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- 1 This article on Persian treatises on Indian medicine, zoology and alchemy is much more than its modest title suggests. The author starts by reevaluating current views in the history of medicine about a decline after the end of the Abbasid period. A sophisticated picture is drawn of developments and trends in medicine and related sciences in Muslim India. In contrast to Cyril Elgood, Speziale argues that, although Persian translations and commentaries of classical Arabic works were not produced in large numbers before the 16th century, the original works were widely read in India. He considers the medical texts in Persian and Urdu written in India during the Mogul and colonial periods to be one of the richest corpora of texts in Muslim culture at the time.
- 2 In the first paragraph, Speziale traces Indian knowledge in the works of Muslims back to Abbasid Baghdad, citing several examples such as the section on Indian medicine in 'Alī b. Sahl Rabban al-Ṭabarī's *Firdaus al-ḥikma*. But he also states that such works seem to have had no influence on the Persian works about Indian medicine written later in India. About the translations from Sanskrit into Persian already in progress in pre-Mogul India, Speziale points out that the process of appropriating Indian knowledge was much slower than the integration of Greek knowledge into Arabic literature, but

that it lasted much longer. The author then focuses on the interest in Indian medicine, the forms of appropriating knowledge, the relation between Muslim traditions and Indian knowledge, and the Indian medical milieu. The interest in Indian medicine and drugs mainly stemmed from practical considerations, from the need to adapt Avicennian medicine to the Indian environment. The remark is insightful that new knowledge was appropriated mainly by composing new works in Persian and seldom by direct translation from Sanskrit sources. Worth mentioning too is the finding that native Indians – more often Muslims than Hindus – mostly produced the corpus of new Persian texts, whereas written by Iranian emigrants to India made the early Persian translations and commentaries of classical Arabic texts, such as Avicenna's *Qānūn*. This comprehensive overview of trends and developments in the field of medicine is followed by four instructive paragraphs about major works in pharmacology, sexology, physiognomy, zoology, veterinary medicine and alchemy. The last paragraph is devoted to the developments during the colonial period. The author draws the conclusion that many of the new topics pointed out in this article demand more research. Given the lack of research on the history of sciences in Muslim India, we can but agree with this conclusion.

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