



## Section 3. General psychology

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### CHRISTIAN ELEMENTS OF CAUCASIAN ALBANIA – KHACHKAR. PSYCHOLOGY OF THE PEOPLES OF THE CAUCASUS

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#### Abstract

The cross has an older history. Again, it is not connected with Europe and the West, but with Asia and the East. But let's also say that the cross came to the Turks from outside as a symbol of religious faith. In time, the Turks saw it on the chest of the Buddha (statue). This happens 600 years before the time of Christianity. It is also known that in the 4th century, Christianity was still not recognized as an independent religion. It was considered a branch of Judaism. See, all this confirms the Asian origin of the cross. It is from this period that the cross became a symbol of Christianity with the help of George and took its place in the dome of the Armenian church. First, the cross, and then temples, prayers, icons, church bells – everything in church paraphernalia – all of these gained important citizenship rights among Armenians by passing through the Turks.

**Keywords:** *Albanian, Armenian, cross, religion, Islam, Christianity, Turkish, monument, cross stone*

#### History

Turkic tribes had an undeniable role in the administration of the Albanian state, in the development of its culture and architecture. That's why many historians use the term "Albanian-Turkish architecture" when talking about Albanian architecture, which is completely consistent with that period. In the early and mature medieval commemorative plastic of Caucasian Albania, certain pre-Christian worldviews and symbolic im-

ages were reflected. The images of the Albanian cross stones were formed over many centuries, first under the influence of two, then three religions, which were organically crossed in the images of stelae of religious symbolism. All the uniqueness, originality and fundamental difference of Armenian khachkars of cross stones comes from this. As shown in the formation of Albanian grave, memorial and border stelae, cross stones, the ideas about the structure of the world on

them have been proven to be pre-Christian Turkish stelae.

With this, Armenian “Khachkars” began to appear in Tsarist Russia and Bolshevik Russia. In fact, the root of the word khachkar is a word of Persian origin, which was transferred from the Persian language to the Armenian language. This word means “work, hard work” in Persian, and when translated into Armenian, it means “deaf”, stone. Therefore, the meaning of the word “khachkar” in Armenian is “cross stone”. The chairman of the Albanian-Udi Christian community, Robert Mobili, specifically stated in his statement, “They falsify the Albanian cultural heritage and monuments belonging to the Udinese and present them as Armenian churches. Armenians changed the inscriptions and crosses on the churches. This seems obvious. Crosses of Albanian churches are different” (Aliyev Z., p. 3).

The Albanian cross is the only cross in the world that has signs that include signs of pre-Christian beliefs and understanding of the universe. All the compositions of these crosses are reflected as a symbol of the connection between heaven and earth, the sun, light, light and fertility. All Albanian inscribed stones, with the regular placement of pre-Christian beliefs and cosmic forces, form unique images subject to religious-artistic laws, which are not found in the cross images of other nations (Shanidze, 1938, p. 3).

In the monuments of the Albanian period, especially in the artistic compositions in the decor of the cross stones, in addition to the cross, which is a symbol of Christianity, various elements of Turkish beliefs, worldview, art traditions and culture can be observed. All this unequivocally confirms that the Albanian monuments belong to the Turkish ethnoculture. British orientalist and archaeologist K. Wilson, talking about ancient Iranian culture, shows that “... the obtained information and signs suggest that the oldest cultural center was Azerbaijan” (Aliyeva K. M., 1999, p. 56–57).

Because Albanian crosses have three leaves and belong to the type of “rose-leaf” crosses. They are also called “liliaflur” cross in some literature, and the “trinity” on the arms and wings of these crosses represents the ancient beliefs of the Albanians (Sun,

Moon and Fire) (Smirnova Inna. 2006, p. 12–19).

However, all the examples shown by Galichyan were taken from the area where Albanians lived (Tbilisi suburbs, Sulfa of Iran), and later Armenianized with minor changes.

Albanian cross stones are amazing for their plasticity, depth of thought, and their boldness in solving architectural-artistic issues resulting from the organic synthesis of architecture, art, and religious symbolism based on folk beliefs and traditions formed over the centuries. Theorists divide the Albanian cross stones into four groups according to their artistic composition and unique image characteristics, which are Khachin, Arsak, Juga and Yeniveng cross stones.

According to researchers studying the Albanian stelae, they bear the influence of ancient anthropomorphic artworks. R. Goyushov, after examining the female statue discovered in the Khinisli settlement, notes that this ancient work of art undoubtedly had a religious significance. The opinions of various researchers about the anthropomorphic origin of early medieval Albanian stelae are confirmed by many tombstones of Azerbaijan and Dagestan, which belong to the greater part of the territory, as well as to historical Caucasian Albania. Many stelae of Dagestan are carved in an anthropomorphic form with a prominent human head (Akhundov, D., Akhundov, M., 1984, p. 39–48).

Crossing of Christian iconography, Muslim decor and symbols of pagan religions in the memorial works of Albanians (Azerbaijani) freely practicing Christianity or Islam is their main distinguishing feature.

Research conducted in Julfa region shows that Turks lived in this area 4–3 thousand years ago – historical monuments were discovered in Mahabbir, Goynuk, Ameniyyar villages. It was determined that Julfa was a place where Turkic tribes lived since ancient times. After the spread of Christianity in this geography, 24 large Turkish families (and 8 small Turkish families) together with the Shahdag peoples living here create the state of Albania.

According to the information of Claudius Ptolemy, one of the ancient authors and numerous other written historical sources, the territory of the Caucasian Albania state,

which was formed in the territory of Azerbaijan, covered an area from the beginning of our era to the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century from the Araz River in the south to the North Caucasus, in the east from the west coast of the Caspian Sea to the lands located west of Lake Goycha.

There are hundreds of temples, churches and monasteries belonging to the rich architectural heritage of Caucasian Albania on the territory of Azerbaijan. In particular, Julfa has a necropolis belonging to the Albanian period. The Juga necropolis, where ancient cross stones are located, is located in the western part of the city. The oldest graves in the cemetery belong to the 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the last graves to the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. In addition to hundreds of Albanian cross stones, the necropolis contains a large number of chests decorated with various Christian motifs, ram and horse-shaped tombstones from the Aggoyunlu and Garagoyunlu periods. According to Alexandre de Rod, a French traveler who visited Julfa in 1648, there were up to 10,000 cross stones in the cemetery even then. Due to the Ottoman-Safavid wars in Nakhchivan, the occupation and genocidal policy of the Armenians who moved here after the Turkmenchay Treaty, and the occupation of Tsarist Russia and the Bolsheviks, the Juga Necropolis, like many monuments here, was damaged, and only a part of those cross stones arrived in 1903–1904.

The Armenians moved to these areas by the Russians at different times, the inscriptions of the Albanian monuments were defaced and replaced with new fake inscriptions indicating that the temples belonged to Armenians. Especially during the Soviet occupation, hundreds of examples of Albanian cultural heritage were stolen from Julfa and taken to Armenia, and they are currently exhibited as Armenian khachkars in the courtyard of Uchmuadzin cathedral. Changes were made on the crossstones taken to Uchmuadzi,

their Albanian written parts were erased or completely broken, but Albanian inscriptions still remain on many crossstones left in Cuga.

They just got fed up with renewing the boring Armenian cross stones, which do not have any artistic meaning, and recently they started using the artistic examples and ornaments of the Albanian cross stones.

In this way, Armenians carved cross stones, headstones and sign stones using the method of engraving and embossing, which is the same as the decorative design of a large number of Albanian cross stones (only by changing the ornaments and decorations of these stones) in different parts of Azerbaijan, in the areas that were once recreation centers of the region, on the roadsides, around the springs, in well-maintained places of public residential centers, in gardens, parks, on top of architectural monuments, in cemeteries and in various residential areas.

Experts know that the height of Armenian khachkars was 1.25 to 1.75 times higher than their width. In some cases, it was taken twice as high as wide. Crossing of Christian iconography, Muslim decor and symbolism of old religions in memorial works of Albanians freely practicing Christianity or Islam is one of the main distinguishing features of Albanian cross stones and Armenian khachkars (Aliyev Z. B., 2019, p. 24–26).

### Conclusion

The elements of Turkish shamanism are clearly visible in the monuments with Albanian crosses, while the Armenians have no mythology, so their khachkars are devoid of motifs. And most importantly, as someone who studies Armenian and Albanian khans, I can confidently say that you know just by looking at their material. Unlike Albanian cross stones, Armenian khachkars were mostly made of tuff stone, which is soft and easy to rub, while Albanian cross stones were made of traditional local hard rock stones.

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