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DOI
10.5117/JNB2023.003.DIJK

Publication date
2023

Document Version
Final published version

Published in
Jaarboek voor Nederlandse Boekgeschiedenis

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Link to publication

Citation for published version (APA):
Dijkstra, T. (2023). Boiling it Down: Chinese Tea in the First Dutch Medical Journal, 1680-1688. *Jaarboek voor Nederlandse Boekgeschiedenis*, *30*, 31-63. https://doi.org/10.5117/JNB2023.003.DIJK

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Download date:13 Nov 2026

Amsterdam University Press

JAARBOEK NEDERLANDSE BOEKGESCHIEDENIS 30 (2023) 31-63
HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.5117/JNB2023.003.DIJK

Trude Dijkstra

Boiling it Down

Chinese Tea in the First Dutch Medical Journal, 1680-1688[1]

Abstract

This article, by analysing the first medical journal published in the Dutch Republic and its discussion of tea, will consider the role of print and the importance of intermedia adaptation and editorial intervention in the early modern circulation of Chinese medical knowledge in Europe. To that end, I will analyse Steven Blankaart's *Collectanea medico-physica* (1680-1688) and address three key questions in the historiographical debate on early modern science and the dissemination of knowledge from Asia in Europe. The present study assesses, firstly, how this early medical journal illuminates the role of the editor in shaping early modern European discourses on Chinese medicine; secondly, how the materiality of this printed work influenced its possible reading; and thirdly, how the paratext affected the presentation of the *materia medica* it discussed.

Keywords: intercultural medicine; the Dutch Republic; China; history of tea; print culture

In 1710, a Dutch East India Company ship carried an unexpected traveller to Amsterdam. A Chinese doctor by the name of Zhou Meiye 周美爺 accompanied the sickly governor-general of the Dutch East Indies, Johan van Hoorn, from Batavia to Holland.[2] In Amsterdam, the doctor was received with great interest. China had held a special place in the Dutch imagination since the late sixteenth century, but the decades between 1680 and 1710 represented a high

1 I am grateful to the Niels Stensen Fellowship for their generous support, I would also like to thank the editorial board and the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments.

2 Leonard Blussé, 'Doctor at Sea. Chou Mei-Yeh's Voyage to the West (1710-1711)', in: Erika de Poorter (ed.), *As the Twig is Bent … Essays in Honour of Frits Vos*. Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1990, 7-30:14; Thijs Weststeijn, 'Just like Zhou. Chinese Visitors to the Netherlands (1597-1705) and Their Cultural Representation', in: Thijs Weststeijn (ed.), *Foreign Devils and Philosophers. Cultural Encounters Between the Chinese, the Dutch, and Other Europeans, 1590-1800*. Leiden: Brill, 2020, 104-131.

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point in this interest in the culture, religion, politics, and indeed medicine of *Zhongguo* 中國 or 'The Middle Kingdom'. The Dutch artists, cartographers, printers and publishers of this period were prolific in portraying China, and the first European considerations with some claim to accuracy of Chinese history, arts, and philosophy were written in the Netherlands.[3]

This lettered interest in China extended to Chinese medicine. The Dutchman Willem ten Rhijne was the first in Europe to write a detailed study of acupuncture in 1683,[4] and while the medicinal root known as *radix China* (various species of *Smilax*) was introduced in the early Middle Ages by Arabian merchants, knowledge about the root's medicinal properties only became available during the seventeenth century, when the Dutch made major inroads into the Iberian monopoly on overseas trade.[5] Even as numerous books, newspapers, journals, and pamphlets had taken the Middle Kingdom for their subject since the late 1500s, it was only after 1600 that Chinese products such as porcelain, lacquerware, and tea became widely available in Europe.[6] Yet few Chinese visited Europe, and Zhou Meiye's knowledge of diagnosis and medical treatments further convinced the literate elite of Holland of the merits of Asian medicine and medicinal practices such as palpation, moxibustion, and the use of *radix China*. By the time Zhou embarked upon his return voyage after staying only six weeks in Europe, he left a country that was clamouring for further information about China and its medicine – a thirst for knowledge that, much like the increasing appetite for Chinese products such as tea, continued to be primarily quenched through the intervention of European merchants and producers of texts.

3 Benjamin Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism. Geography, Globalism, and Europe's Early Modern World*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015; Thijs Weststeijn, 'The Middle Kingdom in the Low Countries. Sinology in the Seventeenth-Century Netherlands', in: J. Maat et al. (eds.), *The Making of the Humanities. From Early Modern to Modern Disciplines*, vol. 2. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012, 209-241; Willy vande Walle and Noël Golvers (eds.), *The History of the Relations Between the Low Countries and China in the Qing Era (1644-1911)*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003; Leonard Blussé and Floris-Jan van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders. Geschiedenis van de Nederlands-Chinese betrekkingen 1600-2007*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2008.

4 Willem ten Rhijne, *Dissertatio de arthritide: Mantissa schematica, de acupuntura et orationes tres*. London: Richard Chiswell, 1683; Robert W. Carrubba and John Z. Bowers, 'The Western World's First Detailed Treatise on Acupuncture. Willem Ten Rhijne's "De acupunctura",' *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 29 (1974), 371-398.

5 Anna E. Winterbottom, '"Of the China Root". A Case Study of the Early Modern Circulation of *Materia Medica*,' *Social History of Medicine* 28 (2015), 22-44.

6 Trude Dijkstra, *The Chinese Imprint. Printing and Publishing Chinese Religion and Philosophy in the Dutch Republic, 1595-1700*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2022.

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This article, by analysing the first medical journal published in the Dutch Republic and its discussion of tea, will consider the role of print and the importance of intermedia adaptation and editorial intervention in the early modern circulation of Chinese medical knowledge in Europe. To that end, I will analyse Steven Blankaart's *Collectanea medico-physica* (1680-1688) and address three key questions in the historiographical debate on early modern science and the dissemination of knowledge in print from Asia in Europe. The present study assesses, firstly, how this earliest medical journal illuminates the role of the editor in shaping early modern European discourses on Chinese medicine; secondly, how the materiality of this printed work influenced its possible reading; and thirdly, how the paratext affected the presentation of the *materia medica* it discussed.

I will argue that through this journal, its editor Steven Blankaart, who was himself a physician, facilitated and amplified the European discourse on tea.[7] He did this by translating, reordering, summarizing and reframing information from his sources, which belonged to a category of publication that was largely inaccessible to the wider early modern audience. Through this intervention, Blankaart not only reduced the actual (financial) costs of the information, but he also removed traditional barriers of language, education, and social class, thereby offering the population beyond privileged intellectual and financial elites the opportunity to acquire (medical) knowledge.

This dissemination of information was facilitated by the expansion of available forms of print which occurred in this same period. *Collectanea medico-physica* opened up the discussion of Chinese medicine to a broader public of curious readers, who through de journal were kept up-to-date with the latest publications in their area of interest, among which current knowledge on newly introduced colonial products. In fact, Blankaart's journal granted his readers access to this information even before the boom of these products as consumer goods.

7 Also compare the 'vernacularisation of knowledge': Sheldon Pollock, 'Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History', in: *Public History* 12 (2000) 3, 591-625; Päivi Pahta and Irma Taavitsainen, 'Vernacularisation of Scientific and Medical Writing in its Sociohistorical Context', in: Päivi Pahta and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.), *Medical and Scientific Writing in Late Medieval English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004; 'the knowledge economic' and the related 'knowledge commons': Joel Mokyr, *The Gift of Athena. Historical Origins of the Knowledge Economy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005; Joel Mokyr, 'The Commons of Knowledge. A Historical Perspective', in: Emily Chamlee-Wright and Jennifer Kodl (eds.), *Annual Proceedings of the Wealth and Well-Being of Nations*, vol. IV: Self-Governance, Polycentrism, and the Social Order. Beloit: Beloit College Press, 2012, 29-44; Katherine J. Strandburg et al. (eds.), *Governing Medical Knowledge Commons*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

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Early modern cultural encounters between the Chinese and Dutch

Since Europe was first introduced to Chinese medicine at the end of the sixteenth century, the demand for practices and products like herbal medicine, acupuncture, and palpation have only grown in popularity and demand.[8] The roots of this western fascination with Chinese medicine are in part found in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, facilitated and stimulated by (cultural) entrepreneurial motivations. This is not a new thesis. In his 2007 book *Matters of exchange*, Harold Cook argued that Dutch commerce served as the impetus for the rise of modern medical sciences.[9] Cook relates how Asian medical practices and instruments, too, were tried, adopted, and described, not only by men of science but by many who were engaged in commerce and consumer goods. Those involved in the collection, documenting, and dissemination of medical goods from China counted among them artisans, shopkeepers, and traders. Cook and others have pointed out how this open and democratic accumulation and exchange of knowledge changed the kinds of knowledge that were produced in early modern Europe.[10]

If the process of discovery and the collection of intercultural medical information were not limited to a small circle of intellectuals and scholars, however, we should also take into account the people who were in charge of the formation of these representations; most importantly, the producers of the printed works that contained this new medical information.[11] To be sure,

8 Harold J. Cook, 'Introduction: Translating Chinese Medical Ways in the Early Modern Period', in: Harold J. Cook (ed.), *Translation at Work. Chinese Medicine in the First Global Age*. Leiden and Boston: Brill Rodopi, 2020, 1-22.

9 Harold J. Cook, *Matters of Exchange. Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007; On the connection of capitalism, empire, and (medical) sciences also see: Zachary Dorner, *Merchants of Medicines. The Commerce and Coercion of Health in Britain's Long Eighteenth Century*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2020; Katrina Maydom, 'New World Drugs in England's Early Empire', PhD-thesis Cambridge University 2019; Katherine Paugh, *The Politics of Reproduction, Race, Medicine, and Fertility in the Age of Abolition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017; Harold J. Cook, 'Moving About and Finding Things Out: Economies and Science in the Period of the Scientific Revolution', in: *Osiris* 27 (2012), 101-132; Iris Bruijn, *Ship's Surgeons of the Dutch East India Company. Commerce and the Progress of Medicine in the Eighteenth Century*. Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2009.

10 Deborah Harkness, *The Jewel House. Elizabethan London and the Scientific Revolution*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008; John Brewer and Roy Porter, *Consumption and the World of Goods*. Oxon: Routledge, 1993; Dorner, *Merchants of Medicine*, introduction.

11 Jeroen Salman, 'The Battle of Medical Books. Publishing Strategies and the Medical Market in the Dutch Republic (1650–1750)', in: Daniel Bellingradt et al. (eds.), *Books in Motion in Early Modern Europe. Beyond Production, Circulation and Consumption*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, 168-192;

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merchants facilitated scientific progress in the Dutch Republic by introducing new (medicinal) products to the European consumers. By that same token, however, Dutch book producers and their printed texts served as an impetus for the European consumption of Chinese products and medical practices by transferring and broadcasting knowledge of these products and practices to the growing literate audience. After all, the seventeenth century not only saw the first uninterrupted cultural encounter between China and Europe, it also marked a defining moment in the history of print. By the late seventeenth century, the Dutch Republic had become the undisputed 'bookshop of the world', through which the producers of print not only reshaped the early modern world of books, but that of the transfer and democratization of knowledge as well.[12]

Moreover, societal developments and economic growth created an increasing number of potential buyers of medicine *and* printed works. As scholars were willing to explore a Sinophilia that moved beyond accepted European opinions, so the improved economic conditions after 1600 led to the emergence of a larger number of people with a disposable income; money that they could spend on books, porcelain, or tea. The sale of printed works was further stimulated by the relatively high rate of literacy among the Dutch: roughly 60 per cent of men, and 40 per cent of women could read.[13] Meanwhile, the quality of Dutch printing was highly esteemed, and the whole of Europe purchased books from shops in Amsterdam, Leiden, and The Hague. Dutch publishers and booksellers thereby performed a 'pivotal function as intermediary in the international exchange of news and information'.[14]

The Dutch provided an infrastructure that, in facilitating the transportation of products between China and Europe, also expedited the transmission of (medical) ideas. On the one hand, this stimulated Asiatic trade; on the other, it fed the intellectual and scientific impact of intercultural contacts with the

Elizabeth Lane Furdell, *Publishing and Medicine in Early Modern England*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002; Marta Hanson and Gianna Pomata, 'Medicinal Formulas and Experiential Knowledge in the Seventeenth-Century Epistemic Exchange between China and Europe', in: *Isis* 1 (2017) 108, 1-35.

12 Recently, Andrew Pettegree and Arthur der Weduwen put forth that before the end of the century 350.000 separate editions were printed: Andrew Pettegree and Arthur der Weduwen, *The Bookshop of the World. Making and Trading Books in the Dutch Golden Age*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2019.

13 Carlo M. Cipolla, *Literacy and Development in the West*. London: Penguin Books, 1969.

14 Pettegree and der Weduwen, *The Bookshop of the World*; Hoftijzer, 'The Dutch Republic'.

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Middle Kingdom.[15] And while in the seventeenth century, the ancient Greek physician Hippocrates still reigned supreme in Europe, scholars increasingly began to question the overarching dominance of the ancient texts.[16] Over the course of the scientific revolution, the quarrel between 'the ancients and the moderns' also proved receptive to foreign elements in the form of Chinese and Japanese medical practices.[17] Employees of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in Asia *and* scholars in Europe began appealing to other means of gaining knowledge that could be tested and accepted by European readers; knowledge that was subsequently circulated and democratized through such newly established genres as the learned journal.

The rise of the learned journal

The newly emerging genre of the learned journal demonstrates how Western Europe became increasingly occupied with China in the seventeenth century. These journals brough the Middle Kingdom to the fore as an intellectual phenomenon because they focused on the scientific and philosophical consequences of European encounters with China.[18] The learned journal originated in the 1680s. Its relative low cost — a journal like *Collectanea medico-physica* would probably have cost between 15 and 20 *stuivers* — together with its accessible format, made the learned journal an agent of change, broadly disseminating the intellectual efforts of the Enlightenment that had hitherto been relatively opaque.[19] Before their emergence, news about scholarship and science was primarily available either through personal correspondences of the intellectual elite or through relatively expensive books. In comparison, the new journals made the intellectual debate 'public' by publishing letters that described research results or new observations, while also providing summaries of the latest scholarly publications. Perhaps just as important, the journals functioned as intellectual equalizers, meaning that they allowed readers to share in the

15 Weststeijn, 'The Middle Kingdom in the Low Countries', 209-242; Willemijn van Noord, 'Between Script and Ornament. Delftware Decorated with Pseudo-Chinese Characters', in: *Journal of Design History* 34 (2021), 1-20.

16 Harold J. Cook, 'The History of Medicine and the Scientific Revolution', in: *Isis* 102 (2011), 102-107.

17 Eun Kyung Min, 'China Between the Ancients and the Moderns', in: *The Eighteenth Century* 45 (2004), 115-129.

18 Thomas Broman, 'Criticism and Circulation of News. The Scholarly Press in the Late Seventeenth Century', *History of Science* 51 (2013), 1-26.

19 Hans Bots and Sophie Levie, *Periodieken en hun kringen. Een verkenning van tijdschriften en netwerken in de laatste drie eeuwen*. Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2006.

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labours of the scholarly community without personal referral or a letter of introduction.

Therefore, knowledge that had long been the prerogative of a small circle of intellectual correspondences was, for the first time, made public. For, while the intellectual Republic of Letters may have transcended many boundaries, the United Provinces performed a particularly valuable service to European scholarship by facilitating a *free* trade in the circulation of knowledge.[20] This became such a Dutch trademark that the editor of the journal *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* (1686-93) even believed that he would surpass his rivals by the simple fact that he worked in Amsterdam, 'as we find ourselves in a country of freedom'.[21] As such, Dutch publishers and booksellers performed a pivotal function as intermediaries in the international exchange of news and information.

The first Dutch medical journal, titled *Collectanea medico-physica* (hereafter *CMP*), was edited by the Amsterdam chemist and physician Steven Blankaart (1650-1704).[22] Today, Blankaart is mainly known for his development of the injection technique and the discovery of the capillary system, as well as for authoring the first Dutch book on child medicine. He followed the principles established by René Descartes and was one of the first physicians to follow the empirical method.[23] His journal was published in three issues, covering the years between 1680 and 1688. The notices on health and medicine in the pages of this journal are interspersed with letters that were sent to the editor Blankaart by his correspondents. The journal also included 'extracts' from other journals and books, as well as recipes for medicine. When one was plagued by gout, for instance, *CMP* notes that a grain of white poppy together with white wine should be squeezed through a cloth, after which nut-oil, juice from a species of Norway spruce, white wax, palm oil, and a number of other ingredients should be applied with a plaster.[24] If one was bitten by a tarantula, playing a certain song – reproduced for the benefit of *CMP's* readers – would

20 Hans Bots, *De Republiek der Letteren. De Europese intellectuele wereld, 1500-1760*. Nijmegen: Uitgeverij Vantilt, 2018.

21 'Comme on se trouve en un pais de liberté', *Bibliothèque universelle et historique*, January 1686, 3.

22 Steven Blankaart, *Collectanea medico-physica, oft Hollands jaar-register der genees- en natuurkundige aanmerkingen*, 3 vol. Amsterdam: Jan Claesz ten Hoorn, 1680-1683; hereafter *CMP*.

23 Steven Blankaart, *De Kartesiaanse academie ofte institutie der medicyne*. Amsterdam: Jan Claesz ten Hoorn, 1683.

24 *CMP* I, 53.

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COLLECTANEA
MEDICO-PHYSICA,
Oft
Hollands Jaar-Regiſter
Der Genees- en Natuur-kundige Aanmerkingen van gantſch Europa &c.
Beginnende met het Jaar,
M D C LXXX.

Door eigen ondervinding en gemeen-making van verſcheide Heeren en Liefhebbers.

By een verſamelt
DOOR
STEPH. BLANKAART,
Med. Doct. en Praktizyn tot Amſterdam.

t'AMSTERDAM,
By JOHAN ten HOORN, Boekverkooper over het Oude Heeren Logement. 1680.

Figure 1. Title page of Steven Blankaart, *Collectanea Medico-Physica Collectanea medico-physica, oft Hollands jaar-register der genees- en natuur-kundige aanmerkingen*, vol. III. Amsterdam: Jan Claesz ten Hoorn, 1680-88. Allard Pierson Amsterdam UB: 649 G 21

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cure the patient suffering from the associated hysterical condition known as 'tarantism'.[25] [FIGURE 2]

One of the central aims of journals like *CMP* was to present readers with regular updates on intellectual debates. The intended audience consisted mainly of academic scholars, but also of less specialized yet nevertheless interested and educated general readers.[26] Indeed, copies of the *CMP* are found in the book sales catalogues of a Leiden doctor of medicine; the son of an Amsterdam *burgermeester*; a Groningen professor of law; and a Frisian delegate to the Admiralty in Amsterdam.[27] The relative affordability allowed these readers to gather knowledge, both about a large number of books that they otherwise had to have bought individually, and about products and practices which could not yet be acquired in Europe at the time.

The content of these early modern journals was mainly the responsibility of the editor, who performed the tasks of collecting, assembling, and editing news and reviews. The editorial process consisted of sorting papers to accept and reject, which was not only a responsible task, but also a difficult one. In 1722, Albert von Haller of the *Göttigsche Gelehrte Zeitung* wrote that the editor must be a master of many subjects, understand many languages, and be versed in many sciences.[28] Thus, it was the editor who tended to select what the audience read, primarily because most journals were an individual enterprise. And yet, Steven Blankaart specifically aimed at his colleagues in the preface to the second volume of the *CMP*, addressing 'the illustrious, curious, and diligent gentlemen, editors of the *Ephemerides* in Germany, the *Journal des Sçavans* in France, and the *Acta Philosophica* in England', calling on them to share their medical findings. In doing so, Blankaart demonstrated

25 *CMP* III, 343-345.

26 Hans Bots (ed.), *Henri Basnage de Beauval en de* Histoire des ouvrages des savants*, 1687-1709. Verkenningen binnen de Republiek der Letteren aan de vooravond van de Verlichting*. Amsterdam: Holland Universiteits Pers, 1976. As related by Hans Bots, the price of early modern learned journals is difficult to gauge yet a journal of the size of *CMP* would probably have cost between 15 and 20 *stuivers*, which is roughly the wage a skilled worker would have made in a day: Hans Bots, *De "Bibliothèque Universelle et Historique" (1686-1693). Een periodiek als trefpunt van geletterd Europa*. Amsterdam: Holland University Pers, 1981, 123.

27 Catalogus exquisitissimorum & rarissimorum librorum [...] Accedit Pauli Hermanni P.M. Herbarius vivus. Leiden: Pieter van der Aa, 1705; Bibliotheca Nicolaiana, In duas partes divisa; quarum prima libros continet, altera numismatum ac operis prisci thesaurum. Amsterdam: Janssonius van Waesberge, 1698; Bibliotheca Oizeliana. Leiden: Jacobus Hackius, 1687; Catalogus rarissimorum [...] librorum. Leiden: Pieter van der Aa, 1692, many thanks to Arthur der Weduwen and Andrew Pettegree for providing me with this information.

28 Albrecht von Haller, *Sammlung kleines Hallischen Schriften*. Berg: E. Haller, 1772, 121.

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Figure 2. 'This music below was played to heal one who was bitten by a tarantula', Steven Blankaart, *Collectanea medico-physica, oft Hollands jaar-register der genees- en natuur-kundige aanmerkingen*, vol. III. Amsterdam: Jan Claesz ten Hoorn, 1680-88. Allard Pierson Amsteram UB: 649 G 21

not only that the learned journal had become an established genre in Western Europe, but also that cooperation was necessary for a successful discussion of medical knowledge.[29]

Chinese medicine in early modern Europe

Steven Blankaart's *CMP* consists of hundreds of so-called '*observatio*s', many of which concern the non-European world.[30] For example, volume I summarises a

29 *CMP* I, *2.

30 Margaret D. Garber, 'Domesticating Moxa. The Reception of Moxibustion in a Late Seventeenth-Century German Medical Journal', in: Harold Cook (ed.), *Translation at Work. Chinese Medicine in the First Global Age*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2020, 134-156. On *observationes* as genre see: Gianna Pomata, 'Observation Rising. Birth of an Epistemic Genre, 1500-1650', in: Lorraine Daston and Elizabeth Lunbeck (ed.), *Histories of Scientific Observation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011,

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letter sent by 'a certain curious person' detailing 'some observations, concerning the wonderous swarms of bloodless little animals, and their harmfulness' that could be found in North America.[31] The same issue of *CMP* relates how Brazilian *quakzalvers* (quacks) heal people by rubbing them with ointment.[32] Observation 42 in volume II describes how Septalius (director of the Academy of Fine Arts, Manfredo Settala) in Milan purportedly found a way to make porcelain.[33] While this statement was not true, as porcelain could only be made in Europe after 1710,[34] it provided Steven Blankaart with the opportunity to relate how porcelain is produced in China. This reveals how the subject matter of his journal was not confined to medical interests alone.

In the third volume of *CMP*, Blankaart included a rather lengthy reflection on Chinese medicine. As demonstrated by Linda Barnes, early modern descriptions of Chinese medicine were shaped by European self-perceptions and cultural frameworks as much as by any Chinese realities.[35] Western assumptions predetermined the understanding and interpretation of China and its medicine. Indeed, what was reported should be considered in a broad context of trade and exploration, religion, and natural philosophy, in which the printed works and the actors involved in their production should be placed at the centre. As noted, the primary function of learned journals was to summarize information from other sources, in which the editor fulfilled the role of gatekeeper-cum-curator. By deciding what was included, what was not, and in what order the materials were presented, the editor effectively shaped and framed the information his journal presented to the reading audience.

And in the case of *CMP*, this information related to medicine – including Chinese medicine. Blankaart began by stating that the precepts of Chinese medicine differ little from that of Europe, 'yet it surpasses [ours] by far in its undertaking'.[36] As the first person to prove the existence of the capil-

45-80; Gianna Pomata, 'The Medical Case Narrative in Pre-Modern Europe and China. Comparative History of an Epistemic Genre', in: Carlo Ginzburg and Lucio Biasiori (ed.), *A Historical Approach to Casuistry. Norms and Exceptions in a Comparative Perspective*. London: Bloomsbury, 2018, 15-46.

31 *CMP* I, 4.

32 Note that the word 'kwakzalver' – from which comes the English 'quack' – consists of the part 'zalver' which means someone who anoints, and which already had negative connotations since the sixteenth century.

33 *CMP* I, 27.

34 Suzanna L. Marchard, *Porcelain. A History from the Heart of Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020.

35 Linda L. Barnes, *Needles, Herbs, Gods, and Ghosts. China, Healing, and the West to 1848*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005.

36 *CMP* III, 286.

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lary system, it comes as no surprise that Blankaart subsequently praised the Chinese practice of pulse examination: 'Het kloppen van de slag-ader of de pols, ondersoeken en voelen ze [...] en soo ervaren synse uit de kennis van 't bewegen des slag-aders, datse by wylen ook door desselfs beweging, de sweeren, die inwendig in 't lighaam verborgen zyn, konnen ontdekken'.[37] Chinese palpation was clearly of great interest to early modern Europeans. While aboard the ship that took him to Europe in 1710, the abovementioned Zhou Meiye taught Joan van Hoorn's wife the basic principles of 'the pulse'.[38] In Holland, Zhou and van Hoorn visited Amsterdam *burgomaster* Nicolas Witsen, who asked for a demonstration of this Chinese diagnostic method. Zhou obliged, palpating the *burgomaster*'s wrist in complete silence. Without asking any questions Zhou declared his opinion on the state of Witsen's health. He also sketched a diagram of a hand and wrist, marking the places where the pulse should be felt according to Chinese medical tradition.[39]

Blankaart went on to note how the Chinese use herbs, roots and 'similar crops' in their healing practices. As such, he declared, the whole of Chinese medicine consists almost entirely of their knowledge of herbalism. Blankaart's focus on herbalism is not unexpected. A number of scholars have recently noted how Spanish, Portuguese, English, and Dutch travelers and merchants looked for medicinal plants abroad.[40] This search complemented the pursuit of spices. And both added to the European pharmacopeia of the sixteenth- and seventeenth centuries. Harold Cook has noted how 'the more materialistic a medical practice, the more easily it crossed cultural boundaries'.[41] Only from the mid 1680s onwards were Europeans introduced to Chinese medical practices

37 'they examine and feel the beating of the artery of the pulse, and they have such experience in this that they can sense ulcers hidden deep inside the body', *CMP* III, 286.

38 Blussé, 'Doctor at sea', 7-30; Shigehisa Kuriyama, *The Expressiveness of the Body and the Divergence of Greek and Chinese Medicine*. New York: Zone Books, 1999. Also see Louis-Augustin Aleman, *Les secrets de la medecine des Chinois, consistant en la parfaite connoissance du pouls*. Grenoble: Philippes Charuys, 1671; [Michał Boym], *Clavis Medica ad Chinarum Doctrinam De Pulsibus*. Nuremberg: s.n., 1686.

39 Letter of Nicolas Witsen to Gisbert Cuper, 5 December 1710 and 12 October 1712: Royal Library The Hague, MS 72 C 32.

40 Kevin O'Rourke and Jeffrey Williamson, 'After Columbus. Explaining Europe's Overseas Trade Boom, 1500-1800', *The Journal of Economic History* 62 (2002) no. 2, 417-456; Ronald Findley and Kevin O'Rourke, *Power and Plenty. Trade, War, and the World Economy in the Second Millennium*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007; Winterbottom, 'Of the China root'.

41 Harold J. Cook, 'Conveying Chinese Medicine to Seventeenth-Century Europe', in: Feza Günergun and Dhruv Raina (ed.), *Science Between Europe and Asia*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2011, 209-232; Harold J. Cook, 'Moving About and Finding Things Out. Economies and Sciences in the Period of the Scientific Revolution', *Osiris* 27 (2012), no. 1, 101-132.

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such as acupuncture and moxibustion, though not through Chinese doctors such as Zhou Meiye, but through the written works of European physicians like Willem ten Rhijne, Andreas Cleyer, and Herman Busschoff. These practices would provide fertile grounds in the late seventeenth century European polemic concerning the superiority of either ancient or modern learning. However, Steven Blankaart and others also remained concerned with the pragmatic quest for efficacious treatments, in which they partly looked to Chinese herbalism and botany.

Finally, Blankaart discussed the education of Chinese medical practitioners. Since Chinese medicine is based primarily on herbalism, 'in gansch China is ook geen openbare of gemeene schole daar in de artseni geleert wert'. Such schools are only to be found in the respective northern and southern capitals of Beijing and Nanjing, but scholarly degrees are bestowed 'byna zonder onderscheid aan yder'. As such, the profession of medical doctor is held in low esteem in China, since 'weshalve wil zig nyna niemant op de kunsten uit leggen, dan die arm van middelen, of dom van hersenen is, en hier door van het leeren van hooger wetenschappen afgeschrift wort. Dit is d'oorsaak dat d'arzen in China byna niet met allen geagt werden'.[42] Blankaart provided no explanation for this low appraisal of medical professionals in China, except that people sooner try to 'excel in the moral arts'. What exactly these moral arts are remains unclear, as the following *observatio* (XCIV) goes on to discuss the wholly unrelated 'branched stone in the kidneys'.

These remarks on the state of medical education in China can only be properly understood when we consider Blankaart's learned journal as part of the wider textual tradition of his time. And this is where his position as gatekeeper, and gateway, of contemporary knowledge becomes clear. For that, we have to consider the source for his observation on the Chinese medical profession; namely, Johan Nieuhof's *Het gezantschap der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie* of 1665.[43] Johan Nieuhof (1618-1672) had accompanied the second Dutch embassy to Beijing in 1655-1657, during which he was appointed to illustrate 'Chinese cities, villages, government, sciences, crafts, morals, religions, buildings, costumes, ships, mountains, plants, animals etc.'[44] Back in the Dutch Republic, he entrusted his notes and drawings to his brother Hendrik

42 'in the whole of China there is no public or communal school where medicine is taught', 'with almost no distinction', *CMP* III, 286; 'Almost nobody commits to this art, except those who have few resources or have little in the way of brains', *CMP* III, 287.

43 Johan Nieuhof, *Het gezantschap der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie, aan den grooten Tartarischen Cham, den tegenwoordigen keizer van China*. Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1665.

44 Titel page, Nieuhof, *Het gezantschap*.

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Nieuhof and to the publisher Jacob van Meurs, who, together, produced one of the more magnificent examples of early modern travelogues. Published in folio and in two volumes, the book contained 149 engravings. After the first edition in Dutch, French, German, English, and Latin translations would soon appear. The book remained an important European source on China in the late seventeenth century, and Blankaart did, in fact, mention Nieuhof by name in a later *observatio*.

He did not, however, simply copy Nieuhof's work; as it behooves a good editor, he curated the information in a way that he deemed appropriate for his readers. While Blankaart finishes his observation on Chinese medical education with the succinct remark that it is not held in very high esteem in China, Nieuhof had provided more context. His exposition on Chinese medicine is followed by a lengthy summary of the Chinese system of imperial examinations (*keju* 科舉). Nieuhof writes that this system of selecting candidates for the state bureaucracy became dominant from the middle of the Tang dynasty 唐 (618-690, 705-907) onwards. Government officials were selected on merit rather than birth, based on a system of written examinations. Divided into a (roughly) three-tiered scale, the highest degree *jinshi* 進士 granted successful candidates access – with the corresponding status and financial rewards – to the highest offices at the imperial palace.[45] As such, it is not surprising that people with the necessary resources would dedicate themselves to what Nieuhof refers to as 'moral studies' rather than enter into a medical education.

This is in no way clear from Blankaart's description of Chinese medicine, however, even though it follows parts of Nieuhof's description on this subject almost verbatim. Again, as editor, Blankaart chose which elements to include and which to exclude from the wealth of information on China he had at his disposal in the books of the late seventeenth-century Dutch Republic. But in the process of editing, bits (or chunks) of information were removed from their original context, and this process influenced his readers' understanding of China. Considering that learned journals were generally more accessible to the broader public than the expensive travelogues on which Blankaart based his descriptions, one could argue that editors such as Blankaart distorted ordinary people's perception of Chinese medicine. On the other hand, one could equally wonder whether these journal editors, by merging and boiling down a wide selection of texts that were largely inaccessible to their readers,

45 Benjamin A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000.

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Figure 3. Illustration of a tea bush, Johan Nieuhof, *Het gezantschap der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie, aan den grooten Tartarischen Cham, den tegenwoordigen keizer van China*. Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1665. Allard Pierson Amsterdam UB: 249 B 3

were not empowering those same readers, precisely because they made the information easier to digest. Indeed, Blankaart's misrepresentation of the Chinese system of medical education was not the only incidence in which his editorial interference influenced his presentation of Chinese medicine. Pages 226 to 238 of the third volume of *CMP* concern the introduction of Chinese tea in Europe; an encounter which proved to have tremendous and long-lasting implications for both regions involved. And in that case, Blankaart's curating efforts had a tangible connection to changes in consumer patterns.

Tea from China

The first ship known to have brought tea to Europe was probably a Dutch one, arriving around 1610 from Macau.[46] Tea was initially imported as an exotic medicine, then promoted as a safe alternative to gin or *jenever*, and finally

46 George van Driem, *The Tale of Tea. A Comprehensive History of Tea from Prehistoric Times to the Present Day*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019, 288; Beatrice Hoheneggen, *Liquid Jade. The Story of Tea from East to West.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006.

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marketed as a mass consumer product.[47] Originating in China, where it was thought to have medicinal properties, the history of tea is closely entwined with the history of botany and herbal medicine.[48] Tea came to Europe during what has been called the 'First Global Era' (c. 1450- c. 1750). Through their interactions with local people, the European merchants, missionaries, and medical professionals of this period came across many plants that had been unknown to them, which they collected and imported for medical use or general consumption.[49] It should be emphasised that it was the Asian interlocutors that were essential in these cultural encounters. They were the ones, after all, who provided the information that would later find its way into Dutch printed works.[50]

And so, following local Chinese traditions, when tea was first introduced to Europe, it was advertised as medicine.[51] Newspapers like *Oprechte Haerlemsche Courant* ran advertisements for the sale of Chinese tea in Haarlem by the broker Herman van Pamburg on 17 April 1685. According to the *Amsterdamse Courant*, tea could be bought at Mr. Guart's in The Hague on 2 April 1689. How people could or should *use* tea remains unclear from these newspapers, however. For that information, one had to turn to books or journals. Indeed, in 1678, various newspapers ran announcements for books by the famous Dutch physician Cornelis Bontekoe.[52] He was undoubtedly one of the most outspoken proponents of the use of tea, and his tireless promotion of the medicinal properties of tea even earned him the nickname 'tea doctor'. In his *Tractaat van het excellenste kruyd thee*, Bontekoe described the medicinal properties of drinking tea and it is immediately apparent from the chapter titles that he thought that every part of the human body would benefit from tea. Tea is said to be especially beneficial for the mouth and throat, stomach, gut, the blood, brain, eyes and

47 Yong Liu, *The Dutch East India Company's Tea Trade with China, 1757-1781*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007.

48 James A. Benn, *Tea in China. A Religious and Cultural History*. Hong Kong: Hong Kon University Press, 2015; He Bian, *Know Your Remedies. Pharmacy & Culture in Early Modern China*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020.

49 *The Historical Journal: Special issue* 'Intoxicants and early modern European globalization' (2022).

50 Marta Hanson and Gianna Pomata, 'Travels of a Chinese Pulse Treatise. The Latin and French Translations of the *Tuzhu maijue bianzhen* 圖註脈訣辨真 (1650s-1730s)', in: Harold Cook (ed.), *Translation at Work. Chinese Medicine in the First Global Age*. Leiden and Boston: Brill Rodopi, 2020, 23-57.

51 Van Driem, *The Tale of Tea*, 290-367.

52 Cornelis Bontekoe, *Tractaat van het excellentste kruyd thee*. 's-Gravenhage: Pieter Hagen, 1678.

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ears, chest intestines, kidneys and bladder. The benefits of tea are endless: it gives you white teeth, it drives away 'the winds' and it helps against fevers.

Hundreds of books containing information on China were published in the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century.[53] Again, knowledge of Chinese medicine (tea included) was first introduced by missionaries, merchants, and medical practitioners who had travelled to Asia. One of the earliest descriptions is found in the Jesuit missionary Giovanni Pietro Maffei's *Historiarum Indicarum* of 1587.[54] Later writings on China by Jesuits such as Matteo Ricci, Nicolas Trigault, Martino Martini, Alvaro Semeda, Louis le Comte, and Jean-Baptiste du Halde would continue to include descriptions of tea. These reports should be considered in light of the Jesuit effort to propagate the Christian faith in China. And this involved drumming up support in Europe from the general public as well as from religious authorities.

Of course, the religiously motivated Jesuits were not the only early modern Europeans to travel to China. As the Jesuits saw opportunities for conversion, so European traders explored the commercial possibilities of cultural encounters with the Chinese.[55] In 1513, the Portuguese explorer Jorge Álvares was the first European to instigate interactions with China by sea. In the centuries that followed, those in pursuit of commerce continued to arrive on the shores of Ming- and Qing-dynasty China.[56] The VOC first brought tea to the Dutch Republic in 1610, and from there to France in 1636. It was also the Dutch that first transported tea across the Channel to England in 1645. Indeed, in 1671, Frenchman Philipe Sylvestre Dufour would note in his book on coffee, tea, and chocolate that 'it is those from Holland that brought us [tea] through their commerce in Japan and China'.[57] As recently noted by the historian Yong Liu: 'Notwithstanding the fact that the VOC traded with China for tea, porcelain, raw silk, textiles, China root and galingale, rhubarb, star anis, spelter and so

53 Dijkstra, *The Chinese imprint*; Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism*.

54 Giovanni Pietro Maffei, *Historiarum Indicarum libri XVI. selectarum*. Lyon: Jean Baptiste Regnault, 1587.

55 Wouter Ryckbosch, 'From Spice to Tea. On Consumer Choice and the Justification of Value in the Early Modern Low Countries', *Past & Present* 242 (2019), 37-78.

56 J. M. Braga, *China Landfall. Jorge Alvares' Voyage to China. A Compilation of Some Relevant Materials*. Hong Kong: K. Weiss, 1956, 10; J.E. Wills, 'Maritime Europe and the Ming', in: John E. Wills (ed.), *China and Maritime Europe, 1500-1800: Trade, Settlement, Diplomacy, and Missions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 25; Donald F. Lach and Edwin van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, 4 vol. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1965-1993.

57 'Ce sont les Holandois qui nous l'ont aporté leur commerce dans le Japon & dans la China', Philippe Sylvestre Dufour, *De l'usage du caphé, du thé et du chocolate*. Lyon: Jean Girin & Barthelemey Riviere, 1671, 56.

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on, the tea trade alone occupied by far the most important proportion of the VOC's China trade'.[58]

Aside from these commercialized products and religiously laden texts, however, another kind of information about Chinese medicine came to Europe; namely, through the writings of medical professionals working in Asia. Physicians such as Willem ten Rhijne, Andreas Cleyer, and Jacobus Bontius travelled from Europe to Asia, where they learned first-hand about the potential of new and exotic medicine from local interlocutors. While their interest primarily lied in medical practices rather than in *materia medica*, the information they brought back (either personally or through their written correspondences) further stimulated the western interest in Chinese botanicals generally, and tea specifically. That said, these medical interests were not entirely separate from commercial interests, as demonstrated by Harold Cook, some physicians also made their fortune by speculating on the medicinal capacities of tea, which made it a staple in the Asiatic trade.[59]

Tea in Blankaart's *Collectanea medico-physica*

In keeping with his role as gateway to the learned knowledge that was current in his day, Steven Blankaart accommodated the growing interest in tea among the European reading public by presenting, in the third volume of his journal, 'some descriptions of tea and coffee, from various authors collected, *that admirers of these drinks may read in order to gather wat is being said about them*' (my emphasis). He went on to summarise the books from various authors. In the pages of his *CMP*, Blankaart is often explicit about where he gets his information from. And in this case, his summary is principally true to his source material, as the focus of his descriptions of tea is both cultural and medical, with an emphasis on the healing properties of tea.

This is not to say that he did not alter the information, however. As with the description of the Chinese scholarly system, Blankaart seems to have boiled his descriptions of tea down to such a degree as he thought would benefit his particular branch of readers. The first description of tea he cites comes from the Dutch surgeon, *burgomaster* of Amsterdam, and subject of Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicholaes Tulp*; namely, Nicolaes Tulp (1593-1674). The 60th chapter of Tulp's *Observationes Medicae* (a book that was printed in

58 Liu, *The Dutch Tea Trade with China*, 2.
59 Cook, *Matters of Exchange*.

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1641) discusses 'Herba Theé' within the context of its medicinal properties.[60] When comparing this original description with *CMP*'s adaptation, it is immediately apparent that Blankaart abbreviated Tulp's description. Tulp's lengthy narrative on tea's physical properties is removed, as is his explanation of the plant's esteem in China and Japan. Blankaart did keep Tulp's description of the medicinal properties of tea, however; most notably, that steeping it and drinking the brew regularly prevents diseases such as kidney stones, headaches, the common cold, lippitudo of the eye, and falling sicknesses. Blankaart also copied Tulp's recommendation that tea is especially beneficial for those who wish to study or read at night, since '[zy die] eenige kopjes uitslorpende, zal men heele nagten konnen zonder slaap zyn'.[61] It is not that Blankaart's description is entirely shorn of references to tea's geographic origins either, as his observation ends with a paragraph on how tea is consumed in Japan and China. But he seems to have thought that his particular audience needed a different kind of edification than Tulp's, as he completely removed the final section where Tulp suggests some titles for further reading.

That Blankaart was not simply economising on ink and paper in his editing process is evident from his following *observatio* on tea, which is derived from the French chemist, physician, and botanist Petrus Borel [Pierre Borel, 1620-1671]. Borel's book *Historiarium et observationum medico-physicarum centuria IV*, published in Paris in 1656, contains a description 'De Thea'.[62] Admittedly, this original passage only constituted two short paragraphs, but it is still noteworthy that Blankaart chose to include it in full, because the type of information in Borel's description fits the general pattern of the kind that our Dutch editor preferred to pass on to his readers. It is again reported that tea keeps sleep at bay, together with the notion that it cures kidney stones. Like Tulp, Borel calls upon the authority of others to add to his commendation of tea's medicinal powers. The names of these experts are preserved by Blankaart in his journal, presumably to lend further credence to his account. Borel/Blankaart further explains that tea is only found in two provinces of China, and that its leaves look like daisies 'the one larger than the other', which are carefully harvested once a year 'like grapes are here'. Again, while the original passage was short to begin with, the fact that Blankaart copied it *in extenso* is probably due to the, partly practical and partly authoritative, nature of the description.

60 Nicolaes Tulp, *Observationes medicae.* Amsterdam: Lowijs III Elzevier, 1652, 400-403.

61 'those who drink a few cups can be whole nights without sleep', Tulp, *Observationes medicae*, 401; *CMP*, 227.

62 Pierre Borel, *Historiarium et observationum medico-physicarum centuria IV.* Paris: Louis Billaine, 1656, 227.

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The next commentary on tea in *CMP* is taken from Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680), a German Jesuit priest working in Rome, who wrote one of the most influential European works on China of the late seventeenth century. His *China illustrata* was intended as a compilation of all European knowledge about the Middle Kingdom and its neighboring countries. Small wonder, then, that Blankaart's editing of Kircher was more extensive than his reworking of Borel's. But in this case in particular, it is worth to consider the role that learned journals such as *CMP* played in passing along knowledge to the less well-to-do, which would otherwise have been hard to access for them. The reason for this is that Kircher's work was published as a lavishly illustrated folio, by Johannes Janssonius van Waesberge and Elizaeus Weyerstraten in Amsterdam in 1667. A book like this would have been too expensive for most people. Based on reports that China-based missionaries sent back to the Jesuits' administrative office in Rome, Kircher had become an expert on China although he never visited the country. Indeed, after listing the medicinal benefits of tea for the 'learned man' and those who require 'prolonged wakefulness', he recounts how he had been persuaded of these qualities after sampling the hot drink at the 'frequent invitation' of his Jesuit brothers.[63]

Kircher's elaborate description deviates from that of Tulp and Borel in other respects as well. He notes how tea is more generally called *cha*,[64] and broadens its geographical distribution to include *Tartarien* (a western European blanket term to describe central and northeast Asia broadly considered), Tibet, the Indies, and the Mughal Empire. While Blankaart does copy the information on the usage of tea in other countries, Kircher goes even further by mentioning various provinces by name, which is not reproduced in the journal. The latter also delves deeply into tea's connection with coffee and chocolate, which is only briefly touched upon by Blankaart in a subsequent observation.

Of particular interest is that, in contrast to his reproduction of Borel's sources on Chinese tea, Blankaart removed Kircher's expert corroborators in his description of tea in *CMP*. In writing *China illustrata*, Kircher had made

63 Athanasius Kircher, *China monumentis qva sacris quà* [...] *illustrata*. Amsterdam: Johannes Janssonius van Waesberge and Elizaeus Weyerstraten, 1667.

64 *Te* is derived from the Hokkien dialect of southern Fujian where the mayor trading ports of Xiamen (Amoy) and Quanzhou where located. Dutch traders perhaps got this pronunciation directly from these dealings, or from Taiwan where they had established a port in the early 17th century. This Dutch connection gave rise to the English pronunciation of tea. *Cha* is derived from the Cantonese around Guanzhou and the city-states of Hong-Kong and Macau. Especially the Portuguese trading contacts there influenced the spread of this pronunciation. The reference to tea as chai in Central Asia and Russia derives from the same root as Cha yet came about through overland trading via Persia.

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extensive use of the Jesuit Martino Martini's *Novus Atlas Sinensis*.[65] This atlas had been published in Amsterdam in 1655 as the sixth instalment of Joan Blaeu's monumental *Atlas Maior*, and it was based upon Martini's observations while working as missionary in China. Blankaart did not mention Martini, nor the Society of Jesus by name, but only referred to the source of the *observatio* as the 'Chinese Atlas'.[66] This seems surprising at first glance, given his explicit reference to Borel's sources. Yet it was probably a conscious editorial intervention on his part, meant to erase the explicit connection to the Jesuit origin of his information. The Jesuits were Catholics, after all, which, in the liberal yet Protestant Dutch Republic, might have put readers off, or at the very least distracted them from the information Blankaart wished to convey. Nevertheless, the textual connection to the *Atlas Maior* (the unnamed source of his source) is evident. After describing the characteristics of the tea plant, much as in Blankaart's learned journal, the *Atlas* went on to tell of its medicinal properties. It also informs readers that the 'power' of tea lies in its healing properties with regard to gout and kidney stones; adding that it aids the digestion and provides relief for drunkards. And the anonymous *Atlas*, via Kircher, lends further support to the statement that tea helps those who want to stay awake by 'dispelling the sleepy fumes from their eyes'.[67]

The final two observations on tea in Blankaart's journal are also the longest, and these are noteworthy for being perhaps the most 'practical' to the aspirant tea drinkers among *CMP*'s readers. The first observation is derived from Johann Schröder (Schroderus), an influential German physician and pharmacologist.[68] While this passage in *CMP* rehashes statements on tea that the journal already features – it helps to prevent kidney stones, dispels drunkenness, works against 'runny eyes', and helps to stay awake – Blankaart's summary of Schröder also presents new information. The text notes how 'Van 't zelve kruid kan men op eenmaal een half dragme nemen, en van 't water zoo veel men op eenmaal drinken kan, makende het met zuiker soo zoet als men wil'.[69] This habit of drinking tea with sugar might seem insignificant, yet Woodruff D. Smith has pointed to its historical effects. The connection between tea and sugar bolstered demand for both products in Europe, all at once strengthening

65 Martino Martini, *Novvs Atlas Sinensis*. Amsterdam: Joan Blaeu, 1655.

66 *CMP*, 229.

67 *CMP*, 230.

68 Johann Schröder, *Pharmacopoeia medico-chymica, sive thesaurus pharmacologicus, quo composita quaeque celebriora*. Ulm: Johann Gerlini, 1641.

69 'From the same herb one may take half a dram, and of water as much one can drink at once, making it with sugar as sweet as one wants', *CMP*, 231.

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European imperialism in Asia, the growth of plantation slavery in the Americas, and economic growth in Europe.[70] However, in China, tea was (and is) not drunk with sugar. And there is little evidence to suggest that this was customary in Europe before the very end of the seventeenth century. Indeed, Blankaart himself had still advised against putting sugar in one's food in his *De Borgerlyke Tafel* of 1683 (although he does not mention tea specifically).[71] Schröder was therefore early in connecting the consumption of tea to that of sugar. And Blankaart copied this directive almost verbatim, despite his earlier warnings against sugar. This is anecdotal evidence, of course, but it could suggest that early modern learned journals functioned differently from books where it concerned instructions on the consumption of early modern medicinal products. In this regard, the role of the editor was not to comment upon his sources, even though he implicitly did so by adding or subtracting information; instead, the journal presented information in its original format, after which the reader could draw his or her own conclusions.

Following Schröder's remark about sugaring tea, his is the first description in *CMP* to include comprehensive instructions on how to prepare tea. The *observatio* goes on to note that in Japan, tea is used as powder, and that tea can also be distilled together with cinnamon (which is especially beneficial to those suffering from 'the stone'). A different drink may be prepared by making an infusion of one-and-a-half ounces of tea and a quarter jug of wine. Also, the herb can be mashed into a rough powder and mixed with sugar-syrup, simply taken in small morsels, or as an extract made with brandy (which is not recommended as 'its finest quality' will evaporate). Finally, the Schröder passage in *CMP* notes that tea may also be consumed as concoction, to be imbibed as much as one can take in the morning. However, this drink should only be taken three times a week as it may hinder sleep ''t welk schadelyk mogt wezen'.[72]

The final observation on tea included in Blankaart's *CMP* is taken from the already mentioned travelogue *The Embassy* by Johan Nieuhof. It begins by explaining where tea is grown in China, what the plant looks like, and which leaves are most valued. Nieuhof had expressed the hope that tea could also be cultivated in Europe, since in China and Japan 'it also hails and snows and

70 Woodruff D. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600-1800*. New York and London: Routledge, 2002.

71 Steven Blankaart, *De borgerlyke tafel, om lang gesond sonder ziekten te leven*. Amsterdam: Jan Claesz ten Hoorn, 1683.

72 'which could prove harmful', *CMP*, 232.

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good harvests can still be attained'. He then went on to explain at length how tea is imbibed in China, praising its restorative properties.[73]

In Blankaart's *CMP*, this description from Nieuhof ends with the question of how long tea has been known in China. Nieuhof/Blankaart references writers who do not believe in tea's roots in Chinese antiquity, based on the fact that no Chinese characters in 'the ancient Chinese books' express the meaning of tea; yet others, 'who have resided here in these lands for many years', believe that tea has been growing in the wild for many centuries. Here, Nieuhof was summarising a debate initiated by Matteo Ricci, who had already noted in the early seventeenth century that 'no ideography in their old books designates this particular drink'. Yet Nieuhof – and, by extension, Blankaart – did not provide a final answer to this question, nor does Blankaart mention Ricci by name.

In short, by summarising books on tea taken from six different authors, Blankaart made their works available to a readership of non-specialists. He specifically focused on information that would be relevant and engaging to the wider – relatively uneducated yet interested – reader. Blankaart explained where tea comes from, how the Chinese use it, what the primary benefits of its consumption are, and how it can be prepared by Europeans. This constitutes a three-pronged 'democratization' of knowledge. Blankaart's journal informed ordinary readers, firstly, by translating from the inaccessible Latin into the vernacular Dutch; secondly, by including information from expensive or hard-to-get books; and thirdly, by boiling down and arranging the information in a such an order as would be easier to digest for those without a scholarly background.

And Blankaart's sources were often inaccessible to the non-specialised audience, to be sure. Nicolaas Tulp's *Observationes medica*, for one, was intended as a work of reference for Tulp's colleagues (and highly successful as such). However, a translation of the fourth book containing the chapter on tea would not be published until 1740, which made the information inaccessible to those not versed in Latin.[74] Borel's *Historiarium et observationum medico-physicarum* was never translated into Dutch, nor was Schröder's work. Of course, since neither were published in the Dutch Republic, they would have been even harder to come by. Finally, while Kircher's *China illustrata*, Nieuhof's *The Embassy*, and Martini's *Atlas* were published in Amsterdam and translated into Dutch, the

73 Note how Nieuhof emphasises his own authority in extolling the virtues of tea.

74 Nicolaes Tulp, *De drie boecken der medicijnsche aenmerkingen*. Amsterdam: Jacob Benjamin and Jan Jacobsz Bouman, 1650. A complete Dutch edition was only published in 1740: Nicolaes Tulp, *Geneeskundige waarnemingen*. Leiden: Jurriaan I Wishoff, 1740.

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financial cost of these large folios with numerous engravings prevented their broad dissemination. Through learned journals such as *CMP*, however, Dutch readers were still at the forefront of early modern medical knowledge.

Intermedia adaptation and its paratext

Through his adaptation of medical knowledge across different printed media, Steven Blankaart partially removed traditional barriers of language, education, and socio-economic class; all of which had hitherto prevented a more widespread circulation of (intercultural) knowledge. Of course, the learned journal is merely an example of the different channels through which knowledge circulated in early modern Europe. And as demonstrated by this example, descriptions about such things as Chinese medicine were not confined to any particular channel: Blankaart himself reused textual material that he had sourced from books. And so, early modern knowledge was disseminated across a variety of printed forms. Yet the publishing strategies devised by the producers of these different types of publications were not interchangeable.[75] As I will discuss in this final section, while Blankaart did not provide explicit editorial commentary, *CMP*'s discourse on tea is nevertheless altered by the journal's 'paratext' broadly considered. That is, the way in which readers processed the information Blankaart presented to them was influenced by elements outside of the text itself; most notably, the materiality of the text carrier, the content that surrounds the descriptions of tea, and external elements that contextualise the text.[76] As a new medium, with a different kind of paratext to other printed carriers of texts, the early modern learned journal thereby gave rise to new forms of representation of Chinese medicine.

Broadly speaking, Blankaart sourced his own information from two genres: medical treatises (Tulp, Borel, and Schröderus), and more general travelogues and compilations on China (Kircher, Martini, Nieuhof). Both genres have a visible and tactile materiality, and the reading experience cannot be independently understood without taking into account these materialities.[77] The first and

75 Louisiane Ferlier and Bénédicte Miyamoto, 'The Shape of Knowledge', in: Louisiane Ferlier and Bénédicte Miyamoto (eds.), *Forms, Formats and the Circulation of Knowledge. British Printscape's Innovations, 1688-1832*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2020, 1-26.

76 Gérard Genette, *Seuils*. Paris: Editions du Sueil, 1987; Sirkku Ruokkeinen and Aino Liira, 'Material Approaches to Exploring the Borders of Paratext', *Textual Cultures* 11 (2017) no 1-2, 106-129.

77 Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books. Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the 14th and 18th Centuries*. Standord: Standford University Press, 1994.

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perhaps most striking expression of a book's materiality is its format or size. The three volumes of Blankaart's journal were published in octavo; Tulp's *Observationes medicae* were also printed on easily pocketed octavo sheets, while Kircher's *China illustrata* constituted a much larger 66 sheets in folio. This difference not only influenced portability, it also impacted upon price, as paper could make up as much as half of a printed work's cost. These costs in turn reflected upon the status of those who were able to purchase such elaborate works of artisanry.

Apart from the size and number of paper sheets, the price was also influenced by the inclusion of illustrations. The works of Kircher, Martini, and Nieuhof all counted numerous high-quality engravings: *The Embassy*, for example, boasts an impressive 149 illustrations. These illustrations are in large part decorative, enhancing the overall stature of the works in question. In contrast, Blankaart's journal on average contains fewer than 10 engravings per volume, while Tulp's book has 19 (among which is the earliest European image of an Orangutan). The latter two works primarily offer 'functional' graphic material, which is to say that the images primarily support the textual content. The main difference is that Tulp also provided abstract representations of dissections. Blankaart's illustrations offer a different type of visualisation with a more figurative imagery. The nature of these illustrations confirms their intended audiences: heavily decorated travelogues and compilations aimed at a wealthy yet non-specialist readership, intellectual treatises with abstract imagery were intended for educated specialists; meanwhile, Blankaart's figurative and sometimes sensational illustrations were meant to appeal to a more general public.

In a less tangible but not to be underestimated way, the textual contents surrounding Blankaart's descriptions of tea also influenced their possible reading. The descriptions of tea in *CMP* are embedded into a series of sensational medical notices, such as a tale of how someone's pinkie finger was crushed and what happened thereafter, or a narrative on how a boy suffering from 'the falling disease' (epilepsy) could not be cured by drinking the blood of a recently decapitated man (which apparently came as a surprise to the parties involved).

In contrast, the surrounding materials in the intellectual treatises and the travelogues are of an altogether different nature. Nieuhof, Kircher, and Martini's descriptions of tea are found in chapters on 'herbs'. These descriptions are preceded, for instance, by an anecdote on botanicals called *Quei*, which would expel sadness, *Hoako*, which would make those eating it infertile, and 'the thousand-year herb', which makes grey hair black again. The chapter on herbs itself is followed by chapters on 'flowers' and 'reeds'. The medical treatises,

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then, embed tea into an intellectual, medical discourse. Here, tea features, for instance, among passages on the treatment of certain ailments, medical recipes, or even among reflections on anatomical dissections (which would have been solely aimed at medical professionals). Here the different focus of each description is made clear: Blankaart embedded his summary of the uses of tea into a sensational and general medical context, Nieuhof, Kircher, and Martini order their descriptions into botany, while Tulp, Schröder, and Borel slot them into a decidedly intellectual-medical discourse.

Concluding remarks

From the seventeenth century onwards, print became the leading instrument through which information on Chinese medicine circulated in Europe. The medium of print opened up new and innovative ways of copying and disseminating knowledge to a far larger readership than would have been possible in the late medieval period – partly because literacy rates were simultaneously on the rise, but the two phenomena were interlinked.

Saliently, however, the broad provision and dissemination of knowledge about such Chinese *materia medica* was instigated *before* the dramatic increase of their import and consumption.[78] Blankaart published his journal in the 1680s, just as tea imports to Europe were gradually increasing from a mere trickle to a decent stream. But it was not until the first decade of the eighteenth century that this stream became a flood. It has been widely recognised that the globalisation of trade changed the European economy from the seventeenth century onwards, and that this process only accelerated throughout much of the next hundred years. This rise, of consumer goods like tea, but also porcelain, coffee and sugar, played a fundamental role in the emergence of a consumer society in eighteenth-century Europe.[79] Yet, while the economic impact of Europe's interactions with Asia has been documented extensively, the fundamental role played by print and its producers in the introduction of knowledge on Chinese *materia medica* in Europe has been relatively neglected. As noted by Woodruff D. Smith, this is partly because, as soon as an historical topic touches upon matters of economics, a related postulate soon comes into play: namely, that 'motives for behaviours apart from ones that can be resulted

78 John Jordan, 'Global Goods Away from Global Trading Points? Tea and Coffee in Early Modern Bern', *History of Retailing and Consumption* 4 (2018), 217-234.

79 Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability.*

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into a rational calculus of quantifiable costs and benefits lie outside the scope of explanation'.[80] Still, the present study has shown that it is worthwhile to focus on these nonquantifiable factors as well, which can be achieved through a book historical analysis. After all, one could argue that it was largely these factors that led early modern people to consume knowledge on the newly introduced products of global trade.

The early modern producers of books, newspapers, and journals discussing Chinese medicine, who were predominantly located in the Dutch Republic, effectively shaped the European representations of Chinese medicine.[81] Their printed products acted as focal points around which new ideas coalesced, and their activities allowed for a rapid and broad dissemination of new ideas. In this collaborative effort, the author was only one of the many actors involved. Early modern knowledge production involved printers, publishers, booksellers and other agents of book production. And the guise under which a printed work eventually entered the public domain 'although balanced against the public's demand and the author's offer, was ultimately a publisher's decision'.[82]

The medium of print itself also became more democratised from the second half of the seventeenth century onwards, with the introduction of cheaper and more widely available publications such as newspapers, pamphlets, and indeed learned journals such as Blankaart's *CMP*. Yet the majority of historical scholarship on early modern scientific thought and scientific practices still relies on a handful of books and on the authority of a few good men who travelled to Asia.[83] However, these books only represent the tip of the iceberg of publications on China that were available in Western Europe at the end of the seventeenth century.[84] I would argue that it is precisely these publications – these books,

80 Smith, 'Complications of the Commonplace', 259-278.

81 Joel Mokyr, *A Culture of Growth. The Origins of the Modern Economy*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016. Claartje Rasterhoff, *Painting and Publishing as Cultural Industries. The Fabric of Creativity in the Dutch Republic, 1580-1800*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017.

82 Michael Baird Saenger, 'The Birth of Advertising', in: Douglas A. Brooks (ed.), *Printing and Parenting in Early Modern England*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2005, 198.

83 Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'Travel Writing as a Genre. Facts, Fictions, and the Invention of a Scientific Discourse in Early Modern Europe', *International Journal of Travel and Travel Writing* 5 (2000), 5-33; Dawn Odell, 'The Souls of Transaction. Illustration and Johan Nieuhof's Travels to China', in: Kael Bostoen et al. (eds.) *"Tweelinge eener dragt". Woord en beeld in de Nederlanden*. Hilversum: Verloren, 2001, 223-242; Sun Jing, *The Illusion of Verisimilitude. Johan Nieuhof's Images of China*. PhD dissertation: Universiteit Leiden, 2013.

84 Marcia Reed and Paola Demattè, *China on Paper. European and Chinese Works from the Late Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2007; Dijkstra, *The Chinese Imprint*.

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but also journals, newspapers, and pamphlets – that should be considered in future studies in order to explain fully the cultural encounter between Asia and Europe; and in their own right, as opposed to a mere footnote to the large travelogues in folio or the intellectual treatises in Latin.

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