

Mellon Foundation Sawyer Seminar  
Conversion in Late Antiquity: Christianity, Islam, and Beyond  
Session on 'Converting Environments'  
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"From Pagan to Christian? The religious transformation of Jerusalem in the fourth century"

Abstract

This paper seeks to explore the transformation of Jerusalem from a pagan city to a Christian city. After a short survey of Jerusalem's religious configuration in the second and third centuries, it will deal with the presence and visibility of Christianity in Jerusalem through Christian architecture, sacred sites, liturgy and religious festivals, and the development of the city as a centre of pilgrimage. The main question the paper seeks to answer is whether Jerusalem and its population had a distinct Christian identity by the end of the fourth century or whether it was still a religiously diverse city.