

STUDIES

Nūr al-Dīn b. Balqāsīm (Nouredine ben Belgacem), *Fī naqd al-qissa wa-l-riwāya bi-Tūnis*, Tunis 1989; Jean Fontaine, *20 ans de littérature Tunisienne 1956-1975*, Tunis 1977; Farid Ghazi, *Le roman et la nouvelle en Tunisie*, Tunis 1970; Muḥammad al-Ṣāliḥ al-Jābirī, *al-Qissa al-Tūnisīyya. Nash'atuhā wa-ruwāduhā*, Tunis 1975; Muṣṭafā Kilānī, *al-Adab al-ḥadīth wa-l-mu'āṣir. Ishkālīyyāt al-riwāya*, Carthage 1990.

MOHAMED-SALAH OMRI

al-Mizzī, Jamāl al-Dīn

Jamāl al-Dīn Abū l-Ḥajjāj Yūsuf b. al-Zakī 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Yūsuf al-Qudā'ī al-Kalbī **al-Mizzī** (654-742/1256-1341) was a high-ranking Syrian religious scholar of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab* (school of law). Officially committed to the Ash'arī creed, he was sympathetic to Salafī thought, presumably as a result of his affiliation with Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328). He is known best for two works in the field of *ḥadīth* (Prophetic traditions): *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, a biographical dictionary of *ḥadīth* transmitters, and *Tuhfat al-ashraf*, an encyclopaedia of the *isnāds* (chains of transmitters) of the six canonical *ḥadīth* collections.

1. LIFE

Al-Mizzī was born on 10 Rabī' II 654/7 May 1256 in al-Ma'quliyya, a neighbourhood on the outskirts of Aleppo, and grew up in al-Mizza, a wealthy village just southwest of Damascus. His family, which included no noteworthy '*ulamā'*' (religious scholars), afforded him a basic education in Qur'ān recitation, Arabic grammar, and some Shāfi'ī *fiqh* (jurisprudence). In his youth, he associated for a short time with 'Aff al-Dīn al-Tilimsānī (d. 690/1291), a Damascene Ṣūfī poet championing Ibn

'Arabī's (d. 638/1240) pantheistic monism (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) (al-Dhahabī, *Dhayl*, 488; *Tadhkira*, 4:1499; al-Ṣafadī, 5:651).

It was not until he left home, at the age of twenty-one, that he pursued further religious education with established authorities. His focus shifted to *ḥadīth*, and he soon became a specialist in the *ilm al-rijāl* (knowledge of the transmitters). A lifelong learner, al-Mizzī chose his *shaykhs* so as to receive the best possible education and acquire impressive credentials. He studied with *shaykhs* in Baalbek, Ḥamā, Aleppo, and Jerusalem. When he travelled to the Ḥijāz to perform the *ḥajj* pilgrimage, he seized the opportunity to hear *ḥadīth* in Mecca and Medina. Finally, in 683-4/1284-5, his quest for knowledge took him to Egypt, where he stayed in Cairo, Bilbeis (Bilbays), and Alexandria. He also copied manuscripts for himself and others and was praised for his attractive handwriting (al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkira*, 4:1498; Ibn Ḥajar 4:457; Ibn al-Imād, 8:236-7).

His first professional appointment was at al-Nāṣiriyya *madrasa* in Damascus, founded, like its namesakes in Palestine and Egypt, by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn b. Ayyūb (Saladin, r. 564-89/1169-93). From 718/1319 until his death, al-Mizzī headed the Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ashrafiyya, a prestigious Shāfi'ī-Ash'arī institute in Damascus that focused on the study of *ḥadīth* (Ibn Ḥajar, 4:458; on the Dār al-Ḥadīth, see al-Nu'aymī, 1:15-35). He combined this position with shorter stints as a teacher at other Syrian *ḥadīth* academies (al-Nu'aymī, 1:45, 84).

He belonged to a tight-knit circle of Damascene intellectuals that vacillated between Shāfi'ī-Ash'arism and Salafism and included, besides al-Mizzī, his students 'Alam al-Dīn al-Birzālī (d. 739/