

# Nureddin Biography

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# Biography

Nureddin (1118-1174), or Malik al-Adil Nur-al-Din Mahmud, was a Damascene ruler and one of several Moslem leaders striving to drive the Christian Crusaders out of the Levant.

The father of Nureddin Imad-al-din, son of a Turkish slave of the Seljuk sultan Malik Shah, created a principality based in Mosul and stretching westward to Aleppo. Nureddin was born in Damascus on Feb. 21, 1118. Highly capable, he inherited his father's expansionist proclivities and the western portion of his principality, making Aleppo the capital. Nureddin was a skilled military campaigner who commanded the respect of his men.

In 1144, 2 years before his murder, Nureddin's father had inspired the Second Crusade (1147-1149) by capturing Edessa from its Frankish ruler, Joscelin II; when he died, this important country, which was a fief of Jerusalem and had been the first crusader state, was the first to fall. With its recapture by Nureddin, Moslems again dominated the eastern part of the Baghdad-Mediterranean trade route.

During the Second Crusade, Nureddin captured Damascus and Antioch from fellow Moslems and held them against the crusaders. Damascus and other inland cities never fell to the crusaders, although occasionally they paid tribute. The Damascene payment in 1156 was 8,000 dinars. In a subsequent peace settlement between Nureddin and Baldwin III of Jerusalem, tribute was eliminated. When the Christian rulers of Antioch and Tripoli fell into Nureddin's hands, they were ransomed, Bohemund III after a year and Raymond III after 9.

Saladin, the nephew of Nureddin's lieutenant in Cairo, became vizier and commander in 1169, 5 years after Zangid forces entered Egypt. Saladin resisted Christian attacks and even raided into the kingdom of Jerusalem, but the independence of this young officer curtailed effective cooperation with Damascus against the Franks.

In the north, Nureddin continued his raiding, taking several towns from the Rum sultanate in 1173. While on this campaign he received a diploma of investiture as lord of Mosul, Syria, Egypt, and Konya from the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad. Nureddin died of throat trouble on May 15, 1174.

A pious Sunni, Nureddin was noted for strict adherence to religious dicta in his public and private life. Justice was a paramount feature of his character. He is credited, culturally, with patronizing scholars and with the extensive building of mosques, hospitals, and schools throughout his territories.