

BIELFELD, (J.F.) DE.

Institutions politiques. Nouvelle édition, revue, corrigée & augmentée.

Référence : 16639

Leide, Chés (sic) Samuel et Jean Luchtmans, 1767-1772. With engraved title-vignettes, engraved portrait and 5 folding tables. 3 volumes. (4), viii, 710, (12) pp.; (6), 736, (8) pp.; xxiv, 892, (26) pp. 8vo. Contemporary half calf, spine gilt in compartments, gilt lettering, corners, marbled boards, yellow edges. Humpert 7491; Camus 215; Higgs 3984 (citing an edition running upto 1774); not in Kress; not in Goldsmiths; not in Einaudi (although Kress has a mixed edition of which the third volume is the volume here described, see S.4180); Leblanc 240; Carpenter, Economic Bestsellers, XX.7. The improved, revised and augmented edition, complete with the often lacking third volume which was published in 1772 for the first time. Baron Bielfeld was personal advisor to Frederick II of Prussia and mentor to Prince Ferdinand. His Institutions aims at examining the foundations of the modern state and at outlining a science of government. His perspective is economic as well as political; his leanings are towards policies of free trade, granting timely independence to colonies, and the fight against poverty. He traces a history of political arithmetic citing Graunt, Petty, Süssmilch and the English and French 'calculateurs', and examines the sources of the wealth of nations, devoting particular attention to trade, and mentioning the effects of American lands and resources on Spain and Britain. Three pages are devoted to the analysis of the financial innovations introduced in France by John Law, describing them as 'le plus beau plan pour les [scilicet affaires] rétablir qui soit jamais sorti du cerveau d'un habile Financier.' Cet ouvrage est écrit à l'usage des gouvernants. Il concerne l'art de régner. Bielfeld veut réduire la politique en système, la transformer en une science qui puisse être enseignée. Il divise ses Institutions Politiques en deux parties: 1: Tout ce qui regarde l'intérieur d'un État: cadre législatifs et politiques, finances, manufactures, commerce, navigation, armée, marine; 2: Tout ce qui concerne la politique étrangère et les rapports d'un État avec les autres puissances' (Leblanc). This is essentially a cameralistic guide for rulers. Bielfeld, although a German, first published his books in French; he relied in large measure upon the French data and writers' (Spengler, French predecessors of Malthus, p. 79). The Supplément aux Institutions Politiques pour cette nouvelle édition is to be found in the second volume covering the pages 647-736.

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