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# I

## Ibn Lu'lu'

Badr al-Dīn Yūsuf **Ibn Lu'lu'** b. 'Abdallāh al-Dhahabī al-Dimashqī (607–86/1211–88) was a poet of the late Ayyūbid and early Mamlūk periods. He was generally known as Badr al-Dīn (or al-Badr) Yūsuf b. Lu'lu'—not to be confused with his contemporary, Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu', the *atabeg* of Mosul (r. 607–57/1211–59). Al-Şafadī (d. 764/1363) notes that his father, Lu'lu', a freed slave of the commander of Tall Bāshir, Badr al-Dīn Dildarim al-Yārūqī (d. 611/1214), named his son after his master. Little is known about Ibn Lu'lu's early life, his family, or his education. Born in Tall Bāshir (twenty-five kilometres southeast of the city of Gaziantep, now in Turkey), he and his family moved to Damascus when he was young and settled near the Umayyad Mosque. Ibn Lu'lu' learned the goldsmith's trade and owned a little shop in the Labbādīn market (the market selling *libd*—felt) east of the city gate, Bāb Jīrūn. He apparently acquired his literary knowledge as an autodidact and attended literary salons in Damascus.

According to al-Şafadī, the Mamlūk ruler of Damascus, al-Malik al-Nāşir Şalāh al-Dīn Yūsuf b. Muḥammad (r. 648–58/1250–60), heard about his poetic skills and engaged him as a poet. When al-Malik al-Nāşir was confirmed in his office by the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Mustaşim (r. 640–56/1242–58), Ibn Lu'lu' composed a congratulatory *qaşīda* in his honour.

As a widely travelled man, visiting the Hījāz, Iraq, Lebanon, and Egypt, Ibn Lu'lu' composed a number of laudatory poems for the dignitaries and rulers he met. The *ḥadīth* scholar and historian al-Irbilī (d. 692/1292 or 1293) notes that he encountered Badr al-Dīn Ibn Lu'lu' in Irbil and heard him reciting a laudatory *qaşīda* for a military commander. During his visit to Egypt Ibn Lu'lu' praised the Mamlūk sultan Baybars (r. 658–76/1260–77) in several poems, including one written on the occasion of his victory against the Mongols in the battle of al-Furāt (671/1272).

Ibn Lu'lu' maintained friendly relationships with other poets of his time. One of his friends was the Damascene poet Ibn Isrā'īl (d. 677/1278), who was famed for