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VOLTAIRE

03.05.2017

Winkler, Daniel; Voltaire, François-Marie de
Crusaders, love and tolerance: tragic and operatic taste in and around Voltaire's Zaïre (1732) .--
Cass, London, 1986 : Ottoman Empire and European theatre, II. The time of Josef Haydn: from
Sultan Mahmud I to Mahmud II (r. 1730-1839)
Edit. Michael Hüttler, Hans Ernst Weidinger , pp. 445-461,
Great Britain - 20th century | Ottoman Empire - 20th century | World War I

03.05.2017

Torabi, Dominique; Hadīdī, Javād; Voltaire, François-Marie de
De Voltaire au Coran .-- 2002-2003 ISSN: 0259-904x : Luqmān: Annales des Presses Universitaires
d'Iran, vol. 19 i / 37 pp. 225-227, (2002-2003)

“frightful chaos” of the French system.⁵⁹ Voltaire also highlighted Montesquieu’s misreadings of Paul Rycaut.⁶⁰

Voltaire’s empirical corrections, though they may seem a bit pedantic, were a vehicle for expressing his deep discomfort with Montesquieu’s mode of argument and his undiscerning use of sources.⁶¹ Voltaire believed that there was not enough verified knowledge about the Ottoman Empire to justify its use for political philosophy, and that tales of travelers, “or rather of errant men, who have told so many fables, who have taken so many abuses to be laws,” were unreliable, a caution also applicable to travelers’ reports about China and many other Asian empires.⁶² Lack of empirical evidence rendered Montesquieu’s view of despotism vague and poorly substantiated. Voltaire wrote: “We are neighbors of the Turks, yet we do not know them. The Count of Marsigli, who lived for so long among them, says that no author has provided true knowledge of their empire, nor of their laws. We did not even have a tolerable translation of the Alcoran before that which the Englishman Sale made in 1734. Almost everything that is said of their religion and of their jurisprudence is false; and the conclusions against them that are drawn therefrom every day have but too little foundation.”⁶³

The debate between Montesquieu and Voltaire over Oriental despotism can also be read as a debate over political authority, in France—with Montesquieu critical of the concentration of power under Louis XIV and Voltaire in favor of it.⁶⁴ Rather than engaging that issue directly, their intellectual dispute concerned how well a theoretical claim could hold up under an empirical challenge. Voltaire buttressed his position by employing the scholarly materials that he had mastered and Montesquieu had not.

In spite of the critiques of Anquetil-Duperron and Voltaire, the concept of Oriental despotism that *The Spirit of the Laws* popularized would have a life into the nineteenth century.⁶⁵ The change in the overall European perception of Islam from admiring to aversive that took place in the later eighteenth century can, at least in part, be attributed to the influence of Montesquieu’s book.⁶⁶

Other eighteenth-century thinkers, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Adam Smith, David Hume, and Adam Ferguson, made occasional references to topics in Islamic history. Rousseau lavished praise on many aspects of Islamic politics and religion but stressed the utter otherness of Muslim customs and manners.⁶⁷ Hume used the Qur’an as evidence that there was no universal

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moral standard, even though moral vocabularies in different languages might seem, misleadingly, to converge.⁶⁸ For Smith and Ferguson, the desert Arabs were an example of a primitive state of human civilization and the modern Ottomans of an undesirable modern political arrangement.⁶⁹

In sum, during the Enlightenment the early history of Arabs and of the rise of Islam served many purposes, including as an archive of primitive legislation and as an example of a pastoral society. Some of the discussions, such as Rousseau’s, harkened back to the treatment of Muhammad as a legislator that originated in Machiavelli’s analysis. The most familiar modern Muslim state, the Ottoman Empire, meanwhile was used in the study of Oriental despotism. Some writers, most notably Montesquieu, reactivated analyses that had been put forth by European travel writers. The impact of the Republic of Arabic Letters is hard to discern in his work. Certain Enlightenment writers, especially those who developed wide-ranging interpretations, were cavalier about facts and opportunistic in their use of Islamic materials. Information about non-European societies was helpful in the development of comparative political thought. Travel writing was relied on more than scholarly accounts, but the most accomplished of these travel accounts were as elaborate and self-conscious as political philosophy. (Moreover, travel writing did not, in any simple way, promote “open-mindedness” about non-European societies.)

With knowledge of what the Republic of Arabic Letters made available to Europeans who did not know Arabic—that is, all the materials presented in the preceding five chapters—we can appraise Enlightenment writings about Islam within a broader context, one that allows us to move away from an anachronistic critique of these writers for not being better informed or for not being interested in Islam for its own sake. Knowing what they did not read and what complexities they ignored permits a more accurate analysis of their intellectual achievements and shortcomings. It also undermines the assumption that the Enlightenment writings are representative, let alone exhaustive, of Western thought on Islam in the eighteenth century. Perhaps it even diminishes their significance.

Voltaire

Voltaire’s *Essai sur les mœurs et l’esprit des nations* (literally, *Essay on the manners and the spirit of nations*, 1756) examines the emergence of modern Europe.

بررسی آراء و افکار ولتر درباره شخصیت حضرت محمد(ص)

زینب کریمی^۱
محمدعلی چلونگر^۲

چکیده: مطالعات اسلامی به عنوان یکی از حوزه‌های مهم شرق‌شناسی از دیرباز مورد توجه مستشرقان بوده است. ولتر به عنوان یکی از این مستشرقان در سده هجدهم میلادی (۱۶۹۴-۱۷۷۸) به شرح و بسط آراء و افکار خود درباره اسلام به ویژه حضرت محمد(ص) پرداخت. او در آغاز یعنی در مرحله نخست، نگاهی بسیار متقصدانه نسبت به اسلام و حضرت محمد(ص) داشته است. تا جایی که پیامبر را مردی جاهل، دروغگو و فریب کار معرفی کرده است. مرحله دوم که در اواسط زندگی فرهنگی و علمی او است، به موضعی معتدل‌تر نسبت به اسلام و حضرت محمد(ص) رسیده است. در این مرحله پیامبر را مردی سیاستمدار معرفی کرده است و در نهایت در اواخر عمر به مدح و ستایش حضرت محمد(ص) پرداخته است. و حضرت را پدید آورنده بزرگ‌ترین انقلاب روی زمین، و دین اسلام را بزرگ‌ترین دین معرفی کرده است. در این مقاله برآنیم تا براساس روش توصیفی-تحلیلی به شرح افکار ولتر درباره پیامبر، چگونگی متحول شدن او و علل آن پردازیم. و در همین جهت در صدد پاسخ به پرسش‌های زیر باشیم. ۱. علل نگاه نقادانه ولتر به شخصیت حضرت محمد(ص) چیست؟ ۲. ولتر در چه مواردی نسبت به حضرت محمد(ص) انتقاد داشته است؟ ۳. علل تغییر دیدگاه ولتر نسبت به حضرت محمد(ص) چه بوده است؟ ۴. آیا بین نگاه مثبت ولتر در نیمه دوم عمرش نسبت به حضرت محمد(ص) و نگاه نقادانه او نسبت به مسیحیت، ارتباطی وجود دارد؟

واژه‌های کلیدی: مستشرقان، ولتر، اسلام، حضرت محمد(ص)

۱۷۱-۱۸۸

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~~MADEN KAYITLARI~~
~~SC. KAYITLARI~~

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25 Ocak 2015

FETULLAH KALIN, Fransız aydınlanması ve
Voltaire'de dini düşünce ve inanç hürriyeti, Atatürk
Üniversitesi, Yüksek Lisans, 2007

G. LITAB-TAT

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1720 MARTINO, P. Quelques notes sur
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Gautier, 1937. pp. 341-347

HZ. MUHAMMED
(eski adı)

Volter'in "Mahomet" inde
cepratiya ve tarih üzerine
bazı notlar!

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VOLTAIRE

14 Ocak 2014

ERNAİL OKUMUŞ, Onsekizinci Yüzyılda deizm ve
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Voltaire

الاستشراق الفرنسي - فولتير

٧١٨ - قسم البحوث والدراسات بالمجلة .
الجهاد . س : ٦ ع : ٦٨ (٧ / ١٩٨٨ م) ، ص
«الاستشراق في الميزان : الاسلام في فكر
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15 MAY 2001

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DOĞU'DAN BATI'YA DÜŞÜNCENİN SERÜVENİ

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fransız Aydınlanmasının en önemli isimlerinden biri olan Voltaire, 21 Kasım 1694'te Paris'te doğdu, 30 Mayıs 1778'de aynı kentte öldü. Gerçek adı François Marie Arouet olan Voltaire'in babası Arouet, bir noterdir. Küçük yaşta annesini kaybeden düşünür zor bir çocukluk dönemi geçirmiştir. Zayıf bir bünyeye sahip olmasından dolayı çok fazla yaşamayacağı düşünülen filozof buna rağmen rahatsızlıklarla dolu olsa da 84 yıllık uzun bir ömür sürdürmüştür.¹

İlk eğitimini aile çevresinde alan Voltaire, eğitimini daha sonra bir Cizvit okulunda sürdürür ve zekâsıyla kısa sürede tanınır. Bu eğitim ona dinî alanda kazandığı bilgilerin yanı sıra çağdaş fizik öğretilerini, diyalektik düşünmeyi ve eleştirel bir zihniyeti kazandırmıştır. Küçük yaşlarda Latince ve Yunanca öğrenen düşünürün edebiyata ve dil eğitimine karşı duyduğu ilgi, düşünce dünyasının genişlemesine katkı yapmıştır. Edebiyata karşı duyduğu ilgiyle bu alana yönelmek istemesi babası ile uzun yıllar sürecek bir gerilim doğmasına yol açmıştır. Hukuk eğitimi görmesi için babasının isteğiyle Lahey'e gönderilmiştir.² Dönemin siyâsî sorunlarıyla yakından ilgilenen düşünür, hicivleri ve eleştirile-

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1. Roger Pearson, *Voltaire Almighty: A Life in Pursuit of Freedom*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London 2005, p. 9, 57; Will Durant, *Felsefenin Öyküsü*, Çev. Ender Gürol, İz yayıncılık, İstanbul 2010, s. 209.
2. Pearson, *a.g.e.* p. 18, 32,36,49.



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İstanbul 2015

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LANGUES ET CIVILISATIONS
LITTÉRATURE

VOLTAIRE ET L'ISLAM

Djavâd HADIDI

Préface par Etiemble



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Paris
1974

less he sees through it, the more he grasps it. It was Europe that invented the cultural notion of Islam as a totality. Why should it still refer to that concept now that the Muslim world is politically shattered and Islam itself has been reduced to functioning only as a religion? Europe no longer debates with Islam, but there is an ongoing argument in the minds of Europeans between themselves and the world, and in the minds of Muslims between themselves and "their" Europe.

Hichem Djait

Europe and Islam

Translated by Peter Heinegg

Berkeley (California) - 1985, s. 21-41

DN: 13244



2

French Intellectuals and Islam

The French intellectual, that leading actor on the stage of European cultural history, began to emerge at about the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century. He proved to be a writer rather than a scholar, an independent thinker, detached from the machinery of state power, a social critic, conscious of his responsibility and perhaps, as Bernanos said, imbued with the conviction of the superiority of *l'esprit*. He lacked the depth of the Germanic *Wissenschaftler*, but he was skilled in the arts of communication. From Voltaire to Sartre he was always a fighter. I have chosen three manifestations of the type: the eighteenth-century *philosophe*, the Romantic traveler, the engaged intellectual of the 1950s.

↓ Voltaire's *Journeys* (Chateaubriand)

ENLIGHTENMENT *Philosophes*: VOLTAIRE AND VOLNEY

Let us start by examining the case of Voltaire, who took a fairly close look at Islam, especially at its religious aspects.¹ In the first phase, with *Mohammed and Fanaticism*, Voltaire's judgment of Islam, which he equated with the Prophet's mission, was disparaging, even hostile. Later, with the *Essai sur les mœurs*, his tone became more restrained and nuanced, but the overall judgment remained harsh. Of course, in the first phase, the object of his attacks on Islam was religion in general and official Christianity in particular. But it is important to note that he fastened on Islam as a symbol of fanaticism, antihumanism,



TÜRKLER MÜSLÜMANLAR
ve
ÖTEKİLER

TÜRKİYE İS BANKASI KÜLTÜR YAYINLARI



1969

TERK

Beşir Fuad VOLTAİRE

SEYFETTİN ÖZEĞE: 1901'de İstanbul'da doğdu. Babası Harbiye Nezâreti Mümeyyizlerinden Hacı İhsan Bey'dir. Vefa Lisesi'nin II. sınıfından ayrıлып Mülkiye Mektebi'nin giriş sınavına katıldı. 7 Haziran 1921'de Mülkiye'yi ve ayrıca İstanbul Hukuk Fakültesi'ni bitirdi. Mezuniyetinden sonra dört yıla yakın bir süre serbest çalıştı. Uzun yıllar bankacılık sektöründe çeşitli görevlerde bulunduktan sonra, 30 Haziran 1950'de kendi isteğiyle emekliye ayrıldı. 27 Nisan 1981'de vefat etti.

Eski harflerle basılmış otuz bin cildi aşkın eserden oluşan bir kütüphaneyi tek başına oluşturmuş bir kitapsever olan Özege, alanında dünyanın nadir koleksiyonlarından biri sayılan kütüphanesini, sağlığında Atatürk Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi'ne bağışlamıştır. Ayrıca kendi eliyle hazırladığı, beş ciltlik "*Eski Harflerle Basılmış Türkçe Eserler Katoloğu*" da kitapseverlerin ve araştırmacıların temel başvuru kaynaklarından biridir.

Babil Yayınları, kültür tarihimize büyük katkılarda bulunan üstâdın hatırasını, "*Seyfettin Özege Osmanlı Klasikleri Dizisi*"nde yayımlamayı tasarladığı eserlerle yâdetmeyi amaçlıyor.

Sadeleştirenler ve Yayına Hazırlayanlar

Erdoğan Erbay: 1964 yılında Yahyalı'nın Burhaniye Köyü'nde doğdu. Atatürk Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü'nden mezun oldu. Bir süre öğretmenlik yaptı. 1988 yılında Atatürk Üniversitesi'ne intisap etti. 1996 yılında doktorasını tamamladı. Halen aynı fakültede öğretim üyesi olarak görev yapmaktadır. *Eskiler ve Yeniler, Doğumunun 100. Yılında Tanpınar'ın Huzur'unda Müsiki'nin Büyülü Dünyası* adlı çalışmaları bulunmaktadır.

Ali Utku: 1969 yılında Konya'da doğdu. Atatürk Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, Felsefe Bölümü'nden mezun oldu. Halen, aynı bölümde doktora çalışmasını sürdürmektedir.

SADELEŞTİRENLER VE YAYINA HAZIRLAYANLAR
ERDOĞAN ERBAY-ALİ UTKU

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Tes.No.	

BABİL YAYINLARI

2002 İstanbul

Ahmad Gunny

Images of Islam in Eighteenth-Century Writings.

London - 1996, s. 130-169.

Six

Islam in French Enlightenment polemical writings

MFR Turk

In this chapter attention will focus on three of the great figures of the Enlightenment. Can one make anything of the man whom Alexandre Deleyre¹ thought was no disciple of Muhammad, although, like the latter, he too had migrated from his native city in 1763? The clear impression that emerges is that Rousseau never engaged in a prolonged study of Islam. His remarks on Voltaire's *Mahomet* reveal nothing more than one writer's perception of another's achievement as a tragic playwright. They lack a penetrating insight into Islam. Yet elsewhere Rousseau shows some affinity with Voltaire in appreciating 'energy' in the language of the Quran, but unlike Voltaire, he does not give specific examples from the Quran to prove his point. He invites the reader to attach greater significance to the energetic accents of a passionate language than to the voice of religious fanaticism. In his view, the rhetoric, if it is passionate and full of warmth, can be persuasive and lead to glory or death. Thus, in the chapter of the *Essai sur l'origine des langues* dealing with differences between primitive languages, he lyrically describes the style and rhythm of the Quran: 'Tel pour savoir lire un peu d'arabe sourit en feuilletant l'Alcoran, qui, s'il eût entendu Mahomet l'annoncer en personne dans cette langue éloquente et cadencée, avec cette voix sonore et persuasive qui séduisoit l'oreille avant le coeur, et sans cesse animoit ses sentences de l'accent de l'enthousiasme, se fût prosterné contre terre en criant, grand Prophète Envoyé De Dieu, Menez-nous à la gloire, au martire; nous voulons vaincre ou mourir pour vous'.² Obviously, Rousseau who is so alive to the power of language exaggerates its importance and oversimplifies the reasons for the spread of Islam during Muhammad's time. However, this emphasis on the poetical and rhetorical strengths of the Quran, brings together Rousseau and Voltaire, even if the unity is temporary and limited in scope.

Following the condemnation of *Emile* by the Archbishop of Paris in 1762, Rousseau replied with a *Lettre à Christophe de Beaumont* in which the most hostile views to Islam are included. He denounces the narrow-mindedness of leaders, which in his opinion causes the misfortune of nations. To support his thesis he invents a story about a Parsee of Surat who secretly married a Muslim woman, was arrested and condemned to death for refusing to be converted to Islam. Rousseau allows the dying man full scope to use all the weapons available to an enemy of Islam. The Parsee starts with a veiled attack on polygamy: he married only one woman who never lived in servitude and never shared him with other women. A more serious point is made by the victim who hopes to be reborn among Muslims in order to teach them to become humane, forbearing and just. He accuses them of being blind in their zeal, of tormenting God's servants and of being cruel and bloodthirsty. Islam itself is severely censured because its dogmas are made to appear too recent to suit God while Muhammad is like an upstart: for twenty centuries before him, the sacred books of

¹ Rousseau 1965-89, p. 2760.

² Ibid, 1968, p. 137.

Islam in French Enlightenment polemical writings

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Zoroaster formed the law of Asia and the whole world. Rousseau's rhetoric relies on a series of differences that separate the Zoroastrians from the Muslims. Whereas the former are men of peace, tilling fields for Muslims and helping them to exploit the land, the latter live like barbarians. The institutions, laws, even the virtues of Muslims torment and degrade men by means of fasts, hardships, struggles and mutilation. In short, they live under the double yoke of despotism and fanaticism. The Parsee's account of Islam is very much like Boulanger's account of it in the article 'Guèbres' of the *Encyclopédie*.

There is more balance in the appraisal of Muhammad's achievement in Book II, Chapter 7 of *Du Contrat Social*. Rousseau does not specifically name Muhammad, but it is clear that his reference is to the Prophet of Islam.³ He points out that not every man can make the gods speak and make people believe him when he says that he is their mouthpiece. The true miracle that proves the legislator's mission is his great soul. Rousseau argues that anyone can resort to coarse methods to deceive the people and assemble a band of madmen, but such a person will never found an empire and his extravagant excesses will perish with him. He finds the same permanence in the law of Moses as in that of Muhammad (l'enfant d'Ismaël), which has been governing half the world for a thousand years. Both laws bear witness even today to the greatness of the men who dictated them. Rousseau rejects the idea that they are simply successful impostors. He attributes it to 'l'orgueilleuse philosophie ou l'aveugle esprit de parti'. He admires in the institutions of Moses and Muhammad that great and powerful genius that presides over lasting creations. Rousseau thus appears to have shown hardly any hostility to the Prophet here and to have left his mark on the less negative presentation of Islam that was associated with the beginning and the latter part of the eighteenth century. These two periods witnessed a change in the status of Muhammad from impostor to legislator, which does not, of course, mean that the stigma of imposture was consistently removed from him in the late eighteenth century.

In Book IV, Chapter 8, Rousseau blames Jesus for establishing a spiritual kingdom on earth, a fact which not only separated the theological and political systems but also contributed to the loss of unity in the state and to internal divisions among Christians. He admires the union of the two systems in early Islam and praises Muhammad's sound policy in binding his system which remained one with his immediate successors. But the Arabs having become cultured and weak were later subjugated by the barbarians and the separation of the two systems reappeared. Although Rousseau finds the separation less marked among Muslims than among Christians, he points out that it does exist, especially in Shiite Persia. It is rather odd that he should single out Persia as an example of the separation of religious and secular power. If there is a country in the Muslim world where the two authorities are often merged, it is Persia. However shrewd and perceptive, Rousseau cannot match Voltaire in his evaluation of Islam, which might have been more original if, like Diderot, he had not in the *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* relied on hearsay to attribute the destruction of the library of Alexandria to Umar and to justify it. To suit his tirade against learning, he did not hesitate to use Islam and associate it with ignorance. He even criticized Sultan Ahmet III for having allowed the first Ottoman printing press to be established (in 1726) under pressure from some so-called men of taste. Admittedly, in Rousseau's view, Umar was no worse than Gregory the Great who would have done the same.

³ There is another indirect reference to Muhammad in the *Fragment d'un brouillon du discours de l'inégalité* which may have been inspired by Diderot.

Il est arrêté à son retour, non pour des motifs politiques mais pour dettes, en novembre 1793, et libéré après le 9 thermidor. Quand la Convention crée l'École normale, il y est nommé professeur d'histoire. La commission exécutive des Affaires étrangères le charge de réfléchir à la *Simplification des langues orientales, ou Méthode nouvelle d'apprendre les langues arabe, persane et turque avec des caractères européens* qu'il rédige en tenant compte des conseils de Venture et Langlès* et publie en 1795. L'ouvrage prétend être utile aux diplomates, aux négociants ou aux savants comme aux Orientaux eux-mêmes. Si le persan et le turc n'y occupent que peu de place, il présente en revanche une grammaire simplifiée de la langue arabe, qui précède donc celles de Savary* et Silvestre de Sacy*. La même année et en réponse à la même commission, il publie ses *Questions de statistiques à l'usage des voyageurs* dont le programme est calqué sur celui du *Voyage*.

Son séjour aux États-Unis (1795-1798), sa proximité avec Bonaparte lors du coup d'État du 18 brumaire, puis son éloignement de la politique active – Napoléon le nomme néanmoins à la Légion d'honneur et le fera comte en 1808 –, sa promotion comme pair de France sous Louis XVIII, sortent du cadre de ce dictionnaire, de même que les travaux qui l'occupent jusqu'à sa mort. Intéressent cependant l'orientalisme son élection, en 1797, à la Société asiatique de Calcutta, doyenne des sociétés de ce type ; son intérêt pour le sanskrit et son amitié avec Hamilton* qui séjourne à Paris ; sa participation à la commission chargée de publier la *Description de l'Égypte* ; et enfin ses *Vues nouvelles sur l'enseignement des langues orientales*, rédigées avant 1807, mais publiées en 1821.

Lucette Valensi

Voyage en Égypte et en Syrie, publié avec une introduction et des notes par Jean GAULMIER, 1959.

GAULMIER Jean, *L'idéologue Volney, 1715-1820. Contribution à l'histoire de l'orientalisme en France*, Beyrouth, 1951 ; Paris-Genève, Slatkine reprints, 1980 (recense tous les écrits de Volney). EHRARD Jean, « Volney ou la révolution mélancolique », in *L'invention littéraire au XVIII^e siècle. Fictions, idées, sociétés*, PUF, 1997, p. 231-245.

VOLTAIRE, François Marie Arouet dit (Paris, 1694 – Paris, 1778)

Voltaire est sans aucun doute le grand auteur des Lumières françaises pour qui l'Orient importe le plus : philosophiquement, historiquement, littérairement.

Baptisé en novembre 1694, Voltaire, fils cadet d'un riche bourgeois parisien, se prétendait né le 20 février, et fruit d'un adultère ! Le plus spirituel des anticléricaux hérite en outre d'un frère janséniste sombrement bigot. Il ne lui restait qu'à faire de sa nièce, fille d'une sœur affectueuse, sa maîtresse et l'intendante de Ferney pour trousseur un assez impertinent roman familial. Après des études brillantes chez les jésuites de Louis-le-Grand (1704-1711), il préfère les vers au droit (1711-1715), et tâte de la Bastille entre mai 1717 et avril 1718 pour excès satiriques envers le régent. Mais il a bien l'ambition, qui ne le quittera jamais, de s'attaquer aux grands genres. Sa première tragédie, *Ceïpe*, triomphe en 1718, et il prend le nom de Voltaire. Il en composera près de trente, plus des comédies, des drames et des livrets d'opéra. C'est comme poète dramatique, et bientôt le plus célèbre d'Europe (Angleterre comprise), qu'il s'impose d'abord, au point de rivaliser avec Corneille* et Racine*, qu'il dépasse en nombre de représentations au cours du XVIII^e siècle (cette gloire s'effondre après 1830-1850). Il s'attaque à une épopée sur Henri IV, interdite de publication en 1723, éditée à Londres en 1728 (*La Henriade*). Une altercation avec un aristocrate le décide en effet à voyager en Angleterre (mai 1726-novembre 1728). Il y publie dès 1727 un essai en anglais ! Revenu en France, d'adroites spéculations lui assurent une autonomie qu'il conseille dans ses *Mémoires aux gens de lettres* (Voltaire mourra comme un des plus riches rentiers de France). En 1731 paraît son premier récit historique, *Histoire de Charles XII*, suivi entre autres du *Siècle de Louis XIV* (1751), et de l'*Essai sur les mœurs* (1756), qui entend décentrer l'histoire du monde. Il faut considérer l'écriture historique à la fois comme un engagement philosophique décisif et la pratique artistique d'un genre noble, à l'instar de l'écriture tragique et poétique (par exemple *Le Mondain*, 1736 ;