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Politics and Diplomacy in the Latin East: The Principality of Antioch in Historiographical Perspective

Abstract

One of four ‘crusader states’ formed following the First Crusade, the principality of Antioch was built on turbulent foundations. Its Latin settlers faced not only various Islamic powers, they also had to contend with the Byzantine Empire, whose rulers claimed the city and its environs for themselves; the Armenian Christians of Cilicia; and the rival machinations of the other Frankish states, particularly the kingdom of Jerusalem. The instability this facilitated, and the power of those who vied for influence with Antioch, has had a profound impact on modern historiography. Thus, the principality has been portrayed as a rigorous autocratic state, whose relationships—internal and external—were primarily shaped by external forces. This article explores these trends, proposing that the principality of Antioch’s power structures were far more dynamic than once imagined and that its ruling elites played a more pro-active, delicate diplomatic game than historians have recognised.

Introduction

When the forces of the First Crusade (1095–1099) secured victory over an army led by Kerbogha of Mosul (fl. 11th/12th century) outside of the city of Antioch on 28 June 1098, it marked the genesis of a new state: the principality of Antioch. The man who engineered the city’s capture and contributed to this victory, the Italo-Norman Bohemond of Taranto (d.1111), emerged as Antioch’s first Latin ruler, despite opposition from another crusade leader, Count Raymond of Saint-Gilles (d.1105), and an oath sworn to return the city to the Byzantine Emperor, Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118) (Asbridge, 2000, pp. 15–46, 92–94). Over nearly two centuries, until Antioch’s capture in 1268 by the Mamluk Sultan Baybars (d.1277), the principality formed a crucial component in the Near East’s political framework (Cahen, 1940b, pp. 205–307, 347–434, 579–652, 693–721). Indeed, its geographic position, on the cusp between northern Syria and Asia Minor, on the frontier with the Muslim centres of power at Aleppo and Mosul, and as the vehicle through which Byzantine interest in the East was

channelled, ensured that the principality was often at the heart of broader political and military relationships. This included not only Islam and Byzantium, but also the Armenian Christians who inhabited Cilicia and the other crusader states, the kingdom of Jerusalem and the counties of Edessa and Tripoli (Buck, 2017, pp. 1–3).

Nevertheless, the principality has often been marginalised by historians, almost certainly because of the power and prestige of those polities with whom the Antiochenes came into contact. Though not ignored, Antioch has not been subjected to the same level of academic scrutiny as these other powers, particularly Jerusalem, whose history continues to dominate historiographical discussions of the crusader states (Jotischky, 2015). There are a number of potential avenues for exploring this, either through inter-cultural contact and warfare, or even by placing Antioch within the broader span of the crusades and the Near East. However, due to constraints on space, this paper focuses on the fact that studies on the principality’s internal power structures have largely relied on now-outdated notions of feudalism, while Antioch’s diplomatic ties have been viewed solely from the viewpoints of two particular external powers. It thus charts the development of these two particular strands in scholarship—firstly through an analysis of historiographical trends and secondly via an exploration of Antioch’s narrative treatment—and argues that in both instances historians have failed to fully appreciate the complexity of the principality’s history. Rather than a vigorous state, it was fluid and dynamic, and in their diplomatic relations the Antiochenes were far from simple pawns for other rulers (namely of Byzantium and Jerusalem), rather they were active agents in the political world of the Near East.

The Power Structures of the Principality

When considering Antioch’s internal power structures, the most influential work is Claude Cahen’s seminal 1940 monograph *La Syrie du nord a l’époque des croisades et la principauté franque d’Antioche*. With a mastery of Arabic, and having written a thesis on the feudal structures of Norman Italy (Cahen, 1940a), Cahen was well equipped to explore what he saw as an extension of the Norman

world. Thus, he argued that the principality's earliest settlers and rulers—Bohemond of Taranto and his nephew, Tancred of Hauteville (d.1112)—largely mimicked the feudal regime he identified in Italy, though he accepted that other Western (primarily Normanno-French) and Eastern influences may have entered the mix (Cahen, 1940b, pp. 435–52, 527–43). This formed the basis for several broader hypotheses.

The first is Cahen's view of the principality as a vigorous, top-down feudal polity, with the prince an 'absolute sovereign' and able to extract unlimited services from fief-holders. Central to this supremacy was the fact that the prince was the single biggest landholder, with control over key coastal possessions and fortresses making him the richest and most militarily powerful secular figure (Cahen, 1940b, pp. 439–41, 537, 541–42). He would also have gathered revenues from fief-holders and other landholders, such as the 'ninth' of assize seen in various charters, fees taken on harvests, and those levied from fishing rights on the lake of Antioch (Cahen, 1940b, pp. 465–67, 472–80, 532, 555–60). Cahen did accept that the *haute cour* (or high court)—which included the major barons and officers of state—would have shared in administrative and judicial duties, and that the patriarch and wider Church played a role (especially in the early decades), but these were not presented as real limitations to the ruler's authority, rather as largely pragmatic realities of power and Christian devotion (Cahen, 1940b, pp. 308–23, 439–52, 501–510, 527–28). Furthermore, he argued that the officers of state, who included the constable, seneschal, marshal, chamberlain and butler, were 'introduced at Antioch in the same form ... as they were in France'. A level of assimilation and alteration was recognised in the retention of Byzantine and Islamic offices, such as the *dux* (an urban official in charge of civic affairs) and the *rayyis* (a local headman and conduit with indigenous communities), but the real impetus for any innovation, he suggested, was the constant state of warfare, rather than close inter-cultural contact, for Cahen believed that the principality was characterised by segregation and intolerance. Consequently, the constable, the prince's chief military officer, became the most prominent figure (Cahen, 1940b, pp. 326–45, 452–62, 561–68).

The high level of fighting also accounted for another aspect of Cahen's analysis, that is his description of the prince's relationship to the Antiochene nobility. Like the political institutions,

Cahen argued that the principality's aristocracy were largely of Norman or Italo-Norman origin, albeit with some notable exceptions (such as the southern-French Masoir family), and so followed the lord-vassal relationships they would have known in the West (Cahen, 1940b, pp. 527–29, 535–42). Primarily, this resulted in a subjected nobility, one which owed extensive services—military and judicial—to the ruler. Each fief-holder, Cahen believed, owed both personal service and that of subordinate knights and serjeants, but while in the West such duties were limited through regulation, the fragility of northern Syria did not allow for this (though he also suggested that each fief had defined stipulations for service). That the documentary material lacked any direct reference to the forms of service was noted, but not viewed as problematic: the evidence for the kingdom of Jerusalem, which is more extensive, was transposed onto Antioch to fill this lacuna (Cahen, 1940b, pp. 529–30). Moreover, using as his guide the thirteenth-century record of the principality's legal procedures, the *Assises d'Antioche* (which were composed *after* an invasion by Saladin (d.1193) in 1188 wiped away most of Antioch's lordships and survive only in a contemporary Armenian translation), Cahen explored not only how military service was called, but also duties relating to judicial and administrative matters; the latter of which, so Cahen claimed, was less extensive and regulated by proximity (Cahen, 1940b, pp. 530–34; *Assises d'Antioche*; Buck, 2017, pp. 14–15, 55–57). Cahen even went so far as to argue that 'the prince was more the master of his barons than the king of Jerusalem'. This view stemmed partly from there being only two instances of noble rebellion in the principality (in the 1130s and 1180s), but also from the dispersal of noble fiefs in areas of challenging terrain. For Cahen, this was a deliberate ploy to limit aristocratic power: 'the prince remained the strongest, and delegated plots of measured power to his vassals in areas where direct administration was the most difficult' (Cahen, 1940b, pp. 534–43).

According to Cahen, therefore, the principality of Antioch was a traditional feudal state, in that the relationship between the ruler and fief-holders was defined primarily through services owed, although the intense and frequent threat of violence allowed for the implementation of powerful autocratic rule which superseded that found in the West and in the other crusader states. This was an influential viewpoint. For example, in *The Families of Outremer*, Steven Runciman directly echoed

Cahen, stating that Antioch's rulers 'kept a tighter control over the whole administration than did their colleagues further south [at Jerusalem]', and ensured a 'strong hereditary landed nobility never fully emerged' (Runciman, 1960, p. 4). Additionally, Hans Eberhard Mayer, whose own influence over modern understanding of the Latin East—principally Jerusalem—is vast, noted in the introduction to his monograph on Antioch, *Varia Antiochena: Studien zum Kreuzfahrerfürstentum Antiochia im 12. und frühen 13. Jahrhundert*, that Cahen's work on the principality's internal structures left little room for improvement (Mayer, 1993, pp. 1–7). Nevertheless, Mayer made important contributions to various aspects of Antioch's history through his editions of previously unknown documents and commentaries on the principality's charter materials and chancery (Mayer, 1993, pp. 31–44, 65–122, 138–61, 203–18). Yet, when exploring issues related to 'feudal' structures, Mayer's analysis was often influenced by—or at least similar in tone to—Cahen's. This is most obvious in his discussion on the relationship between Antioch's rulers and the Masoir family, who governed the fortress of Marqab on the principality's southernmost frontier. In this, Mayer argued that ties between the two became fragmented over the course of the 1160s and 1170s, largely because Prince Bohemond III (1163–1201) sought to oust them from their possessions. This culminated in a noble revolt, led by Renaud II Masoir (d.c.1185) in 1181, following Bohemond's decision to illegally divorce his wife and launch violent raids on Church possessions. Though the rebellion ended without a definitive winner in the field, Mayer—echoing Cahen's belief in the untrammelled supremacy of Antioch's rulers—suggests that Bohemond then increased his pressure on the Masoirs. By 1187, Renaud II's son, Bertrand, had thus been coerced into selling Marqab to the Knights Hospitaller in order to create a military order buffer-zone similar to that held by the Templars to the north (Mayer, 1993, pp. 162–83).

Despite two small studies by George Beech—one which touched on the Antiochene princely succession in the 1130s, and another on the 'crusader' lordship of Marash—it was only with Thomas Asbridge's *The Creation of the Principality of Antioch 1098–1130*, along with a series of shorter studies, that Cahen's model came under substantial scrutiny (Beech, 1993, 1996; Asbridge, 1997b, 2000, 2003). Although Asbridge did not entirely refute Cahen's hypotheses, he added texture, as well as a level of critical insight, which revealed a more complex picture of the principality's internal

structures (Asbridge, 2000, pp. 129–213). In relation to Antioch’s princes, Asbridge examined several less-explored avenues for research, such as the use of the title *princeps* and the succession. He demonstrated that, while the use of the title was a constant, the succession was made complicated by Bohemond of Taranto’s departure to the West c.1104; the birth of his son, Bohemond II (d.1130), in the West; and the fact that both Tancred of Hauteville and Roger of Salerno (1112–1119) governed the principality as *de facto* princes (Asbridge, 2000, pp. 128–43). Moreover, although, like Cahen, he accepted that Antioch’s rulers were supreme enough to exact unlimited military services from their fief-holders, and to govern the capital and *demesne* without challenge, he offered two important (and novel) suggestions. The first was that the nature of the principality’s rulership is unlikely to have been fully formed before 1130 and that the realities of power could also be influenced by strength of personality. The second, advanced through a detailed analysis of Antioch’s emergent nobility, was that the princes afforded these figures administrative and military freedoms akin to the ‘marcher’ rights seen on borderlands in the West, such as the Welsh Marches (Asbridge, 2000, pp. 148–69, 181–94). In addition, Asbridge—in many ways complementing the advances made by Bernard Hamilton—also noted the significant role played by the Church in cementing and holding key frontier zones, and of Patriarch Bernard of Valence in the administration of the principality (Hamilton, 1980, 1984, 1995, 1999; Asbridge, 2000, pp. 195–213). When added to his recognition that Eastern models of government, particularly in civic administration, had a stronger influence than Cahen was prepared to admit, Asbridge therefore offered insights into a more complicated and diverse frontier state (Asbridge, 2000, pp. 189–94). This was extended by a detailed survey of the career and lordship of Princess Alice of Antioch, in which Asbridge outlined her creation of an independent and powerful seigneurie, free from external influence or control (Asbridge, 2003).

These developments were to some extent built upon in Jean-Marie Martin’s 2002 study on the imposition of Italo-Norman power structures in the Holy Land, particularly at Antioch (Martin, 2002). In this, Martin argued that crusader settlers in northern Syria could not have imposed Italo-Norman ‘feudo-vassalic’ relationships, contending that there were few documented settlers from this region—a view shared by Alan Murray—and that the internal frameworks found in Antioch do not match

those of the West at the time of the First Crusade. Moreover, the likelihood of later transferral was seemingly negated by the weakness of long-term relations between the two regions (Martin, 2002; Murray, 1997). Martin similarly argued that princely interference over the mundane administration of lordships was increasingly reduced during the twelfth century because of the growing influence of the *haute cour* (as seen in the *Assises d'Antioche*) (Martin, 2002, pp. 240–47). However, while Martin noted these limitations, he generally continued the presentation of Antioch's princes as supreme, with constant warfare and the retention of key sites enabling a strong ruling house that could demand extensive services from fief-holders (Martin, 2002, pp. 231–49). Like Cahen, Martin showed little concern for the problems associated with transposing the *Assises d'Antioche*'s customs onto this earlier period – something Peter Edbury and Andrew Buck have since warned against (Martin, 2002, pp. 239–50; Edbury, 2013; Buck, 2017, pp. 14–15). Thus, although some significant steps had been taken (especially by Asbridge) to show greater sensitivity to the fluid realities of governing a medieval frontier—a key realisation of most modern studies on border governance in the medieval West—historians remained more conservative in assigning this to Antioch (Power, 2004). This helps to explain why Jochen Burgtorf, in a useful study on the so-called 'War of Succession' which struck Antioch in the early thirteenth century, expressed surprise at the negotiability of the princely succession in 1201 (Burgtorf, 2016).

Alan Murray has gone some way to offering further nuance to Asbridge's work in a detailed survey of the life of Princess Constance of Antioch (d.c.1164), noting her political acumen and skill in traversing a long and challenging career (Murray, 2016). However, it is with Andrew Buck's *The Principality of Antioch and its Frontiers in the Twelfth Century*, along with a series of articles, that the 'frontier' nature of the principality's political structures has been extensively explored, and thus Cahen's work challenged over a broader period (Buck, 2015, 2016a, 2016b, 2017). In Buck's work, the principality is presented as a fluid and responsive state, one in which the relationships of power, particularly between the prince and the nobility, were far from rigid or autocratic. Instead, it is argued that after 1130, and at times before, the Antiochene aristocracy grew in influence over the princely succession and major diplomatic dealings. While this did not extend to constant supervision of the

mechanics of central governance—for the nobles were seemingly only sporadically involved in this—it did result in an increasingly independent aristocracy (perhaps even more so than Asbridge suggested), and not one subject to unlimited services. It also allowed for dynamic political dealings, with little sign of rigidly imposed regulations or structures – as shown, in particular, by the lordship of Harim, whose complex history serves as an ideal case study for the principality as a whole (Buck, 2016a, 2016b; Buck, 2017, pp. 86–163). Whereas the nobility grew in strength, though, the Church decreased in influence—at least until the 1180s—as tensions grew over financial disparities between the secular and ecclesiastical spheres (Buck, 2017, pp. 101–109). Likewise, the precarity of Antioch’s status ensured that Frankish relations with indigenous communities were a blend of tolerance and distrust: a situation defined by issues of time, place, and perhaps even denomination (Buck, 2017, pp. 164–88). The near-constant pressures of warfare are not refuted; rather it is argued that they resulted not in a top-down ‘feudal’ state, but in a polity defined by negotiation and fluidity, whereby responsivity ensured survival where autocracy would have resulted only in destruction (Buck, 2017, pp. 245–51).

Consequently, while most historians have viewed the principality of Antioch as a rigorous state ruled by an autocratic prince who used the fragility of the frontier to implement full control, in recent years a more varied picture has emerged. In a similar vein to the borderlands of the West, power was responsive, negotiated, and dynamic. Importantly, these new trends help to place Antioch more firmly within the context of the wider medieval world. They also have an important bearing on our understanding of Antioch’s broader political and diplomatic relations.

Antiochene Diplomacy

The medieval Near East was the subject of many competing interests, with all rulers, whether of the crusader states, the Byzantine Empire, Muslim rulers, or the Armenians of Cilicia, having to traverse several diplomatic avenues. Given the symbolic and actual power of many of these competing polities, Antioch’s role has—perhaps unsurprisingly—nearly always been viewed from the

perspective of external powers. The sheer number of potential perspectives means it would be impossible to provide an overview of all the scholarship here. Therefore, while important ground has been made regarding the relationship between Antioch and Armenian Cilicia (Augé, 2007; Chevalier, 2010; Burgtorf, 2016), and despite a long tradition of excellent scholarship which has touched upon various aspects of the interplay between the principality and its Muslim neighbours (Elisséeff, 1967; Asbridge, 1997b, 2000, 2010; Köhler, 2013; Mallett, 2013; El-Azhari, 2016; Buck, 2016a, 2017), the focus here will instead be on contacts with the other crusader states (especially Jerusalem) and Byzantium. These two powers, who both sought to implement overlordship of Antioch, serve as the most important avenues for gaining a richer understanding of the principality's delicate diplomatic policies, and how external relations related to internal political developments.

Such a study must begin with the retention of Antioch by Bohemond of Taranto during the First Crusade, because—as already noted—this contravened an oath made to return it to Emperor Alexios I Komnenos. For most historians, this engendered enough bad will to ensure that the following two decades (until Alexios' death in 1118) were characterised by violence and conflict, with Byzantine attacks on the Syrian coastline and Cilicia, as well as efforts to seek Latin support from the other crusader states. However, despite finding an ally in the counts of Tripoli, Alexios' efforts were consistently thwarted, even after Bohemond was defeated and forced to submit to imperial overlordship at the Adriatic port of Devol in 1108 (Chalandon, 1900, pp. 155–276; Cahen, 1940b, pp. 205–82; Lilie, 1993, pp. 1–95; Asbridge, 2000, pp. 92–103; Harris, 2014, pp. 59–97). This was largely the result of Tancred of Hauteville's tireless endeavours, as he built upon his uncle's foundations, opposed Byzantine attacks, and sought to expand Antiochene power over the other crusader states. Indeed, he imposed a strong level of influence over the county of Edessa and intervened in a succession crisis at Tripoli following Raymond of Saint Gilles' death in 1105. His ambitions were eventually stifled by King Baldwin I of Jerusalem (1100–1118), but it is now widely accepted that Tancred was the true power behind the early stages of the principality, making it a real player on the wider political stage. Yet, with Tancred's death in 1112, and the subsequent reign of Roger of Salerno, which was curtailed by his—and many others'—demise at the Battle of the Field of

Blood in 1119, a shift occurred in the political dynamics of the region (Cahen, 1940b, pp. 205–82; Asbridge, 1997a, 1997b; Asbridge, 2000, pp. 47–80, 104–26, 2013b).

Indeed, at this juncture King Baldwin II of Jerusalem (1118–1131) stepped in to act as regent over the principality, treating it as if it were his own. While scholars have debated the nature of Baldwin’s symbolic status, it is undisputed that he acted *like* a prince, and spent considerable time and effort on stabilising Antioch’s internal and external security, even to the chagrin of Jerusalem’s nobility. Likewise, with the arrival from the West of Bohemond’s son, Bohemond II, in 1126, Baldwin assigned his daughter, Alice, to him as his bride, thereby further securing political ties. This did not rule out tension, for Bohemond II had a difficult relationship with Count Joscelin I of Edessa (d.1131), but the leaders were able to work together before the Antiochene’s death in 1130 (Cahen, 1940b, pp. 283–307, 347–50; Mayer, 1981; Murray, 1994; Asbridge, 2000, pp. 81–91, 126–27, 143–46; Asbridge, 2013a; Buck, 2017, pp. 220–21).

Bohemond II’s demise, however, signalled even further change. In addition to the already proposed alteration to Antioch’s internal relations—with the nobility now securing a far stronger role in the principality’s political decision making processes—a similar shift can be seen in the diplomatic policies it adopted. Thus, when Baldwin II came to Antioch in 1130 to resume his regency, he found the gates of the city barred. For most historians, the impetus behind this was Princess Alice, who twice sought to seize control for herself—in 1130 and again in 1136—and was prepared to enter into alliances with Aleppo and Byzantium, with whose emperor, John II Komnenos (1118–1143), a marriage alliance was proposed. That she twice failed, it is argued (by all except Asbridge), was owed to Antioch’s nobles, who feared Byzantium and instead supported Jerusalem. Often seen as evidence for this is the fact that Baldwin’s successor as king, Fulk of Anjou (1131–1142), was eventually able to initiate a bailliage at Antioch in spite of an initial civil war with the northern crusader states in 1132, and to play an important role in contravening the apparent Byzantine marriage alliance by helping to bring Raymond of Poitiers (1136–1149) from the West to marry Bohemond II’s daughter, Constance, and become prince (Chalandon, 1912, vol. 1, pp. 121–22; Cahen, 1940b, pp. 350–57; Lillie, 1993, pp. 103–04; Phillips, 1996, pp. 44–72; Asbridge, 2003, pp. 33–46; Harris, 2014, pp. 85–

89). However, it has recently been proposed that the period following Bohemond II's death instead represented a significant power shift, in which the principality's ruling elites sought to test the conditions upon which a closer union with Byzantium could be implemented and overbearing Jerusalemite influence curtailed (Buck, 2017, pp. 69–73, 191–92, 221–26). Indeed, whereas scholars have continually viewed John II Komnenos' reign as the 'height of confrontation' between Byzantium and Antioch, no doubt a result of Latin-Greek tensions witnessed during the emperor's two visits to northern Syria in 1137/1138 and 1142/1143 (Chalandon, 1912, vol. 1, pp. 119–54, 175–93; Cahen, 1940b, pp. 358–68; Lilie, 1993, pp. 110–41; Phillips, 1996, pp. 61–71; Parnell, 2010, pp. 149–157; Harris, 2014, pp. 85–89), Buck argues that this was actually a vital period of change in the political climate. Yes, tension existed between Antioch and Byzantium, but this was a result of continued efforts to strike the correct balance needed to implement close ties, not the inevitable conclusion of intractable hatred. Moreover, ties with Jerusalem, though far from fractured, were now far less extensive (Buck, 2015, pp. 108–09; Buck, 2017, pp. 190–99, 221–26).

Yet, this new age of diplomatic contact was by no means easily implemented, and when John died in 1143, after facing stubborn resistance in his efforts to seize Antioch, and was replaced by his son, the more pro-Latin Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180), contact continued to be difficult. Similarly, Raymond of Poitiers' leadership kept the principality free from Jerusalemite interference and established nominal Antiochene overlordship of Edessa until its fall in 1144 (Amouroux-Mourad, 1988, p. 112; Buck, 2017, pp. 231–33). As a symbol of the growing discord with the kingdom, neither state proved willing to work for the benefit of the other during the Second Crusade (1147–1148), and even with Raymond's death in 1149 matters remained dynamic. Thus, although King Baldwin III (1143–1163) came north to support the principality and made a concerted effort to coerce Constance into taking a new husband, which for some historians as evidence of a historians of a regency, the princess instead turned to Manuel for a suitor, albeit his choice was also rejected. Finally, Constance settled on Renaud of Châtillon (d.1187), a western migrant who had served for some time in Jerusalem but continued the trend of opposing royal interference, as shown by a refusal to heed royal advice during an attack on Shaizar in 1157, leading to the breakdown of the siege (Cahen, 1940b, pp.

391, 395–98; Phillips, 1996, pp. 119–20, 126–29, 270–81; Buck, 2017, pp. 77–79, 226–28, 233–35). Matters finally came to a head in 1158, when Manuel visited Antioch in retaliation for Renaud’s assault on Cyprus, and following a theatrical penance at the city of Mamistra (believed to have been organised by Baldwin III and Manuel), the prince was restored to the emperor’s good graces, and a secure form of imperial overlordship implemented. For Cahen, this created a *condominium*, with the principality shared between Jerusalem and Byzantium, and while not all historians have gone quite this far, the consensus remains that these events cemented imperial influence in northern Syria and Baldwin’s status as the Latin East’s political head (Chalandon, 1912, vol. 1, pp. 417–55, 462–63; Cahen, 1940b, pp. 389–406; Lilie, 1993, pp. 142–45, 163–69, 175–87; Magdalino, 1993, pp. 66–72; Mayer, 1993, pp. 45–54; Phillips, 1996, pp. 132–39, 270–81; Harris, 2014, pp. 99–114). This has now been challenged, with the penance at Mamistra interpreted as a carefully staged ritual which pre-empted and diffused both Byzantine anger and Jerusalemite interference. The terms of the following agreement of overlordship, moreover, are viewed as a matter only for the principality and empire, not the kingdom. A subsequent marriage alliance between Manuel and Princess Maria of Antioch (d.1182), which was agreed secretly and in apparent contravention of an agreement to allow Baldwin III to mediate a marriage alliance with the emperor, serves as further evidence of this (Buck, 2015, pp. 109–118; Buck, 2017, pp. 199–212; Mayer, 1993, pp. 45–54).

Historiographical differences become less profound from here on, though, with recognition that Manuel exercised a powerful and beneficial form of overlordship, providing diplomatic, political, financial, and military support to the principality at times of great crisis, such as following the major defeat to the forces of Nur al-Din of Aleppo (d.1174) at Artah in 1164. It was only with Manuel’s death in 1180 that this came to an end, as Bohemond III’s decision to divorce his Greek wife, coupled with the subsequent anti-Latin activities of Andronikos Komnenos (d.1185) and his successors, left little room for positive interaction (Chalandon, 1912, vol. 1, pp. 517–53; Cahen, 1940b, pp. 407–26; Lilie, 1993, pp. 187–209, 222–32; Magdalino, 1993, pp. 72–76, ; Mayer, 1993, pp. 45–54; Phillips, 1996, pp. 140–49, 154–59, 243–45; Harris, 2014, pp. 114–36; Buck, 2016b; Buck, 2017, pp. 212–16). Of interest, however, is that division remains over Antioch’s relationship with Jerusalem. Thus,

whereas some implicitly suggest that nominal royal supremacy endured at key moments during the reigns of Amalric (1163–1174) and Baldwin IV (1174–1185) (Cahen, 1940b, pp. 411, 423; Barber, 2012, pp. 240–41), others recognise that Antioch was independent, and that Bohemond III even made a play for increased influence *over* Jerusalem and the broader Latin East. His success within Jerusalem—which was riddled by division in the 1170s and 1180s—is questionable, but the county of Tripoli was subsumed into the principality after 1187 (Richard, 1945, pp. 30–43; Richard, 1985; Amouroux-Mourad, 1988; Mayer, 1993, pp. 123–37, 184–202; Hamilton, 2005, pp. 119–31, 150–58, 164–66; Buck, 2016b; Buck, 2017, pp. 231–40).

Most Antiochene domains were lost with Saladin’s invasion of the principality in 1188, which irrevocably altered the internal and external policies of the Latin ruling elites in northern Syria. It is not that Antioch became unwilling to play a part in the broader political climate, but rather that the broader weakness of Jerusalem, the Antiochene succession crisis of 1201–1219, and the transferral of the princely seat to Tripoli diminished the efficacy of its influence. Therefore, when Baybars captured Antioch in 1268, the principality was only a shadow of its former self, though a detailed study of the principality in the thirteenth century remains a considerable *desideratum* (Cahen, 1940, pp. 428–34, 579–652, 693–722; Burgtorf, 2016; Buck, 2017, pp. 55–60). Nevertheless, as has been proposed here through an examination of Antioch’s ties with the Latin East and Byzantium, for much of the twelfth century, and in some regards beyond, the principality *did* play a central and active role in the diplomacy of the Near East.

Conclusions

This article has sought to outline some of the key historiographical trends, traditional and new, which have influenced the presentation of the political and diplomatic history of the principality of Antioch. It has been noted that, whereas scholars have long considered Antioch a rigid ‘feudal’ state, governed by an autocratic ruler who could demand unlimited services from his fief-holders, it is now recognised that the principality’s internal structures were far more fluid. Moreover, its history can help historians

to better understand governance not only in the crusader states, but on medieval frontiers more broadly. Likewise, although scholars have traditionally side-lined Antioch in favour of larger powers, particularly the kingdom of Jerusalem and Byzantium, a detailed study of the principality's role in broader diplomatic processes suggests more pro-active participation, and offers a richer sense of the complex political climate of the Near East in which Antioch was an active player. It is to be hoped that this, along with the works surveyed here, will not only serve to redress the balance between Antioch and these other polities, but also to stimulate greater interest in its dynamic and complex history.

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