

Introduction

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Folk literature, in any nation, reflects a set of ideas related to its daily life, as these ideas express the beliefs, traditions and lifestyle of the society. They also carry distinctive messages directed to all its members, allowing the individual to identify with them and integrate into his folklore heritage.

Myth is considered one of the oldest forms of folklore, containing translations of messages, holding power, immortality, values, knowledge, advice, opinions, ancient history, as well as collective imagination. These translations are rooted in the beliefs and aspirations of those peoples, and reflect concepts such as immortality, good and evil, weakness and strength, creativity and beauty, failure and victory, spirituality, rise and fall, and many other similar concepts.

Though, this myth might be associated with a particular nation, the modifications and additions reflect its adaptation to the changing temporal context. With the passage of time and the evolution of thought, changing traditions, and contemporary progress, nations tend to abandon their old ideas and reshape their myths, which may negatively affect the original content. As a result, the researcher may lose many facts related to ancient life, leading to the adoption of weak interpretations of history, social structure, and geography. Moreover, myth plays a major role in preserving history, geography, traditions, civilization, etc.

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Undoubtedly, this genre is timeless in nature, subject to some updates over time, that given its constant pursuit of immortality in its content. In our current era, its influence has extended to include deep fantasy literature, cinema, and electronic games, just as it used to attract young and old and influence the formation of their thoughts. So, it can be said that collective imagination has found its way to immortality through myths.

Kurdish mythology is not void without that, as is the case with the symbol of the snake, as it represents a mixture of constant change, renewal and eternity, in addition to its ability to adapt to different historical eras. It brings itself into the present, occupies our thoughts, and introduces us to our ancestors, their way of thinking, their logic, their worship, and their methods of education.

Zakho Center for Kurdish Studies has organized the 9th International Scientific Conference on Kurdish Mythology from the aspects of literature, language, history and sociology. The center received a group of local and international researches, as its main mission was to enhance understanding on Kurdish mythology. Comments and criticisms of Kurdish and foreign scholars towards these texts were also highlighted, focusing on the roots of Kurdish mythology and exploring beliefs and sanctity, as well as comparing the similarities and differences between Kurdish mythology and global mythology.

The main objective of this conference is to explore the Kurdish mythology, both known and hidden, and to identify the similarities and differences between it and world myths. It also seeks to shed light on the views and ideas of Kurdish ancestors about gods, natural phenomena, and society, in addition to studying the structure of the Kurdish family, animal symbols, and other cultural elements.

The main questions of this conference revolve around several fundamental issues, including: To what extent have these myths, despite the busyness and passage of time, been able to form an educational issue and make the education of children or the entire society its main goal? How comprehensive and broad was the Kurdish worldview, and in what areas did ancient Kurdish scholars employ their intelligence? Did the gods play a pivotal role in Kurdish mythology as in other world mythologies, and were the Kurds influenced by the gods of the moon, demons, snakes, serpents, and others, or were they afraid of them and under their control? Finally, does the logical aspect of mythological thought overwhelm the illogical aspects?

However, the hypotheses about Kurdish mythology contribute to proving its validity and its overlap with other myths around the world. In addition, there is a similarity in the existence of gods, their roles and their influence.

The conference was officially announced on July 1, 2024, and according to the deadlines, (160) primary abstracts for the conference have been sent, (129) of which were approved and (31) were rejected. (103) research papers were also submitted to the scientific committee of the conference, and after being reviewed by experts, (55) research papers were approved, while (48) research papers were rejected.