

World after 1492 and their adoption or rejection; and, finally, their views of the three great Enlightenment stimulants: tea, coffee and chocolate. All this is covered with gusto and not a little scholarship: a wide reading of the original sources as well as of modern literature, drawn from many countries. It will surprise no-one that the doctors knew little of what they wrote. Yesterday's axiom was today's object of derision. Anyone who has suffered trying to keep up with modern dietetic opinion will sympathize. But these manuals, like the slimming schemes of today, had large sales and were widely translated. The great imponderable, however, is the degree to which any of the advice was heeded. There are moments when the influence of Galenic theory can be seen to have had real influence: the Balkan taboo against serving yoghurt with fish may be an example, two cold moist foods would be sudden death to a phlegmatic. But all too often Gentilcore records (with regret perhaps) the trimming of medical advice to the realities of the patients' appetites. In part this was due to the decline of Galenic medicine and the adoption of a chemical or mechanical view of the digestive process. This liberated the doctor, and the diner, from concerns for particular foodstuffs and allowed them to target lifestyles in general such as the perils of over-indulgence and over-complication. That a preoccupation with health is central to our approach to the table is illustrated by the emergence of the modern restaurant, the first instance of which was indeed to *restaurer* the failing bodies of its customers with nourishing broths. So perhaps the doctors are our guides after all.

Helen Caruana Galizia: *The Food and Cookery of Malta and Gozo*: Midsea Books, Malta, 2016: 288 pp., paperback, £19.50 (Amazon).

The first new edition since the last century of this work which saw the light in 1973 (in co-authorship with her sister Anne), then appeared as a Prospect Book in 1997. It has grown quite a lot, and has gathered some excellent photographs from Darrin Zammit Lupi. Pages are either blue or white. If white, they are occupied by recipes; the blue are reserved for lexical, encyclopaedic or informative items on ingredients, food customs, history, and much else besides. Helen Galizia has always been an enthusiast and it shows. Malta is really interesting as a showpiece island cuisine that may be dissected rather as naturalists and Darwinians analyse island ecologies.

Eric C. Rath: *Japan's Cuisines: Food, Place and Identity*: Reaktion Books, 2016: 280 pp., hardback, £30.

To the ignorant, Japan always seems a complex society, yet often susceptible to shorthand definition and explanation. The various styles of Japanese cuisine are defined by single words whose meanings are clearcut. The history of those cuisines also seems explicable by strong timelines and easily identifiable cause