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Lynn Hunt, Margaret C. Jacob, and Wijnand Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe: Picart & Bernard's Religious Ceremonies of the World*. Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010. Pp. xi + 383, illus. USD\$32.95 (cloth). ISBN 978-0-674-04928-4.

Reviewed by Gary K. Waite, University of New Brunswick

This is indeed an important book about a very important book. Lynn Hunt, Margaret Jacob, and Wijnand Mijnhardt have collaborated in writing a fascinating and revealing account of the authorship, content, and significance of *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde* (*Religious ceremonies and customs of all the peoples of the world*), published originally in Amsterdam in seven large, illustrated volumes between 1723 and 1737 by Jean Frederic Bernard, who was also the composer of most of the material. With 250 plates of illustrations by the renowned French engraver Bernard Picart — who has often been identified as the book's author since only his name appears on the frontispiece — spread over more than 3,000 pages of text, this was a truly impressive achievement for these French Huguenots who had, like so many other religious dissidents, found a refuge in the Dutch Republic. Even more impressive, and the most important factor in Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt's somewhat overreaching title, is the fully comparative approach that Bernard and Picart applied to all of the religions known to Europeans at that moment. As the authors note, Bernard and Picart's underlying assumption is that all religions, Christianity included, were socially and historically conditioned and could be compared to each other to reveal benefits and shortcomings. The traditional assumption of only one divinely approved religion and that all other varieties were pale shadows of the true faith was set aside in favor of a notion of a "universal human nature as the root of religiosity" (128). To view all religions as equally worthy of blame or praise, to refuse to privilege even Protestant Christianity, was indeed an innovative tactic.

But did this book change Europe, as Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt's title claims? Perhaps not, although *The Book that Changed Europe* concludes with an overview of the publishing history of *Religious Ceremonies of the World* that clearly indicates that this was indeed a best seller especially for one that was so expensive. Reprinted, translated, plagiarized, and bowdlerized, the book undoubtedly contributed to the rationalizing and secularizing tendencies of the Enlightenment, but evidence that it had the earthshaking impact that the present book title implies is less clear. That said, what is certainly apparent is that Picart and Bernard's massive labor of love was a contribution to Enlightenment debates on the part of craftspersons rather than the high intelligentsia who still dominate popular discourse on the field. The authors in fact argue that "Bernard may be considered one of the founders of the European Enlightenment" (127-8). Part of the burgeoning field of study on the sites and media of the Enlightenment, *The Book that Changed Europe* reveals the critical role played by artisans — in this case a publisher/writer and an engraver — not only in disseminating ideas but also in shaping the era's discourse around religion and tolerance.

Hunt, Jacob, and Wijnhardt work together extremely well (this is not their only collaboration) and little evidence is shown of multiple voices in the monograph's composition. Divided into two parts, the authors explore first the background — social, cultural, intellectual, and biographical — of the creation of *Religious Ceremonies of the World*, and then the revolutionary contents of this magnum opus. The account of Bernard and Picart's lives and careers are illuminating, highlighting especially the particular approaches that the experience of exile helped develop. Key to these was, of course, a willingness to look at religion, including one's own, with a critical and comparative eye. Yet exile did not necessarily have that effect on individuals; for many such as John Calvin, it reinforced a single-mindedness with respect to the rightness of one's own faith. The local context of refuge — the Dutch Republic — is frequently praised by the authors for its tolerance of religious diversity and innovation, and yet Hunt, Jacob, and Wijnhardt do not fully explore in detail its role in shaping Bernard and Picart's thinking. Instead, *Religious Ceremonies of the World* is portrayed first and foremost as a work of French artisans who happened to find in the Dutch environment the freedom to explore their experience of religious persecution and rethink the nature of religious identity. And this is indeed an extremely important perspective. Yet one wonders how much these French authors absorbed from local Dutch writers and artists who had been reporting on and interacting with other peoples and religions — including Judaism and Islam — for well over a century and publishing groundbreaking treatises on the subjects. Many of these treatises as well made explicit comparisons between European forms of Christianity and other religions and societies. That said, Hunt, Jacob, and Wijnhardt are correct in noting that *Religious Ceremonies of the World* was the grandest of any of these projects. The objective tone Bernard took in reporting on foreign and exotic religious ceremonies is remarkable even by Dutch standards. His occasional bouts of satire were almost entirely directed at European, rather than Amerindian or Oriental, targets.

The analysis of the contents of *Religious Ceremonies of the World* is necessarily selective, yet the authors have done an excellent job of providing an overview that is both comprehensive and detailed in critical areas. Beginning with Judaism, which Bernard considered foundational, and moving to chapters on Catholicism, Idolatry, Islam, and finally on Dissent, Deism, and Atheism, the authors reveal the goals of Bernard and Picart — among them to “cut Roman Catholicism down to size” not surprising for Protestant refugees from Catholic France. By comparing the rituals of Judaism and Catholicism, for example, Bernard and Picart reveal that it is the latter faith, not the former, which is the most ceremonially obsessive religion in the world. Another goal is to critique priesthood in all of its forms and locales as the source of all religious oppression. While the authors express a measure of disdain for uncontrolled religious enthusiasm especially in contemporary Christian variants such as the French Prophets of the early eighteenth century whose fanaticism led to a failed revolt against Louis XIV, Bernard does not condemn atheism. He presents Deism calmly in clear contrast to the polemics of his more orthodox contemporaries. And his positive evaluation of Islam — all by subtle comparison — is particularly noteworthy.

Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt bring to this collaborative study tremendous expertise in the intellectual culture of the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries — the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment — resulting in a richness of interpretive depth. Herein lies also one of this monograph's few weaknesses: insufficient attention is paid to earlier developments especially to those within the Dutch context of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. While the importance of the Collegiants and liberal Mennonites (*Doopsgezind*) in the development of new, nearly universalist approaches to religion is noted (129-30), little detail and no references are offered to the standard works in the field prior to the eighteenth century even though these groups were critical agents in the development of proto-Enlightenment notions and in the translating and popularizing of the radical Enlightenment thinker Spinoza. For example, when the authors seek to explain Picart's engravings of the “Adamites of Amsterdam” (276-8), they add, “of whose existence there is little to no evidence” (276). While true in the

main, Bernard and Picart's Adamites were in fact drawn from a famous 1535 painting by the Amsterdam artist Barent Dirksz that was later engraved and printed in Lambertus Hortensius, *Het boeck van den oproer der weder-dooperen* (Amsterdam, n.d. [c. 1600-50]). It illustrated an actual event involving a small group of Anabaptists who in 1535 were inspired by their leader to rid themselves of worldly possessions including their clothing, which they set aflame inside the house and then ran naked through the streets of Amsterdam proclaiming the imminent apocalyptic judgement. While a minor note in the broader scheme of things, this neglect of the earlier historiography on Dutch radical reform currents, especially its spiritualistic variants, means that their not inconsiderable contributions to new approaches to religiosity are not appreciated here. While unlikely correct, the authors' assertion that "it would be hard to overstate the distance between Bernard and Picart and most of their predecessors" (256) can be maintained only by neglecting the wide array of writings by spiritualistic-minded individuals and advocates of toleration that had appeared in Dutch presses over the preceding two centuries. That quibble aside, this is a fascinating analysis of a critically important eighteenth-century publication that places the artisan — printer and artist — in the center of the creation of the Enlightenment rather than merely in the service industry margins.