

to replace it with a wooden dome, fearing that the anciently split wall might not be able to carry the weight of the stone dome. If he had carried out his intention would it have been justifiable in the future to think that the Armenians did not know how to build domes?

Toramanian would not of course have written the above lines if he had seen the domed church of Avan near Kanakerr, built towards the end of the VIth century or in the beginning of the VIIth by the anticatholicos John of Garin^{37a} (the opponent of the Catholicos Moses II of Yeghvard), and especially Budghavank which is older. Perhaps it is because of that same idea that he considers the dome of the church of Digor to have been added later to the building, even though he considers it as the oldest extant Armenian dome. Unfortunately very little has remained of the dome of Budghavank (fig. 6), but even that small part brings us such positive evidence, that it is of greater importance for the elucidation of our problem than a large volume of theoretical analysis. It is difficult to determine from the remains the exact shape of the dome of Budghavank; the remaining parts show in any case, that it had a square base on the outside. If excavations should show that its drum was also square, we would not only have a second replica of the dome of Digor but also another important proof that the dome of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna is eastern in origin, as Strzygowski is willing to admit.³⁸ But it is not probable that the drum of the dome of Budghavank was square. In our opinion it must have been octagonal. The octagonal drum was common in Armenia in the VIIth century, as may be seen by the small church of Talin erected by Nerses Gamsaragan, and by Alaman,³⁹ built in the 27th year of the emperor Heraclius, that is in 637.

37a. Should be John of Bagaran.—Translator's note.

38. *Die Baukunst*, 371.

39. See the figures in *Die Baukunst*, 184, 187, 190.

We can find evidences of the earlier existence of the dome in Armenia, in the remains of monumental art, and also through philological considerations. An example of such remains is, in our opinion, the church of Otsoun itself, and also a figure sculpture on the sepulchral stele. It may be objected that the dome is not contemporaneous with the church. It is true that the cone and the drum of the dome have been restored, but its foundations are an integral part of the church, with respect to building material and structure, both externally and internally, so that the dome cannot be considered separately from the body of the church. Churches of the type of Otsoun have resulted from the fusion of various artistic trends and not from the addition of a new dome to an old pagan temple, as Toramanian considers as an example of such a combination of old temple and new dome, was on the contrary built in the year 639 according to an inscription, the original of which we have published in our catalogue of Armenian Paleography.⁴⁰ Our genuine basilicas, such as those of Yererouyk, Kaskakh, Avan of Aracadz, and Dzopk, had no domes.

We have already referred to the figure and ornamental sculpture covering the eastern and western faces of the sepulchral stele of Otsoun. On the eastern side of the south pillar we see, among other sculptures, a tall building with a dome decorated with crosses. When giving a report of our work to the Academy of the History of Material Culture at Leningrad, we also submitted a photograph and an engraving of this sculpture, requesting the academicians to state whether they considered as correct our observation that a dome had been figured or whether they thought it represented a tympanum. It was admitted that our observation was correct.

But the most eloquent proofs for the ancient use of domes in Armenia are the testimonies of the Armenian language. In

40. See also Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, p. 43.