

His beard and His hair falling on his shoulders can be seen.

On that horizontal band under the crowning arch, to the left of the observer, there is a carving of a rider, on a running horse, who with his bow drawn aims at a lion or a tiger, it is not clear which. The rider, shown in profile, wears a girdled tunic reaching to his knees; the shape of his hat is not clear because it is broken off at the back. His nose and mouth are also partly broken. The lion has unnatural proportions, partly because of limited space and partly perhaps with the intention of showing him as wounded. On the contrary the running horse is fairly well represented. His tail is knotted in accordance with Sassanian practice. The horse's saddle, bridle and tail-support are ornamented.

Above this composition is written *ՄԱՆՈՒԵՂ ԱՐԱՏՈՒՆԵԱՅ ՏԷՐ* ("Manuel Lord of-the-Amadoonis"). This inscription of three words, not only designates the founder of the church, but it also constitutes one of the most ancient relics of Armenian paleography, belonging to the first half of the sixth century as will be shown in the discussion concerning the date of the founding of the edifice.⁵

On the other horizontal band, to the right of the observer, just under the last medallion there is a peacock, its tail raised but not spread out. On the band itself there is a bearded and curly-haired man kneeling on his left foot and aiming a lance at an attacking lion.

To the left of this window, on the west, we see a palm tree, under which is standing a lion, its jaw a little broken, its tail hanging between its two hind legs. To the west of these and higher up there are the remains of a vine with leaves. This row of alternating grapes and leaves belonged to the crowning arch over the upper window of the south façade. To the east of it there is the following inscription: "«b»

5. The whole inscription is in middle right-angled uncials. It is worthy of attention that the y is in round-letter form. The s is a little damaged.||

Յով(ն)էս ^{5a} *Ծառայ ալ Է սուրբ խաչին»* ("I, John, servant of God and of the Holy Cross"), again in middle right-angled uncials, but not contemporary with the previous inscription. To the east of the window with figure sculpture, there is another window the crown of which is decorated with protruding semiglobes.

The palm tree, the vine with its row of alternating bunches of grapes and leaves, the ornament formed of semiglobes in circles, are all characteristic of our most ancient basilicas, as for example the sculptures on the door—lintels of the basilicas of Kassakh (fig 7, 8 and Apna fig. 20), works of the fifth or sixth century. The horseshoe arches of the whole church of Kassakh (the southern nave has remained intact), the sculptures on the lintels of the southern and especially the western entrances, the globes at the center and on the arms of the cross, the deers and especially the palm trees at either side of the cross, reveal the Mesopotamian relationship of the church and indicate its date to be not later than the fifth century. That the capitals of Kassakh and similar churches indicate Mesopotamian influence is affirmed by Strzygowski who considers them works of the fourth or fifth century⁶.

The northern wall has preserved much more material in ornamental sculpture. The crowning arches of the windows are in part similar to those of the seventh century churches known to us, such as Arouj and Hripsimè, but they are at the same time quite different. The surfaces of the jambs of the door and of the salient arch are covered with rows of consecutive acanthi; this is unusual in the sculpture of seventh century churches of the same type, and may be seen only on the most ancient sepulchral monuments of which we give

5a. In the original the bracketed letter does not appear, there being an open space instead—due, it seems, to a typographical error (or perhaps the letter is missing in the inscription). Without the bracketed letter the inscription would read: "I, Joa, I a servant of God" etc. Translator's note.

6. Die Koptische Kunst., p. 65, fig. 85: 7334.