

The Different Translations of Ibn ^ufayl's /ayy Bin Yaq&[n and their Transfer to Europe

Mahomud Baroud
Islamic University of Gaza

Abstract

The motif of the castaway living and philosophising for years on a desert island is one which has captured the imagination of various writers in many cultures and literatures and over a very long period of time. Literary historians and critics in the West are most familiar with the famous example of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and the many versions and variations it spawned over the following three centuries, including in recent years works by Michel Tournier, J. M. Coetzee, William Golding and Derek Walcott. However, little attention has been paid to some of the antecedents of Defoe's great novel, especially those from other cultures like the remarkable /ayy Bin Yaq&[n (*Alive, Son of Awake*) by the 12th century Arab Muslim philosopher and physician Muhammad Ibn ^ufayl who was living in Spain. This text is Ibn Tufayl's only surviving work apart from a few writings on medicine and astronomy. It summarises his own ideas and also encapsulates much of the philosophical and scientific thinking of his age in a direct, plain style. Due to its profound influence on European thought and philosophy, Ibn ^ufayl's /ayy Bin Yaq&[n was translated into no less than eight languages (Hebrew, Latin, Dutch, English, French, Russian, German, and Spanish) in addition to Persian and the other major languages of the Islamic world. This paper is an attempt to provide a critical account of some of the aforementioned translations, especially the English and Latin versions and their transfer to Europe. Accordingly, this study seeks to prove that English readers of the eighteenth century had access to four English translations of the /ayy Bin Yaq&[n, the fact which lends credence to the view of some critics that the Medieval story of /ayy Bin Yaq&[n was a model and a possible source for Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), just as the real-life castaway Alexander Selkirk was.

Key Words: Transfer, Influence, Translation, Impact, Source

Latin Translation:

European interest in Ibn ^ufayl's story goes as far back as the fourteenth century when the text was translated into Hebrew,

and supplied with a commentary by the Jew, Moses of Narbonne, in 1349.²³ A Latin translation from the Hebrew version by Pico della Mirandola²⁴ occurred in the second half of the fifteenth century. In 1671, the year when John Locke started on the first drafts of his *Essay on Human Understanding*, a bilingual text in Arabic and Latin was published at Oxford under the title *Philosophus autodidactus* «Self-taught philosopher», sive *Epistola Abi Jaafar Tophail de Hai Ebn Yokdhan*. The story portrayed the development of a child's mind from a *tabula rasa* to that of an adult, in complete isolation from any given society. By means of sensory experience, reasoning, and contemplation, without any innate conceptions, Iayy discovers the natural and physical sciences, God, and morality. With perfect justification, Russell calls this work a case study for the main thesis of Locke's *Essay*.

The Arabic narrative was *Iayy Bin Yaq&[n*, written in the twelfth century by Ibn ^ufayl, the physician-philosopher under the Muwa++ids' reign in Muslim Andalusia. This Latin version was directly translated from Arabic by Edward Pococke the eldest son under the supervision of his father, Dr. Pococke, the first Laudian Professor of Arabic (1636) and the Regius Professor of Hebrew (1648), who provided the historical preface to the text. In fact, the whole project was conceived and directed by the father, who obtained the manuscript from which the translation was made during his five-year visit to Aleppo, wrote the introduction, and supervised the translation itself.²⁵ There is no doubt that the time was opportune for his son, whom he saw

²³ See Antonio Pastor, *The Idea of Robinson Crusoe* (Watford: Congora, 1930), 176.

²⁴ He was an Italian Humanist who acquainted himself with the theories of 'Aristotle and Averroes which he eventually endeavoured to harmonise with Platonism as he learnt it at Florence and with the tenets of the church.' See S. H. Steinberg's edition of *Cassell's Encyclopaedia of Literature*, Vol. II (Cassell: London, 1953), 1354.

²⁵ On Edward Pococke Junior's incompetence in Arabic when supervised by his father, see G.J. Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom and Learning: The Study of Arabic in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 294-95.

as his successor in the Arabic Professorship, to create a place for himself, but there may have been other reasons for Pococke's not publishing this outstanding work under his own name.

It is worth mentioning that the elder Pococke had even started to make an English translation of the work himself in 1645. Whether he ever completed it is not clear, although it seems likely that he did.²⁶ However, Toomer claims that 'this did not happen, probably because of Pococke's cautiousness.'²⁷ During the Civil War and the Interregnum it would have been exceedingly irresponsible for one in Pococke's precarious situation to publish a work which could easily be analysed as an assault on revelation and established religion. Even after the Restoration, when Puritanism had lost its influence in England, there would be many readers who might take a rather negative stand against such a book, especially if published in English. Therefore, it is not strange that when Pococke brought it to the public, he did that in his son's name, and in Latin (so that it would appear as a scholarly, not a debatable book). In addition, his preface incorporates a note requesting the readers to make room for the differences between then and the time in which the work was written and to understand the work's ideas according to their own interpretations.²⁸ In his own argument concerning the author's purposes, he argues that, after explaining how far reason alone can soar in 'attaining knowledge of God, the work demonstrates that further progress is only possible by divine revelation.'²⁹ This reading seems misleading, since to a contemporary English or non-English reader 'divine revelation' would stand for the word of God as embodied in the Scriptures, and Ibn ^ufayl meant nothing of the kind, but rather some kind

²⁶ Russell points out that there is no evidence that anyone was aware of this early unfinished translation; its existence in the Bodleian was initially drawn to his attention by P. M. Holt. See G. A. Russell, 'The Impact of the *Philosophus autodidactus*: Pocockes, John Locke and the Society of Friends', in *The 'Arabick' Interest of the Natural Philosophers in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. G. A. Russell (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 262.

²⁷ See Toomer, 221.

²⁸ Ibid, 221.

²⁹ Ibid, 221.

of mystical spiritual union of the individual with the Divine. In this regard, Toomer interprets this deliberate ambiguity as an attempt by Pococke to provide a cover of belief for a treatise which he knew to be, if rightly understood, profoundly rebellious against ‘conventional morality’.

The dissemination of the *Philosophus autodidactus*, shining and glowing from Oxford to the Continent, is an amazing phenomenon. In clarifying the contributing factors to the reception of this translation, G. A. Russell admits that it was Dr. Pococke’s strong reputation both at Oxford and abroad which attracted ‘attention to the book’.³⁰ To record an idea of the extent of Dr. Pococke’s domain of influence and the admiration in which he was held, one needs only to look at the correspondence reported by Pococke’s eighteenth-century biographer, and at the number of scholars who were interested in consulting him.³¹ Even his son’s translation has at times been mistakenly attributed to the father.³²

Immediately after its publication, many copies of the *Philosophus autodidactus* were being sent to prominent figures abroad. For example, Francis Vernon, who was secretary to the British Embassy in Paris (1673-77) at the time, reported that ‘by

³⁰ Pococke’s reputation derives from a series of publications, among which the *Specimen historiae Arabum* (Oxford, 1648), based on research using Arabic manuscripts, represents a watershed in its attempt to correct some of the erroneous beliefs in the European perception of the Islamic World. See P. M. Holt, ‘Arabic Historians in Seventeenth-century England: The Background and the Work of Edward Pococke’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (1957), xix-13, 453-55. (Reprinted in the *Studies of the History of the East*.) See Russell, 254.

³¹ Leonard Twells, *The Theological Works of the Learned Dr. Pocock, To which is prefixed An Account of his life and Writings never before printed* (London:1740), I. It includes correspondence which is no longer extant. Subsequent references will be to this volume, cited as *Works*.

³² Twells explains (*Works*, 3) that because the father wrote the learned Preface, it ‘led foreigners, especially those of France to consider the whole as the father’s Performance.’ This wrong attribution has, in fact, continued even in this century with reference to the ‘Latin translation of Pococke’ without identifying which one, as in Gauthier, *Hayy ben Yaqdhan*, vii.

the Doctor's own Direction,' he had delivered copies of 'his son's Book' to a number of orientalist at the Sorbonne. He also observed that 'all had read and approved it'.³³ Not only key orientalist or 'Sorbonist' in Paris were interested, but also such influential figures as Melchisedec Thevenot (1620-92),³⁴ who was in touch with most of the famous persons of his time, and John Wallis,³⁵ Pococke's friend, who had little skill in the Arabic language. In fact, it seems that Vernon ran out of extra copies to circulate. In a letter to Dr. Pococke, he regrets that he 'had not begged a copy for Thevenot,' who was so clearly 'much taken with the fancy of the piece' and intended in return to send a gift of an Arabic manuscript of the life of 'Ibn Tophail'.³⁶ The great demand for the book can be, for example, witnessed in the fact that Francis Vernon, having run out of copies of the book, had even to part with 'his own copy' in order to present it, either on his own proposal or possibly upon request, to Christian Huyghens, the distinguished Dutch scientist who was in Paris at the time.³⁷

In November 1671, the book had already been taken to Florence by Abbot Lorenzo] Panciatichi (1635-1676), to make the 'value of it known'³⁸ there. By the end of December of the same year, the *Philosophus autodidactus* was being translated into Dutch in Holland. This anonymous translation from Edward's Pococke's Latin is entitled *Het Leven van Hai ebn Yokdhan* (Amsterdam, 1672) and went through several editions.

³³ See Twells, *Works*, I, 67-68. Vernon cites such eminent French orientalist as Capellain, Herbelote, de la Croix and Ferrand, and conveys their admiration and enthusiasm for the book.

³⁴ Melchisedec's academic interest in oriental subjects is realised in a practical way by his nephew, Jean de Thevenot, who travelled in the Near East, Persia and India. The accounts of his travels were published in five volumes, entitled *La Decouverte* (Amsterdam, 1727). Cited by Russell, 254-55.

³⁵ See Toomer, 247.

³⁶ See Twells, *Works*, I, 68.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 68.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 68.

‘For example, when Pococke’s Latin was reprinted in 1700, a second edition of the Dutch translation followed in 1701, with the additional title of *De Natuurlyke Wysgeer*.’³⁹ In their *Arabic Studies in the Netherlands*,⁴⁰ Brugman and Schroder claim that it was Adrian Reland (1676-1718) who revised the Dutch translation (1701) of *ʾIyy Bin Yaq&[n*. There is no doubt that the efforts of the Oxford circle of Dr. Pococke’s followers were responsible for the primary circulation of the book. In addition, the fact that it was also in Latin made it reachable by the educated elite, and allowed it to travel through Europe.⁴¹ These do not, however, explain the great popularity of the book, or, as Vernon related, why ‘they every where made Account of it.’ There were burning demands for the *Philosophus autodidactus* even of scholars who had come to Oxford from out of the country, to study with Dr. Pococke. For example, Ferrand, at the Sorbonne, requested a copy from Ottsius, the Swiss scholar, on behalf of Francis Bosquet, the Bishop of Lodève and later of Montpellier, who ‘impatiently’⁴² waited for it.

The Quakers’ Translation:

The bilingual publication of the *Philosophus autodidactus*, having attracted immediate attention, was followed by different retranlations into Dutch, English, and German, initially from Pococke’s Latin, but subsequently also from the original Arabic.⁴³ There were reprinted editions, summaries (in English and French), and similar ‘plagiarised’ versions which continued

³⁹ See Russell, 255.

⁴⁰ See J. Brugman, and F. Schroder, *Arabic Studies in the Netherlands* (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1979), 25.

⁴¹ See Simon Ockley’s ‘Dedication to the Reverend Mr. Edward Pococke’ in his translation of the work from the Arabic original, entitled *An Account of the Improvement of Human Reason, exhibited in the Life of Hai ebn Yockdhan* (London, 1708).

⁴² See Twells, *Works*, I, 68.

⁴³ See G.A. Russell, ‘The Role of Ibn ^ufayl, A Moorish Physician, in the Discovery of Childhood in Seventeenth-Century England’, in *Child Care through the Centuries*, eds. John Cule and Terry Turner (Cardiff: STS Publishing for the British Society for the History of Medicine, 1986), 171-72.

right into the next century.⁴⁴ These editions evoked inspiring reactions not only from orientalists, but also from theologians and natural philosophers. George Keith the Quaker, arrested by the similarity of Ibn ^ufayl's views to his own, though innocent of Arabic, immediately set about translating Pococke's laboured Latin into noble English; his version, annotated in the spirit of Quakerism, appeared in 1674 under this long title:

An account of the Oriental Philosophy, the Wisdom of some Renowned Men of the East; And particularly, the profound Wisdom of Hai Ebn Yaqdhan. Both in Natural and Divine things; which he attained without converse with Men (while he lived in an Island a solitary life, remote from all Men from his Infancy, till he arrived at such perfection). Writ originally in Arabick, by Abi Jaaphar Ebn Tuphail; And out of the Arabick translated into Latin by Edward Pococke, a student in Oxford; and now faithfully out of his Latin, Translated into English: For a general service.⁴⁵

This translation bears significant relationship to the 'Society of Friends', or the Quaker movement. What Keith and other Quakers of the time found attractive in the book was the fact that Ibn ^ufayl's ideas and conceptions were in complete harmony with those of the Quakers regarding the Inner Light and personal spiritual experiences. Keith observed that the 'infidel author' had been a good man, and far beyond many who had the name of Christians - a striking contrast to the prevailing intolerance against Islam - and added that he showed excellently how far the knowledge of a man, whose eyes are spiritually opened, different from that knowledge that men acquire simply

⁴⁴ See Leon Gauthier, *Hayy ben Yaqdhan, roman philosophique d'Ibn Thofail, texte arabe publie d'apres un nouveau manuscrit avec les variantes des anciens texts et traduction francais* (Algiers: P. Fontana, 1900), xxxix-xxxiii. Cited by Russell, 228.

⁴⁵As appears on the title page of Keith's translation printed in 1674 and provided by Early English Books Online EEBO, image no. 1.

by ‘hear-say or reading.’⁴⁶ In other words, the personal communion with the Deity which the Quakers valued was beyond any rites or dogma. From this explanation we can say that Keith found a remarkable affinity between this Islamic text and his own form of Nonconformist Christianity where personal experience was put above the established dogma of the church. At the same time, he is acutely aware that such a connection might appear inherently incongruous to some of his readers. So he recommends them in his own introduction entitled ‘An Advertisement to the READER’⁴⁷ to receive what is agreeable with them and pass by what is not.

Keith’s translation seems to have coincided with his drafting of the formal Quaker manifesto, in co-operation with Robert Barclay (1648-1690), the highly influential Scottish apologist for the Society of Friends.⁴⁸ For Keith, Ibn ‘ufayl’s story depicted exactly what he summarised as the Quaker ‘common notion’: ‘the sufficiency of inner light.’ The Quaker doctrines were put forth in 1675 as fifteen propositions, referred to as *Theses Theologiae*, a public discussion of which was held at Aberdeen in Scotland. Being prepared in defence of the ‘theological theses’, Robert Barclay’s *Apologia* was reprinted in Amsterdam in 1676.⁴⁹

Not only did Keith influence Barclay in the creating of the Quaker manifesto; he also provided him with a ‘Quaker’ version *par excellence* of *Hay Bin Yaqdan*. The self-taught philosopher appears in the *Apology*—Propositions V and VI (par. xxvii)—as the perfect illustration of the experience of Inner Light without the means of the Holy Books. The assumption that George Ashwell’s English translation of *The*

⁴⁶ See Keith’s ‘Advertisement to the Reader’ in his translation of *Hai Ebn Yaqdan*.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, image no. 2.

⁴⁸ For Robert Barclay, see *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity* (London, 1678).

⁴⁹ The title is *Theologiae vere Christianae apologia* (Amsterdam, 1676). Cited by Russell, 263.

History of Hai Ebn Yokdhan is remarkable for having provided Robert Barclay with a piece of evidence of his doctrine of Inner Light is completely incorrect. Ashwell's translation from Pococke's Latin version was published in 1686, which puts it after Keith's translation in 1674 and twelve years after the publication of the *Apology*. Like Keith, Barclay leaves out the intellectual development of *Hay Bin Yaq*, and focuses in his summary only on the final achievement of the knowledge of God through personal experience. Although Barclay may have seen Pococke's Latin publication, the main statement of his summary is taken almost faithfully from the 'Advertisement to the Reader' in Keith's version of the *Philosophus autodidactus*.

Yet there is a book translated out of the Arabick, which gives an account of one Hai Ebn Yokdan, who without converse of man, living in an island alone, attained to such profound knowledge of God, as to have immediate converse with him, and to affirm that the best and most certain knowledge of God is not that which is attained by *premisses premised and conclusions deduced, but that, which is enjoyed by conjunction of the mind of man with the Supreme Intellect, after the mind is purified from its corruptions and is separated from all bodily images and is gathered into a profound stillness.*⁵⁰

Entirely aware of his contribution to the *Apology*, Keith gives a description of it years later in his *Standard of the Quakers examined, or an answer to the Apology of Robert Barclay*.⁵¹ By that time he had given up Quakerism, after a life spent in and out of jails with angry battles ranging from England to America (Pennsylvania),⁵² where he most probably carried at least the

⁵⁰ Robert Barclay, *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, (London, 1678), Prop. V and VI, Paragr. 27, p. 134. (As appears in Early English Books Online EEBO, image no. 81.)

⁵¹ See the *Apology*, paragraph 27, 134.

⁵² See G. Keith, *The Standard of the Quakers examined* (London, 1702), 5. According to Russell, he wrote this book after becoming an Anglican; it is both a criticism of *The Apology* and an account of his contribution in its preparation.

summary of *Hayy Bin Yaqan*, if not a copy of his own translation.

Providing the Quakers with a sound proof of the existence of the Inner Light, the *Apology* was highly influential in its original Latin as well as in its English, Dutch, French, German, and other versions. Equally important, the *Apology* was the most reliable and systematic statement of Quaker principles. According to it, the Quaker movement was defined as a religion of ‘inner light’, against both Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism, and conceived of as one where neither the church nor the Holy Scriptures could claim ultimate power or lead to salvation. Instead, salvation could be realised only through the Holy Spirit. *Hayy Bin Yaqan* served the Quakers’ principles simply because it was seen by them as the perfect manifestation of religion as an individual experience of ‘inner light’. In fact, the eighteenth-century English translation from the Arabic original by Simon Ockley (1678-1720) was in reaction against the Quaker understanding and use of the *Philosophus autodidactus* as a representative for their ‘enthusiastic notions’.⁵³

George Ashwell’s Translation:

Inspired by Ibn ‘afayl’s story, George Ashwell, the vicar of Banbury, emulated Keith by putting Pococke into English with an epilogue of his own in 1686, under the title *The History of Hai Eb’n Yockdhan; an Indian Prince: or the Self-Taught Philosopher*. Being well known for his naturalist theology, Ashwell translated the book in support of his argument that nature is capable of leading us to God. In his introductory letter to the reader entitled *Epistle Dedicatory*, he suggests that his main concern is to instruct this ‘licentious Generation, whereof some are too loose in their principles and others in their

⁵³ It has also been translated into Spanish, Danish, and curiously in part into Arabic and is described as not only ‘the first defense of Quaker principles by a man of trained intelligence, but in many respects as one of the most impressive theological writings of the century.’ See Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee’s edition of *The Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. I, 1089-1090 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921-22).

practices.’ He elaborates by saying that the philosopher, whose life is described here, is capable of teaching them:

.....in such principles of Morality and Religion and such alone as the light of Nature discovers and which must needs be acknowledged for true by all those, who will judge and act as Men, according to the dictates of reason, and the Conclusions resulting from experience. And I heartily wish indeed, that all us were arrived even thus far, by the guidance of this light, and agreed in such principles as humane Reason teacheth out of the book of nature, which sets forth to our view God’s works of Creation and Providence. For this foundation being laid, there would be hopes of agreement about that, which the Supernatural light of Revelation discovers to our Faith, and superstructs thereupon.⁵⁴

In his preface, he also declares that his version is not a slavish translation of the Latin rendering. Thus, he thinks that he can use more liberty in order to render it ‘more clear’ and provide the reader with greater profit and pleasure as well. To achieve this goal, Ashwell deletes Ibn ‘ufayl’s introduction, the spontaneous generation version of jayy’s birth, and the passage concerning the argument advanced by Ibn ‘ufayl in support of his view that regions under the equinox enjoy the most temperate weather, for he perceived in them little or nothing contributing to the main ‘Design of the History’. To this translation, Ashwell adds an epilogue written by himself entitled *Theologia Ruris, Sive Schola Scala Nature: Or; The Book of Nature, Leading us, by certain Degrees, to the Knowledge and Worship of the God of Nature*.⁵⁵

Even before Keith and Ashwell had made their translations, Pococke’s Latin had crossed the North Sea and gone into Dutch; as mentioned previously, *Het Leeven van Hai Ebn Yokdhan* appeared anonymously in Amsterdam in 1672. However, as regards its anonymity, we may note that it was

⁵⁴ As appears on Ashwell’s translation (1686) provided by Early English Books Online EEBO, image no. 3.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, image no. 111.

‘reported that Spinoza, the Dutch philosopher whose family settled in Holland as refugees from the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal, had either translated the Arabic novel or recommended it to be translated into Dutch.’⁵⁶ Another anonymous translation (an English one) of *Hayy Bin Yaqzan* appeared in 1696, bound with Robert Green’s *Dorastus and Fawnia*, and under the title *The History of Josephus the Indian Prince*. Here, most of the philosophical concepts of the original text were either omitted or summarised, with the outcome that *Hayy Bin Yaqzan* was presented to its readers simply as an amusing story rendered in plain style and language.

Simon Ockley’s Translation:

Now, Simon Ockley, however impatient and inexperienced he may have been in his promotion of things Arabic, was very far from hoping to be identified with the ideas of Keith, Barclay and Ashwell. In his preface to his translation, he tells his readers that he tried to translate it anew, because he is certain that since Keith’s and Ashwell’s renderings ‘were not made out of the Original Arabic, but out of Latin’, they must have mistaken the sense of the author in many places. His other reason for translating this work is to incline his friends who have not seen this book to a more favourable opinion of Arabic learning. In 1708, Simon Ockley’s version, made directly from the Arabic, was published in London (and was reprinted there in 1711, and again in Dublin in 1731) under the following long title:

The Improvement of Human Reason, Exhibited in the Life of Hai Ebn Yokdhan: Written in Arabick above 500 Years ago, by Abu Jaafar Ebn Tufail, In which is demonstrated, By what Methods one may, by the meer Light of Nature, attain the knowledge of things Natural and Supernatural; more particularly the knowledge of God, and the Affairs of another life,Newly translated from the Original Arabick,.....With an

⁵⁶ See O. F. Best’s *Nachwort* (Epilogue) in *Der Ur-Robinson* (München: Matthes and Seitz Verlag, 1987), 190-1, quoted by Samar [\[r](#) in her article entitled ‘Serving God or Mammon? Echoes from *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* and *Sinbad the Sailor* in *Robinson Crusoe*’, in Lieve Spaas and Brian Stimpson’s edition of *Robinson Crusoe: Myths and Metamorphoses* (London: Macmillan Press., 1996), 79.

*Appendix, In which the Possibility of Man's attaining the True knowledge of God, and things necessary to Salvation, without Instruction, is briefly consider'd.*⁵⁷

Ibn ^ufayl himself had written a short introduction to his treatise, in which he discusses briefly some of the concepts held by the leading Muslim advocates of mystic philosophy before his time, namely, al-F[r\b\ (d.950), al-Ghaz[l\ (d.1111), and Ibn S\n\ (d.1037) and Ibn B[jja (d.1139). This is omitted not only from Ashwell's translation, but also from the 1731 edition of Ockley's version, and from the 1986 edition which was revised and introduced by A.S. Fulton, since - according to him - it contains nothing of general interest.⁵⁸ The bookseller's (Edward Powell) preface to the reader in Ockley's first edition (1708) summarises the author's purpose and outlines the story with sufficient clearness. It states that the purpose is to show how humane reason may, by observation and experience, arrive at the knowledge of natural things, and from thence to Supernatural; particularly the Knowledge of God. Furthermore, in order to achieve this goal, he presumes an individual brought up by himself, where he was altogether fully deprived of any kind of instruction, but what he could get from his own observation and contemplation when living in isolation. Conant claims that one appealing depiction of the lonely hero's manner of making himself live at ease on the island recalls *Robinson Crusoe*, and that since this book appeared only eleven years before *Robinson Crusoe*, 'the passage may possibly have been seen by Defoe.'⁵⁹

Conclusion:

Thus, English readers of the eighteenth century had access to three remarkable English translations of Ibn ^ufayl's *Hayy Bin Yaq&n* in addition to Pococke's Latin translation and the

⁵⁷ See Ockley's preface to his translation, pages not numbered. Quoted by Martha Pike Conant, *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Octagon Books, 1966), 127.

⁵⁸ See A. S. Fulton's introduction to Simon Ockley's translation of *The History of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan by Abu Baker Ibn Tufayl* (Darf Publishers Limited, London, 1986), 37.

⁵⁹ See Conant, 129.

anonymous partial English translation entitled *The History of Josephus the Indian Prince*. If we make brief comparison between these different versions of Keith, Ashwell and Ockley, we can say that Keith was mainly concerned to use it as a support to the Quaker's conception of Inner Light, and he was not so much concerned with producing an elegant work of art as providing his readers with a faithful and accurate rendering of Pococke's Latin translation. It is also worth mentioning that Keith included all Ibn ^ufayl's introductions to the story in his translation. Ashwell gave himself the freedom to render the Latin version into plain language, for his major concern was the pleasure of his readers. Unlike his predecessors, Ockley's aim was to produce a neat, well-organised and as much as possible accurate piece of Arabic artistry. As suggested by Arberry, Ockley's translation is 'a fluent and on the whole very accurate piece of work', and can hardly have failed to make a positive impression on his public. Large claims have now and then been advanced concerning its influence on eighteenth century thought; particularly, it 'has been argued, not implausibly, that the book was read by Daniel Defoe, and remembered when he came to picture Robison Crusoe as a speculative philosopher'.⁶⁰ The following extracts quoted below may well clarify how far the mentioned translators did succeed in achieving their aims:

We will consider an extract from the Arabic text which illustrates |ayy's unexpected discovery of the art of cooking, which runs as follows:

وكان من جملة ما ألقى فيها على سبيل الإختبار لقوتها شيء من أصناف
الحيوانات البحرية - كان قد ألقاه البحر إلى ساحله - فلما أنضجت ذلك
الحيوان وسطع قفاره تحركت شهوته إليه، فأكل منه شيئاً فاستطابه، فاعتاد
بذلك أكل اللحم.⁶¹

In Keith's version, this passage turns out to be an ambiguous chain of relative clauses:

Among other things which he did cast into (fire),
for the trying of its strength, there were some of
those animals which live in the sea, which the sea

⁶⁰ See A. J. Arberry, *Oriental Essays: Portraits of Seven Scholars* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960), 25.

⁶¹ Abu Baker Ibn ^ufayl, *|ayy Bin Yaq&n*, edited and commented on by Albair N[dir (Beirut: Dar el-Mashreq Publishers, 1986), 41.

had cast upon the shore, which being roasted with the fire, and the smell of them rising up, his appetite was stirred up, so that he tasted somewhat of them; which when it was acceptable to him he accustomed himself to the eating of flesh.....⁶²

As an objective reader, I can say that Ashwell's version seems much more interesting and amusing:

And among other Experiments, wherewith he made trial of its strength, he put thereinto certain fishes which the sea had cast upon the shore; which being fried, and the steam thereof coming to his Nose, his Appetite was stirr'd up, and become quickened thereby, insomuch that he ventured to taste some part thereof; which when he found acceptable to his Palate, and agreeable to his Stomach, from thence Forward he accustomed himself to eat Flesh.⁶³

If compared with the previous ones, Ockley's extract is concise, smooth and elegant in style:

Among other things which he put in to try its strength, he once flung in some Sea Animals which had been thrown ashore by the Water, and as soon as e'er he smelt the Steam, it rais'd his Appetite, so that he had a Mind to taste of them; which he did, and found them very agreeable, and from that time he began to use himself to the Eating of Flesh.....⁶⁴

⁶² Keith's translation as appears in Early English Books Online EEBO, image no. 53.

⁶³ Ashwell's translation, *ibid.*, image nos. 29-30.

⁶⁴ Simon Ockley, trans. of *The History of Hayy*, 67-68.

Regarding modern translations of */ayy*, mention can be made of J.M. Budd's in 2000⁶⁵ and Lenn Evan Goodman's in 2003.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ See J. M. Budd, *Hayy Bin Yaqdhan: Ibn Tufail* (United States: Xlibris Corporation, 2000).

⁶⁶ See Lenn Evan Goodman, *Ibn Tufayl's Hayy Ibn Yaqz[n: a Philosophical Tale* (Los Angeles, Gee Tee Bee, Goodman, 2003).

Works Cited:

- Arberry, A. J. *Oriental Essays: Portraits of Seven Scholars*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1960.
- Al-Jarrah, Samar. 'Serving God or Mammon? Echoes from *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* and *Sinbad the Sailor* in *Robinson Crusoe*' in Lieve Spaas and Brian Stimpson (eds.), *Robinson Crusoe: Myths and Metamorphoses*, London: Macmillan Press, 1996.
- Barkley, Robert. *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, London, 1678, provided by Early English Books on Line EEBO.
- Brugman, J. and Schroder, F. *Arabic Studies in the Netherlands*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979.
- Budd, J. M. Trans. *Hayy Bin Yaqdhan: Ibn Tufail*, Philadelphia, Xlibris Corporation, 2000.
- Conant, Martha Pike. *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century*, New York: Octagon Books, 1966.
- Gauthier, Leon. *Hayy ben Yaqdhan, roman philosophique d'Ibn Thofail*, Algiers: P. Fontana, 1900.
- Goodman, Lenn Evan. Trans., *Ibn Tufayl's Hayy Bin Yaqzan: a Philosophical Tale*, Los Angeles, Gee Tee Bee, Goodman, 2003.
- Jassan, Nawal. *Hayy Bin Yaqzan and Robinson Crusoe: A Study of an Early Arabic Impact on English Literature*, Baghdad, Al-Rashid House for Publication, 1980.
- Ibn al-Haytham, al-Buhārī. *Hayy Bin Yaqzan*, (12th century A. D.), (ed.), Beirut: Dar el-Mashreq Publishers, 1983.

- Keith, George. Trans., *An Account of Oriental Philosophy Shewing the Wisdom of Some Renowned Men of the East*, 1674, provided by Early English Books Online EEBO.
- Ockley, Simon. Trans., *The History of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan by Abu Baker Ibn Tufayl*, (1708), revised, with an Introduction by A. S. Fulton, London: Darf Publishers, 1981.
- Russell, G.A. 'The Impact of the Philosophus autodidactus: Pockockes, John Locke and the Society of Friends', in *The 'Arabick' Interest of the Natural Philosophers in Seventeenth-Century England*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994.
- Russell, G.A. 'The Role of Ibn Tufayl, A Moorish Physician, in the Discovery of Childhood in Seventeenth-Century England', in *Child Care through the Centuries*, (ed.), John Cule and Terry Turner, Cardiff: STS Publishing, 1986.
- Toomer, G. J. *Eastern Wisdom and Learning: The Study of Arabic in Seventeenth Century England*, New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1996.
- Twells, Leonard. *The Theological Works of the Learned Dr. Pockocke, To which is prefixed An Account of his life and Writings never before printed*, London, 1740.