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0521809487 - The Trial of the Gospel: An Apologetic Reading of Luke's Trial Narratives

Alexandru Neagoe

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## INTRODUCTION

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## 1

## INTRODUCTION

**Trials and apologetics in Luke–Acts: setting the scene**

Luke's<sup>1</sup> special interest in forensic trials has often been recognised in Lukan scholarship.<sup>2</sup> The textual evidence for such a concern on Luke's part abounds.<sup>3</sup> While in the Gospels<sup>4</sup> of Matthew and Mark Jesus predicts the disciples' trials only once (Matt. 10.17–20; Mark 13.9–11), in the Third Gospel he does so twice (12.11–12; 21.12–15). Similarly, whereas for the other two Synoptics Jesus' trial includes only two episodes (one before the Sanhedrin and one before Pilate), in Luke's Gospel four trial scenes are recorded: one before the Sanhedrin (22.66–71), a preliminary hearing before Pilate (23.1–5), a peculiarly Lukan episode before Herod (23.6–12), and a second session before Pilate (23.13–25). As one turns to Acts, the evidence is even more ample. After a brief presentation of the origins and lifestyle of the early Christian community in Jerusalem, the reader encounters two extensive trial scenes involving Peter (4.1–31;

<sup>1</sup> The author of both the Third Gospel and Acts will be referred to throughout as Luke. The common authorship (as well as narrative unity) of the two books is advocated or assumed by numerous recent Lukan studies: so, for example, W. S. Kurz, *Reading Luke–Acts: Dynamics of Biblical Narrative*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993; I. H. Marshall, 'Acts and the "Former Treatise"', in B. W. Winter and A. D. Clarke (eds.), *The Book of Acts in its Ancient Literary Setting*, BAFCS, vol. I, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1993, pp. 163–82; R. Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 5:1–2, Zürich and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Benzinger, 1986, especially pp. 24–5; R. C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke–Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, 2 vols., Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986, 1990. Even when the generic, narrative, and theological unity has been called into question (M. C. Parsons and R. I. Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity of Luke and Acts*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), the authorial unity has remained largely unchallenged.

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance: J. H. Neyrey, *The Passion According to Luke: A Redaction Study of Luke's Soteriology*, New York: Paulist Press, 1985, pp. 84–5; A. A. Trites, 'The Importance of Legal Scenes and Language in the Book of Acts', *NovT* 16 (1974), 278–84.

<sup>3</sup> For more detail on the evidence listed here, see the relevant sections below.

<sup>4</sup> To help distinguish between 'Gospel(s)' as New Testament literary documents and 'gospel' as the content of the Christian belief and proclamation, I shall write the former with an initial capital and the latter without.

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5.17–42). These are soon followed by an even lengthier account of the trial and martyrdom of Stephen (6.9–7.60). Finally, Paul's whole missionary activity is scattered with conflicts and challenges which are often cast in a trial form, culminating, undoubtedly, with Paul's judicial history between his arrest in Jerusalem (21.27) and his two-year stay in Rome (28.30–1). It is not without justification, then, that Neyrey can write: 'Forensic trials in Acts have an incredible scope: (a) *all of the major figures* of Acts (Peter, Stephen, and Paul) are tried, (b) in *all of the significant places* where the Gospel was preached (Judea, Jerusalem, Achaia, and Rome); (c) the trials take place *before Jewish courts as well as Roman tribunals*.'<sup>5</sup>

It is somewhat intriguing, in view of such a significant Lukan emphasis, that there is to date not a single monograph specifically exploring Luke's use of the trial motif. The attention has tended to focus instead on individual trial scenes or, at most, on the trial(s) of a single Lukan character – mainly Jesus or Paul.<sup>6</sup> To the extent to which the question of authorial intent has been raised with regard to the trial material in larger sections of Luke–Acts, this has been done only indirectly, mainly in connection with the representation of Luke–Acts as some form of apologia. It is important, therefore, to introduce this discussion of Luke's trial motif with a more general survey of previous research on apologetics in Luke–Acts and thus acquire a better grasp of the angles from which Lukan trials have been interpreted in the past. This survey is at the same time necessary in view of the fact that the present study itself proposes an apologetic reading of Luke's trial motif.

### Previous research on apologetics in Luke–Acts

The present survey<sup>7</sup> aims to include both works which have explicitly applied 'apologetic' terminology to aspects of Luke–Acts and works which have noted in Luke's writing tendencies which would naturally belong

<sup>5</sup> Neyrey, *Passion*, p. 85.

<sup>6</sup> For bibliographical information relating to individual Lukan characters, see the relevant chapters below.

<sup>7</sup> A partly similar survey of Lukan apologetics to the one presented here can be found in S. E. Pattison, 'A Study of the Apologetic Function of the Summaries of Acts', unpublished PhD dissertation, Emory University, 1990, pp. 10–35. Several observations justify my own review. First, the number and importance of the works which have been produced since Pattison's thesis are indicative of the need for a more up-to-date survey. Second, Pattison's survey is limited to Acts; this one includes Luke's Gospel. Third, only very limited attention is given by Pattison to works which I shall list under the heading 'An apologia for the gospel' (see pp. 12–21) – his survey does not in fact include such a category.

to what we regard as 'Christian apologetics'.<sup>8</sup> Due to the fluidity of the term in its contemporary use, its meaning within the present work needs to be defined here. When used with reference to a first-century context, I take 'Christian apologetic' (which I use interchangeably with 'Christian apologia') to mean *the exercise of advocating the reliability of the Christian faith, or aspects of it*.<sup>9</sup> The term 'advocating' is preferred to the more commonly used 'defending' because I take apologetics to include not only defence against specific objections but also the positive presentation of a case on behalf of the Christian faith.

The major sections in the survey below are based on the purported *object* of Luke's apologetic (i.e. on whose behalf Luke is arguing), while the subsections describe the specific *nature* of Luke's purported apologetic. It should also be noted that due to the broad scope of this survey I shall limit the discussion to works which view Luke's apologetic agenda as having some relation to Luke's entire work, or at least to the whole of Luke's second volume (which, generally speaking, has been the more closely associated with apologetics). More in-depth discussion of previous research on individual trial accounts will be offered at the beginning of relevant sections – in fact even some of the works which are presented here in an overview will be analysed in more detail later. As for the authors whose works are surveyed here, although most of them would insist that Luke has more than one purpose in mind, I shall discuss their suggestions only in the areas in which their work has made a distinctive contribution.

<sup>8</sup> One possibly surprising omission from the present survey is P. F. Esler's *Community and Gospel in Luke–Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology* (Cambridge University Press, 1987). For those who view 'apologetics' and 'legitimation' as two closely related notions, Esler's repeated designation of Luke's task as one of socio-political legitimation may of itself provide sufficient grounds for including his monograph in the category of works dealing with Lukan apologetics. The reason for which I have refrained from including it is the author's specific dissociation of his thesis from interpretations which regard Luke's goal as apologetic (Esler, *Community*, pp. 205–19).

<sup>9</sup> In modern times, 'Christian apologetics' has also come to include the *study* (as well as the actual exercise) of advocating the Christian faith. For a definition of 'apologetics', as a modern theological discipline and as distinct from 'apology' ('the defence of Christian truth'), see A. Richardson, *Christian Apologetics*, London: SCM Press, 1947, p. 19. Nevertheless, such a linguistic distinction is typically ignored in contemporary literature. Among the numerous works which use the term 'apologetics' to include not only the study but also the exercise of defending Christian truth, see D. K. Clark and N. L. Geisler, *Apologetics in the New Age: A Christian Critique of Pantheism*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990; A. Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, London: Hutchinson, 1971; N. L. Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978; P. J. Griffiths, *An Apology for Apologetics: A Study in the Logic of Interreligious Dialogue*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991; P. Kreeft and R. K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*, Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994.

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## An apologia for Paul

M. Schneckenburger, whose *Über den Zweck der Apostelgeschichte*<sup>10</sup> was the first thorough examination of Luke's purpose,<sup>11</sup> has argued that Acts was designed as an apology for Paul, addressed to Jewish Christians, with the intention of defending Paul's position in the church against the attacks of the Judaizers.<sup>12</sup>

In a similar vein, E. Trocmé has maintained that towards the end of the first century there were two rival branches of the church: the Pauline churches of Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia, and the Judaizing churches, rooted especially in Alexandria. In this context, Trocmé suggests, Acts was written as 'une apologie intrachrétienne' ('an inter-Christian apologia'),<sup>13</sup> which through its commendation of Paul was meant to show that the Pauline churches were in no way inferior to the churches of Alexandria which were proud to trace their origins back to the Jerusalem church and the twelve apostles. In order to achieve this, Luke presented Paul as 'le seul continuateur de l'oeuvre entreprise par les Douze' ('the only continuator of the work performed by the Twelve').<sup>14</sup>

More recently, this general trend has been revitalised by the works of J. Jervell and R. L. Brawley. According to Jervell, Luke's extensive account of Paul's trial, and especially of his apologetic speeches in this context (22.1–21; 23.1; 24.10–21; 26.1–23), is a device which enables the author to put forward an apologia for Paul's Jewish orthodoxy, in the context of the apostle's controversial reputation in Luke's ecclesiastical milieu.<sup>15</sup> Brawley's contribution,<sup>16</sup> on the other hand, is to a large

<sup>10</sup> Bern, 1841.

<sup>11</sup> See W. W. Gasque, *A History of the Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989, pp. 32–3.

<sup>12</sup> For a useful summary of Schneckenburger's position, see A. J. Mattill, 'The Purpose of Acts: Schneckenburger Reconsidered', in W. W. Gasque and R. P. Martin (eds.), *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F. F. Bruce*, Exeter: Paternoster, 1970, pp. 108–12. See also Gasque, *History*, pp. 32–9.

<sup>13</sup> E. Trocmé *Le 'Livre des Actes' et l'histoire*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957, pp. 54–5.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>15</sup> J. Jervell, 'Paul: The Teacher of Israel: The Apologetic Speeches of Paul in Acts', in J. Jervell, *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1972, pp. 153–83 (previously published in German as 'Paulus – Der Lehrer Israels. Zu den apologetischen Paulusreden in der Apostelgeschichte', *NovT* 10 (1968), 164–90). The Jewishness of the Lukan Paul, with its apologetic function, is also advocated in several other works of J. Jervell: 'James: The Defender of Paul', in Jervell, *Luke and the People of God*, pp. 185–207; 'Paul in the Acts of the Apostles: Tradition, History, Theology', in J. Kremer (ed.), *Les Actes des Apôtres*, BETL 48, Gembloux: J. Duculot; Leuven University Press, 1979, pp. 297–306; *The Unknown Paul: Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984.

<sup>16</sup> R. L. Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology, and Conciliation*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987, esp. ch. 9.

extent a contemporary reading of Luke's writings through the spectacles of F. C. Baur,<sup>17</sup> according to whom the early church was torn between the Judaizing tendencies of the Petrine Christianity and the universalistic orientations of the Pauline churches (in welcoming Gentiles without requiring them first to become Jewish proselytes).<sup>18</sup> As the conflict from Jewish quarters was increasing, Brawley argues, Luke decided to compose his writings, which he aimed at the anti-Paulinist groups (Jews, Jewish Christians, converts from among God-fearers). Luke's purpose is partly apologetic, as he shows how even the Jewish opposition plays a legitimating role by establishing Jesus' identity (especially and programatically in the Nazareth incident) and by prompting Paul's Gentile mission. At the same time, Brawley argues, Luke's purpose is also conciliatory: Paul undergoes Jewish rituals; through the apostolic decree Gentiles are required to make concessions to Jewish Christians; the Pharisees are portrayed predominantly positively.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, a more solitary voice among the well-populated camp of those who view Paul's defence as central to the purpose of Acts is that of A. J. Mattill.<sup>20</sup> In his view, although Luke had already been gathering material for his story of the early church, the decisive factor in the final shaping of Acts was Luke's realisation of the indifference, or even hostility, of the Jewish Christians towards Paul, as he came under Jewish attack in Jerusalem (Acts 21). Luke's specific aim is, therefore, to deal with the objections of the Jewish Christians against Paul and thus to cause them to side with him, in the context of his still forthcoming trial in Rome.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Brawley himself (*ibid.*, p. 3) acknowledges antecedents for his approach in the work of Baur.

<sup>18</sup> See Gasque, *History*, pp. 27–30.

<sup>19</sup> Brawley, *Luke–Acts*, pp. 157–8.

<sup>20</sup> Mattill, 'Purpose'. The same proposal finds confirmation for Mattill as he later studies the concepts of *Naherwartung* and *Fernerwartung* in the book of Acts, and as he 'reconsiders' H. H. Evans' Jesus–Paul parallels in Luke–Acts and R. B. Rackham's early dating of Luke's writings (A. J. Mattill, '*Naherwartung, Fernerwartung* and the Purpose of Luke–Acts: Weymouth Reconsidered', *CBQ* 34 (1972), 276–93, especially p. 293; 'The Jesus–Paul Parallels and the Purpose of Luke–Acts: H. H. Evans Reconsidered', *NovT* 17 (1975), 15–46, especially p. 46; 'The Date and Purpose of Luke–Acts: Rackham Reconsidered', *CBQ* 40 (1978), 335–50, especially p. 348).

<sup>21</sup> Somewhat similar to Mattill's position is that advocated by a number of scholars before him and according to which the book of Acts, or Luke–Acts as a whole, was written in order to provide material which could be used at Paul's trial before Nero: M. V. Aberle, 'Exegetische Studien. 2. Über den Zweck der Apostelgeschichte', *TQ* 37 (1855), 173–236; G. S. Duncan, *St. Paul's Ephesian Ministry: A Reconstruction (With Special Reference to the Ephesian Origin of the Imprisonment Epistles)*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930, pp. 96–100; D. Plooij, 'The Work of St Luke', *Exp* 8:8 (1914), 511–23; and 'Again: The Work of St Luke', *Exp* 8:13 (1917), 108–24; J. I. Still, *St Paul on Trial*, London: SCM Press, 1923.

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A few observations regarding the contention that Luke aimed to present an apologia for Paul are in place. The works advocating this position have the undisputed merit of having made Lukan scholarship aware of the unique significance which Paul – and particularly the accusations and defences surrounding his character in the final chapters of Acts – has for any analysis of Luke's aims. Equally valid is their special emphasis on Paul's relationship to Judaism, as a major dimension of the Pauline conflicts in Acts. Notwithstanding such positive contributions, certain severe limitations of this position cannot be overlooked. Thus, in its earlier forms, at least, this suggestion has been too much dependent on the nineteenth-century Tübingen representation of early Christianity, a representation which has often been criticised for building on Hegelian dialectic more than on textual evidence.<sup>22</sup> This criticism is further strengthened by the observation that Paul is not the only Lukan character whom Luke legitimates in relation to Judaism – one only needs to think of Jesus' rootedness in Judaism by means of the infancy narratives, of his general conformity to Jewish practices during his ministry, and of the close association of the early Christian community in Jerusalem with the Jewish temple. This is not to deny, of course, that Paul has a unique place in Luke's apologetic to Judaism, and the reasons for this will be discussed in chapter 7. For now, it suffices to say that Paul's Jewishness is for Luke part and parcel of his concern with the continuity between the new Christian movement and Israel's hopes, a concern within which Paul has an important, but not exclusive, place. Finally, and most significantly, whatever importance one is to attribute to Paul and his defence in Luke's scheme, it remains notoriously difficult to stretch it so that it can account for the whole of Acts,<sup>23</sup> let alone for the Third Gospel.<sup>24</sup>

Little else has been written after Mattill in support of his specific understanding of Luke's purpose, except for a short article by V. E. Vine ('The Purpose and Date of Acts', *ExpT* 96 (1984), 45–8), which states that Acts 'is to be seen as an appeal to the Judaizers for peace and reconciliation as Paul draws near to his trial. The hope is that they will close ranks behind Paul and not disown so faithful a witness to Christ' ('Purpose', 48).

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Gasque, *History*, especially pp. 52–4; Pattison, 'Study', pp. 12–17. For a more sympathetic critique, cf. T. V. Smith, *Petrine Controversies in Early Christianity: Attitudes towards Peter in Christian Writings of the First Two Centuries*, WUNT 2:15, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1985, pp. 24–33, 211–12. A recent version of the Tübingen reconstruction of Early Christianity is M. D. Goulder's *A Tale of Two Missions*, London: SCM Press, 1994.

<sup>23</sup> See, however, Brawley, *Luke–Acts*, pp. 28–50, who attempts to show that 'the story of Paul not only dominates the literary structure of the second half of Acts but also rests on major preparation for Paul in the first half of Acts' (p. 28).

<sup>24</sup> See also R. Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke–Acts*, ed. J. Riches, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1982, p. 21.

## A political apologia pro ecclesia

The suggestion that Luke–Acts was written as a political apologetic directed to the Roman authorities with the purpose of acquiring or maintaining religious freedom for Christians has a particularly long history. In an article published in 1720, C. A. Heumann argued that Luke dedicated his writing to the Roman magistrate Theophilus so that it would serve as an apologia against the false accusations which were being brought against Christianity.<sup>25</sup> A similar position was taken by E. Zeller in his commentary, published in 1854. He suggested that Luke intended both to refute the charges of pagans against Christianity and at the same time to give Christian readers material which they in turn could use in their own defences against such charges.<sup>26</sup> Again, in a short book published in 1897, J. Weiss insisted that Acts is an apology addressed to pagans with the purpose of refuting Jewish accusations against Christians.<sup>27</sup>

(a) *A case for Christianity's religio licita status*

During the twentieth century the interpretation of Luke–Acts as a political *apologia pro ecclesia* has continued in several forms. One major variant started with the claim that at the time when Luke–Acts was written every religion in the Roman world had to be specially licensed by Rome in order to be allowed to function. Judaism, it was argued, enjoyed such a status of *religio licita*, and consequently the purpose of Luke–Acts was to present Christianity as a genuine branch of Judaism in order to enjoy its privileges.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> C. A. Heumann, 'Dissertatio de Theophilo cui Lucas Historiam Sacram Inscriptis', *BHPT*, classis IV, Bremen, 1720, pp. 483–505.

<sup>26</sup> E. Zeller, *The Contents and Origin of the Acts of the Apostles Critically Investigated by Dr Edward Zeller*, London: Williams and Norgate, 1876 (original German edition, 1854), p. 164.

<sup>27</sup> J. Weiss, *Über die Absicht und den literarischen Charakter der Apostelgeschichte*, Marburg and Göttingen, 1897.

<sup>28</sup> Among the most notable statements of this position are: F. J. Foakes-Jackson and K. Lake (eds.), *The Beginnings of Christianity*, part 1, vol. II, London: Macmillan, 1922, pp. 177–87; H. J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke–Acts*, London: SPCK, 1968 (first published New York: Macmillan, 1927), esp. pp. 299–316; and B. S. Easton, *The Purpose of Acts*, London, 1936, reprinted as *Early Christianity: The Purpose of Acts and Other Papers*, ed. F. C. Grant, London: SPCK, 1955, pp. 33–57. More minor contributions from similar angles can be found in: F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, third revised and enlarged edition, Leicester: Apollos, 1990, p. 23; G. B. Caird, *The Gospel of St Luke*, London: A. & C. Black, 1968, pp. 13–15; F. V. Filson, *Three Crucial Decades*, Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1963, pp. 17–18; J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, New York: Doubleday, 1981, vol. I, p. 10. E. Haenchen also speaks repeatedly of Luke's concern to gain political toleration for Christianity by emphasising



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Undoubtedly the single most significant contribution of the proponents of the *religio licita* interpretation is their search for a reading of Luke's purpose which is able to do justice both to the author's emphasis on the continuity between Christianity and Judaism and to the political dimension of the narrative. Yet several observations make their solution very difficult to accept. First, few Roman officials would have been able to appreciate the weight of Luke's (mainly theological) case for Christianity's continuity with Judaism, even were they interested in it. Second, recent research has thrown serious doubts on the premise that the category *religio licita* even existed at the time of Luke's writing.<sup>29</sup> Third, if, according to the great majority of contemporary scholarship,<sup>30</sup> Luke's work is to be dated after the Jewish revolt of 66–74 CE,<sup>31</sup> it is difficult to imagine that Luke could have hoped to do Christianity a political favour by tying it to Judaism.

(b) *A case for Christianity's political harmlessness*

Not impressed by the arguments of those who saw Luke striving to acquire a *religio licita* status for Christianity, H. Conzelmann proposed a different understanding of Luke's defence of Christianity in relation to the Roman system.<sup>32</sup> According to Conzelmann, Luke's apologetic is prompted by the realisation that the church was likely to continue in the world and that it therefore needed to define its position in relation to both Judaism and the Roman Empire.<sup>33</sup> Accordingly, he sees in Luke–Acts a twofold apologetic concern, one related to Judaism and the other to the state. Nevertheless, he

its kinship with Judaism (*The Acts of the Apostles*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971, pp. 102, 630–1, 691–4), but does not condition this interpretation on the existence of a formal *religio licita* category at the time of Luke's writing. He prefers, therefore, to speak in terms of a 'religio quasi licita', a more general form of tolerance which Judaism enjoyed within the empire (*Acts*, pp. 630–1). Cf. also Haenchen's 'Judentum und Christentum in der Apostelgeschichte', *ZNW* 54 (1963), 155–87.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Maddox, *Purpose*, pp. 91–3.

<sup>30</sup> For a useful classification of scholarly opinion on the matter, see G. E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephus, Luke–Acts and Apologetic Historiography*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992, pp. 329–30.

<sup>31</sup> On the dating of the Jewish revolt, see E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63BCE–66CE*, London: SCM Press, 1992, p. 33.

<sup>32</sup> H. Conzelmann, *The Theology of St Luke*, London: Faber and Faber, 1960, pp. 137–49. See also H. Flender (*St Luke, Theologian of Redemptive History*, London: SPCK, 1967, pp. 56–62), who adopts Conzelmann's position and illustrates it in relation to the nativity story (Luke 2), the introduction to the parable of the pounds (Luke 19.11), and Jesus' examination before the Sanhedrin (Luke 22.66–23.1).

<sup>33</sup> Conzelmann, *Theology*, p. 137.

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challenges the assumption of his predecessors, according to which Luke's apologetic to the state is to be understood in terms of Christianity's relation to Judaism.<sup>34</sup> For Conzelmann, Luke's political apologetic runs through Luke–Acts quite independently of his Jewish apologetic. In essence, it is said to consist of Luke's emphasis on the non-politicality of the Christian story, starting from John the Baptist and continuing into the ministry of Jesus and the early church.<sup>35</sup> Particular attention is paid, however, to the Lukan account of Jesus' passion<sup>36</sup> and to a number of incidents connected with Paul's trial.<sup>37</sup> Luke is allegedly at pains to show in these passages that 'to confess oneself to be a Christian implies no crime against Roman law'.<sup>38</sup>

Conzelmann has succeeded in bypassing most of the criticism associated with the *religio licita* theories. Nonetheless, numerous subsequent studies have shown that a political apologetic such as that proposed by him can in no sense be indicative of Luke's governing concern.<sup>39</sup> One sentence from C. K. Barrett, in particular, has posed a daunting obstacle to any study which would attempt to argue for the dominance of a political apologetic: 'No Roman official would ever have filtered out so much of what to him would be theological and ecclesiastical rubbish in order to reach so tiny a grain of relevant apology.'<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, the criticism levelled against the work of Conzelmann and his companions should not be used to exclude every form of political apologetic.<sup>41</sup> Its significance is rather to indicate that such a Lukan concern, to the degree to which it is identifiable, is likely to be subject to a higher authorial agenda. The precise nature of this agenda remains the subject of our further exploration.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 138, 148. See also H. Conzelmann, 'Geschichte, Geschichtsbild und Geschichtsdarstellung bei Lukas', *TLZ* 85 (1960), 244.

<sup>35</sup> Conzelmann, *Theology*, pp. 138–44.

<sup>36</sup> Special reference is made to the non-political character of Jesus' royal title, Jesus' death as a prophet, the portrayal of the Jewish political accusations as lies, and Pilate's triple declaration of Jesus' innocence (ibid., pp. 139–41).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 141–4. <sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>39</sup> In addition to the critiques mentioned below, see Maddox, *Purpose*, pp. 96–7; P. W. Walaskay, 'And so we came to Rome': *The Political Perspective of St Luke*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 15–22.

<sup>40</sup> C. K. Barrett, *Luke the Historian in Recent Study*, London: Epworth, 1961, p. 63. See also the detailed criticism of Conzelmann's position in the works of R. J. Cassidy: *Society and Politics in the Acts of the Apostles*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1987, pp. 148–55; *Jesus, Politics, and Society: A Study of Luke's Gospel*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1978, pp. 7–9, 128–30.

<sup>41</sup> Cassidy rather overstates his case at times (see also Sterling's evaluation of Cassidy's position in Sterling, *Historiography*, p. 382).