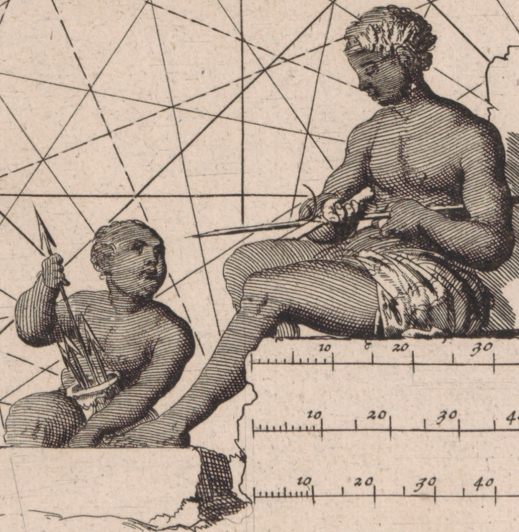




Pascaert van de
Costa de
C A F F R E S,
*Tusschen Cabo Negro en Cabo de bona
Esperança.
't Amsterdam,*

*By Joannes van Keulen Boeck verkooper
en graed-hoggh maecker, aende Nieuwebrug
in gekroonde Lootsman.
met Privilege voor 15 Jaeren.*

Duytsche mylen 15 in een graed.

Spaensche mylen 17½ in een graed.

Eng. en Fran. mylen 20 in een graed.



CEREMONIE qui s'observe à la NAISSANCE des ENFANS chez les CAFRES.

1. La PURIFICATION des ENFANS nouveaux nés. 2. L'EXPOSITION des ENFANS qui naissent avec quelques DÉFAUT.



B. Poiret del. 1799.

MARIAGE des CAFRES.

Staging African Religions in the Early Enlightenment: Bernard Picart and Jean Frédéric Bernard's Section on Africa in *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses des peuples idolâtres*

• STEFF NELLIS •

Between 1723 and 1737, the immensely popular *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde* was published in Amsterdam under the direction of the compiler, editor and author of the original passages, Jean Frédéric Bernard (1683-1744).¹ This multi-volume work offered a comprehensive analysis of the world's religions, with a particular focus on ceremonies, customs and rituals. *Cérémonies* gained widespread acclaim largely due to its rich visual content, primarily the illustrations by the renowned French engraver Bernard Picart (1673-1733). In recent decades, the work has drawn renewed scholarly attention, notably through the efforts of Swiss ethnographer Paola von Wyss-Giacosa, who emphasizes the value of Bernard and Picart's work for analysing the ceremonial articulation of religious veneration, understood not as a culturally specific phenomenon but as a recurring anthropological constant across human societies.² Also contributing to new insight is the research of Enlightenment scholars Lynn Hunt, Margaret Jacob and

< Fig. 1
BERNARD PICART,
Ceremonie qui s'observe à la Naissance des Enfans chez les Cafres and Mariage des Cafres.
Etching and engraving,
338 x 226 mm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. RP-P-1911-3213,
gift of M. Onnes
van Nijenrode.
Illustration for Jean
Frédéric Bernard,
Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde, vol. 7: *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses des peuples idolâtres*,
Amsterdam 1728.
The two volumes on non-monotheistic religions have a different title.

Wijnand Mijnhardt, who in a monographic study dubbed it *The Book That Changed Europe* (2010).³ Central to these studies is the comparative methodology adopted by both Bernard and Picart, seen as revolutionary in its attempt to present religious practices objectively and without overt judgment and earning *Cérémonies* the label of an early anthropological study of religion.⁴

As its title implies, *Cérémonies* is a multi-volume work that covers religion in all parts of the world, each presented in sections. Among these, the section devoted to the African continent, in volume 7, received the least scholarly attention. This oversight is particularly striking given that Bernard and Picart's approach to African peoples and their rituals exemplifies their early modern comparative methodology.⁵ They employ a comprehensive strategy, meticulously juxtaposing textual sources and highly detailed illustrations to construct what they perceive as the most accurate and up-to-date representation of the region and its religious impulses. It must be acknowledged, however, that *Cérémonies*

devotes relatively little space to Africa, specifically sub-Saharan Africa.⁶ Due to this lack of sustained attention, Hunt, Jacob and Mijnhardt have suggested that the African sections in *Cérémonies* were somewhat perfunctory.⁷ One possible explanation for Bernard and Picart's relatively cursory treatment of African traditions is their limited familiarity with the region. Contemporary travel accounts, particularly those concerning the continent's interior, often lacked the depth of information available for other parts of the world.⁸ This disparity stemmed in part from the fact that European commercial and missionary activities were largely concentrated in coastal regions, leaving the interior comparatively under-documented and thus less accessible to the kind of source-rich, comparative synthesis Bernard and Picart pursued elsewhere.

The African material, though less extensive, is conceived within the same comparative logic that structures *Cérémonies* as a whole: African rites are examined within the global repertoire of ceremonies, including birth, marriage, death and initiation rituals, and not as an exception. In this sense, the approach to Africa is based on the same methodological principles Bernard and Picart applied to Asia, the Americas, and even the monotheistic religions. The relative absence of previous scholarship on this section therefore arises not from a fundamentally different approach within *Cérémonies* but is in fact the result of later historiographical preferences: modern studies have traditionally focussed on those volumes with richer textual and visual documentation; despite its fully comparative design, the Africa section has remained under-examined. The present article argues that, despite the limited scope of the Africa section, Bernard and Picart deploy a set of deliberate visual and textual strategies that, within a comparative framework, reframe African

religious practices as socially intelligible forms of ritual performance, thereby countering their construction as expressions of radical alterity.

The Africa Section

The Africa section in *Cérémonies* contains eight plates of engravings, comprising a total of twenty-three individual illustrations. These images not only vividly depict African religious practices, but also mark a significant shift in the visual representation thereof: a departure from typological, sensationalized figures inherited from travel literature towards scenographic depictions of ritual action that invite comparison with other religious traditions represented in *Cérémonies*, such as birth and marriage ceremonies, as can be seen in the illustrations on these subjects (fig. 1). By framing social practices as cultural performances and African communities as ritual performers, rather than reinforcing forms of strangeness inherited from earlier European visual and textual traditions, *Cérémonies* contributed to their humanization.

Nevertheless, Bernard and Picart do not fully transcend long-standing European topoi concerning sub-Saharan Africa and its inhabitants, specifically, assumptions about cruelty, moral deficiency and proximity to nature that continued to thrive independent of a detailed knowledge of the region and which consequently shaped the interpretation of certain customs. In the eyes of Bernard and Picart's European readership, this former view of customs such as infants' exposure to natural elements and the ritualistic urination on brides and grooms (see fig. 1) would have proved unsettling, not just in terms of concrete ethnographic insight but also stemming from inherited cultural assumptions that conditioned how unfamiliar practices were judged. As Giovanni Tarantino has previously stated in a study on Bernard and Picart's religious comparatism:

There is no lack of disparaging comments about the ferocity of certain customs of the Africans, such as cannibalism or the exposure to the elements of children and the elderly, or their vulnerability to the spells of priests and sorcerers. Even so, Picart's etchings emphasise the Africans' humanity: he depicts expressions, gestures and habits distinguished by tenderness, conviviality and a strong sense of community.⁹

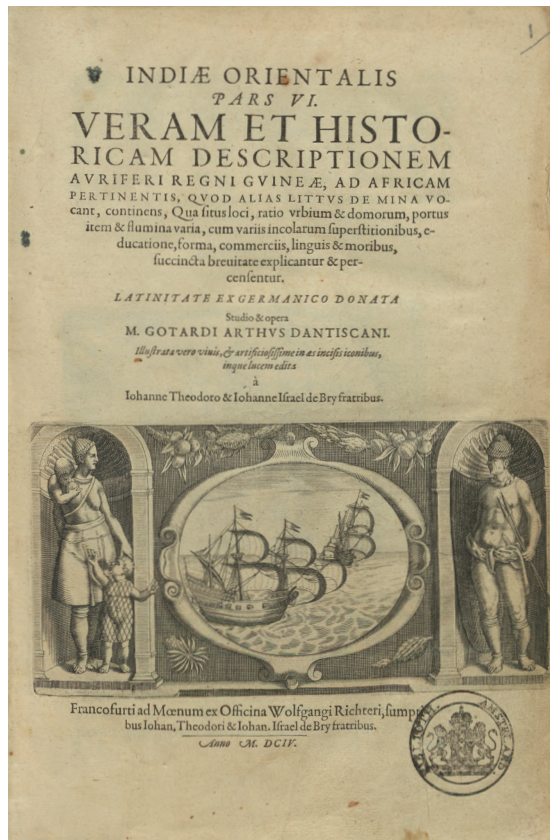
In this passage, Tarantino draws attention to a central tension within *Cérémonies*, arising from a disparity between, on one hand, inherited European accusations of cruelty – e.g. cannibalism, child abuse and susceptibility to superstition in Bernard's textual share – and Picart's visual emphasis on gestures, expressions and social interactions marked by tenderness, conviviality and communal cohesion. Bernard's text, while often condensed and comparatively restrained, nonetheless occasionally reinforces European tropes, particularly those framing African customs in terms of moral severity, cruelty or irrational belief. Picart's engravings, by contrast, develop a visual vocabulary that places greater emphasis on social interaction, care practices and collective organization, rendering African figures legible as participants in structured ritualistic and domestic practices.

These affective and relational strategies do not in themselves negate the persistence of inherited visual conventions, nor do they escape the constraints of an Enlightenment-comparative framework shaped by European epistemologies. Yet, embedded within the broader design of *Cérémonies*, they nonetheless shift the emphasis from sensational alterity towards social intelligibility. Bernard's text and Picart's images operate in tandem, without undermining one another. Even where Bernard's language at times reflects conventional

European judgments, the visual programme aligns with Picart's comparative project, which seeks less to idealize African subjects than to situate their practices within a shared repertoire of observable and interpretable human actions. Correspondingly, this article focusses on one of the most intensively racialized populations in early eighteenth-century European discourse: the inhabitants of South Africa's Western Cape, known today as the Khoikhoi but described in early modern sources as the 'Kaffirs' and 'Hottentots', whom Bernard groups under the heading 'Religion des peuples de la Cafrerie Méridionale'.¹⁰

Paola von Wyss-Giacosa distilled the three main sources of Picart's engravings, namely Theodoor de Bry's *Petits Voyages* (1589–1628, fig. 2), Olfert Dapper's *Naukeurige Beschrijvinge der*

Fig. 2
ANONYMOUS,
engraving.
Title page in
Johann Theodoor
and Johann Israel
de Bry, *Indiæ
Orientalis Part VI*,
Frankfurt 1604.
Allard Pierson,
University of
Amsterdam,
OF 63-746 (i).





Naukeurige Beschrijvinge DER AFRIKAENSCH GEWESTEN

VAN
Egypten, Barbaryen, Lybien, Biledulgerid,
Negroslant, Guinea, Ethiopiën, Abyssinie:

Vertoont

In de Benamingen, Grenspalen, Revieren, Steden, Gewassen,
Dieren, Zeeiden, Drachten, Talen, Rijkdommen,
Godsdiens en Heerschappyen.

Met Lantkaerten en afbeeldingen van Steden, Drachten, &c.
na 't Leven getekent, en in Kooper gesneden.

Getrokken uit verscheide bedendaegse Lantbeschrijvers en geschriften
van bereijde Onderzoekers dier Landen.

Door

D. O. DAPPER.

Den tweeden druck van veel fouten verbeterd.



AMSTERDAM.

By JACOB VAN MEURS, op de Keyfers-gracht, in de Stadt Meurs,
Anno M. DC. LXXVI.

Afrikaensche Gewesten (1668, fig. 3), and Peter Kolbs *Caput Bonae Spei Hodiernum, das ist: vollständige Beschreibung des africanischen Vorgebürges der Guten Hofnung* (1719, fig. 4).¹¹ Besides these, Bernard's comparative textual framework also drew from a variety of sources.¹² Bernard and Picart's personal libraries reveal a remarkable degree of diversity, with sources in Latin, Italian, German, French, Dutch and English. The breadth of sources they consulted on a subject that, given the limited geographic knowledge of the region, was perhaps the most challenging to represent, was unprecedented in the early eighteenth century. This underscores their personal commitment to portraying African religions as objectively and truthfully as possible. The

question remains, however, to what extent does the Africa section of *Cérémonies* offer a distinctively nuanced portrayal of African religions compared to contemporary European stereotypes?

Tempering Exoticization in Word and Image

In what follows, it is important to distinguish between shifts in figural style and broader changes in representational function. While Bernard and Picart's adaptations often depart from the highly stylized visual idioms of earlier travel imagery, the more consequential transformation lies in how these figures are embedded within scenes that foreground ritual action, social interaction and cultural practice. The opening engravings of the Africa

Fig. 3
JACOB VAN MEURS,
Africa, engraving.
Frontispiece in Olfert
Dapper, *Naukeurige
Beschrijvinge der
Afrikaensche
Gewesten van
Egypten, Barbarye,
Libyen, Biledulgerid,
Negroslant, Guinea,
Ethiopiën, Abyssinie*,
Amsterdam 1676
(second edition).
Leiden University
Libraries, inv. no.
RG-214.



Fig. 4
ANONYMOUS,
engraving.
Frontispiece in Peter
Kolb, *Caput Bonae
Spei Hodiernum*,
*das ist: Vollständige
Beschreibung des
africanischen
Vorgebürges der
Guten Hofnung*,
Nuremberg 1719.
Regensburg,
Staatliche Bibliothek,
999/2Hist.pol.809.
Photo: Münchener
Digitalisierungs-
Zentrum

sections, especially those depicting Guinea, make clear that Bernard and Picart did not entirely abandon the then prevailing stereotypes concerning sub-Saharan Africa, its peoples and their rituals. Drawing heavily on Theodoor de Bry's *Petits Voyages* (*India Orientalis*, part VI, 1604) and Pieter de Marees's influential *Beschryvinge ende historische verhael van't Gout-Koninkrijck van Guinea* (1602), they perpetuated many of the conventions and preconceptions embedded in these earlier sources.¹³ However, significant differences emerge in the selected engravings and Bernard's accompanying text. The pronounced exoticization characteristic of both sources is systematically tempered through an explicit cross-cultural and cross-

temporal comparison that aligns African practices with familiar European and ancient customs and reframes difference as variation rather than radical otherness. A textual example of this is Bernard stressing that they 'consacrent le Mardi à leurs *Fétiches*, comme nous le Dimanche à Dieu. Ce jour de repos est observé assés religieusement, par des danses & c.'¹⁴ From the outset, the discussion of African rites and customs highlights similarities with Christian practices.

A compelling visual example of this intercultural comparison can be observed in the way Picart adapted the original De Bry engravings depicting the veneration of 'fetishes' by the Guinea people. In the original source (fig. 5), an engraving presents four



Fig. 5

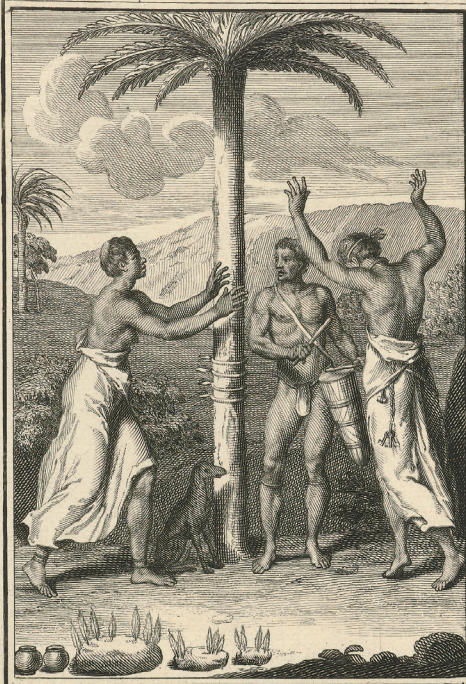
JOHANN THEODOOR
DE BRY, *Fetissio*.
Engraving,
145 x 222 mm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. RP-P-BI-5254.
Illustration from
Pieter de Marees,
*Beschryvinge ende
historische verhael,
vant gout koninck-
rijck van Gunea*,
Amsterdam 1602.

> Fig. 6

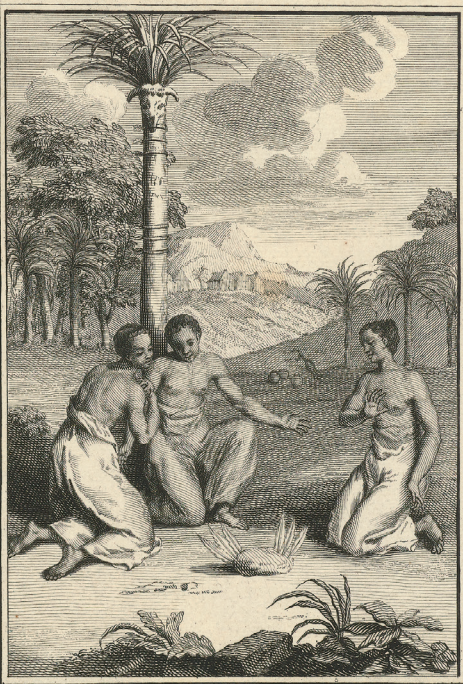
BERNARD PICART,
*Ceremonie des
Peuples de Guinée*,
1726.
Etching and
engraving,
333 x 221 mm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum, inv. no.
RP-P-1911-3268,
gift of M. Onnes
van Nijenrode.
Illustration for
Jean Frédéric
Bernard, *Cérémonies
et coutumes
religieuses de tous
les peuples du
monde*, vol. 7:
*Cérémonies et
coutumes religieuses
des peuples idolâtres*,
Amsterdam 1728.

distinct forms of veneration: two in the foreground, one in the middle and one in the background on the left. Although Picart chooses to reproduce the individual rituals with considerable fidelity, notable differences emerge (fig. 6). He retains all four rituals in their entirety and separates them into four distinct engravings, which together form a single composite print. This approach places greater emphasis on each individual ritual, its specific characteristics and the performer who carries it out. It also allows Picart to incorporate greater detail in his illustrations. In multiple aspects, his own execution therefore differs significantly from the original engravings.

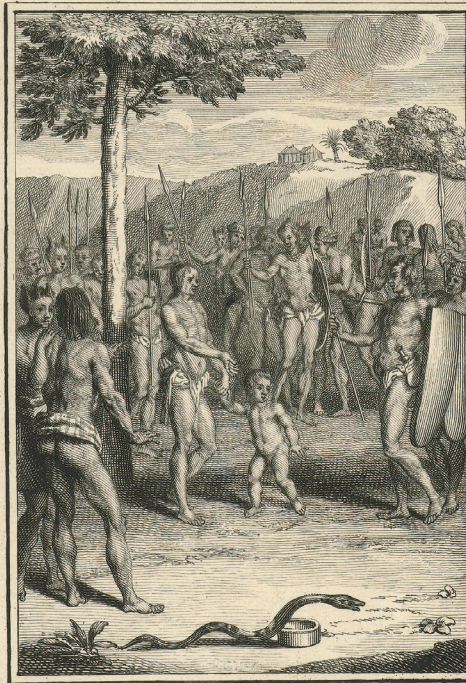
In a study on ethnographic prints, Elmer Kolfin has observed that the characters in the original engravings are depicted in the typical mannerist style of the period, a mode of representation that appears to have been



Cérémonie Religieuse des Peuples de GUINÉE à l'honneur de leur DIVINITÉ. ||



Autre Cérémonie pour demander de la PLUIE &c.



*St. Pierre deux 1748.
Cérémonie des Peuples de GUINÉE, pour la CIRCONCISION d'un ENFANT. ||*



Leur COMMEMORATION des MORTS.



Fig. 7
JOHANN THEODOOR
DE BRY, *Melato*,
[*Inlantsche*
boerinnen,]
Acatiaffa, *Hiro*.
Engraving,
145 x 220 mm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. RP-P-BI-5251.
Illustration from
Pieter de Marees,
Beschryvinge ende
historische verhael,
vant gout
koninckrijck van
Gunea, Amsterdam
1602.

preferred in many travel account projects, particularly those published by De Marees's publisher, Claesz.¹⁵ Such muscular figures had dominated scientific imagery since the fifteen seventies, as this style lent itself to the detailed display of human anatomy.¹⁶ The emphasis on musculature is especially evident in representations of peoples from foreign regions, who are often rendered in rigid, formal poses, as is the case in much of De Bry's work (fig. 7). It is striking, therefore, that Picart selectively chose those engravings that, at least to some degree, avoided the exaggerated, unnatural postures characteristic of this mannerist idiom. In his adaptations, he abandons the muscular style in favour of a more naturalized rendering, consistent with contemporary aesthetic preferences. However, this shift in representational mode does not in itself amount to ethnographic accuracy. Rather, it enables a second, distinct

transformation: by more fully immersing figures within their surroundings and actions, Picart redirects attention away from static typologies of 'Africa' towards the depiction of ritual practices as socially embedded and temporally unfolding performances. In this way, changes in figural style support but are not a substitute for a broader reorientation towards the visualization of ceremonies, customs and rituals within their specific cultural contexts.¹⁷

Furthermore, Picart presents each ritual separately. He does so not to isolate them from their cultural setting but rather to afford them the attention they deserve. In his adaptations, he enhances depth and naturalness by modifying various elements, creating a stark contrast between his own figures' fluid, lifelike postures and the rigid, somewhat awkward poses of the originals. Although Picart had no direct access to the

rituals of 'les peuples idolâtres', his style is nonetheless comparable to engravings produced from first-hand observation, such as those, for example, in the Jewish and Protestant volumes of *Cérémonies*.¹⁸ In this way, Picart extends the approach characteristic of his engravings labelled 'dessiné d'après nature' – or as Borgeaud and Petrella put it, 'sur le vif' – to his depictions of the Guinea people.¹⁹ This is particularly evident in the striking designs Picart created based on Peter Kolb's work.

Framing in a Comparative Religious Context

Regarding the depiction of the Khoikhoi, one of the most crucial influences on both the editor and the engraver was the work of the German ethnologist Peter Kolb, whose renowned 1719 account of his travels on the Western Cape provided a foundational model (fig. 4).²⁰ Bernard's body of writing on the 'Cafretrie Méridionale' is almost entirely based on Kolb's account, just as Picart's images also appear to be heavily indebted to its engravings. Anne Good, in her discussion of Kolb's work, has shown that between 1488 – the year in which Bartolomeu Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope – and 1719 – the year of publication of Kolb's influential *Caput Bonae Spei Hodiernum* – descriptions of the Khoikhoi were featured in more than 250 narratives published in Europe.²¹ For the most part, these descriptions took the form of travel narratives.²² Virtually all were entirely negative, depicting the Khoikhoi as naked, barbaric savages lacking basic human capacities such as speech and reason, devoid of religion and who engaged in cannibalism and unrestrained sexual promiscuity.²³

Widely translated into Dutch, French and English, Kolb's work became one of the most influential eighteenth-century sources on the Cape.²⁴ It is particularly notable for challenging

the then prevailing stereotypes about African peoples, their customs, ways of life and religious beliefs.²⁵ Siegfried Huigen argues that Kolb's strategy can best be understood in rhetorical terms: rather than acting as an advocate for the Khoikhoi, Kolb seeks to replace the dominant negative portrayal in the existing literature with words of praise, yet without abandoning the appearance of objective historiography.²⁶ In an effort to preserve credibility, he acknowledges the undesirability of certain practices viewed by European audiences as reprehensible, such as the exposure of infants, while simultaneously emphasizing the positive aspects of Khoikhoi society.²⁷

Following Kolb's precedent, neither Bernard nor Picart shied away from representing complex or potentially unsettling Khoikhoi rituals and practices. As noted earlier, exposing newborns to the elements or the act of brides and grooms urinating on each other during marital celebrations were customs that likely perplexed early modern European readers, given the recurrent expressions of astonishment and moral unease in contemporary travel literature when describing practices of this kind.²⁸ Nevertheless, because these gestures, habits and expressions attributed to the Khoikhoi are drawn directly from Kolb's demonstrably favourable accounts, and moreover embedded within the *Cérémonies* as part of a compendium of global religious practices, from the outset these depictions are framed within a sustained comparative-religious context that stands in marked contrast to the more overtly negative and dehumanizing stereotypes that prevailed in European travel literature and imagery produced prior to this time.

Text: Downplaying Unsettling Practices

To develop this point further, I turn to the section describing a significant rite of passage, that of childbirth,

introduced by Bernard as ‘Leurs usages à l’égard des Enfans Nouveaux & c.’.²⁹ In Kolb’s original text, as in the highly faithful Dutch translation published in 1727 by Balthazar Lakeman, this section begins with the author’s plea that the Khoikhoi are not as immoral as they had previously been portrayed. The narrative then rather quickly takes a surprising turn, however, especially in light of Kolb’s generally neutral assessment of the African population. The discussion shifts to the treatment of newborn children, particularly the exposure or abandonment of infants deemed weak or non-viable. In this context, Kolb’s tone undergoes a marked transformation, when he characterizes these as acts of extreme cruelty, condemning them as forms of infanticide in his view unparalleled among any other people.³⁰ In his own version of the text, Bernard notably omits these introductory reflections altogether. Instead, he begins his text *in media res*, specifically, at that point where Kolb’s text describes what is observed when a Khoikhoi woman is on the verge of giving birth. Bernard translates this as ‘Lorsqu’une femme enceinte approche du terme’.³¹

Bernard subsequently adheres to Kolb’s original text relatively closely. What follows is essentially little more than an enumeration of the various topics addressed by Kolb, with the original text significantly condensed and much of its extensive detail omitted. Where Kolb’s original account spans approximately ten pages, Bernard reduces the entire discussion to just two. It is precisely in this condensation of discourse that the latter manages to excise the most contentious passages from the original account. For instance, Kolb recounts with horror the Khoikhoi’s treatment of female twins, asserting that, in most cases, the weaker of the two is killed, either by burying the child alive in the den of a wild animal, abandoning it in an open field or

tying it to a tree branch, where it will die by starvation or from being devoured.³² Unable, of course, to ignore Kolb’s findings, Bernard chooses to handle such matters in a very different manner, eliminating almost entirely any form of subjective language or judgment and opting instead for a neutral, almost objective description of the facts presented by Kolb. Consequently, Bernard presents gruesome accounts – unavoidable in Kolb’s work – instead as a sporadic and deeply regrettable anomaly. His discussion of the practice of infanticide, seemingly entrenched among the Khoikhoi, reads as follows:

Fig. 8

ANONYMOUS,
Wie die Hottentotten die neugeborene Kinder waschen, engraving.
Illustration in Peter Kolb,
Caput Bonae Spei Hodiernum, das ist: Vollständige Beschreibung des africanischen Vorgebürges der Guten Hofnung, Nuremberg 1719.
Regensburg, Staatliche Bibliothek, inv. no. 999/2Hist.pol.809.
Photo: Münchener Digitalisierungs-Zentrum, Digitale Bibliothek



Si au contraire deux jumelles viennent au monde, les pauvres filles sont froidement accueillies, à peine sacrifie-t-on pour l'amour d'elles une des plus chétives brebis; & si une de ces filles paroît mal saine ou trop délicate, si le sein de la mere ne peut fournir à les nourrir toutes deux, si enfin le pere ne veut pas les élever, on les porte simplement aux champs, quelquefois on les enterre à moitié, ou l'on les lie à une branche d'arbre.³³

By emphasizing that such scenes also occurred among the Greeks and Romans of antiquity, and that practices of this nature still persisted in China, Japan and elsewhere, Bernard further mitigates his condemnation by employing comparison and broader contextualization.³⁴ As affirmed by the cited passage, however, at no point does he deny or obscure the horror of these acts; rather, he avoids dwelling on specific details and deliberately shifts the focus to the children's physical condition, described as weak or unhealthy. In doing so, Bernard creates the impression that these children were inherently non-viable, a notion reinforced by the caption 'L'Exposition des enfans qui naissent avec quelques Défaut' accompanying Picart's engraving (fig. 1), placed directly after Bernard's description of the event.³⁵

Image: Emphasizing Humanity

This engraving, like the text itself, depicts three possible manifestations of this practice, though only as small details in the distant, indistinct background. The fate of these children is already reflected in the engraving in Kolb's original work from 1719 (fig. 8), on which Picart clearly based his own illustration. As indicated in the accompanying explanatory caption, the letters C, D, E in the engraving mark children abandoned to the forces of nature: abandoned in a tree, in an open field or inside an animal's den.

In its turn, Jan Caspar's engraving for the Dutch edition of Kolb's work presents the same three methods, under the title 'Op wat wyze de Hottentotten de Nieuw geboore Kinderen Handelen' (fig. 9). In Picart's version, however, one encounters several significant modifications to the original. Conspicuously absent is the figure who abandons the children, clearly present in the images by Picart's predecessors. In the engraving with Kolb's original work, a figure is seen retreating towards what was referred to as the *kraal*, an old Dutch term for a traditional African village; in Philips's version, an individual buries a child

Fig. 9
JAN CASPAR PHILIPS,
Op wat wyze de Hottentotte de Nieuw geboore Kinderen Handelen, engraving. Illustration in Balthazar Lakeman's Dutch edition of Peter Kolb's *Caput Bonae Spei Hodiernum: Naaukeurige en uitvoerige beschryving van de kaap de Goede Hoop*, Amsterdam 1727. Allard Pierson, University of Amsterdam, OF 63-20.



inside a cave. Picart replaces this human presence with a feline predator engaged in the act of devouring one of the three abandoned children.

Short of explicitly denying human intervention, Picart's substitution appears to be a deliberate artistic choice aimed to reinforce Bernard's discourse. Without the accompanying text, the engraving might be read as a sensationalized depiction of Africa as a place where children fall prey to wild animals, thus confirming stereotypical notions of the continent as violent and uncivilized. Crucially, Picart relegates this scene to the background. In line with Bernard's text, he frames the abandonment of children, not as a defining cultural trait, but as an anomaly, in stark contrast to the more explicit and foregrounded portrayals of infanticide in both Kolb's original and its Dutch translation. Additionally, Picart may have used this detail to heighten the scene's spectacular impact. He might also have seized the opportunity to display his artistic skill, given that several of his earlier sketches reveal a particular fascination with the study of wild animals, especially lions.³⁶

Indeed, contrary to the grim fate of the children in the background of the engraving, the foreground presents a markedly different vision of the *kraal*, one that emphasizes the humanity, communal bonds and solidarity among the Khoikhoi. The text already establishes that the mother is greatly supported while in labour, as 'deux ou trois Matrones Hottentotes se rendent auprès d'elle & la gardent en quelque façon jusqu'à ce que les douleurs commencent'.³⁷ What stands out in all three illustrations is the collective and communal nature of this practice: the women care for the newborn and support the mother collectively. In the original illustration in Kolb, five women are depicted caring for the newborn, with each woman actively engaged in a different task related



to infant care, a motif retained in Philips's image, in which several women look on while two other individuals carry out the primary tasks of caregiving. Employing a cross-sectional view of the hut, Picart, unlike Philips, remains faithful to the interior domestic scene from the original Kolb engraving. Nevertheless, Picart's design places even greater emphasis on the relationships among the various women: their focus lies not only on the infant but also each another. This composition allows for the interpretation that the woman resting her head on her hand may represent the mother who has just given birth, being comforted by

Fig. 10
Detail of recumbent woman with her child (fig. 1).

Fig. 11
BERNARD PICART, *Seated Female Nude*, year unknown. Red chalk and brown ink on paper, 303/4 x 359/361 mm. Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, inv. no. 4060/1868. Photo: from Rijksmuseum Research Library, sz Tek Best Brus, 2019/3389

another woman through a reassuring gesture. Nevertheless, most striking in Picart's engraving is the deliberate separation of one woman from the rest (fig. 1). This unique composition in Picart's design, and particularly the distinct presence of this lone figure, deserves special attention.

An Early Modern 'Hottentot Venus'?

The African woman illustrated here (fig. 10) sits in an exceptionally elegant, almost classicist pose. Her nakedness aligns with the beauty standards of contemporary female nudes.³⁸ Picart himself created drawings of European female nudes that are similar in detail and posture (fig. 11). This is especially striking given that most of his predecessors, including De Marees, Kolb, and Philips, perpetuated without hesitation the manifold, often highly sexualized stereotypes of African women constructed over the years. One of the most evident examples of this stereotyping can be observed in the representation of the women's breasts. Unlike his predecessors, who depicted African women's breasts hanging halfway down the torso as was customary in most earlier representations, a number of which will be discussed below, Picart renders them in a realistic, and perhaps even somewhat idealized, manner.

In Picart's depiction, the nurturing characteristics of the African mother figure are also strongly emphasized. While tending to the child in her arms, she also lies in close proximity to the infant on the ground, which has been left outside to fend for itself as described in Bernard's account of birth-related rituals. In this regard, the depicted tenderness recalls that of comparable representations of Dutch women cradling their children, thereby fostering a sense of recognition among European viewers familiar with and accustomed to such displays of affection in maternal imagery (fig. 12).



This gentle and intimate portrayal dominates the composition, softening the overall tone of the engraving and relegating the more harrowing elements to the background, where they become secondary to the scene's prevailing sense of care and tenderness.

Notably, Picart employs a collage principle, borrowing the figure from another engraving in Kolb's work, 'Der Hottentotten Täglicher Habit' (fig. 13).³⁹ In this engraving, both male and female figures are depicted, with their attire reflecting the thematic content of the illustration. But unlike most of the pieces in Kolb's collection, the engraving itself is not an original. Instead, Jacob van Meurs's design from Olfert Dapper's *Naukeurige Beschrijvinge der Afrikaensche Gewesten* (1668) was utilized, specifically the piece titled 'Dracht en Wapening der Hottentots' (fig. 14).⁴⁰ The same figures also appear in Jan Caspar Philips's stylized portrayal of a Khoikhoi man and woman, with emphasis placed on their attire (fig. 15).

Fig. 12
BERNARD PICART,
*Paysane de Hollande /
Andere hollantsche
boerinne*, 1703.
Etching and
engraving,
116 x 71 mm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum, inv. no.
RP-P-OB-51.848.

Fig. 13

ANONYMOUS,
*Der Hottentoten
 täglicher Habit,
 engraving.
 Illustration in
 Peter Kolb,
 Caput Bonae
 Spei Hodiernum,
 das ist: vollständige
 Beschreibung
 des africanischen
 Vorgebürges der
 Guten Hofnung,
 Nuremberg 1719.
 Regensburg,
 Staatliche Bibliothek,
 inv. no. 999/2Hist.
 pol.809.
 Photo: Münchener
 Digitalisierungs-
 Zentrum, Digitale
 Bibliothek*

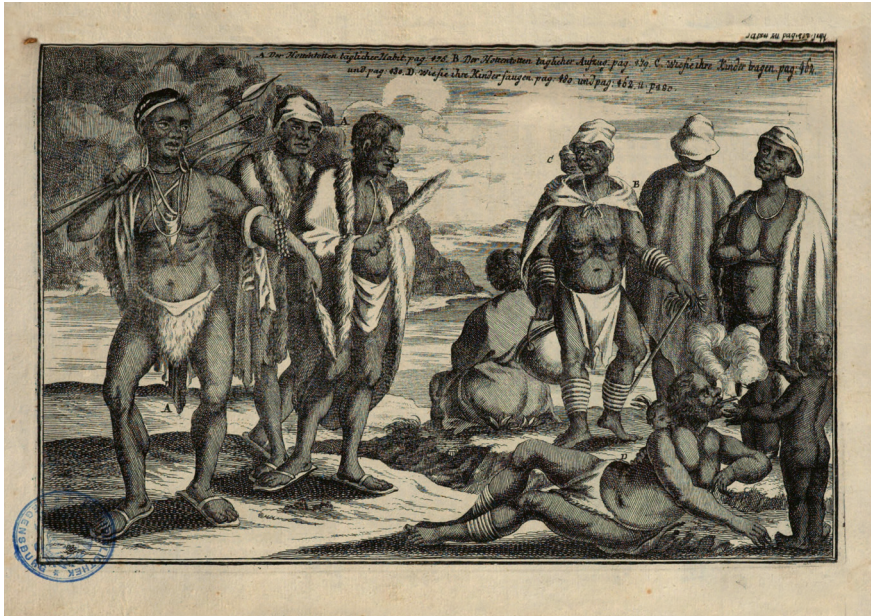


Fig. 14

ANONYMOUS,
*Dracht en wapening
 der Hottentots /
 Les Armes et Habits
 des Hottentots, 1726,
 from album titled
 Les Forces de
 l'Europe, Asie,
 Afrique et Amerique.
 Etching and engrav-
 ing, 247 x 343 mm.
 Illustration for
 Johann Albrecht
 von Mandelslo,
 Voyages celebres
 et remarquables
 faits de Perse aux
 Indes Orientales
 par Jean-Albert
 de Mandelslo,
 Amsterdam 1727.
 Amsterdam,
 Rijksmuseum, inv. no.
 RP-P-OB-83.036-235.*



In the adaptation in Kolb's work, how-
 ever, an addition can be seen far right:
 a woman accompanied by two children,
 with one at her side and the other bound
 to her back while being breastfed.

Picart's illustration resembles another
 engraving by Philips (fig. 16), yet the
 specific position in which the woman
 is depicted suggests it was adapted
 from Romeyn de Hooghe's original



Fig. 15
JAN CASPAR
PHILIPS,
*Kleding der
Hottentotten.*
Etching and
engraving,
290 x 170 mm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no.
RP-P-1908-3393,
gift of Mr Burger.
Illustration for
Balthazar Lakeman's
Dutch edition
of Peter Kolb's
*Caput Bonae Spei
Hodiernum:
Naaukeurige en
uitvoerige
beschryving van de
kaap de Goede Hoop,*
Amsterdam 1727.



Fig. 16
JAN CASPAR
PHILIPS,
*Hoe de Hotten-
tottinnen hunne
Kinderen dragen
en de Borst geven,*
engraving.
Illustration in
Balthazar Lakeman's
Dutch edition
of Peter Kolb's
*Caput Bonae
Spei Hodiernum:
Naaukeurige
en uitvoerige
beschryving
van de kaap de
Goede Hoop,*
Amsterdam 1727.
Allard Pierson,
University of
Amsterdam,
OF 63-20.

portrayal of the 'Caffres' and 'Hottentots' (fig. 17). This earlier depiction is highly stereotypical and even demeaning, showing the mother not smoking tobacco but instead devouring human organs. The engraving in Kolb replaces the act of cannibalism with a woman smoking a pipe; even so, the infant remains. In the early modern period, the image of an infant on the African woman's back being breastfed was a widely recognized stereotype, commonly associated with the manner in which African women were thought to nurse their children. The same image, observed earlier in the depiction of the 'Hiro' by De Bry, accompanied the travel account of De Marees (fig. 7), in which the way the child was breastfed is described as follows:



Fig. 17

ROMEYN DE HOOGHE, *Hottentots en Guineesche*, in album titled *Les Indes Orientales et Occidentales, et autres lieux*. Etching, 211 x 345 mm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. BI-1972-1043-31. Illustration for Simon de Vries, *Curieuse aenmerckingen der bysonderste Oost en West-Indische verwonderens-waerdige dingen*, part 3, Utrecht 1682.

Fig. 18

ANONYMOUS, *Savage Inhabitants*, engraving. Illustration in Thomas Herbert, *Some Yeares Travels into Divers Parts of Asia and Africa*, London 1638 (second edition). The Hague, KB – National Library of the Netherlands, kw 109B21, fol. 18.

Fig. 19

ANONYMOUS after ANDRIES BEECKMAN, *Serdainser Vrouw of Hottentot Aen Cabo de Bon Esperance* (title on verso), c. 1675-1725. Watercolour, 320 x 200 mm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. NG-2016-37-12, purchased with the support of the Johan Huizinga Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds.

De moeder bint haer kindt met een stuccken Lakens op haren rugghe, latende het kindt daer soo hanghen ..., het kint nv crytende om een Mem ofte om te suygen, de moeder werpt hem een borste toe over huer schouderen latende hem alsoo hanghen suyghen, sy gaet over en weer, ende treckt haer het kindt niet eens aen, al of sy geen kindt op haren rugge hangende en hadden, soo dat het kindt hoofts rechts boven haren schouderen comt, loopende en sligherende aldus het kindt over en weer, seer verschrickelijck, soo dat het ons verwondert datse de kinderen niet de ledenen en breken.⁴¹

This quotation from De Marees's original Dutch translation clearly conveys the existence of a very specific, rather harsh vision of the relationship between mother and child and child-rearing practices within African societies, particularly in respect to breastfeeding. The act of suckling a child from a mother's stretched breast thrown uncomfortably over the shoulder, though ostensibly a physically impossible feat, surfaces repeatedly. Examples appear in travel accounts like Thomas Herbert's *Some Yeares Travels into Divers Parts of Asia and Afrique* (1634, fig. 18), drawings

purportedly made 'in situ' such as those by Andries Beeckman (fig. 19), and cartouches in cartographic works like Jan Luyken's *Pascaert van de Costa de Caffres* (fig. 20). Yet they also figure prominently in the frontispieces of written works on Africa, including De Bry's *India Orientalis, Part VI* (1604, fig. 2) and Dapper's *Description of Africa* (1676, fig. 3), for which Van Meurs created the title page.

In this way, a culturally stereotyped image was disseminated throughout Europe, allowing it to endure for many years. As Jennifer L. Morgan argues, the 'image was a compelling one, offering in a single narrative-visual moment evidence that black women's difference was both cultural (in this strange *habit*) and physical (in this strange *ability*)'.⁴² Morgan correctly contends that these erroneous perceptions about

African women's 'African-ness' were grounded in colonial connections between savagery, sexuality, colonial exploitation and enslavement. These perceptions framed African women as inherently suited for reproductive labour, capable of giving birth to numerous children – a misconception in itself, as enslaved women in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries had relatively low birth rates – but also ideal for manual labour.⁴³ Enslaved African women were presented as able to sustain gruelling manual work while simultaneously engaging in childbearing and breastfeeding, both of which were reduced to mechanical, almost effortless processes.⁴⁴

This narrative long served to justify imperial exploitation, portraying Africans as naturally adapted to labour and endurance. While abolitionist campaigns later began to challenge



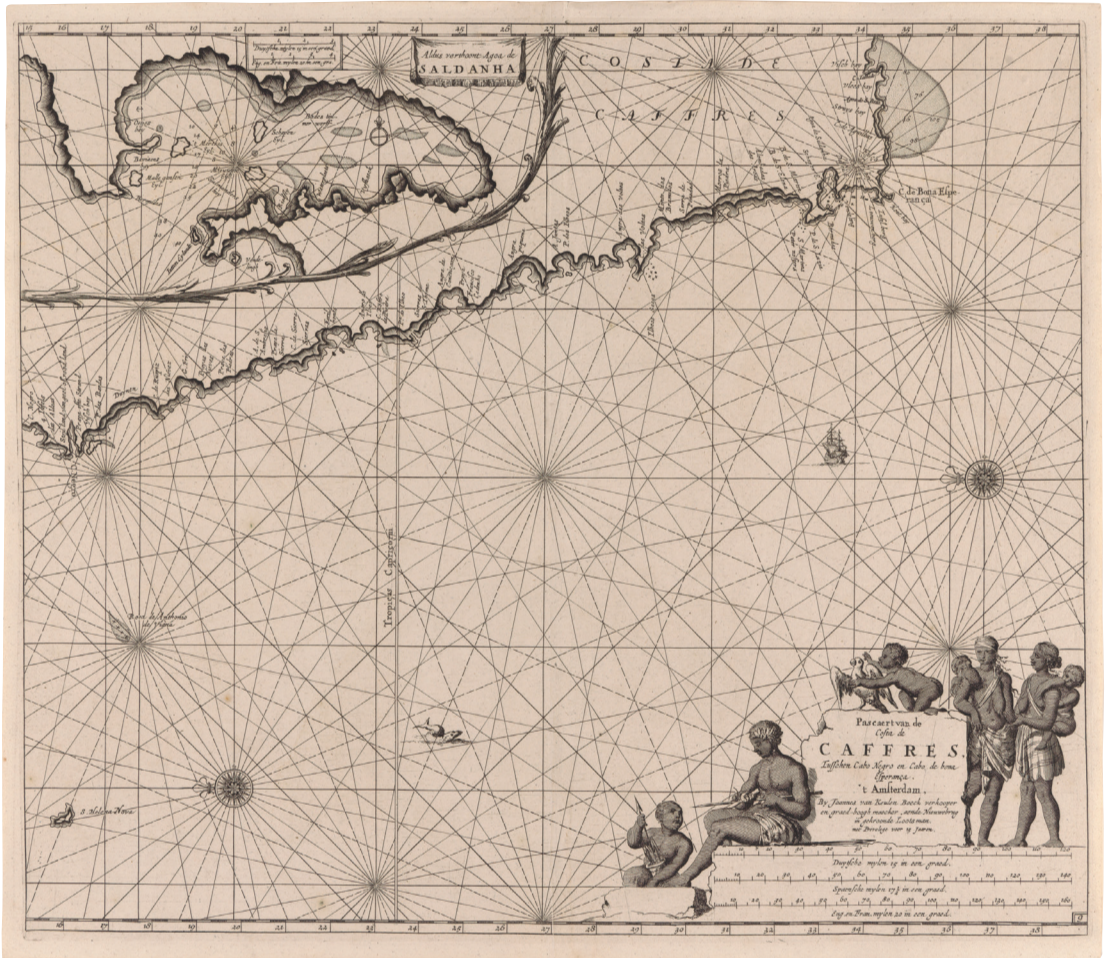


Fig. 20
JAN LUYKEN,
*Pascaert van de
Costa de Caffres*,
c. 1683-1709.
Etching and
engraving,
507 x 596 mm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. RP-P-
1896-A-19368-3113.
Map including a
cartouche decorated
with figures
representing
Khoikhoi people
(see also p. 106).

such assumptions, colonialism and the trade in enslaved peoples soon recast ethnographic curiosity as a racialized spectacle. Marketed as the 'Hottentot Venus', Sarah Baartman (c. 1789-1815) would enter the European stage of freakshows not as a cultural participant but as an object of scientific and erotic display. As Lisa Skwirblies observes, Africans became trapped in a theatrical condition imposed on them by colonial vision: staged, framed and consumed by the European gaze.⁴⁵ Set against this later history, Picart's depiction of the Khoikhoi mother emerges as a remarkably early counter-image. Nursing her child with composure,

she both anticipates and inverts the figure of Baartman, embodying care, ritual, and moral presence rather than erotic exposure. As noted above, Bernard's textual account moreover completely omits the passage on breastfeeding from Kolb's text. Accordingly, *Cérémonies* occupies an uncertain yet revealing position: a work shaped by Enlightenment hierarchies yet capable of granting African subjects a measure of dignity largely absent from a visual tradition that would come to increasingly focus on dehumanization and spectacle.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, images perpetuating reductive and distorted views of African bodies also remained in circulation. Late examples of the stereotype motif discussed in this article, including Jan Caspar Philips's title page for Thomas Salmon's *Hedendaagsche historie of tegenwoordige staat van Afrika* (1763, fig. 21) and Simon Fokke's frontispiece for *Hedendaagsche historie of Het vervolg van de Algemeene historie* (1785, fig. 22), attest to the persistence of such conventions. Viewed in this context, Picart's decision to abandon the stereotypical representation of the African mother is all the more striking. His version corrects both the imagery of Kolb's original and its subsequent Dutch translation, but also surpasses the most recent visual traditions of his time. While Bernard omits the scene altogether, Picart

Fig. 21

JAN CASPAR PHILIPS,
*Tegenwoordige
Staat van Afrika*, from
dismantled album.
Etching and engraving,
176 x 105 mm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum, inv. no.
RP-P-2016-1152.
Frontispiece for
Thomas Salmon,
*Hedendaagsche
historie of
tegenwoordige
staat van Afrika*,
Amsterdam 1763.

Fig. 22

SIMON FOKKE,
*Hedendaagsche
Historie*, from
dismantled album.
Etching and engraving,
161 x 119 mm.
Frontispiece for
*Hedendaagsche
historie of Het
vervolg van de
Algemeen historie*,
part 15, Amsterdam
1785.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum, inv. no.
RP-P-2016-1854.



replaces it with a composition that is at once tender, dignified and intelligible to his readers.

Drawing upon sources that range from Kolb and Philips to major seventeenth-century engravers such as Van Meurs and de Hooghe, Picart nonetheless transforms his material. By foregrounding the mother figure as an analytical anchor, the resulting scene in 'Cérémonie qui s'observe à la Naissance des Enfants chez les Cafres' expands beyond the act of breastfeeding to include a variety of gestures and customs that would have been recognizable and culturally legible for European audiences. I have shown how Bernard and Picart humanize their subjects, allowing readers to engage with African life through a lens that is both comparative and emblematic of their broader approach. Even within the brief Africa section of *Cérémonies*, they deploy carefully balanced visual and textual strategies aimed to counter inherited stereotypes while also emphasizing authenticity, familiarity and moral presence. Their work is distinguished not by the wholesale

transcendence but rather the deliberate reshaping of the European perspective, achieved by means of creating a comparative and performative perspective. By emphasizing the humanity of African ritual performers, they resist the full reduction of their subjects to objects of colonial scrutiny. Instead, they stage them as active participants within a shared world of ritual expression. Through this approach, Bernard and Picart anticipate a more empathetic, observational mode of representation – one that, however imperfect, momentarily suspends the dehumanizing spectacle that would later culminate in figures like the 'Hottentot Venus'. This approach is consistent with the broader methodology of *Cérémonies*, which applies a uniform comparative framework across continents, even though the scarcity of sources for Africa, and the contemporaneous realities of enslavement, resulted in a less extensive but not fundamentally different treatment.

ABSTRACT

Between 1723 and 1737, the immensely popular *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde* was published in Amsterdam under the direction of editor, compiler and author Jean Frédéric Bernard. This multi-volume work offered a comprehensive analysis of the world's religions, with a particular focus on ceremonies, customs and rituals. It gained widespread acclaim largely due to its rich visual content, primarily the engravings by renowned French artist Bernard Picart. In recent decades, *Cérémonies* has gained renewed scholarly attention. Several studies have analysed the comparative methodology adopted by both Bernard and Picart. Seen as revolutionary for its attempt to present religious practices objectively and without overt judgment, this methodology has earned the label of a proto-anthropological study of religion. In the section of *Cérémonies* devoted to African religious practices, a similarly comparative approach is applied, while likewise drawing on a variety of earlier sources. Nevertheless, this section of the book has largely escaped critical analysis. This article seeks to address that gap by asking: To what extent does the Africa section of *Cérémonies* offer a distinctively nuanced portrayal of African religions in comparison with contemporary European stereotypical depictions? Through the visual analysis of a Khoikhoi mother figure, this article draws on engravings primarily held in the Rijksmuseum collection. It examines the sources on which Bernard and especially Picart relied, among them works by De Marees, De Bry, Kolb, De Hooghe, Dapper and Philips.

NOTES

- 1 The order of the original French edition of *Cérémonies* varies from set to set. I adhere to the numbering of the set in the Bibliothèque National de France (BNF, RES-G-562). However, in the present article, I focus solely on volume 7 (published in 1728), and more specifically, on the African section. As for Bernard, it can be assumed that the revisions to the original source texts in his compilation, along with all the 'suppléments' and the introductory essay, were written by him. For this reason, I consider Bernard not only the compiler and editor of the volumes but also their author. For Bernard's authorship in *Cérémonies*, see Wijnand Mijnhardt, 'Jean Frederic Bernard as Author and Publisher', in Lynn Hunt, Margaret Jacob and Wijnand Mijnhardt (eds.), *Bernard Picart and the First Global Vision of Religion*, Los Angeles 2010, pp. 17-34.
- 2 Paola von Wyss-Giacosa, 'Visual Provocations: Bernard Picart's illustrative strategies in *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde*', in Giovanni Tarantino and Charles Zika (eds.), *Feeling Exclusion: Religious Conflict, Exile, and Emotions in Early Modern Europe*, London/New York 2019, pp. 233-58. For an analysis of the early anthropological merit of *Cérémonies*, see also Steff Nellis, Stijn Bussels and Bram Van Oostveldt (eds.), *Performing Religion in the Early Enlightenment: Theatricality and Performativity in Bernard and Picart's Religious Ceremonie of the World*, Leiden/Boston 2026.
- 3 Lynn Hunt, Margeret Jacob and Wijnand Mijnhardt, *The Book That Changed Europe: Picart and Bernard's Religious Ceremonies of the World*, Cambridge/London 2010. See also Ilja M. Veldman, 'Familiar Customs and Exotic Rituals: Picart's Illustrations for *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples*', *Simiolus* 33 (2007-2008), no. 1/2, pp. 94-111.
- 4 Steff Nellis, 'Bernard Picart's Controversial Visual Rhetoric: Theatricality in the *Cérémonies et Coutumes Religieuses de Tous Les Peuples Du Monde* (1723-1737)', *Jaarboek voor Nederlandse Boekgeschiedenis* 31 (2024), no. 1, pp. 85-110, esp. p. 90. See also Steff Nellis, '"Tafereel van de voornaamste godsdiensten der waereldt". Een herbeschouwing van Bernard Picart's titelprent voor de *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde* (1723-1743)', *Jaarboek De Achttiende Eeuw* 54 (2022), no. 1, pp. 72-92.
- 5 Danièle Prégardien, 'L'iconographie des *Cérémonies et coutumes* de B. Picart', in Daniel Droixhe and Pol-Pierre Gossiaux (eds.), *L'Homme des Lumières à la découverte de l'autre*, Brussels 1985, pp. 183-90.
- 6 Jean Frédéric Bernard, *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde*, vol. 7, Amsterdam 1728, p. 1.
- 7 Hunt, Jacob and Mijnhardt 2010 (note 3), p. 216.
- 8 Christine Levecq, 'Early Dutch Travel Writing on Africa', *Dutch Crossing: Journal of Low Countries Studies* 37 (2013), no. 3, pp. 220-39, esp. p. 230.
- 9 Giovanni Tarantino, 'From Labelling and Ridicule to Understanding: The Novelty of Bernard and Picart's Religious Comparatism', in Giovanni Tarantino and Paola von Wyss-Giacosa (eds.), *Through Your Eyes: Religious Alterity and the Early Modern Western Imagination*, Leiden/Boston 2021, pp. 235-66, esp. p. 257.
- 10 Bernard 1728 (note 6), p. 42. For an excellent discussion of representations of the Khoikhoi in English publications, see Linda E. Merians, *Envisioning the Worst: Representations of 'Hottentots' in Early-Modern England*, London 2001. For French attitudes to the Khoikhoi, see Francois-Xavier Fauvelle-Aymar, *L'invention du Hottentot: histoire du regard occidental sur les Khoikhoi (xv-xix siècle)*, Paris 2002; and David Johnson, 'Representing the Cape "Hottentots", from the French Enlightenment to post-apartheid South Africa', *Eighteenth Century Studies* 40 (2007), no. 4, pp. 525-52.
- 11 Paola von Wyss-Giacosa, *Religionsbilder der Frühen Aufklärung: Bernard Picarts Tafeln für die *Cérémonies et Coutumes religieuses de tous les Peuples du Monde**, Wabern bei Bern 2006, p. 103. For the early modern sources: Theodoor de Bry, *Collectiones peregrinationum in Indiam orientalem et Indiam occidentalem* (Frankfurt: Ex Officina Wolffgangi Richter, 1598-1628); Olfert Dapper, *Naukeurige Beschrijvinge der Afrikaensche Gewesten van Egypten, Barbarye, Libyen, Biledulgerid, Negrosland, Guinea, Ethiopiën, Abyssinie: Vertoont in de Benaminge, Grenspalen, Steden, Revieren, Gewassen, Dieren, Zeeden, Drachten, Talen, Rijkdommen, Godsdiensten en Heerschappyen. Met Lantkaerten en afbeeldingen van Steden, Drachten, & c. na 't Leven getekent, en in Kooper gesneden. Getrokken uit verscheide hedendaegse Lantbeschrijvers en geschriften van bereisde onderzoekers dier Landen* (Amsterdam: By Jacob van Meurs, 1668); and Peter Kolb, *Caput Bonae Spei Hodiernum*,

- das ist: vollständige Beschreibung des africanischen Vorgebürges der Guten Hofnung (Nuremberg: By Peter Conrad Monath, 1719).
- 12 Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimage. Or Relations of the World and the Religions observed in all Ages and places discovered, from Creation unto this Present* (London: William Stansby, 1613); Thomas Herbert, *Some yeares Travels into Divers Parts of Asia and Afrique* (London: Iacob Blome and Richard Bishop, 1638); Étienne De Flacourt, *Histoire de la Grande Isle Madagascar, composée Par le Sieur De Flacourt, Directeur General de la Compagnie Française de l'Orient, & Commandant pour sa Majesté dans ladite Isle & és Isles adjacentes* (Paris: Chez Gervais Clovzier, 1661); François De la Mothe Le Vayer, *Oeuvres de François De La Mothe Le Vayer* (Paris: Chez Louïs Billaine, 1669); Nicolas Villault, *Relation des Costes d'Afrique, appellées Guinée; avec la Description du Pays, moeurs & façons de vivre des Habitans, des productions de la terre, & des marchandises qu'on en apporte, avec les Remarques Historiques sur ces Costes* (Paris: Chez Denys Thierry, 1669); Guy Tachard, *Voyage de Siam, des Peres Jesuites, Envoyez par le Roy aux Indes & à la Chine* (Paris: Chez Arnould Seneuze and Daniel Horthemels, 1686); Antonio Giovanni Cavazzi, *Istorica Descrizione de' tre' regni Congo, Matamba et Angole situati nell' Etiopia inferiore occidentale e delle missioni apostoliche esercitateui de religiosi Capuccini* (Bologna: Per Giacomo Monti, 1687); Chevreau De Urbain, *Oeuvres Meslées de Monsieur Chevreau* (The Hague: Chez Adrian Moetjens, 1697); Pierre Van den Broeck, 'Voiaiges de Pierre van den Broeck Au Cap Vert, A Angola, et Aux Indes Orientales' in *Recueil des voiaiges qui ont servi à l'Établissement et aux Progres de la Comagnie des Indes Orientales*, vol. 4 (Amsterdam: Étienne roger, 1705), pp. 306-473; Godefroy Loyer, *Relation du Voyage du Royaume d'Issyny, Côte d'Or, Païs de Guinée, en Afrique* (Paris: Chez Arnould Seneuze and Jean-Raoul Morel, 1714); Jean-Frédéric Bernard, *Recueil de Voyages Au Nord* (Rouen: Chez Jean-Baptiste Machuez le jeune, 1716); Jean-François Laftau, *Moeurs des Sauvages Ameriquains, comparées aux Moeurs des Primiers Temps* (Paris: Chez Saugrain and Charles Estienne Hochereau, 1724); Jean Ovington, *Voyages de Jean Ovington, Faits à Surate, & en d'autres lieux de l'Asie & de l'Afrique* (Paris: Chez Etienne Ganeau, 1725). In this overview, I include only the references crucial to Bernard's discourse. There are also some references to ancient authors and more general essays in the *Bibliothèque Universelle et Historique*, for instance, but these are of less interest to Bernard's main inspirational sources.
 - 13 Johann Theodoor de Bry, the eldest son of Theodoor de Bry, already made the engravings for De Marees' publication, which were then re-used in his own publication on Guinea in *India Orientalis* two years later.
 - 14 Bernard 1728 (note 6), p. 6. English translation: 'consecrate Tuesday to their fetishes, just as we consecrate Sunday to God. This day of rest is observed quite religiously, with dances and the like'.
 - 15 Elmer Kolfin, 'Tradition and Innovation in Dutch Ethnographic Prints of Africans, c. 1590-1670', *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 32 (2016), no. 2, pp. 165-84, esp. p. 172.
 - 16 Elizabeth A. Sutton, *Early Modern Dutch Prints of Africa*, New York 2012, p. 74.
 - 17 Regula Iselin, 'Reading Pictures: On the Value of the Copperplates in the "Beschryvinghe" of Pieter de Marees (1602) as Source Material for Ethnohistorical Research', *History in Africa* 21 (1994), pp. 147-70, esp. p. 162.
 - 18 Steff Nellis, 'A Cabinet of Religious Curiosities: Theatricality and Performativity in Bernard Picart's Illustrations for the *Cérémonies et Coutumes Religieuses de Tous Les Peuples Du Monde* (1723-1737)', *Images Re-vues* 12 (2024), pp. 1-21.
 - 19 Philippe Borgeaud and Sara Petrella, *Le singe de l'autre: Du sauvage américain à l'histoire comparée des religions*, Geneva 2016, p. 89.
 - 20 Kolb 1719 (note 11).
 - 21 Anne Good, 'The Construction of an Authoritative Text: Peter Kolb's Description of the Khoikhoi at the Cape of Good Hope in the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Early Modern History* 10 (2006), no. 1/2, pp. 61-94, esp. p. 64.
 - 22 Anne Good, *Primitive Man and the Enlightened Observer: Peter Kolb Among the Khoikhoi*, Minnesota 2005.
 - 23 For a convenient compilation of extracts from these travel narratives, see Major R. Raven-Hart, *Before Van Riebeeck: Callers at South Africa from 1488 to 1652*, Cape Town 1967 and *Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1702: The First 50 Years of Dutch Colonisation as Seen by Callers*, Cape Town 1971. See also Malvern Van Wyk Smith, "'The Most Wretched of the Human Race": The Iconography of the Khoikhoi (Hottentots), 1500-1800', *History and Anthropology* 5 (1992), no. 3, pp. 285-330.

- 24 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel-Writing and Transculturation*, New York 1992.
- 25 Nigel Penn, 'Written Culture and the Cape Khoikhoi: From Travel Writing to Kolb's "Full Description"', in Adrien Delmas and Nigel Penn (eds.), *Written Culture in a Colonial Context: Africa and the Americas 1500-1900*, Leiden 2012, pp. 173-91.
- 26 Siegfried Huigen, *Verkenningen van Zuid-Afrika: Achttiende-eeuwse reizigers aan de Kaap*, Zutphen 2007, pp. 37-58.
- 27 Siegfried Huigen, *Knowledge and Colonialism: Eighteenth-Century Travellers in South Africa*, Leiden 2009.
- 28 Kolb 1719 (note 11), pp. 442-43.
- 29 Bernard 1728 (note 6), p. 50. English translation: 'Their customs concerning newborn children, etc.'
- 30 Kolb 1719 (note 11), p. 442. See also Balthazar Lakeman, *Naaukeurige en uitvoerige beschryving van de Kaap de Goede Hoop. Tweede deel* (Amsterdam: Balthazar Lakamn, 1727), p. 4.
- 31 Bernard 1728 (note 6), p. 50. English translation: 'When a pregnant woman approaches her term'.
- 32 Kolb 1719 (note 11), p. 444.
- 33 Bernard 1728 (note 6), pp. 50-51. English translation: 'If, on the contrary, two twin girls are born, the poor children are received coldly; scarcely does one sacrifice, for love of them, a single feeble sheep. And if one of these girls appears unhealthy or too frail, if the mother's breast cannot supply enough milk to nourish them both, or if, finally, the father does not wish to raise them, they are simply taken to the fields; sometimes they are buried halfway in the ground, or tied to the branch of a tree'.
- 34 Bernard 1728 (note 6), p. 51.
- 35 English translation: 'The exposure of children who are born with certain defects'.
- 36 Bernard Picart, *Receuil de Lions, Dessinés d'après nature par Divers Maitres et graves par B. Picart*, Amsterdam 1729. In this study, Picart not only drew lions from life but also re-imagined lions drawn by both Rembrandt and Le Brun.
- 37 Bernard 1728 (note 6), p. 50. English translation: 'Two or three Hottentot matrons go to her and attend to her in some manner until the pains begin'.
- 38 Stephanie Archangel and Maria Holtrop, 'Black Women in the Rijksmuseum's Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Collection', *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin* 72 (2024), no. 1, pp. 34-55, esp. p. 35.
- 39 English translation: 'The Hottentots' Daily Dress'. For Picart's collage principle, see Steff Nellis, 'Imag(in)ing Bairam: Charting Image of a Turkish Festival in Picart and Bernard's *Cérémonies et Coutumes Religieuses de Tous Les Peuples Du Monde* (1723-1737)', *Journal of Muslims in Europe* 13 (2024) no. 1, pp. 54-80, esp. p. 61.
- 40 English translation: 'Dress and Armament of the Hottentots'. The same print was also reproduced by Pieter van der Aa in Johann Albrecht von Mandelslo, *Voyages celebres et remarquables faits de Perse aux Indes Orientales par Jean-Albert de Mandelslo* (Amsterdam: By Pieter van der Aa, 1727).
- 41 Pieter De Marees, *Beschryvinghe ende Historische Verhael, vant Gout Koninckrijk van Gunea* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Claesz., 1602), p. 15. English translation: 'The mother binds her child to her back with a piece of linen, letting the child hang there ... the child then crying for a breast or to suckle, the mother throws a breast to him over her shoulder, letting him thus hang and suckle. She walks to and fro and does not even touch the child, as if she had no child hanging on her back at all, so that the child's head comes out just above her shoulder, moving and swaying the child back and forth in this way, very frightful, so that we marvel that they do not break the children's limbs'.
- 42 Jennifer L. Morgan, 'Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500-1770', in Antoinette Burton and Tony Ballantyne (eds.), *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*, New York 2005, pp. 54-66.
- 43 Ibid., pp. 60-62.
- 44 David Bindman, *Ape to Apollo: Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the 18th Century*, New York 2002, p. 11.
- 45 Lisa Skwirblies, 'Colonial Theatricality', in Shirin M. Rai, Milija Gluhovic, Silvija Jestrovic and Michael Seward (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Politics and Performance*, Oxford 2021, p. 27.