Nur Al-Din Mahmud: Unsung Hero of the Second Crusade

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Those who study mathematics and science largely do so clinically and objectively. History is different. Scholars’ beliefs often find their way into the conclusions gleaned from their investigation and the findings. An example of this is their treatment of Nur al-Din Mahmud, who led the Muslim armies against the Western forces during the Second Crusade. Many history books fail to mention him, and several of those that give his name only do so in passing or in a negative light. The original argument for this paper was that, were it not for Nur al-Din, the Muslims would not have vanquished the Franj. Many accounts of the Crusades make it clear that he was given short shrift. Citing sources obtained from the Langson Library at the University of California, Irvine, this essay discusses Nur al-Din’s ascension to power after his father started the Second Crusade and highlights some of his accomplishments while in charge. Nur al-Din’s achievements during his reign include unifying Arab city-states, instilling religious fervor, and enhancing communications in his realm.

Nur al-Din’s lack of acknowledgement lies in the fact that his successor was a very successful leader and shrewd military tactician. If westerners know of any Muslim leader from that era, it is invariably Saladin, who certainly deserves the credit he receives today. It must be noted, however, that there would be no Saladin if it were not for Nur al-Din. It is time history gives Nur al-Din Mahmud the recognition he merits.

Works Cited


