Book Review

Monica Balda-Tillier. *Histoires d'amour et de mort: le précis de martyrs de l'amour de Muġulṭāy (m. 1361)* (Paris and Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2022). ISBN 9782724707892. xiv+284 pp. €49.00 cloth.

Jonathan Lawrence
University of Oxford

(jonathan.lawrence@orinst.ox.ac.uk)

If *al-Wāḍiḥ al-mubīn fī man ustushhida min al-muḥibbīn*, an eighth/fourteenth century work of "love theory," to adopt Lois Giffen's terminology,[1] ought to be understood as "a vademecum on profane love" (p. 1),[2] "containing models of behaviour for a good Muslim to follow" (p. 184), Monica Balda-Tillier's recent monograph should be seen as an expansive vademecum for this vademecum. Tightly focused on Mughulṭāy b. Qilīj (d. 762/1361) and his work, this book brings to light a lesser-known treatise on love from the period of the Cairo Sultanate and situates it within both its immediate reception context and the much longer intellectual history of the emotions in Arabic literature. It will benefit scholarly readers from across the fields of Arabic emotional and intellectual history, as well as Arabic-Islamic ethics and Classical Arabic literature more broadly.

Born in around 690/1291, Mughulṭāy was a prolific scholar who controversially served at one time as the preceptor of *ḥadīth* at the Ẓāhiriyya Madrasa in Cairo, having been elected to the position following the death of Ibn Sayyid al-Nās (d.734/1334), the well-known biographer of the Prophet. He supposedly wrote over one hundred works, all of which, except *al-Wāḍiḥ al-mubīn*, were concerned with the religious sciences; *al-Wāḍiḥ al-mubīn*, much like the other works of love theory outlined by Giffen,[3] combines theoretical discussions about the nature, causes, signs,

1. Lois Giffen, *Theory of Profane Love among the Arabs: The Development of the Genre* (New York: New York University Press, 1971), xv–xvii.

2. Translations of French (not provided) and Arabic are my own.

3. Giffen, *Theory*, 3–50.

and ethics of love with stories and poetry from the vast corpus of the Arabic literary tradition. Mughulṭāy's conception of love is centered on a famously controversial *ḥadīth*; supposedly, the Prophet stated that "*man ʿashiqa fa-ʿaffa fa-katama fa-māta māta shahīdan*" (whosoever experiences passionate love, remains chaste,[4] keeps the secret and dies, dies as a martyr).[5] This apocryphal *ḥadīth*, of which there are several variations, the distinctions between which are ably dissected by Balda-Tillier across her second chapter (pp. 36–46), informs Mughulṭāy's central thesis: that the experience of love itself, if undertaken within the limits outlined by the *ḥadīth*, leads to martyrdom.

The book is split into four chapters, an introduction, and a conclusion, followed by three appendices. As Balda-Tillier notes, the first two chapters of this monograph ought to be understood, in their approach, as a history of ideas, attitudes, and emotion, whilst the second two are literary analyses of aspects of the text (p. 4). The first chapter provides readers with an indispensable historical, technical, and biographical grounding to Mughulṭāy and his work, including a discussion of its immediate public reception, a description of his methods, and a brief analysis of his intended audience. Most significant is Balda-Tillier's description and analysis of the different manuscript traditions, and their divergence from the modern printed edition, noting the critical receptions that each variation attests (pp. 14–16); she returns to this manuscript analysis later, in the fourth chapter, to highlight where individual manuscripts show different approaches to the question of who is and who is not a martyr (pp. 129–30). Balda-Tillier provides footnote references not only to the printed edition, but also to all of the manuscript copies she has seen, a highly useful addition to this work.

Moving into the second chapter, we begin to get into the thick of the analysis. Here, Balda-Tillier scours Mughulṭāy's more theoretical introductory sections (the initial ninety pages in the printed edition) for information regarding his conception of what love is, how it inheres in people, what its signs are, and whether it is a praiseworthy or blameworthy emotion. In sum, she outlines four central aspects of Mughulṭāy's conception of passionate love (pp. 70–71): (i) passionate love is not a deliberate choice of those who experience it; (ii) two souls are linked through *mushākala* (affinity) and united by that which is good and not by their faults; (iii) once it has taken control of the heart, passionate love inevitably turns into illness, madness, and death; (iv) passionate love only appears harmful,

4. As outlined by Renate Jacobi and, more recently, Jokha Alharthi, the translation of "*ʿiffa*" as chastity is something of an academic shorthand that does not express the whole range of meaning implied in the term. Rather, the virtue of *ʿiffa* refers here to the maintenance of Islamic legal norms with regard to sexual propriety. In other words, only engaging in sexual intercourse with licit partners (an opposite-sex spouse or enslaved person). See Renate Jacobi, "The ʿUdhra: Love and Death in the Umayyad Period," in *Martyrdom in Literature: Visions of Death and Meaningful Suffering in Europe and the Middle East from Antiquity to Modernity*, ed. Friedericke Pannewick, 163–187 (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2004), 140; and Jokha Alharthi, *The Body in Arabic Love Poetry: The ʿUdhri Tradition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 56–78, esp. 70–72.

5. Mughulṭāy b. Qilīj, *al-Wāḍiḥ al-mubīn fī man ustushhida min al-muḥibbīn* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Intishār al-ʿArabī, 1997), 17–19.

but in reality suffering is a way to elevate oneself and attain a greater reward in the Hereafter. Although this section is a useful description of the material contents of the introductory section, it might have been profitably enhanced by an integrated analysis of how the theory does or does not show up in different anecdotes; here, Balda-Tillier might have replicated some of what Mughulṭāy himself was doing, showing how the characters exemplify (or not) his theories in action. Love is understood in the text, after all, as a lived, phenomenological experience.

In the third chapter, Balda-Tillier situates Mughulṭāy's work within literary history, building largely on Giffen's foundational *Theory of Profane Love among the Arabs*. Here, Balda-Tillier provides a micro-analysis of the genre outlined by Giffen and the individual works within it, including those which came after Mughulṭāy, emphasizing the novelty of Mughulṭāy's approach and structure. Certainly, within the genre, the use of the biographical dictionary form was truly remarkable and highlights Mughulṭāy's literary and practical focus, his use of storytelling as source material to understand emotional experience, and his desire for his work to be easily navigated by the reader. Balda-Tillier also explains and demonstrates the connections Mughulṭāy's theories and ideas had with thinkers and works outside of this particular genre, including the more mystical-philosophical approach of figures like Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) or the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, and more general histories like *Kitāb al-Aghānī* or *Nihāyat al-arab*. This discussion is useful: it paints Mughulṭāy as the inheritor of a broad and long-standing intellectual and literary tradition regarding love and emphasizes the ways in which his work represents a new and innovative contribution to that tradition, which continued long after his death and in which new texts continue to be found and analysed profitably.[6]

One minor quibble here relates to her discussion of Ibn al-Khaṭīb's (d. 776/1375) *Rawḍat al-taʿrīf*, a large work on divine love that has a lexicographical focus (pp. 112–13). This work is listed last in the third section of this chapter, which is entitled "the other sources of *al-Wāḍiḥ*" (p. 108). However, although Ibn al-Khaṭīb was certainly a contemporary of Mughulṭāy, this work was famously written as a response to Ibn Abī Ḥajala's (d. 776/1375) later *Dīwān al-ṣabāba*,[7] and should not, therefore, be understood as a source of *al-Wāḍiḥ al-mubīn*, even if its appearance in the same century, and its specific orientation towards divine love rather than profane love, helps to clarify the discursive and intellectual context in which *al-Wāḍiḥ al-mubīn* was being read.

Easily the most exciting aspect of Balda-Tillier's book for this reviewer is the fourth chapter, in which she makes use of the same granular precision we saw in the

6. See, for example, Monica Balda-Tillier, "L'épuisement d'un genre littéraire? Le *Ġawānī al-ašwāq fī maʿānī al-ʿuššāq* d'Ibn al-Bakkāʾ (m. 1040/1630)," *Annales Islamologiques* 49 (2015): 39–54.

7. Victor de Castro León, "Ibn al-Khaṭīb and His Mamluk Reception," in *New Readings in Arabic Historiography from Late Medieval Egypt and Syria: Proceedings of the Themed Day of the Fifth Conference of the School of Mamluk Studies*, ed. Jo Van Steenbergen and Maya Termonia, 168–74 (Leiden: Brill, 2021); Th. Emil Homerin, "Ibn Abī Ḥağala and Sufism," in *The Sultan's Anthologist: Ibn Abī Ḥağala and his Work*, ed. Nefeli Papoutsakis and Syrinx von Hees, 13–44 (Baden-Baden: Ergon Verlag, 2017), 24–25.

second chapter to analyse the biographical dictionary section of *al-Wāḍiḥ al-mubīn*. She first explores the difference between those stories that Mughulṭāy introduces with the term *shahīd* (martyr) and those he introduces with the term *qatīl* (victim) and notes the various ways in which a character might be prevented from becoming a *shahīd*, such as committing suicide or not believing in Islam; throughout this chapter, she argues that by excluding pagans and animals as well as those who breach Islamic legal dicta (by, for example, committing suicide) from being martyrs, Mughulṭāy "draws an Islamic framework" for the concept of love martyrdom (p. 150). Here, Balda-Tillier's analysis becomes increasingly mathematical and typological, dividing the anecdotes up through different schematics to explore the major motifs, themes, character types, and geographies depicted in the text. This latter part is of particular geopoetic interest; the author focuses on the relationship between space and the development of the individual story, bringing the urban locations of Iraq, Syria, and the Hijaz into conversation with the deserts, convents, psychiatric hospitals, and other locations that form the backdrop to anecdotes depicting lovers and their tribulations. A further highly informative aspect of this chapter is the author's analysis of "the anchoring of *ʿudhrī* love" (p. 137) in both the literary tradition and history through her twin discussion of poet-lovers (e.g., Jamīl) and real historical characters (e.g., Ibn Dāwūd, d. 297/909) (pp. 137–45). Here, Balda-Tillier's literary scholarship is at its apex, as she explores the interplay between biographical, imaginative, poetic, and historical discourses in shaping the reception of different characters and their placement within this meditation on the nature of love.

In her conclusion, Balda-Tillier brings the many and various strands of her analysis of this text together and provides a final meditation on *al-Wāḍiḥ al-mubīn*, in which she argues that Mughulṭāy marries literary sources with religious ideals. In an "attempt to present and defend his own way of understanding religion," Mughulṭāy brings together "profane" stories and sacred texts to draw up "a new literary *sunna*" that aims to direct Muslims' personal piety and behavior (p. 184). Balda-Tillier compares the text here to a Sufi manual, emphasizing the text's own desire for the reader to adopt and practice its ethics. This conclusion is followed by three appendices that outline (i) the sources of the various citations in the theoretical introduction to the work; (ii) the sources of the various stories in the anecdotal section; and (iii) the different anecdotes depicting a group Balda-Tillier calls the "*faux-anonymes*" (those whose names are given by Mughulṭāy but whose lives are otherwise unknown to history), with a list of other works in which these anecdotes occur. Finally, whilst the index is broken down into people and places, I cannot help but think an index of concepts might also have been useful to allow readers to find more easily discussions of, for instance, technical terms like *shahāda* (martyrdom) or more general topics like divine love.

A central theme of Balda-Tillier's work is her focus on Mughulṭāy's controversial contemporary reception, which led to his book being removed from sale at the Cairo book market and to his arrest some time after 1344; soon after his arrest, however,

the Emir Jankalī b. al-Bābā (d. 746/1345), who took exception both to the ban and to the arrest, freed Mughulṭāy and returned the book to sale. According to Balda-Tillier, there were several likely causes for the uproar. She mentions the contemporary theoretical opposition the book would have received from neo-Ḥanbalite thought, which opposed the idea of love martyrdom, a theoretical position best elaborated in Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's (d. 751/1350) earlier *Rawḍat al-muḥibbīn* (p. 12).[8] Mughulṭāy's postulations concerning love martyrdom are decidedly different from his Ḥanbalite contemporary's conception of *ʿishq* as a dangerous emotion that made the lover direct their focus onto an earthly beloved, distracting them from the divine. For that reason, *ʿishq* was dangerously close to idolatry (*shirk*) (p. 19) in Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's understanding.[9] By contrast, in suggesting that those who experience *ʿishq* should be seen as martyrs, and by advocating the proposition that love ennobles man's spirit, Mughulṭāy draws a straight line between human and divine love and thereby establishes what Balda-Tillier calls the "islamization" (a term used throughout the work, most significantly pp. 67–70) of *ʿishq* with the focus on martyrdom and its associated concept of *jihād* (p. 71). For this reason, much of *al-Wāḍiḥ al-mubīn* is centered on proving the textual and scriptural validity of the *ḥadīth al-ʿishq* against its detractors (p. 20, p. 181). This represents an explicitly positive vision of *ʿishq*, one that depicts it not just as an ennobling moral force, but also as the "summit" of Islamic orthodoxy (p. 181)—an almost necessary experience. In other words, this is a forthright defence of the synergistic relationship between the passionate love of earthly forms and Islamic ideals.

The author also proffers other possible reasons for the book's controversial reception, including the morally licentious verses found at its end, noting that contemporary Cairo was still in the shadow of Baybars' (d. 676/1277) notorious seventh/thirteenth-century campaign against vice (p. 13). She suggests that the intellectual world of contemporary Cairo was such that Mughulṭāy, a Ḥanafī and a *walad al-nās* (son of a Mamluk), would have easily sustained attacks from the autochthonous, largely Shāfiʿī establishment (pp. 13–14). She argues in her conclusion that it was "this innovative religious reading, coupled with his not belonging to the local Egyptian scholarly circle, that earned him his prison sentence and caused his book to be removed temporarily from sale" (p. 185).

However, much of the controversy at the time revolved more explicitly around Mughulṭāy's repeated references to ʿĀʾisha (d. 58/678) and the Prophet's supposed experience of *ʿishq* for her. It is here (pp. 11–13), I would argue, that Balda-Tillier gets to the kernel of the contemporary distaste for the work and shows some of the daring ways in which Mughulṭāy went about his "islamization" of *ʿishq*; this is indeed the reason for contemporary disapprobation that is

8. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Rawḍat al-muḥibbīn wa-nuzhat al-mushtāqīn*, ed. Sayyid ʿImrān (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2004), 158–60; see also Joseph Norment Bell, *Love Theory in Later Hanbalite Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979), 133–38.

9. See Bell, *Love*, 139–40, 164–65.

mentioned by his friend Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363) in his biography of Mughulṭāy, and then later taken up by Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449) and Ibn al-ʿImād (d. 1089/1679).[10] At the very beginning of the work, Mughulṭāy references the very famous story in which ʿĀʾisha loses her necklace and is accused of impropriety;[11] Balda-Tillier argues that Mughulṭāy "establishes a parallel between the attacks of those who considered the *ḥadīth al-ʿishq* as invalid and the *ḥadīth* of the lie, as well as between the Qurʾanic revelation that came to Muḥammad in order to prove the innocence of his wife and the *Wāḍiḥ*, written to confound and thwart the opponents of the notion of love martyrdom" (p. 12). The function of these introductory passages was to "legitimate the subject that Mughulṭāy chose for his book, profane love, and bring it closer to religious discourses" (p. 11). Moreover, Mughulṭāy even includes ʿĀʾisha as a transmitter of one version of the *ḥadīth al-ʿishq*. *Al-Wāḍiḥ al-mubīn* was attacked by scholars who "did not accept making ʿĀʾisha… the proponent of a potentially adulterous and illegal passionate love" (p. 12) and who therefore refused to recognise the authenticity of the *ḥadīth*. Here, Balda-Tillier's analysis is piercing and brings out the ways in which Mughulṭāy's work itself courted controversy, the audacious style and language in which he packaged his own ideas, and the particular way in which he brings all manner of stories together under the auspices of his positive interpretation of *ʿishq*.

Across the work, Balda-Tillier balances her enthusiastic and emphatic analysis of the subtle novelties present in Mughulṭāy's theoretical contributions to the genre with a contextualisation of these ideas and methods within both the well-established genre of love theory and wider intellectual culture. Such contextualisation is necessary if one is to take Mughulṭāy's ideas on their own terms and not overstate their novelty or the manner of controversy his work provoked. Indeed, within a decade or so, as is noted by Balda-Tillier (p. 38), Mughulṭāy and this *ḥadīth* are quoted in encomiastic fashion by Ibn Abī Ḥajala in *Dīwān al-ṣabāba,*[12] itself a far more openly licentious work than *al-Wāḍiḥ al-mubīn*.[13] Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī (d.1325) had also cited the *ḥadīth* in two formulations and integrated it unproblematically into his earlier Ḥanbalite work, *Manāzil al-aḥbāb*

10. Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān al-ʿaṣr wa-aʿwān al-naṣr* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Muʿaṣir, 1998), 5:433–38; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī aʿyān al-miʾa al-thāmina* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1997), 4:433; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsī, 1931–32), 6:197. It is worth noting that in a previous publication, Balda-Tillier had dismissed this reason, alleging that contemporary disapprobation was not about ʿĀʾisha specifically but rather more generally targeted at "the theory of love which is based on this *ḥadīth*" (i.e. the *ḥadīth* of love martyrdom), with any discussion of ʿĀʾisha reframed in this reading as a kind of foil to allow for such criticism; see Monica Balda-Tillier, "The Forbidden Passion: Mughulṭāy's Book on the Martyrdom of Love and its Censorship", *al-Qantara* 35:1 (2014), 189.

11. A story retold at length in Nabia Abbott, *Aishah: The Beloved of Mohammed* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1942), 30–38.

12. Ibn Abī Ḥajala, *Dīwān al-ṣabāba* (Beirut: Dār wa-Maktabat al-Hilāl, 1980), 257–58

13. See, for example, an anecdote Ibn Abī Ḥajala cites about a man drinking his beloved's urine as a sexually permissible way to sate his desire: *Dīwān*, 207.

wa-manāzih al-albāb.[14] The inclusion of the *ḥadīth al-ʿishq* into these texts demonstrates the currency of both the *ḥadīth* and the notion of love martyrdom in contemporary Cairo. Al-Ḥalabī, Ibn Abī Ḥajala, and indeed many other writers in this tradition also bring together profane stories of earthly love with sacred texts and use both sets of materials as evidence for their ethical postulations, harmonizing the correct practice in love with Islamic legal and scriptural norms.[15] Both of these contemporary authors also include explicitly positive descriptions of love as a potentially ennobling emotion even if their final estimation is perhaps more measured than that of Mughulṭāy. Whilst Mughulṭāy's thesis, that through the experience of love one can elevate oneself above one's human condition as a martyr (p. 72), would indeed have found opposition in figures like Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, it is worth remembering Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya was himself a controversial figure whose literalist ideas also at times met with resistance from the contemporary scholarly community and Mamluk elite.[16] Moreover, similar ideas concerning the interrelationship between the experience of passionate human love and the divine, at least as textual motifs, had long had traction outside of this genre in Sufi communities.[17] Indeed, Ibn Abī Ḥajala would soon get into hot water politically for opposing the idea of human love as a gateway to the divine as expounded by Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235).[18]

What becomes clear from reading across this genre and wider debates on emotion and its embodiment in the Cairo Sultanate is that, during the period, there was an increasingly contentious intellectual debate surrounding both the practice of love (the ways in which people behave and act when they are in love) and the adoption of love as a practice (a way of knowing God), an intellectual ferment that cut across different social and religious groups. The theory of love centered on love martyrdom, as espoused in *al-Wāḍiḥ al-mubīn*, and its reception by its contemporaries, are only aspects

14. Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī, *Manāzil al-aḥbāb wa-manāzih al-albāb*, ed. Muḥammad al-Dībājī (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2000), 55, 74–76.

15. We can see this approach as far back as al-Kharāʾiṭī's *Iʿtilāl al-qulūb*; see Beatrice Gruendler, "'Pardon Those Who Love Passionately': A Theologian's Endorsement of *Shahādat al-ʿIshq*," in *Martyrdom in Literature: Visions of Death and Meaningful Suffering in Europe and the Middle East from Antiquity to Modernity*, ed. Friedericke Pannewick, 189–236 (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2004).

16. He was notably imprisoned with Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) in his youth. For a detailed biography of the scholar, see Livnat Holtzman "Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya," in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1800*, ed. Joseph E. Lowry and Devin Stewart, 202–33 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009). Of note is his longstanding adversarial relationship with Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d.756/1355), surveyed in Caterina Bori and Livnat Holtzman, "A Scholar in the Shadow," *Oriente Moderno* 90:1 (2010), 22–6. As Hofer has suggested, for every Ibn Taymiyya (or Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya), there was a Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771/1340) (or Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī), who "embraced and traditionalized" innovative practices; Nathan Hofer, *The Popularisation of Sufism in Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt, 1173-1325* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 11.

17. An obvious example of this would be Ibn al-ʿArabī's (d. 638/1240) *Tarjumān al-ashwāq*, a series of poems that explores divine love with reference to the self-same *ʿudhrī* stories that populate Mughulṭāy's work.

18. Homerin, "Ibn Abī Ḥağala," 39–42. See also Ibn Abī Ḥajala, *Ghayth al-ʿāriḍ fī muʿāraḍat Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, ed. Mujāhid Muṣṭafā Bahjat (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2018).

of a much broader ideological conflict regarding emotional discourses and ethics that runs across the intellectual history of emotions in Arabic and Islamic literature, an ideological conflict that includes many other vastly heterodox points of view.

On a separate note, one area I would have liked to have seen further discussed is the relationship between Mughulṭāy's theoretical discussion of love and his depiction of love martyrdom through anecdotes, on the one hand, and the extra-textual world of the reader on the other. As Balda-Tillier notes, in theory, Mughulṭāy's work "prevents any hierarchy between notices, their contents, or characters" because they are all exemplary, such that "those which concern profane love, hetero- or homosexual, like those which depict martyrs of divine love, are placed on the same level" (p. 26). Whilst this is technically true in an abstracted and idealistic sense, when that love is grounded in the real, we nevertheless do find areas in which this equality between lovers, and between the demands made on different types of lovers by the central dictum of remaining within the boundaries of *ʿiffa*, most often translated as chastity (see n. 4 above), is not so clear. For example, Mughulṭāy includes several statements that negatively portray the theo-erotic practice of gazing upon young men, including Saʿīd b. al-Musayyib's (d. 94/715) threatening dictum: *idhā raʾaytum al-rajul yuliḥḥu bi-l-naẓar ilā al-ghulām al-amrad fa-ttahimūhu* (if you see a man ogle a beardless youth, accuse him).[19] Elsewhere, as Balda-Tillier notes (p. 71), Mughulṭāy explains that those who are *jāfī al-khilqa* (coarse in manner) and *manqūṣ al-binya* (malformed) do not fall in love;[20] rejecting the idea that this has any hierarchical implications, Balda-Tillier explains this statement as meaning that everyone who is "normally constituted," a term she does not go on to explain, can fall in love. Not falling in love is a "defect" in this analysis (p. 71), even if Mughulṭāy suggests that certain people are ontologically unable to do so properly. Certain manifestations of love, as well as certain people, do not appear to fit easily within the boundaries of Mughulṭāy's idealized non-hierarchical approach, then. It might have been an interesting line of enquiry to use these and other moments of tension between theory and practice as opportunities to explore the inconsistencies of his theoretical propositions.

However, I do not want to suggest that Balda-Tillier's analysis falls short in any way; no book has room for everything. Moreover, any differences of interpretation or emphasis between my own reading and that of Balda-Tillier are academic in nature and highlight the dynamic and irrepressible nature of the source text, which continues to inspire new readers and readings centuries later. Indeed, as she notes at the very beginning of her work, it is impossible to delimit the ideas in Mughulṭāy's book to one point of view; this would "deny its heterogenous nature" and "ignore its riches" (p. 2). Her work, she says, does not pretend to be exhaustive, even if it is clearly a thorough analysis of the contents of *al-Wāḍiḥ*

19. Mughulṭāy, *al-Wāḍiḥ*, 25.

20. Ibid., 65; for the broader section in which Mughulṭāy discusses love as it pertains to specific types of people, see ibid., 63–66.

al-mubīn. Rather, she points to the need to "put these distinct, if contiguous, disciplines, which are constantly in a state of osmosis, into conversation with each other" (p. 2), something which her roving analysis accomplishes, demonstrating the broad range of sources and ideas that informed and shaped Mughulṭāy's postulations on love. Indeed, any reader of *al-Wāḍiḥ al-mubīn* (or *Manāzil al-aḥbāb* or *Dīwān al-ṣabāba*) is struck repeatedly by the number of discourses that the author deploys, as well as the ease with which he interweaves scriptural, medical, theological, philosophical, Sufi, poetic, literary, and comedic material.

Histoires d'amour et de mort is an exactingly detailed and capacious book that is grounded in a profound and long-term study of Mughulṭāy's life and work. In particular, it will remind readers of the continued value of microhistories and literary microanalyses; through centering her study on one thinker and his immediate context, Balda-Tillier is able to connect Mughulṭāy's work to much broader intellectual and literary trends. No doubt, this work will serve as the foundation for further studies that might delve even deeper into the intricacies of the wider intellectual history of love and the relationship between the textual and theoretical discussion of love as emotional ideal and the historical manifestation of love outside of the text. Now an indispensable companion for readers of *al-Wāḍiḥ al-mubīn*, and the genre of Arabic love theory more broadly, Balda-Tillier's book is a highly welcome addition to the growing field of the intellectual history of the emotions in Arabic and Islamic studies, especially so given its focus on a later author from the Cairo Sultanate and his reception of a vast, protean tradition.