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ABSTRACT
This article looks at 33 economics books that were published before 1750 and appeared in ten editions or more before 1850. This is a period – before Physiocracy and before the works of Adam Smith – which has been largely neglected in the history of economic thought. The article sheds new light on the early bestselling contributions of German and Italian economists, and on an internationally famous Spanish economist at the time. Also of interest is that three of the bestselling English economists of the period are so forgotten that they do not even have an entry in Wikipedia.

KEYWORDS History of Economic Thought before 1750; Origins of Mercantilism & Cameralism; Early Industrial Policy; Colonial Policies

The suggestion of producing a list of bestselling economics books originally came from Arthur H. Cole (1889–1974), Harvard Professor of Business History and librarian. Cole was responsible for the Kress Library that housed a huge collection of economics works published before 1850, a collection originally built by Herbert Somerton Foxwell and sold to Harvard in 1929.

The first person compiling such a list was Kress Librarian Kenneth Carpenter, who in 1975 published a list of 40 economics bestsellers before 1850.1 At the time of the 1975 exhibition, Fernanda Reinert, then a recent graduate of the Norwegian School of Library Science, worked in the Kress Library at Harvard Business School under Ken Carpenter, preparing the catalogue for the joint Goldsmiths'/Kress collection that was being microfilmed at the time. As a graduate student at Harvard Business School, her husband Erik Reinert was a frequent visitor to Kress, and a life-long interest in the history of economic thought and in old economics books was born in the family. When Reinert returned to academia in 1991, he contacted

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Carpenter and the collaboration on bestselling economics books was initiated. Carpenter is a co-author of the larger 2017 working paper\(^2\) from which the present list is taken and enlarged by two new titles (Nos. XXV & XXVI). Much of the groundwork for this paper is Carpenter’s.

Between 1975 and 2017, the number of known economic bestsellers on the list had risen from 40 to 80 titles. With the two new titles included in this work – plus the addition of Turgot’s Réflexions (1788) – the present number of bestsellers until 1850 is now 83. The paper with 80 titles published until 1850 was presented at the 2017 ESHET conference in Antwerp. In order to keep the present article to a manageable size, only the 33 book titles in economics that were published before 1750 and appeared in 10 editions or more before 1850 are listed here.

Although 1750 as a cut-off point was established for purely pragmatic reasons, this date also represents some qualitative shifts in economics. Around 1750, it became clear that England had surpassed the Dutch Republic as the leading economic power in Europe, a change we find reflected in the literature. Before this date many books tended to use Holland as the main country worthy of emulation,\(^3\) after this date England tended to be the country to copy. The period immediately following 1750 also led to a virtual explosion in the number of economics books published and translated (see also chart I below). 1750, of course, also pre-dates both Physiocracy and Adam Smith’s writings on political economy and is a period that to a large extent has been ignored in the history of economic thought.

Carpenter’s research took place in a fertile research atmosphere that had been created at Harvard Business School’s Baker Library by Arthur H. Cole.\(^4\) From 1938 Baker Library housed the beautifully oak-paneled Kress Library devoted to economics books, mainly

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4 Cole’s own research is represented in the bibliography of item XXIV.
published before 1850.⁵ The core of Kress Library contained the second of two large book collections built by Cambridge economist Herbert Somerton Foxwell (1849–1936).⁶ The cut-off date of 1850 was determined by the fact that Foxwell himself basically collected books published before he was born. Joseph Schumpeter, who spent most of his time during WW II writing the monumental History of Economic Analysis in the Kress Library, called it a scholar’s paradise.⁷

The present paper is a preliminary version of a larger planned book project where our intention is to present an annotated bibliography of all the editions of the books that in the present paper are listed only with their first edition, with an illustration of the title page, a portrait, biography and bibliography of the author. The present one is a publication with very brief comments about the authors, the emphasis is on their bestselling economics books. Apart from the ancient Greek authors, more explanations are added about the oldest and least known works and their authors than about the newer ones. We have also added a small bibliography for each author as a starting point for further research. However, in trying to cover such a huge canvas, important works are likely to have been left out. On the other hand, we have occasionally added references that perhaps are less common, but which the reader may still find interesting.

We realize this is a project that can never be perfect or complete, and one important purpose of this paper is to solicit input for the final book product from fellow economists regarding works that may be missing from our list. The bibliographies we have provided for each bestseller can certainly be improved by colleagues who know the work of individual economists better, and we hope to receive their feedback.

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⁵ The Kress Library of Business and Economics, founded upon the collection of books made by Herbert Somerton Foxwell, M.S., F.B.A, late of St. John’s College, Cambridge, England, Publication Number 1 of the Kress Library of Business and Economics, Baker Library, Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, Boston, Massachusetts, 1939. Today the collection is integrated in the Historical Collections at Baker Library.


One work has been eliminated from the original list from 1975, Wilhelm Schröder’s 1686 *Fürstliche Schatz- und Rent-Kammer*.\(^8\) We were unable to find more than 8 editions (as in Carpenter 1975) and have decided to apply a strict cut-off point of 10 editions.

**Overview**

We have decided to include the first printed versions in book form of ancient Greek economics text if they also fulfill the criteria of achieving 10 or more editions before 1850. The list comprises 1 book printed in the 1400s, 4 books published in the 1500s, 13 during the 1600s, and 15 between 1700 and 1750.

The language distribution is as follows:

- 4 books were originally printed in Latin, 3 translated from ancient Greek authors Aristotle and Xenophon (I, II, IV) and 1 by a German (XIII Pufendorf)\(^9\)
- 1 book was originally published bilingual, Latin and Italian (XXXIII Belloni)
- 2 books were originally published in Dutch
- 12 books in English, of which 1 by a Scotsman (XIX Law) and 1 by a Welshman (XXXII Tucker).
- 6 in French
- 4 in German
- 3 in Italian
- 1 in Spanish

Two authors are represented with more than one work. One of them was first written in Greek and first published in printed form in Latin (II, IV Xenophon), the other was written and published in French, by Pierre Daniel Huet (1630–1721, XXI, XXIII).

**Methodology**

Defining the limits of “economics” is of course not straightforward. Not only does the delineation between economics and other sciences

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\(^8\) For this reason, a detailed account of Schröder’s influential and partly controversial work, with two illustrations, is contained in Reinert and Carpenter (2016).

\(^9\) Pufendorf was residing in Sweden when his book was published.
become more difficult the further we go back in time, authors tended to cover broader subject areas back then, at the same time the definition of what economics is has also narrowed over the recent decades. Probably our most important lacuna is with Medieval lawyers who wrote important works also on economic matters. A main guideline for inclusion has been if the author is included in the 1900–1901 edition of Palgrave’s Dictionary of Political Economy or similar works in other languages. This explains the inclusion of an author like Pufendorf: although today normally classified as a lawyer, he made significant contributions to economics. Herbert Foxwell’s collection, which forms the core of the Kress Library, used criteria wider than ours.

In terms of the number of editions, the methodology has been relatively straightforward. We have included works that appeared in 10 or more editions, including of course translations, before 1750. We have followed the practice of Carpenter (1975) in excluding practical works and manuals for merchants, farmers, and craftsmen and works on agriculture only. Journal articles have not been included, but we have made an exception for Jacques Savary (1657–1716) and his massive Dictionnaire du Commerce (1723–1730) because it also took on the quality of a textbook in its many translations into English, German, Italian and Portuguese. One of the English versions, edited by Malachy Postlethwayt, was a source of inspiration for US Minister of Finance Alexander Hamilton and his 1791 Report on the Manufactures, which is included in the list that runs up to 1850. In some cases, we have included independent publications that technically may have been classified as pamphlets.

The authors are aware that the number of editions by no means is the only possible way to measure the diffusion of ideas. Unfortunately, it is generally impossible to estimate the number of copies printed. This list is therefore biased against authors who were already famous

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11 This point is presently made at an exhibition honouring Hamilton at the US National Postal Museum in Washington DC. https://local.washingtoncitypaper.com/event/national-postal-museum/alexander-hamilton-soldier-secretary-icon-cl

12 The technical cut-off point between a book and a pamphlet seems to vary. The US Census of Manufacturers considers bound publications up to 49 pages as pamphlets, anything above that is considered a book. In the case of unbound books, The New York Public Library traditionally used 90 pages as the cut-off point between pamphlets and books.
when their bestselling work was printed, since the initial print run is likely to have been large. The flip side of this bias against authors who were already famous is a slight bias in favor of authors who started as outsiders, but whose ideas proved to have a large impact. In sum, we find this makes the list more – rather than less – interesting.

*The Great Mirror of Folly (Het groote Tafereel der Dwaasheid)* which was published in *folio* format in Amsterdam in 1720, consisting of a large number of engraved plates, one researcher with more than 30 copies at hand concluded that each and every copy may be unique.\(^{13}\) This book therefore meets our criteria in an unusual way, and the subject – the mechanisms of speculation of financial crises – also makes it highly relevant in today’s context. It is also the only anonymously published book on our list\(^ {14}\), and one of two books originally published in the Dutch language.

We have made one exception to the ten-editions rule in order to include an author who was very influential at the time, and where the same arguments were spread over different books which, alone, do not meet the ten editions criteria, but when considered as one publication do. The author is Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi (1717–1771), who developed his theories in many books with similar texts. One reason for this is probably that book publishing was the main income for this itinerant economist, another may well have been the turbulences of the Seven Years’ War. Justi was not only the most important 18th century German economist, he was also the only one to be extensively translated. We felt that the many books on the same subject – bordering on self-plagiarism – make him qualify in order to provide the overview we wish this publication to render.

**Main findings**

From a theoretical point of view, these bestselling books confirm that national strategies among successful European nations seem to have followed the principle of *emulation* – an effort or desire to equal or excel the leading national powers of the time. A now obsolete synonym for emulation is *jealousy*, and an already classical book on this subject


\(^{14}\) Several of the books on the list were published anonymously, but their authors are now known.
is Istvan Hont’s *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective*.\(^{15}\) If we jump to the present debate, former World Bank Chief Economist Justin Yifu Lin – no doubt correctly – affirms that “Except for a few oil-exporting countries, no countries have ever gotten rich without industrialization first”\(^{16}\). The present list reflects the role of emulation for nations to create a comparative advantage in manufacturing industry: first, the Dutch Republic, then England were the main countries being emulated. Having obtained what UNCTAD much later called “symmetrical trade” – trading manufactured goods for other manufactured goods – industrialized countries would then gradually turn from *emulation* to *comparative advantage*.\(^{17}\) Item XXV on this list – Charles King’s *The British Merchant, or Commerce Preserv’d* – contains an insightful taxonomy of what was considered “good” and “bad” trade at the time.

Another interesting aspect of this work is that if we assume some degree of correlation between the influence of a text and the number of editions published, the publication history we present here suggests that some authors who were once influential are now being neglected. The history of economic thought has traditionally been focused on literature originating in English and French. We have consciously worked in order to bring into light bestselling economists writing in other languages. We consider it an important achievement that this publication now brings to the forefront the founders both of Italian and German economics, Giovanni Botero (V) and Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff (IX), and – in particular – Giovanni Botero’s work as a common parent of both mercantilism and cameralism.\(^{18}\) In the fall of


2017 an international seminar marking the 400th anniversary of Giovanni Botero’s death was held at his village of birth, Bene Vagienna in the Italian Province of Cuneo in Piedmont. This may mark a new interest in the economist whose work seems more than anyone else to have dominated economic discourse in the 17th century. Botero’s volume (V) appeared in 47 editions in 6 languages between 1589 and 1671. A recent (2018) Ph.D. thesis in Cambridge\textsuperscript{19} has confirmed Botero’s strong influence on English economic thought, particularly on Francis Bacon (VII).

This period in the economic literature consistently emphasizes the key role of the real economy and of manufacturing. That did not mean that these economists were necessarily listened to by the rulers at the time. An interesting aspect here is the extent to which Spanish economists at the time clearly saw the forces behind the economic ills of the country and provided theoretical and practical remedies. But, referring to Spain during the period in question, US economic historian Earl Hamilton remarks that “History records few instances of either such able diagnosis of fatal social ills by any group of moral philosophers or of any such utter disregard by statesmen of sound advice”\textsuperscript{20} (see XXVII Uztáriz).

On one hand, mercantilism was inspired by the emulation of successful states, but on the other hand, “(m)ercantilism was born in response to the failure of Spain”, as Cosimo Perrotta puts it.\textsuperscript{21} The de-industrialization that followed in Spain after the inflow of gold and silver from the Americas made Spain the example of what not to do. In this context we would like to mention two important works – in Portuguese and Swedish respectively – which due to the smaller population did not make it to 10 editions, but which in very different contexts both point to Perrotta’s perspective: Duarte Ribeiro de Macedo’s 1675 “Sôbre a introduc¸ão das artes” (On the introduction of crafts) and Anders Berch’s 1747 textbook in economics\textsuperscript{22} both draw lessons from Spain.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{19}Trace, Jamie. 2018. “Giovanni Botero and English Political Thought.” Unpublished Ph.D.
\item \textsuperscript{20}Hamilton, Earl. 1932. “Spanish Mercantilism before 1700”. In Facts and Factors in Economic History, Articles by former Students of Edwin Francis Gay, pp. 214–239. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. See also Hamilton’s article under Uztáriz (XXVII).
\item \textsuperscript{22}Berch was the first professor of economic outside Germany, at the University of Uppsala.
\end{itemize}
Macedo’s chapter VII is entitled: “What is the reason Spain lost its manufacturing industry?” and starts like this:

They say Spain always lacked industrial crafts, but this is wrong, because they always had the crafts they needed. Still today in all the Kingdoms of Europe, when they wish to make a silk fabric more expensive, they claim it is from Granada, and with cloth they say it is from Segóvia. We know that the Catalans had 30 ships with which they exported Spanish manufactured goods to the East, but now they have none of these boats.23

At the time of writing Duarte Macedo had been Portuguese ambas-
sador to France for several years,24 and was very impressed by the economic policies of the man who by his contemporaries anywhere was always referred as “the Great Colbert”: Minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–1683). Macedo argued that Portugal should emulate the policies of Colbert, and therefore it was necessary to avoid the trap Spain had fallen into.

In 1589 Botero wrote:

….such is the power of industry that no mine of silver or gold in New Spain or Peru can compare with it, and the duties from the merchandise of Milan are worth more to the Catholic King than the mines of Potosí and Jalisco. Italy is a country in which… there is no important gold or silver mine, and so is France: yet both countries are rich in money and treasure thanks to industry.25

Following Botero, the use of the Potosí mines in Bolivia to high-
light the importance of manufactures becomes a Leitmotif in early modern political economy across Europe. For example, we find Geronimo de Uztáriz (XXVII) proclaiming “[Manufactures] is a mine more fruitful of gain, riches, and plenty, than those of Potosí.”26 In Sweden Anders Berch, whose work was translated into German, in 1747 succinctly restates the point from Botero and Uztáriz writing that manufacturing represents “inexhaustible gold mines”.27

26 Uztáriz in the 1751 English translation, vol 1, p. 9.
Given this background, we feel that the data we present indicate that the history of economic thought, as it is handed over to today’s students, is somewhat biased. Since Wikipedia has become the measure of things, it is interesting to note that there are no Wikipedia entries for some of our authors28, for Culpeper (VI), Cary (XVIII), King (XXV), Gee (XXVIII), and Belloni (XXXIII). It is worth noticing that, in addition to Culpeper, the only English economists who are not represented on Wikipedia are the three who most honestly explained English heavy pro-manufacturing economic policy, and (in the case of Gee) the prohibition of manufacturing in the colonies. In other words, the English economists who were most contrary to present-day neo-classical economics and well in line with classical development economics are virtually the only ones on the present list not to have an entry on Wikipedia. Also in economics, it seems, the winners write the history of the war.

Kenneth Carpenter has also produced massive data on translations of publications (not only books) in economics.29 Using Carpenter’s data in Chart I30 below, we can observe how the number of translations in political economy virtually exploded after 1750. The Vielschreiberei – the furor scribendi – of the time manifests itself also as a huge increase in translations.

Studying the balance of translations in economics – the languages that had a surplus vs. a deficit in the number of translations – gives some surprising results. Chart II31 reveals a wave of translations from English into other languages at the time it became evident that the United Kingdom was forging ahead of other European nations. “Emulation” – learning from the leading country – was the name of the game.32 In earlier periods this same principle was reflected in the publications and translations focusing on learning from the Dutch Republic, the leading nation before England: Botero (V), Seckendorff (IX) – particularly in the additions to the book made after his visit to

28 As of April 2017.
29 Some of Carpenter’s data on the translation of economics texts are now deposited at https://dash.harvard.edu/handle/1/32307786
Holland – de la Court (X), Child (XII)\textsuperscript{33}, Temple (XIV), and Huet (XXI), all appearing in first editions before 1712.

\textbf{33 Bestselling economics books until 1750}

\begin{enumerate}
\item I. Aristotle, \textit{Oeconomica}, Strasbourg, 1469
\item II. Xenophon, \textit{Oeconomicus}, Paris, 1506
\item III. Luther, Martin, \textit{Von Kauffhandlung und Wucher}, Wittenberg, 1524
\item IV. Xenophon, \textit{Poroi}, Basel, 1551
\item V. Botero, Giovanni, \textit{Tre Libri delle Cause della Grandezza, e Magnificenza delle Città}, Venice, 1589
\end{enumerate}

\textsuperscript{33} Whose 1668 book opens with a statement about the need to learn from the Dutch.
Chart II. English Balance of Translations 1550-1849.

VI. Culpeper, Thomas, A Tract against Usury, London, 1621
VII. Bacon, Francis, An Essay on Innovations, London, 1625
VIII. Davanzati, Bernardo, Lezione delle Monete, Florence, 1638
IX. Seckendorff, Veit Ludwig von, Teutscher Fürsten-Stat (sic), Frankfurt, 1656
X. de la Court, Pieter, Interest van Holland, Amsterdam, 1662
XI. Mun, Thomas, England’s Treasure by forraign Trade, London, 1664

XIII. Pufendorf, Samuel, *De officio hominis*, Lund, Sweden, 1673


XVI. Hörnigk, Philipp Wilhelm von, *Österreich über alles wann es nur will*, [Nürnberg], 1684

XVII. Boisguilbert, Pierre le Pesant, *Le detail de la France…*, n.p., 1695


XIX. Law, John, *Money and Trade considered*, Edinburgh, 1705

XX. Vauban, Sebastien de, *Projet d’une dixme royale*, Rouen(?), 1707

XXI. Huet, Pierre Daniel, *Commerce des hollandois*, Rouen, 1712

XXII. Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees*, London, 1714


XXIV. Anonymous, *Het groote Tafereel der Dwaasheid*, Amsterdam, 1720

XXV. King, Charles, *The British Merchant; or, Commerce Preserv’d*, London, 1721


XXVII. Uztáriz, Géronimo de, *Theorica (sic) y Practica de Comercio*, Madrid, 1724


XXIX. Melon, Jean François, *Essai politique sur le commerce*, n. p., 1734

XXX. Justi, Johann Heinrich Gottlob von, *Policeywissenschaft*, from 1741

XXXI. Muratori, Ludovico, *Della pubblica Felicità*, Lucca, 1749


XXXIII. Belloni, Girolamo, *De Commercio dissertatio*, Rome, 1750
I. ARISTOTLE, 1469

384 BC Stagira, Chalkidiki, Northern Greece–322 BC Euboea, Greece, Macedonian Empire

[Ethica. Politica. Oeconomica]

Translated by Leonardo Bruni. Strasbourg, Johann Mentelin, before April 10, 1469

198 unnumbered leaves, folio.

As with Aristotle, early economic writings in most cultures are embedded in general codes of human conduct. “Aristotle’s purpose in writing [Politics and Ethics] was to help the reconstruction of the existing social order which will salvage what he sees as valuable in the disintegrating structure of Greek civilization” …. Such was indeed the ultimate aim of ancient Hebraic thinking as well … … one should not look for “economic theories” in Judaism, but rather for a code of economic conduct.34

Modern scholars often attribute the work to a student of Aristotle, or to a student of his successor Theophrastus.

The translator Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444) was an influential representative of civic humanism and chancellor of Florence.35

Literature


34 Ambirajan, S., “The Concepts of Happiness, Ethics, and Economic Values in Ancient Economic Thought.” In Price, op. cit., p. 32. The chapter also looks at ancient Indian economic thinking from the same perspective.

Xenophon, whose works were brought from Byzantium to Italy in 1427, gave us the term “economics” from his work on household management: *Oeconomicus*. Many translations of this work circulated during the Renaissance and were used in important works like Leon Battista Alberti’s *I libri della Famiglia* (1434). Apparently, the first translation to make it into print, in 1506, was not the best.

**Literature**


**III. MARTIN LUTHER, 1524**

1483 Eisleben, Grafschaft Mansfeld–1546 Eisleben, Grafschaft Mansfeld

**Von Kauffshandlung und Wucher**

Wittenberg, Hans Lufft, 1524

On Trade and Usury.

Together with an earlier work – *Eyn Sermon von dem Wucher* (Leipzig, Schumann, 1519) – Luther’s works on trade and usury went through a large number of editions, with a conspicuous gap between 1667 and 1817, throughout the period in question (i.e., until 1850).

Martin Luther and the Reformation formed the epicenter of the religious shift which brought economic development to Northern
Europe, while at the same time the Italian city-states fell into decline. The Reformation of Martin Luther (1483–1546) can be usefully presented as a counterpoint to Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498) and his counter-reformation.

In his writings on Savonarola, German historian Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886) contrasted the two as follows: “One of Luther’s largest accomplishments for the later development of the world lies in the distinction between civic and religious life. Savonarola wanted to make the connection between the two even closer than they already were” (see bibliography below).

The 2016 volume *Brand Luther* (see below) shows how Luther’s activities spread with the spread of the printing press.

**Literature**


**IV. XENOPHON, 1551, his 2nd entry on this list**

430 BC Athens–354 BC Athens

*Xenophon* [... ] *Opera, Qvae Qvidem Gr[a]ece extant, omnia.* [T. 1–2]

Basel, Michael Isengrin, 1551 (original around 352 B.C.).
The English title is normally rendered as: Poroi – On the Ways and Means of Improving the Revenues of the State of Athens.

Xenophon not only gave us the word for economics (No. II on this list) as household management – Oeconomicus – he also left us a text on the economic government of states and nations: Poroi – On the Ways and Means of Improving the Revenues of the State of Athens. Here we find an early indication of the role of scale: Xenophon indicates that enlarging the size of a city may help alleviate problems. The influence of the Poroi has never been well charted. Through Georg Heinrich Zincke’s 1753 German edition of more than 500 pages, Xenophon feeds directly into German cameralism.36

V. GIOVANNI BOTERO, 1589

1544 Bene Vagienna, Piedmont–1617 Turin

Tre Libri delle Cause della Grandezza, e Magnificenza delle Città,
in his Della Ragion di Stato: Libri dieci, con Tre Libri delle Cause della Grandezza, e Magnificenza delle Città

Venice, Appresso i Gioliti, 1589, 367 pp, quarto.


The importance of Botero’s writings in Europe during the 1600s was visualized for the authors during a visit to the Gotha Library, the former Hofbibliothek des Herzogtums Sachsen-Gotha-Altenburg where Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff (author of item IX) was the first librarian. The holdings of the library included around 30 different editions of Botero’s works in many languages, all from Seckendorff’s time as a librarian (1645–1664) or before.

In fact, by 1671 Botero’s Cause of the Greatness of Cities/Della Ragion di Stato had reached about 42 editions in Italian, Spanish (first edition in 1593), Latin (in Germany, first edition 1602), French (first edition 1599), English (first edition 1606), and German (first edition 1657). There were no editions between 1671 and 1830, and one

edition in 1839. The editions vary in contents, so it has not been possible yet to establish how many of them contain the *Cause of the Greatnesse of Cities*.37

Botero’s other important work, *Relazioni Universali* (Rome 1591), is a voluminous tome combining geography and ethnography written from Botero’s unique position of being responsible for the office in Rome in charge of the Index of prohibited books. This book reached a total of 84 editions between 1591 and 1796, in Italian, German, Latin, Spanish, and Polish. The book reflects the Jesuit background of the author, the volume is remarkable for its lack of eurocentrism, every culture on the planet is seen and described as a celebration of diversity, of unique adaptation of culture to nature. Apparently, this book was prohibited in France.38

The first publication of Botero on this issue is a 1588 piece estimating the number of inhabitants in Rome at the height of its power.39

In 1613 Antonio Serra, writing from a prison cell in Naples, added an important theoretical element to Botero’s explanation on the wealth of cities: increasing returns found in a large number of different economic activities producing in the same city. In this way, Serra also gives the theoretical explanation to the argument made by the great humanist Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444), chancellor of Florence and translator of Aristotle and Xenophon, about wealth being a product of systemic synergies. As it was later stated by Machiavelli: *il bene comune è quello che fa grandi le città* (“the common weal is what makes cities great”).

37 However, an attempt is made in Reinert (2016), p. 17.
38 E. Reinert (2016) outlines many unseen influences from Botero on early economics. When Edward Misselden and Gerard de Malynes argued fiercely about trade in their works in 1622 and 1623, we recognize Misselden’s argument about value added by human ingenuity as compared to raw materials as coming straight out of Botero. The same applies to the works of such diverse authors as Sir Walter Raleigh and Anders Berch, the first professor of economics outside Germany (in Uppsala in the early 1740s). Also in the 1730 folio work in Swedish by Andreas Bachmanson (alias Nordencrantz, Anders), *Arcana Oeconomiae et Commercii* (Stockholm, Hornn), there are strong similarities to Botero even in the page layout (in what the Germans call the *Satzspiegel*). Copying without proper citation was of course the usual practice of the day.
Figure 1. Giovanni Botero’s 1589 volume on The Greatness of Cities (no. V on this list) was extremely influential in Europe all through the 1600s, with around 42 editions in 6 languages by 1671.
Literature


VI. THOMAS CULPEPER, 1621

1578 Hollingbourne, Kent, England–1662 Hollingbourne, Kent, England

A tract against usury

London, printed by W.I. for Walter Burre, and are to be sold at his shop, 1621

Initially, the authors were undecided about including this work, because the work owes its fame fundamentally to Josiah Child including the text in his 1668 work (XII). Before that, however, the work had already gone into four editions on its own. There were French translations in 1754 and 1755, and a Swedish translation in 1756. The
latest English edition (with Child’s work) is from 1775, showing the impressive life span of the work.

The title of the 1775 edition of the combined works of Culpeper and Child (London, Richardson and Urquhart) shows how their arguments were woven into a bundle of analysis and policy recommendations:

A new discourse of trade: wherein are recommended several weighty points: relating to companies of merchants: the act of navigation, naturalization for strangers, and our woollen manufactures: the balance of trade, and nature of plantations, with their consequences, in relation to the kingdom, are seriously discussed: methods for the employment and maintenance of the poor are proposed: the reduction of interest of money to 4 per cent. is recommended: and some proposals for erecting a court of merchants, for determining controversies relating to maritime affairs, and for a law for transferring of bills of debts, are humbly offered.

Literature

(www) http://www.culpepperconnections.com/ss/p8879.htm

VII. FRANCIS BACON, 1625

Strand, London 1561–Highgate, London 1626

An Essay of Innovation

in The essayes or counsels, civill and morall, of Francis Lo. Verulam, Viscount St. Alban. Newly written.

London, printed by John Haviland for Hanna Barret, 1625

Bacon’s Essays – here represented first and foremost by his Essay of Innovations – represent the transition from innovations being a threat to status quo and therefore doubtful, as when Roger Bacon was arrested in Oxford around 1277 for suspicious innovations, into something highly desirable.

In the journal article cited below, Reinert & Daastøl explore this transition from being a dubious activity into a duty to invent in German and English literature. The article by Fritz Redlich – a long-term “resident” of Kress Library – indicated below relates the transition of innovators both in the English and German languages from being called by the often derogatory term “project makers” to something decidedly positive. Redlich cites Daniel Defoe, in his 1697
Essays on Projects, seeing that he is living in a new and dynamic age, and Defoe even determines 1680 as being the exact year this new age had begun.

Bacon’s Essays appeared in a large number of editions, and we have not attempted to find which editions contain the Essay of Innovation. Before 1850, Bacon’s Essays had been translated into Dutch, French, German, Spanish, and Swedish. Bacon’s utopia New Atlantis, first published in 1627, was also a celebration of innovations that helped bring the mentality of the day away from the Medieval view that one man’s gain was another man’s loss.

**Literature**


**VIII. BERNARDO DAVANZATI, 1638**

1529 Florence–1606 Florence

**Lezione delle monete**, in:

*Scisma d’Inghilterra con altre operette del sig. Bernardo Davanzati al serenissimo Ferdinando Secondo gran duca di Toscana.*

Con privilegio di S.A.S. In Fiorenza nella nuoua Stamperia del Massi, e Landi. M.DC.XXXVIII. Con licenza de’ superiori.

Davanzati’s work on currency was originally presented in Florence in 1588, and was catalogued under that date in Carpenter (1975). However, we have not found any printed version before the 1638 posthumous collection of Davanzati’s works detailed above.

There are at least 20 editions of this work between 1638 and 1846. The geographical distribution of the editions – the work was published also in Padova, Milan, Livorno, Bassano (i.e., Venezia), Siena, and Parma – testifies to a popular demand. There is one English translation, in London in 1638. In her work on early economic thought, Marjorie Grice-Hutchinson succinctly summarizes the reasons for the success of Davanzati’s *Lezione delle Monete*:

Davanzati simply presents, yet again, the Platonic and Aristotelian account of the origin and functions of money, develops the scholastic theory of value based on utility and scarcity, and condemns debasement of the currency. Yet he does so in so delightful and winning a manner, and with such a wealth of adornment and illustration, that these well-worn ideas strike us as charming novelties.\(^{40}\)

**Literature**


IX. VEIT LUDWIG VON SECKENDORFF, 1656

1626 Herzogenaurach, Bavaria–1692 Halle, Saale, Saxony


Frankfurt, Götz, 1656

Seckendorff’s voluminous tome represents the foundation of German thought on economics and economic policy. The setting is the period

Figure 2. Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff’s voluminous The German Principality (No. IX) went through 13 editions and stayed in print for 100 years after the first publication in 1653. With Seckendorff we find the policy of emulating the economic structure of the Dutch Republic as a formula for national wealth creation. The illustration shows the 1737 edition.
after The Thirty Years’ War (1618–48) which had devastated Germany, when Seckendorff spent almost 20 years as librarian for Ernst der Fromme (Ernest the Pious). The additiones to the book formulated by Seckendorff subsequent to his travels to the Netherlands accompanying Fürst Ernst, reflect the author’s admiration and desire to emulate the condition and institutions of that country.

This work appeared in 13 editions and effectively stayed in print for 100 years, but was never translated.

**Literature**


**X. PIETER DE LA COURT, 1662**

1618 Leiden–1685 Amsterdam

**Interest van Holland, ofte Gronden van Hollands-welvaren/By V.D.H.**

[= Pieter de la Court de jonge]

Amsterdam, J.C. van der Gracht, 1662

The title of the 1702 London edition is *The True Interest and Political Maxims of the Repubick of Holland and West-Friesland.*

It is assumed that this work started out as a manuscript about the author’s native city of Leiden circulating in 1659, *Het welvaren van Leiden* (see bibliography). Historians of economic thought generally point to the lack of “high theory” in the Dutch Republic. This is confirmed by Etienne Laspeyres’ 1863 study where he discusses 644
Dutch texts on practical economic and administrative issues from the
time of the Republic. The same observations apply to de la Court’s
work. His is a view from the economic hegemony of the day, and his
recommendations for industrial freedom and for keeping taxes and
costs low are sensible in that setting. Only after the decline, around
1725, Dutch economic policy – including new tariffs – becomes
more active.

However – as is evident in publications in this list, X (after
Seckendorff’s additiones), XIV, XXI – from the late 1500s to the 1700s
political economists from outside the Netherlands frequently comment
on the economic success, and later decline, of the Dutch Republic,
and attempt to draw lessons from the Dutch experience for domestic
use (ref. Reinert, below).

The English and French editions state on the title page that the
author is “Jean de Wit”, and the French editions are even called
Mémoires de Jean de Wit. However, only two chapters of these edi-
tions seem to have been written by that prominent Dutch statesman.

There are in total about 20 editions of this work before
1850, including translations into German (several), French, and
English.

**Literature**

(references)  
http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/hait001repe01_01/hait001repe01_01_0182.php

de la Court, Pieter. 1911. *Het Welvaren van Leiden. Handschrift uit Het Jaar
1659. Uitgegeven met Duitsche Vertaling, Aanteekeningen en Bibliographische
Bijzonderheden* [by F. Driessen]. The Hague: Martinius Nijhoff.

of the Netherlands: A Law & Economics Classic?” *European Journal of Law

Laspeyres, Etienne. 1961 [1863]. *Geschichte der Volkswirtschaftlichen
Anschauungen der Niederländen und Ihrer Literatur zur Zeit der Republik.
Nieuwkoop: de Graaf.

Economy before 1800.” In *The Political Economy of the Dutch Republic*, edited

The Political Thought of Johan and Pieter de la Court*. Leiden: Brill.

Aspects van een Veelzijdig Publicist*. Amsterdam/Maarssen: Holland
University Press.
XI. THOMAS MUN, 1664

1571 London–1641 (place unknown)

England’s treasure by forraign trade

London, printed by J[ohn]. G[rismond]. for Thomas Clark, and are to be sold at his shop at the south entrance of the Royal Exchange, 1664

Mun’s book is generally considered the classic of English Mercantilism. This work was translated into French (2 editions), Swedish (2), and Italian (2), the last Italian edition being published in Naples exactly 100 years after the first English one in London. In the first Italian edition (1757) Mun’s text is incorporated into John Cary’s work (XVIII). There were about 14 editions in all before 1850.

Mun’s posthumous bestseller was preceded by an earlier work, A Discourse of Trade, from England into the East-Indies: Answering to Diverse Objections which are usually made against the same (London, printed by Nicholas Okes for John Pyper, 1621).

Literature


(www) http://www.hetwebsite.net/het/profiles/mun.htm

XII. JOSIAH CHILD, 1668

1630 London–1699 London

Brief observations concerning trade and interest of money/by J.C.


Next to Mun’s work (XI), Josiah Child’s is the most famous of the English 17th century mercantilists. There were French editions in
1754 and 1755, a German translation in 1763 (+ a later abbreviated translation).

In 1756 a partial translation was made into Swedish for the parliament (Riksdagen) to promote the public good (“til det allmänns tjänst”). One reason for translating Child’s text was to explain the “success of the Dutch in trade, wealth, and navigation”. (“Här til kan äfven läggas hvad denne Vittre Auctor nämner ibland orsakerne til Holländernes besynerliga framsteg i Handel, Rikedom och Sjöfart, nemligen: … ”)

**Literature**


(www) http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/child-josiah-1630-99


**XIII. SAMUEL PUFENDORF, 1673**

1632 Dorfchemnitz, Saxony–1694 Berlin

*De officio hominis et civis juxta legem naturalem libri duo*

Londini Scanorum (i.e., Lund, Sweden): Sumtibus Adami Junghans impremebat 41

In early translations the title in English was rendered as:

*The whole duty of man according to the law of nature: By that famous civilian Samuel Puffendorf, Professor of the Law of Nature and Nations, in the University of Heidelberg, and in the Caroline University, afterwards Counsellor and Historiographer to the King of Sweden, and to his Electoral Highness of Brandenburg. Now made English.*

Natural Law (*Naturrecht*) was an important foundation for economics. Among other subjects Pufendorf contributed to the theories of price and value. See Sæther (2017) below for a modern statement of his importance for economics. According to the bibliography by

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Carlos Luig (see below) this work by Pufendorf reached exactly 150 editions before 1850.

This book has a very complicated publication pattern. Since so many early editions are in Latin, there is little correspondence between language and place of publication. The first translations were into English and German (both 1691).

There were in total 108 editions in Latin: 62 in Germany (1678), 11 in Holland (1686), 8 each in England (1682), Italy (1746), Sweden (1673), 5 in Switzerland (1707), 2 in Austria (1757) and Poland (1682), and 1 each in France (1769) and Turkey (1773).

A total of 19 editions were published in French: 7 in Holland (1707), 4 in France (1751), 3 in England (1740), 2 in Germany (1696), 2 in Switzerland (1722), and 1 in Luxembourg (1707).

In addition there were translations into the local languages: 7 into English (1691), 5 into German (1691), 4 into Italian (1761), 3 into Dutch (1706), 2 into Russian (1724), and 1 each into Danish (1742) and Spanish (1834).

Samuel Pufendorf was one of several foreign dignitaries invited by the Swedish regents to work in the service of that country. Others were Hugo Grotius, Sweden’s ambassador to Paris 1634–1644, and Descartes, who died in 1650 from pneumonia at the Stockholm castle after only a few months’ stay. In 1658 Sweden had conquered the province of Skåne (English: Scania, German: Schonen) from Denmark, and in 1666 a new university was established there in the city of Lund. This is why Pufendorf’s book is the only bestseller first published in Scandinavia (Londoni Scanurum = Lund).

**Literature**


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42 As usual, the year of the first translation is indicated in parenthesis.
XIV. WILLIAM TEMPLE, 1673

1628 London–1699 Surrey, England

Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands by Sir William Temple of Shene, in the county of Surrey, Baronet, Ambassador at the Hague, and at Aix la Chapelle, in the year 1668

London, Printed by A. Maxwell for Sa. Gellibrand at the Golden Ball in St. Paul’s Church-yard, 1673


In spite of its title, contemporaries saw this as an economic treatise and a valuable source of information about the successful Dutch nation, its trade, economic structure, and institutions. There seem to be 20 editions in English, 12 in French, 10 in Dutch, 2 in German, and 1 in Italian.

Sir William Temple had a distinguished career as a statesman and diplomat. The later famous Jonathan Swift was Temple’s secretary for most of the period from 1689 onward, and wrote a preface to Temple’s memoirs. Temple was much loved by his friends; Swift wrote that all that was good and amiable in mankind departed with him.

Literature

The Life and Character of Sir William Temple, Bart., written by a Particular Friend [i.e., Lady Martha Giffard, his sister], London: Motte, 1728, 2 vols.

Figure 3. William Temple’s 1683 Observations upon the United Provinces (No. XIV) was an English bestselling volume following the ruling tradition: first emulate the richest nations, and only then engage in trade based on the much later invention of ‘comparative advantage’. This volume reached about 45 editions in 5 languages.


**XV. WILLIAM PETTY, 1683**

1623 Romsey, Hampshire–1687 London

The present state of England: containing I. an account of the riches, strength, magnificence, natural production, manufactures of this island, with an exact catalogue of the nobility, and their seats, &c., II. the trade and commerce within it self, and with all countries traded to by the English, as at this day established, and all other matters relating to inland and marine affairs

This is the first and unauthorized issue of Petty’s *Political Arithmetick* and has the imprint: London: Printed by R. Holt for T. Passinger, and B. Took, 1683

Another essay in political arithmetick, concerning the growth of the city of London: with the measures, periods, causes, and consequences thereof. By Sir William Petty, Fellow of the Royal Society

London: printed by H[enry]. H[ills]. for Mark Pardoe, at the Black Raven, over against Bedford-House, in the Strand, 1683

Petty refrained from printing his Political Arithmetik. It was privately circulated in manuscript form, and – in 1683 – published anonymously without his consent under a different title. It was only in 1690, after the Glorious Revolution and Petty’s own death, that his family saw fit to finally publish it together with his anatomy of Ireland. Petty’s many works on Political Arithmetic appeared in a large number of editions, with a French translation published in London in 1686.

Petty became a cabin boy at the age of 17, but was set ashore in Normandy after breaking his leg on board. After this setback, he applied in Latin to study with the Jesuits in Caen, supporting himself by teaching English. After a year, he returned to England, and had by now a thorough knowledge of Latin, Greek, French, mathematics, and astronomy.

The influences of Thomas Hobbes, for whom Petty acted as personal secretary, and of Francis Bacon were both profound. Having studied at a Jesuit college a little more than two decades after Giovanni Botero had passed away (in 1617), Petty may have been...
exposed to Botero’s work attempting to estimate the population of ancient Rome (see under V). His passion for accuracy led Petty to famously declare that his form of science would only use measurable phenomena and would seek quantitative precision, rather than rely on comparatives or superlatives, yielding a new subject that he named political arithmetic. Petty thus carved a niche for himself as amidst the merchant-pamphleteers – such as Thomas Mun (XI) and Josiah Child (XII) – who dominated economic writing in England (but not elsewhere) at the time.

**Literature**


**XVI. HÖRNIGK, PHILIPP WILHELM VON, 1684**

1638 Frankfurt am Main–1712 Passau (German border town with Austria)

**Oesterreich über alles wann es nur will.** (Austria supreme, if it so wishes)


Gedruckt im Jahr Christi 1684

[i] title; [ii] blank; [iii-viii] Verzeichniss der Abtheilungen; pp. 1–303 text

[No place of publication, but Nürnberg; no publisher, but according to the preface to the 1708 edition, the printer was Johann Hoffmann]

This volume was published in the summer of 1684, less than a year after the end of the last failed Turkish siege of Vienna. 18 editions appeared between 1684 and 1784, and as in the case of Seckendorff
(IX), the work appears (a) to have stayed continuously in print for 100 years, and (b) no translations were published.\textsuperscript{43} In the last edition (Vienna 1784), Benedikt Franz Hermann – an Austrian professor of technology – remarks on the success Austrians have had following Hörmigk’s recommendations given 100 years earlier.

An interesting feature of this book is Hörmigk’s nine point list of recommendations for a poor country to catch up with the rich.\textsuperscript{44} The publication of a first English translation of Hörmigk’s work with an introduction by Philipp Roessner, produced through a grant from the Institute of New Economic Thinking, was published in 2018.

**Literature**


\textsuperscript{43} A list of editions is provided in Reinert and Carpenter 2016.

\textsuperscript{44} Hörmigk’s nine-point list is reproduced as appendix V in Reinert, Erik S. 2007. *How Rich Countries Got Rich… And Why Poor Countries Stay Poor*, 313–316. London: Constable.
XVII. BOISGUILBERT, PIERRE LE PESANT, Sieur de, 1695

1646 Rouen–1714 Rouen

Le détail de la France. La cause de la diminution de ses biens et la facilité du remède, en fournissant en un mois tout l’argent dont le Roi a besoin, et enrichissant tout le monde

[no publisher, no place], 1695. Published anonymously

Boisguilbert was an opponent of Colbertism, and is considered a forerunner of physiocracy and economic liberalism. He blamed excessive, uneven taxation and distortionary prices as the principal causes of the economic crisis in France. Among his more specific policy recommendations were an overhaul and equalization of the land-and-property tax (taille), the suppression of internal customs and tariffs, the liberalization of the grain commerce inside France, and the substitution of foreign export duties with import duties.

There are at least 20 editions of Boisguilbert’s work on the economic and social affairs of France spread over the period 1695 to 1843, but no translations. One edition, published in 1696 under the fictitious imprint of Pierre Marteau in Cologne, carries the title France ruinée sous la règne de Louis XIV.45

Eight editions were published between 1695 and 1699, and then none until 1707. That year Vauban’s volume (No. XX) was published, advocating a similar royal tithe, and this spurred new interest in Boisguilbert’s work which saw nine new editions in 1707. Boisguilbert’s volume was even published under the title Testament politique de Monsieur Vauban (Vauban died in March 1707).

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45 The same work under yet another title, Mémoires Pour Servir au Rétablissement Général des Affaires en France, ou Par Occasion on Fait Voir les Causes de sa Décadence, was published anonymously in Villefranche (chez Pierre & Jean) in 1697. We are unable to find more than three copies of this edition, none of them in France.


**XVIII. CARY, JOHN 1695**

1649 Bristol–1720 Bristol (?)

*An essay on the state of England, in relation to its trade, its poor, and its taxes, for carrying on the present war against France. By John Cary, merchant in Bristoll* (sic)

Bristoll (sic): printed by W. Bonny, for the author, and are to be sold in London by Sam. Crouch, at the corner of Popes Head-Alley in Cornhill, and Tim. Goodwin, at the Queen’s Head, near the Temple; also by Tho. Wall, and Rich. Gravett, near the Tolzey, in Bristoll, Novem. 1695

[20], 178, [2] p.; 80 The last leaf is blank.

Cary’s work was composed in one slim volume in 1695, grew to two volumes in the French translation (1755), to three volumes in the subsequent Italian translation (1757–58), only to revert into one volume in its final (1788) rendition in German (see Reinert below).

Cary codified the aggressively nationalistic policies carried out by England at the time, including extensive tariffs and other intrusive policies. While earlier bestsellers had tended to emulate the success of the Dutch Republic, Cary’s work made English policies into practices to be emulated by other countries in order for them to achieve success. With Cary, political economy reinforced its earlier role as a
science of * emulation* of successful countries before the logic of *comparative advantage* could be embarked upon.\(^{46}\)

In their edited work on *17th Century Economic Documents*, Thirsk and Cooper (see below) emphasize the fact that Cary clearly argues for the merits of high wages [1695, 143–150]. This position, consciously stating that high wages actually benefits development both because it incentivizes technological change and at the same time

\(^{46}\) References are from Reinert, Sophus A. 2011. *Translating Empire*. 

*Figure 4. John Cary’s An Essay on the State of England (No. XVIII) started as a slim volume published in Bristol in 1695 but grew considerably in free translations. Here is the title page of the third volume of the 1757–58 Italian rendering of Cary’s ideas.*
increases demand, appears to be new with Cary. The contrast between Cary on the one hand and Malthus’ and Ricardo’s *dismal science* more than a century later on the other could not have been larger.

**Literature**


Lane, H. J. 1932. “*The Life and Writings of John Cary.*” M.A. diss., University of Bristol.


**XIX. LAW, JOHN, 1705**

1671 Edinburgh–1729 Venice

*Money and trade considered, with a proposal for supplying the nation with money*

Edinburgh: printed by the heirs and successors of Andrew Anderson, Printer to the Queens most Excellent Majesty, Anno Dom. 1705, 120 pages.

John Law is best remembered for being largely responsible for the Mississippi Company bubble and the subsequent chaotic economic collapse in France, contemporaneous with the South Sea Company bubble in England. See item (XXIV), 1720.

In fact, no new impressions of Law’s theoretical work appeared between the Edinburgh edition of 1705 and a number of new editions appearing in 1720, including translations into French and German. A Dutch translation followed in 1721, and later English editions followed until 1850.
As Controller General, Law instituted beneficial reforms that sometimes recall the policies of Colbert more than a century earlier. His reforms attempted to take France out of the feudalism that had been supported by the physiocrats. Law tried to break up large landholdings to benefit the peasants; he abolished internal road and canal tolls; he encouraged the building of new roads, the starting of new industries (even importing artisans but mostly by offering low-interest loans), and the revival of overseas commerce—and indeed, industry increased 60% in two years, and the number of French ships engaged in export went from 16 to 300.

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XX. VAUBAN, SÉBASTIAN LE PRESTRE DE, 1707

1633 Saint-Léger-de-Foucheret, Burgundy–1707 Paris

Project d’une dixme royale: qui supprimant la Taille, les Aydes, les Doûanes d’une Province à l’autre, les Décimes du Clergé, les Affaires extraordinairies; & tous autres Impôts onereux & non volontaires: Et diminuant le prix du Sel de moitié & plus, produiroit au Roy un Revenu certain et suffisant, sans frais; & sans être à charge à l’un de ses Sujets plus qu’à l’autre, qui s’augmenteroit considérablement par la meilleure Culture des Terres

n.p., Rouen?] M. DCC. VII. [1707]


The title of the 1708 English translation reads:

A Project for a Royal Tythe: or, General Tax; which, By suppressing all the Ancient Funds and Later Projects for Raising the Publick Revenues, and for ever abolishing all Exemptions, unequal Assessments, and all rigorous and oppressive Distrainting on the People, will furnish the government a fixt and certain revenue, sufficient for all its Exigencies and Occasions, without oppressing the subjects. By the famous Monsieur Vauban, Marshal of France, Knight of the King’s Orders, and Governour of Lisle.

Marshall Vauban was a famous personality in France, Commissaire Général des Fortifications, and a favorite of Louis XIV until this book came out, was suppressed, and burned. There were about 20 “official” editions in France and Belgium and an English translation (1710).

The “Preface to the English Reader” testifies to the nature of pirate translation and book publishing at the time:

The Eagerness with which this Book was bought up, when it came over lately in the Original French, and that by Persons of Distinction, both for their Sense, and Judgment in Books, as well as by People of Quality has encourag’d the rendring it into English. The Reception it met with among those who understood the Original, soon spread a good Opinion of it among those who did not, and bred a Longing in them to have it translated… The Book will sufficiently recommend itself to those who shall discreetly peruse it, and so needs no Certificate from any one. It is not of the Nature of that miserable Trash which is every day imposed upon the Credulous and Ignorant, under the counterfeit Names of Memoirs and Essays. Those are things, for the most part, very partial and trifling, serving only the Interest of Booksellers, and sometimes of Parties, or perhaps to prevent a mercenary Scribler’s Starving.


**Literature**


**XXI. HUET, PIERRE DANIEL, 1712**

1630 Caen, Normandy–1721 Paris

Le grand tresor historique et politique du florissant commerce des Hollandois, dans tous les états et empires du monde: quelle est leur maniere de le faire, son origine, leur grand progres, leurs possessions & gouvernement dans les Indes: comment ils se sont rendus maîtres de tout le commerce de l'Europe: quelles sont les marchandises convenables au trafic maritime, d'où ils les tirent, & les guains qu'ils y font: ouvrage aussi curieux que nécessaire à tous les négocians: très propre à rétablir le commerce de France

Rouen, Chez Ruault, 1712.

i title; ii blank; iii-xxii Preface de l'auteur, pour réveiller le commerce de France, & le faire prévaloir à tout autre; xxiii-xxvi Table des chapitres; xxvii-xxviii Privilège du roy, dated Jan. 30, 1712; 1–332 text

The title of one of the early English translations reads as follows:

_Memoirs of the Dutch trade in all the states, empires, and kingdoms in the world: Shewing its first rise and amazing progress: after what manner the Dutch manage and carry on their commerce; their vast dominions and government in the Indies, and by what means they have made themselves masters of all the trade of Europe. As also what goods and merchandize are proper for maritime traffick, whence they are to be had, and what gain and profit they produce. A treatise very necessary for every Englishman. Translated from the French, now printed at Amsterdam. By Mr. Samber._

This is an important volume in what we could call _the emulation school of economics_. There are several English translations (the first in 1717), a German (1717), a Dutch (1718), and a Spanish (1746).
Figure 5. Apart from Xenophon, Pierre Daniel Huet (No. XXI) is the only economist represented with two bestsellers on this list. His 1712 *Commerce des hollandois* is a French example of the emulation tradition. There were translations into English (several), German, Dutch, and Spanish.
**Literature**


**XXII. MANDEVILLE, BERNARD, 1714**

1670 Rotterdam–1733 London

The fable of the bees: or, private vices publick benefits. Containing, several discourses, to demonstrate, that human frailties, … may be turn’d to the advantage of the civil society, …

Preface 12, contents 9, 228 p.

London, Printed for J. Roberts, 1714

This work is probably the most influential Enlightenment work on the spirit and ethics of capitalism, setting off an extremely useful debate on the role and limits of self-interest. It had a 1705 predecessor in *The Grumbling Hive; or, Knaves turn’d honest*: [A satire, in verse, by B. de Mandeville].

Mandeville’s book inspired a heated discussion on where to draw the line between private and public interest. Just to provide one example. Erik Pontoppidan, former Bishop of Bergen, at the time Rector of the University of Copenhagen and the editor of Denmark-Norway’s first economic journal, attempts to draw a demarcation line in Mandeville’s work between the self-interest which promotes the common weal and that which destroys the common weal:

I know how an English author of the work *The Fable of the Bees* can argue for lasciviousness and luxury: that it creates labour for many hands. This can apply to policy when foreigners buy more of the work than we do ourselves, when the raw materials are our own, and when the hands of our labourers are more than those who can be employed at the plough, at the flail, and at the oars. I also know what has been replied to this writer, with good reason, that if his suggestions had been well founded, it would follow that a group of arsonists, to whom it occurred to set fire to all four
corners of London, ought to be seen as the best of patriots, because they, more than anyone else, would do much for the trade and employment of many thousands of masons, carpenters and other artisans in the reconstruction of the town.47

In his main work of 1771, Count Pietro Verri of Milan, succinctly condensed the limits to Mandevilles’s theory in one brief sentence:

Because the private interest of each individual, when it coincides with the public interests, is always the safest guarantor of public happiness.48

**Literature**


**XXIII. HUET, PIERRE DANIEL, 1716, his 2nd entry on this list**

1630 Caen, Normandy–1721 Paris

**Histoire du commerce, et de la navigation des anciens**

A Paris, Chez François Fournier, rue S. Jacques, & Antoine Urbain Costelier, Quay des Augustins. M. DCC. XVI. Avec privilege du roy

i title; ii blank; iii–iv Avertissement du libraire; v–xxxii Table des chapitres; 1–446 text; 447–448 blank; 449–511 Table des matières; 512 blank; 513 Approbation, dated Aug. 14, 1715; 513 bottom-515 Privilege du roy, dated Feb. 4, 1716 and registered Feb.6, 1716

A most respected intellectual and bishop, Huet was one of the teachers to the *dauphin*, the heir to the French throne. In this position he published the *Delphin Classics*, a comprehensive edition of the Latin

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classics in about 60 volumes, each work accompanied by a Latin commentary. The publishing of the Latin classics and the title of this book recall Huet taking the side of the “ancients” in a debate that divided the *Académie française* at the time.49

The book contains a very detailed account of ancient commerce, where chapter II is entitled *Commerce Avant le Déluge*, followed by detailed accounts of the commerce of all ancient civilizations, towards the end discussing the different fleets of the Roman Empire and the privileges of the seamen. In the last chapter, chapter LXI – on page 444 of the first edition – we find an overview of the fairs and markets of Ancient Rome.

This, Huet’s second book on this list, appears to have more editions in translations than in French. If there are more translations into the same language, only the first is mentioned: English edition (1717), Dutch (1722), Italian (1737), German (1763), and Spanish (1793).

For literature, see XXI.

**XXIV. ANONYMOUS, 1720**

*Het Groote Tafereel Der Dwaasheid* (*The great Mirror of Folly*)
Amsterdam, 1720

As noted in the introduction, this book – consisting of a large number of illustrated plates – is fairly unique in that not two copies may be alike. The year 1720 represented the first time the real economy and the financial economy “split up” simultaneously in several countries, leading to financial crises in Amsterdam, London, and Paris the same year. In the sense that one picture may say a thousand words, the book illustrates many mechanisms of financial crises from Hyman Minsky’s “destabilizing stability” to inflation and – above all – speculative frenzy indicating a general feeling that “economic gravity” had ceased to exist (this is reflected in many of the plates).

The graph below, based on the number of economics books in the Kress collection published between 1715 and 1723 indicates that the impact of the 1720 crises on the publication of economics books was similar to that of the financial crisis starting in 2007–2008.

49 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quarrel_of_the_Ancients_and_the_Moderns](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quarrel_of_the_Ancients_and_the_Moderns)
The impact of financial crises on the publication of economics books.

Source: the authors.

Literature


On the Kress collection on the subject see ‘USING THE COLLECTION’, https://www.library.hbs.edu/hc/ssb/using_print.html

XXV KING, CHARLES

The British Merchant; or, Commerce Preserv’d.

London, John Darby, 1721, Three volumes.

Little is known about Charles King other than that he was a London merchant and later “chamber-keeper to the treasury”. The volumes he edited were profusely spread, copies were sent to “each of the corporations of Great Britain which send members to parliament” at the cost of the treasury. The British Merchant was originally a journal opposed to a commercial treaty that would have established free trade with France. The often polemical articles from this journal were published in 1721 in three volumes as The British Merchant; or,
**Commerce Preserv’d** (London, John Darby), with Charles King as the author/compiler.

Very early on in this massive work, King argues for making a taxonomy of “good” and “bad trade”: in trading with foreign countries exporting raw materials and importing manufactured goods was “bad trade”, while exporting manufactured goods and importing raw materials was “good trade”. Most importantly, trading manufactured goods for other manufactured goods was also considered “good trade”, i.e., beneficial to both trading nations. If we assume that raw materials are produced under diminishing returns and manufacturing under increasing returns to scale – as Antonio Serra did in 1613 – King’s taxonomy would be both correct and important.

The book version appeared in a steady stream of editions until 1776, and in translations into Dutch (1728), French (1755) with Forbonnais as translator, and German (1764). The last edition is in 1776, in French with an Amsterdam imprint.

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**XXVI. SAVARY DES BRÜLONS, JACQUES, 1723–1730**

1657 Paris–1716 (Paris)


Savary des Brülons embarked on this monumental enterprise under the patronage of the French government, who saw the necessity and usefulness of such a dictionary to merchants engaged in the expansion of French trade and interests, especially overseas. Jacques Savary died in 1716 leaving a vast quantity of manuscript material. This was edited by his brother Philemon Louis and eventually published in

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52 King also entered into a disagreement with Daniel Defoe (of Robinson Crusoe fame). Defoe’s *A Plan of the English Commerce: Being a Compleat (sic) Prospect of the Trade of this Nation, As Well the Home Trade as the Foreign* (London: Printed for Charles Rivington, 1728) was published in several editions contributing to the virtually unknown, but ferocious debate on English trade policy at the time (see also S. Reinert, 2011).

53 In this work, the columns (two per page) are numbered rather than the pages. In addition to the preliminary materials, Vol 1 contains 2002 numbered columns on 1001 pages, vol. 2 1956 columns on 978 pages, and Vol. 3, the supplement, 1316 columns on 658 pages.
1723. There still remained some material unpublished and this appeared in a third volume in 1730, together with a supplement by Philemon Louis Savary. Their father was Jacques Savary (1622-1690, who in 1675 had published the successful *Le Parfait négociant: ou Instruction générale pour ce qui regarde le commerce de toute sorte de marchandises, tant de France que des pays estrangers*.

The Dictionnaire was an immediate success. “This was the first work of its kind that appeared in modern Europe, and has furnished the principal part of the materials for most of those that have followed… It is valuable as a repertory of facts related to commerce, collected with laudable care and industry”, writes McCulloch.

Among the subjects covered are: trading cities throughout the world and their manufactures, operation of foreign trade, fisheries, colonies and plantations in America, trading companies and incorporations (including accounts of the Compagnie des Indes, the East India Company and the South Sea Company), banking (including an account of John Law’s Banque Generale), gold and silver, ordinances and acts of France and England, treaties of commerce, duties and customs, aspects of book-keeping, commercial philosophy, colonization of Africa, etc.

Wyndham Beawes published *The Merchant’s Directory, Being a Compleat Guide to all Men in Business* in London in 1751, a work that was largely a translation of the *Dictionnaire de commerce*. Carl Günther Ludovici of Leipzig made a German translation of the *Dictionnaire de Commerce*. From this work grew a self-written *Merchant Lexicon*, whose five volumes published by Johann Heinrich Zedler began to appear in 1752 and were completed in 1756. Savary’s work was translated and adapted in English by Malachy Postlethwayt in his *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce* in 1751–55 and 1774. An Italian translation was published in Venice 1770–1771.

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54 The 1750 Geneva edition version of this work, in 6 volumes, also contains *Le Parfait négociant*.

This book is reputed to have been banned when it first came out in 1724. Even if that is not true, the author of the approbation in the 1742 edition claims that it was distributed only among friends of the author. The author’s son received in 1734 a royal privilege for a new edition. That privilege, then renewed in 1742, permitted publication of the edition of that year. It has improvements by the author as well as added material by Bernardo de Ulloa.

This work, which acknowledged the sad state of Spain’s economy, analyzed, on the basis of reading and travel, the factors behind the flourishing of other economies, and it urged that Spain imitate the others. “Uztáriz’ outstanding achievement as a theorist was his
unequivocal contention that population depends on economic conditions rather than vice versa”, says Hamilton. He also reports that as late as in May 1824 “Senator Dickerson of New Jersey cited and eulogized Uztáriz during a tariff debate in the United States Senate”.

Besides the Spanish editions, there were two in English (in London 1751 and Dublin 1752), two in French (the first in 1753), and one in Italian (1793). One of the French editions was published in Hamburg, which means that the text was available through the booktrade of German-speaking Europe.

**Literature**


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**XXVIII. GEE, JOSHUA, 1729**

1667 London–1730 (London)

The trade and navigation of Great-Britain considered: shewing that the surest way for a nation to increase in riches, is to prevent the importation of such foreign commodities as may be rais’d at home.

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That this Kingdom is capable of raising within itself, and its colonies, materials for employing all our poor in those manufactures, which we now import from such of our neighbours who refuse the admission of ours. Some account of the commodities each country we trade with take from us, and what we take from them; with observations on the balance

London: Printed by Sam. Buckley, in Amen-Corner. MDCCXXIX

[18], 129 [i.e.131], [1]; 16p.

Joshua Gee was born in circa 1667, probably in London, and died on 3 November 1730. Little is known of his background, but by 1700 he had built up a thriving mercantile business and was trading with the American colonies. Gee – along with Augustine Washington, father of George Washington – was one of the owners of the Principio company, which produced pig iron in Maryland and Virginia for sale in England. He was a merchant in silk, iron and other commodities and also an adviser to the Board of Trade and Plantations. It may be assumed that Gee had other commercial interests in America and the West Indies. Gee was a Quaker and a personal friend of William Penn.57

There were at least 20 editions of Gee’s work between 1729 and 1780, and the issues are unusually widely spread geographically. There are English editions published in London, Glasgow, and Dublin, French translations (the first in 1749), published in London, Amsterdam and Geneva, Dutch (1750), Spanish (1753), and German (in Copenhagen, 1757).58

One factor leading both to the geographical spread of this book, and to its later oblivion is probably that Gee not only was very straightforward when he described English interest in protecting their manufacturing industry, he was also unusually honest about the intention of colonialism being the opposite, to hinder manufacturing there:

That all Negroes shall be prohibited from weaving or spinning or combing of Wool, or manufacturing hats, …Indeed, if they set up manufactures, and the Government afterwards shall be under a Necessity of stopping their

57 https://www.facebook.com/GeeFamilyGenealogy/posts/540319592743293
58 The Danish translation of Melon (XXIX) claims that the Copenhagen imprint of the German edition of that work is false, and that the place of publication actually was Leipzig. That a text in German may have been published in Copenhagen is not entirely unlikely. At the time German was the Amtsprache (“administrative language”) in Denmark. Some of Justi’s important books appear to have been first published in Copenhagen, but this may of course be a false imprint as was so common at the time.
progress, we must not expect that it will be done with the same ease that
now it may.

At the time it must have occurred to those who published the 1730
Dublin edition of Gee’s volume that not only negroes were subject to
this policy, so was Ireland. The trade with Ireland was a contested
issue, also in John Cary’s volume (No. XVIII). In 1779 John Hely-
Hutchinson, then Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, anonymously
published Commercial Restraints of Ireland considered in a series of
letters addressed to a Noble Lord.59 The English authorities thought
Hely-Hutchinson’s book protesting against the prohibition to export
woolen manufactures from Ireland so insidious that the book became
the last book in the United Kingdom to be publicly burned by
the hangman.

Gee was a contributor to the journal The British Merchant which
opposed a commercial treaty that would have established free trade
with France. The polemical articles from this journal were published
in 1721 in three volumes as The British Merchant; or, Commerce pre-
serv’d (London, John Darby) with Charles King as the author/com-
piler (XXV).

Together with John Cary (XVIII) and Charles King (XV), Joshua
Gee’s volume probably scores higher than any other book on this list
on what we could call the fame to oblivion axis: compared to the
popularity at the time these volumes seem to be the least remembered
today. These were the three authors who probably were the most hon-
est in explaining the policies that were actually carried out by
the English.

Precisely these three, Cary, King and Gee – who explained the poli-
cies against which Hely-Hutchinson protested and had his book
burned – are the same three English bestselling authors, in addition
to Culpeper, of which there are no signs on Wikipedia at the time of
writing (April 2017).

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an overview, albeit a negative one, of Charles King and The British Merchant.)

59 Dublin, William Hallhead. 1779. For the reproduction of a second edition (Dublin, M. H. Gill
& Son, 1882), see http://www.gutenberg.org/files/38841/38841-h/38841-h.htm
XXIX. MELON, JEAN FRANÇOIS, 1734

1675 Tulle, Aquitaine (now Nouvelle-Aquitaine)–1638, Paris

Essai politique sur le commerce, par M. M*** 1734

1 title; 2 blank; 3–4 Extrait d’une lettre de Paris au Libraire, le 15. Mars 1734; i–ii Table des chapitres contenus dans ce livre [with typographic ornament in 9 parts at head of page]; 5–273 text

Some 20 editions of Melon’s attack against John Law (XIX) were published, including translations into Dutch (1735), English (Dublin 1738), Swedish (1751), Italian (1754), German (1756), Danish (1759), Russian (1786), and Spanish (1786).60

Charles Dutot, formerly cashier of Law’s Compagnie des Indes, defended Law. The defense also sold well, but not nearly so extensively as Melon’s attack, there being 6 editions between 1738 and 1754.

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XXX. JOHANN HEINRICH GOTTLOB VON JUSTI, 1741

1717 Brückten, Saxony (now Saxony-Anhalt)–1771 Küstrin (now Kostrzyn nad Odra)

Policeywissenschaft, various works from 174161

As indicated in the introduction, we are making an exception for Justi in that we consider his many variations over the theme Policeywissenschaft (“the science of policy-making”) collectively as a

60 Ordered by the first translation to appear in each language.

bestseller. (It should be noted that a Policeystaat means a state ruled by policies, not a police state).

The three best known 18th century German economists – Georg Heinrich Zincke (1692–1769), Justi (1717–1771) and Johann Friedrich Pfeiffer (1718–1787) had all been soldiers as a preface to their eventful lives as economist adventurers or gelehrte Abenteurer (“scholarly adventurers”). Justi, Zincke and Pfeiffer all rose to fame as accomplished writers of economics and Staatswissenschaften (political science) and trusted administrators; but all of them ended their careers in varying degrees of disgrace, all accused of embezzlement, all suffered similar tragic fates towards the end of an active life of teaching, writing, public administration and public entrepreneurship. Justi died in the prison fortress of Küstrin.

Justi suffered from what contemporaries referred to as Vielschreiberei (which could be rendered as “excessive writing”). He had an immense literary production on a variety of subjects, 67 books on a variety of subjects and 7 journals were published between 1741 and 1771.62

Schumpeter remarks that “[Justi’s] vision of economic policy might look like laissez-faire with the nonsense left out.” (Schumpeter 1954, 172).

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XXXI. LUDOVICO ANTONIO MURATORI, 1749  
1672 Vignola, Modena, Emilia-Romagna–1750 Modena, Emilia-Romagna  
Della pubblica felicità, oggetto de’ buoni principi, trattato di Lodouico Antonio Muratori, bibliotecario del serenissimo signor Duca di Modena Lucca [i.e., Venezia] [n.p.] 1749  
Octavo, 461 pp.  
Muratori’s book raises economics to the level of understanding what causes human happiness. The work in many ways resembles the “Kings’ Mirrors” (Fürstenspiegel) of the past, and also recalls the German economic tradition in his separation between private and public goods.  
Muratori also leaves the legacy of the Muratorian Fragment, a copy of perhaps the oldest known list of most of the books of the New Testament discovered by him.  

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XXXII. JOSIAH TUCKER, 1749

1713 Laugharne, Carmarthenshire, Wales–1799 Bristol, England

A brief essay on the advantages and disadvantages, which respectively attend France and Great Britain, with regard to trade: with some proposals for removing the principal disadvantages of Great Britain

London, Printed for the author, and sold by T. Trye, 1749

v, [1], 79 p.

Clergyman Tucker’s 1749 Brief Essay was “adapted” into French by Plumard de Dangeul (under which the work is listed in Carpenter 1975) under the pseudonym John Nickolls. Plumard de Dangeul’s “adapted” French version alone reached 10 editions between 1754 and 1782, including translations back into English (1754), and into Swedish (partial 1754, full 1761), Spanish (1755), Danish and German (1756), and Italian (1758). In addition many editions were published under Tucker’s own name.

Tucker’s arguments proved to be immensely influential on French Enlightenment economists, notably Vincent de Gournay and François Quesnay. Jacques Turgot translated two of Tucker’s pieces and opened correspondence with Tucker during the 1770s.

Tucker is perhaps best known for his views on the relationship between Great Britain and its colonies. He believed that Britain would do far better economically if it gave up its dreams of empire. Arguing that English trade would not be injured by American independence, Tucker urged the British to let the colonies go. Unlike Edmund Burke, he did not believe the American colonists were justified or had any relevance to the British at home. Let the malcontents go, Tucker argued, Britain will be better off without them.63

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63 Adapted from http://www.hetwebsite.net/het/profiles/tucker.htm
XXXIII. GIROLAMO BELLONI 1750

1688 Codogno, Lombardy–1760 Rome

De commercio dissertatio

Roma, Ex typographia Palladis. Excudebant Nicolaus, et Marcus Palearini superiorum facultate

i title in Latin; ii blank; iii title-page in Italian: Del commercio dissertazione del marchese Girolamo Belloni. In Roma MDCCL. Nell Stamperia di Pallade/Appresso Niccolò, e Marco Pagliarini con licenza de' superiori; iv blank; v–ix dedication: Santissimo Domino Nostro Benedicto XIV. Pont. Opt. Max., signed Hieronymus Belloni; x blank; xi–xiii Erudito lectori/All'erudito lettore, signed Nicolaus Palearinus typographus/Niccolò Pagliarini stampatore; xiv Approvazioni, dated October 2 and 9, 1750, & Imprimatur; 1–5 Praefatio/Prefazione; 6–39 text; 40 ornamental vignette; 41–69 Appendix/Appendice. 32.2 × 22 cm

The text is in Latin and Italian in two columns.

Coming from a wealthy family, and after an early career as a trader, Belloni inherited the family banking house in Rome, and became a trusted international banker. He was also banker and administrator to the Vatican, where he was in charge of the customs office.

Belloni was a classical theorist of “the science of commerce” and entered into conflict with René-Louis de Voyer de Paulmy, Marquis d’Argenson, French Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1744 to 1747. The first French edition of Belloni’s resolutely interventionist work (1751) received a favourable review in the Journal économique, but then later a merciless critique from d’Argenson in what may have been one of the earliest debates ever over the virtues of laissez-faire.

Belloni’s theories were discussed in faraway Sweden by Anders Nordencrantz (Bachmanson) in Bekymmerlösa stunders menlösa och owälduga tankar (“Innocent and impartial thoughts in idle moments”)64 and in Scotland by Sir James Steuart in his Inquiry into the principles of political oeconomy (XLVI in the bestseller list to 1850).65

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64 6 issues, Stockholm, tryckt hos Lorens Ludvig Grefing, 1767–1770.
There are about 20 editions of this book. The first edition was the only bilingual. Italian (1751), French translation (1751), English (1752), German (1752), Russian (1771), and Spanish (1788).

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*Dizionario biografico degli Italiani.* 1965. “Belloni, Girolamo; b. 1688; d. 5 July 1760”.


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66 As always, the year of first translation into the respective languages in parenthesis.