

## Imperial Politics and Religion in the Mid-Fifth-Century East

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A meeting at the imperial court in 432/3 allows us to examine the complex interrelationship of religion and politics within imperial government in the mid-fifth century. The delegates to the Council of Ephesus in 431 had fallen out amongst themselves. An ecclesiastical resolution was clearly impractical since this quarrel was the result of a church council. So resolution fell to the emperor. Theodosius' initial attempt to restore unity was in 432/3, when he ordered the *quaestor sacri palatii* Domitianus to tell the Cilician bishops like Helladius of Tarsus to recognize their patriarch, John of Antioch, or be exiled. This order was countermanded by the eastern praetorian prefect, Taurus, who warned that it would cause disturbances and thus affect the flow of taxes from the province.

Some of these themes have been examined recently by Fergus Millar in *A Greek Roman Empire*, though that work focuses more on the machinery of government than on the practicalities of politics. This incident is here examined in an attempt to understand how contemporaries perceived the interface of politics and religion, a question that needs to be addressed in both the provinces of the Roman Empire and in the imperial capital.