

*A Treatise on Mystical Love.* Translated by Joseph Norment Bell and Hassan Mahmood Abdul Latif Al Shafie, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2005, lxx+224 p. (Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies Monograph Series, 1)

Franklin Lewis

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**Édition électronique**

URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/abstractairanica/12822>

DOI : [10.4000/abstractairanica.12822](https://doi.org/10.4000/abstractairanica.12822)

ISSN : 1961-960X

**Éditeur :**

CNRS (UMR 7528 Mondes iraniens et indiens), Éditions de l'IFRI

**Édition imprimée**

Date de publication : 15 mai 2007

ISSN : 0240-8910

**Référence électronique**

Franklin Lewis, « *A Treatise on Mystical Love.* Translated by Joseph Norment Bell and Hassan Mahmood Abdul Latif Al Shafie, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2005, lxx+224 p. (Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies Monograph Series, 1) », *Abstracta Iranica* [En ligne], Volume 28 | 2007, document 276, mis en ligne le 18 septembre 2007, consulté le 25 septembre 2020. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/abstractairanica/12822> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/abstractairanica.12822>

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## *A Treatise on Mystical Love.*

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- <sup>1</sup> Daylamī's treatise, *Kitāb 'atf al-alif al-ma'lūf 'alā al-lām al-ma'ṭūf* (*Book of the Conjunction of the Cherished Alif with the Conjoined Lām*), written in the last quarter of the 10th century CE, appears to be one of the first on mystical love in the Islamic tradition. Though the Arabic text is only known to us from one surviving manuscript, it may have had a profound influence on Persian mysticism through Rūzbehān Baqlī and his followers. A quarter century ago, Jean-Claude Vadet translated this treatise to French as *Le traité d'amour mystique d'al-Daylami* (Geneva, Librairie Droz, 1980) on the basis of his own edition of the Arabic text (Cairo, Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1962). Bell and Al Shafie's amply annotated English translation follows the text established in their new, separately published, critical edition of the Arabic (Cairo, Dār al-Kitāb al-Maṣrī, 2006). Although the unique Arabic ms. of the work presents some thorny textual problems, the Bell/Al Shafie text and their English translation improve upon our understanding of the text.
- <sup>2</sup> In another work, Daylamī provides us with a biography of his famous teacher, Ebn Ḥafīf of Šīrāz, though Daylamī's own life appears by comparison quite obscure. The extended introduction of the present translators attempts, drawing upon the work of Vadet and Florian Sobieroj, to remedy this situation. The translation itself is clear, and rightly

preserves technical distinctions in the terminology of love, especially with regard to *ḥubb* (rendered as “love”) and *‘ešq* (rendered by “eros”). It includes a bibliography (207-218) and an index of proper names (219-24). Though the text is in Arabic, its importance for the Persian mystical traditions of *maktab-e ‘ešq* is clear.

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## INDEX

**Thèmes** : 8. Soufisme

## AUTEURS

**FRANKLIN LEWIS**

University of Chicago