

## Sublime Purveyor of Levantine Trade and Taste: The David van Lennep Family Portrait<sup>1</sup>

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Publications that address 18<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch and Ottoman trade and the Levant occasionally include a reproduction and brief description of the striking David van Lennep Family portrait, providing tantalizing glimpses of a work that warrants further study.<sup>2</sup> The monumental group portrait, attributed to Antoine de Favray, ca. 1770, depicts the sizable Dutch Levantine family of Smyrna confidently facing the viewer, richly clothed in colorful Ottoman and European dress (fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> Three generations are present: the prominent Dutch trading merchant David George van Lennep; his wife Anna

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is dedicated to Henrick van Lennep, whose extensive genealogical work on the van Lennep family and generous responses to this author's inquiries were invaluable resources. The author also thanks Dr. Linda J. Docherty and Dr. Arthur S. Marks for their generous insights and critiques. The paper is a revised version of that presented at the Levantine Heritage Foundation 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference, London, 2-4 Nov. 2016; an expanded article on the portrait is forthcoming.

<sup>2</sup> Cover illustration for Ismail Hakki Kadi, *Ottoman and Dutch Merchants in the Eighteenth Century: Competition and Cooperation in Ankara, Izmir, and Amsterdam* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012); plate in Philip Mansel, *Levant: Splendour and Catastrophe on the Mediterranean* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2010); and the double-page feature illustration in Mansel, "A Dutch Treat," *Cornucopia* 47 (2012): 48-57.

<sup>3</sup> Now in the collection of the Rijksmuseum, acquired in 1967 by descent through the van Lennep family, [www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/SK-A-4127](http://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/SK-A-4127). Apparently there are no inscriptions on the painting or documents relating to the commission. At times associated with the Swiss painter Jean-Étienne Liotard, the portrait is currently attributed to Antoine de Favray (1706-98). The French portraitist and landscape painter had a long career centered mainly in Malta, with a residency in Istanbul from 1762 to 1771; see S. Degiorgio and E. Fiorentino, *Antoine de Favray* (Valletta: Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2004). The author of this paper finds the painting has little of the immediacy, bravura, and facial characterization of Favray's works that are firmly documented, such as the portrait of Countess de Vergennes (1768, Pera Muzei, Istanbul). The Rijksmuseum dates the work between 1769-1771. 1770 seems likely, since the youngest child shown in the painting (born early July 1769) appears about one year old, and the van Lennep's child Sarah Petronella, who was baptized 8 Sept. 1771, is not depicted.

Maria; their seven surviving children; Anna's father, the mohair trader Justinus Leytstar; and the family tutor, Monsieur Dantan.<sup>4</sup> Philip Mansel has observed that the painting is “an icon of Smyrna's cosmopolitan past.”<sup>5</sup> Certainly the portrait shows a Levantine family that has reaped the abundant opportunities provided by that international-oriented, cross-cultural city, then the leading port of the Ottoman Empire.

This paper seeks to interpret the portrait in a broad socio-economic and cultural context, drawing on histories of the van Lennep family, studies on *turquerie*, and changing concepts of familial social order informed by the Enlightenment. The portrait appears to negotiate between a perceived exoticism of the “East,” and “Western” practices, a visual feast of intertwined trade, culture, and customs. But is this really the case? Does the portrait invoke a sense of cultural hybridity? Granted, the van Lennep and Leytstar families' trading interests and long residence in Turkey move the portrait beyond mere fashion for *turquerie* in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Europe and America. Ottoman dress is both an emblem of their mercantile activities and representative of the luxury goods they wore. But a close reading of the actors' clothing, posture, ornament, and other material attributes, which encode their professional and familial identities and gendered roles, points them westward. Not only is the family's orientation to Europe, but the children also ride the cusp of change in terms of social milieu and prescribed gender roles. While the colorful Ottoman clothing invokes cross-cultural encounters, the van Lenneps are also

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<sup>4</sup> Henrick S. van Lennep, “Smyrna Branch,” [www.vanlennep.nl](http://www.vanlennep.nl); “The Van Lennep Genealogy, Smyrna Branch,” [www.levantineheritage.com/pdf/The\\_Van\\_Lennep\\_Genealogy\\_Smyrna\\_Branch.pdf](http://www.levantineheritage.com/pdf/The_Van_Lennep_Genealogy_Smyrna_Branch.pdf).; and F. J. E. van Lennep, *Late Regenten* (Haarlem: H. D. Tjeenk Willink & Zoon, 1962), 212-15.

<sup>5</sup> Mansel, *Levant*, 230.

beneficiaries of Enlightenment thought, which has crossed national boundaries to inform new attitudes and relationships.

The monumental oil on canvas projects a powerful image physically and metaphorically.<sup>6</sup> It must have impressed the numerous friends, business associates, and foreigners that visited the van Lennep residence, a spacious house on Frank Street characterized as the “gathering place of the high society of Smyrna.”<sup>7</sup> The portrait shows the family positioned on or in front of a long sofa, along a very foreshortened picture plane, a composition rare to group portraits with such a substantial number of sitters. The sparsely furnished space provides little information about the sitters’ specific geographic location or country of origin. The background provides no real or imagined interior or landscape. The richly hued Anatolian carpet does not necessarily locate them in the Ottoman Empire -- Oriental carpets had been attributes in Western paintings for centuries. Nor does the sitters’ culturally diverse clothing, Ottoman and European, specifically place them. *Turquerie*, or the fascination with and appropriation of elements of Turkish culture, was well established in Europe by the time the portrait was painted. However, the small cross worn by the youngest daughter shows that they are Christian. Surprisingly, the Dutch nationality of the family is not at all apparent. We might have anticipated a background with ships anchored at Smyrna, all flying the Dutch flag, as this engaging 18<sup>th</sup>-century harbor scene shows (fig. 2). Absent that, we would expect the

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<sup>6</sup> The painting measures 172 x 248 cm., more than five feet high by more than eight feet long.

<sup>7</sup> Mathieu Dumas, *Souvenirs du Lieutenant-Général Comte Mathieu Dumas*, vol. 1 (Paris, Librairie de Charles Gosselin, 1839), 320, cited by van Lennep, “Smyrna Branch.” The van Lenneps also had a large country house in Seydiköy, about 16 km. from Smyrna/Izmir.

clothing of the Dutch merchant patriarch, David George, to firmly establish his identity. However, his dress could as easily be French, then the touchstone of fashion, as Dutch.

The Amsterdam-born David van Lennep (1712-1797), a liberal Calvinist, came from a family of prosperous, socially prominent merchants who commissioned portraits and collected art.<sup>8</sup> By the time the portrait was painted around 1770, van Lennep had spent forty years in Smyrna building his merchant capitalist enterprise into one of three major firms that together controlled approximately half of the Smyrna-Dutch trade.<sup>9</sup> B. J. Slot's calculations from the firm's letterbooks of the 1770s show a yearly turnover of a million or more guilders, which was in trade with Holland alone, importing spices, sugar, coffee, European cloth, and exporting cotton, wool, silk, and dried fruit among other commodities. The Van Lennep and Enslie partnership also had significant trade with Livorno, Venice, and Marseilles, as well as a lucrative banking business that imported foreign currencies to trade with and sell as a commodity on the local market.<sup>10</sup> With Dutch-Ottoman trade having peaked in the early 18<sup>th</sup>-century, just as van Lennep was starting out in Smyrna, and France now dominating trade and fashion, the capitalist had more broadly diversified his business interests.

Van Lennep wielded an extraordinary amount of influence as chief merchant to the Dutch trading station and counsel to the Dutch-Smyrna "nation." The French nobleman Mathieu Dumas, who visited the van Lenneps in 1784, considered him "the

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<sup>8</sup> A portrait of David George's grandfather Jan van Lennep (1634-1711), an art collector and prominent merchant of silk and other fine fabrics, is in the Rijksmuseum.

<sup>9</sup> Long an international trading center, Smyrna was the leading export port of the Ottoman Empire during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century; Elena Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna in the Eighteenth Century* (Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1992), 16, 27.

<sup>10</sup> B. J. Slot, "Commercial Activities of Korais in Amsterdam," *O Eranistis* 16 (1980): 58; Frangakis-Syrett, *Commerce of Smyrna*, 99, 141.

uncrowned king of the Dutch colony.”<sup>11</sup> Indeed, Van Lennep’s portrait affirms this assessment. He projects an image of an enlightened monarch, pausing from his business among his large family to engage directly with the viewer. Seated with one leg crossed high at the knee to show a shapely calf, the near-sixty-year-old projects an ideal of masculinity then favored by royalty and the European elite. The fully European clothing, upright posture, and accoutrements encode European standards of gentlemanly decorum and inferred moral rectitude. Following the current fashion for *habits à la français* and brightly colored cloth for upper-class male dress, the wealthy merchant banker wears a striking green silk collared *justaucorps*, matching sleeveless waistcoat with striking *passementerie*, knee breeches, silk hose, and garters. His peers would have appreciated the choice of green-colored jacket; in the “language of hues,” green was one of the most expensive colors.<sup>12</sup> His shoe buckles set with faceted or “paste” glass stones were also among the most costly of the time. He projects a European identity, surely as much at ease in the Directorate of Levant Trade in Amsterdam or a Paris salon as his office or favored casino in Smyrna.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Dumas, vol. 1, 320, The quote is from the van Lennep genealogy “Smyrna Branch” compiled by Henrick van Lennep.

<sup>12</sup> Peter McNeil, “Despots of Elegance: Men’s Fashion, 1715-1915,” *Reigning Men: Fashion in Menswear, 1715-2015* (LA: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2016), 238. Apparently Ottoman sumptuary laws that forbade non-Muslims to wear green, the color of Islam, did not apply to European fashion or were not followed in this case. M. de M. D’Ohsson comments on the forbidden color in *Tableau Général de L’Empire Othoman*, vol. 4 (Paris, 1788), 160-61, cited by Matthew Elliot, “Dress Codes in the Ottoman Empire: The Case of the Franks,” *Ottoman Costumes, From Textile to Identity*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi and Christoph Neumann (Istanbul: Eren, 2004), 119.

<sup>13</sup> His suit could be French or Dutch; textile historian Natalie Rothstein suggests that the two could have been indistinguishable during this period, “Dutch Silks – An Important but Forgotten Industry of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century or a Hypothesis?,” *Oud Holland* 79 (1964):157.

In contrast, van Lennep's father-in-law, Justinus Johannes Leytstar (1708-1783), fully embraces Ottoman clothing, signifying his life-long residency and vital economic association with the Empire and the natural resources of its interior lands. Leytstar's floor-length gold colored caftan trimmed with snowy ermine or white fox and textured mohair cape richly encode his professional pursuits as a mohair trader for the Istanbul and Smyrna markets. The fur cap, Turkish trousers, and long moustache would have helped assimilate him visually in the local trading community, as a comparison with figures in this 18<sup>th</sup>-century view of the angora wool market in Ankara suggests (fig. 3). His clothing is opulent but not fanciful, more an emblem of active mercantile activity than a souvenir or badge of experience of travel in Ottoman Empire. Travel books such as the 1675 account of the French merchant Jean Baptiste Tavernier, who wrote it as a guide for fellow merchants, urged journeyers in Ottoman lands to adopt Ottoman dress for safety and convenience: "When you go from Constantinople, Smyrna, or Aleppo with the Caravan, it behoves all people to carry themselves according to the mode of the country; in Turkie like a Turk ... else ... sometimes they would hardly be permitted to pass in some places."<sup>14</sup> Ottoman *berats* were issued to foreign travelers and resident Franks (Europeans) permitting them to dress in Ottoman clothing when traveling in dangerous parts of the Empire.<sup>15</sup> Leytstar's clothing reflects the nature of his trade and the practical considerations of men of European origin who traded in the Anatolian interior, even longtime residents.

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<sup>14</sup> John Baptiste Tavernier, *The Six Voyages of Jean Baptiste Tavernier* (London, 1678), 47, cited by Charlotte Jirousek, "Ottoman Influences in Western Dress," *Ottoman Costumes*, Faroqhi and Neumann, ed., 235.

<sup>15</sup> D'Ohsson, *Tableau Général de L'Empire Othoman*, vol. 2, 124, cited by Elliot, "Dress Codes in the Ottoman Empire: The Case of the Franks," *Ottoman Costumes*, Faroqhi and Neumann, ed., 112.

Lest Leytstar be mistaken as a prosperous indigenous trader or one who has “taken the turban,” the artist has cleverly embedded an emblem of the trader’s name and European identity in the Oriental rug (fig. 4).<sup>16</sup> The merchants’ left boot rests prominently on the edge of an eight-sided star woven into the Anatolian runner, an allusion to the name Leytstar, or guiding star. The star also alludes to his notable heritage. His diplomat Colyer as well as de la Fontaine ancestors were living in Istanbul more than a century before the family portrait was painted. Leytstar’s father, the Dutch merchant Pieter Leytstar, had served as treasurer to the Dutch nation in Istanbul.<sup>17</sup>

Despite his distinguished background, Justinus’s business had not prospered as that of the merchant capitalist van Lennep. His mercantile activities had centered on the acquisition of Ankara *teftik* (mohair yarn) and its trade in Istanbul and Smyrna. The wool of the Angora goat, prized for its shimmering white, curly, long strands considered as fine as silk, was long crucial to the Dutch cloth industry, but that market had peaked in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Fierce competition and local traders’ resentment of European’s interests in the commodity, fluctuations in price, and potential loss during transport made the mohair trade a risky enterprise.<sup>18</sup> The arranged marriage of Justinus’s daughter Anna Maria in 1758 to van Lennep, who was twenty-two years her senior, ensured financial stability and a cosmopolitan lifestyle for the Leytstars, who had come to Smyrna from the

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<sup>16</sup> A euphemism for a non-Muslim’s conversion to Islam.

<sup>17</sup> The Leytstar family’s mercantile activities are discussed at length in Kadi, *Ottoman and Dutch Merchants*, Chapter 3; Jan Schmidt, “Dutch Merchants in Ankara,” *The Joys of Philology: Studies in Ottoman Literature, History, and Orientalism, 1500-1923*, vol. 2 (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2002), 301-28. Leytstar’s family history is discussed in Marloes Cornelissen, “Paintings, Powder Puffs, and Porcelain Chocolate Cups in Pera: the Private World of the Dutch Ambassador’s Sister in Early 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Istanbul,” *Osmanli Istanbulu II*, ed. Feridun Emecen et al, (Istanbul: 29 Mayıs Universitesi Yayinlari, 2014), 723-27.

<sup>18</sup> Kadi, *Ottoman and Dutch Merchants*, 132-42, 205.

relative backwater of Ankara.<sup>19</sup> Although Leytstar was no longer active in the trade by the time the portrait was commissioned, his ruddy complexion suggests years spent in the Anatolian interior, as if he had just returned to Smyrna with a caravan loaded with Ankara *teftik*.

Anna Maria Leytstar van Lennep's elegant attire and attributes more than meet expectations of how the consort of a wealthy Dutch Levantine merchant would cast herself. The Istanbul-born notable is a convincing amalgam of West and East. Her accessories -- sable jacket and long pelt, silver pendants at her throat and bosom, and elaborate strands of pearls artfully arranged around a multicolored cloth turban -- display her elevated status and wealth. The turban and gold-filigreed Ottoman *cevberi* (belt),<sup>20</sup> prominent in so many 18<sup>th</sup>-century *turquerie* portraits of ambassadors' wives and wealthy European women, firmly associates her with the exoticism of the East. Her pointed-toe silk slipper, strategically positioned alongside the carpet's "leytstar" between her father's boot and her husband's buckled shoe, alludes to her Dutch heritage as well as her filial and conjugal roles.

Anna Maria's dress, attributes, and pose encode a multi-faceted identity that shifts between the sacred and the profane, the virtuous and the licentious. The maternal grouping, with her two youngest children flanking her, celebrates motherhood, possibly alluding to the Christian image of Charity, the most important of the three theological

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<sup>19</sup> Henry McKenzie Johnston, *Ottoman and Persian Odysseys* (London and New York: British Academic Press, 1998), 2-3.

<sup>20</sup> Sumiyo Okumura, "Women's Garments," <http://www.turkishculture.org/textile-arts/clothing/womens-garments-1065.htm>.

virtues.<sup>21</sup> Her two children wear faith-oriented attributes. Jacob, the youngest child (1769-1855) wears a black velvet cap with a stylized flower in the shape of an equal-armed cross, possibly Maltese, with flared sides defining each arm.<sup>22</sup> Hester Maria (1767-?) wears a small silver cross around her throat (fig. 5). The crosses seem to serve as protective emblems for the youngest, most vulnerable members of the family, residents of a port city long feared for its periodic outbreaks of the plague and other mortal illnesses. Indeed, the family had reason to be fearful. The native ranunculous *asiaticus* that Hester Maria holds to her mother must be a remembrance of the van Lennep's deceased firstborn child, for whom Hester Maria was named (fig. 6).<sup>23</sup> The first Hester Maria, who lived nearly eight years and died in March 1767, a few months before her namesake was born, may have been a victim of the prolonged plague that raged in Smyrna from March to September during the years 1757 to 1772.<sup>24</sup>

Despite her children's faith-oriented attributes, Anna Maria van Lennep's clothing and pose subvert ideals of wifely modesty or maternal deference within the family group. Her fashionable silk ivory dress displays a revealing décolletage, rendered somewhat modest by a tucked lace scarf. The type of dress was in vogue with the British and Continental elite during the period that the portrait was painted; even earlier, the Dutch

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<sup>21</sup> Certainly the image leans more towards a representation of Charity than the more Catholic-centric image of Madonna and child.

<sup>22</sup> Alternately, the four-sided bow on Jacob's cap may signify a four-leaf clover, symbolizing hope, faith, love, and luck.

<sup>23</sup> The graceful ranunculous *asiaticus* is native to the region and blooms in the spring. It apparently has no Biblical or secular historical association with death, loss, rebirth, or memory and could simply have been selected because it was the deceased daughter's favorite flower, or was blooming widely in the countryside when she died. However, in addition to their decorative properties, flowers are commonly linked with the death of the young, as both fade quickly.

<sup>24</sup> Frangakis-Syrett, *Commerce of Smyrna*, 44-47, discusses this unusually lengthy episode of the plague.

painter Jean Baptiste Vanmour had depicted women wearing the fashion (figs. 7, 8). But Anna Maria's gown, splayed-leg position, and long pelt draped between the legs are quite provocative, as is the positional relationship between her and her husband, her thigh caressed by his long stocking leg, an effect that the lengthy violin bow reinforces. Anna Maria's figure shifts between the domestic and the exotic, between the home and the western perception of the *harem*. She is at once virtuous mother and seductress. Her many progeny bear out these roles. By the time the portrait was commissioned, Anna Maria had given birth eight times in thirteen years of marriage and would deliver five more children.

The figural placement of David George and Anna Maria shows a nearly shared focus, as if partners in a joint enterprise. This arrangement seems to align with a wide body of 18<sup>th</sup>-century European, British, and American portraits that show a transition from patriarchic to a more matricentric family, a change that points to a shift in social ideology and practice (fig 9).<sup>25</sup> Unlike the patriarchal dominance shown in portraits of the early 1700s, post-mid-century portraits frequently depict husband and wife in the same posture, with slight deference of the wife to the husband (fig. 10).<sup>26</sup> In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, a new social and personal vision emerges with regard to couples' relationships to one other. Strict decorum gives way to public demonstrations of affection, at times even of a sexual nature, as the association of sexual pleasure with sin and guilt weakens. The

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<sup>25</sup> American portraits of this type are discussed in Margaretta M. Lovell, "Reading Eighteenth-Century American Family Portraits, Social Images and Self-Images," *Winterthur Portfolio* 22 (1987), 243.

<sup>26</sup> Interestingly Lovell identifies the "merchant and professional classes ... the pacemakers of cultural change ... [as] the classes in which the new concept of family relationships were rapidly evolving in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, exactly that moment when family portraits were dramatically changing from earlier patterns," *Ibid*, 247.

van Lennep's arrangement is perhaps as suggestive as that of the Americans Benjamin and Eleanor Laming, a portrait dating from the late 1780s in which the husband's telescope and her peaches serve as "anatomical analogs" to express their affection and sexual desire (fig.11).<sup>27</sup>

In keeping with Lockean and Rousseauian ideology concerning the child, late 18<sup>th</sup>-century portraiture also exhibits a new freedom and spontaneity in the depiction of children and family relationships.<sup>28</sup> Overt displays of affection and playfulness and more practical clothing inform works such as John Singleton Copley's *Family Group* (1776, fig. 12) and Sir Joshua Reynolds *Duke of Marlborough and His Family* (1778, fig. 13).<sup>29</sup> The younger van Lennep children's formal clothing and polite deportment reflect an image of the child that predates this novel thinking. But their self-confident poses and the young van Lennep sisters' affectionate embrace point towards this development. Moreover, they reflect their mother's enlightened child rearing practices. The French nobleman Mathieu Dumas, who visited the van Lenneps in 1784, heartily endorsed "the correctness of her ideas on education of the upbringing of her children." Anna Maria's method centered on a mutual, collegial upbringing that formed strong bonds, in which the older children passed their acquired knowledge to the younger siblings, each determined to learn ever more so as to pass this on to the others. For Dumas the result was a system

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 250-51.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 254-55. As costume historian Aileen Ribeiro observes, Rousseau's 1762 *Emile* advocated that, "children's physical and social needs, including clothing based on practicalities rather than on a display of rank and wealth, should be considered independently," *Dress in Eighteenth-Century Europe, 1715-1789* (New Haven and London: Yale UP), 2002, 7.

<sup>29</sup> National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire.

that followed the norms of nature.<sup>30</sup> Clearly the Frenchman, who had served as *aide-de-camp* to Rochambeau in the American Revolutionary War, considered Anna Maria an enlightened thinker, an innovator in childrearing and a guardian of domestic harmony. Her central position within the family portrait parallels the elevation of the mother as custodian of the family in social discourse of the period, an ideal that casts motherhood in a new light, but which is dependent on altered attitudes toward the child.<sup>31</sup>

The van Lennep children appear confident beneficiaries of this apparently novel upbringing, facing the viewer with self-assured stances and facial expressions. Annetta (1765-1839) and Cornelia (1763-1839) display a strong bond of sisterly friendship and support. Their affectionate embrace and the older girl's hand positioned over her sister's show an intimate relationship fostered by their close ages and their mother's delegated, child-centered educational system. David (1762-1782) and his year-older brother George (1761-1788) form a similar pairing marked by close sibling friendship.

Yet the two pairs of siblings exhibit a stark contrast in prescribed female and male gender roles. The girls' deportment and costume encode traditional roles for 18<sup>th</sup>-century young women as wife and mother. Shown as small adults, they wear matching green and blue silk square-front dresses, bedecked with strands of pearls and carefully coiffured and powdered hair. They demurely, passively, hold a piece of fruit, an emblem of fertility. On the other hand, David and George are active players in the family dynamic, proudly displaying their command of the civil and music arts. By tradition, the boys would have

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<sup>30</sup> Dumas, *Souvenirs*, vol. 1, 322.

<sup>31</sup> Lovell, "Reading Eighteenth-Century American Family Portraits," 257, discusses late 18<sup>th</sup>-century changing perceptions of motherhood.

been educated at a Latin school in the homeland to prepare for university,<sup>32</sup> as their matching uniforms of jet-black wool embroidered with gold braid must signify. David's *engarde* position and ornate cast-iron saber, and George's violin typify the sort of genteel instruction well bred young men were expected to master. Their identification with the leisure arts speaks not only to ideas about gender but also to upward mobility. As part of a lineage of wealthy Dutch merchant patricians, van Lennep would have identified with the *regenten*, or rulers of the Dutch Republic.<sup>33</sup> His elite status was all the more confirmed and enhanced as a key figure in the Dutch "nation" of Smyrna and the wider community. But he was still active in commerce and possibly harbored aspirations for his sons' further upward mobility to the European gentry, or leisure class.

The van Lennep's oldest living child, Elisabeth Clara (1760-1834) projects a far more complex identity than that of her siblings. She belies traditional roles as wife and mother, embracing an unconventional persona that confounds prescribed gender norms. Resplendent in colorful Ottoman dress, she stands in front of her father, signifying her important standing within the family group. A loose-fitting salmon-colored silk kaftan covers her body, unlike her mother's, which is tightly corseted beneath the elegant European dress. An ermine stole (a status symbol for women of the Turkish elite),<sup>34</sup> hooked belt, and headdress complete the girl's outfit. Her stylish headdress scarf trimmed

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<sup>32</sup> Benjamin Roberts, *Through the Keyhole: Dutch Child-Rearing Practices in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century: Three Urban Elite Families* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998), 107.

<sup>33</sup> Concerning the rise of the merchant elite and the *regenten*, see Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic, Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 344-45, 1016.

<sup>34</sup> Markus Koller, "Istanbul Fur Market in the Eighteenth Century," *Living in the Ottoman Community*, ed. Vera Costantini and Marcus Koller (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 127-28.

with pearls and feathers resembles those in Jean-Étienne Liotard's *turquerie* portraits of well-born European women (figs. 14, 15).<sup>35</sup>

Elisabeth Clara's clothing signals unconventional role playing in the family milieu. Does it also show acculturation into the wider Ottoman community? Her Ottoman dress appears to signify cross-cultural interaction in what was then the dominant port city of the Ottoman Empire, a site that Edhem Eldem calls a middle ground between the Ottoman and Christian European worlds.<sup>36</sup> She, like other Levantine women, owned Ottoman textiles and accoutrements,<sup>37</sup> appropriating fashion of a different culture. However, cross-cultural interaction between Muslim and non-Muslim women was limited. Elisabeth Clara remains far removed from her female Muslim counterparts, an anomaly in a culture where the majority of the female population was highly regulated. As the Islamic historian Madeline Zilfi succinctly observes, Muslim women were not to "deviate from the virtuous, modest, and covered ideal."<sup>38</sup>

Rather, Elisabeth Clara's clothing and subversion of gender-specific norms show increased enlightened thought regarding the education of young European women and

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<sup>35</sup> From the 1750s on, the headdress in *turquerie* portraits of women feature feathers, scarves, and pearls rather than the turban, Isabel Breskin, "'On the periphery of a Greater World': John Singleton Copley's 'Turquerie' Portraits," *Winterthur Portfolio* 36 (2001): 102. As Charlotte Jirousek has observed, headgear was the most common appropriation from East to West, distinctive and prominent, "Ottoman Influences in Western Dress," *Ottoman Costumes*, Faroqhi and Neumann, ed., 244.

<sup>36</sup> "Introduction," *The Ottoman City Between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul*, Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman, and Bruce Masters, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), 14-15. See also Onur Inal, "Women's Fashions in Transition," *Ottoman Borderlands and the Anglo-Ottoman Exchange of Costumes*, *Journal of World History* 22 (June 2011): 246-47.

<sup>37</sup> The inventory of Elisabeth Clara's ancestor Maria de Colyer, who died in Istanbul post 1727, includes Dutch and Ottoman textiles; Cornelissen, "Paintings, Powder Puffs . . .," 742.

<sup>38</sup> Madeline Zilfi, "Whose Laws? Gendering the Ottoman Sumptuary Regime," *Ottoman Costumes*, Faroqhi and Neumann, ed., 140.

their role in society. Although she would not be the beneficiary of education outside the home as granted her brothers, her posture, dress, and position in the family group demonstrate her active engagement in intellectual pursuits and leadership in her siblings' acquisition of knowledge. She gazes directly at the viewer holding a writing instrument in one hand, the other hand resting on thin piece of carbon paper. She stands in front of and is framed by her father and her tutor Monsieur D'Antan, both of whom defer to her imposing figure. Like van Lennep, Elisabeth Clara is a self-aware individual pausing from her business at hand. The objects on the table – a ball-head brass divider (a drawing instrument used to measure distances), ruler, and large piece of white paper scratched with numerous lines -- show her engagement with geometry or navigation, traditionally male purviews and central to her father's mercantile business. While simple mathematics was a component of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century elegant education for young ladies, the figure of Elisabeth Clara aligns more closely with the rare portraits of 18<sup>th</sup>-century *femmes savants*. Because women intellectuals were fairly well respected in 18<sup>th</sup>-century France, portraitists did very occasionally paint women with attributes of mathematical, astronomical, and scientific accomplishments, as shown in this portrait of the French mathematician and scientist Émilie du Châtelet dating from the 1730s (fig. 16).<sup>39</sup> The van Lenneps' encouragement of Elisabeth Clara's intellectual pursuits is all the more logical when we recall Dumas' enthusiastic endorsement of her mother's intellect and reasoning. Anna Maria was known for her extraordinary wise counsel, which was solicited by those even outside the family milieu. Even “les hommes en place la consultaient dans les

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<sup>39</sup> Attributed to Maurice Quentin de la Tour, private collection, Choisel.

affaires importantes.”<sup>40</sup> Anna Maria’s proud gaze is directed as much at her eldest daughter as her husband, with the expectation that Elisabeth Clara will equal or surpass her own intellectual abilities and respected position in a male-centric society.<sup>41</sup>

The closely placed figures of Elisabeth Clara and her Swiss tutor show that he is a seminal figure in her education. Dantan is seated with the van Lenneps on the sofa, an extraordinary, honored position rarely seen in family portraits, his figure only slightly removed to signify his non-kinship relationship to the family.<sup>42</sup> His collarless coat, trimmed with brushed gold buttons, is *au courant*, yet appropriately less ostentatious than that of his employer. Like van Lennep and his sons, he wears a wig, fashionable and signifying high class and masculine authority.<sup>43</sup> Looking up from his book, he holds one hand prominently to his face, a pose that is reminiscent of artists’ self-portraits, either shown alone or in their own family milieu. John Singleton Copley’s *Family Group*, which dates from the same period as the van Lennep portrait, exemplifies this rare type of group portrait: the artist in profile, paused from work, part of the group portrait yet

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<sup>40</sup> “The men in office (officials) consulted her in important matters,” Dumas, *Souvenirs*, vol. 1, 321.

<sup>41</sup> Alex Baltazzi refers to additional “Madamas” or “superwomen” in the European community who were contemporaries of Anna Maria van Lennep, “Heritage of Seydiköy, Now Gaziemir,” 2009, [www.levantineheritage.com/note77.htm](http://www.levantineheritage.com/note77.htm).

<sup>42</sup> The exact spelling of the tutor’s surname is unclear. He may have been a descendant of Michel Dantan, who came to Istanbul with the French Ambassador Marquis de Nointel around 1675; a number of his descendants were dragomans working for different countries, but mainly for France; email message from Marie-Anne Marandet to Hendrick van Lennep, 4 October 2016 and kindly shared with this author. However, a transcription of 19<sup>th</sup> century van Lennep family correspondence shows “Dentand,” Johnston, *Ottoman and Persian Odysseys*, 5.

<sup>43</sup> Alison McNeil Kettering, “Gentlemen in Satin: Masculine Ideals in Later Seventeenth-Century Dutch Portraiture,” *Art Journal* 56 (Summer 1997), 46.

separated from family members (see fig. 12).<sup>44</sup> Like the painter, Dantan is creator. His prominently placed hand and position, literally and figuratively behind his oldest pupil, demonstrate his crucial contribution to Elisabeth Clara's intellectual formation.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, he draws comparison with the indispensable tutor in Rousseau's *Emile*, the constant supervisor of his pupil's education and proper upbringing. What little we know of Dantan's personal ideology points to a mind steeped in progressive thought. B. J. Slot's assessment of Dantan from the Dutch consular accounts of Smyrna show him an advocate for "modern ideas" concerning theological and societal issues, a close friend of Adamantios Korais, who would later distinguish himself as a humanist scholar and influencer of the Modern Greek Enlightenment.<sup>46</sup>

The figures of the elderly Leytstar and young Dantan function as bookends to the family and their times. They physically frame the van Lenneps to show their unique relationships to the family. But more importantly, they signify the past and present, old and new ways of thinking. Despite Leytsar's resplendent Ottoman clothing, his *teftik* trading in the Anatolian interior was no longer a viable enterprise for Europeans. His

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<sup>44</sup> Another example is Benjamin West's *The Artist and his Family*, 1771 (Yale Univ. Art Gallery). In a similar vein, John Smibert's *Bermuda Group* (1728, also at Yale) shows the artist with the commissioner of the group portrait.

<sup>45</sup> Such an overt allusion to artists' self portraits raises the possibility that Dantan was somehow involved in the creation of the portrait, at the very least advising about the sitters' costumes, attributes, and proper deportment. Johnston, *Ottoman and Persian Odysseys*, 5, mentions the van Lennep children received instruction in painting, singing, embroidery, and dance in addition to academic studies, but it is unclear whether Dantan himself taught these fine arts.

<sup>46</sup> B. J. Slot, "Commercial Activities of Korais in Amsterdam," 78-81. Slot also discusses the progressive thinking of Bernard Kreun, predicant of the Smyrna Dutch Reformed Church, to which the van Lenneps belonged. Moreover, the library of Van Lennep's business partner Wilhem Enslie, who lived at the van Lennep Frank Street residence, contained progressive-thinking books, providing a ready source of enlightened thought for family members.

determinist, even superstitious nature, which peppers his correspondence, is relegated to the side.<sup>47</sup> Elisabeth Clara, Dantan's star pupil, is clearly the beneficiary of enlightened thought and heir to a bright future.

Did the van Lennep children as adults embody the identities encoded in the portrait or were they self-motivating agents of change? George and David died in their early twenties, not living long enough to realize their potential or family aspirations for their social mobility. Cornelia and Annetta, whose portraits project a purely European identity and share an emblem of fertility, more than fulfilled their prescribed roles by marrying into the English and French nobility and bearing numerous progeny. Ironically, Clara, whose portrait questions norms concerning gender roles, assumed a conventional life by marrying the Smyrna-based Swiss merchant Isaac Morier. Morier then entered the Levant Trade, and they left Smyrna for London. A three-quarter view of Clara attributed to George Romney shows her full acculturation into London society (fig. 17).<sup>48</sup>

These children of privilege reaped the benefits of Dutch-Ottoman mercantile capitalism in Smyrna, that multi-plural, western-oriented Ottoman port city. Those resources facilitated their reorientation to the wider European theater, aligning with nations that were at the forefront politically, economically and socially, in large part leaving behind empires whose golden ages had come and gone. But their portrait remains a striking reminder of the splendor and complexities of 18<sup>th</sup>-century Levantine trade and trade for all time.

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<sup>47</sup> A collection of Leystar's letters is in Schmidt, *Joys of Philology*, 325-26.

<sup>48</sup> Private collection, UK, Alex Kidson, *George Romney, A Complete Catalogue of his Paintings*, vol. 2 (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2015), 418-19, 600. Some of the younger van Lennep siblings and their children continued the family business and maintained a significant presence in Smyrna into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Illustrations**  
**Sublime Purveyor of Levantine Trade and Taste:  
The David van Lennep Family Portrait**

Caroline Mesrobian Hickman, PhD



**Fig. 1** Antoine de Favray, attrib., *David George van Lennep, Senior Merchant of the Dutch Factory at Smyrna, and his Wife and Children*, ca. 1770, Rijksmuseum



**Fig. 2 N. Knop, *View of Smyrna (Izmir)*, showing Dutch ships in the harbor, 1779, Rijksmuseum**



**Fig. 3 Anon. artist, "View of Ankara," 18<sup>th</sup> century, Rijksmuseum**



**Fig. 4 Detail, Van Lennep Family portrait**



**Fig. 5 Detail, Van Lennep Family portrait**



**Fig. 6 *Ranunculus Asiatici*, illustration from Johann Weinmann, *Phytanthoza Iconographia*, 1737-45**



**Fig. 7 Emanuel J. Handmann, Esther Louise Elisabeth Mutach-Steiger, 1768, Bernisches Historisches Museum**



**Fig. 8 Jean-Baptiste Vanmour, *A Turkish Woman*, ca. 1720-1737, Rijksmuseum**



**Fig. 9 Henry Benbridge, *The Gordon Family*, ca. 1762, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia (illustrating a “patriarchal” family group)**



**Fig. 10** John Singleton Copley, *The Isaac Winslows*, 1774, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



**Fig. 11 Charles Willson Peale, Benjamin and Eleanor Ridgely Laming, 1788, National Gallery Of Art, Washington, DC**



**Fig. 12** John Singleton Copley, *The Copley Family*, 1776-77, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC



**Fig. 13 Sir Joshua Reynolds, The Family of the Duke of Marlborough, 1778, Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire**



**Fig. 14** Jean-Étienne Liotard, *Woman on a Sofa Reading*, ca. 1748-52, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence



**Fig. 15** *Frankish Woman from Pera*, ca. 1738-43, Musées d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva



Fig. 16 Attrib. Maurice Quentin de La Tour, *Émilie du Châtelet*, c. 1740, Private Collection



**Fig. 17** Attrib. George Romney, Elisabeth Clara van Lennep Morier, late 1700s, Private Collection, UK