



TECHNOLOGY GOVERNANCE

Working Papers in Technology Governance and Economic Dynamics no. 9

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Antonio Serra

# BREVE TRATTATO DELLE CAUSE

CHE POSSONO FAR ABBONDARE  
LI REGNI D'ORO E ARGENTO  
DOVE NON SONO MINIERE  
CON APPLICATIONE AL REGNO DI NAPOLI

## \* A SHORT TREATISE

ON THE CAUSES THAT MAKE KINGDOMS ABOUND IN GOLD AND SILVER EVEN IN THE ABSENCE OF MINES,  
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE KINGDOM OF NAPLES

NAPOLI 1613

Text based on the edition in *Economisti del Cinque e Seicento*, Augustino Graziani, ed. Bari: Laterza, 1913  
English working translation by Jonathan Hunt for The Other Canon Foundation © 2006

Produced by Benjamin Merkler  
Edited by Wolfgang Drechsler

May 2006

## Preface to the Working Paper

This working paper of Antonio Serra's *Breve Trattato* is designed to be used in a workshop to take place in Venice in 2007, sponsored by The Other Canon Foundation, which will produce a final English translation of the text for publication. It therefore juxtaposes the original on the left and the first version of the English translation by Jonathan Hunt, commissioned by and © The Other Canon Foundation, on the right. The working paper is set up in such a way as to easily allow manual editing. For the Italian, we did not use the 1613 original, which is readily available in several facsimile editions and even online ([http://www.monitore.comune.cosenza.it/monitorebrutio/biblioteca/serra/brevetr/page\\_01.htm](http://www.monitore.comune.cosenza.it/monitorebrutio/biblioteca/serra/brevetr/page_01.htm)), but rather the 1913 version from *Economisti del Cinque e Seicento*, Augustino Graziani, ed., Bari: Laterza, pp. 141-235. The reason for this is that the 1613 original is structured and typeset in such a way as to make comparisons with the translation, which is the entire point of the working paper, much more difficult. The small but immensely helpful changes of the 1913 version, such as introducing a manageable punctuation (the 1613 version resorts, per chapter, only to *comata*), the change from "v" to "u", and the spelling out of the "&", do not violate the original at all, yet are much appreciated – and those who want to consult the original can, of course, still do so. However, because the original is readily available by now and a standard point of reference, the page-division of the working paper is according to the original, not the 1913 edition. The division of paragraphs from the translation has been marked, by hand, also in the Italian text. In the end, such editorial decisions can always be questioned; our guideline was to produce, indeed, a working copy.

Although the much-needed translation of Serra into English is a project of The Other Canon Foundation and its Chairman, Prof. Dr. Erik S. Reinert, Tallinn University of Technology, the current working paper is the product of, and financed by, an Estonian Science Foundation research project, Grant no. 5780, "Good Governing. Lessons from Greek Polis and Italian Commune for the Europe of Today" (2004-2007), which I hold together with Prof. Dr. Rainer Kattel, Tallinn University of Technology. My research assistant, Benjamin Merkler, likewise financed by Tallinn University of Technology, has physically produced the files from which this paper was printed, which took more efforts and discussions than had been anticipated. It is included in the "Working Papers in Technology Governance and Economic Dynamics" series, a joint effort by The Other Canon Foundation and Tallinn University of Technology, which is generally available and subscribable online ([http://tg.deca.ee/eng/working\\_papers/](http://tg.deca.ee/eng/working_papers/)), but this number, primarily designed as it is for the 2007 workshop, is only available in hard-copy and by special request.

In his monumental *History of Economic Analysis*, Joseph A. Schumpeter calls Serra “the first to compose a scientific treatise ... on economic principles and policy.” (Harvard University Press 1954, p. 195) For more than a quarter of a century, it has been the ambition of my colleague Professor. Erik S. Reinert to make Antonio Serra’s path-breaking theory, not least of uneven economic development, available to a wider public, and it is he who has conceived of and is directing the current edition venue, of which this working paper is just a small step. The 1913 version used here is from the Reinert Library as well. My cordial thanks therefore go to him, to Professor Rainer Kattel and to Benjamin Merkler.

Tallinn University of Technology  
May 2006  
Wolfgang Drechsler

## Working Papers in Technology Governance and Economic Dynamics

The Other Canon Foundation, Norway, and the Technology Governance program at Tallinn University of Technology (TUT), Estonia, have launched a new working papers series, entitled "Working Papers in Technology Governance and Economic Dynamics". In the context denoted by the title series, it will publish original research papers, both practical and theoretical, both narrative and analytical, in the area denoted by such concepts as uneven economic growth, techno-economic paradigms, the history and theory of economic policy, innovation strategies, and the public management of innovation, but also generally in the wider fields of industrial policy, development, technology, institutions, finance, public policy, and economic and financial history and theory.

The idea is to offer a venue for quickly presenting interesting papers – scholarly articles, especially as preprints, lectures, essays in a form that may be developed further later on – in a high-quality, nicely formatted version, free of charge: all working papers are downloadable for free from <http://hum.ttu.ee/tg> as soon as they appear, and you may also order a free subscription by e-mail attachment directly from the same website.

The first nine working papers are already available from the website. They are

1. Erik S. Reinert, *Evolutionary Economics, Classical Development Economics, and the History of Economic Policy: A Plea for Theorizing by Inclusion*.
2. Richard R. Nelson, *Economic Development from the Perspective of Evolutionary Economic Theory*.
3. Erik S. Reinert, *Development and Social Goals: Balancing Aid and Development to Prevent 'Welfare Colonialism'*.
4. Jan Kregel and Leonardo Burlamaqui, *Finance, Competition, Instability, and Development Microfoundations and Financial Scaffolding of the Economy*.
5. Erik S. Reinert, *European Integration, Innovations and Uneven Economic Growth: Challenges and Problems of EU 2005*.
6. Leonardo Burlamaqui, *How Should Competition Policies and Intellectual Property Issues Interact in a Globalised World? A Schumpeterian Perspective*
7. Paolo Crestanello and Giuseppe Tattara, *Connections and Competences in the Governance of the Value Chain. How Industrial Countries Keep their Competitive Power*

8. Sophus A. Reinert, *Darwin and the Body Politic: Schäßle, Veblen, and the Shift of Biological Metaphor in Economics*
9. Antonio Serra, *Breve Trattato / A Short Treatise (1613)* (available only in hardcopy and by request).

The working paper series is edited by Rainer Kattel (kattel@staff.ttu.ee), Wolfgang Drechsler (drechsler@staff.ttu.ee), and Erik S. Reinert (reinert@staff.ttu.ee), who all of them will be happy to receive submissions, suggestions or referrals.