

Lü'lü Bedreddin (1202-53)

B

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Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu'

Al-Malik al-Rahīm **Badr al-Dīn** Abū l-Faḍā'il **Lu'lu'** (d. 657/1259) was a military slave (*mamlūk*) and freedman (*mawlā*) of the last Zangids of Mosul; he ruled this principality towards the end of his career. Similar to the Begtiginids in Ḥarrān and Irbil, Lu'lu' took advantage of the disintegration of the Zangid realms in al-Jazīra to found a short-lived dynasty. He was most likely of Armenian origin. (Previous authors have assumed, most likely on the basis of his name Lu'lu' ("pearl"), that he was of sub-Saharan origin; e.g., Cahen.)

Lu'lu's rise to power followed the pattern typical of the military patronage state in its Seljuk (Saljūq) version (Chamberlain): he was designated as regent (*atabeg*) of the principality by Arslān Shāh I (r. 589–607/1193–1211), the last effective Zangid ruler of Mosul, for his young son al-Qāhir (r. 607–15/1211–8), then by the latter for his infant son, Arslān Shāh II (r. 615–6/1218–9). From 617/1220 onwards, Lu'lu' was effectively an independent ruler, and in 631/1233 the caliph formally recognised him as sultan of Mosul.

Lu'lu' successfully navigated the highly regionalised political landscape of al-Jazīra to carve out a remarkable degree of independence for the Mosul principality and expand its territory. He built alliances and clashed with the small surviving Zangid principalities, such as that of Shahrzūr and the Begtiginid principalities; if expedient, he sought the support of the Ayyūbid strongmen of the region, in particular al-Malik al-Ashraf (d. 635/1237); and he successfully dealt with pressure from the East, especially the expansion of the Khwārazmshāhs and the first Mongol incursions. Towards the end of this life, he understood that the Mamlūks were the new holders of power, and he tried to marry his daughter to the Mamlūk sultan, Aybak al-Mu'izz (r. 648–55/1250–7). This was also an attempt to balance the Mongol influence over Mosul, which increased from the early 640s/1240s onwards. While Lu'lu' was initially able repeatedly to build advantageous alliances with Mongol forces, he became a de facto vassal after they took Baghdad in 656/1258. When he died the following year, aged about 80, power passed to his sons, but their rule

7-10