

## Ancient Sources for Acts

### Chapter 26

#### 26:9–11

Pliny, *Letters* 10.96 (See Acts 11:22–26)

#### 26:12–18

Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 3.27

“But see,” said he, “here he is.” And just then the king advanced together with his brother and his son, ablaze with gold and jewels. And Apollonius was about to rise and retire, when Iarchas checked him from leaving his throne, and explained to him that it was not their custom for him to do so. Damis himself says that he was not present on this occasion, because on that day he was staying in the village, but he heard from Apollonius what happened and wrote it in his book. He says then that when they had sat down, the king extended his hand as if in prayer to the sages and they nodded their assent as if they were conceding his request; and he was transported with joy at the promise, just as if he had come to the oracle of a God. But the brother of the king and his son, who was a very pretty boy, were not more considered than if they had been the slaves of the others, that were mere retainers. After that the Indian rose from his place, and in a formal speech bade the king take food, and he accepted the invitation and that most cordially. Thereupon four tripods stepped forth like those of the Pythian Temple, but of their own accord, like those which advanced in Homer’s poem [Iliad 18.375], and upon them were cup-bearers of black brass resembling the figures of Ganymede and of Pelops among the Greeks.

And the earth strewed beneath them grass softer than any mattress. And dried fruits and bread and vegetables and the dessert of the season all came in, served in order, and set before them more agreeably than if cooks and waiters had provided it; now two of the tripods flowed with wine, but the other two supplied, the one of them a jet of warm water and the other of cold. Now the precious stones imported from India are employed in Greece for necklaces and rings because they are so small, but among the Indians they are turned into decanters and wine coolers, because they are so large, and into goblets of such size that from a single one of them four persons can slake their thirst at midsummer. But the cup-bearers of bronze drew a mixture, he says, of wine and water made in due proportions; and they pushed cups round, just as they do in drinking bouts. The sages, however, reclined as we do in a common banquet, not that any special honor was paid to the king, although great importance would be attached to him among Greeks and Romans, but each took the first place that he chanced to reach.

Herodotus, 2.36.4

The rings and sheets of sails are made fast outside the boat elsewhere, but inside it in Egypt. The Greeks write and calculate from left to right; the Egyptians do the opposite; yet they say that their way of writing is towards the right, and the Greek way towards the left. They employ two kinds of writing; one is called sacred, the other demotic.

Philo, *Decalogue* 87

For the conscience which dwells in, and never leaves the soul of each individual, not being accustomed to admit into itself any wicked thing, preserves its own nature always such as to hate evil, and to love virtue, being itself at the same time an accuser and a judge; being roused as an accuser it blames, impeaches, and is hostile; and again as a judge it teaches, admonishes, and recommends the accused to change his ways, and if he be able to persuade him, he is with joy reconciled to him, but if he be not able to do so, then he wages an endless and implacable war against him, never quitting him neither by day, nor by night, but pricking him, and inflicting incurable wounds on him, until he destroys his miserable and accursed life.

Euripides, *Bacchae* 794–95

**Dionysus:** I would sacrifice to the god rather than kick against his spurs in anger, a mortal against a god.

Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1624

Do you have eyes and lack understanding? Do not kick against the goads lest you strike to your own hurt.

Pindar, *Pythian Ode 2*, 90–95

But even this [90] does not comfort the minds of the envious; they pull the line too tight and plant a painful wound in their own heart before they get what they are scheming for. It is best to take the yoke on one's neck and bear it lightly; *kicking against the goad* [95] makes the path treacherous.

**26:24–29**

Xenophon, *Memorialia* 1.1.16

Such, then, was his criticism of those who meddle with these matters. His own conversation was ever of human things. The problems he discussed were, What is godly, what is ungodly; what is beautiful, what is ugly; what is just, what is unjust; what is prudence, what is madness; what is courage, what is cowardice; what is a state, what is a statesman; what is government, and what is a governor; —these and others like them, of which the knowledge made a “gentleman,” in his estimation, while ignorance should involve the reproach of “slavishness.”

Justin, *Dialogue* 39.4

Therefore, just as God did not inflict His anger on account of those seven thousand men, even so He has now neither yet inflicted judgment, nor does inflict it, knowing that daily some [of you] are becoming disciples in the name of Christ, and quitting the path of error; who are also receiving gifts, each as he is worthy, illumined through the name of this Christ. For one receives the spirit of understanding, another of counsel, another of strength, another of healing, another of foreknowledge, another of teaching, and another of the fear of God.

Origen, *Against Celsus* 6.78

Celsus next makes certain observations of the following nature: “Again, if God, like Jupiter in the comedy, should, on awaking from a lengthened slumber, desire to rescue the human race from evil,

why did He send this Spirit of which you speak into one corner (of the earth)? He ought to have breathed it alike into many bodies, and have sent them out into all the world. Now the comic poet, to cause laughter in the theatre, wrote that Jupiter, after awakening, despatched Mercury to the Athenians and Lacedaemonians; but do not you think that you have made the Son of God more ridiculous in sending Him to the Jews? “Observe in such language as this the irreverent character of Celsus, who, unlike a philosopher, takes the writer of a comedy, whose business is to cause laughter, and compares our God, the Creator of all things, to the being who, as represented in the play, on awaking, despatches Mercury (on an errand)! We stated, indeed, in what precedes, that it was not as if awakening from a lengthened slumber that God sent Jesus to the human race, who has now, for good reasons, fulfilled the economy of His incarnation, but who has always conferred benefits upon the human race. For no noble deed has ever been performed amongst men, where the divine Word did not visit the souls of those who were capable, although for a little time, of admitting such operations of the divine Word. Moreover, the advent of Jesus apparently to one corner (of the earth) was founded on good reasons, since it was necessary that He who was the subject of prophecy should make His appearance among those who had become acquainted with the doctrine of one God, and who perused the writings of His prophets, and who had come to know the announcement of Christ, and that He should come to them at a time when the Word was about to be diffused from one corner over the whole world.