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THE MONEY-BOX IN HISTORY AND IN ETHNOGRAPHY

Speaking of ancient usages and customs, it is usually said that their origin, as well as that of the objects or instruments associated with them, is lost in antiquity.

As regards the money-box, it would not be exact to use this term, if "lost in antiquity" is to be taken as referring to prehistorical times, because it is obvious that the money-box presupposes the use of money besides a certain development of currency economy, without reckoning that the mentality of primitive man, similar probably, under this respect also, to that of the savage, was not open to the idea of foresight and thrift.

In fact, among the thousands of most varied objects of domestic use in stone and in bone, in ivory and in terracotta, which the neolithic beds discovered have brought to our knowledge (there are even roughly worked dolls and puppets) and which every day are being accumulated in the museums, the money-box is not to be found.

One of the oldest examples of a money-box is that which was found, not long ago, among the ruins of Utica, one of the cities founded by the Phoenicians in the Mediterranean basin (1).

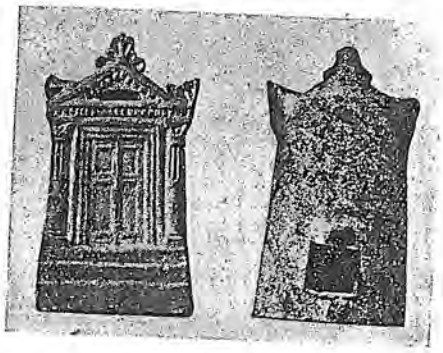
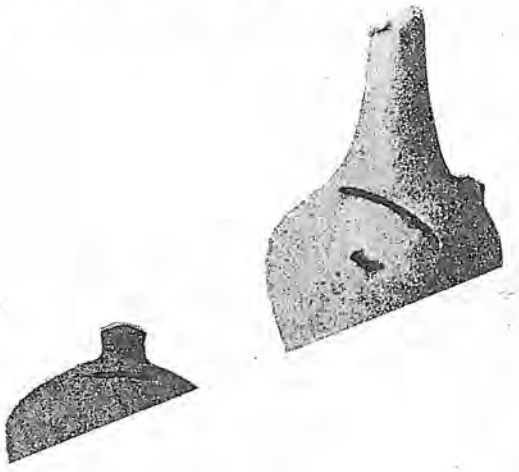


Fig. 1

It is an urn of terracotta with a small slit in the upper part. It contained six pieces of money, of the value of about one halfpenny each (fig. 1).

Mention of another very recent discovery of an ancient money-box on Salisbury Plain was made in the English review *Saving* of January last (Nº 11). A young beater by chance picked up a large pebble of a somewhat unusual shape and amused himself by throwing it against a rock. To his immense surprise

the ground all around became covered with gold coins; some of them remained stuck in the curve of the pebble. It was found that these coins were staters, one of the oldest and most highly prized types of money, which from the East where they originated, were gradually diffused throughout all the Western countries (2). It appears that these coins date back some two thousand years.



A fair number of money-boxes of terra cotta were found, in fragments and whole, in the excavations at Pompeii and other places in Italy and this attests the popularity which this modest utensil enjoyed. Many of them have been placed in the Museum of that city and in that of Naples. The greater number are of a shape which one may call normal or standard, that is to say, of a roundish or ball shape (fig. 23-24). In one money-box made of terracotta which was found in the so-called house of Lucretius, were found three bronze coins bearing respectively the effigies of the Emperors Vespasian, Gal- e and made of terracotta, (fig. 2) contained thirteen coins of the they have the form of a small

house some of them, ...itated in relief, the n and the locks with which the boxes are furnished and surrounded the slit with decorative ornaments (fig. 3-4-5). Others again were decorated with the image of some divinity. There are three on the money-box made of terracotta which was found on August 15th 1812 in the Baths of Titus: the shape is similar to that of a bee-hive of the usual type. It contained 251 coins,

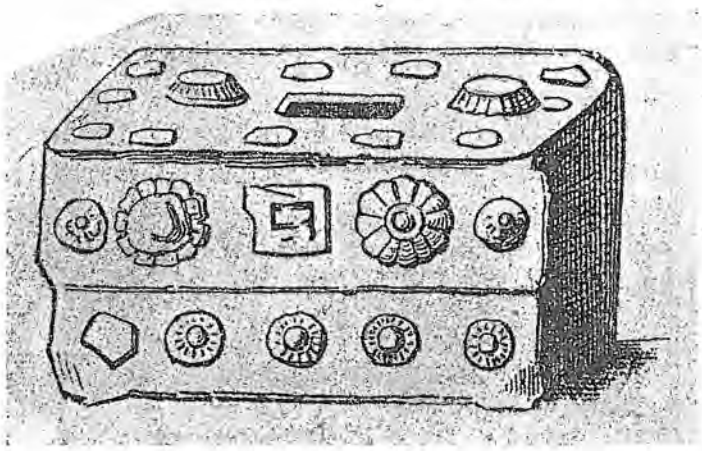


Fig. 3

all of silver, the oldest of which were of the Republican epoch and the most recent of the Emperor Trajan. On the front there were the three Capitoline divinities in whose honor the owner probably asked for offerings. The back was decorated with a palm in relief. Graeven (4) conjectures that it belonged to a watchman of the Baths or to an em-

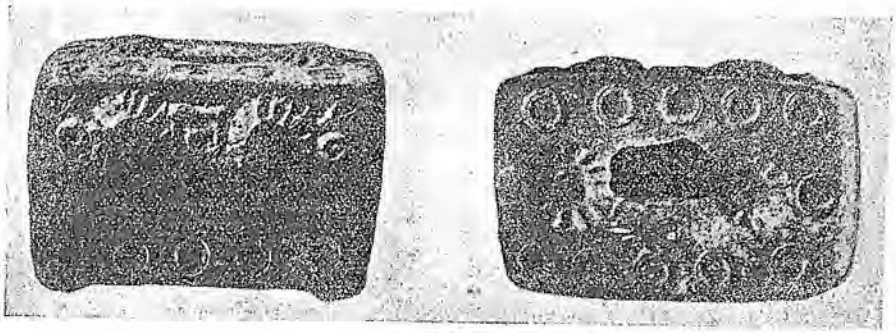


Fig. 4

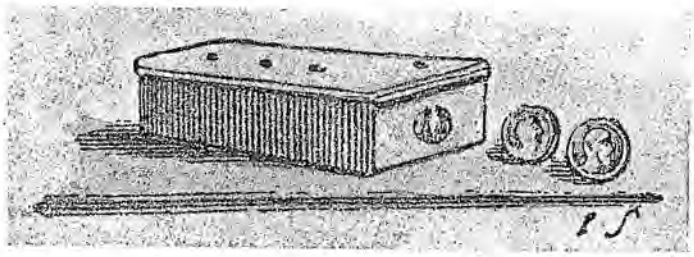


Fig. 5

ployee of the same. It was found = says Fea = "under some steps"; sudden death must have impeded the owner to make use of the content. The Capitoline Deities had the same function as that of Mercury and of the Goddess Fortune mentioned below: that of protecting and increasing the wealth entrusted to them.

Another found during the excavations on the Aventine (1809-1810) of cylindrical shape terminating in a cone, bears on one side the figure of a victorious auriga, and on the other a name, perhaps that of the owner: *Ael. Max.* (Aelius Maximus). The slit is cut horizontally at the point where the cone commences (fig. 6-7). The field is surrounded by a design which appears to be a rough sort of notching. The nine altars which surround the auriga (five on the right and four on the left) with a symbolic frieze – on some the flame is burning – probably correspond to the nine victories won by him. He is crowned and holds another crown in the right hand and a palm in the left. That the money-box served him to collect alms – as some appear to think – does not seem probable, because, given the sport-loving nature of the Romans, the aurigas of the circus must have had very different sources of income. Perhaps the victor is here a symbol, an

Fig. 6

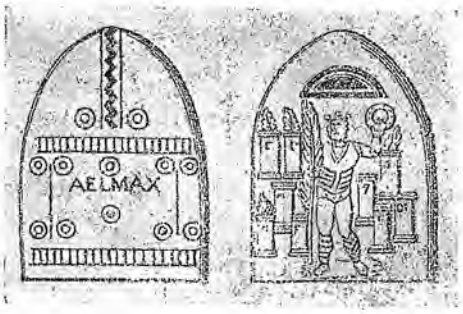


Fig. 7

augury of wealth, which the potter wished to use to decorate the money-box. Scenes taken from the life of the Circus are also frequent on antique lamps. This specimen is now in the ducal museum at Gotha.

As ornamental motives, we find very often the figures of those divinities which the owner, as a thrifty person, was most anxious to propitiate: the Goddess Fortune and Mercury. In the fine example described by Count Caylus (the famous 18th century French collector) (5) and which belongs to the *Cabinet des Médailles*, the voluble Goddess is shown full face and, standing in a small temple decorated with friezes around the top, holding in one hand the Horn of Plenty and in the other a helm. On the back there are two palms in intaglio (fig. 8). The slit, 35 centimetres long, is cut horizontally in the conical part. In another example a name is added to the figure of the Goddess (6). Sometimes, as in the example now in the Saint Germain Museum, the slit is cut between the knees of the Goddess Fortune.

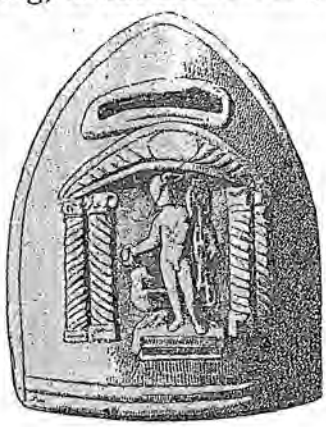


Fig. 8

The figure of the god who presided over commerce and traffic adorns the two examples found on the Esquiline in 1875 (7).

The Goddess of the harvest and plenty occurs sometimes in the decorations on money-boxes. Of the two found on Mount Celio (they were formerly owned by Count Caylus mentioned above (8) — both 58 millimetres high and shaped like an oval terminating in a truncated cone — one bears the figure, on the upper part, of Ceres seated between two standing figures; the other a bust of Hercules in basrelief.

A human visage, probably feminine, is roughly carved on a money-box which has a somewhat lengthened body and which was found in an ancient Christian tomb of a child (fig. 9). The Christians of the Catacombs often buried their children's favorite toys together with the body of the child: dolls, puppets, bells, whistles, or personal objects of wood, ivory or metal, such as combs, earrings, pins and so on. Sometimes money-boxes are also found (9).

Fig. 9

Fig. 10

That finally the use of money-boxes was both popular and widely spread, is shown by the fact that they are stamped on certain coins. In fact, among many money containers (*arcae* = safes, *loculi* = coffers, *sacculi* or *sacelli* = bags, *cistae* = baskets, (fig. 10 et 20) *fisci* = small buckets) are to be found certain vases which experts in numismatics believe to be money-boxes (10).

These, especially in the early days of the Empire, were used

by slaves and the lower classes who kept in them the *strenae* or tips which were distributed during the period of the Saturnalia (i. e. towards the end of the year, whence the present day custom of offering gifts at Christmas time). Historians tell us that these gifts modest at first, of bronze and silver coins, degenerated later into abuses against which it became necessary to legislate. Various sources show that most probably the money-box itself often formed part of the gift (11). Thus a money-box now in the Gregorian Museum at the Vatican shows the figure of Victory holding a branch in the left hand and, in the right, a shield on which is inscribed ANNUM NOVUM FAUSTUM FELICE(M) MIHI HIC = "this brings me a happy and fortunate new year" (fig. 11). Around the figure of Victory are shown, in relief, the gifts which friends exchanged at that epoch: a pinecone, cakes and an *assis* of the early days of the Republic. (These coins however were no longer in course, but were used as gifts for the new year, because they bore the image of Janus, protector of the beginning of the year and who gave the name to the first month).

Fig. 11

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We do not know exactly how the Romans called this homely object; if they had a specific name for it, that name has not come down to us, just as the names of many objects relative to the daily life of that age have not been handed down (12).

Writers have called it by a generic name *loculi* (literally: a small place) but which however occurs frequently, as applied to many kinds of repositories and recipients: jewel boxes, doctors' and painters' boxes etc. They were often divided into several compartments, hence the frequent use of the word in the plural, even when there was only one sole object. *Loculus*, as we know, also means a niche, a

coffin. This probably gave rise to the popular denomination in some languages, as, for example, in Italian, of " dead " (morto) for " money ".

However, *loculus* must certainly have been one of the Latin names for a money-box. Juvenal mentions it as opposed to *arcae* (safe or coffer). The latter were very heavy and often were fixed with bars or in some other way: the *loculi* instead were moveable and transportable (13). In an epigramme (XIV, 12) Martial speaks of precious *loculi* of ivory, worthy of being filled with gold only and adds:

argentum vilia ligna ferant

" silver is placed in vile *loculi* of wood ". And it is to these, that is, as he calls them, *loculi lignei*, that the epigramme which follows is dedicated. Less common is the word *capsa* (from which we have *cassa* in Italian, *caisse* in French, etc.) with the diminutives *capsula* and *capsella*. The latter word is often found in low Latin and medioeval texts (followed by *fictilis* when speaking of money-boxes made of terracotta), as well as *hutica* (and also *huchia*, *huchiellius*, etc.). These latter words are connected with the Gothic *hugd* (treasure); which gave to Spanish one of its names for the money-box, *hucha*. Mention will be made later of the modern nomenclature in various languages.

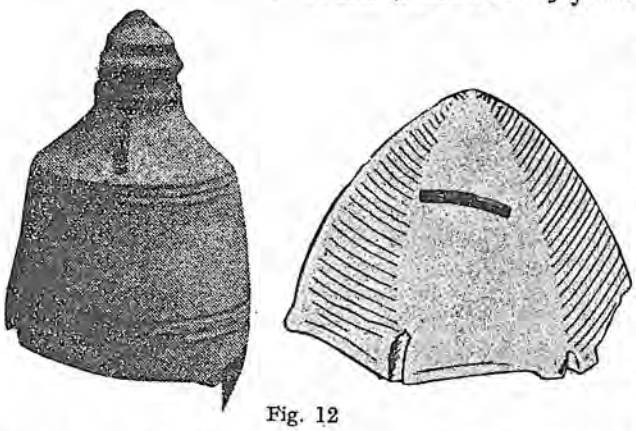

Fig. 12

Another denomination was probably *aula* or *aulula* (hence the Italian and the Spanish word *olla* — pot). It is certain that such pots were used very often for keeping money in. Some of them have come down to our times, and among them is one which bears the inscription ἐς αἐὶ ἐλδει (one is always desired) inviting to thrift; (fig. 12) it had a bronze lid (14). One plautine comedy is entitled *Aulularia*, the protagonist of which is the possessor of a pot full of money.

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Alongside the ordinary money-box properly so-called, there were those which, more elegantly constructed and of grater size, were called *trunci* by reason of the shape often given to them. These *trunci* were, for the greater part, destined for the collection of oblations in the temples, such as are still in vogue in our churches. Generally they were made of wood, stone or bronze, that is of materials less ordinary and less fragile than the usual terracotta; however a few examples made of this latter material have come down to our times.

Such a one was that found at Vichy in 1858 and which is now in the museum at Moulins (fig. 13). It has the form of an elongated quadrilateral socle or plinth which carries the laurelled and clothed bust of an imperial child, probably an Apollo (15). The front is decorated with a series of pilasters forming small hemicylindrical rings, with capitols decorated with acanthus and connected the ones with the others by small arches. Near the base which supports the bust, in the upper tablet, there is an opening the dimensions of which are suitable for the passage of money. A small door applied on the rear part allowed the withdrawal of the money (16).

Fig. 13

Two years later in the Jura department at Saint Amour, there was found a trunk of bronze, composed of a quadrilateral plinth 24 cms. long by 12 cms. wide and 63 mms. high. It is surmounted by a statue of Epona, the Goddess who protected horses and beasts of burden, and who was held in honour especially during the low empire. The Goddess is crowned, with her legs covered by a drapery and rides a mare full of vigour and animation. The pose of the arms show that the Goddess originally held the reins of her mount in one hand and a patera in the other (fig. 14).

Fig. 14

Alongside the animal is a young foal holding its head raised towards the Goddess. In front of the mare's hooves is a quadrilateral box in the cover of which there is an oblique opening 4 centrimetres by 8 millimetres, through which even large coins can be introduced (17).

Instead, the trunk found in the ruins of the temple in the excavations at Châtelet near Saint Didier, is made of stone (18). Grivaud de la Vincelle, who reproduces it in his work *Arts et Métiers des Anciens* (pl. c.1, no. 1.), gives the following description of it. " It is a quarried column of the ionic order; the upper part is quarried out to receive the offerings; these were kept in safety by means of a piece of wood or iron which covered the trunk and closed with a lock. The holes for the lock and the hinges which kept the cover in position are still to be seen ". The writer concludes by saying " It is not merely in these latter days that priests have placed, in the temples, mute depositaries for religious generosity ". In fact, the use of trunks must be most ancient. We do not know who introduced them, although Joseph the Jew, without expressly designating the high priest Joad as the inventor, mentions the trunk placed by him in the Temple at Jerusalem as a new and singular thing. However, the story told by this historian is worth mentioning.

He says that the King Joas, being desirous of obtaining money with which to

repair the Temple, ordered Ioad to send priests and levites throughout the land to gather a capitation of half a sicle. Joad hesitated to obey the royal command as he foresaw that the people would not submit to the new tribute. On being reproved by the King for his scarse interest in the fate of the Temple, he then thought out another expedient. He caused a box of wood to be made (19) closed at every point excepting for one sole opening (ὀπὴν μίαν) and had it placed in the Temple near the altar. He then invited the faithful to place their offerings destined for the restoration of the temple in it. This encountered the favour of the population and everyone hastened to throw coins of gold and silver therein. Each day, the scribe and the priest emptied the box in the presence of the King, and the box was again placed in position. In this way a sum of money more than sufficient to undertake and to complete the works was collected (20).

The usage became stable, because at the time of Our Lord we know from the Gospel that the Temple had a *gazophylacium* in which the public threw their offerings (21). This object was always made of metal and is often shown in paintings and mosaics of the early Christians illustrating the parable of the widow's mite, (22). They were also adopted where the pagan oracles were consulted. Pausania (lib. VII, c. XXII, 3 and 4) describing the ritual observed by those having recourse to Hermes of Pharae in Acaia tells us that after having burned incense and having poured oil into the lamp, it was necessary to place on the altar, at the right of the god, a coin current in the country and precisely a χαλκοῦς (it was a small copper coin) " The same method of interrogation — says the historian — is observed among the Egyptians at the Temple of Apis ". Now it was rightly observed that this money could not be left at the public's disposition: most probably a trunk was placed on the altar or alongside it to collect the oblations (23). This conjecture was amply confirmed by later finds. We know that the Temples of Eleusis, Hieron, Aphrodition, Asklepeion and the Serapeion had them. They were either quadrilateral or rectangular in shape and made of wood or stone or part of wood and part of stone, whilst the mouth was funnel shaped (fig. 15). One of them, still in existence at Santorin, is reproduced by Daremberger (vol. V, p. 223). The base measures 660 + 895 + 380 mms. and the cover 490 + 660 + 218 mms. Sometimes they were carved out of the living rock near the temple, like that

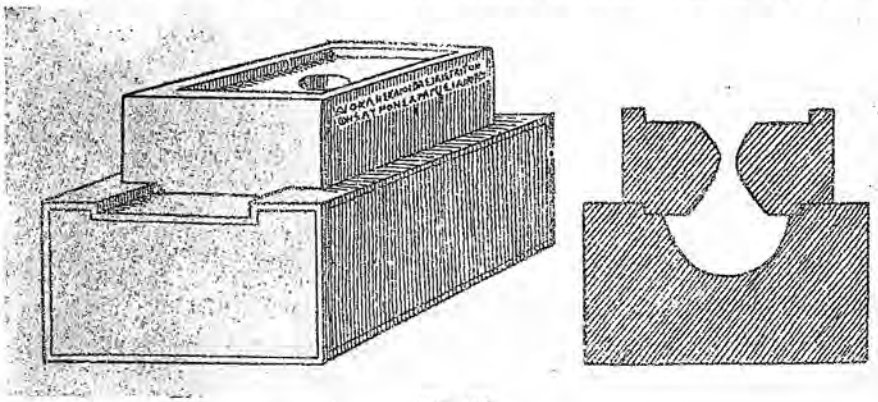

Fig. 15

of Heroon of Theras described by Fougères (24). They were opened once a year. The annual accounts have come down to us of some of these receipts. In 180 B. C. 15 drachmas were extracted from that of the Serapeion of Delos and a like sum from that at the temple of Apollo. We also know the amount of the wages paid to the workmen who opened them: 3 drachmas for those at Delos, 4 for those at Eleusis (25).

From Greece the use of trunks, together with the name *thesaurus*, passed into Italy, where, however, the form was soon changed into a cone or a cylinder instead of the rectangular one. They are almost all made of stone. In the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (vol. IX, p. 555) the cover of one of them is reproduced, which was found in 1878 near Macerata. Both previous to and after the find, more than 5000 denarii of the republican epoch were found near the spot. It is a cylinder of tufa about half a metre in height (fig. 16). Towards the lower part the diameter is lessened thus forming a sort of tooth by which the block must have been mortised in another block of stone or some other support. It is perforated vertically throughout its height, the hole being enlarged towards the base so as to form a sort of inverted funnel. There is a slit in the middle of the cover and on the edge there is an inscription or *titulus: Maxima Nasia Cn. f. Apoline dat.* It resembles the other three, also bearing *tituli*, which were found at Spoleto, Ameria and Preneste, of which mention is made in the above quoted *Corpus* under the names of these places (26).

Fig. 16

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Vast numbers of medioeval money-boxes and trunks are to be found in the museums and in the cathedrals throughout the Christian world. A numerous collection of money-boxes, the greater part of which are made of terracotta, exists in the British Museum at London (fig. 22). Some are oval in shape, others are like large bottles; however the most common shape is the typical and perhaps the original one of a ball (27). One of the most curious examples — fished from the bottom of the Saône — was to be seen in the Paris Exhibition of 1857. It had the shape of a spheroidal gourd with a garniture of bronze (28). Sometimes they contained coins, like the one of dark yellow terracotta in the shape of a bottle which is illustrated in the *Revue Numismatique* of 1868, p. 232. The coins were of the 12th and 13th century. It was found in August 1867 at Ecurat (Creuse), but later it was unfortunately destroyed. As regards the trunks, the oldest go back to the second half of the 12th century. We still have rescripts of sovereigns and pastoral letters of bishops inviting the clergy to provide the faithful with these means for depositing their alms.

Several extracts were published by Du Cange (29): one of them dates back to 1166. One trunk, probably of the 14th century, which is still in existence near the door of the Cathedral at Freiburg in Brisgau (it is sealed up however and out of use), was described and reproduced by Viollet le Duc in his *Dictionnaire du mobilier français* (vol. I, p. 280). It is made of one sole piece of wood, hollowed out internally, with a slit in the upper portion (fig. 17). An opening in the base is closed by two crossed bars fastened in screw rings to which cylindrical iron locks are applied. To open it, most probably two persons were necessary. At least, that may be the explanation of the two locks. Another, made of silver, in the Gothic style, is reproduced and illustrated in *Zeitschrift für Christliche Kunst* (198, p. 393). It belongs to the church of Bützow (30).

Fig. 17

But what we said happened with regard to gifts and money-boxes under the Empire must also have happened in this case: the trunks gave rise to deplorable abuses, because we find that towards the end of the 13th century several English bishops expressly forbade the use of the *trunci concavi*. It appears that some unscrupulous persons turned them to their personal advantage. The bishop of Exeter in the synod of 1287 and the bishop of Chichester in that of 1292 threatened to interdict all those churches from which all trunks were not removed within eight days of the notification, unless a special episcopal authorization had been obtained (31).

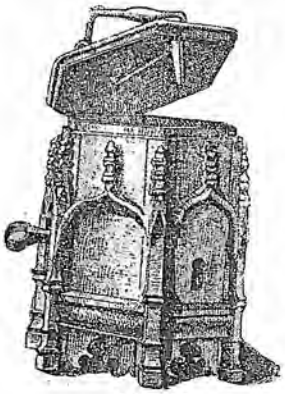

Fig. 18

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In modern times the money-box has also undergone evolution. I do not mean to mention at length the luxury type of money-box of which fine examples may be found in patrician families and in public and private collections. They are artistic pieces of furniture, the makers of which merely used the thrift idea as a pretext and to supply a name. An example of this type of money box is the one which is in the Louvre museum; it is made of engraved iron and is hexagonal in shape (fig. 18). It is most elegant and has a lid with a handle on the upper part. It belongs to the 15th century. Another example is one made of porcelain in the celebrated Delft factory in 1719 (the date is shown together with the name of the owner, one Anna de Ruiter) which is kept in the Kestner Museum (Hanover). It is of the usual round shape, but is finely storied with human figures and surnounted by a small cone which gives the idea of a spiked helmet. It is 9 centimetres high by

20 centimetres wide. It figures country scenes: a couple going for a walk, a boy playing with a bird, another carrying a basket full of provisions, and two boys flying a kite (fig. 19). Other examples are those of wood or metal of greater size and having the shape of chests, moulded and finely inlaid or carved, to be found in the industrial museums at Naples, Venice and many other places.

Fig. 19

We mean to speak of the money-box, properly so-called, which, although continuing the tradition of the original type both in the modesty of its size and that of the material from which it was made, is different either by the addition of some ornament or by the variety of form or shape. Buonarroti, in the introduction to his comedy *La Fiera*, mentioned " gilded " money-boxes (32); but it must have been a very inexpensive gilding, because in the note which Salvini adds to this paragraph it is evident that the money-boxes were ordinary ones. In fact he says " round recipients of earth, with a slit through which one introduces coins and so saves them ".

As regards the shape, they are most varied and bizarre: animals — dogs, cats, ducks, birds; fruit — apples, oranges, tomatoes; toys — dolls, puppets, balls, houses, bells; and so on. One group was recently reproduced in *Travel Talks*, of New York (August 1927, p. 14) under the heading " Savings Banks of the Ages ". It is a collection of money-boxes collected by the National City Bank in New York. Several — so the text says — came from Latin America, where the money-box was introduced by the Spaniards. Among others there is a *botijuela* found at Puerto Rico, a jar of terracotta above one foot high. " The poor used them as water carriers, and the well-to-do dropped their money into them. When full, a stopper was put in the top, the whole sealed with wax and buried in the ground for safety ". In the Philippines, money-boxes were made from bamboo canes and cocoanuts after emptying the latter. One of the most curious of the collection consists of a simple tube of tin. It came from Singapore.

That however also in modern times, as we said, the shape and the material have remained largely the same is shown by the names themselves with which the money-box is denoted in the various languages and which nearly always mean

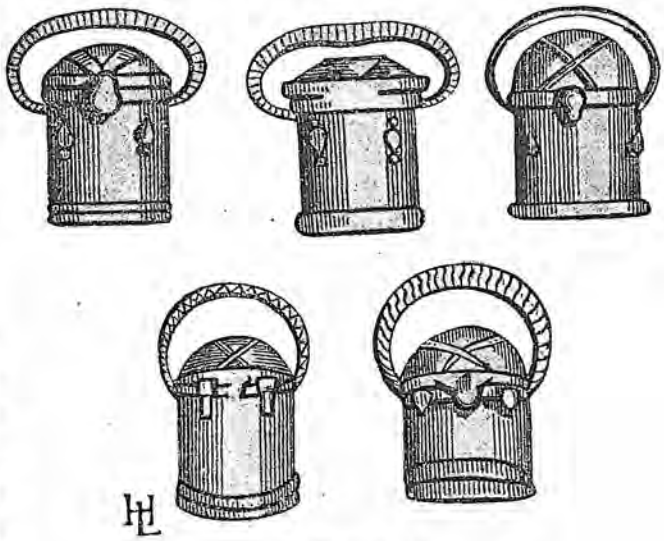

Fig. 20 (pag. 12)

" vase ", " tin ", " box " for money or for savings. Besides " tirelire " (of which mention will be made later), we find in French " esquipot ", composed of " pot " and of another element of uncertain origin: in Dutch we find " spaarport ", in German " Sparbüchse ", in English " money-box ", in Provençal " bouissolo ", in Danish " sparebosse ", in Swedish " sparbössa ", in Polish (" pieniezna ") " puszka ". In Italian, although there is also the word " bossolo ", it is not used excepting in certain dialects as, for example, in Genoese (" bûscioeta " or " biscioeta ").

In some words, as in the Neapolitan " carusiello " or " carosello " the connection with the round shape is evident (" caruso " = a cleaned gourd, or a bald head), whilst the Russian word, which most often occurs in the Slav languages (" deneznaia ") " kruzka ", alludes to a bellied bottle, as the word also means " jug " or " mug ". In the German language there is also the word " Sparkrug " besides " Sparbüchse ", " Spardose " and " Spartopf ".

We have already noted how, in some languages, the money-box is simply called " treasure ", like thrift, of which it is at one and the same time both instrument and symbol (33). One might add the Polish word " skarbona ", " skarbonka " (cfr. " skarbnica " = treasure, exchequer; " skarb " = treasure), the Croat " skrabica " (also from " skarb " already mentioned) and the Spanish " alcancía " (besidess " hucha " of which we have already spoken) from the Arabic " alcanz " which means " treasure ", hidden treasure " and also the place where the treasure is hidden (34).

The variety of words used to denote the money-box in the various languages, as well as the recurrence of diminutive forms (for example, in Polish " skarbniczka ", in Croat " skrabicica ", in Venetian " musineta " from " musina ", Friulan " musine "), are fresh proofs of the popularity enjoyed by this modest domestic utensil.

Another proof is that various languages have drawn locutions and metaphors from it. Thus in Venetian " far musina " is equivalent to saying " to make money " or " to get rich ". " On a comparé l'avare — says the Dictionary of the French Academy (t.s.v.) — à une tirelire, dont on n'obtient quelque chose que lorsque elle est brisée " (The miser has been compared to a money-box, from which one can obtain nothing unless it is broken). The same similitude is often found in the English writers. Bishop Hall (17th century) says " It is a shame for a rich Christian to be like a Christmas box (35), that receives all, and nothing can be got out till it be broken in pieces " (36).

And another of the same period " The lawyer is like a Christmas box, which is sure to get whosoever loseth ".

Yet another (37) says " whoever lost, he, like the butler's box (38), was sure to get " (39). Murray quotes a writing dated 1621 in which mention is made of " an old simile " which compares the miser to a money-box (40).

Fig. 21 - *Persian money-box*

Because of its round shape the " tirelire " has in slang come to mean, " head " (avoir un cafard dans la tirelire = to be mad, to be insane), " stomach " (se coller un litre dans la tirelire; avoir un petit salé dans la tirelire, etc.) and also by antiphrasis " the seat " or " the posteriors " (41). In the " langue verte " it means "louse" and also "head", "ou se mettent les économies de l'étude et de l'expérience" (42) (where one puts the economies of one's studies and experience). The souteneurs call the stockings " tirelire ", " car toutes les filles publiques mettent l'argent dans leurs bas " (43). For thieves, the word " tirelire " means " prison ", because it is easy to get in but not to get out (44). Analogously in Italian the phrase " essere nel salvadanaio " (to be in the money-box) means " to be safe " or " to be in a safe place " (45). In the same language a toothless or tight mouth is called " bocca di salvadanaio " (money-box mouth) (46). A German proverb says " A small coin in the money-box makes more noise than a hundred ".

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With regard to nomenclature, it is necessary to rectify a widely spread error which, on the authority of some reputed linguists (47), is still repeated in the large popular dictionaries, even modern ones (48). This error is the etymology of the word " tirelire " from the Italian " quello che tira le lire " (that which attracts lire). The error was favoured by the casual similarity and also by the analogy with the French words which actually have the word " tirer " as a base (tireballe, tirebarbe, tirebotte, tirebouchon, tirebouton, tirepoil, etc.); but it has no more foundation than those phantastic ones, excogitated and seriously affirmed by old grammarians, (like " fenêtre ", ce qui fait naître le jour; " pantalon ", ce qui pend jusqu'aux talons, etc.). Neither " tirer " nor " lire " have any connection with this word " tirelire "; and it is sufficient, in order to admit it, to note that the Italian has never possessed the word " tira lire ". For that matter, the word " tirelire " occurs in medioeval French writings, for example, " quod dicitur tyrelire vel esparne maille ".

Tirelire is a phantastic or onomatopeic word, says Littré, who classes it with " turelure " (*c'est toujours la même turelure*). One might add the Italian word " tiritera " (a long winded story or a tirade), and the choruses of lullabies and songs — especially those for children — in all languages: trallalà, tantirumlirumlerallà, etc. Godefroy quotes several examples from old French texts:

Et jolivenment chantant
Teirelire un don
— *Tu dis en l'air de si doux sons*
Composez de la tirelire,

where the word is an exclamation of joy. Thus the verb, " tirelirer " in an old text:

En tirelirant
L'alouette a donné d'un bec doux souspirant
Un gay bonjour au jour.

In Provençal the song of the lark goes under this name: " Tirolira " — to sing like a lark, " Tiro-lireto " — an onomatopeic word for the song of the lark.

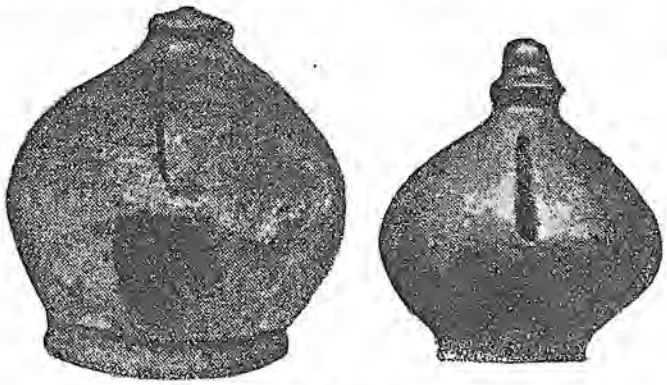

Fig. 22 (pag. 17)

Thus Mistral, who quotes many examples (49). In the same language " tiro-liro " means not only the money-box, but also " the sound of a wind instrument " like " turo-luro ".

Tire-lire is then neither French nor Italian: it belongs to the category of imitative words, composed of dental and liquid sounds of which there are so many examples in all languages both ancient and modern. In Latin *tintinnus, tinnio, aures tinnire* (cp. English - *tingling*, the singing of the ears; French, *avoir un tintouin dans les oreilles*; French, and English, *tintamarre;* English, *tingle-tangle*, a confused tinkling: Italian, *tintinnio* and the word *tintinno* which occurs in Dante to denote a certain sound (Par. XIV, 119). But the Italian Poet also uses the word *dindi* (Purg. XI, 105) which is proper to child language. It is from this word that some of the Italian dialects have formed the word for money-box. In the Roman dialect, for example, it is called *dinderolo*, from " *dindi* " which is the name given by children to money, as it is children who usually collect money in that way (50). That the money-box was also elsewhere considered particularly as an object appertaining to children may be gathered from what another lexicographer, of another country and another age, Fr. Junius, a 16th century Dutchman, says, registering it under the denomination *capsella fictilis* (a box of terracotta) " It is a recipient in which children put their money in order to keep them. Such objects are to be seen hung up in shops and in other places during the Christmas holidays " (51). It should be remembered what was said about the ancient *strenæ* of the Romans; one of the names used in England to denominate the money-box is *Christmas box*, a box for Christmas. This name has also come to mean the tip which one gives to errand-boys at Christmastide. An English author of the first half of the last century in fact gives that meaning as being the most used: « Tire-lire is the only French for Christmas-box, or money-box, cleft on the side " (52).

This certainly was the normal denomination up to a few centuries ago, as may

be gathered from old-time lexicographers. It is sufficient to quote the example given by Cotgrave (I quote from the first edition of his famous dictionary, published in 1611):

"Tire-lire: a Christmas-box, having a cleft on the lid, for money to enter in: used in France by begging Fryers, and here by Butlers and Prentices, etc.". Even today in America the idea of thrift is prominent particularly at Christmas, and many Savings Banks keep that holiday by inviting children in particular to the celebration. (See the note published on page 34, No. 2, 1928 of this Bulletin).

Fig. 23 - *Ancient Roman money-boxes*

Fig. 24

Perhaps the hypothesis is not too hazardous that this simple and primitive form of thrift was created, if not by children at least for children: a toy combined with an instrument to accustom them to foresight and thrift from their earliest years. This much however is certain: the name itself by which the money-box is denoted in many languages, allude to the slight value of the small coins placed in it, which were precisely the small change of which children could dispose. In Old French it was also called "esparnemaille" or "cache-maille". Now "maille" (from the Low Latin "medala" = medal) was a copper coin worth half a denarius or an obole. Also in Provençal — besides the words "esquipot", "argentino", "deneirolo", and the previously quoted "bouissolo" — there are also the words "cachomaio" and "cachomalho" all of which mean "money-box". The Portuguese also has "mealheiro" and "meialheiro" which, used as adjectives, mean "of little value" or "of little profit". In fact in French the word "maille" is used in the sense of "nothing, absolutely nothing": "ne valoir maille"; il n'a ni denier ni maille", etc.

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One would think that after its millenary services the money box has had its day and that progress has, as in the case of other inventions of human ingenuity or industry, surpassed and replaced same by other more rational and more profitable things. In fact one of the writers of the "Grande Encyclopédie" (Vol. XXXI, page 110) has already stated that "the use of money boxes has almost completely disappeared".

Not so! It continues its modest and precious career as it is proved by the fact that the first propagandists of Savings Banks made use of the money-box and called

the new institution by this name, so as to render the idea more accessible to the public (53).

The Savings Bank which has taken over the glorious and powerful succession never wished to replace it not even when it addressed itself to children, families or to the schools under the form of Penny Savings Bank which provoked Samuel Smiles statement in his book " Thrift ", published in 1874, that " the principal supporters of the Penny Bank are children ".

The money-box has generously passed to the service of an Institution which must strike it as being very young although already over a century in existence.

The money-box works now for the Savings Bank because it collects small coins with the intention of dropping, sooner or later, at the Savings Bank window the small treasure collected in order to place it in safety and give it a chance to increase there.

In this way through this novel function and under the modern form of a metallic box, the key of which remains in the hands of the Savings Bank, the money box has in recent years enjoyed a new life and an ever greater diffusion.

Thousands of money-boxes are distributed by the Savings Banks themselves and they reign in the families as a symbol of thrift, instrument of education and a harbinger of fortunes.

NOTES

(1) Cfr. *Travel Talks*, August, 1927, page 14.

(2) Cfr. *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the British Museum, Macedonia*, etc., London, 1879, page 13.

(3) Cfr. the monumental work now in print, entitled *Le case e i monumenti di Pompei*, Naples.

(4) *Die thönerne Sparbüchse im Alterlum (Jahrbuch des Kaiserl. deutsch. Archäol. Instituts*, 1901, vol. XVI, pp. 160 et seq.

(5) *Recueil d'antiquité*, vol. IV, p. 270.

(6) M. De Witte, *Vente du cabinet Durand*, Paris, 1836, num. 1585.

(7) Ed. Brizio, *Pitture e sep. scop. sull'Esquilino*, 1876, p. 1876. Cfr. *Collect. A. Castellani*, 1884.

(8) Op. cit. pl. LIII, num. 3-4, p. 157.

(9) The two which are here reproduced have been pubblished by M. Ant. Boldetti, *Osservazioni sui cimiteri de' santi martiri ed antichi cristiani di Roma*, ecc., Rome MDCXX, page 497.

(10) Cfr. *Revue Archéologique*, 1868, p. 113.

(11) Cfr. Al. Maffei, *Gemme antiche figurate*, etc., Rome MDCCVI, vol. I, page 126, with relative bibliography.

(12) Graeven (page 169) thinks that they were called *arculae*, that is small *arcae* (*arca* was the coffer or strong box). However there is no fact in our possession which supports this hypothesis.

(13) ...neque enim loculis comitantibus itur Ad casum; tabulas posita sed luditur arca (Sat. I, 89

(14) Cfr. Graeven, p. 167, who is inclined to think that this is the oldest form of money-box; Jorio, *Metodo per rinvenire e frugare i sepolcri degli antichi*, Naples, 1828, p. 78; Cavedoni, *Saggio di osservazioni sulle medaglie*, etc., Modena, 1829.

(15) Thus were the figured homages called that were paid to the *domus divina*, i. e. the Imperial Family. Cfr. however Graeven.

(16) Cfr. Edm. Tudot, *Collections de figurines en argile*, etc., 1860. The trunk is shown under diverse aspects. Cfr. pl. XLVIII and pp. 41, 52, 55, 76, 78.

(17) It is now in the National Library at Paris. It is reproduced by Daremberger-Saglio, *Diction. des antiquités grecques et romaines*, Paris, 1913, under the heading *Epona*, p. 735. Cfr. Babelon and Blanchet, *Catal., etc. des bronzes antiques de la Bibl. Nat.*, Paris, 1895, p. 300, n. 689.

(18) Cfr. Grignon, *Second Bulletin des fouilles sur la petite montagne du Châtelet*, etc., Paris, 1775.

(19) The text reads Θησαυρός. This is one of the voices used in Greek to denote the money-box.

Others are φιάλη and ποτήριον, which really mean "cup" or "glass". Cfr. DAREMBERGER, vol. V, p. 224, n. 32. Also in other languages as previously mentioned and as will be seen later, the money-box is called treasure".

(20) *Antiquitates Judaicae*, IX, 8, 2. Cfr. *Book of Kings*, XII, 110. In any case, the *trunci* must be oriental in origin. They are mentioned in the papyri (cfr. Daremberger, vol. V, p. 224, n. 32); Graeven (p. 162) is inclined to believe that the Hebrews have taken the usage of trunks from the Egyptians, with whose institutions they were familiar.

(21) The verb βάλλειν (to throw) occurs more than once when speaking of the *gazophylacium*. Mark. XII, 41 βάλλει χαλκου εἰς τὸ γαζοφυλάκιον; Luke XXI, 1 ...τοὺς βάλλοντας.

(22) Cfr. GARRUCCI, *Storia dell'arte cristiana*, VI, tab. 455 (Mosaic of St. Apollinare at Ravenna).

(23) H. DE LONGPÉRIER, *Récipients monétaires*, etc. in the *Revue Archéologique*, 1869, p. 169

(27) Cfr. *Cataloque of the Museum of London Antiquities*, p. 121. One, reddish-yellow in colour, was found during the excavations in the *City*: it appears to belong to the XVI century. Some are painted green on the upper part. The slit is always vertical.

(28) *Exposition Universelle of* 1857. *Catalogue of the History of Work in France*, n. 781. Cfr. *Revue Archéologique*, 1869, p. 170.

(24) *Grèce*, Paris, 1909, p. 501.

(25) Cfr. TH. HOMOLLE in the *Bulletin de Corres. Héllén.*, 1882, p. 1 seq. and especially p. 70, p. 475; 1890; p. 389 seq. and especially p. 456.

(26) For the description and bibliography see GRAEVEN, p. 162, which registers and describes other pagan trunks found in various regions of Europe.

(29) *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis*, under the headings *truchus* and *truncus*.

(30) Others, Roman and Gothic, in wood, are also reproduced and described (XI, 143; XII, 75).

(31) Cfr. *Concil.*, t. XI, col. 1279 A-D; ibidem Col. C-D 1363.

(32) Egli stan pur benin con quelle borse
Di raso al collo, e que' salvadanai
Dorati in mano (8, 1, 4).

(33) Cfr. This *Bulletin*. n. 3 p. 8

(34) So the Dictionary of the Spanish Academy, which gives under the same word, the locution "correr" or "jugar alcancías": a game in which knights amused themselves by throwing at one another money-boxes full of ashes or light materials, which broke in pieces against their shields. Engelmann is inclined to think that the Arabs already had a word to denote the money-box, "al-canzîya" whence also the word "alquinz" = scyphus parvus and "alcánaz" = "opus figulinum ex luto" (*Glossaire des mots espagnols et portuguais*, etc. Leyde, 1869, q. v.).

(35) *Contempt*. N. T. IV., 11.

(36) HOWELL, *Letters*, I, 76 (1650).

(37) It is another name for the money box, because this was used particularly to collect Christmas tips.

(38) JER. TAYLOR, *Duct. Dubit.*, III, 1, 7.

(39) This was another name for the money-box, because the players used to put part of their winnings in it during Christmastide as a tip for the butler.

(40) *English Dictionary* s. v. Other examples are to be found under the word "Box". Cfr. also Graeven, p. 173. GER. DE LIEGE, *Serm. B. V.*, quoted by GODEFROY.

(41) G. DELESALLE, *Dictionnaire de l'argot français*,, Paris, 1869, s. v.

(42) A. DELVAN, *Dictionnaire de la langue verte*, Paris, s. v.

(43) C. VIRMAITRE, *L'argot fin de siècle*, Paris, 1894, s. v.

(44) L. LARCHEY, *Nouveau supplément du Dictionnaire d'argot*, etc., Paris, 1889, s. v.

(45) Refer to the larger dictionaries.

(46) "Oh va' fidati di certe melate paroline proferite da certe bocche strette che paion fessi di salvadanaj!" (FAGIUOLI, Comed., VI, 198) "Bocca stretta" however is used here as a metaphor, in the sense of "hypocritical".

(47) For exemple, SCHELER, *Diction, étym. de la langue française* (Ist. Edition, 1861, 2nd ed., 1872), who in the third edition however rectifies the erroneous etymology given by him, and accepts that proposed by Littré in the meantime.

(48) For example, in the *Larousse Universal* and in the *Nouveau Larousse Illustré*.

(49) *Lou tresor dou felibrige*, Aix-en-Provence, s. a., s. v.

(50) G. B. BALLESIO, *Fraseologia Italiana*, Florence, p. 1213.

(51) *Nomenclator omnium rerum propria nomina variis linguis explicata indicans*, Augsburg. 1555.

(52) FOSBROKE, *British Monachism* (1843).. Quoted by MURRAY, s. v.

(53) I limit myself to quoting one example *Il nuovo salvadanaio, ossia dei beni derivanti dalla cassa di risparmio. Racconti popolari preceduti dall'idea del regolamento per la città di Bologna*, Bologna. 1840 (Anon.). (The new money-box, or the good deriving from the savings bank. Popular stories preceded by the outlines of the Regulations for the city of Bologna).

At the end of last year, in consequence of a request by the German Association, we had put in hand the research work relative to the preparation of this article in addition to the reproduction of the illustrations which we had found in the Brera Library in Milan.

The article was already ready when we received Mr. E. Hoffmann's booklet, Vom Spartopf zur Sparkasse *(from the old - fashioned savings - box to the Savings Bank — see Bibliography, page* 50*), which treats of practically the same subject but much more fully and from a more general point of view, in considering thrift also under its biological and moral aspects and in its evolution, and containing illustrations the greater number of which differ from ours. We recommend this booklet, to all readers who desire to go deeply into the subject, the interest of which is attested by the coincidence of the two studies.*

REMINDER

We remind Savings Banks and their Associations:

1) That the annual contribution must be remitted in January every year. The same is fixed at a minimum of 2 millionths of the savings deposits existing at this period apart of eventual rectifications in the following January based on the mean average deposits of the previous year.

2) That in order to enable the Institute to carry on its work it is desirable that Savings Banks should not remit a sum below 20 gold francs (say 75 Italian lire, 4 Dollars, 17 Shillings, 100 French francs, 24 Pesetas, 17 Renten marks).

3) That it is earnestly to be hoped that every Savings Bank will add something - even if need be a small amount - to the regulation share or increase same to 3 millionths.

It is particularly recommended above all that there should be no delay in the remittance of the ordinary contributions.