

*“It is the philosopher's first work. It was an immediate success.  
Montesquieu establishes himself as the first historian and sociologist of the 18th century”.*

Rare edition commissioned to Didot by the Count of Artois, future King Charles X.

A precious and superb copy bound in morocco signed by P. Lejard, binder of the future king and bearing the arms of the Count of Artois.

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**MONTESQUIEU.** LETTRES PERSANES.  
*Paris, Didot, 1782.*

3 volumes 16mo. Green morocco, large gilt dentelle on covers, gilt arms at the center, smooth spine richly gilt, inner dentelle, gilt edges. Signed by P. Lejard binder for the future King Charles X.

**RARE EDITION COMMISSIONED TO DIDOT BY THE COUNT OF ARTOIS.**

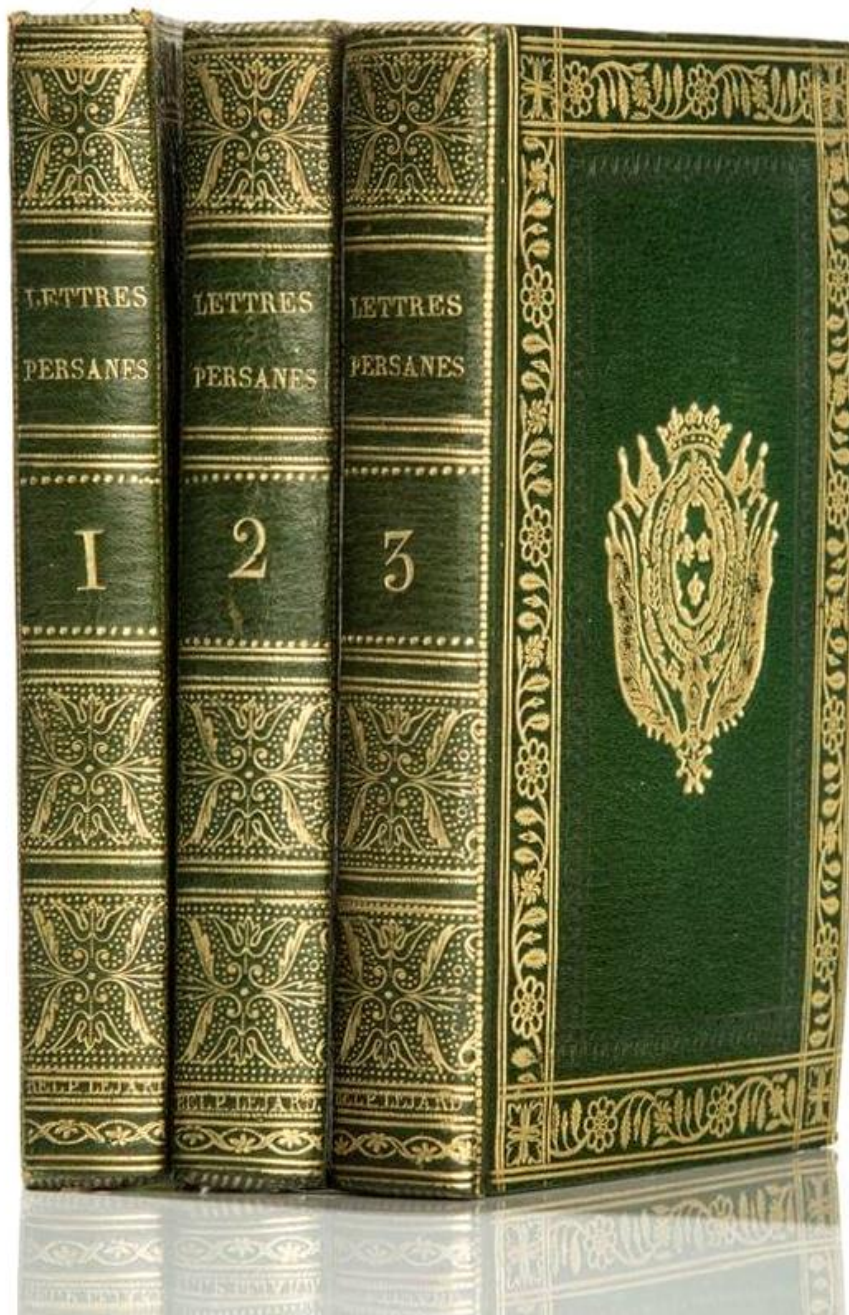
*Lettres Persanes* are a picturesque satire of France at the time, all the finer in that it comes from two Persians, astonished as our travelers were at home, and who judge our morals, one with piquant seriousness, the other another with smiling mischief.

“It is the philosopher's first work. It was an immediate success. This painting of morals required great clarity of mind, a keen sense of observation. Montesquieu would study the society in which he lived and in which he participated since he played an official role, a society where the relief experienced after the miseries and austerities of the end of the reign of Louis XIV gave birth, with a spirit of enjoyment unscrupulous, a proliferation of vices and scandals. In some of these Letters, Montesquieu departs from the moralists of the 17th century and already appears as a “politician” more interested in society than in the individual, and who blames not so much morals as institutions for social corruption. In this way, Montesquieu established himself as the first historian and sociologist of the 18th century. In his criticism of institutions, in the comparative study of political regimes and morals, in his sociological views, he reveals the best of himself. Despite the anonymous character of the work, despite its violence and its impertinence, it was the “Persian Letters” which opened the doors of the French Academy to him in 1727” (*Dictionnaire des Oeuvres*).

“This story of the discovery of the West by two Easterners has above all a political aspect, the “liberalism” of which stems from the condemnation of the “despotism” of Louis XIV” (En Français dans le texte).

Montesquieu paints an unflattering portrait of the French. According to him, they are light, curious, incapable of sustained effort, constantly tormented by a worrying need for pleasure, and money has confused the conditions for them. But his criticism, if severe, is not sad. He amuses, as La Bruyère amused.

Montesquieu addresses all the problems of morality, politics and social economy: he deals with tolerance, eternal justice, suicide, the value of letters and civilization, public law and the law of people, the condition of women, depopulation. How can we not be struck by this attentive curiosity, this concern for lofty questions, the depth and originality of the views? A method is developed, principles appear which, in Montesquieu's thought, will play an essential role. Under the laughing aspect of a pleasant and flowery banter, the seriousness of the upcoming works is announced.



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