

by God".⁴⁴ Special attention should be given to the expression "dome-shaped cube",^{44a} which indicates the ancient form of the dome, therefore approximately that of the dome of our church of Digor. This vision-story, the oldest of its kind in our literature, is in our opinion no later than the VIIth century, when the hymns devoted to the Cross and the Church were being written. Among these is the hymn "Etch Miadzin ee Horè", the author of which (considered to be the Catholicos Sahag of Tsoropor) is very well acquainted with the contents of the story. But the story is probably earlier than the VIIth century. In any case it refers to the church of Etchmiadzin which it is not necessary to connect with the renovations made by the Catholicos Gomidas.

Let us add here that the word **gmbet**, although common in our classic language of the Vth century, is not Armenian in origin. Hubschman in his "Armenian Grammar"⁴⁵ identifies the word **gmbet** with the Pehlevi word **gunbad**, while Nöldecke considers it to have been derived from the Syriac word **goubda**. But Horn⁴⁶ explains it with the Pehlevi word **gmbat** which sounds very similar to the Armenian word and therefore probably passed over from Persia to the Armenians, especially since the IVth and VIth centuries palaces of Servisdan and Ctesiphon were domed. The Pehlevi word **gmbat** is taken from the **Vendidad** which, although not one of the oldest parts of the Zend-Avesta, is in any case no later than the IVth century.

We thus consider it proven that there were domed churches in Armenia even

44. Agathangelos, publ. Ghogasian, p. 374.

44a. The Armenian word "khoranart", which we have here translated as an adjective meaning "tabernacle-like", seems to be understood by the author here to be a noun and therefore meaning "cube"; or if he understands it adjectivally he seems to ascribe to it the meaning "cubic". (Translator's note.)

45. Armenische Grammatik, Strasburg, 1895, p. 127.

46. Neupersische Philologie, in "Grundriss der iranischen Philologie" series, p. 6.

earlier than the middle of the Vth century, that is as early as the IVth century, a conclusion which Strzygowski has based on other data in his great work on Armenian art, and in his "Origins of Christian Art".

IX

In the history of the Armenian language we see an amazing phenomenon: up to the Vth century we have no alphabet, no literature, but suddenly there springs up a complete literature, translations and original writings, in a unified language, forming the Golden Age of the Armenian language. We see a similar phenomenon in the history of Armenian Art. Such phenomena are unintelligible in themselves; historical phenomena are linked to one another and form parts of a whole: considered apart from that whole they can be understood. Thus in the case of the history of our language and art the phenomenon referred to above becomes intelligible only with the classification of questions relating to the origin of Christianity in Armenia and also in neighboring countries with which she had close political, economic, religious, and cultural relations.

Unfortunately we do not have first-hand records, dating earlier than the IVth century, concerning Armenia generally, nor in particular concerning architectural monuments or the existence of churches and their characteristics. The few remaining Greek and Latin inscriptions of the Armenian Arsacidae or of the Roman legions are of no assistance for architecture, and the so-called "throne of Tiridates" at Carrny is of Greco-Roman character. However from the testimonies of Agathangelos and especially Faustus of Byzantium it is certain that there were many churches in Armenia in the time of St. Gregory the Illuminator. This is indirectly confirmed by Lazar of Parb who states in his letter to Vahan Mamigonian that in his time, that is at the end of the Vth century, there were monastery churches "Built two hun-