

Urban Violence in Fifth Century Antioch: Riot Culture and Dynamics in Late Antique Eastern Mediterranean Cities

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History

In the early fourth century, during the reign of the first Christian emperor, Constantine the Great (AD 324-337), Antioch was one of the largest and most important political, cultural, and religious centers of the Greco-Roman and Christian world.¹ Christians, Jews, Pagans, Greeks, Syrians, et al, vied for control within the city. This form of internal urban violence and armed revolt were common in the Greek East. Antioch was a city attempting to transition from a Greco-Roman Pagan society to an orthodox Christian society in a recently Christian empire.² The Persian invasion and a deficiency of source material hinder further historical inquiry of this period until the later writings of John Chrysostom and Libanius in the mid-fourth century. Until the natural disasters of the early sixth century AD and the subsequent Persian and Arab invasions, Antioch flourished as the jewel of the East, and its people fought for domination and control of its wealth, power, and authority.³

During the fifth century, riots erupted in the city due to the transition towards becoming a truly Christian empire. Questions surrounding Christian doctrine and authority across the empire and region fueled the rhetoric, while economics and politics fed the violence. The rivalries that existed, and incited these popular displays of violence, must be understood in an interdisciplinary and broader

¹ Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 342; Ammianus Marcellinus XIV.8: “a city known throughout the world, incomparable in the resources imported and produced there.”

² Frank R. Rombley, “Christian Demograph in the Territorium of Antioch (4th-5th c.): Observations on the Epigraphy.” In Isabella Sandwell and Huskinson, Janet. (eds.), *Culture and Society in Later Roman Antioch* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2004), 59-85. See Glanville Downey, “The size of the Population of Antioch.” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 89 (1958), 84-91, on the size and prominence of Antioch in the late antique world.

³ Averil Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity: AD 395-600* (London: Routledge, 1993), 162. Antioch “the second city of the eastern empire, was hard hit by plague, earthquake and Persian invasion in the mid-sixth century, followed by the deportation of many of its citizens to Persia, not to mention the seventh- century invasions and the Arab conquest.”

manner than previous scholarship has provided. By integrating the most recent scholarship on the region with the social sciences, a picture of combined political and religious hostility emerges - one that illustrates the uses, character, and motives behind late antique urban riots. The religious foundation and justification for violence is an important feature. However, it should be viewed as existing in the environment of a pre-modern world devoid of any separation between religion and state. The most prominent and influential political leaders were those who grounded their authority in faith and a connection with a religious ideology. Religion is then a means by which communities organize their world. Any division between religion and secular authority is artificial and a misunderstanding of the connection between these features of society.⁴

The fact that Christianity emerged as the politically dominant ideology resulted in the reliance by scholars on Christian primary sources. This significantly influenced the scholarship connecting violence with the religious controversies and politics of Late Antiquity. Christian authors wrote the majority of the sources on the fifth century. Due to the connection of these materials with early Christianity, they have been principally interpreted by religious scholars and have resulted in a division in modern scholarship between religious and secular interpretations of late antique violence.⁵ A later development of a secular school has created an artificial division and sought to emphasize the cultural manifestations of nationalism through violence.⁶ The religious and secular interpretations need to be combined to

⁴ Karl Marx, "The Jewish Question." in Robert C. Tucker. (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader* 2nd ed. (Princeton: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 26-52. A description of the relation between religion and the state with implications for the status of a citizen within a secular or religious society; 38-39: "What prevails in the so-called Christian state is not man but alienation. The only man who counts- the King- is specifically differentiated from other men and is a religious being associated directly with heaven and with God. The relations which exist here are relations stilled based upon faith. The religious spirit is still not really secularized. But the religious spirit cannot be really secularized. For what is it but the non-secular form of a stage in the development of the human spirit? ... The basis of this state is not Christianity but the human basis of Christianity. Religion remains the ideal, non-secular consciousness of its members, because it is the idea form of the state of human development which has been attained." See Bryan R. Wilson, *Religious Toleration & Religious Diversity*. (Santa Barbara, California: Institute for the Study of American Religion, 1995). 15, for an example of the religious camp that delegates secular concerns to political and economic histories, disregarding their intimate social connections to the religious controversies and movements of the period.

⁵ A.M.H. Jones, "Were Ancient Heresies Disguised Social Movements." *The Journal of Theological Studies* 10.2 (1959): 280-298.

⁶ E.L. Woodward, *Christianity and Nationalism in the Later Roman Empire* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1916), 41-66; 94-103; Edward Gibbon, *The Christians and the Fall of Rome* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994). Emerging from enlightenment thinking Gibbon

account for the leadership of each city, region, sect, and religion who struggled for domination and power in the sacred and actual space and place of Antioch. This process cannot be restricted to or characterized exclusively by either school of thought.

Political/religious leaders used their authority to advance their cause and support their own power. The involvement and opinion of the population could be an influential factor capable of altering politics and theology. Using the theatre claue, social welfare, education, patronage, and political maneuvering Christian and Pagan authorities sought control of the masses.⁷ This power provided them with real muscle to coerce others and exert larger influence in the empire. The constant shifting of imperial religious preference, after Christianity achieved domination, resulted in a period of conflict between the provincial elites and the emperor. The emperors and their chosen orthodoxies sought the same form of political/religious authority and legitimacy. The major difference is in the imperial control of the military. Through imperial patronage, intimidation, and suppression Constantinople attempted to propagate its orthodoxy and authority as a second Rome.⁸

The direct involvement of the government in the conflict resulted in two consequences. First, the often-violent oppression of other bishops and their religious interpretation stirred popular dissent against the emperor and his orthodoxy. Increased suppression corresponds to greater disaffection and an increase in nationalist and religious hostility. Popular sentiment can then be organized by local authorities and elites to start riots. These displays of unrest demonstrated enough popular support against the emperor as to influence the larger conflict, and to protect the authorities and elites against imperial tyranny. Second, imperial patronage is more often conveyed as fleeting favoritism and any attempt by the emperor to reach a compromise between rival factions is anathema. The vicissitude of imperial preference resulted in an environment of constant factionalism and regionalism.

Riots can then be seen as an attempt by local elites to organize society by the means available to them and access popular support through the preexisting

represents an early addition to the secular school later taken up by Woodward and later historians influenced by Marxism.

⁷ Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity AD 150-750* (New York. W.W. Norton & Company, 1971), 11-96, 137-150.; Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 3-118.

⁸ Jillian Schwedler, "Islamic Identity," 6. Religious "identity is also the product of many different historical, political, and social processes. To understand particular instances of" religious "identity, one must therefore look at discrete political, social, and economic contexts through which particular Islamic identities have been forged."

structures of society, such as the theatre. The motives behind popular involvement in urban violence are difficult to extract directly from the sources available, but a consideration of patronage networks, the larger political milieu, factionalism, group formation and identity further informs a rational understanding of popular involvement. The connection between the Greens and Blues, the theatre claue, ethnic, national, and religious identity further inform this analysis and will be approached separately.⁹

This study intends to explore the history of riots. It attempts to uncover the way in which the history of those normally excluded from the larger narrative take shape.¹⁰ Although there have been significant advances in historical scholarship, the utilization of the social sciences by historians, to understand non-elites, and those lacking any practical power, is a relatively new and under-appreciated advance in history.¹¹ Antioch, serves as a case study for this analysis. Its location, events, and importance have been understated in past and present scholarship. The quantity of available primary sources and the fact that Antioch was not the imperial capitol, but still an important government and religious center, allows it to be representative of the empire and Syria. These characteristics provide less source material than other locations but allow Antioch to escape the corruption by the government, as in Constantinople, or the unique variations of Alexandria.¹²

The fifth century and the decades surrounding it provide a significant supply of source material capable of illustrating this crucial juncture in the development of the Christian church and hierarchy.¹³ Pagan authors such as Libanius, Ammianus Marcelinus and the Emperor Julian will be vital for the end of the fourth century while Chrysostom and Malalas will provide a Christian counterweight. The extant sources concentrate on the period immediately leading up to, and following the Riot of the Statues in AD 387, and again towards the beginning of the sixth century looking back. For this reason the Riot of the Statues and the riot resulting in the destruction of the Synagogue at Daphne (a suburb of Antioch) will be the focal

⁹ Timothy E. Gregory, *Vox Populi: Popular Opinion and Violence in the Religious Controversies of the Fifth Century A.D.* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1979). An articulation of the relationship between political and religious ideology, violence, and popular sentiment provides answers to questions about the role of leadership and the extent and dissemination of popular knowledge. "Why do urban crowds turn to violence?" in Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions- Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

¹⁰ Timothy E. Gregory, *Vox Populi.*, 5. *Demos*, *ochlos*, and *hoi polloi* (the many) all serve as ways in which authors used different Greek terms to refer to the same grouping of people involved in the *tarache* or *stasis* (riot/disturbance) of the cities.

¹¹ George Rudé, *The Crowd in History- A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England 1730-1848* (New York: John Wiley & Son Inc, 1964), 9.

¹² Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria.*, 3-13, 342

¹³ *Ibid.*, 35-45, 342

points around which the analysis will concentrate. In order to articulate the circumstances of the region and time in which these events occur, it is necessary to take a larger look at the Eastern Roman Empire, patronage networks, as well as the political theology of the leaders and bishops involved. In order to access the voice of the people, contemporary social science models will be required and consequently adapted to the environment of Late Antiquity.

Antioch on the Orontes, “Antioch the Great,” “the Queen of the East,” “the Beautiful” founded in the third century BC by Seleucus I Nicator rose to prominence in the ancient world as a center of Hellenistic culture and as the capital of Seleucid royal power.¹⁴ The city’s position on the Orontes River, with its use of the Amunq valley and its many tributaries, as well as a location at the confluence between Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, and Palestine, provided this metropolis with significant advantages from its very inception. It had a large rural hinterland to draw from, a navigable river with access to the Mediterranean and a location along the cultural and trading crossroads of the Near East.¹⁵ Later, in 64 BC, Pompey formally brought Syria and its capital, Antioch, under Roman control.¹⁶ Earthquakes, fires, Persian invasions, and riots swept over the city during this period, but until 637-638 CE Antioch remained an imperial Roman city, one of its eastern Mediterranean gems.

The fifth century was a pivotal period of transition for the Eastern Roman Empire, the Sassanian Empire, and the entire region of what is today the Middle East. Christian ascendancy had become a reality and Emperor Constantine’s reign had initiated a new era for an increasingly Christian empire in the fourth century. From this point on, a rivalry existed between the Christian church and the pagan predecessors of the imperial apparatus.¹⁷ Alongside Rome, Constantinople, and

¹⁴ Bruce M. Metzger, “Antioch-on-the-Orontes.” *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 11.4 (Dec. 1948): 72; Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria.*, 46-118.

¹⁵ Andrea U. De Giorgi, “The Formation of the Roman Landscape: the case of Antioch.” *Journal of Roman Archaeology- Articles, Archaeological Reports and Notes* 20 (2007): 382-290; Strabo. 16.2.7; J.H.W.G Liebeschuetz, *Antioch- City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 128. Commerce on the Orontes was a major asset to the city.

¹⁶ Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria.*, 136-151.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 342; Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion.*, 35-117. For a articulate survey of the shift away from the pagan Greco-Roman emphasis which gave additional importance to individual bishops who could assume authority and control while adapting to an environment where aristocratic *paideia* (παιδεία) no longer legitimated authority; Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity- Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2006). An ethno-social treatment of Alexandria serves as a significant comparative tool against which to understand the cultural and political life of Antioch and the eastern Mediterranean.

Alexandria, Antioch stood as one of the largest and most important political, cultural, and religious centers of the Greco-Roman and Christian world.¹⁸

Antioch in the fifth century was a city struggling against its many enemies, primarily factional grievances from within. A larger struggle also existed against the imperial power of the emperor, his chosen orthodoxy, political/religious oppression and against self-definition. The formative issues regarding the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the empire led to interpretive differences and conflict. Food shortages, manipulative Pagan and Christian elites, natural disasters, and invasion created an environment ripe for violent manifestations of unrest. Factions arose along ethnic, religious, political, and class lines. These divisions and the grievances were expressed in the theatre and the theatre clagues of the Hellenistic world. The theatre provided a venue with the ability to bring these grievances to a fever pitch, and eruption in many forms of violent public displays and riots.

In AD 324, Philogonius, the Bishop of Antioch passed away, and as part of Constantine's effort to unify the Christian church, councils and synods were held in the hope of reaching a consensus. The first synod occurred in AD 325 in Antioch. Eustathius was elected the bishop of Antioch and an anti-Arian creed was published. Late in AD 325, the Council of Nicaea continued the work of Antioch reaching certain resolutions towards establishing orthodoxy while assigning special status to Antioch and Alexandria. The latter act would result in a century long conflict between the two sees.¹⁹ Before AD 330, Eustathius accused a rival bishop, Eusebius Pamphilus, of heterodoxy, as according to Nicaea. Though this conflict is seemingly a dispute over orthodoxy, there are important repercussions of this rivalry, first established here, between the authorities of Antioch and Alexandria. Eustathius was in turn accused of the Sabellian heresy, and another Synod lead by Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea was organized to resolve the matter.²⁰

Socrates Scholasticus informs us in some detail of these disputes with an interpretative eye and an understanding of the meaning and events that lay beneath the surface. Both Eustathius and Eusebius Pamphilus are believed to have held to the orthodoxy of the fourth century and agreed on the nature of God (*homoousis*), however, as rival authorities, "they could not agree among themselves, and therefore could in no way endure to be at peace." After the Synod at Antioch convened in AD 330, a decision was reached to depose the current Bishop

¹⁸ Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*. For a comprehensive history of Antioch, see W.H.C. Frend, *The Early Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991). For a comprehensive treatment of the intrigues and rivalries existing within the developing Christian Church, see Kevin Butcher. *Roman Syria and the Near East* (London: The British Museum Press, 2003).

¹⁹ Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, 350-352.

²⁰ Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History*, Chapter I.XXIII

Eustathius. This verdict enraged a portion of the population and made the internal tension and conflict of factions and their leaders more explicit. Socrates plainly states that the deposition of bishop by synods, councils, or the displeasure of the emperor, was a common occurrence and that “the bishops are accustomed to do this in all cases, accusing and pronouncing impious those whom they depose, but not explaining their warrant for so doing.” The internal wrangling of the Christian church and the political nature of this fighting, devoid of religious grounding, was apparent to observers like Socrates.²¹

The importance of this infighting is the violence that followed the event. As a result, riots burst out across the city and

so fierce a dissension was kindled, as to threaten the whole city with destruction. The populace was divided into two factions, one of which vehemently contended for...Eusebius...the other equally insisted on the reinstatement of Eustathius... a military force was arrayed on both sides with hostile intent, so that a bloody collision would have taken place, had not God and the dread of the emperor repressed the violence of the multitude.²²

According to Socrates, Eustathius’ removal was not actually due to the Sabellian heresy, or any heresy, but rather for other “unsatisfactory reasons.” The conflict arose over Eustathius’ accusations against Eusebius of Arianism due to his connections with Origen Adamantius. The infighting demonstrates a political function of the Christian hierarchy and the synods, and the factionalism of urban violence that could result from political actions in the Church. Each leader roused support amongst those with whom his authority was connected for their wellbeing. The removal of a bishop meant that one of the most powerful patron’s of a city was being challenged and thus the community he led and benefited was also under attack.

The deposition of bishops during and following the reign of Constantine was a frequent occurrence. When an Arian Emperor assumed the throne, he would attempt to place an Arian Bishop in the three major cities. The Nicaeans would

²¹ Ibid., Chapter I.XXIII “Yet as we ourselves have discovered from various letters which the bishops wrote to one another after the Synod, the term *homoousios* troubled some of them. So that while they occupied themselves in a too minute investigation of its import, they roused the strife against each other; it seemed not unlike a contest in the dark; for neither party appeared to understand distinctly the grounds on which they calumniated one another. Those who objected to the word *homoousios*, conceived that those who approved it favored the opinion of Sabellius,”; Ibid. I.XXIV, “As some affirm [this measure was taken] for other and unsatisfactory reasons, though none other have been openly assigned: this is a matter of common occurrence.”

²² Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History*, Chapter I.XXIV.

attempt the same thing. This alternation between orthodoxy and authority resulted in a diffusion of power. Until the first decades of the fifth century there were three rival bishops all contending for authority in Antioch. The parties represented were the Nicaean followers of Eustathius, a divergent faction of Nicaean's backing the more recently deposed Milietus, and the Arian followers under their own Bishop. The three major factions courted imperial favor and the support of the people. With each subsequent emperor favor would pass to another faction. Julian's revival of Hellenism in the late fourth century temporarily united the Christians and pagan against the imperial abuses but resulted in increased imperial suppression during Julian's reign and after.²³

The constant famine resulted in food shortages and manipulative elites cornered the market in an attempt to squeeze more money from the system they dominated. Imperial intervention against price gouging and inflation amounted to little more than rhetoric and only served to infuriate the elites who then would be more interested in raising popular dissent against the emperor.²⁴ Rivalry waned towards the middle of the fifth century when compromise was reached bringing together the three factions. During the latter half of the century however the Nestorian controversy and Monophysitism tore the city apart and the policy of Justinian and others surrounding the sixth century earth quakes and Persian invasion only served to widen the divide between factions and between the emperors and the provinces.²⁵

Although the events of the early fourth century and sixth century are not within the temporal boundaries established for this analysis, the conditions that they created for the latter half of the century are vital to the discussion of urban violence during this period. The rivalry between Alexandria and Antioch, between orthodoxy and variation, and between local and imperial authorities were well established by the mid-fourth century.

In this conflict, the riots of Antioch can be seen as both the competition between factions and as an attempt of the local elites to establish themselves as the uncontested authority of Antioch and Syria. They sought to be the voice of religious and political importance in the region. Libanius provides significant evidence elucidating the conflict between a pagan revival of Hellenistic culture and the dominant Christian authorities.²⁶ In contrast to the urban violence in cities of a

²³ Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria.*, 367-559.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 419-433.

²⁵ Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria.*, 496- 559.

²⁶ Samuel N. C. Lieu, "Libanius and Higher Education at Antioch." In Isabella Sandwell and Huskinson, Janet. (eds.), *Culture and Society in Later Roman Antioch* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2004), 13-23; Tasha Vorderstrasse, "The Romanization and Christianization of the Antiochene Region: The Material Evidence from Three Sites." In Isabella Sandwell and Huskinson, Janet.

similar rank, Antioch was not exclusively defined by these religious concerns. The economic and political spheres must also be considered in Syria, as an occupied province of the Roman East with a heterogeneous population.

The church hierarchy, led by the Greco-Roman *curia* had been brought together through the fourth and fifth centuries at ecumenical councils to establish orthodoxy for Christians everywhere. Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch were the most powerful and influential episcopal sees. The various councils and synods initiated a period of religious and political conflict as divergent interpretations of scriptures and theology became apparent. Constantinople, with the authority of the emperor, led the charge in establishing orthodox practice and belief. The political and religious influence of Rome, representing what was left of the Western Roman Empire, and Constantinople was apparent in the councils. The Bishops vied for political power to support their individual followers, what they saw as true orthodoxy, and the authority of their particular episcopacy.²⁷ Christopher Haas states, “When episodes of popular violence erupted in Antioch, they did not arise from tensions among Jews, pagans, and Christians. Instead, they took the form of bread riots or faction-led insurrections against imperial authority.”²⁸ It was the practical economic and political grievances, against tyrannical authority, that are prominent in the riots of Antioch. Local religious figures lead these popular socio-religious movements in the hopes of gaining more power and challenging rivals.

The theatre clique served, in the late antique city, as an essential function in the discussion of urban violence. Entertainment venues and the professional/social organizations that arose out of their space played a significant role for both the elites and the masses in the urban space. The games and theatre were gifts to the populace from the emperor and elite patrons. They were a means by which an individual or group could advertise their beneficence, proposed public works, or policy. The elite responsibility to provide for societal endeavors from municipal and personal wealth had been the societal norm of the Greek polis and during Roman control. This system was supported by the elite control of *paideia* (παιδεία).²⁹ The success of the Christian hierarchy and the troubles of the second

(eds.), *Culture and Society in Later Roman Antioch* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2004), 86- 101.; Frank R. Trombley, “Christian Demography in the Territorium of Antioch (4th-5th c.): Observations on the Epigraphy” In Isabella Sandwell and Huskinson, Janet. (eds.), *Culture and Society in Later Roman Antioch* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2004), 59- 85.

²⁷ Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, 350. The conflict reached, “political significance of the first importance in that it developed into an effort on the part of the Arians to create a state church under the control of the emperor dominated by the political ideas of Constantine.”

²⁸ Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 9.

²⁹ See note 17 on Peter Brown.

through fourth centuries had undermined this system, and by the start of the fifth century, the largely Christian elites obstinately opposed the obligations that accompanied their wealth and status.³⁰

Libanius' *Oration LXIV*, '*In Defence of the Pantomimes*,' describes the status of theatre and games in late fourth century Antioch. Johannes Haubold and Richard Miles present an argument based on the Oration that establishes a conflict between the declining Hellenic culture and a new place for the Greek heritage in the redefined space. Entertainment had traditionally been a central part of civic and religious festivals and daily life.³¹ Troupes of dancers and choruses of actors were sponsored by patrons as an expression of their power, civic duty, and pride.³² Often competitions and rivalries ensued where one patron and his acts attempted to out shine all others. However, the tragedy and comedy of the classical and Hellenistic world had lost favor in the cities of Late Antiquity during the third century. The people's favor turned towards pantomime or dance (*orchesis*), but even this had begun to fade during the fourth century.³³ Antioch was an exception to this trend. Dance in the theatre remained strong, and Libanius and others describe the Antiochene love of festivals and theatre to the detriment of the city.³⁴

In contrast to the mixed relationship found in Libanius, the Christians of the city expressed hostility towards the theatre and its festivals. They represented a pagan past while they served as a rival source of control over the people, who were not exclusively dominated by the bishop.³⁵ Though the churches served as a

³⁰ Averil Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire: AD 284-430* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993), 174. "The era when ordinary citizen participated in decision about the running of their cities had long gone, a casualty of Roman rule in the early empire. In its place, the task fell on the *curiales*, who found it at first a privilege, then increasingly a burden, because of the financial responsibilities it implied.... there was therefore a large (and growing) lower-class population, many of whom were sustained by free food distributed or charitable hand-outs by the church." ; See for further details on patronage.

³¹ Johannes Haubold and Miles, Richard, "Communality and Theatre in Libanius' Oration LXIV In Defense of the Pantomimes." In Isabella Sandwell and Huskinson, Janet. (eds.), *Culture and Society in Later Roman Antioch* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2004), 24-34.; Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions- Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 5-23.

³² Libanius Oration XI

³³ Zosimus, *Nova Historia* 2.7 (Sourcebook)

³⁴ Libanius Oration LXI.7; Johannes Haubold and Miles, Richard, "Communality and Theatre in Libanius' Oration LXIV." 25.

³⁵ John Chrysostom, *On Statues* 15.1 "their vehement shouts, borne in the air from that place resounded against the psalms which we were singing here."; Averil Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire.*, 176. "Churches themselves were places of public assembly and even entertainment-crowds were drawn by the activities of larger- than- life preachers and politicians like Chrysostom, and clever Christian orators soon learnt the techniques of crowd manipulation and audience control."

communal space and the Bishops as societal organizers, few places or events could bring so great a portion of the population together as the theatre - capable of holding “the multitude of the city, thanks to the abundance of its tiers.”³⁶ The theatre represented a rival associated with paganism and a larger identity as part of the Greco-Roman world that the bishops of Antioch would not care to endorse while they sought sole control of the population.

While the popularity of the theatre in Antioch is clearly stated by Libanius, a more important theme in *Oration LXIV*, and others, is a discussion of the decline of Hellenism and its traditions. Libanius is the product of late antique Hellenistic culture as a sophist, rhetorician, and professor. He studied under some of the most famous teachers of his day.³⁷ As a Hellenized Syrian, he studied at the school of Athens, the birthplace of Hellenism. He then received an official appointment in Constantinople and later, out of pride and ambition, chose to return to Antioch. There, Libanius became the head of the school at Antioch and one of the most prominent teachers of his day.³⁸ During the reign of the Emperor Julian, Libanius’ writings were preoccupied with describing the municipal life of Antioch and the ways in which Hellenistic traditions had and should continue.³⁹ This coincided with Julian’s program to reestablish a Pan-Hellenic paganism to combat the tide of Christian domination. Other pagans such as Ammianus Marcellinus were not as supportive of Julian’s policy because of the intolerant methods and inconsideration for the local milieu.⁴⁰ This, however, is in contrast to the change and decline that Libanius depicts elsewhere. He acknowledges the changes that occur throughout history but provides hope that Hellenism will be reestablished throughout the Greek world in many cities similar to Antioch.⁴¹

In regards to dance, Libanius communicates an idea that it serves an important part in Antioch’s civil life and that as Haubold and Miles state, dance “is itself part of the life of the city as a whole, which it helps to structure and sustain [it].”⁴² More important than the entertainment value that it provides the city are the people who attend the theatre. The elite, the citizens, travelers, and the masses were all

³⁶ Libanius *Oration* XI.218; John Chrysostom, *De incomp.* 11

³⁷ Zenobius was one of his teachers in Antioch while prominent figures like John Chrysostom and others were directly taught by Libanius.

³⁸ Samuel N.C. Lieu, “Libanius and Higher Education at Antioch.” In Isabella Sandwell and Huskinson, Janet. (eds.), *Culture and Society in Later Roman Antioch* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2004), 13-17.

³⁹ Libanius *Oration.* XI

⁴⁰ Libanius *Oration.* I.119; Ammianus Marcellinus XXII.10.7

⁴¹ Libanius *Oration* XI, XXXI.26-28

⁴² Johannes Haubold and Miles, Richard, “Communitality and Theatre in Libanius’ *Oration LXIV*”, 30.

present in one place for entertainment, political, and religious purposes.⁴³ Herein lay the true power of the theatre.⁴⁴

During these events, the populace of a city gathered for several purposes. The first is obviously to be a part of the civic life and be entertained. Secondly, but more importantly, the theatre served as a venue for popular discontent in Antioch and across the empire. After the ritual acclamations to the emperor, gods, and local authorities, the theatre became a competition between rival factions and professional groups capable of communicating to the crowd at large.⁴⁵ These groups originally emerged as paid audience participants that would influence the feelings of the audience at large by giving their support or displeasure for a particular charioteer, actor, or dancer.⁴⁶ By the fourth and fifth centuries, they had developed into a highly experienced professional group capable of manipulating the audience or serving as its mouthpiece. There are no religious, political, or other affiliations that can be associated with these *clagues* because of the variations that existed between each city, venue, and group.⁴⁷ The Blues and Greens became dominant in Constantinople and these divisions often spilled over into other cities. The riot of AD 532, the Nika revolt, revolved around the activities of the circus factions in Constantinople. The consequence of this unrest was an imperial capitol nearly burnt to the ground, and perhaps as many as thirty thousand citizens dead in the streets at the hands of imperial troops.⁴⁸ This is perhaps the extreme example of oppressive violence emerging from the theatre,⁴⁹ but it is important to understand

⁴³ Libanius Oration LV, XXXVI and XXXVII

⁴⁴ Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions- Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976). Cameron provides an in-depth analysis of the functions and characteristics of the circus faction and theatre *claque*. It does however concentrate on Rome, Alexandria, and Constantinople.

⁴⁵ Robert Browning, "The Riot of A.D. 387 in Antioch: The Role of the Theatrical *Clagues* in the Later Empire." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 42.1-2 (1952), 17 *Euphemia*- "stylized acclamation" by "which officials were greeted by gatherings of people in the theatre... often and did end up... with trenchant criticism of, or complain against, officials actually present... demonstrations in the theatre against the shortage of bread in 385 when the *theamata* were driven off the stage by *tou demou thoruboi*"

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 16. "in origin merely a *claque*, whose business it was to stimulate and maintain applause for theatrical performers, was now using its skills and its familiarity with the people to give the lead in political demonstrations in the theatre, often expressing hostility to imperial officials"; *Ibid.*, 19. "The new "political" theatrical *clagues* may have arisen out of a reorganization on a more local basis of the machinery for theatrical performances"

⁴⁷ Libanius Oration 41.15

⁴⁸ Libanius., Oration 1.23.; Evagrius IV.32; Averil Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire.*, 174-175.

⁴⁹ For our purposes the theatre, circus, and hippodrome should be understood as synonymous due to variation of each city.

the mobilizing capacity that the professional theatre claque and circus factions could rouse.

Due to such explosive violence, Constantine brought the theatre under the control of imperial law by requiring that a record be kept regarding the sentiments of the audience. Reports were sent to the emperor under the premise that they would be used to gage the competency of imperial officials in each region.⁵⁰ The preexisting social structures of the Greek East, as represented by the popular displays of groups organized by professional claque, were capable of bringing popular involvement into church councils, theatre, and politics through threats of violence.⁵¹

Patronage can be defined as the process by which elites utilized their wealth, status, and connections to create a network of dependency in society (*philanthropia*). These networks were intended to be symbiotic reciprocal links with individuals or groups above or below and individual on the social scale. The emperor could then be seen as the leading patron of the *pater familias*, and local aristocracies across the empire were subsumed into his network. The curial class and particularly the senators of major cities were obligated through this system to spend their wealth and use their power for the benefit of their network. In return for public works and games, public food doles, career advancement, and education, those lower in rank would give support to their patron.

As the structures of patronage deteriorated under the burden of late antique economics, due largely to the imperial apparatus, constant warfare, and rising Christian hierarchy, so too did other forms of social control break down. Elites no longer were engaged in the civic life as they had been during the classical period, though they still needed the support of the people. Through the gradual elite migration toward living in their rural estates, the threats of urban life, of which there are too many to list, and the increased rivalry with Christian authority, the Pagan curia declined as described by Libanius. The largely Christian elites opposed the obligations that accompanied their wealth and status. Duty to a heretical emperor, or the well being of an empire from which they no longer benefited, resulted in a shift away from the pagan Greco-Roman emphasis. This gave additional importance during Late Antiquity, to the role of bishops who could assume authority and control while adapting to an environment where aristocratic *paideia* (παιδεία) no longer legitimated authority. According to Peter Brown, *paideia* was the,

⁵⁰ Codex Theodosius I.16.6; VIII.5.32

⁵¹ Malalas 386.14-23

traditional culture of the upper classes, as this was imparted to them through the system of education... [it was] a common ground among all members of the upper classes, the rulers and the ruled alike, and in elaborating exacting codes of courtesy and self-control, linked to the ideal of a benevolent, ... cultivated, exercise of authority.⁵²

The connection between the bishop and the new form of episcopal patronage is demonstrated in the writings of John Chrysostom.⁵³ As the authority of the bishops encompassed more of the citizens of the urban space and took on a larger part of the civic life the role of the bishop became entangled with ideas of philanthropy (*philanthropia*). The patronage traditionally associated with the religious and civic obligation of pagan *curiales* was now divided, between the emperor and the bishops.⁵⁴ The two most important elements of this new system are the ways in which the church became the largest patron of social welfare and an important administrative body.⁵⁵ Averil Cameron asserts that, “bishops took on responsibility for regular distributions to the poor, and ... such distributions were already taking place on a large scale in fourth-century Antioch.”⁵⁶ The importance of these two duties is that it establishes the bishops as both the civic and religious authority while providing them with the largest patronage network available, the poor. Access to their collective strength and the ability of educated and experienced politicians, such as Chrysostom, combined with imperial financial support, resulted in Christian political and religious domination.⁵⁷

Through acquiring the role as patron of a city, bishops were able to develop a personal relationship with their parishioners beyond solely a religious collective identity, and establish real dependency.⁵⁸ Patrons exercised their power in two ways. The first is through their access to other prominent individuals across the empire, who could be called on for support in times of need. This is demonstrated somewhat subtly in the attempts by Bishop Flavian to appeal directly to the emperor after the Riot of the Statues. These connections are also powerfully

⁵² Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992) 4, 3-118. Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity AD 150-750* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971), 11-96, 137-150.

⁵³ Wendy Mayer, “Patronage, Pastoral Care and the Role of the Bishop of Antioch.” *Vigiliae Christianae* 55.1 (2001): 58-70.

⁵⁴ J.H.W.G Liebeschuetz, *Antioch.*, 167-266.

⁵⁵ Wendy Mayer, “Patronage, Pastoral Care and the Role of the Bishop of Antioch.” 60.

⁵⁶ Averil Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire.*, 177.

⁵⁷ Theodoret *Historia Ecclesia*, 5.29, 8.27; Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesia* 6.8, Sozomen *Historia Ecclesia*, 8.8

⁵⁸ Palladius, *Dialogues* 5

demonstrated by the relationship between bishops across the empire, working together to condemn or support prominent individuals connected to them through patronage. Secondly, a patron could reasonably assume, if he had performed his duties properly, to call on the support of his network. Often an individual patron would seek the support of a particular guild of carpenters or metal workers. These relationships would be developed over time, but the co-dependency of the bond usually communicated to real support. The combination of this physical might with the manipulative power of the theatre claue and religious/social identity could provide any elite capable of controlling these volatile elements supreme power. The Emperors sought to do this in the theatre and circus, through leading the fight for orthodoxy, and by co-opting local elites.⁵⁹

In regards to Antioch, the most famous display of popular violence was the Riot of the Statues in AD 387. Libanius and John Chrysostom provide the two most detailed accounts.⁶⁰ The anti-imperial riot resulted from a half century of conflict, famine, economic crisis, and controversy that occurred between the reign of Constantine and Theodosius. It was the culmination of rivalry and tension between factions in the city and the resentment of the people against the intervention, wars, and policy of the emperor.⁶¹ The riot was not initiated by the religious elites, either pagan or Christian. The curial and middle classes reacted to a tax increase, rousing a mob amongst their supporters. The tax is believed to have been initiated to pay for the anniversary celebration of the emperor's reign⁶². Regardless of the cause of the tax, the situation in Antioch reached its breaking point when this increase in taxes put further strain on the elite. In AD 387, a riot erupted in Beirut⁶³, in AD 388 in Constantinople⁶⁴, in AD 389 in Alexandria⁶⁵, and AD 390 in Thessalonica⁶⁶.

⁵⁹ Robert L. Cleve, "The Triumph of Christianity: Religion as an Instrument of Control." In Toru Yuge and Doi, Masaoki. (eds.), *Forms of Control and Subordination in Antiquity* (Tokyo, Japan: The Society for Studies on Resistance Movements in Antiquity and Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1988), 530-542.

⁶⁰ Libanius Oration 19-23; John Chrysostom 21 Homiliae ad populum Antiochenum de Statuis

⁶¹ Robert Browning, "The Riot of A.D. 387 in Antioch., 13-20.; Libanius Oration 19.4 Describes the frequent anti-imperial demonstrations in Alexandria; Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria.*, 419-432.

⁶² Robert Browning, "The Riot of A.D. 387 in Antioch.", 14. The nature of the tax is not clear. *Lustralis collatio* effected tradesmen and merchants. Evidence in the Codex Theodosius 13.1.15 and Libanius Oration 33.33. The *aurum coronarium* affected *curiales*. Codex Theodosius 12.13.2 of 28th August 364. Different sections of the population were involved in the riot suggesting that perhaps both we imposed. Patronage networks and the ability of elites to rouse popular dissent could also explain the popular involvement.

⁶³ Libanius Oration 19.28

⁶⁴ Socrates HE 5.13; Sozomenus 7.14; Ambrose. Ep 40.13

⁶⁵ Rufinus HE 2.22-7; Socrates HE 5.16-17; Sozomenus 7.15; Theodore HE 5.22

The later event resulted in the massacre of the entire city's population. With the cities of the empire revolting against authority, and the massacre, Antioch was caught in a state of fear, awaiting imperial punishment.⁶⁷

While the elite (*boule*) were perhaps the initiators of the riot, it is clear from Chrysostom that popular involvement (*hoi polloi*) came to direct the events.⁶⁸ First, the *bouleutai* gathered, to demand that the governor (*archon*) reduce the tax.⁶⁹ When their efforts were unsuccessful, the mob moved on to another leading authority of the city, the Bishop Flavian, to again demand a reduction. When the crowd could not find the Bishop, to vent their anger they returned to the governor's house but were unable to break in.⁷⁰ The governor secure behind walls, and the bishop absent, the people turned to the next symbol of imperial patronage and presence, the imperial statues, pictures, and street lights of the city. They set fire to the house of citizens, believed to be directly involved with price manipulation and food shortage. If it had not been for the police force (*toxotai*), and the soldiers of the General of the East (*comes Orientis*), the imperial palace and complex located near the governor's house might also have been destroyed.⁷¹

Many of the elites attempted to flee the city before receiving punishment from the local or imperial government, but several accused rioters were arrested and quickly tried and executed.⁷² Libanius and Chrysostom's perspective on the riot provides two things. First, they are an overlapping and contrary set of opinions that can be used to validate each other. Secondly, they present a typical understanding and bias of ancient authors concerning riots. Both report that demons influenced masses, and that outside intervention from riot makers from Beirut or elsewhere, were responsible.⁷³ This was not only an appeal on behalf of the Antiochenes, it also provided the leadership of the city, those involved or not, with plausible deniability. They were not capable of controlling their own city because Satan's power is so great.

In Libanius' *Oration 41.6-7*, he describes the *claque* as a freestanding group existing daily with or without performances taking place.⁷⁴ This constant threat of violence and political dissent could be wielded by any authority that was capable

⁶⁶ Rufinus HE 11.18 - Sozomenus 7.25 - Theodoret HE 5,.17. 3 - Malalas 347.18

⁶⁷ John Chrysostom De Stat. 3.6-45

⁶⁸ Libanius, Oration 19.26; John Chrysostom, De Statues 8.3-4

⁶⁹ Libanius, Oration 20.3; Oration 19.27.

⁷⁰ Libanius Oration., 19.31, 22.7

⁷¹ Libanius Oration., 19.36

⁷² Ibid., 19.37

⁷³ Demons- Ibid., 19.29, 19.30 ; John Chrysostom De Statues 15.1, 21.1, 21. 3; Outsiders--Lib Oration 19.28 and 20.3; John Chrysostom De stat 2.3, 5.3, 6.1, 17.2, 17.2

⁷⁴ Libanius Oration 41.6-7

of presenting his grievance to the people and the *claque*. According to Robert Browning they were, “An important political force, whose favour an ambitious official would try to win; and he could only win it by making concessions to those who controlled the *claque*”⁷⁵

After the riot, this direct threat to Christian authority, lead Chrysostom to condemn the theatre as the root of violence and sedition.⁷⁶ While the authorities may not have welcomed the dispersion of power and the access it provided their rivals, the *claque* did serve as a regularized form of political expression. The economic crisis may have contributed to the events of AD 387, but the involvement of the people of the city was a true form of general popular reaction. This is not to say that in any act of violence the entire body is capable or cognizant of the causes and theological or political rhetoric. Rather they are participating in an expression of dissent based upon their understanding of the world and their identity in it.

Due to the involvement of the *curial* class, it is not possible to describe riots as the sole reserve of poor and lower classes. It was the entire city that was oppressed by the economic fluctuations and increased taxes.⁷⁷ However, *curiales* well understood the strength of the rioters to the extent that they would retreat to their country estates during food shortages.⁷⁸ This understanding is what led them to seek the popular involvement of the theatre *claque* and even seek the Bishop Flavian to lend religious support. The larger problem that arose was the fever pitch and anti-imperial sentiment expressed in this riot.⁷⁹ Destruction of the imperial statues was a capital offense and perceived as an act of open revolt and violence towards the person of the emperor.⁸⁰ The participants, especially the *curiales*, would have had this in mind after the riot was quelled.

Fortunate for the people of Antioch, the riots occurring across the empire and the example made at Thessalonica was an adequate display of the Emperor's wrath. The city received a demotion in status from Metropolis, and several privileges such as the Olympic Games were temporarily suspended, but most participants escaped with their lives.⁸¹ In this way, the Emperor expressed

⁷⁵ Robert Browning, “The Riot of A.D. 387 in Antioch,” 18. “They could not be bought and sold by anyone: their effectiveness depended on the appearance- it not the reality- of being champions of some popular cause. People will not demonstrate, still less fight, for what they feel to be foreign to their interests.”; Libanius Oration 29.2, 22.7

⁷⁶ John Chrysostom Hom in Matt. 37.6

⁷⁷ Libanius Oration 36.4-7; Zosimus 4.27-29

⁷⁸ Libanius Oration 29.4

⁷⁹ Robert Browning, “The Riot of A.D. 387 in Antioch.”, 20.

⁸⁰ Ambrose Expos. In ps. CXVIII, 10.25

⁸¹ Libanius Oration 23.25

coercion, both through a strong-handed massacre that gained him no support, and mercy for most of the cities of the empire. Standing in contrast to the Riot of the Statues, the destruction of the Temple at Daphne, is not nearly as well documented. The conditions behind the uprisings are separated by over a hundred years, but many of the same circumstances are present.

In the year A.D. 507, the Nestorian/Monophysite conflicts had been raging for years. The Olympic Games were scheduled to take place in Antioch. Thanks to the record of John Malalas, we have an extant report of the riots that ensued.⁸² When the most celebrated charioteer of the empire, Porphyrius Calliopas, came to Antioch for the games, the city was caught in celebration and enraged. During the fifth century, the emperors had become increasingly concerned with the factionalism of the circus. The emperor Anastasius was rumored to have favored the Greens, and also supported the Monophysites after the war with Persia (AD 503-505). The presence of Porphyrius as a prominent Green was seen as imperial involvement in Antioch and the factions. After several victories, violence engulfed the city sporadically over the course of the games.

While the Antiochenes were celebrating the games in Daphne, Calliopas took the opportunity to attack and burn the Jewish synagogue. When the imperial authorities heard of the event, they responded quickly to stop further violence. Procopius of Antioch was appointed as *comes Orientis*, and the imperial troops prepared for another outbreak. When violence occurred, the troops engaged the Greens, and arrested and killed many of the rioters, chasing them through the city. As the Greens fled to the Church of St. John for protection by Christian authorities, they encountered the Blues and the riot engulfed the city. Procopius was forced to flee, and the rioters, enraged at imperial interference, killed officials and burned parts of the city.⁸³

The reason for choosing the synagogue as a target is unknown. Emperors had repeatedly passed policy to protect the Jewish population. Associations with different factions, and the fact that the Jewish population represented a rival to Christian hegemony in the early sixth century, can be found in the writings of Chrysostom and others. However, at Daphne, once again the involvement of imperial coercion resulted in increased violence directed at the emperor and the government. The factional difference and the association of some members with a religious sect or political group may have started the riot, but the direction ended with an outright rejection of imperial authority. The extant record only accords involvement to the circus factions, but the specific political agenda and the attempt to appeal religious authority, depicts a scene similar to the Riot of the Statues.

⁸² Malalas., 395-398

⁸³ Malalas., 398.9-10.; Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria., 503-510.*

In late antique sources there is minimal evidence directly discussing the political ideology of the late antique world. It is, however, possible to extract from the actions, theological philosophy, and letters, a concrete understanding of the ways in which the late antique world, and in particular, Antiochenes viewed authority and their right or ability to resist tyranny and corruption. In many cases across the empire, when perceived tyrannical rule was imposed by the emperor, or even local/regional authorities, the population relied on a set of values regarding proper responses. These actions often culminated in organizing public displays of discontent, such as riots, or in direct military actions, when the possibility of combining efforts with the strength of the army and a prominent imperial usurper was possible. *Tyrannus*, as defined by Evangelos Chrysos, can be taken in two ways. The first instance is the oppressive regime that takes actions, or policies, without consideration of the will of the population or its leadership. The second is simply the rise of an individual to illegitimate authority, without foundation in religious justification or the will of the people. With these two working definitions in mind, it is then possible to take into account competing strands of political/theological theories. The more commonly espoused Christian political theology is promoted by Eusebius of Caesarea, in which the emperor can be understood as the ad hoc viceroy of God's kingdom on earth. The rise and fall of each emperor can then be seen as part of the will of God and that "all natural and political catastrophes are perceived as God's punishment."⁸⁴ Earthquakes, invasions, famines, tyrannicide, and usurpation are all part of God's larger plan. This political understanding is common in eschatological works throughout Late Antiquity and was the almost universally accepted conception of the relationship between the Christianity and Christian Imperial Rule. Eusebius promoted a Christian empire in which features of Hellenism could be adapted to Christianity and emperors such as Constantine would serve as Christ's representatives on earth.⁸⁵

More importantly for Antioch, however, are the teachings found in the sermons of St. John Chrysostom. Within Chrysostom's prolific writings, there are many instances, in which he describes the relationship between the Christian hierarchy and the apparatus of the Imperial state, as well as the role and relationship between Christian citizens to the state. It is important, however, to understand the complete

⁸⁴ Evangelos Chrysos, "The Right of Resistance in Late Antiquity and Byzantium," In Toru Yuge and Doi, Masaoki. (eds.), *Forms of Control and Subordination in Antiquity* (Tokyo, Japan: The Society for Studies on Resistance Movements in Antiquity and Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1988), 313-314.

⁸⁵ Isabella Sandwell, "Christian Self- Definition in the Fourth Century AD: John Chrysostom on Christianity, Imperial Rule and the City" In Isabella Sandwell and Huskinson, Janet. (eds.), *Culture and Society in Later Roman Antioch* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2004), 36.

integration of the paganism with the civic life of antiquity. It is within this context that Chrysostom's definition of sacred and political space takes shape.⁸⁶

Chrysostom espoused a view that sharply contrasted with Eusebius. The Christianization of the imperial government did not mean that God's kingdom had been realized, because that is only possible after death.

If you are a Christian, no earthly city is yours. Of our City 'the Builder and Maker is God.' Though we may gain possession of the whole, we are strangers and sojourners in it all! We are enrolled in heaven and our citizenship is there.⁸⁷

Constantine and the emperors were not God's representatives, but simply worldly monarchs. This did not mean that Chrysostom proposed open rebellion, but rather he developed an understanding of allegiance to the state without connection to religious affiliation.⁸⁸ Christianity was founded principally in opposition to Jewish and imperial authority of its time, and the historical interpretation of Antioch comes through in Chrysostom's political theology. The conflict between the Christian and Jewish communities, and three hundred years of sporadic persecution, made Christianity skeptical of worldly authority although they were now firmly in control of it.⁸⁹

Unlike Eusebius, Chrysostom believed that worldly concerns and involvement in the imperial apparatus corrupted Christians, both with its pagan past and its intrigue.⁹⁰ This belief was then combined with ideas, that the emperor as elected or appointed by the elite or the army was not a permanent authority. His position was not sanctified by God's authority, and thus the worldly laws created by the empire were below the laws of God and the Church.⁹¹

Our race ran headlong into extreme disorder, He [God] appointed other sovereignties also, but those of masters and those of governors and this too for love's sake. That is, since vice was a thing apt to dissolve and subvert our race, he set those who administer justice in the midst of our cities as kind

⁸⁶ Ibid., 35-48.

⁸⁷ John Chrysostom, On Statues XVII.12

⁸⁸ John Chrysostom, Romans XIII, On I Corinthians VII.1, On II Corinthians II.9

⁸⁹ Isabella Sandwell, "Christian Self- Definition in the Fourth Century AD." 43.

⁹⁰ John Chrysostom, Discourse on Babylas 41-2, On II Corinthians XXCI.4, On I Corinthians XXXVI.7

⁹¹ Ibid., On Statues VII.3, On I CorinthiansXXXIV.7

of doctors that driving away vice... they might gather together all in one place.⁹²

This quote allows for the possibility of divine appointment while still subordinating all authority to God and his representatives on earth, the bishops.⁹³ The inferior status of imperial authority is meant to insure the order and safety of God's flock, while remaining answerable to the bishops.⁹⁴ Even the imperial courts were a secondary measure to the bishops. Christians accused of crimes, sought the mercy and leniency of the bishops, in order to escape the corruption of government magistrates.⁹⁵

The political theology of Christian leaders created an environment in which the Christian communities would not necessarily break into open revolt and establish a separate political entity, but one in which the authority of the Emperor and the entire imperial system was called into question. Authority rests solely in God's majesty, and as apostolic successors, the bishops of Antioch and Alexandria claimed direct access to the orthodox teachings of Jesus and his followers.

The violence in fifth century Antioch was a complex confluence of political, religious, and social conditions. In Late Antiquity, the deteriorating systems of classical authority and social structures coincided with the rise of an alternate social bureaucracy, the Christian church. The violence of the fifth century represents the competition between various elements of society negotiating their space, place, and authority in a rapidly redefined landscape of an occupied territory of the Roman Empire. None of this is to say that religion was not an important element in the discourse. Religion served both as a foundational structure upon which leaders based their authority and in which the larger population could find a unifying identity. Religion can be seen as an important organizing principal; however, religion alone even in its most fervent instantiations cannot exclusively determine or cover over so vast a number of human interactions

The application of modern social science to a pre-modern society may be criticized as an anachronistic effort. The universality of human experience, and an attempt to adapt the social models and theory to the context of Late Antiquity, should accommodate for the variation, similar to the way in which comparative analysis between regions accommodates for other variation. All attempts have been made to seek the essential characteristics of each theory in the hopes of acquiring a-temporal models.

⁹² Ibid., On I Corinthians XXXIV.7

⁹³ Ibid., On Statues VII.3, Romans XIII.1, XXIII

⁹⁴ Ibid., On I Corinthians XV.4

⁹⁵ Ibid., On I Corinthians XII.9-11, XVI. 3-10

Taking into account the political theology of Late Antiquity, it is necessary to find a further articulation of the relationship between a state and its citizens. The political philosophy of Marx and Weber are the two theoretical foundations upon which the popular and state violence of Late Antiquity must be grounded. The Marxist school significantly influenced the social history of the past century, and increased the popularity of the secular interpretation of urban violence, as a result of class struggle and economic causality. While not subscribing completely to this interpretation, Marxist theory must be addressed, and the utility of economic analysis brought to bear on the historical narrative. Marx, in particular, provides a point of access to possible class interpretations, as well as a fuller understanding, of the tension that arises in a society dominated largely by wealth, and landed elites.⁹⁶ Weber's theory on the monopoly of legitimacy violence by the state (*Gewaltmonopol des Staates*), while not as influential upon the scholarship, is equally useful in understanding the rational choice to exercise oppressive and intolerant violence by the Roman state and even by local and religious authorities.⁹⁷

The violence of Late Antiquity revolving around the authority of religious figures should be understood in the context that all religions are at some basic level a means by which groups structure society. Religious structures, during times of conflict possess a mobilizing capacity through the shared identity of its believers and assumed authority of its leaders. Is religion alone capable of mass mobilization for violent means, especially across disparate regions and peoples in the Greek East?⁹⁸

Jillian Schwedler questions the ability of faith to be the sole organizing principle behind popular violence. It appears to be true that faith can cause individuals to carry out violent acts; however, the ability of fervor to animate an entire population would seem to require more than just common belief.⁹⁹ The

⁹⁶ Karl Marx, in Robert C. Tucker. (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader* 2nd ed. (Princeton: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978). Shifts that occurred in the historical perspective legitimize the topic and participation of the crowd in the historical narrative. Marxist ideology and social scientific advances provide new techniques to interpret disparate pieces of evidence.

⁹⁷ Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (1964); Gwenn Okruhlik, "Rentier Wealth, Unruly Law, and the Rise of Opposition: The Political Economy of Oil States." 31.3 (April, 1999): 295-315.

⁹⁸ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 7. Durkheim can be used for further information on the foundations of sociological treatments of religion and popular participation. . His work was used to build an understanding that religion, like all other social and cultural elements, is conditioned and formed by societal norms, influences and events.

⁹⁹ Jillian Schwedler, "Islamic Identity: Myth, Menace, or Mobilizer?" *SAIS Review* 21.2 (Summer-Fall 2001): 1-17

ability of shared cultural, religious, and political identity combined with the impetus provided by a direct or perceived threat is a combination capable of mobilizing more than just the most fervent.

When attempting to discover the salient identity of communities, there are two dominant theories at work in the field of sociology. The first is an ascriptive/primordial model in which the objective features, such as gender or race, determine an individual's identity.¹⁰⁰ Another school of thought argues for the power of identity built around routine practice or acquired identity. According to Schwedler, "Religion is a prime example, with weekly or even daily practice effectively placing one's faith at the core of identity."¹⁰¹ However, John Greenwood asserts that we can hardly learn anything about individual identity based exclusively on membership in a group, ascriptive or acquired.¹⁰² Since so few assumptions can be based upon membership, no identity has the inherent capacity for mobilization.

It is possible then that an individual's identity is formed by a combination of ascriptive and acquired characteristics that are affected by the relationship of an individual to the society around them. Individuals are then capable of possessing several identities simultaneously while placing varying levels of value in a particular situation. Due to shifts in circumstance and relationships to others in society, identity is continuously re-evaluated over time.¹⁰³ The fluidity of identity provides both state and non-state actors space to compete for control of individuals and groups. In Late Antiquity, authorities attempted to develop the broadest and most powerful patronage networks, their finances and manipulation could provide them. Coercion, oppression, and direct manipulation through patronage, rhetoric, and the theatre claque provided the means by which elites established identities for the larger population.¹⁰⁴

While these coercive measures may provide considerable control of identity, communities also define themselves differently, based upon the increasingly hostile attacks. This then can be understood in two ways. First, the state actor

¹⁰⁰ Walker Connon, in *Ethnonationalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), provides an elaboration on the non-rational aspects of primordial identity in regards to political behavior.

¹⁰¹ Jillian Schwedler, "Islamic Identity," 2.; Alberto Melucci, "The Process of Collective Identity," in Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans, eds., *Social Movements and Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

¹⁰² John D. Greenwood, "A Sense of Identity: Prolegomena to a Social Theory of Personal Identity," *Journal of the Theory of Social Behavior* 6:1 (1994): 38

¹⁰³ Jillian Schwedler, "Islamic Identity," 4; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

¹⁰⁴ Gwenn Okruhlik, "Rentier Wealth, Unruly Law, and the Rise of Opposition: The Political Economy of Oil States," 31.3 (April, 1999): 295-315.

attempting to impose an identity creates its own opposition by its very attempt to influence its audience. Secondly, identities within a society vary from extremes. These differences then develop in competition with each other, and the influence upon an individual from the state and various non-state actors, can simultaneously alter the collective identity of each.¹⁰⁵

The actual events and environment surrounding identity formation often play a later role in mobilization than the influence of any one group. Perceived threat or advantage combined with the daily or weekly practice of religion and possible ascriptive forms of identity then has a significant mobilization capacity when in combination. The more repressive measures taken by state or non-state actors without consideration of these three elements of identity formation only results in the establishment of alternative forms of opposition, often found within the structures of organized religion.¹⁰⁶ Schwedler pushes this argument when stating that, “The menace of religious conflict is that it threatens to reveal that the apparent universalism of [orthodoxy as]... a mask worn to obscure imperial hegemony.”¹⁰⁷

For Weber ‘state’ is only a structure that successfully maintains a monopoly of the legitimate use of violence in the enforcement of its order. This places the state as the source of legitimate violence, and all other forms of violence must then derive legitimacy from the state. The importance of this construction is in the persistent use of violence by state and non-state actors in Late Antiquity.

Recent scholarship in the fields of psychology, sociology, economics, and political science, on terrorist activity and popular dissent, all state that popular violence is a complex combination of identity and condition. The economic situation of a particular area cannot exclusively result in anti-imperial or factional violence due to the variation amongst the class and status of those involved. Religious identity does not appear to be universally salient identity for which individuals will act alone. Even theories of collective identity allude to the limited capacity of group mobilization without real impetus.¹⁰⁸

The coercive and oppressive measures of the state have been known to create a condition in which a population is threatened, and thus reacts, based upon a shared identity and economic/political grievances. Individuals are, however, part of a larger social construct, the community. Capable leadership can determine a significant amount about the policy and mobilization capacity of an event or

¹⁰⁵ Jillian Schwedler, “Islamic Identity.” 6-8.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 9.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 12.

¹⁰⁸ T. David Mason and Krane, Dale A, “The Political Economy of Death Squads: Toward a Theory of Impact of State-Sanctioned Terror.” *International Studies Quarterly* 33.2 (June 1989): 175-198.; Martha Crenshaw, “The Psychology of Terrorism: An Agenda for the 21st Century.” *Political Psychology* 21.2 (June 2000): 405-420.

identity, but only insofar as they find consensus amongst the population and rally them behind popular grievances. The fifth century presents a period of nearly constant tension between factions, religions, and authorities. The shift in patronage networks from classical to Christian foundations, and the particular economic conditions that stimulated war, famine, and dissent, came together to provide real impetus to local leaders and factions. The empire no longer brought the same benefits it once had, and the local authorities could promise greater rewards in this life and the next. This equation, combined with the oppressive and often fickle policy of the emperors, created a disaffected population seeking resolutions to practical and religious grievances.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Andrew Kydd and Walkter, Barbara F. "Sabotaging the Peace: *The Politics of Extremist Violence*." *International Organization* 56.2 (Spring, 2002): 263-296; Albert J. Bergesen and Lizardo, Omar, "International Terrorism and the World-System." *Sociological Theory* 22.1 (March 2004): 38-52; Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, "The Quality of Terror." *American Journal of Political Science* 49.3 (July 2005): 515-530.

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