DEMETRIOS OF ETHESOS: SILVERSMITH AND NEOPHOIOS?

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In the middle of the first century A.D. the Apostle Paul visited Ephesos and caused a not led by Demetrios, a silversmith making silver temples of Artemis. 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. 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. 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!” 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

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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 assembly 2.

More than the ascribed avarice may have motivated Demetrios. In 1890 E.L. Hicks combined the fragments of a stelè published earlier by J.T. Wood in which the neopoioi of a year were honored by the Boule and (probably) the demos of Ephesos 3. 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 ἐνωτός in line 4) was Demetrios the silversmith of Acts 19.23-41. Both dating and identification

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may be doubted. The appearance of Πωθικον Περιγένους του (Περιγένους), the later Τ. Φλάουος Περ γένους υιός Πωθικον in lines 11-12, an άσιάρκης and άρχιερεύς της Άσιας during the reign of Trajan arouses suspicion-mitigated somewhat by his achievement of equestrian status as early as the reign of Domitian.\(^4\) Also, the Demetrios in line 4 appears to be a city official whose office would provide a date for the inscription.\(^5\) He is not definitely a neopoios; the Demetrios of lines 6-7, “Δημήτριος Μηνωφίλου Τριφονίας βορεύς.”, indubitably is.\(^6\) 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 Ephesus composed a συνεδριον or συναγωγή.\(^7\) Beginning in the Hellenistic period they were charged with inscribing the names of new citizens on the wall of the Artemisium.\(^8\) Around 300 B.C. the neopoioi appear recommending the good will and enthusiasm of Melanthios, an officer who is to receive citizenship\(^9\), and recommending citizenship for Euphronius, an officer in the army of Prepelaos, who captured Ephesus 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


\(^5\) *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.

\(^7\) συνεδριον of neopoioi at Ephesus: *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, 11; 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 Φλαυνετος οτεν (line 1); the same man who introduced the citizenship decree for Nikagoras of Rhodes in 300 B.C. (*I. Ephesos*, V, 1453, 11): 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 1836f; *KL. Pauly* IV, 1127; J. and L. Robert, *Journal des Savants*, (1976) 171 ff. no. 72. The citizenship decree for Euphronios must post-date 302 B.C.
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 *eikónas* and *ápexikoní蚂* 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 *Boulé* and *demos* 12. And two of the *neopoioi* also were to be present during the cleaning of all statue copies 13.

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 Artemis 14.

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 *eπινοια* "prosperity", (*Acts* 19.25f.) leaves no place for the well-attested and historically prior 15 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

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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; *αθικερετοι* implies election in a citizen assembly: *I. Ephesos* III, 940, 4; 950, 1; 957, 11-12; 961, 3; 963, 3; VI, 2926, 1 (7); 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*, "συνιστημελουμένων" cf. *I. Ephesos* la 27 (Salutaris bequest) 48, 209, 269-70, 423 (560 absent), and 560-61 (full formula).
13 *I. Ephesos* Ia, 27, 543-44.
Jewish population at Ephesos. Although inscriptional evidence is largely late and meagre at best\textsuperscript{16}, literary sources provide a coherent political narrative\textsuperscript{17}.

Jews settled in Ephesos by the reign of Antiochus II Theos (262-246 B.C.)\textsuperscript{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 sacrifices\textsuperscript{19}. 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 compel Jews to appear in court on the Sabbath\textsuperscript{20}. 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 'συνήγερται' they should worship the Ionians' gods\textsuperscript{21}. 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 reaffirmed\textsuperscript{22}. 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 Tax\textsuperscript{23}. 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 Pergamon\textsuperscript{24}.

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

\textsuperscript{16} All evidence: Ιουδαίοι, \textit{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.); 'Ιουδαίοι Ι. Ephesos III, 665, 9 (2nd c. A.D.); 712, 6 (early 2nd c. A.D.).


\textsuperscript{18} Josephus, \textit{Against Apion} II, 39; \textit{Jewish Antiquities} XII, 125; hereafter \textit{A.J.}

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{A.J.} XIV, 223-227.

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{A.J.} XVI, 167-168.

\textsuperscript{21} \textit{A.J.} XVI, 58-59; XII, 125-126.

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{A.J.} XVI, 166, 171; \textit{Leg.} 315.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{A.J.} XVI, 172.

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

\textit{Beitreaten C. I.,} 36
lay the more fundamental issue of Jewish civic status\textsuperscript{25}. 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,"\textsuperscript{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 \textit{ekklēsia} to the pronaos of the temple of Artemis. "If the Jews were to be their fellows, they should worship the Ionions' gods."\textsuperscript{27}

This is the background of dispute over citizen status stretching back into the first century B.C. against which the author of the \textit{Acts}’ omission of Demetrios’ office title must be seen. A \textit{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 Paul\textsuperscript{28}. 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 warning\textsuperscript{29}. A \textit{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.

\textsuperscript{25} Smallwood, p. 143.
\textsuperscript{26} Smallwood, p. 142.
\textsuperscript{27} Josephus, \textit{A.J.} XII, 125-126.
\textsuperscript{28} The "usual" view according to Haenchen, p. 574 n. 7.
\textsuperscript{29} Smallwood, p. 224ff.
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