

surgeon, and man-midwife, and described himself in those terms. The medical memoranda he wrote allow us some interesting insights into his relations with his patients and other practitioners, the intensity and range of his practice, and his midwifery work—including details of his use of forceps. They also give some sense of his expenditures, earnings and costs, such as the carriage of drugs.

Flinders is an interesting figure in general. He came from a medical family—his father John had also been an apothecary in Donington and his brother succeeded him in his practice—and he trained in London before returning home to practise. His first son turned from the family trade to become a noted explorer, charting the Australian coastline, among other achievements. Flinders was also a literate man whose record of his book purchases allows us to see him engaging in the print culture of the period, buying both general literary works, and medical publications.

The editors have done sterling work in producing a very clear and well structured edition. They have also provided an able 25-page introduction tracing the life and family of Flinders, and offer a tidy contextualization to his manuscript and practice. Somewhat unfortunately, they appear not to have known about Irvine Loudon's discussion of Flinders in *Medical care and the general practitioner* (1987). None the less, much can still be gained from this source, and I expect that Flinders will soon become a regularly discussed character in studies of eighteenth-century medicine.

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**A M G Rutten,** *Blue ships: Dutch ocean crossing with multifunctional drugs and spices in the eighteenth century*, translated by Dr J Wormer, Rotterdam, Erasmus Publishing, 2008, pp. 154, €32.50 (hardback 978-90-5235-199-5).

From time immemorial, mankind has used natural substances as essential resources for many purposes, such as clothing and building materials, as spices, dyes and medicinal drugs. They have, therefore, always been important commodities and objects of exchange for many cultures. With the development of the first global commercial system, early modern European overseas enterprises imported great quantities of botanical goods from around the world and introduced them to Europe; these influenced medicine, pharmacy, diet, and the economy. It is well known that the Dutch determined the global commercial exchange during the seventeenth century and well beyond it, thus making an important contribution to the exploration of useful natural products from all over the globe. For this reason, A M G Rutten's study concentrates on the influence of Dutch commercial enterprises on the world-wide distribution of the so-called multifunctional drugs—products that could be used for both industrial and medicinal purposes—and their significance for Europe. Rutten explicitly focuses on primarily industrial products that were also used for medicinal purposes, as he explains using indigo as an example. He then presents a survey of the development of the Dutch trading companies and juxtaposes them with the former trade in multifunctional drugs in the Mediterranean area.

In the main part of the book, the author investigates different centres of global commerce as well as various geographic regions in terms of their significance as suppliers of these drugs to Dutch traders. He presents examples, such as pepper, ginger and nutmeg, and explains their historical tradition and industrial and medical applications. Vanilla, for instance, a plant native to Central America, was used as a spice but also as a remedy against nervousness and sleeplessness, and was included in many European pharmacopoeias. Nowadays, vanilla is still an important aromatic substance in the food industry. Rutten then turns to the medical-pharmaceutical aspects of multifunctional drugs and explores their presence in various

European pharmacopoeias. Using the example of guaiac wood, he shows that the discovery of the special properties of a multi-purpose product could provoke an intense global trade in it. Guaiac was on the one hand used for technical purposes such as a material for ships' pulleys, and mortars, but on the other it was especially highly esteemed as a remedy against syphilis—then a new and fearsome illness—so that trade in it increased enormously. Multifunctional drugs were also used as constituents of compound medicines such as theriac, which was not a new remedy but a classical and famous European panacea. Theriac too was transported around the world in enormous quantities. Finally, Rutten shows that fragrant substances like ambergris, civet and musk were also appreciated as medicines, and formed an important group of commodities in Dutch trade.

The book concludes with a bibliography. Rutten's study provides comprehensive information concerning the trade in multifunctional drugs in the eighteenth century and their influence on Europe. By combining aspects of the histories of pharmacy, culture, and trade, he shows that interdisciplinary studies can contribute to a new understanding of historical developments. It is a pity that there are no detailed references, especially since the author has evidently consulted a large number of archival sources. But, most importantly, the results of Rutten's investigations definitely offer much inspiration for further interdisciplinary studies. The book can be recommended to a wide public: to scientists of many disciplines as well as interested amateurs.

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**G A Lindeboom,** *Herman Boerhaave: the man and his work*, second edition, Rotterdam, Erasmus Publishing, 2007, pp. xxx, 372, illus., €49.50 (hardback 978-90-5235-137-7).

In 1968, G A Lindeboom made his reputation in the English-speaking world as the chief expert on the history of Dutch medicine by publishing his biography of Boerhaave. (See the review in *Medical History*, 1969, **13** (4) by Lord Cohen of Birkenhead.) In that work he was significantly aided by E Ashworth Underwood, who refused to be named as co-author and simply provided a brief, signed Foreword. The book remains the only modern attempt in any language to comprehend the life and work of this most famous of eighteenth-century medical teachers and authors. Given that the original publication is now hard to obtain, Erasmus Publishing have brought out a new edition of the work, with a careful and perceptive introduction by M J van Lieburg about Lindeboom and his work that amounts to an important short biography of its own. The original edition has been entirely reset and is beautifully produced, while the alterations to the text are slight, only correcting errors. More important are Van Lieburg's editorial interventions: the Latin parts have been dropped from appendix one (the *Commentariolus*, composed from Boerhaave's autobiographical notes); appendix three is dropped entirely (the sale catalogue of Boerhaave's collections); the bibliography is painstakingly corrected and brought up to date; and Lindeboom's *Bibliographia Boerhaaviana* of 1959, also carefully expanded and corrected, is added as a final appendix. As he makes plain, the structure and aims of the original work show its age, but it remains a masterful synthesis of information then available in print, and with Van Lieburg's editorial interventions, it will still be widely consulted by anyone wishing to embark on an acquaintance with Boerhaave and his publications.

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**Sandra M Sufian,** *Healing the land and the nation: malaria and the Zionist project in Palestine, 1920–1947*, Chicago and London,