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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

THE TRIALS OF ST. PAUL AND APOLLONIUS—AN HISTORICAL PARALLEL.

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THE story of Apollonius, a travelling philosopher who visited Rome in A.D. 66, and was banished the same year by Nero, and then departed to Spain, and was afterwards tried both privately and publicly by Domitian, is told by Philostratus. Philostratus was a distinguished professor in Athens, who claims to have received papers said to have been written by Damis, the friend of the philosopher, from his patroness Julia, the wife of Severus. He began the work "in honour of Apollonius" about A.D. 215. This *Life* presents many contrasts with the life of St. Paul, but the trials show interesting parallels. We are not concerned to prove the facts of the life of Apollonius, but we may presume that Philostratus, a courtier and a literary professor, would have been careful about the setting of the trial scenes, which he describes, and which help us to reconstruct in a measure the first and second trials of the Apostle. Apollonius, of course, as a revolutionary philosopher, appears to us to stand in a very different position to the Emperor from that of St. Paul. But the latter had been born and educated in Tarsus, a centre of stoical philosophy deservedly suspect in the eyes of Nero and Domitian. And we cannot say whether Nero would be influenced by that fact or not. Philostratus says he had "nothing in common with philosophy." Nero feared philosophers as revolutionaries, and on his leaving Rome for Greece issued an order for philosophers to leave Italy. Some time before that order Apollonius was journeying to Rome, but was warned at Aricia that philosophy was taboo there. He discussed Nero with his informant, who said: "Here you come with a band of philosophers, and you do not know that Nero has guards at the gates to arrest you all before you enter the town." "The Emperor fights like a gladiator, aye and kills his men, and drives a chariot." "It would be a pleasant thing," said the sage, "to see Nero turning into the plaything of man. Plato said man was God's plaything." "If you should be arrested and put to death the sight would cost you dear." "Nero," he added, "would devour you up raw." That expression throws light upon Paul's saying in 2 Timothy iv. 17, "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion," lions being called "raw devouring" (*Il.*, 5, 782). Addressing his followers, the sage spoke of "the beast" that is called a tyrant. "I know not how many heads¹ it has. Lions and panthers and wild beasts do not devour their mothers, but Nero has been filled with such food." After they had entered the city they were accosted by a stroller who sang airs from the *Oresteia*

¹ Apoc. xiii. 1; xvii. 3, seven (Rome, *Cic. Att.*, vi. 5, 2).

and *Antigone* and other dramas in which Nero acted, giving all the Neronian turns and trills, and when they declined to assist him, departed denouncing them as enemies of the divine voice and guilty of sacrilege against Nero, who was, as Paul says, a sacrilegious matricide (1 Timothy i. 9), where the reference must be to Nero, the "matricide" of that era, a name he detested. In consequence of the rascal's charge the sage was summoned before Telesinus the Consul, who eventually gave him permission to teach in the temples. But in consequence of the behaviour of a brother philosopher, who was expelled from Rome, the sage was placed under observation. We can imagine Paul and his friends, after his first release, subjected to the same espionage. "All the eyes with which the government sees were turned upon him, his discourses, and his silences, his sitting and his walking, what he ate and with whom, whether he sacrificed or not, all was reported." Philosophers were living "dangerously." As a result of the observation, it was reported that the sage had said "pardon the gods for taking pleasure in buffoons" (iv. 44), a parallel expression to "the acting of liars" (1 Timothy iv. 2)—for which Tigellinus arrested the sage on a charge of "sacrilege against Nero," Nero being noted for his love of acting, "ille scenicus."¹ Tigellinus did not, however, wish to take proceedings against him, but put in force Nero's order against philosophers. Accordingly, the other turned his steps to the west, the land bounded by the Straits, for he had heard of the philosophy of the men in that district and their progress in religion (iv. 47).

This passage throws light upon the Spanish journey of the Apostle. He also having been to the east would travel to the west, and would find a good opportunity for preaching and teaching there. At Gades Apollonius heard of Nero's victories at Olympia and strove to enlist people in the cause of Vindex, Galba's ally. He was Vespasian's friend, but the foe of Domitian. The story of his relations with that tyrant throw a light upon the legal procedure which was doubtless in vogue in Paul's day. Apollonius was in Ephesus inciting the youth to rise against the tyrant, and intriguing with people in Rome on behalf of Nerva. He was too cautious to put anything on paper, considering epistolary correspondence unsafe, as many had been betrayed by their slaves, friends, and even wives, for "in those days no house could keep a secret" (vii. 8). At last the spies are rewarded. The sage was overheard addressing a threat to a statue of the tyrant, "Thou fool, thou knowest little of the fates or necessity. The man that is destined to succeed thee, though thou put him to death, will come to life." Euphrates, his enemy, under the guise of a friendly visitor, informed the tyrant of this terrible utterance. Domitian sent an order to the governor of Asia to have the sage arrested and brought to Rome. The latter, anticipating his arrest, went by sea from Ephesus to Corinth, as Paul used to do, and from Corinth sailed to Sicily and Italy, on the fifth day reaching Puteoli, as Paul had done (Acts xxviii. 13). There in Cicero's villa, Cumamum, a friend urged him not to go to Rome.

¹ Tacitus, *An.*, xv. 59.

“ There are two kinds of tyrannies,” he said, “ one kills without trial, the other uses legal forms. The first is like furious wild beasts, the second like subtle beasts. Nero is of the impetuous type, Tiberius of the crouching type. Nero put to death men not expecting it ; Domitian kept his victims long in terror.” Nero would thus be the “ lion ” as he is described in 2 Timothy iv. 17, and Domitian the panther.

Apollonius would not listen to his friend who said, “ Your coming here is the beginning of your *trial* (*ἀγών*, cf. 2 Timothy iv. 7). This is to be put down to the *soundness*¹ of your mind ” (262). A dissertation on reason (*νοῦς*) and conscience (*σύνεσις*) follows, with which compare the connexion of both in Titus i. 15.

Arrived in Rome, he found a friend in the Praetorian Prefect Aelianus, as Paul is supposed to have found in Burrus. Aelianus made things easier for the sage. His conduct in exerting his influence to save Apollonius both before and after his arrival in Rome throws light upon the reading in Acts xxviii. 16, the “ centurion delivered the prisoners to the commandant of the camp,” here the general of the Praetorian brigade. The prefect ordered the sage to be arrested and brought before him. The sage told him he was meditating an escape to a place where there was neither *indictment* (*endeixis*) nor prosecution, but thought it a treacherous thing to shun his defence (*apologia*)—two expressions which throw a light upon the Pastoral passages, “ Alexander laid many mischievous charges against me ” (*enedeixato*), and “ in my first defence ” (*apologia*) (2 Timothy iv. 16, 17). The accuser is accordingly the presenter of the indictment (*ho endeiknumenos*). Such was the part played by Alexander. This cannot refer to the first trial of Paul, for the charge sheet, the *elogium*, on which no serious charge was entered, could not be altered after the signature of Festus. In those days Nero showed judgment and justice in the domain of jurisdiction, however great a sinner he was in other spheres of life, as even Suetonius allows. He would have acquitted Paul if tried before him ; but he would have possibly required his withdrawal from Rome, as he never cared for philosophers. He did not persecute Christians as Christians. The occasion on which Alexander showed himself so hostile to Paul was in the preliminary investigation of the case before the Roman prefect in the course of the second trial. Alexander, as the composer of the charge against Paul, also replied to Paul’s speech, “ He was excessively hostile in his reply to our (Luke’s and mine) speeches ” (2 Timothy iv. 16). (*Antestē tois logos* is a legal expression.²) When Apollonius was brought before the prefect he was accused of being a wizard, *goēs*—a word that only occurs in 2 Timothy iii. 13 in the New Testament—and after some passages between the sage and his accuser, the prefect ordered the latter “ to reserve himself for the imperial

¹ τὸ . . . ὑγιαίνον, cf. ὑγιαίνοντες λόγοι, 2 Timothy i. 13.

² Of replying to a statement by opponent in court of law, e.g. “ *defensio cui resistam* ” (Cic., *In Verr.* ii. 5, 1) ; “ *haec cum posceret Sthenius vehemētissime restitit* ” (*ibid.*, ii. 36, 88).

court." Having summoned the accused to his private court he informed him that the Emperor wanted to pronounce him guilty but wished to do so by a legal method. "The counts of the indictment against you are various. You must make your *apologia* about these, but let not your *speech* (*logos*) slight the Emperor." The prefect then withdrew and sent an order that the sage should be lodged in the "Free Prison" until the Emperor interviewed him before his trial (vii. 20, 276). "I order you," he said, "to keep this man under arrest." On entering the prison, the sage said, "We have come to one who is inflated ¹ with pride and folly." In the prison he met various people charged with various offences whom he proceeded to console. One of these he suspected of being a spy. After some four days a message came that the Emperor would see him at noon the next day. At dawn a clerk of the court arrived who said: "It is his majesty's orders that you attend the court about noon; you are not to make your defence yet. It is only a private interview." When he withdrew the sage began to speak of lions and their tamers in a way that recalls 2 Timothy iv. 17, the reference being to Domitian, for he was suggesting "a curb for despots," while his friend Damis spoke of the "Lion in Aesop." At noon the clerk arrived for him, and four guardsmen escorted him to the palace. On his way he made several remarks about courage, discipline, and soldiers that recall St. Paul's words. Aelianus the prefect ushered the sage alone into the presence of Domitian who called him names, "wizard," "impostor," "money-grabber," and told him to begin his defence whenever he wished. The other replied, "You do me greater wrong than the malicious informer (*sukophantes*), as you have made up your mind to believe his false charges." Then began Domitian's bad treatment of the man, who was finally, after many indignities, "bound and thrown among the vilest criminals" (vii. 34). Compare Paul's complaint, "I suffer hardship unto bonds as a *criminal*" (2 Timothy ii. 9). Such was "the preliminary stage of the defence" (*proagôn tēs apologias*) made in private, the *praejudicium*, or examination previous to the trial. But it does not correspond to "my *first* defence" of Paul, for after that we have reason to believe that Paul was set at liberty; while after his investigation Apollonius was thrown into prison to await his trial. There seems to have been some controversy regarding what ensued. Philostratus says there were "malicious detractors" who said that he first spoke in his defence, and afterwards was in prison, where his hair was cut, and "they forged a letter from the sage composed in the Ionic dialect begging his life and liberty from the tyrant." This charge is interesting in view of the theory that the Pastorals are fictitious works. They are not the kind of letters people would invent. The sort of letter that we can conceive would be a forgery would be one intended to undermine the influence of the apostle, like this letter mentioned by Philostratus, or one intended to magnify him unduly. The Pastorals do neither.

After some days Apollonius had a visitor who came to advise

¹ The same expression in 1 Timothy vi. 4, "puffed up."

him how to get free, but had to pay for admission into the prison (vii. 40). It is probable that Onesiphorus, who had much trouble in finding St. Paul (2 Timothy i. 16), had not only to seek him diligently, but also to oil the palms of the jailors to gain admission to him. This man asked Apollonius what it felt like to be in bonds. Paul too felt the unpleasantness of his bonds in his second imprisonment (2 Timothy ii. 9), but was consoled because "the word of God is not bound" (*dedetari*). Some time after a messenger arrived to say, "The King releases you from these bonds upon the recommendation of Aelianus, and allows you to lodge in the free prison until the case (*apologia*) is heard." The sage was welcomed by his former acquaintances, saying how much he had helped them by his counsel. We can well imagine that Paul was a comfort to his fellow-prisoners.

The sage told Damis, his companion, to go by land to Puteoli "and I shall make my defence (*apologia*) on the day appointed." In prison he met a youth, who told him he could only keep his honour "by offering his neck to the sword," a similar phrase to Romans xvi. 4 (Phœbe's letter). The sage replied, "Should not slaves be obedient to their masters?"¹—an expression in Titus ii. 9, but in a very different sense. The boy's answer would have pleased the apostle—"But I am *master* of my own body."

Book VIII opens with the scene in the court where the sage is making his defence or apology. We may presume that Philostratus, a courtier and literary professor, would have been careful about its setting. It may help us to understand the procedure in the trials of Paul. The Emperor is described as too busy with the case to take his meals, handling the little book (*biblion*), the brief of the depositions, in angry perplexity. The sage looked more like a man going to lecture than "*one on trial for his life*"—another pastoral phrase.² The clerk of the court orders the sage to plead against his accuser before the emperor as judge. Before his admission to the court he was searched, to see that he brought no amulet, or book (*biblion*), or tablet (*grammateion*) into court. In 2 Timothy iv. 13 Paul asks for his *biblia* and *membranae*,³ the former probably his longer writings of papyrus and the latter his shorter ones, or his writing materials of parchment.³ The sage is asked how long his speech is to last. "How much water will you require?"—a reference to the *clepsydra* or water clock. He answered, "Until the Tiber is drained!" The court was arranged as for a public oration. The Emperor sat on the tribunal, many of the élite were there, as the judge wished to have many present at the conviction of the sage for complicity in Nerva's plot. The sage is brought in, and is ordered by the accuser, who like Alexander in Paul's trial, "pressed very hard" upon the defendant, to look towards "the God of all mankind," whereupon the latter lifted his eyes to the sun! The

¹ Titus ii. 9.

² *τετέλεκα*—my trial is over. This metaphor in Classics, e.g., Eurip. Or. 868, Anotoph, W. 375.

³ Also called *prigillares*, writing-tablets; *membranam poscis* (Hor., S. ii. 3, 2); *crocea membrana tabella* (Juv., vii. 23); see Mayor's note.

accuser requested the judge not to give the accused his full time, for he would choke them by much talking. "I hold this brief (*biblion*) with the charges, let him answer seriatim."

The accuser then put the questions which the sage answered, and in his turn, did not make the usual speech, but demanded evidence, proof of the charges. This appeared to confuse the accuser, although outside the court the freed men of Euphrates, the enemy of the sage, were standing. They had come with the fee for the accuser and a report of the sage's speech in Donia. But like St. Paul on his first trial, the sage had no witnesses for his defence, and no friends to support him. He had sent Damis away for safety on a journey. However, the Emperor acquitted him of the charges, but said he would have to wait for a private interview with him. The narrative then loses its natural simplicity and becomes unsatisfactory. It contains a speech against sophists, who taught religion for money, and an account of the sage's escape from the court to Greece, from whence he visited Ephesus and Crete. When he arrived among his friends and they asked him about his defence (*apologia*), he said, "I have made my defence and we have gained the day."¹ Now we can imagine Nero saying to Paul on his first trial as Domitian says here to Apollonius: "I acquit you of the charges." There are some interesting parallels in this trial to Paul's. Apollonius said to Domitian, "Who is to be my advocate when I am on my defence? If I call upon Zeus they will say I am a *magician*, but he, O King, will be my helper in my *defence*" (*apologia*). Compare Paul's statement, "The Lord was my advocate (*parestē*) and gave me strength" (2 Timothy iv. 17). There is a distinction in this passage between "*witness*" and "*advocate*." No witness appeared (*paregeneto*)² for him; but he had an advocate.³ In the course of the written speech Apollonius describes sorcery as "false-wisdom," with which compare 1 Timothy vi. 20—"falsely-called knowledge"—another of the many Aischylean words in the Pastorals. He attacked sorcerers as a profession of money-grabbers. All their ingenious devices are for the purposes of gain, and to this end they play upon the ruling passion of their victims. "What sign of riches about me makes you think that I am a student of this *pseudo-science*? Why, your father praised me as superior to money." This indictment of false teaching for money recalls many rhetorical passages in the Pastorals, especially those in which the false teachers are said to regard religion from a mercenary standpoint (1 Timothy vi. 5), and 2 Timothy iii. 2-6, where "impostors" and "money-grabbers" are denounced for laying their spells upon silly women. Domitian had called the sage an "impostor" and a "mercenary magician." Such *magicians* are only mentioned in 2 Timothy iii. 13, in the Greek Bible (*goētēs*)—another parallel.

As regards the charge on which we believe Paul was re-arrested,

¹ "In my first apology, no witness appeared for me, but all forsook me" (2 Timothy iv. 16).

² See Aischylus, *Eumenides*, 309; also Ovid, *M.*, ii. 45, "testis adesto."

³ Cf. "*adsto advocatus*," Plaut., *Cas.* iii. 3, 4. Aischylus, *Eum.*, 65, where Apollo says to Orestes, "I shall be your guardian, standing beside" (*parestos*).

and tried for *majestas*, the passage in 1 Timothy i. 8-10, in which "impious matricides" are mentioned, would be quite sufficient, if reported by a delator. Apollonius was brought to trial before Nero for a much less offensive expression, also in the plural, "buffoons," and was again tried on a capital charge before Domitian for another expression an informer reported. The whole passage, indeed (1 Timothy i. 8-10), might be a character sketch of Nero, true in every particular of him, but it was his crime of matricide that should have been buried in silence. There was probably only one matricide still unpunished in the empire—the Emperor. To be suspected even of such a crime was fatal. Among the prisoners Apollonius met was one who lived on a lonely island and was suspected of being a "matricide." To name the Emperor's crime was therefore to indict him, and to court death.¹ It was the one action of his life that he could never forget. He sought the help of spiritualists to pacify the ghost that ever haunted him. When he visited Greece he avoided Athens, where the Erinyes had taken up their abode after the vindication of Orestes for the same crime. Delphi was despoiled and ravaged by Nero because the Oracle said that Orestes and Alcmaeon had cause for their matricides, but made no attempt to excuse his. Juvenal, afterwards, took up the same parable. Nero was held back from initiation at Eleusis because of this matricide. Tacitus (A., xv., 67) says that, when Subrius Flavus, one of Piso's conspirators, said he hated him when he became, among other things, "a matricide," nothing in the whole conspiracy so affected Nero. It was to justify his deed that he used to play the part of *Orestes the matricide*, and to represent Agrippina, his mother, as indeed she was, a Roman Clytemnestra. Witty epigrams were made and inscribed on walls with reference to his crime in spite of all his precautions. He banished an actor who referred merely by gestures, representing drinking and drowning, to the murders of Claudius and Agrippina, as he said, "Farewell father, farewell mother."² The *delatores* were spying and reporting in every part of the empire with greater zest after the burning of the city and the Pisonian conspiracy. And Nero had issued an order that every case brought up by a *delator* should be one of *majestas* or treason (Suet., 32).

Now here only in the Greek Bible have we the words for *matricide* and *patricide*. And the word is *mētralioias*,³ used in the *Eumenides*, 148, etc., of Orestes in a passage which must have been often quoted in connexion with Nero.

Chorus : We drive the *matricide* from these abodes.

Apollo : What? Him who slew her who her husband slew?

and was probably quoted by him as furnishing some pretext for his crime, for Agrippina murdered Claudius. At all events, any *delator* could make a charge against the writer of such a passage,

¹ Suetonius, *Nero*, 21, "cantavit Oresten matricidam."

² Suetonius, *Nero*, 39.

³ The word also means mother-beater (Plato, *Phaedo*, 114), but the reference is plain, although the form may have been used for ambiguity.

and claim a reward for his information. That Alexander may have been a Christian makes no difference. Tacitus says that after the fire many Christians were informed against by others and were convicted on their information, *indicium* (A., xv. 44). Clement of Rome (i. 5) also remarked that Paul suffered "because of envy" (not necessarily Roman). The very word *indicium* underlies the Greek *enedeixato*,¹ the correct word for laying information or making an *endeixis* against another. That Alexander acted as a *delator* may also be inferred from the reference to his *reward* for which he was working, the rewarding of informers being a principal feature of the procedure of delation, and on a vast scale, if the accused had sufficient assets. Cossutianus and Eprius, who accused Thræsea, obtained fortunes, and Publius Egnatius, the friend and betrayer of Barea Soranus, pro-consul of Asia, A.D. 64-66, is described by Tacitus in words that recall Paul's description of the false teachers. "He professed the dignified character of a Stoic; and had trained himself in demeanour and language to exhibit an ideal of virtue. In his heart, however, treacherous and cunning, he concealed greed and sensuality. As soon as money had brought these vices to light, he became an example warning us to beware just as much of those who under the guise of virtuous tastes are false and deceitful in friendship as of men entangled in falsehoods and stained with infamies."² Alexander was, according to Paul and Tacitus, another informer, "Animo perfidiosus, subdolos, avaritiam occultans, falsus et amicitiae fallax." Now whether or not Nero, the Lord of the Roman empire, could reward Alexander out of Paul's assets, because they were small, Paul's Lord "shall surely reward him according to his deeds" (v. 14). There is Pauline irony here, for the reward, though different from Alexander's expectations, would be appropriate. Compare Ovid (*Met.* viii. 503), "receive the reward for your deed," "cape præmia facti," i.e. death. The warning of Timothy,³ "Against whom do thou also be on thy guard" (v. 15), would lead us to infer that Timothy was in danger through his ignorance of Alexander's real character as spy and informer. Like Euphrates in the case of Apollonius and Egnatius in the case of Barea, he may have been acting ostensibly as a friend of Timothy in order to obtain material for an accusation against him. Horace warns his friend against the slanderer in similar terms, "Hic niger est, hunc tu Romane, caveto" (*Serm.*, i., 4, 85). He is black; Roman, do thou beware of him.

It is very probable, then, from all the technical terms used in connexion with Alexander,⁴ that he had acted as a *delator* against Paul, and consequently we may conclude that the apostle was tried and executed on a charge of *majestas*, or high treason.

¹ Pollus, viii. 49, speaks of the informer as *endeiknumenos* and his information as *endeixis*.

² Church and Brodribb, *Ann. of Tacitus*, xvi. 32.

³ Timothy was evidently imprisoned for complicity in Paul's crime, but afterwards released, as we learn from the Lukan postscript to Hebrews (xiii. 23).

⁴ *antestē, enedeixato, apodōsei, phulassou*, etc.