LAURIE BRINK

Soldiers in Luke-Acts

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe 362

Mohr Siebeck

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Engaging, Contradicting, and Transcending the Stereotypes

Mohr Siebeck

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For the late CPO Bradley A. Brink, Sr. and
TSgt Bradley A. Brink, Jr., Ret., and
all soldiers and veterans who strive to be
εὐσεβὴς καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν

Preface

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Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Chicago, Illinois
November 4, 2013

Laurie Brink, O.P.

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Luke and the Military

1. Assessing the Situation

From the time of Homer[1] the topic of war has held pride of place in Greek and Roman literature. Herodotus' reports on the Persian invasions in the late 5th century B.C.E. mark the emergence of the Greek historic period. Greek and later Latin historiographers continued to chronicle the successive wars that gave rise to kingdoms and empires. So pervasive were military τόποι that they readily appear off the battle field. The rigors of military life became a metaphor for the austere lifestyle of the philosopher and the pursuit of virtue.[2] Long after the battle, the successful general embodied a model for rhetoricians in their creation of *encomia*. In the hands of playwrights and poets, the blood of battle became the source of inspiration for comic triumphs and dramatic tragedies.

So it is not surprising to find the use of military vocabulary and metaphor in the New Testament. Paul writes of breastplates, helmets (1 Thess 5:8), stipends (1 Cor 9:7), weapons (2 Cor 10:4), siege-works (2 Cor 10:5) and swords (Rom 8:35). The Apostle to the Gentiles calls Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25) and Archippus (Phlm 1–2) συστρατιώτης. The Gerasene demoniac in the

[1] As Lendon noted, "The Iliad is the baseline for understanding the military ethos of the Greeks and important for understanding the military methods of historical Greeks" (*Soldiers and Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005] 21–22). The debt to Homer is literary as well. "Homeric epic…bequeathed to historiography many of its most fundamental features: the predominantly third-person narrative of military deeds; the mimetic representation of deeds (*erga*) and words (*logoi*); the articulation of the causes of actions; the concern to immortalize great deeds and rescue them from oblivion; and the use of formal and elevated language" (John Marincola, *Greek Historians* [NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001], 10).

[2] "Antisthenes…adopted and elaborated the Spartan view of moral armament, thus initiating the development of a theme that would continue to occupy philosophers, Stoics and Cynics in particular" (Abraham J. Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus, and Paul at War," *HTR* 76, no. 2 [1983]: 143–73, here 150). A contemporary of Socrates, Antisthenes saw virtue as a weapon: ὅπλον ἡ ἀρετή (Diog. Laert. 6.12.). The philosopher so armed had no fear of the world, particularly if he possessed prudence (φρόνις), a most secure stronghold (τεῖχος ἀσφαλέστατον, Diog. Laert. 6.13).

Gospel of Mark names himself "Legion," a Latin loan word that the evangelist leaves undefined (Mark 5:9). All the Passion accounts speak of soldiers (Mark 15:16; Matt 27:27; 28:12; Luke 23:36; John 19:2, 23, 24, 32, 34), and the Synoptics place a centurion as the head of the crucifixion party (Mark 15:39; Matt 27:54; Luke 23:47). The use of military metaphors in the New Testament texts demonstrates that the early Christian community was not only familiar with martial language, but adapted it for its own evangelical purposes.[3] The author of Luke-Acts is no exception.

As the author of the Gospel of Luke expressly states, after investigating everything accurately (ἀκριβῶς), he penned an orderly (καθεξῆς) narrative (διήγησις) of the events that had been fulfilled among the community (περὶ τῶν πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν πραγμάτων). To demonstrate his commitment to accuracy and order, Luke uses imperial temporal markers, in order to establish the chronological setting of his narrative. Immediately following the prologue to the gospel, the story opens in the days of Herod (Luke 1:5). The birth narrative of Jesus is set during the reign of Augustus (2:1) and the governorship of Quirinius (Luke 2:2).[4] John the Baptist begins his preaching in the fifteenth year of Tiberius' reign, when Pontius Pilate served as prefect in Judaea, Herod Antipas ruled in Galilee, and his brother Philip ruled in Ituraea and Trachonitis (Luke 3:1). In Acts of the Apostle, Luke's second volume, the author sets Saul and Barnabas in Cyprus during the proconsulship of Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:7). While in Corinth, Paul is brought before Gallio, then proconsul of Achaia (Acts 18:12). Paul is sent to Felix, the Roman governor of Judaea (Acts 23:26), who is later replaced by the next governor, Porcius Festus (Acts 24:27).

The use of imperial temporal markers draws attention to the larger Roman world in which the narrative will take place. Luke populated this stage with other quintessentially Roman elements, most notably soldiers. In his treatment of the Imperial army throughout the two volumes, the author uses military

[3] Krentz demonstrated that Paul used extensive military metaphors in his letter to the Philippians. In so doing Paul was not unlike the contemporary Greco-Roman writers of his day ("Military Language and Metaphors in Philippians," in *Origins and Methods. Towards a New Understanding of Judaism and Christianity*, [ed. Bradley McLean; Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993], 105–27). Also see Laurie Brink, "A General's Exhortation to His Troops: Paul's Military Rhetoric in 2 Cor 10:1–11," Part 1, *BZ* 49 (2005): 191–201, and Part 2, *BZ* 50 (2006): 74–89. Harnack disagreed. Paraphrasing the beatitudes, he concluded, "We need say nothing more to confirm that the gospel excluded all force and had nothing warlike about it, nor would it endure the same" (*Militia Christi: The Christian Religion and the Military in the First Three Centuries* [trans. David McInnes Gracie; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982], 26).

[4] Luke's dating of Quirinius is anachronistic, but that does not diminish the fact that he thought it important to situate his διήγησις within imperial parameters. See Mark D. Smith, "Of Jesus and Quirinius," *CBQ* 62 (2000): 278–93.

language and metaphor, omits from his sources negative aspects of the military, and, as will be demonstrated in this study, characterizes individual soldiers and centurions as possessing the qualities of disciples, thus cumulatively creating an apologetic portrait of Rome's military.

1.1 De re militari *in Luke-Acts*

By the end of the first century of the common era, the Roman legions and auxiliary cast a lengthy shadow over the empire.[5] With the imperial army's ubiquitous presence,[6] the use of military vocabulary and battle images added an air of verisimilitude to the Lucan narrative. Yet, the author demonstrates more than a causal interest in and knowledge of *res militaria*. Luke is acquainted with the rank and order of units, and he names several throughout the two volumes. Foot soldiers (Luke 3:14; 7:8; Acts 10:7; 28:16) are under the command of centurions (Luke 7:2; 23:47; Acts 10:1; 22:25; 27:1) who act under the orders of military tribunes (Acts 21:31). Auxiliary cohorts (Acts 10:1; 21:31; 27:1), Herodian soldiers (Luke 3:14; 23:11) and Roman legions (Luke 8:31) are each distinguished from each other. Luke presents his soldiers as a provincial police force (Luke 3:14) that maintains local relations (Luke 7:2–5), carries out executions (Luke 23:32–47), establishes order (Acts 21:31–33), interrogates suspects (Acts 22:25), and transports (Acts 27:1) and guards prisoners (Acts 28:16).

This familiarity with the military allowed the author to make ready use of martial metaphors and vocabulary. Luke creates an extended battle metaphor by inserting specific military vocabulary and references into his sources. Thus, at Luke's hand, a home invasion is embellished into a military siege

[5] The Empire reached is territorial zenith under Trajan. It included an area of nearly 5 million square kilometers and an estimated population of 55 million (Graham Paul Burton, "From Augustus to the Antonines [31 BC–AD 192]," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* [ed. Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996], 1329). For various other estimates and methods of estimation, see P.A. Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971); E. Lo Cascio, "The Size of the Roman Population," *JRS* 84 (1994): 23–40; and Keith Hopkins, "Rome, Taxes, Rents and Trade," in *The Ancient Economy* (ed. Walter Scheidel and Sitta Von Reden; NY: Routledge, 2002), 190–230.

[6] MacMullen estimated the size of the legionary forces at 142,560 ("How Big was the Roman Imperial Army?" *Klio* 62 [1980]: 454), with perhaps a nearly equal number of auxiliary troops (Tacitus, *Ann*. 4.4). A moderate military force was able to uphold the *pax Romana* in outlying provinces largely due to the reputation of the army for swift and thorough retaliation, and, in some cases, the memory of such havoc remained vivid in the minds of the conquered peoples (Josephus, *B.J.* 2.361–379). The extensive use of military insignia on imperial coinage served as a continual reminder of the power behind the Emperor. (See Louis C. West, "Imperial Publicity on Coins of the Roman Emperors," CJ 45 [1949]: 19–26; Christopher Howgego, "The Supply and Use of Money in the Roman World 200 B.C. to A.D. 300," JRS 82 [1992]: 1–31).

(Luke 11:21–22), a parable narrates the aspects of a formal surrender (Luke 14:31–32), and the coming destruction of the Temple becomes a city besieged (Luke 19:41–44). Luke embellishes Mark 3:27, so that the Lucan strong man wears full armor (καθωπλισμένος), guarding his αὐλήν, a more impressive abode with a courtyard than the mere οἰκία of Mark (Luke 11:21–22). His possessions (ὑπάρχοντα, as opposed to Mark and Matthew's σκεύη) are left in peace, unless a stronger attacker should be victorious. The stronger man would then remove the first one's trusted armor and divide the spoils (σκῦλα).

After the Lucan Jesus instructs the crowds on the conditions of discipleship, he illustrates the importance of appropriate preparation with a parable (Luke 14:31–32) that is absent in Mark and Matthew. Which person planning to construct a tower would not first figure the costs, so as to assure the successful completion of the project? What king going up against another king in battle (συμβαλεῖν εἰς πόλεμον, Luke 14:31) does not determine if he can match his ten thousand against the enemy's twenty thousand? If not, he will send an embassy to ask for peace (πρεσβείαν ἀποστείλας ἐρωτᾷ τὰ πρὸς εἰρήνην, Luke 14:32).

Elements of this parable are echoed in Luke 19:41–44, where τὰ πρὸς εἰρήνην are no longer negotiable by an embassy. A palisade of stakes (χάρακα) will be built around the city of Jerusalem, and the besiegers will destroy it to the ground (ἐδαφιοῦσιν). No stone will be left standing. In Chapter 21, Luke transforms Mark's reference to the temple's defilement (τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως, Mark 13:14) into the destruction of the city (ἡ ἐρήμωσις αὐτῆς, Luke 21:20). The source of the coming devastation is the surrounding legions (στρατοπέδα, Luke 21:20). Mark does not depict the θλῖψις, but Luke is graphic. The people will fall by the mouth of the sword and be led away at the end of a spear as captives (πεσοῦνται στόματι μαχαίρης καὶ αἰχμαλωτισθήσονται, Luke 21:24). Josephus describes at length and in vivid detail what Luke is proposing (*B.J.* 5.258),[7] suggesting that both Josephus and Luke or their sources possessed knowledge of Roman siege warfare.

At the Last Supper, the Lucan Jesus admonishes those who are unarmed among his disciples to sell their mantles in order to buy swords (καὶ ὁ μὴ ἔχων πωλησάτω τὸ ἱμάτιον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀγορασάτω μάχαιραν, Luke 22:36). The disciples announce that they have two swords, and Jesus answers, ἱκανόν ἐστιν

[7] The question of Luke's reliance on Josephus or vice versa has been explored extensively. Mason (*Josephus and the New Testament* [2nd; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003]) concludes that Luke utilized Josephus, while Sterling recognizes a similarity in genre (Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*). Pervo cites Luke's use of Josephus in determining an early Second Century date for the writing of Acts of the Apostles (*Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists* [Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2006], 149–200).

(Luke 22:38). Neither the Gospel of Mark nor the Gospel of Matthew includes the mandate to arm oneself.

In some instances, Luke has removed or omitted military references found in his sources. For example, Luke does not include the reference to walking an additional mile in his Sermon on the Plain, while the Gospel of Matthew,[8] the Didache[9] and Justin Martyr[10] include it. The statement found in Matt 5:41 is often thought to refer to the legal right of a Roman soldier to force a provincial to carry his pack for the length of one Roman mile.[11] Scholars presume that impressing local inhabitants into temporary service provided the traveling soldiers with directions through unfamiliar territory. The practice of ἀγγαρεία was so well-known that Epictetus (*Diatr.* 4.1.79) and Apuleius (9.39–42) make mocking mention of it. The frequency of such requisitions and the impressment of civilians into service necessitated imperial intervention.[12] Third Century Jewish sources indicate that the abuses perpetrated by the Roman army did not lessen in peace time.[13] If the recommendation to go the extra mile had been present in Luke's sources, his choice to delete it in the

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[8] καὶ ὅστις σε ἀγγαρεύσει μίλιον ἕν, ὕπαγε μετ' αὐτοῦ δύο (Matt. 5:41).

[9] ἐὰν ἀγγαρεύσῃ σέ τις μίλιον ἕν ὕπαγε μετ' αὐτοῦ δύο (*Did.* 1.4).

[10] Παντὶ δὲ ἀγγαρεύοντί σε μίλιον ἀκολούθησον δύο (*Apol.* 1.16.2).

[11] See Michail I. Rostowzew, "Angariae," *Klio* 6 (1906): 250–51, 253–57; and Chrys Caragounis, "ΟΨΩΝΙΟΝ: A Reconsideration of its Meaning," *NovT* 16 (1974): 50–51. Owing to Matthew's use of the verb ἀγγαρεύω, the Roman practice known as *angareia* is exclusively cited as the backdrop against which to read Jesus' imperative to go the extra mile (Matt 5:41). However, a review of the inscriptional and literary evidence on ἀγγαρεία demonstrates that the official practice concerned the transportation of goods and not the wanton impressing of individuals into labor. Freed from a strictly imperial context, Matt 5:41 might more accurately be interpreted as an example of extortion – c compelling the services of another. See my article, "Going the Extra Mile: Reading Matt 5:41 Literally and Metaphorically" in *The History of Religions School Today: Essays in Honor of Hans Dieter Betz.* (ed. T. Blanton, R. Matthew Calhoun and C. K. Rothschild. WUNT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).

[12] An inscription, dated to the reign of Tiberius and found in Pisidia, set the limits for requisitioned goods and impressed services according to the rank and status of the one making the request. A provincial was obliged to offer unpaid hospitality and housing to imperial officials, soldiers in the provinces, and freedmen, slaves, and animals of the imperial household (Stephen Mitchell, "Requisitioned Transport in the Roman Empire: a new Inscription from Pisidia," *JRS* 66 [1976]: 107). The primary use of such edicts was to ensure the appropriate access to transport and quartering for the military in the provinces, and to discourage the unlawful requisition and seizure of personnel and materials without payment to provincials. Frequent and widespread exploitation is evident in numerous imperial documents from the early imperial period to the fifth century (W. H. C. Frend, "A Third-Century Inscription Relating to Angareia in Phrygia," *JRS* 46 (1956): 49).

[13] Benjamin Isaac, "The Roman Army in Judaea: Police Duties and Taxation," in *Roman Frontier Studies* (ed. V.A. Maxfield and M. I. Dobson; Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1991), 458–61.

Gospel adds to the argument of his specialized treatment of the Roman military.

In scenes where Luke could not wholly remove details involving soldiers, he tends to minimalize the negative aspects. The other evangelists attribute the abuse and mocking of Jesus to the Roman soldiers, but Luke avoids or delays linking soldiers with these actions. In Mark 15:16–20, soldiers take Jesus into the praetorium where they plait a crown of thorns and dress him in a robe of royal color. They then salute (Mark 15:18) and mock (Matt 27:29) Jesus, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews (Mark 15:18//Matt 27:29//John 19:3). Mark, Matthew and even John agree that the soldiers struck Jesus, and Mark and Matthew add that they spat on him as well. At the conclusion of this scene, the soldiers lead Jesus to his crucifixion. Unlike the story in Mark's Gospel, the Lucan soldiers do not physically abuse Jesus. Luke does recount an incident of the beating and mocking of Jesus, but he set it in the house of the High Priest (Luke 22:63–65), rather than in the praetorium.

The scene in which Roman soldiers do mock Jesus merits only a brief mention and is moved to the foot of the cross, where the soldiers do not initiate the taunting but do join the rulers in mocking Jesus by offering him a cup of sour wine (Luke 23:35–36). This propensity to minimize the Roman military's responsibility in the death of Jesus is further evidenced when Luke fails to designate who actually leads Jesus to his crucifixion. Mark states clearly: "The soldiers led him away" (Mark 15:16). But Luke simply writes, "they" (Luke 23:26). In editing his sources, Luke goes to great lengths to minimize the explicit reference to Roman soldiers in the abuse, mocking and death of Jesus.

Luke-Acts evidences the author's familiarity and dexterity with military images and metaphors. The insertion of extended military metaphors into his sources suggests a conscious choice to evoke a martial context. His editing of the Passion narrative placed the brutal beating and mocking at the hands of Herodian guards and limited the cruelty of the Roman soldiers. The omission of sayings that could vilify soldiers adds to the weight of evidence that Luke intended to construct an apologetic portrait of the Roman military. An exploration of his characterization of soldiers in the two volumes will further demonstrate that the author is purposely creating a portrait that counters stereotypes and upsets the expectations of his readers.

1.2 Scholarly Investigations of the Military in Luke-Acts

Despite Luke's demonstrated interest in aspects of the military, little scholarly attention has been focused on the topic. Indeed, the lacuna is not limited to Luke-Acts. As T. R. Hobbs has noted, "many studies of the Roman-Hellenistic social world of the New Testament offer a strange silence on

things military, except as an unexplored background to 'politics.'"[14] In most major treatises, scholars investigate the military from a historical perspective, presuming that Luke-Acts provides a reliable witness to the events it depicts. More recently, Hobbs did address the literary aspects of the military, but only as found in the Gospels. Since no scholars have evaluated the characterization of soldiers across the two volumes of Luke-Acts, this monograph seeks to fill that void.

The topic of the Roman military in the New Testament is so understudied that recent commentaries continue to cite monographs originally published more than a hundred years ago.[15] One of the few monographs solely focused on the topic of the military in Early Christianity is Harnack's now dated *Militia Christi.*[16] Written as a response to the question of the appropriate Christian attitude toward war in light of World War I, *Militia Christi* is a more detailed commentary on the sources mentioned in Harnack's earlier work on Christian origins.[17] Though one of the earliest and most complete compilations of materials concerning the topic, *Militia Christi* is not the work of an exegete.[18] Har-

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[14] T. R. Hobbs, "Soldiers in the Gospels: A Neglected Agent," in *Social-Scientific Models for Interpreting the Bible: Essays by the Context Group in Honor of Bruce J. Malina* (ed. John J. Pilch; Boston; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 334.

[15] Schürer is frequently cited in reference to Luke 7 and Acts 10. His *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* was first published in 1890, though most commentaries cite a later edition (*The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* [ed. G. Vermes et al.; Edinburgh: T &T Clark, 1973, reprint 1993]). For example, see I. Howard Marshall, *Commentary on Luke* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978); Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1981); *The Gospel According to Luke X–XXIV* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1985), and *The Acts of the Apostles* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1998); H. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987); John Polhill, *Acts* (The New American Commentary; Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992); C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994–98); Joel Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997); Ben Witherington, *Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998); and Beverly R. Gaventa, *Acts* (Abingdon New Testament Commentaries; Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003).

[16] Adolf Harnack, *Militia Christi: Die christliche Religion und der Soldatenstand in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1905). The English edition followed nearly eighty years later.

[17]Adolf Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* (trans. James Moffatt; Theological Translation Library; New York: Putnam, 1904–5), most notably 204–17.

[18] In *Militia Christi*, Harnack set out to address three questions: "1) Has the Christian religion continuously or at any time in its history assumed a warlike character and preached the right and duty of the holy war? 2) Has the church, occasionally or continuously, adopted military organization (in a transferred sense) and disciplined its believers, or a part of them, as soldiers of Christ? 3) What position has the church taken with regard to the secular military profession and to war?" (Harnack, *Militia Christi*, 26).

nack wrote as a liberal theologian and historian, and his biblical citations serve as a proof text for his thesis. He limited the definition of "gospel" to the "sayings of Jesus," without comment on the evangelists or their editorial hand. Harnack neglected to evaluate the New Testament literature that included soldiers and only marginally investigated other scriptural texts that engaged military metaphors. Nonetheless, *Militia Christi* is one of the first works to recognize an implicit connection between the Roman military and the spread of Christianity.[19]

Those interested in a more focused interpretation of the Roman military usually begin with T. R. S. Broughton's "Note XXXIII. The Roman Army" in the fifth volume of *The Beginnings of Christianity*, edited by F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake.[20] Broughton's work provides a map through the military maze in Acts of the Apostles. As he noted,

> Acts has several references to the Roman army, and in the background of the story there is always a dimly perceived and changing mass of tribunes, centurions, and soldiers who sometimes limit the freedom and sometimes preserve the lives of the Christians who are in the foreground.[21]

At the time of its publication, Broughton's "The Roman Army" contained the most comprehensive collection of inscriptions that related specifically to the army in Acts. The article's inclusion within the five-volume monumental work of Jackson and Lake guaranteed its wide readership. But, like Schürer and Harnack before him, Broughton's concern was the historicity of the military episodes in Acts of the Apostles and not their narrative function.

In subsequent years, various scholars have focused on aspects of the Roman military including its presence and impact in the province of Judea,[22] but

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[19] "The special justification for developing this theme of the relationship of the Christian religion to the army in a monograph lies in the facts that the early Christians (especially in the West) perceived themselves as God's soldiers and that the historical shift from paganism to Christianity first took place publicly in the army" (Harnack, *Militia Christi*, 24).

[20] T. R. S. Broughton, "Note XXXIII. The Roman Army" in *The Beginnings of Christianity. The Acts of the Apostles* (ed. F. J. Foakes-Jackson and K. Lake; vol. 5; London: Macmillan, 1933; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 427–44.

[21] Broughton, "The Roman Army," 427.

[22] These include Benjamin Isaac, "Roman Colonies in Judaea: The Foundation of Aelia Capitolina," *Talanta* 12/13 (1980 January): 38–43; Denis B. Saddington, "The Administration and the Army in Judaea in the Early Roman Period (From Pompey to Vespasian, 63 BC–AD 79)," in *The Holy Land in History and Thought* (ed. Moshe Sharon; NY: Brill, 1988), 33–40; Shimon Applebaum, *Judaea in Hellenistic and Roman Times* (NY: Brill, 1989); Isaac, "The Roman Army in Judaea"; Michael P. Speidel, "The Roman Army in Judaea under the Procurators," in *Roman Army Studies 2* (ed. Michael P. Speidel; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1992), 224–32; and Jonathan Roth, "The Army and the Economy

they have seldom investigated the portrayal of the army as presented in the New Testament texts and early Christianity.[23] In the mid-1970s, John Helgeland addressed the lacuna for the period following 170 C.E., but acknowledged that the lack of evidence from the earlier period made an investigation of Christians in the military difficult.[24]

The next scholar to focus on the question of soldiers in Luke-Acts was Denis Saddington in his 1996 work, "Roman Military and Administrative Personnel in the New Testament" in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.26.3.[25] Saddington updated Broughton and occasionally disagreed

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in Judaea and Palestine," in *The Roman Army and the Economy* (ed. Paul Erdkamp; Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 2002), 375–97.

[23] For example, see A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963); G. R. Watson, *The Roman Soldier* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969); J. B. Campbell, *The Emperor and the Roman Army: 31 BC–AD 235* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984); Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East: 31 BC–AD 337* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Martin Goodman, *The Roman World: 44 BC–AD 180* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Lawrence Keppie, *The Making of the Roman Army: From Republic to Empire* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma, 1998); and J. E. Lendon, *Soldiers and Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005).

[24] John Helgeland, "Roman Army Religion," in *SBL Seminar Papers* (George MacRae; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975), 199–205.

[25] Saddington's is one of only a few articles in *ANRW* that focus specifically on the intersection between the Roman army and the New Testament. Others that address the Roman military in general include D. J. Breeze, "The Career Structure below the Centurionate during the Principate," *ANRW* II.1 (1974): 435–51; R. W. Davis, "The Daily Life of the Roman Soldier under the Principate," *ANRW* II.1 (1974): 299–338; L. de Blois, "Volk und Soldaten bei Cassius Dio," *ANRW* II.34.3 (1997): 2650–76; H. Devijver, "The Roman Army in Egypt (with Special Reference to the Militiae Equestres)," *ANRW* II.1 (1974): 452–92; Brian Dobson, "The Significance of the Centurion and 'Primipilaris' in the Roman Army and Administration," *ANRW* II.1 (1974): 392–434; G. Forni, "Estrazione etnica e sociale dei soldati delle legioni nei primi tre secoli dell'impero," *ANRW* II.1 (1974): 339–91; J. Harmand, "Les origines de l'armée impériale: Un témoignage sur la réalité du pseudo-principat et sur l'évolution militaire de l'Occident," *ANRW* II.1 (1974): 263–98; J. H. Jung, "Das Eherecht der romischen Soldaten," *ANRW* II.14 (1982): 302–46; idem, "Die Rechtsstellung der römischen Soldaten: Ihre Entwicklung von den Anfängen Roms bis auf Diokletian," *ANRW* II.14 (1982): 882–1013; B. Lehmann, "Das Eigenvermögen der römischen Soldaten unter väterlicher Gewalt," *ANRW* II.14 (1982): 183–284; Denis B. Saddington, "The Development of the Roman Auxiliary Forces from Augustus to Trajan," *ANRW* II.3 (1975): 176–201; idem, "Tacitus and the Roman Army," *ANRW* II.33.5 (1991): 3484–3555; R. K. Sherk, "Roman Geographical Exploration and Military Maps," *ANRW* II.1 (1974): 534–62; Michael P. Speidel, "Legionaries from Asia Minor," *ANRW* II.7.2 (1980): 730–746; idem, "The Rise of Ethnic Units in the Roman Imperial Army," *ANRW* II.3 (1975): 202–31; idem, "The Roman Army in Arabia," *ANRW* II.8 (1977): 687–730; idem, "Nubia's Roman Garrison," *ANRW* II.10.1 (1988): 767–98; Michael P. Speidel and A. Dimitrova-Milceva, "The Cult of the Genii in the Roman Army and the New Military Deity," *ANRW* II.16.2

with some of his findings. Nonetheless, he trod the same historical path. Though providing a realistic backdrop upon which to set the military characters in the New Testament, Saddington's research does not allow for a more nuanced reading of the narrative. He inferred from Acts 22:28 that "Claudius Lysias is notorious for having purchased his Roman citizenship, granted to him by the emperor Claudius,"[26] but then overlooked the σύγκρισις[27] set up between Paul's citizenship and that of the tribune. Elements of the narrative are lost when scholars investigate solely for questions of historical accuracy.

A welcomed change of pace from the purely historical examinations is the more recent work by T. R. Hobbs, which focuses on the soldiers in the Gospels through the lens of social-science methodology. Where Schürer, Harnack, Broughton, and Saddington asked questions of history and reliability, Hobbs posits ones of social identity, power, and agency. He moves closer to recognizing the texts as stories and to considering how the reader might view the soldiers' actions. For his analysis, Hobbs employed a model that categorizes the military organization in relationship to its host society by "ideal types."[28] Such a pursuit attends little to the actual historical context.

(1978): 1542–55; and G. R. Watson, "Documentation in the Roman Army," *ANRW* II.1 (1974): 493–507. Articles pertaining to the Roman military and its religious practices include E. Birley, "The Religion of the Roman Army," *ANRW* II.16.2 (1978): 1506–41; J. Helgeland, "Christians and the Roman Army from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine," *ANRW* II.23.1 (1979): 724–834; idem, "Roman Army Religion," *ANRW* II.16.2 (1978): 1470–1505. And the Roman military and the New Testament are discussed in F. F. Bruce, "The Acts of the Apostles: Historical Record or Theological Reconstruction," *ANRW* II.25.3 (1985): 2569–2603; W. M. Swartley, "War and Peace in the New Testament," *ANRW* II.26.3 (1996): 2298–2408; S. M. Taylor, "St. Paul and the Roman Empire: Acts of the Apostles 13–14," *ANRW* II.26.2 (1995): 1189–1231, and "The Roman Empire in the Acts of the Apostles," *ANRW* II.26.3 (1996): 2436–2500. Taylor recognizes that the Acts of the Apostles paints a favorable picture of Roman soldiers as imperial agents, but does not investigate Luke's intent.

[26] Denis B. Saddington, "Roman Military and Administrative Personnel in the New Testament," 2416.

[27] For a detailed discussion of the function of σύγκρισις in the Greco-Roman world and the Pauline texts, see Christopher Forbes, "Paul and Rhetorical Comparison," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 134–71.

[28] Hobbs develops his model after Feld's structural analysis (Maury D. Feld, *The Structures of Violence: Armed Forces and Social Systems* [Sage Series on Armed Forces and Society 10; Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1977], 31–69).

It is a moot point whether that the writers of the Gospels themselves were fully aware of the details of the military situation, nor of the niceties of Roman military protocol. In true artistic fashion, the Gospels [sic] writers create their literary worlds through the narratives they construct, and the characters that occupy these worlds … Nevertheless, there is a body of "background knowledge," presupposed by all the Gospel writers, which the mere mention of the word "soldier" evokes.[29]

According to Hobbs's analysis, the author of Luke-Acts may be creating a social organization, but he was doing so by means of a narrative.

By far, the majority of the scholarly work on soldiers in the New Testament has concerned the historical context out of which early Christianity emerged. Luke's own claim to be penning a narrative of actual events based on authoritative witnesses encouraged later interpreters to read the texts in search of reliable information. Social historians, both of the New Testament and of Roman history, have tended to evaluate the two-volumes in comparison with data from ancient historians, inscriptions, or archaeological findings. Research into the existence of certain cohorts in Palestine under a Judean king or the period of service for Pilate, Felix, and Festus have led to historical reconstructions of the Roman military in New Testament times. But such historical or, in the case of Hobbs, social-scientific endeavors often ignore the fact that the soldiers in the texts are narrative characters[30] and, as such, require an analytical approach that considers them within a literary context.

2. Methodology: A Strategic Approach

An investigation into the portrayal of soldiers in Luke-Acts begins with two related questions: How did Luke construct military characters within his two volumes? and Why did Luke present them as he does? The first question requires attention to the text of the Gospel and Acts in conversation with the works of other ancient authors. The second concerns Luke's intentional crafting of sources, in order to direct his authorial audience toward a particular view of the Roman soldier. If Luke has envisioned an authorial audience closely aligned with his real one, then the intended result should have an effect on his real audience as well.

Since, as Penner comments, "Methods bring with them particular ways of seeing and reading texts, and they can be, and often are, mutually exclu-

[29] Hobbs, "Soldiers in the Gospels: A Neglected Agent," 335.

[30] As Darr has observed, "historical methods were not designed to analyze characterization, and, in fact, have tended to obstruct our perception of this and other literary features of New Testament" (John Darr, *On Character Building: The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts* [Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992], 12).