



## **SHARP 25th Anniversary Research Fellowship**

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The 25th Anniversary Research Fellowship generously provided by the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing allowed me to conduct a six-week research stay in London in December 2019 and January 2020, primarily to visit the British Library, the Wellcome Institute, and the Warburg Institute.

The project towards which the grant contributes examines how the culture of print affected the introduction of Chinese medicine in early-modern Europe. It specifically examines how the print-revolution met the until then unknown Chinese world and its medicine in the Dutch Republic. The main objectives are to analyse how producers of print influenced the transmission of medicinal information, and how readers received and applied this new knowledge. Through comparative analysis, this project assesses long-term developments and effects (1595-1750) of publishing strategies, marketing-structures, and the reciprocal relationship between printwork and its intended audience(s). Through systematic analysis of textual transmission in books, newspapers, journals, and pamphlets, together with handwritten 'recipe-books' this research gauges the importance of authors, translators, printers, and publishers in shaping the 'medical consumption' of China, and how these representations influenced contemporary cultural and scientific discourses.

Over the course of six weeks I daily visited the Wellcome Institute and Library, the British Library St. Pancras, and/or the Warburg Institute to consult research materials, review literature, and discuss my findings and hypotheses with colleagues and peers. The Wellcome Institute explores 'ideas about the connection between medicine, life and art', focussing on the history of medicine in a broad sense. Its Library holds an extensive collection of unique materials; most relevant for my purpose is their unrivalled collection of 'receipt' books, containing European recipes for medical (home) treatments. These show how literate Europeans incorporated Chinese medical ideas and products into pre-existing notions of diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disease. These handwritten materials were supplemented by early modern newspapers, books, and learned journals held at the British Library, together illustrating the close connection between commercial goods arriving from Asia and their practical application in Europe. The bookhistorical approach focussing on both manuscript and print therefore provided the ideal opportunity to study both production and reception of intercultural contacts between China and Europe during the early modern period.

To understand early modern representations of Chinese medicine, I aim to analyse how texts are related to each other, and how the form in which texts and images are presented influenced the transmission of their content. The innovative character of this project lies in its pioneering a new focus on the materiality of the printed word through an exploration of the influence of the form and presentation of printwork on the way in which knowledge about China was transmitted. This means that the proposed research

methodology was highly interdisciplinary. I use a corpus of different Dutch text types on China, consisting of books, newspapers, learned journals, and pamphlets. Gérard Genette's concept of *transtextual transmission*, derived from literary theory, provided an analytical tool that guided the selection criteria for this corpus. This notion illuminates the relationship between early modern Dutch texts on China, and how these relationships affect contemporary resonance.

The transtextual component is complemented by a focus on *paratext* – a concept derived from the discipline of bookhistory – which refers to those elements that surround and frame the main text (title-page, illustrations, paper, typeface) together with elements outside of the text (private letters, public announcements, reviews). The resulting data are analysed using an *imagological* method, derived from the discipline of comparative literature, which studies the ideological circumstances and cultural conventions that determine the emergence of ethnic and national stereotypes. Here, the dynamic of the discourse itself is essential, regardless of whether the stereotype adequately reflects reality. Finally, this research integrates the imagological approach with the bookhistorical concepts of *sociology and socialisation of texts* and *the circuit of communication*. Both account for the importance of authors, translators, printers, publishers, editors, illustrators, and booksellers in shaping the medical consumption of China.

The SHARP Grant allowed me to further explore academic research in all its forms, on the way sharing my findings and historical curiosity with a broad range of people, both inside and outside of academia. I was invited to present my findings at the monthly meeting of the *Bibliographical Society* in London. There I gave a lecture on Chinese medicine in printwork produced in the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century. Furthermore, I have started working on a peer-reviewed article about the first Dutch medical journal (*Collectanae Medico Physica*, edited by Steven Blankaart) and its preoccupation with Chinese medicine.

On a slightly longer term, the grant allows me to work on a NWO-Rubicon Fellowship which will be submitted in spring 2020, not only as it provided the research foundation for this application but also because it helped me establish helpful contacts at the British Library and the Warburg Institute. On the long term, the SHARP Grant works towards a NWO-Veni application (Spring 2021). While academic progress may often take place inside the mind, physical travels and the new insights and contacts acquired on the way are of equal importance. A six-week stay in London allowed me to attend lectures by world-renowned scholars, and made contact with relevant researchers easier to achieve. My research stay at the world-renowned Wellcome Institute, British Library, and Warburg Institute generously funded by the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing thereby helped me expand my international network, develop new (historical) insights, and aim at international collaboration and understanding as propagated in my intercultural research proposal.