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provides us with several answers. First, in recent decades there has been a revival of homeopathic medicine, especially in Germany. The renewed popularity among patients of homeopathic remedies must at least in part be attributed to dissatisfaction with “scientific medicine”, the élite of which seems primarily interested in modern medicine’s technical tools; as Roy Porter put it in his perceptive analysis on ‘How medicine became a prisoner of its success’ (*TLS*, 14 Jan. 1994, pp. 3–4): “Where patients are seen as problems and reduced to biopsies and lab tests, no wonder sections of the public vote with their feet, and opt for styles of holistic medicine that present themselves as more humane”.

Second, the historiography of medicine itself has changed, and with its broadened scope of “medical culture in society” has begun to give serious consideration to unorthodox medical theories as well as folk medicine and non-Western medical traditions. Whatever the merits of homeopathy may be, it is a fact that practitioners and patients have in large numbers and in many different countries practised its precepts. This asks for historical explanations, and the *Weltgeschichte der Homöopathie* provides these, for a wide range of European countries (Germany, France, Austria, Switzerland, Poland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium, Great Britain, Spain, Italy, Romania), for the USA and Canada, as well as for Brazil and, the “late homeopathic superpower”, India.

A third reason for the historiographical rehabilitation of homeopathy—a reason, not mentioned in so many words in this volume—has been the financial clout of the Robert Bosch Foundation in Stuttgart and its Institute for the History of Medicine—clout used in support of a research programme to put Hahnemann and his tradition on the historical map. Both the editor and one of the principal contributors, Robert Jütte, are members of the Institute. They are historians-with-a-mission, and the emphasis of the book on homeopathy as a global movement is not only a matter of factual documentation, but serves to legitimize present-day homeopathic medicine.

This connection with the current affairs of alternative medical practice has not diminished the scholarly quality of the collection. The scholarship is sophisticated, original and rich. The several ways in which homeopathy spread across Europe and to the Americas and Asia are examined from a variety of angles, such as personal networks (especially networks of patients), translations of major treatises, homeopathic journals (many of which were founded during the second half of the nineteenth century), international congresses, and also the commercial angle of the production of homeopathic remedies. The authors of the different chapters, in describing the reception of Hahnemann’s ideas for separate countries, cover approximately the same chronological ground (early nineteenth century till the present), asking a set of similar questions. As a volume of collected essays, *Weltgeschichte der Homöopathie* has therefore attained more than common coherence; and national differences in the reception of homeopathy stand out clearly. For Britain, the role played by lay healers is highlighted; for France, Spain and Brazil, the connections with spiritualism are discussed; in the case of the USA, critical attention is given, not only to the nineteenth-century success of homeopathy, but to its subsequent decline (“one of the most difficult questions in the history of homeopathy in the US”); etc. In conclusion, this volume is the most comprehensive, serious treatment of its subject to date.

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Lawrence I Conrad (ed.), *The world of Ibn Tufayl: interdisciplinary perspectives on Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science, Texts and Studies, vol. 24, Leiden and New York, E J Brill, 1996, pp. vii, 305, Nlg 150.00, \$97.00 (90-04-10135-7).

This collection of papers marks a decisive step forward in the understanding of an Arabic text with many interesting and sometimes mysterious details. Its significance is

underlined by a broad European reception second only to the Koran and the *Thousand and one nights*. The old hypothesis that Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* was influenced by the first English translation is here dismissed (pp. 53–4), but this may be not the last word. Ibn Ṭufayl (died 1185) is the author of the *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, a unique piece of semi-fictional, semi-philosophical literature showing in a very elaborate thought experiment how a man grows up in complete isolation on a remote island and how he gradually reaches a state of spiritual perfection.

In his introduction, Lawrence Conrad outlines the author's personal circumstances, and gives a vivid picture of the unfavourable political and ideological conditions in Spain and the Maghrib under Almohad rule. Dominique Urvoy in a stimulating paper 'The rationality of everyday life: an Andalusian tradition?' looks at Marx's criticism of Locke and Condillac and the modern psychology of experimentation, and tries to sort out an intrinsic rationality of daily experience typical of the Muslim West and manifest even in a book of cookery.

Next comes a masterpiece of feminist interpretation: Fedwa Malti-Douglas, '*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* as male Utopia'. The author sees a malevolent tendency at work, both in the doubtful character of Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān's mother, who out of fear of her brother throws her new-born baby into the sea, and in Ḥayy's dissection of a gazelle, his foster mother, after her death. But Ibn Ṭufayl depicts here rather the childish attempt to restore her to life. There is another version of Ḥayy's creation in which he is born out of a mass of humid clay under the well-tempered sun rays of the equator. Even here Malti-Douglas finds "a manifest ambivalence and barely concealed anxiety/hostility to the idea of motherhood" (p. 59). But Ibn Ṭufayl's purely philosophical concern was to construct a biography in absolute isolation from the rest of mankind, and for this reason a mother or a playmate had to be excluded. From her standpoint the author may blame Ibn Ṭufayl only for having chosen a male hero instead of a girl.

Remke Kruk, gives a sober and well-documented account of the factual knowledge of minerals, plants, and animals displayed together with some elements of a more fairy-tale character. Lutz Richter-Bernburg shows in his 'Medicina ancilla philosophiae: Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*' that our author, although himself a physician, stands firmly in the tradition of that overbearing Aristotelianism which inherited from Galen some physiological and anatomical improvements without giving up Aristotle's description of the heart as the seat of human consciousness.

Is the *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* to be considered an allegory? J Christoph Bürgel approaches this question in his "Symbols and hints": some considerations concerning the meaning of Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*. Despite the long tradition of allegorical interpretation and the dichotomy of an inner and an outer meaning, the text does not allow this kind of reading; it is a thought experiment which is to be taken at face value, unlike Avicenna's allegorical tale which bears the same title. Bürgel comes to the conclusion that "the narrated reality does not symbolize, but rather typifies" the development of a type (p. 132). But Conrad in his second contribution maintains that at least some allegorical meaning remains under a "thin veil". There is also an important article by Ernst Behler about the inner relationship between the two tales of Avicenna and Ibn Ṭufayl in *Festgabe für Johannes Hirschberger*, ed. Kurt Flasch, Frankfurt am Main, 1965, pp. 351–75.

Vincent J Cornell's 'Ḥayy in the land of Absāl: Ibn Ṭufayl and Šūfism in the western Maghrib during the Muwaḥḥid era' is a very instructive paper on social stratification in the Muslim West. Šūfī mysticism and asceticism remind us of Ḥayy's way of life, but Ibn Ṭufayl stands apart from the Šūfī saints who are still venerated today and who repudiated philosophy as heavily as the orthodox jurists. A similar theme is taken up by Bernd Radtke in his lucid 'How can man reach the mystical union?: Ibn Ṭufayl and the divine spark'. The broad tradition of Šūfī mysticism had its

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impact on Ibn Ṭufayl's forerunners, especially Avicenna, whom Ibn Ṭufayl quotes expressly. Salim Kemal's 'Justifications of poetic validity' gives a very condensed summary of his monograph *The poetics of Alfarabi and Avicenna* (Leiden, 1991). But I doubt whether Ibn Ṭufayl's novel kind of thought experiment can be grasped in terms of Avicenna's poetology.

The medieval Latin translators did not concern themselves with this text, but Moshe Narboni wrote a Hebrew commentary, which is discussed by Larry B Miller (pp. 229–37). This contains allusions to persecutions and many hardships endured by Narboni, who died in 1362. He deemed the mystical conjunction with the upper world impossible in his generation, due to the lack of calm.

In his epilogue Conrad takes up the principal question: what was Ibn Ṭufayl's real aim? In our century two tendencies have emerged. Léon Gauthier saw the harmony of philosophy and religion as Ibn Ṭufayl's main concern. This seems to be the theme especially of an appendix of the tale, where Ḥayy, having reached perfection, meets Absāl, who comes from a neighbouring island with an established religion very similar to Islam. Ḥayy imparts his wisdom to him, and they find that the beliefs of Absāl's countrymen coincide basically with it, but that they lack an ascetic lifestyle and adhere to a primitive understanding of scripture. Ḥayy and Absāl decide to convert the inhabitants. The attempt fails and they both return to their lonely island. Gauthier's interpretation was challenged by George F Hourani who saw in Ḥayy's biography only the model of the *philosophus autodidactus* who reaches perfection without the assistance of a revealed religion. Conrad comes nearer to Gauthier but sees the attempt to reform the religion of the islanders as reflecting Ibn Ṭufayl's own social aspirations. Bürgel, in his paper, gives more weight to the failure of their mission (p. 132) and I see in the ultimate departure for Ḥayy's island an outright allegoric symbol for the "inner emigration" of the enlightened intellectual in Almohad society.

The volume concludes with a rich bibliography composed by Conrad, and a "General Index". To the list of Russian translations I would add: *Ibn Tuḥayl', Povest' o Khaje syne Jakzana*, translation, introduction, and commentary by A V Sagadeev, Moscow, 1988, who mentions three reprints of the older translation by I P Kuz'min, and also a second edition in 1700 of the English translation of 1671.

Gottthard Strohmaier,
Corpus Medicorum Graecorum,
Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der
Wissenschaften

Roger French and Andrew Cunningham,
Before science: the invention of the friars' natural philosophy, Aldershot, Scolar Press, 1996, pp. ix, 298, illus., £45.00 (1-85928-287-3).

In recent years the study of medieval texts has been hugely influenced by borrowing from literary studies a focus on the intended readership and reception of the text through reading or hearing its contents. *Before science* demonstrates this influence in a striking way, arguing that treatises on natural philosophy created by the Dominican and Franciscan friars of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were not early examples of "objective" scientific enquiry, as many later historians have believed, but were instead intimately bound up in these orders' very different attempts to fight heresy. French and Cunningham provide a close reading of the major writers from each order and their sources, and a meticulous discussion of the effects that such ideas might have when preached to the populations of the burgeoning medieval towns. The book first explores the Platonic and Aristotelian ideas that would later attract and be modified and used by Christian writers. The metaphor of "Egyptian gold"—using pagan philosophy for the benefit of Christianity—was controversial, and the fate of the mystical Gnostics and the rejection of Platonic, Arian discourse anticipate later