

But there had been another church there, far more magnificent, judging from the ruined remains; on this site was erected in the 11th century, the building shown in Fig. 49. Its walls are studded with many ancient sculptures, while inside is a collection of fragments of sculpture, one of which is a beautiful cross of equal arms in high-relief, inscribed in a crown. This type of high-relief, was no longer used in Armenian art after the 7th century.

We shall postpone to a later occasion the special study of the church and of the inscriptions belonging to the period of the Zakarians; we shall only consider now a few sculptured fragments from the ancient church which prove, beyond doubt, that it belongs to the same period as that of Otsoun and its sepulchral stele. Here we have the wave-like palmette (Fig. 50), already seen on the Prtatzor stele and on the lintel over the east door of the fifth-century church of Digor. The second fragment (Fig. 51) is decorated with a motif which we also saw on the pedestal of the Prtatzor stele. Strzygowski considers it to be of Syrian origin and characteristic of the 5-6th century. (*).

The fourth fragment (Fig. 52), figuring a cross and with a Sasanian ornament in the form of an ear of corn on the upper frieze, reveals a close relationship, with respect to style and motif, to Prtatzor, Otsoun and Gogh. Of the latter we shall speak in the next chapter. The palmettes of the central cross occur on the oldest Sasanian coins (**). On another fragment of a sepulchral stele, the scepter cross, with arms of equal length, is enclosed in a circle and raised on a perforated, three-stepped pedestal. The triangular grooves of the circle, and the circle itself, which we find also at Gogh, were no longer used in the later periods of Armenian sculpture (Fig. 53). As to the sculpture set above the eastern window—a bishop and a prince holding in their hands the model of the church

—we are doubtful of its being part of an old church. It probably belongs to the present church. (Fig. 54).

We must mention another motif imbedded in the wall of the left vestry: the Almighty seated on a throne, which unfortunately we were unable to photograph for lack of space and other inconveniences. This must be the oldest of its kind, unless what we took to be Jesus' picture over the eastern window of Otsoun was meant to represent the Almighty.

V

In the preceding chapter we mentioned the ruins of Gogh. Let us first determine the location. This place must not be confused with an old town of the same name near the salt mines of the County of the Arsharoonis, the birthplace of Yeznig of Gogh. This one is situated on the right of Tzoraked, near the border line of Ghazakh and Lorri Counties, approximately in the Akhdala region named Goghpor in the olden times. That territory is rich in remains of ancient churches. But on the north-east of the village one of the villagers desiring to build a barn on property owned by him, found a large number of sculptures and the foundation walls of a church. The government of Armenia at once ordered cessation of the work, leaving for the future the excavation of this ancient site by specialists. We are, therefore, unable to discuss the architectural form of the church, although judging from the remnants brought to light, it must be one of the oldest and most interesting.

First of all, let us note that we find here a fragmentary sepulchral stele, similar in shape to the steles found in Central Armenia, particularly around Mt. Aracadz, which we shall discuss in detail in the following sections. Even the small remnants are sufficient to indicate that here was a building which through its sculptured decorations was related to the Sasanian-Mesopotamian, and early Byzantine periods, as well as to the art of Otsoun, Prtatzor, and

* Die Koptische Kunst, Fig. 189, 8792. Compare with Crum Die Grabstelle, 8633, PL. X.

** Frederich Sarre. Die Kunst des Alten Persien, 1925. Taf. 142, No. 4 coin.