competent authorities that this round form of the ground-plan is Oriental in origin.[15] In any case, it is certain that long before Constantine's great building activity introduced it, together with the closely allied octagonal scheme, into Byzantine architecture, it had been familiar to the Hellenistic East. There this 'centralized' type of building was a favourite form for temples, some of them very famous, like the Serapeion at Alexandria, which served cults of Asiatic origin adopted by the classical world into its syncretistic Pantheon.[16]

Architectural links with Īrān and Near East.

It is impossible for me here to follow up the interesting questions which are raised by the connexion thus suggested between our circular shrines of Mīrān, with their counterparts in Gandhāra, and the examples in the Hellenized East. Nor can I give more than mere mention to Professor Strzygowski's important observation that, as far as the pre-Islamic period is concerned, the domes traceable in Persia are set mainly over square structures, and those in the region of Hellenistic art mainly over circular or octagonal ones.[17] It is clear that whatever fascination such questions must present to the student of the history of architectural art in the East, no safe answer to them can be hoped for until we have recovered, if possible in the shape of structural remains, more links of the chain which once stretched from Syria and Mesopotamia across the Pāmīrs. Nowhere is the likelihood of the discovery of such links greater than in ancient Bactria and the regions adjoining it, and once more I must give voice to my old wish that they may soon become accessible to archaeological research.

Finds in ruin M. x.

Débris of brickwork, together with refuse of reed straw and dung, filled the surviving corner of the small cella M. x to a height of close on four feet. But apart from pottery fragments like M. x. 003 and miscellaneous small rags of woollen fabrics, M. x. 002, some of which resembled in texture fabrics found at the Niya Site, the only object brought to light was a rolled-up piece of soft cream-coloured silk, M. x. 001. From the condition of the much-worn ends it appears to have been used as a girdle round the waist. The width of the piece from selvedge to selvedge is one foot ten

[15] Cf. Miss G. L. Bell's very instructive observations in *The Thousand and One Churches*, pp. 428 sqq., together with the works there quoted concerning round temples in Greek and Early Christian architecture.

[16] I cannot refrain from at least a brief reference to the curious analogy which the fact that the circular cellas of the two Mīrān shrines were built to shelter small Stūpas presents to the prevailing character and purpose of the round or octagonal type of the Early Christian and Byzantine church in the Near East. From Miss G. L. Bell's lucid analysis in *The Thousand and One Churches*, pp. 429 sqq., it appears that this type, to which the cruciform one with its central dome is very closely related, was particularly in favour for the Christian martyrium, or memorial chapel. The rotundas built by Constantine and Helena in Jerusalem over the Holy Sepulchre and on the Mount of Olives were its most famous examples, 'and the authority of Constantine marked out the type as one to be accepted and imitated by the Christian world' (*loc. cit.*, p. 430).

In the Near East the round or octagonal plan appears to have been occasionally used also for parish churches. But it is significant that in Europe it was reserved exclusively for baptisteries and martyriums. The close correspondence in purpose between the latter and Buddhist 'memorial shrines', such as we find them in Gandhāra and the Tārīm Basin, is sufficiently obvious. That structures of this type are in Syria, Asia Minor, etc., particularly frequent at spots which had, in all probability, been sacred to pre-Christian cult, is a fact duly noted by Miss Bell (*loc. cit.*, pp. 348 sqq.). It is one to be fully expected by those of us who are familiar with the continuity of local worship as proved at so many sacred sites of India and Central Asia (cf. e.g. my paper in *J.R.A.S.*, 1910, pp. 839 sqq.; *Rājatar.*, transl. Stein, ii. p. 340). The positions occupied by many of 'The Thousand and One Churches' on the Kara-dāgh and by other Christian sanctuaries in Asia Minor are just such as would have recommended themselves to Indian worshippers for their 'Tīrthas', or to Buddhists elsewhere for their sacred spots.

It requires no special demonstration that the circular plan is one structurally most suitable for shrines destined to hold Stūpas, and that the circular 'Buddhist rails' enclosing the earliest Stūpa monuments of India, such as at Barhut and Sānchi, might well have furnished an appropriate prototype for the circular cella such as we find it both in Gandhāra (cf. Foucher, *L'art du Gandhâra*, i. pp. 68, 120 sqq., 134, 142) and at Mīrān. But whether this prototype of undoubtedly ancient Indian origin was the only one, and whether it could have made its influence felt also westwards, is a question in regard to which it would scarcely be safe to propose a definite answer until we know more about the spread of Buddhism into Eastern Īrān and the architectural forms it may have carried with it.

[17] Cf. Strzygowski, *Amida*, pp. 184 sq.