

Ancient Sources for Acts

Chapter 14

Acts 14:1–7

Anabasis 1.2.19

Thence he marched three stages, twenty parasangs, to Iconium, the last city of Phrygia. There he remained three days. Thence he marched through Lycaonia five stages, thirty parasangs. This country he gave over to the Greeks to plunder, on the ground that it was hostile territory.

Cicero, Letters to his Friends 15.4.2

TO M. PORCIUS CATO (AT ROME)

CILICIA (JANUARY)

Having entered my province on the last day of July, and seeing that the time of year made it necessary for me to make all haste to the army, I spent but two days at Laodicea, four at Apamea, three at Synnada, and the same at Philomelium. Having held largely attended assizes in these towns, I freed a great number of cities from very vexatious tributes, excessive interest, and fraudulent debt. Again, the army having before my arrival been broken up by something like a mutiny, and five cohorts—without a legate or a—military tribune, and, in fact, actually without a single centurion—having taken up its quarters at Philomelium, while the rest of the army was in Lycaonia, I ordered my legate M. Anneius to bring those five cohorts to join the main army; and, having thus got the whole army together into one place, to pitch a camp at Iconium in Lycaonia.

Pliny the Elder, Natural History 5.25

These people are bounded by Lycaonia, which belongs to the jurisdiction of the province of Asia, to which also resort the people of Philomelium, Tymbrium, Leucolithium, Pelta, and Tyrium. To this jurisdiction is also added a Tetrarchy of Lycaonia in that part which joins up to Galatia, containing fourteen states, with the famous city of Iconium. In Lycaonia itself the most noted places are Thebasa on Taurus, and Hyde, on the confines of Galatia and Cappadocia. On the [western] side of Lycaonia, and above Pamphylia, come the Milyæ, a people descended from the Thracians; their city is Arycanda.

Acts 14:8–14

Ovid, Metamorphoses 8.631–720

“And I have this to tell, for all must know the evil of such words:—Upon the hills of Phrygia I have seen two sacred trees, a lime-tree and an oak, so closely grown their branches interlace. A low stone wall is built around to guard them from all harm. And that you may not doubt it, I declare again, I saw the spot, for Pitheus there had sent me to attend his father's court. “Near by those trees are stagnant pools and fens, where coots and cormorants delight to haunt; but it was not so always. Long ago "Twas visited by mighty Jupiter, together with his nimble-witted son, who first had laid

aside his rod and Wings. “As weary travelers over all the land they wandered, begging for their food and bed; and of a thousand houses, all the doors were bolted and no word of kindness given—so wicked were the people of that land. At last, by chance, they stopped at a small house, whose humble roof was thatched with reeds and straw;— and here a kind old couple greeted them. “The good dame, Baucis, seemed about the age of old Philemon, her devoted man; they had been in their early youth, in that same cottage and had lived in it, and grown together to a good old age; contented with their lot because they knew their poverty, and felt no shame of it; they had no need of servants; the good pair were masters of their home and served themselves; their own commands they easily obeyed. “Now when the two Gods, and Mercury, had reached this cottage, and with bending necks had entered the low door, the old man bade them rest their wearied limbs, and set a bench, on which his good wife, Baucis, threw a cloth; and then with kindly bustle she stirred up the glowing embers on the hearth, and then laid tinder, leaves and bark; and bending down breathed on them with her ancient breath until they kindled into flame. Then from the house she brought a store of faggots and small twigs, and broken branches, and above them swung a kettle, not too large for simple folk. And all this done, she stripped some cabbage leaves, which her good husband gathered for the meal. “Then with a two-pronged fork the man let down a rusty side of bacon from aloft, and cut a little portion from the chine; which had been cherished long. He softened it in boiling water. All the while they tried with cheerful conversation to beguile, so none might notice a brief loss of time. “Swung on a peg they had a beechwood trough, which quickly with warm water filled, was used for comfortable washing. And they fixed, upon a willow couch, a cushion soft of springy sedge, on which they neatly spread a well worn cloth preserved so many years; 'Twas only used on rare and festive days; and even it was coarse and very old, though not unfit to match a willow couch!

“Now as the Gods reclined, the good old dame, whose skirts were tucked up, moving carefully, for so she tottered with her many years, fetched a clean table for the ready meal—but one leg of the table was too short, and so she wedged it with a potsherd—so made firm, she cleanly scoured it with fresh mint. “And here is set the double-tinted fruit of chaste Minerva, and the tasty dish of corner, autumn-picked and pickled; these were served for relish; and the endive-green, and radishes surrounding a large pot of curdled milk; and eggs not overdone but gently turned in glowing embers—all served up in earthen dishes. Then sweet wine served up in clay, so costly! all embossed, and cups of beechwood smoothed with yellow wax.

“So now they had short respite, till the fire might yield the heated course. “Again they served new wine, but mellow; and a second course: sweet nuts, dried figs and wrinkled dates and plums, and apples fragrant, in wide baskets heaped; and, in a wreath of grapes from purple vines, concealed almost, a glistening honey-comb; and all these orchard dainties were enhanced by willing service and congenial smiles. “But while they served, the wine-bowl often drained, as often was replenished, though unfilled, and Baucis and Philemon, full of fear, as they observed the wine spontaneous well, increasing when it should diminish, raised their hands in supplication, and implored indulgence for their simple home and fare. And now, persuaded by this strange event such visitors were deities unknown, this aged couple, anxious to bestow their most esteemed possession, hastily began to chase the only goose they had—the faithful guardian of their little home—which they would kill and offer to the Gods. But swift of wing, at last it wearied them, and fled for refuge to the smiling Gods. At once the deities forbade their zeal, and said, ‘A righteous punishment shall fall severe upon this wicked neighborhood; but by the might of our divinity, no evil shall befall this humble home; but you must come, and follow as we climb the summit of this mountain!’

“Both obeyed, and leaning on their staves toiled up the steep. Not farther from the summit than the flight of one swift arrow from a hunter's how, they paused to view their little home once more; and as they turned their eyes, they saw the fields around their own engulfed in a morass, although their own remained,—and while they wept bewailing the sad fate of many friends, and wondered at the change, they saw their home, so old and little for their simple need—put on new splendor, and as it increased it changed into a temple of the gods. Where first the frame was fashioned of rude stakes columns of marble glistened, and the thatch gleamed golden in the sun, and legends carved, adorned the doors. And all the ground shone white with marble rich, and after this was done, the Son of Saturn said with gentle voice, ‘Now tell us, good old man and you his wife, worthy and faithful, what is your desire?’ ‘Philemon counseled with old Baucis first; and then discovered to the listening Gods their hearts' desire, ‘We pray you let us have the care of your new temple; and since we have passed so many years in harmony, let us depart this life together— Let the same hour take us both—I would not see the tomb of my dear wife; and let me not be destined to be buried by her hands!’

“At once their wishes were fulfilled. So long as life was granted they were known to be the temple's trusted keepers, and when age had enervated them with many years, as they were standing, by some chance, before the sacred steps, and were relating all these things as they had happened, Baucis saw Philemon, her old husband, and he, too, saw Baucis, as their bodies put forth leaves; and while the tops of trees grew over them, above their faces, — they spoke each to each; as long as they could speak they said, ‘Farewell, farewell, my own’—and while they said farewell; new leaves and branches covered both at once.

Philostratus, *Apollonius* 1.1

[§1] The votaries of Pythagoras of Samos have this story to tell of him, that he was not an Ionian at all, but that, once on a time in Troy, he had been Euphorbus, and that he had come to life after death, but had died as the songs of Homer relate. And they say that he declined to wear apparel made from dead animal products and, to guard his purity, abstained from all flesh diet, and from the offering of animals in sacrifice. For that he would not stain the altars with blood; nay, rather the honey-cake and frankincense and the hymn of praise, these they say were the offerings made to the Gods by this man, who realized that they welcome such tribute more than they do the hecatombs [1] and the knife laid upon the sacrificial basket. For they say that he had of a certainty social intercourse with the gods, and learnt from them the conditions under which they take pleasure in men or are disgusted, and on this intercourse he based his account of nature. For he said that, whereas other men only make conjectures about divinity and make guesses that contradict one another concerning it, -in his own case he said that Apollo had come to him acknowledging that he was the god in person; and that Athena and the Muses and other gods, whose forms and names men did not yet know, had also consorted with him though without making such acknowledgment.

And the followers of Pythagoras accepted as law any decisions communicated by him, and honored him as an emissary from Zeus, but imposed, out of respect for their divine character, a ritual silence on themselves. For many were the divine and ineffable secrets which they had heard, but which it was difficult for any to keep who had not previously learnt that silence also is a mode of speech.

Moreover they declare that Empedocles of Acragas had trodden this way of wisdom when he wrote the line “Rejoice ye, for I am unto you an immortal God, and no more mortal.”

And this also: "For erewhile, I already became both girl and boy." And the story that he made at Olympia a bull of pastry and sacrificed it to the god also shows that he approved of the sentiments of Pythagoras. And there is much else that they tell of those sages who observe the rule of Pythagoras; but I must not now enter upon such points, but hurry on to the work which I have set myself to complete.

Philostratus, *Apollonius* 8.5

[§5] The Emperor approved of this plan of procedure and ordered Apollonius to make his defense according to the informer's advice; however, he dropped out other accusations, as not worth discussion, and confined himself to four questions which he thought were embarrassing and difficult to answer. "What induces you," he said, "Apollonius, to dress yourself differently from everybody else, and to wear this peculiar and singular garb?"

"Because," said Apollonius, "the earth which feeds me also clothes me, and I do not like to bother the poor animals." The emperor next asked the question: "Why is it that men call you a god?" "Because," answered Apollonius, "every man that is thought to be good, is honored by the title of god." I have shown in my narrative of India how this tenet passed into our hero's philosophy. The third question related to the plague in Ephesus: "What motivated," he said, "or suggested your prediction to the Ephesians that they would suffer from a plague?" "I used," he said, "O my sovereign, a lighter diet than others, and so I was the first to be sensible of the danger; and if you like, I will enumerate the causes of pestilences." But the Emperor, fearful, I imagine, lest Apollonius should reckon among the causes of such epidemics his own wrong-doing, and his incestuous marriage, and his other misdemeanors, replied: "Oh, I do not want any such answers as that."

And when he came to the fourth question which related to Nerva and his friends, instead of hurrying straight on to it, he allowed a certain interval to elapse, and after long reflection, and with the air of one who felt dizzy, he put his question in a way which surprised them all; for they expected him to throw off all disguise and blurt out the names of the persons in question without any reserve, complaining loudly and bitterly of the sacrifice; but instead of putting the question in this way, he beat about the bush, and said: "Tell me, you went out of your house on a certain day, and you traveled into the country, and sacrificed the boy - I would like to know for whom?" And Apollonius as if he were rebuking a child replied: "Good words, I beseech you; for I did leave my house, I was in the country; and if this was so, then I offered sacrifice: and if I offered it, then I ate of it. But let these assertions be proved by trustworthy witnesses." Such a reply on the part of the sage aroused louder applause than beseemed the court of an Emperor; and the latter deeming the audience to have borne witness in favor of the accused, and also not a little impressed himself by the answers he had received, for they were both firm and sensible, said: "I acquit you of the charges; but you must remain here until we have had a private interview."

Thereat Apollonius was much encouraged and said: "I thank you indeed, my sovereign, but I would fain tell you that by reason of these miscreants your cities are in ruin, and the islands full of exiles, and the mainland of lamentations, and your armies of cowardice, and the Senate of suspicion. Accord me also, if you will, opportunity to speak; but if not, then send someone to take my body, for my soul you cannot take. Nay, you cannot take even my body,

For thou shalt not slay me, since -I tell thee- I am not mortal." [Homer, *Iliad* 22.13]

And with these words he vanished from the court, which was the best thing he could do under the circumstances, for the Emperor clearly intended not to question him sincerely about the case, but about all sorts of irrelevant matters. For he took great credit to himself for not having put Apollonius to death, nor was the latter anxious to be drawn into such discussions. And he thought that he would best effect his end if he left no one in ignorance of his true nature, but allowed it to be known to all to be such that he had it in him never to be taken prisoner against his own will. Moreover he had no longer any cause for anxiety about his friends; for as the despot had not the courage to ask any questions about them, how could he possibly put them to death with any color of justice upon charges for which no evidence had been presented in court? Such was the account of the proceedings of the trial which I found.

Diogenes Laertes 8.62

Eudoxus was the son of Aeschines, and a native of Cnidos. He was an astronomer, a geometrician, a physician, and a lawgiver. In geometry he was a pupil of Archytas, and in medicine of Philistion, the Sicilian, as Callimachus relates in his Tablets; and Sotion, in his Successions, asserts that he was likewise a pupil of Plato; for that, when he was twenty-three years of age, and in very narrow circumstances, he came to Athens with Theomedon the physician, by whom he was chiefly supported, being attracted by the reputation of the Socratic school. Some say that his attachment to Theomedon was cemented by nearer ties. And when he had arrived at Piraeus, he went up to the city every day, and when he had heard the Sophists lecture he returned. And having spent two months there, he returned home again; and being again aided by the contributions of his friends, he set sail for Egypt, with Chrysippus the physician, bearing letters of introduction from Agesilaus to Nectanabis, and that he recommended him to the priests.

Acts 14:21–28

Didache 15.1

Appoint, therefore, for yourselves, bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men meek, and not lovers of money, and truthful and proved; for they also render to you the service of prophets and teachers.

Ignatius, *Philadelphians* 10.1

Since, according to your prayers, and the compassion which ye feel in Christ Jesus, it is reported to me that the Church which is at Antioch in Syria possesses peace, it will become you, as a Church of God, to elect a deacon to act as the ambassador of God [for you] to [the brethren there], that he may rejoice along with them when they are met together, and glorify the name [of God]. Blessed is he in Jesus Christ, who shall be deemed worthy of such a ministry; and ye too shall be glorified. And if ye are willing, it is not beyond your power to do this, for the sake of God; as also the nearest Churches have sent, in some cases bishops, and in others presbyters and deacons.

Ignatius, *Smyrneans* 11.2

In order, therefore, that your work may be complete both on earth and in heaven, it is fitting that, for the honor of God, your Church should elect some worthy delegate; so that he, journeying into Syria, may congratulate them that they are [now] at peace, and are restored to their proper greatness, and that their proper constitution has been re-established among them.

