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The Safavids under Western Eyes: Seventeenth-Century European Travelers to Iran

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This essay takes a fresh look at the voluminous yet understudied Western travel writing about 17th-century Iran. If properly subjected to close scrutiny for authorial bias, interest and intertextuality, it remains exceedingly valuable for the study of Safavid Iran. Early modern European travelers to Iran brought remnants of past religious and cultural prejudice with them to the country with an open eye, an appreciation for difference, and even a critical perspective on their own culture. The text provides times unique information about Iran and its inhabitants, opening up aspects of Safavid Iran left uncovered by indigenous sources.

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