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- 1 This excellent, well-written article argues that, for all his admiration for the lands of the East, and especially Iran, Jean Chardin saw eastern societies as corrupt and craven, debilitated by luxury and sensuality. Focusing on Chardin's depiction of the Safavid harem as the center of languid lassitude, the author describes how the French Huguenot portrayed a hothouse of intrigue and cruelty, where growth through fertility was curbed through forced abortions and infanticide, thus providing a metaphor for the stuntedness that marked Iranian society at large. In spite of his sympathetic account of Iran, it is argued here, Chardin posited a binary opposition between East and West, in which the former was constitutionally unable to summon the energy and initiative of the former.

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Thèmes : 4.2.1. Safavides et Qâjârs

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