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«Scoppiò un grande tumulto» (At 19:23–40). Efeso, la ‘Via’ e gli argentieri: studio esegetico e storico-giuridico. Presentazione di Valerio Marotta. By Paolo Costa.

Torino: G. Giappichelli, 2021. Pp. xxii + 563. Price €70 (pbk). ISBN 978-88-921-3945-9. Price €59.99 (ebook). ISBN 978-88-921-9628-5.

Reviewed by: LUKE MACNAMARA OSB, *Glenstal Abbey / St Patrick’s Pontifical University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare*

This very fine volume is a revision of a doctoral thesis presented in 2021 at the Pontifical Biblical Institute under the direction of Professors Dean Béchar and Marc Rastoin. The author, both a qualified jurist and biblical scholar, has extensively deployed the tools of both disciplines to bring new clarity, especially regarding the legal processes, to the Ephesian ‘mob scene’ in Acts 19:23–40.

In a brief introduction, the project is described as multidisciplinary, involving both diachronic (textual, source, and redaction criticism) and synchronic methods (literary, narrative, and rhetorical criticism). The text is closely analysed allowing its exegetical questions to emerge from, *inter alia*, the legal, economic, civil, social, and religious references. These are then carefully explored with extensive recourse to extra biblical sources, including administrative and legal documents, literature, inscriptions, and papyri. Examples from literature of applications of the law allow for a more historically founded exegesis of the text, which itself so richly illustrates urban life of a Greek city of the Eastern Empire. A literary and theological interpretation of Acts 19:23–40 within both Acts and the wider Lukan corpus is provided in a unified and holistic reading. The expansive digressions to reconstruct the context and setting are amply rewarded with a fuller appreciation of the text’s complex dynamics.

Following the introduction which sets out succinctly the overall project, the first chapter explores the general Ephesian context of the passage, the history of this important city, proud custodian of the Artemision (temple of Artemis), and seat of the proconsul of the province of Asia. Since contemporary documents (including Acts 19) attest to actual or potential public interventions by Roman authorities in the urban administration, the city appears not to have enjoyed *civitas libera* status. The numismatic evidence points to the close rapport between the Artemision and the Roman state, a rapport

comprising economics, religion, and imperial propaganda. Two broadly contemporary inscriptions, the edict of Paullus Fabius Persicus (44 CE) and the decree of the Ephesian δῆμος (popular assembly) regarding the foundation of Caius Vibius Salutaris (104 CE) are closely examined. The edict includes measures to protect the Artemision from mismanagement by either the cultic personnel or urban administration, showing the readiness of the provincial governor to intervene. The decree confirms the central position of the Artemis cult in the city, providing money to support her cultic celebrations in tandem with those for the empire and city. Thereby, the religious and traditional Ephesian civic identity is fused, in a powerful propaganda move, with that of Rome. In such a context, the local administration would seek to maintain order and preclude any Roman intervention, such as with the recent edict of Persicus.

Chapter two expositis the delimitation and structure of the passage, with the title (v23), Demetrius's inflammatory address which incites the mob (v24–27), the description of the disorder (v28–34), and the irenic address of the γραμματεὺς (city's chief clerk) which restores calm (v35–40). The philological analysis of the 'mob' terminology in the title and passage demonstrates a portrait coherent with contemporary sources notably, Philo and Josephus. The rhetorical technique of ἐνάργεια further contributes to a vivid mob scene. Although the passage's title references 'the way', the focus is upon the reaction to the Christian community within the religious, political, and administrative Graeco-Roman world, which explains the absence of Christian teaching in this passage.

Chapter three performs a close reading of Demetrius's intervention. The direct and indirect characterisation fits very well the profile of a leader of an association of silversmiths and artisans at Ephesus. The precise reference to τεχνῖται (artisans) and ἐργάται (workers) reveals the complexities of the internal organization of artisanal businesses (confirmed by evidence from contemporary Egyptian papyri), involving entrepreneurs such as Demetrius. Philological and rhetorical analyses show how the speech is crafted to incite the mob, through a putative defence of the goddess, the temple, and the earnings of the silversmiths. Finally, the legal framework of the association of Ephesian silversmiths is examined within the context of Graeco-Roman sources. While the associations are often positively viewed as vehicles for social cohesion, they also occasion disturbances, and Acts 19 is regarded by many ancient historians as the *locus classicus* of riots caused by artisanal associations.

Chapter four examines the complex unfolding of the riot in the central section of the passage, circumscribed by the double acclamation to Artemis. The riot expands with the seizing of Gaius and Aristarchus, members of the Christian community, while later disciples and Paul's friends, the Asiarchs, dissuade him from going to the theatre. Contemporary sources indicate that the Asiarchs were local dignitaries who presided over the κοινόν (provincial council) of Asia and often mediated between the city and the Roman authorities. The mention of Paul and the Asiarchs is ascribed to Lukan redaction, possibly for apologetic ends, showcasing Paul's impressive connections. The later intervention by Alexander is eminently plausible, given the need to dissociate the Jewish community from the disturbance and thereby protect its privileged social and legal position in Ephesus. The rapid succession of characters and the awkward syntax might have been emphasized more as narrative devices to underscore the tumult of the crowd.

Chapter five performs a very fine rhetorical analysis of the address of the γραμματεὺς which leads to the dissolution of the illegal gathering. The address includes the *captatio benevolentiae* and *laudatio urbis* before later disallowing a series of hyperbolic charges and expositing possible legal avenues and outcomes, including the risk of provoking the governor's intervention. The profusion of information concerning the Ephesian setting is thoroughly examined, especially the judicial setting. The roles and functions of respectively, the γραμματεὺς, the convened assembly, and the proconsul, and the scope of local and Roman law are examined. Comparison with contemporary sources reveals the impressive plausibility of Luke's portrayal, employing precise legal terminology, of the officials' roles and competencies, and possible legal avenues.

Chapter six proposes to contextualize the mob scene passage within the legislation governing professional associations and the suppression of their illicit gatherings. While most commentators propose the application of the *lex Iulia de collegis* for dealing with riots associated with associations, Costa, following a very extensive trawl of contemporary legal, literary, and documentary sources, posits instead the application of norms punishing crimes such as *vis* or *maiestas*. The γραμματεὺς in his address adroitly weighs the legal options and risks for Demetrius and his group, and for the missionaries, with references to the competencies of the urban assembly, local and Roman law, and possible intervention of the governor. The rhetorical and political flourish is sufficient to appease the mob.

It is hard to do justice to such a monumental work in a short review. The most sustained attention is given to diachronic methods, and in particular, the historico-legal background, with a wealth of illuminating material brought into conservation with Acts 19. The full range of ancient sources, including, numismatics, papyri, inscriptions, documents, legal treatises, literature, etc. are judiciously exploited. Synchronic methods are deftly employed, especially the rhetorical analyses. Sustained careful attention is applied to the asperities of the text, both text critical issues, grammatical and syntactical challenges, and philological questions. The readings of the Western text are consistently exploited for any potential additional information they might provide. The author has a wide range of contemporary interlocutors including Anglo-American, German, French, and Italian scholars, while also drawing from a comparably extensive range of Graeco-Roman sources. Indeed, the bibliography exceeds 80 pages. Often opposing views are challenged with newly adduced evidence. New insights are stated humbly, often acknowledging how earlier scholars have prepared the way.

It is to be regretted that there are no illustrations within the volume. Maps of ancient Ephesus, showing the location of the significant inscriptions (of particular relevance since the Salutaris inscription is situated in the theatre and the edict of Persicus in the agora), images of significant inscriptions, depictions of coins, and diagrams showing the interrelationship of officials and of laws would have helped summarize what was at times a dense narrative.

This fine volume reveals the benefit of an interdisciplinary approach to a passage such as Acts 19:23–40, which contains not only valuable literary and theological elements but a wealth of information regarding the sociohistorical context and in particular the historico-legal context of Ephesus. The analysis of this passage provides for a more precise understanding of how Paul's mission developed in the province of Asia, while

also yielding a better appreciation of the balance of relations between the urban administration and imperial governance in the early principate. Of direct interest to ancient historians, particularly those who special in Graeco-Roman law, and scholars interested in the social background of the New Testament, it will also be of significant interest to scholars working in the area of Luke-Acts.

Lively Oracles of God: Perspectives on the Bible and Liturgy. Edited by Gordon Jeanes and Bridget Nichols. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Academic, 2022. Pp. xvii + 269. Price £26.51 (pbk). ISBN 978-0-8146-6722-4.

Reviewed by: LIAM TRACEY OSM, *St Patrick's Pontifical University, Maynooth*

This present volume is the latest to appear in the prestigious collection of the Alcuin Club Collections. Unlike many volumes in the series, this is an edited volume with contributors coming from different Christian traditions and indeed places around the world to reflect on the relationship between the Bible and liturgy.

The collection opens with a very brief foreword by Paul Bradshaw, which in a succinct way poses the questions that will be a feature of many of the following essays. The rise of biblical illiteracy; do lectionaries, in the desire to proclaim more Scripture over a number of years, do so at the cost of the role scripture plays in worship? Bradshaw rightly emphasizes the importance of the nature of the specific rite where Scripture is proclaimed; it is a new context of rite, a given occasion and made up of this congregation, which may be a group of strangers or a close knit community who worship frequently together. Thus, they share what he calls a liturgical 'language' or 'script', though he rightly observes that how each participant understands the rite will vary, from those who compiled it, to those who led it, to those who participated in it (p. x). The editors continue this reflection in their preface, which recalls that the Bible is a book as much prayed and sung, as read. Readings from Scripture form part of every act of worship even when they may be paraphrased. 'It would be more accurate to say that the liturgy is the primary means by which the Bible lives in the life of the Church' (p. xi). But how that happens and how it happened in the past of the Church and how it might occur today is one of the major tasks of the volume. There is no doubt that scholarship today would tend to respond to these questions differently than past generations. The editors recall some of the important contributions to this debate over the last 70 years. How does Scripture encounter those who gather to worship and what does it do to them, the perennial and difficult question of liturgical formation, underpin these works. It is a 1992 article of Paul Bradshaw that gives shape to the first part of the volume, and is foundational to the articles that follow. How is Scripture presented to worshippers and how do they hear it? What does it provoke in them, especially those who have little experience of Scripture and the life of the Church?

Cally Hammond is the first to treat this question by arguing that: 'The most habitual aspects of liturgical performance often deserve the closest attention yet receive