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Original Research Article

Iconography and Interpretation of Mythological Birds in Messenger Logos

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Abstract

Introduction: Mythological motifs in the design of messenger logos can facilitate user interaction and comprehension due to shared experiences among different societies. One of these motifs is the use of bird imagery, which is frequently observed in messenger logos. This research seeks to answer two main questions: «What symbolic values are reflected in the iconography of mythological birds in logos?» and «Why are images of mythological birds used in the design of these logos? »This study aims to analyze the icons present in the logos of six messengers: Hodhod, Soroush, Dorna, Twitter, Cubie, and Bat.

Research Method: This study employs a descriptive-analytical approach, with data collected through library research. A purposive sampling method was used to select bird icons in six logos, and the data were analyzed using Panofsky's iconographic method.

Findings: The iconography of mythological birds in logo design can reveal various symbolic values linked to each brand's cultural identity. In different global myths, mythological birds are commonly associated with freedom, communication, speed, efficiency, and spiritual connection. These symbols have been integrated into logo designs based on the meanings and values they convey.

Conclusion: The analysis of six logos shows that, despite their unique iconographic characteristics, they do not display significant visual differences; rather, secondary elements help distinguish them. However, all these logos convey a shared message, facilitating a universal understanding of them. Overall, using mythological birds in logos conveys symbolic values such as messaging, enlightenment, trust, and a connection to cultural identity, enhancing the emotional bond between the brand and its audience.

Keywords

Iconography, Myth, Mythological Birds, Logo, Messenger

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Introduction and Problem Definition

Iconography, the study and description of symbols and content, has gained significant attention since the 20th century. Erwin Panofsky, a German art historian, introduced the method of iconology in art history studies. In today's world, the media play a crucial role in interactions and communication, and messengers as global communication tools provide a new platform for user engagement. Messenger logos must not only have a strong identity but also be comprehensible and acceptable to the audience. Since ancient times, myths and mythological beliefs have significantly influenced human life, and their representation in the real world has been an essential part of human interaction with the surrounding environment. Messengers can reflect the beliefs of a society. Given the globalization of cultures, incorporating deep-rooted mythological symbols into messenger logo designs can help convey meaning and persuade audiences. This study aims to analyze the icons used in messenger logos, examining the integration of myths and symbols, and addressing the following questions: «What symbolic values can be observed in the iconography of mythological birds?» «Why have mythological bird images appeared in messenger logo designs?» To answer these questions, this study will analyze the icons of the selected messenger logos and explore the reasons behind the use of mythological birds in their designs.

Research Method

The present descriptive-analytical research aims to achieve fundamental results in integrating mythological symbols into the design of messenger logos. This study relies on observation and literature review to address its research questions and employs a qualitative methodology for data analysis. For the analytical framework, this research adopts Erwin Panofsky's iconographic method, which focuses on analyzing symbols and uncovering hidden meanings in designs. Data has been collected through library research, academic sources, articles, books, and related studies. The study corpus of this research consists of the logos of six messengers, including three domestic and three foreign messengers. These messengers have been selected using a non-random sampling method and will be analyzed analytically. The selected Iranian messengers for this research are: Hodhod, Soroush, and Dorna. Additionally, the selected foreign messengers include Twitter, Cubie, and Bet. These messengers were chosen using a non-random sampling method, with an analytical approach to examine how mythological symbols are incorporated into their designs. This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of how mythological bird symbols are used in messenger logo design, highlighting their representation of cultural and mythological beliefs in a digital context. By analyzing the symbolism embedded in these logos, this research aims to reveal the role of mythological birds in messenger branding and the symbolic values they convey.

Research Background

As mentioned earlier, this study aims to analyze the iconography of mythological birds in messenger logos. Therefore, it is essential to review the background and theoretical foundations related to iconography and the symbolic interpretation of mythological birds. «Beyroti et al.» (2021) conducted a study entitled «Analysis of the Bird Symbol in Ilkhanid Coins from the Perspective of Religious Discourse Based on Panofsky's Model». They found that during the reign of Yasa, bird motifs on coins were accompanied by Shahada (Islamic creed). In the Islamic era, religious tendencies were more prominent, incorporating Islamic inscriptions, Quranic verses, and the names of the Rashidun Caliphs

alongside bird motifs. These findings suggest that Mongols showed religious tolerance, pragmatism, or uncertainty in their religious policies. Moreover, in their research entitled «Iconography and Interpretation of Eagle Imagery in the Achaemenid Era»,« Sadeghi et al.» (2021) concluded that the eagle was a universal symbol representing divinity, power, and legitimacy. Achaemenid kings used this mythological animal to reinforce their sovereignty and establish their divine authority. A review of existing studies shows that no prior research has specifically examined the iconography of messenger logos. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by exploring how mythological birds are represented in messenger logo designs, analyzing their symbolism.

Theoretical Foundations

1. Messengers: As part of social media, Messengers have attracted many users for various purposes. Today, these platforms have evolved into news media, significantly influencing real-world events, lifestyle, and consumer behavior (Mansouri-Shad et al., 2018). Marshall McLuhan argued that the dominant media of each era define the nature of that society. He believed technological advancement progresses alongside societal development, affecting communication patterns and social structures. Media determine what happens in a historical period and consider it significant. As a proponent of the global idea, he reminds us of the impact of technological advancement on behavioral patterns and social structures with the phrase «it is a means of communication» (Mansouri-Shad et al., 2018, 134). Messengers provide multiple benefits for different social groups, including students, such as: Facilitating educational activities, enhancing learning motivation, sharing multimedia content, and exchanging audio and video files (Bagherianfar et al, 2018). Logos are crucial in establishing a brand's identity and distinguishing a messenger from competitors. A well-designed logo can facilitate effective communication with users (Farrokhi-Rad et al., 2021).

2. Mythological Birds: Since the language of mythology is symbolic, it provides insight into ancient cultures and beliefs (Shafiei-Alaviyeh, 2019). Understanding myths fosters stronger cultural and social connections between communities (Alizadeh, 2022). Myth has always been essential for humans, regardless of temporal and spatial limitations. Analyzing and distinguishing different myths can lead individuals to understand shared desires, inclinations, and tendencies (Hejazi, 2009). Myths are divided into two categories: Descending and ascending. In this classification, myths, on one hand, transform into history, and on the other, history turns into myth, where realities become immersed in the boundaries of time and space. These myths present symbols such as birds, which transition from the natural world to the metaphysical realm. These symbols represent concepts such as happiness, victory, and immortality (Taremi et al., 2021) .Birds have been symbols of the expansiveness of the soul in all cultures and are believed to ascend to the sky, especially after death. In many ancient civilizations, larger birds were associated with the sun, gods, and the sky. In the Quran, birds symbolize the eternal soul and spiritual growth (Zeraatpisheh & Chitsazian, 2016).

3. Iconography: In artistic cultures, the term «Shamayel» is equivalent to «Icon», «Iconography» is translated as «Shamayel-Negari», and «Iconology» as «Shamayel-Shenasi». The term «Shamayel» (Icon) is used in three different meanings: The first refers to worshipped images in Christian religious art. The second meaning is used in the semantic theories and art of the twentieth century. The third meaning refers to «artistic subject». In the twentieth century, these approaches evolved into a more comprehensive and general method for studying literary-artistic works. After Panofsky's theories,

iconography and iconology merged with art history and provided a method for analyzing religious and non-religious artistic works. Researchers use this approach to analyze texts and images and decode artistic works (Shafiei-Alavicheh, 2019). Panofsky's method includes different semantic layers that shape the connection between the concept of «meaning in art» and the «history of meaning» (Emamifar & Norouzizadeh, 2022). Panofsky also emphasizes that understanding a work of art is impossible without considering its social and cultural context. Panofsky proposes three stages to comprehend an artwork: 1. Pre-iconographic description (examining the appearance and external characteristics of the work), 2. Iconographic analysis (analyzing expressive meanings and emotions), 3. Iconological interpretation (going beyond the level of form to understand the author's intent) (Bagherifard & Hosseini-Zharfa, 2020).

Iconographic Analysis of Mythological Birds

In many cultures, the bird symbolizes the soul and serves as an intermediary between the earth and the sky. In many religions and spiritual beliefs, birds symbolize stages of spirituality, angels, and higher levels of existence. The bird, especially when it ascends to the sky after death, represents the vastness of the soul (Beiruti et al., 2021).

1 .The Icon of the Hoopoe Bird: «The hoopoe is one of the birds that has reached such a capacity for manifesting divine names and attributes that calligraphers have written « بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم» in the shape of this beautiful bird» (Fig 1) (Afzal-Tousi & Jalalian-Fard, 2018). The hoopoe delivered the letter of Prophet Solomon (A.S.) to Bilqis, according to verses 20-22 of Surah An-Naml (Darabi & Maroof, 2014). Based on these verses, another name for the hoopoe is 'Solomon's bird,' and in some Islamic narrations in Bihar al-Anwar, this bird has been given the title of 'the best' (Afzal-Tousi & Jalalian-Fard, 2018). Although the hoopoe's role in the story of Prophet Solomon is entirely real, among mystical poets, the hoopoe has taken on a symbolic meaning. For them, the hoopoe represents the sage, guide, and leader (Lotfi Mofrad-Niyassari et al., 2020). The hoopoe is known as a seeker of water and is highly skilled in this task. In The Conference of the Birds, the hoopoe begins to speak with them after the birds gather and wish to set out for Simurgh. In this section, Attar describes it with various qualities, including royalty, sharp-sightedness, and being the messenger of Prophet Solomon (A.S.) (Fig 2) (Attar, 2009, 263).



Fig 1. Bird of Bismillah (بسم‌الله), Hoopoe.
Source: Afzal-Tousi & Jalalian-Fard, 2018.



Fig 2. «The Conference of the Birds» manuscript, Additions of Isfahan School, The Story of Sheikh San'an.
Source: Aghazarian, 2024.

2. The Icon of the Rooster (Parodarsh): The word rooster in the Avestan language is derived from the word «Kharoush», meaning to cry out, and in Persian, it is known as «Parodarsh», which means «foreseeing and looking ahead» (Modaberi & Hosseini, 2015). In Persian literature, Soroush is introduced as the messenger of the unseen and the helper of the distressed, and in various texts, it has been equated with Gabriel (Amiri-Khorasani & Golestani, 2014). The use of animal symbols, including the rooster, in art has a long history due to its connection with human life, beliefs, and traditions, and it has persisted in various art forms such as pottery and metalwork (Fig 3). Before Islam, rooster motifs in textiles and pottery were simple and abstract. In the Islamic period, the rooster conveys religious and mystical concepts and is widely used in post-Islamic pottery and Islamic artworks (Fig 4) .The rooster symbol is also present in the story of the Mi'raj (Ascension) of the Prophet Muhammad and has been depicted in Islamic miniatures, such as the «Bahrām Mirzā Album» and «Mi'raj-Nama of Shahrukh», where the celestial rooster is regarded as a symbol of divine and mystical inspirations (Fig 5) (Chitsazian & Davoodi, 2020). In Sasanian painting traditions, the rooster image was used with a halo around its head and a pearl in its beak (Fig 6) (Panjehbashi & Mohazzab-Torabi, 2022).



Fig 3. Silver Pitcher with Rooster Motif.
Source: Sadeghpour firozabadi & Mirazizi, 2018.



Fig 4. Engraved Polychrome Bowl with Mina'i Glaze ,11th Century.
Source: Fazel & Teymouri, 2016.



Fig 5. «The Prophet's Encounter with the White Rooster», Mi'raj-Nama of Mir Heydar, Herat.
Source: Hosseini, 2011, 12.



Fig 6. Rooster Motif on Sasanian Textile .
Source: Saberi & Mafi-Tabar, 2020.

3. The Icon of the Crane (Dorna): The Crane (Dorna) is a migratory bird in Iran, sharing similarities with the stork. In Iranian and Chinese mythology, it is known as a healing bird (Shabani & Zarei, 2020). In the Shahnameh and The Conference of the Birds, this bird also appears as a wise healer (Sediqi, 2013). The Chinese considered the Crane (Dorna) the soul of pine and cypress trees (Hamzeian & Mirakhorli, 2021). During the Safavid era, pottery with blue patterns on a white background, influenced by Chinese art, reached its peak. Some examples include hookah flasks decorated with abstract depictions of cranes in flight (Hosseini & Chaboksavar, 2020) (Fig 7). In the Ilkhanid period, silk fabrics featuring motifs such as cranes and peacocks were used in religious and historical artworks (Ebrahimi, 2020) (Fig 8). Additionally, during this time, tilework with Islamic motifs replaced human figures, and depictions of cranes in flight can be seen on these tiles (Fig 9) (Sahand Shimi, 2022).



Fig 7. Blue and White Hookah Flask, 16th Century, Kerman. Source: Hosseini & Chaboksavar, 2020.



Fig 8. Section of a Textile Pattern: Turtle, Crane, and a Pond with Two Fish. Source: Ebrahimi, 2020.



Fig 9. Crane Motif on Lusterware Tiles from Takht-e Soleyman, West Azerbaijan. Source: Sahand Shimi, 2022.

4. The Icon of the Hummingbird: The hummingbird is a small bird with various symbolic meanings across different cultures. In Native American legends, it is known as a healer and a symbol of good luck, sometimes appearing as an omen of imminent rain. In the East, particularly in China, the hummingbird represents joy, freedom, and prosperity. In Celtic culture, this bird is considered a messenger between humans and gods, symbolizing wisdom and connection to the divine. According to these beliefs, a hummingbird's sighting signifies messages sent from the gods to humans (Siddique, 2022). In Mayan mythology, the hummingbird is punished for attempting to marry a young girl, a story that alludes to cosmic processes such as reproduction and maturity. This concept is clearly depicted in Mayan art; for example, an ancient stone carving from Izapa features an image of a crocodile tree with a bird on it and a man engaged in battle (Yan & Zhang, 2023) (Fig 10). In other works, such as images found in Mayan and Aztec cultures, the hummingbird is depicted as a symbol of weaving and femininity. In one of these images, the Aztec goddesses Tlazolteotl and Chalchiuhtlicue, who represent cotton and weaving, are shown carrying a cotton spindle, which is interpreted as a magical tool for protecting humans from the enchantment of the hummingbird (Mazariegos, 2010) (Figs 11 & 12).



Fig 10. Stone tablet, Pacific coast, Mexico, Museum of Arts, Soco Cusco. Source: Yan & Zhang, 2023.



Fig 11. Weaver and hummingbird on a classic Mayan clay statue from Jaina Island. Source: Mazariegos, 2010.



Fig 12. A hummingbird perched on the Tree of the West, with Tlazolteotl and Chalchiuhtlicue. Source: Mazariegos, 2010.

5. The Icon of the Owl: Due to its nocturnal presence and distinctive call, the owl is a symbol of mystery and the supernatural. Its silent flight has led many cultures to associate it with superstitions and fear. At the same time, these traits have reinforced the belief that the owl can foresee events, making its sighting either a sign of good fortune or an omen of misfortune. In ancient Greece, the owl was recognized as a symbol of wisdom and knowledge because Athena, the goddess of wisdom and civilization, was always accompanied by a small owl (Fig 13). In ancient Rome, Minerva, the Roman counterpart of Athena, shared the same characteristics, and Romans also associated the owl with funeral rituals, believing that seeing it during the day was an ill omen (Fig 14). Among pre-Islamic Arabs, the owl symbolized death, as they believed that after a person's death, their soul would transform into an owl and wail over their grave. Even after the advent of Islam, despite the Prophet Muhammad's emphasis on avoiding superstitions, many Arabs continued to believe that the flight and calls of ominous birds like owls, crows, and screech owls were harbingers of misfortune (Mahdavi, 2016). In Rumi's Masnavi, the owl symbolizes the material world and sensory attachments, carrying a negative connotation (Sarfi, 2007). In Western culture, the owl represents insight, thought, silence, night, and witches, whereas in Iranian culture, it is often seen as a symbol of doom and sorrow (Haghshenas, 2021).



Fig 13. Athena's owl on a silver coin. Source: Nakou, 2016.



Fig 14. Athena Lakakasouva, Metropolitan Source: Museum of Art. Alpaslan, 2019.

6. Icon of the Bat Bird: Bats are social animals that primarily navigate at night by emitting sound waves. In Rumi's Masnavi, the bat is depicted as a despised bird in opposition to the sun and the hawk, symbolizing avoidance of light and darkness. The Moche civilization, which flourished on the northern coasts of Peru from the 1st to the 8th century A.D., depicted bats in their artwork. These images are usually associated with sacrifice, elite status, and agricultural fertility themes. In Moche iconography, bats are represented in various forms, including anthropomorphic and naturalistic depictions. Anthropomorphic bats are illustrated with features such as veins, human-like faces, and a dual-color scheme of red and cream (Fig 15). These images are generally found in different artistic contexts, including ceramic artifacts and fine artworks (Aleksa K., 2020).



Fig 15. Images of anthropomorphic bats with spherical elements, Peru. Source: Aleksa K., 2020.

This analysis demonstrates that bird symbolism is highly complex and variable, acquiring different meanings depending on cultural and historical contexts. In one culture, a particular bird may symbolize wisdom and knowledge, while in another, it may represent misfortune and death. This diversity highlights the rich symbolic significance of birds in human perception and their influence on art and mythology.

Interpretation of Mythological Bird Representations in Messenger Logos

Visual elements in the design of messenger logos are essential in communicating with the audience. Using mythological and cultural symbols can facilitate better interaction and understanding due to users' familiarity. This research adopts a case-study approach to examine six messengers (three domestic and three international) that have incorporated birds into their logo designs. The analysis uses Panofsky's three-level model (description, analysis, and cultural-social interpretation). The second level analyzes the connection between the logo, culture, values, and social trends, and the results are presented comparatively. Adding the «cultural-social interpretation» level to Panofsky's model makes it possible to examine deeper semantic layers of logos and analyze how beliefs and social trends are reflected in the choice of bird and logo design.

1. Hodhod (Hoopoe) Messenger: The Hodhod (Hoopoe) Messenger logo is inspired by the bird in the Quran, known as the carrier of Prophet Solomon's (PBUH) message to the Queen of Sheba (Bilqis). This bird is significant in Islamic culture and ancient Iranian art as a symbol of messaging and communication. The hoopoe, as the symbol for this messenger, reflects a deep connection to Iran's cultural and historical roots and conveys an attempt to link national and religious identity. The logo is designed in a minimalist style, featuring blue and white colors. In this design, the bird's gaze is directed to the right, utilizing both positive and negative space. The letter «H» is shaped like the hoopoe's head, and the letter «D» forms its wing and tail. The hoopoe's role in delivering Prophet Solomon's message signifies effective, fast communication and a connection with

the unseen world. These attributes convey feelings of trust, speed, and efficiency in message transmission. Additionally, the hoopoe is considered a guide and leader in mysticism, capable of delivering guidance in the information space. Its association with the «Conference of the Birds» by Attar and the search for water symbolizes the discovery and attainment of knowledge and awareness. These features may reflect the messenger's capabilities, such as advanced search and access to informational resources. The choice of the hoopoe as a logo symbol strengthens the sense of national identity in Iranian audiences and helps build an emotional connection to the country's cultural heritage.

2. Soroush Messenger: Soroush Messenger is a domestic app with a logo divided into two parts: positive and negative space. An abstract white bird is shown in the negative space with simple lines and minimal details. The bird's head and beak, facing upward, along with the app's name, derived from the Zoroastrian deity Soroush (meaning «to deliver new information and news»), suggest the artist's effort to convey the image of a rooster (Soroush) to the viewer. In Iranian culture, the rooster is a symbol of the messenger of light and dawn, and using this symbol in Soroush's logo can help attract the attention of Iranian users. The rooster's connection with Soroush, the heavenly messenger, and its resemblance to Gabriel in Islamic tradition emphasize the importance of delivering messages and news. The Soroush logo, with the rooster symbol, conveys trust, speed, and accuracy in information transmission. Moreover, the rooster's association with the Prophet's (A.S.) ascension strengthens the idea of awakening the audience's mind. The use of the rooster in Iranian traditional art, both before and after Islam, highlights the deep connection of this symbol with Iranian cultural identity. The choice of the rooster in the Soroush logo can strengthen the sense of national identity and connection with Iranian history and culture. The designers of the Bet logo have leveraged these features, placing a Wi-Fi symbol on the bat's chest to highlight the messenger's communication power. Additionally, in literature, the bat symbolizes darkness and opposition to light, which could refer to hidden aspects of online communication and false information. On the other hand, in Mochica culture, the bat is a symbol of fertility and connection to the supernatural world. The Bet logo could refer to the power of communication beyond time and space, as well as the ability to infiltrate networks. Bats communicate with their environment using echolocation, which relates to the efficiency and speed of information transfer in Bet Messenger and emphasizes the social connection between users.

3. Owl Messenger: The owl, which entered Iran from China, appears frequently in the art of the Samanid period and Islamic motifs. In those times, the owl was known as a symbol of good luck and a messenger of the gods in textiles, and in various cultures, it represents longevity, happiness, and a connection with the divine world. The design of the Owl Messenger logo uses both the name and image of the bird, as it symbolizes messaging and the transmission of positive information. The logo is designed with simple lines and geometric shapes, which can attract a larger audience. The choice of the owl not only represents global taste but also connects with Iranian cultural heritage. In Persian mythology, the owl and the Simurgh are known as wise and healing birds. This feature of the owl as a messenger of hope and healing means providing positive solutions in difficult situations. Additionally, the owl's long lifespan suggests the durability and longevity of the Owl Messenger, building trust with the audience. The choice of the owl as a symbol of connection with nature and Iranian cultural identity evokes a sense of national pride. This bird also holds a special place in Iranian traditional arts, including Safavid pottery and Ilkhanid textiles, and its use in the logo references historical and cultural heritage.

4. Twitter Messenger: Twitter is one of the popular messengers, with its logo inspired by the image of a hummingbird, a small white bird. The minimalist design of this logo aligns with Twitter's characteristics of speed and efficiency. In Celtic mythology, the hummingbird is associated with the air element, symbolizing freedom, quick communication, and global reach. The logo's blue color also conveys a sense of calmness and trust. The speed and agility of the bird, which relates to fast information transmission, align with the dynamic nature of Twitter as an instant communication platform. Additionally, the hummingbird's presence in different regions indicates Twitter's global nature. In various cultures, this bird is associated with concepts like joy and good luck, helping create a positive impression among audiences. However, the meanings of the hummingbird are not the same across all cultures, and cultural context should be considered. In Celtic mythology, the bird is known as a messenger between humans and deities, reflecting Twitter's role in creating connections among individuals and groups. Also, the dual symbolism of the hummingbird in Mayan mythology could refer to both positive and negative aspects of using Twitter, as the platform can be an effective communication tool or contribute to spreading rumors and false information.

5. Cubie Messenger: With its name, this messenger has chosen an owl for its logo. In many cultures, the owl is recognized as a symbol of wisdom, knowledge, and observation. The owl's physical features, such as its large eyes and the ability to rotate its head 270 degrees, could also explain the choice. In Western culture, the owl symbolizes insight, wisdom, and mystery, and using it in the Kiwi logo could represent intelligence and information-processing ability. It can also symbolize surveillance over information. However, in Iranian culture, the owl is generally regarded as an omen of misfortune, which may make it less effective or even negative for Iranian audiences. Nonetheless, the designers may have used the owl's dual meanings to convey a complex, multi-layered message. The owl can symbolize both wisdom (like Athena in Greek mythology) and misfortune (in some cultures). This duality may add intrigue and ambiguity to the logo, encouraging the audience to contemplate its deeper meaning.

6. Bat Messenger: The bat in the international messenger «Bet» logo has been chosen for multiple reasons. The bat is a social bird that flies in groups and can identify its path and prey at night using sound waves. In some cultures, the bat symbolizes night and mystery, while in others, it represents social connection and the power of auditory perception. The designers of the Bet logo have leveraged these features, placing a Wi-Fi symbol on the bat's chest to highlight the messenger's communication power. Additionally, in literature, the bat symbolizes darkness and opposition to light, which could refer to hidden aspects of online communication and false information. On the other hand, in Mochica culture, the bat is a symbol of fertility and connection to the supernatural world. The Bet logo could refer to the power of communication beyond time and space, as well as the ability to infiltrate networks. Bats communicate with their environment using echolocation, which relates to the efficiency and speed of information transfer in Bet Messenger and emphasizes the social connection between users.

Table 1. Analysis of the Role of Mythological Birds in Messenger Logos. Source: Authors.

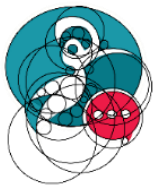
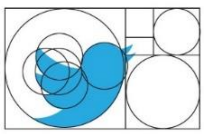
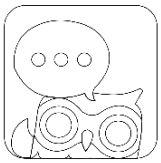
Messenger	Logo	Color	Structure	Logo Line Design	Logo Composition
Hodhod		Blue, White, Magenta	Asymmetrical		
Soroush		Blue, White	Asymmetrical		
Dorna		Blue, White	Asymmetrical		
Twitter		Blue, White	Asymmetrical		
Cubie		Blue, Green, White	Asymmetrical		
Bat		Blue, White	Symmetrical		

Table 2. Iconology of Mythical Bird Roles in Messenger Logos. Source: Authors.

Messenger	Examples in historical works			Description, Analysis, and Iconographic Interpretation
	Logo	artifacts	Civilization	
Hodhod			Harat	Description: The hoopoe is represented due to the name of the messenger application/ The bird has an elongated beak/ The letter (H) symbolizes the hoopoe's crest/ The bird is depicted in flight, symbolizing speed/ The design is stylized and simple. Analysis: Leader/ Sharp-eyed/ Letter and message carrier/ Symbol of fast and effective communication/ Messenger. Interpretation: Reference to national identity and connection with ancient Iranian culture/ Emphasis on the hoopoe's role as a messenger.
Soroush			Seljuks	Description: The rooster is represented through the shape of its head (direction of gaze) and beak/ The chest is prominently displayed, representing its crowing/ The design is simple and abstract. Analysis: Call to action/ Herald of light and sunrise/ New beginnings/ Awakening. Interpretation: Emphasis on being a messenger and bearer of good news/ Announcing new developments/ Intellectual awakening.
Dorna			Safavids	Description: The crane is represented through its long, extended wings/ Resembles the well-known origami paper crane/ Minimal and simple design. Analysis: Wise/ Migratory/ Ever-present/ Symbol of longevity, joy, and peace/ Connection to the celestial world/ Divine messenger. Interpretation: Perseverance/ Success/ International connectivity/ Always accessible.

Messenger	Examples in historical works			Description, Analysis, and
Twitter			Aztecs	Description: The hummingbird is represented through its small body size/ Fast-moving wings/ Minimal and simple design. Analysis: Speed/ Thoughtfulness/ Wealth/ Tranquility/ Beauty/ Graceful speed/ Joy/ Freedom/ Confidence/ Invitation to explore/ Determination/ Bearer of fortune messages/ Messenger between humans and the divine/ Patience/ Good luck. Interpretation: Emphasis on high speed and efficiency of the messenger service/ Carrier of messages.
Cubie			Mithraic	Description: The owl is represented through its large, round eyes/ Small beak/ Round and flat face/ Simple and symbolic design. Analysis: Mysterious/ Prophetic/ Connection to the otherworld/ Healer/ Wisdom/ Death/ Knowledge and contemplation/ Intellect. Interpretation: Emphasis on the broad connectivity and knowledge-sharing function of the messenger service.
Bat			Moche	Description: The bat is represented through its distinctively shaped wings and ears/ The Wi-Fi symbol on the bird's chest represents its ability to receive and reflect sound waves/ Minimal and symmetrical design. Analysis: Sacrifice/ Agricultural fertility/ Nocturnal/ Social/ Symbol of night and mystery/ Symbol of communication and auditory power/ Community/ Wireless communication. Interpretation: Reference to the concept of communication and receiving hidden messages/ Emphasis on message transmission and feedback reception.

The research shows that messaging app logo designers use the symbolism of mythological birds to convey concepts of speed, communication, knowledge, and messaging. The choice of each bird is associated with its characteristics in various myths and cultures, emphasizing a specific aspect of the messaging app's functionality. In domestic

messaging apps, birds with Iranian roots have been used, such as the hoopoe (messenger), the rooster (Soroush, symbol of light), and the crane (symbol of good fortune). These choices help strengthen national identity. In foreign messaging apps, more universal symbols have been used, such as the hummingbird (Twitter), representing speed and global communication; the owl (Cubie), symbolizing intelligence and knowledge; and the bat (Bat), which embodies communicative and social traits.

Conclusion

Since ancient times, myths and mythological beliefs have been central to human life and interactions with nature. Humans have always sought to represent their beliefs and worldviews tangibly and concretely. Today, the media significantly expands human communication and transfers beliefs and mindsets into the public sphere. In this context, messaging app logo designers draw inspiration from myths and cultural symbols. The artifacts of various civilizations are filled with the symbolism of mythological birds. Using Panofsky's iconographic approach, this study examines six bird symbols (hoopoe, rooster, crane, hummingbird, owl, and bat) in messaging app logos. The analysis of images through Panofsky's iconographic method consists of three main stages: determining meaning at the descriptive level (shape and form), analyzing, and interpreting symbolic meanings (cultural and mythological interpretations). In response to the first research question, the formal characteristics of birds in messaging app logos are influenced by both their natural and mythological features. However, the function of the messaging app also plays a role in logo design. Iconographic analysis reveals that these symbols date back to ancient times, and their use in logos emphasizes the role of birds as messengers. The symbolic values of these icons (such as freedom, power, creativity, spirituality, and connection to nature) depend on the culture and branding of each company. Regarding the second research question, it is evident that the messaging app logos design incorporates mythological bird icons with unique iconographic interpretations. However, the common feature among all these birds is their role as messengers. Mythological birds symbolize freedom, communication, speed, efficiency, and a connection to the spiritual world, and they have been used in various myths and stories for centuries. The selection of these symbols in logos conveys specific messages and symbolic values. Despite different geographical backgrounds, specific symbolic values are shared among these icons. The analysis of the six messaging apps studied in Tables 1 and 2 shows that the designed logos do not exhibit significant differentiation from one another or other logos. Typically, additional visual elements or the function of the messaging app contribute to their distinctiveness. Despite unique interpretations, mythological birds share common themes; for example, all the analyzed messaging apps emphasize the symbolic value of messaging. This enhances the global audience's comprehension of the logos. Ultimately, the iconographic analysis of mythological birds in messaging app logos highlights symbolic values such as messaging, illumination, trust, and a connection to cultural and national identity. These birds symbolize the transmission of information and establish an emotional and identity-based connection with the audience due to their deep cultural and historical roots. Using these symbols in logo design strengthens cultural and social identity and fosters trust and deeper connections between users and messaging apps. Paying attention to cultural and mythological symbols in branding and logo design is an effective strategy for capturing attention and creating an emotional bond with the audience.

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Conflict of Interest

The author (s) declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest related to this research, in writing, and publication of this article

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