

leaves and clusters of grapes, while on the pedestal is a geometric ornament peculiar to Armenian and Sasanian art of this period. (See Fig. 51 at Khozhorni). The third face (Fig. 47) has a palmette scroll similar to the one over the west door of the 5th century church of Digor, as well as to the ornaments on the fragments of memorials belonging to the same period, such as Khozhorni (Fig. 50 and 51). The same motif (Fig. 47) appears on the lintel of Deir el Benat, which is considered a work of the 5th century (*). The ornament shown on figure 51 occurs in Egypt and more often in Syria, and belongs to the 5-6th century, according to Strzygowski (***) .

The fourth face of the stele is the most interesting of all (Fig. 48). As on the stele of Otsoun, human and animal figures, ornamental motifs, crosses having the shape typical of those represented on the old basilicas, are all inscribed in square frames. The first two squares beginning from the bottom are entirely effaced. In the third is a cross of equal arms, with a ball on the tips of each arm, a characteristic feature of the 5th and 6th centuries, which we shall explain later. Each angle of the cross is filled with an acanthus leaf, having a long stem; similar examples often occur on the other sepulchral monuments. The fifth square frames a geometric motif, a three-stranded interlace, repeated in the tenth square, and which will be discussed in the chapter devoted to Talin (Pictures 78-81). The sixth square has a horse-like animal with three plants (trees? or flowers?); such a composition, but with different animals, appears in Sasanian art or on monuments which show Sasanian influence. (***) The seventh square has two figures, a man and a woman, probably a deceased couple, holding the long stem of a cross as we saw on the Otsoun stele. The eleventh, represents the Nativity (?) It is

* Deir el Benat is between Aleppo and Antioch.

** Die Koptische Kunst, 189: 8792. For Egypt, Crum, *Die Grabstelle*, 8633, Pl. X.

*** See Pope, 204, 208, 232 figures.

bady effaced; four horse-shoe arches figure the cave, above it was a figure, now defaced. The fourteenth square, with a cross of a different shape, is also defaced. The rest is broken off. It is difficult to determine the original height of the stele, perhaps it was not much higher. On this face the pedestal is decorated with an equal-armed scepter cross inclosed in a double circle.

Indicative of the antiquity of the church and the site is still another remnant, probably the fragment of a sepulchral stele of a different type, ending in a broken capital placed on a free-standing column. Judging from the treatment of the surface, there must have been something on the capital, perhaps a cross. We shall discuss later the shapes of these steles. For the present what interests us is their sculpture which also appears in the Syrian art of the fifth and sixth centuries, motifs, such as the six-armed crosses set in round circles (*) the palmette scroll and the lilies we saw on the church of Digor and the stele of Otsoun.

IV

Not far from Prtatzor, in the same valley, slightly northward, is the town of Khozhorni which, according to Vartan, was the native town of the Zakarians who must have settled there in the 11th century. We find there, their inscribed memorials in the 13th century, for instance the inscription of Shahinshah, son of Zakaré the Great, in a forest, which has not yet been published. But long before the reign of the Zakarians, cultural and artistic life had flourished there. There is a small basilica with one nave in the village of Khozhorni, on a hill, already mentioned where was the residence of the Melikofs, Georgian princes, later bought by the wealthy Aramian, and now a state property. Near the church is the sepulchral stele we mentioned before.

* Strzygowski, "L'Ancien art Chrétien", Paris, 1938, page 87-88.