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The Shamanism Magazine

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We hope you enjoy reading the article. Nicholas Breeze Wood (editor)

Tuareg man with agadez crosses around his neck

Below: two teardrop shaped amulets with magical square incantations

Right: old silver agadez cross



many Berbers and some Tuareg were Christian, and familiar with Christian art. As with the early Egyptian Christian Coptic Cross, there is a circle on the top arm of their cross, sometimes with another cross inside it. The Tuareg cross most likely inherited this Coptic cross design, which in turn was inherited from the ancient Egyptian ankh - the symbol of life.

Another popular amulet is the *tcherot*. This word means 'message,' 'letter,' or 'paper on which something is written' in the Tuareg language. A *tcherot* is a form of African amulet, generally called a *gri gri*, which are found in many different sub-Saharan countries. Tuareg *tcherot* take the form of a lozenge-shaped rectangle, or square metal or leather box. They are often worn on the chest - rather like Tibetan gau boxes - and they generally have a sheet of paper inside. Written on the paper are often verses from the Quran, or non-Islamic magical symbols, all designed to protect the wearer from *djinn* and *kel-asuf* and to repel the evil eye, curses, hatred, and diseases projected at the wearer.

The Tuareg also have a tradition of 'magic square' rings which contain magical symbols, often arranged in grid form. They often have large front panels, similar to the type of ring known as a signet ring in the West. It is on these front pieces that the magical designs are inscribed.

These rings have a relationship to the traditional square or rectangular Tuareg tent. A tent is like a magical amulet in its own right, protecting the occupants, and different areas inside the tent are ascribed different meanings - for example some parts of the tent are male and others female.

There will generally be magical protection spells painted or cut into the wooden poles of a tent, and these poles divide up edges of the inner space of a tent, marking them like a sheet of graph paper into the cells of an invisible, magically protected grid.

Tuareg rings carry these same ideas, in effect creating a magical tent around the person wearing the ring to protect them from harm.

These same 'magical square'

TO DRIVE AWAY THE DJINN

Magical Protection Amulets of the Tuareg



Because of their concern to be protected from the *djinn* and the *kel-asuf*, the Tuareg have a wealth of talismanic amulets, which they wear to protect them. Some of these are in the form of pendants and others are in the form of magical rings.

Perhaps the most common of these amulets is the *agadez*, which is also known as the *amazigh*, and in

English known as the Tuareg or Berber Cross

The Tuareg say that the centre of the cross represents God, and as Muslims believe we are one with God, humanity also shares this central spot. The four arms of the cross represent the four corners of the world and are said to keep harm at bay from the human wearer at the centre.

The Tuareg Cross is probably based on the Christian cross, because, before the arrival of Islam,

designs can also be found on - often tear shaped - amulets which are worn around the neck.

Tuareg *agadez* crosses and *tcherot* have become popular in the West in recent years, and both old original pieces, and modern silver reproductions can easily be bought online. Talismanic rings are also fairly easy to obtain, although it might perhaps be prudent to know exactly what magic you want 'singing out' on your finger, or around your neck, should you wish to obtain one.



Above: early Egyptian Christian Coptic cross
 Top: ancient Egyptian ankh
 Far left: Tuareg magical ring
 Left: Tuareg tcherot amulet



Above: silver Tuareg rings
 Far left: Tuareg tcherot amulet
 Left: front of a Tuareg magical square silver ring