

**WOUTER VAN DOEVEREN**  
**AND**  
**PETRUS CAMPER**  
**IN PARIS**

**TRAVEL DIARIES, KEPT IN THE  
YEARS 1752-1753, 1777 & 1787  
AND RELATED  
CORRESPONDENCE**

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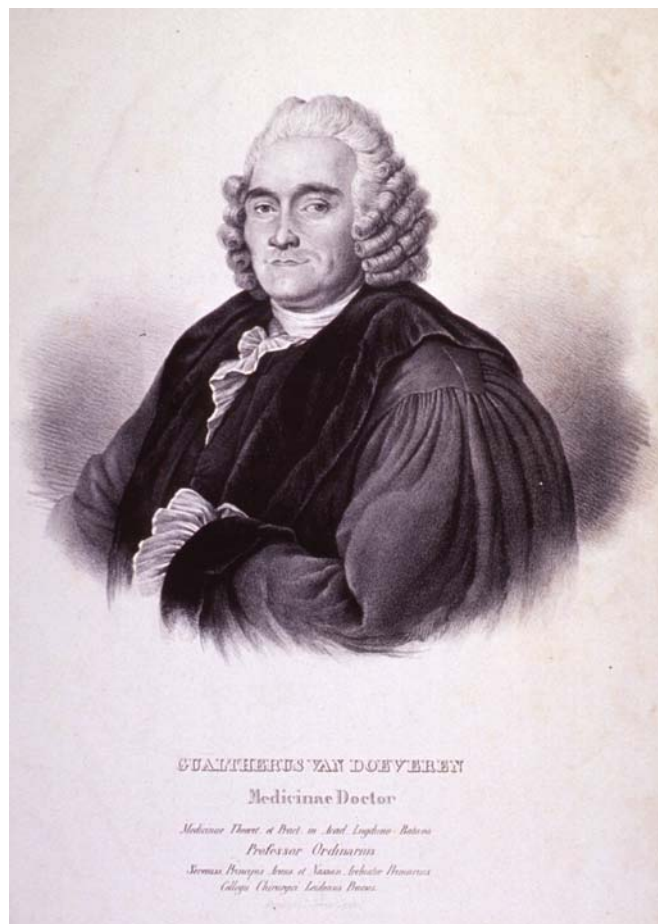
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## Part I



***Wouter van Doeveren (1730-1783)***

## II. VAN DOEVEREN'S TRAVEL DIARY TO PARIS, 1752-1753

*Between late August 1752 and late June 1753 Van Doeveren visited Paris to study medicine and to improve his practical skills in obstetrics and surgery. The travelogue given below is an account of this visit. Only the pages 85 to 268 of this diary are present in the collection of the Library of the University of Amsterdam (NL). Most probably also a smaller number of pages, starting on page 269, is missing, as page 268 ends rather abruptly.*

LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM (SPECIAL COLLECTIONS):  
UVA: UB: coll. hss. IV A 5 (3)

[Augustus 1752]

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[Rue du] Bacq woonde, hier sogten wij den heer <sup>S<sup>T</sup></sup> GERMAIN, aan wien de pastor van Assenede<sup>34</sup> mij een brief had medegegeven. Deese was ook niet 't huis, waaren met de Prins à la campagne te Suresnes. Ik overhandigde mijn brief en ons adres aan een Lakei; komende vervolgens, na de reconvalescerende heer BONNER<sup>35</sup> een visite te hebben gegeven, wederom ten huis.

Na de middag deeden we een wandeling in de Thuilerie, Cour de la Reine, &c. en met de heeren VAN ROYEN<sup>36</sup> en VAN HEES<sup>37</sup>, die van Fontainebleau waren geretourneerd, alwaar se, in deese tijd, terwijl er het Hof resideerd, sig eenige dagen hadden opgehouden, en door middel van onse ambassadeur &c. veel plaisir hadden genooten; 's avonds gaven we den heer KLANKE<sup>38</sup>, die aan de koorts en diarrhaea laboreerde, een visite, en kwamen vervolgens

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<sup>34</sup> 'Assenede': a place in the Southern Netherlands (nowadays Belgium), near Zelzate.

<sup>35</sup> Van Doeveren means most likely L. Boner, from Graubuenden (Switzerland), who entered an inscription in Van Doeveren's *Album Amicorum* on February 17, 1753.

<sup>36</sup> David van Royen (1727-1799) had studied medicine at the University of Leyden since 1740. In August 1752, he left for Paris, where he stayed until the spring of 1753. Here he was trained in practical surgery and obstetrics. After his return in Leyden, he succeeded his uncle Adriaan van Royen as professor of botany. On November 10, 1751 he entered an inscription in the *Album Amicorum* in Leyden, which Van Doeveren had started in 1750 (KB).

<sup>37</sup> Mr. Van Hees: this close friend and travel companion of David van Royen was evidently a medical doctor. Van Doeveren states in his diary that Van Hees' elder brother lived in The Hague. During Van Royen's study time in Leyden (the period 1740-1752) the only medical student with the family name 'Van Hees' was Gulielmus (or 'Willem') van Hees from The Hague, who matriculated in 1741 at the age of 33, nine years older than Van Royen! Another candidate for this 'Van Hees' is Corneli(us) van Hees from Gouda, who obtained a degree in medicine in 1745 at Utrecht University, after having defended a thesis on epilepsy. Later in life this Cornelis settled as a physician in Utrecht.

<sup>38</sup> Franciscus Klanke from Moscow (Russia) matriculated in 1745 at the age of 20 as a student of medicine at Leyden University. In 1751, while in Leyden, he entered an inscription in the *Album Amicorum*, which Van Doeveren had started in 1750 (KB:78J1).

ROCHE deed vooraf een kleine oratie in seer goed Latin, waarin hij de noodzakelijkheid van 't betragten der deugd en religie in de regten aantoonde, en seer als een voorbeeld daarin aanpreef de overleden prof. M<sup>r</sup>. CUGNET, in wiens plaats de h<sup>r</sup>. MARTIN soude ingehuldigd worden. Na 't eindigen van dese redevoering ging M<sup>r</sup>. MARTIN zijn lange en grootte roode tabberd aandoen, gelijk alle de professores Juris hebben en kwam in de cathedra bij M<sup>r</sup>. [DE] LA ROCHE: het kwam ons aardig voor dat dese in 't ingaan tusschen 't Latin spreken egter zijn tong geen meester was om tegen de Doctor 'Entrez' te seggen in 't Fransch; insgelijks dat aan de eene kant van de stoel een Docteur sat, die de oratie van den eenen en andere las, om in te steeken als se kwamen te missen. Daarna inaugureerde M<sup>r</sup>. DE LA ROCHE de Doctor M<sup>r</sup>. MARTIN als 'Professor Juris, more majoris'. Hij omhing hem met de roode mantel, die wel eer de dragt der Koningen was geweest, om daar door de groot- en agtbaarheid van de Regteren te vertoonen. Hij omgordde hem met een band

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of zona, om gelijk een krijgsman die altijd gereed moet zijn om den staat te verdedigen, altijd ook aangejord te zijn om als antecessor de regten des rijks in stant te houden; daarna een boek waarin de Canones en Leges vervat waren. Hij stak hem een ring aan de vinger om op nieuws met de Faculteit een huwelijk aan te gaan; sette hem een bonnet op, om hem op nieuws, hoewel dat te vooren bij zijn doctoraat reeds geschied was, als lid van de Faculteit te kennen. Eindelijk omhelsde de een den anderen om sig als broeders en vrienden saamen te vereenigen; De nieuwe prof[essor] kuste vervolgens alle de antecessoren of professoren die aan de regterhand saaten, en de doctoren aan de linkerhand van 't gestoelte, en deed daarna een gepaste oratie in goed Latin, waarin hij de Lofuitingen van de Faculteit niet vergat en ook seer uitweide in de lof aan zijn voorganger CUNIER.

Saturdags 's morgens [24 februari] gingen we volgens afspraak na M<sup>r</sup>. GRANDCLAS, die we 't huis vonden en onse experimenten overgaaven, maar die van hem nog niet kreegen; die hij egter ons al weederom beloofde ten minsten te sullen geeven, soo wel als ons bij de experimenten te admitteren, die hij in 't kort met Dr. LORRY soude beginnen. Wij bleeven enige tijd bij hem en spraaken over verscheide saaken; hij verhaalde ons onder anderen ook dat hij experimenten gedaan had met de aga .... du chaine (houdende egter

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de swam voor eeven goed) waar door 't vorige jaar een chirurgiein 2000 livres pension had verkregen. Hij scheen aan deselve meer te contribueeren als hier ordinair de chirurgiens dedden, die er niet veel van opgaven, mogelijk 'Laudis alienæ emuli'. Hij seide onder anderen dat hij in een grootte hond een *arteria carotis* geheel en al doorgesneden had so dat het bloed er van beide kanten uitsprong met veel geweld, 't welk egter met daarvan de fungus op te leggen gestild was en zelfs so dat de wond geneesen en de hond volkomen in 't leven is gebleeven. Hij had geobserveerd, dat, als men de fungus appliceerd het bloed eigentlijk gestild word door een thrombus die in 't vat komt, die een figuur heeft als een champignon, waarvan 't hoofd sig buiten om de afgesneden extremitet van 't vat formeerd, terwijl als een steel die allengskens dunder word, binnen in flotteerd. Hij sprak nog veel over DE FAILLE en vooral

over de wijze van **FRÈRE COSME**,<sup>195</sup> daar hij seer voor was; hij had door kennis aan die monnik, die deese operatie op een diverse wijze van andere deed, deselve dikwils gezien & beloovde ons gelegenheid te zullen verzorgen om daar ook bij present te zijn, 't geen we wel graag accepteerden, maar we maakten 'er geen groote staat op, dewijl het b[e]looven der Francen ons al bekend was geworden. Hij seide ook dat die père haast

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nog een nadere verdediging van sijne operatie tegens M<sup>t</sup> LE CAT en andere uit soude geven, waaraan hij nog seer veel casus soude bij de andere voegen.

's Middags aaten we bij Mevr. *MULDER*, daar we op sijn Hollands soute vis met aardappels hadden. 's Namiddags van Mad. *CLAVÉ* komende, daar om de Heilige Dag geen wijven waren, gingen we een tour maken op de Foire du S<sup>t</sup> Germain, waar ik nog niet was op geweest. Alle jaaren is deselve in 't voojaar, beginnende in februarij en duerd omtrend 8 weeken in een plaats daartoe geschikt in 't Faubourg S<sup>t</sup> Germain, daer men dan allerlije soort van goederen te koop siet in kraamen die voor die tijd verhuerd worden, waarvan ook een gedeelte voor coffij- en drinkhuizen &c diend; bij andere zijn koordedansers, marionetten &c, of rariteiten te sien; Daar sijn seer veel gallerijen om door te wandelen, en alles is door een generaal dak bedekt. In 't Najaar is in de Faubourg S<sup>t</sup> Denis een diergelijke jaarmarkt, die men de Foire S<sup>t</sup> Laurent noemd, die omtrend ook so lang duerd, waer van wij in September het einde gesien hadden: Deese plaets is niet overdekt. Op beide deese Foires speeld men alle avonden de Opera Comique; maar deese gav op de Foire S<sup>t</sup> Germain wel so veel genoeg niet als deese op die van S<sup>t</sup> Laurent gedaan had, vooral dewijl 'er twee van de voornaamste acteurs ontbraken, die 'er toen bij waren.

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Wij saagen daar de Rhinoceros die in Holland, en bijna door geheel Europa vertoond is, en door Hollanders geleid wierd; deselve weegd omtrend 6000 pond, wij sagen desselvs tanden, die seer ver agter in de mond staan, en saagen met verwondering desselvs kleine oogen: men toonde ons een hoorn, die hem voorleede jaar te Romen was afgevallen hoewel hij nu wederom van een andere voorzien was bijna soo groot als de voorige. Daar na saagen we nog een vet kind, dat *MAGITO* uit Holland had medegebragt: deese jongen omtrend 4 jaren oud woeg 140 pond, was vroolijk en altijd wel te vreeden, kon door sijne swaarte niet gaan; hij had een schoone roode kleur, en scheen volkooime gezond; sijn weesen was seer groot en deffig, maar sijn partes *genitales* waren in proportie der andere delen seer klein en omtrend als van een jonggebooren kind, 't is aanmerkelijk dat sijn neus ook seer klein is in vergelijking van de andere partijen van sijn hoofd. Hij at en dronk seer wel omtrend als een kind van 10 jaar, en was selvs een liefhebber van Rataffiat.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Jean Baseilhac (1703-1781), dit 'frère Cosme', surgeon and lithotomist. He published a *Méthode pour extraire la pierre* (Paris, 1779).

<sup>196</sup> 'Rataffiat': ratafia is an alcoholic drink, produced in Catalonia (East Spain) and the Languedoc (South of France).

Van daar gingen we na D<sup>s</sup> DE LA BROUE, die in de Rue S<sup>t</sup> Benoist, [in het] Hotel DAUPHIN, seer wel gelogeerd was: Sijn Ed: had ons desen avond versogt beneevens D<sup>f</sup> DANTI<sup>k</sup>, met wien wij bij hem den avond passeerden en bleeven soupeeren: hij communiceerde ons eenige lijsten

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waar uit we het considerabel getal van protestanten konden bemerken, die in Vrankrijk sijn, selvs Paris niet uitgezonderd, waaronder we selvs van de voornaemste genoemd vonden, behalven seer veele die op geene lijsten willen bekend sijn: het eene gedeelte van Vrankrijk heeft 'er veel meer als 't andere, in Picardij, so als ook in en om Orleans is 't aantal seer gering, maar in de Languedocq is 't considerabel, waar in 't open veld nu op die dan op een andere plaats dikwils voor 30.000 menschen wordt gepreedikt, en seederd de groote vervolging van 1685 nog nooit de publicque vergadering, en hebben opgehouden; wij sagen dat in Nantes alleen een getal van meer als 34700 op de lijsten bekend was, &c.

Sondag den 25<sup>e</sup> [februari] gingen we in de Capel D<sup>s</sup> COURTONNE hooren preeken.

's Avonds schreef ik een brieven aan broer MORAAZ, een aan de Heer SCHOUTEN, en een aan de heer DE WINTER, aan wien [ik] de uitslag van de visites bij D<sup>f</sup> GRANDCLAS communiceerde, en na lang wagten Sijn Ed: antwoordde met sijne brieven.

's Maandags [26 februari] na de middag verhandelde M<sup>f</sup> LEVRET in sijn 18<sup>e</sup> les over de strabisme<sup>197</sup>: hij merkte deselve ongeneeslijk aan in de bejaarde personen, maar niet in de kleine kinderen, die daar van dikwils kunnen hersteld worden; hij stelde voor als een seker middel daarvoor, van altijd een van desselvs oogen

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met een band gesloten te houden en dit om de 24 uren van 't een oog op 't ander te veranderen, wel zorg draagende dat beide de oogen te gelijk so weinig bloed sijn als 't mogelijk is; want hij merkte aan dat schoon beide de oogen scheel sijn, indien men 'er een bedekt, het ander dat open blijft regt siet; dus gewend men door een bandagie altijd op een van de oogen te leggen, het ontbloote altijd regt te sien, waardoor desselvs *musculi* sig tot die directie ook gewinnen, en door 't veranderen van die bandagie gewend men beide de oogen in die staat: Hij seide met deese simpele manier selvs verscheide kinderen geneesen te hebben, en stelde in de jonge kinderen als een seker hulpmiddel voor, indien de ouders en 't kind maar patientie genoeg hebben, om die band op een der oogen met sorg en lang genoeg te draagen, 't geen omtrent 3 maanden is.

Hij vertoonde ons een *uterus* van een gestorven kraamvrouw die seer duidelijk toonde de plaats daar de *placenta* vast geweest was, nam[entlijk] op sijn agterste gedeelte, van beneeden de *fundus*, waardoor hij oogschijnlijk demonstreerde tegen VAN DEVENTER dat de *placenta* sig niet alleen op de *fundus* van de lijvmoeder vast hegt. Hij seide dat die sig op alle plaatsen van desselvs inwendigen *sup[er]ficius* kan vasthegten, en selvs op 't *orificium*, gelijk hij

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<sup>197</sup> 'Strabismus': squinting.

## I. SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF WOUTER VAN DOEVEREN (1730-1783)

### *Introduction*

In 1787, the Société Royale de Médecine (established in Paris after a Royal Decree had been issued on 26 April 1776) published the eulogy dedicated to Wouter van Doeveren, professor of medicine at Leyden University and foreign member (*associé étranger*) of that society. This memorial address had been written by Félix Vicq d'Azyr, first secretary for life of the society founded by him and by Joseph-Marie-François de Lassone, surgeon to King Louis XVI.<sup>1</sup> Van Doeveren passed away on December 31, 1783.

### *Biographical note*

Wouter van Doeveren was born on 16 November 1730 in the town of Philippine, in Zeeuws Vlaanderen.<sup>2</sup> On 7 October 1747, after having been educated at the grammar school of Goes (Zeeland), he enrolled as a student of Medicine at Leyden University. His most inspiring professors were Bernhard Siegfried Albinus (1697-1770), who taught him physiology, while Friedrich Bernhard Albinus (1715-1778) instructed him in anatomy. Frederik Christiaan Winter (1712-1760; physiology), Adriaan van Royen (1704-1779; botany), Petrus van Musschenbroek (1692-1761; physics) and Hiëronymus David Gaubius (1705-1780; practical medicine) completed the list of Van Doeveren's instructors. It was Bernhard Siegfried Albinus, the world-famous anatomist, who kindled Van Doeveren's interest in human anatomy, while Frederik Winter stirred his vivid interest in physiology.

Van Doeveren's academic discourses, his unpublished manuscripts, and a great deal of his correspondence are preserved in the library of Amsterdam University. Other manuscripts and letters are kept in the library of Leyden University. The library of the University of Amsterdam is also the custodian of the travel journal kept by Van Doeveren between late August 1752 and the end of June 1753. He made this trip to Paris in the company of his fellow student Jan Tak, who was born in Middelburg, on the island of Walcheren (Zeeland). Tak was a brother-in-law of Paulus de Wind III (1714-1771), a renowned surgeon and obstetrician who practised in Tak's native town. Finally, a collection of letters is preserved in the Royal Library of the Netherlands (The Hague).

### *Educational trip to Paris; ambitions and experiences*

On 31 August 1752 Wouter van Doeveren and Jan Tak left for Paris, where they arrived already on 7 September. After having found a boarding house they went to see some friends.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Histoire de la Société Royale de Médecine, Années 1782 et 1783, avec les Mémoires de Médecine et de Physique médicale pour les mêmes années, tirés des Registres de cette Société* (Paris: Théophile Barrois le jeune, 1787), pp. 188-199.

<sup>2</sup> The part of the Dutch province of Zeeland south of the Scheldt estuary, which only shares land borders with Flanders.

<sup>3</sup> In Leyden close friends had been Gerard de Wind III (from Middelburg) and Johann David Hahn (from Heidelberg), who enrolled as students of medicine at Leyden University on 25 July 1747. Others were Gerard Heerkens (from Groningen; enrolled in Leyden on 21 July 1747), Franconius de Vrije (from Gouda; enrolled in

One of them was David van Royen. At the time, Van Royen had already finished his study of medicine at Leyden University. The friends were very ambitious, and dying to attend the courses of surgery given by Jean Astruc, Antoine Ferrein, Georges De la Faye and René-Jacques Croissant de Garengot. Moreover they wanted to visit Jean-Antoine Nollet, abbot and famous physicist, teaching at the 'Collège Louis-le-Grand'. In order to improve their practical skills and theoretical knowledge of obstetrics, they also wanted to attend the practical courses given by André Levret (1703-1780) and Nicolas Puzos (1686-1753), who were demonstrators of obstetrics at the 'Hôpital Saint-Côme'.<sup>4</sup> During one of the first lessons given by André Levret, Van Doeveren asked his professor what he thought of the drawings of a pregnant uterus made by Bernhard Siegfried Albinus.<sup>5</sup> Levret answered him straight out that these drawings were unworthy of the great Albinus. Van Doeveren, however, succeeded in convincing him of the contrary, explaining how the various plates needed to be read.

Supervised by Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Andouillé, demonstrator of surgery at the 'Hôpital de la Salpêtrière', Van Doeveren practised the removal of vesical calculi, together with his friend Jan Tak. All things considered, they had high expectations of their instruction, as becomes clear from Van Doeveren's detailed travel diary.<sup>6</sup> They began friendship with several other young and eager scientists, among others Heinrich Johann Nepomuk von Crantz (1722-1797), native of Luxemburg and former student of Gerard van Swieten and Anton de Haen in Vienna. Von Crantz had taken his doctorate in 1750, after which he continued his studies in Paris. He was therefore able to show his friends around. In 1756, having continued his studies in the main hospitals of London, Von Crantz published his *Einleitung in eine wahre Hebammenkunst*.<sup>7</sup> This publication, which was clearly inspired by the works of Levret, paved the way for his appointment as professor of physiology and medicine at the University of Vienna. Among other things, he improved the forceps designed by Levret.

For almost ten months Van Doeveren and Tak stayed in Paris. In order to improve their obstetrical skills, Mr Thomas, demonstrator of anatomy at the 'Hôpital de Bicêtre', put the bodies of women who had died in pregnancy or during childbirth at their disposal. At the time this immense hospital was used as an asylum for mad women. Van Doeveren and his friends repeatedly practised obstetrical manipulations on the manikin designed and constructed by Levret and his wife. On several occasions, they were called upon to assist and to carry out more difficult deliveries by Madame Clavé's or Madame Liset's, two midwives who practised in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, at the time already one of the privileged suburbs of Paris.

For most of the young foreign physicians, their period of study spent in Paris turned out to be the start of a most promising and productive career. In 1754, for example, shortly after his return to Leyden, David van Royen was appointed professor of botany at Leyden

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Leyden on 17 August 1748), while Jan Florentius Martinet was matriculated as a student of theology at Leyden University on 11 September 1748.

<sup>4</sup> Puzos, Nicolas, *Verhandelingen over de Verloskunde, vervattende in zig veele gewigtige waarnemingen in het Beoeffenen van deeze konst*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam: Gerrit Bom, 1762-1768). [Translation of the French edition published in 1759].

<sup>5</sup> Albinus, Bernhard Siegfried, *Tabulae VII uteri mulieris gravidæ cum jam parturiret mortuæ* (Leyden: J. & H. Verbeek, 1748-1751).

<sup>6</sup> Library of the University of Amsterdam, Special Collections, UVA: UB: coll. hss. IV a 5 (3).

<sup>7</sup> Published in Vienna by Thomas Trattner.

University as the successor of his uncle, Adriaan van Royen. Having returned to their respective native countries, the majority of Levret's students focused themselves on practical obstetrics and showed a special interest in difficult deliveries, such as those in which the child's head appeared to be stuck in the mother's pelvis.

*Scientific contacts and other diversions in Paris*

Shortly after his arrival in Paris, Van Doeveren went to see Jean-Antoine Nollet (1700-1770) in order to hand over a letter of recommendation written by Petrus van Musschenbroek. Adriaan van Royen had also given Van Doeveren a letter of recommendation, addressed to René-Antoine Ferchault de Réaumur (1683-1757), a famous mathematician and physicist who at the time owned one of the most interesting collections of natural history. This collection was preserved in the Observatoire.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Van Doeveren's teacher Gaubius, a foreign member of the Académie Royale de Chirurgie facilitated his entrance in the scientific community of Paris. Eventually, Van Doeveren decided that these letters of recommendation were only of limited use to him.

The visit Van Doeveren and his friends paid to the Observatoire made an indelible impression. On 15 November 1752, they attended a meeting of the Académie Royale des Sciences. At that occasion they also met Henri-Louis Duhamel du Monceau (1700-1782), a renowned physicist, agronomist and engineer. At the occasion of one of their visits to the Hôtel-Dieu the young men were upset by seeing thousands of patients packed together in this immense building. At the *Sorbonne* they attended the defense of a thesis in theology, and at the Ecole de Médecine they witnessed a speech on the occasion of the recovery of the Dauphin, the oldest son of King Louis XV. A visit to the Hôpital des Enfants Trouvés also left a deep impression. During the visit to Réaumur, Van Doeveren was overwhelmed by the splendour of his collection of natural history and mineralogy, which in the view of all visitors was one of the most exquisite collections in all of Europe. Van Doeveren and Tak repeatedly visited the famous Bibliothèque Mazarine.

A major tourist event was witnessing His Majesty King Louis XV getting up in his bedroom, followed by his morning prayer. At another occasion, Van Doeveren and his friends attended the defence of a thesis in the Faculté de Médecine, which took six hours. They saw Jean-Joseph Süe the elder (1710-1792), demonstrator of anatomy, at the Hôpital Saint-Côme, Time and again they met Christoph Gottlieb Büttner (1708-1776), who already held a full professorship of anatomy at the University of Königsberg (East Prussia) since 1737.<sup>9</sup> In Büttner's company, they paid a visit to Bernard de Jussieu (1699-1777), a famous botanist, who worked in the 'Jardin Royal des Plantes'.

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<sup>8</sup> Réaumur was called the 'Pliny of the eighteenth century'.

<sup>9</sup> UVA: UB: HSS-mag.: IV A 92bh: Wouter van Doeveren (Philippine) to Mr. Looze (Paris): 14 July 1753. Christoph Gottlieb Büttner wrote several books on anatomy and teratology, among others *Dissertatio inauguralis de vera mali epileptici causa* (Halle, 1732), *Dissertatio de hydropis veri genuine causa proxima* (Königsberg, 1734), *Kurzer Beweis von der vermehrten Glückseligkeit eines Landes durch ein erbautes Theatrum anatomicum, wodurch zugleich die Eröffnung des neuerbauten Königsbergischen Theatri bekannt gemacht wird* (Königsberg, 1738) and *Vollständige Anweisung wie durch angestellte Besichtigungen ein verübter Kindermord auszumitteln sey, nebst 88 Obduktionszeugnissen* (Königsberg, 1771).

On 12 June 1753, Van Doeveren returned to Leyden, while his friend Tak went to London. He arrived safe and sound in the town of Philippine a few weeks later, and found his relatives in good health. That same year, on 19 October, he took his doctoral degree of medicine.<sup>10</sup>

#### *Professorship at the University of Groningen*

On 8 May 1753, Princess Anne of Hannover, widow of William IV, Prince of Orange-Nassau, the hereditary Stadthold of the United Provinces, received the list of candidates for the two vacant professorates in Medicine at Groningen University. Three names were mentioned in this document: Tiberius Lambergen, professor of medicine at the University of Franeker (Friesland), Petrus Camper (professor of philosophy and anatomy at the same university) and Doctor Swijghuizen, town physician in Groningen. However, the Princess decided otherwise. She informed the governors of the university that – besides Lambergen – she wanted Johann Georg Roederer, a young and most promising professor of medicine at the University of Göttingen, to be appointed professor of medicine.<sup>11</sup> Roederer initially accepted this appointment, but later he withdrew from his application. Therefore, the governors of Groningen University decided that next to Lambergen, a professor had to be appointed who was an expert in the field of obstetrics. They suggested to the Princess to appoint the 23-year-old Wouter van Doeveren, who at the time worked as town physician in Leyden. They felt that they were not obliged to offer him the same salary as they had offered Roederer. From the part of the correspondence preserved by the library of Leyden University, it becomes apparent that it was Van Doeveren himself who, already in August 1753, offered to fill the vacancy.<sup>12</sup> It was probably his former teacher Gaubius who encouraged him to do so; a preceding letter by Gaubius to the governors of the University of Groningen suggests as much.<sup>13</sup> In early February 1754, Van Doeveren answered them that he had received the official invitation to fill the vacancy of professor of medicine, that he felt most honoured by the fact that they had put their trust in him, and that he eagerly accepted this professorship.<sup>14</sup> He was officially appointed professor of medicine on 18 March 1754. A few months later, he expressed to his friend Jan Tak his feelings of great satisfaction about the fact that his practice had already a good run of patients. On 11 June of that same year, he delivered his inaugural address at Groningen University; in it he underlined that medical science should found itself on observations, experiments and veracity, and that all groundless hypotheses, preconceived ideas and incorrect analogies should be rejected.

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<sup>10</sup> W. van Doeveren, *Dissertatio physico-medica inauguralis de vermibus intestinalibus hominum* (Leyden: C. de Pecker, 1753).

<sup>11</sup> In 1753 Roederer had published his excellent book, *Elementa artis obstetriciae in usum praelectionum academicarum* (Göttingen: Sumptibus Bibliopolii Acad. Privilegiati). During the following decades this book ran through several editions, reprints and translations.

<sup>12</sup> Royal Library, The Hague (NL): KB 424 B 2: Wouter van Doeveren (Leyden) to the Governors of the University of Groningen (Groningen): 7 February 1754; *ibid.*, 8 February 1754.

<sup>13</sup> KB 424 B 2: Hiëronymus David Gaubius (Leyden) to Mr. Antonie Adriaan van Iddekinge (The Hague): 24 August 1753.

<sup>14</sup> Library of the University of Amsterdam: UVA: UB: HSS-mag: y 123 a: Wouter van Doeveren (Groningen) s.n., s.l., s.d., but most probably addressed to J. Tak (Middelburg, Zeeland). At the time Tak was still completing his studies of medicine at Leyden University.

Shortly after his inauguration, Van Doeveren asked the city council's permission to give a course on surgery to surgeons and assistant surgeons practising in Groningen, and he was authorized to do so. An increasing number of students and private persons attended his surgical demonstrations. However, the almost constant lack of bodies hindered the ambitious and zealous Van Doeveren. Usually these corpses were provided to him by the 'Binnen-Gasthuys', established in Amsterdam, and they would arrive in Groningen by barge.<sup>15</sup> (16) At the occasion of his accession to office, Van Doeveren delivered a lecture in which he stressed the major importance of anatomy for the practice of medicine, surgery and obstetrics. He also underlined the endless Wisdom of God Almighty, which appeared from the perfect organisation of the human body. He saw that many of his fellow scientists were still opposing the dissection of cadavers, although one should understand that only these dissections could yield an improvement in medical treatment. From 1756 onwards, Van Doeveren also gave a regular course on practical obstetrics, something which had never been done before in Groningen. In fact, there was no hospital in those days. He gave his *collegium casuale* in the form of an outpatients' clinic, like his colleague Petrus Camper was doing in Amsterdam at that time.

On 9 June 1763, Tiberius Lambergen died, after which Camper was appointed to this vacancy. The governors of the university assigned Camper to teach theoretical medicine, surgery and anatomy, the subjects Van Doeveren had taught until then. They assigned Van Doeveren to teach practical medicine, chemistry, physiology and obstetrics. Thanks to the efforts made by Van Doeveren and Camper, the Groningen University went through a heyday and the number of students of medicine increased rapidly. In August of 1763, Gaubius wrote to Van Doeveren explaining how the University of Göttingen had asked him to suggest a candidate for the succession to Johann Georg Roederer. Roederer had suddenly died and Gaubius's proposal had been to appoint Van Doeveren as his successor. Although Van Doeveren felt very honoured, he decided not to leave Groningen. Not only was he quite satisfied with his position, but he also took into account that he owed too much to the governors of Groningen University.

In 1764 the governors decided that Van Doeveren had to hand over another field of study to Camper: the teaching of practical obstetrics. A year later, Van Doeveren published the results of his researches in pathological anatomy during the last fifteen years.<sup>16</sup> Together, Van Doeveren and Camper planned to inoculate young horned cattle in order to protect these animals from rinderpest. For that reason they founded, together with several leading farmers, a society for the advancement of the inoculation of horned cattle. These activities drew a great deal of attention, especially in Paris.

As professor of medicine at the University of Groningen, Van Doeveren was also a member of the Collegium Medicum, which was responsible for the control of the abuse in pharmacies in the town of Groningen. It also examined the pharmacists and midwives, supervised the surgeons and advised the municipality. Finally, as town physician, Wouter van Doeveren

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<sup>15</sup> UVA: UB: HSS-mag: y 123 n: Wouter van Doeveren (Groningen), s.n., s.d., s.l.

<sup>16</sup> *Specimen observationum academicarum ad monstrorum historiam, anatomen, pathologiam et artem obstetriciam, praeceptantium* (Groningen: J. Bolt / Leyden, Luchtmans, 1765).

practised forensic medicine and taught midwives and those who were still studying for that position.

#### *Van Doeveren as an obstetrician*

Only shortly after his arrival in Groningen, Van Doeveren started to carry out obstetrical operations. For instance, by means of Roonhuysen's lever and Titsingh's spatula he succeeded in delivering a woman who had already been in labour for five days. The child, whose head turned out to be stuck in the pelvis, had died and its body was already decaying. Nevertheless, the woman survived the operation. The following years Van Doeveren founded a medical regime, which was completed by Matthias van Geuns, one of his most talented students. Late in 1770, shortly after he left for Leyden, Van Doeveren discussed the state of public health in the town of Groningen, and submitted several proposals for a more successful fight against the pollution of air, water and soil.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore Van Doeveren practised forensic medicine.

#### *Contemporary surgery*

In the eighteenth century, practical surgery in the Low Countries was the exclusive domain of surgeons. Medical doctors and professors of medicine confined themselves to theoretical lessons. As we have seen, Johannes Jacobus Rau (1658-1719), a German physician who taught anatomy at Leyden University, was one of the rare exceptions, along with Petrus Camper. Rau, a most skilful anatomist and surgeon, especially operated on vesical calculi. This situation – the strict division between the theoretical activities of the medical doctors and professors on the one hand and the practical domain of surgeons on the other hand – lasted until the end of the eighteenth century. The fact that so many Dutch students completed their surgical and obstetrical education in the main hospitals of Paris and London eventually put an end to this situation.

The only surgical dissertation written by Van Doeveren, which has actually been published, is entitled *Treatise on a new way of perforating the urinary bladder, as proved by experiments* (*Verhandeling over een Nieuwe manier van 't doorsteeken der Blaas, door proeven bevestigd*).<sup>18</sup> In addition to the two methods practised until then – perforating the perineum by means of a troicart and secondly opening the basis of the bladder under the pubic arch – Van Doeveren introduced a new technique in the Netherlands, which had been developed by Claude Flurant (1721-1779).<sup>19</sup> Finally, he practised various orthopaedic operations, which were always carried out with extreme precision.

#### *Contemporary physiology*

Already in 1751, his teacher Gaubius informed Van Doeveren about the phenomenon of irritability. Gaubius and Winter both lectured about the contents of the recently-published

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<sup>17</sup> *Sermo academica de Sanitatis Groninganorum praesidiis ex urbis naturali historia derivandis* (Groningen, 1770).

<sup>18</sup> *Verhandelingen van het Bataafsch Genootschap der Proefondervindelijke Wijsbegeerte*, vol. 1 (Rotterdam: Reinier Arenberg, 1774), pp. 547-574.

<sup>19</sup> Claude Flurant, Maître ès Arts, was chief surgeon in the *Hôpital de la Charité* (Lyon) and member of the Académie Royale de chirurgie (Paris).

dissertation written by Johann Georg Zimmermann (1728-1795).<sup>20</sup> Zimmermann's book discussed the experiments he had carried out in association with Albrecht von Haller (1708-1777), his professor. Van Doeveren decided to repeat these experiments, together with David van Royen and Jan Tak. It is quite possible that their decision was inspired by Winter, who had told his students that for the time being he did not want to express his final opinion on the subject.<sup>21</sup> Based on the results of their experiments, Van Doeveren and his friends decided that the dura mater and the tendons were sensitive to stimulation, although Zimmermann and Von Haller had decided otherwise. Possibly, Van Doeveren was influenced by the ideas expressed by Anton de Haen, who had studied medicine at Leyden University under Boerhaave and who had denied Von Haller's conclusions. De Haen put that the pia mater, dura mater, tendons and several other structures of the human body were indeed sensitive to stimulation.<sup>22</sup> In the autumn of 1752, while staying in Paris, Van Doeveren met Doctor Claude-François Grandclaus, who also appeared to be interested in this subject. Several years later, after having discussed this affair with his colleague Johannes David Hahn (1729-1784), a professor of medicine and botany at the University of Utrecht who adhered to Von Haller's ideas, Van Doeveren began to have doubts about the accuracy of his own experiments. New investigations proved that Von Haller was indeed right. So, after having taken notice of the critical review Von Haller had written on his experiments, Van Doeveren reopened this question in a letter to Von Haller, dated 7 December 1771, and stated that Von Haller obviously did not know that he usually did not adhere unconditionally to the ideas of his teachers.<sup>23</sup> In his view, the concepts of irritability and sensibility were essential for the science of animal physiology, and he remained committed to this subject during the rest of his scientific career.

*Professor at Leyden University; Scientific research; bedside teaching*

On 1 October 1770, Wouter van Doeveren was appointed professor of medicine at the University of Leyden. The next day, in the letter he sent to his friend David van Royen, he confirmed that he had most willingly accepted this honourable appointment and that – if necessary – he would even have accepted a lower salary than he had received in Groningen. On the other hand, he demanded that the title of *Professor Medicinae Theoreticae et Practicae* would be bestowed on him.<sup>24</sup> On 6 May 1771, Van Doeveren delivered his inaugural lecture, in which he laid out the recent evolution of the various disciplines of medical science. He underlined that, in spite of this advancement, the state of public health had not improved. He

<sup>20</sup> Zimmermann, Johann Georg, *Dissertatio physiologica de irritabilitate* (Göttingen, G.L. Schulzii, 1751); Steinke, Hubert, *Irritating Experiments. Haller's Concept and the European controversy on irritability and sensibility* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), pp. 133-135.

<sup>21</sup> Waa, G. van der, *De irritabilitate. Een onderzoek naar de betekenis van het irritabiliteitsbegrip in de geschiedenis van de achttiende-eeuwse Nederlandse fysiologie* (Rotterdam: Erasmus Publishing, 1992), especially pp. 95-98, 120, 127, 244-248.

<sup>22</sup> Haen, Antonius de, 'Zwaarigheden aangaande de stelling der Hedendaagschen van de Gevoeligheid en Beweegbaarheid van het menschelijk lichaam, de geneeskundige wereld voorgehouden door A. de Haen, Professor te Wenen', *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen* III-1 (1761), pp. 65-71.

<sup>23</sup> UVA: UB: HSS-mag: IV A 9: 2i.

<sup>24</sup> UVA: UB: HSS-mag: IV A 92e: W. van Doeveren (Groningen) to David van Royen (Leyden): Late September 1770.

put this situation down to the objectionable way of life of most of the country's inhabitants, and he attributed the high child mortality rate to the fact that most mothers, while abandoning themselves to luxury, had given their babies to wet nurses whose milk was of a quality inferior to that of the mothers. Moreover, many inhabitants suffered from diseases like smallpox, typhus, all kinds of fevers, and scurvy.

As a Leyden professor, Van Doeveren again gave a *collegium casuale* like he had done before in Groningen.<sup>25</sup> Bedside teaching, carried out after the example given by Boerhaave, was the most important part of medical instruction according to him. He kept his interest in the removal of vesical calculi by means of surgery and especially by means of the operating procedure described by Flurant. Between 1768 and 1772, he performed several of these operations.

When Friedrich Bernhard Albinus died in May 1778, Van Doeveren replaced him as rector of Leyden University. In his rectoral speech he meticulously analysed the uncertainties of contemporary medical interventions. He urged the necessity of restraint with respect to the prescription of remedies, and he emphasized that although a certain drug might act most effectively in the fight against a certain disease, it could at the same time be most dangerous in the fight against another disease. He opposed decidedly against large-scale bloodlettings, which, in many severe diseases, could cause an untimely end. He also declared himself an opponent of large-scale inoculations and preventive bloodlettings, which at the time were generally applied, especially in spring and in autumn. He also rejected the administration of drugs if there had not been any preceding careful examination of the patient.<sup>26</sup>

#### *Teratology and pathological anatomy*

Van Doeveren showed a vivid interest in teratology because he wanted to demythologize monstrosities and find a natural explication for these malformations. In his view, it was necessary to dissect these monsters and to give detailed descriptions of the results. Abraham Delfos, a skilled draughtsman and engraver who lived in Leyden and who later worked for Eduard Sandifort, made excellent engravings of these preparations. Van Doeveren held the view that there were only two possible explanations. The first one was, as Von Haller and Winslow had stated, that every monstrosity had already been determined at the moment of conception; therefore these anatomists qualified these malformations as *monstra primigenia*. The other possible explanation, which had been given by Harvey and Lancisi, was that malformations came into existence in the course of fetal development, and they introduced the term *monstra accidentalia*. In Van Doeveren's view, most monstrosities were *monstra primigenia*. They should be regarded as freaks of nature, or in other words as deviations from the beautiful and perfect Scheme of the Creator. Even a monster had an efficient organization. Van Doeveren rejected maternal imagination as a possible cause of congenital malformations. All things considered, it is quite possible that Van Doeveren was inspired by the book written on this subject by James Augustus Blondel (1666-1734). The Dutch translation of this book, *Dissertation physique sur la force de l'imagination des femmes enceintes sur le*

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<sup>25</sup> Zwaag, P. van der, *Wouter van Doeveren, medicus, 1730-1783* (Assen: Van Gorcum & Comp., 1970), p. 58.

<sup>26</sup> UVA: UB: HSS-mag: y 123 m: Wouter van Doeveren (Leyden) to Samuel de Monchy (Rotterdam): 7 December 1776. De Monchy was town physician of Rotterdam.

*fœtus*, was published in Leyden in 1737.<sup>27</sup> In it, Blondel rejected all examples of the horrible effects of maternal imagination, qualifying them as twaddle. Van Doeveren repeatedly stressed the importance of a thorough post-mortem examination in order to improve clinical understanding. He was a pioneer in the domain of pathological anatomy, and meticulously examined all established anomalies.

Félix Vicq d'Azyr, secretary of the Société Royale de Médecine (Paris), expressed this accuracy in his eulogy: 'Monsieur Van Doeveren's reputation has been made by his researches, his good judgment, correctness of ideas and proper and successful approach of unsolved topics'.<sup>28</sup>

#### *Problematic deliveries*

During his stay in Paris, Van Doeveren thoroughly investigated all aspects of normal and difficult deliveries. Under the supervision of André Levret he brought his obstetric skills into perfection. After his return to Holland, he took the view that the skills of midwives needed improvement. In those days, the jammed head was an insurmountable obstacle, even for the most experienced midwives and obstetricians. Because usually the Caesarean section ended in the death of the mother, the only possible solution through which the mother could be saved was to sacrifice the child simply by awaiting its death. Van Doeveren was strongly interested in new developments. In 1754 already he decided to modify Smellie's lever. He often preferred Smellie's forceps above the one designed and produced by Levret. Among the Dutch physicians who occupied themselves with the problem of the jammed head of the unborn child, Paulus de Wind III (1714-1771) occupied a leading position. In his book '*T geklemd hoofd geredt (The jammed head saved)*', published in 1752, De Wind gave the results of precise measurements of the female pelvis of a number of women and of the skulls of their babies.<sup>29</sup> As a professor of medicine at Leyden University, Van Doeveren was an adversary of the section of the symphysis of the pubic arch, as appears from the dissertation of Jan Petersen Michell, defended under Van Doeveren's supervision. The latter deeply distrusted the alleged advantages of this operation.<sup>30</sup>

In spite of all his efforts and zeal, the years spent in Leyden ended in a deception for Van Doeveren, among others because of his unrelenting and consistent attitude, his merciless sincerity and his veracity. In other words Van Doeveren was not very popular with his colleagues.

Meanwhile Gaubius, the celebrity of theoretical medicine and chemistry in the Netherlands in his day, had become aged and blind. Van Doeveren himself, meanwhile, was increasingly hampered by podagra. He never got over the loss of his wife, who had died in 1777. However, there were some highlights as well: in 1781, Van Doeveren succeeded

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<sup>27</sup> Blondel, J.A., *Natuurkundige Verhandeling over het vermogen der inbeelding van zwangere vrouwen op haar vrucht* (Rotterdam: Hermannus Kentlink, 1737). Translation of the French edition by Jan van der Hulst.

<sup>28</sup> See note 1, p. 189.

<sup>29</sup> Middelburg: Pieter Gillissen, 1751.

<sup>30</sup> Heiningen, T.W. van, 'La section de la symphyse pubienne et la césarienne; Analyse d'une controverse', *Histoire des Sciences Médicales*, vol. 43 (2009), pp. 249-260; Petersen Michell, Jan, *Dissertatio Academica inquirens Synchronotomiae pubis utilitatem in Partu Difficili* (Leyden: Van der Eyk & Vijgh, 1781).

Gaubius as chief physician to Prince William V, a token that the hereditary Stadholder of the United Provinces held him in high esteem.

*International recognition; scientific legacy*

Wouter van Doeveren died on 31 December 1783, by then universally recognised as an esteemed scholar and a member of countless learned societies.<sup>31</sup> As a professor of medicine, Van Doeveren was succeeded by Eduard Sandifort (1742-1814). At the price of 4.300 guilders, Leyden University acquired Van Doeveren's cabinet, which contained preparations of anatomy, teratology, pathological anatomy as well as objects belonging to the fields of paleontology and mineralogy. His anatomical collection formed the basis of a most impressive anatomical publication, *Museum Anatomicum Academiae Lugduno-Batavae*. This masterpiece was written by Sandifort. Its first volume, published in 1793, contains a eulogy dedicated to Wouter van Doeveren, founder of pathological anatomy and teratology in the Netherlands. Its last (fourth) volume was published in 1835 by Gerard Sandifort (1779-1848), Eduard Sandifort's son.<sup>32</sup> This standard work was extremely well received by the scientific community.

In his eulogy on behalf of the Société Royale de Médecine, Félix Vicq d'Azyr spoke the following words: 'He who occupies Boerhaave's chair should proceed more carefully with respect to his productions than anyone else'.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Since 1766 Van Doeveren had been a corresponding member of the Academia Caesarea Naturae Curiosorum. In 1771 he was elected member of the Batavian Society of Experimental Philosophy (Rotterdam). In 1773 he was elected member of the Society of Science of Zeeland (Flushing). In 1777 he was elected member of the Amsterdam Agricultural Society. In 1778 the Société Royale de Médecine (Paris) made him a member. In 1779 he was elected a member of the Society of Arts and Sciences (Utrecht) and of the Royal Society of Medicine (Edinburg).

<sup>32</sup> Leyde: S. et J. Luchtmans, 1793-1835. The volumes I and II were published by Eduard Sandifort (1741-1818), while the volumes III and IV were published by Gerard Sandifort (1779-1848), his son and successor as professor of anatomy at the University of Leyden; Elshout, A.M., *Het Leidsche Kabinet der Anatomie in de achttiende Eeuw: de betekenis van een wetenschappelijke collectie als cultuurhistorisch monument* (Leiden: Universitaire Pers, 1952), pp. 77-81.

<sup>33</sup> See note 1, pp. 192-193, 198-199.

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