CHAPTER TWO

SUOCESSION IN LUKE-ACTS
AND IN THE LUKAN MILIEU

The question addressed in this essay is: How would ancient auditors have heard the sections of Luke-Acts that deal with succession? Pursuit of an answer to this question requires a focus on two topics: succession in the Lukan milieu and succession in Luke-Acts. We may take up these two topics in order.

Succession In Mediterranean Antiquity, Part 1: The Lukan Milieu

The purpose of this essay, in Part 1, is to describe the concept of succession in Mediterranean Antiquity, to delineate its semantic field, to identify extant texts in which succession plays a key role, and to define the conventional form of a succession story. The authors¹ do not claim that their work is exhaustive, only that it is as exhaustive as their time constraints allowed.

The Concept of Succession in Antiquity

In the Greco-Roman world the concept of succession was widespread. It was used above all for rulers (e.g., Phoenician kings [Porphyry, Christ. acc. to Eusebius, Praep. ev. 10.9]; succession to the Lydian throne [Oenomaus, Γοητον ψωφα, acc. to Eusebius, Praep. ev. 5.20]; kings of Athens, Macedon, Ptolemies, and Seleucids [Tatian, acc. to Eusebius, Praep. ev. 10.11]; Alexander the Great’s successors [Diodorus Siculus 17ff.]; Druid chiefs [Caesar, Bell. gall. 6.13]; Assyrian kings [Vellius Paterculus 2.93.1]; kings of Tyre [Josephus, Ag. Ap. 1.18 §121–25]; governors [Livy 36.31.12; Cicero, Fam. 2.17.5; Josephus, A.J. 18.2.2 §31–35]; a ruler in Syria [Josephus, A.J. 19.6.4 §316]; pagan rulers [Athenagoras, Leg. 37.2]; Roman emperors [Josephus, A.J. 18.2.2 §32; Dio Cassius 2.11.12; 44.34.5; 48.15.4; 49.17.6]). It was also used widely for philoso-

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phers (e.g., generally [Cicero, *Nat. d.* 1.10.25–1.15.41]; of the Stoic succession [Div. 1.3.6]; of the Platonic succession [Acad. 1.34–35]; cf. also Plutarch, *Exil.* 14; Athenaeus 546d; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.14; Diogenes Laertiuss, *Vit. phil.* and his predecessors; Origen, *Cels.* 3.67). Writers also employed the concept when referring to such figures as *jurists* (Pomponius Sextus, *Ench.* [acc. to a fragment contained in Justinian’s *Dig.*, Book 1, authority 2, sections 35–53]), *magi* (Lucian, *Men.* 6; Xanthus of Lydia, acc. to Diogenes Laertius, 1.2.10), *rhetoricians* (Aristotle, *Soph. elench.* 34.27–35 §183b; Cicero, *Div.* 1.3.6; *Brut.* 1.37), *temple wardens* (Lucian, *Alex.* 60), *priests* (Athenagoras, *Leg.* 28.5), *admirals* (Dio Cassius 41.48.1), and *generals* (Livy 23.27.12; 43.4.8). It could also be used of a succession in a *craft* (Ovid, *Metam.* 3.587). The concept of succession was so integral to Greco-Roman thinking that Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 30.4–5, notes that the survival of magic is surprising because there is “no line of … continuous successors” in it.

In the Jewish world the concept of succession was related to *leaders* or *rulers of the people* (e.g., the patriarchs [Josephus, *A.J.* 1.4 §85]; Joshua as successor to Moses [LXX Num 27:12–23; LXX Deut 1:37–38; 3:21–22, 28; 31:2–6, 7–8, 14–15, 23; LXX Josh 1:2–9; Josephus, *A.J.* 4.7.2 §165; Sir 46:1; *L.A.B.* 25.3; *T. Mos.* 1:6 and 10:15; Clement Alex, *Strom.* 1.21.100]; kings of Israel [LXX 3 Kgs 1–2; 11:43, etc.; Josephus, *A.J.* 8.15.6 §420; 9.2.2 §27, etc.; Clement Alex, *Strom.* 1.21.119]; Edomite kings [Gen 36:33–39//1 Chr 1:44–50]; Maccabean rulers [Josephus, *B.J.* 1.2.1 §48; 12.6.4 §285; LXX 1 Macc 3:1]). It was also used for *prophets* (e.g., LXX 3 Kgs 2; Eupolemos, acc. to Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.30; Sir 48.8; Josephus, *Ag Ap.* 1.8 §41; Justin, *Dial.* 52.3), and for *priests* (e.g., Aaron is succeeded by Eleazar who is succeeded by Phinehas [LXX Num 20:23–28; 25:10–13; Josephus, *A.J.* 5.11.5 §361]; the succession in the high priesthood under the kings [Josephus, *A.J.* 10.8.6 §151–53]; the succession of high priests from Aaron [Josephus, *A.J.* 20.10 §224–51]; the succession of priests under the Herods [Josephus, *A.J.* 20.5.2 §104] the discontinued authoritative succession of the Jewish high priesthood [Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.4]). The concept of succession was furthermore used in discussions about the passing on of both *rabbinic tradition* (Josephus, *A.J.* 13.10.6 §297; Acts 6:14 when read in terms of 2 Macc 11:25 and 4 Macc 18:5; m. *Aval* 1; *Aval of Rabbi Nathan* 1; Letter of Peter to James in *Pre. Pet.* 1.2; Ps-Hippolytus, Fragment [ANF 5.194–95]) and the *mythical tradition* (*3 En.* 48D.16).

Christian writers also made use of the concept. It was used for *bishops* (e.g., Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.3.3; Tertullian, *Praescr.* 32; Pseudo-Clement,