

A CHRISTIAN CITY IN THE BYZANTINE AGE.

IF the question were put what was the practical effect exerted on the people in Asia Minor by the teaching and organization of the Christian Church, after its triumph during the fourth and following centuries, it would not be easy to reply except in vague generalities and assumptions. What was the condition, the education, the standard of life, of the ordinary people in the towns and villages? I know of no serious attempt to answer the question. The material for an answer is very slight, for the historians of the Byzantine Empire have their attention almost wholly devoted to Emperors and courtiers and generals, while the ecclesiastical historians in similar fashion write chiefly about bishops and councils and church leaders and heresies. The private letters of the period, which have been preserved, contain more information in an incidental rather than an intentional fashion. The literary material, however, has never been collected and valued.¹ Epigraphic material is practically non-existent.

In the present year we have had the opportunity of adding to the range of evidence available in this problem by a careful examination of a city whose modern name is sufficient proof of its ecclesiastical interest, as it is now currently called "the Thousand and One Churches" (Bin-

¹ In the writer's *Pauline and Other Studies*, the last paper contains a sketch of the material contained in Basil's *Letters*, but there is great need for a much fuller study of the *Letters* and other works from this point of view. The Byzantine and Roman Law-books also require to be studied and compared with the works of the ecclesiastical writers.

Bir-Kilisse), though its proper official name is "City of Mines" (Maden-Sheher). We found ourselves thus brought into close relations with a simple Anatolian town of the Byzantine period, whose ecclesiastic character continued from the fourth century (if not earlier)¹ down to the final destruction of Byzantine society by the Turks some time after A.D. 1072. It was not a town of Hellenized type. It seems to have lain apart from the main currents of Greek and Roman civilization, and to have been only very slightly affected by Greek education. The impression made on me is that even the Greek language came into use only in a Christian form, and that apart from Christianity Greek had never succeeded in producing any real effect on the city; but this is only a personal impression, and the evidence is not sufficient to prove that such was the case. But at least it is quite clear that here the Christian teaching and manners were introduced among a non-Hellenic and entirely native Anatolian population, the commonplace average rustic people who formed the mass and the ground-stock of the population of the central plateau generally.

This city was, therefore, up to a certain point, a fair specimen of the ordinary Anatolian class, though there were, of course, in this (as in every case) special conditions which gave a certain individuality and distinction to it, and differentiated it from other Anatolian rustic townships. It lay in the heart of Lycaonia, and may be regarded as the most typical example of a Lycaonian city, with the minimum of Greek and Roman influence affecting it. The Christian city was the offspring of the pre-Christian city; and the history and circumstances of the older city determined to a large degree the fate and character of the later. Behind everything else the peculiar and very

¹ Stephen, bishop of Barata, was present at the Council of Nicaea A.D. 325.

marked situation of the city was the determining factor in its history.

The city, called Barata or Barathra, "the Pits," was situated in a rounded valley on the northern skirts of the Kara-Dagh, "Black-Mountain," with hills closing it in to east and west and north-east, and the highest peak of the mountain rising behind it on the south, about 7,000 feet above the sea and 3,000 above the city.¹ The mountain is entirely volcanic. There is a large oval crater on the north-west side of the highest peak, measuring about two or three miles long²; and several smaller craters, large deep pits, about one quarter of a mile across with perpendicular sides, are met with in different parts of the mountain, two (called Maden, "Mines," by the Turks) being in the hill on the west (or north-west) side of the town. The word "Maden" is applied by the Turks to any mine or quarry³: it also indicates the metal or valuable material found in the mine. These deep holes in the Maden-Dagh look like quarries, and at the first glance I supposed them to be quarries; but this opinion had to be abandoned. The holes seem to be natural. They are also called Geuzlar, "the Eyes"; and the hill is often called Geuz-Dagh.

¹ Our American friends of the Cornell expedition estimated the height by aneroid as only 6,000. I ascended the peak three times, and my aneroid gave the height on all three occasions very close to 3,900 ft. above Konia. Now Konia is fixed by the Anatolian railway measurements exactly 1,027 metres above the sea (about 3,370 feet).

² It is difficult to estimate by eye; and, on the steep rough path round the crater, the time occupied is a bad criterion. Sometimes walking, generally riding, and ascending the highest peak, but keeping along the shoulder of the other peaks that fringe the crater, we took fully four hours to go round it. Three miles NE. to SW., and two miles across NW. to SE., is, I think, a fair estimate. The crater lip is only 300 feet above the bottom on NW., but far higher on all other sides, and the peaks rise 1,500 to 2,000 feet above the bottom. It is grassy and on the sides bushy, with low trees, fruit trees and others.

³ The Latin word *metallum* has the same wide range of meaning as the Turkish "Maden."

On account of these two deep pits, this hill is called Maden-Dagh by the modern population, and the city is called Maden-Sheher, "the town of the Maden."¹ As there are no mines known in the whole Kara-Dagh, the reason for the name Maden-Sheher was obscure, until we observed the two pits called Maden and the hill Maden-Dagh at the edge of the city. Then it became clear that the modern name is only the translation of the ancient name Barathra, and probably Barata was the Anatolian word equivalent to the Greek Barathra.

In the modern Turkish language, as my wife discovered, there is sometimes used a word Varta, which is said to be borrowed from the Arabic²; its original meaning was "abyss," but it is now only used in Turkish to mean "danger." Possibly there may have been some connexion between the Anatolian Barata (pronounced Varata in Roman time) and the Semitic Varta.

The most striking and unusual feature of the locality, the deep craters with their almost perpendicular sides, gave rise both to the Greek and to the modern name. The Greek name Barathra was apparently used on the map of the Empire prepared under Augustus.³ The native name Barata is not known earlier than the second century; but we may suppose that it was the older term, displaced for a time in official documents by the Greek name Barathra (which we conjecture to be merely a translation of the older

¹ Bin-Bir-Kilisse, "Thousand and One Churches," is merely a descriptive term, used by the outer world, but not by the natives of the town.

² It is a rare word in Turkish, known to few. A proverb was quoted to us by Husni Pasha, an educated and exiled Turk, "This is not a varta that cannot be crossed," of a difficulty which one boldly faces. The German Consul in Konia, a good Orientalist, after some research, gave me the information stated in the text. But Miss Bell and Professor Sayce do not think that Varta can be an Arabic word. The latter is disposed to think that it may be Aramaic. I leave the decision to Orientalists.

³ This is inferred from the fact that Barathra is the name used on the Peutinger Table, which ultimately rests on the great Imperial map.

and later Barata). Professor Sayce suggests that Varta or Varata may be an Aramaic word. If so, we may expect to find that there was a still older Hittite or Lycaonian name for the town, and that this oldest name likewise had the same meaning as the later names.

The important Roman road from Iconium to Thebasa (Kale-Keui) and Cybistra, forking thereafter to Tyana and to the Cilician Gates, passed on the north side of the "Black Mountain"; and by this road the distance from Iconium to Barata is given in the Table as fifty Roman (about forty-six English) miles.

Barata was situated in this oval recess of the mountain, looking out to the north, a typically Lycaonian position,¹ similar to the sites of Laodiceia Combusta, Savatra, and Isaura Nova. The valley slopes gently back towards the mountain on the south; and the city is double, one part in the middle of the valley, the other higher up towards the south-west. The latter is probably the original fortified city. The other grew in times of peace, when the lower ground was more convenient; and on its northern side are many sarcophagi and graves of other forms. One may conjecture that a temple with many graves round it existed here from early time.

There is no more striking example anywhere of the degeneration of the Mediterranean lands than here. As the degeneration of the Mediterranean lands was described in general terms, and assumed as the basis of reasoning, in the *EXPOSITOR*, June, 1907, pp. 559 ff., we may here devote a page to show how the degeneration has been brought about in this special case.

The ancient city was, as we shall see, rich and abundantly supplied with all comforts from its own soil. The modern town, or rather village, is one of the most wretched

¹ See the *Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, p. 86.

in the whole of Turkey. There are now only about thirty families in it ; and I do not think that we saw so many children. The Moslem population, as so often in Turkey, is dying out. In earlier Turkish time it was much larger. There is no drinking-water in the village. A certain small amount of half-poisonous water and melted snow is stored in a few filthy ancient cisterns ; but there is barely enough to quench the thirst of the scanty population during the summer. A stranger cannot drink this water except at the risk of serious illness. Yet there was formerly abundant water, brought to the village by an aqueduct carried under the ground in terra-cotta pipes laid on a concrete bed. The aqueduct has been allowed to fall into ruin, for nothing is ever repaired in Turkey ; and there is not sufficient energy or enterprise to restore it ; in fact, government would repress any attempt in the village to combine for this or for any other purpose, while it is not efficient enough itself to undertake this necessary work. Nothing is grown round the village except a good deal of corn and some melons or vegetable marrows ; and some half-wild fruit is gathered from degenerate trees growing naturally on the hillsides. There is no terracing ; as the water falls in rain or melts from the snows of winter, it runs rapidly off the steep slopes and does no good to the soil.

Want of water, due to ignorance and sluggishness, is the ruin of the modern town. The water supply of the ancient city, which was the foundation of its prosperity and of its habitability, was of three kinds.

(1) The springs of the Kara-Dagh are not numerous nor abundant ; but there are two within a few miles of the city,¹ and the water of the nearest certainly, probably

¹ I leave out of count other two springs, Geuk-Bunar and Kavakli-Bunar, as they are not perennial. They are about two miles west of the city, on the north side of the lip of the great crater. It is said that they

of both, was conducted to the city by conduit. Doubtless this was reserved for drinking, and it would afford a perennial supply of ever-running water.

(2) A system of cisterns on quite a vast scale served to store rain and snow water. These cisterns are seen throughout the double city.

(3) The water of the streams was doubtless stored up by means of dams. Except after heavy rain, the stream beds are quite dry ; but a large amount of water must run down from the mountains in early spring. I noticed remains of one dam across a small watercourse on the north-west side and two water-chambers across two dry ravines, some miles south and south-west of the city. A careful examination would throw considerable light on the method of storing the water ; but it would require a very accurate map of the whole district and would take much longer time than we could devote to it. The means employed seem to have been very simple ; no large engineering work was required ; a series of small dams must have served better for irrigation than a few large dams, and the water thus stored would be more easily controlled. The dams, being small and probably roughly made, have doubtless been for the most part washed away since the irrigation system fell into disuse and decay.

(4) Generally there are a considerable number of thunderstorms in the later spring and early summer ; and this source of supply, though precarious, is generally sufficient to nurture the very light crops with which the natives are contented at the present time ; but the area cultivated and the amount of crops grown per acre would be greatly increased by the storage of water and the artificial irrigation practised in ancient time.

In striking contrast with the modern wilderness of neglect

flow only while the lake in the bottom of the great crater lasts. This year Geuk-Bunar was dry in June, but Miss Bell saw it flowing in May.

and poverty was the ancient aspect of the country. For several thousand years Barata was evidently a sort of sanatorium and Elysium for the surrounding country. The Kara-Dagh is, as it were, an island in the level plain of Lycaonia, cultivable in varying degrees and ways to the highest summit, offering cool glades and pastures, a delightful resort for man and animals in the heat of summer. The Lycaonian plain is treeless. The mountain still grows trees, and might grow many more; on the north side of the highest peak is quite a forest. Yet even the trees are an example of the deterioration of the country and the soil: many of them are fruit trees which have degenerated and become wild and poor.

This contrast between the bare and barren hillsides in modern time and their rich, highly cultivated condition in ancient time is an essential fact in the right understanding of the old city. The district has in a large degree gone back to its original condition, though showing plentiful traces of the improved state in which it was for centuries and even for thousands of years. How was this improvement effected? The remarkable thing is not merely that so much labour had to be expended on the improving of the soil: far more impressive is it to think of the wisdom, the forethought, the sacrificing of the present to the future, the accumulated experience and knowledge, which lie behind the process. How was the engineering skill gained, which stored up every drop of water that fell in the rainy season for use in the dry season? There is still the same amount of water, but it runs off the slopes as quickly as it falls, and is of very small service to the soil or to man. The people who still inhabit the town¹ are of much the same

¹ The people of the town of Maden-Sheher (Bin-Bir-Kilisse) consider themselves Osmanli or Turks, not Turkmen or Yuruk. Those of Deghile are Yuruk settled in recent years and no longer nomadic. On the dis-

race, and of much the same character, as the population of old. They are industrious. What they want is knowledge, and not willingness to work. They have died out down to the measure of the food that they can grow, and are now dying out still further from the dearth of water. They have not the knowledge, or skill, or forethought, or power of adapting means to ends, which would give them more food and better water to drink. The fruit trees in ancient times were the result of careful cultivation and much care ; but the art of tending them is lost. It takes a long time to produce a good orchard, and requires a people who can work for a distant future, and who can count on security of property and peace to enjoy the fruits of labour in the distant future. This implies settled government, order and the reign of law. Those conditions are all wanting now. Such considerations show how the whole fabric of society has deteriorated in the course of 3,000 years.

But the question has still to be answered, how it was that essentially the same people¹ acted with such forethought and knowledge in ancient times, and now show such ignorance and short-sightedness. The reason seems not to have lain in any high standard of education in this Lycaonian city. We have found no reason to think that the people were ever anything but rustics ; they seem to have been

tion between the Turkmens, Yuruks, etc., on the one hand, who are all nomads of Central Asiatic stock, and the Turks on the other hand, who are practically the ancient population with an admixture of the Turkish conquering element, which has been merged in the former population, see *Impressions of Turkey*, pp. 96-109. The Turkmens and other nomads are as old as the Turkish conquest of the land (some tribes however, are later immigrants).

¹ There seems no reason to think that the Seljuk Turks affected the city population much ; and the nomads who swamped the whole plain around did not establish themselves on the site of the city, which gradually decayed as civilization and skill died out in the deteriorating and dwindling people.

unused to employ the art of writing, and they have left remarkably few proofs of their capacity to write, showing in this a noteworthy contrast to the Hellenized cities of the country and to the Greek cities proper. In this respect one may well doubt whether the old Lycaonian rustics were very much superior to those of the present day. It was not through the high education of the individual that those great results in engineering and agriculture and the use of the earth generally were gained. It was through the guiding power of their religion. The Goddess herself, the Mother Earth, taught her children ; as she gave them birth and life and nourishment, so she showed them how to use the things that she tendered to the use of man. The religion was agricultural and economic ; and its rules and practices were the annual cycle of events in the industrial year.

In this way that ancient religion acquired an extraordinarily strong hold on the simple minds of a little-educated population. In their religion lay their sole education ; but it prescribed to them all the wisdom and the conduct that they needed for a prosperous agricultural life.¹ The hold which it possessed on their minds lasted through the centuries that followed, when new rulers and strange religions became dominant in the land. The old holy places, perhaps also the old religious customs to some extent, imposed themselves on the Christians of the Byzantine time ; and it is not easy to see any great or deep difference between the Byzantine saints and the Divine figures who surrounded the principal deity in the early religion.

I have assumed that the town grew at a period long anterior to Greek or Roman influence in the country (Greek influence beginning about 330 B.C.). But the question must be formally raised, in what period should the origin of

¹ This subject is treated in more detail in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, v., pp. 109 ff.

this prosperity in the Black Mountain be placed? Must we suppose that it began in the Roman time, or is it of far more ancient date? There is no third alternative, as Greek influence here was evidently quite unimportant.

As to this, there is no doubt. Already in the old Hittite time Barata was a flourishing city. In the town itself we found little to prove its age definitely, for the terms of our firman permitted no deep excavation, but only the clearing up of the lines of buildings and the making of trial-holes: hence we nowhere could go down to the early stratum of city life. A few scraps of pre-Greek pottery, and scanty traces of the fortifications of a character certainly pre-Hellenic, are the only indication of the early period of Barata found on the site; but they show that we have not here to deal with a city of the Greek period. Neither inscription nor any other sign can be found of the Greek time or of Greek origin. The Roman period at Barata follows immediately on the Anatolian. The place was an old Anatolian foundation, with nothing of the Hellenic character and showing no traces of Hellenic city life and municipal organization.

Hence the town is perhaps slurred over in Acts xiv. 6 as a mere country place, not a city at all.¹ Paul and Barnabas fled to "the cities of Lycaonia, Derbe and Lystra, and the surrounding region." In the Roman region of Lycaonia there were only two cities and a rude Anatolian rustic region; and the Apostles' work was confined to the two cities.

¹ There remains always a doubt whether this district was comprised in Lycaonia Galatica (the part of the Roman province in which Paul sought refuge) or in Lycaonia Antiochiana (which was under the rule of King Antiochus and is not taken notice of in Acts). If it was in Lycaonia Galatica, it is part of the "surrounding region" (*τὴν περιχώρον*) mentioned in Acts xiv. 6: in the text I have spoken as if it were so; but this cannot be taken as at all certain. In the map attached to a careful study of Lycaonia published in the Austrian *Jahreshefte* 190, pp. 57-131, I have

Outside the city the evidence is more conclusive. On the highest point of the mountain, a peak called Mahalitch or Mahlitch, looking out on all sides over a vast stretch of country, is a Hittite inscription, evidently of hieratic character. Remembering the ancient idea that lofty peaks were sacred, no one can doubt that here was a "high place" of the early Anatolian religion. Unfortunately, the permanence of religious awe attaching to special places in Anatolia caused an almost complete recasting of the old sanctuary. The revival of the old paganism under Christianized forms in the Orthodox Church, which was so marked a feature of the fourth and following centuries, can be observed here in a very clear fashion. About the sixth century a monastery and a church and a small chapel, "the memorial of Leo," as it is called in an inscription on the apse, were built on the summit; and this great series of constructions almost completely obliterated the earlier features.

Almost the only relic now visible of the original "High Place" is a narrow passage in the rocks, partly cut and partly natural, close underneath the Christian Church on the north side. On its rock walls two Hittite inscriptions show its original character. A Byzantine wall was built along part of one of the sides of this passage; and it is probable that in Christian times these inscriptions were concealed by building or in other ways, at the time when all the higher part of the sanctuary was destroyed and built over. This monument, discovered by Miss Bell¹ in May, 1907, after so many travellers had visited the site of Barata, is one of the best examples of the general principle which

marked the frontier between Galatic and Antiochian Lycaonia as passing through Barata, to indicate the uncertainty.

¹ Miss Bell was our collaborator in the study of this site; and the most important part of the work, the study of the Byzantine architecture as shown in sixty churches, was done entirely by her.

we have often described—that religious awe clung permanently to the same localities.¹ There can be no doubt that the church and monastery were placed here because of the old sacred character. The new religion was obliged to satisfy the religious instincts of the population, which revered this ancient seat of worship. The church and monastery have every appearance of being comparatively early: the fifth or at least the sixth century is the date to which they should be assigned. The Byzantine type of architecture with dome standing within a square tower was already fully developed when the church was built; hence one would not be able to date the foundation back to the fourth century²: on other grounds one would like to place it as early in the monastic period as possible.

The monastery and church belong to the age of monasticism, initiated in the fourth century but lasting long. Those who founded the monastery on this lofty peak, about 7,000 feet above the sea, were prepared to face a very rigorous and long winter, when the monks must have been almost buried in snow for months. The cold of those bare stone buildings must have been extreme. A long covered passage leads from the south-east corner of the monastery to the church, which it enters through a door in the south wall of the narthex. At a later date, but probably not much later, a small memorial chapel north-west from the church was built in honour of a certain Leo. It is of cruciform plan, and is also connected by a covered passage with the church. But as the builders did not like to interfere with the architecture of the church, they added an outer narthex to the church, and made the covered passage enter the north wall of this exo-narthex. The

¹ Especially *Pauline and other Studies*, p. 163 ff.

² Many would on this ground forthwith relegate the church to a later date. We are not of this opinion.

chapel bears on the apse outside the inscription "the memory of Leo," and inside a long but mutilated and undecipherable inscription, of which I could read only "by the vow of Callinicus . . . to Leo . . ." One may conjecture that Leo was the builder of the monastery and church, as there seems no reason to place a long interval between the two constructions. As the name of Leo stands alone also on the apse of a church in the lower town and on a boundary stone east of the mountain, we may also conjecture that he was a leading person, doubtless a bishop, of Barata.

This site on the central point of the mountain would alone be a complete proof of the ancient origin of its civilization. But it was our good fortune to find a second almost more striking confirmation of the Hittite occupation. On the north-west side an outlying hill, called Kizil Dag, about eight or nine miles from the city, was made into a fortress to defend the approach to the central city. The ancient origin of this fortress is shown by its style, and its Hittite character is proved by four hieroglyphic inscriptions, one on a sort of altar near a gate in the west wall, and three on a "Holy Place," a pinnacle of rock forty feet high, carved into the shape of a seat or throne with high back, below the west wall. On the throne is incised a figure of the god, sitting, holding a sceptre in the left hand and a cup in the right.¹ He wears magnificent robes and rests his feet on a footstool. He is the god who presides over and guards the city of the mountain, with its bounteous vineyards, its wine, its fruit trees, its riches, and its cool, delightful climate in summer. The discovery of this throne would have

¹ Professor Sayce tells me that he interprets differently the symbol which I took for a cup; but this is immaterial for our present purpose. He regards the seated figure as that of the priest-king; but in that case, according to the usual practice, the priest wears the dress and plays the part of the god.

gladdened the heart of the German scholar (the late Dr. Reichel, if my memory is correct), who wrote from very slender materials a most suggestive paper on the importance of the throne in early Anatolian religion. We have been able this year to confirm his views by several monuments of the same class. A throne played a very important part in the equipment of the primitive cultus in Anatolia. The name of the same priest-king, Tarkuattes, appears in the inscriptions on both these Hittite sites, as Professor Sayce informs me. This priest-king must have been the dynast either of Barata or of some remoter city to which Barata was subject, and the former seems far the more probable supposition.

These brief notes are enough to give the reader some conception of the heritage which fell to the lot of the Christian population of Barata. They were heirs to a prosperity gained by industry and knowledge and science. They were heirs also to a religious belief deep engrained in their hearts through generations, a reverence for the religion to whose teaching they owed the beginning and the foundations of their prosperity : they owed to it also the conservation of their prosperity, for those numerous engineering works had to be kept in good repair, and we must suppose that this duty also was part of the ritual of the early religion. The deity who taught them became an inalienable part of the national mind and temperament ; and the Christians could not get free from their heritage of belief and reverence,¹ nor would it have been right to force them to throw off all their inherited ideas, fixed in their nature through countless generations. If we knew more about them, we might be able to trace the new form which all the old ideas assumed in Byzantine times. As it is, we can at least trace the form in a few cases.

¹ See *Pauline and other Studies*, pp. 136 ff.

In one branch of the subject we found important evidence and that of a kind which was quite new to me. The religious importance attaching to the preparation of a grave is the most striking and the most permanent feature of Anatolian religion. No sacred place from the most ancient time down to the Moslem Turbe at the present day seems to have been complete in popular estimation unless it was consecrated by a grave.¹ In a general way we knew (or felt certain from the whole situation and circumstances) that the graves of Christian martyrs or heroes² were used in the same fashion to consecrate and protect sacred localities. Here in Barata we find the facts set out in detail before us.

W. M. RAMSAY.

(*To be continued.*)

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AND COMPARATIVE RELIGION.

A FEW years ago the editor of one of our best journals of theology, with a rare ability to discern the signs of the times, told us that in his judgment the problem certain to tax most sorely the Christian Apologetic of this generation is the problem created by the science of Comparative Religion. His foresight has been justified. Indeed, the present situation of theology exemplifies the justice of the aphorism—Mr. Balfour's, I think—that nothing changes its form so rapidly as Apologetic, unless it be the negative assault which Apologetic has to meet. Christian doctrine is being challenged to-day to justify immemorial claims of

¹ On this topic much may be found in various parts of *Studies in the History of the Eastern Provinces*, 1906: see pp. 27 ff., 289, also pp. 65, 79, 81, 89, 122, 142, 146, 193: also *Pauline and other Studies*, p. 179.

² It is not necessary to suppose that the martyr was really buried at the church which his memory consecrated.