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Il Dio Denaro. Una storia teologico-politica della moneta
[*The Money God. Towards a theologico-political history of money*]

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ABSTRACTS

GIAN LUIGI PRATO

Denaro sacro nell'Antico Testamento. Le componenti filologiche, culturali e teologiche di un'attribuzione non accessoria

(pp. 13-42)

Old Testament texts – obviously – do not deal explicitly with economics and money; however, we can draw from them meaningful data to verify how economy and religion influence each other and how the divinization of money may be understood in its own terms. For this purpose, we first give an outline of the economy of ancient Israel before the exile, and explain how the economy of the Persian period contributed to the formation of a new identity for the Jewish society. Secondly, we highlight the semantic changes which are typical of the language of economy and money, and thanks to which money may also be considered as god. In this sense, money is divinized not in itself, but only metaphorically. As a consequence, the local coins of the province of Yehud strengthened in some way the religious cohesion of the Jewish group. Finally, some considerations on divinization and (therefore) demonization of money conclude the overview.

PAOLA RADICI COLACE

Il denaro da invenzione pericolosa a strumento di salvezza. Tra età greca e prima età cristiana

(pp. 43-72)

The article analyses the conceptualisation of money – and its ambiguity – in a number of texts of Ancient Greece and the first centuries of the Christian era. Several Greek and Christian texts (i.a. Solon, Aristote, Augustine, Jerome, Basile of Caesarea) interpreted money as a dangerous invention and had a critical approach to the use of wealth and to usury. However, the economic conceptualisations and metaphors are showed to be key in the exegeses of many pericopes elaborated upon by the Fathers of the Church, and in the development of Christian theological tools.

ARIANNA D'OTTONE

Fonti per la storia del pensiero economico arabo-islamico medievale e post-medievale

(pp. 73-88)

This contribution aims at highlighting old and new sources useful for the history of the economy and for the history of the economic thought in the Islamic lands (Ar. Dār al-Islām) in the Middle Period. A number of different sources, ranging from archaeological and numismatic material, to a palimpsest letter, from a classical literary text to an unpublished manuscript and a little-known work by a 16th century Egyptian sufi - are presented in order to contribute to a wider and better understanding of the Mediterranean economy.

PAOLO EVANGELISTI

La forma della majestas. Governo della moneta e potere della comunità nella teologia monetaria di Oresme

(pp. 89-136)

In 1355, Nicolas Oresme, philosopher and political counselor of King Charles V of France, wrote the first work entirely dedicated to money, entitled De Moneta. In this text, he uses twenty biblical citations to argue that money is a common good, which does not belong to the King but to the whole community. The biblical verses are theological-political devices and structure a series of positions of theoretical-political importance. This implies examining the attributes of the majestas of the king, of the rights of the community, of the relationship between the powers over money and political practicability. Oresme's theological-monetary discourse is an institutional and normative discourse and aims at two goals: the legitimization of money, considered a common good, and the legalization of the government of money (connected to the validation of money, based on the nexus that ties it to God, its Creator). The essay focuses on the relation between Oresme's theoretical-political positions and the theology used by the Magister to confer legal force to money conceived as an exclusively common good of the community.

WOUTER DRUWÉ

Monetary Fluctuations and Credit in Netherlandish Early Modern Learned Legal Practice
(pp. 137-58)

The essay explores monetary fluctuations and credit in Netherlandish printed sources of the early modern 'learned legal practice', i.e. the consilia and decisiones. After a summary of the medieval discussions on the topic and an introduction to the source material, this contribution will argue that many Netherlandish jurists opted for a nominalist solution, but that the very frequent usage of valuation clauses practically speaking moved most of them to adopt a 'pragmatic metallist' opinion instead.

WIM DECOCK

Il De monetae mutatione di Juan de Mariana (1609) e la questione costituzionale sollevata contro la svalutazione monetaria
(pp. 159-72)

This contribution concentrates on Juan de Mariana's De monetae mutatione (1609), a plea against the attempt by King Philip III to rescue his country from bankruptcy by debasing copper money. Mariana's critical evaluation of the laxist monetary policy in his time rested on a strong constitutionalist understanding of the relationship between institutional power and citizens' rights. He defended a rules-based monetary order, in which the natural rights of the individuals must be protected against the arbitrary exercise of power by the prince. Considering the stability of money as some kind of divine reference point, Mariana fiercely rejected the unholy attempt to tinker with money's value, warning against its diabolic effects, particularly the expropriation of citizens without their consent.

DANIEL CAREY

Locke, Money, and Religious Enthusiasm
(pp. 173-98)

John Locke's engagement with the problem of religious enthusiasm was long lasting, resulting in a chapter dedicated to the topic added to the fourth edition of the Essay concerning Human Understanding. The plan for the chapter originated in discussions with friends in the mid 1690s when Locke was also closely engaged with the crisis in English currency which resulted in the Great Recoinage (1696-97). Locke's work on these unrelated topics has never been considered as

springing from linked concerns. This paper explores the possibility that Locke's 'solution' to the ungrounded claims of enthusiasts has important parallels with his solution to the currency and the urgent need to restore a devalued standard. The very distinctiveness of the two topics calls our attention to a shared argumentative strategy on Locke's part. In both instances (coinage and enthusiasm) Locke appeals to an external rule, measure or standard to regulate a difficult predicament. His arguments about money and enthusiasm are particularly instructive, and by attending to them we not only gain a perspective on this larger commitments but also grasp more readily the biases that motivate his position-taking in the midst of contemporary controversies. Ultimately we can begin to draw together important strands of Locke's analysis of language and politics with his view of religion.

ANNA CARABELLI – MARIO A. CEDRINI

J.M. Keynes e la critica al capitalismo. Moneta e religione

(pp. 199-230)

The paper analyses John Maynard Keynes's 1938 autobiographical (and posthumous) essay My Early Beliefs with a view of retracing the fundamental values inspiring capitalist societies as detected by Keynes. It does so by examining Keynes's criticisms of such values, distinguishing between the alternative "religious" bases on which such values are grounded. It thus explores Keynes's criticism of the Christian, Protestant, Jewish values inspiring, according to Keynes himself, the most questionable passions of capitalism, without neglecting the impact of the "new" religions of Benthamism and Marxism. The paper speculates on Keynes's desired revolution in values for transforming capitalism into a morally efficient system.

MARIA GRAZIA TURRI

La moneta come riserva di valore. A ogni funzione la sua ontologia e la sua metafisica

(pp. 231-60)

Throughout history, money is mainly defined in terms of three functions: as a unit of account, as a medium of exchange, as means of payment. In 19th and 20th centuries a new function was added and money was also described as a store of value. Money assumes the fundamental role to connect debts and credits, as John M. Keynes argued. This function – which is analysed in this article – introduced time as a crucial element in economics. Money as store of value is a key function to understand financial capitalism, which is based the relation between debts and credits. At the same time, the concept of money and the concept of gift share certain similarities, as both follow the cycle of imbursement and reimbursement.

ALFREDO GIGLIOBIANCO

Ferdinando Galiani e il denaro

(pp. 261-66)

Money – and the economy largely based on the use of money – is often associated to a sterilization and objectification of interpersonal and social relationships. The article briefly counters this criticism and points out some aspects of the social significance of money, by analysing the function of money according to the economist Ferdinando Galiani (1728-1787), a leading figure of the Italian Enlightenment.