

Presentation 1—Introduction to the Acts of the Apostles



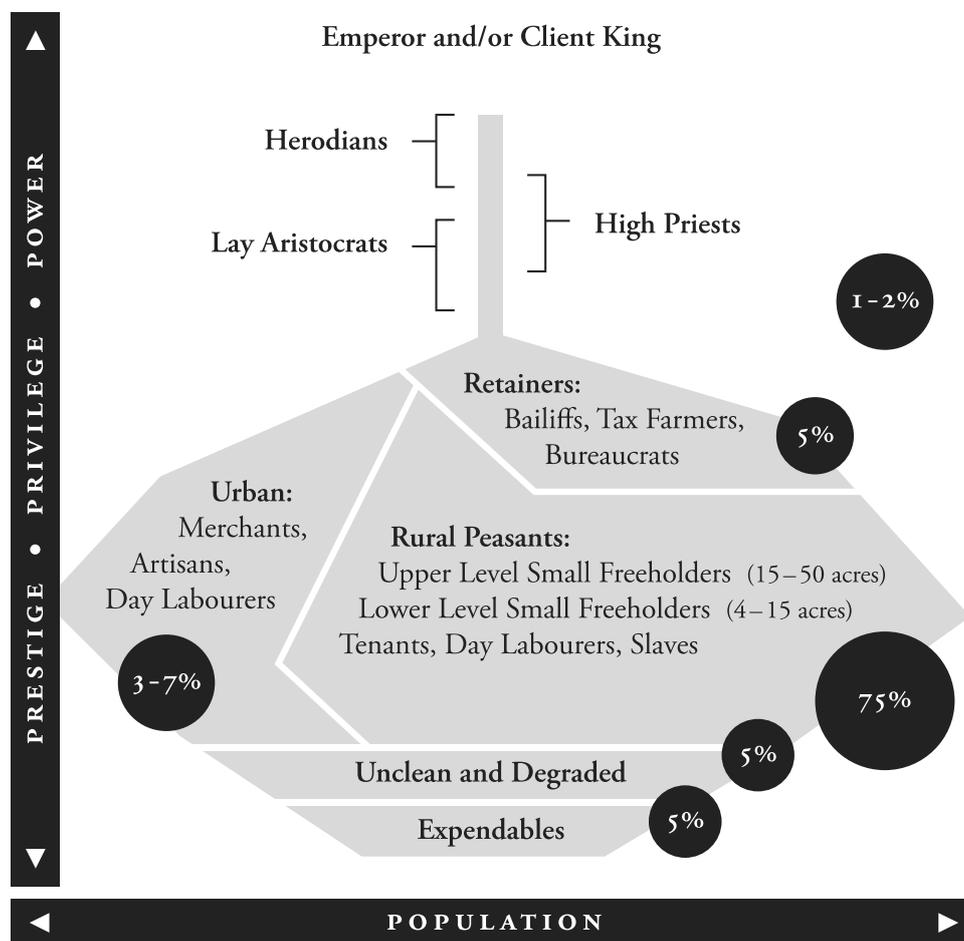
Greek manuscript of Acts 1:1–2a from the 14th century
by the Monk, Antonius (Public Domain)

- The author of the *Acts of the Apostles* is also the author of the *Gospel According to Luke*
- Both addressed primarily though not exclusively elite and wealthy Jesus followers in a time and place different from the situation of the Galilean Jesus.
- “Luke” was a Jewish-Gentile follower of Jesus, writing in the late first century CE (c 85CE). According to one Lukan scholar,

Limited understanding of Judaism and strong familiarity with the LXX [the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible] suggest a gentile who had thoroughly immersed himself in Greek Scripture, perhaps a believer of long or even lifelong standing. Familiarity with the rhetorical technique and contact with such authors as Homer and Euripedes suggest an education that progressed beyond the

elementary level, but his stylistic limitations indicate that he did not reach the advanced stages. Luke, as he is conveniently denominated, had at least occasional access to a wide range of Hellenistic Jewish literature. His cosmopolitan outlook suggests an urban background.¹

- Luke wrote within the cultural and cultural stratification of the Greco-Roman world, encouraging Jesus followers especially those from higher up the social ladder to reconfigure their relationships with those, especially in the lower rungs of the social ladder, present in the Jesus-Gospel household and representative of the social mix of Luke’s world:



Social Stratification in Luke’s Greco-Roman World

¹ Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Minneapolis; Fortress Press, 2009), p. 7.

An Outline of the Book of Acts

1. Acts 1.1-8.1b: The Jerusalem Jesus 'household'
 2. Acts 8.1b-11.18: Growth of the Jesus movement beyond the Jerusalem household
 3. Acts 11.18-14.23: From Antioch to Antioch
 4. Acts 15.1-20.38: From Antioch to Europe
 5. Acts 21.1-28.33: From Jerusalem to Rome 21:1-28:33
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OUTLINE OF THE PODCAST PRESENTATIONS THAT FOLLOW

1. *Acts 1-2*: Prologue of Acts and Pentecost
2. *Acts 3-5*: Jerusalem Jesus household and its characteristics
3. *Acts 6-8*: Stephen and Philip, and the movement of the Gospel into Samaria
4. *Acts 9-11*: Saul becomes a follower of Jesus; Peter preaches in Caesarea and affirms the Gentile acceptance of the Gospel
5. *Acts 11-14*: At Antioch, Barnabas goes to Tarsus and gets Paul. The First Missionary Journey
6. *Acts 15-17*: The formal decision for the Gentiles; Paul's Second Missionary Journey
7. *Acts 18-20*: Paul's Third Missionary Journey
8. *Acts 21-23*: Paul in Jerusalem, moved to Caesarea
9. *Acts 24-26*: Paul defends himself before the governor and the king
10. *Acts 27-28*: Paul in Rome and arrives at 'Earth's End'

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION & CONVERSATION

- As you prepare to enter into your engagement with the Acts of the Apostles, what do you hope will emerge for you?
- Why do you want to spend time with Acts?
- What reservations might you have about reading and studying the whole of the Acts of the Apostles?

IN PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT PRESENTATION

- The next session will focus on Acts 1-2. In preparation for this session, spend time with this section of the *Acts of the Apostles*

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