

gall. oct. 3

#### Binding:

Binding made of gilded paper, on the spine there is a title label, bearing a partly faded inscription *Les trois[...] Im- post[...] MS* in black ink. Pastedowns of white paper. The binding bears traces of damage: headbands and tailbands were torn off. No element of the binding allows exact dating, but the whole seems to be original.

#### History:

The manuscript comes from the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was created after 1721, that is after the publication of the print of which it is a transcript. Considering the handwriting, the manuscript is no later than 18<sup>th</sup> century. The only trace of previous owners is the call number *R. and f 4<sup>6</sup>* on the initial pastedown. Unfortunately, its provenience was impossible to establish. It has not been established how the manuscript got to the Königliche Bibliothek in Berlin. It bears no accession number, therefore it reached there before 1828, when the accession register was introduced.

#### Content:

The manuscript contains a text known as *Traité des trois imposteurs*. Its author is most likely Jan Vroese (or Vroesen), who lived in the years 1672-1725. The main thesis of this work is that three religions based on revelation – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – are the work of three frauds, who wanted to take control over naïve people. It should not be mistake for the Latin treatise *De tribus impostoribus*. The texts are different, in spite of evident interference. The story of *Traité des trois imposteurs* is remarkable. The text first appeared in print in 1719. It was initially entitled *L'esprit de M. Benoît Spinoza* and was published together with the text *La vie de M. Benoît Spinoza*. The latter is a biographical work, attributed to Jean Maximilien-Lucas. In 1721, another edition appeared, in which *L'esprit* was entitled *Traité des trois imposteurs* and was published separately. This is the state of all subsequent editions of the work. We collated the manuscript of gall. oct. 3 with the 1777 edition, serving as the basis for many critical editions, which allowed us to

establish the following differences: in chapter III, § 19 was omitted, and the § on Moses is not numbered (§ 10 in print); in chapter V §§ 1 and 2 were combined into one and § 6 was divided into two §§, numbered 5 and 6. With reference to this manuscript, cf. Lemm p. 22.