremard “old man”; b. Solaymāniya, 1867; d. Solaymāniya, 19 June 1950), pen-name of Tawfîq, son of Maḥmud, son of Ḥamza (in Kurdish: Tewfîq kurî Mehmûd ‘Aḡa kurî Hemze ‘Aḡa), Kurdish writer, journalist, and public intellectual. A leading poet of his time, he made indispensable contributions to the development of modern Kurdish literature, his own works reflecting the course it took. He lived much of his early and later life in Solaymāniya, in present-day northeastern Iraq.

His was a family of means that valued education, and thus at the age of six he began reading the Quran and a little later took up studies at the local mosque. Under the tutelage of its imam he acquired a knowledge of Arabic and Persian through the reading of poetry, and as a teenager he tried his hand at writing poetry in both languages. He traveled widely in Kurdistan, deepening his knowledge of Kurdish poetry and folklore and experimenting with a writing style of his own. He was much influenced by Kurdish poets, especially *Nalî* (1800-56), Mewlewî (*Mawlawi*; 1806-82), and Hacî Qadirî Koyî (Ḥāji Qāder-e Koyi; 1816-94).

Pîremêrd’s first career was as a public official, and between 1882 and 1898 he held various posts in the local administration, among them, in 1886 chief clerk at the court of justice in Solaymāniya and in 1895 an assistant administrative judge in Karbalā’. Beginning in the 1890s he spent much time in Istanbul. He studied law at the university and became a lawyer and was a member of the *meclis* (high council) of Istanbul. In 1899 he went on a pilgrimage to Mecca and henceforth became known as Hacî Tewfîq Beg (Ḥāji Tawfîq Beg). In 1908 he



joined other Kurdish writers and intellectuals in establishing the Komeleya Alîkarî û Peşketina Kurd, which devoted itself primarily to cultural matters, and he published poems in its newspaper under the name Tewfîqê Silêmanî (Tawfiq-e Soleymanî). Further successes as an administrator awaited him: *kaymakam* (governor) of the district of Hakkari in 1909 and *mutasarref* (*motaşarref* “governor”) of the Sanjak of Amasya in 1918.

He left Istanbul in 1920 with his wife and two sons and returned to Solaymāniya. He ended his government service about the same time and devoted himself to literature and journalism. In 1926 he established a publishing house and founded the newspaper *Jîyan* “Life” with a colleague, and in 1937 he became the sole owner and editor of the renamed *Jîn* “Life” (Hawar, pp. 32-42). While fully engaged in the important issues of the day, he wrote continuously—poetry, short stories and sketches, and newspaper articles.

He is best known for his poetry, which combines the forms and meters of classical Kurdish poetry with contemporary themes. He wanted poetry to speak to a wide audience, and thus he drew on the spoken language and kept his verse simple and close to the rhythms of folklore. He was an avid collector of popular sayings and proverbs, which he turned into poetry (*Penda peşîman*, 1936), and of folk stories (*Galte û gepi*, 1970). A believer in the didactic value of poetry, he urged his audiences, especially women and girls, to read and study, as in his poem *Xozge* (1948; Aşîna, p. 302). He thus made it a point to bring his poetry before large public gatherings, as on New Year’s Day. None of his poems were revolutionary, but they were filled with patriotic sentiments that stirred all who heard them, like *Newroz* (Pers. *Nowruz*; 1948), which became a kind of Kurdish national anthem (Aşîna, pp. 152-53). He also wrote poems for children, an innovation in Kurdish literature, and he reworked the famous epic *Mam û Zin*. One of the first Kurdish short story writers, he was inspired by heroic events in Kurdish history and wrote several historical works himself, among them, *Dwazde swarey Merîwan* (1935) and *Mehmûd ‘Ağa* (1942).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

Umêd Ašina (Omid Āšenā), *Pîremêrd û pêdaçuneweyekî nuêy jiyan û berhemekanî*, Erbil, 2001.

Mehmed Rasul Hawar, *Pîremêrdi nemîr*, Baghdad, 1970: on his career, pp. 12-95, and on his poetry and other works, pp. 97-443.

Refiq Hilmi, *Şîr û edebiyatî kurdî*, Erbil, 1988, pp. 81-97.

Fa'îq Huşiyar (Fā'eq Hoşyār), *Dîvanî Pîremêrd*, 1st ed., Baghdad, 1990.

Maruf Khaznadar, *Ocherk istorii sovremennoi kurdskoï literatury*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 165-69.

Elaedîn Sucadî, *Edebî kurdî û lêkolînewey edebî kurdî*, Baghdad, 1968, pp. 300-306.