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THE RULE OF NŪR AL-DĪN MAHMŪD ZANGĪ DURING A'LĀ AL-DĪN AL-KASĀNĪ'S LIFETIME

Abstract: *Nūriddīn Mahmūd Zangī, a prominent representative of the Zangī dynasty that ruled parts of the Levant and Upper Mesopotamia on behalf of the Seljuk Empire in the twelfth and thirteenth century, was one of the kings who fought for the prosperity of the homeland. In addition to fighting with external enemies, he was also kind to scholars for the development of Islamic knowledge in his country and the prosperity of his people.*

Key words: *Imad al-Dīn Zangī, Sayf al-Dīn al-Ghāzī, Nusrat al-Dīn Amīr Amīrān, Jamal al-Dīn Muhammad al-Isfahānī, Salah al-Dīn al-Yāghsiyānī, the Ash'ariyyah, Ibn al-Athīr, A'lā al-Dīn al-Kasānī.*

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Introduction

The Zangī dynasty was a dynasty of Oghuz Turkic origin [1:191], which ruled parts of the Levant and Upper Mesopotamia on behalf of the Seljuk Empire and eventually seized control of Egypt in 1169 [2:269-280].

In 1174 the Zangī state extended from Tripoli to Hamadan and from Yemen to Sivas. [3:51-61]. The dynasty was founded by Imaduddīn Zangī (480-541/1085-1146) and he controlled the dynasty during 521-541/1128-1146.

His emirate included most of the Levant, and he confronted the second crusade, then he annexed Egypt to his emirate and overthrew the Fātimiys and the sermon of the Abbāsīs caliph in Egypt after the Fātimiys stopped it for a long time, and stopped their doctrine. Thus, he paved the way for Salāhuddīn al-Ayyūbī to fight the Crusaders and conquer Jerusalem after uniting Egypt and the Levant into one state. His reign was marked by justice and the establishment of the Sunni sect in the Levant and Egypt. He also spread

education and health in his emirates, and some consider him the sixth of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.

Imaduddīn Zangī left four male children: Sayfuddīn al-Ghāzī, who was the eldest, then Nūriddīn Mahmūd, who is the just king, Nusratuddīn Amīr Amīrān, and the father of kings Qutbuddīn Mawdūd, who was the youngest [4:76]. These brothers had no difficulty in retaining their father's property thanks to the help of two of Imaduddīn Zangī's loyal men: Jamaluddīn Muhammad al-Isfahānī, chief of the court, and Salahuddīn al-Yāghsiyānī, Amīr Hājib. The first was in the campaign that besieged Ja'bar Castle, so he played a major role in preserving the country and keeping it in the hands of the sons of Zangī.

Nūriddīn Mahmūd Zangī was born in 511/1118 and he is the second son of Imaduddīn Zangī bin Āq Saṅqur, after Sayfuddīn al-Ghāzī. He is called the "*al-Malik al-Ādil*" (the Just King), and among his other titles are "*Nāsir al-amīr al-mu'minīn*" (the Supporter of the Faithful), "*Taqiyyu al-Mulūk*" (the Pious of

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Kings), “*Laith al-Islām*” (the Lion of Islam), “*Al-Xalīfatu al-Rāshīd*” (the Rightly Guided Caliph, and he was also called “*Nūruddīn al-Shahīd*” (The martyr Nūruddīn) despite his death due to illness. He ruled Aleppo after the death of his father, and he gradually expanded his emirate, and he also inherited from his father the project to fight the Crusaders.

He was raised in his childhood under the care and supervision of his father, and that his father used to give him precedence over his brothers and saw in him fantasies of decency [5:329].

Some modern historians believe that he was Ash‘arī,[6:248] while others believe that he was a follower of the Qadiriyya method, and others believe that he reconciled between the Qadiriyya and the Ash‘ariyyah. Nūruddīn Mahmūd Zangī ruled Aleppo, while Sayfuddīn al-Ghāzī ruled Mosul. The boundary between the two brothers’ possessions was the Khābūr River in the Syrian Jazīrah [7:163].

In 541/1146, Nūruddīn married Ismatuddīn Khatūn, the daughter of the Atabīk Muin al-Din Anar, the ruler of Damascus, and wrote the contract in Damascus on Shawwal, 23. He fathered two sons and a daughter, the eldest, Ismail, who took power after him, and the youngest, Ahmed, died as a child [7:164].

Nūruddīn was accompanied by his father when he was killed in the year 541/1146 at Ja‘bar Castle, while his older brother, Sayfuddīn al-Ghāzī, was residing in Shahrazūr. Nūruddīn took his father’s ring, and went with his army to Aleppo, and he became king of it and its dependencies in Rabī‘ al-Akhīr, 541/1146. Nūruddīn Zangī was thirty years old at that time.

The Zangī’s state was thus divided into two parts, the first in Mosul, the Jazīrah, and Homs, to which Sayfuddīn al-Ghāzī hurried to establish his rule there, and the second in Aleppo and its vicinity under the command of Nūruddīn. Their brother, Nusratuddīn Amīr Amīrān, ruled the Harran region, subordinate to Nūruddīn, while the fourth brother, Qutbuddīn Mawdūd, remained under the auspices of Sayfuddīn al-Ghāzī [4:264].

Nūruddīn’s first attempt to control Damascus was in the year 545/1150 when he sent his forces there, but their march was delayed due to rain, so Mujīruddīn hurried to seek help from the Crusaders, so Nūruddīn decided to break the siege on Damascus after Mujīruddīn promised him that he would engrave his name on the money and that he would pray for him in the mosques [8:151,193]. The Crusaders took control of Ashkelon in the year 548/1153, and wrested it from the hands of the Fātimiys, and Damascus objected between Nūruddīn and it.

So Nūruddīn commissioned Najmuddīn Ayyūb, who was the ruler of Baalbek at the time, to win some leaders in Damascus and spread rumors within Damascus and incite the people to revolt, until Najmuddīn went with some of his guards to meet Mujīruddīn, who in turn feared the interview and refused it. So Nūruddīn considered it an insult, so he

marched his army to Damascus [8:151,193]. Mujīruddīn begged the Crusaders to give them money and hand over Baalbek to them, so they gathered and rallied. In the meantime, Nūruddīn went to Damascus in Muharram in the year 549/1154 and wrote a group of its events and promised them from themselves. When he arrived, they rebelled against Mujīruddīn and took refuge in the castle.

And he opened one of the gates of Damascus, which is an eastern gate, so that Nūruddīn entered through it, and Nūruddīn took possession of the city and besieged Mujir al-Din in the citadel and gave him a fief from the city of Homs. Mujīruddīn and the king of Nūruddīn went to the castle. Then he compensated him for Homs with Basil, and he did not satisfy her, so he moved to Baghdad and built a house there and resided there until he died [9:114].

He continued his military campaigns and went to Shayzar. Shayzar has a strategic location, as it lies on the trade lines between Aleppo, Damascus, and Homs. Despite this, Nūruddīn did not try to annex it militarily. But an earthquake occurred in the year 552/1152, which destroyed the fort and killed most of the saved Munqidh family [10:424]. Nūruddīn feared that Shayzar would fall under the hands of the Crusaders, so he stood with his army on the outskirts of the country and repaired the damaged walls. Thus, some of the princes of Nūruddīn entered it, and then he entered it and owned it after all of the Munqidh family who had gathered at its prince died in an invitation, and the earthquake hit them together, so the castle fell on them, and none of them escaped.

After Nūruddīn succeeded in annexing Damascus, al-Dahhak ibn Jandal al-Biqā‘i, who was subordinate to the Emirate of Damascus, declared his disobedience and rebellion against Nūruddīn. But Nūruddīn did not take any action against him for fear that he would seek the help of the Crusaders. He waited three years until a truce agreement was concluded with the Crusaders. In the year 552/1154, Nūruddīn annexed Baalbek without any resistance from al-Dahhak [11:419].

Nūruddīn set his sights on fighting the Crusaders since the beginning of his taking over the Emirate of Aleppo and ending all the strongholds of the Crusaders in the Levant, and his goal was to liberate Jerusalem, so he ordered the construction of a pulpit in the year 563/1168 to put it in Al-Aqsa Mosque after he had conquered the city. This pulpit was made in Damascus. By skilled artisans from Damascus and Aleppo. This pulpit was actually moved to Jerusalem after its conquest by Salāhuddīn al-Ayyūbī, and this pulpit was later called the Saladin pulpit.

As for the Crusaders, they were determined to go to Homs after defeating Nūruddīn, because it is the closest country to them. Then they were sent to Nūruddīn in the truce, but he did not respond to it, so they left at the fort someone to protect it, and returned to their country and dispersed [7:494].

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Moreover the Nūruddīn's army tended to seize Al-Munaitra Fort in the year 561/1165 and the abundant spoils, and in the following year 562/1166 the areas surrounding the Kurd Fort were attacked, and the spoils were plundered, as well as the Sāfītā Fort, which is one of the impregnable forts of the Emirate, and a clash took place between the army of Nūruddīn, and the army of the Emirate of Tripoli 565/1169 in what was known as the Battle of Labwa, and after two years, that is, in the year 567 AH / 1171 AD, he continued the same policy, and forces were sent to besiege the fortress of Arqa and seized it in the same year [7:495].

A part from that Nūruddīn Mahmūd Zangī used to say: "We charge (police) the Sharī'a and carry out its orders." He also said: "We protect the road from a thief and a bandit, and the harm that occurs from them is close. Should we not preserve the religion and prevent from it what contradicts it, which is the principle".

In a word, he is considered to be a skilled king who fought for the benefit of his people and spent all his efforts for the development of the state along with politics. Ibn Kathīr said about him: "He was based in his rulings with good treatment and following the purified Sharī'a and he showed in his country the Sunnah and put an end to heresy".

He ordered the abolition of all taxes and excises that were taken from the people, when his minister Muwaffaquddīn Khālid bin Muhammad bin Nasr al-Qaysarānī the poet told him that he had seen in a dream as if he was washing the clothes of King Nūruddīn, so he ordered him to write leaflets setting out the excises and taxes for the country, and he said to him: "This interpret your vision." And he wrote to the people so that they would be free from what was taken from them, and he said to them: "This was only spent fighting your infidel enemies and defending your country, your women, and your children." And he wrote to the rest of his kingdoms and the countries of his authority, and he commanded the preachers to seek permission from the merchants for him.

Ibn al-Athīr says about him in the justice of Nūruddīn: "I have read the biographies of the previous kings, and I did not see among them after the Rightly Guided Caliphs and U'mar bin A'bdu al-A'zīz better than his biography, and no more investigation than him for justice"[12:903].

Ibn al-Athīr described Nūruddīn as: "He used to investigate justice and do justice to the oppressed from the oppressor, whoever he was, the strong and the weak in his view were equal in the right, so he used to hear the complaint of the oppressed and take charge of exposing it himself, and he did not entrust that to an eyebrow or a prince, so it is no crime that his mention spread in the East the earth and its west".

Nūruddīn used to pray a lot at night, and it was told about him that he prays and lengthens the prayer, and he has wīrds during the day, so if the night comes

and he prays the evening prayer, he sleeps, then he wakes up in the middle of the night, and he rises to ablution and prayer and calls to tomorrow, then he appears to ride and performs the tasks of the state.

Damascus was the capital and the most important city during the reign of Nūruddīn Zangī, and he was concerned with the construction of many buildings that bear his name, such as:

- In Damascus, he established legal education schools and focused his attention on the Hanafī and Shāfi'i schools of thought. He also established schools for the Mālikī and Hanbalī schools;
- He built the first and largest house of hadith and entrusted its affairs to the great Hafiz Ibn A'sakir;
- He built orphanages for graduating scholars and allocated many endowments for them;
- He built many hospitals in all cities.
- He restored the Damascus Wall and reinforced it with numerous and impregnable towers, including the "Nūruddīn Tower" south of Jābiya Gate.
- He built a public bath, which became known as the Nūruddīn bath, and it is located in the al-Bazūriyyah area in Damascus, and its building is considered one of the oldest baths in the city.

Furthermore, Nūruddīn had a good attitude towards the scholars from his country and abroad, and earned their respect. In particular, A'lāuddīn al-Kasānī, who was sent as an ambassador to Aleppo in 541-543/1146-1148, had a warm attitude. He persuaded him to stay in Damascus. A'lāuddīn al-Kasānī was sent as an envoy to the ruler of Aleppo, Nuruddīn Zangī where he lived for the rest of his life. During Kasānī's stay in Aleppo, the government was ruled by the Zangī and Ayyubis, and the country's scientific environment was stable. For more than 40 years, Kasānī served as "Chairman of the U'lama'" in the state of Zangī. He soon gained great fame here and was appointed chief teacher of the Halavīyyah Madrasah, built by Nuriddīn Zangī at the request of local jurists. Before this, ar-Razī as-Sarakhsī was the head teacher of the madrasa, and the Taliban were not satisfied with the pronunciation errors due to his fluency. Al-Kasānī's respect for the madrasah is so great that even in the absence of the teacher, a place of worship was set up for him, and he sat around him from the time he arrived until he got up. Al-Kasānī was a high-level scholar and a sharp-witted orator there.

In addition to fighting with external enemies, he was also kind to scientists for the development of science in his country and the prosperity of his people.

Nūruddīn Mahmūd Zangī fell in early 569/1174 with angina pectoris, and he remained on his sickbed for eleven days, to die on Shawwal 11, 569/May 15, 1174, when he was fifty-nine years old, [8:151,173] and was buried in the house in which he was confined in Damascus Citadel, then his body was transferred to the Nūriyyah School located in the Khawāsīn market in Damascus.

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