Prior to 1204, from their formation at the end of the eleventh century in the context of the First Crusade, the Byzantine emperor looked upon the Latin principalities in Syria and Palestine as being politically dependent on his imperial authority. In the first half of the twelfth century however, the succession of attempts to establish a certain measure of direct Byzantine governance of these principalities failed. In the course of the 1150s, Manuel I Komnenos tried a different approach and contented himself with the formal recognition by the various Latin princes of his imperial suzerainty or supremacy. In so doing, in the period 1158–1180 the Byzantine emperor was able to establish effective political influence in the region. After Manuel’s death in 1180 however, this Byzantine influence was lost once more.¹ From 1204 onwards, the concern for the Latin Orient was an important element in the imperial ideology of the Latin emperors.² The question is whether Outremer also acquired a place of any importance in the Latin Empire’s concrete foreign policy, and the extent—if any—to which this was inspired by the earlier Byzantine policy vis-à-vis the Latin Orient.

The Principality of Antioch

During the greater part of the twelfth century the relations between Byzantium and the Principality of Antioch were strained. The emperors repeatedly tried to establish either direct control or their suzerainty over the principality. Although at times the princes of Antioch were prepared to recognize their feudal dependence on Constantinople, such recognition usually being the result of direct military pressure, actual Byzantine interference in Antioch was limited. Only in 1158–1180 was Manuel Komnenos able to establish any real influence in the region, thanks to a mild and conciliatory policy of co-operation. After 1180

¹ Lilie, Byzantium and the Crusader States, pp. 246–258.
² Cf. Chapter II, p. 96.
this influence was lost as the result of the general internal and external weakening of the empire, although the theoretical Byzantine claims continued to be maintained. The alliance that Andronikos Komnenos and Isaac II Angelos entered into with Saladin, sultan of Damascus and Egypt at the end of the twelfth century caused a complete breach with the Latin principalities in the Holy Land.3

After Saladin’s resounding success at Hattin in 1187, as a result of which the Latin states in Syria and Palestine were almost entirely lost, Prince Bohemond III offered the suzerainty over his principality successively to King William II of Sicily and Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa with the aim of obtaining much-needed military support. Barbarossa took up his offer, and the crusade that he undertook in 1189–1190 was to a major extent intended as a relief expedition for Antioch. After Barbarossa’s death during the expedition, in the summer of 1190 his younger son Frederick of Swabia accepted Bohemond III’s homage at Antioch.4 After 1190, nothing further is known about the feudal relationship between the Holy Roman Emperorship and the Principality of Antioch. In any event, the troublesome succession in the Holy Roman Empire following the death of Emperor Henry VI in 1197, with the struggle for the throne between Philip of Swabia and Otto IV of Brunswick in the years 1198–1208, prevented the Holy Roman monarchy from lending any support.

Shortly after the seizure of the Byzantine capital, Bohemond IV, prince of Antioch (1201–1216 and 1219–1233) and count of Tripoli (1187–1233) on his own initiative displayed his preparedness to recognize the suzerainty of the Latin emperor over Antioch. As early as 1204, mindful of the theoretical feudal tie with Constantinople, he journeyed to Acre to pay Antioch’s homage to Mary of Champagne, wife of Emperor Baldwin.5 For Bohemond this was principally a politically calculated move. In the beginning of the thirteenth century the prince was embroiled in a drawn-out conflict with King Leo II of Cilician Armenia, who contested the Principality of Antioch with him and who maintained the claims of his young relative Raymond Roupen.6 In

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6 Bohemond IV succeeded his father Bohemond III in 1201. Leo II supported the claim of Raymond Roupen, the underage son of Bohemond III’s oldest and