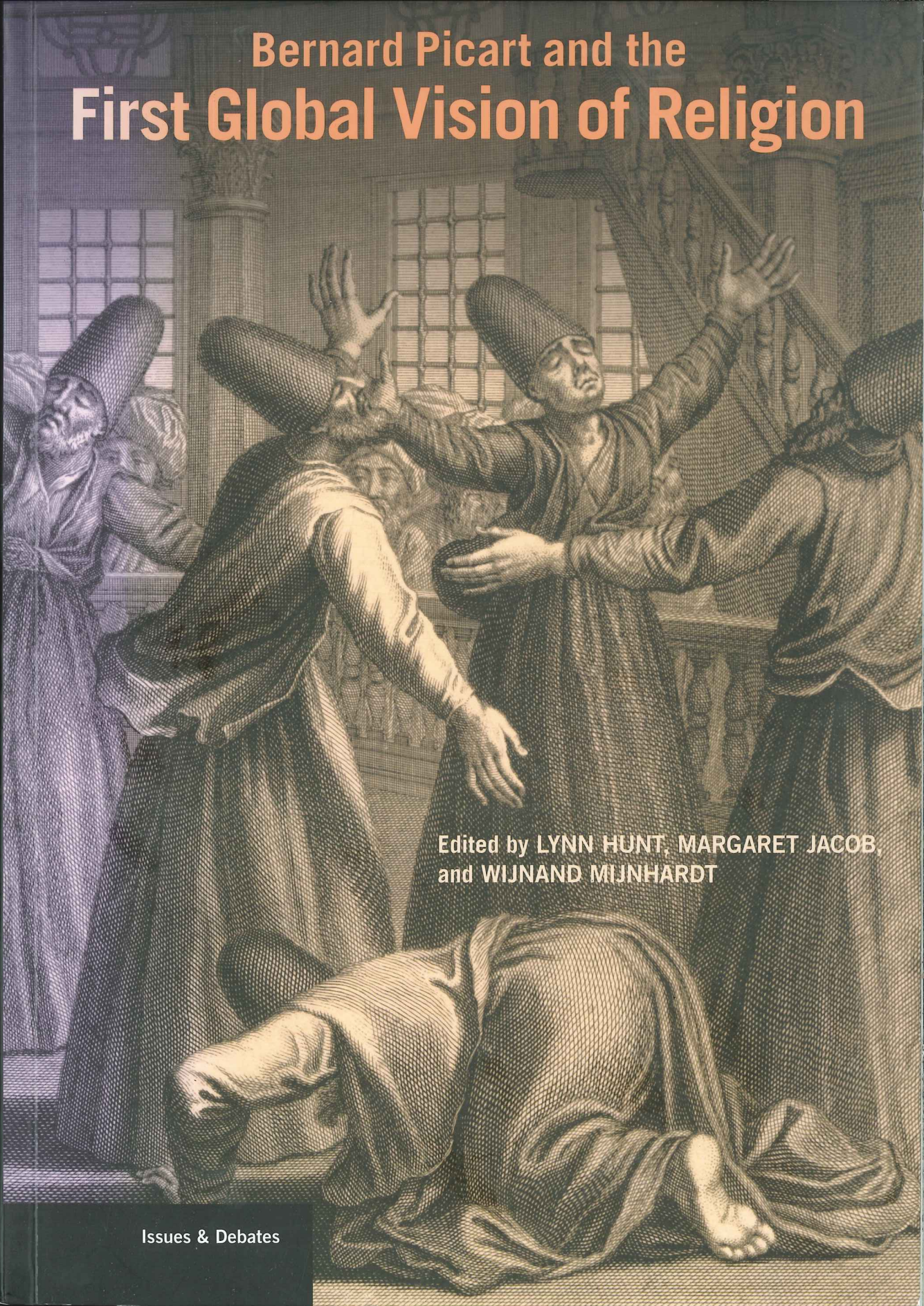


# Bernard Picart and the First Global Vision of Religion

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Issues & Debates





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## PERSIAN PICTURES: Art, Documentation, and Self-Reflection in Jean Frederic Bernard and Bernard Picart's Representations of Islam

'Ali bin Abli Talib stands upright, his right hand is raised, the index finger pointing upward, and in his left hand is an open book. His audience comprises a group of men of differing ethnicities, wearing costumes that distinguish them as Sufis, janissaries, princes, and soldiers. The men sit in a semi-circle around 'Ali, some looking at him, others gazing beyond the picture frame. One among them, wearing a bulbous turban on his head and sporting a full mustache, supports a large stone plaque on which are inscribed eight directives. Behind him is a raging fire, through the flames of which one can see the unlucky souls confined to hellish punishment.

The scene of 'Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the prophet Muhammad, preaching to his followers is one of several vignettes found in the frontispiece to Jean Frederic Bernard and Bernard Picart's illustrated magnum opus, *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde* (1723–43) (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> 'Ali and his group are clustered at the front and bottom of this complex and didactic engraving.<sup>2</sup> From 'Ali to the practitioners of pagan religions, representative figures from preceding religions recede backward through time and the picture plane, getting smaller and fainter, almost in an analogy of significance. The placement of 'Ali in the foreground of the frontispiece may simply be a reiteration of Islam's position as the last of the revealed prophecies, but the visual evidence suggests that there may be more at stake than historical accuracy.<sup>3</sup> The fire behind the man holding the tablet is an ominous reminder that Picart's depiction is not without cautionary restraint. The juxtaposition of the souls burning in hell and the man holding the tablet points toward the tensions between European perceptions of Islam as a false religion and admiration for its association with the most powerful empire in history, specifically that of the Ottomans of Turkey. The frontispiece may be seen as a synecdoche of the entire enterprise, a fragmentary glimpse into the seven volumes. The introductory essay in the first volume sets up a comparative framework that continues throughout the work. Bernard systematically compares a wide range of religious practices in order to show readers that the true path to salvation lies in the "simple and plain . . . Worship of the supreme Being," no doubt reflecting his own beliefs.<sup>4</sup> In fact, Bernard and Picart's Protestantism was central to the manner in which they represented the religions of the world.

The textual and visual display of people and their rituals resembles that of a museum with its systematically arranged collection of artifacts.<sup>5</sup> The organization of knowledge points to the nascent modernity of this extraordinary project. The





comparative method employed in *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses*—focused on religion, ritual, and manners—anticipates that of later ethnographic studies. However, Bernard and Picart were neither travelers nor scientists, but rather gatherers of texts and images. Their genius was expressed in a kind of collage that presents the world in novel ways. Although sometimes the juxtapositions may appear incongruous, there are underlying themes that permeate the whole. Bernard and Picart focus on the role of religion in society and the authority of clerical elites as ways of organizing their historical and geographic material while also proposing their own view of contemporary religion.<sup>6</sup>

*Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* provides an excellent case study of the manner in which the culture of printed texts and drawings informed concepts of difference in the early eighteenth century. In particular, it serves as an example of how the religion and history of Islam were studied by European intellectuals as a means of understanding not only their Muslim neighbors but also themselves. Bernard and Picart developed their representations of Turkey and Iran before European expansion in the region would encourage the drawing of sharp distinctions about race, religion, and the politics of domination. At this moment, the rhetoric of difference was not captive to either religious fervor (as seen already during the Crusades) or imperialist ambitions.

Volume 7 contains the religious ceremonies of the “Mahometans,” followers of Muhammad. Detailed information about the lifestyle, beliefs, and practices of eighteenth-century Arabs, Turks, and Iranians is also provided. Volume 7 appeared in 1737, and although Picart designed many of the significant engravings, much of the visual documentation was executed by his students and apprentices after his death in 1733.<sup>7</sup> Beginning with the life and times of Muhammad, who was depicted sometimes as a hero and sometimes as a false prophet, Bernard’s text describes the history and practice of Islam and compares it with Christianity. Exegetical passages from the Qur’an accompany detailed discussions of the foundational beliefs of Muslims. The last third of the volume focuses on the various sects of “Mahometism,” and the last ten pages dwell on popular religious beliefs in eighteenth-century Ottoman Turkey and Safavid Iran (called Persia by early modern Europeans).<sup>8</sup> The tradition of theological studies of the Qur’an and the rising importance of Arabic and Persian language study in the academies of Europe obviously influenced the text, along with an increasingly popular travel literature.<sup>9</sup>

The volume reflects the centrality of Turkey and Iran to European political and economic ambitions. Knowledge of the religion and customs of the potential rivals and allies of the Europeans was essential and augmented by trends in literature, theater, and music. Information about Iran and Turkey came from people interested in the political and philological aspects of Islamic culture. The pictures supplementing these texts were drawn either by the traveler himself or by an artist accompanying him in the field, but on occasion, the European publisher employed skilled artists to illustrate books based on earlier drawings or their own interpretations of the texts. Travelers also often collected manuscripts and paintings to bring back to Europe for further study. Thus, both texts and images were constructed through complex negotiations requiring linguistic and cultural translation.

Fig. 1.  
Bernard Picart  
*Tableau des principales religions  
du monde*  
From [Jean Frederic Bernard,] *Cérémonies et coutumes  
religieuses de tous les peuples  
du monde*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam:  
J. F. Bernard, 1723),  
frontispiece



Although Picart and Bernard themselves never left Europe, they had at their disposal books and, more interestingly, miniature paintings, which allowed them access into their subject.<sup>10</sup> The relationship between texts and images reflects the close partnership between the author and the artist-engraver. Their collaboration was aided by numerous apprentices and workshop assistants. Bernard's use of the growing literature on Iran and Turkey in writing the *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* is documented by his meticulous footnotes, which cite not only the foundational documents on Islamic history but also the latest publications by travelers in Turkey, the Levant, and Iran. However, Picart did not cite the sources for his illustrations, which points to a more problematic attitude toward visual representation. The pictures of different types of Turks or Iranians, for example, were not straightforward portraits of people observed. Nor were the drawings of funeral processions or dancing dervishes merely illustrations of descriptions found in the accompanying texts. Rather, the economy and complexity that went into the selection and reuse of information foregrounds the purposeful manner in which the *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* was composed, although one in which the style and subject of non-European works of art were sometimes misunderstood. It belongs in a continuum of studies dedicated to Islam and the history of early-eighteenth-century European art. In addition, due consideration must be paid to the manner in which Bernard and Picart's vision provided new and radical contexts for previous approaches to the art of documentation.

### Volume 7 and Its Sources

Islamic history is merged into an assemblage of academic and impressionistic study. Although much of Bernard's concern is with the distant past, that is, Muhammad's Arabia, the modern history of the Ottomans and Safavids supplements the primary goal of explicating the ceremonies and customs of Muslims. While sometimes the particulars of political and ethnic identity are confused, there is a clear awareness of distinctions between the religions of, say, the Sunni Ottomans and the Shi'ite Safavids, a point often overlooked by modern commentators on the travel and documentary literature of the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. The manner in which Bernard and Picart interpreted these distinctions evinces a sophisticated and self-conscious awareness of Islamic history that went far beyond simple polemics against the Muslim "Other."<sup>11</sup>

Bernard utilized a large number of well-known sources when writing volume 7, and they may be divided into two main categories. The first included authors who studied the Qur'an and early Islamic history by utilizing primary Arabic literature or its translations. For Muhammad's life, Bernard relied heavily on the work of the scholar Jean Gagnier, who used the Qur'an, Sunna (exemplars from the life of Muhammad), and Arab chronicles.<sup>12</sup> In addition, works such as Barthélemy d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque orientale; ou, Dictionnaire universel* (1697; Oriental library; or, The universal dictionary) and George Sale's definitive translation of the Qur'an into English in 1734 laid the groundwork for a close study of Islamic theology and practice.<sup>13</sup> An interest in historical figures from diverse religious and geographic



localities defined the eighteenth century, as exemplified in Henri de Boulainvilliers's *La vie de Mahomed* (1730; *The life of Mahomet*), which is among the most comprehensive and sympathetic descriptions of early Islamic history and is cited extensively by Bernard in volume 7.<sup>14</sup> The use of sources giving current points of view on Islamic history points to the significance of *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* as a documentation of contemporary engagement with Islam.

The second group of sources utilized in *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* consisted of narratives written by European merchants, ambassadors, and adventurers traveling in the Levant, Turkey, and Iran. These were in the form of illustrated travelogues and chronicles of diplomatic exchange. Just as the authors of books on language and Qur'anic exegesis utilized primary sources in Arabic and Persian, travelers recorded their "authentic" experiences, which were very highly valued for the voyeuristic pleasure provided to the armchair travelers back in Europe. The literature utilized in volume 7 reported on the current political state of the Ottoman and Safavid empires. Traveler-authors made intricate observations about the culture, the people, their customs, and even their clothing. This type of illustrated travel account "[got] to the bottom of things, precisely because 'art' (or the lack thereof) seems to hold itself aloof from any generally available convention of signification."<sup>15</sup> However, this empirical method belied the imposing presence of a particular point of view deployed by the traveler.

As the accounts make clear, the travelers had knowledge of the language or had with them translators and interpreters, who acted as guides and facilitators. Thus, the information gleaned in the pages of early modern travelogues comes not just from the voice of the European traveler but also from his unnamed native companion. Studies on later colonialist literature have exposed more clearly the role of the "native" as an autonomous and complex figure who is often embedded in the identity of the empire. It is also the case that early modern discourses were formed through reciprocal, if not unproblematic and unequal, modes of communication. Sometimes named, and other times characterized as "rumors" heard in the bazaars by the traveler, these mediators were the primary sources of cultural and political knowledge, whether in Istanbul or Isfahan.

Europeans always rendered the drawings in travel literature; however, these images were also the result of differing modes of translation. Although artists accompanying the traveler often drew what they observed (or what they thought they were observing), their access was also mediated through works of art encountered and collected in the cities they visited. Renditions of cityscapes complemented depictions of their inhabitants, consisting of officers and clergy, men and women. Artists and travelers recorded their images from experiences both real and imagined. In narrating what they saw in words and pictures, these authors often gave the reader insight into themselves and the contexts from which their work arose. Thus, the travelogues are hybrid entities. They negotiate time and space, merge the personal and the communal, and blur the distinctions between the documentary and the fictional.

Foremost in the genre of travel literature utilized by Bernard and Picart were works such as Paul Rycart's *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (1667), Jean de Thévenot's *Suite du voyage de Levant* (1674; *The travels of Monsieur Thévenot into*

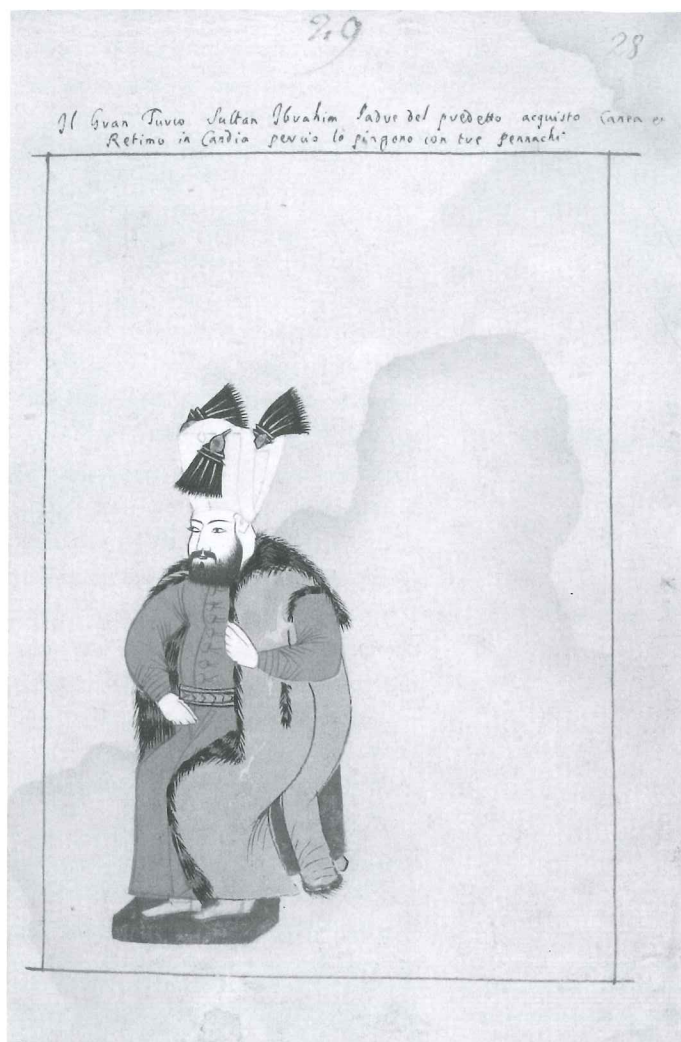




the Levant), and John Chardin's *Journal du voyage du Chevalier Chardin en Perse et aux Indes Orientales* (1686; The travels of Sir John Chardin into Persia and the East Indies).<sup>16</sup> The primary motivation for these travelers was to gain knowledge about the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals in order to further the ideological agenda of the European patrons who had underwritten their travels. Thus, the political dimension of Bernard and Picart's sources—whether awash in religious fervor or diplomatic posturing—is critically important in understanding the agenda of *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses*.

Travelers had individual political and religious points of view. The reasons for travel were also unique; for example, Rycart had been hired in 1660 as a chancellor and private secretary to the ambassador of the English mission to the Ottoman court. As his Turkish improved so too did his ability to write authoritatively about relations and activities between the English and the Ottomans. Although the illustrators of *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire* remain unknown, the images





of the various Ottoman officers and the differing ethnicities that made up the Turkish Empire were based on firsthand observation (their own or that of earlier observers). However, when confronted with subjects they had not seen, such as the sultan (fig. 2), the illustrators may have resorted to Ottoman miniature paintings and costume books produced in Istanbul for European patrons (fig. 3). This form of reinterpretation goes beyond the simple "curiosity" that has often been ascribed to the collecting of art by European courts. Rather, the use of Ottoman paintings as viable models speaks to an attempt to translate images from one culture into the visual language of another through an appropriation of their modes of representation.<sup>17</sup>

In *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses*, the Ka'ba in Mecca, the holiest site for all Muslims, was depicted in a manner that clearly drew inspiration from Ottoman and earlier Islamic sources. Titled *Le temple de la Mecque*, the image illustrates the text, and its manner of rendition aims to provide a "realistic" portrayal of its

Fig. 2.  
Sultan Mahomet Han the  
Present Emperor of the Turkes  
Aged 26 Years Anno 1669  
From Paul Rycaut, *The History  
of the Present State of the  
Ottoman Empire: Containing  
the Maxims of the Turkish  
Polity, the Most Material Points  
of the Mahometan Religion...*  
(London: Starkey & Brome,  
1675), p. 6

Fig. 3.  
Sultan Ibrahim Enthroned  
From Gastallan *Histori  
Tahtureks*, ca. 1645–48,  
MS 2380, fols. 28–29  
Istanbul, Deniz Müzesi Kitaplığı



subject (fig. 4). The city of Mecca was the birthplace of Muhammad, and the Ka'ba is believed by Muslims to have been built by the prophet Abraham. Although inaccessible to non-Muslims, Mecca was the source of great fascination for seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europeans, who wrote vivid descriptions about the architecture as well as the rituals that took place within its sacred precincts. In volume 7, a variety of methods are used to give a full picture of this sanctuary, from its recorded history to myths about its origins, to the precise measurements of the Ka'ba.

A double-page engraving opens to reveal an axonometric view of the Ka'ba within an arcaded enclosure. Unlike the other images in volume 7, this remarkable drawing is unsigned. Instead, a legend is written below the frame, listing the five primary sites called out in the drawing, starting with the black stone mounted on the wall of the Ka'ba. According to Bernard, his main sources of information on the Ka'ba were the Swedish missionary Michel Eneman and the Dutchman Adriaan Reelant. A printed version similar to the engraving in *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* had been published by Reelant in 1717 and was believed to have been based on an Ottoman (Turkish) representation procured by Eneman on his travels in Egypt and Arabia.<sup>18</sup> The model for the engraving of the Ka'ba was thus in another "language" altogether, that is, one more closely related to Ottoman and Arab traditions than to French or Dutch ones. The engraver followed the convention of identifying the specially designated pilgrimage sites of the Ka'ba, laying emphasis on the same sites that were often called out by Ottoman artists. In addition, visual devices directly influenced by Ottoman depictions of the Ka'ba include the flattened axonometric view, which was in contrast to the more common perspectival one favored by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European artists.

Ottoman pilgrimage manuals could have been useful sources of visual information on the Ka'ba, as they were easily available and were collected by Europeans who traveled to Istanbul and Cairo. An illustrated guide from 1580, with descriptions of the holy sites of Mecca and Medina, provides an example of such images, which could be found on decorative tiles, in single-sheet paintings, and on carpets (fig. 5). Thus, although Bernard suppresses the validity of Ottoman art by writing that "the Turks are not able to give us a compleat Representation of it [the Ka'ba], being intirely ignorant of the Art of Painting or Drawing," in truth the original image was most likely an Ottoman one, much like the portrait of the sultan used in Rycart's *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire*.<sup>19</sup>

However, the engraving is crucially different from the Ottoman painting through the addition of human figures. The scale appears awkward, and the figures, seemingly dropped into the vast courtyard, look like ants crawling every which way. Even though there were innumerable manuscripts with depictions of humans and animals in the Islamic world at this and earlier times, it has always been considered inappropriate to include them in religious buildings or books. The European illustrator of the Ka'ba would have had some textual knowledge of the measurements of the buildings, and Ottoman paintings would have provided information about their locations and shapes, but the human scale had to be invented. In the end, the abstraction of the Ottoman style and the lack of figures did not translate into the

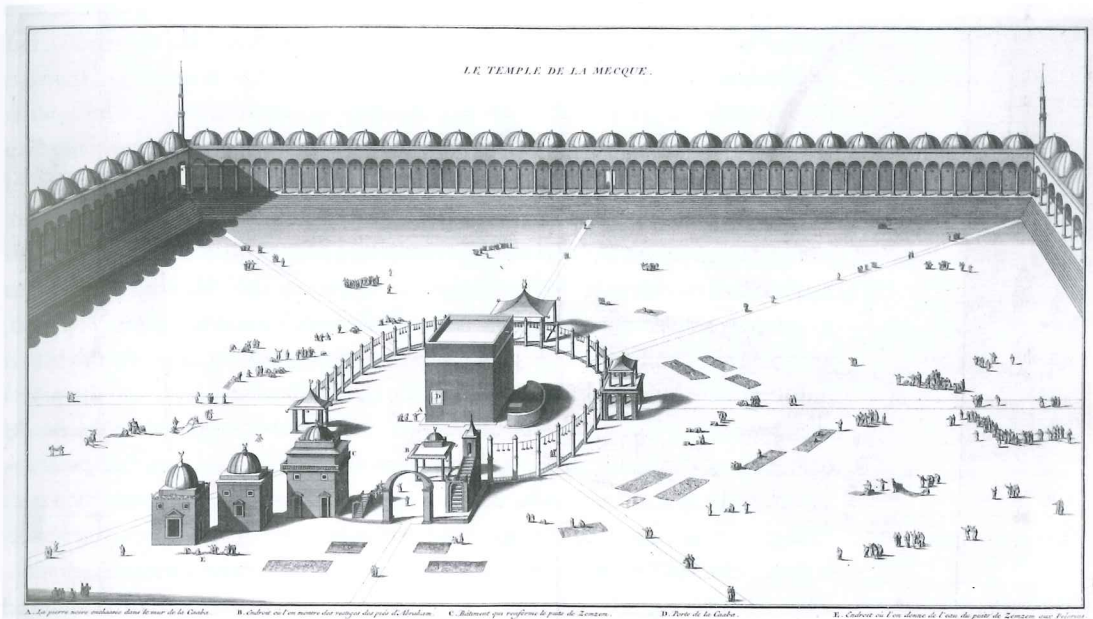


Fig. 4.  
Bernard Picart  
*Le temple de la Mecque*  
From [Jean Frederic Bernard,] *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde*, vol. 7 (Amsterdam: J. F. Bernard, 1737), "Dissertation sur les commencements du mahometisme," after p. 70

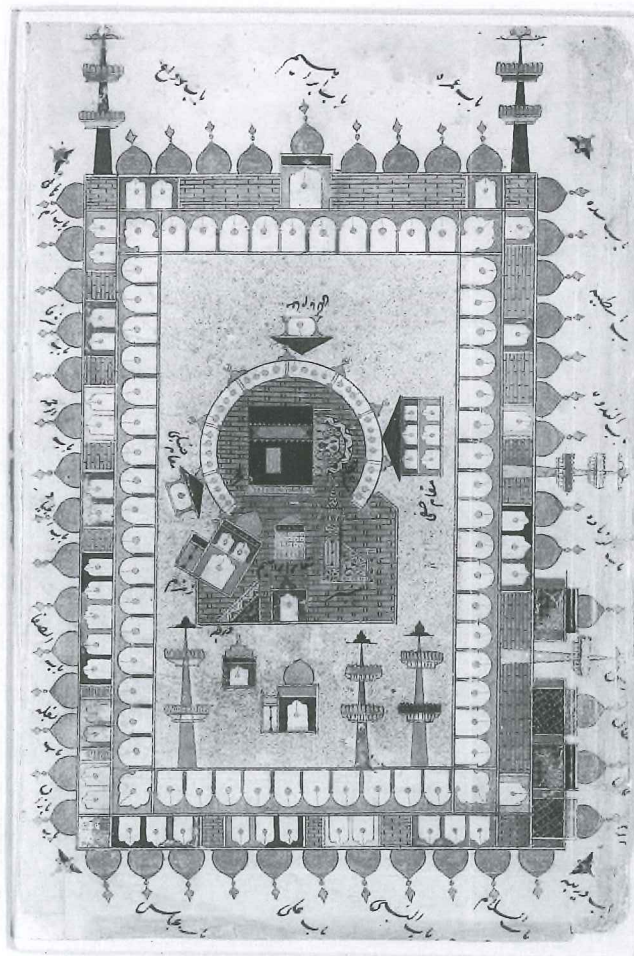


Fig. 5.  
Leaf of a pilgrimage guide depicting the Ka'ba in Mecca  
From the manuscript *Majmuah* [(Anthology) of Four Persian Texts, with Sixteen Paintings, 16th and 17th centuries, 1985.265, fol. 20v  
Cambridge, Arthur M. Sackler Museum



European artist's attempts at creating a narrative illustration showing "real" spaces and peoples. The artist has captured the image (and analogously, the words), but not its significance.

The use of Ottoman visual sources to depict sultans or holy sites, both often inaccessible to European travelers, contradicts a common refrain in early modern travel literature, which denigrated the arts of the Ottoman and Safavid courts.<sup>20</sup> If the sources for Islamic history and language, such as Abu'l-Fida, are acknowledged, why then a negation of the visual sources used? In later colonialist discourse, cultural artifacts were mobilized as evidence of an inferior race or political entity, but in the early eighteenth century, the same framework cannot be so easily applied, especially in the context of Picart's illustrative program. It is well known that European artists, such as Peter Paul Rubens, collected and copied miniature paintings; however, less is understood about the evaluation and reception of these works of art (fig. 6). Certainly, art was understood in *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* as a form of cultural expression, as were costumes and religion. It is known that Picart himself copied from Indian manuscripts some of those images appearing in volume 4.<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, when rendered in artists' notebooks and used as inspiration, such paintings provided more than simply insight into the cultures that produced them. They functioned as forms of mediation, however unacknowledged, and were appreciated for the visual pleasure they provided as well as for the documentary information they contained.

Fig. 6.  
Peter Paul Rubens (Flemish,  
1577–1640)  
*Four Figures in Persian Dress*,  
1592–1620, pen and brown ink,  
occasionally with brown  
or gray wash, 39.8 × 26 cm  
(15½ × 10¼ in.)  
From Peter Paul Rubens,  
*The Costume Book*, PD 1841–  
12–11–8, fols. 37–38  
London, British Museum



### Documenting Muslims: Turks and Persians

Bernard begins volume 7 by presenting the life of Muhammad and the circumstances in which the Qur'an was revealed. While providing us with a historical narrative, the author also offers judgments that invalidate Muhammad's prophetic mission. Thus, there is admiration for the charismatic leader, but it is overshadowed by distrust; Muhammad is portrayed as an impostor, but also a gifted statesman. Bernard, relying on sources such as Reelant, recognizes the Qur'an's sophistication, calling it akin to "sublime . . . Poetry," yet its miraculous nature is undermined.<sup>22</sup> "Mahometanism," the very term used, forces a comparison with the religion of Christ, but also makes Muhammad into an idol. Islam diminishes into the cult of Muhammad, similar to the Catholic cult of saints and the worship of icons that Bernard criticizes elsewhere in *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses*.

Most of the authors cited in volume 7 sought to reconcile Islam, seen as inferior, with the political realities of the past millennium in which Muslim armies were victorious against the Christians, be they Crusaders, Byzantines, or Catholics. The question Bernard asks in the chapter titled "On the Rise of Mahometism" is how could this religion become so powerful?<sup>23</sup> In answering that, he points the finger back at Christianity, which he claims had become spiritually and politically weak and therefore deserving of defeat at the hands of the Ottoman sultan. In this manner, the interest in *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* was less in studying the superior political systems of the Muslims and more in justifying their power by critiquing what was misguided in Christian (notably, Catholic) ideology.

Contemporary Muslims were an important subject for Bernard and Picart. Even as they attempted to make connections with the life and religion of Muhammad, the seventh century was conflated with the eighteenth in intriguing ways. Their visual documentation included officials and dignitaries, mystics and mendicants, as well as women, weddings, funerals, and the commemoration of religious events.<sup>24</sup> The focus was not limited to "Arabs," but included "Persians," "Turks," and "Africans." The visual program of the *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* departs from the historical and travel literature that it draws upon, and it must indeed be situated within the tradition of European artistic production. Consider an engraving by Picart, *Le moufti, ou chef de la loy* (The mufti, or head of the law), in which an Ottoman cleric is shown in an interior setting (fig. 7). With his large turban and fur-lined coat, this figure closely resembles that of the emir shown in Nicolas de Nicolay's *The Navigations, Peregrinations, and Voyages, Made into Turkie* (1585), but the "situation" has been augmented (fig. 8).<sup>25</sup> The grand cleric in Picart's rendition preaches to men sitting behind him, listening with grave attention. A large curtain to his side echoes the drapes of his gown. The pose is dramatic and yet incomplete: the raised arm and forward step make us believe that we're witnessing a scene in which action is taking place. Books such as Nicolay's could be used as pattern books, that is, for describing people, their attire, and gestures. Picart's earlier experience making engravings of costumes and performances served him well here and reminded viewers of the great interest in Ottoman and Safavid themes found in the music and theater of the period.<sup>26</sup>





LE MOUFTI, ou Chef de la Loy.

**Fig. 7.**  
Bernard Picart  
*Le moufti, ou chef de la loy*  
From [Jean Frederic Bernard,]  
*Cérémonies et coutumes*  
*religieuses de tous les peuples*  
*du monde*, vol. 7 (Amsterdam:  
J. F. Bernard, 1737), "Suite  
de la dissertation precedente;  
ou, Description générale des  
cérémonies religieuses du  
Mahometisme," after p. 248

**Fig. 8.**  
*Emir, a Kinseman of Mahomet*  
From Nicolas de Nicolay, *The*  
*Navigations, Peregrinations,*  
*and Voyages, Made into Turkie*,  
ed. John Stell, trans. Thomas  
Washington (London: Thomas  
Dawson, 1585)

The drawing of the mufti moves far beyond the documentation of ethnic or social types: Picart animates the scene by situating the figure within narrative and spatial contexts. Like the influential art theorist Charles Le Brun, Picart laid emphasis on the ability of the human body to convey meaning through gestures.<sup>27</sup> The concern with such expression brings the drawing of the mufti into the realm of art and situates Picart's work within the broader discourse of early eighteenth-century painting. Thus, *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* departed from its sources in important ways, specifically the travel account, requiring the viewer to participate in an artistic endeavor that moved from an engagement with visual authenticity toward an emotive connection with human subjectivity. Picart's drawings, while on the surface appearing documentary, invite an imaginative intervention by the viewer. They therefore promote the idea of an "ethnography" whose service is oriented toward not just science but also art.

The economic reuse of images was under way within volume 7 itself, such that Picart's drawing of the mufti is a copy of the figure of Imam 'Ali in the frontispiece.



It is in the nature of engravings that copies can be made and plates reused; however, here there is a change in scale as well as subject matter. Certainly, the event of preaching a sermon is shared both by the cleric and the historical figure; they also share the contrapposto pose, the dramatic arm gesture, and the intense expression in their eyes. The manner in which the entire group of documentary images in volume 7 was compiled—through distinctions based on geographic and political boundaries—requires that we look more closely at what those distinctions came to mean in the *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses*. For both Bernard and Picart, choice and difference—as shown by the diversity of their subjects—were defining aspects of humanity, despite their inclination to foreground similarities and universals.

Picart animated the images copied from previous authors and situated his subjects not only in the distant past but also in the present. The conflation of a proto-ethnography and the arts—encompassing theater, music, literature, and painting—produced a complex set of images that European audiences could respond to. Trends in painting and engraving leaned heavily toward narrative



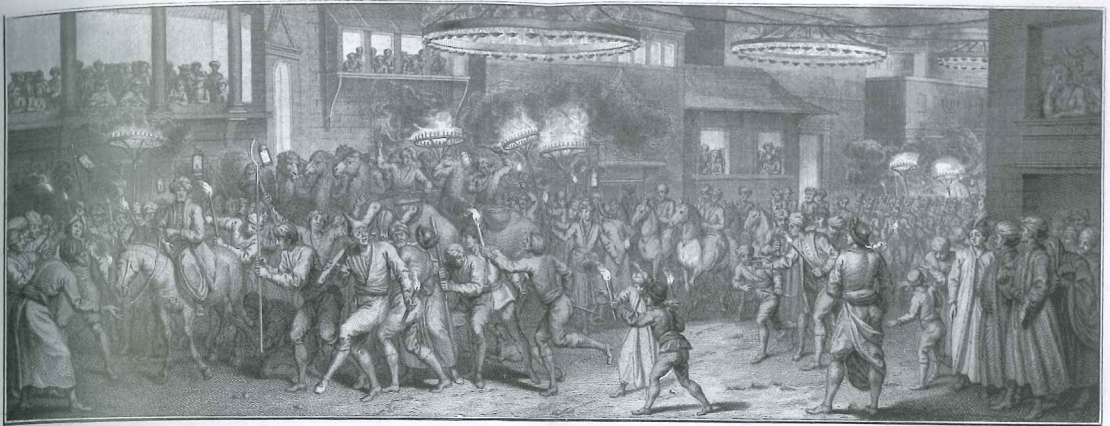
scenes, but how to do this visually when faced with having only textual evidence? On the one hand, the artists of volume 7 had to give narrative contexts to descriptions of people, costumes, and objects that were not "eventful." On the other hand, there was the question of how to depict sites and ceremonies for which the artists had no precedent, similar to the issue raised earlier in regard to the Ka'ba. Travel literature about Turkey and Iran did provide images of people and costumes, yet public events were seldom chosen for illustration, even if they were described in detail.<sup>28</sup> Although authors took pains to draw the reader into imagining the rites of say, the Turks, by finding parallels to Christian ones, the visual counterpoint was sometimes more difficult. Even Ottoman or Persian miniatures were inadequate, as their codes of depicting action were abstracted and sometimes difficult to translate. In addition, their artists seldom portrayed daily or ritual praxis that would have seemed "useful" to those illustrating volume 7.

The description of public ceremonies and private rituals permitted a comparative framework within Islam itself; it also allowed Bernard and Picart to employ empathy and antipathy as a way to criticize Christian sects. The variety of travel literature available to Bernard and Picart meant that they could glean important and subtle differences between Arabs, Turks, and Iranians. As noted, the primary sources utilized for contemporary life were Jean de Thévenot on Turkey and the Levant, and John Chardin on Iran. The aim of these authors, as reiterated by Bernard, was not to homogenize, but rather to explain the distinctions between religious and ethnic groups. Thus, it is not surprising that Bernard highlights the religious differences between the Sunni beliefs of the Turks and the Shi'ite ones of their Safavid rivals.

The drawings allow comparisons in ways that were sometimes more effective than textual descriptions. For example, two public events are depicted on a page divided into registers, one of the Turks and the other of the "Persians" (fig. 9). It is signed "L. F. D. B. inv." in the bottom left corner and "B. Bernaerts Sculp" in the right—the names of the designer and engraver of the drawings, respectively (L. F. D. B. was the artist Louis Fabricius Dubourg; the engraver was Balthasar Bernaerts).<sup>29</sup> The top image is titled *Le carnaval des Turcs* and corresponds to Thévenot's descriptions of Ottoman festivities enacted during Ramadan, the month of fasting. Bernard's synopsis is somewhat confused and this holiest of Muslim months is characterized as "a Mixture of Devotion and Debauchery."<sup>30</sup> Drawing attention to the accompanying engraving, Thévenot's description is quoted verbatim, detailing the processions through the city, the lighting of lamps and torches, and other activities. Dubourg relates the images to specific descriptions in the text but also inserts his own interpretation. A collection of architectural elements represents Istanbul. The incongruous use of large, circular lamps—a typical feature on the interior of Ottoman mosques—effectively illustrates a night scene, with characters from the text parading through. Although Thévenot's description is relatively neutral, in the engraving, greater attention is given to the "debauched" Turks than to the devotion that was at the heart of the event. The density of the population, horses and camels, smoke, and running figures in the foreground reinforce the sense of chaos that permeated the event, rather than the sacredness of the occasion. The label of "carnival" would have

Fig. 9.

Balthasar Bernaerts (Dutch, act. 1711–37), after Louis Fabricius Dubourg (Dutch 1693–1775) *Le carnaval des Turcs and La fête d'Hussein* From [Jean Frederic Bernard,] *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde*, vol. 7 (Amsterdam: J.F. Bernard, 1737), "Suite de la dissertation precedente; ou, Description générale des cérémonies religieuses du Mahometisme," after p. 258



*Le CARNAVAL des TURCS.*



*La FÊTE d'HUSSEIN.*



been familiar to Christian readers, especially when understood in the context of Protestant morality, which denigrated such excess.

In contrast to the representation of the Turks is the image below it, *La fête d'Hussein*. Here Bernard includes the travel accounts of Chardin to describe rituals specific to the Safavids, including the Imperial New Year and the commemoration of the martyrdom of Husayn. The "feast of Hussein" relates to Chardin's description of Shi'ite rituals of mourning for the death of Muhammad's grandson Husayn in A.D. 680. Describing in sequence the deaths also of Husayn's brother, Hasan, and his father, 'Ali, Bernard writes,

The Death of these *Mahometan* Prophets, or Heroes is still mourned for, as represented in this Print, where some are seen half naked, and dawbed over with Blood, in Memory of their tragical [*sic*] End, others black their Faces and loll out their Tongue, with convulsive Motions of the Body and rolling their Eyes; because these two Brothers, as the *Persian* Legend relates, suffered so much by Drought, that they became black, and their Tongues came out of their Mouths. . . . These Ceremonies may have been borrowed from the *Syrians* and *Phoenicians*, deploring the Loss of *Adonis*, which was afterwards practised by the *Grecians*, who were Colonies settled by the *Phoenicians*, and received from them their Religion, and the Worship of that Libertine.<sup>31</sup>

Bernard points out that some Persians buried themselves in the ground, while others reenacted the battle in which Husayn died by carrying models of the tombs of Husayn and his family. Bernard concludes that "such Follies are but too common in Christian Countries on the most solemn Occasions," once again making the foreign familiar through comparison with Christian practices.<sup>32</sup> Bernard and Picart, in their respective media, judged the religions of their subjects and created a system of valuation that fit well with their own didactic goals. Through the comparative method, they critiqued the misguided "follies" of religions, including their own.

The contrast between the depictions of the Turks and the Persians sheds important light on how Bernard and Picart constructed their worldview. While the festival of the Turks is shown in a dark and squalid atmosphere, the rituals of the Persians take place in bright daylight. Dubourg has clearly picked up the references to the ancient Greeks and Phoenicians, such that the naked Persians have physiques and poses derived directly from classical sources. Calling Muhammad's descendants "heroes" furthers their association with classical figures and overlays the history of Shi'ite Islam with that of classical Greece and ancient Iran. In so doing, Chardin, the author of the original text, and Dubourg, the artist of volume 7, made direct connections with the European past.<sup>33</sup> What can we make of the two images juxtaposed together, that is, the wild and chaotic Turks versus the penitent yet heroic Persians? Although both entities are treated with a certain dramatic license, the Persians are clearly represented in a more sympathetic manner than the Turks.

Despite the seemingly scientific method and the comparative structure of *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses*, it must be viewed as a highly politicized document, one in which the author's opinions were consistent with the historical

contexts of early-eighteenth-century French and Dutch society. Thus, although Islamic history is recorded using well-cited Arabic and European sources, the interpretations are not unproblematic. Muhammad is described as an impostor and the Turks as debauched. The Persians are given greater respect for what are perceived to be two very important attributes. The first is their classical heritage, no doubt based on the writings of the fifth-century historian Herodotus, who is cited both in the introduction to volume 1 and in volume 4 (in the section on the followers of Zoroaster).<sup>34</sup> The second reason for the respect given to the Persians was the contemporary Safavids' Shi'ite faith. As Bernard explains, the primary difference between Shi'ite Iran and Sunni Turkey was that of religion. The Safavids, as descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, venerated his family, in particular his son-in-law and cousin 'Ali. The Ottomans considered them heretics, and severe punishment was meted out to anyone professing Shiism—not unlike the persecutions of the Protestants in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France. Here again, parallels appear with Christianity; Ottoman beliefs are equated with the outdated and clerically overburdened faith of the Catholics, while the Shi'ite faith is seen as one of reform, and thus compatible with the Protestant tradition out of which Bernard and Picart are working.

Authors in the early modern period saw the rivalry between Islam and Christianity, or more accurately the Ottomans and their European counterparts, as both political and ideological. Ottoman Turkey loomed large in the art and literature of the period, not to mention political polemics, in its role as both trading partner and imperial rival.<sup>35</sup> Less attention has been paid by modern scholars to its neighbor, Iran, which played a central role in the political geography of the region. French, English, and Dutch courts, in particular, saw Iran not only as a viable trading partner but also as an important foothold in the more eastern regions of Asia. Although historians have noted its key position on land and maritime routes and the flourishing trade of European silver for Iranian silk, cultural and diplomatic ties are not as well studied.<sup>36</sup>

As adversaries of the Ottomans, with whom they had gone to war several times, the Safavids were seen by Europeans as potential allies against the threat of Ottoman expansion into Europe. As a result, several embassies had been sent to Isfahan, the capital, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In 1715, Shah Sultan Husayn sent his ambassador, Muhammad Riza Beg, to the court of Louis XIV in Versailles to negotiate a trade treaty.<sup>37</sup> Although an Ottoman embassy followed five years later, Riza Beg's was the last ambassadorial visitation to the court of the Sun King and was given a great deal of public attention. The visit was captured in numerous engravings collected in the Cabinet des estampes at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, such as *L'entrée à Paris de l'ambassadeur de Perse, 7 février 1715* (fig. 10), as well as in important works of art, such as Antoine Coypel's *Louis XIV Receiving Ambassador of Persia Feb 19, 1715*.<sup>38</sup> Whereas the focus of Coypel's painting is primarily Louis XIV and the magnificence of his court, the engraving from the Cabinet des estampes illustrates the pageantry of the Safavid ambassadorial visit and fits well into current pictorial trends, including the formal use of lightness and dark and the contrast of pageantry with chaos.<sup>39</sup> In *L'entrée à Paris de l'ambassadeur de Perse*, the Persian



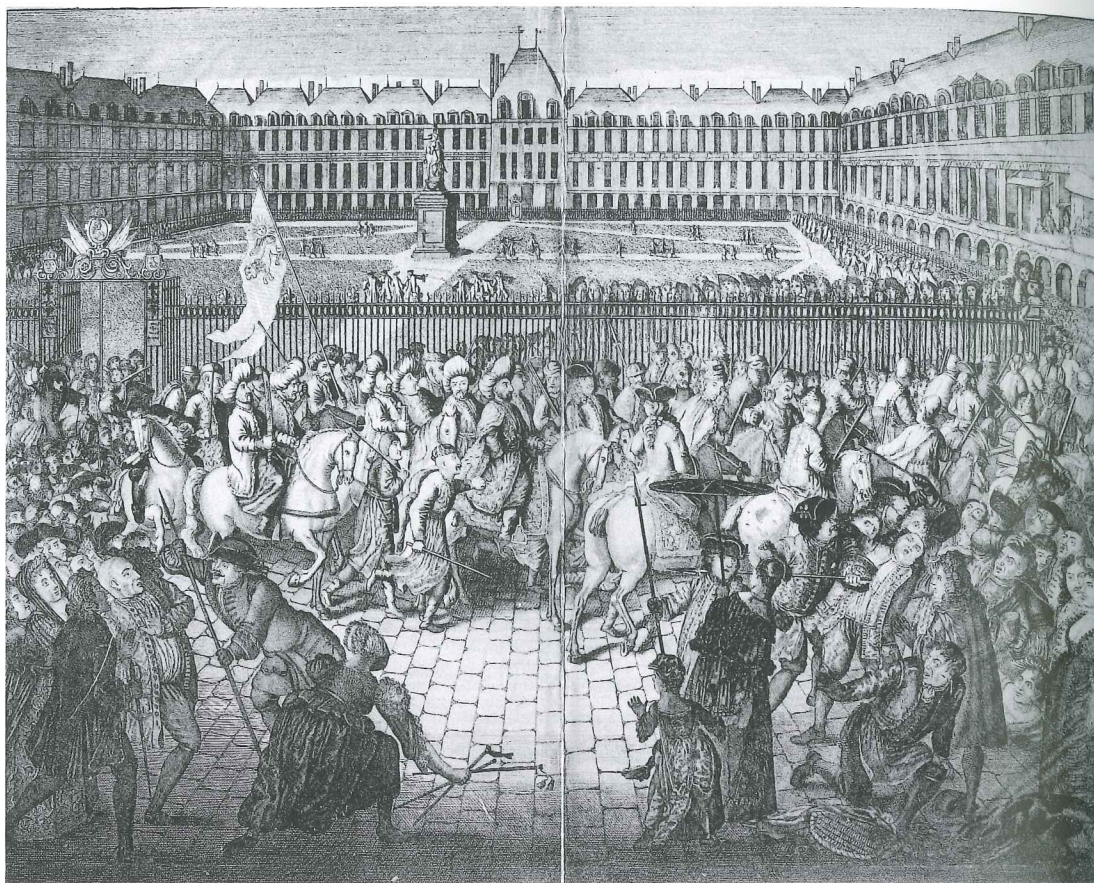


Fig. 10.  
Entrée à Paris de  
l'ambassadeur de Perse,  
7 février 1715, engraving  
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de  
France, Cabinet des estampes

ambassador and his entourage are admired, their upright postures echoing the tall roofs of the buildings behind them, and the rowdy French public is beaten back to make way for the prestigious guests.<sup>40</sup>

In the 1733 inventory of Bernard's bookstore, on subjects dealing with Islamic religion and culture, books on Iran far outnumber any other texts.<sup>41</sup> Thus, of the forty-seven titles that range from treaties on the Qur'an (five) to histories of contemporary Ottoman Turkey (seven), there are twenty-two titles on travels to and descriptions of Iran. Iran was central to Dutch concerns, such that from 1623 to 1759, the Dutch East India Company (by name of the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*) was the foremost European trading entity in Iran, primarily dealing in the export of silk. However, trade was not the only "commodity" that united the Dutch Republic and Iran. Beginning in the seventeenth century, a large number of Dutch painters were employed at the Safavid courts by both the shahs and the commercial elite.<sup>42</sup> Not much is known about their participation in the artistic milieu beyond passing mention in historical chronicles. Nonetheless, their presence points to far closer ties than often assumed and requires that we expand the notion of interconnectedness to include the cultural as well as diplomatic relations that helped nuance European literary and artistic representations of Islam, all exemplified in volume 7.



### Humor and Critique

The illustrative program of volume 7 straddles art and documentation, as well as political commentary and aesthetic pleasure. One of the most intriguing images, *Le bairam, ou la Pâque des Mahometans*, was designed and engraved in 1737 by Jacob Folkema, who was among Picart's most accomplished students (fig. 11).<sup>43</sup> The engraving attempts to show Ottoman celebrations marking the end of Ramadan, the Bairam, most likely in the capital city of Istanbul. The text is based once again on Thévenot's observations and describes the significance of the holiday, the dates it is held, and the "numerous diversions" for public celebration. The composition of the page is carefully thought-out, notably in the manner in which the buildings frame each side of the page—one side dark, the other light—and the resultant attention given to the center. The circular composition is reflected in the large wheel, akin to a Ferris wheel, which draws the viewer's attention upward, toward the open sky. A diagonal thrust of the ropes on which a man swings adds a sense of dynamism to the whole composition. The street is garlanded and festooned with banners, and people pop their heads out of the windows to participate in the festivities.

The composition and style of the engraving draw upon contemporary trends in European works of art in which social critique was a popular subject, as witnessed in the satirical works of the English artist William Hogarth and earlier caricatures by the Dutch artist Romeyn de Hooghe. Humor was also a goal in Folkema's rendition of the Bairam festivities, albeit with a different focus. The engraving of the Bairam is mentioned as an illustration to the text preceding it:

The Bairam is published, at the first Sight of the Moon of Sjewal, or if, the Weather being cloudy, the Moon cannot be seen as expected, the Feast begins on the Day following; for in that Case they suppose the Moon is changed. The Diversions then used *are represented in this print*. Seats are set in the Streets, so contrived, that those who set in them may swing in the Air, being pushed faster or slower; these Seats are adorned with several Festoons. They have also Wheels, on which People are alternately at the Top, Middle and Bottom, a common Emblem of Fortune, the Changes of which, though so often described in Prose and Verse, still overtake us when most unexpected.<sup>44</sup>

As the passage above demonstrates, Thévenot was fascinated by the different forms of urban entertainment, as were earlier travelers to Istanbul, such as Peter Mundy, who traveled there in 1618 and described the various types of swings and wheels used by Turks during the Bairam celebrations.<sup>45</sup> However, in Thévenot's text, as in Mundy's, there is little judgment placed on these forms of entertainment. In the Folkema engraving of a man with a turban on his head slightly askew, we can recognize from earlier depictions in volume 7 that this is a cleric. The serial nature of the images suggests that such recognition would have been assumed by the artist of the engraving. The figure of the turbaned man swinging through the air enhances the sense of levity of the joyous occasion. However, with his look of astonishment and hesitation, his shoe having fallen off, and his toe sticking out of the sock, he





Fig. 11.

Jacob Folkema (Dutch,  
1692-1767)  
*Le bairam, ou la Pâque des  
Mahometans*  
From [Jean Frederic Bernard,]  
*Cérémonies et coutumes  
religieuses de tous les peuples  
du monde*, vol. 7 (Amsterdam:  
J. F. Bernard, 1737), "Suite  
de la dissertation precedente;  
ou, Description générale des  
cérémonies religieuses du  
Mahometisme," after p. 256

Fig. 12.

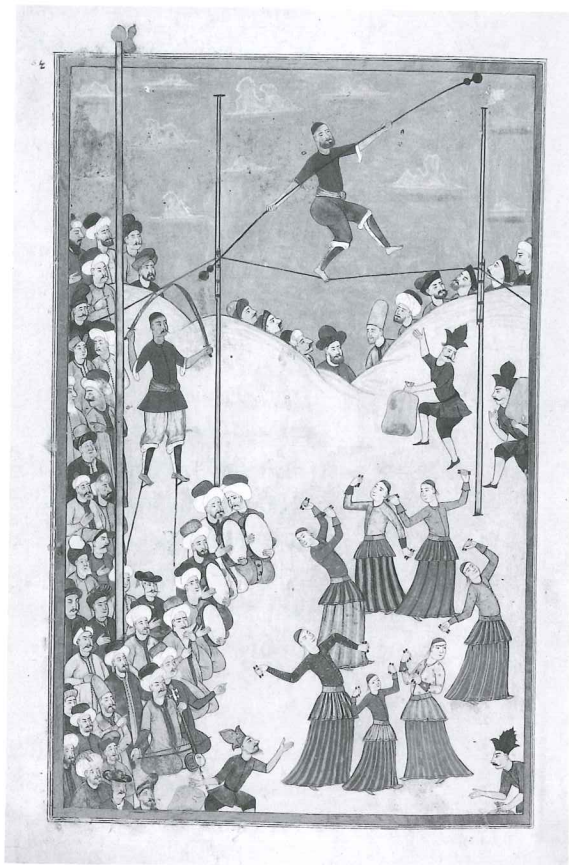
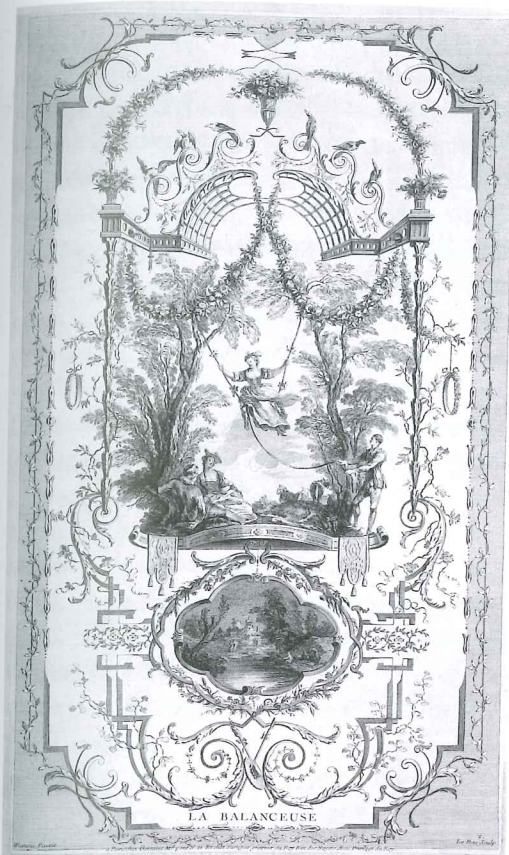
Jacques Philippe Le Bas  
(French, 1707-83), after  
Jean-Antoine Watteau (French,  
1684-1721)  
*La balanceuse*  
From *L'oeuvre d'Antoine  
Watteau... gravé d'après  
les tableaux et desseins  
originaux... par les soins de  
M. de Jullienne*, vol. 3 (Paris:  
n.p., n.d.), fol. 61

Fig. 13.

Abdülcélil Levnî Çelebi (Turkish,  
1703-40)  
*The Acrobats*  
From Vehbî, *Sürnâme-i  
humâyûn*, 1721-30, fol. 53r  
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı

Le BAIRAM ou la Pâque des MAHOMETANS.





is also an object of ridicule. There is humor in this painting as well as critique. As others have shown in this collection of essays, one of the major concerns of Enlightenment thinkers such as Bernard and Picart was the corrupt power of the clergy, especially of the Catholics. The Ottoman counterpart is equally mocked and here, it may be argued, depicted in an unbecoming situation.

This picture permits a reading of intentionality and also introduces levity as a device used by artists to explore difference, be it in the realm of social class or religion.<sup>46</sup> The engraving is not simply about visual pleasure or poking fun at the clerical elite; it can also be understood as a denigration of the culture depicted. The visual trope of women on swings has a long history in European painting, dating back to Greek attic vases. However, the "girl on a swing" motif gained a great deal of popularity with eighteenth-century artists such as Jean-Antoine Watteau, a contemporary of Picart (fig. 12). Donald Posner has shown the different symbols deployed in this image, including the fickleness of women and the sexual associations with the act of swinging itself.<sup>47</sup> Folkema's engraving emasculates the cleric with his act of swinging and also points to the fickleness of the Ottomans depicted. Showing them in such compromised and feminine poses subjects them to the sexual and gender hierarchies of eighteenth-century European visual culture. The image of a



man swinging is not common in Ottoman paintings; the closest resemblance may be scenes of acrobats and tightrope walkers performing in the hippodrome outside the Topkapı Palace, as seen in the image from the *Sûrnâme-i humâyûn* (1720; Book of imperial processions) by Vehbi (fig. 13). The two images, one French/Dutch and the other Ottoman, are almost contemporaneous and share a lot in terms of their formal structure and composition, but what different worlds they depict. Whereas both the engraving and the miniature provide enjoyment and project levity, the moralistic overtones of Folkema's drawing contrast sharply with the courtly entertainment depicted in the *Sûrnâme-i humâyûn*.

### The Drama of Difference

Volume 7 portrays Islamic worship through a universalist conception of world religions. It also offers a showcase, through texts and images, of the diverse ethnicities that made up the population of Ottoman Turkey and Safavid Iran.<sup>48</sup> The project to document contemporary Muslims depended on intellectual curiosity, but also a need to understand the political, cultural, and economic environment within which Europeans had interests. Travel, trade, diplomacy, and art all played a part in constructing an image of the region now known as the Middle East. However, the primary goal of volume 7 was to provide both a lens and a mirror for Bernard to reflect on Protestant attitudes toward Christian faith. For Picart, the engravings also brought his work and that of his atelier into dialogue with the profession of painting, whether that of his own European counterparts or, interestingly, that of the Ottomans and Safavids.

Looking back again at the frontispiece enables us to synthesize concepts that defined not only volume 7 but also the entire corpus of *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses*. The legend at the base of the frontispiece identifies 'Ali along with representatives of Protestantism, such as Martin Luther and John Calvin. In front of 'Ali rests a small, round clay tablet, particular to Shi'ite worship.<sup>49</sup> Behind him a man kneels and supports with his hand a plaque with eight commandments. The man is attired in Safavid dress, familiar to the readers of *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* through the ubiquitous images of Persians in the travel literature and in popular engravings, such as those that accompanied the visit of Riza Beg to France. The plaque reads: "There is no God but God; Mahomet is the messenger of God; Ali is the Vicar of God; The necessity for the purification of the body; Prayer; Charity; Fasting; Pilgrimage." In the addition of three more commands to Muslim belief, Picart has conflated the Shi'ite profession of faith and Islamic ritual ablution with the five pillars of Islam.<sup>50</sup> Bernard presents as central to Safavid belief the naming of 'Ali as a vicar, which is incongruous with Islamic belief, Shi'ite or Sunni, where the notion of clerical stewardship is absent.<sup>51</sup> However, "vicar" would be familiar to Christians, for whom it would be understood as the title of the Catholic pope. Placing 'Ali at the threshold of the frontispiece of *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* must have been a deliberate decision. Throughout volume 7, 'Ali is presented as a heroic figure that oftentimes outshines Muhammad, who, despite some attempts at evenhandedness, is consistently referred to as an impostor. In the frontispiece, as in

volume 7, 'Ali provides an alternate, if parallel, reading of Islam, one that is situated at the limits of anxiety and admiration.

Like Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu's epistolary novel *Lettres persanes* (1721; Persian letters), which presented social critique and satire through the voices of fictional Persian protagonists, *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* was a self-reflective project.<sup>52</sup> Yet, unlike the *Lettres persanes*, it was in a vigorous dialogue—however one-sided it sometimes appeared—with the cultures represented, whether through the use of eyewitness accounts, primary sources, or original works of art. At once familiar and foreign, Islam allowed the makers of *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* to construct images of a world considered distant and yet at the borders of Europe. Expanding the discourse about the Middle East (in particular Turkey and Iran) and Europe (in particular France and the Dutch Republic) to encompass issues of art and identity, as well as polemic, permits one to better understand the views of the authors. *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* reflected the early-eighteenth-century world of Protestant French exiles responding to current trends in a broadened political landscape where the French and Dutch vied for the attention of Safavid and Ottoman rulers while trying to make sense of their religion, Islam. To do so, Bernard, Picart, and their collaborators explored different media, word, and images, recombining and reinventing them in ways that altered not only the very concept of a world united through its rituals of devotion but also the manners in which it would be represented ever again.

### Notes

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Edith Sanguenza and to thank Christopher S. Wood, Elizabeth Hutchinson, Louis Marchesano, and Alicia Weisberg-Roberts for their helpful suggestions. I am particularly grateful to Lynn Hunt, Margaret Jacob, and Wijnand Mijnhart, without whose guidance and willingness to share primary material this essay would not have been possible.

1. [Jean Frederic Bernard,] *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde*, 9 vols. (Amsterdam: J. F. Bernard, 1723–43). For the English translations used here, see [Jean Frederic Bernard,] *The Ceremonies and Religious Customs of the Various Nations of the Known World*, 7 vols. (London: printed by William Jackson for Claude Du Bosc, 1733–39); accessed through Yale University Internet Resource.
2. The legend to the frontispiece reads as follows: "At the base, in front is the vignette of Ali, the successor of Mahomet, explaining the Qur'an to the diverse people who embrace the Mahometan religion."
3. 'Ali bin Abli Talib was the fourth caliph of the Muslim authority established at the death of Muhammad. He is also considered by Shi'ite Muslims as the first Imam, or rightful successor to Muhammad. See Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1985).
4. [Bernard,] *Ceremonies and Religious Customs* (note 1), 1:23 = [Bernard,] *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* (note 1), 1:xxxviii. Universalism played a central role in Bernard's exposé of humanity's intrinsic (and sometimes misguided) dependence on religious customs, as well as in the manners and gestures of the very people drawn as examples of difference.



5. On print culture, see Rebecca Zorach and Elizabeth Rodini, *Paper Museums: The Reproductive Print in Europe, 1500–1800* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2005).
6. Margaret Jacob, "Bernard Picart and the Turn toward Modernity," *De Achttiende Eeuw* 37 (2005): 1–16, esp. 7.
7. To be exact, eleven of the twenty-three engravings were made either by Picart or under his supervision.
8. In this paper I shall refer to the country as Iran. However, I will retain the word *Persian* to give a sense of the "invented" nature of Iranian identity vis-à-vis European literature. For a study of the term *Persian* in reference to Iranian art, see Kishwar Rizvi, "Art History and the Nation: Arthur Upham Pope and the Discourse on 'Persian Art' in the Early 20th Century," in proceedings of the symposium "Historiography and Ideology: Writing the History of the Ottoman Architectural Heritage," ed. Sibel Bozdoğan and Gulru Necipoglu, *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 45–63.
9. The word *Islam* is used sparingly in the lengthy discourses on its history, rituals, prohibitions, and anomalies. For early-seventeenth-century English attitudes and the use of the term *Mohammedanism*, see Elie Salem, "The Elizabethan Image of Islam," *Studia Islamica*, no. 22 (1965): 43–54.
10. See Peter Parshall, "Prints as Objects of Consumption in Early Modern Europe," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 28, no. 1 (1998): 19–36; and Carol Gibson-Wood, "Picture Consumption in London at the End of the Seventeenth Century," *Art Bulletin* 84 (2002): 491–500.
11. The literature on the subject of European views of Islam is vast; see, for example, Elizabeth Hallam and Brian V. Street, eds., *Cultural Encounters: Representing Otherness* (London: Routledge, 2000); and Nebahat Avcioğlu, "Ahmed I and the Allegories of Tyranny in the Frontispiece to George Sandys's *Relation of a Journey*," *Muqarnas* 18 (2001): 203–26. A recent publication adds important insights about French orientalism but came too late to my attention for me to incorporate it into this essay: Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, *Orientalism in early modern France: Eurasian trade, exoticism, and the Ancien Régime* (Oxford: Berg, 2008).
12. The Arab chronicles were, notably, a history written by a thirteenth-century prince and historian, Abu'l-Fida Isma'il ibn-'Ali. Earlier translations of this work were undertaken by John Greaves and Jean Gagnier; see Abu'l-Fida Isma'il ibn-'Ali, *Chorasmiae et Mawaralnahrae: Hoc Est Regionum extra Fluvium Oxum Descriptio*, trans. John Greaves (London: n.p., 1650); and Abu'l-Fida Isma'il ibn-'Ali, *Ismael Abu'l-Feda, de Vita et Rebus Gestis Mohammedis... Edidit, Latine Vertit, Praefatione, et Notis Illustravit Joannes Gagnier, A. M.*, trans. Jean Gagnier (Oxford: e theatro Sheldoniano A. D., 1723).
13. Barthélemy d'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque orientale; ou, Dictionnaire universel...* (Paris: Compagnie des Libraires, 1697).
14. *The Koran, Commonly Called the Alcoran of Mohammed, Translated into English Immediately from the Original Arabic...*, trans. George Sale (London: printed by Charles Ackers for J. Wilcox, 1734). Henri de Boulainvilliers, *La vie de Mahomed* (London: P. Humbert, 1730). This book was consulted by Voltaire for his play *Mahomet: Tragedie* (Brussels: n.p., 1742).

15. Barbara Maria Stafford, *Voyage into Substance: Art, Science, Nature, and the Illustrated Travel Account, 1760–1840* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984), 1.
16. Other authors included Cornelis de Bruyn, Jan Janszoon Struys, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Pietro Della Valle, and Garcia de Silva y Figueroa. All of these books were in collections owned by Bernard, whereas Picart had illustrated books by both Thévenot and Chardin in his personal possession.
17. The difference in visual representation in Europe and the Islamic world is too complex a topic to discuss here, although it is tempting to contemplate the reasons for those differences—especially during and after the Renaissance, when the mobility of images and ideas was unprecedented.
18. Adriaan Reelant, *De Religione Mohammedica Libri Duo* (Utrecht: ex libraria Gulielmi Broedelet, 1717), 119. A painting that was supposedly commissioned by Eneman is currently at Uppsala universitet (Handskriftsavdelningen UUB Referenskod: UUB/REA000136452), but it is an oil painting, and it is doubtful from the style and rendition that it originated in seventeenth-century Turkey. Bernard writes that Eneman's description was based on "Conversation with several Pilgrims, during the Time of a long Residence he made at Cairo." See [Bernard,] *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* (note 1), 7:38. Picart engraved a vignette for one of Reelant's other books, *La religion des Mahometans, exposée par leurs propres docteurs, avec des éclaircissemens sur les opinions qu'on leur a faussement attribuées*, trans. David Durand (The Hague: Isaac Vaillant, 1721). I am grateful to Margaret Jacob for this citation.
19. [Bernard,] *Ceremonies and Religious Customs* (note 1), 7:38 = [Bernard,] *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* (note 1), 7:38. For another interesting depiction of the holy sites, see Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, *Entwurf einer historischen Architectur . . .* (Leipzig: n.p., 1725), studied in Oleg Grabar, "A Preliminary Note on Two Eighteenth-Century Representations of Mekka and Medina," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, no. 25 (2001): 268–74.
20. John Chardin, *A Journey to Persia: John Chardin's Portrait of a Seventeenth-Century Empire*, ed. and trans. R. W. Ferrier (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996), 154.
21. R. A. Ingrams, "Rubens and Persia," *Burlington Magazine* 116 (1974): 190–97. See R. W. Lightbown, "Oriental Art and the Orient in Late Renaissance and Baroque Italy," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 32 (1969): 228–79.
22. [Bernard,] *Ceremonies and Religious Customs* (note 1), 7:51 = [Bernard,] *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* (note 1), 7:106. While some of the interpretations are closely based on Arabic exegesis, other Qur'anic verses are reinterpreted in awkward and sometimes inconsistent ways.
23. [Bernard,] *Ceremonies and Religious Customs* (note 1), 7:30 = [Bernard,] *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* (note 1), 7:64.
24. In contrast to enthronements, which were commonly illustrated in Ottoman manuscripts.
25. Nicolas de Nicolay, *The Navigations, Peregrinations, and Voyages, Made into Turkie*, ed. John Stell, trans. Thomas Washington (London: Thomas Dawson, 1585).
26. Alexander Pilipczuk and Neal K. Moran, "The Grand Concert dans un Jardin by Bernard Picart and the Performing Musical Arts at the French Court around 1700,"



- Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 30 (1980): 121–48; and Mary Rowen Obelkevich, “Turkish Affect in the Land of the Sun King,” *Musical Quarterly* 63 (1977): 367–89. See also an engraving of the actress Madame Favart in her Ottoman costume for her role in the play *Les trois sultanes* in 1752, cited in Fatma Müge Göçek, *East Encounters West: France and the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), 74.
27. B. R. Tilghman, “Charles Le Brun: Theory, Philosophy, and Irony,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* 32 (1992): 123–33; and Jennifer Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions: The Origin and Influence of Charles Le Brun’s “Conférence sur l’expression générale et particulière”* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1994).
  28. A notable exception is the Safavid rituals of mourning, illustrated in Adam Olearius, *Offt begehrte Beschreibung der neuen orientalischen Reise* (Schleswig, Germany: Bey Jacob zur Glocken, 1647). Bernard cites this author in volume 7.
  29. Mention of Dubourg as a designer of engravings as well as silverwork is made in Jan Rudolph de Lorm, *Amsterdams goud en zilver* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1999).
  30. [Bernard,] *Ceremonies and Religious Customs* (note 1), 7:129 = [Bernard,] *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* (note 1), 7:260. Bernard takes liberties with Thévenot’s text, such as eliminating whole segments and confusing the names and chronologies of holidays. That renders the facts incorrect and sometimes incomprehensible.
  31. [Bernard,] *Ceremonies and Religious Customs* (note 1), 7:130 = [Bernard,] *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* (note 1), 7:260. The emphasis is mine.
  32. [Bernard,] *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* (note 1), 7:260 = [Bernard,] *Ceremonies and Religious Customs* (note 1), 7:130.
  33. For a brief biography of Chardin, see Chardin, *A Journey to Persia* (note 20).
  34. [Bernard,] *Ceremonies and Religious Customs* (note 1), 4:401 = [Bernard,] *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* (note 1), 4:10.
  35. Titles include Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 2000); and Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).
  36. See Rudolph P. Matthee, *Politics of Trade in Safavid Iran: Silk for Silver, 1600–1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999); and Rudolph P. Matthee, “Christians in Safavid Iran: Hospitality and Harassment,” *Studies on Persianate Societies* 3 (2005): 3–43.
  37. Laurence Lockhart, “European Contacts with Persia, 1350–1736,” in Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhart, eds., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, *The Timurid and Safavid Periods* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986), 122. Despite the apparent awe with which the ambassador was treated, subsequent literary texts denigrated Riza Beg as an amorous scoundrel; see, for example, De l’Hostelfort, *Amanzolid: Nouvelle historique et galante, qui contient les aventures secrètes de Mehemed-Riza-Beg, ambassadeur du Sophi de Perse, à la cour de Louis-le-Grand, en 1715* (Paris: P. Huet, 1716).
  38. See also Alicia K. Weisberg-Roberts, “Drawing the Persian Embassy,” in idem, *Antoine Watteau and the Cultural Value of Drawing in Eighteenth-Century France*

- (Ph.D. diss., Courtauld Institute of Art, 2005), chap. 3.
39. Maurice Herbert, *Une ambassade persane sous Louis XIV, d'après des documents inédits* (Paris: Perrin, 1907).
  40. The first Ottoman embassy to France was in 1720, undertaken by Mehmed Celebi Effendi, as shown in the engraving *Reception of the Ottoman Ambassador Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi by the French King Louis XV, Here Only a Child*; cited in Göçek, *East Encounters West* (note 26), 33.
  41. *Catalogue du fonds de librairie de feu Jean Frederic Bernard* (Amsterdam: Humbert, Schouten & Rey, 1747).
  42. *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, s.v. "Dutch-Persian Relations" (by Willem M. Floor), <http://www.iranica.com> (accessed 30 September 2008); and Willem M. Floor, "Dutch Painters in Iran during the First Half of the Seventeenth Century," *Persica*, no. 8 (1979): 145–61.
  43. *Grove Art Online*, s.v. "Folkema, Jacob (Isidor Coridon Fidelle)" (by Christiaan Schuckman), <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T028747> (accessed 30 September 2008).
  44. [Bernard,] *Ceremonies and Religious Customs* (note 1), 7:128–29 = [Bernard,] *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* (note 1), 7:257–58.
  45. Peter Mundy, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608–1667* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1907), 1:58. Possibly consulted by Thévenot for his text, Mundy describes men swinging and young children riding the carousels and cartwheels during the celebration of the Bairam holiday. I thank Margaret Jacob and Barbara Charles for this reference.
  46. A parallel is offered in Katie Scott, "Playing Games with Otherness: Watteau's Chinese Cabinet at the Chateau de la Muette," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 66 (2003): 189–247.
  47. Donald Posner, "The Swinging Women of Watteau and Fragonard," *Art Bulletin* 64 (1982): 75–88.
  48. Although the wealthiest of the Muslim empires of the period, that of the Mughals, is largely marginalized in volume 7, its presence is acknowledged in the foreground of the frontispiece in the form of an Indian courtier.
  49. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier describes it in an account of his travels to Iran in 1677. The French version of the book is included in the inventory of Bernard's library and was no doubt consulted by Picart, as I have not found any other textual or pictorial representation of Shi'ite prayer. Tavernier's description is extremely detailed and includes mention of a "flat stone, about the bigness of a man's palm, which was brought from Mecca." Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *The Six Voyages of John Baptista Tavernier, Baron of Aubonne, through Turkey, into Persia and the East-Indies, for the Space of Forty Years . . .*, trans. John Phillips (London: printed by William Godbid for Robert Littlebury . . . & Moses Pitt, 1677), 226.
  50. The five pillars of Islam are the belief in one God, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and the Hajj pilgrimage. "Shi'a Muslims consider three additional practices essential to the religion of Islam. The first is *jihad*, which is also important to the Sunni, but not considered a pillar. The second is *Amr-Bil-Maruf*, the 'Enjoining to Do Good' which calls for every Muslim to live a virtuous life and to encourage others to do the same.



The third is *Nahi-Anil-Munkar*, the 'Exhortation to Desist from Evil' which tells Muslims to refrain from vice and from evil actions and to encourage others to do the same." Momen, *Introduction to Shi'i Islam* (note 3), 180.

51. [Bernard,] *Ceremonies and Religious Customs* (note 1), 7:134 = [Bernard,] *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses* (note 1), 7:265: "A Chief article of the Persian's Belief is that Ally [sic] is the Vicar of God."
52. Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu, *Lettres persanes* (Amsterdam: Pierre Brunel, 1721).