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From spice to tea: On consumer choice and the justification of value in the early modern Low Countries*

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Abstract

This article uses the case of exotic comestibles consumed in the Low Countries to study the problem of continuity versus transformation in early modern consumer behaviour. The paradigm of changing consumer behaviour resulting from the emergence of the market economy has increasingly been rejected by scholars of late medieval and Renaissance material culture. However, an integrated approach that attempts to bridge the conceptual and methodological gap has so far been missing. By examining a large body of discursive sources on the introduction of exotic comestibles in the early modern Low Countries from a fresh theoretical perspective (that of conventions theory), this article proposes a novel reconciliation between the two perspectives on the history of consumption before the Industrial Revolution. The focus on exotic goods also allows for a nuanced perspective on the role of the non-western world in shaping new consumer patterns, and contributing to the great transformation in European economy and society.

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Introduction

The consumer behaviour of early modern Europe is often taken to have been fundamentally different from medieval forms of consumerism. The former is considered to have been mostly urban, bourgeois and rational in nature, whereas the latter is described in terms that denote the rural, aristocratic and magical. This contrast mirrors the Weberian narrative, long established in sociology and history, of a growing separation between culture and economy in early modern Europe.[1] According to this narrative, the development of a market economy meant that economic interactions became increasingly motivated by self-interest, and were therefore no longer submerged in social relationships, or subject to social control. The end-point of this development has been labelled the 'disembedded' economy, and Karl Polanyi has famously described this process as 'the great transformation.'[2]

In the history of consumption this transformation is often equated with a transition from a system based on the exchange of gifts to one where products are fully commoditized.[3] The *gift* here refers to products of which the value is determined primarily by cultural and social contexts (for instance the status of the producers or givers), while the value of *commodities* is based upon their utility to individual consumers, relative to the utility that can be produced by other commodities. During the early modern period, it is argued, large strands of the European population abandoned old moral norms, traditional superstitions and restrictive sumptuary legislation, so that, by the end of the eighteenth century, the maximizing and utilitarian consumer had emerged.[4]

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[1] The classic texts are Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, trans. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, 2 vols. (Berkeley, 2003) [I can't find a 2003 edition; is this perhaps the 2013 one?] and Max Weber, 'Class, Status, Party', in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (London, 1967) . See also Mike Savage, 'Status, Lifestyle, and Taste', in Frank Trentmann (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption* (Oxford, 2012), 554.

[2] Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (New York, 1944); David Graeber, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams* (New York, 2001).

[3] Marcel Mauss, 'Essai sur le don: Forme et raison d'échange dans les sociétés archaïques', *L'Année sociologique*, new ser., 1 (1923–4); Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process', in Arjan Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986); Martha C. Howell, *Commerce before Capitalism in Europe, 1300–1600* (Cambridge, 2010).

[4] The literature within this tradition is large, so I limit myself to only a few particularly influential references: Neil McKendrick, 'The Consumer Revolution of Eighteenth-Century England', in Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb (eds.), *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1982); Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660–1760* (London, 1988); Cissie Fairchilds, 'The Production and Marketing of Populuxe Goods in Eighteenth-Century Paris', in John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds.), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, 1993); Jan de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2008). Recent contributions to the debate include Frank Trentmann, *The Empire of Things: How we Became a World of Consumers, from the Fifteenth Century to the Twenty-First* (New York, 2016); Robert S.

In the field of economic history in particular, the paradigm of the growing 'disembeddedness' of the early modern consumer has enjoyed great success. Perhaps most influentially, Jan de Vries has argued that in the urban culture of the seventeenth-century Low Countries new attitudes developed towards middle-class consumer behaviour. This new perception of luxury was different from the old, in the sense that it was now aimed primarily at individual utility rather than at ostentation; and, because its value was no longer directly tied to the cost of the raw materials incorporated in it, the new luxury was no longer exclusively restricted to elite consumption [5] The consequences of this transition in the social 'embeddedness' of luxury consumption were great, as De Vries credits it with drawing unprecedented shares of the European population into market involvement. This commercialization of luxury commodities, with its roots in changing attitudes towards consumption, has been seen as a crucial step towards the growing division of labour, economic modernisation and eventual modern economic growth that obtained from the late eighteenth century onwards.

Other economic historians have denied that endogenous (and primarily urban) developments in consumer culture were at the core of this consumer transition, although they generally agree with its timing and consequences. Maxine Berg and Giorgio Riello have stressed the importance of global interactions in the dismantling of traditional social and cultural limits to consumption and commerce in early modern Europe.[6] In this view, the superior quality and cheaper price of Asian commodities helped to break down traditional prejudices against luxury consumption, thereby fostering new consumer demands in Europe which in turn prompted a wave of technological innovation attempting to meet them.[7] According to Berg, this exogenous transformation was helped by the changing valuation of exotic imports, as 'the introduction of Indian calicoes, Chinese porcelain and Japanese lacquers undermined the uniformity and clear social hierarchies previously imposed'.[8]

Met opmerkingen [MOU1]: I think you need to say what this involved – it's not clear what the new luxury is and so the following sentences are a bit unclear.

Met opmerkingen [MOU2]: Correct meaning?

DuPlessis, *The Material Atlantic: Clothing, Commerce, and Colonization in the Atlantic World, 1650–1800* (Cambridge, 2016).

[5] De Vries, *Industrious Revolution*. See also, in a similar vein, Fairchilds, 'Production and Marketing of Populuxe Goods'; Johan Poukens and Nele Provoost, 'Respectability, Middle-Class Material Culture, and Economic Crisis: The Case of Lier in Brabant, 1690–1770', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, xlii (2011).

[6] Maxine Berg, 'In Pursuit of Luxury: Global History and British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century', *Past and Present*, no. 182 (Feb. 2004); Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2007); Maxine Berg, Felicia Gottmann, Hanna Hodacs and Chris Nierstrasz (eds.), *Goods from the East: Trading Eurasia, 1600–1800* (Basingstoke, 2015); Giorgio Riello, *Cotton: The Fabric that Made the Modern World* (Cambridge, 2013).

[7] See in particular Berg, 'In Pursuit of Luxury', and Riello, *Cotton*. Marcy Norton has made a similar argument for the cultural transfer of taste from the New World to Europe by the introduction of chocolate and tobacco: Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Ithaca, 2008).

[8] Maxine Berg, 'New Commodities, Luxuries and Their Consumers in Eighteenth-Century England', in Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford (eds.), *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe, 1650–1850* (Manchester, 1999). [page ref needed]

In tracing these narratives of economic progress driven by the growing disembeddedness of the early modern consumer, economic historians have mirrored the themes developed by Enlightenment philosophers. During the eighteenth-century debates about luxury, Enlightenment thinkers theorised the ways in which religious and moral limits to self-interest, commerce and luxury consumption could be overcome for the public good.[9] Rather than as a religious and social sin, luxury consumption could increasingly be seen as an instrument of progress. Like the Enlightenment thinkers who saw the potential for liberation and emancipation in the anonymity and impersonal nature of the city or the moneyed (cash-based) economy, the proponents of luxury consumption hailed the growing disembeddedness of the economy from social and cultural constraints.[10]

Nevertheless, despite its prominence and explanatory power in early modern economic history, the paradigm of the emergence of the disembedded consumer appears increasingly problematic. The bulk of recent studies on late medieval and Renaissance consumption practices has squarely refused to be drawn into the discussion on the great transformation of consumer behaviour — let alone its causal links to modernity, and the industrial or scientific revolutions — instead drawing on the fields of material culture studies and economic anthropology,.[11] Three decades ago the anthropologist Arjan Appadurai pointed out that the

Met opmerkingen [w3]: Kan weg (indien vorige weg gaat).

Met opmerkingen [MOU4R3]: It seems fine!

[9] Berg and Clifford (eds.), *Consumers and Luxury*; John Sekora, *Luxury: The Concept in Western Thought, Eden to Smollett* (Baltimore, 1977); Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge, 1994); Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (Basingstoke, 1996). The idea that luxury consumption and import trade could foster industriousness and growth was further developed in Bernard Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* (1705), but was also taken up by other proponents of Enlightenment economic thought such as David Hume in Scotland, George Marie Butel-Dumont in France and Pieter de la Court in the Dutch Republic. See E. J. Hundert, *The Enlightenment's Fable: Bernard Mandeville and the Discovery of Society* (Cambridge, 1994); Michael Kwass, 'Ordering the World of Goods: Consumer Revolution and the Classification of Objects in Eighteenth-Century France', *Representations*, lxxxii (2003); Mary Lindemann, *The Merchant Republics: Amsterdam, Antwerp, and Hamburg, 1648–1790* (New York, 2014). A provocative stance on this topic in Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism Before Its Triumph* (Princeton, 1977).

[10] See for instance Deborah M. Valenze, *The Social Life of Money in the English Past* (Cambridge, 2006). Cultural historians working on the early modern consumer revolution have often taken the position that the development of a more liberal culture surrounding luxury consumption (centred on notions such as decorum and respectability, and focused on comfort, pleasure, or domesticity) was not just a reflection, but itself a prime cause of consumer change: see, for instance, Colin Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (Oxford, 1987); Grant McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (Bloomington, 2002); Woodruff D. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600–1800* (New York, 2002); John Styles and Amanda Vickery, 'Introduction', in John Styles and Amanda Vickery (eds.), *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700–1830* (New Haven, 2007).

[11] See, for instance, Michelle O'Malley and Evelyn S. Welch, *The Material Renaissance* (Manchester, 2007). A critical reflection in Samuel Cohn, Jr, 'Renaissance Attachment to Things: Material Culture in Last Wills and Testaments', *Economic History Review*, lxv (2012), and Bruno Blondé and Wouter Ryckbosch, 'In "Splendid Isolation": A Comparative Perspective on the Historiographies of the "Material Renaissance" and the "Consumer Revolution"', *History of Retailing and Consumption*, i (2015).

dichotomy between socially embedded gifts and impersonally exchanged commodities does not hold up to closer scrutiny.[12] Instead, anthropologists have developed the notion that the nature of objects is not fixed, nor determined by a single modernization process spanning from the medieval to the modern era, but is instead contingent upon the specific context in which they are embedded. Depending on the contexts through which they circulate, all objects can potentially be gifts or commodities. This concept of the 'social life of things' has often been noted, but rarely has its implicit criticism of the modernization paradigm at the heart of the consumer revolution debate been taken seriously by (economic) historians of the early modern period. On the other hand, this revisionism has led many students of material culture and Renaissance studies to stress the uniqueness of individual consumer choices, as well as the multi-layered meanings of consumer value. In doing so, they have not only rejected the notion of any great transformation in consumer behaviour over the course of the early modern period, but they have also projected the idea of the disembedded consumer further back in time.[13] Seen from such perspectives, pre-modern consumers may have preferred different objects and assigned different meanings to them, but essentially followed the same rules of rational consumer choice that modern consumers would follow.

This article investigates the issue of continuity and transformation in consumer behaviour during the early modern period. Was consumer behaviour by the end of the early modern period more 'disembedded' from social relations than three centuries earlier? This question will be approached with respect to exotic consumables in the Low Countries, and in particular to the consumption of tea, one of the first mass-consumed imported commodities in Europe. By employing the framework of conventions theory, the article points out elements of change as well as of continuity, and it considers the role of global interaction as a potential causal factor in this transition.

The geographical focus is on the Low Countries, the northern part of which (the Dutch Republic) became one of the main importers of tea in the seventeenth century, while the southern part had contained the principal trading ports for longer-established exotic comestibles, such as spices, in medieval north-western Europe. In studying the relationship between consumer valuation and economic change, the Low Countries is as a particularly instructive region. During the seventeenth century the development of Cartesian philosophy in Dutch intellectual and scientific life prompted a thorough reflection on the mind–body relationship, and the region's engagement with overseas expansion contributed to a

[12] Arjun Appadurai, 'Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value', in Appadurai (ed.), *Social Life of Things*.
[13] See Bert De Munck, 'Artisans, Products and Gifts: Rethinking the History of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe', *Past and Present*, no. 224 (Aug. 2014), 40–41, and Frank Trentmann, 'Materiality in the Future of History: Things, Practices, and Politics', *Journal of British Studies*, xlviii (2009), 288.

systematization of the natural world that would come to characterize much of later Enlightenment thinking throughout Europe.[14] Moreover, the vibrancy of Dutch urban life has been credited with bringing about an entirely new type of ('modern') consumer behaviour.[15] Finally, the choice of the Low Countries, instead of more frequently studied regions (southern France or Italy in the case of spices, England in the case of tea) allows us to draw out long-term historical continuities and comparisons that otherwise remain obscured.[16]

I

The analysis of the narratives surrounding early modern tea drinking in the Low Countries that follows is loosely based on an adoption of the conventions theory (or 'economics of convention') developed by Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot. It is a sociological and heterodox economic framework that was developed in the late 1980s as a pragmatist approach to the analysis of economic institutions. The central idea of conventions theory is that actors, if faced with conditions of uncertainty when evaluating situations, persons, or objects, can co-ordinate their individual interactions to achieve a common goal. In justifying those coordinated actions, they refer to specific socio-cultural resources or particular views of the common good. In the field of economics, for instance, this means that economic actors rely on conventions — specific socio-cultural frameworks — to arrive at shared interpretations of the value or worth of objects or actions. In this way, conventions theory extends the classic utilitarian economic framework in order to take into account broader systems of reciprocal expectations about the behaviour of others.[17] Whereas neo-classical theory assumes both object quality and subject rationality to be a given, in conventions theory both qualities and rationalities become dependent on conventions.

Although the approach taken by conventions theory has had little influence on historiography in the English-speaking world, the Annales school attempted to adopt it during the cultural turn as a solution to the problems posed by structuralist historiography. In conventions theory, they hoped to find a way of salvaging the ultimate goal of studying large-

[14] Harold J. Cook, *Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven, 2007); Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477–1806* (Oxford, 1995); Peter Boomgaard (ed.), *Empire and Science in the Making: Dutch Colonial Scholarship in Comparative Global Perspective, 1760–1830* (New York, 2013).
[15] Witold Rybczynski, *Home: A Short History of an Idea* (New York, 1986).
[16] The separation between the literature on renaissance and eighteenth-century consumer behaviour has also been brought up in Blondé and Ryckbosch, 'In "Splendid Isolation"'.
[17] The framework has been labelled as a 'social-constructivist theory of economic action'. Introductions to convention theory can be found in Søren Jagd, 'Economics of Convention and New Economic Sociology: Mutual Inspiration and Dialogue', *Current Sociology*, lv (2007), and Peter Wagner, 'Dispute, Uncertainty and Institution in Recent French Debates', *Journal of Political Philosophy*, ii (1994). See also Bert De Munck, 'Conventions, the Great Transformation and Actor Network Theory', *Historical Social Research*, xxxvii (2012).

scale social processes (the formation, mutation and disappearance of conventions), but by beginning from the micro-processes that constituted social reality (i.e. the actions of individuals), rather than from pre-determined, reified social categories.[18] It is not our ambition here extensively to develop a theoretical framework of conventions applied to early modern consumer behaviour, or to argue that this is the only sensible approach to the topic. However, considering the debate on the nature of early modern consumer change, it might prove worthwhile to follow the example set by conventions theory in suspending *a priori* notions concerning object qualities and consumer motivations, while at the same time preserving an interest in history as the study of macro-processes, above and beyond the fragmented study of the actions of particular individuals in the past. This article is an attempt to demonstrate that the study of the historical mutation of conventions of consumer valuation can provide a more historicized reading of early modern consumer change.

Seen from the perspective of this theoretical framework, the central question becomes: how did consumers justify the value they attached to tea? This justification of value refers to a common principle: an implicit idea of the common good that can be relied upon to provide the justification of a statement of worth — in this case the value of tea-drinking. Boltanski and Thévenot originally envisioned six 'worlds' with specific conventions of valuation, each referring to classical works of political economy.[19] In applying this approach to the early modern history of tea-drinking, I have resorted only to three distinct conventions: a convention based on 'social custom', a convention referring to 'utility', and a third convention related to 'the market'.[20]

It is important to note that there is no necessary hierarchy or linear development between these value conventions over time. In fact, it is one of the central elements of conventions theory that contradictory conventions exist simultaneously, leading to interaction, conflict and change over time. Therefore, we use conventions theory in this article in order to study changes in the valuation of tea by early modern consumers without resorting to either holistic teleological generalisations or individualistic utilitarian consumer motivations.

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[18] Bernard Lepetit (ed.), *Les formes de l'expérience: Une autre histoire sociale* (Paris, 1995). This is not to say that this objective has often been met, as pointed out in Gareth Stedman Jones, 'The New Social History in France', in Colin Jones and Dror Wahrman, *The Age of Cultural Revolutions: Britain and France, 1750–1820* (Berkeley, 2002), and William H. Sewell, Jr, *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago, 2005), 75–7.

[19] These worlds were the inspired world, the domestic world, the world of fame, the civic world, the market world, and the industrial world: Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, *On Justification: Economies of Worth*, trans. Catherine Porter (Princeton, 2006), 159–211.

[20] The 'social custom' convention corresponds rather well to what Boltanski and Thévenot described as the 'domestic world'. The convention based on notions of 'utility' loosely resembles their 'industrial' world, and the 'market' convention is the same as theirs: Boltanski and Thévenot, *On Justification*, 118–23.

II

In his entry on tea in Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* (1751–65), Louis de Jaucourt described the enormous popularity of tea-drinking in Europe.[21] He reckoned that no less than eight to ten million pounds of tea were annually imported into the continent.[22] This estimate, which can probably be revised upwards,[23] was extraordinary because less than a century earlier practically no one in Europe had been familiar with tea. At the end of the seventeenth century probably less than a hundred thousand pounds was imported annually into Europe; by the 1730s this had risen to approximately four million pounds.[24] Tellingly, as a share of the value in total imports of the Dutch East India Company, the importance of tea rose from 2 per cent in 1711 to 54 per cent in 1790.[25] After tobacco, tea was thus one of the first and most important global commodities to undergo a swift transition from a luxury to a staple good.

European explorers and their readers first encountered the dried leaves of the *Camellia sinensis* plant only two centuries before the publication of the *Encyclopédie*, around the end of the sixteenth century. The plant is native to south-east Asia, and in places such as Yunnan province in China the leaves of wild tea trees had probably been consumed since prehistoric times.[26] Nevertheless, it took until the Tang dynasty (618–907) for a recognizable tea-drinking culture to emerge in China. It was in this period that Lu Yu's *The Classic of Tea* (760–62) was written, which set out the rituals and meditative associations of tea drinking for several centuries to follow.[27] It would take much longer for Europeans to take note of the East Asian drink.

When European observers first came across tea, their appraisal of its worth can best be understood as adhering to a value convention that prioritized the preservation and reproduction

Met opmerkingen [MOU5]: Is this right – or do you mean its worth as judged in China/Asia more generally?

[21] Louis de Jaucourt was one of the most prolific contributors to the *Encyclopédié*, especially in the field of botany and natural sciences: Georges A. Perla, 'La philosophie de Jaucourt dans l'"Encyclopédie"', *Revue d'histoire des religions*, cxcvii (1980).
[22] Encyclopédie, vol. 16, p. 226. [please give full reference]
[23] Els M. Jacobs, *Koopman in Azië: De handel van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie tijdens de 18de eeuw* (Zutphen, 2000), 145, puts the total tea imports into Europe in mid-century at 11 million pounds. C. J. A. Jörg, *Porcelain and the Dutch China Trade* (The Hague, 1982), 81, table 3; Niels Steensgaard, 'The Growth and Composition of the Long-Distance Trade of England and the Dutch Republic before 1750', in James D. Tracy (ed.), *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350–1750* (Cambridge, 1990), 132, table 3.12.
[24] K. N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660–1760* (Cambridge, 1978), 386–8; Jacobs, *Koopman in Azië*, 145.
[25] Jacobs, *Koopman in Azië*, 250.
[26] General introductions to the history of tea are numerous, and include: James A. Benn, *Tea in China: A Religious and Cultural History* (Honolulu, 2015); Alan MacFarlane and Iris Macfarlane, *Green Gold: The Empire of Tea* (New York, 2004); John Griffiths, *Tea: A History of the Drink That Changed the World* (London, 2011); Roy Moxham, *A Brief History of Tea: Addiction, Exploitation and Empire* (London, 2009); Laura C. Martin, *Tea: The Drink That Changed the World* (Tokyo, 2007); and Mary Lou Heiss and Robert J. Heiss, *The Story of Tea: A Cultural History and Drinking Guide* (Berkeley, 2007).
[27] Lu Yu, *The Classic of Tea*, trans. Francis Ross Carpenter (Boston, 1974).

of social ties and hierarchies — that is, one based on 'social custom'. The first pieces of information concerning tea that were transmitted to Europe are to be found in the travel diaries and journals published during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In the discussions of tea in these texts, it initially emerged almost exclusively as a ceremonial luxury. This is particularly clear in the extensive diaries of the Dutch accountant and merchant Jan Huygen van Linschoten, who travelled to Portuguese India around the end of the sixteenth century.[28] His *Itinerario* was the first work printed in the Low Countries to mention the existence of tea. Van Linschoten understood the value of tea only as it was embedded within Asian society, resting on the esteem attributed to it by the Chinese and Japanese, on its association with imperial power, and on the social functions that hinged on it. He noted how the Japanese — like the Chinese — after their dinner

> drink a cup of hot water . . . to which a certain powder is added from a herb named 'Tchaa', which is held in great esteem, and so highly regarded, that anyone who has the wealth and estate keeps this water in a certain, secret, location, and prepares it whenever they wish to receive a friend or guest in a grand and honourable way.[29]

For European observers such as van Linschoten the value of tea was construed in terms of its significance in cementing social hierarchies and ties — as an instrument in social relations. For observers outside this particular social hierarchy tea seems to have held little value initially. In the *Itinerario* there is no mention of the taste, quality, effect or intrinsic properties of tea — or of its (potential) commercial value as a commodity.

Van Linschoten was not alone in his perception of tea as something more akin to a gift. A description by the Italian Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci — widely read throughout Europe during the seventeenth century, and written around the same time as Van Linschoten's *Itinerario* — emphasized the same aspects of the plant. He noted tea's role in Chinese domestic sociability, describing it as 'a drink which they use at meals and which is served to friends when they come to visit. On such occasions it is served continually as long as they remain together engaged in conversation'.[30] Half a century later, the Dutch traveller Johan Nieuhof, who served in China on behalf of the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) between 1655 and 1657,[31] described the numerous tea rituals he witnessed in Canton. On the occasion of a meeting with the viceroy of Canton, Nieuhof recorded how the tea was served at the beginning of a meal 'in the manner of all the greats of China, when they wish to treat someone in the most exquisite

[28] Cook, *Matters of Exchange*, 124–8; E. M. Beekman, *Troubled Pleasures: Dutch Colonial Literature from the East Indies, 1600–1950* (Oxford, 1996), 39–79.
[29] Jan Huygen van Linschoten, *Itinerario, voyage, ofte schipvaert van Jan Huygen van Linschoten naer Oost ofte Portugaels Indien*, (Amsterdam, 1596), 106.
[30] *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci, 1583–1610*, trans. Louis J. Gallagher (New York, 1953), 18.
[31] A.J. van der Aa, *Biografisch woordenboek*, 21 vols. (Haarlem, 1852–78), xiii, 215.

way', and went on to describe in elaborate detail how the tea was prepared and served. Remarkably, there and in other references to tea, Nieuhof barely touched upon the taste or effects of tea-drinking, other than noting that it seemed to please the local population. Apparently it sufficed that the Chinese 'praise and boast [tea] like the alchemists do their Lapis Philosophorus, or rather their "Aurum Potabile"'.[32] Yet, on top of this Orientalizing praise, he also noticed that tea was not only served at important meetings, but also consumed by common people in China and Japan. They 'drink water in which they boil some tea, and from the well-being of those who drink it daily, [this drink's] healthiness is apparent . . . even though at times it fills them with cheerfulness, like our own beers and wines tend to do'. Writing around the end of the seventeenth century, Engelbert Kaempfer (1651–1716), a German physician who lived in Japan, still wrote in similar terms about the gift-giving and hospitality rituals involved in the Eastern consumption of tea.[33]

Met opmerkingen [MOU6]: Is this quotation covered by the previous footnote or do we need a new one?

The justification of tea's value by reference to the cementing of hierarchical social ties, by means of a gift or as an act of hospitality, did not remain limited to the travel accounts of those who observed tea-drinking in the East. This understanding of tea also became influential in Europe from the first imports of tea until at least the end of the seventeenth century.[34] The directors of the VOC, which would become the largest tea importer in Europe by the middle of the eighteenth century, notified the governor of the Northern Indies in 1637 that 'since Tea is nowadays beginning to be consumed', they henceforth expected 'a couple of Chinese and Japanese pots' of tea to be despatched in all their ships.[35] Nevertheless, tea does not appear in the VOC trade books before 1670. Rather than as a bulk commodity, tea entered the East Asian import trade in the capacity of a rare but valuable luxury, traded almost exclusively as part of the private trade conducted by the supercargoes, captains and sailor — an individual commerce for private gain, and often in the shape of gifts for those back home. It is not surprising that ,in the second half of the seventeenth century, internal documents of the VOC included tea among the high-value luxury goods along with diamonds and pearls.[36]

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[32] Joan Nieuhof, *Het gesantschap der Neerlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie aan den Grooten Tartarischen Cham, den tegenwoordigen Keyser van China* (Amsterdam, 1665), 16. [I hope this is OK - I know what you gave is a variant title, but this appears to be what is on the actual title-page.]

[33] Engelbert Kaempfer, *De Beschryving van Japan, behelsende een verhaal van den ouden en tegenwoordigen Staat en Regeering van dat Ryk* (Amsterdam, 1729).

[34] On the question of the lasting perception of tea as exotic or novel in the eighteenth century, see Jon Stobart, *Sugar and Spice: Grocers and Groceries in Provincial England, 1650–1830* (Oxford, 2012), 165–89; Bruno Blondé and Wouter Ryckbosch, 'Arriving to a Set Table: The Integration of Hot Drinks in the Urban Consumer Culture of the Eighteenth-Century Southern Low Countries', in Berg, Gottman, Hodacs and Nierstrasz (eds.), *Goods from the East*.

[35] 'Alsoo den Tee bij sommige Int gebruijck begint te comen sullen met alle schepen zoo van Chinese als Japanse eenige potten verwachten': quoted in G. Schlegel, 'First Introduction of Tea into Holland', *T'oung Pao Archives*, Série II, i (1900), 469. [correct?]

[36] 'Dat wanneer nae desen eenige diamanten, peerlen, thee, of diergelijke waeren…': resolution of the directors of the VOC, 24 Apr. 1668, quoted in Schlegel, 'First Introduction of Tea', 470. [OK?]

Many aspects of the Chinese and Japanese tea ritual and its function of showing hospitality, friendship and respect were not only described by travellers and diplomats, but also depicted on porcelain tea wares, and subsequently emulated by European consumers. None of the customs of adding spices, fruits, comfits, liquors, milk or sugar to tea were unknown to the Chinese and Japanese (or their Mongol, Tibetan and Manchurian neighbours), and none were thus distinctively European. The various wares and utensils that went with the preparation of tea spread among Europe's homes, although the Western tea-preparation ritual would never surpass the elaborateness of the Japanese one. Most importantly, the social values ascribed to tea during its conquest of Europe were remarkably similar to those described by such travellers as van Linschoten or Nieuhof. The custom of continuously serving tea for friends and guests was adhered to almost religiously in Europe and its colonies throughout the eighteenth century — even resulting in shifts in time conception and domestic forms of sociability.[37]

III

The preservation of social hierarchy by means of gift-giving was not the only value convention in which the consumption of tea became embedded in the seventeenth century. Not long after its first introduction, the value of tea also became justified by reference to conventions based on the notion of 'utility'. The principles drawn upon for the justification of the worth of tea-drinking in this realm were grounded in medical and dietary thought, and reflected an adherence to a rather different common good: the successful preservation of good health, and thus the efficacy and utility of medicine.

Matteo Ricci had noted that tea was 'considered to be wholesome even if taken frequently', thus alluding to the medicinal properties ascribed to tea by the Chinese and Japanese. In Engelbert Kaempfer's description of Japan at the end of the seventeenth century, it was similarly observed how the regular consumption of tea outside elite and ceremonial contexts brought these consumers all sorts of (unspecified) medical advantages.[38] During the second half of the seventeenth century, tea increasingly became discussed in the medical literature of the Dutch Republic itself. This was a period when botany, anatomy and the medical sciences in general blossomed at Dutch universities, particularly in Leiden, Utrecht and Amsterdam.[39] Tea figured rather prominently in several of these discussions. The first natural philosophers to discuss the beneficial health effects of tea — the Leiden professors Jacobus Bontius (1592–1631), Willem Piso (1611–78) and Nicolaes Tulp (1593–74) — did so on the

Met opmerkingen [MOU7]: Not clear which discussions – expand or rephrase

Met opmerkingen [EHR8]: Full names OK? They need to be consistent throughout the article – can you check this is so – you might wish to include a gloss or note giving alternative versions if there is likely to be any confusion.

[37] See, for instance, Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability*, 171–87.
[38] Kaempfer, *De Beschryving van Japan*. [page reference needed here]
[39] Cook, *Matters of Exchange*, 226–66; Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 889–933.

basis of its similarity to the much more familiar fine spices.[40] Since those spices were almost without exception taken to be 'dry' and 'hot' within the Galenic framework of bodily humours, tea was assigned the same characteristics, and its medical value was grounded upon this understanding.[41] In their valuation of tea, they referred to principles of (medical) effectiveness, utility and efficiency, rather than to the preservation of social relations and hierarchies.[42]

Within this utilitarian convention of value, different sub-realms can be discerned. Until the last quarter of the seventeenth century, the value of tea in a scientific context was justified primarily by reference to authority. The inclusion of tea in the Galenic/Hippocratic medical framework, for instance, demonstrates how tea as a novel commodity was nevertheless understood by referring to the authority of the learned men of classical antiquity.[43] Yet, by the end of the seventeenth century, the nature of medical knowledge in the Low Countries had become the subject of radical change, as the influence of René Descartes' deductive principles made themselves felt throughout the Dutch scientific world. Thus, by the time the medical praise for tea had reached its peak in the 1670s and 1680s, when doctors and merchants from all over Europe glowingly recommended the substance to anyone who could read, the underlying explanations of its properties had changed considerably. Nevertheless, and remarkably, even though medical theory in the Low Countries underwent highly disruptive changes during this period, the essence of what it had to say on the virtues of tea remained largely unchanged.

The most famous among the new proponents of tea was the Leiden physician and chemiatrist Cornelis Bontekoe (1640/47–85). Bontekoe's mentor Franciscus Sylvius (1614–72) had developed a medical framework based upon the ideas of Jan Baptiste van Helmont (1580–1644) and René Descartes (1596–1650). [44] This framework abandoned the old Galenic/Hippocratic four-way balance of humours, and replaced it with a chemic interaction and contrast between acids and alkalis. In his *Treatise on the Most Excellent Herb Tea* (1678), Bontekoe applied this understanding to the case of tea. In describing tea as an almost universal panacea, suitable for curing anything from hangovers and headaches to malarial fever, he

Met opmerkingen [MOU9]: Probably needs a gloss or note.

Met opmerkingen [MOU10]: Does this needs a gloss, or can we replace with 'chemical' or 'iatrochemical' with ref. to previous gloss on Bontekoe?

[40] In general see D. Schoute, *De geneeskunde in den dienst der Oost-Indische Compagnie in Nederlandsch-Indië* (Amsterdam, 1929). On the natural histories of the East Indies written by de Bondt, Tulp and Piso, see Cook, *Matters of Exchange*, 175–225.
[41] Jacobus Bontius, *De Medicina Indorum*, 4 vols. [or parts?] (Leiden, 1642), iv, 88; Nicolas Tulpius, *Observationes Medicae* (Amsterdam, 1641); Willem Piso, *Annotatio* (Leiden, 1658). [can't find this in STCN - is it the 1658 *De Indiae*?]
[42] A similar connection has been observed in eighteenth-century Hamburg: Christine Fertig and Ulrich Pfister, 'Coffee, Mind and Body: Global Material Culture and the Eighteenth-Century Hamburg Import Trade', in Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello (eds.), *The Global Lives of Things: The Material Culture of Connections in the Early Modern World* (London, 2015).
[43] On early modern developments in medicine and the lasting influence of the Galenic/Hippocratic framework, see Ian Maclean, *Logic, Signs and Nature in the Renaissance: The Case of Learned Medicine* (Cambridge, 2002).
[44] C. Louise Thijssen-Schoute, *Nederlands cartesianisme* (Utrecht, 1989), 276–315.

concurred with physicians such as Bontius, Tulp and Dufour, but disagreed on the reasons for this: 'If one asks me if Tea is hot, cold, dry or damp, and in which degree, I reply that such a question is useless and unworthy of an answer, since one should not value herbs on the old and false scale of four qualities and four degrees'.[45]

Instead, Bontekoe argued that tea derived its powers from an alkali: a 'fine, subtle salt'. Others would soon follow this new interpretation. Among them was the popular Amsterdam physician Stephen Blanckaert (1650–1704). In a vernacular book advising respectable citizens on how to eat and drink properly (*De Borgelyke Tafel*, 1683), he praised tea as 'the healthiest drink known to me thus far'. The reason for this, he clarified, was that tea contained alkalis which could counteract superfluous acids and phlegm in the head or stomach. Five years later, the French physician De Blegny also published a book (*Le bon usage du Thé, du Caffé, et du Chocolat*, 1687) integrating tea in the new, chemical approach to medicine, but did so in a way precisely opposite to Bontekoe and Blanckaert. He thought tea to be acidic instead of alkaline, but nevertheless attributed very similar beneficial qualities to it. The ease with which contrasting medical theories could be applied to the effects of tea upon the body indicates that the initial popularity of tea did not hinge upon a coincidental match of the commodity's characteristics with the specificities of a particular medical framework.

The justification of tea's value by reference to 'scientific' principles of effectiveness and utility for bodily health was not limited to the world of academic physicians. Throughout the seventeenth-century Netherlandish world, consumers of tea were highly alert to the commodity's effects upon the body. For the Dutch preacher Philippus Baldaeus, writing in seventeenth-century Ceylon, 'fresh tea . . . has such powers as to make all limbs shake, and make the head light, after only four or five cups'.[46] The Jesuit Kaspar Alardin compared the physical sensation of drinking tea to the acceptance of Christ into one's life: just as tea drives away sleep, so Christ opens men's inner eyes and brings him from darkness to light; and although men at first have no taste for tea, they must learn to appreciate it over time.[47] Similarly preoccupied with tea's strong intrinsic value, a poem written in 1697 by the Amsterdam poet Jacob Jonker praised — perhaps mockingly — the ludicrous number of medical qualities attributed to tea:

> Tea, yes tea one must praise,
> And call the body's best doctor,
> Because the medicine tea

Met opmerkingen [MOU11]: Full name?

Met opmerkingen [EHR12]: Footnote needed here, including page reference.

Met opmerkingen [EHR13]: Again, footnote needed.

[45] Cornelis Bontekoe, *Tractaat van het excellenste kruyd thee: 'twelk vertoond het regte gebruyk, en de grote kragten van 'tselve in gesondheid, en siekten* (The Hague, 1678). [page reference needed]
[46] Philippus Baldaeus, *Naauwkeurige beschryvinge van Malabar en Choromandel, der zelver aangrenzende ryken, en het machtige eyland Ceylon* (Amsterdam, 1672), 183b.
[47] [Kaspar] Alardyn, *Vergeestelijk en hemels thee-gebruyck, ofte beknopte overbrenging van de thee, geestelijk op Christus Jesus toegepast* (Amsterdam, 1696).

Is of daily use.[48]

In an anthology of ballads to be sung during tea-time, published in Amsterdam in 1679, the first ballad implored a damsel to drink her tea in order to remove her pain and suffering:

> The tea will refresh you, and remove all vapours from your head, as well as the pains that rob you from your lust; it will also cool the searing blood, and prevent the vomiting of bile . . . Yes, the noble tea drives away all bad humours that rise from the stomach, and steer the brain. It's a preservative, useful to prevent many diseases. It also quickly dries rheumy eyes, and returns a clear view to the eye's light.[49]

In terms both of the physical effects of tea and the explanations of them (counteracting superfluous humours and vapours from the stomach), popular ideas were clearly influenced by medical theory. Consumers as well as physicians can be seen as searching for an interpretative framework to understand the addictive and rousing effects of caffeine upon early modern bodies.[50] Whether these theories were Galenic, Hippocratic, Paracelsian, or based on the new field of chemiatry, appears to have been of secondary importance. The belief in tea's beneficial medicinal properties did not in the least diminish when the Galenic/Hippocratic framework, which had smoothed its initial reception, was abandoned. It was not upon the specificity of this particular medical framework that the medicinal appreciation of tea hinged, but on its adoption into a utilitarian convention of valuation.

IV

The period of — mostly positive — medicalization of tea lasted until the first decades of the eighteenth century. Throughout this period tea was generally held in high regard, but it was not consumed either regularly or widely. Tea remained an exclusive luxury in the seventeenth-century Low Countries.

Probate inventories, detailing the household goods left upon the death of a parent with a non-adult child, offer some important clues as to the timing of the spread of domestic tea consumption through the Low Countries. In the maritime, commercialized town of Maassluis (Holland), the first teacups can be found in inventories dating back to the 1660s. Domestic tea consumption was still rare in that period, since the first teapot was recorded only in a 1676

[48] J. Jonker, *De vrolijke bruidlofs gast: bestaande in boertige bruidlofs levertjes, en vermaakelyke minne-digten* (Amsterdam, 1697). [page reference needed]

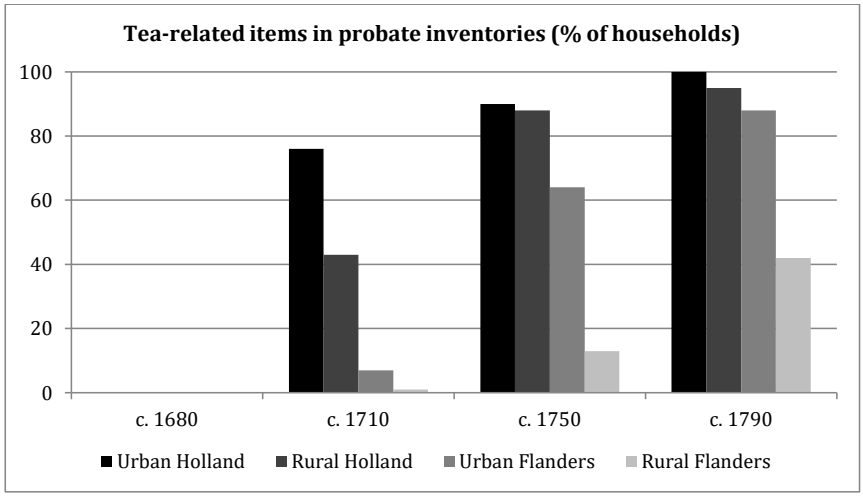
[49] *Het Amsterdamse Minne-beekje* (Amsterdam, 1679), 4–5. [I can't locate an edition of this date - please can you check the title, many of them are slightly different - *Amsteldams minne-beeckje*, and so on]

[50] For a comparative perspective on the introduction of caffeinated drinks in early modern Europe, see Ross W. Jamieson, 'The Essence of Commodification: Caffeine Dependencies in the Early Modern World', *Journal of Social History*, xxxv (2001).

inventory, and the second as late as 1696.[51] Inventory studies for other places show even later first occurrences of domestic tea wares. The first tea goods mentioned in the inventories of the inland town of Doesburg (Gelderland) were recorded around 1700. Although a cup of tea could be had by the clientele of the — still rather scarce — coffee-houses during the second half of the seventeenth century, domestic consumption was primarily confined to the well-to-do or those directly involved in Asiatic trade. Evidence from newspaper advertisements points in the same direction. From the period before 1700 only a handful of advertisements for vendors or auctions of tea or tea wares are to be found in the main newspapers of Amsterdam and Haarlem, while this number would rise into the hundreds per year from the first decades of the 1700s onwards.[52]

The official trade statistics of the VOC do not mention any tea imports between 1619 and 1670, since, as we have seen, it was mostly traded privately. Yet when tea does appear in the official books of the Company for the first time in 1698–1700, only 4 per cent of the import volume is taken up by it — a figure that would then quickly rise to over 30 per cent within the next three decades.[53]

Figure 1. The spread of tea-related items in probate inventories.



Sources: Aggregates based on local studies of probate inventories. For urban Holland, see Hans van Koolbergen, 'De materiële cultuur van Weesp en Weesperkarspel in de zeventiende en

[51] Hester C. Dibbits, *Vertrouwd Bezit: Materiële cultuur in Doesburg en Maassluis, 1650–1800* (Nijmegen, 2001), 157–60.
[52] Based on an analysis of the advertisements from the *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant* and the *Amsterdamsche courant*, digitized and made searchable on Delpher (http://www.delpher.nl).
[53] Kristof Glamann, *Dutch–Asiatic Trade, 1620–1740* (Copenhagen, 1958), 12–14, 269–76; see also J.R. Bruijn, I. Schöffer, F.S. Gaastra and A.C.J. Vermeulen, *Dutch–Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, i, *Introductory Volume* (The Hague, 1987), 192. [is this the correct volume?]

achttiende eeuw', in Anton Schuurman, Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude (eds.), *Aards geluk: de Nederlanders en hun spullen van 1550 tot 1850* (Amsterdam, 1997), 145; for rural Holland, Johan A. Kamermans, *Materiële cultuur in de Krimpenerwaard in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw: ontwikkeling en diversiteit* (Wageningen, 1999), 121; for urban Flanders, Wouter Ryckbosch, 'A Consumer Revolution under Strain?' (Univ. of Antwerp Ph.D. thesis, 2012), 205. For rural Flanders, see Isabelle Crombé, 'Studie van 18e-eeuwse plattelandsinterieurs te Evergem' (Ghent Univ. MA dissertation, 1988); Barbara Depla, 'De consumptierevolutie in de Nieuwe Tijd. De stad Roeselaere en de omringende plattelandsdorpen in de 18de eeuw' (Ghent Univ. MA dissertation, 2005); Petra De Decker, 'Sociaal-economische analyse van de levensomstandigheden in een plattelandsgemeenschap: Het Ambacht Maldegem in de 18de eeuw' (Ghent Univ. MA dissertation, 2003); Ineke Jonckheere, 'Boer zkt comfort: studie van het consumptiegedrag in relatie tot de levenscyclus in het land van Wijnendaele in de 18de eeuw' (Ghent Univ. MA dissertation, 2005); Simon Kuijpers, 'Materiële cultuur in Lokeren, Eksaarde en Daknam in de 17de en 18de eeuw' (Ghent Univ. MA disseertation, 2006); Greet Van der Herten, 'Een onderzoek naar de materiële leefwereld in een plattelandsgemeenschap. Casus: Melsele in de 17de en 18de eeuw' (Ghent Univ. MA Thesis, 1999); Lisa Van Nevel, 'Materiële cultuur op het platteland tijdens de 18de eeuw' (Ghent Univ. MA dissertation, 2005); Siger Zeischka, 'Strukturen en leefpatronen aan het einde van het Ancien Régime: Zaffelare in de achttiende eeuw' (Ghent Univ. MA dissertation, 2001).

Whereas tea quickly became an item of mass consumption during the very first decades of the eighteenth century in the Dutch Republic, it would take longer in the southern Low Countries. In both the large commercial city of Antwerp (Brabant) and the medium-sized town of Aalst (Flanders), no references to tea or tea-related apparatus were found in the probate inventories for the years around 1680.[54] Outside the towns tea would not penetrate everyday life until several decades later. In the inventories of four rural jurisdictions in Flanders no references to tea could be found prior to 1720, and even in the subsequent two decades only very sporadically among the largest farmers.[55] In the Flemish city of Ghent, advertisements related to tea were almost wholly absent before the 1730s.[56] Indeed, throughout the second half of the seventeenth century, financial administrators in the southern Low Countries considered the consumption of tea to be of too little importance to be included in the tariff lists for indirect taxation.[57]

Thus, only during the first decades of the eighteenth century did tea undergo the rapid transition from a luxury commodity destined exclusively for consumption by the better-off to an everyday consumer good within reach of members of the middling and lower social strata. Because of their social bias, probate inventories are notoriously difficult to use as a source for studying the social aspects of consumption, but in this case the extent of change is hard to miss. By the end of the eighteenth century, even among the 20 per cent poorest households in the

[54] Blondé and Ryckbosch, 'Arriving to a Set Table'.
[55] Based on a database for Land van Wijnendaele, Oostkamp, Zaffelare, and Evergem compiled from the appendices of Jonckheere, 'Boer zkt comfort', Zeischka, 'Strukturen en leefpatronen', Crombé, 'Studie van 18e-eeuwse plattelandsinterieurs', and De Decker, 'Sociaal-economische analyse'. [CW check order re: figure legend]
[56] Stijn Ronsse, 'Men laet eenieder weten: de consumptierevolutie in het 18de- en vroeg 19de-eeuwse Gentse advertentiewezen' (Ghent Univ. MA dissertation, 2007), 91.
[57] State Archives of Belgium, Brussels, Raad van Financiën, no. 4506. [is this the complete reference? What is the document?]

Flemish town of Aalst (whose inventories are underrepresented, but not entirely absent from the sample) more than half owned teacups, saucers or pots.[58] In the town as a whole, 88 per cent of all inventoried households owned items relating to the consumption of tea. In the Flemish countryside, dominated by a proto-industrial peasantry, well over half of all households owned apparatus for the preparation or consumption of tea by the last quarter of the eighteenth century.[59] Even among the poor in Amsterdam in the mid-eighteenth century, almost half of all households were equipped to drink tea at home.[60]

Met opmerkingen [MOU14]: Move to note – and rephrase – it's not clear whether poor households are under-represented in the inventories in general, or only in your sample

V

When comparing the changes in the conventions used to value tea with the quantitative evidence for the spread of tea consumption in Netherlandish society, it becomes clear that the medical debates on the beneficial effects of tea predated the actual popularity of tea by several decades. Moreover, by the time tea prices had fallen and widespread consumption had followed in its wake, the conventions invoked in the valuation of tea had begun to change profoundly. Cornelis Bontekoe, mentioned earlier as the most famous proponent of tea in the 1670s, prefigured this change. He had become increasingly critical of the excessive use of tea by the end of the seventeenth century. This was, he argued, because 'cobblers and porters, and their respective housewives, had now placed their grubby hands on those holy goods'.[61]

Whereas tea and coffee had been suitable luxuries for the elites, they became detrimental and potentially life-threatening when consumed by the common people — an argument quite contrary to what had been observed by Dutch observers, such as Nieuhof and Kaempfer, about the healthiness of tea for 'commoners' in China and Japan. The value conventions invoked now became dependent on the quality of the consumer rather than of the consumed. Whereas the seventeenth-century medical specialists, writing at a time when tea consumption was rare and exclusive, had debated the universal effects of tea upon the body, eighteenth-century scientists observed different effects for different consumers.

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[58] Based on a sample of 277 inventories (Stadsarchief, Aalst, Oud Archief van de stad Aalst, nos. 1790–1915 [complete references – there's no collection identifier??]), nominally linked to the tax list of housing values (Stadsarchief, Aalst, Oud Archief van de stad Aalst, nos. 264–79 [same query]) in order to assess their relative position in the social distribution of the entire town.

[59] Bruno Blondé, Thijs Lambrecht, Wouter Ryckbosch and Reinoud Vermoesen, 'Consumérisme, révolution agricole et proto-industrialisation dans la Flandre et le Brabant du XVIII[e] siècle: Malédiction ou bénédiction? Une synthèse préliminaire', *Actes du Colloque de Flaran 2014* (forthcoming). [any further details yet?]

[60] Anne E. C. McCants, 'Poor Consumers as Global Consumers: The Diffusion of Tea and Coffee Drinking in the Eighteenth Century', *Economic History Review*, lxi, S1 (2008), 190.

[61] Cornelis Bontekoe, *Gebruik en mis-bruik van de thee, mitsgaders een verhandelinge wegens de deugden en kragten van de tabak* (Amsterdam, 1686), 56.

The greatest medical bestseller of the eighteenth century, Samuel Tissot's *Avis au peuple sur sa santé* (published in Dutch in 1764), illuminates this point. Not only is tea no longer considered a medicine in Tissot's compendium, but it is now seen as a harmful drink and itself the cause of many diseases among the common people of the countryside: 'the poison works slowly, and affects women and children first'. Yet despite the frequent warnings by physicians, he laments, the evil of frequent tea and coffee drinking endures, 'and is not susceptible to reason'. He believed it to be crucial that these tea and coffee drinkers 'would break free from this slavery, and henceforth quench their thirst only with good beer'.[62]

Similar criticisms of hot-drink consumption by the lower classes, and praise for their traditional beers, recurred throughout most of the eighteenth century in the Low Countries. Writing in 1750, the physician Nicolas Eloy, from Mons, argued that the cheap bohea tea was particularly bad for health. He believed that tea's recent popularity was not so much caused by falling prices as by a declining quality of the tea imported for the lower classes — to such an extent even that the bitterness of the new, cheap tea 'irritates the palate, annoys the throat, makes the stomach turn and even causes one to vomit'.[63] In a later treatise on tea and coffee he observed that consuming these hot drinks had become a 'mania, which spread like an epidemic', especially among the 'middling classes and the inferior sorts of people'. As a result, these people abandoned their regular consumption of beer, which had 'formerly given them the strength and support required for their work'.[64] The final outcome was clear: men had become less strong and robust, lifespans had shortened, and illnesses were on the rise. In those parts of Europe where the consumption of tea and coffee had become widespread, 'the human species [was] decaying', and 'the strength of past generations had become languished'.[65]

During the second half of the eighteenth century such medical warnings against the physical weakness that would stem from general tea consumption became commonplace. 'Our physicians rage against [tea], and say that it weakens the stomach, that we produce weak children because of it, who often contract the English disease; they say that it makes us too weak to nurture [suckle] them; that [tea] is why we look so pale, and what more … but it is to no avail', one Dutch observer in 1770 noted.[66] In England as well, physicians cautioned 'weaker persons' against the consumption of tea, and the Danish natural scientist Carl Linnaeus (who spent several years in the United Provinces from 1735 to 1738) recommended moderation with regards to tea.[67]

Met opmerkingen [MOU15]: Should there be an accent on the E?

Met opmerkingen [MOU16]: Might need rephrasing – at present it reads that the declining quality is the cause of tea's increasing popularity, which seems odd!

Met opmerkingen [MOU17]: This reads oddly in English – could it be 'had languished'?

Met opmerkingen [MOU18]: Gloss please – syphilis, depression, homoseuxuality?

[62] [Samuel] Tissot and [Lambertus] Bicker, *Raadgeeving voor de gezondheid van den gemeenen man vna landlieden* (Rotterdam, 1772), 10–12.
[63] [Nicholas Éloy], *Réflexions sur l'usage du thé* (Mons, 1750), 30.
[64] N. F. J. Eloy, *Examen de la question médico-politique* (Mons, 1781), ii–iv.
[65] Ibid., 25–6.
[66] *De Denker* (Amsterdam, 1770), 54a. [can we have an issue number or full date for this periodical, please?]
[67] Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 1043.

The attention paid by physicians to the unfitness of tea for consumption by peasants and labourers, who needed beer to keep them well fed and industrious, is reminiscent of the traditional criticism of luxury for the threat it posed to the established social hierarchy. Hence, the convention of value justification implicitly invoked here is — again — the appeal to the preservation of the traditional social order and social custom. The weakness caused by tea was one matter for the well-to-do and aristocratic, but damning for those who belonged to the labouring classes. An educational poem, entitled 'The peasant boy' and published in 1782, contrasted the strength of the said boy to that of a sickly rich boy. 'How often that is the case / That rich children are sickly / I would never have thought', the author remarked sarcastically, 'Because such a child is never in need / Suffers hunger nor thirst; / Eats biscuit, and pie, and white bread; / Drinks coffee, tea and wine'. The healthy peasant boy is, not surprisingly, brought up on cheese and bread, and milk and water.[68]

This cautionary discourse on the confusion of social boundaries between the higher and lower social orders and their respective lifestyles was closely connected to a larger argument about the threat to the social, political and moral order posed by exotic and fashionable consumerism in the eighteenth century.[69] Particularly in the Dutch Republic, where the economic decline that set in from the beginning of the eighteenth century sparked a growing intellectual unease, tea became strongly associated with societal corruption.[70] In a telling example, the natural scientist, physician, poet and painter Johannes Le Francq van Berkhey (1729–1812) lashed out repeatedly against tea consumption in his *Natural History of Holland.* Drawing on a discourse reminiscent of narratives of the fall of the Roman Empire, he lamented the inferiority of his eighteenth-century countrymen compared to those of the previous century. In those older times, he imagined, the Dutch had been of a 'stout and wakeful stature', in contrast to the 'lean and slender, but quick Italians and French'. By his own time, this robustness and health had been lost, which could be blamed on their new lifestyles: 'Since tea and coffee were then almost not in use, or only by a very few'. Instead, they drank beer. 'No one', he concluded, 'who observes this, and knows even the least about the effects of tea and coffee drinking, will doubt that this is a primary reason for why our countrymen used to look a lot more fresh and healthy than they do nowadays'.

For van Berkhey, the physical, economic and political decline of Holland in the eighteenth century was directly connected to the widespread acceptance of luxurious novelties.

Met opmerkingen [MOU19]: Right word? Maybe look for alternative if you don't mean literally damning.

Met opmerkingen [MOU20]: Note needed here, including page references.

[68] W.E. de Perponcher, *Onderwys voor kinderen*, 3 vols. (Utrecht, 1782), 404. [which volume?]
[69] See, in general, Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (London, 1988), and, more specifically, Ilja van Damme, 'Zotte verwaandheid: over Franse verleiding en Zuid-Nederlands onbehagen, 1650–1750', in Raf De Bont and Tom Verschaffel (eds.), *Het verderf van Parijs* (Leuven, 2004).
[70] On the intellectual life during this period, see Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 998–1017; H. P. H. Nusteling, *Welvaart en werkgelegenheid in Amsterdam, 1540–1860: Een relaas over demografie, economie en sociale politiek van een wereldstad* (Amsterdam, 1985).

Tea, he argued, was simply not suitable for regular consumption in the damp and wet environment of north-western Europe. More apposite to the natural dispositions of the region were 'our own beers and our gins', as well as indigenous herbs. Unlike the eighteenth-century Dutchmen, in their permanent state of decline, their ancestors had known how properly to use these indigenous herbs, such as lovage, sage and rosemary. Tea thus became a symbol of the French manners that were considered to be one of the main causes of Dutch moral decline in the eighteenth century.[71]

This eighteenth-century reformulation of a classical trope, in which former glory was corrupted by the decadent lure of foreign luxuries, resurfaced many times in the later eighteenth-century discourse on tea.[72] The author of the 'Catechism of Nature' (1779) argued that the cold air in the Low Countries would prevent general weakening as a result of dampness — if it weren't for the 'foolish' and 'superfluous daily use of tea and coffee'.[73] The author of an educational book explaining the main crafts and occupations of children argued that beer possessed a strengthening and refreshing power, which is why the strong indigenous beers were formerly drunk by everyone. 'Yet luxury (*weelde*) has supplanted this worthy custom; and the bourgeoisie, which is always ready to follow the habits of their superiors, now prefers bad wine or narcotic spirits . . . as well as the immoderate drinking of weakening coffee and tea drinks'. The author therefore implored children to be content when friends offer them a glass of beer, since 'then you will see how healthy and strong you'll become'.[74]

The condemnation of tea consumption for its decadence was not limited to scholars and educators. In popular ballads and plays the same denunciations recur. In some of these cases tea was condemned as a sin on religious grounds. One eighteenth-century song describes a dialogue between 'Virtue' and a 'debauched Young Man', where the latter is particularly devoted to his afternoon tea.[75] Another ballad includes tea among a list of worldly sins from which the singer wants to abstain: 'Goodbye, World with your seductive lusts, I have served

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[71] The idea that moral decline lay at the root of Dutch decline was emphasised in particular by Justus van Effen, the publisher of the influential periodical the *Hollandsche Spectator*: N. C. F. van Sas, 'Vaderlandsliefde, nationalisme en vaderlands gevoel in Nederland, 1770–1813', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, cii (1989), 473 [page number doesn't match range of article - please check], and Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 1064.

[72] A Dutch physician writing in 1783, for instance, implored people to abandon the habit of drinking the 'stomach-weakening' tea, and instead to resort to a more economic, and healthy alternative: 'indigenous herbs': *De Denker* (1783). [needs issue number or full date, and page number]

[73] If only, he lamented, 'we had stuck to beer, like our ancestors, we would, like them, fare well by it', and went on to recommend the raising of import duties on tea, and the reduction of excises on beer: J.F. Martinet, *Katechismus der natuur*, 4 vols. (Amsterdam, 1777–9), iv, 150. A similar sentiment can be found in Van Berkhey's *Natural History of Holland*: J. le Francq van Berkhey, *Natuurlyke historie van Holland*, 9 vols. (The Hague, 1779–1811), iii, 636–7.

[74] *De middelen van bestaan, of ambachten, konsten en handwerken, voorgesteld ter opwekking voor kinderen* (Amsterdam, 1802).

[75] Jacobus de Ruyter, *Nieuw liedboek genaemt den vrolyken speelwagen* (Amsterdam, *c.*1700) [I can't turn up this edition other than in a brief reference on dbnl - can you double-check please, and substitute a different edition if necessary], 63–5.

you for such a long time, with Coffee, Tea and Chocolate', he begins, and ends by joining a monastery and finding peace there.[76] All these examples are condemnations of tea as a worldly sin in its most traditional, Augustinian, sense.

Although less explicitly so, the same caution against the danger of the deception present in worldly pleasure is also a central theme in such songs. One Dutch story, published in a lengthy anti-tea pamphlet, relates how Barbara, a girl from Amsterdam, was brought by tea-drinking, and under the cover of several tea visits, to seduce Ignatius, the soon-to-be groom of one of her friends. Unfortunately, the story ends badly for Barbara, as the path onto which tea had lured her ultimately left her 'in the utmost shame' and with 'the loss of her good name'.[77] Another ballad from the second quarter of the eighteenth century offers the cautionary tale of a servant girl who offered her secret lover tea when her master was not at home. One thing led to another, and when she eventually became pregnant and her lover abandoned her, she was left to do 'nothing but cry, and pass her time in shame and defamation'.[78]

Similar stories of tea as a deceptive luxury are to be found in the many ballads of simple peasants lured into marriage by the promise of tea, wine and roast — as exemplary of a bourgeois lifestyle — only to find themselves badly treated by their lazy and spendthrift wives. As one of these ballads summarized the moral lesson: 'All is not gold that glitters'.[79] These cautionary tales of bad marriages often linked the individual vices of those deceived by tea and other luxury goods to broader economic and financial vices. They featured women addicted to tea-drinking and lavish spending on elaborate tea wares, while the poor husband had to slave away in order to earn enough money for her superfluous spending. One early eighteenth-century story described how a woman pawned her diamond wedding ring in order to buy a new set of porcelain teacups, sparking a spiral of lies and jeopardizing her marriage.[80]

These individual vices were ultimately connected to the public decadence of the eighteenth-century Dutch Republic — a place where, apparently, people had forgotten their traditionally assigned rank and place. As such, the repeated outrage — whether medical or popular — over the ways in which improper consumption of tea undermined the desired social order can be interpreted as a conflict between two conventions. According to these moralizing observers, the pursuit of a multitude of individual, private

Met opmerkingen [MOU21]: I wasn't sure whether you intended to draw a distinction between different types of popular songs here? It reads as if that is what is meant, but if so the distinction isn't clear - could you clarify? If the distinction is between the types of caution, let's take out 'same' earlier in the sentence.

Met opmerkingen [EHR22]: Roast what?

[76] Pieter De Vos, *Verzameling volks- en straatliedjes* (Amsterdam, 1700–1710), [is this a page or item number?] 354 [is this a published edition of this ballad collection, or are you referring to the original collection? If the latter we probably need the library details, and shelfmark]. The ballad is also included in *Cupido's mengel-sangen* (Amsterdam, 1707), 56–7.
[77] *De gedebaucheerde en betoverde koffy- en thee-weereld* (Amsterdam, 1701), 39–44.
[78] *De Amsterdamse gaare-keuken, met den blyhertigen op-disser* (Dordrecht, 1736), 74–5.
[79] F. A. Stoett, *Nederlandse spreekwoorden, spreekwijzen, uitdrukkingen en gezegden* (Zutphen, 1923–5), no. 719, 'Het is al geen goud wat er blinkt'.
[80] *De gedebaucheerde en betoverde koffy- en thee-weereld*, 111–19. A similar reference to women pawning their wedding rings in order to keep up with emulative spending on tea wares can be found in De Vos, *Verzameling volks- en straatliedjes*, 195.

interests did not ultimately combine to establish the general interest or good.[81] Despite the defences of commerce as beneficial to the (re)public as a whole — by Pieter de la Court and others — the popular literature on tea firmly held on to the value conventions related to 'social custom', even though it is clear that authors were reacting against a growing share of consumers who did not. A Dutch play from around the middle of the eighteenth century by the playwright Pieter Langendijk contrasts two diligent seventeenth-century merchants with their lazy and profligate eighteenth-century sons and their spendthrift wives. A dispute between the two worldviews erupts during tea-time, triggered by snobbish and immoderate spending on tea and tea wares. The wise, elderly men argue that the whole of the urban and mercantile class is fast heading for economic and financial ruin by attempting to emulate their social betters. The relative economic decline of Holland in the eighteenth century is again associated with the younger generation's sinful passion for luxuries.[82]

The criticisms of supposedly unworthy tea drinkers in the eighteenth-century Low Countries reveal a disagreement between different political economies, foremost among which were the world of the market and the world of traditional social hierarchy and order. This reaction indicates that the 'utilitarian' value convention associated with the market, which had risen to prominence in the later seventeenth century, had in fact remained embedded within an essentially hierarchical world of consumption; hence the dictum that 'not everything is for sale' (as a critique of the 'market' convention), and the criticism of the poor quality of popular sorts of tea (against the apparent dominance of the 'utilitarian' convention over the 'social custom' convention).[83] Dutch philosophers of the eighteenth century clearly rejected the notion, central to the convention of the market world, that luxury consumption by anyone who could pay the price was a socially acceptable practice.

Met opmerkingen [MOU23]: These are what you've elsewhere termed realms of conventons, right? Is it ok to switch terminology like this? (genuine question – I don't know the theory)

In this way, even though they have often been seen as key to Dutch colonial and mercantile success, exotic imports such as tea came to be seen as metaphors for the moral and social decadence that led to the Republic's downfall. The chronology of this change in the valuation of tea, combined with the timing of the spread of tea consumption, suggests a narrative quite different from the one that prevails in the historiography on consumer change in England.[84] In the Low Countries the moralistic rejection of luxury consumption surfaced only *after* tea had already become a familiar and mass-consumer commodity, not as a pre-existing barrier that had to be overcome before tea could be adopted and accepted by European consumers.

[81] See on this Hirschman, *Passions and Interests.*
[82] Pieter Langendijk, *De gedichten*, iv (Haarlem, 1760), 267–73.
[83] See Boltanksi and Thevenot, *On Justification*, 241–7.
[84] A general introduction to the literature is provided in Maxine Berg, 'Consumption in Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Britain', in Roderick Floud, Jane Humphries and Paul Johnson (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2014).

VI

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the theme of the moralistic rejection of tea-drinking faded from the ballads, plays and poems of the Low Countries.[85] Nevertheless, the tendency to value tea consumption primarily based on the quality and status of the consumer, and not on the intrinsic value of tea itself, only grew stronger. Tea became valued chiefly for its capacity to express choice and taste. Other studies of early modern consumption have found a similar tendency towards the growing importance of the 'relative' value of commodities, often based on fashionability or design.[86] Increasingly, the act of tea consumption was valued by reference to other acts of consumption rather than to the utilitarian properties of tea itself.[87]

Tea consumption became closely associated with concepts of domesticity and feminine hospitality, even though this was not dictated by either the intrinsic properties of tea or the cultural meanings it had gained during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Rather, tea seems to have acquired this association primarily by comparison with the consumption of two other commodities: coffee and chocolate. Coffee had become closely tied to male bourgeois culture in the public coffee-house, bearing values related to rationality and thrift. Chocolate, on the other hand, was mostly considered an aristocratic matter, closely identified with amorous affairs and idleness. By the end of the eighteenth century, the values of tea, coffee and chocolate were more clearly defined by their relation to other acts of consumption than by their intrinsic or exotic properties.

In 1780, the former priest Joseph de Wolf wrote a mocking commentary on the lifestyle of the bourgeoisie in Ghent, in which he presented the new ways of valuing tea, coffee and chocolate in a clear-cut manner. He described a fictitious conversation between seven young ladies during tea-time, dealing mostly with gossip, anxieties regarding love and marriage, and the latest Parisian fashions. Tea serves as the cohesive force between the ladies, in an explicitly private domestic setting ('Damsels, be welcome / Serve yourself with tea / . . . / My husband is out for three days / Hunting in the fields / Now we have all noon / To have a good

[85] In the total sample of sixty-seven plays, ballads and poems used in this study, 48 per cent wrote in a negatively moralising way of tea in 1700–29. In the period 1730–59 this figure rose to 63 per cent, but in 1760–99 this declined again to 21 per cent.

[86] For instance, Helen Clifford, 'A Commerce with Things: The Value of Precious Metalwork in Early Modern England,' in Berg and Clifford (eds.), *Consumers and Luxury*; Bruno Blondé, 'Tableware and changing consumer patterns: dynamics of material culture in Antwerp, 17th–18th centuries', in Johan Veeckman and Sarah Jennings (eds.), *Majolica and Glass from Italy to Antwerp and Beyond: The Transfer of Technology in the 16th and Early 17th Century* (Antwerp, 2002); Bert De Munck, 'Skills, Trust, and Changing Consumer Preferences: The Decline of Antwerp's Craft Guilds from the Perspective of the Product Market, *c.*1500–*c.*1800', *International Review of Social History*, liii (2008).

[87] See also De Munck, 'Artisans, Products and Gifts'.

conversation').[88] Around the same time De Wolf also published a second conversational play, revolving not around tea and feminine conversation, but focusing on the 'talking bench of gentlemen' in the coffee-house.[89] In between sipping coffee, a couple of gentlemen politely discuss politics and war, business and trade, gossip and the questionable morals of their time. These are entrepreneurial members of the bourgeois class, priding themselves on their industriousness, strict morality and sobriety. In passing, they scorn those lazy men of fortune, who 'rise at ten-o'clock; wash themselves, clean their buckles, await the wig maker, powder their cheeks, regard themselves in the mirror for a long time, turning around to see whether everything fits; order the servant around . . . drink chocolate, and play a game of cards'.[90] In the literary caricatures of De Wolf, the mapping of distinct social identities (feminine, bourgeois and aristocratic) to the three hot beverages of the time (tea, coffee and chocolate respectively) was unambiguous.[91]

The same is evident in a chapter on the painting of 'an everyday bourgeois scene' in a manual for Dutch painters published in 1707.[92] Central to the bourgeois scene was a tea visit. However, at the end of the chapter the author notes that if one wants to turn this bourgeois scene into an aristocratic one, one only needs to replace the tea with wine, the teacups with glasses, and the teapot with a wine bottle. This epistemology of valuation contrasts sharply with the way in which tea was first appreciated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when its value had been based on a principle of resemblance, rather than on comparison. Tea resembled the well-known spices, and its value had correspondingly been understood on the basis of a fundamental similarity between its famed place of origin (the 'hot' and 'dry' East) and its presumed effect on the body. Moreover, the medical appreciation of tea was rooted in the fundamental similarity between the working of the body and that of the world which underpinned the teachings of Galen and Paracelsus. According to Michel Foucault, this reliance on resemblance as the epistemology of valuation was typical of Renaissance knowledge, language and economics.[93] Increasingly, however, we find, in the changing valuation and appreciation of tea during the eighteenth century, hints of what Foucault termed the 'classical episteme': an epistemological system in which the structure of knowledge is based on difference and identity instead of resemblance. In eighteenth-century consumer perceptions, tea, coffee, wine and chocolate became increasingly juxtaposed with one another as the

[88] [Joseph De Wolf], *De klap-bank der juffers, ofte het vermaek aen de thé-tafel* (The Hague, 1780), 4–7.
[89] [Joseph De Wolf], *De klap-bank der heeren, ofte het vermaek in het Caffé-Huys* (The Hague, 1780).
[90] Ibid., 10–11.
[91] See Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability*, 115–88; Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Tastes of Paradise: A Social History of Spices, Stimulants, and Intoxicants*, trans. David Jacobson (New York, 1993), 15–84.
[92] Gérard de Lairesse, *Het Groot Schilderboek* (Amsterdam, 1707), 182–4.
[93] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London, 1970).

signifiers of distinct social categories (femininity, bourgeois masculinity, aristocracy) that were similarly defined in relation and comparison to one another. In terms of conventions, the justification of value became rooted in the choices made by consumers in a world of competitive status consumption — that is, the conventions associated with the market.

The shift from an intrinsic to a relative valuation of tea, and the corresponding mapping of social identities onto specific acts of consumption, opened the way for acts of consumption not merely to express one's social position, but also actively to perform it. Such socially aspirational consumption was a major concern of popular literature, ballads and plays during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Moreover, since the value of tea was no longer fixed to inherent qualities or properties, the social connotation of its consumption could easily shift over time. A play published two decades before the painter's manual cited above satirically commented on bourgeois households drinking tea and speaking French in an attempt to emulate the aristocracy — a phenomenon that the playwright perceived to be so threatening to the civic and economic order that it could be blamed for a flood of bankruptcies that hit late seventeenth-century Amsterdam.[94] Remarkably, several decades later, ballads warned peasants of bad luck when they tried to emulate their bourgeois betters by wanting to drink tea and other such luxuries. [95] Contemporary moralists repeatedly warned of the dangers associated with consuming luxuries above one's station such as tea — even though what was considered the appropriate station for such consumption was itself subject to change, and what was once acceptable only for bourgeois households might later become so for peasants.

The moralistic ballads, periodicals and pamphlets of the eighteenth century reacted against the emerging belief that drinking tea could free its consumers from social structures and relationships, and that such performative acts of consumption were available to anyone able to pay the price. In other words, these consumers — if not their critics — had come to adopt the principles of the market convention in determining the worth of tea.[96]

Although conventions of valuation with regards to tea coexisted and overlapped in the early modern Low Countries — as they still do today — it is clear that the dominant conventions used to appreciate tea shifted over time. Initially the conventions relating to social custom and, soon after, to medical utility had dominated the discourse of the merchants, diplomats and natural historians who first encountered tea overseas. During the second half of the seventeenth century there were clear shifts in the justification of value within the world of utilitarian conventions, and the first half of the eighteenth century was characterized by a renewed dominance of the social custom conventions following the rapid social spread of tea

[94] [Pieter Bernagie], *De belachchelyke jonker* (Amsterdam, 1684), 18–24.
[95] For instance, *De vermakelyke Haagsche tap-toe* (The Hague, 1774), 14–17.
[96] On the value conventions of the market world, see Boltanksi and Thévenot, *On Justification*, 193–203.

consumption. During the second half of the eighteenth century, when tea consumption reached the highpoint of its popularity, the conventions of valuation shifted towards those associated with the world of the market: stressing the freedom or 'disembeddedness' from social ties that the act of tea consumption could bring the consumer. In this final convention of tea valuation, the economic world of consumption became increasingly detached from the social and moral spheres of valuation.

To be sure, these transitions in the dominant conventions of valuation do not exactly correspond to a modernist transition in the sense of Weber or Polanyi. The ascent of the market convention by the end of the eighteenth century merely indicates that, for a growing share of consumers, the general principle that guided their consumer choices and preferences was no longer the preservation of a divinely ordained hierarchy, but the principle of (economic) competition. This principle was just as embedded in place- and time-bound social conventions as previous conventions had been, and did thus not mark an actual 'great transformation' towards social disembeddedness in an absolute sense. However, recognizing changes in the currency of different conventions through time does allow for a more historical reading of early modern consumption practices than the 'social life of things' literature on material culture inspired by Appadurai has generally allowed for.[97] It is clear that throughout the eighteenth century at least three different, often contradictory, conventions could be called upon by consumers to justify (or reject) the value of tea consumption. The conflict between these three interpretations, and the way they interacted, demonstrates how the acceptance of tea as a mass-consumed commodity was neither self-explanatory nor inevitable, but the outcome of a long-term shift in the values that governed the world of consumption, as well as tea's particular place in it.

VII

If different value conventions could interact, transform and ultimately replace one another, it is important to question the causes of change explicitly. How can we account for the long-term changes in the conventions of valuation applied to tea, and to consumer goods in early modern Europe in general? On one hand, several historians of early modern consumer change have argued that new attitudes towards the value of (exotic) consumer goods were adopted from the

[97] Appadurai, 'Introduction'; and the criticisms raised in Cohn, 'Renaissance Attachment to Things' and Blondé and Ryckbosch, 'In "Splendid Isolation"'.

East.[98] On the other hand, others have questioned whether this transfer of consumer attitudes and knowledge was indeed sizeable, or at all crucial to general European development.[99]

Certainly it is no coincidence that Jacob de Bondt, the Leiden-educated physician who initiated the inclusion of tea in the medical literature of the Low Countries, had been living and working in Batavia as a functionary for four years when he hailed the benefits of tea-drinking in his *De Medicina Indorum* (written around 1630, published in 1641).[100] Despite his university education in medicine, his praise for tea as a universal panacea was ultimately derived not from empirical observation, but from Asian authority.[101] Guillelmus Piso (also a Leiden-educated physician), who republished Bontius' work with extensive annotations in 1658, based his own positive assessment of tea at least partially on the authority of those who had spent long spells of time in the East, referring to former functionaries (*praefecti*) in Japan (such as Spex and Caron), to Jesuit missionaries (including Almeyda and Ricci), andto the aforementioned Bontius, as well as to 'omni Sinensium, Iaponemsiumque experientia'.[102]

Long after tea had become a well-known commodity in Europe, and many people had first-hand experience of preparing and consuming it, scientific discourse often continued to resort to those who had initially written about the first encounters of Europeans with tea in Asia itself. In his encyclopaedic work on the East Indies (*Curieuse aenmerkingen*, 1682), the Utrecht schoolmaster Simon de Vries based his entry on tea entirely on what had earlier been written by van Linschoten, Nieuhof, De Bondt and Piso. Even De Jaucourt, when writing the previously cited entry on tea for the *Encyclopédie*, based it almost entirely on first-hand knowledge from Japan previously relayed by Kaempfer, rather than on any newer understandings that might have risen from European science and experience.

To a significant degree, European perceptions and uses of tea were thus represented in the literature as having been transferred directly from the East. This lack of explicitly first-hand knowledge on the part of Europeans does not mean, however, that the understanding, perception and adoption of tea-drinking practices by Europeans in Asia was informed only or even primarily by Chinese and Japanese practices or understandings. As scholars such as

Met opmerkingen [MOU24]: Might be confusing to have different forms of the name in the article without a clarifying note somewhere? Suggest using one form consistently, with note at first appearance if you think necessary.

Met opmerkingen [MOU25]: Again, is this consistent?

Met opmerkingen [MOU26]: Give full names please, if first appearance in article

Met opmerkingen [MOU27]: Full name please.

Met opmerkingen [MOU28]: Please give translation.

Met opmerkingen [EHR29]: Footnotes needed for both these.

[98] A recent introduction to the literature can be found in Berg, Gottman, Hodacs and Nierstrasz (eds.), *Goods from the East*. see also Riello, *Cotton*; Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures*.
[99] A recent contribution is Jos Gommans, 'For the Home and the Body: Dutch and Indian Ways of Early Modern Consumption', in Berg, Gottman, Hodacs and Nierstrasz (eds.), *Goods from the East*.
[100] 'Bontius (Jacobus)', in P.C. Molhuysen and P.J. Blok (eds.), *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek*, 11 vols. (Leiden, 1911–37), iii, 137.
[101] 'Porro de hoc potu tantas laudes celebrant Chinae, tanquam ista The sacra esset herba, et omnibus languoribus, morbisque accomodatum solatium': Bontius, *De Medicina Indorum*, iv, 88.
[102] Piso, *Annotatio* [page references?]. See, on this topic, Harold J. Cook, 'Global Economies and Local Knowledge in the East Indies: Jacobus Bontius Learns the Facts of Nature', in Londa Schiebinger and Claudia Swan (eds.), *Colonial Botany: Science, Commerce, and Politics in the Early Modern World* (Philadelphia, 2005), and Boomgaard (ed.), *Empire and Science in the Making*.

Benjamin Schmidt have convincingly shown, the pervasiveness of existing (classical) European frameworks of perception and interpretation continued to loom large.[103]

Despite the perceived indebtedness of European attitudes to Chinese and Japanese tastes, then, there are also elements that emphasise the importance of endogenous factors in explaining shifting attitudes towards tea. It could be argued that an openness to Eastern consumer goods was part and parcel of European consumer behaviour — and thus long pre-dated the introduction of tea — whereas the shift towards the employment of utilitarian and market conventions in appraising tea occurred only several decades after 'Asian' knowledge about tea had been introduced in Europe. After all, tea had not been the first exotic commodity to be integrated into European conventions of valuation and consumption practices. Willem Piso, writing around the middle of the seventeenth century, noted that tea's beneficial qualities were reminiscent of tobacco and sugar cane — two plants that had formerly been known only in their native regions, but, once European contempt with regard to the pleasures they brought to indigenous peoples (*barbari*) was overcome, had become more widely and industriously cultivated and spread around the world, to the delight of many.[104] Given this similarity, it is not surprising that Piso largely understood the medicinal qualities of tea within a Galenic/Hippocratic framework, as had been the case with cacao, tobacco, sugar cane, and exotic spices before them.

Consistently throughout the seventeenth century the medicinal qualities ascribed to tea were based on its position within the Classical medical framework, which revolved around maintaining the balance of the four bodily humours (phlegm, yellow bile, black bile and blood) with the help of condiments whose properties belonged to one or two of four basic types: dry, hot, wet, or cool. Nicolaes Tulp developed the position of tea in the Galenic framework more elaborately in his *Observationes Medicae* (1641). He argued that tea's heating properties ('elle échauffe moderément') could help in dissipating superfluous humidity from brain and stomach ('un cerveau trop humide . . . et phlegmatique'). Various authors built upon this Galenic understanding of tea in order to explain why tea was able to stimulate wakefulness, by attributing sleepiness to bodily vapours that could be driven out by drinking the hot and dry substance that tea supposedly was.[105]

Met opmerkingen [EHR30]: Needs a footnote.

[103] Benjamin Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism, and Europe's Early Modern World* (Philadelphia, 2015).

[104] 'Quod si ita sit, non male quadrat cum iis, quae de Tabaco et Canna saccharisera perhibentur: quarum illa olim in natali solo Indiae Occidentalis solummodo herba vulneraria fuit habita; Haec vero instar Iridis circa ripas vaga fuit et contemta, antequam dulcedo eius à Barbaris detecta, tandemque per manus tradita, atque cum labore exculta, tot Orbi ceperit esse oblectamento': Piso, *Annotatio.* [page ref.?]

[105] S. de Vries, *Curieuse Aenmerkingen der bysonderste Oost en West Indische Verwonderens-waerdige Dingen* (Utrecht, 1682), 34–9, who attributes this quotation to P. Martinus Martinii: 'd'overvloedige voghtigheden doet verdroogen, dat het de vaeck weghdrijft, als men geerne waecken of by naght Studeeren wil'.

Why was tea, which had been unknown to Galen, Hippocrates, or any other natural historian from Antiquity, assigned 'hot' and 'dry' properties? Contemporary Chinese sources commenting on the medicinal properties of tea usually stressed its role as a stimulant, as an aid to meditation and wakefulness, and as a rather vaguely defined universal panacea.[106] Yet, if anything, tea was generally considered to be associated with Yin, and regarded as cold and chilly. This was the case, for instance, in Lu Yu's highly influential *Classic of Tea*, where this coldness was recommended for curing fevers and general hotness, thirst and dry eyes.[107]

That tea was assigned 'hot' and 'dry' properties upon its first adoption by European natural historians and doctors is more easily understandable when considered in relation to the longer history of the consumption of exotic luxuries. These same properties were generally attributed to almost all the fine spices that had been imported into Europe for centuries. Spices from the East, including pepper, sugar, cinnamon, ginger, saffron, cloves and nutmeg, had been known since antiquity and regained popularity during the High and Late Middle Ages.[108] These spices were generally described as having medicinal and dietetic characteristics very comparable to those claimed for tea, coffee and chocolate by their seventeenth-century advocates.[109] Tea's position in a long-standing tradition of spice consumption is also demonstrated in its place in Dutch collections that were intended to display the exotic wonders of the world. An anatomical specimen in the famous collection of the Amsterdam medicine professor Frederik Ruysch (sold to the king of Poland for 20,000 guilders upon his death) contained a foetus with a crown of African, American and Asian spice plants: 'twigs of the tea-tree, along with the nutmeg-tree, twigs of cloves, and of the cinnamon-tree, small leaves of the small American fig, and twigs of the black and round pepper'.[110] The perception of the similarity of the 'new groceries' and the spices of the 'old world' was not confined to the world of university-educated physicians: they were mutually interchangeable in contemporary popular expressions such as 'my tea is as good as his saffron', which also surfaced as 'my

Met opmerkingen [MOU31]: I have given his name as 'Fredrik' in the note, as this is what is on the title-page, but it would be OK to change if this is confusing or looks odd.

[106] Macfarlane and Macfarlane, *Green Gold*, 59–88.
[107] Yu Lu, *Classic of Tea*, ch. 6.
[108] Paul Freedman, *Out of the East: Spices and the Medieval Imagination* (New Haven, 2008); Stefan Halikowski Smith, 'The Mystification of Spices in the Western Tradition', *European Review of History*, viii (2001); Bruno Laurioux, *Manger au Moyen Âge: Pratiques et discours alimentaires en Europe aux XIVe et XVe siècles* (Paris, 2002).
[109] For instance, when the thirteenth-century chronicler Jacob van Maerlant wrote his work of natural history *Der Nature Bloeme* while residing in Bruges in 1287, he referred to Pliny the Elder (23–79 AD) and Jacques de Vitry (1170–1240) in order to argue — to cite but one example — that nutmeg is 'hot and dry in the third degree' and that 'muscata does the brain well [this doesn't read well in English – is there an alternative translation?]/ warms the stomach / and digests it contents'. Similar references to the dryness and healthy effects upon both brain and stomach frequently recur within Van Maerlant's overview of spices, and resonate throughout the entire late medieval period. [Can we have a reference to a particular edition of the text here?]
[110] Fredrik Ruysch, *Alle de ontleed-, genees-, en heelkundige werken*, trans. Ysbrand Gysbert Arlebout, 3 vols. (Amsterdam, 1744), ii, 693. On the importance of Ruysch's cabinet of rarities, see Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 1044–5.

pepper is as good as his chocolate' or 'my coffee is as good as his chocolate', or 'my pepper is as good as his saffron'.[111]

The continuity between the scientific understanding of spices in the late medieval era and that of tea during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries not only emphasizes the endogenous character of early modern consumer change, but also links in with debates on the relationship between commercial expansion and scientific advances during the early modern period. The conventions of valuation applied to tea were essentially the same as those used during the Middle Ages, and would only begin to change after tea had been known, studied, and written about for several decades.

Met opmerkingen [MOU32]: This paragraph doesn't seem to be adding much at present – the bit about scientific advances seems like a bit of an aside. Does it need to be a bit more clearly linked to the next paragraph? If it doesn't link in, I'd consider deleting it altogether.

There are thus arguments to be made for tea's popularity to be the result of an adoption of conventions of valuation previously exogenous to European economic thought, as well as arguments for understanding tea's initial popularity as part of an older, endogenous, European convention of valuation that placed high value on consumer products from the East. However, the distance between these propositions need not be large. A significant body of work on the history of cultural interactions between East and West has already indicated how impractical it is to disentangle them. Even if Europe looked at the outside world from a firmly European viewpoint, the confrontation with different — non-European — perspectives nevertheless could have given rise to a crucial degree of change.[112] The Italian historian Germano Maifreda has argued that European expansion played an important role in the transformation of economic knowledge during the early modern period, albeit indirectly.[113] The exposure of European consumers not just to novel commodities, but also to the different systems of economic valuation customary in non-European societies, undermined the idea of a single and absolute value for things — of a 'true' convention of valuation. A similar argument has been made for sixteenth-century Spain, where the large-scale import of gold and silver not only created huge financial problems as a result of rapid inflation, but also — and much more fundamentally — provoked questions as to the true value of things.[114]

A similar scenario appears likely in the case of tea. When, in the late 1500s, Jan Huygen van Linschoten had asked with bewilderment why the Japanese held their decorated teapots and cups in such high regard, they had replied: 'why do [you] keep diamonds and rubies, and other stones, in such esteem, where no profit comes from, and which are of no use other than to be gazed at, while [teapots and cups] at least are also of some utility[?]'.[115] Two centuries

[111] *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*, 43 vols. (1864–1998), entries for 'tea' and 'coffee'.
[112] See, in particular, Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific* (2nd edn, New Haven, 1985).
[113] Germano Maifreda, *From Oikonomia to Political Economy: Constructing Economic Knowledge from the Renaissance to the Scientific Revolution* (Farnham, 2012).
[114] Elvira Vilches, *New World Gold: Cultural Anxiety and Monetary Disorder in Early Modern Spain* (Chicago, 2010).
[115] Van Linschoten, *Itinerario*, 106.

after van Linschoten's travels, diamonds and rubies were quickly falling out of fashion in Europe, while teapots and cups were held in higher esteem than ever. If anything, the extraordinary spread of porcelain cups, silver pots, tea-trays and tables, milk jugs, sugar scissors and teaspoons in European homes during the intervening period provides ample testimony to the relative nature of conventions of worth with respect to consumer goods.[116]

VIII

The dominant conventions of valuation used to justify the worth of tea consumption changed several times during the early modern period. During the period of its first introduction, when tea was consumed only by a very small and elite consumer public, the conventions invoked to justify its value oscillated between an emphasis on gift-giving and the reproduction of social relationships ('social custom') on the one hand, and a stress on the medical effectiveness and usefulness of tea consumption ('utility') on the other. During a second stage, from the beginning of the eighteenth century onwards, when tea imports surged and consumption expanded beyond the upper classes, value came to rest primarily on the principle of competition, and on the relation of tea-drinking to other acts of consumption ('market'). This transition confirms the idea, espoused by many historians that consumption became increasingly freed or disembedded from traditional social relationships in the early modern period, although this was not freedom from conventions in general, but from the particular conventions that had hitherto been dominant. This process can be seen more properly as a form of 'purification' (Bruno Latour) than as a 'great transformation' (Polanyi).[117]

This article has presented a bottom-up view of tea's transition from a luxury to a mass-consumed commodity. Over the course of this trajectory, the general cultural and social principles to which individuals turned to justify their actions as consumers changed. The adoption of tea as a staple in the consumer culture of the Low Countries was neither the self-evident result of fixed consumer rationality and object utility, nor a straightforward expression of a cultural change in which consumers turned to tea for its inherent connotations of domesticity and femininity. The preceding analysis suggests that the interaction between a changing supply context and the individual responses of consumers as actors resulted in a (non-linear and incomplete) shift of conventions of valuation from those in which social custom and hierarchy prevailed to others in which market relations dominated.

Met opmerkingen [MOU33]: Not sure this is quite right? 'a view ... contextualised in literary, scientific and popular culture'?

[116] Blondé and Ryckbosch, 'Arriving to a Set Table'.
[117] Bruno Latour, *Nous n'avons jamais été modernes* (Paris, 1991); Polanyi, *Great Transformation.*

Moreover, this investigation more acutely draws our attention to the central actors in these processes: to the role of travellers, diplomats and missionaries in translating Eastern conventions of valuation for a European audience; to the role of merchants, VOC officials, doctors and medical scholars in shaping a more utilitarian framework for understanding the effects of tea-drinking; and, finally, to the role of ordinary peasants, sailors and housewives, who are more often the subject of condemnation in the texts studied here, than they are able to explain their own conventions of valuation when consuming tea. The evidence from the inventories presented above clearly indicates that a considerable number of 'common' people had already become avid drinkers of tea long before the learned and well-to-do had ceased to disapprove of this practice. The approach taken here thus allows for an argument that takes seriously the agency of ordinary consumers in shaping the meaning of tea in early modern Europe.

However, value conventions did not take shape in an economic and global vacuum. Important changes in the appreciation of tea, such as the condemnation of immodest or socially improper consumption, occurred in direct response to the fall of the price in tea — itself a result of the opening of the direct China trade from the beginning of the eighteenth century onwards.[118] Conversely, the high social esteem attached to tea during much of the seventeenth century coincided with its scarcity in Europe. In other words, the changes in the ways European consumers understood tea were related not only to shifting social and cultural forms in their own societies, but were also part and parcel of the creation of a capitalist world system.

If the shift towards the use of the market convention to justify the value of tea appears to emphasize change over continuity in early modern consumerism, there are no less important aspects of continuity to consider. Different value conventions can coexist, giving rise to disagreement and conflict over the value of things. Indeed, all the conventions applied to tea over the course of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are still with us today — even though the weight they carry and their domain of application has shifted. The transition in the valuation of tea should therefore not be seen as a historical development that applied to all commodities. It is striking, for instance, that in Jan Huygen van Linschoten's sixteenth-century travel account tea was not only described as a product that was treated like a gift, but that it was also omitted from the extensive compendium of Indian herbs and spices published alongside his travel diaries. Included in that compendium were numerous spices, dyestuffs and botanicals that were traded by the Portuguese. Unlike tea, they were described in distinctly utilitarian terms, which suggests that, by the sixteenth century, fine spices were already valued with reference to conventions that would only be applied to tea at the end of the seventeenth century. Moreover, the mid-sixteenth-century botanists Carolus Clusius and Rembert Dodoens

Met opmerkingen [MOU34]: Not clear – can you rephrase?

[118] Jörg, *Porcelain and the Dutch China Trade*, 15–46.

valued pepper for its efficacy in arousing lust, while the natural historian Paludanus wrote in 1596 that 'pepper warms the stomach, and absolves superfluous phlegm', thereby attributing to pepper some of the same characteristics that Bontius, Piso, Tulp and Bontekoe would ascribe to tea almost a century later.[119] In the seventeenth century, at a time when tea was primarily valued for its medical utility, the Dutch poet Jacob Cats (1577–1660) valued the consumption of spices as a marker of consumer identity by comparing it to other acts of consumption.[120] He considered eating pepper and spice to be signs of manliness, whereas sweets primarily defined womanhood — opinions which were shared, some decades later, by the Amsterdam physician Stephen Blankaert.[121] Again, the justification of value — this time associated with the 'market' convention — was applied to spices much earlier than it was applied to tea.

Met opmerkingen [MOU35]: We need a reference for Paludanus I think, unless he's included in one of the others.

Met opmerkingen [MOU36]: I have changed the spelling of Blankaert in the note to match what's on the title-page (as stipulated by the journal style) but if Blankaert is generally accepted I think it would be OK to revert. Google suggests that both are used!

The different chronologies of the value conventions for tea and spices indicate that there was not a single shift in consumer valuations — or attitudes towards popular luxury consumption — in early modern Europe. This is also suggested when the trajectory of tea from a luxury to a mass-consumed commodity in the early modern Low Countries is compared to the more hesitant take-up elsewhere. In Spain, where chocolate was considered the primary domestic hot beverage, tea did not quite gain the same foothold as it did in north-western Europe.[122] Nor, conversely, did chocolate cease to be a luxury in the Low Countries for the rich until the nineteenth century — unlike its much earlier popularity in Spain.[123] Conventions of valuation clearly differed from one society to the next, and from one commodity to the other. They were shaped by a complex interplay between local social and cultural norms (such as urbanization and the role of courtly consumption), and economic factors (the commodity chains that connected the European metropoles with different parts of the world and their resources). Studying contrasting conventions of valuation should allow us better to explain the complex geographies of global consumption that materialized in the early modern world.

The expanding range of exotic goods that became subject to this process of changing valuation and commodification reflects a considerable degree of continuity in the expansion of an outward-looking European consumer culture. Nevertheless, with each transition the concept of value as an absolute truth became shakier, as, by the end of the eighteenth century, the rapid

[119] Carolus Clusius, *Exoticorum libri decem* (Leiden, 1605), 181; Rembert Dodoens, *Cruijdeboeck* (Antwerp, 1554), pt. v, 679–80; van Linschoten, *Itinerario*.
[120] Jacob Cats, *Alle de wercken van den Heere Jacob Cats*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, 1726), i, 316. The quotation dates from 1625.
[121] S. Blankaart, *De Borgerlyke Tafel, om lang gesond sonder ziekten t eleven* (Amsterdam, 1683), 50.
[122] Irene Fattacciu, 'Atlantic History and Spanish Consumer Goods in the 18th Century: The Assimilation of Exotic Drinks and the Fragmentation of European Identities', in *European Perspectives on a Longer Atlantic World*, Colóquios, *Nuevo Mundo, Mundos Nuevos* (2012), available at <https://journals.openedition.org/nuevomundo/63480> (consulted 21 Aug. 2016); Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures*.
[123] M. Libert, 'De chocoladeconsumptie in de Oostenrijkse Nederlanden', in Bruno Bernard, Jean-Claude Bologne and William G. Clarence-Smith (eds.), *Chocolade: van drank voor edelman tot reep voor alleman, 16de–20ste eeuw* (Brussels, 1996), 77–80.

succession of one convention of value by another had emphasized the relative and open-ended nature of all value.

Met opmerkingen [MOU37]: This ending feels a bit weak – I suggest insterting the whole paragraph after n. 125, and then having from 'Conventions of valuation...' to the end as a concluding paragraph. What do you think?