

all in Savatra, where water was procured from very deep wells and actually sold. Savatra lies close under the hills of the Boz-Dagh, which are much lower than those above Laodiceia, and supply little water: I do not remember ever to have seen a fountain in any of the passes which I have crossed. Yet Strabo's description is inaccurate in one respect. The wells at Savatra are not deep; and the Crimean refugees who have recently settled there say that there is abundant water at no great depth, wherever they sink a well. Yet Strabo, clearly, had been at Savatra,<sup>1</sup> and was struck with the novel spectacle of water sold in the streets. The Graeco-Roman cities were, as a rule abundantly supplied with this necessary of life, which in most places ran free and health-giving through the streets. I can only suppose that the Pontic traveller confused the memory of his journey across Asia Minor, and attributes to Savatra a fact which is true of some places along his road through Lycaonia, that the wells are extremely deep.

W. M. RAMSAY.

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### III. THE TIME OF THE TRANSFIGURATION.

When I reviewed in the *EXPOSITOR*, January 1908, the noteworthy book by Colonel Mackinlay on the Morning Star, I mentioned his very ingenious suggestion that the Transfiguration occurred at the Feast of Tabernacles in A.D. 28, a synchronism which suggested to Peter's mind the idea of making the three tabernacles. The ordinary view as to Peter's reason for making this curious proposal seems to be that which is stated by Dr. Plummer in his Commentary on Luke ix., "if they were to remain there they must have shelter." Why superhuman personages like Moses and Elias should require the shelter of booths in order to remain on a

<sup>1</sup> Soatra is the form which he uses, p. 568: Savatra occurs in the inscriptions and on the coins of the city.

mountain does not appear very clear. But, if the Jews were everywhere making booths at that very moment in order to spend in them the sacred week, it seems a very natural proposal of Peter's to construct three booths for the three superhuman personages to keep the Jewish feast: "one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias": and thus prolong the incident: "it is good for us to be here."

Colonel Mackinlay's suggestion agrees with the very slight indications of time that can be gathered from the context.

The Transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 1 ff.; Mark ix. 2 ff.; Luke ix. 28 ff.) occurred later than the Passover of A.D. 28 (about which time, as is generally agreed,<sup>1</sup> must have happened the incident mentioned by Matthew xiv. 14 ff., and John vi. 4 ff.); but the visit to the borders of Judæa beyond Jordan (Matt. xix. 1; John x. 40), the opening of the final period of the Saviour's life, about the end of 28 and the beginning of 29, had not yet occurred. This approximate date for the Transfiguration is, of course, evident and universally accepted; but its connexion with the Feast of Tabernacles is not a matter of general agreement, and no recent scholar adopts it, so far as I know.

Now Jesus spent part of this Feast at Jerusalem (John vii. 14). It is mentioned that He would not go up at the beginning of the Feast, but remained some days in Galilee, and appeared in Jerusalem, "when it was now the middle of the Feast," the third or the fourth day. On the Author's theory we have thus a quite remarkable chronological agreement between John and the Synoptics; and the agreement is so striking that it could hardly be purely accidental. On that theory the Transfiguration occurred at the time when the Tabernacles were being constructed, i.e., either on the day at whose sunset the Feast began or on the first day of the Feast. In that event Jesus was manifested as the Son of God, not

<sup>1</sup> EXPOSITOR, Jan. 1908, p. 10.

publicly, but to three disciples on a solitary mountain-top ; and the three were ordered to keep the event secret until after the Resurrection (as Mark and Matthew state). John vii. 4 mentions that, when this " Feast of Tabernacles was at hand," the brothers of Jesus urged him to go up to Jerusalem, to abandon His privacy and secrecy, and " manifest Thyself to the world." But Jesus refused to go up, on the ground that, " My time is not yet come." When the rest went up to Jerusalem to the Feast, " He abode still in Galilee." But afterwards He went up, " not publicly, but as it were in secret " ; and suddenly, " in the midst of the Feast," He appeared in the Temple. There He preached the remarkable discourse, beginning : " I am the light of the world."

All that John mentions in this passage fits in so perfectly in tone and in chronology with the Synoptic record as to make it evident to anyone possessed of the literary and the historic sense that the two narratives, which complete one another so remarkably, although neither of them mentions any detail or any saying that occurs in the other, must be founded on personal knowledge or first-hand evidence about actual facts. The only other theory that would account for such a singular coincidence amid difference is that there has been deliberate and wonderfully skilful invention of a series of incidents, and partition of them between two separate narratives dovetailing perfectly into one another. Such a theory, whether in the form that the two narratives were concocted by agreement at the same time, or that one was invented subsequently to suit the other which was already in existence, is not likely to be advanced at the present day by any scholar, for there are too many obvious difficulties (which it is needless to state here). This agreement of the two authorities<sup>1</sup> is so important a point as to deserve fuller notice.

<sup>1</sup> Mark is the authority on whom Luke and Matthew both rely.

Take, first of all, the sequence of events.

1. Jesus went forth into the villages of Caesarea Philippi. He asked His disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" They answered that He was taken by some for John the Baptist, by others for Elias or one of the prophets. He then asked, "Who say ye that I am?" Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ." Thereupon He bade them tell no man of Him (Mark viii. 27-30).

2. Jesus now began to tell them of His approaching sufferings and death and resurrection. This He stated openly. Peter rebuked Him for speaking thus, and was sharply reprimanded (Mark viii. 31-ix. 1).

3. Now the Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. His brothers advised Him to go to celebrate it in Jerusalem, and reveal Himself publicly to the Jewish world for what He claimed to be; but He refused, because His time was not yet fulfilled; and He abode in Galilee (John vii. 1-9). This takes as well known the narrative about His claim given by the Synoptics, see 1 and 2.

4. Six days later He took Peter and James and John into a high mountain apart. Here occurred the Transfiguration; and the thought of the Feast suggested to Peter that the three heavenly ones should celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, and the three earthly ones should enjoy the spectacle. Afterwards, as they descended from the mountain, Jesus again charged them to tell no man until the Son of man be risen from the dead. They questioned one another what was the meaning of this rising from the dead. And Jesus explained (Mark ix. 2-13).

5. Jesus then went up secretly to Jerusalem and appeared in the Temple in the middle of the Feast, and taught, so that the people wondered. He asked why they sought to kill Him. He explained that He would be with them only a short time, and would then go "unto Him that sent Me."

He publicly offered instruction, and drink to any that thirsted. And some said that this was the prophet, others the Christ. But the conclusion was that, since He was of Galilee, He therefore could not be the Christ<sup>1</sup>; and no man laid hands on Him. He declared Himself in the Temple to be the light of the world, to be not of this world, but sent by His Father. And He went out of the Temple (John vii. 10–viii. 59).

6. They rejoined the disciples,<sup>2</sup> and He travelled in Galilee, keeping Himself secret; and He taught the disciples about the resurrection; but they understood not the saying and were afraid to ask Him (Mark ix. 14–32).

Secondly, it is plain that the two accounts are agreed about the importance of this moment in autumn A.D. 28. Jesus was now beginning to make His fate known; in Galilee He spoke only to His disciples<sup>3</sup> about the coming events; but though He told them repeatedly, they failed to understand the drift of His words. John alone adds that He made a secret journey to Jerusalem and gave similar teaching in a guarded symbolic fashion to the Jews in the Temple. Both accounts agree that His death was now often mentioned by Him, but that no one realized what He meant.

How is this remarkable agreement as to time and subject to be explained? I cannot see any opening for doubt (1) that it arises from the personal knowledge and memory of John; and (2) that John knew the Synoptic narrative (not necessarily all three accounts, of course). It is impossible that John should so exactly fill up what is omitted by the

<sup>1</sup> The irony of this conclusion escapes many scholars. Their reasoning was sound; and their conclusion was inevitable, if the starting-point was correct. They thought it was correct; but they were in error. Hence their reasoning was really a witness to the truth, Christ must be born in Bethlehem, and Jesus (unknown to them) was born there. Such is the meaning of the Fourth Gospel.

<sup>2</sup> Luke alone says "on the next day" after the Transfiguration.

<sup>3</sup> Except once the expression "openly": see above, heading 2.

Synoptists, without repeating anything that they tell, unless he was deliberately completing, with full knowledge of the facts, a narrative which he regarded as incomplete, though true. The irony of John (which is conspicuous in the touch regarding the supposed birth of Jesus in Galilee and the inference drawn therefrom in ignorance of the real facts of His birth by His opponents) is seen to be much more thoroughgoing when the whole of His words in the Temple are taken as a veiled and symbolic statement to the multitude of the teaching which was given in Galilee to the disciples alone before and after the Transfiguration, and which was as little understood by them as it was by the multitude in the Temple. There is irony in this, but how much greater is the pathos than the irony! This is what the disciples afterwards discussed among themselves and mourned and marvelled over, in the days that followed the Resurrection.

An agreement of this kind between two documents, lying so much beneath the surface, yet so complete, would in the criticism of non-Christian works be regarded as a weighty proof of trustworthiness and authenticity, unless the supposition of elaborately concocted fraud was established; but frauds so elaborate and skilful are unknown in ancient literature.

W. M. RAMSAY.

### LEXICAL NOTES FROM THE PAPYRI.<sup>1</sup>

#### XI.

*δέω* (*bind*).—With Luke xiii. 16, where demoniac power “binds” the sufferer from curvature of the spine, cf. the use of the verb to describe the “binding” power of curses: *Syll.* 809<sup>14</sup> (iv/iii B.C.) ἔδησα τὰς χεῖρας καὶ τοὺς πόδας καὶ τὴν γλῶσσαν καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν, etc. Dittenberger remarks that

<sup>1</sup> For abbreviations see the February and March *EXPOSITOR*, pp. 170, 262.