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SOURCES AND ICONOGRAPHY OF THE FIGURAL SCULPTURE OF
THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS AT AGHT'AMAR

Volume I

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By

Connie Lou Waltz, B.A., M.A., M.L.S.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1986

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PREFACE

I first became aware of the Church of the Holy Cross at Aght'amar as an undergraduate, and, though knowing little of Byzantine art and nothing of Armenian traditions, I was sufficiently struck by its unique program of sculpture to seek out and read Professor S. Der Nersessian's excellent monograph on the building. Some years later the church came to my attention again, in the course of a graduate seminar on Anatolian Seljuq architecture taught by Dr. Howard Crane at the Ohio State University. By that time my knowledge of Byzantine art had increased, and I had also acquired some background in Sasanian and Islamic art, and was in a better position to appreciate the complexity of the wealth of figures and scenes in the sculptural decoration.

I found that earlier scholars had tended to focus either on the Biblical scenes and figures, or on those that stemmed from pre-Islamic and Islamic traditions, treating them as mutually exclusive elements of an eclectic and disjointed program. I felt, however, that there must have been an underlying theme or themes that had determined the inclusion of each component of the sculpture, and that a clearer overview of the sources and iconography could be attained by a detailed analysis of all of the figural decoration, including both the Biblical and the "secular" motifs. To this end, I have assigned a number to each scene
or figure in the sculpture and have presented my discussions in the form of a catalogue.

The diversity of the subjects depicted at Aght'amar required the use of a wide variety of secondary sources, and the staff of the inter-library loan department of the Ohio State University Libraries helped me to obtain many materials that were not available in the University's own collections. I also profited from the resources of the Cleveland Museum of Art's excellent research library.

I am grateful to my adviser, Professor James Morganstern, who patiently read portions of the manuscript over a period of several years and who made many pertinent and helpful suggestions. I also wish to thank the members of my committee, Professors Howard Crane, Christine V. Bornstein, and Charles Atkinson, for generously taking time away from their many other duties and interests to read this dissertation. Finally, I owe a particular debt of gratitude to my parents, without whose help and encouragement this project could not have been carried out.
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<td>AA</td>
<td>Archäologischer Anzeiger</td>
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<td>AI</td>
<td>Ars Islamica</td>
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<td>AMIlan</td>
<td>Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran</td>
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<td>BCMA</td>
<td>Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art</td>
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<td>BEFAR</td>
<td>Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome</td>
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<td>Bulletin de Liaison du Centre International d'Étude des Textiles Anciens</td>
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<td>ByzZ</td>
<td>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</td>
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<td>CahArch</td>
<td>Cahiers Archéologiques</td>
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<td>CHI</td>
<td>Cambridge History of Iran</td>
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<td>Corsi di Cultura sull'Arte Ravennate e Bizantina</td>
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<td>DOS</td>
<td>Dumbarton Oaks Studies</td>
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<td>IrAn</td>
<td>Iranica Antiqua</td>
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<td>JARCE</td>
<td>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</td>
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<td>JBAA</td>
<td>Journal of the British Archaeological Association</td>
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<td>JbAChr</td>
<td>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</td>
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<td>JÖB</td>
<td>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik</td>
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<td>JÖBG</td>
<td>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft</td>
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<td>JWCI</td>
<td>Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</td>
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<td>KunstOr</td>
<td>Kunst des Orients</td>
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<td>MDAFA</td>
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<td>MünchJB</td>
<td>Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst</td>
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<td>QDAP</td>
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<td>RACr</td>
<td>Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana</td>
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<td>RBK</td>
<td>Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst</td>
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<td>REArm</td>
<td>Revue des Études Arméniennes</td>
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<td>REByz</td>
<td>Revue des Études Byzantines</td>
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<td>TextMJ</td>
<td>Textile Museum Journal</td>
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ix
The Church of the Holy Cross stands on the east end of the small island of Aght'amar, located about two miles from the southern shore of Lake Van in eastern Turkey (figs. 1 and 2). It was built between 915 and 921 to serve as the palace chapel of Gagik Artsruni, the ruler of the Armenian province of Vaspurakan.¹

The church, which is built of large blocks of ashlar masonry of a warm yellowish-pink sandstone, is a domed cross-octagon. Four semicircular exedrae radiate from the central bay on the axes, and four narrow cylindrical niches on the diagonals transform the central square into an octagon (fig. 3). The eastern niches give access to two narrow rectangular sacristies that flank the apse. The main entrance to the church is on the west; another entrance on the south facade, originally reached by an exterior staircase, led to the king's private gallery in the south exedra.²

On the exterior, the east and west exedrae and the sacristies are concealed within the walls, but pairs of tall narrow niches indicate the internal divisions (figs. 4 and 5). The volumes of the interior space are expressed on the north and south facades by polygonal walls that define both the exedrae and the cylindrical niches (figs. 6 and 7). A conical dome set on a tall sixteen-sided drum rises above the
central bay of the church, while pitched roofs cover each of the cross arms and small conical domes crown the diagonal niches.\(^3\)

The church at Aght'amar bears many similarities to the late sixth- or seventh-century church of Saint Etchmiadzin at Soradir, and may be seen as a more mature development of the plan represented by the earlier building.\(^4\) T. Breccia Fratadocchi believes that the church at Soradir is actually the Church of the Holy Cross of Aghbak, which served as the dynastic mausoleum of the Artsruni family, and he has suggested that Gagik consciously reproduced both the form and the dedication of this church in his chapel at Aght'amar, in order to emphasize the continuity of the dynasty.\(^5\) Although it is difficult to prove conclusively, this hypothesis is very attractive; and it also raises questions as to whether the church at Aght'amar might have been intended as a mausoleum for Gagik and his descendants, who now held the title of kings of Vaspurakan.\(^6\) The site of Gagik's burial is not known; his body may have been interred, along with those of his ancestors, in the Church of the Holy Cross at Aghbak, but it is also possible that he was buried in his own church at Aght'amar.

The most unique feature of the Church of the Holy Cross at Aght'amar is the rich and varied program of sculpture that decorates its exterior. The reliefs of the main zone of sculpture, which fills the lower third of the decorated surface of the walls, depict a wide variety of scenes and figures, mainly from the Old Testament, as well as a votive scene, images of saints of local significance, and a series of real and fantastic animals. Above this section is a single row of widely spaced birds and animals, carved in high relief. A vine frieze
populated with a variety of animals and human figures encircles the upper part of the church, and friezes of human heads and animals are carved beneath the eaves of the roofs of the exedrae and niches, and at the top of the drum of the central dome. A standing Evangelist appears in the center of each of the four facades, directly beneath the gable. The interior of the church was also richly decorated with a program of frescoes that depicted a complete cycle of the life of Christ, and complemented the predominantly Old Testament iconography of the exterior sculpture.

The builder of the Church of the Holy Cross, Gagik Artsruni, was the second son of Grigor Deranik Artsruni and the princess Sophia, daughter of the Bagratid ruler Ašot I, whose claim to the title of King of Armenia was recognized by both the caliph al-Mu'tamid and the Byzantine emperor, Basil I. The Artsrunis, a line of the Orontid dynasty claiming descent from King Sennacherib of Assyria, had begun a rise to prominence in the fifth century, and in the late eighth and ninth centuries had extended their rule to the entire province of Vaspurakan. We are well informed on events in Vaspurakan during this period, as the chronicler Thomas Artsruni's *History of the Artsruni House* was begun under the patronage of Grigor Deranik, and continued during the reigns of his eldest sons, Ašot and Gagik. On Grigor Deranik's death in 887, Ašot Artsruni became prince of Vaspurakan and inherited most of the territories of the province, while Gagik received the lands south of Lake Van, including the canton of Rštunik' and the island of Aght'amar, and a third son, Gurgen, was given holdings to the west of Lake Urmia. Shortly thereafter, in 890, Ašot I Bagratuni died and was succeeded by
Smbat, his eldest son, who was also officially recognized as king by both al-Mu'tamid and the Byzantine emperor, now Leo VI. At the same time, however, either in 889/90 or in 892, al-Mu'tamid, in order to keep a check on the power of the Armenian rulers, appointed Muhammad b. Abi'l-Saj, one of his most distinguished officers, as governor of Azerbaijan and Armenia. The Sajids, who may have been of Sogdian origin, came from Ushrusana in Central Asia, and Muhammad later assumed the surname al-Afshin, the traditional title of the kings of Ushrusana. He invaded Vaspurakan in 899 and forced Ašot Artsruni to become his vassal, but two years later Muhammad died during the course of an epidemic, and in 904 Ašot also succumbed to an illness and was succeeded as prince of Vaspurakan by his brother Gagik.

Relations between the Bagratid and Artsruni houses deteriorated during the early years of Gagik's reign. One incident, which left bitter feelings on both sides, concerned a fortress at Amiwk on the northeast shore of Lake Van. Although located within the territory of Vaspurakan, this fortress had been held for over a century by the Uthmanid Arabs, who used it as a vantage point from which to make further incursions into Armenian lands. Amiwk was captured by the Artsrunid troops in 905, and Gagik left the citadel in the hands of one of his vassals, Abu-sacr Vahuni, who, persuaded by Smbat's bribes and promises, turned the fortress over to the Bagratids, who subsequently sold it to Gagik for a very high price. Still more serious was a dispute over the city of Nakhchivan, which, although historically part of Vaspurakan, was ceded by Smbat Bagratuni to the prince of Siunik'. When Smbat refused his demands to return the city, Gagik turned for assistance to
Yusuf b. Abi'l-Saj, who had succeeded his brother Muhammad as emir of Azerbaijan, and voluntarily became his vassal. Yusuf was only too willing to join in an alliance against the Bagratid king, as Smbat had incurred the emir's enmity by ignoring his summons and becoming a direct vassal of the caliph al-Muqtadi, and by taking arms against Yusuf when he revolted against the caliph.\textsuperscript{14}

In 908, Yusuf conferred upon Gagik the title of king of Armenia, and installed him in his new position with great pomp and ceremony. Gagik received a gold crown set with pearls and precious stones and a robe of honor embroidered in gold, as well as a splendid sword and a magnificently caparisoned horse.\textsuperscript{15} The caliph al-Muqtadir later confirmed Gagik's title and gave him the right to collect taxes, and also sent him a crown and royal robes.\textsuperscript{16} In return, Gagik and his younger brother, Gurgen, joined forces with Yusuf and undertook a long campaign that began with the reconquest of Nakhchivan in 909 and culminated in Smbat's death at the hands of Yusuf in 914.\textsuperscript{17} Ašot II, the eldest son of Smbat, set out to avenge his father's death and to free the Bagratid kingdom from Muslim occupation. Yusuf at first wished to continue the campaign, but Gagik refused to cooperate further; and, faced with Ašot's growing support among the Armenian nakharars, the hereditary heads of the princely houses, and his own difficulties with the caliphate in Baghdad, the emir was finally forced to recognize the Bagratid's claim to the Armenian crown.\textsuperscript{18} In 921, Ašot II visited the court of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, where he was received with royal honors and given many gifts. Backed by Byzantine troops, he successfully upheld his claim to Armenia, and was recognized as "King of Kings"
by the Arab courts. The Bagratid and Artsrunid houses were reconciled, and Gagik retained only the title of king of Vaspurakan.

After its stormy beginnings, Gagik's reign was long and prosperous, and he became an important patron of the church and the arts. Thomas Artsruni listed a number of churches, palaces, and other buildings that were commissioned by Gagik, apparently even before he became king in 908. On the rock of Amrakan near the city of Van, he built a church dedicated to Saint George, and another, dedicated to Holy Zion, at the base of the rock. In the northeastern part of Vaspurakan, in the canton of Djovachrot, Gagik constructed a large palace, the grounds of which included a paradisus or game park stocked with stags, onagers, wild boar, and lions; and in the same region he built citadels and fortresses, and another church, dedicated to the apostle Peter.

The list of Gagik's later accomplishments was taken up by the continuator of Thomas Artsruni, who first described the king's works at Vostan, which included a beautifully decorated palace and powerful ramparts on the side of the city facing the lake, with splendidly gilt and painted pavilions at their summits. Most of the historian's narrative, however, deals with Gagik's projects on the island of Aght'amar. There too he built walls with high towers enclosing luxurious pavilions, as well as a sheltered harbor, and, at the foot of the high promontory on the west end of the island, a small city with residences for the officials of the court. Artists from all countries gathered at Aght'-amar to carry out the king's plans. His palace was a marvel of vaults and domes, so large that it looked like a great hill. The continuator of Thomas gave only a brief description of the decoration of the palace,
stating that even a wise man who spent several hours contemplating a single room would not be able, upon leaving, to give an account of everything he had seen; he then listed a few of the themes of the decoration, which included images of the king, seated on a gilt throne and surrounded by attendants, musicians, and beautiful young girls; regiments of soldiers with bared swords, and wrestlers in combat; lions and other ferocious beasts; and flocks of birds with varied plumage. The chronicler also devoted a chapter to the Church of the Holy Cross, providing valuable information about its builders, as well as a summary of its sculptural decoration:

The architect, who was Manuel, as mentioned above, was a learned man, most proficient in his art, and he built a remarkable church with consummate skill. He entrusted the cleric, whom we mentioned above, with the sculptural decoration which depicted, in true likeness, all the figures beginning with Abraham and David until Our Lord Jesus Christ and the groups of prophets and apostles, each one of them admirable in appearance. He also devised and depicted around the church companies of game animals and flocks of birds, also all varieties of wild beasts, boars and lions, bulls and bears facing one another, recalling the opposition of their natures which greatly pleases wise men. He girded the church with a remarkable and detailed frieze, which represented a grape vine animated with figures of vintagers, with wild animals and reptiles, accurately rendering the characteristics of each species.

And on the four facades, at the summit of the exedrae, he depicted the lifelike portraits of the four evangelists, who are, in truth, the crowns of joy of the holy church and higher than all the saints.

He represented on the wall of the west exedra the cross-nimbed image of the Saviour, who was incarnate for our sake and assumed human form. Facing the Saviour is the true likeness and glorious image of King Gagik, who, with proud faith, raises in his hands the model of the church, like a gold vase full of manna, or like a gold casket filled with perfume; he stands before the Lord in the attitude of a man begging for the remission of his sins. These are our words, but the king will surely not be denied the gifts he requests, having faith in the rewards of the hereafter.

To the south side of the apse, above the entrance of the church, is the royal gallery, reached by means of a vaulted...
staircase; this is the place where the king prays, removed and isolated from others, so that he may converse with God undisturbed.

And in the interior, he fashioned the marvelous holy of holies, adorned with paintings and with silver doors, and filled with chased gold ornaments, images covered with gold, precious stones and pearls, and all kinds of marvelous and brilliant vessels which recall, in glorious fashion, the second Jerusalem and also the gate of Zion on high.24

When Gagik died, probably in 943, the crown passed to his eldest son, Deranik-Ašot.25 Deranik-Ašot was succeeded by his brother, Abusahl-Hamazasp (958-68), whose three sons then ruled in succession. The youngest, Senek'ērīn, was the last of the Artsrunid kings of Vaspurakan, for in 1021, unable to withstand the pressures of Byzantine expansionism and the increasingly frequent raids of the Seljuq Turks, he ceded the kingdom to Basil II and was resettled, with thousands of followers, in Sebasteia (Sivas) in Cappadocia.26

The province of Vaspurakan was thoroughly sacked by the Seljuqs, and suffered enormous destruction. Only two strongholds, the fortress at Amiawk and the island of Aght'amar, which became an important monastic center, were spared. Gagik had established Aght'amar as an independent diocese, and had installed his nephew, Eghishē, as its first archbishop. In 1113, the see was elevated from a bishopric to a katholikosate, a position it held until the nineteenth century. From its inception until the late sixteenth century, the katholikosate of Aght'amar was maintained as a family fief by the Sefedinians, a branch of the Artsrunid family that appears to have been descended directly from Gagik, possibly through a third son, Khedenik.27 The monastery was continuously inhabited until 1916, when the see was abolished.
Nearly all of the monastic buildings, like the secular constructions of King Gagik, have vanished. With the exception of the Church of the Holy Cross, all that has survived are the ruins of a small chapel dedicated to Saint Stephen, built in 1293 by the katholikos Step'anos III; the remains of some nineteenth-century monastic buildings; and a small cemetery for the katholikoses and other members of the monastery, with khatch'k'ars (memorial stone crosses) dating from the fourteenth to the late nineteenth centuries.28

The church itself has undergone some restorations and additions. The roof of the dome was rebuilt in the late thirteenth century under Step'anos III, and his successor, Zak'aria I, built a small barrel-vaulted chapel that was later connected to the north exedra by the addition of a forechurch. In 1763, a large gavit, a square forechurch that served as an assembly hall, was built on the west side of the church, concealing the original entrance; and in the nineteenth century, the exterior staircase leading to the royal gallery was destroyed and replaced by a bell tower, the lower part of which covers some of the reliefs in the main zone of sculpture.29

Most of the sculpture is well preserved, but some sections of the vine frieze are badly abraded, and the high relief figures of animals in the second zone have suffered considerable damage. According to Armenian tradition, the sculpture was originally painted and gilded, and colored inlays filled the eyes of the figures and enlivened such details as garment hems, haloes, and birds' plumage, but no traces of this ornamentation have survived.30 The decoration of the interior of the church has fared less well. Except for some fragments of a
Genesis cycle in the drum of the dome, all the paintings above the level of the cornice have been destroyed, as have those on the lowest sections of the walls. The royal gallery in the south exedra was enclosed by a stone balustrade with five arched openings, decorated with pomegranate branches in low relief and the heads of six animals, two bulls, a ram, an ibex, an elephant, and a feline, carved almost in the round. Although it was still in situ in the early years of this century and is known from old photographs (fig. 8), this parapet has now disappeared.  

* * * * * * *

The Church of the Holy Cross has been known to Western scholars since 1853, when Sir Austen Henry Layard, the eminent Assyriologist, included a brief description of it in his report on his second expedition to Mesopotamia. Forty years later, H. F. B. Lynch visited Aght'amar and published a longer discussion of the island and its buildings, with three photographs of the exterior of the church.

Investigations in the early years of the twentieth century provided more detailed information. W. Bachmann measured and studied the church, its decoration, and its later additions, and in 1913 published the results of his researches with a plan, two sections, and numerous photographs. A detailed description of the church and its sculpture by E. Lalayan, a learned Armenian ethnographer, was less accessible to Western scholars, but contributed to several later publications: his photographs were reproduced in J. Strzygowski's monumental work, Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa, and his discussion also formed the basis for an article on the sculpture by A. Sakisian. In her
book on Armenia and the Byzantine Empire, published in 1945, S. Der Nersessian analyzed several of the scenes in the main zone of sculpture and commented briefly on Coptic and Sasanian influences in the work.\(^{38}\)

Travel in eastern Turkey was difficult in the years between the world wars, and few scholars were able to visit Aght'amar; but after 1955 the journey was more feasible, and interest in the church revived. The late 1950s and early 1960s saw the publication of a series of popular articles and travel notes,\(^{39}\) as well as a number of important scholarly works. The most significant of the latter is the monograph by S. Der Nersessian, which, although not published until 1965, was completed in 1959.\(^{40}\) Working from a new and complete set of photographs taken by J. Donat and J. Powell, Der Nersessian contributed the first major study of the church and its decoration, including a section on the frescoes, which had barely been mentioned in earlier works. Concentrating on the reliefs in the main zone of sculpture, she distinguished a wide variety of sources and influences, from earlier Armenian art to Early Christian and contemporary Byzantine works, and also pointed out the impact of Sasanian and Islamic art on the depictions of animals and the program of the vine frieze. The book is brief, but filled with pertinent insights, including suggestions regarding the selection and placement of the scenes and the meaning of the program as a whole, and it remains the basic work on Aght'amar.

Other important publications of the early 1960s include a detailed and well-documented study of the vine frieze by K. Otto-Dorn, who interpreted this section of the sculpture as a reflection of Abbasid court art and found sources for many of the motifs in the nomadic art
of the Asian steppes. M. S. İpişiroğlu, in a brief but well-illustrated monograph, discussed the effects of the changing positions of the sun on the visibility of the reliefs, and viewed the building as a whole as a result of the continuing influence of Zoroastrian and Mazdaean concepts in this region. The studies of the Russian academician I. A. Orbeli, who first visited the church in 1912 and whose interest in Aght'amar spanned the course of a long career, were published posthumously in 1968. Orbeli described all of the sculpture except the friezes beneath the roofs in detail, and related many of the scenes and motifs to Armenian folklore and pre-Christian Armenian traditions.

Several recent enterprises have greatly facilitated the study of the Church of the Holy Cross. The volume on Aght'amar in the series Documenti di Architettura Armena appeared in 1974, with essays by H. Vahramian and S. Der Nersessian, an extensive chronology and bibliography, numerous diagrams and drawings, and sixty-five color photographs. Important papers on the sculpture and frescoes of the Church were presented by C. Jolivet and N. Thierry at the Second International Symposium on Armenian Art, held in Erevan in 1978. Finally, the Armenian architecture project undertaken by the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute under the direction of V. L. Parsegian has made the church at Aght'amar more accessible than ever before. The first volume, which was issued in 1982, includes nearly five hundred microfiche images of its architecture, sculpture, and paintings, providing for the first time a virtually complete photographic record of the monument.

The importance of the Church of the Holy Cross has long been recognized, but in spite of the work that has been carried out in recent
years, it still has not received the attention it deserves. As A. Grabar has pointed out, a comprehensive investigation of the church and its decoration would require an expedition with technical equipment and expertise comparable to that of the team that conducted the study of the monastery on Mount Sinai. The most pressing need is for a careful examination of the carved stones to determine the extent of later alterations and reworkings. The present study cannot attempt to answer all the questions that still surround this unique monument, but will examine each figure in the sculpture individually, in order to arrive at a fuller understanding of the sources utilized by the artists, and the structure of the program as a whole. The motifs and scenes will be related to earlier examples in Armenian art wherever possible, and their connections with contemporary Byzantine and Islamic iconography will also be examined.

The main zone of sculpture has been described and discussed by several earlier authors, but except for the studies of the vine frieze undertaken by Orbeli and Otto-Dorn, the reliefs of the upper sections of the church have been neglected. A. Grabar has emphasized the need for a detailed catalogue of these motifs, which the present study will provide. The decoration of the church also includes a wide variety of ornamental motifs that are of considerable interest and merit a detailed examination, but only the figural sculpture will be discussed in this study, and questions of style will be included only when they have a direct bearing on the determination of iconographic sources.

As the sculpture lends itself to a clear division into horizontal zones, the catalogue has been divided into five sections: Zone A, the
wide lower band with the major Biblical scenes; Zone B, the series of animals and animal protomes; Zone C, the vine frieze; Zone D, the Evangelists; and Zones E and F, the friezes beneath the eaves of the roofs and at the top of the drum of the dome. Within each section, the individual figures or scenes have been numbered and discussed in the order in which they appear on the church, reading from left to right and beginning, in each case, with the west facade (see the diagrams, figs. 9-12).
Notes to Chapter I

1. These dates for the construction of the church are not found in the works of contemporary historians, but an eighteenth-century author who compiled a list of the katholikoses of Aght'amar stated that the church took six years to build, and was completed in 921 (K. G. Levonian, "Aght'amaray Kag'oghikosner Skzben ts'verj," Biwzandion, 1900, no. 1191, quoted in J. Strzygowski, Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa, Vienna, 1918, I, p. 292). According to S. Der Nersessian (Aght'amar: Church of the Holy Cross [Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies, I], Cambridge, Mass., 1965, p. 5), this text is full of errors, but the dates may have been based on an inscription on the west facade of the church, now concealed by a later addition to the building, and they are generally accepted as accurate.


3. Ibid., pp. 7f.


5. Breccia Fratadocchi, Chiesa, pp. 87ff.

6. It is noteworthy that the separation or omission of the western corner chambers is very rare in cross-octagon churches; in addition to Soradir and Aght'amar, it occurs only at Arcuaber, another seventh-century church located to the north of Lake Van, which may also have served as a dynastic mausoleum; see M. Thierry, "L'église arménienne de la Mère de Dieu d'Arcuaber," CahArch, 25, 1976, pp. 39ff., and J. M. Thierry, "L'église de la Mère de Dieu d'Arcuaber," Atti del Primo Simposio Internazionale di Arte Armena, Bergamo, 28-30 giugno 1975, Venice, 1978, pp. 699ff. This church did have western corner chambers, but they communicated with the central bay only by small windows and were not an organic part of the interior of the church, and M. Thierry ("L'église arménienne," pp. 41ff.) suggested that they may have served as burial chambers. The seventh-century Tark'mancac' church at Aygešat in the province of Ayrarat may also belong to this group (ibid., p. 57, Note additionelle).


8. C. Toumanoff, "Introduction to Christian Caucasian History: The Formative Centuries (IVth-VIIIth)," Traditio, 15, 1959, p. 80, and
9. The chronicle of Thomas Artsruni survived in only a single manuscript, which was copied in the scriptorium on Aght'amar in 1303/04. Thomas's work ends in the first decade of the tenth century, between 904 and 908, but the narrative was taken up by another author, an anonymous continuator, who wrote a detailed, if rather fulsome, account of Gagik's reign and accomplishments. A French translation of this manuscript by M. Brosset (Histoire des Ardzrouni, in Collection d'historiens arméniens, I, St. Petersburg, 1874) is based on an edition published in Constantinople in 1852. A more complete edition of the Armenian text, edited by K. Patkanian (T'ovmay Vardapeti Arcrunwoy Patmut'iw Tann Arcrunac') was published in St. Petersburg in 1887, and reprinted in Tiflis in 1917. For the history of the manuscript and the career of Thomas Artsruni, see R. W. Thomson, "T'ovmay Arcruni as Historian," Medieval Armenian Culture, Proceedings of the Third Dr. H. Markarian Conference on Armenian Culture (University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies, 6), Chico, Calif., 1984, pp. 69ff.


11. Ibid., pp. 397ff.


15. Continuator of Thomas Artsruni, History 3.32 (Brosset trans., pp. 229f.). On the date of this event, see Grousset, Histoire, pp. 433f.


24. Continuator of Thomas Artsruni, *History* 3.37. This translation is by Der Nersessian (*Aght'amar*, p. 4), based on the 1917 edition of the Armenian text (see above, n. 9).

25. The chronicle of the continuator of Thomas Artsruni concludes with a panegyric of Gagik's virtues and accomplishments, but the final page(s), which probably gave the details of his death, are missing. According to the *Universal History* of Step'anos Asoghik (d. 1004), Gagik died in 943 (see Brosset, *Collection*, I, pp. 245ff., n. 1).


28. H. Vahramian, "La regione di Vaspourakan ed il complesso architettonico di Aght'amar," in *Aght'amar* (DAA, 8), p. 12. For a brief discussion of the khatch'k'ars in the cemetery, see Der Nersessian, *Aght'amar*, pp. 49ff. In the fifteenth century, according to an Italian traveler, the island still boasted a town with several churches and six hundred houses, and one hundred holy men resided at the monastery (G. M. Angioletto, "A Short Narrative of the Life and Acts of the King Ussun
Cassano," A Narrative of Italian Travels in Persia in the 15th and 16th Centuries [Hakluyt Society, Series I, no. XLIX], London, 1872, p. 101, cited by Hewsen, "Artsrunid House of Sefedinian," p. 129). Aght'amar was sacked by the Kurds in 1499, and in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries the area was ravaged by the Ottoman-Safavid wars; it may have been during this period that the town and most of the other buildings were destroyed.


30. The coloring and gilding of the sculpture were mentioned in the same manuscript that gave the dates for the church (see above, p. 1). I. A. Orbeli, who examined the sculpture in 1912, reported that traces of paint were visible on the figure of a man killing a lion on the north facade (cat. no. A60), and on some of the animals above the main zone of sculpture ("Pamiatniki armianskogo zodchestva na ostrove Aght'amar," Izbrannye trudy, I, Moscow, 1968, pp. 105, 189f.). The inlays have nearly all vanished, but Orbeli found pieces of blue glass still in place in the pupils of the eyes of a griffin (cat. no. A21), a stag (cat. no. B6), and a man in the vine frieze (cat. no. C23), all on the south facade (ibid., pp. 113, 147, 189).

31. For early photographs of the parapet, see Bachmann, Kirchen, p. 43 and pl. 32; Strzygowski, Baukunst, II, fig. 580; and Orbeli, "Akhtamar," pl. VII.


34. Bachmann, Kirchen, pp. 40-47 (see above, n. 29).


36. Strzygowski, Baukunst (see above, n. 1), I, figs. 262, 317-18, 330-34, 337, 474; II, figs. 574, 580.


40. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar (see above, n. 1).


43. Orbeli, "Akhtamar," pp. 15-204 (see above, n. 30).

44. See above, n. 27.

45. C. Jolivet, "L'idéologie princière dans les sculptures d'Achthamar," and N. Thierry, "Les peintures de l'église de la Sainte-Croix d'Aghtamar (915-921)," presented at the Second International Symposium on Armenian Art, Erevan, 1978. These references were brought to my attention by Professor L. Der Manuelian, who kindly provided me with typescripts of the papers.


48. Ibid.

49. Ibid., p. 391.
CHAPTER II
ZONE A: THE MAIN BAND OF SCULPTURE

The main zone of sculpture, as indicated above, includes the major Biblical scenes and figures and fills the lower third of the decorated surface of the walls. This astonishing burst of figural decoration is entirely unprecedented. The stone architecture of Armenia and Georgia stimulated the development of a tradition of decorating the exteriors of buildings with relief sculpture, but in earlier Armenian churches the figural sculpture was confined to the areas around the doors and windows; and while some of the Georgian programs are more varied, they are still very limited in comparison to Aght'amar.

As S. Der Nersessian has pointed out, friezes of figural sculpture were characteristic of the art of the ancient Near East, but the chronological gap between medieval Armenian churches and the Hittite or Aramaean palaces with their rows of carved orthostats is very wide. The facades of early Islamic buildings were richly carved, but in the few examples that are sufficiently well preserved to allow their original appearance to be reconstructed, such as Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi, the decorative system is entirely different.

The placement of the sculpture high up on the walls of the church, some three meters from the ground, and the wide ornamental band that separates the frieze from the undecorated lower walls are indications
that the antecedents for the decorative scheme at Aght'amar should be sought not in the Umayyad buildings of Syria and Palestine, but farther to the East, in the Iranian milieu. The placement of sculptural programs high on the walls of important buildings was characteristic of Parthian art. In a palace at Khalchayan in southeastern Uzbekistan (c. 50 B.C.-A.D. 50), the iwan and throne hall were plastered with stucco to a height of three meters, and above this a two-meter-high frieze of figures, including local princes, warriors, horsemen, and deities, was modeled in relief in clay. Similar approaches to the organization of the surfaces of the walls are known from other sites, such as Qaleh-i Yazdigird, a second-century A.D. Parthian stronghold in western Iran. In Room 1 of the royal pavilion, an ornamental frieze of interlocking swastikas and rosettes was set four meters above the floor, and above it were panels with figural decoration, including Dionysiac scenes and portrait busts in medallions.

Sasanian buildings were also decorated with elaborate programs of stucco reliefs. None has survived with enough of its sculpture in situ to allow the decorative system to be determined with certainty, but there are indications that principles of organization similar to those in Parthian art continued not only in the Sasanian period but beyond, in monuments of early Islamic date such as the palace at Nizamabad. If this is indeed the case, it also provides a convincing source for the decorative system and placement of the main zone of sculpture at Aght'amar. In addition, the ornamental band separating the lower walls from the figural frieze includes such motifs as stylized pine cones and
clusters of grapes framed by half-palmettes, details that also clearly indicate a Sasanian source.  

Catalogue

West facade. Figs. 13-17.

The central section of the lower zone of the west facade is occupied by a votive scene in which Gagik, the founder of the church, presents its model to Christ (fig. 13). The two figures are separated by a tall, narrow arched window. Gagik is represented frontally, but with profile feet. He is nimbed and crowned, and wears a mantle fastened by a rosette-shaped fibula over a long caftan-like robe. He holds the model of the church in his left hand. The standing figure of Christ is designated by an inscription above his head (אֵל). He has a cruciform nimbus and wears the traditional tunic and himation. He raises his right hand in a gesture of blessing and in his left holds a book which, although closed, is inscribed with the words, "I am the light of the world" (אֶל), (John 8:12).

The presentation of the church model to Christ or the Virgin was a common theme in the apse mosaics of Byzantine churches from the sixth century on, particularly in Rome. In these early examples, however, the donor is always an ecclesiastic, usually a bishop or a pope, and is presented to the deity by intermediaries, apostles or angels. The type of image in which a king or emperor presents the model of his foundation directly to Christ or the Virgin apparently originated somewhat later,
and became widespread only after the triumph of Orthodoxy in the ninth century.  

In the Christian kingdoms of the Caucasus, donor portraits were among the most commonly represented figural subjects. They are found most frequently on the exteriors of churches, executed in relief sculpture. The earliest examples, which date from the seventh century, show great variation in iconographic type, ranging from Sasanian-inspired representations of the ruler as a mounted hunter, as at Ptghni, to groups like that of the lintel over the west portal of the cathedral at Mren, where Christ is flanked by Peter and Paul, a member of the clergy, and two royal donors, and which is very similar to the sixth-century apse compositions of Roman churches.  

Votive scenes in which a donor holds or presents a church model are relatively rare before the tenth century, and seem to have been more widely used in Georgia than in Armenia. The earliest known example appears on a sixth- or seventh-century Armenian funerary stele from Agarak, one face of which depicts a standing female figure holding a model of a basilica. In architectural sculpture, the earliest preserved figure of this type is found on an isolated relief plaque embedded in the southeast face of the apse of the church of Sion at Ateni. This Georgian church, dated to the first half of the seventh century, was built by an Armenian architect and decorated by Armenian sculptors. The donor, a single frontal figure who holds the church model directly in front of himself, may be related to an image of Christ on another block placed nearby.
There are several Georgian reliefs from the ninth and tenth centuries in which the royal founder is represented with the church model, sometimes forming part of a larger composition, sometimes alone. A plaque from the drum of the dome of a church at Opiza (now in the Georgian State Museum of Art in Tbilisi), dated to ca. 826, depicts the Bagratid ruler Aşot I presenting the model to an enthroned Christ (fig. 18). The prophet David, from whom the Bagratids claimed descent, stands on the other side of the throne, apparently acting as an intercessor. A figure of Aşot II holding a model was carved in high relief on the northwest pier of the interior of the church at Tbeti, built between 891 and 918. At Doliskana, the donor relief is still in situ on the southeast face of the drum of the dome of the mid-tenth-century church: King Šmbat I holds the model out as if to present it, but no additional figures from this composition have been preserved. Finally, in the church at Oşki, dated to the third quarter of the tenth century, two royal donors, the brothers David Magistros and Bagrat, Duke of Dukes, each hold a model of the church and are placed on either side of a Deesis group. This composition is located on the east end of the church, on the south wall of the south pastophory. All four of these churches are located within the boundaries of the feudal province of Tao-Klarjeti, which had close political ties and frequent contacts with the Byzantine Empire.

In Armenia proper, Aght'amar itself appears to be the earliest example of this type of votive scene, and, at least in terms of preserved monuments, remains an isolated case. Although royal donors with church models were represented on other tenth-century Armenian churches, such
as those at Sanahin and Haghbat, they followed a different type in which two donors, usually brothers, hold the model between themselves, forming a symmetrical group; the figures of Christ or the Virgin are not included in these simplified compositions.  

The figure of Christ in the votive scene at Aght'amar conforms to the iconographic requirements for the representation of the Pantokrator (fig. 15). The widely extended right arm with the gesture of blessing and the codex clasped to the chest with the left arm are both characteristic, but still more significant is the use of the text from John 8:12, which was particularly associated with representations of Christ as Pantokrator. The use of this imagery is fully appropriate in a scene in which Christ appears with the Artsrunid king, as Byzantine imperial iconography had developed a close connection between the earthly and heavenly rulers. Contrary to the normal rules of hieratic representation, the figure of Christ is noticeably shorter than that of Gagik. This discrepancy is difficult to explain save as a mistake on the part of the sculptor.

The figure of King Gagik is rendered in great detail, with particular care given to his crown and garments, which probably represent either the gifts he received from Yusuf b. Abi'l-Saj, the emir of Azerbaijan, or the crown and royal robes given to him later by the caliph al-Muqtadir. The crown is damaged, but its basic form can still be determined (fig. 16). Three angular elements rise from a wide band with evenly spaced drilled holes that may originally have been set with colored stones or pieces of glass. Two wings or wing-like forms
projected at right and left, and a taller motif, the shape of which can no longer be determined, rose in the center.

There is ample evidence that the winged crown, originally a Sasanian type, survived long after the end of the Sasanian Empire. The later crowns are not precise reproductions of those worn by Sasanian rulers, but free combinations of the various traditional elements. Within the large and still problematic body of material referred to as "post-Sasanian," a silver plate in the State Hermitage Museum in Leningrad, representing a banquet scene presided over by a seated ruler, was cited by Der Nersessian as an example of a crown related to that worn by Gagik (fig. 19). The placement of the two lateral angular forms and of the wings or palmettes projecting from them is identical. This piece is now believed to be of Sogdian manufacture and to date from the eighth or ninth century. A very similar crown is worn by a ruler in a banquet scene depicted on a silver cup, also in the Hermitage, which has been attributed to the Ghaznavids of Afghanistan and dated to ca. A.D. 1000.

In her excellent discussion of Gagik's crown, Der Nersessian also cited crowns based on Sasanian prototypes that were worn by early Muslim rulers, from the Umayyads in the eighth century to the Samanids and Buyids in the ninth and tenth. Among these examples, the crown on the stucco statue of a prince from the eighth-century Syrian palace of Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi, although badly damaged, may have been very similar to Gagik's. Closer still is the crown worn by a seated ruler on a silver medal found at Nishapur together with Samanid pottery datable
to the second half of the ninth century (fig. 20). The band of pearls around the forehead and the upper elements from which the palmettes or wings project all have a close resemblance to the motifs of Gagik's crown. The later Buyid examples, while still related, are more distant because of their larger wings.

Gagik is clad in a long narrow robe with long sleeves and a high neck (fig. 14). The robe is slit in front at knee level and the two flaps are turned outward, revealing a plain lining. Trousers were apparently worn under the robe; their hems are barely visible above a pair of soft boots. Gagik's robe, like his crown, may illustrate a garment given him by his Muslim allies, and would thus show the style of dress current at the court of Baghdad during this period. As Der Nersessian has noted, so few Islamic monuments from the late ninth and early tenth centuries have been preserved that it is difficult to find parallels within that milieu. Some examples of the eleventh century, however, attest to the wide dissemination of the style as well as its continuity. In a controversial Persian manuscript of the Andarz Nama, dated by colophon to 1090 and supposedly written in Gurgan, many of the figures represented wear long, narrow, elaborately patterned robes, some over trousers. In a miniature from an Armenian Gospel book illustrated between 1045 and 1054 (Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, ms. 2556, fol. 135v), King Gagik of Kars wears a robe very similar to Gagik Artsruni's (fig. 21). This robe has sleeve bands with a tiraz inscription in floriated Kufic letters, and probably represents a robe of honor given to the king by the sultan Alp-Arslan. The same type of robe is worn by three of the four courtiers flanking a Byzantine
emperor in a miniature from a Constantinopolitan manuscript of the Homilies of Saint John Chrysostom of 1074-78 (Paris, B.N., ms. Coislin 79, fol. 2r). Long robes with a front slit also appear with noteworthy frequency on figures depicted in the paintings in the rock-cut churches of Cappadocia, particularly those of the Ihlara group in the region of Hasan Dağı. The similarity between Gagik's robe and some of those represented in the frescoes was pointed out by N. and M. Thierry. The garment is worn by various personages in both Old and New Testament scenes in Kokar Kilise, Eğri Taş Kilisesi, Pürenli Seki Kilisesi, and Yılanlı Kilise (fig. 22). These churches, variously dated from the seventh to ninth through the eleventh centuries, have been attributed to Armenian colonists in Cappadocia.

The pattern of Gagik's robe, as well as its cut, appears to be of Muslim derivation. The fabric has a design of interwoven concentric circles arranged in vertical rows. A tapestry band worked in wool on a linen ground, attributed to the eighth century and probably made in Egypt, has a very similar pattern, with a series of interconnected circles arranged in a wide band between narrower plain borders. The same type of design, though more intricate, was used on a tapestry band on silk ground, possibly woven in Baghdad in the tenth or eleventh century.

The heavy silk of Gagik's simply cut mantle is also clearly of Eastern origin. It is woven with a pattern of interlocked roundels, each of which encloses a bird wearing a jeweled neckband. The birds are simplified and somewhat stylized, but judging from their heavy, short-tailed bodies, short necks, and rounded beaks, they may probably
be identified as ducks. They are shown in profile, facing alternately left and right in successive horizontal rows, although the sculptor did not adhere consistently to this detail. Five-lobed palmettes fill the interstices between the circles.

Several scholars have commented on the Sasanian origin of the pattern of this silk, and have compared it to textile designs on costumes represented in the early seventh-century reliefs at Taq-i Bostan, in which birds and animals of various types appear within circular medallions. These medallions, however, are not joined to form an overall pattern, nor can such patterns be documented in Sasanian art; designs of this type, the most common of which depict figures enclosed in pearl roundels interconnected by smaller pearl roundels, appear to have been a later development. Several fragments of textiles with joined pearl roundels enclosing birds facing opposite directions have been preserved, and are now dated to the seventh or eighth century and attributed to Iran or Iraq. A chlamys made of a textile with a similar design is worn by David Magistros in the votive relief at Oški. On Gagik's mantle, however, the roundels are not separate forms but are interwoven; each bird is framed by a double strand which is twisted to form an unbroken connection to the next roundel. Such patterns are very rare on preserved textiles, but do occur in other media.

Although the overall pattern of Gagik's mantle cannot be documented in Sasanian textile art, the individual motifs are clearly of Sasanian inspiration. Ducks appear on a number of the textiles represented at Taq-i Bostan, as well as on other objects such as stamp seals and silver vessels. Pearled neckbands were associated with the
concept of royalty and appear frequently in Sasanian art, worn by various kinds of birds and animals.\textsuperscript{49} The continued popularity of this motif in Transcaucasia is demonstrated by birds wearing collars depicted in the margins of an Armenian Gospel of A.D. 966 (Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, ms. 537, fols. 158r, 161r, 165v, 179v, 196r),\textsuperscript{50} and by a relief of a pheasant or cock wearing a jeweled neckband carved on the east side of the south door of the later tenth-century church at Hahoul in the province of Tao-Klarjeti.\textsuperscript{51} The stylized five-lobed leaves in the spaces between the roundels on Gagik's mantle are also similar to motifs in Sasanian art, such as the palmettes on fifth-century stucco pattern blocks from Kish.\textsuperscript{52}

The church model held by Gagik was carved in very high relief and thus was more subject to damage by the elements than most of the carving at Aght'amar (figs. 14 and 17). In addition, the construction of the gavit on the west side of the church in the eighteenth century made this whole section easily accessible to later vandals. Enough of the model is preserved, however, to indicate that it is a faithful reproduction of the church itself. The west facade with its central door, one window, and the two tall narrow niches that frame the votive scene is flanked by the polygonal projections of the two corner niches. The forms are somewhat simplified, but in view of the customary freedom of the medieval artist's approach to architectural copies and imitations, this example is very accurate indeed.\textsuperscript{53} A tradition of carving small models of churches developed in both Armenia and Georgia, and there are numerous examples, most of which post-date Aght'amar, of their use not
only in votive scenes, but also as acroteria, reliquaries, and architects' mock-ups.  


In the center of the west facade, beneath the window and between the figures of Gagik and Christ, two small angels support an equal-armed cross inscribed in a medallion. The angels, nimbed and clad in tunics and mantles, are shown standing in profile, with their heads in three-quarter view.

This subject was very common in Early Christian art, but in almost all the examples in which it occurs, the angels are flying rather than standing. Standing figures (erotes or children rather than angels) supporting crosses inscribed in wreaths do, however, appear in Coptic sculpture, as on a fifth-century limestone pediment said to have come from Sohag (fig. 23).

The theme of the Exaltation of the Cross was well known to artists of the Caucasian kingdoms, particularly in Georgia, where the cult of the cross played a larger role than in Armenia. Two angels supporting a Greek cross were carved on the base of a mid-sixth-century votive stele at Pantiani, and similar groups appear in architectural decoration: on the architrave above the north entrance of a church at Tetritskaro (second half of the sixth century); in the tympanum of the south portal of the Džvari Church near Mcheta, built between 586/7 and 605/6; and an example of the first half of the seventh century, reused on the west facade of a tenth-century church at Sapara.
The motif was revived in the second half of the tenth century, when it generally appeared with four angels rather than two. In the province of Tao-Klarjeti, the Exaltation of the Cross was carved in relief in the tympanum of the south portal of the church of the monastery of Hahoul,62 and painted in the interior of the dome of the cathedral at Ishan.63 The theme continued to appear in both sculpture and painting in Georgian churches through the seventeenth century.64

There are far fewer early Armenian examples of this motif. A closely related composition in which the bust of Christ replaced the cross in the medallion was carved at the summit of a sculpted arch above a window on the south facade of the sixth- or seventh-century church at Ptglni.65 The Exaltation of the Cross also appears in the upper panels of several five-part ivory diptychs of the sixth century; one of these now serves as a cover for the Etchmiadzin Gospels (Erevan, Matenadaran, no. 2374) (fig. 24) and may have been carved in the region of the Caucasus, though its provenance is not certain and there is no evidence that the ivories were originally made as covers for this manuscript.66


At the ends of the facade, to the left and right of the triangular niches, stand two six-winged angels, shown full-length and rigidly frontal. The faces of both are damaged. The arms of the figure on the left (fig. 25) are hidden beneath its wings, while those of the right-hand figure (fig. 26) are raised in the orant gesture. The carving of the left figure may not have been completed: it lacks the outer
defining rim of the halo and the parallel hatching on the feathers of
the wings, and the surface of the lower part of the upper pair of wings
was left blank, while on the right-hand angel this area is filled with
eyes.

Although these two beings are generally referred to as seraphim,
they do not strictly adhere to the Biblical distinctions for the mem-
bers of the angelic hierarchy. Seraphim are mentioned in the Bible
only in the vision of Isaiah (Isaiah 6:2-3), where their physical de-
scription is limited to the number and functions of their wings. Al-
though the Aght'amar beings have the requisite six wings, their other
characteristics, including the nimbed heads, the crossing of the upper
and lower pairs of wings, the clearly visible feet, and particularly
the many eyes scattered on the wings, are more proper to the cherubim
of the vision of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:4ff. and 10:1ff.). This confusion
of the characteristics of seraphim and cherubim and the mixed types
produced by it are by no means unique to Aght'amar; they are almost the
rule in Byzantine art rather than the exception.67

There are numerous examples of this mixed iconography for seraphim
in Constantinopolitan and Cappadocian monuments.68 In Armenia, very
few compositions of the early period that include these beings have
been preserved, but in the apse painting of the seventh-century church
at Lmbat, the throne of Christ is flanked by two cherubim and two ser-
aphim.69 The latter are both badly damaged, but they appear to adhere
more closely to the "correct" form; their wings, at any rate, do not
have eyes. In Georgian monuments, the confusion of types is again ap-
parent. In a rock-cut church of the Dodo monastery in David-Garedža,
which has been dated from the seventh to the ninth centuries, the apse was again decorated with a painting representing the enthroned Christ flanked by tetramorphs and archangels.  

The tetramorphs have all the characteristics proper to cherubim, but they also have six wings. Except for the position of the central pair of wings (extended horizontally rather than hanging downward) and the inclusion of the three additional heads arranged around the rim of the halo, these figures have the same characteristics as the seraphim at Aght'amar. A later Georgian example is provided by a sculpted octagonal column in the church at Oški, of the third quarter of the tenth century: a being on the north face of the capital, identified by inscription as a seraph, has six wings, but also the four heads of a cherub or tetramorph.

A4. Medallion Portrait of Saint Stephen Protomartyr. South facade, west end. Fig. 27.

The inscription carved to the left of the pearl-bordered medallion identifies the saint as "Stephen Protomartyr" (ΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΣ ΠΡΩΤΟΜΑΡΤΥΡ). His youthful, beardless face is framed by a pearl-bordered nimbus that is truncated by the frame of the medallion. He wears an omophorion with two damaged crosses over a sticharion.

A5. Medallion Portrait of Zephaniah. South facade, west end. Fig. 27.

The bearded prophet is identified by the inscription carved above the pearl-bordered medallion (ΖΕΦΑΝΙΑ). His gaze is directed toward the viewer and he raises his right hand in a gesture of
acclamation. The figure is a conventionalized type and has no individualized characteristics.73

A6. Medallion Portrait of an Unidentified Saint. South facade, west end. Fig. 27.

The youthful, beardless saint wears a chlamys fastened on his right shoulder over a tunic. Both the medallion and the saint's nimbus have pearled borders.

A7. Medallion Portrait of a Prophet. South facade, west end. Fig. 27.

The bearded prophet, his head framed by an unornamented nimbus, raises his right hand in a gesture of acclamation. The ten-letter inscription above his head, carved at the very edge of the block of stone, is somewhat abraded. The last seven letters clearly form the word margarē ("prophet;" ἐρ αγαθή, but the first three letters that give the name are more difficult to read; they appear to be ΜΑΡ (AZR). The figure has been identified as Azariah,74 but his name would properly be written ΜΑΡΑΙ, and, with the standard exceptions of those identifying Christ and the Virgin, none of the other inscriptions at Aght'amar give the names in an abbreviated or condensed form; further, Azariah was not a prophet. An identification as Elijah (Ελιμαχ) has also been suggested,75 but the final Ε is lacking, and Elijah appears on the east facade as a full-length figure with long hair and beard, which conform to the traditional conventions for representations of this prophet (see below, cat. no. A39), as the short clipped hair and beard of the
figure in this medallion do not. If the first letter of the inscription is an ε rather than a ι, another possible identification might be Ezra (εζρα).


The story of Jonah is told in several episodes (fig. 28). The first scene, which occupies two stone courses, shows the naked prophet cast overboard into the jaws of the sea monster (fig. 29). The boat has a high prow and stern, and a single mast with a square, partially furled sail. Its crew consists of three naked sailors. To the right of this group the monster is represented again (fig. 30), and to its right the prophet, still naked and now bald, reclines in front of the gourd vine. Above the monster the figure of Jonah is repeated, this time bearded and nimbed and clothed in tunic and pallium, preaching to the king of Nineveh. To the right of the king are the busts of four repentant Ninevites, enclosed in medallions (fig. 30).

As is well known, the story of Jonah was one of the most frequently depicted subjects in Early Christian art, and appeared repeatedly in Roman catacomb paintings and sarcophagi. Fewer early examples from the Greek East have been preserved, but those that are known treat the subject in a manner very similar to that of the monuments of the Latin West. Although there is some variation, the three episodes most commonly depicted in the Early Christian cycles are: Jonah thrown overboard into the jaws of the monster; Jonah cast up by the monster; and Jonah reclining beneath the gourd vine. The first three scenes
at Aght'amar follow this general pattern, though the artist combined the last two episodes: Jonah is not shown actually issuing forth from the jaws of the monster, but rather in front of it, already lying on dry land before the gourd vine. The conflation of these two episodes also occurs in Early Christian art, though it is less common than the separate treatment of the scenes.\textsuperscript{79}

Many of the iconographic details of the Aght'amar cycle also find parallels in early monuments. The same type of boat and the crew of three naked sailors appear in fourth-century Roman catacomb paintings;\textsuperscript{80} the inclusion of a fish beneath the sea monster to emphasize the marine locale was used in a number of early reliefs;\textsuperscript{81} and the Aght'amar Jonah rests in the shelter of the gourd vine in the traditional pose borrowed from classical representations of Endymion and Dionysos.\textsuperscript{82}

The nakedness of the reclining Jonah is characteristic of Early Christian renderings of the scene, but his baldness is a much less common feature. As Der Nersessian has noted, this detail appears to have derived from Jewish apocryphal texts, specifically an early version of the \underline{Midrash Jonah}, which relates that Jonah's clothing and hair were burned away by the intense heat inside the monster's belly.\textsuperscript{83} B. Nar- kiss has suggested that there might also have been Early Christian models for the bald Jonah, but the few Byzantine and related monuments in which this detail occurs are later.\textsuperscript{84} On a relief decorating the Georgian church at Hahoul, of the second half of the tenth century, the figure of Jonah being ejected from the jaws of the monster is bald, but apparently clothed and also bearded.\textsuperscript{85}
The fourth scene at Aght'amar, Jonah preaching to the Ninevites (fig. 30), was not part of the Early Christian cycle. In the Rabula Gospels of 586 (Florence, Laurentian Library, cod. Plut. I,56, fol. 6a) Nineveh, represented as a conventionalized fortified city, was placed beneath the sleeping Jonah in the marginal decoration of one of the canon tables, but the full scene of the prophet preaching to the inhabitants of the city appears to have developed only in the ninth century. It is found in the Sacra Parallela of the first half of the ninth century (Paris, B.N., ms. gr. 923, fol. 15r), and in the well-known manuscript of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus of 879-82 (Paris, B.N., ms. gr. 510, fol. 3r). In the tenth century, the scene was included in the miniature for the Ode of Jonah in the Paris Psalter (B.N., ms. gr. 139, fol. 431v). Among the later examples are the Theodore Psalter of 1066 (London, B.M., Add. 19.352, fol. 201r) and a Psalter at Mount Athos from the eleventh or twelfth century (Vatopedi cod. 760, fol. 283r) (fig. 31). Each of these scenes includes a standardized fortified city with figures clustered at its gates, and the standing figure of Jonah preaching. The Paris Gregory and the Vatopedi Psalter also show the king of Nineveh enthroned before his city. At Aght'amar the city itself was omitted, but Jonah stands to the left of the ruler in a relationship similar to that of the Vatopedi Psalter.

The king of Nineveh, instead of being shown as a Byzantine emperor as in the manuscripts, is represented at Aght'amar as an Arab ruler, wearing a long robe and seated cross-legged on two cushions on the ground. His crown consists of a wide circlet with rows of drilled holes indicating pearls or precious stones, above which rise three
arched forms: two lateral elements with a central drilled hole and a series of concentric framing lines, and a shorter central arch topped by a disk. In this general arrangement the crown recalls the one worn by Gagik on the west facade (see above, cat. no. A1, fig. 16), but it lacks the wings or palmettes, and is not so clearly of Sasanian inspiration. K. Wessel identified it as a "misunderstood Byzantine crown," and there does appear to be some similarity to Byzantine diadems. J. Deér traced the tradition of the horizontal band topped with oval, arch-shaped, or triangular forms back to the fifth century, and demonstrated its continued use through the late Byzantine period, but only for women's crowns. In areas outside the Byzantine Empire, however, similar crowns also appeared in other contexts. Some of the diadems represented in the mosaic decoration of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (completed in 691/92) are of this type, and such crowns were also worn in the West, particularly by the Ottonian emperors. According to Deér, the ultimate source for all these diadems was the Persian-Islamic East.

The repentant Ninevites in the Aght'amar scene, rather than being clustered before a city, are represented by four figures enclosed in medallions (fig. 30). They are clad in long-sleeved, high-necked garments, perhaps the sackcloth mentioned in the Bible (Jonah 3:5). The figure at the upper right points toward Jonah and the king, while the other three hold their right hands against their heads, a gesture generally associated with the expression of grief and remorse. The representation of the repentant Ninevites as bust-length figures in medallions is unique to Aght'amar. No earlier Armenian illustrations of the Jonah cycle have been preserved, so it cannot be determined whether this
feature was an innovation of Gagik's sculptors or was taken from an earlier model.

The Jonah cycle at Aght'amar, taken as a whole, follows the traditional patterns of Early Christian and Byzantine representations. In only two details are there clear reflections of the orientalization we might expect in a location on the very eastern reaches of Christianity: in the manner of showing the king of Nineveh, noted above, and in the second representation of the sea monster.

The type of monster traditionally represented in the Jonah cycle was the ketos, a composite creature with canine or lupine forequarters and a knotted fish's tail, whose origins can be traced back to ancient Greece.98 The creature had a long life in Hellenistic and Roman art; apart from its use in a general context in marine scenes, it was identified with the sea monster that threatened Andromeda, and found a place in classical astronomy as the large constellation (Cetus) south of Perseus and Andromeda in the southern hemisphere. Although there are variations in minor details, the ketos appears in much the same form in Pompeian paintings of Perseus rescuing Andromeda, in Jonah scenes of the Early Christian and Byzantine periods, and in medieval astronomy treatises in both the Byzantine East and the Latin West.99

At Aght'amar, however, instead of following the traditional form of the ketos, the sea monster was clearly derived from another mythical composite creature, the Sasanian senmurv.100 This hybrid being was also most often represented with canine forequarters, to which were added wings and the tail of a bird, usually a peacock. The senmurv was a popular motif in late Sasanian art and continued to appear long after the
fall of the dynasty, in both Byzantine and Islamic works. Of the many surviving representations of this creature, those that agree most closely in stylistic details with the front part of the Aght'amar monster are found on a group of silk textiles dating from the eighth to the mid-ninth century and probably produced in Iran (fig. 32). Such details as the circular motifs on the joints of the paws, the stylized palmettes on the shoulders, and the pearl bands dividing the wings are common to both the Aght'amar creature and to the semmurvs on this group of textiles.

The main feature in which the Aght'amar hybrid deviates from the standard representation of the semmurv is in the form of its tail. It has generally been assumed that the Aght'amar sculptor invented this new form, replacing the traditional peacock's tail with that of a fish in order to make the creature appropriate to its new function. The combination is indeed unusual, but not unique. A pair of semmurvs with fishes' tails appears on an eleventh-century marble capital from Córdoba, and there is a semmurv with a knotted sea monster's tail on a gold glass medallion of unknown date and provenance in the Corning Museum of Glass.

An examination of the illustrations of the constellation Cetus raises some new possibilities for the source of the Aght'amar hybrid. The greatest number of constellation pictures is preserved in illustrated commentaries on the Phaenomena of Aratus of Soli. The earliest Latin manuscripts to have survived are from the Carolingian period, and the only Greek manuscript with constellation pictures (Vatican cod. gr. 1087) dates from the fifteenth century, but in both cases the
Illustrations were based on Late Antique models, which may in turn have reflected Hellenistic books. All of these illustrations of Cetus preserve the type of dog-fish composite monster seen in the narrative paintings of Andromeda or Jonah.

The Greek scientific texts and the Greek traditions of constellation imagery also formed the basis of early Islamic astronomy. The fresco in the vault of the caldarium at Qusayr 'Amra (724-43), which provides the earliest preserved Islamic constellation images, shows an iconography still almost completely within the classical tradition. Later, however, these constellation pictures began to be orientalized. The earliest manuscript of the Book of the Fixed Stars (Suwar al-Kawakib al-Thabitah) of al-Sufi (Oxford, Bodleian Library, ms. Marsh 144), dated by colophon to 1009-10, depicts Cetus with a beard and a shorter snout, features associated with the senmurv. The process of orientalization is seen at a more advanced stage in the manuscripts of the Wonders of Creation ('Ajā'ib al-Makhlūqat) of the thirteenth-century cosmographer al-Qazwini. One of the earliest preserved copies of this work, the Sarre Qazwini (now divided between the New York Public Library and the Freer Gallery in Washington), is attributed to the second half of the fourteenth century, but its illustrations are thought to be archaic and based on earlier models and the representation of the constellation Cetus in this manuscript (fig. 33) has a great deal in common with the creature at Aght'amar. Both have the dog-like forequarters and wings deriving from the senmurv, and both have the fish's tail, though in its details the Aght'amar hybrid shows a much closer relationship to the Sasanian prototypes. This correspondence gives
credence to the theory of A. D. H. Bivar, who noted the relationship between the Aght'amar monster and the Cetus images in the Qazwini manuscripts and suggested a common derivation from star-maps, though these may have been early Islamic rather than Sasanian as he suggested.\textsuperscript{110}

A9. The Sacrifice of Isaac. South facade, polygonal wall of the southwest niche. Fig. 34.

Abraham, nimbed and clad in a long tunic and mantle, faces right but looks back over his shoulder at the hand of God projecting from a segment of heaven at the upper left. He holds a knife in his right hand and with his left grasps Isaac's hair. Isaac, dressed in a long tunic, kneels on an altar with his hands bound behind his back. Both figures are identified by inscriptions (\textsuperscript{ufru} and \textsuperscript{um}'). At the left of the scene, a ram hangs suspended in a narrow, stylized tree.

The Sacrifice of Isaac was a popular subject in early Armenian art. It was carved on a capital in the apse of the Palace Church at Ani, built in A.D. 622,\textsuperscript{111} and also appears on seventh-century funerary stelae, some of which have compositions very similar to that of the relief at Aght'amar (fig. 35).\textsuperscript{112} The scene also appears as a half- or full-page illustration in three tenth-century Armenian Gospel books, but these miniatures follow a different iconographic tradition, which has been connected to Coptic art.\textsuperscript{113}

The Sacrifice of Isaac was also one of the most frequently depicted Old Testament subjects in Early Christian and Byzantine art, and numerous precedents could be cited for every detail of the Aght'amar relief.\textsuperscript{114} One of the closest non-Armenian parallels for the scene as a
whole is the seventh-century encaustic panel from the apse of the basilica in the monastery of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai (fig. 36). This panel was related by K. Weitzmann to the tradition of the Byzantine Octateuchs, and the Aght'amar Sacrifice of Isaac may be placed within the same group.

AlO. Moses. South facade, polygonal wall of the southwest niche. Fig. 34.

Moses, nimbed and clad in a tunic and mantle, stands in three-quarter view turned to the right, but with his bearded face shown almost frontally. In his raised hands, which are covered with the ends of his mantle, he appears to hold a rectangular object that probably represents the tablets of the Law, but this detail is difficult to distinguish.

Although there is no identifying inscription, there can be little doubt that this figure represents Moses, who was frequently depicted in Early Christian and Byzantine art as a standing figure with his arms extended and veiled by his mantle. In most of the illustrations of this scene, however, the moment of the actual transmission of the Law is represented, and Moses reaches up to receive a scroll or tablet extended to him by the hand of God that projects from a segment of heaven. While the hand of God could have been omitted at Aght'amar because of a lack of space on the narrow face of the polygonal wall, its absence, combined with the fact that Moses's head is turned away and his gaze directed outward, indicates that a slightly different scene provided the model for this relief. The type of Moses who turns his head away rather
than gazing upward is associated with a second set of tablets of the Law, which Moses did not receive from God but had to make himself and bring to Sinai. Several monuments of the sixth century combine elements from the two events: in the mosaics in San Vitale in Ravenna and in the basilica of the monastery of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai, and on an ivory pyxis in the Hermitage in Leningrad, Moses is shown with his head turned away, but still reaching up to receive the Law from the hand of God. A similar combination appears in an illustration in the Paris Gregory of 879-82 (B.N., ms. gr. 510, fol. 25v). More extensive cycles such as those preserved in the Byzantine manuscripts of the Octateuch include separate illustrations of the second Receiving of the Law, in which Moses appears as a solitary figure with his head turned away, but already holding the tablets in his outstretched veiled hands, as in the twelfth-century manuscript in Istanbul (Seraglio Library, cod. 8, fol. 257) (fig. 37). The Aght'amar Moses appears to have been derived from a scene of this type.

Moses is bearded in both the Sinai mosaic and the Aght'amar relief. While Moses also appears with a beard in some Early Christian representations of this scene, it is a very unusual feature for the tenth century. The bearded type recurs in later Armenian works, as in the scene of Moses Receiving the Law in the Erznka Bible of 1269 (Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, ms. 1925, fol. 8v).
All. Confronted Goats Flanking a Palm Tree(?). South facade, polygonal wall of the southwest niche. Fig. 38.

Two goats, confronted and regardant, rear up on either side of a stylized form that consists of a column resting on a stepped base and supporting a spade-shaped top.

The motif of goats or ibexes flanking a palm tree was a common design in the Near East from at least the second millennium B.C. Related themes were still in use in the Sasanian period. The central form in the Aght'amar composition could represent a fire altar rather than a tree, as it resembles the altars represented on Sasanian coins; the stepped base in particular would seem to support this interpretation (fig. 39). On the other hand, the goats appear far more commonly in connection with a palm tree.

Like other symmetrical animal groups in the Aght'amar reliefs, this motif may have been derived from textiles. A silk with a pattern of stylized goats flanking a palm tree or altar was found in a tomb at Mochtchevaja Balka in the northern Caucasus, and has been attributed to a seventh-century Byzantine atelier (fig. 40). Another example, a wool and cotton twill of the seventh or eighth century, was decorated with medallions enclosing confronted ibexes rearing up against a stylized tree.

The knees and ankles of the goats in the relief are marked by very distinct circles. This schematized rendering of the joints is characteristic of animals represented in Sasanian art. It is seen very clearly, for example, on both the horses and the hunted animals in almost the entire series of Sasanian silver vessels with hunting
scenes (fig. 41). As these plates span a period from the fourth to the seventh centuries, they demonstrate the continuity of this detail throughout the Sasanian era. The circles continued to appear from the end of the Sasanian period through the tenth century and beyond, in both Byzantine and Islamic works. They are particularly prevalent on animals represented on textiles, but can also be found in other media.

A12. Medallion Portrait of an Unidentified Saint. South facade, polygonal wall of the southwest niche. Fig. 38.

A youthful, beardless saint, dressed in a tunic and mantle, gazes directly out toward the viewer. His right hand is raised with the forefinger extended in a gesture of speech or exhortation. His pearl-bordered nimbus projects slightly above the unornamented frame of the medallion.

A13. Medallion Portrait of the Prophet Joel. South facade, between the southwest niche and the central exedra. Fig. 42.

The figure is identified as "Joel the Prophet" by the inscription carved within the field of the unornamented medallion (.tb/ yw/ pЛЬ/ r<f). Clad in a tunic and mantle, he raises his right hand in a gesture of acclamation and in his left holds a closed scroll. His head is framed by a pearled nimbus. The facial type with the short beard conforms to one of the established traditions for representations of the prophet Joel.
Al4. Christ Enthroned with Angel. South facade, polygonal wall of the southwest niche and adjoining section. Figs. 38 and 43.

Christ is seated frontally on a jeweled throne, blessing with his right hand and with his left supporting a closed Gospel stamped with a cross. The abbreviation for "Jesus Christ" (ΣΥ ΧΡ) is inscribed above his cruciform nimbus. He wears a tunic and himation, the latter decorated at intervals along its border with short bands with a guilloche pattern. The cushioned backless throne has high posts topped by capitals that support an arch decorated with a rinceau of half-palmettes. The jeweled footstool ordinarily included with this type of throne has been omitted. On the projecting wall of the niche to the left a large nimbed angel stands in three-quarter view, extending his arms toward Christ. The angel is clad in a tunic and a bulky himation with a band of pearls on its lower border, and his feet are shod in pearl-ornamented buskins.

The representation of Christ as a heavenly ruler seated on a jeweled throne became a standard image in Byzantine art as early as the fifth century. From that time on, through the entire Byzantine era, it appeared in monumental painting, mosaics, and sculpture, as well as in smaller works in various media, both alone and in combination with other figures as part of more complex themes.

In spite of the almost total destruction of early Armenian monumental painting, enough evidence has survived to show that this image was well known in Armenian church decoration. Theophanic visions with Christ enthroned as the central figure appeared in the apses of the
seventh-century churches at T'alın, Mren, and Lmbat; the lower part of
the latter composition, showing the jeweled throne and footstool, is
still preserved.\textsuperscript{137} In the apse of the church at Goch, also of the
seventh century, Christ was flanked by angels.\textsuperscript{138} In the early tenth
century, the enthroned Christ appeared in the apse of the church at
Aght'amar itself, forming the central figure of a Deesis.\textsuperscript{139} Other ex­
amples can be found in illuminated manuscripts, such as the ninth-
century Gospel owned by Queen Mlk'ē, Gagik Artsruni's consort: in the
miniature illustrating his Ascension, Christ is seated on an elaborate
throne and flanked by large angels in imperial garb (Venice, San Laz­
zaro, Mekhitarian Library, ms. 1144, fol. 4).\textsuperscript{140}

The arch above the throne does not occur in any of these Armenian
monuments, but there are numerous examples of similar structures in
Byzantine art. On one hand, it recalls the central portion of the im­
perial portico as seen on the fourth-century Missorium of Theodosius
and still in use centuries later, as in the scene of David before Saul
on one of the seventh-century silver plates from Cyprus.\textsuperscript{141} It could
also, however, be a flattened and simplified version of the canopy or
baldachin that frequently surmounted the thrones of both Christ and the
Emperor.\textsuperscript{142} In the frescoes of the audience hall of the eighth-century
Umayyad palace at Qusayr ʿAmra, a prince is seated on a jeweled throne
with tall posts supporting an arch, very similar to that in the Aght'-
amar relief (fig. 44). This image of a seated ruler flanked by atten­
dants was clearly adapted from Byzantine imperial iconography, and the
throne has been interpreted as a simplification of the type of canopied
ciborium-throne seen in Byzantine ivories and miniatures.\textsuperscript{143}
A15. Bust Portrait of an Unidentified Saint. South facade, west side wall of the central exedra. Fig. 45.

The youthful, long-haired saint, his head framed by an unornamented nimbus, is shown in three-quarter view facing right. He wears a tunic and mantle, and raises his hands in a gesture of speech, apparently directed to the prophet Nahum in front of him (see below, cat. no. A16). Only the lower part of the framing medallion was carved, probably because of a lack of space.

A16. Medallion Portrait of the Prophet Nahum. South facade, west side wall of the central exedra. Fig. 45.

The figure, clad in a tunic and mantle, is identified as "Nahum the Prophet" by the inscription carved within the field of the double-bordered medallion (יהויה נחום). His bearded head is framed by a pearl-bordered nimbus and his right hand is raised with the forefinger extended in a gesture of speech or exhortation. The bust is a standardized type with no individualization, comparable to several others at Aght'amar, as for example the representations of Zephaniah (cat. no. A5) and Hosea (cat. no. A57).

A17. Virgin and Child Enthroned with the Archangels Gabriel and Michael. South facade, west side walls of the central exedra. Fig. 46.

The Virgin, nimbed and clad in tunic and maphorion, is seated frontally on a high-backed jeweled throne with a cushion and footstool. The Christ Child, shown seated in three-quarter view on the Virgin's left
knee, wears a tunic and himation and has a cruciform halo. He raises his right hand in a gesture of blessing and holds a closed scroll in his left hand. The inscriptions carved above the throne identify these figures as Mary, Mother of God (μαριά/σκουμάς) and Jesus Christ (Ιησοῦς Χριστός). The Archangel Gabriel, shown standing to the left of the throne, is nimbed and wears a simple tunic and mantle. He holds an unfurled scroll with the inscription "Gabriel, Angel" (γαβριήλ/αγγέλας). To the right of the throne, on the adjoining wall of the exedra, the figure of the Archangel Michael completes the composition. Like Gabriel, he occupies only a single stone course, but he is taller and more slender, and wears a more elaborate mantle with a decorated border. Michael raises his right hand to point to the Virgin and Child. The inscription identifying him as "Michael, Angel" (μιχæηλ/αγγέλας) is carved on a projecting stone that occupies the same position in relation to the figure as the scroll held by Gabriel.

The theme of the Virgin and Child enthroned between archangels was widespread in the East in the sixth and seventh centuries. It appeared as an isolated image in apses, as in the Panagia Kanakariá at Lythrankomi in Cyprus and the Church of the Theotokos (Odalar Camii) in Istanbul, as well as in ivories and metalwork. The subject was particularly common in Coptic art, where it is found in the frescoes of the monasteries at Bawit and Saqqara. The Theotokos flanked by angels also appears on the bases of several seventh-century Armenian funerary stelae (fig. 47).

Although the Virgin with angels was essentially a pre-Iconoclastic theme, the subject reappeared in the late ninth and early tenth
centuries, and is found in several Cappadocian churches. In other images of the Virgin and Child produced in this period the angel guard was frequently omitted, but was included again from the twelfth century on in the apses of churches within the Byzantine sphere of influence.

On the whole, the Aght'amar relief follows the standard iconography for this subject. In most examples, however, the Child is seated in the center of his mother’s lap, in an iconic and hieratic presentation. The iconographic type in which the Child is seated on the Virgin’s left knee or left arm, as seen at Aght’amar, is specifically East Christian and possibly of Egyptian or Syrian origin. Early examples are preserved in Coptic frescoes and on several sixth-century ivories, including the diptych that now serves as a cover for the Etchmiadzin Gospels (fig. 24). This type had a long history in Armenian art, and appears on the seventh-century funerary stelae as well as in other early Armenian reliefs of the Virgin and Child.

The location of the angel Gabriel to the left of the Virgin’s throne and Michael to its right is very unusual. In representations of this scene in which the archangels are identified by inscriptions, Michael nearly always appears on the left. The angel holding a scroll is also exceptional, as Michael and Gabriel are most often shown carrying standards or sceptres.

A18. Ibex. South facade, west side wall of the central exedra. Fig. 48.

An ibex is shown in profile facing right. Its enormous horns are carefully rendered, even to the characteristic corrugations of
their surfaces. A clearly defined circle marks each leg above the hoof. A similar ibex is included in the zone of animal sculptures on the north facade (see below, cat. no. B28).

A19. Confronted Eagles Grasping a Ring. South facade, west side wall of the central exedra. Fig. 48.

Two eagles represented in profile stand confronted, jointly clasping a ring in their beaks. Their heads and breasts are carved with a scale pattern, and rows of vertical bars indicate the feathers of their tails and the primary feathers of their wings, which are divided by pearled bands and decorated with half-palmettes at the bases. The birds stand on a stylized plant with two rosettes rising from a single stem.

Eagles carrying rings in their beaks were ancient Iranian emblems of divine kingship, good fortune, and victory. They are found on Parthian coins and reliefs, and continued to appear in similar contexts in Sasanian and Sogdian art. The motif survived well into the Middle Ages in Byzantine and Islamic art, particularly as a design for luxury textiles. In regard to a source for the Aght'amar relief, the most significant comparison was drawn by Der Nersessian: a fragment of a ninth- or tenth-century silk fabric used in the binding of an Armenian manuscript in Erevan (Matenadaran no. 6263), on which two confronted birds grasp rings in their beaks (fig. 49).

The stylistic details of the motif at Aght'amar find their closest parallels in later Persian textiles. The decoration of the bodies of birds and animals with plant designs did not become common until the seventh century, and is found mainly on objects dating from the Islamic
era. Birds with half-palmettes at the bases of their wings appear on a late Buyid or early Seljuq textile from Rayy (fig. 50). On another silk fragment from the same site, pairs of confronted birds flank a conventionalized tree, the base of which is almost identical to that in the Aght'amar relief (fig. 51). The use of pearled bands to divide the wings of birds and other creatures also occurs most frequently on objects post-dating the Arab conquest.

A20. Medallion Portrait of an Unidentified Saint. South facade, east side wall of the central exedra. Fig. 52.

The youthful, beardless saint wears a chlamys over a tunic. The chlamys is fastened at his right shoulder with a brooch in the form of a four-petaled rosette. Both the saint's nimbus and the frame of the medallion have pearled borders.

A21. Griffin. South facade, east wall of the central exedra. Fig. 52.

The creature is presented in profile, except for its left wing which projects in front of its chest. The head with its strong curved beak is that of a bird of prey, while the body, other than the wings, is that of a lion. A row of overlapping ovals outlines the animal's neck and back. The wings, divided by pearled bands, are decorated with stylized palmettes at their bases, while the primary feathers are carved with simple patterns of horizontal lines. Half-palmettes adorn the creature's neck and flank and the end of its tail, and eight-petaled rosettes mark the joints of its paws.
The griffin is a composite creature of great antiquity. It appears to have originated in the third millennium B.C. in Iran, from whence it later spread throughout the Near East, Egypt, and the Aegean. It occurs in many variations, but the most common combines the head and wings of an eagle with the body of a lion, as at Aght'amar.  

In Sasanian Persia, the griffin was a beneficent creature, a protector of men, and was closely associated with the concept of royalty. It appeared on some early coins as a protome on royal head-dresses, and on a fourth-century Kushano-Sasanian silver plate, a king is shown seated on a bench supported by griffins. Several bronze furniture legs in the form of griffins have been preserved; these may have served as throne supports, and though some of them appear to have been made after the Arab conquest, they continued a Sasanian tradition. A seventh- or eighth-century example in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York is of particular interest because of the extensive use of stylized plant motifs to decorate the creature's head and chest.

The griffin continued to appear in contexts associated with royalty in later centuries throughout the Islamic world. It is found among the carved and painted decorations of early Islamic palaces from Palestine to Afghanistan, and was also common on textiles and small court-related objects such as the ivory caskets produced at Córdoba.

Griffins also occur frequently in Byzantine art, not only on luxury objects such as textiles, ivories, and enamels, but also in the sculptural decoration of church furnishings. Their meaning varied according to the context; in some cases the griffin was undoubtedly
used simply as a decorative motif, while in others an apotropaic value was attributed to it.\textsuperscript{175} Griffins were often included among the reliefs on the exteriors of Georgian churches, as at Martvili (seventh or tenth century), Hahoul (late tenth century), Nikortsminda (1010-14), and Samtavisi (1030); none of these, however, are as richly ornamental as the creature at Aght'amar.\textsuperscript{176}

The immediate source of the Aght'amar griffin may have been a luxury textile. Many of the stylistic details, such as the tripartite wing with its pearled band and palmette, the row of scallops outlining the neck and back, and the decoration of the body with leaves and rosettes, also appear on Byzantine silks (figs. 53 and 54).\textsuperscript{177}

A22. Bears and Hares. South facade, east side wall of the central exedra. Fig. 55.

Two bears, mouths open and teeth bared, stand on their hind legs and extend the paws of their front legs toward each other, forming a symmetrical composition. Between the bears are two hares, confronted and regardant, poised on their hind legs and with one front leg raised as if about to jump.

Bears were popular animals for hunting and amphitheater sports in Late Antiquity, and some scenes of bears in combat, such as the one on an ivory diptych of ca. 400 in the Louvre, include pairs of animals in poses very similar to those at Aght'amar (fig. 56).\textsuperscript{178}

The decorative, heraldic arrangement of the four animals also recalls the designs used on luxury textiles. No examples with bears and hares together are known to me, but hares were a common motif and often
appeared in symmetrical groups, either confronted or addorsed. In Coptic art, hares were most frequently depicted in an arrested pose with their heads turned back and one front leg lifted. E. J. Grube has demonstrated that this motif survived almost unchanged in Egypt from the Roman period into the Muslim era, and confronted hares in poses very similar to those of the creatures at Aght'amar are found on Fatimid ceramics and wood and ivory carvings (fig. 57).\footnote{179}

The fact that both bears and hares are constellation animals suggests still another possibility for the source of this relief. The bears, Ursa major and Ursa minor, appear in the northern hemisphere, while the constellation Lepus, the hare, is seen in the southern sky. The bears are usually shown in profile in a jumping pose with front paws extended, but they ordinarily face different directions and are separated by the coils of Draco, the dragon constellation.\footnote{180} However, in the Islamic manuscripts of the Book of the Fixed Stars (Suwar al-Kawakib al-Thabitah) of al-Sufi, each constellation was represented twice, once as it would appear from above, as seen on a celestial globe, and once as it would appear from below, as seen in the night sky.\footnote{181} Such manuscripts were, therefore, filled with symmetrical, heraldically confronted images of pairs of animals, and the combination of the drawings for the constellations Ursa major and Lepus could easily result in a composition like the one in the Aght'amar relief.\footnote{182}
Saints Sahak (Isaac) and Hamazasp are depicted as full-length figures in frontal poses. Part of the inscription above Sahak's head has been destroyed, but can be reconstructed as "Lord Saint Sahak, Brother of Hamazasp, Martyrs and Witnesses of Christ" (Lord Saint Sahak, Brother of Hamazasp, Martyrs and Witnesses of Christ)\(^ {183}\). The inscription above and to the right of Hamazasp's head reads "Lord Saint Hamazasp, Prince of Vaspurakan" (Lord Saint Hamazasp, Prince of Vaspurakan). Sahak and Hamazasp were princes of the Artsruni family, imprisoned in 785/86 by Khozaima ibn-Khazim, who governed Armenia during the brief reign of the caliph al-Hadi. Forced to choose between apostasy and death, they submitted to martyrdom, and were later canonized in the Armenian church.\(^ {184}\)

Both figures are bearded and bareheaded, and have pearl-bordered haloes. Sahak raises his arms in a gesture of conversation or instruction. He wears a long collarless robe that closes diagonally across his chest and is fastened at the waist with an elaborate belt. One edge of the skirt is turned back, revealing a plain lining. Three pendants are suspended from the belt; the lower part of the one on the left has been broken off. The robe is patterned with rows of concentric circles enclosed in squares formed by double lines. Hamazasp, on the right, raises his right hand in blessing and holds a martyr's cross in his left hand. He is clad in a long robe with a front slit whose edges have been turned back. The robe is made of heavy cloth with a pattern
of equal-armed crosses, with plain material for the cuffs and a narrow collar and rectangular plaque at the neck. The edges of trousers are visible beneath the garment's hem. Between the two saints a bust-length portrait of a beardless nimbed figure dressed in a tunic and mantle is enclosed in an almond-shaped medallion. His right hand is raised in a gesture of speech which, like his gaze, appears to be directed to Prince Hamazasp; but in the absence of an inscription the identity of this figure cannot be determined.

The caftan-like robe worn by Sahak had a long history in the East. Second-century Parthian cult reliefs from Hatra depict deities wearing similar but shorter robes, which also have diagonal closings from the right-hand side to the left and form open Vs at the necks. The same type of closing occurs in Sasanian costumes, as seen on the colossal statue of Shapur I at Bisutun. The survival of this type of garment into the Arab epoch is demonstrated by a stucco figure from Khirbat al Mafjar, representing a ruler clad in a long belted coat with slits at the sides (fig. 59). Much of the upper part of the statue is lost, but enough remains to show that the garment was closed diagonally across the chest, and Hamilton hypothesized a V-shaped opening at the neck. A similar robe is worn by a mounted falconer on a late tenth- or eleventh-century Buyid textile in the Abegg Foundation in Berne (fig. 60).

Simple repeat patterns were popular in Sasanian textiles, and a design of circles within squares similar to that of Sahak's robe appears on the mantle of a figure in a third-century Sasanian graffito at Persepolis. The fragmentary remains of patterned textiles
represented in the ninth-century frescoes from Samarra show that such designs were still widely used much later at the Arab court. The same pattern also appears on costumes represented in Byzantine manuscripts, such as the Menologion of Basil II (Vatican, ms. gr. 1613), illustrated in Constantinople in the late tenth or early eleventh century. The belt with lambrequins of the type worn by Sahak has been extensively studied and discussed. It is generally considered to have originated in the milieu of the nomadic peoples of Central Asia, and to have been disseminated by migrating tribes. Such belts are worn by many of the figures in the Sasanian boar- and stag-hunt reliefs at Taq-i Bostan (fig. 61), and they continued to appear on post-Sasanian silver vessels (fig. 62). A belt with three short straps is worn by a high-ranking military official in a relief plaque on the south facade of the late sixth- or early seventh-century church of the Holy Cross (Džvari) at Mcheta in Georgia. These ornamented belts often served as insignia of rank, and they became an important element of court and military costumes at the Islamic capitals. They are represented in several works of the ninth and tenth centuries, worn by a mounted falconer in a fresco from the Iranian city of Nishapur (fig. 63), by hunters and soldiers painted on the Bildsäulen from the palace at Samarra (figs. 64 and 55), and by a seated figure depicted on a tapestry fragment from Egypt (fig. 66). The belts were still widely used in the Ghaznavid period, and are worn by the soldiers of the sultan's Turkish guard in the late eleventh- or early twelfth-century frescoes in the audience hall of the palace at Lashkari Bazar (fig. 67).
and on marble reliefs from the palace at Ghazni (fig. 68).  

The lambrequins suspended from Sahak's belt are very similar in length and decoration to those represented at Taq-i Bostan; however, in the Sasanian reliefs the pendants are worn pushed together in groups, and range in number from three to as many as twelve.  

The belts worn by some of the figures on the Samarra Bildsäulen are identical to Sahak's, consisting in both cases of a series of overlapping oval plaques, probably made of metal, but the pendants on these belts are longer than those at Aght'amar.  

On another Abbasid work, the Egyptian tapestry fragment cited above, the pendants of the belt are similar in both placement and length to those worn by Sahak. Belts with lambrequins were undoubtedly worn by nobles and officials at the Artsrunid capital, and their use may be seen as yet another example of Arabic influence on the customs and dress of the courts of neighboring states.

Hamazasp's robe is similar to the garment worn by King Gagik on the west facade (see above, cat. no. A1), but is distinguished from it by the collar and the rectangular plaque at the neck. The closest parallels to Hamazasp's robe appear in the frescoes of the churches of the Ihlara group in Cappadocia. In Pürenli Seki Kilisesi, the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste wear long beltless robes with a front slit and with rectangles of a different material at the neck; further, most of these robes are made of textiles with small repeat patterns, while the cloth inserts at the necks are plain (fig. 69). N. and M. Thierry, who noted the similarity between these robes and the garments in the Aght'amar reliefs, have suggested that both were reflections of the current court styles of Iran and Baghdad.
As we have seen, Hamazasp's robe is made from a textile with a small repeat pattern of equal-armed crosses with pointed ends. This motif of crosses or four-petaled rosettes also occurs on a well-known Byzantine silk of the eighth or ninth century, where it is interspersed with figural designs (fig. 70). A very similar pattern decorates the robe worn by Queen Gorandoukht, the wife of Gagik of Kars, in a miniature from an Armenian Gospel book of the mid-eleventh century (fig. 21).

It is difficult to find actual textiles with patterns like those on the robes of Sahak and Hamazasp. Silks with more elaborate figural designs were important luxury items and had a greater chance of survival. Those with the simpler small repeat patterns, although in steady demand, were not valued as highly and are less frequently preserved.

A24. Medallion Portrait of an Unidentified Saint. South facade, polygonal wall of the southeast niche. Fig. 71.

The bust of a youthful, beardless saint, depicted in a frontal pose, is enclosed in an oval medallion with a pearled border. The saint is nimbed and clad in a tunic and mantle, and raises his right hand in a gesture of speech or exhortation.

A25. Ram-Headed Bird. South facade, polygonal wall of the southeast niche. Fig. 71.

A hybrid creature with the head of a ram and the body of a bird is shown in profile facing left. It wears a pearled collar around its neck.
and a ball attached to each leg. The bird's body is decorated with a variety of stylized patterns: the tail feathers have a herringbone design, while the secondary feathers of the wing are rendered by three broad oval forms and the primary ones by a series of horizontal bars. The breast is carved with a pattern of wavy lines and the thigh is ornamented with a palmette. Pearled bands divide the creature's wing and outline its neck and breast.

This type of hybrid is undoubtedly of Sasanian origin. Although no examples have been preserved on monumental sculpture, textiles, or metalwork, there are a number of Sasanian stamp seals on which the heads of rams, ibexes, stags, or antelope are combined with the bodies of birds (fig. 72). Such creatures may have represented avatars of Verethragna, the Iranian god of victory, and were also related to the concept of kingly glory.

The pearled neckband was a common motif in Sasanian art and was worn by various types of birds and animals. Many animals in Sasanian art also feature ribbons tied around their legs, but the balls attached to the legs of the Aght'amar creature are clearly of a different form. Der Nersessian identified them as the balls that falconers tied to the legs of their hawks. As these attributes are inappropriate to the type of hybrid creature depicted here, but would be a very suitable addition to the hawk striking a smaller bird represented immediately below, it may be asked whether the sculptor who carved the reliefs, lacking a full understanding of the significance of the figures, might have arbitrarily transferred these accessories from one bird to the other (see below, cat. no. A26).
Several stylistic details indicate that this creature was derived from a model of post-Sasanian date. The decoration of the bodies of animals with vegetal designs and the use of pearled bands to divide birds' wings occur mainly on objects dating from the Islamic era, and, as Der Nersessian has pointed out, the outlining of the bodies of birds or animals with pearled bands is also characteristic of later works inspired by Sasanian models.

A26. Bird of Prey Attacking a Smaller Bird. South facade, polygonal wall of the southeast niche. Fig. 73.

A large bird, shown in profile with wings addorsed, pecks at the throat of a smaller bird which it grasps with its talons. The hooked beak of the larger bird indicates that it is a raptor, an eagle or a falcon. The smaller bird, judging from its longer, rounded beak and its feet which, though damaged, appear to be webbed, may represent a duck or a goose. The head, body, and upper contour feathers of the wings of the bird of prey are carved with a scale pattern. The wings are divided by pearled bands, and the long primary feathers are carefully carved with a herringbone pattern, while the tail feathers are indicated by rows of bars. The surface of the smaller bird's body is plain except for its wing, which is similar to that of the large bird, and its tail, separated from the body by another pearled band and represented as a series of concentric ovals.

A bird of prey attacking a small animal or another bird is one of several animal combat themes that originated in the Near East around 3,000 B.C. and survived for millennia in widely varied cultures.
and contexts.\textsuperscript{214} In most of the preserved examples, the prey is a small quadruped or a hare (see below, cat. no. A50). The motif of a raptor striking a smaller bird was less common, and, at least from the Sasanian era onward, lends itself to a more specific interpretation.

Eagles or falcons preying on other birds appear on a number of Sasanian seals,\textsuperscript{215} but are rarely found on larger works from that period. One exception is a small silver vase in Tehran, tentatively dated to the seventh century, on which the birds are part of a scene with hunters pursuing various animals in a "paradise" or game park (fig. 74). One of the hunters, kneeling below and to the left of the birds, prepares to loose a falcon perched on his wrist. The motif of the two birds undoubtedly belongs to the theme of the hunt, and represents a trained falcon seizing its prey. The falconer and the other hunters are dressed as courtiers, and the vase is thought to represent the pastimes of the nobility.\textsuperscript{216}

In the early Islamic period, the art of hunting small game with falcons was closely associated with the royal courts. Several treatises on falconry were commissioned by ninth-century Abbasid caliphs,\textsuperscript{217} and around the same time representations of the ruler as a mounted falconer began to appear. One of the earliest of these is a late ninth-century(?) silver medallion from Nishapur, the obverse of which was cited above in the discussion of King Gagik's crown (cat. no. Al); on the reverse of this medallion the mounted king is shown holding both a falcon and an eagle.\textsuperscript{218} Another image of a richly dressed mounted falconer is preserved in a late ninth- or tenth-century wall painting, also from Nishapur (fig. 63).\textsuperscript{219} Royal falconers continued to be
represented on tenth-century Buyid medallions and textiles (fig. 60), and from this point on the mounted prince holding a falcon became one of the most popular subjects in Islamic art. It is surely not merely coincidental that the number of objects decorated with the related motif of a falcon striking a smaller bird (usually a duck or a goose) increased at the same time.

From the eleventh century on, the falcon attacking a duck was a common motif throughout the Islamic world. It is found on ceramics, metalwork, and stuccoes from Persia and the Fertile Crescent, and on ivories, woodcarvings, and paintings from Spain, Egypt, and Sicily. Yet in spite of the diversity of the monuments on which they appear, the birds can be interpreted in every case as a symbolic element drawn from the "princely cycle" of imagery. This cycle centers around representations of the prince and his leisure pastimes, such as hunting, banqueting, and royal entertainments. These themes, which originated in Persia, were adapted and expanded in the court art of the Umayyads and Abbasids, and later developed into a standardized repertoire for Islamic decoration. When falconry became a favorite pastime of the caliphs and their courts, the image of the falconer was incorporated into this cycle, as was the motif of the falcon and the duck.

When the two birds occur as part of a larger program, as on some ivories and metal objects, the accompanying representations may or may not include falconers, but they are always part of the traditional imagery of the princely cycle. The theme of the royal hunt and the concept of the falcon as a symbol of the glory and power of the prince are still implied when the pair of birds appears in isolation, as
This interpretation is supported by such works as a stucco relief from Rayy (fig. 75) and a Persian or Syrian lakabi ware plate in the Cleveland Museum of Art (fig. 76), both of the eleventh or twelfth century: in each case, the raptors are shown with small round bells attached to their legs. These bells were used by falconers to help them locate their birds if they did not immediately return with the prey. The relief at Aght'amar is strikingly similar to these examples, and even such details as the patterning of the wings are nearly identical to those on the Cleveland plate. The Aght'amar falcon does not have bells attached to its legs; these are found instead on the legs of the "am-headed bird carved above it (cat. no. A25). The fact that they are wholly inappropriate in that context leads us to wonder if the sculptor might simply have transferred this detail from one bird to the other.

It would be difficult to support a Christian interpretation for the motif of the falcon striking a duck, particularly at this early date. Comparable images do exist in Byzantine art, but they were never common, and they too appear to have been borrowed directly from Islamic sources. There is no evidence that the Armenians themselves hunted with falcons, but literary sources show that they were acquainted with the sport as practiced by the Persians and that they were also aware of the propensity of falcons to attack other birds in the wild. There is nothing in the early literature, however, that would support a different interpretation for the birds at Aght'amar. It was not until the thirteenth century that the motif of a large bird attacking a smaller one was revived in Armenian art and widely used in specifically
Christian contexts. There are numerous examples, both in the decora-
tion of illuminated Gospels and in relief sculpture on the exteriors of
cruches.²²⁸ The amount of figural decoration on these later churches
is very limited in comparison to Aght'amar, so it is possible that the
motifs that were used were selected because they had acquired a signif-
ificant Christian meaning. L. Der Manuelian, basing her conclusions
partly on the prominent locations of these motifs on the church facades
and on their proximity to other symbols such as crosses, has suggested
that the birds were derived from a manuscript of the Physiologus and
represent pelicans, and should thus be interpreted as metaphors for
salvation.²²⁹ The much earlier group at Aght'amar, however, clearly
stems from an Islamic source, and the evidence points to its having re-
tained its original meaning. Like several of the other motifs on the
south facade, such as the eagles clasping a ring in their beaks (cat.
no. A19) and the ram-headed bird (cat. no. A25), it represented the
concept of royal power.

A27. Figures from the Story of David: The High Priest Eli,
the Prophet Samuel, King Saul, and the Combat of David
and Goliath. South facade, east end. Figs. 77-79.

An abbreviated cycle of figures from the life of David occupies
the east end of the south facade, compositionally balancing the Jonah
cycle on the west end. Eli, identified by the inscription to the left
of his head as "Eli the Priest" (אֵלַי אֶלֶּה), is presented as a
bust-length unframed figure above the window on the narrow recessed
wall between the southeast niche and the east end panel. He is clad in
a tunic and mantle and raises his left hand in a gesture of speech or instruction, directed, like his gaze, toward the medallion portrait of Samuel on the adjoining wall. Samuel, like Eli, is depicted as a bearded, long-haired elder dressed in a tunic and mantle. He is identified as "Samuel the Prophet" by the inscription to the left of the double-bordered medallion (אֱלִישָּׁאל הַנּוֹרָא). His head is framed by a nimbus, and his right hand is raised in a gesture of speech. Below and to the left of the portrait of Samuel, Saul, designated by the inscription beside his head as "Saul, King of Israel" (אֱלִישָּׁאל הַנּוֹרָא), is presented as a full-length figure. His gaze is directed outward, and he raises both hands toward the right. Saul's head is wrapped in a turban, and he wears a jeweled collar and a robe that closes diagonally across his chest and is fastened at the waist by a belt with three pendants. The robe is cut from a luxurious textile with a pattern of horizontal bands filled with diamonds, crosses, hearts, and rinceaux of half-palmettes. To the right of Saul, David and Goliath are shown standing in three-quarter view, facing each other in readiness for combat. The inscriptions carved beside their heads identify them as "David the Prophet" (אֱלִישָּׁאל הַנּוֹרָא) and "Goliath the Foreigner" (אֱלִישָּׁאל הַנּוֹרָא). David is barefoot and wears a short tunic, with a shepherd's leather pouch slung over his left shoulder. He holds his loaded sling in his right hand and carries additional stones in his left. Goliath, an enormous bearded figure occupying four stone courses, is clad in a knee-length tunic, high boots, and a slightly pointed helmet with a dome and neck guard forged from a single piece of metal. Over his tunic he wears a coat of lamellar armor, and
a wide gorget of scale armor protects his shoulders. His sword is raised in his right hand, and with his left he holds his spear and a round shield before his chest. A goat crouches between the two figures, and above the animal two rosettes, one with six petals, the other with twelve, are enclosed in circular medallions.

The story of David does not appear to have been a popular subject in Armenian art, and no earlier or contemporary Armenian representations of these figures are known to me. They were, however, depicted frequently in other areas of the Christian East. The combat of David and Goliath in particular was already a common theme in the Early Christian period, and more extensive David cycles are found in sixth-century Coptic painting and sculpture, and on the well-known series of silver plates from Cyprus, produced in Constantinople in 628-30. Numerous examples are preserved in Middle Byzantine Psalters and other manuscripts.

The figures of David and Goliath at Aght'amar are curiously static, but there is little doubt that they were intended to illustrate the battle scene. Although this subject allows only minor variations, none of the preserved examples corresponds exactly to our version. In the Cyprus plate with David and Goliath and in most of the miniatures that belong to the aristocratic Psalter recension, David raises his left arm, wrapped in a fold of his mantle, to shield himself from the giant's attack. However, in the Psalter of Basil II of 1001-1005 (Venice, Marciana, cod. gr. 17, fol. IVv), David clutches additional stones in his left hand, which, as at Aght'amar, is held before his waist (fig. 80). At first glance there also appears to be some similarity
between the figures of Goliath at Aght'amar and in the Psalter of Basil II, as both seem to be immobile, awaiting the battle rather than taking part in it. This is particularly marked in the Psalter, where Goliath holds his spear upright and rests his shield on the ground. K. Weitzmann has explained the miniature as a conflation of two scenes from a more extensive cycle: while the active figure of David was drawn from an illustration of the battle, that of Goliath was derived from an earlier scene representing the challenge (I Kings 17:43-47). It has been suggested that the figure of Goliath in the Aght'amar relief also recalls the challenge, but there the giant holds his shield before his chest, and, while the sword seems to rest on his right shoulder, it should probably be interpreted as being raised to strike; it was only the sculptor's inability to convey motion that gives the figure the appearance of standing at rest. Most representations of the battle show Goliath hurling his spear at David rather than attacking with his sword, but there are other exceptions: in an illustration from an early eleventh-century Psalter at Dumbarton Oaks (ms. 3, fol. 71), Goliath's sword is raised in his right hand, while his spear, as in our relief, appears to be attached to his shield and projects beneath it.

There is considerable variation in the treatment of the sizes of the two figures. On the Cyprus plate and in most of the aristocratic Psalters, David and Goliath are shown as roughly the same height, while in the Psalter of Basil II and some marginal Psalters, such as the Theodore Psalter of 1066 (London, B.M., ms. Add. 19.352, fol. 182r), the Philistine is much larger, as at Aght'amar.
The composition at Aght'amar appears to be a conflation of several scenes from the story of David's early life. The first four chapters of the first book of Kings are represented by the bust of the high priest Eli, who gestures toward the portrait of Samuel, his pupil. The inclusion of the latter may be seen as a reference to the anointing of David, through which David received the spirit of the Lord and was able to defeat Goliath. The figure of King Saul is more problematic, as it is not clear whether he should be understood as part of the scene of combat, or as a figure drawn from an earlier episode. The inclusion of Saul in the scene of the battle between David and Goliath is very unusual, although some examples are preserved in later Byzantine manuscripts. C. Jolivet's suggestion that his presence is an allusion to the interview between David and Saul immediately before the battle is quite plausible; but it is also possible that the figure of Saul should be understood in relation to the bust of Samuel, rather than to David. Scenes of Samuel reproaching Saul appear in cycles such as those found in the eleventh-century Book of Kings in the Vatican (cod. gr. 333, fol. 22r) and the ninth-century manuscript of the Sacra Parallela in Paris (B.N., ms. gr. 923, fols. 38r, 149v, 275v, 343r). In a miniature from the latter, illustrating I Kings 15:31, Samuel addresses Saul with an emphatic gesture of speech, and the king, dressed in the full regalia of a Byzantine emperor, turns away and raises his hands in prayer in a pose very similar to that of King Saul in the Aght'amar relief (fig. 81).

The goat curled on the ground between David and Goliath is probably an allusion to David's early occupation as a shepherd.
Similar devices were used on the Cyprus plates: on the plate with the Anointing of David, a ram and staff appear in the exergue, and on the plate depicting David summoned to Saul, two sheep graze in the foreground. An identical goat is represented in the vine scroll on the west facade at Aght'amar (see below, cat. no. Cl, for further discussion). The two rosettes above the goat may symbolize astral bodies, perhaps reflecting a tradition similar to that seen in the Cyprus plates, several of which include the sun, moon, and stars in a segment of the sky at the top.

The costumes worn by the figures in this relief provide few additional clues to their origins. David is invariably shown in a short tunic in scenes from his early life. The inclusion of the shepherd's pouch is less common; this detail is found mainly in early examples and in Coptic art, though it also appears in the battle scene on a tenth- or eleventh-century ivory casket in the Palazzo Venezia. The various types of armor worn by Goliath all had a long history in Asia Minor, and in the period from the tenth through the thirteenth centuries they appear to have been in use in Armenia, Georgia, and Byzantium, as well as in the Muslim kingdoms of Persia and Mesopotamia. Saul, like the king of Nineveh in the Jonah cycle (cat. no. A8) and Hezekiah on the north facade (cat. no. A53), has been transformed into an Oriental ruler. His robe and belt are identical to those worn by Prince Sahak (see above, cat. no. A23). The robe is cut from a textile woven in a series of patterned horizontal bands. Silks with patterned bands were made during the Sasanian era, and their continued production during the Buyid period in the Caspian provinces of Iran is documented.
by the miniatures of the controversial manuscript of the Andarz Nama, illustrated in Gurgan in 1090. Some of the motifs that fill the bands of the textiles in this manuscript, such as diamonds, crosses, and vertical bars, are identical to those on Saul's robe in the Aght'amar relief. The turban worn by Saul in place of a crown is another example of the influence of Muslim customs and fashions on the Armenian courts.

A28. Saint John the Baptist. East facade, south section. Fig. 82.

The saint, shown full-length in a rigidly frontal pose, is identified as "John the Baptist" by the inscription carved on a projecting block of stone to the left of his head ( Gesture of acclamation. His facial type conforms to the established traditions for representations of the Baptist, as do his long tunic and fur cloak, the melote. The trousers, the edges of which are just visible below the hem of the tunic and which are fastened beneath the feet by thin straps, are an unusual feature: they are probably anaxyrides, the long trousers worn by Eastern peoples.252

A29. Medallion Portrait of an Unidentified Saint. East facade, south section. Fig. 82.

A youthful, beardless saint, his head framed by a nimbus, wears an omophorion with two crosses over a sticharion. The bust is framed by a double-bordered medallion.
A30. Saint Gregory the Illuminator. East facade, south section. Fig. 82.

The bearded saint stands in a frontal pose, making a sign of blessing with his right hand and holding a Gospel, a closed codex with a cross inscribed on it, in his left. His head is framed by a nimbus, and he wears a sticharion and phelonion, with an omophorion decorated with four crosses. The inscription to the right of his head identifies him as "Lord Saint Gregory, the Illuminator of the Armenians" (Lord Saint Gregory, the Illuminator of the Armenians).  

Saint Gregory converted King Trdat III and thus was instrumental in the establishment of Christianity as the official religion of Armenia in A.D. 314. He was consecrated Bishop at Caesarea in Cappadocia. The depiction of Saint Gregory at Aght'amar conforms to the standard iconographic type for portraits of bishops, and is very similar to the bishops represented in Constantinopolitan work of the same period. His ecclesiastical robes agree with those represented in other dated or datable works of the late ninth and early tenth centuries.

Saint Gregory was frequently represented in earlier Armenian art. A seventh-century Armenian text mentions that images of the saint appeared in the decoration of churches, but none has survived. He was also depicted on funerary stelae, but it is difficult to distinguish the saints in these reliefs from one another. In some cases in which a single saint accompanies a depiction of Trdat, as on a stele from T'alín, the saint may be assumed to be Gregory the Illuminator; but
these images have little in common with the comparatively refined figure at Aght'amar.\textsuperscript{257}

Until the ninth century, Saint Gregory the Illuminator was little known outside Armenia; but after he was included among the Church Fathers in the mosaic of the south tympanum of Saint Sophia in Constantinople, his image appeared on many other Byzantine monuments.\textsuperscript{258}

A31. Confronted Lions. East facade, south and center sections. Fig. 83.

Two lions are shown standing in profile with their raised tails echoing the curves of their backs. Although they are separated by the tall niche that indicates the division between the apse and the south sacristy, their proximity to each other and their nearly identical poses and treatment indicate that they should be understood as a pair of heraldically confronted beasts. Stylized leaves decorate the animals' shoulders, and circles mark the joints of their front paws.\textsuperscript{259} Their manes are rendered as a series of jagged points, filled in with shallowly carved parallel lines and spirals. The upper part of the head of the lion on the left is damaged, and a section of the mane and the left front paw of the lion on the right have been broken away.

Lions have symbolized various concepts in different cultures and religions, but their connection with the idea of royal power and majesty was particularly pervasive, and may have inspired their inclusion in the reliefs at Aght'amar. The close association of lions with royalty in this period is easily documented, as symmetrically paired lions,
either confronted or addorsed, frequently accompanied images of enthroned rulers.260

Pairs of standing confronted lions are also found on textiles. A group of Sogdian silks made in the region of Bukhara and known to have been widely exported is of particular interest, as confronted lions appear on a number of seventh- and eighth-century examples (fig. 84).261 The lions on these silks are more abstract than the animals at Aght'am, but show some of the same stylized ornamental details.

A32. Full-Length Portrait of an Unidentified Saint. East facade, center section. Fig. 85.

A bearded saint, clad in a tunic and himation, is presented as a full-length frontal figure, raising his right hand in a gesture of blessing. His head is framed by a nimbus with a pearled border.

In the absence of an inscription, the identity of the saint cannot be determined with any degree of certainty. Because of the prominence of his location on the center of the east facade, it may be assumed that he represents a figure of importance to Armenian Christianity, and he has customarily been identified as the apostle Thaddaeus, who introduced the Gospel to Armenia.262 In some Armenian versions of his Vita, Thaddaeus left Edessa after the conversion of King Abgarus and continued eastward to Armenia, becoming the first Christian missionary to that land.263 According to the chronicler Thomas Artsruni, Khuran, an Artsrunid prince, was baptized by Thaddaeus in Edessa and thus was the first Armenian to be converted to Christianity.264
A full-length portrait of an unidentified saint. East facade, center section. Fig. 85.

A bearded saint, his head encircled by a nimbus, stands in a frontal pose. He raises his right hand in a gesture of blessing, and holds a closed Gospel book inscribed with a cross in his left hand. He wears a sticharion and phelonion, and an omophorion with four crosses. The figure type and the ecclesiastical robes are identical to those of Saint Gregory (cat. no. A30).

Like the figure on the other side of the window (cat. no. A32), this saint lacks an inscription, and therefore cannot be identified with certainty. E. Lalayan's suggestion that he represents the apostle Bartholomew was followed by many later scholars, but was questioned by Der Nersessian on the grounds that a bishop's robes would be inappropriate for Bartholomew; she suggested that the figure might instead represent Saint James of Nisibis. Either identification could be supported on the basis of the importance of these saints to the spread of Christianity in Armenia, and each had connections to the province of Vaspurakan. The apostle Bartholomew was mentioned in connection with the legend of Thaddaeus in Armenian texts from the seventh century on, and he was credited with the foundation of a monastery in Vaspurakan. Saint James was Bishop of Nisibis in the fourth century, and is known particularly for his role in the Council of Nicaea. According to the legends, he visited Vaspurakan in connection with a dispute with a Rštunid prince. His cult was particularly active in the tenth century, and he continued to be an important figure in this region. King Senek'erim, a grandson of Gagik Artsruni, built a monastery dedicated
to Saint James on the south shore of Lake Van in the early eleventh century. 269

A34. Leopard. East facade, center section. Fig. 86.

A leopard is shown in profile, striding to the right with its head slightly lowered. Its ribs are indicated by a series of parallel curved lines, and its body is covered with small gouges in the stone representing spots.

A35. Goat. East facade, center section. Fig. 86.

A goat is shown in profile facing right, its head lowered as if to graze or drink. Its short, slightly curved horns and cleft hoofs are carefully rendered. Small circles mark each leg above the hoof and at the knee. 270

A36. Full-Length Portrait of an Unidentified Saint. East facade, north section. Fig. 87.

A youthful, beardless saint, his head encircled by a pearl-bordered nimbus, stands in a frontal pose. He is clad in a tunic and himation. His body is disproportionately short in relation to his head, hands, and feet. The saint raises his right hand in what was probably intended to be a gesture of blessing, but instead of showing the ring finger bent inward as on other figures of blessing saints at Aght'amar, the sculptor carved the hand with all four long, boneless fingers.
extended. The fingers of his left hand are bent as if to hold a scroll, but only the folds of the himation are visible.

Like the two full-length saints flanking the window in the center of the facade, this figure lacks an inscription, and his identity cannot be conclusively determined. M. van Esbroeck believes that he may represent the apostle Bartholomew, while Der Nersessian has suggested an identification as the apostle Thomas, another saint who had special connections with the province of Vaspurakan. Thomas's remains were said to have been brought from India to Edessa, where, in the fourth century, an officer of the Persian army was miraculously converted by the power of the relics and transported them to Vaspurakan. The Artsruni kings later built a marble tomb for the apostle and dedicated a monastery to him.

A37. Half-Length Portrait of an Unidentified Prophet. East facade, north section. Fig. 88.

A bearded, nimbed prophet dressed in a tunic and mantle is shown at nearly half-length in a rigidly frontal pose. He holds a scroll in his left hand and raises his right hand in a gesture of acclamation. The figure lacks a framing medallion.

A38. Medallion Portrait of an Unidentified Saint. East facade, north section. Fig. 88.

A youthful, beardless saint, nimbed and wearing a tunic and mantle, raises his right hand in a gesture of blessing and holds a scroll in his left hand. The bust is framed by a double-bordered medallion.
A frontal, full-length figure, his head framed by a nimbus, is identified as "Elijah the Prophet" by the inscription carved on a projecting block of stone to the right (צ"א לupil פ"ד). The long hair and beard are traditional features for representations of this prophet, as are the tunic and melote. Elijah's garments, including the long trousers with narrow straps under the feet, are identical to those worn by John the Baptist (cat. no. A28). He holds a closed scroll in his left hand and extends his right arm in a gesture of acclamation.

The figure that kneels to the left of the prophet and raises its hands in supplication is much smaller in scale, and so badly damaged that details of the features and clothing cannot be distinguished. Lalayan and Orbeli, both of whom studied the sculpture some seventy years ago, arrived at very different conclusions regarding this figure: Lalayan identified it as a woman, while Orbeli believed that he could distinguish a beard and mustache. Given the present condition of the sculpture, this is difficult to confirm; what appears to be a beard could simply be the outline of a rather long jaw, as seen on many of the beardless saints at Aght'amar (compare, for example, the face of the saint just above and to the left of the kneeling figure [cat. no. A36]). The head appears to be encircled by a nimbus.

The identification of this figure is made even more difficult by the scarcity of comparative materials. The only scene from Elijah's life to be frequently represented was his Ascension; for more extensive early narrative cycles, we are limited to the third-century frescoes in
the Synagogue at Dura-Europos and the ninth-century miniatures of the Sacra Parallela (Paris, B.N., ms. gr. 923), neither of which includes a scene with a supplicant kneeling at Elijah's feet. Orbeli suggested that the figure might represent Obadiah, King Ahab's governor, who, upon meeting the prophet, fell down before him in fear (III Kings 18:7). This, however, is a very minor event, absent even from the extensive cycle in the Sacra Parallela. Another possibility is suggested by a scene from that manuscript illustrating IV Kings 2:9-10 (fol. 328r), in which Elijah invites Elisha to make a last request of him. Elisha appears there in a smaller scale than Elijah, and, although he is not kneeling, he turns toward his mentor with his veiled hands raised in supplication (fig. 89).

If, on the other hand, the kneeling figure is a woman, Der Nersessian's identification as the Widow of Zarephath is undoubtedly correct. The widow is represented in the Sacra Parallela, but only as a bust-length figure in the margin (fol. 388r), while in the Dura frescoes she is shown at the city gate, bending to gather sticks (III Kings 17:10). If the Aght'amar figure is the widow, she might be seen as kneeling in supplication to the prophet to heal her son (III Kings 17:17-18). Der Nersessian also pointed out the allegorical significance of this interpretation, as Elijah would be a precursor of Christ and the widow symbolic of the Church which recognized and received him when the Synagogue did not.
A40. Samson Killing a Philistine. North facade, first scene on the east end. Fig. 90.

Samson, who is identified by inscription (אָבִי), is a very large figure, with thick, abundant hair cascading down his back. He is dressed in a short tunic with long sleeves and a short mantle fastened across his chest with a wide strap. The border of the mantle is decorated with a guilloche pattern. He holds the jawbone of an ass in his raised right hand, and prepares to strike a cringing Philistine soldier, whose hair he grasps in his left hand. The Philistine, an exceptionally awkward figure, is clad in a long, shapeless tunic. The fabric has a pattern of vertical stripes enclosing rows of circles with dots in the centers, similar to, but simpler than, the design of the textile of Gagik's tunic (see above, cat. no. A1).

The scene at Aght'amar belongs to the same tradition as the miniature in the Paris manuscript of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus of 879-82 (B.N., ms. gr. 510, fol. 347v) (fig. 91). The illustration in the miniature is far more dynamic, but it also depicts Samson raising a jawbone to strike a Philistine he grasps by the hair. A similar group appears in a miniature of the ninth century Sacra Parallela manuscript (Paris, B.N., ms. gr. 923, fol. 246v).

A41. Medallion Portrait of an Unidentified Saint. North facade, east end. Fig. 90.

A bust of a nimbed and bearded saint, his long hair falling on his shoulders, is enclosed in a double-bordered medallion. The figure is clad in a tunic and mantle, and blesses with his right hand.
A42. Medallion Portrait of an Unidentified Saint. North facade, east end. Fig. 92.

A youthful saint wearing a tunic and mantle raises his right hand with the forefinger extended in a gesture of speech or exhortation, and holds a scroll in his left hand. The framing medallion has a pearled border.

A43. Medallion Portrait of an Unidentified Prophet. North facade, east end. Fig. 92.

The face of this prophet is so badly abraded that the features can scarcely be distinguished, but he appears to have had long hair and a beard. The right hand is raised in a gesture of acclamation, while the left holds a scroll. The medallion has a pearled border.

A44. Full-Length Portrait of an Unidentified Prophet. North facade, east end. Fig. 92.

A bearded, long-haired prophet, his head framed by an unornamented nimbus, stands in a frontal pose. He is clad in a long tunic and himation and holds a closed scroll in his left hand while making a gesture of blessing with his right. Although there is considerable damage to the upper part of the face, the prophet appears to have a receding hairline interrupted by a tuft of shaggy hair in the center, which could indicate an identification as Obadiah.
A45. Full-Length Portrait of the Prophet Ezekiel. North facade, east end. Fig. 92.

Ezekiel, nimbed, bearded, and with long hair falling onto his shoulders, is shown in a frontal pose. He wears a tunic and a long mantle fastened by a brooch in the form of an eight-petaled rosette. His right hand is raised in a gesture of acclamation, while in his left he holds an unfurled scroll inscribed with the words "Ezekiel the Prophet" (אֶזְכֶל הַנֵּבּ).  

A46. Pair of Fighting Cocks. North facade, recessed wall between the east end panel and the northeast niche. Fig. 93.

The cocks are realistically represented, with the combs and wattles, spurs, and backward-curving tail feathers characteristic of their species. Aside from the short pearled band separating the tail from the body of the bird on the right, they lack the decorative stylizations seen on many of the other birds at Aght'amar. Their joined beaks and ruffled neck feathers emphasize that they are in combat, and are not merely symmetrically paired. A similar pair of fighting cocks appears in the inhabited vine frieze on the south facade (cat. no. C20), and the motif is repeated a third time, again on the south facade, in the frieze beneath the eaves of the roof (cat. no. E40).

K. Otto-Dorn interpreted the fighting cocks at Aght'amar as a realistic reflection of one of the amusements popular at the Abbasid court, and noted that the motif also appears in the twelfth-century paintings on the stalactite ceiling of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo. 284
The subject is relatively rare in Islamic art, but it was also represented on an eleventh- or twelfth-century Fatimid luster-painted bowl, where two kneeling figures are shown holding the birds in readiness for the battle (fig. 94). Although this could be an ordinary genre scene, E. Grube convincingly related it to the more traditional and symbolic cycle of princely entertainments.285

While the interpretation of the cockfights at Aght'amar as part of the princely cycle is entirely appropriate and may very well be correct, the fact remains that the parallels in Islamic art are rather rare and much later in date; the possibility of other interpretations should at least be considered.

Cockfighting was a popular sport among both the Greeks and the Romans, and was frequently depicted on utilitarian objects such as vases and mirrors, and in frescoes and pavement mosaics of private homes.286 It also appeared on a number of Roman funerary monuments, where it apparently symbolized immortality, the victory over death.287 Both the motif and its eschatological symbolism were adopted by the Christians, and cockfights were depicted on several fourth-century sarcophagi in company with scenes of the miracles of Christ.288 It is possible that such scenes were interpreted in the same way as athletic contests or spectacles in the arena: as victories over sin and weakness, or over death itself.289 In later centuries, however, the theme does not appear to have been widely used. While cocks were frequently represented both singly and in pairs on sixth-century mosaic pavements in Christian churches, an actual battle between the birds is shown or
implied in only a few cases, as on a mosaic in the Funerary Chapel at el Hammam near Beisan.  

No other examples of cockfights in Armenian art are known to me, though the birds appeared frequently in the canon tables of illuminated Gospels. A pair of cocks stands confronted (but not in battle) above the arcade of an unfinished canon table in a fragment of a tenth-century Gospel in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York (ms. 789, fol. 3). In his introduction to a Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, the twelfth-century Armenian katholikos Nerses the Gracious explained the symbolism of some of the motifs that decorated canon tables; the cocks, according to this text, represented the prophets of the Old Testament. In Armenia and elsewhere, the cock was also frequently associated with the Resurrection. If the birds at Aght'amar are to be interpreted in a Christian sense rather than as part of the princely cycle of the Islamic courts, they should probably be associated with the concepts of salvation and immortality, the victory over sin and death made possible by Christ's sacrifice.

A47. Samson(?) Killing the Lion. North facade, recessed wall between the east end panel and the northeast niche. Fig. 95.

A kneeling man dressed in a very short tunica exomis is shown in combat with a lion. The man holds a knife raised in his left hand, while his right hand rests against the animal's chest. The lion, seated on its haunches, grasps the man's left arm with its right front paw.
Der Nersessian tentatively identified this figure as Samson, while pointing out that the scene does not agree with the Biblical text, which states that Samson killed the lion bare-handed (Judges 14:6). The inclusion of a weapon in this context is very unusual, but there is another possible exception in a roundel of the twelfth-century opus sectile pavement of the south church of Zeyrek Camii in Istanbul, which may show Samson dispatching the lion with a club.

No earlier strictly Armenian representations of this subject are known to me, but it occurs in Georgian architectural sculpture, on a relief plaque on the seventh-century church of Sion at Ateni (fig. 96) and in the seventh- or tenth-century apse frieze at Martvili. In both of these scenes Samson, clad in a long robe with sleeves, grasps the lion's jaws with his bare hands.

On the same facade at Aght'amar, on the polygonal wall of the northwest niche, is another scene of a man struggling with a lion (cat. no. A64). This man, who is dressed in a long robe, also kneels before the lion, but he has no weapon and has seized the animal's jaws with both hands. Were it not for the presence of an inscription identifying him as David, it would be logical to assume that this figure represents Samson. The Biblical text is less explicit in regard to David's combats with the lion and the bear, and merely states that he slew the animals (I Kings 17:34-36). David is sometimes shown killing the lion with a knife, as on a seventh-century silver plate from Kama and a tenth- or eleventh-century ivory casket in the Palazzo Venezia, or with a club, as on the Cyprus plate or a miniature in the Paris Psalter (B.N., ms. gr. 139, fol. 2v). However, in some other
depictions of this scene, such as the early eleventh-century miniature in the Psalter of Basil II (Venice, Marciana, cod. gr. 17, fol. IVv) (fig. 97) or a panel on an eleventh- or twelfth-century ivory casket in the Cathedral Treasury of Sens. David kills the lion without a weapon, either strangling it or tearing apart its jaws. These images are very close to some illustrations of Samson and the lion, such as the miniature in the eleventh-century Vatican Octateuch (cod. gr. 747, fol. 248v). If such scenes were taken out of context, it would be difficult to determine whether the subject was Samson or David. As a case in point, the figures in the well-known "Lion Strangler" silk have been variously identified as David, Samson, Herakles, Daniel, and a Roman gladiator.

Both of the figures fighting lions in the Aght'amar reliefs have rather long hair, but neither has the abundant flowing tresses common to representations of Samson and seen in the figure of Samson slaying the Philistine on the east end of the north facade (cat. no. A40). The long robe worn by the figure identified as David on the northwest niche is an unusual feature, as both David and Samson are ordinarily clad in short tunics in the illustrations of their encounters with lions. Samson, however, is sometimes shown in a longer garment, and in the two Georgian reliefs cited above he wears a long robe with sleeves. The figure in this relief, clad in a short tunic and holding a knife, conforms to the standard iconography for scenes of David slaying a lion, while the long-robed weaponless figure on the northwest niche would be more appropriate as an illustration of Samson. It must be asked whether the sculptors, unfamiliar with the finer points of Old Testament
iconography, could have reversed their models for these two closely related scenes.

A48. Human-Headed Bird. North facade, recessed wall between the east end panel and the northeast niche. Fig. 98.

The creature, which stands in three-quarter view facing left, is now only partially visible, the lower half being covered by the soil that has built up around the base of the church; but it may be seen in its entirety in earlier photographs, one of which is reproduced here. The face, apparently that of a woman, is framed by long hair with a single curl in front of the left ear. A circular motif adorns the creature's forehead, and there is a jeweled collar around its neck. Its raised left wing is divided by a plain band and the upper feathers are carved with a simple pattern of diagonal lines projecting from central shafts. The upper part of the breast and the stylized peacock's tail are decorated with a scale pattern.

The human-headed bird, or harpy, is a composite creature of great antiquity, with a long history in the arts of many Mediterranean and Near Eastern cultures. Few examples from the Sasanian period have survived, but, as E. Baer demonstrated in her important study, harpies were a very common motif in later Islamic art. The Aght'amar creature appears to have been based on a Persian source. As Baer pointed out, the treatment of the wing and tail show a direct dependence on Sasanian art. Further, the variant of the human-headed bird with a peacock's tail may have been a specifically Iranian creation, though it is found later in the art and literature of other areas. No strictly
comparable Persian examples from the tenth century or earlier are known to me, but the harpies on one of the Buyid textiles found in a tomb tower at Rayy have stylized peacock's tails and coiffures with cheek curls similar to those in the Aght'amar relief (fig. 99). The circular motif on the forehead of the Aght'amar creature is a noteworthy detail, as it appears to represent the bindi, the cosmetic spot worn by Indian women on their foreheads. D. Shepherd has shown that this is by no means an exclusively Indian feature, but had a very long history in Iran and may actually have originated there. Another harpy with both cheek curl and bindi appears on a twelfth-century Persian lakabi ware dish in a private collection in New York.

The harpy at Aght'amar is the earliest preserved Armenian example of a motif that later became very common. It is found in the sculptural decoration of several twelfth- and thirteenth-century churches, and from the thirteenth century on it was so widely used in the decoration of chapter headings and margins in Armenian manuscripts that Der Nersessian remarked that it is rare to find a Gospel or Bible in which this fabulous beast does not appear in the decoration at least once.

The meaning of the harpy at Aght'amar is difficult to determine. Baer's study of this creature in Islamic art amply demonstrated the diversity of the contexts in which it could appear and the difficulty of arriving at clear definitions of the meanings of isolated examples. It is possible, however, to trace an association between the harpy and the concept of royalty. In Islamic art, harpies were frequently represented as attributes of the ruler, and they also became a common element in the princely cycle of imagery. Harpies with peacocks' tails were
particularly appropriate as royal emblems, as the feathers of a peacock were seen in Persia as one of the external marks of royal power and glory. 315

A49. Camel. North facade, polygonal wall of the northeast niche. Fig. 100.

The camel, a dromedary, is shown in profile facing left. His hump is barely indicated, but the shape of the head and the long neck are those of a camel.

A50. Bird of Prey Attacking a Hare. North facade, polygonal wall of the northeast niche. Fig. 100.

A large bird, shown in profile facing left with wings addorsed, grasps a hare in its talons. The bird's curved beak is that of a falcon or an eagle. Its body is carved with a scale pattern, as are the contour feathers of its left wing, which is divided by a pearled band. The primary feathers of the left wing and the lower surface of the right wing are represented as a series of bars. The hare, also shown in profile facing left, turns its head back to look up at its captor.

This motif clearly belongs to the same general category as the bird of prey attacking a smaller bird carved on the south facade (cat. no. A26), and, like it, may be related to the theme of the princely falconer. Eagles and hares appeared in the paintings of the ninth-century Abbasid palace at Samarra, and the falconer in the Nishapur fresco cited above was specifically hunting hares, as attested by the animal hanging from his saddle (fig. 63). 316 Like the motif of the falcon
striking a duck, the raptor attacking a hare was a common theme in Islamic art from the late tenth century on, and can be found on Syrian and Persian ceramics and metalwork, and on ivories, woodcarvings, textiles, and paintings from Spain, Egypt, and Sicily. In each case, the animals can be interpreted as elements from the princely cycle and symbols of royal power.

This motif, however, also introduces a different set of problems, for while the falcon striking a duck rarely appeared in Late Antique or Byzantine art, the eagle attacking a hare was comparatively common. In some cases the animals were simply part of hunting scenes. More significant, however, is the use of this motif in the sculptural decoration of Christian churches and their furnishings. Eagles grasping hares in their talons are carved above the windows of the south transepts of the churches at Hahoul and Oški, both located in the Georgian province of Tao-Klarjeti and both dating from the second half of the tenth century. In these reliefs, however, the eagles are presented frontally with their wings displayed, and have a heraldic character that is very different from the naturalism of the animals at Aght'amar. On a tenth- or eleventh-century marble panel from Constantinople, an eagle with a serpent in its talons is flanked by two eagles grasping hares. The eagles in this relief have been interpreted as symbols of Christ, who in vanquishing the devil (the serpent) also triumphs over the "quick course of human life" (the hares) and brings salvation to mankind. Carved plaques found in Greece and dated to the eleventh century and later provide the greatest number of examples of this motif in Byzantine sculpture. In most cases these emblems are frontal and
heraldic, but some reliefs, such as that on a twelfth-century plaque in the Byzantine Museum in Athens, have compositions similar to that at Aght'amar (fig. 101). As G. Miles has demonstrated, however, many of the animal motifs in Byzantine Greek sculpture of this period can be traced back to Islamic prototypes, so the plaque in Athens and the Aght'amar relief may ultimately have been derived from similar sources. Eagles grasping small animals in their claws are also found in the sculptural decoration of a number of later Armenian churches, but in most of these examples the birds are represented frontally and the prey is a sheep or a gazelle rather than a hare.

A51. Confronted Peacocks with Intertwined Necks. North facade, polygonal wall of the northeast niche. Fig. 100.

Two peacocks stand confronted, their necks intertwined and their beaks touching. The tapering ovals of the birds' tails are carved in a simple scale pattern. The wings are divided by plain bands, with the primary feathers represented by a scale pattern and the secondary feathers by horizontal lines. The lower parts of the birds' legs are no longer visible, hidden by soil and weeds that have built up around the base of the church.

The motif of confronted animals with intertwined necks appeared as early as the third millennium B.C. in the Near East. While pairs of birds represented in this manner probably had a long history as a decorative form, most of the preserved examples are relatively late. Confronted peacocks with intertwined necks are found in the frescoes of the interior of a Seljuq tomb tower at Kharragān, built in 1067/68,
and the motif reappeared later on stucco panels and ceramic tiles that decorated Seljuq palaces in Iran and Anatolia. In Spain, peacocks with intertwined necks were depicted on eleventh-century ivory caskets made in Córdoba and Cuenca, and on a carved marble basin or pila in the Municipal Museum at Játiva, where they accompany a variety of motifs from the princely cycle of Islamic art. E. Kühnel suggested that such designs were transmitted to the West mainly through textiles, and they may also have reached the Armenian sculptors at Aght'amar by this means. The motif of peacocks with intertwined necks has indeed been preserved on textiles; one example, a fragment of wool tapestry in the Musée de Cluny in Paris, may have been produced in Iran or Iraq as early as the tenth century (fig. 102).

The relief at Aght'amar is the earliest preserved example of this motif in Armenian art, but peacocks and other birds with intertwined necks later became a popular design in the decoration of chapter headings and canon tables in Armenian manuscripts, particularly in Cilician Gospel books of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

A52. Two Rams. North facade, recessed wall between the north­east niche and the central exedra. Fig. 103.

Two rams are shown kneeling in profile, confronted and regardant. Their large curved horns identify them as a species of mountain sheep. The surface of the stone is severely abraded on both figures, and the legs of the animal on the right are damaged.

The ram was an important emblem in Sasanian art and thought, symbolizing the hvarnah, the concept of royal fortune and divine
kingship. It is found on a number of seals, sometimes paired in arrangements similar to the Aght'amar design, as well as on stucco reliefs, textiles, and metalwork. Rams continued to appear in contexts associated with royalty into the Umayyad period and beyond, as witnessed by the fragmentary stucco decoration from the palaces at Chal Tarkhan-Eshqabad near Rayy in northern Iran (late seventh or early eighth century) and that from Khirbat al Mafjar in the Jordan Valley (second quarter, eighth century). The immediate source for the group at Aght'amar may have been a luxury textile, such as a late Abbasid or early Buyid silk with a Sasanian-inspired hunting scene on which pairs of rams, confronted and regardant, appear between the royal hunters and attendants (fig. 104).

A53. King Hezekiah and the Prophet Isaiah. North facade, recessed wall between the northeast niche and the central exedra and east side wall of the central exedra. Figs. 103 and 105.

King Hezekiah, identified by the inscription to the left of his head (כַּכַּדְרֶה/כַּכַּדְרֶה), is presented as a full-length, frontal figure, gesturing toward the left with both hands. He wears a turban and a jeweled collar, and a long robe identical in both cut and pattern to that worn by Prince Hamazasp on the south facade (cat. no. A23). To the right of Hezekiah, on the side wall of the central exedra, Isaiah, identified as "Isaiah the Prophet" by the inscription carved beside his head (כְּנַע/כְּנַע/כְּנַע), is also shown at full length in a frontal pose. He is nimbed and bearded, and his long parted hair falls over his shoulders. Clad in a long tunic and himation, he raises his
right hand in a gesture of acclamation and holds a scroll in his left hand.

These two figures were often depicted in Byzantine miniatures illustrating Hezekiah's illness and the moment when Isaiah foretold first his death, and then the prolongation of his life (IV Kings 20:1-11 and Isaiah 38:1-8). In the scenes in the Paris Gregory (B.N., cod. gr. 510, fol. 435v) and the Paris Psalter (B.N., cod. gr. 139, fol. 446v), Isaiah is represented as a full-length figure, standing beside Hezekiah's sickbed with his right arm raised in a gesture of speech. Hezekiah reclines on his bed in these scenes, but in the Paris Psalter miniature and in other manuscripts such as the ninth-century Sacra Parallela (Paris, B.N., cod. gr. 923, fol. 252v), he is shown a second time, standing upright with his hands extended in a gesture of prayer or thanksgiving. The figures at Aght'amar may have been drawn from a related source. Isaiah conforms to the figure type seen in Middle Byzantine prophet manuscripts and other works, while Hezekiah, who is clad in the robes and crown of a Byzantine emperor in the miniatures cited above, has been transformed into an Oriental ruler.

A54. The Temptation and Fall. North facade, front wall of the central exedra. Figs. 106 and 107.

The Fall of Man is depicted to the left of the window in the center of the north exedra. Adam and Eve, who are identified by inscriptions (Ὡς and Εὐς), stand flanking the Tree of Knowledge, represented as a fig tree laden with fruit. Both figures, shown in a rather awkward three-quarter view, hold pieces of fruit in their right hands,
which they raise to their mouths. Their left arms are bent, with the hands overlapping beneath a fig that appears to hang from a branch of the tree. The faces of both figures are damaged. The scene of the Temptation appears to the right of the window. The figure of Eve, again identified by inscription (ץַיְכָד), is so badly abraded that only her pose can still be determined. She kneels on her right knee, with her arms raised in a gesture indicating discussion. Before her stands the serpent, whose head is also badly damaged. It has the traditional coiling body of a snake, but stands on four short legs. The central part of its body is looped around a tree that bears large leaves and flowers.

Of the various recensions and versions of the story of Adam and Eve that have been preserved, the reliefs at Aght'amar appear to be most closely related to the iconographic tradition represented by the Middle Byzantine Octateuchs. The Temptation and Fall are illustrated in these manuscripts in a sequence of three episodes in a single miniature: Eve and the serpent, Adam and Eve talking, and Adam and Eve eating the fruit (fig. 108). The center scene, certainly the least important to the narrative, was not included at Aght'amar, but there are marked similarities with the other two. In the scenes of the Temptation in both the miniatures and the relief, Eve is shown to the left of the tree, facing a serpent that stands on four legs; and in the representations of the Fall, Adam and Eve stand flanking the tree and eating the fruit; the serpent is not present. There are, however, several unusual features in the Aght'amar scenes. The kneeling Eve in the Temptation relief is unique; in all other representations of this subject
she is shown standing. The form of the serpent is also unparalleled. The serpents in the Octateuchs are shown as quadrupeds, but are more complex in structure and have some resemblance to camels. The Aght'amar creature may be based on different sources, such as the Commentarium de Paradiso of Moses bar Kephas, who affirmed that the serpent had four legs but did not further describe it, other than to deny its resemblance to a camel. Some of the same texts also emphasize that the Tree of Knowledge was a fig tree.

Except for the Jonah cycle and the figures from the story of David on the south facade (cat. nos. A8 and A27), the story of the Fall is the only subject to be represented at Aght'amar in more than one episode. The two scenes are presented as part of a continuous sequence of events, as in the Octateuchs; but unlike the miniatures, which are read from left to right, at Aght'amar the Temptation is shown on the right and the later scene of the eating of the forbidden fruit on the left. This unusual right-to-left arrangement is also seen in the much later reliefs of the story of Adam and Eve on the south porch of the church of Hagia Sophia at Trebizond.

Although the frescoes decorating the interior of the church at Aght'amar are beyond the scope of the present study, it must be noted that they include another cycle of the story of Adam and Eve, located in the drum of the dome. Unfortunately, the scenes of the Temptation and Fall have been destroyed, so their iconographic relationship to the reliefs cannot be determined. The serpent is included in one of the later scenes with the Creator, and differs in form from the one in the relief, although it still has feet. The Genesis frescoes do not
completely correspond to any of the known early recensions, though they have some elements in common with several different cycles. 350


The figure is identified as "Saint Cyriacus" by the inscription carved within the field of the double-bordered medallion (UNr/rr [y]/ rr...u/y...nu). His beardless face is framed by a pearl-bordered nimbus. He wears a chlamys knotted on his right shoulder over a tunic and holds a martyr's cross in his left hand, while his right hand is raised in a gesture of speech or exhortation.

Saint Judas Cyriacus, a bishop of Jerusalem and a martyr, was associated with Saint Helen's discovery of the true cross.


The nimbed, beardless saint wears a chlamys knotted on his right shoulder over a tunic. His right hand is raised with the forefinger extended in a gesture of speech. The bust is framed by a double-bordered medallion.

A57. Medallion Portrait of the Prophet Hosea. North facade, recessed wall between the central exedra and the north-west niche. Figs. 109 and 112.

The figure, his head framed by a pearled nimbus, is identified as "Hosea the Prophet" by the inscription carved within the field of the
medallion (끷/끷 꾹/中关/中关). He wears a tunic and mantle and is shown with long hair and a beard, following a standard type for the representation of prophets. He holds a scroll in his left hand and raises his right hand in a gesture of speech or exhortation.


Each of the three equestrian saints is identified by inscription: from left to right, Saint Theodore (䚀/䚀 꾹/中关/中关) (fig. 110), Saint Sargis (Sergius) (䚀/䚀 꾹/中关/中关) (fig. 111), and Saint George (䚀/䚀 꾹/中关/中关) (fig. 112). All three are bareheaded and nimbed, and each wears a coat of plate armor over a tunic, a chlamys knotted on the right shoulder, and high boots. Theodore and Sargis are bearded, while George is clean-shaven. The horses' trappings include bridles, stirrups, and pearled breast and breech straps that keep the riding pads in place. The saints are differentiated mainly by the victims that are trodden beneath their horses' hoofs, and which they pierce with their cross-ended lances: Saint Theodore vanquishes a knotted serpent, Saint Sargis a panther, and Saint George a bound human figure.

The origins of the motif of the warrior saint triumphant over an enemy are quite complex, and beyond the scope of the present study. The theme had already appeared in Armenian art by the sixth century. Der Nersessian cited several early examples, including a fragmentary sixth-century capital from Dvin with a mounted warrior trampling a serpent; a relief from Ani, possibly of the seventh century and now known
only through a drawing, in which two mounted warriors flanking a stylized tree lance serpents coiled beneath their horses' hoofs (fig. 113); and two equestrian figures painted on either side of the apse of the seventh-century church at Lmbat. 352 None of these, however, carries inscriptions, so the equestrian figures cannot be identified with certainty. This is also true of the early Georgian examples, such as a relief from the church at Martvili, in which two nimbed riders battle a dragon. 353

The representations of Saints Theodore and George at Aght'amar follow an iconographic tradition that was well established in the Middle Byzantine period. The two saints were frequently shown together, as on the wings of an icon triptych from Mount Sinai, possibly made under Georgian influence and dated by K. Weitzmann to the ninth or tenth century (fig. 114), 354 or in two sets of reliefs on the early eleventh-century Georgian church at Nikortsminda. 355 In each case, Saint Theodore is shown spearing a serpent while Saint George triumphs over a human enemy. Although Saint George later came to be more commonly associated with the slaying of a monstrous serpent or dragon, the sources that attribute such an exploit to Saint Theodore are much earlier. 356 The motif of Saint George vanquishing a human figure may have originated in Georgia, where it appears on a number of early silver repoussé icons. 357 The defeated figure is often crowned, and in one case specifically designated as the emperor Diocletian. 358

The third warrior saint at Aght'amar, Sargis, has no parallels in earlier monuments. According to the Armenian synaxaria, Saint Sargis was a high official (strategos) in the army of Constantine the Great,
but later fought for Shapur II against the troops of Julian the Apos-
tate. He was martyred at Seleucia for refusing to deny Christ, and be-
came a symbol of protection, as his last wish was that those who invoked
his name be delivered.\textsuperscript{359} Saint Sargis was an object of special veneration
in the Armenian church and was frequently represented as a mounted
warrior in later manuscripts.\textsuperscript{360} The relief at Aght'amar is the earli-
est preserved Armenian representation of this saint, and the only one
to show him slaying a panther.\textsuperscript{361} There are numerous examples of
mounted warriors lancing felines that could have been adapted for this
image. Some early amulets depict riders spearing human-headed lionesses
or prostrate female figures with lions beneath them,\textsuperscript{362} and riders with
lions or panthers beneath their horses were a common motif in Coptic
art.\textsuperscript{363} On a sixth-century ivory relief from the chancel of Aachen
Cathedral, also possibly of Coptic origin, an armored warrior spears a
panther-like animal under his horse's hoofs.\textsuperscript{364}

The serpent vanquished by Saint Theodore in the Aght'amar relief
is shown with a heart-shaped knot in the center of its body. This de-
tail may indicate that the creature was ultimately derived from Eastern
astrological imagery, in which a dragon symbolized the eclipse demon,
and a knot in its body referred to the node of the moon's orbit.\textsuperscript{365}
The serpent-dragon with a heart-shaped knot also appears with Saint
Theodore on the Sinai icon cited above, but it is very unusual at this
early date; most of the preserved examples of this motif date from the
twelfth century and later, when it was widely used in Seljuq Anatolian
architectural sculpture.\textsuperscript{366}
Some details of the rendering of the horses in this group suggest Sasanian influence. Their joints, like those of many of the animals at Aght'amar, are marked by clearly defined disks at each knee and fetlock.\textsuperscript{367} The manes of all three horses fall loosely and naturally, as do the tails of the horses ridden by Saints Theodore and Sargis, but the tail of Saint George's mount is knotted in a curious loop from which two ends project. Horses depicted in Sasanian art frequently have elaborately plaited and looped tails,\textsuperscript{368} and this detail also appeared in Umayyad works, such as a fresco from Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi.\textsuperscript{369} The horses in the relief from Ani cited above (fig. 113) may also have knotted tails, though it is difficult to be certain from the drawing, and horses with their tails tied in a manner identical to that of Saint George's mount appear in Georgian sculpture from the seventh century on.\textsuperscript{370} All three of the horses at Aght'amar have crescent-shaped phalerae suspended from their breech straps, as does the horse on the left in the drawing of the Ani relief. No Sasanian phalerae of this shape are known to me, but they are found on a number of tenth-century works that display strong Sasanian influence. They are worn by the horses depicted on the lid of the ivory casket in Troyes Cathedral, while the horses in the Sasanian-inspired lion hunt scene on the front have knotted tails and pearled breech bands.\textsuperscript{371} Similar details appear in both Islamic and Christian works produced in Spain: the horses ridden by a falconer on a Córdoban ivory casket of 969/70 and by a Christian warrior battling a serpent-dragon in a miniature of the Gerona Beatus of 975 (Gerona Cathedral, ms. 7, fol. 134v) are shown with pearled breast and breech straps, crescent-shaped phalerae, and knotted tails.\textsuperscript{372}
A59. Lions and Fox. North facade, polygonal wall of the northwest niche. Fig. 115.

Two lions stand addorsed and regardant, with a running fox, shown in profile facing left, above their backs.

This group was probably derived from a textile. The closest parallels are found on a group of Sogdian silks attributed to the region of Bukhara. Of eleven silks that were originally assigned to one class of this group, eight have a design of confronted lions enclosed in medallions, and in all but one of these running animals are depicted between the medallions (fig. 116). These filler motifs consist of pairs of running foxes, addorsed and regardant, with addorsed leopards above. Although the animals are different at Aght'amar and only a single fox is shown above the lions, the designs are nonetheless related and may derive from a common tradition. Pairs of lions, addorsed and regardant but without accompanying animals, also appear on Sasanian-inspired Byzantine silks of the ninth or tenth centuries.

A60. Man Killing a Lion. North facade, polygonal wall of the northwest niche. Fig. 115.

A youthful, beardless man, shown in three-quarter view, stands with both legs bent at the knees and thrusts his lance into the chest of a lion that rears up on its hind legs to his right. The man wears a short tunic ornamented with clavi and segmenta, and high boots or leggings.

The motif of a man in combat with a lion had a long history in the Near East, where the human combatant was usually a king, as in the many
Assyrian reliefs that are among the best-known examples of this subject. The battle between the ruler and the king of beasts was generally understood as an emblem of royal power, and continued to be an important theme throughout the Sasanian period. There is nothing in the costume or attributes of the lion-fighter at Aght'amar, however, that would indicate a royal personage; his garments seem rather to be those of a venator and to point to an origin for this motif in the Mediterranean rather than the East. Very similar scenes occur on Roman funerary monuments, and in the first through the fourth centuries lions and venatores in poses identical to those of the figures in the Aght'amar relief appeared with great frequency on Roman and North African pavement mosaics depicting hunts and amphitheater games. Similar scenes continued to appear in the fifth and sixth centuries, particularly on ivory diptychs and pyxies (fig. 117) and on pavement mosaics, in churches as well as in private villas. Venatores in costumes similar to that of the Aght'amar hunter are also found on later textiles, such as an eighth-century silk, possibly of Byzantine origin, in the Vatican.

In the Mediterranean as well as in the Near East, scenes of combats between men and animals often had symbolic connotations. The Romans had imbued the hunt with a spiritual character, and lion hunts in particular often symbolized victory over death. Both the imagery and its moral and eschatological significance were taken up in Christian iconography, and, as E. Kitzinger has shown, scenes of combat in the amphitheater could be interpreted as emblems of man's victory over evil and death, or allegories of moral strife.
There are also some precedents for this theme in Armenian art that are of considerable interest, and which may shed some light on the question of the meaning of the relief at Aght'amar. The earliest Armenian example is a fourth-century (?) stone slab with a relief of a nude man armed with a lance battling a boar, found in a pre-Christian mausoleum of the Arsacid kings at Aghts. In the reliefs carved above a window on the south facade of the sixth- or early seventh-century church at Ptghni, two hunters, one mounted and armed with a bow and arrow, the other kneeling and holding a lance, are shown in combat with lions (fig. 118). These hunters, one of whom is identified by inscription, have been shown to represent either the princely donors of the church, or the donors' martyred ancestors, who died in battle against the Persians. In either case, as L. Der Manuelian has demonstrated, these scenes combine the concept of royalty with that of a victory over evil and death, leading to salvation. It would be difficult to support an identification of the hunter at Aght'amar as an image of King Gagik, but the placement of this relief next to the figures of the equestrian saints, whose combats with various foes are generally understood as emblems of the triumph of Christianity, may indicate that a similar allegorical interpretation would be appropriate for this scene.

A61. Medallion Portrait of an Unidentified Saint. North facade, polygonal wall of the northwest niche. Fig. 119.

The saint, who is clad in a tunic and mantle, has short hair and a short trimmed beard. The gesture of his left hand is difficult to determine; his fingers are bent as if to hold a scroll, but no object
is visible. Both the saint's nimbus and the frame of the medallion have pearled borders.


A large bear is shown in profile facing right with its head lowered, eating grapes from a vine that encloses it on three sides. Its ribs are indicated by a series of slightly curved lines, its fur by short straight lines along its back, belly, and hindquarters. The joint of the right front paw is marked by a circle.

This motif was almost certainly derived from a larger composition of an inhabited vine scroll. Bears eating grapes also appear in the vine frieze that encircles the upper part of the church (see below, cat. nos. C2 and C48).

The fruit-eating bear was a common subject in Roman art, and bears enclosed in vine scrolls and eating the grapes continued to appear in later centuries, as in the decorative ivory bands framing the main panels of the sixth-century Cathedra of Maximianus (fig. 121). The long popularity of this motif in the East is documented by its appearance on monuments as diverse as a series of late Sasanian silver plates with scenes of the vintage and the stucco decoration from Khirbat al Mafjar in the Jordan Valley.
A  lion, its body curved in an arc as it clings to the back of a bull, seizes its victim by the neck and tears at its throat with sharp teeth. The bull's head is twisted back and its forelegs are beginning to buckle under the weight of its attacker. The ferocity of the scene is conveyed with an unusual degree of drama and naturalism, though the animals themselves show some characteristic stylizations, such as the disks at their joints and the treatment of the lion's mane as a series of parallel lines ending in spirals.

Of all the animal combat themes, the lion attacking a bull is the most ancient, and the most pervasive. Its history covers a span of more than five millennia, during which it was depicted many hundreds of times. The majority of the earliest representations of this theme appear to have had an astronomical significance, but there is evidence that the lion attacking a bull had become a symbol of royal power in the Assyrian culture as early as the ninth century B.C., and that this symbolism continued under the Achaemenid Persians. In Sasanian art, lions attacking bulls are found on seals as well as on larger silver plates that appear to have had royal connotations (fig. 123). The motif was later widely used in Umayyad art, in which one of the best-known examples is the mosaic in the main throne apse of the diwan at Khirbat al Mafjar, where the prey, however, is a gazelle rather than a bull. Lions were also shown attacking bulls in Umayyad works, as on an ivory casket made in Córdoba in 968 for Prince Mughira, a son of the
caliph Abd ar-Rahman III, where the animals appear with themes from the princely cycle, including banqueters, musicians, and falconers. That this motif was also current in the East in the tenth century, and was closely associated with the concept of royalty, is clearly demonstrated by a gold medallion struck as a presentation piece in Baghdad in A.D. 973/4 by the Buyid emir 'Izz ad-Daula, with a lion attacking a bull on the obverse, and a leopard attacking an ibex on the reverse (fig. 124). Lions and bulls continued to appear as emblems of royal power in later Islamic art, and there are numerous examples in Seljuq Anatolian architectural sculpture.

The possibility of a Christian interpretation for this motif must be entertained, but is more difficult to substantiate. No earlier examples in Armenian art are known to me, but the lion-bull combat was depicted on the exteriors of Georgian churches in the province of Tao-Klarjeti later in the tenth century; it is found on the frame of a window on the west facade at Oskh, while at Hahoul it is one of several animal themes carved at the sides of the south portal. In these and similar contexts, particularly when they occur near doors and windows, the animals are thought to have had an apotropaic value. Such groups are also found among the reliefs on the exteriors of a number of later Armenian churches, where they may have acquired a more specifically Christian significance as emblems of salvation or spiritual victory, as L. Der Manuelian has suggested.

Any scene of this type can represent a dualistic concept, a struggle between light and darkness, good and evil, or any traditionally opposed forces. The problem is very complex, and, particularly in terms
of a Christian interpretation, is by no means adequately understood.
At Aght'amar, however, in view of the fact that the church was built as
a palatine chapel, an interpretation of the motif of the lion-bull com-
bat as an emblem of royal power appears to be most strongly indicated.

A64. David Killing the Lion. North facade, polygonal wall
of the northwest niche. Figs. 125 and 126.

A man, identified by the inscription to the left of his head as
"David the Prophet" (Daniel 9:2), kneels before a stand­
ing lion whose jaws he grasps with both hands. The man wears a long
robe with three-quarter length sleeves. Above the lion a ram is shown
standing in profile facing left.

This scene is the third relief on the north facade to depict a
combat between a man and a lion, and, as noted above, would be more
appropriate as an illustration of Samson's feat than of David's (see
the discussion of cat. no. A47). While David was sometimes shown slay­
ing the lion with his bare hands, as in the miniature in the Psalter of
Basil II (fig. 97), he was more commonly depicted with a knife or a
club; and no other examples of this scene in which David is clad in a
long robe instead of a short tunic are known to me. The similarity be­
tween this relief and the depictions of Samson killing a lion in seventh­
century Georgian sculpture, such as the panel from the church at Ateni
(fig. 96), would seem to indicate that the sculptor at Aght'amar re­
versed his models for the illustrations of the lion combats of Samson
and David. Nonetheless, the presence of the inscription makes it clear
that this figure was understood as David, and in this context, the ram
shown immediately above the lion should be considered as part of this scene, as David's flocks were very frequently included in illustrations of his combat with the lion. It is also very possible that the grape-eating bear carved above and to the left of David (cat. no. A62) is an allusion to his combat with that animal, as the lion and bear battles were usually represented as a pair.

A65. The Three Hebrews. North facade, west end. Fig. 127.

The Three Hebrews stand in frontal poses with their arms raised in the orant gesture. They are bareheaded and nimbed, and wear tunics over long Persian trousers (anaxyrides). They are identified individually by inscriptions: from left to right, Ananias (UyilUMD), Azariah (q -u-rril), and Misaël (ưvrưz).

The most unusual feature of this scene is its simplicity: neither furnace nor flames are indicated, and the angel usually included in this composition is also omitted. The Three Hebrews were represented on several seventh-century Armenian funerary stelae, but these followed the standard iconography for the theme and included the furnace and angel.

Abbreviated renderings of the scene of the Three Hebrews are also found in the Cappadocian churches of the Peristrema valley. In Kokar kilise, one of the churches of the Ihlara group, the three figures are shown alone, standing and frontal, without flames; but they wear long robes with slits rather than Persian costumes, and the inscriptions give their names in the Babylonian form, rather than the Hebrew as
at Aght'amar. A still closer parallel to the Aght'amar relief is offered by a tenth- or early eleventh-century fresco in Sümüllü Kilise, in which furnace, flames, and angel are again omitted, and the youths are dressed in Persian garb and identified by inscription with their Hebrew names, in the same order as at Aght'amar.

A66. Daniel and Habakkuk. North facade, west end. Fig. 128.

Beneath an inscription that gives his name (גַּלעַד), Daniel stands in the position of an orant. He is bareheaded and nimbed, and wears a short tunic, a mantle fastened over his chest with a circular fibula, and long Persian trousers (anaxyrides). He is flanked by two lions, symmetrically arranged in vertical positions, standing on their front legs and licking his feet. Above the left lion are half-length figures of Habakkuk and an angel, both clad in tunics and himations. The angel grasps Habakkuk by the hair, while the prophet extends his hands toward Daniel.

The scene of Daniel in the Lions' Den, represented by numerous examples in Early Christian catacomb paintings and sarcophagi, also enjoyed a long vogue in early Armenian art. In spite of the scarcity of preserved monuments of classical Armenian sculpture, there are several examples that pre-date Aght'amar. The earliest, like those of the West, appear in funerary contexts. Daniel is represented as an orant between two lions on a relief plaque from one of the arcsolia of a fourth-century hypogaeum at Aghts, and the scene was also depicted on the bases of seventh-century funerary stelae from Haridj, Agarak, and
Ketchror (fig. 129). In addition, there is evidence for the use of this subject in the sculptural decoration of earlier churches. A fragmentary carved block set in the south facade of the church at Ptghni, thought to have come from an earlier church on this site, depicts a lion in front of a palm tree and the raised right hand of an orant Daniel. A schematic composition with the bust of an orant and two quadrupeds, placed above a window in the north apse of the seventh-century cathedral at Mren, may also represent Daniel and the lions.

The most striking feature of the iconography of the Daniel scene at Aght'amar is the position of the lions, which is unusual but by no means unique. The lions on the Ketchror stele are arranged in similar vertical poses, and additional evidence for this tradition in the Caucasus is provided by the relief of Daniel and the lions on the apse frieze of the seventh- or tenth-century church at Martvili. In the scene of Daniel in the Lions' Den in Pürenli Seki Kilisesi, one of the rock-cut churches of the Ihlara group in the region of Hasan Dağı in Cappadocia, the lions again stand on their front legs and lick Daniel's feet. Scenes of Daniel flanked by vertically arranged lions were also common in other regions, particularly Tunisia and Merovingian Gaul. The earliest examples of this composition known to me, however, are found on fourth-century Sasanian stamp seals (fig. 130). The figures on these seals have been identified with Eastern deities, or may represent Daniel himself; but whatever their original meaning, images of this type may have provided a model for the related Armenian compositions.
The group of Habakkuk and the angel appeared much less frequently in early Armenian sculpture, but an example is preserved on another side of the base of the Ketchror stele, and this scene was also included among the reliefs on the seventh-century church at Ateni in Georgia (fig. 96). The rendering of the figures in half-length at Aght'amar is unique, and it seems likely that the sculptor abbreviated them from full-length models in order to fit the group into his limited space.

A67. Medallion Portrait of the Prophet Amos. North facade, west end. Fig. 128.

Amos, identified by the inscription within the field of the medallion (Ամոս), is shown nimbed, bearded, and with short bushy hair. He wears a tunic and mantle, and raises his right hand with the forefinger extended in a gesture of speech or exhortation.
Notes to Chapter II


2. For examples, see N. A. Aladashvili, Monumental'naia skulptura gruzii: Figurnye rel'efy V-XI ve kov, Moscow, 1977 (cited hereafter as Aladashvili, Skulptura gruzii).

3. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 28.

4. Ibid. For a good illustration of the facade of Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharibi as reconstructed in the Damascus Museum, see J. Sourdel-Thomine and B. Spuler, Die Kunst des Islam (PropKg, 4), Berlin, 1973, pl. XI.


6. G. Herrmann, The Iranian Revival, Oxford, 1977, pp. 67f. The excavator, E. J. Keall ("Qal'eh-i Yazdigird: A Sasanian Palace Stronghold in Persian Kurdistan," Iran, 5, 1967, pp. 99ff.), originally dated the stronghold to the fifth century, but the finds made during more extensive excavations in 1975 enabled him to demonstrate that the site is actually late Parthian. The final report has not yet been published.

7. See J. Kröger, Sasanidischer Stuckdekor (Baghdader Forschungen, 5), Mainz am Rhein, 1982, pp. 185f.

8. Compare, for example, some stucco fragments from Ctesiphon with stylized pine cones and half-palmettes framing pomegranates (ibid., pl. 21, 1, 3, and 6, and pl. 38, 3 and 5).


10. A. Grabar, L'empereur dans l'art byzantin, Paris, 1936, pp. 109ff., 154f., 172ff. The earliest preserved Byzantine example is the mosaic of the late tenth or early eleventh century in the southwest vestibule of St. Sophia in Istanbul, in which Constantine and Justinian offer models of the city of Constantinople and the church of St. Sophia to the enthroned Virgin and Child (frequently reproduced; for example, J. Beckwith, Early Christian and Byzantine Art, 2nd ed., Harmondsworth, 1979, fig. 190). The subsequent popularity of this type of image is attested by numerous examples from the eleventh century on, found in all
areas of Byzantine influence. An exhaustive list of examples in monumental art from the sixth to the seventeenth centuries, with bibliography, was compiled by G. Ieni, "La rappresentazione dell'oggetto architettonico nell'arte medievale con riferimento particolare ai modelli di architettura caucasici," Atti del Primo Simposio Internazionale di Arte Armena, Bergamo, 28-30 giugno 1975, Venice, 1978, pp. 251ff.


12. A catalogue of both Armenian and Georgian examples of votive scenes in which the donors hold church models was compiled by P. Cuneo, "Les modèles en pierre de l'architecture arménienne," REArm, n.s. 6, 1969, pp. 202ff. and figs. 2-17. G. Ieni ("Oggetto architettonico," pp. 257ff.) also lists examples in both Armenia and Georgia, in fresco as well as relief sculpture, with bibliography.


17. D. Winfield, "Some Early Medieval Figure Sculpture from North-East Turkey," JWCI, 31, 1968, pp. 35ff. and pl. 4 b (cited hereafter as Winfield, "Figure Sculpture").


19. See Winfield, "Figure Sculpture," p. 34, and Djobadze, "Donor Reliefs," pp. 52f.
20. For illustrations, see O. K. Ghalpakhtchian and A. Alpago-Novello, Sanahin (DAA, 3), Milan, 1970, fig. 13, and S. Mnatsakanian and A. Alpago-Novello, Haqbat (DAA, 1), Milan, 1974, figs. 8-9; and for discussion of these and later donors holding church models in Armenian architectural sculpture, Der Manuelian, "Armenian Sculptural Images II," pp. 103ff.


22. Ibid., pp. 526ff.

23. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 29. An opposing view was put forward by C. Jolivet ("L'idéologie princière dans les sculptures d'Aghthamar," paper presented at the Second International Symposium on Armenian Art, Erevan, 1978, p. 1 of the typescript), who has suggested that Gagik was deliberately represented as the larger figure to emphasize his power and importance.

24. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, pp. 2, 30ff.; and see above, p. 5.

25. The fundamental study of Sasanian crowns is the article by K. Erdmann, "Die Entwicklung der sásánidischen Krone," AI, 15-16, 1951, pp. 87ff.


27. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 31. The plate was first published by I. I. Smirnov, Vostochnoe serebro, St. Petersburg, 1909, pl. XXXV, no. 64, and is also illustrated in I. Orbeli and C. Trever, Orfèvrerie sasanide, Moscow/Leningrad, 1935, pl. 18.


29. Marshak, Sogdiiskoe serebro, pp. 147ff. and fig. 29.


31. Ibid. The statue was published by D. Schlumberger, "Les fouilles de Qasr el-Heir el-Gharbi (1936-1938): Rapport préliminaire," Syria, 20, 1939, pp. 329, 353, and pls. XLV, 3 and XLVI, 1; see also O. Grabar, "Islamic Art and Byzantium," DOP, 18, 1964, pp. 84f.

33. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 31.

34. Ibid., p. 32.

35. The authenticity of this manuscript, divided between the Cincinnati Art Museum and the Kevorkian Foundation in New York, has been questioned, but the general consensus seems to be that it should be accepted as genuine until it can be proven false beyond doubt. The manuscript was the subject of a series of papers delivered at the Fourth International Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology in 1960, later published as a fascicle of Volume XIII of A Survey of Persian Art, ed. A. U. Pope, Kobe, Japan, 1968.


38. N. and M. Thierry, Nouvelles églises rupestres de Cappadoce: Région du Hasan Dağ, Paris, 1963, p. 139, n. 2. The Thierrys also listed a number of examples of such robes in the frescoes of other Cappadocian churches.

39. Ibid., pls. 45-48, 59, 65 a, 68 a, and fig. 11.


41. Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art, no. 13021; see R. Pfister, "Les tissus orientaux de la Bible de Théodulf," Coptic Studies in Honor of
Walter Ewing Crum (Bulletin of the Byzantine Institute, 2), Boston, 1950, pp. 507ff. and pl. XXIX a.

42. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, no. 35.55; see N. P. Britton, A Study of Some Early Islamic Textiles in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Boston, 1938, pp. 33, 35, and fig. 10.


45. Ibid., pp. 134f., no. 59. These two fragments of wool and cotton twill are in the Textile Museum, Washington, D.C. (73.341 and 73.555).

46. The pattern of this textile was discussed in detail by Djodbadze, "Donor Reliefs," pp. 46ff.

47. Though textiles with this design are rare, they are not unknown. An important exception is the silk compound twill with the Annunciation and Nativity in the Vatican, dated by W. F. Volbach to the seventh or eighth century (I Tessuti del Museo Sacro Vaticano, Vatican City, 1942, pp. 39ff., pls. XXIX-XXX). A design of birds in interconnected roundels identical to that of Gagik's mantle appears on a sixth-century mosaic pavement in the chapel of a monastery at Beisan in Palestine (G. M. Fitzgerald, A Sixth Century Monastery at Beth-Shan (Scythopolis), Philadelphia, 1939, p. 3 and pls. XIV-XV).

48. For Taq-i Bostan, see S. Fukai and K. Horiuchi, Taq-i-Bustan, Tokyo, 1972, II, pls. XXXV, XXXVII, XXXIX, and LXVII. There are a number of Sasanian stamp seals with ducks; see C. Brunner, Sasanian Stamp Seals in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1978, pp. 109f., for examples in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and a list of those in other collections, as well as some examples of textiles and silver vessels on which ducks appear.

49. For a list of examples of birds wearing jeweled collars in Sasanian and post-Sasanian art, see D. Thompson, Stucco from Chal Tarkhan-Eshqabad near Rayy, Warminster, 1976, p. 104, n. 49.


52. Harper, Royal Hunter, p. 105, nos. 36-37. Similar palmettes are also found in textiles, as on a fragment of wool from Antinoë, thought to imitate a Sasanian silk (R. Pfister, Tissus coptes du Musée du Louvre, Paris, 1932, pl. 48, bottom left).


54. These examples were collected and discussed by Cuneo, "Les modèles en pierre," pp. 201ff.; see especially p. 207 for his discussion of the model at Aght'amar.

55. For the history and meaning of this theme, see A. Grabar, L'empereur, pp. 239ff.; Ihm, Apsismalerei, pp. 91ff.; and G. Berefelt, A Study on the Winged Angel, Stockholm, 1968, passim.


57. For discussions of the use of this theme in Georgian art, additional examples, and bibliography, see Winfield, "Figure Sculpture," pp. 59ff.; N. and M. Thierry, "Peintures du Xe siècle en Géorgie méridionale et leurs rapports avec la peinture byzantine d'Asie Mineure," CahArch, 24, 1975, p. 94; and Velmans, "L'image de la Déisis," pp. 131ff.

58. N. Chubinashvili, Khandisi, Tiflis, 1972, pls. 11-16.

59. Ibid., pl. 50.

60. Mepisashvili and Tsintsadze, Arts of Ancient Georgia, ill. p. 80. In the same church, on the architrave above the small entrance to the southwest corner chamber, is a relief of two hovering angels supporting a medallion with the bust of Christ (Chubinashvili, Khandisi, pl. 44, 1).

61. Ibid., pl. 48.

62. Winfield, "Figure Sculpture," figs. 3-4 and pl. 30 a.

63. N. and M. Thierry, "Peintures du Xe siècle en Géorgie méridionale," fig. 16.

64. See Velmans, "L'image de la Déisis," p. 133, for a list of these later examples.
65. Der Nersessian, L'art arménien, fig. 12.


68. For a list of examples, see Pallas, "Himmelsmächte," cols. 83ff.

69. Der Nersessian, L'art arménien, fig. 46.


71. Winfield, "Figure Sculpture," p. 53 and pl. 27 a.

72. Haloes with pearled borders were common in the Early Christian period, but disappeared from monumental Constantinopolitan painting toward the end of the ninth century; they continued to appear, however, in Cappadocia and Italy, and in the minor arts (C. Mango and E. J. W. Hawkins, "The Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul: The Church Fathers in the North Tympanum," DOP, 26, 1972, p. 28).


75. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 13.

76. For the bibliography on the Jonah cycle, see the references listed by B. Narkiss, "The Sign of Jonah," Gesta, 18, 1979, pp. 71f., n. 2.

77. Several Eastern examples have been discussed by K. Wessel, "Jonas," RBK, 3, 1978, cols. 647ff.

78. For a discussion of the selection and number of scenes in early Jonah cycles, see Narkiss, "Sign of Jonah," pp. 70f.
79. Early monuments in which the two episodes are conflated include the Sta. Maria Antiqua sarcophagus (F. W. Deichmann, Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophage, I, Wiesbaden, 1967, pp. 306ff., no. 747, pl. 117) and the sarcophagus of Baebia Hertofilia (ibid., pp. 325ff., no. 778, pl. 124), both of the second half of the third century, and a glass patera from Podgoritza, probably of the fourth century, now in the State Hermitage Museum, Leningrad (A. Bank, Byzantine Art in the Collections of Soviet Museums, New York, 1978, fig. 26).

80. For example, in the scene of Jonah thrown overboard in an arcosolium of the Tomb of the Aurelii (A. Grabar, Early Christian Art, New York, 1968, fig. 31).

81. For examples, see Narkiss, "Sign of Jonah," p. 74, n. 29.


85. Winfield, "Figure Sculpture," p. 62, fig. 6, pl. 30 b.


87. Weitzmann, Sacra Parallela, pp. 138f. and fig. 317.

88. Onont, Miniatures grecs, pl. XX.

89. Ibid., pl. XII.


94. See, for example, the diadem illustrated by M. van Berchem, "The Mosaics of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and of the Great

95. See Deér, "Mittelalterliche Frauenkronen," pp. 422ff. and figs. 57 h-i. A crown quite similar to the king of Nineveh's is worn by Henry II in a portrait on a page of his Gospels from the first quarter of the eleventh century (Vatican, ms. Ottob. lat. 74, fol. 193v) (C. R. Dodwell, Painting in Europe: 800 to 1200, Harmondsworth, 1971, pl. 85).


98. A gold plaque of Greek workmanship in the form of a ketos was found in the fourth-century B.C. Scythian kurgan at Kul Oba near Kerch (From the Lands of the Scythians: Ancient Treasures from the Museums of the U.S.S.R. 3000 B.C.-100 B.C., catalogue of an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1975, p. 110, no. 75, pl. 14 upper right). The monster also appears in scenes of Perseus rescuing Andromeda on South Italian vases of the fourth century B.C.; for examples, see K. M. Phillips, Jr., "Perseus and Andromeda," American Journal of Archaeology, 72, 1968, figs. 24-26.

99. Some of the Hellenistic examples and other contexts were discussed by W. D. Wixom, "Early Christian Sculptures at Cleveland," BCMA, 54, 1967, p. 85. For the Pompeian paintings, see Phillips, "Perseus and Andromeda," figs. 3, 4, 6, 7. Most of the Early Christian Jonah cycles illustrate the ketos in its standard form; one of the most striking examples is the well-known Jonah sarcophagus in the Vatican (Deichmann, Repertorium, I, pp. 30ff., no. 35, pl. 11). For later Byzantine art, see the manuscripts cited above, and other examples noted by Narkiss, "Sign of Jonah," p. 73, n. 29. The astrological manuscripts will be discussed below.


101. The references cited in note 100 include numerous examples of the use of the senmurv motif in Sasanian and post-Sasanian art.
Schmidt ("The Sênmurw," pp. 38f.) also lists a number of examples of its appearance in Islamic and Byzantine art, with bibliography. For its penetration into Byzantine and Western art, see also A. Grabar, "Le rayonnement de l'art sassanide dans le monde chrétien," La Persia nel Medioevo (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Problemi Attuali di Scienza e di Cultura, 160), Rome, 1971, pp. 679ff.

The sêmurry was not a common motif in Georgian or Armenian art. The only example of its appearance that predates Aght'amar is a relief plaque on the church of Sion at Ateni in Georgia, from the first half of the seventh century (Aladashvili, Skulptura gruzii, fig. 46). Within Armenia proper, the only example known to me is a painting in the Church of Saint Gregory of Tigran Honents at Ani, dated to 1215, where the pattern of confronted sêmurvs in interconnected medallions was clearly taken from a textile (Der Nersessian, L'art arménien, fig. 122). For other examples in Georgian art, see Schmidt, p. 40.


103. M. Gomez-Moreno, El arte árabe español hasta los Almohades; Arte mozárabe (Ars Hispaniae, III), Madrid, 1951, p. 181 and figs. 245 top right.

104. Sasanian Silver: Late Antique and Early Mediaeval Arts of Luxury from Iran, catalogue of an exhibition at the University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, 1967, no. 75 (cited hereafter as Sasanian Silver). S. Eyice ("Ein Sennurvenrelief auf einem Turm der Stadtmauern von Istanbul," Tortulae: Studien zu altchristlichen und byzantinischen Monumenten [Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte, 30. Suppl.], Rome, 1966, pp. 114ff.) noted that the sennur motif has a variation with a serpent-like curved tail and compared the Aght'amar creature to the hybrid animals on the eighth-century sarcophagus of Theodota in the Museo Civico, Pavia; the monsters on the Talisman Gate in Baghdad, built in 1221; and a thirteenth-century relief in the Panagia Parigoritissa in Arta. The hybrid in the Arta relief is similar to the creature at Aght'amar, but the figures on the sarcophagus have the forequarters of lions and derive from classical forms, while the horned creatures of the Talisman Gate would more properly be called dragons.

Another group of hybrids based on the sennur and combined with the twisted tail of a sea serpent appears in Campanian sculpture of the tenth to thirteenth centuries; see W. F. Volbach, "Oriental Influences in the Animal Sculpture of Campania," ArtB, 24, 1942, pp. 178f. and
fig. 20, with further references; and D. Glass, "Jonah in Campania: A Late Antique Revival," Commentari, 27, 1976, pp. 179ff.


106. Compare, for example, the representations of the constellation Cetus in the Carolingian Aratea manuscript in Leiden (Univ. Lib., cod. Voss. lat. quart. 79, fol. 66v) of the second quarter of the ninth century (G. Thiele, Antike Himmelsbilder, Berlin, 1898, fig. 49) and in the Greek manuscript in the Vatican (cod. gr. 1087, fol. 306v).


109. E. Attil, Art of the Arab World, Washington, D.C., 1975, pp. 115 and 120, no. 59. The page with the illustration of the constellation Cetus is in the Freer Gallery, no. 54.46r. For other examples of this constellation in Qazwini manuscripts, see E. Baer, Sphinxes and Harpies in Medieval Islamic Art (Oriental Notes and Studies, 9), Jerusalem, 1965, pp. 78f. and fig. 49.


111. V. L. Parsegian, Armenian Architecture, I, Zug, 1982, fiche 105. I have not yet been able to locate a reproduction of this capital.

112. For examples, see G. Hovsep'ian, "Funerary Stelae and their Significance for the History of Armenian Art," Materials and Studies for the History of Armenian Art and Culture (in Armenian), III, New York, 1944, figs. 56, 97.

113. The manuscripts are: the Etchmiadzin Gospel in Erevan (Matenadaran, ms. 2374, fol. 8); a Gospel in the Armenian Patriarchate, Jerusalem (ms. 2555, fol. 8v); and a Gospel in the Mekhitarian Library in Vienna (ms. 697, fol. 6v). For illustrations and a discussion of the iconography of the Sacrifice of Isaac in these miniatures, see S. Der Nersessian, "The Date of the Initial Miniatures of the Etchmiadzin Gospel," ArtB, 15, 1933, pp. 346ff. and figs. 26-28, republished in eadem, Études byzantines et arméniennes, Louvain, 1973, pp. 533-58.


116. Ibid., pp. 52f.


120. Volbach, Elfenbeinarbeiten, p. 117, no. 190. For a recent discussion of the iconography of this pyxis, see A. St. Clair, "The Basilewsky Pyxis: Typology and Topography in the Exodus Tradition," CahArch, 32, 1984, pp. 15ff.

121. Omont, Miniatures grecs, pl. XXIV.


123. For an example, see the two-zone frieze sarcophagus in the Museo Pio Cristiano (Deichmann, Repertorium, pp. 35f., no. 40, pl. 13).


125. Der Nersessian, Études, II, fig. 375.

126. For examples, see H. Danthine, Le palmier-dattier et les arbres sacrés dans l'iconographie de l'Asie occidentale ancienne, Paris, 1937, especially nos. 115, 309, and 361, in which the animals rearing up against the tree are confronted and regardant, as at Aght'amar.

127. See, for example, a fourth-century seal in the British Museum with a ram and a goat rearing up on either side of a tree (Bivar, Seals, no. 119840, p. 90, and pl. 17, ESI); a sixth- or seventh­century silver-gilt cup in the Hermitage (V. G. Lukonin, Persia II, Cleveland, 1967, fig. 213); and a series of stucco plaques with two ibexes flanking a vine (Kröger, Stuckdekor, pp. 57f., fig. 25, pl. 15, 1 and pp. 207f., pl. 99, 4).

129. Other animals such as lions do, however, appear in symmetrical groups flanking fire altars. For an example, see a post-Sasanian Persian silk in the treasury of the church of Notre Dame de la Couture at Le Mans (R. Ghirshman, Persian Art: The Parthian and Sasanian Dynasties, New York, 1962, p. 313 and fig. 419).


132. See Harper, Silver Vessels, pls. 8-10 and 13-32.

133. Dated or datable Byzantine textiles that depict animals with their leg joints emphasized by sharply defined circular forms include a mid-eighth-century silk from St. Calmin in Mozac (W. F. Voitbach, Early Decorative Textiles, London, 1966, pl. 55; for the date, R. de Micheaux, "Le tissu dit de Mozac," BullLiaisonCIETA, 17, 1963, pp. 14ff.;) the shroud of St. Victor in the Cathedral Treasury of Sens, before 769 (C. G. E. Bunt, Byzantine Fabrics, Leigh-on-Sea, 1967, fig. 13); the Siegburg lion silk, made in Constantinople between 921 and 923 (A. Grabar, "Le succès des arts orientaux," pp. 33 and fig. 1); another Constantinopolitan lion silk of 976-1025, in St. Heribert, Cologne-Deutz (ibid., pp. 33f.; for an illustration, R. Jaques and E. Flemming, Encyclopediia of Textiles, New York, 1958, pl. 28); and the elephant silk of ca. 1000 in Aachen (A. Grabar, "Le succès des arts orientaux," pp. 34f. and fig. 3). For other examples, see E. Kitzinger, "The Horse and Lion Tapestry at Dumbarton Oaks," DOP, 3, 1946, p. 40 and figs. 1, 30, 40; and Bunt, Byzantine Fabrics, figs. 14, 17, 25, 28, 30, 46, 48-50, 55, and 56.


Schematized circles at knees and ankles also occur on a drawing of a horse in a tenth-century Arabic papyrus (I. W. Arnold and A. Grohmann, The Islamic Book, London, 1929, p. 6 and fig. 4), and in the illustration of the constellation Equus in the Oxford al-Sufi manuscript
of 1009-10 (Bodleian Library, ms. Marsh 144) (Wellesz, "An Early al-Sûfî Manuscript," p. 17 and fig. 29).

134. Weitzmann, Sacra Parallela, pp. 136f.

135. The early fifth-century apse mosaic in the church of S. Pudenziana in Rome is the first preserved example of the use of the jeweled throne as a seat for Christ (Ihm, Apsismalerei, p. 132; see also A. Grabar, L'empereur, pp. 196ff.).

136. For a partial list of Middle Byzantine images of the enthroned Christ, see K. Wessel, "Christusbild," RBK, 1, 1966, cols. 1024ff.; and for scenes of Christ enthroned between angels, ibid., cols. 1000ff., and Ihm, Apsismalerei, p. 28.

137. N. Thierry, "La peinture médiévale arménienne," CorsiRav, 1973, pp. 398f.; N. and M. Thierry, "La cathédrale de Mrên," pp. 76f. and fig. 8; and Der Nersessian, L'art arménien, p. 71 and fig. 46 for a color illustration of the apse of the church of Saint Stephen at Lmbat.


140. For the date of this manuscript and a complete bibliography, see D. Kouymjian, Index of Armenian Art, Part I, Manuscript Illuminations, Fasc. I (Draft), Illuminated Armenian Manuscripts to the Year 1000 A.D., Fresno, Calif., 1977, pp. 3f.; and for a color illustration of the Ascension miniature, Der Nersessian, L'art arménien, fig. 57.

141. For the Missorium of Theodosius, see K. Weitzmann (ed.), Age of Spirituality, New York, 1979, pp. 74ff., no. 64; and for the Cyprus plate, ibid., pp. 477ff., no. 427 (III).

142. See, for example, the throne of Christ on an ivory pyxis of ca. 400 in Berlin (Volbach, Elfenbeinarbeiten, p. 104, no. 161, pl. 82) and similar examples on several sixth-century ivory plaques (ibid., p. 90, nos. 132-33, pl. 69, and pp. 91f., no. 137, pl. 71). Later and more elaborate thrones of this type appear in the miniatures of the ninth-century Paris manuscript of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus (B.N., ms. gr. 510, fol. 239 and 355; see Omont, Miniatures grecs, pls. XLI and L). For further examples and discussion of the canopied throne, see E. B. Smith, Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages, Princeton, 1956, pp. 107ff., and H. P. L'Orange, Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World (Instituttet for Sammenlignende Kulturforskning, Serie A, vol. 23), Oslo, 1953, pp. 134ff.

144. For other representations of Nahum, see Weitzmann, Sacra Parallela, pp. 139ff.


146. For the Panagia Kanakaria, see Ihm, Apsismalerei, pp. 188ff., no. XLII, and Megaw and Hawkins, Church of the Panagia Kanakaria, pp. 37ff., figs. 39-40; and for the Church of the Theotokos, Ihm, Apsismalerei, p. 187, no. XLI, pl. XVII, 2. Ivories with this motif include the five-part diptychs in Erevan (Voibach, Elfenbeinarbeiten, pp. 94ff., no. 142, pl. 75) and Paris (ibid., p. 97, no. 145, pl. 77), and the Berlin diptych with Christ and the Virgin (ibid., pp. 91ff., no. 137, pl. 71). Examples in metal include a silver flask in Monza (A. Grabar, Ampoules de Terre Sainte (Monza-Bobbio), Paris, 1958, p. 21, pl. X, 1) and a gold encolpion at Dumbarton Oaks (M. C. Ross, "A Byzantine Gold Medallion at Dumbarton Oaks," DOCP, 11, 1957, pp. 247ff., figs. 1-2).

147. See, for example, the frescoes in Chapel XXVIII at Bawit (J. Clédat, Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouit [MémInstCaire, XII, 2], Cairo, 1906, pp. 154f. and pl. XCVI b) and those in Chapel A of the monastery at Saqqara (J. E. Quibell, Excavations at Saqqara (1906-1907), Cairo, 1908, pp. 54, 81 and pls. XLI-XLIII). In other frescoes at Saqqara, the Theotokos flanked by archangels forms part of a larger composition that includes the figures of local saints, as in Chapel F (ibid., pp. 67f. and pl. LV) and Cells 1719 (idem, Excavations at Saqqara (1908-9, 1909-10): The Monastery of Apa Jeremias, Cairo, 1912, p. 134 and pl. XXIII below), 1725 (ibid., p. 23 and pl. XXII), and 1727 (ibid., p. 22 and pl. XXIV). For the iconography of these frescoes, see A. Grabar, Martyrium: Recherches sur le culte des reliques et l 'art chrétien antique, Paris, 1946, II, pp. 207ff. The theme also appears in Coptic sculpture (Beckwith, Coptic Sculpture, p. 26 and fig. 113) and textiles (Shepherd, "Icon of the Virgin," pp. 90ff. and color ill. on back cover).
148. The best preserved example is the base of a stele from T'alın (B. N. Arakelian, Haykakan Patkerak'andaknere IV-VII Darerum, Erevan, 1949, fig. 23). Another base with the same composition was found by the Thierrys, built into the south wall of the fortified city of Ketchror (N. and M. Thierry, "A propos de quelques monuments chrétiens du vilayet de Kars (Turquie), II," REArm, n.s. 8, 1971, p. 198 and fig. 18).

149. Images of the Virgin and Child flanked by angels were painted in the apses of the chapel at El Nazar (G. de Jerphanion, Une nouvelle province de l'art byzantin: Les églises rupestres de Cappadoce, Paris, 1925, I, 1, pp. 178f. and Album I, pl. 40, 1) and of Chapel 6 at Göreme (ibid., I, 1, p. 96); in the apse of the north nave of the Chapel of Niketas the Stylist at Ortahisar (G. P. Schiemenz, "Die Kapelle des Styliten Niketas in den Weinbergen von Ortahisar," JOB, 18, 1969, p. 251 and fig. 7); on the triumphal arch of the Chapel of Joachim and Anna at Kızılı Çukur (N. and M. Thierry, "Iconographie inédite en Cappadoce: Le cycle de la conception et de l'enfance de la Vierge à Kızılı-Tchoukour," Akten des XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten Kongresses, München 1958, Munich, 1960, p. 632 and pl. LXXXIV, 1); and in the vault of Eğri Taş kilisesi (ibid., Nouvelles églises rupestres, pp. 46f., fig. 10, pls. 27-28). For additional examples, see J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, "L'église rupestre dite Eski Baca kilisesi et la place de la Vierge dans les absides cappadociennes," JOB, 21, 1972, pp. 163ff.

150. Ihm, Apsismalerei, p. 188.


152. Chapel XXVIII at Bawit and Chapel F and Cells 1719 and 1727 at Saqqara (see above, n. 147).

153. See above, n. 146; and see also an ivory diptych with Christ and the Virgin in Saulieu (Volbach, Elfenbeinarbeiten, pp. 101f., no. 156, pl. 80).

154. For the stelae, see above, n. 148. Other Armenian examples of the late sixth or early seventh century include a Virgin and Child in a medallion on a capital from Dvin (Der Nersessian, L'art arménien, p. 52 and fig. 33) and a relief plaque with the Virgin and Child set into the north interior wall of the church at Odzoun (ibid., p. 51 and fig. 31, and C. Kane, "The Enthroned Virgin and Child in the Ojun Church," Classical Armenian Culture, Proceedings of the First Dr. H. Markarian Conference on Armenian Culture [University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies, 4], n.p., 1982, pp. 159ff.).
155. Another exception is the fresco in Chapel A at Saqqara (see above, n. 147), where Gabriel is also placed to the left of the Virgin's throne. In compositions with Christ enthroned and flanked by archangels, Michael also nearly always stands to the left of the throne, but in the Chapel of St. Eustathios at Göreme this position is occupied by Gabriel (Restle, Byzantine Wall Painting, II, fig. 146).

156. Another exception occurs in a fresco at Eğri Taş kilisesi, where the archangels flanking the Virgin and Child each hold what appears to be a square of cloth embroidered with a cross (N. and M. Thierry, Nouvelles églises rupestres, p. 46, fig. 10, pls. 27-28).

157. See the discussion of cat. no. A11, pp. 46ff.

158. For the coins, see D. Sellwood, An Introduction to the Coinage of Parthia, London, 1971, types 77/9 and 84/102. Eagles were embroidered on the garments of Parthian kings, and an eagle with a ring in its beak decorated a fragment of a bust found at Bard-i Nishandeh (R. Ghirshman, Terrasses sacrées de Bard-è Néchandeh et Masjid-i Solaiman [Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique en Iran, XLV], Paris, 1976, I, pp. 35ff., and II, pl. XXX, 2). The same motif appears beside a royal figure in a rock relief of ca. 50 B.C.-A.D. 50 at Hung-i Nauruzi in western Iran (Colledge, Parthian Art, p. 92 and pl. 17).

159. See the discussion of this motif by G. Azarpay, "Some Iranian Iconographic Formulae in Sogdian Painting," IrAn, 11, 1975, pp. 168ff. Other types of birds (cocks and ducks) carrying jewels in their beaks are found on silver vessels and on textiles (Orbeli and Trever, Orfèvrerie sasanide, pl. 28; Sasanian Silver, nos. 17 and 35; and A. C. Weibel, Two Thousand Years of Textiles, New York, 1952, p. 93, no. 58 [cited hereafter as Weibel, Textiles]), but the jewels in these examples are necklaces with pendants rather than simple rings.

160. For a Byzantine silk fragment of the eighth or ninth century with profile eagles or falcons holding rings, see Weibel, Textiles, p. 95, no. 62; and for a later (eleventh century?) silk of Syrian or Egyptian workmanship with a similar motif, R. Koechlin and G. Migeon, Islamische Kunstwerke, Berlin, 1928, pl. LVIII a. On the well-known eagle silks produced by the imperial Byzantine workshops in the tenth century, the eagles are shown frontally with wings displayed but with profile heads, again holding rings in their beaks (Volbach, Early Decorative Textiles, p. 134 and pls. 63-64).

161. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 33; and eadem, L'art arménien, p. 109 and fig. 74. As Der Nersessian noted, this silk may have been an import rather than a product of Armenian manufacture, but it demonstrates again the presence of such fabrics in the Armenian milieu.


164. _Ibid._, pp. 102f. and pl. 52.


168. Göbl, _Sasanidische Numismatik_, p. 44 and pl. 5, no. 71.

169. Harper, _Silver Vessels_, p. 108 and fig. 35.


171. _Ibid._, pp. 97ff., no. 35; see fig. 35 a for line drawings of the vegetal details.


173. Griffins appear among the animals carved on the stone band that decorated the facade of the mid-eighth-century palace at Mshatta in Jordan (Creswell, _Early Muslim Architecture_, I, pp. 599ff. and pls. 123, 125, 128); in the mid-ninth-century paintings of the Jausaq Palace at Samarra in Iraq (E. Herzfeld, _Die Malereien von Samarra [Die Ausgrabungen von Samarra, III]_, Berlin, 1927, figs. 22, 76); and on the marble panels carved in the early eleventh century to decorate the palace at Ghazni in Afghanistan (A. Bombaci, "Introduction to the Excavations at Ghazni," _East and West_, n.s. 10, 1959, fig. 12). For examples of griffins on Islamic textiles, see an eighth- or ninth-century Syrian silk in the Pierpont Morgan Library (Weibel, _Textiles_, no. 67) and a Buyid Persian silk of the first half of the eleventh century in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (ibid., no. 104); and for the Spanish ivory caskets, all from the early eleventh century, E. Köhnel, _Die islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen: VIII.-XIII. Jahrhundert_, Berlin, 1971, pp. 41ff., no. 35, pl. XXV, 35 f; pp. 44f., no. 37, pl. XXVIII, 37 e; and pp. 46f., no. 40, pls. XXXII, 40 a and XXXIII, 40 b.

174. For griffins and their symbolism in Byzantine art, see Z. Kádár, "Fabelwesen," _RBK_, 2, 1971, cols. 517ff. They are particularly common on textiles (Bunt, _Byzantine Fabrics_, figs. 14, 20, 24, 32, 46, 49, 50, 54, and 56); and for examples on Byzantine church furnishings.
of the tenth and eleventh centuries in Turkey, Greece, and Bulgaria, see A. Grabar, *Sculptures byzantines de Constantinople (IVe-Xe siècle)*, Paris, 1963, pls. XLV, 2-3 and LXIV, 4; and idem, *Sculptures byzantines du Moyen Age II (Xle-XIVe siècle)* (Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques, XII), Paris, 1976, no. 11, pl. VI b; no. 44, pls. XXIV a-b and XXVI b; no. 62, pl. XL a; no. 68, pl. XL b; and no. 70, pl. XLIV d.

175. An apotropaic significance would apply particularly to the animals carved on the exteriors of buildings (see below). A. Grabar has discussed this function in several of his books and articles; see *Sculptures byzantines*, p. 124, and *Sculptures byzantines II*, pp. 59, 120.

176. Griffins appear in the friezes of both the west and east apses at Martvili (Baltrušaitis, *Études*, pl. LVIII, 90, and Aladashvili, *Skulptura gruzii*, fig. 51), and among the figures flanking the south portal at Hahoul (ibid., figs. 118, 120). At Nikortsminda, they are carved on the frame of a window on the west facade, on the drum of the dome, and in the vault of the portico (eadem, *Rel'efy Nikortsminda*, Tiflis, 1957, pis. 17, 2; 21, 2; and 29, 1); and at Samtavisi, on the east facade (eadem, *Skulptura gruzii*, figs. 196, 225).

177. Good examples with these details include an eighth-century Byzantine silk found in a tomb near Hassaut in the Northern Caucasus (Ieroussalimskaja, "Trois soieries," pp. 13f., 19ff.); the tenth-century (?) Shroud of St. Siviard in the Cathedral Treasury at Sens (Talbot Rice, *Art of Byzantium*, p. 320 and pl. 131); and an eleventh- or twelfth-century silk in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Bunt, *Byzantine Fabrics*, fig. 49).


180. See, for example, the illustration in the Greek astronomy manuscript in the Vatican, cod. gr. 1087 (W. H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, Leipzig, 1924-1937, VI, cols. 869ff., fig. 1).

181. Wellesz, "An Early al-Sūf Manuscript," p. 5. As al-Sufi's book was written only ca. A.D. 960, his work could not have been known to the sculptors at Aght'amar, but his use of paired images for each constellation may reflect earlier traditions.

182. Wellesz (ibid.) published only one figure for most of the constellations in the Bodleian manuscript, but see her figs. 25
(Corvus), 27 (Canis major), and 28 (Lepus) for illustrations of the symmetrically paired images.


186. Ghirshman, Persian Art, pp. 162ff. and figs. 208-209.


189. Harper, Royal Hunter, p. 123 and fig. N.

190. See Herzfeld, Malereien, pp. 74f. and pls. XXXIX, bottom row, second from left; XL, 1 and 4; and XLII, 5.

191. For an example, see J. Ebersolt, Les arts somptuaires de Byzance, Paris, 1923, fig. 24; and on the date of this manuscript, A. Cutler, "The Psalter of Basil II," ArtVen, 30, 1976, pp. 14ff.

193. A late Sasanian origin for these belts was suggested by Gropp ("Gürtel mit Riemenzungen," pp. 279ff.), but this theory has not been widely accepted.


199. Herzfeld, Malereien, pls. LXXV, LXXVI, and LXXIX. D. S. Rice ("Deacon or Drink: Some Paintings from Samarra Re-examined," Arabica, 5, 1958, pp. 15ff.) demonstrated that the Bildsäulen, cylindrical pottery objects with a painted decoration on one side, were used as containers for wine.

200. This fragment, from the collection of the Textile Museum of the District of Columbia, was first published in Pagan and Christian Egypt: Egyptian Art from the First to the Tenth Century A.D., catalogue of an exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, 1941, p. 86, no. 271, where it was dated to the eighth or ninth century. It was attributed to the pre-Fatimid period and dated to the ninth or early tenth century by R. Ettinghausen, "Painting in the Fatimid Period: A Reconstruction," AI, 9, 1942, p. 121 and fig. 25.

201. For the belts at Lashkari Bazar, see D. Schlumberger, "Le palais ghaznévide de Lashkari Bazar," Syria, 29, 1952, pp. 262ff. and pls. XXXI, 2-3, and XXXII, 1; republished in idem, Lashkari Bazar: Une résidence royale ghaznévide et ghoride, IA: L'architecture (MDAFA, 18), Paris, 1978, pp. 61ff. For the reliefs from Ghazni, see Bombaci, "Introduction to the Excavations," p. 13 and figs. 1, 2, 6.

202. The similarity between the pendants at Taq-i Bostan and those at Aght'amar was noted by Gropp, "Gürtel mit Riemenzungen," p. 280. For a summary and discussion of the significance of the number of pendants on the belts at Taq-i Bostan, see ibid., pp. 278f.

203. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 32.

204. N. and M. Thierry, Nouvelles églises rupestres, p. 139, n. 2, and pl. 65 a.
205. This textile has been frequently reproduced; see, for example, Weibel, Textiles, p. 95, no. 61. For a study of the textile, with bibliography and a list of the known examples, see Ieroussalimskaia, "Trois soieries," pp. 12f., 19ff.

206. See above, n. 36.

207. Weibel, Textiles, p. 95.

208. I. A. Orbeli, "Pamiatniki armianskogo zodchestva na ostrove Akhtamar," Izbrannye trudy, I, Moscow, 1968, p. 114 (cited hereafter as Orbeli, "Akhtamar"). A list of examples of these hybrid creatures on Sasanian seals was compiled by J. Lerner, "A Note on Sasanian Harpies," Iran, 13, 1975, p. 170, nos. 8-14, and pl. II, 6-7. See also R. Göbl, Der sasanidische Siegelkanon (Handbücher der mittelasiatischen Numismatik, IV), Brunswick, 1973, pl. 27, 74 b-c and 75 a-b.


210. See above, pp. 29f. and p. 120, n. 49.

211. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 33.

212. See above, pp. 53f.

213. Der Nersessian (Aght'amar, p. 33) compared a lion on a Buyid silk in the Treasury of St. Servatius in Maastricht (see above, p. 128, n. 133); see also a cock on a silk textile in the Vatican (Ghirshman, Persian Art, fig. 280).


215. For examples, see Bivar, Seals, nos. HI 2, 8-12, pls. 23-24. C. Brunner (Sasanian Stamp Seals, p. 106) suggested that the seals with a bird of prey attacking another animal or bird were probably regarded as scenes from nature or as combats between "royal" animals of different families.

216. Harper, Royal Hunter, pp. 64ff., no. 22. Another example of a raptor striking a smaller bird appears on a Sasanian silver cup that has also been interpreted as illustrating scenes of a "paradise" (Orbeli and Trever, Orfèvrerie sasanide, pls. 37-38). K. Lindner denied that the motif on this cup had any recognizable connections with falconry, or that there were any depictions of that sport from the Sasanian period (Beiträge zu Vogelfang und Falknerei im Altertum [Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Jagd, XII], Berlin, 1973, pp. 150ff. and n. 10),
but the new evidence brought to light by the publication of the Tehran vase necessitates a re-evaluation of some of the previously known material.


220. For the well-known Buyid medallion in the Freer Gallery, see Bahrami, "Gold Medal," pp. 5ff., especially 7 and 16f., and fig. 1 b; and for falconers on Buyid silks, Ghirshman, *Persian Art*, pp. 236ff. and fig. 288, and Lemberg, "Soieries bouyides," p. 54, no. 1143.


    Ivories: The motif appears on several early eleventh-century Córdoban ivories, including the Pamplona Casket (Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, pp. 41ff., no. 35, pl. XXII) and a pyxis in the collection of the Marquis de Ganay (ibid., p. 45, no. 38, pl. XXXI, 38 b). It was even more common on the painted ivory caskets produced in Sicily in the twelfth century (P. B. Cott, *Siculo-Arabic Ivories*, Princeton, 1939; see p. 13 for a list of examples).

    Woodcarving: An eleventh-century wooden frieze believed to have decorated a Fatimid palace in Cairo (E. Pauty, *Les bois sculptés jusqu'à l'époque avyoubide [Catalogue général du Musée Arabe]*, Cairo, 1931).

222. O. Grabar, *Formation*, p. 163.
223. On the Pamplona casket and the Fatimid wooden frieze in Cairo, for example, the motifs include dancers, musicians, banquet scenes, and hunters and falconers, as well as many other animals.

224. See E. J. Grube, Islamic Pottery of the Eighth to the Fifteenth Century in the Keir Collection, London, 1976, pp. 142f. On some later objects produced for members of the affluent middle classes rather than the court, the traditional motifs from the princely cycle continued to be used, but acquired a more general meaning as illustrations of abstract themes such as wealth and pleasure (see O. Grabar, "Les arts mineurs de l'Orient musulman à partir du milieu du XIIe siècle," Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale, 11, 1968, p. 187). For an excellent discussion of the meaning of the falcon-duck motif in these contexts, see Baer, "Islamic Inkwell," pp. 207ff.

225. Möller, Falknereilitteratur, p. 144. The use of these bells was discussed in a treatise on falconry preserved, with several others, in a sixteenth-century copy in Istanbul (Fatih 3566). The text is thought to be the work of al-Mahdi ibn Asram, who was falcon-master at the court at Baghdad in the mid-ninth century (ibid., pp. 47ff., especially pp. 53-58).

226. There are several twelfth-century examples that are similar to Aght'amar and its Islamic parallels; see especially a chancel plaque in the Thebes Museum (Grabar, Sculptures byzantines II, p. 70, no. 67, pl. LXXXVI d) and a capital from Petrovitza, now in the Ioannina Museum (ibid., pl. LXXXVIII d). For a discussion of the Islamic influences on these motifs, see G. C. Miles, "Byzantium and the Arabs: Relations in Crete and the Aegean Area," DOP, 18, 1964, pp. 1ff., especially pp. 28ff.

A falcon striking a duck appears on one panel of the sixth-century mosaic pavement in the Villa of the Falconer at Argos, but in this case it is simply part of a secular hunting scene (G. Åkerström-Hougen, The Calendar and Hunting Mosaics of the Villa of the Falconer in Argos, Stockholm, 1974, fig. 12, 2 and pl. 5, 1; and see pp. 91ff. for a discussion of falconry in late antiquity). The theme of the royal falconer became current in Byzantium only much later, in the tenth or eleventh century, under the impact of a wave of Islamic influence on the Byzantine court (A. Grabar, "Le succès des arts orientaux," pp. 48f.).

227. The references to falcons and falconry in Armenian literature were collected and discussed by J. A. C. Greppin, "Classical and Middle Armenian Terms for 'Falcon' and 'Hawk,'" REArm, n.s. 12, 1977, pp. 5ff.

228. For a partial list of examples, see L. Der Manuelian, "The Monastery of Geghard: A Study of Armenian Architectural Sculpture in the 13th Century," Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1980, pp. 233, 237f. These motifs are quite varied; the reliefs tend to be very stylized, while the examples in manuscripts are more realistic. The falcons attacking ducks on the opening page of the Gospel of Mark in a Cilician
Gospel of 1253 in the Freer Gallery (ms. 44.17, fol. 93) are particularly interesting, as the group on the right is very similar to the relief at Aght'ambar and the falcon has a bell attached to its leg (S. Der Nersessian, Armenian Manuscripts in the Freer Gallery of Art [Freer Gallery of Art Oriental Studies, 5], Washington, D.C., 1963, pl. 25, fig. 48).


231. For the Early Christian examples, see Weitzmann, Age of Spirituality, pp. 384ff., no. 352, with further bibliography. For the Coptic frescoes in Chapel III at Bawit, J. Clédat, Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouit (MsnInstCaire, XII, 1), Cairo, 1904, pp. 13ff. and pls. XVIII-XIX; and for a limestone relief found near Bawit and thought to have decorated the South Church there, H. Torp, "Two Sixth-Century Coptic Stone Reliefs with Old Testament Scenes," Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia, 2, 1965, pp. 117ff. and pl. V. For the Cyprus plates, see Weitzmann, Age of Spirituality, pp. 475ff., nos. 425-33 (with the earlier bibliography).

232. For the Cyprus plate with the combat of David and Goliath, ibid., pp. 481ff., no. 431; and for discussion of this detail, Weitzmann, Sacra Parallela, pp. 78f.

233. Cutler, "Psalter of Basil II," pp. 9f. and p. 18, n. 19; and for the date of the manuscript, idem, "A Psalter of Basil II (Part II)," ArtVen, 31, 1977, pp. 9ff.


239. In the Theodore Psalter (fol. 190v), Saul is shown seated among his warriors on the page facing the miniature of David decapitating the fallen Goliath (Der Nersessian, *L'Illustration des Psautiers grecs*, pp. 100f. and fig. 198, with discussion and further examples), and in a miniature of the Hamilton Psalter (Berlin, Staatl. Museen, Kupferstichkabinett, cod. 78 A 9, fol. 42r), attributed to a Constantinopolitan workshop of the late thirteenth century, Saul appears enthroned to the right of the battle scene itself (H. Buchthal, "Toward a History of Palaeologan Illumination," in K. Weitzmann, W. C. Loerke, E. Kitzinger, and H. Buchthal, *The Place of Book Illumination in Byzantine Art*, Princeton, 1975, pp. 151f. and fig. 11).


245. Ibid., p. 477, no. 426; p. 481ff., no. 431; and p. 483, no. 433. Orbeli ("Akhtamar," p. 97 and n. 35) suggested that the rosettes symbolize heavenly bodies, indicating the length of the duration of the battle between the Israelites and the Philistines, and compared the astral symbols in a segment of sky above a besieged citadel depicted on a ninth- or tenth-century silver plate in the Hermitage (Orbeli and Trever, Orfèvrerie sasanide, pi. 20; and see also R. N. Frye, "Sasanian Silver and History," *Iran and Islam: In Memory of the Late Vladimir Minorsky*, Edinburgh, 1971, p. 260).


251. See the discussion by K. Weitzmann, Monastery of Saint Catherine: The Icons, I, pp. 32ff., no. B.11.

252. The Three Hebrew Children and Daniel, represented on the west end of the north facade (cat. nos. A65 and A66), wear a slightly different type of anaxyrides in which the trouser legs are extended over the heel and cover part of the foot.


254. Compare, for example, the bishops in the north tympanum of St. Sophia at Istanbul, of the last two decades of the ninth century (Mango and Hawkins, "Mosaics," pp. 1ff. and figs. 12, 17, 28), or those represented in the Paris manuscript of the Homilies of St. Gregory of Nazianzus of 879-82 (B.N., ms. gr. 510, fol. 72) (Omont, Miniatures grecs, pl. XXVII).


257. For other examples, see S. Der Nersessian, "Les portraits de Grégoire l'Illuminateur dans l'art byzantin," Byzantion, 36, 1967, pp. 386-95; cited hereafter as republished in eadem, Etudes, pp. 55ff.; see p. 60, n. 27.

258. Ibid., pp. 55ff.

259. For plant designs as a decorative motif on animal bodies, see above, pp. 53f., cat. no. A19; and for the disks on the paws, pp. 46f., cat. no. A11.

260. See below, cat. no. C45.

262. The suggestion that this figure represents Thaddaeus was made by E. Lalayan ("The Famous Monasteries of Vaspurakan: The Monastery of the Holy Cross at Aght'amar" [in Armenian], Azagragakan Handes, 20, 1910, p. 206) and has been followed by most later scholars.

263. For a discussion of the legends placing Thaddaeus in Armenia, and further bibliography, see M. van Esbroeck, "Le roi Sanatrouk et l'apôtre Thadée," REArm, n.s. 9, 1972, pp. 266ff.

264. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 21. The chronicler was attempting to glorify the Artsrunid house by stressing its princes' very early associations with Christianity. A similar claim for the Bagratid rulers of Armenia was made by the historian Moses Khorenats'i, according to whom Tobias, a Bagratid prince, was converted in Edessa by Thaddaeus and was the first Armenian Christian (Moses Khorenats'i, History of the Armenians, II 33; see the translation and commentary by R. W. Thomson [Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies, 4], Cambridge, Mass., 1978, pp. 39f., 170).


266. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 21.


269. For a study of this monastery and the circumstances of its foundation and dedication to Saint James, see J.-M. Thierry, "Monastères arméniens du Vaspurakan, II," REArm, n.s. 5, 1968, pp. 65ff.

270. See above, pp. 46f., cat. no. All.


273. Ibid., p. 21; and see also Le synaxaire arménien de Ter Israël, I: Mois de Navasard, ed. with French trans. by G. Bayan (Patrologia Orientalis, V, fasc. 3), Paris, 1910, pp. 420ff.

275. For a general discussion of representations of Elijah in Byzantine art, see K. Wessel, "Elias," RBK, 2, 1971, cols. 90ff., and L. Réau, "L'iconographie du prophète Élie," Élie le prophète (Les Études Carmélitaines, 35), Louvain, 1956, I, pp. 233ff.; for Dura-Europos, C. H. Kraeling, The Synagogue (The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Final Report, 8, pt. 1), New Haven, 1956, pp. 133ff.; and for the Sacra Parallela, Weitzmann, Sacra Parallela, pp. 89ff. There is an abbreviated Elijah cycle on the vault of the passage connecting the north and south chapels of Ayvalik kilise in Cappadocia, which dates from 913-920 and is thus exactly contemporary to Aght'amar, but only the Test of Sacrifice on Mount Carmel and the prophet's Ascension are represented there (N. and M. Thierry, "Ayvalik kilise ou pigeonnier de Gülî Dere: Eglise inédite de Cappadoce," CahArch, 15, 1965, pp. 121ff. and figs. 15-17). Even the Vatican Book of Kings includes only one scene, that of Elijah Nourished by the Ravens, in addition to his Ascension (Lassus, L'Illustration byzantine du Livre des Rois, pp. 81ff. and figs. 103-104).


277. Weitzmann, Sacra Parallela, p. 92 and fig. 174.

278. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 16.

279. Weitzmann, Sacra Parallela, p. 89 and fig. 158; Kraeling, Synagogue, pp. 135ff. and pl. XXXI.


281. Omont, Miniatures grecs, pl. XLIX.

282. Weitzmann, Sacra Parallela, p. 68 and fig. 96.

283. See ibid., pp. 137f. for representations of Obadiah in early mosaics and manuscripts.

284. Otto-Dorn, "Figurenreliefs," pp. 29ff., 48; and for the Capella Palatina painting, Monneret de Villard, Pitture musulmane, fig. 142.


287. Ibid., pp. 115ff.

289. Ibid., especially pp. 264f.

290. For the mosaic at Beisan, see M. Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements at el Hammâm, Beisân," QDAP, 5, 1936, p. 16 and pl. XIV. C. Dauphin counted twenty depictions of cocks in her study of 116 fourth- through seventh-century mosaic pavements from Constantinople, Cilicia, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine ("Byzantine Pattern Books: A Re-examination of the Problem in the Light of the 'Inhabited Scroll,'" Art History, 1, 1978, pp. 400ff.). Cocks were equally common on the mosaic pavements of churches in other areas of the Mediterranean; for examples, see E. Alfoldi-Rosenbaum and J. Ward-Perkins, Justinianic Mosaic Pavements in Cyrenaican Churches, Rome, 1980, pp. 89f., 114 and pls. 63, 1-2; 79, 1; and 82, 5; and M. Spiro, Critical Corpus of the Mosaic Pavements on the Greek Mainland, Fourth/Sixth Centuries, New York, 1978, no. 83, pp. 239ff., fig. 279; no. 153, pp. 441ff., fig. 475; no. 155, pp. 454ff., fig. 521; and no. 218, pp. 619ff., fig. 686.

291. Kouymjian, Illuminated Armenian Manuscripts to the Year 1000 A.D., p. 18 and fig. 105.


294. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 25.


297. Aladashvili, Skulptura gruzii, fig. 52.

298. M. S. Ipgiroğlu (Die Kirche von Achtamar, Berlin, 1963, caption to fig. 55) did identify this figure as Samson, but offered no explanation of the discrepancy with the inscription.

300. See above, p. 140, n. 230.


306. For a recent discussion of this silk, see the entry by J. Lafontaine-Dosogne in *Splendeur de Byzance*, catalogue of an exhibition at the Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels, 1982, p. 213, no. Tx. 7, with the earlier bibliography.


308. Baer, *Sphinxes and Harpies*, p. 46. Baer cited no specific examples, but good comparisons are provided by many of the *senmurvs* depicted on Sasanian textiles and metalwork, as these creatures also have raised wings and stylized peacocks' tails; see, for example, a silver ewer in the Hermitage (Orbeli and Trever, *Orfèvrerie sasanide*, pl. 48).


310. Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks," fig. 12 g.


312. Baer, *Sphinxes and Harpies*, fig. 15.


314. Baer, *Sphinxes and Harpies*, pp. 51ff. In this context, it is interesting to note that the royal robes worn by Prince Leo and
Princess Keran in their portrait in a Cilician Gospel of 1262 (Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, ms. 2660, fol. 288) are decorated with human-headed birds (see Sakisian, "Tissus royaux," p. 295; and for an illustration, Der Nersessian, The Armenians, pl. 74).


316. For the Samarra paintings, see Herzfeld, Malereien, pls. XII-XIV; and for the interpretation of the eagles and hares there as a royal symbol, Esin, "Turk al-‘ağam," p. 83, and Grube, Islamic Pottery, p. 122. For the Nishapur fresco, see above, p. 136, n. 198.

317. Examples of this motif on ceramics include a tenth- or eleventh-century bowl from North Africa (Grube, Islamic Pottery, p. 122, no. 77) and a twelfth-century Syrian luster-painted bowl (ibid., pp. 152f., no. 99), as well as tiles that decorated the walls of a banquet hall in the Kubadabad palace, built in the second quarter of the thirteenth century on the shore of Lake Beyşehir in south central Anatolia (K. Otto-Dorn, "Bericht über die Grabung in Kobadabad 1966," AA, 1969, pp. 458ff.). For metalwork, see the roundels decorating an inlaid brass vase of ca. 1200, attributed to Persia and now in the British Museum (D. Barrett, Islamic Metalwork in the British Museum, London, 1949, pl. 8). Spanish and Egyptian ivories with this motif include a Córdoban casket of 970 in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Kühnel, Elfenbeinskulpturen, pp. 39f., no. 32, pl. XIX, 32 b); the Pamplona casket of 1005 (ibid., pp. 41ff., no. 35, pl. XXX, 35 b) and several eleventh- and twelfth-century Fatimid plaques used as inlays on furniture (ibid., pp. 73f., no. 103, pl. CI; p. 77, no. 123, pl. CII). Other inlays with the eagle-hare motif were carved from wood (Pauty, Bois sculptés, pl. XXX). For textiles, see E. Baer, "The Suaire de St. Lazare," *OrArt*, 13, 1967, pp. 36ff., especially p. 47. In Sicily, the motif appeared on painted ivory caskets (see Cott, Siculo-Arabic Ivories, p. 13) and in the paintings on the stalactite ceiling of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo (Monneret de Villard, *Pitture musulmane*, fig. 161).

318. On objects such as the Persian brass vase and the Córdoban and Sicilian ivory caskets, where it occurs as part of a larger program, the eagle and hare motif accompanies images of mounted falconers, as well as other figures from the princely cycle, such as banqueters and musicians.

319. Hunting scenes with eagles and hares occur in various contexts and over a period of many centuries, from fifth-century Tunisian mosaic pavements (Lindner, *Vogelfang und Falknerei*, figs. 57 and 63) to the decoration of a canon table in an eleventh-century Byzantine Gospel (Paris, B.N., ms. gr. 64, fol. 5v [ibid., fig. 45]).


322. A. Grabar, Sculptures byzantines II, p. 66, no. 55, pl. XXXV b; p. 67, no. 56, pl. XXXV a; p. 69, no. 62, pl. XXXIX a; p. 99, no. 81, pl. LXVIII a; and p. 109, no. 96, pl. LXXXIII a.


324. For examples of this motif in later Armenian sculpture and suggestions on its significance, see Der Manuelian, "Geghard," pp. 239ff.

325. More of the lower part of the group appears in the earlier photographs published by J. Strzygowski (Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa, Vienna, 1918, I, fig. 317) and by Orbeli ("Akhtamar," pl. XXVII).

326. See, for example, the frequently cited cylinder seal with serpent-necked lions from Tell Billa (H. Frankfort, The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient, Harmondsworth, 1970, fig. 28).


328. The birds are found on a twelfth- or thirteenth-century stucco panel from Rayy, now in the Seattle Art Museum (SPA, V, pl. 515), and on ceramic tiles that formed part of the wall decoration of the thirteenth-century Kubadabad palace in Anatolia (G. Úney, "Die Karreefliesen im grossen Palast von Kobadabad," AA, 1969, pp. 497f. and pl. I a).


332. For examples, see the headpiece of the Gospel of Luke in a Gospel of 1193 in the Mekhitarian Library, San Lazzaro, Venice (Ms. 1635, fol. 151) (Der Nersessian, Manuscrits arméniens illustrés, I, p. 70, and II, fig. 47); the Letter of Eusebius in a Gospel of 1253 in the Freer Gallery (Ms. 44.17, fol. 2v) (eadem, Armenian Manuscripts in the Freer Gallery, p. 21 and fig. 33); and the Letter of Eusebius in a contemporary Cilician Gospel in the Chester Beatty Library (No. 558, fol. 3v) (eadem, The Chester Beatty Library: A Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts, Dublin, 1958, pl. 8).

333. For discussion of the artistic and literary evidence for this symbolism and further bibliography, see Brunner, Sasanian Stamp Seals, pp. 91ff., and R. Ettinghausen, From Byzantium to Sasanian Iran and the Islamic World, Leiden, 1972, pp. 42ff.

334. A number of seals show pairs of confronted kneeling rams, but with only the one on the right regardant (see Brunner, Sasanian Stamp Seals, p. 93, no. 82, with a list of additional examples). For other Sasanian seals with rams in various poses, ibid., pp. 92ff., and Bivar, Seals, EP 1-6 and EQ 1-8, pl. 16; and ER 1-7 and ES 1-5, pl. 17. Rams with ribbons or scarves indicating royal status also appear on Sasanian stucco plaques (Kröger, Stuckdekor, pp. 138ff., fig. 76, and pl. 58, 1); on a silver dish, now in the Detroit Institute of Arts (Sasanian Silver, pp. 124ff., no. 41); and on textiles, such as a seventh-century silk found at Antinoë in Egypt but probably produced in Iran or Transoxiana (Ghirshman, Persian Art, fig. 277). In addition, rams were represented as the prey on several Sasanian silver plates with scenes of the royal hunt (Harper, Silver Vessels, ps. 17, 19, 27, 28).

335. For the Iranian examples, see Thompson, Stucco, pp. 23, 34ff. and pls. III, 8 and V, 6; for Khirbat al Mafjar, Hamilton, Khirbat al Mafjar, pp. 102, 240f. and pl. XLII, 2 and 7, and Ettinghausen, From Byzantium to Sasanian Iran, p. 43.

336. For an illustration, see Lemberg, "Soieries bouyides," p. 46, no. 188, and for the date, Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks," p. 15.

337. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 18.

338. Omont, Miniatures grecs, pl. LVII.

339. Ibid., pl. XIV.

341. Ibid., p. 150.


343. Der Nersessian (*Aght'amar*, p. 24) believed that the sculptor had created an original composition, like the later artist who carved the recumbent figure of Eve on the lintel from Saint-Lazare at Autun. In regard to the latter, O. K. Werckmeister ("The Lintel Fragment Representing Eve from Saint-Lazare, Autun," JWCI, 35, 1972, pp. 23ff.) has suggested that Eve's pose symbolizes sin and conflict, as the upright stance was related to man's ability to recognize God and denoted his fundamental difference from the animals. Similar interpretations could also be supported from earlier Eastern sources. It is perhaps more likely, however, that the artist at Aght'amar simply changed Eve's pose so that she would still be face to face with the serpent, which had to be shown standing on the ground to emphasize that it possessed legs.

344. K. Weitzmann ("Die Illustration der Septuaginta," *MünchJb*, 3/4, 1952-1953, pp. 96-120, cited as translated and republished in *idem*, *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination*, Chicago, 1971, p. 74) described the creature in the Istanbul Octateuch as a snake on the back of a camel, and suggested a derivation from Haggadic literature. The rabbinic sources were also discussed by H. A. Kelly, "The Metamorphoses of the Eden Serpent during the Middle Ages and Renaissance," *Viator*, 2, 1971, pp. 301ff. Other scholars, however, have pointed out that Christian commentaries and other texts could also have provided the basis for this image; see G. Kretschmar, "Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach dem Verhältnis zwischen jüdischer und christlicher Kunst in der Antike," *Abraham unser Vater: Festschrift für Otto Michel zum 60. Geburtstag*, Leiden, 1963, p. 301, n. 2; and P. Huber, *Bild und Botschaft: Byzantinische Miniaturen zum Alten und Neuen Testament*, Zürich, 1973, pp. 38ff. A great deal of light was recently shed on this problem by F. de' Maffei ("Eva e il serpente," *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici*, n.s. 17-19, 1980-1982, pp. 13ff.), who clarified a misconception about the Octateuch serpents, demonstrating that many sources described the serpent as being similar to a camel, and that the illustrations show only the serpent itself in its original form, and not a snake on the back of a camel. Maffei collected and analyzed the preserved texts, both Hebrew and Christian, and offered convincing arguments for the derivation of this imagery from Christian sources.

346. Ibid., pp. 30, 33. The identification of the Tree of Knowledge as a fig tree was, however, quite common in Greek and Eastern texts; see O. Goetz, Der Feigenbaum, Berlin, 1965, pp. 25ff.

347. D. Talbot Rice, The Church of Hagia Sophia at Trebizond, Edinburgh, 1968, pp. 47ff. and pls. 16-18. M. Alpatov ("Les reliefs de la Sainte-Sophie de Trébizonde," Byzantion, 4, 1927-1928, pp. 413f.) conjectured that the right-to-left arrangement at Trebizond might have been influenced by a miniature cycle in a Syriac Bible.

348. See Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, pp. 37 and 41ff., and figs. 57-58, and H. Vahramian and S. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar (DAA, 8), Milan, 1974, figs. 55, 56, 58. For recent studies of this cycle, see T. F. Mathews, "The Genesis Frescoes of Aht'amar," REARm, n.s. 16, 1982, pp. 245ff., and N. Thierry, "Le cycle de la création et de la faute d'Adam à Aht'amar," REARm, n.s. 17, 1983, pp. 289ff.


350. Der Nersessian (Aght'amar, pp. 42f.) found the closest parallels to this cycle in the eleventh-century mosaics of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo and the Cathedral of Monreale; see also E. Kitzinger, The Mosaics of Monreale, Palermo, 1960, p. 60. N. Thierry ("Cycle de la création," pp. 289ff.) pointed out analogies between this cycle and those preserved in the Cotton Genesis, the Paris Gregory, and the Carolingian Bibles, while Mathews ("Genesis Frescoes," pp. 245ff.) emphasized the specifically East Christian and Armenian features of the iconography.


353. Aladashvili, Skulptura gruzii, fig. 56.

354. Weitzmann, Monastery of Saint Catherine: The Icons, I, pp. 71ff. and pls. XXIX, XCVII.

355. Aladashvili, Rel'efy Nikortsminda, pls. 5-7, 18-19. For these images and other examples, see also B. E. Scholz, "Die paarweise-symmetrische Darstellung des Hl. Georg und des Hl. Theodor Strateiates


357. See Weitzmann, Monastery of Saint Catherine: The Icons, I, p. 72; Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 24 and p. 57, n. 49; and Mepisashvili and Tsintsadze, Arts of Ancient Georgia, p. 227. For the icons, see G. N. Tschubinaschwili, Georgian Repoussé Work: VIIIth to XVIIIth Centuries, Tiflis, 1957, pls. 92-98.

358. Ibid., pl. 93.

359. See Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 24, and Le synaxaire arménien de Ter Israël, VI: Mois de Aratz, ed. with French trans. by G. Bayan (Patrologia Orientalis, XIX, fasc. 1), Paris, 1925, pp. 120ff. For additional bibliography on Saint Sargis, see Bibliotheca hagio-graphica orientalis, pp. 231f., nos. 1056-58.

360. For a list of examples, see Der Nersessian, Armenian Manuscripts in the Walters Art Gallery, p. 81.

361. Ibid.

362. C. Bonner, Studies in Magical Amulets: Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian, Ann Arbor, 1950, pp. 302ff., nos. 298-300, 314, 318, and 324, pls. XIV-XVII.


364. Volbach, Elfenbeinarbeiten, p. 61, no. 77, pl. 44.

365. W. Hartner, "The Pseudoplanetary Nodes of the Moon's Orbit in Hindu and Islamic Iconographies," AI, 5, 1938, especially pp. 134ff. The knotted serpent is not the only example of this type of astrological imagery at Aght'amar; see also the discussion of the sphinx depicted in the vine frieze (cat. no. C34).


367. See above, pp. 46f., cat. no. A11.
368. Compare the horses' tails in the relief of Hormizd II at Naqsh-i-Rustam (Ghirshman, Persian Art, fig. 220) or on several of the Sasanian silver plates with hunting scenes (Harper, Silver Vessels, pls. 14, 15, 37).


370. Compare the rider on a fragmentary seventh-century altar screen from Tsebelda, now in the Georgian State Museum of Art (Aladashvili, Skulptura gruzii, fig. 61); the equestrian saints in the tympanum over the west door of the church at Vale, of the last quarter of the tenth century (ibid., fig. 94); and the equestrian saints at Nikortsminda (see above, pp. 151f., n. 355).


372. For the casket, see Kühnel, Elfenbeinskulpturen, pp. 39f., no. 32, pl. XIX; and for the Beatus miniature, J. Williams, Early Spanish Manuscript Illumination, New York, 1977, pl. 30. The influence of Sasanian art on this miniature was discussed in detail by A. Grabar, "Éléments sassanides et islamiques dans les enluminures des manuscrits espagnols du Haut Moyen Age," Atti del II Convegno per lo studio dell'arte dell'Alto Medio Evo tenuto presso l'Università di Pavia nel Settembre, 1950, cited as republished in idem, L'art de la fin de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Age, II, p. 665.

373. Shepherd and Henning, "Zandan-TjT Identified?," pp. 15ff. In a later article ("Zandan-TjT Revisited," pp. 108, 116ff.), Shepherd reaffirmed her original attribution and dating of these silks to the seventh century, and added further examples; for a complete list of the textiles now assigned to this group, see the table, ibid., p. 119. K. Riboud and G. Vial ("Quelques considérations techniques concernant quatre soieries connues," Documenta Textilia: Festschrift für Sigrid Müller-Christensen, München, 1981, pp. 129ff.) have suggested later dates in the eighth and ninth centuries for some of the textiles in this group.

374. Shepherd and Henning, "Zandan-TjT Identified?," p. 32.

375. For an example, see Volbach, Early Decorative Textiles, pp. 140f., no. 67.


377. For examples in Roman funerary art, see F. Cumont, Recherches sur le symbolisme funéraire des Romains, Paris, 1942, pp. 436ff. For mosaics, examples with figures particularly close to those at Aght'amar include the second-century peristyle mosaic from Castel

378. See, for example, the Diptych of Areobindus, made in Constantinople in 506 (Volbach, Elfenbeinarbeiten, pp. 32f., no. 8, pl. 4); the fifth- or sixth-century Lion hunt diptych in the Hermitage in Leningrad (ibid., pp. 53f., no. 60, pl. 32); and a pyxis in the Cathedral Treasury at Sens (ibid., p. 74, no. 102, pl. 55).

379. Compare the lion hunts on the fifth-century Megalopsychia and Worcester Hunts from Antioch (Lavin, "Hunting Mosaics," figs. 2, 6-7); the figures in the lower section of the sixth-century Orpheus mosaic from Jerusalem, now in the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul (P. B. Bagatti, "Il mosaico dell'Orfeo a Gerusalemme," RACr, 28, 1952, figs. 5-6); and those in the top row of a mosaic pavement unearthed in 1976 at Râs Siyâgha (Mount Nebo, Memorial of Moses), dated by inscription to A.D. 531 (M. Piccirillo, "New Discoveries on Mt. Nebo," Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, 21, 1976, pp. 58f. and pls. XIV, XVI).


382. E. Kitzinger, "Studies on Late Antique and Early Byzantine Floor Mosaics, I: Mosaics at Nikopolis," DOP, 6, 1951, pp. 117f.

383. Der Nersessian, L'art arménien, pp. 60ff. and fig. 37.


387. Volbach, Elfenbeinarbeiten, pp. 93f., no. 140, pls. 72-74; and for good illustrations of the bears, see idem, Early Christian Art, New York, n.d., pls. 232-33.

389. At Khirbat al Mafjar, the grape-eating bear is found in the stucco decoration of both the palace entrance hall and the diwan or audience hall attached to the bath (Hamilton, Khirbat al Mafjar, pp. 169ff., and pls. XXXVII, 10; XXXVIII, 2; and XLIX, 7).


391. For examples on seals, see Brunner, Sasanian Stamp Seals, pp. 98ff., and Bivar, Seals, nos. DJ 1-6, pl. 11; and for a silver plate with this theme, see Orbeli and Trever, Orfèvrerie sasanide, pl. 30, and Ettinghausen, From Byzantium to Sasanian Iran, p. 44.

392. Hamilton, Khirbat al Mafjar, pp. 337ff. and pl. LXXXIX; and see the discussions by Ettinghausen, "Conquering Lion," p. 167, and From Byzantium to Sasanian Iran, pp. 44f.

393. Kühnel, Elfenbeinskulpturen, pp. 38ff., no. 31, pl. XVIII, 31d.


396. For an illustration, see Öney, "Bull Reliefs," fig. 17.

397. Baltrušaitis, Études, pl. LXIII, 98.

398. In a discussion of the Hahoul portal, A. Grabar ("Deux portails sculptés paléochrétiens d’Égypte et d’Asie Mineure, et les portails romans," CahArch, 20, 1970, p. 28) suggested that both the Exaltation of the Cross carved in the tympanum and the animals and other figures at the sides of the door had a magical force to protect the purity of the church and insure the salvation of those who entered.


400. Cutler, "Psalter of Basil II," fig. 2.

402. For the iconography of this scene, see K. Wessel, "Jünglinge im Feuerofen," RBK, 3, 1978, cols. 668ff. One of the earliest preserved representations of this subject, on a fourth-century glass patera in the Hermitage in Leningrad, is also very abbreviated and shows only the three youths as orants, dressed in short tunics and trousers (Bank, Byzantine Art, p. 276 and figs. 26, 28).

403. See, for example, the base of a stele from Agarak (Arakelian, Haykakan Patkerak'andknere, fig. 20), or the east face of the south column of the double stele at Odzoun (Der Nersessian, L'art arménien, fig. 40).

404. N. and M. Thierry, Nouvelles églises rupestres, p. 117 and pl. 59 b.

405. Ibid., pp. 177f. and pl. 79 b.

406. An article on Daniel in the Lions' Den in early medieval Armenian sculpture by S. Mnac'akanyan ("Rel'ne izobrazheniiia i simbolika Daniila v memorial'noi plastike Armenii rannego srednevekov'ia," Vestnik obshchestvennyh nauk, 6, 1977, pp. 48-64) was not available to me.

407. For an illustration, see M. Thierry, "Monastères arméniens du Vaspurakan, V," REArm, n.s. 8, 1971, fig. 14. Thierry compared the relief to a similar scene on a plaque found embedded in the base of the south wall of a church at Angegha vank' (ibid., p. 226 and fig. 13).

408. For the stele from Haridj, see Der Nersessian, L'art arménien, fig. 42; and for the one from Agarak, Arakelian, Haykakan Patkerak'andknere, fig. 20. The Ketchror stele was found by N. and M. Thierry, re-used in the wall of a house in the Kurdish village that now occupies the site ("Monuments chrétiens du vilayet de Kars, II," p. 197 and fig. 14).

409. Der Manuelian, "Armenian Sculptural Images," p. 182; and for a good illustration, see N. Stepanian and A. Tchakmaktchian, L'art décoratif de l'Arménie médiévale, Leningrad, 1971, fig. 22.


411. Aladashvili, Skulptura gruzii, fig. 58.

412. N. and M. Thierry, Nouvelles églises rupestres, pl. 65 b. On the question of the attribution of these churches to Armenian colonists, see above, p. 119, n. 40.
413. Tunisian works with this composition, most of which appear to date from the fifth century, include lamps (W. Deonna, "Daniel, le 'Maître des fauves': À propos d'une lampe chrétienne du Musée de Genève," ArtibAs, 12, 1949, pp. 119ff., figs. 1-3), terracotta revetment plaques (M. R. de la Blanchère and P. Gauckler, Catalogue du Musée Alaoui, Paris, 1897, p. 209, no. 9, pl. XXXVIII), and funerary mosaics (Dunbabin, Mosaics, fig. 191). For the European examples, which are particularly common on seventh-century bronze belt buckles, see E. Salin, "Sur quelques images tutélaires de la Gaule mérovingienne: Apports orientaux et survivances sumériennes," Syria, 23, 1942-1943, pp. 21ff. and pl. XI, 3-4; J. Baum, La sculpture figurale en Europe à l'époque mérovingienne, Paris, 1937, pp. 65ff. and pl. XXV, 76-77; and H. Kühn, "Die Danielschnallen der Völkerwanderungszeit," Ipek, 15-16, 1941-1942, pp. 140ff. and pls. 59-64.

414. Two seals with compositions of this type are preserved, one in the British Museum (Bivar, Seals, pp. 66ff., no. C88, pl. 8), and one in the Hermitage in Leningrad (A. I. Borisov and V. G. Lukonin, Sasanidskie gemmy, Leningrad, 1963, no. 189).

415. Bivar (Seals, p. 67) identified the figures on these seals as Daniel; but for another interpretation, see J. B. Segal ("A Syriac Seal Inscription," Iraq, 29, 1967, pp. 14ff. and n. 65), who suggested an identification with Leon-Atargatis-Hera, and who also pointed out the similarity between the compositions on these seals and the relief at Aght'amar.


417. Ibid., fig. 16.
CHAPTER III
ZONE B: ADAM NAMING THE ANIMALS

The second zone of sculpture, located two stone courses above the figures of the lower section, consists mainly of images of animals and birds. Some of the creatures are shown in profile, in somewhat higher relief than the scenes of the lower zone, while others are carved almost in the round, with only their backs or hindquarters attached to the surface of the wall. A number of animals are represented only by their heads, rendered as frontal, fully three-dimensional forms projecting from thick necks; three of these heads are accompanied by forelegs carved in much lower relief. Some of the relief figures are well preserved, but the others were more subject to the forces of the elements as well as to human vandalism; all are damaged and badly weathered, and some have been completely destroyed.

Most students of Aght'amar have mentioned these animals only in passing, and as a group. The Russian academician I. A. Orbeli was the only scholar to discuss them individually and in detail. Orbeli first examined the sculptures in 1912, and though much of the damage had already occurred by that time, several of the figures appear to have been in better condition than they are now. I have had to rely on Orbeli's identifications in several cases.
It has long been recognized that the key to the presence of these animals, and the focal point of this zone of sculpture, is the medallion portrait of Adam in the center of the east facade (cat. no. B20). The inscription to the left of the medallion, based on the text of Genesis 2:20, reads, "And Adam gave names to all the animals and wild beasts." The various animals and birds are thus the inhabitants of Eden, brought together to receive their names, and the entire zone of sculpture represents a single Old Testament subject.

The scene of Adam naming the animals was included in a number of Early Christian and Byzantine manuscripts, and is also found in ivories and mosaics. Among the earliest examples are the left wing of the Carrand Diptych of ca. 400 and a fifth-century mosaic pavement from a Syrian church at Huarte. In the manuscripts and related works of the Cotton Genesis recension, the scene is preserved in the atrium mosaics of San Marco in Venice, the Bamberg Bible (Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Bibl. I, fol. 7v), and the Millstatt Genesis (Klagenfurt, Mus. Cod. VI, 19, fol. 9r). Later Byzantine examples include the late tenth- or eleventh-century Bristol Psalter (London, B.M., Ms. Add. 40.731, fol. 16r), the Theodore Psalter of 1066 (London, B.M., Ms. Add. 19.352, fol. 6v), and the Octateuchs in Istanbul (Seraglio Library, cod. 8, fol. 42v), the Vatican (cod. gr. 747, fol. 31r), and Smyrna (Evangelical School, cod. A.1, fol. 12v) (destroyed). The crowd of birds and animals in the Smyrna Octateuch (fig. 131) includes many of the creatures represented in the Aght'amar reliefs: sheep, deer, horses, bulls, camels, lions and other felines, and a variety of birds, including a
peacock, eagles, and waterfowl, are found in both cycles. The miniatures of the Octateuch recension, however, also include fantastic animals such as unicorns and griffins, which do not appear at Aght'amar. Fish are not represented in the Octateuch miniatures, but are present in both the Bristol and Theodore Psalters (fig. 132), as well as in the Millstatt Genesis; and the scene in the Bristol Psalter also includes an ape.

Recent studies of the theme of Adam naming the animals have emphasized its significance as an illustration of man's superiority over other creatures by virtue of his ability to reason, and through that ability, to lead a pious life and be worthy of salvation. In addition, N. Thierry has suggested that this subject is particularly appropriate for the decoration of a palatine church, not only because it expresses the concept of sovereignty, but also because the animals could evoke the hunts and game parks of Eastern rulers. In this context, it is significant that the stone balustrade of Gagik's private gallery in the south exedra was decorated with the heads of two bulls, a ram, an ibex, a feline, and an elephant, which, like the animal heads in this zone of sculpture, were carved almost in the round (fig. 8).

The decoration of buildings with sculptures of animals and animal heads had a long history in the Near East. Frontal heads of ibexes and rams, carved from stucco in high relief, were found during the excavations of the Sasanian buildings at Damghan and Kish. The continuation of this practice in the Umayyad period is attested by the rows of couchant rams and ibexes that decorated the facade of the bath porch at Khirbat al Mafjar in the Jordan Valley and the entrance facade of Qasr
al-Hayr al-Gharbi in Syria. Of particular interest are the remains of stucco sculpture from the Main Palace at Chal Tarkhan-Eshqabad in Iran, which dates at least partly from the Islamic period. Among the finds were a number of animal heads in high relief, and the frontal body of a bird, carved almost in the round (fig. 133). Frontal birds are unusual in Sasanian and Islamic sculpture, and this example, which may date to as late as the early ninth century, shows similarities in its pose and decorative stylizations to several of the birds at Aght'amar (cf. cat. nos. B8 and B25). Many of the animals in this zone of sculpture have stylized leaves on their shoulders, and a number of the birds' wings are also adorned with vegetal motifs and divided by pearled bands. This type of ornamentation is rarely found on animals in Sasanian art, but it became common after the Arab conquest.

Catalogue

B1. Head of a Ram. West facade, center section. Fig. 134.

The lower part of the head, which is carved almost in the round, is damaged, but the slanted eyes with deeply cut pupils are well preserved. The large, backward-curving horns are those of a mountain sheep.

B2. Head of a Feline. West facade, center section. Fig. 134.

The head was carved almost in the round and is damaged and abraded. Round eyes, bared teeth, and the remains of small pointed ears can
still be distinguished. The animal has been identified as a lion or a leopard.18

B3. Bird. South facade. Fig. 135.

The bird is shown standing in profile, facing right. Its head and the upper part of its body have been broken off, making a more precise identification impossible. The tail and primary feathers are carved with simple patterns of chevrons and bars, and the thigh is decorated with a stylized leaf.

B4. Animal(?). South facade, west end. Fig. 135.

The animal, which apparently was carved practically in the round, is almost completely destroyed; only projecting fragments of rough stone remain.

B5. Feline(?). South facade, west end. Figs. 135-137.

Most of the animal, which was carved almost in the round, has been broken away. Only the hindquarters, the rear paws, and a long cylindrical tail, possibly that of a feline, remain.


The stag, shown in profile facing right in a running pose, is well preserved except for its right rear leg. Stylized antlers stream behind
its head in a long band, and its shoulder is decorated with a vegetal design.

B7. Ape. South facade, polygonal wall of the southwest niche. Fig. 137.

The ape is shown frontally, carved in very high relief with only its back attached to the surface of the wall. It is seated with its knees drawn up before its chest and clasped with its hands. (For the significance of the inclusion of apes in this zone of sculpture, see cat. no. B30 below.)

B8. Bird (Eagle?). South facade, polygonal wall of the southwest niche. Fig. 137.

The bird, carved almost in the round, is shown frontally with wings partly displayed. Its breast is decorated with a scale pattern, and the inner surfaces of the wings, which are divided by narrow bands, with a series of small chevrons. The lower part of the tail projects beneath the bird's feet.

B9. Lion(?). South facade, polygonal wall of the southwest niche. Figs. 137 and 138.

The animal's head has been broken off, but the form of the paws and the long cylindrical tail indicate that it may be a lion. It was carved in a seated position, almost in the round, with only its hindquarters attached to the surface of the wall. A stylized leaf decorates its shoulder.
B10. Peacock. South facade, between the southwest niche and the central exedra. Fig. 138.

The peacock is shown in profile facing right. Its tail and crest are realistic, though simplified. The tail is separated from the body by a short band with a guilloche pattern; the thigh is decorated with a floral design; and the wing, with its pearled band and stylized leaf, is identical to those of some of the birds depicted in the main zone of sculpture (see above, cat. no. A19).

B11. Head of a Man. South facade, east side wall of the central exedra. Fig. 139.

The features are pitted and damaged, but the head, carved almost in the round, is clearly that of a long-haired, bearded man. The inclusion of a single human figure among the birds and animals is puzzling. In most of the Early Christian and Byzantine examples of the scene of Adam naming the animals, Adam appears alone with his subjects. In the members of the Cotton Genesis recension he is accompanied by the figure of God; but it is hardly likely that the Creator would be represented in so undistinguished a manner. Another possibility is suggested by the miniature from the Theodore Psalter, in which Adam appears twice, once with the animals and birds of the land, and a second time standing at the edge of a pool as he names the waterfowl and fish (fig. 132). If the Aght'amar sculptor had used a model similar to the scene in this manuscript, this head might also be a second representation of Adam.
B12. Guineafowl. South facade, recessed wall between the south­east niche and the east end panel. Fig. 140.

The bird is shown standing in profile facing right, and is quite realistic, with the heavy body and short rounded wings characteristic of its species. The small evenly spaced holes represent the white spots that cover the plumage of these birds, and the featherless head with the triangular wattle beneath the eye is also accurately rendered.

B13. Head of a Feline. South facade, east end. Fig. 141.

The head was carved almost in the round and is very weathered, but round eyes and small pointed ears are still clearly distinguishable. It is similar to the head in the center of the west facade (cat. no. B2) and, like it, has been identified as either a lion or a leopard.20

B14. Animal(?). South facade, east end. Fig. 141.

The animal that was carved here has been completely destroyed; only a tiny fragment of a paw remains at the lower right.

B15. Head and Neck of a Camel(?). South facade, east end. Fig. 141.

All that remain of this creature are its thick curving neck and a tiny fragment of the head, but it is undoubtedly the same kind of animal as the better-preserved figure on the east facade, which probably represents a camel (cat. no. B18; see discussion below).
B16. Protome of a Hoofed Animal (Boar?). East facade, south section. Figs. 142 and 143.

The head of the animal was carved almost in the round, its forelegs in much lower relief. Part of the face has been broken off, making it difficult to identify, but the short bristly mane carved along the back of the neck may be that of a boar. The legs end in small hoofs.

B17. Protome of a Ram. East facade, south section. Figs. 142 and 143.

The head of the ram, carved almost in the round, has the same curved horns and slanted eyes as the animal on the west facade (cat. no. B1). The forelegs are carved in low relief and end in cleft hoofs.

B18. Head and Neck of a Camel(?). East facade, south section. Figs. 142 and 143.

The thick curving neck carries a long head that is only partially preserved, but the eyes and ears are still clearly distinguishable. Orbeli suggested that this creature and its counterpart on the south facade (cat. no. B15) might represent either camels, serpents, or dragons, probably the latter.21 This identification seems unlikely, however, as no other fantastic creatures are included among the sculptures of this zone; and although serpents appear in other scenes of the naming of the animals, they may be ruled out here because of the presence of the ears.22 The identification of these figures as camels is more plausible.23
B19. Head of an Ox(?). East facade, center section. Fig. 144.

The head was carved almost in the round and is very badly damaged, with most of the upper part broken away. The muzzle appears to be that of a bovid animal.²⁴

B20. Medallion Portrait of Adam. East facade, center section. Fig. 144.

Adam, represented as a long-haired, bearded prophet, dressed in a tunic and mantle, is identified by the inscription within the field of the double-bordered medallion (URUK). His right hand is raised with the forefinger extended in a gesture of speech.

B21. Head of a Lion. East facade, center section. Fig. 144.

The head was carved almost in the round, but although it is weathered, the pointed ears, round eyes, and sharp bared teeth are still clearly visible.

B22. Head of a Bear. East facade, north section. Fig. 145.

The head, carved almost in the round, is badly abraded and part of the muzzle has been broken away. The rounded, erect ears, round eyes, and bared teeth can still be distinguished, and support Orbeli's identification of the creature as a bear.²⁵
B23. Protome of a Leopard. East facade, north section. Fig. 145.

The animal's head was carved almost in the round, and like those of the other felines, has round eyes and bared teeth. Its forelegs are depicted in lower relief.

B24. Head of a Horse or Onager(?). East facade, north section. Fig. 145.

The head of this animal has been broken away and only its thick neck is preserved; but in some earlier photographs, such as those published by Bachmann in 1913, a long head, possibly that of a horse or an onager, is visible (fig. 143).^26

B25. Bird (Eagle?). North facade, east end. Fig. 146.

The bird, carved almost in the round, is shown frontally with closed wings. Its head and breast are carved with a scale pattern. Stylized leaves adorn the bases of the wings, while the primary feathers are indicated by a series of bars. The bird may be an eagle, but as most of the head has been broken off the form of the beak cannot be determined.


The animal's head was carved almost in the round and is very badly weathered. A short mane on the back of the neck indicates that it may have been a horse or an onager.
B27. Destroyed. North facade, polygonal wall of the northeast niche. Fig. 147.

Whatever was carved here has been almost completely destroyed; only a few projecting fragments of stone remain. Orbeli suggested that it might have been an animal, smaller than the others depicted in this zone, but he offered no explanation for the medallion frame, which remains a mystery.

B28. Ibex. North facade, east side wall of the central exedra. Fig. 148.

The ibex, shown standing in profile facing left, has long, corrugated horns that curve back along the entire length of its body. Its shoulder is decorated with a stylized leaf. The front part of the animal's face has been broken off, and its legs are badly damaged. It is similar to the ibex carved in the main zone of sculpture on the south facade (cat. no. A18).

B29. Lion(?). North facade, front wall of the central exedra. Fig. 149.

The animal was carved almost in the round in a seated position, with only its hindquarters attached to the surface of the wall. The head has been broken off, but the tail and paws indicate that it may be a lion. The shoulders are adorned with stylized leaves.

Fig. 149.

Because of the damage to the head and the oddly undefined bulk of the right side of this figure, it is difficult to recognize; but Orbeli convincingly demonstrated that it is an ape, seated in a pose similar to that of the ape on the south facade (cat. no. B7), but now shown in profile and carved in very high relief. Its back is bent, and it clasps its knees to its chest.

Apes were not included in the majority of Byzantine representations of the naming of the animals, but they are not unknown; in the miniature of this scene in the Bristol Psalter, an ape appears directly beneath the figure of Adam. As noted above, the theme of Adam naming the animals is generally interpreted as an illustration of man's superiority over the lower orders. The inclusion of an ape in this scene has a definite iconographic significance. In the words of H. W. Janson, "[The ape's] presence serves as a reminder that man is not entirely dissimilar to the animals after all. Counterbalancing the as yet proud and blameless Adam, he represents the sinful, bestial aspect which entered into human nature only after the Fall." In the light of this interpretation, it is significant that this ape appears on the central exedra of the north facade, directly above the scene of the Fall of Man (cat. no. A54).
B31. Fish. North facade, front wall of the central exedra. Fig. 150.

Three fish are shown in profile, the center one facing right and the other two left. They are somewhat simplified, but each has (or had) two dorsal fins and two pectoral fins. The bodies are carved with scale patterns. The head of the upper fish and the head and tail of the lower one have been broken away. Their inclusion in this zone is entirely appropriate; in the miniatures from the Bristol Psalter, the Theodore Psalter (fig. 132), and the Millstatt Genesis, Adam is shown naming the fish as well as the animals and birds.

B32. Head of a Stag. North facade, west side wall of the central exedra. Fig. 151.

The head was carved almost in the round, and its muzzle and part of its branching antlers have been broken away.

B33. Head of an Animal. North facade, west side wall of the central exedra. Fig. 152.

The head was carved almost in the round, but only a projecting slab of rough stone and two ears remain. Orbeli thought that it might have been a deer or a similar animal.

B34. Bird. North facade, recessed wall between the central exedra and the northwest niche. Fig. 152.

The bird is shown standing in profile facing left. Its head has been broken off, but its long neck and long thin legs indicate a type
of waterfowl. The wing, divided by a pearled band, has a spotted base and primary feathers represented as a series of bars. Orbeli reported traces of pink paint on the bird's body and red paint on its legs and tail.\textsuperscript{32}

B35. Head of a Bear(?). North facade, polygonal wall of the northwest niche. Fig. 153.

The head was carved in the round and projects from the surface of the wall on a thick neck. The lower part of the face is broken off, but the rounded, erect ears may be those of a bear.\textsuperscript{33}

B36. Destroyed. North facade, west end. Fig. 154.

Fragments of stone project from a small block, but the figure is almost entirely destroyed and there is no possibility of identification.

B37. Bird. North facade, west end. Fig. 154.

This figure was carved almost in the round and is very badly damaged, but the body and legs appear to be those of a bird represented in a frontal pose.

B38. Parrot. North facade, west end. Fig. 154.

The parrot, carved in high relief, is shown perched in profile facing left. The stout, hooked beak, the speckled feathers beneath the
eye, and the long tail feathers are all accurately rendered. The stylized wing has a pearled dividing band and a leaf design at the base.
Notes to Chapter III


3. Ibid., p. 16.


5. M.-T. and P. Canivet, "La mosaïque d'Adam dans l'église syrienne de Mügarte (Ve s.)," CahArch, 24, 1975, pp. 49ff.


9. For the Istanbul Octateuch, see T. Ouspensky, L'Octateuque de la bibliothèque du Séraîl à Constantinople (Bulletin de l'Institut archéologique russe à Constantinople, XII), Sofia, 1907, fig. 24; and for the manuscript formerly in Smyrna, D.-C. Hesseling, Miniatures de l'octateuque grec de Smyrne, Leiden, 1909, fig. 18). A scene of Adam naming the animals depicted on an eleventh- or twelfth-century ivory casket in Cologne is related to the version in the Octateuchs (A. Goldschmidt and K. Weitzmann, Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X.-XIII. Jahrhunderts, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1979, I, pp. 61ff., no. 118, pl. LXVIII a).


12. See above, p. 10.


14. R. W. Hamilton, Khirbat al Mafjar: An Arabian Mansion in the Jordan Valley, Oxford, 1959, pp. 102, 240 and pl. XLII, 7; and for the location of the animals on the facade, pl. CVII. Most of the figural stucco from Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi is still unpublished. Some of the animals have been placed above a cornice on the upper part of the facade reconstructed at the National Museum of Damascus; for an illustration showing their location, see J. Sourdel-Thomine and B. Spuler, Die Kunst des Islam (PropKg, 4), Berlin, 1973, pl. XI.

15. D. Thompson, Stucco from Chal Tarkhan-Eshgabad near Rayy, Warminster, 1976, pp. 32ff. and pls. V-VII.


17. See above, pp. 53f., cat. no. A19.


22. Serpents are included among the animals on the Carrand Diptych, the Huarte mosaic, and in the miniature of the Bamberg Bible.

23. Camels were included in many of the Byzantine depictions of Adam naming the animals, and are particularly prominent in the examples from the Cotton Genesis recension.

24. The identification of this head as that of an ox was made by N. Thierry ("Cycle de la Création," p. 301), who further suggested that this head and that of a lion (cat. no. B21) to the right of the bust of Adam might refer to Isaiah's vision of paradise.

26. W. Bachmann, Kirchen und Moscheen in Armenien und Kurdistan, Leipzig, 1913, pl. 34 above (our fig. 143).


28. Ibid., p. 197.

29. See above, p. 174, n. 7.


32. Ibid., p. 189.

33. Ibid., p. 190.
CHAPTER IV
ZONE C: THE INHABITED VINE FRIEZE

Above the zone of animals and animal protomes, a narrow band of sculpture in the form of an inhabited vine frieze encircles the church. With only a few exceptions, the frieze, which is carved in relatively high relief, occupies a single stone course. The thick leafy vine stocks, abundantly laden with clusters of grapes, frame a variety of human figures and animals.

The decorative device of a vegetal scroll populated with figures appears to have originated in the Hellenistic period, and by the Late Empire, it had spread throughout the Mediterranean world and the Near East. In the late third century the vine scroll acquired a new, specifically Christian significance, and from the fourth through the seventh centuries it was used to decorate sculpture, metalwork, ivories, and mosaics. The inhabited vine scroll was also a favorite design on Sasanian metalwork, and later, in the eighth and ninth centuries, it appeared in the painted and sculptural decorations of Umayyad and Abbasid palaces in Palestine and Iraq.

Toynbee and Ward-Perkins, in their extensive study of this motif, distinguished three basic types of floral scrolls: the free scroll, in which the stem winds across the ground in a free, curvilinear pattern; the single running scroll, with a single stem looped alternately to
fill a narrow strip of pattern; and the double scroll, in which two stems interlace to form circular or oval medallions. The Aght'amar frieze belongs to the second type, but differs from other examples in its extremely free treatment. While most vine scrolls spring from a vase or an acanthus cluster and continue across the surface in a regular, formal pattern, the Aght'amar scroll is broken into a number of separate sections, most of which originate from thick, woody vertical trunks with branches on either side forming medallions or simply carrying leaves and fruit (figs. 250 and 253). A continuous pattern is rarely maintained for more than a short distance, and in some sections of the frieze the vine is indicated only by isolated clusters of grapes arbitrarily placed around the figures (figs. 191 and 214), while in others it is omitted completely (figs. 184 and 192).

Although very few examples have been preserved, inhabited vine scrolls appear to have been widely used in Armenian architectural sculpture from an early date. The decoration of a carved stone plaque in the south arcosolium of a fourth-century mausoleum at Aghts includes a short segment of an interlaced vine scroll, the stems of which form two oval medallions occupied by a bird and a goat (fig. 155). A fragment of a sixth-century stone lintel from Dvin is carved with a dense pattern of grape vines and stylized leaves and includes two human figures among the foliage (fig. 156). The arrangement of the vines on this slab is very free, and some elements, such as the small, tightly twisted loops at the ends of the branches on the right, are similar to details at Aght'amar (compare figs. 164 and 213), but the lintel is too small and fragmentary to allow a more detailed comparison. Simple vine
scrolls without figures appear on the carved moldings above the doors and windows of a number of sixth- and seventh-century Armenian churches, but these designs are very formal and bear no relation to the inhabited vine frieze at Aght'amar.⁸

Sixth-century vine scrolls from other areas may also be compared to the Aght'amar frieze. The decorative scrolls in the horizontal bands of the ivory Cathedra of Maximianus, the provenance of which is still being debated, are arranged in a manner similar to that of some of the more unified segments of the Aght'amar frieze (compare fig. 121 to figs. 227 and 236).⁹ The vine scrolls that decorate a number of Palestinian mosaic pavements, such as those in the Monastery of Lady Mary (fig. 157) and the Funerary Chapel at Beisan (fig. 158), are also of interest, particularly as many of the figures that inhabit these rinceaux are of the same types as those in the Aght'amar frieze (see below).¹⁰ These scrolls are characterized by their strict regularity, but if such models were translated into sculpture and adapted to a long frieze rather than an over-all pattern, the result might be similar to some of the segments at Aght'amar in which a continuous scroll is maintained (compare figs. 157 and 158 to figs. 220 and 263).

Further points of comparison are found in Umayyad works of the second quarter of the eighth century. The vault of the palace entrance hall at Khirbat al Mafjar was decorated with inhabited vine scrolls carved in relief in stucco.¹¹ These vines have thick, heavy trunks and freely developed foliage, but the remains of the decoration are too fragmentary to allow the underlying pattern to be determined. Hamilton suggested that it may have been modeled on Syrian or Palestinian
paintings or mosaics, similar to the Beisan examples. That such designs were known to the artists employed by the Umayyad princes is attested by a painting of an inhabited vine scroll at Qusayr 'Amra (fig. 159). This fresco, located in the vault of a niche in the caldarium, clearly derives from sixth-century mosaic pavements.

Vine scrolls are also the dominant theme in the carved stone decoration of the south facade of the palace at Mshatta, and those on the left side of the entrance (triangles A-L) are inhabited by birds, animals, and occasional human figures. Some of the designs are conservative, with regular, schematized rinceaux springing from a central vase, but in others the thick vine branches rise directly from the base line of the relief, as at Aght'amar, and unfold in less rigid patterns (compare fig. 160 to fig. 220). Several other triangles are filled with vine "trees," in which the stems are interlaced to form complex designs. This motif, which appears to be a characteristically Umayyad invention, is also found on a series of small relief plaques of bone and wood (fig. 161), and in a section of foliage in the frieze on the south facade at Aght'amar (fig. 186).

The figures that inhabit the Aght'amar frieze are extremely varied. Hunters and vintagers play a prominent role, and these figures, together with those of a number of birds and animals, find their closest parallels among the occupants of the vine scrolls that decorate sixth- and early seventh-century mosaic pavements from Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine. A number of other figures appear to have been taken from a cycle of the labors of the months. Several symmetrical designs with birds and animals are derived from Sasanian art, and other motifs are clearly
Islamic in character. The use of such varied sources is not surprising in a milieu with strong cultural ties to both Byzantium and Islam. As Der Nersessian has pointed out, many of the themes at Aght'amar also appear in the inhabited vine scrolls at Khirbat al Mafjar, which, as one of the major monuments from the formative period of Islamic art, exhibits a similar blending of cultural traditions.17

Catalogue

C1. Goat and Kid. West facade. Fig. 162.

A goat, its head turned back and lowered so that it is framed by its body, crouches among the vines. Next to it a kid stands facing left among several clusters of grapes.

The position of the goat is quite unusual, but animals in similar poses are represented on late and post-Sasanian silver vessels (fig. 163).18 An identical animal appears between the figures of David and Goliath in the main zone of sculpture on the south facade (cat. no. A27).

C2. Bear with Cubs. West facade. Fig. 164.

A bear stands facing left, greedily devouring a bunch of grapes. She is accompanied by two cubs, one suckling, the other sprawled across her back.

The grape-eating bear, a common motif in the Aght'amar reliefs, appears in the lower zone of sculpture on the north facade as well as in
the vine frieze (see above, cat. no. A62, for further discussion). Families of bears were rarely depicted in either Byzantine or Islamic art, but the mosaic pavement of the Great Palace at Constantinople includes a scene with a bear climbing a tree and shaking down fruit for two cubs on the ground below (fig. 165). 

C3. Man Holding a Melon (Personification of August?). West facade. Fig. 164.

A man clad in a short tunic, his face badly abraded, holds a large melon with both hands. He is shown in three-quarter view turned toward the right, with his left leg resting along the curved frame of the window to help him support the heavy fruit.

Melons were included as one of the secondary attributes of the personification of the month of August in the Calendar of 354, and they continued to appear in later Byzantine cycles. They are held by the young men who represent August on the sixth-century mosaic pavements at Tegea and Argos in Greece, the mosaic from Qabr Hiram in Lebanon, and on the calendar page in the Ptolemy manuscript of 813-820 in the Vatican (cod. gr. 1291, fol. 9r (fig. 166)). Melons were used as symbols for August because they ripen in that month in all the countries of the Mediterranean, and because their cool flesh gives relief from the heat.
C4. Pomegranate Tree with Grape Vines and Birds. West facade. Fig. 167.

A pomegranate tree laden with fruit is flanked by thick vine stocks bearing clusters of grapes. Standing birds shown in profile mark the corners of the composition. The birds' wings and tails are carved with scale patterns and straight lines, but they lack the more decorative stylizations seen on many of the birds at Aght'amar. This segment of the vine frieze was raised one stone course above the rest because of the intrusion of the central window of the west facade into this zone.

The central tree, with its complicated pattern of intertwined branches, is similar to the vine trees found in Umayyad reliefs (see above, p. 180). The composition in a general way also recalls some of the repeat patterns used in Sasanian stuccoes, such as those on the plaques from a house near Ctesiphon (Ma'arid IV) in which two pairs of birds are placed among the branches of a palmette tree bearing pomegranates and flowers (fig. 168). The survival of such designs to a later period is attested by a fresco from the interior of an early Seljuq tomb at Kharraqan (Tower I, dated by inscription to A.D. 1067/68), in which four birds positioned very much like those in the Aght'amar relief flank a stylized pomegranate tree (fig. 169).

C5. Man Struggling with a Bear. West facade. Fig. 170.

A man, locked in combat with a bear that stands on its hind legs and seizes him around the waist, is pressed back so that the lower part
of his body follows the curve of the window. He grasps the bear's leg with his right hand, and his left hand rests on the animal's back.

Combats between men and bears recur frequently in the vine frieze, and may be considered one of the dominant motifs of this zone of sculpture (see below, cat. nos. C8, C11, C16, C32, C42, C58, and C72).^{27}

Indigenous to vast areas from Europe to Persia, bears were among the most ubiquitous beasts of prey in the ancient world.^{28} They were hunted in the West for sport and to protect the flocks, but also to provide animals to be used in public spectacles. The continued popularity of bear *venationes* in the early Byzantine period is demonstrated by the amphitheater scenes on a series of ivory diptychs carved in Constantinople in the early sixth century.^{29} These scenes had a long history in Byzantine art, and *venatores* fighting bears re-appear much later in the decoration of eleventh- and twelfth-century ivory caskets.^{30} Hunters and bears are also found among the vine scrolls that decorate a number of sixth-century mosaic pavements, and in works with related programs, such as the carved capitals of a series of chancel pillars from Izmit.^{31}

In the East, savage Persian bears provided sport for the Achaemenid kings, who hunted them in their game parks or in the open country, and this practice continued into the Sasanian period.^{32} Bears appear as the prey of royal hunters on several Sasanian and post-Sasanian silver plates; one of these, possibly dating to as late as the eighth century, was found at Nor Baiazet near Erevan, and may actually have been produced somewhere in the Transcaucasian region (fig. 41).^{33} A lion and a boar are also represented on this plate, and P. O. Harper has suggested that the animals may have referred to the king's dominion over different
territories: the lion would symbolize Iran itself; the boar, Khorasan; and the bear, Armenia and Georgia. In addition, several Sasanian vessels depict non-royal hunters fighting bears. In the present context, one of the most interesting of these is a fourth- or fifth-century silver jug on which a hunter is shown in combat with a bear standing on its hind legs (fig. 171).

Some students of Sasanian metalwork have argued that bears never appear as prey on works made in Sasanian Iran, and that all such vessels with bear hunts should be attributed to the Caucasus, where bears were the most typical objects of the hunt. Although this hypothesis can no longer be maintained, the fact remains that the animals were particularly prevalent in Georgia and Armenia. The absence of bear-hunting scenes from these regions is undoubtedly due to the almost total destruction of the secular art of the early medieval period. Bears do, however, figure among the animals represented in the sculptural decoration of several churches, as, for example, on a capital from the apse of the late-fifth-century Sion Church at Bolnisi (fig. 172), or in the frieze above the exterior arcade of the Church of Saint Gregory of Tigran Honents at Ani, built in 1215.

Scenes of hunters in combat with bears also occur in early Islamic art, in the vine scroll fresco at Qusayr 'Amra (fig. 159) and possibly also in the stucco vine scroll from Khirbat al Mafjar. The greatest number of Islamic examples, however, occurs on objects much later in date. Bear hunts were a popular motif on the inlaid bronzes produced in Iraq and Persia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and in spite of the enormous gap of time that separates them from Aght'amar,
the scenes on these objects provide some of the closest parallels to our reliefs.41

C6. Man Grasping Vine Branches (Personification of May?). West facade. Fig. 173.

A youthful, beardless man wearing a long robe is seated on the ground with one leg hooked over a vine stock. He grasps the branches of two vines that cross in front of his chest and frame his head.

This figure recalls personifications of the month of May found in cycles of the activities of the months in both Western and Byzantine manuscripts. In a late-tenth-century Sacramentary from the School of Fulda (Berlin, Staatsbibl., ms. theol. lat. fol. 192), May appears as a frontal seated figure framed by flowering branches in a manner very similar to our relief (fig. 174).42 May is also represented as a man wearing a long robe and holding two flowering branches in a Byzantine Gospel of ca. 1100, in which the months are presented as small atlantids standing on the columns in the canon tables (Venice, Marciana, cod. gr. 540) (fig. 175).43 This iconography may have had a much longer history in the East; a relief of a half-length figure holding a vine branch above his head, which A. Grabar has suggested may also personify the month of May, was found in the so-called House of Justinian in the Great Palace of Constantinople and has been dated to the sixth century.44
C7. Confronted Rams. West facade. Fig. 173.

Two rams are shown confronted, butting their heads against each other. The animals' lowered heads indicate a scene of combat rather than a simple heraldic pairing.

K. Otto-Dorn explained this scene as a motif from the princely cycle, illustrating the ram battles that were a popular form of entertainment at the Abbasid court. If this is the case, the subject does not appear to have been widely represented. The closest parallel known to me is a pair of similarly confronted animals, ibexes or goats rather than rams, on an ivory pyxis made in Córdoba in 968.

C8. Archer and Bear. West facade. Fig. 173.

An archer kneels on the ground, his bow raised and drawn as he prepares to loose an arrow. His quarry is a bear, shown standing on its hind legs and resting its front paws on a vine that separates the two figures. The bear's shoulder has already been pierced by an arrow.

In this scene, the second example of a combat between a hunter and a bear on the west facade (see above, cat. no. C5), the most unusual detail is the kneeling posture of the bowman. Kneeling archers were common motifs in ancient Near Eastern hunting scenes, particularly in the reliefs commemorating the exploits of the Assyrian kings; but while bowmen appear frequently in Sasanian, early Islamic, and early Byzantine art, they are nearly always represented as standing or mounted. K. Otto-Dorn noted, however, that kneeling archers do appear in
seventh- to ninth-century East Asian art, on works such as Siberian rock pictures and nomadic metalwork.\textsuperscript{47}

The example closest to Aght'amar both geographically and chronologically is a relief above a window of the southeast chapel of the church at OŞki in the Georgian province of Tao-Klarjeti (third quarter of the tenth century), where an archer in a pose very similar to that of the figure in our relief is shown aiming at a pair of ibexes flanking a stylized tree (fig. 176).\textsuperscript{48} It was only later, however, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, that kneeling bowmen were more frequently represented in both Byzantine and Islamic art, particularly on small luxury objects such as ivory caskets.\textsuperscript{49}

C9. Shepherd Carrying a Ram (Personification of April?). South facade. Fig. 177.

On the west end of the south facade, following a curving vine stock with clusters of grapes and a narrow slab of stone, is the figure of a shepherd. He is dressed in a short tunic and carries across his shoulders a ram, whose legs he clasps with both hands.

The motif of the ram-bearing shepherd had a long history in ancient art, where it appeared frequently in pastoral scenes. By the Late Antique period it had come to symbolize the concept of philanthropy, and was then adopted by the Christians as a symbol of Christ in the role of the Good Shepherd.\textsuperscript{50} After the fourth century this imagery was largely superseded by less ambiguous representations of Christ, but the shepherd continued to appear in other contexts, among them the cycles of the activities of the months.
Shepherds are found in most of the Late Antique and Byzantine cycles, personifying March in the Latin West and April in the Greek East. In some examples they hold goats or lambs clasped to their chests or extended before them like offerings, but shepherds carrying the animals across their shoulders appear as personifications of April on several sixth-century mosaic pavements, including those in a villa at Awza'i, a suburb of Beirut, and in the Funerary Chapel of el Hammam near Beisan. This iconography persisted in the later Byzantine cycles, as seen in the Marciana Gospel (fig. 175) and the manuscripts of the Octateuch (fig. 178), and was also adopted in the much later cycles of the months depicted on a series of bronze candlesticks that may have been produced in Anatolia.

Young men carrying goats or small game animals across their shoulders are also found in Islamic art in other contexts. The earliest preserved example, dating from the ninth century, is a painting on one of the "picture columns" (Bildsäulen) found at the Jausaq Palace in Samarra (fig. 64). This figure is generally agreed to represent a hunter carrying game, and, as such, a motif from the expanded cycle of the royal hunt that was being developed in Islamic art. Similar figures representing hunters appear in later Islamic art in Spain and Sicily as well as in the East.

In Islamic art, the shepherds personifying April and the hunters carrying game are virtually indistinguishable, but their meaning can usually be determined from the context in which they are found. The solution is less clearly defined in the vine frieze at Aght'amar, but the hunting scenes here are, for the most part, more closely allied to
the imagery preserved in earlier Palestinian mosaics than to that of the Islamic princely cycle; and in view of the presence of other figures of the months in the frieze, it is probable that the ram-bearing shepherd should be understood as a representation of April.

C10. Grape Vines and Birds. South facade. Fig. 179.

The stocks of the vine form a figure-eight loop from which three sets of branches project. The upper and lower branches carry bunches of grapes, while those in the center end in circular medallions enclosing small duck-like birds shown in profile. A profile eagle with wings displayed is enclosed in the upper loop of the vine.

This attractive symmetrical design was inspired by Sasanian compositions, and probably transmitted through motifs on luxury textiles. A number of Sasanian silver vases are decorated with stylized trees, some of which have branches that form circular medallions enclosing birds. Ducks in medallions very similar to those in our relief are seen on the garments worn by attendants in the boar-hunt reliefs at Taq-i Bostan, and an interesting parallel to the central part of the design is found on a late eighth- or ninth-century Byzantine (?) silk with a Sasanian-inspired hunting scene (fig. 180). The elaborate pattern of this textile includes a stylized tree from which two branches project, forming loops that enclose eagles identical to the one at Aght'amar.
C11. Man Struggling with a Bear. South facade. Fig. 179.

A man is shown lying on his back, overwhelmed by a fierce-looking bear that has pinned him to the ground. The man kicks at the bear with his raised right leg, and also tries to defend himself with a short spear or knife that he holds in his right hand.

For a general discussion of hunters and bears, see above, cat. no. C5. This type of scene, in which a hunter is in grave danger of being devoured by an attacking animal, is less common than those with archers or hunters with lances, and probably derives from scenes of combat in the amphitheater. A similar group, but with a tiger rather than a bear, appears on the mosaic pavement of the Great Palace in Constantinople. Hunters who have fallen to the ground under the attack of bears are also seen on eleventh- and twelfth-century Byzantine ivory caskets.

The decoration of an eleventh-century silver bowl in the Hermitage includes a scene with a bear crouching above a naked human figure (fig. 181). The place of origin of this vessel is uncertain, but A. Grabar, noting the persistence of Sasanian influence in the iconography of this and several related bowls, suggested that it was produced in some part of Asia Minor, in the neighborhood of Transcaucasia or Persia.


Two frontal, beardless heads are framed in a figure-eight loop formed by the heavy stocks of the vine. The disembodied heads have an expressionless, mask-like quality. Similar motifs are found farther to the east on the same facade (cat. nos. C17, C24, and C26).
These heads appear to be related to the foliate masks that were a common feature in architectural sculpture and in the acanthus borders of mosaic pavements from Greece, Syria, Palestine, and Turkey. The masks vary in form and in number, and their meaning is difficult to determine. In several sixth-century Palestinian mosaics, including the pavement from the Funerary Chapel at el Hammam near Beisan (fig. 158) and the Orpheus mosaic from Jerusalem (fig. 183), a mask is placed at each of the four corners of the border, and in each case, two of the heads are bearded and two are beardless. M. Avi-Yonah compared these masks to a set of four heads placed at the corners of a third-century mosaic from Dougga in Tunisia. Pairs of wings projecting from the heads in the North African mosaic allow them to be identified as personifications of the four winds, and Avi-Yonah has suggested that the heads on the Palestinian pavements should also be interpreted in this way.

The Aght'amar heads are not technically foliate masks, as they lack the vegetalization of the hair, but the manner in which they are so closely framed by the vines gives them a similar effect. They may have been derived from a mosaicist's model book and simplified by the sculptors, who also adapted the motifs to fill the width of the frieze, either by doubling the heads, as in this example, or by adding an awkwardly formed body, as in cat. no. C17. This motif appears four times in the Aght'amar frieze, twice with bearded heads and twice with beardless heads, as in the Palestinian mosaics; and, like the earlier examples, these heads may also represent the four winds.
A bearded man dressed in a long robe is shown in three-quarter view with his head turned toward the viewer. He kneels on the ground with his arms extended outward.

This figure may represent an old man warming himself at a fire, and would thus be another personification from the cycle of the activities of the months. The earliest preserved examples of this scene are found in Carolingian manuscripts as illustrations of the month of January. In later Byzantine cycles, the man before a fire is seen most frequently as a personification of February, as in the Marciana Gospel (fig. 175).

This interpretation of the figure at Aght'amar is suggested not only by his pose, but also by the fact that he is the only one of the active, full-length figures in the vine frieze to be shown as bearded, and therefore presumably older; and the man warming himself at a fire was, in the Byzantine cycles, specifically characterized as an old man. The same variation is seen in the Marciana Gospel, where February appears as an older bearded man and the other eleven personifications of the months are youthful and beardless. The fact that the flames of the fire are not represented is not necessarily significant, as they were also omitted in the scene of the Three Hebrew Youths in the lower zone (cat. no. A65). Further, when the old man at the fire appeared on later Islamic bronzes (usually as a personification of January), the flames were also almost invariably either omitted or misunderstood.
Two birds stand confronted on either side of a stylized central tree. The birds have long curved necks and heavy bodies with long tails, which, like the wings, are carved with a simple pattern of vertical lines. The head of the bird on the left and sections of the wings of both birds have been broken away. The central tree has a palm-like top and stylized half-palmettes projecting from its trunk, the lowest ones serving as perches for the birds.

The motif of birds flanking a stylized tree or flower is typically Sasanian, but had a long history after the fall of the Sasanian Empire as a decorative design on luxury textiles. A large number of fragments of wool and cotton compound twill, convincingly attributed to seventh- or eighth-century Iran or Iraq, carry designs of this type, and the motif continued to be popular on later textiles, both Persian and Byzantine. No design completely identical to that of the Aght'amar relief is known to me, but there are many parallels to the individual details. The central tree recalls the stylized palm on one of the Zandaniji lion silks. Half-palmettes that project from the base of the central stalk and serve as perches for the birds are a characteristically Sasanian detail, found on stuccoes and textiles from the Sasanian period (fig. 168) as well as on later Armenian and Byzantine silks (figs. 49 and 54). Designs similar to that in our relief also appear on Spanish ivory caskets, which were themselves strongly influenced by Eastern textiles (fig. 185).
C15. Warrior (Personification of March?). South facade. Fig. 186.

This figure is carved at the edge of the projecting flange separating the west section of the south facade from the polygonal outer wall of the southwest niche. Because of its prominent position it has suffered greater damage than most of the other reliefs of the frieze, and the head has been completely destroyed. The man stands in a frontal pose with his left hand resting on his hip, and holds in his right hand a long object, perhaps a sword or a club, which projects above his shoulder. He wears a short caftan-like robe over trousers, and soft shoes or boots.

This figure is differentiated from the majority of the occupants of the vine frieze by his distinctly Eastern costume. Similar garments are worn only by the two attendants to the seated ruler on the east facade (see below, cat. no. C45). The closest parallels to all three of these figures are found not among the hunters and workers on the Palestinian mosaics, but in contemporary Islamic art. A soldier, dressed in a short coat and holding some object in his bent right arm while resting his left hand on his hip, appears on a fragment of one of the Bildsäulen from Samarra (fig. 65). Better preserved examples, though later in date, are found on the marble reliefs from the palace at Ghazni (fig. 68) and the wall paintings from the audience hall of the palace at Lashkari Bazar (fig. 67). These figures, who represent members of the sultan's Turkish guard, wear caftans and supple boots, and, like the figure at Aght'amar, they hold in their right hands long
weapons that projected above their shoulders, while their left hands are placed on their hips.

In view of its similarity to military figures in Islamic art, the identification of the Aght'amar figure as a warrior seems secure. To carry this further is perhaps precarious, but warriors also figured among the personifications in many of the Late Antique and Byzantine cycles of the months, representing April in the cycles of the Latin West and March in those of the Greek East. The warriors seen in the Byzantine examples hold shields and lances, and are dressed in the cuirasses and short tunics of Roman soldiers (figs. 175 and 178). However, artists working in an area where contemporary dress reflected that of the Abbasid court, on being confronted with such an image, might well have transformed it into the type of warrior more familiar in their own milieu; and it is possible that this figure is another personification from the cycle of the months, probably representing March.

Cl6. Bear Pursuing a Hunter. South facade. Fig. 187.

Following a long section of the frieze carved only with vine trees with interlaced branches (fig. 186; see above, p. 180), a bear is shown in profile, rearing up on its hind legs and resting its front paws on a segment of the vine. The animal's mouth is open, but it does not appear to be devouring the grapes and should probably be understood as attacking or pursuing the man shown to the right. This figure, clad in a short tunic, is badly damaged; the head is almost destroyed, but it
seems to have been turned back with the gaze directed toward the bear. The man's arms are flung wide, and the position of his legs indicates flight.

Venatores fleeing from bears were depicted in amphitheater scenes, as in the diptych of Areobindus of A.D. 506 (fig. 188). A scene very similar to ours also appears among the motifs on the mosaic pavement of the Great Palace in Constantinople (fig. 165). Other examples of wild animals pursuing hunters are found on the sixth-century mosaic pavement from the nave of the church of Saint Christopher at Qabr Hiram in Lebanon (fig. 189), and in the painted vine scroll in the caldarium of Qusayr 'Amra (fig. 159).

C17. Seated Man. South facade. Fig. 190.

A frontal, bearded man, his head framed in a loop formed by the stocks of the vine, is seated on the ground with his legs crossed, and grasps in each hand a stem laden with fruit.

This figure should probably be classified as one of the "masks" discussed above (cat. no. C12; compare especially cat. no. C26). The artist appears to have added arms and legs to one of these disembodied heads, probably to fill in the lower part of this section of the frieze. The ill-proportioned, symmetrical body is completely unlike those of the other full-length figures.

A bird is shown in profile facing left, with its head turned back to peck at a cluster of grapes. Its tail and the primary feathers of its wing are carved with a series of parallel lines. A short pearled band separates the tail from the body, and the base of the wing is decorated with a stylized leaf.

In nearly every example of the populated vine scroll, whether it occurs in Roman, Early Christian, Byzantine, Coptic, Sasanian, or Islamic art, birds are included among the inhabitants of the vine, and are very frequently shown eating the fruit. In some Early Christian and early Byzantine compositions the birds may have symbolized souls, and the motif of birds pecking at grapes carried a general message of salvation and immortality. The extent to which such symbolism survived in the hundreds of later examples is very questionable; in most cases, including the vine frieze at Aght'amar, the birds should probably be understood simply as representatives of the creatures of the earth.

C19. Hunter Confronting a Lion. South facade. Fig. 191.

A hunter clad in a pair of knee-length trousers holds a sling loaded with a stone in his right hand and carries an additional stone in his raised left hand. He is confronted by a lion shown in profile facing left, with its head slightly turned and awkwardly foreshortened. The joints of the lion's front paws are marked by disks (see above,
Hunters in combat with lions were popular subjects in the decoration of mosaic pavements in Palestine and Lebanon, but the hunters in these scenes are usually armed with lances or bows and arrows. Slings were not unknown as weapons, however; on the pavement of the Church of the Priest John at Khirbat al-Makhayyat, a hunter with a sling is shown in pursuit of a wild boar, and at Qabr Hiram, a hunter with a sling in one hand and a lance in the other occupies a medallion in the vine scroll between a leopard and a lion (fig. 189).

C20. Confronted Cocks. South facade. Fig. 191.

Two cocks stand confronted, their beaks touching. The column-like form between the birds is a stock of the vine, which splits just above their beaks into two slender branches, each of which carries a cluster of grapes. The birds are almost identical to the pair of fighting cocks in the lower zone of the north facade (see above, cat. no. A46, for a discussion of this motif).

C21. Cow Suckling Her Calf. South facade. Fig. 192.

A cow with a suckling calf is shown in profile facing left, with its head turned back to lick its raised hind leg.

This type of motif had a very long history as a decorative design in the ancient Near East. There is a striking similarity between the animals at Aght'amar and those on Assyrian ivory furniture inlays of
the eighth century B.C. There are, however, many later parallels in both Byzantine and Islamic art. Animals suckling their young are found on mosaic pavements, as, for example, a mare with her foal from the Great Palace in Constantinople, and a lioness with cubs from the Church of Saint George at Khirbat al-Makhayyat. They were also a popular motif on Islamic textiles and ceramics. The arrangement of a camel and her foal on a tenth-century Abbasid luster-painted cup is particularly close to that of the animals in our relief (fig. 193).

The pose of the cow alone is of some interest, as it is very similar to those of animals depicted in a number of Byzantine manuscripts. Examples include a deer in the margin of one of the canon tables of the Rabula Gospels of 586 (Florence, Laurentian Library, cod. Plut. I,56, fol. 6a) and gazelles represented in the ninth-century Vatican manuscript of the Christian Topography of Cosmas Indicopleustes (cod. gr. 699, fol. 15r) (fig. 194) and in miniatures illustrating the Creation of the Animals in the Octateuchs in Istanbul (Seraglio Library, cod. 8, fol. 32v) and Smyrna (Evangelical School, cod. A.1, fol. 7r; destroyed).
scene appears in the frieze under the eaves on the north facade (cat. no. E69).

K. Otto-Dorn was the first scholar to notice the similarity between these reliefs and a ninth-century painting from the Jausaq palace at Samarra, in which a kneeling figure also grasps a bull by both horns (fig. 196). Among the Sasanian plates with the theme of the royal hunter, a bull appears as the quarry only once, on a plate that P. O. Harper has convincingly attributed to a provincial center in the area east of Merv and Herat (fig. 197). The king represented on this plate, although mounted and armed with a sword, grasps one of the charging bull's horns with his left hand.

It seems possible that all of these images of the man-bull combat may ultimately derive from the same source. Whether they should be understood as simple hunting scenes is questionable. Some suggestions regarding this problem were made by J.-P. Roux, who, in a detailed and well documented study of the Samarra painting and the two reliefs at Aght'amar, traced the origin of this iconography to pre-Islamic Turkish traditions and stressed its ritual and mythic significance.

C23. Two Men in Combat. South facade. Fig. 198.

Two men dressed in short tunics are shown in combat. The clean-shaven man on the left grasps his opponent's ankle with one hand and his long beard with the other. The bearded man, whose head is disproportionately large, has one arm around the other figure's shoulders and
prepares to strike him with the thick wooden staff he holds in his right hand. A dog, its body extended across the lower portion of the scene, bites the bearded man on the leg.

There are several interesting parallels to this scene in Islamic art, though none that predates Aght'amar. Two men grasping each other's beards are seen on the eleventh-century pila (marble basin) in Játiva (fig. 199); and in another scene on the same object, three men are shown armed with long staves and again pulling each other's beards. The latter group of combatants is flanked by seated musicians. E. Baer, who noted the similarity between these scenes and the Aght'amar relief, interpreted both representations on the pila as performances or dances rather than actual combats, and cited literary evidence for the use of staves in a type of dance current in Abbasid Baghdad. Another pair of men fighting with staves, also interpreted as participants in a ceremonial scene or a type of dance or game, appears on an eleventh- or twelfth-century luster-painted plate from Fatimid Egypt.

Both the pila of Játiva and the Fatimid plate are related to the cycle of princely entertainments. It seems likely that similar scenes had appeared in the Abbasid epoch; that none are known is not surprising, in view of the almost total destruction of the palaces and court art of that period. At present, the figures at Aght'amar are the earliest known example of a subject that continued to appear for hundreds of years. Some of the later representations, such as the scene on a fourteenth-century luster-painted tile in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, are still very similar to our relief.
C24. Head and Duck in Vine Stocks. South facade. Fig. 200.

The heavy stocks of the vine are interlaced to form two circular frames. A frontal, beardless head gazes out from the upper frame, while the lower one encloses a duck shown in profile facing left.

The mask-like head is of the same type as those discussed above (see cat. no. C12). The presence of the duck in the lower loop is consonant with the interpretation of these heads as derivations from the foliate masks found in the borders of mosaic pavements, as the vegetal scrolls of these borders frequently enclose birds as well as heads. In the Orpheus mosaic from Jerusalem, for example, a bird appears in the foliage next to each mask (fig. 183). The beardless head and the duck shown in profile in the lower left corner of this border provide a particularly good comparison to the Aght'amar relief.

C25. Wrestlers. South facade. Fig. 201.

Two confronted figures, each with one leg raised to rest along the edge of the window that intrudes into the zone of the frieze, are shown among the vines. The man on the left, clad only in a pair of knee-length trousers, grasps his opponent's long hair in his left hand, and his wrist is clasped in turn by the figure on the right. The long hair is an unusual detail, but it seems unlikely that it would indicate that this figure is a woman. His short tunic is identical to those worn by many of the men in the vine frieze; and a number of wrestlers in Late Antique mosaics are shown with their hair fastened in a top-knot, though none so long as this. Above the wrestlers is a symmetrical
composition of two birds pecking at a bunch of grapes. The birds are somewhat simplified, and awkwardly presented: their wings are closed, but their legs are extended beneath them, as if they were in flight.

Wrestling was a popular sport in the Near East, as well as in the classical world. It had already entered the repertoire of the princely cycle by the late Sasanian period, and pairs of wrestlers are depicted on several seventh-century silver vessels. On one bowl, wrestlers, a hunter facing a bear, and several musicians are enclosed in the rinceaux of a vine scroll, and on another the wrestlers are shown with other scenes of court life, including musicians and backgammon players.

The frescoes in the audience hall of Qusayr 'Amra provide ample evidence for the popularity of this theme in early Islamic court art. Wrestlers appear in a palaestra scene on the west wall (fig. 202); between the windows of the east wall; and on the vault of the central bay, which is divided into a series of compartments with scenes of the life of the court (fig. 203). The figures in each compartment are framed by a pediment supported on two columns, with pairs of confronted birds occupying the spandrels. The juxtaposition of symmetrically paired birds above two wrestlers makes an interesting comparison to our relief. A pair of wrestlers was also included among the stucco figures that inhabited the vine scroll on the vaulted ceiling of the palace entrance hall at Khirbat al Mafjar.

Although no examples of wrestlers in Abbasid art have been preserved, we may safely assume that such scenes continued to decorate royal residences in the ninth and tenth centuries. One of the most
important documents in this respect is the chronicle of the continuator of Thomas Artsruni, who, in describing the subjects depicted in King Gagik's palace at Aght'amar, specifically mentioned warriors with bared swords and combats of wrestlers.¹⁰⁷

Pairs of wrestlers also appear in the court art of later centuries, as on an ivory pyxis made at Córdoba in 968;¹⁰⁸ an eleventh- or twelfth-century Fatimid luster-painted bowl;¹⁰⁹ and the stalactite ceiling of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo.¹¹⁰ There are also a number of later eastern Islamic examples on inlaid brass objects from the Seljuq period.¹¹¹ The depictions of wrestlers almost invariably accompany other themes from the princely cycle. In both the Sasanian and the Islamic examples, these combats are generally seen as a form of entertainment, but, as demonstrations of strength or prowess performed before the king, they may also have had some religious or ceremonial significance.¹¹²

C26. Head in Vine Stocks. South facade. Fig. 204.

A frontal, bearded head gazes out from a circular frame formed by the heavy stocks of the vine. For discussion of this motif, see above, cat. no. C12.

C27. Two Men Treading Grapes. South facade. Fig. 205.

Two men, clad only in knee-length trousers, are shown treading rather large grapes. They stand beneath arches that rest on three columns on stepped bases.
Grape treaders appear frequently on the Palestinian mosaic pavements with inhabited vine scrolls. A composition similar to that of the Aght'amar relief appears in the nave of the Church of SS. Lot and Procopius at Khirbat al-Makhayyat, where two treaders flank the central screw of a wine press (fig. 206).113

C28. Vintager. South facade. Fig. 207.

A man dressed in knee-length trousers and a blouse with elbow-length sleeves kneels among the vines. He grasps a stock of the vine with his left hand and with his right supports a woven basket on his shoulder. An almost identical but very badly weathered figure appears on the east facade (cat. no. C46).

Vintagers harvesting grapes were a common theme on Palestinian mosaic pavements with inhabited vine scrolls; there are, for example, several such figures on the pavement in the Monastery at Beisan (fig. 157).114 Similar scenes also appeared in contemporary Armenian art, as witnessed by the fragmentary relief from Dvin (fig. 156).115

In Late Antique and Byzantine cycles of the activities of the months, vintagers appear as personifications of September. In some examples, the men are shown merely holding the fruit, rather than harvesting it, while in others standing figures reach up to pick the grapes and collect them in baskets placed on the ground at their feet.116 In still other cycles, such as those preserved in the Marciana Gospel (fig. 208) and the Byzantine Octateuchs (fig. 178), September is represented by porters carrying baskets of grapes on their backs. These figures
are very similar to the porter who appears in the vine frieze on the north facade (cat. no. C57). As a number of the other personifications of the months at Aght'amar correspond very closely to the figures in these later manuscript cycles, we may probably assume that it is the porter who represents September, and the kneeling men picking grapes, both here and on the east facade, should be understood simply as workers harvesting the fruit.

C29. Head. South facade. Fig. 207.

A small frontal bearded head is placed within the Y formed by the branching of the vine from a central stock. The same motif is repeated a little farther to the east on this facade (cat. no. C33), and a total of four times on the north facade (cat. nos. C50, C65, C71, and C76).

The disembodied heads have an expressionless quality similar to that of the heads that were discussed above and related to foliate masks (see cat. no. C12), but these appear to have been derived from a different source. Their closest parallels are found in architectural sculpture rather than in mosaics. Human figures or busts rising from plant forms were common motifs throughout the Mediterranean world and the Near East; they appear from the Hellenistic period on, in inhabited vine scrolls carved on pilasters, lintels, and other architectural elements. Heads rising from the midst of foliage are also found on column capitals from many different regions, from Parthian Iraq to Coptic Egypt; the examples on Byzantine capitals from Jericho (fig. 209) and 'Ain Shems are particularly close to ours.
Disembodied heads projecting from foliage also appear in a variety of contexts in later architectural sculpture. In the diwan of the bath complex at Khirbat al Mafjar, the center of the dome was filled by a circular composition of stylized acanthus leaves from which six beardless heads radiate. The heads at Aght'amar were also compared by D. Winfield to those found among the stylized palmette foliage that covers the octagonal shaft of a mid-tenth-century column in the church at Oški.

C30. Man Seated Astride a Bear. South facade. Fig. 210.

A man dressed in short trousers and a blouse with elbow-length sleeves is seated astride a bear, pulling at the creature's ears. The bear, greedily devouring a cluster of grapes, seems oblivious to his presence.

Like several of the other scenes with hunters and bears depicted in the vine frieze (cat. nos. C11 and C16; and see cat. no. C5 for a general discussion), this motif probably originated in representations of public spectacles in the amphitheater. One leaf of the diptych of Areobindus in Zurich, already cited in reference to the hunter fleeing from a bear farther to the west on the same facade (cat. no. C16), includes a similar group, although in this case the bear bites the leg of the venator seated on its back (fig. 188). Bears were not always captured simply to be slaughtered in the arena, however; there is ample evidence, both literary and artistic, for the popularity of trained
performing bears in Late Antiquity, and the Aght'amar motif might also have been drawn from a scene of this type.¹²²

C31. Man. South facade. Fig. 211.

A man, clad only in a pair of knee-length trousers, stands with both arms raised framing his head. He does not appear to hold any type of weapon or other object, but part of his left hand and the area around it have been broken away. In the absence of any recognizable attributes, it is difficult to establish this figure's identity or his role in the vine frieze. Orbeli's suggestion that he is simply another worker, watching in horror as a bear attacks a hunter, may be correct, as the man's gaze is clearly directed toward that scene (cat. no. C32).¹²³

C32. Hunter and Bear. South facade. Fig. 211.

A man dressed in knee-length trousers and a blouse with elbow-length sleeves kneels on the ground, grasping with both hands a long lance that he thrusts into the thigh of an attacking bear. The bear, a ferocious creature with bared teeth, rears up on its hind legs and grips the hunter's shoulder and knee with its front paws.

Confrontations between bears and hunters armed with lances were common motifs in early Byzantine art.¹²⁴ Some of these scenes, such as that on the mosaic pavement in the Church of SS. Lot and Procopius at Khirbat al-Makhayyat (fig. 212),¹²⁵ are very similar to our relief, although the combat at Aght'amar is more dramatic, lacking the distance
between the two figures ordinarily maintained by their placement in separate scrolls of the vine.

C33. Head. South facade. Fig. 213.

A frontal bearded head is placed within the Y formed by the branching of the vine from a thick central stock. For discussion of this motif, see above, cat. no. C29.

C34. Palm Tree and Sphinx. South facade. Figs. 213 and 214.

To the right of a palm tree bearing two large clusters of dates stands a sphinx, shown in profile facing left but with its head turned toward the right. The creature has a human head, a lion's body with a tail that ends in a stylized dragon's head, and wings. The base of the left wing is decorated with a stylized vegetal motif framed by a clearly defined circular border with a scalloped upper edge. The surface of this figure is badly abraded and some details are difficult to distinguish.

Like the griffin and the harpy represented in the lower zone of sculpture (cat. nos. A21 and A48), the sphinx is a composite creature with a very long history in the ancient Near East. It appeared in many forms, but the human-headed leonine hybrid with wings, like the figure at Aght'amar, was most common. In both ancient and medieval art, sphinxes were very frequently depicted in pairs flanking a stylized tree of life, and it seems clear that the palm tree and sphinx in the vine frieze should be considered together. The model for the relief
was probably a symmetrical composition, but only one of the sphinxes was carved.

K. Otto-Dorn believed that this motif derived from a Byzantine source, and compared the sphinxes flanking stylized trees on the exterior of the Panagia Gorgoepekoos in Athens. There are, however, earlier examples of this theme in Islamic art. Pairs of seated sphinxes confronting trees are found on several eleventh- and twelfth-century Persian silks, and date palms similar to the one in our relief appear on silks from the same period.

The early history of the sphinx in eastern Islamic art is somewhat problematic. It appeared in Achaemenid art, but is not found in the Sasanian period, and very few examples of this creature can be documented in Persian art before the twelfth century. In her comprehensive study of these hybrids, E. Baer demonstrated that the earliest securely dated sphinxes in Islamic art appear on objects made in Egypt and Spain. She concluded, nonetheless, that these representations stemmed from Persian sources, as their stylistic characteristics as well as the compositions and contexts in which they occur reflect the traditions of Persian art. The sphinx at Aght'amar supports Baer's thesis, as it exhibits several characteristics that indicate an Eastern, and probably Persian, source. The decorative treatment of its wing is very similar to that of the wings of fantastic animals depicted on an eighth-century silver plate from Iran (fig. 215) and a seventh- or eighth-century bronze ewer from Daghestan in the Caucasus. The dragon's-head tail finial is also a specifically Islamic feature. Animals with vegetal motifs at the tips of their tails are common in post-Sasanian art.
and it is not always easy to distinguish stylized plants from stylized dragons' heads, particularly as the latter are commonly represented with leaf-shaped ears and open jaws and resemble trefoils; in our relief, however, the presence of the large hole indicating an eye supports the identification as a dragon's head.  

Sphinxes with tails ending in the heads of animals or birds are found on an eleventh-century wooden panel from Egypt, and on an ivory casket of the same date produced in southern Italy or Sicily. The sphinx at Aght'amar, however, has more in common with Eastern representations of such creatures, even though they are later in date. Examples include a twelfth-century ceramic sculpture (fig. 216) and thirteenth-century underglaze-painted vessels (fig. 217) from Rakka in Syria; a small bronze sculpture found near Derik in southeastern Anatolia; and an east Persian bronze dish dated to ca. A.D. 1200 (fig. 218). The appearance of these sphinxes with dragon's-head tails on objects produced in so many different regions shows how widespread this iconography was, and the formal relationships between our relief and these later works would appear to indicate a common prototype, perhaps in post-Sasanian or Abbasid art. The wing of the ceramic statue is similar to that of the Aght'amar sphinx, as are the pose and the position of the tail of the creature on the bronze plate; and the dragon's-head tail finials of the sphinxes in the bronze sculpture from Derik and on the Rakka plate are of the same type as that of the sphinx in our relief. The tip of the wing of the Aght'amar creature may have ended in another animal head, as do those of the two sculptural figures, but the stone is so worn it is impossible to judge.
The addition of a dragon's head to the tail of another animal may in time have become nothing more than a decorative motif, but it originally had a very specific meaning. As W. Hartner has demonstrated in his studies of Islamic astrological iconography, the dragon symbolized the eclipse demon, the light-devouring monster that periodically threatened the sun and the moon. A lion with a dragon's-head tail would thus represent the sun menaced by an eclipse. Such appendages are also found on other creatures; on the Wade Cup, an inlaid brass bowl made in Khorasan ca. A.D. 1200 and now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, the dragon's-head symbol appears with all the signs of the zodiac that have solar or lunar connections. The sphinx is neither a planet nor a constellation, but it had a long history as a solar symbol, and the dragon's head must originally have had the same significance as it did when appended to the tail of a lion.

The meaning of the sphinx in Islamic art is, like that of the harpy, difficult to define, and largely dependent on the context in which the creature appears. In addition to its significance as an astrological symbol, it was also related to the concept of royalty. Pairs of confronted sphinxes are found with other images from the princely cycle on the eleventh-century wooden frieze that decorated a Fatimid palace in Cairo, and the creatures frequently accompany enthroned rulers represented on later ceramics and metalwork. In addition, Baer suggested that the sphinx, because of its solar connotations, may have been thought of as a celestial creature and related to the concept of paradise. Some of the Persian silks decorated with
sphinxes flanking trees were used as tomb covers or shrouds, and the designs may, in this context, have had an eschatological significance.  

C35. Bird. South facade. Fig. 214.

A bird with a long beak and a plume of feathers at the back of its head is perched on a cluster of grapes, facing left but with its head turned back toward the right. Its fan-shaped tail is composed of three long feathers, and the base of its wing is decorated with a short pearled band.

The bird may be an ibis, as some members of this species have long, slender curved bills and tufts of ornamental feathers that project from their napes. The long tail is inaccurate, but artists often took liberties with such details. Ibis are among the birds commonly represented on mosaic pavements, and they appear on several of the fifth- and sixth-century Armenian mosaics from Jerusalem.

C36. Hunter with Hare (Personification of October or November?). South facade. Fig. 219.

A man dressed in a short tunic and a long-sleeved jacket stands in three-quarter view, carrying a hare slung on a pole held over his right shoulder.

The hunting of small game such as rabbits and hares was a popular pastime throughout the Mediterranean world, and was frequently illustrated, particularly on mosaic pavements. In most examples, the hares are pursued with the aid of hunting dogs, as on sixth-century
pavements from the Church of SS. Lot and Procopius at Khirbat al-Makhayyat, the Villa of the Falconer at Argos, and the East Church at Apollonia. The latter two examples include figures like ours, carrying their quarry slung on poles over their shoulders. Similar scenes continued to appear in later works, such as the peristyle mosaic from the Great Palace in Constantinople, the pavement from an early eighth-century basilica at Deir el-Adas in Syria, and a miniature in an eleventh-century copy of the *Cynegetica* of Pseudo-Oppian in Venice (Marciana, cod. gr. 479, fol. 54v). Hares were also hunted with falcons, as discussed above (cat. no. A50).

Because this activity was associated particularly with the autumn months, hunters carrying hares also appeared as personifications of the months of October and November. In early cycles in both the Latin West and the Greek East, including the Calendar of 354, a lost fourth-century mosaic from Carthage, and a sixth-century mosaic from Awza'i in Lebanon, hunters holding up hares by their hind legs represented the month of October; in the Byzantine Octateuchs, similar figures shown in half-length served as allegories of November or December (fig. 178). The images most closely related to ours, in which October is represented by a hunter with a hare hanging from a pole carried over his shoulder, are much later in date; they include a miniature in a fourteenth-century Byzantine typicon from Trebizond (Mount Athos, Vatopedi 1199, fol. 65a) and the figures on two thirteenth- or fourteenth-century Islamic inlaid brass candlesticks.

A hare is shown in profile facing left, with its front paws resting on a cluster of grapes. Its head is turned back to nibble on another bunch of grapes hanging from the vine above.

As shown in the preceding entry, hares appeared very frequently in Late Antique and Byzantine art as the quarry in hunting scenes; this rather large animal may be related to the hunter at the left, who has already captured one hare, but it could also function as an independent motif. The grape-eating hare was one of the most ubiquitous images in the Mediterranean world, appearing on virtually hundreds of works in a wide variety of media. It is found as an isolated decorative motif in Roman paintings and mosaics, and on Coptic textiles;¹⁶¹ it appears on pagan sarcophagi and votive plaques from Syria;¹⁶² and it is nearly always present in inhabited vine scrolls, in Sasanian art as well as in Late Antique and Byzantine monuments. Grape-eating hares in poses identical to that of the animal in our relief may be seen on both sixth-century Palestinian mosaics (fig. 157)¹⁶³ and seventh-century Sasanian vessels.¹⁶⁴ The motif appears to have been less common in Islamic art, though it was not unknown.

The appearance on sarcophagi of hares eating grapes supports E. C. Dodd's suggestion that this motif originally carried a message related to the concept of life after death; but in view of its later use on works of so many different types and functions produced by such diverse cultures, it seems unlikely that it could have retained any clearly understood symbolic significance.¹⁶⁵
birds pecking grapes, the hares in the Aght'amar frieze should probably be understood simply as examples of the fauna that populated the vineyards.

C38. Man. South facade. Fig. 220.

The surface of this figure has been almost completely destroyed, so that details of his clothing and attributes are impossible to distinguish, and even his action is unclear. He appears to be clad in knee-length trousers, and the position of what remains of his legs seems to indicate rapid movement, perhaps directed toward the bird shown on the next segment of the frieze. He holds a large object, possibly a weapon, in his raised right hand.

C39. Bird Pecking Grapes. South facade. Fig. 220.

A heavy-bodied, short-tailed bird, perhaps a partridge, stands on a stock of the vine and pecks at a large cluster of grapes. For discussion of this motif, see above, cat. no. C18.

C40. Fox Eating Grapes. South facade. Fig. 220.

A fox with a long, bushy tail is shown in profile facing left. It stands with its front paws resting on a cluster of grapes, and stretches its head up to eat from another cluster.

Foxes, like birds and hares, appear frequently as inhabitants of vine scrolls. They are found on Palestinian mosaic pavements at
Madaba, Beisan (fig. 157), and Khirbat al-Makhayyat, and they are particularly prevalent among the grape-eating animals on Sasanian silver vessels.

C41. Hunter and Dog. South facade. Fig. 220.

A hunter clad in a short tunic stands in three-quarter view facing left. He raises his right hand to point at the grape-eating fox on the preceding stone, indicating the quarry to the lean-bodied, long-jawed hunting dog whose leash he holds in his left hand.

Hunters with dogs were a popular subject in the decoration of mosaic pavements throughout the Mediterranean world. Although they appear more frequently in scenes of hare coursing (see above, cat. no. C36), several examples with foxes as the quarry are also preserved, as in the upper register of the "Small Hunt" at Piazza Armerina and on a closely related mosaic from the Dermeh district at Carthage, both probably of the early fourth century. In a later (mid-sixth-century) scene from the northeast chapel of a church at Qasr-el-Lebia in Cyrenaica, a hunter with two dogs pursues two foxes that run toward a cave. The hunter, who still holds the dogs' leash in his left hand, is shown in a pose very similar to that of the figure in our relief (fig. 221).

C42. Mounted Archer and Bear. East facade. Fig. 222.

A hunter mounted on a horse shown moving toward the left turns backward and prepares to loose an arrow at an attacking bear, which
stands on its hind legs directly behind the horse. The hunter is clad in a knee-length coat of mail, a helmet, and high boots. The hem of his coat and a strap running diagonally across his chest are decorated with an angular guilloche pattern. The helmet has a rounded dome and a broad band that appears to be decorated with circular motifs. The horse's trappings include a bit, bridle, stirrups, and a riding pad held in place by pearled breast and breech straps; a crescent-shaped phalera is suspended from the latter. The horse's tail is knotted, and its joints are marked by disks, as are those of the bear's front paws. The upper part of the hunter's bow has been destroyed, and the bear's head is damaged. A section of the right part of the stone has been broken away, and with it the back part of the bear; a narrow slab of uncarved stone has been inserted in its place.

This figure, the only hunter in the frieze clad in armor and mounted, represents a person of higher rank than the other figures shown in combat with animals. Of all the hunting scenes, this one is most clearly of Sasanian inspiration. The archer is shown in the pose generally referred to as the "Parthian shot," with the upper part of his body turned backward to allow him to shoot to the rear. Sasanian kings and princes in this pose, shooting at animals standing on their rear legs, appear on a series of silver plates dating from the third to the early seventh centuries. Like many of the other motifs at Aght'amar, however, this scene is modeled on a work produced after the fall of the Sasanian dynasty. Works such as the Pur-i Vahman plate in the Hermitage (fig. 223), dated to the eighth century or later, and a series of stucco plaques produced in Iran in the Umayyad or early
Abbasid period, attest to the continued popularity of these compositions; and a number of details in our relief, such as the frontal view of the archer's head, the presence of stirrups, and the use of the thumb to pull the bow-string, also indicate a model from the Islamic era.

The armor worn by the hunter at Aght'amar differs from that seen in the Sasanian and post-Sasanian works, but it is difficult to assign it to a specific region or date, as coats of chain mail were worn throughout the Near East for many centuries. The band across the chest is an unusual feature, but similar details are seen on the stucco figures of helmeted warriors from the palace entrance hall at Khirbat al Mafjar; Hamilton tentatively identified them as baldrics from which swords were slung. I have found no convincing parallels to the helmet, but in view of the almost total lack of representations of helmets from this period, this is perhaps not surprising.

The archer is the only figure in the entire frieze to project above the single course of stones. For this reason, and also because there is no trace of the vines on this block, both Der Nersessian and Orbeli questioned its authenticity as part of the original composition. Der Nersessian also felt that the style and figure type differ from those of the other reliefs. Both scholars concluded that this scene was carved much later, perhaps in the fourteenth century, to replace a damaged section of the frieze. None of these arguments, however, appears to me to be conclusive. The other figures in the frieze, whether standing, kneeling, or bending, occupy the full height of the block; a mounted figure would have to project into the next stone
course, or else be drastically reduced in scale, which would be particularly inappropriate for a personage of higher rank. And, while elements of the vine appear on most of the stones, this is not the only block from which they are absent (see above, p. 178). The carving is more detailed, but this may result from the type of figure being depicted rather than a change in style; the bear is treated in the same manner as the other bears in the frieze, and the horse's elaborate trappings are identical to those of the mounts ridden by the military saints in the lower zone (see cat. no. A58). Finally, even though the archer is very different from the other hunters in the frieze, his inclusion is entirely appropriate. He should probably be interpreted as a princely hunter, a figure from the same cycle of imagery as the ruler with attendants in the center of this facade (cat. no. C45); but he is not without parallels in the Palestinian mosaics which provide so many other comparisons to the motifs in the vine frieze. On a mosaic from the church of Saint George at Khirbat al-Makhayyat, for example, one of the acanthus scrolls encloses the figure of a single mounted archer who is much more richly dressed and equipped than the other hunters and agricultural workers on this pavement.\textsuperscript{183}

C43. Hunter and Hare. East facade. Fig. 222.

A man dressed in a short tunic is shown in three-quarter view, holding a club in his raised right hand. With his left hand he grasps the tail of a disproportionately large hare, shown in profile facing left but with its head turned back toward its captor.
As shown above, the hunting and trapping of hares was a popular subject on mosaic pavements and related works (see cat. no. C36). This motif, in which the hunter pursues his quarry armed only with a club, is much less common than the hunting scenes with dogs. Hunters armed with clubs appear on Palestinian mosaic pavements, as in the Funerary Chapel at el Hammam near Beisan (fig. 158); and parallels to this group are also found on Sasanian silver vessels. In the scene on a seventh-century vase in Tehran, the prey is a fox rather than a hare, but the hunter, as in our relief, holds a club in one hand and with the other grasps the tail of the animal, who looks back toward him (fig. 224). A man pursuing a hare is also depicted in the painted vine scroll from the caldarium of Qusayr 'Amra: the figure is badly damaged, and the position of his left arm cannot be determined, but his right arm is extended toward a hare who looks back at him over its shoulder (fig. 159). A later example is found on a fragmentary and poorly preserved bone plaque from Fatimid Egypt, made in the eleventh or twelfth century for use as a furniture inlay (fig. 225). On this plaque, the two figures were adapted to a vertical format, and the hunter wielding a club appears above the hare. This hunter also carries a pole over his shoulder, like the figure on the south facade at Aght'amar (cat. no. C36); the animal slung from the pole can no longer be identified with any certainty, but it was probably also a hare.
C44. Animal. East facade. Fig. 226.

The central segment of the vine frieze on the east facade was raised one stone course, and rests directly on the carved moldings that frame the two tall niches. There is considerable damage to the south part of this segment, and the first figure is only partially preserved. It appears to be an animal, possibly a bear standing on its hind legs, which may have formed part of another hunting scene.


The central section of the vine frieze on the east facade is occupied by a seated ruler flanked by two attendants and accompanied by a lion and an eagle. The bearded ruler, framed in a medallion formed by the twisting stocks of the vine, is shown in a frontal pose, seated on a cushion with his legs folded beneath his body and crossed at the ankles. He wears a long caftan, probably similar to that of the attendant at the left, and a crown with a jeweled band topped by three arched forms; his head is framed by a nimbus. He holds a large stemmed cup in his right hand and with his left reaches up to a cluster of grapes hanging from the vine. The attendant on the left, separated from the ruler by a stylized pomegranate tree, is shown standing in three-quarter view, plucking a fruit from the tree with his right hand and gesturing toward the ruler with his left. He is clad in a high-necked caftan worn over trousers and clasped at the waist by a belt with three pendants. The attendant on the right also stands in a three-quarter pose and wears a belted caftan over trousers, but his garment closes diagonally from
right to left and has lapels. He holds a rounded object, perhaps a fruit, in his raised right hand. A crouching lion with bared teeth and a mane carved in stylized spirals appears behind the attendant on the left, and behind the figure on the right an eagle, shown in profile with wings closed, stands on a vine leaf.

The ruler's crown is similar to that of the King of Nineveh in the Jonah scene on the south facade (cat. no. A8), and belts with three pendants are also worn by Saint Sahak (cat. no. A23) and King Saul (cat. no. A27). The coat with lapels worn by the attendant on the right, however, is unique among the Aght'amar reliefs. Garments of this type were characteristic of the Turkic and Hephthalite peoples of Central Asia, and numerous examples appear in sixth- and seventh-century Buddhist wall paintings in Afghanistan and Turkestan. Similar costumes were still being worn in these regions centuries later, as attested by the late eleventh- or early twelfth-century paintings of the Turkish guards in the audience hall of the Ghaznavid palace at Lashkari Bazar (fig. 67).

The figure of the ruler is of considerable interest, as it is one of the earliest preserved examples of a motif that became a conventional image, almost a cliché, in Islamic iconography. In the eighth century, the Umayyad caliphs were represented seated on thrones in the manner of Byzantine emperors, or in poses derived from Sasanian models, as illustrated by a stucco sculpture from Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi that was clearly based on an official enthronement scene of a Sasanian king. The image of the ruler seated on a cushion or bench with his legs crossed beneath him and holding a cup rather than a sword must
have entered the repertoire of Islamic princely iconography in the course of the ninth century, soon after the transfer of the Muslim political center from Syria to Baghdad opened the way for Eastern influences. There may have been political as well as geographical reasons for the increased importance of Iranian sources in the formation of Islamic art, as Iran had been conquered and converted in its entirety by the mid-eighth century and the imagery associated with its former rulers had none of the connotations of a rival empire or a religion antagonistic to Muslim beliefs.\(^{193}\)

The motif of a ruler seated in a cross-legged position and holding a wine cup is usually described as a derivation from the princely cycle of the Sasanian tradition; but while this may be true in essence, the adaptation was by no means a direct transfer. The theme of the royal banqueter had a very long history in the Near East. One of the most clearly presented early examples is a mid-seventh-century B.C. relief from Nineveh, in which King Assurbanipal is depicted reclining on a couch, holding a cup in his right hand and a flower in his left.\(^{194}\) E. Herzfeld long ago recognized a thematic relationship between this Assyrian relief and the later Islamic images, but felt that there was little probability of a direct connection between monuments separated by so many centuries.\(^{195}\) Recent studies, however, have established the existence of a chain of intermediaries, not only in Greece and Asia Minor, but also on Iranian soil, extending from the Achaemenid Empire through the Seleucid and Parthian periods to the Islamic conquest.\(^{196}\) Surprisingly, it is in the Sasanian period itself that the theme is most difficult to document. Princes reclining on couches and holding
cups and flowers appear on several silver plates (figs. 62 and 231),
but each of these examples exhibits details of composition, iconography,
or execution that indicate an origin in a region east of Iran, and a
date in the early Islamic period. It is quite possible, as R.
Ghirshman has suggested, that these plates are later adaptations of
scenes that were current during the Sasanian period. But even if we
accept this hypothesis, there is a considerable difference between the
princes on these plates, who are shown in the traditional semi-
reclining pose with one leg extended on the couch and the other folded
beneath them, and the later Islamic rulers who are depicted frontally
with both legs crossed beneath them. While the theme of the royal ban-
queter in Islamic art can be confidently traced to Iranian prototypes,
the cross-legged frontal pose is almost unknown in early Iran. It
is clearly of Eastern origin, and examples of kings seated in this po-
sition appear on Kushan coins dating as early as the first and second
centuries A.D.

It is not difficult to establish the area in which these trends
met and combined. The impact of Iran on the art of Central Asia has
long been recognized, and M. Carter has demonstrated that the princely
drinking scenes were part of a "pan-Iranian cultural phenomenon" that
reached far beyond the borders of the Sasanian Empire, and profoundly
influenced the imagery of the Hephthalites, Sogdians, Khorasmians, and
Turks. It is in the art of these peoples, in the pre-Islamic and
early Islamic periods, that we find noble or royal banqueters seated
frontally with their legs crossed beneath them. Among the earliest ex-
amples are the figures in a series of murals, probably of the sixth
century, in a Hephthalite stronghold at Balalyk Tepe in Transoxiana (Uzbekistan). In these paintings, some banqueters are shown in the traditional semi-reclining pose, while others are represented frontally with both legs crossed beneath them. Sogdian examples include the seated banqueters in seventh-century frescoes at Panjikent and a ruler on a ninth-century silver plate in the Hermitage, already cited in regard to his winged crown (cat. no. Al) (fig. 19). The prince on this plate is not only shown seated cross-legged and holding a cup, but also, as at Aght'amar, he is flanked by two standing attendants, one of whom hands him a pomegranate. Motifs of this type are also found in the art of the Gök-Turk tribes of eastern Asia, who used the cup in rituals of allegiance and investiture. A seated ruler holding a cup and flanked by two attendants appears on the sarcophagus of the Kagan Bilge, who died in A.D. 734.

The Iranian theme of the princely banqueter does indeed appear to have been the primary source for the Islamic image of the ruler holding a wine cup, but Central Asian traditions also contributed to the development of the motif. It is of some interest that this imagery was based not on the official enthronement scenes of Sasanian kings, as the stucco statue from Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi had been, but on banquet scenes that probably had a ritual significance, perhaps as illustrations of the Naurūz, the festival of the New Year. The choice of this motif to represent the ruler may have been inspired by more than a simple desire to create a new, more specifically Islamic iconography. The celebration of the Naurūz involved the ceremonial drinking of wine by the ruler; and, probably under Sasanian influence, drinking wine also
became part of the court ritual of the caliphs: "... Umayyad princes adopted as their own an ancient Near Eastern tradition of transforming pastime and pleasure into a formal activity illustrating the power and the greatness of the prince." 209

A silver medallion made for al-Muqtadir (A.D. 908-32), Gagik's contemporary and ally, is one of the earliest examples in which the cross-legged figure holding a cup can be securely identified as the caliph himself (fig. 232). 210 This medallion and the figure in the Aght'amar relief are also among the earliest preserved examples of the fully developed Islamic motif, but there must have been numerous others, judging from the wide dissemination of this image throughout the Islamic world by the late tenth century. The ruler appears again, flanked by two standing attendants, on a medallion of the emir 'Izz ad-Daula and the caliph at-Ta'i, minted in Baghdad in A.D. 975/76. 211 A related composition is depicted on a Buyid gold medallion in the Freer Gallery (fig. 233). 212 Figures seated with their legs crossed beneath them and holding cups also appear on early ceramics in both Iran and Iraq. 213 Even more examples are preserved in the West, particularly in the art of Fatimid Egypt, where the motif is found in tenth- and eleventh-century manuscripts and wall paintings, on textiles and ceramics, and on eleventh- and twelfth-century wood carvings and ivories (fig. 234). 214 A Fatimid marble relief with a seated prince flanked by two attendants, found at Tunis, has been attributed to the tenth century. 215 In Sicily, the ruler with a cup appears on painted ivory caskets, and in the paintings on the stalactite ceiling of the Cappella
Palatina. There are also several interesting variants on tenth- and eleventh-century ivory caskets from Spain (fig. 235). Later, in the second half of the twelfth and throughout the thirteenth centuries, the motif was even more widely used, and appeared in a great variety of contexts and media throughout the Islamic world.

While some of the early images, particularly those on the medalions with inscriptions, may be interpreted with a reasonable degree of certainty as portraits of the caliphs themselves, it is equally clear that not all seated figures holding cups represent actual rulers. The motif seems to have lost its specificity at a relatively early date, and it came to be used not only as a general symbol for a ruler or for the concepts of power and authority, but also as a "sign" representing abstract themes like luxury, prosperity, and pleasure. The correct interpretation could be defined by the context, or by an inscription; and, as O. Grabar has shown, such a motif, created only in general terms, may have been understood in more concrete terms by the contemporary observer. It was the "... very ambivalence and lack of iconographic precision [of Muslim courtly art] that made it possible for Islamic princely themes to be copied on such diverse monuments as the ... church at Akhtamar or the ... Cappella Palatina in Sicily."

The ruler at Aght'amar conforms to the standard Islamic image, as defined by the cross-legged pose and the wine cup held in the right hand. Many figures of this type, however, also carry another object in addition to the cup, and there is more variation in these attributes. As noted above, the rulers on post-Sasanian plates are shown holding flowers, as are many of the banqueters in the Panjikent frescoes.
Flowers or leafy branches are also carried by the figures in some Islamic examples; they are seen most frequently on early ceramics, but they also appear in later works such as the paintings in the Cappella Palatina. Although the significance of these attributes has not yet been conclusively determined, it is generally agreed that they originally had a religious or ritual purpose. It seems unlikely, however, that the meaning of these flowers and branches would have been consistently maintained through several centuries of Islamic art, particularly as it has no demonstrable association with Islam. In most cases, these attributes appear to have been reduced to stock motifs, mere echoes of an older tradition; or they may have become general symbols of authority. As the symbolic value of the flower grew more obscure, it was replaced with increasing frequency by the mandil, a small cloth used, among other things, for wiping the mouth after drinking. This accessory originated as a purely utilitarian object, but it came to be understood as a mark of refinement and a symbol of rank.

The ruler in our relief holds neither flower nor mandil, but reaches up with his left hand to a cluster of grapes hanging from the vine that surrounds him. It is possible that the sculptor drew from a model in which the ruler held a leafy stalk in his left hand, and either misunderstood the attribute or intentionally changed it to one more appropriate to the vine-scroll setting. It is equally possible, however, that the cluster of grapes was another attribute that survived from an earlier tradition. On one of the ivory caskets from Córdoba, made in 1005, a seated figure flanked by two standing attendants appears against a background of highly stylized grape vines (fig. 235).
He holds a small drinking flask in one hand, and a bunch of grapes in the other. This figure deviates from the standard Islamic image in several details, which could indicate a more direct influence from earlier Iranian art. His pose, with one leg folded beneath him and the other raised and bent at the knee, is an awkwardly rendered version of the semi-reclining pose seen in the banqueters on the post-Sasanian plates discussed above; and he holds the grapes in his right hand and the flask in his left, which is characteristic of the figures on the plates but very unusual in the Islamic examples. The only other example known to me in which a figure of this type is shown holding grapes is a fragment of an underglaze-painted ceramic tile that formed part of the wall decoration in a thirteenth-century palace at Kubadabad in south central Anatolia.

The lion and the eagle behind the attendants in the Aght'amar relief complete the scene, and confirm the influence of Iranian traditions on this iconography. Benches supported on the foreparts of lions had a very long history as a throne type in Western Asia, but the appearance of complete figures of lions in company with seated rulers holding cups is most conspicuous on the post-Sasanian and Sogdian silver plates that were produced in the seventh to ninth centuries under strong Sasanian influence (figs. 231 and 19). The continuation of this tradition in the tenth and eleventh centuries in Iran and Transoxiana is attested by the Buyid medallion in the Freer Gallery (fig. 233) and a Ghaznavid cup in the Hermitage. Lions also appear beneath the king on the Spanish ivory casket discussed above (fig. 235) and on a twelfth-century Fatimid ivory (fig. 234). Additional evidence that this
iconography was known in Greater Armenia, and was still in use more than a century after the church at Aght'amar was constructed, is provided by a miniature from a Gospel made for King Gagik of Kars, in which the ruler and his wife and daughter are shown seated with their legs crossed beneath them on a bench with a pair of addorsed lions at the lower corners (Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, ms. 2556, fol. 135v) (fig. 21). Many of the lions in these scenes are shown either crouching or reclining, and the poses of the lions on the Sogdian plate are particularly close to that of the creature in our relief. It is clear that our enthronement scene was based on a model of the same type that inspired the scenes cited above; and it is noteworthy that each of these works, with the exception of the post-Sasanian plate and the Armenian miniature, also includes a pair of standing attendants. The sculptor at Aght'amar carved only one lion, and in order to compress all the details of the scene into a narrow frieze, placed it to the side rather than beneath the ruler.

Eagles are less common in enthronement scenes of this type, but there are some works in which they appear in a role similar to that of the lions. A prince holding a cup and reclining on a couch supported on three legs in the form of eagles is depicted on a Parthian rock relief of ca. A.D. 200 at Tang-i-Sarvak. Parthian influence is apparent in the images of rulers in the early third-century frescoes in the Synagogue at Dura-Europos, in which pairs of reclining lions and eagles appear on steps leading up to the elaborate thrones occupied by King Solomon and King Ahasuerus. Later examples are found on post-Sasanian silver vessels: on an oval bowl in the Walters Art Gallery,
a king holding his sword vertically in front of him in the traditional pose of official Sasanian enthronement scenes is seated on a bench supported on two eagles; and on a plate found at Qazvin, an elaborate "cosmic" throne, supported on the backs of two confronted lions, is surrounded by a canopy decorated with birds shown in profile. The throne of a caliph in a fresco in the apse of the audience hall at Qusayr 'Amra recalls this structure in some details: it stands under a baldachin, on top of which three birds are perched, and the outer framing arch of the apse also has a frieze of birds (fig. 44). On an ivory pyxis made in Córdoba in 970, a pair of confronted eagles appears beneath the ruler, who, however, holds a flag-like object rather than a cup in his right hand. Finally, in one of the paintings of the Capella Palatina, a turbaned man seated cross-legged and holding a stylized flower and a drinking cup is flanked by two falcons placed above his shoulders. Both lions and eagles continued to appear with scenes of enthroned rulers in ceramics and metalwork of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The seated ruler at Aght'amar, holding a wine cup and accompanied by two attendants, a lion, and an eagle, is an early example of an iconographic theme that became almost synonymous with the concepts of royalty, power, and luxury in Islamic art. There is, however, no reason to identify the central figure as an image of an Islamic caliph, or specifically the caliph al-Muqtadir, as has sometimes been suggested; it is much more likely that he was intended, or at least understood, as a portrait of King Gagik. The fact that the king was already represented on the west facade (cat. no. Al) does not conflict with
this identification. In the votive scene, which was necessarily based
on Byzantine iconography, Gagik appears as a donor and a supplicant; in
the vine frieze he is shown as the ruler of the temporal world, as it
unfolds on either side of the enthronement scene.

C46. Vintager. East facade. Fig. 236.

A kneeling man supporting a basket on his right shoulder plucks
fruit from the vine with his left hand. This area of the frieze is
very badly weathered, and the surface of the stone is too worn to allow
details to be distinguished. This figure is very similar to the vin­
tager represented on the south facade (see above, cat. no. C28, for
discussion).

C47. Bird-Catcher (Personification of October or November?).
East facade. Fig. 236.

A man dressed in knee-length trousers and a long-sleeved jacket
bends to seize the tail of a bird shown in profile facing right. The
surface of the stone is badly abraded.

Bird-catching was a popular sport in the Mediterranean and the
Near East, and was frequently depicted on mosaic pavements and on smal­
ler objects such as carved gems and lamps. Many different imple­
ments, including lime rods and glue, nets, and decoys, were used to
trap the birds; later they were also hunted with falcons (see above,
cat. no. A26). Hunters catching birds with their bare hands were less
frequently represented, but scenes similar to that in our relief are
found on a sixth-century mosaic pavement in the south transept of Basilica Alpha at Nikopolis (fig. 237) and in an eleventh-century manuscript of the Cynegetica of Pseudo-Oppian in Venice (Marciana, cod. gr. 479, fol. 13r).

Like the hunting of hares, bird-catching was an activity associated particularly with the autumn months. In the Calendar of 354, the month of October is represented by a hunter holding a hare (see above, cat. no. C36), but a bird and a bundle of lime rods appear behind the hunter as secondary attributes. On the sixth-century mosaic pavement in the Monastery of Mary at Beisan, October is personified by a fowler carrying lime rods, a net, and a basket; and in the Marciana Gospel, the figure of October carries three captured birds hanging from a rod over his shoulder and holds another on his left wrist (fig. 208). Bird-catchers may also represent the month of November, as in the sixth-century mosaic in the Funerary Chapel at el-Hammam near Beisan, and in the Ptolemy manuscript of 813-820 in the Vatican.

C48. Bear Eating Grapes. North facade. Fig. 238.

The surface of this stone is very worn, but the figure of a large bear, shown in profile facing left and devouring a cluster of grapes, can still be distinguished. For discussion of this motif, see above, cat. no. A62; and see also cat. no. C2.

The blocks to the right of the grape-eating bear are so weathered that even the general outlines of the reliefs can scarcely be distinguished. The largest rounded form on the first stone (fig. 239) may have been a crouching animal. The other two blocks appear to have been carved only with vines and fruit, but the surfaces are so badly abraded that it is difficult to be certain that no other figures were represented.

C50. Head. North facade. Fig. 242.

A frontal head appears between the branching vine stocks. This block is still very worn and only the eyes can be distinguished, but the head was undoubtedly similar to those depicted on the south facade (see above, cat. no. C29).

C51. Bird. North facade. Fig. 243.

A bird, which appears to have the large curved beak of a raptor, is shown in profile facing left, perched on a tendril of the vine.

C52. Man Digging with a Spade (Personification of November?). North facade. Fig. 243.

A man wearing a short tunic is shown in three-quarter view, digging with a long-handled spade that he grasps with both hands. He leans forward and pushes the spade down with his right foot, which is placed
on the cross-bar. A similar figure appears in the vine frieze farther to the west (see below, cat. no. C68).

Agricultural workers turning the soil with mattocks or spades were depicted on early mosaic pavements in North African villas, as at Zlit-ten and Cherchel, and on the mosaic from the portico of the Great Palace at Constantinople. Such figures also appear in cycles of the labors of the months, as on the mosaic in the Monastery of Mary at Bisan, where February is represented by a man carrying a two-pronged mattock over his shoulder. The example closest to our relief is a man digging with a spade who personifies November in the cycle in the Marciana Gospel (fig. 208). A similar figure appears in an abbreviated cycle in a late-eleventh-century manuscript of the writings of John Climacus in the Vatican (cod. gr. 394, fol. 12v), but it is unclear whether he represents the month of October, November, or December. The cycles on the thirteenth- or fourteenth-century Islamic bronze candlesticks also include men with spades, once as an allegory of February, once as March, and twice as May.

C53. Wrestlers. North facade. Fig. 244.

Two men clad only in knee-length trousers appear in the midst of thick foliage. Each grasps vines in his hands and stands on one leg, with the other raised to kick at his opponent.

Wrestlers were popular subjects at Aght'amar; this is the second pair to appear in the vine frieze, and similar scenes figured among the paintings that decorated Gagik's palace (see above, cat. no. C25, for
further discussion). The poses of these men, particularly the raised and extended arms, recall those of some of the figures in the *palaestra* scene on the west wall of the audience hall at Qusayr 'Amra (fig. 202).  


A man wearing a short tunic stands in three-quarter view facing right. He holds a sling loaded with a stone in his right hand and with his left gestures toward a large bird that is undoubtedly his target. The bird, perched on a vine stock, is shown in profile facing left but with its long neck twisted back as it devours a cluster of grapes.

A hunter with a sling confronting a lion is depicted in the vine frieze on the south facade, and hunters armed with slings are also found among the figures on sixth-century pavement mosaics in Lebanon and Palestine (see above, cat. no. C19). A man in a pose very similar to that of our figure, holding a sling loaded with a stone in his lowered right hand and stalking a bird pecking at foliage, is represented on a late Sasanian silver vase with scenes of the hunt and the vintage (fig. 246).  

C55. Ram. North facade. Fig. 247.

A crouching ram enclosed in a vine medallion is shown in profile facing right, but with its head turned back in the opposite direction. With the exception of its left foreleg, which extends beyond the
framing vine, the animal's legs are folded beneath its body. The joints of the legs are marked by disks.

The pose of this animal, particularly the arrangement of the legs, is distinctive, but so ubiquitous that it is difficult to suggest a single source. An ibex in an identical pose is depicted on a Scythian buckle of the fifth or fourth century B.C. There are many later examples in both Byzantine and Islamic art, including an ibex on the fifth-century Worcester Hunt mosaic from Antioch; stucco sheep from the bath at Khirbat al Mafjar; and sheep and goats in a number of eleventh-century Byzantine manuscripts, most frequently in miniatures illustrating the creation or naming of the animals or scenes from the early life of David.

C56. Eagle Eating Grapes. North facade. Fig. 248.

Following a segment of frieze decorated only with vines, fruit, and foliage, a large eagle, shown in profile with wings addorsed, devours a cluster of grapes. Its body is carved with a scale pattern, its tail with a series of bars, and its wings are divided into long narrow feathers with short parallel hatchings. For the motif of birds eating grapes, see above, cat. no. C18.

C57. Porter with Baskets (Personification of September?). North facade. Fig. 248.

A man dressed in a short tunic is shown in three-quarter view, striding toward the left. He carries two tall woven baskets, one on
his back, supported by his awkwardly bent right arm, the other held in front of his body.

Porters carrying baskets of fruit on their backs were a common motif in cycles with scenes of the vintage, and figures very similar to ours, though without a second basket held in front of them, appear on mosaic pavements in Beisan, Madaba, Gerasa, and Khirbat al-Makhayyat (figs. 157 and 158). These figures are also found in cycles of the activities of the months as personifications of September. There is more variation in the earlier cycles, where this month is sometimes represented by men holding grapes or harvesting the fruit (see above, cat. no. C28 and p. 268, n. 116), but in one example, the mosaic pavement from the Funerary Chapel at el Hammam, the figure of September supports a basket on his shoulder with his right arm in a pose very similar to that of the man in our relief (fig. 249). In later cycles, as in the Marciana Gospel (fig. 208) and the Octateuchs (fig. 178), porters with baskets were almost universally adopted as allegories of September. These figures also appear on eleventh- or twelfth-century Fatimid ivories, though it is not always clear whether they were intended as personifications of the months or as ordinary genre scenes. In several of the later Islamic cycles found on inlaid bronze candlesticks, September is depicted as a man carrying two baskets or buckets, both of which, however, are held at his sides, rather than in the positions seen in our relief.
C58. Man Struggling with a Bear. North facade. Fig. 248.

A man clad in a short tunic is shown in combat with a bear standing on its hind legs. The man grasps the bear's back with his left hand, and in his right holds a sword that he has thrust through the animal's pelt. His head, part of which has been broken away, it turned slightly toward the left, and his gaze appears to have been directed toward the man carrying baskets. The bear stands with one paw on the man's shoulder and the other curled around the lower part of his face. Except for the fact that the hunter in this relief is armed, the group is very similar to the man and bear in the frieze on the west facade (see above, cat. no. C5).

C59. Bird Pecking Grapes. North facade. Fig. 250.

A small bird is shown standing in profile facing left, pecking at a cluster of grapes. The bird's wing is divided by a pearled band, but other details are more realistically rendered, and the heavy body and short rounded wings, as well as the form of the bill and the markings around the eye, allow the bird to be identified as a partridge.

Of all the species of birds depicted on Palestinian pavement mosaics with inhabited vine scrolls, partridges are among the most common. They are often shown pecking at grapes, as on the pavement in the Funerary Chapel at el-Hammam near Beisan (fig. 158) and in the contemporary Armenian mosaic from the funerary chapel of Saint Polyeuktos in the Musrara Quarter of Jerusalem.
C60. Confronted Birds. North facade. Fig. 250.

Two birds stand confronted beneath clusters of grapes that hang from the vine. Their short heavy bodies and long rounded beaks are those of ducks or geese, but the bird on the right, which wears a plain collar around its neck, has a stylized peacock's tail. Short pearled bands decorate the wing and tail of the bird on the left.

This Sasanian-inspired motif was almost certainly transmitted through luxury textiles. A similar pair of confronted birds decorates the caftan worn by an attendant in the boar-hunt relief at Taq-i Bostan (fig. 61), and there are numerous preserved textile fragments with pairs of ducks or peacocks. The mantle worn by King Gagik in the votive scene on the west facade is decorated with a pattern of interlaced roundels framing ducks wearing collars (see above, cat. no. A1).

Several details of the Aght'amar relief indicate that it was modeled on a work produced after the fall of the Sasanian dynasty. Pearled bands dividing the wings of birds or other creatures appear mainly on objects made after the Arab conquest; and the rounded stippled tail of the bird on the right finds its closest parallels in a series of eighth- or ninth-century Sasanian-influenced Sogdian silks with pairs of confronted peacocks.

C61. Confronted Goats. North facade. Fig. 250.

Two confronted goats, shown in profile and standing on their hind legs, form a symmetrical composition within a loop of the vine.
This motif is related to that of the confronted goats beside a palm tree or altar in the lower zone of sculpture on the south facade (cat. no. All). In most designs of this type, the animals flank a stylized "tree of life;" but a composition very similar to ours, in which a pair of ibexes is shown confronted amidst the fruit and foliage of a grape vine, is preserved on a series of molded stucco plaques from a fifth-century Sasanian building in Iran (fig. 251).

C62. Leopard. North facade. Fig. 252.

A leopard, shown in profile facing left, paces through the vines. Its spotted coat is rendered by a series of small holes drilled in the stone.

Leopards appear frequently in the inhabited vine scrolls on sixth-century mosaic pavements. A creature in a pose and in a setting particularly close to those of the Aght'amār leopard is depicted in one of the interstices between the vine medallions on the mosaic in the Monastery at Beisan (fig. 157).

C63. Bird Pecking Grapes. North facade. Fig. 253.

A bird, standing in a crook of the vine, leans forward to peck at a cluster of fruit.

The placement of this bird above, rather than within, a vine medallion is another indication of the use of a model related to those employed by the mosaicists who created the pavements at Beisan (figs. 157 and 158), as it was only in the final stage of the development of the
vine trellis pattern that birds and animals began to be placed in the interstices between the medallions.\textsuperscript{280} Many of the inhabited vine scrolls on Sasanian silver vessels are also of this type, and a bird very similar to ours in both position and general outline appears on a sixth- or seventh-century bowl in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 254).\textsuperscript{281} For further discussion of the motif of birds pecking grapes, see above, cat. no. C18.

C64. Hare Eating Grapes. North facade. Fig. 253.

A large hare, framed by a branch of the vine, is shown in profile facing left, standing on its hind legs and nibbling at a bunch of grapes that it grasps with its forepaws.

As discussed above (see cat. no. C37), hares eating grapes are among the most ubiquitous inhabitants of populated vine scrolls. They occur in a wide variety of poses, crouching over the grapes, standing among the vines, or, as here, standing on their hind legs and stretching up to the fruit. A grape-eating hare in a pose very similar to ours, though facing right rather than left, is repeated twice on the pavement mosaic of the Funerary Chapel at el-Hammam near Beisan (fig. 158).\textsuperscript{282}

C65. Head. North facade. Fig. 255.

A frontal bearded head is placed within the Y formed by the branching of the vine from a thick central stock. For discussion of this motif, see above, cat. no. C29.
C66. Parrots. North facade. Fig. 255.

A loop of the vine is bisected by two birds placed one above the other, the lower one facing left, the upper one right. Judging from the shapes of their bodies and the form of the beak and eye of the larger, more clearly distinguishable lower bird, they appear to be parrots, similar to the one carved in high relief in the second zone of sculpture on the north facade (see above, cat. no. B38).

Parrots, although not unknown in Byzantine art, are not common; and the presence of two birds probably indicates a model from the Islamic world, in which there are a number of examples of parrots arranged in vertical rows forming borders, or presented in heraldic pairs. A ninth-century painting of seated men with wine cups from a house at Samarra was framed by rows of parrots, placed side by side in the lower border and arranged vertically, one above the other, on the sides; and a similar border framed a large painting of dancers in the harem of the Jausaq Palace. Pairs of addorsed birds very similar to those in our relief appear on several late tenth-century caskets from Córdoba. These designs were probably transmitted by textiles, and such a motif might have served as a model for our relief, in which the birds also face opposite directions. Finally, parrots appear to have been particularly common in Egyptian Islamic art, and another interesting example is found on an eleventh- or early twelfth-century Fatimid manuscript leaf from Fostat, where a figure seated on a throne is framed by a border of parrots.
C67. Lizard(?). North facade. Fig. 255.

A small animal with a narrow pointed head and a long tail, probably a lizard, is shown in profile facing left.

Small creatures such as lizards and insects appeared frequently in inhabited scrolls produced in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, but are less common in fourth- to seventh-century works. There are, however, some exceptions, such as the acanthus border of the mosaic of the Great Palace in Constantinople, which includes three depictions of lizards as well as a tortoise and a grasshopper.

C68. Man Digging with a Spade. North facade. Fig. 255.

A man clad only in a pair of short trousers grasps the long handle of a spade with both hands, and pushes the blade down with his right foot. A similar figure is depicted in the vine frieze farther to the east on the same facade (see above, cat. no. C62, for further discussion).

C69. Woman Holding Jars. North facade. Fig. 256.

A woman, the only one in the entire vine frieze, stands with both arms raised, holding a rounded jar in each hand. Her head and body are shown in a frontal view, but her legs and bare feet are in profile, with the left foot slightly raised. She wears a knee-length dress and a long veil or scarf draped over each arm, and circlets adorn each of her ankles. Her hair appears to be arranged in heavy coils on top of her head.
K. Otto-Dorn correctly interpreted this figure as a dancer, part of the cycle of princely entertainments already represented by the wrestlers and stick-fighters on the south and north facades (cat. nos. C23, C25, and C53).\textsuperscript{289} According to the description in the chronicle of the continuator of Thomas Artsruni, dancing girls and musicians also accompanied an image of the seated ruler in the paintings that decorated Gagik's palace at Aght'amar.\textsuperscript{290} Dancers were an exceptionally popular motif in the art of the Mediterranean and the Near East. As the majority of these figures were ultimately derived from the maenads and bacchantes of Hellenistic art, it is not surprising that there are similarities in the poses and costumes of dancers depicted on works widely separated both geographically and chronologically.

In Coptic Egypt, the subject matter of Greek mythology was an important source of motifs for the artists who designed patterns for textiles, and a number of themes, including dancers and maenads, were drawn from the imagery of the Dionysiac cycle.\textsuperscript{291} The dancers depicted on a silk from Achmîn-Panopolis, generally dated to the seventh century, share several features with the figure in our relief: although they hold pomegranates rather than jars, the positions of their arms are very similar, and they also wear anklets and have long scarves draped over their arms (fig. 257).\textsuperscript{292}

Dionysiac imagery also played a major role in Sasanian art. Stucco reliefs with depictions of dancers were found in several mansions near Ctesiphon, and the influence of classical maenads on the form of these figures was immediately recognized.\textsuperscript{293} Dancers, or women in dancing poses, were also a favorite subject for the decoration of metalwork,
and more than fifty Sasanian and post-Sasanian silver vessels with this theme have now come to light. The figures on these objects are of two distinct types: those who carry musical instruments or hold scarves billowing above their heads, and who clearly represent dancers or entertainers;\textsuperscript{294} and those who carry a variety of symbolic attributes, and are most commonly found in groups of four decorating ewers and bottles (fig. 258).\textsuperscript{295} The latter category is by far the larger in terms of the number of examples preserved, and it is also the most important in the present context. At first glance these graceful, erotic ladies may seem far removed from the stocky little dancer in the Aght'amar frieze, but there are some striking similarities in their poses and costumes. Although there are some variations, the women on the Sasanian vessels are most frequently represented with frontal heads and torsos and profile legs and feet, with one foot flat on the ground and the other lifted upward. They wear long, tight-fitting dresses, with the ends of veils or scarves that cover their lower bodies draped over their arms, and their elaborate jewelry often includes a pair of anklets. Each of these figures holds two symbolic attributes, among which birds, fruit, and flowers are the most common, but vessels such as bowls and ewers also occur.\textsuperscript{296} The women do not as a rule hold two identical objects, although in rare cases they may carry two vessels, such as a cup and a ewer.\textsuperscript{297} Most of these figures have only one arm raised, while the other is extended downward and away from the body, but on some examples, particularly those thought to date from the Islamic period, the women have both arms raised in a position similar to that of the dancer in our relief.\textsuperscript{298}
The interpretation of these attribute-bearing Sasanian dancers has been the subject of considerable scholarly discussion. They have been variously identified as secular entertainers; as personifications of months, seasons, or seasonal Zoroastrian festivals; as nymphs; and as priestesses or devotees of the goddess Anahita, or different aspects of the goddess herself. Whatever their meaning in the Sasanian era, it is probable that by the time these figures became part of the princely cycle of Islamic art, they were indeed thought of as mere entertainers. A good illustration of this later development is provided by a post-Sasanian plate in the Cincinnati Art Museum (fig. 231), already cited in regard to the image of the seated ruler on the east facade (cat. no. C45). On this plate, which was described by O. Grabar as a "mediaeval eastern Iranian reworking of several pre-Islamic traditions," the four attribute-bearing dancers have been reduced to ordinary attendants or entertainers, who, along with two musicians, accompany a seated prince holding a wine cup and flower. A number of other bottles, ewers, and bowls with the dancing figures are thought to have been made after the fall of the Sasanian dynasty, and although these works are notoriously difficult to date, it is quite likely that some of them were produced as late as the tenth century. A series of tenth-century slip-painted bowls found at Nishapur also attests to the later survival of this iconography in eastern Iran. While the crudely executed figures on these bowls are very different in style from those found on metalwork, their dependence on the earlier tradition is clear. A dancer on a bowl in the Keir Collection, although apparently male, stands with one foot flat on the ground and the other slightly raised, and holds two attributes
that are difficult to identify, but which might be a flower and some type of vessel; and on another bowl from Nishapur, now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, two female figures with scarves draped over their raised arms hold flowers and cups, and accompany two male figures seated cross-legged and holding wine cups.

The images of dancing girls that decorated the royal residences of the Umayyad caliphs in Palestine and Syria also betray the influence of Sasanian and post-Sasanian metalwork. Several dancers depicted in the frescoes at Qusayr 'Amra appear to be more purely classical in inspiration and may have been drawn directly from a Late Antique source, but the stucco statues of attribute-bearing women from the palace entrance hall and bath porch of Khirbat al-Mafjar owe much to the Sasanian tradition. Two women depicted on fragmentary stucco parapet plaques from Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi were also adapted from the Sasanian dancers; and while the right arms of both figures are unfortunately lost, each holds a rounded jar in her raised left hand in a manner very similar to that of the dancer in the Aght'amar frieze (fig. 259). A frequently reproduced painting of two dancers from the Jausaq Palace at Samarra demonstrates the continued influence of this tradition in the Abbasid period, and, as Otto-Dorn noted in her earlier study, these figures also show similarities in their poses, costumes, and attributes to the woman in our relief (fig. 260).

Dancing girls continued to be a popular subject in Fatimid art, and in some cases, such as the eleventh-century carved wooden beams thought to have come from the Western Fatimid Palace in Cairo and the twelfth-century paintings on the ceiling of the Cappella Palatina at Palermo,
they are still found in cycles directly connected to the court; but they also appeared in other contexts, and examples have been preserved on ceramics and ivories and in sketches and drawings, as well as in larger wall paintings.\textsuperscript{308} Dancers, like many other motifs from the princely cycle of Islamic art, had by this time acquired a more general meaning as abstract symbols of luxury, pleasure, and wealth.\textsuperscript{309} The dancing girls in Fatimid art are no longer shown in the relatively static poses of the women in the Sasanian and early Islamic works; their movements are much livelier and more vivid, and their scarves, rather than being merely draped over their arms, are now held in their hands and apparently used to accentuate the movements of their bodies.\textsuperscript{310} They no longer hold any other objects, but vases still occasionally appear in connection with the dancers. On a luster-painted bowl in the Freer Gallery, a dancer is flanked by two vases that are simply placed against the abstract "peacock-eye" background;\textsuperscript{311} and a single vase appears beneath the feet of one of the dancers in the Cappella Palatina.\textsuperscript{312} Dancers continued to be represented in later Islamic art, and they also became part of the iconographic repertoire of the Byzantine court.\textsuperscript{313} The dancer at Aght'amar, however, clearly descends from an earlier tradition. Although she may ultimately be traced back to the attribute-bearing ladies on Sasanian metalwork, the position of her arms and the attributes she carries find their closest parallels on post-Sasanian and Islamic works of the eighth to tenth centuries, and she must have been drawn from the same cycle of imagery that produced the
representations of the mounted hunter and the seated ruler on the east facade (cat. nos. C43 and C45).

C70. Birds and Melon. North facade. Fig. 256.

Two birds, very simplified but vaguely resembling ducks or geese, stand confronted but with their heads turned back in opposite directions. They lack the ornamental stylizations seen in many of the birds and animals in the Aght'amar reliefs; their wings are divided by plain bands, and the primary feathers are indicated by simple parallel lines. A melon is carved above the bird on the right.

Pairs of birds in poses similar to these were a popular motif for the decoration of luxury textiles, and many examples are preserved on Byzantine silks (fig. 261). The sculptor at Aght'amar may have enlarged the bird on the right and added the melon simply to fill the available space.

C71. Head. North facade. Fig. 256.

A large frontal bearded head appears within the Y formed by the branching of the vines from a central stock. For discussion of this motif, see above, cat. no. C29.

C72. Hunter Fleeing from a Bear. North facade. Fig. 262.

A man with both arms raised stands among the vines. The surface of the stone is badly abraded and details are difficult to distinguish,
but the figure does not appear to hold any object, and his gaze is directed toward the right, where the next loop of the vine frames a bear. Orbeli appears to have been correct in interpreting the position of the man's arms as a gesture of fear, and his slightly bent right knee and extended left leg as denoting haste or flight. The bear stands on its hind legs and rests its front paws on a branch of the vine, in a pose very similar to those of the bears pursuing a fleeing man (cat. no. C16) and confronting a hunter armed with a lance (cat. no. C32), both on the south facade.


A large wild boar is shown in profile facing left, browsing among the grapes. The creature has the characteristic tusks, humped back, and tufted tail of its species, and the joints of its legs are defined by disks.

Boars were one of the most commonly represented animals in Sasanian art, where they not only appeared as the prey in scenes of the royal hunt, but also carried a variety of symbolic connotations. In our relief, however, as the boar is presented as merely another of the grape-eating animals found among the vines, and also as the quarry of the distinctly non-royal hunter in the next medallion, its source must be sought in the hunting and vintaging cycles of the early Byzantine mosaic pavements rather than in Sasanian art. A wild boar appears among the grapes in an inhabited vine scroll on the pavement of a late sixth- or early seventh-century church at Madaba; and on the
pavements of the Funerary Chapel at el-Hamam near Beisan, church of the Priest John at Khirbat al-Makhayyat, boars are shown, respectively, attacking a hunter armed with a lance and pursued by a hunter with a sling. Boars also figured among the stucco animals in the inhabited vine scroll carved on the ceiling of the entrance hall of the early eighth-century Umayyad palace at Khirbat al-Mafjar.

C74. Hunter and Dog. North facade. Fig. 263.

A hunter, clad in an elbow-length blouse and perhaps a pair of short trousers, stands in three-quarter view with his right hand raised, probably indicating the quarry, the boar in the preceding medallion, to the large hunting dog that accompanies him. The dog is shown in profile, standing alertly but not yet running. It wears a collar around its neck, and the hunter appears to hold the end of a leash in his left hand. The group is very similar to the hunter and dog depicted in the vine frieze at the east end of the south facade (cat. no. C41).

Boars were among the most common objects of the hunt in Late Antiquity. Widely known for their ferocity, they were hunted not only for sport, but also for the table and for use in spectacles in the amphitheater. Hounds were very frequently used to assist the hunters in capturing wild boars, and scenes depicting hunts of this type are preserved on a number of Late Antique mosaic pavements.
C75. Peacock. North facade. Fig. 263.

A peacock, shown in profile facing right, stands on a stylized palmette base. The bird's wing is divided by a pearled band, and another outlines its tail.

This motif was clearly derived from a textile. Peacocks were a favorite subject for the decoration of elaborate silks, and they are found in Sasanian art as well as on textiles produced in Byzantine, Islamic, and Armenian workshops. The use of a stylized palmette as a base for birds or animals is also particularly characteristic of textile designs. Some of the closest parallels to the bird in our relief are found on early eleventh-century Córdoban ivories. The artists who produced these objects frequently drew motifs from Eastern silks, and peacocks similar to ours in their general outlines and in the shapes and positions of their tails appear in roundels or lobed medallions on the lids of several caskets.

C76. Head. North facade. Figs. 162 and 263.

A frontal bearded head appears within the Y formed by the branching of the vines from a central stock placed at the corner of the north and west facades. For discussion of this motif, see above, cat. no. C29.


3. For examples, see P. O. Harper, The Royal Hunter: Art of the Sasanian Empire, New York, 1978, pp. 53ff., no. 14; p. 62, no. 19; and pp. 71ff., no. 24; and Sasanian Silver: Late Antique and Early Mediaeval Arts of Luxury from Iran, catalogue of an exhibition at the University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, 1967, pp. 124ff., no. 41, and pp. 134ff., nos. 51-52 (cited hereafter as Sasanian Silver). The motif does not appear to have been common in Sasanian sculpture, but partridges enclosed within the circles of a vine scroll were found among the fragments of stucco from the palaces at Chal Tarkhan-Eshqabad (D. Thompson, Stucco from Chal Tarkhan-Eshqabad near Rayy, Warminster, 1976, p. 57 and pl. X, 4-5).

4. For the Umayyad examples, see the discussion below. An elaborate inhabited scroll was painted on the wall of the domed hall of the harem in the Jausaq palace at Samarra (836-839), but this scroll, although it includes some vine leaves and clusters of grapes, is a cornucopia scroll rather than a vine rinceau (E. Herzfeld, Die Malereien von Samarra [Die Ausgrabungen von Samarra, III], Berlin, 1927, pp. 2ff. and pls. XI-XIV).


7. Ibid., p. 55 and fig. 35. Der Nersessian (Aght'amar: Church of the Holy Cross [Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies, 1], Cambridge, Mass., 1965, p. 26) also mentioned some large stone slabs with inhabited vine scrolls that were re-used in the construction of the seventh-century church at Zvart'nots, but I have not been able to obtain photographs of these reliefs.

8. Examples include the molding above the tympanum of the south entrance of the sixth-century church at Ptghni (Der Nersessian, L'art arménien, fig. 12); the frieze above the blind arcade of the church at Zvart'nots (ibid., fig. 26); moldings over the windows of a church at T'alich (ibid., fig. 52); and the molding framing the tympanum over the west entrance of the cathedral at Mren (M. and N. Thierry, "La cathédrale de Mren et sa décoration," CahArch, 21, 1971, p. 97 and fig. 11g).

10. For the Beisan mosaics, see G. M. Fitzgerald, A Sixth Century Monastery at Beth-Shan (Scythopolis), Philadelphia, 1939, p. 9 and pls. XVI-XVII; and M. Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements at el Hammām, Beisān," QDAP, 5, 1936, pp. 13ff. and pls. XIV-XV.


12. Ibid., p. 171.


15. These include triangles H and I and the upper parts of triangles B and C; see Creswell, Early Muslim Architecture, pls. 121-22 and 127-28.


18. The best examples are two stags on a lobed silver bowl in the Hermitage (I. A. Orbeli and C. V. Trever, Orfèvrerie sasanide, Moscow-Leningrad, 1935, pl. 58, and SPA, IV, pl. 221 B). This bowl has been dated to the post-Sasanian period by P. O. Harper ("An Eighth Century Silver Plate from Iran with a Mythological Scene," Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1972, p. 161).

5, 1942, p. 39. These mosaics have been variously dated from the sixth century to as late as ca. 700; for a summary of the evidence and the state of the question, see D. Talbot Rice, "On the Date of the Mosaic Floor of the Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors at Constantinople," Charisterion eis Anastasion K. Orlandon, I, Athens, 1965, pp. 1ff.


23. Although this manuscript was produced in Constantinople in the ninth century, the calendar page is a copy of a mid-third-century diagram. For a recent brief discussion and the earlier bibliography, see G. M. A. Hanfmann, "The Continuity of Classical Art: Culture, Myth, and Faith," Age of Spirituality: A Symposium, New York, 1980, pp. 80f. and p. 96, n. 36.


29. Ibid., p. 98. See especially the diptychs carved in A.D. 506 for Areobindus (Volbach, Elfenbeinarbeiten, pp. 32f., no. 8, pl. 4;
p. 33, no. 10, pl. 5; and pp. 33f., no. 11, pl. 5) and one made in A.D. 517 for Anastasius (ibid., pp. 35f., no. 17, pl. 8); and compare also an earlier example of ca. A.D. 400, possibly made in the West (ibid., p. 53, no. 58, pl. 31).

30. For examples, see A. Goldschmidt and K. Weitzmann, Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X.-XIII. Jahrhunderts, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1979, p. 36, no. 31, pl. XVII c; pp. 39f., no. 41, pl. XXIII b; pp. 41f., no. 48, pls. XXVII b and XXVIII c; p. 44, no. 55, pl. XXXV a-b; and p. 44, no. 56, pl. XXXVI a.


33. P. O. Harper, Silver Vessels of the Sasanian Period, I: Royal Imagery, New York, 1981, pp. 68ff., 131, 135, and pl. 20. The other examples with royal hunters in combat with bears are a third-century plate found at Krasnaya Polyana on the shores of the Caspian Sea (ibid., pp. 50ff. and pl. 9) and a provincial post-Sasanian plate from Anikovska in the Ural Mountains (ibid., p. 70 and pl. 21).

34. Ibid., p. 139.

35. D. G. Shepherd, "Sasanian Art in Cleveland," BCMA, 51, 1964, pp. 89ff. and fig. 30. Other examples of Sasanian silver vessels with hunters and bears include a seventh-century bowl, also in the Cleveland Museum of Art, on which the figures are enclosed in vine scrolls (Harper, Royal Hunter, pp. 53f., no. 14); a small bowl in the Hermitage (Orbeli and Trever, Orfèvrerie sasanide, pl. 35); and a larger bowl found in the Molotov district and now also in the Hermitage (S. Fajans, "Recent Russian Literature on Newly Found Middle Eastern Metal Vessels," ArsOr, 2, 1957, pp. 56f. and figs. 3-4).

"Akhtamar"). In support of this hypothesis, both scholars cited the plate from Nor Baiazet and a seventh-century relief of a standing hunter confronting a bear, found near Zvart'nots. This relief, known to me only through a line drawing published by B. N. Arakelian (Haykakan Patkerak'andaknere IV-VII Darerum, Erevan, 1949, fig. 47), is fragmentary and badly damaged, and it is difficult to be certain from the drawing whether the animal represented is a bear or a lion.

37. On bears in Sasanian art, see Fajans, "Recent Russian Literature," pp. 75f.; Harper, Silver Vessels, p. 50, n. 57; and Köger, Stuckdekor, pp. 60f.


40. For Qusayr 'Amra, see above, p. 257, n. 13. The fragments of the Khirbat al Mafjar scroll include a bear with its teeth fiercely bared, standing on its hind legs; the beast may have confronted a hunter, but the rest of the scene is not preserved (Hamilton, Khirbat al Mafjar, pl. XLII, 1).

41. The similarity between the hunting scenes in the Aght'amar frieze and the bear hunts on these bronzes was noted by Otto-Dorn ("Figurenreliefs," pp. 59ff.); for a list of examples, see ibid., p. 60, n. 112, to which should be added the scene on a fourteenth-century Persian candlestick in the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh (E. Baer, Metalwork in Medieval Islamic Art, Albany, 1983, fig. 194).


43. A good illustration of these figures was published by Åkerström-Hougen (Calendar, fig. 86 and Appendix B:3, p. 134), who also gives the earlier bibliography.

44. Grabar, Sculptures byzantines, pp. 75f., and pl. XXV, 5.


animals on this pyxis are butting their heads against each other and are not separated by a vegetal motif, so they may actually be in combat; but the later examples in Fatimid painting and Seljuq metalwork cited by Otto-Dorn ('Figurenreliefs,' p. 61, n. 117) illustrate the much more common ancient motif of heraldically confronted or addorsed ibexes flanking a tree of life. Otto-Dorn also cited, as a contemporary parallel, a tenth-century Abbasid luster-painted bowl (ibid., p. 31, n. 47); but the animals on this object are humped bulls (zebus) rather than rams.

47. Ibid., pp. 22, 24 and figs. 11-12 a.

48. D. Winfield ( "Some Early Medieval Figure Sculpture from North-East Turkey," JWCI, 31, 1968, pp. 41ff. and pl. 11 a [cited hereafter as Winfield, "Figure Sculpture"] ) discussed archers in Byzantine hunting scenes in some detail, and noted the rarity of the motif of the kneeling archer and the similarity between the Oški and Aght'amar figures.

49. Kneeling archers are found on two ivory caskets from Cuenca: one, dated 1026, in the Museo Arqueologico at Burgos (Kühnei, Elfenbeinskulpturen, pp. 46ff., no. 40, pls. XXXII-XXXIII), and another made in 1049/50 and now in the Museo Arqueológico in Madrid (ibid., pp. 48ff., no. 43, pl. XXXVI). For later examples on Eastern inlaid bronzes, see Otto-Dorn, "Figurenreliefs," p. 60, n. 114. Byzantine ivory caskets with this motif include an eleventh- or twelfth-century casket in the Cappella Palatina in Palermo (Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, Elfenbeinskulpturen, I, p. 40, no. 43, pl. XXIV d) and two twelfth-century examples, one in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (ibid., p. 42, no. 49, pl. XXXI e), the other in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Brussels (ibid., p. 44, no. 56, pl. XXXVI c).


51. See Stern, Calendrier, pp. 239ff., especially p. 244; and Åkerström-Hougen, Calendar, pp. 76ff. and Table II on p. 88.


53. Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements at el Ḫammām," p. 23 and pl. XV.

54. See above, p. 260, n. 43.

55. Miniatures illustrating the cycle of the months are found in all of the complete Byzantine Octateuchs: Vatican Library, cod. gr. 747, fol. 48v (see Åkerström-Hougen, Calendar, p. 135, Appendix B:7, and fig. 87, 2); Vatican Library, cod. gr. 746, fol. 27r (ibid., p.
On the Islamic bronzes, the shepherd most frequently represents March. See D. S. Rice, "The Seasons and the Labors of the Months in Islamic Art," ArsOr, 1, 1954, pp. 20f. and pls. 12, 2; 13, 3; 14, 5; and 15, 3; H. Stern, "Au sujet des images des mois dans l'art musulman," ArsOr, 2, 1957, pp. 493ff.; and E. Atî, "Two İl-Hânid Candlesticks at the University of Michigan," KunstOr, 8, 1972, p. 21, figs. 10 c and 19 d, and the chart in fig. 23. Rice ("Seasons," pp. 16ff.) had attributed these candlesticks to Azerbaijan, but an Anatolian provenance has been suggested by several scholars in more recent studies; see A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World: 8th-18th Centuries (Victoria and Albert Museum Catalogue), London, 1982, pp. 356ff., and J. W. Allan, Islamic Metalwork: The Nuhad Es-Said Collection, London, 1982, pp. 58ff. An important discussion by P. P. Soucek in Islamic Art from the University of Michigan Collections, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1978, was not available to me at the time this text was being prepared.

On the function of the Bildsäulen, see above, p. 136, n. 199. E. Herzfeld (Malereien, p. 89 and pl. LXIX) thought the gazelle carrier represented a woman (Azadeh) carrying an ox, but J. Sauvaget ("Re- marques sur les monuments omayyades, II: Argenteries 'sasanides,'" Journal Asiatique, 1940-1941, pp. 53ff.) later demonstrated that it should be understood as a hunter carrying game.

See, for example, the figures in a procession on a carved marble basin of the eleventh century, now in the museum at Játiva (E. Baer, "The 'Pila' of Játiva: A Document of Secular Urban Art in Western Islam," KunstOr, 7, 1970-1971, pp. 152ff. and fig. 9); the men carrying deer or goats in the paintings on the ceiling of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo of ca. 1140 (U. Monneret de Villard, Le pitture musulmane al soffitto della Cappella Palatina in Palermo, Rome, 1950, figs. 31, 33, 231); and the hunter carrying a gazelle on an inlaid brass ewer in the Louvre, probably made in Mosul in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century (D. S. Rice, "Studies in Islamic Metal Work--II," BSOAS, 15, 1953, p. 76, fig. 11, and pls. XV, XVI).

An exception to this statement is a hunter carrying a gazelle across his shoulders on an ivory plaque (one of a set of four) in Berlin (Kühnel, Elfenbeinskulpturen, pp. 68f., no. 88, pls. XCVII, XCVIII). These plaques were made in Egypt in the eleventh or twelfth century and probably served as inlays on a piece of furniture. Their decoration includes the hunters, falconers, and musicians of the princely cycle, but also figures that might have been taken from a cycle of the months,
so it is difficult to determine which group the gazelle-carrier belongs to. For a brief discussion on this question, see R. Ettinghausen, "Early Realism in Islamic Art," Studi orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi della Vida, I, Rome, 1956, pp. 258f., n. 2.


61. S. Fukai and K. Horiuchi, Taq-i-Bustan, Tokyo, 1972, II, pl. XXXIX.


64. Among the examples with motifs closest to ours are a casket in the Musée de Cluny, Paris (Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, Elfenbeinskulpturen, I, pp. 39f., no. 41, pl. XXII b), and another in the Hermitage in Leningrad (ibid., pp. 41f., no. 48, pls. XXVII a and XXVIII c). Weitzmann (ibid., pp. 36, no. 31) compared these scenes to the man-bear combats on earlier consular diptychs.


68. For the Funerary Chapel at el Hammam, see Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements at el Hammām," pp. 17, 21f. and pls. XIV, XV, XVII, I and 3; and for the Orpheus mosaic, P. B. Bagatti, "Il mosaico dell'Orfeo a
Gerusalemme," RACr, 28, 1952, pp. 248ff. and fig. 2. Other examples of mosaic pavements with bearded and beardless heads in the corners of the borders are found in Gerasa, in the Church of Elias, Mary, and Soreg (Saller and Bagatti, Town of Nebo, p. 281 and pls. 46, 48) and the Church of Saint Procopius (C. H. Kraelting, Gerasa: City of the Decapolis, New Haven, 1938, pl. LXXIII d), and in several churches at Madaba (Lux, "Eine altchristliche Kirche," pp. 168, 174, and pls. 29 B-C).


71. For the Marciana Gospel, see above, p. 260, n. 43. There is some variation in the Octateuchs; in the Smyrna manuscript and in Vat. cod. gr. 746 the old man represents January (for references, see above, pp. 261ff., n. 55).


73. See Harper, Royal Hunter, p. 133, no. 57, with a list of additional examples.

74. This silk was attributed to the early seventh century by D. G. Shepherd ("Zandānī Identified?," Aus der Welt der islamischen Kunst: Festschrift Ernst Kühnel, Berlin, 1959, p. 35), but is sometimes dated as late as the ninth century (K. Riboud and G. Vial, "Quelques considérations techniques concernant quatre soieries connues," Documenta Textilia: Festschrift für Sigrid Müller-Christensen, Munich, 1981, p. 143).

75. For an example in stucco from Ctesiphon, see above, cat. no. C4; and see Kröger, Stuckdekor, p. 101, for further discussion of this motif and additional examples. A well-known silk with ducks flanking stylized trees in the Cathedral Treasury at Aachen has been attributed to the Sasanian period by D. G. Shepherd ("Sasanian Art," CHI, III(2),

76. See above, p. 53, cat. no. A19 and p. 132, n. 161 for an Armenian(?) example; and for a Byzantine silk with this motif, Bunt, Byzantine Fabrics, fig. 49.

77. See, for example, a late tenth-century Córdoban casket in the Museo Nazionale in Florence (Kühnel, Elfenbeinskulpturen, pp. 40f., no. 34, pl. XXI). On the importance of textiles in the transmission of decorative designs on these ivories, ibid., pp. 3f.; idem, "Antike und Orient als Quellen der spanisch-islamischen Kunst," Madrider Mitteilungen, 1, 1960, pp. 179f.; and J. Beckwith, Caskets from Córdoba, London, 1960, pp. 13ff.

78. Herzfeld, Malereien, pl. LXV.

79. For the reliefs, see A. Bombaci, "Introduction to the Excavations at Ghazni," East and West, n.s. 10, 1959, pp. 10f. and figs. 1, 6; and for the wall paintings, D. Schlumberger, Lashkari Bazar: Une résidence royale ghaznévide et ghoride, IA: L'architecture (MDAFA, 18), Paris, 1978, pp. 6ff. and pls. 120-124.


82. Volbach, Elfenbeinarbeiten, p. 32f., no. 8, pl. 4; and see above, cat. no. C5.

83. Great Palace: First Report, p. 83 and pl. 44.

84. Baratte, Mosaiques, p. 137, no. 55, fig. 143.

85. See above, p. 257, n. 13.


87. Examples include the pavements of the monastery at Beisan (Fitzgerald, Monastery, p. 9 and pl. XVI); the church of SS. Lot and Procopius at Khirbat al-Makayyat (Saller and Bagatti, Town of Nebo, p. 61 and pl. 14, 2); and a baptistery at the same site (M. Piccirillo, "New Discoveries on Mt. Nebo," Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, 21, 1976, p. 58 and pls. XIV, XVI); a church at Madaba (Lux, "Eine altchristliche Kirche," pp. 170ff. and pls. 34 C-D); and the
lower part of the Orpheus mosaic from Jerusalem (Bagatti, "Il musaico dell'Orfeo," pp. 152ff. and fig. 6).

88. Saller and Bagatti, The Town of Nebo, p. 52 and pl. 11, 1.

89. Baratte, Mosaïques, p. 135, no. 55, fig. 143.


92. Saller and Bagatti, The Town of Nebo, p. 71 and pl. 24, 3.

93. On a seventh- or eighth-century silk made in Syria or Egypt and now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, two antelopes with suckling foals are shown flanking a central tree; see A. C. Weibel, Two Thousand Years of Textiles, New York, 1952, p. 89, no. 46 (cited hereafter as Weibel, Textiles). Otto-Dorn ("Figurenreliefs," p. 27 and fig. 15) also cited as a comparison a fragment of stamped relief ware with a cow and a suckling calf, found at Samarra.

94. R. Koechlin and G. Migeon, Islamische Kunstwerke, Berlin, 1928, pl. VI. Otto-Dorn ("Figurenreliefs," p. 60 and n. 116) also noted the similarity of the motif on this cup to the animals at Aghtamar, but she attributed the cup to the Seljuq period. As the scalloped rim, the "arrowhead" background pattern, and the contour lines around the animals are all typical of tenth-century luster-ware, I have adhered to the more generally accepted early date.


96. Otto-Dorn, "Figurenreliefs," pp. 25f. For the Samarra painting, see Herzfeld, Malereien, pls. V-VI.

97. Harper, Silver Vessels, pp. 77ff., 136f., and pl. 26; see eadem, Royal Hunter, pp. 58f., no. 17.


100. For discussion of this bowl and further references to "stick-fighting" or the "stick-dancing game" in Islamic art and literature,


102. Bagatti, "Il mosaico dell'Orfeo," fig. 2.

103. Examples of wrestlers in Late Antique mosaics are found on third-century pavements from houses at Aigeai (Ayas-Yumurtalik) in Cilicia (L. Budde, Antike Mosaiken in Kilikien, Recklinghausen, 1972, II, pp. 67f. and pls. 57-58); Henchir-Thina in Tunisia (ibid., pl. 201); and at Utica in Tunisia (M. A. Alexander, S. Besrou, and M. Ennaifer, Corpus des mosaiques de Tunisie, I, 3: Utique: Les mosaiques sans localisation precise et El Alia, Tunis, 1976, p. 2, no. 246, pl. II).


105. The palaestra scene on the west wall is well preserved; see Almagro, Qusayr 'Amra, pls. XVI a and XXI a-b. The wrestlers on the east wall and the vault of the central bay can still be distinguished (ibid., pls. XXVIII a and III a), but the details are clearer (though not always completely accurate) in the watercolor copies made by A. L. Mielich in 1901 and published in A. Musil, Qusayr 'Amra, Vienna, 1907. Both copies with the wrestlers are reproduced in J. Sourdel-Thomine and B. Spuler, Die Kunst des Islam (PropKg, 4), Berlin, 1973, pls. 34 and IX.

106. Hamilton, Khirbat al Mafjar, p. 171; and for an illustration, see idem, "The Sculpture of Living Forms at Khirbat al Mafjar," QDAP, 14, T950, pl. XXXIX, 9.

107. See above, p. 7.

108. E. Kühnel (Elfenbeinskulpturen, pp. 38f., no. 31, pl. XVIII, 31 e; and "Antike und Orient," p. 181) described these figures as "wrestling or embracing," and compared them to the Dioscuri represented on an early sixth-century Coptic ivory in Trier (Volbach, Elfenbeinarbeiten, p. 63, no. 82, pl. 45).

109. R. Ettinghausen, Arab Painting, Geneva, 1962, p. 56 and ill. p. 55. The inscription above the figure on the left has been translated as tahrīdj al-quwwa, "a test of strength" (Islamic Art in Egypt: 969-1517, catalogue of an exhibition held at the Semiramis Hotel on the occasion of the Millenary of Cairo, Cairo, 1969, p. 128, no. 114).

111. Otto-Dorn, "Figurenreliefs," p. 60, n. 115. Several examples of these scenes are illustrated by D. S. Rice, "Inlaid Brasses from the Workshop of Ahmad al-Dhaki al-Mawsili," ArsDr, 2, 1957, figs. 33 a-e and pls. 8 a, 8 e, 9 f, and 9 i. It is not always clear whether these pairs of figures represent wrestlers, dancers, or acrobats; see Rice, ibid., pp. 308f.; Baer, "Pila," p. 150; and Ettinghausen, "Dance," p. 222.

112. For discussion and further bibliography, see Harper, Royal Hunter, pp. 53f., no. 14; Ettinghausen, "Early Realism," pp. 263f.; idem, "Dance," pp. 221ff.; and Grube, Islamic Pottery, pp. 141f.

113. Saller and Bagatti, Town of Nebo, p. 60 and pl. 18, 1. Grape treading at a wine press are also depicted on the mosaic pavements of the church of Saint George at the same site (ibid., p. 70 and pl. 24, 1); at Qabr Hiram (Baratte, Mosaïques, p. 135, no. 55, fig. 143); in the Monastery at Beisan (Fitzgerald, Monastery, p. 9 and pl. XVI); and in the Funerary Chapel at el Hammam (Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements at el Hammam," p. 14f. and pl. XVI, 2).

114. Fitzgerald, Monastery, p. 9 and pls. XVI-XVII.

115. Der Nersessian, L'art arménien, p. 55 and fig. 35.

116. The personification of September on the mosaic pavement from the sixth-century church of Elias, Mary and Soreq in Gerasa carries a large bunch of grapes in one hand and a basket in the other (Saller and Bagatti, Town of Nebo, p. 275 and pl. 46), as does the figure in the contemporary mosaic from the Monastery at Beisan (Fitzgerald, Monastery, p. 7 and pl. VII, 2). In the Vatican Ptolemy manuscript of 813-20, September is represented by a man carrying a pole with large bunches of grapes suspended from each end (see above, p. 258, n. 23). Standing vintagers who collect the grapes in baskets at their feet are found on the sixth-century mosaic at Argos in Greece (Akerström-Hougen, Calendar, p. 26 and fig. 11, 1); an eleventh- or twelfth-century ivory plaque that may have decorated a casket (Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, Elfenbeinskulpturen, I, p. 52, no. 83, pl. LIV); and in a calendar miniature in a typicon illustrated at Trebizond in 1346 (Mount Athos, Vatopedi 1199, fol. 44b) (J. Strzygowski, "Eine trapezuntische Bilderhandschrift vom Jahre 1346," Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft, 13, 1890, pp. 247f.).

The capitals from the second-century Parthian palace at Seleucia (Mercklin, Figuralkapitelle, p. 32, no. 44, figs. 39-40) and some fourth-century Coptic examples (ibid., p. 16, no. 46, fig. 68) are particularly interesting, but there are many related objects (see ibid., pp. 83-119, "Kopf- und Bostenkapitelle der römischen Kaiserzeit"). For the Palestinian capitals and related works, see M. Avi-Yonah, "Oriental Elements in the Art of Palestine in the Roman and Byzantine Periods," QDAF, 10, 1942, pp. 136f., fig. 4, and pl. XVIII.

For the early history of the sphinx, see A. Dessenne, Le Sphinx: Etude iconographique (Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques, XII), Paris, 1957, pp. 81, figs. LXXIX b-c.

For these reliefs, which are much earlier than the examples cited above, see A. Grabar, Sculptures byzantines du Moyen Âge (Musée Archéologique, XII), Paris, 1976, pp. 96f., 125, Salier and Bagatti, Town of Nabi, p. 58, and pl. 16, 1.

See above, cat. no. C5, and the examples cited above, p. 259, n. 31, as well as the early Islamic examples cited on p. 260, n. 40. For these reliefs, which are dated to ca. 1200, see Wellhausen, "Kopfreliefs," pp. 46f. and pls. 14-17, 20.

A number of these textiles came from Rayy; their dates are still in some controversy. One of the earliest is a silk with a design of paired sphinxes in roundels, now in the Textile Museum in Washington, D.C., published by G. Wiet (Sciences Parthanes, Cairo, 1947, pl. LXXIX b-c. An attribution was accepted by M. Avi-Yonah, "Oriental Elements in the Art of Palestine in the Roman and Byzantine Periods," QDAF, 10, 1942, pp. 136f., fig. 4, and pl. XVIII.

For the early history of the sphinx, see A. Dessenne, Le Sphinx: Etude iconographique (Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques, XII), Paris, 1957, pp. 81, figs. LXXIX b-c.

For these reliefs, which are much earlier than the examples cited above, see A. Grabar, Sculptures byzantines du Moyen Âge (Musée Archéologique, XII), Paris, 1976, pp. 96f., 125, Salier and Bagatti, Town of Nabi, p. 58, and pl. 16, 1.

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See above, cat. no. C5, and the examples cited above, p. 259, n. 31, as well as the early Islamic examples cited on p. 260, n. 40. For these reliefs, which are dated to ca. 1200, see Wellhausen, "Kopfreliefs," pp. 46f. and pls. 14-17, 20.
p. 9 and fig. 12. A date palm similar to the one in our relief is found on another silk from Rayy, attributed to the Buyid period (tenth or eleventh century) by E. Kühnel ("Some Observations on Buyid Silks," Proceedings of the IVth International Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology, April 24-May 3, 1960 [A Survey of Persian Art, 14, ed. A. U. Pope and P. Ackerman], London, 1967, p. 3081 and fig. 1143) and to the Seljuq period (eleventh or twelfth century) by Weibel (Textiles, pp. 112f., no. 112).

130. The creatures on Sasanian seals that are sometimes referred to as sphinxes are Lamassu, human-headed bulls, rather than human-headed lions; see C. J. Brunner, Sasanian Stamp Seals in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1978, p. 67.

131. Baer, Sphinxes and Harpies, pp. 8ff.


133. Orbeli and Trever, Orfèvrerie sasanide, pl. 71.


135. Orbeli ("Akhtamar," p. 162) also recognized this form as a dragon's head.


137. Kühnel, Elfenbeinskulpturen, pp. 66f., no. 84, and pl. XCV, 25.

138. For the ceramic sculpture, see Baer, Sphinxes and Harpies, pp. 11ff. and fig. 19, and E. J. Grube, "Islamic Sculpture: Ceramic Figurines," OrArt, n.s. 12, 1966, p. 165 and fig. 6; and for a bowl with this motif, Sourdel-Thomine and Spuler, Kunst des Islam, p. 275, no. 216.

139. Baer, Sphinxes and Harpies, p. 15 and fig. 29.

140. Ibid., p. 14 and fig. 23.


143. See the discussion by R. Ettinghausen, "The 'Wade Cup' in the Cleveland Museum of Art, Its Origin and Decorations," ArsOr, 2, 1957, pp. 348ff.

144. Baer, Sphinxes and Harpies, pp. 51ff.

145. Ibid., pp. 56ff.


147. These include the late fifth-century mosaic in the Chapel of the Head of Saint John the Baptist and the sixth-century mosaic from the funerary chapel of Saint Polyeuktos in the Musrara Quarter near the Damascus Gate; see B. Narkiss, Armenian Art Treasures of Jerusalem, New Rochelle, N.Y., 1979, pp. 24ff., 147, and figs. 36-40; Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements in Palestine," p. 167, no. 117, and pp. 171ff., no. 132; and Bagatti, "Uccelli," pp. 207ff.


149. Saller and Bagatti, Town of Nebo, p. 61 and pl. 14, 2.

150. Åkerström-Hougen, Calendar, p. 32 and figs. 13, 1-2.


153. Åkerström-Hougen, Calendar, p. 91 and fig. 48, 2.

154. K. Lindner, Beiträge zu Vogelfang und Falknerei im Altertum (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Jagd, XII), Berlin, 1973, pp. 133ff., and fig. 62.


156. See Åkerström-Hougen, Calendar, pp. 124f., Appendix A:5 (with earlier bibliography), and fig. 80.
157. See above, p. 261, n. 52.

158. See above, pp. 261f., n. 55.


160. ATIL, "Two Il-Hânid Candlesticks," p. 21 and figs. 11 d, 22 d.


162. E. C. Dodd, "On a Bronze Rabbit from Fatimid Egypt," KunstOr, 8, 1972, pp. 74ff. and figs. 28-30.

163. For an example, see the mosaic from Room L of the Monastery at Beisan (Fitzgerald, Monastery, p. 9 and pls. XVI, XVII, 3).

164. Compare the hare on a small silver vase with vintaging and hunting scenes in the National Collection, Tehran (Harper, Royal Hunter, pp. 71ff., no. 24).


167. Fitzgerald, Monastery, p. 9 and pl. XVI.

168. Saller and Bagatti, Town of Nebo, p. 59 and pl. 16, 2.

169. The numerous examples include a fifth-century fluted bowl in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Shepherd, "Sasanian Art in Cleveland," pp. 86ff., fig. 25); a dish in the Detroit Institute of Arts (Sasanian Silver, p. 124, no. 41); and a sixth- or seventh-century roundel in the Sackler Collection (Harper, Royal Hunter, p. 62, no. 19). In addition, both the Tehran vase cited above (n. 164) and a small bowl in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (BMMA, 29, 1970, p. 63) include the motif of a hunter armed with a club pulling at the tail of a grape-eating fox.

170. For the Piazza Armerina mosaic, see Dunbabin, Mosaics, pp. 53ff., 196ff., 243ff., and fig. 198 (with earlier bibliography); and for the Carthage mosaic, ibid., pp. 53ff. and p. 252, no. 24, and A. Mahjoubi, "Découverte d'une nouvelle mosaique de chasse à Carthage," Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 1967, p. 271.
171. Alföldi-Rosenbaum and Ward-Perkins, Justinianic Mosaic Pavements, pp. 44, 137f. and pls. 59, 60, and color plate B.

172. Otto-Dorn ("Figurenreliefs," p. 20) suggested that this figure represents the caliph al-Muqtadir, but there is no evidence to support such an identification. See also cat. no. C45.

173. The literature on the Parthian shot is very extensive; for references to its use in the Sasanian period, see Harper, Silver Vessels, pp. 48f., ns. 45-46; and for its use by the people of the Steppes, Otto-Dorn, "Figurenreliefs," pp. 20f.

174. Examples include a third-century plate from Shemakha, on which the archer's quarry is a wild goat (Harper, Silver Vessels, pp. 48ff., 125, and pl. 8); a fourth-century provincial work found at Touroucheva, with the king hunting lions (ibid., p. 197 and pl. 37); and a plate variously dated from the late fifth to the early seventh century, also depicting a lion hunt, supposedly found in Persia and now in the Cleveland Museum of Art (ibid., pp. 60f., 128, and pl. 14).

175. Ibid., pp. 139ff. and fig. 46.


177. The almost frontal view of the horseman's head is unknown in Sasanian examples, but common in work of the eighth century and later; for examples, see Harper, Silver Vessels, p. 140, and Thompson, "Fragmentary Stucco Plaque," p. 92. Stirrups, introduced from the East, appear only at the very end of the Sasanian period, but were widely used by Umayyad horsemen and are seen in a painting of a mounted hunter from Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi (D. Schlumberger, "Deux fresques omeyyades," Syria, 25, 1946-1948, p. 100, fig. 5, and pl. B), and on a stucco figure from the palace entrance hall at Khirbat al Mafjar (Hamilton, Khirbat al Mafjar, p. 238, pl. XXXVI, 2). For further discussion of the use of stirrups in these regions and additional bibliography, see A. D. M. Bivar, "Cavalry Equipment and Tactics on the Euphrates Frontier," DOP, 26, 1972, pp. 286ff. The use of the thumb to draw the bow was also characteristic of the archers of early Islam (ibid., pp. 284ff.).


179. Hamilton, Khirbat al Mafjar, p. 228 and pl. XXXVI, 11.


182. A. Grabar (review of S. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, in REArm, n.s. 2, 1965, p. 390) also expressed doubts about assigning this relief to a later reconstruction.

183. Sailer and Bagatti, Town of Nebo, p. 71 and pl. 25, 1.


185. Harper, Royal Hunter, pp. 71ff., no. 24; and see above, p. 272, n. 169.

186. See above, p. 257, n. 13.

187. Kühnel, Elfenbeinskulpturen, pp. 72f., no. 98, pl. C.

188. Kühnel (ibid., p. 73) tentatively identified the animal in the lower portion of this plaque as a gazelle, but gazelles and hares in Fatimid art are frequently confused; cf. Dodd, "Bronze Rabbit," p. 62 and n. 7, and Grube, Islamic Pottery, pp. 123ff.

189. Otto-Dorn ("Figurenreliefs," pp. 8f.) and Der Nersessian (Aght'amar, p. 32) compared these coats to the garments worn by figures in the paintings of the cave temples at Kizil and Kumtura in eastern Turkestan (A. von Le Coq, Bilderatlas zur Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Mittel-Asiens, Berlin, 1925, figs. 3, 6-9, 11, 15-27, 32-33, 86). To these examples should be added the contemporary paintings of donors at Bamiyan (J. Hackin and J. Carl, Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Bâmiyân [MDAFA, 3], Paris, 1933, pp. 18, 34f.; fig. E, pl. XXVIII; and fig. F, pl. XLVIII) and of a moon god in Niche K of the Buddhist monastery at Fondukistan (J. Hackin, J. Carl, and J. Meunie, Diverses recherches archéologiques en Afghanistan (1933-1940) [MDAFA, 8], Paris, 1959, pp. 57f., figs. H 2 and 199). The coat with lapels is also found in metalwork, worn by banqueters on a seventh-century(?) plate with a Sogdian inscription (R. Ghirshman, Persian Art: The Parthian and Sasanian Dynasties, New York, 1962, p. 277 and fig. 359) and by an equestrian on a seventh- or eighth-century Khorasanian bowl (G. Azarpay, "Nine Inscribed Choresmian Bowls," ArtiBAs, 31, 1969, pp. 201f. and pl. 9 b).

190. See above, p. 265, n. 79.

191. O. Grabar, "Islamic Art and Byzantium," DOP, 18, 1964, pp. 84f., figs. 22-23; and see also R. Hillenbrand in Sourdel-Thomine and Spuler, Kunst des Islam, pp. 160, 163f. and pls. 33, 38.


197. The best-known examples include silver plates in the Cincinnati Art Museum (Sasanian Silver, pp. 58f. and 102, no. 14), the Hermitage (Orbeli and Trever, Orfèvrerie sasanide, pl. 16), and the British Museum (see the references cited above, p. 136, n. 195). An exception is another plate in the British Museum with a scene of investiture in the center and banqueters on the border, which has been identified as a Kushano-Sasanian work of the fourth century (Harper, Silver Vessels, pp. 108ff. and fig. 35).


199. Figures seated in this position are very rare in Sasanian art, and in the few instances in which they do occur, they usually represent personages of lower rank, such as musicians (Harper, Silver Vessels, pp. 117f.). A silver plate in the Hermitage, on which a figure representing either a god or a king is seated cross-legged on a bench, is an exception; but Harper has suggested that this vessel was produced somewhere east of Iran, and in the Islamic period (ibid., pp. 102, 117ff., and pl. 35).


206. Esin, "And," pp. 230ff. and fig. 4 A.


208. Ibid., pp. 187ff.

209. O. Grabar, Formation, p. 157. The texts relating to this custom were discussed by Grabar in his Ph.D. dissertation, "Ceremonial and Art at the Umayyad Court" (Princeton University, 1955), which was not available to me.

210. See N. M. Lowick in Sourdel-Thomine and Spuler, Kunst des Islam, p. 240, no. 155 a. This piece provides further evidence of Central Asian influence in the figure's patterned legs and the odd pointed markings on his forehead; see G. Fehérvári, "Two Early 'Abbasid Lustre Bowls and the Influence of Central Asia," OrArt, n.s. 9, 1963, pp. 84ff.


213. Each of these plates, all of which appear to date from the tenth century, is decorated with a single figure. For an example from Nishapur, C. K. Wilkinson, Nishapur: Pottery of the Early Islamic Period, New York, 1973, pp. 22f., no. 64, and ill. p. 47; and for examples on Mesopotamian luster-painted ware, see A. Lane, Early Islamic Pottery, London, 1947, pl. 13 A, and Islamic Art from the Collection of Edwin Binney 3rd, catalogue of an exhibition coordinated by the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1966, no. 76.
214. Examples in painting include a papyrus fragment of the tenth century, possibly a frontispiece (Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, Inv. Chart. Ar. 25751) (T. W. Arnold and A. Grothmann, The Islamic Book, London, 1929, pp. 8ff. and pl. 4 b), and an eleventh-century fresco from a bath in Fostat (Sourdel-Thomine and Spuler, Kunst des Islam, p. 262 and pl. XXXIV b). A figure seated with his legs crossed and holding a cup and a stylized branch or flower is preserved on a tapestry-weave fragment in the Textile Museum in Washington D.C. (see above, p. 136, n. 200). For examples on ceramics, see E. Kühnel, The Minor Arts of Islam, Ithaca, 1971, fig. 93, and Grube, Islamic Pottery, p. 146, no. 96, ill. p. 149. Several figures of this type are found on an eleventh-century wooden frieze believed to have decorated a Fatimid palace in Cairo (E. Pauty, Les bois sculptés jusqu'à l'époque ayyoubide [Catalogue général du Musée Arabe], Cairo, 1931, p. 49 and pl. XLVI). A twelfth-century ivory carving, which may have been used as an inlay on a piece of furniture, is of particular interest, as it includes both standing attendants and lions; see Islamic Art in Egypt: 916-1517, p. 45, no. 38, pl. 5 a, and Kühnel, Elfenbeinskulpturen, p. 73, no. 100, pl. C.

215. This relief has not, to my knowledge, been published, except for a small drawing and a brief entry in the exhibition catalogue The Arts of Islam, p. 303, no. 480.


217. Examples, all from Córdoba, include a pyxis of 968 in the Louvre (Kühnel, Elfenbeinskulpturen, pp. 38f., no. 31, pl. XVIII, 31 c); another of ca. 970, in the same museum (ibid., p. 40, no. 33, pl. XX); and a casket made in 1005, now in the Museo de Navarra in Pamplona (ibid., pp. 41ff., no. 35, pl. XXVI, fig. 35 h).

218. There are some particularly interesting examples in later metalwork which obviously belong to the same tradition, as each depicts a frontally seated figure in a cross-legged pose, holding a cup and flanked by two standing attendants. These include a brass bowl in the Kevorkian Foundation, which was classified as Ghaznavid by R. Ettinghausen ("Interaction and Integration in Islamic Art," Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization, Chicago, 1955, p. 116 and pl. III a); D. S. Rice ("Studies in Islamic Metal Work—VI," BSOAS, 21, 1958, pp. 251f., pl. XIII) later suggested Transoxiana as a possible provenance, based partly on details of the bowl's execution. Twelfth- or thirteenth-century Seljuq examples from Iran include a bronze cup in Tehran.
(Bahrami, "Gold Medal," p. 15 and fig. i) and a silver bowl in the Hermitage (D. G. Shepherd, "Banquet and Hunt in Medieval Islamic Iconography," Gatherings in Honor of Dorothy E. Miner, Baltimore, 1974, pp. 84f. and fig. 8). The latter two objects include pairs of lions below the enthronement scene; on the Kevorkian bowl, a single running gazelle in this location may recall the royal hunt (Ettinghausen, "Interaction," p. 116). A very similar composition, with standing attendants and crouching lions, appears on a thirteenth-century Persian stucco roundel (Kühnel, Minor Arts, p. 242 and fig. 206). For other late examples, including ceramics and manuscripts, see Otto-Dorn, "Figurenreliefs," pp. 50ff., and Roux, "La coupe," pp. 46ff.


220. Ibid.

221. O. Grabar, Formation, p. 178.

222. It is very likely that the flowers held by the figures on the post-Sasanian plates, and perhaps in the Panjikent frescoes as well, relate to the celebration of the festival of the New Year (see Carter, "Royal Festal Themes," pp. 179ff., 184ff.; and Grube, Islamic Pottery, p. 84). In this context, it is worthwhile to note that figures holding cups and flowers or branches in celebration of the New Year Festival may be traced back to the Early Dynastic period of Sumerian art (Frankfort, Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient, pp. 49, 68 and figs. 44, 72), and that the Medes and Persians carrying flowers in the Achaemenid reliefs at Persepolis have also been interpreted as taking part in this festival (ibid., p. 371 and fig. 436).

In other studies, flowering branches held by figures represented on tenth-century ceramics from Nishapur have been related to Sasanian investiture scenes (R. Ettinghausen, "A Case of Traditionalism in Iranian Art," Forschungen zur Kunst Asiens: In Memoriam Kurt Erdmann, Istanbul, 1969, pp. 88ff., especially p. 107f. and fig. 20; see also Grube, Islamic Pottery, p. 74), and to Bacchic rites (D. G. Shepherd, "Bacchantes in Islam," BCMA, 47, 1960, pp. 42ff.). C. Wilkinson (Nishapur, p. 23, no. 66) pointed out the similarity between the attributes held by the figures on these plates and the flowers carried by princely figures in eighth- and ninth-century Central Asian Buddhist paintings (see M. Bussagli, Painting of Central Asia, Geneva, 1963, pls. on pp. 105-107, and E. Esin, "Ay-Bitiği: The Court Attendants in Turkish Iconography," Central Asiatic Journal, 14, 1970, pp. 92ff.). A.-M. von Gabain (Das Leben in uigurischen Königreich von Qocho (850-1250), Wiesbaden, 1973, I, pp. 165f.) has suggested that the flowers held by these figures symbolized the hope of a desirable reincarnation.


225. K. Otto-Dorn ("Figurenreliefs," p. 8), followed by J.-P. Roux ("La coupe," pp. 43ff.) called attention to the similarity between the gesture of the figure at Aght'amar and the leafy branch carried by a man on a tenth-century luster-painted bowl.

226. See above, p. 277, n. 217.

227. The influence of Sasanian art in Spain has been studied in some detail by A. Grabar, "Éléments sassanides et islamiques dans les enluminures des manuscrits espagnols du Haut Moyen Age," Atti del II Convegno per lo studio dell'arte dell'Alto Medio Evo tenuto presso l'Università di Pavia nel Settembre, 1950; cited as republished in idem, L'art de la fin de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Age, Paris, 1968, II, pp. 663ff. See also idem, "Rayonnement de l'art sassanide," pp. 700ff. Of particular interest in this context is the figure of King Nebuchadnezzar in the Beatus manuscript of 970 at Valladolid (University, cod. 390, fol. 201v). The king is shown in a semi-reclining pose on a couch with cushions, which, as Grabar has demonstrated, could have been derived only from Sasanian or post-Sasanian work, perhaps through early Islamic forms that still closely imitated Sasanian traditions ("Éléments sassanides," p. 665, pl. 159 c; "Rayonnement," pp. 701ff., pl. XXIX, 2).

228. K. Otto-Dorn, "Die menschliche Figurendarstellung auf den Fliesen von Kobadabad," Forschungen zur Kunst Asiens: In Memoriam Kurt Erdmann, Istanbul, 1969, p. 121 and fig. 9. The grapes are again held in the figure's right hand, but the position of his legs and whether or not he held a cup in his other hand cannot be determined.

229. Otto-Dorn ("Figurenreliefs," p. 20) described the lion and the eagle as symbols of power, and recognized their role as part of the enthronement scene. For additional discussion of these creatures as symbols of royalty, see above, cat. nos. A19, A26, A31, and A63.


231. This silver cup, on which a ruler seated in a cross-legged pose is flanked by two attendants, was published by K. V. Trever, "Novoe 'sasanidskoe' bludtse Ermitazha," Issledovaniia po istorii kul'tury narodov Vostoka: Sbornik v chest' akademika I. A. Orbeli, Moscow-Leningrad, 1960, fig. 1.

232. See above, p. 27, cat. no. A1, and p. 119, n. 36.
233. Ghirshman, Persian Art, fig. 67; for discussion and further bibliography, see Dentzer, "L'iconographie iranienne," p. 41.


235. Harper, Silver Vessels, pp. 119f. and pl. 36. An eagle cast of solid bronze, which may actually have served as a throne leg, is preserved in the Berlin-Dahlem Museum and has been attributed to the Sassanian period by A. S. Melikian Chirvani, "Studies in Iranian Metalwork, V: A Sassanian Eagle in the Round," Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1969, pp. 2ff.


237. Almagro, Qusayr 'Amra, pls. X, XI.

238. Kühnel, Elfenbeinskulpturen, pp. 39f., no. 32, pl. XIX.

239. Monneret de Villard, Pitture musulmane, fig. 185; and for a good illustration in color, Sourdel-Thomine and Spuler, Kunst des Islam, pl. XXXII.

240. See above, pp. 277f., n. 218.

241. Otto-Dorn ("Figurenreliefs," pp. 18f.) identified this figure as al-Muqtadir, citing as evidence the political alliance between the caliph and King Gagik, and the similarity between the image of the ruler at Aght'amar and that of al-Muqtadir on the silver medallion discussed above. This interpretation was recently revived by J.-P. Roux ("La coupe," p. 43). M. S. Işıroğlu (Die Kirche von Achtamar, Berlin, 1963, pp. 58ff.) accepted Otto-Dorn's interpretation with some reservations, observing that it could also have served as a more general symbol of power, and that the Armenians may have understood the figure as an image of the king of Vaspurakan. Der Nersessian (L'art arménien, p. 251, n. 7) pointed out that a Muslim caliph would not be likely to appear on the facade of any Christian church, and would be particularly out of place at Aght'amar, where the lower zone of sculpture includes the figures of the Artsruni princes Sahak and Hamazasp, who were martyred by the Arabs.

242. The ruler was traditionally interpreted as Gagik in Armenian scholarship; see A. Sakisian, "Notes on the Sculpture of the Church of Akhtamar," ArtB, 25, 1943, pp. 353f.; Orbeli, "Akhtamar," pp. 156f.; and Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 25. Otto-Dorn ("Figurenreliefs," pp. 3f., n. 3) ruled out this identification because of the presence of the portrait of the king on the west facade, and because of the
cross-legged pose, but neither of these arguments is conclusive; as Sakisian ("Notes," p. 354) had earlier demonstrated, a securely identified portrait of an Armenian king seated in this position appears in the Gospel of King Gagik of Kars in Jerusalem (our fig. 21; and see above, p. 27, cat. no. A1, and p. 119, n. 36). As discussed above, this type of ruler image lent itself to a variety of interpretations; but it seems probable that the relief at Aght'amar would have been intended to represent Gagik himself.

243. For discussion and numerous illustrations, see Lindner, Vogelfang und Falknerei, pp. 9ff.

244. Ibid.; see also Åkerström-Hougen, Calendar, pp. 94f.


246. Lindner, Vogelfang und Falknerei, p. 88 and fig. 47.


248. Fitzgerald, Monastery, p. 7 and pl. VII, 2. The damaged figure that represents October on the contemporary pavement in the church of Elias, Mary, and Soreg at Gerasa appears to have been very similar; see Saller and Bagatti, Town of Nebo, p. 277 and pl. 46.

249. See above, p. 260, n. 43.


251. See above, p. 258, n. 23.

252. Dunbabin, Mosaics, pp. 109, 114, and figs. 95, 102.


255. See above, p. 260, n. 43.

256. J. R. Martin, The Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus (Studies in Manuscript Illumination, 5), Princeton, 1954, pp. 54ff. and fig. 73; see also Åkerström-Hougen, Calendar, Appendix B:6, pp. 134ff., and fig. 87, 3.
257. D. S. Rice, "Seasons," p. 20 and pls. 13, 2; 14, 3; and 15,5; and Ati{l}, "Two Il-Hanid Candlesticks," p. 21 and figs. 10 e and 21 e.

258. See above, p. 267, n. 105.


262. Hamilton, Khirbat al Mafjar, pl. XLII, 2.


264. See Fitzgerald, Monastery, p. 9 and pls. XVI, XVII, 1; Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements at el Hammām," pp. 14f. and pls. XIV, XV, XVI, 2, XVII, 4; Lux, "Eine altchristliche Kirche," pp. 171ff.; and Sailer and Bagatti, Town of Nebo, pls. 16, 2 and 45.


266. See above, p. 260, n. 43.

267. See above, pp. 261f., n. 55.

268. These ivories are small plaques that were probably used as furniture inlays. The porter carrying a basket on his back is found on one of a set of four narrow panels in Berlin (Kühnel, Elfenbeinskulpturen, pp. 68f., no. 88 D, pl. XCVIII), and on one of the plaques from the Carrand Collection, now in the Museo Nazionale in Florence (ibid., pp. 70f., no. 90 B, pl. XCIX). See also D. S. Rice, "Seasons," pp. 31ff., and Ettinghausen, "Early Realism," pp. 258f., n. 2.


272. See above, p. 271, n. 147.


274. See above, pp. 264f., n. 75.


276. For the provenance and dating of these silks, and additional examples, see D. G. Shepherd, "Zandanji Revisited," Documenta Textilia: Festschrift für Sigrid Müller-Christensen, Munich, 1981, pp. 105ff.; and A. A. Jersalimskaja, "K slozheniiu shkoly khudozhestvennogo shelt.kotkachestva v Sogde," Sredniaia Azia i Iran (Gosudarstvennyi Ermiztazh), Leningrad, 1972, pp. 5ff. and figs. 14, 1; 14, 3; 15.

277. Although these plaques appear to have come from Iran, their exact provenance is unknown. Examples are preserved in a number of collections, including those of the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Cincinnati Art Museum. See Kröger, Stuckdekoration, pp. 207f. and pl. 99, 4; for the date of these works, p. 259; and for a related composition on a plaque from Ctesiphon, pp. 57f., cat. nos. 54-55, fig. 25 and pl. 15, 1.


279. Fitzgerald, Monastery, p. 9 and pls. XVI, XVII, 1.


284. Herzfeld, Malereien, pp. 55, 59f., fig. 23, and pls. XXV, L.

285. Kühnel, Elfenbeinskulpturen, pp. 38f., no. 31, pl. XVIII, 31 d; and pp. 39f., no. 32, pl. XIX.


288. Great Palace: First Report, p. 67, pls. 28, 32; Second Report, p. 126, pl. 48 A.


290. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, pp. 3f.


292. O. von Falke, Kunstgeschichte der Seidenweberei, 3rd ed., Berlin, 1936, fig. 40. For another example of this textile, and discussion on the problems of dating these works, see E. J. Grube, "Studies in the Survival and Continuity of Pre-Muslim Traditions in Egyptian Islamic Art," JARCE, 1, 1962, pp. 80f. and pl. XVI, 9.

293. Kröger, Stuckdekor, pp. 85ff., nos. 99-106, fig. 46 a-b, pls. 27-28; and pp. 104ff., nos. 142-47, fig. 59, pls. 41-42, i (with earlier bibliography).

294. For examples, see Shepherd, "Sasanian Art in Cleveland," pp. 86ff. and figs. 25-26; Sasanian Silver, p. 107, no. 20; and R. Ghirshman, "Argenterie d'un seigneur sassanide," ArsOr, 2, 1957, pp. 7ff. and figs. 1-12. Dancers with scarves also accompany a ruler and attendants on a bowl in the Walters Art Gallery (see above, pp. 232f., cat. no. C45, and p. 280, n. 235).

295. The most complete publication of these vessels is the article by D. G. Shepherd, "The Iconography of Anāhitā," Berytus, 28, 1980, pp. 47ff., in which thirty-three examples, many of them previously unpublished, are discussed.


298. Ibid., fig. 25, nos. 26 and 31.

299. See O. Grabar, "Introduction to the Art of Sasanian Silver," pp. 60ff., for the best summary and discussion of the earlier material. The most important of the more recent discussions include, in addition

300. Sasanian Silver, pp. 58f. and 102, no. 14.

301. See O. Grabar, "Introduction to the Art of Sasanian Silver," pp. 80ff., and idem, Formation, p. 176.

302. Grube, Islamic Pottery, pp. 81ff., no. 42. Otto-Dorn ("Figurenreliefs," p. 33) also compared a standing figure holding a cup on one of these bowls to the dancer at Aght\'amar, but this figure probably represents a man holding a drinking cup; see Wilkinson, Nishapur, pp. 17ff., no. 59, and color pl. 2.


304. The paintings of dancers at Qusayr\'Amra are found both in the audience hall (Almagro, Qusayr\'Amra, pls. VI a and XXVII c) and on the vault of the tepidarium (ibid., pl. XLII c). The latter figure is particularly close to the maenads of classical art, and was compared by R. Hillenbrand (Sourdel-Thomine and Spuler, Die Kunst des Islam, p. 162, no. 36 a) to the dancers in the Paris Psalter. Maenads and bacchantes appeared frequently in Byzantine art, not only in Old Testament scenes that required images of dancers, but also in other contexts; see K. Weitzmann, "The Classical in Byzantine Art as a Mode of Individual Expression," Byzantine Art and European Art: Lectures, Athens, 1966, pp. 149-77; republished in idem, Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination, Chicago, 1971, pp. 167ff.

305. Hamilton, Khirbat al Mafjar, pp. 233ff. and pls. XXXV, 3; LV, 2-4; LVI, 6, 7, 9. Hamilton saw few similarities between the costumes and poses of these figures and those of the women on the Sasanian silver vessels, but he did suggest that the ornamental niches occupied by the stucco statues could have been inspired by the arcades or niches that frame some of the Sasanian dancers (ibid., p. 235). Ettinghausen (From Byzantium to Sasanian Iran, p. 65), on the other hand, pointed out that both the Khirbat al Mafjar sculptures and the figures on the Sasanian vessels are essentially frontal, have cloths draped over the lower parts of their bodies, share the same facial types, and hold similar attributes (flowers and fruits); and O. Grabar ("Introduction to the Art of Sasanian Silver," pp. 67, 80f.) also viewed the sculptures as a monumental transformation of the themes on the silver.

306. Schlumberger ("Les fouilles," p. 354 and fig. 25) recognized the similarity between the figures in these reliefs and those on Sasanian metalwork, although he identified the objects they hold as pomegranates; L. Trümpelmann ("Die Skulpturen von Mschatta," AA, 1965, col. 253)
correctly identified their attributes as libation flasks. For further discussion on the influence of Sasanian art on these figures, see R. Hillenbrand in Sourdel-Thomine and Spuler, Kunst des Islam, pp. 171f. and pl. 44.

307. Otto-Dorn, "Figurenreliefs," pp. 32f. For further discussion of these dancers and their relationship to Sasanian art, see Herzfeld, Malereien, pp. 9ff. and pls. I-II; Ettinghausen, Arab Painting, p. 42; idem, From Byzantium to Sasanian Iran, p. 9; and E. Dodd in Sourdel-Thomine and Spuler, Kunst des Islam, p. 223 and pl. XXIII.

308. For the carved wooden beams from Cairo, see Pauty, Bois sculptés, pls. XLIX, L, LIII, LV, LVII, LVIII; and for the Cappella Palatina, Monneret de Villard, Pitture musulmane, figs. 219-20. Examples on ceramics include a luster-painted bowl in the Freer Gallery (E. Atil, Ceramics from the World of Islam [Freer Gallery of Art, Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition, III], Washington D.C., 1973, p. 131, no. 58) and a very similar piece in Berlin (Islamische Kunst in Berlin, p. 78, no. 276). For ivories, see Köhnel, Elfenbeinskulpturen, pp. 70ff., no. 90, pl. XCIX, 90 E-F. A small drawing of a dancer was published by Grube ("Fostat Fragments," pp. 44f., no. I.14, pl. 5) with a detailed discussion and bibliography; and for another drawing, see D. S. Rice, "A Drawing of the Fatimid Period," BSOAS, 21, 1958, pp. 31ff., pls. II-III. For a good illustration of a poorly preserved eleventh-century painting of a dancer from a bath in Cairo, see Sourdel-Thomine and Spuler, Kunst des Islam, pl. XXXIV b, and the discussion on p. 262 by J. Zick-Nissen.


310. The poses of these dancers have been discussed in some detail; see R. Ettinghausen, "Painting of the Fatimid Period: A Reconstruction," AI, 9, 1942, pp. 115ff.; idem, "Early Realism," pp. 253ff.; and Grube, "Fostat Fragments," pp. 44f., and especially pp. 93f., n. 134.

311. The vases on this bowl (see above, n. 308) are generally interpreted as an indication that the dancer's performance took place at a revel, a festive occasion at which wine was drunk; see Ettinghausen, "Early Realism," p. 255, and Atil, Ceramics, p. 131.

312. Monneret de Villard (Pitture musulmane, p. 39 and fig. 219) suggested that the vase might have been held by the woman in the initial steps of her performance, but was tossed aside during the course of the dance.

313. For dancing girls in Byzantine court art and the interplay of Sasanian and Islamic influences on this motif, see A. Grabar,

314. See Bunt, Byzantine Fabrics, figs. 46, 49; and Falke, Kunstgeschichte der Seidenweberei, figs. 168, 199.


319. Saller and Bagatti, Town of Nebo, p. 52 and pl. 11, 1.


322. For the techniques of hunting boars in Late Antiquity, see J. Aymard, Essai sur les chasses romaines (BEFAR, 171), Paris, 1951, ch. XIV; and Anderson, Hunting, pp. 138ff. For North African mosaics with scenes of hunters and hounds pursuing wild boars, see Dunbabin, Mosaics, pp. 48ff. and figs. 21, 23, 27, 30. A scene similar to these appears in the "Small Hunt" mosaic at Piazza Armerina (ibid., pp. 53ff., 196ff., 243ff., and fig. 198). In a mosaic of the first half of the sixth century from the nave of a basilica at Klapsi in central Greece, a dog similar to the animal in our relief is shown behind a boar that stands among grape vines issuing from a large vase (Spiro, Critical Corpus, pp. 287ff. and figs. 324, 329-31).

323. See above, cat. no. C60; and for an Armenian(?) peacock silk, see above, p. 53, cat. no. A19 and p. 132, n. 161.

324. See above, cat. no. C14. Shepherd ("Zandanījī Identified?", p. 32) suggested that the palmettes that appear beneath many of the paired animals on Zandaniji silks are a simplification and stylization of more realistic flowering branches, and that intermediary stages of this development from realism to abstraction had once existed.

325. See especially the caskets illustrated by Kühnel, Eichenbeinskulpturen, pp. 44f., no. 37, pl. XXVIII, 37 d-e and pp. 41ff., no. 35, pl. XXVI, 35 m.
A full-length life-size figure of an Evangelist occupies the center of the upper part of each facade of the church. The saints' heads are directly beneath the gables of the four exedrae, where they interrupt the animal frieze that runs beneath the eaves of the roof, and their feet are separated from the vine frieze by a single stone course.

The Evangelists follow the standard iconography for figures of this type: they are nimbed and clad in tunics and himations, and each holds a closed codex in his left hand. Their closest parallels are found in late ninth- and tenth-century manuscripts. Their broad bodies and low-browed faces, as well as the strict frontality of their poses and the positions of their feet, are comparable to the Evangelist portraits inserted in a Gospel from Andreaskiti on Mount Athos, now in the Princeton University Library (cod. Garrett 6, fol. 54v, 83v, 130v). These miniatures have been dated to the second half of the ninth century, and are the earliest extant examples of the standing Evangelist type in a Greek manuscript. A similar style is seen in the tenth-century portraits of Matthew and Mark inserted in a Georgian manuscript on Mount Sinai (cod. georg. 38, fol. 68r and 100r). There are also comparable sets of Evangelist portraits in tenth-century Armenian manuscripts, including the Etchmiadzin Gospel of 989 (Erevan, Matenadaran,
cod. 2374, fols. 6v and 7), a related manuscript in Jerusalem (Armenian Patriarchate, ms. 2555, fols. 7v and 8), and a fragmentary Gospel in Vienna (Mekhitarian Library, ms. 697, fol. 8v). As S. Der Nersessian has noted, the Evangelists of the Etchmiadzin Gospel are stylistically similar to the figures at Aght'amar in their rigorously frontal poses and flat, schematized drapery.

The Aght'amar Evangelists are the earliest full-length figures of this type to be placed on the exterior of an Armenian church, but there is a noteworthy precedent for this usage in the late seventh-century church of Saint John at Sisavan, where carved busts of the four Evangelists appear at the top of the drum of the dome, facing the four cardinal directions.

Catalogue

DI. Saint Matthew. West facade. Fig. 264.

The bearded saint, his head framed by a pearl-bordered nimbus, wears a tunic and himation. His right hand is raised in a gesture of blessing, and he holds a Gospel in his veiled left hand. Several letters of an inscription are visible to the left of his head. Only the last two letters, \( \text{NU} \), are legible, but they are sufficient to identify the saint as the Evangelist Matthew (\( \text{YN_UP} \)).

The bearded saint, dressed in a tunic and himation, raises his right hand in a gesture of speech and holds a Gospel stamped with a cross in his left hand. The relief is difficult to photograph because it is now partly concealed behind the bell tower that was added to the south facade in the nineteenth century. No inscription is visible, but as Matthew, Mark, and Luke can be identified by the remains of inscriptions or other details, this figure must represent Saint John.

D3. Saint Luke. East facade. Fig. 265.

The saint, his head encircled by a pearl-bordered nimbus, is clad in a tunic and himation. His right hand is raised with the forefinger extended in a gesture of speech, and a closed Gospel inscribed with a cross is supported on his left forearm. The central part of the gable, which probably carried an inscription, has been destroyed; but the saint may be identified as the Evangelist Luke, who was traditionally represented as youthful and beardless.7

D4. Saint Mark. North facade. Fig. 266.

The saint, his head framed by a pearl-bordered nimbus, wears a tunic and himation. The upper part of the figure is badly worn and the face has been almost completely destroyed. Plain slabs of masonry have been inserted to the left of the figure, replacing the original carved blocks with the remainder of the saint's right arm and the
identifying inscription; but the four letters of the inscription that remain (ῬΗ/ΗΝ) allow the Evangelist to be identified as Saint Mark (ΜΑΡΚΟΥ).
Notes to Chapter V


2. G. Vikan in Illuminated Greek Manuscripts from American Collections, pp. 52ff., no. 1.


4. See D. Kouymjian, Index of Armenian Art, Part I, Manuscript Illumination, Fasc. I (Draft), Illuminated Armenian Manuscripts to the Year 1000 A.D., Fresno, 1977, p. 11, figs. 56-57; p. 14, figs. 76-77; p. 17, fig. 100; and Friend, "Portraits II," pp. 22ff. and figs. 20-22.


CHAPTER VI
ZONES E AND F: THE ANIMAL FRIEZES

The uppermost sections of the walls of the church are bordered by narrow friezes carved in high relief. The lower frieze (zone E) is located directly beneath the eaves of the roofs covering the exedrae and niches, and a similar band of sculpture (zone F) decorates the top of the drum of the dome. The two friezes are identical in character, and consist mainly of individual figures of animals, including lions, bears, boars, foxes, dogs, bulls, horses, ibexes, deer, sheep, hares, and birds. Most are shown running, but some merely walk or stand and others are depicted at rest, crouching or reclining. Occasionally the rhythm is broken by symmetrical pairs of rams or birds, confronted or addorsed, or by stylized ornamental motifs. In addition to the animals, these friezes include a number of disembodied frontal heads, most of which occur in long rows at the west ends of the north and south facades. Fantastic creatures and human figures are exceptional, and are limited to a human-headed bird on the west facade (cat. no. E2) and a man in combat with a bull on the north (cat. no. E69).

Because of the variations of the wall surface, the lower frieze is less unified than the frieze beneath the dome. The front wall of each exedra is treated as a separate unit. Carved consoles mark the bases of the gables on each facade, and above them rows of animals move
toward the peaks of the gables, where they are interrupted by the heads of the Evangelists. There is no animal frieze on the east ends of the north and south facades, as the roof of the east exedra extends to the level of the vine frieze. Most of the sculpture in these friezes appears to date from the time of the construction of the church, but there are some signs of disturbance, particularly in the lower frieze. The roof was restored in the thirteenth century, and some reworking of the sculpture must also have been done at that time.¹

The use of a continuous band of animals as a decorative border is so ubiquitous that it is difficult to isolate a single source for these friezes, but a brief review of related compositions may indicate some possibilities regarding both their origins and their meanings.

Animal friezes were widely used in early Byzantine art, in both religious and secular contexts. Examples in monumental sculpture are rare, but a stone cornice with reliefs of animals and birds may have crowned an exterior wall of the fifth-century church of Saint Menas in Thessaloniki. The church is not preserved, but some fragments of the cornice have survived and are now in the Byzantine Museum in Athens. The animals, which include lions, dogs, a zebu, and birds, are shown in front of or accompanied by trees, and were separated from each other by stylized acanthus leaves.² Friezes of running animals were also a common theme on mosaic pavements. In the sixth-century church of Saint Christopher at Qabr Hiram in Lebanon, the animals appear in the intercolumniations flanking the nave, which is decorated with an inhabited vine scroll. The frieze is broken by the columns into eight rectangular panels, in each of which are depicted two running animals separated...
by trees: bears, panthers, greyhounds, and lions pursue horses, bulls, hares, a boar, and a stag. Bands of animals also appear on smaller works, such as a silver reliquary found in Isauria and dated to the fifth century. On the lid of this object, the images of a lamb and the monogram of Christ flanked by two apostles are framed by a frieze of running animals separated by trees. The meaning of the animals in relation to the holy figures is by no means clear; in addition to a general apotropaic or prophylactic significance, they may also have referred to a symbolic victory over evil.

On a late sixth-century gold encolpion found near Mersine in Cilicia, a central scene with an emperor flanked by personifications of the sun and moon is bordered by a vine scroll and a frieze of running lions, foxes, dogs, and hares (fig. 267). A. Grabar has suggested that in this instance the animals may be a reference to the hunt, with the sovereign in the center as the heroic hunter.

Animal friezes were also employed in the sculptural decoration of Georgian churches. Running animals, seated lions, and stylized trees are found on a capital in front of the apse of the late fifth-century Sion Church at Bolnisi (fig. 172). Pairs of animals were carved on the cornerstones of the cornices beneath the roof of a late tenth-century church at Vale; and a long animal frieze decorates the drum of the dome of the church at Oski in the province of Tao-Klarjeti, also of the second half of the tenth century.

In the East, friezes of animals frequently appeared in connection with the theme of the royal hunt. Although hunting scenes were one of the most common subjects of Sasanian art, the animals were usually
spread over broader fields, as in the reliefs at Taq-i Bostan, but evi-
dence that the frieze composition was also used in Sasanian decoration
is provided by a fragmentary stucco plaque with a relief of a running
dog found in a house at Ctesiphon (Ma'arid IV) (fig. 268). The raised
borders at the top and bottom of this plaque indicate that it formed
part of a narrow continuous frieze, which may have represented a vari-
ety of pursuing animals.9

In the bath complex of the eighth-century Umayyad palace at Khir-
bat al Mafjar, the cornice at the base of the dome in the porch carried
a row of kneeling gazelles and mountain sheep, and in the main audience
hall, or diwan, a row of stucco partridges formed a continuous file
around the base of the drum of the dome.10 The animals, which may have
been included in the decoration as reminders of the pleasures of the
hunt, were molded in the round rather than carved in relief, and these
friezes are further distinguished from the compositions at Aght'amar by
their lack of variety; but as Der Nersessian has pointed out, the prac-
tice of defining the bases of domes with long rows of birds and animals
is worthy of note.11 Birds also appear on the elaborately carved marble
cornice at the base of the dome of the Constantinopolitan church of the
Theotokos (Fenari Isa Camii), built by Constantine Lips in 907; in this
case, however, they do not form a continuous frieze, but are limited to
six frontal eagles placed at regular intervals around the circumference
of the dome, while stylized vegetal motifs fill the remaining areas.12

The painted decorations of the Jausaq palace at Samarra also in-
cluded friezes of birds and animals. In most cases the creatures were
enclosed in pearled medallions or in vine or cornucopia scrolls, but a
narrow band of hares pursued by greyhounds appeared as a border below an elaborate inhabited acanthus scroll. Friezes of running animals of various species were also carved on marble panels that decorated the eleventh- or early-twelfth-century palaces at Ghazni. Compositions of this type were still more widely used in later Islamic art, particularly on small metal objects, where they continued to appear in connection with scenes of the hunt and other motifs from the princely cycle. The earliest examples of metalwork decorated with rows of pursuing animals appear to have come from Persian workshops. Most of these objects are relatively late, but the animal friezes used in their decoration must have derived from sources similar to those that inspired the sculpture at Aght'amar. A particularly good comparison is provided by a twelfth-century inlaid bronze inkwell from Khurasan in the Nuhad Es-Said collection, recently published by J. W. Allan (fig. 269). The body of this object is decorated with six roundels enclosing mounted hunters and falconers, framed above and below by rows of animals, including lions, dogs, foxes, ibexes, and hares. Most of the animals are shown running, some with their heads turned back toward their pursuers, but others are at rest, standing or grazing; and, as at Aght'amar, the frieze is interrupted at intervals by pairs of confronted birds and stylized vegetal motifs of Sasanian inspiration. K. Otto-Dorn also compared the roof friezes at Aght'amar to the rows of animals found on thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Seljuq and Mamluk metalwork.

The groups of disembodied heads included in these friezes are one of the most puzzling aspects of the sculptural program at Aght'amar. Two of these heads occupy the consoles of the gable on the west facade.
(cat. nos. E1 and E9), and others are aligned in long rows on the north and south facades (cat. nos. E11-22, E70-71, and E77-86). Six more heads of this type appear in the frieze beneath the dome (cat. nos. F1-2, F8-9, F39, and F45). These heads do not differ significantly in appearance from the mask-like heads framed in vine stocks or the small heads positioned above branching vines in the frieze below (see above, cat. nos. C12 and C29), but they are distinguished from the others by their lack of connection with any kind of foliage and by their placement, usually in groups, on the uppermost parts of the church. Each of the three series of heads appears to derive from different (though not unrelated) sources.

Disembodied or severed heads (commonly referred to as têtes coupées or "heads cut short at the chin") had a long history in both Near Eastern and Western art. The ultimate origin of the motif has been a matter of some controversy, but the heads at Aght'amar clearly derive from an Eastern source, and find their closest parallels in the pre-Islamic art of Iraq and Iran. Severed heads were a common motif in Parthian art, where they occur in architectural contexts as well as in the decoration of small objects such as rhyta and jewelry. Frontal heads carved in relief were set in groups on the interior walls of the iwans of the second-century Temple of the Sun at Hatra (fig. 270). In addition, rows of severed heads and busts, some of which may have represented members of the royal family, decorated the archivolts of the iwan arches of the Sun Temple and other sanctuaries at the same site. Relief heads found at Qum and at Hamadan in Iran are also
thought to have been used in an architectural context, and attest to the wide dissemination of this motif in the Parthian period.\textsuperscript{24}

The decoration of Sasanian buildings with heads and busts carved in relief is less well documented, but not unknown. Busts of King Narseh (A.D. 293-302) adorned the exterior walls of a stone tower at Pai-kuli,\textsuperscript{25} and in the fifth-century palace at Kish, at least six stucco busts of women appear to have been set on the walls of the courtyard of Building 1, and fourteen busts of kings were found in the forecourt of what may have been the royal audience chamber in Building 2.\textsuperscript{26} At the same site, the soffit of an arched entrance to Building 1 was decorated with female heads terminating at the base of the neck, alternating with plaques with a stylized floral design.\textsuperscript{27}

Disembodied frontal heads also occurred in other areas and other media. They are found on a number of fifth- and sixth-century Egyptian wool hangings, where they often accompany motifs of Sasanian inspiration.\textsuperscript{28} In cell 1725 of the Monastery of Apa Jeremias at Saqqara, the Virgin and Child flanked by archangels are depicted in a niche framed by a double arch, the outer band of which is decorated with a row of nimbed female heads very similar to some of the Aght'amar examples, while the inner band has a row of palmettes of Sasanian type (fig. 271).\textsuperscript{29}

Both busts and disembodied heads also appeared in the sculptural decoration of other Armenian and Georgian churches of the seventh through the eleventh centuries. In the seventh-century church of Saint John at Sisavan, in addition to the busts of the Evangelists at the top of the drum of the dome, other busts, possibly representing donors,
were carved at the heads of dihedral niches on the west and south facades. In the Cathedral of the Holy Apostles at Kars (930-943), the symbols of the Evangelists were carved on stones embedded in the center of each of the squinches, and Saint Matthew is presented as a frontal severed head. The spandrels beneath the dome in this church were also decorated with heads carved in relief, of which only the four on the east, including the heads of a ram and a bull and two frontal disembodied human heads, are preserved. The sculptural decoration of the Georgian church at Martvili includes a row of frontal half-length figures of saints placed immediately beneath the roof of the polygonal eastern apse. Finally, two disembodied heads appear in a spandrel of a blind arcade on the south facade of the Georgian cathedral at Kutaisi, completed in 1003. Except for the examples in which these busts or heads clearly represent saints or Evangelists, their meaning is difficult to determine. None of these figures is accompanied by an identifying inscription, but there is a tendency to interpret them as donors or founders, as the inclusion of such historical figures was a common theme in Armenian and Georgian church decoration.

The catalogue of the lower frieze (E) begins with the figures beneath the gable on the west facade, and that of the upper frieze (F) with the northwest segment of the drum. Figures such as the human-headed bird on the west facade (cat. no. E2) and those animals or birds that occur in pairs or compositions that may allow their sources to be determined are discussed in detail. The single profile animals that constitute the majority of the motifs in these friezes have no specific
individual significance and will not be discussed, but are described in abbreviated heraldic terms.

Catalogue of Zone E

El. Head. West facade. Fig. 272.

The disembodied head of a woman is carved on the block beneath the triangular stone that terminates the frieze at the north end of the west exedra. The head, presented in a strictly frontal view, is framed by long hair and surrounded by a nimbus.

E2. Human-Headed Bird. West facade. Fig. 272.

A human-headed bird is shown in a frontal pose supported on its fan-shaped tail, above which its feet project horizontally on either side. The creature's face, apparently that of a woman, is framed by long hair. Its wings are divided by pearled bands and decorated with half-palmettes at the bases, while the primary feathers are indicated by parallel lines. A scarf edged with a pearled band projects from the upper tip of each wing.

Another human-headed bird, or harpy, was represented in the main zone of sculpture on the north facade (cat. no. A48), but this creature was depicted in a profile pose and has a peacock's tail. Frontal harpies are less common, but there are Iranian antecedents in the form of bronze figurines from the Parthian period (fig. 273). The figure's wings are similar to those of birds and other hybrid creatures depicted
in post-Sasanian works, and also indicate a derivation from an Iranian source. No examples of harpies of this type in Sasanian or post-Sasanian art are known to me, but the Aght'amar creature's face and wings resemble those of stucco "genius" busts that were arranged in a frieze in the eighth-century palace at Chal Tarkhan-Eshqabad near Rayy (fig. 274). Human busts or animal protomes rising above a pair of wings were also a common motif on earlier Sasanian seals and stuccoes. Many of these figures wear collars with fluttering ribbons, and the wings themselves are bound together at their bases by flying ribbons or scarves. The scarves projecting from the wing-tips of the Aght'amar harpy may have derived from designs of this type, which were no longer fully understood.

E3.  Stag in right profile, running. West facade. Fig. 272.

E4.  Deer in right profile, running. West facade. Fig. 275.

E5.  Ibex in left profile, running. West facade. Fig. 275.

E6-7. Two horses in left profile, running. West facade. Fig. 275.

E8.  Lion in left profile, running. West facade. Fig. 275.
E9. Head. West facade. Fig. 275.

A disembodied head, framed by long hair, is shown in a frontal view. The head is similar to the one depicted at the other end of the gable (cat. no. E1), but lacks a nimbus.

E10. Lion in left profile, crouching. South facade. Fig. 276.


Twelve male heads, some bearded and some clean-shaven, are aligned in a row. Ten of these heads are shown in a frontal view and are "severed" immediately below the chin, but the fourth and sixth heads in the sequence are shown in profile with the necks included, flanking one of the frontal heads.

E23. Ibex in right profile, lodged. South facade. Fig. 278.

E24. Bull in left profile, lodged. South facade. Fig. 278.

E25. Deer in left profile, running and regardant. South facade. Fig. 278.

E26. Bird in right profile, standing. South facade. Fig. 278.

E27. Lion in right profile, running. South facade.

E29. Ibex in right profile, running. South facade. Fig. 279.

E30. Confronted Birds. South facade. Fig. 279.

Two birds stand confronted with their beaks touching. They appear to grasp a ring in their beaks, but this detail cannot be distinguished with certainty. The birds' wings are divided by pearled bands, and each wears a long scarf attached to a collar around its neck. A pair of confronted eagles holding a ring in their beaks appears in the main zone of sculpture on the south facade (cat. no. A19), and there is another pair of confronted birds wearing collars in the vine frieze (cat. no. C60).

Collars with scarves or fluttering ribbons are one of the most characteristic attributes of animals depicted in Sasanian art. They are most frequently worn by rams and birds, and in most cases may be understood as symbols of the hvarnah, the "royal glory." The motif continued to be widely used in the Islamic period, and ducks, parrots, and guineafowl wearing scarves were found in the wall paintings of the Jau- saq palace at Samarra. Pairs of confronted birds holding rings or jewels in their beaks and wearing collars with scarves were also a popular motif on Byzantine textiles.

E31. Confronted Birds. South facade. Fig. 279.

Two birds stand confronted with their beaks touching, flanking a twisted branch. Two small oval eggs are depicted beneath the bird on
the left. The birds are simplified and stylized, and lack the detailed treatment of the wings and feathers seen in other birds in the Aght'amar reliefs. The composition has an abstract, decorative character, and is almost certainly a later addition to the frieze.

E32. Quadruped in right profile, running. South facade.

E33. Quadruped in right profile, running. South facade.

E34. Quadruped in right profile, running. South facade.

E35. Quadruped in left profile, standing and regardant. South facade.


E37. Lion in left profile, running. South facade.


E39. Bull in right profile, kneeling. South facade. Fig. 280.

E40. Confronted Cocks. South facade. Fig. 280.

Two cocks stand confronted with their beaks touching. The birds are very similar to the pairs of fighting or confronted cocks represented in the main zone of sculpture on the north facade (cat. no. A46)
and in the vine frieze on the south facade (cat. no. C20). For discussion of this motif, see above, cat. no. A46.

E41. Bird in left profile, standing. South facade. Fig. 280.

E42. Lion and Deer. South facade. Fig. 281.

A lion, shown in a running pose facing right, seizes a lodged deer which turns its head back to look at its attacker.

E43. Ibex in right profile, running. South facade. Fig. 281.

E44. Boar and Lion. South facade. Fig. 282.

A boar, shown in profile facing right, is confronted by a striding lion.

E45. Fox in left profile, lodged and regardant. East facade. Fig. 283.

E46. Lion in right profile, sitting. East facade.

E47. Bull in right profile, running. East facade. Fig. 284.

E48. Stag in right profile, running. East facade. Fig. 284.

E49. Antelope in right profile, running. East facade. Fig. 284.
E50. Deer in left profile, lodged and regardant. East facade. Fig. 285.

E51. Stag in left profile, running. East facade. Fig. 285.

E52. Stag in left profile, lodged. East facade. Fig. 285.


E54. Hare in right profile, crouching. East facade. Fig. 286.

E55. Ibex in left profile. North facade.

E56. Addorsed Birds. North facade. Fig. 287.

Two birds stand addorsed and regardant with their tail feathers crossed and their beaks touching, leaving an open heart-shaped space between them. The surface of the stone is very worn and details are difficult to determine, but the birds' wings appear to be divided by pearled bands.

This motif is of some interest, as pairs of addorsed birds with their heads turned back are far less common than other heraldic compositions with animals. Examples in Sasanian art are rare, but two birds are shown addorsed and regardant flanking a large floral motif on a silver-gilt vase in the Hermitage (fig. 288), and a considerable body of indirect evidence also points to a Sasanian origin for this design. Other early examples are found in sixth-century Coptic works,
all of which betray Sasanian influence. These include a wool tapestry in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection; a decorative frieze painted in Chapel XVIII at Bawit, in which the birds wear fluttering ribbons around their necks; and a recently published tapestry fragment in the Textile Museum in Washington D.C., on which two addorsed parakeets wearing Sasanian jeweled collars are depicted with their heads turned back and their tails crossed (fig. 289).

As E. Kitzinger has demonstrated, similar designs are found in Byzantine art, notably on a group of small marble capitals of uncertain date from Constantinople. There are also numerous examples of this motif in Islamic art, but all are relatively late. The most interesting of these is an ivory mirror back of unknown provenance, on which the birds have pearled bands on their wings and around their necks, and the space between them is filled by a design described by E. Kühnel as a misunderstood variant of a Sasanian wing palmette with fluttering fillets (fig. 290). Because of these details Kühnel tentatively attributed this piece to eleventh-century Iran. Similar pairs of birds also appear on a series of silver-gilt and nielloed objects made in Iran in the late twelfth century, and on eleventh- and twelfth-century ivories and luster-ware ceramics.


Two birds stand confronted, grasping a ring in their beaks. The birds are similar to those represented in the vine frieze on the north facade (cat. no. C60); and for confronted birds holding a ring, see above, cat. no. A19.


E60. Boar in left profile, standing. North facade. Fig. 291.

E61. Lion Attacking Deer. North facade. Fig. 292.

This motif is related to that of the lion attacking a bull, as seen in the main zone of sculpture on the north facade; for discussion, see above, cat. no. A63.

E62. Bird in right profile, standing. North facade. Fig. 292.

E63. Feline (leopard or lioness) in right profile, running. North facade. Fig. 292.

E64. Deer in right profile, standing and regardant. North facade. Fig. 292.

E65. Antelope in left profile, running. North facade. Fig. 293.
E66. Feline (leopard or lioness) in left profile, running. North facade. Fig. 293.

E67. Bird and Tree. North facade. Fig. 293.

A bird is shown in profile, facing a stylized tree with half-palmettes projecting from its trunk. Although only one bird is included, the motif was probably adapted from a design with confronted birds flanking a tree. A composition of this type appears in the vine frieze on the south facade (cat. no. C14).

E68. Deer(?) in right profile, lodged. North facade. Fig. 294.

E69. Man Struggling with a Bull. North facade. Fig. 294.

A kneeling man whose long mantle billows out behind him grasps the horns of a bull that stands facing him and twists the animal's head downward. A very similar scene is depicted in the vine frieze on the south facade; for discussion, see above, cat. no. C22.


Two frontal, bearded male heads, "severed" beneath the chin, are carved on a single rectangular block of stone.


E73. Deer in right profile, standing. North facade.
E74. Rams. North facade. Fig. 295.

Two rams are shown addorsed and lodged. A related design with a pair of confronted rams appears in the main zone of sculpture on the north facade; for discussion, see above, cat. no. A52.

E75. Ibex in left profile, lodged. North facade. Fig. 295.

E76. Lion in right profile, standing and regardant. North facade. Fig. 295.

E77-86. Heads. North facade. Fig. 296.

Ten frontal heads, terminated beneath the chin, are aligned in a row. The first five heads are framed by long hair and apparently represent women, while the last five are male heads. The third female head in the sequence is nimbed.

E37. Lion in right profile, crouching. North facade. Fig. 296.

Catalogue of Zone F

F1-2. Heads. Fig. 297.

Two male heads, terminated immediately beneath the chin, are shown in a frontal view.

F3. Deer in right profile, running. Fig. 297.
F4. Bird in right profile, standing. Fig. 297.

F5. Bear in right profile, running. Fig. 297.

F6. Ibex in right profile, running. Fig. 297.

F7. Ibex in right profile, running. Fig. 298.

F8-9. Heads. Fig. 298.

Two frontal male heads, "severed" beneath the chin, are carved on a single block of stone.

F10. Ibex in right profile, running. Fig. 298.

F11. Stag in right profile, running. Fig. 298.

F12. Ibex in right profile, lodged. Fig. 298.

F13. Lion in right profile, running. Fig. 298.


F15. Lion in right profile, running.

F16. Deer in right profile, running and regardant.
F17. Animal in right profile, running.

F18. Animal in right profile, running.

F19. Animal in right profile, running.

F20. Fox in right profile, running. Fig. 299.

F21. Hare in left profile, crouching. Fig. 299.

F22. Ram in right profile, lodged and regardant. Fig. 299.

F23. Lion in right profile, running. Fig. 299.

F24. Horse in right profile, walking. Fig. 299.

F25. Bird in left profile, standing. Fig. 299.

F26. Rams. Fig. 299.

Two rams are shown confronted and lodged. For related designs with pairs of confronted or addorsed rams, see above, cat. nos. A52 and E74.

F27. Lion in right profile, crouching. Fig. 284.
F28. Dog in right profile, running. Fig. 284.

F29. Ram in right profile, lodged. Fig. 284.

F30. Lion in right profile, running. Fig. 284.

F31. Bull in right profile, walking. Fig. 285.

F32. Lion in right profile, running. Fig. 285.

F33. Onager(?) in right profile, standing. Fig. 285.

F34. Bear in right profile, standing. Fig. 285.

F35. Fox in right profile, running. Fig. 285.

F36. Antelope in right profile, running. Fig. 285.

F37. Lion in right profile, running.

F38. Lion(?) in right profile, running.

F39. Head

A single male head, terminated beneath the chin, is shown in a frontal view.
F40. Quadruped in right profile, standing.

F41. Deer in right profile, running.

F42. Lion in right profile, running.

F43. Deer in right profile, running. Fig. 300.

F44. Lion in right profile, running. Fig. 300.

F45. Crowned Head. Fig. 300.

A disembodied male head is shown in a frontal view. The head is crowned, and is the only one in the entire series of heads in the roof friezes to be distinguished by such an attribute. The crown appears to be similar to the one worn by King Gagik in the votive scene on the west facade (see above, cat. no. A1).

F46. Dog in right profile, running. Fig. 300.

F47. Deer in right profile, lodged.
Notes to Chapter VI


2. A. Grabar, Sculptures byzantines de Constantinople (IVe-Xe siècle), Paris, 1963, pp. 73ff. and pls. XXIII-XIV.

3. F. Baratte, Mosaïques romaines et paléochrétiennes du musée du Louvre, Paris, 1978, pp. 132ff., no. 55, fig. 141 (with earlier bibliography). Rows of pursuing animals are found in a variety of compositional arrangements on related sixth-century pavements: in the church of Saint George at Khirbat al-Makhayyat, an inhabited acanthus scroll in the nave is framed by a geometric meander pattern enclosing busts of the seasons, birds, and running or standing animals, while other running animals appear in the panels of the intercolumniations (S. J. Sailer and B. Bagatti, The Town of Nebo (Khirbet el-Mekhayyat), Jerusalem, 1949, pp. 72ff., fig. 8, and pls. 23, 3; 26, 1-4; and 28, 2); and in a church at Madaba, the inhabited vine scroll in the nave is framed by an acanthus scroll populated with running animals and other figures (U. Lux, "Eine altchristliche Kirche in Mâdeba," Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins, 83, 1967, pp. 168ff. and pls. 26 A, 27 A, 29-30).


5. A. Grabar, "Un médaillon en or provenant de Mersine en Cilicie," DOP, 6, 1951, pp. 48ff. and fig. 1; see also S. R. Zwirn in K. Weitzmann (ed.), Age of Spirituality, New York, 1979, pp. 72ff., no. 62.

6. N. A. Aladashvili, Monumental'naia skulptura gruzii: Figurnye rel'yefy V-XI vekov, Moscow, 1977, fig. 3 (cited hereafter as Aladashvili, Skulptura gruzii).

7. Ibid., fig. 95.


11. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 28.


13. For the border beneath the acanthus scroll, see E. Herzfeld, Die Malereien von Samarra (Die Ausgrabungen von Samarra, III), Berlin, 1927, pp. 59f. and pls. XII-XIV; and for the other friezes, ibid., pp. 59ff. and pls. XLVII-L.


15. For a discussion of the development of the animal frieze on Islamic metalwork, see E. Baer, Metalwork in Medieval Islamic Art, Albany, 1983, pp. 175ff.

16. Ibid., p. 176.


19. Der Nersessian (Aght'amar, p. 26) and Otto-Dorn ("Figurenreliefs," pp. 37ff.) briefly discussed the sources of these heads, and the latter attributed a general magical significance to them. G. Goyan (2000 let Armianskago teatru, Moscow, 1952, II, pp. 181-323 [cited in Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 55, n. 21]) identified them as copies of masks used in performances of the ancient Armenian theater, but according to Der Nersessian (Aght'amar, p. 26), this theory was based on a misinterpretation of texts and cannot be accepted. I. A. Orbeli ("Pamiatniki armianskogo zodchestva na ostrove Akhtamar," Izbrannye trudy, I, Moscow, 1968, p. 187, n. 13) apparently accepted Goyan's interpretation, and planned to include a section on the heads in his own work on Aght'amar, but it was never written.

20. R. Ghirshman believes the motif of the "head cut short at the chin" to be an Iranian creation, appearing as early as the beginning of the first millennium B.C. on pottery found in Cemetery B at Sialk; see Bîchâpour, II: Les mosaïques sassanides (Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités Orientales, Série Archéologique, VII), Paris, 1956, pp. 117ff., and idem, Persian Art: The Parthian and Sasanian Dynasties, New
York, 1962, pp. 37, 146, 272, 295ff. Other scholars have argued for an origin in Etruscan and Roman art (H. von Gall, "Zur figuralen Architekturplastik des grossen Tempels von Hatra," Baghdader Mitteilungen, 5, 1970, pp. 7ff.; see also F. Henry and G. Zarnecki, "Romanesque Arches Decorated with Human and Animal Heads," JBAA, 20-21, 1957-1958, pp. 29ff., and L. Seidel, Songs of Glory: The Romanesque Facades of Aquitaine, Chicago, 1981, pp. 109ff., n. 65). Otto-Dorn ("Figurenreliefs," pp. 37ff.) compared the Aght'amar heads to disembodied heads found on horse trappings and ornaments from Siberian tombs, but these examples are rather different in appearance, and while they may ultimately have derived from the same sources as the later Iranian works (see Ghirshman, Bîchâpour, II, pp. 128ff.), more convincing parallels can be drawn to examples in which the heads appear in similar architectural contexts.


23. Ibid., pp. 7ff., 25ff. and pls. 1, 4; 2, 1; and 3, 1-4.

24. Ghirshman, Bîchâpour, II, p. 131 and pl. XXV, 5 and 9; idem, Persian Art, p. 37, fig. 52 A and B.

25. SPA, I, fig. 164.


27. Moorey, Kish Excavations, p. 126; see also Kröger, Stuckdekor, pp. 74ff., and Thompson, "Parthian Stucco," pp. 302f. and fig. 11.


31. J. M. Thierry, La cathédrale des Saints-Apôtres de Kars (930-943) (Materiaux pour l'Archeologie Armenienne, 1), Louvain, 1978, pp. 50f., fig. 27, and pl. VII, 3-4. Saint Mark is represented at Kars by a second human head rather than by a lion; Thierry has suggested that this may be due to a later restoration. Saint Matthew was also symbolized by a severed head in the squinches of a number of other tenth-century Armenian churches, including the church of the Holy Martyrs at Gndevank', the church of the Mother of God at Sanahin, Kumbet Kilise, and a church at Makaravank' (ibid., pp. 51f. and fig. 28).

32. Ibid., p. 53 and pl. VII, 5 a-d. Thierry noted the similarity between these heads and those in the Aght'amar frieze, and suggested that in both cases they may be purely decorative.

33. Aladashvili, Skulptura gruzii, figs. 48, 50-51, 59-60.

34. Ibid., fig. 140.


36. For examples of the Parthian figurines, see E. Baer, Sphinxes and Harpies in Medieval Islamic Art (Oriental Notes and Studies, 9), Jerusalem, 1965, p. 25 and fig. 43, and J. Lerner, "A Note on Sasanian Harpies," Iran, 13, 1975, p. 167 and pl. II, 9. Frontal harpies are also found on the carved marble panels that decorated the eleventh- or twelfth-century palaces at Ghazni (Bombaci, "Introduction to the Excavations," fig. 11), and on thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Syrian and Mesopotamian metalwork and ceramics (Baer, Sphinxes and Harpies, pp. 15f., n. 60, p. 18, n. 72, and fig. 34). For a thirteenth-century Armenian example, see above, pp. 146f., n. 314.

37. See above, pp. 53f., cat. no. A19.


39. For a list of examples and further discussion and bibliography, see ibid., pp. 26f.; and see also eadem, "Parthian Stucco," p. 305, and Kröger, Stuckdekor, pp. 239ff.

40. For a list of examples of birds wearing scarves in Sasanian and post-Sasanian art, see Thompson, Stucco, p. 33 and p. 104, n. 49; and for a discussion of the meaning of these scarves or ribbons, Kröger, Stuckdekor, pp. 242f.

41. Herzfeld, Malereien, pp. 59f. and pls. XLVII-L.
42. In addition to the examples cited above, p. 132, n. 150, see A. Jeroussalimskaia, "Une soierie récemment trouvée dans le tombeau de Mochtchevaja Balka, Caucasian Septentrional," Documenta Textilrum: Festschrift für Sigrid Müller-Christensen, Munich, 1981, pp. 123ff.

43. For discussion of this motif, see Kitzinger, "Horse and Lion Tapestry," pp. 25ff.

44. I. Orbeli and C. Trever, Orfévrerie sasanide, Moscow/Leningrad, 1935, pl. 39.

45. Kitzinger, "Horse and Lion Tapestry," pp. 1ff. and figs. 1, 2, and 21; and for a good color illustration, W. F. Volbach, Early Decorative Textiles, London, 1969, pl. 28.

46. J. Clédat, Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouît (Memlinst Caire, XII, 1), Cairo, 1904, pls. 66, 72; and Kitzinger, "Horse and Lion Tapestry," pp. 26ff., figs. 24-25.

47. Trilling, Roman Heritage, p. 38, no. 15.

48. Kitzinger, "Horse and Lion Tapestry," pp. 27f. and figs. 22-23.

49. E. Kühnel, Die islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen: VIII.-XIII. Jahrhundert, Berlin, 1971, pp. 77f., no. 128, pl. CIII.

50. Ibid., p. 78.

51. Examples include a dish in the Cincinnati Art Museum (Baer, Metalwork, fig. 135 above); a silver-gilt ewer in Berlin (E. Kühnel, The Minor Arts of Islam, Ithaca, 1971, fig. 152); and a brass ewer with silver inlay in the British Museum (D. Barrett, Islamic Metalwork in the British Museum, London, 1949, pl. 6). The motif also appears on a pottery imitation ostrich egg of unknown function, also attributed to twelfth-century Iran and now in the L. A. Mayer Memorial in Jerusalem (R. Ettinghausen, From Byzantium to Sasanian Iran and the Islamic World, Leiden, 1972, p. 34 and fig. 72).

52. Examples in ivory include two eleventh-century hunting horns made in southern Italy or Sicily (Kühnel, Elfenbeinskulpturen, p. 54, no. 57, pls. LII and XCV; and pp. 59f., no. 71, pl. LXXI), and several twelfth-century painted caskets from Sicily (P. B. Cott, Siculo-Arabic Ivories, Princeton, 1939, no. 5, pl. 3; p. 32, no. 9, pl. 3; and p. 38, no. 43, pl. 23). Addorsed birds also appear on a mid-twelfth-century luster-ware plate, found in Sicily but probably made in Fatimid Egypt (A. Lane, Early Islamic Pottery, London, 1947, pl. 28 A).
The detailed analysis of the incomparably rich sculptural ensemble of the Church of the Holy Cross has, in one sense, merely confirmed what was apparent at the outset: the decorative program at Aght'amar is the result of the superimposition of a variety of influences from both Byzantium and the Islamic world on an already well-developed tradition of Armenian art. The investigation of each individual figure and motif has uncovered little that is new or surprising regarding the character of the sources and influences that are reflected in the sculpture, but it has allowed greater precision in determining the types of models that were used and their means of transmission; and, more importantly, it has revealed a series of underlying complementary themes and concepts that shed new light on the questions of the selection and placement of the scenes and the meaning of the program as a whole.

Among the Biblical subjects depicted in the main zone of sculpture, some scenes, such as the Virgin and Child flanked by Archangels, the Sacrifice of Isaac, and Daniel in the Lions' Den, follow earlier Armenian iconographic traditions, as attested by reliefs of the same subjects carved on seventh-century funerary stelae.¹ For many of the other Old Testament scenes and figures, however, including the Temptation and Fall of Man, Moses, Samson and the Philistine, and the stories
of David and Jonah, the reliefs at Aght'amar are the earliest preserved Armenian examples, and their iconography shows a close connection to contemporary Byzantine works. Compositions related to each of these scenes appear in ninth-century manuscripts such as the Sacra Parallelela and the Paris Gregory, or in the Byzantine Octateuchs, which, although preserved only in eleventh- and twelfth-century copies, reflect much earlier sources. As Der Nersessian has pointed out, a familiarity with contemporary Byzantine iconography is also demonstrated by the donor scene on the west facade, which adheres to a Byzantine type that became common only after the Iconoclastic period, and which differs from other Armenian examples of votive scenes.  

According to the continuator of Thomas Artsruni, artists from all lands gathered at Aght'amar to carry out Gagik's plans for his church and palace, and one of these masters could well have come from Constantinople or some other center with close ties to the Byzantine capital, perhaps bringing with him a model book of the type that must have been used by illustrators of manuscripts as well as mural painters and mosaicists. The question of model books always raises difficulties because of the lack of direct evidence concerning such works, but as E. Kitzinger has demonstrated, they undoubtedly did exist; they would have been expendable and it is not surprising that no Byzantine examples have been preserved.  An Armenian pictorial guide, however, actually has survived, and is of considerable interest even though it is much later than the church of the Holy Cross. This manuscript, which is now in the Mekhitarian Library at San Lazzaro (ms. 1434), consists of two separate books that were combined at a later date. The first part was
apparently produced in the fifteenth century in an Armenian scriptorium, very probably the one in the monastery at Aght'amar itself. In addition to a variety of initials and ornaments, it includes drawings of a Christological cycle, and figures of saints, prophets, and Evangelists, some of which are shown as full-length standing figures, while others are depicted as half-length or bust portraits. Der Nersessian has shown that the drawings were copied from a variety of manuscripts of different types, dates, and regions, including Bibles, Gospel books, menologias, and other liturgical works. It is tempting to imagine that an earlier guide of this type might have been used at Aght'amar, as such a book could have provided models not only for the Old Testament scenes, but also for the profusion of full-length, half-length, and medallion portraits of saints and prophets included in the reliefs.

Although a number of the Biblical scenes and figures at Aght'amar were based on Byzantine sources, the Armenian sculptors did not merely copy these models, but altered and transformed them. A number of iconographic details, such as the form of the sea monster and the depiction of the repentant Ninevites as medallion portraits in the scenes from the story of Jonah, or the form of the serpent and Eve's kneeling pose in the Temptation, are unique to Aght'amar. The scene of Adam Naming the Animals is found in a number of Byzantine Octateuchs, Psalters, and other manuscripts, but its presentation at Aght'amar as a series of high relief animals and animal protomes accompanied by a medallion portrait of Adam is again unprecedented. The costumes of many of the figures were also altered to reflect local traditions: the portraits of John the Baptist and the prophet Elijah on the east facade, while
conforming to Byzantine types in other respects, wear Persian anaxyrides beneath their long robes; and the King of Nineveh, Hezekiah, and Saul, instead of being shown in the full regalia of Byzantine emperors as they are in the Greek manuscripts, were transformed into Eastern rulers wearing long oriental robes and diadems or turbans.  

In addition to the Biblical scenes and figures, the main zone of sculpture at Aght'amar includes a number of real and fantastic animals, most of which were derived from post-Sasanian and Islamic sources. These motifs could have reached Aght'amar in a variety of ways. Although no Islamic pattern books have been found, a number of fragments of drawings and paintings from Fostat, most of which appear to date from before A.D. 1200, are thought to have been produced as models for painters and other craftsmen. As demonstrated in the catalogue, however, animals similar to those at Aght'amar are known mainly from examples in the so-called industrial arts, such as ceramics, metalwork, ivories, and textiles; and works in these media unquestionably played a major role in the formation and spread of an iconography specifically associated with the royal courts. Such goods moved freely throughout the Islamic world, and motifs disseminated by imports were often imitated and adapted by local artisans. Motifs connected with the art of the court were also transmitted through the visits of royal ambassadors, and by gifts that were sent from one prince to another. Many Armenian rulers are known to have received robes of honor, crowns, and objects made of precious metals from Islamic princes, and we have seen that Gagik himself was given such gifts by the emir Yusuf b. Abi'l-Saj and the caliph al-Muqtadir. Luxury textiles, which were highly
prized and easily transportable, have long been recognized as an impor­
tant means of transmission for Near Eastern patterns and motifs, and it
is significant that parallels for the majority of the animals depicted
at Aght'amar have been found either on Persian textiles or on Byzantine
silks that imitate Eastern patterns. Many of these motifs ultimately
originated in Sasanian art, although stylistic details indicate that
the actual models were works produced during the Islamic era. The
Artsrunid lands were not far distant from the Iranian border states
around the Caspian Sea, where Islam penetrated only very slowly and
Sasanian motifs never completely died out; but the influence of Sasan­
ian art on the Aght'amar reliefs may also be seen as part of a much
wider phenomenon. The "Persian Renaissance," which reached its apex in
the tenth century, was characterized by a conscious revival of pre-
Islamic Iranian traditions, in court ceremonies and government institu­
tions as well as in literature and art; and during this period, a new
wave of Sasanian influence made itself felt not only in Islamic lands,
but also in the Christian kingdoms of the Caucasus and in Constantinople
itself.

The vine frieze encircling the upper part of the church of the
Holy Cross is also characterized by a combination of Byzantine, Sasan­
ian, and Islamic sources. Vine scrolls populated by vintagers, animals,
and birds, which ultimately originated in the realm of Dionysiac im­
agery, were a common artistic theme from the Mediterranean lands to
Central Asia in the first millennium B.C. Parallels to some of the fig­
ures and animals in the Aght'amam frieze were found on a series of late
Sasanian silver vessels with this type of decoration, but the
vintagers and hunters on these objects are usually represented as naked erotes, and they reflect, for the most part, an earlier and more purely Dionysiac version of this imagery than that which inspired the later Armenian sculptors. More significant comparisons are provided by early Byzantine mosaic pavements, as more than half of the motifs in the Aght'amar frieze duplicate figures found in such works. In a closely related group of mosaic pavements with inhabited vine scrolls from sixth-century Palestinian churches at Beisan, Madaba, and Khirbat al-Makhayyat, the vine rinceaux enclose a number of figures that are very similar to those at Aght'amar. These include vintagers harvesting and treading grapes; men armed with lances, bows, slings, and clubs, and sometimes accompanied by dogs, hunting lions, bears, boars, and hares; and a variety of other animals, including leopards, foxes, and different species of birds, many of which are shown devouring or pecking at the grapes. Some of these pavements, and others from the same region, have elaborate borders with foliate masks that may represent the four winds defining each corner, and four such "masks," two bearded and two unbearded as on the mosaics, also appear in the Aght'amar frieze. So many analogies can scarcely be coincidental. C. Dauphin, who analyzed more than one hundred fourth- to seventh-century mosaic pavements with inhabited vine scrolls from Constantinople, Syria, Cilicia, Lebanon, and Palestine, found that many of the same figures and animals appeared repeatedly, and suggested that such recurring motifs may have been taken from pattern books. She envisioned these not as large-scale cartoons with designs for entire pavements, but as extensive notebooks with sets of drawings of basic layouts for vine rinceaux and geometric
patterns, individual sketches of different kinds of animals, birds, and human figures, and separate series for such cycles as the activities of the months and the signs of the Zodiac. The mosaicist could select as many of these standardized images as he needed, or could supplement them with designs of his own to make the work more appropriate to a particular region. A chronological link between the Palestinian mosaic pavements and the Aght'amar frieze is found in the decoration of eighth-century Umayyad palaces, as vine scrolls populated with similar figures were painted on the vault of a niche in the caldarium at Qusayr 'Amra, and translated into carved stucco on the vault of the palace entrance hall at Khirbat al Mafjar.

Dauphin's theory that the same pattern books that contained sketches for inhabited vine scrolls also included figures representing the months of the year is of considerable interest, as at least part of such a cycle is also found in the Aght'amar frieze. Some of the Aght'amar personifications are similar to those on sixth-century mosaic pavements, while others find their closest parallels in cycles preserved in later Byzantine manuscripts. In the earlier mosaics, the months are sometimes found together with inhabited vine scrolls, but the personifications do not appear in the vine scrolls themselves, interspersed among the vintagers and hunters, as they do at Aght'amar. At Beisan, for example, the vine scroll decorates the nave, while the full-length figures of the months are found on a panel in the narthex; and in the church of Saint Christopher at Qabr Hiram in Lebanon, the months, presented as medallion busts, were placed in the aisles. The figures at Aght'amar do not appear in a sequence that corresponds to any of the
known cycles of the activities of the months. August and May are found on the west facade, while February, March, and April are relatively closely grouped on the west half of the south facade, but not in their proper order. Figures that may represent September, October, and November appear on the north end of the east facade and the adjoining side of the north facade, but again not in the sequence of the traditional cycles. The man digging with a spade, a common personification of November, was depicted twice, while several other months (December, January, June, and July) have not yet been identified among the figures at Aght'amar. It is nonetheless possible that a complete cycle once appeared; some areas of the vine frieze are badly damaged and some figures may have been lost altogether, while the surfaces of several others are so badly abraded that their actions and attributes cannot be determined with certainty. The sculptors may not have fully understood the significance of the images they copied, or they may simply have elected to disregard the normal sequence of the cycle, and scattered the figures randomly throughout the frieze. A similar freedom is seen in the placement of the foliate "masks," which must also have been included in mosaicists' pattern books; on mosaic borders, these heads appear at the four corners, or sometimes in the center of each side of the border, while at Aght'amar all four are grouped on the west half of the south facade.

As in the scenes depicted in the main zone of sculpture, the designers of the vine frieze did not merely reproduce their models, but altered and enriched them. In the earlier mosaics, the hunters were most frequently shown in pursuit of lions, which were native to
Palestine until the Middle Ages; at Aght'amar, only one hunter confronts a lion, but there are many scenes of men fighting or fleeing from bears, which were the most common objects of the hunt in the Caucasus. Some of the personifications of the months were also modified. The warrior on the south facade, who may represent March, is depicted in a costume and pose like those of the guards in Abbasid and Ghaznavid paintings and reliefs, rather than as a Roman soldier as in the Byzantine cycles. The frieze also includes a number of animals and figures foreign to Byzantine compositions of this type. The most striking addition is that of a series of images drawn from the princely cycle of Islamic art, including the elaborate scene of a ruler flanked by attendants in the center of the east facade, as well as wrestlers, stick-fighters, and a dancer. Many of these motifs, which also appeared in the decoration of Gagik's palace at Aght'amar, ultimately originated in Sasanian art; but, like the animals in the main zone of sculpture, they were transmitted through objects produced later in the Islamic era. Eastern sources are also dominant in the friezes beneath the roofs at Aght'amar, as both the individual motifs and their compositional arrangement find their closest parallels in Sasanian and Islamic works.

In spite of the diversity of the subjects depicted on the church at Aght'amar and the widely varied sources and influences they reflect, the sculpture is by no means merely a collection of unrelated scenes and motifs. Both the selection of the subjects to be represented and their positions on the walls were determined by a carefully worked out program, each part of which relates to and reinforces the others.
As Der Nersessian has pointed out, the west facade is the most successful compositionally, as the entire width of the main zone of sculpture is occupied by a single symmetrically balanced scene in which Gagik presents the model of the church to Christ. The concept of royalty is emphasized by the direct relationship of the ruler to Christ and by the depiction of Christ as the Pantokrator, the heavenly king, as well as by the inclusion of the seraphim. Angels sometimes appeared in votive scenes in early Byzantine apse mosaics, as at San Vitale in Ravenna, but these were always members of a lower order in the angelic hierarchy. Seraphim are found in theophanies or visions of Christ in Majesty, and judging from the very few Armenian apse decorations that have been preserved, these were common subjects in this area; but earthly rulers were never, to my knowledge, included in such contexts. A clue to the meaning of the votive scene at Aght'amar may be found in contemporary Constantinopolitan church decoration: in Hagia Sophia, the nave mosaics of the second half of the ninth century included a bust of the Pantokrator in the dome and seraphim in the pendentives, and the same arrangement was used in a church built by Stylianus Zaoutzes between 886 and 893. These compositions appear to have been understood not as representations of specific Old Testament visions, but as celestial courts; and the scene at Aght'amar should perhaps be interpreted in the same way, as a heavenly court to which Gagik, by virtue of his royal status, has gained admittance as a donor and a supplicant. The location of this composition above the main entrance on the west facade is unusual for this region, as the majority of votive scenes on both Armenian and Georgian churches are found on the east facades.
Its placement may, like the iconography of the scene itself, reflect Constantinopolitan practices. The prominent position of the mosaic of Leo VI over the central door of the narthex of Hagia Sophia has been explained by the emperor's role as a *ktetor*, who either repaired the church or added to its decoration; and in the much later church of the Chora (Kariye Camii), the scene of the donor presenting a model of the church to Christ was again placed in the narthex, above the main door leading into the nave.\(^{28}\) Like other such compositions, the votive scene at Aght'amar was more than a proclamation of the king's wealth and glory. As L. Der Manuelian has demonstrated, the emphasis on eternal salvation was a major theme in Armenian art and religious thought, and the construction of a church was a pious deed and a means of gaining salvation for the donor and his family.\(^{29}\) That this scene must also be understood as a reference to the king's quest for salvation is supported by the description of the continuator of Thomas Artsruni, according to whom Gagik "... stands before the Lord in the attitude of a man begging for the remission of his sins."\(^{30}\)

The hope of eternal salvation and the concept of royal glory and power, already expressed in the votive scene, are the two main themes that determined the selection of the subjects and motifs depicted in the main zone of sculpture. With the exception of the iconic images of the enthroned Christ and the Virgin and Child on the south facade, the Biblical subjects were drawn from the Old Testament and presented as abbreviated narratives. The story of Jonah, the Sacrifice of Isaac, Moses, the Three Hebrews, and Daniel were among the most common paradigms of deliverance through divine intervention or assistance, and
occurred repeatedly in Early Christian catacomb paintings and sarcophagi. Adam and Eve were included in many of these cycles as an emblem of the original sin that brought about the need for redemption. David, Samson, and Elijah also appeared as prototypes of Christ and images of salvation in more extensive cycles, such as that in the Catacomb of the Via Latina. David and Samson overcame great odds through the strength given them by the Lord, and Elijah was also a paradigm for salvation, as he was saved from death by his ascension into heaven. Of the figures at Aght'amar, only Hezekiah was not included in these early cycles, but he too received divine assistance in preserving Jerusalem from the Assyrians, and was himself saved through his faith in God. Faith, the first condition for salvation, and God's mercy toward sinners are also unifying themes. The list of saints saved by faith in Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews (11:4-32) includes Abraham and Isaac, Moses, Samson, David, and Samuel; and the Fathers of the Church added other models, such as Daniel and the Three Hebrews. The repentant Ninevites, depicted with unusual prominence in the Jonah scene at Aght'amar, were an emblem of God's mercy toward, and forgiveness of, sinners who repent. This cycle of imagery was, from its inception, essentially funerary, and its use at Aght'amar would be doubly appropriate if the church also served as a royal mausoleum. This cannot at present be proven, but the function of the church of the Holy Cross as Gagik's palace chapel is well established, and in this context it is significant that many of these same scenes and figures had imperial connotations in addition to their theological significance.
As A. Grabar and others have demonstrated, it was a common practice for Byzantine emperors, as well as for kings and princes of other Christian lands, to affirm the divine origin of their sovereignty by claiming the great monarchs and leaders of the Old Testament as their spiritual ancestors. Rulers were thus frequently acclaimed as "the new David" or "the new Moses," while their subjects and lands formed "a new Israel." Armenian chroniclers and poets also glorified their princes with such epithets, and Gagik himself was referred to as the "king of the new Israel" by the continuator of Thomas Artsruni. A number of the figures at Aght'amar, including not only David and Moses but also Abraham, Elijah, Daniel, and Hezekiah, all of whom were models or prototypes for pious kings, may be related to this tradition of aulic imagery.

Equally widespread were the attempts of rulers to increase their prestige through the creation of illustrious genealogies, and this too may be reflected in the Aght'amar reliefs. The stories of David and Jonah are represented in more detail than the other abbreviated Old Testament narratives. C. Jolivet has shown that these two scenes, which occupy the east and west end panels of the south facade and balance each other compositionally, should also be understood as a reference to Gagik's ancestry: his mother, Sophia, was a Bagratid princess, and the Bagratids traced their lineage back to the prophet David, while the Artsrunis claimed descent from the Assyrian kings.

The cycle of Biblical subjects at Aght'amar may also have been influenced by the traditions of Byzantine palace decoration. Nothing remains of these works, but some information about them is provided by
literary sources. The most interesting of these, in the present context, is the eleventh- or twelfth-century epic of Digenis Akritas.\(^{39}\)

The origins of this poem are uncertain, but it clearly has some Armenian elements.\(^{40}\) A. A. M. Bryer was the first to notice a connection between the description of the decoration of Digenis's palace on the Euphrates and the reliefs at Aght'amar, both of which include scenes of Samson and the Philistine, Samson slaying the lion, Moses, and the combat of David and Goliath.\(^{41}\) The mosaics of Digenis's palace, however, also depicted episodes from Greek epic poetry and mythology, and from the life of Alexander.\(^{42}\) The description of this imaginary palace may reflect the contemporary fashions of the Byzantine court; according to the twelfth-century historian Joannes Cinnamus, the customary subjects for the decoration of the houses of courtiers were the "ancient deeds of the Hellenes" and the emperor's achievements.\(^{43}\) An anonymous twelfth-century poet described the house of Leo Sikountenos at Thessaloniki as containing various pictures of ancient subjects, which included Moses and Joshua, as well as pictures of the emperor, Manuel I Comnenus;\(^{44}\) and Manuel himself decorated his Palace of the Blachernae with mosaics representing "battles before his day" and his own combats.\(^{45}\) The purpose of all of these decorations was clearly to glorify the emperor by drawing parallels between his exploits and those of the heroes of the past, and some of the reliefs at Aght'amar may also have been understood in this way. Like Samson, David, and Hezekiah, Gagik fought against foreign armies, and like Daniel and the Three Hebrews, he defied foreign kings and adhered to the faith of his fathers. Daniel and the Three Hebrews are also prototypes of Saints Sahak and
Hamazasp, who were put to death by the Arabs in the eighth century for refusing to deny their faith. As Christian martyrs, these saints are emblems of salvation, and as Artsrunid princes, they are further allusions to the piety and courage of Gagik's ancestors. The military saints on the north facade, Theodore, Sargis, and George, achieved salvation through their victories over evil. They too may be seen as Christian counterparts of the Old Testament heroes, and are equally appropriate subjects for the decoration of a palatine church. The representation of the emperor as a mounted warrior triumphing over a foe was a standard theme in early Byzantine imperial iconography, and in the later years of the Middle Byzantine period, direct parallels were drawn between the emperors and the military saints. Digenis Akritas's palace included a chapel dedicated to Saint Theodore, and the Comnenian emperors issued coins depicting Saints Theodore, George, and Demetrius. Gagik himself is known to have dedicated at least one of the churches he constructed to Saint George.

The remaining Biblical figures at Aght'amar are drawn from the "choir of saints," the apostles and martyrs, prophets and patriarchs who, in the classical system of Middle Byzantine church decoration, represented the third and lowest zone of the celestial hierarchy. The figures on the east facade form a carefully balanced composition, framed by Saint John the Baptist and the prophet Elijah, prototypes and precursors of Christ, whose identical poses and costumes illustrate the traditional interpretation of the Baptist as a reincarnation of Elijah (Matthew 17:12-13). Of the other saints represented on the east facade, only Gregory the Illuminator is accompanied by an inscription,
but the identification of the three additional full-length figures as saints and apostles connected with the introduction and spread of Christianity in Armenia, proposed by Der Nersessian and others, is very plausible. The precise role of the saints and prophets on the north and south facades is more difficult to define, particularly as only a few of them can be identified. Like the members of the choir of saints in Middle Byzantine churches, they are presented as full-length figures, busts, and medallion portraits. In centralized churches, the placement of each type of figure was determined by the architecture; but when this system was transferred to the exterior of the church, the surfaces to be decorated were very different and the traditional rules could not be applied, resulting in what appears to be a rather random arrangement. It is noteworthy, however, that the four Evangelists occupy a higher position on the walls of the church, just as they do in many centrally planned Byzantine churches, where they are found in the pendentives of the dome. The placement of the Evangelists at Aght'amar in the center of each exedra, facing the four cardinal directions, may have symbolized the spread of Christianity to the four corners of the earth.

The animals in the main zone of sculpture are distributed over the north, south, and east facades, arranged singly or in groups. Some of the individual animals, such as the ibex on the south facade, the leopard and goat on the east, and the camel on the north, seem to be randomly placed and their iconographic significance (if any) cannot be determined. The majority of these motifs, however, are related to the concept of royalty. Lions, found in symmetrical pairs on both the east and north facades, were almost universal symbols of sovereignty, and
Gagik himself was described as being seated on his throne "with the majesty of the lion." A number of other motifs, including the confronted eagles grasping a ring and the ram-headed bird on the south facade and the two rams on the north, were ancient Iranian emblems of hvarnah, the concept of divine kingship and royal glory and fortune. The griffin, the human-headed bird, and the various animal combats also symbolized royal power. Some of these motifs could also be understood as emblems of salvation, and it is possible that, like many of the Old Testament scenes, they carried a double meaning; but in view of the great emphasis placed on the concept of royalty throughout the entire program of this palatine church, their role as symbols of the king's might and glory seems to me to be most clearly indicated, and this is also supported by the location of these motifs. The eagles grasping a ring in their beaks and the griffin frame the door on the south facade, through which Gagik would have entered his private gallery; and to the right of this door, the ram-headed bird and the falcon striking a duck are placed beside the Artsrunid princes, Sahak and Hamazasp. The end panels of this facade, as noted above, are occupied by the Jonah and David scenes which allude to Gagik's ancestry. The arrangement of the sculpture on the north facade is less unified, but a number of the animal motifs again accompany royal figures: the eagle attacking a hare and the two rams are placed beside and above King Hezekiah, while the lion attacking a bull is found next to the scene of David killing a lion.
The themes of salvation and royal power that determined the choice of subjects in the main zone of sculpture are also reflected in the second zone, which represents Adam naming the animals. As indicated above, this scene illustrates man's superiority over the animals, in the sense that only he is capable of reason and free will, and only he, through contemplation and virtue, can become worthy of salvation. At the same time, as N. Thierry has suggested, Adam's dominance over the animals may be understood as an expression of the concept of sovereignty, and the animals themselves, in addition to representing the inhabitants of the Garden of Eden, may refer to royal game parks. This seems very plausible, particularly as the grounds of one of Gagik's other palaces included a game park stocked with wild animals, which was undoubtedly modeled on those of the Arab rulers. Although most of the animals appear to be randomly distributed around the circumference of the church, there are some cases in which their placement is related to figures or scenes in the main zone of sculpture. This is seen most clearly in the location of the ape above the depiction of the Fall of Man on the north facade. In addition, the protomes of a ram and a lion, animals associated with royalty, were placed above the votive scene on the west facade, and other felines, probably lions, are found above the King of Nineveh and King Saul on the south facade.

The vine frieze at Aght'amar has traditionally been explained as a derivation from the cycles of imagery found in Sasanian and Islamic palaces, and as a purely secular intrusion into the decorative program of the church. The scene of the ruler flanked by attendants, the
mounted archer, the wrestlers, and the dancer have been emphasized to a disproportionate degree in order to support this interpretation. These motifs were indeed borrowed from the Eastern cycle of princely imagery, but they are only a part, and a relatively small one, of the larger program of the frieze. They are greatly outnumbered by the ordinary rustic hunters and vintagers and the figures that have been related to the cycle of the activities of the months, just as such creatures as the sphinx and the pairs of heraldically confronted birds, rams, and goats appear much less frequently than the animals that commonly populated Late Antique and Byzantine vine scrolls. These hunters and rural genre scenes and animals are essentially neutral subjects, and are not in and of themselves religious symbols; but as E. Kitzinger has reiterated on several occasions, it was their very neutrality that allowed them to be transferred into ecclesiastical settings. As indicated above, many of the figures and animals at Aght'amarr echo motifs found on sixth-century Palestinian mosaic pavements with inhabited vine scrolls, and the key to the meaning of the vine frieze may also be found in these works. It is generally agreed that the mosaics represent the physical world: the domain of the animals and of man, who pursues his daily activities and is sometimes beset by danger. The addition of such elements as the months or seasons and the four winds, which are also present at Aght'amarr, broadens the scope of these programs to include the entire perceptible universe, providing an encyclopedic view of creation. These mosaics have been interpreted in terms of sixth- and seventh-century texts in which the architecture of the church is described as an image of the cosmos, and the nave is
specifically equated with the physical world. Symbolic interpretations of church architecture are also found in the texts of Armenian theologians, and John of Odzoun, writing in the eighth century, made similar distinctions between the nave and the sanctuary, which was an image of heaven. The inclusion of the physical world within the confines of the church was justified in the sense that contemplation of God's creation was a step whereby the faithful could attain to the contemplation of the intelligible world, and ultimately to the contemplation of God himself, thereby becoming worthy of salvation. The themes taken from the princely cycle are by no means inappropriate in this context. The physical world was ruled by earthly kings, and if the seated ruler may be understood as an image of Gagik himself, it would also be another donor portrait. The other figures are also suitable additions for the adaptation of this cycle to a palatine church, as the normal course of daily existence at Aght'amar would encompass not only the rural activities of the common people, but could also be viewed in terms of the life of the court, as represented by the noble hunter, the dancer, and the wrestlers and stick-fighters, common motifs of princely pastimes and entertainments.

The two highest zones of sculpture, the friezes of animals and human heads, may be seen as a continuation of the program of the vine frieze. Stylistically, the rows of pursuing animals find their closest parallels in Islamic works, where they frequently appeared as part of the theme of the princely hunt. They may be understood in the same way at Aght'amar, as an elaboration of the cycle of royal pastimes, and perhaps as a further reference, with the animals of the second zone of
sculpture, to royal game parks. They may also be interpreted, however, as a continuation of the representation of the physical world. It is noteworthy that on a number of mosaic pavements, including those of churches in Qabr Hiram, Madaba, and Khirbat al-Makhayyat, the inhabited vine scroll in the nave is framed by pursuing animals, either in a border or in the intercolumniations. 70

The rows of disembodied heads in these friezes present a more difficult problem. They were not mentioned in the continuator of Thomas Arstruni's description of the sculptural decoration of the church, and few attempts have been made to define their meaning. 71 Although it cannot be proven, it is possible that they represent Gagik's ancestors, members of the Artsrunid royal house. In the lower frieze under the eaves of the roof, two of the heads occupy prominent positions on the consoles of the gable of the west facade, above the votive scene, while the majority of the others are arranged in long rows on the west ends of the north and south facades; the latter series is thus placed directly above the reliefs of the story of Jonah, which, as we have seen, may allude to the descent of the Artsrunid dynasty from King Sennacherib of Assyria. The heads in the frieze under the dome are more widely scattered, but it is significant that one of them wears a crown. The rows of busts that decorate the archivolts of the iwan arches at Hatra, which are among the closest formal parallels to the Aght'amar heads, have been interpreted as members of the Parthian royal family, the divinized kings and their ancestors; and rulers continued to be represented as busts carved in relief on the exteriors of Sasanian buildings. 72 The representation of images of Gagik's ancestors would be
particularly appropriate at Aght'amar if, as Breccia Fratadocchi has suggested, the church was designed as a replica of the Artsrunid dynastic mausoleum at Aghbak. The church was designed as a replica of the Artsrunid dynastic mausoleum at Aghbak.

While the sculptural decoration at Aght'amar is a unique combination of elements from a variety of cultures and milieus, it is fully within the tradition of artistic programs developed under royal patronage. As O. and A. Grabar have demonstrated, aulic arts are, almost by definition, eclectic. Everything that pleased the prince, or that might enhance his image, was incorporated into these cycles, whether it originated in his own land or in another. In addition to contemporary themes, motifs from past eras were not only included, but held in special veneration, because of the prestige of the past and the practice, widespread among early medieval rulers, of adopting ancient kings or heroes, whether Biblical, legendary, or historical, as spiritual or actual ancestors. The same traits are exhibited in other palatine churches, such as the Cappella Palatina in Palermo, the church of Saint Sophia in Kiev, and the church of San Marco in Venice.

The church of the Holy Cross was built as a pious deed, and the king's quest for salvation is a recurring theme throughout the iconographic program. In the sculptural decoration of the exterior, the major Biblical scenes are drawn from the Old Testament, while the New Testament is indicated only by isolated iconic images of saints, Christ, and the Virgin. Conversely, the frescoes that decorate the interior of the church include a complete Christological cycle, from the Annunciation to the Last Judgment, and the Old Testament is represented only by scenes of the Creation and Fall of Man in the drum of the dome,
illustrating the fall from grace that brought about the need for redemption through Christ, as depicted in the paintings below. As in the sculpture, the themes of redemption and salvation determined the selection of scenes in the frescoes, which include an unusually extensive cycle of the Resurrection.76

The church at Aght'amar was built as Gagik Artsruni's palatine chapel, and possibly also as his dynastic mausoleum. While the king sought to insure his salvation through the pious act of founding a church, there can be little doubt that he also intended the building, with its unique program of exterior sculpture, to serve as a display of his wealth and status. In addition to scenes and figures related to the concept of salvation, an equally prominent role in the sculptural program was given to a series of motifs that emphasize Gagik's glory and power as a ruler, and his illustrious ancestry. It is highly appropriate that these scenes were placed on the exterior of the church, where they would proclaim the king's power and status to all who visited his royal capital.
Notes to Chapter VII


2. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 30; and see above, cat. no. A1.


4. A discussion of the manuscript, with a summary of its contents and a series of line drawings, was published by L. Alishan in the journal Bazmavep in 1896. Alishan's articles were later summarized and re-published in a French translation by F. Macler, Documents d'art arméniens, Paris, 1924, pp. 25ff. For the first part of this manuscript, which is the most important in the present context, see now S. Der Nersessian, "Le carnet de modèles d'un miniaturiste arménien," Armenica: Mêlanges d'études arméniennes, Venice, 1969, pp. 175ff., cited hereafter as re-published in eadem, Études byzantines et arméniennes, Louvain, 1973, pp. 665ff.; and for the second part, eadem, "Copies de peintures byzantines dans un carnet arménien de modèles," CahArch, 18, 1968, pp. 111ff., re-published in Études, pp. 673ff.

5. Der Nersessian, "Carnet de modèles," p. 670. Der Nersessian compared the styles of some of the drawings to those of manuscripts illustrated in the fifteenth century at Aght'amar or other monasteries in the region of Lake Van. Further evidence that the model book may have been produced at Aght'amar itself is provided by the drawing of a seraph on fol. 25r (ibid., fig. 426), which differs markedly in style and proportions from the other figures of prophets and saints on the page, and which appears to have been copied from the seraph on the right of the west facade of the church of the Holy Cross.

6. Ibid., pp. 666ff.

7. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, pp. 23f., 33; and see above, cat. nos. A8 and A54.

8. Der Nersessian (L'art arménien, p. 90) emphasized that such costumes should be understood as accurate reflections of the types of garments worn by Gagik and his courtiers, which were strongly influenced by the fashions of the court at Baghdad.


15. This was earlier recognized by Der Nersessian (Aght'amar, p. 33), and by A. Grabar ("Le rayonnement de l'art sassanide dans le monde chrétien," La Persia nel Medioevo [Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Problemi Attuali di Scienza e di Cultura, 160], Rome, 1971, p. 696); and see cat. nos. A19 and A25.

16. For an overview of the Persian Renaissance, see C. E. Bosworth, "The Heritage of Rulership in Early Islamic Iran and the Search

17. See above, cat. nos. C37, C40, C43, C54, and C63.


20. See above, pp. 179f.

21. See above, cat. nos. C3, C6, C9, C13, C15, C36, C47, C52, C57, and C68. The suggestion that a cycle of the seasons might be included in the frieze was first made by K. Otto-Dorn ("Türkisch-Islamisches Bildgut in den Figurenreliefs von Achtamhar," Anatolia, 6, 1961, pp. 35f. [cited hereafter as Otto-Dorn, "Figurenreliefs"]), who compared several of the figures to the personifications on the much later bronze candlesticks.


24. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 28.

25. See above, pp. 48f.

26. For the Hagia Sophia mosaics, see C. Mango, Materials for the Study of the Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul (DOS, 8), Washington,

27. Mango, Materials, pp. 34, 86.

28. For the mosaic of Leo VI, ibid., pp. 96f. and fig. 8; and for the votive scene in the church of the Chora, see P. A. Underwood, The Kariye Djam!, New York, 1966, I, pp. 42f., and II, pls. 26-29.


30. See above, p. 7.

31. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 22.

32. A.-G. Martimort, "L'iconographie des catacombes et la caté­

33. Ibid., p. 111.

34. A. Grabar, L'empereur dans l'art byzantin, Paris, 1936, pp. 95ff.; idem, "Les cycles d'images byzantins tirés de l'histoire biblique et leur symbolisme princier," Starinar, n.s. 20, 1969, p. 133; and see also S. Der Nersessian, "The Illustrations of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus: Paris Gr. 510," DOP, 16, 1962, p. 222. Several of the scenes depicted at Aght'amar are also found in the Paris Gregory; Der Nersessian explained their presence in the manuscript by the fact that it was produced for an emperor, and discussed the imperial connotations of these subjects.

35. A. Grabar, "Cycle d'images," p. 133. "The new David" was by far the most commonly used epithet of this type; see S. Spain Alexander, "Heraclius, Byzantine Imperial Ideology, and the David Plates," Specu­

lum, 52, 1977, pp. 217ff., and for further bibliography on this subject and numerous examples, see especially pp. 227ff., n. 53-54.

36. Continuator of Thomas Artsruni, History 3.40 (Brosset trans., p. 244).


38. C. Jolivet, "L'idéologie princière dans les sculptures d'Aght­
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nian Art, Erevan, 1978, p. 4 of the typescript. On the dynastic claims
of the Artsrunids and Bagratids, see C. Toumanoff, "Introduction to Christian Caucasian History: The Formative Centuries (IVth-VIIIth)," Traditio, 15, 1959, pp. 76, 80.


40. See A. P. Kazhdan and A. Wharton Epstein, Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries, Berkeley, 1985, for a brief discussion and some of the more recent bibliography.


42. Digenes Akrites 7. 3393-3402.

43. Mango, Art of the Byzantine Empire, pp. 224f.

44. Ibid., pp. 225f.


46. Der Nersessian, Aght'amar, p. 22.

47. Ibid.

48. Early Byzantine examples include the well-known Barberini Diptych (W. F. Volbach, Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters, 3rd ed., Mainz, 1976, pp. 47ff., no. 48, pl. 26) and the ivory relief from the chancel of Aachen Cathedral (ibid., p. 61, no. 77, pl. 44). For discussion of the Middle Byzantine examples, see Kazhdan and Epstein, Change, pp. 110ff., especially p. 116.


51. See above, p. 6; and for another possible example, J. M. Thierry, "Monastères arméniens du Vaspurakan, VI," REArm, n.s. 9, 1972, pp. 157ff., especially p. 163.


54. Der Nersessian, *Aght'amar*, p. 21; and see above, cat. nos. A32, A33, and A36.


58. See above, p. 160 and p. 174, n. 11.

59. See above, p. 6.

60. For discussion, see above, cat. no. B30.


68. For discussion of the identification of the seated ruler, see above, pp. 233f. and pp. 280f., n. 241-242. Donors were sometimes included in the rinceaux of inhabited vine scrolls on Palestinian pavements, as in the church of Elias, Mary and Soreg at Gerasa (S. J. Saller and B. Bagatti, The Town of Nebo (Khirbet el-Mekhayyat), Jerusalem, 1949, pp. 269ff. and pl. 45).

69. See above, p. 297. Otto-Dorn ("Figurenreliefs," p. 39) also perceives these zones of sculpture as a continuation of the cycle of the vine frieze.

70. See above, pp. 294f. and p. 316, n. 3.

71. See above, p. 317, n. 19.

72. See above, pp. 298f.

73. See above, p. 2.

74. O. and A. Grabar, "L'essor," passim, especially pp. 882f.

75. Der Nersessian (Aght'amar, pp. 27f.) has compared the program of Aght'amar to those of the churches in Palermo and Kiev, and Otto-Dorn ("Figurenreliefs," pp. 46ff.) also discussed parallels between Aght'amar and the ceiling of the Cappella Palatina. There are also interesting similarities between Aght'amar and the decoration of San Marco, particularly in the program of sculpture of the central porch; see O. Demus, The Church of San Marco in Venice (DOS, 6), Washington, D.C., 1960, pp. 148ff. and figs. 65-85.

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SOURCES AND ICONOGRAPHY OF THE FIGURAL SCULPTURE OF
THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS AT AGHT'AMAR

Volume II

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By

Connie Lou Waltz, B.A., M.A., M.L.S.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
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Fig. 77. Aght’amar, south facade, story of David (A27)

Fig. 78. Aght’amar, south facade, the high priest Eli (A27)
Fig. 79. Aght'amar, south facade, Saul, Samuel, David (A27)

Fig. 80. Psalter of Basil II, David and Goliath
Venice, Marciana, cod. gr. 17, fol. IVv
Fig. 81. Sacra Parallela, Samuel and Saul
Paris, B.N., ms. gr. 923, fol. 3Br

Fig. 82. Aght'amar, east facade, St. John the Baptist, unidentified saint, St. Gregory the Illuminator
Fig. 83. Aght'amar, east facade, lions (A31)

Fig. 84. Sogdian silk
Vatican, Sancta Sanctorum
Fig. 85. Aght'amar, east facade, unidentified saints (A32 and A33)

Fig. 86. Aght'amar, east facade, leopard (A34), goat (A35)
Fig. 87. Aght'amar, east facade, unidentified saint (A36)

Fig. 88. Aght'amar, east facade, unidentified prophet (A37) and saint (A38), Elijah and a kneeling figure (A39)

Fig. 89. Sacra Parallela, Elisha and Elijah. Paris, B.N., ms. gr. 923, fol. 328r
Fig. 90. Aght'amar, north facade, Samson killing a Philistine (A40), unidentified saint (A41)

Fig. 91. Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, Samson and the Philistines
Paris, B.N., ms. gr. 510, fol. 347v
Fig. 92. Aght'amar, north facade, unidentified saints (A42 and A43) and prophet (A44) and the prophet Ezekiel (A45)
Fig. 93. Aght'amar, north facade, pair of fighting cocks (A46)

Fig. 94. Fatimid bowl
Keir Collection
Fig. 95. Aght'amar, north facade, Samson(?) killing the lion (A47)

Fig. 96. Ateni, Sion Church, relief of Samson and the lion, Habbakuk
Fig. 97. Psalter of Basil II, David slaying a lion
Venice, Marciana, cod. gr. 17, fol. IVv
Fig. 98. Aght'amar, north facade, human-headed bird (A48)

Fig. 99. Buyid silk from Rayy
Fig. 100. Aght'amar, north facade, camel (A49), eagle attacking a hare (A50), confronted peacocks (A51)

Fig. 101. Greece, relief plaque
Athens, Byzantine Museum

Fig. 102. Wool tapestry, Iraq or Iran
Paris, Musee de Cluny
Fig. 103. Aght'amar, north facade, rams (A52), King Hezekiah (A53)

Fig. 104. Abbasid silk

Fig. 105. Aght'amar, north facade, Isaiah (A53)
Fig. 106. Aght'amar, north facade, Fall of Man (A54)

Fig. 107. Aght'amar, north facade, Temptation of Eve (A54)
Fig. 108. Istanbul Octateuch, Temptation and Fall
Istanbul, Seraglio Library, cod. 8, fol. 43v

Fig. 109. Aght'amar, north facade, medallion portraits (A55-57) and military saints (A58)
Fig. 110. Aght'amar, north facade, St. Cyriacus (A55), St. Theodore (A58)

Fig. 111. Aght'amar, north facade, unidentified saint (A56), St. Sargis (A58)

Fig. 112. Aght'amar, north facade, Hosea (A57), St. George (A58)
Fig. 113. Ani, Palace Church, relief of mounted warriors

Fig. 114. Icon triptych, Mount Sinai, wings, SS. Theodore and George
Fig. 115. Aght'amar, north facade, lions and fox (A59), man killing a lion (A60)

Fig. 116. Sogdian silk London, Victoria and Albert Museum

Fig. 117. Ivory pyxis Sens, Cathedral Treasury

Fig. 118. Ptghni, church, relief on south facade
Fig. 119. Aght'amar, north facade, unidentified saint (A61), bear eating grapes (A62)
Fig. 120. Aght'amar, north facade, bear eating grapes (A62)

Fig. 121. Cathedra of Maximianus, detail
Ravenna, Archiepiscopal Museum
Fig. 122. Aght'amar, north facade, lion attacking a bull (A63)

Fig. 123. Sasanian silver plate
Leningrad, Hermitage
Fig. 124. Gold medallion of the Emir 'Izz ad-Daula

Fig. 125. Aght'amar, north facade, David killing the lion (A64)
Fig. 126. Aght'amar, north facade, ram (A64)

Fig. 127. Aght'amar, north facade, the Three Hebrews (A65)
Fig. 128. Aght'amar, north facade, Daniel and Habakkuk (A66), Amos (A67)

Fig. 129. Funerary stele from Ketchror with Daniel between lions
Fig. 130. Sasanian seal
Leningrad, Hermitage

Fig. 131. Smyrna Octateuch, Adam naming the animals
Smyrna, Evangelical School, cod. A.1, fol. 12v (destroyed)
Fig. 132. Theodore Psalter, Adam naming the animals
London, B.M., Ms. Add. 19.352, fol. 6v

Fig. 133. Chal Tarkhan-Eshqabad, palace, stucco relief
Fig. 134. Aght'amar, west facade, ram (B1), feline (B2)

Fig. 135. Aght'amar, south facade, bird (B3), animal (?) (B4), feline (?) (B5)

Fig. 136. Aght'amar, south facade, feline (?) (B5), stag (B6)
Fig. 137. Aght'amar, south facade, feline(?) (B5), stag (B6), ape (B7), bird (B8), lion(?) (B9)

Fig. 138. Aght'amar, south facade, lion(?) (B9), peacock (B10)
Fig. 139. Aght'amar, south facade, man (B11)

Fig. 140. Aght'amar, south facade, guineafowl (B12)

Fig. 141. Aght'amar, south facade, feline (B13), animal (?) (B14), camel (?) (B15)
Fig. 142. Aght'amar, east facade, boar(?) (B16), ram (B17), camel(?) (B18)

Fig. 143. Aght'amar, east facade, heads and protomes of animals (B16-B24)
Fig. 144. Aght'amar, east facade, ox (?) (B19), Adam (B20), lion (B21)

Fig. 145. Aght'ammar, east facade, bear (B22), leopard (B23), horse or onager (?) (B24)
Fig. 146. Aght'amar, north facade, bird (B25)

Fig. 147. Aght'amar, north facade, destroyed figure (B27)

Fig. 148. Aght'amar, north facade, ibex (B28)
Fig. 149. Aght'amar, north facade, lion(?) (B29), ape (B30)

Fig. 150. Aght'amar, north facade, fish (B31)
Fig. 151. Aght'amar, north facade, stag (B32)

Fig. 152. Aght'amar, north facade, animal (B33), bird (B34)
Fig. 153. Aght'amar, north facade, bear(?) (B35)

Fig. 154. Aght'amar, north facade, destroyed figure (B36),
bird (B37), parrot (B38)
Fig. 155. Aghts, Mausoleum, relief plaque in south arcosolium

Fig. 156. Dvin, fragment of a stone lintel
Erevan, Armenian Historical Museum
Fig. 157. Beisan, Monastery of Lady Mary, mosaic pavement of Room L

Fig. 158. Beisan, el-Hammam, Funerary Chapel, mosaic pavement
Fig. 159. Qusayr 'Amra, caldarium, painting

Fig. 160. Mshatta, south facade, triangle J
Berlin, Staatliche Museen
Fig. 161. Ebony plaque
Formerly Fouquet coll.,
Cairo
Fig. 162. Aght'amar, vine frieze, goat and kid (Ci)

Fig. 163. Post-Sasanian silver lobed dish
Leningrad, Hermitage
Fig. 164. Aght'amar, vine frize, bear with cubs (C2), man holding a melon (C3)

Fig. 165. Constantinople, Great Palace, mosaic
Fig. 166. Ptolemy Handlists, personifications of months and hours
Vatican Library, cod. gr. 1291, fol. 9r

Fig. 167. Aght'amar, vine frieze, pomegranate tree with vines and birds (C4)
Fig. 168. Ctesiphon, stucco plaque
Berlin, Staatl. Museen

Fig. 169. Kharraqan, tomb tower, fresco
Fig. 170. Aght'amar, vine frieze, man struggling with a bear (C5)

Fig. 171. Sasanian silver jug
Cleveland Museum of Art

Fig. 172. Bolnisi, Sion Church, capital from apse
Fig. 173. Aght'amar, vine frieze, man grasping vine branches (C6), confronted rams (C7), archer and bear (C8)

Fig. 174. Sacramentary, School of Fulda, allegory of May Berlin, Staatsbibl., ms. theol. lat. fol. 192
Fig. 175. Gospel Book, personifications of the months 
Venice, Marciana, cod. gr. 540

Fig. 176. Oški, church, relief on 
southeast chapel
Fig. 177. Aght'amar, vine frieze, shepherd (C9)

Fig. 178. Vatican Octateuch, personifications of the months
Vatican Library, cod. gr. 746, fol. 27r
Fig. 179. Aght'amar, vine frieze, vines and birds (C10),
man struggling with a bear (C11), heads (C12)

Fig. 180. Byzantine silk
Berlin, Staatl. Museen

Fig. 181. Silver bowl
Leningrad, Hermitage
Fig. 182. Aght'amar, vine frieze, heads (C12), kneeling man (C13)

Fig. 183. Jerusalem, Orpheus mosaic
Istanbul, Archaeological Museum
Fig. 184. Aght'amar, vine frieze, kneeling man (C13), birds flanking tree (C14), warrior (C15); and bird (eagle?) (B8)

Fig. 185. Ivory casket from Córdoba
Florence, Museo Nazionale
Fig. 186. Aght'amar, vine frieze, warrior (C15), vine trees
Fig. 187. Aght'amar, vine frieze, bear pursuing a hunter (C16)

Fig. 188. Ivory diptych of Areobindus
Zurich, Schweizerisches Landesmuseum
Fig. 189. Qabr Hiram, Church of Saint Christopher, nave, mosaic pavement
Fig. 190. Aght'amar, vine frieze, seated man (C17),
bird (C18)

Fig. 191. Aght'amar, vine frieze, bird (C18), hunter
confronting a lion (C19), cocks (C20)
Fig. 192. Aght'amar, vine frieze, cow suckling her calf (C21)

Fig. 193. Luster-ware cup
Paris, Louvre

Fig. 194. Topography of Cosmas Indicopleustes, gazelle
Vat. gr. 699, fol. 15r
Fig. 195. Aght'amar, vine frieze, man struggling with a bull (C22)

Fig. 196. Samarra, Jausaq palace, fresco
Fig. 197. Silver plate
New York, Blumka Coll.
Fig. 198. Aght'amar, vine frieze, two men in combat (C23)

Fig. 199. Pila of Jätiva, men in combat
Jätiva, Municipal Museum
Fig. 200. Aght'amar, vine frieze, head and duck (C24)
Fig. 201. Aght'amar, vine frieze, wrestlers (C25)

Fig. 202. Qusayr 'Amra, audience hall, painting, palaestra
Fig. 203. Qusayr 'Amra, audience hall, vault, paintings.

Fig. 204. Aght'amar, vine frieze, head (C26)
Fig. 205. Aght'amar, vine frieze, two men treading grapes (C27)

Fig. 206. Khirbat al-Makhayyat, church of SS. Lot and Procopius, nave, mosaic pavement
Fig. 207. Aght'amar, vine frieze, vintager (C28), head (C29)

Fig. 208. Gospel Book, personifications of the months
Venice, Marciana, cod. gr. 540
Fig. 209. Jericho, Byzantine capital

Fig. 210. Aght'amar, vine frieze, man seated astride a bear (C30)
Fig. 211. Aght'amar, vine frieze, man (C31), hunter and bear (C32)

Fig. 212. Khirbat al-Makhayyat, church of SS. Lot and Procopius, nave, mosaic pavement
Fig. 213. Aght'amar, vine frieze, head (C33), palm tree (C34)

Fig. 214. Aght'amar, vine frieze, sphinx (C34), bird (C35)
Fig. 215. Post-Sasanian silver plate
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Fig. 216. Faience sculpture from Rakka
Copenhagen, David Coll.
Fig. 217. Plate from Rakka
Copenhagen, David Coll.

Fig. 218. Bronze dish from Persia
London, Victoria and Albert Museum
Fig. 219. Aght'amar, vine frieze, hunter with hare (C36), hare eating grapes (C37)

Fig. 220. Aght'amar, vine frieze, hunter with hare (C36), hare eating grapes (C37), man (C38), bird (C39), fox (C40), hunter and dog (C41)

Fig. 221. Qasr-el-Lebia, church, northeast chapel, mosaic pavement
Fig. 222. Aght'amar, vine frieze, archer and bear (C42),
hunter and hare (C43)

Fig. 223. Post-Sasanian silver plate
Leningrad, Hermitage
Fig. 224. Sasanian silver vase
Tehran, National Collection

Fig. 225. Fatimid bone plaque
New York, Metropolitan Museum

Fig. 226. Aght'amar, vine frieze, animal (C44)
Fig. 227. Aght'amar, vine frieze, ruler and attendants (C45)

Fig. 228. Aght'amar, vine frieze, lion, attendant, pomegranate tree (C45)
Fig. 229. Aght'amar, vine frieze, ruler and attendant (C45)

Fig. 230. Aght'amar, vine frieze, eagle (C45)
Fig. 231. Post-Sasanian silver plate
Cincinnati Art Museum

Fig. 232. Silver medallion of al-Muqtadir
Berlin, Staatl. Museen

Fig. 233. Buyid gold medallion
Washington, D.C., Freer Gallery
Fig. 234. Fatimid ivory plaque
Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art

Fig. 235. Ivory casket from Córdoba, detail
Pamplona, Museo de Navarra
Fig. 236. Aght'amar, vine frieze, vintager (C46), bird-catcher (C47)

Fig. 237. Nikopolis, Basilica Alpha, mosaic pavement
Fig. 238. Aght'amar, vine frieze, bear eating grapes (C48)

Fig. 239. Aght'amar, vine frieze, crouching animal(?) (C49)
Fig. 240. Aght'amar, vine frieze, foliage(?) (C49)

Fig. 241. Aght'amar, vine frieze, foliage(?) (C49)
Fig. 242. Aght'amar, vine frieze, head (C50)

Fig. 243. Aght'amar, vine frieze, bird (C51), man digging with a spade (C52)
Fig. 244. Aght'amar, vine frieze, wrestlers (C53)
Fig. 245. Aght'amar, vine frieze, hunter and bird (C54)

Fig. 246. Sasanian silver vase
Tehran, National Collection
Fig. 247. Aght'amar, vine frieze, bird (C54), ram (C55)
Fig. 248. Aght'amar, vine frieze, eagle (C56), porter (C57), man struggling with a bear (C58)

Fig. 249. Beisan, el-Hammam, Funerary Chapel, mosaic pavement with personifications of the months
Fig. 250. Aght'amar, vine frieze, bird (C59), confronted birds (C60), confronted goats (C61)

Fig. 251. Sasanian stucco plaque
Berlin, Staatl. Museen
Fig. 252. Aght'amar, vine frieze, leopard (C62)

Fig. 253. Aght'amar, vine frieze, bird (C63), hare (C64)

Fig. 254. Sasanian silver bowl
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art
Fig. 255. Aght'amar, vine frieze, head (C65), parrots (C66), lizard(?) (C67), man digging with a spade (C68)
Fig. 256. Aght'amar, vine frieze, woman holding jars (C69), birds and melon (C70), head (C71)

Fig. 257. Silk from Achmim-Panopolis Athens, Benaki Museum
Fig. 258. Sasanian silver vase
Cleveland Museum of Art
Fig. 259. Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi, stucco plaques
Damascus, National Museum

Fig. 260. Samarra, Jausaq palace,
painting
Fig. 261. Byzantine silk
London, Victoria and Albert Museum
Fig. 262. Aght'amar, vine frieze, hunter fleeing from a bear (C72), boar (C73)

Fig. 263. Aght'amar, vine frieze, boar (C73), hunter and dog (C74), peacock (C75), head (C76)
Fig. 264. Aght'amar, west facade, Saint Matthew (D1)

Fig. 265. Aght'amar, east facade, St. Luke (D3)
Fig. 266. Aght'amar, north facade, Saint Mark (D4)
Fig. 267. Byzantine gold encolpion
Leningrad, Hermitage
Fig. 268. Ctesiphon, stucco plaque
Berlin, Staatl. Museen

Fig. 269. Bronze inkwell, Khorasan
Beirut, Nuhad Es-Said Collection
Fig. 270. Hatra, Temple of the Sun, iwan

Fig. 271. Saqqara, Monastery of Apa Jeremias, Cell 1725, niche with fresco
Fig. 272. Aght'amar, roof frieze, head (E1), human-headed bird (E2), stag (E3)

Fig. 273. Parthian bronze figurine

Fig. 274. Chal Tarkhan-Eshqabad, palace, stucco plaque
Fig. 275. Aght'amar, roof frieze, animals and head (E4-9)

Fig. 276. Aght'amar, roof frieze, lion (E10), heads (E11-22)

Fig. 277. Aght'amar, roof frieze, heads (E11-17)
Fig. 278. Aght'amar, roof frieze, animals (E23-26)

Fig. 279. Aght'amar, roof frieze, ibex (E29), confronted birds (E30 and E31)
Fig. 280. Aght'amar, roof frieze, bull (E39), confronted cocks (E40), bird (E41)

Fig. 281. Aght'amar, roof frieze, lion and deer (E42), ibex (E43)
Fig. 282. Aght'amar, roof frieze, boar and lion (E44)

Fig. 283. Aght'amar, roof frieze, fox (E45)
Fig. 284. Aght'amar, roof frieze, animals (E47-49); dome frieze, animals (F27-30)

Fig. 285. Aght'amar, roof frieze, animals (E50-52); dome frieze, animals (F31-36)
Fig. 286. Aght'amar, roof frieze, hare (E54)
Fig. 287. Aght‘amar, roof frieze, addorsed birds (E56)

Fig. 288. Sasanian silver vase
Leningrad, Hermitage
Fig. 289. Coptic tapestry fragment
Washington, D.C., Textile Museum

Fig. 290. Ivory mirror back, Iran(?)
Athens, Benaki Museum
Fig. 291. Aght'amar, roof frieze, boar (E60)

Fig. 292. Aght'amar, roof frieze, lion attacking deer (E61), animals (E62-64)
Fig. 293. Aght'amar, roof frieze, antelope (E65), feline (E66), bird and tree (E57)

Fig. 294. Aght'amar, roof frieze, deer (E68), man struggling with a bull (E69)
Fig. 295. Aght'amar, roof frieze, animals (E74-76)

Fig. 296. Aght'amar, roof frieze, heads (E77-86), lion (E87)
Fig. 297. Aght'amar, dome frieze, heads and animals (F1-6)

Fig. 298. Aght'amar, dome frieze, heads and animals (F7-13)
Fig. 299. Aght'amar, dome frieze, animals (F20-26)

Fig. 300. Aght'amar, dome frieze, animals and head (F43-46)