

DEMETRIOS OF ETHESES: SILVERSMITH AND *NEOPOIOS*?

G.M. ROGERS

In the middle of the first century A.D. the Apostle Paul visited Ephesos and caused a riot led by Demetrios, a silversmith making silver temples of Artemis¹. *Acts of the Apostles*, 19.23-41:

23 About that time there arose no little upheaval concerning the "Way." **24** For a certain man, Demetrios by name, making silver temples of Artemis, brought much work to the craftsmen. **25** He gathered them together and the workmen concerned with such things, and said, "Men, you know that our prosperity comes from this business. **26** And you see and hear that not only at Ephesos but nearly in all of Asia this Paul, having used persuasion, has turned away a considerable crowd of people, saying that they are not gods who are made by hands. **27** Not only does this endanger that our business come into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be reckoned for nothing and her majesty destroyed, whom the whole of Asia and even the world reveres." **28** When they heard this they became angry, and shouted, saying "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" **29** And the whole city was filled with confusion. Then they rushed with one accord into the theatre, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians and companions of Paul. **30** But when

I thank E. Varinlioglu of Ankara University, F.G.B. Millar of Oxford University, and D.M. Eisenberg of Princeton University for help in the preparation of this paper. I am solely responsible for all views and errors.

¹ E.L. Hicks, "Demetrius the Silversmith," *Expositor* Ser. IV, vol. I (1890), 401-22; E. Ceroni, "Grande Artemide degli Efesini! Il tumulto degli Efesini contro San Paolo alla luce delle recenti scoperte archéologiche (Act 19.28ff.)," *Scuola Cattol.* 60 (1932) 2, 121-42, 203-26; J. Bertrand, "Het oproer der Zilvermeden Hand. 19.23-40, een meesterstukje van reportage," 't Helige Land IV 10 (1951), 155-8; E. Lichtenecker, *Das Kultbild der Artemis von Ephesus*, Tübingen (1952); E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, (1971). For Paul at Ephesos from the summer of 52 A.D. until autumn of 54 A.D. cf. Haenchen, pp. 67, 71, 570-79.

Paul wished to go into the assembly, the disciples did not allow him. ³¹ Some of the Asiarchs, being friendly to him, having sent to him, warned him not to venture into the theatre. ³² Therefore some were crying out one thing and some another. For the assembly was confused and most of them did not know why they had come together. ³³ Some of the crowd explained to Alexandros as the Jews sent him forward. Alexandros shook his hand and wished to make an apology to the people. ³⁴ But when they recognized, "He is a Jew!", there was one shout from all for about two hours, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" ³⁵ Then the secretary of the city calmed the crowd with the words, "Ephesian men, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is *neokoros* of great Artemis and Diopetous? ³⁶ Since these things are undeniable it is necessary for you to be calm and to do nothing rash. For you have brought these men here who are neither temple robbers nor blaspheming our goddess. ³⁸ If indeed therefore Demetrios and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against anyone, court days are held and there are proconsuls-let them accuse one another. ³⁹ If you seek anything concerning other matters, it will be settled in the regular assembly. ⁴⁰ For we also are in danger to be accused of riot about this day, since there is no reason concerning which we shall be able to give a justification for this mob action." ⁴¹ And having said these things he dismissed the assembly².

More than the ascribed avarice may have motivated Demetrios. In 1890 E.L. Hicks combined the fragments of a stèle published earlier by J.T. Wood in which the *neopoioi* of a year were honored by the *Boulē* and (probably) the *dēmos* of Ephesos³. Having dated this inscription "to the middle or latter half of the first century A.D." Hicks conjectured that "the foreman of the college of neopoioi" (Δημητρίου ἐνιαυτῷ in line 4) was Demetrios the silversmith of *Acts* 19.23-41. Both dating and identification

² Author's translation from *Novum Testamentum Graece*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, A. Souter ed. (1956 reprint); hereafter *Acts*. Cf. Haenchen, pp. 571-76 for commentary on the passage, especially verse 33, on συνεβίβασαν.

³ J.T. Wood, *Discoveries at Ephesus*, app. 4 Ins. Augusteum 1 and 5, London (1877); E.L. Hicks, *The Collection of Ancient Greek Inscriptions in the British Museum*, Part III, Section II Ephesos 578 pp. 207-09, Oxford (1890); *Inchriften Griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien, Die Inschriften von Ephesos*, Teil 5, 1578A, pp. 86-87, Bonn (1980); hereafter *I. Ephesos*.

may be doubted. The appearance of Πυθίων Περιγέ[vous τ]ου (Περιγένους), the later Τ. Φλάουιος Περιγένους υἱὸς Πυθίων in lines 11-12, an ἀσιάρχης and ἀρχιερεὺς τῆς Ἀσίας during the reign of Trajan arouses suspicion-mitigated somewhat by his achievement of equestrian status as early as the reign of Domitian⁴. Also, the Demetrios in line 4 appears to be a city official whose office would provide a date for the inscription⁵. He is not definitely a *neopoios*; the Demetrios of lines 6-7, "Δημήτριος Μηνοφίλου Τρυφωναῦς βορεύς.", indubitably is⁶. The identification of the indubitable *neopoios* with the silversmith is therefore speculation-but if the identification is correct, and the historical implications are pursued, part of the literary technique and purpose of the author of the *Acts of the Apostles* is exposed.

The *neopoioi* at Ephesos composed a συνέδριον or συναγωγή⁷. Beginning in the Hellenistic period they were charged with inscribing the names of new citizens on the wall of the Artemisium⁸. Around 300 B.C. the *neopoioi* appear recommending the good will and enthusiasm of Melanthios, an officer who is to receive citizenship⁹, and recommending citizenship for Euphronius, an officer in the army of Prepelaos, who captured Ephesos for Lysimachos in 302 B.C.¹⁰ During the imperial period the board probably had twelve members-two men elected annually from each tribe in the

⁴ Hicks, *IBM*, p. 209; for doubts about Hicks's dating: W. Ramsay, *Expositor*, ii p. 1 f., whom Haenchen, p. 572, follows. For Πυθίων Περιγένους cf. *I. Ephesos* III 674A, 858; V 1500, 1578A; VII, I, 3033; VII, 2, 4342 and M. Rossner, "Asiarchen und Archiereis Asias," *Studii Clasice*, 16, (1974) p. 130. If Πυθίων was a very young man at the time of the honorary inscription (1578A), Hicks's dating cannot be excluded.

⁵ *I. Ephesos*, V, 1578A; a lacuna in line 3 prevents a certain reconstruction of his office.

⁶ It is possible that the Demetrios of line 4 is the same man as appears in lines 6-7.

⁷ συνέδριον of *neopoioi* at Ephesos: *I. Ephesos* Ia, 28, 2 (104 A.D.); III, 943, 5 (undated?); 951, 10 (late second century A.D.); 966, 1-2 (undated); VI, 2083, c2 (post Augustan); VII, 1, 3263, 1 (undated); VII, 2, 4330, 3 (3rd c. A.D.); συναγωγή: *I. Ephesos* II, 419a, 8-9 (92/93 A.D.).

⁸ *I. Ephesos* IV, 1405, 12; 1408, 5 & 15; 1409, 4; 1411, 8; 1412, 6; 1413, 5; 1440, 7; 1441, 8; 1442, 7; 1443, 7-8; V, 1447, 17-21; 1449, 1; 1450, 9; 1452, 4-5; 1453, 15-16; 1454, 6-7; 1455, 8-9; 1458, 6-7; 1461, 2; 1466, 6-7; 1470, 2-3; 1471, 3; VI, 2004, 14; 2005, 12; 2008, 5.

⁹ *I. Ephesos* IV, 1408, 7-9 in which citizenship decree Φιλαίνετος εἶπεν (line 1); the same man who introduced the citizenship decree for Nikagoras of Rhodes in 300 B.C. (*I. Ephesos*, V, 1453, 1); thus, *I. Ephesos* IV, 1408, must be contemporary or nearly so.

¹⁰ *I. Ephesos*, V, 1449, 1-2; for Prepelaos cf. Diod. XX, 107; *RE* XX 1836ff; *Kl. Pauly* IV, 1127; J. and L. Robert, *Journal des Savants*, (1976) 171 f. no. 72. The citizenship decree for Euphronius must post-date 302 B.C.

*ekklesia*¹¹. In the testamentary bequest of C. Vibius Salutaris of 104 A.D., perhaps the closest dated contemporary document, the *neopoioi* appear as guardians of the εἰκόνας and ἀπεικονίσματα dedicated by Salutaris: two of the *neopoioi* “attend” the statues being carried from the pronaos of the temple of Artemis into the theatre and back at every assembly, during gymnastic contests, and on other days determined by the *Boulē* and *dēmos*¹². And two of the *neopoioi* also were to be present during the cleaning of all statue copies¹³.

The epigraphical evidence surveyed therefore associates the *neopoioi* with two general functions: first and historically prior, the institutional process of recommending and formally conferring citizen status within the city and secondly, the guardianship and preservation of the dedicated “furniture” of the temple of Artemis¹⁴.

It is tempting to unite a silversmith “making silver temples of Artemis,” presumably to be sold to pilgrims who would in turn dedicate these temples to the goddess, or to men like Vibius Salutaris, who wished to leave a bequest of thirty-one gold and silver statues, with a *neopoios* performing that second function of his office. What one hand fashions the other guards. If this connection is correct, Demetrios’ incitement of the crowd reflects both institutional loyalty and financial self-interest.

Thus far, the author of the *Acts* presents an account of Demetrios’ motives which is plausible. But the author’s emphasis upon εὐπορία “prosperity”, (*Acts* 19.25f.) leaves no place for the well-attested and historically prior¹⁵ function of the *neopoioi*: namely, their critical role in the institutional process of creating new citizens of Ephesos. The *neopoioi* recommended individuals for citizenship and formalized citizen status for individuals by inscribing their names and the terms of their citizenship on the walls of the Artemisium.

In order to understand the significance of this connection for Demetrios the silversmith and *neopoios* it is necessary to review briefly the history of the

¹¹ *I. Ephesos* V, 1578A, 1-26 apparently gives a complete list of 12 *neopoioi* for a year (first century A.D.); also cf. 1590B; ἀθῆταιροι, implies election in a citizen assembly: *I. Ephesos* III, 940, 4; 950, 1; 957, 11-12; 961, 3; 963, 3; VI, 2926, 1 (?); VII, 1, 3263, 6-7; for the *ekklesia* as the elective assembly: *I. Ephesos* V, 1570, 5-6; and Hicks, p. 203.

¹² For two of the *neopoioi*, “συνεπιμελουμένων” cf. *I. Ephesos* Ia 27 (Salutaris bequest) 48, 209, 269-70, 423 (δύο absent), and 560-61 (full formula).

¹³ *I. Ephesos* Ia, 27, 543-44.

¹⁴ Cf. Hicks, *IBM*, p. 81; Haenchen, pp. 571-72.

¹⁵ Epigraphically prior: cf. note 9.

Jewish population at Ephesos. Although inscriptional evidence is largely late and meagre at best¹⁶, literary sources provide a coherent political narrative¹⁷.

Jews settled in Ephesos by the reign of Antiochus II Theos (262-246 B.C.)¹⁸. At the end of the Republican period, in response to the envoy Hyrcanus II, Dolabella in 43 B.C. granted the Jews at Ephesos exemption from military service and allowed them to keep native customs and rites and to make offerings for sacrifices¹⁹. Around 14 B.C. M. Vipsanius Agrippa wrote to the city officials in Ephesos ordering the safe conduct of the Temple Tax to Jerusalem and, further, that no one should compell Jews to appear in court on the Sabbath²⁰. In a separate and perhaps subsequent dispute between the Greek city authorities and the Jews of the Ionian cities the Greeks petitioned Agrippa that they alone might enjoy citizenship, and claimed that "if the Jews were to be 'συγγενεῖς' they should worship the Ionians' gods²¹. Further Jewish delegations sent to Augustus after Agrippa's death prove that Greek attacks upon the civic status and rights of Jews in Asia did not subside. A fragment of Augustus' response is preserved in which the right of collecting the Temple Tax and sending it to Jerusalem was reaffirmed²². A later attack elicited a letter from the proconsul Jullus Antonius between 9 and 2 B.C. reminding the city authorities that both Agrippa and Augustus had ordered the safe collection and passage of the Temple Tax²³. Finally, Augustus in 2/3 A.D. was forced to publish a comprehensive edict outlining Jewish rights, to be inscribed on the wall of the temple of imperial cult in Pergamon²⁴.

Behind the dispute over the Temple Tax fought out before Roman tribunals between resident Jews and the Greek authorities in the Greek cities

¹⁶ All evidence: Ἰουδαῖοι, *I. Ephesos* Ia, 46, 5 (5/6th c. A.D.); V, 1676, 4-5 (early 3rd c. A.D.); 1677, 7 (2nd c. A.D.); VII, 2, 3822, 1-2; 4135, 25-26 (6th c. A.D.); Ἰουδαῖα *I. Ephesos* III, 665, 9 (2nd c. A.D.); 713, 6 (early 2nd c. A.D.).

¹⁷ Cf. A. Kraabel, "Judaism in Western Asia Minor Under the Roman Empire," unpublished thesis, Harvard Divinity School (1968), pp. 51-60; E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule*, Leiden (1976), pp. 120-43.

¹⁸ Josephus, *Against Apion* II, 39; *Jewish Antiquities* XII, 125; hereafter *A.J.*

¹⁹ *A.J.* XIV, 223-227.

²⁰ *A.J.* XVI, 167-168.

²¹ *A.J.* XVI, 58-59; XII, 125-126.

²² *A.J.* XVI, 166, 171; *Leg.* 315.

²³ *A.J.* XVI, 172.

²⁴ *A.J.* XVI, 162-165; Ancyra in the text is an inept restoration. I thank F. Millar for pointing this out.

lay the more fundamental issue of Jewish civic status²⁵. From the point of view of the Greek authorities the Jews enjoyed all of the benefits of life in the Greek cities without having the concomitant obligations. And this inequality seemed to be sanctioned by the Roman authorities. Hence the city authorities in Ephesos, "the old offender,"²⁶ frequently challenged the religious and civic rights of the resident Jews. They fought either to exclude or include them totally from the seats of the *ekklēsia* to the pronaos of the temple of Artemis. "If the Jews were to be their fellows, they should worship the Ionians' gods."²⁷

This is the background of dispute over citizen status stretching back into the first century B.C. against which the author of the *Acts*' omission of Demetrios' office title must be seen. A *neopoios* who incited a riot against a proselytizing Jew would immediately evoke memories of this conflict. Further, if this passage is read in the light of a generalized historical debate over Jewish civic status within the Greek cities, the appearance of Alexandros, put forth by the Jews, to make an apology, comes into sharper focus. Alexandros probably wished to dissociate the Jewish community from Paul²⁸. The Jews at Ephesos could guess the consequences of Paul - a Jew by birth - debunking the religious beliefs of the Greek population. A mob might make no distinction between Jews and Christians, and organized Greek attacks upon Jews at Alexandria within living memory provided a compelling warning²⁹. A *neopoios* had a complaint which might interest a proconsul. A greedy silversmith did not. A significant omission perhaps, the choice of an author interweaving apologetic drama and narrative history, exposes technique and purpose: the evangelical message determines the selection of the facts.

²⁵ Smallwood, p. 143.

²⁶ Smallwood, p. 142.

²⁷ Josephus, *A.J.* XII, 125-126.

²⁸ The "usual" view according to Haenchen, p. 574 n. 7.

²⁹ Smallwood, p. 224ff.

ÖZET

İsa'nın havarilerinden Pol, Efes kentini İ.S. I. yy.'da ziyaret etti. Bu ziyaret gümüş ustası Demetrios adında bir kişinin başını çektiği ayaklanmaya neden oldu. Azizlerin İşleri adlı kitabın yazarına göre, Demetrios açgözlü, olay çıkartan, Pol'ün yeni dine adam kazanmasının kazancı üzerinde yapacağı etkiden başka bir şey düşünmeyen bir kişidir. Ama Efes yazıtları Demetrios'un başka nedenlerle de hareket ettiğini düşündüren belgeler vermektedir. Demetrios belki de bir *neopoios*'tu: Artemis tapınağının eşyasından sorumlu, kente yeni yurttaşlar kazandırmada aktif görev yüklenmiş bir devlet yetkilisidir. Kentte oturan Yahudilerle Yunanlı yetkililer, Yahudilerin yurttaşlık hakları konusunda bir yüzyıldan daha çok bir süreden beri birbirleriyle mücadele ediyorlardı. Azizlerin İşleri 19.23-41'de sözü edilen gümüş ustalarının ayaklanmasının asıl nedeni de bu olabilir. Kitabın yazarı, Demetrios'un bir *neopoios* olduğunu okurlarına açıklamamayı yeğlemiştir. Çünkü o, bu çatışmayı Romalı yetkililerin desteklediği Aziz Pol'le açgözlü Yunanlılar arasında geçen dramatik bir senaryo olarak sunmak istiyordu.

