

Almasty

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Caucasian wild-person stories became entangled with the life of Zana, a woman reduced to a supposed mystery creature. Genetic research restored a crucial boundary between legend and person.

STATUS	A human identity established; cryptid claim unsupported
CLASSIFICATION	STR
MATERIAL	Caucasus
DISPOSITION	PUBLIC / SOURCED STORY
CATEGORY	Strange Files
RECORD TYPE	Cryptids
STORY HISTORY	Caucasian traditions; nineteenth-century Zana account; genetic study published 2021

THE ACCOUNT

Almasty stories describe a wild, humanlike being in the Caucasus. One account acquired a particularly troubling afterlife: that of Zana, a woman who lived in nineteenth-century Abkhazia. Later writers treated descriptions of her appearance and behavior as possible evidence for an unknown human relative. A real person’s life became part of a monster file, while the circumstances in which others described her were pushed into the background.

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

Researchers compared genomes from remains attributed to Zana and from her son Khwit. Their close relationship supported the identification, and the study traced her immediate ancestry toward present-day East African populations. She was human. The authors’ suggestions about a possible genetic condition remain speculation, not a retrospective diagnosis. This result addresses the Zana claim specifically; it does not catalogue every regional wild-person tradition.

WHY IT STAYS WITH US

Here the essential discovery is a correction to the telling. An eerie reputation can conceal cruelty and prejudice as easily as it conceals an animal. Keeping this account means remembering Zana as a person and keeping the unverified Almasty tradition separate from her identity.

WHERE THIS TELLING COMES FROM

The genomic origin of Zana of Abkhazia

Advanced Genetics / Wiley

<https://advanced.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/ggn2.10051>

RETURN TO THE STORY

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