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CASTLES AND THE FRONTIER: THEORIZING THE BORDERS OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF ANTIOCH IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY

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Abstract: The principality of Antioch was a medieval frontier polity of great complexity, one whose territorial extent waxed and waned considerably during the twelfth century. Subject to interest from several external polities, the principality's ruling Frankish elites had to adopt a dynamic approach to relations with their neighbors in order to maintain their status and power. This article seeks to shed new light on the means by which they did so through the prism of Thomas Nail's 2016 *Theory of the Border*, and so to explore what this new critical lens can offer to the study of pre-modern borders and frontiers. By examining, in particular, the role of castles in defining and maintaining Antioch's extremities, it argues that, as key points for directing the flow of human movement, fortresses could indeed act as distinct, if not impermeable, borders, and that a new approach to understanding what a border could be provides important new avenues for studying medieval frontiers.

Keywords: Antioch, principality of; Latin East; Frontiers; Borders; Warfare; Castles

The Crusader States (otherwise called the Latin East) were four polities situated on the eastern-most edges of medieval Latin Christendom. Formed in the wake of the First Crusade, the kingdom of Jerusalem, the principality of Antioch, and the counties of Edessa and Tripoli are thus important exemplars of medieval borderlands. With diverse topographical and demographic landscapes, each offers its own various avenues for examining the nature of frontiers and liminality, whether in terms of physical and political borders, or cultural, social, religious, and intellectual interaction.¹ Of particular interest is the principality of Antioch (see map), the political and topographical nature of which demanded a delicate balance of diplomacy, warfare, political reactivity, and social pragmatism on behalf of its ruling elites.

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¹ For a good introductory overview of the varied routes through which medieval frontiers might be examined, see David Abulafia, "Introduction: Seven Types of Ambiguity, c.1100–c.1500," *Medieval Frontiers: Concepts and Practices*, ed. David Abulafia and Nora Berend (Aldershot 2002) 1–34. For a general introduction to the demographic character of the Latin East, see Christopher MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East: Rough Tolerance* (Philadelphia 2008).

Founded by the southern Italian Norman, Bohemond of Taranto (d. 1111), the area in which the principality was situated acted as a meeting point between Asia Minor, Syria, and Mesopotamia. As such, the newly-arrived Latin Christians, described more generally as “Franks,” came into contact with a near incomparable array of internal and external groups whose political or religious reach intersected with that of the Antiochenes.² This included Eastern Christian communities and powers, such as the Byzantine Empire and those who maintained liturgical allegiance to the Greek Orthodox Church (for instance, Hellenophonic Christians and Arabic speaking Melkites); the Armenians, including the independent warlords of Cilicia but also the communities living within Antiochene territory; and the Syriac Jacobites, whose patriarch held sway over a wide geographical area spanning both Christian and Muslim territories. Likewise, were the Jewish and Muslim communities, the latter incorporating both internal Sunni and Shi’a groups—including the enigmatic Isma’ili sect known as the Assassins—as well as external potentates theoretically linked to the Abbasid Caliphs of Baghdad (such as the *atabegs* of Aleppo and Mosul) and the Seljuk and Danishmend Turks of Asia Minor.³ Finally, there were rival Latin powers to contend with, not only the other crusader states, but also the rulers of the Latin West, the papacy, and, after a few decades, the military orders.⁴

Alongside this, the various topographical features of northern Syria and Cilicia both guided and impeded Frankish settlement.⁵ Particularly challenging were the numerous imposing mountain ranges and limestone massifs, found to the north of Antioch with the Amanus Mountains that governed movement between northern Syria, Cilicia, and Asia Minor; to the south with the Ansariya

² For the issue of cultural Frankishness and group identity in the Latin East, see Alan V. Murray, “Ethnic Identity in the Crusader States: the Frankish Race and the Settlement of Outremer,” *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Simon Forde, Lee Johnson, and Alan V. Murray (Leeds 1995) 59–73; Timo Kirschberger, *Erster Kreuzzug und Ethnogenese: In novam formam commutatus – Ethnogenetische Prozesse im Fürstentum Antiochia und im Königreich Jerusalem* (Göttingen 2015). Now, see also Andrew D. Buck, “Settlement, Identity, and Memory in the Latin East: An Examination of the Term ‘Crusader States’,” *English Historical Review* 135 (2020) 271–302.

³ Andrew D. Buck, *The Principality of Antioch and its Frontiers in the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge 2017) 21–61, 164–217.

⁴ Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above), 218–244; Andrew D. Buck, “The Military Orders and the Principality of Antioch: A Help or a Hindrance?,” *The Military Orders Volume VII: Piety, Pugnacity and Property*, ed. Nicholas Morton (Abingdon 2019) 285–295.

⁵ There have been several excellent surveys of the topography of northern Syria and Cilicia. See René Dussaud, *Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale* (Paris 1927) 117–232, 413–440; Claude Cahen, *La Syrie du nord à l’époque des croisades et la principauté Franque d’Antioche* (Paris 1940) 105–176; Nikita Elisséeff, *Nur ad-Din: un grand prince musulman de Syrie au temps des croisades*, 3 vols (Damascus 1967) 1.87–102, 161–219; Paul Deschamps, *Les châteaux des croisades 3: La défense du comté de Tripoli et de la principauté d’Antioche* (Paris 1973) 35–184, 191–286, 331–366; Hugh Kennedy, *Crusader Castles* (Cambridge 1994) 62–97. See also now the overviews in Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above) 5–6, 21–61.

Mountains, which enclosed the southern regions of Antiochene lands from the rest of Syria and into Lebanon; and through the central and eastern regions with the various massifs, known as Jibal (or Jabal in the singular), which bisected areas of Frankish authority, including the Wastani, Talat, Barisha, Duwayli, and al-Summaq.⁶ These areas dictated the main routes of travel and communication, and contained vital centers of authority and defense. Importantly, just as the terrain guided human action, so too did the Orontes River, which made landfall at the port of St Symeon, travelling inland past Antioch before cutting a valley south into southern Syria and beyond. A conduit of movement and trade, the Orontes nevertheless also served as a physical division between the coast and inland Syria, forming a key cog in the principality's eastern border in the second half of the twelfth century.⁷

When these human and environmental issues are combined, therefore, it is unsurprising that the history of the principality, like the other polities of the Latin East, offers much potential for historians looking to understand the form of borders and frontiers in this period. In particular, when viewed in relation to ideas of movement—a central premise of Thomas Nail's 2016 *Theory of the Border*—it is possible to challenge current historiographical trends to posit that the castles of this region both defined and defended the limits of Frankish territory.

In his seminal study of crusader warfare, R.C. Smail rejected earlier historians, like Hans Prutz and Emmanuel Rey, who characterized fortresses as defensive lines, designed first and foremost to protect these Frankish polities from outside incursions, arguing instead that although border castles might have a special importance, fortresses were primarily instruments of colonization not defense.⁸ Recently, Ronnie Ellenblum has taken the debate further, challenging notions of linear borders—seen as largely anachronistic and serving only to impose modern notions of nation states onto very different political bodies—and the role of castles in maintaining them. Even if border lines might were

⁶ On these, in addition to the works cited above, see the important archaeological surveys of several of these Jibal: Ivan Peña, Pascal Castellana, and Romuald Fernández, *Inventaire du Jébel Baricha: Recherches archéologiques dans la région des Villes Mortes de la Syrie du Nord* (Milan 1987); Ivan Peña, Pascal Castellana, and Romuald Fernández, *Inventaire du Jebel el-A'la: Recherches archéologiques dans la région des Villes Mortes de la Syrie du Nord* (Milan 1990); Ivan Peña, Pascal Castellana, and Romuald Fernández, *Inventaire du Jébel Wastani: Recherches archéologiques dans la région des Villes Mortes de la Syrie du Nord* (Milan 1999); Ivan Peña, Pascal Castellana, and Romuald Fernández, *Inventaire du Jébel Doueili: Recherches archéologiques dans la région des Villes Mortes de la Syrie du Nord* (Milan 2003); Balázs Major, "The Fortified Caves of the Jabal Wastani Region," *Château Gaillard* 22 (2006) 251–257; Balázs Major, *Medieval Rural Settlements in the Syrian Coastal Region (12th and 13th Centuries)* (Oxford 2015).

⁷ On this period, see Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above) 36–55.

⁸ R.C. Smail, *Crusading Warfare, 1097–1193*, 2nd edition (Cambridge 1995) 204–215.

known in some contexts (for example in demarcating fields), he argued, castles did not act as border markers, rather as the central hubs of intersecting spheres of power. Fortresses should thus not only be analyzed in relation to their apparent military functions, which could vary widely depending on size and geographical placement, but also as regards their administrative and political importance. Likewise, we should eschew notions of borders which achieved defined, linear characteristics, and instead focus on the limits of sovereignty.⁹ Elements of Ellenblum's approach have since been taken up by Denys Pringle, who has remarked that, although distinct borders could exist, "castles or fortifications on their own could not defend frontiers, and were never intended to do so."¹⁰ Alongside this, Uri Shachar has recently considered the spiritual significance of castles, arguing (in terms somewhat similar to Smail) that their imprint on the landscape was more than just physical, for they could even come to embody religious dominance.¹¹

However, while the discussion of the role played by castles in establishing and maintaining the eastern Frankish frontier has attracted diverse opinions, the primary focus on the kingdom of Jerusalem has meant that, with some notable exceptions, the evidence of the principality of Antioch (and the other northern states) has been relatively overlooked.¹² Likewise, in spite of Ellenblum's influential work, and the growing interest of crusades scholars in theory-based approaches to the past, his conclusions have not yet been revisited in light of Thomas Nail's aforementioned *Theory of the Border*, which, as the author claims, offers the first systematic attempt to provide "a theoretical framework for understanding the structure and function of borders across multiple domains of social life" by focusing on ideas of motion; of the "flow" of people and

⁹ Ronnie Ellenblum, *Crusader Castles and Modern Histories* (Cambridge 2007) 105–184.

¹⁰ Denys Pringle, "Castles and Frontiers in the Latin East," *Norman Expansion: Connections, Continuities and Contrasts*, ed. Keith Stringer and Andrew Jotischky (Farnham 2013) 227–239. See also Jochen Schenk, "Nomadic Violence in the First Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Military Orders," *Reading Medieval Studies* 36 (2010) 39–55.

¹¹ Uri Zvi Shachar, "Enshrined Fortification: A Trialogue on the Rise and Fall of Safed," *The Medieval History Journal* 23.2 (2020) (forthcoming)

¹² Thomas S. Asbridge, *The Creation of the Principality of Antioch, 1098–1130* (Woodbridge 2000) passim; Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above) passim; Andrew D. Buck, "The Castle and Lordship of Hārim and the Frankish-Muslim Frontier of Northern Syria in the Twelfth Century," *Al-Masāq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* 28.2 (2016) 113–31; Kevin James Lewis, *The Counts of Tripoli and Lebanon in the Twelfth Century: Sons of Saint-Gilles* (Abingdon 2017) esp. 12–128; Kevin James Lewis, "Shifting Borders in the Latin East: The Case of the County of Tripoli," *Crusader Landscapes in the Medieval Levant: The Archaeology and History of the Latin East*, ed. Micaela Sinibaldi, Kevin James Lewis, Balázs Major, and Jennifer A. Thompson (Cardiff 2016) 103–116.

things.¹³ It is the aim of this article to fill this lacuna by demonstrating the benefits of examining the evidence of Antioch's borders through this modern theoretical lens. Indeed, while caution must be taken when approaching medieval borders through the lens of modern theory in order to avoid anachronism, it is evident that important new light can be cast on the role and function of at least some of the castles or fortified sites found in the principality. It will be argued below, therefore, that although control over fortresses could vary widely, as could political success, it is nevertheless possible to view castles as junctions monitoring and directing flows of human movement, and thus as crucial cogs in a policy of bordering aimed at maintaining stability. Moreover, it is hoped that offering such a discussion will not only increase our understanding of the nature of Frankish borders in the Latin East, but also offer a blueprint for how others examining other medieval borderlands might benefit from this new conceptual framework.

FRONTIER THEORY AND THOMAS NAIL'S *THEORY OF THE BORDER*

The oft-cited inspiration for much of the modern historical analysis of borders and frontiers is the work of Frederick Jackson Turner (1861–1932). Turner's work, particularly his essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," offered reflections regarding how, over time, the unique experiences of the wilderness allowed settlers to shape the world around them, thus facilitating larger-scale settlement and the creation of "civilization"—which, in turn, provided the impetus to expand once more into new territory. In short, the borders of modern America were forged through a continual process of developing, defining, and then expanding the frontier.¹⁴ However, despite Turner's continued importance, his work—and the theoretical assertions it relies upon—has not gone unchallenged, particularly due to its American-centric focus. As regards the study of medieval frontiers, the focus now on the variability of pre-modern borders (including Ellenblum's aforementioned warning against imposing anachronistic ideas of linear demarcations), as well as the dynamic societies which inhabited or travelled across them, has necessitated a more flexible approach to adopting his ideas—especially given the importance of localism to medieval identities and the restrictions caused by limitations in travel, communication, and administration. What has triumphed,

¹³ Thomas Nail, *Theory of the Border* (Oxford 2016) 1. For an example of a theory-driven analysis of a crusading topic, see Marcus G. Bull, *Eyewitness and Crusade Narrative: Perception and Narration in Accounts of the Second, Third and Fourth Crusades* (Woodbridge 2018).

¹⁴ Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *American Historical Association, Annual Report for the Year 1893* (1893) 119–227. For a useful modern edition, see Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (London 2008) esp. 1–38.

therefore, is the belief that there was no single medieval concept of a border or a frontier (terms still used somewhat synonymously); rather, historians should remain alive to the regional circumstances of the zones of contestation—be they physical or social—they are examining.¹⁵

Despite recognizing these trends, and accepting the potential problems of offering a single border theory, even for the modern world, Thomas Nail nevertheless posits in *Theory of the Border* that this does not mean borders do not (or did not) exist. Rather, it means that we must look for them by accepting their varied forms—defined by how, when, where, and by (or for) whom, they are made. There are some core ideas of what constituted a “border,” though. For example, Nail insists that they should be understood as a “process of social division,” one not restricted to the limits of sovereign states, but as zones in between—zones shaped, first and foremost, by movement. A border is not static; it is a fluid area—a “zone of contestation”—which forms its own character and is maintained by “continuously redirect[ing] flows of people and things across or away from itself.”¹⁶ Yet, although borders, and one’s experiences of them, are defined by power—that is, who has power and who does not—such delineations are not the end products of fully-defined societies. Instead, the processes of “bordering” are part of the means by which key types of social formation and organization are created, be they territorial, statist, juridical, or economic. As such, to understand a border is not just to recognize a polity’s physical extremities, but to identify the underlying processes of motion and movement that guide its formation.¹⁷

Indeed, the politics of movement—which Nail calls “kinopolitics”—is integral to his approach and underpins the below discussion on the Antiochene evidence, and so warrants explanation here.¹⁸ Thus, in emphasizing the non-static nature of borders, he draws attention to the varied means by which divides become impermanent: natural phenomena (earthquakes and rivers); the decay in enforcing the structural integrity of its “border technology” (including walls, towers, and guard posts); violence; and economic and social factors (the wealth of those moving or the policies surrounding trade, migration, and social

¹⁵ For overviews of responses to Turner’s work, particularly in the study of medieval frontiers, see Robert I. Burns, “The Significance of the Frontier in the Middle Ages,” *Medieval Frontier Societies*, ed. Robert Bartlett and Angus Mackay (Oxford 1989) 307–330; William Urban, “The Frontier Thesis and the Baltic Crusade,” *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier*, ed. Alan V. Murray (Aldershot 2001) 45–71, esp. 46–58; Enrique Rodríguez-Picavea, “The Frontier and Royal Power in Medieval Spain: A Developmental Hypothesis,” *Medieval History Journal* 8.2 (2005) 273–301, esp. 276–280. See also Abulafia, “Introduction” (n. 8 above).

¹⁶ Nail, *Theory of the Border* (n. 13 above) 2–6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 4.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 21. This is a development on Nail’s earlier work in Thomas Nail, *The Figure of the Migrant* (Palo Alto, CA 2015).

belonging). Central to this is the extent to which humans manage, through “bordering,” the endless circulation of people and things, both physically and ideologically. It is this, he argues, which has the greatest bearing on the ordering of society, not the border itself, which is merely the end product.¹⁹ In noting this, Nail also classifies as “critical limology” the need to both recognize the importance of local conditions when understanding how borders emerge and to also place these specifics in the context of broader sociological processes. “Critical limology” does not simply see the border as a technology to be resisted (or not), it examines the underlying social process which convince someone to create such technologies, for example a border wall.²⁰

Consequently, bordering is a process characterized by both expansion and expulsion: for some, power and rights increase, as does their sphere of influence; for others, rights are removed, and they are expelled from the social order.²¹ To achieve this, however, three key processes of movement (or “regimes of motion”) must be harnessed: flow, junction, and circulation.²² Regarding “flow,” this relates to the continuous movement of peoples or things—a process which, though impossible to permanently control, can be managed or directed, as borders “define the limits and transition points of human flows.”²³ The primary means by which a flow might be directed is by creating a “junction,” that is a “driver” (or static conduit) through which a flow (or flows) might pass. For example, a border wall can act as a junction, for it directs movement towards specific entry points and affords those charged with enforcing the border the opportunity to control the direction of the flows passing through it. For Nail, such conduits are vital to an understanding of kinopolitics, for, at its core, this is “a study of the function and typology of these junctions.”²⁴ There are two key types of junction: limit and non-limit. A non-limit junction is a simple conduit, one that does not filter flows, but merely allows them to pass through. By contrast, a limit junction marks the end point of a flow, after which it either stops entirely—for instance, someone is prevented from crossing a border or entering a city—and so this conduit acts as an “exit junction”; or, if it is an “entrance junction,” the flow is filtered through but in so doing becomes something else, much like a migrant might become the citizen of a new country.²⁵ Quite what level of bordering is possible through these junctions depends on the form of flow: if it is conjoined, that is a limited circuit of movement redirected by

¹⁹ Nail, *Theory of the Border* (n. 13 above) 5–8.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 10–15.

²¹ *Ibid.* 21–23.

²² *Ibid.* 24.

²³ *Ibid.* 24–26.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 27–28.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 32–33.

junctions according to a specific need, then more control can be achieved; whereas if it is disjointed, that is a wider process of movement that is unconstrained and redirects in various ways, bordering becomes a looser concept.²⁶ Nevertheless, once these junctions have been formed into an ordered network through which control has been achieved over the “reproduction and redirection of movement,” this becomes the “circulation.” An interwoven knot of multiple flows, the circulation need not be simple—in fact, Nail sees it as dynamic; a continuum—with some junctions joined by certain flows and excluded by others. However, it is the circulation that helps to define the processes of expansion and expulsion: or, more accurately, expansion *by* expulsion. Thus, expansion allows certain flows to spread out and enlarge (to broaden its social circulation), be that territorially, politically, juridically, or economically, while expulsion drives out or deprives others of their social status and so limits their flow. As Nail states, this is “the social logic by which some members of society are disposed by their status so that social power can be expanded elsewhere.” It is the role of junctions, therefore, to construct the circuits through which mechanisms of social inclusion and exclusion are built and reinforced.²⁷

In addition to providing the conceptual “bordering” frameworks for understanding how societies are created and disbanded, Nail urges scholars to think more carefully about the words they use for describing a border. Although terms such as “mark,” “limit,” “boundary,” and “frontier” are often used interchangeably, as if they are synonymous with border, these instead “each describe a specific kinetic function of the border.”²⁸ The “mark,” for example, is the forward point whereby a flow is bifurcated, often by creating a diversion in the earth, such as a ditch or a mound. This marker directs traffic by pushing out intruders and sets out a path for insiders which, if fully followed, will eventually lead them back to that initial point.²⁹ This path is called “the limit,” and acts, in its purest form, as the perimeter, only becoming a “border” once it is protected, defended, and enforced. As Nail puts it, “the limit is the defensive border function that fills the gap left behind by the offensive march.” Like Hadrian’s wall, which sat back from the furthest edge of Roman authority, the limit (perimeter) secures the expansion set out by the mark (the most extreme point).³⁰ The limit cannot defend against everything, though, and where it lets things through, this is called “the boundary.” In other words, the boundary is the kinopolitical process governing the movement of social flows:

²⁶ Ibid. 31–32.

²⁷ Ibid. 28–31, 33–35.

²⁸ Ibid. 35.

²⁹ Ibid. 36–38.

³⁰ Ibid. 37–39.

the “passage across, around, and through the border.” Importantly, the boundary takes on a more sociological (rather than physical) character, for markers of belonging—including identifiers on clothing or banners—demarcate who is inside and outside the boundaries of a particular orbit of power.³¹ Within this framework, then, the “frontier”—rather than a physical space *per se*—becomes an area of “disjoined flows” guided by expulsion (the mark), expansion (the limit), and compulsion (the boundary). As the border moves, so does the frontier, as it responds to the flows. Yet, this is not necessarily an external process—should an internal community become socially excluded, and so placed outside of the “boundary,” this creates a frontier, a belt around the area of conjoined flows. It is any place, or more correctly a “zone of experimentation,” “where a colonial power is expelling a native people.”³² Consequently, these four aspects come together to serve as functions of the border’s kinopolitical operation, one which is based around the logic of expulsion and expansion.³³

For Nail a border is no simple line of demarcation, created by two opposing sides whose social orders are fully developed. Instead, it is a much wider process, one defined by the continuous movement of people and things and the attempts (successful or otherwise) to harness and direct this as a means to *create* social order. This is crucial to how bordering works, for it allows societies to both emerge and disappear: to expand or to expel. To fully understand borders, one cannot simply point to the markers which signal a polity’s furthest extremities; rather, it is important to understand both how these are utilized and managed through border technology, as well as how they then interact with, and help to guide, the social structures which exist behind them. Admittedly, when it comes to an examination of how Nail’s theoretical frameworks might be used to examine the evidence for the twelfth-century principality of Antioch, there are limits to what can be feasibly considered. Some evidence, such as we might have for modern borders, is often missing; while the abilities of the “state” to impose restrictions on movement, difficult for modern governments, are even more complicated for the medieval period. It is wise, therefore, to heed Ellenblum’s warnings regarding the potential pitfalls and anachronisms of transposing modern theoretical exercises onto the middle ages. Nevertheless, by drawing on several core concepts of Nail’s theory, that is “flow,” “circulation,” “junction,” “mark,” and “limit”, the below discussion will demonstrate the value to be had for historians of the Frankish East and other medieval borderlands.

³¹ Ibid. 39–40.

³² Ibid. 40–41.

³³ Ibid. 42.

CASTLES AS JUNCTIONS

Understanding Antioch's castles as junctions exposes the important active roles they played in shaping and defining the principality's bordering processes, or at least those they sought to impose. Thus, the form and extent of Frankish authority, particularly at the extremities of power, directed, and at times limited, certain movements of people, while also facilitating others. As the southern border of the principality was largely enclosed by mountains and abutted onto the Frankish county of Tripoli, its usefulness for this discussion is minimal, especially as it rarely served as a zone of military contest during the twelfth century.³⁴ We begin, instead, with the castles found in the northern regions of the principality, especially the fortresses which sat along the routes linking northern Syria and Cilicia through the Amanus Mountains.

Four castles were particularly significant: Baghras (or Gaston), Darbsak (or Trapesac), Roissel (or La Roche de Roissel), and La Roche Guillaume. So important was this region, that some historians have characterized it as a frontier buffer zone (albeit not necessarily a linear border) between the principality and Cilicia, one vital to Antioch's security—albeit the exact role of these castles has been less examined.³⁵ Of these, the most prominent was Baghras, which lay just 25km to the north of Antioch and overlooked the plain leading all the way to the principality's capital. Situated at the head of an enclosed valley, it was just to the south of one of the major mountain roads, the Belen Pass. The castle itself was strongly fortified, with towers and defenses constructed across two levels, as well as room for two well-lit halls (which later formed a refectory and a chapel), and would have allowed for a sizable garrison.³⁶ Less is known about Darbsak, especially given the poor survival of its medieval fabric, though its importance matched that of Baghras in terms of its position as a point of

³⁴ Cahen, *Syrie du Nord* (n. 5 above) 168–180; Asbridge, *Creation of the Principality* (n. 12 above) 65, 73; Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above) 26–27, 52–53, 55–56.

³⁵ Jonathan Riley-Smith, "The Templars and the Teutonic Knights in Cilician Armenia," *The Cilician Kingdom of Armenia*, ed. Thomas S.R. Boase (London 1978) 92–117; David M. Metcalf, "Monetary Questions Arising out of the Role of the Templars as Guardians of the Northern Marches of the Principality of Antioch," *The Crusades and the Military Orders: Expanding the Frontiers of Medieval Latin Christianity*, ed. Zsolt Hunyadi and Josef Laszlovsky (Budapest 2001) 77–87; Marie-Anna Chevalier, *Les ordres religieux-militaires en Arménie cilicienne: Templiers, hospitaliers, teutoniques & Arméniens à l'époque des croisades* (Paris 2010) 56–68. See also Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above), 43–44; Buck, "Military Orders" (n. 4 above) 286–288.

³⁶ Cahen, *Syrie du Nord* (n. 5 above) 141–144; Deschamps, *Châteaux des croisés* (n. 5 above) 359–360; Kennedy, *Crusader Castles* (n. 5 above) 141–144; Kristian Molin, *Unknown Crusader Castles* (London 2001) 182–187; A.W. Lawrence, "The Castle of Baghras," *Cilician Kingdom*, ed. Boase (n. 35 above) 35–49, plates 10–34; Robert W. Edwards, "Bagras and Armenian Cilicia: A Reassessment," *Revue des Etudes arméniennes* 17 (1983) 425–455, plates LX–LXXXII; Denys Pringle, "Castle Chapels in the Frankish East," *Churches, Castles and Landscape in the Frankish East*, ed. Denys Pringle (Abingdon 2013) 1–29, at 17–18.

surveillance over those entering via the Belen Pass, this time from the north. Importantly, Darbsak also offered oversight of roads joining Aleppo to the Lake of Antioch and beyond via the Hajar Shughlan pass, which entered the mountains to the north west of the castle.³⁷ To the north of Darbsak, atop an isolated hill some 1250m in height and half-way along the Hajar Shughlan pass is the (generally accepted) site of Roissel. Though by no means large in size, it had towers and a curtain wall and represented an imposing challenge for aggressors.³⁸ Regarding La Roche Guillaume, which has never been securely identified, Thomas Boase suggested that it is a site (in an even more ruinous condition) further east along the pass near to modern day Bektasli, and so is near to the entrance to the Hajar Shughlan pass when coming from Cilicia, while others have posited that it is synonymous with Roissel. The likelihood is that these were two separate castles; however, as Guillaume's remains cannot be located, any discussion here must treat its function only very carefully.³⁹ What is undeniable, though, is that the existence of these fortresses attests to the significance of the Hajar Shughlan pass, which, as already noted, granted access to roads leading to Antioch and Aleppo for those travelling in a west-east direction; connected the interior of the principality with a coastal strip, housing the sites of Portella, the port of Alexandretta, as well as the Templar-held Port Bonnel; and lead into Cilicia.⁴⁰

Clearly, then, these fortresses were an important part of any attempt to monitor movement through the Amanus Mountains. That they do not appear in the sources before 1130 need not challenge this. Indeed, this is in part a result of the fact that during the first decades of Frankish settlement, save for a short period following a defeat to Muslim forces at Artah in 1105, they did not serve as the principality's northern border, since the cities of Tarsus, Adana, and Mamistra acted as "marks," as key forward points of Frankish power on the Cilician plain, while further north Marash and Kesoun ensured that the limits of Latin power extended away from the mountains.⁴¹ Despite this, sites like

³⁷ Cahen, *Syrie du Nord* (n. 5 above) 141–144; Deschamps, *Châteaux des croisés* (n. 5 above) 361; Kennedy, *Crusader Castles* (n. 5 above) 141–144; Molin, *Unknown Crusader Castles* (n. 36 above) 182–183, 185.

³⁸ It should be noted that some doubt remains over which remaining site can be identified as Roissel, although most now accept that it is modern day Chivlan Kale. For references, see note 39 below.

³⁹ Cahen, *Syrie du Nord* (n. 5 above) 140–144, 147–149; Deschamps, *Châteaux des croisés* (n. 5 above) 363–365; Kennedy, *Crusader Castles* (n. 5 above) 141–144; Molin, *Unknown Crusader Castles* (n. 36 above) 182–183, 185–187; Thomas S.R. Boase, "Gazetteer", *Cilician Kingdom*, ed. Boase (n. 35 above) 145–185, at 178.

⁴⁰ Cahen, *Syrie du Nord* (n. 5 above) 140–144, 147–149; Deschamps, *Châteaux des croisés* (n. 5 above) 363–365; Molin, *Unknown Crusader Castles* (n. 36 above) 182, 186–187.

⁴¹ Asbridge, *Creation of the Principality* (n. 12 above) 48, 51–59, 62–64, 67–69, 78, 90; Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above) 22–24.

Baghras and Darbsak might still have acted as important cogs in the “limit” (or perimeter) which defined the principality’s northern extremities, and so facilitated expansion by ensuring “flows” were expelled away from the Antiochene interior. In other words, by adopting Nail’s kinopolitical frameworks and exploring how the Amanus fortresses might have contributed to the governing of flows in this region, we can still potentially gain insights into the principality’s early bordering processes, despite the paucity of written material. However, it is following the untimely death of Prince Bohemond II (1126–1130) that the Amanus achieved a more obvious bordering significance. At this juncture, the Cilician plain became far less stable as a result of the growing military strength of the Armenian warlord Leon (d.1140), as well as renewed Byzantine interest in the region through Emperor John II Komnenos (d.1143), who visited Antioch in 1137–1138 and 1142–1143 and established lasting Greek control over Tarsus, Adana, and Mamistra.⁴² Marash and Kesoun remained in Frankish hands a little longer, but were eventually lost following the disastrous defeat and killing of Antioch’s prince, Raymond of Poitiers (1136–1149), inflicted on him at the Battle of Inab by the Muslim ruler of Aleppo, Nur al-Din (d. 1174), who likewise had political interests in Cilicia and Asia Minor.⁴³ Combined, this ensured that the Amanus not only steadily crystallized as Antioch’s northern territorial extremity, but also that the mountain range sat as the nexus between the competing ambitions of Latin, Byzantine, Muslim, and Armenian powers. This afforded the castles which lay near to, or along, its major passes much greater significance and marks the point at which they became more noticeably active agents, or junctions, within the principality’s bordering processes.

It is of interest, then, that although Baghras was the largest of the four fortresses, at least as far as modern historians can tell, the Belen Pass was far less directly defended than Hajar Shughlan, which had (perhaps) two castles along its route, as well as Darbsak overseeing its entrance into the northern Syrian interior. If this is viewed against Nail’s concept of flow, it could be argued that the greater defensive nature of the Hajar Shughlan acted as a means to divert movement away from this pass and towards the Belen Pass. In other words, Roissel and Darbsak, and likely also La Roche Guillaume, all served, at least in part, as limit junctions—as points of disruption designed to control and manage the flow of human movement—perhaps with the hope that they could even act as exit junctions and halt the flow entirely. It is true that this latter hope would have been difficult to implement in practice, because, as historians have

⁴² Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above) 22–24, 27–30, 35–36.

⁴³ Ibid. 38–41. See also Alex Mallet, “The Battle of Inab,” *Journal of Medieval History* 39.1 (2013) 48–60.

long agreed upon (and Nail accepts even for modern borders), no castle could completely halt a determined military body. Yet, the greater level of surveillance these fortresses offered meant that any invading force would certainly have found it harder to enter the principality undetected. This is unlikely to have been a coincidence. Rather, in addition to Baghras' relative size and powerful fortifications, which would have allowed for a stronger garrison to remain there in the hope of disrupting an attack, the presence of Darbsak to the north would also have served to direct such armies onto the plain leading towards Antioch. Significantly, this would have left them vulnerable and exposed, while it also offered the Franks a better chance to engineer a battle on open ground. This explains why John II Komnenos quickly seized Baghras when he sought to pressure the Franks into surrendering Antioch to him in the late 1130s and early 1140s, as, given the size of his army, the Belen Pass offered his only realistic entry point into the principality.⁴⁴ As such, when in Frankish possession, Baghras acted more as an entrance junction, in that the flow was allowed to pass through, but only so that it might be better controlled.

These fortresses also played a part in Frankish efforts to secure themselves against their Muslim neighbors. By governing movement through Hajar Shughlan, this could help to prevent any potential union between Muslim Aleppo and the Turks of Asia Minor—or efforts by either to establish hegemony over larger swathes of Islamic territory—by ensuring that communication between these two areas could not easily pass too far north from Antiochene eyes. This explains why it was that, as Frankish military strength diminished over the twelfth century, and the need to protect the principality's fragile extremities became increasingly fraught, Baghras and the other mountain fortresses were surrendered to the Templars. There has been some debate over when this happened, with Jonathan Riley-Smith arguing for the 1130s, but it is now largely accepted that the period of the 1150s, with Nur al-Din in the ascendancy and the Seljuks threatening to invade the principality, is more likely.⁴⁵ That this region had gained greater importance to the “flow” of Muslim military and political ambitions is also demonstrated by an alliance between Nur al-Din and the Armenian warlord Mleh (d. 1175) in the late 1160s and early 1170s, which resulted in the temporary expulsion of the Templars from their

⁴⁴ Kemal al-Din, “La chronique d’Alep,” *Recueil des historiens des croisades: historiens orientaux*, 5 vols. (Paris 1872–1906) 3.674; Michael Italikos, *Lettres et discours*, ed. and trans. Paul Gautier (Paris 1972) 241; William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. Robert B.C. Huygens, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* 67/67A, 2 vols. (Turnhout 1986) 2.700–701.

⁴⁵ Riley-Smith, “Templars and the Teutonic Knights” (n. 35 above) 92–95. C.f. Chevalier, *Les ordres religieux-militaires* (n. 35 above) 56–68; Buck, “Military Orders” (n. 4 above) 286–288. On the broader issues of the 1150s, see Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above) 36–44.

fortresses.⁴⁶ Marie-Anne Chevalier has argued that Nur al-Din sought to create a buffer zone against Byzantium, whose emperor, Manuel I Komnenos (d. 1180), had grown in influence by offering extensive military, diplomatic, and financial support to the principality.⁴⁷ This remains likely; however, when these castles are understood as junctions designed to divert human flows, this alliance can also be seen to have offered Nur al-Din the opportunity to more easily extend his influence into Asia Minor by controlling the routes of communication.⁴⁸ That Mleh quickly showed his devious nature and broke off the *détente*, and Prince Bohemond III of Antioch (c. 1164–1201), with support from King Amalric of Jerusalem (d. 1174), soon recovered the lost fortresses, means such efforts came to naught, but this does not preclude the ambitions their initial captures potentially reveal.⁴⁹

While Nur al-Din's eventual successor, Saladin (d. 1193), captured these fortresses during a devastating invasion of the principality in 1188, he appears to have shown less of a long-term interest, particularly in Baghras—likely as a result of the need to focus his energies further south.⁵⁰ Thus, although he handed Baghras to a trusted ally, 'Alam al-Din Sulaiyman, after capturing it from the Templars in 1188, when its new governor abandoned the fortress a short while later, there was seemingly little opposition from the sultan. This allowed the Armenian ruler, Leon (d. 1219), to move in and take control; an important development because it heralded the beginning of over two decades of Latin-Armenian conflict as they rivalled each other for power over the principality.⁵¹

⁴⁶ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (n. 44 above) 2.948–950; Ibn al-Athir, *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kamil fi'l-Ta'rikh*, ed. and trans. Donald S. Richards, 3 vols. (Aldershot 2005–2008) 2.210; Kemal al-Din, "L'histoire d'Alep," trans. Edgar Blochet, *Revue de l'Orient Latin* 3 (1895) 509–565, at 553–554; John Kinnamos, *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus*, trans. Charles M. Brand (New York 1976) 214–217; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche jacobite d'Antioche (1166–1199)*, ed. and trans. Jean-Baptiste Chabot, 4 vols. (Paris 1916–1920), 3.331.

⁴⁷ Chevalier, *Les ordres religieux-militaires* (n. 35 above) 106–111. On Manuel's relationship with the principality, see Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above) 199–213.

⁴⁸ Emmanuel Sivan, *L'Islam et la Croisade: idéologie et propagande dans les réactions musulmanes aux Croisades* (Paris 1968) 85–87; Michael Köhler, *Alliances and Treaties between Frankish and Muslim Rulers in the Middle East*, trans. Peter M. Holt and Konrad Hirschler (Leiden 2013) 202–212; Elisséeff, *Nur ad-Din* (n. 5 above) 2.638–693.

⁴⁹ Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above) 49–51.

⁵⁰ Baha al-Din Ibn Shaddad, *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin*, trans. Donald S. Richards (Aldershot 2002) 87; Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, *Conquête de la Syrie et de la Palestine par Saladin*, trans. Henri Massé (Paris 1972) 141–143; Ibn al-Athir, *Chronicle* (n. 46 above) 2.352–353; Kemal al-Din, "L'histoire d'Alep," trans. Edgar Blochet, *Revue de l'Orient Latin* 4 (1896) 145–225, at 189–190; Abu Shama, "Le livre des deux jardins," *Recueil des historiens des croisades: historiens orientaux*, 5 vols. (Paris 1872–1906), 4.375–379.

⁵¹ Abu Shama, "Livres des deux jardins" (n. 50 above) 4.379; Izz al-Din ibn Shaddad, *Description de la Syrie du Nord*, trans. Anne-Marie Eddé-Terrasse (Damascus 1984) 256–257, 264; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* (n. 46 above) 3.411; Sempad the Constable, *La chronique attribuée au connétable Smbat*, trans. Gerard Dédéyan (Paris 1980) 68, 71–72. On the long-term

In the immediacy, it also provided Leon with the opportunity to ambush and capture Bohemond III—with whom he had fallen into dispute regarding the latter's treatment of his brother, Rupen III (d. c. 1195)—who was convinced to come to Baghras in 1193 with the promise of recovering such a vital fortress.⁵² More pertinent to this discussion, however, is the fate of Darbsak, which appears to have remained in Muslim hands until at least 1196, when a number of Frankish prisoners held there rebelled and recovered the castle.⁵³ Indeed, when combined with the heavy interest in Baghras by Leon and Bohemond, this further demonstrates the extent to which the fortresses of the Hajar Shughlan could direct human flows towards the Belen Pass, thus ensuring Baghras' continued status as a vital junction in monitoring and controlling Antioch's northern borders.

The castles of the Amanus Mountains (especially in the decades following 1130) did more than just sit within a broader marcher zone. Instead, they served as crucial junctions which—to varying degrees of success—defined the region's bordering policies. Although the mountains offered a natural barrier between Cilicia and northern Syria, these fortresses offered the Franks the chance to monitor and direct movement—and so create, wherever possible, a conjoined flow that ensured the circulation could be limited to those areas most easily controlled. In turn, this offered the Antiochenes, as well as other powers with a vested interest should they secure control of the castles, the opportunity of using this region to secure or expand their authority. Given the delicate balance of power between Antioch and its non-Latin neighbors, attempts at expelling flows rarely allowed for Frankish expansion after 1130, but distinct bordering attempts were at play in preventing major invasions that might herald total territorial collapse.

However, it was not only to the north that the Antiochenes faced important challenges. In fact, the most active frontier during the twelfth century was to the east, where the Franks vied for authority with the Muslim lords of Aleppo and Mosul, especially in the areas in and around two particular massifs: the Jabal Talat (otherwise called the Belus Hills) and the Jabal al-Summaq.⁵⁴ This

conflict between the Armenians and Antioch, see Jochen Burgdorf, "The Antiochene War of Succession," *The Crusader World*, ed. Adrian Boas (Abingdon 2016) 196–211.

⁵² *La continuation de Guillaume de Tyr (1184–1197)*, ed. Margaret R. Morgan (Paris 1982) 96, 165–172; *Chronique d'Ernoul et de la Bernard Le Trésorier*, ed. Louis de Mas Latrie (Paris 1871) 318–324; "L'estoire de Eracles empereur et la conquete de la terre d'Outremer," *Recueil des historiens des croisades: historiens occidentaux*, 5 vols. (Paris 1844–1895), 2.213–215; Sempad the Constable, *Chronique* (n. 51 above) 68, 71–72.

⁵³ Kemal al-Din, "L'histoire d'Alep" (n. 50 above) 212–213.

⁵⁴ For overviews of the narratives of these events, see Asbridge, *Creation of the Principality* (n. 12 above) 47–62, 65–91; Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above) 24–27, 30–39, 41–48, 51–54, 57, 59.

afforded the castles and fortified settlements which dotted these regions a special significance, acting as junctions not just for diverting flows away from Antioch's heartlands to the west of the Orontes, but also for attempts at controlling wider circulation between northern and southern Syria. Regarding the Jabal Talat, through which ran the main Antioch–Aleppo road, the key fortresses were Harim and Artah, while the small fortified settlements of al-Atharib and Zardana, which were further east on the Aleppan plain, are also relevant to this discussion.⁵⁵ By contrast, the Jabal al-Summaq and the areas contiguous with it were home to various confluences linking northern Syria to the wider region, as well as several sites of tactical significance, including Ma'arrat al-Nu'man, Kafartab, Apamea, and al-Bara, each of which acted as junctions through which the Antiochenes might seek to control human flows and the circulation of the Frankish–Muslim border.⁵⁶

Running through the Jabal Talat was the road linking Antioch to its main local rival, Aleppo. As such, the human flows which passed through this region, and the junctions put in place to manage them, were crucial to the political and military stability of Frankish power. Initially, hopes for using these castles to control Aleppan activities centered on al-Atharib and Zardana, as their close proximity to the Muslim city meant that they were perfectly situated to monitor movements and launch attacks. Tancred of Hauteville (1105–1112), in particular, used them to deter aggression against the principality and extract financial tribute.⁵⁷ Likewise, efforts at recovering following the disaster of the Battle of the Field of Blood in 1119—during which Prince Roger was killed along with many of the principality's forces by the armies of Il-Ghazi of Mardin (d. 1122), who had taken control of Aleppo—focused on this eastern zone, particularly in recapturing the now-lost al-Atharib and Zardana, and even attempting to capture Aleppo itself in 1124.⁵⁸ Importantly, in addition to the

⁵⁵ For discussions of this area, see Cahen, *Syrie du Nord* (n. 5 above) 133–138, 154–156; Deschamps, *Châteaux des croisés* (n. 5 above) 59–61, 341–342; Peña, Castellana, and Fernández, *Inventaire du Jebel el-A'la* (n. 6 above). See also Thomas S. Asbridge, “The Significance and Causes of the Battle of the Field of Blood,” *Journal of Medieval History* 23.4 (1997) 301–316; Buck, “Castle and Lordship of Ḥārim” (n. 12 above) 113–31.

⁵⁶ Cahen, *Syrie du Nord* (n. 5 above) 156–163; Deschamps, *Châteaux des croisés* (n. 5 above) 60–64; Thomas S. Asbridge, “The Principality of Antioch and the Jabal as-Summaq,” *The First Crusade: Origins and Impact*, ed. Jonathan P. Phillips (Manchester 1997) 142–152. For a useful map showing the roads which bisected the region, see Dussaud, *Topographie historique* (n. 5 above) carte XIV.

⁵⁷ Asbridge, *Creation of the Principality* (n. 12 above) 51, 53, 55–62, 65–67. The danger posed to Aleppo by Frankish control of al-Atharib in particular is also mentioned in Muslim sources. See Abu'l Fida, “Tire des Annales d'Abou'l-Feda”, *Recueil des historiens des croisades: historiens orientaux*, 5 vols. (Paris 1872–1906), 1.18–19.

⁵⁸ Asbridge, *Creation of the Principality* (n. 12 above) 69–81; Asbridge, “Field of Blood” (n. 55 above) 301–316; Thomas S. Asbridge, “How the Crusades Could Have Been Won: King

practical military and economic benefits of maintaining these fortified sites, they also had a significant impact on human flows by serving as limit, even exit, junctions. Thus, Aleppo movement could not easily pass further west than the plain, with these limit junctions diverting potentially aggressive flows either north, and so into the county of Edessa, or south, into the more densely defended Jabal al-Summaq region (discussed below). Though this could not entirely preclude attacks on sites further east towards Antioch, such as the battle between Tancred and Ridwan of Aleppo (d. 1113) near to Artah in 1105, combat was largely focused to the north or south of this area before 1119, as well as following the re-establishment of Frankish authority in the early 1120s.⁵⁹ Furthermore, given the dangers inherent in launching attacks on either of these areas of Frankish control without major external support, such as that provided by Il-Ghazi, these junctions often stunted flows entirely. They also protected Antiochene lands on the west bank of the Orontes and ensured the balance of power favored the Franks. In short, they helped to create a distinct bordering policy.

However, this had another consequence: by diverting flows emanating from Aleppo further east in search of external aid, this allowed the Muslim *atabeg* of Mosul, Zengi (d. 1146), to take control there in 1127. Immediately, this endangered the principality's eastern border, as hopes of isolating Aleppo relied on their lack of powerful allies. As such, the 1130s witnessed an important period of change. Zengi, ably supported by his lieutenant Sawar (fl. 1130s–1140s), now launched successive attacks on al-Atharib and Zardana, as well as nearby Ma'arrat Misrin, capturing them all by 1135. In spite of the Antiochenes' short-term recovery of these sites (with aid from John II Komnenos) in 1138, by the end of the decade they were permanently lost.⁶⁰ This breakdown of Antioch's easternmost border technologies—the marks—had two significant consequences for the principality's limit: firstly, it allowed the human flows coming from Aleppo to more easily divert south towards the Jabal al-Summaq; and, secondly, it increased the role played by Harim as a pivotal junction. In other words, it both aided the future unification of northern and southern Syria under a single Muslim power, and created an ever greater need for the Antiochenes to adopt and utilize a defensive bordering strategy which placed castles as vital junctions aimed at directing threats to the principality's interior.

We turn first to the regions surrounding and including the Jabal al-Summaq. As already noted, this region was home to numerous interconnected fortified

Baldwin II of Jerusalem's Campaigns against Aleppo (1124–5) and Damascus (1129)," *Journal of Medieval Military History* 11 (2013) 73–94, at 73–86.

⁵⁹ Asbridge, *Creation of the Principality* (n. 12 above) 52–62, 65–67, 69–90.

⁶⁰ Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above) 24–27, 30–31.

settlements, the most powerful of which were al-Bara to the east, Ma'arrat al-Nu'man and Kafartab in the central zone, and Apamea to the south.⁶¹ The proximity of each to major roads leading south means that their roles as junctions defining a wider bordering process related not only to their direct protection of Antiochene authority, but also to hampering potential attempts to unite the Muslim powers of northern and southern Syria. It is for this reason that, during the early decades of Frankish settlement, Antioch's rulers went to great lengths to capture and maintain them, even establishing a bishopric at al-Bara and Apamea to ensure its security.⁶² Unsurprisingly, therefore, alongside capturing the Aleppan plain in the 1130s, Zengi seized Ma'arrat al-Nu'man and Kafartab, both of which now passed permanently out of Frankish hands.⁶³ Though al-Bara and Apamea survived, these losses were devastating for the principality's border, as they allowed the military "flow" of Muslim power to divert further south. Though Islamic unity was a much longer process, one Zengi did not master and which cannot be viewed as a natural progression, it is undeniable that any such hopes of unification were now far more likely, with the *atabeg* able to extend his influence over Hama, Homs, Baalbek, and the eastern regions of the county of Tripoli around Montferrand.⁶⁴ It is certainly no coincidence that, once Zengi's son and heir, Nur al-Din, wiped away the last remaining vestiges of Frankish power in and around the Jabal as-Summaq, securing control of al-Bara and Apamea by 1149 as part of a wider pushback against Antioch following victory at Inab, within a few years the first major step towards a united Islamic response to the Latin East was achieved—the joining of Aleppo and Damascus under one ruler.⁶⁵ What is clear, therefore, is that although the fortresses in this zone of contention between Antioch and Aleppo cannot be seen as a linear border, when they are viewed through Nail's concept of circulation and junctions, it is evident that they nevertheless acted as part of a bordering process, one that not only defined the principality's eastern

⁶¹ Cahen, *Syrie du Nord* (n. 5 above) 156–163; Deschamps, *Châteaux des croisés* (n. 5 above) 60–64.

⁶² Asbridge, *Creation of the Principality* (n. 12 above) 50–53, 56, 59–62, 70–73, 80–84, 87, 89–90, 196–199, 213–214; Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above) 101; Jean-Paul Fourdrin, "La fortification de la seigneurie épiscopale latine d'El Bara dans le patriarcat d'Antioche (1098–1148)," *Pèlerinages et Croisades*, ed. Léon Pressouyre (Paris 1995) 351–406; Paul Dangles, "Afamiya – Qal'at al-Mudīq. Die Mittelalterliche Wiederbefestigung der Antiken Zitadelle von Apamea am Ende des 12. bis Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts," *Burgen und Städte der Kreuzzugszeit*, ed. Matthias Piana (Petersberg 2008) 221–233.

⁶³ Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above) 24–27, 30–31.

⁶⁴ Köhler, *Alliances and Treaties* (n. 48 above) 127–150; Taef El-Azhari, *Zengi and the Muslim Response to the Crusades: The Politics of Jihad* (Abingdon 2016) 61–111.

⁶⁵ Elisséeff, *Nur ad-Din* (n. 5 above) 2.389–493; Thomas S. Asbridge, *The Crusades: The War for the Holy Land* (London 2010) 239–245; Mallet, "Battle of Inab," (n. 43 above) 48–60; Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above) 36–41.

extremities in the first half of the twelfth century, but which also sought to limit the extent and nature of Muslim bordering as well. With the increased ability of Antioch's Muslim neighbors to respond to, and expel, Frankish authority, however, this process diminished, and so the following decades saw the principality's border focus instead on Harim and the crossings of the Orontes.

Though far from being the principality's most imposing fortress, Harim was a site of great strategic significance. Built by the Byzantines in the tenth century, it was situated 30km east of Antioch and roughly 70km west of Aleppo. The castle sits upon an impressive, partially artificial, tell four hectares in diameter and rising 40m above the surrounding plain. Its fortifications cover one hectare of the mound and include a square keep, a fortified gate, and a triangular curtain wall interspersed by several towers. The dating of these defenses remains a matter of debate, not least because later Muslim rulers carried out extensive renovations, but the Franks clearly added to the Byzantine original.⁶⁶ As noted above, Harim's importance derived from its proximity to the major road linking Antioch and Aleppo. Moreover, once through the Jabal Talat, travelers were granted access onto the 'Amuq plain—a fertile region which contained the Lake of Antioch—and the vital Orontes crossing called the Iron Bridge. From here, the principality's interior could be accessed, as could the aforementioned passes into Cilicia through the Amanus Mountains.⁶⁷ Before 1150, the battle for control in northern Syria was largely diverted further east, though Harim was temporarily lost to Il-Ghazi following the Field of Blood in 1119 and subjected to Zengid attacks in the 1130s.⁶⁸ The extent to which vulnerability here opened up threats to the Antiochene interior is shown by the ability of both Zengi and Nur al-Din, having loosened the Frankish grip on Harim, to raid as far west as the Syrian coastal city of Latakia in both 1135 and 1149.⁶⁹ By contrast, with the Aleppan plain in Muslim hands, Harim served as a significant border mark for the Latins, a staging point for raids against the Zengids—such as those enacted

⁶⁶ Cahen, *Syrie du Nord* (n. 5 above) 133–136; Elisséeff, *Nūr ad-Dīn* (n. 5 above) 1.199–201; Deschamps, *Châteaux des croisés* (n. 5 above) 59–61; Asbridge, "Field of Blood," (n. 55 above) 301–316; Sauro Gelichi, "The Citadel of Ḥārim," *Muslim Military Architecture in Greater Syria: From the Coming of Islam to the Ottoman Period*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Leiden 2006) 184–200, at 184–186. See also Buck, "Castle and Lordship of Ḥārim" (n. 9 above) 113–131.

⁶⁷ Cahen, *Syrie du Nord* (n. 5 above) 127–176.

⁶⁸ Asbridge, *Creation of the Principality* (n. 12 above) 74–81; Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above) 25–26.

⁶⁹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (n. 44 above) 2.770–774; Ibn al-Qalanisi, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, trans. Hamilton A.R. Gibb (London 1932) 238–239, 292–294; Ibn al-Athir, *Chronicle* (n. 46 above), 1.327, 2.31, 36; Kemal al-Din, "Chronique d'Alep" (n. 44 above) 672; Kemal al-Din, "L'histoire d'Alep" (n. 46 above) 3.521–523; Abu Shama, "Livres des deux jardins" (n. 50 above) 4.61–64; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* (n. 46 above) 3.245, 289–290.

in 1156, 1158, and 1159/1160.⁷⁰ Furthermore, control here could allow for the diversion of aggressive Muslim flows away from the Iron Bridge, and thus the best route into the interior. Should an enemy force wish to cross the river, they would either have to risk passing by Harim, and nearby Artah, meaning they could be detected and disrupted by the garrisons of both, or move south towards another river crossing, Jisr ash-Shughr, which was defended by the double fortress of Shughr-Bakas. Zengi had seemingly recognized this in late 1138/early 1139, laying siege to the latter bridge as part of a wider campaign to re-establish control over the Aleppan plain and the Jabal al-Summaq after John II Komnenos' intervention.⁷¹ Likewise, as Nur al-Din probed Harim's defenses in the late 1140s, he also seized Hab, just to the east of Jisr ash-Shughr, which would have allowed him to harass the region.⁷² If a crossing could be achieved here, though, hopes of reaching Antiochene heartlands would have depended on either traversing the mountains via the road leading from Jisr ash-Shughr, which took them near to the imposing castle of Saone, or navigating the zone between the Orontes and the mountains, where they might be funneled into an ambush.⁷³ Neither were easy options, even for a powerful military commander like Nur al-Din, and so Frankish retention of Harim proved vital to maintaining an effective border by retaining some control over the region's circulation.

In the period 1149–1164, therefore, the recognition of Harim's strategic importance as a junction for controlling flows came to the fore. Even though the castle fell to the Zengids after Inab, Harim changed hands on several further occasions in the following years. Thus, Nur al-Din is recorded laying siege to the castle in 1156, indicating that it had been recovered by the Antiochenes after 1149, while in 1157 the Franks again regained it with aid from Count Thierry of Flanders (d. 1168).⁷⁴ In 1162, Nur al-Din once more attempted to capture Harim, though his attack was repulsed by its strong garrison.⁷⁵ Significantly, further evidence for Harim's role as a crucial border junction, particularly in

⁷⁰ Ibn al-Qalanisi, *Damascus Chronicle* (n. 69 above) 325, 344; Abu Shama, "Livres des deux jardins" (n. 50 above) 4.83, 96; Kemal al-Din, "L'histoire d'Alep" (n. 46 above) 3.528, 533; Ibn al-Athir, *Chronicle* (n. 46 above) 2.79; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* (n. 46 above) 3.316.

⁷¹ Frederic Monot, "La chronique abrégée d'al-Azimi années 518–538/1124–1144," *Revue des études islamique* 59 (1991) 101–164, at 143–145; Ibn al-Qalanisi, *Damascus Chronicle* (n. 69 above) 251, 256; Kemal al-Din, "Chronique d'Alep" (n. 44 above) 678–679.

⁷² Kemal al-Din, "L'histoire d'Alep" (n. 46 above) 3.515–516; Ibn al-Athir, *Chronicle* (n. 46 above) 2.15; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* (n. 46 above) 282.

⁷³ Cahen, *Syrie du Nord* (n. 5 above) 157–161, 168–171; Deschamps, *Châteaux des croisés* (n. 5 above) 61–64, 79–91, 217–247.

⁷⁴ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (n. 44 above) 2.838–840; Ibn al-Qalanisi, *Damascus Chronicle* (n. 69 above) 326, 338, 344; Kemal al-Din, "L'histoire d'Alep" (n. 46 above) 3.528, 530; Ibn al-Athir, *Chronicle* (n. 46 above) 2.79, 87; Abu Shama, "Livres des deux jardins" (n. 50 above) 4.92–93, 96; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* (n. 46 above) 3.315–316.

⁷⁵ Kemal al-Din, "L'histoire d'Alep" (n. 46 above) 3.533; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* (n. 46 above) 3.319.

either diverting flows away or to the south, comes from the fact that, following the failed siege in 1162, Nur al-Din then captured Arzghan, a fortified river port settlement on the Orontes just to the north of Jisr ash-Shughr.⁷⁶ Despite not offering a direct crossing over the river, it would have facilitated movement via boat, as suggested by a damaging raid launched by Nur al-Din against Latakia soon after.⁷⁷ This reveals that, with Zengid power in the ascendancy, even control over Harim could not entirely deter attacks against Frankish territory, although it would have helped to limit aggressive ventures to quick-fire raids. When Nur al-Din returned to Harim in 1164, however, he was more successful. After a brief siege, he withdrew and tempted Prince Bohemond III, along with a large force of allies, into an ambush near to Artah, achieving an astounding victory.⁷⁸ Harim was then easily taken, and remained in Muslim hands from then on, despite abortive attempts by the Franks to recover it in the late 1170s and early 1180s.⁷⁹ The Antiochene interior was now easily accessible to Muslim forces via the Iron Bridge and roads leading to the Amanus Mountains in the north. As noted above, it was probably the fear of this eventuality that had earlier convinced the Antiochenes to surrender the Amanus fortresses to the Templars. Furthermore, it is undoubtedly because of the loss of Harim that in 1168 Bohemond III made a sizable sale of lands to the Hospitallers, concentrated on the region around the Jisr ash-Shughr crossing.⁸⁰ This included Arzghan itself; the nearby fortifications of Basarfut and Farmith; the prince's half of the highly prized Rujia estate in the Ruj valley, which probably centered on the fortress known as *Chastel Rouge*; and *Caveam*, believed to be the cave fortress above Darkush on the western bank of the Orontes.⁸¹ By surrendering his claims to these sites, Bohemond clearly sought to strengthen the Frankish grip over this

⁷⁶ "Gregory the Priest: Continuation of Matthew of Edessa," trans. A. E. Dostourian, *Armenia and the Crusades: Tenth to Twelfth Centuries* (New York 1993) 279. See also Cahen, *Syrie du Nord* (n. 5 above) 158–159.

⁷⁷ Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* (n. 46 above) 3.320.

⁷⁸ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (n. 44 above) 2.874–875; Ibn al-Athir, *Chronicle* (n. 46 above) 2.144–149; Kemal al-Din, "L'histoire d'Alep" (n. 46 above) 3.538–540; Abu Shama, "Livre des deux jardins" (n. 50 above) 4.108–109; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* (n. 46 above) 3.324–325.

⁷⁹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (n. 44 above) 2.984–987; Baha al-Din ibn Shaddad, *Rare and Excellent History* (n. 50 above) 54–56; Kemal al-Din, "L'histoire d'Alep" (n. 46 above) 3.149–150, 154–160, 167–168; Ibn al-Athir, *Chronicle* (n. 46 above) 2.254–260, 277–279, 295; Abu Shama, "Livre des deux jardins" (n. 50 above) 4.163, 189–192, 213–214, 222–227, 235–236; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* (n. 46 above) 3.373–376; Gregory Bar Ebroyo, *The Chronography: Being the First Part of his Political History of the World*, trans. Earnest A. Wallis Budge, 2 vols. (London 1932) 2.317.

⁸⁰ *Cartulaire général de l'ordre des hospitaliers de S. Jean de Jérusalem (1100–1300)*, ed. Joseph Delaville Le Roux, 4 vols. (Paris 1894–1906) 1.391.

⁸¹ Pascal Castellana and Enzo Hybsch, "Il castello del Roudj o Chastel de Ruge dei Crociati," *Studia Orientalia Christiana Collectanea* 23 (1990) 309–323; Deschamps, *Châteaux des croisés* (n. 5 above) 61, 78; Peña, Castellana, and Fernández, *Inventaire du Jébel Wastani* (n. 6 above) 171–181; Major, "Fortified Caves" (n. 6 above) 251–257.

area; a concern made more pressing now that Harim's loss had severely weakened hopes of maintaining control over the flows passing through the eastern border.⁸²

As such, it would appear that the Antiochenes' bordering processes now focused on Jisr ash-Shughr, which became a limit junction, with the Franks aiming to halt access to the regions over the mountains via the road leading from here—which Nur al-Din had shown the vulnerability of in 1162. With Harim now acting as a non-limit junction for the Franks, efforts at harnessing movement further south, and so divert and disrupt Muslim military movements towards the Iron Bridge and the roads to the Amanus Mountains, appear to have taken on a new importance. This helps to explain why it was that Nur al-Din then embarked on his short-lived alliance with the Armenian Mleh to capture the mountain fortresses, as it was towards here that flows were now directed. At first glance, it may seem odd—and not a little risky—that the Franks perhaps sought to divert Nur al-Din's attentions towards their capital, but at this point there were reasons to believe that the Zengid ruler would not launch an assault on Antioch itself. For one, it retained imposing defenses that would challenge even the most powerful armies, while the overarching protection offered by Byzantine overlordship, which had been fully established by 1158 and reinforced in the 1160s by the emperor's military support at Artah and payment of Bohemond's ransom following the defeat, also served as a deterrent, as an assault on the city risked provoking imperial reprisals.⁸³ By seeking to strengthen Jisr ash-Shughr as a junction, and so direct flows further north, it is possible that Nur al-Din was being challenged, should he wish to continue the fight against the Franks, to take on the daunting task of seizing Antioch, rather than launching small-scale raids or captures elsewhere. In this respect, it is of interest that although the Muslim ruler was largely distracted by events further south in Egypt and the kingdom of Jerusalem, assaults on the Antiochene interior were rare, and limited to minor raids, until Saladin's invasion of 1188.⁸⁴ Therefore, while the eastern border of the principality had shifted with the loss of Harim, attempts to use castles and fortified sites as junctions in order to

⁸² Buck, "Military Orders" (n. 4 above) 288–289.

⁸³ Christiane Brasse, "Von der Stadtmauer zur Stadtgeschichte. Das Befestigungssystem von Antiochia am Orontes," *Neue Forschungen zu antiken Stadtbefestigungen im östlichen Mittelmeerraum und im Vorderen Orient (Byzas 10)*, ed. Janet Lorentzen, Felix Pirson, Peter I. Schneider, and Ulrike Wulf-Rheidt (Istanbul 2010) 261–282; Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above) 202–214. On Nur al-Din's likely reluctance to assault Antioch itself, see also Cahen, *Syrie du Nord* (n. 5 above) 409–411; Elisséeff, *Nur ad-Din* (n. 5 above), 2.593–594; Asbridge, *Crusades* (n. 65 above) 260.

⁸⁴ Elisséeff, *Nur ad-Din* (n. 5 above) 2.602–700; Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above) 48–56.

protect the interior by diverting flows towards, or away from, specific sites or areas, and so better manage the circulation, were certainly still in force.

CONCLUSION

Deploying the frameworks outlined in Thomas Nail's *Theory of the Border*, this article has explored the value provided by several core concepts of this theory for understanding medieval frontiers, particularly those in the twelfth-century Latin East. More specifically, by focusing on the principality of Antioch, whose extremities waxed and waned to an unprecedented degree in this period, it has offered a model of how historians might use this prism to better understand the actions of the Frankish ruling elites who were faced with a complex military and political climate. In doing so, it has been argued that, although castles and fortified settlements did not offer impenetrable or linear borders, especially when the balance of military power was tipped in favor of the principality's Muslim neighbors, it is nevertheless clear that they played a vital role in the Antiochenes' bordering policies. Control over fortresses might be subject to extreme fluctuations, but it remains the case that they served as vital marks and junctions which could divert and control flows, directing them away from vulnerable areas in the hope of maintaining stability. This suggests that castles could serve as more than just the centers of power posited by Ellenblum, focused primarily on the needs of the immediate surrounding area; they could also define the borders of Frankish territory and even act as lines of (hoped-for) defense, redirecting invading armies to better protect the principality.

Moreover, a careful examination of how castles, as junctions directing flows, came to underpin the maintenance of the border—realized or aspirational—not only helps to explain why the principality survived several disastrous military setbacks, it also demonstrates the potential value for historians in returning to pre-modern borders with the ideas of *Theory of the Border* in mind. This need not be limited to castles and military borders; it could also act as an important stepping-stone for re-examining the “frontier” nature of the principality, and, by extension, the wider conceptional utility of considering the role and harnessing of flows of movement to medieval “bordering.” For example, while this article has focused on the military extremities of Antioch's existence, and so its relations with neighboring powers, it might be possible to consider lower-level flows, such as trade and religious migration, to examine the broader experience (and nature) of the Frankish border for non-Latin groups and the ways in which the principality's ruling elites engaged with economic and devotional communities whose circulations transcended the physical limits of their

power.⁸⁵ In other words, while we should remain attentive to the differences between the medieval and the modern, and the vast regional divergences which influenced social and political engagements in the twelfth century, the conversation regarding how borders worked in the middle ages, or even whether they existed, has been given a potentially new lease of life through Nail's *Theory of the Border*. For Antioch in particular, it has allowed for a renewed understanding of the dynamic political activities of its ruling elites in seeking to monitor and direct the flows of human movement which punctuated the region, as well as the central role played by castles in defining and maintaining the borders of Frankish authority.

⁸⁵ On the nature of inter-cultural contact in the principality of Antioch, see Buck, *Principality of Antioch* (n. 3 above) 164–188. For an examination of religious borders in another context, see Antonella Liuzzo Scorpo, “Religious Frontiers and Overlapping Cultural Borders: The Power of Personal and Political Exchanges in the Works of Alfonso X of Castile (1252–1284),” *Al-Masāq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* 23.3 (2011) 217–236.

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