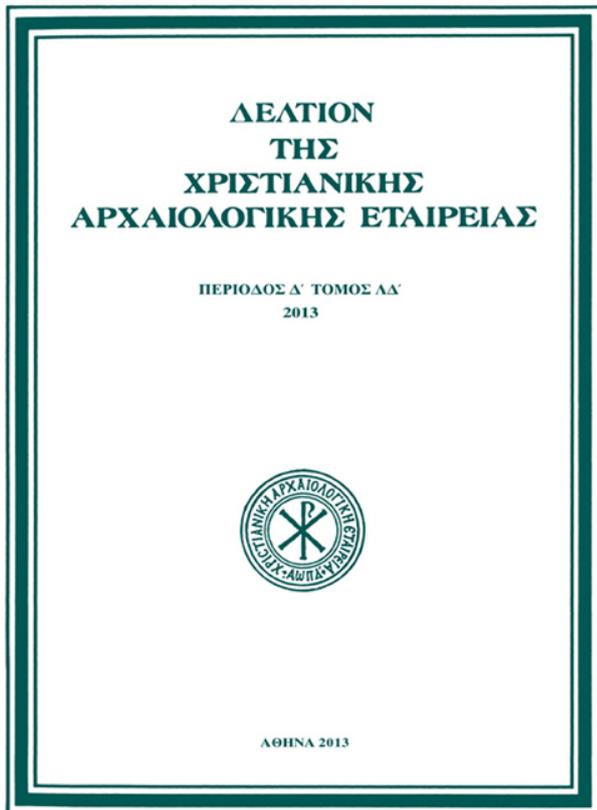


## Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας

Τόμ. 34 (2013)

Δελτίον ΧΑΕ 34 (2013), Περίοδος Δ'. Στη μνήμη του Τίτου Παπαμαστοράκη (1961-2010)



**Επανεξετάζοντας την τοποθεσία Binbirkilise: Οι φωτογραφίες του John Henry Haynes του 1887**

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doi: [10.12681/dchae.1735](https://doi.org/10.12681/dchae.1735)

### Βιβλιογραφική αναφορά:

OUSTERHOUT, R. (2013). Επανεξετάζοντας την τοποθεσία Binbirkilise: Οι φωτογραφίες του John Henry Haynes του 1887. *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας*, 34, 395–404. <https://doi.org/10.12681/dchae.1735>

Robert Ousterhout

## BİNBİRKİLİSE REVISITED: THE 1887 PHOTOGRAPHS OF JOHN HENRY HAYNES

Η τοποθεσία των πρώιμων βυζαντινών χρόνων του Binbirkilise (οι χίλιες και μία εκκλησίες), κοντά στην επαρχία Καραμάν στη Λυκαονία, είναι περισσότερο γνωστή από την τεκμηρίωση του 1907 του Sir William M. Ramsay και της Gertrude Bell. Άγνωστη σε αυτούς, ωστόσο, ήταν η επίσκεψη το 1887 του Αμερικανού αρχαιολόγου John Henry Haynes, ο οποίος φωτογράφησε τους ναούς 8, 10, 13, 32 και 39. Εξαιτίας σοβαρών φθορών στα κτήρια μεταξύ του 1887 και του 1907, οι φωτογραφίες του Haynes παρέχουν σημαντικές λεπτομέρειες των κτηρίων, οι οποίες δεν ήταν γνωστές στους μεταγενέστερους ερευνητές.

The early Byzantine site of Binbirkilise (the Thousand and One Churches) near Karaman in Lycaonia is best known today from the 1907 documentation by Sir William M. Ramsay and Gertrude Bell. Unknown to them, however, was the visit in 1887 by the American archaeologist John Henry Haynes, who took photographs of Churches 8, 10, 13, 32, and 39. Because of severe damage to the buildings between 1887 and 1907, Haynes's photographs provide important details of the buildings not available to later scholars.

The site of Birbirkilise (the Thousand and One Churches) near Karaman in Lycaonia has been known to European travelers since at least the early 19th century. Recognized for the abundant remains of early Byzantine churches set within a stark and barren landscape, various names have been proposed for the site. Today, as in the 19th century, the settlement is divided into two parts, the lower city known as Maden Şehir, while the upper area is called Dëgle. Sir William M. Ramsay suggested the ancient toponym Barata, and this is generally accepted, although others placenames have been proposed.<sup>1</sup> But the identity

of the site is less important than its situation – isolated and off the beaten track, then as now. By the 4th century, a small Christian community had developed on a site with virtually no evidence of earlier buildings or a street system, and it survived over a period of at least six turbulent centuries, if not longer.

Our earliest graphic representations of the site come from the 1826 visit of Léon de Laborde, whose romantic views emphasize the barrenness of the site while exaggerating and regularizing the features of the standing remains (Fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> Other scholars had visited the site but

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### Λέξεις κλειδιά

Πρώιμη βυζαντινή περίοδος, αρχιτεκτονική, Λυκαονία, φωτογραφία.

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### Keywords

Early Byzantine period, architecture, Lycaonia, photography.

<sup>1</sup> Sir W. M. Ramsay – G. L. Bell, *The Thousand and One Churches*, London 1909; reissued with a new Foreword by R. G. Ousterhout and M. P.C. Jackson, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum Publications, 2008 (hereafter: Ramsay – Bell, *The Thousand and One Churches*), esp. 560–570. The evidence for the churches has been

reassessed by M. Restle, “Binbirkilise,” *RbK* I, 690–719; S. Eyice, *Karadağ (Binbirkilise) ve Karaman*, Istanbul 1971 and K. Belke, *Galatien und Lykaonien*, *TIB* 4, Vienna 1984, 138–143.

<sup>2</sup> L. de Laborde, *Voyage en Orient*, vol. I. *Asie Mineure*, Paris 1837, 120–121; pls 66, 68–69.



Fig. 1. Binbirkilise, view of Churches 8 and 13 seen from the northwest, by Léon de Laborde, 1826.

did not leave a visual record of it before the end of the century. The photographs, drawings, and site description prepared by J. W. Crowfoot and J. I. Smirnov in 1900 were incorporated into Josef Strzygowski's *Kleinasien*, and these give the first systematic overview of the remains.<sup>3</sup> The German engineer Carl Holzmann visited the site in 1904 while overseeing the construction of the Baghdad railroad, and he produced a folio of drawings.<sup>4</sup> Holzmann's drawings are less useful, however, for they show only his hypothetical reconstructions of the original states of the churches but provide no indication of their condition at the time he examined them. Binbirkilise is best known from the 1905-1909 photographs by Gertrude Bell, which accompany her publica-

tion of the site with Sir William M. Ramsay (Fig. 2).<sup>5</sup> Bell's analysis of the architecture is the most complete and remains authoritative. While she incorporated the observations of earlier visitors into her study of the architecture, their accounts provide little evidence not visible to her during her time at the site. Many of the buildings in the lower city had fallen sometime between Laborde's visit and Bell's, and it is often assumed to be the result of gradual deterioration over time. As Ramsay commented, "The destruction of this ancient city has proceeded comparatively slowly, but it goes on steadily."<sup>6</sup> Ramsay had first examined the site with Sir Charles Wilson in 1882, but his account places the destruction of the monuments considerably later. For example, he writes, "Church 8 was

<sup>3</sup> J. Strzygowski, *Kleinasien ein Neuland der Kunstgeschichte*, Leipzig 1903 (hereafter: Strzygowski, *Kleinasien*), esp. 1 27.

<sup>4</sup> C. Holzmann, *Binbirkilise: Archäologische Skizzen aus Anatolien*,

Hamburg 1904.

<sup>5</sup> Ramsay and Bell; their book is dedicated to Strzygowski.

<sup>6</sup> Ramsay Bell, *The Thousand and One Churches*, 7.



Fig. 2. Binbirkilise, view of the ruins of Churches 8 and 13, seen from the northwest, by Gertrude Bell, 1907 (courtesy of the University of Newcastle Gertrude Bell Archive).

standing in 1907 to a considerable height, and was one of the most interesting and picturesque monuments of the city. In 1908 I observed no change in it: in 1909 all the higher parts had fallen, and the structure had become a ruin, deprived of its most striking features.<sup>7</sup> Ramsay was no doubt confused, for his chronology is contradicted by the photographs of Crowfoot (1900) and Bell (1907), which show Church 8 already fallen.<sup>8</sup> Ramsay must have been remembering his impression from his earlier visits to the site.

Unknown to Ramsay, Bell, Crowfoot, Holzmann, Strzygowski, and almost everyone else is the folio of photographs of archaeological sites in Asia Minor published by

John Henry Haynes in 1892.<sup>9</sup> For much of his career, Haynes, an American, lived in the Ottoman Empire and was often hired or subsidized by the Archaeological Institute of America, requested by them to photograph archaeological sites.<sup>10</sup> An accomplished and prolific photographer, several hundred photographs by Haynes survive in the archives at University of Pennsylvania Museum and at Harvard University, notably from journeys he took in 1884 and 1887 across Phrygia, Lycaonia, Cappadocia, Cilicia, and into Syria. These represent the earliest photographs for many of the inland sites. With rare exception, Haynes did not divert from the routes taken by earlier travelers, such as Ainsworth and Hamilton, whose texts

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 7 8.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., figs 56, 58, 59; Strzygowski, *Kleinasien*, fig. 17.

<sup>9</sup> J. H. Haynes, *Photographs of Asia Minor Taken in the Summer of 1887*, New York 1892, copy preserved at Harvard University, Aga Khan Visual Resources.

<sup>10</sup> The AIA no longer preserves a photographic archive, and its fate is unclear. They do, however, preserve numerous letters from Haynes to Charles Eliot Norton, founding president of the AIA; see R. Holod R. G. Ousterhout (eds), *Osman Hamdi Bey and the Americans*, Istanbul 2011, 294 301.



Fig. 3. Binbirkilise, view of the ruins of Churches 8 and 13, seen from the southeast, by John Henry Haynes, 1887 (Harvard University, Aga Khan Visual Resources).

he knew.<sup>11</sup> Unlike them, however, he traveled with a camera. Sadly, his published folio was not a commercial success and remains virtually unknown today. Because I have attempted to reconstruct the career of Haynes elsewhere,<sup>12</sup> in the following pages I will concentrate on the photographs of Binbirkilise, which provide a unique record of the early Byzantine city.

Haynes's folio includes five views of Binbirkilise (his Plates 4-7), taken in August 1887, and these give a remarkably different impression of the site, showing a situation closer to that recorded by Laborde than by Crowfoot or Bell. Church 8, for example, is fully standing – as Ramsay must have remembered it from 1882. We may suppose that instead of gradual deterioration, an earthquake may

<sup>11</sup> W. F. Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Chaldea and Armenia*, London 1842, 2 vols; W. J. Hamilton, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia with Some Account of their Antiquities and Geology*, London 1852. In an unpublished letter of 17 March 1886 (Archive of the American Board of Overseas Missions, Istanbul), Haynes begs Brother W. W. Peet at the Bible House in Constantinople to sell him Hamilton's

*Researches in Asia Minor*. "I would give more for that book than any book I know of," he wrote, "It would be worth more to me than almost any book that is published." Apparently he was unsuccessful the book is still in the Bible House library collection.

<sup>12</sup> R. G. Ousterhout, *John Henry Haynes: A Photographer and Archaeologist in the Ottoman Empire 1881-1900*, Istanbul 2011.



Fig. 4. Binbirkilise, view of the ruins of Church 13, seen from the northwest, by John Henry Haynes, 1887 (Harvard University, Aga Khan Visual Resources).



Fig. 5. Binbirkilise, view of the ruins of Church 8, seen from the northwest, by John Henry Haynes, 1887 (Harvard University, Aga Khan Visual Resources).

have struck the site sometime between 1887 and 1900.<sup>13</sup> Haynes's photographs of Churches 10 and 13 also reveal dramatically different states of preservation in 1887 than those noted after 1900, and his photographs clarify numerous aspects of these buildings. Bell had relied on the engravings from Laborde for reconstructing the elevations,<sup>14</sup> but Haynes's photographs allow us to correct the inevitable distortions in Laborde's images, which attenuate the buildings and exaggerate the horseshoe arches. The visual information they provide also complements the often astute observations of Bell.

Haynes's photograph of Churches 8 and 13 (Fig. 3) is taken from the southeast rather than the southwest, as were the views of Bell and Laborde. By the time Bell had arrived on the scene, Church 8 had fallen but was still recognizable, while Church 13 was nothing but a pile of rubble – so much so that Bell didn't bother to record it.<sup>15</sup> In Bell's photograph (Fig. 2), its foundations appear immediately to the right of Church 8, just behind the rock fence. Haynes's

views provide our only photographic record of it, including a detailed view of the standing remains (Fig. 4).

Church 13 may be reconstructed as a basilica with a two-storied narthex. While Laborde had depicted the west façade of the building, representing it as a simple, rectangular tower, Haynes shows the inner wall, where the narthex once joined to the nave, with walls extending from it to the east. In our Fig. 3, the narthex stands almost its full height, to the left, while the remains of the apse appear between it and Church 8, in the distance to the right. Changes in the masonry surface of the narthex block indicate the position of the angled roofs of the side aisles, allowing the restitution of the building as a three-aisled basilica with the nave rising above the level of the side aisles. This is in contrast to what Bell calls a "barn church," in which the side aisles and nave rise to the same height, and a clerestory would not have been possible.<sup>16</sup> Both types existed side-by-side at Binbirkilise.

More interestingly, there are two thicknesses of walls visi-

<sup>13</sup> Dr. Caroline Finkel kindly checked the earthquake recorded in the late Ottoman period in the Karaman Konya area for me but found no earthquakes recorded in the region at this time. Nevertheless, the dramatic changes in the monuments between 1887 and 1900 argue

in favor of earthquake destruction.

<sup>14</sup> Laborde, *op.cit.* (n. 2), 120–121, pls 66, 68–69.

<sup>15</sup> Ramsay Bell, *The Thousand and One Churches*, 99–105.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 303–24 for typology.

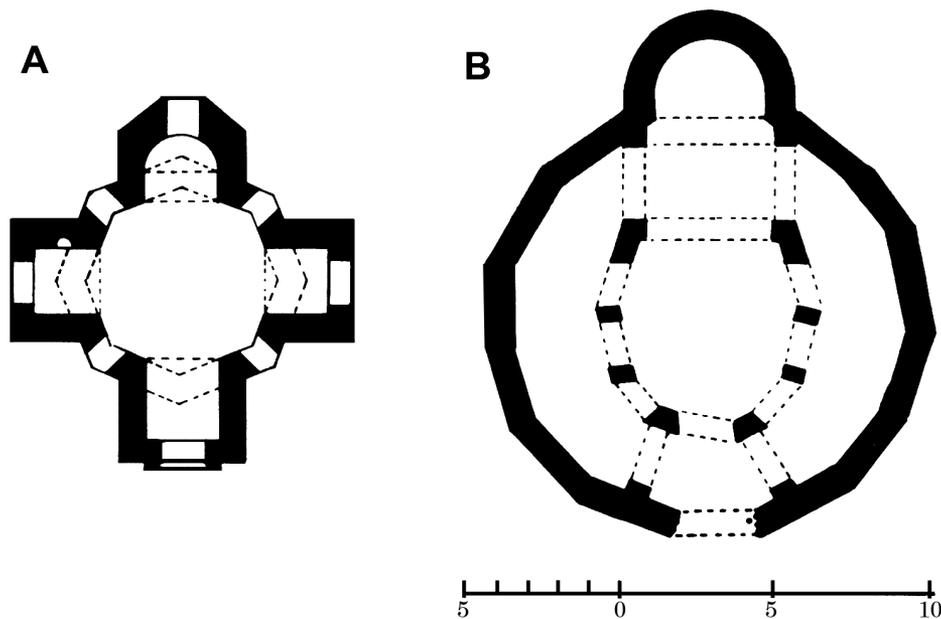


Fig. 6. Binbirkilise, plans of Churches 8 and 10 (after Gertrude Bell with author's modifications).

ble inside the narthex of Church 13. These are of different character, with the inner thickness rougher than the outer and supporting a transverse barrel vault. Directly behind the remains of the vault, putlog holes appear in the inner west wall, four stone courses below the gallery windows. The details suggest that the separation between the two levels of the narthex was originally a wooden floor, but that this was replaced by vaulting at a later date. Ramsay and Bell had observed similar evidence of rebuilding elsewhere, which they attributed to a period of revival, *ca.* 850-1070, following widespread destruction during the Arab incursions. As what is visible appears to be an insertion into a standing building rather than the repair or reconstruction of a damaged building, this more likely represents the updating of a building that had existed over a long period of time.<sup>17</sup>

Another problem is the form of the narthex and its connection into the side aisles. At many of the Binbirkilise churches, the lateral bays of the narthex are closed off

from the central bay, with limited access from the side aisles. At Church 13, there is no indication of an internal division within the narthex, while the access from the side aisles is not entirely clear. The large arched openings seem to be windows between interior spaces, with low passageways beneath them. That to the south is covered by a lintel, while that to the north is arched. Without a sense of the original ground level, however, it is impossible to determine just how low these openings were.

Impressively, Church 8 stands its full height, its domed octagonal core amplified with barrel-vaulted projections on three sides and an apse on the fourth (Figs 5, 6A). Church 8 has long been of interest to scholars because of its similarities to the martyrion described by Gregory of Nysa.<sup>18</sup> Haynes's photograph confirms that this was, indeed, an impressive building, and typical of Haynes, he poses his traveling companions in the windows. Seen from the southeast, the faceted apse projects to the right, terminating in a single arched window. The transept arm extend-

<sup>17</sup> Ramsay and Bell saw the arrival of the Arabs and the arrival of the Seljuks as convenient historical moments around which to construct a chronology; see comments by Ousterhout and Jackson, Foreword

to Ramsay Bell, *The Thousand and One Churches*, xxii xxvii.

<sup>18</sup> Strzygowski, *Kleinasien*, 70-90.

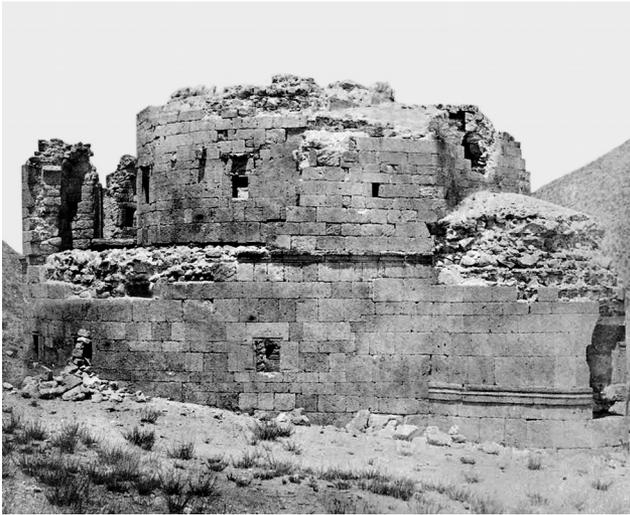


Fig. 7. Binbirkilise, Church 10 seen from the southeast, by John Henry Haynes, 1887 (Harvard University, Aga Khan Visual Resources).



Fig. 8. Binbirkilise, Churches 32 and 39 seen from the southwest, by John Henry Haynes, 1887 (Harvard University, Aga Khan Visual Resources).

ing to the left terminates in a door. The central octagon rises through a clerestory zone below the dome, disguised behind the rising walls of the octagon. Where the facing has fallen away, the mortared rubble core of the wall is exposed. The octagon is rotated so that its corners, rather than its flat walls, are on axis. As a consequence, the lower diagonal windows (where one of Haynes's companions stands) are set at the corners, while the clerestory windows are positioned within each facet of the octagon. The lack of vertical alignment adds to the visual interest of the building.

The Rev. E. J. Davis visited Binbirkilise in 1875 and described the church as follows: "An octagonal tower, with three projecting chapels and a projecting ante-chapel or porch. In the upper part of the tower are small arched windows, one in each side. The arrangement of the windows below is, three in the vaulted apse at the east, two at the N.W. and S.W. angles of the octagon. There are three doors, two small on north and south, one large on the west. The roofs of these chapels and of the tower are stone

cupolas. Below the roof of the tower there had been a false ceiling; some of its rafters still remain, projecting for the wall inside, in a circular form."<sup>19</sup>

The last detail is probably the remnant of a system of tie beams to brace the dome, rather than a false ceiling. By the time of Bell's analysis, all traces of the wooden bracing had disappeared, along with the dome. And while the apse was covered by a half-dome, the projecting porches must have been covered by barrel vaults, not cupolas. The description of the building as a "tower" conforms to the visual impression recorded by Haynes. Holzmann, who drew a reconstruction of the church in 1904, supposed the octagon to have been covered by a cloister vault that was exposed on the exterior, but this is clearly incorrect.<sup>20</sup> Our Fig. 3 shows the remains of a shallow pyramidal roof, which is how Restle has reconstructed it.<sup>21</sup>

Church 10 was also centrally planned, but much more irregular than Church 8, and its masonry rougher (Figs 6B, 7).<sup>22</sup> Its lower level was partially standing when Bell cleared its interior and examined it. She was aided in her

<sup>19</sup> Rev. E. J. Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey. A Journal of Travel*, London 1879, 309.

<sup>20</sup> Holzmann, *op.cit.* (n. 4), pl. 8.

<sup>21</sup> Restle, *op.cit.* (n. 1), 23, fig. 11.

<sup>22</sup> Ramsay Bell, *The Thousand and One Churches*, 105-112.

reconstruction by the description by Rev. Davis, who called it, aptly, “a church of very strange form:”

“It consisted of a stone vaulted apse, having attached to it a pentagonal screen on arches; outside this is an exterior wall, with small arched windows, and the space enclosed between this and the interior screen in two stories, which have small square windows looking inwards. This outer wall forms a figure of thirteen sides, the great west door being in the thirteenth side. There is a small door to the north of the large door, and just below the cupola of the apse are four small square windows which give light to the interior. The masonry is very good.”<sup>23</sup>

Haynes’s photograph shows the church from the south with its apse to the right. His caption calls it “A ruined Building (Church?) with twelve sides and an apse.” The building is actually fourteen-sided, with the apse taking one side of the polygon, and while solidly built, it was very irregular. The central space is oval – actually an irregular octagon, flanked by triple arcades to the north and south. Bell had cleaned the interior to clarify the plan, but by 1907 much of the upper level had disappeared, and she was hard pressed to match Davis’s description to the standing remains. Where, for example, is the “small door to the north?” She suggests, rather tentatively, that the internal arcades are Davis’s pentagonal screen. Nor do the windows match Davis’s description.

Haynes’s photograph provides the missing details, although at first glance it is rather confusing. We see the building from the south, with its lower level standing the full length. The upper level of the outer wall stands only on the eastern (right) side, where it rises above a string course. To the west (left), the outer wall has fallen, and we see the rising inner wall, pierced by small rectangular windows at the gallery level, as noted by Davis. Immediately below this is the rubble extrados of the annular barrel vault covering the ambulatory on the lower level. To the west and east, Bell indicated pilasters engaged to the outer wall flanking the entrance and the apse, with arches connecting to the piers at the ends of the arcades (Fig. 6B, with author’s modifications). Haynes photograph shows vaulting on the upper level in both of these bays. The apse

must have had a tall, vaulted sanctuary bay preceding it, opening to the central octagon. Davis’s four small rectangular windows, just below “the cupola of the apse,” may have been in the east wall of this bay, above the vault of the apse, rather than in the apse itself. If the sanctuary vault opened directly into the central space, Davis’s “pentagonal screen on arches” may simply have been the upper level wall, pierced by (most likely) five windows. Within the gallery, stone corbels appear immediately above the square windows, but there is no evidence of vaulting. We may assume these areas were covered by raking wooden roofs.

As for the central octagon, Bell assumed it was vaulted with an oval-shaped dome, but is unclear how much taller than the gallery it rose. However, one of Laborde’s views of Binbirkilise shows an irregular, centrally-planned building with a tall central tower.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately the view shows very little detail, but the building is clearly not Church 8. One wonders if this could be church Church 10, as Strzygowski surmised.<sup>25</sup>

Haynes included a single photograph from the upper city of Değle in his folio, showing Churches 32 and 39 from the southwest (Fig. 8). Both are unique buildings at Binbirkilise, as Bell observed.<sup>26</sup> Church 32 is a three-aisled basilica with galleries. Haynes’s view shows the arcade of the north gallery fully intact, as well as the vault of the apse, faded on the right side of the photograph. Portions of the narthex gallery are still standing as well. These features were still visible to Crowfoot but partially damaged by the time Bell recorded them.<sup>27</sup> By 1909 Bell reported all the upper portions of the building had fallen. The broad west façade of the church had three portals set within arches, and its width was extended by chambers projecting to the north and south; the south chamber is clearly visible in the foreground of Haynes’s photograph.

Church 39, visible in the background, is probably not a church, but a nine-bayed, cross-in-square hall, quite different in character and date from the neighboring church. A central tower rose above the lower vaults, its the surviving wall detailed with niches and bands of brick. This is most likely a construction of the Middle Byzantine period and corresponds to a variety of centrally planned halls

<sup>23</sup> Davis, op.cit, 309-310.

<sup>24</sup> Laborde, op.cit. (n. 2), pl. 66; reproduced Strzygowski, *Kleinasien*, fig. 71; Eyice, op.cit. (n. 1), fig. 2.

<sup>25</sup> Strzygowski, *Kleinasien*, 103.

<sup>26</sup> Ramsay Bell, *The Thousand and One Churches*, 199-221, fig. 164 for plan.

<sup>27</sup> Strzygowski, *Kleinasien*, figs 14-16; Ramsay Bell, *The Thousand and One Churches*, esp. fig. 172.

found in rock-cut complexes of Cappadocia.<sup>28</sup> The use of brick is also a characteristic of the Middle Byzantine period, as Bell recognized. Although both Haynes and Bell assumed this to be part of a monastery, the complex at Değle may in fact be a secular residence.

Haynes had to cut short his visit to Binbirkilise on 3 August 1887, having photographed only five of its buildings.<sup>29</sup> He wrote in a letter to his sponsor, William R. Ware of Columbia University, two years later: “Since there was no water within several miles and the sun was very hot I could only take a few photographs as speedily as possible and hasten away to join the caravan...” More critically, it seems, there was also no food for the horses.<sup>30</sup> Consequently Haynes had very little beyond this to say about the site, although the few photographs he took are of utmost significance.

Ramsay and Bell were reluctant to assign dates to the buildings at Binbirkilise and do so in only the broadest terms. Of the buildings illustrated here, with the exception of No. 39, which is Middle Byzantine in its design, all should date before the 8th century. The sophisticated design and tall dome of Church 8 suggest a 6th-century date,

on the analogy of the standing dome of the Red Church at Sivrihisar, which can be confidently dated to the 6th century.<sup>31</sup> The basilicas may be 5th or 6th century. Church 10 remains a puzzle, in part because of its unusual plan, in part because of its irregularity. Bell wanted to see it as one of the later churches – that is, from after the Arab incursions,<sup>32</sup> but it lacks the distinctive hallmarks of Middle Byzantine architecture. I would place it in the 6th or 7th centuries but attribute it to a different workshop than the one that built Church 8. Finally, the two phases of construction evident at Church 13, seem to follow a pattern evident elsewhere in the Byzantine Empire: Early Christian buildings that were originally covered with wooden roofs have vaulting introduced into them in the 9th or 10th century.<sup>33</sup> We are still lacking solid archaeological data for an authoritative analysis of these buildings, and the Churches 8, 10, and 13 of Maden Şehir have subsequently deteriorated beyond recognition. With Haynes’s photographs, however, we have considerably more evidence than we did previously.

<sup>28</sup> See my discussion, R. Ousterhout, *A Byzantine Settlement in Cappadocia*, Washington, DC 2011, 2nd rev. ed., esp. 174–176.

<sup>29</sup> The papers of William Ware are preserved at Columbia University. They include many of the photographs from Haynes’s folio, dispersed and unattributed within his photographic collection and without the accompanying booklet. I had hoped to find additional photographs from Binbirkilise, but all I have been able to locate appear published in the folio.

<sup>30</sup> J. H. Haynes, unpublished diary, University of Pennsylvania

Museum Archives.

<sup>31</sup> R. Ousterhout, “Messages in the Landscape: Searching for Gregory Nazianzenos in Cappadocia (with two Excursions to the Çanlı Kilise)”, *Images of the Byzantine World: Visions, Messages and Meanings, Studies Presented to Leslie Brubaker* (ed. A. Lymberopoulou), Ashgate 2011, 147–169, esp. 154–155.

<sup>32</sup> Ramsay Bell, *The Thousand and One Churches*, 433–35.

<sup>33</sup> See my discussion, R. Ousterhout, *Master Builders of Byzantium*, Princeton 1999, 86–92.

## ΕΠΑΝΑΞΕΤΑΖΟΝΤΑΣ ΤΗΝ ΤΟΠΟΘΕΣΙΑ ΒΙΝΒΙΡΚΙΛΙΣΕ: ΟΙ ΦΩΤΟΓΡΑΦΙΕΣ ΤΟΥ JOHN HENRY HAYNES ΤΟΥ 1887

Η τοποθεσία των πρώιμων βυζαντινών χρόνων του Binbirkilise (οι χίλιες και μία εκκλησίες), κοντά στην επαρχία Καραμάν στη Λυκαονία, ήταν γνωστή στους Ευρωπαίους περιηγητές τουλάχιστον από τις αρχές του 19ου αιώνα. Ο Sir William M. Ramsay πρότεινε το αρχαίο τοπωνύμιο Βάρατα, το οποίο έγινε ευρύτερα αποδεκτό. Μέχρι τον 4ο αιώνα, μια μικρή χριστιανική κοινότητα είχε αναπτυχθεί σε μια θέση της περιοχής χωρίς ενδείξεις προγενέστερων κτισμάτων ή οδικού δικτύου και επιβίωσε για μια περίοδο τουλάχιστον έξι ταραγμένων αιώνων, αν όχι και περισσότερο.

Γραφικές αναπαραστάσεις της περιοχής έχουμε από την επίσκεψη του Léon de Laborde το 1826, καθώς επίσης και από τις φωτογραφίες και τα σχέδια του J. W. Crowfoot και του J. I. Smirnov το 1900, οι οποίες εντάχθηκαν στο έργο του Josef Strzygowski, *Kleinasion ein Neuland der Kunstgeschichte*, Leipzig 1903. Η περιοχή είναι, ωστόσο, καλύτερα γνωστή από τις φωτογραφίες της Gertrude Bell της περιόδου 1905-1909, που συνόδευαν τη συνδημοσίευσή της με τον Sir William M. Ramsay για την περιοχή. Ωστόσο, πολλά από τα κτίσματα είχαν καταρρεύσει κάποια στιγμή στο χρονικό διάστημα που μεσολάβησε ανάμεσα στην επίσκεψη του Laborde και στις

αρχές του 20ού αιώνα, όταν πια ξεκίνησε η συστηματική έρευνα στην περιοχή.

Νέες πληροφορίες προέρχονται από φωτογραφίες του Αμερικανού αρχαιολόγου John Henry Haynes. Οι λήψεις πραγματοποιήθηκαν τον Αύγουστο του 1887 και δημοσιεύτηκαν σε λεύκωμα το 1892. Το λεύκωμα του Haynes περιλαμβάνει πέντε όψεις του Binbirkilise, οι οποίες δίνουν μια εντελώς διαφορετική αίσθηση της περιοχής, δείχνοντας μια κατάσταση πιο κοντινή στις καταγραφές του Laborde παρά σε αυτές του Crowfoot ή της Bell. Ο ναός 8 διατηρείται ακέραιος και οι ναοί 10 και 13, επίσης, αποκαλύπτουν τα σημαντικά διαφοροποιημένα στάδια διατήρησης του 1887, σε σχέση με εκείνα που σημειώθηκαν μετά το 1900. Επιπρόσθετα, η εξέταση των φωτογραφιών του Haynes επιτρέπει να φανούν πολυάριθμες πτυχές αυτών των κτισμάτων. Η Bell είχε στηριχθεί στα χαρακτηριστικά του Laborde για να ανασυνθέσει τις σχεδιαστικές όψεις, αλλά οι φωτογραφίες του Haynes επιτρέπουν τη διόρθωση ορισμένων λαθών και την ένταξη των κτισμάτων μέσα στην ολόενα και πλουσιότερη εικόνα που έχουμε για την εξέλιξη της βυζαντινής αρχιτεκτονικής στη Μικρά Ασία.