

ries Jesus on her left arm, and raises her right arm in the same way as the angel on our stele. The same gesture may be seen on the base of a sepulchral stele. (Fig. 85). The fact that we see the same gesture on Coptic sepulchral monuments is of particular interest. (*).

The figure below is that of a man, hands joined, and with a cross alongside of him. He has a circular halo around his head, his hair is thick and cut in the style of the foregoing ones. It is John the Baptist. On the other side of the stele is Jesus, being baptized. The angel descending from heaven is placing a crown on His head. (Fig. 43). The importance of this scene in determining the time and trend to which it belongs has already been noted above. (Page 64 in the Armenian text, page 9 in this MMs.). The stele must have had a different termination, probably a cross was raised on it, for one can see a cavity in which it must have been set.

VII

Figure 74 shows the lower part of a monument, the only part which has come down to us. Its first face has a large acanthus which we reproduced in Part One. Figure 9.

On the opposite side appears a male figure; the face is broken off, but the lower parts of the cheeks and the chin are still visible. He wears an ornate mantle in the form of a cope, hooked under the neck with a clasp; his straight tunic reaches his feet. Over it he has something like a scapula with a circular ending. He holds a book pressed against his breast with both hands. His feet are bare, and under them are two stalked acanthuses whose outer arms pass on to the right and left side as shown in the next figure (75). Here too, a man stands on an acanthus, with one arm raised, the other lying on his breast. The tunic reaching just below the knees is drawn tight across the hips. With his chlamys clasped on the right shoulder and

his trousers pushed into his boots, he appears to be a military man. On the fourth face of the stele there is again a figure standing on an acanthus. He seems to be wearing boots with the ends of his trousers thrust in the bootstraps. Only the lower part of the front of his tunic is visible; his mantle comes down to his feet. It is not clear if he is holding something in his left hand, or has it placed on his breast. His hat, resembling the hood worn by the Armenian clergy, is very interesting. (Fig. 76). The exact meaning of this representation is not clear to us, but the headgear is very much like that of the Saka warriors in the sculptures of Persepolis. (*)

VIII

None of the Talin steles that we have described had a base, but that does not mean they never had any. Fortunately two bases, though separated from the steles, still survive at Talin; they are entirely covered with precious carvings. They are large quadrangular blocks with large holes dug in them on which to erect the stele proper, as we see on the cross-stones of later centuries and of somewhat different shape.

Figures 77-78 give an idea of the shape of the base and of the general disposition of the sculptures; 79-82 give detailed views. If we consider the first face to be that with the Virgin, the second going from left to right would have the cross, the third a geometric interlace, and the fourth a series of six concentric and gradually decreasing rectangles, which present the appearance of a bound book (Fig. 81-82). I think we would not be far wrong considering these two carvings (the interlace and the rectangles) as the book covers of a Gospel. Together with the cross, the Gospel was an object of worship or veneration. As a book, it was considered as the

* Sarre, *Die Kunst des Alten Persien*, page 29. Under the picture is written: "Krieger in Sackischer Tracht." See also Herzfeld, *Tafel XVI. Sackisches Volk. Persepolis*, Berlin Museum.

* Cairo Museum. See Fig. 42.