In 1671 there appeared at Oxford the Arabic text and Latin translation of Ibn Tufayl’s *Risālat Hayy b. Yaqzān* by Edward Pococke, son of the famous Arabic scholar of the same name. This work seems to have been undertaken at the encouragement of the elder Pococke, who wrote a preface to the book.¹ What many of the elder Pococke’s contemporaries, as well as his biographer, Twells, did not know, however, was that the elder Pococke had begun an English translation of this work many years before the appearance of his son’s edition. Indeed it was not until P. M. Holt discovered among Pococke’s papers in the Bodleian Library some fragments of this translation, with the first page dated 10 July 1645, that we first had definite proof of the existence of such a work by Pococke.² Holt says that Pococke “seems never to have disclosed this translation to anyone”, and that he made no mention of it in the preface to his son’s book.

This may not have been the case, however, for at least three people knew of a translation by Pococke which fits the description of Ibn Tufayl’s work: Robert Boyle, Samuel Hartlib and John Worthington. Reference is made to an “Arabic Philosophical Fiction” in a number of letters written between the latter two in 1659-1662. James Crossley, the editor of Worthington’s diary, wherein most of these letters are found, unequivocally asserts that the work referred to is *Risālat Hayy b. Yaqzān*.³ However, we cannot absolutely be sure that the “Fiction” referred to in the letters is the *Risālah*, since its title is never mentioned. In the light of Holt’s discovery, though, we can assume that Crossley is correct, and

³ J. Crossley, ed., *The Diary and Correspondence of John Worthington*, 2 vols. in 3, Chetham Society Publications, Vols. 13, 36, 114; Manchester, 1847-86, I, 176. Robert Boyle, the well-known English chemist, was also a devout Christian. He funded Pococke’s translation into Arabic of Hugo Grotius’s *De Veritate Religionis Christianae* in 1660, and encouraged other similar missionary work in the Levant. He seems to have been closely involved with the printing of Pococke’s translation of Ibn Tufayl. Samuel Hartlib was a mutual friend of Boyle and Worthington, who was Master of Jesus College, Cambridge.
that Pococke must have revealed this incomplete translation of the *Risālah* to these men. The other possibility, that is, that the "Fiction" of the letters refers to an entirely different work, is, when one considers this evidence, rather implausible.

These are the relevant excerpts from their letters:

(a) Hartlib to Worthington, 30 January 1659,

"The ingenious Arabick Fiction doth neither delectare nor prodesse, because it is not yet extant in English. I shall urge so much the more the truly noble Mr. Boyle, he being in town at present. I shall acquaint him with your belief concern(ing) Mr. Pocock as being able to add much to Grotius's book".\(^4\)

(b) Hartlib to Boyle, 5 April 1659,

"I thank you heartily for [Pococke's] printed paper of coffee, which will be gustful no doubt to your coffee drinkers, and who perhaps may add as many more good observations from their own experience, as the Arabian physician hath done. Is the philosophical figment under the press? Dr. Worthington told me huge commendations of it".\(^5\)

(c) Hartlib to Worthington, 5 May 1659,

"About Coffee there is no more published or done by Mr. Pocock, than that little paper w(ich) I sent unto you, save that the Arabick is added in the original. Last Tuesday I wrote affectionately to noble Mr. Boyle, who is at Oxford, to expedite the desired philosophical fiction".\(^6\)

(d) Hartlib to Worthington, 1 January 1660,

"O that I had received but an hour sooner your letter, for then I might have sent you exactly word, what you desire to be ascertained from Mr. Boyle concerning the printing or dispersing of Grotius, and of Pocock's Arabick Fiction. But as soon as he gives me another visit, you shall be satisfied G.(od) w.(illing)".\(^7\)

(e) Worthington to Hartlib, 9 September 1661,

"I should be glad to hear that Mr. Pocock had published the Philosophical Fiction in Arabic, with a translation, of which you wrote heretofore".\(^8\)

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\(^7\) *Idem*, I, 259.

\(^8\) *Idem*, II, 26-27.