

Antioch and the Intersection between Religious Factionalism, Place, and Power

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One of the oldest and most influential Christian sees in the Mediterranean world until the late sixth century CE, Antioch offers an opportunity to study the connection between religion and power from a multitude of angles. In this paper we examine two instances occurring in the late fourth and sixth centuries, in which churches at Antioch play a significant role in the dynamics of Christian factionalism and in which the buildings themselves become part of the discourse of power. The two cases considered are the Church of St. Babylas, constructed by Meletius in the late 370s (completed under his successor Flavian) and the substantial church building program that took place at Antioch under Justinian. In the first example we observe a bishop asserting the authority of his particular faction of Christianity, in the second an emperor attempting to win support for his particular faction of Christianity in a climate of resistance.