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al-Maḥallî, Jalāl al-Dīn

Abū ‘Alī **Jalāl al-Dīn** Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī **al-Maḥallî** al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 864/1459) was an Egyptian religious Shāfi‘ī scholar who is most famous for the summary Qur’ān commentary *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* (“Tafsīr of the two Jalāls”), begun by al-Maḥallî and completed after his death by his illustrious former student, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505). Al-Maḥallî lived in Cairo during the waning of the Mamlūk sultanate (648–922/1250–1517). He was born in 791/1389 and died on 1 Muḥarram 864/28 October 1459. His biography, found in al-Suyūṭī’s *Ḥusn al-muḥādara* and reproduced in Ibn al-‘Imād’s *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī l-akḥbār man dhahab*, as well as his extant works show (see below) show that he was well versed in the Qur’ān and its interpretation, *ḥadīth* science, law, poetry, theology (*kalām*), and logic (Ibn al-‘Imād, 7:303). Al-Maḥallî is described as being extremely devout and morally upstanding: he refused the position of chief *qāḍī* in Cairo to stay of politics, instead devoting himself to the teaching of *fiqh* at the Mu‘ayyadiyya and Barqūqiyya

madrasas in Cairo (Ibn al-‘Imād, 7:304) and also taught briefly at the Shaykhūniyya *madrasa* in 865/1456, where he took on al-Suyūṭī as his pupil, when the latter was thirteen years of age (Sartain, 25).

Al-Maḥallî is most famous as one of the authors of the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, an extremely popular work of Qur’ānic commentary, which was often included in the margins of other works of *tafsīr* or even in editions of the Qur’ān itself. The impact of the work has been profound, and it has become part of the *tafsīr* canon in many, if not all, Sunnī scholarly traditions from East Africa to Southeast Asia (see Musa; Johns: 4–5). Al-Maḥallî began this work by writing a commentary on the Qur’ān from Sūrat al-Kahf, the eighteenth *sūra*, until the end of Sūrat al-Nās, the last *sūra*, along with the opening *sūra*, *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*. However, after al-Maḥallî’s death, his student al-Suyūṭī continued the work, completing the commentary from Sūrat al-Baqara to the end of Sūrat al-Isrā’, according to the account given by al-Suyūṭī himself at the end of *Sūrat al-Isrā’* (Hamza, 285–7). The work has been translated into English twice, once by Feras Hamza and once by Aisha Bewley,