

BOULAINVILLIERS, (H.) DE.

**Mémoires présentés à Monseigneur d'Orléans, régent de France,
contenant les moyens de rendre ce Royaume très-puissant, &
d'augmenter considérablement les revenus du Roy et du peuple.
Tome I [- Tome II.]**

Référence : 26957

A La Haye & A Amsterdam, Aux dépens de la Compagnie, 1727. Title of volume one printed in red and black. 2 volumes. (6), 158 pp.; (2), (1-4), 5-230, (2) pp. 12mo. Contemporary speckled calf, richly gilt spines, raised bands, contrasting labels with gilt lettering, marbled edges, front covers with a gilt stamped (castle ?) tower in the center. Kress 3678; INED 714; Goldsmiths 6532; not in Einaudi; Bourgeois & André 6557; Weulersse i, xix; Monod, Bibliographie de l'histoire de France, 4344; Conlon 27:349. First edition. Political and economical improvements are suggested. With great frankness the author lays bare the causes of the financial distress of France. His work was prohibited in France. The mémoire against the financiers and proposing a state-treasurer's office; the mémoire against arbitrary taxation; the mémoire against the excessive salt-tax and the mémoire against disorderly financial administration in general, are of special interest. In many ways the author anticipates the ideas of the Physiocrats, who held him in great esteem. Boulainvilliers's works were all published after his death, mostly in Holland or under Dutch imprint, and were forbidden in France. Henri de Boulainvilliers (1658-1722) was an eclectic philosopher, a historian, an astrologer with scientific pretensions, and a freethinker in religion. The coherence of his works lay in a dramatic effort to reconcile the principles and culture of the nobility with the social, political and cultural tendencies of the modern world. In his early years, his encounter with Baruch de Spinoza's Ethics was decisive. After translating that text into French, he wrote an Essai de Métaphysique that was intended to lift the burden of "mathematical dryness" from Spinoza's thought. Boulainvilliers was one of the aristocratic fathers of the Enlightenment. The philosophes read Spinoza through the intermediary of the Essai de Métaphysique Voltaire used Boulainvillier's name to symbolize free thought in his Diner du Comte de Boulainvilliers. His historical studies influenced Montesquieu and were debated throughout the century (see: Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment, vol. i, pp. 168-9). - A very nice copy.

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