Enduring Threads: An Ethnographic Report on Kurdish Female Traditions

I. Introduction: The Diverse Tapestry of Kurdish Womanhood

Kurdish female traditions present a rich and heterogeneous mosaic, shaped by centuries of history, diverse geographies across the vast territory of Kurdistan—which spans parts of modern-day Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria—varied religious affiliations, and distinct socio-economic contexts, including tribal, nomadic, rural, and urban lifestyles.[1] This report endeavors to explore these multifaceted traditions, acknowledging that there is no single, monolithic "Kurdish woman." Instead, a spectrum of experiences and practices defines Kurdish womanhood, reflecting a complex interplay of cultural continuity and adaptation.[1] The traditions are not static entities preserved in isolation; rather, they are in a constant state of flux, influenced by internal social dynamics, protracted political struggles, the pervasive forces of modernization, and the increasing interconnectedness of globalization.[5]

The traditions associated with Kurdish women are a product of a significant interplay between historical context, such as the Ottoman era and the subsequent formation of post-colonial nation-states, and pronounced regional variations within Greater Kurdistan. Furthermore, the profound impact of socio-political movements, including the long-standing Kurdish national struggles for autonomy and rights, alongside emergent feminist activism exemplified by philosophies such as Jineology, has been instrumental in shaping and continually reshaping female traditions.[1]

A central theme that emerges from an examination of Kurdish female traditions is the persistent tension between deeply entrenched patriarchal structures and the remarkable agency, resilience, and adaptability demonstrated by Kurdish women. This dynamic is not merely a narrative of women coping with restrictive circumstances but is a testament to their active role in shaping and resisting within their specific contexts. Numerous accounts describe Kurdish society as traditionally patriarchal, with women historically facing limitations on their rights, exclusion from certain public spheres, and, at times, negative portrayals in traditional oral forms like proverbs.[1] However, concurrently, historical and contemporary records highlight Kurdish women's significant participation in military endeavors, their assumption of leadership roles, and a degree of freedom that, in some historical periods and contexts, surpassed that of women in neighboring Middle Eastern societies.[1] Their involvement in the arts, the preservation of oral traditions, and their pivotal roles in modern political and feminist movements further underscore this active presence.[5] This juxtaposition reveals that Kurdish female traditions are not a simple story of oppression but represent a dynamic interplay of patriarchal constraints and enduring female agency. The "traditions" themselves are often the very sites of this contestation. Understanding these traditions,

therefore, necessitates moving beyond a binary of victimhood versus heroism to appreciate the nuanced strategies women have historically employed and continue to employ to navigate, negotiate, and transform their social and cultural environments. This inherent resilience is a core, defining characteristic of Kurdish womanhood.

Furthermore, the concept of "tradition" itself, within the Kurdish context, is fluid and often contested. What is considered "traditional" is frequently subject to reinterpretation, challenge, and adaptation, particularly in response to political mobilization, experiences of displacement, and the formation of diaspora communities. Historical accounts demonstrate shifts in practices such as veiling, participation in public life, and even religious interpretations, as seen, for example, in the Yazidi community's response to the atrocities committed by ISIS.[1] Political movements, notably the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), and the development of Jineology, have actively sought to redefine gender roles and cultivate new "traditions" centered on equality and female leadership, often by reinterpreting historical narratives or cultural symbols.[5] The experiences of Kurdish women in the diaspora also contribute to a continuous re-evaluation and adaptation of traditions, as communities navigate new cultural landscapes while striving to maintain connections to their heritage.[3] Consequently, "tradition" is not a fixed historical artifact but a living process. For Kurdish women, it often serves simultaneously as a resource, a constraint, and a site of ongoing struggle. This report aims to capture this dynamism, exploring the enduring threads of tradition alongside the forces of change that continue to shape the lives of Kurdish women.

II. Social Fabric and Familial Roles

A. Traditional Family Structures

The foundational unit of traditional Kurdish society is the patrilineal lineage, where households are typically assembled around the male head of the family.[8] This structure emphasizes mutual support and defense, particularly within the context of ancestral villages where kin groups reside in close proximity. Such a system traditionally dictates patterns of inheritance, lines of authority, and the broader social organization of the community.

The extended family constitutes the core social and economic entity, known as the *mal*. This unit often resides under a single roof, referred to as *xani*, or within a family compound, which for semi-nomadic pastoralist groups is termed *zoma*.[8] The *mal* is a corporate entity where production, reproduction, distribution, and consumption activities take place. Shared meals and resources are common even when nuclear family sub-units—consisting of a mother, father, and their children—begin to form separate dwellings within the larger family compound.[8] According to tradition, marriage does not immediately lead to the creation of an independent household; often, the oldest brother and his family are obliged to remain with his parents.[8] As family resources expand, younger married brothers may build their own houses, gradually enlarging the family compound. This collective nature of the *mal* underscores the embeddedness of individual roles, including those of women, within the larger kin group, highlighting their crucial, often domestic, contributions to the functioning and sustenance of this central socio-economic unit.

B. The *Kabanî*: The Female Head of Household

Within the traditional Kurdish household, alongside the male head (*malxî*), there is often a recognized female head, the *kabanî*. The *kabanî* has clearly defined duties and responsibilities concerning household production, the distribution of resources within the domestic sphere, and the allocation of goods for consumption.[8] Her role is integral to the day-to-day management and smooth operation of the household.

Despite these defined duties, which confer a degree of operational authority, the decision-making power of the *kabanî*, and women in general (unless they are heads of households in their own right, such as widows), is traditionally subordinate in broader household and extra-household affairs, particularly in rural patriarchal settings.[8] Her authority is often circumscribed to the domestic sphere, likely operating within parameters established by male household heads.

Nevertheless, women have found ways to exercise power and agency. One indirect method involves negotiating patriarchal structures by, for example, choosing social isolation from family affairs, an act that could publicly damage the family's reputation and thus exert pressure.[8] Historically, women in seminomadic pastoral tribes enjoyed more privileges and a status that allowed for nominal equality with their husbands, suggesting that economic contribution and mobility can influence gender dynamics.[8] More recently, the engagement of peasant women in wage labor in urban settings has been observed to weaken traditional patriarchal structures and grant women greater decision-making power within their households.[8] The fact that women resort to indirect power tactics or gain more explicit power through external economic changes indicates that the traditional *kabanî* role, while providing a domain of responsibility and respect, did not inherently provide a pathway to equal power with men in all spheres. It appears that significant empowerment beyond the domestic domain often necessitated a disruption of traditional socio-economic patterns. This suggests the *kabanî* role may have, in some ways, served to maintain patriarchal structures by confining women's primary influence to the internal management of the household.

C. Gender Dynamics: Historical and Comparative Perspectives

Historically, Kurdish women in certain contexts and periods possessed more rights and experienced greater freedoms compared to women in some other Islamic societies in the Middle East.[1] European travelers and some Kurdish writers from the 19th and early 20th centuries noted their active participation in labor, social activities such as dancing and singing alongside men, the common absence of veiling in many communities, and even instances of women assuming roles as tribal chiefs or rulers.[1]

However, these relative freedoms existed within a societal framework that was, and in many ways remains, fundamentally patriarchal.[1] For instance, in the powerful Bidlis principality, women were reportedly excluded from public spaces like marketplaces, and such transgressions could even be punishable by death.[1] While polygyny was not the norm for the majority, it was practiced by the ruling landowning class, the nobility, and the religious establishment.[1] Furthermore, women's voices (*deng*, a Kurdish word that also signifies "vote")

were often marginalized in public discourse, and their influence in familial affairs typically grew only with age, work, and childbearing.[2]

This historical "freedom" must be contextualized carefully. While women might have enjoyed more public visibility or participation in economic activities compared to their counterparts in some neighboring cultures, this often coexisted with severe patriarchal controls, particularly concerning female sexuality and family honor (*namus*). The Kurdish writer Mahmud Bayazidi, while noting women's active roles and lack of veiling in the mid-19th century, also documented that families would kill women with impunity for suspected pre-marital or extra-marital sexual relations, a measure intended to instill fear and uphold honor.[1] The persistence of honor killings in contemporary times, despite legal and activist efforts against them, underscores the deep roots of these patriarchal controls.[1] Thus, the observed "freedoms" of Kurdish women were often conditional and did not equate to full autonomy or equality, but rather represented a different manifestation of patriarchy that allowed for certain public and economic roles while maintaining stringent control over other aspects of their lives.

D. Evolution of Roles: Impact of Modernity and Political Movements

The 20th and 21st centuries have witnessed significant transformations in the roles and traditions of Kurdish women, largely driven by modernization efforts, political upheavals, and concerted activism. In the early to mid-20th century, state-led modernization campaigns, such as Reza Shah's 1936 decree for coercive unveiling in Iran, directly targeted traditional female attire. The government viewed colorful traditional Kurdish dress as "ugly and dirty," promoting Western clothing instead, a move often resisted by Kurdish communities who termed the imposed dress "Ajami" (foreign/Persian) rather than European.[1] Conversely, short-lived political entities like the Republic of Mahabad (1946) actively encouraged women's participation in public life and supported women's education.[1]

A pivotal shift occurred from the 1970s and 1980s onwards with the rise of Kurdish political and national liberation movements. Organizations such as Komala and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) increasingly mobilized women, recruiting them into their military and political ranks. In some instances, these movements abolished gender segregation within their camps and provided women with combat and military training, marking a significant departure from traditionally prescribed roles for many.[1] This participation inherently challenged existing gender norms and provided avenues for female leadership and empowerment.

From within these movements, particularly associated with Abdullah Öcalan and the PKK, the philosophy of Jineology (Kurdish: *jineolojî*, "women's science") emerged.[6] Jineology is a feminist framework that seeks to reclaim and centralize women's role in society, positing that the liberation of society as a whole is unattainable without the liberation of women. It critiques patriarchy, capitalism, and the nation-state system, advocating for women's active participation in all spheres of life, including self-defense, and the creation of alternative, democratic, and ecological social structures.[6] This philosophy has had tangible impacts, most notably in Rojava (Northern Syria), where it has informed governance structures like the co-chair system (mandating one male and one female leader for all institutions) and led to significant legal reforms, including the banning of forced marriages, child marriages, and

polygamy.[2]
Despite these progressive developments, Kurdish women continue to face enduring challenges. Issues such as domestic violence, forced marriages, honor killings, and, in some regions like Iraqi Kurdistan, female genital mutilation (FGM), persist as serious concerns, indicating an ongoing struggle against deeply entrenched patriarchal norms and practices.[1]
Conflicts in the region, such as the Anfal campaign against Kurds in Iraq in the late 1980s, have had devastating and specific impacts on women. The Anfal led to mass killings, disappearances, and widespread displacement, forcing women into new roles as survivors, widows, and heads of households, often compelling them to navigate traditional patriarchal expectations under extremely traumatic circumstances.[25]
The intersection of national liberation struggles and feminist aspirations has been complex. While political and military mobilization has offered Kurdish women unprecedented opportunities for empowerment and leadership, these movements have sometimes been double-edged swords. There have been instances where women's rights were relegated to a secondary concern once broader political objectives were perceived to be achieved, or where women felt pressure to conform to a "tough male face" or a desexualized ideal to gain acceptance and trust within male-dominated movement structures.[5] The taboo around women's sexuality within some movements further underscores this tension.[5] This suggests that while national liberation struggles can be a powerful catalyst for women's emancipation, they do not automatically guarantee it. The fight for genuine gender equality often necessitates a "second struggle" within the broader national movement itself, a challenge that ideologies like Jineology attempt to address by making women's liberation a central and non-negotiable tenet.[6]

III. Rites of Passage: Marking Life's Transitions

Rites of passage are pivotal in Kurdish society, marking significant life transitions with distinct customs and rituals where women often play central, though sometimes prescribed, roles. These traditions, while varying regionally and by religious affiliation, underscore shared cultural values surrounding birth, marriage, and death.

A. Birth Traditions

In Kurdish society, pregnancy and childbirth are generally considered joyous occasions, symbolizing the continuation of life and divine blessing. Expectant mothers traditionally receive increased care, intimacy, and kindness from their husbands and relatives.[26] During a woman's first pregnancy, her family often takes on the responsibility of buying and preparing clothes and furniture for the anticipated baby.[26]
Historically, births frequently occurred at home, attended by a midwife (*pîrik* or a similar local term), who played a crucial role in the delivery and the initial care of the newborn.[27] Hospital births became more prevalent for high-risk situations or in urbanized areas. In some regions, such as Diyarbekir (though these practices were shared among various ethnic groups residing there), specific rituals followed the birth. For instance, the severed umbilical cord might be

showered with *baksheesh* (monetary gifts), with the amount sometimes varying based on the baby's sex.[27] The disposal of the umbilical cord itself carried profound symbolic meaning, reflecting and reinforcing gendered life paths from the very beginning. For a baby girl, the cord might be placed in a sewing machine drawer or a dowry chest, signifying a future tied to domestic skills and marriage. Conversely, a baby boy's umbilical cord might be buried in the garden of a madrasa (religious school) or a secular school to encourage a scholarly path, or in an artisan's shop to foster a trade.[27] These early-life rituals serve as powerful instruments of cultural reproduction, shaping individual identity and societal structure along gendered lines long before conscious choices are made, demonstrating the deeply embedded nature of gender differentiation in traditional frameworks.

Postnatal practices involved meticulous care for both the mother and the newborn. The postpartum mother, known as the *nefse*, traditionally observed a recuperation period, often lasting around 40 days.[26] This was considered a vulnerable time, as underscored by the saying, "The new mother's grave remains open for forty days".[27] She was protected from cold, sometimes dressed in blue attire to ward off the evil eye, and provided with special foods believed to help restore energy lost during childbirth.[26] The newborn received its first bath from the midwife and was swaddled. A headdress, such as a *şübara*, might be placed on the baby's head, and the forehead could be tightly wrapped with gauze to prevent frontal bossing.[27] A custom in some areas involved a softly spoken and mild-natured person rubbing honey on the baby's lips, with the belief that the child would inherit these qualities and that the honey would aid in passing the first stool.[27] To protect against the evil eye, the baby's face might be covered with a silk cloth; if the baby developed jaundice (known as *reng değişimi*, or change in color), its face would be covered with a yellow sheet, and the father might pin a golden 'Maşallah' coin on the baby's attire.[27]

A significant postnatal celebration is the "seventh night" ritual, common in many Middle Eastern cultures including those with Kurdish populations.[27] This event formally welcomes the baby into the community and involves close relatives and neighbors. Festivities could include a *mevlit* (Mawlid) recital, followed by entertainment where women often played a central role, engaging in music with instruments like the darbuka (goblet drum), oud, and tambourine, and dancing.[27] The baby would be passed from lap to lap, and lullabies and songs in various local languages, including Kurdish, Turkish, Zazaki, Syriac, Armenian, and Arabic, would be sung.[27] The new mother might be adorned with her gold jewelry and have her hands and feet dyed with henna.[27] For Muslim Kurdish families, other Islamic birth rites may also be observed, such as the *Aqiqah*, a celebration involving the sacrifice of an animal (typically a sheep or goat) and the distribution of its meat to family, friends, and the poor, often performed on the seventh day after birth. On this day, the child's hair is also traditionally shaved, and an equivalent amount of its weight in silver is donated to charity.[29] The Adhan (the Islamic call to prayer) is recited into the newborn's right ear and the Iqamah (the second call to prayer) into the left, symbolically introducing the child to the core tenets of Islam.[29]

B. Marriage Customs (*Xwazgînî* - Courtship/Proposal)

Marriage in Kurdish tradition is a cornerstone of social life, pivotal for establishing alliances and reinforcing social hierarchies within and between tribes or clans.[19] It is a process steeped in customs where women are central, yet their agency in these transactions has historically been shaped by collective familial and communal interests.

Courtship and Engagement (Xwazgînî)

Traditionally, many Kurdish marriages were arranged.2 The courtship process, known as xwazgînî, commenced when elder men and women from the prospective groom's family paid a formal visit to the girl's home to declare the bachelor's request for her hand in marriage.30 This was not always a swift process; the bride's family might undertake a thorough investigation of the groom and his family, which could take weeks or even months.32 During the initial visit, the groom's representatives would state their purpose. If the bride's family showed interest, a customary act involved asking the prospective bride to serve water to the guests, providing an opportunity for them to observe her demeanor, character, and appearance.30 If this interaction was positive, a second visit might be arranged, this time including the groom himself, allowing the young couple to interact under supervision.30 A charming folk belief associated with this period was that if a sugar cube a girl was holding were to accidentally drop into her teacup, it signified an impending marriage proposal.31 Once both families and, ideally, the young couple consented to the union, the engagement would be formalized. Elder women from the groom's family typically presented the bride with a gold souvenir as a token of engagement. Following this, the elders and parents from both sides would collaboratively choose a date for the wedding ceremony.[31]

Wedding Ceremonies

Kurdish wedding celebrations are vibrant affairs, rich with music, dance, and communal participation, often commencing the day before the main event.1 Traditional Kurdish dances like the Halay or Govend are central, with men and women often dancing together in lines or circles.1 Storytellers and musicians performing love songs contribute to the festive atmosphere, with songs often praising the couple.30

During the ceremony, the groom formally places a ring on the bride's finger.[30] It is customary for the groom's relatives to offer presents, frequently gold or money, to the bride and also to her parents as a gesture of appreciation.[30] The religious solemnization of the marriage for Muslim Kurds is typically performed by a *mela* (Islamic cleric) according to Sharia law.[31]

A significant element in some traditional Kurdish weddings is the presentation of the *shara buke*, a bridal shawl, often adorned with white, yellow, and red colors, which is ceremoniously placed on the bride's head, usually towards the conclusion of the festivities.[30] In some traditions, two rings might be given to the bride: the primary one symbolizing the engagement, and a second one signifying the husband's right to visit his bride.[30] Other customs include the bride wearing a white veil and being accompanied by a trusted older female relative to the ceremony room.[31] Folk beliefs also surround the wedding: it was thought that if a bride placed her veil on an unmarried girl's head, that girl would be the next to marry. The presence of divorced women in the bride's preparation room was sometimes considered a bad omen. Another belief held that tying the *Sorani* (a part of traditional Kurdish attire) during the marriage ceremony could bring misfortune to the couple.[31]

Dowry and Bride-Price

Economic exchanges are a significant aspect of traditional Kurdish marriages, underscoring their role as socio-economic alliances.

- **Bride-Price (*Naxt* or *Qelen*):** This is a payment made by the groom's family to the bride's family, typically in cash, gold, or other valuables such as livestock, household goods, or even historically, a rifle.[32] It could be paid at betrothal or in installments. The amount varied based on the social standing and wealth of the families involved but was often reduced in cases of kin-marriages (e.g., father's brother's daughter/son). The bride herself did not traditionally claim this payment; fathers often used the bride-price received for their daughters to fund the bride-prices for their sons.[35]
- **Trousseau/Dowry (*Cihêz*):** This comprises the goods and property the bride brings into the marriage, prepared by her family. It typically included bedding (with the bride's bed being a central item), Kurdish rugs and carpets, clothing, household utensils, and often jewelry and livestock.[32] The Kurdish saying, "*Qız beşikte, çeyizî sandıxta*" ("The daughter in the cradle, her dowry in the chest"), illustrates the long-term preparation of the dowry by the bride's mother, reflecting both her love and her family's status.[32] Cross-stitched canvasses depicting the mythical Shahmaran were considered indispensable items for a dowry in some areas.[32]
- ***Kaleb* or *Sirdan* (Milk Money / *Heqê Şîrê*):** This is a distinct, courteous gift, usually of gold jewelry, presented by the groom's family to the bride's mother. It is not typically negotiated as part of the bride-price but is given as a token of appreciation for her role in raising her daughter and as compensation for the loss of her daughter's labor in the natal household.[35]

These economic traditions highlight that marriage was not merely a union of individuals but a transaction and alliance between families, where women were pivotal but often not the primary agents controlling these exchanges.

Levirate and Sororate Marriages

To maintain family lineage, ensure the well-being of children, and keep land inheritance within the family, two specific forms of marriage were traditionally practiced:

- **Levirate:** If a woman was widowed, particularly if she had young children, she was often obliged to marry her deceased husband's brother.[35]
- **Sororate:** If a man lost his wife before she bore a child, or if she died leaving young children, her lineage would typically provide another wife to the man, often a younger sister of the deceased, usually with a lowered bride-price.[35] These practices further underscore the communal and strategic aspects of marriage in traditional Kurdish society.

C. Death and Mourning Rituals

Death in Kurdish communities is marked by solemn rituals where women play significant and visible roles in expressing grief and honoring the deceased. For Muslim Kurds, funeral rites generally follow Islamic customs, which include the washing (*ghusl*) and shrouding (*kafan*) of the body—with women performing these rites for deceased women—followed by the funeral

prayer (*Salat al-Janazah*), burial, and a customary mourning period, typically three days, during which the bereaved family receives condolences.[28]

A particularly distinctive Kurdish mourning tradition, especially for women, is *Por Kur*, the ritual cutting of hair.[38] When a woman lost her husband, she would often cut her hair, sometimes hanging the shorn locks over his tomb. This act was a profound public declaration of her deep despair and often signified a vow not to remarry, symbolically burying her beauty and her life as a wife with her deceased husband. The term *Por Kur* itself could also be used as a curse, indicative of extreme grief or misfortune. This practice was not limited to the loss of a spouse; it could also be performed upon the death of other significant individuals, such as a hero killed in battle or a revered tribal leader.[38] While this tradition has become less common in its original form, often replaced by wearing black mourning attire for forty days, it has seen revivals in moments of profound collective trauma, such as during the Yazidi genocide, when many women reportedly cut their hair in mourning for their male relatives.[38]

The evolution of mourning traditions is evident in contemporary contexts, particularly concerning female fighters within Kurdish political movements. The funeral ceremonies for these women have transformed into powerful sites for political mobilization and the assertion of a new gender dynamic.[39] In a striking departure from traditional funerals often dominated by men, women have assumed leading roles in these ceremonies: carrying coffins, leading processions, and delivering eulogies. These acts challenge historical male dominance in public rituals and serve to inscribe women as nation-builders and pivotal figures in national narratives. Such funerals become platforms for articulating both Kurdish national aspirations and gender-egalitarian ideals, demonstrating how even deeply ingrained traditions can be reinterpreted and transformed to reflect new socio-political realities and to assert female agency in unprecedented public ways. This evolution highlights that mourning traditions, while intensely personal, are also socially constructed and highly communicative. For Kurdish women, these practices have expanded from expressing personal loss and fulfilling social roles to becoming potent symbols of political identity, resistance, and the active re-negotiation of gender power within the public sphere.

IV. Cultural Expressions: Adornment, Crafts, and Arts

Kurdish women's traditions are vividly expressed through their distinctive clothing, intricate crafts, and rich participation in music, dance, and storytelling. These cultural forms are not merely aesthetic but are deeply interwoven with identity, social communication, and historical memory.

A. Traditional Clothing and Adornment

Traditional Kurdish female attire is renowned for its vibrant colors, elaborate designs, and regional diversity, serving as a powerful visual marker of cultural identity.[40] It is often said that one can discern a Kurd's region of origin from the specifics of their clothing.[40]

Key Garments:

The centerpiece of the traditional ensemble is typically a long dress or gown known as the kras. This garment is usually floor-length, crafted from light, often sheer fabrics, and

distinguished by its long sleeves that culminate in a flared, dangling triangular piece called a faqiana. These faqiana can be artfully knotted together behind the dress or wrapped and knotted individually around each arm, adding a unique stylistic element.40

Beneath the *kras*, women traditionally wear a long, wide-strapped camisole, the *zher kras*, and shimmering bloomers called *derpey*.[41] Over the *kras*, a short vest, or *helik*, often made of solid-colored velvet-like fabric, is commonly worn. Alternatives to the *helik* include a long, robe-like coat known as a *kawa*, which may be sleeveless or have sleeves, or a short, tailored jacket called a *salta*.[40] Colorful belts, or *pshtwen*/*pshten*, cinch the waist, and brightly colored pants are also an integral part of the outfit.[40]

Regional variations are notable. For example, Iranian-style Kurdish dresses tend to be sewn from slightly stiffer fabric, feature a gathered skirt, and are often complemented by a contrasting or matching fabric draped around the shoulders and attached at the waist as a cummerbund.[41]

The following table summarizes some of the key traditional Kurdish female garments and accessories:

Table 1: Traditional Kurdish Female Garments and Accessories

Garment/Accessory (Kurdish Name)	Description	Material (if specified)	Significance/Use	Sources
Kras	Long, floor-length dress/gown with long sleeves ending in *faqiana*	Light, sheer fabrics	Primary outer garment	[40]
Faqiana	Flared, dangling triangle at the end of *kras* sleeves	Same as *kras*	Decorative sleeve element, can be knotted	[41]
Zher Kras	Long, wide-strapped camisole	Shimmering fabric (often)	Undergarment worn beneath *kras*	[41]
Derpey	Bloomers	Shimmering fabric	Undergarment worn beneath *kras*	[41]
Helik	Short vest	Solid-colored velvet-like fabric	Worn over the *kras*	[40]
Kawa	Long, robe-like coat, with or without sleeves	Varied	Alternative outerwear to *helik*	[41]
Salta	Short tailored jacket	Varied	Alternative outerwear	[41]
Pshtwen / *Pshten*	Colorful belt / cummerbund	Varied	Worn around the waist	[40]
Klaw	Decorated skull	Varied, decorated	Headwear, design	[41]

	cap		can indicate regional origin	
Lechik	Headscarf with tassels	Varied, with tassels	Headwear, design can indicate regional origin	[41]
Kollwana	Women's cape	Varied	Traditional cape, experiencing a resurgence	[41]
Pelaw	Shoes	Varied, often colorful	Footwear, often high-heeled, may be embroidered with beads or precious stones	[40]
Jewelry (*Mlwanka*, *Gwara*, etc.)	Necklaces, earrings, bracelets, rings	Gold, silver, precious stones	Adornment, can signify status, dowry; worn by women of all ages	[40]

Accessories and Jewelry:

Jewelry is an essential component of Kurdish women's adornment, worn by women of all ages. This includes long necklaces (mlwanka), earrings (gwara), bracelets (bazn), and rings (mstila).40 Married women often proudly display the gold jewelry they received as part of their engagement or wedding gifts.41 Historically, the quality and quantity of a woman's jewelry could serve as an indicator of her family's societal status, and older women, particularly those who had received a substantial dowry, might wear more expensive pieces.40

Headwear is also significant, with various decorated skull caps (*klaw*) or headscarves adorned with tassels (*lechik*) being common. The specific designs of this headwear traditionally served to identify the wearer's region of origin.[41] Another traditional element, the women's cape known as a *kollwana*, is reportedly making a comeback.[41] Footwear (*pelaw*) is typically colorful, often high-heeled to complement the floor-length dresses, and can be elaborately embroidered with beads or even precious stones.[40]

Changes and Influences:

Over time, the styles of traditional Kurdish female dress have undergone changes, possibly influenced by religious sensibilities. A noticeable trend is that older women now tend to wear darker, more muted colors, while younger women and girls continue to embrace the brightly colored traditional gowns and dresses.40

The increasing prevalence of modernization, the adoption of the dress codes of host countries (for those in the diaspora or under different national administrations), and a general welcoming of Western styles have contributed to a decline in the daily wear of traditional Kurdish dress.[40] In Iran, for example, Kurdish women often adhere to prevailing Islamic dress codes, which may include wearing a covering cloth over their clothes and a hijab to cover their hair.[40] In Turkey, the secular government's past ban on headscarves in universities and

government jobs also impacted dress practices, leading to controversy and adaptation.[40] A particularly stark example of external pressure was Reza Shah Pahlavi's 1936 decree for the coercive unveiling of women in Iran, which explicitly targeted traditional attire. The colorful Kurdish female costume was officially treated as "ugly and dirty" and mandated to be replaced with "civilized" (i.e., Western) dress, a policy that was met with resistance.[1]
This dynamic illustrates that Kurdish women's attire is more than mere clothing; it is a visible and often contested battleground for cultural preservation, assimilationist pressures, and self-expression. Choices about what to wear can be deeply personal and profoundly political, reflecting an ongoing negotiation between tradition, modernity, religious observance, and national identity.

B. Traditional Crafts

Kurdish women have historically been skilled artisans, with their crafts representing a vital part of Kurdish cultural heritage. Textile arts, in particular, are prominent, though other crafts also flourish.

Textile Arts:

- **Carpet and Rug Weaving (*Glimseneh*/Seneh rug):** This is arguably the most significant Kurdish folk art.[42] Kurdish rugs and carpets are renowned for their distinctive medallion patterns, intricate all-over floral motifs (such as the Mina Khani design), and bold "jaff" geometric patterns. They are characterized by the use of high-chroma blues, greens, saffrons, as well as terracotta and burnt orange hues, further enriched by the lustrous quality of the wool used.[42] The *Glimseneh* (Seneh rug), primarily woven in the Sanandaj region of Iranian Kurdistan, often features floral designs with sharp angles, a characteristic that some interpret as a reflection of the rugged mountainous geography of the area.[43] A remarkable aspect of Kurdish carpet weaving is the improvisational skill of the weaver; motifs are often created ad-lib, without a pre-drawn pattern. This makes each piece a unique and direct impression of the weaver's natural surroundings, personal experiences, and artistic vision, resulting in an extraordinary variety of designs.[43] The symbols woven into the rugs can be deeply communicative, conveying the dreams, wishes, and hopes of the weaver.[42]
- **Julayi (Fabric Weaving):** *Julayi* refers to the traditional art of fabric weaving in Kurdistan, a craft with a long and storied history. The term "Jula" in Kurdish signifies mobility and vitality, perhaps reflecting the dynamic movements the weaver must perform during their work. *Julayi* fabrics are versatile and used in the creation of various items, including prayer mats, bedspreads, traditional Kurdish clothing, and rugs.[43]
- **Embroidery:** Embroidery is another notable textile art practiced by Kurdish women, adding intricate and colorful details to clothing and other textile items.[42]

While not always explicitly documented as exclusively female domains, weaving crafts such as carpet making and *Julayi* are strongly associated with women's labor in many traditional societies. The description of the weaver creating motifs ad-lib [43] suggests a personal, artistic endeavor often undertaken by women within the domestic sphere, transforming utilitarian objects into expressions of cultural identity and individual creativity.

Other Crafts:
Beyond textiles, Kurdish artisans, including women, engage in a variety of other crafts, often utilizing locally sourced materials:

- **Klash (Kurdish Giveh):** This is traditional hand-woven footwear, highly valued for being light, cool, comfortable, and exceptionally durable. Made from natural materials like yarn and cotton, *Klash* is considered ideal footwear for long walks and navigating difficult, rocky terrain. A unique feature of *Klash* is that the shoes are not made in right and left pairs; each shoe can be worn on either foot, and alternating them is often recommended to increase their lifespan.[43]
- **Felt-making:** An ancient craft with a history stretching back over three thousand years, felt-making involves a laborious and time-consuming process of rubbing wool with pressure, heat, and humidity until it becomes a single, dense piece of fabric that can then be cut and sewn. Felt is used to create warm garments such as hats, saddlebags, and shawls.[43]
- **Wicker Weaving with Judas Tree Fibers:** Kurdish artists utilize the natural fibers obtained from the Judas tree, valued for its beautiful color, to weave a variety of products, including baskets, sieves, and bread and fruit baskets.[43]
- **Woodworking:** Due to the abundance of wood in many parts of Kurdistan, woodworking is a developed craft. It is used to produce decorative items, jewelry boxes, walking sticks, and, significantly, musical instruments such as the *daf*, violin, *tar*, *setar*, *qanun*, and *santur*.[43]
- **Leather-working and Metal Ornamentation:** These are also prominent traditional crafts, with Kurds being particularly known for their skill in copper-working.[42]

The prevalence of wood, wool, and leather in Kurdish handicrafts reflects the close relationship between the people, their environment, and their traditional livelihoods, such as livestock raising.[43]

C. Music, Dance, and Storytelling

Music, dance, and storytelling are vibrant and integral components of Kurdish cultural life, with women actively participating as performers, creators, and preservers of these traditions.
Dance:
Communal dances are a cornerstone of Kurdish social gatherings and celebrations. A distinguishing characteristic of Kurdish folk dancing, setting it apart from some other Middle Eastern cultures, is the frequent co-participation of men and women dancing together in the same line.1 These dances typically follow floor patterns of a circle, semi-circle, or straight line, with dancers linked by holding hands, standing shoulder to shoulder, interlacing pinky fingers, or placing hands across each other's lower backs.11
Popular Kurdish dances include the *Halay*, a term widely used across regions (also known as *Govend* in the Kurmanji dialect and *Hełperrkê* or *Çopî* in the Sorani dialect). Other notable dances are the *Delîlo*, a circular dance originating from Turkey that emphasizes graceful movements of the arms and torso, often accompanied by songs and hand-clapping, and the *Canary* (or *Koçerî*), a dance from Syria characterized by complex and dynamic foot

movements, jumps, and kicks, usually accompanied by percussion and singing.[11] Each village or region may boast its own signature dances and variations, reflecting local customs and histories.[11] The leader of the dance, known as the *sergovend* (in Kurmanji) or *serçopî* (in Sorani), often holds a colored cloth (*destmal*) and guides the group's movements.[11] Dances frequently begin at a slow tempo and gradually accelerate, demanding harmonious coordination.[34]

While some dances may be men-specific, characterized by speed and athletic feats, women's dance styles are noted for their more delicate and nuanced movements involving the feet, shoulders, knees, and neck.[11] Beyond its festive role, dance, particularly the *Halay*, is viewed by many Kurds as an act of resistance and cultural affirmation, symbolizing solidarity, resilience, and the proud celebration of their ancestral heritage in the face of adversity.[34]

Music and Song:

Traditional Kurdish music is rich and varied, often accompanying dances with instruments like the zurna (a type of oboe) and the davul (a large double-headed drum) being most common for dance music.34 Other traditional instruments include the flute and the ut-ut (a stringed instrument similar to a guitar).42

Women have historically participated and continue to participate as singers (*stranbêj* in Kurmanji; *şayîr* or *goranîbêj* in Sorani).[11] Historical records and contemporary accounts attest to the presence of influential female Kurdish musicians. Compilations of works by artists such as Elmas Muhamed, Meyrem Xan, Gulbihar, Nesrîn Şêrwan, and Ayşe Şan indicate a legacy of female vocalists.[12] In the modern era, artists like Iman Rasha are gaining international recognition, bringing Kurdish music to a global audience while expressing a deep connection to their cultural heritage.[44] Many other female Kurdish musicians are popular today.[45]

Storytelling and Folklore:

Oral traditions have been a vital means of preserving Kurdish history, culture, and values, and women have played a central role in this transmission.

- ***Zarbêj* and *Dengbêj* Women:** These women are recognized as crucial keepers and transmitters of Kurdish oral culture, including history, art, literature, and musical memory. *Zarbêj* women are often the source creators of various oral forms such as laments, songs, folk songs, tales, and stories, while *Dengbêj* (a term often, but not exclusively, referring to male bards) are the performers and reciters of epic poems and historical narratives.[12] Epic romances, such as the famed *Mem û Zîn*, were traditionally recited by a *dengbêj*, often accompanied by a stringed instrument like the *tembûr*.[11] Despite being fundamental sources of this tradition, *Zarbêj* women faced significant challenges in performing professionally in public *dengbêj* environments due to prevailing social and religious constraints and the male-dominated nature of public performance. Consequently, many had to record their works under difficult conditions, sometimes using pseudonyms or having their work attributed to others, especially given that the Kurdish language itself was often banned or suppressed.[12] This suggests that much of this vital cultural preservation work by women occurred in informal settings, perhaps within domestic spaces or women-centered gatherings, before any formal documentation or recording became possible. The contemporary efforts to compile and

archive their works represent an important act of reclaiming and validating this historically female-led cultural labor.

- **Representation of Women in Proverbs:** Kurdish proverbs (*gotinên pêşiyan*) offer a complex and often contradictory window into societal views on women. This oral tradition reflects the multifaceted and negotiated realities of women's lives and status within a society that, while patriarchal, also recognized their contributions in specific domains. An academic study identified seven main themes in the portrayal of women in Kurdish proverbs: women as irrational, women as equal to men, women as subordinate, women as "the other one," women as sacred, women as powerful, and women as a mysterious subject. The overarching finding was that the "Kurdish woman" is depicted as an "Uncertain Subject".[46] Some proverbs reflect negative stereotypes, portraying women as weak, hesitant, credulous, dishonest, or even as commodities, embodying both happiness and sadness, peace and war, while men are seen as beyond failure.[9] For example, a proverb humorously used when a beautiful woman marries a perceived "undeserving" or unattractive man is, "Every sweet cantaloupe is eaten by a donkey".[48] Conversely, other proverbs highlight women's strength, importance, or equality. Examples include: "A lion is a lion, whether male or female" (*Şêr şêr e, çi jin çi mêr e*), suggesting inherent capability regardless of gender.[49] "The home's stability relies on women" emphasizes their crucial role in the family unit.[50] Another proverb, "A shy woman is worth a city; a shy man is worth a goat," places a high value on female modesty.[51] This range suggests that proverbs are not a monolithic expression of a single cultural view but a collection of diverse, context-dependent statements that can be selectively invoked in social discourse to uphold or challenge existing norms. They reveal societal ideals, fears, and everyday negotiations of power and status, rather than a simple, unified "traditional view" of women.
- **Female Figures in Epics and Folklore:** Kurdish folklore is rich with powerful and influential female characters who embody diverse aspects of womanhood, from tragic heroines to wise goddesses and resilient protectors.
    - **Zîn (from *Mem û Zîn*):** Zîn is arguably the most iconic heroine in Kurdish literature, the central female figure in Ehmedê Xanî's 17th-century epic *Mem û Zîn*. Portrayed as angelically beautiful, righteous, and good, she and her sister Sitî courageously disguise themselves as boys during the Newroz (Kurdish New Year) festival, where they encounter Mem and his friend Tacdîn, who are similarly cross-dressed as girls.[52] Zîn's profound love for Mem, and their tragic inability to unite due to the machinations of the villain Beko and the disapproval of Zîn's brother, the Mîr (prince), forms the core of the epic. Her eventual death from grief after Mem perishes in prison solidifies their status as star-crossed lovers.[54] Beyond a simple love story, *Mem û Zîn* is often interpreted allegorically, with Zîn symbolizing Kurdistan and Mem representing the Kurdish people, their tragic separation reflecting the political plight of the Kurds.[16] In a modern reinterpretation, the PKK has utilized Zîn as a symbol of pure, ideological love for the nation, drawing parallels between her and Zilan, the first Kurdish female

suicide bomber, thus transforming her image into one of national sacrifice.[16] The epic also notably discusses female same-sex desire, albeit through the lens of mistaken identity due to cross-dressing.[52]

- **Sitî (from *Mem û Zîn*):** Zîn's sister, Sitî, shares in the initial adventure of cross-dressing and also falls in love with Mem's friend Tacdîn (who is disguised as a girl). Unlike Zîn, Sitî is permitted to marry Tacdîn, and her story provides a contrasting, happier romantic outcome within the epic.[52]
- **Edûlê (from *Derwêşê Evdî*):** Edûlê is a Sunni Kurdish girl who is the beloved of Dewrêşê Evdî, the Yazidi hero of this famous Kurdish epic. Their love story unfolds against a backdrop of historical enmity and conflict between Kurdish tribes of different faiths.[57] The epic explores themes of love transcending religious and tribal divides, sacrifice, and resilience, with Edûlê being the catalyst for much of Dewrêş's heroic actions and internal conflict.[58]
- **Şamaran (Shahmaran):** A prominent mythical figure in Kurdish (and broader Middle Eastern) folklore, Şamaran is depicted as a half-woman, half-snake creature. She is revered as the queen of snakes, a goddess of wisdom, abundance, and a guardian against evil spirits.[60] The legend typically involves a young man (often named Tahmasp or Jamasp) who stumbles upon her hidden underground kingdom. Şamaran imparts her wisdom to him but is eventually betrayed, leading to her death, which, paradoxically, often results in the transfer of her wisdom or healing powers. In Kurdish regions like Kermanshah and Dersim, women traditionally prepare a ceremonial porridge called "Dakulaney Şamaran" from wheat, lentils, and spices, distributing it to neighbors to invoke Şamaran's blessings, particularly against snake bites and scorpion stings.[60] Her image is a common motif in Kurdish art, embroidery, and household decorations, including on dowry items, symbolizing protection and wisdom.[32]
- Other strong female figures in Kurdish folktales include the wise and strong treasurer girl in "Hebhenare," and the brave and wise mother goat in "Shanga and Panaga," who rescues her children from a fox.[50] The Iranian folktale of "Molla Badji," which has variants among Iranian peoples including Kurds, features sisters who demonstrate initiative and cleverness after being wronged.[63] These stories, often transmitted orally by women, contribute to a cultural narrative where female strength, wisdom, and resilience are acknowledged and celebrated.

V. Religious and Spiritual Traditions

The religious landscape of the Kurdish people is notably diverse, encompassing a range of faiths and spiritual practices that significantly influence female traditions. While the majority of Kurds are Sunni Muslims, predominantly of the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence, there are also substantial communities adhering to Shi'a Islam, Alevism (known among Kurds as *Rêya Heqî* or 'The Path of Truth/God'), Yazidism (Êzidîtî), and Yarsanism (also known as Ahl-e Haqq or Kaka'i). Furthermore, influences from ancient Iranian religions, including forms of

Zoroastrianism, and pre-Islamic nature veneration are discernible in various cultural practices.[33] This religious pluralism is essential for understanding the varied expressions of female spirituality and ritual participation among Kurdish women.

A. Kurdish Muslim Women

Participation in Mosque Activities and Religious Education:
Historically, the transmission of basic Islamic knowledge to children, both male and female, was a common practice, though for girls, this education often took place within the home.65 Formal Islamic study in public institutions like mosques or madrasas was largely considered a male prerogative.66 However, it is important to note that in the early period of Islam, women were involved in the transmission of Islamic knowledge, particularly Hadith studies, especially in major centers of learning like Damascus and Cairo. While this involvement became sporadic and largely ceased by the 16th century, there has been a significant revival of formal Islamic study among Muslim women since the 1970s globally, including the establishment of female madrasas and study circles.66
Architectural evidence from the early Islamic period, such as the Prophet's mosque in Medina which had a designated "Gate of the Women" (*Bab an-Nisaa*) and where women occupied positions within the main prayer chamber, indicates a historical precedent for women's presence and participation in mosque activities.[67] Contemporary efforts are underway to standardize female sections in mosques, aiming for a fair distribution of space and services that are consistent with Islamic jurisprudence and women's rights, rather than being solely based on local customs.[67]
The religious education of children in Kurdish Muslim families often begins at a very young age. Parents typically teach their children the names of God and the prophets, the five pillars of Islam, the six articles of faith, and basic prayers.[65] Modern resources, such as Quran learning books in the Kurdish language, are also utilized to instill Islamic values and stories in children.[68] Community-based initiatives, like the "Maghrib Al-Qur'an Santri Movement" (though the specific Kurdish context of this example is not fully clear from the snippet), aim to educate children and adolescents in Quranic recitation and the application of its values in daily life.[69] Within the family structure, older women, particularly grandmothers and mothers, traditionally play a crucial role in preserving and informally transmitting Islamic traditions, moral values, and religious stories to younger generations within the household.[33]
Mawlid (Mevlit) Traditions:
The Mawlid an-Nabawi, commemorating the birth of Prophet Muhammad, is an important religious and cultural event observed by many Kurdish Muslims. Celebrations typically involve gatherings where religious poetry (Na'at) praising the Prophet is recited, sermons are delivered, feasts are shared, and sometimes supererogatory fasting is observed.72 In Kurdish regions, particularly in Iraqi Kurdistan (e.g., Sulaymaniyah, Erbil, Kirkuk), Mawlid (often referred to as Mevlit or Mewlûd) is celebrated with the singing of couplets from various poets and is also an occasion for gatherings related to other life events, such as deaths and their anniversaries (e.g., the çile, a gathering forty days after a death).73 While the provided sources do not explicitly detail Kurdish women leading formal public Mawlid events as a

widespread tradition, their participation in family and community-based social gatherings for Mawlid is implied by the nature of these communal celebrations.72 Historical Kurdish female figures like Dayka Amina, Dayka Halima, and Dayka Aisha are lauded for embodying resistance and community spirit, suggesting respected roles for women, though not specifically tied to leading Mevlit ceremonies.74 The Mawlawi Kurdish Cultural Centre in Manchester, UK, lists "Social women events" and "Religious events" among its activities, indicating organized religious gatherings for women in diaspora communities.75

Sufism:

Sufism, the mystical dimension of Islam, has historically offered spaces where women could achieve spiritual prominence and participate actively. Figures like Rabia of Basra are well-known early female Sufi mystics, and historical records mention women Sufis who functioned as spiritual directors and mentors.76 Some Sufi orders, such as the Mevlevi, had female shaykhas (spiritual leaders) and encouraged women's participation in ceremonies like the sema (whirling dervish ceremony), often in their own circles but sometimes jointly with men.76 While specific details on Kurdish female Sufi figures or widespread organized women's Sufi gatherings are not extensively covered in the provided material, the general inclusivity of Sufism towards female spiritual aspirants suggests a potential for, and likelihood of, such involvement within Kurdish Sufi traditions, though this may be an under-documented area.5 Women's participation in pilgrimages to saints' tombs and performing dhikr (remembrance of God) in homes or groups is a common Sufi-influenced practice.76

Influential Muslim Kurdish Female Scholars:

Kurdish history includes notable female Islamic scholars. Fakhr-un-Nisa Shuhdah Umm Muhammad al-Baghdadiyyah (died 1112 CE) was a distinguished Kurdish scholar of Islam, a muhaddithah (female expert in Hadith studies), and a skilled calligrapher. Known as "Fakhr-un-Nisa" (the Glory of Womanhood) and "Shuhdah al-Baghdadiyyah" (the Writer of Baghdad), she studied Hadith extensively with renowned teachers in Baghdad, narrated important Hadith collections, and delivered scholarly lectures on history, linguistics, and literature. She commanded great respect, attracting students from distant lands, and with the support of Caliph Al-Muqtadi Bi-amr-Allah and donations, she established a significant Darsgah (institution of learning) on the banks of the Tigris River, where hundreds of students pursued their studies under her patronage.77 Her contributions underscore a historical precedent for Kurdish women achieving high levels of Islamic scholarship and educational leadership.

B. Yazidi (Êzidî) Women

Yazidism is an ancient, monotheistic faith with origins in pre-Zoroastrian Iranic religions, though it has incorporated elements from other traditions over millennia.[33] Yazidis believe in one God, *Xwedê*, who created the world and entrusted its care to seven Holy Beings or Angels (*Heft Sirr*), with Tawûsî Melek (the Peacock Angel) being the most preeminent.[79] Nature holds profound significance; fire, water, air, and earth are considered sacred elements that must not be polluted.[79] Yazidis traditionally pray facing the sun, which they revere as a symbol of God's light or glory.[79] Their religious tradition is largely oral, conveyed through sacred hymns (*qewls*)

and narrative stories (*çiroks*) in the Kurmanji dialect of Kurdish.[81]

Women's Participation in Rituals and Festivals:

Yazidi women actively participate in various religious practices, both at home and in communal settings, particularly at the sacred site of Lalish in Iraqi Kurdistan.

- **Daily/Home Practices:** While formal prayer is not obligatory for all Yazidis at set times, the devout often pray at sunrise and sunset, facing the sun. This involves washing the hands and face, crossing arms over the body, and addressing prayers to Tawûsî Melek or Shams (the sun).[80] A common personal devotional item is the *Dazike Batzmie* or *Basmbar*, a sacred white and red string made from spun wool or cotton, worn around the neck or wrist for good luck and as a symbol of faith.[81] Many Yazidis also keep soil from Lalish in their homes or carry it as a talisman.[80]
- **Festivals:** Women play integral roles in Yazidi festivals. During *Sersal* (New Year), also known as *Çarşema Sor* (Red Wednesday), which occurs on the first Wednesday of April according to the Eastern calendar, women engage in specific rituals. They boil and intricately paint eggs, which symbolize the universe and the renewal of life in spring.[84] They prepare a special type of bread called *Saok*, mixed with cooking oil, and distribute it to neighbors. On the morning of the festival, young girls and boys collect red anemones and other spring flowers, which, along with colored eggshells, are hung by housewives above the doorways of homes, often with a bit of flour paste, as a symbol of the new year and blessing.[84] Women also visit cemeteries to honor the dead during this festival and may participate in other local customs, such as the *stikosh* ritual, where pieces of a shepherd's stick are broken and distributed over women milking sheep to bless the flock and increase milk production.[84] During other Eids (festivals), Yazidi women again visit cemeteries and distribute food to the poor.[84]
- **Pilgrimage to Lalish:** Lalish is the holiest shrine for Yazidis, and every Yazidi is expected to make a pilgrimage there at least once in their lifetime if possible; those living nearby often visit annually.[80] Women participate fully in these pilgrimages. Inside the sacred complex, which pilgrims enter barefoot and in modest attire, a popular tradition for all is the tying of *girêk* (knots) in colorful silk scarves hung around pillars and trees. Each color can represent one of the seven angels, and each knot signifies a prayer. It is believed that untying a knot made by a previous pilgrim helps grant that person's wishes.[80] Women also participate in the communal food preparation and sharing that occurs during festivals at Lalish, sealing bonds of togetherness.[80]
- ***Tawusgerran* (Peacock Tour):** This is a biannual tradition where *Qewals* (trained reciters of Yazidi sacred texts) and religious figures tour Yazidi villages with a *sencaq* (a sacred bronze or copper effigy of a peacock representing Tawûsî Melek). The purpose of these tours is to provide religious guidance, interpret sacred texts, resolve communal disputes, and maintain spiritual connections between Lalish and outlying communities.[81] Women, as integral members of these villages, would be among those receiving guidance and participating in the communal events associated with the *Tawusgerran*.

Female Religious Roles and Post-ISIS Adaptations:

The Yazidi social and religious structure is traditionally patriarchal, with a strict caste system

(Sheikhs, Pirs, and Murids) and prohibitions against conversion or interfaith marriage.13 While the highest religious leadership roles, such as the Baba Sheikh (spiritual head) or Peshimams, are held by men 14, women do have recognized spiritual roles. One such role is that of the xuşka axiretê (sister of the hereafter), a lifelong spiritual sister, typically from a Sheikh lineage, who is assigned to a Yazidi man or woman from adolescence. This spiritual sibling helps guide the individual through rites of passage, such as weddings, and is believed to aid their soul in reaching the next world after death.88 There is also mention of nuns residing at Lalish.80 The term koçek refers to seers, who are traditionally male and led by the Baba Sheikh 88; however, the existence of female ascetics or devotees in related traditions (like fakra in some Sufi contexts) might suggest parallels, though specific Yazidi female koçeks are not detailed in the provided sources.

A profound adaptation of Yazidi tradition occurred in the aftermath of the 2014 genocide perpetrated by ISIS. Thousands of Yazidi women and girls were abducted, subjected to horrific sexual violence, and forcibly converted to Islam.[24] Given the traditional Yazidi prohibition against conversion (even under duress) and strict rules about marrying outside the faith, the fate of these survivors upon return was a critical issue. In an unprecedented and compassionate response, the Yazidi Spiritual Council, under the leadership of the then Baba Sheikh, Khurto Hajji Ismail, issued a decree welcoming these women and girls back into the community with honor. This landmark decision allowed for their reintegration and even their baptism back into the Yazidi faith at Lalish, a rite that would have been impossible before.[13] This doctrinal shift, driven by extreme circumstances and the advocacy of figures like Khidher Domle and Nadia Murad, demonstrated the capacity of Yazidi tradition to adapt in the face of existential crisis, particularly concerning the status and well-being of its women.

C. Yarsani (Ahl-e Haqq / Kakai) Women

Yarsanism, whose followers are also known as Ahl-e Haqq ("People of Truth") or Kaka'i (in Iraq), is an esoteric faith found primarily among Kurds in western Iran and eastern Iraq.[33] Core beliefs include the concept of *mazhariyyat* (successive manifestations of the Divine Essence in human form) and *dunaduni* (transmigration of the soul, or reincarnation).[91] Sultan Sahak is a central divine manifestation, and the *tambur*, a stringed musical instrument, is sacred and played during religious ceremonies (*jam*).[91] Yarsanism explicitly rejects class, caste, and rank, setting it apart from some other indigenous faiths.[92]

Role in Jamkhaneh (Cem) Ceremonies and Religious Teaching:

The primary Yarsani communal religious gathering is the jam (or cem), held in a jamkhaneh (meeting house). These sessions, which involve the recitation of sacred verses from the holy book Kalâm-e Saranjâm, the playing of the tambur, and often a communal meal with sacrificed food, are presided over by a Sayyed, a male spiritual leader believed to be descended from a sacred lineage.93

The role of women in the *jam* itself is limited. They are generally not active participants in the core rituals, which are male-centric. While they may be present or nearby, and food left over from the *jam* is often distributed to women and children outside the main circle of male participants, they do not typically join the circle or lead prayers or musical performances

within it.[93] However, women often play a crucial role in preparing the bread for the sacrificial meals offered at *jams*, while other food items are typically prepared by men.[93] There is no mention in the provided sources of formal religious leadership roles for Yarsani women equivalent to that of a *Sayyed*, and the described ranks of spiritual attainment within the faith are framed in masculine terms.[93]

Khatun-e Rezbar and Other Female Divine Manifestations:

Despite the limitations in ritual leadership, Yarsanism holds certain female figures in high esteem within its cosmology. The most significant is Khatun-e Rezbar (also Dayerak Rezbar or Ramzbār), who is revered as the mother of Sultan Sahak, the primary divine manifestation of the Fourth Epoch.70 She is considered one of the Haft Tan ("The Seven Persons" or Archangels), a group of key divine manifestations, and is often the only female among them.91 A central Yarsani narrative recounts the virginal conception of Sultan Sahak by Khatun-e Rezbar after a pomegranate seed, pecked by a bird, fell into her mouth while she slept under a pomegranate tree.70 The pomegranate is considered a sacred tree, further linking Khatun-e Rezbar to ancient symbols of fertility and divine feminine power, possibly connecting to the broader cult of the mother goddess Ana/Anāhitā.70

Additionally, Fatimah, the daughter of Prophet Muhammad, is recognized in Yarsani belief as an incarnation of a female angelic being during the Second Epoch of divine manifestation.[91] The presence of these revered female figures within the Yarsani pantheon highlights a significant female principle in their spiritual worldview, even if this does not translate into equal participation for women in contemporary ritual leadership.

D. Alevi (Rêya Heqî) Women

Kurdish Alevism, often referred to by its adherents as *Rêya Heqî* ("The Path of God/Truth") or *Elewîtî*, represents a distinct syncretic faith on the periphery of Shia Islam, with unique rituals, sacred site practices, and mythological discourses.[33] Alevis venerate Ali ibn Abi Talib, Prophet Muhammad's son-in-law, and their beliefs incorporate elements of pre-Islamic Turkish shamanism, ancient Anatolian-Iranian spiritual motifs, and Islamic mysticism.[33]

Religious Philosophy and Practice Regarding Gender:

A core tenet of Alevi philosophy that distinguishes it from more orthodox interpretations of Islam is its emphasis on the genderless nature of the 'soul' (can). This belief underpins the traditional practice of men and women worshipping together during Alevi religious gatherings, known as cem ceremonies.96 This co-participation is often highlighted by Alevis as evidence of inherent gender equality within their faith, contributing to a perception of Alevism as 'modern,' 'secular,' and more liberal in its gender attitudes compared to mainstream Sunni or Shia Islam.96 Generally, Alevism imposes fewer religious restrictions on daily life; for example, the consumption of alcohol is often permissible, and women are not typically required to cover their hair.96

Female Religious Roles: Ana and Pîr

Within Kurdish Alevi (Reyā Heqī) communities, women can attain significant spiritual status and leadership roles. A predominant position for Kurdish women saints is anaship, or becoming an Ana (literally 'mother').70 The role of an Ana is a respected and important

spiritual position for women, and it remains relevant in contemporary Reyā Heqī practice. Remarkably, an Ana can even assume the functions and authority of a pîr (a male spiritual leader or elder), particularly if a male pîr is absent or if circumstances necessitate it.70 This capacity for women to hold such high spiritual authority, interchangeable with traditionally male roles, is a distinctive feature of Kurdish Alevism and points to a strong undercurrent of reverence for female spiritual power. The contemporary example of Sevim Yalıncakoğlu, an Alevi woman who leads a congregation in Istanbul and is depicted in the film "Ana," further illustrates the potential for and reality of female spiritual leadership within Alevi communities.100

Discrepancies between Ideal and Practice:

Despite the Alevi discourse emphasizing gender equality and the visible roles women can play, some research suggests that a gap may exist between these ideals and the lived realities of Alevi women.96 Studies, such as Nimet Okan's work in a Turkmen Alevi community 101, indicate that patriarchal attitudes and practices can persist in daily life and even within the cem ritual itself. The very discourse of inherent gender equality within Alevism can, paradoxically, sometimes make it more difficult for women to voice complaints about inequalities or to challenge patriarchal norms that continue to operate within their communities.96 This highlights a tension between the progressive theological tenets of Alevism regarding gender and the socio-cultural realities that Alevi women navigate.

E. The Mother Goddess Ana (Anāhitā)

The figure of Ana, or Anāhitā, represents a profound and ancient layer of Kurdish spiritual heritage, a mother goddess whose veneration predates many of the Abrahamic religions prevalent in the region today.[70] She is a cosmological figure primarily associated with water, rain, fertility, wisdom, and healing. As the goddess whose life-giving waters flow from mountain springs to lakes, ensuring the survival of creation, Ana is seen as a protector of women, promoting their fertility and ensuring safe childbirth.[70] Her name is cognate with the Avestan *Anāhitā* ('The Immaculate One'), the Persian *Anāhid* or *Nāhid*, and the Eastern Iranian *Nanā*. In Zoroastrian hymns, she is lauded with the epithets *Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā* ('damp, powerful, pure').[70] It is believed that her cult may have evolved from prehistoric river goddesses of proto-Indo-European peoples and later absorbed attributes from pre-existing goddesses in regions like Mesopotamia where her worship spread.[70]

The memory and influence of Ana are preserved in various aspects of modern Kurdish culture, demonstrating the persistence of these ancient beliefs:

- **Rituals:** Specific rituals, often performed by women, connect directly to Ana's attributes. The *Būka Bārānē* (Rain Bride) ceremony, performed during droughts, involves young girls (and sometimes boys) carrying a wooden doll dressed as a Kurdish woman (representing Ana) through villages, singing songs to invoke rain. Community members often splash water on the effigy and offer treats to the children.[70] Other water-related ceremonies, such as those for newborns (washing with water containing wheat seeds) and new brides (a first public outing to the village well), also reflect Ana's connection to fertility and well-being.[70]

- **Sacred Sites:** Numerous natural sites and ancient temples are associated with Ana. Bābā Gūrgūr in Kirkuk, known for its eternal flames, was a shrine to Ana where Kurds, especially women, sought blessings and fertility.[70] The Chārsteen cave in Duhok province is believed to be a fire temple dedicated to Ana, evidenced by the discovery of her emblem, a fire-altar.[70] Archaeological finds at the Rabana-Merquly fortress in the Zagros Mountains (a Parthian-era sanctuary near a water source) also suggest a cultic link to Anāhitā.[70] In the Dersim region, a "Spring of Ana" was known, its water called 'mother's milk' and used in reconciliation ceremonies.[70]
- **Symbolism:** The pomegranate (*hanār*) is considered the sacred tree of goddess Ana in Kurdish culture, symbolizing blessing, fertility, health, and wealth. It is a common motif in Kurdish rugs, representing abundance and protection.[70]
- **Links to Yarsanism, Yezidism, and Alevism:** The persistence of powerful female deities or spiritual principles in these faiths is seen as connected to the ancient cult of Ana. Figures like Khātūn-i Razbār in Yarsanism and Pīra Fātima in Yezidism, both part of their respective heptads of divine beings, show strong links to Ana.[70] The Reyā Heqī (Alevi) tradition of *anaship* for women saints directly continues her veneration, where respected female spiritual leaders are effectively seen as embodiments or successors of Ana.[70] Even among some Muslim Kurds, shrines dedicated to "Ana the Pîr" (Ana the Elder) existed, or her attributes were transformed into the veneration of revered Islamic female figures like "Mother Aisha" or "Mother Fātima".[70]

This evidence of syncretism, where pre-Islamic, possibly matriarchal or female-centric spiritual elements like the mother goddess Ana persist, are reinterpreted, or co-exist with later patriarchal Abrahamic influences, is a significant aspect of the Kurdish spiritual landscape. It suggests that as new religions were adopted, older indigenous beliefs related to powerful female deities were not entirely erased but were often absorbed, transformed, or subtly integrated. This provides a unique cultural resource for contemporary Kurdish women navigating identity and spirituality, indicating that their spiritual heritage is not solely defined by the dominant patriarchal interpretations of major religions but is enriched by older, indigenous layers where female spiritual power was significant.

F. Newroz Celebrations

Newroz, the celebration of the spring equinox and the Kurdish New Year (typically March 21st), holds immense cultural and symbolic significance for Kurds across all regions and religious affiliations.[33] Rooted in ancient Zoroastrian traditions and pre-Islamic vernal festivals, Newroz symbolizes renewal, rebirth, the victory of light over darkness, and, particularly in the Kurdish context, resistance and liberation, often linked to the myth of Kawa the Blacksmith defeating the tyrannical King Zahhak.[33]

Women play a vibrant and increasingly assertive role in Newroz celebrations. They actively participate in the festivities, which traditionally include lighting bonfires, communal dancing (especially the *Halay* or *Govend*), singing, feasting, and wearing colorful traditional Kurdish attire.[102] In recent times, especially in regions facing political oppression like Iranian Kurdistan (Rojhelat), women's participation in Newroz has taken on heightened political significance.

The act of women celebrating openly, often in traditional dress and, notably, without the compulsory hijab (in Iran), has become a powerful act of defiance against restrictive state laws and a potent symbol of the broader struggle for freedom and women's rights, as exemplified by the "Jin, Jiyan, Azadî" (Woman, Life, Freedom) movement that gained global prominence following the death of Jina (Mahsa) Amini.[18]

Furthermore, Kurdish women's organizations have taken the lead in organizing Newroz events, such as lighting the first Newroz fire of the year on the ancient walls of Diyarbakır (Amed). These acts explicitly honor the history of Kurdish resistance and the pivotal role of women within the freedom movement, often evoking the memory of female figures of defiance like Zekiye Alkan, who set herself on fire in 1990 to protest the Turkish state's repression of Newroz celebrations.[103] Thus, for Kurdish women, Newroz is more than a cultural holiday; it has evolved into an active site for asserting cultural identity, expressing political aspirations, and championing gender liberation. The festival's ancient spiritual roots, connected to nature veneration and renewal, provide a powerful, unifying backdrop for these contemporary expressions of female agency and resistance.

The convergence of ancient spiritual traditions with modern political expression during Newroz, particularly through the visible and symbolic actions of women, highlights the dynamic nature of Kurdish female traditions. It showcases how cultural heritage can be re-energized and re-purposed to address contemporary struggles, with women at the forefront of these transformative processes.

The religious and spiritual lives of Kurdish women are thus characterized by a complex interplay of adherence to the tenets of their specific faiths, the preservation of ancient indigenous beliefs, and the adaptation of these traditions in response to social and political change. Religious spaces and practices can be simultaneously restrictive and liberating, offering avenues for female community, spiritual expression, and the preservation of cultural identity, even as they may also uphold patriarchal norms. The resilience of female spiritual figures and the active participation of women in evolving traditions like Newroz underscore their enduring spiritual agency.

VI. Historical Trajectories and Influential Kurdish Women

The history of Kurdish women is marked by a legacy of both significant influence and societal constraint. Across centuries and diverse regions of Kurdistan, women have emerged as rulers, scholars, poets, warriors, and activists, shaping their communities and contributing to Kurdish culture and political life, often navigating complex patriarchal structures.

A. Pre-20th Century Contexts

Early accounts from both Kurdish and external observers provide glimpses into the varied roles and statuses of Kurdish women before the 20th century. The 16th-century Kurdish historian Sharaf ad-Din Bitlisi, in his *Sharafnama*, noted the practice of polygyny among the Kurdish elite, aligning with Islamic tradition, but also documented instances of three Kurdish

women who assumed leadership of principalities after the deaths of their husbands, ruling effectively until their sons came of age. Bitlisi, while generally using degrading terms for women, extolled the ruling abilities of these women, even calling one a "lioness".[1] However, he also described restrictions, such as women in the Bidlis principality being barred from marketplaces under threat of death.[1]

In the mid-19th century, Mela Maḥmūd Bayazīdī, a learned Kurdish mullah, provided one of the first Kurdish accounts of women's lives in tribal, nomadic, and rural communities. He observed that the majority of marriages were monogamous and that women in these settings often did not veil. They actively participated in productive labor alongside men, as well as in social activities like singing and dancing. Nomadic women, in particular, were responsible for animal husbandry and would even take part in warfare when their tribe was attacked. Bayazīdī described them as being, simultaneously, men's "wives, slaves, and guards" as well as fighters.[1] He also praised Kurdish women for being "much wiser, accomplished, perceptive and humane than men".[21] European travelers of the same era and later often corroborated these observations, noting the absence of veiling among many Kurdish women, their relatively free association with men (including strangers and guests), and the existence of female rulers.[1]

This historical pattern of female leadership, though perhaps episodic or context-dependent, suggests a cultural thread that allowed for female authority, providing a backdrop to the prominent roles women would later play in 20th and 21st-century Kurdish movements.

Female Rulers and Leaders:

Several Kurdish women rose to positions of significant political and tribal leadership:

- **Lady Adela Jaff (Adela Khanem)** (late 19th-early 20th century): As ruler of Halabja and chief of the powerful Jaff tribe, she was renowned for her sound judgment, her efforts in restoring law and order, developing commerce, and building infrastructure. She famously saved the lives of British army officers during World War I, earning her the moniker "Princess of the Brave" from the British.[1]
- **Lady Halima Khanim of Hakkari:** She ruled the region of Bash Kala until she was forced to surrender to the Ottoman government following the suppression of the Bedir Khan revolt in 1847.[1]
- **Fatma:** Became chief of the Ezdinan tribe in 1909 and was known among her tribe as "the queen".[1]
- **Lady Maryam of the Nehri family:** Wielded great authority among her followers and negotiated with Russian forces for safe passage through tribal territory during World War I.[1]
- **Kara Fatima Khanum (Black Lady Fatima):** A female leader who commanded a battalion of Kurdish men during the Crimean War (1853-1856), capturing the imagination of Western observers.[2]
- **Mîr Mayan Khatun:** A Yazidi Princess from the Emirate of Sheikhan, she twice assumed the leadership role (Mîr) of the Yazidis following the deaths of her husband and later her son. She was recognized for her strong leadership skills, wisdom, and the fear and respect she commanded.[104]

Early Scholars and Poets:
Access to education, though generally limited for women, was a key pathway to influence for some, allowing them to contribute significantly to intellectual and cultural life.

- **Asenath Barzani** (1590-1670): A Jewish woman of Kurdish origin, she was a renowned Tannaith (female Talmudic scholar) and poet. She headed a Yeshiva (a Jewish institution for Talmudic study) in Kurdistan and is considered by some scholars to be the first female rabbi in Jewish history. She wrote many letters and published several works.[1]
- **Fakhr-un-Nisa Shuhdah al-Baghdadiyyah** (died 1112): A prominent Kurdish Islamic scholar, *muhaddithah* (female expert in Hadith), and calligrapher. Titled "Fakhr-un-Nisa" (Glory of Womanhood), she studied extensively, taught Hadith to numerous students, and established a large *Darsgah* (institution of learning) in Baghdad.[77]
- **Mestureh Ardalan (Mah Sharaf Khanom Mastoureh Ardalan)** (1805–1848): A Kurdish poet, historian, and writer from the Ardalan principality in Iranian Kurdistan. She is considered the first female published historian in Iran and excelled in Kurdish, Persian, and Arabic literature, having received private lessons when formal education for girls was not permitted.[1]

These historical figures demonstrate that even within predominantly patriarchal systems, avenues for female leadership, scholarship, and influence existed, often through exceptional individual talent, favorable social positions, or specific historical circumstances.

B. 20th Century and Contemporary Figures

The 20th and 21st centuries have seen Kurdish women increasingly at the forefront of political activism, armed struggle, and cultural production, building upon and often radically transforming earlier traditions of female agency.

Political Activists and Leaders:

- **Leyla Zana** (born 1961): A pivotal figure in contemporary Kurdish politics in Turkey. She was the first Kurdish woman to be elected to the Turkish parliament in 1991. Her decision to recite the parliamentary oath partly in Kurdish led to her imprisonment for ten years. An ardent activist for women's and Kurdish rights, Zana has been recognized as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International and remains a vocal advocate for peace and equality.[1] Her actions and resilience have made her an icon, with many Kurdish girls born in the 1990s being named Leyla in her honor.[106]
- **Sakine Cansız (Sara)** (1958–2013): A co-founder of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), Cansız is a legendary figure within the Kurdish freedom movement, often described as its most prominent female activist. Born in Dersim to an Alevi family and influenced by the oral histories of the Dersim Genocide, her life was dedicated to the Kurdish struggle and the organization of women within the movement.[1]
- **Leyla Qasim** (1952–1974): A Kurdish student and activist against the Iraqi Ba'ath regime. She was publicly executed in Baghdad in 1974 for her political activities, becoming a national martyr and a potent symbol of Kurdish resistance and sacrifice.[1]
- **Houzan Mahmoud** (contemporary): An influential Kurdish feminist writer, activist, and public speaker from Iraqi Kurdistan, now based in the UK. She is the editor of the

collection *Kurdish Women's Stories* and a co-founder of the Culture Project, an organization dedicated to promoting feminism, critical thought, and giving voice to Kurdish women in Kurdistan and the diaspora.[3]

- **Margaret George Shello (Dayika Peshmerga)** (1942-1969): An Assyrian Christian woman who joined her father in the Kurdish struggle for autonomy during the Aylul Revolution in Iraq in the 1960s. She is widely considered the first female Peshmerga (Kurdish fighter) and was known for her bravery and leadership in important battles, earning the affectionate title "Dayika Peshmerga" (Mother of Peshmerga).[2]
- **Hafsa Khan** (1891-1953): An early 20th-century feminist and Kurdish rights advocate in Iraqi Kurdistan. Born into an intellectual family, she worked to make education accessible to women by transforming her home in Sulaymaniyah into a night school. In 1930, she founded the 'Kurdish Women's Association,' one of the earliest women's organizations in the region.[104]

Artists, Writers, Musicians:

Kurdish women are also making significant contributions in the arts, using their creative expressions to explore themes of identity, resistance, memory, and transformation.

- **Hayv Kahraman** (born 1981): An Iraqi-Kurdish contemporary artist whose paintings often feature female figures and explore themes related to migrant lives, the brutality against women, and cultural memory. Her work frequently references traditional Kurdish clothing and patterns, juxtaposing them with stark, evocative imagery.[110]
- **Iman Rasha (Iman Badrkhan Salih)** (contemporary): A young Kurdish singer from Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan, who has gained international attention for her vocal talent. She expresses a deep connection to her Kurdish heritage through her music and aims to serve her nation through her art.[44]
- **"Ego Sum" Exhibition:** A significant 2025 art exhibition in Krakow, Poland, showcased the work of 14 female Kurdish artists from all parts of Kurdistan. The exhibition, titled "Ego Sum" ("I Am"), was a milestone in contemporary Kurdish art history, celebrating the voices, visions, and resilience of Kurdish women artists on an international stage. Their works explored personal narratives, collective memory, cultural heritage, and themes of identity, resistance, and transformation through various media.[111]
- **Zarbêj and Dengbêj Women:** Historically, figures like Elmas Muhamed, Meyrem Xan, Gulbihar, Nesrîn Şêrwan, and Ayşe Şan were instrumental as singers and creators in preserving Kurdish oral culture and music.[12] Their legacy continues to inspire.

The process of elevating contemporary activists and fighters like Sakine Cansız and Leyla Zana to "legendary" status within Kurdish society is noteworthy. This near-mythologizing serves to create powerful, modern role models and symbols that resonate with historical narratives of heroism and resistance. It demonstrates an active continuation and adaptation of traditions that honor influential women, thereby mobilizing support and providing inspiration for current struggles for national rights and gender liberation. This phenomenon blurs the lines between historical "tradition" and contemporary "legacy-building," indicating a dynamic cultural process where the past informs and energizes the present.

The following table provides a quick reference to some of the key female figures mentioned,

highlighting the diversity of their roles and impact:

Table 2: Influential Kurdish Women and Their Contributions (Select Examples)

Name	Era	Region/Affiliation	Key Contributions/Significance	Sources
Asenath Barzani	1590–1670	Kurdistan (Jewish)	Renowned Talmudic scholar, poet, head of a Yeshiva; considered first female rabbi by some.	[1]
Fakhr-un-Nisa Shuhdah al-Baghdadiyyah	Died 1112	Baghdad (Kurdish origin)	Islamic scholar (Muhaddithah), calligrapher; established a learning institution (*Darsgah*).	[77]
Mestureh Ardalan	1805–1848	Iranian Kurdistan (Ardalan)	Poet, historian, writer; first female published historian in Iran.	[1]
Lady Adela Jaff (Adela Khanem)	Late 19th–Early 20th C.	Iraqi Kurdistan (Halabja, Jaff tribe)	Ruler of Halabja, tribal chief; known for justice, economic development, aiding British officers.	[1]
Kara Fatima Khanum	Mid-19th C.	Ottoman Kurdistan	Military leader; commanded a Kurdish battalion in the Crimean War.	[2]
Hafsa Khan	1891–1953	Iraqi Kurdistan (Sulaymaniyah)	Early feminist, Kurdish rights advocate; founded night school for women and Kurdish Women's	[104]

			Association.	
Margaret George Shello	1942–1969	Iraqi Kurdistan (Assyrian, fought with Kurds)	First female Peshmerga; known for bravery in Aylul Revolution.	[2]
Leyla Qasim	1952–1974	Iraqi Kurdistan	Political activist against Ba'ath regime; executed, became national martyr.	[1]
Sakine Cansız (Sara)	1958–2013	Turkish Kurdistan (PKK)	Co-founder of PKK; influential female Kurdish activist and leader.	[1]
Leyla Zana	Born 1961	Turkish Kurdistan	Politician, activist for Kurdish and women's rights; first Kurdish woman in Turkish Parliament.	[1]
Houzan Mahmoud	Contemporary	Iraqi Kurdistan / UK Diaspora	Feminist writer, activist, editor of *Kurdish Women's Stories*; founder of Culture Project.	[3]
Hayv Kahraman	Born 1981	Iraqi Kurdistan / Diaspora	Contemporary artist; explores themes of migration, female experience, Kurdish identity.	[110]

VII. Challenges, Resilience, and Evolving Traditions

The narrative of Kurdish female traditions is one of profound resilience in the face of persistent challenges. While progress has been made, particularly through activism and political mobilization, Kurdish women across different regions continue to confront significant violations of their rights and navigate deeply entrenched patriarchal structures. Yet, their responses often transcend mere survival, evolving into active social and political agency that seeks to transform the very conditions causing their suffering.

A. Enduring Issues and Violations of Rights

Despite historical instances of female leadership and relative freedoms in some contexts, gender inequality remains a pervasive issue within many Kurdish communities, rooted in traditional patriarchal systems.[1] This manifests in various forms:

- **Forced Marriages and Child Marriages:** These practices continue to be a concern, especially in more conservative rural areas. They curtail girls' educational opportunities, limit their autonomy, and can have severe health and social consequences.[1] While regions like Rojava (Northern Syria) have enacted laws banning child marriage and forced marriage [2], effective enforcement across all of Kurdistan remains a challenge.[112]
- **Honor Killings (*Namus*-based violence):** The concept of *namus* (family honor), which is often intimately tied to female chastity and behavior, can lead to extreme violence against women, including honor killings, for perceived transgressions of social norms.[1] These acts are reported across Kurdish regions, though there are ongoing efforts by activists and some legal reforms aimed at combating them.[1]
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** FGM has been reported as a significant problem in parts of Iraqi Kurdistan, where women's organizations have actively campaigned against it.[1] In Rojava, FGM has been banned under new legal frameworks.[23]
- **Domestic Violence:** Domestic violence is a common, though often underreported, issue linked to conservative societal norms and patriarchal power dynamics within families.[1]
- **Impact of Conflict and Displacement:** Kurdish women have been disproportionately affected by decades of conflict, political instability, and displacement across the region.
    - The **Anfal Campaign** in Iraqi Kurdistan (1988) resulted in mass killings, disappearances, and the destruction of thousands of villages. Women survivors became widows, sole providers for their families, and bearers of immense trauma, often having to rebuild their lives within existing patriarchal structures and with limited resources.[25] Their collective mobilization and formation of solidarity networks in the aftermath were crucial acts of agency.[25]
    - The **ISIS genocide against the Yazidis** (commencing in 2014) involved the systematic enslavement, sexual abuse, and forced conversion of thousands of Yazidi women and children, causing unimaginable suffering and communal devastation.[13] The courage of survivors like Nadia Murad in speaking out and advocating for justice has been a powerful form of resistance.[13]
    - More broadly, ongoing conflicts and militarization in Kurdish regions continue to expose women to displacement, loss of family members, targeted violence, and the breakdown of social support systems.[1]

B. Activism, Resistance, and the Pursuit of Rights

In response to these multifaceted challenges, Kurdish women have a long and continuing tradition of activism and resistance. This is not merely passive endurance but an active, transformative force.

- **Historical Resistance:** Women have historically participated in Kurdish uprisings and

struggles for national rights.[1] As early as 1919, the "Society for the Advancement of Kurdish Women" was established in Istanbul, marking an early organized effort by women to advocate for their rights and advancement.[1]

- **Modern Women's Movements:** The latter half of the 20th century and the 21st century have seen the proliferation of Kurdish women's organizations and movements. Groups like the Kurdistan Women's Union and the Kurdistan Women's Rights Organization have campaigned tirelessly against gender-based violence, child marriage, FGM, and have pushed for legal reforms to protect women's rights.[6] This activism has led to the establishment of women's shelters, gender studies centers in universities, and feminist academies aimed at political and consciousness-raising education.[2] The Kurdish feminist slogan "Jin, Jiyan, Azadî" (Woman, Life, Freedom), originating from Kurdish women fighters, gained international prominence, particularly after the death of Jina (Mahsa) Amini in Iran in 2022, becoming a global rallying cry for women's liberation and resistance against oppressive regimes. This slogan encapsulates a broader philosophy that links women's freedom to the life and freedom of society as a whole.[6]
- **Jineology ("Women's Science"):** This intellectual and political framework, developed primarily within the Kurdish freedom movement associated with the PKK, has become a cornerstone of feminist thought and practice in many Kurdish circles.[6] Jineology critiques patriarchy, capitalism, and the nation-state as interconnected systems of oppression. It advocates for women's liberation as fundamental to overall societal liberation, promoting women's active and equal participation in all spheres of life, including political decision-making, economic self-sufficiency, and self-defense.[6] It also critiques what it sees as Eurocentric feminism, emphasizing instead the development of indigenous knowledge systems accessible to women from all walks of life.[22] In Rojava, Jineology has been influential in shaping social contracts, legal reforms (e.g., banning polygamy, child marriage, FGM, and ensuring equal inheritance), and establishing institutions like women's houses (*Mala Jin*) and co-presidency systems.[2]
- **Armed Struggle:** Kurdish women have gained global recognition for their significant participation in armed struggle as Peshmerga in Iraq and Iran, and as guerrilla fighters in the YPJ (Women's Protection Units) in Syria and women's units within the PKK in Turkey.[1] Their role in combating extremist groups like ISIS has been particularly prominent, challenging traditional gender norms and becoming powerful symbols of resistance and female empowerment.[6] For many of these women, armed resistance is viewed as an extension of their feminist ideology, a fight not just for territorial sovereignty but for broader liberation from patriarchy and authoritarianism.[6]
- **Political Participation:** There has been an increase in women's representation in political bodies in some Kurdish regions. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq has a quota for female parliamentarians (though its effectiveness in genuinely empowering women has been debated, with concerns that some women may be chosen based on political affiliations rather than capability).[2] The co-chair system in Rojava mandates gender parity in all leadership positions.[6] However, the journey

towards equal and effective political participation is ongoing, often facing resistance from traditional patriarchal attitudes and male-dominated political structures.[5]

For many Kurdish women activists, the struggle for Kurdish national rights and the struggle for women's liberation are seen as inextricably linked. The philosophy of Jineology and the widespread adoption of the "Jin, Jiyan, Azadî" slogan explicitly connect these struggles. However, the actual prioritization and genuine integration of gender equality within broader nationalist movements remain a complex and sometimes fraught area of negotiation. While national liberation movements have provided unprecedented platforms for female agency and leadership, there is an ongoing need for women to assert their specific rights and ensure that their liberation is not considered secondary to other political goals.

C. Traditions in the Diaspora

The Kurdish diaspora, spread across Europe, North America, and other parts of the world, plays a significant role in the evolution and preservation of Kurdish female traditions.

- **Adaptation and Preservation:** Kurdish women in diaspora communities are often key custodians of cultural identity, working to maintain their language, customs, and traditions while simultaneously adapting to new societal contexts.[3] This involves a dynamic process of selecting, reinterpreting, and sometimes transforming traditions to fit new environments.
- **Activism and Advocacy:** Many women who were politically active before migrating continue their activism in the diaspora. This activism serves multiple purposes: it allows them to raise awareness about the political situation and human rights issues in Kurdistan, advocate for Kurdish rights on an international stage, and also helps mitigate feelings of homesickness and build a sense of individual and collective belonging in their new host countries.[3] Diaspora women often have greater exposure to international feminist discourses and networks, which can influence their perspectives, strategies, and the way they articulate their demands for gender equality.[3]
- **Challenges and Re-negotiation:** Life in the diaspora also presents challenges. Women may experience feelings of alienation, uprootedness, and the complexities of navigating "the national order of things" in host countries, which can create tensions between preserving tradition and adapting to new norms.[3] The diaspora becomes a space where traditions are actively re-negotiated, and where new forms of Kurdish female identity are forged. The interconnections between life in Kurdistan and in the diaspora are strong, with ideas and support often flowing in both directions.[3]

The experiences of Anfal survivors, Yazidi women post-genocide, and the broader Kurdish women's movement illustrate that resilience often evolves into transformative agency. Trauma and oppression, while inflicting immense suffering, have paradoxically catalyzed significant social and political mobilization among Kurdish women. Their "tradition" of resilience is not one of passive endurance but an active, creative, and transformative force that continually challenges and reshapes societal norms and power structures, both in the homeland and in the diaspora.

VIII. Conclusion

The traditions of Kurdish women, as explored in this report, constitute a dynamic and multifaceted domain, characterized by a profound interplay of continuity and change, resilience and resistance. Far from being a monolithic or static set of practices, these traditions are continually shaped by historical forces, diverse regional contexts, varied religious beliefs, and the enduring impact of socio-political struggles. A consistent thread woven through this complex tapestry is the persistent tension between deeply embedded patriarchal structures and the remarkable agency, strength, and adaptability demonstrated by Kurdish women across generations.

Historically, Kurdish women have navigated societal expectations that often limited their public roles and autonomy, yet they also carved out spaces for influence, leadership, and cultural expression. From the authority of the *kabanî* within the household to the documented instances of female rulers and military leaders in pre-20th century Kurdistan, and the scholarly achievements of figures like Asenath Barzani and Fakhr-un-Nisa, a legacy of female capability and influence is evident. Traditional cultural expressions, including vibrant attire, intricate crafts like carpet weaving, and the vital role of women as *Dengbêj* and *Zarbêj* in preserving oral history and music, underscore the centrality of women to Kurdish cultural heritage. However, this often coexisted with stringent patriarchal controls, particularly concerning honor and sexuality, and a social fabric where marriage was as much an alliance and economic exchange between families as a personal union.

Rites of passage surrounding birth, marriage, and death reveal deeply gendered societal expectations from infancy, while also highlighting women's central roles in performing and transmitting these crucial rituals. The evolution of these rites, such as the transformation of funeral ceremonies for female fighters into political statements, demonstrates the capacity of tradition to adapt and acquire new meanings in response to contemporary realities.

The religious and spiritual lives of Kurdish women are marked by diversity, reflecting adherence to Islam (Sunni and Shia), Alevism, Yazidism, and Yarsanism. Across these faiths, women's participation ranges from home-based religious education and specific female rituals to, in some cases like Alevism, recognized spiritual leadership roles such as the *Ana*. The persistence of ancient mother goddess figures like Ana/Anāhitā, often syncretized or reinterpreted within later religious frameworks, points to a resilient undercurrent of female spiritual significance in Kurdish culture.

The 20th and 21st centuries have witnessed a profound acceleration in the evolution of Kurdish female traditions, largely catalyzed by national liberation movements and the emergence of explicit feminist consciousness, notably through Jineology. Women's mass mobilization in political and military spheres has radically challenged traditional gender roles, creating new "traditions" of female leadership, combat participation, and political activism. Figures like Leyla Zana and Sakine Cansız have become contemporary icons, their life stories contributing to a modern "legendary" status that inspires ongoing struggles for national and gender liberation.

Despite significant advancements, Kurdish women continue to face formidable challenges,

including gender-based violence, forced marriage, honor killings, and the devastating impact of conflict and displacement. Yet, their response is consistently characterized by resilience that often transforms into potent agency. From the collective mobilization of Anfal survivors to the global advocacy of Yazidi women against genocide, and the multifaceted activism of the broader Kurdish women's movement, the struggle for rights, justice, and equality is a defining feature of contemporary Kurdish womanhood. This activism, both in Kurdistan and within the diaspora, continues to redefine boundaries and push for a future where the slogan "Jin, Jiyan, Azadî" (Woman, Life, Freedom) translates into lived reality for all Kurdish women.

In conclusion, the traditions of Kurdish women are not relics of a static past but are living, contested, and evolving practices. They are a testament to the enduring strength of women in preserving cultural heritage, navigating oppressive structures, and actively shaping their own destinies and the future of their communities. Understanding these traditions requires an appreciation for their complexity, the historical depth of female agency, and the ongoing struggles and triumphs that define the experience of being a Kurdish woman today.

IX. Works Cited

1. [1] Wikipedia. (n.d.). *Kurdish women*.
2. [5] IGG Geo. (2024, January 22). *Kurdish Women: Agents of Change in the Struggle for Identity, Equality, and Liberation*.
3. [2] Georgetown Journal of International Affairs. (2019, December 30). *Gender Issues in Kurdistan*.
4. [6] DCKurd.org. (2025, February 11). *Kurdish Women: Redefining Freedom through Resilience*.
5. [29] Philosophy Institute. (n.d.). *Islamic Rites: Birth, Marriage, Death*.
6. [28] When Women Speak. (n.d.). *Life Transitions & Rites of Passage*.
7. [40] The Kurdish Project. (n.d.). *Learn About Kurdish Dress*.
8. [41] Kurdish Central. (n.d.). *Clothing*.
9. [43] ICRO. (n.d.). *Kurdish Handicrafts*.
10. [42] The Kurdish Project. (n.d.). *Kurdish Culture*.
11. [34] Decibel Danse. (2024, June 13). *Kurdish dance: origins and step-by-step guide*.
12. [11] The Kurdish Project. (n.d.). *Kurdish Dance*.
13. [33] Folklore.Earth. (n.d.). *Kurdish Mythology, Rituals, and Religious Practices*.
14. [1] Wikipedia. (n.d.). *Kurdish women*.[1]
15. [3] Hamelink, W., & Mahmoud, H. (2022). Kurdish women's life stories, feminism, and activism: A conversation with Houzan Mahmoud. *Kurdish Studies, 10*(2), 249-262. [3]
16. [119] Sorma, M. (2023). *Militant Mothers of the Kurdish Resistance: Statelessness, Mothering and Subaltern Politics in Contemporary Turkey*. University of Washington Libraries.
17. [17] Intellect Discover. (2025, March 31). *The role of Kurdish women's activism in cultivating a sense of belonging in the diaspora*. Hospitality & Society.

18. [108] PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review. (2024, October 4). *The Mother, the Politician, and the Guerilla: Women's Political Imagination in the Kurdish Movement*.
19. [112] CFRI. (2024, October 30). *Redefining Boundaries: Women's Activism in the Light of Nationalism in Iraqi Kurdistan*.
20. [15] Publishers Panel. (n.d.). *JINEOLOGY: KURDISH "FEMINISM" IN THE DOCTRINE OF DEMOCRATIC CONFEDERALISM AND THE POLITICAL SYSTEM OF THE DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION OF NORTHERN SYRIA (ROJAVA)*.
21. [26] Gholi Davalani, G., et al. (2015). The Childbirth Experience of Kurdish Women in Sanandaj, Iran: A Phenomenological Study. *Iranian Journal of Nursing and Midwifery Research, 20*(2), 209–215. [26]
22. [27] Diyarbakır Hafızası. (n.d.). *Tradition from the Cradle to the Grave*. [27]
23. [30] Video Babylon. (n.d.). *Kurdish Traditional Weddings*. [30]
24. [31] KurdShop. (2023, June 6). *Kurdish Wedding Traditions*. [31]
25. [38] KurdShop. (2023, March 14). *Kurdish Mourning Traditions: Hair Cutting*. [38]
26. [39] Abakay, Y. (2024). Kurdish gender politics: funeral ceremonies of female fighters. *Nations and Nationalism*. [39]
27. [120] Balcanı Caucaso. (n.d.). *The Kurdish Storytellers*.
28. [12] CultureCIVIC. (2023, December 7). *Zarbêj and Dengbêj Women whose voices resonate with music in Mesopotamia*. [12]
29. [121] YouTube. (n.d.). *Kurdish women folk songs (stranên jinên Kurd OR* گورانی ژنانی کورد*)*. [Video content, not directly citable for textual claims without transcription and specific attribution within the video].
30. [122] YouTube. (n.d.). *Kurdish women folk songs (stranên jinên Kurd OR* گورانی ژنانی کورد*)*. [Video content, not directly citable for textual claims without transcription and specific attribution within the video].
31. [45] Google Search. (n.d.). *Kurdish women musicians traditional*..
32. [89] NRC. (2018, December). *Five things you should know about the Yazidis*.
33. [91] Wikipedia. (n.d.). *Yarsanism*. [91]
34. [92] RootsHunt. (n.d.). *Yarsanism*. [92]
35. [96] Hanoğlu, H., et al. (2025). The roads to empowerment: an intersectional analysis of Kurdish Alevi women's struggle for equality and freedom. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*. [98]
36. [94] Wikipedia. (n.d.). *Kurdish Alevism*.
37. [64] Britannica. (n.d.). *Yazīdī*. [64]
38. [82] Wikipedia. (n.d.). *Yazidis*.
39. [102] Fair Observer. (n.d.). *Kurdish Newroz Celebrations Expose Iranian Chauvinists' Fear of Ethnic Identity*.
40. [103] Medya News. (n.d.). *Women light Newroz fire on Diyarbakır's ancient walls, honouring Kurdish resistance*.
41. [8] Family.JRank.org. (n.d.). *Kurdish Families - Kurdish Family And Households*. [8]

42. [19] Encyclopedia.com. (n.d.). *Kurdish Families*. [19]
43. [19] Encyclopedia.com. (n.d.). *Kurdish Families* (specific focus on decision-making power).
44. [7] Al-Adhami, A. M. S. (2020). The Role of Kurdish Women in Politics During the Ottoman Era. *International Journal of Raciology and Criticizing Studies, 3*(2), 1-10. [7]
45. [123] Hebbel-am-Ufer. (n.d.). *The Kurdistan Women's Revolution: A Social History from Below*.
46. [24] Wilson Center. (n.d.). *New Milestones for Kurdish Women*.
47. [25] Mlodoch, K. (n.d.). Review of *The Limits of Trauma Discourse: Women Anfal Survivors in Kurdistan-Iraq*. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*. [25]
48. [10] Institut Kurde de Paris. (n.d.). *Independent Kurdish Women*.
49. [22] Alterites. (n.d.). *Jineolojî: A Kurdish Feminist Epistemology*.
50. [18] ResearchGate. (n.d.). *The role of Kurdish women's activism in cultivating a sense of belonging in the diaspora*.
51. [117] Kurdistan Chronicle. (n.d.). *The Indispensable Role of Kurdish Women in Society*.
52. [70] The Kurdish Center for Studies. (2023, April 24). *Kurdish Mother Goddess Ana: Origins & Traditions*. [70]
53. [9] Alustath Journal for Human and Social Sciences. (2019). *The Image of women in Kurdish proverbs*. *58*(4(1)), 439-454. [9]
54. [111] Kurdistan24. (n.d.). *"Ego Sum": Kurdish Female Artists Shine on European Stage*.
55. [110] Christie's. (2023, May 16). *HAYV KAHRAMAN (IRAQI, B. 1981), Kurdish Women*.
56. [107] Radical Ecological Democracy. (n.d.). *I am Sakine Cansiz: Remembering the Life of a Revolutionary*.
57. [105] The Kurdish Project. (n.d.). *Leyla Zana*.
58. [106] Duvar English. (n.d.). *Erdogan should re-initiate peace process, says veteran Kurdish politician Leyla Zana*.
59. [44] Kurdish Globe. (2025, February 10). *Kurdish female artist rises to fame through music*.
60. [124] Inclusive Citizenship and Human Rights. (n.d.). *Yazidis*.
61. [13] American Documentary. (n.d.). *Background Information | On Her Shoulders*.
62. [1] Wikipedia. (n.d.). *Kurdish women*.[1]
63. [5] IGG Geo. (2024, January 22). *Kurdish Women: Agents of Change in the Struggle for Identity, Equality, and Liberation*.[5]
64. [125] ResearchGate. (n.d.). *Toplumsal Cinsiyet Kürt Atasözlerinde İyi Kadın-Kötü Kadın İmajı*..
65. [4] Britannica. (n.d.). *Kurd*.
66. [1] Wikipedia. (n.d.). *Kurdish women*.[1]
67. [35] Family.JRank.org. (n.d.). *Kurdish Families - Kurdish Marriage Patterns*. [35]
68. [32] Diyarbakır Hafızası. (n.d.). *The ancient story of the bride and the groom*. [32]
69. [126] Hewalname.com. (2022). *Folklorê kurdî Wêje, Ziman, Mêjû, Civak û Kelepûr*. [Kurdish Folklore Collection, specific content on female heroines not detailed in snippet].

70. [127] DergiPark. (n.d.). *Aşk ve Kahraman: Kürtçe Şahnamelerde Kahramanın Vuslat ve Ayrılığı*..
71. [128] Galip, Ö. (n.d.). *Kurdistan: A Land of Longing and Struggle Analysis of 'Home-land' and 'Identity' in the Kurdish Novelistic Discourse*..
72. [129] Rashidirostami, M. (n.d.). *Kurdish Theatre under the Baath, 1975-1991*..
73. [14] UNHCR. (2015, June 15). *Yazidi women welcomed back to the faith*. [14]
74. [93] Servant Group International. (2017, June 17). *Yarsani Religion - Beliefs and Practices*. [93]
75. [100] Minority Rights Group. (2023, May 24). *Ana: A Journey of Resilience and Resistance in Istanbul's Alevi Community*. [100]
76. [6] DCKurd.org. (2025, February 11). *Kurdish Women: Redefining Freedom through Resilience*.[6]
77. [5] IGG Geo. (2024, January 22). *Kurdish Women: Agents of Change in the Struggle for Identity, Equality, and Liberation*.[5]
78. [118] myMESA. (n.d.). *Gender Negotiations within Kurdish Families and Activism in Turkey and Diaspora*. [Abstract].
79. [108] PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review. (2024, October 4). *The Mother, the Politician, and the Guerilla: Women's Political Imagination in the Kurdish Movement*.[108][108]
80. [130] eHRAF World Cultures. (n.d.). *The Kurdish woman's life: field research in a Muslim society, Iraq*. [Abstract of Hansen's work]. [130]
81. [131] Intellect Discover. (2025, March 31). *The role of Kurdish women's activism in cultivating a sense of belonging in the diaspora*.[17]
82. [132] ResearchGate. (2024, August). *Weeping without tears: Kurdish female kolbers and gendered necropolitics of state in Iran*. [Abstract].
83. [133] Mazda Publishers. (n.d.). *Kurdish Women Through History, Culture, and Resistance*.. [133]
84. [116] Lund University Publications. (2023, March 7). *The power of Kurdish women - A discourse analysis of Kurdish women's agency in Rojava*..
85. [23] Gender Campus. (2022, December). *Women's Rights in Northeast Syria: Enforcing Gender Equality*.
86. [52] Leezenberg, M. (2023). "The Kurds Have Not Made Love Their Aim": Love, Sexuality, Gender, and Drag in Ehmedê Xanî's Mem û Zîn. *International Journal of Middle East Studies, 55*(1), 60-77. [52]
87. [53] HJUOZ. (n.d.). *The Functions of Characters in Ehmedê Xanî's Epic of Mem û Zîn According to Vladimir Propp's Theory*.
88. [58] Atlı, H. (n.d.). EPIC OF DERWÊŞÊ EVDÎ AND EDÛLÊ FORM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ETHNIC AND RELLIGOUS ATTITUDES. *G*[58] .وڤارا زانستێن مرۆڤایەتی یا زانکۆیا زاخۆ
89. [59] HJUOZ. (n.d.). *View of EPIC OF DERWÊŞÊ EVDÎ AND EDÛLÊ FORM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ETHNIC AND RELLIGOUS ATTITUDES*.
90. [16] Topal, A. (2023). From Zin the Mythical Heroine to Zilan, the First Kurdish Female

Suicide Bomber: The PKK's Creation of a New Feminist Figuration. *Politics, Religion & Ideology*. [16]

91. [134] Iranian Studies. (n.d.). *The World of Kurdish Women's Novels*. [Abstract].
92. [135] Bor, O. (2022). *Female Figures in Kurdish Mythology and Folklore*. Indiana University. [135]
93. [80] BBC Travel. (2023, August 3). *In pictures: The protectors of a 7,000-year-old faith*. [80]
94. [79] Wikipedia. (n.d.). *Yazidism*.
95. [84] KDP-fro.krd. (n.d.). *Yazidi Festivals and Ceremonies*.
96. [86] Young Pioneer Tours. (n.d.). *The Yazidis: Faith, Sacred Lands, and Persecution*.
97. [14] UNHCR. (2015, June 15). *Yazidi women welcomed back to the faith*.[14]
98. [87] Middle East Eye. (2020, October 5). *Yazidi leader Baba Sheikh leaves legacy as champion of women seized by Islamic State*.
99. [67] Kurdish Studies. (2024). Architectural Standards for the Mosque Female Sections. *Kurdish Studies, 12*(2), 19–32. [67]
100. [65] Zinar, Z. (1998). Medrese education in northern Kurdistan. (M. van Bruinessen, Trans. & Ed.). *Les Annales de l'Autre Islam, 5*.
101. [77] Wikipedia. (n.d.). *Fakhr-un-Nisa*. [77]
102. [78] Wikipedia. (n.d.). *Spread of Islam among Kurds*.
103. [75] Charity Commission for England and Wales. (n.d.). *MAWLAWI KURDISH CULTURAL CENTRE - 1148640*.
104. [46] Mohammadpour, A., Karimi, J., & Maaroofpur, N. (2012). An Interpretative Study of Women Representation in Kurdish Proverbs (A Case Study of Surani & Mokeriani Sub-language). *Journal of Woman in Culture and Arts, 4*(3), 65-83. [46]
105. [S_S

Works cited

1. Kurdish women - Wikipedia, accessed May 19, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdish_women
2. Gender Issues in Kurdistan - Georgetown Journal of International ..., accessed May 19, 2025, https://gjia.georgetown.edu/2019/12/30/gender-issues-in-kurdistan/
3. kurdishstudies.net, accessed May 19, 2025, https://kurdishstudies.net/menu-script/index.php/KS/article/download/185/155
4. Kurd | Syria, Language, Map, Women, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, History, & Culture | Britannica, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Kurd
5. Kurdish Women: Agents of Change in the Struggle for Identity, Equality and Liberation, accessed May 19, 2025, https://igg-geo.org/en/2024/01/22/kurdish-women-agents-of-change-in-the-struggle-for-identity-equality-and-liberation/
6. Kurdish Women: Redefining Freedom through Resilience - Washington Kurdish Institute, accessed May 19, 2025, https://dckurd.org/2025/02/11/kurdish-women-freedom/

7. The Life and Political Role of Kurdish Women in the Ottoman Empire ..., accessed May 19, 2025, https://journals.iium.edu.my/irkh/index.php/ijrcs/article/view/154
8. Kurdish Families - Kurdish Family And Households - Gender, Development, Urban, and Women - JRank Articles, accessed May 19, 2025, https://family.jrank.org/pages/1025/Kurdish-Families-Kurdish-Family-Households.html
9. The Image of women in Kurdish proverbs, accessed May 19, 2025, https://alustath.uobaghdad.edu.iq/index.php/UJIRCO/article/view/973
10. Independent Kurdish women - Institut kurde de Paris, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.institutkurde.org/info/independent-kurdish-women-1232550946
11. Learn About Kurdish Dance | The Kurdish Project, accessed May 19, 2025, https://thekurdishproject.org/history-and-culture/kurdish-culture/kurdish-dance/
12. Zarbêj and Dengbêj Women whose voices resonate with music in ..., accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.culture-civic.org/en/projects/zarb-j-and-dengb-j-women-in-mesopotamia
13. Background Information | American Documentary, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.amdoc.org/engage/resources/her-shoulders-discussion-guide/background-information/
14. Yazidi women welcomed back to the faith | UNHCR, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/yazidi-women-welcomed-back-faith
15. jineology: kurdish “feminism” in the doctrine of democratic confederalism and the political system of the - Publishers Panel, accessed May 19, 2025, https://publisherspanel.com/api/files/view/1923614.pdf
16. www.lectitopublishing.nl, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.lectitopublishing.nl/download/from-zin-the-mythical-heroine-to-zilan-the-first-kurdish-female-suicide-bomber-the-pkks-creation-of-13548.pdf
17. The role of Kurdish women's activism in cultivating a sense of belonging in the diaspora, accessed May 19, 2025, https://intellectdiscover.com/content/journals/10.1386/hosp_00087_1
18. The role of Kurdish women's activism in cultivating a sense of belonging in the diaspora, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/390606939_The_role_of_Kurdish_women's_activism_in_cultivating_a_sense_of_belonging_in_the_diaspora
19. Kurdish Families | Encyclopedia.com, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.encyclopedia.com/reference/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/kurdish-families
20. (PDF) The Position of Kurdish Women in the View of the British in the First Half of the Twentieth CenturyThe Position of Kurdish Women in the View of the British in the First Half of the Twentieth Century - ResearchGate, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/367410259_The_Position_of_Kurdish_Women_in_the_View_of_the_British_in_the_First_Half_of_the_Twentieth_CenturyThe_Position_of_Kurdish_Women_in_the_View_of_the_British_in_the_First_Half_of_the_Twentieth_Century
21. Kurdish Women: Overview - Brill, accessed May 19, 2025,

https://brill.com/view/entries/EWIO/EWICCOM-0104.xml
22. Jineolojî Confronting Hierarchical Knowledge: (Il)legitimacy of a Decolonial Science of Women in Kurdistan - OpenEdition Journals, accessed May 19, 2025, https://journals.openedition.org/alterites/1283
23. Women's Rights in Northeast Syria: Enforcing Gender Equality, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.gendercampus.ch/en/blog/post/womens-rights-in-northeast-syria-enforcing-gender-equality
24. New Milestones for Kurdish Women | Wilson Center, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/new-milestones-for-kurdish-women
25. The Limits of Trauma Discourse: Women Anfal Survivors in ... - Brill, accessed May 19, 2025, https://brill.com/edcollchap-oa/book/9789004506176/BP000016.xml
26. Iranian Kurdish women's experiences of childbirth: A qualitative ..., accessed May 19, 2025, https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4402992/
27. Tradition from the cradle to the grave - DİYARBAKIR'S MEMORY, accessed May 19, 2025, https://diyarbakirhafizasi.org/en/tradition-from-the-cradle-to-the-grave/
28. Life Transitions & Rites of Passage – When Women Speak, accessed May 19, 2025, https://whenwomenspeak.net/blog/life-transitions-rites-of-passage/
29. Rites of Passage in Islam: Birth, Marriage, and Death - Philosophy Institute, accessed May 19, 2025, https://philosophy.institute/religions-of-the-world/islamic-rites-birth-marriage-death/
30. Kurdish Traditional Weddings - Video Babylon, accessed May 19, 2025, https://videobabylon.ca/kurdish-traditional-weddings/
31. Courtship (Marriage Proposal) in Kurdish Culture - KURDSHOP, accessed May 19, 2025, https://kurdshop.net/en/culture/2125
32. The ancient story of the bride and the groom - DİYARBAKIR'S ..., accessed May 19, 2025, https://diyarbakirhafizasi.org/en/the-ancient-story-of-the-bride-and-the-groom/
33. Kurdish Mythology - Mythosphere, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.folklore.earth/culture/kurd/
34. Kurdish dance: origins and step-by-step guide - Decibel danse, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.decibel-danse.com/en/advice/kurdish-dance/
35. Kurdish Families - Kurdish Marriage Patterns - Gender, Family ..., accessed May 19, 2025, https://family.jrank.org/pages/1026/Kurdish-Families-Kurdish-Marriage-Patterns.html
36. Wedding/ marriage tradition : r/kurdistan - Reddit, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.reddit.com/r/kurdistan/comments/1e70nmv/wedding_marriage_tradition/
37. A Kurdish wedding celebration in Iraq. - - 2 PEOPLE 1 LIFE - The 2people1life Story, accessed May 19, 2025, http://2people1life.com/destination-wedding-64-iraq/
38. Hair Cutting in Kurdish Culture - KURDSHOP, accessed May 19, 2025, https://kurdshop.net/en/culture/1419
39. (PDF) Kurdish gender politics: Funeral ceremonies of female fighters, accessed

May 19, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/377228338_Kurdish_gender_politics_funeral_ceremonies_of_female_fighters
40. Learn About Kurdish Dress | The Kurdish Project, accessed May 19, 2025, https://thekurdishproject.org/history-and-culture/kurdish-culture/kurdish-dress/
41. Clothing - Kurdish Central, accessed May 19, 2025, https://kurdishcentral.org/clothing/
42. Learn About Kurdish Culture, accessed May 19, 2025, https://thekurdishproject.org/history-and-culture/kurdish-culture/
43. Kurdish Handicrafts - English, accessed May 19, 2025, https://en.icro.ir/Handicrafts/Kurdish-Handicrafts
44. Kurdish female artist rises to fame through music - Kurdishglobe, accessed May 19, 2025, https://kurdishglobe.krd/kurdish-female-artist-rises-to-fame-through-music/
45. www.google.com, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.google.com/search?q=Kurdish+women+musicians+traditional
46. Journal of Woman in Culture and Arts - Articles List, accessed May 19, 2025, https://jwica.ut.ac.ir/?_action=article&kw=75090&_kw=Kurdish+Proverbs.&lang=en
47. Journal of Woman in Culture and Arts - Articles List, accessed May 19, 2025, https://jwica.ut.ac.ir/?_action=article&kw=75089&_kw=Thematic+analysis&lang=en
48. Is there an English equivalent for this Kurdish proverb: "every ripe and delicious cantaloupe is eaten by a donkey", accessed May 19, 2025, https://english.stackexchange.com/questions/405146/is-there-an-english-equivalent-for-this-kurdish-proverb-every-ripe-and-delicio
49. Jin Jiyan Azadi: Kurdish Women Resisting in the 4 Parts of Kurdistan, accessed May 19, 2025, https://nlka.net/eng/jin-jiyan-azadi-kurdish-women-resisting-in-the-4-parts-of-kurdistan/
50. Women in a Positive and Negative Perspective in Kurdish Culture - Part 3 - KURDSHOP, accessed May 19, 2025, https://kurdshop.net/en/culture/4024
51. d2fahduf2624mg.cloudfront.net, accessed May 19, 2025, https://d2fahduf2624mg.cloudfront.net/pre_purchase_docs/BK_OASI_001410/2020-06-24-05-22-29/bk_oasi_001410.pdf
52. “The Kurds Have Not Made Love Their Aim”: Love, Sexuality, Gender, and Drag in Ehmedê Xanî's Mem û Zîn | International Journal of Middle East Studies, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-journal-of-middle-east-studies/article/kurds-have-not-made-love-their-aim-love-sexuality-gender-and-drag-in-ehmede-xanis-mem-u-zin/BDDB73EEE4B047C51C39C1160425F3F4
53. View of Analyzing the Epic of Mem and Zin According to Vladimir Propp's Narratology | Humanities Journal of University of Zakho, accessed May 19, 2025, https://hjuoz.uoz.edu.krd/index.php/hum/article/view/1200/873
54. “Mem û Zîn,” the Kurdish epic, accessed May 19, 2025,

https://nykcc.org/mem-u-zin/
55. SPECTERS OF KURDISH NATIONALISM: GOVERNMENTALITY AND TRANSLATION IN TURKEY - Critical Multilingualism Studies, accessed May 19, 2025, https://cms.arizona.edu/index.php/multilingual/article/download/67/102/273
56. (PDF) “The Kurds Have Not Made Love Their Aim”: Love, Sexuality, Gender, and Drag in Ehmedê Xanî's Mem û Zîn - ResearchGate, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/367478414_The_Kurds_Have_Not_Made_Love_Their_Aim_Love_Sexuality_Gender_and_Drag_in_Ehmede_Xani's_Mem_u_Zin
57. PKK leader Öcalan's prolong advocacy for Yazidis echoed in his ..., accessed May 19, 2025, https://medyanews.net/pkk-leader-ocalans-prolong-advocacy-for-yazidis-echoed-in-his-2010-poem/
58. EPIC OF DERWÊŞÊ EVDÎ AND EDÛLÊ FORM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ETHNIC AND RELLIGOUS ATTITUDES - DOAJ, accessed May 19, 2025, https://doaj.org/article/77715beecfc941619a0075cd39d3911a
59. View of EPIC OF DERWÊŞÊ EVDÎ AND EDÛLÊ FORM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ETHNIC AND RELLIGOUS ATTITUDES, accessed May 19, 2025, https://hjuoz.uoz.edu.krd/index.php/hum/article/view/930/685
60. The Enduring Legend of Şamaran: Half-Woman, Half-Snake, and ..., accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/story/809055/the-enduring-legend-of-%C5%9Famaran-half-woman-half-snake-and-keeper-of-wisdom-in-kurdish-folklore
61. Shahmaran - Wikipedia, accessed May 19, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shahmaran
62. Kurdish mythology - Wikipedia, accessed May 19, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdish_mythology
63. Molla Badji (Iranian folktale) - Wikipedia, accessed May 19, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Molla_Badji_(Iranian_folktale)
64. Yazidi | History, Culture, & Religion | Britannica, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Yazidi
65. Medrese education in northern Kurdistan - DSpace, accessed May 19, 2025, https://dspace.library.uu.nl/bitstream/1874/20694/1/bruinessen_98_medreseeducationinnorthernkurdistan.pdf
66. Female Islamic Education Movements - Islamic Studies - Oxford Bibliographies, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/abstract/document/obo-9780195390155/obo-9780195390155-0268.xml
67. Architectural Standards for the Mosque Female Sections | Kurdish ..., accessed May 19, 2025, https://kurdishstudies.net/menu-script/index.php/KS/article/view/1664
68. Kurdish Quran Learning Book, Kurd Kid Religious Gift, Kids Quran Lessons, Interactive Quranic Education, Quran Verse Kurdish, Islamic Lesson - Etsy, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.etsy.com/listing/1714883694/kurdish-quran-learning-book-kids-qura

n
69. (PDF) Kurdish Studies The Role of Santri Maghrib Recitation Movement in Islamic Axiology, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385345221_Kurdish_Studies_The_Role_of_Santri_Maghrib_Recitation_Movement_in_Islamic_Axiology
70. Kurdish Mother Goddess Ana: Origins & Traditions, accessed May 19, 2025, https://nlka.net/eng/kurdish-mother-goddess-ana-origins-traditions/
71. Azadî in the Homeland & inside the Home - The Kurdish Center for Studies, accessed May 19, 2025, https://nlka.net/eng/azadi-in-the-homeland-inside-the-home/
72. Mawlid - Wikipedia, accessed May 19, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mawlid
73. A Gūrānī Mawlid - DergiPark, accessed May 19, 2025, https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/416599
74. 'At Times Even Greater': President Barzani Highlights Pivotal Role of Kurdish Women, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/story/834724/at-times-even-greater-president-barzani-highlights-pivotal-role-of-kurdish-women
75. MAWLAWI KURDISH CULTURAL CENTRE - 1148640 - Charity Commission, accessed May 19, 2025, https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/en/charity-search/-/charity-details/5030113/full-print
76. Women in Sufism, accessed May 19, 2025, https://whenwomenspeak.net/blog/women-in-sufism/
77. Fakhr-un-Nisa - Wikipedia, accessed May 19, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fakhr-un-Nisa
78. Spread of Islam among Kurds - Wikipedia, accessed May 19, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spread_of_Islam_among_Kurds
79. Yazidism - Wikipedia, accessed May 19, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yazidism
80. The holiest place you've never heard of - BBC, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20230803-in-pictures-the-protectors-of-a-7000-year-old-faith
81. Yazidi Cultural Preservation - Yazda, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.yazda.org/culture
82. Yazidis - Wikipedia, accessed May 19, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yazidis
83. Yezidi Theology, Oral Tradition, and Ritual (1) - Servant Group International, accessed May 19, 2025, https://servantgroup.org/yezidi-theology-oral-tradition-and-ritual/
84. The religious and social ceremonies of Yazidis | Foreign Relations - Kurdistan Democratic Part, KDP, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.kdp-fro.krd/en/article/2515
85. Yazidis embrace new beginnings at Lalish new year celebrations - Rudaw, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/160420257
86. The Yazidis: Faith, Sacred Lands, and Persecution - Young Pioneer Tours, accessed May 19, 2025,

https://www.youngpioneertours.com/the-yazidis-faith-sacred-lands-and-persecution/
87. Yazidi leader Baba Sheikh leaves legacy as champion of women seized by Islamic State, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/baba-sheikh-yazidi-spiritual-leader-dies
88. Yazidi social organization - Wikipedia, accessed May 19, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yazidi_social_organization
89. 5 things you should know about the Yezidis | NRC, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.nrc.no/news/2018/december/five-things-you-should-know-about-the-yazidis
90. The Genocide - Nadia's Initiative, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.nadiasinitiative.org/the-genocide
91. Yarsanism - Wikipedia, accessed May 19, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yarsanism
92. Yarsanism - ROOTSHUNT, accessed May 19, 2025, https://rootshunt.com/aryans/indiairanandaryans/archaeologicalsitesinpersia/sarpolezahab/yarsanism.htm
93. Yarsani Religion - Beliefs and Practices - Servant Group International, accessed May 19, 2025, https://servantgroup.org/yarsani-religion-beliefs-and-practices/
94. Kurdish Alevism - Wikipedia, accessed May 19, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdish_Alevism
95. Alevis | Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion, accessed May 19, 2025, https://oxfordre.com/religion/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-101?p=emailAuysF9S4KQMKw&d=/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-101
96. The roads to empowerment: an intersectional analysis of Kurdish Alevi women's struggle for equality and freedom - ResearchGate, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/390340601_The_roads_to_empowerment_an_intersectional_analysis_of_Kurdish_Alevi_women's_struggle_for_equality_and_freedom
97. ALEVIS IN BRITAIN: EMERGING IDENTITIES IN A TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL SPACE - Research Repository, accessed May 19, 2025, https://repository.essex.ac.uk/16698/1/thesis%20final.pdf
98. accessed January 1, 1970, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/390340601_The_roads_to_empowerment_an_intersectional_analysis_of_Kurdish_Alevi_women_s_struggle_for_equality_and_freedom
99. alevi identity - isamveri.org, accessed May 19, 2025, https://isamveri.org/pdfdrg/D02049/1998_8/1998_8_SHANKLANDD.pdf
100. Ana: A Journey of Resilience and Resistance in Istanbul's Alevi ..., accessed May 19, 2025, https://minorityrights.org/ana-a-journey-of-resilience-and-resistance-in-istanbuls-alevi-community/
101. Review Article Kurds, Zazas and Alevis - Brill, accessed May 19, 2025, https://brill.com/downloadpdf/display/book/9789004700383/BP000013.pdf

102. Kurdish Newroz Celebrations Expose Iranian Chauvinists' Fear of Ethnic Identity, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.fairobserver.com/politics/kurdish-newroz-celebrations-expose-iranian-chauvinists-fear-of-ethnic-identity/
103. Women light Newroz fire on Diyarbakır's ancient walls, honouring Kurdish resistance, accessed May 19, 2025, https://medyanews.net/women-light-newroz-fire-on-diyarbakirs-ancient-walls-honouring-kurdish-resistance/
104. 9 Women every Kurd needs to know - Kurdistan Regional Government-Iraq Representation in Austria, accessed May 19, 2025, http://austria.gov.krd/en/frauentag/
105. Leyla Zana - The Kurdish Project, accessed May 19, 2025, https://thekurdishproject.org/history-and-culture/famous-kurds-old/leyla-zana/
106. Erdoğan should re-initiate peace process, says veteran Kurdish politician Leyla Zana, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.duvarenglish.com/erdogan-should-re-initiate-peace-process-says-veteran-kurdish-politician-leyla-zana-news-63685
107. “I am Sakine Cansiz!”: Remembering the life of a revolutionary, accessed May 19, 2025, https://radicalecologicaldemocracy.org/i-am-sakine-cansiz-remembering-the-life-of-a-revolutionary/
108. The Mother, the Politician, and the Guerilla: Women's Political ..., accessed May 19, 2025, https://polarjournal.org/2024/10/04/the-mother-the-politician-and-the-guerilla-womens-political-imagination-in-the-kurdish-movement/
109. Kurdish Women's Life Stories, Feminism, and Activism: A Conversation with Houzan Mahmoud in - Brill, accessed May 19, 2025, https://brill.com/display/book/9789004726253/BP000007.xml
110. HAYV KAHRAMAN (IRAQI, B. 1981), Kurdish Women | Christie's, accessed May 19, 2025, https://onlineonly.christies.com/s/modern-contemporary-middle-eastern-art/hayv-kahraman-iraqi-b-1981-4/182230
111. “Ego Sum”: Kurdish Female Artists Shine on European Stage - Kurdistan24, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/story/833287
112. Redefining Boundaries: Women's Activism in the Light of Nationalism in Iraqi Kurdistan, accessed May 19, 2025, https://cfri-irak.com/en/article/redefining-boundaries-womens-activism-in-the-light-of-nationalism-in-iraqi-kurdistan-2024-10-30
113. an ethnographic study of female genital cutting, domestic violence and the state response in Iraqi Kurdistan - SOAS Research Online, accessed May 19, 2025, https://soas-repository.worktribe.com/output/379005
114. Yazidi Women Finally Go To School, Defying Former ISIS Rulers — And Their Own Parents, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2018/02/14/585152138/yazidi-women-finally-go-to-school-defying-former-isis-rulers-and-their-own-paren

115. International Women's Day: The Yazidis' global quest for justice, accessed May 19, 2025, https://fxb.harvard.edu/2025/03/07/international-womens-day-the-yazidis-global-quest-for-justice/
116. The power of Kurdish women - Lund University Publications, accessed May 19, 2025, https://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordOId=9100514&fileOId=9100515
117. Resilience and Talent of Kurdish Women - Kurdistan Chronicle, accessed May 19, 2025, https://kurdistanchronicle.com/b/3301
118. Gender Negotiations within Kurdish Families and Activism in Turkey and Diaspora - myMESA, accessed May 19, 2025, https://my-mesa.org/program/abstracts/view/eyJpdiI6Ikdjbm1sa3BFZjFGQVBseGI4QmlUZmc9PSIsInZhbHVlIjoieVErVmpSb1ZteEprTVovU3U5Z0Zidz09IiwibWFjIjoiMjhhODQ1ODkzNTFiNTk1MTRjMmYzOTA0ZDdlZjkyZDAwODIzMzYzNTJjNDlkOTU3ZDY2NmJjYWI2NTZjNDcwZiIsInRhZyI6IiJ9
119. Militant Mothers of the Kurdish Resistance | Department of Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies, accessed May 19, 2025, https://gwss.washington.edu/research/graduate/militant-mothers-kurdish-resistance
120. The Kurdish Storytellers / Turkey / Areas / Homepage - Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso Transeuropa, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Areas/Turkey/The-Kurdish-Storytellers-163457
121. Kamancheh & steel pan! "Shirin Shirin" (Kurdish Folk Song) ترانه ی کردی شیرین شیرین, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQ33tii-Fto
122. Concert • Sakina Teyna • Female Voice of Kurdistan - YouTube, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MdQJzLo8x4
123. HAU Hebbel am Ufer Berlin - The Kurdistan women's revolution – A social history from below, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.hebbel-am-ufer.de/hau-publikationsreihe/festivalmagazin-protagonistas/the-kurdistan-womens-revolution-a-social-history-from-below
124. Yazidis - Inclusive citizenship and human rights, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.inclusive-citizenship.no/yazidis/
125. (PDF) Toplumsal Cinsiyet Kürt Atasözlerinde İyi Kadın-Kötü Kadın İmajı - ResearchGate, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/363640261_Toplumsal_Cinsiyet_Kurt_Atasozlerinde_Iyi_Kadin-Kotu_Kadin_Imaji
126. õ ơ - Untitled, accessed May 19, 2025, http://www.hewalname.com/ku/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/165-2.pdf
127. Evîn û Leheng: Wuslet û Firaqa Lehengî di Şahnameyên Kurdî de - DergiPark, accessed May 19, 2025, https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/3986728
128. Kurdistan: A Land of Longing and Struggle Analysis of 'Home-land' and 'Identity' in the Kurdish Novelistic Discourse, accessed May 19, 2025, https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10036/4518/GalipO.pdf?sequ

ence=1&isAllowed=y
129. Kurdish Theatre under the Baath, 1975-1991 Mahroo Rashidirostami Submitted to the University, accessed May 19, 2025, http://www.hewalname.com/ku/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/224.pdf
130. The Kurdish woman's life: field research in a Muslim society, Iraq - eHRAF World Cultures, accessed May 19, 2025, https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/cultures/ma11/documents/004
131. The role of Kurdish women's activism in cultivating a sense of belonging in the diaspora, accessed May 19, 2025, https://intellectdiscover.com/content/journals/10.1386/hosp_00087_1?TRACK=RSS
132. Weeping without tears: Kurdish female kolbers and gendered necropolitics of state in Iran | Request PDF - ResearchGate, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/388889893_Weeping_without_tears_Kurdish_female_kolbers_and_gendered_necropolitics_of_state_in_Iran
133. Kurdish WomenThrough History - Mazda Publishers, accessed May 19, 2025, http://www.mazdapublishers.com/book/kurdish-womenthrough-history
134. The World of Kurdish Women's Novels | Iranian Studies | Cambridge Core, accessed May 19, 2025, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/iranian-studies/article/world-of-kurdish-womens-novels/916DCC2EE8F371DB351522D1F5F4D4B3
135. Female Figures in Kurdish Mythology and Folklore - Ozlem Bor - Google Books, accessed May 19, 2025, https://books.google.com/books/about/Female_Figures_in_Kurdish_Mythology_and.html?id=vfuezwEACAAJ