

indication of the painting of the anatomist Tulp which he saw in the surgeons's guildhall (in the Amsterdam Waag) is now specified as Rembrandt's 'The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Tulp' (202). At the same time, however, some information is silently dropped, such as the renovation of the guildhall in 1700, no doubt because it seemed extraneous to the subject at hand. A short section of chapter 4, 'Heibel in de hortus' (following Commelin's death in 1692) has also been cut, as has some material in the last chapters, which are merged into one. Anyone seeking every possible bit of information should therefore consult the original. But for everyone else, the translation is almost complete, and is both faithful to the original text and to modern English usage.

Kooijmans organized his book according to a traditional biographical structure. Much of the information is well known, but the author has read carefully and thoroughly, and brought it together masterfully. Given the length of Ruysch's life and the importance of his work, the work can be treated as an excellent introduction to some fundamental aspects of the natural science of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. A few of the other major figures who make an appearance here include Bidloo, De Bils, Blasius, Swammerdam, Huydecoper, Commelin, Bontekoe, Blankaart, Boerhaave, Seba, and Tsar Peter. Ruysch's interest in the curious art of Otto Marseus, and his encouragement of his daughter Rachel's development as a painter, is also well handled. Other topics that enter the biography and are treated carefully include vivisection, midwifery, literary societies and free-thought, surgery (including lithotomy), and of course the medical faculties, guilds, and other institutions of the period; Kooijmans also gives much careful attention to Ruysch's intellectual interests, not only anatomy and botany, but the lacteal vessels, reproduction, plant anatomy, the study of the brain, and the argument that the body is composed of glands. No wonder that Ruysch was considered to be one of the greatest natural scientists of

the period, succeeding Isaac Newton in the Paris Académie des Sciences in 1728. My only personal disappointment is that Kooijmans offers no new insights into the methods of preparation that Ruysch kept secret but which not only made his *rareitenverzamelingen* famous but helped in making many of his most important factual discoveries; the details may be lost forever.

Because of the book's biographical framework, Kooijmans does not offer an argument about the nature of historical change in the period. But he raises some questions. He is clear that he does not think that Ruysch's achievements were due to religion; perhaps this leaves politics and personal networks as possible explanations, but Kooijmans does not go there, either. Was Ruysch's work possible, then, because of urbanization, printing and the emergence of a Republic of Letters, a new kind of commercial economy, or an information revolution? This descriptive biography does not answer that question but it does provide the kinds of examples that allow further speculation about such larger forces in the world. And in the meantime, Ruysch has been treated in a way that he himself would have appreciated: that fact is stranger than fiction, and can be discovered by human art, even displayed for all to see.

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Hunt, Lynn, Jacob, Margaret C., Mijnhardt, Wijnand, *The Book that Changed Europe: Picart & Bernard's Religious Ceremonies of the World* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010, xi + 383 pp., ISBN 978 0 674 04928 4).

Between 1723 and 1737 there was published in Amsterdam a multi-volume, lavishly-illustrated survey of the rites and rituals of all the world's religions. The book, *Ceremonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde*, was a

joint production by two French exiles. The celebrated engraver Bernard Picart contributed the illustrations, until his death in 1733. His friend, the wealthy bookseller Jean Frederic Bernard, compiled the text as well as publishing it, in seven huge folio volumes. Despite its size and cost (probably around 100 florins per set), it was something of a best-seller. Before his own death in 1744, Bernard brought out more than one revised edition, and issued two further, supplementary volumes. By 1750, translations of *Religious Ceremonies of the World* had been published in Dutch, German, and English. Even after the book was placed on the Catholic Church's index of forbidden books, a bowdlerized plagiary of it was produced in Paris by two French clergymen in 1741.

Nowadays the work is almost entirely forgotten. In *The Book that Changed Europe*, Lynn Hunt, Margaret Jacob and Wijnand Mijnhardt seek to overturn its long neglect, and to explore its significance for the history of the European Enlightenment. They have produced a beautiful volume of their own, impeccably presented and elegantly written. It is the outcome of an exemplary collaborative effort between the three distinguished authors and a wider community of scholars that, under the auspices of the Getty Research Institute in California, has also resulted in two complementary achievements: a rich collection of essays entitled *Bernard Picart and the First Global Vision of Religion* (2010), and a website at which the major editions of *Religious Ceremonies* (French, Dutch, English, and German) can be browsed and compared in their entirety (<http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/picart/>).

*The Book that Changed Europe* is divided into two parts. The first introduces us to Bernard and Picart, their intellectual, social, and personal worlds, and the making of their *magnum opus*. The second part describes how the different volumes of *Religious Ceremonies of the World* approached Judaism, Roman Catholicism, the 'idolatrous' religions of the Americas and the East, Islam, and the proliferation of modern Christian forms

of belief – mainstream Protestant Churches; heretics, sects, and enthusiasts; contemporary deists; freemasons; even atheists. One of the book's chief features was its attempt to argue for the essential similarity of all religions, whether Christian or heathen. Time and again, the texts and engravings stressed that all the peoples of the world shared similar desires, rites of passage, and ways of interacting with the supernatural. Religion itself derived from a basic human need, and god's grace was present in all of its varieties. The other overarching argument that Bernard and Picart advanced was that, over time, all religions became corrupt, mainly due to the growing power and self-interest of their priests. From primitive simplicity, they degenerated into the complicated ceremonialism, intolerance, priestcraft, and superstition that bedeviled modern society and obscured the universal, natural religion that was common to all human beings.

How did Bernard and Picart come to think in this way, and why did they publish their book? Beyond the thousands of pages of the work itself, there is relatively little external evidence that directly bears on those questions, but Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt offer a masterful reconstruction of its context, and some tantalizing suggestions. Particularly compelling is their stress on the Dutch context. Bernard and Picart met each other in the first place because, ever since the seventeenth century, the Republic had been a major haven for Huguenot exiles, and for free-thinkers and radical philosophes of every stripe. It was also, of course, the most religiously liberal nation in the western world, a place where Jews and Christians of all kinds lived and worshipped freely; its most highly urbanized country; and the capital of the European book trade — between 1650 and 1725 almost half of all the books printed across the continent were produced in the United Provinces. It is equally clear that the two authors were part of an intellectual milieu in which heterodox ideas about religion circulated freely. Amongst the radical thinkers to whom they were personally connected were the

leading English deist John Toland, the free-thinking literary entrepreneur Prosper Marchand, and the authors and distributors of *The Treatise of the Three Impostors* (1719), one of the most notoriously atheistic books of the age, which argued that Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad were merely con-artists, and the three great religions of the world founded on lies and frauds.

Exactly what Bernard and Picart's own religious viewpoints were is harder to pin down. The evidence of their art, writing, reading, and actions suggests rather a skeptical, questing curiosity about the nature of divinity and human nature than any clear, programmatic philosophy. The authors of *The Book that Changed Europe* are therefore less convincing when, periodically, they make claims for the great originality and significance of their subjects. They are right to stress the importance of publishers and what they call 'artisans' (businessmen, journalists, engravers, and so on) in fomenting and spreading new ideas about religion and civilization in the course of the eighteenth century: the Enlightenment was not made by a few great thinkers alone. But there are two major difficulties with the assertion encapsulated in their title, and in statements such as that '*Religious Ceremonies of the World* marked a major turning point in European attitudes towards religious belief and hence the sacred', that Bernard should be regarded as 'one of the founders of the European Enlightenment', or that Picart's engravings 'essentially created the category "religion"' (1, 127-128, 155). In the first place, though the scale on which it deployed them may have been novel, *Religious Ceremonies'* essential ideas about the universality of natural religion, priestcraft, and so on were certainly not (the fact that Bernard's text was mainly a bricolage of extracts and quotations from other writings further complicates that claim). The basic point that, across the world, people were in thrall to rules that they thought divine but which were in fact only man-made customs had been powerfully made and abundantly illustrated by several earlier

writers, such as Montaigne, Charron, Hobbes, and Bayle. The Reformation's shattering of Christian unity had provided an unceasing impulse towards the investigation of religious difference and the ideal of religious unity. The same questions were central to the great seventeenth-century debates on natural law and the origins of human society. By the early eighteenth century, such arguments had become commonplace in radical circles, and were increasingly seeping into mainstream discourse. Yet in their infectious enthusiasm for their two heroes, Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt sometimes pass too quickly over the many precursors and parallels to Bernard and Picart's ways of thinking.

The second difficulty with their approach is that, in fact, they have uncovered very little evidence of how *Religious Ceremonies of the World* was actually read, and what impact it really had on its readers. Compared to the tangible intellectual effects of, say, the contemporary writings of Toland or Mandeville, which can be clearly seen in the responses of their contemporaries, those of *Religious Ceremonies* remain frustratingly hard to discern. Indeed, many of the book's readers, it seems fair to surmise, must have bought it primarily, as one subscriber did, simply out of a love of 'travel books which contain such extraordinary stories' (302). Yet whatever the work's true originality or influence, it will now surely attract further attention as a wonderfully rich example of the early eighteenth-century ferment over natural religion, toleration, and cultural diversity. All scholars of those subjects are indebted to Professors Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt for reintroducing and contextualizing it with such verve.

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