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Dear Professor Goitein:

Thank you very much for your letter of March 3. The delay in answering it has been caused by -- rather futile -- inquiry in the problem raised by you, - an effort undertaken primarily to demonstrate my appreciation of your kind trust and faith in my heuristic competence.

I have to start by reiterating a certain fundamental 'principium operandi' which I uphold myself and which I preach to my students:
'If you cannot solve a problem - try Goitein! If Goitein does not furnish you with an answer - nobody will!'

Consequently, having read the issue involved in your query I hardly expected to come up with an explicitly substantiated answer. Nevertheless, I have come across some data which may lead to a plausible, speculative solution of the problem.

1. Al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥīy Dawlat Amīr al-Mu'minīn = Saladin
(as you stated)
2. The oldest son of Saladin, born in A. H. 565 - was called 'Alī. Al-Afdal was his laqab.
3. The ninth son of Saladin, al-Mufaḍḍal Abū Mūsā (Abū Shāmah, KR, 1962, I/710) or Mūsā (Ibn Wāṣil, MK, 1957, II/424), was born in A.H. 573. He was the shaḡīq of al-Afdal. Both: Abū Shāmah and Ibn Wāṣil (loc. cit.) maintain that al-Mufaḍḍal "thumma nu'ita bi-l-Muzaḡffar."
4. At what date did al-Mufaḍḍal acquire the laqab al-Muzaḡffar?
As a young lad? As an adolescent? As an old man?
5. On the other hand we have a number of inscriptions listing Saladin as Abū -l-Muzaḡffar: A.H. 574; 575; 576; 579; 581; 583; 583; 583; 584; 587; 588 (Cf. Syria, 3, 1922, p. 307 -312).

6. After temporarily succeeding Saladin in Damascus, al-Afdal was gradually relegated to an insignificant position in the Ayyūbid power hierarchy. He ended up as the lord of Samosate, where he died in A.H. 622. He was succeeded by his shaqīq al-Mufaḍḍal alias al-Muẓaffar.
7. I wonder whether Arab chroniclers did not err in using the laqab of al-Muẓaffar with reference to one of Saladin's sons. Perhaps that laqab "belonged" to ʿAlī. Al-Mufaḍḍal might have inherited it following his take-over in Samosate, after many years of a close personal and political association with his shaqīq, ʿAlī?
8. Should this reconstruction prove correct then your document would acquire additional importance by furnishing us (or confirming) the name of the son of al-Afdal. I do not know how Zambaur arrived at linking al-Afdal with Ṣāliḥ Ismāʿīl (cf. Zambaur's genealogical table of Saladin's descendants).

I am glad to learn about your visit to Detroit. The fact^{that} it coincides with our summer vacations will make it possible for me to attend your lecture in person. As for "my" Saladin, I have finally signed a contract with the State University of New York Press at Albany.

Hoping to see you at the AOS meeting in Boston.

I remain most sincerely yours

Arthur S. Huntington.