

a little to the northeast of the village historically known as Vuzhan and now called Ootchan (which is on the southern flank of Mt. Aracadz) there was a sepulchral stele, now in the Etchmiadzin museum, on one side of which is represented the Virgin with the infant Jesus; a flying angel is placing a crown on the head of the Virgin (fig. 31). Strzygowski considers that the sculpture of the cave of Tagi Bostan is influenced by Syro-Egyptian art. The Egyptian art referred to is not that of the ancient Pharaohs but the art resulting from a combination of the latter with Greco-Roman art, with which in turn was also combined Syrian art. These are his words: "Vom syro-egyptischen Kreise abhängig ist auch Tag i Bostan, wo Chosroes II, in der Hirshjagd ähnlich eingeführt ist." (See Rawlinson, *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, p. 614/5.)²³

The bearded Christ, in a disc, and the apostles at his sides also appear in Syrian art. Thus on the band of a vessel now in the Louvre the bearded Christ and six apostles on either sides are pictured within circular frames, each formed of two parallel ears of corn — a work of the VIth century.²⁴ The silver censers from Kerynia, now in the British Museum, are works of the same period and of quite similar art and style. These collateral indications should be accepted as very important data for determining the time and the artistic affinities of Budghavank.

But we also see at Budghavank ornaments which occur on the churches of Hrip-simè, Acrag of Kars, and other edifices, and which remind us of the Sassanian period of Iranian art. The hunting scene of Manuel, for instance, was the favorite

motif of Sassanian art, to say nothing of the fact that there is also a certain similarity in the manner of fighting.

The union in Armenian architecture of these two styles, that is of the domed square and the long basilica, has been pointed out by Strzygowski in his great work on Armenian art. He considers the church of St. Gregory in Arouj as the most ancient and most glorious exponent of that fusion, so magnificent that it can be compared with the great cathedrals of the west and with Baroque buildings of the Gesù type — "in einer Grossartigkeit, die den vergleich mit den mächtigen kathedralem des Abenlandes und den Barockbauten vom Typus des Gesù im besonderen aushält."²⁵

Although the Armenians adopted the rectangular basilica from Mesopotamia and Syria, and the domed square from Iran, they were not mechanical copyists: they developed the elements they borrowed and created, in particular, the domed long edifice which became the precursor of the Byzantine domed basilicas of the IXth century, that is of the time of the emperors of Armenian descent. Strzygowski admits theoretically that the prototype of the church of Arouj must have originated in the VIth century; he was not aware of the existence of edifices of that type older than the church of Arouj, built in the VIIth century, and the church of Yerazcavors, of the IXth century; but behold, Budghavank, built approximately one and a half centuries before, gives us the proof of this fusion, and with such perfection that a period of development must have preceded it. Between Budghavank and St. Gregory of Arouj however there is a significant difference: while in the church of Arouj

1938, Fig. 21, which is considered to be a work of the year 400.

23. Strzygowski, *L'ancien Art Crétien de Syrie*, Tables XII and XIII. See also Baroness Ravensdalle, *Old and new in Persia*, in *The National Geographic Magazine*, Sept. 1939, p. 352; also A.U. Pope, *A Survey of Persian Art*, London and New York, 1938, p. 159.

24. Strzygowski, *L'ancien Art Chrétien de Syrie*, plate XX, 2.

25. Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst der Armenier*, p. 188. See also his *L'ancien Art Chrétien de Syrie*, Paris, 1936, p. 32. The arguments of the Georgian scholar Tchubinashvil in favor of assigning a later date for the church of Arouj are not only non-convincing but also entirely unacceptable for one who is acquainted with Armenian art. We turn to his matter at some other time, for we do not have under hand at present our measurements and notes about the Church.