

(BOISGUILBERT, P. LE PESANT DE.)

Le détail de la France, sous le regne present. Augmentée en cette nouvelle Édition, de plusieurs Mémoires & Traitez, sur la même matiere.

Référence : 18571

No place (Rouen?), Année 1707. 2 volumes in 1. (2), 294 pp.; (2), 300 (misnumbered 302, 277-278 omitted in numbering), 12 pp. 8vo. Contemporary calf, spine richly gilt with raised bands, red label with gilt lettering, spine and joints damaged at head and foot, some damage to rear cover with some loss of calf at extremities. Kress 2542; Goldsmiths 4429 & 4430; Einaudi 581; Carpenter VIII (9); INED, Pierre de Boisguilbert où la naissance de l'économie politique, i, p. 495 ff; Gerits, A., Le Détail de la France in Quaerendo, vol 16/3 (1986), pp. 198-207. One of at least 7 editions published in 1707. The 12 pages at the end of volume two are printed in a small character and contain the supplement, here written with one 'p' and which is only rarely found. Aiiii and Aiii in the supplement have been interchanged. This is the edition normally found, but often without the rare supplement of 12 pages. The importance of this edition is that "Boisguilbert réunit dans cette édition, parue avant le 14 mars 1707, les plus importantes de ses oeuvres antérieures, manuscrites et imprimées, et y ajouta de nouveau textes" (Pierre de Boisguilbert où la naissance de l'économie politique, vol. i, p. 495 ff). These new texts are the following: "Traité du mérite et des lumières de ceux qu'on appelle Gens habiles dans la Finance, ou Grands Financiers" (pp. 164-183, vol. 1); "Sentence du Châtelet de Paris, qui fixe le prix du pain. Du sixième May 1649. De par le Roy, et Monsieur le Prévost de Paris, ou son Lieutenant Civil" (pp. 192-195, vol. 11). The "Détail de la France ..." contains minor changes, additions and corrections, the "Traité de la Nature, Culture, Commerce," (pp. 184-294, vol. i) is a new text and the principal text by Boisguilbert "sur les Bleds"; the "Memoire, qui fait voir en Abrégé, que plus les Bleds sont à vil Prix," (pp. 179-191, vol. ii) was published in 1704 "en deux feuilles" with a slightly different title; the "Causes de la Rareté de l'Argent," (pp. 196-212, vol. ii) is published here for the first time; the "Dissertation de la Nature des Richesses, de l'Argent" (pp. 213-302, vol. ii) is published here for the first time. The "Supplément" was published separately in early 1707 and added in some, but not all, copies. In the second half of the seventeenth century the great advance in economic theory and method had been concentrated mainly in England. The appearance of the first writings of Pierre de Boisguilbert, notably his *Détail de la France* (first published in 1695), can be taken as a sign that eventually, in the course of the eighteenth century, pre-eminence in political economy would pass to France - before subsequently being assumed by Scotland. As regards France, the title of the definitive edition of Boisguilbert's writings (1966) is well justified: Pierre de Boisguilbert: où la naissance de l'économie politique Boisguilbert regarded the economic situation of France as one of disastrous decline and widespread poverty, and he began to study, with mounting passion, the causes and policies in the preceding decades which had brought this about. The depression seemed to have been specially severe in agriculture, which had suffered from Colbert's policy of favouring industrial development. Whether or not his alarming assessment of France's economic decline was correct, Boisguilbert, in seeking to analyse and establish the causes of what had happened, made general, theoretical and conceptual contributions of fundamental importance, including, among others, such monetary, or macro-economic, concepts, clearly though precisely formulated as: the propensity to consume or save, the velocity of circulation, the state of confidence, the expectations of businessmen, multiplying or cumulative effects, and, especially, the fundamental notion of equilibrium' (T. Hutchison, *Before Adam Smith. The Emergence of Political Economy 1662-1776*, pp. 107-115). Boisguilbert was 'chiefly preoccupied with the problem of French fiscal policy and nearly as fact-minded as was Vauban, he differed from the latter not only in the much wider scope of his interests but also in the fact that he was theoretically articulate - perhaps more so than any other writer before Cantillon' (Schumpeter, p. 215 note). 'Boisguilbert is largely remembered as a precursor of the Physiocrats and as the economist whom Marx linked with

Petty as marking the start of classical political economy. His influence was undoubtedly more extensive: much of Cantillon's circular flow analysis appears inspired by his work; while Roberts in his *Boisguilbert, Economist of the Reign of Louis XIV*, (1935) argues for considerable similarity between his fundamental economic ideas and some of Adam Smith's' (New Palgrave, i, p. 259).

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