



The roots of prizes, awards and rewards Dragonetti, Genovesi and Aquinas

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Very preliminary draft – not to be quoted

1. Introduction

“Nor ought it to be objected that virtue, in proposing its prize, loses its dignity and becomes mercenary”(1769, p. 27).¹ Through this passage contained in his book *Delle Virtù e dei Premi* (*On Virtues and Prizes*), the Italian civil economist Giacinto Dragonetti expressed a very unusual concept for his times and for contemporary economics. Since the early days of modern Political economy, in fact, theories of action and its motivation have gained a central role. This centrality has been lost later in XIX and XX century, and come back recently in the experimental economics and its emphasis on intentions, motivations and rewards (Frey and Neckermann 2008; Neckermann et al, 2014; Frey and Gallus, 2017, Grant 2011).

This recent literature, in different forms, claims for an idea of human being (anthropology) that is able to complicate the over-simplified nexus actions/rewards that characterizes standard neoclassical economics, based on the concept of *incentive*. The incentive, under the neoclassical perspective, is a tool (monetary or material reward) to induce an effort from the agents towards pre-established ends, pre-established by the firm or the institution (principal) for which they work. The theories based on awards or praise try to inquire other tools to interact with individual intentions and behaviors.

¹ The quotations from Dragonetti's *Delle virtù e de' Premi* come from the English 1769 edition. All the other translations of Genovesi are ours.

However, the present vision of awards that we find in little contemporary literature², where awards/prizes are conceived as a symbolic recognition of the intrinsic value of the action performed by the agent, remains still based on the distinction of intrinsic/extrinsic motivation. Dragonetti's and Genovesi's account of *premi* is different from both the current idea of incentives and prizes/awards.

With the aim to contribute to this emerging stream of research on prizes and motivations, in this paper we go back to its historical roots. We analyze the concept of *premi*³ in the Italian Civil economy tradition of XVIII century (Bruni and Zamagni 2017, 2016), trying to show its relation with the theory of Thomas Aquinas, which has to be considered the real reference point of this tradition. In the first and second paragraph we start from Dragonetti, and we move soon to his master, Antonio Genovesi, the founder of Civil Economy, whose philosophical and economic ideas are the real foundations of Civil Economy concept of *premi* (included that of Dragonetti). We show that in Genovesi (and Dragonetti) economic *premi* are at the time close *and* distant to what today we call incentive. They argued that *both* actions directed to the individual self-interest and to the Common good contribute to the happiness of society (*pubblica felicità*), and thus both need to be rewarded, although in different ways. A plural idea of man' motivation produced a complex theory of rewards, articulated in what we would call today prizes and incentives.

In the third and fourth paragraph, we will show that the issue of *premi* has even earliest roots, that goes back to ancient Greek, Roman Jurisprudence and Medieval Philosophy. In particular, one the best synthesis on the theme of *premium* was produced by Aquinas, that is the third author we consider in this paper. Aquinas is not only a steady reference point for Italian civil economists. Through its reflection upon the theme of *premium* as a reward to virtue, he developed original insights that are still useful to understand the nexus incentive/*premi* in contemporary theory.

² In his latest works, Frey and Gallus' notion of awards resembles the one of *premi*, as when he explains that often "awards entail *social and material advantages*" and, at the same time, "symbolic awards therefore differ in many important dimensions from the material, in particular monetary, rewards commonly studied in economics". Frey, B and Gallus, J. (2017), Towards an Economics of Awards, *Journal of Economics Surveys*, vol. 31, No. 1, pp. 190-191.

³ We maintain the Italian word *premi* because, as we are going to see, its meaning is in the middle between the English 'awards' and 'rewards'

In a nutshell, the paper claims that there is no opposition between private and public virtues, since both requires *premi*. In the private as well in the public sphere, in fact, the assignment of *premi* is a way in which virtues can be enlightened and can induce, via emulation, other people to perform virtuous actions, then the growth of the common good (*pubblica felicità*). The social and pedagogical function of *premi* is a constant theme in Aquinas and in the Civil economy tradition. Furthermore, we will show how the ancient concept of incentive (*incentivus*) was often associated with vice and sin – particularly in Aquinas’ speculation – whereas in the works of Genovesi it gains a positive nuance.

Moreover, we will show how civil economists and Aquinas’ notion of *premi* depends on their similar anthropologies, in which the two forces of self-love and love-for the others are considered both primitive. By maintaining the equal importance of these two forces, they go over the dichotomy between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations because, in markets such as in public sphere, monetary and material rewards can coincide with virtue and intrinsic motivations, such as in Genovesi’s concept of mutual assistance - this argument is in line with the one sustained by Bruni and Sugden (2013).

2. Dragonetti on virtues and prizes

Dragonetti⁴ argued that to reward virtue does not transform virtuous behavior in a mercenary one. In other words, according to Dragonetti intrinsic motivation is not crowded-out by extrinsic motivation.

⁴ At the beginning of his small treatise, Dragonetti put the reader immediately facing the core point of his vision of virtues and *premi*: “We have made numberless laws to punish crimes, and not one is established to reward virtue”(1769, p. 13). What the pronoun ‘we’ is referring to?

Even if we can generalize that ‘we’ may coincide with the various societies developed throughout the course of history, Dragonetti had in mind a precise interlocutor, namely the Neapolitan society of XVIII century (Israel 2011; Bruni 2013).. As various authors have shown, the Kingdom of Naples was characterized by widespread corruption and by the erosion of civic virtues. The majority of citizens was focused on their personal interest, with the result of a constant decline of the attention to the common good and to the social and economic development of the society. Dragonetti, as well as other authors close to Italian Enlightenment (Genovesi, Filangieri), harshly criticized that *status quo*, hoping for a new season of splendor and prosperity for Naples. His anti-feudal polemic, expressed also in his book *On the Origin of Fiefs in the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily* (1788) is the best evidence of this sensibility, not minor in respect of his master Genovesi. Dragonetti thought that feudal society could not lead to civil development because it promotes perverse reward or acquired privileges and discourage genuinely virtuous behavior.

Preliminary, we need to distinguish Dragonetti's treatise *On Virtues and Prizes* (1766) from a book it was usually associated with: *On Crime and Punishments*, written by Cesare Beccaria two years before (1764). Despite the connections between the books –Beccaria was aware of the positive implications of rewarding virtue as well as Dragonetti of the importance of punishments – the two authors did not share a common philosophical framework. While Beccaria's argumentation was consistent with the utilitarian doctrine, Dragonetti's thesis was derived from the classic tradition of virtue ethics. While the former echoed Hobbes in his characterization of the state of nature and anthropological pessimism, the latter shared Genovesi's and Aristotelian-Thomistic conviction about the naturalness of civic virtues to human being. In this respect, other important sources consulted and quoted by Dragonetti are the Roman Republicanism of Cicero, Seneca and Plutarch, as well as some branches of the Lockean tradition.

To establish what 'to reward virtue' consists exactly in, Dragonetti starts describing virtue. In the classical tradition, which he directly and indirectly recalled, virtue is a *disposition* of character, which express the excellence of human behavior in a determinate field. More precisely, virtue is a habit, namely a character trait that has to be cultivated through intentional, constant exercise, until virtuous behavior become something con-natural to those who are performing it. Dragonetti associates virtue with the direct and intentional pursuit of public good (as distinct from, although not in contrast to, one's personal well-being), placing more emphasis on 'intentionality' than the classical theory of virtue.

The reason why he stressed the distinction between the pursue of individual and public good is twofold. On the one side, in the Kingdom of Naples in which he lived free-riding and the pursue of private interest were very spread among the population. On the other side, Dragonetti inherited the focus on the real behavior of human being (Machiavelli's *l'uomo qual è*), especially from the syncretistic work of Vico and Genovesi, and thus he is less confident on the automatic coincidence between the individual good and the common good (the invisible hand mechanism).

In addition to public utility as a criterion to value virtuous behavior, Dragonetti adds another important element: the effort sustained in the action. The emphasis on effort is in line with what

Conversely, a well-set system of rewards, one that is able to reward truly virtuous behavior of citizens and to direct their attention to the common good of society, constitutes an important tool to recreate the bonds that tied citizens together and to encourage their civic virtues.

we have just argued, namely that virtue requires the capability to go over one private interest for the common good of society. Dragonetti summarizes these two characteristic of virtue in what follows:

Virtue can only be the attribute of a being weak in nature and strong in will; this is the effort of human morals; a generous effort in behalf of another, independent of the laws, is therefore virtue; its points are the sacrifice which the virtuous offers in himself, and the advantages that hence arise to the public. (1769, p. 19)

To sustain and spread civic virtues, Dragonetti claims for a system of rewards for virtuous behaviors. However, it is important to distinguish the virtuous, those “contributes more than others towards the general benefit” (1769, p.), from the citizens who simply respect laws and the boundaries of social pacts. The former has to be rewarded with *premi*, the latter enjoys rewards derived from the social contract. Dragonetti is interested in surpassing the ‘intrinsic bound’ of virtuous behavior: a millenarian tradition before him sustained that virtue has its own reward in itself and, consequently, other rewards transform virtuous behavior in a mercenary one. This position, that can be reported especially to Greek and Roman stoicism (Cicero and Seneca, above all), arrived to Dragonetti especially through the works of Shaftesbury, whose *Inquiry on Virtue and Merit*, published in 1699 and in the collection *Characteristics* of 1711, influencing his master Genovesi and the Neapolitan philosophical scene of the beginnings of XVIII century⁵. Shaftesbury, in opposition to some clergyman of his time, and in general to all the revealed religions, which advocate an eternal reward for virtuous behavior on earth, stated that “they have made virtue so mercenary a thing and have talked so much of its rewards that one can hardly tell what there is in it, after all, which can be worth rewarding”⁶. At the same time, he admits that “the principle of fear for future punishment, and hope of future reward, how mercenary or servile soever it may be accounted, is yet, in many circumstances, a great advantage, security and support to virtue”⁷. Dragonetti moved a step forward Shaftesbury. Rewards are related to virtues not as something evil but necessary, but as a useful and good instruments for encouraging virtuous behavior and the common good of society.

⁵ For the Neapolitan period of Shaftesbury, see Croce (1927).

⁶ Shaftesbury, A. C. C. (2000 [1711]), *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*. Edited by Lawrence E. Klein, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 46.

⁷ *Ivi*, p. 185.

This step is crucial for our argumentation, because Dragonetti avoids the economical consequences of the theological and anthropological assumption of Shaftesbury expressed in what follows: “if that which he calls resignation depends only on the expectation of infinite retribution or reward, he discovers no more worth or virtue than in any other *bargain of interest*”⁸.

Dragonetti’s notion of *premi* lies in the middle between the definition of award and reward (Bruni 2013). Awards are like medals, academic, artistic, civic, or military awards; they are given *ex-post* to reward virtuous behavior and they have scarce or no extrinsic value. Rewards are similar to incentive, having big extrinsic value (they are often equated with big amount of money or benefits), and they are established *ex-ante* to induce an agent towards a specific action. To understand which among these features are proper of *premi*, in the next paragraphs we will analyze how Genovesi distinguish between honor and *premi*, and how, in Aquinas, honor was conceived as the best reward for virtue. However, before addressing Genovesi and Aquinas, we need to take one more step with Dragonetti.

Advocating the necessity for a civil code of rewards, Dragonetti put implicitly the stress on the public nature of *premi*, whereas, as we will see in detail later, Genovesi and Aquinas highlight it explicitly in many passages. Taking examples from the past, Dragonetti lists various forms of *premi*: in Persia, Rome and China, who distinguished more than others in cultivation or agricultural matter, one was rewarded with public offices; the Greeks and the Romans rewarded their bravest and soldiers with “statues, crowns or brands of honor” as well as “pensions from the public treasure” or “lands”. Considering the public nature of recompense, and the public utility that characterizes virtuous behavior, the reader might be surprised reading the second part of *On Virtues and Rewards*, where Dragonetti analyzes how to reward virtues in fields like agriculture, navigation or commerce. Generally speaking, we are used to consider this field as a matter of self-interest of individuals instead of public virtue. How can self-interest be related to the reward of virtuous behavior? Do we have to suppose that also private virtues need to be rewarded? In other words, how it is possible to reconcile the two parts of Dragonetti’s treatise? The answer is traceable in the book: “Rewards alone tie the wayward interest of individuals to the public, and keep the eye of man focused on general good” (1769, p. 31). Under this light the examples of

⁸ *Ibidem*, our italics.

prizes analyzed by Dragonetti, as in the cases of the inventor of new techniques for agriculture or new methods for navigation, become indeed more intelligible. Still, it remains unclear how exactly the interest of individuals can be tied to the general good. To go more in depth on this issue, we need to afford the anthropological assumption at its basis, analyzing the work of Dragonetti's master, Antonio Genovesi.

3. Genovesi on honor and *premi*.

As far as virtues and *premi* are concerned, Dragonetti and Genovesi's analysis are complementary. While the former dedicated an entire treatise to the theme of *premi*, without developing the anthropological thesis on which it was based, the latter proposed a wide anthropological account, but he did not consider the theme of *premi* systematically, although he frequently scrutinized it⁹. Moreover, both authors read the respective works, influencing each other. Then, Genovesi's anthropology can be considered the root of Dragonetti's discourse.

In Naples, many economists of that time adapted Newton's theory of gravitation to their own systems. The abbot Ferdinando Galiani, for instance, employs Newtonian force of gravity to explain that the economic actor is mainly moved by his self-interest. Conversely, in his treatise of moral philosophy (*Della Diceosina*), Genovesi argues that even if some passions are manifestations of "self-love" (*forza concentriva*), others reflect another force, namely "love of the species" (*forza diffusiva*). The whole of Genovesi's theory of action is constructed upon the idea that human nature and society can be explained as an "equilibrium" between these two primitive, but opposite, forces. Furthermore, this conception provides the logical basis for the criticism towards Mandeville's and Hobbes' egoistic conceptions of man that we find throughout Genovesi's work: "Hobbes founds all on *forza concentrativa*, and the *forza diffusiva* springs only from a higher degree of the *concentrativa*, that is fear" (*Logica* ch. 5, §36).

The two different forces seem both to require prizes: prizes that comes from contracts to reward self-interest, prizes that comes from social pacts for the love of species. What has just

⁹ Benedetto Croce analyzed the paternity of Dragonetti's book (see Bruni 2013, footnote 3) to which "Genovesi gave more than a hand" (Genovesi, *Scritti*: 205, footnote 5).

been argued is summarized by Genovesi in this passage: “From social pacts, who has been useful to the country, has acquired a right to honors and *premi*, that is very similar to those that come from private contracts”. (*Diceosina*, p. 348). A similar thesis was sustained by Dragonetti, when he argued that “who evaluates his laudable operations on the basis of law, he deserves a reward that consists in the advantages that come from the social contract [...] who operates, beyond what law requires, for the good of the other, he deserves a special reward (*special guiderdone*)” (1769, p. . Our addition and italics).

Genovesi explains where the similarity between public and private *premi* lies. So far, in fact, we could be tempted to think that *premi* for public virtues do not follow a contractual logic like private *premi*, but instead they are more similar to gifts given to reward pro-social behavior. This statement is explicitly refused by Genovesi:

It must be noticed that the donations which are given to someone as a reward for his service, or patriotic virtue, have not to be conceived as donations, but instead as remunerations for some contracts of exchange, *do ut facias, aut quia fecisti*, as well-observed by Vinnio. Even if they are done by the Government, nonetheless they suppose the law of the justice named ‘distributive’, that is among the basic facts of every State; and thus they are rewards (*paghe*) and not gift. (*Diceosina*, p.)

The formula ‘*do ut facias, aut quia fecisti*’ expresses the double role of *premi*, that could be established to induce some pro-social behavior or that could be given to recognize and highlight a virtuous performance.¹⁰

Another similarity between public and private *premi* lies in their nature: public *premi*, in fact, are not just symbolic or of intrinsic value. As it is clear in many passages of his *Lezioni di Economia Civile*, in fact, Genovesi states that monetary *premi* can encourage the privates to accomplish public endeavors. Consider the following passage as a clear example: “This society distributes from 80 to 100 prizes, per year, whose, together, amount to 1000 pounds” (*Lezioni* ch.15, § 11). Genovesi is explicitly arguing that for encouraging inventions and developments in Agriculture and Manufacturing, which contribute to the common good of society, a private society distributes every year *premi* with high monetary value. From this passage we can infer a point

¹⁰ That prizes can be given *ex-ante* and *ex-post* is recognized also by Frey and Gallus (2017). The latter lie in the notion of confirmatory/discretionary awards, the formers in the notion of innovative prizes.

that we will encounter in Aquinas: rewarding is not exclusive competence of the Government, but it pertains to different parts of society.

From what we have just argued, it could appear that *premi* are only public means to deviate *forza concentriva* of human being towards those goals typical of the *forza diffusiva*. However, this is only a part of the function of *premi*. In many passages, in fact, Genovesi stated that between the two primitive forces a ‘proportional median’ (*mezza proporzionale*) has to be achieved: “But that proportional median can be sustained only through appropriate, immediate, bright punishments, and through solicitous, public prizes (*premi*) to the great virtues” (*Logica* ch. 5, § 55) . Thus, *forza diffusiva* requires to be rewarded in its own proper way, that, as we saw, reveals a similarity with the rewards for *forza concentriva*, but, as we will see, it has also significant differences.

On Genovesi’s account, in fact, *premi* have to be conferred publically, recognizing the virtuous actions accomplished by the person: “The Genius, father of the sciences and the Arts, wants freedom and a ‘wing’. These come from the prize, that from the esteem and the applause of the sovereigns”(?). Here *premio* means simply ‘incentive’, whereas ‘applause and esteem’ is what we would today call ‘prize’ or praise (Grant 2011). Several times Genovesi referred both to ‘honor and *premi*’, implying that these two forms of reward go hand in hand in promoting civic virtues among citizens or, in other words, in sustaining their love for common good. For Genovesi, in fact, common good of society is constituted by the moral character of its citizens as well as their material wealth. In this respect, “education, public examples, *premi*, are all good attractive to be wise, temperance, just, human, hard worker; and thus, that education, those example, those *premi*, have to be considered of the greatest importance” (*Lezioni* ch.14, § 21). As we will see analyzing Aquinas, Genovesi inherited this sensibility to the theme of moral education of citizens from Aristotelic-Thomistic tradition, whose authors had often put the stress on the importance of civic virtues for individual and public happiness.

Hence, honor¹¹ and *premi* are both fundamental to sustain and reward public virtues. To understand why honor is equally important, we need to go back to Genovesi’s text. Before

¹¹ Someone might argue that even if Genovesi put honor or praise as complementary to *premi*, he considers it another form of incentives. This thesis could be inferred from his reference to ciceronian maxim, “*honos alis artes*”, meaning that, seeking for

explaining that “not to reward (men) is neither fair nor useful, because this extinguish the impetus/enthusiasm to be great men in favor of society” (*Diceosina*, p.), Genovesi links directly the logic of rewards to the logic of gift, as developed by Seneca in his *De Beneficiis*. There, Seneca distinguished between two forms of rewards for a benefit given:

The first reward from a benefit is one’s awareness of it, and this comes when the giver gets the gif though to its intended destination; the treads in the form of fame and things provided in return for the gift are secondary. And so when a benefit is accepted with a kindly attitude, then the giver has already received his gratitude in return, but not the payoff yet.¹²

Honor, for Seneca as well as Genovesi, covers that part of gratitude which is needed to reward a virtuous behavior, namely an intentional benefit directed to the common good of society. However, Genovesi does not think - as Seneca did – that the material payoff is secondary, since human being virtuous behavior is the result of an equilibrium of the two forces of self-love and love-for-others. Thus, a prize (*premio*) only symbolic will be useless, because the *forza concentriva* will be too strong and will lead a man only to care of his own interest, or dangerous, because the uncontrolled spread of *forza diffusiva* will be a not desirable outcome. For the same reason, in some passages Genovesi distinguishes honor from *premi*, whereas in others he mentioned only public *premi*, implying through the adjective ‘public’ that the goodness of the action is recognized and rewarded at the same time.

In Genovesi’s philosophy the concept of *premi* lies both in the grammar of contract (justice) and gift (beneficence). A first explanation of this ambivalence is historical, since Genovesi wanted to free Neapolitan (and Italian) people to the hierarchical logic of gift typical of feudal societies. In this respect, Genovesi formulates the first, fundamental rules of beneficence: “Do not be forced ourselves in the state of not being able to live aside from beneficence” (*Diceosina*, p.).¹³ He looked with favor at the world of economy, that he defined ‘civil’ also because it is able to civilize societies, by spreading the logic of contract between free and equal human being. In the passage emerges another genovesian insight on theme of prizes, useful even for our times:

honor or praise, human being could be lead to focus his efforts on the development of arts and sciences. We can agree with this consideration, and so did Genovesi and Dragonetti. But this is only one side of the same coin because, as explained by Genovesi, in that formula “honor includes especially the prizes (*premi*)” (*Lezioni*, ch. 9 , 4).

¹² Seneca L. A. (2011). *On Benefits*. Translated by M. Griffin and B. Inwood, Chicago: Chicago University Press, p. 56.

¹³ This concept is outlined by Frey and Gallus (2017), when they stressed the danger of “too many awards”.

public *premi* have not to be assigned as frequent as the rewards coming from private pacts or contract.

This historical-sociological thesis is confirmed by his anthropological vision: “It is true that as the attraction of bodies is maximal in their contacts and decreases proportionally to distances; in the same way the reciprocal attraction and love among men is very great in the family, among companions, in the homeland, etc., and decreases with greater distances”. (*Diceosina*, pp. 42–43). Here, Genovesi recognize that there are different degrees of bounds which tie a man with his private affects and with the society as a whole. Thus, when a man directs his action towards the common good, he needs more than symbolic *premi* to be ‘restored’ or ‘encouraged’ for his virtuous action. Conversely, when a man put his effort in order to pursue goals that are proximate to his own utility, as in the case of private contracts or in the benefits towards his family, he needs that the rewards contains less ‘symbolic’ parts and more certain, material parts. Despite this noticeable difference, what matters for Genovesi and for our research is that in both cases we are in presence of virtuous behaviors that have to be rewarded, and that the material and symbolic part go hand in hand, with different degrees depending on the cases.

We have now arrived to the issue of private *premi*, typical of contracts between privates. We saw that Genovesi defined them similar to the public *premi*: “I think that the second means to encourage and promote industry should be the increasing of the natural and intrinsic *premio* of labor, namely the profit of workers [...] This instrument alone, whereas other *premi* are lacking, is able to increase and develop all the Arts” (*Diceosina*, pp. ?). Still, it is difficult to conceive why an action pursued in the name of private interest can be defined virtuous and, consequently, rewarded. The explanation has to be found in Genovesi’s account of market, coincident with the peculiar way to capitalism of Civil Economy.

As shown by Bruni and Sugden (2008, 2013), Genovesi did not conceive market as a “morally free zone”. Conversely, for Genovesi the reciprocal trust, confidence and willingness to reciprocal help, are pre-conditions for a fruitful economic transaction for the participants and the whole society. Notwithstanding its peculiarity, market has to be considered one of the form in which reciprocity, i.e. mutual assistance, shows itself in civil society: “Genovesi’s approach seems to differ by requiring that the parties to a market transaction have a more internalized sense of its mutually beneficial nature. Somehow, each party’s understanding of his own part in

the transaction must include the idea of the transaction as mutually beneficial”¹⁴. Under this light, private *premi* can be conceived as the material benefit shared by the parties involved in a market transaction, whose virtuous part is constituted by the mutual concern of both parties of the interest of the other during, and not before, the transaction.

This is a crucial passage for our analysis. Genovesi’s account of public and private *premi* showed us that the dichotomy intrinsic/extrinsic motivation does not need to coincide with monetary and non-monetary rewards. The participants to a market transaction can find the intrinsic motivation in the joint consciousness of its beneficial nature, as well as people who directed their behavior to the common good of society can be legitimately and morally rewarded through material *premi*. To sum up with a formula, whereas public *premi* have to develop the love-for-others (*forza diffusiva*) without ignoring self-love (*forza concentriva*), private *premi* have to reward the interaction between self-love and love-for-others, during the market transaction, expressed in the ‘mutual assistance’.

It emerges, also, that two notions of incentive were born from the idea of *premi*, namely incentives naturally produced by market and incentive planned by an institution. They are both two forms of private *premi*, and thus both keep a positive moral connotation. Hence, we are not surprised when Genovesi stated that “in this way it will be understandable for what *incentives* and in what order the men from rude and barbarous principles of economy and police have gradually come to this cultured and tidy state of contracts and trade” (*Lezioni*, II, ch. 1, § 1). On his behalf, incentives coincide with well-allocated private *premi* that are fundamental for the development of society. In the conclusion, we will consider what this common origin suggests to the modern theories of incentives.

However, the ancient notion of incentive was not always associated with the significance of ‘good mean’. Conversely, it was often used in a negative acceptance, especially in theological and anthropological context. To inquire more in depth the roots of the concepts of prize and incentive, now we turn to Aquinas and its reflections upon the theme of (prize) *praemium* and *incentivus* (incentive). Before that, we need to justify our temporal shift to Aquinas, showing

¹⁴ Bruni and Sugden, (2008), Fraternity: Why the Market Need not to be a Morally Free Zone, in *Economics and Philosophy*, n. 24, Cambridge University Press, p. 49.

how his reflections were the base of some of the debates that dominated philosophical scene of XVII-XVIII centuries, arriving directly and indirectly to the Italian civil economists.

4. Mercenary Love and Pure Love: back to Aquinas

The long path that separated Aquinas from Italian civil economy tradition is scattered by some hints, which show us how theological ideas had become anthropological, and then economical, ones. Leaving aside the numerous explicit and implicit reference to Aquinas in Genovesi's work, let us return to the adjective 'mercenary', attributed to the virtuous people that seeks for reward, refused by Dragonetti and Genovesi. One of the stream of this debate is traceable in England, in particular in Shaftesbury's polemic against clergymen such as Robert Toland. However, another influential stream came from French philosophy of the second half of XVII century, well-known by Genovesi. The debate on pure love (*amour-pour*) between the catholic priest Francois Fenelon, who advocated an unconditional love for God, free from every consideration of one's own happiness, and the Catholic Jacques Bousset, who preached the impossibility of the separation between the love for God and the love for the self, echoed in the all European philosophical scene.

The debate is well-known; recently, however, Roinila (2013) had put the accent on a silent protagonist of this debate, the German philosopher Leibniz, who, in a letter dated July 1707 to Michael Gottlieb Hansch, wrote: "even before the controversy arisen, about the distinction between mercenary and true love, I had seen this difficulty and resolved in the preface of my *Codex juris gentium*"¹⁵. In an another letter, this time sent to the Electress Sophie of Hanover, Leibniz showed us that this debate has deeper theological roots, since "*the love arising from benevolence, or from virtue of charity, are entirely different from the motives of the virtue of hope or the love arising from greed*"¹⁶. As well-noted by Roinila, Leibniz affirmed that the distinction between virtue of charity and virtue of hope, "derives from scholasticism (*l'amour*

¹⁵ Leibniz, G. W. (1989), *Philosophical Papers and Letters*. Edited by Loemker, L.E., Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, p. 594.

¹⁶ Leibniz, G. W. (2011), *Leibniz and the Two Sophies: The Philosophical Correspondence*. Edited and translated by Lloyd Strickland, Toronto: Iter, p. 177.

bienveillance vs l'amour de cupidité)”¹⁷. Thus, using Aquinas’ lexicon, in the French debate the virtue of hope and the love of concupiscence (*amor concupiscentiae*) were considered together since they were two manifestations of a self-directed love, whereas charity and the love of friendship (*amor amicitiae*) were the manifestation of selfless love for others.

Even if contemporary authors (Aguar and Auer 2009; Gorday 2012)¹⁸ shows us that Aquinas’ thought was an important reference point of confront both for Fenelon and Bossuet, Leibniz’ direct testament is fundamental for our purpose, because it attested the European echo of this medieval and modern debate. Without asserting that a direct reference arrived to Genovesi through Leibniz works, which the young Genovesi knows very well (Zambelli 1972), we want to argue that Genovesi’s thesis of the two primitive forces was born also from this European dispute. In this respect, as we will show, Genovesi’s anthropological account is similar to the theory of love developed by Aquinas and how this similarity reflects on their respective account on prizes and incentives, with significant differences.

One of the most influential studies on the historical doctrine of love of the last century, Anders Nygren’s *Eros and Agape*, seems to deny in advance our parallelism between Aquinas and Genovesi, arguing on the impossibility of tracing pure-selfless love in Aquinas’ thought:

What interests us here, however, is [...] the fact that Thomas felt the tension between the Eros motif, on which his thought as a whole is based, and Christian Agape-love, and that he tried to find a solution with the help of the idea of “amor amicitiae”. It need hardly be said that this attempt was doomed to failure. Apart from the hopelessness of trying to express the meaning of Agape by the alien idea of “amicitia”, it is obvious that this external corrective is unable to neutralize the egocentricity that is bound up with the very first premises of the Thomistic doctrine of love.¹⁹

Since for Aquinas love is a basic passion, from which originated the other passions, and since love regards the body and the mind as well, the thesis sustained by Nygren has deep

¹⁷ Ronila, M. (2013), Leibniz and the *Amor Pur* Controversy. *Journal of Early Modern Studies*, 2(2), p. 47.

¹⁸ Consider as example this passage from Gorday: “While Thomas Aquinas was not yet the official authority for Catholic theology that he would become at the end of nineteenth century, it is clear that both Fenelon and Bossuet are struggling with him. On the question of wheter charity, precedes hope, Aquinas asserts that there is perfect, and there is imperfect, love”. Gorday, P. (2012). *Francois Fenelon A Biography: The Apostle of Pure Love*. Paraclete Press, Footnote 397.

¹⁹ Nygren, A. (1953 [1932 part. I; 1938 part. II vol. I; 1939 part. II vol. II]), *Agape and Eros*, translated by P. Watson, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, p. 645.

consequences: Aquinas' anthropological account does not hold the love-for-others as primitive passion, but only as a consequences of more basic self-love. However this interpretation might be plausible, we partially refuse it, because it lacks some crucial passages of Aquinas' argumentation.

Aquinas' distinction between love of concupiscence (*amor concupiscentiae*) and love of friendship (*amor amicitiae*), in fact, does not coincide perfectly with the couple love for the self/love for others: "the movement of love has a twofold tendency: towards the good which a man wishes to someone (to himself or to another) and towards that to which he wishes some good. Accordingly, man has love of concupiscence towards the good that he wishes to another, and love of friendship towards him to whom he wishes good"²⁰. Thus, both kinds of love are two aspects of one, unique act. Furthermore, one can direct both kinds of love towards himself as well as towards others, and both can be ruled by reason. Still, who adopt Nygren's interpretation could argue that Aquinas' doctrine of love retraced the Aristotelian one, whereas the Stagirite affirmed that the love for another person is posterior and depends on to the love that one has for himself. Even if the love of friendship is the pure appreciation of one's good, which means the lack of will of possessing the good (typical of love of concupiscence), is always an 'I' the subject who appreciate, and hence it is his own good which he is seeking for. But this is only one side of the coin.

On the other side, which lacks in Nygren's interpretation, Aquinas explains that in the grammar of love the gratuitous, disinterested part is equally fundamental:

In proof of this we must know that a gift is properly an unreturnable giving, as Aristotle says (Topic. iv, 4)—i.e. a thing which is not given with the intention of a return—and it thus contains the idea of a gratuitous donation. Now, the reason of donation being gratuitous is love; since therefore do we give something to anyone gratuitously forasmuch as we wish him well. So what we first give him is the love whereby we wish him well.²¹

According to Aquinas, man has a natural predisposition in wishing the good of the others, that is rooted in the social nature (*naturaliter homo homini amicus*), and that is linked, but not totally absorbed, with the natural predisposition to seek his own happiness. For this reason, Aquinas

²⁰ Aquinas, S.T., (1947 [1270]). *Summa Theologiae*. New York: Benzinger Brothers. (Henceforth *S. Th.*). *S. Th.*, I-II, q. 23, a. 4.

²¹ *S. Th.*, I, q. 38, a. 2.

states that an inevitable effect of love is to produce the unity of the will of the lover with the one of the beloved. In turn, when the unity is reciprocal, friendship arises and the friends both wish respectively the good of the other. Hence, we can agree when Nygren's affirm that the Aristotelian notion of friendship does not coincide with the one of *Agape*; but then we have to add that charity conceived as friendship is precisely the solution found by Aquinas to explain how self-love and love-for-others can coincide, without absorbing one in the other and vice versa.

For the same reason, on Aquinas' account, the virtue of hope is not necessarily linked with love that arises from greed, and it is similar to charity:

If we presuppose the union of love with another, a man can hope for and desire something for another man, as for himself; and, accordingly, he can hope for another eternal's life, inasmuch as he is united to him by love, and just as it is the same virtue of charity whereby a man loves God, himself, and his neighbor, so too it is the same virtue of hope, whereby a man hopes for himself and for another.²²

All things considered, we can state that for Aquinas self-love, in the form of love of concupiscence and love of friendship, is primitive as well as the love for the others. Under this light become intelligible the definition of moral virtue given by Aquinas, whereas he defined it as the capability to harmonize this different manifestation of love through reason, directing the will to the right goods. Moreover, here lies the point of convergence between Aquinas' and Genovesi's anthropological account, because both recognized these primitive forces and both advocated the necessity to moderate them through reason. Demonstrating this convergence, we are ready to understand completely Aquinas' account on prizes and incentives, highlighting the similarities and the differences with the civil economists' one.

²² *S. Th.*, II-II, q. 17, a. 3, ad.3.

5. Prizes and Incentives in Aquinas

The concept of prize (*praemium*²³) recurs often in Aquinas' works and it is always connected with the reward of virtue, though with three different acceptations. Aquinas defines (1) happiness and (2) honor as the proper reward to virtue and, he lists (3) other kinds of prizes to encourage virtuous behavior, sometimes using the term *remunerationem*. We analyze almost the (2) and (3) definitions, since they correspond to the 'honor and *premi*' seen in Genovesi, with some differences.

As far as happiness as virtue's reward is concerned, Aquinas adopts some Aristotelian argumentations: happiness is the ultimate, self-sufficient end of life, and it is deeply connected with the practice of virtue. For our purposes²⁴, it is sufficient to highlight Aquinas' usage of this formula, through which he meant that the virtuous person finds its true reward in the delight (*delectationem*) that goes with virtuous behavior. In what follows, in fact, we will see that the third kind of prizes will be defined by Aquinas as 'external' to virtue, implying apparently that they coincide with extrinsic motivations. However, this is what Aquinas meant. Rather, we will

²³ In ancient Latin the word *praemium* had at least three different - although related - meanings, derived from the different usage by Greek and Roman poets, jurists and philosophers [In what follows, we intertwine the definitions reported on Latin-Italian dictionary (), on Latin German dictionary (*Georges*, 1918), on French-Latin dictionary (*Gaffiot*, 1934) and on Latin-English dictionary (*Oxford Latin dictionary*, 2012)]. Chronologically speaking, the word was first used to describe the spoils of a battle, such as in Homer, who use the Greek word *Γῆρας* to describe the part of the prey given to the heroes as a 'gift of honor', or in Virgil, that wrote in *Aeneid* about *praemia pugnae* (En.11, 78). The underlying idea is that the excellence proved during the battle, the heroes' virtue, has to be rewarded with a part of the spoils gained through the victory. When the notion of virtue was extended to signify various aspect of life, *praemium* followed the same pattern, gaining the general meaning of reward or public prize. On this behalf, it is sufficient to recall Aristotle's formula, employed also by Cicero and Seneca, of happiness or honor as a rewards to virtue. Moreover, in the Latin-German dictionary *Georges* (1918) it is specified that this meaning of *praemium* was counterposed to punishment, torment. Since punishments are consequences of precedent behaviours or actions, a particular contractual dimension seems to be implied also in the notion of *praemium* as a reward to virtue. We will see that Aquinas consider this point, especially the usefulness of prize and punishment to promote virtue. Finally, in a third acceptation *praemiae* stood for advantages, goods attainable in this life. In this regard Cicero wrote about a man that has gained all the goods ("*referius omnibus praemium*", *Tusc.* 5, 20) and Lucretius listed *omnia vitae premiai*, namely all the advantages of the life.

The two latter meanings were employed also by Christian authors whose, on the authority of the Bible, reflected upon the heavenly rewards given by God. The medieval-patristic dictionary *Blaise* (1954) confirms this passage, distinguishing two meanings of *praemium*: 1) Recompense, reward: *praemium celeste* (*Sacr. Leon.* p. 15,20); 2) Gift, benefit of Redemption: *salutis aeternae praemia* (*Sacr. Gel.* II, 47). In what we can consider as a reversed process of secularization, the Christian world inherited and employed the Greek and Latin meanings of *praemium*, unsurprisingly leaving aside the reference to the battles and the war.

²⁴ Due to the lack of space, we refer here only to imperfect happiness (*beatitudo imperfecta*), leaving aside Aquinas' thesis on perfect happiness as a reward of theological virtues.

show that the externality is advocated in respect of happiness as true reward for virtue, but it is not something that necessarily crowded out intrinsic motivations linked with sphere of virtue.

Now, we turn to Aquinas thesis on ‘honor as a reward to virtue’, starting from two fundamental passages of the *Summa Theologiae*:

As the Philosopher says (Ethic. i, 5), honor is not that reward of virtue, for which the virtuous work: but they receive honor from men by way of reward, "as from those who have nothing greater to offer." But virtue's true reward is happiness itself, for which the virtuous work: whereas if they worked for honor, it would no longer be a virtue, but ambition.²⁵

According to the Philosopher (Ethic. iv, 3), honor is not a sufficient reward of virtue: yet nothing in human and corporal things can be greater than honor, since these corporal things themselves are employed as signs in acknowledgment of excelling virtue. It is, however, due to the good and the beautiful, that they may be made known, according to Mt. 5:15, "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house." In this sense honor is said to be the reward of virtue.²⁶

These considerations have a common source: honor, in fact, is considered here as a public prize, reward of political virtues. We saw that virtue is the ability to balance and harmonize the two parts of the act of love. When the love of friendship is dominant, a “man's will is confronted with a good that exceeds its capacity [...] as regards the individual, such as the good of one's neighbour, then does the will need virtue”²⁷. Thus, human being virtuous behaviour has to be evaluated not only in itself, but also referring to the good of community in which he lives. The more someone contributes to the common good of society, the more he deserves to be rewarded. Since honor, conceived as a signs and words that attested human excellence, is the recognition of this service to community, the rulers are the first receivers of this prize: “Further, if it is characteristic of virtue to render the work of a person good, it seems as if working a greater good would be characteristic of a greater virtue. But the good of the multitude is greater and more divine than the good of one [...] It pertains to the office of a king zealously to procure the good of a multitude, so a greater reward is due to a king for a good government [...]”²⁸.

²⁵ *S. Th.*, I-II, q. 2, a. 2.

²⁶ *S. Th.*, II-II, q. 103, a. 1, ad. 3.

²⁷ *S. Th.*, I-II, q. 56, a. 6.

²⁸ Aquinas, T. Saint (1997), *On the Government of Rulers. De Regimine Principum*. Translated by Blythe J. M., Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 86.

The adjective public does not refer only to the impact on the common good of society. As Aquinas makes clear in his account of how punishments and rewards has to be conferred, “public merits should be rewarded in public, in order that others may be stirred to emulation”²⁹. Returns here the theme of the public-pedagogical function of prizes, which brings light to the virtues that usually are not seen and that can induce people to perform virtuous behaviour following the example of great men.

However, despite the social role of honor as a public prize, Aquinas points out its limits and risks, addressing somehow the ‘mercenary’ objection that we encountered early. Even if he considers this issue referring specifically to king, we can extend his analysis to every citizen, inasmuch he contributes to the common good of society.

The first two problems are specifically related to the political life. On the one side, seeking for honor, human being based his action on other’s judgment. In this way, argue Aquinas, a person progressively loses his freedom of choice, and becomes slave of people opinions. Here Aquinas gives us an important and modern insight on prizes: they are strictly related with freedom. Prizes can encourage and promote virtuous behaviour, but the development of the capacity of making free choice of the agent at its basis is their real aims.

On the other side, when honor is the only reward for virtue, the good man can be no longer attracted by political life. This kind of crowding out effect is easily explainable, and it is strictly linked to the risk of ‘mercenary’ behaviour. If virtuosos people consider the delight of virtue, and the true reward for their actions, the oversize awarding with honor can be seen as something that will prove that their real interest was for prize, and not for virtue in itself.

The third problem consists in the fragility and instability of honor. In particular, if a man seeks honor as the end of all his actions, he risks to spend efforts to something that is based on man’s opinions, that are various and shimmering. The underlying message is important because Aquinas seems to state that this kind of prize, even the one that is higher among human realities, has not to be pursued as the end of one’s action; rather, it has to be conferred as a recompense, symbolic and of low extrinsic value, of virtuous action that, as we saw, has its reward in virtues itself. Nonetheless, Aquinas does not reject the possibility that honor could rightly enter in the

²⁹ *S. Th.*, III, q. 55, a. 1, ad. 1.

aims pursued by the virtuous: “Just as some are heartened to do good and disheartened from doing evil, by the desire of honor, *if this be desired in due measure*; so, if it be desired inordinately, it may become to man an occasion of doing many evil things, as when a man cares not by what means he obtains honor”³⁰. In this passage Aquinas is recognising that even the most virtuous among men, the good King, can seek honor as one of his ends, for example needing the help of an additional rewards, different from the delight offered by virtue, to accomplish certain virtuous actions. This is line with what we argued about Aquinas’ account on love: even the good king, the one who cares about his people with love of friendship, does not forget the love felt for himself, and he needs this other part to be nourished, in this case through honor that is the best prizes that the citizens can offer to him. It goes without saying that when honor became the only reason for action, love-for-others is completely dismissed and, as stated in the passage abovementioned, it increased the “occasion of doing many evil things”. Still, Aquinas admits that seeking for a prize does not necessarily transform King’s virtuous behaviour in a mercenary one, but it depends on circumstances.

A similar thesis is sustained by Aquinas in response to the fourth risk, namely the simulation of virtuous behaviour for the sake of honor. When the virtuosos are rewarded with honor, in fact, some men simulate virtuous behaviour in order to obtain praise and public esteem; this attitude, explain Aquinas, can be extremely dangerous for the well-being of a state, such in the case in which a king, to prove his courage in battle, begins a war without plausible reason. But even in this case, Aquinas finds a positive element. To testify and reward the virtuous character of someone, in fact, are required other virtuous men. Thus, one who simulate a virtuous behaviour want to be approved and recognised by these men. For these reason, “the glory that a persons desired is, as Augustine says, nothing other than ‘the judgment of persons when they think well of other persons’”. The desire for glory has some vestige of virtue, at least when he seeks the approbation of the good”³¹. In respect of the desire for riches and power, the desire for honor, at least, seems to exclude major evils, and put man in contact with the sphere of virtue.

We can now consider the third kind of prizes listed above, which differs from honor for the fact that they need to stimulate concupiscence love for the self: “For those who as yet are not

³⁰ *S. Th.*, II-II, q. 131, a. 1, ad. 3.

³¹ Aquinas, T. Saint (1997), *On the Government of Rulers. De Regimine Principum*, p. 80.

endowed with virtuous habits, are directed to the performance of virtuous acts by reason of some outward cause: for instance, by the threat of punishment, or the promise of some extrinsic rewards, such as honor, riches, or the like”³². As we anticipated, here Aquinas employs the term *remunerationem*, and use the adjective *external* to distinguish these kind of rewards from imperfect happiness that, as we argued, is the true reward for virtue. In addition, he adds a fundamental explanation: “Generally speaking, men direct their actions to some point of utility. Consequently in those precepts in which it seemed that there would be no useful result, or that some utility might be hindered, it was necessary to add a promise of reward”³³. Even if he was confident on the possibility of human will to spontaneously overcome un-controlled self-interest (Fanfani 1933), Aquinas shows to be perfectly aware of the co-existence and, under given circumstances, the convergence of the research for private utility (love of concupiscence directed to the self) as well as the one of common good (love for the others). Moreover, these kind of rewards follow a similar pattern with honor, since they have to be conferred in public as examples and sources of inspirations. Thus, we can affirm that these external prices coincide approximatively with the civil economists’ concept of *premi* for the reward of public virtue, and they maintain the same purpose.

So far, we are not surprised in finding in Aquinas’ philosophy the notion of prize for rewarding private virtues. On this behalf, the use of *praemium* that we want to consider regards voluntary exchanges between privates, specifically when Aquinas analyzes the field of buying and selling. That rewarding does not pertain only to the public authority is affirmed explicitly in the *Summa Theologiae*: “to reward may also pertain to anyone: but to punish pertains to none but the framer of the law, by whose authority the pain is inflicted”³⁴. Notwithstanding this important remark, at a first sight could be unclear in what sense rewarding private virtues pertains to the economic transactions. To clarify this point, let us consider firstly what Aquinas writes about it:

The saying of Chrysostom refers to the trading which seeks gain as a last end. This is especially the case where a man sells something at a higher price without its undergoing any change. For if he sells at a higher price something that has changed for the better, he would seem to receive the reward of his labor (*praemium laboris*). Nevertheless

³² *S. Th.*, I-II, q. 107, a. 1, ad. 2.

³³ *S. Th.*, I-II, q. 100, a. 7.

³⁴ *S. Th.*, I-II, q. 92, a. 2.

the gain itself may be lawfully intended, not as a last end, but for the sake of some other end which is necessary or virtuous, as stated above.³⁵

In many works Aquinas considers the field of buying and selling, the ones between the members of the same village (*vicus*) or city as well as the ones between foreign merchants. The virtue that governs this kind of transactions is commutative justice, defined as “the constant will to provide each to his own”. More precisely, the ‘owned’ corresponds to the just price of something exchanged in a market transaction, or to a fair wage for the work accomplished. Thus, in these cases the prize (*praemium*) is a monetary reward for the work done or that has to be done. Since “buying and selling seem to be established for the common advantage of both parties, one of whom requires that which belongs to the other, and vice versa”³⁶, monetary prizes can encourage the good trend of economic transactions, and they are the proper rewards of private virtues involved, such as honesty or affability showed by the parts during the exchange. Under this light become clear why Aquinas seems to accept in the boundaries of justice also the research for higher price, such in the case of the passage abovementioned, in which a man has bettered something that, in virtue of the major quantity of labor involved in its production, has gained value. For Aquinas monetary rewards can be pursued directly, entering in people’s motivations for acting without crowding out the sphere of virtue. Thus, the research for a monetary reward is involved in the intrinsic motivations of the participants in a market exchange, and the reward itself is the sign that mutual advantage in the boundaries of justice has been reached.

This notion of private prizes emerges also when Aquinas considers if it is unlawful that an advocate takes fee for pleading the cases of the poor. Even if an advocate can do this for mercy, seeking an eternal reward, Aquinas believes that it is important to specify another option: “A man may justly receive payment for granting what he is not bound to grant. Now it is evident that an advocate is not always bound to consent to plead, or to give advice in other people's causes. Wherefore, if he sells his pleading or advice, he does not act against justice”³⁷. What he adds then is even more interesting: “the same applies to the physician who attends on a sick person to heal him, and to all like persons; provided, however, they take a moderate fee, with due

³⁵ *S. Th.*, II-II, q. 77, a. 4, ad. 1.

³⁶ *S. Th.*, II-II, q. 77, a. 1.

³⁷ *S. Th.*, II-II, q. 71, a. 4.

consideration for persons, for the matter in hand, for the labour entailed, and for the custom of the country. If, however, they wickedly extort an immoderate fee, they sin against justice”³⁸. Thinking about gains and wages as a monetary reward for the economic sphere, seeking for them as moderate gain (*lucrum moderatum*) for the efforts put in business affairs; all of this, for Aquinas, pertains to the sphere of private virtues and it contributes not only for the well-being of the persons, but also to the common good of society. On the other hand, when the research for *lucrum* become the only motivation that dominates market transactions; when self-love, in this case coincident with love of concupiscence, is the only passion that is encouraged through high monetary incentives; when all of this occurred, then for Aquinas we are not talking about private *praemium* anymore, but only about incentive.

From what have been just argued, in fact, emerges that private *praemium* rewards in the right manner the two parts of love abovementioned, corresponding then to a positive incentive. Conversely, in Aquinas’ thought the incentive (*incentivum*³⁹) is a wrong stimulus to passions and it is always associated with sin and vice, like showed by the formulas ‘incentive to lust’ (*incentivum libidini*) or ‘incentive to concupiscence’ (*incentivum concupiscentiae*). The sin of greed (*avaritia*) it is strictly related to the theme of gain from trade but, as we saw, Aquinas maintains the possibility of virtuous market transaction whereas the right passions were harmonized through reason and the right means. What in Aquinas was seen as an inevitable dichotomy. i.e. private *praemium/incentivus*, in Genovesi and Civil Economy became a unique concept, probably due to the different social and cultural circumstances in which their reflections took place.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ We know that *incentivus* came from the verb *incinere*, meaning to sing, to enchant. It meant both the instrument, generally a flute or a trump, that the choir followed to tune their voice or that was played to animate the soldiers before a battle, and the sound itself. From this usage the word was employed to describe, in a parallel fashion, the effects of passions on human being. To go in depth into the history of the word incentive see Manno (1855). Here a significant passage of his reconstruction, in which he underlines the transition of the meaning of incentive from the instruments to the passions: “Since in Latin *incentivus*, whether applied to aerophones, such as flutes or trumpets, signified the sound (*incentivum*) of those instruments, it was later employed to express those afore-mentioned incitements and provocations. At that time, one intrepid orator came to realize that, being man as aroused by the voice of passion as soldiers were by the sound of trumpets, the transposition of *tuba incentiviva* from the battlefield to human’s hearts was a mere transliteration of a comparison into a metaphor”. Manno, G. (1855), *Della fortuna della parole*, Firenze, Felice le Monnier, p. 188. For its implications on the modern notion of incentives see Bruni (2015).

6. Conclusions

We aimed at outlining two less perceivable nuances of the inquiry on prize and incentives. Aquinas' concerns regarding the risks of honor and Genovesi's remark on the importance of non-subservience to beneficence, share the same intuition: *prize cannot be an alternative to the incentive*. This thesis divides into two other arguments. First, the dimensions of virtues - love for the others and intrinsic motivation - which prize address, are intrinsically characterized by a degree of uncertainty and freedom. Second, in public institutions, enterprises and firms one can influence but not fully control virtuous behavior, which continually changes under different circumstances. From that comes the idea that prizes cannot work whereas the level of incentives (wages, incomes) are low or uncertain still prevails. Hence, in parallel with the researches and the experiments on the kinds of prizes/incentives, it would be useful to inquire the pre-conditions under which these important tools are able to produce desirable outcomes.

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